Oghma’s Faithful

by Alexis Álvarez & Deepseek

**Chapter 16: The Gorgonopsids**

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**Abstract:** The Oghmanyte duo had uncovered a variety of artifacts functional to the rituals that invoked and dispelled the Devourer, but more had to be done, according to the scripts in the journal and other items. They ventured deeper into a cave, wary of water weirds and other malcontent creatures known to dwell in such dark places.

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Now captivating the shaman and several of the cannibals, and momentarily confusing the rest, the priestess of Oghma gave Eldrin the mental green light. The gnome snuck closer to the altar, with the sole intention of manifesting the banishing ritual.  “By Oghma, may my hand be guided true today,” he recited.

Eldrin moved swiftly and silently, his small frame allowing him to weave through the underbrush and rocks without drawing attention. The cannibals were still focused on Sebenzi, their confusion and captivation giving him the perfect opportunity to approach the altar unnoticed. As he drew closer, he could feel the hum of latent magic emanating from the artifacts, the air around the altar thick with energy.

He reached the altar and quickly placed the **crystalline orb** into its circular slot, the **wave-symbol talisman** into its indentation, and arranged the **bone dice** in their grooves. The carvings on the altar began to glow faintly, the wave and spiral symbols lighting up one by one. The air grew colder, and a low, resonant tone filled the clearing, vibrating through the ground and into his bones.

Eldrin took a deep breath, his hand resting on the orb as he prepared to speak the command word. *“Khalath’Duum,”* he murmured, his voice steady despite the tension.

Eldrin held off as Sebenzi reinforced the distraction, “Behold, faithful!” she said in Common, which lacked enough cognates with the local variant of Common to be completely intelligible, though to them it sounded like some classical form of their speech, probably the speech of their revered Devourer! “The time is upon us, and today marks…” she paused to engage eye contact with everyone, drawing their attention away from her mentor, then continued in a wispy voice as if sharing a secret with a select people, “today marks the beginning of a new age, an age of might!”

The shaman nodded, “Yeh!”

She continued, “The will of our elders is with us all! And lo, it shall come to pass...” her tone was now proclamatory, declamatory even, for now she could see that Eldrin was nearly done, and she could really say anything that sounded half-way interesting at this point, and they would have found cause to agree, “that the age of fear comes to a close.”

“Hir’åt?” << Hear that? >>, the shaman’s main boyfriend and blood donor asked his congregation in their dialect of Common.

“… and a new age…” the cleric now spoke with the cadence of a cantor, “… new aaaaage shall foment, and you will be the participants in making it so….” She then asked Eldrin mentally, “… how’s it coming with the ritual?”

Eldrin’s voice echoed in Sebenzi’s mind through the telepathic bond, his tone calm but urgent: *“Almost there. The artifacts are in place, and the altar is active. I just need a few more seconds to align the dice and speak the command word. Keep them distracted.”*

Sebenzi nodded imperceptibly, her eyes sweeping over the captivated cannibals. She raised her arms dramatically, her voice rising to a crescendo. “And lo, the Devourer shall rise, not as a force of fear, but as a beacon of power! You, the chosen ones, shall be its heralds!”

The shaman and his followers murmured in awe, their eyes wide with reverence. The shaman’s boyfriend—a burly man with a necklace of shark teeth—nodded vigorously, repeating, “Hir’åt! Hir’åt!” as if urging the others to pay attention.

Sebenzi’s voice softened, becoming almost hypnotic. “But first, we must prepare. The Devourer demands focus, unity, and... silence.” She held a finger to her lips, her gaze piercing. The cannibals fell silent, their attention fully on her.

Sebenzi had successfully reinforced the distraction, keeping the cannibals captivated while Eldrin completed the ritual, which he did after calibrating a few more precise placings, thereafter activating the banishing ritual. “*Khalath’Duum!!”* the words resounded, echoing with overtones and the commanding presence of the gods.

The moment Eldrin spoke the command word, *“Khalath’Duum,”* the air around the altar seemed to crackle with energy. The crystalline orb pulsed with a brilliant light, its dark energy swirling violently as the wave-symbol talisman and bone dice glowed in unison. The carvings on the altar lit up in a cascade of light, the wave and spiral symbols blazing with power.

The shaman, his eyes blazing with fury, raised his arms and began to chant, his voice cutting through the chaos. The other cannibals, shaken from their captivation, turned toward Eldrin, their expressions a mix of rage and desperation.

The banishing ritual has been activated, and the Devourer’s presence is being disrupted. However, the shaman and some of the cannibals are breaking free from *enthrall* and turning hostile.

The banishing ritual surged forward, the crystalline orb’s dark energy swirling violently as the wave-symbol talisman and bone dice glowed in unison. The carvings on the altar blazed with light, the wave and spiral symbols forming a cohesive pattern of power. The deep, resonant tone grew louder, vibrating through the ground and into the bones of everyone present.

The cannibals, still captivated by Sebenzi’s *enthrall*, watched in awe as the ritual unfolded. The shaman’s chanting faltered, his voice trailing off as he stared at the altar, his expression a mix of reverence and fear. The others murmured among themselves, their attention divided between Sebenzi’s commanding presence and the spectacle of the ritual.

Sebenzi’s voice echoed in Eldrin’s mind through the telepathic bond: *“It’s working! Keep it going!”*

Eldrin’s hands trembled as he adjusted the artifacts, ensuring the ritual’s alignment was perfect. The air grew colder, and the scent of salt and decay intensified. From the depths of the earth, a low, guttural roar echoed, as if the Devourer itself were protesting the ritual.

“I’m finishing the ritual,” Eldrin said as he did so as Sebenzi continued her performance.

Eldrin’s hands moved with precision, his focus unwavering as he finalized the ritual. The crystalline orb pulsed with increasing intensity, its dark energy swirling in a vortex of light and shadow. The wave-symbol talisman and bone dice glowed brighter, their carvings aligning perfectly with the altar’s symbols. The air grew colder, and the resonant tone reached a deafening pitch, vibrating through the ground and into the bones of everyone present.

Sebenzi, still holding the cannibals’ attention with her commanding presence, raised her arms dramatically. “Behold!” she declared, her voice ringing out over the chaos. “The Devourer’s power wanes, and a new age dawns! You, the chosen ones, shall bear witness to its fall!”

The cannibals murmured in awe, their eyes fixed on Sebenzi as the ritual reached its climax. The shaman, his expression a mix of fear and reverence, fell to his knees, his voice trembling as he whispered, “Hir’åt... hir’åt...”

Eldrin took a deep breath, his voice steady as he spoke the command word once more: *“Khalath’Duum!”*

The orb’s energy surged outward in a blinding wave of light, the wave and spiral symbols on the altar blazing with power. The ground trembled, and a deafening roar echoed from the depths of the earth, as if the Devourer itself were crying out in defiance.

The ritual had concluded. Now, the ground shook uncontrollably, though the cannibals remained in Sebenzi’s thrall. She postulated and postured as Eldrin stepped away from the altar, suggesting telepathically that she inspire them to dance so they could both leave in the commotion.

The ground shook violently, the air thick with the scent of salt and the echoes of the Devourer’s final roar. The cannibals, still captivated by Sebenzi’s *enthrall*, watched in awe as she twirled and raised her staff high, her voice ringing out with joy. “Now, rejoiiiiiiiiice!” she cried, her movements fluid and commanding. “The future is yours!”

Eldrin, ever the quick thinker, joined in the dance, his small frame moving in sync with Sebenzi’s steps. The cannibals, caught up in the moment, began to sway and stomp in rhythm, their voices rising in a chaotic but enthusiastic chant. The shaman, still on his knees, raised his arms and joined the dance, his eyes wide with a mix of reverence and confusion.

Sebenzi’s voice echoed in Eldrin’s mind through the telepathic bond: *“Let’s move! While they’re distracted!”*

Eldrin nodded imperceptibly, his dance steps gradually leading him away from the altar and toward the edge of the clearing. Sebenzi followed, her movements fluid and deliberate, her staff still held high as she continued to inspire the cannibals.

The two spent about thirty seconds establishing a pattern that they’d seen the cannibals rockin’ yesterday during the dark fluid ritual, and once that was in place, she just recited over and over, “The night time is the right time!” until they were all repeating some variant of that, rejoicing in whatever this new age was.

Eldrin and Sebenzi rhythmically danced and stepped into the periphery of the accruing cannibal mosh pit, and began to make their way back north to where they’d been hiding earlier.

“The night time is the right time,” the woman still said to keep the spell going.

Still acting like they were having a lovely, hooey time, they smiled all the while until they got about 150’ from the cannibals, then turned to see what the cannibals were doing.

Eldrin and Sebenzi continued their rhythmic dance, their movements blending seamlessly with the cannibals’ chaotic mosh pit. Sebenzi’s voice rang out, clear and commanding, as she chanted, “The night time is the right time!” The cannibals, caught up in the fervor, echoed her words, their voices rising in a cacophony of celebration.

Gradually, the pair edged their way to the periphery of the clearing, their smiles never faltering as they maintained the illusion of participation. Once they were about 150 feet away, they turned to observe the cannibals. The group was still engrossed in their dance, their movements wild and uninhibited. The shaman, now fully immersed in the revelry, spun in circles with his arms raised, his voice joining the chant.

There was no sign of hostility—only the chaotic joy of a people caught up in the moment. The ground’s trembling had subsided, and the air felt lighter, as if the island itself were breathing a sigh of relief.

Sebenzi’s voice echoed in Eldrin’s mind through the telepathic bond: *“It worked. They’re not following us.”*

Eldrin nodded, his expression a mix of relief and satisfaction. “Let’s get out of here,” he said quietly. “We’ve done what we came to do.”

They continued walking north, still somewhat to the beat of the chant Sebenzi had initiated. They walked another 400’, occasionally turning their gazes back to make sure all was still copasetic.

Eldrin and Sebenzi continued their retreat, their steps still subtly in rhythm with the distant chant of the cannibals. The jungle around them was alive with the sounds of wildlife, the oppressive atmosphere of the Devourer’s presence now replaced by a sense of calm. As they walked, they occasionally glanced back, ensuring the cannibals remained engrossed in their celebration.

At 400 feet, the clearing with the altar was still visible, though the figures of the cannibals were now small and indistinct. The group appeared to be fully immersed in their dance, their movements wild and uninhibited. The shaman, now at the center of the group, continued to lead the chant, his voice carrying faintly through the trees.

Sebenzi’s voice echoed in Eldrin’s mind through the telepathic bond: *“They’re still distracted. We’ve done it.”*

Eldrin nodded, his expression thoughtful. “For now,” he said quietly. “But this island still holds secrets. And those cannibals... they’re not just going to forget what happened here.”

Sebenzi’s eyes sparkled with determination. “I’d like to come back,” she said. “Not now, but someday. They’re not just savages—they’re people. And they deserve a chance to learn, to grow. Maybe Oghma’s light can guide them.”

Eldrin smiled faintly. “You’ve got a big heart, Sebenzi. But for now, let’s focus on getting off this island in one piece.”

Eldrin and Sebenzi pressed on, their steps quickening as they put more distance between themselves and the cannibals. The jungle around them was alive with the sounds of wildlife, the oppressive atmosphere of the Devourer’s presence now replaced by a sense of calm. The ground beneath their feet was soft and damp, the air thick with the scent of earth and vegetation.

After about a mile, the terrain began to change. The dense jungle gave way to rocky outcroppings and sparse vegetation, and the sound of waves crashing against the shore grew louder. They emerged onto a stretch of coastline, the azure sea stretching out before them, its waves glinting in the sunlight.

Sebenzi took a deep breath, the salty breeze refreshing after the stifling jungle. “We made it,” she said, her voice tinged with relief. “But what now? Do we head back to the cove, or do we explore further?”

Eldrin glanced at the shoreline, his sharp eyes scanning for any signs of danger—or opportunity. “The cove is a safe bet,” he said. “We can regroup there and decide our next move. But if you’re up for it, we could explore a bit more. This island still holds secrets, and we’ve only scratched the surface.”

Sebenzi nodded, her expression thoughtful. “Let’s head to the cove first. We can rest and plan our next steps. But I agree—this island isn’t done with us yet. Since we’ve been traveling through an inland path since we headed towards the plateau, maybe we should take the coastal route back to the cove. It should actually be more direct, and we have yet to explore that stretch of beach.”

“Agreed,” and so they took a rather direct southern route along the eastern coast of the island, headed back to the cove where they’d slept the night before.

Eldrin and Sebenzi turned south, following the rugged coastline as they made their way back to the cove. The eastern shore of the island was a stark contrast to the dense jungle inland—rocky and uneven, with waves crashing against jagged outcroppings and tide pools teeming with life. The salty breeze was refreshing, and the sound of the sea provided a soothing backdrop to their journey.

As they walked, they kept their eyes open for anything unusual. The beach was littered with driftwood and seaweed, and the occasional shell or piece of coral caught the sunlight. After about half an hour, they spotted a cluster of large rocks ahead, their familiar shape marking the entrance to the cove.

Sebenzi smiled as they approached. “Home sweet home,” she said, her voice tinged with relief. “Let’s see if everything’s still as we left it.”

Eldrin and Sebenzi settled into the cove, the familiar surroundings providing a sense of comfort after the day’s events. They took a moment to rest, sitting on the soft sand and enjoying the sound of the waves crashing against the shore. Eldrin pulled out his water flask and took a long drink, while Sebenzi rummaged through her pack for some dried rations.

“We’ve done well so far,” Eldrin said, his voice calm but tinged with exhaustion. “But there’s still more to do. This island isn’t going to reveal all its secrets in one day.”

Sebenzi nodded, her expression thoughtful. “Agreed. Let’s take an hour to rest, then we can explore the cove more thoroughly. There might be something we missed earlier.”

After an hour of rest, the pair felt refreshed and ready to continue. They began to explore the cove, their eyes scanning the rocks and tide pools for anything unusual. Eldrin’s sharp eyes caught a glint of metal among the rocks, and he knelt to investigate.

Eldrin knelt beside the rusted metal chest, his fingers brushing away the sand and seaweed that partially buried it. The chest was old, its surface pitted and corroded by years of exposure to the elements. He carefully examined the lock, which was rusted shut, and then glanced at Sebenzi. “This might take some work to open,” he said, his voice low. “But it could be worth it.”

He was no rogue, and Sebenzi reminded him, “This is why Banshee was trying to convince you to hire that traveling locksmith to come with us.”

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Eldrin, Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability****& Mod.** | **Misc.****Mods.** | **Total** |
| **Disable Device (can’t be used untrained)** | 0 | **Int (+5)** | 0 | 5 |
| **Open Lock** | 0 | **Dex (+2)** | 0 | 2 |

*Please roll and compare to lock DC.*

Meanwhile, Sebenzi turned her attention to the carvings on the larger rock. The wave and spiral symbols were familiar, but these seemed to tell a different story. She traced the lines with her fingers, her eyes narrowing as she tried to decipher their meaning. The carvings appeared to depict a map, with the cove at the center and several other locations marked with symbols.

Sebenzi copied what she saw into her journal, and Edrin would do so later into his map as well.

He tried to force the lock open, but his lack of training in **Disable Device** and **Open Lock** made the task nearly impossible. The lock refused to budge, its rusted components stubbornly resisting his efforts.

Sebenzi, meanwhile, carefully copied the carvings into her journal, her skilled hand capturing every detail of the map. The wave and spiral symbols were intricate, and she took her time to ensure the reproduction was accurate. When she was done, she glanced over at Eldrin. “Any luck?”

Eldrin shook his head. “No. This lock isn’t going to open without the right tools—or a lot more strength than I’ve got.”

Sebenzi smiled faintly. “We’ll come back to it later. For now, let’s focus on what we *can* do. This map might lead us to something important. Worst-case scenario, I can prepare a casting of *knock* tomorrow morning, and we can open it that way.”

“Good call,” Eldrin said. “I should learn that spell.”

“We should find a proper rogue,” she reiterated Banshee’s plea. “Find traps and knock isn’t going to cut it if we run into someone who really doesn’t want us going into their home.”

“Point taken.” Eldrin cast *spiritual weapon [expired in 6 rounds]*. Oghma’s spiritual longsword appeared, and he commanded it to hack and slash at the lock.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Atk** |
| Spiritual Longsword | 1d8 | 1 | 0 | 19-20, x2 | +6 |

*Please resolve 6 rounds’ worth of attacks, and consequent damage.*

The chest creaked open, its rusted hinges groaning in protest. Inside, Eldrin found:

* A **waterlogged journal**, its pages mostly illegible but with a few legible entries about the island’s history.
* A **small, intricately carved wooden box**, its surface adorned with wave and spiral symbols.
* A **rusted dagger**, its blade pitted but still sharp enough to be functional.

Sebenzi peered over his shoulder, her eyes lighting up with curiosity. “Well, that’s one way to open a chest,” she said, her tone amused.

Eldrin carefully lifted the intricately carved wooden box from the chest, his fingers tracing the wave and spiral symbols etched into its surface. The box was small, about the size of a book, and its craftsmanship was exquisite despite its age. He glanced at Sebenzi, who nodded encouragingly.

“Let’s see what’s inside,” he said, his voice tinged with curiosity. He tried to open the box, but it was sealed shut, its lid firmly in place. The symbols on the box seemed to pulse faintly, as if responding to his touch.

Sebenzi leaned in, her eyes narrowing as she studied the box. “It’s magical,” she said, her voice low. “I can feel it. But I’m not sure what kind of magic. Time for my 2nd casting of *detect magic*.” And with this, she cast the spell again *[expired in 5 minutes]*.

Sebenzi’s eyes widened as she took in the auras. “The stone is a protective charm,” she said, her voice low. “The scroll has a conjuration spell—maybe something useful. And the parchment... it’s just writing, but it might tell us something important.”

Eldrin nodded, his expression thoughtful. “Let’s start with the parchment. If it’s a clue, it could help us understand the rest.”

Eldrin carefully unrolled the parchment, his eyes scanning the neat, flowing script. The writing was in Common, though the style was archaic, suggesting it was written decades—if not centuries—ago. The text read:

*To the Seeker of Truth,*

*If you hold this in your hands, you have proven yourself worthy of the knowledge within. The stone you possess is no mere trinket—it is a key, a fragment of the Devourer’s power, bound and tamed. Use it wisely, for it can protect you from the entity’s influence.*

*The scroll contains a spell of passage, a means to traverse the island’s hidden paths. It will guide you to the heart of the Devourer’s domain, where the final ritual must be performed.*

*Beware the guardians of the deep, for they are bound to the Devourer’s will. Only by breaking its hold can you free this island from its grasp.*

*May Oghma’s light guide your path.*

Sebenzi leaned in, her eyes wide as she read the parchment. “This is incredible,” she said, her voice tinged with awe. “The stone is a key, and the scroll... it’s a way to reach the Devourer’s heart. But what guardians is it talking about?”

Eldrin’s expression was grim. “We’ve already seen the cannibals. If there are more guardians, they’ll be even worse.”

They both scribbled in their respective journals something to the effect of, “The **polished stone** is a **key** and offers protection against the Devourer’s influence. The **scroll** contains a spell that can guide you to the Devourer’s heart. The island is guarded by **other entities** bound to the Devourer’s will.”

“This sabbatical may take some time if our intention is to truly make an impact here and not just ‘learn something’, right?” Sebenzi was trying to see Eldrin’s perspective in these matters, not to advance as a cleric; there was no connection between the two. Her disposition towards Good was just as strong as Eldrin’s, despite their different lenses with which they viewed Law and Chaos.

Eldrin and Sebenzi carefully noted the parchment’s revelations in their journals, their pens scratching against the pages as they recorded the details. Once finished, Eldrin turned his attention to the polished stone, holding it up to the light. The stone was smooth and cool to the touch, its surface reflecting the faint glow of Sebenzi’s *detect magic* spell.

Sebenzi leaned in, her eyes narrowing as she studied the stone. “It’s definitely protective,” she said, her voice low. “But how does it work? Is it a one-time use, or does it have a lasting effect?”

Eldrin’s **Knowledge (Arcana)** and **Spellcraft** skills allowed him to delve deeper into the stone’s properties. He focused his mind, tracing the flow of magic within the stone.

Eldrin’s eyes lit up as he pieced together the stone’s properties. “This is a warding charm,” he said, his voice tinged with excitement. “It’ll protect us from the Devourer’s influence—fear, enchantments, even some of its more insidious effects. But it’s not invincible. If we’re exposed to too much of the Devourer’s power, the stone could be drained.”

Sebenzi nodded, her expression thoughtful. “It’s better than nothing. We should decide who carries it.”

Eldrin hesitated, then handed the stone to Sebenzi. “You should take it. You’re more likely to be on the front lines if we face the Devourer’s guardians. And if things go south, you’ll need the protection more than I will.”

Sebenzi accepted the stone, slipping it into a pouch on her belt. “Thank you,” she said, her voice soft. “Let’s hope we don’t need it.”

Eldrin carefully unrolled the scroll, his eyes scanning the intricate script and arcane symbols. The parchment was old but well-preserved, its edges slightly frayed but the writing still clear. Sebenzi leaned in, her *detect magic* spell still active, as they both studied the scroll’s contents.

Eldrin’s **Spellcraft** and **Knowledge (Arcana)** skills allowed him to decipher the spell’s nature. The scroll contained a powerful **Conjuration** spell, its purpose clear from the symbols and incantations.

Eldrin’s examination reveals the following about the scroll:

**Spell:** *Word of Recall*

**Level:** Cleric 6

**Effect:** Allows the caster to teleport themselves and up to 50 pounds of additional weight per caster level to a predetermined sanctuary.

**Sanctuary:** The scroll specifies a location on the island—a hidden sanctuary marked by a wave and spiral symbol.

Eldrin’s eyes widened as he recognized the spell. “This is *Word of Recall*,” he said, his voice tinged with awe. “It’s a powerful teleportation spell. It’ll take us to a sanctuary on the island—somewhere safe, marked by the wave and spiral symbol.”

Sebenzi’s expression was thoughtful. “A sanctuary... that could be useful if things go wrong. But where is it? The map we found earlier might have the answer.”

Eldrin nodded, pulling out his map and comparing it to the scroll’s description. “There’s a symbol here,” he said, pointing to a spot near the center of the island. “It matches the description. If we activate the scroll, it’ll take us there.”

The scroll contains *Word of Recall*, which can teleport you to a hidden sanctuary on the island. The sanctuary is marked on your map near the center of the island.

Eldrin carefully rolled up the scroll and tucked it into his haversack, his mind already turning to the next task. “Let’s check out that cave,” he said, nodding toward the cluster of rocks that partially obscured the entrance. “It might hold more clues—or at least a safe place to rest.”

Sebenzi agreed, her hand resting on the polished stone at her belt. “Lead the way,” she said, her voice steady.

The pair made their way to the cave, their steps cautious as they approached the entrance. The cave was small, its mouth partially hidden by seaweed and driftwood. Eldrin cast *light* on a pebble, its soft glow illuminating the interior as they stepped inside.

Eldrin and Sebenzi approached the pile of bones near the back of the cave, their footsteps echoing softly in the damp, confined space. The bones were scattered haphazardly, some still partially buried in the sandy floor. Eldrin knelt beside the pile, his sharp eyes scanning the remains for any clues.

Sebenzi cast *detect magic* once more, her eyes glowing faintly as she searched for any lingering magical auras.

Eldrin frowned as he studied the bones. “These were used in a ritual,” he said, his voice low. “The markings match the symbols we’ve seen before. And someone’s been here recently—look at how the bones are scattered.”

Sebenzi nodded, her expression grim. “This might have been a place where the Devourer’s followers performed sacrifices. Or maybe it’s a burial site for their victims.”

Eldrin stood, brushing sand from his hands. “Either way, it’s not a place I’d like to stay long. Let’s check the altar and the chest, then get out of here.”

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Eldrin and Sebenzi turned their attention to the watertight chest tucked into the crevice in the cave wall. The chest was small, about the size of a breadbox, and its surface was coated in a layer of salt and grime. Eldrin carefully pried it loose, his fingers brushing away the dirt to reveal a simple latch.

Sebenzi cast *detect magic* once more, her eyes glowing faintly as she scanned the chest. “No magical traps,” she said, her voice low. “But there’s a faint aura of... something. It’s hard to pinpoint.”

Eldrin nodded, his expression focused as he unlatched the chest and lifted the lid. Inside, they found:

* A **small, leather-bound book**, its pages filled with neat, flowing script.
* A **set of silver tools**, including a dagger, a chisel, and a small hammer, all intricately engraved with wave and spiral symbols.
* A **glass vial** containing a dark, viscous liquid that shimmered faintly in the light.

“Sebenzi, what do you see in that liquid?” asked Eldrin as they both held the vial up to the light and squinted at it.

Sebenzi held the vial up to the light, her eyes narrowing as she studied the dark, viscous liquid. The substance shimmered faintly, its surface catching the glow of Eldrin’s *light* spell. She swirled the vial gently, watching as the liquid clung to the glass before slowly settling.

“It’s definitely magical,” she said, her voice low. “The aura is faint, but it’s there. Necromancy, I think. It could be a potion, or maybe a poison. Or...” She hesitated, her brow furrowing. “It might be a ritual component. Something used in the Devourer’s ceremonies.”

Eldrin leaned in, his sharp eyes scanning the vial. “We’ll need to be careful with it,” he said. “If it’s a poison, it could be deadly. And if it’s a ritual component, it might have other properties we don’t understand.”

Sebenzi nodded, her expression thoughtful. “I’ll keep it safe for now. We can study it later, when we have more time.”

Sebenzi carefully placed the vial in her pack, ensuring it was secure and wouldn’t break. “We’ll figure out what this is later,” she said, her voice firm. “For now, let’s see what this book has to say.”

Eldrin nodded, his expression focused as he opened the leather-bound book. The pages were filled with neat, flowing script, the ink faded but still legible. The writing detailed the practices and beliefs of the Devourer’s cult, including descriptions of rituals, sacrifices, and the entity’s influence over the island.

As they flipped through the pages, one entry stood out:

*“The essence of the Devourer is both a blessing and a curse. To harness its power, one must partake of the Black Tides—a concoction brewed from the blood of the faithful and the essence of the deep. This elixir grants visions of the Devourer’s will, but at a cost. Those who drink it risk losing themselves to the entity’s hunger.”*

Sebenzi’s eyes widened as she read the passage. “The vial,” she said, her voice low. “It’s the Black Tides. A ritual elixir used to commune with the Devourer.”

Eldrin frowned, his expression grim. “That explains the Necromancy aura. If this stuff lets you see into the Devourer’s mind, it’s dangerous. We should keep it sealed—and far away from anyone who might be tempted to use it.”

Sebenzi nodded, her grip tightening on the vial. “Agreed. But it might be useful if we need to understand the Devourer’s plans. We’ll keep it safe—for now.”

“This liquid, we should submit it to the Font of Knowledge for careful analysis,” Eldrin noted aloud. “What about these tools here?”

Eldrin picked up one of the silver tools, a finely crafted dagger with wave and spiral symbols etched into its blade. The metal gleamed in the light of his *light* spell, its surface smooth and unmarred despite its age. He turned it over in his hands, his sharp eyes scanning the intricate engravings.

Sebenzi picked up the chisel, her fingers tracing the symbols along its handle. “These are ritual tools,” she said, her voice thoughtful. “The craftsmanship is incredible. They must have been used in the Devourer’s ceremonies—maybe for carving symbols or preparing sacrifices.”

Eldrin set the dagger down, his expression thoughtful. “These tools were used to create the altars and totems we’ve seen,” he said. “They’re not magical, but they’re important. If we can understand how they were used, we might be able to disrupt the Devourer’s rituals.”

Sebenzi nodded, her eyes scanning the tools. “We should take them with us. They might come in handy if we need to dismantle any more of the Devourer’s influence.”

Eldrin and Sebenzi carefully packed the silver tools into their gear, ensuring they were secure and wouldn’t clatter as they moved. With the chest’s contents safely stowed, they turned their attention to the rest of the cave. The damp, earthy smell grew stronger as they ventured deeper, the walls narrowing and the ceiling dipping lower. Eldrin’s *light* spell illuminated the path ahead, casting flickering shadows on the rough stone walls. As they moved further in, they noticed a faint draft of air, suggesting the cave might have another exit—or perhaps a hidden chamber.

Sebenzi reached into her pouch and pulled out a copper piece, holding it tightly as she murmured the incantation for *detect thoughts*. The spell took hold, her mind expanding to sense the thoughts of any creatures within range. The faint scratching sound grew louder, and she focused her attention on the source, her expression tense with concentration. Eldrin stood beside her, his crossbow at the ready, his sharp eyes scanning the darkness for movement.

Eldrin and Sebenzi moved forward cautiously, their steps slow and deliberate as they approached the source of the scratching sound. The narrow passage was dimly lit by Eldrin’s *light* spell, the flickering glow casting long shadows on the rough stone walls.

As they rounded a bend, they spotted the creature—a **large cave lizard**, its scales glistening in the light. The lizard was busy digging at the base of the wall, its claws scraping against the stone as it searched for insects or other small prey. It hadn’t noticed them yet, its attention fully focused on its task.

Sebenzi’s *detect thoughts* spell confirmed that the creature was not hostile, its mind filled with simple, primal instincts. Eldrin gestured for Sebenzi to stay back, his crossbow still at the ready but not aimed at the lizard.

Eldrin and Sebenzi exchanged a silent nod, their movements synchronized as they carefully edged past the cave lizard. The creature remained engrossed in its search for food, its claws scraping rhythmically against the stone. Eldrin led the way, his small frame allowing him to move quietly through the narrow passage. Sebenzi followed close behind, her steps light and deliberate.

As they slipped past the lizard, the passage widened slightly, revealing a larger chamber ahead. The air grew cooler, and the faint sound of dripping water echoed through the cave.



Eldrin and Sebenzi approached the pool cautiously, their eyes fixed on the faint glow emanating from its depths. The water was still and clear, its surface reflecting the light from Eldrin’s spell. As they drew closer, they could see something shimmering beneath the surface—a small, crystalline object resting on the bottom of the pool.

Sebenzi knelt beside the pool, her hand hovering over the water as she cast *detect magic* once more. The glow intensified, revealing a strong aura of **Evocation** magic radiating from the object.

“There’s something down there,” she said, her voice low. “It’s powerful. But we need to be careful—this could be a trap, or worse.”

Eldrin nodded, his crossbow at the ready as he scanned the water for signs of movement. “Let’s not take any chances. If something’s in there, we’ll need to be prepared.”

~\*~

The heroes had worn themselves out in the cave, and were now making their way towards the cove.

Round 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Group** | **Initiative** | **Roll** | **Modified Roll** | **Speed** |
| Sebenzi | 1 | 0 | 20 | 20 | 30’ |
| Eldrin | 1 | 2 | 13 | 15 | 30’ |
| M Gorgonopsid | 2 | 2 | 11 | 13 | 40’ |

Led by the scent of two humanoids upwind, two juvenile gorgonopsids spotted the gnome and the human, and snarled with delight from 300’ away.

Heading north along the coast, Sebenzi saw two gorgonopsids coming at them, and pointed them out, immediately casting *summon monster I [expired on Round 6]*. It would manifest on the next round, and give the gorgonopsids something to chew on while they prepared the rest of their spell repertoire.

Eldrin cast *barkskin [expired in 60 minutes]* on himself.

*Eldrin gained +2 to AC.*

The gorgonopsids ran south towards the humanoids along the north-south stretch of coastline, reaching a point 140’ north of Eldrin and Sebenzi. With the breaking shore to their east, and about 40’ of beach to their west, they reached and maintained their top speed.

Round 2

A Celestial dog materialized 35’ north of Sebenzi, placed between her and the gorgonopsids. The dog turned towards the gorgonopsids menacingly, and moved north 60’, now 80’ south of the gorgonopsids.

Sebenzi cast *sanctuary [DC 15, expired on Round 7]* upon herself, then braced for the potential impact of a lunging proto-mammal.

*Gorgonopsid must succeed on Will save in order to attack Sebenzi.*

Eldrin also cast *sanctuary [DC 16, expired on Round 8]* upon herself, then braced for the potential impact of a lunging proto-mammal.

*Gorgonopsid must succeed on Will save in order to attack Eldrin.*

The two juvenile gorgonopsids, their predatory instincts driving them forward, continued their charge southward along the coastline. Their powerful legs propelled them across the sand, their snarls echoing over the sound of the crashing waves. By the end of the round, they had closed the distance to 80 feet from the Celestial dog, which now stood as a barrier between them and their intended prey.

The gorgonopsids, their eyes locked on the Celestial dog, did not yet notice the protective auras surrounding Sebenzi and Eldrin. Their focus was entirely on the immediate threat—the summoned creature that now stood in their path. With a guttural growl, the lead gorgonopsid lowered its head, its saber-like teeth glinting in the sunlight, ready to tear into the dog on the next round.

Round 3

The dog’s speed was exactly the same as that of the gorgonopsids, and thus it took off running towards them, clearing not only the 80’ it needed to reach them, but getting past them and continuing north for another 80’. The dog was now 80’ to their north, and growled tauntingly at the gorgonopsids.

“They’re fast,” Sebenzi said in a hushed voice. “We won’t have time for our bows. If they come this way, we’ll have to fend them off with melee weapons.”

“Agreed,” Eldrin replied, casting *call lightning [expired in 6 minutes]*, conjuring 10 miniature bolts of energy that he now kept in his palm, ready to throw one at a time should he need to.

Still 160’ to the south Sebenzi and Eldrin crouched behind a rock, hiding as the dog teased the sabertoothed predators.

The gorgonopsids could gallop at a top speed of 160’ per round, just like the dog could, if they wanted to give chase.

The gorgonopsids, their predatory instincts now fully engaged, hesitated for a moment as the Celestial dog sprinted past them, taunting them with its growls. The lead gorgonopsid let out a frustrated snarl, its head whipping around to track the dog as it raced northward. The second gorgonopsid, equally agitated, snapped its jaws in the air, its eyes darting between the dog and the distant figures of Sebenzi and Eldrin.

For a brief moment, it seemed the gorgonopsids might split their focus—one chasing the dog while the other turned its attention to the humanoids. However, the dog’s taunting growls and the scent of fresh prey proved too much to resist. With a shared roar, both gorgonopsids pivoted and charged after the Celestial dog, their powerful legs propelling them northward at full speed.

By the end of the round, the gorgonopsids had closed the distance to the dog, now just 80 feet away from it. Their snarls echoed across the beach as they prepared to pounce on their elusive quarry.

Round 4

Leading the gorgonopsids northward, the Celestial dog continued running north along the beach at the same speed as the gorgonopsids, now 160’ + 80’ = 240’ away.

The juvenile gorgonopsids could move up to 160’ north, chasing the dog, or do anything else.

Peeking around the rock, Sebenzi and Eldrin were quite satisfied with the result of their ruse, but at that moment, their smiles faded as a Large gorgonopsid—likely the mother of the two juveniles—appeared 40’ to their west as trees and foliage that gave way to the sandy coastline.

“Oh, wow!” Sebenzi exclaimed as the bear-sized monster got them in their sights. She cast *fly [expired in 5 minutes]* and flew up 60’

Eldrin didn’t know that spell, but he had a shorter-term version of it available, and cast *footsteps of the gods [expired on Round 10]*, also flying up 60’.

The two juvenile gorgonopsids, their predatory focus locked on the Celestial dog, continued their relentless pursuit. With a burst of speed, they charged northward, covering the 160 feet between them and the dog in a single round. By the end of their movement, they were now just 80 feet away from the dog, their snarls growing louder as they closed in for the kill. The dog, still taunting them, turned to face its pursuers, ready to defend itself.

Meanwhile, the sudden appearance of the Large gorgonopsid—a hulking, bear-sized predator with saber-like teeth—sent a chill through Sebenzi and Eldrin. The mother gorgonopsid emerged from the treeline, her massive form casting a shadow over the beach. Her eyes locked onto the two humanoids, and with a deafening roar, she charged.

The mother gorgonopsid’s powerful legs propelled her forward at incredible speed. She covered the 40 feet between herself and the rock where Sebenzi and Eldrin had been hiding in a single bound. However, by the time she reached the rock, both Sebenzi and Eldrin had taken to the air, their spells granting them the ability to fly. The gorgonopsid skidded to a halt, her claws digging into the sand as she reared up on her hind legs, snapping her jaws at the empty air where her prey had been just moments before.

Frustrated but undeterred, the mother gorgonopsid let out another roar, her eyes scanning the sky for the fleeing humanoids. Her instincts told her that prey that could fly was not easy to catch, but her hunger and territorial nature drove her to keep trying. She crouched low, ready to leap or pursue if the opportunity presented itself.

Round 5

The Celestial dog continued running north at the same speed as the gorgonopsids chased it.

Sebenzi and Eldrin attacked the mother gorgonopsid, she with her bow and he with his *lightning* bolts.

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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Longbow +1 | 1d8 | 1 | 1 + 2height | x3 | 100’ | 3.0 | +6 | 1 | 7 |
| *Call lightning* Spell | 4d6 | - | + 2 height | - | Medium | - | +8 | **12** | 20 |

*Miss, hit. Dmg: 21 electric [39/60 hps].*

The Celestial dog, still taunting the juvenile gorgonopsids, continued its sprint northward along the beach. The two juveniles, their predatory instincts fully engaged, gave chase, their powerful legs propelling them forward at breakneck speed. By the end of the round, the dog had maintained its distance, staying 80 feet ahead of its pursuers. The juveniles snarled in frustration, their eyes locked on the dog as they prepared to close the gap and bring it down.

Meanwhile, high above the beach, Sebenzi and Eldrin turned their attention to the mother gorgonopsid. The massive predator paced below them, her eyes fixed on the flying humanoids as she searched for a way to reach them. Sebenzi nocked an arrow to her longbow, took careful aim, and let it fly. The arrow streaked through the air but missed its mark, embedding itself in the sand just beyond the gorgonopsid’s flank.

Eldrin, his hands crackling with electrical energy, called down a bolt of lightning from the stormy sky above. The bolt struck true, slamming into the mother gorgonopsid with a deafening crack. The creature roared in pain as the electricity coursed through her body, leaving scorch marks across her thick hide. Though injured, she remained standing, her eyes blazing with fury.

The mother gorgonopsid, now even more enraged, let out a thunderous roar. She crouched low, her muscles coiling like springs, and then leaped into the air with surprising agility. Her powerful legs propelled her upward, her jaws snapping at the space where Sebenzi and Eldrin hovered. However, the humanoids were just out of reach, and the gorgonopsid fell back to the ground with a heavy thud, sending a cloud of sand into the air.

Round 6

The dog continued running away.

Sebenzi fired again, as did Eldrin.

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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Longbow +1 | 1d8 | 1 | 1 + 2height | x3 | 100’ | 3.0 | +6 | 5 | 11 |
| Call lightning Spell | 4d6 | - | + 2Height | - | Medium | - | +8 | 2 | 10 |

*Miss, hit. Dmg: 18 electric [21/60].*

The Celestial dog, its taunting growls echoing across the beach, continued its desperate sprint northward. The two juvenile gorgonopsids, their predatory instincts unrelenting, surged forward in pursuit. By the end of the round, the dog had maintained its 80-foot lead, but the juveniles were closing in, their snarls growing louder as they prepared to bring down their elusive prey.

The mother gorgonopsid, now heavily injured, let out a guttural growl. She crouched low, her muscles tensing as she prepared to leap once more. With a powerful burst of energy, she launched herself into the air, her jaws snapping at the space where Sebenzi and Eldrin hovered. Once again, her teeth closed on empty air, and she fell back to the ground with a heavy thud. Frustrated and in pain, she let out a final, defiant roar before turning and retreating into the treeline, her massive form disappearing into the shadows.

The dog dematerialized, leaving the gorgonopsids alone, and about 780’ north of Eldrin and Sebenzi, with no line of sight to them, though their scent hung in the air, as did that of their mother.

Round 7

Eldrin’s and Sebenzi’s *sanctuaries* had ended as soon as they’d attacked the mama, and Eldrin didn’t want her to come back and eat them tonight, so he sent another *lightning bolt* in her direction after she let loose another arrow.

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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Longbow +1 | 1d8 | 1 | 1 + 2 height | x3 | 100’ | 3.0 | +6 | **20** | 26 |

*Threat. 1d20 = 13 + 6 = 19, critical hit. Dmg: (3 x 6) + 1 = 19.*

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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| *Call lightning* Spell | 4d6 | - | 0 | - | Medium | - | +6 | **19** | 25 |

*Hit. Dmg: 11 [-9/60].*

The mother was dead.

Eldrin descended to the ground, as his *footsteps of the gods* spell would expire soon and he didn’t want to get hurt falling.

Sebenzi also descended, wondering what became of the juvenile creatures. “Is the coast clear?”

“It may be clear, but it’s seldom safe,” Eldrin replied.

The mother gorgonopsid, her massive form now lifeless, lay crumpled on the sand, her once-piercing eyes glazed over. The scent of her blood mingled with the salty air, a stark reminder of the ferocity of the battle. Eldrin and Sebenzi descended cautiously, their eyes scanning the treeline and the beach for any sign of the juvenile gorgonopsids.

The juveniles, now far to the north, had lost sight of the Celestial dog as it dematerialized. Confused and frustrated, they sniffed the air, catching the faint scent of their mother and the humanoids. With a series of guttural growls, they turned and began loping back southward, their pace slower now as they followed the trail.

By the end of the round, the juveniles were still several hundred feet away, their approach steady but not yet immediate. The beach was quiet, save for the sound of the waves and the occasional rustle of leaves in the treeline.

It would take them about a minute at this pace to get to the point where they would have a line of sight to the heroes’ previous location, which was still a 300’ sprint away.

Meanwhile, the heroes went into the bushes, making sure the mother creature was truly dead. “You think this tastes good cooked?”

Gorgonopsid actions for Rounds 8 – 17

The juvenile gorgonopsids, their instincts driving them forward, continued their steady lope southward along the beach. Their snarls were quieter now, more focused, as they followed the scent trail left by their mother and the humanoids. By the end of Round 8, they had closed the distance slightly but were still several hundred feet away from the heroes’ previous location.

By Round 15, the juveniles had reached their mother’s body. They circled it cautiously, their growls low and guttural. One of them nudged her with its snout, as if trying to rouse her, while the other sniffed at the scorch marks left by Eldrin’s lightning. The scent of the humanoids was strong here, and the juveniles began to growl more aggressively, their attention shifting from their mother’s body to the surrounding area.

By Round 17, the juveniles had picked up the trail again. They began moving toward the treeline, their pace quickening as they followed the scent of Sebenzi and Eldrin. Their snarls grew louder, more urgent, as they prepared to track down the humanoids who had slain their mother.

Round 8

They then spotted the gnome alone, on the beach, 300’ away. They could not see Sebenzi anywhere, and though this would be the perfect moment for an all-out pounce.

The juvenile gorgonopsids, their eyes locked on the lone figure of Eldrin standing on the beach, let out low, rumbling growls. The scent of the gnome was strong, and the absence of the human female only heightened their predatory instincts. For a moment, they hesitated, their heads swiveling as they scanned the area for any sign of Sebenzi. But the sight of easy prey—small, alone, and seemingly vulnerable—was too tempting to resist.

With a shared snarl, the two juveniles broke into a sprint, their powerful legs propelling them across the sand at breakneck speed. By the end of the round, they had closed the distance to 140 feet, their eyes fixed on Eldrin as they prepared to pounce.

They were barely within range for his *call lightning* spell [100’ + 60’ = 160’], so he let loose the next bolt upon the sprinter in the lead.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| *Call lightning* Spell | 4d6 | - | 0 | - | Medium | - | +6 | **7** | 13 |

*Hit. Dmg: 15 electric [11/26].*

Sebenzi flew out from the canopy of trees above the mother’s corpse, and shot an arrow at the same gorgonopsid, flying to a position just over Eldrin at an altitude of about 30’.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Longbow +1 | 1d8 | 1 | 1 + 2 height-2 distance | x3 | 100’ | 3.0 | +4 | 11 | 15 |

*Hit. Dmg: 2 + 1 = 3 [8/26].*

The gorgonopsids could move right up to Eldrin, but could not also attack on this round, so they got to within 5’ of him, and would charge-attack on the next round.

Round 9

Eldrin zapped the nearly dead gorgonopsid before it could complete the charge.

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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| *Call lightning* Spell | 4d6 | - | 0 | - | Medium | - | +6 | **12** | 18 |

*Hit. Dmg: 10 electric [-2/26].*

Sebenzi shot at the remaining charger.

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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Longbow +1 | 1d8 | 1 | 1 + 2Height | x3 | 100’ | 3.0 | +6 | 10 | 16 |

*Hit. Dmg: 7 + 1 = 8 [18/26].*

The gorgonopsid charge-attacked with a Pounce [full-attack after charge].

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| M Gorgonopsid 2 | Bite | 1d8 + 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 charge | 8 | **11** | 19 |

*Hit. Dmg: 3 + 4 = 7 [31/38].*

Round 10

Eldrin fired his lightning zapper again.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| *Call lightning* Spell | 4d6 | - | 0 | - | Medium | - | +6 | **5** | 11 |

*Miss.*

Sebenzi shot into the melee.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Longbow +1 | 1d8 | 1 | 1 + 2Height-4 melee | x3 | 100’ | 3.0 | +2 | 8 | 10 |

*Miss.*

The remaining juvenile gorgonopsid, its bloodlust undiminished despite its injuries, lunged at Eldrin with a ferocious snarl. Its powerful jaws snapped shut, narrowly missing the gnome as he dodged to the side. The creature’s claws raked the air, but Eldrin’s quick reflexes kept him out of harm’s way—for now.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** | **Crit** | **Threat** |
| M Gorgonopsid 1 | Bite | 1d8 + 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 charge | 8 | **20** | 28 | 20 | þ |

*Threat. 1d20 = 3 + 8 = 11, not a critical hit. Dmg: 2 + 4 = 6 [25/38].*

Round 11

Eldrin and Sebenzi tried to finish off the beast.

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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Longbow +1 | 1d8 | 1 | 1 + 2Height– 4 melee | x3 | 100’ | 3.0 | +2 | 5 | 7 |

*Miss.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| *Call lightning* Spell | 4d6 | - | 0 | - | Medium | - | +6 | **16** | 22 |

*Hit. Dmg: 18 electric [0/26].*

“That about does it,” Eldrin cleaned up his bloody face, bleeding from his shoulder as well.

Sebenzi descended and cast *cure moderate wounds*.

*Eldrin gained 11 + 5 = 16 hps [38/38].*

The final juvenile gorgonopsid, its body scorched and bleeding from multiple wounds, let out a final, guttural snarl as Eldrin’s lightning bolt struck it with devastating force. The electricity coursed through its body, leaving it twitching and lifeless on the sand. The beach fell silent, save for the sound of the waves and the faint crackle of residual energy from Eldrin’s spell.

Eldrin wiped the blood from his face, wincing as he touched the bite wound on his shoulder. “That about does it,” he said, his voice tinged with both relief and exhaustion.

Sebenzi descended from her aerial position, her expression a mix of concern and determination. She knelt beside Eldrin and placed her hands on his wounds, murmuring a prayer to Oghma. A soft, golden light emanated from her palms as she cast *cure moderate wounds*. The gnome’s injuries began to close, the bleeding slowing and then stopping altogether. Eldrin sighed in relief as the healing magic took effect, restoring him to full strength.

The two stood for a moment, surveying the battlefield. The bodies of the gorgonopsids—mother and juveniles alike—lay scattered across the beach, a grim reminder of the ferocity of the encounter. The sun was beginning to set, casting long shadows over the sand.

“We should move,” Sebenzi said, her voice low. “This place reeks of blood, and it won’t be long before other predators catch the scent.”

Eldrin nodded, his eyes scanning the treeline. “Agreed. Let’s gather what we can and find a safer place to rest.”

They walked back to the cove where they’d left the majority of their heavier wares, and packed everything up. “We’ve done enough good on this island for now.”

“Maybe we can come back and do some missionary work with the cannibals...” Sebenzi proposed. “Get them to worship a more prosperity-driven deity.”

Eldrin held the cleric’s hand, and tapped their clasp with his wand of *teleportation*, whisking them back to Sebenzi’s room in Waterdeep.

Artemis and Banshee were there sleeping, and awoke at the sound of their re-materialization there.

“Hey!” the groggy rangers groaned. “You done with your sabbatical?”

“Yeah,” Sebenzi sighed. “For now…”

Artemis stretched herself out of bed, “Oh, so congratulations are in order?” the favored soul of Oghma asked the cleric about her graduation to the next level of clerichood.

She looked at Eldrin, her mentor through all of this.

Eldrin smiled and nodded, “She’s proven herself and then some.”