



DISEASED!

An Adventure for Four to Six 7th-Level Characters

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2006, game designers revised and expanded the 1st edition I6: *Ravenloft* module and called it *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*. Shorn of the whole Demiplane of Dread, *Ravenloft* returned to the adventure's roots. Dungeon Masters (DMs) can now run the new *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft* as a campaign instead of as a single short adventure, thus expanding on and building the sense of horror until the climactic encounter with Count Strahd. Within that campaign, you have room for your own shorter adventures, since different patrons can send the PCs on missions either to help defeat Strahd or to hinder his defeat. Even the vicious count himself can become a patron for the PCs, at least for a while.

This adventure for 7th-level player characters (PCs) is designed to be one of those short missions. It fits into the lands of Barovia and connects to existing story elements, while taking the PCs off on a tangent. It can be very dangerous, though, and failure can mean death for the PCs even if they defeat all the creatures they meet.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The land of Barovia is hundreds of years older than Count Strahd. In those ancient days, when the forest was friendlier, a family built an estate in the meadows near the crossroads. The original estate held a small tower and two small, but fine, houses. Over time, the family lost the land and others claimed it. During that time, owners converted one of the houses to a small tavern, since a road led past the estate to lands beyond Barovia. But even those people lost the property, and it fell into decay. By the time Strahd came, it had crumbled into ruin. In the hundreds of years since, it has only decayed even further.

This long-forgotten site holds a secret—one wanting to escape. The wife of the man who first built the estate tower was a powerful summoner who used her art to entrap her foes. This she did to a rakshasa named Parmitt Balam, who was a hated and long-time enemy of hers. Balam has remained trapped in this place, never aging and never able to escape. However, he has never stopped trying to free himself using the limited resources he has available.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

After nearly a millennia of entrapment, Balam is even more desperate to be free. The werewolves that live

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in the ruins have not been cooperative about freeing him, so he plans to use them to bring others that might be more willing. He created a virulent disease that spreads via open wounds, and then he summoned a small creature to carry the disease and infect the werewolves. The werewolves, in the course of their normal hunting, spread the disease to anyone who survives one of their attacks, and after contracting it, the host can spread it to others. The adventure begins when the werewolves attack and possibly infect the PCs.

If the PCs are infected, they learn that they cannot cure the disease through “normal” magical means, so they must seek out its source. They can learn information in the village of Barovia or from Madam Eva. (Alternatively, if they don’t get infected, other means of presenting this problem are suggested below.) This information leads them to the ruined site, where they battle various creatures and make their way down to where the rakshasa is trapped. The creature offers to trade a cure for its freedom, and the PCs have a choice to make.

PREPARATION

To run this adventure, you’ll need the *Player’s Handbook* (PH) and the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* (DMG). You should also pick up *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*. This adventure is designed to use the new D&D *Dungeon Tiles* product. In fact, to get the most out of this aspect, you need the first two sets of D&D *Dungeon Tiles*.

To get started, print out the adventure, including the maps. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major nonplayer characters (NPCs). Some text is designated as player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Beginning this adventure is very easy: Attack the PCs with a group of werewolves.

Tactical Encounter: Attack of the Diseased Werewolves on page 8.

Development: From here, the PCs can go anywhere. Those infected won’t notice the effects of the disease until the next day.

Troubleshooting: It may be that none of the PCs catch the disease during this fight. If so, then you can try again in a few different ways:

- A “thankful” victim of the werewolves whom the PCs rescue may herself be a werewolf in human guise; her appreciative kiss for one PC then turns into an unwelcome nip or even a bite.
- The PCs may come across a dying victim who pleads for assistance.
- Lastly, you can also alter Madam Eva’s reading from the *Fortunes of Ravenloft* so that one of the three legendary items needed to defeat Strahd is hidden at the estate site, and bypass the whole disease part of the story entirely.

Be creative, though, because if the first attack doesn’t infect a PC, you may find that successive werewolf attacks may become boring and certainly don’t inspire an atmosphere of horror.

THE DISEASE

The disease created by Parrmitt Balam is a fast-moving and deadly disease, though not everyone who is infected with it suffers its consequences. Every day, the victim loses 1 point of Strength, Constitution, and Charisma. This is permanent ability drain, (DMG 300) not ability damage. A *remove disease* cast by a 12th-level caster can cure the disease, or finding the antidote that Balam holds can help. Finding a nonmagical cure would take longer than an infected PC has to live under normal circumstances. *Lesser restoration* does not restore lost ability points, since that spell cannot restore permanently drained ability points.

The initial Fortitude save to resist the disease is DC 19. If the victim fails the saving throw, she must be cured. The disease spreads through wounds, and each wound has a chance to become infected. Once infected, the incubation time is 24 hours, and then the victim can affect others.

Some rare few victims, for whatever reason, do not develop the symptoms of the disease but become carriers instead. These creatures rolled a natural 1 on their initial Fortitude saves when exposed to the disease. Carriers pass on the disease normally, but they do not lose ability points themselves. Thus, they usually don’t know they are sick.

INTO THE SNARE

If some of the heroes have contracted the disease, they may try to cure themselves. The cleric in the village of Barovia is 5th level, but he is also quite insane. He could cast *remove disease*, but he is not of high enough level to

cure this disease. Given the suggested level range for this adventure, chances are that any cleric in the party also cannot cure this disease. Because magic is involved in the disease, mundane means of healing (herbalism, and so on) do not work. The PCs must find the source of the disease and then find an antidote.

THE DEAD WEREWOLVES

The bodies of the werewolves that attacked the PCs don't offer any means for curing the disease, since nonmagical means are ineffective. The werewolves have no gear at all, since they preferred to revel in their new natures and run around naked. *Speak with dead* is about the only way to make use of their corpses to gain a lead.

The werewolves are most likely of different alignments than the PCs, and they get a saving throw against *Speak with dead* (which they take). If they fail, they can reveal information in the following areas. Use the specifics provided in the rest of the adventure, and in *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*, to work out their answers.

- The werewolves know where their lair is at the ruined estate. They know that two more werewolves are suffering from some kind of sickness there. They can describe the general features of the estate, but not any of the monsters or traps in the house or tavern buildings. In the tower, they know about the large spiders on the second floor and that the room next to theirs in the lower level is very hot.
- They know that a girl is trapped somewhere in the cellars, which they have not explored. (They have not even opened the door into the super-heated room next to theirs.) She appeared to them in a magic circle painted on the floor of their room and asked them to find and free her. They did not and have no interest in doing so.
- They used to be adventurers who came here a year ago to help the burgomaster, but werewolves in the forest attacked them, turning them into werewolves as well. They like their new existence and have no desire to be cured.
- They know what the other werewolves know about Strahd. See *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*.
- They know that Madam Eva has the gift of seeing the future. They visited her soon after arriving, and she foretold dark times for them. If the PCs want to know anything about this land, they should talk to her.

It should be noted that these werewolves don't have to be dead. Captured werewolves can be questioned too, but they begin as hostile and must be moved to friendly via Diplomacy checks (DC 35) before they'll give any real information. They might spread lies, at your discretion.

TALK IN THE VILLAGE

One place the PCs can find information is in the village of Barovia itself. The ancient ruined estate is far older than anyone here remembers, especially with the evils of Strahd so present in their minds (and the recent zombie infestation). Three sources of information in the village can point the PCs toward the ruined estate.

ISMARK

Ismark the Lesser (*Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*, page 27) is the person most likely to have even heard of the ruined site, since his father raised him to be the next burgomaster. And in fact he has heard of an old set of ruins to the west of the crossroads. He can relate the following story.

"Come to think of it, there is an old ruin somewhere west of the crossroads. According to the history book that my grandfather (god's rest his soul) used to have, this land is much older than even that devil Strahd. This ruin probably dates back to that time. It can't be much of anything anymore, but it could be a lair for some of the devil's creatures. My grandfather said that a powerful wizard lived there a long time ago, maybe a thousand years, and she dealt with creatures from ... elsewhere. Back then, there was a road eastward from the crossroads that led to lands none of us have ever seen. The road is gone now, and you can't even tell where it might have been. But the ruin was along that old road. We don't go out there ourselves because the woods have been too dangerous for common folk for years and years. And I hear wolfmen are in the woods too, living with the wolves we hear every night."

VISTANI

The Vistani have suffered attacks from the diseased werewolves, and two of their number at the Tser Pool encampment have been stricken with the disease. A few Vistani are always in the village, and they can usually be found (at least in the evenings) in the Blood of the Vine tavern (*Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*, page 26). The Vistani begin as unfriendly, but if they can be brought to indifferent (Diplomacy DC 15) then they relate that they too have seen this sickness. It came

upon two of their number who were attacked near the crossroads by werewolves. They don't know any more, and they suggest that the PCs speak to Madam Eva.

THE HUNTER

Lastly, a werewolf hunter named Janis Baragh (human male ranger 9) is in the village. Janis knows where the werewolves are in the Svalich Woods, and he can tell the PCs where to look for werewolves, including near the crossroads. Janis believes that there are two groups of werewolves (the ones at the crossroads and the others).

Of the main group, he knows general information on their numbers and possible lairs (see *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*, Lands of Barovia section).

Of the werewolves at the crossroads, he can say that there are three to five of them, and that they seem to have a lair of some kind west in the meadowlands, or possibly in the Svalich Woods adjacent to the meadowlands. If shown the corpses from the first combat, he can verify that these are some of the ones from the crossroads group. He doesn't know anything personal about them, except that they have been here for only a couple of years, while the main group is much older.

MADAM EVA

The PCs may go talk to Madam Eva about their disease and what they can do about it. None of the Vistani can cure it, but they are very interested in it because werewolves attacked two Vistani (which is unusual) and infected them with the same disease. In exchange for information from the PCs on where and by whom they were attacked, Madam Eva tells them that the two Vistani who have the disease were attacked in the meadows west of the crossroads. She also knows of a ruin somewhere out there that predates the memory of anyone here. She doesn't know anything about it, but in the early days of their arrival here, the Vistani found it. The crumbling ruin has a one-story tower and the outlines of a couple other buildings. They have not been back in years, since the Tser Pools is a much better camp for them. She is very vague about where it is, since she has not thought of it in a long time.

ALTERNATIVE STORY HOOK

If you don't want to bother with the diseased werewolf aspect of this plot, you can introduce the ruined estate location simply by altering the Fortunes of Ravenloft to indicate that either the *Sunsword* or the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* is hidden there. You can either do so randomly by replacing the *Sunsword* and *Holy Symbol of*

Ravenkind location of "Bildrath's Mercantile" with the ruined estate, or you can simply declare that whatever card comes up indicates the ruined estate. Here is the text to insert into the reading.

<Card Revealed>: "Seek it in an old place, one near the setting sun that predates the evil that has come on this land."

Explanation: "This card speaks of the past—an ancient past beyond that even of Count Strahd and his family. In the west there is a remnant of this past, west of the crossroads. Seek it there."

TRACKING THE WEREWOLVES

It is possible, though difficult, to track the werewolves back to their lair at the ruined estate. To do so, the PCs have to start at the crossroads. The werewolves came from the estate to the crossroads and then moved southward, covering their tracks as they went. Thus, tracking them to the crossroads requires a successful Survival check (DC 25) for tracking. However, tracking them from the crossroads requires only a Survival check (DC 15) that must be made three times between the crossroads and the estate location.

Optionally, if you want to make things more difficult for your PCs, you can use one of the werewolf tactical encounters from *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft* as a "random encounter." It will confuse them about the location of the werewolves, so be judicious with this. You don't want to lead them so far astray that they cannot recover.

On the other hand, such an encounter can be used as a troubleshooting measure to direct the PCs toward the ruined estate. The werewolves in the encounter could be trying to find the diseased werewolves and know the direction from which they came.

COUNT STRAHD

It is possible, though unlikely, that the PCs view Strahd as a patron rather than as a foe. Perhaps they have been taking missions in the lands on his behalf. If this is so, they might think to ask him about the disease once they catch it or become aware of it.

Strahd doesn't know anything about the disease or the ruined estate. He shows interest in either of them, however, and should the PCs mention them, he tries to send them to explore the ruined estate and report back on what's there. He can have one of his creatures of the

night pinpoint the location in a few hours, and thus the PCs would get excellent directions to the site.

THE ANCIENT ESTATE

The estate consists of two partial buildings and a short stone tower. The entire site is worn down by age, though the tower is more or less intact. Each area is described below.

This is the main part of the adventure, and you should be prepared to inject horror elements into the exploration. Flickering lights (especially near the fire elementals' prison), the howl of wolves nearby (even after the remaining two werewolves are dead), and rustling in the brush (especially if the assassin vines are alive) all make the PCs jumpy. If you can get them to use resources on figments of their imagination, that's even better.

THE RUINED HOUSE

Low stone walls mark the boundaries of what once was the house on this estate. Now the structure is overgrown with vines and low bushes. All of the furnishings are long gone, though rotted wood underneath some of the shrubs mark where bookcases, a table, and posts that were part of a bed once existed. Now nothing remains that is of any interest to adventurers.

THE RUINED TAVERN

The second building was converted into a tavern a long time ago, and it has fallen into ruin in that guise. The main timbers survive, somehow, but otherwise only the stone walls remain.

Tactical Encounter: Thorny Embrace on page 10.



Development: The PCs can search the tavern once the plants are dead, but they don't find anything at all. The valuables and even the barely valuable items were taken a long time ago.

The area around the tavern shows tracks of werewolves in hybrid form (weird manlike animal tracks) and they show that the werewolves never went into the tavern.

THE TOWER, GROUND LEVEL

When built, this was intended to be a five-story tower. However, for one reason or another, only the first story was ever built. Finally, the owner put a roof on the first story and gave up trying to make it taller. The wizard did not live in the tower; she lived in the house next to it. She used the tower for magical research.

The tower's sunken floor was once an extremely detailed carving work, but now nothing remains but dirt. The stone floor and walls still exist, but they are showing a great deal of age. The stairs lead both upward and downward.

The real danger here is the ceiling. Though made of stone, it has weathered the centuries poorly and threatens to fall in at any moment. See the upper level description for more information. For every 10 minutes the PCs spend in this room, there is a 10% chance that a random 5-foot square of the ceiling falls on them. If a section falls, it falls onto a PC if at all possible. Mark out the missing section in the tile for the upper level should the PCs go there afterward.

Falling Ceiling Trap: CR 3; mechanical device; random trigger; no reset; Atk +20 melee (4d6 damage); Search DC 20 to find; Disable DC 40 to deactivate (from this level).

THE TOWER, UPPER LEVEL

The upper level of the tower is actually its roof. The top has battlement walls that are 5 feet high, though they were never used in a battle. The roof has nothing of value to the PCs' search, but it does house a couple of nasties.

Tactical Encounter: Spiders and Flies on page 12.

Treasure: In one of the webs are the remains of a Vistani that came here years ago (he was lost). His body has been eaten by the spiders that killed him, but his skeleton still has a *wand of cure light wounds* (27 charges), a vial of *silversheen*, and a masterwork greataxe.

Development: While the PCs don't gain anything by fighting the spiders, they do alert the two werewolves in the lower level to their presence (unless they took extraordinary precautions to be silent and

avoid hazards and combat), which allows the werewolves to cast some spells before the PCs arrive.

THE TOWER, LOWER LEVEL

Beneath the tower is the “dungeon” level that the estate’s owner built so that his wife could conduct magical experiments, contact extraplanar beings, and do other magical things without being observed. It is the only part of the estate that is free from most of the effects of age, and the werewolves rediscovered it only recently.

This level uses several *D&D Dungeon Tiles* tiles to create the map. See the image at the right for what it looks like, and use the appropriate tiles. They come from the first two sets of *D&D Dungeon Tiles*.

The underground area is lit in only three rooms: Werewolf Lair, Room of Flames, and Summoning Chamber. Every other location is dark (normal darkness). It is not humid in the lower level because of the constant flame in the Room of Flames. The whole level is considered worked stone.

Entry Corridor

The circular stairs end in a corridor 10 feet wide and 40 feet long. At the far end is a large single door that opens into the Werewolf Lair area. That door is not locked or trapped.

On the north wall 10 feet from the circular stairwell is a lever in the upward position. It controls a stone wall meant to trap any unwanted magical effects or beings inside the lower level. The sliding stone wall is 5 feet down the corridor from the lever, and it slides from north to south across the corridor on a slight decline. To retract the stone wall, the lever is attached to a complex winch system that pulls the wall back when the lever is raised to the up position. However, the ropes from this system have rotted away.

If someone pulls the lever to the down position, three long metal pins in the floor under the sliding wall drop (unseen to the PCs), releasing the stone wall. The wall slides across the corridor in 1 round (as a full-round action), closing it off completely. However, because the winch system is missing its ropes, raising the lever to the up position produces no result at all. Once released, the wall blocks the corridor until it is removed.

The wall is 2-foot-thick worked stone (hardness 8, 360 hp), and it must be battered through. It is far too heavy to slide sideways.

Tracks in this passage show humanoids with clawed animal-like feet passing back and forth frequently (Survival DC 20).

Werewolf Lair

This room is the lair of the werewolves that contracted the disease. Two of the original five remain here, suffering from the effects of the disease. There is a summoning circle inscribed on the floor in the southwest corner of the room, away from the door to the Room of Flames.

Tactical Encounter: Sick Werewolves on page 14.

Treasure: This room contains the original equipment of all five werewolves, piled in the corner on top of the summoning circle. This pile of treasure contains a +1 chain shirt, a +1 composite longbow (+2 Str) and 40 cold iron arrows, a *potion of bull's strength*, a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, a *wand of detect magic* (40 charges), a *ring of protection* +1, a pair of *boots of elvenkind*, a *potion of mage armor*, three *potions of cure light wounds*, a suit of masterwork studded leather armor, a pair of *gloves of Dexterity* +2, a suit of masterwork chain shirt armor, a masterwork rapier, a *potion of aid*, a +1 greatsword, a suit of +1 mithral breastplate armor, a *ring of counterspells*, a *wand of mage armor* (11 charges), and disposable personal items.

Development: Parrmitt Balam can move from one summoning circle to another, though he cannot escape the network of circles. Thus, he can appear in this room if he wants. During the combat, he appears in the circle as a waiflike young woman and watches the combat with apparent hope in his features; it takes a successful opposed Sense Motive check to determine he is faking it, and a Spot check (DC 39) to tell that he is not what he appears to be. Just before the end of the combat, he disappears and returns to the Summoning Chamber.

The doorway from here leads to the Room of Flames. The whole room is warmed by the heat from next door, and the door is hot to the touch. The werewolves live here because of the warmth. The door is locked with a good lock that has deteriorated in the heat to an average lock (Open Lock DC 25). The door is stone, 6 inches thick (hardness 8, 90 hit points, break DC 30). Once the werewolves have been defeated, the PCs can take 20 on the Open Lock check. The lock re-locks itself magically 1 minute after it has been unlocked.

Room of Flames

This room serves as the prison of several fire elementals that were put here to prevent any intruders from getting to the Summoning Chamber.

Tactical Encounter:

Flaming Pyre on page 16.

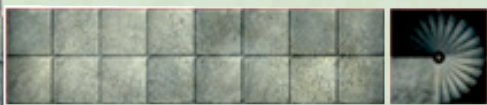
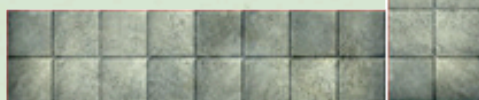
Development: In the center of the north wall is a door that leads toward the laboratories. It is locked with a good lock that has deteriorated with heat to an average lock (Open Lock DC 25). The door is stone, 6 inches thick (hardness 8, 90 hp, break DC 30).

Ravenloft Story Item

Placement: If you use the alternative hook and place either the *Sunsword* or the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* at the ruined estate, then it can be found in this room, next to the north door. Next to it is a burned skeleton with no equipment whatsoever (the legendary item could withstand the heat, but the normal stuff could not).

Laboratories

The two rooms between the Room of Flames and the Yawning Chasm were spell laboratories. They were cleared of any magical experimentation gear



long ago by later generations, and now nothing remains in either one except some rotten pieces of wood on the floor that used to be racks or shelves or tables. One very heavy stone statue is in the far corner of the east room. It was going to become a stone golem but the wizard died before she could finish it.

The Yawning Chasm

After passing the laboratories, the PCs reach a platform over a 30-foot drop into complete darkness. Beyond it they can see a large room with three circles inscribed on the floor. To reach it, they must cross the chasm.

Tactical Encounter: The Grasping from Below on page 18.

Treasure: The otyughs in the chasm have some trinkets in their junk pile that they have collected from the world outside. Specifically, they have a *ring of feather falling*, a suit of leather armor, three daggers, a masterwork dagger, a *potion of pass without trace*, and a *potion of blur*.

Summoning Chamber

This final room is where Parmitt Balam is imprisoned. Though this should be a diplomatic and negotiation-oriented encounter, it could degenerate into combat.

Tactical Encounter: The Tiger-Man on page 20.

FREEING THE RAKSHASA

Balam knows that his imprisonment is tied to the magic circles, but he does not know exactly how. He theorizes (correctly) that all four circles must be broken (defaced), and that once someone does that he will be freed. There are three circles in this room and one in the Werewolf Lair room.

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ATTACK OF THE DISEASED WEREWOLVES

Encounter Level 10

This encounter begins the adventure and should be used near the crossroads (but not at them) on the Old Svalich Road.

To begin, read aloud the following text:

The woods are creepy during the day or the night, and as you walk the Old Svalich Road, the howls of wolves sound in the distance, some close and some farther away. Glowing eyes have occasionally watched your progress before their owners scampered into the underbrush. The road sees frequent use, since boot prints go in both directions down it. But there is no one on the road today, and it would be eerily quiet if not for the insect sounds coming from the trees.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

Draw a 10-foot road on the battlemat and draw some brush near it, with the woods farther off. Have the players place their miniatures on the map in a walking formation on the road. Then have the PCs make Spot and Listen checks opposed by the werewolves' Hide and Move Silently checks. Once the attack begins, or if any PCs detect any of the werewolves, place the werewolves in ambush locations.

THE MONSTERS

Three werewolves try to ambush the PCs and have them for dinner. Taking any dead PC is okay with them; they don't need all the PCs. So, if they get a chance to grab a downed PC and flee, they'll take it.

These werewolves once belonged to a party of adventurers who came to Barovia. The werewolves in the Svalich Woods overcame them and infected them with lycanthropy. Since no one could help them, they turned into werewolves and became evil. Now, still hunted by the other werewolves, they struggle to survive by living at the ruined estate and taking victims from the road when they can. They also feast on forest animals.

They had been watching the Old Svalich Road for Vistani, but the PCs came along instead. They wait in hiding until the PCs are abreast, and then they spring to attack in the surprise round using a partial charge.

They use only their natural weapons, having left their old equipment back at the estate.

These werewolves are carriers of the disease that the rakshasa created. They don't suffer from it, but they can pass it to others. Anyone injured by one of these werewolves must make a DC 19 Fortitude save for each injury; failure means they caught the disease.

Palrion Malon's Tactics

Palrion attacks any human that he can reach immediately. Elves are second on the list, but Palrion was always a bit evil and preferred to hunt humans. He saves his *entangle* spell to cover the group's retreat if they have to run. On the first round after he and his surviving friends withdraw (Palrion tumbles), he puts the *entangle* effect so that it will slow down the PCs for the longest time, and then the werewolves change to wolf form and run away.

Najel Beyuz's and Fennen Estyn's Tactics

Najel and Fennen both rage as soon as combat begins (even on a PC's turn if necessary), so they don't have much in the way of tactics.

PALRION MALON, HYBRID FORM

CR 7

HP 49

Werewolf (human) male ranger 5

CE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +5; **Senses** Improved Scent, low-light vision;

Listen +11, **Spot** +11

Languages Common, Elven

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14

(+5 Dex, +4 natural)

HD 7; **DR** 5/silver

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d4+3) and

bite +5 (1d6+1)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Atk Options favored enemy humans +4 (+7 damage), favored enemy elves +2 (+5 damage)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 2nd):

1st—*entangle* (DC 13)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 8
SQ alternate form, wolf empathy, wild empathy +6 (+2 magical beasts)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Endurance^B, Improved Favored Enemy (from *Complete Warrior*), Improved Scent (from *Savage Species*), Iron Will^B, Quick Change (from *Savage Species*), Track^B, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +6, Hide +15, Jump +8, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +14, Spot +11, Survival +8 (+10 aboveground natural environments, +12 tracking by scent, +14 tracking by scent in aboveground natural environments)*, Tumble +8

Alternate Form (Su) Palrion can assume a wolf form or the form of a human.

NAJEL BEYUZ AND FENNEN ESTYN,
HYBRID FORMS **CR 7 EACH**
HP 76 each

Werewolf (human) male barbarian 5 (raging)
CE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +11, Spot +8

Languages Common

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; improved uncanny dodge, uncanny dodge
(+3 Dex, +4 natural, -2 raging)

HD 7; **DR** 5/silver

Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d4+6) and
bite +8 (1d6+3)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Instantaneous Rage, Power Attack, rage 2/day (9 rounds)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 17, Con 22, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

SQ alternate form, trap sense +1, wolf empathy
Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Instantaneous Rage (from *Complete Warrior*), Iron Will^B, Power Attack, Track^B, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Balance +4, Climb +14, Jump +18, Listen +11, Spot +8, Survival +10 (+14 when tracking by scent), Tumble +7

When not raging, Najel and Fennen have the following changed statistics:

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 16

hp 62 (7 HD)

Fort +10, **Will** +5

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d4+4) and
bite +6 (1d6+2)

Grp +10

Abilities Str 18, Con 18

Skills Climb +12, Jump +16

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex) Najel retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or attacked by an invisible attacker, and he cannot be flanked by anyone of the appropriate level range in this adventure.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex) Fennen retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or when struck by an invisible attacker.

Alternate Form (Su) Naje and Fennenl can assume a wolf form or the form of a human.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The spot picked for hunting is a stretch of road with sparse vegetation along the side of the roadway. Not enough grows to impede movement, but enough fills the area and provides places to hide. Meadows stretch away in the distance. The road is well used and hard packed, offering no challenges during the adventure. A light rain could be falling, at your discretion, that worsens during the combat.

THORNY EMBRACE

Encounter Level 7

This encounter takes place only when the PCs enter the ruins of the old tavern. It uses the tavern tile from D&D Dungeon Tiles set 1.

To begin, read aloud the following text:

Before you, the remains of a building rise eerily from the surrounding plant growth. Low stone walls mark a structure about 60 feet by 40 feet. Within, entwined vines cover what might once have been part of a bar, a fireplace, and a crumbling chimney. This place looks like it has been undisturbed for centuries.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

Have the players place their miniature figures on the tavern map in a location that their PC would likely explore. You can also have them start outside the tavern room and move their figures into the room as the PCs begin to search. Once the PCs (all that are coming inside, anyway) are in random places in the room, and they have had a few minutes to search around, spring the attack.

ASSASSIN VINES

Two Huge assassin vines have taken root, so to speak, in the old tavern ruins. Their center squares are indicated on the map, and they spread out to their full 15-foot space. They appear as any other plant that is growing in the area, and so make Hide checks for them as per the rules for spotting assassin vines.

Assassin Vine Tactics

The assassin vines wait until several creatures are inside the tavern, and thus surrounded by their vines. Then they attack by surprise if possible. If their true natures are discovered and/or they are attacked, they attack immediately. They like to grapple a foe and constrict while attacking other foes. They can only animate plants outside the tavern ruins, so they do so if the PCs move outside the ruined walls for tactical reasons.

Once each plant kills something, it begins to eat its victim and attacks only in self-defense after that.

ADVANCED ASSASSIN VINES (2)

CR 5

HP 76 each

N Huge Plant

Init -1; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

AC 16, touch 7, flat-footed 16
(-2 size, -1 Dex, +9 natural)

HD 8

Immune electricity, mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, polymorph, stunning, critical hits

Resist cold 10, fire 10

Fort +11, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

Speed 5 ft. (1 square)

Melee slam +13 (1d8+13)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (30 ft. with vines)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +23

Atk Options constrict 1d8+13, entangle, improved grab

Abilities Str 28, Dex 8, Con 20, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 9
SQ camouflage

Constrict (Ex) An assassin vine deals 1d8+13 points of damage with a successful grapple check, in addition to damage from its slam attack.

Entangle (Su) An assassin vine can animate plants within 30 feet of itself as a free action (Reflex DC 13 partial). The effect lasts until the vine dies or decides to end it (also a free action). The save DC is Wisdom-based. The ability is otherwise similar to *entangle* (caster level 4th).

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, an assassin vine must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Camouflage (Ex) Since an assassin vine looks like a normal plant when at rest, it takes a DC 20 Spot check to notice it before it attacks. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use one of those skills instead of Spot to notice the plant.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

The tavern is filled with rotting boards, bones, and other scraps that dropped from bodies long since dead. Some metal pieces, such as hinges and the occasional knife or spoon or plate, are in the undergrowth that fills this tavern area.

SPIDERS AND FLIES

Encounter Level 6

This encounter takes place on the upper level of the ruined tower. It uses the tower roof tile from *D&D Dungeon Tiles II: Arcane Corridors* and two of the 10-foot web tiles from *D&D Dungeon Tiles II: Arcane Corridors*. Place the webs as shown on the map below.

To begin, read aloud the following text:

You step onto the roof of the small tower and see that it has weathered the centuries better than the other buildings of the estate. Still, you can see that the floor is breaking apart in some areas. The central part of the level is taken up by a 10-foot-square chimney of sorts. On either side, a mass of webs blocks the way to the far side.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

Ignore the fact that the circular staircase does not match with the one for the ground level tower tile. Have the PCs start in the stairwell and make their way onto the roof. The spiders begin on the walls of the central block within their webs (and thus concealed). See the trap description to handle movement. The spiders attack when someone comes within 5 feet of their webs or if the webs begin to burn.

MONSTROUS SPIDERS

Two monstrous spiders have made their home on the roof of the tower. They live in the webs marked on the map. They are always hungry, though they do manage to find suitable food.

Monstrous Spider Tactics

The spiders wait for something to come close to their webs, and then shoot webs at the victim on their first round. They prefer to ensnare their victims before chewing on them. The spiders never walk on the floor, since they know it is dangerous. Thus, you have to think a little three-dimensionally for this combat. Spiders on the wall take up a 10 foot-by-10 foot square on the wall, but since they are not tall they extend only 5 feet from the surface on which they are perched. Thus, looking down onto the tile a spider takes up a 5 foot by 10 foot area.

The spiders can move on walls and through their webs at their climb speed. As per the *web* spell, 5 feet

of webs between a PC and a spider provides cover to both creatures.

ADVANCED MONSTROUS SPIDERS

CR 3

HP 38

N Large vermin

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Listen** +0, **Spot** +4

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 11

(–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

HD 7

Immune mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d8+8) or

Ranged web +7 ranged touch (entangle, 50 ft. max range, 10 ft. range increment)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +11

Atk Options poison, web

Abilities Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills Climb +11, Hide +3*, Jump +2, Spot +4*

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fort save DC 13, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str.

Web (Ex) A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Web-spinners can throw a web eight times per day. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 13) or burst it with a Strength check (DC 17). Both are standard actions. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has 12 hit points, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/—. A monstrous spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

Skills Monstrous spiders have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A monstrous spider can always

choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Monstrous spiders use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher. Web-spinning spiders have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

TRAP!

The floor of the tower roof is unstable and may fall. There is a 10% chance that any given 5-foot section collapses under the weight of a creature of Small or larger size. Rolling for each square moved would be

repetitive and dull, though, so instead have each PC make a Reflex save (DC 15) once for each whole movement. If a PC fails, he or she falls through a weak section of floor at a random square in the movement path.

For any 5-foot section of ground that falls, use this trap stat block.

Pit Trap: CR 2; mechanical device; location trigger; no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. drop (2d6 falling damage); Search DC 10 to find; Disable DC 35 to deactivate.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The tower roof is all worked stone, but the floor is very unstable. It is open to the sky, so whatever weather conditions are in effect at the time affect this combat.



SICK WEREWOLVES

Encounter Level 10

This encounter takes place in the werewolves' lair, the first room in the lower level of the tower. Once the door is opened, read aloud the following text:

The door opens and you see a square room of about 30 feet on each side. Inside, a pile of clothing and gear is scattered to one side, and some kind of marking on the floor peeks out from underneath it. With snarls, two wolverines launch themselves at you while two wolf-women move toward you. Despite their threatening expressions, they move languidly and shiver occasionally.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

The PCs start in the hallway outside the room. The door is wide enough to allow people in both squares on either side to fight through or move through the door without impediment.

WEREWOLVES

Matrika and Tris are the remaining two werewolves from the original group. They have been suffering the effects of the disease for five days now (and their stats reflect their weakened state). The wolverines are not suffering from the disease.

These two have been taking turns listening intently for the return of their comrades, and unless the player characters took ongoing precautions not to be heard, the two werewolves have had sufficient time to prepare themselves for combat. They normally have the door open so they can hear any sounds coming from above. The PCs may have alerted them during the exploration, the fight with the spiders, or the noise from the collapsing roof (if any). Once the werewolves detected the PCs, they retreated to their lair, closed the door (it is not locked), and cast some preparatory spells upon themselves. They are ready to attack as soon as anyone opens the door.

They know they are infected with a disease of some kind, and that they cannot cure it, so they are waiting for their friends to return. The presence of the PCs tells them that their friends have probably died.

Matrika's and Tris's Tactics

Matrika and Tris let their wolverines attack and then they engage in melee attacks. They cure as needed with their limited abilities to do so.

MATRIKA SOLANA AND TRIS BUREVA,
HYBRID FORMS **CR 8 EACH**
HP 51 each

Werewolf (elf) female druid 6
CE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +12, Spot +12
Languages Common, Druidic, Elven

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14
(+2 Dex, +4 natural)
HD 8; **DR** 5/silver
Resist +4 against spell-like abilities of fey
Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares); woodland stride
Melee 2 claws +2 (1d8–3) and
bite –2 (1d6–3)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +2
Special Actions wild shape 2/day (6 hours)
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 6th):
3rd—*charge of the triceratops**, *cure moderate wounds*, *girallon's blessing**
2nd—*splinterbolt** (+7 ranged touch)
1st—*cure light wounds*
0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *resistance*

* Spells from *Spell Compendium*

Abilities Str 5, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 7
SQ alternate form, animal companion, link with companion, trackless step, wild empathy +4 (+0 magical beasts), wolf empathy
Feats Iron Will^B, Lightning Reflexes, Natural Bond (from *Complete Adventurer*), Natural Spell, Track^B, Weapon Focus (bite)^B
Skills Concentration +7, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +12, Move Silently +4, Ride +4, Spellcraft +4, Spot +12, Survival +12 (+14 above-ground, +16 tracking by scent), Tumble +3

Alternate Form (Su) Matrika and Tris can assume a wolf form or the form of an elf.
Active Spells *claws of the bear*, *longstrider*

WOLVERINE ANIMAL COMPANIONS
(ADJUSTED FOR SPELL EFFECTS) **CR —**
HP 76 each

N Medium animal

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +6, Spot +6

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16
(+3 Dex, +6 natural*)

HD 7

Resist evasion

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3, +7 against enchantment

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee 4 claws +12 (1d4+7) and
bite +7 (1d6+4) or
gore +12 (1d8+9)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +10

Atk Options rage, rend (2d4+6)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ 3 bonus tricks

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Track⁸

Skills Climb +17, Listen +6, Spot +6

Rage (Ex) A wolverine that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage on its next turn, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. When raging, the wolverine has the following changed statistics:

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14

hp 90 (7 HD)

Fort +13

Melee 4 claws +14 (1d4+9) and
bite +9 (1d6+5) or
gore +14 (1d8+12)

Grp +10

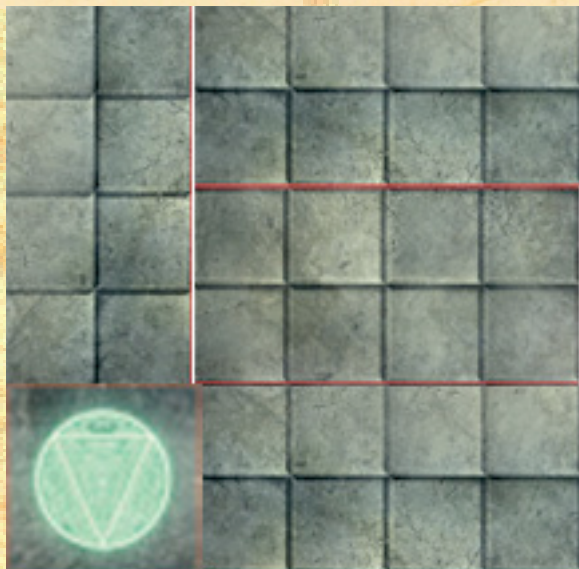
Abilities Str 20, Con 23

Skills Climb +17

Skills Wolverines have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks (included above) and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Active Spells (CL 6th)

- *Charge of the triceratops* gives +4 natural armor enhancement (adjust AC above to 23/13/20 for duration of effect; 21/11/18 if raging) and gore attack as a primary attack (as above) or as secondary attack (replace bite with gore [1d8+4 not raging; 1d8+5 raging]); lasts 5 rounds from start of combat
- *Girallon's blessing* gives an extra set of arms and claw attacks; rend ability; lasts an hour
- *Crabwalk* grants +4 attack bonus on charge and no AC penalty instead of +2 attack and -2 AC; lasts 6 minutes
- *Nature's favor* grants +2 luck bonus on attack and damage included above; lasts 9 rounds
- *Bull's strength* lasts 6 minutes; included above
- *Bear's endurance* lasts 6 minutes; included above



FEATURES OF THE AREA

This 30-foot-square stone room has a pile of gear in the corner and some bedding brush in different places around the side of the room. Use enough tiles from the *D&D Dungeon Tiles* sets to make a 30-foot by 30-foot room. Place a 10-foot wide doorway in the center of the east wall, and one in the center of the north wall.

FLAMING PYRE

Encounter Level 8

This encounter takes place in the Room of Flames. The fire elementals cannot leave the room.

To begin, read aloud the following text:

Beyond the door you see a flaming pyre in the center of a 20-foot-square room. The flames encompass most of the room and sometimes lick at the walls. The walls are almost completely black with burn marks. Across the room you can see another door.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

The PCs begin in the Werewolf Lair room, with at least one PC in the doorway. Let the players move their figures as the PCs move. The fire elemental begins in the center of the room, hidden as part of the fire.

THE MONSTER

This room contains bound fire elementals and a fire. The fire burns from a magical source set below the floor. There is a 5-foot-diameter hole in the floor in the center of the room. In the bottom of the 10-foot-deep hole, a metal disk with magical symbols has been merged with the rock. The disk is the source of the fire, which never dies out. The elementals are bound to the fire itself, not the disk. They have been here a thousand years, which hasn't put them in the best of moods. Unless a PC who enters the room immediately starts freeing the elementals, they attack.

Huge Fire Elemental Tactics

The huge elemental's fighting space leaves only a 5-foot-wide corridor around the whole room, and it threatens everywhere in the room. It can make a lot of attacks of opportunity, and it does so whenever it can. Otherwise it concentrates all its attacks on spellcasters, and finishes off a spellcaster (it does not change foes) before moving to another foe. If it is fighting a nonspellcaster, it may change foes the next round to attack a spellcaster.

Other Fire Elemental Tactics

The other fire elementals in the room work with their Huge companion and concentrate all their attacks on the Huge elemental's chosen foe.

HUGE FIRE ELEMENTAL

CR 7

HP 136

N Huge elemental (fire, extraplanar)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +12

Languages Ignan

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Dodge, Mobility (–2 size, +7 Dex, +4 natural)

HD 16; **DR** 5/—

Immune fire, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, critical hits, flanking

Fort +9, **Ref** +17, **Will** +7

Weakness vulnerable to cold

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee 2 slams +17 (2d8+4 plus 2d8 fire)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +24

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Spring Attack

Special Actions burn

Abilities Str 18, Dex 25, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative⁸, Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse⁸

Skills Listen +11, Spot +12

Burn (Ex) Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 22) or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based. Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

MEDIUM FIRE ELEMENTAL

CR 3

HP 26

N Medium elemental (fire, extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +4

Languages Ignan

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Dodge, Mobility (+3 Dex, +3 natural)

HD 4

Immune fire, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, critical hits, flanking

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1

Weakness vulnerable to cold

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee slam +6 (1d6+1 plus 1d6 fire)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4

Special Actions burn

Abilities Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative^B, Mobility, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Listen +3, Spot +4

Burn (Ex) Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 14) or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based. Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

SMALL FIRE ELEMENTALS (3)

CR 3

HP 26 each

N Small elemental (fire, extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +3

Languages Ignan

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Dodge (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

HD 2

Immune fire, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, critical hits, flanking

Fort +0, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Weakness vulnerable to cold

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee slam +3 (1d4 plus 1d4 fire)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** -3

Special Actions burn

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11

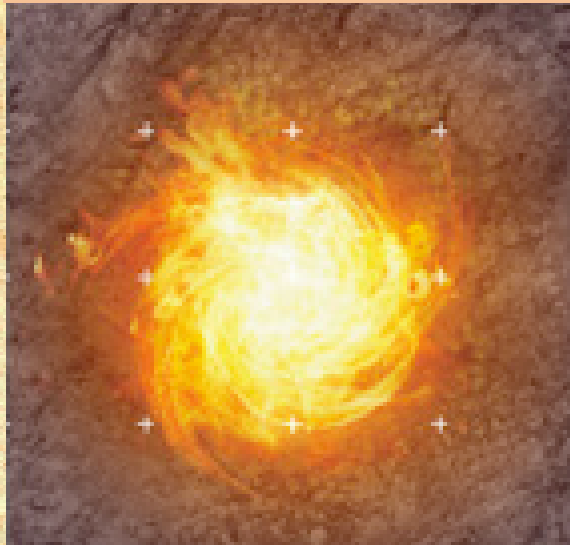
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative^B, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Listen +2, Spot +3

Burn (Ex) Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 11) or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based. Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This 20-foot-square room has a door in the southwest corner and a door in the center of the north wall. The walls, floor, and ceiling are covered with burn marks and soot, making the whole room black. Use the tile from *D&D Dungeon Tiles II: Arcane Corridors* that has the fire in the middle of a 20-foot room.



THE GRASPING FROM BELOW

Encounter Level 8

This encounter takes place when the PCs reach the chasm before the Summoning Chamber. The chasm contains specially bred guardians designed to prevent intruders from getting to the Summoning Chamber.

To begin, read aloud the following text:

You step onto a ledge that is 5 feet wide. Before you is a dark chasm spanning 15 feet. Beyond, you can see a room lit by the soft glow of runes inscribed in the floor and walls. In the closest of three circles that have been etched on the floor, you see a waiflike young woman standing. She has a fey look to her, and she stares at you wistfully.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

The young woman is the rakshasa Balam, and Balam does not speak until the PCs reach the Summoning Chamber.

The chasm is 30 feet deep, and at the bottom are huge piles of refuse and material from the surrounding forest/meadow.

The PCs begin the encounter with at least one of them on the ledge. Have the players place their figures appropriately on the ledge, in the corridor that leads to it, or in one of the lab rooms if the PCs split up to explore.

CROSSING THE CHASM

Crossing the chasm is not that difficult. There are several options available.

- PCs can use magic to fly to the other side.
- PCs can jump the chasm. A standing jump of 15 feet requires a successful Jump check (DC 30), while a running jump (from the corridor) requires an easier Jump check (DC 15).
- PCs can climb down the rough surface of the wall into the chasm and back out with a successful Climb check (DC 25). Each must make one Climb check going down and one coming back up.

The bottom of the chasm is a maze of animal bones and body parts, plant material, and excrement.

THE OTYUGHS

Hidden in the refuse at the bottom of the chasm are two advanced otyughs that have been bred to guard this area. Actually, they were bred for that about 1,000 years ago. Since then, the creatures have inbred, become even larger, and have become mentally unstable. They survive on animals and plant matter, which they hunt outside. One end of the chasm leads to a tunnel that emerges at the edge of the Svalich Woods.

The otyughs hear the PCs coming if they have made no effort to be silent. If they have, make opposed Listen checks for the otyughs. Assuming they hear the PCs approach, they hide and wait for someone to try to cross the chasm, readying an action to grab at whatever living thing crosses the chasm above them. They have a +2 circumstance modifier on Hide checks because of the care they take in hiding, giving them a total +9 bonus. If they are seen, they attack immediately.

Otyugh Tactics

The otyughs have been bred to have 30-foot reach, and they try to grapple anyone they can reach and pull them down into the chasm. This works especially well with PCs crossing the chasm by jumping or flying. If they are successful in grappling a jumping PC, that PC immediately falls to the chasm floor below because the PC's momentum has been stopped. For flying PCs, the otyughs must use grapple checks to move them downward.

PCs climbing down into the chasm are attacked as soon as they have climbed down 10 feet (so the fall is 20 feet).

Otyughs constrict opponents as they move them downward until they can bite them and spread disease. They are very hungry and motivated; they get a +2 circumstance bonus on attacks for the first 2 rounds of the combat (DM's Friend bonus).

AFTER THIS ENCOUNTER

Once this encounter is over, the PCs can cross the chasm (or climb down and back up) and reach the chamber of the rakshasa without further trouble.

ADVANCED OTYUGHS (2)

CR 6

HP 75 each

N Huge Aberration

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages Common

AC 18, touch 7, flat-footed 18
(-2 size, -1 Dex, +11 natural)

HD 10

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee 2 tentacles +17 (2d8+4) and
bite +4 (1d6+2)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +19

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (30 ft. with tentacle)

Special Actions constrict 2d6+4, disease, im-
proved grab

Abilities Str 19, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Alertness, Extended Reach (from *Savage Species*), Skill Focus (Hide), Weapon Focus (tentacle)

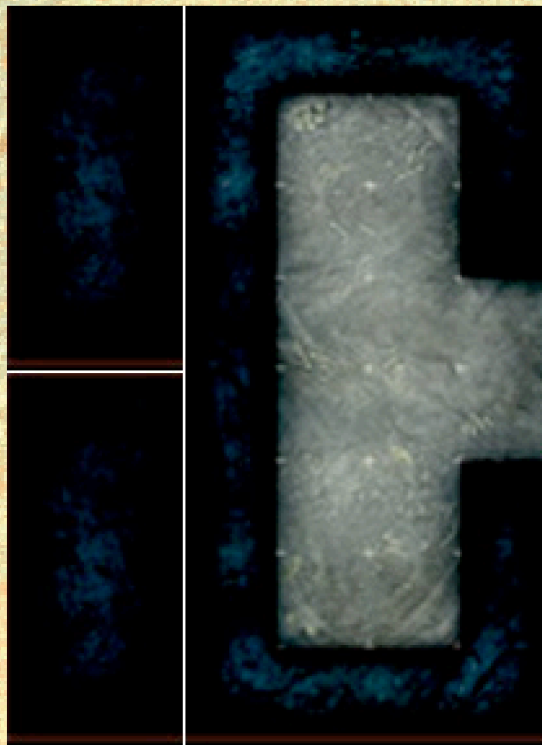
Skills Hide -1 (+7 in lair), Listen +7, Spot +7

Constrict (Ex) An otyugh deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

Disease (Ex) Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 18, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, an otyugh must hit with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: *An otyugh has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in its lair, due to its natural coloration.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

The chasm is 15 feet wide and 30 feet deep. On the sides it is only 5 feet wide. The bottom is covered in debris. The west end continues underground and then turns south and proceeds for several miles to the forest edge. The walls are rough surfaces, and there is no light except that provided by the PCs.

To make this map, take the ledge and chasm tile from *D&D Dungeon Tiles* set 1 and add 10-foot-wide black tiles on the end to make the chasm 15 feet wide. Place the summoning circle room (the room with the three magical circles on the floor) from *Arcane Corridors* on the other side of the chasm.

THE TIGER-MAN

Encounter Level 10

The final encounter in the scenario should not involve any combat. However, if combat does erupt, the encounter provides you with material so that you'll be prepared, but the main antagonist has no interest in fighting. To begin, read aloud the following text:

You stand at the edge of a room that is lit by magical writings inscribed on the walls. Three magical circles are spaced throughout the room and inscribed on the floor. In the closest, you see a small and thin young woman. She has almost a fey cast to her face, with very delicate features and ears that might be a little pointed. "At last, someone who can free me," she says in a soft voice.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

Have the players place their figures at the end of the tile, with the single circle closest to them and the other two farther away. Place a figure for Balam in the close circle.

RAKSHASA

The figure in the circle is Parmitt Balam, a rakshasa who has been trapped here for nearly a thousand years. He hopes that by appearing in the guise of a trapped fey creature that the PCs will release him. His voice is soft because the magic of the circle prevents him from projecting any part of himself or his power very far. He can cast spells, but all his spells have close range (or touch range) as long as he is trapped. He can move from one circle to another as a full-round action if he chooses.

Rakshasa Tactics

He must persuade the PCs to release him through charm and diplomacy, and he cannot fight while trapped. He uses his *detect thoughts* ability freely on PCs that are close enough, which should help him figure out what will get them to free him. He can offer a cure for the disease, though he doesn't say so outright. If they mention the disease, he tries to get them to describe its symptoms to him. Then he tells them that the same disease ravaged the land when "she" was lured out of the woods and trapped here. The wizard had a cure for it, and there is some left. If

the PCs release him, he'll reveal the location of the cure. He is bluffing, of course, except about the cure. He does have the cure. It is stored in a secret compartment underneath the frontmost magic circle (Search DC 30).

If freed, he has no interest in fighting the PCs at all and leaves the area as quickly as he can. Should he be attacked, he takes defensive actions and attempts to use his *dimension door* spell to reach the surface and then get away.

If the PCs treat with him in a straightforward way, he reveals himself in his true form to them after he is freed and tells them that he owes them a debt of gratitude. At your discretion, he could provide some help to the PCs against Strahd. This could be the acquisition of knowledge or the provision of allies. Balam does not engage in conflict with Strahd personally, however. He has wanted freedom too long to give it up in a useless fight.

Note: You might wonder how he made the disease at all if he cannot leave the circles. He can summon creatures, though, and he sent them out to collect what he needed and otherwise serve as his arms and legs.

PARRMITT BALAM

CR 11

Rakshasa male sorcerer 1
HP 57

LE Medium Outsider (Native)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +13, Spot +11
Languages Common, Infernal, Undercommon

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Dodge
(+2 Dex, +9 natural)

HD 8; **DR** 15/good and piercing

SR 27

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee 2 claws +8 (1d4+1) and
bite +3 (1d6)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +8

Special Actions change shape, detect thoughts

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 8th)

4th (4/day)—*dimension door*

3rd (6/day)—*suggestion* (DC 17), *summon monster III*

2nd (7/day)—*invisibility*, *Melf's acid arrow* (ranged touch +9), *summon monster II*
1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *silent image*
0 (6/day)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (melee touch +8, DC 13)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 18

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge

Skills Bluff +18*, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +18 (+20 acting)*, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcane) +2, Listen +13, Move Silently +12, Perform (oratory) +14, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +12, Spot +11

Change Shape (Su) A rakshasa can assume any humanoid form, or revert to its own form, as a standard action. In humanoid form, a rakshasa

loses its claw and bite attacks (although it often equips itself with weapons and armor instead). A rakshasa remains in one form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but the rakshasa reverts to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell reveals its natural form.

Detect Thoughts (Su) A rakshasa can continuously use *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 18th; Will DC 16 negates). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Skills A rakshasa has a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks. When using change shape, a rakshasa gains an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If reading an opponent's mind, its circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks increases by a further +4.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Wiese entered the gaming hobby through the Boy Scouts and progressed from green recruit to head of the most powerful gaming fan organization in the world. He served as head of the RPGA® Network for almost seven years, overseeing the creation of the *LIVING GREYHAWK*® and *LIVING FORCE*® campaigns, among other achievements. Eventually, he returned to private life in Reno, Nevada, where he spends as much time as possible with his wife, son Owen, and many pets.

He is still involved in writing, organizing conventions, and playing, and he models proteins for the Biochemistry Department of the University of Nevada, Reno.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

This 50-foot by 40-foot room is carved out of stone. The only way into the room is the way the PCs came. The light from the magical writing provides a twilight level of illumination in the whole room (no penalties, but the light is dim).