

# Dead Fire



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*Dead Fire* is a challenging adventure for characters levels 1-3 with a total average party level of no more than 12 and serves as an excellent introduction to the 3rd edition rules. The party should consist of 4-6 characters and it would be a good idea, but not absolutely necessary to include a wizard and a ranger in the group. Most of the adventure takes place in the wilderness surrounding the small village of Foresthall, where an unnatural forest fire grows larger by the minute. The blaze threatens the survival of both Foresthall and Valmirindi, a nearby elven community.

Keep in mind that this adventure is written mainly for first or second level characters, but it is designed to be a challenge. It is very likely that a party of four or five 1st level adventurers will advance in level over the course of the adventure.

## INTRODUCTION

**Dark Portal Games** strives to bring you high quality, entertaining and useful products. *Dead Fire* is our first free offering and the copy you have now is the second edit. We have added some more artwork, tightened up the plot and writing and added a little more content to this version. We certainly hope you find it useful for your gaming.

While it is unnecessary to access THE LANDS OF AREKOZ web site prior to running this adventure, you may find doing so very helpful in establishing the world as a living, breathing place. Because this information is provided by **Dark Portal Games** online free, every effort is made throughout the adventure to include only the most relevant details of the campaign setting throughout the adventure. You may find it useful to read through the information provided to add side adventures and further tie-ins with the rest of the world. Any information that is web-enhanced is underlined to indicate it is a link to our web site. While viewing this PDF on your computer and if connected to the internet you may click the links to launch your browser and access the associated web enhancement(s). For obvious reasons this feature is only available in the screen version of the adventure.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Twenty years ago the young but powerful wizard Eldolan Darkbough, interested in immersing himself in magical research, sought to establish a residence and laboratory near the village of Foresthall. In search of a secluded place from which to work, he settled into an abandoned tower in the woods outside the village, not far from another settlement, a community of elves.

Eldolan's research, indeed even his presence, went largely unnoticed for several years, until one fateful spring afternoon. A small group of dryads also called the woods near the wizard's tower their home. Following a particularly violent spring thunderstorm, the dryads had left their grove to tend animals that had been injured. As fate would have it that same morning Eldolan ventured into the forest seeking wood from the heart of an ancient oak, a necessary ingredient he needed for his spell casting. Unknowingly entering the dryad's grove, Eldolan immediately spotted what looked to be excellent candidates for acquisition of the materials he sought, several very old yet exceedingly healthy oak trees. Casting *lightning bolt* spells at the great oaks he sundered them and extracted his prizes. Sensing the wanton destruction, the dryads swiftly returned to their grove to confront whoever or whatever was attacking their trees. The battle was short and brutal: to defend himself, Eldolan cast *flesh to stone* (a spell he was entirely too fond of) and turned each of the dryads into a lifeless statue.

Struck by the frozen beauty of the dryads, Eldolan summoned one of his golem servants to carry them back to his tower as trophies. He arranged them neatly in the gardens, integrating them into the landscaping surrounding his tower. Over the years, Darkbough became so deeply involved in his studies that he ceased tending to the upkeep of the area around his tower and focused his attentions completely on his magical research.

Many years later, Ardruar Desmid, an apprentice from Foresthall's small school of wizardry, having heard rumors of a mysterious 'abandoned' tower in the forbidden woods, entered the forest sought out and found the structure.

A bit apprehensive about entering, he first explored the area around the tower. Buried beneath a thick overgrowth of moss and foliage, Ardruar stumbled upon one of the 'dryad statues' and immediately became enraptured by its phenomenal beauty. Fascinated with and greatly desiring the exquisite sculpture, with youthful abandon Ardruar impulsively conceived to make it his own. Putting forth only a half-hearted effort, not surprisingly he failed to attract the attention of any occupant that might be in the tower. Happily, this allowed him to conclude the tower was empty, satisfying his conscience for the moment. Expending great effort he managed to load and transport the statue upon his mule, journeyed back to the village and dragged it to his quarters. It took quite a bit of convincing to get the schoolmasters to accept his dubiously contrived story of discovering the statue buried in a farmer's field, but eventually he prevailed and was allowed to place it an out of the way corner of his room.

Whether due to intuition or deduction it will never be known, but Ardruar suspected the statue was somehow special and that there might be more to it than first met the eye. Over the course of several years, Ardruar's knowledge in the arcane arts grew, as did the trust his mentors

### **For New Game Masters**

This adventure uses the d20 system and the open gaming license that is graciously made available by **Wizards of the Coast**. It requires the use of the 3rd edition *Core Rulebooks I, II and III* published by **Wizards of the Coast**. You should take the time to read through the adventure in its entirety at least once before attempting to run it. If you are a new GM, take the time not only to read the adventure, but also to familiarize yourself with the rules that refer to running an adventure in *Core Rulebook II*.

placed in him. As many young men at his age are wont Ardruar grew to ardently desire female company. Filled with romantic notions and an unabated obsession with the statue, his desires led him to conceive of a mad plan to acquire a mate in a most unconventional way; a companion he hoped to make flesh from the statue itself. Knowing of certain forbidden manuscripts of magical power kept under lock and key in the school library, through some sleight of hand and trickery he managed to abscond with a *stone to flesh* scroll.

Later that night, in the privacy of his room, half-doubtful the scheme would work, his voice quavering in anticipation, Ardruar cast the spell written in the scroll upon the statue.

The following events caught the young wizard completely off guard. Upon completion of the incantation, the 'statue' transformed into a breathtakingly beautiful living, breathing young woman, the dryad Niederial. Ardruar was dumbstruck by the dramatic results of the spell. This was more than he had hoped for. Unbelievably, he had done it, he had brought to life a being achingly lovely beyond description; a companion he imagined would be his very own. Arduars adolescent ecstasy was to be short lived however. With a horrid chilling screech his prospective consort bowled the young wizard over and fled the school leaving Ardruar frightened and stunned in her wake.

The entire college was awakened by the commotion and rushed to the young wizards aid. After Ardruar regained his composure he contrived the story that he had suffered a nightmare and had called out in his sleep. As his grumpy schoolmates sleepily returned to their quarters the foolish young apprentice, guild ridden and fearful of his masters' punishments, made a personal vow to never reveal what he had done. It is this unfortunate vow which adds to his tortures to this day.

Once free, Niederial used the nearest tree to *dimension door* back to her grove. What she discovered upon her arrival profoundly wounded the dryad's overwrought sensibilities. The grove's ancient oaks had become badly diseased and rotted. Worse still, there was little evidence that her grove-sisters still lived, yet there was much evidence to the contrary. So far, unbeknown to her the oak's scars became her scars, her beauty replaced in a sympathetic replication of its wretched state.

Niederial became enraged, filled with vengeance and hatred towards the wizard who had caused the horrible tragedy. The decay of her personal oak had not affected Niederial when she had been stone, but now the fires of hatred and desire for revenge overcame her pure nature allowing the seeds of insanity to be sown. Overcome with grief the dryad wandered the woodland, eventually pursuing solace in a familiar glade she and her sisters had made the occasion to frequent in the past. Peering into a pool of water she was mortified to see the loathsome creature she had become reflected within. Her appearance had rapidly transformed into a twisted and distorted corruption of her former beauty, mirroring the horribly marred state of her oak tree. In her weakened and mentally unstable condition this final unbearable shock sent her over sanity's edge plunging her into utter dementia.

Mad thoughts of vengeance and murder consumed Niederial and her twisted diseased mind quickly conceived of a plan to exact her revenge upon Eldolan. Returning to the ruined remains of her tree, she feverishly dug beneath its roots recovering one of the most powerful magic-items she

had secreted there, a magical amulet which the dryads occasionally used to charm those who were normally resistant to their natural abilities. Next, desiring aid from someone she thought to be her ally, Niederial sought out one of the dryad's elf friends, Ancarohir Hyaryandil, a powerful elven wizard.

Ancarohir caught off guard and alarmed by the bizarre creature that now stood before him screeching of blood and vengeance, was taken aback by the grotesque creature's incomprehensible demands. Becoming impatient and sensing the wizard would not help her, Niederial turned the amulets magic upon Ancarohir and successfully bent him to her will. Questioning him she discovered Ancarohir had no information concerning the fate of her grove-sisters. She grew more enraged, believing the gold elves had done nothing to protect the grove and her sisters from Eldolan. With the charmed elf at her side, the crazed dryad then moved to destroy the hated wizard Eldolan and the gold elves of the Nowyn forest.

Through her *dimension door* ability, Niederial transported Ancarohir to a point near Eldolan's tower. Once there she directed the wizard to summon the mightiest creature it was within his power to command and send it to destroy Eldolan. Sensing something was amiss, from his tower Eldolan watched in horror as an elf he did not recognize summoned a fantastic creature of fire, a flame hive queen and sent it to assault his keep.

Believing the elf had attacked without reason, the wizard summoned all manner of creatures to battle the monster which now railed with flame and fury against the stone walls of the tower. After a long desperate battle his summoned minions were defeated, the flame hive queen eventually overcame Eldolan's remaining defenses and attempted to raze all within the tower. Eldolan weakened by the poisonous smoke and the flames that licked at his robes was killed when the burning roof of his tower collapsed on him. Some of the wizard's experimental retinue of zombies and other creations, horribly burned, survived and absorbed some of the magical blaze, taking on new and unusual characteristics.

Her insane vengeful passion unquenched by Eldolan's defeat, Niederial next turned against the elves vowing to destroy by fire their beloved forest home and inflict upon them the agony which tore at her mind and soul. To this purpose, the wrathful dryad commanded Ancarohir to loose the beast of flame he had summoned and allow it to wantonly wreck destruction throughout the forest. Thereafter Niederial imprisoned Ancarohir and keeps him alive still to make sure the flame hive queen remains until the elven woods are utterly destroyed.

Recovering eventually from his charmed state and powerless to escape, Ancarohir watches in horror as a path of fiery death and destruction races towards his home.

## ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is designed to introduce the players to a small corner of Arekoz, as well as to familiarize them with the 3rd edition rules. As with all products by **Dark Portal Games**, you may modify this adventure to fit within any campaign setting. While it is not required that you use THE LANDS OF AREKOZ as the backdrop for this adventure, using it aids in tying this adventure into forthcoming products. Also, certain elements presented are unique to Arekoz and may require some modification to adapt them to another campaign setting.

### Prelude to More Adventure

*Dead Fire* is the prelude to a series of adventures titled *White Robes*, *Black Hearts*, each of which can be played independently, or in order from beginning to end. The adventures deal more directly with the conflict between the Kingdom of Calrendia and the Empire of Mhul and the struggle for freedom Calrendia is engaged in.

The adventure begins in the village of Foresthall in the city-state of Gateway which lies in a neutral territory between the kingdom of Calrendia and the Empire of Mhul. The Mhulnish Empire recently won a long-fought bloody war against Calrendia and the citizens have been subjugated. Almost as soon as the war ended, fighting resumed as the people of Calrendia organized to overthrow the invaders. There is a rumor that a previously unknown warlord, whose tactics have been taking their toll on the Mhulnish occupation forces, heads this new effort. It is possible for the PCs to become involved in the events in this adventure while on their way to take a side in the struggle. If you choose not to use this adventure hook, the group might simply begin in Foresthall, or may be passing through on their way elsewhere.

If you wish to use this adventure outside THE LANDS OF AREKOZ, *Dead Fire* can be set in nearly any elven forest with a nearby village. If you do not want to use elves replacing them with nearly any other intelligent forest dwelling race works just as well.

## SCALING THE ADVENTURE

It is entirely possible that your gaming group has already gone through some early character levels and now you are looking for a challenge for a group of mid-level or higher characters. With a little bit of modification, it is possible to scale this adventure to fit your needs.

**4th to 6th Level:** For a group of adventurers levels 4-6, replace the fire zombies with wights that possess the same special properties. Also, the flesh golem encountered near the end of the adventure should be at full strength, rather than in the weakened state that is presented. You may want the water elemental summoned at the end of the adventure to soften up the flame hive queen, but fail, forcing the characters to finish the job. Even in its weakened state, the flame hive queen is a challenge to a party of mid-level PCs. If you opt for this resolution to the adventure, you may want to decrease the damage from the monster's attacks. Characters of 1st through 3rd level should not be forced to contend with the flame hive queen alone.

**7th to 10th Level:** For characters level 7-10, increase the number of flame wights encountered, include two or more flesh golem servants, or tweak the storyline so that the party is forced to contend with the flame hive queen at full strength themselves (For instance, the dryads have no special ability to summon a water elemental, but recovering the other dryads does calm down Niederial's rage). The party might already have the ability to cast *stone to flesh*, so you could rearrange the chronology of the adventure, allowing the party to turn the dryads back to flesh, conquer the flame hive queen, then explore the tower to unravel its secrets, though the sense of urgency during the search is lost in that alternate sequence of events.

If, at any level, the encounters are not adequately challenging, increase the number of foes or strengthen them until they are of sufficient difficulty to keep the players interested. Feel free to include wandering monsters, or invent new encounters to add to the ones presented to make the adventure more challenging and enjoyable for the group. Some possibilities include large numbers of dire forest creatures driven into inhabited areas by the fire, or the party being called to rescue helpless forest dwelling families trapped by the fire.

## MOTIVATING THE PLAYERS

Though the reasons for beginning this adventure should be sufficient, rescuing a village from certain destruction and getting a handsome reward, you may find it necessary to find other ways to encourage your players to become involved. Following is some ideas that may help:

- The PCs need to find one of the elves that lives in Valmirindi. With the looming forest fire, the elves are too distracted to bother with them. Stopping the fire removes the distraction and gains the goodwill of the elves.
- One of the PCs has a distant relative that lives in Foresthall. The livelihood and fortunes of the family member are threatened by the impending catastrophe.
- The PCs need to acquire a special plant or herb that grows in the forest. Doing so while a forest fire rages around them is nearly impossible.
- If one of the PCs happens to be a druid they are drawn to the village by a strange sense of something out of balance in nature.
- The PCs encounter elven refugees who have fled the fire. They are looking for heroes to solve the problem. If there are any elves with the party they appeal to them directly for help.
- The PCs are hired by the city-state of Gateway to travel to Foresthall and investigate the trouble.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs may originate from Foresthall and use the village as their base of operations for several adventures. This adventure details one possible scenario involving Foresthall, but a number of other expeditions can easily be set in the areas surrounding the village. The region was purposely left vague so that a GM can develop it as needed.

Another option is to assume that the characters are traveling through Foresthall on their way elsewhere. The characters may be traveling to Calrendia to take part in (or take advantage of) the struggle there. As they pass through Foresthall, this provides a perfect hook to get the party involved in the crisis in the forest. The village is on the main road, but does not show on many

larger maps. Unless the party is already familiar with the area, they may not even be aware of the village's existence.

Regardless of why the party is in Foresthall, it quickly becomes apparent that all is not right: understandably so, since the villagers are worried that the fire may threaten their village directly.

When the PCs first arrive in the village read the following to the players:

In the distance, you see an ominous black cloud of smoke spreading out over the forest. It is mid-spring and it is unusual for a large forest fire this time of year. The people of the village speak in hushed tones of this black omen. A general tension is present throughout and the village folk in the streets are obviously nervous.

The villagers are concerned that the flames portend a drought for the coming summer, which would be hard on the community and their crops come harvest time. As time progresses the conflagration moves slowly, inexorably closer to the village. A Spot DC of 15 reveals this fact to any PC making the effort to monitor the fire.

## THE LAY OF THE LAND

The Nowyn Forest, the woodlands in which Foresthall is located, is well known throughout the Gateway protectorates as a haven for gold elves and a few gnomish clans. The forest is temperate. The occasional overgrown hillock, a good number of meandering streams and creeks and some few glades and clearings are disbursed throughout. Birch and oak predominate in lower areas giving way to cottonwood and evergreen in the higher elevations at the foothills of the Tharnkirst Mountains.

An abundance of wild animals which are managed by the elves finds refuge in the forest. The occasional goblin, orc or other brute may wander into the woodlands from the surrounding wilds and the mountains but they are usually dispatched by the elves or an armed Gateway patrol if they prove to be too troublesome. For some tables and information for running overland adventures in the Gateway protectorates you may wish to download the Gateway Countryside document available from our web site at [www.darkportalgames.com](http://www.darkportalgames.com) in the Free Stuff section.

## THE LAW OF THE LAND

The gold elves, from within their sovereign area of the Nowyn forest, have dominion over the woodlands and its creatures but allow humans in nearby settlements to hunt and log at its borders. None who are armed may lawfully pass through the elves territory without leave from their ruler; Lord Lonlindiri, a writ of authorization from the Sovereign of Gateway; Selroth Bucada, or special 'leaves of passage' provided by Sir Brandenburg and impressed with his seal (see Players' Handout 1).

Those caught by the elves wandering through the woodlands without authorization are usually found the following morning in the village square bound and gagged.

# THE VILLAGE OF FORESTHALL

The settlement of Foresthall is a small village that lies along a major trade route between Gateway and the kingdom of Calrendia. Although Gateway is technically a city-state, they police and defend much of the territory between the major kingdoms.

Ironically, although these kingdoms strive to gain as much territory as possible, most of them find comfort in the fact that there is an established protected neutral zone between one another. This allows relatively safe traveling conditions for those that have business in neighboring kingdoms. Gateway's military is notorious for enforcing "goodwill" between their warlike neighbors and garrisons some soldiers under the command of Sir Darius Brandenburg in the small woodland village of Foresthall.

**Foresthall (Village):** Conventional; AL NG; 200 GP limit; Assets: 12,000 gp; Ready Cash 4500; Population 1000; Mixed (human 80%, elf 8%, half-elf 5%, halfling 7%); Highest level NPC: 4th level fighter.

*Authority Figures:* Sir Darius Brandenburg, Genevieve, Halbur Eniax.

*Important Characters:* Anskar, Belar Anvilsplitter, Darius Brandenburg, Ardruar Desmid, Dotta, Genevieve, Larissa, Laucimos, Olvir, Valgard, Agus Wrightsmith.

*Notes:* Gateway militia 50 1st-level warriors, of those 15 are kept in active duty to patrol and maintain the peace in the village and the surrounding area.

## VILLAGE OVERVIEW

Selroth Bucada, the sovereign of Gateway, has placed Foresthall under the watchful eye of one of his trusted knights, Sir Brandenburg. The good knight is decidedly earnest about his responsibilities and at the time of this adventure he can be found in his estate at the south end of the village tending to matters overseeing the community.

Homes and businesses tend to be simple yet sturdy making good use of the abundant bucolic surroundings for construction materials. Log huts and the occasional mortared fieldstone dwelling capped with wood shake roofs are most common. Many families plant a small garden near their home to supplement their customary fare of wild game, livestock and produce from the grain fields.

On the northern end of town is a small school of magic where anywhere from 25 to 50 aspiring wizards train. An odd mixture of children end up at this school, including the unruly who are dumped there by their parents, somewhat talented individuals who might one day practice magic for a living and the truly talented who have a bright career ahead of them. The people of the village place much faith and trust in the capabilities of the wizards that run the school, believing them to be more powerful than they truly are.

In the center of town is the temple of Maransol. The clerics of the temple tend to the spiritual needs of the community and provide healing when necessary. Their temple is a large stone structure where nearly 500 people come to worship. Despite their overwhelming popularity in the community, the priests try not to assert any sort of political pressure on Sir

### **The Gold Elves**

Among the elven races, the gold elves are the most common in The Lands of Arekoz. They reside in wooded areas and are well known as wardens of the forest lands. Gold elves are identical to the elves found in *Core Rulebook III*.

Brandenburg, choosing instead to stay in his good graces.

Clustered around the temple are the businesses of the village. The community boasts Belar Anvilsplitter's blacksmithy, the Golden Hoof horse breeder, Laucimos' Cracked Mug, The Swaying Merchant Tavern and The White Wood Inn among others. A small marketplace is in the center of town, a village square where locals have permission to sell goods and services for a small tithe to the temple.

## **VILLAGE COMMERCE**

Most of the humans who call Foresthall home either tend the fields or are involved in the felling, transportation, or sale of lumber. A wide swath around the village has been cleared of trees and converted to farmland which is used to raise grains and some livestock.

The gold elves of the Nowyn have never appreciated the way the humans manage the land, which is why the two peoples were forced to come to a compromise several years ago outlining very specifically the trees that can be harvested, where they can be harvested and how many can be cut from a single area. Therefore, a reforestation program was begun which the elves monitor and oversee.

Some humans in Foresthall are still resentful that they are forced to limit their timber harvest, blaming the elves for the fact that they have not become wealthy from their foresting endeavors. Sir Brandenburg insists that the people of Foresthall take their neighbors' concerns into consideration for the general good of the village. Hence, the knight's careful diplomacy has won him the respect and trust of the elves.

The nearby Nowyn Forest Road, often traveled by merchants and traders, cuts through the forest and brings extra business to the village.

## **THE RESIDENTS OF FORESTHALL**

Most of the inhabitants of Foresthall are human. The elves living in the village are either outcast from their society, or consider themselves outcasts. Halflings living in Foresthall have wildly different stories about why they live within a human community. They almost all admit that they would not be happier (or at least not much happier) anywhere else. There is a tavern on the northeastern end of town called *Laucimos' Cracked Mug*, which counts most of the demi-humans of the village among its customers. Most local demi-humans have some sort of craft from which they generate an income or are retired. None make their living by working the fields or logging.

The people of the village tend to dress in subdued shades accented by the occasional splash of color from bright hued kerchiefs and scarves. Most residents are reasonably amicable and used

to seeing strangers of many races pass through.

## VILLAGE RUMORS

If the party decides to try to gather information about the fire, they can easily collect a number of rumors circulating throughout the village. The rumors below are grouped so that the most likely and common explanations have a higher chance of being shared. The tendency of the local townspeople to deny that the fire is threatening their homes is also taken into account.

A Gather Information skill check turns up information as follows. The higher the player rolls on their Gather Information skill checks, the more information they receive.

- A result of 10 or more means one roll on Table 1a.
- A result of 15 or more means one roll on Table 1a and one roll on Table 1b.
- A result of 20 or more means one roll on Tables 1a, 1b and 1c.
- Completely accurate rumors are labeled as **True**.
- Completely inaccurate rumors are labeled as **False**.
- Some rumors are false yet contain information that is relevant to the current situation. These are labeled as **True But Inaccurate**.
- Some information is not a rumor at all but simply an irrelevant statement; these are labeled as **Irrelevant**.

### TABLE 1a: VILLAGE RUMORS

(Roll 1d12)

**1.** *Some kids playing with kindling sticks started the fire.*

**False:** Kids do start fires in the forest occasionally, but never so far away from town. They are not responsible for this fire.

**2.** *Some local woodsmen started the fire to clear more farmland for the town. No worries. It's all under control.*

**False:** Woodsmen do periodically start fires to clear farmland but it is a controlled burn. They are not responsible for the current blaze.

**3.** *Some local woodsmen started the fire to clear more farmland. They made a mistake. Now it's out of control.*

**False:** Woodsmen do periodically start fires to clear farmland but it is a controlled burn. Once in awhile they do get out of control. They are not responsible for the current blaze, however.

4. *Nothing to worry about. The elves start such fires every 50 years or so to keep the woodlands healthy.*

**False:** The elves do not start such fires.

5. *Lightning started the fire. It happens all the time.*

**False:** Lightning does start fires occasionally but not in this instance.

6. *There's no fire. That's an unusually concentrated release of seedlings from an ancient stand of cottonwood trees.*

**False:** This person is extremely misinformed with little or no sense of smell.

7. *The minotaurs are having their annual elf roast. Elf Fest 23! Hoohaa!*

**False:** The minotaurs do not hold such a feast; at least not in this forest.

8. *The elves are at war and their enemies and are trying to burn them out.*

**False:** The forest fire was not started for any such reason.

9. *A farmer's chicken caught on fire and went running into the woods.*

**False:** This has happened in the past (and is certainly a story worth hearing) but in this instance, it is not true.

10. *Fire? What fire?*

**Irrelevant:** This person is either oblivious, in total denial, or wishes to be evasive. Role-play the encounter as you see fit.

11. *I did it! I did it all! I'll burn you too if you do not get away from me! Hahahaha!*

**False:** Obviously this individual is deeply disturbed. Have fun role-playing the encounter.

12. *You're a stranger here aren't you? Funny you should ask about it. Hrmph...I think maybe you started the fire!*

**Irrelevant:** This person is fearful of what the fire portends and is itching for someone to blame. Role play this encounter as you wish.

#### **TABLE 1b: VILLAGE RUMORS**

(Roll 1d6)

1. *A woodcutter saw an evil old hag creeping about the forest. No doubt, she started the fire.*

**True But Inaccurate:** A woodcutter did see Niederial the crazed dryad. She did not start the fire, however. This is still a valuable clue for the party.

### More Notes For the Game Master

One thing to remember is that the proper path to stopping the fire is not plainly laid out for the heroes before they leave the village. The PCs probably need to have several encounters with the locals, as well as NPCs they meet later in the forest. In this way, they discover that they have to journey to the heart of the blaze to find the answers they seek to stop the fire from destroying the village. The party can explore obvious locations, including the village, the forest and Eldolan's Tower to form a clear picture of what is happening and what events led up to the fiery catastrophe.

If the players do not seem to be piecing together the clues or if they arrive at a dead end, you may want to consider imparting some additional information through various sources, including new NPCs, scrolls or journals that provide clues, or (worst case) a premonition or dream.

**2.** *The magi from the school of wizardry summoned a fire demon and it's causing all the trouble.*

**True But Inaccurate:** The magi had nothing to do with the fire other than the indirect results of Ardruar's actions.

**3.** *There's evil witches in those woods. Woodland witches, yeah...They're responsible for the fire.*

**True But Inaccurate:** Some people know of the general existence of the dryads whom they call the woodland witches. However, they did not start the fire.

**5.** *It's them damn fire fairies agin. Spit on em and they go out like snuffin a candle (spits across the room).*

**False:** This person obviously has a good imagination but his theory is completely wrong.

**6.** GM's choice from Table 1a or 1b, or make up a new rumor.

#### TABLE 1c: VILLAGE RUMORS

(Roll 1d4 )

**1.** *A wizard that lives in a spooky old tower I heard about out in the forest somewhere no doubt had something to do with the fire.*

**True:** Eldolan, the last resident of the 'forest tower', did indeed have something to do with the fire. If the characters follow up on this lead, they eventually find the tower.

**2.** *A few of the woodsmen have been seeing creatures look like people and animals that are on fire. It didn't make sense until the fire got going.*

**True:** These were the fire creatures created by the flame hive queen. Some woodsmen saw them running about in the forest starting the fire. This story was dismissed by the townspeople until after the fire grew abnormally large.

3. *We used to catch glimpses of fairy folk out in the woods, but they haven't been around for a number of years. Some are saying that this is their revenge for something we've done to drive them away.*

**True:** People would occasionally see the dryads of the forest many years ago. This fire was started as the result of an angry dryad's reaction to the destruction of her tree and the apparent demise of her sisters.

4. GM's choice from Table 1a, 1b, or 1c, or make up a new rumor.

The PCs may guess that fishing for rumors in a locale where tongues are a bit looser is to their advantage. Visiting any of the taverns; The Swaying Merchant or Laucimos' Cracked Mug, garners them the best results. If the PCs make a point of frequenting the taverns add a +1 circumstance bonus to any Gather Information skill checks. Any patron they ply with free drinks adds an additional +1 to a Gather Information check. Buying the house a round of drinks further increases their Gather Information DC by +2. Buying more than one drink, or buying multiple rounds does not stack the bonuses.

## MAJOR LOCALES IN FORESTHALL

Use the description keys for the corresponding locations as the PCs explore the village. Between the information the PCs gather in the places they visit, plus the information they obtain through the rumor mill, they should come to two conclusions about the blaze: it is not a natural fire and the secret to stopping it lies within the burning forest itself. It is vitally important that the party meets the young student mage Arduar Desmid. If they shy away from the tavern, or if you prefer not to start adventures in taverns, the party should encounter him drunk in the streets of the village.

The encounters presented below can be run in any order and not all of them are absolutely necessary in order for the party to take their investigation to the forest.

### BELAR ANVILSPLITTER'S SMITHY

This is the only smithy in Foresthall. Belar, along with his two sons and two apprentices does a brisk business forging and repairing various tools and other items for the farmers and forresters in the surrounding area. He can also make and repair weapons and armor. There are several pieces on display in his shop, which can be purchased for the prices listed in *Core Rulebook I*.

**Belar Anvilsplitter, male human Exp7:** hp 29 (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

### LAUCIMOS' CRACKED MUG

Owned and Operated by a gold elf bard and former adventurer, Laucimos' Cracked Mug has become the meeting place for most of the demi-human inhabitants of the village.

**Laucimos, male gold elf Brd3:** hp 12 (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

The rules of the establishment are simple: all races (including humans) are welcome and snobbery in the name of any race's alleged superiority or refinement is quashed.

#### What Laucimos Tells the PCs

**Gather Information DC 10:** Laucimos tells the PCs the following if they are successful in pumping him for information (Gather Information DC 10, -5 if an elf or a bard speaks with him).

- He is very worried about the fire and believes it will overtake the village in two or three days.
- He thinks the fire is not natural but he has no idea how or where it started.
- Ancarohir Hyaryandil, the senior wizard in the elven community usually takes it upon himself to lead efforts to extinguish any forest fires that threaten the elves. If this was an ordinary blaze, he should have taken care of it some time ago.
- So far the gold elves have been unable to stop the fire. Every time they think they have put it out, mysteriously it starts again. They are beginning to lose their battle with the blaze but are too proud to admit it.
- He thinks someone should investigate why the fire will not stop, but he doubts there is anyone left in the village stalwart enough to brave the danger.
- Sir Brandenburg has sent some men with 'leaves of passage' to offer aid to the elves, but they have not returned.
- His brethren, the gold elves, will not let anyone into the forest without proper permission. He thinks this rule is now hurting them when they should be welcoming outside help.
- Something strange must be going on with the wizards school. A young wizard was drinking in his place, which is very odd since they are forbidden strong drink. He had to kick him out because he was accosting the serving wenches. He kept mumbling something about "Losing a beautiful lady of stone."

**Gather Information DC 15:** Due to his being a bard and being privy to lore most others are ignorant of, a Gather Information check (DC 15 or greater, -5 if an elf or a bard speaks with him) gains the PCs the following additional errata from Laucimos.

- Many long years ago, a famous human bard, Rymsyn Darkbough, had visited the elves to study their music.
- Rymsyn fell in love with the elven maid Lyrindiel and though it was never fully accepted by many of the elves they married and built the tower in the woods as their home.

- It is said they had only one child, named Eldolan. When he came of age the child was sent away to study in Gateway. Eldolan returned a few years ago to reclaim his birthright and set up shop in the tower of his now deceased parents.

## THE GOLDEN HOOF, HORSE BREEDER

Dotta and her husband Valgard run Golden Hoof Horse Breeding. They are pleased to talk to the PCs about whatever they wish to discuss, though they focus on attempting to sell the party a mount. They are willing to purchase an old mount from the party at half the values listed in *Core Rulebook I—Goods and Services*, provided that the mounts are in good condition. They currently have a total of 16 mounts for sale including 2 mules (8 gp), 6 ponies (30 gp), 6 light horses (75 gp) and 2 heavy horses (200 gp).

**Dotta, female human Exp1:** hp 8 (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

**Valgard, male human Exp1:** hp 7 (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

### What Dotta and Valgard Tell the PCs

**Gather Information DC 15:** Dotta and Valgard have one particularly valuable piece of information for the party, provided that the fire is mentioned to the couple and the PCs are successful with their questioning (Gather Information DC 10, -5 if the PCs buy a mount).

- Just yesterday, when Dotta was out riding through the woods (as she often does), she found herself all too close to the blaze in the forest, in an area that has now been thoroughly charred. Through the smoke and haze, she saw a small man-like impish creature (a magmin, but she did not know it) that seemed to be made of flame, running through the forest, lighting trees and plants on fire as it scrambled about.

## SIR BRANDENBURG’S ESTATE

Aside from the temple, this is the largest structure in the village. A 6 foot tall stone wall surrounds the property. Three buildings are arranged around the grounds, which include the estate of Sir Brandenburg, a servant’s house and stables. Darius Brandenburg lives with his wife Larissa and employs ten guards and three servants.

**Darius Brandenburg, male human Ftr4:** hp 51 (See *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

**Larissa Brandenburg, female human Ari3:** hp 22.

**Guards, male human War2:** hp 12.

**Servants, human Com1(4):** hp 2.

### **Sir Brandenburg's Dilemma**

Sir Brandenburg has a vexing problem on his hands. The fire is indeed becoming a great concern to the noble knight. Due to an iron clad treaty between the city-state of Gateway and the gold elves he cannot send any of his men enforce into the forest to investigate it or fight it. The edict is quite clear, none who are armed shall step foot in the elve's woodlands without leave from their ruler, Lonlindiri.

Messengers have been sent to Valmirindi to entreat the elves for information about the fire. As of yet, having become victims of flamespawn, none have returned. He dares not send any men to fight the blaze for fear that it may be the result of an invading army or some other unknown threat and he reasons it is best to keep his men close should the village come under attack. The Lord of Foresthall is aware time is running short, as are his options. He is within a hairsbreadth of ordering the people of the village and the surrounding countryside to abandon their homes and head for the refuge of Gateway.

Should the PCs gain an audience with Sir Brandenburg, gain his trust and convince him they can help it dawns on the knight that they may be able to solve his dilemma. He reasons that the PCs could be valuable assets to find out what is going on and possibly end the threat.

The wily knight has one other device to bolster the legitimacy of the PCs presence in the elves domain, a handful of 'leaves of passage' given to him by the elves and impressed with his wax seal. Normally, these elven writs are used for emissaries and messengers. Today; however, Sir Brandenburg may find a better use for them.

The guards watch the front gate, patrol the grounds for Sir Brandenburg at all times and make sure that his estate is secure. If the party wishes to speak with the knight, they are granted an audience, though how soon depends on the stated purpose for the visit. Should they say that they wish to speak with him about the fire, they are granted immediate audience. Should they indicate any other reason for wishing to speak with him, he postpones meeting with them until the following day.

If the party gains an audience with Sir Brandenburg, he invites them into his home and cordially offers them food and drink while listening to what they have to say. He is skeptical of any claims the party may make about the source of the fire being unnatural. He easily identifies the party as adventurers and assumes that they are there to talk him into giving them some sort of reward for 'saving the town.' The character in the party who is doing most of the talking should make a Diplomacy check (DC 17) to determine their believability. If several members of the group are trying to speak, allow them all Diplomacy checks, but raise the DC to 25: Sir Brandenburg does not like disorganization. If the party has already encountered Ardruar Desmid or Dotta and relays either of their stories, lower either DC by 5.

After weighing their arguments (assuming that the party succeeds in their Diplomacy check), he sees a way he may be able to solve his dilemma (see 'Sir Brandenburg's Dilemma') and offers them 500 gp if they can stop the fiery menace that threatens the village. If the party asks him for adventuring gear (see *Core Rulebook I-Adventuring Gear*) in advance, he provides them with basic non-magical equipment, not more than 150 gp in total value. Lastly, Sir Brandenburg provides each of the PCs with a 'leaf of passage' (see *Appendix IV-Miscellaneous*) instructing them that it permits them to travel through the forest lawfully (Players' Handout 1).

## THE SCHOOL OF MAGIC

The school of magic is very small - three professors and a handful of students in two large buildings on the outskirts of town. The people of Foresthall look to it for wisdom and leadership in times of misfortune. Unfortunately for the village, none of the teachers rank higher than third level. Since they fully realize that their combined skills would not be effective against an impending blaze, they have instead turned their efforts to coordinating the people to be prepared with large amounts of stored water and seeing to the safety of their students. They have a few spells to offer, but possess little power to combat the blaze should it threaten the village directly. None of them suspect that the blaze is anything but natural.

This school fills an odd niche in the community of Foresthall and is overseen by Genevieve, Anskar and Olvir.

**Genevieve, female human Wiz3:** hp 12.

**Anskar, male human Wiz2:** hp 7 (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

**Olvir, male human Wiz2:** hp 8.

More often than not, small villages with few or no spellcasters of their own are very suspicious of magic and its practitioners. In Foresthall; however, the school of magic was endorsed by the sovereign himself and set in place for the protection and the betterment of the people.

Most of the villagers recognize that there is a ‘magical’ elven community nearby and they feel that having the school evens things up a bit, plus they take comfort from the fact that these highly educated people have taken up residence in their community. The school is certainly not a place to groom war wizards. It is where youngsters who show some aptitude for magic can learn the basics before they move on to larger schools when they are a little older.

The school of wizardry has had a couple of its students go on to be world-renowned wizards and therefore exists as a great pride to the village.

### What the Wizards Tell the PCs

**Gather Information DC 10:** The wizards volunteer the following information if the PCs question them (Gather Information DC 10, -5 if a wizard converses with them).

- They point to the fact that during this time of year, the woods are comparatively wet and therefore, a fire in the forest would have a tendency to burn out quickly.
- Just before the fire started, there was an enormous blaze that consumed a cursed tower in the forest.

- They have no direct knowledge about the fire, but they think, “There’s a good chance that it’s not natural.” They further believe that if this was a natural fire and it started at the tower, it would have spread outward with the tower at the center, not move to the south as it has.

- They knew of the wizard that resided in the tower, Eldolan Darkbough. They were not fond of what they knew of Darkbough’s methods and so were not over concerned until the fire began to spread eastward toward the village.

- Other than some vague notions of forbidden magic, if questioned further, the wizards have no other useful information about Eldolan Darkbough.

- If asked why they are not trying to fight the fire, they respond that they have the safety of their students to look after and the elves can do a much better job controlling the blaze than they can. This is partially true since they are charged with the protection of their students, but the heart of the matter is that they are not powerful enough to affect the fire in any meaningful way.

- It is unlawful to enter the woods while armed without proper leave from Sir Brandenburg. If the PCs have permission from Sir Brandenburg Anskar draws a rough map for the party indicating the approximate location of the tower, the village and Valmirindi (Players’ Handout 2).

- One of their students (Ardruar) is missing and they fear he might have fallen, victim of the fire. They ask that the PCs keep an eye out for him and report back to them if they see him. They give a description of Ardruar.

If the party relay’s Ardruar’s story, the wizards become very upset with the student, expel him immediately and Anskar insists upon accompanying them to try to resolve the crisis. Anskar may be played as an NPC for this adventure (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*). If the party’s wizard dies during the adventure, or if they did not have a wizard to begin with, at the GM’s discretion, he may be adopted by a player upon completion of the adventure.

If the party has already convinced Ardruar to accompany them, Anskar vehemently insists that only one of them goes with the party.

If the party asks to purchase any magic items, the school offers them up to 5 *potions of resist elements (fire)* at 30 gp each. If the party tries to sell them any potions or magic items, they are willing to purchase up to 1,000 gp worth and are willing to pay up to 125% of the gp value listed in *Core Rulebook II*.

## THE SWAYING MERCHANT TAVERN

The most frequented establishment in Foresthall is The Swaying Merchant Tavern. It is where the villagers, merchants and travelers gather to cut loose and shake off the cares of work. This place is usually dimly lit and full of pipe smoke. The festivities within can usually be heard up to two blocks away. The beverages served include everything from water to ale and specialty drinks commonly ordered by demi-human patrons.

The proprietor is a much-loved old man named Agus Wrightsmith. Agus has run the tavern for over forty years.

**Agus Wrightsmith, male human Com2:** hp 11.

### What Agus Tells the PCs

**Gather Information DC 10:** If the PCs begin to question him about the fire Agus shares the following information with them (Gather Information DC 10, -5 if the PCs buy a round for the house).

- He goes on for close to an hour about other fires he has seen in his day, but in his entire experience he has never seen a fire this early in the spring.

- If asked whether anything strange has been going on besides the fire, he tells the party that the young mage Ardruar (points him out at his table) has been in the tavern getting himself drunk quite a bit the last couple days and has been acting depressed and worried. This is odd behavior for a wizard because the school forbids them to partake of any spirits. *Note:* This makes an excellent introduction to the encounter with the young wizard himself.

- Folks have started fleeing the village and if things do not change for the better soon he too will be leaving.

If the PCs decide to question or converse with Ardruar use the following encounter key:

### Guilt and Mead

The party encounters Ardruar Desmid slouched over a tankard of mead at a table in a corner of The Swaying Merchant Tavern.

**Ardruar Desmid, male human Wiz1:** hp 5 (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

If you prefer not to begin adventures in taverns, Ardruar may also be encountered in the streets of the village, drunk, looking haggard and bedraggled.

The stench of alcohol is evidenced merely by being in his presence. It should be obvious that something has seriously disturbed the young man. Attempts to talk to him are first shrugged off, but if the party decides to leave, he pursues them, following the unfathomable logic of the inebriated. If the PCs get him to talk, Ardruar attempts to make the group promise to keep a secret. If they refuse for any reason, he waves them away, but may return later. If they agree, he tells them of the link that he believes exists between his actions and the fire that threatens Foresthall. His speech is slurred, but he makes a concerted effort to speak clearly and succinctly to ensure he tells his story to someone he believes may be able to help.

The following can be read word for word, or paraphrased in an interactive conversation with the PCs.

Ardruar clears his throat nervously and begins to relay his tale. “It was over a year ago,” he begins, with a soft hiccup.

“I was riding through the forest in search of spell components when I came upon a tower. I’d been told by the school to stay away from the tower because of the evil practices that’re supposed to go on there. I didn’t mean to be there at first, but I figured that since I was there I might as well take a look around. The whole place was overgrown with weeds and tall grass and looked deserted. Well, I thought it was a really interesting place, so I sat down near what I thought was a tall rock and started to sketch the tower in my journal. At least, I thought what I had sat down on was a rock, until I started scraping at the moss. I discovered that underneath was a statue of an incredibly beautiful woman. I cleared more off, but began wondering if the person living in the tower would notice me out there after all that time.

I started to leave and then noticed that other than my own footsteps and the birds chirping and the insects, I couldn’t hear anything else. So I walked back to the tower and called out to see whether anyone was there. I didn’t get an answer. I called again and again, expecting whoever lived in the tower to come out and say something to me, or turn me into a frog, or something. I finally decided that no one lived there. I wasn’t going to go inside, since my instructors told me what an evil place it was.

I studied the statue closer and noticed how real it looked. I finally decided that it must have been a gift from the Gods for me to find it there. It was very heavy, but I managed to load it onto my mule and brought it back to town. I put it in my room and didn’t tell my teachers where I’d been.

It pretty much sat in my room for about a year, then one day in the school I found a bunch of scrolls the teachers had hidden away. I started reading them.

Eventually, I came found one that was supposed to turn stone to flesh. I decided to take it and cast the spell on the statue.

I was thinking that if I cast the spell on the statue, it might release the magic that I was sure was in the thing. When I cast it, it turned into this perfect-looking woman. I didn’t get much time to talk to her or say anything. I nearly soiled my slippers when she looked at me, screamed in agony and fled from my room into the night.

A couple days later I heard the tower where I had found her was on fire. A little after that, this forest fire had begun. So you see, I don’t know how it happened but it looks like I’m responsible for starting the fire. Please don’t tell anyone at the school. They’ll expel me and I’m so close to graduating.”

Hearing Ardruar’s story should be enough to convince the party that the answer to ending the threat of the fire lies outside the village. He has imparted to them all the information he has about the current situation. If the party tries to make him feel even more guilty and tries to shame him into accompanying them, reluctantly he goes, but not until he comes up with an excuse for his teachers to explain why he will not be available for class in the morning.

## THE TEMPLE OF MARANSOL

The largest structure in Foresthall, the temple of Maransol is home for 17 priests and acolytes. The overseer of the temple is Halbur Eniax a well respected but somewhat aloof man of the faith.

**Halbur Eniax, male human Clr5:** hp 24 (see *Appendix I–Major NPCs*).

Maransol is the God of wellness and is the focus of the community. For a small fee characters may go to the temple to receive the benefits of any first and second level clerical spells (see *Core Rulebook I–Special and Superior Items*). The temple can sell the PCs up to 5 potions of *cure light wounds* at 55 gp each.

The temple does not have any means of resurrecting slain characters, but they do have a magical gate that connects to a branch temple in Gateway where such services are available. Should the party need to travel to the nearby city in a hurry, they may be able to convince Halbur to let them use the gate with a successful Diplomacy check (DC 17). Any PC who happens to be a priest of Maransol has the benefit of a +5 circumstance bonus for any Diplomacy checks.

### What the Priests Tell the PCs

**Gather Information DC 10:** A fruitful conversation (Gather Information DC 10, -5 for any good aligned priest) with even the lowliest acolyte gains the PCs the following information.

- A young man (Ardruar), one of the students at the school of wizardry, has been to see them recently to beg for forgiveness for starting the fire. They didn't believe it possible he had done such a thing since it had started so far away. They shrugged it off as another of the hysterical stories they have been inundated with lately by those reacting to the stress of the current uncertain conditions. They do not know the young man's name nor where he is, but they can describe him.
- Some woodsmen with burn injuries from the blaze have come in lately for healing telling wild stories of creatures of flame wandering the woods. They attribute this to stress induced hallucinations.
- Sir Brandenburg, the Lord of Foresthall, has sent messengers to the elves to offer help with the fire but none have returned.
- They have cast for omens and have been told that little time remains if the blaze is to be stopped.

## THE WHITE WOOD INN

For 5 gold pieces for a common room, the party may stay at the inn. It is a two story rectangular building with a large room downstairs where for 2 gold pieces anyone may bunk nightly with 3d6 other patrons. The proprietor is Bandor Nibbletrout a quiet and elderly but shrewd business man. This is a good place to rest in town, relax in the lounge and listen for rumors.

Bandor has been doing brisk business lately as farmsteads and settlements nearer the fire further to the west are abandoned by their fearful occupants. Hence, he has raised his prices significantly. Bandor nor any of his patrons have any special information other than what can be generated on Tables 1a, 1b and 1c. During the day 1d4 patrons are lounging in the lobby and can be pumped for information.

**Bandor Nibbletrout, male human Exp3:** hp 14 (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

## THE FOREST

Once the PCs have left the village, give them two days of game time to complete the adventure. If they fail to solve the mystery of the blaze and defeat the flame hive queen within that time, the fire rages completely out of control, razing Valmirindi and Foresthall to the ground within a few hours.

Before the party leaves for the wilderness, it may be wise for them to obtain a map of the surrounding area. If they took the time to visit the school of wizardry, they should now have a rough idea of the lay of the land (Players' Handout 2). The map they can obtain there is simple, but they should be able to navigate by it. The party may also purchase a local area map from one of the merchants in the market for 3 silver pieces. If they leave the village at night, the market is empty, but they may be able to purchase a map from someone at The Swaying Merchant Tavern for twice the price (6 sp). There is also a 25% chance that a map procured in such a manner is somewhat inaccurate and causes the party to get lost in the forest for 1d8 hours.

After the party has left the village, read the following description to the players. It assumes that the party has left the village in the morning. Paraphrase it if they leave at a different time of day:

The odd combination of the odors of morning dew, sap and smoke fill the air as you leave the village on your way into the woods. The sky is clear, the air is crisp and it feels as though it will be a warm day today. Game trails cut through the woods in several different directions, making the navigation of this forest somewhat easier. The trees loom majestically overhead, but there obviously is something amiss.

All is silent. The normal background forest sounds; the occasional chatter and rustle of the woodland animals seem to be muted as if they have hunkered down in anticipation of some unknown danger.

Encounters in the forest are dependent upon the zone the PCs have entered. These zones are identified on the 'Nowyn Forest Fire Map.'

**Zone 1:** Encounters in this area are with animals, the occasional normal monster and possibly elves. The forest is normal though it is very quiet. There is the slight odor of smoke in the air. No flamespawn are encountered here.

**Zone 2:** After entering this area the PCs begin to notice more smoke in the air. Heat can be sensed coming from the direction of the fire. No real breathing difficulties as of yet.

**Zone 3:** The air has become warm and very smoky. Breathing is difficult and ashes float about. Vision is reduced to half-normal and the smoke provides one-quarter concealment (miss chance 10%).

Unless steps are taken to mitigate the conditions all PCs must make a Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage from the heat.

A character must make a Fortitude save (DC 5, +1 per previous check) each round he inhales the smoke or he spends that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort have a -4 penalty to their saves. Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking normal damage (1d4 points per hour).

**Zone 4:** The air is nearly impossible to breath. Vision is reduced to 10 feet and the smoke provides one-half concealment (miss chance 20%). Hot ashes float through the air along with the occasional burning cinder. Scattered around are patches of burning foliage and trees.

Unless steps are taken to mitigate the conditions all PCs must make a Fortitude saving throw every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage from the heat.

A character must make a Fortitude save (DC 10, +1 per previous check) each round she inhales the smoke or she spends that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort have a -4 penalty to their saves. Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking normal damage (1d4 points per each 10 minute period).

**Zone 5:** Without magical aid it is nearly impossible to survive here. Vision is reduced to 5 feet and the smoke provides three-quarters concealment (miss chance 30%). Trees and anything else flammable are blazing all around. There are no encounters with animals.

Characters in this area are allowed a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) every round to avoid catching on fire. Those who do catch on fire take 1d6 points of damage immediately. In addition, a character must make a Fortitude save every 5 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or she sustains 1d4 points of subdual damage.

Those wearing heavy clothing or any sort of armor have a -4 penalty to their saving throws. In addition, those wearing metal armor or coming into contact with very hot metal are affected as if by a *heat metal* spell (see *Core Rulebook I* for the spell description).

Breathing the superheated air does 1d6 points of damage per minute (no save). A character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) each round he inhales the smoke or he spends that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage.

**Zone 6:** The air is somewhat smoky and breathing uncomfortable but not harmful. All fuel has been consumed by the fire. The ground is covered with black and gray ash and the trees have been reduced to smoking cinders.

*Note:* Characters with the Wilderness Lore skill may apply their bonus to saving throws vs heat dangers. This bonus applies to the entire party if they are traveling together. Bonuses do not stack if multiple characters have the Wilderness Lore skill. If more than one character has the Wilderness Lore skill apply the bonus gained from the character having the most ranks to the entire party.

## FOREST RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Because the creatures of the forest are fleeing the fire, roll a d% once for every half-hour of travel, referring to Table 2-1. If the game seems to get bogged down in random encounters, skip a few and the next planned encounter.

Since all animals encountered are under stress or fleeing from the fire; apply a penalty of +8 to the DC for any attempts made to use the Animal empathy skill in such encounters. If left alone, the animals are 75% likely to flee. If cornered, they fight ferociously.

**TABLE 2: FOREST ENCOUNTERS**

(Zones 1–3 10%, zones 4 & 5 12%, zone 6 5% chance per half-hour)

Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Encounter	Number
–	01	01–05	01–25	01–50	–	Azer	1
01–05	02–12	06–16	26–29	–	01–05	Badger	1
06–20	13–19	17–23	30–33	–	06–20	Black bear	1d3
21–25	20–26	24–30	34–37	–	21–25	Brown bear	1
26–46	27–37	31–42	38–41	–	26–46	Boar	1
47–72	38–74	54–74	42–52	–	47–72	Deer*	1d4
–	75	72–77	53–60	51–65	–	Fire mephit	1
–	76	78	61–86	66–96	–	Fire salamander	1
–	77	79–84	87–93	97–100	–	Magmin	1
73–77	78–82	85–89	94	–	73–77	Stag*	1
78–100	83–100	90–100	95–100	–	78–100	Wolf	1d6

\* Use the statistics for a Bison/Herd animal.

## FOREST ENCOUNTERS: ZONE 1

The encounter with ‘The Elven Scouts’ should occur within a few minutes after entering this zone and they should find the ‘Signs of a Struggle’ about 10 minutes later, or just before the party reaches Zone 2, whichever comes first.

### The Elven Scouts (EL 2)

A group of six gold elves are returning to Valmirindi after battling the fire. If any of the PCs are openly displaying a ‘leaf of passage’ they waste no time introducing themselves to the party and questioning them.

**Gold Elves, War1/Wiz1 (6):** hp 8 (see *Appendix I—Major NPCs*).

If the PCs are not displaying any ‘leaves of passage’ then the elves try to unobtrusively follow the PCs for a while. When running this encounter, have the party make an opposed Spot check versus the elves’ Hide skill to see whether they notice the elves. If no one notices them, re-roll again the next round. If still no one notices them, the elves eventually make themselves known and stop the PCs for questioning.

If this happens read the following description to the players:

Through the smoke and trees, you see six lithe shapes moving silently through the forest. As they get nearer, their distinctive angular features become more apparent; they are elves. Three of them have their bows drawn, while the others have their weapons out. They are standing in a defensive position facing you, though they are making no openly hostile moves.

The gold elves have no wish to begin a conflict with the party, yet they fear a hostile reception, so they are being as careful as possible. If PCs are not openly displaying or don’t quickly show them any ‘leaves of passage’ the elves interrogate them and insist they leave the forest.

If the PCs are displaying any ‘leaves of passage’ or eventually show them to the elves they politely interrogate the party to see whether they have any information about how the blaze started.

If the party asks them what they know, the elves reply that it is an unseasonable fire and nothing more. If the party suggests that there is something unnatural about the fire, the gold elves shrug off the suggestion as being a quaint theory. At this point the party should have no knowledge that the fire is being caused by a flame hive queen or its offspring and this group of elves has yet to encounter any of the creatures the monster has produced.

The party may wish to obtain one or more of the *wands of ice storm*. The elves agree to part with one of them upon a successful Diplomacy check (DC 20). The party may also try to steal one, which requires a successful Pick Pocket skill check (DC 20) and a contested roll between the party member’s Pick Pocket skill versus the elf’s Spot check, but this begs the question of how the sneak-thief got so close to the elves in the first place.

## What the Elves Tell the PCs

**Diplomacy check DC 20:** The party can learn the following information from the elves if they succeed with a Diplomacy check (DC 20, -5 for any elf):

- The elves are nervous not only because of the fire, but also because their most trusted wizard Ancarohir has been missing since before the blaze began. They fear that his disappearance has something to do with the fire. He usually is the one who spearheads any battles against threatening conditions, such as forest fires. Without him they are trying their best to use the skills he taught them, but their *wands of ice storm* that they use to combat forest fires are running low and the fire is fast approaching Valmirindi.

If the party cannot get the above information out of them, the elves advise the PCs to return to their village where it is safer and stay out of the path of the fire. They make no promises that they can control the blaze, however. They are running out of options.

The information the party gleans from their encounter with the gold elves is intended to throw them off track. The elves have not seen any evidence that this fire is anything but naturally occurring and they say as much to the party. The encounter with the dryad (see ‘The Forest Hag’), if played well by the party, suggests the history of this crisis and can point them in the direction of the tower as where a possible resolution may be found.

Once they have resolved this encounter after 10 minutes (game time) have the PCs discover the following ‘Signs of a Struggle.’

## Signs of a Struggle

Eventually, Ancarohir overcame his charmed state. Realizing he and the forest were in danger he tried to escape his captor. The PCs find evidence of the ensuing struggle.

At this point read the following to the players:

There are the obvious signs of a struggle here. The ground has been torn up, some shreds of brown and bright green cloth lie on the ground and there is some fresh blood spattered on a tree.

Those who take a closer look (Search DC 10, Track DC 5) may notice a trail of torn ground and broken branches leading away from the area. After losing his struggle, in the hopes that his elven brethren would stumble upon it, Ancarohir purposely did everything he could to leave an easily discernible trail as Niederial dragged him away. He also hid one of his rings in the crook of the blood spattered tree (Spot DC 15, Search DC 10). The ring is silver (75 gp) with elven script incised into it. Those who speak elven or decipher the writing (Decipher Script DC 25) read “Given to our most exhalted magi.” Elves know immediately that the ring is elven make. Those who Appraise (DC 10) the ring are also able to discern it is of elven make.

The trail may be followed (Search DC 10, Track DC 5). No matter where the PCs come across the signs of the struggle, eventually, the trail leads to ‘The Forest Hag’ encounter.

## The Forest Hag (EL 1)

Through the foliage in a small clearing, you spy a strange, misshapen, horrid creature pacing back and forth in front of a low narrow cave opening penetrating the side of a hill. The creature resembles an old woman stooped with age.

She is clothed in a ragged, full-length dress that may have formerly been of fine make, decorated with a complex green and brown pattern. Her gray hair is wild and unkempt, hanging in long twisted strands nearly to her ankles. The skin of the creature is wrinkled, mottled green and seems to be peeling off in patches. The red-rimmed eyes glow with a sort of fierce, feral hunger.

Mumbling and cackling to herself, she occasionally peers intently and suspiciously into the surrounding woods. On these occasions, you see that her wrinkled and shrunken countenance has a horrible scar running the length of her face.

In one hand she tightly grips a rope that leads into the cave opening. You think you detect some movement within the darkness.

The hag is the dryad Niederial. The party may mistake her for a green hag or some other kind of monster. If so, play upon their assumption. Niederial has taken up residence in a small cave near her damaged oak tree. She spends little time inside the cave and guards the exterior so that Ancarohir cannot escape or be rescued. She tirelessly paces around the area in a state of constant alert and is therefore, difficult to catch by surprise. Only if the party attempts to move silently do they have a chance of sneaking up on her. Make a contested roll of the party’s Move Silently or Hide skills versus her Spot skill to see whether she detects them.

If any of the PCs get closer, read the following description to the players:

As you approach the creature, she quickly positions herself protectively in front of the cave entrance. She threateningly raises her claw like hands, displaying wickedly long and broken black nails; obviously ready to lash out at the nearest one who advances. In a hissing cracked singsong voice she screeches, “Be gone thieves. You’ll not have the wicked elf until my sisters have returned from their graves! If you’ve come from the evil tower, your bloody bones will feed the hungry roots of this forest.”

You think you see more movement, seemingly more energetic, within the darkness of the cave.

Niederial does not attack as long as the characters stay at least 30 feet away. If they approach any closer she attempts to cast *charm person* on the nearest warriors, commanding them to protect her. She continues to use all of her *charm person* spells if need be. Also that, she

possesses an *Charm of the Woodland Fey* (see *Appendix III–Magic*). which she used rather than her natural charm ability to enchant Ancarohir. If pressed to defend herself physically, she does so ferociously, immediately going into an insane fury equal to a barbarian rage.

**Niederial, Medium–size fey:** hp 7 (see *Core Rulebook III*).

She has set a simple snare trap 10' away from the entrance to the cave. Unless the trap is detected or disabled (Disable Device DC 10), any characters coming within the area have a 20% chance to activate it and become ensnared.

**Snare Trap:** CR 2; ensnares victim, hanging them 10 ft. upside down in the air; Reflex save avoids (DC 15); Search (DC 15); Spot (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 5). *Note:* Those ensnared are quickly and forcefully dragged from the area to hang upside down by one leg from a nearby tree. If the trap isn't immediately sprung, there is an additional 10% cumulative chance per round they are in the area that one of them activates the trap. The ensnared party member then takes 1d6 points of falling damage if not very carefully extricated from the trap.

If the party stays and continues to speak with her, making no threatening moves (Diplomacy DC 15), Niederial remains extremely wary and on guard, but does not attack. During this time, Ancarohir creeps to the mouth of the cave to see what is happening; at which time he becomes plainly visible.

When this happens, read the following:

You notice a haggard looking elven male clothed in brown and bright green, torn, unkempt and dirty robes peering out from the confines of the cave entrance. Forced to squat on his haunches because of the low cave entrance, he watches your party. You notice his hands are bound in front of him with a rope, the other end held by the creature guarding the entrance.

Ancarohir continues to observe the party for at least 10 rounds. If they make no threats toward Niederial, Ancarohir speaks with them. Niederial ignores him, seemingly oblivious to his speech.

**Ancarohir, male elf Wiz8:** hp 33 (currently 29) (see *Appendix I–Major NPCs*).

First, Ancarohir asks the PCs what they are doing in the forest. If they indicate they are there to investigate the fire, he tells them his story. Ancarohir cares for the dryad as a kindred forest soul and will not harm her under any circumstances. He realizes he is in a difficult position and sees a friendly party as a means to extricate himself from the situation without causing her harm. If they attack her, he calls out, desperately trying to convince them to stop immediately. He does not take kindly to the party if they ignore his pleas and continue to attack.

If they harm or kill Niederial, he attempts to run off, making his way to Valmirindi. If he makes his escape as the result of harm coming to the dryad, within two hours elven rangers begin looking for the party with the intent of driving them from the forest, or killing them if need be.

## What Ancarohir Tells the PCs

If the party succeeds in speaking with a friendly Ancarohir, read or paraphrase the following:

“I was charmed by the dryad’s amulet and forced to do battle with a peaceful yet reclusive wizard, Eldolan Darkbough at his tower. Before the battle, she told me to summon the most powerful creature within my power, which I did. I summoned a flame hive queen, a horrendous creature from the plane of fire, which is now raging through the forest wreaking fiery destruction wherever it goes.

Later, when the charm wore off and I came to my senses, I came to realize the creature that charmed me was actually a horribly deformed dryad, which I had known for many years and who had inexplicably disappeared a decade ago, along with her many grove sisters. Her name is Niederial. I beg of you not to harm her. She is very upset about the apparent death of her six sisters.

The creature I summoned is far beyond my usual capabilities. I used a scroll from my collection to bring it here, but I made a mistake during the casting, making it impossible for me to banish it. Niederial and her sisters once could summon an enormous water elemental from the lake near here. Alas, they are likely dead, but such a creature might have challenged the flame hive queen.

Perhaps if you investigate the tower, you may find out what happened to the other dryads. If they, like Niederial, are still alive somehow, they might yet be able to stop the fire. I wish to remain here to protect this poor creature. I would advise you to be wary of speaking with any other elves you might meet: they would most likely not believe your story and would threaten Niederial. Even I cannot help them. The only chance we have of averting this tragedy is the hope that an answer lies somewhere within the burned ruins of the tower.”

If the party proposes to attack and kill the flame hive queen, Ancarohir explains the incredible danger the creature represents and how small he thinks the party’s chances are of surviving such an encounter. His only real hope is that there might be something at the tower left over from the magic Darkbough amassed that might help them. He tries to direct them in that direction and away from any plan that leads to facing the monster themselves.

## Lake of the Wood (EL 9)

The size of this lake is deceptive because it connects to other lakes in the forest through a subterranean river complex. The lake is very deep (200+ feet).

If the PCs find the lake, read the following to the players:

Entering a forest glade you have stumbled upon a small placid woodland lake. Lilies and other aquatic plant life float serenely upon its surface as if nature were oblivious to the coming fire storm. Entering a forest glade you have stumbled upon a small placid woodland lake. Lilies and other aquatic plant life float serenely upon its surface as if nature were oblivious to the coming fire storm.

An elder water elemental, a longtime friend of the dryads, visits this small lake regularly and is now carefully watching the progression of the forest fire.

**Water elemental, huge elemental (water) greater:** hp 199 (see *Core Rulebook III*).

The elemental knows that if the fire gets out of control the lake will be polluted and poisoned for many years to come. If the PCs treat Niederial well in ‘The Forest Hag’ encounter the water elemental is aware of it and bequeaths a boon upon them if they immerse themselves in the lake. Those who do so can be healed once per day for 1d8+5 damage as if they had received the benefit of a *cure light wounds* spell.

The elemental communicates its willingness to help by placing some pebbles near the lake’s edge (Spot DC 15, Search DC 10) in a pattern that forms the commonly known symbol for healing (Decipher Script DC 20). If the PCs find the symbol give the players Handout 3.

## Spotting the Tower

If the PCs come anywhere within the radius of the circle (within a half-mile) indicated on the ‘Nowyn Forest Fire Map’ they can see Eldolan’s tower in the distance (Spot DC 15, Search DC 10, check for every character). Make a Spot check every 10 minutes they travel within the area indicated by the circle. If they enter Zone 6 they automatically see the tower.

If the PCs see Eldolan’s Tower read the following to the players:

Through the smoke and haze, you see in the distance a lone smoke blackened tower.

As indicated on the map, to get to the tower the PCs must cross Zones 2 and 3. Zone 2 should prove to be of little difficulty. Zone 3 however has the potential to be hazardous (see the ‘Nowyn Forest Fire Map’ and accompanying notes). If they scout the perimeter the PCs can determine the narrowest area to cross (Wilderness Lore DC 10) into Zone 6 along the North, East and West sides of Zone 6 where the tower is located. At these points, Zone 3 is approximately one-eighth of a mile across and can be crossed in 2 minutes (20 rounds) at normal speed. Adjust accordingly, if the PCs run through the area.

If the PCs make it through Zone 3 into Zone 6 use the ‘Eldolan’s Tower’ section and encounter keys to further referee the game.

# ELDOLAN'S TOWER

At the point where the party has come within about a half-mile of the tower read the following description to the players:

The ground is gray and covered in a thick layer of ash. You have entered an area where it is obvious the fire has already passed through and consumed every scrap of fuel. The landscape looks dead and desolate. The trees are all blackened. Some still stand, their flame stripped frames canted at unnatural angles, while others lay charred and smoking on the ashen ground. Several wan pillars of smoke rise into the sky above the razed foliage and burned woodland.

You are not far from the blaze now. The sky overhead is black with smoke and the acrid stench of burnt timber is overpowering.

Though the burnt trees you again spot the soot blackened tower silhouetted against a sky aglow with angry shades of saffron and crimson.

If the party stops to examine their surroundings they may notice (Search DC 20, Track DC 17) both the tracks of wildlife which fled the area and the impressions of other strange bipedal creatures that did not seem to have been fleeing. A few of the two-legged creatures have left clawed impressions in the earth while others left almost humanoid footprints. The tracks lead in many different directions; spoor left by the elemental monsters spawned by the flame hive queen. Those with the Tracking skill can follow the tracks southward across Zone 6 and through Zones 3, 4 and 5 toward the flame hive queen (Track DC 20).

The trek through this section of wilderness is meant to be a solemn journey for the party. Try to create tension as you describe their journey the rest of the way to the tower. A useful technique is to roll dice behind your GM's screen while making a few cryptic comments. Do not run any further encounters until they have reached the tower.

When the PCs have gotten within a hundred yards of the tower, read the following description to the players:

The tower, constructed of dark basalt rock, now soiled with soot and ash, sits atop a tall hill that looms over the surrounding landscape. The wild vines that once crept up the walls; though shriveled, gray and black, still cling to the stone.

There narrow windows spaced evenly up the tower, though it looks as if all the glass has been blown out of the casements. The edges of the window openings are blackened with soot.

From where you stand, it appears that the roof has collapsed. A set of charred slightly ajar double doors are at the base of the tower.

Hidden in this landscape of destruction beneath piles of charred and burnt foliage are the statues of the dryads Eldolan turned to stone long ago. A Search of the area (DC 15 each) reveals them.

Before the fire overran the area, they were buried under layers of filth and moss— now the petrified dryads are buried under just as much ash and soot. The statues themselves are still in good condition and if the party casts *stone to flesh* on any statue, the dryads return to life.

**Dryads, Medium–size fey (5):** hp 7 ea. (see *Core Rulebook III*).

The key to solving the adventure is to turn the dryads from stone to flesh. The dryads then return to their grove and the nearby lake (see ‘The Lake of the Wood’), where they call forth an elder water elemental strong enough to defeat the flame hive queen. To do this the party either has to turn the dryads back to flesh with any spells or potions they have with them, or they have to retrieve the *wand of stone to flesh* that is on the top floor of Eldolan’s tower (see ‘Eldolan’s Tower–Top Floor’).

If the party was established before the beginning of this adventure and has enough resources with them to turn the dryads back to their natural forms, allow them to do so, then proceed to the section titled ‘Concluding the Adventure.’

### Climbing the Tower

If the party decides to bypass exploring the tower from the bottom up by attempting to climb it, allow them to try. The tower stands approximately 130 feet tall. Because of the excess of soot and ash coating the sides of the tower, which has made them slippery, anyone attempting to scale the walls must make a Climb check (DC 17) every 10 feet.

The window openings to the tower are too narrow for a grapple hook or a normal size character to slip through (8 in. wide). The stone below the opening is beveled so that a grapple hook cannot find a purchase.

If a PC tries to use a grapple hook and rope to assist their climb, use the following guidelines.

**Using a Grapple Hook:** Have the character making the attempt try to beat a DC of 20 by adding their Strength modifier to a d20 roll. Have them then make a Dexterity check against a DC of 15 to see whether his grapple hook catches. He may take 10 or take 20 (2 minutes of consecutive attempts) on the initial throw, but may not take 10 to see whether it catches.

If the grapple hook does catch, because the roof structure has been severely weakened it may

### For the Rules Lawyer

From *Core Rulebook III–Dryad Symbiosis (Su)*: Each dryad is mystically bound to a single, enormous oak tree and must never stray more than 300 yards from it. Any who do become ill and die within 4d6 hours. A dryad’s oak does not radiate magic.

The above rule is very much in effect. Niederial risked much by traveling a great distance away from her oak to capture Ancarohir and exact her vengeance against Eldolan. Her tree is not dead, but in a severely damaged and weakened state. At the conclusion of the adventure the party is presented with the opportunity to restore the tree, which in turn restores Niederial’s health, both mentally and physically.

rip loose (Break DC 10) while the PC is climbing. It is possible to notice the weakened state of the wood and conclude that it may not hold a climber's weight (Wisdom save DC 15). For every 10 feet a PC climbs roll vs the roofs Break DC. A positive result means the hook has ripped loose and he plummets receiving 1d6 damage for every 10 feet fallen.

Once atop the tower a climber finds that the roof structure is severely charred and weakened and there are holes where the flames ate through the shingles. Before a PC enters, she must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or the roof collapses beneath her feet and she falls 20 feet into the room on the top floor taking 2d6 falling damage.

If a PC successfully climbs and enters the tower, proceed to the key for 'Eldolan's Tower-Top Floor.' If they do not climb the tower but instead attempt to enter through the double doors, referee the following encounter:

### A Warm Greeting (EL 3)

Eldolan did much experimentation with his undead servants before his death. One of the experiments he attempted was to fortify the flesh of his zombies so that they would last longer in a fight. While his experiments first appeared to fail, this was proven otherwise, when the flame hive queen attacked the tower, immolating the zombies. Because of Eldolan's ministrations some of the undead quickly adapted to the flames and transfigured into fire zombies. The flames that now burn within them have made the zombies somewhat brittle, lowering their overall number of hit points, but has given them the ability to inflict additional burn damage (see *Appendix II-Monsters*).

While many of Eldolan's undead minions perished in the blaze that consumed the tower, the ones that remain are still tending to the tasks he assigned them before he died; the defense of the tower and ignoble death to any who enter.

If the party approaches the doors to enter the tower, three of the zombies attack them.

If this happens read the following description to the players:

Before you reach them, the tower doors slowly open wide. Deep within the darkness some sort of shambling movement attracts catches your eye. Something large is definitely moving around just beyond your vision; perhaps several somethings. For a moment, you think you caught a glimpse of a pair of blazing eyes.

Give the party one round to decide what they shall do. If they decide to stick around to see what is coming out of the smoke, within 5 rounds the fire zombies within the tower emerge to attack.

At this point, read the following to the players:

Emerging from the gloomy charcoal blackness within the doorway, several man-like creatures shuffle toward you with a stiff awkward gait. Blackened, rotting flesh hangs loosely from their malign decaying corpses. Obscenely accentuated by the taught shriveled flesh of their gaunt visage, a vacuous ghastly rictus grin of broken yellowed teeth is their sole expression. Their eyes, seemingly aglow from within, hold the dancing flame of baleful un-life. Their arms are raised toward you and their hands are aflame as if they are torches; flames licking at their flesh, though not consuming it. Small wisps of smoke rise from their bodies.

The zombies mindlessly attack the party until either they or the party has been destroyed.

**Fire Zombies, Medium-size undead (3):** hp 8 ea. (see *Appendix II—Monsters*).

If they make it past the fire zombies the PCs may enter the ground floor of the tower through the double doors. The following keys should be used for any further encounters:

## GROUND FLOOR

### Reception Chamber (EL 2)

The air is thick with smoke in this room, immediately irritating your eyes and throat. A narrow wooden staircase, badly burned, curves upward, along the outer wall. Above you, chains attached to the walls suspend a rough stone platform in midair. There seems to have been much finery in this room formerly, including a couch, a rich carpet and tapestries, but they have all been reduced to ashes and scorched wooden frames. Upon the far wall hangs the remnant of a picture of some sort. Several large smooth stones are scattered about the floor of the room.

Upon entering the tower, 2 fire zombies stationed on top of the stone platform attack by hurling stones at the PCs. The top of the platform is about twelve and a half feet above the floor.

**Fire Zombies, Medium-size undead (2):** hp 8 ea. (see *Appendix II—Monsters*).

There are 22 stones piled on the platform. Each fire zombie hurls one stone per round at a random member of the party. If a PC moves under the platform, but remains where they can see enough of the zombies to attack, the zombies have a 20% miss chance and the PC enjoys one-half cover for a +4 bonus to his armor class. Of course, the same bonuses then apply also to the zombies.

Characters that retreat completely beneath the platform cannot attack the zombies, nor are the zombies able to attack them. Each rock weighs approximately 10 lbs. and does 1d6 points of damage on a successful hit.

Behind the painting (Spot DC 15, no Search check needed if the painting is examined) in a niche in the stone there is a +1 *longsword* hidden behind the blackened canvas. Eldolan kept the weapon stashed in the niche as a failsafe for unruly guests.

Because they have been severely damaged by the fire, the wooden stairs are extremely hazardous throughout the tower (Break DC 10) for every level the party ascends. There is a chance that the stairs will collapse beneath the PCs weight, taking a 5 foot section with the falling character. Two checks are required when climbing from the ground floor to the second floor. When a section of stairs crumbles beneath them, the affected characters either have to jump up the stairs ahead of the collapse, or climb the wall to the next section of stairs they wish to climb. If they jump (Jump DC 17), they have to catch hold of the next area above them that is still intact, then pull themselves up (Strength check). If they climb the remaining section of stairs, the going is rough due to the ash and soot that clings to the walls (DC 17 to climb). On this check, the party may take 10 or 20, if necessary to move the adventure forward. For a grapple hook and rope thrown to the first floor use the earlier mentioned guidelines for using a grapple hook.

The chains holding the platform though weakened by the fire are still fairly intact (Break DC 15, hardness 8, hit points 4).

## 1st FLOOR

### Supply Storage (EL 1/4)

The center section of floor in this chamber has been burnt completely through. Ragged, charred edges of floor planks jut into a dark opening that opens to the floor below.

There are a few scorched wooden crates and singed burlap sacks stacked along the walls where the floor hasn't been burnt through. In one of the broken crates against the far wall, something is skittering about, making squeaking, chittering sounds.

Obviously, other similar items stored here must have fallen to the chamber below when the floor collapsed.

Stairs continue to spiral along the outer wall to the next floor.

There are 3 crates and 3 burlap sacks left in this storage room. One crate contains dried apples and the other a live ferret that somehow survived the fire. The ferret was a trained pet of Eldolan and if bribed with a bit of food it can follow simple commands issued by those possessing Animal Empathy, Handle Animal or similar skills. The dried apples work well for befriendng the animal.

**Ferret, tiny animal:** hp 2 (see *Core Rulebook III*). Use the statistics of a weasel for a ferret.

*Special Attack:* If sufficiently frightened or aggravated a ferret can release a spray of foul smelling fluid from their scent glands. This spray is capable of hit anyone within a 5 foot radius of the animal (Reflex save DC 15). The scent is harmless but reduces by -4 the charisma of anyone struck by it. This undesirable effect lasts for 1d4 weeks and cannot be washed off.

The ferret has a silver collar engraved with the name ‘Jilby’. If a party member befriends the creature and learns to command it, the ferret can prove extremely useful in retrieving the permanently reduced *staff of stone to flesh* on the top floor. See the key to the top floor for details.

All three burlap sacks contain dried beans. If the characters wish to investigate the items or perhaps rescue the ferret, they are likely to have to creep along the outer section of flooring while clinging to the perimeter of the tower wall. Doing so incurs a risk of collapse every 5 ft. moved, with results similar to a collapsed stair section, detailed above. The only difference is that those who fall are subject to the choking effects of the resulting dust cloud when they hit the bottom.

## 2nd FLOOR

### Zombie Storage (EL 3)

As you continue your ascent of the stairway, you enter another circular chamber. This chamber is filled with heavy smoke, which severely clouds your vision. Your eyes become much irritated, stinging from exposure to the pungent choking atmosphere.

In the smoke, you think you see a couple of glowing embers floating around.

Eldolan stored his retinue of zombies here. Because of the heavy accumulation of smoke, vision here (including dark vision) is limited to a distance of no further than 5 feet in any direction.

A character must make a Fortitude save (DC 10, +1 per previous check) each round she inhales the smoke in this area or she spends that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Obedying Eldolan’s last orders, 2 fire zombies hidden in the smoky vapors guard the area and attack if the area is entered, or if the PCs try to continue up the stairway. There are also 20 undead bats that have undergone a similar transformation as that of the zombies.

**Fire Zombies, Medium-size undead (2):** hp 8 ea. (see *Appendix II–Monsters*).

**Fire Bats, diminutive undead (12):** hp 3 ea. (see *Appendix II–Monsters*).

One zombie is on the stairway that leads to the next floor, making combat with the creatures unavoidable if the party wishes to continue upward. The zombies wander in and out of the smoky haze as they attack, gaining a +2 on initiative every other combat round.

Hidden within the cloud of smoke, underneath the stairway (Spot DC 20) is a small wooden chest containing 50 gp.

## 3rd FLOOR

### Bedroom

Because this is the area where Eldolan lived, he kept his undead servants out of it.

Within this room is the blackened, crusty remains of a bed pushed up against a wall that is also heavily charred and fire damaged. Shelving that once held a large collection of books and scrolls is beneath what remains of a collapsed stairway that led upward to next floor. The contents of the library have been reduced to ash and cinders. A badly scorched yet intact wood chest sits in the middle of the room.

The room is devoid of anything of value except for the contents of the chest (hardness 5, hp 10, Break DC 20. The lock was damaged in the fire and can be picked relatively easily (Open Lock DC 9). The contents of the chest are 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds*, an *identify scroll*, 320 gp and 98 sp.

Because the stairway burned and collapsed, to get to the next floor of the tower the PCs have to climb or find another way proceed upward.

### 1.Dining Room

This room is full of charred pieces of wood that once was a table and chairs set.

If the PCs find it, buried in the pile of burnt furniture (Spot DC 15, Search DC 10), is a lump of melted silver (25 sp) that was once a collection of eating utensils.

### 2.Kitchen

Judging by the stench of burned and rotting food and the remains of what were once counters and cabinets attached to the walls; you get the impression that this was once a kitchen.

Besides, badly burned and rotting food, there is, nothing of value to be found within this room.

## 4th FLOOR

### The Laboratory (EL Variable)

You seem to have found a section of the tower that was very nearly missed by the fire. Though some smoke damage is apparent nothing seems to have been burnt. Judging by the layout of the furnishings, it is easy to conclude that this was once the wizard's laboratory.

A the center of the room is worktables, upon which are set an assortment of items such as glass beakers, jugs full of colored liquids, heaps of different types of powders and other odd-looking equipment.

Also on the table, a large glass vessel contains a hideous-looking humanoid head suspended in a clear purple fluid. Against the wall stands a human skeleton on a rack. Next to that is a stuffed sheep which looks as though it has been sewn together. Also against the wall a set of shelves packed with bulging small sacks runs from the floor to the ceiling.

Next to the shelves is an enormous glass tube which holds the body of a monster, also suspended in purple liquid, seemingly born of the twisted imagination of a demented individual. The abomination is a bizarre admixture of parts from several different creatures. It has the lower torso and legs of a goat, which has been forced into an upright position, the upper torso of a man, though much larger, long, chitinous arms which end in hooks and no head. The sections of the monster seem to have been sewn together, though the flesh seems to have pulled together and healed.

Under the stairway, which leads to the next floor is a large ornate writing desk and chair

Dissatisfied with the witless service of his zombies, Eldolan was, which leads to th creating a new monster to serve him. With his research, he developed a special "fluid of reanimation" (the purple liquid) which allows dead tissue from disparate sources to knit together and animate. Unfortunately, the information needed to make the fluid was lost when the library on the 3rd floor was destroyed and the wizard took the recipe with him when he died in the fire. Though it is no longer efficacious, the fluid is worth up to 10 gp a gallon to those with Alchemy skills.

The head in the jar on the table is still alive and is that of a bugbear. It poses no danger to anyone provided that they do not open the jar and trifle with it. Should they decide to dally with the head it quickly becomes apparent it is still alive and is unhappy. If it is removed from the purple liquid for more than ten minutes the head dies. If a PC puts their hand in the container with the head, it attempts to bite their hand. While Eldolan could get the body parts of his construct to come together in an unlife state, he had not finished connecting the head to the pieced together body in the larger container.

**Bugbear Head, tiny construct:** hp 3. The head is actually part of a fully formed construct. As such it has no ability to attack other than to bite for 1d3 damage.

Should someone attempt to attach the head of the bugbear to the construct in the tank, have her make an Intelligence check (DC of 25), or a Knowledge (anatomy) check (DC of 15), to see whether she can connect the two parts correctly. If the check is successful, the monstrous construct immediately animates, asking after the whereabouts of its master. Answering that its master is dead incites the construct to attack. With any other answer, the construct goes in search of the master leaving the tower to wander aimlessly through the woods.

The head was aware of Eldolan, so it does not believe any PC claiming to be its master unless she can convince it otherwise (Bluff DC 20). If the PCs let the construct go without killing it, there is a 50% chance that they encounter it again by the end of the adventure. By this time it has figured out the fate of its master and attempts to punish the party for their deception.

Under no circumstances, does it confront the PCs at the top level of the tower unless the party leads it up there with them.

**Monster Golem, Medium-size construct:** hp 25. A monster golem is essentially the same as a flesh golem (see *Core Rulebook III*) with the exception of its appearance. The constructs are pieced together using the body parts of a variety of different monsters. Some monster golems may take on some of the special qualities or attacks of the monsters used to construct them. The golem found in Eldolan's tower is not at full strength, its hit points and attack damage halved. It grows to full strength within 3 days.

If the party can get the body of the magical construct out of the tower intact, it is worth up to 2,000 gp, but it has to be sold to a client with a need for things of a peculiar nature. The closest place to do this is the city of Gateway.

The “stuffed sheep” is a harmless animal construct, Eldolan's first successful experiment with his new “fluid of reanimation.”

**Animal golem, small construct:** hp 25.

An animal golem is essentially the same as a half strength flesh golem (see *Core Rulebook III*) with the exception of its appearance. The constructs are pieced together using the body parts of animals.

*Note:* The animal golem does not attack anyone. If anyone in the party is wearing robes it starts following him mistaking him for Eldolan and perceiving him to be its master. Unless destroyed, from now on if possible the golem follows the PC wherever he goes. If more than one party member is wearing robes choose one randomly.

The skeleton in the corner is that of a human and is not animated. The materials on the table include powdered mandrake root, powdered silver, powdered copper, powdered gold and powdered bone. The glass containers on the tables contain the following potions: cure light wounds x3, spider climb, ghoul touch x2, Delay Poison, levitate, water breathing and gaseous form. If the party searches the shelving, they find the spell components necessary for most spells levels 1-3 (including two pearls suitable for *identify* spells). They also find an unlocked box

with 4 potions of restoration inside that survived the heat. The gold dust is worth a total of 10 gp if melted down, or 15 gp as a spell component to other wizards. The silver dust is worth 20 sp melted down, or 30 sp if sold as a spell component. The copper dust is worth 10 cp, or 15 cp if sold as a spell component.

## 5th FLOOR

### The Music Room (EL 2)

Against the far wall of this circular room squats a strange contraption. Heavily blackened by soot, it seems to be some sort of machine made of dark, stained wood, ivory and bronze. Several fluted bronze pipes and tubes of various sizes rise from it nearly to the ceiling, their point of origin lost somewhere deep within the guts of the device.

A thick layer of dust and spider webs covers the apparatus, testifying to a long period of disuse. An old, very threadbare, circular rug (once colorful but now faded with age) covers the floor. Along the walls hang equally ancient and threadbare banners depicting various woodland creatures. Two man-like creatures of smoke and flame shamble towards you.

Two undead servants, now fire zombies, had been left here so Eldolan could fetch them to the top floor should he need them. They were instructed to attack anyone within the tower other than himself. They attack the PCs upon their entry into the area.

**Fire Zombies, Medium-size undead (2):** hp 8 ea. (see *Appendix II—Monsters*).

The device is an ancient pipe organ left in the tower centuries ago by the previous occupants. Eldolan had no interest in the instrument and had left it undisturbed. The organ is enchanted to begin playing whenever anyone approaches within 5 feet. Should this happen the organ begins braying and wailing, spewing forth a cacophonous, ear-splitting clamor.

The organ is badly out of tune and continues playing as long as anyone is near it. Though it may seem to be of little worth, if the PCs can remove the contraption from the tower, it can be sold to a collector for up to 1,000 gp. If cleaned, repaired and tuned the organ, it is worth 7,000 gp, though the process costs approximately 2,000 gp in labor and replacement parts. The object weighs approximately 1500 lbs. and takes a combined strength of at least 40 to move. It can be dismantled somewhat with specialized organ crafters tools and a successful Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 15) or a Craft (musical instrument) check (DC 15). The heavy brass tubes, etc. can be removed from the tower with great effort, good planning and proper equipment (a block and tackle, rope, etc.).

## TOP FLOOR

### The Observatory (EL 6)

A massive room at the top of the tower; the once vaulted ceiling here has collapsed inward, revealing much of the sky overhead. In the center of the room stands a massive bronze telescope pointed towards a gaping hole in the ceiling. Much additional bronze machinery is attached to the bottom of the telescope. Several levers, wheels and pulleys are attached in disparate locations. Many piles of burned lumber lay in tumbled, ashen heaps on the floor, several still smoking.

To one side of the room, underneath a pile of blackened roofing, lays the body of a dead... human (you think) dressed in green robes. Its face and body are burnt beyond recognition.

Among other esoteric subjects, Eldolan was a believer in the mystical powers inherent in heavenly bodies. He was an avid astronomer and he had the roof of the tower reconstructed to retract to make viewing the sky possible. In its current state, many pulleys still work, but the roof sections refuse to move from their current positions, other than to crumple and collapse if forced.

The wizard concealed a flesh golem behind a secret door on this level with the express instructions to attack anyone besides he or his servants that enter. The flesh golem was badly damaged in the fire, but is still able to fight, acting on the last set of instructions it was given.

**Flesh Golem, large construct:** CR 3; Large Construct; HD 9d10 (35); Init -1; Spd 30 ft (can't run); AC 15; Atk 2 slams +8 melee; GMG slam 1d8+3; Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft; SA Berserk; SQ Construct, magic immunity, damage reduction 15/+1; AL N; Fort +3; Ref +2; Wil +3; Str 16; Dex 9; Con -; Int -; Wis 11; Cha 1; Height 8'; Weight 300lbs.

On Eldolan's body is found his arsenal of wands, most of them nearly drained of magic in his battle with the flame hive queen; a *wand of magic missile* (5th level, 2 charges), a *wand of web* (1 charge) and a *wand of cure moderate wounds* (2 charges). Underneath a pile of fallen roofing (Spot DC 15, Search DC 10), flung from him when Eldolan fell, is a permanently reduced *staff of stone to flesh* (10 charges) the PCs can use to turn the dryads back to their natural form. It is not easy to get to however, as there are several hundred pounds of charred wood and debris laying on top of it. The seared shingles and blackened timbers require a nearly impossible strength check to lift (DC 35). The party may decide to chop away at the wood until they have reached it (charred wood, hardness 5; hp 60). They may also command the ferret they found on the first floor to retrieve the wand. The ferret is small enough to wriggle through the debris to retrieve the wand without a problem. The party may also make use of various spells such as *unseen servant* to retrieve the wand, though *mage hand* cannot, since the item is magical.

The telescope has been damaged beyond repair and is of no worth other than for its salvage value (50 gp).

# CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

As soon as the party has found the dryads and turned them to flesh they return to their trees. Niederial, ecstatic to see her sisters alive, immediately releases Ancarohir. The adventure can end here with the assumption that Ancarohir and the elves manage to bring the fire under control and defeat the flame hive queen.

You may wish to continue with a more dramatic ending where the PCs attempt to destroy the flame hive queen and her minions themselves (see *Destroying the Flame Hive Queen*). This ending gives the players more opportunity to feel that their characters have had a big effect on the fortunes of the people of Foresthall and the elves of the Nowyn Forest. This ending is probably more satisfying for the players.

Optionally, depending on whether you judge the capabilities of the PCs and the player's gaming style are up to the challenge of taking on the flame hive queen, you may want to give each PC two elven scout body guards.

## Destroying the Flame Hive Queen (EL 9)

The dryads, able to combine their charm abilities into something completely different, summon and command the water elemental found at the 'Lake of the Wood.' A total of five of the dryads must cooperate to use this ability. The water elemental is then dispatched to battle the flame hive queen.

The elemental clads the PCs in a special *armor of water*; a thin film of water that bestows upon them protections equal to a *resist elements* spell (absorbs 12 hit points fire damage each round) with the added benefit that it filters out any smoke damage. The *armor of water* lasts until the end of the adventure. Protection provided by the *armor of water* extends to anything the PCs wear, but not to items being held such as weapons and wands.

Additionally, the elves give each of the PCs a *wand of ice storm* (2 charges). Let the players run the water elemental themselves, making the choice to be as foolish or wise as they want with the powerful new ally (see *Core Rulebook III*).

The water elemental and the PCs, along with the elves who have gathered enforce can then march to Zone 5 using their remaining *wands of ice storm* to cut their way through the blaze. When they get to their destination, the PCs find the flame hive queen upon a small hill in the center of a great bonfire created by her spawn.

The flame hive queen is flanked by one representative of each of her flamespawn.

**Flame Hive Queen, huge outsider (fire):** hp 95 (see *Appendix II—Monsters*).

*Details and Tactics:* The flame hive queen gives forth an ear splitting screech that calls to its aid any other flamespawn in the area. These servants can be held at bay by Ancarohir and the other elves while the PCs concentrate on the monster and her nearby minions. If anyone gets close enough she tries to grapple, crush and burn them.

**Azer, Medium-size outsider (fire):** hp 11 (see *Core Rulebook III*).

### Saving the Dryad's Trees

The party can gain some extra experience by saving the dryad's trees. Four of the trees were badly damaged when Eldolan split them apart. While this did not kill them, it weakened them badly. To this day, the oaks are barely hanging on to life. Niederial and three of the other dryads continue to decline rapidly as the result of the condition of their trees if they are not restored. The party may save these trees by using the *restoration* potions on them, if they are found in Eldolan's lab.

Because of the symbiotic relationship between the dryads and the trees, when the potion is consumed by the dryad, the tree recovers somewhat and conversely. The dryads become youthful and beautiful again within 1d6 hours after drinking the potion. The PCs may also restore the trees by recruiting priests from the somewhat distant city of Gateways that are capable of casting *restore* spells. The PCs earn 300 experience points for every oak they restore to health.

*Details and Tactics:* The azer throws a spear at the nearest spell caster and follows up to attack with his hammer.

**Magmin, small elemental (fire):** hp 9 (see *Core Rulebook III*).

*Details and Tactics:* The magmin tries to get close and use its burning touch. If the touch does not work, it runs away attempting to lead anyone who gives chase into pockets of burning timber. Metal weapons that strike the magmin must save vs Fortitude (DC 11) or melt.

**Fire Mephit, small outsider (fire):** hp 13 (see *Core Rulebook III*).

*Details and Tactics:* The fire mephit remains at a distance until the PCs come within range of its magic missile attack which it targets upon any spell casters it perceives. When the PCs come within range it also uses its *cone of fire* breath weapon. Anyone it engages in direct melee if possible it uses *heat metal* upon their armor or secondarily upon their weapon.

**Salamander (Flamebrother), small outsider (fire):** hp 16 (see *Core Rulebook III*).

*Details and Tactics:* If need be the salamander sets its spear against any oncoming charge. If there is no charge, it then rushes to attack the largest strongest looking PC using its multiattack, tail slap and constriction abilities to best effect.

## RETURNING TO FORESTHALL

If the fire is extinguished and the village of Foresthall is no longer in danger the PCs are acclaimed as heroes and Darius Brandenburg is ecstatic upon their return. If the party spoke with him earlier and they talked him into offering them a reward, he gladly pays it. He also offers to pen for them writs of heroism that, when presented to the Sovereign of Gateway, nominate them for knighthood within the city-state. He does however forget to mention a required period of "squire's service" that must be served to gain official knighthood.

As a token of their appreciation, the village offers to let the PCs stay at the inn free from charge and the taverns provide them with a night's carousing completely gratis.

## MORE ADVENTURE

This adventure is intended as a possible lead-in to a series of adventures set in THE LANDS OF AREKOZ collectively entitled *White Robes, Black Hearts*, in which the PCs join the struggle to free the conquered people of a war-torn kingdom.

If the players decide to have their PCs follow up on Sir Brandenburg's suggestion of seeking knighthood, undoubtedly they must survive several trials to prove their worth. If they make it to knighthood, the PCs are likely to be sent on several quests. An idea in fitting with the milieu may be to send the PCs on a mission to free the people of Calrendia from their oppressors.

## I: MAJOR NPCs

### BELAR ANVILSPLITTER'S SMITHY

**Belar Anvilsplitter, male human Exp7:** CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 6 ft. 2 in; HD 7d6; hp 29; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex), Melee +1 *warhammer* +10 (1d8+5/crit x3) or longsword (1d8+4 /crit 19–20); AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +6, Craft (Armorsmithing) +9, Craft (Blacksmithing) +12, Craft (Locksmithing) +9, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +9, Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +3, Innuendo +5, Intuit Direction +4, Knowledge (Local) +12, Open Lock +10, Search +12; Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Martial Weapon Proficiency (Longsword), Martial Weapon Proficiency (Warhammer), Simple Weapon Proficiency, Skill Focus (Gather Information)

*Equipment:* +1 *warhammer*, longsword, breastplate, small steel shield, artisan's outfit, gold ring (250 gp), silver ring (50 gp).

*Details and Tactics:* Despite his name, Belar is not a dwarf. He is a large, tall, hardworking man in his mid-thirties with curly black hair and a beard. If asked about the fire, consult the rumor tables to determine his response to any inquiries the PCs might have. He is capable of producing and repairing all iron and steel non-magical weapons and armor.

### LAUCIMOS' CRACKED MUG

**Laucimos, male elf Brd3:** CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid (elf), 5 ft. 1 in; HD 3d6; hp 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Melee +1 *longsword* +2 (1d8/crit 19–20); Ranged longbow +6 (1d8-1/crit x3); SQ Elven traits; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 9, Cha 14

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +9, Bluff +8, Gather Information +8, Knowledge (Local) +9, Listen +1, Profession (Tavernkeeper) +5, Search +5, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +2; Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Martial Weapon Proficiency (Longsword), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

*SQ-Elven Traits (Ex):* Immunity to magic *sleep* spells and effects, +2 racial bonus to Will saves against enchantment spells or effects, low-light vision, +2 racial bonus to Search, Spot and Listen checks, automatic search check if within 5 feet of secret/concealed door. Weapon proficiencies. *Class Features:* Bardic music, bardic knowledge.

*Bard Spells Known* (cast 3/2): 0th—*daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1st—*alarm*, *erase*, *silent image*.

*Equipment:* +1 *longsword*, composite masterwork longbow, 25 arrows, +1 *leather armor*, elven lute.

*Details and Tactics:* A former adventurer, Laucimos has decided to settle down in Foresthall. Laucimos is known to play a song or two on a nightly basis and he offers free meals or drinks to any other bards who wish to perform in his tavern. Laucimos left the gold elves many years ago to see the world. After his experiences, he no longer craves the isolationist lifestyle of his homeland. Instead, he recognizes that there are some monumental changes taking place in the world that could easily affect his people. He keeps an ear out for trouble, occasionally closing down the tavern to visit his kin in the forest to apprise them of current events.

## THE GOLDEN HOOF, HORSE BREEDER

**Dotta, female human Exp1:** CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 2 in; HD 1d6+2; hp 8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Melee shortsword +1 (1d6+1/crit 19–20) or dagger +1 (1d4+1/crit 19–20); Ranged shortbow +2 (1d6/crit x3); AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Animal Empathy +3, Appraise +4, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +4, Handle Animal +7, Perform +4, Profession (Horse Breeder) +5, Ride +4, Spot +3; Armor Proficiency (Light), Simple Weapon Proficiency, Skill Focus (Handle Animal), Skill Focus (Profession (Horse Breeder))

*Equipment:* Shortsword, dagger, shortbow, 20 arrows, leather armor.

*Details and Tactics:* Dotta has short cut blond hair and striking green eyes. She loves to ride and most of the time would rather be out exploring the countryside on her mount than dealing with business. Dotta gives buyers tips on the riding and care of their horses while Valgard does the majority of the selling.

**Valgard, male human Exp1:** CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 9 in; HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Melee shortsword +2 (1d6+2/crit 19–20) or dagger +2 (1d4+2/crit 19–20); Ranged shortbow +3 (1d6/crit x3); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +2, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +2, Handle Animal +2, Profession (Horse Breeder) +3, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Swim +4; Armor Proficiency (Light), Martial Weapon Proficiency (Heavy Lance), Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency

*Equipment:* Shortsword, dagger, shortbow, 20 arrows, leather armor, small wood shield.

*Details and Tactics:* Valgard is in his early thirties with medium length brown hair and a mustache. He usually greets most of the customers and does the majority of the selling, while his wife gives customers tips on how to properly care for their horses.

## SIR BRANDENBURG'S ESTATE

**Darius Brandenburg, male human Ftr4:** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 6 ft. 0 in; HD 4d10+16; hp 51; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Melee +1 *greatsword* +9/+4 (2d6+7/crit 19–20) or +1 *punching dagger* +9/+4 (1d4+5/crit x3); AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will –1; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 7, Cha 15

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7, Diplomacy +5, Jump +7, Knowledge (Local) +4, Listen +0, Ride +9, Sense Motive +1, Spot +0, Swim +10; Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Power Attack, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency

*Equipment:* +1 *greatsword*, +1 *punching dagger*, +1 *scale mail*, +1 *small steel shield*, great helm, platinum signet ring with ruby (500gp), gold ring with topaz (150gp), 2,300 gp.

*Details and Tactics:* Darius is a veteran of several minor conflicts that have served to protect the sovereignty of Gateway in the past. Now in his middle years, he puts on a festive appearance whenever he moves about in the community to keep the morale of the people high. He takes the time to listen to people's concerns personally and is generally well respected.

The knight is in his early fifties with graying black hair cut short. He is loud, boisterous and festive, given the opportunity. The fire concerns him a great deal, but he has no reason to believe that it is the result of anything but natural causes. He has been spearheading an effort by the people of the village to dig water trenches and store as much water from the river as possible so that they may hold off the flames should they spread to Foresthall.

**Larissa Brandenburg, female human Ari3:** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 2 in; HD 3d8; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Melee +1 *rapier* +5 (1d6+3/crit 18–20) or +1 *dagger* +5 (1d4+3/crit 19–20); Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +4 (1d8/crit 19–20); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +10, Innuendo +6, Knowledge (Local) +4, Knowledge (Nobility) +4, Listen +6, Sense Motive +8, Spot +6; Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Martial Weapon Proficiency, Power Attack, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Sense Motive).

*Equipment:* +1 *rapier*, +1 *dagger*, +1 *light crossbow*, 20 crossbow bolts, +1 *scale mail*, gold and silver tiara with pearls (1,250gp), gold necklace with amethyst (1,250gp), 500gp.

*Details and Tactics:* Larissa is a tall woman in her late forties with long brown hair shot with silver. She was raised to the noble court in Gateway, but loves the small village she and her husband now live in, though she does spend much time elsewhere. The couple has one son, Owen, now seventeen, who is currently the squire to a landed knight in Gateway.

**Guards, male human War2** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 2d8+5 (includes Toughness); hp 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +4 armor, +1 shield); Melee morningstar +5 (1d8+3/crit 19–20) or dagger +5 (1d4+3/crit 19–20); Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8/crit x3); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will –1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Intimidate +4, Jump +3\*, Listen +1, Ride +7, Spot +1; Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Martial Weapon Proficiency, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Toughness.

*Equipment:* Morningstar, dagger, light crossbow, 10 bolts, scale mail, small steel shield, 5 sp.

*Details and Tactics:* Most of the guards are no nonsense professional men who brook no shenanigans from adventurers. They usually deal with unlawful conduct swiftly and efficiently.

**Servants, human Com1:** CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 1d4; hp 2; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Melee +0; Ranged +0; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +1, Hide +1, Listen +5, Move silently +4, Spot +5; Alertness, Skill Focus (Move Silently).

*Equipment:* 4 gp.

*Details and Tactics:* Generally Sir Brandenburg's servants are polite but reserved. They know their place in the social order and do not go out of their way to become friendly with strangers; quietly, unobtrusively going about their duties.

## THE SCHOOL OF MAGIC

**Genevieve, female human Wiz3:** CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 5 in; HD 3d4+3; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Melee +0; Ranged +2; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; AL CG; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 7, Cha 17.

*Skills and feats:* Alchemy +9, Balance +3, Craft +9, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Knowledge (Religion) +5, Pick Pocket +2, Spellcraft +9, Use Rope +3; Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Run, Scribe Scroll.

*Wizard Spells Known* (cast 4/3/2): 0th—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*. 1st—*charm person, feather fall, grease, identify, sleep, spider climb, summon monster I, Tenser's floating disk*. 2nd—*mirror image, web*.

*Equipment:* *Brooch of shielding* [85 hp], *scroll of charm person, scroll of sleep, scroll of spider climb, scroll of summon monster I, potion of cure light wounds x2, potion of invisibility, silver bracelet* (25gp), 25 gp.

*Details and Tactics:* Genevieve is a striking woman in her early twenties with bright curly red hair that she wears long. She is the unofficial self-appointed spokesperson of the small wizards' enclave. She usually dresses in gray robes with dark blue magical sigils running along the borders. Though passionate and unpredictable at times Anskar and Olvir have come to respect her magical prowess. Anskar and Olvir tend to spoil her and overlook her occasional impetuosity because they are a bit smitten with her and believe she has the potential to become a great wizard one day. Anskar, male human Wiz2: CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 8 in; HD 2d4+2; hp 7; Init +4; Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Melee +3, Ranged +1; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3; AL LN; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and feats:* Alchemy +8, Knowledge (Arcana) +8, Knowledge (Nature) +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (Administration) +5, Spot +2, Spellcraft +7; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll.

*Wizard Spells Known* (cast 4/3): 0th—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*. 1st—*change self, magic missile, Nystul's undetectable aura, protection from evil, silent image, sleep*.

*Equipment*: scroll of magic missile x2, scroll of sleep x2, potion of cure light wounds x2, potion of fly, potion of fire breath, iron ring (2gp), 20 gp

*Details and Tactics*: Anskar is in his early thirties, with a shaven head, dark skin, brown eyes and a strong physique for an academic. A disciplined man, every morning he spends a half hour exercising believing a sound body means a sound mind. He usually dresses in cream colored robes with gold trim. Though not as powerful in magic as Genevieve, Anskar is the oldest of the three and considered to be the wisest; he acts as the superintendent of the school. He often becomes exasperated by Genevieve's unpredictable behavior but is usually appeased by her natural charm.

**Olvir, male human Wiz2**: CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 3 in; HD 2d4+2; hp 8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Melee +1; Ranged +3; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; AL LE; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 11.

*Skills and feats*: Heal +1, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +6, Move Silently +3, Search +3, Spellcraft +7, Use Rope +4; Heighten Spell, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.

*Wizard Spells Known* (cast 4/3): 0th—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*. 1st—*burning hands, chill touch, identify, magic missile, silent image, spider climb*.

*Equipment*: scroll of burning hands x2, scroll of magic missile x2, potion of cure light wounds x2, potion gaseous form, tooled leather belt (5gp), 50 gp

*Details and Tactics*: Olvir is in his mid-twenties and is a graduate of the school. He has long dark brown hair, a slight build and pale skin. Olvir is infatuated with Genevieve but carefully hides his feelings. He is secretly planning to one day take over the school and make Genevieve his consort.

## THE SWAYING MERCHANT TAVERN

**Agus Wrightsmith, male human Com2**: CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 10 in; HD 2d4+3 (includes Toughness); hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Melee +2 dagger (1d4 +1/crit 19–20); Ranged +1; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +3; AL LN; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16.

*Skills and feats*: Handle Animal +7, Hide +2, Listen +8, Ride +5, Spot +5, Swim +6; Great Fortitude, Toughness.

*Equipment*: Dagger, iron ring (2gp), 4 gp.

*Details and Tactics*: Agus is well known and well liked in the community. He is famous for his special blends of pipe weed. Though white haired and stooped with age his mind is still quick and his wit sharp.

**Ardruar Desmid, male human Wiz1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 9 in; HD 1d4+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Melee -2; Ranged +0; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL NG; Str 7, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and feats:* Balance +2, Concentration +3, Handle Animal +1, Hide +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +4, Listen +1, Open Lock +1, Spellcraft +4; Enlarge Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell.

*Wizard Spells Known* (cast 3/2): 0th—*dancing lights, daze, detect magic, disrupt undead, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*burning hands, sleep*.

*Equipment:* *Scroll of sleep, scroll of enlarge x2, scroll of burning hands x2, potion of cure light wounds x4, potion bull's strength, potion of speak with animals, 57 gp.*

*Details and Tactics:* Ardruar is sixteen years old and nearly ready to graduate from the school of wizardry. To be honest, he stayed on a bit long since he is not entirely sure what to do with himself. He has light brown hair, a pale complexion and blue eyes. Normally upbeat and optimistic he has been morose and angst ridden of late due to his suspicion of being somehow responsible for the forest fire.

## THE TEMPLE OF MARANSOL

**Halbur Eniax, male human Clr5:** CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 6 in; HD 5d8-5; hp 24; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 10 (-1 Dex, +1 deflection); Melee masterwork light mace +4 (1d6/crit x2); Ranged +3; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +6; AL NG; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 14.

*Skills and feats:* Concentration +3, Heal +6, Hide +1, Knowledge (Local) +2, Knowledge (Religion) +5, Scry +3; Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Brew Potion, Extra Turning, Scribe Scroll, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (cast 5/4/3/1; domains Good and Healing): 0th—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, resistance*. 1st—*bless, detect evil, endure fire (x2), (domain—cure light wounds)*. 2nd—*augury, calm emotions, speak with animals, (domain—aid)*. 3rd—*protection from fire, (domain—magic circle against evil)*.

*Equipment:* masterwork light mace, masterwork chainmail, small steel shield, *potion of cure light wounds x3, potion of cure moderate wounds x2, potion of delay poison, ring of protection +1, scroll of bless, scroll of detect evil, 112 gp.*  
*Details and Tactics:* Halbur is seen as the village patriarch and is often sought out to solve minor disputes between neighbors that do not rise to the level of an official court. Upon meeting him most get the impression he is a bit aloof but in truth it is merely a facade he has developed to protect his appearance of impartiality. Halbur keeps his grey hair shorn close along the sides and back as is the custom for priests of Maransol. He is slight of build though he has a bit of a paunch.

## THE WHITE WOOD INN

**Bandor Nibbletrout, male human Exp3:** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (human), 5 ft. 5 in; HD 3d6; hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Melee quarterstaff +2 (1d6/crit x2) or; Ranged +3; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +6, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +5, Forgery +8, Gather Information +8, Innuendo +8, Knowledge (Local) +8, Listen +5, Profession (Innkeeper) +8, Sense Motive +8; Armor Proficiency (Light), Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

*Equipment:* Quarterstaff, leather armor, 25gp.

*Details and Tactics:* Bandor is quiet but a shrewd businessman. He is elderly with long brown peppered gray beard and hair. No one in Foresthall knows of his somewhat unsavory past—long ago he worked forging documents for the Scarlet Sashes thieves' guild in Gateway.

## THE ELVEN SCOUTS

**Gold Elves, War1/Wiz1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (elf); HD 1d8+1d4+1 (includes Toughness); hp 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +2 armor, +1 shield); Melee longsword +1 (1d8/crit 19–20); Ranged masterwork longbow +4 (1d8/crit x3); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; AL N; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and feats:* Hide +2, Knowledge (Nature) +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +1, Spot +2, Use Rope +2; Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Martial Weapon Proficiency, Scribe Scroll, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Toughness.

*SQ—Elven Traits (Ex):* Immunity to magic *sleep* spells and effects, +2 racial bonus to Will saves against enchantment spells or effects, low-light vision, +2 racial bonus to Search, Spot and Listen checks, automatic search check if within 5 feet of secret/concealed door. Weapon proficiencies.

*Wizard Spells Prepared:* 0th—*arcane mark, light, resistance*; 1st—*endure fire, true strike*

*Equipment:* Longsword, masterwork longbow, 20 arrows, leather armor, small wood shield, gold ring (20gp), *wand of ice storm* (2 charges).

*Details and Tactics:* These elven scouts are busy fighting the forest fire. Though normally they would take more interest and umbrage at strangers wandering their woodlands they have little time to parley or question anyone.

## THE FOREST HAG

**Ancarohir, male elf Wiz8:** CR 8; Medium-size Humanoid (elf), 4 ft. 11 in; HD 8d4+8; hp 33; Init +6; Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 deflection); Melee +1 *longsword* +5 (1d8/crit 19–20); Ranged +6; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AL N; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 9, Cha 13.

*Skills and feats:* Bluff +3, Concentration +7, Craft (Carpentry) +12, Disable Device +4, Handle animal +2, Hide +3, Knowledge (History) +9, Knowledge (Local) +5, Knowledge (Nature) +5, Listen +1, Move Silently +5, Perform +3, Search +7, Spellcraft +11, Spot +1; Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Weapon Focus (Longsword).

*SQ—Elven Traits (Ex):* Immunity to magic *sleep* spells and effects, +2 racial bonus to Will saves against enchantment spells or effects, low-light vision, +2 racial bonus to Search, Spot and Listen checks, automatic search check if within 5 feet of secret/concealed door. Weapon proficiencies.

*Wizard Spells Known:* 0th—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*. 1st—*burning hands, change self, charm person, chill touch, identify, jump, magic missile, message, reduce, shield, sleep, summon monster I*. 2nd—*alter self, blur, ghoul touch, invisibility, knock, locate object, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, obscure object, protection from arrows, summon monster II, Tasha's hideous laughter, web*. 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, fly, protection from elements, slow, summon monster III*. 4th—*remove curse, scrying*.

**Equipment:** +1 *longsword*, *ring of protection* +2, *scroll of ice storm* x2, *potion of cure light wounds* x2, *potion of fire resistance*.

*Details and Tactics:* Ancarohir is the patriarch of Valmirindi and their most powerful mage. Tall and slender even for an elf, he has long golden hair which he keeps braided.

## II: MONSTERS

### Fire Zombie

**Medium–size Undead**

**Hit Dice:** 1d12+3 (10 hp)

**Initiative:** -1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** Slam +1 melee

**Damage:** Slam 1d6+1/burn 1d6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Burn

**Special Qualities:** Undead, immune to fire, partial actions only

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

**Feats:** Toughness

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground

**Organization:** Gang (2-5), squad (6-10), or mob (11-20)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement Range:** 2-3 HD (Medium)

The fire zombie is a sub-type of zombie created by the combination of magical experimentation and an accident involving an out of control fire. Since their creation was an accident, there are only a very small number of them in existence. Attempts have been made to capture them for study in an effort to replicate them.

Although physically weaker because of the deteriorating effect the fire has had on their decaying corpses, their attack is more deadly than that of regular zombies. Their appearance is much like that of regular zombies except the heat within them has turned their corpse charcoal black. Flames dance in their eyes and they exude a cloud of smoke wherever they go. Their hands are alight with flame at all times.

### Combat

Fire zombies use the same combat techniques as the zombies found in *Core Rulebook III*.

**Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Burn (Ex):** Those hit by the fire zombie's attacks take an additional 1d6 points of burning damage. A Reflex save (DC 15) is required to avoid catching on fire. Victims that catch on fire immediately suffer another 1d6 points of damage. In each subsequent round, the burning character must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means the victim takes another 1d6 points of damage that round. Success means the fire has been put out.

**Partial Actions Only (Ex):** Fire zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack, but can only do both if they charge (a partial charge).

**Fire Subtype (Ex):** Fire immunity, double damage from cold except on a successful save.

## Fire Zombie Bat

### **Diminutive Undead**

**Hit Dice:** 1/4d12+1 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** -1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 5 ft., Fly 20 ft. (average)

**AC:** 13 (+4 size, -1 Dex)

**Attacks:** Slam -1 melee

**Damage:** Slam 0 (Explode 1d3)

**Face/Reach:** 1 ft. by 1 ft. / 0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Explode

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight, undead, immune to fire, partial actions only

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

**Skills:** Listen +4\*, Spot +4\*

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (Slam)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground

**Organization:** Squad (6-10)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/6

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement Range:** —

Fire zombie bats are essentially tiny versions of fire zombies. They are identical in every way with adjustments made for their size, exceptions made for their ability to fly and a different attack.

Fire zombie bats are coal black like the larger version of fire zombies with small flaming eyes and wisps of flame coming from their wings.

## Combat

Fire zombie bats combat tactics consist only of attempting to fly into their target and explode.

**Explode (Ex):** Upon a successful hit, either by them or to them, fire zombie bats explode for 1d3 fire damage in a 5 foot radius. A Reflex save (DC 15) is required to avoid catching on fire. Victims that catch on fire immediately suffer another 1d6 points of damage. In each subsequent round, the burning character must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means the victim takes another 1d6 points of damage that round. Success means the fire has been put out.

**Blindsight (Ex):** Fire zombie bats can "see" by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, that allow them to locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. A silence spell negates this and forces the bat to rely on its weak vision, which has a maximum range of 10 feet.

**Skills:** \*Fire zombie bats receive a +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if Blindsight is negated.

## Flame Hive Queen

**Huge Outsider [Evil, Fire, Lawful]**

**Hit Dice:** 10d8+50 (95 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 20 ft

**AC:** 21 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +11 Natural)

**Attacks:** 1 Bite +17 melee, 2 slam +12 melee

**Damage:** Bite 2d6+7; slam 2d6+3

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 10 ft. / 15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Grapple, burn

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 10/+2

**Saves:** Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +7

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 10

**Skills:** Bluff +10, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +10, Listen +10, Search +12, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and Underground

**Organization:** 1-4

**Challenge Rating:** 9

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always lawful evil

**Advancement Range:** 11-23 HD (Huge); 24-30 HD (Gargantuan)

Originating from the elemental plane of fire, flame hive queens are incredibly rare and greatly feared on the material plane. They can give birth to any creature from the plane of fire up to one size smaller than themselves. Once per year an adult flame hive queen may generate a younger flame hive queen. They do not typically choose to leave their home plane, but they are sometimes summoned by those who would use them for their sheer destructive power and their ability to bring forth other fire-based creatures.

The flame hive queen is an enormous creature made from a magma-like material, with an exoskeleton that bears a remarkable resemblance to a fire ant. It has an enlarged abdomen, from which it extrudes eggs that hatch into its offspring. It tends not to move around, preferring instead to find a nice burning place where it can produce its spawn.

## Combat

Flame hive queens prefer to let their offspring fight for them. If pressed into a fight, they attempt to bite their opponents, causing 2d6+7 points of damage plus burn damage. They also use their pincers for a secondary slam attack, causing 2d6+3 points of damage, plus grapple and burn attacks. If a flame hive queen feels its life is threatened it usually has a preplanned route of escape.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the flame hive queen must hit an opponent of up to Large size with a pincer slam attack. If it gets a hold, the victim automatically catches fire and takes burn damage.

**Burn (Ex):** Those hit by any one of the flame hive queen's attacks must succeed at a Ref save (DC 20) or catch fire. Victims that catch on fire immediately suffer another 1d6 points of damage. In each subsequent round, the burning character must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means the victim takes another 1d6 points of damage that round. Success means the fire has been put out. Creatures hitting a flame hive queen with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take 1d6 fire damage and also catch fire unless they succeed at a Ref save (DC 20).

**Spawn (Sp):** A flame hive queen may spawn elemental fire creatures as often as once every ten minutes. Treat this as a *summon monster VI* spell as cast by a 14th level sorcerer. The spawned creature remains until destroyed (it was created, not *summoned*) or dismissed to the plane of fire (all spawn of the hive queen are native to the elemental plane of fire and are extraplanar creatures on any other plane).

**Fire Subtype (Ex):** Fire immunity, double damage from cold except on a successful save.

**Heal (Sp):** The flame hive queen can use a *heal* spell upon itself once per day, but only if it is near a source of fire at least as large as a bonfire.

## III: MAGIC

### Charm of the Woodland Fey

This amulet of silver and gold, shaped into the likeness of an oak tree, has a shock of hair from a dryad clasped to it. Those who wear the charm gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma and may cast a *heightened charm person* [3d level spell] once per day as if cast by a 6th level sorcerer (save DC 14). The amulet's powers are magnified in the hands of a fey: the *heightened charm person* [6th level spell] spell works as if cast by a 12th level sorcerer (save DC 19).

*Caster Level:* 12th.

*Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, *charm person*.

*Market Value:* 30,000 gp.

*Weight:* –.

## IV: MISCELLANEOUS

### Leaves of Passage

These writs are created from large specially cured leaves from a golden oak that has been inscribed with Lonlindiri's own magical sigil. Anyone possessing a "leaf of passage" can travel freely through the Nowyn forest while armed and suffer no harm from the elves.

*Market Value:* 100 gp (black market only).

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