



A Chaos Scar Adventure

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DEN OF THE SLAVETAKERS



“Den of the Slavetakers” is a short adventure for five 1st level characters that takes place in the Chaos Scar. A slavetaking operation run by a one-armed gnoll turns out to have a truly sinister purpose: victim-gathering for death rituals performed by an underground cult of Torog. The priest of the temple on the far side of the cavern, a female halfling named Morgana, uses a small shard of the meteor to draw mutated homunculus servants out of the valley’s rock. Not content with homunculus servants, she is now using gnoll magic borrowed from her henchman to turn halfling victims into flawed but deadly witherlings. In the mushroom-choked depths of the central chamber, myconids prepare for an assault on the temple to take the meteorite from whoever is left standing after the PCs interrupt the cultists’ rituals.

For details on the Chaos Scar and its environs, read the [Chaos Scar introduction](#) and check out the map of the entire valley.



BACKGROUND

The pivotal figure in the secret Torog cult is a female halfling magician who took the name Morgana when she entered Torog's service. Having come into possession of a shard from the meteor, Morgana took over a previously occupied underground lair and set it up as a well-defended underground temple where she could pursue experiments to learn the extent of the shard's powers.

Morgana has two main lieutenants: a human torturer named Scalpel and a one-armed elderly gnoll known as the Hand of Torog. Scalpel, a heavily muscled and tattooed degenerate who sleeps hanging from hooks in his cell in the temple, gets his name from his favorite tool. The Hand of Torog fled a chief's challenge in his pack instead of fighting to the death. Faith in Torog gave him new purpose, and Morgana gave him a home on the front line of her defenses. The Hand doesn't have the social perspective to understand that his name is more sardonic wit than an honorific.

As the adventure begins, the Hand of Torog and cultist accomplices have succeeded in taking six new slaves, two male humans and four halflings, two male and two female. Seven human Torog worshipers have preceded the PCs into the area, arriving for a ritual in which Morgana has promised great pain, great pleasure, and magic that draws on the power of the Chaos Shard to create more homunculus and undead servants for the temple.

Beneath the temple in a great mushroom chamber, a circle of myconids drawn toward the Chaos Shard's energies are secretly creating a great fungal tower that will enable them to climb to the top of the cavern and take Morgana's shard as their own. Although unaware of the myconid's plans, Morgana is a dedicated

survivor with an elaborate escape plan. The PCs may end up facing the myconids even if Morgana escapes with the shard.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

"Den of the Slavetakers" takes place in the Chaos Scar. Use one of the hooks below to get the PCs into the valley and on the slavetakers' trail. These hooks also come with a minor quest that can provide the PCs with some extra experience.

HOOK 1: A FAMILY KIDNAPPING

Four members of Jangi Blackstream's family were kidnapped last week, in two separate incidents. Jangi, a halfling trader who operates near the valley, is desperate to recover his kin: Nebin, Wayan, Shaena, and Lani. Survivors of one of the kidnappings, which turned into a short and almost lethal brawl, reported that the Blackstream cousins were taken by flying blue demons and a one-armed gnoll. Jangi has no solid information on what has happened to his relatives, but he has a nasty hunch. Some years ago, another family member discarded her old name (Nedda Blackstream), renamed herself Morgana, and moved into the Chaos Scar, if such a thing can be believed. Jangi thinks that Nedda/Morgana's vindictive streak might explain an otherwise inexplicable assault on the Blackstream family, and he knows she is somewhere in the area of the valley that contains the temple. Jangi will pay 50 gp and provide a 25% discount on two 1st- through 5th-level magic items if the PCs can follow-up on his hunch.

Quest XP: 100 XP for finding Morgana, 100 XP for finding the missing Blackstreams, and another 300 XP for rescuing one or more halflings alive.

HOOK 2: SMITE THE KING THAT CRAWLS

It's said that a cult devoted to Torog operates somewhere in the valley near the King's Wall. A nearby temple of Avandra has never been able to cope with the worst problems presented by the Chaos Scar, but it certainly understands how to deal with Torog. The temple announces that it will pay anyone who can find and eliminate the temple 300 gp. As a start, Avandra's followers point the heroes toward the area in which the Hand of Torog operates.

Quest XP: 50 XP for finding the temple, another 250 XP for erasing the temple from existence, and 200 XP for making sure that none of its priests or servants escape.

TREASURE PREPARATION

Den of the Slaves uses the treasure parcel system described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The PCs should gain a total of four treasure parcels in this adventure, though parcel 3 below is deliberately small. Listed below are the most likely places to find parcels and what those treasure parcels might consist of. The magic weapon should come from the players' wish lists.

Parcel 1: The Hand's Arsenal	One level 4 magic weapon (not a battleaxe)
Parcel 2: Cultist's Bodies	20 gp
Parcel 3: Treasure Heap	220 gp and 800 sp
Parcel 4: Morgana's Desk	Two 100-gp gems and alchemical formulae (see below)

GETTING STARTED

Regardless of the hook used to get the PCs into the Chaos Scar, read or paraphrase the following when they reach the vicinity of the slavetaker's lair.

A depression in the valley floor leads to a wide cavern that slopes gently downward. You don't have to be a tracker to tell that many people have walked in and out of this cavern recently, following a single-file trail—tracks from boots and tracks from small feet, likely children or halflings. The cavern slopes gently down, turning into a wide corridor.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs obtained the Chaos Shard, will they destroy it or keep it to find out if they can use it later on? A DC 12 Arcana check reveals that the meteor shard *might* have properties that would make it useful later on, when the PCs have more power and are confronting other beings possessing shards. But the same check also reveals that the shard could be pounded into dust and destroyed with no ill side effects, and that the world would probably be a better place.

Does the mushroom forest's trail lead to a myconid stronghold, or some weirder cavern?

If the Hand of Torog escapes, there's no telling where he'll turn up next.

And if Morgana escapes, she is likely to join a band of murderous halflings who infest a cave nearby in the valley.



SI: ENTRYWAY AND THE FIRST CAVE

Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

SETUP

2 clay scouts (C)

Hand of Torog (H)

Mutant arbalester (M)

The area marked as the entryway is the end of a tunnel that runs for another hundred feet or so to the cavern at the surface. Light filters in from the surface and from holes in the ceiling.

Two of the arrow slits (marked in red on the map on page 32) looking out into the entryway are guarded by clay scout homunculi created by Morgana's meteor-twisted rituals. The homunculi don't stir or attack until someone comes within 3 squares of the door.

As indicated in the tactics notes, the mutant arbalester is chained up beside the inner door and is unable to move. Meanwhile the Hand of Torog is out of position, running across from the other side of the rope bridge.

The keys to running this encounter are:

- ◆ Flit the clay scouts between the arrow slits and then out of sight as they use their mind touch attack from behind the arrow slit's superior cover.
- ◆ Remember to let PCs roll an Acrobatics or Perception check to treat the rubble-strewn entry room as clear terrain that round, rather than as difficult terrain.
- ◆ Choose a dramatic moment for the Hand of Torog to get the inner door open to provide the chained-up mutant arbalester with a clear shot into the entryway.

When the PCs approach the outer door and trigger the clay scouts, read:

You see a flash of motion from the arrow slit and a probe of psychic energy erupts in your mind as a misshapen winged creature made of blue stone tries to catch your eyes and pry into your mind.

When the PCs first get a good look at the clay scouts, read:

There's something wrong with these homunculi. They've been altered by weird magic—they glow with blue light and their parts don't fit together properly.

When the inner door opens and the PCs can see the mutant arbalester chained to the wall ahead of them, read:

(Read the first sentence only if the Hand opens the door.)

A gnoll opens the door at the end of the chamber and dodges aside. Behind him, you see a twisted construct made of glowing blue rock. It looks like a giant crossbow on wheels and it seems to be screaming as it looses a bolt.

2 Clay Scouts (C)	Level 2 Lurker	
Small elemental animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 125	
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 31; Bloodied 15	AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15	
Immune disease, poison	Speed 6, fly 3 (clumsy)	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ◆ Poison		
+3 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the homunculus makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +2 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends)		
⌘ Mind Touch (standard; at-will) ◆ Psychic		
Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)		
Guard Object		
The clay scout gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against targets adjacent to or carrying its guarded object.		
Limited Invisibility ◆ Illusion		
The clay scout is invisible to dazed creatures.		
Redirect (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a melee or ranged attack; at-will)		
The clay scout makes an attack against the attacker: +4 vs. Will; the triggering attack targets a creature adjacent to the clay scout instead (as chosen by the clay scout).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Stealth +8		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 16 (+4)

The Hand of Torog (H)		Level 3 Brute
Medium natural humanoid, gnoll		XP 150
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +4; low-light vision	
HP 52; Bloodied 26		
AC 14; Fortitude 15, Reflex 12, Will 12		
Speed 6		
⊕ Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, or 1d8+8 while bloodied.		
⊕ Quick Bite (at-will; free, when gnoll marauder hits a bloodied enemy with a melee attack)		
The Hand of Torog makes a bite attack against the same target; +4 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage, or 1d6+4 damage while bloodied.		
Desperate Loner		
The Hand of Torog deals 5 extra damage on melee attacks when 2 or more enemies are adjacent to it.		
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Endurance +7, Intimidate +5		
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 12 (+2)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 7 (-1)	Cha 5 (-2)
Equipment leather armor, battleaxe		

Mutant Arbalester (M)		Level 3 Artillery
Medium immortal humanoid (construct, homunculus)		XP 150
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
HP 36; Bloodied 18		
AC 15; Fortitude 14, Reflex 13, Will 14		
Immune disease, poison (and push, pull, slide when chained)		
Speed 6 (0 when chained)		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage		
⊕ Bolt (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 20/40; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage		
⊕ Perverse Double Shot (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ)		
The arbalester makes two bolt attacks, each against a different target. The targets must be within 5 squares of each other. If an ally of the mutant arbalester is within 5 squares of its first target, there is a 50% chance that it will target that ally with its second shot.		
Guard Self		
At the start of the arbalester's turn, if an enemy is within 2 squares, the arbalester recharges its <i>double shot</i> power.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 4 (-2)	Cha 7 (-1)

TACTICS

When the clay scouts see a hero approach within 3 squares of the door, one of the scouts attacks the PCs with *mind touch* while the other flies to ring the alarm bell (marked “b” on the map) and rings it (a standard action). On its next turn, that clay scout returns to an arrow slit, where it has superior cover against attacks from outside, joining its comrade and attacking the intruders with *mind touch*.

The clay scouts aren't smart enough to execute a perfect defense. They stall enemies by dazing them with *mind touch* and use *redirect* whenever possible. The clay scouts are assigned to guard the Hand of Torog. If he shows himself through the inner door, the surviving clay scouts fly to his side, so long as they can do so without taking attacks of opportunity.

Penetrating the cave's defenses would be much harder for the PCs if the Hand of Torog hadn't abandoned his post to bask in the sounds and smells of worship. The one-armed gnoll's assigned role during the ceremonies is to guard the entryway alongside the clay scouts and the mutant arbalester. Going by the book, he's supposed to lead the fight against any intruders or hapless travelers, while sending one of the clay scouts to the temple to warn Morgana. But because the Hand was lurking with his ears pressed to the temple wall, he runs for the entryway upon hearing the alarm bell without revealing his dereliction by warning those within the temple.

The Hand enters initiative the round after the alarm bell is rung (most likely to be round 2 of combat). His first order of business is to reach the mutant arbalester. The arbalester remains chained to the wall, but undoing the locks that bind the arbalester's firing mechanism requires a standard action on the Hand's part, consuming his actions in the second round of the fight.

Cursing loud enough to be heard through the thin doors, the Hand uses his next turn to throw open the inner door, hoping to give the mutant arbalester an enemy target. If there are no enemies in the entry room yet, the Hand leaves the door open so the arbalester has an open field of fire and dodges back toward his quarters out of the arbalester's sight while it deals with enemies.

Unlike savage gnolls addicted to the frenzy of the pack, the Hand is a survivor first. When bloodied, he tries to escape. If he still has over 25% of his hit points when he gets clear, he runs back through the open doors into the main cavern and across the bridge, where he gathers the forces from the second encounter by running to the door of the temple, before the PCs have a chance to take a short rest or fully search that side of the cavern. If he is already below 25% hit points when he runs, the Hand abandons all thoughts of continuing the fight, runs south past the double doors leading to the rope bridge, and plunges through the curtain of dried mushrooms (marked “e” on the main map, page 32) leading to his privy/bolthole (marked “f” on the map, page 32). After diving through, he tries to take his chances cutting away from the cavern along the strip of mushroom forest, but see the notes on the privy below.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Clay Scout Overlook: The east end of the entry room has a 10-foot wall, easily scalable (DC 5 Athletics check) that leads to a 6-foot-tall section where the clay scouts fly to use the arrow slits. The scouts aren't quite smart enough to retreat there on their own, but the Hand can order them to do so if he can see them.

Double Doors: The double metal doors are presently wide open so that the Hand can hear the alarm bell.

Outer Door: This poorly-made wooden door is barred on the inside with an iron wedge made of rusty old swords. If Morgana paid attention to the outside world, she would have noticed that the door is no longer up to the standards of her defense plans, but the Hand of Torog is left to handle such maintenance tasks. The door can't be opened with Thievery, but a DC 10 Strength check will smash it open enough for small characters to slip through, while a DC 15 Strength check will force it all the way open.

Chokepoint Rubble: The entryway is full of jumbled rocks and rubble, but regular trips through by the slavetakers and cultists have resulted in more stable footing and a couple of well-worn tracks. As a free action at the start of their turn, a PC can attempt his or her choice of a DC 10 Acrobatics check or a DC 15 Perception check. Success allows the PC to move in the room as if it was normal terrain until the start of his or her next turn. Failure means the floor counts as rubble for the PC until the start of his or her next turn.



The Hand's Arsenal: This is a collection of cast-off and leftover weapons. The disturbing genius of the collection is that the Hand contrives to arrange each of the dozen or so weapons in his collection so that they rest in the dismembered hand of a victim of the temple. The Hand doesn't actually use any of these weapons, so the collection is something of an art installation. It's also a guilty secret. Morgana doesn't know about it, hence the possibility that a garbage-crusted but otherwise splendid magic weapon (but not a magical battleaxe) rests in the skeletal hand of one of the temple's victims (Treasure Parcel 1).

The Hand's Furs: These lice-ridden sleeping furs sit next to a keg of nasty liquor, both of which could be induced to burst into flames if they're subject to any fire damage. The only unusual items are piles of hyena skulls and antelope horns, jumbled together in heaps around the furs. If the furs catch fire, a creature in the area or an adjacent square is subject to an attack: +4 vs. Reflex, 1d6+1 fire damage.

Inner Door: If the Hand doesn't manage to get to the door himself, this rickety wooden door can be opened with either a DC 10 Thievery check or a DC 5 Strength check.

Privy and Bolthole: Anyone living (other than the Hand) must make a DC 15 Endurance check to venture any portion of their body into the pit. It's large enough to offer a slimy slip-and-slide down into the mushroom cavern detailed in *area 2*. Barring unusual circumstances, any creature passing through this bolthole lands in the mushroom forest below, unharmed, except for the 1d6 poison damage for landing in the mushroom forest. Covered in filth, the creature suffers a -5 penalty on all Charisma-based skills for the remainder of the encounter.

If the Hand has fled here, it's possible he's already under attack by myconids as soon as he lands in the mushroom forest. It's up to you to decide whether the myconids ignore the fleeing Hand (they're used to his smell) or leave hiding and try to kill him.

S2: MUSHROOM CAVERN & ROPE BRIDGE

Encounter Level 1 (350 XP)

Clay scout (C)

Stonefist defender (S)

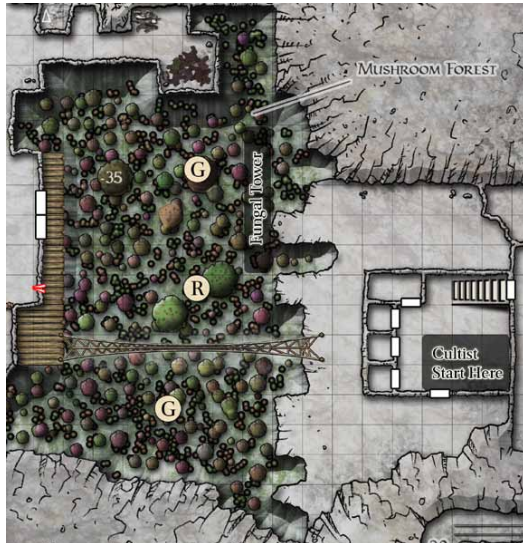
4 cultist archers (A)

In addition, the heroes have a chance to trigger an additional encounter

Encounter Level 1 (500 XP)

Myconid rotpriest (R)

2 myconid guards (M)



SETUP

The dividing line between these two encounter areas is more a matter of pacing than of physical space. The doors to the cavern are wide open, and nearby, the PCs can find an arrow slit (marked in red on the map) to peer through first if they're leery of hanging out near the open doors.

The monsters in the main cavern have no immediate interest in crossing over or climbing up to confront the PCs. The cultists are busy with a torture ritual to create new homunculi and botched witherlings. The myconids are planning a later assault to capture the meteor fragment. One likely course of events is that the PC search this side of the cavern thoroughly and take a short rest before determining how to cross to the other side of the cavern. If the PCs surprise you, use the elements of the encounters that follow to improvise.

The fight with the cultist minions and a couple homunculi isn't meant to be particularly challenging if the PCs cross using the bridge to confront the cultists directly.

If the PCs make things difficult for themselves by avoiding the rope bridge and crossing the floor of the cavern, they're likely to encounter the myconids, which might or might not lead to a fight.

The myconids warn the PCs away, gesturing that the PCs should go back and come no further. If the PCs ignore the warning and advance closer to the hidden fungal tower, the myconids attack. If the PCs end up fighting the myconids, they also have to deal with the cultists in the middle of the myconid fight.

If the PCs do fight with the myconids, skip encounter 5 later in the adventure.

When the PCs first look out across the cavern, read the following:

The symbol of Torog glares at you from the other side of a large cavern. Painted on the wall in dark pigment, this 15-foot-tall symbol graces the stone wall of a building. There's no sign of motion in the cavern, except for the pulsing green light that comes from the bottom of the chasm filling the cave. From what you can see, the chasm is filled with mushrooms of all sizes, many of them glowing with phosphorescence. It smells terrible. As you peer across, you hear a muffled scream from the building featuring the symbol of Torog. It has no doors or windows you can see, but a coarse rope bridge stretches across the chasm.

When the PCs first step onto the wooden platform above the cavern, read:

Now that you're closer, you can see pieces of corpses and skeletons scattered on and through the mushrooms at the base of the far wall, as if someone had thrown bodies off the edge.

After a PC gets halfway across the bridge, or sets foot on the temple-side of the cavern after climbing the walls, read the following:

You hear a scrape from the south side of the rough stone building with the Torog symbol burned on it. Another blue homunculus flaps awkwardly into view, along with a lurching blue creature made entirely of blue stone, all making directly for you. Humans in blood-splattered gray robes bearing the symbol of Torog follow around the south corner of the building, carrying longbows. One screams, "Turn back fools! Torog gives us strength, and you can never defeat our might. We are invinc..."

If the PCs haven't already interrupted and killed the screaming cultist, another gray-robed figure cuffs his fellow, taking a moment to yell "Shut up! Just shut up!" before firing his own bow at the PCs.

If a PC climbs or falls to the mushroom floor and enters a square within 3 squares of one of the concealed myconids' positions, read:

A large mushroom ahead of you shakes itself back and forth, throwing off the debris that covered it. It rises to reveal arms and legs. Once on its feet, it lifts its arms and gestures that you should go back the way you came.

If the PCs turn around, away from the fungal tower, the myconid that gave the warning watches them go and then returns to hiding. If a fight starts, the other two myconids emerge and attack. See encounter S3 for the myconids' statistics.

If a PC enters a space adjacent to the hidden fungal tower, read:

There's something buried in the debris here—some sort of structure, lying on its side, which appears to have been constructed of mushrooms. Still under construction, it seems to be a tower waiting to be raised.

Clay Scout (C)	Level 2 Lurker	
Small elemental animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 125	
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 31; Bloodied 15		
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 6, fly 3 (clumsy)		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+3 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the homunculus makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +2 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends)		
⌘ Mind Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)		
Guard Object		
The clay scout gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against targets adjacent to or carrying its guarded object.		
Limited Invisibility ♦ Illusion		
The clay scout is invisible to dazed creatures.		
Redirect (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a melee or ranged attack; at-will)		
The clay scout makes an attack against the attacker: +4 vs. Will; the triggering attack targets a creature adjacent to the clay scout instead (as chosen by the clay scout).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Stealth +8		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 16 (+4)

Stonefist Defender (S)	Level 2 Skirmisher	
Small elemental beast (construct, homunculus)	XP 125	
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 38; Bloodied 19		
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 14		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 8		
⊕ Spiked Fist (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.		
Guard Creature		
A stonefist defender gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against any enemy adjacent to its guarded creature (see Tactics, below).		
Synchronized Flank		
While a stonefist defender is flanking an enemy with its guarded creature, its attacks deal 1d6 extra damage against the flanked enemy.		
Tumble (move; at-will)		
The stonefist defender shifts 3 squares.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Acrobatics +9		
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 17 (+4)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 11 (+1)	Cha 7 (-1)

4 Archer Cultists (A)	Level 1 Minion Artillery	
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 25	
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 13; Fortitude 13; Reflex 14; Will 13		
Speed 6		
⌘ Shortbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +8 vs. AC; 3 damage, or 5 damage if an ally is adjacent to the target.		
⊕ Shortsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 3 damage.		
Archer's Dodge		
The archer cultist has +4 to AC vs. opportunity attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Str 10 (+0)	Dex 16 (+3)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 10 (+0)	Int 10 (+0)	Cha 10 (+0)

TACTICS

Cultist Fight: The two homunculi focus mindlessly on the nearest enemies. The stonelist defender is currently guarding the clay scout, so the two fight near one another. The defender tries to stay near the clay scout, which prefers to use *mind touch* over its *bite*, but will engage if provoked by ranged attackers. At that point, the clay scout moves with it, flying and landing to stay near the defender. Clever PCs might have no trouble luring the stone defender onto the bridge or near the edge where it could be pushed off into the mushroom cavern.

The archers have no intention of closing to melee; they spread out as best they can around the temple. They might try to retreat after loosing a couple arrows apiece, but they find the door they emerged from shut against them.

Myconid Fight: The three myconids concentrate their attacks, when possible, on the PC who is nearest their hidden fungal tower. If all the PCs manage to climb or ascend back to the temple level, the myconids break off combat and return to hiding, biding their time for their later assault.

If the PCs begin fighting the myconids, wait a couple turns, then bring the bow-armed cultists to the edge of the cavern. The cultists aim mostly at the PCs instead of the myconids, though they may take a shot at a myconid or two. The two homunculi do not join the fight until PCs come to the level of the temple, either by climbing or taking the rope bridge.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Sickly green light from the mushrooms fills the cavern. It counts as normal light.

Central Cavern: The floor of the central cavern is 35feet below the ledges and cavern floors on either side. A fall from either side of the cavern to the floor below deals 3d10 damage, and subjects the creature to an attack for falling into the poisonous mushrooms: +4 vs. Fortitude, 1d6 poison damage (see the mushroom forest below). The walls are moderately difficult to climb, a DC 10 Athletics check.

Fungal Tower: Until later in the adventure, the myconid's fungal tower lies lengthwise along the west edge of the cavern, waiting to be raised when the myconids are ready to assault the temple to seize the meteor shard.

The Mushroom Forest: Dank and poisonous mushrooms ranging from normal size to man-sized giants sprout everywhere on the floor of this cavern. If you move carefully in the mushroom forest, treating the ground as difficult terrain, you can avoid brushing against poisonous mushrooms and their drifting spores. Any non-plant creature that moves faster is subject to an attack: +4 vs. Fortitude, 1d6 poison damage. A creature can only provoke this attack by moving, but is subject to it only once per turn.

Rope Bridge: At its central and lowest point, the rope bridge hangs only 20 feet above the floor of the mushroom forest. Consider rope bridge squares to be difficult terrain. The bridge is anchored solidly at either side by deep-set wooden posts. The quickest way to destroy the bridge would be to cut it apart on one side. Each of the thick ropes supporting the bridge has an AC of 5 and 30 hp on each end. The bridge won't collapse until two ropes were cut. The cultists have no interest in cutting themselves off by destroying the bridge.

Anyone on or adjacent to the bridge can use the following at-will terrain attack.

Shake the Bridge

At-Will Attack

This rickety bridge spans a deep gap. One sudden move, and it sways perilously, threatening to put anyone on it over the side.

Standard Action

Requirement: You must be on or adjacent to the bridge.

Check: Athletics check (DC 10) to sway the bridge.

Success: The bridge sways.

Target: Each creature standing on the bridge (including you, if applicable)

Attack: Level + 3 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target is knocked prone.

S3: THE LOWER TEMPLE

Encounter Level 1 (XP 525)

SETUP

Morgana, halfling priestess of Torog (M)

Scalpel, human torturer (S)

2 botched witherlings (B)

3 evil ritualists (E)

Opening the door to the inner temple isn't difficult (DC 10 Thievery or Strength check), though the cultists inside won't open it themselves. They have attempted to finish their ritual, but they are ready to be attacked. They prefer to fight inside the temple, where the terrain suits them, but only Morgana has ranged attacks that can pull PCs inside, so if the PCs try to fight from outside, they might eventually get their wish.

The ceremony underway in the temple is slightly more than a sadistic torture session, thanks to the power of the meteor fragment embedded in a 30-pound boulder Morgana lugs with her as she moves about the room. Of the six slaves who were brought into the room, the two humans are dead and piled in a corner. Two of the halflings survive. One is locked into a small cell on the west side of the building.

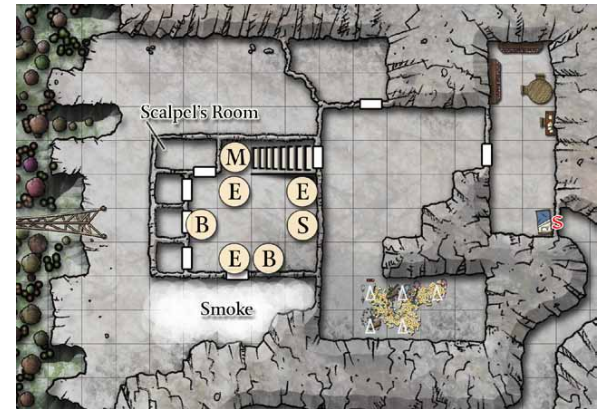
The main feature of this fight is the bizarrely low ceiling that honors the King Who Crawls, "so that all who come into Torog's presence must crawl like the god." The low ceiling forces most creatures to fight hunched over or kneeling. See the jagged ceiling feature in Features of the Area. The witherlings deal more damage to any creature they have combat advantage against, so the low ceiling is potentially lethal, rather than just a nuisance. The other ongoing feature of the fight is the eddying smoke (again, see Features of the Area).

Most of the creatures in the temple fight to the death, but Morgana bolts through the door at the top of the stairs toward her escape route, lugging the boulder with her, as soon as one of the nonminions in the fight is eliminated, she is bloodied herself, or when two of the nonminions in the fight are bloodied.

When the PCs first look inside the temple, read:

The inside of the building is a macabre murder scene.

The ceiling is jagged and low, so that anyone taller than a halfling must stoop or kneel. Hunched in the flickering light of torches on the walls are a motley collection of thickly tattooed humans with long daggers, glowing blue monsters, and prone victims. Two of the creatures are horrid, featuring the skulls of hyenas stitched onto the still bloody shoulders of recently slain halflings. The creatures' eyes, and their bodies where skull meets neck, glow the same weird blue as the homunculi you killed earlier... and the same blue as the big chunk of rock in the arms of the female halfling in red robes on stairs at the back of the room. She booms "Kill them quickly, blessed ones!" in a bass voice that must be augmented by magic, since it shakes the walls and makes the thick, toxic-smelling smoke that eddies around the room surge forward.



At some point during the fight, read:

Two male human slaves appear to be dead, shoved in a corner. Of the halflings who were taken as slaves, one is cowering in a cell on the west wall and one is half-dead and chained in to the floor by the stairwell. The other two seem to have been turned into the hyena-headed monsters that are attacking you.

Once the PCs are fully in the room they can make Perception checks to notice one more feature.

Perception (DC 10):

The floor here is unsteady, and you've just realized why. Chunks of the floor are missing, magically pulled straight from the solid rock. Looking closer, you realize each missing piece is the exact shape of one of the small constructs you fought earlier.

Morgana, Priest of Torog (M) Level 3 Controller
 Small natural humanoid, halfling XP 150

Initiative +1 **Senses Perception** +1
HP 43; **Bloodied** 21
AC 17; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16
Speed 6

⊕ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.

✱ **Blinding Bomb** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 Area burst 1 within 10; +6 vs. Reflex; the target treats all nonadjacent creatures as having concealment until the end of your next turn. Creatures that do not rely on sight to detect other creatures are immune to this effect.

↻ **Torog's Wrath** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Ranged 5; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 3 necrotic damage, and the next attack made against the target has a +2 bonus.

⚡ **Kneel Before Torog** (standard; recharges when bloodied) ♦ **Psychic**
 Close blast 3; +8 vs. Will; 1d8 + 3 psychic damage and the target is knocked prone

Sacrifice Underling (immediate interrupt, when Morgana takes damage from an attack, and only while she is adjacent to her meteorite shard; recharge ☞☞ ☞☞ ☞☞☞)
 Morgana takes half the damage of the attack, and an ally within 5 squares takes the rest of the damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Intimidate +9, Religion +6
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 11 (+1) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 11 (+1) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 17 (+4)

Equipment robes, Chaos Shard (sliver of the meteor), 6 blinding bombs

Scalpel, Human Torturer (S) Level 1 Brute
 Medium natural humanoid XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses Perception** +0
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 13; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12
Speed 6

⊕ **Scalpel** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +4 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Acrobatics +6, Intimidate +5
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Equipment scalpel

2 Botched Witherlings (B) Level 1 Skirmisher
 Small elemental magical beast (undead) XP 100

Initiative +5 **Senses Perception** -1; low-light vision
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15
AC 15; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12
Speed 6, climb 6

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
 +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends)

⚔ **Double Attack** (standard; usable only while bloodied; at-will)
 The witherling makes two claw attacks

Combat Advantage
 A witherling deals 1d6 extra damage on attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Blood Dance (minor; usable only while bloodied; at-will)
 The witherling shifts 2 squares.

Pack Attack
 A witherling's melee attacks deal 2 extra damage against any enemy that has two or more of the witherling's allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Str 9 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 9 (-1)
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 5 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+0)

3 Evil Ritualists (E) Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
 Medium natural humanoid, human XP 25

Initiative +5 **Senses Perception** +0
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Speed 6

⊕ **Sacrificial Dagger** (standard; at-will)
 +6 vs. AC, 4 damage

Unholy Vigor (free action)
 When an evil ritualist, or an ally within 5 squares, scores a critical hit, this creature makes an immediate melee basic attack against an adjacent enemy.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 10 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)

TACTICS

Unlike the half-hearted minions who fought outside, Scalpel and his similarly tattooed evil ritualist minions are crazed with a lust for blood. They fight to the death, gloating over damage they deal, particularly if one of their number lands a critical hit.

The witherings focus on characters who are providing the creatures with combat advantage.

As mentioned above, Morgana flees when things go bad, but until then she fights all-out. Once Morgana runs, she heads through the door at the top of the stairs, pauses to open the door to the garden room if she has time, then runs for her chambers and the secret door. She might pause to throw a blinding bomb or two from the top of the stairs as a final parting gift, but only if some of her allies are still standing.

Blinding Bomb

When thrown, this fist-sized ceramic sphere explodes in a blinding flash.

Level: 3

Price: 30 gp

Alchemical Item

Power (Consumable): Standard Action. Make an attack: Area burst 1 within 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; on a hit, the target treats all nonadjacent creatures as having concealment until the end of your next turn. Creatures that do not rely on sight to detect other creatures are immune to this effect.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The temple is lit by the glow of the meteorite, torches on the walls, and luminous blood stains sprayed on the walls and floor.

Eddying Smoke: The torches on the wall put out belches of foul smoke, stoked to toxicity by some of Morgana's herbs. The smoke surges out of the temple and covers nine squares outside the south wall of the temple. Any creature that ends its turn in one of those squares takes 2 damage from the toxic smoke.

Jagged Ceiling: In honor of the King Who Crawls, the lower temple has a low and jagged ceiling that forces Medium or larger creatures to fight hunched over or on their knees. Such creatures grant combat advantage to all attackers unless they make a DC 15 Acrobatics check at the start of their turn as a free action.

Scalpel's Room: The door to Scalpel's disgusting den does not lock. Torture implements festoon every surface. He sleeps dangling from some of his hooks.

Small Cells: These cells are more like cages with narrow bars and doors that lock with keys that Scalpel carries. One door is locked, containing the intact halfling kidnap victim. The other doors are open. Attacks through the bars of the cages are possible, but grant targets on the other side cover.

Stairs and Door: The stairs (and ceiling) rise 10 feet to a door that locks.

Sacrificial Victim: The other still-living halfling in the room will not remain that way for much longer. He's bleeding from the wounds of Scalpel's ministrations, and will die in 3 rounds unless stabilized with a DC 10 Heal check. A creature who makes a DC 15 Perception or Heal check (a free action) from the entrance realizes that the halfling is still alive and can be saved.

S4: THE UPPER TEMPLE

Encounter Level 0 or 1 (XP 0 or 100)

SETUP

1 botched witherling (B)

Unless other fights spill into this area, the upper temple isn't likely to be the sight of a long fight. Morgana attempts to flee through here with her meteor shard. Escaping means a lot more to her than winning the fight, so she only attacks as a last resort.

If Morgana died in the room below, when a PC enters or looks through the door at the top of the stairs, read:

You see a door to your left and a door straight ahead. To your right, you also see a pile of gold and other coins spilled out on the floor in a heap.

If Morgana preceded the PCs up the stairs, read:

Bright sunlight spills out of a door on the left. The room is full of plants in pots and in long planters. When you can pry your eyes away from the sunlight, you see another door straight ahead. And on your right, down the corridor, are piles of gold coins, just heaped up on the floor.

If the PCs open the secret door while pursuing Morgana, read:

A small figure with claws reaches for your throats. It's another of the twisted little witherlings, crouched behind the door waiting for you.

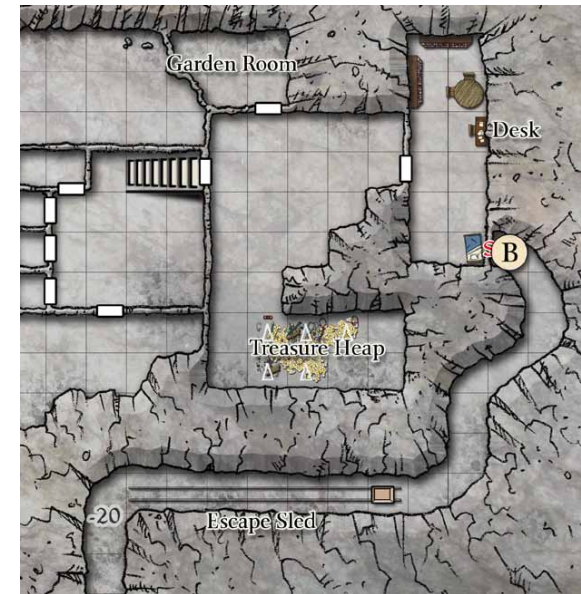
If the PCs get control of the rock containing the shard, read:

The shard is a chunk of blue rock about the size of a fist protruding from a black boulder. You can sense immediately that the shard is a source of potent magic—and equally potent evil.

Botched Witherling (B)		Level 1 Skirmisher
Small elemental magical beast (undead)		XP 100
Initiative +5	Senses Perception -1; low-light vision	
HP 30; Bloodied 15		
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 6, climb 6		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends)		
⊕ Double Attack (standard; usable only while bloodied; at-will)		
The witherling makes two claw attacks		
Combat Advantage		
A witherling deals 1d6 extra damage on attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.		
Blood Dance (minor; usable only while bloodied; at-will)		
The witherling shifts 2 squares.		
Pack Attack		
A witherling's melee attacks deal 2 extra damage against any enemy that has two or more of the witherling's allies adjacent to it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Str 9 (-1)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 9 (-1)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 5 (-3)	Cha 10 (+0)

TACTICS

As mentioned earlier, when Morgana gets to the top of the stairs, she first opens the door to the Garden Room. Then she lugs the meteorite toward her room and the escape tunnel behind the secret door.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The upper temple area, and Morgana's room, are both lit with candles. The escape tunnel is dimly lit by small glowing pebbles that Morgana would normally pick up as she goes, but with the meteor boulder in her arms she can't take the time to pick them up. The blue meteorite provides light as well, depending on how far the PCs are behind the priest.

The Escape Tunnel: The tunnel behind the secret door eventually leads up to the surface of the valley. Somewhere near the first bend in the tunnel, Morgana has set up a panel on the wall and seven buried spearpoints thrusting up from the ground slightly covered by dirt. A passive Perception check (DC 10) reveals what looks like a spear trap. An active Perception check (DC 15) reveals that the supposed trap is entirely fake, nothing more than spearpoints in dirt and a metal panel attached to the wall. Speeding over the “trap” may not reveal it as fake, but the trap won’t fire.

Garden Room: This small room is full of rows of herbs and flowers and edible plants in pots, all basking in the light of three sun rods, so that light shines out of the door glaringly when the door is opened into the much darker upper temple. If Morgana has escaped past the room and opened the door, the light spilling out might be distracting, and will certainly illuminate the sizeable pile of gold down at the south end of the chamber.

If you like, and one of the characters expresses an interest in going through the plants to find out if there’s anything useful, you could reward their diligence with a couple species used to make the blinding bombs and greenbane whose formulas are located in her desk. Those plants might be worth 20 gp if taken back to civilization or an herbalist. Otherwise, the room is simply an expression of Morgana’s fondness for gardening and fresh vegetables.

Morgana’s Bed: This is a halfling-sized bed with fur blankets. The secret door is located above the bed on the wall where someone normal might have hung a work of art.

Morgana’s Escape Sled: Morgana intends to speed down this difficult slope on a sled she has set on rails. The rocky slope on the other side of the sled’s rails is difficult terrain for anyone else. When Morgana moves into the square containing her sled, she ends her move action boarding it. Her next minor action takes her all the way down the slope. She makes a DC 10 Acrobatics check to land on her feet at the bottom; otherwise she is prone in the square past the rails. If Morgana can get off the map, she enters a maze of corridors too small for Medium creatures, which should enable her to escape and reach the surface without further risk of being caught. It’s an area the PCs probably shouldn’t be interested in exploring unless they all attempt to run away from the myconids in encounter 5, and even then the size of the tunnels makes this escape route awkward.

Morgana’s Desk: This desk is a sophisticated, darkwood, halfling-sized desk. The papers include the alchemical formula for a blinding bomb like the one that Morgana likely threw earlier (see *Adventurer’s Vault 2*, page 26) and the formula for a new alchemical item called greenbane that Morgana used to keep the creatures from the lower cavern at bay (worth 160 gp). If the PCs search the desk at their leisure, the discovery of the greenbane formula could be followed immediately by the schlurping sound of the myconid’s fungal tower coming up to the temple level, triggering encounter S5.

Greenbane

Level 4+

This stick of fast-burning incense creates a haze of smoke that keeps plant creatures from closing on the user.

Lvl 4	160 gp	Lvl 19	9,400 gp
Lvl 9	320 gp	Lvl 24	42,000 gp
Lvl 14	1,600 gp	Lvl 29	210,000 gp

Alchemical Item

Power (Consumable ♦ Zone): Standard Action. Make an attack: Close burst 1; targets beasts only; +10 vs. Fortitude; the burst creates a zone, and targets that are hit slide to the closest square outside the zone. The zone lasts until the end of the encounter, and beasts that move into an affected square or begin their turn in an affected square are subject to the same attack from the beastbane.

Level 9: +15 vs. Fortitude.

Level 14: +20 vs. Fortitude.

Level 19: +25 vs. Fortitude.

Level 24: +30 vs. Fortitude.

Level 29: +35 vs. Fortitude.

Secret Door: Spotting the door takes a DC 15 Perception check. If Morgana is in the act of escaping, model the frenzy of the chase by letting the PC with the highest Perception roll every round, with a +1 for every PC helping.

The first surprise in the tunnel is a final botched witherling, made in a previous batch, waiting on the other side of the secret door to attack anyone who comes through. Roll initiative rather than using a surprise round.

Treasure: Morgana leaves her gold lying around, figuring that some assailants might be distracted by money. The heap contains 220 gp and 800 sp.

SS: RISE OF THE FUNGAL TOWER

Encounter Level 1 (XP 500)

SETUP

2 myconid guards (M)

Myconid rotpriest (R)



The PCs can be forgiven for thinking their work is over. But if they failed to fight the myconids in an earlier encounter, or if you think the adventure could be improved with a final desperate encounter, the myconids raise the giant fungal tower they have been gluing together with spittle and ooze. The fungal tower acts as a ramp to the temple level. The myconids march up to seize the meteor fragment.

The first sign of trouble will be when the fungal tower erupts to the temple-level with a giant schlurping sound, audible no matter how far away the PCs might be. The myconids proceed up the fungal tower

moving at their normal speed and do their best to take or pursue the fragment of the meteorite. Along the way, any PCs who approached within 3 squares of the meteorite within the past hour are treated as potential meteorite holders. PCs who avoided coming within 3 squares of the meteorite might be ignored, provided they don't attack the myconids.

Negotiating with the myconids isn't likely. If the PCs possess the meteorite, drop it where the myconids can get it, and back off, the myconids will pick it up and seek to withdraw to their cavern. Any subsequent attacks will result in a fight to the death.

Read the following when the PCs confront the myconids:

Fragments of the mushroom chamber seem to have acquired arms and legs and murderous beady eyes. Three mushroom people are advancing on you, one taller creature with a wide cap and a staff and two smaller specimens people with mighty fists.

2 Myconid Guards (M)		Level 4 Soldier
Medium fey humanoid (plant)		XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +3; tremorsense 10	
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Speed 6		
⚔ Spiny Strike (standard; at-will)		
+11 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.		
⚔ Pacification Spores (standard; encounter) ⚔ Poison		
Close burst 1; +9 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 poison damage, and the target cannot take a standard action until the end of the myconid guard's next turn.		
Roots of the Colony (free, when the myconid guard is hit by an attack while a myconid ally is within 5 squares of it; at-will)		
The myconid guard takes half damage from the attack, and the myconid ally takes the same amount of damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 10 (+2)

Myconid Rotpriest (R)	Level 3 Brute (Leader)	
Medium fey humanoid (plant)	XP 150	
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +3; tremorsense 10	
HP 48; Bloodied 24; see also <i>life burst</i>		
Regeneration 5		
AC 15; Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 16		
Vulnerable radiant (if the myconid rotpriest takes radiant damage, regeneration does not function until the end of the rotpriest's next turn)		
Speed 5		
⚔ Stipe Staff (standard; at-will) ⚔ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage.		
⚔ Decomposing Spray (standard; at-will) ⚔ Necrotic		
Close burst 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 3 necrotic damage.		
⚔ Life Burst (when reduced to 0 hit points) ⚔ Healing		
Close burst 1; targets living creatures; the target regains 10 hit points.		
Roots of the Colony (free, when the myconid rotpriest is hit by an attack while a myconid ally is within 5 squares of it; at-will)		
The rotpriest takes half damage from the attack, and the myconid ally takes the same amount of damage.		
Sacrifice for the Colony (free, when a myconid ally uses <i>roots of the colony</i> to deal damage to the myconid rotpriest; at-will)		
The rotpriest takes the damage dealt to the ally, and the ally takes none.		
Alignment Unaligned		
Languages –		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 12 (+2)	Wis 15 (+3)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 18 (+5)
Equipment staff		

TACTICS

The myconids guards try to use their pacification spores as quickly as they can. Meanwhile the rotpriest slams away with its *stipe staff* and *decomposing spray*. All of the myconids cooperate to use *roots of the colony* to funnel damage where it can be dealt with best. 🌀

About the Author

Rob Heinsoo led the design of the 4th Edition D&D® Roleplaying Game. His 4th Edition design credits include *Martial Power*™ and the *Forgotten Realms*® *Player's Guide*. His other game designs include *Three-Dragon Ante*™ and *Inn-Fighting*.