

THE CHRONICLES OF  
**EMBER**  
ADVENTURE MODULE



**A DARK AND  
STORMY KNIGHT**

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# A DARK AND STORMY KNIGHT

## INTRODUCTION

A group of adventurers has taken shelter inside the ruins of an abandoned burial mound. It has changed hands many times during the years, and as it turns out, the fel folk of the wilds also have their heroes whom they venerate. Deep within Hightower Barrow lies a Dark Champion of the god Duruk – woe be upon those who would disturb his rest.

## PREPARATION

"A Dark and Stormy Knight" is an adventure for 4-6 players of levels 1-2. However, it can be scaled up for more powerful parties as needed (see "Adapting the Adventure") It takes place over the course of a few hours, with the Loremaster controlling the pacing as she sees fit. It revolves heavily around combat, with a group consisting mostly of warrior classes being preferred. It is recommended that a specialty priest or cleric be in the party, although this is not required. No one should have access to spells or items that provide instant shelter.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago in what is now the Dutchy of Andromar, a kingdom known as Crisnia existed, although it didn't necessarily flourish. Bugbear and Orc tribes fought brutal wars of expansion against both one another and the goodly races of the Dutchies, and strife ran rampant. War was a way of life as every faction was vying for the limited resources available in the frozen land.

The constant warring produced a lot of dead heroes and little else, though the more cynical voices of the time were known to remark that keeping the population down could be viewed as a good thing. Those who died in battle were typically cremated on a communal pyre, although especially valiant or important dead were buried in tombs known as crag barrows that were dug directly into rocky hillsides. Among these was the large barrow known as Hightower.

A struggling and war-ravaged Crisnia was annexed by the neighboring Dutchy of

Andromar amidst boiling intrigue, and most official structures and monuments were either re-purposed, re-dedicated, or simply razed for building materials. Interestingly, Hightower Barrow escaped destruction. Being too tempting a prize to be allowed to lay fallow, the goblin and orc tribes occupied the structure in time, and converted it into a fortress of sorts.

As is the way with such things, the goblinoid races of Hightower Barrow began striking out in a thirst for conquest, but the humanoids and beastfolk of Andromar eventually crushed their forces and sealed the barrow with a huge stone. Since then, Hightower Barrow has been used as a landmark by those in the know, but has otherwise been forgotten. Both its remote location and relative lack of importance have allowed it to go unnoticed and largely unspoiled to date. A small group of tomb robbers once dug an access shaft down from the remnants of the tower into the tombs below, but they were never heard from again. Only small rodents and vermin have used the shaft since.

## SUMMARY

This adventure takes place during the first month of Spring. The characters have taken shelter inside the barrow during a particularly violent storm. Lightning rains down outside, and the wind is strong enough to blow a man over (70 mph gusts). A lightning strike on the remains of the tower at the top of the barrow breaks open one of the inner doors, allowing access to the humanoid tombs within. After defeating the vermin and other monsters who dwell within, the party encounters the Dark Knight himself – a hobgoblin zombie interred in the barrow's deepest chamber. This fight is intended to be difficult.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

As Loremaster, you know your players and their PCs better than anyone else. By extension, you also know best how to involve the PCs in this adventure. The simplest way is to say that the characters were all drawn here to the barrow in an attempt to escape the

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storm. This offers a convenient way to get the party together for the first time, as they won't need to have been traveling together before the adventure begins. As Hightower Barrow is literally visible for miles, PCs may have even been traveling in different directions before the storm hits.

If such a method to gather the party doesn't work for you, the following suggestions may also be useful:

- The PCs have been asked to scout out Hightower Barrow to see if any humanoids have begun using it as a base again.
- The characters found a map showing Hightower Barrow and the surrounding area on the body of a fallen brigand or in an old chest somewhere, indicating an abandoned complex that may contain treasure.
- A wealthy patron has hired the PCs to find a family heirloom believed to have been interred with a long-dead ancestor in Hightower Barrow.

**Presentation Notes:** This adventure is designed in a style to cut down on roll-out time during play. While flavor text is given, each area and encounter is also summarized in bullet point style to refresh your memory at the table. You may read the flavor text in blue boxes aloud, or summarize it in your own voice. The latter is recommended as things which are meant for print have a different character than those designed for oratory. However, if you are uncomfortable with this, fear not; reading the flavor text as-written will certainly get the job done.

**Adapting the Adventure:** One way to scale up the difficulty is to simply add extra creatures to each combat if your party is higher than 2nd level or consists of more than 4 players. If this is not to your liking, you can always have a couple of skeletons here and there to menace the party (they are not listed as built-in monsters for this adventure, but you're the Loremaster; you get to do this)! Just remember to figure any extra critters into the XP total at the end of the game.

Also, all treasure here is given in the local currency of the region: Silver Myr. If playing in a different region or adapting this to another system, change the award to the prevailing base currency (i.e. gold).

## BONUS MONSTER

These creatures make up the majority of any random encounters here in the tomb should you decide to animate them and menace the party. They are not in any one particular location so much as they are literally everywhere in areas 2, 6, and 7. They are normally inert skeletons, but feel free to animate as many or as few as you see fit to adjust the difficulty and tension of the adventure for your players.

– Ember Studio Staff

### BONUS MONSTER: GOBLIN SKELETON

**AL:** Neutral  
**Init:** +5/+5; Weapon +5  
**Size:** Medium  
**Move:** 9  
**Att:** Claw x2 (1d4 each) or by weapon  
**SD:** Undead Immunities, ½ damage from edged & piercing weaponry  
**Morale:** 20 (Fearless)  
**Ability Scores:**  
STR 10, DEX 12, CON --, INT --,  
WIS 10, CHA 11, PER 10, COM -4  
**Saving Throws:**  
PPDM 6, RSW 4, PP 5, BW 3, Spell 3  
**Skills:** None  
**Tactics:** Skeletons approach their targets directly via the shortest viable path and fight without regard for their own safety.  
**Treasure:** Type C

#### Combat Statistics by Type

| TYPE     | HP | AC | TAB | DMG | XP    |
|----------|----|----|-----|-----|-------|
| Weenie   | 6  | 13 | +0  | +0  | 35    |
| Normal   | 12 | 13 | +2  | +1  | 90    |
| Hero     | 25 | 15 | +5  | +2  | 350   |
| Legend*  | 35 | 17 | +6  | +5  | 750   |
| Paragon* | 50 | 19 | +7  | +7  | 1,250 |

\*Don't do this to your players.

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## THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE

This adventure takes place on a single site. It can begin at any time of day.

## THE STORM

- **A bad storm has brewed up. The PCs must take shelter before it kills them.**
- **The Barrow is visible in the distance. It seems rocky and solid if they can find a way inside.**
- **The tower atop the hill doesn't look accessible, especially in this weather.**

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

“Things have gone from bad to worse. The light gray clouds of the morning have pulled together and begun to darken into an ominous rolling purple wall. The smell of dust and rain comes on cold winds, and instincts from time out of mind prod at you to take cover. Distant rolling thunder coupled with flashes of lightning come more and more frequently, and the winds intensify. The grasses nearby ripple like waves on a pond and make slithering sounds around you. Eventually, the first drops fall. Sparse at first, the rain begins coming in buckets all too soon.

“Suddenly, lightning slams into the ground nearby, blasting a hapless tree and causing it to topple. There are small fires, but the downpour and walnut-sized hail extinguish them before they amount to anything of concern.

“You feel exposed like you've never been before. But ahead in the distance, a large, rocky hill rises from the sea of wet grasses. Illuminated by the flashes of lightning, you can see the ruins of a tower sitting atop it like a broken and spent candlestick. Attempting to climb to the tower ruin in this weather would doubtless be folly. But there may well be an outcropping that can provide safety from the storm.”

Characters with the skills Local History, Bardic Knowledge, Dungeoneering, or Ancient Geography, or the Historian background can identify this location as Hightower Barrow and recall its history as given in the Adventure Background section. Otherwise, no one knows anything about this location (unless you decide they do).

Should the PCs balk at heading for the tower, let the hail get worse. First announce that everyone outside must make a saving throw vs. RSW or suffer 1d2 points of hail damage. Tell them that their armor is being dented and taking durability damage. If this doesn't send them toward the tower, up the ante. After a few minutes, make it 1d3 damage, and eventually 1d4. This should convince them that the tower is their best bet for survival.

The storm is so intense that it is impossible to start a fire, even with a tinderbox, and erecting a shelter such as a tent is a fool's errand. Even fires started by magical means are beaten out by the weather in a couple of minutes.

If the PCs *insist* on staying outside in the storm, keep doing damage to them until they expire. Being stupid is supposed to hurt.

## HIGHTOWER

The following sections describe the crag and the tombs within. Unless otherwise noted, all areas are unlit, and the walls, floors, and ceilings are made of worked stone.

### 1. HIGHTOWER MAIN ENTRANCE

- **The party notices an entrance on the West side of the hill.**
- **The barrow appears to be a suitable shelter.**

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

“The massive hill rises sharply above the surrounding countryside. A few narrow ledges offer scant shelter against the wind and rain, but a closer inspection reveals a large, arched entryway into the small crag.

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It is at least 20 feet tall and 10 feet wide, and is set into the side of the hill. The ground slopes away from the entryway, directing falling water out and away. Given this fact, and the sturdy nature of this hill, it seems reasonable that whatever space lies beyond the doorway will be both dry and safe from the hail and lightning. The likelihood of collapse, even in these conditions, seems remote.”

Any Minotaur, any character with the Mason background, or any character who makes a successful check on their Stonemasonry or Mining skills can determine the stonework of the doorway and surrounding area is indeed *very* strong. Note that Stonemasonry can be used untrained, meaning that even if characters don't have it, they may still check against it at an additional -8 penalty (that is, STR at -10).

Anyone searching the area is entitled to a Perception check. Success indicates they notice the broken remains of an immense, round stone scattered across the ground near the entrance. This stone once blocked the entryway, but was blasted apart by lightning some weeks ago.

The door is heavy but well counterweighted. It is unlocked and opens easily, and swings shut of its own accord unless propped open.

## 2. HIGHTOWER MAIN HALL

- This chamber is 50' x 50'.
- There are three exits, one on each wall.
- All doors are locked, causing a -4 penalty to Open Locks rolls.
- Doors are 4" thick and made of stone (red granite). AC 15, DR 8, HP 60.

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

“Passing through the massive doors, you enter a cool, dry chamber beyond which you estimate to be at least ten paces square. Regularly spaced columns support the weight of the hill above you. The smell of

dust and... something else – spices perhaps – lingers in the air. It is then that you notice regularly spaced alcoves along the walls. Horizontal and stacked four high, the spaces seem to be made for bodies; this is a tomb.

“Three more stone doors – one each to the left and right, and another directly across from the entrance – lead deeper into the complex.”

Once the PCs are inside, the outer door swings shut silently, but for a soft rush of air when it closes. It does not lock, and large iron rings on the inside allow it to be pulled open again with no trouble. The door can be propped open without too much trouble.

Each of the three doors is locked, and requires a successful Open Locks check at a -4 penalty to jimmy. Only one attempt per PC is allowed due to the nature of the lock – it is extremely difficult, and is set into the stone of the door itself. The key (gods know where *that* has gotten to), is a large, multi-pronged affair that sets into the centerpiece of the locks. However, the doors' hinges have weakened over time, and can be made to sway ever so slightly with a heavy push. The party must beat them down or wait for the events of encounter #3 to pass.

## 3. RATS!

- The storm intensifies, and lightning strikes the tower above
- The doors fall off their hinges to varying degrees, allowing passage.
- Squeaking and scurrying can be heard, and the party is mobbed by giant rats.

Read or paraphrase the following to your players. If the party has battered down any of the doors, modify the following text as required.

“The sound of hissing rain, pounding hail, and heavy thunder can be heard alongside the howling winds from outside.

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Peering out, vegetation has been beaten flat for as far as the eye can see (which isn't much; about 50 feet), and a blanket of hail covers the ground. Even still, this room seems stable for the most part – not a mote of dust drifts down from the ceiling from even the most violent of blasts. However, you notice the interior stone doors beginning to sway slightly with each thunderclap.

“Suddenly, a particularly loud and violent peal of thunder rings out – the tower must've been hit – and the ancient hinges aren't up to the punishment. In a mighty chorus of noise, the inner doors topple in rapid succession as their hinges fail. As the peal of thunder fades away into the white noise of the storm outside, you become aware of another sound – rats.

“Within seconds, the sounds of squeaking and growling fill the air. Swarming like a thing out of nightmares, the mangy rodents pour into the room from the largest doorway like a living blanket. Dozens of red eyes catch the torchlight as they advance upon you. Each is the size of a small dog, and there are too many to count.”

Two dozen giant rats swarm into the chamber. They are seeking a way out after the lightning strike collapsed and subsequently flooded their nest in the chambers beyond. They are panicked and have a herd mentality. All interactions they have with anyone or anything will involve teeth. A priest of Nanawen can turn them, preventing the swarm from approaching closer than 10'. If this happens, they scurry away into another chamber (but not outside into the storm).

Since there are so many rats, initiative rolls are going to be a logistical nightmare. In cases such as this, allow 1-3 rats to attack the PCs every initiative count until their numbers become manageable for you.

## GIANT RATS

**AL:** Neutral

**Init:** +0

**Size:** Small

**Move:** 12

**Att:** Bite (1d4-3 Minimum of 1)

**SD:** None

**Morale:** 8 (Unsteady)

**Ability Scores:**

STR 3, DEX 12, CON 12, INT 2,

WIS 10, CHA 6, PER 18, COM 8

**Saving Throws:**

PPDM 6, RSW 4, PP 5, BW 3, Spell

3

**Skills:** None

**Tactics:** Swarm – 4 creatures can attack each

PC, gaining a +2 flanking bonus. If a rat is injured but not killed, it flees on its next action.

**Treasure:** None

### Combat Statistics by Type

| TYPE    | HP | AC | TAB | DMG | XP  |
|---------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Weenie  | 4  | 13 | +0  | +0  | 9   |
| Normal  | 8  | 13 | +2  | +0  | 18  |
| Hero    | 15 | 14 | +3  | +1  | 35  |
| Legend  | 20 | 14 | +4  | +1  | 90  |
| Paragon | 35 | 15 | +5  | +2  | 180 |

Check morale for the rats any time that one of them dies. If the 1d20 roll is 8 or less, the rats continue chewing on the PCs. If the roll is 9 or greater, all the rats flee as a single unit toward the nearest door (but again, not outside into the storm).

## 4. PREPARATION CHAMBER

- This used to be a torture / embalming chamber.
- There is a hole in the ceiling that leads to the surface. This was cut by tomb raiders long ago, and weather is making its way inside.
- Hobgoblin raiders attack the party.

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

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The long stone hallway ends in a square room furnished with decaying tables and rusty iron implements. Rain and the occasional hailstone falls from a small hole in the ceiling no more than 2' across at its widest point – it must run all the way to the top of the hill... possibly to the ruined tower itself. A rope dangles from the opening, swinging slightly. Water pools on the flagstones before being carried away by the large iron drain in the center of the floor. Old dark stains suggest that it was intended to carry away other fluids in times gone by.

Suddenly, from a doorway on the far side of the room step two burly humanoids. With deep set red eyes, pinched faces, and strong jaws filled with too many teeth, each stands over 6 feet tall. With a roar, they draw their weapons and charge!

The rope does indeed lead to the ruined tower at the top of the hill. A successful Climb Walls check at a +8 bonus is needed to manage the climb, and those of size L will not be able to fit through the hole without becoming hopelessly stuck.

Inspection of the area surrounding the opening of the shaft reveals only the wrecked remains of a hobgoblin camp. The shaft was dug by tomb robbers long ago to provide easy and discrete access to the riches of the barrow below.

The hobgoblins intend to establish a brigand camp here, and witnesses to their arrival cannot be allowed to live.

The number of hobgoblins that attack the party varies with party size. As a rule of thumb, having one Normal type hobgoblin per two total party levels scales well. That said, feel free to mix things up a bit if you want – just remember that the major battle lies immediately beyond this chamber.

## HOBGOBLINS

**AL:** Chaotic Evil

**Init:** -1/-1

**Size:** Medium

**Move:** 12

**Att:** 1d2 (x2) or Short Sword (1d6/1d8)

**SD:** None

**Morale:** 16 (Solid)

**Ability Scores:**

STR 18, DEX 17, CON 13, INT 14,

WIS 16, CHA 14, PER 15, COM 6

**Saving Throws:**

PPDM 7, RSW 5, PP 6, BW 4, Spell 4

**Skills:** Alertness, Military Science,

Darkvision,

**Tactics:** Flanking – Hobgoblins will attempt to flank targets whenever possible for a +2 to-hit bonus. They attack the biggest and most threatening target first.

**Treasure:** Short sword, Armor by AC value; Base AC 13 (Dex), One hobgoblin has a *lifting belt*. One hobgoblin has two *potions of healing*. 118 GP

### Combat Statistics by Type

| TYPE    | HP  | AC | TAB | DMG | XP  |
|---------|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Weenie  | 10  | 14 | +0  | +4  | 50  |
| Normal  | 15  | 15 | +2  | +5  | 100 |
| Hero    | 50  | 18 | +3  | +6  | 250 |
| Legend  | 80  | 19 | +4  | +7  | 400 |
| Paragon | 100 | 20 | +5  | +8  | 750 |

## 5. WHAT A TANGLED WEB

- A giant spider has taken up residence here. It attacks anyone who becomes tangled in the web.
- The web over the doorway is all but invisible – anyone touching it gets stuck.
- Only one creature can be stuck in the web at a time.

Read or paraphrase the text on the following page to your players:

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“This hallway – if you could call it that – is narrow and cramped. The walls are rough and unfinished, and the ceiling is quite low indeed. The larger members of the party have to stoop to navigate this passage at all. The smell of dust pervades the air, and smatterings of cobwebs become increasingly prevalent, to the point of eventually obscuring the walls themselves.

“At the end of the hallway lies a small chamber that is positively blanketed in silky white cobwebs. Numerous body-shaped lumps are visible through the doorway, wrapped in layers of gray threads like woven mummies.”

The encounter here isn't in the room, but just outside of it in the hallway. Any character attempting to enter the chamber must make a PER check at -12 to prevent themselves from walking into an almost invisible web designed to catch whatever comes this way. Any character touching the web is stuck fast as if they were trapped in a net. Of course, this alerts the giant spider lurking on the ceiling inside the room.

The web can be destroyed by attacks from weapons, but any weapon which touches the web also gets stuck. The web is sufficiently strong to prevent characters with a STR score of 12 or less from extracting a stuck weapon. Further, such characters cannot free themselves from the web and must be assisted.

Characters with STR scores between 13 and 17 can free themselves within 6 seconds, while those with STR scores of 18-19 can accomplish this in 3 seconds. Characters with a STR of 20 (or more), can walk right through the webs as if they weren't there.

The webs are highly flammable and can be burned away in 6 seconds by a lit torch, burning oil, flaming sword, or other reasonable method. However, anyone caught in the webs while they are alight suffers 2d4 damage from the flames.

## MONSTROUS SPIDER

**AL:** Neutral  
**Init:** +3  
**Size:** Medium  
**Move:** 12  
**Att:** 1d6 (plus poison)  
**SD:** Immune to web, Mindless  
**Morale:** 20 (Fearless – does not check morale)

### Ability Scores:

STR 14, DEX 17, CON 13, INT 1,  
WIS 10, CHA 3, PER 15, COM 6

### Saving Throws:

PPDM 6, RSW 4, PP 5, BW 3, Spell 3

**Skills:** Darkvision – 60', Poison (1d4 STR loss – 10-count onset time), Hiding, Climb Walls

**Tactics:** Hunting – this creature will remain hidden in the room beyond until something bumps into its web and begins thrashing around. It will silently descend to bite the victim until it seems that it won't break free of the web.

**Treasure:** The lair contains a 1<sup>st</sup> level *pearl of power*, a bag containing 75 gp. There are also numerous rusty weapons and rotten clothing, all of which are useless and have no value, even as scrap.

### Combat Statistics by Type

| TYPE    | HP  | AC | TAB | DMG | XP  |
|---------|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Weenie  | 8   | 14 | +4  | +0  | 35  |
| Normal  | 18  | 14 | +4  | +0  | 90  |
| Hero    | 36  | 14 | +5  | +2  | 150 |
| Legend  | 80  | 14 | +5  | +4  | 200 |
| Paragon | 100 | 16 | +6  | +6  | 350 |

Those affected by the spider's venom (and survive), find that it runs its course in two weeks, at which point their strength slowly returns at the rate of 1 point per day. Of course, a *neutralize poison* spell instantly has the same effect, and lost strength is restored immediately.

Once the spider has been dispatched, the PCs may enter the room. The lumps in the chamber are the dead people and literally hundreds of giant rats the spider has fed on.



## 6. THE OFFERING CHEST

- This 20ft<sup>3</sup> room was built for making offerings to the dead interred here.
- Like the rest of the complex, the walls here are covered in burial niches.
- Opening the offering chest triggers a fusillade of darts on anyone standing directly in front of it.
- Chest has 4" thick walls and is made of stone (red granite). AC 15, DR 8, HP 60.

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

"This room is lined with burial niches from floor to ceiling, and almost all of them appear to be occupied. The smell of dust and decay is quite strong. Other than the bodies of the dead, the only notable feature is a small, stone chest set into the center of the floor. Suspicious stains and cut marks on the lid suggest that more than one kind of offering was made here."

**Trapped Chest:** The unlocked stone chest is built into the floor and cannot be moved. It is also trapped. If the lid is opened, a dart trap is triggered, firing up at anyone standing in front of the chest from the inside. Due to the nature of the trap, it is quite difficult for a character to notice the disarming mechanism. A Find/Remove traps roll at a -8 reveals a small push button on the back of the lid. Pushing it disarms the trap. Opening the chest with a pole or long weapon allows the trap to be sprung harmlessly.

Should the trap be triggered, give anyone standing in front of the chest a saving throw vs. Rod/Staff/Wand, with failure indicating they were hit by one of the darts. If Lukan characters are present, allow them their preternatural dodge check. Monks may attempt to parry darts sent their way if they are not the one opening the chest (both hands would be full).

The trap fires 1d3 darts, doing 1d4+1 points of damage per dart.

**Treasure:** The chest contains two pearls worth 100 Myr each, a small bag with 83 silver Myrs, and a *blood ring*.

At your option, you can have some of the skeletons rise from their niches and attack the party once the chest has been looted. For extra fun, allow a Silver Pudding to have taken up residence in the ribcage of one of the skeletons.

### BONUS MONSTER: SILVER PUDDING

**AL:** Neutral

**Init:** +2

**Size:** Medium

**Move:** 12

**Att:** 2 (corrodes metal)

**SD:** 80% cover (rib cage). Fire causes it to split. Immune to cold & lightning. Can only be damaged with blunt weaponry.

**Morale:** 16 (Solid)

**Ability Scores:**

STR 4, DEX 10, CON 13, INT 10,  
WIS 10, CHA 5, PER 15, COM 6

**Saving Throws:**

PPDM 7, RSW 5, PP 6, BW 4, Spell 4

**Skills:** Corrode – pseudopods which strike PCs automatically ruin one random metal item, causing it to crumble to dust. Magical items get a saving throw vs disintegration (6) with a bonus of 1 for every plus of enchantment to avoid this.

**Tactics:** The creature can smell metal and will send out pseudopods in search of it to a range of 10 feet. It does not leave the safety of the goblin's rib cage unless it is split.

**Treasure:** None.

#### Combat Statistics by Type

| TYPE    | HP | AC | TAB | DMG | XP  |
|---------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Weenie  | 8  | 16 | +0  | +0  | 50  |
| Normal  | 16 | 16 | +2  | +1  | 100 |
| Hero    | 34 | 19 | +3  | +3  | 350 |
| Legend  | 52 | 21 | +4  | +5  | 500 |
| Paragon | 72 | 25 | +5  | +7  | 750 |

This creature is designed to give especially robust parties a bit of extra headache. You

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don't have to include it in the adventure unless you feel the PCs need to be taken down a notch. If you *really* feel like they need to be taken down a notch, have more than one of them in this chamber.

## 7. GETTING AHEAD

- This 20' room is lined with burial niches, with a central sarcophagus set in a place of honor.
- A lesser Keen has taken up residence on the sarcophagus. It attacks as soon as the party enters.

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

"This chamber is lined with niches for the dead. It is almost a perfect cube, with burial slots being carved in every conceivable spot from floor to ceiling. The only object of interest in this chamber is a statue at the center of the Northernmost wall. It could be a sarcophagus. Upon closer inspection, you note that the face of the figure is blackened and distorted, resembling a demonic skull. Suddenly, the eyes of the skull begin to glow, and the entire skull erupts in flame. It flies free of its perch, and opens its mouth in a soul-rending shriek!"

Instead of biting, the Keen can use its shriek ability. Everyone within 60' (excepting Rotan characters), who can hear the shriek *and* clearly see the creature must make a saving throw vs, Paralysis (PPDM), or be frozen in fear for 4d6 segments, or until the monster attacks them. Anyone who successfully saves cannot be affected by the same Keen's shriek for 24 hours. The shriek is a mind-affecting fear effect.

## LESSER KEEN

**AL:** Neutral Evil  
**Init:** +0; +2 (Bite)  
**Size:** Small  
**Move:** FL (18)  
**Att:** Shriek, Bite (1d4)  
**SD:** None  
**Morale:** 20 (Fearless)  
**Ability Scores:**  
STR 10, DEX 17, CON 14, INT 8,  
WIS 10, CHA 16, PER 10, COM -14  
**Saving Throws:**  
PPDM 6, RSW 4, PP 5, BW 3, Spell 3  
**Skills:** Darkvision, Intimidation (16), Fly, Shriek  
**Tactics:** The Keen opens combat with a loud *shriek*, then attacks the nearest foe still standing. If all the PCs are still paralyzed, it moves and attacks each of them once, then repeats the process. As soon as someone recovers, it focuses attacks on that character.  
**Treasure:** Within the sarcophagus is a pile of dust and a *translator's ring*.

### Combat Statistics by Type

| TYPE    | HP | AC | TAB | DMG | XP    |
|---------|----|----|-----|-----|-------|
| Weenie  | 6  | 15 | +0  | +0  | 35    |
| Normal  | 12 | 15 | +2  | +4  | 90    |
| Hero    | 25 | 17 | +3  | +2  | 350   |
| Legend  | 35 | 17 | +5  | +5  | 750   |
| Paragon | 50 | 19 | +6  | +7  | 1,250 |



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## 8. THE DARK KNIGHT

- This is the “boss monster” of the dungeon. He cannot be reasoned with, and rises to attack the party as soon as they enter his chamber.
- He opens combat by hurling a javelin at the nearest PC.
- He fights with a rusty morningstar, even though he has an enchanted sword on his back. He will only draw it if he is disarmed.

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

A solitary stone slab dominates the center of this chamber, and bright bits of silver wink from within the dust that covers the floor. Two braziers stand in the far corners of the room – strangely lit – and their flames cast eerie shadows along the chamber’s walls. The fury of the storm is greatly muffled in this place, and an unreal, supernatural quality pervades the room. Along the back wall hangs a rotting standard – a black hand wreathed in purple flame.

Upon the slab lies the well-preserved corpse of a tall humanoid wearing the tabard and belts of a knight. The device upon the tabard is twin to that of the standard in the back. Suddenly, the corpse sits up, lifting an old, rusty morningstar in one hand and a javelin in the other. His sunken eyes are little more than lidless sockets, but you know that *he sees you*. As he climbs off the slab, he opens his mouth in a hollow, otherworldly moan.

This creature is a former Dark Champion of Duruk – the god of disease and pestilence – and he *will* wring the PCs necks unless they’re very careful, very lucky, or both.

PCs with the Knowledge, Religion skill and any specialty priests or clerics in the party know the heraldry on the tabard and the standard in the back to be that of Duruk.

### THE DARK KNIGHT

**AL:** Chaotic Evil  
**Init:** +2 (fist) / +3 (morningstar) / +2 (javelin) / +2 (Ebonhawk)  
**Size:** Medium  
**Move:** 12  
**Att:** Fist 1d2 (x2);  
Morningstar (1d6+1/4d4);  
Javelin (1d4/1d4);  
Ebonhawk (1d8+/1d12)  
**SD:** Undead Immunities, Zombie Fortitude  
**Morale:** 20 (Fearless – Does not check morale)  
**Ability Scores:**  
STR 16, DEX 10, CON –, INT –,  
WIS –, CHA 10, PER 15, COM -10  
**Saving Throws:**  
PPDM 14, RSW 12, PP 13, BW 13, Spell 11  
**Skills:** Wraithsight – The Dark Knight’s entire body surface is capable of detecting changes in his environment, and does not require light to see. This functions through even magical darkness. He has 360° awareness and cannot be flanked.  
**Tactics:** The Dark Knight throws his javelin at a random PC s soon as combat begins. After this, he closes to melee and attacks the closest foe. He then keeps changing targets to whoever did the most damage to him since his last attack. If the Dark Knight is disarmed or his weapon is broken, he switches to the sword on his back.  
**Treasure:** Small shield, morningstar, javelin, +1 arming sword (*Ebonhawk*).  
Armor: (Ruined Lorica / Ruined Half Plate / Ruined Full Plate, depending on what version of him the party fights – see below). There are also 250 Myr scattered about loose on the floor.

#### Combat Statistics by Type

| TYPE    | HP  | AC | TAB | DMG | XP    |
|---------|-----|----|-----|-----|-------|
| Weenie  | 30  | 17 | +11 | +4  | 450   |
| Normal  | 48  | 17 | +11 | +4  | 650   |
| Hero    | 58  | 18 | +12 | +4  | 850   |
| Legend  | 71  | 18 | +12 | +5  | 1,200 |
| Paragon | 100 | 20 | +13 | +7  | 1,500 |

# A DARK AND STORMY KNIGHT

The Dark Knight fights until it reaches 0 hp or less, whereupon it must make a saving throw vs PPDM, and then again every time he takes damage thereafter. If successful, he continues to fight. The Dark Knight can only die if he fails his PPDM saving throw.

A nice touch to use when running this fight is to be *very* descriptive about the wounds the Dark Knight suffers. Don't tell your players that they've done damage – *show them* that they've done damage. And then show them that it doesn't seem to matter. Unless the creature is rendered physically unable to continue (perhaps by having its body completely annihilated), it will continue to advance upon the invaders. Make this terrifying.

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## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure is over when the Dark Knight has been defeated and all the creatures have been cleared out of the barrow. It is at this time that the storm outside subsides and blows itself out.

At this point, the party may head off to wherever they choose. However, the tribe of hobgoblins that sent the first warriors the PCs encountered in area 4 still want to turn the barrow into a base of operations. More hobgoblins arrive within a few days with supplies and tools to begin altering the interior to suit their purposes. If they are not stopped, they establish a base within 2 weeks and begin raiding the surrounding countryside.

What's more, if the hobgoblins discover that their honored ancestor, the Dark Knight, has been slain by the PCs, they send occasional parties of warriors to get revenge. Up to three of these honor parties are sent out before the hobgoblins give up on their quest for vengeance.

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## EXPERIENCE AWARDS

When awarding experience, sum up the total monster XP that you actually put the

players up against. This is the base story award. Then divide this by the number of PCs who started the adventure (characters who died don't get XP). The resulting number is the individual base experience award that all surviving characters earn. Then allow players to take individual awards for good roleplaying, spells cast, abilities used, and so on. It would not be unreasonable for a group of six players to earn between 1,000 and 1,750 XP for this adventure at higher difficulty levels. However, if you don't want to do the math, feel free to offer the following award based on party size at Normal difficulty.

**Total XP Award: 3,000**  
**4 Players – 750; 6 Players – 500**

Please note that the XP award can change dramatically depending on what you throw at the PCs. Enjoy!

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## NEW MAGIC ITEMS

**Lifting Belt:** This heavy leather kidney belt features brass studs and large buckles on both sides. Anyone wearing it gains a +1 enhancement bonus to Strength for the purpose of determining his carrying capacity. The belt does not alter the wearer's actual Strength score, nor does it change his STR modifier. This effect does not stack with that provided by any other bonus to Strength. Value: 500 Myr.

**Blood Ring:** This small silver band is set with a single, fire-cut ruby. It is finely wrought to the point of appearing fragile. Anyone wearing the ring instinctively knows that it can be used to restore health in case of injury. The ring can be commanded to spend any amount of its charges to heal an equal amount of damage to the wearer. The healing is instantaneous and permanent. It currently has 23 charges, and cannot be recharged. When it is depleted, the ruby turns black and crumbles to dust. Value: 1,200 Myr.

**Pearl of Power:** This small, silver orb is about the size of a man's thumbnail and is cool to the touch. A mage character may hold it in

her hand and concentrate to recall any one first-level spell to memory as if it had not been cast once per day (sunrise to sunrise). Upon using the pearl, it appears to tarnish until the following sunrise, when it may be used again. Value: 1,000 Myr.

**Translator's Ring:** Wrought of a blue-silver metal, this ring is perfectly smooth with beveled edges and no visible markings. True to its name, the ring grants the wearer the ability to fluently read, write, and speak both the Sithic and Halai languages. The wearer can scribe any written or spoken word of these tongues to any other language she knows. The ability lasts only for so long as the character wears the ring. Value: 500 Myr.

**Named Weapon – Ebonhawk:** Ebonhawk is an arming sword variant with unique furniture. The blade is constructed of a blackened, pattern welded steel of unknown origin which resembles dark marble. The surface of the blade itself is unmarred, and has been polished to a glass-like finish. The grip is of sharkskin over twisted wire, which itself covers unidentified bone scales. Altogether, the design and materials of this weapon exude an ominous, yet handsome appearance.

Ebonhawk's counterweight and quillons (what there is of them) appear to have had metal chewed away by powerful teeth. The stigma which surrounds this blade suggests that these tooth marks are more than cunning metalwork by a skilled smith. Legends say that Ebonhawk occasionally vibrates when wielded, as if it were a living thing, and from time to time emits a faint odor akin to burning copper.

Last wielded by Onugug Red-Tooth, a Dark Champion of Duruk, and interred with his remains in Andromar. According to the tales, Ebonhawk was forged by Minotian hands under the guidance of a fiend named X'pulta Ka'a. It is said that the fiend provided the materials and supervised the forging, finishing, sharpening, and consecrating of Ebonhawk to Duruk. Value: 15,000 Myr.



## NAMED WEAPON - EBONHAWK

### VITAL STATISTICS

WEIGHT: 3.5 LBS  
BLADE PROFILE: HOLLOW-GROUND DIAMOND  
CENTER OF BALANCE: 4" FORWARD FROM QUILLONS  
CENTER OF PERCUSSION: 10" FORWARD FROM QUILLONS

### BLADE DIMENSIONS

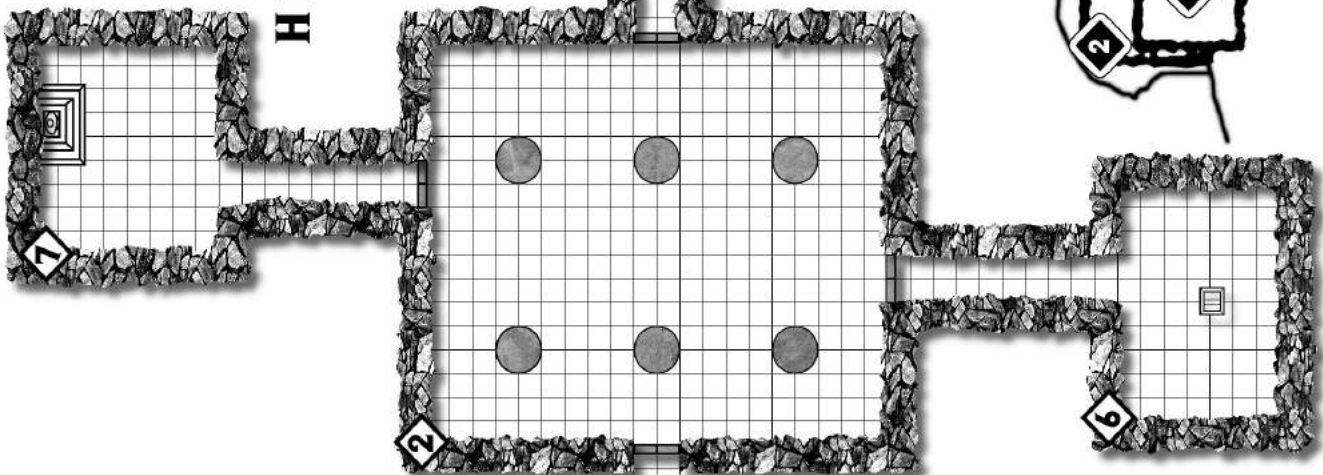
PROFILE TAPER: 2.25" TO 1.75"  
DISTAL TAPER: 0.25" TO 0.15"  
TOTAL LENGTH: 45"  
BLADE LENGTH: 38"  
SIZE: MEDIUM  
SPEED: 5  
TYPE: SLASHING  
WEAPON CLASS: STRENGTH  
DAMAGE OUTPUT: 1D8+1/1D12+1  
CRITICAL RANGE: 19-20  
ESTIMATED VALUE: 15,000 MYR

### FEATURES:

SMALL "BLOCK" QUILLONS, WASP-WAISTED RICASSO, CROWN COUNTERWEIGHT. HOLLOW GROUND BLADE WITH NO FULLER. BLACK STEEL BLADE. SYMBOL OF DURUK ETCHED INTO RICASSO ON BOTH SIDES.

### FORGE DATE:

ON OR AROUND FIRESEEK 10, 541 CY



# HIGHTOWER BARROW

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



|  |             |  |               |
|--|-------------|--|---------------|
|  | STONE DOOR  |  | DRAIN         |
|  | STATUE      |  | CEILING SHAFT |
|  | STONE CHEST |  | BURIAL SLAB   |

