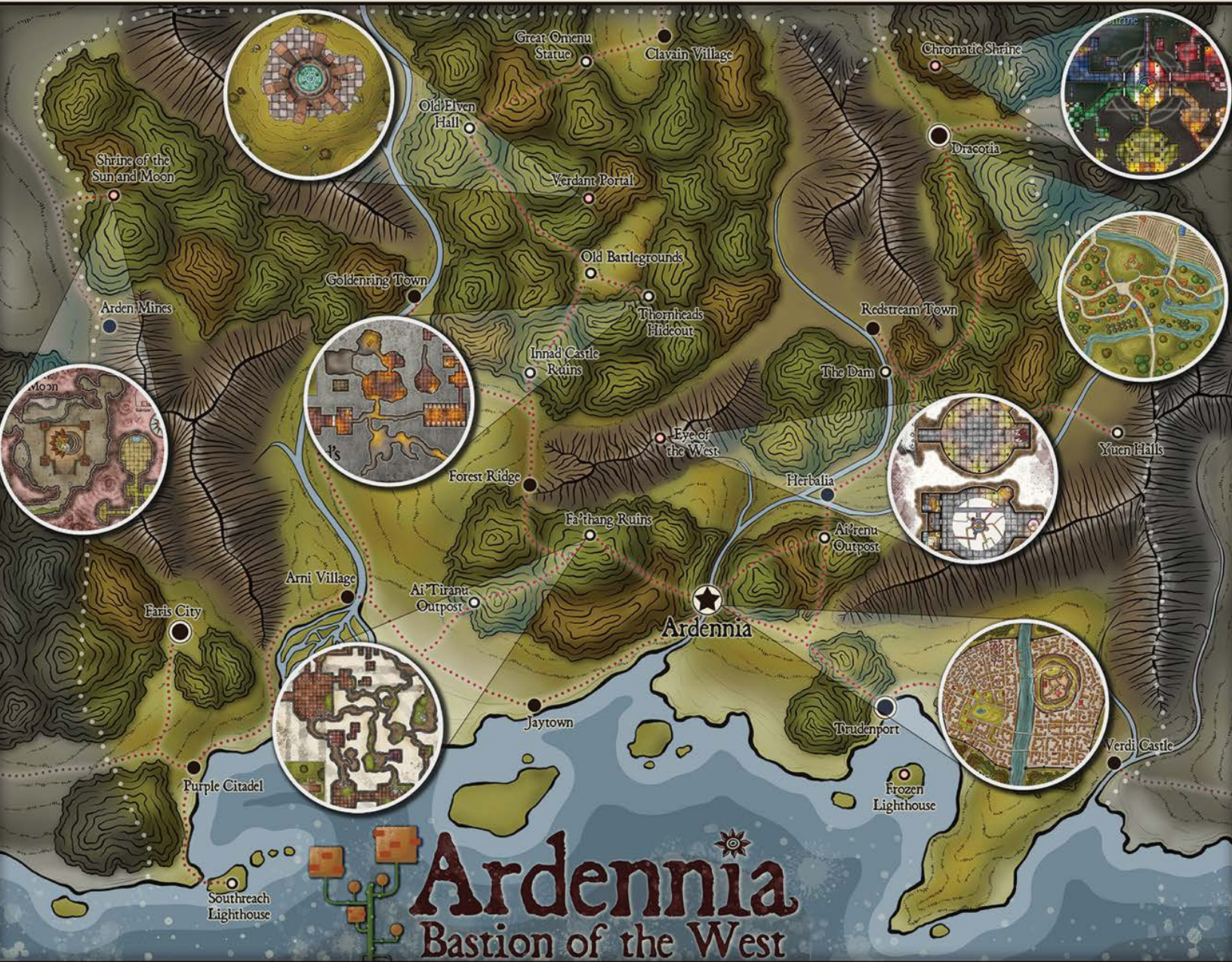


ARDENNIAN KINGDOM

MULTIMAP PROJECT



By Elven Tower

PATREON COMPILATION JAN.2019

Ardennian Kingdom

January 2019

This is part of Elven Tower's monthly releases on Patreon. You can visit our [Portfolio Website](#) to see more cartography and adventures.

The intent with this material is to create ideas and extra material for the illustrations I create. You're free to use this information or change it in any way to adapt it to your own game and players.

This release was inspired by the collaborative work of my supporters on Patreon. I thank you all for helping out with your funding and your answers in the polls in January 2019. It was a great creative exercise but even more, it was fun. This is a compilation of all written and illustrated material about the Ardennian Kingdom. This material was released previously in separate PDF documents. This is just a compilation with no extra content.

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ARDENNIA, BASTION OF THE WEST

About this Resource

This resource features the general description of a kingdom under a fey autocracy. This is the first in a series of related PDF releases within the same general area. It includes adventure ideas that are appropriate for low to mid-level (Levels 1 to 10) adventuring parties. Challenge Rating (CR) is calculated using a party of four as the model.

The DM is free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first the DM should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew world lore. When monsters are referenced, the creature's name is noted in bold. Only creatures from the Monster Manual are cited.

BACKGROUND LORE

It has been known as the Bastion of the West for the past two hundred years. Ardennia is an oddity among other kingdoms and provinces, mainly due to the fact that a fey oligarchy rules the kingdom with an iron fist. The kingdom is secluded from the outside world except for commerce. Information often leaves but it does not come in. Most Ardennians ignore the origin of the current state of affairs. Some of them go as far as to believe that outside places are also ruled by fey entities. The fey oligarchy has doctored what information is available to the peasantry for the past two centuries. Their past is all but forgotten to humans, halflings, and other creatures with similar lifespans. Elves remember; some of them are old enough to have lived through the change, but they enjoy a middle-class privilege in Ardennia. Their fey blood, though old and watered down, is still recognized by the fey court. Elves are now a privileged class with no incentive to confront an authoritarian government friendly to them.

The forgotten story of Ardennia goes back almost two-hundred and fifty years back. A time of war and death. Ardennia was in an armed conflict with two neighboring kingdoms over a land-grab struggle. They were losing the war, and the king had already died in the field. Before the eldest prince had been crowned, something unimaginable happened. A fey lord appeared in front of the prince in the throne

room and offered him a deal he could not refuse. The fey lord presented his daughter, Ai'Haranna. Her presence was something out of this world; unearthly beauty, an aura of confidence and command, a stare that pierced your eyes with curiosity and imperiousness. The prince was enraptured by Ai'Haranna's smile and body. She was a dryad. The fey lord offered his daughter in marriage to join both families. The first official marriage of two long-lasting noble families, one from the Feywild and the other from the material plane. In exchange, reinforcements from the Feywild would come forth and join their efforts in battle. The prince accepted at once and married Ai'Haranna within the fortnight. As promised, a battalion of satyrs, centaurs, fomorians, and other creatures came to their aid. The war stopped less than a year later. The two foreign kingdoms surrendered after facing the fresh armies from the Feywild. They had no chance. No army has successfully invaded Ardennia after that, thus earning the title "Bastion of the West".

The marriage with Ai'Haranna was successful but it came with some unintended consequences. The first one was that they could not conceive offspring. Ai'Haranna's fey origin prevented this. The king had a few bastards but they would never inherit the throne or his riches. Ai'Haranna did not seem to mind the absence of children, though. Years passed and the king aged, but Ai'Haranna did not. It turned out she was immortal. When the king was an old man he could see the kingdom transformed into something different than what his father had built. Ai'Haranna had turned the senate into a court. More than half the representatives within the court were of fey origin, elves or other species. Already human peasantry became an oppressed class, fey and satyrs their overlords. The last human king died of natural causes at the age of sixty-two. He had no heirs, but according to the chain of succession, his nephew was the next in line. The lad was already an adult, he had been trained to rule. But Ai'Haranna would not have that.

The consort queen Ai'Haranna enacted a coup mere days after the king's death and took the capital, Ardennia. Her army and the support of the fey in the capital made her successful. She was crowned Queen of Petals and any other heirs were executed that week. Ai'Haranna still rules Ardennia today.

The kingdom is a far cry from what it was back then. The court is now known as the Fey Court, only people with fey ancestry can aspire to be a representative there. Thus, the interests and wellbeing of humans and other non-fey races are of no importance. Dwarves left decades ago, their interests and ideas clashed so bad with the Fey Court they could not stand it any longer.

By law, all cities and smaller settlements must have a lord in charge. This lord must be of fey ancestry. Things are bleak, and the government is strong-handed. The situation is worse for non-fey the closest one is to the capital, Ardennia. Fringe communities and small villages can be safe places where only the ruler lord is a reminder of the state of affairs.

FACTIONS

Thornheads

For almost a hundred years, a resistance group known as the Thornheads has tried to thwart the objectives of the Fey Court. Their ultimate goal is to retake the kingdom, exile all fey, and put a human back on the throne. The leader of the group is Harold Guinesh. According to popular gossip, Harold is a descendant of a bastard of the last human king. If that were true, he may have a legitimate claim to the throne.

Order of the Petal

It is the most exclusive order of knights in the kingdom. It requires full fey ancestry to be a member of, thus, elves are excluded. Most of them are satyrs, pixies, and centaurs. They obey the queen orders directly and their task is to keep the peace and uphold the current status quo. They hunt the Thornheads for a living, they have become exceedingly efficient at it.

Yellow Leaf Council

A group of fey and non-fey in the capital which openly opposes the oppression of non-fey. They often make proposals to the Fey Court to alleviate the conditions of non-fey. They also provide healthcare and refuge for non-fey in the capital. While the organization is an

uncomfortable reality for the queen and the court, they have not yet acted against them to maintain an illusion of free-will and openness.

The Purple Glove

The agents of the Purple Glove have a strong presence in Dracotia and Faris City. This is an occult organization with loose leadership and unknown members. It is public belief that a group of fey extremists wishes to purge those cities from the presence of non-fey. They act in the darkness, select a non-fey victim, and kill them. They always leave a purple glove in the murder scene as a form of signature.

IMPORTANT SETTLEMENTS

Ardennia

The heart of the kingdom and the home of Queen Ai'Haranna. The old castle was brought down and rebuilt. The Palace of Petals is an impregnable fortress of pink-tinted bricks with tall spires and towers. The fey presence is strongest here.

Faris City

Faris City is the densest settlement in the western side of the kingdom. It is fueled by scores of profitable mines in the western mountains. Lord Tu-manni, a satyr, is the ruler of this city. He despises non-fey and makes sure most of them work in the mines for miserable wages. Faris City celebrates the summer solstice with a grand festival where everyone wears fey masks and becomes equal for a night.

Trudenport

The city of Trudenport is in charge of most commerce with the outside world. The fortified piers are a sight to see. A water fortress with a strong military presence that controls everything and everyone that comes in and out of the city.

Dracotia

This is the oldest city in the kingdom. Its story goes back almost eight hundred years. It has formed part of three different regimes during this time. Dracotia owes its name to a widespread religion that worships dragons. An ancient silver dragon has its lair to the southwest of Dracotia on a mountaintop; it is the subject of many a superstition, theory, and cult.



The dragon often flies over the city but has ignored them for centuries. The city features magnificent statues of draconic features. The dragon palace is home to Lord Ha'lllarin, a pixie.

Purple Citadel

This fortified village and castle are near the southwest pass of the kingdom. The walls still show the marks and scars of ancient battles, some won and some lost. The central tower bastion is said to have never been taken by force, even after the village was stormed by invaders.

Arden Mines

This is the only settlement where dwarves still live in Ardennia, it is also the only one where no fey creatures live, not even the ruler. It is so close to the border that the Fey Court disregards it most of the time. They still collect tithes from the small mining settlement. As long as tithes keep on com-

ing, the court will not interfere with their affairs. Arden Mines is a small underground settlement. There are rumors about some tunnels that go from here all the way to the capital.

Jaytown

A small fishing village mostly inhabited by humans and halflings. The ruler is an eladrin lady named Gajaria. A strange snake-like statue rises in the middle of the village, proof of an ancient civilization very different from the one today.

Verdi Castle

This castle and the adjoining hamlet are the first line of defense in the southeast pass. It withstood for years all kinds of attacks in the old wars. It has remained peaceful for more than a hundred years but it still keeps an active garrison.

Resdstream Town

This town owes its name to a strange event that happens once a year in autumn. Large groups of scarlet butterflies migrate to the region once a year to die after a new generation is born. Their red blood is a strong pigment that colors the soil and the water of the river. The river turns red for a day while the town celebrates the coming of the new year. Many people collect the dead insects and process their colorful blood to create strong pigments which they sell to other settlements and merchants.

OTHER LOCATIONS

Shrine of the Sun and Moon

Old ruins of a civilization older than time. Some pilgrims come from far away places to this shrine to get the blessing of the goddess of the sun and the moon. This obscure deity is said to be the object of worship of current religions under a different name, but no one knows for sure. Legends say that the shrine used to create a strong ray of light with magical qualities but it does not work anymore. Some rumors claim that there is an underground unexplored section in the dungeon.

Verdant Portal

In the middle of the forest lies a strange formation of rocks. Some people think that the rocks and pillars are aligned with the constellations of the night sky, calling it a sort of observatory. In reality, this is the place where the fey armies came forth from the Feywild to aid the kingdom of Ardennia two hundred years ago. Strange magic auras still haunt the place and people avoid it.

Chromatic Shrine

A strange stone door marks the place in the middle of the northeast forest. The runes on the door have no translation to any language of current use. They talk about untranslatable concepts of a world where colors are separated from reality and can be manipulated and moved at will. A strange warning in the stone door mentions a menace which could erase all color from the world, drowning it in grey hell.

Eye of the West

A strange spire on top of the mountains is visible from Ardennia on a clear day. The trip is dangerous because the mountain is cold and treacherous. The

Eye of the West is an ancient observatory which is said to be able to see into any location within the multiverse. Rumor has it that the powers of the Eye of the West are not free to use. The observatory's guardian tests the worth of anyone who visits the place. Those found unworthy find a cold death as they fall from the summit.

Frozen Lighthouse

On a clear day, the strange anachronous lighthouse is visible south of Trudenport. It is set on a small island. The lighthouse is inaccessible. A bubble-shaped force field of 1 mile surrounds the location. The field is not visible but it can be felt. As one approaches the lighthouse, an unseen force starts to push back. It gets stronger as you get close until it becomes an immovable wall of energy. The farthest someone has gotten is within half a mile from the lighthouse. Scholars have also noted something strange about the place. It appears that time has stopped within the bubble. From within the part of the field that people can still traverse, it appears like vegetation is in a standstill. It never grows or moves. Some birds are visible in close to the lighthouse frozen in place. Most mysterious of all, the silhouettes of two cloaked people running towards the lighthouse have been frozen in place for centuries. No one has any explanation for this. Nor even the powerful fey in the court are able to get close enough either.

Grey Forest

The Grey Forest is as old as the world itself. The trees are the tallest in the region. The grey trunks and foliage give the place a dead nature but the forest is very much alive. There is evidence that the forest moves, but it is so slow that men die before the forest moves a step. The forest appears to have moved a few miles from the north over a large period of time. It is now in the process of merging with natural green forest. The process is so slow that no scholar can foresee how it will turn out.

Capital Outposts

Two outposts protect the capital: Ai'renu in the east, and Ai'Tiranu in the west. Both of them are exact replicas of walled forts with a central courtyard. Each of them has a garrison of twenty-five trained soldiers.

Southreach Lighthouse

This is the only working lighthouse in the region. An old fomorian was assigned to it twenty years

ago. It is the only living creature in the area. Some people say that the fomorian is an accomplished spellcaster.

Haint Fishery

The Haint Fishery is a series of buildings and devices that manage nets in the river delta. There are also vats and processing centers where they extract fish oil, ferment some strange spirits, and salt the fish for transportation. The fishery is strange in that it still belongs to a halfling family and not a fey creature.

Fa'thang Ruins

In the depths of the forest northwest of Ardennia, the capital, a very old place awaits. In between the greenery and tree roots, an explorer can see the remains of a city. Whatever remains is made of stone. Vague forms of buildings and towers, all of them drowned in the soil of the forest. Scholars have dug out skeletons of the strange people who lived there. They were hybrids of humans and snakes of different forms. They are known as yuan-ti but none of them live there anymore. Whatever happened to them is a secret long forgotten.

Innad Castle Ruins

Innad Castle was stormed by invading forces two hundred years ago before the fey armies arrived through the Verdant Portal. The castle is in ruins and no one intends to rebuild it. It is shunned by most travelers. For the past few years, a sentient giant spider has made it its home. The place is now infested with oversized spiders.

The Dam

A few miles south of Redstream Town, the river flow is obstructed in a large stone dam. It was built fifty years ago and its purpose is to provide water for the many plantations in the area that span for miles. The dam is emptied once a year in a slow process to restore the natural flow of the stream. If the process was done too fast it would cause floods downstream.

Thornheads Hideout

The Thornheads have a strong presence in the capital and in Faris City, but their main hideout and cache are hidden in the forest near the old battlegrounds. It is an underground complex hidden under a ruined tower. The entrance is covered by a large slab of stone. It is charmed with a strong

spell. The spell compels any creature that approaches the area to leave after they feel they should be somewhere else. Only by saying the command word "Uruntha" is the magic dispelled for a minute, allowing the person to access the entrance.

Great Omenu Statue

King Omenu was the great-grandfather of the last human king. A large statue was built in his image. The ancient effigy is not in good shape, the head and a section of the torso with an arm fell to the forest floor long ago. The place was a park back then and a few people lived there in a hamlet too. Nothing of that remains. Digging around in the Petal Library in Ardennia unearths an old map of the location that shows an underground section beneath the statue. The entrance is buried under the enormous head of Omanu.

ARDENNIA

Go back to your slums, you human trash. Your kind is not welcome here...

About this Resource

This resource features the general description of Ardenia, the fey-ruled capital of the kingdom of the same name. It includes adventure ideas that are appropriate for low to mid-level (Levels 1 to 10) adventuring parties. Challenge Rating (CR) is calculated using a party of four as the model.

The DM is free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first the DM should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew world lore.

BACKGROUND LORE



Ardenia is a bustling metropolis in an unlikely location. It lies in the middle of the Whispering Forest, completely surrounded by forest. The Arden River goes through it and parts the city in half. The city is not as inaccessible as it may appear. Four well-kept roads traverse the forest to connect other settlements in the kingdom with Ardenia. These roads are safe for travelers and merchants alike. Things were not so in the past. Two centuries ago the city and the kingdom were very different places. The Whispering Forest did not exist. It was planted by the growing fey faction after the last human king died. As some human settlements prepared to resist a siege, a several kilometer radius surrounding the city had been cleared of obstacles. They did this to secure exit routes and to have the advantage over an approaching enemy.

The fey do things differently. The forest surrounding the capital is a wall in itself. No heavy siege equipment or cavalry can move through the forest, it is dense enough to prevent it, except on the main roads which are well surveyed. Large

Centaur Guard

armies are forced to squeeze through the main road or go through the difficult terrain of the forest. Worst of all is the fact that most soldiers in the fey armies are at home in the forest environment and can ambush their enemies from above or below. This is truly what earned the kingdom the surname "Bastion of the West". Over the last 200 years, there have been three invasion attempts. All of them a complete disaster for the attacking faction. Ardenia is now relaxed in its defensive position.

Another thing that changed after the last human king died is the royal castle. The castle is located on the top of Arden Hill. A single road connects the castle with the city proper. No human remembers what it used to be like before; all records and drawings of it were destroyed by Queen Ai'Haranna's command. Perhaps its architecture is similar to that of the Lord's Hall in Trudenport. The new castle was built over a period of ten years. The queen named it the Palace of Petals after the flowery shape of the main tower and the adjoining rooms. They kept the inner walls that surround the palace itself. The palace is a magical place of portentous magnificence. Lustrous marble floors, decorated walls with bas-reliefs and gold inlays, frescoes painted on all ceilings depicting marvelous landscapes of the Feywild, obsidian and emerald statues of unknown entities from the Feywild Courts. The central tower shoots above everything else like a needle trying to reach the clouds. The central spire holds the queen's chambers, her arcane laboratory, and other facilities exclusive to her.

Known only to the queen and her most trusted advisors. The Palace of Petals was fitted with an artifact of incredible power. It is a lapis-lazuli orb attuned to the Feywild. The artifact is hidden inside an adamantine safe in the queen's arcane lab. Upon activation, the orb creates a rip in the fabric of space strong enough to pull anything surrounding it into the Feywild. Its power is such that it is believed

General Features

These are the general features of Ardennia, the capital. It is surrounded by the Whispering Woods a the Arden River goes through the middle of the city. Four different roads connect the capital with other settlements.

Terrain. The forest that surrounds the capital is dense enough to prevent any kind of siege weaponry or cavalry to move through, except on the main roads.

Gates. The four gates to the outside world open at dawn and close at sunset. No creature is allowed in or out during the evening and night. A toll of 1 silver piece is charged to any foreign visitors on first entrance.

Light. Lighting conditions are dependent on the time of day and weather. The roads are in the shade during most of the day, though.

Smells and Sounds. The verdant smell of greenery, pines, and rushing water is ever present. These natural smells merge with the more mundane smells or city detritus and people.

that it can take the whole palace and inner walls back to the Feywild, but it has never been used. This is an escape measure of last resort.

LIFE IN ARDENNIA

Life in the capital is dependent on race and ancestry. The political divide in Ardennia is the strongest in all the kingdom. Fey ancestry or origin is the only thing that separates the haves from the have-nots. Elves are on the privileged side of things, but that's the very minimum of fey ancestry one needs to be respected. Half-elves get no recognition whatsoever, sometimes they are treated worse than base humans.

The fey oligarchy of the kingdom and capital is strongest here. 50% of the city's population is of fey ancestry. The remaining citizens are mostly human and form the lowest link of the chain. Most non-fey live in the outside small settlements of Ardennia or within in one of the many sums. By royal decree, non-fey cannot own property within the walls of Ardennia, nor can they represent the people in the Fey Court. The better off portion of the non-fey population are the ones who serve in the homes of

powerful fey. They receive fair wages and have most of the city open to them, the most fortunate ones serve a fair lord who finds no joy in mistreating non-fey, like members and supporters of the Yellow Leaf Council. The council has tried to improve the lives of non-fey over the years with little to no success.

Peacekeeping

Ardennia's Watch is the main peacekeeping force in the capital. Most of its officers are elves and satyrs. Contrary to common belief, the watch does not focus its attention on non-fey. They are considered a waste of the watch's resources. Some fey are savage and cunning and those are the ones the watch is looking for most of the time. This results in no laws or punishment for criminal in non-fey slums.

High profile situations are always the priority for the Order of the Petal. This organization of elite soldiers and magic-users reports directly to Queen Ai'Haranna. They antagonize the efforts of the Thornheads in their quest of returning the kingdom to a human government.

Location Descriptions

1. Silent Gate – The road out of the Silent Gate leads to Trudenport. It is less than a day's travel there. Many non-fey live in the small settlement outside of the gate.

2. North Gate – This road leads to the Ai'renu Outpost and later Herbalia.

3. Western Door – This road leads directly to Fa'thang Ruins where the road goes south and connects to Ai'Tiranu Outpost and Forest Ridge. The road is dangerous in proximity to the old ruins. An extension of the slums follows the road outside of the gate; only non-fey live here.

4. South Gate – This road exists the forest in less than two hours and continues southwest towards Jaytown.

5. Main Stables – Public stables for travelers and merchants. The fee is one copper coin per night and includes food for the mount and a daily brushing session.

6. Lord Fatiner's State – Lord Fatiner is a wealthy pixie fey lord who supports the movement of the Yellow Leaf Council. Lord Fatiner often hires adventurers of all kinds for diverse objectives. There are rumors that he secretly funds the Thornheads.



7. Fax' Exotic Substances – A smiling satyr sells all kinds of potions, substances, and ingredients from behind the counter. If he does not have it, he knows where to get it.

8. Great House of Prayer – After the death of the last human king, all churches were removed and replaced by the House of Prayer. The only idol inside the church is a strange statue that is supposed to represent the wildness of all fey creatures.

9. Black Lotus Guild – The only objective of the Black Lotus guild is to fund expeditions to strange and/or unexplored places in Ardennia. It holds monthly expeditions to Fa'thang Ruins. There are also plans to visit some of the other arcane locations in the realm.

10. The Slums – Most non-fey live in the slums north of the city and the ones next to the Western Door. Life is rough in here as there is no peace-

keeping force. Some people do their best to try to lead an honest life. Others wait only for an opportunity to profit from other people's problems.

11. Cott's Fishery – Old Cott is a cunning fomorian who runs a fishery right next to the docks. He offers fair pay for honest work. He likes to hire non-fey only to mistreat them.

12. Pink Pint Inn – This inn features all kinds of amenities but it is exclusive to fey-ancestry patrons. Humans and other non-fey will not make it long after the front door. Two centaur guards keep watch by the entrance. The music and theater spectacles in the inn's main room are famous city-wide.

13. Griffin Barter Shop – Mr. Griffin will buy or exchange pretty much anything from you. He also sells all kinds of stuff. He is famous in the city and even neighboring settlements, the amount of stuff that goes in and out of his establishment would

daze the most cunning accountant.

14. Order of the Petal – A small walled manor serves as headquarters for the Order of the Petal. The leader of the order is a centaur knight named Ardeus. He answers directly to the queen.

15. Flower Market – A small market that opens only during the night. The sellers only deal in light-producing kinds of flowers. Elven bards and minstrels are often around to sing songs from the old realms while the flowers shine in the night.

16. Larissa's Smith shop – Larissa is a female satyr who owns the largest smith shop in Ardennia. Eight apprentices work non-stop in her shop every day. She provides elite weaponry to the Order of the Petal and the Watch. Her work is the best in the kingdom. However, ordering a piece of armor or weaponry from her means waiting months before she is able to begin.

17. Perfume Shop – Mrs. Adulant is a distinguished elf who offers the best perfumes in town. Some of her best essences are good enough to fool savage creatures into fleeing or coming closer. These exquisite perfumes are the result of not only her expertise in perfumery but also potent charms. She sells a famous "Love Perfume" that goes in and out of fashion several times per decade.

18. Fishy Inn – The Fishy Inn is outside of town in the small community outside of the Silent Gate. Contrary to other lodging establishments within the city, the Fishy Inn will take anyone's money.

19. Fey Court Building – The Fey Court holds meetings in this building every week. The building is guarded by 20 elements of the Order of the Petal when the court is in session.

20. Palace of Petals – The Palace of Petals is the home of Queen Ai'Haranna. It is considered to be the most impregnable structure in the whole kingdom.

SHRINE OF THE SUN AND MOON

Hundreds of pilgrims visit the shrine every year. I wonder what the fuss is all about.

- Dracotian Citizen

About this Resource

This resource features the general description of an ancient shrine with no known purpose. It includes adventure ideas that are appropriate for mid-level (Levels 1 to 5) adventuring parties. Challenge Rating (CR) is calculated using a party of four as the model.

The DM is free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first the DM should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew world lore. To modify the challenge rating of the adventure, the DM must first consider the power level of the party. Considering the PCs' individual levels and the number of players is crucial to presenting a good challenge. Not all parties are the same, different playing styles and command of the system in the party can increase or decrease their effectiveness in encounters. The DM may adjust the encounters slightly by adding or subtracting monsters. Alternatively, controlling monsters with more intelligence and strategy is often the easiest way to raise the difficulty of an encounter. When monsters are referenced, the creature's name is noted in bold. Only creatures from the Monster Manual are cited.

BACKGROUND LORE



The Shrine of the Sun and the Moon is a known structure in Ardennia. The shrine consists of at all bas-relief floor sculpture on top of a platform which features the sun and the moon fused together into the same entity. The shrine is located inside what appears to be a natural cave close to the northwest border of the kingdom. It is located inside the forest but the way is well marked by the pilgrimages that visit the shrine

from far away several times a year. The hollow hill that houses the cave and shrine features an aperture on its summit. This circular shaft crosses the hill and reaches the cave chamber where the shrine is. Sunlight comes down the shaft at uneven angles throughout the year but it aligns perfectly with the shaft once a year during the summer solstice.

Little is known of the actual purpose of the shrine, or what deities or entities it is supposed to be dedicated to. Erosion and the passage of time have erased away most of what was carved on the platform and shrine itself, but a few passages can still be read. Etched on the ancient stones, the beautiful markings of the elvish alphabet adorn the shrine. Elf scholars have determined that the shrine is at least twenty thousand years old. They know this from the old form of the elvish language on the stones. Very few elves can make sense of the arcane writings these days. The most accurate translations refer to the shrine as a place of healing and growth. A place where the sacred light of the sun can cleanse your very soul and imbue its energy with a sacred bath. It mentions that creatures that emerge from such ritual are not the same as when they entered. It talks about a growth which is not visible because its very nature lies in the souls of those who accept the gift.

Despite these discoveries, not much else is known about the shrine or how it was used. The only thing out of the ordinary is what happens during the summer solstice. Light comes down in a straight line from the sun shaft above and hits the sun and moon effigies on the stone straight on. It is then that the eyes of the sun and moon glow with a reddish hue as if they were reflecting the light back up. But that is the extent of the event.

General Features

These are the general features of the Shrine of the Sun and the Moon. It is located in the northwest border of the Ardennian Kingdom. It is half a day north of Arden Mines and five days from the capital.

Terrain. The known section of the shrine is inside what appears to be a natural cave. The floor is rough and unworked but uncannily even. The squares with rocks and debris on the floor are considered difficult terrain for the purposes of tactical movement.

Secret Doors. A secret passage hides the only way to access the underground part of the shrine. Each end of the passage features a secret door. A successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to open the door.

Light. The sun shaft on the ceiling of the cave lets some light in during the day. The area is considered to be in dim-light. The underground section is in complete darkness except on the summer solstice when light reaches the mirrors.

Smells and Sounds. The ground level smells of damp soil and old vegetation. The dungeon has a sterile smell to it.

The pilgrimages

Not knowing the original purpose of the Shrine of the Sun and the Moon does not mean the location is not celebrated. People from Ardennia and other realms know the shrine well and have given a new meaning to it. People believe that the shrine is a focal point of energy for both celestial bodies. A place where there is a gathering of strength, power, dedication, and other qualities people have assigned to the sun and moon. People come from far away in pilgrimages that come several times a year. When people reach the shrine, they climb the platform and look up through the shaft, to the sky, with their arms wide open. They believe that doing so helps you absorb the energy from the sun and moon. The largest pilgrimage group comes for the summer solstice when sunlight reaches them directly.

The constant arrival of travelers to the area has also caused some troubles. Lately, a group of savage gnolls visits the place often. They rob, scare off,

and sometimes kill travelers to take their belongings. These gnolls have no interest in the shrine, nor do they hold any significance for it. They are only here to profit from other people's unpreparedness.

The Real Purpose

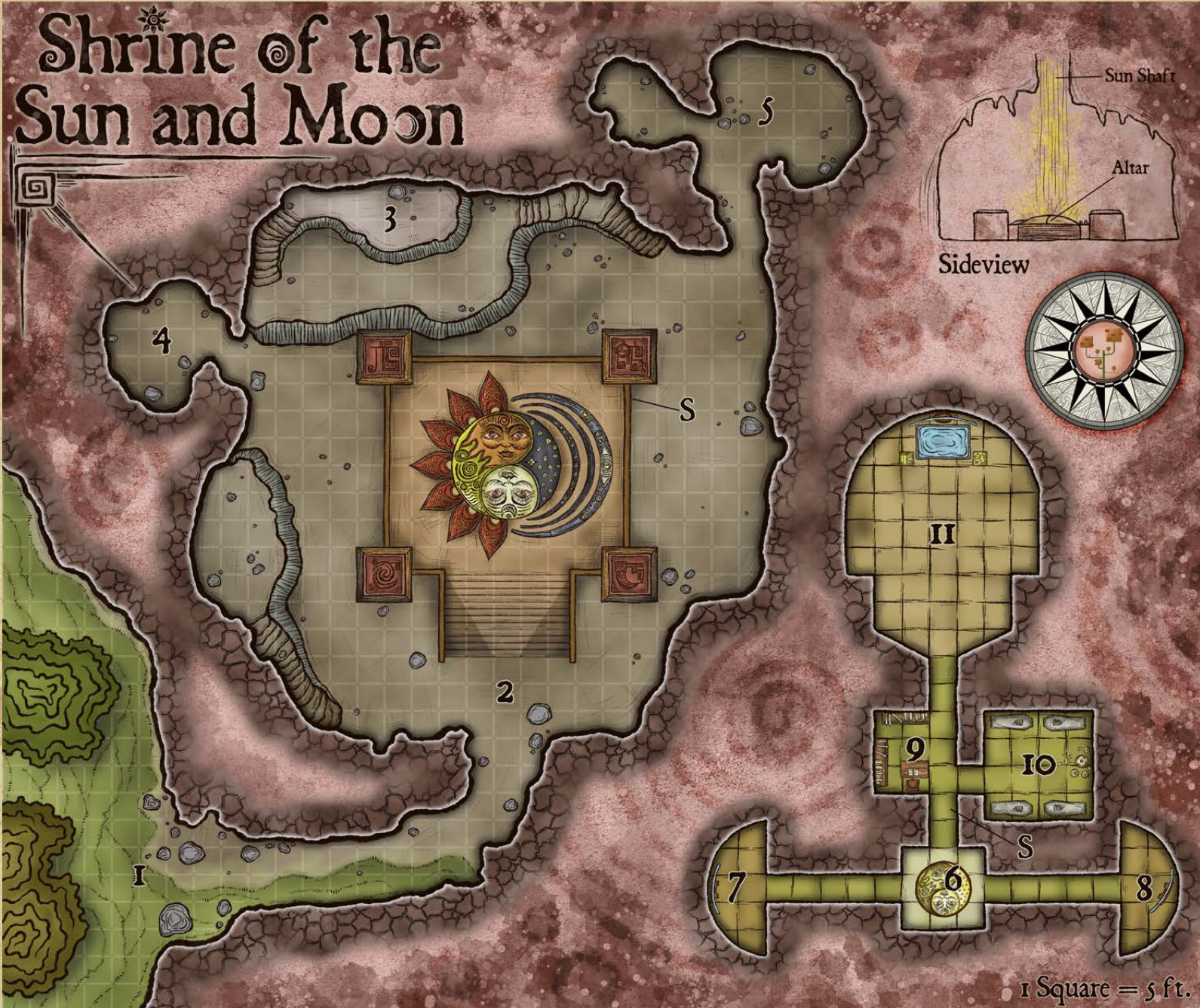
Thousands of years ago, elves from a warring culture which revered strength and combat prowess above all built the shrine. Once a year, when the light of the sun hit the effigy, the light would come down through the eyes into a delicate and complicated arrangement of mirrors and focusing crystals. The focused rays of light would then reach a smaller version of the sun and moon effigy in the lower level of the shrine. The light would then be redirected to three different directions, to curved mirrors in separate chambers. The mirrors refracted that light into many colors and hues which would move to other mirrors and magical runes on the walls of the chambers. When this happened, the sunlight would finally be refracted and concentrated into a new color the eyes had never seen. This ray of light hit the surface of a waist-high pond in the largest chamber of the underground level. The water acquired magical qualities which would be passed onto anyone who bathed on the pond. Only the strongest elf warrior received the honor of bathing in the pond. The ceremony was held by a war priest who sang a six-hour-long lament about the old gods and their untimely deaths. After this, the warrior emerged from the water stronger and more resilient than before. The shrine has not been operational for thousands of years because the mirror in **Area 8** is not aligned.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Cave Entrance

The area immediately outside of the Shrine of the Sun and the Moon is a low-density forest. It is even possible to reach the mouth of the cave on horseback or a horse-drawn cart. This forest is mostly ignored by the forest-dwelling factions of the capital due to it being so far from the capital. The cave is currently the home of a group of gnolls. A **passive Perception score of 15 or higher** or a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals several sets of footprints of large canine or feline creatures. (gnolls have hyena feet)

Shrine of the Sun and Moon



2. Main Chamber

The platform is 10-feet-tall but the stairs on the south side make the climb an easy thing. The sun and moon stone-effigy is 2-feet tall at its highest point. If characters do not already know the significance of the few elven markings that are visible on the platform, a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check** reveals the information about the original builders and the clue for the shrine's purpose. PCs would also know that the shrine has no practical purpose throughout the year except for the summer solstice.

A **passive Perception score of 16 or higher** or a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the presence of a locked secret passage on the eastern side of the platform. A successful **DC**

16 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check allows a character to open the door and reach the underground level.

3. Raised Ledges

A pair of **gnoll** scouts is hiding on the uppermost ledge. They are immediately aware of any creatures that enter the cave. They choose the best moment to ambush any visitors from their hiding place with their longbows. After they reveal their presence, one of them blows a horn to alert their allies in **Area 5**.

4. West Side Cave

The cave is empty but for some markings on the northern wall. They appear to be the work of early human civilizations. The use of magic to translate and a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (History)**

check reveals the meaning of some of the writing. The early human settlers knew the purpose of the shrine but envied the elves who used it. After a war, a group of human warlords went to the underground level and moved a mirror to throw the whole apparatus out of shape.

5. North Side Cave

Farsu (**gnoll pack lord**) is the leader of the gnoll brigands. He is camping in the cave with 4 **gnolls**. He attacks any visitors on sight or after he hears the horn of the scouts in **Area 3**. He values his own life more than any treasures he may come across so he attempts to flee if things go bad for him and his gnolls.

6. Effigy Replica

The smaller replica of the effigy above is made of reflective material. Its surface is jagged and uneven as all areas are supposed to reflect the light coming from above to different places. Covering, damaging, or reshaping any part of the replica would make the shrine useless. The effigy replica has a high sale value if a right buyer is found. It is fixed to the floor and very difficult to remove without damaging it. A successful **DC 22 Dexterity (Thieves Tools and Masonry Tools) check** allows a group of six people to safely remove the replica for transportation. Failure causes a chain effect of fissures that breaks the whole thing into many pieces, rendering it valueless.

7. West Mirror

The westernmost chamber of the underground level of the shrine features an 8-foot-wide curved mirror by the west wall. It is meant to refract light into many smaller rays that hit magical runes on the walls.

8. East Mirror

This chamber is a mirror image of **Area 7** except for one thing. The mirror is not in its original position. It was moved by saboteurs a long time ago. So long as the mirror is not returned to its original position, the shrine will not work as intended. Positioning the mirror as intended requires an uncanny level of precision. A successful **DC 18 Dexterity check** allows a character to properly align the mirror.

9. Forgotten Library

A small library was left behind by the old elven civilization. All texts are in an old form of elvish which is not readable by today's elves. An expert elf scholar can translate any texts found here. Otherwise, a spell such as *comprehend languages* reveals that most reference material is about the purpose of the shrine, past people who received the shrine's gift and their deeds, and a few poem books. Any or all of the texts found in the library can be sold to the right collector in a big city.

10. Resting Place

The unresting spirits of the four original elf builders (**ghosts, shadows, or wraiths**) still remain in their sarcophagi in this chamber. Their purpose is not to guard the place but their spirits returned from the afterlife unable to find peace so long as the shrine is not returned to functioning status. The four of them are currently unable to behave rationally due to being consumed by anger and desires of revenge. They emerge from their burial boxes and attack any creature that accesses the underground level of the crypt. After being destroyed, they reform in 1d10 minutes and approach the visitors once again, now reasonable and in control of their actions. They explain their conundrum and ask the visitors to rearrange the mirror in **Area 8**.

11. Pond of the Sun and Moon

A stone pond filled with crystalline liquid dominates this large chamber. Two small pedestals with strange runes flank the pond. Other than that, the only other thing in the chamber are the scores of runes on the walls and ceiling.

During the summer solstice, if the mirror of **Area 8** is back to its intended position, all runes in the chamber shine and shoot a ray of light to the pond. The rays of light make the water shine like liquid gold. One creature per year may enter the pond nude and stay there for five minutes to absorb the energy of the sun. It is not within the scope of this module to specify the particular benefit of receiving this gift but a *blessing* from a god is recommended. The rules for supernatural gifts such as this one are in the **DMG p. 227**.

CHROMATIC SHRINE

About this Resource

This resource features the general description of a local place of worship which hides a dangerous dungeon. It includes adventure ideas that are appropriate for mid-level (Levels 6 to 10) adventuring parties. Challenge Rating (CR) is calculated using a party of four as the model.

The DM is free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first the DM should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew world lore. To modify the challenge rating of the adventure, the DM must first consider the power level of the party. Considering the PCs' individual levels and the number of players is crucial to presenting a good challenge. Not all parties are the same, different playing styles and command of the system in the party can increase or decrease their effectiveness in encounters. The DM may adjust the encounters slightly by adding or subtracting monsters. Alternatively, controlling monsters with more intelligence and strategy is often the easiest way to raise the difficulty of an encounter. When monsters are referenced, the creature's name is noted in bold. Only creatures from the Monster Manual are cited.

Background Lore



The Chromatic Shrine is a fabled location within the Ardennian Kingdom. Not many know of its existence because it appears to have no origin or purpose. It is located next to the northeastern border of the kingdom, about three hours north of Dracotia. The shrine consists of a large door on the face of a large rock outcropping and a fountain (not in the illustration).

The fountain features the statue of an androgynous person holding a jar and pouring water on a shallow stone basin. The water pours steadily and it never stops. Despite the limited size of the jar, a magical aura keeps the water coming out. The basin constantly overflows and drips into the immediate forest floor around it. Under sunlight, however, the water reveals a strange quality. It shines in several different colors, five to be exact. The visual effect is similar to that of combustible oil mixed

with water but restricted to five colors only. Despite this phenomenon, the water has no chemical traits, nor is it toxic if drank.

A large dark-blue stone door towers behind the statue. It is made of an alloy of adamantine and some other unidentifiable metal. The eroded remains of ancient runes decorate the door and give it a bas-relief appearance. Just like the fountain water, the door shines with many colors under sunlight. The visual effect makes it seem as if the door were laced with glitter. No one has ever managed to open this door in recorded history, nor does anyone care.

Key and Entrance

The only way to open the door to the Chromatic Shrine is to place the flower-key on the basin when sunlight touches the water. The colors on the water intensify and the great adamantine door slides sideways. The flower-key appears to be a brooch in the shape of a five-petal flower. Each petal is of a different color: red, orange, yellow, green, and blue respectively. Careful examination of the key reveals that the flower vibrates faintly if it is pointed in the direction of the Chromatic Shrine. This happens regardless of the distance to it and will lead any person curious enough to follow the path.

An appropriate place for the party to find such a key is as part of the treasure in a different dungeon or place unlikely to have been visited before. It could also be a piece of jewelry of an unknowing lady or member of the nobility, perhaps they never noticed the vibration or gave it no importance.

THE CHROMATIC SHRINE

The builders of the Chromatic Shrine left this world eons ago. The original purpose of the shrine was to imbue the essence of the weave of magic onto physical objects. This process transformed a mundane object into a magical object capable of manipulating a certain aspect of the weave. It is known that most magical items were created a long time ago. Whether the secret to creating these objects was lost to time or simply not possible to today's mages is anyone's guess. This is what makes the Chromatic Shrine such an important location. It is a kind of factory of magical devices.

General Features

These are the general features of the Chromatic Shrine. It is located in a forest near the northeastern border of the Ardennian Kingdom. The known area is an outdoors fountain of an androgynous person pouring water on a basin. The water features five colors under sunlight.

Terrain. The floor in the Chromatic Shrine is made of granite floor tiles. Most of them are in good condition and, thus, pose no obstacle for movement.

Doors. The dungeon's main door can only be opened by placing the chromatic key in the basin outside (not in the illustration). Other doors within the complex are all stone reinforced doors. They slide sideways automatically if a creature moves within 5 feet from them.

Light. Some locations feature magical braziers or magical candle holders. They are perpetually on. A dispel magic or similar spell can turn any of these lights off for an hour. Other areas are in complete darkness. None of these devices produce any heat or sound.

Smells and Sounds. The Chromatic Shrine has been enclosed for a long time. A sterile, dusty smell pervades the location. No sound is heard except the echoes of any sounds the visitors produce.

In order to use the shrine as intended, a visitor must first access the central hub where the chromatic forge is. Any spellcaster can power the forge by focusing his or her own magical power on the forge. This is equivalent to spending a level 3 spell slot. Five locations within the underground complex feature a magical/mechanical device that produces a special kind of paint or tincture. A visitor must visit each of these chambers and take a sample of the tincture back to the central hub. The object to be enchanted must be drenched with the five different colored tinctures and placed on top of the arcane forge. Only the builders of the shrine could manipulate the delicate and precise process of enchantment to their own needs. A visitor has no agency in what kind of enchantment is placed on the object, however.

Area Descriptions

1. Entrance Hallway. A forty-foot-long hallway that marks the entrance to the central hub. A **passive Perception score of 16 or higher** or a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the presence of a secret door and the trigger brick to open it. It leads to **Area 3**.

2. Central Hub. The arcane forge dominates the chamber. It is immobile when found but a spellcaster can spend a level 3 spell slot to power it. Once it is activated, the color triangles move around in circles slowly. An object drenched with the five tinctures and place on top of the forge is imbued with magic over a period of two hours. Once the forge is used, further usages require a higher spell slot to function. Each subsequent use adds one to the required spell slot (4, then 5, and so on). Otherwise, the forge functions once more with a level 3 spell if it is left alone for a week.

3. Secret Room #1. A single wooden chest is the only thing in the room. The chest is made from an unknown type of wood which no character recognizes. It appears to be resilient enough to stand the passage of time better than other known woods. The chest contains crumbled unreadable books and one-hundred old gold coins of an ancient civilization. The coins are square and have a goat-shaped sigil engraved on one side.

4. Blue Tincture Chamber. The blue tincture basin is in this chamber. It is not alone, however. 2 **stone elementals** emerge from the walls and tower over the basin. They attack anyone willing to take the blue tincture. If the characters have a way of communicating with the golems, they explain that they were tricked into a perpetual deal. They must remain in the chamber indefinitely and protect the tincture from visitors unless they pay 2 rubies each. Since they cannot leave the chamber they can never fulfill the payment. If the party are willing to supply the rubies, the golems thank them and leave the shrine never to return.

A successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the presence of a secret door and the trigger brick to open it. It leads to **Area 5**.

5. Secret Room #2. A single wooden chest is the only thing in the room. It is similar in material and contents to the one in **Area 3**. A short bookcase holds a few books still in good conditions, despite the passage of time. One of them features several illustrations of the shrine builders. They were

humanoid but taller than average humans. Their features are androgynous, similar to the statue outside of the shrine.

6. Guardians from Beyond. The **ghosts** of six ancient guardians emerge from their sarcophagi and stand tall. They inquire about the PCs reasons for using the forge. If their intentions are found to be noble and with the purpose of giving more life than taking it away, the ghosts stand aside and let them pass. Otherwise, they ask the PCs to leave. If a battle breaks out, the ghosts attack without mercy.

7. Red Tincture Chamber. The red tincture basin is at the bottom of this chamber.

8. Library. Only a bookcase remains of what once was a well-organized library. A detect magic spell

reveals that an abjuration aura protects the bookcase and its contents from the passage of time. A cursory look of the book reveals them to be history, fables, and myth books. Some of the titles and stories appear to point to the fact that the androgynous civilization that built the shrine parted a long time ago to live in a different plane of existence. The exact location is never mentioned, nor is the name of the civilization.

9. Red Sage. The immortal spirit of one of the creators of the shrine rests in this location. The sarcophagus is made of the same material as the main door to the dungeon and it cannot be opened. The voice from the sage can be heard in the minds of anyone within the room. It speaks in a strange language but anyone can understand him through the telepathy trick it uses to communicate. The sage

Chromatic Shrine



1 Square = 5 ft.

explains how the arcane forge works but warns any visitors that hard trials await to any that wishes to collect all tinctures. It also warns the party that people with bad intentions will surely find a prompt demise if the qualities of the shrine are misused.

10. Old City Councilors. The ghosts of the city councilors of an ancient city lie dormant here. They were supposed to be rational creatures like the ghosts in **Area 6** but the large wait has driven them mad. Now they are but shadows of their former selves. The 4 **wraiths** attack anyone who approaches their sarcophagi.

11. Orange Sage. The chamber was intended to hold an immortal representation of a member of the ancient civilization but something happened. The sarcophagus is broken. A tear reaches the central cavity where the bodily remains of someone rest. The spirit of the sage either vanished or escaped long ago.

12. Orange Tincture Chamber. An echo of the vital force of the missing sage in **Area 11** is here. It manifests in the material world as an **invisible stalker**. Once it chooses a target, it will not stop until the target dies. This creature follows its target to any other location within the shrine but it cannot leave the complex.

13. Green Sage. The immortal spirit of the sage in this chamber can still communicate but its thoughts are not translated properly. It is in a process of mental decay after such a long time. It is not possible to hold a coherent conversation with it, but it explains that there is a chance that items created with the forge are cursed if it is not handled correctly. The correct way of using it is not disclosed, however.

14. Green Tincture Chamber. The green tincture basin is in the chamber. Six decorated sarcophagi line the north and south walls. They open and six **skeletons** emerge from the stone boxes. The skeletons are not aggressive and talk courteously to any visitors. After such a long eternity of servitude, they would like to hear any news from the outside world, and if possible exchange a few riddles with the PCs. Like the elementals in **Area 4**, these creatures are not here willingly as they were also tricked into pledging their eternal life to guard the shrine. Their exit condition is to place 20 different kinds of flowers on the arcane forge. Since they cannot leave the shrine, doing this is not possible.

15. Secret Room #3. A single wooden chest is the only thing in the room. It is similar in material and contents to the one in **Area 3**. The chest also contains an old spellbook of what appeared to be an archmage.

16. Yellow Tincture Chamber. The yellow tincture basin is in the chamber. For some unapparent reason, this chamber is larger and better decorated than the other chambers with the tincture basins. Six sarcophagi line the walls opposite the entrance to the room. The boxes' lids stand aside and six **ghasts** in plate armor emerge. They carry long-swords and greatswords. They are talkative too. They explain that no mortal of the young races is allowed to use the forge and offer the chance to leave unharmed. Otherwise, they fight to the death. A successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the presence of three secret doors and the trigger bricks to open them. They lead to **Area 15**, **Area 17**, and **Area 18**.

17. Secret Room #4. A single wooden chest is the only thing in the room. It is similar in material and contents to the one in **Area 3**. There are 5 potions of healing and one +1 longsword are inside.

18 Secret Library. A large bookcase dominates the narrow chamber. A detect magic spell reveals that an abjuration aura protects the bookcase and its contents from the passage of time. The several volumes of this library describe the precise way to manipulate the arcane forge and its creations. Studying the material here requires translation magic and at least six months of study. After this period, the appropriate command words for the forge are revealed. There is one caveat, the forge controller must power the device with a grandiose amount of magical power. A level 9 spell slot must be spent each time the forge is used using this method.

THE EYE OF THE WEST

About this Resource

This resource features the general description of a planar observatory near an Ardennian mountaintop. It includes adventure ideas that are appropriate for mid-level (Levels 6 to 10) adventuring parties. Challenge Rating (CR) is calculated using a party of four as the model.

The DM is free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first the DM should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew world lore. To modify the challenge rating of the adventure, the DM must first consider the power level of the party. Considering the PCs' individual levels and the number of players is crucial to presenting a good challenge. Not all parties are the same, different playing styles and command of the system in the party can increase or decrease their effectiveness in encounters. The DM may adjust the encounters slightly by adding or subtracting monsters. Alternatively, controlling monsters with more intelligence and strategy is often the easiest way to raise the difficulty of an encounter. When monsters are referenced, the creature's name is noted in bold. Only creatures from the Monster Manual are cited.

Background Lore



There is a planar observatory in Ardennia. It is located in the mountain range in the middle of the kingdom's territory. It is close to the capital but due to the difficult journey up the mountain, it takes at least two days to reach the complex. Few travel there for good reasons. To begin, the place is so far up the mountain that the cold is unbearable to most travelers. And second, there are plenty of tales of a merciless guardian inside the observatory. Some tales end with the travelers being turned down who return home empty-handed, other tales end with the travelers being destroyed by the guardian.

All of those tales are true. There is a guardian, and it is a dragon. Some say it is made of stone, others say it has red scales. Others say both things! Regardless of the actual truth, no one travels there. However, a promise of power and knowledge re-

mains. All this because it is said that the observatory in the mountain is capable of seeing any location within this world and even other worlds beyond the stars.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Outer Mountain Path

A narrow goat trail is the only path to the Eye of the West. It starts at the base of the mountain range, a few hours north of Ardennia and leads all the way up to the observatory's doors. From the midpoint forward, any traveler suffers the effects of extreme cold climates. Traveling without protection for such weather means death for most people. The observatory doors are made of a strange adamantine alloy. They are heavy but unlocked.

2. Chamber of Trials

The chamber features six magical braziers and twelve pillars all around the room. If a character looks up, a portion of the internal clockwork machinery of the eye device is visible above. Scores of pipes and cables connect the eye to other machines and apparatus on the walls.

The Eye of the West is the home of Vaathrifax, a **young red dragon** who is the guardian of the observatory. Vaathrifax is actually dead. He offered the essence of his immortal spirit to the creators of the observatory eons ago. Vaathrifax now lives inside a life-like statue of himself in the eastern alcove of **Area 2**. When visitors arrive, Vaathrifax uses the magic in the statue to transform the rock to flesh and become a living form once more. He explains that the observatory can only be used by powerful beings and that anyone unable to beat him should return home empty-handed. When defeated, the dragon turns back to stone and breaks into hundreds of small pieces. The pieces reform after 1d6 hours and Vaathrifax's statue continues its vigilance. After a particular person or group defeats Vaathrifax, he does not confront them again.

3. Elevator

A wooden winch elevator connects the three levels. The means for activating and controlling the eleva-

General Features

These are the general features of the Eye of the West. It is a three-story complex near a mountain-top. It is located two days of travel away from the capital, Ardennia.

Weather. The observatory is so high that the immediate area around the place is in a state of permanent frost. Characters without clothes and equipment appropriate for cold weather suffer the consequences of extreme cold conditions.

Terrain. The interior of the Eye of the West is well kept by invisible servitors. The marble floor tiles are in good shape.

Doors. The outer doors are made of a rare adamantite alloy. Despite that, they are never locked. The slide inwards when enough pressure is used. The doors to the chambers in the second level are made of hardwood and feature no locking systems.

Light. There are magical braziers in most chambers. They produce bright light and never go out. A *dispel magic* or similar spell suppresses the light of a single source for 3 (1d6) hours.

Smells and Sounds. The eye-shaped device in the second level has thousands of cogs and other small mechanical parts inside. They produce a never-ending droning or humming noise that changes in pitch and volume continuously.

tor are in a metal panel in the platform. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the proper way to use the device.

4. The Eye Machine

The middle part of the second level is hollowed out to house the eye device. This is the actual observatory. The eye-shaped panel on its top projects tridimensional images that can be observed from **Area 9**. The device requires constant adjustment as the stars change positions and the planes to be observed move around the multiverse. A stone bridge crosses the hollow part of the second level and lets a tinkerer make adjustments directly to the eye device. If a character wishes to make an adjustment for a different plane, a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check** allows a character to make the appropriate changes.

5. Teleportation Circle

A circle of runes on the floor provides the means for teleporting directly to the Eye of the West. Any spellcasting character can copy the runes of the circle to a spellbook in one hour. Yugannate, the caretaker and only living creature in the observatory, meets any visitors here. He is an **arcanaloth**. He spends most of his time in the study room creating new adjustment variables for the eye device and observing faraway planes on **Area 9**. Yugannate can help the party use the observatory for their own means. He has a strange aloof personality but actually appreciates the company. If Yugannate catches any member of the party damaging any component of the observatory or if they attack him, he can conjure the power of the whole device and forcefully teleport any visitors to a faraway plane.

6. North Room

This room is furnished for visitors. No one is occupying it currently. The bookcase inside has poetry works from authors all over the multiverse. They are in many languages unknown to the party. The collection itself is valuable, the right buyer may up to 1500 gold pieces for it. Yugannate disapproves this action and teleports away the thief.

7. Storage Room

This room contains many discarded trinkets that did not fit anywhere else. The chest contains old clothes and a *wand of magic missile*. Hidden in the bookcase is a book that describes a few advanced functions of the eye device. A character that reads it and succeeds on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** knows how to use the eye device to create a forceful teleportation effect twice per day. This ability can only be used inside the observatory and can target any creature or group of them and send them to any plane the eye is currently tracking.

8. South Room

Yugannate sleeps in this room. It is not locked but he alerts any visitors that the room is off bounds. There are many magic scrolls in the room and Yugannate's spellbook which contains all archmage spells. If the arcanaloth discovers anyone inside his chamber he forcefully teleports them away.

9. Observatory Control Deck

Once the eye is adjusted in the second level to track a particular plane, the control panel in Area 9 can be used to move the observation device to any loca-

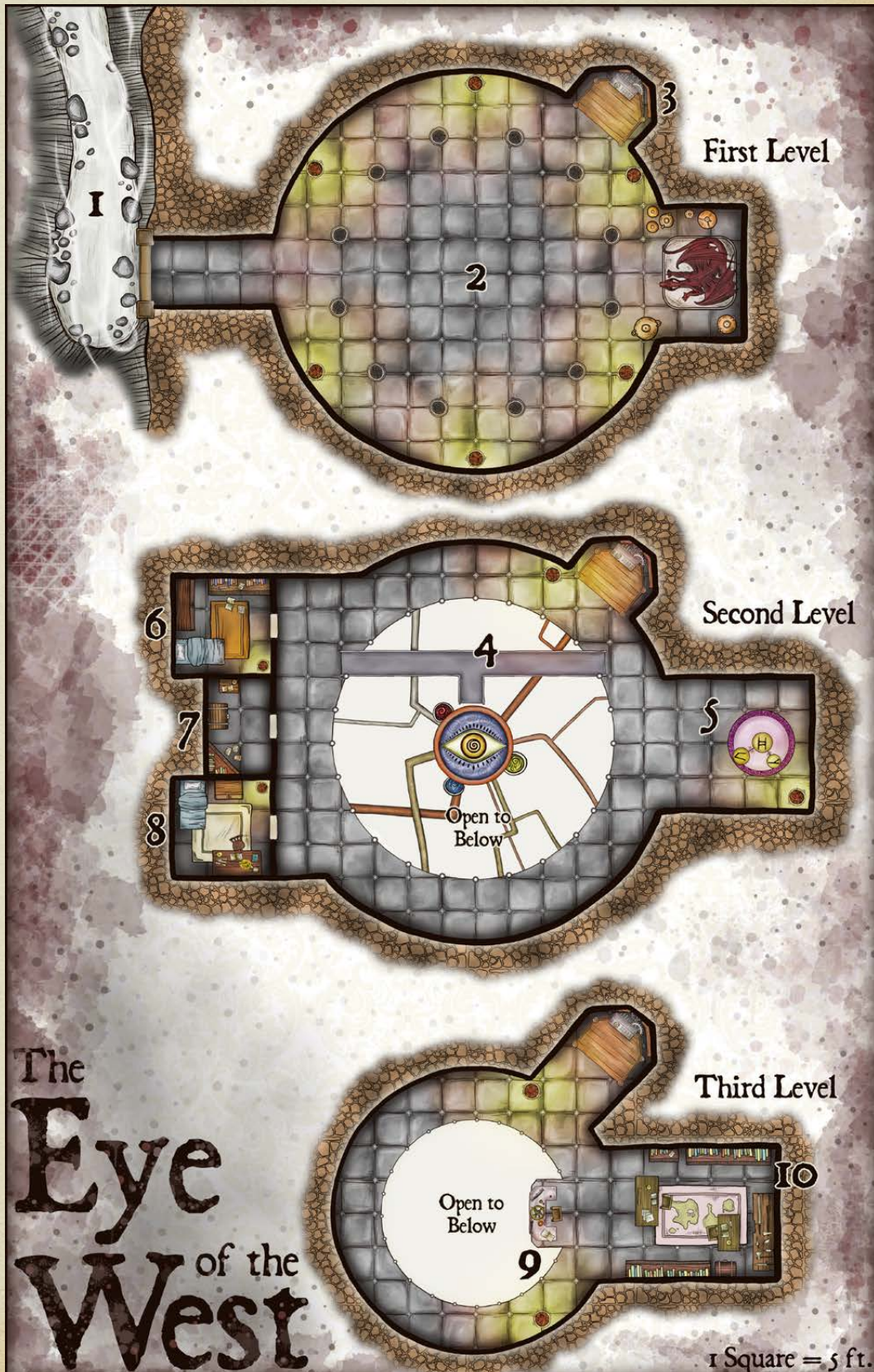
tion within the plane. Using the device is no easy task. A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** allows a character to correctly focus the observatory to the desired location. Failure simply means that the observatory is looking at a different location. If a character studies the books about the control deck in **Area 10**, he or she rolls with advantage.

Once a location is chosen and the observatory is activated, the device in the second level projects images for all to see in **Area 9**. This scrying device does not supersede anti-scrying spells or magical auras so any location with such protections appears as a dark cube in the projection.

10. Study Room

A gigantic assortment of books and scrolls are available in this library. Most of the books are about the functioning and maintenance of the Eye of the West. Others are journals of past visitors and users of the observatory. Other books are outsider's explanations, tales, and theories of what the place is supposed to be.

A character can study here to better understand the device. Learning to use the control panel takes two weeks of studying and trial and error. Learning how to make adjustments to track different planes in the machinery in the second level takes two weeks too. On the other hand, learning what is necessary to give maintenance or fix the device if it malfunctions will take any character six to eight months to do it properly.



THORNHEAD'S HIDEOUT

About this Resource

This resource features the general description of the hideout of a separatist group deep in the forest. It includes adventure ideas that are appropriate for mid-level (Levels 1 to 5) adventuring parties. Challenge Rating (CR) is calculated using a party of four as the model.

The DM is free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first the DM should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew world lore. To modify the challenge rating of the adventure, the DM must first consider the power level of the party. Considering the PCs' individual levels and the number of players is crucial to presenting a good challenge. Not all parties are the same, different playing styles and command of the system in the party can increase or decrease their effectiveness in encounters. The DM may adjust the encounters slightly by adding or subtracting monsters. Alternatively, controlling monsters with more intelligence and strategy is often the easiest way to raise the difficulty of an encounter. When monsters are referenced, the creature's name is noted in bold. Only creatures from the Monster Manual are cited.

BACKGROUND LORE



he kingdom of Ardennia has been under the yoke of the fey and Queen Ai'Haranna for far too long. It has been almost two centuries since the fey queen seduced and wed the last human king. People live in despair and with no hopes that their children or grandchildren expect a better life than what they were dealt. There is one key factor that guarantees that things can only get worse for the non-fey population, it is the queen's immortality. The dryad queen is for all intents and purposes immortal. She shall never die of old age, nor is she touchable behind the high walls of the Palace of Petals. After she was wed to the last human king, she did not plot for his death, she did not poison him or had him sent away. She only waited for him to die of old age before claiming the kingdom as her own.

General Features

These are the general features of the Thornhead's Hideout. It is located under the ruins of an old tower, a few hours from the Old Battlegrounds. It is almost three days away from the capital, Ardennia, due to the amount of travel through forested areas.

Terrain. The area that surrounds the ruined tower is a meadow deep in the forest. The areas with rocks are considered difficult terrain for the purposes of tactical combat. Inside the hideout, about half the floor is covered in stone tiles, the rest is a natural cave. The natural cave floor is mostly even but rough. Only areas covered with rocks or furniture are considered difficult terrain for the purposes of tactical combat.

The Stone Slab. The entrance to the hideout is under a large stone slab with the sigil of the old human dynasty. The stone slab is under an *antipathy/sympathy* spell as described in its entry. The charm can be bypassed if a visitor says the command word "Uruntha".

Doors. The great stone doors in the ambush room are meant to resist a siege. From the inside, they can be locked with adamantine bars. The doors feature several murder holes. Other doors inside the underground complex feature simple locks.

Light. Some areas inside the hideout are illuminated with magical pedestal braziers which never go out. A *dispel magic* spell may suppress one brazier for 4 (1d8) hours.

Smells and Sounds. A smell of ale and stale food is perceivable in most areas. The noises of a neighborhood and tavern are part of normal life in the hideout; those sounds echo back and forth and merge with other sounds, creating a low-pitched undistinguishable cacophony.

But there is a ray of hope. For the past fifty years, a small group of brigands has organized a kind of resistance movement meant to overthrow the fey government and instate a new human dynasty. They are collectively known as the Thornheads. They claim that their leader, Harold Guinesh, is the descendant of one of the last human king's bastards.



Thornhead's Hideout

The organization bases its existence on a pedigree scroll that details Harold's lineage back to the king.

The Thornheads have been largely "inactive" since their creation. They have not yet taken any city or outpost, nor have they openly confronted the crown. They gather strength with each passing year, though. They give out scrolls with their mission and have people talking about how it was before the fey took over. They adopt orphan children and train them in their ways, ready to one day revolt. They gather allies and take care of their friends. The Thornheads have a strong presence in Faris City and in Ardennia, the capital. Harold Guinesh recently welcomed the Yellow Leaf Council members into their ranks. The council is a fey faction that openly opposes the oppression of non-fey in the capital. Their members are high ranking officials and a few members of the Fey Court. Their friendship and influence may prove important later on.

Despite their presence in those cities, the Thorn-

head's Hideout is almost three days away from the capital. They set it up far away in case things go south and they have the need to bug out and lay low for a time. It is near the Old Battlegrounds in a seldom visited part of the forest. The hideout is an underground complex under the ruins of an old tower. It features many amenities like an armory, a tavern, a pantry, barracks, officers' quarters, a safe room, and an alternate exit route.

The entrance is hidden under a stone slab with the sigil of the old human dynasty. The slab is under a permanent *antipathy/sympathy* spell with the antipathy function. Whenever any creature is within 60 ft. of the slab, it must roll a **DC 18 Wisdom saving throw**. On a fail, it feels an urgent need to be somewhere else. The reason is a self-imposed excuse that makes sense for the creature. It cannot be convinced otherwise. Any creature may roll this save once per day. Saying the command word "Uruntha" bypasses the charm automatically, allowing the creature to climb down to the hideout.

The hideout has one weak point when it comes

to how hidden it is: the armory. Having a working forge to make weapons for the Thornheads is a challenge to hide. So far, the only working solution is to direct the smoke from the forge through a pipe that reaches the forest soil almost a mile away from the hideout. There is a “fake camp” in the spot. The smoke exhaust comes right where the campfire is. Two or three Thornhead agents are always there on watch when the forge is in use to make it seem more real. So far it has worked.

The hideout would not be what it is if it were not for the lively tavern in its core. The tavern is active all day round. A minstrel is usually on watch sharing songs, refrains, and stories. The barracks feature double bunk beds in rows. There is enough space to house 32 soldiers and six officers. The last chamber in the officers’ section is Harold Guinesh’s place.

One of the officers’ quarters is more than it seems. Behind an expertly crafted brick replica beside the bed is a red switch. Pressing the switch causes a section of the western wall to slide to the right, revealing a short tunnel to the vault. This vault is not real. It is only a decoy designed to fool any would-be invaders. There is a second secret passage on the south wall of the fake vault. This tunnel leads to a descending natural flight of stairs that lead to a vault and refuge. The chamber contains the most valuable treasures and magic artifacts the Thornheads have collected. It is also fitted with furniture and supplies for more than a month. It has never been used as a safe room yet but it is supposed to contain all that is needed to stay out of sight for a good while.

DRACOTIA

About this Resource

This resource features the general description of a town in northeastern Ardennia. It includes adventure ideas that are appropriate for mid-level (Levels 1 to 5) adventuring parties. Challenge Rating (CR) is calculated using a party of four as the model.

The DM is free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first the DM should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew world lore. When monsters are referenced, the creature's name is noted in bold. Only creatures from the Monster Manual are cited.

BACKGROUND LORE

Dracotia is a town near the northeastern border of the Ardennian Kingdom. The town is an old settlement; it is almost 800 years old. Before the foundation of the last human dynasty, it had a different name: Drakenfort. It was not much of a town back then, it was only a handful of homes and farms around the Draken Keep.

The Draken Keep is a small fort with a central watchtower, it is located in the middle of the settlement on top of a hill. The place is a strong defensive position near the border but after almost two centuries of no armed conflict, the militaristic importance of it fell into the background as more people moved near the keep because of the fertile lands around the place. The town has grown steadily in size over the past century, up to just above five-hundred people, counting a small group of fey creatures.

An important part in Dracotian culture is the worship of dragons as the mightiest creatures of the world. This religion has its roots a long time ago when only the keep stood there. Soldiers would commend their lives and soul to the powerful dragon that lived in the mountain range west of Dracotia. The dragon was a symbol of hope and protection to the land. Seeing the magnificent creature fly by the keep was a good sign, an omen

of good fortune for the battles to come. When the soldiers abandoned their lives of battle for calm days in the fields their beliefs remained. It slowly grew into a kind of religion. All people in Dracotia except for the fey are part of this religion or cult. The dragon in the mountain still lives, and it still flies by the town from time to time to the amusement of stern believers and children. The dragon, however, does not spare much thought for Dracotia and its citizens. It goes on and about its businesses with remarkable indifference. Still, the townsfolk justify the dragon by claiming that the portentous creature cannot bother itself with the petty troubles of a bunch of farmers. The townsfolk are content with being able to see the object of their worship and spend their time and efforts trying to impress it.

One thing the townsfolk did to call the attention of the great silver dragon in the mountain was to artificially change the course of a stream that goes through town and waters the fields. They used dams and trenches to redirect the water flow in unnatural ways. The result is that the stream takes the shape of a dragon's head if seen from above. The Draken Keep takes the place of the dragon's eye. While all this effort looks interesting on a map, the image is so large that no one in the city can see it whatsoever. The dragon has surely seen the dragon-shaped stream but has made no notice of acknowledgment.

Dracotia Today

The town is not focused on military protection anymore but it features a few natural and artificial barriers. The western side of town is covered by a wooden palisade that the stream at both ends. The rest of the town enjoys the natural protection the stream provides. These defensive barriers are not designed to withstand an open confrontation, but they keep brigands and road thieves at bay.

Most buildings are within the palisade and stream, but a few houses are out there by the farms. The Draken Keep is on top of a hill, next to the stream. Since the coronation of Queen Ai'Haranna, the ruler of Dracotia is Lord Ha'Illarin, a pixie noble. Lord Ha'Illarin is a terrible despot and racist against non-fey creatures but he sees the town as a

General Features

These are the general features of Dracotia. It is located near the northeastern corner of the kingdom. It is located almost four days of travel from the capital, Ardennia. It features a man-made stream in the shape of a dragon's head.

Terrain. The town is surrounded by grassy hills and vibrant vegetation. The town is well connected to other settlements through three well-kept roads. The Dragon Stream that goes through the town had its course changed over time to take the shape of a dragon's head with its mouth slightly open.

Population. 500 (80% human, 10% elves, 5% satyrs, 5% mixed)

Exports. Farm produce, ores, animal products.

Government. Ha'Illarin, a pixie lord, rules the town in Queen Ai'Haranna's stead.

business he is committed to making grow. Under his rule, the town has grown steadily and things appear to follow the same trend even today. The town is also home to about twenty satyrs, they enjoy a privileged position because of their natural fey blood. Along with the lord, the satyrs own most of the land in and around Dracotia. This is because Lord Ha'Illarin has gifted them great plots of lands, some of them previously owned by humans. Most humans work for them in the farms and fields.

The Great Silver Dragon

On the highest reaches of the mountain range west of Dracotia is the lair of Auhaxroul, an adult silver dragon. Auhaxroul is a creature of mystery in the region. It makes no effort to hide its presence so people in nearby settlements see it fly high in the skies at least twice a month. Auhaxroul is well aware of the recent changes of royalty in the Ardenian Kingdom but has chosen to take no sides and to not interfere with history. Auhaxroul sometimes visits the capital taking the outer image of a noble elf. It enjoys Ardennian cuisine and conversation. These visits happen every month or two.

Auhaxroul is a student of the planes and celestial

bodies. It spends one season per year at the Eye of the West researching remote locations for its own works of discovery. A few times a year, Auhaxroul flies east and crosses over the kingdom's border. It flies east for three days to meet an ancient copper dragon who is willing to part with some secrets now that the end of its life is near.

Auhaxroul is aware of the religious efforts to revere it in the town of Dracotia. Auhaxroul feels pity for them as they spend their time and work worshipping an indifferent, but present, figure. Auhaxroul likes the smaller races but finds it hard to sympathize with them as their lifespans are so short. That is one of the reasons why it insists on not taking any side; it considers all the squabbles of the small races a petty subject of study. The recent influence of Queen Ai'Haranna and the armies from the Feywild is more worrying, however. That is why Auhaxroul looks closely to any developments.

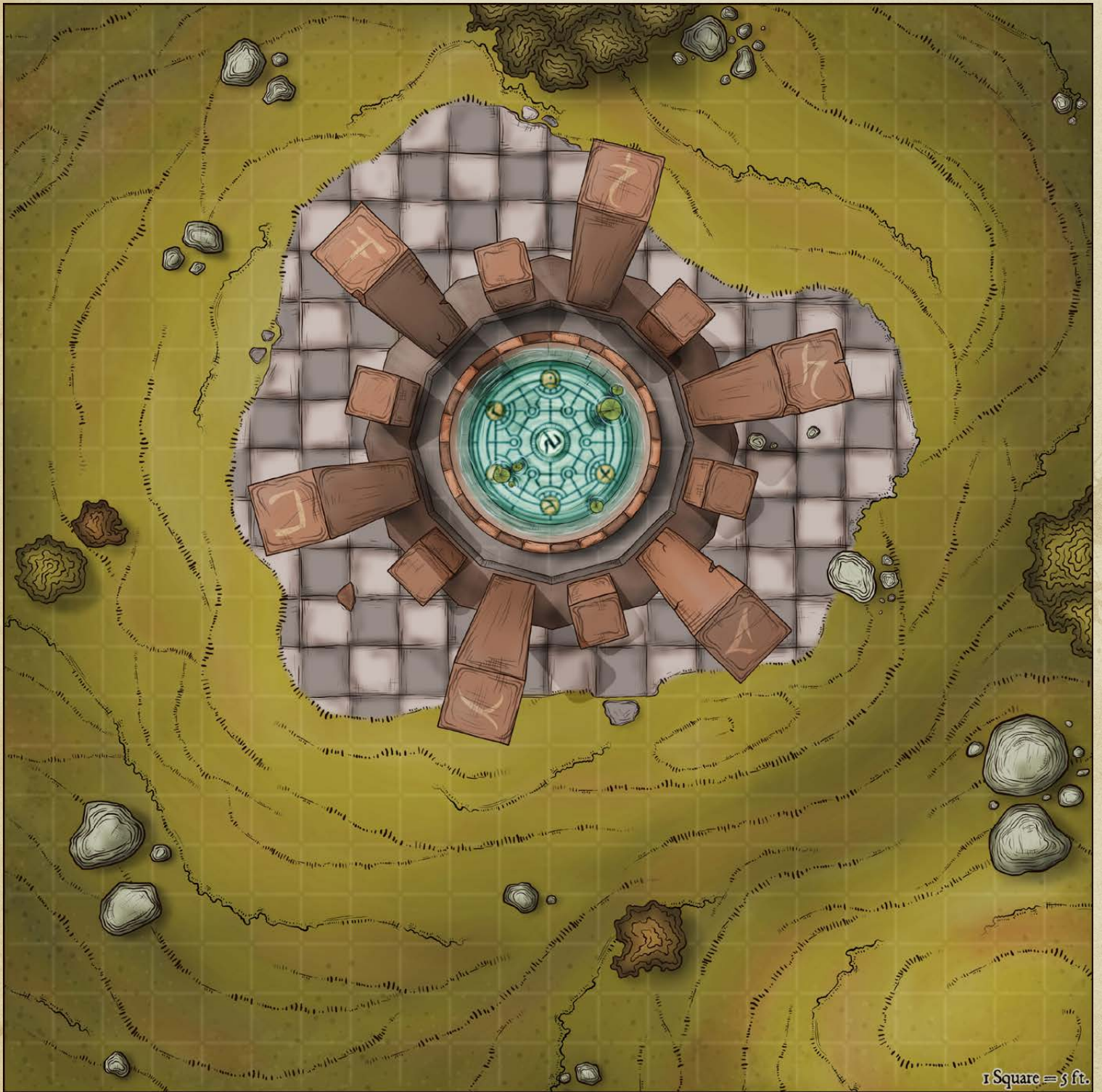
While Auhaxroul dismisses Dracotia most of the time. It decided to please the locals by making an annual appearance during the summer solstice. That day, the town celebrates a great party where people dress up as drakes and dragons. There are theater plays, street performances, a grand farmer's market, and fireworks. Auhaxroul has made an appearance for the last 33 years. After the fireworks, Auhaxroul approaches flying and lands in the middle of the square, it roars, shoots a yet of cold breath into the sky, and takes off again in a cloud of cheers. Its icy breath turns the humidity in the air to snow. It all comes down and over Dracotia over the next few minutes; a strange snow in June.



Map Key

1. Western Palisade
2. Bridge
3. Draken Keep
4. Wyrmling's Nest Inn
5. Watermill
6. Gaines' Orchard
7. General Barter Shop
8. Haren's Forge
9. Lord Ha'lllarin's Manor
10. Old Varen's Farm
11. Yinn's Coffee Plantation

VERDANT PORTAL



FA'THANG RUINS

About this Resource

This resource features the general description of an uncharted underground complex which was part of an ancient yuan-ti civilization. It includes adventure ideas that are appropriate for mid-level (Levels 6 to 10) adventuring parties. Challenge Rating (CR) is calculated using a party of four as the model.

The DM is free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first the DM should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew world lore. To modify the challenge rating of the adventure, the DM must first consider the power level of the party. Considering the PCs' individual levels and the number of players is crucial to presenting a good challenge. Not all parties are the same, different playing styles and command of the system in the party can increase or decrease their effectiveness in encounters. The DM may adjust the encounters slightly by adding or subtracting monsters. Alternatively, controlling monsters with more intelligence and strategy is often the easiest way to raise the difficulty of an encounter. When monsters are referenced, the creature's name is noted in bold. Only creatures from the Monster Manual are cited.

BACKGROUND LORE



Two days of travel away from the capital, Ardennia, a place of wonders awaits. It is known as the Fa'thang Ruins. Little of it remains visible since the rainforest has claimed the place. The ruins of an ancient civilization lie buried under geological layers of soil, dust, and greenery. Great pillars of stone, domed ceilings, and ruined towers still adorn the misty forest; giving it a sense of dread and foreboding.

The name was coined by a group of researchers a long time ago. Scholars know that the name is probably wrong and not pronounced as such. The word "Fa'thang" was found to be a common term in many scripted hieroglyphs and tablets in the area. But there is no way to know how the locals pronounced it. A linguist and scholar came up with

a phonetic approximation for the written language and it stuck within the scientific community, despite it being not accurate.

Traveling to Fa'thang Ruins is relatively easy as one of the western roads from the capital passes in front of the start of the ruins. Fa'thang Ruins is considered to be a faux touristic place, however. People know about it and want to visit it but the Ardennians often advise against making such a trip because it is indeed dangerous. The local fauna close to the site is larger than usual and ferocious. Even merchants just making a pass-by are cautious of bears and panthers which are very common in the area. Those are the facts, but then there are rumors. Some travelers speak of strange beings shooting poisoned arrows at them. Others claim to have lost a friend or companion to these strange creatures. Some say they have scales instead of skin and strange-looking eyes.

The Ardennian authorities and scholars dismiss all these stories as ramblings of stressed survivors and crazy superstitious townsfolk. Little do the populace know that there is a foundation of truth in those tales. Archeologists have uncovered enough information from the Fa'thang Ruins to sustain the idea that a civilization of man-snake hybrids were the inhabitants of the site. This information is not public so as not to attract treasure hunters or mercenaries of all kinds. Most people believe the ruins are man-made.

A small group of yuan-ti explorers recently returned to the ancient city and have claimed an underground complex as their own. They lived in the Underdark before returning to the surface. They come from a bloodline that goes back to the settlers of the Fa'thang Ruins but have no written history or recollection of it. They know, however, that it belongs to their people because they can read some of the writings on the walls. Not accurately, because their written language has changed over the eons; and none of them is what would be considered a linguist or a scholar.

The presence of the snake people in Fa'thang Ruins is still unconfirmed by official sources.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Entrance

The entrance to the new lair of the yuan-ti explorers is near the fallen statue of an old yuan-ti warrior. A short corridor flanked by eight stone pillars marks the spot. A **passive Perception score of 15 or higher** or a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals footprints of both humanoids and one set of tracks of a large snake.

2. Main Nave

This grandiose location has seen better days. It appears it once was a place of worship. Only dust and rocks remain of the altar at the western end of the chamber. Most of it is covered in greenery. There are **3 yuan-ti pureblood** in this room sitting in camp. One of them has a horn he will try to blow to alert the rest of the yuan-ti in the complex.

3. Mausoleum

Only dust remains of the eight sarcophagi that should have been in the alcoves. There is nothing of value in the area. A **passive Perception score of 18 or higher** or a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the presence of a fake wall in one of the south alcoves. A switch opens to reveal a secret chamber. There was a chest but only splinters remain. 120 gold coin lie scattered across the floor, they feature a strange sigil of a snake eating itself.

4. Nesting Area

Seven recently dug alcoves on the walls contain 1d8 yuan-ti eggs each. The eggs are supposed to hatch within the fortnight. The eggs are not alone, a **yuan-ti malison (type 1)** and **2 yuan-ti pureblood** will defend the nest with their lives.

5. Yuan-ti Larder

The increasing reports of strange scaly people attacking merchants are not unfounded. The yuan-ti have robbed many travelers and merchant caravans from their belongings. All

General Features

These are the general features of the underground complex found near the center of the Fa'thang Ruins. The complex is located one day of travel away from the capital Ardennia. The entrance is located near the fallen statue of a snake-human hybrid creature.

Terrain. The underground complex is formed of several ancient chambers in bad shape and rough tunnels that connect these locations. The tunnels are not as old as the stone-tiled sections but they are rough and made with crude tools. Areas with debris or rocks and tunnels narrower than 5 ft. are considered difficult terrain for the purposes of tactical combat.

Light. The layer of soil that covers the ancient ruins is soggy and soft due to constant rainfall. This caused the formation of narrow holes on the ground that lead to several areas of the underground complex. All areas with greenery feature these holes in the ceiling; during the day they provide dim-light. Most shafts are not wide enough for a creature to climb up or down.

Smells and Sounds. A smell of wet soil and greenery is prevalent throughout the underground complex. The smell is similar to that found before it rains. The sound of water dripping from above is also common. Water does not stay in the dungeon as it filters further down.

the loot is here, most of it is sellable items and products meant for merchant ventures. A crate of cinnamon is worth 300 gp outside of the kingdom. Another package of Ardennian Silk is worth 800 gp outside of the kingdom. The place is guarded by **2 giant snakes** trained to attack any non-yuan-ti.

6. Narrow Tunnels

These narrow passages connect many different areas within the complex but the yuan-ti do not use them. They prefer to move around the area because a dangerous **roper** lives there. Yu-Haina has tried twice to get rid of it but he has lost 4 yuan-ti already. All of them are avoiding the area for the moment.

7. Trapped Room

The yuan-ti have set a trap in this location. There is a hidden tripwire near the middle of the room. If pulled, it causes rocks to fall from the ceiling. If the trap is activated, every creature in the room must make a successful **DC 17 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 19 (6d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

A **passive Perception score of 17 or higher** or a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the presence of the tripwire. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to cut the wire safely or to rig the trap so the wire does not activate it.

8. Yu-Haina's Chamber

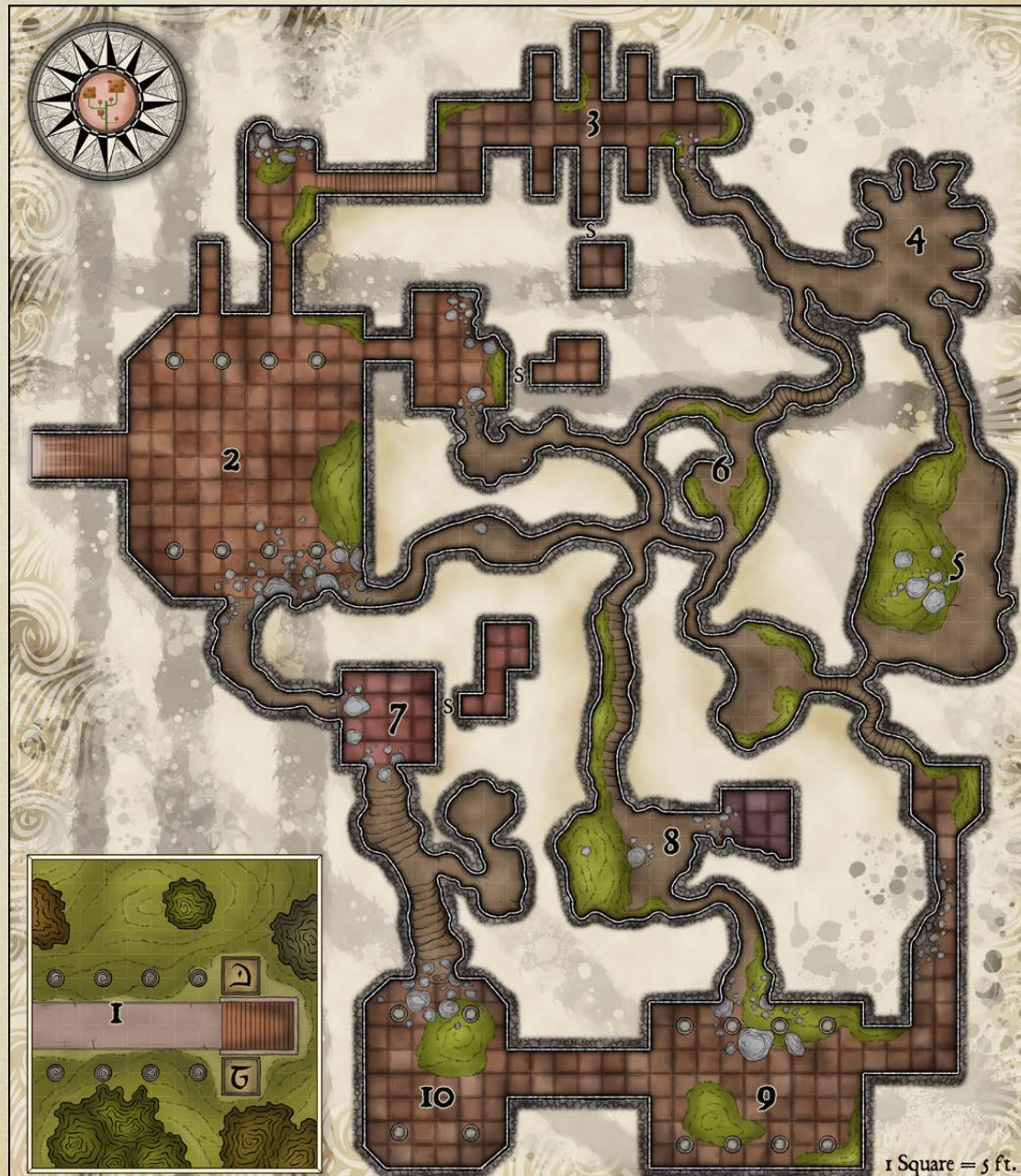
The leader of the explorers is a **yuan-ti abomination** named Yu-Haina. He has claimed this area as his private domain. The site is decorated with bones of past kills and other strange objects. There is a wooden chest in the adjoining stone-tiled chamber. It contains 3 rubies, a diamond ring, a bag with 1d8 sapphires, and 326 gold coins. If Yu-Haina is encountered here, he flees to **Area 9** to fight among his comrades.

9. Yuan-ti Camp

The rest of the yuan-ti explorers are here. They lie scattered across the room in sleeping pads or around improvised campfires. There are 5 **yuan-ti purebloods**, and 3 **yuan-ti malison (type 1)**. If a battle breaks out in this chamber, Yu-Haina comes from **Area 8** and joins the battle in round 2.

10. Old History Room

The walls of this chamber are better preserved than the rest in the complex. There are bas-reliefs on the walls, scriptures, hieroglyphs, and other forms of written language in almost every inch of the walls and ceiling. With the use of magic to translate, the party may learn that the room used to be a place of learning: a library, a teaching room, or similar. The DM may choose to reveal information about the ancient past of this location. It is also recommended to reveal the location of a treasure or powerful item in a different part of the world to span a journey for adventure.



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I have two adventures, linked below, and a compilation of maps for the Forgotten Realms.

