

# STAIRWAY TO HELL

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Designed for use with

**ShadowDark RPG**



**LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE**

**A LOW-LEVEL SHADOWDARK ADVENTURE ABOUT STOPPING A DEMON-SUMMONING MAGE**

# ADVENTURE PRIMER

We have foreseen it all. Summer Fort shall fall soon unless the demon is stopped. We shall all bask in cinders as hell takes over our dear motherland.

Chief Seer Damocles



Time and again, mages who dabble in obscure magic and incantations reach the limitations of the mortal body and their limited lifespan. Eager to learn more and achieve greater power in the least amount of time possible, the magic-users turn to shortcuts that are best left uncharted. These forbidden spells and binding rituals can bring forth and capture an entity from a different plane of existence. But with little to no option to harness its power. Thus, most attempts at this most-advanced type of magic end in regrettable failures and baleful invasions.

## SEARCH FOR POWER

A **COMPETENT MAGE** named Raddaghark has recently made contact with a strange entity from hell, a demon. Raddaghark was once the apprentice of the court wizard and had a prominent future ahead of him. The crown even considered as the replacement of his tutor, once the old wizard retired from duty. Unfortunately, Raddaghark saw no glamor in such a life and resented his tutor for dedicating his life and magic to the benefit of the nepotist system of kings and queens. Raddaghark fled from his station and traveled the world looking for the power that his tutor could not offer him. After years of wandering the realm looking for answers, Raddaghark came across a well-hidden tome in an abandoned tomb. The book offered great power and an enhanced lifespan, provided the mage made contact with a demonic entity.

The spells collected a ruinous toll on Raddaghark's body but he was willing to risk it all for the everlasting rewards of success. The demon spoke to Raddaghark and gave him directions to a dilapidated ruin a two-day ride from Summer Fort. Within, the magician found a strange arcane artifact, a seemingly-endless, descending staircase that led to nowhere. The demon dictated to Raddaghark a complex ritual that would break an ancient seal and open the way to hell. Thus, the demon would be able to physically access the Material Plane and reward Raddaghark for his great efforts. Raddaghark is halfway through a complex incantation that allows Tragmuth, the demon, to have more influence over the region. Tragmuth, the Puppet-master bends the minds of mortals and makes them prone to instant aggressiveness and fits of rage. This has spelled doom for Summer Fort.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

### Level 2 Adventure

#### CALL FOR HELP

Summer Fort townsfolk grow restless, aggressive, and eager for blood-lust. Local authorities fear a revolution but are unable to pinpoint the reason for the populace's unrest. Only one faction has a clue about this, the seers. After hearing of the characters' past deeds, Seer Damocles sends an errand boy to summon them to the house of Worship in Summer Fort. From his visions, the seer knows that evil gathers by a ruined keep close to town. What causes the problem is anyone's guess (10 gp, 1 XP).

#### GLADIATORS

Rumor has it that the arena in Summer Fort has become the most popular spectacle in the last month with hundreds of participants and demand for great warriors. There is an open call for able fighters and veterans to participate in the upcoming games (10 gp, 1 XP).

## RUMORS

d8	Details
1	A man was killed on the streets by a neighbor last night. Such a grim scenario happens twice a week. Unaffected civilians are worried about the increasing incidents.
2	At least a third of the population is affected by what can only be described as a will to fight and the impossibility to take an insult with stride. People are too jumpy.
3	People respect the seers' foreshadowing as they tend to be accurate the majority of the time, if only a little vague.
4	Spectacles at the arena are the most profitable business since so many people volunteer to participate.
5	People report a strange nightmare in which they climb down a spiral staircase that never ends while a puppet master controls each of their movements with strings.
6	The dilapidated ruin close to town was once the hideout of a perilous sect that was vanquished almost a century ago. People say the place is haunted by a foul entity.
7	The Emerald Palace was closed off a few days ago after a throng of enraged people broke into it. There are rumors that Queen Cannadi was injured in the attack and that some crazed insiders let the crowd into the palace.
8	People are worried about the poor that live in the slums as there is talk of an uprising. So far, the authorities have tried to direct the slum rebels to participate in the arena to ease their feelings, somewhat successfully.

# SUMMER FORT

We don't even have enough space to house them all. This is the new era of gladiators! We have so many trainees we can host the greatest melee ever.

Lanista Gardug



Summer Fort was once a fortified settlement that saw bloody battles in wars so ancient that no one alive participated in them. After a period of terrible conflict, Summer Fort has enjoyed almost two centuries of peace. During this time, it has grown into a sprawling city with rich history and a cultural mixture. It is a trade center that connects many merchant roads and the beginning of a largely profitable river trade route. In time, the fort itself was remodeled into the Emerald Palace. The royal family moved here and declared it the realm's capital. For a long time, the arena was one of the most important spots in Summer Fort. The games are a profitable endeavor for the rich and great entertainment for the crowds. Alas, the populace lost interest in the bloody games and the arena languished for a decade with a reduced audience until now.

## HEATED BLOOD

RADDAGHARK'S FOUL ACTIONS have brought the demon's influence circle to Summer Fort. The demon enjoys wreaking havoc and causing unnecessary violence. Its influence has caused the arena to become relevant again. Hundreds come to quench their blood thirst by watching the games. The most aggressive enlist to participate in the grim gladiator games. But others seek change, a faction of rebels lead a heated crowd that broke into the Emerald Palace and gravely injured some of the royals, including Queen Cannadi.

### Town Features

► **Events.** Check for **Random Events** each time a new area is visited. There is a 3-in-6 chance for an event.

► **Religion.** Most people worship Ord. However, a specialized Ord cult exists in Summer Fort in the form of the Seers. They use divination magic and rituals to foresee the future and help locals lead better lives.

► **Enhanced Aggressively.** The demon's influence affects a third of the population. Those vulnerable are aggressive, impatient, and foolish. They get into fights and issue threats that they have no fear of following through. There is a 2-in-6 chance that **peasants** are affected by the demon whenever the characters meet them. This may cause even the slightest disagreement to evolve into a shouting match or outright physical aggression.

## RANDOM EVENTS

d8	Details
1	Two groups of people have a brawl outside a tavern. They quarrel about their favorite gladiator in yesterday's games at the arena. Two people are gravely injured.
2	Eight <b>thugs</b> approach the characters and demand they join their syndicate and pay 10 gp of subscription fees.
3	An opportunistic criminal tries to attract people to join their band of brigands. He claims that once they take over the Emerald Palace the city shall be free.
4	A desperate merchant calls for help after some thugs robbed him and ransacked his store in the Merchant District. He offers 5 gp to deal with the petty thieves.
5	A parade of this week's gladiatorial winners marches through the streets to attract attention to the next games. People cheer but some claim they are stronger and pick fights with the gladiators. It all devolves into a mess.
6	A royal envoy summons the characters to the palace. The Hand of the Queen wishes to speak with them about the recent developments and the seer's predictions.
7	An envoy of Lanista Gardug approaches the characters and commends them on their physical prowess. He offers them a spot at the gladiatorial games in two days.
8	A heated throng attacks civilians, ransacks homes, and destroys the city. Ten <b>peasants</b> approach the party and try to rob them. They cannot be reasoned with.

## WEST GATES

Two gates connect with several rural paths and miles of farmlands. The roads bend southward and follow the river downstream in what becomes the Queen's Way, the most traveled trade route in the realm. If they come from afar, the characters arrive at Summer Fort from here.

## THE SLUMS

Not known for being safe or calm, the slums have become home to havoc and violence. Tragmuth, the Puppet-master's influence over the townsfolk has disproportionately affected the poor. The current leader is Jodah, a blacksmith by profession but the head of the rebels now.

If the characters come to teach the rebels a lesson, they must contend with one **gladiator**, two **thugs**, two **peasants**, and Jodah (**peasant**). Arresting or killing these rebels delays future attacks on the palace for 1 week. In just a few days, a new leader rises to prominence and gathers the townsfolk for new waves of aggression. The heroes must deal with Raddaghark, the mage to solve this.



## ARENA

The coliseum's recent increase in activity has the administrators struggling to keep up with the demand. Even more so after two of them and a lanista volunteered as fighters and died a few weeks back in the games.

Lanista Gardug, once just a gladiator trainer, out of necessity stepped up to direct the games and sort the abundant new participants, but he is a mediocre manager. Most people volunteering have no fighting abilities and are nothing but cannon fodder for more experienced fighters. Gardug seeks great fighters who can pose a challenge to the professional gladiators so that the games are less of a bloodbath (see **The Blood Games**).

## EMERALD DISTRICT

The higher echelons of Summer Fort society live in this neighborhood. They are either holed up in their manors or work together to have entire streets closed off from the city. Still, even some of these secluded neighborhoods have been stormed by tycoon-hating crowds.

## HOUSE OF WORSHIP

The characters are welcomed and brought inside to meet Chief Seer Damocles upon arrival, as was foreseen. The priest tells the characters that evil gathers in a ruined keep. It is a two-day ride from Summer Fort. He already sent a brave priest there, Seer Verbogden, to investigate. The characters should be able to find him near the keep. Chief Seer Damocles confesses that the omens for the city in the following weeks are clouded in doubt and duality. The city could eat itself in uprisings or it could be saved, provided the threat beneath the keep is destroyed. The chief seer presumes demonic entities are involved so he offers the characters five *scrolls of cleansing weapon* to combat the forces of evil. If there is no priest in the party, Seer Verbogden may use the magic scrolls.

## EAST GATE

The east gate leads to narrow hillside trails. Gatherers use it to move upstream. Small communities lie nearby but the gate is a relic from wartimes when it was tactically beneficial to move troops to the northeast.

## MERCHANT DISTRICT

Most merchants, accustomed to dealing with petty thievery and ruffians, are now guarded by hired muscle and mercenaries. The unaffected locals managed to capture and drive away aggressive individuals. Even aggressive merchants were driven away. The characters may earn 5 sp guarding a store for a day. There is plenty of work.

## EMERALD PALACE

The Hand of the Queen, Lord Vallen, is looking for a small but effective, elite task force to put a stop to the rebel leader that gathers the populace in the city slums.

If the characters heed his call (see **Random Event 6**), Lord Vallen explains that when the horde broke into the palace, the rebels barely failed trying to murder Queen Cannadi. The queen is injured but recovering well. She is not granting any audiences at the moment, though.

Lord Vallen dismisses Chief Seer Damocles' claims of a demonic threat as gossip. He considers the upcoming uprisings a more severe threat. He orders the party, on the queen's behalf, to infiltrate the slums and arrest a man named Jodah. Once a blacksmith, he now leads what Lord Vallen describes as *'a heated throng of disgusting burglars, brigands, low-lives, and ne'er-do-wells.'*

## THE KING'S FOREST

The sprawling, forested area behind the Emerald Palace was once a large forest where the royals would gather to hunt. The city swallowed the area almost a century ago and there is no game left. Still, the name stuck.

# THE BLOOD GAMES

**LANISTA GARDUG OFFERS** the characters a spot in the upcoming gladiatorial games. He claims, in a goading manner, that the characters should not dare participate unless they are confident of their abilities because some of the professional gladiators are the strongest fighters in the region. Gardug also mentions that the prize for surviving all matches is 100 gp and a set of plate armor.

The party can act as a unit. They must survive five consecutive fights. There is a rest period between each encounter when they can rest. The fights are as follows:

1. Melee against ten **peasants**.
2. Two **lions**.
3. Four **thugs**.
4. One **gladiator** and three **peasants**.
5. Three **gladiators**.

Due to the excess of participants, none can escape a fighting match. Once a fight begins, it is fought to the death. Most end with gory, grim decapitations.

## SETTING OFF

**TO SAVE THE DAY**, the characters must reunite with Chief Verboggden at the ruined keep. The structure is located in the countryside, northeast of Summer Fort. The characters cross the East Gates and follow the hillside trails upstream for two days to reach the source of evil.



# RUINED KEEP

It is only through strict self-control and dedication that I have resisted the demon's compulsions. Be swift! This being is bound to assail your hearts too.

Seer Verboggdén

**T**he ruined keep was once the headquarters of a perilous, demonic sect that scourged the region and recruited dozens of people until an order of paladins came and stopped them short. The knights trashed the place and put all the sectarians to the blade. But they missed the underground compound which was left untouched but abandoned.

The keep is located on a hill. It is overgrown with greenery and little more than a mound of bricks. The paladins who stopped the sect spread wretched rumors about the place and said it was cursed. Since then, most people do not dare approach the place out of crippling fear.

Seer Verboggdén stakes out the place since two days ago. He has seen demons emerge from the premises and has heard terrible screams. He used an animal messenger to let the chief seer of his observations.

## Area Features

► **Events.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 crawling rounds and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Smells.** A pungent stench of sulfur and decay comes from the underground compound beneath the keep. It grows stronger with proximity to the ruined edifice.

► **Demonic Influence.** The mind-bending power of Tragmuth affects common people and turns them into aggressive, danger-seeking individuals (DC 14 WIS). The characters, though, are not yet affected by it.

## RANDOM EVENTS

d6	Details
1	Four <b>dretch demons</b> emerge from beneath the keep and rush toward the characters' position to attack.
2	A terrible roar breaks the utter silence from afar. A <b>vrock demon</b> approaches flying and uses its Screech attack.
3	Seven <b>peasants</b> from Summer Fort approach the keep. They are under Tragmuth's influence and have come to swear allegiance to it. These are the first cultists.
4	Clouds gather and a thunderstorm breaks. It lasts until both Raddaghark and Tragmuth have been defeated.
5	Two hunters ( <b>guards</b> ) arrive at the scene by chance. If offered at least 100 sp, they stay as hired muscle.
6	A piercing, soul-shattering, human-like screech comes from beneath the ruined keep. It is Tragmuth, the Puppet-master finally approaching the Material Plane.

## KEEP'S ENTRANCE

*The outline of a crumbling, stone construction stands against the horizon. It was once a fortified keep. Now, only meager, water-eroded ruins remain.*

The main wooden doors are nothing but splinters now. Still, the first story of the keep can be accessed through any of the collapsed walls. The place seems empty.

## BARRACKS

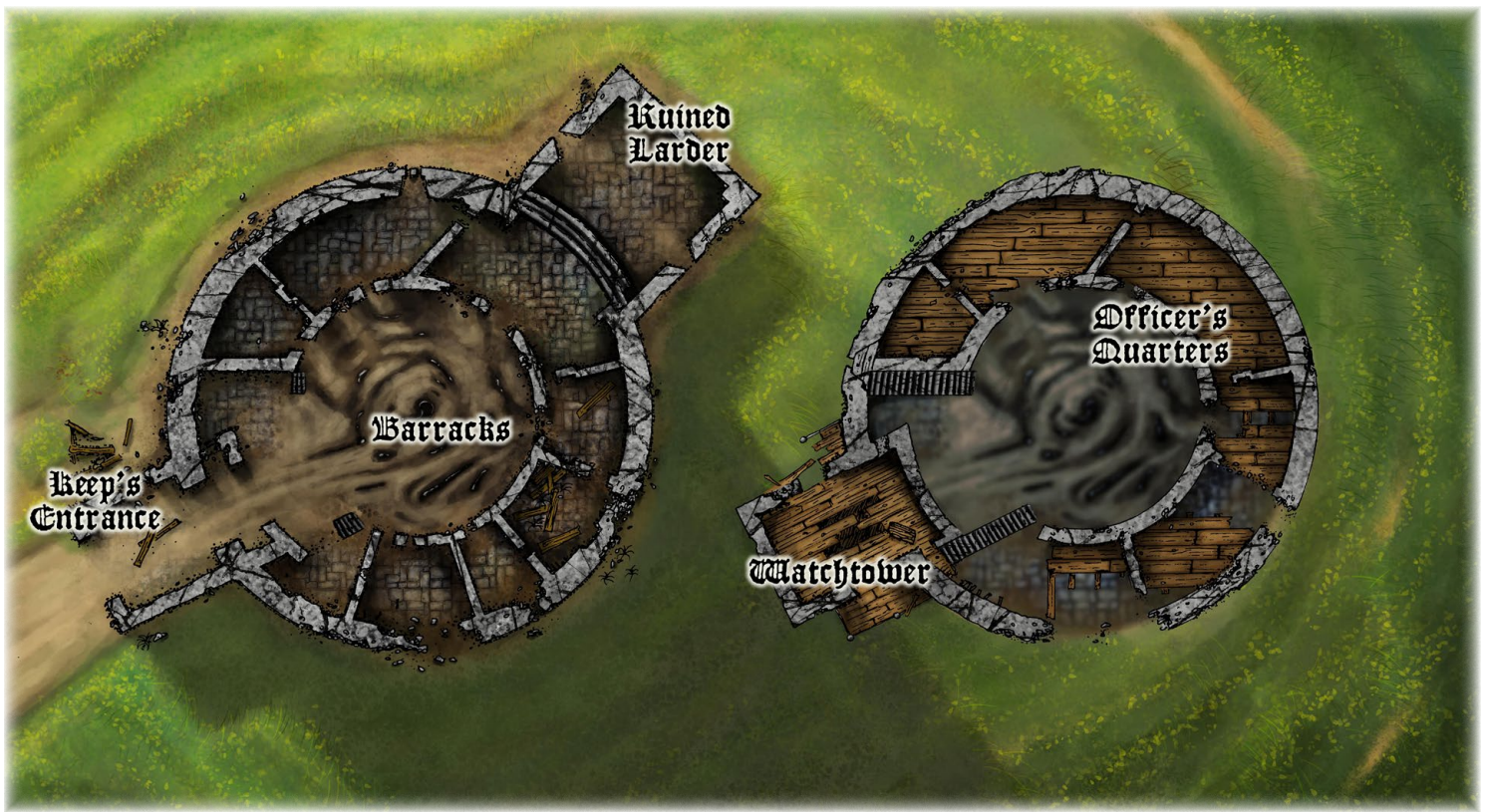
*The inside of the keep is a calamity of destruction and debris. Two wooden ladders climb to the unstable second story. Plenty of footprints mark the floors.*

► **The Seer.** Verboggdén (**acolyte**) approaches the characters here. He is helpful after learning that the chief seer sent them and reveals the presence of demons nearby. This is the first time Verboggdén enters the place. The valiant acolyte wants to prove himself to impress the chief seer as it may facilitate a rank promotion.

► **Tracks.** A good hunter notices that the strange prints converge in one of the decrepit side chambers (DC 14 WIS). Upon closer inspection, the prints lead to a hidden staircase. It leads to the dungeon's Main Entrance.

Seer Verboggdén





## LARDER OF GLUTTONY

*Three eroded steps climb up to what once was the keep's larder. A putrid stench of rotting food without a clear source permeates the dark, decrepit place.*

A creature that walks into the larder triggers a vivid illusion spell. Metal shelves, packed to the brim with spoiled food magically materialize in the chamber. Any mortal creature present is subject to a delirious compulsion to gorge themselves on the food (DC 11 WIS check).

Alas, creatures that fail this test endlessly consume the rotten, illusory food that does not nourish them in any way. Days later the subjects perish of dehydration. An affected creature, if forcibly moved 30 feet from the larder is free from the mental compulsion to remain 'eating'.

## OFFICER'S QUARTERS

Two wooden ladders climb to the second story and the watchtower on top of the entrance. Navigating the second story and reaching the Officers' Quarters requires jumping across 5-10-foot gaps (DC 13 STR check.)

*Four skulls with living eyes within cages hang from the far wall. The crazed eyes move blankly around.*

The skulls belonged to the sect leaders. They were slain by the order of paladins a century ago and their skulls were placed here. A spell keeps them awake and aware of their surroundings but they cannot communicate. The *restoration* spell frees their souls. But this deed earns the order of paladins' enmity as the faction still exists.

## WATCHTOWER

*The cracked walls of this chamber bear ancient markings etched on the eroded bricks. Some of the runes glow red, as if painted in glimmering blood.*

► **The Floor.** The wooden planks are rotten and unstable. Creatures that walk around the room to examine the runes have a 3-in-6 chance of breaking a plank and falling into the entrance hall below, breaking the floor there, and opening a shaft into the dungeon's Alternate Entrance. Creatures that fall this way take 4d6 damage.

► **The Runes.** The markings were made by the ancient demonic sect. They are written in Diabolic. Seer Verbgden knows this language. The runes speak of an obscure demon named Tragnmuth, the Puppet-master. The demon influences the minds of mortals and causes them to do terrible things. This constitutes proof that the people of Summer Fort are victims of a foul demon.

► **The Guardian.** After reading the runes, a mighty demonic guardian is summoned to stop them. **Tragnmuth's Avatar** appears beside them and attacks.

## TRAGMUTH'S AVATAR

*A goat-headed, fur-covered, 10-foot-tall figure emerges from the ether. The fire of hell shines in its dark eyes.*

**AC 15, HP 25, ATK 2 horns +5 (1d8), MV near, S +3, D +2, C +2, I -0, W +1, Ch -1, AL C, LV 5**

**Gore.** Deals an extra die of damage if it hits the same target with both horns.

# THE HELLISH ASCENT

No! It should not be like this. Why? Filthy, treacherous demon! I brought you here. You owe me everything. Deliver what you promised abominate monster.

Raddaghark, the Puppet

**R**addaghark's demon-summoning ritual has already occurred when the characters arrive. Tragmuth slowly ascends the endless spiral stairway and shall soon arrive. Raddaghark believes he is powerful enough to bind the demon with his magic but nothing is further from the truth; he is overconfident. The dungeon is filled with undead monsters and demonic abominations that emerged from the malignant stairway in anticipation of Tragmuth's arrival.

## Dungeon Features

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** There are no light sources. All chambers are in complete darkness. All denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Doors.** All doors are locked or stuck (DC 14 DEX). Raddaghark keeps the only key in the Mage's Quarters.

► **Foul Aura.** The Stairway to Hell is a beacon of malignity that can be felt by any priest that concentrates on it.

► **Demonic Influence.** The power of Tragmuth is strong enough to affect anyone (DC 12 WIS). If affected, the characters become danger-seeking, violent individuals. If an affected character attempts an action that goes against this description, they must resist the demon's influence to carry forward (DC 20 WIS). Defeating Tragmuth, the Puppet-master ends this effect.

## RANDOM EVENTS

d6	Details
1	Six <b>dretch demons</b> approach. Their faces have mutated to resemble people that the characters know. The demons speak and beg for mercy while fiercely attacking.
2	Three crypt <b>shadows</b> emerge from the ceiling and attack the least-armored character. They flee on turn 2.
3	A random character steps through a fine thread and triggers a swinging axe trap. The character takes 2d6 unless they are fast enough to jump away (DC 14 DEX check).
4	Four <b>skeletons</b> climb the Stairway to Hell and march toward the party. They wield blood-drenched scimitars.
5	A would-be adventurer, Yaran ( <b>soldier</b> ), followed the party from Summer Fort. He wishes to join the party to begin a new life of dangerous adventures and rewards.
6	A random character steps on a pressure plate and triggers a poison dart trap. The character drops to 0 HP unless their body is strong enough (DC 13 CON check).

## MAIN ENTRANCE

*The narrow staircase descends 30 feet and into a small landing chamber. The room contains a few rotten crates and chests. They are empty and dusty.*

► **Footprints.** An avid tracked identifies coming and going boot traps and the clawed prints of dretch demons (DC 13 WIS). All foot tracks circle around the chamber's east side when coming in or out of the compound.

► **Spikes Trap.** Stepping into the center of the chamber triggers a barrage of spear-like spikes to emerge rapidly from hidden holes in the floor. The creature who triggered the trap takes 4d6 damage (DC 15 DEX for half).

## GRIM GUARDIANS

*Tongues of fire are sculpted on the walls of this chamber. The domed ceiling features an eroded fresco of a dark figure holding a human as a puppet.*

► **The Art.** The ceiling's depiction and the runes by the sculpted fire are congruent with the identity of Tragmuth, a mind-controlling demon (DC 16 INT check).

► **The Guards.** Four slim **ghouls** hide behind the stone pillars (DC 14 WIS to notice). When fighting, the blood-thirsty, ravenous ghouls prioritize wounded individuals. If a person is reduced to 0 Hit Points, all ghouls rush to the body to gorge on their flesh while ignoring attacks.

## DEMONIC ALTAR

*An obsidian effigy overlooks the chamber from a raised dais. It portrays a stringy, zombie-like, hatted figure holding two dark puppets by their necks.*

Wooden pews once furnished this chamber but only rotten splinters remain before the hellish, demonic effigy.

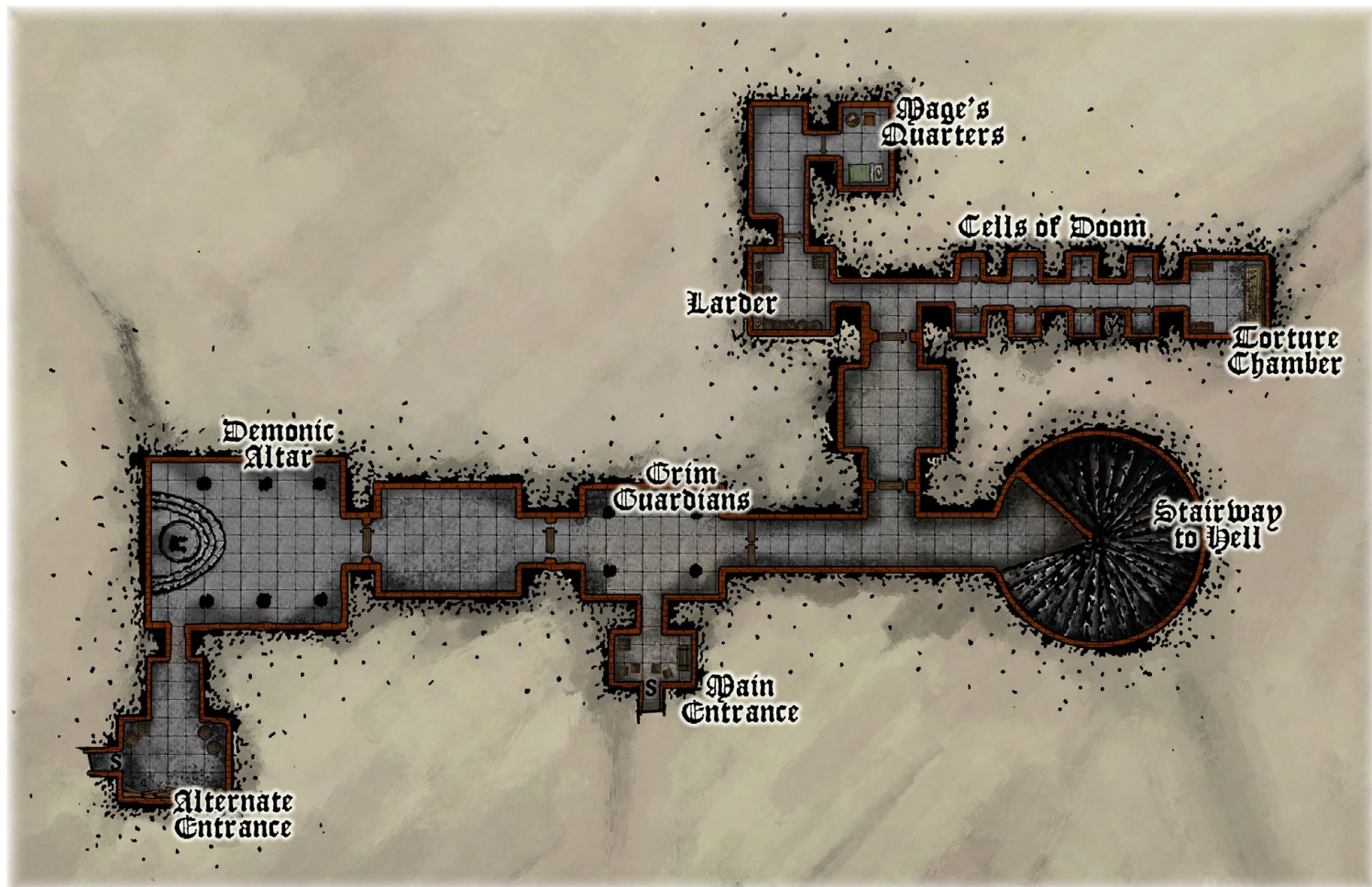
► **Influence.** Characters unaffected by Tragmuth's powers must pass the save again (see **Dungeon Features**).

► **Treasure (1 XP).** Inspecting the statue for 1 crawling round reveals the presence of a hidden compartment beneath it. It contains 14 gp, 26 sp, and a dagger.

## ALTERNATE ENTRANCE

This chamber can only be accessed by falling from the Watchtower above. The characters can climb back up with ropes and climbing gear (DC 13 STR check).





## LARDER

This chamber was once a larder and a storage room for the keep's commander and the cells nearby. An embroidered leather bag stands on one of the tables. It is a *bag of holding* that contains water and rations for the mage.

## CELLS OF DOOM

*The narrow hallway is interrupted by eight wooden doors with secure locks. Cries, groans of pain, and throaty utterances come from behind some of them.*

When a cell door is opened, it contains any of the following at random. Skip repeated results (roll 1d8):

1. A tortured man named Han. He is close to dying.
2. A ravenous **ghast**.
3. Four wounded people crammed into a single cell. They are weak but can help the party if healed.
4. Four **dretches** crammed into the narrow chamber.
5. The cell room is empty.
6. The cell room contains discarded hip bones.
7. Three **giant rats** emerge and attack.
8. A wooden chest that contains 25 gp, 200 sp, 1,600 cp, two *potions of healing*, a *potion of vitality*, and a case with seven random priest *scrolls* (4 XP).

## TORTURE CHAMBER

The room contains two wooden torture tables with leather straps and a long table with countless grim tools. The surfaces are bloodstained and were recently used by Raddaghark. Tragnmuth instructed the mage to perform terrible torture sessions on people kidnapped from the nearby roads as part of the demonic summoning ritual.

## MAGE'S QUARTERS

*The last door opens and a hooded figure emerges. The man wields a scepter embedded with obsidian. The mage promptly readies to cast a baleful spell.*

Raddaghark (**mage**) knows that Tragnmuth is close to reaching the surface. He wants to be there to bind it. However, as he is also affected by the demonic influence, he cannot flee from this battle and has no sense of self-preservation. The mage fights until he is defeated. As the battle concludes, a loud, fiery sound comes from the south. Tragnmuth has arrived (see **Stairway to Hell**).

► **The Quarters.** The room contains a bed, a side table, and a chair. The dungeon doors' key rests on the table. The chamber is otherwise empty except for the chest.

► **Treasure (1 XP).** There is a chest under the bed. Within, there are 5 gp and Raddaghark's *spellbook*. The tome contains seven random wizard spells of tiers 1-3.

## STAIRWAY TO HELL

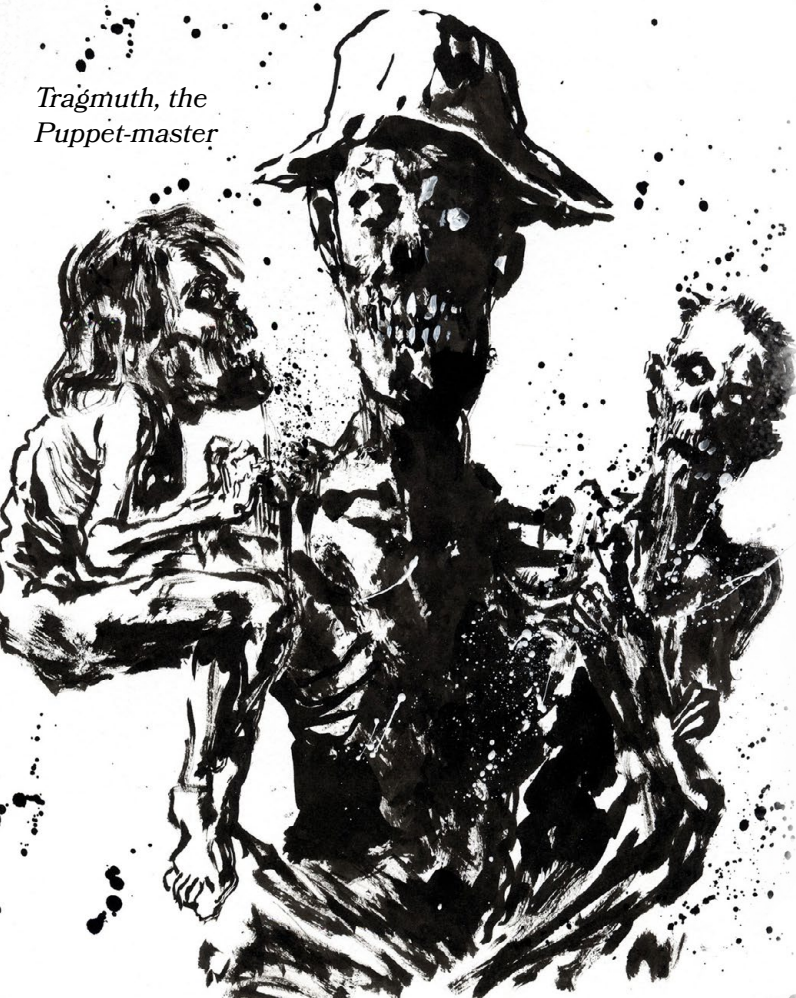
*A descending, spiral staircase with scorched, obsidian steps appears to go down endlessly. The stairs are wide enough for a giant to go through them. A faint, red light seems to come from the depths below.*

The stairs are an ancient artifact of untold power. They connect the Material Plane and the hellish realms where demons are spawned. If the characters descend, the spiral staircase goes on forever and reaches nowhere. Regardless of how long they go, it always takes 1 minute to reach the top again. The red light that comes from below is Tragnmuth ascending. But the characters cannot reach it either. It remains always just outside of their reach.

► **The Acolyte.** If Verboggen is present, he claims this is the source of evil that assails Summer Fort. Verboggen is unsure how to proceed and confesses to being afraid to descend into the hellish darkness below.

► **Tragnmuth.** The demon shows itself only after the characters encounter Raddaghark in his quarters. If the mage was arrested, he attempts to cast the ritual to bind the demon. Even if cast, it is unsuccessful. **Tragnmuth, the Puppet-master** promptly uses his Puppet Possess ability on the mage. It lasts for the encounter. If the mage is dead, the demon revives him for the same purpose. Raddaghark is conscious during the fight and resents this unlucky development (see Epigraph).

*Tragnmuth, the  
Puppet-master*



## TRAGMUTH THE PUPPET-MASTER

*A 15-foot tall, lean, zombie-like, hatted figure holding a deformed puppet of Raddaghark, the mage by its neck.*

**AC 11, HP 27, ATK 2** draining touch +5 (1d8 + life drain) or 1 puppet possess, **MV** near, **S +3, D -2, C +2, I +0, W +0, Ch +4, AL C, LV 6**

**Life Drain.** 1d4 CON damage. Death if reduced to 0 CON. Upon such a death, the person becomes a permanent puppet under Tragnmuth's control.

**Puppet Possess.** One target, close range. Contested Charisma check. If Tragnmuth wins, the character's body is temporarily deformed into an abominate puppet in the demon's hand. It controls its actions for 1d4 rounds.

## ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

**THE CHARACTERS REACH** the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

### THE DEMON DEFEATED

The characters fight Tragnmuth's physical form as well as the puppet mockery that Raddaghark has become and are triumphant. The defeated demon crumbles into a mound of fiery embers and ash. Raddaghark shares the same fate; there is no scenario in which he survives.

After the demon is gone, the Stairway to Hell reverts to its initial behavior of endless descent. It is still connected to the abyss but it requires a tortuous summoning ritual for it to work. The obsidian stairs cannot be destroyed by means available to mortals. The evil artifact shall remain a terrible threat that must be guarded from cultists.

### SUMMER FORT IS SAVED

The strange wrath-causing affliction subsides the moment Tragnmuth is defeated. People are immediately aware that their behavior was manipulated and the townsfolk take great measures to repair the damage and attempt to reunite with friends and family. When the characters return, they are welcomed by Chief Seer Damocles and Lord Vallen. They are pronounced heroes and a tournament in their name is scheduled in two weeks, when Queen Cannadi is expected to be well enough to attend the affair. Other patrons in town are interested in the characters' deeds and abilities too. There shall be no shortage of work for them in the future.

### BUSINESS IN COLLAPSE

After the demon is defeated, the gladiatorial booming industry soon collapses back to its normal level. People like Lanista Gardug lose recently made investments they made in expectation of future work. Vengefully, the lanistas assemble a strike force of gladiators to assassinate the party. Alas, that is an adventure for another day...