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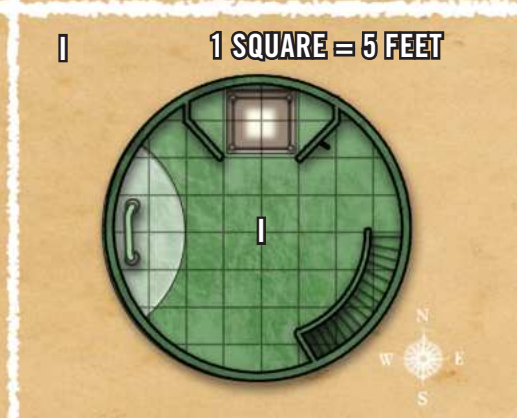
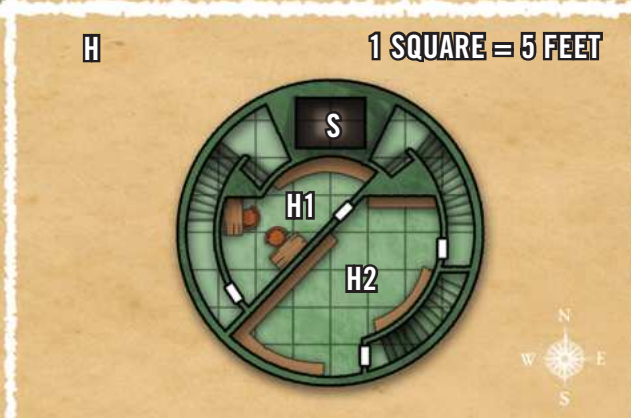
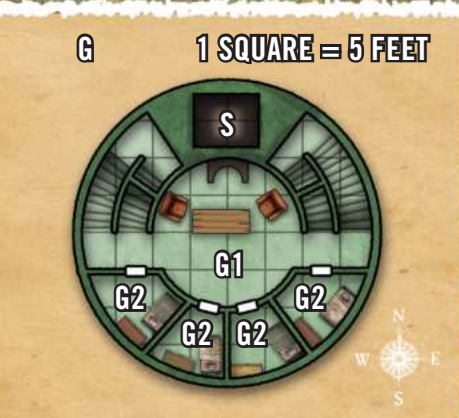
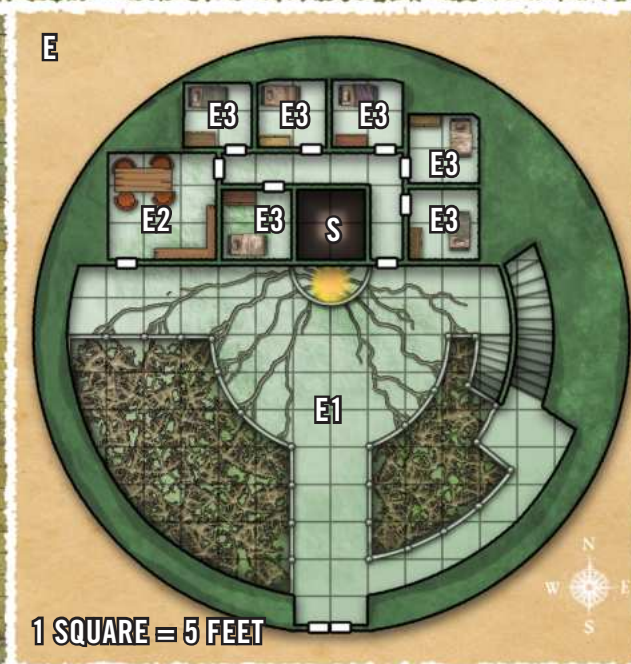
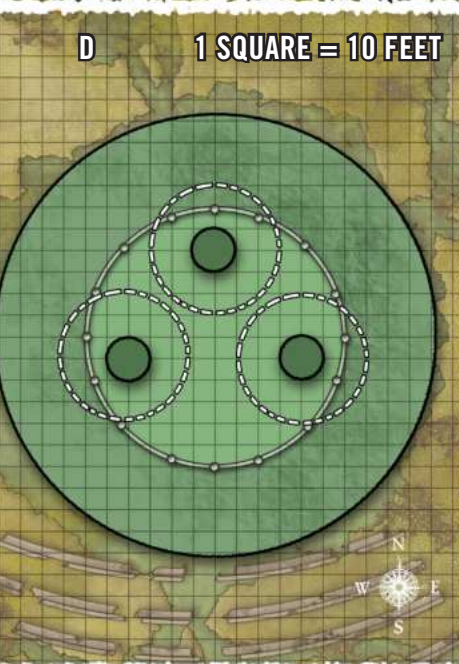
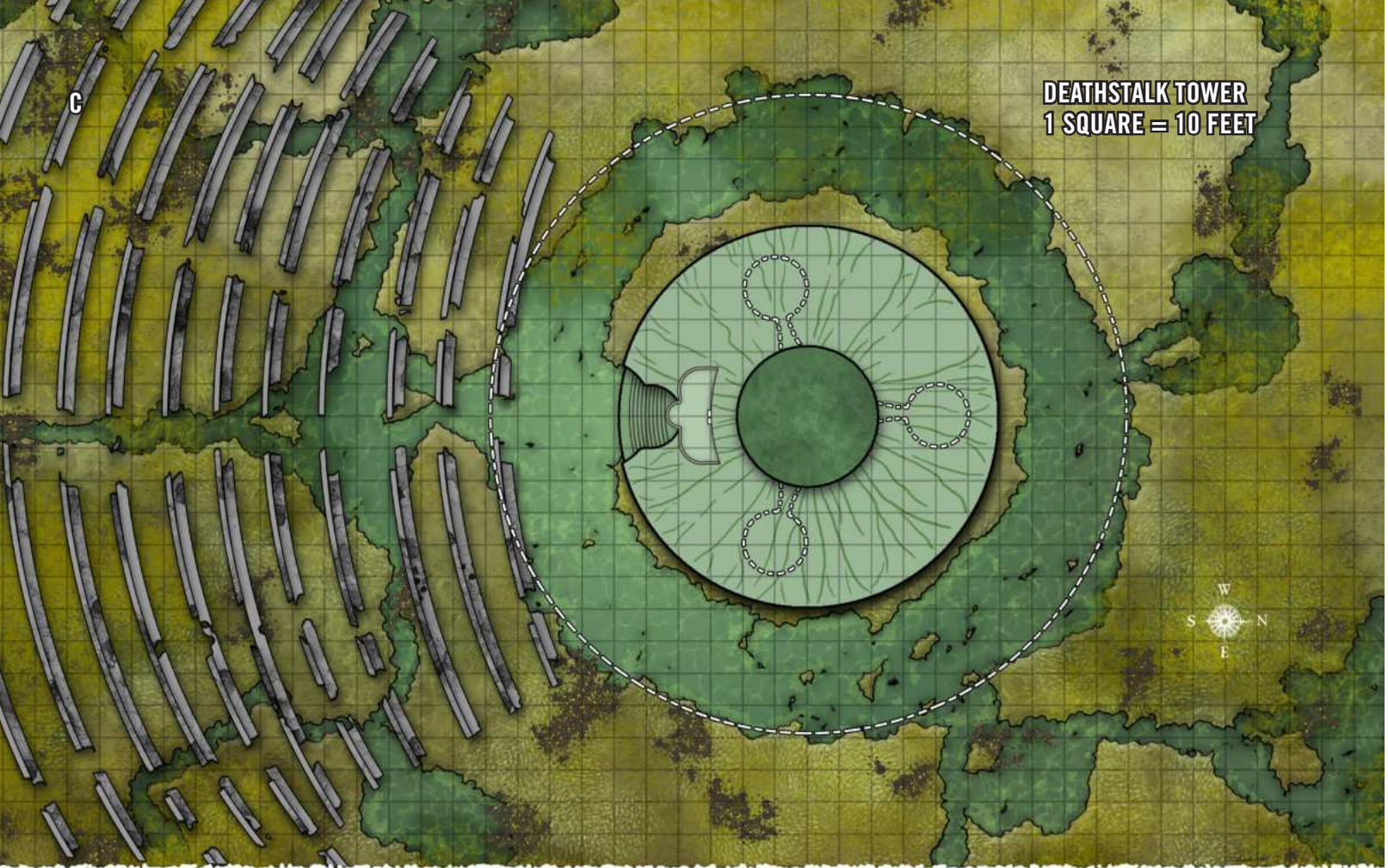


Spore War

ADVENTURE PATH

The Secret of Deathstalk Tower

By James Jacobs



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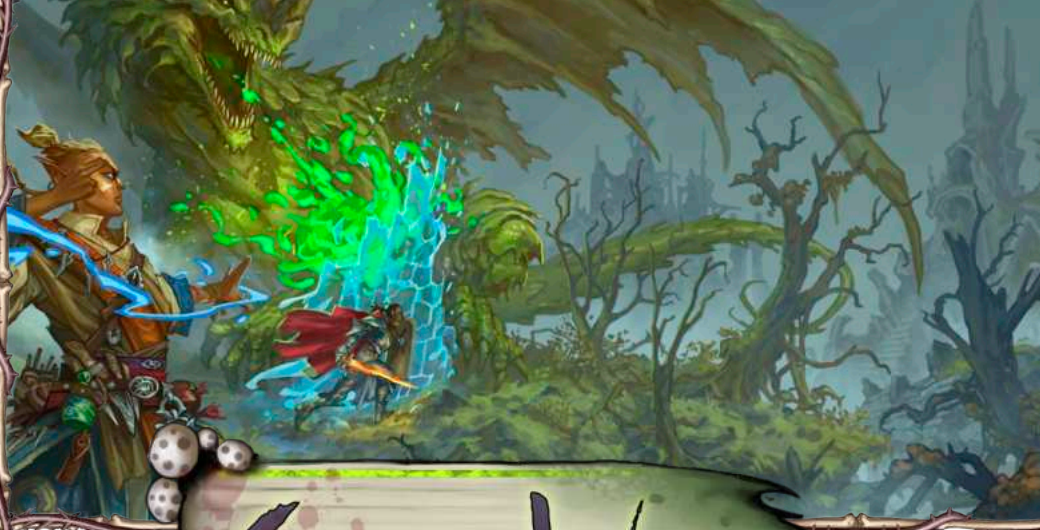
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Spore War

ADVENTURE PATH

ADVENTURE PATH 2 OF 3

The Secret of Deathstalk Tower

The Secret of Deathstalk Tower

by James Jacobs

Chapter 1: The Putrid and the Vile

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by Aoife Ester

Corruptors of Nature

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Adventure Toolbox

by James Jacobs and Linda Zayas-Palmer

Heroic Treasures of Kyonin

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The Secret of Deathstalk Tower

Chapter 1: The Putrid and the Vile.....4

Queen Telandia asks the PCs to travel to a ruined hunter's lodge in distant Fangwood to determine the fate of an elven hero. There, they find his campsite in ruins and the lodge under the control of monstrosities from Tanglebriar. In defeating them, the PCs learn of a sinister plot put into play by Treerazer's high priestess, the mysterious Spore Queen.

Chapter 2: Where Demons Tread..... 20

The PCs mount several skirmishes and missions into the heart of Tanglebriar, seeking to hamper Treerazer's war efforts and look for a way to stop him in his tracks before the Spore War escalates.

Chapter 3: Spores of Sin..... 40

A confrontation with the Spore Queen is nigh. To face her in combat and uncover the devastating plot she's working (a hidden scheme that could grant Treerazer a swift and decisive win), the PCs must first navigate the halls, dungeons, and spires of Deathstalk Tower.

DELEGATE SUPPORT

During the previous adventure, the PCs sought to gain the support of six delegates from other nations near Lake Encarthan. Around the time they begin this second adventure, the delegates return to their homes, but those whom the PCs convinced to sign Article 3 of the Encarthan Treaty (the Self-Defense Agreement) will send support from their nations to aid Kyonin against Treerazer's aggression.

This support helps the PCs by granting them additional Triumph Points to help resolve this adventure's War Interludes. Indeed, without at least one delegate's pledge of support, the PCs will have no points at all with which to face the first interlude!

Each delegate who signed Article 3 grants the PCs 1 Triumph Point at the start of this adventure, to a maximum possible total of 6 Triumph Points if they convinced all six delegates to sign it.

See page 5 for details on Triumph Points and War Interludes.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Secret of Deathstalk Tower" is designed for four characters.

- 14 The PCs begin this adventure at 14th level.
- 15 The PCs should be 15th level after completing Chapter 1.
- 16 The PCs should reach 16th level before starting Chapter 3.
- 17 The PCs should be 17th level before they delve into the dungeons or spires of Deathstalk Tower.

The PCs should reach 18th level by the time they complete the adventure.



Chapter 1: The Putrid and the Vile

The city of Greengold has suffered a devastating disaster. The PCs' quick actions during the previous adventure prevented an even more destructive fungal explosion from taking place, though in either case, the event proved a much-needed warning to Kyonin's government: Treerazer has spent centuries seeding heretofore unguessed-at dangers through the nation's soil. Other Jeharlu Spores and fungal networks exist throughout Kyonin, and while their magical wards make them difficult to discover, the nation now knows of their existence. At the same time, Treerazer must now scramble to launch his offensive against Kyonin, since one of his secrets has been revealed before it was ready to be sprung. As the Spore War ignites, ruin and suffering spread through Kyonin—but it could have been much worse.

Queen Telandia knows this, just as she knows that the conflict may well carry on for years. Even though she believes Kyonin can defend itself and eventually prevail, she is aware of the ugly costs of war: the longer it continues, the more elves will perish and the more damage Kyonin will sustain. Therefore, as she mobilizes the nation's defenses to meet Tanglebriar's march, she also reaches out to the same heroes who saved Greengold from utter annihilation.

At the end of the previous adventure, Queen Telandia bestowed the title "Heroes of Kyonin" upon the PCs. They should also know that she intends to visit Greengold soon to speak with them about a new mission. In the meantime, they have a few days to rest and recover. When the queen travels to Greengold, she does so in secret, teleporting with four of her personal



guards after arranging to meet the PCs at the Vynoren Estate. Dalamian, her young cousin and herald, delivers this message. When you're ready to begin, proceed with "The Queen's Visit."

WAR INTERLUDES

While the Spore War event includes mass combat and clashes between elven and demonic armies in-world, these wartime battles do not take place "on screen" in this Adventure Path. Though the PCs don't physically take part in these battles, these conflicts still occur in the background of the campaign, and the PCs' achievements during play help to bolster their allies on the field of battle. Whether by whittling down Treerazer's forces, creating distractions by initiating skirmishes behind enemy lines, or simply by successfully completing great feats of heroism, their contributions to the war effort do affect the morale of Kyonin's fighting forces.

At various points during this adventure and the next, you'll come across War Interludes. These describe key battles and developments over the course of the Spore War, but the resolution of these battles is contingent on how successful the PCs have been in their own efforts to resist and hinder Treerazer's war machine. At the end of the previous adventure, and periodically during the rest of this Adventure Path, the PCs can earn Triumph Points. During the campaign, they may hear news about battles and events taking place elsewhere in Kyonin as the war progresses. By spending Triumph Points, the party can influence the outcomes of these conflicts.

Publicly keep track of the total number of Triumph Points the PCs earn. Each time a War Interlude occurs, the party must decide whether they wish to spend a point to ensure Kyonin's victory in the interlude, or whether they want to save the point for later. Inform the PCs that any Triumph Points left unspent at the end of the Spore War Adventure Path will influence both Kyonin and Tanglebriar's overall state after the war ends, but also emphasize that letting too many interludes pass by without victory could result in their facing growing penalties and disadvantages. In most cases, spending a Triumph Point earns the PCs significant XP, representing their growing fame and legend, but some War Interludes can result in additional penalties or benefits depending on how the interlude plays out.

Some GMs might feel that the amount of XP granted for a War Interlude is too much, as each grants a reward equivalent to a moderate encounter. Feel free to reduce the reward to 20 XP per War Interlude, but then consider augmenting each one with an additional

low-threat encounter of your own design to make up for the loss of XP rewards. Random encounters (such as those listed on page 23) can go a long way toward bolstering XP shortfalls.

THE QUEEN'S VISIT

Queen Telandia meets with the PCs at Vynoren Estate. When the PCs arrive, she congratulates them on their recent triumphs in Greengold, as well as for any of the delegates they convinced to stay on to aid Kyonin. Some of those delegates may have promised Kyonin additional aid as detailed at the end of the previous adventure, but as the queen explains, they have since returned to their homelands to spread the news of Treerazer's aggression. After that, she gets right to the point.

"First, let me thank you again for your accomplishments here in Greengold. Without your aid, we would be alone in this war and one of our settlements would have been lost before the war even truly began. For this, Kyonin owes you a debt of gratitude, but I fear that our need of your heroism is far from over. Just yesterday, news came from the town of Riverspire of something horrific!"

At this point, pause the queen's dialogue and run the following War Interlude.

WAR INTERLUDE 1: THE LOSS OF RIVERSPIRE


The town of Riverspire in southern Kyonin has fallen! An army of demons and fungal creatures attacked late at night, seeking to slaughter all who dwelled within it and expand Tanglebriar's borders further to the northwest. Some of the townsfolk managed to escape north along the riverbanks, but now corruption has started seeping into the river waters as well, endangering all who dwell downriver.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: Riverspire is overwhelmed, and most of its citizens are killed or captured after Treerazer's army occupies the settlement.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: Riverspire sustains significant damage and is still captured by Treerazer's army, but the citizens are evacuated safely, along with a fair amount of the town's resources. The PCs earn 80 XP.

A New Mission

Depending on whether the party spent a Triumph Point in the interlude, Queen Telandia either mourns the loss of the town or thanks the PCs for the aid they provided by giving Kyonin advance warning. Either development paints the mission the queen has for



the PCs with a sense of urgency—either because the tragic loss requires a swift turn of fortune, or because the unexpected win now gives the elves a chance to strike back at Tanglebriar while the proverbial iron is hot.

“Though our armies stand against Treerazer’s war machine, you have proven that your skills and talents work best as surgical strikes. To that end, I’ve come to you directly: we need you to secure the aid of an expert who understands how supernatural energies from the Outer Rifts can corrupt this world. I speak of Aravashnial, a veteran of the Fifth Mendevian Crusade that sealed the Worldwound and a master of the ways of the Riftwarden.

“A few years ago, he approached us and offered to share his experience in fighting demons with us, and recently, he and a small group of Ekujae researchers set out to investigate the Darkblight in Southern Fangwood on the far side of Lake Encarthan. Aravashnial hoped that studying the blight that was defeated in Fangwood toward the end of the Ironfang Invasion might reveal information that could aid our own efforts against Tanglebriar—research that has now become more important than ever. Yet something has happened. My attempts to contact him and call him and his researchers home have failed. This timing cannot be coincidental; I fear something has befallen him. And so, I ask you to travel to Fangwood, locate his camp, and return him to Kyonin should he still live. If, as I fear, something awful has happened to him... simply discover what you can and report to us with haste.”

The queen would like the PCs to travel to Fangwood at once, but if they need a few days to prepare, she understands. She tells them that both *sending* and *screy* have failed to yield results, and that even *pinpoint* failed to give her any information about his location. When she cast *pinpoint* a second time, however, now targeting his spellbook, *What Doors We Open* (which he allowed her to peruse for a time when he first came to Kyonin a few years ago), she got a result: Aravashnial’s spellbook is located in the ruins of Elkhaven Lodge in Southern Fangwood in Nirmathas.

Queen Telandia wants the PCs to travel to Fangwood and find out what happened to Aravashnial and his Ekujae assistants. Even if it’s as she fears and they’ve been captured or slain, she asks the PCs to determine if the reason the researchers are missing has any connection to Tanglebriar and, if so, to ensure that any agents from Tanglebriar who are active in Fangwood are defeated. She laments she can’t send more aid with the PCs, or even to potentially accompany them

herself, but also expresses that the PCs have already shown their heroic nature, and that she has every confidence they shall succeed. Additionally, sending a small but powerful group such as the party helps to keep their activities clandestine, should there indeed be links to Tanglebriar as she fears!

Supply Drops

Before the PCs head out to Fangwood, Queen Telandia has one more thing to offer the PCs to aid them, in addition to the powerful magic items she gifts them. Because they’re heroes fighting for Kyonin, she’s able to deploy supplies to the PCs to aid them in their work, but doing so costs resources that would otherwise have gone to support troops or bolster defense of the nation’s settlements. Still, keeping the PCs in the fight and well-supplied is important.

Queen Telandia entrusts a PC with a *greater pendant of the occult*, instructing them that they can use the pendant’s ability to send a *dream message* to make a request for a supply drop. The queen introduces the PCs to her four guards and informs them that these guards will be sleeping in shifts, so that if a *dream message* is sent to all of them, plus herself, at least one person will receive the request immediately and take action. Within the next 12 hours, Queen Telandia assures them, she will cast *pinpoint* to locate the PC who sent the *dream message*, then send a carrier out to deliver the supply drop.

Requesting a supply drop costs the PCs 1 Triumph Point. The supplies are delivered via an elven scout mounted on a giant wasp who swoops low over the area indicated by the *pinpoint*, then drops the supplies into the area. Each supply drop is contained within a *type I spacious pouch* and contains no more than 4,000 gp in consumable items. A typical supply drop consists of two greater bottled catharsis elixirs (*Pathfinder Player Core* 2 286), four *greater healing potions*, two *panaceas*, four *ration tonics* (*Player Core* 2 304), and two greater surging serum elixirs (*Player Core* 2 288). If the PCs want a different mix of consumables, they’ll need to indicate this in their *dream message*. The elven scout fires a *beacon shot* arrow into the ground near the supply drop to indicate to the PCs that the drop’s been made, then immediately flies out of the region to safety.

The spent Triumph Point covers the cost of the supplies, the *spacious pouch*, and the resources needed to get the elven scout and their wasp mount to the PCs in a safe and timely manner. Once the supply drop is delivered and the beacon is shot, though, the PCs should only have a limited amount of time to get to the resources before they attract unwanted attention. Feel free to include complications in this form as you

see fit, but keep in mind that Triumph Points are a limited resource, so if the PCs spend one for a supply drop, they should be able to gather up the supplies they “purchased” as long as they’re not being entirely lackadaisical.

Before she bids the PCs farewell and returns via teleport to Iadara, Queen Telandia gives the PCs their first supply drop for free. In this case, the supply drop is the typical one detailed above. No Triumph Point need be spent for this first supply drop, as the queen hands it directly to the party.

FANGWOOD

Elkhaven Lodge is located on the far side of Lake Encarthan from Kyonin, in the eastern reaches of the Southern Fangwood Forest. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion or Society check to Recall Knowledge recognizes that Elkhaven Lodge is one of many Erastil-dedicated hunting lodges in Fangwood that have long served double duty in Nirmathas as a rallying point or hideout for skirmishers and freedom fighters. A PC who critically succeeds at this check knows where Elkhaven Lodge is located (that is, in the shadow of a local landmark of upthrust granite called Deadeye’s Tower) and is able to use spells like *teleport* to travel to it. Elkhaven Lodge is about 400 miles to the west of Greengold, so spells like *nature’s pathway* or *teleport* must be heightened to allow swift travel to and from each other. Note the limitation of carrying extradimensional spaces, however, such as the spacious pouch the queen uses to hand over the PCs’ first supply drop, or on the way back, after the PCs have discovered the extradimensional space within the back cover of *What Doors We Open*. If the PCs opt for non-instantaneous fast travel spells like *migration* or *umbral journey*, remind them that the presence of the Isle of Terror in Lake Encarthan would make taking the longer trip around the southern edges of the lake (a journey of about 600 miles) the wisest choice.

While the progress of Spore War isn’t technically on a timer, taking a more leisurely journey to and from Fangwood via boat, horseback, or even on foot will give Treerazer a significant advantage. If your group simply lacks the resources to cast teleport or the like, then Queen Telandia gives the PCs two scrolls of *teleport* heightened to 7th-rank if one of the PCs can use them. Barring that, she offers to cast *teleport* the next day to transport the PCs to Elkhaven. If she does so, she must return to Kyonin at once via a second *teleport* to continue to attend to her other responsibilities—she’ll arrange a time to teleport back to Elkhaven Lodge to pick the PCs up over the next few days.

Fangwood is, like much of Kyonin, a dense forest, yet it differs from Kyonin’s Fierani Forest in that Fangwood is only sporadically inhabited by people. Much of the woodland remains wilderness, and many of those who dwell inside it do so out of necessity, living lives as fugitives or freedom fighters. The region of woodland around Elkhaven Lodge and Deadeye’s Tower is one of the last remaining holdouts of Darkblight, a corruption similar to what engulfs Tanglebriar. Aravashnial and his Ekujae assistants came here to study the blight for this reason, both to examine terrain like Tanglebriar’s without the risk of going there in person, but also to study the methods by which the Darkblight was defeated during the later stages of the Ironfang Invasion not a decade earlier. If the PCs teleport to the area from Greengold, they arrive within 4 miles of Elkhaven Lodge, deep in the woods. A climb up a tree or a quick flight above the canopy is all they need to get their bearings and spot the looming escarpment of Deadeye’s Tower—an unmistakable landmark to head toward. Travel through these blighted woods is much safer and simpler than moving through Tanglebriar, but the land still functions as difficult terrain due to the heavy undergrowth.

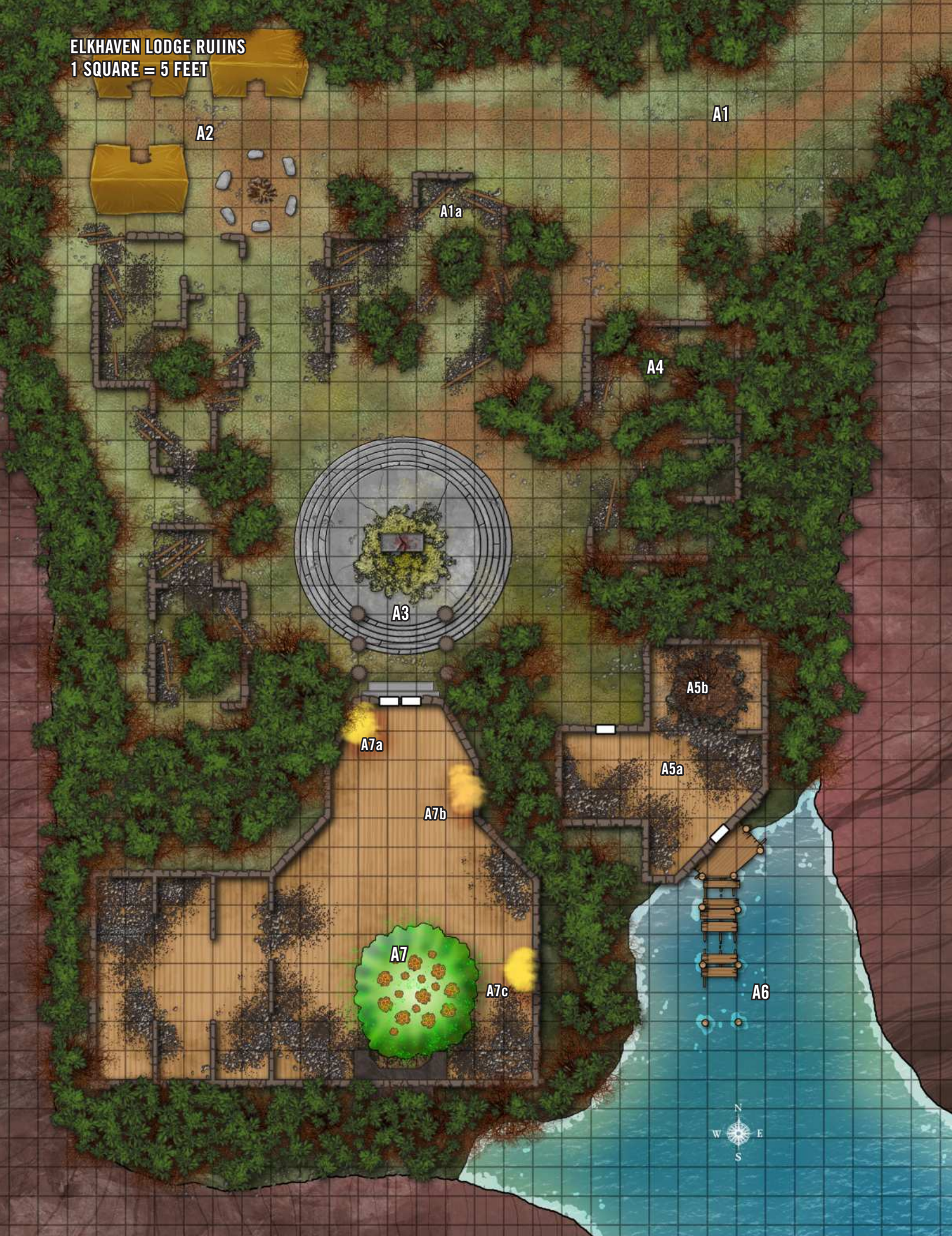
Elkhaven Lodge Features

Originally built by worshippers of Erastil and meant to serve as both a temple and as a place for hunters to relax and organize in between forays into the wild, Elkhaven Lodge fell into ruin well over six centuries ago when the Darkblight first came to the Fangwood. Only seven years have passed since the Darkblight ended, and smaller patches of the slowly dying blight remain in areas like this one. Because the people of Nirmathas haven’t had much of a chance to catch their breath during those years, Elkhaven Lodge has remained in ruin.

Aravashnial and his Ekujae assistants arrived in the area about six months ago. They set up a small camp at the northern edge of the lodge and, in that time, have studied the slowly dying blight and investigated the ruins using painstaking archaeological techniques. Even though Aravashnial was a powerful wizard, and while his assistants were each skilled druids and rangers, they were not prepared for the disaster that faced them one night a mere three months into their stay. The Spore Queen arrived in the region with a small army of fungal minions, and together, they slaughtered the assistants and took Aravashnial prisoner, sacrificing him on the nearly reconsecrated altar of Erastil at the heart of the lodge’s grounds. In doing so, the Spore Queen extracted and captured the elven wizard’s soul,

ELKHAVEN LODGE RUIINS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



a key resource she needed to continue her work on the project she keeps secret within Deathstalk Tower. She abandoned the site by morning but left behind many of her followers, commanding them to “reawaken the slumbering blight.” After all, if Treerazer’s plans succeed and Tanglebriar overtakes Kyonin, locations like this elsewhere in the Inner Sea will give him a head start at expanding his domain even further!

Today, the ruins are more entangled in fungal growth and foul-smelling vegetation than one might expect this long after the Darkblight’s defeat. When the PCs reach the area, they can confirm this with a successful DC 25 Nature check or DC 30 Survival check to Recall Knowledge, and a PC who critically succeeds notes that the type of growth here bears disturbing similarities to what is found in Tanglebriar. Within the ruins, the terrain is relatively open, but patches of dense, thorny brambles and fungal infestation surround much of it, save for a partially overgrown trail leading into area **A1**; these patches are greater difficult terrain. The air in the area smells foul—a mix of rotten vegetation, decaying flesh, and a sickly-sweet syrupy stink that might be the most unpleasant scent of all. The first time the PCs breathe deeply of this air (this should coincide with the start of combat in area **A1**), they must succeed at a DC 32 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). They are then temporarily immune to the stench until after they spend an hour in clean air.

The lodge’s grounds are located entirely within a narrow vale to the side of Deadeye’s Tower. Several of the buildings in the northern half of Elkhaven Lodge are partially or wholly collapsed, but the rubble is only intense enough to impede movement in areas indicated on the map—these areas are difficult terrain.

A1. A Violent Welcome **Severe 14**

As the PCs approach Elkhaven, it’s best if you have them stumble upon the overgrown trail that leads to the site, and then describe the sounds of battle, monstrous roars, and terrified cries for help coming from close by. The cliffs of Deadeye’s Tower surround the lodge grounds—flying PCs can, in theory, approach from any direction, but at your discretion, if the PCs don’t hurry to area **A1**, then the group of Chernasardo Rangers in peril there are slaughtered.

The stony facade of Deadeye’s Tower looms to the south, a sheer cliffside that rises nearly a thousand feet into the air. The overgrown trail leads into something of a clearing, within which the ruins of an ancient lodge and its five stone outbuildings slump over grounds infected with mold, sloppy with mud, and reeking of a sickened

swamp. A newer trail leads to the west, where a small cluster of three tents and a campfire are visible through the infested undergrowth.

Creatures: Mere moments before the PCs arrive, a group of Chernasardo Rangers (an organization of Nirmathi scouts known for their wilderness skills) is ambushed. The six rangers just managed to retreat into a precarious defense in one of the ruined outbuildings at area **A1a**, while a pair of long-necked antlered monsters known as catoblepases are preparing to attack them. Spread among the catoblepases are six humanoid figures, elven men and women clad in leather armor and armed with bow and blade who move with an unnerving set of spasmodic jerks and contorted lurches. These elves are encrusted with growths of fungus, many of which erupt from their flesh or dangle from limbs in ragged, moist filaments of mold. This is all that remains of the Ekujae researchers who aided Aravashnial—they were slain and raised from death as spore thralls by the Spore Queen.

The six spore thralls and the two powerful catoblepases are unlikely to notice the PCs at first, since they’re focused on attacking the rangers who have dug into the ruined building. PCs can roll Stealth checks for their initiative if they wish, even if they hadn’t previously indicated they were sneaking. Regardless, the distracted nature of the monsters grants the PCs a +4 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls. If the PCs instead deliberately call out to challenge the monsters, everyone rolls initiative normally, but the creatures don’t begin combat attacking the rangers. Otherwise, if one of the PCs goes first in the initiative order, the spore thralls and catoblepases immediately turn to face them in combat while the rangers attack the creatures from cover in area **A1a** with their longbows; the monsters ignore the rangers unless one of them scores a critical hit, in which case that creature turns back to attack them. If the creatures act before the PCs, the spore thralls delay their turn as needed until after the catoblepases take their turns to breathe their poison fumes over area **A1a**, likely slaughtering the rangers within. Afterward, the spore thralls move in to finish off any miraculous survivors, though they immediately switch targets to the PCs once they notice them. Once they engage the PCs, the monsters fight to the death.

Rather than have the rangers perish immediately once they’re reduced to 0 HP, allow them to use the dying rules so that, even if the PCs fail to go first in this combat and the rangers get slaughtered, the party will still have a chance to save some or all of the rangers if they move quickly.

SPORE THRALLS (6)

CREATURE 10

RARE MEDIUM ELF FUNGUS HUMANOID

Fungal Ekujae cultists of Treerazer

Perception +18; low-light vision

Languages Chthonian, Common, Elven

Skills Athletics +17, Nature +18, Stealth +19, Survival +18

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** +3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Items +1 leather armor, +1 striking elven curve blade, +1 striking composite shortbow

AC 29; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +19, **Will** +16

HP 175; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison

Spore Burst (poison) When a spore thrall is reduced to 0 Hit Points by damage other than cold damage, they burst in an explosion of toxic green spores. All creatures in a 15-foot emanation around the spore thrall take 10d6 poison damage (DC 26 basic Fortitude save).

Speed 30 feet



Spore Thrall

Melee ♦ *elven curve blade* +22 (finesse, forceful, magical),

Damage 2d8+6 slashing

Ranged ♦ *shortbow* +22 (deadly d10, magical, propulsive, range 60 feet), **Damage** 2d6+4 piercing

Hunt Prey ♦ (concentrate) The spore thrall designates a single creature they can see or hear as their prey. They gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks when they Seek their prey and ignore the penalty for making ranged attacks within their second range increment against the prey they're hunting. If the spore thrall uses Hunt Prey against a creature when they already have one designated, the previous creature loses the designation. The designation lasts for 24 hours.

Precise Aim ♦ A spore thrall deals an additional 2d6 precision damage against a creature they've designated as their hunted prey.

ELITE CATOBLEPASES (2)

CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 48

Initiative Perception +24

CHERNASARDO RANGERS (6)

CREATURE 7

Human hunters (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 219)

Initiative Perception +17

Reward: Grant the PCs 10 XP for each ranger that they save, to a maximum of 60 XP if they save them all.

THE RANGERS' STORY

If at least one of the Chernasardo Rangers survives, that fortunate ranger is a woman named **Aliir Shilarken** (exhausted female human ranger 7). She (along with any other surviving rangers) thanks the PCs profusely for the rescue and tells them a harrowing story of how the rangers had been sent deep into Fangwood by their superiors to scout out old lodges and caches of equipment that might still be of use in the ongoing war with Molthune. Now that the Darkblight has ended, many such stashes of weaponry have become more available, but as this encounter shows, recovering those resources can potentially remain dangerous.

Aliir explains that the leader of her squad was slain by "one of those horrid poisonous monsters—only this one flew. It snatched him up and flew off to splash into that polluted pond to the south." A few moments after that tragedy, the other monsters attacked them, and the rangers only barely managed to reach cover because of the distraction their leader's martyred death provided.

Now, Aliir and her surviving rangers want nothing more than to retreat to safety several days' travel to the southwest. She thanks the PCs again, noting that the people who once operated

these lodges traditionally hid caches of powerful gear in a false area behind the central building's fireplace or in the stable, buried under one of the horse stalls. The rangers tell the PCs that they've more than earned either of these caches' contents as a reward for their bravery, then quickly take their leave of the area.

If the PCs press the rangers for more information, Aliir can tell them that it's not unusual for pockets of Darkblight to survive in small areas, but that the blight here seems different and more dangerous. She suspects that a new source of blight has reached the lands surrounding Elkhaven Lodge and is eager to report this to the druids of Crystalhurst. If the PCs explain to her that the blight may have links to Tanglebriar, she and the remaining rangers gasp in shock. They've been in the wild for well over a month and haven't heard the news from across the lake, nor do they know anything about a new Encarthan Alliance. Upon learning this, however, the rangers promise to spread word of the PCs' aid here and swear that their efforts will be repaid in kind.

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for talking to the rangers. If they informed the rangers of the recent events in Greengold and of the Encarthan Alliance, the PCs also earn 1 Triumph Point.

A2. Ruined Campsite

Low 14

This campsite consists of three tattered tents and a fire pit surrounded by small, flat boulders that have been arranged as improvised seating. While the campsite's gear looks relatively new, the growth of fungus and brambles throughout the area looks older than it should be, as if the site had been abandoned for a year rather than, at most, several weeks.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Nature check to Recall Knowledge confirms that the overgrowth of fungus and vines in this area seems unnatural, considering how new the camping gear appears. A critical success on this check allows the PC to notice the presence of potentially dangerous fungi in the area.

Hazard: Aware that Aravashnial's elven allies would probably come looking, the Spore Queen left the site relatively intact rather than destroy the campsite the elves had built here. While this means that the stash of notes and gear Aravashnial hid in one of the

ruined tents (see Treasure below) went unnoticed, it also means that the PCs must now contend with the aggressive mold that grows over all three tents.

WITHERMOLD (3)

HAZARD 12

RARE COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL FUNGUS

Stealth +38 (master) (or +30 and expert if a PC critically succeeded at Recalling Knowledge about the campsite's condition)

Description Coils of pale yellow thorny fungal vines on which grow hundreds of brown puffballs suddenly whip into frenzied life.

Disable DC 33 Religion (master) twice to exorcise the unholy presence within the withermold, or DC 35 Survival (master) twice to safely remove the sensory tendrils growing in the mold

AC 30; Fort +27, Ref +25

HP 86 (BT 43); Immunities acid, critical hits, object immunities, precision damage;

Weaknesses holy 10; Resistances physical 10

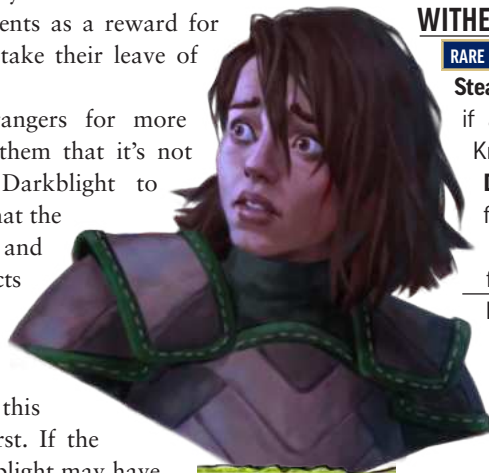
Spore Burst ⤿ (poison) **Frequency** three times per day; **Trigger** A Small or larger creature touches or attempts to enter one of the three tents; **Effect** The thorny vines of the three withermolds growing on the tents suddenly whip into a frenzy, filling the air with clouds of toxic spores. All creatures within a tent or within 10 feet of a tent's exterior take 8d6 poison damage (DC 32 basic Fortitude save). The withermolds then roll initiative.

Routine (3 actions) A withermold makes three Strikes with its thorny vines on its turn, splitting its Strikes up among potential targets before striking a single target more than once.


Melee ⤿ thorny vine +26 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 1d10+5 piercing

Reset A withermold deactivates at the end of any round when there are no targets within reach to attack with thorny vine Strikes. It resets immediately unless it's used all its Spore Burst reactions for the day, in which case the withermold resets in 24 hours.

Treasure: An investigation of the contents of the three tents is enough to confirm that this was once where Aravashnial and his assistants were stationed. There are some clues to be found here, given time, but the most significant cache of clues is hidden in the northwestern tent. A PC who Searches this tent for 10 minutes and succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check discovers a bundle wrapped in cloth that was buried in the dirt in a corner of the tent. Within this bundle is Aravashnial's grimoire, *What Doors We Open*.



Aliir Shilarken



Tucked into the spellbook is a hastily scribbled note from Aravashnial, written in Empyrean. The short message reads as follows.

"Under attack. Treerazer's agents are active. They're here. I'm hiding this in hopes it will be found. If you read this, warn the queen, and use the treasures within this book to save Kyonin!"

An extradimensional space inside the back cover of *What Doors We Open* contains three journals' worth of research on the blight Aravashnial found at Elkhaven Lodge. These also contain summaries of the methods he suggests would be useful to combat the demonic influence within Tanglebriar, based on his experiences in dealing with similar supernatural blights during his time in the Worldwound. Stored alongside these journals are three treasures, all of which bear Ekujae artisanship and were once the belongings of his assistants: a *storm flash* rapier, a *greater primeval mistletoe*, and a *major saurian spike spellheart* (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 128).

INVESTIGATING THE CAMPSITE

There are clues waiting to be discovered in the ruined campsite, but investigating the site takes time. There are two things the PCs can Research (*GM Core* 190): the campsite itself and the journals found within *What Doors We Open*. The former must be researched on-site, but the journals can be researched anywhere. Regardless, each round of Research takes 4 hours of work, and if the PCs haven't yet dealt with the dangers present within the ruins of Elkhaven Lodge, they'll attract attention at some point and be attacked by the following groups in this order: the omox demons from area A3, the Tanglebriar scouts from area A5, and the spore thralls from area A7. The timing of when these attacks occur is left to you, but each should interrupt ongoing research, forcing the PCs to start that round of Research over from the beginning.

The Ruined Campsite: Under the overgrowth lies evidence of a battle fought here. The PCs discover remnants of then-ongoing examinations and experiments on blighted samples gathered locally and can piece some things together from the shambles. **Maximum RP 4; Research Checks** DC 30 Survival to examine the tracks and battlefield damage, DC 32 Nature to interpret results from damaged experiments, DC 34 Perception to uncover clues and draw conclusions from the wreckage.

Aravashnial's Journals: The three journals hidden within *What Doors We Open* contain a wealth of clues and information, but they are all written in

Empyrean and present their work in a dense and hard to understand format. **Maximum RP 4; Research Checks** DC 30 Nature, DC 32 Religion, or DC 34 Arcana or Occultism to study the texts and correctly understand the dense writing.

TANGLEBRIAR'S INFLUENCE

RESEARCH 14

UNIQUE

Research Checks ruined campsite (area A2), Aravashnial's journals (found inside *What Doors We Open*'s extradimensional space)

2 Research Points Aravashnial and his Ekujae assistants were studying the blight in the ruins, hoping to find a link between the Darkblight and the greater blight that stains Tanglebriar. The team consisted of Aravashnial and eight Ekujae researchers.

4 Research Points Aravashnial and his assistants were attacked relatively recently and, judging by the amount of blood spilled, there were few survivors. The fact that there are no bodies (or even fragments) found here indicates that the elves fled, were captured, or were slain and their bodies hidden away or destroyed. If the PCs haven't found *What Doors We Open* yet, they automatically find the hidden journal in one of the tents at this point.

6 Research Points Both forms of blight share features found in the demonic realm of Jeharlu, ruled by Cyth-V'sug, sire of Treerazer and, while the blight in Tanglebriar is more powerful (due to Treerazer's presence), methods that were used to combat the Darkblight can be combined with techniques used to fight demons in the Worldwound. The PCs earn 1 Triumph Point upon giving the journals over to Queen Telandia and pointing out the relevant passages in the journals.

8 Research Points The PCs manage to extract a detailed analysis of the types of threats they'll face in Tanglebriar and gain advantages in that region as detailed on page 22.

Reward: Grant the PCs 20 XP for each research point threshold they reach, for a total maximum reward of 80 XP if they earn all 8 points.

A3. Corrupted Altar

Moderate 14

A circular platform surrounded by four stone steps rises from the surrounding fungi and undergrowth. Most of the platform's surface is free from pollution save for a sizable mass of slimy mold pooled around a central altar stone. The altar is cracked down the middle, and the carvings of elk-headed hunters on its sides seem to have almost melted in parts. A large bloodstain, thick with clouds of flies, coats the center of the altar. Just to the south, the

fungus-encrusted facade of a large stone building looms, its portico supported by six stone pillars that extend over the southern portion of the stone platform.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Religion check to Recall Knowledge identifies this as once having been an altar to Erastil, though it has since been despoiled and corrupted. It was here that the Spore Queen sacrificed Aravashnial and captured his soul, an act that befouled the entire area and resulted in the altar cracking in half and becoming tainted, as if under the effects of a *consecrate* ritual heightened to 7th rank that applies only to worshippers of Treerazer. Elven PCs are automatically considered to be anathema to this effect.

The slimy mold surrounding the altar is incredibly slick, and a creature must Balance when moving through this area or they fall prone immediately upon stepping on it. Application of at least 10 points of fire damage to a square causes the mold in that area to burn off.

Creatures: A pair of omox demons lie in wait nearby, “relaxed” on the ground to the east and west of the platform and appearing to be nothing more than noxious heaps of sludge. A third guardian—an immense and fiendishly corrupt khravgodon brought here by the Spore Queen (one of her many pets)—lurks atop the portico amid overhanging branches. These three monsters watch and listen to any combats taking place elsewhere but won’t spring to attack until a PC either steps up onto the platform or attempts to pass under the portico toward the entrance to area A7. At this point, all three roll Stealth for initiative.

Note that all three of these creatures are worshippers of Treerazer. The +1 status bonus to attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and Perception checks granted by the *consecrate* effect is not included in the stats below.

TANGLE KHRAVGODON

CREATURE 14

RARE HUGE BEAST UNHOLY

Variant khravgodon (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 192)

Perception +24; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Chthonian

Skills Athletics +28, Stealth +25, Survival +24

Str +8, **Dex** +5, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

AC 35; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +25, **Will** +22

HP 280; **Immunities** disease, poison; **Weaknesses** cold iron 10, holy 10; **Resistances** acid 10

Speed 30 feet, burrow 15 feet, climb 15 feet; *unfettered movement*

Melee ♦ jaws +28 (deadly d12, magical), **Damage** 3d12+11 piercing plus 1d6 poison

Melee ♦ claw +28 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d10+11 slashing

Melee ♦ tail +28 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+11 bludgeoning plus Grab

Primal Innate Spells DC 31, attack +23; **6th** *tangling creepers*; **5th** *wall of thorns*; **Constant (6th)** *unfettered movement*; **Cantrips (6th)** *caustic blast*, *tangle vine*

Crush Chitin ♦ As khravgodon.

Grasping Tail As khravgodon.

OMOX DEMONS (2)

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Monster Core 79

Initiative Stealth +24

Restoring the Altar: A PC who Investigates the altar for 10 minutes can attempt a DC 30 Religion check to Recall Knowledge. On a success, they confirm that the altar, once sacred to the god of families and the hunt, is now one of the sources of corruption that stain the region. A critical success on this check allows the PC to infer that the fracture in the altar stone was created when someone powerful was sacrificed to Treerazer atop the stone.

Fully restoring the altar would require months of work and would involve rebuilding the site and the casting of a *consecrate* ritual by a worshipper of Erastil, but if the PCs can dispel the 7th-rank *consecrate* ritual currently affecting the altar, they can lessen the corruption in the area. This is one of three ways they can hinder Auttox the Vile at the end of this chapter.

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for removing the *consecrate* ritual.

A4. Ruined Stable

Low 14

Most of this wooden stable has collapsed into ruin. The roof is missing entirely, while the space within is overgrown with thorny brambles.

Creatures: A half-dozen dezullons grow amid the undergrowth in this ruined building. These carnivorous plants are the only dangerous creatures that dwelled here before the Spore Queen arrived, and she felt no need to do anything about them. The six dezullons fight to the death and pursue foes throughout the ruins if needed. The fey in area A5 enjoy periodically feeding hapless animals to the dezullons, and if they hear combat within, they come to investigate within a round of the fight ending here.

DEZULLONS (6)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Monster Core 94

Initiative Stealth +24

Treasure: A PC who Investigates the stable's overgrown interior for 30 minutes can attempt a DC 32 Survival check or a DC 35 Perception check to notice a set of almost-faded Chernasardo markings in the southernmost stall, indicating the presence of a buried cache of supplies. If the PCs were told about this cache by the rangers they rescued, they automatically discover these markings after only 10 minutes of Investigating. Digging up the cache takes an hour of brush clearing and back-breaking digging in foul-smelling earth (or eight hours without proper tools). At your discretion, the PCs can significantly shorten this time if they use appropriate spells. Their reward for this diligence is a small chest that contains six *greater healing potions*, three *panaceas*, five *greater explosive arrows*, 40 cold iron arrows,

two *scrolls of dispel magic* at 7th rank, and a *scroll of desiccate*.

A5. Briarblight Nursery Moderate 14

While the walls of this stone boathouse still stand, the interior is in ruins. Collapsed workbenches, half-completed rowboats, and mounds of detritus lie heaped in the corners. To the northeast, a low mound of rubble lies where a wall once separated a room. Beyond it, what appears to be a mound of fibrous black fungus grows in the earth below a hole in the wooden floor.

The mounds of rubble in this room are difficult terrain, and the fibrous knot of fungus growing in the northern area is an immature sporepod for a briarblight (page 22). Once the sporepod is mature in a few weeks, the Spore Queen expects this room's occupants to move it into the surrounding forest to infect a large tree, providing a new vector through which Tanglebriar's blight can grow. The sporepod can be identified for what it is with a successful DC 32 Nature check—it's not dangerous yet, but will be soon if it's not destroyed. The sporepod has Hardness 10 and 100 Hit Points. Destroying it is one of the three ways the PCs can weaken Auttox the Vile at the end of this chapter.

Creatures: While the sporepod can be destroyed with enough work and has no defenses other than its Hardness, the spore's two caretakers won't abide any actions taken against it. These caretakers are sadistic fungus leshies who have pledged their souls to Treerazer and have been gifted with potent abilities in return so that they might serve the Lord of the Blasted Tarn with greater strength. The sporescouts move quickly to attack and slay anyone who enters the room, eager to use their remains as fertilizer to help encourage the briarblight's growth (and perhaps to snack on certain choice selections from the softer parts). They fight to the death.



Sporescout

SPORESCOUTS (2)

CREATURE 14

RARE SMALL FUNGUS LESHY UNHOLY

Fungus leshy rogue

Perception +24; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Chthonian, Common, Elven, Fey

Skills Acrobatics +28, Deception +26, Intimidation +26, Nature +24, Religion +24, Stealth +28, Survival +24, Thievery +26

Str +1, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +4

Items +2 greater striking corrosive sickle, +2 striking composite shortbow (20 arrows), religious symbol of Treerazer

AC 36; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +28, **Will** +24

HP 275; **Immunities** disease; **Weaknesses** holy 15; **Resistances** poison 15

Fungal Whisperer A creature suffering from a fungal affliction takes a -2 status penalty on all saving throws against mental effects created by a sporescout and can always understand any language the sporescout speaks to them.

Infectious Devotion (aura, divine, mental) 20 feet. When a creature ends its turn in the aura, it must attempt a DC 31 Will save (a plant or fungus takes a -2 circumstance penalty to this save). If the creature fails, it becomes stupefied 1 for 1 minute (stupefied 2 on a critical failure) as the fungus leshy's spores take root on the flesh and send unwelcome and distracting thoughts of devotion to Treerazer into the victim's mind.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *sickle* +28 (agile, finesse, magical, trip), **Damage** 3d4+12 slashing plus 1d6 acid

Ranged ♦ *composite shortbow* +28 (deadly d10, magical, propulsive, range 60 feet), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 31; **7th** *crisis of faith*; **6th** *divine wrath*

Cloak of Subversion ♦♦ (divine, mental) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The sporescout exudes a sticky layer of subversive spores onto their body. For 1 minute, any creature that touches the sporescout or damages them with an unarmed attack or melee weapon without the reach trait takes 3d6 mental damage as the spores infuse their thoughts with painful and subversive desires to offer servitude to Treerazer.

Focus Spores ♦ (divine, incapacitation, mental) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The sporescout expels its infectious spores at a creature they can see within 20 feet. The target must immediately attempt a DC 31 Will save against the sporescout's infectious devotion. If the creature was already stupefied by infectious devotion, they instead become controlled by the sporescout until the start of the sporescout's next turn.

Grisly Attack ♦♦ A sporescout deals 1d6 extra precision damage and 1d6 persistent bleed damage to creatures who are off-guard.

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for destroying the briarblight spore.

A6. The Putrid Pond

Low 14

The narrow valley to the side of Deadeye's Tower—into which Elkhaven Lodge was built—narrows down into a triangular cleft with sheer cliffs rising hundreds of feet into the air. A sludgy pool of rancid-smelling water fills much of the area, its surface shining with the prismatic sheen of spoiled meat. A partially collapsed wooden pier extending

out over the pool suggests that, once upon a time, the lake was stocked with fish, but those days are surely long past.

The waters of the putrid pond are both foul smelling and incredibly toxic. A character who swims in the water must succeed at a DC 32 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure), saving again at the start of each turn they begin in the water. Ingesting the water or being fully immersed in it exposes a creature to a particularly dangerous variant of brain worms (*GM Core* 89); it is a level 14 disease and has a DC 32 Fortitude save to resist its effects. The pond's bed drops off swiftly. It's 5 feet deep at the edge and swiftly plunges to 60 feet deep beyond, but it's only a DC 10 Athletics check to swim in the calm water.

Creature: The source of this lake's pollution is an immense unholy catoblepas brought here from a swamp deep in Tanglebriar—a creature known only as the Putrid. Larger than an elephant, with slime-dripping bat wings and breath that carries diseased spores, the Putrid has been wallowing in this pond ever since the Spore Queen brought her here. She periodically spawns additional dangerous and fully grown catoblepas offspring (such as those that the PCs encountered in area A1), all while preparing to extend her corruption down into the stone roots of Deadeye's Tower.

If the PCs engaged in combat against the occupants of area A5, then the Putrid knows they're close by and swims close to shore to hide near the ruined pier. She keeps her head canted backward so her antlers are mostly underwater while her nostrils and eyes extend above the surface under the pier. She rolls Stealth for initiative, and on her first turn, she Tramples up through the pier. Any creatures standing on the pier fall into the water unless they succeed at a DC 30 Reflex save to Grab an Edge.

If the PCs approach the pond without making much noise, the Putrid is relaxing in the water, floating about 10 feet south of the two southernmost pier pilings and looking like a filthy mound of rotten vegetation covering an island unless a PC succeeds at a DC 35 Perception check. In this case, the Putrid attacks as soon as she notices the PCs poking around at the pond's shore, rolling Perception for initiative and surging forth to open combat with her putrid breath.

The Putrid pursues foes throughout the area, but if reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, she attempts to retreat to the depths of the lake to hide. Since she can't breathe water, it isn't long before she's forced to come up for air. When the Putrid is slain, the fiendish catoblepas utters a gurgling roar and melts away

into sludge. Over the course of the following hour, the water in the pond grows less toxic, after which it no longer causes those immersed in it to become sickened or infected with brain worms. This is also one of three ways the PCs can hinder Auttox the Vile at the end of this chapter.

THE PUTRID

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE GARGANTUAN BEAST FIEND UNHOLY

Variant catoblepas (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 48)

Perception +27; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Chthonian

Skills Athletics +30, Intimidation +27, Stealth +27, Survival +27

Str +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +8, **Int** +0, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As catoblepas, but DC 33.

AC 35; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +23, **Will** +27

HP 345; **Immunities** disease, poison (olfactory);

Weaknesses cold iron 15, holy 15

Ferocity ⤴

Quicken the Rot ⤴ (primal) **Trigger** A sickened creature within 10 feet of the Putrid takes poison damage; **Effect** The Putrid darts her head out to lick the poisoned creature, exposing the creature to tanglerot (page 22). The Putrid gains 30 Temporary Hit Points if the target fails their saving throw against tanglerot.

Speed 35 feet, fly 40 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ⤴ jaws +30 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 piercing plus 2d6 poison

Melee ⤴ antler +30 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d12+15 piercing

Melee ⤴ hoof +28 (magical), **Damage** 3d10+15 bludgeoning

Putrid Breath (poison, primal) The Putrid exhales a 60-foot cone of rotten spores and fumes, dealing 16d6 poison damage (DC 36 basic Fortitude save). The area of this cone is reduced to 30 feet underwater. Targets that fail their saving throw also become sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure) and are exposed to tanglerot (page 22). The Putrid can't use Putrid Breath again for 1d4 rounds.

Trample ⤴⤴⤴ Huge or smaller, hoof, DC 36.

Reward: Grant the PCs an additional 40 XP for slaying the Putrid beyond the normal amount granted.

A7. The Nest

Moderate 14

Once, this lodge's interior may have been a comfortable and cozy place for hunters to rest, relax, feast, and plan their next excursions, but those days are long gone. A few of the internal walls remain standing to the southwest where there once might have been sleeping quarters, but for the most part, the furniture here has rotted away, leaving only the structure's stone shell intact. The ceiling looms thirty feet overhead, sagging and looking on the verge of collapse. Coils of fungus and mold hang from it in sheets.

A trio of orange, puffball-like growths cling to the walls, while to the south, the low mound of what appears to be a freshly sprouted mushroom looms before an old stone hearth, its pale green cap mottled with orange growths.

The smaller orange puffballs that cling to the walls are nodes of fungal corruption that draw in fiendish power from three other concentrations of



The Putrid

blight in the region. The growth at area **A7a** is linked to the *consecrate* effect in area **A3**, while the growth at area **A7b** is linked to the spore in area **A5b**, and the growth at area **A7c** is connected to the Putrid at area **A6**. If any of those three sources of corruption are active, the associated orange puffball pulses and throbs, and unsettling orange light shines from within it. Tendrils of softly glowing filaments stretch out from each one, and while these quickly grow faint and hard to see, a character can Track a set of filaments to its corresponding source with a successful DC 30 Survival check. If a source is destroyed, the corresponding puffball appears to be decaying slowly into foul-smelling sludge.

The larger blooming mushroom to the south is a slowly growing link to the demonic realm of Jeharlu on the Outer Rifts. A PC who succeeds at a DC 34 Religion check to Recall Knowledge realizes this, while a critical success allows them to confirm that the fungus is about to summon a powerful demon. This mushroom is detailed after this encounter, under “The Vile.”

Creatures: While the Spore Queen left behind several monstrous agents to continue the corruption of this site, she ceded command to only one of them, a cambion harpy priest of Treerazer named Gruddunk. Beyond ensuring that the other creatures in the area continue to taint the ruins and do their part to prepare for eventual expansion beyond Tanglebriar, Gruddunk’s main job here is to cultivate, nurture, and encourage the growth of the immense mushroom in this room. Once it reaches maturity, it will allow for a small legion of demons from Jeharlu to be drawn into the world, at which point Gruddunk can return to the Spore Queen’s side in Deathstalk Tower.

The PCs’ arrival is not entirely unexpected, even if they haven’t yet undone any of the corruption nodes in the area. When Aravashnial was sacrificed, the Spore Queen anticipated that his allies would come to investigate, and here lies another of Gruddunk’s responsibilities: capturing and sacrificing all allies who come to the ruins to try to find their friend. When he notices the PCs, Gruddunk

asks them if they’re seeking Aravashnial, then offers to return him to the PCs in reward for leaving the ruins. Even if the PCs refuse, the harpy takes sadistic glee in introducing Aravashnial, who now serves as nothing more than a soulless zombie. Gruddunk is also attended by two more spore thralls grown from the bodies of the Ekujae researchers.

Gruddunk has no interest in talking beyond an initial promise to deliver the PCs’ souls to the Spore Queen, where they will be reunited with their “friend Aravashnial.” He is eager to get to the violence so he can capture the PCs alive for sacrifice and use their deaths to quicken the growth of the portal mushroom. He uses flight to remain out of melee as best he can while his spore thralls (and, for what it’s worth, the zombie Aravashnial) engage in melee. They fight until destroyed and will pursue fleeing PCs into the ruins.



GRUDDUNK

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE AIR BEAST HUMANOID NEPHILIM

Variant male harpy (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 193)

Perception +28; darkvision

Languages Chthonian, Common; wind's whispers

Skills Acrobatics +29, Deception +27, Intimidation +29, Nature +28, Performance +27, Religion +30, Stealth +29, Thievery +27

Str +7, **Dex** +6, **Con** +2, **Int** +4, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +6

Items +2 greater striking corrosive wounding battle axe, greater sleeves of storage, four scrolls of heal (7th rank), slate of distant letters

Wind's Whispers As harpy.

AC 37; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +25, **Will** +28

HP 275; **Immunities** disease

Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet, DC 33

Speed 20 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ♦ battle axe +30 (magical, sweep), **Damage** 3d8+15 plus 1d6 acid and 1d6 persistent bleed

Melee ♦ jaws +28 (finesse), **Damage** 3d8+13 piercing plus putrid plague

Melee ♦ talon +28 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d6+13 slashing

Divine Spells Prepared DC 36, attack +28; **8th** divine immolation, vampiric exsanguination; **7th** dispel magic, execute, heal; **6th** dominate, spellwrack, spirit blast; **5th** command, grim tendrils, sound body; **4th** blood vendetta, resist energy, unfettered movement; **3rd** blindness, fear, heal; **2nd** darkness, deafness, silence; **1st** command, enfeeble, sanctuary; **Cantrips (8th)** daze, divine lance, guidance, shield, void warp

Hungry Winds ♦♦ (air, concentrate, primal) As harpy, but DC 36.

Putrid Plague (disease) As harpy but DC 36 Fortitude.

SPORE THRALLS (2)

CREATURE 10

Page 10

Initiative Perception +18

ARAVASHNIAL

CREATURE -1

Male zombie shambler (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 356)

Initiative Perception +0

Treasure: Gruddunk keeps his scrolls and *slate of distant letters* in his *greater sleeves of storage*, along with a trophy he claimed from one of the Ekujae elves—a *kora of the unending story* (page 83) that he won't use in combat. The *slate of distant letters* is a particularly valuable find, for this is the primary way that Gruddunk maintains communication with the Spore Queen, who keeps the linked slate close at hand in Deathstalk Tower.

Whenever Gruddunk uses the slate, he includes Treerazer's sigil as the first character in the message

so that the Spore Queen knows it comes from him. It's unlikely the PCs know to do this, so if they use the slate to send any message, the Spore Queen's suspicions are roused. She takes advantage and writes what sounds like a message intended for Gruddunk: "We've had some unexpected developments. Come soon to Tanglegate, and I shall reward you in person for your service and give you your new mission." If the PCs follow up on this, they'll be walking into an ambush (see page 32).

If the PCs manage to learn of the use of Treerazer's sigil to "authenticate" their message, they have a chance of potentially tricking the Spore Queen into revealing something if their message is written in Chthonian—any other language arouses her suspicion as above. What sorts of clues and advantages you might wish to hand the PCs is up to you if they manage to keep this communication up, but at the very least, you should ask the PC writing the message to attempt a DC 44 Deception check. Failure here indicates that they've aroused the Spore Queen's suspicion.

As soon as the Spore Queen realizes that the PCs aren't going to fall for her attempt to lure them to Tanglegate, or if she suddenly realizes that she's not talking with Gruddunk anymore, she sends a message that conveys the following sentiment: "Whoever you are, you've only ensured your death will be all the worse, for when I complete my work, Treerazer's armies will be unstoppable!" She then destroys her *slate of distant letters*, causing the one the PCs hold to crumble away into fragments.

Beyond Gruddunk's gear, an additional stash of treasure lies here, unguessed at by the harpy priest. Hidden in a small compartment in the back of the southern fireplace is a cache of powerful Chernasardo items. A PC who Searches this part of the room can discover the hidden cache with a successful DC 35 Perception check, but if the PCs were told about this cache by the rangers they rescued, it's a DC 20 Perception check instead.

The stash of Chernasardo items hidden here include a +2 greater striking flaming holy longbow, a suit of +2 resilient standard grade elven chain, a 6th-rank wand of tangling creepers, a major charm of acid resistance, and two scrolls of moment of renewal.

The Vile

Severe 14

Once Gruddunk is slain, his death causes a distortion to the growth of the portal mushroom in area A7, as his life force was linked to the magical fungus. The immense growth shudders and shakes, and over the course of 3 rounds, it begins to emit an unsettlingly

shrill sound not unlike that of air escaping through a tiny vent under high pressure. At the end of those 3 rounds, the mushroom melts away into a mass of corruption—the area where it once stood becomes difficult terrain, and something vile emerges from the shiny slick as if rising through the surface of a pool of tar.

The PCs might attempt to destroy the mushroom before this, or even during the fight with Gruddunk, but this only hastens things. The mushroom has AC 35, Hardness 22, and 90 Hit Points, along with object immunities. While its destruction would force Gruddunk to start the process over if he wants to cultivate the fungus into a stable portal to the Outer Rifts, it still melts into sludge as detailed above.

Creature: Once the mushroom melts, the demon to whom it was linked on the far side of reality pushes through from the Outer Rifts—a towering and powerful shemhazian demon named Auttox the Vile. Unlike the traditional shemhazian, Auttox is pale yellow and dun in coloration, with flesh splitting open in several places to let thick runnels of blood-like fluid weep from his skin. A tangle of mushrooms and gossamer molds grow on his frame. Auttox is enraged at being pulled through into the Universe before the portal was complete, and he immediately attacks all creatures in sight, including Gruddunk and any surviving spore thralls if the mushroom was destroyed early.

Auttox fights to the death, but after 20 rounds have passed, the stain left by the mushroom fades, and he is automatically forced back into the Outer Rifts—but it's likely his battle with the PCs will resolve long before then.

Note that Auttox is an elite shemhazian demon, and as a 17th-level creature, he is a severe threat encounter for 14th-level characters. If the PCs managed to destroy some of the corruption nodes elsewhere in the ruins, though, Auttox is hindered and manifests at lessened strength. If one of the nodes found at areas A3, A5, or A7 has been neutralized, Auttox the Vile loses the elite adjustment and is a regular 16th-level shemhazian. If two of these nodes are removed, Auttox gains the weak adjustment and becomes a 15th-level shemhazian. And if all three are removed, Auttox the Vile is not only weak, but starts the combat slowed 2 (this reduces to slowed 1 on the second round and goes away entirely on the third and following rounds).

AUTTOX THE VILE

CREATURE 17

Elite male shemhazian demon (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 6, 81)

Initiative Perception +32

Reward: Regardless of what Auttox the Vile's level is when the PCs encounter him, defeating the demon grants the party 120 XP and 1 Triumph Point.

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

The PCs are free to return to Kyonin to report their findings to the queen at any point, but in order for Queen Telandia to consider the situation at Elkhaven Lodge resolved, the PCs must recover Aravashnial's notes and body and must defeat the corruption in the area by slaying Auttox the Vile. At this point, continue with Chapter 2, as the queen rewards the PCs with potent treasures before assigning them to an even more dangerous mission—one that takes them into Tanglebriar itself!

The discovery that Aravashnial has been transformed into a zombie is, horrifically, the least of the atrocities committed unto his person, for further research and attempts to resurrect the elven wizard reveal a terrible truth: his soul has been trapped. Whether the PCs learn this themselves or they learn it from the queen, saving the elven hero's soul becomes a secondary goal for this adventure.

Finally, when the PCs finish this chapter and return to Queen Telandia, she has more news for them about the escalating battle with Tanglebriar. While dozens of minor skirmishes have taken place along the border, a powerful monster from the depths of the blighted swamp has begun making devastating attacks deeper into Kyonin. Run the following War Interlude at this time.

WAR INTERLUDE 2: WRATH OF ZAUGLAGAUL

The dragon Zauglagaul, long thought slain by a rival dragon known as Zuldnavox, the Queen of Thorns, is still very much alive. Encrusted with fungal growths, the horned dragon makes a devastating return when he emerges from Tanglebriar to wreak havoc on numerous smaller settlements in southern Kyonin.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: Zauglagaul continues to make harrowing strikes against smaller settlements in Kyonin, spreading fear and horror through the nature of his cruel tactics.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: Zauglagaul faces an unexpectedly tough resistance from Kyonin on his first attack, and the elves take advantage of an old wound under Zauglagaul's right wing that never quite healed right. He is forced to flee in humiliation before he can complete even one of his assaults. The PCs earn 80 XP and automatically learn of his old wound (and how to take advantage of it) when they encounter him in Chapter 3.



Chapter 2: Where Demons Tread

Even without confirmation of Treerazer's influence far beyond the borders of Tanglebriar in Fangwood, it's only a matter of time before Kyonin sends a strike force into the depths of the nascent demon lord's domain. As some of the most capable heroes in Kyonin, the PCs are the obvious choice, and as this chapter begins, they once again find themselves in an audience with Queen Telandia.

The queen congratulates the PCs on their successes in Fangwood, but her demeanor is anything but celebratory—Treerazer's armies are only intensifying their attacks, and while the elves have largely managed to neutralize the Jeharlu Spores that would've certainly devastated the nation had the PCs not exposed that plot early, Kyonin's defenders are still hard pressed. While the war rages on in the

borderlands and, increasingly, inside of Kyonin itself, the time has come for the PCs to lead a series of surgical strikes into Tanglebriar.

POWERFUL REWARDS

The PCs have proven themselves time and time again to be among Kyonin's greatest heroes, and so Queen Telandia tells them that the time is right for them to become the wielders of some of the nation's greatest heroic relics—magical treasures used in ancient times, some of which predate the rise of Tanglebriar and even Earthfall. She presents six items of power for the PCs to choose from: the *Anima Robe*, *Fiendbreaker*, the *Guiding Star Orb*, *Slithermaw's Bane*, *Soulcutter*, and *Wintershot*. All six of these items are detailed in this volume's Adventure Toolbox, beginning on page 80.

While each of these items are unique and powerful, they aren't artifacts. What the PCs don't yet realize is that as their heroic legacies grow and merge with the legacies behind these legendary items, there will soon come a time when these items become artifacts. Until that point, it's important that each PC chooses one of these six items as their reward for their services thus far, and that these items remain with the group through to the next adventure. The PCs might decide to set their chosen item aside for a time if they find something else along the way, but fate should work to keep their chosen rewards around.

Feel free to make minor adjustments to these items to suit your party's characters better. For example, if the best choice in the group to take up *Soulcutter* is a fighter who prefers to fight with a warhammer, then adjust *Soulcutter* to be a +2 *greater striking astral warhammer*. While there are six of these items to choose from, no PC should gain more than one of these items as a reward. If your group has fewer than six PCs, then choices left unchosen are sent to other elven heroes fighting elsewhere in the Spore War. That said, if you have more than six PCs, you'll want to design additional 15th-level items to gift them.

An Object's Story

Several of the magic items and objects in this adventure have stories to tell. If a PC casts *object reading* (Player Core 2 248), *retroognition*, or a similar spell, use the opportunity to give them glimpses of their foes—minor agents in the war like Gruddunk or Auttox the Vile, the Spore Queen, or even Treerazer, and let them see things like the sacrifice of Aravashnial or other traumatic events. These aren't meant to be secrets, and the more of these recollections the PCs learn, the greater their desire should be to take the war to Tanglebriar itself in this chapter and beyond.

THE TANGLEBRIAR MISSIONS

Once the PCs have chosen their rewards, Queen Telandia tells them that she's had agents, spies, soldiers, and diviners work to compile what intelligence they could about Tanglebriar and Treerazer's army. While there isn't a lot of information available, what they've discovered has allowed the queen to compile a list of risky but potentially rewarding missions for the PCs to tackle behind enemy lines. Queen Telandia presents the PCs with four initial missions, allowing them to pick and choose which ones they want to attempt and

in what order, and asks them to do what they can to learn more about the demon armies and Treerazer's goals while they work on completing these tasks. If the PCs mention the mysterious Spore Queen or that Aravashnial's soul seems to be trapped, she'll nod grimly and confirm that she's learned a bit more about this topic. Per the intelligence her agents have gathered, the Spore Queen is likely Treerazer's high priestess, and there are rumors that she's working on some secret weapon that will turn the tide of war against Kyonin. Queen Telandia asks the PCs to learn what they can about this Spore Queen and her plans while they undertake these other missions in Tanglebriar, as other opportunities behind enemy

lines will surely present themselves as they go about their work.

Support from Jinin

While the Tanglebriar missions are tasks best suited for a small but adept and powerful team like the PCs, the queen tells them she's not sending them into the demon swamp alone. At this point, a blonde elven woman steps forward to introduce herself as **Shalelu Andosana**, a world traveler most recently from the distant land of Jinin and the commander of a group of scouts called the Silverbranch Sentinels.

Queen Telandia has already secured Shalelu's agreement to accompany the PCs into Tanglebriar, where she and the Silverbranches will help to defend advance camps that the PCs might build as well as provide recovery support as needed. This will allow the PCs to focus on the most dangerous aspects of their missions. Additional details on Shalelu and the Silverbranch Sentinels appear at the end of this book on pages 90–91.

TANGLEBRIAR

Once the PCs are rested and ready to begin their work in Tanglebriar, the queen outlines the four missions she's decided upon through her advisors' research. The PCs are free to choose any of these missions, although the queen suggests that establishing methods for setting up base camps first will make accomplishing the others easier. The initial missions she suggests are Establish a Base Camp (page 26), Deep Reconnaissance (page 27), The Missing Spy (page 27), and Investigate Tanglegate





(page 31). Each of these missions is presented individually in this chapter, as are additional missions the PCs can discover.

Tanglebriar Features

While the denizens of Tanglebriar are powerful, numerous, and dangerous, the terrain itself is no laughing matter. Within Tanglebriar's borders, the land bleeds into that of the Outer Rifts, and the normal rules of reality begin to fall apart. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Nature or Survival check to Recall Knowledge about Tanglebriar knows of the dangers listed below. Queen Telandia can describe the perils to them as well.

HAZARDS AND DISEASES

A wide range of hazards exist within Tanglebriar—far too many to list here. The more common of these (including diseases like bog rot, tetanus, malaria, bubonic plague, scarlet leprosy, blinding sickness, and sewer haze) are too low a level to serve as a particular threat to 15th-level PCs except for brain worms and crimson ooze (*GM Core* 89). Two other rarer afflictions in Tanglebriar that can threaten the PCs are detailed as follows.

BRIARBLIGHT

CURSE 16

CURSE | FUNGUS | INCAPACITATION | MAGICAL

A creature afflicted with briarblight becomes riddled with fungal growth and infused with demonic energies that bend their will to Treerazer's. In most cases, one must be entombed in a blighted tree in Tanglebriar for a week before they make their first saving throw against this curse, after which new saving throws must be attempted for every day that the victim remains imprisoned.

Saving Throw DC 35 Will; **Effect** The victim gains the fiend and fungus traits and becomes a loyal servant of Treerazer under the GM's control. The creature becomes more powerful—you can either rebuild their statistics at one level higher or simply apply the Elite adjustments to the creature (see *Monster Core* 6). After one year, the effects of this curse grow; the creature gains another level of power, and the transformation becomes more difficult to remove, requiring a *wish* ritual or a more powerful effect to end it.

TANGLEROT

DISEASE 14

DIVINE | DISEASE | FUNGUS

As tanglerot progresses, pale green and white tendrils grow from the victim's body—tendrils that increasingly

twitch and writhe with a mind of their own. Eventually, the victim perishes, and from their remains sprout new fungal corruptions capable of spreading Tanglebriar's legacy. Elves who perish of tanglerot suffer a different fate, as their bodies are animated as fungal undead known as root rotters (*Whispers in the Dirt* page 85).

Once a victim sprouts filaments at Stage 3, a one-hour operation and a successful DC 30 Medicine check can remove all the filaments (a critical success reduces the operation time to 10 minutes, but a critical failure inflicts 2d6 persistent bleed to the victim). If a victim has unremoved filaments, their drained condition value from tanglerot cannot be lowered below 1. At Stages 4 and 5, removing filaments also removes the slowed condition.

If a victim suffering from tanglerot recovers, they're temporarily immune to tanglerot for 1 week. Demons, fungi, and plants are immune to tanglerot, as are nonsapient creatures (those with an Intelligence modifier of -4 or lower).

Saving Throw DC 32 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 day; **Stage 1** stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** stupefied 2, plus hallucinations in the form of barely-heard whispers in Chthonian that urge the creature to seek out others of its kind—these whispers do not force action but are distracting enough that the victim takes a -2 circumstance penalty to Perception checks (1 day); **Stage 3** stupefied 2 plus drained 1 as fungal filaments grow from the victim's body while the whispers from Stage 2 persist (1 day, removed tendrils grow back in 24 hours); **Stage 4** stupefied 2, plus drained 2 and slowed 1 as the fungal filaments begin to twitch and writhe of their own accord (1 day, removed tendrils grow back in 8 hours); **Stage 5** stupefied 3, plus drained 3 and slowed 2 as the filaments continue to wrap around limbs and hinder mobility or otherwise distract the victim (1 day, removed tendrils grow back in 1 hour); **Stage 6** death; body splits open to release a cloud of spores in a 20-foot emanation that can inflict tanglerot for 24 hours, after which the spores become inert and the body might sprout additional fungal hazards or creatures at the GM's discretion.

NAVIGATION

The terrain within Tanglebriar is composed largely of trackless swaths of overgrown forest and swamp populated by a dizzying variety of plants and fungus, some of which are native to this world and others which are fiendish extensions from the Outer Rifts—mostly, however, the two legacies are mixed. Travel through Tanglebriar is always considered to be difficult terrain, and sometimes becomes greater difficult terrain or even hazardous terrain (further details on when these three terrain types apply are explained on page 27 under Deep Reconnaissance). Disruptive energies from

the Outer Rifts meddle with compass needles and even distort glimpses of the skies above through the thick canopy. While these effects aren't constant, they still make it easy to get lost. A PC must succeed at a DC 30 Survival check to Sense Direction within Tanglebriar. Finally, it's incredibly dangerous to forage and hunt within the region, and as such, a PC must succeed at a DC 40 Survival check to Subsist in Tanglebriar. A critical failure here indicates exposure to a dangerous disease (such as brain worms or crimson ooze) in addition to the normal effects for a critical failure.

THE HAZE

The average height of the top of Tanglebriar's canopy is 220 feet, although trees and immense mushrooms sometimes reach a height of 260 feet, with a few cresting above 300 feet. Those who clamber up into the canopy or fly above Tanglebriar are not rewarded with a view, though, for a miasma of spores, foul-smelling vapor, and oily-feeling fog—a mixture known as the Haze—constantly clings to the treetops and skies above. The Haze begins at a height of about 200 feet and extends to a roiling mass nearly 500 feet over the ground, blanketing Tanglebriar in a noxious-looking and sickly green cloudbank that complicates aerial navigation through the landscape. From ground level, the Haze diffuses sunlight to give everything a nauseating, verdant cast. After dark, the Haze blocks starlight and most moonlight, yet the sickly glow of phosphorescent molds and fungi ironically make nights in Tanglebriar brighter than in most parts of the world. As a result, Tanglebriar is constantly illuminated by dim light.

In the Haze, vision-based Perception checks have a -2 circumstance penalty, and creatures more than 60 feet away in the Haze are concealed. The Haze cuts off all visibility at a distance of 180 feet. Creatures within the Haze find the air to be foul-smelling and mind-dulling, and a creature that ends its turn in the Haze without holding its breath must succeed at a DC 30 Fortitude save or become stupefied 1 with an unlimited duration (stupefied 2 on a critical failure). It's then temporarily immune to the Haze's stupefying effects for 24 hours. This has the fungus and poison traits. Over time, creatures that dwell in Tanglebriar become immune to this effect.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

You can use the table on the following page to randomly generate an encounter with creatures in Tanglebriar. If a fight occurs, use the Tanglebriar Wilds map on page 26, a thematically similar Flip-Mat, or a map of your own design.

Random encounters with monsters in the wild should be used sparingly, as the intent isn't to turn this part of the adventure into a combat slog—the focus should instead remain on the missions. Sometimes, the “Starting the Mission” text indicates a chance for such an encounter to occur. When the PCs camp, attempt a DC 6 flat check (if they're camping without a base camp) or a DC 19 flat check (if they camp in an established base camp); on a success, a creature from one of the random encounters discovers the campsite and ambushes the PCs during their rest, but no more than once per night. Otherwise, you should limit random encounters, having them occur only when you think the pacing of the game would benefit from combat or that the PCs need a few extra opportunities to earn experience points.

TANGLEBRIAR ENCOUNTERS

d20 Roll	Encounter	Threat
1–4	4 fungal marsh giants (page 24)	Trivial 15
5–8	4 miastrirek demons (page 88)	Trivial 15
9–11	4 omox demons (<i>Monster Core</i> 79)	Low 15
12–14	2 sporescouts (page 14)	Low 15
15–16	4 Tanglebriar regents (see below/page 25)	Moderate 15
17–18	1 banshee (<i>Monster Core</i> 37)	Moderate 15
19	3 briargeists (page 86)	Severe 15
20	1 seraptis demon (<i>Monster Core</i> 80) and 6 miastrirek demons (page 88)	Severe 15

Fungal Marsh Giants: Marsh giants covered in mold are among the most widespread of Treerazer's worshippers in the swampiest parts of Tanglebriar. At an average height of 13 feet, these lumbering behemoths stand much taller than the typical marsh giant, and they often wear crowns of twisted mushrooms or bear other fungal growths on their hunched backs or wide scalps, making them appear even taller. Fungal marsh giants fight with scythes, not gaffs, and while they lack the gaff-related drowning hook ability of a typical marsh giant, their close association with the demonic influence of Tanglebriar affords them other options in combat.

FUNGAL MARSH GIANTS (4)

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON LARGE AMPHIBIOUS GIANT HUMANOID FUNGUS WATER

Variant marsh giant (*Monster Core* 164)

Perception +20; low-light vision

Languages Aklo, Chthonian, Common, Jotun

Skills Athletics +24, Intimidation +20, Nature +20, Religion +22, Stealth +18 (+22 in fungal swamps)

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

Items +1 striking corrosive scythe

AC 30; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +18, **Will** +22

HP 197; **Immunities** disease; **Resistances** poison 10

Spore Cloud (aura, poison) 20 feet. The fungal marsh giant exudes a faintly visible cloud of green spores when not underwater.

Any creature that ends its turn in the spore cloud takes 2d6 poison damage (DC 27 basic Fortitude save). A creature that fails this save also becomes sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure).

Speed 35 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ scythe +24 (deadly d10, magical, trip), **Damage** 2d10+13 slashing plus 1d6 acid



Fungal Marsh Giant

Melee ♦ fist +24 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+13 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ mold spit +20 (fungus, primal, range 60 feet), **Damage** 6d6 poison

Occult Innate Spells DC 27; **6th** *toxic cloud*; **5th** *wall of thorns*; **2nd** *augury, mist*

Moldy Mess ♦ (fungus, primal) **Requirements** A creature is prone within the fungal marsh giant's reach; **Effect** The fungal marsh giant shakes and heaves their body, causing great swaths of mold and fungal crust to slough off them and cover the prone creature. The target becomes immobilized in the mold until they Escape (DC 27) and takes 6d6 poison damage (DC 27 basic Fortitude save). The fungal marsh giant can't use Moldy Mess again for 1d4 rounds.

Twist the Hook ♦♦ As marsh giant but makes a melee Strike with their scythe.

Tanglebriar Regent: Arboreals are among the most tragic victims of Tanglebriar's corruption. When an arboreal succumbs to this fiendish influence, they transform into massive, mushroom-like creatures with thorny limbs that are encrusted with the rotting fragments of the tree-like bodies they once possessed. These unfortunate creatures lose the plant and wood traits and gain the fungus and unholy traits. Many of these are too low level to threaten the PCs, but the towering Tanglebriar regent is an exception.

TANGLEBRIAR REGENT CREATURE 13

RARE **HUGE** **FUNGUS** **UNHOLY**

Variant arboreal regent (*Monster Core* 25)

Perception +24; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Chthonian, Common; *speaks with plants*

Skills Athletics +27, Deception +22, Intimidation +24, Nature +24, Stealth +17 (+27 in Tanglebriar)

Str +8, **Dex** +0, **Con** +6, **Int** +3, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

AC 31; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +17, **Will** +24

HP 270; **Weaknesses** axes 10, fire 15, holy 15; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10, piercing 10

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ moldy branch +27 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d12+14 bludgeoning

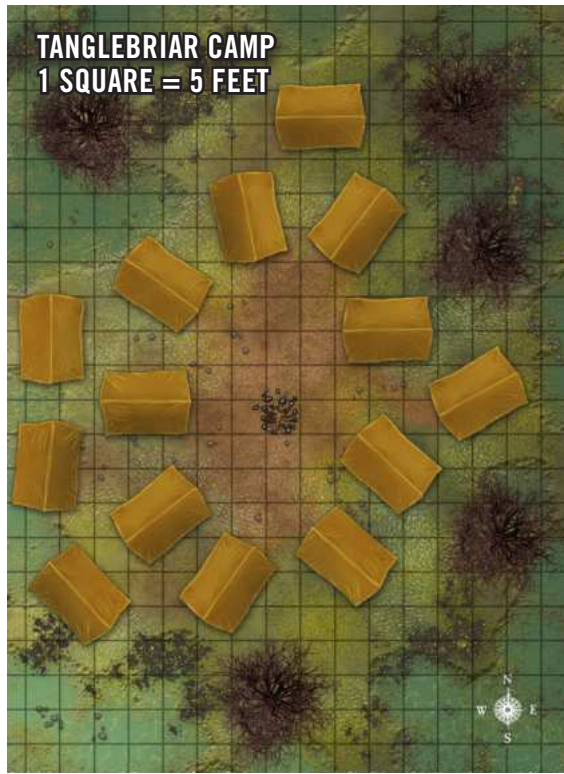
Melee ♦ thorny root +27 (trip), **Damage** 3d8+14 piercing plus 1d6 poison

Ranged ♦ rock +27 (brutal, range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 2d8+14 bludgeoning

Spore Spray ♦♦ (primal) The Tanglebriar regent sprays a blast of spores from their body, dealing 14d6 poison damage in a 50-foot cone (DC 33 basic Fortitude save). They can't use spore spray again for 1d4 rounds.

Sunder Objects As arboreal regent.

Throw Rock ♦



RESTING IN TANGLEBRIAR

Any mission that requires delving into Tanglebriar for more than a day is likely to involve camping in the wild. Without a base camp to rest at, the PCs must succeed at a secret DC 40 Survival check. On a failure, their sleep was low quality, and each PC begins the day stupefied 1 as a result of nightmares and intense stress. On a critical failure, each PC also begins the day fatigued; they cannot make their daily preparations until they remove this fatigue.

Once the PCs establish a base camp protocol (see page 26), they don't have to succeed at Survival checks, and they can rest normally.

TANGLEBRIAR MISSIONS

The remainder of this chapter describes several missions that the PCs should undertake before moving on to the adventure's climax in Deathstalk Tower. The first four missions are all suggested by Queen Telandia, though one of them, Investigating Tanglegate, might also be one that the PCs are tricked into pursuing after being duped during a conversation with the Spore Queen (see description of Gruddunk's *slate of distant letters* on page 18). The order in which they tackle these missions is ultimately up to the PCs.

Each of the following missions includes a Starting the Mission section that describes how many days it takes for the PCs to travel through Tanglebriar



to get to the mission's starting point. Run these journeys through Tanglebriar in Exploration Mode by determining which of the exploration activities from pages 438–439 of *Player Core* the PCs are taking, then having them make the checks indicated at the start of each mission to determine what happens on the way.

Establish a Base Camp **Moderate 15**

Queen Telandia suggests that the PCs, working together with Shalelu and the Silverbranch Sentinels, make their first mission a day trip into Tanglebriar to work out the best methods by which they can establish a base camp. Once they figure this out, the Silverbranch Sentinels can be commanded to deploy a similar camp anywhere within Tanglebriar that the PCs can then use as a place to fall back to if they must retreat. See page 91 for the ways the Silverbranches can support the PCs once a base camp protocol is established.

Starting the Mission: The PCs don't need to travel far into Tanglebriar to find themselves in a place that feels dangerous, cut off, and frightening. A mere few hours' travel into enemy territory is enough to put the PCs and the Silverbranches in a space where they can start establishing camp-building protocols. When you're ready to start this mission, up to four PCs can attempt DC 32 Survival, DC 34 Nature, or DC 36 Perception checks to earn Victory Points. Once they

roll, make a note of how many Victory Points they earn, and read or paraphrase the following.

Tanglebriar isn't as awful as expected—it's much worse. Thorny vines and spiky roots clutch and scratch at exposed flesh like grasping fingers, and the ground sinks and squelches with every step, making the mere act of walking awkward and tiring. The unpleasant scents of vegetable decay, musty pollution, and strange, bitter chemicals do little to mask periodic whiffs of waste or rotting flesh. No birdcall or regular insect life can be heard in this fungus-drenched landscape full of moist and seeping vegetation, but it's far from silent. Hisses, croaking, grumbling, moaning, and even sporadic screams and roars act as constant reminders that what lurks in Tanglebriar is eager to welcome intruders with pain, death, or worse.

If the PCs earned at least 3 Victory Points, then the site they've discovered is relatively safe and open. If they achieved 1 or 2 Victory Points, the site is relatively safe, but during the following encounter, all terrain in the area is difficult terrain for the PCs. If they have 0 or fewer Victory Points, the PCs have unfortunately chosen a site that not only has difficult terrain but is infested with toxic, thorny undergrowth. The PCs can avoid taking damage from these thorns during camp setup by moving carefully, but once combat begins, the area is treated as hazardous terrain that inflicts 2d6 poison damage once per round on a creature's turn if they take a move action during their turn.

Since the following combat takes place before the PCs have a chance to finish their campsite, use the Tanglebriar map provided or a similar map of your choice that depicts any remote forest or swamp location.

Creatures: As the PCs and the Silverbranches are setting up their first campsite and creating methods to streamline and bolster future camp deployment, their activity attracts some unwanted attention. The swamp's primal power rises in the form of a pair of briargeists—tangled masses of undead plants infused with cruel intellect and a need for brutality. The briargeists manifest out of the undergrowth, roll Stealth for initiative, and focus their attacks on the PCs, fighting until destroyed.

BRIARGEISTS (2)

CREATURE 15

Page 86

Initiative Stealth +29

CAMPSITE PROTOCOL

Once the briargeists are defeated, the PCs and the Silverbranches can finish their campsite. The map on

page 25 gives an example you can use for this camp, but it assumes relatively mundane structures like canvas tents, a simple fire pit, and nonmagical alarms rigged around the perimeter (trip lines attached to noisemakers, for example).

The PCs can bolster their camp with magic if they wish, such as by casting spells like *alarm*, or by using magic structures like *explorer's yurts*. At your discretion, if you feel these enhancements are particularly well-staged, increase the DC for late-night encounters at camp to 20 or even negate the chance entirely.

If the PCs have access to them, spells like *planar palace* or *resplendent mansion* (Player Core 2 250) can completely replace this whole process, allowing the party to automatically have an established base camp protocol without having to undertake this mission at all. That said, Shalelu still suggests establishing a second protocol as a backup plan in the event that, for whatever reason, the PCs find that these spells are unavailable to them.

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for establishing their first base camp. Once they do so, they can have the Silverbranch Sentinels quickly set up new camps during their travels, which gives the PCs a relatively safe place to rest each night in Tanglebriar.

Deep Reconnaissance

The PCs spend three days exploring Tanglebriar and performing reconnaissance far behind enemy lines. This mission can be attempted multiple times, but as news of the PCs' movements and presence in Tanglebriar grows, it becomes more difficult for them to pursue it. Each time the party repeats this mission, increase the DCs to gain Victory Points by 2.

Starting the Mission: This assignment begins the instant the PCs enter Tanglebriar.

Undertaking the Mission: Each Deep Reconnaissance takes 3 days to perform, during which the PCs attempt to earn Victory Points by completing a series of skill checks. Each day, up to four PCs can attempt one of the following skill checks to earn Victory Points: a DC 32 Scouting Lore or Survival check to scout the land, a DC 34 Stealth or Warfare Lore check to spy unseen upon Tanglebriar's denizens, or a DC 36 Perception check simply to observe the region. Each time a PC fails a check, attempt a DC 11 flat check; on a success, the PCs have a random encounter (see page 24) that day. This occurs automatically on a critical failure. No more than one random encounter can happen per day regardless of the number of failed checks.

Completing the Mission: At the end of the 3 days, total up the number of Victory Points the PCs have accumulated and consult the following for results.

Disaster! (0 or Fewer Victory Points): The PCs learn nothing, but Tanglebriar learns plenty. The next time the PCs perform Deep Reconnaissance, increase the DCs to gain Victory Points by 4 instead of 2.

Failure (1–3 Victory Points): The PCs learn nothing, but at least they don't give themselves away too much.

Partial Success (4–6 Victory Points): The PCs learn a little about the dangers present in Tanglebriar and the power of its denizens. The next time a flat check result indicates a random encounter is to occur, treat it as no encounter. Furthermore, the next time the PCs start a mission, they gain a +2 status bonus to all skill checks made to do so.

Success (7–12 Victory Points): As partial success, but the PCs also learn a significant amount of information about Tanglebriar's forces. Grant the PCs 1 Triumph Point.

Great Success (13 or more Victory Points): As success, but the information the PCs learn is critical, including a confirmation that certain areas within Tanglebriar appear to be more toxic than others, and that if one could find a particularly corrupt region, samples gathered from that site could be of great use for developing more potent alchemical and magical protections and cures against the various afflictions that spread from the swamp. Grant the PCs 2 Triumph Points. This level of success also unlocks the mission A Cure For Corruption (page 33).

Reward: Regardless of how many times the PCs perform this mission, they can't earn more than a cumulative total of 4 Triumph Points from it. The first time the PCs earn at least a Partial Success at this mission, grant them 20 XP. Grant them an additional 20 XP for each Triumph Point they earn (up to a maximum total reward of 100 XP over the course of multiple Deep Reconnaissance missions).

The Missing Spy

Queen Telandia reveals to the PCs that one of her most trusted spies, an elven rogue named **Kynnriel** (unassuming male elf spy 11), has failed to return after his latest mission. He set out to infiltrate the fallen town of Riverspire, scout out the forces now occupying it and, if possible, retrieve a cache of powerful magic items that had been left behind in a vault hidden within a basement of the Morgethai family's fabled tower. The queen used magic to learn a bit more about Kynnriel's disappearance and has confirmed via *pinpoint* that he and the cache are housed within the tower itself, which is fully under the control of a small legion of demons and corrupted fey.

Starting the Mission: Riverspire isn't far into enemy territory. The PCs can reach it after an hour of travel in the morning if they depart from a frontline encampment, at which point new information is learned—there are plans to sacrifice Kynnriel as part of a blasphemous ritual to spread a huge swath of corruption deeper into Kyonin.

Undertaking the Mission: This mission uses the infiltration rules described in *GM Core* (pages 196–199). Once the PCs arrive and learn about the grim deadline facing Kynnriel, they must head out at once—they've no time to do any preparation activities. The party's primary goal is to rescue Kynnriel, and their secondary goal is to retrieve the cache of magic items within the tower.

When the PCs are ready, present the following obstacles to them in order. While there's no time for the PCs to prepare for the infiltration, if they spent a Triumph Point on War Interlude 1, the party begins this infiltration with 4 Edge Points (*GM Core* 199) that can be used on any of the following obstacles.

The infiltration is broken into five stages (the fourth of which is an optional stage where the PCs can attempt to recover the tower's treasure). Each stage introduces two obstacles—present both to the

party at each stage and let them choose which of the two they wish to attempt to overcome so as to move on to the next stage. Each infiltration round takes 30 minutes to perform, so the PCs should have plenty of time to either achieve their goal or fail by reaching 12 Awareness Points before the sacrifice happens in 15 hours.

STAGE 1: INFILTRATING RIVERSPIRE

The PCs travel for an hour behind enemy lines then come to the ruined town of Riverspire. Their goal is to reach Morgethai Tower at the center of town while not arousing the ire or suspicion of the cultists and creatures that now occupy the ruins.

POSE AS MERCENARIES

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Warfare Lore, DC 36 Intimidation, or DC 39 Deception

Openly walking through the captured town could work if the PCs pretend to be mercenaries come to Riverspire in search of work, but this approach requires a bit of quick thinking, bravado, or a knack for trading war stories with each other so that eavesdroppers don't make "the wrong assumption."

CREEP THROUGH THE RUINS

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Scouting Lore, DC 36 Stealth, or DC 39 Perception

Riverspire was not particularly well-defended by walls or terrain, and many of the outlying buildings are now abandoned, so moving through them without being spotted by demons or corrupted fey requires a mix of excellent timing, stealth, and knowledge of how to plan out an approach in advance.

Reward: Grant the PCs 20 XP for completing Stage 1.

STAGE 2: INFILTRATING MORGETHAI TOWER

Now at the tower, the PCs must choose one of two ways to infiltrate the building. The exact method used, be it entering on foot, flying to an upper window, or using other travel-based spells should flavor how you describe each of these obstacles. At your discretion, if the PCs come up with a particularly clever use of magic, they can gain a +2 circumstance bonus to checks made to overcome the obstacle.

EXPLOIT THE ARCHITECTURE

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Architecture Lore, DC 36 Acrobatics, or DC 39 Stealth

Elven architecture has a wide range of repeating themes that aren't immediately obvious. The



cult now occupying this building may rule the tower, but they certainly don't fully understand the ways that elven architecture funnels sound, provides narrow areas one can squeeze through, or affords opportunities to quickly hide.

TRICK THE TOWER GUARDS OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Treerazer Lore, DC 36 Deception, or DC 39 Religion

The cultists who now command the tower don't expect intruders and won't look closely at anyone who knows the right things to say, wears the right outfits, or behaves appropriately.

Reward: Grant the PCs 20 XP for completing Stage 2.

STAGE 3: RESCUING KYNNRIEL

The PCs reach the central portion of Morgethai Tower, a series of laboratories and shrines now controlled by Treerazer's cult. These chambers are difficult to reach, be they in the central portion of the tower's lower floors or even below ground. Evidence of vandalism and violence mar the walls and decor of these chambers—a constant reminder of the horrors of the invasion of Riverspire. Once the PCs complete this stage, they can move on to Stage 4, or they can skip Stage 4 and finish up with Stage 5.

STORM THE PRISON OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Athletics, Strike against AC 36, or DC 39 Intimidation

The foes that the PCs face in the converted laboratories that serve as a holding area for sacrifice victims aren't that dangerous individually. It's possible to defeat them quickly and minimize alarms, to wrench open locked doors or barricades, or simply to be scary enough to prevent resistance.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MAGIC OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Arcana, DC 36 Occultism, or DC 39 Nature

While the cultists occupy Morgethai Tower, they've not yet had the chance to fully corrupt generations of magical effects and resources, so a canny group can use the Morgethai family's items and wards to their advantage and disable the prison barriers and guards alike.

Reward: Grant the PCs 20 XP for completing Stage 3.

STAGE 4: TREASURE RECOVERY

This stage is optional. If the PCs don't want to risk accumulating more Awareness Points, they can skip this stage entirely and move on to their escape. The treasure chambers themselves are all located underground, below even the prison cells in which Kynnrirel is kept. Once the PCs finish this stage, move on to Stage 5.

ENGAGE IN A HEIST OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 4 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Thievery, DC 36 Stealth, or DC 39 Acrobatics

While the traps and wards left behind by the Morgethais have, so far, kept the occupying cultists from recovering the treasure, a group of talented infiltrators like the PCs can use their skills to bypass traps, sneak past defenses, or adroitly tumble or balance through triggered dangers.

INVOKE ELVEN AUTHORITY OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 4 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Diplomacy, DC 36 Arcana, or DC 39 Society

The wards in the treasury are magical in nature, and by reasoning with them, manipulating them, or simply by knowing elven customs, one can bypass many of these protections.

Treasure: If the PCs overcome this stage's obstacle, they can recover the vault's treasures, which consist of a suit of *major library robes* (Treasure Vault 18), a *major staff of phantasms*, a *wand of project image*, and a *wand of wall of force*.

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for successfully completing Stage 4.

STAGE 5: ESCAPE

Kynnrirel is in bad shape once the PCs find him in his cell. Battered, bruised, unconscious, and drugged, he must either be carried to safety, or the PCs must use healing magic to get him on his feet. In this final stage, magic spells are particularly helpful, especially those that can heal Kynnrirel of his wounds or drugged condition or that allow for swift or hidden travel.


ESCAPE WITH KYNNRIEL OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 34 Medicine, DC 36 Athletics, or DC 39 Stealth

The PCs have rescued Kynnrirel, but they must still make their way out of Riverspire. The PCs can speed this escape by getting Kynnrirel back on his feet, addressing his



Kynnrirel



wounds or condition, or they can simply haul him out over a shoulder. Of course, creeping away unseen could work as well.

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for completing Stage 5.

RIVERSPIRE AWARENESS

As detailed in *GM Core*, when the PCs fail or critically fail any check to overcome an obstacle during this infiltration, they accrue Awareness Points. In addition, at your discretion, each time a PC takes actions that are impossible to ignore, the party earns 2 to 4 Awareness Points.

The party's Awareness Points total has the following effects.

- **3 Awareness Points** The Riverspire occupiers become suspicious that someone's sneaking around town, but they don't yet suspect enemies from Kyonin. The first time the PCs reach this tier, the Accosted by Evil complication occurs.
- **6 Awareness Points** Rumors spread through Riverspire that the troublemakers are in fact spies or saboteurs from Kyonin. Increase the DCs for obstacles by 1 for as long as Awareness Points remain at this tier or higher.
- **9 Awareness Points** The denizens of Riverspire are now convinced that Kyonin has sent a force of adventurers into town to try to rescue Kynnrirel or to disrupt the ritual intended to spread Tanglebriar's corruption. Increase the DCs for obstacles by a total of 2. The first time the PCs reach this tier, the Demonic Reinforcements complication occurs.
- **12 Awareness Points** The cultists in Morgethai Tower panic and rush the ritual to sacrifice Kynnrirel. While the good news is that this rushed ritual backfires, Kynnrirel is still lost, and a powerful agent of Treerazer—a terotricus (*Monster Core* 326)—suddenly manifests in Riverspire to lash out at the failed cultists as a result. The terotricus destroys Riverspire and slaughters the cultists before venturing forth into Kyonin to wreak havoc for several days. Then it retreats, returning to Tanglebriar. If your PCs wish to try to defeat this creature, the fight is an Extreme 15 encounter against a solo boss, a combat that could very well end in a total defeat for the group. Wiser PCs flee. If the party manages to defeat the terotricus, then Kynnrirel's death and their mission's failure (which includes the collapse of Morgethai Tower and the burying of its treasure) costs the PCs 1 Triumph Point. If the terotricus runs rampant through Kyonin, the party loses 2 Triumph Points.

- **Taking Too Long** If the PCs run out of time but don't reach 12 Awareness Points, then 15 hours after they begin this infiltration, the cult makes the sacrifice without having to rush. The terotricus doesn't damage Riverspire, but it guides corruption deep into Kyonin before returning. This costs the PCs 4 Triumph Points.

RIVERSPIRE COMPLICATIONS

As awareness grows, the party might face one of two potential complications.

ACCOSTED BY EVIL

COMPLICATION

Trigger The PCs reach 3 Awareness Points for the first time.

Overcome DC 34 Deception, DC 36 Intimidation, or DC 39 Religion

A group of cambion mercenaries takes an interest in the PCs but mistakes them for mercenaries. The cambions eagerly badger the PCs to tell them stories about their triumphs against the elves, and if the PCs don't come across as "evil enough" or don't sound like proper Treerazer worshippers, the mercenaries grow more suspicious.

Success The PCs appease the mercenaries, who move on to other entertainment.

Failure The mercenaries mock the PCs' paltry accomplishments very publicly. Increase the DCs of all future Deception or Intimidation checks made during the infiltration by 2.

Critical Failure The mercenaries realize the PCs aren't who they claim to be and rush off to spread the news. The party accrues 1 Awareness Point.

DEMONIC REINFORCEMENTS

COMPLICATION

Trigger The PCs reach 9 Awareness Points for the first time.

Overcome DC 34 Stealth, Strike against AC 36, or DC 39 Acrobatics

A mob of brimorak demons are recalled back to Riverspire to augment its defenses from the surrounding woodland. Individually, brimoraks are no match for 15th-level PCs, but the large number of these goat-headed arsonists makes it difficult for them to continue. The PCs must spend some time hiding from them, outmaneuvering them by leaping onto rooftops or scrambling through rubble, or simply quickly slaughter enough of the demons without them realizing who's picking them off so that the reinforcements lose interest and leave town.

Success The PCs outlast the brimorak mob's fleeting interest in Riverspire.

Failure The brimoraks spread word about the PCs, causing all future DCs to overcome obstacles to increase by 1.

Critical Failure A very public fight breaks out; the brimoraks are slain, but the party accrues 1 Awareness Point and all future DCs to overcome obstacles increase by 1.

RIVERSPIRE OPPORTUNITIES

During any infiltration round, a PC can always opt out of attempting to overcome an obstacle and instead try their hand at one of the following opportunities.

EAVESDROP

OPPORTUNITY

Requirement The PC can understand Chthonian.

Rather than work to overcome an obstacle during this infiltration round, the PC spends the round accompanying an ally who has yet to roll their skill check to achieve the current stage's goal. A PC who succeeds at a DC 34 Perception check eavesdrops on any nearby foes and reports their findings to the ally, giving them the benefits of Follow the Expert (*Player Core* 438). If the PC has the Read Lips skill feat, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to this Perception check.

On a critical success, the PC overhears something significant. The first time a PC does so, they overhear a discussion between two cultists about how "one of those elf wizards who got away left his spellbook behind, see? We must'a scared him so bad he didn't stop to pick up his stuff! Fool!" The disrespectful cultist foolishly shows off the spellbook he found, causing the other cultist to try to snatch it away. A scuffle ensues, during which the PC can attempt a DC 34 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check to step out and trick, convince, or demand the cultists hand the spellbook over, DC 34 Thievery check to quietly steal the book while the cultists bicker, or a Strike against AC 34 to wait for one cultist to beat the other unconscious and then step in to render the last cultist standing unconscious as well, thereby quickly claiming the spellbook. If the PC fails, the opportunity to gain the spellbook is lost as their attempt to take control results in the spellbook's destruction (since one of the cultists likely takes an "If I can't have it, no one can!" approach). If the PC critically fails their check, this also results in the alarm being raised and the party accruing 1 Awareness Point.

On all critical successes after this, the PC learns something like a shortcut, a password, or the like, which speeds things along for their Infiltration and grants them 1 Infiltration Point.

SPREAD DISINFORMATION

OPPORTUNITY

Requirement The PC can speak Chthonian.

Rather than work to overcome an obstacle, the PC spends the time spreading disinformation about the PCs' presence in Riverspire and about Kyonin in general. The PC attempts a DC 34 Deception check or a DC 36 Diplomacy check.

Critical Success Not only does the disinformation work and reduce the party's Awareness Points by 1, but the first time a PC critically succeeds while pursuing this opportunity, false intelligence about Kyonin spreads like wildfire through Treerazer's army, and the PCs earn 1 Triumph Point.

Success The disinformation works—reduce the party's Awareness Points by 1.

Critical Failure The attempt to spread disinformation backfires, and the party accrues 1 Awareness Point.

BACK IN KYONIN

If the PCs make it out of Riverspire and back to safety in Kyonin with Kynnriel alive, he's incredibly thankful for the rescue and sees to it that, within 24 hours, the PCs are rewarded with a family heirloom that he now believes is better suited for their hands than his: a +2 *greater striking greater standard-grade cold iron astral dagger*.

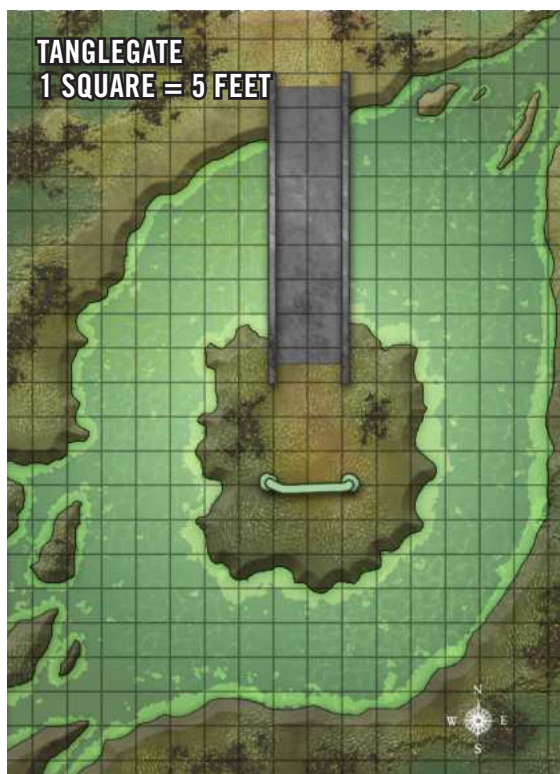
In addition, the intelligence he managed to gather proves quite helpful to the war effort—grant the PCs 1 Triumph Point. More importantly, during his mission, Kynnriel heard many rumors about a high-ranking officer within Kyonin's army who's supposedly turned traitor and has been aiding Tanglebriar from behind enemy lines. This revelation unlocks the mission The Elven Traitor (page 35).

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for this success, with a total reward of up to 180 XP if they also accomplished all five Stages of the infiltration.

Investigate Tanglegate

When news of the Jeharl Spore explosion in Greengold reached Kyonin's queen, she acted quickly to deactivate the network of *aiudara* portals that connect Kyonin to multiple spots on Golarion and Castrovel, using the power of the *Sovyrian Stone* to do so. The portal network remains inactive for now, for seizing control of this network remains one of Treerazer's primary goals; until the queen can be sure that he isn't any closer to using the portal to spread his corruption, she chooses to keep the portals closed, a choice that forces Kyonin to increasingly rely upon its own resources (and on the PCs) as the Spore War continues.

Key to Queen Telandia's fears is the simple fact that one of these *aiudara* portals lies within Tanglebriar—the notorious portal known as Tanglegate. The PCs may have already been invited to Tanglegate by a mysterious message encountered in the previous chapter, but even if not, Queen Telandia asks them to investigate the site and discover the status of the lost *aiudara*. Furthermore, if the PCs can find a way retake Tanglegate, it would be quite a boon for Kyonin's war effort.



Starting the Mission: Tanglegate lies in north-central Tanglebriar about 25 miles south of the front lines, yet this part of the war front is particularly active. The shortest and safest overland path to Tanglegate is a winding route from either the east or west. If a PC performs the Scout exploration activity and succeeds at a DC 34 Survival check, the trip to Tanglegate takes 4 days (or 2 days on a critical success). Otherwise, the trip takes 6 days. If the PCs all Hustle, they can reach Tanglegate automatically in 4 days without needing a Survival check, but they should come across at least one random encounter along the way because their rushed actions draw attention.

Undertaking the Mission: Use the Tanglegate map for this mission. As the PCs approach the site, read or paraphrase the following text.

The ground has grown increasingly boggy and muddy over the past hour, and what at first looked like a potential clearing in the thorny, moist undergrowth has instead revealed itself to be an algae-choked swath of open swamp water. A stone bridge caked with mold extends outward from a muddy shore over the water to an upraised, grassy hummock not far from the water's edge. At the top of this low mound of dry ground is a vine-shrouded and moss-encrusted archway made of pale green stone.

Contrary to Queen Telandia's fears, Treerazer hasn't pursued his original plans to corrupt the *aiudara* network since his original defeat at the hands of the elves so many centuries ago. He's largely left Tanglegate untouched and has forbidden anyone from directly damaging or corrupting the device—both because he still hopes someday to use it against the elves, but also because he feared that any meddling would attract more attention from his enemies.

The Spore Queen knows this, but she also knows it's one of the few places in Tanglebriar that her enemies are guaranteed to know the location of, so she selects it as a point to ambush the PCs if they're foolish enough to accept her invitation via the *slate of distant letters* they may have recovered in area A7 (page 18).

Tanglegate's current guardian is a swamp blight known as the Tar Root. This creature claimed the region as their domain a few years after the fall of Thorn's End and maintains a small group of dominated fungal marsh giants and some bhutas as its subordinates. The details of how the PCs encounter the Tar Root and its minions depend on whether the Spore Queen is using Tanglegate as the site of her ambush. If so, these two encounters should each be adjusted up a threat level.

The 5 miles surrounding Tanglegate are the Tar Root's cursed domain, but to the casual observer, there's no obvious indication of this shift when traveling into the area from the rest of Tanglebriar. When the PCs enter, have each of them attempt a secret DC 36 Perception check. Those who succeed can see (or point out) subtle differences in their environment—the land has grown swampier and the vegetation and fungi have changed. A character who succeeds at a DC 36 Occultism or DC 38 Nature check to Recall Knowledge recognizes that these are signs of a blight's cursed domain.

APPROACHING TANGLEGATE

LOW 17

Creatures: As the PCs approach Tanglegate, the Tar Root's dominated fungal marsh giants quickly rise to defend the island the Tar Root sits upon. Normally, the Tar Root keeps six giants in the area as its advance guards (a Low 17 threat encounter), but if the Spore Queen has arranged an ambush, eight giants are found here instead (a Moderate 17 threat encounter). The giants spend their time on the shore near the bridge or wallowing in the swamp water and roll Perception for initiative unless they're waiting in ambush, in which case they hunker down mostly underwater or in thick tangles of undergrowth and roll Stealth for initiative. Once combat begins, the giants fight to the death unless any of them have the dominate effect from the

Tar Root countered. A freed giant flees for their life upon being reduced to 80 HP or less.

FUNGAL MARSH GIANTS (6 OR 8) CREATURE 11

Page 24

Initiative Perception +20 or Stealth +22

THE TAR ROOT'S ISLE

MODERATE 17

The Tar Root spends most of their time lately lying amid the swampy muck along the southern shore of the island, dreaming idle dreams of world corruption. Once the fight with the fungal marsh giants begins, the Tar Root takes notice but remains hidden, using telepathy to taunt the PCs with promises that the corruption they see all around them is what lies in store for them, and that once they die, their souls will remain in their rotting bodies and become playthings and worshippers of the tar.

When the last fungal marsh giant is slain, or as soon as any PC is adjacent to or attempts to interact with Tanglegate, the Tar Root slithers out of hiding and rolls Stealth for initiative. If this is an ambush, the swamp blight has gathered four bhutas to its side in preparation, shifting this to a Severe 17 threat encounter. The Tar Root fights to the death and pursues foes to the edges of its cursed domain.

THE TAR ROOT CREATURE 17

swamp blight (page 84)

Initiative Stealth +34

TANGLEBRIAR BHUTAS (4) CREATURE 11

Variant bhuta (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 76)

Initiative Perception +22

Primal Innate Spells DC 30, attack +22; **9th** *nature's enmity* (*Player Core* 2 248, only while within the Tar Root's cursed domain); **6th** *summon plant or fungus*; **5th** *toxic cloud*, *wall of thorns*; **4th** *charm* (plants and fungi only); **3rd** *earthbind*; **Cantrips (6th)** *caustic blast*, *tangle vine*; **Constant (3rd)** *speak with plants*

Treasure: The Tar Root has slaughtered countless adventurers over the years but hasn't taken much notice of its victims' gear, often allowing the stuff to remain on their bodies after they rose as undead and wandered off. A few potent items are gathered here, however, and a PC who Searches the southern half of the island for 10 minutes discovers a +2 *greater striking keen standard-grade adamantite dwarven waraxe*, a star sapphire necklace with a gold chain worth 3,500 gp, a standard-grade dawnsilver rapier kept within a duskwood scabbard inset with pearls (the scabbard is worth more than the rapier at 2,000 gp), a waterproof

standard-grade dawnsilver scroll case adorned with rubies worth 2,500 gp that contains a *scroll of hidden mind*, and a set of *greater bands of force* etched with images of flying wasps.

MISSION REWARD

Once the Tar Root and their dominated minions are destroyed, the PCs can take their time investigating Tanglegate. Even a quick investigation reveals that, while overgrown with fungus and moss, the *aiudara* is in remarkably good condition, although it remains inactive. It was last used during the assault on Thorn's End many years ago.

Now that the Tar Root and their minions have been defeated, though, Queen Telandia can send reinforcements through the *aiudara* network after momentarily reactivating it. Within 24 hours, Kyonin's army has a solid fortification built around Tanglegate, and at this point, Queen Telandia feels safe in reactivating the *aiudara* network—although she never strays far from the *Sovyrian Stone* in the event she needs to shut the network down at a moment's notice. Once Tanglegate is fortified, the PCs can use it to come and go from their Tanglebriar missions. This reduces the time needed to start any mission in Tanglebriar by 1 day.

Grant the PCs 2 Triumph Points for helping the *aiudara* network to be safely reactivated.

A Cure for Corruption

Starting the Mission: This task unlocks as soon as the PCs achieve a Great Success on a Deep Reconnaissance mission. At your discretion, a PC who spends time using *speak with plants* or who uses other similar methods to communicate with the vegetation in Tanglebriar has a chance to learn about the existence of this opportunity each time they have a significant conversation. On a successful secret DC 36 Perception check, the PC realizes that this opportunity exists.

The idea of using pure forms of a toxic material as raw resources to engineer a cure for that toxin is nothing new, but the news of corrupted groves that could be raided for such resources is significant. Such cures could help fight afflictions like briarblight, tanglerot, rotter infestation (see the previous adventure), or any of the poisons or diseases spread by Tanglebriar's inhabitants. The trick is to locate one of these corrupted groves—once that's done, the PCs can start harvesting and studying the corruption to help engineer each affliction's respective cure. This mission begins the instant the PCs enter Tanglebriar and begin a search via the Locate a Corrupt Grove activity.



LOCATE A CORRUPT GROVE

CONCENTRATE | EXPLORATION

You Detect Magic, Investigate, or Search over the course of a day of exploration in Tanglebriar, looking for clues that might lead the party toward one of the corrupt groves. With luck, these might contain resources that can be used to engineer cures and tonics to resist the region's horrific afflictions.

If you Detect Magic, make a DC 36 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check to examine and interpret the corrupt magic flowing through Tanglebriar.

If you Investigate, make a DC 34 Nature or Survival check to interpret the ways in which Tanglebriar's fungal network might be tracked to a corrupt grove.

If you Search, make a DC 39 Perception check to simply keep an eye out for signs of a corrupt grove.

Critical Success The party earns 2 Victory Points for this mission.

Success The party earns 1 Victory Point for this mission.

Failure The PC accidentally stumbles upon a particularly toxic threat and is exposed to tanglerot (page 22).

Critical Failure If this is the first critical failure result of the day while pursuing this activity, the PC attracts the attention of a dangerous inhabitant—roll on the Tanglebriar Encounters table on page 24 to determine what the PCs encounter. Otherwise, the PC accidentally causes an explosion of spores that exposes the entire party to tanglerot.

RESEARCHING THE GROVE

LOW 16

Once the PCs have accrued 8 Victory Points, they discover a corrupt grove.

Here, the dripping, rank-smelling canopy of trees and immense mushrooms breaks to reveal a view of overcast skies. The clearing is about two hundred feet across, roughly circular in shape, and slumps in the middle like a bowl, or like a tarp draped over an open cistern that's been allowed to sag and grow fat with mold and squirming parasites over the course of many years of neglect. At the center of the shallow crater, a twitching mound of puffballs, mold, mushrooms, and other fungal shapes that may have once been animals or people rises to a shuddersome height of thirty feet.

Hazard: This large crater of corruption is as dangerous as it looks, but if the PCs want to research it without penalty, they must enter and contend with its dangers. The ground within the grove is greater difficult terrain, and the air in the grove is toxic to breathe and functions as mindfog mist (*GM Core* 250). This toxic air deteriorates into harmless but foul-smelling air as soon as it travels further than a

hundred feet from the grove at the crater's center. The toxic air instantly replenishes if wind effects are used to disperse it until the hazard is disabled or destroyed, at which point the toxic air in the area persists for 24 hours before dissipating on its own.

CORRUPT GROVE

HAZARD 16

RARE | COMPLEX | ENVIRONMENTAL | FUNGUS | UNHOLY


Stealth +23 (expert)

Description A noisome mass of fungus at the center of the grove raises fungal guardians from the ground to defend itself.

Disable DC 42 Survival (master) six times to carefully remove all the tangled fungal clots that absorb Tanglebriar's ambient energies for nourishment or DC 45 Religion (legendary) on the grove three times by a character who has holy sanctification and who uses prayer to exorcise the unholy energies that sustain the corrupt grove

AC 39; **Fort** +30; **Ref** +25

Hardness 25; **HP** 106 (BT 53); **Immunities** acid, critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15, holy 15; **Resistances** bludgeoning and slashing 15

Awaken Guardians  **Trigger** A creature damages the corrupt grove, attempts but fails to disable it, or ends their turn within 10 feet of the central mass; **Effect** The corrupt grove suddenly contracts and then exudes an unsettling, trumpeting howl and rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action; poison, primal) The corrupt grove pulses and exudes a blast of toxic spores in a 60-foot-cone that targets the area with the densest concentration of intruders. Creatures in this area take 8d6 poison damage (DC 37 basic Fortitude save).

Reset The corrupt grove resets 1 minute after no enemies are within the grove itself or attempting to damage the grove from beyond the crater's perimeter.

Investigating the Corrupt Grove: There are two things the PCs can use the corrupt grove for: securing samples of toxic fungi that will aid in the creation of methods to treat the afflictions that are so common in Tanglebriar and using magic to examine the fungal mass as a way to research the Spore Queen. The latter of these options is covered at the start of Chapter 3, but for both, if the PCs perform their research and investigate from the grove's edges without entering it, all checks are made at a -4 circumstance penalty, and all check results are reduced by one degree of success.

To secure the materials needed to develop a method to fight Tanglebriar's afflictions, a PC must Search the grove for 4 hours, after which that PC can attempt a

DC 34 Medicine, DC 36 Nature, or DC 39 Perception check to earn Victory Points. A critical failure not only costs Victory Points as normal but also exposes that PC to tanglebot if they made the check within the crater's borders.

Once the PCs accumulate 6 Victory Points, they secure enough samples for Queen Telandia's researchers. At your discretion, any PC who doesn't take care while handling the potent stuff exposes their hands to crimson ooze (*GM Core* 89). The sample of material is 3 Bulk. Over the course of the following weeks, Kyonin's alchemists and herbalists dramatically increase the production of alchemical and magical cures against Tanglebriar's awful afflictions.

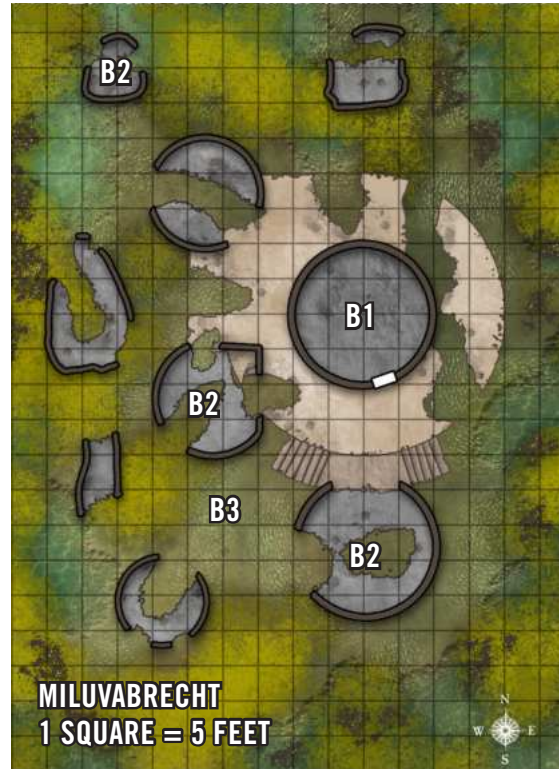
Reward: Grant the PCs 1 Triumph Point and 40 XP for delivering the materials to the queen.

The Elven Traitor

Starting the Mission: The PCs unlock this mission once they've rescued Kynnriel. His discovery—that one of Riverspire's leaders, a renowned elven wizard named **Iravalinn Morgethai**, didn't die during the town's invasion but in fact betrayed his family and all Kyonin—comes as a shock, but Queen Telandia has a plan. The PCs must seek out Iravalinn, who has retreated to a remote fortress called Miluvabrecht deep within Tanglebriar, and prevent him from continuing his betrayals. She would prefer he be captured alive but notes with a saddened expression that his death would also do the job. If he must die, his remains should be brought back to Iadara, both to honor his family legacy and to prevent Treerazer's necromancers from bringing him back either alive or undead to continue his treachery.

The queen tells the PCs that, before Earthfall, a great elven wizard named Aelthian led a society of like-minded spellcasters called the Border Society, a group whose legacy of researching the barriers between realities is still carried on to this day by organizations like the Riftwardens. Aelthian's home, Arabrecht, served as the headquarters for the Border Society, but the lower-ranking members of the society each kept their own smaller-scale laboratories elsewhere throughout Kyonin. Miluvabrecht was one such laboratory, and like the others, it was abandoned just before Earthfall—only Aelthian chose to remain behind. Other laboratories elsewhere in Kyonin have long since been rebuilt and repurposed, but Miluvabrecht (like Arabrecht) was located in lands now claimed by Tanglebriar.


She doesn't know what sort of dangers the PCs might face in Miluvabrecht, but its general location in Tanglebriar is known. The ruined laboratory is



about 50 miles south of the front line, not far from a river that flows north from Tanglebriar into Kyonin and has long been a carrier of constant pollutants and corruption—even before the start of the Spore War. If a PC takes the Scout exploration activity and succeeds at a DC 34 Survival check, the trip to Miluvabrecht takes 6 days (3 days on a critical success). Otherwise, the trip takes 12 days. If the PCs all Hustle, they can reach Miluvabrecht automatically in 6 days without needing a Survival check but should come across at least one random encounter along the way because their rushed actions draw undue attention.

Undertaking the Mission: Use the map of Miluvabrecht above for this mission. As the PCs draw near to Miluvabrecht, they may have time to observe the site before moving in, provided none of the PCs were using the Hustle exploration activity to get there (in this case, Miluvabrecht's guards spot them quickly and the fight begins at once). If at least half the PCs were using the Avoid Notice or Scout exploration activities, then the party can take as long as they want observing the site; otherwise, they have one hour to observe the site before they're spotted.

Centuries spent in Tanglebriar's embrace have done Miluvabrecht no favors. The structure has mostly fallen to ruin and become overgrown with briars and mold, and what portions of the once-beautiful architecture that remain are



caked with filth or look partially melted. Few areas in the ruins look intact enough to offer shelter, although one small section at the base of a drooping tower appears to have a still-functional door at its base.

Once per every hour spent observing Miluvabrecht from a hidden vantage point, each PC can attempt a DC 30 Perception check, with the following results.

Critical Success As success below, but the PCs notice that Iravalinn is behaving strangely for a few moments when he thinks he's alone—any PC who succeeds at a DC 41 Perception check to Sense Motive realizes that the elf might be possessed.

Success The PCs spot Iravalinn Morgethai, confirming his presence in the area. They can time their attack on Miluvabrecht so that, for the first round of combat, they'll only face the rancorous priesthood, with the demons joining the fight on the second round, and Vixivax and Iskurnauni joining on the third round.

Failure The PCs don't spot Iravalinn, but neither are they spotted. If they attack, they face all the foes in the area at once.

Critical Failure As failure, but the PCs might be discovered. Each PC in the area must succeed at a DC 31 Stealth check or they're spotted by the demons and the rancorous priesthood, who raise the alarm at once.

THE BATTLE OF MILUVABRECHT

SEVERE 15

Creatures: Since the rise of Tanglebriar, Miluvabrecht has seen different uses through the centuries, typically as the lair of a powerful monster. As the Spore War began, it became the favored hideout of an invidiak demon named Vixivax, who managed to possess a powerful wizard named Iravalinn Morgethai during the attack on Riverspire that took place during this adventure's first War Interlude.

Once he claimed control of Iravalinn, Vixivax swiftly left Riverspire behind to seek greater glory in advising more important members of Treerazer's army, and it wasn't long before he came to the attention of the Spore Queen. She's tasked him with learning everything that Iravalinn knows about Kyonin, a mission that Vixivax took to with glee at first but now realizes is a curse. While he controls Iravalinn, Vixivax can't read his thoughts, so to learn all he can about what Iravalinn knows, Vixivax has been forcing the elf to write down all his memories and knowledge. Iravalinn has been doing his best to fight this command by trying to present this information in a deliberately disorganized manner, but over time, Vixivax's constant control has resulted in the revelation of a large number of secrets.

So far, Vixivax has forced Iravalinn to fill three dozen thick blank tomes with stolen memories, and

there seems to be no end in sight; though he's started to consider abandoning his task, the recent arrival of an agent of the Spore Queen (a seraptis demon named Iskurnauni) has made Vixivax realize that simply walking away from the task might not be possible. Further complicating the situation is the fact that when Vixivax unexpectedly gained full control of the wizard, he didn't tarry long in Riverspire, and in his haste to leave, he left behind Iravalinn's spellbooks (the PCs may have discovered one of these during the Missing Spy mission). As a result, Iravalinn's prepared spells are a shadow of what he'd normally have available for Vixivax to use.

When the PCs arrive at Miluvabrecht, Vixivax and Iskurnauni are speaking about the slowed production of memory volumes inside of the ruins' only enclosed chamber (area **B1**). A group of three miastriplek demons stand watch on nearby crumbling rooftops (one at each area **B2**), while a large number of humanoid Treerazer cultists (mostly humans, orcs, and a few dwarves who collectively form a rancorous priesthood) gather in the open area at the base of the stairs (area **B3**). The cultists are engaged in a lengthy prayer to the Lord of the Blasted Tarn.

Taken altogether, these foes constitute a Severe 15 threat, but if the PCs time their attack on Miluvabrecht well, they'll spread out when the enemies engage in battle. The rancorous priesthood moves to engage the PCs in melee as soon as possible, typically casting spells and then making a one-action wild swing each round; they fight to the death and pursue PCs relentlessly. The miastripleks prefer to team up on a single PC to harry them; they fight until only one remains, at which point that demon flees.

Iskurnauni is eager to defeat the PCs and present their bodies and gear as trophies to the Spore Queen. She attempts to *dominate* a PC first (ordering them to stand aside and wait patiently to serve later if she succeeds) before swooping into melee. She flees via a 5th-rank *translocate* if brought below 100 Hit Points and, at your discretion, might be encountered again somewhere in Deathstalk Tower.

Vixivax doesn't immediately attack the PCs and instead calls out to them begging for aid, claiming to have been captured. His hope is that the PCs defeat the other enemies, believe his story, and escort him back to Kyonin, where he'll be able to wreak more havoc; as soon as he realizes they think he's a traitor, however, he fights back to the best of his ability. While possessing Iravalinn, Vixivax initially relies on spells cast from his staff, but he eventually uses his own divine innate spells and Iravalinn's precious remaining higher-rank spells once he realizes the PCs are a significant threat; he

works to keep himself at range and avoid melee. If his possessed body is slain or physically incapacitated, Vixivax exits the possessed elf and continues the fight until he's reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, whereupon he attempts to flee. Unlike Iskurnauni, though, he doesn't run very far—instead, he lurks nearby and comes back to try to possess one of the PCs as soon as their guard is down, perhaps after they retreat to their camp. In this second fight, he flees again if brought below 50 HP, at which point he decides the PCs (and Treerazer) are more trouble than they're worth and leaves Tanglebriar entirely, heading south to torment dwarves instead of elves. He won't abandon Iravalinn's body unless he has no other choice.

If the PCs manage to exorcise Vixivax and drive him out of Iravalinn's body, the elf immediately sides with the PCs and does everything in his power to support them in finishing the fight.

VIXIVAX

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE MEDIUM DEMON FIEND INCORPOREAL UNHOLY

Variant male invidiak (page 87)

Perception +25; darkvision

Languages Chthonian, Common, Elven, Fey; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +27, Arcana +27, Deception +31, Intimidation +29, Occultism +25, Religion +27, Society +25, Stealth +27

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +8

AC 35; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +29, **Will** +23; +1 to all saves vs. magic

HP 200; **Immunities** disease, poison, precision; **Resistances** all 15 (except force, *ghost touch*, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical); **Weaknesses** cold iron 15, holy 15

Exorcism Vulnerability As invidiak, but 9d6 mental damage. In addition, see Iravalinn's Fight for Control reaction.

Share Pain (illusion, mental, nonlethal) As invidiak, but DC 33.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +27 (agile, finesse, magical, unholy), **Damage** 4d8 cold plus 4d6 spirit

Divine Innate Spells DC 36, attack +28; **8th** *illusory creature, possession* (range touch); **7th** *illusory creature, illusory disguise, phantasmal calamity*; **6th** *illusory creature, illusory scene, truesight*; **5th** *translocate* (at will), *truespeech*; **4th** *translocate* (at will); **3rd** *fear* (at will); **Cantrips (8th)** *telekinetic projectile*

Rituals DC 36; *demonic pact*

Favored Host As invidiak; Vixivax's favored host is elf.

Unbodied Possession Vixivax leaves no body behind when using possession.

IRAVALINN MORGETHAI

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID

Male elf wizard

Perception +21; low-light vision

Languages Aklo, Arboreal, Chthonian, Common, Elven, Fey, Gnomish

Skills Academia Lore +27, Arcana +27, Crafting +25, Diplomacy +24, Occultism +25, Society +27

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +5

Items *greater bands of force, greater choker of elocution* (grants Aklo, Arboreal, and Fey), +2 *greater striking major staff of elemental power* (7 charges)


AC 34; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +24, **Will** +21

HP 220

Fight for Control ⤿ **Requirement** Iravalinn is possessed by Vixivax; **Trigger** Vixivax starts his turn while Iravalinn's spellbook, *Visions and Fancies*, is visible; **Effect** The sight



Iravalinn Morgethai



of his spellbook is enough to bolster Iravalinn's spirit, and he forces Vixivax to suffer the effects of Exorcism Vulnerability.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ *staff* +24 (monk, two-hand d8), **Damage** 2d4+5 bludgeoning

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 25, attack +17; **7th** *force barrage*; **6th** *wall of force*; **5th** *banishment*; **4th** *fly*, *suggestion*; **3rd** *paralyze*; **2nd** *blur*, *stupefy*; **1st** *command*, *gust of wind*; **Cantrips (7th)** *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *figment*, *light*, *shield*

ISKURNAUGNI

CREATURE 15

Female seraptis (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 80)

Initiative Perception +25

MIASTRILEKS (3)

CREATURE 11

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Initiative Stealth +22

RANCOROUS PRIESTHOOD

CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 213

Initiative Perception +21

Divine Spontaneous Spells DC 27, attack +19; **6th** (2 slots) *harm*, *vampiric feast*; **5th** (3 slots) *crisis of faith*, *divine wrath*, *grim tendrils*; **Cantrips (6th)** *divine lance*, *shield*, *void warp*

Treasure: If the PCs spend 10 minutes Searching the ruins, they'll find a fair amount of treasure that the cultists and their demonic agents looted. This consists of a few chests containing a mix of coins, gems, and art objects, the latter of which are obviously looted from Kyonin; taken all together, these are worth a total of 4,000 gp. In addition, the stolen goods include a +2 *greater striking greater vitalizing bo staff*, a *major retrieval belt* containing three major elixirs of life, and a *selenite crystal ball*. If the PCs mention a desire to return these items to their original owners, Queen Telandia is touched and offers to reward the PCs gold equal to the items' full prices for each one they hand over, noting that they should feel free to keep any of the items they feel they can use in their ongoing fight against Tanglebriar. She notes that these items can be returned once peace is restored.

If he survives, Iravalinn is understandably traumatized by his time being possessed by a demon and isn't interested in or capable of continuing to directly aid the PCs. Still, in thanks for his rescue, he gives them both his gear and (if they recovered it) his spellbook as rewards once he's safe back in Kyonin.

Reward: Grant the PCs 1 Triumph Point if they kill Iravalinn and either destroy his remains or transport his remains back to Kyonin. If the PCs manage to force Vixivax out of Iravalinn and then see that the elven wizard makes it safely back to Kyonin, grant them 2 Triumph Points instead, along with an additional 40 XP.

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

The path the PCs take through this chapter is in large part up to them—the order in which they undertake their missions in Tanglebriar, as well as whether or not they attempt them all in the first place, should be determined during the course of play. Still, eager or worried parties might seek to rush things and head straight to Deathstalk Tower once that location becomes known to them as the overall goal of this adventure.

The challenges that will face the PCs in Chapter 3 are significant, and the PCs shouldn't start these encounters until they're 16th level. If your group is eager to skip missions and head directly there, you should take extra time in presenting the journey to Deathstalk Tower. Have them encounter more foes in the form of random encounters, or even have them stumble upon bespoke encounters of your own design to give them opportunities to gain more experience.

One excellent option here would be for the PCs to encounter a small group of elven soldiers or advance scouts who have gotten in over their heads in a fight against a group of Tanglebriar's monstrosities. This lets the PCs swoop in to save the day, but then the rescued elves beg to be led back home safely. This sort of encounter can also give you a point where you can bolster the party's gear, having the families of the rescued elves gift them with treasures and magical items that they otherwise would have earned by going on the skipped missions in the first place.

War Interludes

As this chapter proceeds and the PCs make progress in their efforts in Tanglebriar, the war against Kyonin continues. The following four War Interludes play out at the times indicated. It's best to present these as bits of news that the PCs hear while conversing with allies in Kyonin between their missions or as updates from the queen or another contact back in Iadara or Greengold when they retreat there to regroup. If your group is comfortable with the concept, you can also depict these as periodic "cut scenes" where the action is temporarily moved away from its focus on the PCs.

WAR INTERLUDE 3: CIVIL UNREST

As Tanglebriar's forces continue pushing the border northward and the elven nation loses ground, some

of Kyonin's movers and shakers take this as an opportunity to advance their own political agendas. The perception that Queen Telandia has been too timid about starting a war with Tanglebriar has long given these elements in the nation's government and society an axe to grind, and now they've taken to touting this war as "proof" that Queen Telandia made an error and should have taken up the offensive against Tanglebriar centuries ago. Ironically, the civil unrest these radicals create threatens the safety of the nation more than it helps Kyonin. This War Interlude occurs just before the PCs undertake their first mission in Tanglebriar.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: Kyonin's forces must divert resources and time to manage the civil unrest, so Treerazer's forces take advantage and are able to push forward at a horrific pace. All future missions into Tanglebriar take 1 additional day to start.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: The PCs' support, as well as backing from allies in the Encarthan Alliance and other, more measured responses from the local government, ensure that cooler heads prevail. The people of Kyonin do not fall for the bait—the tactic of avoiding a war in favor of maintaining a peaceful status-quo until conflict offers no other choice is widely accepted as the wiser move, and the hardliners in the government are forced to reckon with their own unpopular ideology. Kyonin's defenses aren't distracted and can put up a stronger fight on the borders. Tanglebriar's progress north is measured in feet rather than miles. The PCs earn 80 XP.

WAR INTERLUDE 4: CORRUPTION SPREADS

Various fungal infections and awful diseases begin to spread through Kyonin. Most are transmitted via rivers flowing north through the land from Tanglebriar, but some are afflicted by demonic intruders or spies. This War Interlude occurs just after the PCs finish their first mission in Tanglebriar.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: Sickness and horrific infections spread throughout Kyonin. Once the PCs complete A Cure for Corruption on page 33, things start to get back to normal, but the damage has been done and Kyonin remains shaken by the afflictions.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: Druids and healers quickly take note of the spreading corruption and take measures to minimize its effects on the nation at large. The PCs earn 80 XP and gain a +1 circumstance bonus on all skill checks made to Locate a Corrupt Grove or to disable the Corrupt Grove during A Cure for Corruption.

WAR INTERLUDE 5: BATTLE OF THE CENTURY ROOT

As the war proceeds, Treerazer's high priestess, the Spore Queen, makes a rare but devastating personal appearance during a push downriver from Riverspire. She personally leads an assault of demons, corrupt fey, fungal monsters, and cultists against the arboreals of the Century Root. This War Interlude occurs after the PCs finish their third mission in Tanglebriar.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: Many of the arboreals of the Century Root are destroyed, and the Century Root itself, one of the largest and oldest trees of Kyonin, is toppled and corrupted into decay. The arboreals of Kyonin are demoralized and withdraw direct support of the elves, instead retreating to their own hidden groves. This will have repercussions in the next adventure.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: The Spore Queen's arrogant attempt to take matters into her own hands proves foolish. She's forced to flee the battle, leaving the army to be routed and allowing Kyonin to save the Century Root. The PCs earn 80 XP, and in her hasty retreat, the Spore Queen leaves behind more evidence than she intends—reduce all DCs for researching the Spore Queen at the start of Chapter 3 by 2.

WAR INTERLUDE 6: ASSASSINS!

As the PCs' fame grows and word of their triumphs in Tanglebriar spread, the Spore Queen sends assassins into Kyonin. This War Interlude occurs when Chapter 2 ends.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: Several important NPCs (not including Queen Telandia) whom the PCs have met and befriended over the course of the Spore War Adventure Path are slain by demonic assassins. Choose up to one NPC per PC to meet this fate; their souls are captured and brought to Deathstalk Tower, and until they're rescued, these NPCs cannot be resurrected. The captured souls are brought up to the spires of Deathstalk Tower to be held. Each PC must attempt a DC 30 Will save or a DC 34 Deception check. Each failure costs the party 1 Triumph Point as the visibility of their despair sends doubt and misery through the nation.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: The assassination attempts fail, and the residents of Kyonin take heart! The PCs earn 80 XP, and the assassins are destroyed for their failure. Area F5 of Deathstalk Tower no longer has omoz demons encountered therein.



Chapter 3: Spores of Sin

Rumors of a powerful high priestess serving as the spiritual leader of Treerazer's army begin to spread not long after the attacks begin, but apart from her being referred to as the "Spore Queen," very little information exists about this mysterious figure. Still, as the war proceeds, it becomes obvious that this Spore Queen is possibly the most important element of Treerazer's army—not the most powerful, perhaps, but the most influential. Her defeat would certainly tip the war in Kyonin's favor.

Adding to this, there are rumors that she's working on something dire—a secret weapon that will win the war for Treerazer with ease if she's allowed to finish constructing it. The exact nature of this weapon has spawned much speculation; some say it might be a portable portal to the Outer Rifts or

a corruption-spewing siege engine. Feel free to get creative when you're offering possibilities to the PCs, but the truth—that the Spore Queen seeks a method to grant the Witchbole the ability to teleport at will—should be a discovery the party makes on their own during the course of play.

SEEKING THE SPORE QUEEN

Once the PCs complete their missions in Chapter 2, Queen Telandia meets with them again. Whether the rumors about the Spore Queen and her secret weapon are true or not, Queen Telandia has concluded that Treerazer's high priestess must be stopped, and it falls to Kyonin's greatest heroes to carry this dangerous mission out. Yet before she can be defeated, she must be found!



The search for the Spore Queen uses the research rules (*GM Core* 190). The PCs have access to three libraries of sorts in researching this topic.

Interrogations: Treerazer's soldiers are fanatics, but some have been captured alive and could be interrogated to learn more. Queen Telandia points out a particularly unique opportunity if the PCs rescued Iralvalinn during *The Elven Traitor* (page 35), for his time spent possessed by a demon in Treerazer's service doubtless gave him important insights. **Maximum RP 4; Research Checks** DC 35 Diplomacy to gently interview Iralvalinn and learn what he discovered during his traumatic possession or DC 40 Intimidation to interrogate captured cultists or mercenaries.

Iadara's Resources: The libraries and researchers of Kyonin are made available to the PCs for their investigation. **Maximum RP 4; Research Checks** DC 33 Library Lore to methodically pore through tomes and scrolls, DC 35 Society to interview researchers and scholars, or DC 37 Perception to just dive into the overwhelming lore Kyonin has gathered on Tanglebriar over the centuries.

Tanglebriar's Fungal Network: Once the PCs finish *A Cure for Corruption* (page 33), the discovery that Tanglebriar has a network of fungal hyphae that can be "interrogated" with the right magic opens up an unpleasant but important avenue of research. A PC who can cast *Speak with Plants* or who can otherwise communicate with fungi gains a +4 status bonus to all checks to Research using this library. **Maximum RP 4; Research Checks** DC 37 Nature to correctly interpret information hidden in the hyphae network or DC 40 Deception to trick the fungal network into revealing secrets.

THE SPORE QUEEN

RESEARCH 16

UNIQUE DIVINE FIEND FUNGUS

Research Checks interrogations (anywhere in Kyonin); Iadara's resources (Iadara); Tanglebriar's fungal network (corrupt grove sites within Tanglebriar that must be traveled to as detailed in *A Cure for Corruption* (page 33) or via fast travel magic)

2 Research Points The PCs learn that the Spore Queen is not actually a cleric of Treerazer, but some sort of occult spellcaster.

4 Research Points The PCs confirm that the Spore Queen has made Deathstalk Tower, located in the ruined city of Shevaroth, her base of operations. She's indeed working on a secret weapon—research that seems to require Treerazer to remain in his fortress of Witchbole (an ominous but fortunate bit of news that explains why the nascent demon lord hasn't yet been encountered on the field of battle).

6 Research Points The PCs learn that while the monsters that dwell in the ruins of Shevaroth are unlikely to pose a significant threat, Deathstalk Tower's approach is well guarded by the horned dragon Zauglagaul. Though he was long thought slain by rival dragon Zudanavox, the Queen of Thorns, it now seems wise to prepare for a dangerous fight against this dragon, whose lair is doubtless somewhere near—if not within—Deathstalk Tower.

8 Research Points The PCs discover that the Spore Queen is a fungal tyrant and gain a +2 circumstance bonus from their research to all checks to Recall Knowledge about fungal tyrants. They also realize that the ancient elven hero Silisifex went missing with a group of Calistrans in Deathstalk Tower centuries ago—there might be remnants from their mission within the tower that could be useful if located.

10 Research Points The PCs hear rumors that the dungeons below Deathstalk Tower are ruled by powerful "squatters," including a cult of Rovagug worshippers who might be of some use as allies or at least as distractions to force the Spore Queen to split her defenses. Also, the PCs stumble upon ancient notes that the Calistrans left a fair amount of treasure in a hidden vault in the dungeon that might still lie within its depths and could be a cache of gear that could aid the PCs.


12 Research Points The PCs confirm that the Spore Queen is the succubus Quilindra reborn (page 92) and could potentially use her previous failures as a succubus as a psychological distraction. They also learn that one of the key elements she needed to move forward with her secret weapon was the soul of a "powerful elven hero"—something that explains her need of Aravashnial's soul. Finally, they learn that the secret entrance to the ancient Calistran treasure vault is in the crypts below the tower; reduce the DC to discover the crypt's secret door by 10.

War Interludes

The war grows more violent and harrowing as the PCs push on to Deathstalk Tower, almost as if the increasing threat they pose to the Spore Queen has encouraged her to push her armies to swifter victory. Since many of these war interludes are scheduled to occur during the exploration of Deathstalk Tower, presenting them as "cutscenes" at the appointed times is probably best. Time them to occur at the start of a session if you can so as to not interrupt the flow of play.

WAR INTERLUDE 7: CITY OF THORNS

Several years ago, the discovery of a lost city in south-central Kyonin, a place whose original name has been lost to antiquity and that's known today as the City of Thorns, resulted in a tenuous alliance



between two queens—Queen Telandia and the horned dragon Zuldavax, known also as the Queen of Thorns. Zuldavax is a powerful dragon who prefers to remain alone in her city. Despite the alliance she promised to the queen of the elves, her initial reaction to Tanglebriar's aggression is to hunker down. This war interlude occurs at the start of Chapter 3, before the PCs begin researching the Spore Queen.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: Zuldavax closes the borders of the City of Thorns and leaves Kyonin to its fate.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: Zuldavax honors the alliance and aids Kyonin in the war. The PCs earn 80 XP, and by the time the PCs encounter the horned dragon Zaaglagaul, word that the powerful Queen of Thorns has chosen to side with the elves weakens his morale, as detailed on page 46 under Zaaglagaul at a Disadvantage.

WAR INTERLUDE 8: THE SPORE FLOOD

While Treerazer's initial gambit didn't go as planned, he still has some dangerous Jeharlu Spores at hand. When one bursts near the source of a river that flows out of Tanglebriar and north into Kyonin, the river transforms into a pudding-thick artery of fungal corruption. This war interlude occurs after the PCs' first encounter with Zaaglagaul but before they begin exploring Deathstalk Tower.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: The river creates a path through the heart of Kyonin, its corruption spreading all the way to the West Sellen River along Kyonin's northern border and cutting the nation in half. From this point onward, whenever the PCs spend a Triumph Point to resolve a war interlude, they must succeed at a DC 5 flat check; on a failure, they must spend a second Triumph Point or they lose that first point and treat the war interlude as a failure.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: Working with allies from neighboring nations, a small army of Kyonin's priests manages to exorcise the river's corruption before it takes root. The PCs earn 80 XP.

WAR INTERLUDE 9: THE BATTLE OF OMESTA

The town of Omesta suffers a surprise attack as an army of undead fungal elves known as root rotters emerge from the soil below the town's roots! This war interlude takes place at some point while the PCs are exploring Deathstalk Tower but before they enter any of its spires or the dungeon.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: The root rotters overtake the town of Omesta, forcing its inhabitants to evacuate and creating a growing pocket of corruption that makes it easier for Tanglebriar's forces to penetrate Kyonin's defenses.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: The root rotters are destroyed, and Omesta remains free. The PCs earn 80 XP, and in thanks for their service, the gnomes of Omesta send the PCs one of their greatest treasures as a gift—a 7th-rank *wand of holy light*.

WAR INTERLUDE 10: THE POSSESSION INFECTION

An invasion of invidiak demons slithers into the souls of Kyonin's unsuspecting protectors, threatening to turn the elven army against itself. This war interlude takes place soon after the PCs begin exploring Deathstalk Tower's spires.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: The invidiaks do incredible damage to Kyonin and its international alliances before those who have been possessed are slain and the demons are successfully forced back to the Outer Rifts. Choose one delegate that the PCs got to sign Article 3 in the previous adventure—that delegate's nation withdraws from the Encarthan Accord. The PCs must attempt a DC 11 flat check; on a failure, they lose 1 Triumph Point.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: The invidiaks are exorcised before they do any lasting harm. The PCs earn 80 XP, and one of the delegates who signed Article 3 (whose agents were nearly compromised by these possessions) sends a reward of thanks to the queen, who then uses this reward to send the PCs a free supply drop.

WAR INTERLUDE 11: THE MOONPOOL SIEGE

In the wake of the Spore Queen's defeat, Treerazer takes a more active role in the war, and among his first reactions is an attempt to force the fey of Kyonin to their knees. He orders an army of omox demons and other pollution-spewing monsters to lay siege to the Moonpool Causeways with the intent to absorb their power and corrupt many of the fey allied with Kyonin. This war interlude takes place at the end of the adventure, after the PCs have defeated the Spore Queen.

Spend 0 Triumph Points: The omox demons' siege carries on for the remainder of the Spore War Adventure Path, and the fey of the forest are prevented from providing further aid to the elves; this will have repercussions in the next adventure.

Spend 1 Triumph Point: The siege breaks nearly as soon as it begins. In thanks for the preservation of their sacred pools, many of the fey increase their contributions to Kyonin as their allies in the Spore War. The PCs earn 80 XP, and the fey send a powerful magic weapon to Queen Telandia as thanks. They also pledge their intent to help Iadara should the city ever be threatened; this has ramifications in the next adventure! In the meantime, Queen Telandia sends the weapon, a +3 *greater striking animated brilliant longsword*, to the PCs to aid them in their efforts in Tanglebriar.



Zuldnavox

RECRUITING ZULDNAVEX

While it's beyond the immediate scope of this adventure, the PCs might attempt to meet with Zuldnavox in the City of Thorns and recruit her aid directly in their fight against Zauglagaul. Zuldnavox is a level 21 horned archdragon, but even if the PCs secure an alliance with her, convincing her to aid their assault against Deathstalk Tower directly should cost them more. At the very least, this should require an expenditure of 4 Triumph Points (reduce this to 3 Triumph Points if a PC succeeds at a DC 42 Diplomacy check to make the Request, or to 2 Triumph Points if a PC critically succeeds at this check).

If you allow the PCs to recruit Zuldnavox's aid in this way, grant them 80 XP. When the time comes to fight Zauglagaul, Zuldnavox joins the battle and attacks with the PCs. Don't play out this fight—instead describe it as a violent conflict between two dragons that ends with Zuldnavox finishing what she almost did the last time she fought Zauglagaul: she bites off his wing, causing him to fall to his death and potentially be impaled on one of Deathstalk Tower's many spires in the process. Don't award the PCs additional XP for Zauglagaul's death in this event. They can loot the dragon's treasure freely, however, for Zuldnavox is wounded significantly in the fight and doesn't linger, opting instead to return to her home in the north to nurse her wounds.

SHEVAROTH

Once one of Kyonin's greatest cities, Shevaroth bore the brunt of one of Treerazer's earliest depredations during his first war with Kyonin centuries ago. The city was reduced to rubble and now lies firmly in the depths of Tanglebriar. One notable building remained standing in the ruins: Shevaroth's Cathedral

of Calistria, once the largest and most impressive temple to the goddess in the Inner Sea Region. While it avoided physical destruction, its fate was ultimately worse: Treerazer's presence corrupted the elegant spires of the temple into a twisted mockery of what they once were. In the cathedral's place now stands one of Tanglebriar's most dangerous fungi—the deathstalk mushroom.

Now known as Deathstalk Tower, the twisted spires loom above the ruined city, which today looks more like clumps of tangled brambles and hills of mold and rubble than a center of society. The creatures that dwell within the ruins are dangerous, but for the most part, they rarely exceed level 11, meaning that a party of 16th-level adventurers would face little challenge from their ilk. If you wish, you can have the PCs encounter one or two of the wandering monsters on the list presented on page 24, but the most dangerous foes they'll face here are the horned dragon Zauglagaul and his magically controlled minions.

Reaching Shevaroth

Shevaroth lies about 60 miles south of the front line by the time the PCs turn their attention toward it. If a PC takes the Scout exploration activity and succeeds at a DC 35 Survival check, the trip to Shevaroth takes 7 days (or 3 days on a critical success); otherwise, the trip takes 14 days. If the PCs all Hustle, they can reach Shevaroth in 6 days without needing a Survival check, but they should come across at least one random encounter along the way because their rushed actions draw undue attention.

DEATHSTALK TOWER

Ridges and crumbled stones from ancient buildings protrude from the soggy ground, mournful remnants of the city that once occupied this wide swath of land. Croaks, roars, and screams drift over the swampy expanse, and here and there, monstrous creatures lumber through the ruins. The corpses of blighted trees and twisted clumps of enormous mushrooms rise here and there, but they never quite reach the layer of thick green clouds that hovers two-hundred feet above. At the ruined city's center, however, a single structure reaches the heights of this haze—a tower reminiscent of an immense deathstalk mushroom, with three smaller spires branching from its sides. The tower's upper reaches are only vaguely visible through the haze but appear to rise well over three hundred feet in height.

Note that areas **C–I** of Deathstalk Tower are intended to challenge 16th-level PCs, while areas **J** and **K** are challenges for 17th-level PCs. Your group might reach 17th level before reaching this section—if they do so, remember to adjust XP awards for combat encounters appropriately.

C. Deathstalk Amphitheater **Low 16**

The ridges of ruined foundations and jagged remnants of stone walls give way near the city's center to a crescent-shaped plaza with row upon row of stone seating arranged before the looming Deathstalk Tower. Swampy rivulets connecting larger ponds of bog water break up the plaza, and low stone ridges that were once the backs of rows of tiered seating now exist as lumps of broken rubble

arrayed along the sides of a bowl-shaped depression that dips down into the slough of murky water surrounding the tower. Mossy steps rise up from the bog at the tower's base to a double door, and forty feet above this door hangs a thirty-foot-wide balcony that overlooks the ruined amphitheater below.

Most of those who worshipped Calistria during the height of Shevaroth's pre-Earthfall era never actually set foot in the temple itself. Instead, they gathered multiple times a week in the sprawling amphitheater to the west of the tower to attend services guided by one of Calistria's many high-ranking clerics, who led those sermons from a balcony pulpit (area **F7**) with magically enhanced voices that carried throughout the neighborhood. Today, that amphitheater is a swamp with muddy paths winding around pools of standing water.

As the pools around the amphitheater's edges drain, they trickle down toward the base of the depression in numerous shallow streams, accumulating in a ring-shaped, 10-foot-deep pond that surrounds the base of Deathstalk Tower. The runoff from tainted water throughout Shevaroth becomes concentrated in the central ring, and any PC who drinks the water or is fully immersed in or swims in it is exposed to tanglerot (page 22). This foul water never overflows its sodden banks or floods the ground floor (area **E**) regardless of how much water trickles down into the pond, for Deathstalk Tower itself absorbs it and its concentrated infection to maintain the ongoing defenses found inside that structure (page 47).

Movement through the open swamp is through difficult terrain, while the more overgrown patches (which are indicated by darker green areas on the map) become greater difficult terrain as well as hazardous terrain. The thorny undergrowth in the overgrown sections inflicts 2d6 piercing damage to anyone who moves through it.

Creatures: The horned dragon Zauglagaul is this area's primary guardian, but he spends most of his time relaxing in his nest (area **D**). His ability to *dominate* and *charm* creatures ensures he always has loyal guardians lurking about on the ground below—currently, this includes a trio of Tanglebriar regents. These corrupted arboreals lie amid the undergrowth surrounding Deathstalk Tower, looking at first glance like nothing more than sizable heaps of mushrooms and mold growing out of decaying deadfalls of trees. Upon noticing the PCs, the Tanglebriar regents rise up, rolling *Stealth* for initiative and moving to attack with grinding roars certain to alert Zauglagaul in his



nest up above. The Tanglebriar regents fight to the death and pursue foes up to a thousand feet from Deathstalk Tower; they won't chase foes who flee into the structure itself.

TANGLEBRIAR REGENTS (4)

CREATURE 13

Page 25

Initiative Stealth +27

ZAUGLAGAUL'S REACTION

SEVERE 16

Zauglagaul is present when the PCs arrive at Deathstalk Tower but doesn't immediately attack. If the PCs are particularly stealthy and avoid engaging in noisy combat with the Tanglebriar regents, they might be able to enter Deathstalk Tower without encountering the horned dragon. As soon as the tower's internal alarm is triggered, however, Zauglagaul knows of the PCs' presence. How he reacts depends on the situation.

Ambush: If the PCs evade Zauglagaul's notice entirely only to trigger the alarm later, the dragon takes up a sentinel position atop the tower and keeps an eye out for the PCs. He orders the Tanglebriar regents to let the PCs escape if they flee, then follows them stealthily through the forest, Tracking them back to their campsite to attack them there. Here, he fights as in his full assault below, but if brought below 200 Hit Points, he breaks off the fight and returns to his nest.


Combat in the Amphitheater: If a fight develops with the Tanglebriar regents, Zauglagaul takes note and creeps onto the lip of his nest to perch upon Deathstalk Tower's central roof using Stealth to remain hidden. Atop this edge, he's 280 feet above the ground below (with 80 feet of Haze between him and the PCs, so he's also concealed). While he can see through the Haze, anyone directly under Deathstalk Tower's central roof (within the area shown by the dotted circle) isn't visible to the dragon. He doesn't intervene until the PCs defeat the regents or as soon as a PC appears to be flying or climbing up into his nest at area D, at which point he rolls initiative with Stealth and begins casting spells down at the PCs. He starts with *wrathful storm*, then uses other long-range spells like *chain lightning*, *eclipse burst*, and *tangling creepers* on PCs who remain near the ground. If a PC is near some of the swampy water, he casts *control water* to cause water

around one of the PCs to rise up to a height of 10 feet. This water then immediately cascades down into the central ring around the tower's base, and any PC caught by this wave is swept off their feet and into the bog unless they succeed at the Fortitude save against the spell. Once the PCs locate Zauglagaul and start to approach or attack him, he switches to a full assault.

Full Assault: Once the PCs engage directly with Zauglagaul, he attacks in kind. He starts by using his Spore Breath, then takes to the air and spends a few rounds casting offensive spells down at the PCs, relying on his swift flight to keep ahead of pursuit and hoping to spread the PCs out. If they oblige, he swoops down to land next to a lone PC and attacks in melee



Zauglagaul



until he's ganged up on, at which point he uses Spore Breath again and takes to the air to repeat this tactic. If reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, Zauglagaul takes to the air and flies into the Haze, circling high above while casting *heal* spells on himself before he swoops back down to finish the fight—at this point, he fights to the death. If, on the other hand, the PCs flee the area, he pursues and harries them with his breath and spells, returning to his nest only once they make their way out of Shevaroth.

ZAUGLAGAUL

CREATURE 19

UNIQUE GARGANTUAN AMPHIBIOUS DRAGON PRIMAL

Variant horned dragon (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 119)

Perception +33; darkvision, mist vision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Aklo, Chthonian, Common, Draconic, Elven, Fey
Skills Acrobatics +28, Athletics +34, Deception +34, Diplomacy +32, Forest Lore +33, Intimidation +34, Nature +33, Occultism +35, Religion +35, Society +33, Stealth +32, Survival +33

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +6, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +7

Camouflage Zauglagaul can Hide in exterior locations in Tanglebriar even if he doesn't have cover.

Mist Vision Mist and fog (such as the Haze) doesn't impair Zauglagaul's vision; he ignores the concealed condition from mist and fog.


AC 44; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +30, **Will** +35

HP 355; **Immunities** paralyzed, poison, sleep


Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 120 feet, DC 39


Miasma (aura, poison) 20 feet. As ancient horned dragon, but 5d6 poison damage and DC 39.


Old Wound After Zuldnavox nearly bit off Zauglagaul's right wing decades ago, it never quite healed right. A crescent-shaped patch of discolored scales at the base of his wing on his right side marks this wound. The PCs might already know about this wound (see Zauglagaul at a Disadvantage below); otherwise, a PC only learns about this weakness if they witness a critical hit against Zauglagaul that inflicts piercing damage. Once a PC knows about Zauglagaul's old wound, they can Seek during their turn to focus on this old wound, automatically treating Zauglagaul as off-guard until the start of their next turn. If a PC critically hits Zauglagaul in the same round they Seek in this way, the pain causes the dragon to become enfeebled 1 and clumsy 1 for 1 hour. Multiple critical hits can increase the value of these conditions up to a maximum of enfeebled 4 and clumsy 4.


Twisting Tail  As young horned dragon.

Speed 50 feet, fly 200 feet, swim 50 feet; forest passage, trackless journey

Melee  jaws +36 (magical, poison, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d10+17 piercing plus 4d4 poison

Melee  claw +36 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d8+17 slashing

Melee  tail +34 (magical, reach 25 feet), **Damage** 4d8+15 bludgeoning


Melee  horn +34 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+15 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 41; **9th** *dominate*; **8th** *charm*, *suggestion*; **4th** *charm* (at will); **2nd** *entangling flora* (at will)


Primal Prepared Spells DC 41, attack +33; **9th** *massacre*, *wrathful storm*; **8th** *chain lightning*, *heal*, *toxic cloud*; **7th** *eclipse burst*, *execute*, *heal*; **6th** *heal*, *petrify*, *tangling creepers*; **5th** *control water*, *heal*, *humanoid form*; **4th** *mirage*, *pest form*, *vapor form*; **3rd** *blindness*, *earthbind*, *haste*; **2nd** *entangling flora*, *humanoid form*, *mist*; **1st** *gust of wind*, *grease*, *pest form*; **Cantrips (9th)** *caustic blast*, *electric arc*, *ignition*, *read aura*, *tangle vine*

Rituals DC 41; *blight*

Forest Passage As young horned dragon.

Impaling Charge  As young horned dragon.

Trackless Journey As adult horned dragon.

Spore Breath  (fungus, poison, primal) Zauglagaul breathes a toxic cloud of spores that deals 18d6 poison damage in a 60 foot cone. Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 39 Fortitude save. Zauglagaul can't use Spore Breath again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature takes no damage.

Success The creature takes half damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is stupefied 1 for an unlimited duration as the spores take root and cause the victim to suffer from distracting hallucinations.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage and is stupefied 2 for an unlimited duration.

ZAUGLAGAUL AT A DISADVANTAGE

The horned dragon Zauglagaul is one of the most dangerous foes the PCs face in this adventure, but there are ways they can prepare for a fight against him, even if they don't realize it at the time. Once the PCs learn that Zauglagaul (who many believe was slain years ago by Zuldnavox, a rival horned dragon known as the Queen of Thorns) lives and guards Deathstalk Tower, they would do well to prepare to face him. A DC 35 Arcana or Nature check to Recall Knowledge about horned dragons can provide the PCs with key information, and a PC who critically succeeds at this check automatically recalls how, in the fight against Zuldnavox, Zauglagaul's right wing was nearly bitten off. In the aftermath, he was left for dead by the victorious Queen of Thorns—a clue that might

allow them to take advantage of Zauglagaul's old wound. Of course, if the PCs spent a Triumph Point in War Interlude 2, they learn of this possible advantage automatically.

During War Interlude 7, the PCs have a chance to recruit Zauglagaul's old enemy, Zuldnavox, to the fight against Tanglebriar. If they spent a Triumph Point to resolve this interlude, word spreads through Tanglebriar quickly, and Zauglagaul grows distracted and worried. The first time he fights the PCs, he's frightened 2, and he can't reduce this condition's value normally. If he survives this first fight, his confidence grows—he's frightened 1 in the second fight, and if he survives again, he shrugs off his fear entirely. Effects that would increase his frightened condition above his current minimum value decrease normally but can't go below the current minimum. While this condition somewhat replicates the weak creature template by effectively reducing his checks and DCs by 2, his damage remains unchanged, and the PCs still earn XP for defeating him as if he were a level 19 creature.

D. Zauglagaul's Nest

Severe 16

A forty-foot-tall wall of dense, green fungal matter surrounds this sixty-foot-diameter rooftop. Sharp, thorny spires arch up from the rim of that encircling wall, while three ten-foot-wide mushroom stalks grow out of the spongy, moldy floor to different heights in the haze above. A nest made of hundreds of bones and coils of fungal vines rests at the center of the rooftop, within which lies heaped a significant amount of treasure.

If the PCs reach this area without alerting Zauglagaul, they could potentially catch the dragon by surprise. If so, he fights back using his Full Assault tactics, detailed on page 45, but is quick to adjust and swoop down to attack any PC in melee if he sees them meddling with his treasure. The three mushroom spires that grow from this rooftop are solid masses of fungus that each rises to a different height. A smaller, 10-foot-diameter platform sits atop each of these spires, but there's no indication anything is within them; these three spires exist in their own demiplanes.

Treasure: The treasure hoard of a horned dragon lies free for the taking if the PCs have managed to defeat its mighty guardian. The treasure itself is strewn throughout the dragon's nest, and gathering it takes about 30 minutes.

Zauglagaul's treasure includes a large number of minor magical weapons and suits of armor, all harvested from various elven victims. In all, there are 20 various *+1 striking weapons* and 11 different suits

of *+1 armor* strewn about the place, for a combined total value of 3,760 gp. Scattered among these weapons and suits of armor are 429,000 cp, 61,200 sp, 4,162 gp, 1,250 pp, and 11,000 gp in assorted gemstones and minor pieces of jewelry.

Mixed among this already impressive amount of wealth are several items of greater individual value, including a gold ring set with rubies worth 3,000 gp; a flawless diamond worth 5,000 gp; a high-grade platinum statuette of Queen Telandia with opals for eyes that's worth 6,500 gp; a high-grade duskwood violin inlaid with dawnsilver filigree worth 8,000 gp; a standard-grade duskwood case worth 500 gp that contains a rare, first-edition, and signed copy of *Soul of the Wild* worth 12,000 gp (this treatise on primal magic, written by the ancient elven witch Silisifex, grants a +3 item bonus to Nature checks if it's consulted as a 10-minute activity and can also help appease Silisifex in area J7); a high-grade adamantite shield; a suit of *+2 greater resilient standard-grade elven chain* with a *ghost dust talisman* affixed to it; a *+3 greater striking keen greater shock shortbow*; a *greater countering charm*; a *belt of long life*; and a *+3 greater striking vorpal elven curve blade*.

Deathstalk Tower Features

Originally made of stone and enhanced with divine magic sacred to Calistria, the cathedral's corruption into Deathstalk Tower has done more than give it the outward appearance of an immense deathstalk mushroom. The walls, floors, and ceilings of Deathstalk Tower are made of incredibly strong and dense fungal material that's stronger than iron, has Hardness 22 and 88 HP (BT 44), and is immune to acid and fire damage, but as with all walls, smashing through them requires downtime or powerful magic. Furthermore, effects like *shape stone* won't work on these walls at all. One can attempt to communicate with the architecture of Deathstalk Tower via a spell like *speak with plants* (indeed, the Spore Queen does so via her fungaltongue ability now and then to get updates on the PCs as they crawl around inside the immense fungal structure), but anyone other than the Spore Queen who does so finds Deathstalk Tower to be vile, insulting, and profane in all replies. It never gives trustworthy responses.

The Spore Queen has protected some areas within Deathstalk Tower with a 10th-rank *consecrate* ritual, as detailed in their respective encounter locations. In these areas, worshippers of Treerazer gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and Perception checks, while elves take a –1 penalty to these rolls. These areas are unholy, and Strikes made



Tanglebriar Creeper

by worshippers of Treerazer while inside them gain the unholy trait. In these areas, a 10th-rank *planar seal* spell tries to counteract teleportation by non-worshippers of Treerazer, using the Spore Queen's divine spell attack roll for the attempt.

Unless otherwise noted, ceilings in Deathstalk Tower are 10 feet high.

Doors in Deathstalk Tower are made of the same fungal material as its walls, and while all can be locked, most are left unlocked. A locked door can be Forced Open with a DC 40 Athletics check, or with five successful DC 35 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock. Additionally, the fibrous walls have an unsettling habit of exuding slick oils when one attempts to climb them—it's a DC 40 Athletics check to Climb any of the walls in Deathstalk Tower.

Deathstalk Tower automatically repairs damage done to its walls and doors at a rate of 16 restored HP per minute. This repair ability can be lessened or disabled by destroying the undead and hazard on the tower's ground floor (area E).

The area labeled S on the first four floors of the central tower is the shaft that connects area I with

area J1; it can only be physically accessed from either of those two locations.

CALISTRIA'S VENGEANCE

The first time the PCs step into Deathstalk Tower, each hears an angry buzzing, as if a furious wasp were flying just out of sight near their ears. The PCs instinctively realize that its anger isn't directed at them, but at their surroundings. The wasp's buzzing is a manifestation of Calistria, who sees the PCs' presence in Deathstalk Tower as the best chance for her faith to reclaim the corrupted site. The PCs gain the following boons from Calistria as long as they're inside Deathstalk Tower, its dungeon, or its spires.

Deceptive: All PCs become bolstered deceivers. Once per day inside the tower, when they roll a failure on a check to Lie or Feint, they get a critical success instead.

Wasp Guardian: All PCs who worship Calistria also gain a protective wasp guardian that only they can see while inside the tower. This wasp is the size of an apple and can't be harmed or interacted with, but as long as the Calistrian PC can see or hear, the wasp's warnings of danger grant the PC an untyped +2 bonus to all initiative rolls.

Avenging Agent: In addition to the aforementioned boons, any PC who's sanctified holy by Calistria also becomes infused with her need for vengeance. While in the tower, the PC deals 2 additional damage on all Strikes made against inhabitants of Deathstalk Tower, and when they attempt to counteract any enemy effect within the tower, they gain a +2 status bonus to their roll.

CRAMPED QUARTERS

Some of the encounters in Deathstalk Tower, particularly those in the upper floors of the central tower, feature relatively small areas in which combats with large numbers of foes is possible, leaving very little room for movement. This is intentional and is meant to pose another challenge to high-level characters and to force players to be careful about party order and where they move. Of course, a canny party can use these cramped quarters against foes, keeping them from being able to surround the PCs by bottlenecking them in a doorway or hall.

If you find that your group is easily frustrated by this sort of restriction, you have two options to adjust play. The first works best before the PCs begin this

chapter: simply expand the scale of Deathstalk Tower so that the squares double in size. You'll want to keep in mind that any furniture on the map shouldn't scale as well in this case!

Another option, and one that works well if your group grows frustrated in this way after a few close-quarter fights, is to simply reduce the number of foes in an area and have the enemies you removed from these encounters be confronted elsewhere or on return forays into the tower. In effect, this places some of the listed inhabitants out of the tower on short errands or otherwise wandering the halls, keeping them in play as potential reinforcements.

E1. Gathering Garden Moderate 16

Ledges and bridges cross this chamber's open floor, which drops down twenty feet into a tangled mass of spiky fungus. Two doors sit in the wall to the north, while a walkway to the east leads to a ten-foot-square landing at the base of a flight of stairs leading upward. Nearby, another flight of stairs leads down from a walkway into the tangles below. A fountain-like area directly north of the entrance contains a pulsing mass of diseased-looking fungus that periodically spurts blasts of gray spores into the air. Several twitching tendrils of green fungus wind out of this mass to hang down into the tangles below, and glistening gossamer sheets of what seem to be spiderwebs cover the walls, floors, and the ceiling.

Once a place where elegant plants were cultivated to give visitors to the temple a taste of Calistria's gardens in Elysium, the garden below is now an affront to that very concept. The area beneath the walkway is open, its northern wall aligned with the upper wall that separates off areas E2–E4. The thorny fungus here is difficult terrain and also hazardous terrain that inflicts 2d6 piercing damage to anyone who walks through it.

The fungal orb in the fountain is a unique Jeharlur Spore, and the PCs should immediately recognize it as such because it's similar to the spores they encountered in the previous adventure. As with those spores, this one is a dangerous presence—see Hazard below.

Creatures: A pair of immense green-and-gray Leng spiders have long dwelled in the tangles below. They were originally drawn here from their realm by the nightmares of captured elven priests brought to this tower during Treerazer's first war against the elves, and they've grown more powerful over the centuries, appearing to be infested with growths of fungus themselves. They're favored allies of the Spore Queen, who often visits the two creepers to hear stories of the awful horrors that take place daily

in Leng. The creepers cling underneath the central platform and can use their greater web sense to track the movements of the PCs through the area. They roll for initiative with Stealth once the hazard is triggered or once a PC descends down into the lower area, clambering horribly up over the edges into melee with the PCs and using *warp mind* on any PC whose magic seems to be particularly effective. They fight to the death.

TANGLEBRIAR CREEPERS (2) CREATURE 15

RARE HUGE ABERRATION DREAM FUNGUS

Variant Leng spider (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 157)

Perception +27; darkvision, *detect magic*, greater web sense

Languages Aklo; *truespeech*

Skills Acrobatics +29, Athletics +30, Crafting +29 (+33 to make traps), Deception +27, Occultism +29, Religion +27, Stealth +29

Str +7, **Dex** +8, **Con** +6, **Int** +8, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +6

Greater Web Sense As Leng spider.

AC 37; **Fort** +25, **Dex** +29, **Will** +27; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 275, fast healing 15; **Immunities** cold, confused; **Resistances** poison 15, sonic 15

Speed 40 feet, climb 40 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ web war flail +30 (disarm, magical, reach 15 feet, sweep, trip), **Damage** 3d10+15 bludgeoning plus 1d6 poison

Melee ♦ fangs +30 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+15 piercing plus Leng spider venom

Melee ♦ leg +30 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d8+15 slashing

Ranged ♦ web bola +30 (magical, nonlethal, ranged trip, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 3d6+15 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 36; **8th** *dispel magic*, *illusory disguise*, *warp mind*; **7th** *illusory scene*, *mislead*; **4th** *charm* (×3), *unfettered movement*; **Cantrips** (8th) *detect magic*; **Constant** (8th) *fly*, *truespeech*

Create Web Weaponry ♦ (manipulate) As Leng spider, but any melee weapon created by a Tanglebriar creeper also becomes saturated with toxin and inflicts an additional 1d6 poison damage on a hit.


Descend on a Web ♦ (move) As Leng spider.

Lay Web Trap ♦ (manipulate) **Frequency** three times per day; **Effect** As Leng spider, but Escape DC 43.

Leng Spider Venom (poison) As Leng spider, but DC 36.

Ranged Trip As Leng spider.

Hazard: The unique Jeharlur Spore that grows in this area's dry fountain appears similar to the fungal heart the PCs discovered at the end of the previous adventure, but this one is half that one's size and its



purpose is quite different. While the fungal heart was a weapon of destruction and fungal colonization, this one is more akin to a stomach. Its frequent exhalation of toxic spores is, while dangerous, a side effect of its primary goal—to provide a method by which Deathstalk Tower can drain toxic nutrients from the corrupted moat that surrounds it outside.

If the spore stomach is disabled or destroyed, Deathstalk Tower loses the ability to draw nutrients from the environment until the Spore Queen builds a new spore stomach—a task that takes over a month to complete. Deathstalk Tower won't immediately "starve," but the water that surrounds it slowly builds up, and after a few weeks, it becomes deep enough to flood into this floor and begins to fill the garden below. Thereafter, the water simply spreads into the surrounding area and eventually forms a large, shallow lake from which the tower extends. As long as the spore stomach is destroyed, Deathstalk Tower loses its self-repairing ability as well.

SPORE STOMACH

HAZARD 13

UNIQUE COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL FUNGUS

Stealth +27 (master) to detect that the spore stomach is hazardous; noticing the spore stomach has a DC of 0

Description A puffball-like fungus periodically vents gray spores into the air.

Disable DC 37 Nature (master) three times to carefully prune away the fungal roots that connect to the garden below, or DC 37 Religion (master) three times to exorcise the demonic energies from the fungus

AC 37; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +20

Hardness 22; **HP** 90 (BT 45); **Immunities** acid, critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** cold 15, cold iron 15; **Resistances** fire 15

Defensive Spray ⤵ (divine, poison) **Trigger** The spore stomach takes damage, an attempt to disable it fails, or combat breaks out in area **E1**; **Effect** The spore stomach clenches, exuding gray spores in a 20-foot emanation. Non-fungus creatures in this area take 10d6 poison damage (DC 37 basic Fortitude save). The spore stomach then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action; divine, poison) On the first round, the spore stomach sprays a 40-foot-long cone of spores into the left half of area **E1**. On the second round, it sprays spores into the right half of area **E1**. On the third round, it takes no action. It repeats this pattern thereafter every 3 rounds. A creature in the area of spores takes 10d6 poison damage (DC 37 basic Fortitude save).

Reset The spore stomach deactivates if it starts a turn and there are no non-fungus creatures in area **E1**. It then immediately resets.

E2. Servants' Lounge

Trivial 16

A moldy table with four chairs is pushed up into this room's northern corner, while to the southeast, shelves of books eaten through with mold sag from the wall.

Creatures: Long ago, the tower kept a small staff of servants whose duties included cleaning and maintenance—food was generally provided for everyone in the tower from external suppliers. As with the rest of the elves in Shevaroth, these servants fled to Castrovel just before Earthfall, and for centuries, this room stood empty.

When she took up residence in Deathstalk Tower, the Spore Queen brought a half-dozen undead elves with her—elves who perished in the depths of Tanglebriar and rose as bhutas. Today, these bhutas live out a mockery of the lives the elven servants once did, and their roles aren't that different thematically. Rather than clean and maintain the tower, these incorporeal, undead elves serve as conduits through which the toxins in the surrounding moat can be drawn in to nourish the spore stomach in area **E1**. The bhutas look like ghostly elves with faces twisted in pain and backwards feet, but they also feature dozens of tiny ectoplasmic filaments that extend out from their chests and slither into the surrounding walls, periodically pulsing with unsettling green light. Destroying the bhutas won't stop Deathstalk Tower from drawing sustenance, but it will make the process slower. Each one that's destroyed reduces the HP restoration rate for Deathstalk Tower by 2, down to a rate of 4 HP per minute if all six are eliminated.

Of the six bhuta servants, four drift aimlessly in this room. Once combat begins, they pursue foes throughout this floor, and the other two found in area **E3** join the fight within a few rounds. If the spore stomach in area **E1** is destroyed or disabled, these bhuta servants become slowed 1.

BHUTA SERVANTS (4)

CREATURE 12

RARE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL UNDEAD

Variant bhutas (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 76)

Perception +24; darkvision

Languages Arboreal, Chthonian, Common, Elven, Necril; *speak with plants*

Skills Arcana +22, Deception +24, Intimidation +24, Nature +26, Survival +24

Str -5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** +5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +7

Bound As bhuta; bound to the interior of Deathstalk Tower.

Shadowless A bhuta casts no shadow.

AC 32; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +26, **Will** +24

HP 175, void healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, poison, precision, unconscious; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5;

Resistances all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +26 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d12+15 piercing plus 1d8 persistent bleed

Melee ♦ claw +26 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d10+15 slashing

Primal Innate Spells DC 32, attack +26; **6th** *toxic cloud*; **5th** *harm*, *vampiric feast*; **3rd** *fear*; **Cantrips (6th)** *daze*, *tangle vine*; **Constant (3rd)** *speak with plants*

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, occult, polymorph) As bhuta, into the form of a Large, Medium, or Small bat, insect, or arachnid.

Ectoplasmic Lash ♦♦ (divine) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The bhuta lashes out with one of the strands of ectoplasm that keep it linked to Deathstalk Tower, inflicting 13d6 spirit damage to all living creatures of the bhuta's choice within 15 feet (DC 32 basic Will save).

Primal Corruption As bhuta.

E3. Servants' Quarters Trivial 16

This room features a dresser and a bed, both of which are in terrible moldering condition. What appear to be empty portrait frames are built into the walls.

These rooms once served as servants' quarters but are completely neglected today. The "portrait frames" were once false windows, with artistic magic inside each conveying the illusion of being able to look out over the surrounding city. These enchantments have long since faded.

Creatures: Two of these rooms (the two farthest to the east) house a bhuta servant each. If the PCs encounter one of these bhtas first, they raise a shrieking alarm, and those in area E2 come to their aid in a few rounds.

BHUTA SERVANTS (2) CREATURE 12

Page 50

Initiative Perception +24

F1. Stairwell

Doors stand in the southern wall of this long, curving hall. A set of runes "written" in streaks of glowing green fungus shimmers on the frame above each door.

The stairs here lead 40 feet down to area E1. The three rooms off of this hallway (areas F2–F4) were once specialized shrines to Calistria where favored worshippers could go seek aid or enlightenment, but today, all three are corruptions of those Calistrian

values, each now associated with more sinister concepts linked to Treerazer's faith.

The fungus runes above each door are written in Chthonian, but a creature that looks closely enough to read them notices that a different phrase is engraved on the wall under the fungus. If the fungus is wiped away as an Interact action, the original phrase, carved into the lintel in Elven, can be read. The phrases found here will be used again in area I to activate the spire portals.

F2. Shrine of Razing

The fungal inscription above this door reads, "Razing Ruins their Hope." The elven carving behind it reads, "Vengeance is our Absolution."

The southeast portion of this room is blocked off by a wall of rusty iron bars in which a cell door is set. A dead elf, his body partially consumed and transformed into mold and mushrooms, lies on the floor in the cell.


The Calistrians were always careful to ensure that prisoners here were confirmed to be guilty and preferred to tailor vengeful punishments to fit their crimes. Execution was never a sentence at this cathedral, but nowadays, the shrine of vengeance has been corrupted and transformed into a shrine of razing. Here, the Spore Queen imprisons those who have wronged her, vexed Tanglebriar, or blasphemed against Treerazer; she sentences them to torture and eventual slaughter, with the lucky ones merely being executed rather than transformed into a spore thrall.

Treasure: If an NPC allied with the PCs had been captured earlier in this adventure, or even if one of the PCs is caught, they can be recovered here at your discretion. Otherwise, the remains of the Spore Queen's latest victim, an elven spy captured behind enemy lines, are all that lie within this chamber. Most of the spy's gear is ruined, but a PC who Seeks the remains finds a 7th-rank *wand of cleanse affliction* protruding from a hidden pocket on the inside of his left boot—a prize that remained cleverly hidden until the mold and fungus ate enough of the corpse's clothing away.

F3. Shrine of Corruption

The fungal inscription above this door reads, "Corruption Controls their Fate." The elven carving behind it reads, "Trickery is our Delight."

The left and right walls of this room feature floor-to-ceiling shelves. Whatever they once held, they now contain only twitching clots of mold and fungus around tangles of mismatched bones.



The shelves once held a wide range of items, tools, and manuals for the construction of practical jokes, rigged contraptions, and other implements helpful in pursuing the whimsies of trickery. The elves brought these supplies with them when they fled to Castrovel, and today, the shelves are filled with corruption growing from a wide combination of bones harvested from elves, animals, fey, and other Kyonin natives. There's nothing to be found here, but anyone who searches through the shelves is exposed to crimson ooze (*GM Core* 89).

F4. Shrine of Pollution

The fungal inscription above this door reads, "Pollution Feeds their Pain." The elven carving behind it reads, "Lust is our Love."

The farthest half of this room is a bath filled with what appears to be crystal-clear water, yet the acrid stink in the air suggests that the water is anything other than pure.

Formerly used by elven priests of Calistria to bring pleasure to favored worshippers, this shrine's

once-rejuvenating waters are now hopelessly polluted. A PC who ends their turn in this room must succeed at a DC 35 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 (or sickened 2 on a critical failure) by the foul stink in the air. The water in the bath feels strangely clammy and oily, and a character who comes into contact with it becomes cursed such that all forms of liquid they drink thereafter taste of foul pollution. This manifests as an unending thirst curse (*GM Core* 87). If a PC fully immerses themselves in the water or swallows any of it, the curse's DC increases to DC 37. *Cleanse cuisine* has no effect on this polluted water, but the Break Curse feat can remove the unending thirst curse on the bath.

F5. Deathstalk Cathedral Moderate 16

The ceiling in this chamber arches upward, reaching a height of forty feet at the center of the room. To the south, a pair of long, curved benches provide seating before a pulpit that sits ten feet above the floor to the south.

A pair of curved stairwells rise up to this pulpit, then continue upward through arches to the pulpit's left and right. An immense statue of a demonic winged humanoid with a reptilian head—the demon lord Treerazer—looms at the back of the platform, while directly south, a small balcony stands ten feet above the ground. A thick wall of thorny fungus grows over double doors in the southern wall of this balcony.

The inhabitants of Deathstalk Tower don't perform public sermons or rituals for the people of Tanglebriar, but that doesn't mean they neglect their sacred duties to Treerazer. The balcony to the south provides access to the outer pulpit (area F7)—priests used *fly* or other forms of magic to reach this balcony, but the current occupant has little interest in using that pulpit. The thorny fungus covering the doors to the south can be removed with any slashing weapon and about 5 minutes of chopping, or the fungus can be Forced Open with a DC 35 Athletics check. Each attempt to Force Open the thorny fungus inflicts 5d6 piercing damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save) to the person attempting it.

This area is protected by a *consecrate* ritual placed here by the Spore Queen and focused on the statue of Treerazer.

Creature: The looming statue depicting Treerazer is fearsome and unsettling, but despite the fear it



Irshandi

might inspire in adventurers, it isn't a construct. The dangers posed by this cathedral instead come from its caretaker, Irshandi, and her four subservient omox demons. During the first war against Treerazer, Irshandi was a powerful druid and the sometimes-lover of the legendary elven witch Silisifex, and she accompanied her love on her ill-fated mission to reclaim Shevaroth back in 3050 AR. Silisifex and her other Calistrian followers met their fates in the dungeons below Tanglebriar, in large part due to Irshandi's treachery—she sold her love out in exchange for power from Treerazer himself. This betrayal largely doomed Silisifex's attempt to purge Shevaroth, and in return, Treerazer transformed Irshandi into a partially petrified undead monstrosity—a siabrae.

At first, Irshandi gloried in her newfound power, but when it became apparent she'd been bound to Deathstalk Tower as surely as Silisifex and the other Calistrans were, she realized she'd made an irrevocable mistake. Over the ages to follow, the fallen druid went through centuries of anger, grief, regret, and finally acceptance. Today, her previous personality is all but gone, and she serves as the undead heart of Deathstalk Tower, leading daily rituals to ensure it remains strong and continues to serve as one of Treerazer's greatest trophies.

When she notices the PCs, Irshandi turns away from the statue of Treerazer and invites them to kneel and worship the Lord of the Blasted Tarn. She promises that if they allow themselves to be offered up in sacrifice, they'll escape lives of torment and agony when Treerazer finally spreads his power throughout Kyonin and into the world beyond. Far beyond redemption and with her old love for Silisifex as petrified as her bony frame, Irshandi reacts to anything other than self-destructive submission with rage and attacks. Her omox demon servants slurp forth to engage the PCs in melee while she hangs back and uses her staff and spells to attack from the upraised stage. She fights until destroyed and can't leave area E5.

Unlike the typical siabrae, Irshandi can't use druid order spells; her obedience and faith in Treerazer precludes the use of this magic entirely.

IRSHANDI

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE MEDIUM UNDEAD UNHOLY

Variant female siabrae (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 145)

Initiative Perception +31

Items *major staff of the tempest* (*Player Core* 2 308)

Primal Prepared Spells DC 41, attack +33; **8th** *chain lightning*, *harm*, *lightning bolt*; **7th** *dispel magic*, *execute*, *harm*; **6th** *cursed metamorphosis*, *petrify*, *truesight*; **5th** *fireball*, *impaling spike*, *wall of thorns*; **4th** *fly*, *unfettered*

movement, *wall of fire*; **3rd** *blindness*, *earthbind*, *slow*; **2nd** *mist*, *one with plants*, *revealing light*; **1st** *charm*, *fear*, *gust of wind*; **Cantrips** (8th) *caustic blast*, *electric arc*, *ignition*, *sigil*, *tangle vine*

OMOX DEMONS (4)

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Monster Core 79

Initiative Stealth +24

Treasure: Once Irshandi is slain, the petrified fungus that encrusts her *major staff of the tempest* (*Player Core* 2 308) crumbles away to dust, leaving behind a distinctive and elegant item made of duskwood and emblazoned with imagery of wasps swarming amid bolts of lightning. This distinctive-looking staff can help the PCs get through to Silisifex's ghost in area J7.

F6. Cathedral Storage

Fungus-infested shelves and crumbled chests are all that remain of what once likely served as a storeroom for religious supplies.

Since the occupants of Deathstalk Tower don't perform public services, they have little use for this chamber and have allowed it to fall into ruin.

Treasure: A hidden panel on the highest shelf to the north can be discovered if a PC Seeks and succeeds at a DC 35 Perception check. Within lies a single item left behind long ago—a neatly folded, scandalously cut, and elegant Calistrian robe that functions as +2 *greater resilient greater ready winged explorer's clothing*. When activated, the wings created by the robes look like giant wasp wings. A PC who's holy sanctified to Calistria can sense the presence of this armor and discovers the hidden panel automatically if they Seek.

F7. Outer Pulpit

Low 16

This ten-foot-wide balcony looks out over the boggy amphitheater to the south of Deathstalk Tower. A pair of fungus-encrusted statues of Treerazer squat to either side of it, while a set of double doors, its gaps plugged with thorny-looking mold, sits in the tower's outer wall.

The doors to area F5 are stuck shut; from this side, they must be Forced Open with a DC 40 Athletics check.

Creatures: The two statues of Treerazer aren't hostile constructs, but each does house a briargeist. The incorporeal undead lurk within the statues and don't take part in any battles that take place in areas

C or D; they emerge to attack foes only if someone attempts to enter Deathstalk Tower through the doors to area F5. Once a fight begins, though, they pursue foes relentlessly until they're destroyed.

BRIARGEISTS (2)

CREATURE 15

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Initiative Stealth +29

G1. Scout's Lounge

Low 16

Flights of stairs descend and ascend to either side of this circular lounge, although the decor in the chamber is hardly conducive to relaxation for creatures other than natives to Tanglebriar. The two chairs facing a fungus-encrusted table are equally malformed and unpleasant, while what bubbles in the iron cauldron simmering over a fire in a glistening, greasy-looking hearth to the north looks anything but appetizing. To the south, four doors are set into the wall.

This floor once served as a home for the temple's four resident underpriests, although they didn't spend much time here. Today, the four rooms instead house two different pairs of specialized servants of Treerazer, but only one pair is currently present on this floor. The cauldron's contents are a foul mix of boiled bones, rotting vegetables, and preserved deathstalk mushrooms.

Creatures: A pair of elite sporescout leshies are currently relaxing in this room, each seated in one chair while they take turns entertaining the other with violent boasts or spoonfuls of the concoction bubbling in the cauldron. These two sporescouts, Scabbysty and Dribblewen, sometimes serve the Spore Queen as spies, but since the launch of the Spore War, she's recalled them back here to serve as guards. They react to the PCs' arrival with scoffing laughs, and Scabbysty comments (in Fey) that Dribblewen owes him a dozen braised elf tongues for "losing the bet." What that bet might have been is unclear, however, as the two leshies

eagerly attack. If one sporescout is slain, the other gives vent to a nonstop stream of profanities as he flees up the stairs to the floor above, intent on warning the scribes in area H1.

ELITE SPORESCOUTS (2)

CREATURE 15

Page 14, *Pathfinder Monster Core* 6

Initiative Perception +26

Treasure: The cauldron contains four doses of stew, each of which functions as a single dose of deathstalk mushroom (page 83) to non-fungi. To fungus creatures, the stew is mildly intoxicating and tasty.

G2. Acolyte Quarters

A low, shelflike ledge occupies the far side of this room, on which is strewn a lumpy-looking "mattress" made of sheets of mold and decaying mushroom caps. A partially collapsed dresser leans against a wall.

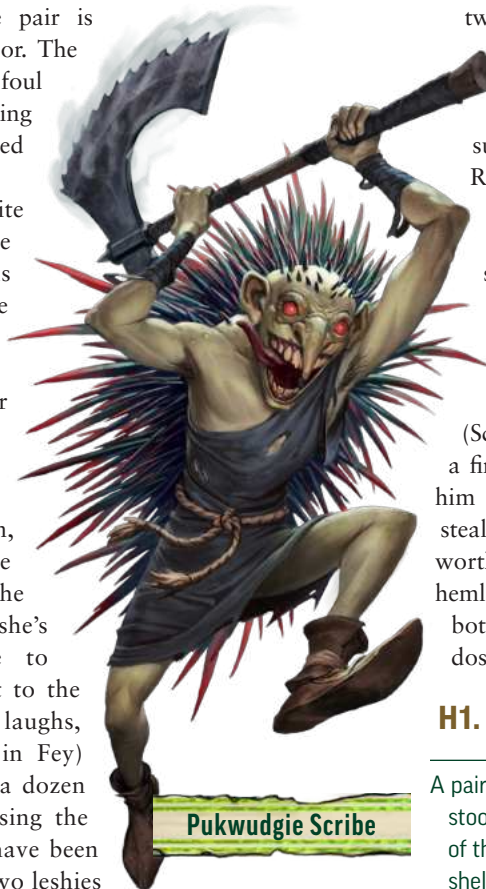
Each of these rooms once served as private quarters for the temple priests. Today, two function as homes for the sporescouts in area G1, while the other two house the scribes in area H1—a search of the latter two (the two rooms to the east) turns up a fair number of discarded pukwudgie quills, which can be identified as such with a successful DC 23 Nature check to Recall Knowledge. If the PC critically succeeds, they note that the quills seem particularly sturdy and sharp, suggesting they come from a much more powerful pukwudgie than the norm.

Treasure: In the westernmost room, one of the sporescouts (Scabbysty) left a "treasure" behind as a final prank against anyone who kills him and then barges into his room to steal his things—a fine crystal vial (itself worth 30 gp) that contains a dose of hemlock (*GM Core* 249). The joke? The bottle is mislabeled, in Chthonian, as a dose of *sun orchid elixir*.

H1. Scriptorium

Low 16

A pair of relatively clean wooden tables with stools stand back-to-back against the walls of this room, while to the north, tall, curved shelves contain all manner of scrolls and



Pukwudgie Scribe

writing supplies. The ceiling rises to a height of twenty feet, giving the small room an airy feel.

Creatures: The Spore Queen has two of her assistant clerics working here to produce various scrolls that she then disperses to other clerics embedded in platoons of soldiers throughout Tanglebriar. These two scribes work eagerly here: a pair of pukwudgies named Eyelancet and Stitchlip. These fey, like so many others lost to Tanglebriar, have been corrupted by the region, and long, thin, twitching filaments of glowing fungus grow out in droves from amid the spines on their backs. The two have developed a particularly efficient method for scribing scrolls involving toxic or fungal effects by using quills plucked from their own bodies as writing implements.

If the scribes have been warned about the PCs from one of the sporescouts on the lower floor, both pukwudgies cast *invisibility* on themselves. One of them accompanies the sporescout into area **H2** and then up the stairs to area **I** to mount a final defense against the PCs there, while the other scribe remains in hiding here to ambush the PCs and slow their pursuit. If the PCs confront the scribes here without giving them advance warning, they do their best to hold the room down, but if one of them is slain, the other flees to area **I** to make a last stand there.

PUKWUDGIE SCRIBES (2)

CREATURE 15

RARE SMALL FEY FUNGUS UNHOLY

Variant pukwudgie cleric (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 279)

Perception +27; low-light vision

Languages Chthonian, Common, Elven, Fey

Skills Crafting +27, Deception +29, Medicine +27, Nature +27, Religion +29, Stealth +29

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +6

Items +2 greater striking corrosive unholy greataxe

AC 37; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +25, **Will** +29

HP 274; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15; **Resistance** poison 15

Defensive Quills As pukwudgie, but 6d6 piercing damage and 2d6 poison damage with a DC 33 basic Reflex save.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *greataxe* +29 (magic, sweep); **Damage** 3d12+12 slashing plus 1d6 acid and 1d4 spirit

Primal Innate Spells DC 36; **7th** *mirage*, unfettered movement, wall of thorns; **4th** *invisibility* (self only, at will)

Divine Prepared Spells DC 36, attack +28; **8th** *divine wrath*, harm (×6), vampiric exsanguination; **7th** *divine decree*, heal, regenerate; **6th** *dominate*, heal, truesight; **5th** *command*, sending, vampiric feast; **4th** *blood vendetta*, fly, talking corpse; **3rd** *blindness*, fear, vampiric feast;

2nd *blood vendetta*, see the unseen, translate; **1st** *command*, enfeeble, sanctuary; **Cantrips** (8th) *daze*, *divine lance*, *light*, *read aura*, *shield*

Cleric Domain Spells 2 Focus Points, DC 36, attack +28; **8th** *shared nightmare* (*Player Core* 377), *waking nightmare* (*Player Core* 377)

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal) As pukwudgie, but quill strike +27 for 3d10+11 piercing plus 2d8 persistent poison.

Pukwudgie Poison (poison) As pukwudgie, but DC 36.

Treasure: When the scribes complete work on a scroll, they set it aside on the western end of the northern shelf, where the parchments are weighed down with a *major potency crystal talisman* used as a paperweight. The current stack of scrolls here includes a *scroll of dominate*, a *scroll of dream message* (4th rank), a *scroll of execute*, a *scroll of heal* (7th rank), a *scroll of moment of renewal*, a *scroll of sending*, a *scroll of tangling creepers*, a *scroll of tanglecurse* (page 75), and a *scroll of ray of corruption* (page 75).



Fungal Amalgamite

H2. Library

Low 16

The walls of this oddly shaped room are obscured by floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. The shelves are caked with mold, and tendrils of fibrous fungus dangle from the edges like gauzy curtains that obscure the rows upon rows of books that fill the shelves. Lengths of thorny vines hang in crisscrossing loops from the twenty-foot-high ceiling, drooping down in places nearly to the floor. Almost a dozen bodies, each wrapped tightly in vines, dangle at different heights or are bound to the walls or against the ceiling.

The fungus hanging from the ceiling grows out of Deathstalk Tower. A creature can Climb these vines with a DC 20 Athletics check, maneuvering through any part of the room's upper areas.

Tangled in these vines are the bodies of several elves, their remains preserved by unholy nutrients injected into their flesh by the thorns. Just as the books below contain lore, so too do these remains, for these are the bodies of movers and shakers who, over the centuries, have been brought here to serve as additional fonts of information about Kyonin. *Talking corpse* is used often on these remains, which are swapped out periodically as a body's information grows outdated or irrelevant.

Creatures: Among the dead bodies are four elves who are still alive, although as twisted blasphemies who now view Treerazer as their lord. These elves have been warped through Tanglebriar's influence into twisted aberrations known as amalgamites. Unlike the typical amalgamite, these creatures' limbs are largely boneless and constantly twist and knot against their bent and distorted bodies. The vines that suspend them grow through their flesh, making them as much fungus as they are aberrations. These fungal amalgamites can essentially fly through the air as the mass of hyphae attached to them moves them through the chamber like marionettes. This does prevent an amalgamite from being able to pursue foes out of this room, but they otherwise fight to the death, hoping to use their transpose ability to swap places with a PC so that they become gripped by the fungal vines.

FUNGAL AMALGAMITES (4) CREATURE 13

RARE MEDIUM ABERRATION FUNGUS

Variant amalgamites (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 14)

Initiative Perception +23

Destabilizing Field (aura) As amalgamite, but doesn't affect fungi or plant creatures.

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet

Occult Innate Spells DC 33; **7th** *spirit blast*, *warp mind*; **4th** *talking corpse* (×2)

Transpose ♦♦ (concentrate, occult, teleportation) As amalgamite, except if the amalgamite is wrapped in vines when it Transposes with a PC, the amalgamite loses its fly speed and the PC must attempt a DC 33 Reflex save.

Critical Success The PC isn't gripped by the vines. They either fall or they can cling to the vines and then Climb through them.

Success As critical success, but the PC must succeed at a DC 33 Reflex save to Grab an Edge to cling to the vines.

Failure The PC is immobilized by the vines until they Escape (DC 33).

Critical Failure As failure, but the PC is restrained.

Unrisen Slithermaw

Treasure: Although the shelves in this room are filthy with mold, the books on the shelves are curiously pristine. This vast collection of books includes a staggering number of rare tomes about elven history and constitutes one of Tanglebriar's most important tactical resources. If the PCs destroy or remove this collection from Deathstalk Tower, grant them 1 Triumph Point.

The collection of just over 750 books is 75 Bulk in all. If they are used as part of any exploration or downtime activity to research or Recall Knowledge about elves, Kyonin, Castrovel, *aiudara*, or any similar topic, they grant a +3 item bonus to the check. The collection is worth 14,000 gp in all—if the PCs deliver this collection to Kyonin, Queen Telandia eagerly pays this price to the PCs as a reward for the service.

I. Deathstalk Aiudara Moderate 16

This entire floor consists of a single domed chamber. The ceiling rises to a height of twenty-five feet and is infested with an unsettling, tangled pattern of oily, multicolored mold and fungus that evokes a powerful sense of vertigo even at a glance. A flight of stairs to the southeast winds down to a lower floor, while to the north, a large stone archway opens into a platform with fungus-encrusted chains attached to rusting, ruined winches—a lift platform that doesn't look very operational at all. To the west, a dais presents a place to stand before an eight-foot-wide and ten-foot-tall archway. Apart from being constructed from the same material as Deathstalk Tower and featuring carvings of elven cities being violated and destroyed by demons, this large archway looks strangely similar to other *aiudara*.

This area is protected by a *consecrate* ritual placed here by the Spore Queen; the ritual effect is focused on the circular slab to the west. Remember that as long as this effect is in place, the PCs won't be able to use the shrine to teleport to any of the spire chambers!

The flight of stairs leads down to area H2.

Creature: Before the PCs have a chance to examine either of the most interesting parts of this room, they must contend with its horrific guardian. Coiled in the center of the chamber is what appears to be a twitching, raw tangle of undead snakes, some of them little more than skeletons while others are in advanced states of decay. Still more look horrifically inverted, with their entrails and bones twisted around a central, knotted stalk of scaly skin. Each snake's head is adorned with horns and has a mouth full of fangs. The tangled mass hisses and roars out in pain as it rises up,

revealing itself not to be a ball of snakes but some sort of twelve-headed, undead hydra. Any PC who took part in the Hydra Chop challenge in Chapter 1 of the previous adventure has a sudden flash of insight as they realize something truly awful—they stand before the undead remains of Slithermaw, one of the oldest remnants from the first war against Tanglebriar so long ago!

This is, indeed, the reanimated carcass of Slithermaw, a demonic hydra who ruled the region around modern-day Greengold in the time just before elves returned to Kyonin. A PC who didn't take part in Hydra Chop can recognize the creature with a DC 30 Religion check to Recall Knowledge. If they critically succeed, they also intuit that this creature is a shattered mockery of what Slithermaw once was—his body is missing a large amount of his previous, lower serpentine length. Though the Spore Queen hoped to resurrect Slithermaw and install the powerful hydra here as a dangerous guardian, her attempt to bring the legendary fiend back to life backfired. Instead, he returned from death as an unrisen: a mangled mess of flesh and bones that, while not nearly as powerful as the original Slithermaw, still remained a potent creation. Disappointed, she left the undead demonic hydra here as a guardian, making plans to revisit her attempt to resurrect him fully after completing her current secret task for Treerazer. It's fortunate for the PCs that her plan backfired, of course, as the original, living Slithermaw was a level 21 creature, but this pain-addled remnant is no pushover. The PCs learn this swiftly; the moment they enter, the unrisen Slithermaw lurches forward, fighting until destroyed.

It's possible that some of the inhabitants from areas G1 or H1 have fled here as well (potentially increasing this to a severe 16 encounter—or beyond). In this case, they let the unrisen Slithermaw engage the PCs in melee while they hang back and use ranged attacks and magic, but regardless, this is their last stand. They all fight to the death.

UNRISEN SLITHERMAW

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE LARGE FIEND UNDEAD UNHOLY

Variant unrisen (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 153)

Perception +32; darkvision, lifesense 30 feet

Languages Chthonian, Necril (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +35

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** -1, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +6

AC 41; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +32

HP 350, meant to live, void healing; **Immunities** bleed, death, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious;

Weaknesses Calistria's Bane 15, *Slithermaw's Bane*, resurrection vulnerability

Meant to Live (occult) As unrisen.

Reactive Strike ➤ The unrisen Slithermaw gains 12 extra reactions per round beyond its first, which it can only use to make Reactive Strikes. He can't use more than 1 reaction on the same triggering action, even if a creature leaves several squares on the same triggering action.

Resurrection Vulnerability As unrisen.

Rise Again (occult) If the unrisen Slithermaw is reduced to 0 Hit Points by means other than fire damage, disintegration, damage caused by a character wearing *Slithermaw's Bane*, or his resurrection vulnerability, he returns to unlife at the start of his next turn. He has 150 Hit Points and is prone in the space in which he was destroyed. He can't be returned to unlife by this ability again for 1 hour.

Slithermaw's Bane If a PC wears *Slithermaw's Bane* (page 82), the unrisen Slithermaw focuses his attacks on that PC. A PC who wears *Slithermaw's Bane* is immune to all poison damage caused by the unrisen Slithermaw. Whenever such a PC scores a critical hit on the unrisen Slithermaw, the undead hydra becomes frightened 2. The unrisen Slithermaw is not immune to poison inflicted by *Slithermaw's Bane* when Calistria's Sting is activated and in fact has weakness 15 to this poison damage.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ➤ jaws +24 (deadly d10, magical); **Damage** 3d10+17 piercing plus 2d6 poison and Grab

Awful Approach ➤ As unrisen, but DC 37 Fortitude save.

Death Grip ➤ (curse, occult) As unrisen, but DC 40.

Poisonous Breath ➤➤ (occult, poison) The unrisen Slithermaw breathes out a toxic cloud of foul vapor from its heads in all directions at once. Creatures within a 30-foot emanation take 15d8 poison damage (DC 40 basic Fortitude save). The unrisen Slithermaw can't use Poisonous Breath again for 1d4 rounds.

Storm of Jaws ➤➤ The unrisen Slithermaw makes up to 12 jaws Strikes, each against a different target. These attacks count toward his multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after he makes all of his attacks.

DEATHSTALK LIFT

Despite its ruined appearance, the lift is perfectly safe to use to travel down through the central tower into area **J1** of the dungeons below. Activating it requires a creature that is standing on the platform (or who is standing in area **I** and is touching the stone arch surrounding the entrance to the platform) to mentally will the lift to move via an Interact action with the concentrate trait. This causes the lift to move 20 feet down or up between this area and area **J1**. This action can be Sustained. The platform may be commanded to move only once per round; in the case of multiple creatures attempting to move it, resolve the order via an initiative check, and whoever wins gets to move the platform that round in the direction they prefer.

A successful check to Identify Magic (DC 30 for Arcana, or DC 35 for Nature, Occultism, or Religion) is all that's needed to understand this function.

DEATHSTALK AIUDARA

The archway to the west's *aiudara*-like appearance is no coincidence, for this magical portal was once constructed by employing the same sort of methods used to build the elven *aiudara*. This one was built from the same material that comprises Deathstalk Tower's walls, and while it looks similar to other *aiudara* the PCs may have encountered, even a short examination of this portal is enough to reveal that its construction seems cruder and less artistic than the artisanship displayed in actual *aiudara*. This is because this *aiudara* has been corrupted by Treerazer as part of Deathstalk Tower's rise and Shevaroth's fall.

Even before the city's fall, this *aiudara* was a lesser portal, one not connected to the larger network. Instead, it provided access to the tower's inner sanctum, an extradimensional space contained "inside" the tower's spires. To visit the inner sanctum, a traveler needed only to repeat three sacred phrases before the lesser *aiudara*



and present a religious symbol of Calistria that had been blessed by one of the cathedral's priests. The portal would then open, allowing passage into the inner sanctum (area **K**).

Today, this function remains intact, but the phrases to trigger the portal to the spires has changed to three short prayers to Treerazer—the same short prayers the PCs may have noticed on the shrine doors on the tower's second floor (areas **F2–F5**). Speaking these three phrases isn't enough by itself, though, for the speaker must also present a specially blessed religious symbol of Treerazer to open the portal. Functional symbols are possessed by those who dwell within the inner sanctum, a security feature the Spore Queen is comfortable relying on to keep undesirables like the PCs out while she and her agents complete their secret project.

What the Spore Queen doesn't realize, however, is that two potential options to fulfill this requirement lie below in Deathstalk Tower's dungeons—see areas **J4** and **J7**.

Any PC who examines the *Deathstalk aiudara* can attempt a DC 35 check to Identify Magic with the following results. A PC who worships Calistria or who carries *Soulcutter* (page 82) and attempts the check has their thoughts supernaturally guided toward the proper solution (either by Silisifex's ghost or by Calistria herself) and increases their rolled result by one degree of success.

Critical Success The PC learns that this is a *lesser aiudara*, and that it can open a portal to an extradimensional location hidden "inside" the spires of Deathstalk Tower. They learn how to activate this *lesser aiudara* as if they rolled a success (see below), but they also detect a sort of spiritual "tugging" from somewhere deep below them and intuitively understand that a method to bypass the religious symbol requirement lies somewhere in chambers below Deathstalk Tower.

Success The PC recognizes that this archway is a portal that, when activated, provides access to an extradimensional place hidden within Deathstalk Tower's spires. They also learn that to activate the portal, they must present a specially prepared religious symbol of Treerazer to the portal, and then utter three short phrases sacred to Treerazer's worship—yet the location of such a symbol or the exact phrases they must speak remain unknown.

Critical Failure The PC incorrectly assumes that the archway is a portal that leads to Treerazer's fortress, the Witchbole, and that any attempt to activate the portal runs the risk of attracting the nascent demon lord's attention. Tampering with it might thus expedite his arrival here to punish those who dare to meddle in his affairs.

DEATHSTALK DUNGEON

Before Earthfall, the dungeon below the tower served the church of Calistria in two primary ways: it was a place to imprison Kyonin's or the church's foes while they awaited trial and final sentencing, and it was a crypt to contain the ashes of those who had gone before. It also served as a storage area and treasury. When the time came to abandon Golarion for Castrovel in the days preceding Earthfall, the priesthood released the prisoners inside the dungeons and offered many of them pardons and places in society on Castrovel, but it was ultimately decided to leave the honored dead behind. A small contingent of elves volunteered to stay behind as honor guards for the catacombs and the tower, and to aid these brave souls, the church also left behind a fair amount of treasure for them should they ever find themselves in need of it.

While Earthfall didn't leave as much of a physical mark on Kyonin as it did elsewhere, the years of darkness in the immediate aftermath—and the centuries of metaphorical darkness that followed—were more than these brave elves left behind could bear, and none of them lived to see the end of the Age of Darkness, leaving the dead and their treasure unguarded for thousands of years.

When Treerazer arrived and corrupted the temple into Deathstalk Tower, he initially treated the place as a trophy and left it largely unattended. Centuries later, this neglect made for a perfect home for a cult of Rovagug-worshipping boggards, and until the Spore Queen's recent arrival, these cultists ruled much of Deathstalk Tower's central reach and the dungeons below it. The Spore Queen thought of these cultists as little more than squatters, and while she forced them out of the central tower, she had little interest in the dungeons below and left the cult to make their way within. The cult, on the other hand, has festered and stewed here, eager for vengeance against the Spore Queen but still stinging from their recent defeat and too cowardly to make an overt move against her. Their own cowardice is as strong a lock as the Spore Queen needs on the cultists' cage.

J1. Undercroft

Moderate 17

A shaft rises up from the center of this thirty-foot-wide undercroft, the vaulted ceiling rising to a height of twenty feet. In the center of the area, between double doors to the east and west, a slightly upraised platform sits under a shaft that leads up into darkness. To the north, ten-foot-high partially collapsed shelves turn the undercroft into a small maze, while to the south, a half-dozen ruined desks

and benches lie in heaps on the floor. Beyond these, the southern wall features three mold-covered altars.

This undercroft was used to store books, scrolls, supplies, and other materials that weren't needed in the day-to-day operations of the temple above; it was also a place where the priests could gather for lectures. The destruction of the furnishings is not an ancient remnant of Earthfall's ravages, but instead evidence of the cultists' delight in devastation. Areas of rubble are difficult terrain.

The double doors to the east toward area **J8** are barricaded from this side with planks of wood and scraps of metal spiked into the cracks. These can be Forced Open with a DC 30 Athletics check, or they can simply be unbarricaded with 10 minutes of work.

Creatures: As cultists of Rovagug, the boggards who dwell here now have long trafficked with qliploth, and four of these awful fiends have been left here as guardians—not only to prevent any invasion by intruders from above, but also to raise the alarm for the cultists to the west. A group of four mugrisant qliploth stand guard in this chamber, two to the north and two to the south. The southern mugrisants appear to swim eerily through the air as they fly up to attack PCs in melee, while the northern ones use the partially collapsed shelves as cover and fire their teeth or cast spells on the party. The qliploth fight to the death,

and the sound of their gurgling roars and the sharp cracks of their teeth being fired from bubbling gums is easily loud enough to alert the boggards in area **J2** that their home is being attacked.



MUGRISANTS (4)

CREATURE 15

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Initiative Perception +27

Treasure: The three altars to the south were once devoted to Calistria's three tenets, but now they're draped with mold and long ago lost any sort of spiritual connection to the Savored Sting. Neither Treerazer's nor Rovagug's cultists have bothered to do anything more with them, however, and as a result, a hidden cache of treasure remains stashed in a secret panel built into the side of the westernmost shrine, which was once devoted to vengeance. A PC who Seeks this shrine and succeeds at a DC 35 Perception check discovers the hidden niche and the *headwrap of wisdom* still sitting within it.

J2. Processing Room

Moderate 17

Walls of rusty iron bars set here and there with iron cell doors turn this long, twenty-foot-high room into a maze of sorts. A flight of stairs nestled in a nook near a ten-foot-high overlooking balcony leads up to a door to the south, while larger double doors sit in the walls to the east and west.

The iron-barred walls are rusty and damaged, so it's only a DC 28 Athletics check to force open a section of bars so that a Medium creature can Squeeze through the opening (on a critical success or a second success on a different check, the bars are removed from that 5-foot area entirely). Ironically, the iron doors might pose a stronger barrier, as they are kept locked.

Creatures: Once a place where guards would process prisoners who had been found guilty by Calistrian law (be they blasphemers or those captured for other crimes who awaited vengeful justice), this area is now a front line of defense for the boggard cultists. If the PCs make it to this room without raising an alarm in area **J1**, roll a DC 11 flat check. On a success, the room is empty. On a failure, they find a single, heavily distracted boggard cultist slumped in a pile of debris and filth in the balcony leading to area **J3**; this boggard tries to use their terrifying croak as soon as possible in combat to raise the alarm, after which three more boggards from area **J6** come to join the fight.

If the alarm's been raised, then those three boggards from area **J6** are already here and have taken up positions in the western half of the room, ready to use their magic against foes on the far side of the bars once they enter. Once two of the cultists are slain, the survivors attempt to flee to area **J6**.

BOGGARD CULTISTS (4)

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS BOGGARD HUMANOID UNHOLY

Variant boggard (Pathfinder Monster Core 44)

Perception +27; darkvision

Languages Boggard, Chthonian, Common

Skills Athletics +28, Intimidation +28, Occultism +26, Religion +29

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +3, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Items +2 greater striking greataxe, +2 resilient hide armor, ring of keys to all doors in areas **J2-J6**

AC 36; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +26, **Will** +29

HP 280

Speed 20 feet, swim 25 feet, swamp passage

Melee ♦ greataxe +30 (magical, sweep), **Damage** 3d12+13 slashing

Melee ♦ tongue +28 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** tongue grab

Divine Prepared Spells DC 36, attack +28; **8th** *crisis of faith, divine wrath, harm* (×6); **7th** *divine decree, execute, noise blast*; **6th** *blood vendetta, spirit blast, truesight*; **5th** *breath of life, command, heal*; **4th** *fly, heal, unfettered movement*; **3rd** *blindness, heroism, vampiric feast*; **2nd** *blood vendetta, create food, revealing light*; **1st** *command, create water, fear*; **Cantrips (9th)** *daze, divine lance, read aura, shield, void warp*

Cleric Domain Spells 2 Focus Points, DC 36; **8th** *cry of destruction* (Player Core 374), *destructive aura* (Player Core 374)

Swamp Passage As boggard.

Terrifying Croak ♦ (auditory, emotion, fear, mental) As boggard, but DC 36.

Tongue Grab As boggard, except AC 33 and 28 HP.

J3. Guard Post

What may have once been a table, several chairs, and a cabinet now exists only as a smashed pile of rubble in this otherwise empty room's southeast corner.

This chamber was once staffed by elven guards, but it's remained empty since Earthfall. If the PCs manage to sneak into area **J2** and the flat check you made there was a failure, then the boggard cultist otherwise found in area **J2** is found here, catching a nap amid the rubble.

J4. Warden's Office


Low 17

This ramshackle room's original purpose is hard to discern at a glance, but judging by some of the fragments in the rubble strewn about the place, it was once an office.

Creature: Ever since his glorious and painful “ascension” through the gut of a mugrisant resulted in his transformation into a powerful gongorinan, the boggard cultist known as Gruntch has led this group. His first act after his transformation was the murder and consumption of the cultists’ previous leader (who had been the one to feed him to the mugrisant in the first place). This locked him into a leadership role to such an extent that, in the years that have followed, no other boggard has dared challenge him. For the most recent of those years of leadership, Gruntch has been happy to slumber here in his chambers, periodically moving next door to area **J5** to offer private worship to Rovagug. He’s better at cooking up plans for how he might lead his cult and their qliploth allies back into the heights of Deathstalk Tower than he is at acting on them, and the PCs’ arrival in the area might be what pushes him over the edge into action.

Gruntch is even more strange in appearance than the typical gongorinan. His humanoid arm is the slimy green of a boggard’s arm, and his crablike shell is smooth and slick rather than covered in jagged spikes, although bits of mold and small mushrooms grow on it here and there. His eyestalks end in numerous yellow frog eyes, and he speaks in the croaking, guttural voice of a boggard. When he first encounters the PCs, be it





here or upon joining a battle in progress in area J6, he commands any other cultists and qliploth to stop fighting if needed before he asks the PCs if they've slain "those filthy squatters up above." Gruntch reacts with delight at every word the PCs share of a dead Treerazer agent, but upon learning that the Spore Queen still lives, he grows frustrated: "Why haven't you killed her yet? You call yourselves heroes? Cowards, more like. Begone from my home, and get back up there and do your jobs!"

While dismissive, Gruntch is actually willing to discuss a potential alliance, but he's loath to risk his cult too early. His initial attitude toward the PCs is unfriendly, but if he can be made at least friendly, he promises that he and his surviving cultists will accompany them and aid them in their fight against the Spore Queen.

If the PCs point out that they can't enter the spires without a proper key, Gruntch gurgles out what might be a condescending chortle, then reveals that he managed to snatch a religious symbol from one of the enemy clerics during the original clash between the boggards and the Spore Queen's invading forces. He offers it to the PCs if they agree to his terms (even if they don't point this need out to him beforehand). Otherwise, he keeps this symbol in area J5.

Of course, Gruntch fully intends to betray the PCs as soon as the Spore Queen is slain, as detailed on page 68—a PC who succeeds at a DC 41 Perception check to Sense Motive on Gruntch's offer can pick up on his planned treachery. If he is confronted with this knowledge, Gruntch roars in anger at being found out and attacks.

Gruntch's transformation into a qliploth altered his mind and faith as well as his body, and while he no longer has the ability to utilize the divine spells he could cast as a boggard cultist, he possesses several potent occult innate spells in excess of the typical gongorinan. He favors this magic in battle but isn't afraid to revel in the gory glory of melee. Once a fight starts, Gruntch quickly loses track of anything else but the causing of pain and fights to the death. If he's slain, all boggard cultists in the area panic and flee or surrender. At your discretion, boggard cultists who surrender might be willing to ally with the PCs in a fight up in Deathstalk's Spires. The qliploth in the area don't alter their behavior at all in the wake of Gruntch's death, other than perhaps to chortle a bit at the "pretender's" swift rise and fall.

GRUNTCH

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE MEDIUM FIEND QLIPLOTH UNHOLY

Variant gongorinan (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 281)

Perception +32; darkvision

Languages Boggard, Chthonian, Common; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +30, Athletics +35, Deception +31, Intimidation +31, Religion +32

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +9, **Int** +3, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Items +2 greater striking greater thundering battle axe

AC 42; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +28, **Will** +30

HP 350; **Immunities** controlled, fear; **Resistances** mental 15, physical 15 (except cold iron)

Speed 40 feet, climb 50 feet, fly 40 feet, *unfettered movement*

Melee ♦ battle axe +35 (magical, sweep), **Damage** 3d8+15 slashing plus 1d6 sonic and 2d6 mental

Melee ♦ pincer +33 (magical, unholy), **Damage** 3d10+15 plus 2d6 mental and Grab

Melee ♦ tentacle +33 (agile, magical, reach 20 feet, unholy), **Damage** 3d6+15 bludgeoning plus 2d6 mental

Melee ♦ stinger +33 (magical, unholy), **Damage** 3d6+15 piercing plus gongorinan venom

Occult Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** *cursed metamorphosis, overwhelming presence*; **8th** *petrify, spirit blast*; **7th** *warp mind*; **3rd** *one with stone* (at will); **Cantrip (9th)** *telekinetic projectile*; **Constant (9th)** *unfettered movement*

Disquieting Display ♦♦ (concentrate, mental, occult, visual) As gongorinan, but DC 40.

Gongorinan Venom (poison, polymorph) As gongorinan, but DC 40.

Painful Limbs ♦♦ As gongorinan.

Treasure: A PC who Searches this room for a few minutes finds nothing of interest in the rubble, but sitting on the western shelf is a key with a decorative element that looks like a birdcage—a design that matches precisely the full-size cage in area J7. This bell functions as a *greater skeleton key* but its activation to Loosen Lock has an additional unique quality when used in area J7.

J5. Shrine to the Rough Beast

A filthy nest made of rubble sits in the western half of this room, while to the southeast, another pile of rubble has been artistically stacked into a shape that resembles the gaping maw of an immense monster—a mouth with smaller skulls mounted on some of its teeth as trophies.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check to Recall Knowledge recognizes the mouth sculpture as resembling the maw of Rovagug, and that this is a horrific altar to the Rough Beast on which the heads of vanquished foes appear to have been impaled. These victims were slain long ago, and now, only their

skulls remain—three elves, two satyrs, two orcs, and a boggard.

Treasure: One of the satyr skulls has a gold necklace worth 500 gp tangled in its horns, but attached to this necklace is a *major symbol of conflict* currently in the form of Treerazer's religious symbol. As long as this *major symbol of conflict* remains in this form, it can be used to activate the *Deathstalk aiudara* in area **I**. If a character attunes it so that it changes into a different symbol, however, it can no longer be used in this fashion. If the PCs are told about this symbol by Gruntch, he warns them of this, explaining why he hasn't attuned it to use it himself as a symbol of Rovagug.

The boggard skull is all that remains of the cult's previous leader, a priest whose body was ultimately consumed by Gruntch, post-transformation. Gruntch managed to stop eating long enough to salvage the previous leader's head, and the *dread blindfold* they once wore remains wrapped around the skull today. A large iron key lodged in this skull's mouth can be used to unlock the doors to area **J7**.

J6. Prison Block

Moderate 17

A total of eight ten-foot-square prison cells, each containing a filthy looking nest of rubble, surround this large room, while at its center, a five-foot-wide section of floor is surrounded by a three-foot-deep ditch filled with bones and broken weapons. A statue of a coiled, centipede-like monster stands on the platform itself. To the south, a balcony overlooks the prison block, while to the north stand double doors with an oversized lock.

The doors to the north are locked with a superior lock (six DC 40 Thievery successes to Pick the Lock) that can be unlocked with the key in area **J5**.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Religion check to Recall Knowledge realizes that the statue of the centipede and its surrounding moat of bones and broken weapons serves as an altar to Rovagug. The moat's sharp, jagged edges make it hazardous terrain; any creature that moves through it takes 2d6 slashing damage.

Creatures: The prison cell doors are all unlocked, for these are the boggard cultist barracks. The cell to the southeast is unused (this was Gruntch's home before his transformation), but the others each belong to one of the seven cultists who live here now. Unless some of these cultists fled here from area **J2**, there are three boggard cultists in this room sleeping or praying if they're caught unaware, or ready to defend their homes if the alarm has been raised.

These boggards croak and howl in rage as soon as they notice the PCs and attack at once, but one round into the fight, Gruntch (if he lives) scrambles out of area **J4** to the upper balcony to call a stop to the fight. If the PCs agree, his offer proceeds as detailed in **J4**.

If the PCs persist in fighting, Gruntch roars in frustration and calls out to Rovagug to aid him. A moment later, the centipede statue in the middle of the room transforms into an elite augnagar qliphoth, much to the delight of the other cultists. Gruntch then retreats into area **J4** to let his underlings do the work of killing the intruders. The boggards and the augnagar fight to the death; if the PCs then confront Gruntch, he doesn't begrudge them slaying his followers and instead gives them one more chance to make an alliance against the Spore Queen.

ELITE AUGNAGAR

CREATURE 15

Pathfinder Monster Core 6, 282

Initiative Perception +29

BOGGARD CULTISTS (3)

CREATURE 15

Page 60

Initiative Perception +27

J7. Oubliette

Low 17

The doors leading to this room are locked with superior locks; the key from area **J5** can unlock both doors.

The ceiling of this thirty-foot-diameter round room rises up to a domed ceiling twenty feet above. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of elegant sigils are carved into the walls, while a ring of iron bars rises up to completely encircle the central twenty feet of the room, as though this were a birdcage. Ancient demonic bones lie in heaps around the walls. An ornate-looking lock is built into the southernmost bar of the cage, and at the center of the area beyond it, a ten-foot-wide opening in the ground drops away into darkness.

The pre-Earthfall worshippers of Calistria were vengeful and quick to imprison and sentence those who had wronged their faith or their charges, but they weren't overly cruel against their prisoners. Judgement was generally swift and fair (and typically tailored to meet the individual), but in rare cases, particularly dangerous enemies of the faith warranted a longer-term solution—imprisonment in this oubliette. A PC who examines the lock on the cage bars quickly determines it to be decorative, and any attempt to Pick the Lock has no result unless one also activates the *greater skeleton key* from area **J4**, which causes the bars of the cage to shimmer and become insubstantial

illusions that can be freely passed through. Once the key is brought out of area J7 and no physical objects occupy any of the bar spaces, the bars become solid again. Without the key, the bars can be bent to allow passage with a DC 35 Athletics check to Force them Open, or they can be destroyed (Hardness 18, HP 72 [BT 36]).

Creature: Prisoners were rare in this chamber, and none occupied it when Earthfall struck, yet there remains a prisoner within this oubliette today. The elfen hero Silisifex played a key role during the first war against Tanglebriar, and 9 years after the elves won that conflict, she led a group of Calistrans into the lost city of Shevaroth in an attempt to recapture and purify the temple of Calistria that had become Deathstalk Tower. At the time, she'd hoped this would be the first step toward reclaiming Tanglebriar. She and her followers vanished without a trace, and their failure helped ensure there would be no other major attempts to follow in her footsteps in the centuries to follow—until today.

When Silisifex and her followers forged their way inside, they initially met little resistance and made their way up to the *aiudara* in area I, only to discover that Treerazer's forces had laid a trap for them. Suddenly surrounded and faced with overwhelming odds, the group retreated down the lift into the dungeon, hoping to recover the powerful treasures still locked away in the vault (area J9) only to be captured. Silisifex attempted to buy her followers time via a last stand, but this only separated them—her followers became trapped in the crypts with no way to escape or access the vault without her, and she was overwhelmed and placed in this oubliette, an ironic final prisoner for the temple's deepest dungeon. Tormented relentlessly, Silisifex was never able to recover enough to escape, and she and her wasp familiar eventually perished here.

When she rose as a banshee the next evening, though, her tormentors felt her full wrath and were swiftly slain by her wail. When she attempted to move beyond this area, however, she found herself bound to the site. She's remained trapped within this oubliette for 17 centuries, the bones of her final victims her only companions. When the boggards claimed the tower, they sensed the great danger in this room and simply avoided entering it, so the PCs are the first living creatures she's seen in well over a thousand years.

Silisifex rises up from her oubliette within 1 round of the PCs entering the area, preceded by a light blue glow from the pit itself.

Silisifex pauses a moment as she lays eyes on the party. Allow the PCs to attempt DC 30 Religion checks to Recall Knowledge to recognize the ghostly figure as Silisifex. A PC who carries her sword, *Soulcutter*, recognizes her automatically—the blade vibrates in their hand, and an awareness of the sword's original owner dawns in the PC's mind.

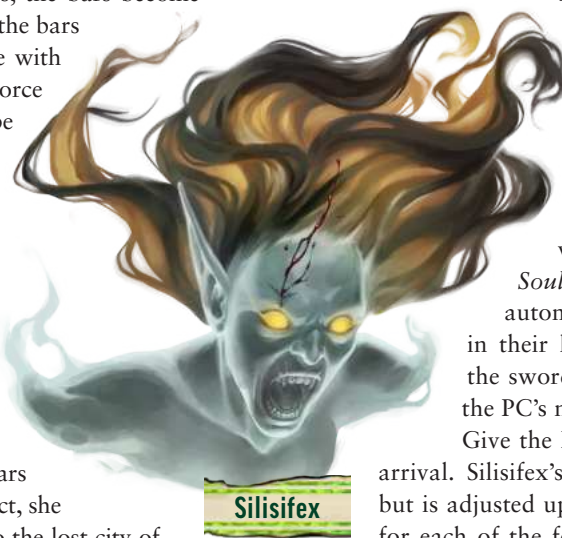
Give the PCs a round to react to her arrival. Silisifex's attitude begins as hostile, but is adjusted up one degree toward helpful for each of the following conditions present

in the party:

- There's at least one elf or aiuvvarin among the PCs.
- There's at least one obvious worshipper of Calistria in the party.
- A PC carries *Soul of the Wild* from area D.
- A PC carries the *major staff of the tempest* from area F5.
- A PC carries *Soulcutter*.
- A PC recognizes her and addresses her by her name.

If she's made unfriendly, she holds back her attack for about a minute, giving the PCs a chance to attempt a DC 44 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression or a DC 44 Intimidate check to Coerce her. If any of these attempts fail to make her at least indifferent, she reverts to hostile at the end of the minute and attacks. Silisifex can't leave this area but can move with ease through the bars, and fights until she's destroyed. If she's destroyed, she rejuvenates in the oubliette's depths after 24 hours. Future encounters can give the PCs additional chances to appease her.

If she's made indifferent, she demands to know why the PCs are here. If the PCs share their mission to defeat Deathstalk Tower's current ruler with her, she nods, then tells them they need a special way to trigger the *aiudara* in area I in order to enter the spires. Normally, this would require a specially blessed symbol of Calistria, but now that the *aiudara* is corrupted, it requires a specially blessed symbol of Treerazer. Yet here, Silisifex offers them an alternative: if the PCs present any other religious symbols to her, she can attempt to bond her own undead soul to it in order to give them a "back door" through the *aiudara*, on



the theory that her long centuries spent here will help to trick the corrupt portal. She warns that if she fails to do so, her vengeful nature will take over and she won't be able to hold back from committing violence. To bond with a presented symbol, Silisifex must touch it and succeed at a DC 40 Will save. If the symbol is of Calistria and Silisifex fails this saving throw, she gets a success instead. On a failure, she shrieks in rage and attacks, as detailed above.

If she's made friendly, she makes the same offer, but she only loses control on a critical failure and can attempt multiple saving throws each round until she either critically fails the save or she succeeds.

If she's made helpful, she automatically succeeds on the saving throw. In addition, she tells the PCs the route to the temple vault and aids them from her new home within the religious symbol, helping them bypass any remaining guardians or wards in that room (area J9).

SILISIFEX

CREATURE 18

Elite female banshee (*Pathfinder Monster Core 6, 37*)

Initiative Perception +34

Treasure: The skeletons of the demons and corrupted fey that lie around the room's perimeter crumble to dust if they're disturbed, but ten +2 *striking greataxes* can be salvaged from the remains along with a single set of *greater armbands of athleticism*.

Reward: If Silisifex bonds with a symbol, grant the PCs 80 XP.

J8. Crypts

Severe 17

The floor of this pillar-lined chamber is thick with dust. Crumbled rubble lies in the corners of the room, including a collapsed double door to the east. To the north and south, ten-foot-wide halls extend. Regular alcoves with shelves containing old urns adorn each one.

The ashes of dozens of ancient elves remain buried here in the urns within each crypt. Fortunately, the souls of these elves had long gone on to their rightful afterlives before Tanglebriar corrupted the area. The rubble in each corner of the room in area J8a are all that remains of wooden tables that once held candles for vigils. The doors to the lower crypts are collapsed, and all three areas are equally desolate and dry.

The secret door at the western end of area J8c can be discovered with a successful DC 35 Perception check (or DC 25, if the PCs learned more about the secret door while researching the Spore Queen) made while Seeking, but if the PCs have made Silisifex

helpful and her spirit empowers a religious symbol, the outlines of this secret door glow and become obvious as soon as the PC carrying that symbol comes within 20 feet of the door.

Creatures: While the ashen remains of the dozens of ancient elves here are harmless, the remains of the elves who accompanied Silisifex only to become trapped here are not. These eight elves have risen as tormented, but beyond one attempt by the Rovagug cultists to enter the crypts, they have remained quiet for the entire time since their deaths by starvation. They waited hopelessly for their leader to return after realizing they couldn't open the door to area J9 to recover the treasures within.

When the PCs first enter the crypts, four tormented are in the central area of J8a. Another two are in area J8b, while the final two are in area J8c. Once they spot the PCs, they lurch forth to attack, shrieking in rage. The tormented in areas J8b and J8c move to join the fight as soon as it begins (you can assume the two from area J8b arrive at the start of the second round, and that those from J8c arrive at the start of the third round). The tormented fight until destroyed.

If the PCs have managed to bond Silisifex to a religious symbol, though, the undead elves here pause, sensing her presence. They won't attack the PCs in this event unless they are attacked first. If Silisifex was made helpful, she retains enough of herself that she can mentally command these tormented, giving the PCs the option to allow them to all collapse into dust or to join at their side and fight with them against any remaining encounters in Deathstalk Tower.

TORMENTED (8)

CREATURE 14

Pathfinder Book of the Dead 152

Initiative Perception +27

Endless Suffering (Starvation)

Reward: If the PCs work with Silisifex to grant the tormented release rather than have them accompany them, grant the PCs XP as if they'd defeated the tormented in combat.

J9. Lost Treasury

The thick stone door to this room is magically locked via a 10th-rank *lock* spell, so in order to progress through it, the PCs must either Force Open the door with a DC 38 Athletics check, Pick the Lock with a DC 38 Thievery check, or dispel the *lock* effect. The door still shows ancient scars from when the trapped elves in area J8 attempted to smash through it, but they lacked the tools and strength to do so. If Silisifex is bonded to a symbol the PCs carry, the door opens automatically

as soon as that religious symbol is touched to it; if she was made helpful first, she telepathically informs the PCs about this option.

The air in this twenty-foot-high vaulted chamber is stale, and thick layers of dust cover the floor and stone display cases. Two longer cases stand in the middle of the room, while five smaller circular ones sit in alcoves. Objects covered with dust sit on all of them.

Treasure: This chamber has remained undiscovered and undisturbed by Treerazer's minions and the Rovagug cultists for centuries. While Kyonin's elves knew that these treasures had been left behind to aid those who chose to remain on Golarion during Earthfall, they've long since assumed the vault was plundered. Not so; these treasures remain for the taking and have been watched over by Calistria, whose favor has helped to keep the chamber hidden all these years. Each time someone allied with Treerazer attempts to claim any of the treasures here, they must succeed at a DC 40 Will save or become cursed—the exact nature of the curse should be tailored to the creature, but as the PCs are unlikely to include worshippers of Treerazer, they have nothing to fear.

The treasure held here consists of a collection of magic weapons and armor laid out on the two central platforms. The eastern platform holds a half-dozen

+2 *greater striking weapons* (two composite longbows, two elven curve blades, and two rapiers), while the western one holds three suits of +2 *resilient standard-grade elven chain*.

The five alcoves hold even greater treasures. Going clockwise and starting with the southeasternmost alcove, these treasures are a *major shining symbol*, a *greater searing blade*, a *cloak of swiftness*, a *necklace of allure*, and a *greater accolade robe*.

DEATHSTALK SPIRES

The inner sanctum of Deathstalk Tower, as was that of the temple of Calistria before it, is an extradimensional space that duplicates the roofs of the central tower and its three spires. This space is accessible only via the *Deathstalk aiudara* found in area I.

This area is the PCs' ultimate goal, for it is here that the Spore Queen is working with Aravashnial's fractured soul to empower Treerazer's fortress, the Witchbole, with the ability to teleport itself and all inside it.

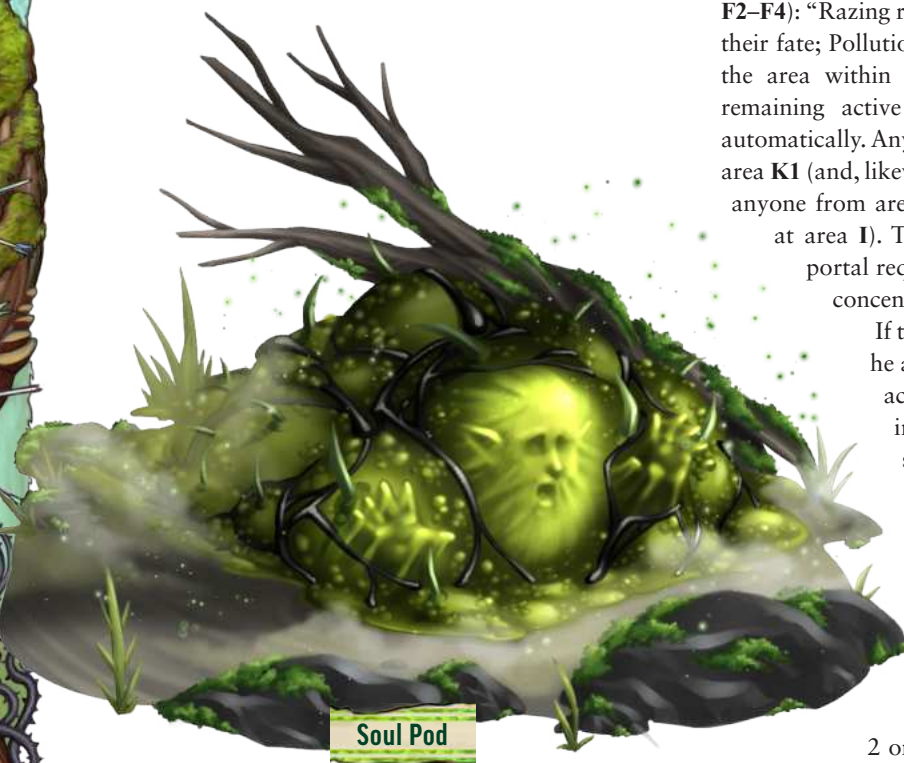
Before the PCs can activate this *aiudara*, they must secure one of two options—either the *symbol of conflict* found in area J5 (while it remains in the form of a religious symbol of Treerazer), or any religious symbol that's bonded with Silisifex's soul (see area J7).

Once the PCs have one of those religious symbols, they need only to speak the following three prayers in order (as they appeared above the doors to areas F2–F4): “Razing ruins their hope; Corruption controls their fate; Pollution feeds their pain.” An instant later, the area within the *aiudara* whirls and shimmers, remaining active for 10 minutes before it closes automatically. Anyone who steps through it appears at area K1 (and, likewise, while the portal remains active, anyone from area K1 who steps through it appears at area I). The entire procedure to activate the portal requires three Interact actions with the concentrate trait.

If the PCs allied with Gruntch (area J4), he and his available cultists are eager to accompany the PCs through the portal into the spires and will fight at their side in the encounters that follow.

Deathstalk Spire Features

Within the Spire, the air is humid, warm, and foul-smelling—non-fiends who breathe the air must succeed at a DC 35 Fortitude save to avoid becoming sickened 1 (or sickened 2 on a critical failure), after which they



are temporarily immune to the air for 24 hours. The area appears to be a cylindrical space, 60 feet across and 200 feet high. The walls and ceiling of the chamber appear to be thick, roiling clouds of green spores and mist similar to that of the Haze, but they cannot be passed into—these walls are the limits of this area.

The lowest portion of the spire is a 10-foot-deep tangle of briars and toxic fungi. Non-fungi creatures moving through this area treat it as greater difficult terrain and hazardous terrain that inflicts 2d6 piercing and 2d6 poison damage. Forty feet above this area (and so 30 feet above the upper level of the briars) is a 30-foot-diameter rooftop on which stand the *lesser aiudara* (area K1) and a 10-foot-diameter pool of churning fungal slurry (area K2). Steps lead a few feet up to the top of the lowest spire (area K3), while a winding staircase with no railings and no obvious support curls upward 40 feet to area K4, and then another 40 feet up to area K5. Pillars of solid fungal material similar to what that makes up Deathstalk Tower extend downward below the central 30-foot area and the three 10-foot diameter platforms, but otherwise the area below is open and filled with toxic tangles.

Fungal Pool: The pool of churning fungal liquid at area K2 is surrounded by a 3-foot-tall rim. The level of the fluid within is equal to the floor, but the depths drop all the way down inside the central pillar to a depth of 40 feet. Creatures inside the pool can Swim in the churning fluid with a DC 30 Athletics check, but visibility is reduced to zero inside the opaque fluid, and each round a creature remains immersed, they are exposed to tanglerot (page 22). The Spore Queen is merged with this fluid as she works on stitching the fragments of Aravashnial's fractured soul into the device that will grant the Witchbole teleportation abilities, and she does not emerge until all three of the elf's soul fragments are released from areas K3–K5.

Soul Pods: At each of the spire locations (areas K3–K5), a pulsing, puffball-like growth slowly expands. They are similar in shape to a Jeharlu Spore, though upon closer inspection, a distorted elven face can be seen silently screaming on the sides of each of these pods. This visage belongs to Aravashnial, whose soul has been split into three fragments, each of which has been trapped within one of these pods. If the Spore Queen has time to finish her work, the three spore pods fully consumes his soul, and the central pool of fungus condenses down into a single spore she can then bring to the Witchbole to grant it the ability to teleport. Methods for freeing Aravashnial's soul and preventing this are detailed below under Freeing Aravashnial.

Consecrate: The entire spire area is protected by a *consecrate* ritual placed by the Spore Queen and is focused on the fungal pool (area K2).

Spire Guardians

Moderate 17

Creatures: As soon as the PCs activate the *aiudara*, the demons the Spore Queen has recruited here as guardians take note and prepare for battle. Two of these are elite omox demons that lurk in the churning waters of the pool at area K2 and who roll Stealth for initiative, while the other three are seraptis demons—one stationed at each of the three soul pods at areas K3–K5 and who roll Perception for initiative.

The demons attack the PCs on sight. The omoxes remain in the central pool, starting combat by casting *toxic cloud* and then using slime balls at range, while the serapti each cast *dominate* on a PC in the first round, ordering those who fall under their control to approach them and protect them from harm. They follow this up with *phantasmal calamity* or *wave of despair*, then move in to fight in melee. The demons fight to the death.

SERAPTIS DEMONS (3)

CREATURE 15

Pathfinder Monster Core 80

Initiative Perception +25

ELITE OMOX DEMONS (2)

CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Monster Core 6, 79

Initiative Stealth +26

Treasure: Each of these demons carries a religious symbol of Treerazer that's been specially blessed to function as a portal key for the *aiudara* linking areas I and K1. These symbols can replace any that the PCs used to reach this area but then lost (as occurs if Silisifex emerges from her symbol in the final encounter).

Freeing Aravashnial

Low 17

Hazard: Once the demons are defeated, the entire area seems to shake and a muffled shriek of anger bubbles up out of the churning waters of the fungal pool. At the same time, the three soul pods located at areas K3, K4, and K5 begin to pulse and emit flickers of green light as the Spore Queen redirects some of the corrupting energy she's been weaving through the area back out of the pods, transforming them into hazards in a last-ditch attempt to defeat the PCs—a move that puts Aravashnial's captured soul at risk of being set free.

Soul pods that are only disabled can function as sporepods for the Spore Queen's Sporestride and Sporewarp abilities, but those that are destroyed cannot.

SOUL PODS (3)

HAZARD 15

RARE COMPLEX FUNGUS HAUNT

Stealth +30 (master)

Description An oblong, puffball-like fungus shaped ominously like a bulging coffin in which Aravashnial's distorted face can be seen silently screaming.

Disable DC 40 Religion three times to exorcise Aravashnial's soul from a pod, or DC 43 Nature twice to pull the well-hidden filaments that connect the spore pod to the rest of the spires

AC 37; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +23, **Will** +29

Hardness 24; **HP** 96 (BT 48);

Immunities acid, critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15, holy 15

Soulrending Shriek ⤿ (divine, emotion, mental) **Trigger** A

round begins after all demons

in the spires have been slain; **Effect** Aravashnial's distorted face unleashes an overwhelming shriek of agony that threatens to completely warp the thoughts of all intruders. All creatures within 20 feet of a soul pod must succeed at a DC 36 Will save or become confused for 1 round (1 minute on a critical failure). A confused creature can attempt a new save at the end of each of their turns to end the confusion early. The soul pods then roll initiative.

Routine (2 actions) The soul pod releases a soulrending shriek on its first action, then on its second action exhales a blast of spore-laden wind in a 40-foot cone. Creatures in this area must attempt a DC 36 Fortitude save. This blast has the air and poison traits.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 4d6 poison damage.

Failure The creature takes 8d6 poison damage and is knocked prone by the wind.

Critical Failure The creature takes 16d6 poison damage, is knocked prone, and is blown 10 feet backward directly away from the soul pod, possibly being blown off the edge of a platform or stairwell.

Reset A soul pod deactivates once no PCs are in the spires, then resets automatically.

Reward: In addition for earning XP as normal for defeating a hazard, each time a PC destroys or disables a soul pod, that fragment of Aravashnial's soul sighs in relief as a tattered and torn translucent image of the elven wizard rises out of the soul pod and merges into the body of that PC. This not only restores 3d12+17



Spore Queen

Hit Points to that PC, but also infuses them with heroic vim, granting them a +2 status bonus to attack rolls, Perception checks, saving throws, and skill checks for 10 minutes. If that PC already has been infused with Aravashnial's soul, that PC can instead pick one other PC to gain this infusion.

The Spore Queen Severe 17

Once all three soul pods are destroyed or deactivated, Aravashnial's soul is released fully, but it can't yet move on to the afterlife. Instead, his soul remains temporarily bound to three PCs, his ultimate fate now tied to the PCs themselves. The PCs have 1 round to take actions, during which time the central pool at area K2 appears to start boiling. When this round ends, the Spore Queen emerges from the liminal zone in which she'd been working on her project, once so near completion. She howls in rage at the interruption.

The Spore Queen can appear anywhere she wishes within the Spires and rolls Perception for initiative. Her tactics in combat are presented on pages 92–93, but as she fights, she takes the time to shriek insults and threats at the PCs, promising them and their loved ones untold torments for daring to interrupt her grand work. At least once, preferably as a PC withstands a particularly painful blow in combat, she should cackle in delight and cry out, "Yes! Fall to my lord! The Witchbole shall wake and feed on your soul, and then it shall raze your homes to rubble!"

The Spore Queen is a dangerous foe—easily the most powerful creature the PCs have faced thus far. Yet if the PCs made certain choices along the way as they explored Deathstalk Tower, they have additional resources at their disposal beyond even any surviving tormented elves from area J8.

Aravashnial: If one of the PCs carries Aravashnial's grimoire, *What Doors We Open*, his fractured spirit is strengthened. Rather than being passively bound to the PCs, his three fragments merge upon the PC who carries this grimoire, causing that PC to become quickened (the PC can use this extra action for any action, but can't use it as part of a 2-action or 3-action activity) and to gain a +3 status bonus to all saving throws against mental effects.

Grunch: If the PCs bargained with Grunch (area J4), he and any surviving boggard cultists who accompanied the PCs into the Spires continue to fight at their side, but as soon as the Spore Queen is defeated, Grunch attacks the PCs if he still lives,

ordering his boggards to fight as well. Once Gruntch is slain (or if he's dead when the Spore Queen is defeated), the boggard cultists grow submissive and cower, wanting nothing more than to flee the area entirely.

Silisifex: If the PCs made Silisifex friendly, then on the first round of combat at the start of the turn of the PC who carries the symbol she infused, the banshee emerges from the symbol with a shriek, unleashing her Wail. This only affects the Spore Queen. Silisifex then fades away, the last of her spiritual energies expended, but like Aravashnial, her soul won't escape into the afterlife until the PCs defeat their foe. If Silisifex was made helpful, her spiritual power is strengthened; she emerges from the symbol at the start of the combat to fight at the PCs' side. As for the previous case, her Wail only affects the Spore Queen.

SPORE QUEEN

CREATURE 20

Page 92

Initiative Perception +34

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the Spore Queen is slain, the fungal well at area **K2** erupts into a geyser of foul fluid. The fiendish magic the Spore Queen was weaving into the well collapses after her defeat, and any creature who was within the well itself at this time takes 10d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 35 basic Reflex save) as they are spat out of the well and then fall 100 feet into the tangles below (taking falling damage as appropriate). This column of fungal fluid churns into a shape like that of a twisted tree, its gnarly branches reaching out to the surrounding walls, and any PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Religion check or DC 35 Perception check recognizes the shape as that of Treerazer's fortress, the Witchbole. For a moment, the Witchbole seems to shimmer and quake, and the PCs realize at that moment that had the Spore Queen finished her plot, the entire malevolent fortress would have gained great power—the ability to teleport itself and the armies within it to anywhere on Golarion!

The vision then vanishes, and the fungal fluid fades away, leaving the central well empty and the PCs with the knowledge that even though some of that power did get siphoned away to empower the Witchbole, it was only a fragment of what it could have received. Worries and fears about how this could shift the balance of power in the Spore War itself will need to wait for the start of the next adventure, but for now, the PCs have delivered a staggering blow to Tanglebriar's forces by defeating Treerazer's high priestess.

As the vision fades, Gruntch and his cultists betray the PCs and attack. Play this battle out first, but once it's over, or once the PCs flee back through the *Deathstalk aiudara* or otherwise escape the spires, three things of note might happen.

A Resounding Triumph: For defeating the Spore Queen, the PCs earn 3 Triumph Points.

Departing Souls: Aravashnial's restored soul escapes into the afterlife, but at this point, powerful PCs may wish to resurrect him if they're able. Whether or not the wizard wishes to come back to life is left to you to decide. You don't need to generate statistics for him, but as a powerful wizard, his aid to the war effort is immense. Grant the PCs 1 Triumph Point and 80 XP if they decide to resurrect him.

If the PCs convinced Silisifex to merge with a symbol, her soul is also released into the afterlife, but as she's been dead for well over a thousand years, restoring her to life is well beyond the power of the PCs. As she fades away, she smiles in thanks at the PCs for the mercy they've given her, and each PC becomes bolstered by the favor of the ancient hero's legacy as her soul passes on. This bolstering lingers within the PCs for the rest of the Spore War Adventure Path, manifesting as a bonus feat chosen from the following options: Canny Acumen, Diehard, Incredible Initiative, Toughness, or Untrained Improvisation. If a PC already possesses all of these feats, they can choose any other general feat they currently qualify for as a bonus feat instead.

The Voice in the Blight: As the PCs exit the spires, they find Deathstalk Tower as they left it, yet the aura of menace and despair that seemed to infuse it has lessened. Any creatures left in the tower who are capable of fleeing do so at once, and any *consecrate* rituals still in place in the tower that were brought to bear by the Spore Queen end. The process of restoring the temple to its previous glory as a cathedral to Calistria yet requires many more years of effort, but it is now a possibility.

But the tides of war grow stranger still: as the PCs emerge, they each sense something peculiar arising from the blighted fungus all around them. Manifesting first as the soft pattering of trickling water, this sound quickly gives way, transforming into the voice of a person speaking Elven directly into their minds. It is a voice from the blight that carries a warning and promises aid—a call from Kyonin's distant past. What this voice has to say begins the next adventure, "A Voice in the Blight," so if you don't have access to this adventure yet or want to delay its start, this mysterious voice should wait until the right moment to contact the PCs.



Treerazer

Treerazer, the Lord of the Blasted Tarn, is the unruly spawn of Cyth-V'sug, a former qliphoth lord and current Demon Lord of Fungi and Parasites. Proving himself his father's son, Treerazer attempted to betray his sire and take command of the colossal parasitic fungus (and divine realm) known as Jeharlu. His coup failed in spectacular fashion, resulting in Treerazer's indefinite exile from the Outer Rifts. Expulsion did little to temper the nascent demon lord's hunger for power, however, and after several centuries spent in hiding, Treerazer decided to forge a new realm within the then-abandoned land of Kyonin. Unfortunately for the self-appointed Lord of the Blasted Tarn, this move prompted the elves to return in force, driving Treerazer into the most deeply corrupted corner of his new dominion: the fetid marshland known as Tanglebriar.

In the ages since, Treerazer seems to have scaled back his plans. He rarely leaves the safety of his fortress in the heart of the Tanglebriar, giving rise to theories that he is either a coward or has been imprisoned within his domain. This is as he plans, for in truth, Treerazer has spent those years carefully cultivating a much greater scheme: ascension to the lofty heights of true divinity, followed swiftly by a vengeful reckoning with all his enemies, mortal and otherwise, beginning with Kyonin. Until that day, he believes it best to keep his head low and his machinations subtle. Better, he reasons, to keep his foes busy fighting endless small-scale border skirmishes than for them to realize the true scope of his plan and take decisive action against him before he's ready to act.

Treerazer's route to godhood, known only to himself and his closest confidants, isn't to empower an attack on his father's realm but rather to draw that realm into the Universe. From the roots of his wandering tree-fortress Witchbole, the Lord of the Blasted Tarn silently extends fungal filaments infused with corrupting magic through the earth, infusing spores stolen from his father's realm into Kyonin's soil from below. A combination of cunning magical wards and growing complacency toward the "cowardly" Treerazer have kept these dormant Jeharlu Spores hidden from mortal eyes for over 2,000 years, and the hour of their awakening grows near. Should it come to pass, Kyonin would be transformed by an explosive

"I'll make thrones of your bones and pyres of your homes!"

—Treerazer's promise to elvenkind, 2633 AR


influx of fiendish corruption, resulting in an empire of demonic fungus from which Treerazer could exercise his rule over the Universe and Outer Rifts alike!

PERSONIFICATION AND REALM

Treerazer's demonic form resembles a winged, saurian monstrosity that stands in a vaguely humanoid fashion, his hunched back covered in bony spines that extend down his twisting tail. Despite this fearsome appearance, the nascent demon lord rarely shows himself to his followers or enemies, opting instead to remain inside the heart of Witchbole—his mobile fortress—deep within the twisted realm of Tanglebriar. In the rare event that he deigns to travel outside of his shambling sanctuary, the Lord of the Blasted Tarn always carries his devastating weapon, *Blackaxe*, its acid-dripping edge leaving a caustic trail in his wake.

Tanglebriar is a twisted mockery of nature, a vast and untamable land of fungal forests and noxious swamps, the borders of which are forever shifting in the unending battle between the elves of Kyonin and Treerazer's faithful. Within the depths of this sodden realm dwell demons loyal to Treerazer, corrupted beasts, debased fey, and a variety of fungal creatures. Though Tanglebriar's inhabitants pose threat enough to intruders, the conditions within have convinced many that the land possesses a will of its own—and to some degree it does. Clouds of poisonous spores drift on winds heavy with the stench of rot, thorny briars lash around the legs of unwary wanderers, and acidic quicksand threatens to devour any creature that missteps. Underneath the muck, a startlingly complex network of fungal hyphae connect almost every corner of the realm, feeding information back to Treerazer's mycelial forces that enables them to respond to intrusions with alarming speed.

Despite the land's unceasing hostility, several groups unaligned to Treerazer defy the odds by



making permanent homes in the swamp. Certain types of fey, for example, find the conditions of Tanglebriar a fascinating display of reality's dual nature: rigid in its natural laws and yet malleable to those with the will to bend it—and so these fey make their homes therein to study this phenomenon. A rare few intelligent fungal creatures resist assimilation by the land's mind-warping network of spores and—provided they can avoid the attention of disloyal kin—discover a land of unnatural bounty in the swamps. Perhaps most defiant of all Tanglebriar's inhabitants are the Splinterbark orcs, whose homeland was subsumed by the demonic swamp many generations ago. While many of the clan have fled the region or defected to Treerazer's cause as a matter of survival, a few prominent circles of warrior-druids have remained, unwilling to cede their ancestral lands to cultists and demons. Those who fly the Splinterbark flag of today are renowned for their unwavering tenacity, ferocity in battle, and deep commitment to tradition, but their numbers are nevertheless dwindling as more and more of their kind perish in battle against Treerazer's cult.

DOGMA AND WORSHIPPERS

As a nascent demon lord, the majority of Treerazer's worshippers are demons, the most ancient and devoted of whom traveled with their god upon his exile to the Universe. One such demon is the colossal, toad-like Vamollaroth, whose swollen form basks in a vast lake of toxins deep within the heart of Tanglebriar. The lesser ranks of Treerazer's demonic forces consist of demons of all levels of power.

Treerazer's mortal worshippers are concentrated in Tanglebriar and its bordering nations, growing sparser and more secretive the further one gets from the region. Within Tanglebriar, his worshippers include a wide range of people: fey, orcs, fungal creatures, cambions, and more—bound together only by their faith in the Lord of the Blasted Tarn. Indeed, many of Treerazer's worshippers have cut all other ties to society before making the pilgrimage to Tanglebriar.

Despite Treerazer's hatred, even traitorous or self-loathing elves constitute a portion of his following—a fact that incites no small amount of distrust among Kyonin's communities unfortunate enough to border Tanglebriar. These elven cultists are outcasts, criminals, or merely those who perceive that they've suffered injustice in Kyonin. They're typically motivated less by faith in Treerazer's divinity than a spiteful desire to see their kin brought low. Treerazer regards these followers with a perverse sense of accomplishment, viewing them as the

ultimate corruption of that which he opposes most strongly. Where possible, elven agents of Treerazer are deployed within Kyonin to subvert the nation and sabotage its defenses; these cultists occasionally willingly allow their presence to be exposed to further foment distrust among the populace.

When the cultists wear vestments to reflect their faith, they prefer simple hooded shawls consisting of coarse fabric or untreated hide, and these garments are stored in damp places to encourage the growth of mold within the fabric and fur. Enduring the unpleasantness of wearing a sopping, mold-infested shawl is considered to be a test of faith, and it's impossible to advance within the cult until one becomes accustomed to doing so. To denote rank, adherents wear necklaces woven from filaments of fungi and adorned with sharp fragments of obsidian. It's customary to further decorate the string with small bones or teeth: each taken from an enemy of the faith that the wearer has slain.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Whether within Tanglebriar or among the few hidden sects of Treerazer's cult that operate in the wider world, temples to the Lord of the Blasted Tarn are usually built upon despoiled land. One popular method cultists use to create smaller shrines is to hollow out a particularly ancient tree, carve it with profane symbols, and decorate its soon-to-be-rotting branches with the corpses of elven enemies. These shrines are rarely attended by a priest on a permanent basis, instead acting as waymarks for the faith's following and warnings to its foes. Subtler shrines are hidden within Kyonin, placed by infiltrators along the hidden fungal filament lines so as to slowly infect and disrupt the networks of magic that empower the nation's magical defenses against the incursion of Tanglebriar.

More permanent temples are sometimes established within the hollowed-out trunks of gigantic trees or in the depths of murky, fungi-infested caverns. These larger sites of worship often serve as staging points for skirmishes and include unholy summoning circles from which demons (including, in the rare event of his leaving the Tanglebriar, Treerazer himself) can be called forth to terrorize the surrounding lands.

The largest and most important temple to Treerazer, a colossal and still-living but corrupted tree known as the Witchbole, doubles as the nascent lord's palace and is capable of crawling on writhing roots. The tree's twisting branches terminate in a canopy of corpses, displaying the failed attempts by would-be heroes who tried to face Treerazer in battle. Due to the

Witchbole's ambulatory nature, it's become customary for cultists to engage in pilgrimages that follow the temple's ponderous route through the marsh. These processions can span many miles, forming a trail of flickering funguslight and silhouetted figures across vast swathes of the fetid wilderness. On more than one occasion, the Witchbole has trampled groups of pilgrims after unexpectedly changing its course, but such fatalities are simply considered a risk intrinsic to being so close to one's god.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

It's widely understood within Treerazer's following that empty acts of observance do little to curry favor with their god, and therefore the most valued expressions of faith are those that directly advance his goals. As such, a ranking member of the faith usually provides tribute by sacrificing an enemy of the church (preferably an elf) or providing direct support to the Tanglebriar. Many followers are trained in guerrilla warfare to this end, and they're expected to lay down their lives, if necessary, to defend this profane realm.

One of the most important duties of a priest operating within Tanglebriar is to provide magical assistance in hastening the outward expansion of the realm's corruption, a task accomplished by channeling corrupting energies through the earth. Even outside of Tanglebriar, devotees are expected to corrupt nature using whatever methods are at their disposal. When magical means fail or are beyond the reach of a priest, simply fouling a wellspring or blighting a woodland are acceptable acts of deference.

HOLIDAYS

Though most followers of the Lord of the Blasted Tarn practice their religion in secret and observe local religious holidays to maintain their cover, there's one notable exception: the autumnal observance known to the cult as the Blightharvest.

The Blightharvest is, at its core, a celebration of the culmination of long-spun plans that further the cult's goals. It's well-known that such plots come to fruition in the autumn—Treerazer's favored season—but what's less understood is that cultists

meticulously organize their machinations so as to cause as much despair as possible; the resulting panic of several tragedies occurring in rapid succession creates the perfect environment to turn kin against kin. The name "Blightharvest" is often literal, as the most popular activity performed during the gathering is the casting of a modified *blight* ritual designed to spoil a local harvest by twisting crops into inedible mockeries rather than simply withering them. From a distance, these gatherings resemble a harvest festival typical to the region, but closer inspection reveals something far from benign: cornucopias filled with rotten fruit, banners made of elf skin, and ravels of thorns twisted into grisly pyres are all typical fixtures.

APHORISMS

Treerazer's worshippers identify fellow devotees by subtly quoting their god in conversation and don't keep sacred texts. While these practices result in an ever-changing repertoire of code phrases, two of the more poetic of these codes (long since discovered and thus rendered obsolete by Kyonin's operatives) have taken on a second life as aphorisms.

Cut Your Roots: Treerazer used this expression as a rallying cry for his elfen followers before a fateful attack on Kyonin, but it has since earned a measure of popularity among those who joined his cult to escape unwanted responsibilities or the circumstances of their birth. It's also more rarely used when justifying a necessary deviation from religious tradition.

Nothing Flourishes Forever: Reflecting the impermanence of life, this aphorism is most often uttered as a reassurance after Kyonin's forces push back Tanglebriar's borders or when the cult suffers some other major setback. When used to identify fellow cultists, it's echoed by the phrase "Everything returns to rot."

Prosper in Darkness: A rare example of an aphorism created wholly by cultists rather than lifted from one of Treerazer's speeches, this reference to the nature of fungi is exchanged as a parting phrase. It's also used as a dismissive reminder to impatient and overambitious acolytes that discretion is key to the cult's continued survival in areas where the faith is illegal.



Treerazer cultist



SACRED TEXT

Though the spoken words of their god are oft-repeated within the cult's circles, Treerazer has no sacred text to speak of, and has never ordered the creation of one. There have, nonetheless, been several attempts across the centuries to formalize a collection of Treerazer's teachings, but without the backing of their deity, all of these efforts ultimately failed to gain traction. Instead, worshippers focus on stealing and defiling the sacred texts of enemy faiths, and it's therefore not uncommon to find a cultist of Treerazer in possession of at least one tastelessly vandalized or mold-ruined copy of an elven religious text.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

As a result of his exile, Treerazer makes a point of avoiding confrontation with other gods, in particular having spent thousands of years avoiding the attention of his vengeful father, Cyth-V'sug. Despite this reclusiveness, the Lord of the Blasted Tarn has made a great many enemies over the course of his exile, chief among them being the elven pantheon. Above all others, Ketephys counts Treerazer as his nemesis, having personally clashed with the nascent demon lord in a decisive campaign that pushed Treerazer's domain back into Tanglebriar. Embittered by this defeat, Treerazer's cult makes a point of antagonizing followers of the Hunter, hoping to goad them into retaliatory attacks; for their part, Ketephys's following has thus far shown restraint, recognizing that extending their conflicts into the Tanglebriar itself would be a foolish endeavor that could result in escalation far beyond what Kyonin could survive.

Besides Ketephys, other members of the elven pantheon take specific issues with Treerazer. Alseta the Welcomer views Tanglebriar's perpetual state of autumnal decay as an affront to the natural order, and her followers maintain divine wards that form Kyonin's best defense against the corrupt region's ingress. Treerazer's constant plots to corrupt the *aiudara* network further enrages followers of Alseta, who hold these portals as sacred creations. Calistria is said to personally keep a list of every elf who defected to Treerazer's cult, with the assumed intent of visiting terrible revenge upon the traitors at an unspecified time; those placed on her list tend to habitually avoid hives of stinging insects as a matter of course.

With the recent closing of the Worldwound, the Mendevian Crusaders have begun slowly turning their attention toward Tanglebriar, offering several of their holy warriors (primarily Iomedaeans) and singular expertise in combating demons to Kyonin's cause.

Realizing that such an alliance could turn the tide of war against him, Treerazer has ordered many demons to infiltrate the crusaders' ranks with the goal of sowing discontent toward the "unnecessary" reassignment and engendering distrust between them and their new elven allies. As a result, once the Spore War begins more significant support from the north is slow to manifest, leaving Kyonin to its local defenses and alliances.

Unlike most demonic deities, Treerazer is rarely directly opposed by qliptho lords; having been exiled from the Outer Rifts and his connection to that plane severed, its primordial inhabitants simply perceive the nascent god as a threat long since solved. Nonetheless, the qliptho lord Aonaurious keeps Treerazer under constant close surveillance, though why Treerazer has attracted so much of the Enigma Clot's attention remains an unsettling mystery.

Despite widespread opposition and conflict, Treerazer has thus far avoided personally involving himself in confrontations drawn along religious lines, preferring to focus his wrathful attention on the most pressing threat to his realm: Kyonin and its inevitable (to him) downfall.

Though Treerazer has gone to great pains to ensure that his demonic father, Cyth-V'sug, doesn't personally intervene in his affairs, occasionally a band of demons loyal to the Prince of the Blasted Heath stage attacks on Tanglebriar. These assaults are brief, intentionally avoiding a direct confrontation with their master's scion, and instead focus their retributive violence towards the demons who defected from their cause when Treerazer was expelled from the Outer Rifts.

In their destruction and despoiling of the natural world, Treerazer's followers regularly find themselves opposed by the faithful of Gozreh and other stewards of nature. Druids, specifically, are almost universally opposed to the Lord of the Blasted Tarn, as his corruption represents a threat to all that even the most debased druid considers sacrosanct. Druids who venerate the fungal cycle in particular find Treerazer and his methods abhorrent. This enmity goes both ways, with some sects of Treerazer's cult specifically targeting druidic enclaves, and the corruption of revered nature spirits is considered an important priority to the cult. Though a particularly stubborn rumor claims that several "corrupted druids" bolster Treerazer's ranks, very few of these followers are actually druids; most are other kinds of primal spellcasters (typically witches) who perform irreverent parodies of Green Faith practices to further demoralize their druidic enemies.

TREERAZER

Treerazer's combat statistics appear on pages 328–329 of *Monster Core*.

LORD OF THE BLASTED TARN

Areas of Concern corruption of nature, pollution, elf slaughter

Edicts corrupt plants, feast on rot, slay elves

Anathema grant mercy to elves, encourage natural plant growth, plant trees

Divine Attribute Strength or Wisdom

Religious Symbol bleeding tree stump

Sacred Animal deinonychus

Sacred Colors black, green

Devotee Benefits

Cleric Spells 1st: *grim tendrils*; 3rd: *wall of thorns*; 6th: *tangling creepers*

Divine Font harm or heal

Divine Sanctification must choose unholy

Divine Skill Nature

Domains destruction, nature, nightmares, tyranny

Alternate Domains decay

Favored Weapon greataxe

AVATAR FORM

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Treerazer transforms into the form of their demonic patron.

- **Treerazer** Speed 50 feet, fly speed 70 feet; **Melee** ♦♦ jaws (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 6d6+6 slashing; **Ranged** ♦♦ corrupting pulse (range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+3 poison (plants have weakness 10 to this damage)

SPELLS OF THE FAITHFUL

Agents of Treerazer often use strange and unsettling magic, such as the following rare spells.

TANGLECURSE ♦♦

SPELL 6

RARE **CONCENTRATE** **CURSE** **FUNGUS** **MANIPULATE**

Traditions divine, primal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

Defense Will

Tanglebriar has been called a “curse on the land,” which has inspired Treerazer’s cult to develop this notorious spell. The target must attempt a Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success A fungal bloom springs up from the ground in a 5-foot emanation around the target. This area is difficult terrain for creatures that enter the area. The target

treats all terrain as difficult terrain since this swath of fungus moves with them as they do, transforming into a tangle of spores and floating tendrils if the target flies or a thick swath of stringy floating algae if the target swims. This effect ends after 1 minute or as soon as the curse is lifted, whichever comes first.

Failure As success, but the fungal bloom increases to 10 feet. It persists until the curse is lifted. In addition, the target is also affected by the spores exuded by the fungal bloom—roll 1d4 and consult the results below to see how the spores affect them. This affect reactivates automatically every 24 hours, replacing the previous result.

1: The spores cause atrophy; the target is enfeebled 1.

2: The spores cause fibrous fungal growths to sprout from the target; the target is clumsy 1.

3: The spores settle in the target’s blood and flesh and cause great pain; the target is drained 1.

4: The spores intrude upon the mind and cause hallucinations; the target is stupefied 1.

Critical Failure As failure, but the emanation increases to 15 feet, and the condition value caused by the spores increases to 2.

RAY OF CORRUPTION ♦♦

SPELL 7

RARE **CONCENTRATE** **FUNGUS** **MANIPULATE** **POISON**

Traditions divine, primal

Range 60 feet; **Area** one creature or object

Defense AC and basic Fortitude

You unleash a sickly gray beam of toxic spores at your target. Make a spell attack against the target. If you hit a non-magical object that’s made of organic material (such as a tree, wooden house, or massive skull), it melts away into a foul-smelling sludge. A single casting can destroy no more than a 10-foot cube of matter.

If you hit a creature, it takes 6d12 poison damage and 6d12 spirit damage with a basic Fortitude save. If you critically hit, the target gets a result one degree of success worse than the outcome of its Fortitude save.

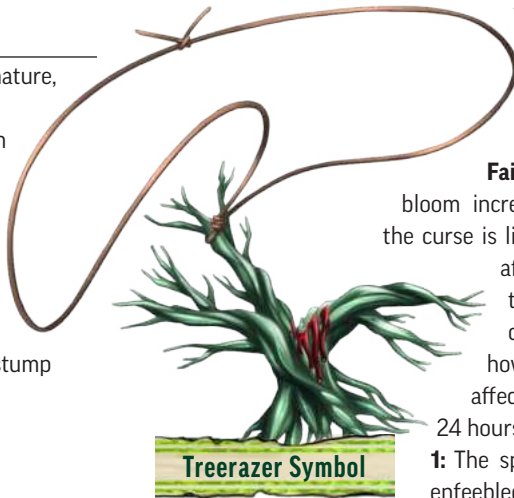
Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes half damage.

Failure The target takes full damage. Fungal tendrils swiftly digest the body and reduce it to sludge—the target takes 2d12 persistent acid damage.

Critical Failure As failure, but the target takes double damage, plus 4d12 persistent acid damage.

Heightened (+1) The poison damage and spirit damage each increase by 1d12.



Treerazer Symbol



Corruptors of Nature

The beings that lurk in the depths of the wilderness inspire wonder and fear in the hearts of those accustomed to the shelter of living in communities. Tall tales abound, with every twisting shadow and unfamiliar howl taking on a life of its own, but some of the denizens of the untamed wilds are more dangerous than even the most dramatic tales. Such is the way of blights, twisted harbingers of nature's wrath who creep forth from the primordial depths, driven by their all-consuming hatred of civilization.

ECOLOGY

Blights are oozes who dwell at the center of corrupted domains, landscapes that they've twisted into hostile lairs with their innate magic. Despite their massive influence on their environment, blights are rather small, with the main portion of their bodies measuring about 4 to 5 feet in diameter. Their forms are amorphous, their glistening surfaces studded with dozens of red eyes. Numerous tentacles protrude or retract from their bodies as needed, with their appearance depending upon the blight's environment. The tentacles of a forest blight resemble ropy vines, while the tentacles of a swamp blight are tipped with deadly stingers. Maintaining the corruption of their domains requires a constant output of vital energy, which blights extract from their prey and store in specialized vessels within their bodies. Occasionally, when a blight's vital vessels are overfilled, a portion of their body forms a bud and falls off. These buds have the potential to become new blights, though their survival entirely depends upon their parent's whims. Few last more than a week before being consumed by their parents, and those who quickly flee establish their own domains elsewhere.

Newly formed blights wander the land in search of suitable terrain to corrupt, then gradually develop into that terrain's associated type of blight. A typical blight reaches maturity over the course of a century, though areas steeped in primal magic or plagued by sources of corruption can accelerate this process dramatically.


While most blights retain their type after reaching maturity, a few attempt to transform themselves to attune to a different type of terrain. This arduous and

excruciating process requires a year-long rite during which the blight has no cursed domain. Blights who survive the process don't always transition entirely, and many retain aspects of their former powers that let them create a new, hybrid terrain. Barring death through violence, accident, or disease, a blight can live for thousands of years, although those who transition domains tend to be shorter lived by a dozen centuries or so.

Origins

During the Age of Serpents, before the formation of the first human civilizations, serpentfolk communities battled for supremacy against other ancestries. Their researchers devoted considerable effort to uncovering the true potential of all traditions of magic. In the realms of the occult, they matched wits with the alghollthu, primordial aquatic shapeshifters known for using mind-bending magic to trick and coerce air breathers into their service. To tap into the power of the divine, serpentfolk priests concocted elaborate rituals to their patron god Ydersius, who sent his half-divine children to rule the rising serpentfolk cities in his name. Arcane scholars delved into knowledge from all over Golarion and the planes beyond, with some even calling upon the heretical name of Ydersius's serpentine rival Abraxas, demon lord of forbidden knowledge, in their tireless quest for power. Meanwhile, secretive druidic circles sought the means to coax the fury of nature to rise up against their foes, to tear their civilizations to pieces and let the flora and fauna reclaim their traditional homes.

One such circle made a pact with the demon lord Cyth-V'sug, who granted them the power to call forth a blight mighty enough to eradicate their enemies. He taught the druids how to siphon primal power from the First World toward their aims and infused that energy with his own intentions. The druids had expected to curse their enemy's land, and curse it they did. The curses weren't a mindless force of destruction, but an army of amorphous blobs possessed of uncanny intellect and boundless malice who quickly spread out across the landscape. Animals, oozes, and plants were spared their wrath, but all other living beings found themselves sorted into two categories: those strong



TYPES OF BLIGHT

The **swamp blight**, presented in full detail on page 84 is but one of several types of blight. **Cave blights** are found almost exclusively in the Darklands, where they can prey upon settlements without emerging into sunlight and poison the rocks in their domains with radiation. **Desert blights** transform their environments to become even more hostile to life and often collect undead from fallen settlements or capture necromancers to make them armies. **Forest blights** rule dense woodlands, hiding the awfulness they create under thick layers of illusions so their poisonous trees are even more subversive. **Mountain blights** are less likely than other variants to actively seek out settlements to destroy and instead lurk atop remote peaks, where their presence causes the air to get dangerously thin. **Sewer blights** dwell not in the natural world, but in the aqueducts and drains below urban centers, where they rule empires of filth and decay. **Tundra blights** inhabit polar regions, where they cause their domains to become supernaturally cold as well as influence snow and ice to form into unsettling and dangerous shapes and hazards.

enough to serve the ooze's purposes for a time and those suitable only as food. The druid's efforts to direct their creations to spare their own people went ignored. In the face of this crisis, local rulers were forced to redirect their armies and research efforts toward eradicating this existential threat.

Countless lives were lost in the battle, but ultimately, the serpentfolk and blights reached a stalemate. The blights who remained retreated deep into uncharted wilderness, where they proved too difficult to hunt. There they remained, biding their time. As centuries faded into millennia, the blights grew, spawned more of their kind, and gradually evolved to adapt to their new environments. The survivors and their offspring slowly emerged once again, spreading across the world in search of vulnerable settlements to destroy.

SOCIETY

Blights prefer to rule their own cursed domains. They rarely share territory with others of their own kind or attempt to move into territory claimed by a powerful creature they can't subjugate. They ultimately seek to destroy all sapient life beyond animals, beasts, fungi,

oozes, and plants, lest it begins to form a civilization. Blights have the power to dominate and control creatures of these types and believe that they're owed loyalty from any that live in their domain. When a creature susceptible to their mental control attempts to act against them, a blight will wait for the right moment, when the insolent upstart is facing down their loyal minions or tangled up in their deadly hazards, and then attempt to suborn their target's will. A typical blight's opinions of different types of creatures are described below.

Animals: Blights particularly favor large predators and other creatures that are well-suited to hunting humanoids. Animals that have accepted the influences of civilization, such as animal companions and awakened animals, are hated.

Beasts: Beast ancestries who traditionally form societies, such as centaurs and minotaurs, receive the same destructive treatment from blights as do humanoids. For those who might join societies or prey upon them, such as harpies and lamias, their reception depends upon their deeds as well as the blight's personal tastes. Animalistic beasts, such as hydras and manticores, make favored servants for blights, who value their higher intelligence.

Fey: Despite the blights' ties to the First World, few of them are willing to let fey survive. Fey who embrace or succumb to corruption are an exception. Such fey become natural allies for blights, and blights are often inclined to allow them to survive and make themselves useful. Even corruption that originates from a non-blight source can transform a fey into a worthy pawn.

Humanoids: Many humanoid ancestries are known for their tendency to gather in groups and form lasting civilizations, making them the primary target of the blights' wrath. Though their resourcefulness and sheer numbers make humanoids a nuisance, simply exterminating large groups of them outright is rarely a blight's favored course of action. Instead, they prefer to use some of those people to weaken the rest, saving these pawns to be killed last. The rare few humanoids who are clever enough to make the right approach and whose deeds undermine other settled communities can establish a long-term connection with a blight. This task is easier for wercreatures, as their alternate forms make their presence more tolerable to blights.

Oozes: As oozes themselves, blights consider oozes to be an indispensable part of the natural world. Cultivating mindless oozes and coaxing them into more dangerous variants is a common hobby among blights.

Plants and Fungi: To blights, plants and fungi are a part of the natural order, and any that can endure the corruption of a blight's domain and don't interfere with the blight's plans are allowed to exist. While some intelligent plant or fungus creatures adapt to or even embrace life in blighted domains, others strive to restore the terrain to its natural state.

Undead: Swamp blights believe these unnatural beings make excellent puppets and infuse their domains with a curse that creates new undead from their victims. Desert blights also prize undead for their ability to survive in desiccated environments but lack an innate means of creating them.

DOMAINS

Corruption is omnipresent within a blight's domain. Toxicity weeps out of rocks, trees grasp at travelers' heels, diseases multiply and evolve, and temperatures plummet or soar to unbearable extremes. Widespread though these manifestations are, blights control them with a finely honed sense of precision, protecting the creatures they favor while leaving enemies to suffer the effects of their power.

Over time, blights cultivate a sadistic variety of hazards within their territory, from avalanches, quicksand, and pitfalls to magical traps and even haunts formed from their victims' souls. Over larger swaths of terrain, blights cultivate the flora and fauna most likely to harm intruders, such as plants with painful thorns, animals with poisonous stingers, and beasts with a taste for sapient flesh. Even creatures that might normally shy away from confrontation are affected by the atmosphere of the blight's domain, gradually becoming more territorial and aggressive. Eventually, these changes inevitably transform the flora and fauna that make the domain their home, favoring creatures that can survive these harsh environments.

Though they maintain a deep connection and attachment to their domains, some blights choose to move after eradicating everything nearby that displeases them, or if sufficiently powerful forces oppose them. Once per year, a blight can perform a ritual to claim a new region as their domain.

When choosing a location, many blights prefer uncorrupted regions close to settlements, where they can reshape the land and sow terror and destruction. Yet, blights know that settlement builders are tenacious. Rather than bringing destruction with a single grand show of force, they prefer to turn people against each other. They promise power, wealth, and influence to the greedy, vengeance to the distraught, and protection to the terrified. Ultimately,

a successful blight is one who leaves behind a legacy of fear and a land considered too accursed to enter for generations after they've finished their fell work and moved on to another domain.

Other blights prefer to establish domains in lands that are already marred by unnatural corruption. When a blight ooze chooses to establish a domain in a region already so afflicted, such as with unstable magic or an extraplanar incursion, the two corruptions interact in unusual ways. The most common effects are the spontaneous appearance of additional hazards as well as the manifestation of additional powers and abilities within the blight.

Blights who prefer pristine lands and those who prefer corrupted ones disagree strongly on which approach is best. To blights in the first category, establishing domains in previously corrupted territory is lazy, preventing true mastery of the domain, and opening the blight up to challenges to their rulership. To blights in the second category, however, it's foolish to neglect the potential of regions that are already twisted to bring about destruction; if the forces that have corrupted those lands are repulsive, the blight can clear them out after achieving their own objectives.



Sewer Blight



Adventure Toolbox

HEROIC TREASURES OF KYONIN

These legendary treasures are tied to six different elven heroes. While not yet artifacts, each item holds potential to transform into something greater, as detailed in the final volume of the Spore War Adventure Path.

ANIMA ROBE

ITEM 15

UNIQUE ILLUSION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 6,500 gp

Usage worn garment; **Bulk** L

This robe was the favored garment of the legendary Ekujae hero, Iyalirrin. When the draconic god Dahak threatened destruction, Iyalirrin was the primary architect of a powerful ritual to banish him called the *anima invocation*. Iyalirrin and many others were forced to sacrifice themselves to empower this ritual, but he ensured his *Anima Robe* remained in good hands before he did so. Since then, the *Anima Robe* has been worn by dozens of elven occultists and bards who have traveled Golarion and beyond. The *Anima Robe* has remained in the care of Queen Telandia for only the past few dozen years.

While wearing the *Anima Robe*, you gain a +2 item bonus to Diplomacy checks made to Make an Impression and to all Performance checks. You also gain resistance 10 to mental damage.

Activate—Who Am I? ♦♦ (concentrate, illusion, manipulate, visual) With a toss of the robe's hood, you cast a 3rd-rank *illusory disguise* on yourself.

Activate—Who Are We? ♦♦ (concentrate, illusion, manipulate, visual) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** With a whirl of the robe's hem, you cast a 7th-rank *illusory disguise*.

Activate—Who Are They? ♦ (auditory, concentrate, illusion, manipulate, olfactory, visual) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** With a swish of the robe's sleeve, you cast a 7th-rank *illusory creature*.

FIENDBREAKER

ITEM 15

UNIQUE DIVINE STAFF

Price 6,500 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

After she led her people through the Darklands to the far side of the world, the elven oracle Jininsiel established the nation of Jinin in the heart of the continent of Tian Xia. As she sought to forge alliances with other lands surrounding

her own, Jininsiel crafted potent magic items as gifts. For the people of Tianjing, she created this staff, which served the people of that nation well for many years. They returned it to Jinin as a token of condolence when that nation's leader passed into the Great Beyond. Many centuries later, when the people of Jinin learned that their kin had returned to Kyonin from Castrovel only to face fiendish threats in their homeland, a group of priests from Jinin traveled across the world to help. They brought with them *Fiendbreaker* and chose to leave it in Kyonin to help protect them in the future from demonic foes.

Fiendbreaker functions as a +2 *greater striking holy standard-grade cold iron staff*. While wielding the staff, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to checks made to Recall Knowledge about fiends.

Activate Cast a Spell; **Effect** You expend a number of charges from the staff to cast a spell from its list.

- **Cantrip** *divine lance*
- **1st** *sanctuary*
- **2nd** *see the unseen*
- **3rd** *anointed ground* (Player Core 2 240), *holy light*
- **4th** *clear mind*, *planar tether*
- **5th** *banishment*, *divine wrath*
- **6th** *holy light*, *spirit blast*

GUIDING STAR ORB

ITEM 15

UNIQUE MAGICAL

Price 6,500 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Candlaron the Sculptor is one of Kyonin's most storied and honored wizards. While his final fate is unknown, his greatest creations, the *aiudara*, remain behind as a legacy of his power—as do other potent items, such as the *Guiding Star Orb*, a navigational traveling aid that the heroic wizard often relied upon when venturing into an unexplored part of the world.

Activate—Embed Location 10 minutes (concentrate); By focusing on the *Guiding Star Orb*, you embed your current location in the item. Thereafter, anyone who holds the *Guiding Star Orb* while Casting a Spell with the teleportation trait to travel to this location arrives precisely, without any inaccuracy at all. The *Guiding Star Orb* can only have one location embedded at a time; if

Fiendbreaker

you use this activity a second time, the new location replaces the previous one.

Activate—Momentary Aiudara 10 minutes (concentrate, manipulate, teleportation); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You cause a shimmering magical archway to appear next to you as the *Guiding Star Orb* casts a 7th-rank *teleport* to your specifications. If you are teleporting to an *aiudara* you've visited before, you and the targets appear precisely at that location.

SLITHERMAW'S BANE

ITEM 15

UNIQUE INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 6,500 gp

Usage worn armor; **Bulk** L

This suit of +2 *greater resilient elven chain* was worn by the elven hero Kyloss Syndar. The armor served him well, but eventually he fell in battle against the demonic hydra Slithermaw. As Kyloss slew the demonic beast, its fangs pierced his chest and mortally wounded the elf. The armor retains several ragged holes along the chest and abdomen where the hydra's teeth damaged it.

Slithermaw's Bane grants its wearer poison resistance 10, and the *resilient* rune increases the item bonus on saving throws versus poison by 1 (to +3).

Activate—Calistria's Sting ⤵ (concentrate, divine)

Frequency once per day; **Trigger** A creature grapples you; **Effect** Poison wells up from the armor's links to seep into the triggering creature's body, causing it to suffer wracking pains as if it were being stung by thousands of angry wasps. The triggering creature takes 7d6 persistent poison damage (DC 34 basic Fortitude save); this persistent damage cannot be ended as long as the triggering creature continues to grapple you.

Activate—Terrain Adaptation 10 minutes (concentrate, divine); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You alter the exterior of the armor to better adapt to the surrounding terrain: aquatic, arctic, desert, forest, mountain, plains, sky, swamp, or underground. You ignore non-magical difficult terrain within the chosen environment and gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saving throws against environmental hazards, natural disasters, and extreme temperatures that originate from that terrain. You are also protected from severe and extreme heat or severe and extreme cold (your choice when you activate this ability). This effect lasts until your next daily preparation.

SOULCUTTER

ITEM 15

UNIQUE MAGICAL

Price 6,500 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 2

This +2 *greater striking astral elven curve blade* was the treasured weapon of the Calistrian witch Silisifex,

who played several key roles in reclaiming Kyonin from Tanglebriar when the elves returned to Golarion. Although a witch, her mesmerizing skill with the curved blade rivaled that of many soldiers. Her reasons for leaving *Soulcutter* behind in Kyonin before her final mission into Tanglebriar in an attempt to purify Deathstalk Tower are unknown.

As long as you carry *Soulcutter*, you gain its potency bonus as an item bonus to all saving throws against mental effects. This bonus increases by 2 against possession effects.

Activate—Soothe Souls ⬠⬠ (concentrate, healing,

manipulate, primal, vitality) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You whirl *Soulcutter* in the air around you, rejuvenating the living within a 20-foot emanation around you while castigating those in that area who have no place in nature. You can Sustain this activation for up to 1 minute. Living creatures that start their turn in the area regain 1d8 Hit Points, and any fiend or undead creature that starts its turn in the area takes 1d8 spirit damage.

Activate—Soulcutting Storm ⬠⬠ (concentrate, manipulate, primal) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You swing *Soulcutter* and cast a 7th-rank *weapon storm* to your specifications, but all damage caused by the spell is spirit damage. If used to damage a creature that's possessing another creature, this spell does no damage to the possessed creature.

Soulcutter

WINTERSHOT

ITEM 15

UNIQUE MAGICAL

Price 6,500 gp

Usage held in 1+ hand(s); **Bulk** 1

This +2 *greater striking frost composite shortbow* belonged to a legendary scout, Jelarial, who found herself in command of a company of elves fleeing Mierani north into the Crown of the World to escape the doom of Earthfall thousands of years ago. *Wintershot* resurfaced during the war to reclaim Kyonin from Tanglebriar several thousand years later, wielded by a succession of mysterious snipers whose movements through the woodland confounded the demons, so much so that it gave rise to rumors that Jelarial's ghost had returned to the south to aid her kin in a time of need.

When making a Strike with *Wintershot*, targets do not gain concealment from the effects of mist or precipitation, and circumstance penalties to attacks of up to -2 imparted from strong winds are negated.

Activate—Auroral Shine ⬠ (cold, concentrate, light, primal) **Frequency** once per 10 minutes; **Effect** Fire an arrow at a target. If you hit, instead of dealing damage with the arrow, the creature struck must attempt a DC 34 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is surrounded by shimmering lights akin to an aurora, causing it to become dazzled for 2 rounds. If the creature was invisible, it becomes concealed instead. If the creature was already concealed for any other reason, it is no longer concealed.

Failure As success, but the creature also takes 2d6 persistent cold damage, and the light affects the creature for 1 minute.

Critical Failure As success, but the creature also takes 4d6 persistent cold damage, and the light affects the creature for 10 minutes.

Activate—Signal Flare ◆ (light, manipulate, primal) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You pull back *Wintershot's* string and fire an arrow straight upward. The arrow soars to a height of 500 feet, or until it strikes a solid surface like a ceiling. When it reaches its apex, it explodes in a brilliant burst, creating a 100-foot radius area of bright light and dim light in the next 100 feet. In the night sky, this beacon can be seen clearly for miles. The beacon remains lit for up to 1 minute in a color of your choice. Alternately, you can fire a Signal Flare like a normal arrow to attempt to strike a Target—if it hits, the arrow inflicts normal damage and attempts to counteract one darkness effect of your choice that affects the area you hit with a counteract rank of 7th and a counteract modifier of +26.



Deathstalk Mushroom

OTHER TREASURES

DEATHSTALK MUSHROOM

ITEM 16

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE INGESTED POISON VIRULENT

Price 2,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ◆ (manipulate)

Deathstalk mushrooms that have been alchemically treated into this poison cause those who succumb to suffer horrific hallucinations in which everyone around them distorts into demonic shapes shortly before their own bodies begin to break down and melt from within. Creatures with the fungus trait are immune to this poison and often find the flavor of a deathstalk mushroom to be rather pleasant.

Saving Throw DC 35 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 minute; **Maximum Duration** 6 minutes; **Stage 1** stupefied 1 (1 minute); **Stage 2** confused and stupefied 2 (1 minute); **Stage 3** 16d6 poison damage, confused, and stupefied 3 (1 minute); **Stage 4** 17d6 poison damage, confused, and stupefied 4 (1 minute)

KORA OF THE UNENDING STORY

ITEM 14

RARE CODA OCCULT STAFF

Price 4,500 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** 1

This 21-stringed instrument symbolizes connectivity with the past, present, and future. The kora grants a +2 item bonus to Performance checks made to tell stories when used to accompany song or speech.

The *kora of the unending story* is a coda instrument—an item that functions like a staff but in the form of a musical instrument (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 136).

Activate Cast a Spell; **Effect** You expend a number of charges from the kora to cast a spell from its list.

• **Cantrip** read aura

• 1st object reading (*Player Core* 2 248)

• 2nd augury

• 3rd mind reading

• 4th read omens

• 5th vision of death

• 6th object reading (*Player Core* 2 248)

WHAT DOORS WE OPEN

ITEM 14

UNIQUE GRIMOIRE MAGICAL

Price 4,500 gp

Bulk L

What Doors We Open is the culmination of Aravashnia's research. Before he was captured, he performed a 1-minute ritual to erase his spells from this book and then hid it at his campsite to prevent his demonic foes from learning too many of his secrets. A spellcaster can transfer their own spells to this grimoire using a similar 1-minute ritual. When a spellcaster prepares their spells from it, they gain the ability to Activate the grimoire until their next daily preparations and gain a +2 item bonus to checks made to Recall Knowledge about demons. A grimoire's benefits apply only to spells cast via spell slots. No one can use more than one grimoire per day, nor can a grimoire be used by more than one person per day.

Activate—Cast Out ◆ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** If the next activity you take this round is to cast *banishment* prepared from this grimoire, it counts as the extra cost of adding an object that is anathema to the creature and gives the creature a -2 circumstance penalty to its save. If the targeted creature is a demon, increase this to a -3 circumstance penalty.

Activate—Open the Door Within ◆ (manipulate) The inside back cover of *What Doors We Open* features a realistic depiction of a bejeweled door set in a stone wall. When you Open the Door Within, you open that door to reveal an extradimensional space that otherwise functions identically to a *type II spacious pouch*.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The "Corruptors of Nature" article that begins on page 76 of this volume presents much more information on blight ecology, society, and their domains, as well as notes on other types of blights beyond the swamp blight.

BLIGHT

Blights are corruptions of nature's wrath.

Blight Abilities

All blights possess the following abilities.

Blight Domination All blights can cast *dominate* as an innate primal spell but can target only animals, beasts, fungi, oozes, or plants that are located inside their cursed domain. If a creature dominated by this spell leaves the cursed domain, the effects of *dominate* immediately end, but as long as the dominated creature remains in the cursed domain, the duration is unlimited. When a blight targets a mindless fungi, ooze, or plant, its *dominate* spell loses the mental trait.

Cursed Domain (curse, primal) Once per year, when in a terrain that is compatible with its type (such as a swamp for a swamp blight), the blight can infuse the land around it with its corrupted essence by performing a rite that takes one day. The region in a 5-mile radius becomes its cursed domain; this effect does not extend into incompatible terrain and does not move with the blight. The point at which the blight cursed the domain becomes its epicenter.

Within their cursed domain, a blight ignores all non-magical difficult terrain and always gains the benefits of the Cover Tracks action. Blights also have an imprecise sense for the locations of all creatures within their domain and can communicate with all sapient creatures they detect within their domain using telepathy. Each blight's cursed domain has additional properties specific to the blight's type. A blight outside of a cursed domain becomes slowed 1 until it returns to its own or another blight's cursed domain.

Removing this curse requires a character with the Break Curse feat (or a similar ability); this activity must be performed at the cursed domain's epicenter. If the blight that cursed the domain is dead, checks to counteract a cursed domain gain a +4 circumstance bonus.

Oversee Domain (concentrate, primal) The blight projects its senses to any point in its cursed domain, gaining a precise sense of its surroundings with a 500-foot radius until the end of its next turn. A blight can cast *dominate* through this sensory link. A blight can Sustain this ability, but cannot use it to extend its senses beyond the edges of its domain.

Rejuvenation (primal) If a blight is slain within its cursed domain, its body melts into the surrounding environment and a new blight of the same type spontaneously forms in 1d10 days at the cursed domain's epicenter unless the curse is removed before then. The new blight retains all the memories of the previous blight.

Swamp Blight

A swamp blight appears as a quivering blob of rancid brown and green mud from which dozens of hateful red eyes peer.

SWAMP BLIGHT

CREATURE 17

RARE MEDIUM BLIGHT OOZE

Perception +29; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Fey; telepathy (within cursed domain)

Skills Acrobatics +32, Athletics +33, Deception +30, Intimidation +30, Nature +29, Stealth +32 (+34 in swamps), Survival +27, Swamp Lore +29

Str +8, **Dex** +7, **Con** +8, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5



SWAMPY UNDEAD

While a swamp blight can dominate undead in its cursed domain, it prefers to use this power to gather and control undead that would prosper in a swampy environment. When building an encounter with a swamp blight, consider adjusting existing undead to match more thematically with the swampland environment, and avoid using undead that wouldn't make sense in such a region. Adjusting an undead creature's innate spells to be primal spells associated with swampy regions is a great way to achieve this customization.

AC 38; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +26, **Will** +29

HP 300, fast healing 30, rejuvenation; **Immunities** acid, bleed, critical hits, precision


Mosquito Aura (aura, primal) 30 feet. Mosquitoes surround the blight. The mosquitoes ignore creatures the blight designates as allies as well as any who are at full HP. All other creatures who enter the aura or begin their turn within it take 2d6 persistent bleed damage with a DC 35 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature takes no damage.

Success The creature takes half damage.


Failure The creature takes full damage and is sickened 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage and is sickened 2.

Putrefied Expulsion  **Trigger** A creature within 20 feet of the swamp blight deals damage to the blight; **Effect** The swamp blight violently expels putrefied organic matter at their attacker, making a decaying flesh Strike against them.

Speed 25 feet, swim 30 feet


Melee  stinger +33 (magical), **Damage** 3d8+12 piercing plus 2d6 persistent acid

Ranged  decaying flesh +32 (magical, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 3d8+12 bludgeoning plus splatter viscera

Primal Innate Spells DC 38, attack +30; **9th** *mirage*; **8th** *dominate*; **7th** *vomit swarm* (×3; *Player Core* 2 254); **6th** *dominate* (at will); **5th** *command* (at will, plants only), *nature's pathway* (at will, within cursed domain only)

Rituals DC 38; *blight*

Blight Domination A swamp blight adds undead to the type of creatures it can target with *dominate*.

Call of the Mire  (incapacitation, mental, primal) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** An aura of glittering lights surrounds the swamp blight, compelling a target the swamp blight can see that's within 60 feet to move toward it. This is not forced movement and can compel creatures to move through dangerous terrain. The target must attempt a DC 38 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is temporarily immune to Call of the Mire for 1 hour.

Success The target immediately Strides or otherwise uses their fastest Speed to approach the swamp blight. This movement does not cost the target their actions. On the target's next turn, they cannot willingly move farther away from the blight, but they can otherwise act normally.

Failure As success, except that the target spends all of their actions on their next turn also approaching the blight if they are not already adjacent, and they cannot take any other actions for 1 round. Additionally, the target cannot willingly move farther away from the blight for 1 minute.

Critical Failure As failure, except that the creature's only actions are to approach the blight for 1 minute.

Cursed Domain (curse, primal, void) Humanoid creatures that die in a swamp blight's cursed domain are infused with void energy. After 24 hours, they rise as undead creatures of their level of lower. Creatures whose bodies were intact typically become zombies or mummies, while those whose bodies were severely damaged typically rise as shadows or bhutas (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 76). These undead are not automatically under the swamp blight's direct control, but they can potentially be dominated by the swamp blight.

Oversee Domain  (concentrate, primal)

Splatter Viscera Targets hit by a decaying flesh Strike must succeed at a DC 40 Fortitude save or be sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). This condition is cumulative with itself and with the sickened condition from the mosquito aura, up to a maximum value of sickened 4. If the Strike critically hits, the target also takes 2d6 persistent acid damage.



ABOUT VERDORITES

Verdorites are the enraged spectral echoes left behind when an ecosystem experiences a catastrophic collapse. Calling upon the essences of millions of extinguished plants and animals, they punish any they deem responsible for the disaster, as well as whoever might try to harm the lands to which they are bound. Additional verdorites are detailed on pages 164-165 of *Pathfinder Book of the Dead*.



BRIARGEIST

Briargeists are verdorites unique to Tanglebriar. Millennia spent steeping in Treerazer's corruptive influence has granted them far greater strength while distorting their forms away from the vaguely humanoid to an animate tangle of thorny vines, roots, and fungal growths.

CREATURE 15

BRIARGEIST

RARE **MEDIUM** **INCORPOREAL** **SPIRIT** **UNDEAD**

Perception +27; darkvision

Languages Arboreal, Chthonian, Common, Fey; *speaks with plants*

Skills Acrobatics +29, Intimidation +27, Nature +27, Stealth +29, Tanglebriar Lore +27

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +6

AC 35; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +27, **Will** +29

HP 240, void healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 15 (except force, *ghost touch*, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Tanglebriar Dependent A briargeist is bonded to Tanglebriar and must remain within it. If the briargeist moves outside of Tanglebriar, they are immediately destroyed.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ vine +29 (agile, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+8 void plus bewildering toxin

Ranged ♦ infesting seed +29 (magical, range increment 40 feet), **Damage** 3d10+8 void plus briarvine

Primal Innate Spells DC 36, attack +28; **8th** *fungal infestation* (*Player Core* 2 245), *wall of thorns*; **7th** *nature's pathway* (at will, within Tanglebriar only), *sudden blight* (*Player Core* 2 253); **6th** *tangling creepers* (at will); **Cantrips** (8th) *tangle vine*; **Constant** (8th) *speaks with plants*

Bewildering Toxin (mental, occult poison) **Saving Throw** DC 36 Will;

Maximum Duration 6 rounds; **Stage 1** dazzled and off-guard (1 round);

Stage 2 confused and off-guard (1 round); **Stage 3** 3d10 mental damage, confused, and off-guard (1 round)

Briarvine (curse, occult, void) The incorporeal seeds ejected from a briargeist grow rapidly when they damage living creatures. Living creatures hit by a briargeist's infesting seed must attempt a DC 36 Fortitude save with the following effects. A living creature can only host one briarvine at a time; a creature that currently has a briarvine growing out of them after failing a previous saving throw does not need to attempt additional Fortitude saves.

Critical Success The seed fails to take root.

Success The seed fails to take root, but the target still takes 2d10 void damage as the seed dies out.

Failure The seed takes root within the target and inflicts 2d10 void damage.

At the start of the creature's next turn, a long ghostly thorny vine grows out of their body. This ghostly growth makes a vine Strike (as if the briargeist were making the attack) against a randomly determined ally of the host creature within reach at the start of the host creature's turn. If there's no viable target, the vine inflicts 2d10 void damage (DC 36 basic Fortitude save) on the host. The host can attempt a new Fortitude save at the end of each of its turns; otherwise, this effect ends automatically after 1 minute.

Critical Failure As failure, except the host can't attempt new Fortitude saves to end the Briarvine early.

DEMON, INVIDIAK (ENVY DEMON)

An invidiak has no physical body and is born out of a deep sense of envy over this lack. An invidiak only feels properly “alive” when they’re possessing a host. In many cases, an invidiak remains dormant in such a host, spending months, even years, observing from within and building up its influence over the host slowly, so as to cause as much long-lasting despair and emotional trauma to the host’s friends and family as possible.

INVIDIAK

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON MEDIUM DEMON FIEND INCORPOREAL UNHOLY

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Chthonian, Common; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +15, Deception +18, Religion +13, Society +15, Stealth +17

Str -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +5

AC 23; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +13; +1 to all saves vs. magic

HP 90; **Immunities** disease, poison, precision; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5, holy 5;

Resistances all 5 (except force, *ghost touch*, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Exorcism Vulnerability If an invidiak attempts to possess a creature, and the creature rolls a critical success on their saving throw to resist, or if an invidiak’s possession of a creature is ended prematurely, such as via a successful *dispel magic*, the invidiak takes 6d6 mental damage and cannot cast *possession* for 24 hours.

Share Pain (illusion, mental, nonlethal) **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet of the invidiak deals damage to the invidiak; **Effect** An echo of the invidiak’s pain lashes out at the triggering creature, dealing an amount of nonlethal mental damage equal to half the damage the invidiak took from the triggering attack (DC 25 basic Will save). On a critical failure, the target is sickened 1.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +13 (agile, finesse, magical, unholy), **Damage** 2d8 cold plus 2d6 spirit

Divine Innate Spells DC 25, attack +17;

7th *possession* (range touch); **5th** *translocate*; **4th** *illusory creature*, *translocate* (at will); **3rd** *fear*, *illusory disguise* (×3); **Cantrips** (4th) *telekinetic projectile*

Rituals DC 25; *demonic pact*

Favored Host Each invidiak has a type of creature they prefer possessing, chosen from aberration, animal, beast, or any humanoid (such as dwarf, elf, or human)—in most cases, the favored type of target is human. When an invidiak casts *possession* on a favored host, the duration of *possession* increases to unlimited, and the effect lasts until dispelled or until the invidiak dismisses it.

Unbodied Possession An invidiak leaves no body behind when using *possession*.



LENGTHY POSSESSIONS

An invidiak can possess a favored host for an unlimited amount of time, and over the course of years their influence can result in their host gaining strange new and unique supernatural powers that grow from this spiritual corruption. Such powers only function as long as the possession lasts; if the invidiak is forced out of the body, these powers vanish and don’t return, even if the invidiak later re-possesses the same host. These unique invidiaks are generally much more powerful than the typical one presented here. (See *Vixivax* on page 37 of this adventure for an example of this effect.)





POLLUTERS OF FLESH

Miastrileks are demons associated with pollution and corruption, but unlike the omox (a demon that rises from souls who routinely befouled and polluted their environmental surroundings in life), the miastrilek's sin is more focused on the pollution and corruption of the flesh—such as those who in life ran complex webs of corruption in society that manufactured and distributed drugs that ruined communities, or used pollution and toxins to torture and transform their victims.

DEMON, MIASTRILEK (SPIDER DEMON)

When in their true form, miastrileks have a spider-like appearance. However, they prefer humanoid forms when interacting with mortals, posing as rich or influential figures such as nobles, merchants, or leaders of criminal organizations.

MIASTRILEK

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON LARGE DEMON FIEND UNHOLY

Perception +20; darkvision

Languages Chthonian, Common, plus one additional regional language; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +20, Crafting +20 (+22 for poisons), Deception +22, Society +20, Stealth +22, Thievery +22

Str +5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** +3, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5

AC 30; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +24, **Will** +22

HP 245; **Immunities** acid, disease, poison; **Weaknesses** cold iron 10, holy 10

Clarity Vulnerability The first time in a round that a creature within 30 feet of the miastrilek critically succeeds on a saving throw against a poison or disease or fully recovers from either such affliction via magic or another effect, the demon takes 6d6 mental damage.

Speed 40 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +24 (finesse, magical, unholy), **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing plus 2d6 acid and tremortoxin

Ranged ♦ caustic slurry +24 (magical, range increment 60 feet, unholy), **Damage** 2d8+6 acid

Divine Innate Spells DC 27; **6th** *hallucination*, *toxic cloud*; **5th** *subconscious suggestion*, *translocate*; **4th** *translocate* (at will); **3rd** *hypnotize* (at will);

Constant (6th) *water walk*

Rituals DC 27; *demonic pact*

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, divine, polymorph) The miastrilek can take on the appearance of any Small or Medium humanoid. This doesn't change their Speed but does prevent them from making fangs Strikes.

Spew Pollution ♦♦ (divine) The miastrilek disgorges a spray of acid and rubble in a 30-foot-cone, dealing 6d6 piercing and 6d6 acid damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). The area becomes hazardous terrain for 1 minute (2d6 acid damage). A creature can take this damage only once per turn. The miastrilek must wait 1d4 rounds before Spewing Pollution again.

Tremortoxin (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 30 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** -10-foot status penalty to all Speeds (1 round); **Stage 2** -10-foot status penalty to all Speeds and a -1 circumstance penalty to attack rolls and checks requiring a firm grasp on held items (1 round);

Stage 3 as Stage 2, but increase the circumstance penalty to checks to -2 (1 round)

QLIPPOTH, MUGRISANT (MUTATION QLIPPOTH)

Mugrisants are manifestations of the Outer Rifts' capacity for destructive transformation. This qliploth's cycle of never-ending transformation gives them an insatiable appetite. While a mugrisant can derive nourishment from any flesh, they need not eat to survive, and favor prey that are strong enough to put up a bit of a fight before being devoured, almost turning their bodies inside out to gulp down creatures nearly as large as they are.

MUGRISANT QLIPPOTH

CREATURE 15

RARE **LARGE** **FIEND** **QLIPPOTH** **UNHOLY**

Perception +27; greater darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet; *truesight*

Languages Chthonian; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +27, Athletics +30, Intimidation +27, Occultism +25, Religion +27

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +4

AC 37; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +25, **Will** +23

HP 245; **Immunities** controlled, fear; **Resistances** mental 15, physical 15 (except cold iron)

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 100 feet, DC 33

Speed 40 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +30 (magical, unholy), **Damage** 3d8+15 piercing plus 2d6 acid and Improved Grab

Melee ♦ wing +30 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet, unholy), **Damage** 3d8+15 slashing

Ranged ♦ tooth +28 (concussive, magical, range increment 60 feet, unholy), **Damage** 3d10+14 piercing plus imbed tooth

Occult Innate Spells DC 36; **8th** *duplicate foe*; **7th** *warp mind*; **5th** *translocate* (×3); **Constant (8th)** *truesight*

Imbed Tooth On a critical hit, a mugrisant's fired tooth embeds itself and begins to burrow, inflicting 3d6 persistent piercing damage for the next 3 rounds.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Large, 3d6+14 bludgeoning plus 2d6 acid, Rupture 25

Teratomatous Display ♦♦ (concentrate, emotion, fear, mental, occult, visual) The

mugrisant opens their central maw to display a roiling mass of teratomas. The bodies of those who view this revolting sight change of their own accord, sprouting teratomas of their own. Creatures in a 30-foot emanation must attempt a DC 36 Will save, after which they are temporarily immune to further Teratomatous Displays for 1 minute. Tumors created from this ability vanish when the creature isn't sickened.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 3d6 piercing damage and is sickened 1.

Failure The creature takes 6d6 piercing damage, is sickened 2, and is drained 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes 12d6 piercing damage, is sickened 2, and is drained 2.



CONSTANT, HORRIFIC CHANGE

A mugrisant's body is always consuming itself and generating new organs. While a few of these new body parts appear in functional locations, the rest are drawn toward the mugrisant's central growth sac, a composite organ that lies within their largest maw and is used to warp the bodies of those exposed to it. A rare few who are consumed by a mugrisant don't actually die, but are instead transformed body, mind, and soul into a new qliploth.





Shalelu Andosana

Warden of the Silverbranch Sentinels

Shalelu Andosana spent the first 130 years of her life in the hinterlands of Varisia's Lost Coast, eventually falling into the role of an unofficial wilderness protector of the small town of Sandpoint, where she helped to protect travelers and farmers in the region from goblin raiders and hungry monsters. In 4711 AR, she accompanied her friend Ameiko Kaijitsu and several adventurers on an epic journey over the Crown of the World and played a key role in helping to overthrow the corrupt Jade Regent in Minkai. Today, Ameiko is known throughout Golarion as Empress Amatatsu Ameiko, but Shalelu—by her own choice—returned to a less visible role as warden.

She remained in Minkai for a time to aid her friend Ameiko, but once the political scene stabilized, she took her leave, citing a desire to see yet more of the world. Ameiko gifted her old friend with a magical katana and extracted a promise to return to Minkai now and then to visit, and with that, Shalelu was off once again. She spent six years wandering Tian Xia and eventually came to the land of Jinin, a place ruled by her own kind. Her time in Jinin was the closest Shalelu ever came to feeling at home since leaving Sandpoint years before and, while there, she inspired a dozen other elven naturalists and scouts to follow in her footsteps. Never one to seek leadership, Shalelu found herself in an awkward situation where it had been thrust upon her—and to her surprise, discovered an aptitude, if not a delight, in teaching her ways to others. Thus, the Silverbranch Sentinels came to be.

When hostilities erupted at the start of the Spore War, Queen Telandia contacted the leaders of numerous other elven nations on Golarion and Castrovel, all of whom sent what help they could. Among these were the elves of Jinin, and Shalelu quickly volunteered to lead the Silverbranch Sentinels to Kyonin to provide what aid they could, for Shalelu and her allies had spent years in Jinin patrolling the dangerous entrances to the Darklands. These regions in particular were infested by a wide range of fungal and fiendish threats, and it took only a heartbeat for Shalelu to realize her skills would be a great boon to her people in their fight against Tanglebriar.

Shalelu is devoted to the small group of allies she counts as friends but also believes that coddling allies robs them of the chance to improve themselves. She'd rather protect allies than presume to tell them how to do their jobs, a hands-off method of teaching that has resonated well with the dozen Sentinels who now follow her. While she's largely abandoned the rage she once felt against goblins back in her days living on the Lost Coast, her hatred of corruption—be it of society (as she experienced in her fight against the Jade Regent) or the natural world (as she found too often in the Darklands below Jinin)—remains as strong as ever. She gives off a standoffish vibe and rarely laughs at shared jokes, but to those she counts as friends, she occasionally reveals a softer side that admires nature-themed works of art and stories of wandering the wild.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Shalelu plays a support role in this adventure and would prefer to avoid accompanying the PCs directly on their adventures, fully aware that the foes they'll be facing will be increasingly out of her league. When they accompany the PCs into the wilds of Tanglebriar, the Silverbranch Sentinels depend on Shalelu and, to a greater extent, the PCs for safety should the group be attacked while traveling to a mission site or when the camp is discovered and attacked by creatures. In return for this protection, Shalelu and the Silverbranches can help the PCs in other ways.

Combat Support: Rather than track actions each round for Shalelu and the Silverbranches, it's easiest to narratively describe the assistance they provide in any combat in which they take part. At the end of each round of such a combat, each foe in the fight takes 8d6 piercing damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save) from numerous arrows fired from the magic shortbows of these soldiers. If the PCs win the fight, the Silverbranches are fine, but if the PCs are forced to flee, make a DC 11 flat check. On a success, enough of the Silverbranches are slain that the group can no longer provide combat support. On a critical success, all are slain and the group can't even provide camp support. Kyonin can provide reinforcements to the support

group within 24 hours at the cost of 1 Triumph Point (to restore combat support) or 2 Triumph Points (to restore combat and camp support) in such a case.

Camp Support: Once the PCs establish a base camp, the Silverbranch Sentinels remain there to provide camp support as follows.

- The Silverbranches post guards at night, so no PC needs to stay on watch. Their ability to grant advance warning gives each PC in a camp a +1 status bonus to any initiative rolls resulting from a late-night attack.
- Once the PCs rest and make their daily preparations, the Silverbranches provide medical assistance through the use of Medicine checks, lower-rank spells, and low-level restorative consumable items. Each PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their next saving throw against any afflictions they have, and each PC regains 4d8 Hit Points and loses the wounded condition.
- Every day during daily preparations, the Silverbranches can attempt to counteract a disease or poison afflicting one PC. The Silverbranches have a counteract rank of 7th and a +21 modifier for the roll, with a +2 circumstance bonus if the affliction is fungal.
- If the PCs call in a supply drop, the Silverbranches can retrieve it and have it ready at base camp for the PCs when they next return.

SHALELU ANDOSANA

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID

Female elf ranger

Perception +23; low-light vision

Languages Common, Elven, Goblin, Minkaian, Tien, Varisian

Skills Acrobatics +24, Athletics +22, Forest Lore +21, Medicine +21, Nature +23, Stealth +26, Survival +25

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +1

Items *greater coyote cloak*, +2 *greater striking hunter's anthem* with 20 arrows, +2 *striking greater fearsome katana*, +1 *resilient greater shadow studded leather armor*

AC 33; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +25, **Will** +22

HP 234

Resilient Hunter When Shalelu rolls a success on a Fortitude or Reflex save, she gets a critical success instead.

Speed 35 feet, climb 35 feet (in forests)

Melee ♦ *katana* +24 (deadly d8, magical, two-hand d10, versatile P), **Damage** 2d6+6 slashing

Ranged ♦ *hunter's anthem* +26 (deadly d10, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+3 piercing

Ranger Warden Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 33, attack +25;

5th gravity weapon (Player Core 383), *ranger's bramble* (Player Core 384), *soothing mist* (Player Core 383), *terrain transposition* (Player Core 384)

Favored Terrain Shalelu gains a Climb speed of 35 feet when she's in forested terrain.

Hunt Prey ♦ (concentrate) Shalelu designates a single creature she can see and hear, or one she's Tracking, as her prey. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek the prey and to Survival checks to Track the prey. The first time she hits her designated prey in a round, she deals an additional 2d8 precision damage. These effects last until she uses Hunt Prey again.

Nature's Edge Enemies are off-guard to Shalelu when they're in difficult terrain.

Unimpeded Journey Shalelu ignores the effects of difficult terrain and treats greater difficult terrain as difficult terrain.



Quilindra

Spore Queen of Treerazer

Quilindra was little more than one of a rare few succubi serving in Treerazer's court, during which time she achieved some success in Kyonin destabilizing and disrupting the political scene... at least, until she was found out by Queen Telandia herself. Ashamed at her failures, Quilindra begged for mercy and revealed what she knew about a shadowy force within Kyonin's government: a group known as the Winter Council. The queen, working with a group of adventurers, agreed to a temporary alliance with Quilindra to take down the Winter Council, but when she betrayed the adventurers during that mission, she was slain.

Yet death was not the end for Quilindra. Her rebirth as a fungus tyrant has granted her greater power than ever before. No longer does she serve as a mid-ranking spy—today, she is the Spore Queen of Tanglebriar, the high priestess of Treerazer's faith and one of the most dangerous and powerful members of his army.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

In combat, the Spore Queen prefers to remain at range. Her first action in battle is to cast *freeze time*, during which time she creates a sporepod somewhere advantageous, casts *fly*, and casts *wall of force* in a way that hinders the PCs, using her one remaining action each round either to Stride or Fly as desired. On the second round, she casts *overwhelming presence*, and on the third she casts *suggestion* on the PCs, suggesting they return to Queen Telandia and admit their failures. Beyond this, she'll use her spells to continue attacking at range, using sporepods and soul pods to make tentacle Strikes or remain mobile. She'll cast *duplicate foe* early in the combat if it becomes apparent that she could use some allies and saves *vampiric exsanguination* for a point where she's under 250 Hit Points. If reduced to below 150 Hit Points, she casts *disappearance* and then spends a few rounds casting *soothe* and remaining mobile to recover before she resumes the battle. She fights to the death.

If the PCs retreat from her, the Spore Queen does not pursue. Instead, she returns to her work, although

with a greater urgency to finish quickly. At this point, if the PCs don't finish the fight against her within a few days, she completes her ritual and the Witchbole gains the ability to freely teleport. If this happens, this adventure comes to an end as the Spore Queen leaves Deathstalk Tower and relocates to the Witchbole, with ramifications as detailed in the next adventure.

SPORE QUEEN QUILINDRA

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM FIEND FUNGUS UNHOLY

Female fungus tyrant (Seven Dooms for Sandpoint 190)

Perception +34; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Chthonian, Common, Draconic, Elven,

Empyrean; fungaltongue, telepathy 100 feet, *truespeech*

Skills Athletics +38, Deception +38, Diplomacy +38, Intimidation +40, Nature +34, Performance +38, Religion +34, Society +36, Stealth +34

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +10, **Int** +8, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +10

Items +3 greater resilient antimagic raiment leather armor, +3 greater striking wounding unholy dagger, slate of distant letters, wand of phantasmal calamity (8th rank)

Fungaltongue The Spore Queen can speak with all forms of fungi. She gains a +3 circumstance bonus to all Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation checks made against fungal creatures.

AC 44; **Fort** +38, **Ref** +34, **Will** +34; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 375; **Weaknesses** cold iron 20, holy 20; **Resistances** electricity 20

Distracted by Failures Quilindra remembers her failures in her previous life vividly. A PC can taunt her as an action with the auditory, concentrate, linguistic, and mental traits by attempting a DC 40 Deception, Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Performance check.

Critical Success Quilindra is significantly distracted; she becomes off-guard for the remainder of the encounter, becomes stupefied 1, and is slowed 1 until the end of her next turn as she spends valuable moments sputtering and shrieking in rage at the PC. Additional critical successes increase the value of her stupefied condition by 1, to a maximum of stupefied 3.

Success As critical success, but she's not stupefied and remains off-guard only until the end of her next turn.

Failure Quilindra is only slightly distracted and becomes off-guard to that PC until the end of the PC's turn.

Critical Failure Quilindra is unaffected.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ tentacle +36 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d12+16 bludgeoning plus Grab

Melee ♦ dagger +39 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 3d4+16 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed and 1d4 spirit

Melee ♦ claw +36 (agile, magical), **Damage** 4d10+16 slashing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 42, attack +34; **10th** (1 slot) *freeze time*; **9th** (3 slots) *overwhelming presence*, *seize soul*, *spirit blast*; **8th** (3 slots) *disappearance*, *duplicate foe*, *vampiric exsanguination*; **7th** (3 slots) *resist energy*, *soothe*, *warp mind*; **6th** (3 slots) *blood vendetta*, *teleport*, *wall of force*; **5th** (3 slots) *command*, *sending*, *subconscious suggestion*; **4th** (3 slots) *confusion*, *fly*, *translocate*; **3rd** (3 slots) *blindness*, *fear*, *slow*; **2nd** (3 slots) *laughing fit*, *paranoia*, *stupefy*; **1st** (3 slots) *command*, *enfeeble*, *sanctuary*; **Cantrips (10th)** *daze*, *read aura*, *shield*, *telekinetic hand*, *telekinetic projectile*

Divine Innate Spells DC 42, attack +34; **9th** *hallucination*, *illusory disguise*, *mind probe*; **8th** *charm*, *mirage*, *suggestion*; **7th** *mind reading*, *slow*; **Cantrips (9th)** *daze*, *detect magic*; **Constant (9th)** *truespeech*

Rituals DC 42; *consecrate*

Create Spawn (divine) The Spore Queen can create spawn from foes, but she doesn't use this ability in combat, as she would rather see the PCs dead than given this fungal gift, so full details aren't reprinted here.

Grow Sporepod ♦♦ (divine) The Spore Queen causes a human-sized pod of fungal material to burst out of the ground at any point she can see within 60 feet. Once created, a sporepod lasts for 1 minute, until she moves more than 120 feet away from it, or until it's destroyed (AC 45, Hardness 20, 60 HP). She cannot Grow a Sporepod again for 1d4 rounds, but apart from this and a sporepod's 1 minute life, there is no hard limit to the number of sporepods she can have active at any one time.

Mind-Draining Kiss ♦ (divine, emotion, mental)

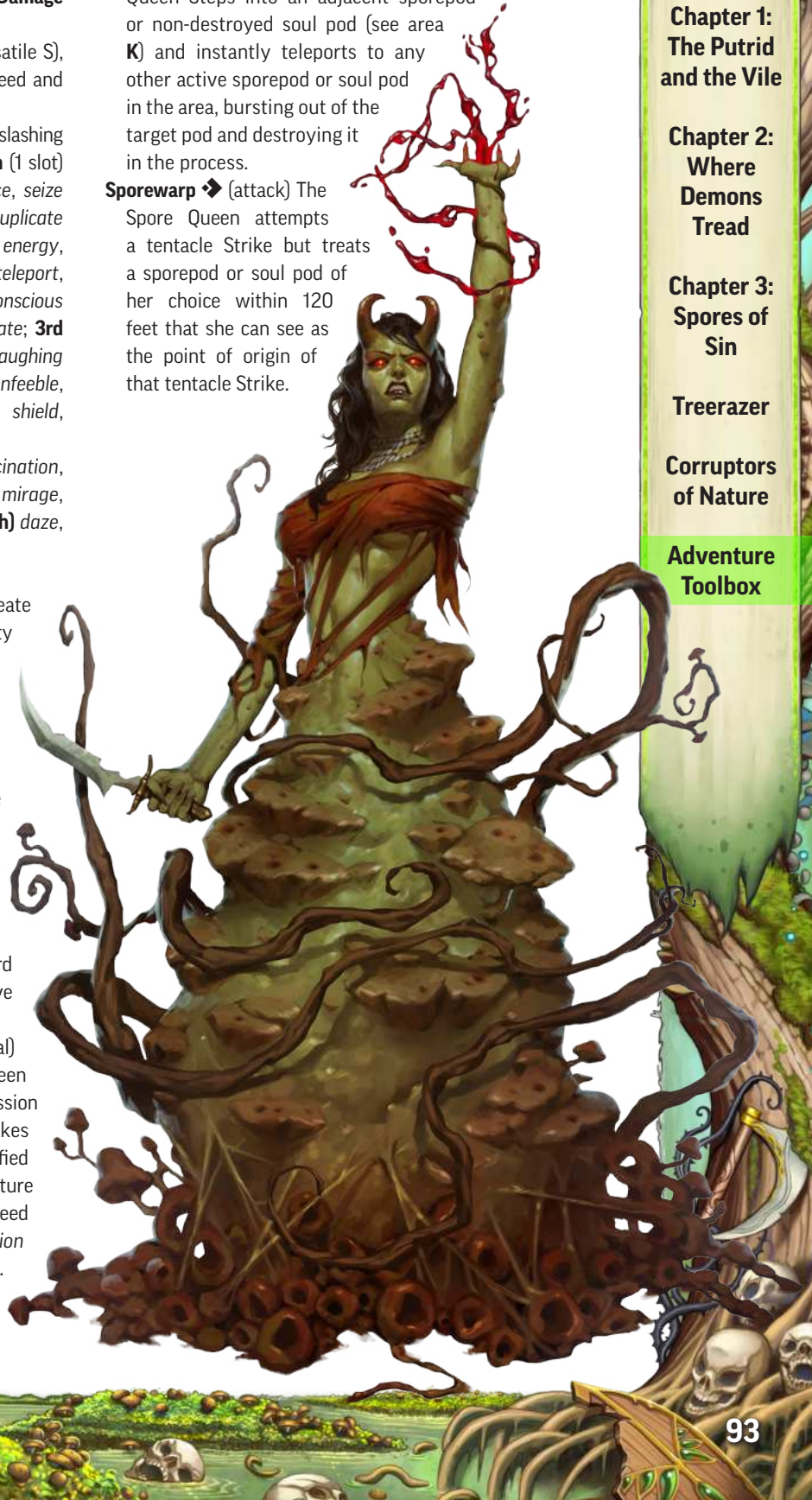
Frequency once per round; **Effect** The Spore Queen engages a creature she's grabbed in an act of passion in an attempt to drain its will. The kiss makes the creature stupefied 1 or increases its stupefied condition by 1, to a maximum of 4. The creature takes 4d6 poison damage and must then succeed at a DC 42 Will save or be affected by a *suggestion* to remain immobile rather than trying to Escape.

Vengeful Slice (divine) The Spore Queen inflicts an additional 2d6 spirit damage to elves she

Strikes with her dagger. An elf reduced to 0 Hit Points by the Spore Queen's dagger Strike becomes doomed 1 as Treerazer takes note of their soul.

Sporestride ♦ (divine, move, teleportation) The Spore Queen Steps into an adjacent sporepod or non-destroyed soul pod (see area K) and instantly teleports to any other active sporepod or soul pod in the area, bursting out of the target pod and destroying it in the process.

Sporewarp ♦ (attack) The Spore Queen attempts a tentacle Strike but treats a sporepod or soul pod of her choice within 120 feet that she can see as the point of origin of that tentacle Strike.



NEXT MONTH

A Voice in the Blight

by Rigby Bendele

With the Spore Queen's defeat, Treerazer's plans accelerate, and the final conflict of the Spore War promises either triumph or annihilation.

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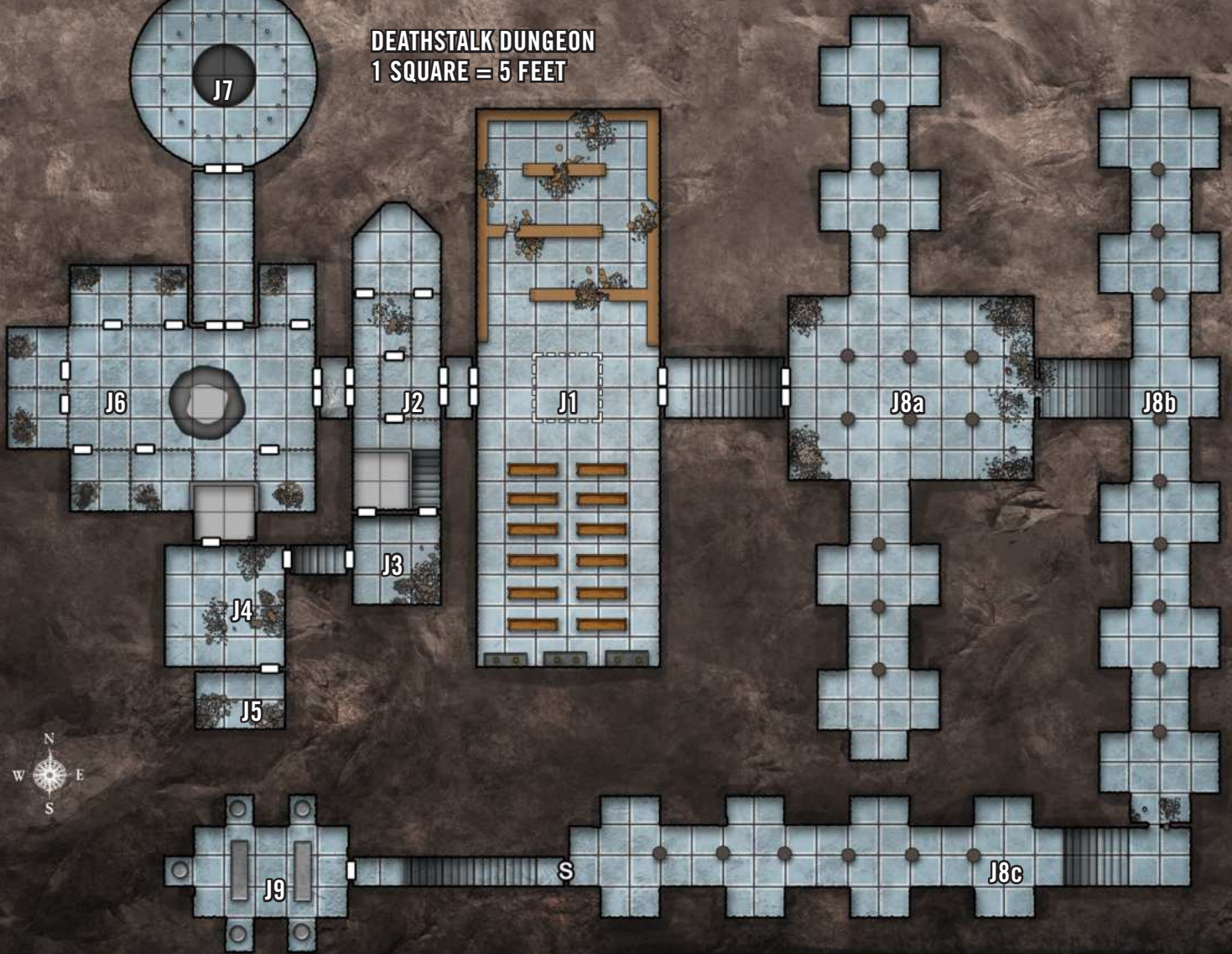
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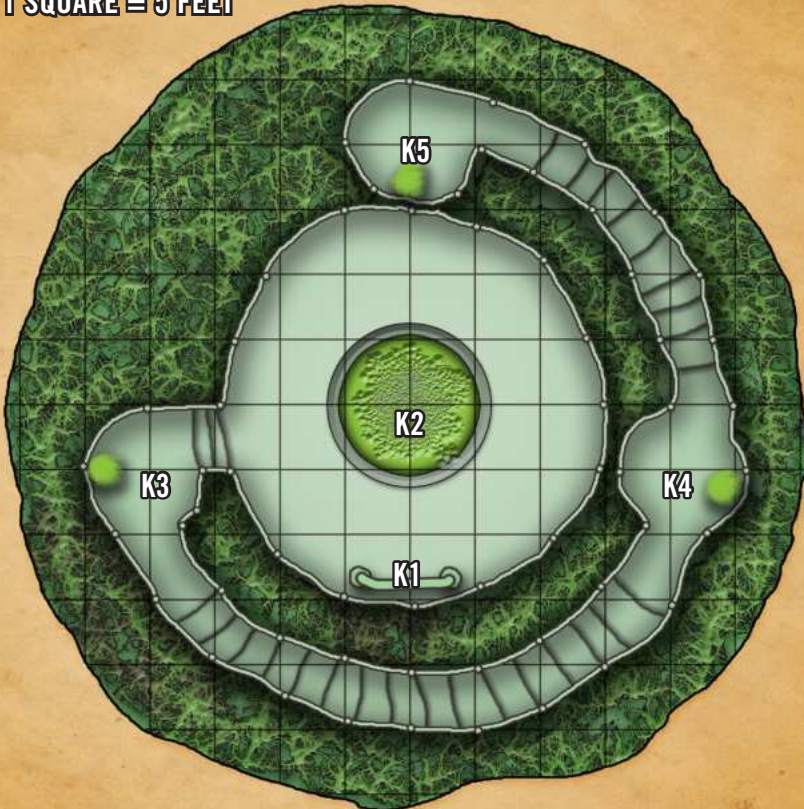
DEATHSTALK DUNGEON

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



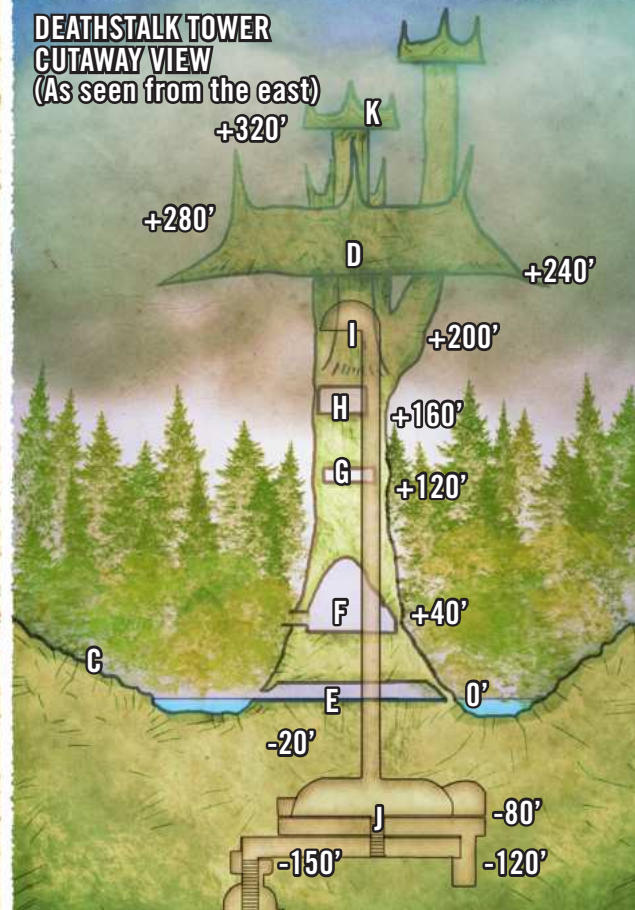
DEATHSTALK SPIRES

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DEATHSTALK TOWER

CUTAWAY VIEW
(As seen from the east)



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