

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Adventure

DUNGEON CRAWL™
FOR SIX TO EIGHT CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 9-12

HELLGATE KEEP



by Steven E. Schend

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®



Hellgate Keep

A Dungeon Crawl® Adventure

By Steven E. Schend

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Campaign setting based on the original campaign world of Ed Greenwood.
 Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax
 and Dave Arneson.

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9562XXX1501

1st Printing, February 1998 ISBN 0-7869-0786-X

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INTRODUCTION

"Hellgate Keep as an organized satellite of villainy is no more. Despite our best hopes, however, the evil was not eradicated utterly, and that which was once contained therein now may have gained egress to the realms beyond the Upvale. The corruption should end with its passing, for I have no wish to see my people nor my realm suffer the fates that befell Ascalhorn or Eaerlann. I beseech those who take the mantle of heroes to stand forth and prevent such depredations from spreading further than the wards that once penned them in. For doing this, ye shall receive my blessings and those of the people, and perhaps even those of the five goddesses of Luruar.

-Alustriel, Lady Hope of Luruar, Year of the Tankard (1370 DR)

This adventure acts as a stand-alone quest, though it also easily adapts to any FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign in the Savage Frontier or any other fantasy campaign world of the DM's choice. No rules are necessary for this adventure beyond the core AD&D® rules (the *Player's Handbook*, *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* tome, and *Tome of Magic*), the *Complete Psionics Handbook*, *PLAYER'S OPTION®: Skills & Powers*, the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting box, and *Faiths & Avatars*. However, having access to *The North* boxed set would provide more background on the region the adventure is set in and its recent history, and *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical* provides more information on the *Gatekeeper's Crystal*, an artifact prominent in the recent history of Hellgate Keep. Folks might also find some PLANESCAPE® materials useful in expanding the details and backstory of some of the more fiendish inhabitants of Hellgate Keep.

This DUNGEON CRAWL® adventure assumes that the player characters (hereafter called PCs) are of intermediate to high levels (levels 9-12) and of an average party size (5 or 6 members). PCs of lower experience levels may explore the dungeons but will need discipline and power to survive the dangers of Hellgate Keep. This module also provides a number of adventure starts to get the PCs into the action. All of them are arrayed below as options for the DM to use, since not all parties act the same nor are their motivations equal. No matter what style of play a gaming group enjoys or what campaign world a DM uses, these vignettes should work in getting the PCs to leap headlong into the abyss of evil that was once Hellgate Keep.

ADVENTURES IN THE KEEP

Most of these startup scenarios have their ties to the FORGOTTEN REALMS game setting because that is where Hellgate Keep is found. If there are details—from people and place names to noted events—among the scenes below that do not fit a particular campaign, all that DMs need do is genericize them to their component roles to fit into their own campaign worlds. For example, the Sealing the Keep adventure option given below has Alustriel of Silvermoon giving the PCs a quest to complete within the Keep. In another campaign world, she could be replaced by either another queen or any ruler with access to magic and still maintain the bulk of the plot.

These scenes only serve to motivate the players and get their PCs moving toward the dungeon. DMs can easily slip in short side adventures involving wandering monsters or spies or bandits along the way since most of these suggestions involve travel time to the dungeon. Other DMs with more involved campaigns might forego these suggestions and create their own ways to entice the PCs into action by releasing some of the recent history of the Keep and its destruction into tavern gossip and allies' tales of news to PCs. How the PCs enter the adventure is up to each DM, though what information and equipment they have ahead of time (based on how they start the adventure) could later determine friend from foe or life from death.

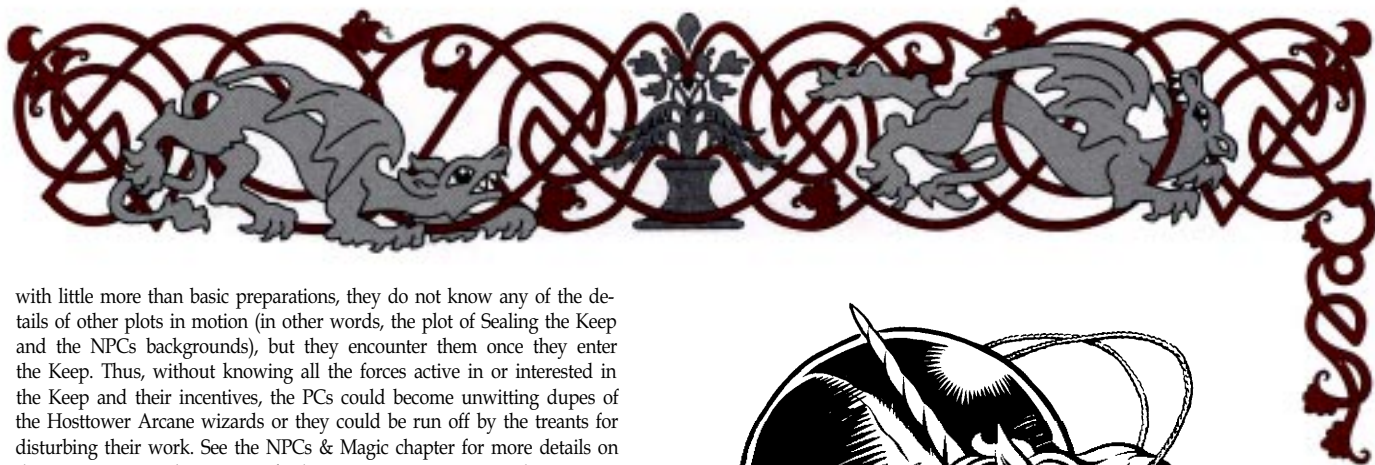
Overview

As revealed in *The North* boxed set, the treants of Turlang have claimed the surface lands around and atop the ruins of Hellgate Keep after its destruction in the autumn of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR). Thus, the most immediate defenders against the rise of anything from Hellgate Keep's ruins are the treants. Second lines of defense are the allied forces of the fledgling nation of Luruar, the Evereskan elves normally guarding the Nameless Dungeon, the Harpers (through numerous agents), and the Mistmaster. All may be active within the PCs' adventure as factors to keep the evils in the area destabilized and downtrodden. This adventure is assumed to take place in the spring of the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR) or later.

Exploring The Keep

Whether PCs find the dungeon by chance or design, the basic instinct of adventurers is the same across a thousand worlds: Let's go take a look and see what secrets that dungeon holds! And, if the PCs are altruistic agents of good, chances are they might immediately seek to rush to the Keep upon hearing of its destruction to both eradicate its final evils and prevent its riches of magic and coin from falling into the wrong hands.

Merely wandering about without rhyme or reason draws attention to the PCs in the form of Turlang's treants and others with more contrived designs on the Keep's ruins. Since the PCs will have just wandered into the scene



with little more than basic preparations, they do not know any of the details of other plots in motion (in other words, the plot of Sealing the Keep and the NPCs backgrounds), but they encounter them once they enter the Keep. Thus, without knowing all the forces active in or interested in the Keep and their incentives, the PCs could become unwitting dupes of the Hosttower Arcane wizards or they could be run off by the treants for disturbing their work. See the NPCs & Magic chapter for more details on the motivations and activities of other power groups among the ruins. In all other ways, a DM can merely use one of the dungeon entrances and begin the adventure.

Sealing The Keep

Alustriel, the queen and Lady Hope of Luruar, summons the heroes to the High Palace of Silverymoon. Within the Peers' Hall of the Lady's Annex she receives them graciously, along with some of her court, including King Harbronn of Citadel Adbar. (Alustriel either knows of the PCs from personal experience or through a referral by her sister Laeral, brother-in-law Khelben, or other Harpers.) She wishes the PCs to help her protect the North by taking an item into the ruins.

You are given a small green glass ball Alustriel calls a *Mythantha's Orb*. Once activated, the *Orb* seals a set area behind an impenetrable ward and keeps any lurking evils trapped within the dungeons beneath Hellgate Keep. She also provides you each with a necklace with a unicorn's head amulet.

"Grasp the amulet," says the Lady Hope, "say the word 'Lurue,' and pull it from the chain. Its magic returns you and one other you touch to just outside the Hunters' Gate into Silverymoon. Only the magic of these amulets will see you past the wards set by the *Orb* should you get trapped inside of it.

"Take no unnecessary risks while delving the dungeon, but I will reward you well for any relics you recover from the ruins, any information you bring to me about troops within it, or any reasonably detailed maps of the remaining Keep's structures that you can construct and return to me.

"Good journey, and may the five goddesses and Tymora all bless you in your effort for us."

If the DM does not wish to use this plot for the PCs, it should be activated nonetheless. At some point during the adventure, the PCs encounter agents of Luruar seeking to seal off all access to the dungeon. If they are careless, they might get sealed in or under the dungeon. See the Epilogue chapter for further details.

Searching The Keep

Treasures abound in the former town of Ascalhorn, and many factions across the North want to plunder Hellgate Dell (the ruins of Hellgate Keep) for artifacts of the fallen citadel, a place that was previously too dangerous to explore.

- Many factions in Waterdeep, Silverymoon, and elsewhere want to send agents (or themselves) into the ruins to find any and all elven items and artifacts buried among the fallen evils. Most money going to mercenaries' and adventurers' funds to persuade them to explore the Keep changes hands during the early winter months of the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR).
- A trio of elves meets with the PCs, identifying themselves as representatives of Evereska's ruling council. They pay 400 gp to the PCs in exchange for sending them to Hellgate Keep to reclaim elven artifacts lost since Ascalhorn's Fall long ago. (DMs can adjust the amount to suit their campaigns.) The PCs must meet these elves in two months' time at the easternmost confluence on the Delimbiyr



river, which is located 30 miles northeast of the Keep. Upon delivery of the Items, the PCs are paid 1,600 gp (unless they collect less than three items) and are thanked for their efforts. While there are few ways to uncover the elves' deception (especially since they are using magic to make them proof against *detect lie* spells), these elves are actually outcasts of Evereska seeking items of power to fuel their revenge plans against the peaceful elven realm. In fact, it is not out of the question for these ruthless elves to hunt the PCs after their rendezvous and try to slay them before they reveal too much.

The fiends of Hellgate Keep brought low the great dwarven realm of Ammarindar and pillaged its many treasures in past centuries. Since the halls of Ammarindar echo emptily, unable to reveal the current location of their lost relics, the dwarves of the North want to search (or have agents search) the ruins of Hellgate Keep to find and recover any items that formerly belonged to the dwarves of Ammarindar. In addition to helping fund the search, the dwarven sponsors from the Citadels will pay handsomely for such historical items.

- One night in the Dripping Dagger (or any tavern in Waterdeep or Silverymoon), the PCs are met by an aging dwarf whose carriage suggests far more nobility and composure than the usual dwarf's tense and temperamental bearing. He approaches them directly, the glint of Dumathoin's holy symbol at his neck clasp suggesting his priestly status. "I wish to hire noted heroes to venture deep into the ruins of Hellgate Keep to recover some things whose loss has shredded the dwarven bloodlines of the North to the tatters that remain today. I want to fund an expedition to recover the crown Jewels of Splendarmorn and Ammarindar and restore them to our keeping, that we might recover some of our lost heritage and pride." What Tomil Myrilhew (son of Argehk, blood of Dar-rlk, holy dwarf of Dumathoin) falls to mention is that while he is seeking the three crowns of the fallen realm for his church, he is also a distant relation to the last ruling clan and an heir to Ammarindar's lost throne!
- The usual rumors of lost magics are more than enough to fuel the greed of many adventurers. Simply mention some of the lost items listed in the NPCs & Magic chapter in tavern tales the PCs hear, and lead them on a quest for one such item.



Hidden Stories

"What is known of Hellgate Keep and the Upvale tells us much of how evil took hold there and what was done to combat the same. What is not known to the populace at large gives even me and mine pause, for it shows how deeply and subtly corruption worms its way through even the noblest of hearts and realms."

—Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, the Year of the Dragon (1352 DR)



ost assume that Hellgate Keep's evil is now gone from the Realms, and that assumption allows them to sleep peacefully at night. Those same folk believe that Hellgate Keep's evils stemmed merely from the depredations and magics of one man: Wulgreth the Ambitious. Of course, matters are hardly that simple. While Hellgate Keep's evils bubbled openly to the surface with the tanar'ri invasion, they dwelt in seclusion and privacy within Ascalhorn since its inception.

The Prehistory of Hellgate Keep

Before humans first heard of Turnstone Pass or the Talons or the Land of Three Fords, the elves were here among the once-plentiful forests of the Upvale. In the days when elves walked Faerûn as rulers, the High Forest was more massive. What are now the Lurkwood, Moonwood, Silverwood, Everwood, Cold Wood, FarForest, and South Wood once were part of one greater forest, and the land therein was known among elves as Aryvandaar, which translates as *High Forest/the Great Woodlands Home*. With the Crown Wars, the elven civilization of Aryvandaar and its great forest began to splinter. Within a score of centuries, the northernmost reaches of the High Forest split along the River Rauvin and the trees also thinned along the Delimbiyr, creating the Upvale.

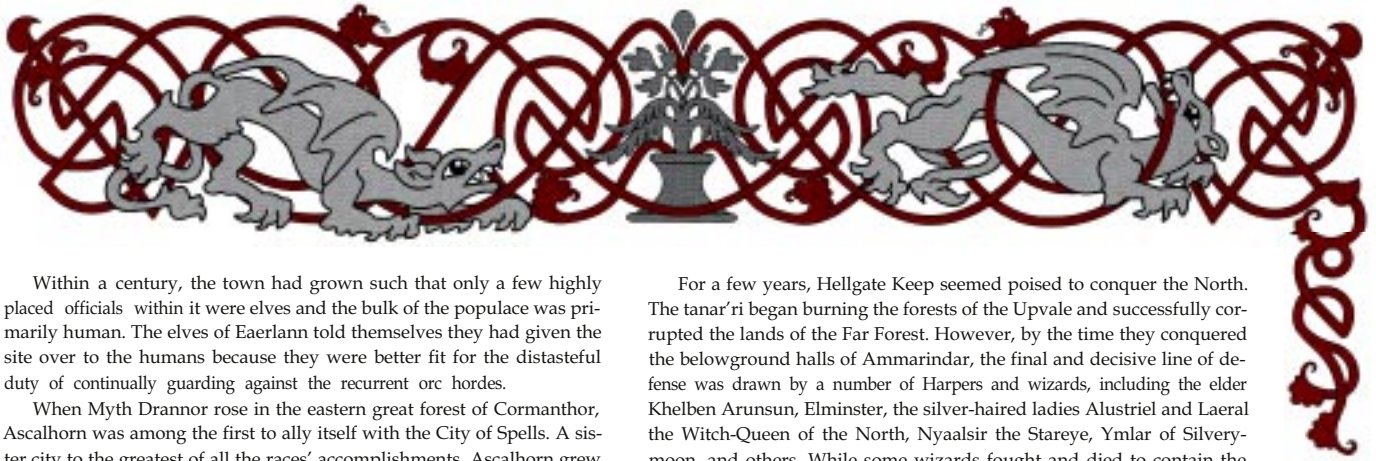
Later, though the elves colonized more of Faerûn, they returned to the High Forest to create other realms like Siluvanede, the gold elf realm that sought to reclaim the exalted position held by Aryvandaar; Sharrven, the mixed elven realm centered on the Unicorn Run and the Star Mounts; and Eaerlann, a splinter realm of Sharrven that soon equaled its parent and occupied the former ruling lands of Aryvandaar. Of all those realms, Eaerlann built the most fortresses and military posts within its lands and at its borders. Ostensibly, its inhabitants built them to protect themselves from the orcs whose hordes regularly swept across the frontier, but other historians have suggested the elves lived in fear of the rising human populations and built them in response to the rise of the human nation of Netheril. Regardless of why they were built, the fortresses that dot the Upvale and the eastern High Forest today sprang from Eaerlann or were rebuilt Aryvandaarn posts.

The Rise of Ascalhorn

The elves had lived in temporary settlements (hunting lodges, seasonal villages, etc.) among the upper tributaries of the Delimbiyr for thousands of years, but the discomfiting rise of Netheril catalyzed them to react to the increased human activity in the region. Eaerlann's elves had freely taught these humans magic, but the humans greedily plundered lost caches of magic from the ruined towers of Aryvandaar, and once they discovered the *Nether Scrolls* (which were discovered by the elves themselves and hidden again by them before the Crown Wars), Netheril's power grew by leaps and bounds.

Most elven nations, like Siluvanede and Sharrven and Ammarindar, withdrew from all contact with the humans and waited for their greed and abusive power to destroy them. Eaerlann, with whom the humans had early and continuing contact, merely cemented its borders and made them clearly known by their defensive fortresses such as the one built on the Horn, a natural peak along a bend in the western source stream of the Delimbiyr (long centuries later known as the Ascalhorn River). Ascal Rachilstar, the founding commander and primary engineer and leader of his small house, found many renaming the site and the burgeoning fortress after him. The work finished on the fortress of Ascal's Horn in the Year of Owls' Watching (-372 DR), and its walls bristled with spears, arrows, and other defenses set to guard Turnstone Pass against an orc horde. Secretly, the spellcasters within the military town wove wards (which many considered to be near-mythals) designed to repel the spells and quasimagical item effects of the Netherese while magnifying the defenders' magics.

Less than four decades after Ascal's Horn posted its first guards, the pompous Netherese archwizard Karsus brought ruin upon himself and his people by becoming a god (for a brief moment). Netheril fell with Karsus, whose hubris led to the temporary destruction of the Weave and thus the Fall of Netheril. While many elves rejoiced over the end of the human nation of archwizards, they also took pity on the downtrodden and aimless masses of survivors of the Fall and took them under their protective wings. Within 30 years of the Fall, the elven fortress town of Ascal's Horn became Ascalhorn, the town of magic, where human wizards relearned the less-abusive magics of the elves and Mystra. However, all capable of wizardry had to abandon quasimagical and learn new magical theories and practices, for to use Netherese magic in this town was a crime punishable by death.



Within a century, the town had grown such that only a few highly placed officials within it were elves and the bulk of the populace was primarily human. The elves of Eaerlann told themselves they had given the site over to the humans because they were better fit for the distasteful duty of continually guarding against the recurrent orc hordes.

When Myth Drannor rose in the eastern great forest of Cormanthor, Ascalhorn was among the first to ally itself with the City of Spells. A sister city to the greatest of all the races' accomplishments, Ascalhorn grew great in arcane might along with Myth Drannor. However, without the guiding light of Coronel Eltargrim or his advisors, such as Myth Drannor had, that power was quietly hoarded by elitists and paranoid mages rather than shared by all citizens to make Ascalhorn strong. Also during this time, Ascalhorn and Silvermoon grew close as fellow centers of learning in the largely undeveloped Savage Frontier.

The Fall of Myth Drannor and the influx of elves and other wizards and citizens from that realm toward Ascalhorn saw changes in the town. Many accepted the newcomers as fellow scholars and folk of knowledge, and the magic they brought from Myth Drannor was wondrous and happily safe from the Army of Darkness that ravaged their fallen city. However, the flood of new wizards and elves also made many of Ascalhorn's elitist wizards paranoid and afraid of losing their positions and their monopoly on power. This signaled the true start of Ascalhorn's collapse.

Ascalhorn's Fall & The Rise of Hellgate Keep

Wulgreth, a lesser Ascalhi wizard, summoned baatezu into the town in secret to grant him the power to overcome his social and magical rivals. Despite his power and precautions, the baatezu he summoned were never fully controlled, and thus they insinuated themselves into the power plays of many wizards, steering them covertly with hidden plots within the wizards' overt power games. While the fact that baatezu were present in the town was kept quiet, many folk began to feel ill-at-ease due either to the unconscious influences of the baatezu or the growing problems among the warring wizards, whose social battles flooded the streets with magic at least twice a tenday. Folk uninvolved in these feuds or power groups began migrating out of Ascalhorn, leaving behind only the power-mad.

After a few decades of servitude, a few baatezu convinced their masters to accept lichdom as a path to power. Once their masters became undead, the baatezu slowly began taking control of the town through their former controllers. Within a few short decades, baatezu dominated Ascalhorn openly, and few people were beyond their control. In desperation, the few wizards left alive summoned the baatezu's ancient enemies—the tanar'ri—into Ascalhorn and sought to bind them into saving the town. The tanar'ri saved the town from the baatezu, but slaughtered nearly everyone within the fortress, dominating the site and declaring it their territory. (This territorial claim was almost mandated by the lack of wizards to send the tanar'ri back to the Blood War and their homeland.) Maerstar, a bard among the few humans who escaped the battles of the Horn's Fall and fled to safety, rechristened the town Hellgate Keep in one of his songs.

Grinthalke, a balor and greatest of the tanar'ri commanders, immediately brought more of his kin over to Faerûn to reinforce his position. By late summer, Grinthalke's plans to ally with the orc hordes to bring down both Ammarindar and Eaerlann were in full swing. Given the fall of their northernmost defense into fiendish hands, both the elven realm of Eaerlann and the dwarven kingdom of Ammarindar were ill-prepared to repel both a massive orc horde and the consolidated fiends of Hellgate Keep from their borders. Thus, within months of the fall of Ascalhorn, the last great demihuman empires of the North also fell. Hellgate Keep's reputation as a center of great evil seemed permanently etched in the minds of all the survivors, the refugees, and the peoples of nearby lands.

For a few years, Hellgate Keep seemed poised to conquer the North. The tanar'ri began burning the forests of the Upvale and successfully corrupted the lands of the Far Forest. However, by the time they conquered the belowground halls of Ammarindar, the final and decisive line of defense was drawn by a number of Harpers and wizards, including the elder Khelben Arunsun, Elminster, the silver-haired ladies Alustriel and Lalerel the Witch-Queen of the North, Nyaalsir the Stareye, Ymlar of Silvermoon, and others. While some wizards fought and died to contain the tanar'ri within Hellgate Keep on Midsummer of the Year of the Fell Fire-break (886 DR), the others established powerful wards permeating the lands about the citadel. In fact, Elminster and Khelben used knowledge from *Mythanthar's Folio* (a collection of scrolls that contain research and commentary on the nature of abjuration magics, specifically wards and mythals) in conjunction with other sources of power placed in the Keep by the elves and hidden from the human wizards of Ascalhorn to aid the wizards in weaving a ward so powerful it was nearly a mythal. In addition to other effects useful against the Keep's forces, its dweomer trapped any greater or true tanar'ri within the Keep's walls, limiting their direct control over operations beyond the fortress to what they could exercise through their underlings. These wards also prevented the tanar'ri from summoning others of their kind as reinforcements.

Recent Events of Hellgate Keep

Grinthalke ruled Hellgate Keep for centuries, and despite the hampering wards surrounding his demesne, the forces of Hellgate Keep raided the surrounding mountains, hills, and forests, hunting intelligent prey and enslaving many humans, orcs, and others. Grinthalke kept many house slaves and bred them against their wills with orcs and his own troops, creating all sorts of foul half-breed servitor cambions and tieflings. Grinthalke allowed numerous lesser tanar'ri the freedom to wander the North and draw wizards into their thrall in the hopes that one held the key to destroying the wards about the Keep.

This remained the status quo for centuries, as the Keep filled with more and more half-breeds of both human and orc descent. Barbarian tribes fell under the indirect influence of the Keep's tanar'ri. Humans were enslaved by the tanar'ri, then slain and turned into ghouls, which were then unleashed all across the North. Many others, in their greed to seek out power, fell before Grinthalke and his lieutenants rather than binding the tanar'ri to their will. These wizards and priests gave Grinthalke more power as they brought information and magic to him that he lacked and coveted. Thus Grinthalke grew bored and complacent, trapped as he was without any entertainment beyond the tales of what lay outside his prison or gladiatorial combat among his slaves.

Just after the start of the Year of the Wave (1364 DR), the Keep's patrols captured seven Everseskan elves spying on the citadel and brought them to Grinthalke. The bored balor decided after 17 months of thoroughly interrogating (in other words, despicably torturing) the elves to allow himself a chance at play. He faced all seven elves in his personal gladiatorial arena. They were allowed to fight him fully armed with their own weaponry, for none in the Keep felt they stood a chance against Grinthalke (especially since none of the tanar'ri in the Keep could face him themselves). Once the elves were revived from their drugged states, they sprung their trap. As Grinthalke and none of the other tanar'ri were familiar with the *Shattering Swords* of Coronel Ylloeth, they could not have known what dangerous items Grinthalke's foes wielded against him. The balor stood firm, toying with the elves and striking to wound to prolong his foul playtime. When one elf finally brought the *Shattering Swords* together, the blades exploded in a flurry of razor-sharp shards that immediately engulfed the wielder and then descended on the balor. While any



The Shattering Swords Shred Grintharke

other foe would have died instantly, flesh stripped from bone by the shard swarm, Grintharke's toughened flesh and magic resistance actually allowed him to survive for a whole minute before expiring. In that time, he managed to draw at least three of his elven foes into the swarm with him and witness their deaths before his own.

With the fall of Grintharke, the four remaining elves sought to destroy as many of the tanar'ri commanders of the Keep as possible while they stood in shock around the arena. Though the elves only survived a few minutes beyond Grintharke, they managed to destroy Grintharke's vrock second-in-command, the only tanar'ri capable of controlling the other greater and true tanar'ri.

Due to Grintharke's overconfidence, he and his lieutenant were dead. The remaining tanar'ri all fell to fighting each other to see who would win control of the Keep. Within the course of a day, all but seven of the greater and true tanar'ri were slain. The others all lay permanently dead since the wards prevented their reconstitution on the Lower Planes. The senior tanar'ri officers remaining were three mariliths, who agreed to a truce and formed a triumvirate to rule over the Keep.

Within the course of a year, the Marilith Triumvirate fell to infighting, with all of them plotting against each other. Within a short time, Ssaarn of the Five Hands and Mulvassys the Sceptered conspired to bring about the assassination of their third, Amassyra the Tricoil. Once Amassyra was eliminated, the two split the Keep's rule. In an obviously uneven split of the Keep's resources, Ssaarn took command of the tanar'ri and the undead, and Mulvassys was left with the cambions, captive orcs, humans, and others. Mulvassys was in no position to challenge her more powerful rival, who had the backing of the bar-Igura, even with the support of her crafty son Kaanyr Vhok, the cambion commander who had successfully slain the Tricoil. While the Keep stayed internally peaceful

for the rest of the Year of the Staff (1366 DR), Mulvassys and Kaanyr plotted their revenge on Ssaarn, and Kaanyr further plotted how to remove his mother from power once she led the Keep.

Word of the changes in leadership in Hellgate Keep trickled out slowly to other ears. When the mad wizard Radoc learned of his great enemy Grintharke's passing, he pulled his mongrelmen and other monstrous forces out of the Fallen Lands and set them to bear on Hellgate Keep. Ssaarn sent out her tanar'ri and undead creatures to engage the enemy, since the tanar'ri's deaths inside the wards would be their final ones rather than merely a return to the Outer Planes. During the fray, Kaanyr Vhok and a small troop of human slaves escaped the Keep and entered the High Forest to meet with Tanta Hagara, shaman of the Blue Bear Uthgardt tribe and Kaanyr and Mulvassys's hag ally of some two decades. While Radoc's forces damaged the main gates and walls and decimated a large number of undead creatures and tanar'ri, the Keep remained in Ssaarn's hands. Radoc and his siege engines were destroyed by falling masonry willingly ripped off the battlements by the tanar'ri within the Keep. With the death of their heavy weapons and their leader, Radoc's armies turned and routed, scattering into the Nether Mountains, the Far Forest, and back to the Fallen Lands.

Taking advantage of her rival's forces weakened position, Mulvassys the Sceptered quickly slew Ssaarn and conquered the Keep, uniting rule under one leader again after four years of strife. As her son Kaanyr Vhok brought the Blue Bear tribe and Tanta Hagara (and the tribal chieftain Tanta Hagara controlled as a puppet) under his direct control, Mulvassys would have more breeding stock to continue creating more cambions and tieflings so as to strengthen Hellgate Keep once more. The day Kaanyr led the annis and her barbarians into the Keep was seen by Mulvassys as the next step in her plans for conquest. However, she had not counted on her



son's ambitions. She was quite shocked when, while she was welcoming her son and formally greeting her long-time ally for the first time, Kaanyr Vhok treacherously slew her with the very weapons that once slew Amassyra the Tricoil. The puppet chieftain of the Blue Bear tribe, Hlutwig Long-throw, whose mind had long since snapped and whose body was by this time a withered husk, died in the confusion in the reception chamber, trampled beneath the feet and claws of the assembled forces.

Kaanyr Vhok and his lieutenants decided to implement a number of Mulvassys's plans, including introducing the barbarians into the breeding stock and creating more tiefling troops. In a solely political move, Kaanyr Vhok and Tanta Hagara were wed to cement the alliance and keep the Blue Bear tribe, which saw Hagara as its remaining bastion of leadership, in line with Hellgate Keep.

While internally Kaanyr Vhok controlled the Keep's forces, he allowed Tanta Hagara to be perceived as the leader of the Keep. The Blue Bear tribe members outnumbered the cambions, tieflings, and the few lesser tanar'ri left by three to one, though their power was insignificant save in those numbers. Thus, Tanta Hagara stood as the "leader" of Hellgate Keep while her "husband" plotted deeper plots. Using tunnels burrowed beneath the Keep in hope of bypassing the wards, Kaanyr Vhok moved many of the tanar'ri further west and into the Nameless Dungeon, where they dwell still. Tunnels strayed east and north as well, though no major movement of troops has yet to use them.

The Fall of Hellgate Keep

With all the confusion and tumult of the Blue Bears' takeover of the Keep, it was simple for two Harpers—the bard Cryshana Fireglen and Spellviper, a priest of Mystra—to infiltrate the citadel as two more barbarians in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR). At first, they believed exposing Hagara's existence as an annis would cause the Blue Bear tribe to revolt against her. When they worked in secret to reveal her true form to her people, much to the Harpers' chagrin the tribe members instead saw her transformation as a sign from their god that she was granted that strong form to cement the alliance with Kaanyr Vhok and Hellgate Keep. The Harpers then began attempting to lure Hagara and her forces forth or force her to overextend herself and make a tactical mistake by spreading rumors of *gates* and items of great power. These caught the attention of Tanta Hagara, for with control of those *gates* and items, she believed her tribe and Hellgate Keep could conquer the North. She (and Kaanyr) began pursuing these leads with scouts, reconnaissance parties, and finally whole units and small armies of troops.

Alustriel of Silvermoon and the Mistmaster of the Citadel of the Mists defended their own lands against the barbarian and tanar'ri cambion hordes that summer, though the High Forest also had the assistance of the treants of Turlang. Sundabar fell to the torch, but it was soon reestablished with only about a 25% loss of its people. A final rumor to Hagara's (and Kaanyr Vhok's) ears fixed her sights on the Citadel of Mists: Here lay the *Gatekeeper's Crystal*, she heard, which would allow her to cancel the wards around Hellgate Keep and bring in more troops to strengthen the tribe and the Keep. Kaanyr Vhok, however, sensed something amiss at last and pursued a more cautious path, continuing to mobilize small numbers of troops down through secret tunnels and out toward the Nameless Dungeon.

Tanta Hagara assembled a huge army of more than 100 cambions and full tanar'ri and over 400 Blue Bear tribesfolk and led them to attack the Mistmaster's Citadel to gain the magics therein. Once the army was within a half day of the Citadel, the Mistmaster activated his own plan—for Cryshana and Spellviper each already held a piece of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* (see *The Gatekeeper's Crystal* sidebar for more details). Having positioned themselves atop western and eastern towers of the Keep, the two Harpers signaled the Mistmaster, who invisibly teleported just outside Hellgate Keep and activated the *Crystal*.

The Gatekeeper's Crystal

This material supplements the information in *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical* on the *Gatekeeper's Crystal*. The other powers of the crystal are ignored here in favor of swiftly explaining the manner of the artifact's destruction of Hellgate Keep.

The *Gatekeeper's Crystal*, an artifact shaped like a three-pointed star, is made of onyx threaded with some unknown metal. The star can be disassembled into three points. The most power ability of the *crystal* is to bring down wards and mythals and other extant magical fields.

When its greatest power activates, two purplish beams of energy lance out of each piece, automatically seeking each of the other pieces and maintaining a beam of power once they magically lock onto each others' positions. When the points of the star are united by the energy beams, they push one of the pieces (and its holder) out until all points of the triangle they form are equidistant from each other. (The field always pushes to encompass the largest amount of space set by two of its points, rather than the smaller space.) Once established, that triangle of energy is doubled as a third energy beam lances downward from each piece beneath the plane of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* to meet at a point again equidistant from the other points, creating a three-sided energy pyramid that marks the *Crystal's* area of effect. In the Mistmaster's usage of it, the pyramid was over 600 feet long per edge, and he floated over the cliffs south of the Keep to set the magics into effect.

Every magical item within the field is immediately drained of one charge or one daily use. All permanent or temporary protective/warding magics and extant magical fields (primarily abjuration or alteration magics, and especially all mythals or wards) are stripped away from their anchor places and absorbed into the energy of the pyramid. Any other types of magic either contacted or activated within the area of effect transform into wild magic. Within a second of the pyramid's formation, the energy fields contract toward the point farthest from the crystal pieces (the center of the original triangular plane), creating an implosion of magnificent force. Less than a second after the implosion of the energy field, all the activated wild magic is unleashed from the bottom point of the contracting field (the inverted pyramid point) up and out along the former area of the pyramid!

The *Crystal* pieces are seized by the force of the explosion and the magic of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* and scattered across the planes of existence after each activation of this power. The explosion that caused the destruction of Hellgate Keep killed the two Harpers, who were flung off their tower perches and crushed by flying debris; the Mistmaster, airborne and heavily protected during the activation, was flung over three miles away from the explosion but avoided lethal injuries.

The repercussions of using the *Crystal* depend on where it is activated and under what conditions it is used. In Hellgate Keep's case, the first implosion of magic tore away magical supports that made many subcellars viable, and the overburdened and overmined Keep began to crumble instantly. When the remaining wild magic effects were unleashed, more supports collapsed, and the outward force of the magic threw much of the Keep and the pulverized rock beneath it high into the air in a wide-spreading explosive plume. What was a high outcrop is now a deep gulch among ruins.

A lingering aftereffect peculiar to the ruins of the Keep is that all magical spells or effects that allow one to fly do not work. Psionics and natural flight abilities relying on wings are unaffected, so birds and bats can flit about as usual, and winged tanar'ri have no problems, but potions, spells, and magical items allowing flight do not function.

The *Gatekeeper's Crystal* compressed the wards throughout the city, forcing an implosion that was immediately followed by an explosion of wild magic that shook the lands for more than 100 miles around. Nearly every building above and below ground was leveled by the explosion. Few, if any, within the Keep at the time survived. Only a tenth of the cambions and tieflings left behind survived, and these lived only because they were belowground at the time of detonation. Tanta Hagara, at the head of her army, did not have time to worry over the fate of her allies in Hellgate Keep, for she and her army soon fell to the Mistmaster's defenses and the creatures of the High Forest, including the great treant Turlang. With nearly one fell swoop, Hellgate Keep had fallen to ruin.

Soon, Turlang and the treants blocked passage north at the confluence of the Heartblood and Delimbiyr rivers. Something of great power (some say Alustriel, others say galeb duhr allies of the Mistmaster, and still others say Turlang) caused an avalanche to seal Turnstone Pass and close the Up vale from any invaders. Travel into the area once occupied by Hellgate Keep is now limited to adventurers and other brave travelers willing to face the treants who now protect the ruins where Ascalhorn once rose.

Timeline

Year (DR)	Era or Year Name & Events of Import
-23,900	Establishment of Aryvandaar in the High Forest.
-9000	The Fifth Crown War ends with Aryvandaar's fall.
-8600	Evereska founded as an elven safe haven.
-8400	Rise of Siluvanede in the northwestern High Forest.
-7600	Sharrven rises in the southern High Forest.
c. -4700	Eaerlann is built in Aryvandaar's ruins by Sharrven nobles to keep Siluvanede from becoming too powerful.
c. -4500	Start of the Seven Citadels' War of Siluvanede versus Eaerlann and Sharrven.
-4300	End of the Seven Citadels' War, with Sharrven reducing Siluvanede to a vassal realm of Eaerlann.
-4100	Rise of the dwarven realm of Ammarindar.
c. -3900	Creation of Delzoun, Shield Kingdom of Dwarves.
-3859	Rise of Netheril.
c. -3830s	Netheril's humans learn magic from the Eaerlanni.
-3533	Wizards find the Nether Scrolls among the ruins of Aryvandaar and abandon the elves' magic for power.
-2770	Sharrven falls, but isolated sites linger for centuries and the forest keeps the name until modern times.
-461	Anauroch, the Wasting Desert, begins growing as the phaerimm begin draining all life out of the land.
-372	<i>Year of Owls' Watching</i> Ascalhorn founded by elves of Eaerlann.
-339	<i>Year of Sundered Webs</i> The Fall of Netheril.
-333	<i>Year of Humbling Havens</i> Elves of Eaerlann allow Netherese refugees to settle in Ascalhorn.
459	<i>Year of the Blooded Dagger</i> The River Rauvin bridge grows into Silver Village.
574	<i>Year of the Gored Griffon</i> Silver Village expands and becomes Silverymoon.
671	<i>Year of the Shrouded Slayer</i> Travelers frequently pass between Ascalhorn and Silverymoon, and trade opens up with the dwarves.
714	<i>Year of Doom</i> Final Fall of Myth Drannor.
766	<i>Year of the Yearning</i> The Bane-worshipping Brothers of the Black Hand steal powerful items from Silverymoon, including High Mage Ederan's staff of Silverymoon, the chain mail glove of Taarnahm the Vigilant, and Tasmia's necklace. Their safehouse in Ascalhorn is the Black Hand's undoing, as it falls to wizardly and baatezu manipulations, and the stolen items are confiscated by the Hand's slayers.
779	<i>Year of the Crying Sphinx</i> Folk begin emigrating from Ascalhorn due to the abuses of the town archwizards.
c. 820	Wulgreth summons the first baatezu to Ascalhorn.
880	<i>Year of Unfettered Secrets</i> The first tanar'ri are summoned to Ascalhorn late in the year.
882	<i>Year of the Curse</i> Ascalhorn becomes Hellgate Keep. Ammarindar and Eaerlann fall.
886	<i>Year of the Fell Firebreak</i> Wards are placed around Hellgate Keep by the Harpers to strip the tanar'ri of their gating abilities.
890	<i>Year of the Burning Tree</i> Many of the cellars beneath Hellgate Keep's buildings become connected to the sewers as the fiends attempt their first tunnels under the wards.
898	<i>Year of the Common Corpse</i> The first shafts below the sewers are opened, and the tunneling fiends find some older hidden subterranean crypts that are soon plundered for magic.
912	<i>Year of the Sudden Journey</i> The first deep tunnels lead north out of Hellgate Keep toward the Nether Mountains.
919	<i>Year of the Chase</i> Hellgate Keep's forces are forced from their deep tunnels for a time by the Morueme clan dragons.
1150	<i>Year of the Scourge</i> Due to Hellgate Keep's forces fouling the waters of the River Rauvin further upstream, a virulent plague strikes Silverymoon, resulting in the death of nearly half its population.
1221	<i>Year of the Frozen Flower</i> Tunnels are dug beneath Hellgate Keep to connect with the deep tunnels of Ammarindar.
1356	<i>Year of the Worm</i> The deep tunnels now connect with the Nameless Dungeon to the southwest under the High Forest.
1365	<i>Year of the Sword</i> Death of Grintharke and many greater tanar'ri. Rule of the Triumvirate over Hellgate Keep.
1366	<i>Year of the Staff</i> Fall of Amassyra the Tricoil; rule now falls to Ssaarn of the Five Hands and Mulvassys the Sceptered.
1367	<i>Year of the Shield</i> Radoc and his mongrelman army attacks Hellgate Keep and both sides suffer grave losses. Ssaarn the marilith is slain by her co-leader, giving Mulvassys sole control over Hellgate Keep.
1368	<i>Year of the Banner</i> The Blue Bear tribe and Tanta Hagara conquer Hellgate Keep with aid from Kaanyr Vhok.
1369	<i>Year of the Gauntlet</i> Destruction of Hellgate Keep, Tanta Hagara, and the Blue Bear tribe.
1370	<i>Year of the Tankard</i> Current year. Treants have sealed most entries to the Up vale to gain privacy for their work in reforesting the upper Delimbiyr.



NPCs & Magic

This chapter introduces the major NPCs and the major plots that are still active within the shattered ruins of Hellgate Keep. At one time, this chapter could have filled the entire module, but the Mistmaster's gambit and the subsequent destruction of Hellgate Keep obliterated the majority of creatures within the citadel-town in all ways save to continue their existence in frightening tales told around a campfire. The balor general Grintharke and his successors, the mariliths Amassya the Tricoil, Mulvassys the Sceptered, and Ssaarn of the Five Hands, were completely destroyed. Honored only by surviving barbarians, the black annis Tanta Hagara is dead, slain by Turlang the Great Treant himself. The death knight Shan Nikkolet, left as a garrison commander at the Keep while Tanta Hagara led the attack on the Mistmaster's Citadel, was apparently blasted beyond the bounds of even his corrupt unlife by the *Gatekeeper's Crystal's* effects. Countless other fell creatures, from tanar'ri to captured slaves to allies from Zhentil Keep or Thay, have walked the halls of Hellgate Keep, but they are all either dead or no longer relevant to the Keep as it exists now.

There is no one story laid out for the PCs to follow while within the Keep. Instead, the stories, plans, and activities of the NPCs are where much of the adventure resides. Read through what the evil power groups and individuals have planned, and keep these plans in mind while the PCs explore the Keep. Obvious plots and hooks lurk within the NPCs' stories and plans that the heroes can trigger merely by encountering any one of these creatures. For instance, if the PCs ever need motivation to activate *Myrthanther's Orb* quickly, one short meeting with Sarya the Cambion Countess should move them to a frenzied panic.

And last but not least, magical items practically litter the floors in the ruins of what was once Ascalhorn, as it was both an elven stronghold and a human center for magic at one time. Later, after Ascalhorn's fall in status to become Hellgate Keep, the tanar'ri forces brought the plundered dwarven treasures of Ammarindar here as spoils. Entire rooms of magical items could be found if not for all the rubble of the upper Keep collapsed atop the entrances. The passage of time and the actions of these successive groups have scattered enough magical items about the dungeon or placed them in the hands of their enemies to keep the PCs' interests high. These items are detailed at the end of this chapter.

Tanar'ri Abilities

Tanar'ri prevail among the major personalities left in Hellgate Keep's ruins. Among both the House Dlardrageth NPCs and the Scourged Legions detailed below, there are quite a few NPCs with the basic tanar'ri combat immunities and resistances. It is easier and more compact to summarize them here than to repeat them for each character. If any character's immunities and powers change from the norms stated here, they are duly noted under that NPC's entry. These ability standards hold both for the half-elf cambions and the other more orthodox tanar'ri.

- All tanar'ri share these powers: *darkness 15' radius* and *infravision* of at least 60-foot range (both at will). In accordance to changes made during the Blood War (*Hellbound*, a PLANESCAPE accessory), these tanar'ri no longer possess the ability to *teleport without error*.
- Tanar'ri can bypass language barriers by using a line-of-sight-based telepathy.
- Tanar'ri suffer no damage from electricity or lightning, nonmagical fire, or poisons.
- Tanar'ri suffer only half damage from cold, magical fire, or gas (poisonous or otherwise).

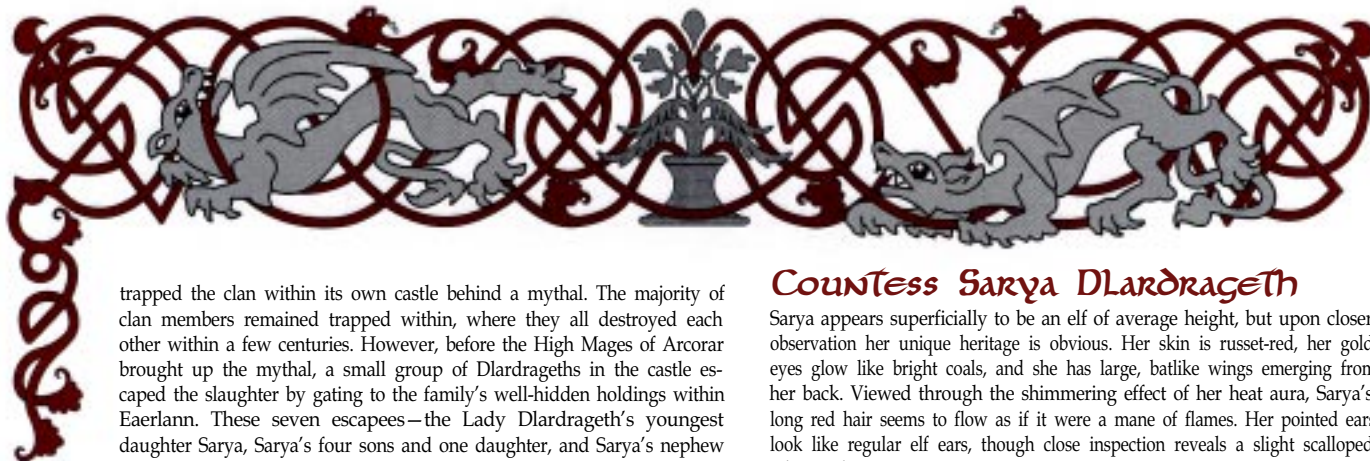
Bear in mind that the three unique cambions of House Dlardrageth and the tiefling-orcs known as the tanarukka do not closely resemble the standard cambions, alu-fiends, and tieflings one is led to expect from the PLANESCAPE setting. They are all different for any number of reasons; DMs should choose the explanation that best suits their campaigns. Perhaps the magic-rich nature of the Realms altered the half-breed progeny of the tanar'ri, or perhaps their mating with elves and orcs rather than the human norm assumed in the standard cambion, alu-fiend, and tiefling generally produces different creatures each time. The changes and the viability of the tanarukka in the Realms could be a side-effect of the magics around the Keep—or maybe the long-standing breeding program of orc and human slaves with the greater tanar'ri of Hellgate Keep actually succeeded in creating an underling/soldier capable of great destruction when fielded en masse. No one can say for sure.

House Dlardrageth

Before the eastern woods were Cormanthyr, the Dlardrageth clan of Arcorar loomed large among the forest's early settlers. Survivors of Aryvandaar and the Crown Wars, the Dlardrageths, led by their matriarch, sought to strengthen their gold elf family and their race after the loss of the Crown Wars. The archmage matriarch led the family to believe that secret breeding with tanar'ri and other fell creatures would strengthen its bloodline. Many of the children born of such unions were physically weaker than the average elf, but they later proved to have more inherent magical powers as their diabolical legacy.

Within a few decades, the elves of Arcorar discovered the horrid dealings of the Dlardrageths and mustered a host of soldiers, mages, and priests against them and their tanar'ri allies. The elves banished the tanar'ri and





trapped the clan within its own castle behind a mythal. The majority of clan members remained trapped within, where they all destroyed each other within a few centuries. However, before the High Mages of Arcorar brought up the mythal, a small group of Dlardrageths in the castle escaped the slaughter by gating to the family's well-hidden holdings within Eaelrlann. These seven escapees—the Lady Dlardrageth's youngest daughter Sarya, Sarya's four sons and one daughter, and Sarya's nephew (her twin brother's son)—quickly fled east toward the Upvale, hoping to lose any pursuers and create a safehold within the mountains.

Within a few centuries, the elves of Arcorar dropped the mythal surrounding the long-fallen Castle Dlardrageth and sifted through the wreckage. They soon realized a number of the more highly placed House Dlardrageth members were missing, and divinations revealed their escape years earlier. A dozen High Mages and the heirs of Rystall Wood and Jhyrennstar gated to Eaelrlann and tracked the Dlardrageths to their new home beneath a low volcanic crag at the western confluence just east of Eaelrlann's borders. The corrupt half-elf cambions now lived in a series of caves within the crag, and when confronted by these new adversaries, they fought to save themselves and their new home. The initial skirmishes between the Dlardrageths, the High Mage groups, and the forces the High Mages drew from Eaelrlann slew four of the seven Dlardrageths, and the High Mages of Arcorar sealed the survivors within their "villa" (the caverns beneath the crag). The magic that held them there stopped all time and movement but placed the half-elf cambions in states of reverie so they might have some consciousness of the evil they had done and dwell on it during their imprisonment.

The half-elf cambion Dlardrageths had been making deals with some of the lesser houses of Siluvanede to the west and fomenting war against their betters and Eaelrlann. This harsh offensive action by Eaelrlann and the High Mages against a once-mighty gold elf house—even though it was but the corrupt remnants of the house—was among the sparks that set off the Seven Citadels' War. Arcorar's people became caught up in the swift rise of the conflict, and there they died. While they had only planned to imprison the Dlardrageths in their peculiar magical reverie for a few centuries, none survived the war who knew the method to unbind them. Thus, the Dlardrageths remained trapped in time, never aging but with their minds always just to one side of dreaming. They spent several millennia staving off insanity by planning their revenge.

Current Activities: When the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* absorbed all the major magics within the crag that was Hellgate Keep, it also stripped away the magic that trapped the Dlardrageth trio far beneath the citadel. Free for the first time in centuries, they attempted to use the secret doors they had installed in the caverns thousands of years ago to escape the crag and gain their freedom. However, the explosion created by the *Crystal* had shifted enough rock to wedge the secret doors tight. As the PCs enter the Keep, the Dlardrageths will have finally made enough headway with magic and brute force to tunnel up and out into the upper tunnels beneath the Keep. As their primary goal, the countess and her cohorts desperately seek information about the world (second to wanting to remove the head of any elf who wanders near them).

As they capture people for interrogation, the three of them begin to extract information from their captives through fiendish, tortuous interrogations and through psionic mental invasions. Their goal is to learn more about the world and its changes during their five-millennia-long imprisonment. Once they believe they understand the new status quo, Countess Sarya (as she now calls herself) and her son and nephew seek out a suitable new hideaway where she and her brood can rebuild House Dlardrageth to a position of strength. Only later, after enough of her progeny have grown strong enough to aid her, will Sarya pursue her revenge on the Houses of Durothil, Moonflower, Swordstar, Irithyl, and Starym with fiendish delight and efficiency.

Countess Sarya Dlardrageth

Sarya appears superficially to be an elf of average height, but upon closer observation her unique heritage is obvious. Her skin is russet-red, her gold eyes glow like bright coals, and she has large, batlike wings emerging from her back. Viewed through the shimmering effect of her heat aura, Sarya's long red hair seems to flow as if it were a mane of flames. Her pointed ears look like regular elf ears, though close inspection reveals a slight scalloped edge to them.

The Cambion Countess is aloof, unforgiving, and totally without remorse. While her abilities make her a formidable foe, she prefers to have her son and nephew sully their hands in combat while she remains the planner behind the scenes. She has nothing but disdain for nonelves and utter hatred for most elves. As it has been "proven" to her, only House Dlardrageth matters, and she is adamant that it *will* survive.

The youngest child and sole daughter of Lady Xiiltharra Dlardrageth and her balor consort, Sarya spent her life in awe of her mother, the matriarch of the Dlardrageth clan. As she expected to become the new matriarch upon her mother's death, she always ordered her family and friends around, and her awesome temper would flare quickly to a burning heat if she were disobeyed or ignored. With the house reduced to its current trio, Sarya's driving motivation is to learn of the new Faerûn, rebuild her house by abducting proper gold elves for mates, and then begin her revenge on those who imprisoned her and dared to render short-sighted judgment upon her house. Though she is only 180 years old physically, millennia of waiting have kept her hatred bright, and she is intent upon seeing the upstart moon elves suffer for their actions and their presumption.

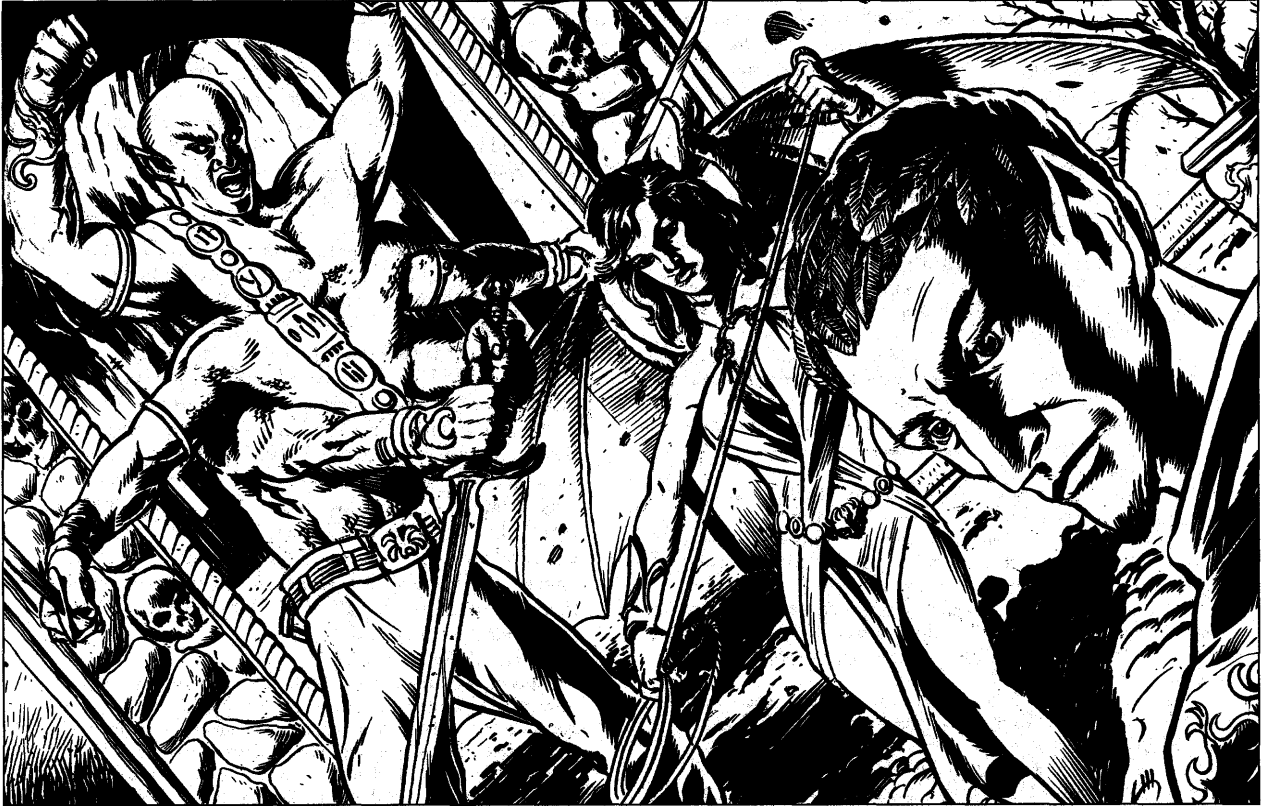
Countess Sarya Dlardrageth, hef cambion M17 (Tanar'ri, Lesser; Unique): AC 0 (base AC 2, *gilded gown*); MV 12, FI 18 (C); hp 64; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d2+4 (*Aduce's whip*, +1 STR) or 1d6+4 (*Miilaethom's staff*, +1 STR); SA Spell use, innate powers, magical weapons; SD Heat aura, 90-foot infravision, *detect magic* at will, innate powers, +1 or better weapon magical weapon to hit, fire immunity, 30% resistant to *sleep* and *charm* spells, immune to 1st- and 2nd-level illusions; SW Double damage from cold attacks; MR 30%; SZ M (5'6" tall); ML champion (16); AL CF; XP 16,000.

S 16, D 15, C 16, I 20, W 16, Ch 20.

Special Attacks: Sarya can use these spell-like powers three times per day: *affect normal fires*, *burning hands* (1d3+4 damage; more powerful if cast as a wizard spell), *fear*, and *pyrotechnics*.

Special Defenses: Sarya is constantly surrounded by an aura of intense heat that she can mute at will (to prevent burning tomes or allies, for instance). It acts at all times as a *warm fire shield*, and with a round of total concentration, Sarya can boost the heat to light flames and force all flammable objects within a 5-foot radius to make saving throws against magical fire or burn up. She is fully immune to all types of fire and poisons. Her Wisdom gives her a +2 bonus to saving throws vs. illusions and mind-affecting spells.

Special Equipment: As a mage of an elder house, Sarya has kept some ancient house artifacts safe for millennia, and she has also appropriated some items from the lower parts of the Rift. Her magical arsenal includes at least these items: *Aduce's Whip*: *Aduce's whip* is a whip threaded with gold that emits an obvious glow of flames and is wielded as a whip +3 for 1d2+3 damage. With a successful attack roll of 19 or 20, it also wraps around the target and burns the entangled foe for 1d4 automatic points of damage per round entangled (Strength check vs. whip's Strength of 16 to break free). *The Emerald Earring of Vhoadan*: Sarya wears this two-carat teardrop emerald dangling from her left ear. It allows her to cast *clairaudience* twice per day at the 6th level of experience. *The Gilded Gown of Selussa*: The *gilded gown* is a skin-tight, filmy dress made of woven mithral that provides a +2 AC bonus and reflects all *magic missiles* back upon their casters. *Miilaethom's Staff*: This *staff of striking* conceals a great treasure: In a hidden compartment near the center of this slim duskwood staff is a folded-up *portable hole* in which Sarya hides her spellbooks and important equipment.



The Dlardrageths: Ryvvik, Countess Sarya, and Xhalh

Spellbook (5/5/5/5/3/3/2): Sarya prefers spells that enhance her tanar'ri aspects, such as causing her aura to flare up in full flames for a time or adding to her flight speed. The majority of her spells involve fire and combat, not subtlety. Her usual complement is given here, but DMs may modify it at their discretion: 1st—*affect normal fires*, *burning hands**, *color spray**, *detect magic*, *enlarge**, *grease*, *magic missile** (usually memorized twice), *phantasmal force*, *read magic*; 2nd—*blindness**, *flaming sphere**, *hypnotic pattern*, *improved phantasmal force**, *mirror image*, *pyrotechnics**, *scare**; 3rd—*blink**, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *fireball** (usually memorized twice), *flame arrow**, *haste*, *invisibility 10' radius**, *lightning bolt*; 4th—*confusion**, *dig*, *dimension door*, *Evard's black tentacles** (which she calls *Ghaunadar's grasp*), *fire charm**, *Otiluke's resilient sphere** (though she knows it as *Viialiya's pliant orb*), *polymorph other*, *rainbow pattern*, *wall of fire**; 5th—*chaos**, *conjure elemental**, *contact other plane*, *domination**, *passwall**; *sending*, *telekinesis**; 6th—*chain lightning**, *eyebite**, *globe of invulnerability*, *mislead*, *project image**; 7th—*banishment*, *delayed blast fireball**, *prismatic spray**, *teleport without error**; 8th—*incendiary cloud**, *mind blank*, *prismatic wall**.

*Indicates favored/memorized spell. Sarya does not conjure water elementals.

Lord Ryvvik Dlardrageth

This elf appears wan and bald from a distance. Up close, a viewer can see that his hair is actually a skullcap of gray and black feathers and his complexion is ash gray. Far more thin and angular than even the gauntest elf, Ryvvik's pinched face draws attention to his hooked nose, which looks like a vulture's beak. While not ashamed of his looks, Ryvvik often wears wide-sleeved robes with deep cowlled hoods so that he can revel in the shock and horror of those to whom he reveals his true visage.

While not as vengeful as his mother, Ryvvik has an insatiable and totally amoral curiosity about what others think and feel, and his powers

give him easy access to such information. However, should he encounter resistance to his mental probings, he takes it as a challenge and doggedly hammers away at any defenses. His view is: "I *deserve* to know what's in your head, and I'll kill you before you keep it from me!" While jealous of Xhalh's and his mother's physical power, he takes sadistic glee in the use of his psionic abilities to inflict mental, emotional, and physical pain, believing his methods to be more sly and refined than theirs. Ryvvik prefers to use his telepathy and never speaks out loud. He considers this method of communicating superior to speech, an attitude that infuriates Xhalh and amuses his mother.

Ryvvik is the youngest son of Countess Sarya. He is the only survivor among her brood, as her five other cambion children were slain in Arcorar or just before her imprisonment. Spoiled in his youth, Ryvvik does everything to please his mother or himself, and she is the only one who can influence his actions.

While the Dlardrageth trio was kept in stasis, Ryvvik's psionic abilities kept them relatively sane and capable of some communication within their reverielike state. He also was able to glean small amounts of information about goings on in the world when those in the Keep above began moving below into the lower tunnels. While Ryvvik was unable to find anyone susceptible to his mental domination or with the resources to free the three Dlardrageths, he could listen in on the thoughts of passersby and through doing so learned many languages, including the modern common tongue, orc, elvish, and dwarvish.

Lord Ryvvik Dlardrageth, hem cambion Psi12

(**Tanar'ri, Lesser; Unique**): AC -3 (base AC 2, +1 DEX, *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of protection* +2); MV 15; hp 62; THAC0 14; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (hand claws) or 1d4 (dagger) or 1d6 (short

sword); SA Psionic abilities, screech; SD Psionic abilities; *feather fall*; +1 or better magical weapon to hit; 30% resistant to *sleep* and *charm spells*; immune to 1st- and 2nd-level illusions, *cause fear*, *charm person*, *command*, *friends*, and *hypnotism*; MR 30%; SZ L (7' tall); ML champion (15); AL NE; XP 11,000.

S 11, D 15, C 16 I 20, W 19, Ch 10.

Saving Throws: PPD 11, RSW, 11, PP 8, BW 12, Sp 12.

Special Attacks: Ryvvik can let loose a lesser version of the vrock's horrific screech once per hour. His screech deafens all within 20 feet, stunning all targets who fail Constitution checks for 1 round.

Psionic Abilities: While Ryvvik did not gain the physical power of either his half-elf mother or vrock father, his psionic abilities far exceed those natural for tanar'ri. His psionic abilities are rated using **PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers**.

Psionic Summary: Mental #AT 3/2; Mental THAC0 7; Mental AC 3 (base 5, boosted by a mental armor nonweapon proficiency); Dis 4/Sci 6/Dev 17; PSPs: 171; Att: all; Def: all.

Clairentient: Sciences—clairaudience, clairvoyance; Devotions—all-round vision, danger sense, martial trance, psionic sense.

Psychokinetic: Devotions—levitation.

Psychometabolic: Devotions—body equilibrium (allows Ryvvik flight at Fl 9 (D) when in use), chameleon power, displacement, double pain.

Telepathic: Sciences—domination, mindlink, probe, ultrablast; awe, conceal thoughts, contact (free as a psionist), ESP, inflict pain, identity penetration, invisibility, phobia amplification, send thoughts.

Telepathic Speech: Ryvvik uses telepathy that operates along a line of sight between him and his targets; this drains no PSPs and does not count as a contact for other powers. For all intents, it is speech that bypasses the ears into one's mind.

Mind Surge: Up to three times a day, Ryvvik can emit a *mind surge* in either a 20-foot-radius globe or a 10-foot-wide and 40-foot-long ray from his mind. All within the area of effect must make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds.

Special Defenses: The primary physical defenses Ryvvik gains from his tanar'ri heritage are a high natural Armor Class and the usual immunities. His vestigial underarm wings provide Ryvvik with *feather fall* abilities at will. Ryvvik's Wisdom and status as a psionist give him a +6 bonus to saving throws vs. enchantment/charm spells, mind-affecting spells, and illusions.

Special Equipment: Aside from a *ring of protection* +2 and a *cloak of protection* +2, Ryvvik wears a *kiira* (a small round-rose-cut emerald) on his forehead that he keeps visible at all times. The *kiira* allows him to permanently store all knowledge read from the minds of others, and he can access that knowledge instantly through the gem rather than memorize it himself.

Lord Xhalh Dlardrageth

Son of Countess Sarya's twin brother Khuumal and a marilith, Xhalh is physically the most fearsome of the tanar'ri half-breeds. His skin has an olive-green tone and parts of it appear to be heavily scaled. His darkly scaled ears stand out prominently due to his bald head. His skin tone and scales are readily apparent since he never wears shirts, believing his musculature and his six arms far more intimidating to his foes when exposed. (And his *baldric* wards off cold.)

By his aunt's testimony, "Xhalh has little patience for anything aside from battle, and his longing for true challenges leads him into foolish exercises of berserker rage and wasteful combat. In truth, his father's blood makes him more akin to a wrathful balor than the scheming marilith his mother was." Temperamental and rash, Xhalh is his aunt's enforcer, though he gets annoyed when he is denied a chance for battle. While held in check from his desire for direct and immediate conquest by his aunt's will and her plans, he would much rather take command of those of Kaanyr Vhok's tanarukk forces now leaving the Keep and lead them immediately against the nearest elven settlement than wait on her schemes.

The only Dlardrageth to receive the exceptional physical prowess sought by the house matriarch, Xhalh once reveled in the jealousies of his

cousins. He constantly felt the need to push himself and prove that he was the best combatant of the clan. Now, because his aunt's plans keep the Dlardrageth trio to the shadows and out of the combat he loves, Xhalh believes it may soon be time for House Dlardrageth to revive itself under the rule of a powerful patriarch. Only his unfamiliarity with the world around him and a noted lack of allies keeps Xhalh from either killing or banishing his aunt from her position. For now, he follows her lead, but he has plans (and well she knows it).

Lord Xhalh Diardrageth, hem cambion F 11 (Tanar'ri,

Lesser; Unique): AC -2 (base AC 2, -4 DEX); MV 15; hp 78; THAC0 12/14 (primary hand/off hands, including multiple weapon penalty; 11/13 with STR 18/20/9/11 with broad sword specialization (using only broad swords), 7/11 with *Blade Dlardrageth*); #AT 7/1 (2/1+5); Dmg 2d4+7 (+2 broad sword specialization, +3 STR, *Blade Dlardrageth*) and 2d4+5/2d4+5/2d4+5/2d4+5 (broad swords, +2 broad sword specialization, +3 STR) or by weapons (+3 STR for melee weapons); SA Innate powers, magical weapons; SD Innate powers; never surprised; detect magic at all times; +1 or better magical weapons to hit; 30% resistant to *sleep* and *charm spells*; regenerate 1 point of damage/turn (*Khuumal's baldric*); regenerate 1 point of cold damage/turn, +2 saving throw bonus vs. cold attacks, -1 point of damage per die from cold attacks (*Khuumal's baldric*); MR 30%; SZ L (7'6" tall); ML fanatic (18); AL CE; XP 11,000.

S 18/20, D 18, C 16, I 13, W 17, Ch 11.

Special Attacks: In terms of physical ability, six arms and 18/20 Strength are more than imposing enough. Xhalh can also exhale a *cloudkill* once per day (1 round to reach maximum dimensions).

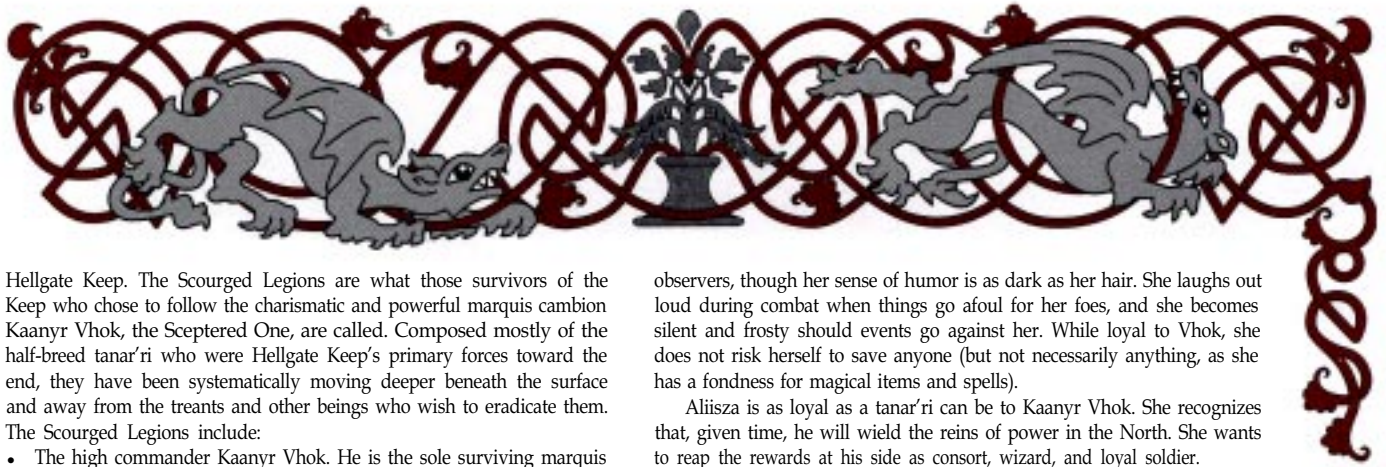
Special Defenses: Xhalh's physical defenses include immunity to all poisons and gases (including his own *cloudkill*). His Wisdom gives him a +3 bonus to saving throws vs. illusions and mind-affecting spells.

Special Equipment: Rather than assign a major arsenal to Xhalh, the DM should outfit the Marilithson with most of his weaponry. Given the large amount of dwarven and elven artifacts littering the ruined keep, it should be easy for DMs to decide which ones Xhalh has already claimed. (To make combat with him easier, DMs can choose to arm him with all broad swords, an option reflected in the above statistics.) He does retain two items from times past that he is never without: the *Blade Dlardrageth* and *Khuumal's baldric*. The *Blade Dlardrageth* is a *broad sword* +2, *giant slayer* and *Khuumal's baldric* is a studded-leather baldric that acts as a *ring of regeneration* and a *ring of warmth*.

The Scourged Legions of Hellgate Keep

Many creatures not slain by the havoc that brought the Keep low abandoned the site shortly thereafter due to lack of leadership (or at least authority they would follow). Thus, DMs can affect their campaigns in serious ways by having scores of tanar'ri free and wandering about the North, though the majority should be of lesser tanar'ri status and easily hidden by shapechanging abilities, such as bar-Igura, succubi, and incubi. Officially, the Dire Woods and eastern High Forest now host at least 30 bar-Igura and 60 manes. In addition, at least seven succubi hide within Yartar, Sundabar, and Everlund. The large numbers of human or half-orc tieflings who were once the slaves and servants of the Keep compose the majority of those who survived the blast, and these refugees (or bandits) now wander the Nether Mountains and the High Forest.

Once the greatest throng of evils in northern Faerûn, the Scourged Legions are the only survivors from among the great tanar'ri hordes of



Hellgate Keep. The Scourged Legions are what those survivors of the Keep who chose to follow the charismatic and powerful marquis cambion Kaanyr Vhok, the Sceptered One, are called. Composed mostly of the half-breed tanar'ri who were Hellgate Keep's primary forces toward the end, they have been systematically moving deeper beneath the surface and away from the treants and other beings who wish to eradicate them. The Scourged Legions include:

- The high commander Kaanyr Vhok. He is the sole surviving marquis cambion and the last commander of Hellgate Keep.
- Sixteen alu-fiends under Kaanyr Vhok's command. Most of them are mid-level officers within the Legions as a result of their positions in the chain of command beneath Kaanyr. Aliisza the Favored is specially detailed below since her status as Kaanyr's current consort raises her to among the luminaries of the Scourged Legions. Of the 16 alu-fiends, seven are wizards and the rest are warriors. All are equipped as deemed appropriate by the DM.
- Five entire tanarukk tribes (1,200+ tanarukka). The other four tribes (over 300 tanarukka per tribe) abandoned the Keep and settled in the Nether Mountains over the previous winter. The tribes still officially part of the Scourged Legions include the Gorytusks, the Scaleskulls, the Balorclaws, the Hungerknives, and the Bonefires. These tanarukka comprise the bulk of the army under Kaanyr Vhok, who has become a blood brother of all the tanarukk chiefs to cement his control.

Current Activities: Even before the destruction visited by the *Gatekeeper's Crystal*, Kaanyr Vhok's forces had been moving down through the bowels of the Keep into the deep tunnels. None know whether Kaanyr had foreknowledge of the coming attack or if it was Tymora's will that he and his forces survived. Still, only 300 of his loyal tanarukka were killed during the fall of the Keep. The rest of his forces had been garrisoned far enough beneath the destruction to be unaffected or had moved beyond the Keep and entirely into the deep tunnels. Now, while Kaanyr and his lieutenants scour the ruins for any magical or monetary plunder no longer guarded by tanar'ri, the Scourged Legions are on the march in the tunnels. Their southerly course suggests their destination is either the Nameless Dungeon in the High Forest or the abandoned halls of old Ammarindar.

Kaanyr Vhok has no misguided loyalty to or affection for the ruined Keep and wants to consolidate his forces somewhere from which they may later deal from a position of strength. Therefore, he and his troops are moving rather than remaining in the Keep as open targets in a ruined citadel.

Kaanyr plans on recruiting local orc tribes and other monsters to strengthen his armies. In fact, while he has stationed a group within Hellgate Keep to guard the retreat and seek any remaining easily plundered treasures, he has sent two other groups on missions seeking to forge ties to the creatures of the Fallen Lands and the orcs of the Nether and Rauvin Mountains. It is strongly suspected that the far-thinking Vhok allowed certain tanarukk tribes to seem to flee north into those regions in order to consolidate those other orc tribes under his command; the true primary goal of the "refugees" is to breed into the orc tribes and increase the tanarukk forces. In the future, the orcs and tanarukka of these northern mountains will fall into step with his amassed forces to the south, creating the greatest (and most organized) horde ever seen in the North—should Kaanyr Vhok give the word.

Aliisza

Lustrous black curls surround the disarming face of Aliisza, obscuring her sharply defined eyebrows. Her sea green eyes seem inviting to those she charms, though they flash a deeper green when she is denied or spurned. Not one to reveal her tanar'ri nature unless necessary, Aliisza keeps many different shapechange forms under which she hides her wings.

Calculating and cold, Aliisza never seems to do anything without planning six steps ahead, and she is very close-mouthed about such plans, even to her lover Kaanyr Vhok. She smiles often, usually to manipulate

observers, though her sense of humor is as dark as her hair. She laughs out loud during combat when things go afoul for her foes, and she becomes silent and frosty should events go against her. While loyal to Vhok, she does not risk herself to save anyone (but not necessarily anything, as she has a fondness for magical items and spells).

Aliisza is as loyal as a tanar'ri can be to Kaanyr Vhok. She recognizes that, given time, he will wield the reins of power in the North. She wants to reap the rewards at his side as consort, wizard, and loyal soldier.

As the most powerful alu-fiend mage of the Scourged Legions, Aliisza officially is Kaanyr Vhok's advisor and the commander of his personal guard. She is currently operating in the Keep both to guard the throne room and to seek out treasures with a single squad of Hungerknives tanarukka. Given her position, she already knows Vhok plans to send her with Chief B'Ghyr's (of the Hungerknives tribe of tanarukka) squads into the Fallen Lands to explore it as a possible redoubt and recruit more creatures into the Scourged Legions.

Aliisza, alu-fiend f M12 (Tanar'ri, Lesser): AC 2 (base AC 5, *ring of protection* +3); MV 12, FI 15 (D); hp 31; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2 (*long sword* +2, *spellblade*) or 1d4 (*dagger*); SA Spell use, magical weapons, hit point drain, *charm person* (at will), *dimension door* (1/day), ESP (at will), *shape change* (at will, only to humanoid form of approximately same size and shape but with hidden wings), and *suggestion* (at will); SD Combat intuition, magical armor, cold iron or +1 or better magical weapons to hit; MR 30%; SZ M (5' tall); ML steady (12); AL CE; XP 6,000.

S 9, D 13, C 14, I 18, W 11, Ch 18.

Special Attacks: An alu-fiend can attack a foe for 1d8 points of damage (requiring a successful attack roll) and absorb half of that damage to restore her own hit points.

Special Defenses: Aliisza's combat intuition warns her of danger 75% of the time, negating surprise or backstab attacks when successful and providing other benefits the DM deems appropriate. She has 240-foot infravision.

Special Equipment: Aliisza carries three normal daggers and a *dagger of throwing* +2 at all times (one normal dagger in her left boot, the magical one in her right boot, and two normal ones in her belt) and is skilled at throwing them. She carries her primary weapon, a long sword +2, *spellblade*, in a sheath strapped to her right thigh. (She is left-handed.) Aliisza found the *spellblade* in a lower crypt of the Keep and claimed it for her own. The *spellblade* is an ancient elven long sword from the days of Eaelrann and Aryvandaar. It renders its owner immune to *hold person* when it is drawn and wielded. Aliisza also wears a *ring of protection* +3 at all times.

Spells (4/4/4/4/1): 1st— *dancing lights*, *detect magic**, *grease**, *hold portal**, *identify*, *magic missile**, *message**, *read magic**, *shocking grasp*; 2nd— *detect evil* (*detect good**), *deafness*, *fog cloud**, *forget*, *irritation*, *mirror image**, *summon swarm**; 3rd— *dispel magic*, *flame arrow*, *fly*, *haste**, *hold person**, *slow**, *vampiric touch**; 4th— *charm monster**, *contagion*, *dimension door**, *fumble**, *ice storm*, *solid fog*, *wall of ice**; 5th— *advanced illusion**, *Bigby's interposing hand**, *cone of cold**, *fabricate*, *passwall*, *seeming**; 6th— *chain lightning*, *death fog*, *programmed illusion**.

*Indicates favored/memorized spell.

Kaanyr Vhok, The Sceptered One

As the son of a true tanar'ri and a human father, Kaanyr Vhok is a marquis cambion, though he looks different from other Realms-bound cambions. Most observers see only his light olive complexion and silver-gray hair and believe him to be an aging half-elf due to his pointed ears, but beneath Kaanyr's rich clothes and cloak, his chest, upper arms, and legs are covered with deeper green scales as his tanar'ri legacy. Thus far, though, any nontanar'ri who has seen Kaanyr's scales is dead, as Kaanyr plans to infiltrate certain power groups by using his looks as part of his dis-



Alitsza and Kaanyr Vhok, the Sceptered One

guise and cannot have his face well known or linked with Hellgate Keep for these plots to work well.

Kaanyr Vhok is regal, bearing himself with an elegance and dignity that belies his chaotic blood. While he seems cultured and polite, his charm is purely for show, and his ruthlessness makes him capable of anything that adds to his power. Some few quick-blooded members of the Legion complain he acts too slowly, since he rarely makes a move unless the odds are in his favor, but few protest loudly or long, as his methods bring victory in the small skirmishes around the Keep. Even his most loyal troops fail to understand that Kaanyr Vhok sees everyone around him as an enemy. His allies are merely adversaries with whom he shares a common goal and who are to be betrayed when they become liabilities.

As the son of the marilith Mulvassys the Sceptered, Kaanyr's plots and maneuverings, as well as his luck, saw to his survival in the political infighting of the Keep's tanar'ri and his eventual rise to the command of the surviving forces of Hellgate Keep. However, obvious actions and direct confrontational conquest were never a goal of his. He would much rather have quietly operated in secret for years more rather than carrying on like the trapped tanar'ri of centuries past who railed stridently against their fates and lashed out at all in frustration. However, due to the hand dealt him by a combination of fate and his desire for secret maneuvers, Kaanyr Vhok and much of his loyal army were deep beneath the Keep when the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* brought much of it crashing down—thus ironically catapulting him to a position requiring direct action on his part.

Now close to the final stages of relocating his remaining forces, Kaanyr has become intrigued by the many folk who are wandering into the ruins. While he still plans on quitting the Keep in the next tenday, he wants to retrieve as much magic and wealth from the Keep as possible and to build links with other groups such as the Zhentarim and the Red Wizards. In the

winter after the Keepfall, Kaanyr met and allied with Zhent slavers from Llorkh, who bypassed the treants during the great blizzards to enter the Keep. While Kaanyr in no way plans on honoring his agreements, he will use Llorkh to gain slaves, information, and modern magic.

His tanarukka also recently slew a group of wizards who found the deep tunnels by accident. Those captured alive were, in his opinion, poor negotiators who did not pay him the proper respect due his station, and most of them have since been tortured to death. He cares little about their threat that "Zulkir Nevron will see us avenged!" but was intrigued enough by their power to want to know more about the Red Wizards. After all, the folk he has encountered outside the Keep (like Tanta Hagara and these wizards) "all seem so assured of their power that they are easily tricked to serve my purposes." Wherever Kaanyr settles his troops, rest assured he will not cut off all ties with other groups until he has no need of their aid or unwitting assistance.

Kaanyr Vhok, marquis cambion m (Tantar'ri, Lesser)

AC -2 (base AC 2; +1 DEX ring of protection +3); MV 15; hp 41; THACO 15 (12 with STR 19; 10 with long sword +2, spellblade; 10 with whip +2; 10 with broad sword +2 of baatezu-slaying; 9 with vorpal battle axe +3); #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+9 (long sword +2, spellblade) or by weapon (+7 STR bonus for melee weapons); SA Innate powers, spells thief abilities; SD Innate powers, thief abilities; MR 30%; SZ M (6' 7" tall elite 14); AL CE; XP 6,000 S 19, D 15, C 16, I 18, W 15, Ch 17.

Special Attacks: As a cambion marquis, Kaanyr induces *fear* by a mere touch. He casts spells as a 6th-level mage.

Special Defenses: He can climb walls like a thief (95%) and hide in shadows and move silently (80% each), even in bulky armor, with no penalty. He cannot be surprised and can *levitate* seven times a day.

Special Equipment: Kaanyr Vhok can have any item in the Keep (as the DM decides), but he definitely carries three items at all times: a ring of protection +3; a long sword +2, spellblade; and the *Scepter Malevolus*. Long sword +2, Spellblade: Kaanyr calls his spellblade "Burnblood."

The spellblade is an ancient elven long sword from the days of Eaelrann and Aryvandaar. Kaanyr's spellblade renders him immune to *cone of cold* when it is drawn and wielded.

Scepter Malevolus: The *Scepter Malevolus* is an 18-inch rod of metal carved with glistening black runes. Created long ago in the Abyss, the *scepter* can only be touched by chaotic evil beings. All other creatures touching the item suffer 3d10 points of damage (save vs. rod, staff or wand for half damage) per contact. All powers below are activated by command words only known to Vhok.

Three times per day, the scepter's wielder can have the scepter cast *detect law* or *detect chaos*, working as *detect good* or *detect evil* does but for only law or chaos. The *scepter* can become a weapon, though the haft or handle of the weapon still appears identical to the *scepter*. Its weaponry options are a whip +2, a broad sword +2 of baatezu-slaying, or a vorpal battle axe +3. When the whip +2 option is invoked, the +2 bonus is for attack purposes only; no damage is inflicted by a successful attack, but the target must succeed in a saving throw vs. poison or die in 1d4 rounds from the whip's magical poison.

The *scepter* can emit *havoc's pulse*. This *pulse* is an energy sphere originating from the *scepter* that rapidly expands to a 30-foot-radius sphere for one round. It can only be generated once a month. Olive green in color and utterly silent in effect, its expansion or effects are not blocked by any physical barriers and penetrate all magical defenses like a 7th-level effect. It inflicts 10 points of damage upon a lawful creature and 6 points of damage upon each good creature in the area of effect. Lawful good targets suffer both effects. A successful saving throw vs. rod, staff, or wand allows targets to suffer only half damage. A number of hit points equal to the damage inflicted by the scepter are added to the *scepter*-wielders total. The wielder can exceed his or her normal maximum hit points for up to one hour after *havoc's pulse* is used. Damage is taken from these hit points first, and any remaining hit points in excess of the wielder's normal maximum dissipate at the end of the hour.



Spells (4/2/2): 1st— *detect magic, change self, color spray**, *enlarge, grease**, *hold portal, magic missile**, *read magic, spook**; 2nd— *ESP*, hypnotic pattern, invisibility, mirror image, scare**, *web*; 3rd— *dispel magic, fly**, *lightning bolt, protection from good 10'-radius, wraithform**.

*Indicates favored/memorized spell.

The Tanarukka

A tanarukk is a tiefling-orc born of the tanar'ri and orcs of Hellgate Keep. Grintharke's plans to maintain a large number of forces in the Keep seemed unrealistic due to the tanar'ri's inability to *gate* in reinforcements. He instituted a breeding program among the lesser (and some greater) tanar'ri with their orc slaves. After long centuries, tanarukka breed true among themselves or with orc mates, and these tiefling-orcs are no longer halfbreeds but a new race now native to the Realms.

Tanarukka appear as short, stocky humanoids with stooped postures. Coarse hair grows atop their heads and in various patches about their bodies. Their razor-sharp teeth and tusks are prominent, as their lower jaws jut out from under smallish snouts. Their eyes are reddish in hue, and they glow when their 90-foot infravision is in use. Obvious differences between tanarukka and orcs, aside from tanarukka's smaller dwarflike statures, are the thick horn- or scalelike ridges along their low, sloped foreheads. In addition, many of the tanarukk tribes ritually scar their young tanarukka during their rites of passage into adulthood or when they become warriors. Tanarukk skin tones vary from gray-green to dun brown. They rarely wear armor, since their skin is naturally tough (but not scaled). They are also heavier than their size would suggest, another similarity that they share with dwarves.

In addition to a slight natural resistance to magic, tanarukka have gained two powers from their tanar'ri forebears. First, a tanarukk can *af-fect normal fires* twice per day. Second, tanarukka are resistant to fire; they are immune to damage from normal fire and suffer only half damage from magical flames.

Tanarukka speak both orc and a pidgin subdialect unique to their race that combines some tanar'ri terms with orc for a slightly more complex language.

While more intelligent than common orcs, tanarukka still respect only strength and power. Should they perceive a leader as weak, challenges result until the leader either maintains his or her position or lies dead at the feet of his or her successor. Though individual DMs can establish different social patterns among the different tribes, tanarukk behavior closely parallels that of orcs in most other ways.

Though there are yet no crossbred mongrel offspring of this race, their social similarities to orcs could eventually result in half-tanarukka, whether the alternate parents are goblins or humans. Note that only one fiendish benefit among the three possible benefits of half damage from normal fire, natural AC 8, or 90-foot infravision is passed to a halfbreed child, along with the ridged brow, the tusks, and the snout of a tanarukk. For all other details, use the standard MONSTROUS MANUAL tome rules on half-orcs to apply to a half-tanarukk character.

Tanarukk: AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite) or 1d8 (battle axe); SD *affect normal fires* 2/day, immune to fire, 90-foot infravision; MR 10%; SZ S-M (3'-5' tall); ML elite (13-14); INT avg (8-10); AL CE; XP 420.

The Hungerknives

The Hungerknives are the largest of the tanarukk tribes, and their clans serve particular purposes in both their tribe and the Scourged Legions. While the majority of the Hungerknives tribe is on the march through the deep tunnels, Chief B'Ghyr and his most loyal tanarukka remain in the ruins to act as a rear guard and to loot any final treasures from the Keep before abandoning it.

Just as the dwarves name their clans after the honorifics or known names of their ancestors, all the tanarukk clans of the Hungerknives tribe are named after the tanar'ri that spawned their fiendish bloodlines more than five generations back. The clans birthed by the greater tanar'ri tend to rule over those born of their lessers, though not always.

- Clan Hruamkkar's members are the hunters of the tribe, and the 18 tanarukka of the clan are patrolling the upper tunnels and former cellars of the Keep, hunting for food and items.
- Clan Krushaaln is Chief B'Ghyr's clan, and this clan has always helped guard the Keep commander. Though the Keep is no more, the Krushaaln Guardians remain as the protectors of Kaanyr Vhok. For continuing to perform this office, the protectors received some great plunder formerly from Ammarindar: the 12 silver *roaring armor* breastplates that were once used for honor guards of Ammarindar royalty. A dozen tanarukka now wear them in their capacity as guardians for Kaanyr. The *roaring armor* breastplates add a +2 AC bonus to their wearers and reflect all missiles (normal, magical, and spells) back upon the person who fired (or sent) them. They also proof wearers against back attacks, since the bear or dragon heads carved on the breastplates roar to warn of impending attacks from the rear.
- Clan Tuoldak's members most often act as the scouts for the Scourged Legions, as their clanfolk are both faster and smaller on average, making them good scouts, since they can hide more easily. The 30 tanarukka of this clan currently are the primary forces guarding the armory stairwell or wandering the rift and the dungeon, seeking money and magic to bring back to Kaanyr Vhok.

Magical Items of Hellgate Keep

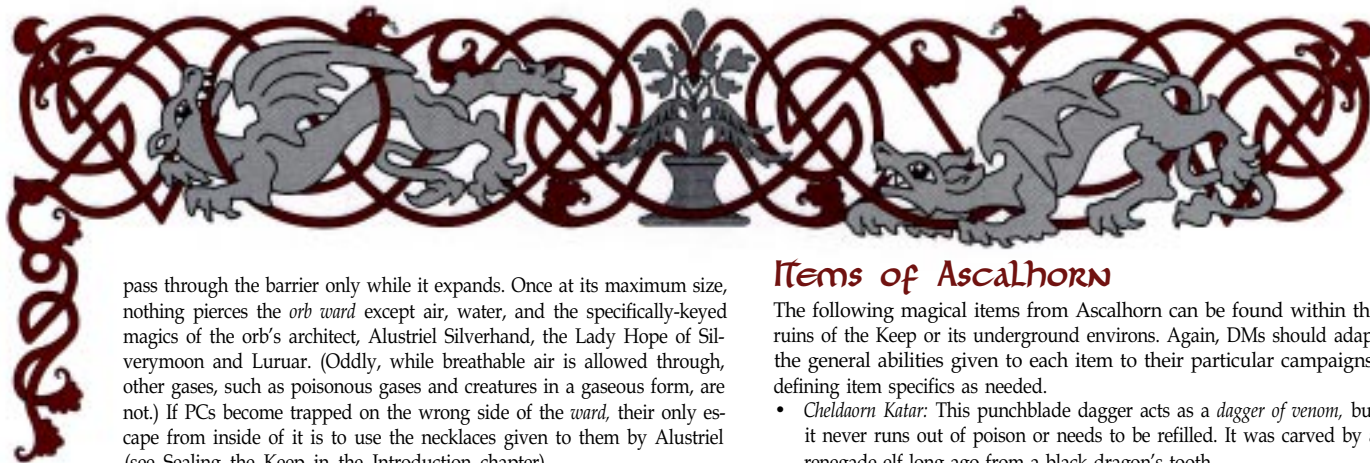
The site of Hellgate Keep has been a magical enclave for both elves and humans and the lair of fiends. Many magical items and effects lie long hidden the ruins, and these were not all destroyed with the denizens and the town by the *Gatekeeper's Crystal*. Since the former structures exploded and many items were thrown about in the furious blast, magical items can be found scattered all about the dungeon and across the Upvale. DMs will have certain keyed areas for some items, while others are loosely placed on the map in unkeyed areas. These items are for either a PC's or NPC's use, depending on who finds them first.

Also bear in mind that all of the NPCs just listed are after these precious items, few are willing to share their spoils, and most of them have the power to keep what they find. Imagine how much more difficult it might be to regain the missing *staff of Silverymoon* if Xhalh Dlardrageth has just beaten you to it.

Mythanthar's Orb

This 2-inch-diameter green glass globe creates a spherical ward against anything living, sealing it behind an impenetrable green magical field. Once activated, the *orb* rises 5 feet into the air and projects a field that grows slowly at a rate of 5 feet a round in all directions; this *orb ward* reaches its maximum expanse of a 300-foot-radius globe in one hour. The growing *ward* flares with Mystra's silver fire where it contacts wild and dead magic zones, eradicating them where it touches them and averting their interference with the final workings of the *orb ward*.

When *Mythanthar's orb* is given to the PCs, Alustriel insists that they set the *orb ward* so as not to disturb Turlang and his treants. While the ward is expanding, it remains an arcane glowing green energy field that is unimpeded by physical matter. It flows around and past all creatures like the skin of a bubble; however, once it completely engulfs anyone or any thing, it becomes as hard a barrier as stone or iron. Spells and abilities that allow phasing or achieving a gaseous or ethereal form allow people to



pass through the barrier only while it expands. Once at its maximum size, nothing pierces the *orb ward* except air, water, and the specifically-keyed magics of the orb's architect, Alustriel Silverhand, the Lady Hope of Silvermoon and Luruar. (Oddly, while breathable air is allowed through, other gases, such as poisonous gases and creatures in a gaseous form, are not.) If PCs become trapped on the wrong side of the *ward*, their only escape from inside of it is to use the necklaces given to them by Alustriel (see Sealing the Keep in the Introduction chapter).

Items of Ammarindar

The following famous magical items originally from Ammarindar can be found within the ruins of the Keep or its underground environs. DMs should adapt the general abilities given to each item to their particular campaign needs, defining, for example, the conditions under which a weapon glows and its actual area of illumination, etc.

- *Aoxar's Helm*: This open-face metal helmet of otherwise unremarkable but sturdy construction can be placed on the head of a dead human-size humanoid creature and, within three days, subsequently put on by a living humanoid. The wearer then sees how the dead creature died as if viewing the death scene through the dead creature's eyes.
- *Captain Aerad's Shield*: This medium-size round steel shield allegedly shattered any weapon it parried. Actually, it is only a *shield* +3, but the legends about its weapon-breaking ability are strong despite the sagely logic of one not uncommon effect of striking a steel shield with inferior bronze swords.
- *Craenmol's Hammer*: This *war hammer* +3 sought out gold as much as its greedy owner did, shone like the sun, and rang like a loud temple bell whenever in the presence of the corrupting drow.
- *Dragonsheart Armor of King Connar IV of Ammarindar*: The *dragonsheart armor* is a dwarf-size suit of red dragon scale mail with a full helm in the shape of a dragon's head. It provides AC 5 (equivalent to *scale mail* +1) and its wearer gains the following benefits: a +1 bonus on all saving throws vs. red dragon breath, *fireball* spells, and other attacks using heat or fire, and a -1 damage modifier to each and every damage die rolled (with a minimum of 1 point of damage per die) for such damage. In addition, attacks of this type that cause 6 points of damage or less in a round (whether initially or after being reduced by the -1 damage modifier per die) inflict no damage to the wearer.
- *Glove of Taarnalm the Vigilant*: This chain mail gauntlet imbues any melee weapon its wearer grips with the flight abilities of a *hammer* +3, *dwarven thrower* but not the combat bonus.
- *Lashing Sword of Samos the Skullreaver*: This Ammarindarn short sword trails an arc of magic that, if wielded like a whip against undead, destroys most undead creatures utterly with a touch.
- *Pegasus Helm of Kloeth Ironstar*: This *full helm* +1 of the legendary scout Kloeth Ironstar can summon a translucent pegasus twice a day to be used as a phantasmal mount. The pegasus can carry up to one extra passenger of human size and otherwise operates as a normal pegasus with regard to its movement abilities. The pegasus has no independent intelligence and cannot fight for its rider. However, it can be directed with a thought and can function for up to three hours at a time.
- *Twinblades Alight*: This unique *vorpal battle axe* has one half forged of black iron and the other of mithral. It glows only at the touch of a lawful good dwarf warrior and functions as a *vorpal weapon* only when wielded by such a warrior. In anyone else's hands, it functions as a *battle axe* +2.
- *Tyranny's Knell*: This golden *war hammer* +3, *dwarven thrower* causes earthquakes when slammed against the ground and reputedly shrinks giants by a foot with each blow. Whether this shrinking effect is permanent or not is not recorded, and tales never seem to mention the earthquake effect being invoked (or working) more than once in every great battle it was wielded in.

Items of Ascalhorn

The following magical items from Ascalhorn can be found within the ruins of the Keep or its underground environs. Again, DMs should adapt the general abilities given to each item to their particular campaigns, defining item specifics as needed.

- *Cheldaorn Katar*: This punchblade dagger acts as a *dagger of venom*, but it never runs out of poison or needs to be refilled. It was carved by a renegade elf long ago from a black dragon's tooth.
- *Nychyaella's Healing Spear*: This silver-headed shadowtop-wood spear can heal its wielder up to once per day by transferring all damage from the wielder into a successfully struck opponent on a successful attack roll of natural 20 and draining equal hit points to restore the wielder. Opponents so struck cannot contribute more points of healing than they currently have in hit points.
- *Shattering Swords of Coronal Ynloeth*: These two blades form an artifact that once belonged to a former Coronal of Shantel Othreier before the Crown Wars. They can shatter once each year when intentionally clashed together in a specific manner, whereupon the *long swords* +2 become a swarm of ravenous razor shards that strip the wielder and any moving or living foe within a 30-foot radius of all life.
- *Shroudscrown*: The *Shroudscrown* is an agate-studded bronze circlet artifact that allows the wearer to turn or control undead as a 10th-level priest, renders him or her immune to undead touch powers (like wraiths and lichs possess), and makes him or her invisible and inaudible to unintelligent undead. It may have other unknown abilities, and those who use it seem to have died under mysterious circumstances involving the undead.
- *Staff of Silvermoon*: This long-lost staff of High Mage Ederan was stolen centuries ago by the Brothers of the Black Hand. (The locations of three other *staves of Silvermoon* are currently known; see *The Seven Sisters* accessory). For information on the *staff of Silvermoon*, see the Magical Items of the Seven chapter of *The Seven Sisters*. This *staff* may have additional or slightly differing abilities, however, as determined by the DM.
- *Tasmia's Heart*: This elaborate high-necked bustier is laced and lined with black silk and adorned with sapphires and beljurils. It sustained the High Lady Tasmia's life both underwater, functioning as a *helm of underwater action* and a *ring of free action*, and for centuries beyond measure, working in some unknown manner to slow her aging and preserve her life force.
- *Thyrus of the Druid Craenoth Driel*: The *thyrus* is a staff topped with a massive pine cone and dedicated to Rillifane. It allegedly commands trees and treants alike to defend the wielder or perform missions of limited duration.
- *Ynloeth's Bracer*: This artifact is a singular silver *bracer of defense* AC 2 made to be worn on the left arm. It is the only item that can protect a wielder against the effects of the *Shattering Swords*.

More Magical Items

To generate additional magical items (since the map locations containing magical items exceed those items of historical note mentioned here), assume 60% of the items indicated are armor, found on Tables 105-107 of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide (DMG)*. The remaining 40% of the items are the DM's choice of either items or weapons found on Table 110: Special Weapons of the DMG with these adjustments: On the 1d10 roll, use Subtable A on 1-3, C on 4-9, and D on a 10; add 9 when rolling on Subtable A, and subtract 2 from rolls on Subtable D. These adjustments are made to simulate the types of magical items found, since logic and history dictate that the majority should be items of either elfen or dwarven craft- ing looted from Ammarindar.



Upper Ruins

The demolition of Hellgate Keep bred stories fast, since few were on hand to verify them and the principals involved in the event were either dead or in hiding. Since many folk saw the arc of violet light and felt the rumble of the explosion, they asked questions and rumors flew wildly. Even now, months after the havoc, there is more falsehood than fact in the air when most commoners or tavern-goers discuss Hellgate Keep's fail. Those in the know (in other words, Alustriel, Khelben the Blackstaff, the Harpers, etc.) do not quell the rumors, since it keeps most folk away from the area out of fear (and thus out of trouble). Below are the actual facts and particulars as of 1370 DR.

Physical Details

There are a number of situations repeated throughout the adventure, and they are all collated here. Keyed areas may differ from these standards as noted in their descriptions.

Climate

The dungeon's climate is identical to its aboveground surroundings unless otherwise mentioned. However, the Keep's underground climate shifts. In the lower ruins, the air is clammy, but temperature changes are minimal; however, torches and open flames sputter, and the corridors and rooms smell noticeably of mildew and decay. In and beyond the Chambers Below level, the walls are damp and sometimes dripping, showing that the tanar'ri-dug tunnels run close to subterranean water sources.

Crumbling Construction

All the upper ruins are unstable and crumbling. Activity above and within the Keep could collapse the weakened floors, walls, or ceilings at any time. While there are no strict rules for how much destruction results, some keyed areas are presented below to show options for the DM. This general warning of instability applies to all areas that fall within 100 feet of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal's* pyramidal area of effect.

Doors in the upper Keep were wood reinforced with steel bands. Those below are made of stone. They turn on central pins and have pull-rings on both sides. Most doors have locks that use keys to drive metal or stone bolts into the doorframes from a side or at top or bottom. Many of these doors are damaged or jammed due to the shifting of the walls and floors of the Keep. When it is specific to an encounter, the text notes whether a door is open, locked or unlocked, jammed shut (and if it can be forced or not), shattered, or in some other condition. The DM should decide the status of doors about which nothing specific is written. If no door is indicated on the map, assume the entry is an archway.

The Gatekeeper's Crystal's Aftermath

The powerful artifact that destroyed the Keep left a legacy of dead and wild magic areas and an aftereffect that prevents all flying magic from working in the area. The operation of dead magic regions and wild magic regions is covered in the Setting Up a Campaign chapter of the *Running the Realms* book in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting box. As always, the dead magic and wild magic areas are invisible but have clear borders. They are always identified in the text; major areas, like the majority of the open Gulch, are also noted on the maps. The spell-using tanar'ri can sense the boundaries of dead magic areas and do not enter them willingly. (Dead magic regions are normally spherical, but those in the ruins are peculiarly shaped due to the artifact use that created them.) The wild magic areas are not as easily defined or detected by magical creatures. A number of wild magic regions are noted on unkeyed parts of the maps, and their effects should be determined by the DM.

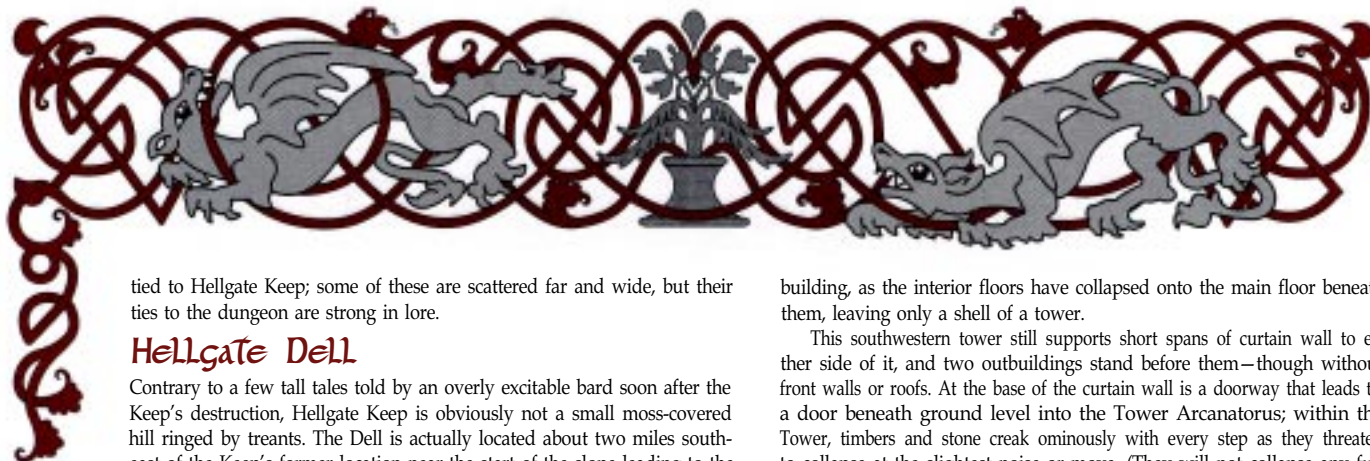
Wandering Monsters & NPCs

While no creatures truly wander randomly within the ruined Keep as of yet, it is only a matter of time before creatures from the plains and hills of the Upvale use this area as a new lair. Numerous examples and hooks exist in this chapter, the next, and the epilogue for DMs to create encounters from, but DMs who wish to increase the difficulty of the adventure can add new monsters into the mix. The type and number are up each DM, but typical creatures to expect due to geography, the uniqueness of the locale, or the backstory could be: treants, galeb duhr, elves, cambions and tieflings (former residents), dwarves, blue dragons (the Morueme clan from the Nether Mountains via the deep tunnels), orcs, goblins, and human barbarians.

Surface Features

Given the massive destruction inflicted on the Keep, it is astounding to see even what remnants there are that exist above the edge of the Gulch. This section provides notes and brief descriptions of aboveground areas





tied to Hellgate Keep; some of these are scattered far and wide, but their ties to the dungeon are strong in lore.

Hellgate Dell

Contrary to a few tall tales told by an overly excitable bard soon after the Keep's destruction, Hellgate Keep is obviously not a small moss-covered hill ringed by treants. The Dell is actually located about two miles southeast of the Keep's former location near the start of the slope leading to the Keep's high promontory. The Dell is a small uneven crag about 70 feet in height and 200 in diameter that is actually a large collection of debris flung from the Keep. Its impact collapsed a number of local goblin tunnels, forcing the goblins out to the surface, and since all "fleshlings" appear similar to treants, two treants (and at least one reporter) surrounded the large rocks and masonry with animated trees and began sealing the tunnel exits of the goblins. Now, after winter and the spring, Hellgate Dell is fully covered with mosses and small shrubs. The two treants, who remain close by, steadfastly believe they do Turlang's bidding and guard against anything tunneling near or under the hill.

Keepsfall Rock

At the ford where Ascal Creek joins the River Shining, another large shard of rock impacted after being flung miles from the explosion of Hellgate Keep. The ford is wider and more shallow after the rock's impact, making it easier to traverse for travelers. The new sharp-edged landmark of blasted rock that was the thrown debris stands nearly 40 feet tall and 20 feet wide. It makes the ford more easily seen by travelers coming from the Nether Mountains.

Razorthorn Rift

With the massive explosion at the pyramidal effect's center, a wide rift opened along the southern cliff that Hellgate perched on and shattered the southern curtain wall of the Keep. One of the first places tended by the treants, the cleft (which provides entry into Grinthalke's Gulch only 140 feet above the foot of the cliffs) has been blocked by 30-foot-high and 50-foot-deep sharp thorn and briar patches to deter entry or exit. The slopes beneath this Razorthorn Rift are rocky due to the large amount of fallen stone and debris shed by the damaged cliffs above. Any attempts to penetrate the Rift by damaging the thorns (20 points of edged [type S] or fire damage minimum to clear a 5-foot x 10-foot path of penetration) is met by resistance from the treants and any allies they might have (druids, satyrs, etc.). If PCs attempt to proceed through the thorns without clearing a path, they take their base AC in damage plus 1d3 points for each round they attempt to move through the thorns. Base AC for this purpose is one's Armor Class without Dexterity adjustments, shield, or magical adjustments that do not actually cover one's whole body or that rely on misdirection. (*Armor* or a *ring of protection* would help with the damage, but *blur* would not.) Unencumbered or lightly encumbered characters can proceed through the thorns at a rate of 10 feet per round in this case; further encumbered characters can only manage 5 feet per round.

The Tower Remnants

Atop the cliffs that were formerly Hellgate Keep are three partly ruined sites that are all that remain of the old fortified town. These may only be extant for a short period of time, given the terraforming being done by the treants (see below), but for now they still stab skyward as the last evidence of tanar'ri occupation. All are at least 40% covered in vegetation and vines.

The Tower Arcanatorus: The Tower Arcanatorus is the sole building within the boundaries of Hellgate Keep that seems to be whole from the outside; it is located in the quarter of the town that used to house the tanar'ri magic practitioners. It can be reached by nonmagical flight or by climbing the southern or western cliffs. In actuality it is not a whole

building, as the interior floors have collapsed onto the main floor beneath them, leaving only a shell of a tower.

This southwestern tower still supports short spans of curtain wall to either side of it, and two outbuildings stand before them—though without front walls or roofs. At the base of the curtain wall is a doorway that leads to a door beneath ground level into the Tower Arcanatorus; within the Tower, timbers and stone creak ominously with every step as they threaten to collapse at the slightest noise or move. (They will not collapse any further as they are wedged into their current configuration, but the players should not know that.) Beyond the door is an antechamber and cloak room, and under a hidden trap door in the cloak room is a spiral stair leading below. The antechamber is almost filled with debris from the upper floors, and the door to the cloak room is difficult to make out behind it. Player characters (PCs) may need to spend some time clearing away debris to get to the door and open it. See Ways In & Out below for more information on the stairs.

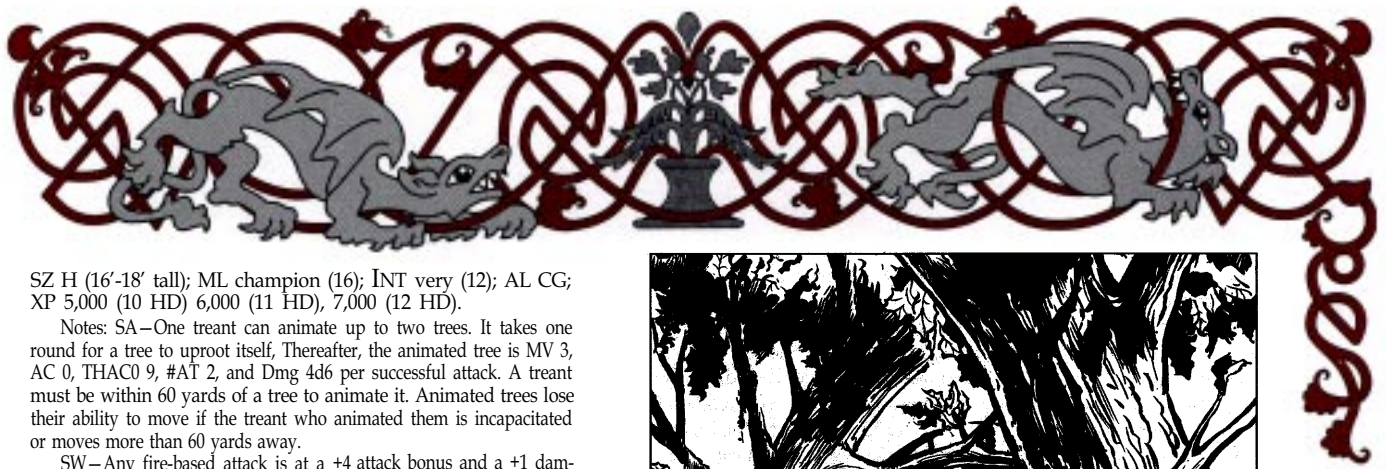
The Sundered Armory: This armory is the northernmost surviving relic of the Keep. It seems the massive-walled armory and a nearby tower kept each other supported during the destruction. This locale can be reached only by climbing the northern cliffs or approaching from the east and walking across the Gulch on the vines (see below). With the armory and its barracks torn in half and the top half of the tower beyond sheared in two along its length, the Sundered Armory appears incapable of supporting any soldiers beyond scavenging goblins. There are a number of nonmagical weapons still buried amid the rubble; all magical weaponry is buried in the subterranean levels. In the back of the armory, where it nears the tower, there is a stairwell leading below. See Ways In & Out below for more information on the stairs.

The Three Torn Towers: The Three Torn Towers mark the easiest approach to the ruins, since these are the former gate towers of Hellgate Keep and need only be approached along the ramp leading to the site. Of course, one has to meet with the treants assembled around the gate and along the plateau closer to the Gulch if one wishes access to the Torn Towers. This trio of tall towers has suffered damage that knocked at least the top three levels from each tower and blew out most of the walls and gates that linked them together. In the southernmost of the towers, the ground floor room is filled with rubble, as the second floor has crashed down along the western half. Barely visible through the rubble is a crawl-space beneath some fallen slabs that leads to a stair downward. See Ways In & Out below for more information on the stairs.

The Treants' Terrain

Thanks to the treants of Turlang, the ruins are overgrown with small trees and shrubs and other vegetation that they magically moved to the locale. All across the rim of the Gulch and the former city areas, roots creep and crawl over rubble and into archways still standing among shattered walls. Massive vines shroud the broken stone walls all around the ruins, using either great crushing strength or their invasive roots to undermine and destroy what few structures remain. Old stairwells and cellars and even the sublevel sewers lie exposed to the open air, and the vegetation has taken hold everywhere, chaining areas shut with roots or linking areas by living bridges of ivy and vines across parts of the open gulch. The treants themselves do not venture much farther than the former eastern gates or the foot of the outcrop on which the Keep rested. During the spring and summer of 1370 DR, the 14 treants plan on planting trees along the cliffs to break up the rock and further erode it.

Treants (14): AC 0; MV 12; HD 10, 11, or 12; hp 45, 46, 48, 50, 68 (10 HD); 48, 51, 55, 64, 72 (11 HD); 53, 54, 68, 84 (12 HD); THAC0 11 (10 HD) or 9 (11-12 HD); #AT 2; Dmg 3d6 (10 HD), 4d6 (11-12 HD); SA animate normal trees, can inflict structural damage; SD never surprised; SW fire vulnerability;



SZ H (16'-18' tall); ML champion (16); INT very (12); AL CG; XP 5,000 (10 HD) 6,000 (11 HD), 7,000 (12 HD).

Notes: SA—One treant can animate up to two trees. It takes one round for a tree to uproot itself. Thereafter, the animated tree is MV 3, AC 0, THAC0 9, #AT 2, and Dmg 4d6 per successful attack. A treant must be within 60 yards of a tree to animate it. Animated trees lose their ability to move if the treant who animated them is incapacitated or moves more than 60 yards away.

SW—Any fire-based attack is at a +4 attack bonus and a +1 damage bonus vs. a treant. Treants have a -4 penalty to their saving throws against all fire-based attacks.

Ways In & Out

Characters can take several approaches in entering the underground ruins. These are divided into routes through Grinthalke's Gulch and routes that avoid the Gulch by using the three long remaining staircases below each of the curtain wall towers.

Through the Gulch

The Gulch is the most obvious opening that leads into the deeper areas of the former Keep, but it contains by far the most dangers. However, there are ways that PCs can enter the dungeons below in relative safety.

Level by Level on Ropes: PCs can anchor ropes to lower themselves down the sides of the Gulch a rope-length at a time. There is a 20% chance per 100 pounds of weight on a rope that either the anchoring item or the flooring beneath an anchored person collapses, forcing the climber to make a Dexterity ability check at -6 penalty to leap to a safe point, be struck by debris (for an amount of damage determined by the DM—at least 1d6 is suggested), or take appropriate falling damage (1d6 per 10 feet fallen to a maximum of 10d6).

Using the Vines and Roots of the Vegetation: Using the vines that cover the ledges in the same way as normal ropes works for the top 60 feet of the Gulch without the risks noted above. After that, PCs must work through the rubble-strewn Sewers level to reach some stairwells down or risk using ropes as above.

Down the Stairs

In addition, three sets of stairs are mentioned above in the Tower Remnants section that lead below, though none are without their dangers. In fact, there are deep-cut stairwells beneath the former locations of all three remaining curtain wall towers of the Hellgate Keep, though most are now rendered impassable at some point in their depths by surface rubble or vegetation. The stairs are all 15-feet wide and allow two normal-size humanoids to walk and fight side-by-side. Thirty feet down and every 90 feet thereafter, the stairs open into a small 20 x 30 x 15-foot guard room. If the PCs are noisy or if retreating guards know they are coming, parts of the stairs could be trapped with murder holes or dart traps (as the DM wishes).

Beneath the Sundered Armory: This stairwell is the only one completely unblocked by rockfalls. However, it is also the only stairwell with guards posted in the guard rooms. The three lower guard rooms have five tanarukk guards. The tanarukka engage the PCs when they become aware of their presence, but they retreat down the stairs if outnumbered or wounded.

Beneath the Three Torn Towers: The ceiling has collapsed in the third guard room down along the stairs beneath the gatehouse towers, totally blocking the stairs and filling this room. The only exit from this room is into the Deep Garrisons 1 level.

Beneath Tower Arcanatorus: These stairs are very unstable since more destruction occurred on this side of the town. Hidden caches of magical items and other long-lost pockets of elven magic exploded wildly due to the *Gatekeeper's Crystal's* effect, and more of the lower levels under



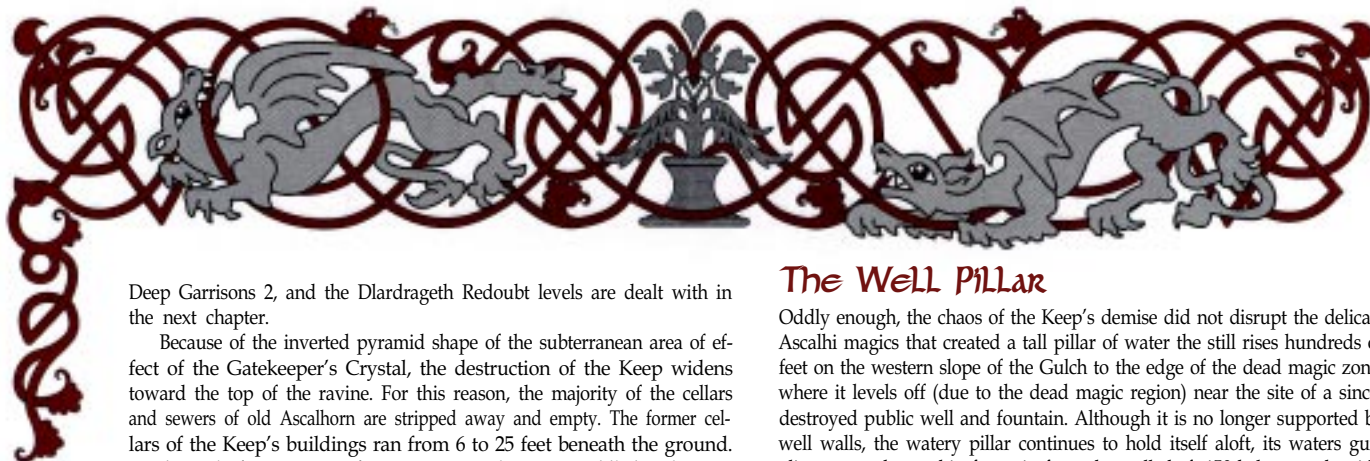
A View of Grinthalke's Gulch

the western side of town lost huge amounts of support for flooring and subterranean structures. Thus, if PCs travel closer than one person per 20 feet on the floor, there is a 30% chance per person that is too close (minus the 30% for the lead person in a clump) that the stairs break open beneath them. If any PCs travel faster than MV 12 on the ground, there is 30% chance per person that the stairs break open. Being too close together and moving too fast are cumulative.

If a breach is caused, DMs should roll 1d8 to see how many stairs break free beneath the area of effect. For every fallen block, a 3-foot-wide hole opens, and PCs standing on or directly approaching the hole must make a successful Dexterity ability check or fall through it (a -1 penalty applies for each block beyond two). The falling blocks also each have a 10% chance (cumulative for falling multiple block groupings) of breaking open the stairs beneath them, making for a dangerous domino effect.

Grinthalke's Gulch and Cellars

Though the balor general Grinthalke was dead before the fall of the Keep, the central ravine has acquired his name since he was the greatest enemy across the years and a noted bard needed the alliteration his name provided for a ballad. The name stuck. Grinthalke's Gulch is an uneven ravine at least 600 feet long per side and about half as deep. A large pile of rubble at the bottom is all that remains of much of the central Keep. There are five major layers of subterranean passages noticeable from the edge looking down: the former cellars, sewers, and crypts. The crypt levels, represented by the Lesser Assemblies, Deep Garrisons 1,



Deep Garrisons 2, and the Dlardrageth Redoubt levels are dealt with in the next chapter.

Because of the inverted pyramid shape of the subterranean area of effect of the Gatekeeper's Crystal, the destruction of the Keep widens toward the top of the ravine. For this reason, the majority of the cellars and sewers of old Ascalhorn are stripped away and empty. The former cellars of the Keep's buildings ran from 6 to 25 feet beneath the ground. Used mostly for storage or for crypt access, they were riddled with secret passages and rooms in which families and wizards hid great treasures not buried with the dead among the crypts.

The Granaries

Once over 30 deep-shaft food repositories and granaries rested below this town, though most blew away with the center of the outcrop. While only one (E) is keyed on the Grinthalke's Gulch and Cellars level map, there are at least four open to the sky along the angular walls of the Gulch. They are all located among the cellar and sewer levels, as they were 20- and 30-foot shafts accessed from the surface or a cellar. Each has a small rung ladder that leads from the old cellar access (or whatever truncated access still exists) down into the granaries. While they once held grains and food for humans and elves, the tanar'ri found them convenient for corpse disposal. Each granary is filled to its brim with bleached and crushed bones and rotting equipment. Four hours of digging at Area E yields a *ring of telekinesis* and a *brooch of shielding*. DMs adding to the challenges present by the Keep can have the granaries become ghoul and ghastr lairs where the PCs become trapped in mires of crumbling bones that the ghouls traverse easily.

The Rookeries

Cellars and other areas exposed by the crater have become homes for many birds—in fact, far more birds than any other kind of creature. The more horrific denizens of the ruins hunt the larger birds for food, but most of the western and eastern cliff rooms now peacefully play host to many avians.

The Rubble Below

Nearly 400 feet down from the former level of the streets of Hellgate Keep is a monstrous pile of rubble at the bottom of Grinthalke's Gulch. Very few people have climbed down to this precarious mound of huge stone slabs haphazardly teetering atop one another in hopes of finding an accessway to the nadir of the Gatekeeper's Crystal pyramid effect. Unless a seeker can reduce himself or herself to a gaseous or liquid form, even reduce cannot shrink a character small enough to safely fit through the innumerable air pockets and shifting spaces down through the cracked ceiling into the former Grand Assembly Chamber of Grinthalke.

Merely standing on the pile demands a Dexterity ability check to remain upright or move about at MV 3. Failed Dexterity checks cause a person to fall and suffer 1d3 points of damage. If a critical ability check failure occurs (a roll of 20), the person has fallen and a slab of rock has shifted atop his or her leg. A successful Dexterity ability check at a -3 penalty and a successful bend bars/lift gates roll are required for another character to move the block. Up to three characters may combine their efforts to lift the block, but all must succeed on their Dexterity checks (with the penalty) in the same round for a combined roll to be attempted.

Nevertheless, people still try to reach the bottom in this direct manner or through the Citadel Tower Stairs (Area J) for one simple reason: An ambient glow comes from under the pile, and *detect magic* spells temporarily (1d3 rounds) blind those who cast them within 100 yards of the rubble pile (or what it covers). These two factors provide enough incentive for folk to continue to try to enter the ravine's precarious bottom despite the dangers.

The Well Pillar

Oddly enough, the chaos of the Keep's demise did not disrupt the delicate Ascalhi magics that created a tall pillar of water the still rises hundreds of feet on the western slope of the Gulch to the edge of the dead magic zone, where it levels off (due to the dead magic region) near the site of a since-destroyed public well and fountain. Although it is no longer supported by well walls, the watery pillar continues to hold itself aloft, its waters gurgling upward as a thin fountain from the well shaft 150 below on the side of the ravine.

Visible Entrances in The Gulch

The Gulch provides access to all but the Chambers Below and the Deep Tunnels levels. This section keys the visible entrances from the ravine and indicates the depths down from surface level where they are located in italics; if the entrance is to a shaft or hole, the depth of the shaft or hole is indicated in parentheses also. Areas B, C, I, and J link up with other areas on other levels. Areas A, D, E, F, G, and H do not. So that these entrances do not create confusion within their particular level keys, they are marked by letters rather than numbers.

A, B, C, & D. Storage (Cellars): *Depths: A – 12 feet, B – 15 feet, C – 17 feet, D – 20 feet.* These storage cellars have been taken over as rookeries (see The Rookeries section above). Secret doors in the open cellars marked B and C have a chance to be found if characters search beneath and behind the heavy layers of detritus, bird guano, nesting material, and tanar'ri filth. The secret door in C leads to a short passage; the one in B is a trap door. Both doors open onto 8-foot-wide spiral stairs leading down to the crypts. The staircase at B passes through encounter area 2 in the Lesser Assemblies level in the next chapter and terminates at encounter area 12 in the Deep Garrisons 1 level. The staircase at C terminates in a small room with two secret doors in the Deep Garrisons 2 level.

E. The Ghoulish Granary (Cellars): *Depth: 22 feet (14 feet deep).* This former granary is now filled with bones. See The Granaries section above.

F, G, & H. The Cisterns (Cellars to Lesser Assemblies): *Depths: F – 24 feet (11 feet deep), G – 31 feet (4 feet deep), H – 112 feet (24 feet deep).*

I. The Dlardrageth Redoubt (Between Lesser Assemblies and Deep Garrisons 1): *Depth: 125 feet.* For a description of this entrance, see encounter 4 in the Lower Ruins chapter.

J. Citadel Tower Stairs (Deep Garrisons 2): *Depth: 288 feet.*

The Sewers

The former sewers ran no closer to the surface of Hellgate Keep than 27 feet, so as not to intersect any cellars. The tangleweb of huge room-size pipes and sluice gates has long since fallen into disrepair over the five centuries since the town fell to the tanar'ri. Even the exit point of the sewers through a long shaft down to an underground river beneath the eastern gates has long been blocked, so exiting the upper regions of the underground Keep in this way is not only a filthy mode of travel, but it leads nowhere.

Sewer Encounters: While it is totally unkeyed, DMs with lax PCs could easily ambush them in the Sewer level with some tanarukk hunters of Clan Hruamkkar. DMs can also use this level for their own random encounters, to provide small caches of nonmagical helpful items, or as a setting for encounters with neutral or helpful NPCs of their own devising.



Lower Ruins



slim series of tunnels links all the guard chambers of the tower stairwells, the lesser assemblies, and the deep garrisons, for which the Lesser Assemblies and Deep Garrisons 1 and 2 levels are named. The deep garrisons were once crypts with only one entrance through secret doors and stairs from family homes above, so the passages between them are rough-hewn and carved by the claws and picks of tanar'ri slave labor. With the destruction of the Keep, many of the passages are blocked by rockfall, but there are still some ways to maneuver about the majority of the tunnel network, as seen on the maps. The tunnels are all lit by *continual light* effects every 120 feet (leaving a shadowy area 10-15 feet wide at the furthest extent of each light); these spells were set by the elves when the tunnels were the catacombs of Ascalhorn.

The largest number of adventure encounters occur in the lower ruins, which are comprised of the three tunnel areas set beneath the Keep's former surface at depths of 120 feet (Lesser Assemblies level), 210 feet (Deep Garrisons 1), and 280 feet (Deep Garrisons 2) and the sublevel at 170 feet (the Dlardrageth Redoubt). Guard contingents may be more alert or numerous, depending on their depth in the ruins and how close they are to areas their leaders would want closely guarded. All the tunnels are as described above, while areas are detailed not by order of importance but by their depth below the surface; features in the Lesser Assemblies level are thus listed below before the Dlardrageth Redoubt level or the Deep Garrisons 1, etc. Detailed encounters follow general descriptions for each level or group of levels. The names of NPCs of note are placed in SMALL CAPS in areas where they may be encountered. These NPCs (SARYA, RYVVIK, XHALH, KAANYR, and ALIISZA) are detailed in full in the NPCs & Magic chapter, and their statistics are not repeated below.

Lesser Assemblies

The lesser assemblies were, for elven Ascalhorn, a place for the citizens to hide in safety when the town was under martial law and under attack. There are small granaries and cisterns set in the corners of each assembly that were originally stocked with bunkbeds and tables, all long since consumed by fires or other destruction. For the past five centuries, the tanar'ri used the lesser assemblies for all manner of foul purposes, including magical testing grounds or forced combat among slaves. The scarring on the walls or debris of shattered bits of armor or long-since dried blood is often the only remaining witness of what happened in these rooms. The granaries hold only bones or rotting corpses, and the cisterns contain slightly brackish water (20% chance of contracting a disease if ingested).

1. The Stairwell of Feral Wizardry

The stairs beneath the Sundered Armory are stable, unlit, and devoid of any travel difficulties. This encounter on the stairs just as the PCs reach the Lesser Assemblies level guard room (the second guard room down the stairway from its top) may actually be their first combat if they took this entrance into the Keep.

A localized wild magic zone has unique effects on active spells (whether generated by spell or item) or those cast within the guard room: These magics each become small snakelike creatures of 1 HD per spell level that inflict 1d4 points of constrictive or biting damage per HD. These creatures attack the person that cast the spell that created them or the person upon whom they are cast. For example, a *continual light* effect on a cloak gem becomes a glowing cottonmouth snake that sinks its fangs into the person nearest to it!

This peculiar wild magic region also affects fires and open flames, including those on magical swords, in similar ways. All fires become fiery leonine beasts that attack those nearest to them when they appear. They have hit points or Hit Dice that depend on the size of the fire source they were created from: 1 hp (candle), 1 HD (torch), 3 HD (flaming sword or lantern), 5 HD (larger flame sources). They inflict physical damage equal to their hit points, though flammable items are set aflame after one round. If the fire-beasts cannot hit a target with their initial attacks, they leap around and set fire to what they can (MV 3 per HD) by resting on it for 1 round or successfully attacking it with a fiery bite.

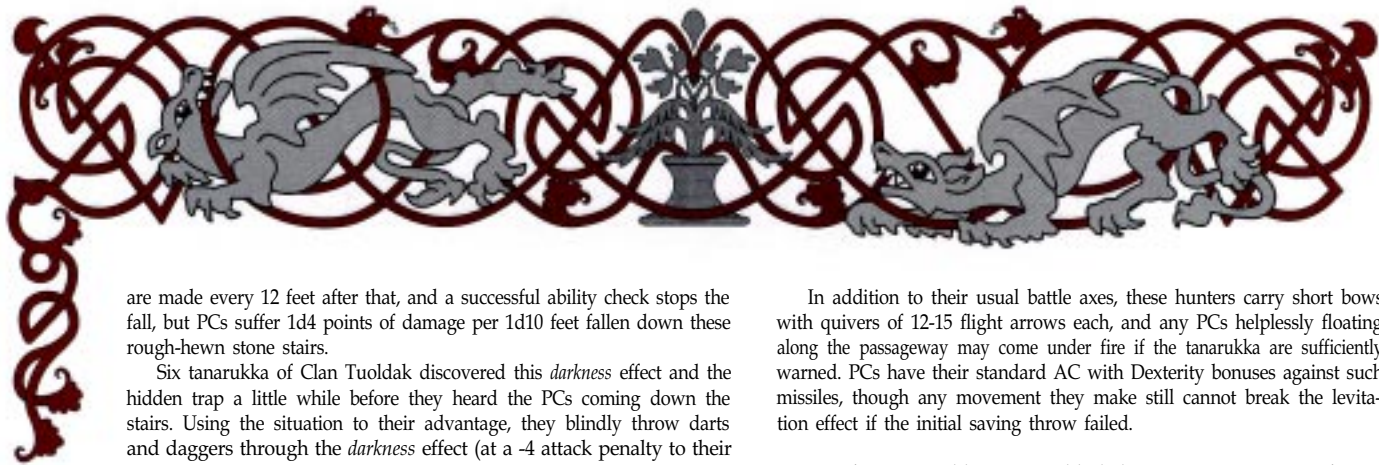
2. Darts in Darkness

This encounter is keyed to occur along the stairs that lead down from cellar B to the former crypt that is now a deep garrison on the Deep Garrisons 1 level. DMs can easily use this encounter on other stairs or within a tunnel with only minor adjustments if the PCs never entered or explored the exposed cellars.

As the PCs descend the tight and musty stairs leading from the cellar, their light sources suddenly end at a curtain of darkness that none of their lights penetrate. If the PCs stop or begin to investigate, a flurry of darts and daggers flies out of the darkness.

At the keyed point on these stairs, a permanent darkness 15' radius is set to deter folk from going further. At the center of the darkness the stairs are trapped (unless one steps just next to the inner wall) to suddenly spring up by two feet when stepped on and then forward, pitching intruders headlong down the stairs. Unless PCs make successful Dexterity checks (at a -2 penalty), they fall 1d12 feet down the stairs. Successive Dexterity ability checks





are made every 12 feet after that, and a successful ability check stops the fall, but PCs suffer 1d4 points of damage per 1d10 feet fallen down these rough-hewn stone stairs.

Six tanarukka of Clan Tuoldak discovered this *darkness* effect and the hidden trap a little while before they heard the PCs coming down the stairs. Using the situation to their advantage, they blindly throw darts and daggers through the *darkness* effect (at a -4 attack penalty to their listed THACO), hoping to force the PCs to advance incautiously. If PCs begin falling down, they let them roll past, though a tanarukk follows each PC, hoping to get in a free backstab attack with his battle axe when his target halts his or her fall.

Clan Tuoldak Tanarukka (6): AC 5; MV 12; HD 5; hp 37, 32, 30, 26, 25, 19; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite) or 1d8 (battle axe); SD *affect normal fires* 2/day, immune to fire, 90-foot infravision; MR 10%; SZ S (4' tall); ML elite (14); INT avg (10); AL CE; XP 420 each.

3. Ohlimbiyr's Passage

The PCs enter a once-great chamber where grand carved murals depicting great feats of magic and majestic elves rise up the walls. Of course, the tanar'ri have marred most of these murals with filth and claw marks or the blast points of magic and fire, but enough remains to give one a sense that this area was a place where magic was important. At the far side of the chamber is a dim glow coming from an exiting passageway.

Unlike the other standard rectangular passages between the lesser assemblies, this tunnel is both round (the floor dropping away from the entry arch into a rounded arc about a dagger's length beneath the room's floor) and glowing with a pale azure radiance of latent magic. If anything living breaches the edge of the tunnel, it slowly levitates into the air and begins floating (Fl 3 (D)) along the length of the 60-foot-long tunnel toward its other open end. As creatures float along this passage, they relive their entire lives in their minds' eyes, though particular emphasis and energy seems focused on any exposure to or learning of magics, with such instances returning to the forefront of memory.

The more living beings in the tunnel at any given time, the brighter the glow of the azure magics. Only two successful saving throws vs. spell or two successful magic resistance checks (or some combination thereof) allow an entrant to avoid each of these effects (levitation and "mental mysteries tour"). Not even other magic that affects movement can cancel the levitating once it has begun. Once caught in the grip of the magics, a person must experience the full effects of Ohlimbiyr's passage and travel to its opposite end, where she or he is halted peacefully at the passage's end and needs only take one conscious step to exit.

Unfortunately, depending on how much noise or light the PCs generate either in the far chamber or in the tunnel itself, the tanarukk patrol in the exit chamber may be sitting about a small cooking fire, roasting rats, or they may be set up on both sides of the tunnel in ambush. No matter what, at least one rests behind an overturned table just to one side and across the room from the tunnel, acting as a guard and tunnel watch with partial cover.

The first PCs through the tunnel are each attacked with small nets normally used to trap birds and other small animals for food (successfully attacked PCs must successfully save vs. paralyzation or be helplessly entangled for one round). Entangled PCs are disarmed by another tanarukk so that they can be taken as prisoners to Kaanyr Vhok. Once all three nets are so employed, the remaining troops hold off any other intruders until they can secure any prisoners and escape with them. If four tanarukka would outnumber the remaining free PCs, four tanarukka remain while six escort the bound and weaponless PCs out of the chamber and down toward Kaanyr Vhok; otherwise, all 10 Hruamkkar tanarukka quickly retreat with their captives.

In addition to their usual battle axes, these hunters carry short bows with quivers of 12-15 flight arrows each, and any PCs helplessly floating along the passageway may come under fire if the tanarukka are sufficiently warned. PCs have their standard AC with Dexterity bonuses against such missiles, though any movement they make still cannot break the levitation effect if the initial saving throw failed.

Clan Hruamkkar Tanarukk (10): AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp 40, 36, 36, 33, 31, 31, 28, 26, 24, 22; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg entangle (net—only three have nets), 1d4 (bite), 1d8 (battle axe), or 1d6 (short bow with flight arrow); SD *affect normal fires* 2/day, immune to fire, 90-foot infravision; MR 10%; SZ S (4' tall); ML elite (13); INT avg (9); AL CE; XP 650 each.

Lore: This tunnel was originally designed as an elven wizard's graduation exercise from his school of wizardry, which once graced the town above with its arts. The tunnel magically stimulated the elves' state of reverie as they walked through, making students reflect on their studies and prepare them for the life of a mage.

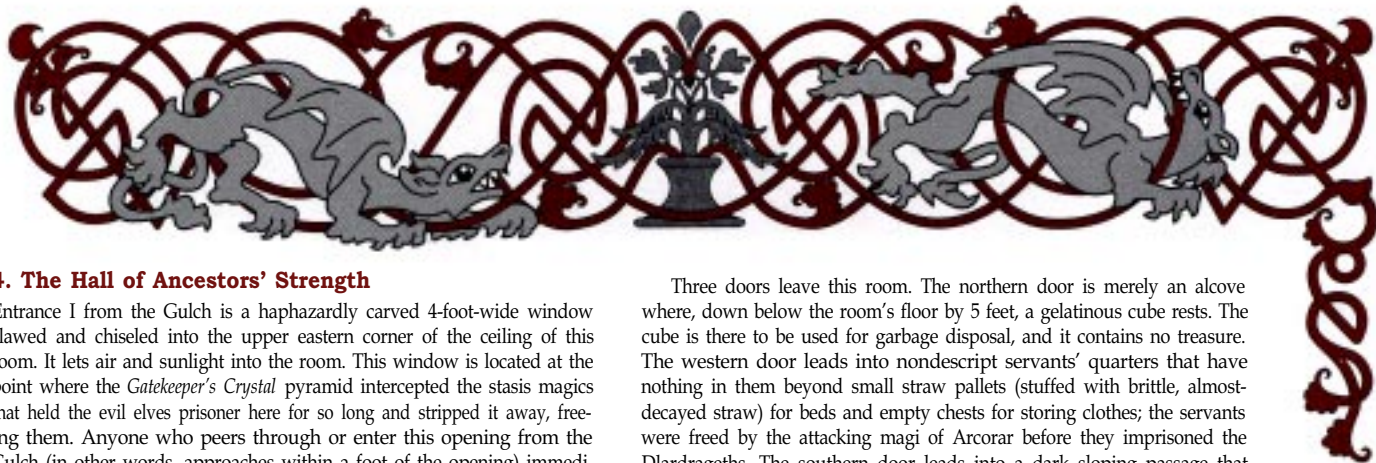
The Dlardrageth Redoubt

These deep chambers, entombed in stone between the Lesser Assemblies and the Deep Garrisons 1 levels, were totally unknown both to the settlers of Ascalhorn and Hellgate Keep alike. Their only access to the outside world originally was a secret door that exited the southeastern cliffs close to the gatehouse; this exit became blocked with rockfalls during the Mistmaster's gambit, and the trapped creatures within the Redoubt level have already carved alternate exits from these chambers out to tunnels above and below. The most immediate difference between these chambers and other areas of the Keep is the lack of filth and debris.

These chambers were (and still are) the home of the renegade gold elf House Dlardrageth (see the NPCs & Magic chapter). The Dlardrageth elves carved a small villa out of the original minor cavern complex's rough caves and created this home for themselves. It used to have many more rooms accessed through Areas 4 and 6, but the *Gatekeeper's Crystal's* explosion caused massive rockfalls that buried these other chambers. All areas in the Dlardrageth Redoubt level are lit by everburning flaming torches in wall sconces. These torches emit no smoke or heat, but otherwise react and appear as normal torches (which they are, once removed from the sconces that supply the enchantments).

The Dlardrageth elves fought their final battle against the High Mages of Arcorar here in their home, and here they remained frozen in time in their Hall of Strength for over 5,000 years. Now they are free, and with a number of "witless mongrels crawling about the wreckage above," the Countess Sarya has sources of both food and information. When she is satisfied with what she and Ryvvik can learn of the world outside and they have discerned a safehold to remove themselves to, they plan on corralling Xhalh from wherever his hunts have taken him and quitting the ruins.

Of course, how the encounter areas and scenarios of this level play out depends on which entry the PCs find. If they enter from the Gulch at entrance I, the scenarios play out along the defaults written into encounters 4-10 below. Much of the advance preparation of the Dlardrageths is due to the magical alarms Sarya has set near the Gulch opening and her use of her earring's *clairaudience* powers to listen in on PC plans. If the characters use the small rough-hewn tunnel at location X in the Lesser Assemblies level, they will meet the fearsome Xhalh alone and things play out quite differently, though the physical details of the areas remain the same (see Area 9A for details).



4. The Hall of Ancestors' Strength

Entrance I from the Gulch is a haphazardly carved 4-foot-wide window clawed and chiseled into the upper eastern corner of the ceiling of this room. It lets air and sunlight into the room. This window is located at the point where the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* pyramid intercepted the stasis magics that held the evil elves prisoner here for so long and stripped it away, freeing them. Anyone who peers through or enter this opening from the Gulch (in other words, approaches within a foot of the opening) immediately sets off magical alarms that notify the corrupt half-elf cambions that intruders are about (if they do not already know because of undue noise or other warnings).

The once-grand hall the rough-hewn window opens into has seen better days. While its floor still has a the underlying sheen of a high polish, much of it is covered in dust and rubble because the northern wall has collapsed inward and filled over one-third of the room with loose rock. On the southern wall are six highly detailed statues of tanar'ri interposed with bas reliefs on the walls of elves and creatures that appear to be mixes of the two races. The closest three statues to Entrance I are partially buried in the rubble that has spilled through the northern wall and the partially broken ceiling. At the far western end of the chamber is an archway leading out. (Despite previous comments about unstable ground, the PCs are safe from rockfalls here, since Sarya has used some hidden magics to reinforce the walls and floors while the Dlardrageths remain here.)

While it would normally be a 20-foot drop to the floor from the window (Entrance I), rubble from the collapsed wall has collected under the opening. It allows PCs to drop without harm only 6 feet onto the rubble mound. However, each PC that descends by dropping down must make a Dexterity ability check (at a +1 bonus) or begin to slide on loose debris, tumbling down the slope to the floor, suffering 1d4 points of damage and making a great deal of noise.

5. Entry Hall

This domed circular chamber rises 20 feet from the floor at its apex. The floor is polished and gleams in the torchlight, and the elaborate gold inlay set in the dome illustrates the House Dlardrageth seal, a golden wyvern in flight (a wyvern volant) against three red crossed swords. Archways exit this chamber to the west, north, and east. The southern egress is a wide stairwell leading down to a sloping easterly passageway.

6. Dining Hall

The darkest of the chambers of this level, this room is lit only by a small torch guttering in the southwest corner, though a little more light streams across the rubble from the west. While most of this room is totally buried beneath collapsed rock, a few chairs and a shattered corner of a duskwood table suggest this was once a dining hall. Digging through the loose rubble produces numerous silver serving pieces, but it takes at least an hour of digging to reach the first one and 1d4 turns for each one thereafter. All such pieces have been pounded flat by debris and the impact wave of the explosion.

Within an archway in the western wall rests what appears to be the shattered remnants of a door. Iron reinforcing bands lie twisted on the floor amidst broken wooden planks. The door's metal hinges, still attached to the archway, grip only small wooden shards.

7. Kitchen

Upon entering the brightly lit room to the west of the dining hall, PCs can immediately identify this as the kitchen. Shelves line the east walls, while a table dominates the southwest corner. A wide fireplace inhabits the northwest corner, and a spit magically rotates a large piece of meat over a low-burning fire. (Successful Intelligence ability checks by curious PCs result in reasonable speculation that the meat was a dwarf.)

Three doors leave this room. The northern door is merely an alcove where, down below the room's floor by 5 feet, a gelatinous cube rests. The cube is there to be used for garbage disposal, and it contains no treasure. The western door leads into nondescript servants' quarters that have nothing in them beyond small straw pallets (stuffed with brittle, almost-decayed straw) for beds and empty chests for storing clothes; the servants were freed by the attacking magi of Arcorar before they imprisoned the Dlardrageths. The southern door leads into a dark sloping passage that ends behind the (obvious) back of a secret door that leads into the lounge. This hall is merely a servant's passage for quicker access to the personal chambers from the kitchens.

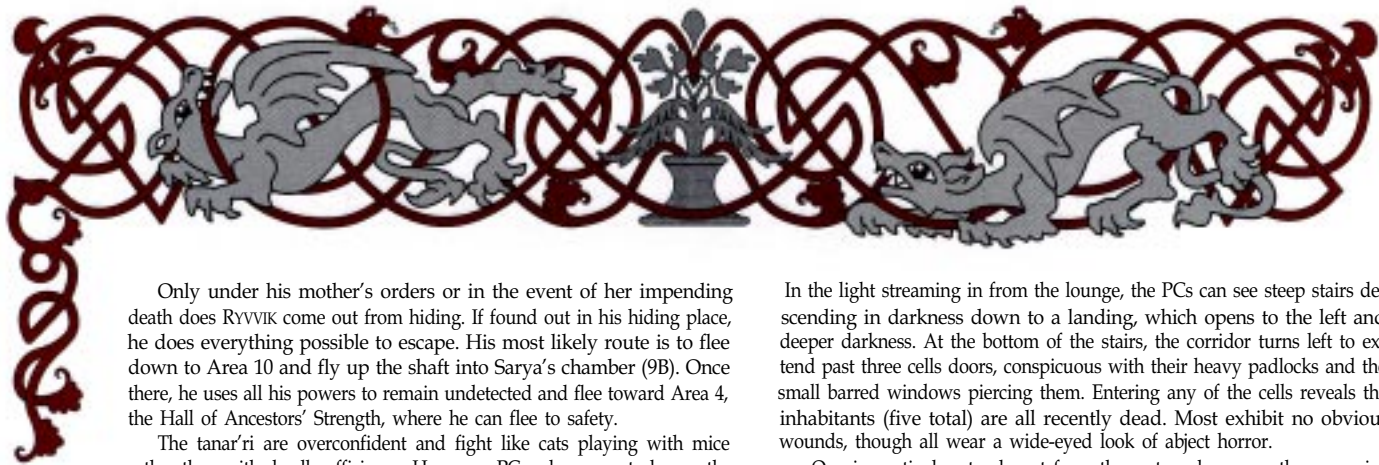
8. The Lounge

The western archway from the entry hall or the servants' entry from the kitchen leads to this room. Among the most noticeable features in this room is the odd lighting. Torches are absent from the wall sconces, but multiple beams of light stream down from points on the ceiling. The recent magical chaos seems to have disrupted the illusory ceiling, as in some sections the roof appears to be a glass greenhouse roof with bright sunshine streaming down through it, while other parts reveal the arched stone ceiling 15 feet overhead. This room seems warmer, both in temperature and because it is more inviting than the others on this level, because its floor is carpeted and its walls are lined with wooden wainscoting to a height of eight feet. Divans and long couches surround a small shallow fountain pool set into the floor in the room's center. To the left of the eastern entrance is a stairwell leading up. A close inspection of the walls reveals secret doors in the north and west walls, though the wood paneling expertly disguises the hinges and door jambs.

As the PCs enter the room, all is quiet. SARYA and XHALH stand unnoticed under an *invisibility* 10'-radius spell in the southwestern corner. When the PCs approach within 10 feet of the pond at the center of the room, SARYA casts *Evard's black tentacles*, centering the effect on the pond, and thus canceling her invisibility. Eighteen tentacles erupt from the water, keeping the PCs suitably busy so that the villains can gauge their abilities. SARYA is interested in keeping at least a few of the PCs alive, most notably the spellcasters or priests (the knowledgeable ones in her mind). She uses such spells as *Otiluke's resilient sphere* and *eyebite* (charm or sicken effect to neutralize attacks) to render them helpless and then take them to the rooms below.

XHALH remains invisible and sneaks around the southern perimeter of the room to cut any fleeing PCs off at the room's eastern exit. He should be armed with no less than four broad swords or melee weapons (including the *Blade Dlardrageth*) and his only remarks to any PCs are low chuckles of wrathful glee. If more than two foes engage him in battle, he exhales his *cloudkill* breath upon them and himself (since he is immune to its poisonous effects). He then fights to keep the PCs within the deadly cloud by grabbing hold of them with spare arms, though he always keeps at least three weapons among his six arms. He withdraws only if he is losing the battle, and if he has not used his breath weapon at that point, he uses it to cover his retreat.

RYVVIK prefers not to engage in active combat, leaving that to his more martially attuned relatives. He waits, listening to the battle after it is engaged, at the top of the stairs behind the secret door into the lounge on the west wall. Should SARYA and XHALH encounter greater resistance than expected, he strikes psionically from hiding by using concealed peepholes to see everyone in the room. He coordinates his actions with his mother by mindspeaking with her; after she corrals the PCs all into one area within 40 feet of the western wall, he uses his *mind surge* ray to try and paralyze them all. Other psionic attacks he may try are to *inflict pain* or *double pain* on Xhalh's foes (allowing him to defeat them more easily) or even to use the draining *ultrablast*.



Only under his mother's orders or in the event of her impending death does RYVVIK come out from hiding. If found out in his hiding place, he does everything possible to escape. His most likely route is to flee down to Area 10 and fly up the shaft into Sarya's chamber (9B). Once there, he uses all his powers to remain undetected and flee toward Area 4, the Hall of Ancestors' Strength, where he can flee to safety.

The tanar'ri are overconfident and fight like cats playing with mice rather than with deadly efficiency. However, PCs who prove to be worthy opponents during the engagement will briefly gain their respect—before the Dlardrageths work to subdue or slay them outright. The Dlardrageths only want to keep some of the PCs alive for questioning; truly dangerous foes who reveal their abilities only earn themselves a swift death.

SARYA quickly abandons a fight and joins RYVVIK in hiding behind the western secret door rather than risk life and limb. If the PCs begin winning their battle, SARYA and RYVVIK flee (as noted above under Ryvvik's actions), and they telepathically let Xhalh know to escape with them through his own methods. While they want more magic and more information, they all break off fighting if there is a chance of actually losing. After all, their plans are to refound their family, not die senseless deaths.

9. Living Quarters

The stairs and the hallway beyond in this area have carpets cushioning the hard, but still brightly polished, stone floors. Leading off the hallway are four doors and an archway leading to a fifth room. All of the rooms these entrances lead to are opulently decorated bedrooms, complete with wardrobes of clothes more than five millennia old and weaponry and magical item caches (though the items are found only in Sarya's room).

The doors into these rooms can barely open due to slight shifts in the stone floors and doorways that cause them to bind against the floor and their frames; essentially, they are stuck. They require successful open doors rolls to noisily force them inward. Once opened, a door remains stuck open unless another successful open doors roll can shove it closed.

9A. Xhalh's Room: If the PCs entered the Dlardrageth villa by the small rough-hewn tunnel in the floor at location X in the Lesser Assemblies level, they drop in on the fearsome XHALH, who is finishing his preparations for a hunt. He laughs loudly, glad for a battle, but he also yells a warning to his aunt through his open door. SARYA then yells down through the hidden shaft to Ryvvik's interrogation room (Area 10) to warn him and bring him up through the lounge to aid the fight. Within 1d4 rounds, SARYA enters the doorway to Xhalh's room and does what she can to draw the PCs down into the lounge, where there is more room to fight. RYVVIK hides via his chameleon power or psionic invisibility at the bottom of the stairs or just outside 9A behind his mother and cousin; he picks the best location to keep him out of a direct fight but allow him line of sight for psionic attacks. If the fight moves down into the lounge, he moves to hide behind the secret door in the western wall as is described in the information for Area 8.

9B. Sarya's Chamber: The only difference between this room and the others is its wardrobe and secret egress. If both doors of the wardrobe are opened wide and the base at its back is pressed firmly, the back pops open, swinging outward, to reveal a 20-foot-wide shaft that slopes at an angle to open above Ryvvik's interrogation chamber (Area 10, detailed below). Sarya and Ryvvik use this secret shaft to flee major foes, and Sarya also uses it as a quick way to fly up to her room with those poor guests of Ryvvik who gain—or deserve—her personal attentions.

10. The Guest Rooms

Behind the western secret door from the lounge the ceiling rises to a 30-foot height, most of it in shadow, as this area is unlit by magical torches.

In the light streaming in from the lounge, the PCs can see steep stairs descending in darkness down to a landing, which opens to the left and deeper darkness. At the bottom of the stairs, the corridor turns left to extend past three cells doors, conspicuous with their heavy padlocks and the small barred windows piercing them. Entering any of the cells reveals the inhabitants (five total) are all recently dead. Most exhibit no obvious wounds, though all wear a wide-eyed look of abject horror.

One in particular stands out from the rest, as he wears the recognizable robes of a Red Wizard of Thay and his shaven head features numerous scalp tattoos. He is chained to a wall in the eastern cell; missing from his corpse are his eyes and all ten fingers. The other corpses, two in each of the western cells, can be identified through the use of *speak with dead* and other such magics. These four otherwise nondescript robed humans were wizards from the Hosttower Arcane of Luskan.

If the PCs are captured by the tanar'ri, their group is divided as equally as possible between the three cells and imprisoned. The corpses noted above remain in the cells with the imprisoned PCs.

A curtain is drawn across the end of the corridor past all the cells, and this blocks much of the dim light emitting from the 10 small candles set in the reflective holders along the walls of the long room behind the curtain from leaving the room. This interrogation room is dominated by a large depression in the center of the floor. Over that depression hangs a rusty, doubled chain with blackened shackles at the ends. These shackles end about 9-feet from the floor and are joined by a corresponding pair with a floor-mounted chain at the bottom of the 2-foot depression. Ryvvik believes that "proper interrogations can only be done one at a time," so prisoners are shackled here alone while Ryvvik enters their minds. The discomfort of the shackles prevents most folk from resisting the mental invasions.

Along the west wall of the room is a table and a small bin in the far corner. The table holds rings, necklaces and most items of value confiscated from the people Ryvvik has interrogated. DMs can place treasures as they wish here, though Sarya and Ryvvik make concerted efforts to take all the magic if forced to flee. A random selection could include: Thayan jewelry, pouches of gems from Luskan and Mirabar, papers or log books (in which DMs can place hints and hooks for other adventures for their campaigns), and two *rings of warmth*, a *ring of spell turning*, a *ring of sustenance*, a *medallion of ESP*, a *cloak of the bat*, a *wand of fire*, a *wand of illumination*, and a *wand of frost*.

Above the southeast corner of the room is a 10-foot-square hole in the ceiling that is nearly unnoticeable in the gloom unless additional light is brought near it. It is the end of an angled shaft that, once beyond the ceiling of this lower room, opens to a 20 feet square and rises up to Sarya's bedchamber (Area 9B) to end behind the wardrobe.

Sneaky PCs and Scenario Adjustments

If the PCs arrive via Entrance I from the Gulch and use *dispel magic* to cancel the magical alarms and enter the Dlardrageth Compound in secret or if they quietly create their own entrance elsewhere, they encounter the Dlardrageths in slightly different circumstances. RYVVIK has not quite killed all his guests and is busy interrogating the last one, a hapless lesser wizard of the Hosttower Arcane, in the guest rooms. SARYA is descending the stairs into the lounge with the charred corpse of a male gold elf that she is taking to the kitchens to dispose of in the gelatinous cube. XHALH readies himself for a hunt in the Lesser Assemblies level, and unless interrupted, he leaves Area 9A in three rounds and is missing until recalled by his cousin Ryvvik. Keep track of time, sound, and anything the PCs might do to attract attention. With some luck or skill, PCs might turn the tables and surprise the Dlardrageths!





Deep Garrisons 1 and 2

The former catacombs and burial crypts of the great elven and human families of Ascalhorn did not fare well with the advent of the tanar'ri. For the past 500 years or more, these areas have been torn apart and turned into the foul deep garrisons of Hellgate Keep. Each of the former crypts held 12 sarcophagi and at least three times as many wall niches within which coffins rested. Now most have been ransacked and despoiled by the tanar'ri, who used them as garrisons and barracks for their troops as they assembled armies to exit via the tunnels out into the North.

Unlike the lesser assemblies in the first tunnels, the deep garrisons have no cisterns or granaries within them since their original purpose had little to do with the living. The former crypts are now merely temporary staging areas for troops, though the tanar'ri and other creatures turned the sarcophagi into beds and burial niches into lesser troop bunks. The shattered remnants of funerary statues, burial offerings, heirlooms buried with the dead, and even the bones of the dead themselves often litter the floors of these areas ignominiously.

11. Revenge of the Ascalhi

While this is considered only one encounter, there are multiple tags for it on the Deep Garrisons 1 level map. The tag within the western deep garrison is the central encounter, and the other tags correspond to places the DM can place preliminary encounters. Use the lesser spectres for these encounters and have them flee back to their master, thus leading the PCs to him.

Dosal Marnath, once a minor wizard of Ascalhorn, summoned baatezu to help him gain power, and his rivals fell swiftly. His servants turned on him close to the fall of the city, and his hatred and outrage at their betrayal brought him back as a spectre. For a short time, he raged against baatezu, tanar'ri, and former rivals alike until magically imprisoned in a gem and buried in a deep crypt. The tremors of the Keep's destruction above were enough to knock the gem to the floor from its pedestal, shattering it. This unleashed Dosal the spectre, and he began to hunt and torment the tanar'ri and tanarukka garrisoned near his prison.

Now a master spectre in this deep garrison, Dosal commands three other spectres he created from tanarukka by his attacks. Although these creatures had other abilities in life, their undead state renders them identical in all ways to normal spectres. His creations wander the halls around the lair and kill any lone or paired creatures they encounter. If they (or the master spectre) encounter greater numbers, they flee and gather again later near the long-ruined crypt Dosal uses as his lair.

Dosal Marnath (Master Spectre) and 3 Spectres (4 total): AC 2; MV 15, FL 30 (B); HD 7+3; hp 59 (Dosal), 49, 40, 35; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+energy drain; SA energy drain (two life-energy levels per successful attack); SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and cold-based spells; immune to poison and paralysis; SW holy water, *raise dead*; SZ S-M (3'-5' tall); ML champion (15); INT high (13); AL LE; XP 4,000 (Dosal), 3,000 each (other spectres).

Notes: SW-Holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage. *Raise dead* destroys a spectre immediately if a saving throw vs. spell is failed.

12. The Crypt Toryvhallen

This is the sole area within all of Ascalhorn that has never felt the corruptive touch of the tanar'ri and thus remains a sacrosanct burial place. Its untouchability stems from the unsleeping guardians who rest within

the crypt itself. The stone doors into the tomb are long shattered, and the antechamber is filled with rubble from them. Numerous footprints have disturbed the dust at the crypt's entrance, though most stop abruptly five feet after entering the crypt.

At the back of the antechamber, blocking the secondary doors into the main crypt, are a pair of crypt things. It is their guardianship that continues to deter the tanarukka and others from despoiling the tomb. In addition to the standard abilities of crypt things, one of them wears a *ring of shocking grasp* and the other bears a *girdle of stone giant strength*. The antechamber also has innate magics that cancel magic resistance (a power easily within the grasp of elven High Mages), and this capability is what allows the crypt things to continually defeat the tanar'ri. If anything penetrates the doorway into the antechamber, the crypt things immediately attempt to teleport intruders away. Their powers have been modified and augmented to allow them to send them only to one of two places (as determined by their creators): the central square pillories where criminals were placed in old Ascalhorn (now empty air above a 480-foot sheer drop) or outside the main gates of the city (among the 14 treants to the east of the Three Torn Towers). Intruders are sent to the pillories if their actions show that they are intent on plunder or vandalism; any other actions or ambiguous behavior results in an intruder being teleported outside the main gates of the city.

Crypt Things (2): AC 3; MV 12; HD 6; hp 44, 38; THAC0 15 (12 with *girdle of stone giant strength*); #AT 1; Dmg 2d8+6 (skeletal hand wearing *ring of shocking grasp*) or 1d8+8 (skeletal hand affected by *girdle of stone giant strength*); SA teleportation; SD can be hit only by magical weapons; immune to *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*; immune to poison; cannot be turned; SW holy water and items (like all undead); SZ M (6' tall) ML fanatic (18); INT very (12); AL N; XP 975 each.

Teleportation: Each crypt thing can try to teleport any given group of intruders once per encounter. Each target is entitled to a separate saving throw vs. spell or she or he is instantly transported away to one of the two locations noted above.

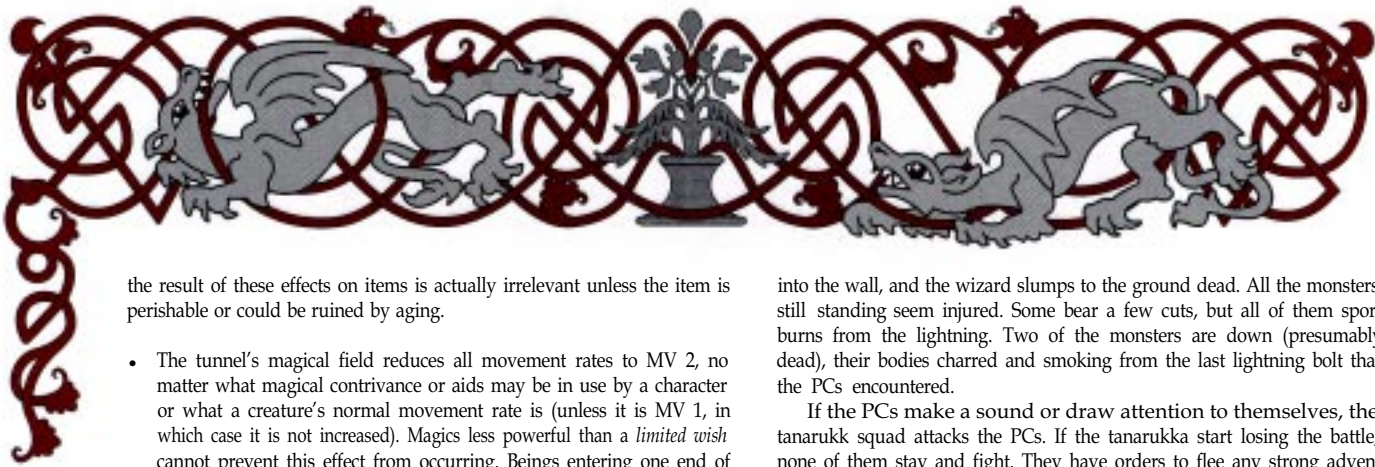
Special Equipment: One crypt thing wears a *ring of shocking grasp*; the other bears a *girdle of stone giant strength*. While the crypt thing wears it, the *ring of shocking grasp* can function once per round and never become inert. If removed from the crypt thing, it functions as a normal *ring of shocking grasp*.

Lore: The crypt things guard the Crypt Toryvhallen, the burial place of an elven family of early Ascalhorn. Within it are rumored to be many great magics including some secrets of High Magic. Many have died trying to plumb its secrets, as its undying guardians have never once allowed any nonfamily member to tread within the inner crypt in over 900 years.

13. Arcane Aging

Upon entering a deep garrison, the PCs immediately notice a noisome stench emanating from a large pile of filthy furs located just a few feet inside the entrance to a side tunnel. Also near the entrance are eight 16- to 18-foot-long hooked poles either leaning in the corners or fallen to the floor.

People who step up close enough to investigate the furs cross the threshold into the side tunnel. The furs contain the rancid and rotten remains of a haunch of some kind of meat, but the tunnel itself is much more interesting. This side tunnel between the two chambers continually pulses with extremely strong magic if a *detect magic* is used on it or in its vicinity. People and objects in the tunnel are subject to a multitude of effects all tied together in a specialized, complex dweomer. People receive a saving throw vs. spell at a -2 penalty to avoid each of the bulleted magical effects detailed below. Items get no saving throws unless they are stored in a magical container (*bag of holding*, *cloak of many pockets*, etc.);



the result of these effects on items is actually irrelevant unless the item is perishable or could be ruined by aging.

- The tunnel's magical field reduces all movement rates to MV 2, no matter what magical contrivance or aids may be in use by a character or what a creature's normal movement rate is (unless it is MV 1, in which case it is not increased). Magics less powerful than a *limited wish* cannot prevent this effect from occurring. Beings entering one end of the tunnel take nearly two rounds to cross from the entrance to the other end (using combat movement rates, which are applicable in this case).
- Living creatures are healed for 1d10 points up to their maximum hit point total, but never exceeding it. This benefit is visited each full round a living being remains in the tunnel.
- Anything, whether a living creature or an object, caught in this tunnel ages 2d6 years per round within the field. If a PC rushes as quickly as possible through this tunnel, she or he only ages a maximum of 3d6 years. PCs who spend two full rounds in the tunnel age 4d6 years.
- Living creatures are always ravenously hungry upon exiting the tunnel. If food is not found within two rounds of leaving the tunnel, a creature suffers a -1 penalty on all rolls until fed. DMs should note that any food carried by PCs through this tunnel will likely be ruined by the aging process unless it is carried in a magical container.
- Normal and enchanted missiles fired or thrown into the tunnel fall after flying 10 feet into it due to the fluctuating fields of *haste* and *slow* magic within it. Spells that generate missiles are unaffected.

If the PCs have managed to put any of the lesser tanar'ri to flight (especially Aliisza or Kaanyr Vhok), this is a great area through which they might lead the PCs in chase. The full and half-breed tanar'ri are either unaffected or little affected by the aging process of the tunnel, but the PCs suffer both the delays of the tunnel's movement restrictions as well as the aging.

Lore: This tunnel was originally used by alchemists to speed up the process of creating certain items that needed aged materials. The large hooked poles were used to move objects (or people) within the tunnel from one end to the other, or at least pull them out after placing them within it. The tanar'ri found it horribly useful for sending their cambion and tanarukk children through the tunnel to ensure they constantly had an adult population of forces for Hellgate Keep.

14. Thunder and Plunder

As the PCs approach this intersection of the tunnels, have them check to see if they hear a noise from up ahead. The tell-tale sounds of a fight are heard coming from around the bend (from whichever direction the PCs cannot see around) by those who succeed at a hear noise roll. Observant characters also see a faint light whose source lies beyond their line of sight flare up and suddenly snuff out, leaving the area seemingly dimmer for its sudden brightness.

Those PCs that are forewarned gain a special bonus as a lightning bolt suddenly booms and arcs around the corner, heading directly toward the party. Alert PCs who noticed the commotion roll a saving throw vs. spell with a +2 bonus. If they succeed, they take no damage, while if they fail, they take half damage. PCs who were inattentive gain their normal saving throw against the effect. The lightning bolt was generated from a *wand of lightning*, and it inflicts 6d6 points of lightning damage upon those who suffer its full effects.

Assuming the PCs approach the corner and peer around it, they find six burly, reddish-skinned orcs with ridged brows (tanarukka) surrounding one lone wizard with a *wand of lightning*. A tell-tale crackling arc of blue light surrounds the just-fired wand. Before the PCs can do anything, the largest of the monsters seizes the wizard by the face and throws him

into the wall, and the wizard slumps to the ground dead. All the monsters still standing seem injured. Some bear a few cuts, but all of them sport burns from the lightning. Two of the monsters are down (presumably dead), their bodies charred and smoking from the last lightning bolt that the PCs encountered.

If the PCs make a sound or draw attention to themselves, the tanarukk squad attacks the PCs. If the tanarukka start losing the battle, none of them stay and fight. They have orders to flee any strong adventurers within the Keep and bring news of them either to Allisza or Kaanyr Vhok. The lesser members sacrifice themselves and remain behind to allow the escape of their officers (the two tanarukka with the highest maximum hit points). If the PCs remain undetected by the tanarukka (in other words, no light source, no noise, no movement into or beyond the corner), the six tanarukka head toward the nearest deep garrison or guard room to rest and bind their wounds. Unlike the orcs that they resemble, they take some care to collect their fallen comrades and soberly arrange the corpses for their final rest within a nearby deep garrison, restoring its use as a crypt.

Clan Hruamkkar Tanarukka (6): AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp 33/40, 26/36, 19/32, 12/21, 9/28, 5/30 –all wounded; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite) or 1d8 (battle axe); SD *affect normal fires* 2/day, immune to fire, 90-foot infravision; MR 10%; SZ S (4' tall); ML elite (13); INT avg (9); AL CE; XP 420 each.

Notes: Two other tanarukka are dead nearby.

If the dead mage is somehow communicated with, he is/was Eligar Nhos (LE hm M6), an agent of the Arcane Brotherhood. He was here on an independent scouting mission with two hired mercenaries, who disappeared last night with what little loot they had recovered—about 45 gp and a magical sword. He assumes they deserted him due to the dangers, and he has no idea where they went. (They were teleported to their deaths by the crypt things when they tried to loot the crypt at Area 12.)

15. Aliisza's Ambush

Even if the PCs have been extraordinarily careful to avoid detection, ALIISZA and her squad of tanarukka are alerted to their presence due to subtle magics, canny spies, and their abilities to notice things out of the ordinary in their home. This entire encounter has been staged long in advance, and the villains await the PCs they know are coming, so even a roving *wizard eye* would not detect anything amiss unless it were uncommonly thorough.

The encounter begins more than 50 feet along the corridor to either side of the marked area. Play out the following scene for as long as possible; ALIISZA intends to lead the PCs into the garrison (Area 15), *charm* as many as possible to her control, and use *ESP* on others to root out information to exploit. Once all are inside and slightly off guard, her *illusion*-cloaked tanarukka attack.

You see a lone figure hobbling along up ahead in its own circle of light. As you move closer, you see a woman in long robes and a tattered cloak, her staff's gem providing her light. She leans heavily on the staff and tries to shuffle quickly forward, but she is plainly injured and only moving by using her staff for support. As you watch her, she stumbles and falls heavily to the ground with a muffled cry of pain. As you approach her, her sobs grow more audible.

The first PC to reach ALIISZA is hit full force with a *charm person* effect as she raises tear-filled eyes to the PC. If another comes close to help carry her (to support her between two people, for instance), this PC also gets subjected to a *charm person*. If either of these charm attempts or her align-



ment is detected, ALIISZA becomes very regal and snobbish. She fires an angry retort at any who question her about the magic or her alignment:

"Well, of course I'm going to do what is necessary to secure aid for myself! I am Evynayla Ninestars, wizard of Llorkh, and it is not for you to question me! Aid me now and be rewarded well for returning me to my home. My companions proved less than capable, and I alone have survived this ruined dungeon. Help me to the next chamber, and we can trade stories in a more defensible position. Hurry, for the monsters prowl about more thickly down here!"

"Evynayla" tries to rush the PCs toward the encounter area, telling them it is a secured area that she and her former companions cleared out earlier. She refuses any immediate offer to heal her wounds (which are either cosmetic wounds made by smeared blood from other victims or part of her changed form) since she wants to impress upon the PCs the idea that they must hurry away from danger. The "cleared" deep garrison appears to be as she described, with much of the reeking garbage and wreckage common to such rooms shoved into the far corner. Eight funerary statues of elves in armor line the walls, three along the length of the room and two facing the room and flanking the doorway into the garrison. They are all down on one knee, and each holds a bow upright. The majority of the bones and funeral items found strewn about and broken in most other deep garrisons have been replaced into the burial niches along the walls.

Once all the PCs are in the chamber, "Evynayla" collapses onto a previously set pile of blankets and furs near a firepit toward the back of the room. The minute the majority of the PCs are huddled about the campfire (which the she insist on lighting for food and warmth), the fire flares up for a moment and then goes out entirely, pitching the room into utter darkness. If the PCs could see in the dark, they would notice that the statues shimmer and fade as six tanarukka step out of the cloak of an illusion to surround them.

Note that of her memorized spells (marked as favored spells in her description in the NPCs & Magic chapter), ALIISZA has already cast *detect good* and *seeming* when she begins this encounter, and the *programmed illusion* she has memorized will be cast later in Area 21. Once the battle begins, ALIISZA (if her cover is not yet blown) leans over to the nearest PC and suggests that she casts an *enlarge* spell on him or her. If she is allowed to do this, the PC is automatically hit with her *vampiric touch* spell (6d6 hit points transferred from the PC to ALIISZA), and ALIISZA laughs evilly as she injures the trusting PC. She drops her illusory form and takes to the air as the alu-fiend she is, raining spells down upon the PCs to immobilize and capture them. (Her *spellblade* was disguised as her "staff.")

If her *hold person* and *slow* spells are resisted, she has no recourse but to drop a *wall of ice* on the PC party, even if her tanarukka are within the area of effect. Once she has at least one prisoner, she takes up a tanarukk net and carries her charge away from the fight to Kaanyr Vhok (at Area 18). She takes more prisoners if she can, but she can only carry one herself while in flight, and she will choose the one who appears to be the leader of the party or the eldest of her prisoners.

Clan Krushaaln Tanarukka (6): AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp 37, 34, 32, 30, 23, 21; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite) or 1d8 (battle axe) or entangle (large net); SD *affect normal fires* 2/day, immune to fire, 90-foot infravision; MR 10%; SZ M (5' tall); ML elite (14); INT avg (10); AL CE; XP 420 each.

Entangle: Successful attacks force a save vs. paralyzation or the target is helplessly entangled for at least one round. Entangled beings can be disarmed in one round. A new save vs. paralyzation can be attempted each round for three rounds. Success frees an entangled creature; failure for three successive rounds means a creature must be cut loose.

Chambers Below

The rooms that form most of the Chambers Below level represent the deepest shaped and crafted rooms in the former Hellgate Keep. These chambers were primarily used when organizing an army for maneuvers, and they have never before seen as much activity as they have in recent months with the destruction of the Keep above. Unlike the majority of the levels above them, in which the rooms, if not all the tunnels connecting them, are man-made, the Chambers Below level is comprised of both rough caverns and carved, shaped rooms with high vaulted ceilings. To improve security, the level was originally constructed with limited access to the levels above and below it in case of invasion from either direction.

When Ascalhorn lived, these were the secret chambers unknown to all but the leaders of the city and the military. They were used for the planning of defenses and constructed to be secure from *magical scrying*. A latent magical field that permeates all of this level provides the benefits of an *amulet of proof against detection and location* to everyone on it, preventing anyone from locating people within these chambers and tunnels using magical means. No one knows why this field was not stripped away by the effects of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal*, but the powerful magic still exists and is the primary reason why Kaanyr Vhok chose to headquarter himself and his troops here after the Keep's fall.

16. The Deepspawn's Den

This wild-card situation could easily change the balance of power in the North, as it introduces the most ruthless foe of Kaanyr Vhok and the Scourged Legions. If the DM does not wish to alter the balance of power among the villains, this cavern becomes a hidden cache of magical items or treasure.

Read the boxed text to the players, and see how the confrontation plays out:

Wandering about the rough-hewn tunnels beneath Hellgate Keep, you have run across a number of caverns blocked by rockfalls. Curiously, this latest one you've discovered seems to be moving, as pebbles roll off the pile and something within pushes against the larger rocks but is unsuccessful at dislodging them and getting free.

If the PCs join in pulling rocks away from the pile, their joint efforts create a 6-foot-wide opening within a round. The movement is being caused by seven trolls that have been trapped for some time on the other side of the rockfall (with the deepspawn who birthed them). Once the trolls get a whiff of the PCs, their frenzied rush to get at a food source causes two of them to nearly explode out through the hole, widening it as they frantically claw their way up and out. The PCs obviously win initiative for the first round, but any damage they do, even by fire, does not deter the rushing trolls. Two more force their way out of the cavern each round and into the tunnel outside the marked area, madly clawing at PCs or leaping from the rubble heap over the other trolls into the PCs' midst.

Within the cavern beyond the trolls, the floor is slimy with multitudinous earthworms (both whole and mashed under the feet of trolls), and the walls ripple with thousands upon thousands of tiny black spiders (nonpoisonous). The deepspawn has moved out of its normal resting place within the cavern's western niche and lumbers forward, coming into view of the opening of the cavern within four rounds. It does not immediately attack, needing allies more than food, and it holds its tentacles up and back in a sign of surrender. If given a chance to talk, it speaks in the common tongue (in stereo from its multiple mouths) of its desire to eradicate a great evil, the treacherous Kaanyr Vhok the cambion. (It has learned common from its contacts with various races over the years.) It tries to persuade the PCs to help it, but it retaliates if attacked.



The Deepspawn Asks to Negotiate

Deepspawn (1): AC 6; MV 6 SW 8; HD 14; hp 68; THAC0 7; #AT 6; Dmg 3d4 (x3; bites), 1d4+1 (x3; tentacle slap), or by weapon (x3; wielded by tentacle); SA *hold* spells (1 per 3 rounds); constriction in tentacles; ESP and *water breathing* at will; spawn servant creatures; SD immune to known venoms/poisons, regenerates lost arms and stalks at 2 hp/day, *heal* self 1/day; MR 77%; SZ H (14' in diameter; 20'-long tentacles); ML elite (15); INT genius (17); AL CE; XP 12,000.

Notes: *Constriction:* Constriction requires a successful attack roll but is automatic if the victim is held. It inflicts 1d4 points of damage the first round and 1d4+1 every round thereafter except the round when a victim frees himself or herself; then only 1 point is taken. Constricted victims can be used as bludgeons to cause 1d2 points of damage to others, ruin spellcasting, and force saving throws on breakable items. Victims used like this take no extra damage unless forced onto points or blades (the DM determines these effects). Victims can escape constriction by severing the tentacle or tearing free. Tentacles have 2 HD and severing occurs if they take half their hit points in a concentrated area by Type S or Type P weapons. To try to tear free, both the victim and the deepspawn roll 1d20 and add their respective Strengths (17 for the deepspawn). If the victim has the higher total, it tears free.

Spawn: Over a period of 1d4 days, a deepspawn can grow and give birth to any creature native to the Prime Material Plane that it has ever devoured (not undead or dual-dimensional creatures). These creatures never attack their spawning parent, even under magical duress. See the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome for details.

Trolls (7): AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 15, 17, 18, 22, 28, 33, 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+4/1d4+4/1d8+4 (claw/claw/bite) or by melee weapon (+8 damage bonus); SA throw stones (1d8 dmg, 20-yard range), severed limbs (severed on a natural 20

with an edged weapon) fight as whole troll; SD regenerate 3 hp/round starting three rounds after first injured; SW fire and acid damage do not regenerate; SZ L (9' tall); ML elite (14); INT low (5); AL CE; XP 1,400 each.

While the chance for discussion may not arise between PCs and the deepspawn (due to the trolls' hunger), there is a small chance that the creature and its minions could be temporary allies against Kaanyr Vhok. The deepspawn originally ventured down the Deep Tunnels from the Fallen Lands with the legions of Radoc. It set itself up within this cave during the siege to produce trolls, mongrelmen, and other minions as its part of the attack. With the failure of the attack, the deepspawn used its agents sparingly, as the magical field otherwise kept its presence here a secret.

With the slow but steady movement of the Scourged Legions below (both before and after the Mistmaster's Gambit destroyed the Keep above), the deepspawn corralled some small numbers of scouts and others looking to desert Kaanyr Vhok or use the deep tunnels to head north. The numbers of disappearing troops eventually brought the deepspawn to the attention of the Sceptered One. After a few half-hearted negotiations where neither being would accept the terms of servitude demanded by the other, Kaanyr Vhok and his legions attacked the creature, slew its minions, and stole most of its treasure. They managed to collapse the front of this cavern, trapping the wounded deepspawn in its own lair, about the time of the Keep's demolition. Vhok planned on returning within a few months to offer the starving deepspawn one more chance to join his forces. This is among the last things the cambion commander planned to do during his retreat from Hellgate Keep.

Obviously, the deepspawn has plans of its own, and during its months of imprisonment, it has nursed a great hatred of the cambion who trapped



it here. With the only food source being spiders and worms, the deepspawn fed on these until it had regained enough strength to spawn a number of trolls. One troll it kept close as a food source, consuming its head, arms, and legs, and allowing its torso to regenerate (and thus remain a replenishable food source). The other trolls it created have either fed on the worms and spiders or each other. Having birthed a sufficient number of trolls to be an effective attack force, the deepspawn directed the trolls to dig away the rockfall so that they could all leave their prison and gain revenge on Kaanyr Vhok (and get some food).

If the deepspawn gets the chance, it speaks to one or more PCs to try to bargain with the PC group. It offers both two magical items (choose from the items noted in the NPCs & Magic chapter) and a promise to call off its troll minions if the PCs aid it in getting revenge on Kaanyr Vhok. As the magic of the Deep Chambers level limits its *ESP* ability to line of sight, it needs the characters' help in finding Vhok and his tanarukka. Once they are found, the deepspawn may forget about the PCs and concentrate on its foe, or it may try to devour a character or two to eventually birth loyal minions of higher intellect and ability than its current crop of trolls.

17. The Audience Chamber

The former Grand Assembly Chamber of Grinthalke is now merely referred to by the Scourged Legions as the audience chamber. This massive room is the primary assembly area and embarkation point for armies to enter the deep tunnels.

This chamber rises to a height of nearly 70 feet, its vaulted peak stretching the north-south length of the room. Off-center to the west, a broad hole in the ceiling's structure is roughly patched by rubble that originally fell from above. Just beneath the poorly patched section of ceiling hovers a purple pyramid surrounded by a pulsing halo of obvious magical power (see Area 20). This pyramid lights much of the rest of the room, which is largely empty aside from the central dais upon which a macabre throne rests (Area 18) and some open cages set to the eastern side of the room (Area 19).

The main floor of the entire room is slightly sunken; a slim 5-foot-wide, 1-foot-high ledge runs completely around the perimeter of the room, forcing all who exit, even via the southern great staircase, to step up. Four great cauldrons of oil rest behind huge oil lamps in each corner of the room, supplying both some small amount of heat and a greasy aroma to the area, as their illumination is minimal compared to the pyramid above them.

Facing the dais in the chamber's center is a wide staircase that descends to the Deep Tunnels level. Flanking the stairwell on either side is a large winch, each with a separate function. The stairs are protected at the bottom by a portcullis gate and at the top by a rectangular metal shield door that totally covers the opening into the audience chamber. The western winch drops the portcullis, and the eastern winch moves the shield door from its resting position (just to the east of the stairwell next to the wall) along a track to close off the stairwell.

Scattered and stacked all about the room are the last remnants of the Scourged Legion's armaments and supplies. Piles of furs both for sleeping and winter protection lie in the northwestern and southwestern corners, as well as bundles of spears, packs of food, skins of water, and so on.

The situation within this chamber strictly depends on how the PCs arrive and what events have occurred before their arrival to warn KAANYR VHOK of their presence and capabilities. There may be 4-16 or more tanarukka about the room, sleeping or sharpening weapons (most located to the east on the furs). Four guards stand near the east and west entrances into the room and the grand stairwell. The remaining tanarukka mill about, testing weapons or sleeping. While all others rouse immediately to a fight, the sleeping tanarukka (1d8 of them) require two rounds to wake up and ready themselves for battle. KAANYR VHOK might

be interrogating his prisoners or lounging in one of the small private rooms to the north off the audience chamber.

Clan Krushaaln Tanarukka (Approx. 20): AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp [roll as needed]; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite) or 1d8 (battle axe); SD *affect normal fires* 2/day, immune to fire, 90-foot infravision; MR 10%; SZ M (5' tall); ML elite (14); INT avg (10); AL CE; XP 420 each.

Only the DM is in control of this scene and situation. Adapt the description of this room as the PCs see it to accommodate their arrival point, the circumstances of their arrival, and the activities of the principal NPCs. Read through the details of the sections on the magical pyramid construct, the throne of bone, and the cages given below, for these will affect the way the room is conveyed to the party. Finally, consult the Scenario Adjustments section below for suggestions on how to adapt the scene and the NPCs' actions to what the PCs do or have done.

18. Throne of Bone

The dais in the center of the audience chamber is 20 feet long and 10 feet wide at the top. The eight stairs, each a foot deep, that surround and lead up to the dais raise it 10 feet above the level of the floor.

Kaanyr Vhok's 12 honor guard tanarukka (the Krushaaln Guardians) attend him at all times. When KAANYR VHOK is on his throne, one stands at each of the corners of the dais at the top, at the corners of the fourth step, and at the corners of the base. All of them are officers in the Scourged Legions, and they wear *roaring armor* breastplates.

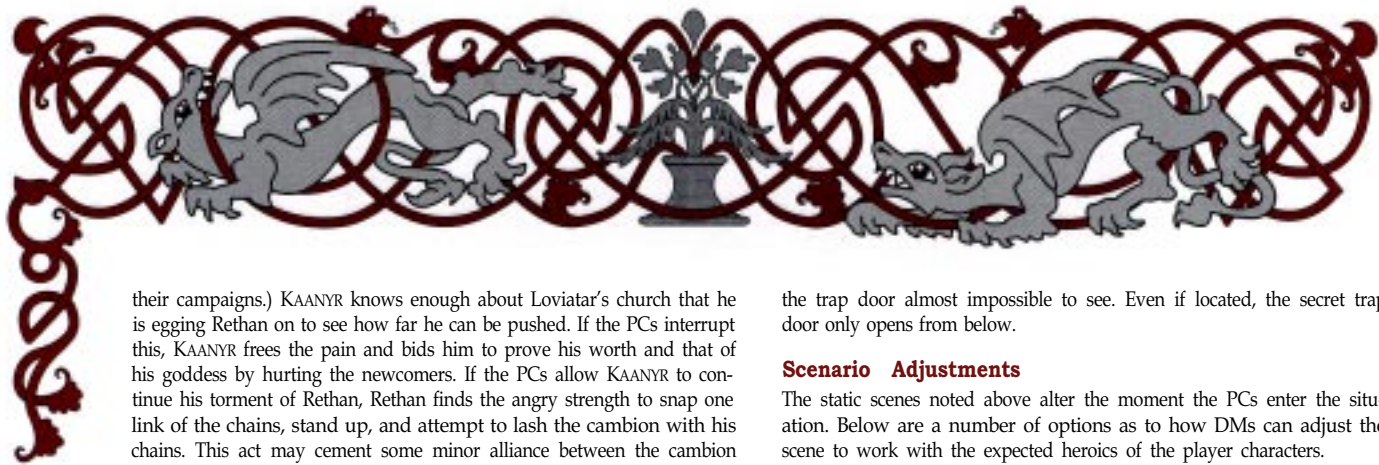
Krushaaln Guardians Tanarukka (12): AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite) or 1d8 (battle axe); SD *affect normal fires* 2/day, immune to fire, 90-foot infravision, *roaring armor* breastplates; MR 10%; SZ M (5' tall); ML elite (14); INT avg (10); AL CE; XP 420 each.

Special Equipment: Silver *roaring armor* breastplates add a +2 AC bonus to their wearers and reflect all missiles (normal, magical, and spells) back upon the person who fired (or sent) them. They also proof wearers against back attacks, since the bear or dragon heads carved on the breastplates roar to warn of impending attacks from the rear.

At the top of the eight-stepped dais rests the Throne of Bone, an ostentatious construct made for Grinthalke and seized by Kaanyr Vhok. This ceremonial seat of power (which Vhok kept hidden from Tanta Hagara) is made from the bones of a dracolich. The dracolich's ribcage acts as the vaulted back of the chair, its red dragon skull forms the canopy above, and the lower jaw surrounds the main seat formed from smaller bones and teeth. Under most options for encounters in this area, KAANYR VHOK sits on this grisly throne, tapping his foot restlessly against the throne's lower right fang. Whether it is a residual power of these dracolich bones or a magical property of the throne, the throne and anyone seated in it are protected by a *globe of invulnerability*.

Before the throne is an area for supplicants to approach the lord of Hellgate Keep. In the floor of the dais here are three steel rings. The scratching and markings on the stone suggest folk are chained to these rings by neck chains and arm shackles to keep prisoners bowed low before anyone seated in the throne.

Kaanyr Vhok's current prisoner chained to the central ring of the three here is Paingiver Rethan Mhovan (NE hm P[Loviatar]7; hp 7). The pain (specialty priest) of Loviatar grovels to ingratiate himself to KAANYR VHOK, who berates him and his goddess as "minor know-nothings in the dealings of pain." (Specialty priests of Loviatar, known as pains, are described in *Faith & Avatars*. DMs should further detail Rethan to suit



their campaigns.) KAANYR knows enough about Loviatar's church that he is egging Rethan on to see how far he can be pushed. If the PCs interrupt this, KAANYR frees the pain and bids him to prove his worth and that of his goddess by hurting the newcomers. If the PCs allow KAANYR to continue his torment of Rethan, Rethan finds the angry strength to snap one link of the chains, stand up, and attempt to lash the cambion with his chains. This act may cement some minor alliance between the cambion and the evil priest and perhaps result in either the construction of some small temple to Loviatar in the North or Kaanyr's alliance with an already-established one.

19. The Cage

Set off in the eastern quadrant of the great audience chamber are a series of large cages. Constructed completely of thick metal bars, the cages are 20 feet long and 10 feet wide but only 3 feet high, forcing all humans and most demihumans to remain on their knees while imprisoned. There is always at least one tanarukk standing atop each cage near the door in its top. The guard stands upon a bolted-down strip of metal that runs the length of the cage, allowing him or her to walk along the cage comfortably and poke a long spear (which each guard carries) down into the cage at nearly any angle. (These spears do 1d6 points of damage with a successful attack roll.)

While within the cage, all prisoners have their arms bound behind them painfully with iron shackles and/or wetted leather strips to ensure that they cannot work free. Given the uncomfortable nature of the binding, most prisoners lie on their sides in the cage to guard their backs as best as possible from the prodding spears of the tanarukka. Food and water skins are thrown in through the bars, but prisoners (who are normally kept two to a cage) must help each other eat as best they can with bound arms.

Inside the westernmost cage now are two burly warriors, one human and the other a half-orc, who call themselves Tyvaq (NE hm F6; hp 31) and Kuurl (CN hom F5; hp 20). They are mercenary bodyguards of Rethan Mhovan (see Area 18) and were paid well to escort the priest here; now they simply wish to escape alive.

20. The Pyramid

The pyramid hovers about 10 feet below the broken ceiling above it, and it is about 50 feet from its downward point to the floor. It pulsates every round with a purple light equivalent to full daylight that is nearly white in its brightness if the viewer stares directly at the pyramid. It is oriented with one point toward the floor and spins smoothly on that point.

This triangular pyramid is the source of the glow that emanates through the rubble at the bottom of Grinthalke's Gulch. While not intuitively obvious, this construct is the end product of the use of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* in Hellgate Keep. It is composed of all the magic pulled from the Keep, which has been compressed into a solid glowing magical energy pyramid.

The pyramid (which is exactly 10 feet tall per side) absorbs all magic that contacts it, be it a *divination* magic from afar (thus negating the spell) or the active magical powers of an item functioning when someone touches the pyramid itself. Any spells sent at it are absorbed, and any nonliving item that is not a relic or artifact that touches it has a 50% chance of being disintegrated instantly. Living creatures that touch its surface merely feel a warmth and a slight humming beneath the pyramid's surface. Nothing else can be discerned about the pyramid, and even the divine powers themselves may puzzle over its uses and its secrets.

21. Watery Escape Hatch

If the PCs trigger the trap at Area 23, the secret trap door in the ceiling there leads to the secret trap door in the northeast corner of the floor of this room. The floor in the room is covered in rubble and dust, making

the trap door almost impossible to see. Even if located, the secret trap door only opens from below.

Scenario Adjustments

The static scenes noted above alter the moment the PCs enter the situation. Below are a number of options as to how DMs can adjust the scene to work with the expected heroics of the player characters.

Forewarned: The only changes to the scenes as described above are that none of the tanarukka in the audience chamber are sleeping or distracted. They are all alert and utilize the most devastating weapons available to them. In fact, there is already a light coating of clear lamp oil on the main floor; any creature moving faster than MV 9 must make a successful Dexterity check or slip and fall.

Captured PCs: Any player character who has been captured during the course of the adventure (Areas 2, 3, or 15) is brought here. In the context of the generic scenes described above, two PCs should be chained up in front of the Throne of Bone (Area 18) with Rethan, and any others are in the cages (Area 17; two to a cage). Those in Area 18 are bound identically to Rethan Mhovan and those in the cage have their hands bound as noted above. Otherwise, the scenario plays out as noted above in the Forewarned scenario.

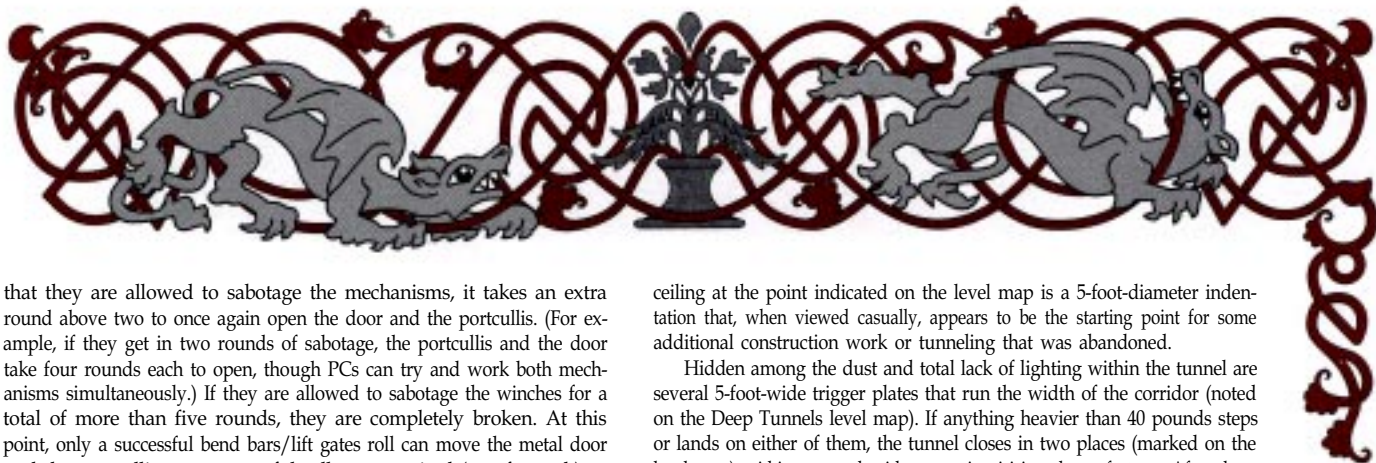
Kaanyr Vhok in Battle: As an intelligent and cunning commander, KAANYR VHOK sees little reason to sully his hands in combat when his troops are all quite capable of dealing with any intruders. If there are heroes that he sees in need of humbling (in other words, paladins, overly powerful mages, and so on) or his troops need aid, he may enter the fray using the *havoc's pulse* ability of the *Scepter Malevolus* amid the thick of battle to injure as many of the heroes as possible while leaving his troops unaffected. If this does not turn the tables on the heroes, he casts *grease* on the battlefield to buy himself some time to flee down the stairwell into the deep tunnels. He has no compunctions about leaving his troops behind, though he will take his honor guard and consort (ALISZA) with him if strategically possible without allowing pursuit.

Villains in Flight: Should the villains be given a tough time by the PCs, they will, of course, cheat and bring the odds to their favor. With a word from KAANYR VHOK, ALISZA, or one of the Krushaahn Guardians, the tanarukka tip over the oil cauldrons at the corners and cover the floor with oil. Within the same round, another tanarukk (or one of the fleeing leaders) sets the oil afire. The flames do not harm the tanarukka in the least, though PCs remaining in the fiery area sustain 3d6 points of fire and smoke damage per round until either they leave the area or the flames die out after 2d4 rounds. Even PCs fleeing to the relative safety of the dais (or anywhere above the flames) suffer 1d4 points of damage from their eyes and lungs being injured by the heat and the smoke.

Obviously, saving throws vs. normal fire for items are needed for each round they spend within the flames to see if they are destroyed. Magical items gain a +3 bonus to this roll due to the odd effects of the proximity of the magical pyramid.

The tanarukka, once the fire is started, continue fighting the PCs. They take what actions they can to both keep the PCs away from the tanarukka's leaders and keep the vulnerable PCs within the flames. If the tanarukka's weapons and equipment ignite in the oil, they break off direct attacks and simply act to contain the PCs and keep them in the fire as long as possible.

In the meantime, two tanarukka are busy dropping the portcullis and closing the metal shield door on the stairwell once their leaders (ALISZA, KAANYR VHOK, and the Krushaahn Guardians) are safely away. This takes them two rounds. (It takes two rounds to use either mechanism, but they are working them both simultaneously, so only two rounds total are needed.) After the door and portcullis are down, they begin breaking the winches by removing the metal handles (which are detachable) and using them as clubs on the mechanisms. For each round after the first



that they are allowed to sabotage the mechanisms, it takes an extra round above two to once again open the door and the portcullis. (For example, if they get in two rounds of sabotage, the portcullis and the door take four rounds each to open, though PCs can try and work both mechanisms simultaneously.) If they are allowed to sabotage the winches for a total of more than five rounds, they are completely broken. At this point, only a successful bend bars/lift gates roll can move the metal door and the portcullis; two successful rolls are required (one for each) to open the stairway.

Bear in mind that ALIISZA the alu-fiend and more tanarukka might be available for this battle. If Encounter 15 results in a rout of the tanar'ri rather than the PCs being captured or routed, those who successfully flee that battle are here and have alerted the others to the PCs' presence.

The Deep Tunnels

Mostly rough-hewn rock-and-dirt tunnels with no light sources, the deep tunnels are the main avenues by which the tanar'ri and monsters of Hellgate Keep came and went for the last century or more. Some areas, like Area 20 below, were once worked and trapped by dwarves of Ammarindar, who used these tunnels as part of the trade routes with Delzoun and other underrealms. However, the flood trap below is a singular, last-ditch defense that the dwarves of Ammarindar were never able to trip. With the fall of Ascalhorn, they meant to seal themselves off from the tunnels into Ammarindar, but tanar'ri and baatezu filled the tunnels too quickly and prevented their defenses from saving the longest-lived dwarven realm of the North.

Most of the stairs and accesses to these deep tunnels were constructed not by the elves or humans of Ascalhorn, but by the baatezu, tanar'ri and undead of Hellgate Keep. Only long use over time has smoothed the clawed-out passages into a semblance of stonework.

21. Icy Pursuit

As she is among the first to flee a losing battle, the alu-fiend ALIISZA most likely has survived to corral KAANYR, her consort and leader, and the two, perhaps with a small number of the Krushaahn Guardians, have fled ahead of the PCs. ALIISZA has set a *programmed illusion* at this point in the tunnels to prevent pursuit. The illusion is set to activate "only when a creature without the blood of tanar'ri crosses this spot."

The illusion crackles to life as ice crystals coat the floor and walls and grow massive stalactites and stalagmites, soon blocking the entire corridor with a wall of glacial ice more than 30 feet thick (judging from the instant freeze effect at the start of the illusion). Due to the complexity of the illusion in terms of sound, sight, and temperature, there are very few clues that might allow someone to believe it is merely an illusion. Aside from role-playing options, the easiest clue that gives away the secret is the inability for fire (whether magical or normal), weapons, or spells to affect the ice in any way. Once this becomes apparent and the players (or their characters) begin making comments implying that this effect is very peculiar, the DM can allow rolls (and eventually bonuses to those rolls) for disbelieving the illusion. Otherwise, the PCs believe their way is blocked and will probably allow the escape of the tanar'ri commanders—who the DM is free to use as recurring villains in the region.

22. Deep Deluge

This trapped tunnel—where many tracks lead, including those from Kaanyr Vhok—slopes downward slightly from the rest of the tunnels. (The trap has not been activated by the tanar'ri and tanarukka because they know where the triggers are and avoid them.) This tunnel is slightly different from the other tunnels in the area, as there are shaped and placed support arches of rock that stick out approximately two inches from the surrounding rough-hewn walls every 50 feet or so along its length. In the

ceiling at the point indicated on the level map is a 5-foot-diameter indentation that, when viewed casually, appears to be the starting point for some additional construction work or tunneling that was abandoned.

Hidden among the dust and total lack of lighting within the tunnel are several 5-foot-wide trigger plates that run the width of the corridor (noted on the Deep Tunnels level map). If anything heavier than 40 pounds steps or lands on either of them, the tunnel closes in two places (marked on the level map) within a round with a massive irising door of stone. After those doors close, the four support bands closest to the southern door are smashed by pistons forcing their way out of the rock, and any PCs within 50 feet of the closed door suffer 1d8 damage from rock shards. As the supports crumble, water blasts its way from behind the pistons and into the tunnel. The rush of water creates a tidal wave effect in the corridor, sweeping all PCs off their feet and along with the water until they reach the entry point of this tunnel and splash against the opposite closed door.

The water fills up the tunnel within 3d4 rounds and begins flooding up into the Deep Chambers level. Any PC who cannot swim should make Constitution ability checks every other round to stay afloat or drown; PC swimmers check every turn. Refer to the swimming/drowning rules in the *Player's Handbook* for details. Successful swimming non-weapon proficiency checks (or successful Dexterity checks with a -3 penalty) allow PCs to maneuver into the shallow indentation in the ceiling. The indentation contains a crudely concealed trap door that leads to a 5-foot-diameter shaft with a rung ladder in on its side. This shaft leads up to the trap door at Area 21, which is obvious from its underside and opens with a successful open doors roll, though it is secret and unopenable from Area 21. The water continues to rise, but only gushes until Area 21 and the rooms and tunnels directly around it are flooded to a depth of five inches. Once they have reached this point, PCs easily have enough time to use other avenues of escape without drowning.

Other Avenues

There are other deep tunnels here, of course, and they remain untagged since they have little direct bearing on the adventure or the escape of the Scourged Legions. Where they lead to (and what they might lead to) are left largely to the DM, though general topography and history suggests that the north tunnel might lead to the Nether mountains and the Morueme clan blue dragons or other tanarukka and orc lairs, the south tunnel might lead to Ammarindar and either the undead and tanar'ri forces from Hellgate Keep or undead guardians of dwarven crypts, and the east and south tunnels might lead to the Fallen Lands and unknown beasts.

Other Dangers

Are the PCs disappointed over the shortage of tanar'ri, undead, and other creatures in what once was Hellgate Keep? Well, DMs can toss these tantalizing bits at them as wandering monsters or other encounters:

- Imagine the Deep Tunnels level with a host of guardian crawling claws—created from tanar'ri claws! Standard damage might be improved to 1d6 or the natural claw damage of the tanar'ri from which a claw came.
- The Blue Bear tribe has survived as a pack of revenants and zombies intent on finding and killing the Mistmaster. Unfortunately, they are trapped at the bottom of Hellgate Keep with all normal exits blocked. Your PCs find them and show them the way out, after a fashion.
- Blue dragons of the Morueme clan are scholars and thus curious by nature. With the infrequent contacts that they have had with the tanarukka and tanar'ri of Hellgate Keep, the dragons know of the deep tunnels and may venture southward out of the mountains to investigate what has become of the Keep and its evils. If met, they are content to trade information with PCs in exchange for leaving each other in peace. If attacked, these scholarly dragons fight back with all the intellect and power at their disposal.



Epilogue



As PCs can easily surmise, the adventure turns into a chase toward the end. The heroes do what they can to prevent the evils of Hellgate Keep from escaping, and the villains do their level best to both destroy these bothersome heroes and hold onto as much power as possible, often by retreating to regroup their power at a later time. At the least, the three Dlardrageths and Kaanyr Vhok or Aliisza are likely to escape due to their many-layered plans, and these are enemies against whom any heroes should watch their backs.

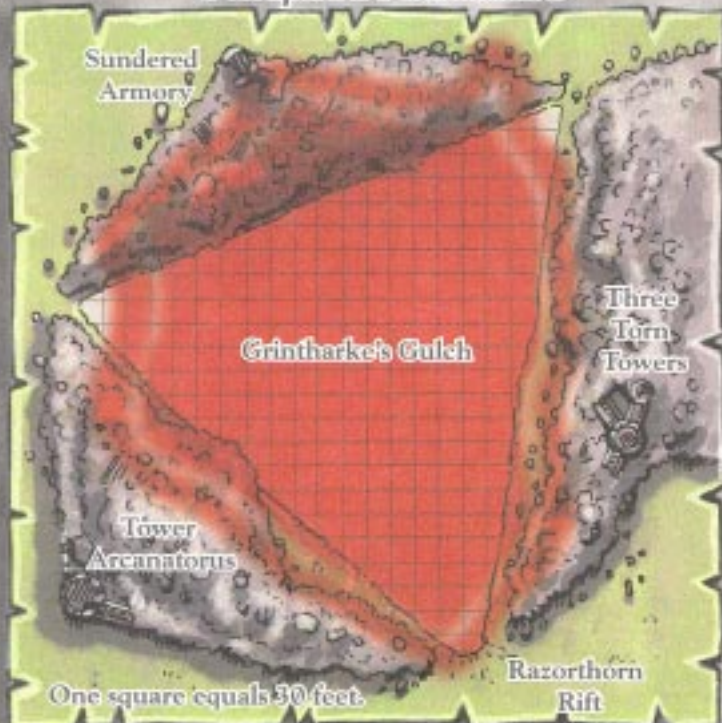
Aftermath

By now, either the PCs have become the top layer among the ghoulish granaries within the shattered Keep or they triumphed and emerged from the dungeon with tales of heroics and horrors aplenty. Here are some projected plotlines for enemies and allies alike after the events of this adventure:

- Alustriel & Luruar hail the PCs as heroes provided they tell tales of what evils they prevented being loosed into the Realms. As found, the ruined Hellgate Keep did not truly need the protections of *Mythanthar's Orb*, and if PCs did not deploy it due to a lack of the expected number evils to contain, they are rewarded. Depending on the players' roleplaying and what they reveal to Alustriel, the PCs could become regular agents of the Lady Hope, especially if she wishes to keep tabs on the Dlardrageths, of whom she knows little but fears much.
- The Dlardrageth half-elf cambions' plans are quite clear and simple after they flee the encounters with the PCs: Find a safehold and begin rebuilding House Dlardrageth. Their best options are the ruins of Siluvanede in the High Forest, though they may pick a closer location, like the Far Forest or ruined Mhiilamniir of Eaelrann, to provide better shelter.
- The Hosttower Arcane is hardly a group complacent enough to leave such a known storehouse of both ancient magics and otherplanar evil alone for long. In fact, the Arcane Brotherhood has numerous agents that just might do their best to keep *Mythanthar's Orb* from being employed here. The merchants of the Arcane Brotherhood have also opened discussions with the Zhents of Llorkh over the matter of controlling a cambion from the Keep (Kaanyr Vhok).
- The Scourged Legions of Hellgate Keep now hold positions deep within the Nameless Dungeon, far below the areas under the cognizance of the guards established by Evereska and Luruar—and the Legions have plans to explore the Fallen Lands soon.
- With the druids' circle from Talltrees joining the revivification efforts of Turlang, Hellgate Keep is further transformed. The treants' rootwork up atop the plateaus crumbles the top layers of rock, further burying the bottom of the gorge and widening Grinthalke's Gulch. With some carefully cast *rock to mud* transmutations, the druids help expand the southern opening at Razorthorn Rift and open the ruins up to create a proper gulch. By summer's end, any shafts leading further down beneath the Gulch are buried under mud and soil or the rootwork of trees and other plants. By that time, more birds, native wildlife, and plants will have made this their home than surviving monsters or wandering orcs looking for a hideout.
- The Zhentarim of Llorkh are looking to maintain their links with Kaanyr Vhok, especially since such an alliance allows them access to the tunnels below Llorkh that lead toward the Keep and the Nameless Dungeon and thus keeps the treants from totally cutting off their access to the headwaters of the River Shining and the Moonlands of Luruar. Of course, they are aware of Vhok's penchant for treachery, so they are seeking binding rituals to keep the marquis cambion under their control.
- If the PCs trip the trap in Encounter Area 22, some of the subterranean sources that feed Skull Creek (the westernmost stream in the Upvale that feeds the Delimbiyr River) flood the tunnels beneath the Keep. While damage to trapped people is discussed in that area's description, the aftereffects of the flooding are not. Once the trap is activated, the Tunnels Below and Deep Chambers levels will continue to slowly flood and eventually be fully flooded unless extraordinary measures—such as emplacing *walls of force* or reworking the terrain with elementals—are taken to hold back the water. (Though the water appeared to stop creeping up after a certain point in the level description, in reality it was pursuing new avenues not on the maps and began to creep upward again in 2d4 days.) If the DM chooses to flood the dungeon to the maximum water level, water continues to rise until it creates a small 50-foot-deep pond at the bottom of Grinthalke's Gulch.
- If *Mythanthar's Orb* is deployed and the *ward* it creates does not protrude from the crest of the crater, the druids of Talltrees and the treants collapse the surviving top remnants of Hellgate Keep atop the *ward*. Assuming mud, soil, and broken rock can fully cover the *ward*, what was once Hellgate Keep becomes a sealed hill with no trace of its former citadel-town atop it.



Surface Features



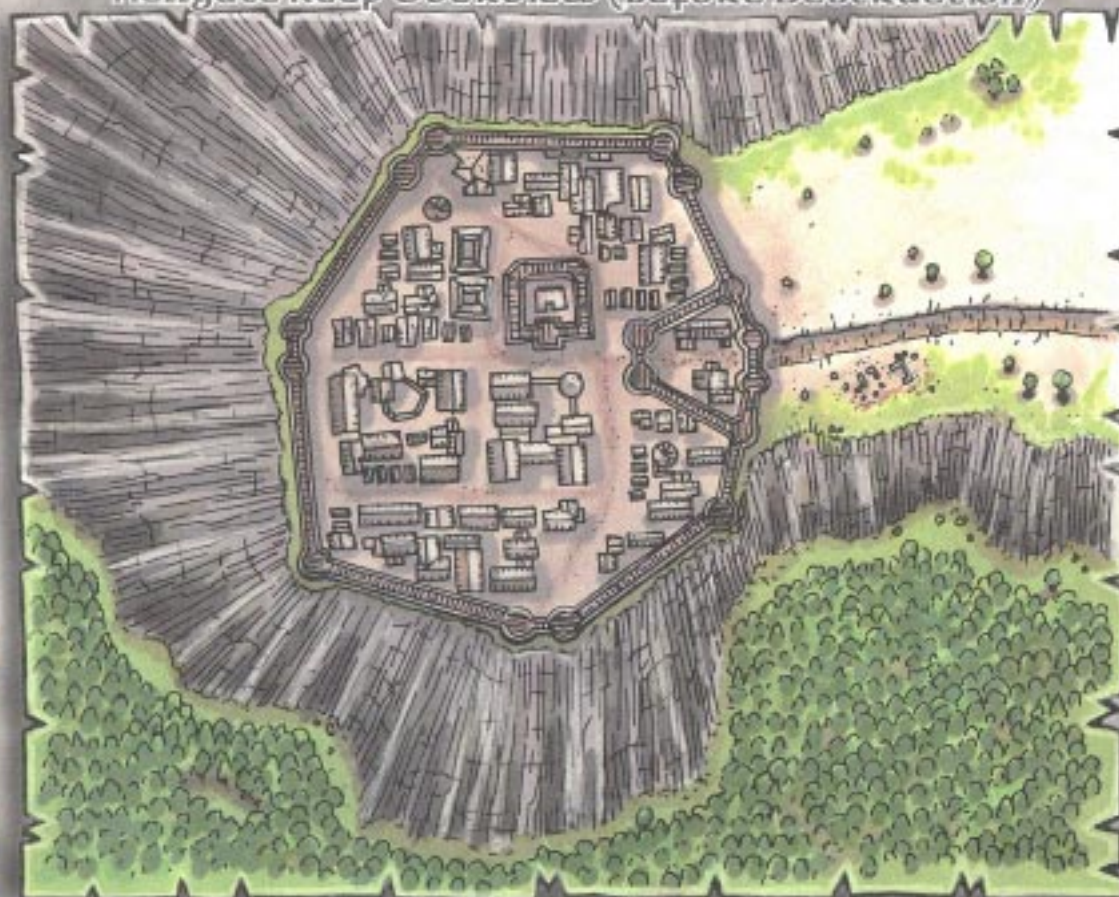
Grintharke's Gulch and Cellars



Hellgate Keep



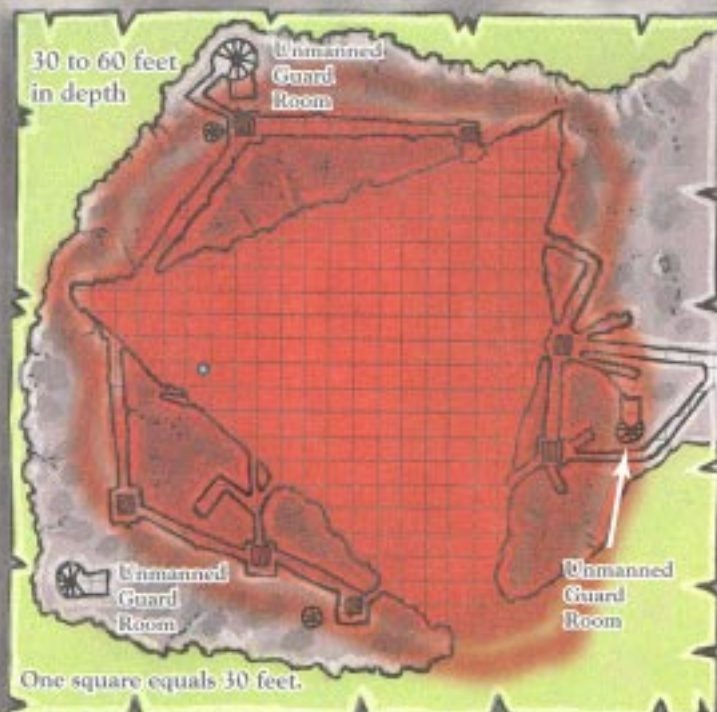
Hellgate Keep Overview (Before Destruction)



Key

- Door
- Secret Door
- Water
- Pillar
- Rubble/Rockfall/Blocked Area
- Statue
- Curtain
- Suterranean Levels
- Dead Magic Zone
- Wild Magic Zone
- Magical Item Area
- Spiral Stairs
- Stairs
- Throne Dais
- Trigger Plates

Sewers

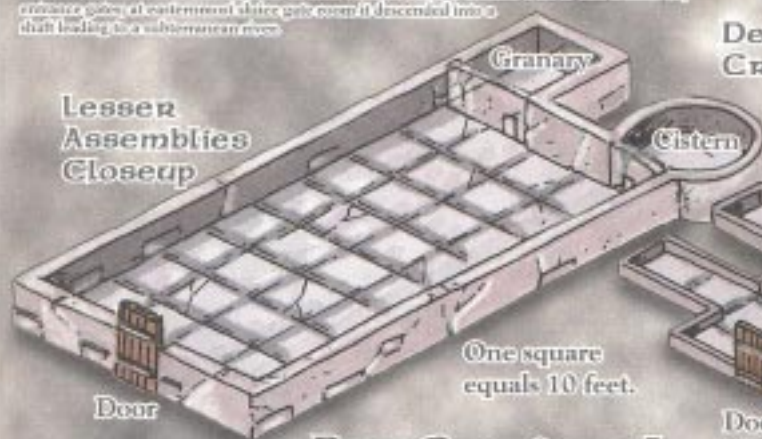


Sewage drained down through grates in ceiling in stitche gate rooms (shown as squares) which also contain vertical flues to ceiling grates in their centers. Sewage drained west to east toward city entrance gates at easternmost stitche gate room if descended into a shaft leading to a subterranean river.

Lesser Assemblies



See the Dunderberg Rebirth map for location.



Deep Garrisons/ Crypt Closeup



Deep Garrisons 1



Easternmost spiral staircase blocked for descent to below this level by rubble.

Deep Garrisons 2



Easternmost spiral staircase blocked for ascent 100 feet above this level by rubble.

The Dlardrageth Redoubt

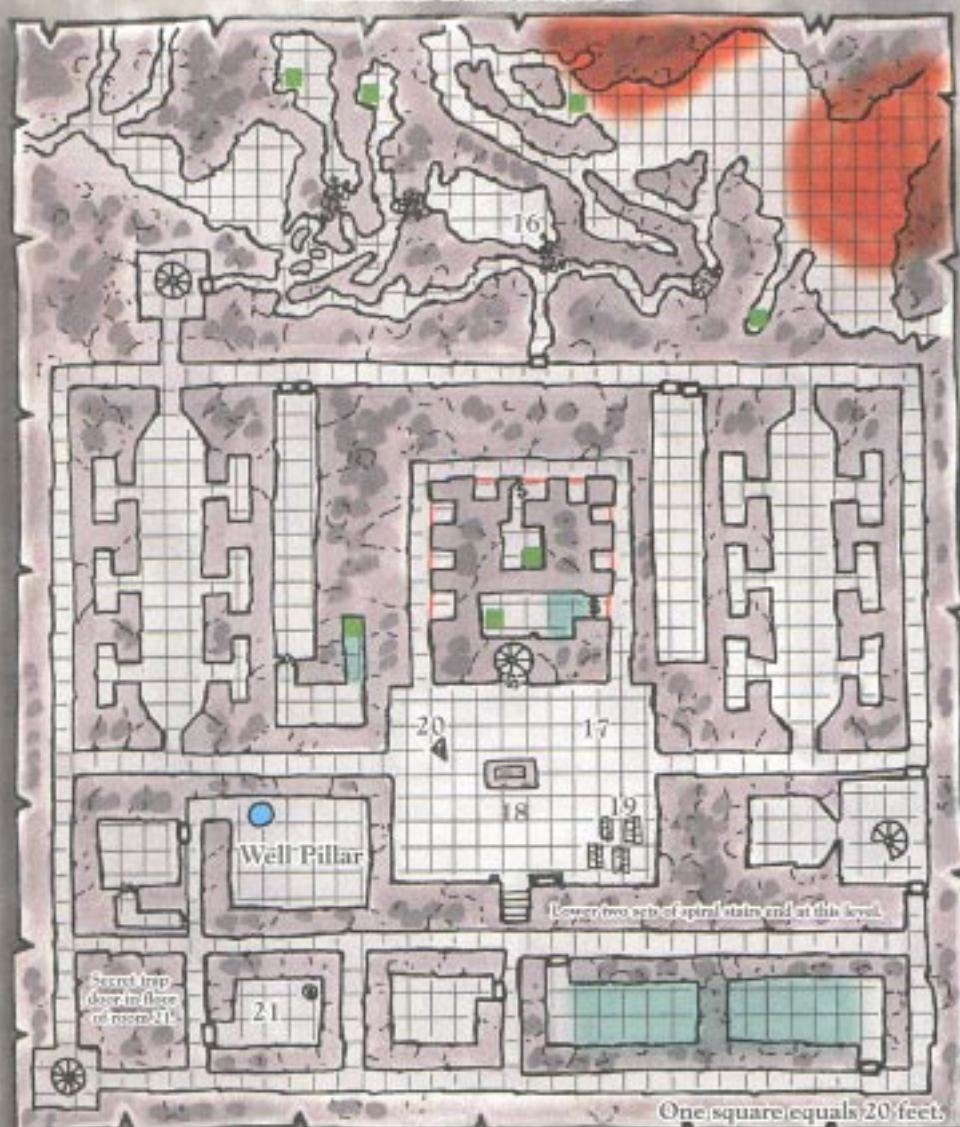


(Between the Lesser Assemblies Level and Deep Garrisons 1-)

The Deep Tunnels

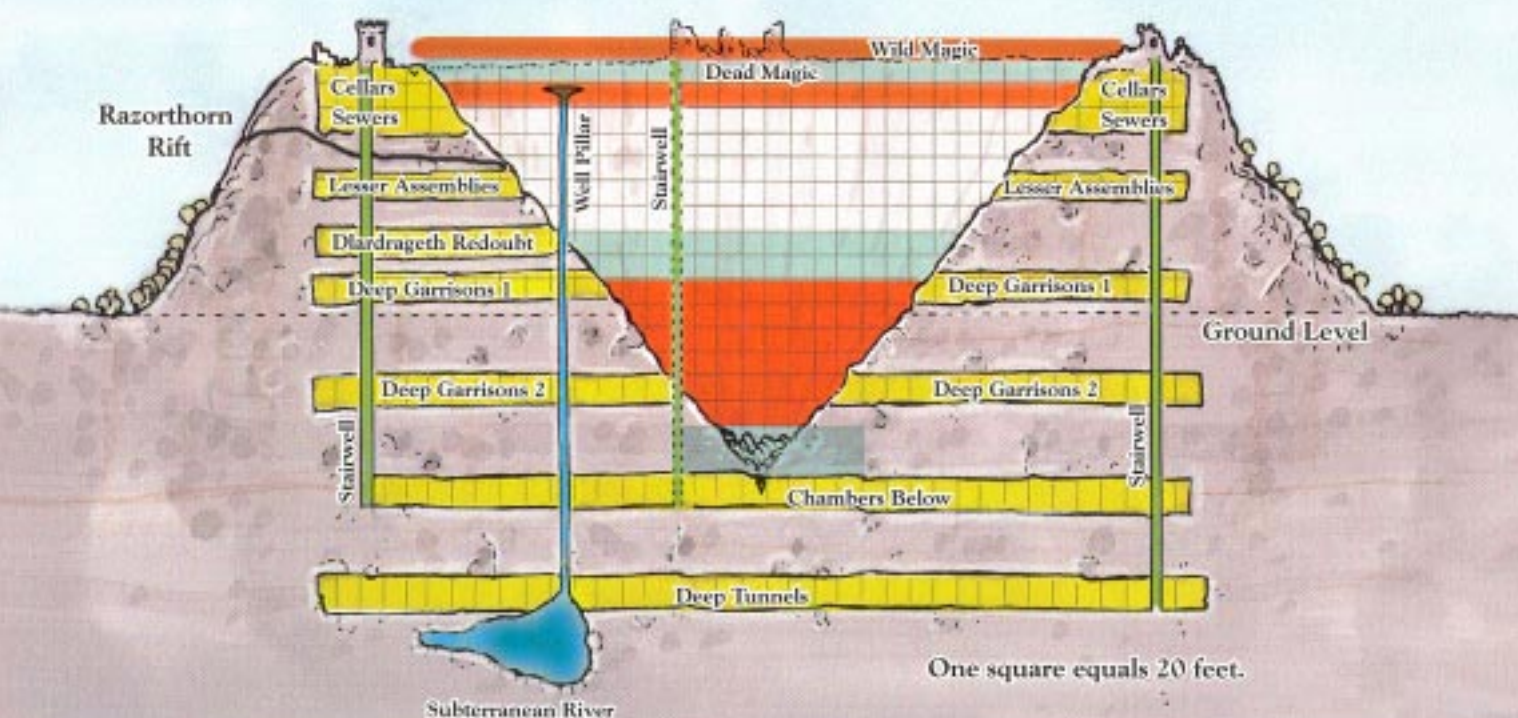


Chambers Below

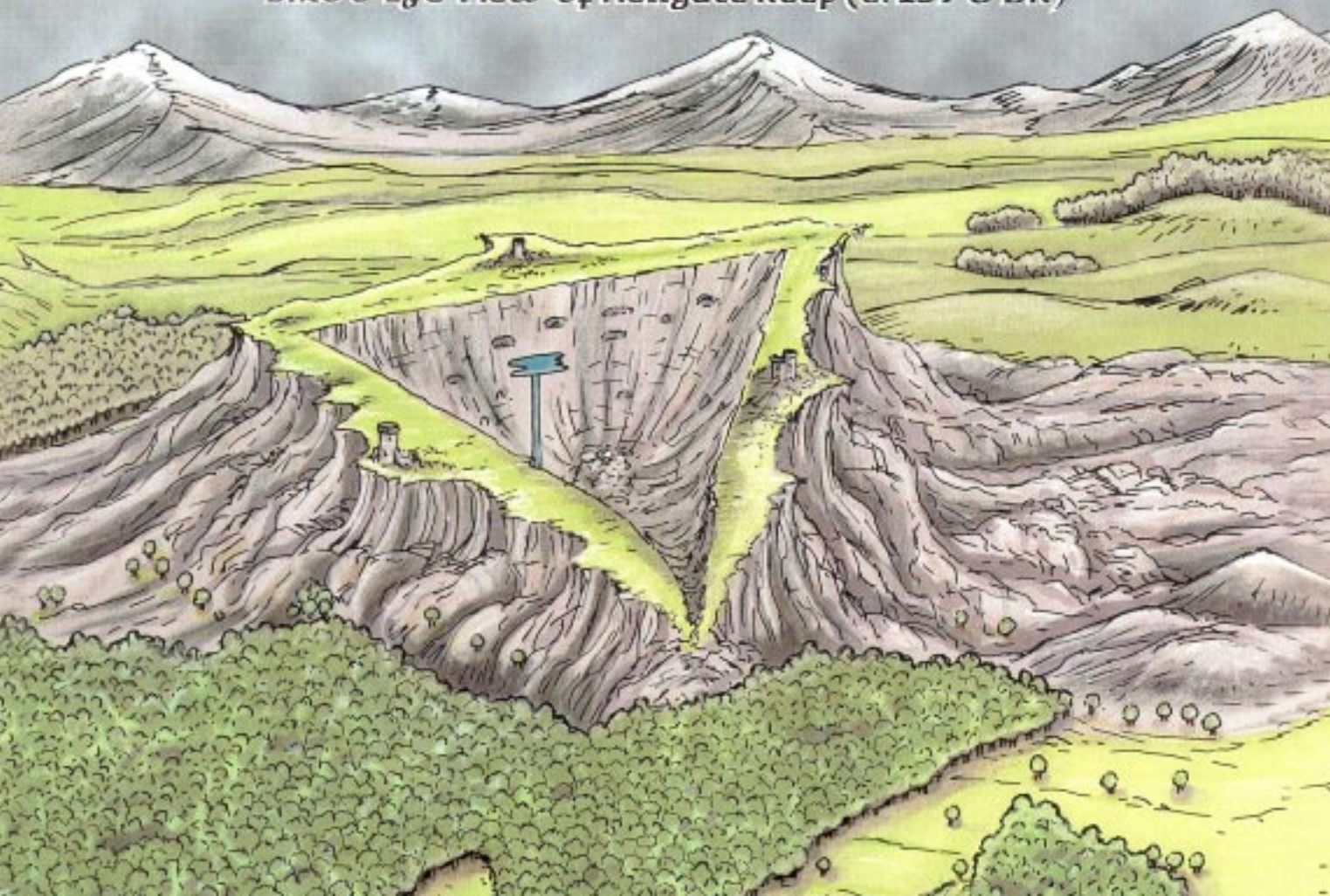


Cross-Section of Hellgate Keep (c. 1370 DR)

Eastern face of area transparent; viewed facing west.



Bird's-Eye View of Hellgate Keep (c. 1370 DR)



FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Adventure

Hellgate Keep

by Steven E. Schend

Hellgate Keep—a name that once made the boldest of heroes shudder in fear—was long ago known as the fair citadel of Ascalhorn, a haven for elves and humans. Then a demonic horde of baatezu and tanar'ri destroyed all remnants of real civilization and turned it into a den of malevolence. Today, the citadel lies ruined. The Mistmaster and the Harpers destroyed the keep and ended its centuries-long reign of evil in the autumn of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR) . . . or so they believed.

With the coming of the following spring, many scavengers streamed to the Upvale to uncover treasures and artifacts long hidden by the tanar'ri of Hellgate Keep. They went forth assuming they could find easy plunder. They were wrong.

Prepare to meet a new race of creatures spawned both of Faerûn and the Lower Planes. Uncover the corruption of an elven house that was ancient before Myth Drannor ever rose. Find out what survived the havoc visited upon the Keep, and who or what leads the survivors to a new lair. All this and more awaits amid the depths of ruined Hellgate Keep!

This stand-alone 32-page adventure is set within the northern wilderness of the Realms. It easily fits within an existing FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign, though it can also be incorporated into any other AD&D® campaign world with minor modifications.

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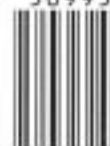
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ISBN 0-7869-0786-X



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