

THE WORLD OF

# FARLAND

# WHAT LURKS WITHIN

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# INTRODUCTION

“What Lurks Within?” is a D&D adventure for four to five 2<sup>nd</sup>-level player characters (PCs). The scenario takes place in the World of Farland, in the Kingdom of Daven, in and around a small sleepy human village named Eichen. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign. The only real difference is the currency of Farland. Farland is on the silver standard, and as such, a silver piece is equal to a gold piece in the standard D&D campaign. If your campaign uses the standard D&D pricing, you may wish to read “pp” where the adventure says “gp,” “gp” where the adventure says “sp,” “sp” where the adventure says “cp” and “cp” where the adventure says “tp.”

You will want to be familiar with the gods of the World of Farland ([www.farlandworld.com](http://www.farlandworld.com)). You (the GM) also need the D&D core rulebooks, including the Player’s Handbook, the Dungeon Master’s Guide and the Monster Manual to run this adventure. Featured monsters include Vargouilles, Skeletons (of various shapes and sizes), Bugbear Zombies and a new monster (as detailed at the end of this adventure). This scenario utilizes the D&D fifth edition (5e) rules. To get started, print out the adventure. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major NPCs. You will notice that the adventure is split into several different locations, and based on where the PCs decide to investigate, you may have to skip to certain sections. Text that appears in white is player

information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times. Maps, NPCs, and monsters are found in the appendix.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Although the Kingdom of Daven has been plagued by evil since the Liberation, the town of Eichen was mostly spared from this suffering because of its location. Near the edge of a large forest, away from major roads and trade routes, the town has been largely unmolested. The past two months, however, have been dark times for the folk of Eichen. Recently there have been grizzly discoveries of headless corpses and strange disappearances, mainly at night. Also, Ewald, a local protector of the forest (a druid) has reported to the town elders that the woodland has been strangely quiet of late, particularly at night. He suspects that the woodland creatures have sensed something strange. Naturally tales of trouble afoot and a hefty reward for the solution to these disappearances (250 sp provided by a collection of local wealthy merchants and village elders) have drawn adventurers, dogooders and treasure seekers from neighboring villages like moths to an open flame. The truth behind the murders and disappearances was initially due to a strange extra-planar beast trapped upon the material realm. This *queen*, a strange warped monstrosity, reproduces by infecting unfortunate humanoids, thereby mutating its victims’ heads into Vargouilles.

Adding to this turn of events, a local nobleman Marnak Morgenstein and his family have been corrupted by the dark mysteries of Grlarshh and have seen these attacks and disappearances as an unholy sign from their dark god. The Old man Morgenstein and his evil cult have abandoned their secret shrine in the basement of his manor house and currently reside within an old orcish burial ground with the *Vargouille Queen* whom they feed, provide victims, worship, and study with disturbing curiosity. Will a band of brave adventurers uncover the evil and dark truth surrounding this small village? That remains to be seen....

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The player characters uncover the mysteries of the disappearances in Eichen and in doing so they destroy a small cult of Grlarshh and kill the foul beast that is the cause of the murders.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The PCs may choose to investigate the disappearances in and around Eichen for any number of reasons. As the DM, it is your job to decide how best to involve them in the adventure. You can use the following hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to fit your campaign or the characters.

***Towers of Night.*** If you are continuing from the adventure "Towers of Night," then a person from Eichen who happens to be a cousin of one of the camp leaders has written to the Loch Brech campsite and requested help. The leader asks the heroes to journey to Eichen.

***Residents.*** The PCs live in Eichen and have been asked to investigate the strange disappearances by a family member, friend or local authority figure.

***Family ties.*** One of the missing people was a friend or family member of one of the group; the adventurers are trying to track him/her down.

***The Slayers.*** The PCs are members of the Slayers, a secret guild of undead hunters. They have been charged by their guild to help Eichen.

***Random travels.*** The characters come upon Eichen in their travels and hear in a tavern about the problems plaguing the village. They also might see a sign offering employment to anyone willing to uncover the mystery of the missing common folk.

***Help the wizard.*** The PCs are asked by a curious old mage to travel to Eichen, investigate the rumors of a strange beast from another plane that is indiscriminately attacking people at night. If there is any truth in the rumors, the old wizard will pay anyone well who brings back a sample of the said creature/creatures as well as undeniable proof that it comes from another plane of existence.

## PART ONE: BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when the PCs reach Eichen. There they can find out about the current situation from any of the townsfolk.

### EICHEN (see separate map in Appendix)

Eichen is a small village with a population of around 500 and only two drinking establishments, one Inn (The Hobbling Goblin) and one Tavern (The Merry Mage). Here is the bare minimum information on the village; you may flesh it out with more information if you wish.

#### The Village of Eichen

**Max value for one item that can be bought or sold:** 100 sp.

**Population:** 500 adults. (95% human, 5% half orc).

**Authority Figures:** Arnulf Von Gerhan, male human, Merchant and Mayor of Eichen; Hogan Von Feran, male human, a minor aristocrat and captain of the town guard.

**Important Characters:** Bernard Hugo, town sheriff; Farmer Dortmund; Conrad Smithstan, half orc, blacksmith; Katrina Rabe, female human priestess of

Bestra; Boris Whiteanvil, a priest of Neltak; and Nebnel Luts Hiller, an alchemist; Wolf, Horl, and Brab, town guardsmen.

During their stay at the small farming village of Eichen, the PCs discover several disturbing truths about the village by talking to some of the locals. You may add this additional information where and whenever you feel that it is most appropriate, but ultimately the information provided should point them in the direction of either the Morgenstein manor house (most likely) or old Drok's shack. At either of these locations the PCs will discover clues on where to go next.

#### The Disturbing Rumors

The PCs are told by the locals of several disappearances/deaths that have happened of late as well as some other strange rumors (Investigation check DC 5 to DC 15 for each fact). You may either role play these interactions or just read out loud each item of info they discover:

**Missing huntsmen.** Two huntsmen were killed in the woods three weeks ago; they were both very familiar with the forest and until their deaths there had been no hint of trouble in those woods for several years. Their bodies were recovered with their heads missing. Strangely, the rest of their bodies and possessions were present and completely intact (Investigation DC 10).

**Missing boy.** A young boy went missing nine days since when he went walking his dog in Oaken Forest. His dog returned home looking terrified; it has refused to

leave the house since (Investigation DC 10).

***The old hermit.*** An old Dwarven hermit by the name of Oscar Drok lives in a cabin within Oaken Forest to the north, not more than one mile away. He normally journeys to the village every week on market day to pick up supplies. But he has not been seen in over a month (Investigation DC 10).

***The Morgenstein manor.*** Old man Morgenstein, a local land owner and old retired adventurer, has not been seen for the last three months nor have his wife or son. They all live in a large manor house not far from the village itself. When the local tax collector paid him a visit not two weeks ago, rumors spread that he never returned from the old manor house. Many suspect that the apparently abandoned house has been one of the most recent victims of the local attacks (Investigation DC 5).

***Dark family secrets.*** Some say that the Morgenstein family members have become somewhat withdrawn over the past six months. They have taken to hiding themselves away at day, emerging only at night, and they used to send their house servant (a disfigured hunchback named Victor) to the village once a week to buy food and supplies, but no longer. Some accused the family of harboring some dark secret within the extensive tunnels beneath their grounds; others have dismissed such rumors. Whatever the case, the few people who whisper such things do so warily; to openly accuse a rich landowner of ill deeds can be dangerous indeed... (Investigation DC 15).

***The tomb.*** Some speak of a newly discovered tomb hidden within the forest; although no one is sure of its location, those that speak of it say that it is both

cursed and filled with deadly traps! (Investigation DC 15).

Because of the very nature of the disappearances and their cause, if the PCs delay for any length of time, more innocent people may go missing/be found without their heads. The next attack will come in two days time in which an elderly couple and their middle aged farmer son are found dead in an outlying farmstead, all with their heads missing (a vargouille attack— don't forget to add three additional vargouilles at some point in the adventure). If the PCs delay for another two days, have an NPC that the group has befriended go missing. They will discover his body without a head at the entrance to the vargouille queen's pit in the orcish tomb complex (see below). Hopefully from this point onwards the PCs may realize that there is a certain degree of urgency in their actions. If they decide to delay further, have the local Inn attacked by half a dozen vargouilles during the following night.

## PART TWO: THE MANOR AND SHACK

### THE MORGENSTEIN MANOR

As hinted in some rumors within the village, the apparently deserted Morgenstein manor house harbors more than just dust and cobwebs. The PCs will likely discover that within its cellars dwell foul undead, evil cultists, and a disfigured hunchback gardener (Victor), lead by an insane priest of Grlarshh (young Gregory Morgenstein). The tale of the Morgenstein family is a sad and horrific one. For the past seven years, Marnak Morgenstein, an ex-adventurer and the man of the house, has been slowly but undeniably turning mad with delusion. After a long history of wavering mental health, six months ago he became convinced that those closest to him (his wife and daughter) were conspiring to poison him in his sleep. As a consequence, Marnak took to boarding himself in his own cellar, and there, with an evil scroll he had obtained, he animated some skeletons and began construction of a secret private sanctum where he was convinced he would be safe from those who would conspire to kill him. The only one who was even close to Marnak was his son, Gregory, and he also was not the most stable minded of young men. So together, Marnak and Gregory took refuge in the cellars of the manor. Guarded by the undead that Marnak had created, they studied dark secrets and turned to powers

that should have been left well enough alone...

The mother and daughter (Lady Henrietta and Miss Felicia respectively) although suspecting the use of dark magics, were torn between the love for their family and the nagging of their conscience to do the right thing and inform the local church of the foul deeds committed by Marnak and Gregory. But it was not to be; their family ties won in the end and Marnak's and Gregory's secluded studies were allowed to continue behind closed doors. Consumed by the powers and dark secrets of Grlarshh, both Gregory and Marnak were eventually overcome with madness and sacrificed Henrietta and Felicia to the lord of dark secrets.

Such an evil and great sacrifice did not go unrewarded; the lord of death revealed to them both an evil that dwelled beneath the forest not two miles away. He told them of an extra planar creature that had hid itself from the prying eyes of the cattle-like folk of Eichen within an ancient burial ground. It was an abomination that would greatly please the dark god if it were captured and revered. So Marnak and his son set about finding this place, this tomb; and in doing so they discovered the vargouille queen, an evil beast both terrible and great...

### THE DESERTED MANOR HOUSE (see separate map in Appendix)

The old manor house is an aging and disused house, once fine and richly furnished; it is now derelict and gathers

dust. Old man Morgenstein no longer resides here and has instead taken up residence in the nearby orcish tomb to study and protect this beast Queen that was revealed to him by Grlarshh. Instead, his son Gregory watches over the house and is aided by the family's faithful hunchback house servant and gardener, Victor. The chances are that the PCs will enter the grounds via the dirt track road and through the main (and overgrown) gardens. If this is the case they will most likely be spotted at day by Victor who is watching out from one of the manor house windows 50% of the time and walking the grounds 50% of the time. If the PCs are spotted (usually Perception DC 10 for Victor to spot them), Victor will not engage them in a conflict but will attempt to return back to master Gregory and report to him that armed humanoids are approaching the manor house.

If Victor is caught unawares in the grounds, he will run as fast as he can towards one of the manor's several entrances (he has the keys) and will try to report back. If he gets back to the cover of the house, he will lock the door behind him. All locks on the exterior will be locked and will require a Dexterity check DC 20 to open. Of course the PCs can just break one of the many windows, but if they do this without taking any precautions to avoid being heard, they will automatically alert Gregory and the handful of cultists to their presence. The interior of the house buildings themselves are bare save for one small and dirty room (Victor's sleeping quarters). All of the valuable furniture and paintings have been sold off/traded for magical scrolls and valuable materials needed to create the undead and the shrines to the dark god. The only place of interest is an entrance to the cellar, which unlike the rest of the house, looks considerably less dusty and more recently used.

### Morgenstein Manor Basement (see separate map in Appendix)

Unless otherwise stated, the walls and floors of all passageways and tunnels are constructed with worked stone blocks or are smooth worked stone, covered with moss and/or damp soil, and as a consequence they are slippery. Any PCs trying to charge, run, jump or tumble within the cellars must make a Dexterity save DC 10 to avoid slipping and falling prone. All climb checks within the cellars are made at disadvantage for the same reasons. All of the descriptions assume that the PCs approach in the day and the enemy are not aware of the PCs approach; if they are aware that there may be trouble or the PCs attack at night, then you will have to adjust the encounters as you see fit.

### The Top of the Stairway

Looking down the moist and worn looking stone staircase, you can see the flickering of torchlight some thirty feet below. From the chamber below you can hear the unmistakable sound of muttered conversation. You estimate the presence of around half a dozen different voices...

The room below serves as a dining/common room for the handful of cultists that reside within the cellars. The group below is currently engaged in a game of cards and is in-between ritualistic ceremonies. Unless they have had any forewarning of the PCs' approach, they will not react to anything short of a full on charge!

## Area A

The taller of you brush away the occasional cobweb and descend the moist and worn stone stairway. After around twenty steps, you emerge into a torch lit room. In the center of the room, three dark red robed humanoids of various ages, are sitting around a large oak table deeply engrossed in a game of cards. In the corner of the room resides a most unsettling sight. With empty and blackened eye sockets, a six-foot tall, eight foot long skeletal bear stands vacantly and seems to stare strait at you!

Only a few seconds after entering the room, the PCs will be spotted, the cultist will sit shocked and then hurriedly ready their clubs and daggers (full round action), whilst one of the group calls a command word ("*nefarious*") to get the skeletal bear to attack anything that is not wearing a dark red robe (the command word for it to stop attacking is "*dictum*"). When the cultists eventually do act, the one nearest the door leading to areas B and C will make a dash to alert Gregory in his private sanctum (area E on the map).

**3 Cultists:** See MM p. 345

**Skeletal Bear:** See Appendix for stats

In the centre of the table the PCs will find a lit hooded lantern (half an hour illumination remains), a jug of cheap smelling ale, several tankards and a several small piles of coin totalling 17 tp and 18 cp. Obviously the cultists were gambling before the PCs' intrusion. In one corner of the room lies a pile of two dirty red robes (similar to those worn by the other cultists in the room), two unused torches, and 8 pints of oil.

## Area B

You walk through the wooden framed doorway and into a small unlit cross roads. Only ten feet away there are doors to your left, right, and dead ahead. From the door to your left you can clearly hear muffled screams as though someone was trying to get your attention whilst being gagged...

The area serves as a small prison for the cult's next sacrifices. The doors to the right and left are small cells. The one on the right is empty and unlocked whilst the one to the left is locked and holds a bound and gagged prisoner (Dexterity check DC 20 to open the lock; one of the cultists from area A has a key).

You open the door to a dirty cell that reeks of filth and urine. Curled in a fetal position upon the floor is a grey haired elderly man with a long beard matted with filth. His hands and ankles are bound and he shields his eyes from your light source as though he had been in darkness for days.

The prisoner is an elderly local tax collector named Frederic Goldhorn. For the past two weeks Frederic has been held captive and has been periodically beaten and taunted. He is badly malnourished and although he has been occasionally watered and fed, he is in desperate need of both food and water. If the PCs free him he is more than willing to divulge the information he has gleaned whilst imprisoned. He informs the PCs that he was to be a sacrifice for a cult of Grlarshh, an evil god of dark secrets, and that he heard his captors speak of a secret passage leading below somewhere on this



level, though he is not sure where exactly. He also informs the PCs that he has heard some of the cultists speak of the beast queen within a tomb several times, but again he has no further information. Beyond this information, Frederic knows little. Although if escorted back to the village he will ensure that the PCs are rewarded for their kindness. He promises to pay each of them 25 sp for his safe return, which is all of the tax collectors personal wealth.

### Area C

You enter a dusty ten foot wide and thirty foot long room. Along each of the walls to the left and the right are columns and columns of old empty wine racks; other than this the room is bare. Not twenty feet ahead rests a sturdy-looking doorway in the left hand wall.

This room served as part of the Morgenstein household's wine cellar, but like the expensive furniture and paintings from the floors above, almost all of the expensive wine and spirits were sold off to pay for magic and building materials. If the PCs spend the time to search this room (10 minutes) they may find three bottles of vintage spirits worth 5 gp each that have fallen down behind one of the racks (Perception check DC 20). The door set into the left hand wall is trapped with a twin crossbow bolt trap on the other side of the door. A small wooden catch on the floor protruding from underneath the door allows people to pass though without setting off the trap. The trap will trigger when the door is opened:

**Twin Crossbow Bolt Trap.** Fires 2 bolts at random targets within the area that triggers the trap; *Ranged weapon attack*: +4 to hit, range 30 ft./60 ft., two targets. *Hit*: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage. Perception

check DC 15 to spot the trap; Investigation check DC 5 to comprehend and disable the trap without setting it off once it is spotted.

### Area C

The next chamber is a mirror of the one you have just left, with similar wine racks lining each side of the room excluding the far wall. Though this time there is no door set into the left hand wall.

The room harbors the secret entrance that leads to the level below. Also, hidden in the floor of the chamber ten feet from the secret door is a pit trap concealed by a dirty leather sheet spread over the floor and camouflaged with dust and gravel to look like the dirty hewn stone floor.

**Pit Trap.** 15 feet deep pit with broken glass at the bottom. DC 15 perception notices lack of foot traffic over the pit. DC 12 investigation discerns it is a pit. Dexterity saving throw DC 15 to avoid falling into the pit if it is stepped upon. Anyone falling takes 6 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and an additional 5 (1d10) slashing damage from the broken glass. The walls of the pit are greased, so anyone trying to climb out of the pit without aid makes climbing ability checks at disadvantage.

### **Concealed Door in the North Wall:**

Perception DC 15 to find and Investigation DC 10 to open (hidden loose stone catch to the left of the doorway).

As you pull a loose stone to the left of the concealed doorway, what looked like a coincidental line in the masonry opens slightly, allowing you to push it open

further with little effort. As the heavy door swings open it reveals a spiralling stone stairway beyond that leads further down....

### Area D

You round the dirty spiralling staircase until you see flickering torchlight. Gingerly you peer around the corner and into an unnaturally cold and large paved chamber beyond. In the large room are three armed and armored skeletons that stand stiffly to attention guarding a large wooden double door. A flickering torch above the closed double doors provides poor illumination and is the only feature in an otherwise bare room.

The three skeletons are Gregory's Morgenstein's pride and joy, and they are armed and armored as such. Each of the undead are wearing chain shirts and carrying long swords. They will attack anyone who enters the room unless they utter the pass phrase "*Mortis nu vigo.*" If Gregory and his two helper cultists hear the combat in the next room (very likely) they will come to the skeletons aid and try to repel the adventurers before they can get to the inner sanctum (see area E for details on Gregory and the cultists).

**Skeleton Sanctum Guards:** See MM p. 272 except skeletons have an AC 15 (chain shirt) and longwords (Hit: 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage).

**SPECIAL NOTE:** This entire level is unholy; undead trying to resist being turned have advantage on their Wisdom saving throws. If the PCs are getting the upper hand in the combat, Gregory will likely bar himself inside the sanctum until he is ready to emerge. The Strength

check to burst open the heavy barred door is DC 20.

### Area E

The features of this torch-lit room are dominated by an enormous blood-stained granite altar on a dais. Hanging on a wall behind the altar is a large wooden symbol to some dark god, and lying on the altar is an ornate curved and serrated dagger caked in dried blood; the dagger appears to have more of a functional use than a military one. In one corner of the room are stacked two mattresses, one on top of the other, along with several thick winter blankets, and sitting nearby is a large chest. Against the other wall are two shelves brimming with ancient-looking books, and a bureau cluttered with quills, parchment and inks. Standing over the altar is a priest in swathes of rich, dark red and black robes. He is an imposing young man with deathly pale skin and short greasy hair. In one hand he holds aloft a black symbol on a chain, similar in design to the one hanging on the wall behind him, and in the other he wields another more robust and fine looking dagger with a silver design. He glares at you with wide, maddened eyes and the two similarly dressed cultists that were flanking him ready their crossbows. In the corner of the room skulks a cowering hunchback, who stares wide eyed in fear...

This is the inner sanctum of the complex; it is where Gregory spends nearly all of his time. The chances are that Gregory will have heard the PCs approach, and as such, reading the second of the descriptive paragraphs will not be necessary. On the first round of combat Gregory will target the most heavily armored and most unintelligent looking of the group with

hold person (DC II saving throw) and then on the following rounds he will join his cultist minions in the fight. Due to his maddened and deluded state, Gregory Morgenstein will fight to the death.

**2 Cultist:** See MM p. 345

**Gregory Morgenstein, Old Man Morganstein's son.** Use stats for Cult Fanatic on MM. p. 345.

**Personality and Appearance:** Gregory Morgenstein is every bit as evil as his father, only Gregory seems to take pleasure in killing; his father does it more out of curiosity or frustration. He regularly sacrifices innocents to his evil lord just to hear them squeal as he slices them with a knife! Like his father was in his youth, Gregory is a heavy set man. Standing over six feet tall and broad shouldered, with black greasy hair, pale skin and dark penetrating eyes, he is an imposing figure.

**Tactics:** Gregory is as blunt as he is large. If a fight breaks out, he doesn't hesitate to get into the thick of things, taking great pleasure in cutting into his opponents with his blade and cackling insanely as he does so. Because he is completely insane and maddened with blood lust, Gregory will fight to the death if his home is invaded.

Aside from what he was carrying, Gregory has some coin and a collection of valuables that he salvaged from the house above that he one day hopes to sell if he is ever short on coin. In the locked chest (DC 15 Dexterity check to unlock, AC 15, HPs 12) are the following items: - 7 sp - 258 cp - 34 tp - 2 pieces of amber (10 sp each), a silver emerald encrusted ring (10 sp) and a small sapphire (20 sp) in a small leather tied pouch. - Some silver candlesticks (10 sp total) - A silver cutlery set (5 sp) - Some gold and silver women's jewelry (20

sp total) - A potion of healing. A crude map of Eichen and the surrounding forest. The map has a large black X inked over an area in the forest.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** If the box is smashed open the potion vial will break thus ruining it. On the small bureau desk the PCs will discover a collection of half-scribbled notes on the best means of torture and sacrifice. And in another person's handwriting there is an account of a study into a strange beast referred to as *The Queen* dated a week ago. See below:

### The Letter

*My dear son, Contrary to our doubts, over the past week the subject has been a most interesting study. Although not the most intelligent of creatures, it displays an animalistic cunning and has claimed the lives of two of our lord's followers. Therefore we have exercised the utmost caution of late. Based on my limited observations it would seem that this creature and her spawn have been the cause of the attacks within Eichen, and I plan to begin 'acquiring' some new humanoid vessels for our Queen in a bid to learn more of her reproductive cycle. The renovations and extensive mining of the new facility is almost complete, including a custom made pen for our queen and dwellings for at least ten of our most loyal follows; I may send for them before long. I trust things are well where you are. Have you been able to commune with the great one of late? I am keen to know if we still have the favor of our lord and I look forward to hearing from you again.*

*With love,  
Father.*

*P.S- Keep a close eye on Victor. For the past month I have had doubts as to where his heart*

*truly lies. I fear that he may not be loyal to our cause. If necessary, use any means to silence him; he knows too much.*

## WHERE TO GO NEXT?

Once the PCs have killed Gregory and his minions, they shouldn't be at a loss for where to go next. If Victor (the Hunchback) was present during the final encounter and they refrained from attacking him (he spent the entirety of the final combat cowering in the corner, skulking in a puddle of his own urine) they may ask him what he knows and they may also him to guide them to the 'new facility'. Victor has limited knowledge of Marnak and Gregory Morgenstein's plans, and what he does know he doesn't really like the idea of (see the description of Victor in the NPC section). If asked some of the more obvious questions he will reply in the following manner:

**Who are you?**

*Please don't kill me masters! My name is Victor; I am but a simple house servant and gardener. I didn't want to help Master Gregory but it is my duty...*

**What's going on here?**

*It is a long story masters, but I will tell if you'll hear me out! Six months ago, after a history of mad behaviour, Master Marnak Morgenstine became convinced that those closest to him were conspiring to poison him in his sleep. As a consequence, Marnak took to boarding himself down here in his cellar, and here he made the skeletons and began construction of this secret private sanctum where he was convinced he would be safe from those who would conspire to kill*

*him. The only one who was even close to my master was his son, Gregory; and even he was not the most stable minded of young men. So together, Marnak and Gregory took refuge here in the manor. Guarded by the undead that my master had created, they studied dark secrets and turned to powers that should have been left well alone... My mistress and daughter, Lady Henrietta and Miss Felisia respectively, although suspecting the use of dark magic, were torn between the love for their most noble family and the nagging of their conscience to do the right thing and inform the local church of the foul deeds committed by Marnak and Gregory. But it was not to be, their family ties won in the end and Marnak's and Gregory's secluded studies were allowed to continue behind closed doors. Consumed by dark powers, both Gregory and my master eventually were overcome with madness and sacrificed my mistress Henrietta and Felicia to the dark powers. Whatever dark powers they now worship told them of something evil that dwelled beneath the forest not far away, in a tomb. So my master and his son set about finding this place, this tomb; and in doing so they discovered an evil beast both terrible and great. Although I've never seen it, my master thinks the beast is responsible for the murders. That is where Master Marnak is now...*

**Why were you aiding them?**

*They are my masters, I do not know a life beyond my servitude to this family. They looked after me and gave me a job when I was a young lad, homeless on the streets. My mistress was always so nice to me... With these words the hunchback looks downcast and tears drop to the floor. I know my masters were evil but I was too*

*scared to act against them... I..I'm sorry...*

**Will you aid us in finding and killing your master?**

*Do you plan to stop my masters killing people? If so, I will help you. I can lead you to the tomb but I do not know what lurks within. Though... once my master is gone, I will have no one to look after me...*

It is also quite possible that the PCs have killed Victor before they read the letter or get to talk to him; if this is the case have the map in the chest be a little more detailed (to the point where with a little searching they could find the way to the tomb entrance).

## OSCAR DROK'S SHACK

For the past 25 years, Oscar Drok, an aging dwarf and local huntsman, has lived in his quiet shack quite content with his hermit lifestyle. With only his dogs for company, the dwarf wiled away his hours perusing his hobbies of archery, hunting, smoking and fletching. A month ago, Oscar was walking through the woodland not far from his home when he spotted something that disturbed him greatly. He saw an entrance to a cave and near the entrance he and his dogs watched a young boy's deformed head tear from his body (see the info on *vargouilles*). Naturally he and his dogs fled in terror from the scene and hid themselves within his house.

Although not dead, Oscar is currently boarded up inside his home, driven mad by the attacks of strange fear-inducing glowing green-eyed creatures at night (the *vargouilles*). Similarly, his dogs have suffered the same fate and likewise they cower in their kennels, starving to death and maddened with fright. If the PCs

approach his shack (being only a mile from the village, it is easy to find), then the PCs will have the following encounters. It is assumed that the PCs approach at day and do not attempt to do so under cover of stealth; if this is not the case, then you will have to adjust the encounters as you see fit.

### Outside the Shack

As you approach the old-looking shack in a small woodland clearing, not closer than 200 ft. away, you notice that the visible doors and shutters are all closed and there is no smoke rising from the stone chimney. You see large kennels, presumably for more than one pet, that look empty. At a glance it doesn't like anyone is home.

When the PCs get to within 60 ft of the shack, compare the PC's passive perception scores against a DC 12. Those with 12 or higher scores notice movement in the large kennels. When the PCs come within 40 ft. of the kennels, read the following.

As you near the kennels, suddenly, with a torrent of barking and snarling, five big wolf-like dogs, each weighing nearly a hundred pounds each, bound from the cover of the large gloomy kennels. With wild ferocity, they run at you with glaring mad eyes and frothing mouths!

The five big dogs within are maddened with hunger and fright, and will attack (charging) any PCs who try to get close to the shack. They will achieve surprise against the party if all of the party failed their passive perception checks. Anyone with trained in Animal Handling will immediately notice that the animals are

clearly distressed and confused. If the party throws the dogs some food, any party member may attempt a Handle Animal check DC 15 may attempt to influence the dogs. On a success, the dogs will allow the PCs to approach the house and will not attack, although they will growl if directly approached and will attack if someone attempts to touch them. A further attempt to influence the dogs like this is possible if they are given more food with each attempt.

**Large Maddened Guard Dogs** : Use stats for wolves on MM p. 34L.

Once the dogs are defeated or subdued and the PCs investigate the shack further, read the following to them.

As you investigate the rickety old shack further, you notice that the only door leading into the house is solidly locked, and although there are windows, they are similarly locked with wooden shutters. You manage to peer through a gap in one of the shutters and see a ransacked room within. A table lies overturned, the remnants of what may have been some chairs lie scattered over the floor along with some arrows, torn clothing, broken pottery, and a liberal scattering of silver, copper, and tin coins.

In madness and fear, Oscar ransacked his own home. The door is a sturdy wooden one and is barred from the inside and locked via a key (DC 20 Dexterity check to open the lock, DC 20 strength check to smash down). Alternatively, the PCs may simply pry one of the shutters away from the glassless window (DC 15 strength check) and enter that way.

## Inside the Shack

You stand amid the piles of broken wood, torn clothing and broken pottery; against the wall to your right there is an old looking wooden door. On closer inspection, you now notice that there is an iron bound trapdoor partially hidden under a pile of broken wood and cloth in the center of the room. Perhaps the most sickening thing is a stale but faint smell of urine and excrement in the air, and small spiders have begun to spin webs across the ceiling and around the window frames. It doesn't look like anyone has been in this room for weeks.

If the PCs choose to search the piles of refuse, they will find the following items of worth without the need for rolling a search check: - 8 sp - 67 cp - 34 tp - 8 arrows If the PCs say that they are specifically searching through the piles of refuse, have them make a Perception check (DC 15) to find the following: - Leather pouch containing 2 gp, a small uncut emerald (20 sp) and a small smooth topaz (30 cp) If the PCs investigate the trapdoor read the following out loud.

You shove aside a pile of broken wood and pottery that was covering the trap door and with little effort you pull the creaking hatch upwards, revealing a dark and dingy cellar beyond.

If the PCs investigating have dark vision or have a light source, then continue reading.

Peering through the gloom you see a small room with an earthen floor and a low 4 ft. ceiling. In the left hand corner of the room are piled barrels, old pieces of furniture, an old lantern and dusty boxes of cloth. Stood by the wall on the right hand side of the room is a large iron bound chest with a sturdy looking padlock sealing it shut. Also in the wall on the right hand side of the room, a foot wide hole has been dug through the sandstone and earth....

Compare the passive perception scores of any PCs looking down into the cellar with a DC 12 to hear the faint scratching and squeaking of rats. Eight giant rats will attack from their hiding places amid the boxes and barrels as soon as any PCs enter the cellar. Unless the PC/PCs who entered have detected the rats, the giant rats will achieve surprise on the PC.

**8 Giant Rats:** See MM p. 327.

When the PCs search the cellar more closely, they notice that the piles of barrels, cloth, and old furniture are riddled with gnaw marks and large rat droppings; they are of no value. The lantern is a bullseye lantern and is still usable, although the PCs will have to find some oil for it. The chest, however, is perhaps the most noteworthy item within the cellar. It is locked with a simple but sturdy lock (DC 18 to open) and inside is the following items: Potion of climbing and potion of resistance. Meanwhile Oscar is currently watching any remaining PCs through a gap in the door that leads to his larder and bedroom. The emaciated dwarf will leap through the door, dagger and club in hand, and will attack when he thinks he has the best chance of catching the PCs unawares (i.e. when one or more of the PCs climb down the trap door or move towards the door where he's hiding), all the while screaming at the top

of his voice; "*Yar 'll never take me! Yar green eyed bastards!*"

**Oscar Drok, the maddened woodsman:** See Appendix

If reduced to less than half hit points, he will drop to the floor and sob uncontrollably whilst trying desperately to get away from the PCs and back to his bedroom. Oscar has been maddened by his experiences over the past month and as a result he is convinced in his mind's eye that the PCs are the same green-eyed monsters (*vargouilles*) that have come for him in the night.

The only way the PCs can get him to reason with them is either through days of constant reassurance (with the PCs present he can begin to heal and regain his sanity), by casting *calm emotions* (which will cure temporarily suppress his madness, or by casting *lesser restoration*, which will cure him permanently (they may be able to attain one of these spells within the village temple for free). Once Oscar is no longer mad, he will be able and willing to aid the PCs any way he can. If asked some questions whilst in an untreated maddened state, the PCs will get nothing of value out of him other than frantic babbling about glowing green eyes in the night and invisible creatures that tear off people's heads! Ideally, the players should have Oscar eventually lead them to the entrance of the tomb, or the PCs should follow up some other rumors and investigate the Morgenstein manor house if they have not done so already.

## WHAT TO DO IF THE PLAYERS EXHAUST ALL OF THE LEADS

Ultimately, no matter where they choose to investigate, the players should end up at the tomb via a guide, map or other means. For one reason or another, the PCs may miss the leads that would point them in the direction of the tomb; they could either kill an essential NPC, or just simply miss a vital clue altogether. If this is the case, then have the PCs come across an exhausted and frightened adventurer or woodsman at some point (they will most likely encounter this man in the village of all places). Assume that he stumbled over the entrance to the tomb the previous night and was chased back to the party by cultists/vargouilles, he would be able to lead the PCs back there for a small price.

## PART TWO: THE ORCISH BURIAL GROUNDS

The orcish burial grounds have been beneath the forest long before any humans ever moved near the forest and claimed the lands for their own. For hundreds of years the tomb remained sealed and undisturbed until two months ago when something found its way in. That something was a creature not of this world, a multi-headed, monstrosity responsible for many of the murders and disappearances around Eichen of late. And it is to this place that the ex adventurer and local land owner, Marnak Morgenstein, was drawn by his dark lord of secrets, Grlarshh. Over the past four weeks, Marnak, with the aid of his undead legions and cultist followers, has excavated a small complex just beyond the burial chambers to house his fellow followers of Grlarshh, and to continue his research on the beast he has affectionately dubbed *The Queen*. As stated above, the intention of the previous clues and hints was to draw the PCs to this point as this is where the PCs will get to the bottom of the mystery around the Morgenstein family and the answer to the strange disappearances of late.

## THE BROKEN ENTRANCE

After trudging through thick undergrowth for the past half an hour, you suddenly emerge into a small clearing, no larger than 20 ft. across. In the centre of the open ground facing you, set into a large mound of earth standing over ten foot high, is a crudely constructed doorway, made of ancient-looking granite slabs adorned with strange glyphs etched into the doorframe. The stone double doors, long since broken and tossed aside into the long grass nearby, are overgrown and moss covered. Just beyond the threshold of the ancient stone doorway is an old and broken stairway that descends into the darkness below.

The doorway leads down into the flooded burial chambers below. If the PCs stop and listen, they will hear the distant dripping of water and even more distant chanting from the depths below (DC 15 perception to hear). If they pass the check by five or more, the listener will be able to discern that the multiple voices below are chanting a prayer in infernal (the prayer is a daily ritual to Grlarshh). The strange runes chipped onto the surface of the stone doorframe are of an old orcish dialect similar to the orcish Dark Speech spoken in the current day. Anyone who attempts to read the strange runes and is fluent in orcish Dark Speech may attempt an intelligence check (at DC 15) to roughly translate the wording. It says the following:

*Here rests the bones of Red Fang's strongest.  
May any who cross this threshold contend with  
the wrath of the ancestors!*

If the players are not quiet when descending the stair or investigating the doorway, they may alert the Vargouilles below to their presence (see areas B and C below for more details).

## THE TOMB

### The Entrance Area

As you come to the bottom of the broken and soil covered stairway, you can see the area beyond is more of a subterranean cavern than a room. The low earthen ceiling is riddled with protruding string-like tree roots from the surface above, much like a forest of gnarled and elongated fingers. Twenty foot ahead, you clearly notice that the bank of compact soil that you are standing upon gradually drops away and becomes submerged under dark murky water. Forty ft. away, jutting from the water on a similar island of compact earth, stands a 10 ft. high crudely constructed and fungus covered monument of some kind. In the far distance, you can see two larger islands of soil; upon them, jutting from the earth like the macabre teeth of some giant beast, are the unmistakable shapes of headstones. To your immediate right you can see that the wall has been recently excavated to allow space for a number of coat hooks, on which hangs an assortment of dark red robes, a large table and two chairs currently unoccupied, a chamber pot and an unlit lantern.

This cave is an old orc burial ground; the monument is a tribute to the god Vornoth and is nothing more than that. The islands in the distance contain the headstones of many great orc warriors, but are now the homes of vargouilles. The chances are that the vargouilles will know of the PCs' intrusion (perception check at DC 5 for the vargouilles to hear any loud noises) and are lying in ambush behind gravestones. If the PCs remain suitably quiet, any PCs that are present in the cavern will see glowing green eyes moving about on the distant islands. If the PCs enter the water (which is muddy but no deeper than three feet at the deepest point) the regular vargouilles will ambush them when they are moving towards the island in area 'B' and try to get a surprise round where they will use their shriek attacks and then move in for the kill. Any vargouille shriek attacks or loud melee noises in this chamber will 70% of the time alert the cultists currently in prayer in the main temple area, where they will prepare to ambush any intruders (see below for details). The area containing the coat hooks, table, and chairs are for the cultists to hang their robes to avoid getting them wet in the waist-high water in the room beyond. It is occasionally manned by a cultist or two, but when the PCs initially investigate the complex, all of the cultists will be in prayer to Grlarshh in the main chamber.

If the PCs investigate the large stone statue (only possible if they waded out to the small island) they may investigate the large idol more closely.

Looking closely at the 10 ft. tall fungus and lichen covered statue still reveals nothing. The subterranean plant life smothers it like a blanket, hiding most of its features almost as if they were grown there intentionally.

The statue as mentioned above is of the God Vornoth. It can only be identified if much of the yellow-colored fungus is scraped off. Once the face is uncovered it is plain to see two large emeralds in place of the statue's eyes. If the PCs can climb up the statue (DC 20, as it is slippery), they can prize the gems from the eye sockets with ease. The large emeralds are each worth 100 sps.

### **Area A**

Pulling yourself from the thick swamp-like mud you can see twenty some gravestones arranged in no particular order. The eerie flickering shadows of the crude headstones sends shivers down your spine.

A vargouille lies in wait here; it is hiding behind a nearby headstone and springs an attack when it thinks the PCs least suspect it (DC 14 perception to spot a hidden vargouille). If the PCs are attacked, two vargouilles also attack from the opposite island in an attempt to surprise the PCs (see below for details).

### **Area B**

This island is possibly the largest you've seen within this small cave. Upon its muddy bank you can see over 30 crude gravestones, half of which have been dug up and strewn about the floor in a random fashion. In the far corner of the cave you can see a mound of earth 20 ft. wide and 5 ft. high, behind which you suspect a hole has been dug, but currently it is obscured from your vision. In and amongst the clumps of dug up earth you can see many glittering objects: pieces of metal armor and ancient rusty weapons.

This 'hole' is in fact a passage way down to a living quarters and temple of Grlarshh, dug by Old man Morgenstein's undead minions and cultists. If the PCs have managed to avoid alerting the cultists below, they may be able to hear the sound of chanting from beyond as soon as they step foot on the island (perception check DC 10). Two vargouilles lie in wait on this island; they are hiding behind nearby headstones, and they spring from cover to attack when they think the PCs least expect it or when they think they've been discovered (DC 14 perception to spot a hidden vargouille). If the PCs are attacked, the vargouille from area A also attacks from the opposite island in an attempt to surprise the PCs. Don't forget that the cultists have a 70% chance to hear any loud noises within this cavern (this includes any vargouille screams). If they are alerted to anything untoward, they will stop their prayers and get ready to ambush the party (see below for details). If/once the PCs have defeated the vargouilles within this room and move towards the hole dug in the loose earth, read the following aloud.

As you peer over the large trampled mound of earth and into the hole beyond, you see that a crude stone block stairway descends 20 ft. into a newly dug 5 ft. wide corridor with an earthen floor and walls. The corridor only leads one way, strait ahead, and in the distance you can clearly see the flickering of torch light and some doors set into both the right and left hand walls some 60 ft. in the distance.

The corridor itself is unguarded and the PCs will encounter little resistance here. If the PCs alert the cultists to their presence (quite likely) they may see some of the cultists rushing to/from the armory (Area D) and back to the main

temple (Area E). If the PCs attempt to attack any cultists when they are rushing to and fro in the corridor, the cultists will flee back to the temple immediately.

### Area C

As you open the door to what appears to be a sleeping quarters of some kind, lined with beds, chests, chamber pots and other such furniture, a seven foot tall, four foot wide bugbear with a half rotten face and no lower jawbone slowly lumbers toward you with its crude morning star and shield raised, ready for combat!

The zombies in each of these rooms have been commanded to guard them against intruders. If anyone enters without knocking three times, the bugbear zombie will attack. The zombies will not leave this room unless Marnak Morgenstein specifically instructs them to.

**Bugbear Zombies:** See MM p. 316.

In each of the rooms are three beds, a collection of humble bedroom furniture and some iron bound chests (three chests in each room, each are un-trapped and have a simple lock, DC 15 Dexterity check to open). The contents are the following:

**Chest 1** - Commoners clothing - A belt pouch containing 3 cp, 34 tp and a small piece of amber (worth 10 sp) - A mace

**Chest 2** - Commoners clothing - Small leather bag containing 4 ivory dice, 17 cp, 45 tp.

**Chest 3** - Commoners clothing - A small doll with a dozen pins/nails stuck into it. - A pouch containing 7 cp and 5 tp - A

silver bracelet studded with topaz (worth 25 sp)

**Chest 4** - Expensive and flamboyant clothing (worth 25 sp) - Some shiny knee high black leather boots - A pouch containing 6 sp, 55 cp and 3 tp. - A plain gold ring (worth 10 sp)

**Chest 5** - Commoners clothing - Small leather pouch containing a deck of worn cards, 37 cp, 5 tp.

**Chest 6** - Commoners clothing - Small suede bag containing 10 cp, 5 tp - A straw hat

### Area D

Before you is a small newly dug room, and lining the walls are racks of spears, daggers, morning stars, small wooden shields, and suits of armor in various states of repair and of various sizes. There seems to be enough here to equip around twenty people! Stood by one wall are two barrels and hanging from wooden beams set into the earth ceiling are slabs of salted meat and cheeses.

This room serves as a small armory and larder for the handful of cultists that live here. Ever the optimist, Old man Morgenstein plans to eventually gather a small army of cultists and undead which he intends to arm and armor with this equipment. One barrel contains water, the other ale and the meat and cheese are just that (although they might not look it; the hanging meats are of the human variety!). The cultists from the temple (Area E) will rush here and grab suits of armor and morning stars. To get fully equipped it will take the cultists around 2 minutes from when they are alerted to the PCs' presence. They will get what they need

from the armory and ready themselves in the Temple area.

### **Area E**

As you push aside the large sturdy wooden door, a torch lit, wide stone walled chamber greets you. In the centre of the room is a dais and upon the dais stands a large black granite altar. Stood around the altar, four cultists wearing dark red robes and leather armor carry an assortment of weapons. Behind the altar is a stooped elderly figure with white, wispy hair in a set of flamboyant red and black velvet robes. He points his finger at you and begins chanting a spell with mad widened eyes!

This is the final combat (or so the players think!) and should be played as such. Marnak Morgenstein is an evil individual and will use every trick in the book (no matter how evil) to save his own life; including (if things take a turn for the worse) turning invisible and leaving his followers to die as he makes a hasty retreat. The above description assumes that the PCs give the cultists and Marnak sufficient warning of their approach. The cultists require 2 full minutes to gather weapons and don armor retrieved from the armory. If the PCs don't give them this time then you will have to adjust the encounter where appropriate (see the difference between a typical cultist and a typical armed and armored cultist below). Before the PCs engage the cultists and Marnak, Marnak will cast *Mage Armor* as soon as he is aware of any trouble and will then retrieve his spell book from area E (takes one minute). As soon as the PCs open the door to the temple, they will be swarmed by an assault spells and melee combatants (see the appendix for Marnak's tactics in combat).

**Marnak:** See Appendix.

**4 Cultists:** With no time to prepare, use stats on MM p. 345. If they have time to prepare, use the stats on p. 345 with the following changes: AC 14 (chain shirt), *Morningstar*. At attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage. Add 5 XPs per cultist if they are prepared.

As soon as Marnak has taken at least 12 HP of damage or three of the cultists have been slain, he will use *invisibility* to try and escape from the PCs via the only way he can get out (the way the PCs came in!). The only way the PCs will be able to locate him is by a perception check (at DC 10 when he is close by) or to wait for him when he tries to wade through the waist high water in the entrance area. If he escapes he will return to his manor; if he finds that the PCs have already been there and murdered his son, he will flee the village, never to return.

**Special Note:** This is a very challenging encounter if the PCs allow the enemy time to prepare themselves for combat.

### **Area F**

You enter a large and luxurious living quarters, complete with a bed and a small library; the sweet and sickly smell of decay assaults your nostrils. Against one of the walls rests three shelves packed with leather-bound books of various sizes; against the other is an expensive-looking four poster bed and by a large desk sits a plush red armchair. Piled neatly on the desk are a collection of papers and books, along with an expensive-looking ink and quill set and a two foot wide terrestrial map depicting

the kingdoms. But perhaps the most disturbing item in the room, and the source of the rank smell, is a headless and partially decayed naked male corpse suspended at head height from the ceiling on hooked chains as though it were some form of freakish ornament. By the looks of it, the body must have belonged to a young boy.

The body hanging from the ceiling is that of the missing boy (see *The Disturbing Rumors* section above). The body is too badly decomposed and mangled to identify. Nothing short of a spell will reveal the body's owner. It has been hung there so that Marnak could examine it more closely. If they examine the notes on the table, they will discover some detailed drawings of the body (in particular around the neck wound) and detailed notes on the study of the vargouilles' breeding habits. It is in the notes that they also discover the nature of the attacks on the villagers (again the vargouilles) and the study and strange pictures of a tentacled creature referred to as *The Queen*. The notes state that Marnak, although obviously keen to know, has no idea what this *queen* is or where it came from. Though he suspects it's from another plane of existence. Also in the diary of Marnak Morgenstein are multiple references to *The Lord of Death* and the numbers and details of sacrifices to his name, as well as a detailed description of his paranoia towards his wife and the murder of his wife and daughter by Marnak and his son.

The contents of the room, if searched, are the following:

**In a hidden compartment in the desk (catch is perception DC 18 to find):**  
Marnak's Spell Book (may be gone if Marnak had time to retrieve it, see above)

- A gold ruby ring (his wedding ring, worth 50 sp)

**In an iron bound chest at the foot of the bed:** (locked at DC 20, break DC 20. Marnak has the keys). A medium sized battleaxe of fine quality, - A large leather pouch bulging with coin (contains 3 gp, 20 sp, 230 cp) - A small leather pouch containing black gem stones (contains 30 sp of black onyxes) - A suit of man-sized Chain mail - A scroll tube containing a scroll of *Animate Dead*.

**Other valuable contents of the room:** The large globe on the desk is worth 20 sp - The expensive ink and quill set is worth 10 sp - There is 50 sp of fine inks that are valuable for scribing spells in a spell book. If used for some other purpose, they are worth nothing. Two rare books on the bookstand, one entitled *The Gentleman's Guide to Plane Shifting Magic* by G.J.T.L.P Jinglehop (worth 50 sp) and the other is entitled *Life in the Forge, a complete guide to maintaining your magical forge* by T.G.Whiteanvil (worth 40 sp).

## **Area G**

The Final Encounter!

Leaving the recently mined earthen corridor, you cautiously emerge into a dark, wide deep natural cave. In the centre of the room is a large hole that, when you peer down into it, you see continues beyond your light source (darkvision) allows you to see. Stalagmites and stalactites line the ceiling and floor of this truly ancient cave like a small inverted forest of thin cacti.

This is the resting place of the vargouille queen. She is currently lying in wait at the

bottom of this shaft and flies into the room as soon as she hears anything enter her cave (use her passive perception score). Compare the passive perception scores of any PCs in the room against a DC 12 to hear her flying up the shaft; she will gain surprise against any PCs who did not detect her.

flask, 50 ft. of rope, and a grappling hook.  
- 5 sp, 120 cp and 56 tp scattered over the floor.

Like a foul daemon rising from the depths of hell, a wingless seven foot wide floating mass of tentacles emerges from the pit in the centre of the cave. Each of its scaled slimy appendages ends in a hideously distorted human-like head with scaly skin and glowing green eyes. You do not have time to count but feel sure that there are at least eight such heads. The beast suddenly lurches forwards through the air and hisses angrily!

THIS is the vargouille queen! Although she looks fierce and is cunning, she lacks real intelligence and lives only to feed and procreate. Therefore her tactics are simple: spring out, use the scream ability to cause as much disruption as possible, and then tear into her opponents with as much force as possible. Due to her insatiable lust to procreate as much as possible (by delivering the vargouille kiss), she will attack the PCs until death.

**The Vargouille Queen:** See appendix.

If the PCs venture into the layer of the Queen 100 ft. below, apart from the strong smell of ammonia, they will find the headless body of an adventurer and a belt pouch of coins scattered over the floor (see the list below).

**Treasure in the Queen's layer:** - Suit of Plate Armor - Long Sword - Heavy Wooden Shield - Potion of healing - Backpack containing a bed roll, a water

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PC have slain the Vargouille queen, there remains little else to do. The PCs may wish to take the bodies back to the local temple to be put to rest and report back to the local authorities on their findings. After uncovering the mystery of the disappearances and vanquishing the cause, they receive the promised payment, if any, and free room and board for a week in the Hobbling Goblin Inn. Others in town who know where heroes are needed may point them in the direction of further adventures, but they are always welcomed in Eichen.

## FURTHER ADVENTURES

Expanding the adventure shouldn't be too much of a problem; if Marnak Morgenstein escaped, he will want revenge on the PCs at some point. If not, you could have the map found in his study marked with an X and expand on the notes found on his desk, suggesting that he had learnt where *The Queen* came from, and if so, the PCs may be able to find this place and see if any other such creatures have appeared. Alternatively, you could have Marnak working for a larger cult (his was just a branching organization) and the PCs could follow leads to track the others down. If you are playing the next Farland adventure, *The Quick and the Dead*, have a note or papers giving the players a reason to head to the village of Kenby.

# APPENDICES

## NPCs

### Marnak Morgenstein (Old man Morgenstein)

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 24 (6d6 + 6)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR** 9 (+0) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 12 (+1)

**INT** 14 (+1) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 14 (+2)

**Skills** Arcana +3, history +3, Intimidation +4

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Kelevan, Dark Speech

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Spellcasting.** Marnak is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spell casting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mage hand, ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, mage armor, magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers, invisibility*

#### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

**Personality and Appearance:** Old man Morgenstein is a cold and calculating

individual, though at times (especially when angered) he has psychotic breakdowns where he goes on a destructive and murderous rampage. Due to this fact, his followers know to keep out of his way as much as possible, lest they be blinded, deafened or electrocuted by the mad old wizard! A scientist at heart, he sees everything, including the value of human life, as something that can be manipulated and dissected in the name of science. At the age of 54, Old man Morgenstein looks far older than his years. Due to years spent pouring over books in his study, his back is bent and he walks about constantly stooped over. Added to his thinning wispy white hair and hobbling caused by arthritis in his right knee, he looks positively ancient.

**Tactics:** In combat (if given the opportunity) he uses his mage hand spell to good effect. Initially he will cast *Mage Armor* on himself when the combat starts and then, once the melee truly begins, he will target any melee fighter types with his *burning hands* spell, or if that fails, a *cloud of daggers* on the same target. He will use *ray of frost* liberally and *magic missile* to target spellcasters. If things are turning out badly, Marnak will use *invisibility* to escape and extract his cold and calculated revenge on the PCs at a later date.

### Victor the Hunchback (Old man Morgenstein's Groundskeeper and Butler)

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 8 (2d8)  
**Speed** 30ft.

STR II (+1) DEX 10 (+0) CON 10 (+0)  
INT II (+0) WIS II (+0) CHA 9 (-1)

**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** Kelevan  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

#### ACTIONS

**Club. Melee Weapon Attack:** +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

**Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +2 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

**Personality and Appearance:** If a single word could be used to describe Victor, it would be loyal. For the past twenty years, since he was taken from the streets by lady Morgenstein and given a job, he has been loyal to the family. It is only over the past year that Victor has seriously begun to secretly question his master's actions. Not being evil, Victor has been heartbroken since he watched Gregory and Marnak Morgenstein murder his mistress and now he only serves the Morgenstein family out of fear. Before he served this family, Victor had had a horrible life. Standing a little over five foot tall, the hunchback's arms hang beneath his knees as he is constantly stooped over. His face is deformed, with one eye higher on his head than the other, and he talks with a very bad lisp. Because he still serves as a groundskeeper, he wears a pair of worn out brown leather boots, an unwashed dark green shirt, and brown trousers. Because he never washes and suffers from incontinence (especially when scared), Victor constantly smells of dried urine and stale sweat.

**Tactics:** Victor is a coward and will not fight the PCs if he can help it. Instead, if he is cornered, he will whimper and plead for his life whilst he sits in a growing pool of his own urine. If he has been convinced to help the party to track down and stop Marnak Morgenstein, then he finds the courage to fight and do the right thing (but only at range, never in melee). Though if the PCs go down, he will sooner run away and save himself than risk his own life.

## Oscar Drok (Maddened Old Hermit)

Medium Humanoid (dwarf), neutral

**Armor Class** 13 (excrement and urine-covered leather armor)  
**Hit Points** 50 (10d8 + 10)  
**Speed** 30ft.

STR 12 (+1) DEX 14 (+2) CON 14 (+2)  
INT II (+0) WIS 10 (+0) CHA II (+0)

**Skills** Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5  
**Senses** passive Perception 14  
**Languages** Dwarven, Kelevan  
**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** Drok has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Drok makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

**Club. Melee Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Personality and Appearance:** Oscar is a moody old dwarf at the best of times.

Unusually for a dwarf, he enjoys the peace and quiet of the woodland as opposed to the hustle and bustle of village life. Content with his hobby of archery and fletching arrows, he wiles away his time in his shack as he drinks the local ale and pipe weed that he picks up from the village once a week. However, recently, Oscar has been attacked on a number of occasions by the vargouilles that nest in an old tomb a mile or two away. Therefore, he and his dogs have been maddened by their experiences and do nothing but shut themselves away in a dark room. As a result, Oscar has not eaten or drank for days. He is thinning and slowly dying from dehydration (even though he has a well just outside his house!). If the PCs manage to increase Oscar's wisdom to six or above (through clerical healing or natural healing), then Oscar (although still quite mad and disturbed) will offer to take the PCs to the entrance of a tomb where he saw a head rip free of its body and fly at him with green eyes (though he will not enter the tomb for any reason).

**Tactics:** Oscar is a mad old dwarf and sees everyone as vargouilles in his mind. He waits in hiding within his room and jumps out wielding his club when he thinks the adventurers will least expect it. If reduced to less than half hit points, Oscar drops to his knees and sobs at the PCs and pleads with them not to take his head.

## MONSTERS

### Skeletal Brown Bear

*Large undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (fur scraps)  
**Hit Points** 44 (6d10 + 12)  
**Speed** 30ft.

STR 19 (+4) DEX 10 (+0) CON 16 (+3)  
 INT 2 (-4) WIS 9 (-1) CHA 5 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The skeletal bear makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws. Melee Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

### Vargouille

*Small monstrosity, Neutral Evil*

**AC** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 9 (3d6)

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1), DEX 14 (+2), CON 11 (+0),  
 INT 6 (-2), WIS 11 (+0), CHA 8 (-1)

**Senses** darkvision, passive perception 10

**Languages** broken Kelevan or broken Infernal

**Challenge** 1/4 (100 XP)

**Light Sensitivity:** When in sunlight, the vargouille has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage and target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw against poison or be unable to heal the vargouille's bite naturally or magically. A *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *greater restoration*, or *heal* spell removes this effect, as does completing a long rest.

**Shriek. (Recharge 5-6)** The vargouille lets out a terrible shriek affecting all within 60 feet (except other vargouilles). Targets must succeed at a DC 10 Wisdom save or be paralyzed with fear. The target can save again at the end of each of its turns. A target who succeeds at its save cannot be affected by the same vargouille's shriek for 24 hours.

**Kiss.** The vargouille kisses an adjacent paralyzed victim. The victim must succeed at a DC 12 Constitution save or be afflicted with a disease that transforms him into a vargouille over a 24-hour period. Within 6 hours, the victim loses all hair. Within 12 hours, his ears grow long and pointed, his teeth become fangs, and tentacles sprout from his head and chin. Within 18 hours, the victim becomes noticeably dull and lethargic. Within 24 hours, the victim's head sprouts wings and breaks from his body, killing the victim. A new vargouille has been created. Sunlight or the *daylight* spell delays the transformative disease; the disease does not progress as long as the victim remains in the light. However, only *lesser restoration*, *greater restoration*, or *heal* can fully cure the disease.

Vargouilles are hideous flying heads with wings and tentacles. They are disgusting scavengers who infest ruins and dark places. Sages say they spread from the Infernal Planes by infecting travelers with their transformative disease. Most are

only semi-intelligent, with only basic, but a rare few understand or can even speak bits of Common or Infernal. As evil opportunists, vargouilles prefer living prey but also eat carrion and their own kind as well. Though they collect no treasure, the headless bodies of their victims can possess a few items of incidental treasure in a vargouille's lair, typically a dark underground place.

## Vargouille Queen

*Large monstrosity, Neutral Evil*

**AC** 14 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 98 (14d10+28)  
**Speed** 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

**STR** 17 (+3), **DEX** 14 (+2), **CON** 14 (+2),  
**INT** 5 (-2), **WIS** 12 (+1), **CHA** 8 (-1)

**Senses** darkvision, passive perception 11  
**Languages** broken Kelevan or broken Infernal  
**Challenge** 4 (1100 XP)

**Many eyes, many ears.** Due to the vargouille queen's many sets of eyes and ears, she receives advantage on perception checks when she or the thing she has the chance of perceiving is not in sunlight. Her field of vision is 360 degrees. She cannot be flanked.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The vargouille queen makes two bite attacks and may attack in any direction without turning around. Alternately, the vargouille queen may make one bite attack and use *bissing despair*.

**Bite.** *Melee Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) piercing damage and target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw against

poison or be unable to heal the vargouille queen's bite naturally or magically. A *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *greater restoration*, or *heal* spell removes this effect, as does completing a long rest.

**Shriek. (Recharge 5-6)** The vargouille queen lets out a terrible shriek affecting all within 60 feet (except vargouilles or vargouille queens). Targets must succeed at a DC 12 Wisdom save or be paralyzed with fear. The target can save again at the end of each of its turns. A target who succeeds at its save cannot be affected by the same vargouille queen's shriek for 24 hours.

**Hissing Despair.** A vargouille queen can emit a distracting hiss that fills all near her with a profound feeling of hopelessness. Those within 30 feet (except vargouilles or vargouille queens) must succeed at a DC 12 Wisdom save or have disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws versus fear. The target can save again at the end of each of its turns.

**Multiple Kiss.** The vargouille queen kisses up to two adjacent paralyzed victim. The victim must succeed at a DC 13 Constitution save or be afflicted with a disease that transforms him into a vargouille over a 24-hour period. Within 6 hours, the victim loses all hair. Within 12 hours, his ears grow long and pointed, his

queens's bite naturally or magically

teeth become fangs, and tentacles sprout from his head and chin. Within 18 hours, the victim becomes noticeably dull and lethargic. Within 24 hours, the victim's head sprouts wings and breaks from his body, killing the victim. A new vargouille has been created. Sunlight or the *daylight* spell delays the transformative disease; the disease does not progress as long as the victim remains in the light. However, only *lesser restoration*, *greater restoration*, or *heal* can fully cure the disease.

Rumored to have leaked from another plane of existence, a vargouille queen is a terrifying beast to behold. It is a seven-foot wide floating mass of tentacles. Each of its scaled, slimy appendages ends in a hideously distorted human-like head with scaly skin, glowing green eyes, and tiny wings that somehow seem to keep the monstrosity aloft. Although at some point this creature was dubbed a vargouille "queen," this creature is the ruler of nothing. In fact the term queen can be quite misleading, as the beast is gender neutral and reproduces asexually. When an outbreak of vargouilles emerges in a certain area, it is a safe bet that there is a vargouille queen hidden somewhere that is the root cause of the outbreak.

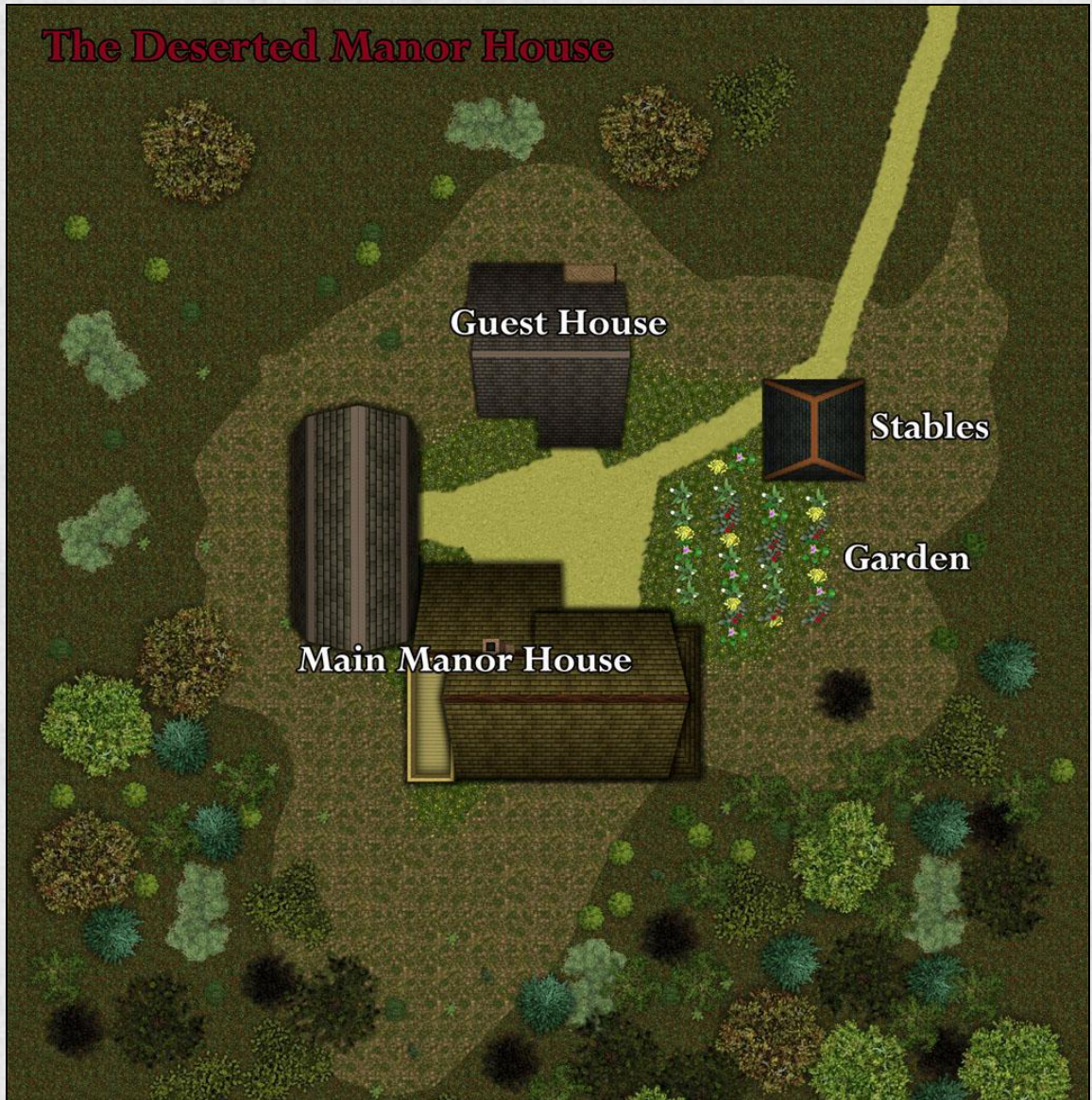
## MAPS



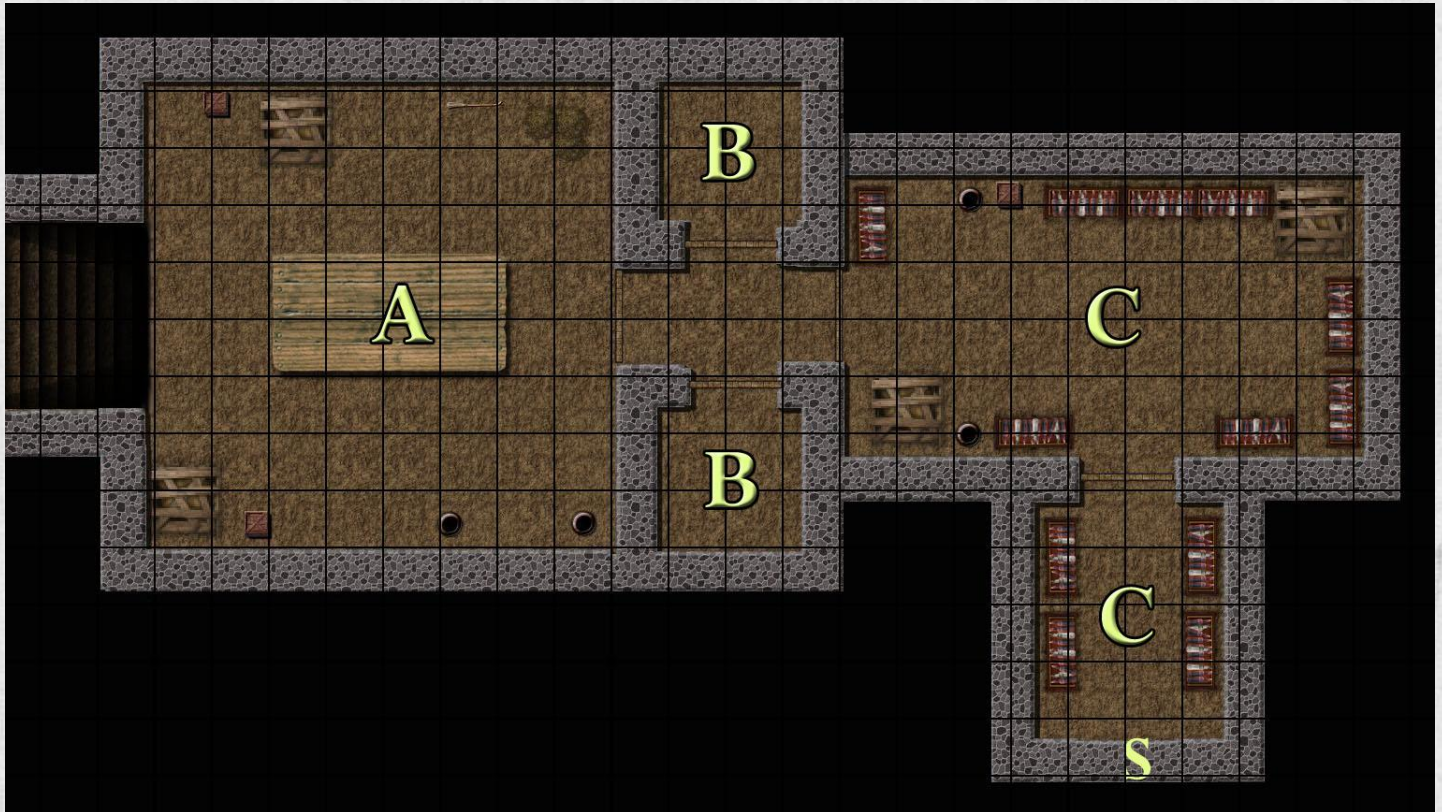
### Eichen Key

- A Town Hall
- B Temple
- C The Hobbling Goblin Inn
- D The Merry Mage Tavern
- E Morganstein Manor House
- F Oscar Drok's Shack

## Morganstein Manor House Grounds



## Morganstein Manor House Basement Level 1



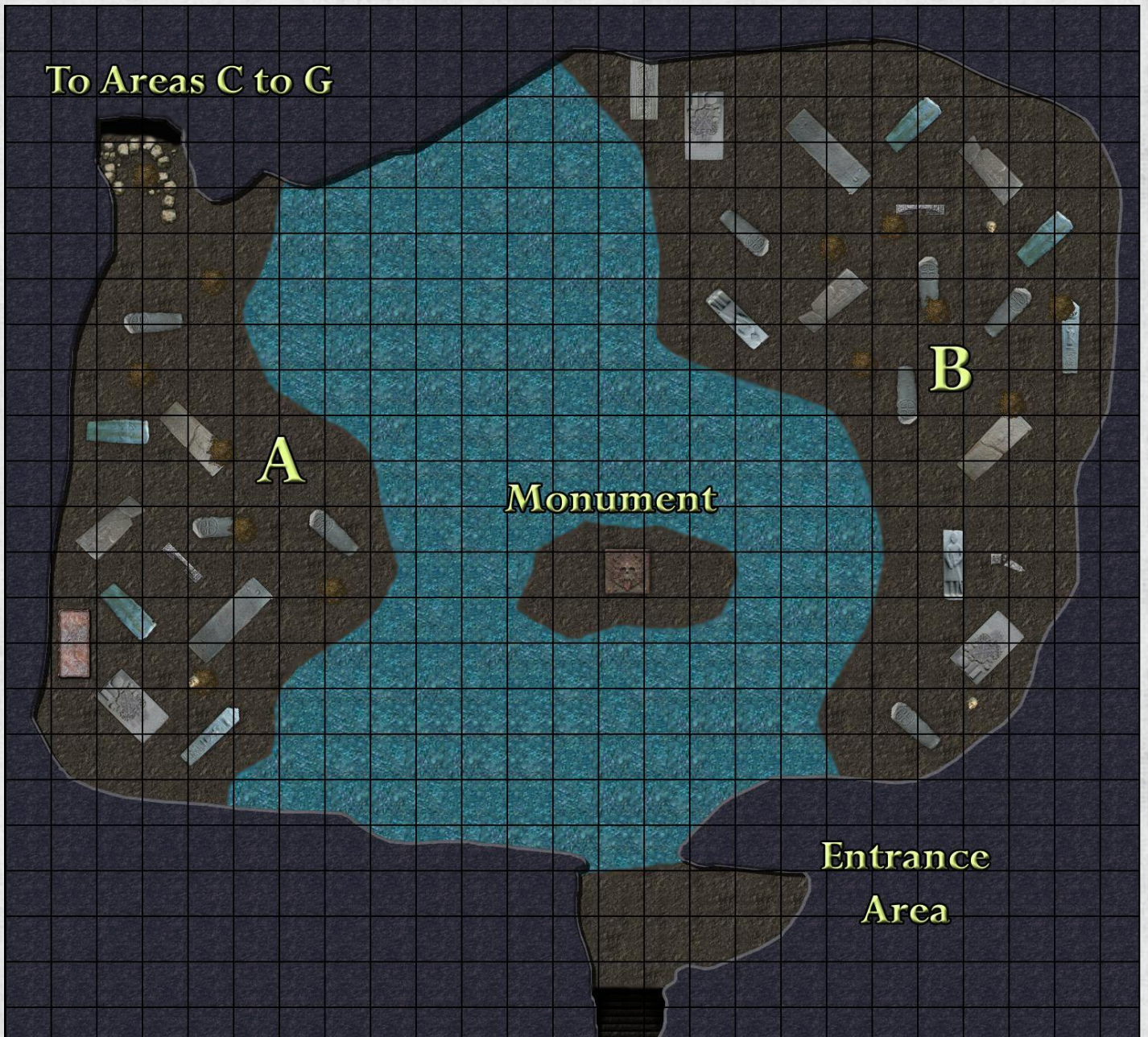
## Morganstein Manor House Basement Level 2



## Oscar Drok's Shack



Orcish Burial Grounds Areas A & B



Orcish Burial Grounds Areas C to G



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