

THE HAND OF NERGAL

A *Dungeons and Zombies* scenario by Monica Valentinelli and Jason Vey

OVERVIEW

This scenario is set in the Deadworld of Iurth, as presented in Chapter 3 of *Dungeons and Zombies*, “Dead Gods and Demon Lands.” With some modification, however, it can be placed in any Deadworld the ZM desires.

Tucked away in the lands of Iurth is the village of Heimatstadt, a small and unassuming realm that is surrounded by a forest rich with game, trees, and monsters. Anyone may enter the realm, but due to a spell cast by a Kali priestess named Lumbasi, none may leave. It is not impossible to find the way out of the Black Forest surrounding the village. On the contrary, visitors can find the road that led them to Heimatstadt easily enough. When a traveler follows that road and attempts to leave the forest, however, she finds herself either lost within the woods, or back on the village’s main street.

The Voivod or lord of this region is a vampiric zombie lord named Nergal. He falls prey to a dark infatuation with a living girl, the innkeeper’s daughter Ilsa. Nergal strives to capture her beauty and make her his immortal companion. He is consumed with this desire, and entraps any village woman that crosses his path for a short-lived reprieve. These women become Nergal’s vampire brides. The voivod turns them into vampires, and collects their souls in a gem. After Nergal has his way with the woman, he quickly becomes disgusted by her. Nergal shuns the woman, and she becomes one of the vampire maidens that haunt the forests, caves, and castle of Nergal.

When Nergal’s Soul Gem reaches full power, Nergal will use it to bind Ilsa to his heart and will. Any villager that crosses Nergal’s path is in danger of losing their soul, to the gem. Out of desperation, the voivod has recently begun sending small groups of zombies and hell hounds into the village to bring him more

victims. The more souls Nergal captures with the gem, the quicker he can dominate Ilsa.

The Cast quickly finds themselves in the thick of things as they try to rescue the beautiful maiden, kill the vampiric zombie lord, and free the imprisoned realm. The Cast should be on their guard, however, for the darkest conspiracy may lie right under their noses...

ACT ONE—INTRODUCTION

A disoriented Cast wakes up in a comely room at a rustic inn. They are suffering from a mysterious amnesia, unable to remember details about the last few days. When they look around, they realize they are all fully clothed, prepared for battle. Some Cast members find blood on their torn clothing, others find dried mud and grass stains.

Soon after they awaken Petrov, the Innkeeper, arrives. He is amazed by their appearance, and tells them to get cleaned up, for they are late for their meeting with the mayor. If the Cast presses Petrov for more information, he will act confused and concerned. Petrov will mention, as an afterthought, that his daughter, Ilsa, found the group at the edge of the nearby forest sometime that morning.

At the Mayor’s house, the Cast discovers that they wandered into Heimatstadt a week ago, and became victims of a curse that afflicts the entire village. No one can leave, though many have tried. Further, the town is plagued nightly by zombies and hell hounds that drag a screaming villager with them, back into the Black Forest. The Cast was hired by the Mayor, Burgomaster Hendersson, to rid the Black Forest of its unnatural inhabitants and find a way to free the town. Last night, the Cast stopped an attack on the town and chased a dark figure that seemed to be controlling the monster horde. The town waited for the Cast to return, but gave up all hope shortly before dawn. Only one

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townsperson was courageous enough to venture into the Black Forest. Ilsa found the confused Cast in the forest, shortly after daybreak, and led them back to the inn.

The Cast remembers pieces of the battle and of the previous week. One Cast member had a vision of a young girl calling for help, luring them deep into the forest. Another Cast member pictures the battle happening under the light of Ishtar's moon, but doesn't remember what (or who) he was fighting. The Mayor offers the possibility that the mysterious leader of the zombie attacks cast some kind of dark magic on the Cast to cloud their senses.

As the meeting continues, screams ring through the town's streets. Two hell hounds and five zombies attack outside. As the Cast emerges from the Mayor's house to investigate, they see the creatures dragging away a townsman and his son. It's time to loosen up those muscles and leap into the fray.

Zombie Stats: Use a mix of Ahriman Zombies and Restless Dead from *Dungeons and Zombies* page 64 and 65. When the Cast finally enters Nergal's castle, all zombies are either Ahriman Zombies (the elite) and/or Restless Dead (foot soldiers). Some zombies have enhancements: the ability to use weapons, speak to the Cast, etc. (See *Dungeons and Zombies*, page 47 for information on Enhanced Zombies.)

NPC stats: Petrov and Ilsa's stats can be found on page 11, and Burgomaster Hendersson's on page 12, should they ever become necessary.

Orcs: In addition to Hell Hounds and zombies, Nergal uses orcs to bolster his forces. Stats for typical orcs can be found on page 124 of *Dungeons and Zombies* under the "Bakemono" stat block. In this scenario, orcs use battle axes which deal D8x5(20) slash/stab damage, and wear leather armor, which provides an AV of D6+1(4). ZMs who want more "mundane" opponents for their Cast to do battle with should feel free to mix orcs in wherever Ahriman zombies or female vampires are called for. These orcs have been marked by Nergal, so they move freely among zombies without being attacked.

After the battle is decided, the Cast should return to the Inn to rest and gather their thoughts. The ZM should implicate that they're much dizzier and more tired than they should be after the battle. This should be enough to dissuade them from entering the forest at night. If the Cast travels back into the forest, they will find it crawling with zombies and hell hounds too numerous to count. The Cast should realize it's a hopeless endeavor to continue battling, particularly after their Endurance losses start to stack up.

HELL HOUNDS

These vicious creatures are summoned by the dark magic that is controlled by Nergal and his servant Lumbasi (see pp. 6-8). They resemble giant, black wolves with slavering jaws and long, dagger-like claws. Their eyes glow red and their fur is matted and oily. When they die, they fizzle and melt into a pool of brown ooze.

Hell Hounds

Str 3 Int -1 (animal)
Dex 4 Per 2
Con 5 Wil 2

LPs: 50
EPs: n/a
Spd: 16
Essence: 15

Skills: Brawling 4, Tracking 4

Attack: Claws D6 x 3 (9) slashing, Bite D4 x 3 (6) slashing

Powers/Metaphysics: Regenerate 2 points of damage per round unless killed (reduced to -10 LP's or below, and fail a Survival Test).

ACT TWO—COMPLICATION

On the morning of the next day, the Cast may decide whether they want to investigate the Black Forest, or investigate the townspeople.

At this point, the Cast has several leads to follow up on.

In general, the townspeople are both grateful and reluctant to help the Cast. They know the Cast are trapped and have been hired to help solve the mystery, and many know of the legend of Liam Bolger (see p. 10). As such, they are quick to offer the basic resources (ale, bread, game) but not so quick to offer information. If the Cast questions them about the local lord or press too hard about the origins of the supernatural attacks, many townspeople will make the sign against the evil eye and some will even go so far as to shut their door. A few will say, "Talk to the Gypsies. They're fool enough to speak of such things."

THE GYPSIES

A band of *Domari gypsies* camps just outside the town, on the edge of the Black Forest. The tribe mourns the passing of their matron mother. Recently, they named her young and gifted daughter, Anika, the title of clan *Shuvani*. Her brother Erik, a swarthy, young man who serves as the tribe's *Barro*, watches over her every move. Some gypsies gossip that he watches over her too closely, others mutter about the evil whisperings that come from the castle looming above them. Domari gypsies are normally distrustful of outsiders, but have become desperate as they search for a band of heroes that will free them from their imprisonment in this realm. The Domari are, by their nature, wanderers seeking adventure. Here, in Heimatstadt, there are no pockets left to pick or Gadge left to prank.

In their talks with the townsfolk, the Cast will undoubtedly hear that the Domari gypsies are to blame for all of the town's misfortune. Still, the townsfolk are a superstitious lot, and they have adopted some of the gypsies' charms and wards to protect against evil. With a Perception + Notice Task, a Cast member may recognize the townspeople's hand wards as those of the gypsy tribe. If and when the Cast decides to investigate the Domari, the gypsies will greet them with uncomfortable stares and silence. If

the Cast comes across a gypsy in the town buying provisions or selling their wares, they will undoubtedly encounter a superstitious townswoman in tow, begging him to let her speak with her dead husband as well as several, trailing townspeople spitting and cursing at the "gypsy trash."

The villagers fear and distrust the Gypsies, despite having adopted some of their charms and wards. Some even blame them directly for the happenings in town. Should the Cast pay Anika for a vision, or perform a favor for the Domari (perhaps rescuing a young Dom girl or boy from the villagers' persecutions) she will perform a ritual that will shed some light on the identity of their dark jailer. Anika's finger will point towards a hermit woman named Lumbasi, a Priestess of Kali. If the Cast requests the Shuvani to perform any necromantic arts, Nergal will sense the intrusion. What, if any, effect or consequence this has for the Cast is at the ZM's discretion.

THE CAVES

At some point in the episode, the Cast may travel far into Black Forest. With a Perception + Survival (Forest) Task, they will locate a trail leading to the mouth of an underground network of caves. The caves are numerous, and lead in many directions. One part of the caves leads to a ritual sacrifice chamber, where the Cast will discover the location of the missing townswomen's grisly murders. A stone altar rests in the middle of this cavern, its ceiling open to the night air. Should the Cast search carefully enough, they will find a townswoman, barely alive, chained to the cave wall. Two puncture wounds are visible on her pale throat. Any sort of medical skill Test with Perception will reveal the townswoman to be severely anemic. This room will also be inhabited by several of Nergal's vampire brides (exact number is left up to the ZM). Although the brides will savagely attack any who invade their domain, they aren't foolish enough to fight to their death and will flee if possible.

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Within the maze, the Cast may also find the **Tomb of Lost Heroes**, where the bodies of Liam Bolger, the region's first renowned paladin-turned-adventurer, and his group of adventuring companions rest. The Tomb has recently been defiled, and the Cast can see this place was once hallowed and revered. In the gloomy midst of the Tomb, the Cast will have to do battle. Their foes are none other than Liam and his compatriots, who Nergal imprisoned in undeath and commanded to kill anyone who comes into the cave complex.

CAVE MAP KEY

1. Entry Chamber: This chamber will always be guarded by D6(3) Ahriman zombies, and D4(2) hell hounds during the day. At night at least one (D4-1) female vampire will also be present.

2. Blessed Spring: The forest surrounding Heimatstadt used to be a blessed place, and some areas are still possessed of that holy magic. No undead thing will enter the room of the Blessed Spring; the water is, in fact, *holy water*. A splash from it will deal D8(4) damage to vampires and to Ahriman Zombies (but not to restless dead), and immersing such a creature in the spring is fatal. Drinking directly from the spring will heal D10x2(10) points of damage to any injured character! Gifted characters will sense the Essence in the stream with a Simple Perception Test (though they won't know the Essence's true source, just that the waters are magical somehow). Inspired characters who make a Difficult Perception Test, or Invokers with either the Communion or Insight Invocation (Roll Perception + Communion or Insight) will divine the exact effects of the water, which retains its mystical properties even if bottled and removed from the room. Filling a waterskin with water from the spring will yield 5 healing draughts, or 10 "splashes" worth of water to use against vampires.

3. Hell Hound Kennels: This room is full of chained hell hounds, who are unleashed upon the village nightly to bring Nergal and his brides

more victims. They are tended by Ahriman Zombies (D4(2)) and female vampires (D4(2)).

4. The Tomb of Lost Heroes: In this massive marble chamber, Liam Bolger and his companions are laid out reverently upon five stone slabs. The moment the Cast enters, the two doorways slam closed behind them. Liam and his companions stand up, their eyes glowing with an unholy light. Liam speaks to the Cast. *"Welcome to our eternal home. We are cursed to defend this place until those who are worthy return us to our slumber. Will you accept the challenge?"*

If the Cast accepts, the battle will begin. If they refuse, Liam's features will fall as he says, *"Very well. You may leave the way you came."* The door behind the Cast will then re-open. The door to the Castle will remain sealed until Liam is defeated. The door may be opened, temporarily, if someone who is marked by Nergal, such as Lumbasi, passes through it.

If the Cast defeats Liam and his party, the ghosts of the heroes will rise from the fallen bodies and appear before the Cast, thanking them. The now-freed ghosts will gift their weapons to the Cast, and will charge the Cast with a quest to recover and make use of the Grimoire of Spells that Thomas held dear, along with Liam's journals. Liam will explain to the Cast that the curse of undeath has dulled their memory. Both items were stolen by the witch Lumbasi following their burial in the caves. For reasons they don't understand, Liam and his companions were unable to take action against Lumbasi any time she entered their domain. What Liam and his friends don't know, but what the Cast may discover, is that Lumbasi is marked by Nergal and thus undead can take no action against her.

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Liam, Lothon, Thomas, Bartok, Angela

Str 4 Int 1
Dex 5 Per 4
Con 2 Wil 2
DPs: 49
Spd: 18
Essence: 18

Skills: Brawling 2, Hand Weapon: Axes 3 (Bartok), Hand Weapon: Bows 3 (Lothon), Hand Weapon: Knives (Thomas), Hand Weapon: Staff 3 (Angela), Hand Weapon: Swords 3 (Liam and Lothon), Shields 2 (Liam) [Liam 7, others 5]

Attack:
(Angelica) Magic Staff +2 to hit and damage [4] D8x4+2(17) bash or Elemental Earth Invocation level 2 [4]
(Bartok) Great Axe D12x4(16) slash/stab, or Elemental Air Invocation Level 4 [8]
(Liam) Magic Long sword +1 to hit and damage [2], D8x4+1 (17) slash/stab, or punch with gauntlet D4x4+1(9) Bash
(Lothon) Magic Bow +2 to hit and damage [4], D6x4+2 (14) slash/stab, or lightning or fire (see below), or sword D6x4 (12) slash/stab
(Thomas) Elemental Fire Invocation Level 2 [4], or retractable (spring-loaded) arm blades D4x4(8) Slash/Stab

Weak Spot: Any (0)
Getting Around: The Quick Dead [10]; Special Dex [2]
Strength: Strong Like Bull [5]
Senses: Like the Living [3]; Special Perception [2]
Sustenance: Who Needs Food? [8]
Intelligence: Language [1], Tool Use 1 [3], Teamwork [4]
Special Abilities: Damage Reduction [5], Increased Life Points [5]
Spreading the Love: Liam does not Spread the Love

Gear: Magic Items (see sidebar), rusted plate and mail armor AV D8x2 (8) (Bartok and Liam only), Leather Armor AV D6+1(4) (all others), medium battered shield (Liam only) +2 block/AV 15/DC 60

Power: Angelica 64, Bartok 64, Liam 60, Lothon 60, Thomas 60

The Weapons of the Lost Heroes

The re-animated corpses of the Lost Heroes still wield their weapons, powerful items of magic that the spirits of the Heroes will gift to the Cast if they destroy the undead shells and set the tortured souls free.

Bracer of Storms: Etched with the holy symbol of Indra, this plain bracer of silver is meant to be worn by a person well-versed in magic. When worn, the item grants the wearer an Essence pool of 30 additional points that the player may draw upon at any time. The circlet provides a Level 2 Elemental Air Invocation for those who do not have it, or grants a +2 bonus to their existing Air Invocation. It does not provide the ability to Channel Essence. It is worn by the dwarven cleric, Bartok.

Lothon's Blessed Bow: Covered with runes and inscribed with a sigil for Ahura Mazda, this blessed bow is found with a quiver of ten, silver-tipped arrows. The bow grants its archer +2 to hit and damage. Twice a day, the bow yields deadly bolts of flame and lightning (The wielder may fire two fire bolts per day, and two lightning bolts per day. The bolts do not fire simultaneously). The flame bolts deal d6 x 5 (15) points of damage, and the lightening bolts deal d8 x 4 (16) points of damage, plus any bonuses from success levels. It was possessed by the elven Ranger, Lothon, and is still wielded by his re-animated corpse.

Staff of Life: Dedicated to Ishtar, this runic staff has many abilities. When used in combat, the staff has +2 to hit and damage. When used as a staff for healing, the wielder may regain 25 Life Points at a maximum of three times daily. This healing ability may not increase the recipient's Life Points above their normal maximum. The staff's most unique and powerful ability is the *resurrection of the dead*, a maximum of five times. To do this, the wielder must pass a double Willpower roll and spend 20 Essence points. Inspired characters may spend this all at once; others are restricted by their Essence Channeling and so take longer to gather the required Essence. The recipient of the spell must pass a Survival Task with a -1 penalty per every 6 hours the Cast member was deceased. Once the resurrection power is used five times, the staff loses all its magical properties and becomes a normal, if exquisite, quarterstaff. This staff is carried by the druid, Angelica.

Sword of Storms: The symbol of Indra adorns this long blade, and its holy touch inflicts damage to undead victims with no penalty. If faced with the servants of Kali and Ahriman, the Sword of Storms increases its damage multiplier by one. As a Blessed Weapon, the sword has +1 to hit and damage. This weapon is wielded by Liam himself.

Passages: Two sets of passages lead off of the map. The passage to the south leads to Lumbasi's chapel (see below for information). The other two lead to apparent dead ends. With a heroic Perception + Notice Task (at -6), the Cast will discover that these dead ends are actually secret doors, but that keys are needed to open them. The keys are in the possession of Lumbasi, but the Cast won't find this out until later on in the adventure.

THE KALI PRIESTESS

The Kali priestess, Lumbasi, resides on the outskirts of town in a hut. As one might expect from a priestess of Kali, she is a beautiful, middle-aged woman with a penchant for lecherous pursuits. The town does not trust her and her strange, hermetic ways. Certainly mothers dislike the way their young sons have a tendency to go to Lumbasi to become men, and sometimes returned *changed*. In truth, Lumbasi uses her magic to convert those young men to the faith of Kali after she takes their virginity. Any number of young men in Heimadstadt would gladly come to Lumbasi's defense if she was in danger. If the Cast loudly suspects Lumbasi is either in league with Nergal or responsible for the curse, many of village residents will make the sign of protection against her, while the young men will brashly warn the heroes to stay away from Lumbasi.

Lumbasi owes her allegiance to Nergal through his powerful gift, the *Tome of the Black Earth Mother*. This book's ritual magic entrapped the realm's inhabitants and called forth Nergal's servants to attack the village nightly. Lumbasi serves Nergal mostly because he possesses the amulet that is the focus for the Tome's spells. Were the amulet destroyed and her current spells cancelled, Lumbasi could simply create another focus and keep it for herself. Having her own focus of power would free her from Nergal's service. Alas, as long as he holds that amulet, Lumbasi can not make a move against him. Lumbasi also holds the keys to the two secret passages through the caves, which lead to the Prison Tower and Chapel of Ahriman in

Nergal's castle. Locating these keys without Lumbasi's assistance requires searching her bedroom and making a Perception + Notice Task at -6 (the keys are very well hidden in a lock box concealed in a secret panel behind the wall. ZM's are also justified in requiring a basic Dexterity + Lock Picking Task to open the lock box.

Should the Cast investigate the home of Lumbasi, she will be home on a roll of 7 or higher on a D10 and they'll have to do some fast-talking to get inside, or start a fight, in which case she'll flee to the caves through her underground temple, grabbing the Tome as she runs, but leaving behind her *journals* (see below). If they gain entrance, they will find a curtain that with a Perception + Notice Task they can divine is made of human skin. Behind this curtain, prominently displayed, is the *Book of Spells*. Lumbasi pretends that this Grimoire is the true source of her magic; while she has found it useful, it is not the true source of her power. Lumbasi keeps the Tome of the Black Earth Mother well-hidden; beneath a well-concealed trap door in her house (Difficult Perception + Notice Task at -3 to find) the Cast will find a narrow staircase heading down. At the base of the stairs, they will come upon a temple to Kali, and discover the Tome on a pedestal in front of the altar. On a roll of 1-3 on a d10, Lumbasi will be here and the Cast will have to do battle with her. Regardless of whether or not she is here, the Cast will have to battle her two *Golems*, magical constructs made of stone and clay. These creatures will come to life and attack without mercy the moment any Cast Member moves against Lumbasi or approaches the altar, and will not quit until destroyed.

If Lumbasi is in the temple and seems in danger of losing the Tome, she will betray the voivod in the hopes that the Cast will forget about her and refocus their efforts elsewhere. To Lumbasi, the book is everything; a bible of her goddess, and she's even willing to lose the power contained in Nergal's amulet. Indeed, she's happy to have it done, since it frees her of Nergal's influence.

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The book has instructions on creating a new focus if the original is destroyed, so Lumbasi can make use of the Cast's talents, just as everyone else in town. Lumbasi also knows of the conspiracy between the Burgomaster and Petrov, and will tell the Cast everything to save her own skin. She will also give her word, if given the chance, that she will neither help the Cast further nor hinder their efforts, and contrary to what one might expect, Lumbasi is an honorable sort. If the Cast show her mercy and let her keep her Tome, she'll go off on her way and not trouble them further, and in fact could make for an interesting recurring Supporting Cast or Adversary in an ongoing game.

After defeating Lumbasi and her golems, the Cast has many choices; question the priestess (if she survived), obtain the Tome of the Black Earth Mother, read *Liam's Journal* (which links her to Nergal), or study the Grimoire of Thomas St. John. The priestess can impart all of the Journal's information to the Cast if they speak with her. She will add that there's little time left; Nergal has been using the kidnapped victims for more than just maintaining his own immortality. Lumbasi will reveal Nergal's plan to use his Gem. At this time, she'll also turn over the keys to the cave complex. If the Cast does not defeat Liam or obtain the keys from Lumbasi, they'll have to find other help to get into Nergal's castle (see the Gypsy solution, p. 12)

At the rear of the temple is a passageway leading to the Cave complex (see p. 4)

Lumbasi, Priestess of Kali

Str 3 Int 2

Dex 4 Per 4

Con 4 Wil 4

LPs: 46

EPs: 38

Spd: 16

Essence: 71

Qualities and Drawbacks: Attractiveness 1, Charisma 2, Covetous (Ambitious) 3, Covetous (Lecherous) 2, Cruelty 2, Essence Channeling 6, Hard to Kill 5, Honorable 1, Increased Essence 10, Inspired Invoker, Zealot

Skills: Brawling 1, Dodge 3, Fast Talk 2, Hand Weapon (Knives) 1, Hand Weapon (Staves) 2, Magic Bolt 4, Myth and Legend 4, Notice 3, Occult Knowledge 2, Rituals (Kali Worship) 5, Seduction 2, Stealth 3

Attack: Knife D4x3(6) slash/stab, Staff D8x3(12) bashing, or by magic.

Powers/Metaphysics: Elemental Air 2, Elemental Earth 2, Affect the Psyche 2, Communion 2, Shielding 2, Soulfire 2 and Miracles: Binding, Holy Fire, Touch of Healing

Gear: Ceremonial knife, cloth armor (Heavy, yet form-fitting robes) AV D4 (2), Book of Spells, Tome of the Black Earth Mother

Lumbasi's Golems

Str 9 Int -2

Dex 1 Per 2

Con n/a Wil n/a

LPs: 100 EPs: n/a

Spd: 12 Essence: 20

Qualities and Drawbacks: Increased Life Points, Damage Resistant (as Zombie Aspect), Natural Armor AV D8x2+2 (10)

Skills: Brawling 5

Attack: Fist Smash D4x9(18) Bashing

Books in Lumbasi's possession

Grimoire of Thomas St. John: This grimoire is approximately 10 inches wide by 12 ½ inches long, and weighs approximately 10 pounds. Its cover and clasp are inscribed with elaborate silver runes, and it radiates magic. The pages are perforated, implying that it is meant to be torn apart. Indeed, the book is filled with single-use magical effects which are activated when the user tears out a page and reads the spell contained on it. On the first page of the book are instructions to its use. Every Invocation effect in *Dungeons and Zombies* is represented once; each spell has 3 task levels of success and a base level of effect. Where resisted rolls are necessary, use the current reader's Simple Willpower Test as the Invocation Task result. This book functioned as the grimoire of the wizard Thomas, and is a complete treatise on the workings of Invocation magic; with proper study it could teach a Gifted (though not Inspired) character any Invocation desired (spending experience points would still be a requirement; the book merely makes the knowledge available to learn).

Tome of the Black Earth Mother: An ancient book infused with dark, ritual magic dedicated to the goddess Kali. The heavy tome is full of complicated and powerful ritual magic that can only be accessed by a follower of the Black Earth Mother, Kali. It ties all of its spells to a focus defined by the Caster; spells cast are permanent as long as the focus exists. This focus is discussed in the very beginning of the book as the source of all power within. *Destroy the Link*, the book implies, *and all spells shall be broken*. Within its pages, a Cast member searching for a spell will find "To Seal the Borders". The writing outlines the creation of the Black Forest and how to entrap everyone living within its reach. It mentions a focus to which the spell must be bound, which gives the focus's owner great power over any spellcaster who uses this book, but does not tell what the focus is. Also in the book is a spell called "Cloud the Memory," and the Cast will rightly suspect that this is the spell that has victimized them. Other spells held within the pages are at the discretion of the ZM.

Journals of Liam Bolger: Liam was a Paladin dedicated to the service of Indra, and was one of the first adventurers to cross into the Heimatstadt. Throughout its pages, the Cast may discover answers to their most urgent questions – how Liam and his band were trapped in the realm, Liam's suspicions that the Kali Priestess controls the curse, and that she is in league with Nergal (through a magical kind of blackmail). The journal details Nergal's love for Ilsa and outlines a plot by the mayor and Petrov, who trapped Liam and his companions in Heimatstadt to force them to save the town. Nergal, it seems, believes Ilsa to be the reincarnation of his long-dead wife. He has tried to court Ilsa legitimately, and she has resisted his overtures. Thus, Nergal gifted Lumbasi with the Tome of the Black Earth Mother, which he (a follower of Ahriman) cannot use, in return for her allegiance. He ensures this allegiance will remain strong for he holds the focus for all spells contained within the book. If he destroys the focus, or removes the enchantments upon it, all of Lumbasi's spells will fail, and she will lose much of her power. At Nergal's insistence, she used the book to seal the borders of the town, allowing none to leave until Nergal makes Ilsa immortal, and wins her hand in marriage. Once he has achieved his goal, Nergal plans to baptize the union in the blood of the village; he will unleash all of his undead creations be they vampire, zombie or hell hound, on the town and revel in the unrestrained slaughter of the villagers. The next passage tells about the demise of Liam's four companions, Thomas, Angelica, Bartok and Lothon as they explored the forest. The final entry discusses Liam's intent to face the Voivod alone.

THE INNKEEPER'S DAUGHTER

The humble inn sits on the other side of town from Lumbasi's hut, and houses the object of Voivod Nergal's desire. The Innkeeper's daughter Ilsa, blessed with a slender yet curvaceous form and golden hair, looks kindly on her family's guests with her twin crystal-blue eyes. Ilsa is possessed of a gentle heart and caring nature, and takes great pains to care to the comforts of her family's guests. Townspeople gossip about the young and beautiful, seventeen-year-old girl, saying she serves the moon goddess Ishtar through rhythmic, naked movements under Her light. Still others attribute the grisly findings of mutilated townsmen, and townswomen

disappearances, to her moonlit dances. Few, if any, suspect her enthrallment by Nergal.

It is true that Ilsa is a follower and secret priestess of the goddess Ishtar, and she wants nothing more than to escape imprisonment and get out into the world where she can join a cult to better serve her goddess. She is afraid of Nergal, but believes the soft voices she hears calling her in the night are those of her goddess, not those of a vampire lord seeking to make her his eternal companion. She knows nothing of her father's scheme to force the Cast to save her.

Her father is well aware of the truth, having turned down Nergal's demands for his daughter's hand. It was Petrov who arranged for the Cast to be led into the forest and to the

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village, so that they would be inclined to help save the town and his daughter. The girl who initially beckoned the Cast into the Black Forest was Ilsa's young, sixteen-year-old cousin Marta, using a powerful magical amulet that she stole from Lumbasi. Marta disappeared the following night in an attack, along with her parents. If pressed, Petrov will reveal the truth of the matter, and confess to the entire plan to lure the Cast in.

Ilsa, the Innkeeper's daughter

Str 2 Int 3
Dex 4 Per 2
Con 2 Wil 2
LPs: 35
EPs: 23
Spd: 12
Essence: 40

Qualities and Drawbacks: Attractiveness 3, Charisma 3, Covetous (Ambitious) 2, Covetous (Lecherous) 1, Hard to Kill 3, Honorable 2, Increased Essence 5, Inspired, Situational Awareness, Zealot

Skills: Dodge 3, Hand Weapon (Staves) 2, Myth and Legend (Iurth) 3, Notice 3, Perform (Dancing) 3, Riding 3, Rituals (Ishtar Worship) 3

Attack: Staff D8x2(8) bashing
Powers/Metaphysics: Blessing, Touch of Healing
Gear: Chances are when the Cast find her, she's either naked or wearing a sheer nightgown.

THE MAYOR

Immersed within the conspiracy is a quiet and fearful town mayor named Burgomaster Hendersson. The Mayor can be a valuable resource if the Cast plays their cards right. If the Cast becomes stuck and refer back to this portly man (who has an affinity for strong ale) he can direct them to the cave complex and the Tomb of Lost Heroes, where he suggests they might find more information to help them in their quest.

Burgomaster Hendersson will also admit that he suspects the town is cursed due to Petrov's staunch refusal to bow to the demands of the

lord Nergal, but that most of the town does not know or suspect this. This admission will only come if the Mayor feels sorely threatened. Burgomaster Hendersson, like everyone else in town, is terrified of Nergal. He knows that the voivod is not only aware of all happenings in town, but fears that Nergal may be listening on their conversation at this very moment!

The mayor agreed to participate in Petrov's plans to lure the Cast to Heimadstadt when Ilsa began disappearing—sometimes for days at a time—into the forest. When villagers began to gossip loudly about her dancing wildly, naked, in the moonlight, the Mayor became concerned. Ilsa savagely attacked those who approached the girl in her trance. Strangely, if Ilsa was restrained, she would awake from her trance and remember nothing of what had happened. If the Cast presses the mayor as to why he would assist Petrov instead of handing the girl over to Nergal, the burgomaster will confess to being terrified of Nergal, and to being somewhat smitten with young Ilsa.

Petrov, the Innkeeper

Str 3 Int 2
Dex 2 Per 2
Con 4 Wil 2

LPs: 31
EPs: 32
Spd: 12
Essence: 15

Qualities and Drawbacks: Cruelty 1, Obsession (Protect Ilsa), Resources 2, Situational Awareness

Skills: Brawling 1, Crafts (Brewing) 4, Crafts (Cooking) 4, Dodge 2, Hand Weapon (Clubs and Maces) 1, Notice 1, Riding 2

Attack: Small Mace D6x3(9) bashing

Burgomaster Hendersson, Mayor of Heimatstadt

Str 2 Int 3
Dex 2 Per 3
Con 2 Wil 3

LPs: 26
EPs: 26
Spd: 8
Essence: 15

Qualities and Drawbacks: Addiction (Heavy Drinker), Charisma 3, Coward, Honorable 1, Paranoid, Resources 3

Skills: Brawling 1, Bureaucracy 5, Dodge 2, Fast Talk 4, Notice 3

Attack: Fist D4x2(4) bashing

Troubleshooting

Upon hearing the rumor of the Innkeeper's daughter dancing naked by the moonlight, the Cast may choose to follow her from the Inn to the heart of the Black Forest. Should the Cast decide to follow her, they will be unharmed provided Ilisa is dancing. If the Cast tries to stop or restrain the girl, hell hounds and zombies will attack the Cast. It is at the discretion of the ZM whether or not Ilisa is taken by Nergal's black carriage during the battle; this could expedite the sequence of events in the scenario greatly. Alternately, Ilisa's dance could lead the Cast to the cave complex, where they will have to see to her safety while they explore this new lead.

ACT THREE—CLIMAX

By this time, the Cast should have faced Lumbasi and gathered all the information they need to determine that Voivod Nergal rests at the heart of this mess. Nergal, for his part, is not blind to the interference of the Cast (he has Communion—as per the Invocation on page 38 of *Dungeons and Zombies*—with his entire domain through Lumbasi's spells) and will quickly expedite his plans.

That evening, Ilisa will be kidnapped and taken to Nergal's castle for the final ritual that will make her his beloved forever. Witnesses will see Ilisa step forth from the Inn, wearing a sheer, wispy nightgown, and climb into a black carriage drawn by hell hounds and attended by Ahriman Zombies. Petrov will be beside himself with grief and will beg for the Cast's assistance; he will offer anything—including Ilisa's hand in marriage—to rescue his daughter and free the town from the curse.

This presents a moral dilemma of sorts for the Cast. Petrov and the burgomaster have been dishonest to them since day one, but on the other hand, many of the people in this town are innocents, and it's certainly in the Cast's personal best interests to break the curse and get out of this hellish place.

THE GYPSY SOLUTION

Getting through the forest to Nergal's castle requires either the keys held by Lumbasi, or the aid of the gypsies, who know safe routes through the woods to avoid the zombies and Hell Hounds that infest the area even during the daytime. Eager to be free of their curse, Erik will personally lead the Cast along the trails to reach the castle of Nergal, though he will not enter to face the Voivod. He will explain that the gypsies are powerless; since they arrived before the spell to seal the borders was cast, they are as much tied to the curse as the

townsfolk, and only true outsiders such as the Cast may break it.

Once they make their way inside, the Cast must battle their way through Nergal's castle to his bedchambers, where the dark lord awaits, ready to destroy these latest interlopers into his domain.

MAP NOTES AND KEYS

CASTLE OVERVIEW MAP

Nergal's castle sits on a major Place of Power, a kind of mystical convergence that under normal circumstances would provide 200 Essence per day to whoever had the wherewithal to draw upon it (anyone with Essence Channeling). However, Nergal has used all of this extra Essence to enhance the zombies within his castle, so while magically inclined Cast Members may sense that they are in a place of incredible mystic power, they won't be able to draw upon the power. Likewise, using the power contained here to enhance his zombies means that Nergal still has access to his full personal Essence Pool.

Notes about location descriptions

The important parts of the Castle are the Keep, the torture chamber, and the chapel of Ahriman. The Keep is where the Cast must venture to defeat Nergal and remove the curse from the town. The chapel is where Ilsa is currently kept entranced and weak, and the torture chamber is a possible entrance to the Castle. Many of the other areas of the castle are deliberately sketchy in description, and are left to the discretion of the ZM to flesh out if she so desires.

1. Stables – This is where Nergal keeps his mounts—the Hell Hounds he sends to attack the village and which draw his carriage. These Hell Hounds aren't well restrained, and can easily break free and attack the party if and when they emerge into the open courtyard. The exact number of Hell Hounds here is up to the ZM,

but there should be at least two to three per Cast Member.

2. Barracks/Guest Housing - Where the lord's immediate guard and guests who weren't of consequence would stay. This building should be full of zombies and maybe a couple castoff vampires. If using the Orcs option (p. [?]), this is where Nergal's small force of orcs bed down.

3. Mess Hall - Where the occupants would gather for meals. Since everyone in the castle is undead, this building is empty and in disrepair. Once again, if using the Orcs option (p. 2), the building is not empty, but is still in poor repair. An orcish chef would prepare slop for the troops in here if this is the case.

4. Chapel to Ahriman – One of two possible areas where the Cast will enter via the secret entrances from the caves. This elaborate chapel to the evil god Ahriman is meticulously kept. The outside is white marble; the interior is mostly obsidian. The long sanctuary is barren of pews, with torches lining the walls, and statues of debauchery, evil, and perversion covering the place. At the front of the sanctuary is a blood-stained obsidian altar and a bible/ritual manual dedicated to the dark god. This area is occupied by 2 vampire servants of Nergal's, and 2 Hell Hounds who guard the place. A Perception + Notice roll will uncover a hidden switch behind the altar that opens a door leading to a ceremonial chamber in back. The chamber is decorated with exquisite tapestries and adorned in crimson velvet and satin. Ilsa can be found here, laid out on a bed in the small but lavish chamber in a deep, enchanted slumber. She has been bitten and drained to the point of death; there is blood on her lips. An Intelligence + Myth and Legend roll will reveal that the Cast has three days to find a cure for the girl or she will rise as one of the undead. An Intelligence + Occult Knowledge Task will reveal that the Cast has one day to find this cure, not three, and that the cure is to kill the vampire who sired her: Nergal. She is weak and anemic, but can be awakened and is strong enough to accompany the Cast.

5. Keep - This is Lord Nergal's private house. It has all the stuff you'd expect: a commons room, throne room, bedrooms, ball room, library, kitchen, etc. See the specific maps for the Keep for more information.

6. Gardens/Practice Field - Where the lord can go to relax, practice swordplay and archery, etc. The gardens here are well-tended, but still foreboding. They consist of night-blooming flowers, lilies, and black roses.

THE TOWERS

Each Tower has 2 doors leading out onto the ramparts. Nergal regularly has zombie troops patrolling the area, and has used his necromantic skills to gift them with the intelligence to use weapons both ranged and melee. If using the Orcs option (p. 2), orcish troops may also patrol the ramparts.

Tower A and B. Guard Towers - Not much of consequence here. The Cast might encounter a zombie or three in each.

Tower C. Prison Tower - A spiral staircase leads up. The tower is dotted with empty cells, and a staircase descends into the dungeons (which are typical rows of cells and torture chambers, not D&D-style dungeons). This is one possibility of where the Cast will ideally enter, via the caves (see p. 4). If the Cast chooses this passage, they will emerge into a medieval torture chamber, complete with racks, iron maidens, dunking machines, and all manners of horrific devices. One of the voivod's more vicious vampire servants, Erszébet, makes her home here, she brings kidnapped victims to sate her unholy thirst. The cast will note a throne encased in an open cage, which has gore-covered spikes on top. Next to the throne is a small tower, with a ladder and platform suspended over the spikes. Erszébet likes to sit naked on this throne and have zombies cast young men upon the spikes, where she can bathe in their blood as it rains upon her. She will be here, and will attack the Cast with five zombies and two Hellhounds. If the battle goes

badly, she'll turn into a bat and fly off to warn her master, in which case she'll also be present at the final battle. She is enslaved and loyal to Nergal. However, deep within her black heart Erszébet would love nothing more than to see Nergal destroyed, which would free her. If and when he dies, the vampiress will flee the battle, heading for more fertile grounds.

Tower D. Ilsa's Tower - This tower has been set aside for Ilsa's private use after she's been vampirized (but for now she's being held in the Keep). It's lavishly decorated and meticulously kept, but is mostly empty. There may possibly be a jealous female vampire in here.

NERGAL'S KEEP—FIRST FLOOR

ZM Reminder

If using the Orcs option (p. 2) it's possible to substitute orcs for some or all of the Ahri-man zombies or vampires encountered in the keep, though we recommend more undead than orcs, since Nergal's private house likely wouldn't contain many of these creatures, which he considers useful but base and filthy.

1. Entry Hall: This is the main greeting hall for visitors to the castle. It is equipped with several long tables and chairs where visitors could sit and make themselves comfortable while waiting admittance to the rest of the Keep.

2. Library: This is the public library for the keep. The room is filled with bookshelves and tables at which patrons could sit and study, or read at their leisure. Most of the books here are moldy and unreadable. Still, there is a chance that a few of the books may still be useable and even valuable (they are old). On a Perception + Notice Task, the Cast finds D4(2) books that are in saleable condition, valued at D8x5(20) Silver pieces each. Reading these books would also enable the reader to spend experience to increase her Humanities (History of Iurth) skill. The door at the north of this library is always

kept locked and is of solid oak. It has AV 10, DC 60, and BV 20. The lock is also fine quality, requiring at least 4 success levels on a Dexterity + Lock Picking Task to open.

3. and 11. Guard Rooms: These rooms, annexing the main hall, library, and lounge/meeting area, are small stations where guards could be called upon at a moment's notice. Nergal keeps D4x2(4) Ahriman zombies in each station that will emerge and attack any intruders into either the library or the lounge/meeting area.

4. Study: The lord's personal study. An ornate rug adorns the floor in this chamber, which is furnished by a plush chair and desk. Not much of interest here, though it's possible one of Nergal's vampire brides might inhabit the room.

5. Throne Room: This large chamber is mostly empty; the walls are lined with black marble, and half-rotted tapestries line the walls. Nergal's throne sits at the eastern wall. On the southeast wall is a trap door, which leads to a service hall emerging into the kitchen (See room 8). A secret staircase leading into Nergal's private chambers is hidden next to the trap door, but requires a Perception + Notice Task at -9 to find (it is extremely well concealed).

6. Ball Room: This once was a grand ball room. It has since fallen into decay and disrepair. D10(5) Hell Hounds, D4(2) Ahriman Zombies, and D8(4) Restless Dead inhabit this room.

7. Great Hall: A large banquet hall, lined with tables long since eaten by termites, time, and disuse. On a roll of 1-3 on a D10, there will be D12(6) Restless Dead and a vampire bride in this room.

8. Kitchen: This room is empty. It was once the kitchen for the palace, but as everyone inhabiting the place is undead, there is no need for food. A trap door in the floor leads to a service tunnel emerging into the Throne Room (Room 5), and a spiral staircase in the northwest corner leads to the rooms on the second floor.

9. Display Room: This room is filled with ornate suits of armor and weaponry on display. The armor and weapons are functional, though not magic. Particularly cruel ZM's may wish to have the armor animate and attack the party as they enter the room, giving each suit the same stats as Liam (see p. [?]), minus the intelligence. A spiral staircase on the west wall leads to the rooms on the second floor.

10. Lounge/Meeting Area: This was a meeting area for important dignitaries to the castle. It is currently inhabited by D4(2) vampire brides and their pet Hell Hound.

NERGAL'S KEEP—SECOND FLOOR

1-8. Guest Bedrooms: These rooms once played host to the lord's guests who were of sufficient station to merit rooms within the keep itself. Now, they are occasionally used by his vampiric brides, a few of whom at the ZM's discretion may be here. Each room is furnished with a bed and vanity chest. All mirrors have been smashed. Since the vampiresses occasionally sleep here, the beds are maintained and have elegant sheets and bedclothes. Vampire encounters in these rooms are at the discretion of the ZM. Otherwise, on a roll of 1-2 in any given room there will be D4(2) restless dead. If the Cast makes too much noise on this floor, Nergal will be alerted to their presence, and will head for the chapel to grab Ilsa. If the Cast have Ilsa with them, the vampire lord will be outraged and will return to face them wherever the ZM deems appropriate.

ROOMS 9, 10, 11—NERGAL'S QUARTERS

Ideally, if the Cast play their cards right, Nergal will be here, and may be caught off guard by the Cast's intrusion. He will likely either be in his study or the library, poring over the final rituals to commit Ilsa's soul to Ahriman upon her rising as a vampire. With him will be D4(2) Hell Hounds, and he has the power to summon D8(4) Ahriman Zombies and D4(2) Vampire Brides from elsewhere in the castle, who will arrive within 1 round of his calling.

9. Nergal's Dining Area: This is Nergal's private dining area. It has fallen into disrepair.

10. Nergal's Private Library: This room is Nergal's Private Library. It contains extensive treatises on vampirism, undeath, and Necromancy. It'd be worth a veritable fortune to a Necromancer, and taking the proper books from here opens up the door to any Necromancy path a Gifted (but not Inspired) character would wish to learn. In the southeast corner is a chest that contains: D12x10(60) gold pieces; a Cloak of Illusions capable of casting any Full Illusion effect (per the Lesser Illusion Invocation, *D&Z* p. 42) once per day, covering twelve cubic feet and lasting five minutes; and a blessed long sword with no magical effects added to it, inscribed with the symbol for Ahura Mazda, whom Nergal worshipped in life. Since becoming a vampire, Nergal is unable to touch the sword, though he keeps it for sentimental value.

11. Nergal's Bed Chamber: Decked out exactly like the guest rooms (see rooms 1-8).

12. Nergal's Study: Likely the best physical location to stage an encounter with the dark lord (as it's the largest), this room has a desk, chair, table, and bookshelf. It also contains the secret stairwell leading to the throne room downstairs. If Nergal has advanced warning of the Cast's presence, this stairwell will be wide open to view; he won't bother to close the hidden door behind him when running for Ilsa. Otherwise, he'll be in one of these rooms and ready to fight.

Nergal, the Vampire Zombie Lord

Str 5 [1] Int 3 [1]

Dex 3 Per 3

Con 2 Wil 5 [3]

Dead Points 226

Essence 122

Speed 18

Skills: Brawling 4, Hand Weapon (axes) 4, Shield 3, Necromancy 6

Weak Spot: Fire, Sun, Blessed Objects, Magic [-5 total]

Weight: Life Like [0]

Getting Around: The Quick Dead [3]

Strength: Strong Like Bull [5], Teeth [4]

Senses: Like a Hawk [2]

Intelligence: Language [1], Long-Term

Memory [5], Problem Solving [15]

Sustenance: Daily [0], Blood [-2]

Special: Shapechange [Wolf, Bat] [16],

Regenerate 1 DP/Turn [5], Increased Essence

20 [20], Nightstalker [-2], Slaves [Female

Vamps] [78 each], Compulsion [4], Zombie

Lord [100]

Spreading the Love: Ritual [Blood

Exchange] [-3]

Metaphysics: Might of the Dead, Seal the Dead, Rule the Dead, All necromancy powers at level 6, Communion Level 3

Total Power: 182, plus Slaves

Amulet of the Zombie Lord: Worn about Nergal's neck, this simple bloodstone amulet is set in silver, and is affixed to a black, leather cord. The Amulet imparts its wearer with all of the abilities of a Zombie Lord as described in *Dungeons and Zombies*, Chapter 3. The Amulet is the focus for all of Lumbasi's spells, including the "Seal the Borders" spell; as long as it exists, all the spells cast from the Tome of the Black Mother are permanent. It must be destroyed for the Cast to get out of Heimatstadt. It has AV 5 and DC 200. A Simple Perception Test by any Gifted character will reveal that the amulet hums with power, and that it seems to be connected somehow to the entire realm. Attempting to strike the amulet while Nergal wears it imposes a -7 penalty to attack rolls; it's a very small object and the vampire lord doesn't make it easy to hit.

Nergal's Soul Gem: This blood-red gem houses the souls of all the victims Nergal has claimed. He intends to use the combined Vital Essence of the souls to power his ritual to enslave Ilsa's mind and heart. A Perception + Necromancy, Perception + Insight, or a Simple Perception Task (by an Inspired with the Divine Sight Miracle) will enable a character to see the souls trapped within. The Gem is worth approximately D12x10 (60) gold pieces, or is of great value as an Essence battery to a less-than-scrupulous mage or Necromancer, who can draw from the gem's current stores of 300 Essence. However, doing so would be akin to torturing and murdering the souls within all over again and the ZM shouldn't hesitate to point this out. The gem can be destroyed with a blow from a heavy, blunt object like a hammer or stone, and this would set all of the souls free (or at least, as free as any soul can be during the Godswar).

ACT FOUR—RESOLUTION

The adventure ends with the Cast facing the Voivod Nergal for better or for worse, and hopefully emerging victorious. If the Cast defeats the Voivod, the curse will be lifted and anyone can come and go as they please. The Gypsies will await the Cast's return, and Erik and Anika will greet them and inform them that the Domari Gypsies will no longer consider them gadje, they are now friends. To this end, the Gypsies will present them with talismans that mark them as gypsy-friends for eternity.

What the Cast does with the townsfolk is up to them. The Burgomaster and Petrov have behaved extremely dishonorably towards the Cast, manipulating them to their own goals. Ilsa will beg the cast for her father's life. Ilsa will shy away from intervening for the Burgomaster, of whom she is terrified because he has stalked her for years. Petrov will be genuinely penitent and ask the heroes for forgiveness, positing the question "What would you do, had you found yourselves in my shoes?" He will offer Ilsa's

Vampire Slaves

Str 4 Int 2

Dex 3 Per 3

Con 4[2] Wil 4[2]

DPs: 26 EPs: n/a

Spd: 18 Essence: 20

Skills: Brawling 3, Dodge 3, Hand Weapon (as appropriate) 3 [9]

Attack: Claw D6x4(12) slash/stab, bite D4x4(8) slash/stab (must grapple first; if grappled, the vampire gains +9 to maintain grapple and automatically deals d8(4) additional slash/stab damage per round), or by weapon.

Weak Spot: Fire, Head (decapitation), Heart, Sunlight [1]

Weight: Life Like [0]

Getting Around: The Quick Dead [3]

Strength: Strong Like Bull [5]; Claws [8];

Teeth [4]

Senses: Like a Hawk [2]

Sustenance: Daily [0]; Blood [-2]

Intelligence: Language [1]; Long-Term

Memory [5]; Problem Solving [15]

Special Abilities: Compulsion [4]; Cannot

Cross Water [-3]; Enslaved [-4]; Fog [5];

Living Form [5]; Night Vision [3];

Prohibition (holy items, garlic) [-5];

Regeneration (1 DP per Turn) [5]; Repulsion

(holy items, garlic) [-4]; Shape Changing

(Wolf and Bat) [16]; Walk in Shadows [4]

Spreading the Love: Ritual (Blood exchange at the moment of death) [-3]

Gear: Some carry varied weapons; most just attack with claws and teeth.

Power: 78

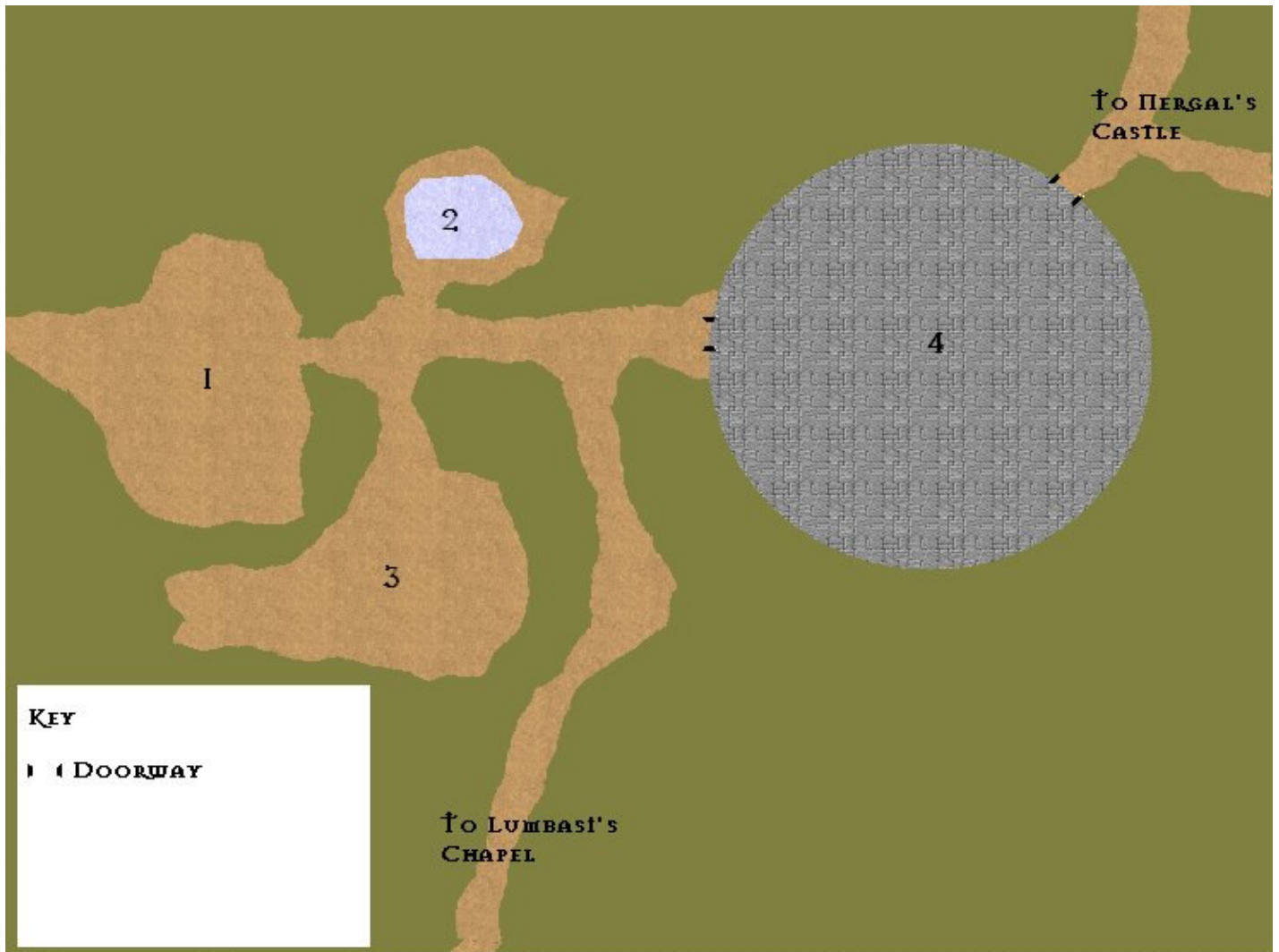
hand to any among the Cast who desire it; Ilsa will be amicable to the deal provided that the Cast member in question has treated her kindly throughout the ordeal, and is willing to take her into the world outside Heimatstadt.

All Flesh Must Be Eaten™

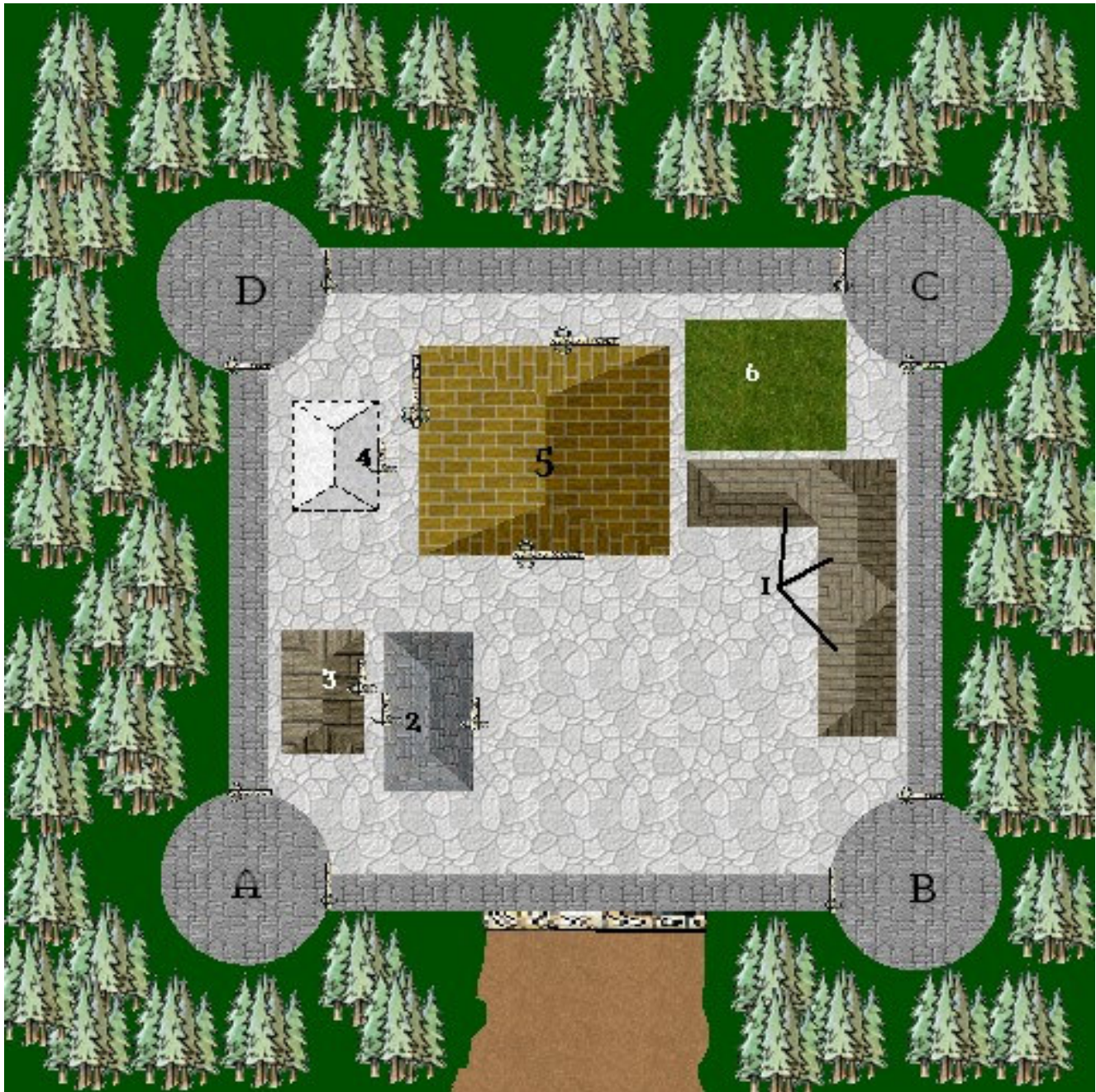
The townsfolk are grateful to the Cast, and offer supplies, horses, equipment, and anything else that is in their power to grant as their reward.

At the end of it all, the Cast rides off into the sunset, seeking further adventures.

MAPS CAVE COMPLEX



NERGAL'S KEEP – OVERVIEW

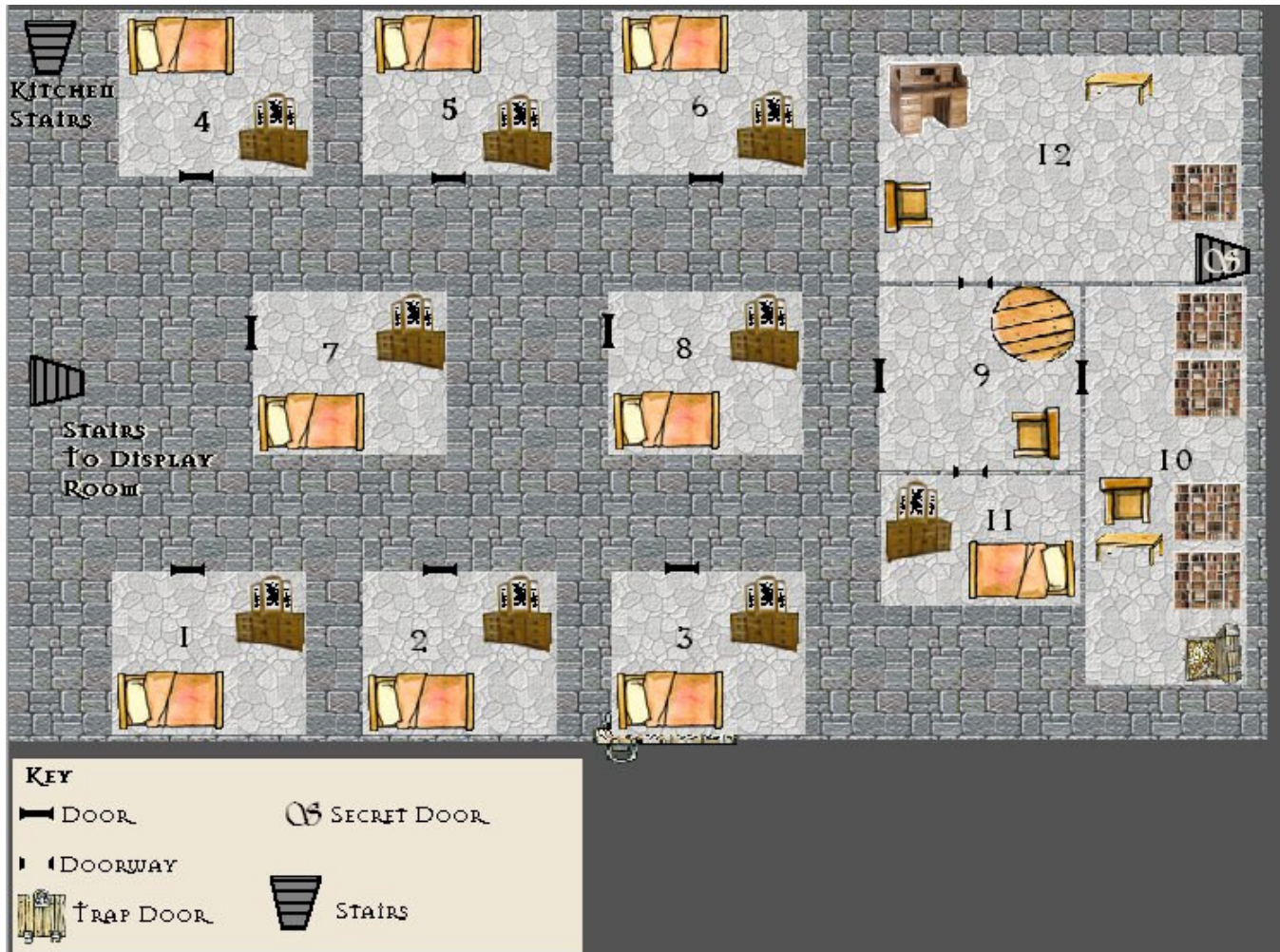


NERGAL'S KEEP – FIRST FLOOR



All Flesh Must Be Eaten™

NERGAL'S KEEP – SECOND FLOOR



CAST HANDOUTS

WEAPONS OF LIAM AND HIS COMPANIONS

Bracer of Storms: Etched with the holy symbol of Indra, this plain bracer of silver is meant to be worn by a person well-versed in magic. When worn, the item grants the wearer an Essence pool of 30 additional points that the player may draw upon at any time. The circlet provides a Level 2 Elemental Air Invocation for those who do not have it, or grants a +2 bonus to their existing Air Invocation. It does not provide the ability to Channel Essence. It is worn by the dwarven cleric, Bartok.

Lothon's Blessed Bow: Covered with runes and inscribed with a sigil for Ahura Mazda, this blessed bow is found with a quiver of ten, silver-tipped arrows. The bow grants its archer +2 to hit and damage. Twice a day, the bow yields deadly bolts of flame and lightning (The wielder may fire two fire bolts per day, and two lightning bolts per day. The bolts do not fire simultaneously). The flame bolts deal d6 x 5 (15) points of damage, and the lightening bolts deal d8 x 4 (16) points of damage, plus any bonuses from success levels. It was possessed by the elven Ranger, Lothon, and is still wielded by his re-animated corpse.

Staff of Life: Dedicated to Ishtar, this runic staff has many abilities. When used in combat, the staff has +2 to hit and damage. When used as a staff for healing, the wielder may regain 25 Life Points at a maximum of three times daily. This healing ability may not increase the recipient's Life Points above their normal maximum. The staff's most unique and powerful ability is the *resurrection of the dead*, a maximum of five times. To do this, the wielder must pass a double Willpower roll and spend 20 Essence points. Inspired characters may spend this all at once; others are restricted by their Essence Channeling and so take longer to gather the required Essence. The recipient of the spell must pass a Survival Task with a -1 penalty per every 6 hours the Cast member was deceased. Once the resurrection power is used five times, the staff loses all its magical properties and becomes a normal, if exquisite, quarterstaff. This staff is carried by the druid, Angelica.

Sword of Storms: The symbol of Indra adorns this long blade, and its holy touch inflicts damage to undead victims with no penalty. If faced with the servants of Kali and Ahriman, the Sword of Storms increases its damage multiplier by one. As a Blessed Weapon, the sword has +1 to hit and damage. This weapon is wielded by Liam himself.

LUMBASI'S BOOKS

Grimoire of Thomas St. John: This grimoire is approximately 10 inches wide by 12 ½ inches long, and weighs approximately 10 pounds. Its cover and clasp are inscribed with elaborate silver runes, and it radiates magic. The pages are perforated, implying that it is meant to be torn apart. Indeed, the book is filled with single-use magical effects which are activated when the user tears out a page and reads the spell contained on it. On the first page of the book are instructions to its use. Every Invocation effect in *Dungeons and Zombies* is represented once; each spell has 3 task levels of success and a base level of effect. Where resisted rolls are necessary, use the current reader's Simple Willpower Test as the Invocation Task result. This book functioned as the grimoire of the wizard Thomas, and is a complete treatise on the workings of Invocation magic; with proper study it could teach a Gifted (though not Inspired) character any Invocation desired (spending experience points would still be a requirement; the book merely makes the knowledge available to learn).

Tome of the Black Earth Mother: An ancient book infused with dark, ritual magic dedicated to the goddess Kali. The heavy tome is full of complicated and powerful ritual magic that can only be accessed by a follower of the Black Earth Mother, Kali. It ties all of its spells to a focus defined by the Caster; spells cast are permanent as long as the focus exists. This focus is discussed in the very beginning of the book as the source of all power within. *Destroy the Link*, the book implies, *and all spells shall be broken*. Within its pages is contained a spell entitled "To Seal the Borders". The writing outlines the creation of the Black Forest and how to entrap everyone living within its reach. It mentions a focus to which the spell must be bound, which gives the focus's owner great power over any spellcaster who uses this book, but does not tell what the focus is. Also in the book is a spell called "Cloud the Memory," which can all but erase the recent memories of a victim. Other spells are surely contained herein, but would require weeks of study to work out.

Journals of Liam Bolger: Liam was a Paladin dedicated to the service of Indra, and was one of the first adventurers to cross into the Heimatstadt. Throughout the pages of this worn leatherbound journal, you discover answers to many questions. The journal details Nergal's love for Ilsa and outlines a plot by the mayor and Petrov, who trapped Liam and his companions in Heimadstadt to force them to save the town. Nergal, it seems, believes Ilsa to be the reincarnation of his long-dead wife. He has tried to court Ilsa legitimately, and she has resisted his overtures. Thus, Nergal gifted Lumbasi with the Tome of the Black Earth Mother, which he (a follower of Ahriman) cannot use, in return for her allegiance. He ensures this allegiance will remain strong, for he holds the focus for all spells contained within the book. If he destroys the focus, or removes the enchantments upon it, all of Lumbasi's spells will fail, and she will lose much of her power. At Nergal's insistence, she used the book to seal the borders of the town, allowing none to leave until Nergal makes Ilsa immortal, and wins her hand in marriage. Once he has achieved his goal, Nergal plans to baptize the union in the blood of the village; he will unleash all of his undead creations, be they vampire, zombie or hell hound, on the town and revel in the unrestrained slaughter of the villagers. The next passage tells about the demise of Liam's four companions, Thomas, Angelica, Bartok and Lothon as they explored the forest. The final entry discusses Liam's intent to face the Voivod alone.