



# The Thing That Should Not Be

**T**he *Thing That Should Not Be* is a Fifth Edition horror-mystery adventure for **three to five characters with an average party level (APL) of 5 or 6**. Characters who successfully complete this adventure should earn enough experience to gain at least one level. The characters unravel a mystery that leads them to a strange, cold island in the Tyrant's Riddle. There, they discover a hibernating god whose dark hunger cannot be sated. This adventure works particularly well as a follow-up to the adventure *Winds of Vapul* featured in the *Legends of Omeria Starter Set*.

## Running the Adventure

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. If you don't have a copy, you can access a free basic ruleset from the official source.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block

ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

*Spells* and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game masters unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the Appendix.

Although the adventure is set in the DMDave campaign world of Omeria, it can easily be retooled to take place in any campaign setting of your choice where the Heald Mine and the horrible creatures within wouldn't seem too terribly out of place.

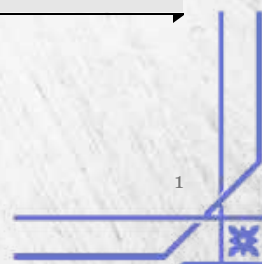
## Credits

In addition to our lovely patrons, the following creators made this adventure possible:

**Design and Writing.** DMDave

**Cartography.** Tom Cartos

**Art.** Direquest, Fat Goblin Games, Nacho Lazaro, Paper Forge





# Adventure Synopsis

This section serves as a basic rundown of how the adventure should play out, including the adventure hook/introduction.

## Adventure Summary

1. **The Hook.** A close friend of the characters asks them to investigate the disappearance of his son, who vanished over a year ago.
2. **The Investigation.** The characters investigate the missing person and find clues that point towards the son traveling north for a mining job. A series of letters points to the missing person's last known location, a small fishing town named Providence near the arctic circle.
3. **The Town.** The characters arrive at Providence. The villagers tell the characters that all the miners on the job—including the missing person—left six months ago on a ship. Shortly after it left, the ship wrecked, killing everyone on board. Before the characters go to leave, an unlikely ally informs them that the villagers are lying.
4. **The Quarry.** After the characters learn that the villagers lied to them, they are brought to the quarry where the missing person and the other miners worked. Cultists and monsters attack them. Inevitably, they make it inside the quarry's mine.
5. **The Hibernating God.** The characters discover that the miners uncovered a strange, monstrous statue. The statue is actually the dormant form of an alien god named Rhan-Tegoth. The mine's owner fed most of the miners to the evil god.

## The Hook

Loen Humwin (LG male human **commoner**), a close friend of the characters' or someone who has heard of their exploits, approaches the party asking for help. Humwin explains that his son, Loen II (or just Second) has not been seen in over a year and he hopes that they can find him.

Humwin describes his son Second as a man in his early twenties with dark hair and brown eyes. Second has a star-shaped scar over his cheek, earned after he tried to cheat a gang of Doom Blade debtors.

Second lived in a small, run-down tenement apartment in Knotside with Marina, the mother of his two children. Before he left, he had considerable trouble with debtors all over the city. Humwin believes that because Second couldn't secure employment in the city, he likely left to find a job. Humwin doesn't know where Second went or how to contact him. He recommends that the characters speak with Marina, who still lives in their old tenement.

Humwin offers 100 gp to each of the characters for learning what they can about Second's disappearance. He wishes he could offer more, but he recently had to shutter his business in Knotside.

## Backstory

Catarina Heald was the only living descendant of the Vale family, a dark brood of Vapulite worshipers who lived in the city of Desneorus before the Transmuter Wars. However, Catarina was not aware of her heritage. She believed she was just daughter of a wealthy Murktown merchant.

Upon his death, her father Walter left Catarina his sizable holdings plus three curious items. First, he gave her a deed to a large tract of land on the Surdesse Pinnacle, an island north of Murktown across the choppy waters of the Tyrant's Riddle. Second, he left her a small fragment of *necromancer stone*, or *silingfashi shi*, a rare but powerful element. Third, he included a strange, curved whistle.

Following the leads left by her father, Heald traveled to the Surdesse Pinnacle to inspect the land her father left her. Through costly divination magic, she discovered that the land her father owned was rife with more *necromancer stone*. She spent the next five years securing funds to dig in the area hoping to unearth more of it. Using unskilled labor from the nearby village of Providence plus commoners transported from the mainland, Heald and her crew uncovered a huge supply of the stone. She kept the nature of the stone a secret from most of the miners, explaining that it was nothing more than pink agate.

The *necromancer stone* wasn't the only thing she found in the ground there. Deep within the bowels of the mine, she discovered a series of natural caverns within which a great purple worm lived. Immediately, the worm killed a handful of her miners. Heald almost met her end, too, before she thought fast and blew the whistle her father left her. The high-pitched sound stopped the worm dead in its tracks. She then realized that she could control the worm with the whistle.



*Necromancer stone* covered the walls of the worm's den. Additionally, an unusual statue depicting a horrific alien creature stood at its center. Heald could feel an extradimensional mind within the mysterious statue. It spoke to her telepathically, calling itself Rhan-Tegoth. Rhan-Tegoth claimed that it was a great old one, a being of unspeakable cruelty from beyond the stars. Rhan-Tegoth begged Heald to feed it the life force of sentient creatures. In exchange, it would grant her spells and untold power.

Heald complied and commanded the worm to coral the miners into the den. She then forced the miners to touch the statue. Anyone who touched the statue died fast and horribly, drained of all their fluids and vital organs, leaving behind only a hollow husk. After it drank the miners' life force, the statue temporarily became flesh. Terrified of the sight of the creature, the remaining miners fled, ignoring Heald's threats and even the purple worm that chased them.

After the initial discovery, Heald spread rumors that the mine was dry and her efforts were to no avail. She then paid a ship's captain handsomely to add the names of the dead miners to his manifest and sink the ship. This made the locals believe that Heald and all the minders died leaving the island.

Heald returned to the statue. The few miners who survived the attack committed their undying loyalty to Heald and Rhan-Tegoth, becoming her first cultists. Soon, Rhan-Tegoth's evil started to permeate the region around the mine. The great old one's evil attracted dangerous creatures. It turned the minds of the locals to corruption and madness. Those lucky few who refused the call of Rhan-Tegoth went insane or were captured and fed to the great old one. Loen Humwin II was one of those unfortunate miners.

## Part 1. The Investigation

At the start of the adventure, the only lead the characters have for Loen Humwin II is his home address. Second lived in a rat-infested tenement in a rough-and-tumble Knotside neighborhood called The Teeth. Crime is rampant in this part of town and many of the town guards quit after recent troubles involving an unrelated undead incursion (see *Winds of Vapul* for details). It would not be out of the ordinary for the characters to get attacked by a group of 1d6 + 2 **bandits** led by a **bandit captain** on their way to visit Second's old home.

## Marina

When the characters arrive, they meet Marina (N female human **commoner**), Second's girlfriend and the mother of his two children. A proud Pressonian, Marina refuses to speak with or accept charity from Second's father following an argument between the two Humwin men shortly before Second left.

Since Second disappeared, Marina has had to work to take care of her two children. She works long hours in a nearby smithy. Soot covers her face and gruesome burns mar her arms. When she works, she keeps her children with a friendly old neighbor who helps them learn their letters. While they appear happy and loving, both children look malnourished. If

pressed, Marina explains that half of her earnings find their ways into the paws of Second's old debtors.

## Letters from Second

Marina doesn't know where Second went. Just before he left, he explained to her that he had secured a mining job in the north. The job paid well, but the mine's owner did not want anyone to know its location, including spouses. This disclosure caused Marina and Second to argue before he left, an event that Marina now regrets.

A month after he left, Marina received a letter from Second with gold coins enclosed. The letters—which she gladly shares with the characters—explain that the work is hard, but he and the others are being taken care of. He still can't share the nature of the work, but he promises to send payments at least once a month. True to his word, the payments continued for the first six months then suddenly stopped.

The first five letters were relatively normal: "I love you and the children, the work is hard but they take care of us, I will send you money next month," and so forth. But the last letter raised Marina's suspicions, even before she knew it would be the last. (See the Appendix for a player's handout of the letter.)

The letter reads:

Dear Marina,

I hope you and the children are well. Work has been much more difficult than usual. I've had the same dream every night since we uncovered the caverns below the mine. In these dreams, I dream of Casar's sky turning pitch black, even in the daytime, Naeyer's Eye nowhere to be seen. Dark things crawl across the land. Their arms, if I dare call them that, surround me and pull me towards countless, horrible gnashing mouths. Just before they devour me, I wake. But with each dream, I feel myself getting closer and closer.

Of course, these are probably nothing more than illusions conjured by an overstressed mind.

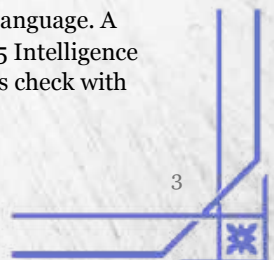
I hope tonight's dreams are filled with nothing but you and the children.

I learned how to write the local language: *esch'w t'lawo da*.

That means "I love you."

## Surdesian

The letters seemingly lack clues to Second's location. However, a clever character might recognize that the words "*esch'w t'lawo da*" are part of the Surdesian language. A character recognizes the language with DC 15 Intelligence (History) check, elven characters making this check with





advantage. Surdesian is an off-shoot of the Anorian elven language. Surdesian is rarely spoken anywhere outside of the Surdese Pinnacle, an island a few dozen miles north of Murktown in the Tyrant's Riddle. If the characters fail to pick up on this clue but show the letter to Loen Humwin, he recognizes it immediately, explaining that the Surdesians rarely leave their island. He suspects that's where his son is located.

## The Surdese Pinnacle

Like many of the locations throughout this part of Northern Omeria, the Surdese Pinnacle was part of the vast Anorian empire over 1,000 years ago. When the Pressonians defeated the Anorians during the Time of Triumphs, the Surdesians willingly surrendered to the crusaders and even helped the Pressonians halt Anorian warships traveling through Tyrant's Riddle. As their reward, the Pressonians allowed the Surdesians to keep their island so long as they rejected worship of the Anorian god Vapul and remained apolitical. The Surdesians kept their word. For eleven centuries, the Surdesians never involved themselves in the affairs of the humans beyond simple trade with the Merchant Kings of Murktown and minor involvement during the Attack of Regrets.

The Surdese Pinnacle experiences cool summers but treacherously cold winters. Blizzard conditions are common on the island from late Nehruer into mid-Asnas. In Tholona, the sea surrounding the island becomes so congested with ice floes, travel by ship becomes impossible. It is assumed that this adventure takes place in mid-fall of 1044 AT, a year after Caustis Méyor seized control of Knotside.

Surdesians live exclusively off the bounty provided by the Tyrant's Riddle and the 25-square-mile island upon which they live. They have the same pale skin, blue eyes, and dark hair common among Anorians, but tend to keep their hair short. Tribal tattoos mark their face and arms. These tell the story of the Surdesian's own history as well as the history of those who came before them. Surdesian children receive their first tattoo at the age of fifty (approximately ten years in human years).

The characters should have no trouble booking passage to the Surdese Pinnacle. If they lack their own means, they can book a vessel in Murktown for the cost of 5 gp each. All ships headed for the Surdese Pinnacle anchor in the Surdesian town of Providence. It takes only half a day to reach Providence from Murktown.





## Part 2. The Village

Providence is a small village of only 250 people, the majority of which are Surdesian-Anorian elves. Although they welcome traders into their village, the Providentians are relatively inhospitable to outsiders. The village lacks a formal inn, and only locals patronize the village's tavern.

Providence can muster up to fifty soldiers if it needs (elven **tribal warriors**) led by 4 **veterans**. Old Pressonian laws forbid the Providentians to dress their village with heraldry; despite the outdated accord, Providentians comply, seeing no need for such frivolity.

### Jhannis Baenre

The town's speaker is a 514-year-old Anorian elven woman named Jhanniss Baenre (N elven **scout**). Tattoos cover nearly every inch of her body. When she travels around town, she walks with a **winter wolf** named Gal'tsche, her protector. She speaks little and doesn't care for non-Anorians—or even Anorians for that matter. But the Providentians put their faith in her ability to manage the village without any question. At some point the characters should run across the old woman. While she isn't outright rude with them, she is very stand-offish and pretends not to know the answer to any of their questions.

### Locations in Providence

Providence lacks an inn or other places for visitors to rest. Because the travel to and from Murkwood is so short, most traders enter port in the morning, spend the day loading and unloading cargo and making deals, then depart at night. Those who have to stay in port usually remain on their own ships. If the characters spend an hour or two asking for a place to stay, they may find a ship to spend the night (for the cost of 10 gp per character) or maybe even a friendly Surdesian-Anorian who will grant them a room.

The shops in town cater exclusively to the Surdesian-Anorians of Providence. Unless the characters are particularly friendly, the price of common goods double when paid for in Tadjuuni Tael—the "coin of the mainlander." If the characters happen to have some of the local currency, the prices are only 10% higher than normal. The locals consider this an "outsider tax."

The village boasts a single tavern named Ske Lloun Eer-Mena, which translates to "The Three Loud Men." The tavern is managed by a pair of Surdesian-Anorian brothers named Veszven and Mournar and its clientele is exclusively Surdesian-Anorian. No matter how friendly the characters are, they will undoubtedly get queer looks from the patrons who will view them as outsiders and interlopers.

### Strange Things

Right away, the characters should sense that there is something off about the village. The Unusual Sighting table on the next page introduces some of the unusual things that the characters might notice while they're in Providence. Choose any that you like or roll randomly once every few hours that they spend exploring the village.

### Anorian Traits

Many of the NPCs featured in this adventure are Anorian elves. Unless stated otherwise, all Anorian NPCs have the following additional traits:

- **Resistances.** The Anorian has resistance to cold damage.
- **Darkvision.** The Anorian has darkvision out to 60 ft.
- **Fey Ancestry.** The Anorian has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

### Searching for Clues

The Providentians are tight-lipped. They only speak in Elvish, using the traditional Surdesian-Anorian dialect. Even those who speak Elvish will have a hard time understanding their words, imposing disadvantage on all Charisma checks made to interact with them. Using the spells *comprehend languages* or *tongues* alleviates some of this, but doesn't make the Providentians any more friendly. Even gold, particularly Tadjuuni Tael, carries very little weight when used as a bribe among the Providentians. As a predominantly communist society, the Providentians see very little need for gold.

If the characters spend a minimum of four hours gathering rumors and interviewing the Providentians, they can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather information. Refer to the Clues in Providence table on the next page to determine what they learn. The results are cumulative, so if the characters score a 15 on their check, they learn the clue for a 15 plus all the clues before it.

Some of the clues are not true or are rumors that the Providentians believe.

### Getting Too Close

Unless the characters are careful, chances are they will draw attention to themselves. Some of Heald's cultists hear that the party is investigating rumors of the mine and its workers. If the characters seem deterred and ready to leave, they don't interfere. But if the characters want to check out Heald's old mine, then they attack. The cultists wait until the characters are in a quiet part of town. Even if there are Providentians present, they quickly pretend like they see nothing and walk the other way.

The attackers consist of five Anorian **berserkers** led by an Anorian **bandit captain**. In addition to their normal traits and features (see the sidebar on Anorian elves above), the attackers also possess the Dark Devotion feature, giving them advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

If the characters defeat the cultists and keep some of them alive, they may interrogate the cultists to reveal what they are really hiding. However, the cultists are tight-lipped and their Dark Devotion prevents them from divulging too much. If the characters are creative and have powerful enchantment

or divination magic, they might learn what the cultists know. Otherwise, the cultists will happily take what they know to the grave.

## The Ravine

If the characters run into what feels like a dead end, either because they couldn't uncover any of Providence's hidden secrets or the cultists who attacked them refused to speak, they soon get a lucky break. While moving through the village—possibly on their way to book a ship back to the mainland,

thinking they've failed—they catch the glimpse of the **winter wolf** Gal'tsche at the edge of town. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check realizes that the wolf is watching them. If the characters try to catch up to Gal'tsche, the wolf runs, heading east into the hills. However, it always stays just within sight of the characters. It wants the characters to follow them.

If the characters do follow Gal'tsche, eventually, the large wolf leads them to a narrow ravine. Gal'tsche doesn't speak Common, but does speak Giant and Winter Wolf. It asks the characters to look into the ravine.

## Unusual Sightings

### d8 Unusual Sighting

- 1 A local vendor sells small wooden idols carved to look like six-legged, horned bears. When the characters ask about them, the vendor clears them away and tells the characters that they aren't for sale.
- 2 Periodically, the wind picks up and begins to howl. Choose a character; that character swears they hear screams in the wind. The locals pretend like they don't hear anything.
- 3 If the characters spend the night in Providence, one of them suffers from the same dreams described in Second's last letter—black skies, grasping tentacles, and thousands of small gnashing mouths.
- 4 The characters find a skinned cat nailed to the outside of a door in a room in which they are planning or resting.
- 5 While walking through town, a character notices ripples in a puddle of slush. When the character goes to inspect it, a desiccated humanoid arm reaches out of the slush and grabs the character, restraining them. When the character tries to free themselves, they discover that the arm was just an illusion. Furthermore, no one else noticed the arm except for the character.
- 6 The characters walk past a circle of locals (Anorian **commoners**) gathered in an alley. "Wza-y'ei! Wza-y'ei!" the people chant. "Y'kaa haa ho-ii, Rhan-Tegoth-Cthulhu fthagn-Ei! Ei! Ei! Ei!-Rhan-Tegoth. Rhan-Tegoth, Rhan-Tegoth!" If the characters approach, the group disperses. If questioned, each one has no memory of what they were saying or how they got into the alley in the first place.
- 7 A woman wearing a hood over her head trips and falls just in front of the characters. If a character goes to help her up, he sees her face for the first time—it is completely devoid of facial features. A muffled groan comes from behind her mask of flesh. The character must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw to avoid screaming. Just before the character has time to react, the woman's face returns to normal. She does not understand why the character reacted the way they did.
- 8 If a character glances out over the water towards Murktown, they see the lights of the great city in the distance. However, a few silhouettes drift a few feet over the water. At first, the character believes them to be a figment of their imagination, but after watching for a moment, the character realizes that they're humanoids! If the character calls out to their companions or tries to get closer to the things floating over the water, they disappear.

## Clues in Providence

### Check

### Result Clue Learned

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 4 or less    | There is no one here by the name of Loen Humwin II. In fact, other than traders, humans rarely set foot on the island. (This is not true. Loen Humwin II was in the village. However, he was just one of many humans passing through on their way to Heald's mine.)   |
| 5-9          | The only human anyone remembers on the island was a woman who wanted to purchase tribal lands north of the village. (This is true.)   |
| 10-14        | A human named Catarina Heald visited the island two years ago. She purchased a piece of land north of Providence with intent to mine the area. (This is true.)  |
| 15-19        | Heald built the mine and hired a number of elves from the village as well as humans from the mainland. Heald and her miners left the site six months ago, booking passage on a ship back to the mainland. (This is partially true. Heald did hire people from the village and the mainland, Humwin included. And while Heald did book a ship, it was not actually carrying Heald or her workers.) |
| 20 or higher | Heald's ship wrecked on its way back to the mainland, killing everyone on board, including Heald. The locals gained possession of her mine. (This is not true. Heald paid the captain a hefty sum to sink his ship so Heald could fake her own death as well as those of her workers. The captain survived and returned to the mainland unscathed.)   |





Within the ravine, the characters discover a trio of desiccated, frost-bitten **zombies**. The zombies immediately attack the characters as they come near. After what should be a quick battle, the characters may inspect the zombies' bodies. All three zombies were humans. Hundreds of small puncture marks mar their flesh, and their bodies completely lack fluids. The zombies also wear identical uniforms. One of the zombies has a star-shaped scar on his cheek—it's the remains of Loen Humwin II. If the characters search Humwin's corpse, they find a crumpled letter in one of his pockets (see the Appendix for a player handout of the letter). The letter reads:

Dear Marina,

I pray you receive this letter. Heald went insane and trapped us all with her great worm. Already, five of us are dead, fed to the thing that should not be. Unless the elements intervene, I know that I, too, will meet a similar fate. Whatever you do, do not seek me. It's far too dangerous.

Know that I love you and the children with all my heart.

Loen

The letter is inscribed on the back of a mine blueprint. The blueprint reads "Heald Mine" at the top. There is an arrow in the bottom left corner of the map marked "To Providence." Using this map, the characters can travel northeast to reach Heald Mine.

Jhanniss Baenre tasked Gal'tsche to alert the party to the zombies' presence. However, neither she nor Gal'tsche will freely admit involvement. Baenre fears retribution from the cultists in Providence, so she chooses to appear impartial. However, she recognizes that the mine and its inhabitants are a threat.

If the characters seek Baenre with intent to learn more from her, they find her dead, assassinated by one of the cultists. To make matters worse, one of the cultists might even use a weapon or spell similar to one employed by the characters, hoping to frame them for the beloved speaker's murder. When this happens, the characters have very little time before the Providentians turn against them.





## Part 3. The Mine

Inevitably, the characters should decide to investigate Heald mine. The mine is situated approximately two miles from the village near the center of the island. The hills here are frost-swept and cold, devoid of any but the scrubbiest plants. It takes only an hour to walk from Providence to the mine, but the chilly air makes it feel like an eternity. And all the while, the characters can't help but feel they are being watched.

As soon as the characters lay eyes on the mine and its surrounding quarry, they recognize that the mine hasn't been in service for months. Even if there were fresh tracks, recent snowfall hid them. Only the unceasing creak of chains dangling from the quarry's cranes greet the characters.

### Quarry Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of Heald Mine's quarry as shown on page 7.

#### Q1 – Guards Hut

This area was once used to receive visitors. It now stands empty.

#### Q2 – Workmen's Camp

These four tents once held ten human miners who worked the site. If the characters spend a few minutes searching through the tents, they discover a bag labeled "Humwin." Humwin's bag, along with the other workers' bags—ten in all—all contain the contents of an entertainer's pack except instead of disguise kits, they contain a change of common clothes. All of the rations have turned rotten.

#### Q3 – Dormitory

Human specialists lived in this small, cramped dorm.

There are four locked footlockers here, all requiring a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools or Strength (Athletics) check to open. Inside each chest, the characters find the contents of a scholar's pack, two warm blankets, cold weather clothing, and 5d6 gold pieces.

#### Q4 - Common Area

This area boasts a small kitchenette and seating for the workers in between shifts. All of the food in the pantries have turned rotten. A quick search of the room reveals schematics of the mine as well as a diagram depicting the strange statue (see page 16 for a description of the statue).

#### Q5 - Foreman's Office

The door into this area is locked, requiring a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools or Strength (Athletics) check to open.

This is Heald's office. Here is a list of clues the characters might find in her office:

**Mine schematics.** The maps and schematics covering Heald's desk are similar to those found in area Q4.

**Surdesian History books.** The bookshelf on the eastern wall contains a variety of books on Northern Omerian history. A fair number focus on the history of the Surdes Pinnacle and the Anorians who live here.

**Someone was here.** A character who searches the place and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check (the character's choice) notices that it has been used more recently than the other parts of the quarry and surrounding camp.

**The Vales of Desneorus.** A character who looks through the books and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices a book with some of its pages earmarked. The book is titled *The Vales of Desneorus*. It details a family of humans who lived in the city of Desneorus before the Transmuter Wars. The family was relatively wealthy, but was later accused of Vapul worship and exiled. The Vales vanished into obscurity until one of their descendants, Ishta Vale, attempted to resurrect Vapul at an old manor outside of the village of Camor. After Ishta died at the hands of adventurers, it's believed that the Vale line ended.

The author theorizes that there was a forgotten Vale, a nephew who worked in Murktown as a deckhand. This long-lost Vale went by the name Walter Heald. He spent most of his days traveling between Murktown and the Surdes Pinnacle. No one could ever prove he was actually a descendant of the accursed Vales.

**Dynamite.** Multiple sticks of dynamite (see the sidebar) crowd the shelf behind Heald's desk.

**Trapdoor.** A character who inspects the rug in Heald's office and succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) checks spots a trap door hidden just near its edge. The trapdoor is kept locked, requiring a successful DC 16 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to open it. It is also trapped—unless the trap is found with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a poison needle fires from a small hole next to the lock. The needle makes a +6 attack to hit, targeting the transgressor. On a hit, the needle deals 1 piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. While poisoned in this way, the target is paralyzed.

The trapdoor conceals a space measuring 15 inches wide and long and 5 inches deep; just big enough for a large book. A character who casts *detect magic* recognizes a faint aura of

#### Dynamite

A stick of dynamite weighs 1 pound. As an action, a creature can light a stick and throw it at a point up to 60 feet away. Each creature within 5 feet of that point must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A character can bind sticks of dynamite together so they explode at the same time. Each additional stick increases the damage by 1d6 (to a maximum of 10d6) and the burst radius by 5 feet (to a maximum of 20 feet). Dynamite can be rigged with a longer fuse to explode after a set amount of time, usually 1 to 6 rounds. Roll initiative for the dynamite. After the set number of rounds goes by, the dynamite explodes on that initiative.



magic from the hole, likely the residual effect of a spellbook having been stored there. Although the aura has traces of each school of magic, necromancy pings strongest.

## Q6 – Toilets

Nothing here but ice and filth.

## Q7 – Testing Lab

This large lab reeks of sulfur.

Small shards of *necromancer stone* (see the sidebar) found in the excavated debris are tested for quality, purity and potency. There are a few of those shards still lying on the table.

## Q8 – Geologist's Office

The site's geologist used this office to log and perform research on the *necromancer stone* discovered at the site.

Below are a few clues the characters might find in this office:

**Geologist's log.** A log on her desk details the *necromancer stone* discovered and the dates discovered. The dates start at the beginning of the excavation, approximately one year ago and end six months ago. The last entry notes the discovery of something she refers to as "the statue."

**Tell-tale signs of struggle.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals faint bloodstains on the walls, floors, and desk.

**Locked wardrobe.** The wardrobe in the southwestern corner is chained and locked with a padlock. The lock requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check to pick open. As soon as the chains come undone, the geologist's corpse tumbles out onto the floor. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that she was stabbed in the back. Judging by her rate of decay, she's been dead for six months. Two copper pieces cover her eyes and there is a faint trace of salt on her tattered clothing. A character who succeeds on a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes that *gentle repose* was cast upon her, likely to prevent her corpse from smelling.

**Speak with Dead.** If a character thinks to cast *Speak with Dead* on the dead geologist, the corpse openly shares what she knows.

- Her name was Temer Atarac and she worked for Catarina Heald.
- After her father, Walter, died, Catarina discovered that her father owned a large piece of land in the Surdese Pinnacle. Apparently, the location was rife with the jaduee pat'r *necromancer stone*, also known as necromancer's stone.
- During the excavation, the miners discovered a large statue made of unknown material. The base of the statue bore unusual markings. The site's historian deduced that the markings were in Kwalteth, the ancient language of the dulons. Atarac used divination magic to understand the Kwalteth letters: "Here sleeps eternal the thing that should not be." Troubled by the discovery, Atarac wanted to leave the site immediately. As she began to pack, Heald confronted her in her office and killed her. Heald hid Atarac's body in the wardrobe.

Atarac hopes that the characters will stop Heald. She fears that the statue is not what it seems, and should be destroyed or returned to the earth.

## Q9 – Sifting Room

All of the excavated rock and soil from the mines was sifted by hand in this room, in search of small shards or fragments of high-quality *necromancer stone*.

## Q10 – Watchtower

Guards once stood atop here to keep watch of the quarry and surrounding environs. No one has been here for months.

## Q11 - Debris Pile

All of the loose rock removed from the quarry and mines was kept here, waiting to be sifted for valuable *necromancer stone*.

## Q12 – Water Tanks

These water tanks once kept water warm enough so it could be used to clean samples and blast away loose rock. Since the heaters went cold six months ago, there is nothing in the tanks but solid ice.

## Q13 – Break Area

This abandoned area features a couple of tables and piles of equipment and machinery.



### Necromancer Stone

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

The white gem known as *necromancer stone* (or *silingfashi shi*) is predominantly found on the ashen-covered slopes of the volcanic Xenem Dynasty. They are the jaduee pat'r gems of necromancy.

While attuned to a 2-inch-diameter piece of *necromancer stone*, you gain immunity to necrotic damage and you no longer require food, drink, or sleep. In addition, you become invisible to all undead creatures of CR 2 or lower. You can choose to reveal yourself to any number of undead of your choice without using an action.



## Q14 – Rock Breaker

Smaller pieces of unusable rock were broken up by hand in this area to see if any *necromancer stone* was encased inside.

## Q15 – Mine Entrance

This small entrance leads to the maze-like tunnels of the mines below.

## The Gnoph-keh

Just before the characters get a chance to enter the mine, the wind starts to noticeably pick up around them. Strange sounds dance on the wind and the boiling, gray skies above them burst, showering a sudden deluge of snowfall.

It is at this moment that a **gnoph-keh** (see the Appendix) approaches from the north end of the quarry. It moves along the buildings stealthily, howling in its strange, alien language. The gruesome beast hopes to drive off the characters, using its powers of intimidation. Failing that, it attacks. It attempts to kill most of the party, leaving a few as potential sacrifices to its gruesome god. Any characters caught this way are dragged to the lowest level of the mine and placed under Catarina Heald's care (see area M22 for details).

The gnoph-keh is a deadly opponent and exceptionally intelligent. It uses its ability to summon blizzards to weaken its foes, then lays into them with a dazzling array of attacks with its horn and claws. If the characters seem outmatched, you might have the **winter wolf** Gal'tsche join the fray.

## Mine General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the mine has the following features.

**Construction.** The mine is carved directly into the grant that comprises the majority of the Surdesse Pinnacle. Ceilings are relatively low, no more than 8 feet high in most locations. Wooden beams and shiplap panels grant the narrow corridors and claustrophobic chambers a modicum of durability.

## Unstable Mine

### Result Outcome

0 or less Nothing happens

1-9 **Debris falls from the ceiling.** Any creature standing within 5 feet of the falling debris must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw (in addition to any saving throws made to avoid the explosion). A target takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. The fallen debris becomes difficult terrain.

10-24 **A large portion of the mine collapses.** Any creature standing within 20 feet of the center of the blast must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw (in addition to any saving throws made to avoid the explosion). On a failed saving throw, a target takes 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage and gets buried under the rubble. While buried, a target is restrained, suffocating, and takes 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns. On a successful saving throw, the target takes half as much bludgeoning damage and isn't buried. A buried target can free itself by using its action to make a DC 25 Strength check, freeing itself on a success. A creature within reach of the buried target can use its action to dig away the rubble with a successful DC 10 Strength check. Each time the creature succeeds on the check, roll a d10. On a result of 1, the creature discovers the buried target.

25+ **The entire mine collapses.** Any creature caught in the mine when this happens must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw (in addition to any saving throws made to avoid the explosion). On a failed saving throw, a target takes 49 (14d6) bludgeoning damage and gets buried under the rubble. On a successful saving throw, a target takes half as much damage and manages to slip into an air pocket. While buried, a target is restrained, suffocating, and takes 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns.

**Heat.** Despite this adventure being in the middle of the winter, the mine is relatively hot inside due to normal geological conditions. A character without access to drinkable water must succeed on a Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. The DC for the saving throw is 5 for the first hour and increases by 1 for each additional hour. Creatures wearing medium or heavy armor, or who are clad in heavy clothing, have disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire, or those accustomed to living underground, automatically succeed on the saving throw.

**Illumination.** There is no light throughout the entire mine. And maybe it's just a trick of the mind—but the darkness of the mine seems darker than normal.

**Sounds.** The sound of dripping water, scrapes, and the odd scratch or scream echoes throughout the labyrinthine corridors of the mine. The mine's acoustics make it hard to pinpoint where these sounds come from exactly. All Wisdom (Perception) checks made to hear are made with a -2 penalty.

**Unstable.** The mine was dug fast with little thought put towards sound engineering principles. As such, it is highly unstable. Any dwarven character or character familiar with mining practices notices this fact immediately. All other characters notice this with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. This check is made with advantage if the characters witness an explosion within the mine.

If an explosion occurs within the mine, such as ones created from a stick of dynamite or the *fireball* or *thunderwave* spells, roll a d100. Subtract the result of the die roll from the die roll result for the explosion's damage. Compare the result to the Unstable Mine table below to determine the explosion's outcome.

For example, if a creature casts a *fireball* spell that deals 27 points of damage, then rolls a d100 and gets a 5, that causes a large portion of the mine to collapse (27 - 5 = 22). Every creature within 20 feet from the point of the fireball's impact becomes the target for the falling debris.





## Mine Entrance

The following locations are keyed to the Heald Mine entrance as seen above.

### M1 – Splitstone Quarry

The mine entrance is situated at the bottom of the quarry. Cold air from outside rushes through this wider-than-normal corridor.

**Encounter: Cultists.** Four Anorian **cultists** guard the entrance. Unless the characters were particularly quiet outside while exploring the quarry and fighting the gnophkeh, these cultists will attempt to hide and surprise the characters.

One of the cultists, a young man named Lukil, is reluctant to join the fray. He hangs back, weapon trembling in hand. The other three fight without care for their own well-being. If the characters aren't quick about dispatching the cultists, the cult fanatic from area M2 joins the fray in the second round.

If the characters allow Lukil to survive, he explains to the characters what's happened since they discovered the statue and how the people of Providence have become obsessed with the lingering terror that lurks in the bowels of the mine. He doesn't want to join the party, but he will share as much as he knows about the different levels of the mine.

- "Terrible creatures lurk within the mine. Some of them were formerly humans who were transformed."
- The other members of the cult sabotaged the elevator. It will collapse into the shaft if anyone uses it without first repairing the winch.

- "The mine is extremely unstable. Even a small explosion might cause it to come tumbling down."
- "Some of the other miners might still be alive somewhere on the second and third sub-levels. Heald's been feeding them to her monsters."
- The elevator only goes down to the second sub-level. You must find a ladder to reach the lowest level of the mine, where Heald is located.
- "The mine's owner, Catarina Heald, discovered something horrible on the lowest level of the mine. It's some kind of statue of an unspeakably horrible creature. It drove her insane and forced her to kill almost all of the miners."
- "There is a gigantic worm that crawls through the second and third sub-levels. It hates loud noises. Heald controls the worm with a special whistle she wears around her neck."

Once he's done divulging information, Lukil retreats into the cold outside, eager to remove this terrible place from his memories.

### M2 – Primary Storage

Tools and mining supplies crowd the shelves of this platform. Maps and discarded personal belongings clutter a trio of tables at the center of this storage deck.

**Encounter: Diseased Fanatic.** Unless he was already drawn into the fight in area M1, there is an Anorian **cult fanatic** here. Strange blisters and boils cover half the Anorian's body, including his face. If the Anorian's hit points drop to 0, instead of dying, the Anorian regains 67 hit points and transforms into a **gibbering moulder**. Any creature



within 30 feet of the fanatic who witnesses this must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of the gibbering mouther until the end of its next turn. The gibbering mouther fights until destroyed.

**Maps.** Maps depicting the mine's three uppermost levels clutter the tables. Give the characters a copy of the Mine Map handout in the Appendix.

### M3 – Elevator

This large elevator car contains two levers. To the immediate right of the elevator shaft stands its impressive winch system.

**Using the Elevator.** This mechanical elevator provides access to the entrance and the two levels below it. The elevator doesn't reach the lowest level. The levers inside the elevator only function to signal the operator. The elevator may only be operated from the winch (area M4). A character who examines both the elevator and the winch and then succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check recognizes this fact immediately.

**Climbing the Shaft.** If the car is destroyed or the characters simply don't wish to use it, they can climb along the rough rock of the shaft's walls so long as there isn't anything obstructing the way. The first sub-level is 50 feet below the mine entrance and the second sub-level is an additional 50 feet beyond that one.

**Trap: Falling Elevator.** The cultists sabotaged the elevator to prevent would-be heroes like the characters from disrupting their operations. If the characters operate the elevator before they repair the winch, the elevator's cables snap. If the elevator falls from the mine entrance level, it falls a complete 100 feet before it crashes onto the second sub-level. Each creature in the elevator car must make a DC 20 Dexterity or Strength saving throw (creature's choice). On a failed saving throw, a creature takes 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage if the cart falls from the mine's entrance, or 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage if the cart falls from the first sub-level. A target takes half as much damage on a successful saving throw. Once the elevator car falls, it is no longer operational.

### M4 – Elevator Winch

This large winch lowers and lifts the elevator (area M3).

**Encounter: Mutated Cultists.** Two **gibbering mouthers** hide in the shadows near the smoke powder kegs at the east end of this cubby. Both were once Anorian cultists who succumbed to the Rhan-Tegoth's transformative effects.

**Using the Winch.** The only way to raise and lower the elevator is through this winch. A creature that uses its action to crank the winch can raise or lower the elevator car by 5 feet.

**Sabotaged Winch.** The cultists sabotaged the winch. If the characters operate the winch without first repairing it, it causes the winch's chain to snap and sends the car plummeting to the depths below. See area M3 for a detailed description. Spotting the sabotaged winch requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A character with proficiency in tinker's tools or a similar toolset can use their tools to repair the winch with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using their proficiency. Failing this check by 5 or more makes the winch irreparable. The spell *mending* also fixes the winch.

### Smoke Powder Keg

Smoke powder is used to propel bullets from the barrel of pistols and rifles, or it can be used as explosives. The smoke powder found throughout the mine is kept in small, 20-pound wooden kegs. Setting fire to one of these containers causes it to explode. Each creature within 10 feet of an exploding keg must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 24 (7d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. Setting fire to an ounce of smoke powder causes it to flare for 1 round, shedding bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.

A character holding an open keg can pour a line of smoke powder as they move, so long as they don't move more than 30 feet during their turn. A character can use their action to light the smoke powder. The ignited powder then burns 30 feet away from the point of ignition along the line, doing so on the same initiative count that it was lit, until the line ends. A full keg holds enough smoke powder to draw a 700-foot line. Every 100 feet used this way reduces the keg's weight by 2 pounds and the damage dealt by the keg's explosion by 1d6.

**Smoke Powder Kegs.** Six kegs of smoke powder rest against the eastern wall. See the sidebar.

### M5 – Mine Shafts

The miners constructed the shafts at regular intervals to maximize the chances of finding *necromancer stone*. Although eerily dark, there is nothing of interest in these caverns beyond discarded tools and mining supplies.







## First Sub-Level: Collapsed Tunnels

The following locations are keyed to the Collapsed Tunnel map as seen above.

### M6 – Blocked Tunnel

Huge piles of rock and other debris block the way.

A character can spend 1 minute clearing away some of the rubble, doing so with a successful DC 5 Strength check. It takes 20 successful checks to clear enough rubble to make a path. Each time a character fails a check to clear away the rubble or rolls a 1 on the d20 (regardless of if the check passes or fails), they must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character gains one level of exhaustion.

**Encounter: Noise.** Moving the rubble creates considerable noise, potentially drawing unwanted attention. Each time a character spends a minute removing rubble, roll a d20 to determine what the party encounters.

### Area 6 Encounters

d20	Encounter
1	1d4 <b>gibbering mouthers</b>
2	1d6 <b>zombies</b>
3	1d4 + 1 <b>cultists</b> with 1 <b>cult fanatic</b>
4-9	No encounter
10	The <b>purple worm</b> (second and third sub-levels only)

### M7 – Side Storage

This small storage space hides behind a pile of rubble (see area M6).

Other than some mining tools and random supplies, there is nothing of value here.

**Hazard: Smoke Powder.** Spilled smoke powder lies in piles all over the floor. A character with proficiency in alchemist's tools identifies the substance with a successful DC 10 Intelligence check. If a fire is brought into this area or an effect or spell that deals fire or lightning damage occurs, roll a d6. On a result of 5 or 6, the smoke powder ignites and causes a small explosion. Each creature in the area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. This area is relatively well reinforced, so you do not need to check to see if it collapses.

**Hatch.** A hatch in the northeastern corner of the room leads down to area M12.

### M8 – Trapdoor

A pile of heavy timbers covers the floor of this area.

**Encounter: Specter.** When the characters approach the pile of timbers, a **specter** rises from the floor. The specter appears humanoid but semi-transparent. It is dressed like one of the miners. When it sees the characters, its eyes shrink back into its skull and its mouth stretches down the middle of its chest. Any creature within 30 feet of the specter that witnesses this must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. The creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its



turns, ending the effect on a success. After the specter distorts, it attacks.

**Trapdoor.** The timbers conceal the presence of a large trapdoor that leads down to area M13. Spotting the trapdoor amid the timbers requires a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. Removing these timbers requires a check similar to the one described in area M6.

**Treasure: Lantern of Revealing.** Amid the broken timbers lies a lantern that seems to be in perfect shape, despite the destruction surrounding it. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of divination around the lantern. The lantern is actually a *lantern of revealing*.

## M9 – Partially Collapsed Tunnel

Although not fully caved in, the supports in this tunnel have broken and any slight disturbance may bring it all down. When making checks to avoid collapse here (see the general features on page 10, divide the result of the d100 roll by 2 (rounded down).

## M10 – Ladder

This ladder leads down to area M17.

**Encounter: Ochre Jelly.** Midway between the first and second sub-levels, an **ochre jelly** slowly shimmies its way up the shaft. If the characters climb down the ladder from the first sub-level, they may climb on top of it unless they're careful. If the characters climb up the ladder from area M17, the ooze releases its grip on the ladder and walls around it, dropping onto whichever character has climbed furthest up the ladder. When the ooze falls, it makes a pseudopod attack. If this attack hits, the ooze deals an additional 7 (2d6) damage.

**Hazard: Sticks of Dynamite.** There are three sticks of dynamite stuck in the jelly. Any time the jelly takes lightning or fire damage, there is a chance that one of the sticks explodes. Roll a d20. If the d20 result is less than the fire or lightning damage dealt to the jelly, the sticks explode. Each creature within 5 feet of the jelly, including the jelly, must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A character with a passive Wisdom Perception check of 14 or better notices the sticks.

If the characters successfully destroy the jelly, they may take the sticks.

## M11 – Large Cavern

This large, naturally-formed cavern boasts 20-foot-high ceilings. Water constantly drips from the ceiling above onto a mound of stinking vegetation piled at the center of the room.

**Hazard: Algae.** Slick, green algae cover the damp stones of this chamber. Any time a creature moves through this area, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone. A creature can move at half its normal speed to automatically succeed on this check. The shambling mound at the center of the cavern does not suffer from this effect.

**Encounter: Shambling Mound.** The mound of vegetation is actually an aggressive **shambling mound**. The mound lies dormant until a living creature comes near it. It then attacks and fights until destroyed.

# Second Sub-Level: Burrow

The following locations are keyed to the Burrow map as seen on page 15.

## M12 – Ladder

The ladder in the northeastern corner climbs 50 feet up to area M8.

**Corpse.** The gooey remains of a partially digested miner lie on the floor just a few feet from the ladder. A quick search of the body reveals a still-intact gold necklace worth 10 gp.

## M13 – Large Storage

The door that connects this area to the north part of this level has been locked and barricaded shut from inside the room. A character must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to unlock the door. Once the door is unlocked, a character can shove past the barricade with a successful DC 19 Strength (Athletics) check. If a character wishes to break the lock and shove the barricade all in one go, the character must succeed on a DC 21 Strength (Athletics) check instead. It only takes a few rounds to clear the debris from the other side. Additionally, the door can be unlocked from the other side.

This large storage area contains an array of tools and supplies.

When Heald first assumed command of the purple worm, many of the miners fled in terror, and some barricaded themselves in here. Unfortunately, they became trapped when heavy timbers fell on the hatch above, preventing exit. The worm then burrowed into the southwestern corner of the room and killed them all.

**Encounter: Specter.** If the characters have not yet encountered the **specter** from area M8, it attacks them here instead.

**Ladder Up.** The ladder in the northeastern corner of the room leads up to area M8. If the characters have not yet removed the timbers from the passage, they cannot open the hatch from this side without first succeeding on a DC 23 Strength check.

**Collapsed Passage.** The worm closed the passage behind itself when it exited the area. Removing this rubble requires a series of checks similar to the one described in area M6.

## M14 – Worm's Burrow

The purple worm from area M22 dug a passage through the caverns. Whenever it broke through into the man-made tunnels, the tunnels collapsed behind it, covering its tracks. Removing the stonefall requires a series of checks similar to the ones described in area M6.

**Encounter: The Purple Worm.** Removing the rocks here may alert the purple worm to the characters' presence. When you check for a random encounter on the area M6 encounter table, on a roll of 10, the purple worm from area M22 travels to the location to investigate.

## M15 – The Worm's Den

This natural cave was part of the worm's den. There is a hole in the floor at the northwestern part of the cavern. A rope





## The Purple Worm's Aversion to Loud Noises

The worm loathes loud noises. If the worm takes thunder damage, or the characters create a loud noise while within 30 feet of the worm, the worm becomes frightened for 1 minute. While frightened, the worm has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

anchored by a piton near the edge of the hole offers a clear way to descend into the hole.

**Climbing the Worm's Burrow.** The hole in the ground at the northwestern part of this cavern leads 60 feet down to area M21. Rendered smooth by the purple worm, climbing up or down this shaft requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check without a rope.

**Trap: Lousy Piton.** If a character examines the piton and succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they recognize that the piton is loose and the hole in which it was nailed is stripped. Dwarves automatically pass this check. Each round that 50 pounds of weight or more is put upon the rope, roll a d6. On a roll of 6, the piton breaks free

using the rope to tumble down the burrow into the cavern below, taking 1d6 bludgeoning for every 10 feet fallen.

## M16 – Shaft

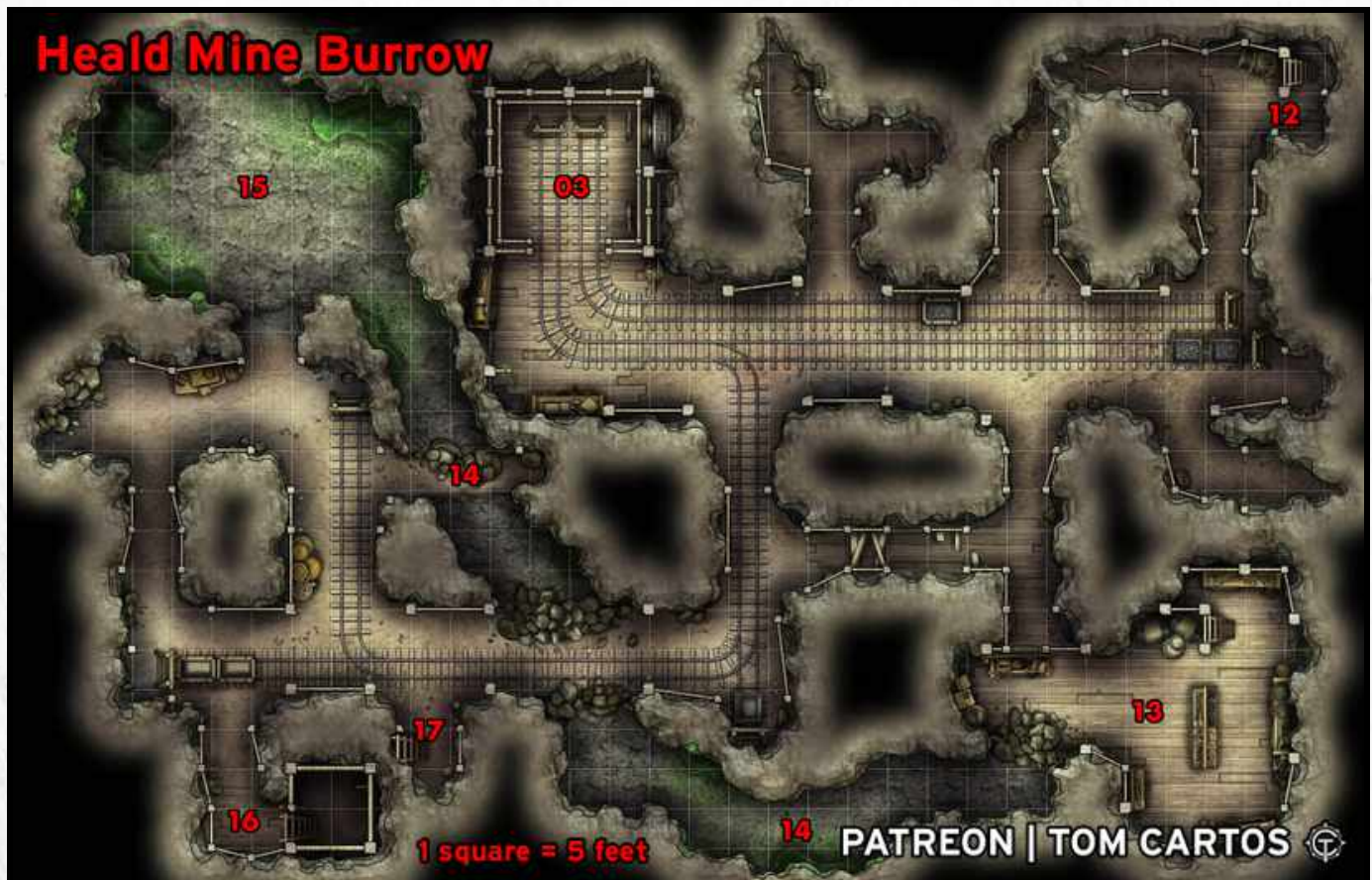
This shaft leads 60 feet down to area M18.

**Trapped Ladder.** The cultists sawed some of the rungs midway down the ladder. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or better immediately notices the trap. If a character fails to notice the rungs and climbs down the ladder, the rungs break; the character must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the character catches themselves before they fall. Otherwise, the character falls 30 feet down to the shaft below, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

**Forgotten Treasure.** One of the nearby minecarts contains a hunk of graphite within which a large diamond is stuck. The diamond is worth 500 gp. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 16 or better spots the diamond as they walk by the cart.

## M17 – Ladder

This ladder leads back up to area M10. If the characters have not already encountered the **ochre jelly** from area M10, then they do so here. See area M10 for details.







## Third Sub-Level: Necromancer Stone Mines

The following locations are keyed to the Necromancer Stone Mines as seen above.

### M18 – Shaft

The ladder from area M16 leads down to here. The cultists sabotaged part of the ladder (see area M16 for details).

**Smoke Powder Trail.** A trail of smoke powder leads from the ladder over to the explosives store in area M19. Noticing the trail requires a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. One of the miners hoped to blow the whole place up but failed to escape before he could ignite the fuse. See the sidebar on page 12 for details on smoke powder trails.

### M19 – Explosives Store

This storage holds over 100 sticks of dynamite (see the sidebar on page 8) and three kegs of smoke powder (see the sidebar on page 12).

**Smoke Powder Trail.** A trail of smoke powder leads out of this area and over to the ladder in area M18. See the sidebar on page 12 for details on smoke powder trails.

**Bring It Down.** A character who examines this room and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check recognizes that exploding the contents here will do enough damage to bring the entire mine down on top of its evil inhabitants. Perhaps a last-ditch effort?

### M20 - Worm's Burrow

The purple worm's burrow (see M22) continues through this part of the mine. This area uses the same mechanics as described in area M14.

### M21 – Necromancer Stone Chunk

This huge mound of gray stone streaked with red is an unimaginably large chunk of *necromancer stone* (see the sidebar on page 9). If the characters could find a way to remove the stone from the granite, it's easily worth millions in gold coins.

**Hole in the Ceiling.** There is a hole 10 feet up in the ceiling directly above the *necromancer stone* chunk. See area M15 for details.

### M22 – Rhan-Tegoth's Cavern

Huge deposits of necromancer's stone decorate the walls of this enormous cavern. A 12-foot-tall statue depicting some horrible thing—not altogether a mosquito, nor crustacean, nor slug, nor decomposed human being, but something one cannot and should not recall—stands at the center of the cavern.

Dozens of dead bodies litter the floor of the cavern, all dead miners. Many of their bodies appear deflated as if all of their liquids and their vital organs were drained away by some malicious creature (they were).

**Encounter: Catarina Heald and Rhan-Tegoth.** When the characters first arrive, they discover the woman, Catarina Heald, kneeling before the statue. Driven mad by the presence of the statue, she mumbles incoherently.



Sickened by exposure to the *necromancer stone*, much of her hair has fallen out of her head. Her mouth bleeds from the absence of teeth and her eyes are bloodshot. Catarina is a neutral evil female human **mage**. She is immune to the charmed and frightened conditions. Recognizing that the mine might collapse if there is an explosion, she doesn't cast spells that deal fire or thunder damage and *counterspells* any spell that the characters might cast that would. Instead of *fireball*, she prepares *vampiric touch*.

When she notices the characters, she says nothing and immediately blows her *whistle of the worm* (see the sidebar) to call the purple worm. Unless the character already killed it, the worm emerges from area M23 or from another part of the dungeon and attacks.

If the characters defeat the worm or the worm doesn't appear, or if the characters target Heald with an attack, she speaks a foul phrase, calling forth her evil god one last time.

"Wza-y'ei! Wza-y'ei!" the madwoman screams. "Y'kaa haa ho-ii, Rhan-Tegoth-Cthulhu fthagn-Ei! Ei! Ei! Ei!-Rhan-Tegoth. Rhan-Tegoth, Rhan-Tegoth!"

The statue turns to cruel flesh and takes on the form of the great old one, **Rhan-Tegoth** (see the Appendix). Any creature other than Heald within 30 feet of the statue that witnesses this transformation must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or gain one form of short-term madness and become frightened. A target that fails its saving throw by 5 or more also gains one form of indefinite madness. While frightened, a creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Rhan-Tegoth as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of Rhan-Tegoth. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action. The creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of its turn if it is 30 feet or more away from Rhan-Tegoth and Rhan-Tegoth is not in direct line of sight.

Rhan-Tegoth spends its first round draining Catarina of her fluids, killing her instantly. It then turns its attention to the characters. If the characters don't immediately realize the danger that they are in, drop a few subtle hints that not only should they run away, but they should probably prevent this thing from ever escaping the mine. (Hint: blow the place to the high heavens.)

If you wish to give the characters an "out"—in other words, if they don't yet realize they're going to become a humanoid smoothie for an evil ancient god—you might have Rhan-Tegoth choose one of them as its next high priest or priestess similar to Heald's role. Rhan-Tegoth might then spare the others at the behest of its new priest/priestess. *Might*.

**Treasure: Heald's Items.** In addition to the *whistle of the worm*, the characters will find Heald's spellbook with her. The spellbook contains all the spells she has prepared.

## Whistle of the Worm

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

You can use an action to blow the whistle and command obedience from a grick, remorhaz, or purple worm of your choice that can hear you within 120 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by you for 8 hours. While charmed in this way, the creature regards you as its trusted leader. If harmed by you or your companions, or commanded to do something contrary to its nature, a target ceases to be charmed in this way. The whistle can't be used again until the next dawn.

## M23 – Worm's Nest

This natural cavern is where the worm rests for most of the day. It collected a small pile of *necromancer stone* upon which it rests. The stone's innate magic makes it nervous and paranoid, frequently imbuing it with dreams of the great titan Kongradol.

**Encounter: Purple Worm.** If the characters haven't yet encountered the **purple worm** elsewhere in the mine, this is where they find it.

## Aftermath

If the characters die or fail to destroy the mine and its evil inhabitants, the world suddenly finds itself in great danger. The Witnesses of the Worm, a dangerous faction from Arruquetta, hear about the strange mine and send a large group of their cultists to secure the statue, the necromancer's stone supply, and the whistle of the worm. They quietly hide the statue in one of their safehouses in the Basilisk's Spine Mountains and remove all evidence of their involvement. Furthermore, they poison the people of Providence, ensuring there are no living witnesses to Rhan-Tegoth's reemergence.

If the characters successfully destroy the mine, it's the last they hear of Rhan-Tegoth and Catarina Heald for some time. Eventually, the people of Providence disband their dark cult and return to their mundane lives. All strange goings-on are written off by mainland authorities as Vapulite worship and sellswords from Murktown are hired to occupy Providence's docks.

Even if the characters didn't discover the zombified remains of Loen Humwin II in the ravine (see page 7), it's safe for them to assume that Second was just another victim of Heald and her dark god. Marina is distraught by this news but gave up hope long ago. She only asks that the characters help her and her children any way they can as their path forward will surely be long and difficult. Ω



# Appendix

## Gnoph-Keh

The gnoph-keh is a six-legged, horned creature vaguely akin to a polar bear in shape and outline, yet possessed of a cruel and creative intellect that elevates it from the rank of wild beast to murderous warmonger. Covered with a dense pelt of shaggy white fur, the gnoph-keh is equally at home walking on two, four, or six legs. The creature prefers to travel on all six when using its powerful charge or running, but rears up on its hind legs in combat to bring its four front claws to bear on its foes. With the gnoph-keh's ability to call up and direct powerful blizzards matched to its ability to move and see in such conditions without any disadvantage, the creature is rightfully feared in the frozen realms where it dwells.



### Gnoph-Keh

*Large monstrosity, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 92 (8d10 + 48)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	17 (+3)	23 (+6)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Wis +8

**Skills** Athletics +14, Perception +8, Stealth +7

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** cold

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Gnoph-keh

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

**Charge.** If the gnoph-keh moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Cold Aura.** A zone of intense cold surrounds the gnoph-keh, extending 10 feet from it in all directions. Each creature that starts its turn in this area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, or take one level of exhaustion. Creatures resistant or immune to cold damage automatically pass their saving throw against this effect. The gnoph-keh can suppress this effect as a bonus action.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The gnoph-keh makes one gore attack and four claw attacks.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) slashing damage.

**Gore.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) piercing damage.

**Summon Blizzard (1/Day).** The gnoph-keh magically conjures a torrent of ice, snow, and heavy winds in a 60-foot-radius, 80-foot-high cylinder centered on itself. The area of the blizzard is heavily obscured and creatures inside the area have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. The blizzard extinguishes open flames, disperses fog, and makes flying by nonmagical means nearby impossible. A flying creature in the blizzard must land at the end of its turn or fall. Each creature that ends its turn in the blizzard must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. Creatures immune or resistant to cold damage automatically pass their saving throws. On a failed saving throw, a target takes one level of exhaustion. The blizzard remains for as long as the gnoph-keh concentrates on it (as if concentrating on a spell), for up to 10 minutes.



# Rhan-Tegoth

The strange and silent Great Old One known as the Herald of the End Times has spent most of its existence in hibernation, waking for short periods of time after his worshipers rouse him or as the result of singular cosmic events. These periods of wakefulness never last for long, but ancient texts speak of a time when Rhan-Tegoth shall waken fully from his slumber, heralding the dawn of the end of all worlds.

While records of Rhan-Tegoth's waking periods and his activities during those times are rare and unreliable, rumors still persist of certain chants and rituals that are capable of temporarily waking the Great Old One from his slumber. What reasons might exist for stirring Rhan-Tegoth from his sleep can only be guessed at, for the Great Old One will usually simply consume any foolish enough to rouse him from slumber.

Rhan-Tegoth appears as an aquatic arthropod in shape, yet closer inspection leaves no doubt in the viewer's mind of the Great Old One's truly alien nature. His body stands 12 feet tall, not altogether a mosquito, nor crustacean, nor slug, nor decomposed human being, but something one cannot and should not recall. The Great Old One weighs 2,000 pounds, but this weight increases to 10 times this amount when he is in statue form. The fact that countless statues of Rhan-Tegoth exist makes it difficult to determine which of them is in fact the actual slumbering god, so care should be taken in proximity of any depiction of the Herald of the End Times.

## Rhan-Tegoth's Cult

Rhan-Tegoth is worshiped by tribespeople who do not understand the strange terrors caused by the unusual statue they have stumbled across, but he is just as often venerated by fanatics who know full well the creature's significance. Cultists take delight in placing the hibernating Great Old One in public venues for display—this act eventually ends in disaster for the region and Rhan-Tegoth transitioning to other realms, leaving behind desolation and madness as a reminder of his visitation.





# Rhan-Tegoth

Large aberration (Great Old One), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 210 (20d10 + 100)

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	14 (+2)	21 (+5)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)

**Saving Throws** Int +8, Wis +11, Cha +12

**Skills** Arcana +8, Perception +17

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder

**Damage Immunities** cold, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 27

**Languages** all, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 20 (25,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

**Amphibious.** Rhan-Tegoth can breathe both air and water.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Charisma is Rhan-Tegoth's innate spellcasting ability (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). Rhan-Tegoth can cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*

3/day each: *clairvoyance*, *telekinesis*

1/day each: *control water*, *control weather*, *dominate monster*

**Inscrutable.** Rhan-Tegoth is immune to any effect would sense his emotions or read his thoughts, as well as any divination spell that he refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the Rhan-Tegoth's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Rhan-Tegoth fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Rhan-Tegoth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Rhan-Tegoth's weapon attacks are magical.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** Rhan-tegoth can use his Frightful Presence. Rhan-Tegoth then makes two attacks with his claws, and one attack with his tentacles. He can replace his tentacle attack with his Drain Life attack.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage.

**Tentacles.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Rhan-tegoth can't use his tentacles on another target.

**Drain Life.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature grappled by Rhan-Tegoth. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) piercing damage plus 36 (8d8) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Rhan-Tegoth regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of Rhan-Tegoth's choice that is within 120 feet of him and aware of him must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of him for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Rhan-Tegoth is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Rhan-Tegoth's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

## Legendary Actions

Rhan-Tegoth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Rhan-Tegoth regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Claw.** Rhan-Tegoth makes one claw attack.

**Move.** Rhan-Tegoth moves up to half his movement speed without provoking attacks of opportunity.

**Raise Dead (Costs 3 Actions).** Rhan-Tegoth targets a humanoid within 30 feet of him that has been dead for no longer than 10 days and died as a result of Rhan-Tegoth's Life Drain attack. The target rises as a zombie in the space of its corpse in the nearest unoccupied space. The zombie is under Rhan-Tegoth's control. Rhan-Tegoth can have no more than seven zombies under his control at one time.



## Handout: Marina's Letter

*Dear Marina,*

*I hope you and the children are well. Work has been much more difficult than usual. I've had the same dream every night since we uncovered the caverns below the mine. In these dreams, I dream of Casar's sky turning pitch black, even in the daytime, Naeyer's Eye nowhere to be seen. Dark things crawl across the land. Their arms, if I dare call them that, surround me and pull me towards countless, horrible gnashing mouths. Just before they devour me, I wake. But with each dream, I feel myself getting closer and closer.*

*Of course, these are probably nothing more than illusions conjured by an overstressed mind.*

*I hope tonight's dreams are filled with nothing but you and the children.*

*I learned how to write the local language:  
esch'w t'lawo da.*

*That means "I love you."*



## Handout: Second's Last Letter

*Dear Marina,*

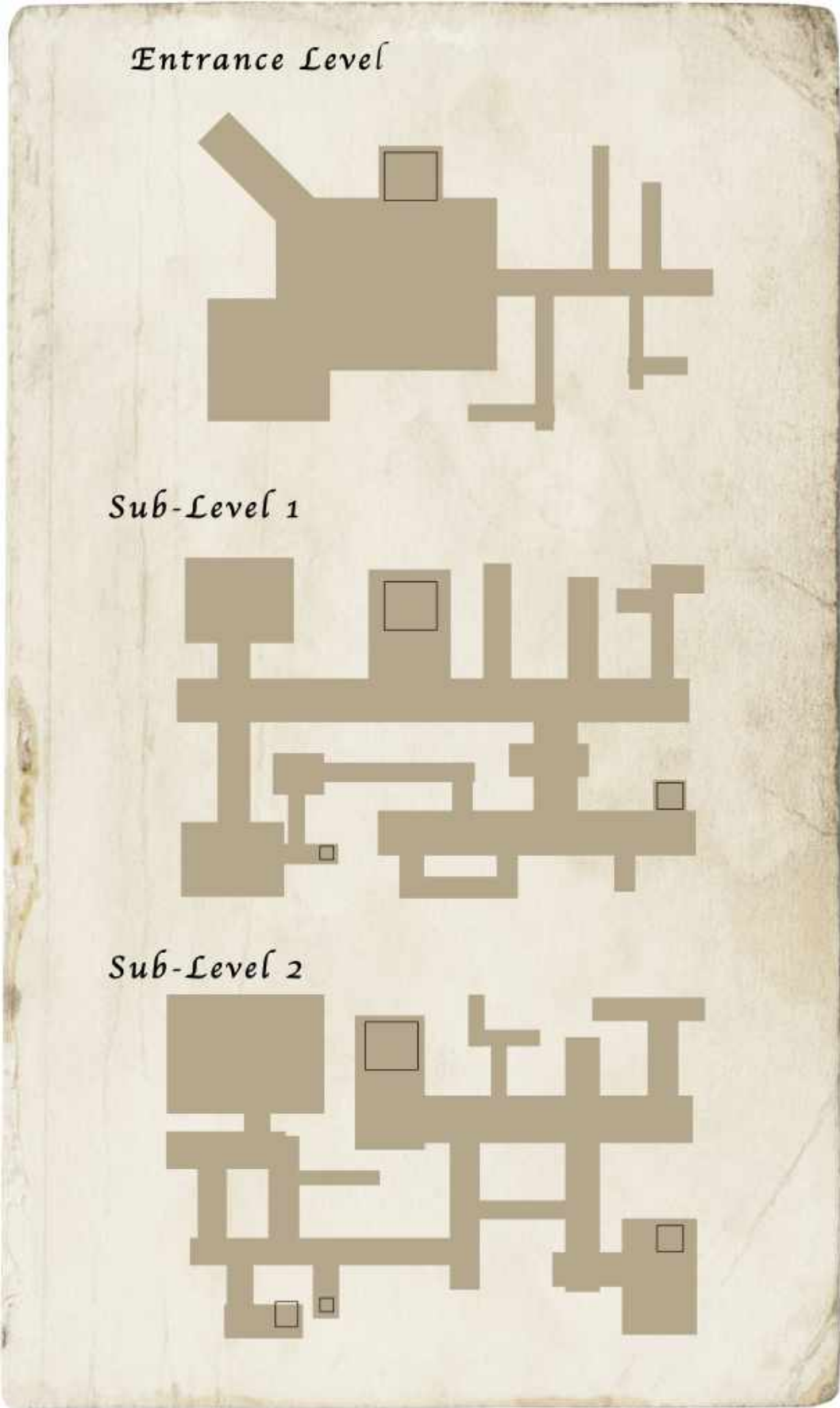
*I pray you receive this letter.  
Heald went insane and trapped us  
all with her great worm. Already,  
five of us are dead, fed to the thing  
that should not be. Unless the  
elements intervene, I know that I,  
too, will meet a similar fate.  
Whatever you do, do not seek me.  
It's far too dangerous.*

*Know that I love you and the  
children with all my heart.*

*Loen*



# Handout: Mine Blueprint





**Product Identity:** The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(E), and are not Open Content: All Trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, place names, new deities, etc.), dialogue, plots, story elements, locations, characters, artwork, sidebars, and trade dress. (Elements that have previously been designated as Open Game Content are not included in this declaration.)

**Open Game Content:** The Open content in this book includes the monster names, statistics, traits, and abilities. No other portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permissions.

## Open Game License

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product Identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" Not for resale. Permission granted to print or photocopy this document for personal use only. System Reference Document 5.1 2 or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.
2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.
3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.
4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.
5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.
6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.
7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.
8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.
9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.
10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.
11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.
12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.
13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.
14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.
15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, LLC.  
  
System Reference Document 5.1 Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.  
  
Pathfinder Adventure Path #46: Wake of the Watcher. © 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Greg A. Vaughan.  
  
Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 6 © 2017, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Robert Brookes, Benjamin Bruck, John Compton, Paris Crenshaw, Adam Daigle, Crystal Frasier, James Jacobs, Thurston Hillman, Tim Hitchcock, Brandon Hodge, Jason Keeley, Isabelle Lee, Jason Nelson, Tim Nightengale, F. Wesley Schneider, David Schwartz, Mark Seifter, Todd Stewart, Josh Vogt, and Linda Zayas-Palmer.

### END OF LICENSE

The Thing That Should Not Be. Copyright 2022, Hamrick Brands, LLC. Authors: Dave Hamrick.

Cartography Copyright Tom Cartos, used with permission.

Publisher's Choice Quality Stock art © Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games, used under license.