**Oghma’s Faithful**

**by Alexis Álvarez and Microsoft Copilot**

**Chapter 7: The Malaugrym’s Study**

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**Abstract:** Korik and Eldrin had initially discussed the exciting prospects of deciphering ancient texts and exploring forgotten ruins. Their adventure took them deep into the malaugrym’s underground study, a place filled with arcane and alchemical wonders. Amidst their exploration, they encountered a formidable, desiccated bodak. A tense battle ensued, with Eldrin casting spells and Korik using his rapier to deliver precise strikes. After a fierce fight, they successfully defeated the bodak and secured the area, allowing them to continue their exploration without fear of ambush.

They diligently cataloged and secured the artifacts and items found in the study. Korik discovered treasures like a Ring of Sustenance, Boots of Elvenkind, and Heward's Handy Haversack, while Eldrin found an Ancient Tome of Knowledge and a Dwarven Thrower. With the help of a salvage team, they made multiple trips to retrieve more items, and law enforcement and stone shaper wizards secured the area. Finally, they documented their findings at the Museum of Arcane Sciences in Secomber, discussing their future plans and adventures. The session was filled with exploration, combat, and valuable discoveries, setting the stage for more thrilling escapades ahead.

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Afternoon, 22 Marpenoth, 1732 DR

Korik and Eldrin had become friends since their tournament, and appreciated one another’s virtues and skillsets. Eldrin’s academic approach to divine magic provided an interesting backdrop for their conversations, and seeing as Korik was not a spellcaster at all, their energies proved to be quite complementary on one occasion.

Secomber, a small town on the border between the Western Heartlands and the more savage North, was built over the ruins of Hastarl, the ancient capital of Athalantar, and there were secrets and ancient artifacts uncovered—it seemed—just about every year. The topic of Hastarl had—until recently—evaded Eldrin, whose cartographic research had been focusing on the Inner Planes, and whose travels had taken him to Silverymoon. It was only today when Korik brought it up that the gnome seemed intrigued by the prospect of learning more about that ancient history.

According to Korik, who had friends and contacts in the trove salvaging industry, there were plenty of untapped sites under the city that could house untold treasure... “and of course, knowledge!” the dwarf added to make it palatable to his scholarly associate.

Eldrin was indeed intrigued. The cartographer asked, “Do your associates have any maps or any clues as to where the optimal sites could be?”

Korik looked down and shrugged for the moment, admitting, “It’s mostly just hearsay, but from reputable people in the business. Maybe I can see if someone has a map.”

“I’d say that’s where we start,” the archivist replied. “Otherwise we’re going to spend more time than I’d like to wandering about the sewers, and that’s certainly not my idea of a well-spent afternoon.”

Korik nodded, stroking his beard thoughtfully. “Aye, Eldrin, I’ll put out some feelers and see what I can find. There are rumors of an old mapmaker who might have some leads on the hidden passages below. We might also want to check the old library—I heard they’ve got some dusty tomes that haven’t been touched in ages. With your knack for decipherin’ ancient texts and my connections, we’ll uncover those secrets in no time.”

~\*~

In 342 DR, Hastarl, the capital of Athalantar, faced its downfall due to several converging factors. The kingdom had been weakened by internal strife and power struggles among the nobility. An orc horde, led by a fearsome warlord, saw this as an opportunity to strike. The orcs attacked with relentless fury, overwhelming Hastarl’s defenses. The city’s walls, though formidable, could not withstand the sheer numbers and ferocity of the invaders. The citizens, unprepared for such a massive assault, were forced to flee or hide within the city’s depths.

The final blow came when the orcs breached the gates and stormed the streets. Many of Hastarl’s defenders were slain, and the city was set ablaze. The surviving citizens sought refuge in the catacombs and hidden chambers beneath the city, hoping to escape the wrath of the invaders.

Undarl’s Tower, once a symbol of the city’s strength, was among the structures to fall. The tower’s lower levels housed a secret laboratory used by a malaugrym, a shape-shifting fiend who conducted dark experiments. As the city burned, the malaugrym fled, abandoning his work and leaving behind arcane secrets and dangerous artifacts.

In the aftermath, Hastarl lay in ruins, its glory days reduced to ashes. The surviving citizens eventually emerged from their hiding places, but the city was never fully rebuilt. Instead, it became a haunted reminder of the past, with its ruins slowly reclaimed by nature.

Centuries later, the secrets of Undarl’s Tower and the hidden laboratory lay waiting for someone to uncover them.

~\*~

Highsun, 23 Marpenoth

Eldrin received Korik in his home, having put some water on the fire for tea, and now offered a cup to the dwarf as they sat down in the cartographer’s study and discussed the dwarf’s findings. He’d brought a foldout map made by a more amateur mapmaker whose dayjob was in locksmithing, and the wilderness rogue now placed it on the gnome’s desk, pointing to a few ingress points via the sewer system under Secomber.

“These are the three most likely spots that have yet to be explored according to my sources. There’s too much debris blocking them, but a wizard with a *stone shape* spell or some telekinetic power should be able to wangle a passage in and out of the area without causing a collapse,” Korik spoke.

“*Should*,” emphasized the gnome. “I’d have to see the situation before I can concur with the viability of loosening debris from a cave-in without spurring a second cave-in.”

Korik was savvy enough about stonework and stone in general to have his own sense of how that effort might go down, literally, and he said, “We can look at the sites together... maybe take a third bloke with us... some expert.”

“I trust you, Korik,” Eldrin said, “But the trove salvaging industry is one fraught with intrigue and misleading colleagues who would benefit from our labor of clearing these passages for them to simply loot the troves themselves.”

Korik’s imagination thought of worse things that his associates could do, and agreed with the discretionary path of keeping this prospect between them.

Eldrin’s Moonshae wolfhound, Barge, entered the room and said hello to Korik by allowing the dwarf to pet his head before moving over behind Korik’s chair and curling up on the floor as the two humanoids continued their conversation.

Korik took a sip of the offered tea, letting the warmth seep into his bones. He nodded in agreement, his eyes scanning the map once more. “Aye, it’s best we keep this between us for now. We wouldn’t want anyone else muckin’ about and makin’ things worse. I’ll reach out to a trusted stoneworker I know—someone who’s got a good head on their shoulders and won’t spill our plans to just anyone.”

Barge let out a contented huff, seemingly approving of the decision. The wolfhound’s presence always brought a sense of comfort to Eldrin, and Korik couldn’t help but smile at the loyal creature.

“Let’s meet at first light tomorrow and head to the first site,” Korik suggested. “We’ll assess the situation, and with any luck, we’ll be able to clear a path without too much trouble.”

Eldrin nodded, his mind already racing with the possibilities. The prospect of uncovering ancient secrets and lost knowledge excited him, and he felt a renewed sense of purpose as he and Korik finalized their plans.

~\*~

Dawn, 24 Marpenoth

Eldrin and Korik were on their way to the site that bore the most promising prospect of finding a viable treasure. They’d determined a linear path along three distinct sites:

1. **The Main Sewer Junction**: An old maintenance hub where multiple sewer lines converged. The map pointed to tunnel 13-b as the path to the most promising site to explore.
2. **Collapsed Chamber in 13-b**: This area was blocked by debris, preventing any further travel along this sewer vein. A partially caved-in chamber that likely led to a malaugrym’s abandoned laboratory.
3. **Malaugrym’s Alchemical Lab**: Rumored to be hidden beneath the city, this lab was reputed to contain remnants of magical experiments and valuable documentation.

Korik’s general understanding of geography and Eldrin’s cartographic background had the dwarf and gnome discussing the various possibilities that this investigation would bring. Being the Lawful fellow that he was, Eldrin had brought with him his municipal permit to explore such sites in case they had to present themselves to the authorities. The woodsy Korik scoffed at such things, and was glad to have Eldrin addressing those concerns so he wouldn’t have to.



They made it to the manhole into which they would have to crawl to begin their spelunking under Secomber’s streets. It was late Dawn, or early Morning, and bystanders were already walking about and standing by. “I have my permit should we be approached by city guards,” Eldrin reminded Korik, “But I’m hoping that ne’er-do-wells don’t see us going in. They’d be tempted to follow.”

Korik nodded, looking circumspect to gauge the attention of the dozens of people walking north, south, east, and west along this intersection. “This isn’t going to work,” Korik said. “We need a more discreet entry point.”

“Agreed,” Eldrin turned around. “I recall one back there; we’ll have to walk a few hundred feet longer in the sewers, but at least we’ll be inconspicuous.”

They returned towards the city’s northwestern gate, and made it to the spot behind a shop.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability****& Mod.** | **Misc.****Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Korik, Bluff** | 0 | **Cha (-2)** | 0 | -2 | 4 | 2 |
| **Korik, Hide** | 5 | **Dex (+2)** | 0 | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| **Korik, Move Silently** | 5 | **Dex (+2)** | 0 | 7 | 16 | 23 |
| **Korik, Spot** | 3 | **Wis (+1)** | 0 | 4 | 4 | 8 |

*See below.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability****& Mod.** | **Misc.****Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Eldrin, Bluff** | 0 | **Cha (-1)** | 0 | -1 | 14 | 13 |
| **Eldrin, Hide** | 5 | **Dex (+2)** | 0 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| **Eldrin, Move Silently** | 6 | **Dex (+2)** | 0 | 8 | 16 | 24 |
| **Eldrin, Spot** | 0 | **Wis (+2)** | 0 | 2 | 8 | 10 |

*See below.*

For as skilled a pair of spelunkers as they were, they did a piss-poor job of dissimulating an orderly entry into the manhole. They eventually both got down, and were quite quiet about it, so as to not rouse anyone’s attention, which would have drawn significant suspicion from the shopkeepers on this block. The manhole cover was replaced quietly, and they dusted off their hands before beholding the tunnel that—according to the map—would convey them to the main sewer junction.

“We’re good?” one of them asked.

“Ya,” the other replied.

The dwarf and gnome walked in tandem, both able to see well in the darkness, though Eldrin had a *light* spell handy. “Should I cast it now?” the whisper gnome whispered to Korik now that they were about 50’ from the only beams of light that trickled in through the finger-sized holes in the manhole cover.

“Junction should be about another 150’ up ahead,” Korik replied. “Wouldn’t hurt to draw a light to see in the full color spectrum. Sometimes, droppers and chokers can hide from Darkvision by staying the same temperature as the cavern ceiling,” he warned.

Eldrin cast *light*, taking note of his remaining, uncast spells.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Prayer** | **Level** | **Bonus** | **DC** | **Cast?** |
| Cure Minor Wounds | 0 | 0 | 15 | q |
| Detect Magic | 0 | 0 | 15 | q |
| Light | 0 | 0 | 15 | þ |
| Mending | 0 | 0 | 15 | q |
| Cure Light Wounds | 1 | 0 | 16 | q |
| Detect Evil | 1 | 0 | 16 | q |
| Protection from Evil | 1 | 0 | 16 | q |
| Sanctuary | 1 | 0 | 16 | q |
| Shield of Faith | 1 | 0 | 16 | q |
| Cure Moderate Wounds | 2 | 0 | 17 | q |
| Hold Person | 2 | 0 | 17 | q |
| Silence | 2 | 0 | 17 | q |
| Spiritual Weapon | 2 | 0 | 17 | q |
| Dispel Magic | 3 | 0 | 18 | q |
| Searing Light | 3 | 0 | 18 | q |
| Summon Nature’s Ally III | 3 | 0 | 18 | q |

Applying the spell’s effect to his left palm, he held his hand out ahead of them, yielding more visual information as they continued towards the main junction.

They made it another 100’ when a carrion crawler poked its head out from a crack in the tunnel wall.

Round 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Group** | **Initiative** | **Roll** | **Modified Roll** | **Speed** |
| Eldrin | 1 | 2 | 17 | 19 | 30’ |
| Korik | 1 | 1 | 16 | 17 | 30’ |
| Carrion Crawler | 2 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 30’/15’ |

Eldrin could tell the invertebrate was hungry, and cast *shield of faith [expired on Round 51]* upon himself before moving further.

*Eldrin gained +2 to AC.*

The crawler was about 35’ away and had by now come out of the crack to begin its famished approach, flailing its eager tentacles.

Korik quickly drew his bow, nocking an arrow with practiced ease. With the light from Eldrin’s spell illuminating the tunnel, he had a clear shot at the carrion crawler. He took a deep breath, steadying his aim, and released the arrow, hoping to slow the creature’s advance before it could reach them.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Composite Shortbow, Str +2 | 1d6 | +2 | 1 | x3 | 70’ | 2.0 | +6 | 6 | 12 |

*Miss.*

The arrow flew straight and true, striking the carrion crawler in one of its flailing tentacles. The creature let out a hiss of pain, but continued to slither forward, its hunger driving it on. Reaching Korik, it swung a single tentacle at him to give him a taste of what would come in a moment.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 1 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 16 |

*Miss.*

Round 2

“Remember that gorilla I summoned on you at the Tournament of Champions?” Eldrin asked before he began casting *summon monster III* to remind the dwarf.”

“How can I forget? It was the nail in the coffin of my victory that day,” he sighed, having had to yield to Eldrin in combat. It was an honorable moment for them both.

It would take a full six seconds for the archivist to cast the spell, and as long as the crawler didn’t distract him, it should prove to even the odds against the dungeon monster before them.

Meanwhile, Korik kept his cool under pressure, adjusting his stance for another shot. With the carrion crawler still approaching, he aimed carefully, hoping to strike a vital spot. He knew Eldrin needed time to complete his spell, and it was his duty to keep the creature at bay.

“Focus, Korik,” he muttered to himself as he drew another arrow and let it fly.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Composite Shortbow, Str +2 | 1d6 | +2 | 1 – 4firing into melee | x3 | 70’ | 2.0 | +2 | 18 | 20 |

*Hit. Dmg: 5 + 2 = 7.*

The arrow hit its mark, embedding itself in the carrion crawler’s body. The creature recoiled slightly, hissing in pain, but continued its relentless advance.

The carrion crawler targeted Eldrin as he was casting *summon monster III*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 1 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 2 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 19 | 22 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 3 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 4 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 16 | 19 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 5 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 17 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 6 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 14 | 17 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 7 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 13 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 8 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Carrion Crawler | Bite | 1d4+1 | -4 | 2 | -2 | 19 | 17 |

*Miss, hit, miss, hit, hit, miss, miss, miss, miss.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**Paralysis | **Rank** | **Ability****& Mod.** | **Misc.****Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Eldrin, Fortitude** | **4** | **Con (+3)** | 0 | 7 | 20 | 27 |
| **Eldrin, Fortitude** | **4** | **Con (+3)** | 0 | 7 | 13 | 20 |
| **Eldrin, Fortitude** | **4** | **Con (+3)** | 0 | 7 | 4 | 11 |

*Success, success, fail. Paralyzed until Round 7.*

Eldrin was paralyzed, and lost the spell.

Round 3

Eldrin could do nothing at the moment.

Korik studied the situation, knowing that he would have better odds with his bow if he retreated a bit, even if it gave the crawler an attack of opportunity, and moving at least 10’ would prompt his Skirmish ability to add extra damage to his shots. Regardless of what he did, he’d incur a penalty for firing into a melee with Eldrin, so he also considered shouldering his bow *[move action]* and drawing his rapier *[move action]* so he could participate in the melee on the next round with better odds.

With Eldrin paralyzed and the carrion crawler still advancing, he decided to maintain his distance and continue his ranged attacks to keep the creature at bay. He swiftly nocked another arrow, drawing his bowstring back and taking aim at the carrion crawler’s most vulnerable spots.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Composite Shortbow, Str +2 | 1d6 | +2 | 1 – 4Melee | x3 | 70’ | 2.0 | +2 | 17 | 19 |

*Hit. Dmg: 4 + 2 = 6.*

Korik hit the creature again and called out, “Hang in there, Eldrin! I’ll keep this thing occupied!” He kept his stance firm and prepared to draw another arrow, ready to continue the assault from a safe distance.

The carrion crawler did its best to stun the gnome further now that he was paralyzed and so much easier to hit.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** | **Crit** |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 1 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 18 | 21 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 2 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 3 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 16 | 19 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 4 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 5 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 16 | 19 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 6 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 15 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 7 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Tentacle 8 | Paralysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 14 | 20 |
| Carrion Crawler | Bite | 1d4+1 | -4 | 2 | -2 | 11 | 9 | 20 |

*Hit, miss, hit, miss, hit, hit, miss, hit, miss.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**Paralysis | **Rank** | **Ability****& Mod.** | **Misc.****Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Eldrin, Fortitude** | **4** | **Con (+3)** | 0 | 7 | 12 | 19 |
| **Eldrin, Fortitude** | **4** | **Con (+3)** | 0 | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| **Eldrin, Fortitude** | **4** | **Con (+3)** | 0 | 7 | 16 | 23 |
| **Eldrin, Fortitude** | **4** | **Con (+3)** | 0 | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| **Eldrin, Fortitude** | **4** | **Con (+3)** | 0 | 7 | 15 | 22 |

*Success, fail, success, fail, success. Paralysis extended by 2 rounds to Round 9.*

Round 4

Eldrin feared for his life, and struggled in vain against the paralyzing effect.

Korik gritted his teeth, knowing he had to act quickly to protect Eldrin. The carrion crawler was relentless, and Korik needed to keep it at bay. He decided to take advantage of his mobility and continued to maintain his distance while firing another arrow. He nocked an arrow, aiming carefully at the carrion crawler’s vulnerable spots, and released the bowstring with precision. Getting into a better position, he leveraged his Skirmish ability to add a little extra damage to the shot.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Notes** |
| MW Composite Shortbow, Str +2 | 1d6 | +2 | 1 – 4Melee | x3 | 70’ | 2.0 | +2 | 18 | 20 | 1d6 Skirmish |

*Hit. Dmg: 4 + 2 + 3 skirmish = 9.*

“Stay with me, Eldrin!” Korik called out, his voice filled with determination as the carrion crawler muled with agony from the third arrow that pierced it, and tried to crawl away from them before it collapsed and fell into the sewage draining along the tunnel.

Rounds 5 – 9

Eldrin remained in place, able to move his eyes a bit, and eventually writhing out of his paralyzed state. In the meantime, Korik \_\_\_\_.

With the immediate threat neutralized, Korik knew he needed to stay vigilant. He kept his bow at the ready, scanning the tunnel for any signs of additional threats. The dim light from Eldrin’s spell illuminated their surroundings, casting eerie shadows on the walls.

Korik used the time to ensure they were in a defensible position, should any other creatures decide to investigate the commotion. He moved to a strategic spot where he could keep an eye on both Eldrin and the tunnel ahead, ready to react if anything emerged from the darkness.

“Just a bit longer, Eldrin,” Korik muttered to himself, keeping his focus sharp. He occasionally glanced at Eldrin to check on his condition, noting any signs of movement that indicated the gnome was coming out of the paralysis.

As the seconds ticked by, Korik also took a moment to inspect his arrows and equipment, making sure everything was in good condition. He knew that being prepared was crucial for their survival in these treacherous tunnels. The smell of sewage was strong, but he pushed it aside, focusing solely on the task at hand.

Rounds 10 – 17

Eldrin was now able to move once again, and thanked Korik for saving his life. “Much obliged.”

“You’d do it for me,” Korik replied.

“Let’s hope I won’t have to,” Eldrin said as they continued making their way to the junction, albeit more cautiously and slowly than before.

Round 18

“Here it is,” proclaimed Korik once they reached the junction. Referring to the map, he added, “So we came by way of tunnel 15-c, and now we turn here into 13-b.”

It was a straightforward enough turn so far, and they were glad to have the map for reference.

Korik scanned the debris ahead, his eyes narrowing as he assessed the situation. “Eldrin, let’s take this slow. I’ll check the stability of the collapsed chamber first. If it looks safe enough, we can start clearing a path. But be ready for anything—there could be more creatures lurking around.” He moved cautiously, testing the ground with each step and listening for any signs of instability. The weight of the situation pressed on his shoulders, but he remained focused and determined.

When they happened upon the collapsed chamber, Korik noted that it was a bigger pile of debris than they’d anticipated. “This’ll take some time to remove or dispel,” he observed.

“Aye,” the gnome agreed. He’d prepared two *stone shape* spells for the day, and was not sure that these would be enough to deal with the tons of stuff lodged in there, particularly the portions that weren’t stone. Fortunately, most of it was. “I have two castings only,” he said as he paced around the predicament of debris.

Korik kept an eye on the ceiling in case of cloakers, droppers, chokers, ropers, and other things that would make a home of such a place.

Eldrin cast the first case of *stone shape*, seemingly melting a hole that he bored straight through for about 30’ of rubble. Once done, the debris atop the tunnel caved in, collapsing the hole he’d bored. Frowning, though he’d made some progress in clearing the top of the pile, he realized he would have to create the tunnel a bit higher up so that less loose mass was compromising it, and then reinforce the ceiling of the tunnel with the remaining juice in the spell.

He cast the second casting, taking a moment to meld together the debris atop the tunnel, providing the greatest stability possible. “There,” he sighed, satisfied. “It won’t last forever, but it should allow us to get in and out enough times today with whatever lies inside.”

Korik marveled at Eldrin’s skill in shaping the stone. The gnome’s handiwork had created a stable passage through the debris, and he was eager to press on. With a nod to his companion, Korik took the lead, carefully moving forward to assess their path. Keeping his voice low, he said, “Let’s move cautiously, Eldrin. I’ll scout ahead and check for traps or creatures. Stay close, but be ready to cast if needed.”

He advanced slowly, each step deliberate and mindful of any signs of danger. Korik’s keen senses were on high alert as he navigated the newly formed tunnel, scanning for anything out of place.

His eyes inspected the tunnel for any signs of instability or traps that might have been set by previous explorers. His trained instincts guided him through the shadows, ensuring their path was safe. He paused and listened intently, trying to catch any faint sounds that might indicate hidden threats. Korik’s experience as a wilderness rogue and scout allowed him to blend seamlessly with his surroundings, making him almost invisible in the dim light.

Eldrin paused with him to increase the chances of hearing movement around them, and—hearing none—they pressed on. They meandered along the path, following the relatively accurate map that was not quite consistent in scale, and found themselves upon a second pile of debris. He’d already spent his two *stone shape* spells in building the tunnel that conveyed them here, and was out of such spells for the rest of the day. Noting what spells he had left (marked as q in the table below), he considered their options.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Prayer** | **Level** | **DC** | **Cast?** |
| Cure Minor Wounds | 0 | 15 | q |
| Detect Magic | 0 | 15 | q |
| Light | 0 | 15 | þ |
| Mending | 0 | 15 | q |
| Cure Light Wounds | 1 | 16 | q |
| Detect Evil | 1 | 16 | q |
| Protection from Evil | 1 | 16 | q |
| Sanctuary | 1 | 16 | q |
| Shield of Faith | 1 | 16 | þ |
| Cure Moderate Wounds | 2 | 17 | q |
| Hold Person | 2 | 17 | q |
| Silence | 2 | 17 | q |
| Spiritual Weapon | 2 | 17 | q |
| Stone Shape | 3 | 18 | þ |
| Stone Shape | 3 | 18 | þ |
| Summon Nature’s Ally III | 3 | 18 | þ |

“We need more castings of *stone shape*,” shrugged Eldrin. “I won’t be able to prepare another batch until tonight.” He suggested returning to the surface via the sewers, and going to purchase a scroll or three just to be thorough. “It’ll get us back here within the hour,” he estimated, considering a few local magic shops in the northwestern quarter.

Korik considered the situation. If they *had* been tailed by someone stealthy enough to tail them without them knowing, that person might be in a position to leverage the whereabouts of this location to their advantage. It was far better than waiting until tomorrow, but buying a few scrolls—maybe extra ones in case some failed—seemed like the most rational option. He considered any other options.

Korik weighed the options carefully. Returning to the surface for scrolls seemed the most practical solution, especially given the potential risks of lingering underground without the necessary spells to proceed. He nodded at Eldrin and said, “Aye, I think that’s our best bet. Let’s head back and get those scrolls. Better to be prepared than find ourselves in a tighter spot down here.”

He led the way back through the tunnel, ensuring they left no trace of their passage that could alert others to their discovery. As they emerged into the fresh air of the city above, Korik felt a sense of urgency driving him forward. “Let’s make this quick,” he urged, glancing around to ensure they weren’t being watched. “We don’t want to draw any unwanted attention.”

Reaching the Scribe’s Nook—a reading parlor that Eldrin had long wished to visit—they took in the cozy atmosphere of the place that served the readership of a wide range of practical topics. Their shelves consisted mostly of nonfiction how-to guides and other technique-oriented publications, but they also had a small section with scrolls, potions, spell components, and magic items, particularly jewelry. The amulets, rings, bracelets, nose rings, toe rings, and earrings were all displayed haphazardly, as there was no uniformity among them to begin with, seeing as each item was handcrafted by different artisans, mages, and others.

“What’s your pleasure gentlemen?” a half-human elf (variant from DMG 3.5, p. 171) woman from behind the scroll counter greeted them, though she made eye contact with Eldrin, who seemed to be the only one between the two patrons with a spellcaster’s getup.

Eldrin inquired as to the availability and price of *stone shape* spells.

“The arcane version, right?” the woman thought the archivist to be a wizard.

“No, divine actually,” he clarified.

“You a priest? Who’s your deity, if you don’t mind me askin’?” she asked anyway.

“Oghma. Not a cleric, though... an archivist.... Eldrin Thistlebrook, at your service,” he took an opportunity to present himself as a transparent citizen, and member of the community.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability****& Mod.** | **Misc.****Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Eldrin, Diplomacy** | 0 | **Cha (-1)** | 0 | -1 | 10 – 15 | ?? |

*See below.*

“Hm,” she shrugged, raising her eyebrows. “I wouldn’t have guessed. You must be one helluva genius.”

“I have a variety of academic interests,” he circumvented the question. “One of them being the shaping of stone,” he added as she produced the six scrolls she had.

“I’m glad to hear that,” she said, pointing out the seals on the scrolls, “because I have three such scrolls cast by a 5th-order wizard, and two cast by a 7th-order fellow who gave it his best, so these two will affect a bit more stone.”

“About how much?” Korik asked, but Eldrin had already done the calculation in his head.

The half-human woman answered, “Well it’s 10 cubic feet plus 5 more for the regular ones, and 10 + 7 more cubic feet for these magnum ones.”

Eldrin had the gold, and even if they didn’t use them up, these were good scrolls to have around for future occasions. “Any reason why I shouldn’t just buy all of these outright?”

Korik considered the whisper gnome’s question, nodding thoughtfully, “Seems like a good investment, Eldrin. We don’t want to find ourselves in the same situation again, needing more spells when we’re deep underground. Plus, having a few extra scrolls could come in handy for future expeditions.”

He glanced at the shopkeeper, “We’ll take them all,” Korik confirmed, reaching into his pouch to assist with the payment if needed. Ensuring they had the scrolls secured, he added, “Let’s get back to the site before anyone notices our absence.”

Paying ₲1,125 for the three minimal ones, and ₲1,050 for the two magnum versions of the scrolls they were off.

~\*~

Korik had led the way back, carefully lifting the manhole cover and descending into the darkness once more. The familiar scent of the sewers greeted them, and Korik felt a renewed sense of determination as they resumed their exploration.

They were not sure if they had moved silently and stealthily enough that they hadn’t been spotted or heard entering the second time, but they were optimistic that they were alone down here. Passing the green blood and a few remaining chunks of the carrion crawler they’d slain, they wondered just how far down the sewage channel its corpse had gotten before getting caught in some filter.

Arriving at the tunnel that Eldrin had carved with his prepared castings of the *stone shape* spell, they crouched through it again, approaching the second pile of debris that likely led to the laboratory they were seeking.

Korik handed one of the scrolls to Eldrin, “Here you go, let’s see if we can clear that debris and continue our search. Time to uncover those secrets.”

“Which one is this?”

“It’s one of the magnums,” he excitedly said, hoping to see just how much more powerful they were.

Estimating the needed volume of stone needed to be molded, and having learned from his previous mistake, which wasted about half the power of the first casting on a structure that collapsed, he positioned the boring magic of the tunnel a bit higher than the ground they stood on, creating a chasm that didn’t quite reach an open chamber, but was a good start.

The dwarf and gnome were both cunning stoneworkers by background, and knew full well the stability and integrity of a pile of debris like this. After some dialogue rich in masonry and mining jargon, they converged on a nod of agreement that the magnum had been a good call, and that probably all that was needed was a second casting of a regular scroll. “That’ll leave us one magnum and two regs,” the dwarf inventoried.

The second casting with 5th-order potency was used to bore the remaining 5’ of stone before reaching the far slope of the debris pile, and he used the rest of the magical energy to reinforce the ceiling of the tunnel once again to prevent a further cave-in.

They surveyed the tunnel, taking a measure of its apparent integrity.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | Rank | **Ability****& Mod.** | Misc.Mods. | Total | Roll | Check |
| **Korik, Craft: Stonemason** | 3 | **Int (+2)** | 4 | 9 | 3 | 12 |
| **Korik, Knowledge: Dungeoneering** | 1 | **Int (+2)** | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| **Eldrin, Knowledge: Archit./Engin.** | 0 | **Int (+5)** | 0 | 5 | 16 | 21 |
| **Eldrin, Knowledge: Dungeoneering** | 0 | **Int (+5)** | 0 | 5 | 20 | 25 |

*See below.*

“I mean...” Korik began. “It’ll do, right?”

Eldrin was far more confident than Korik, and nodded with confirmation, “It will. Let’s not waste any more time.”

They’d actually bored a hole right through the stone door that was separating both halves of the pile of debris, and walked into the larger chamber. Eldrin instinctively made a gesture for Korik to stop in case of any traps, but the wilderness rogue was already on it, scanning the path before them for so much as a loose string.



They held their stances for the moment and marveled at the sight of the room before them.

Korik’s eyes widened as he took in the sight of the underground chamber. “Look at this place, Eldrin,” he whispered in awe. “It’s like we’ve stumbled into a hidden fortress.”

Eldrin nodded, equally impressed. “Indeed, it seems we’ve uncovered something significant.”

Korik moved cautiously into the chamber, his eyes scanning for any signs of traps or hidden threats. The warm light from the torches cast flickering shadows on the stone walls, adding an eerie but mesmerizing quality to the space.

“Let’s proceed carefully,” Korik advised. “There could be valuable artifacts or dangerous surprises waiting for us. I’ll keep an eye out for any traps or hidden mechanisms.”

Korik moved further into the chamber, using his keen senses to inspect the area for any traps or hidden dangers. He moved with the grace and precision of a seasoned scout, ensuring their path was safe.

He then approached one of the tables, examining the contents and looking for any clues or items of interest. His eyes were drawn to an old, dusty book lying on the table. “Eldrin, take a look at this,” he called softly, gesturing for his companion to join him.

They surveyed the old book, which happened to be a cookbook by the looks of the illustrations, though the language was the now obsolete Athalantar dialect, written in an age-old Human alphabet that neither one of them could discern, let alone the average living human.

They guessed with some confidence that this was the common living space for humanoids at some point, and it had apparently been left in a hurry, seeing as there were useful household items still here. Cooking and dining utensils, books of this sort, and other articles peppered the otherwise desolate and dusty space.

Korik ran his fingers over the dusty cover of the cookbook, marveling at the age and history it represented. “This place must have been abandoned in a hurry,” he murmured, scanning the room for more clues. He picked up a few of the household items, examining them for any signs of use or hidden compartments. The utensils were worn but functional, and the books, though old, were well-preserved.

“Eldrin, this is a treasure trove of everyday life from a bygone era,” Korik said, his voice filled with a mix of wonder and respect. “These artifacts might not hold great monetary value, but they’re priceless in terms of historical significance.”

“You’re preaching to the choir, friend,” the archivist assured his comrade-at-arms.

Korik continued to explore the room, examining each item carefully and trying to piece together the story of the people who once lived here. His mind raced with possibilities, and he felt a deep sense of connection to the past, turning his attention to the east passage. “We should check out that passage next,” he suggested. “There might be more clues about what happened here and why this place was abandoned.”

Korik moved to an altar along the northern wall, carefully lifting a tarnished metal object. It appeared to be a small statue, intricately carved with symbols that were unfamiliar to him. “Look at this,” he called to Eldrin, holding the statue up to the light. “I wonder what it represents.”



They then noted the larger-than-life statue of a diabolical deity along the western wall, and a closed chest just north of it in this chamber, which was about 30’ east of the dining area with the cookbooks that they’d just explored.

It was then that they realized that the circular markings in the middle of the room constituted a summoning platform, and this is likely where Outsiders with evil leanings were conjured in ages past.

Korik carefully approached the larger-than-life statue of the diabolical deity along the western wall, his eyes scanning for any signs of traps or hidden mechanisms that might be guarding it. The eerie atmosphere of the room weighed heavily on him, and he knew they had to tread carefully. He knelt beside the closed chest just north of the statue, inspecting it for any signs of tampering or magical protections. His trained eyes and nimble fingers worked quickly, checking for hidden triggers or pressure plates.

“Eldrin, this statue and chest might hold some valuable clues or artifacts,” he called softly over his shoulder. “But we need to be cautious. These summoning platforms usually come with all sorts of nasty surprises.”

“This is a moment for *detect magic*,” Eldrin said as he cast the spell *[expired in 5 minutes]*. Not long afterwards, he warned, “Be careful, Korik: that statue may not be rigged with a trap, but it’s dripping with multiple magical auras.”

“Good to know,” Korik stepped back, and took an interest in the chest, pointing to it and asking, “And this?”

Eldrin could see only a faint glow that she couldn’t identify through the wood that comprised the chest. He said as much, and added, “Probably nothing alive in there by now, but whatever’s in there may still harbor an active spell.”

Seeing no active traps or snares on or behind the chest, Korik checked the lock and noticed it was locked. “What about the summoning circle?” he asked. “What else in here is still magically viable?”

Eldrin nodded, “Definitely stay out of the circle. It may trap us inside if we’re not careful.”

“Or conjure up one of those,” the rogue pointed to the statue of the horned devil grimacing. “Should I do the honors?”

“You’re the locksmiths, sir,” Eldrin motioned for his friend to pick the lock.

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| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability****& Mod.** | **Misc.****Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Korik, Open Lock** | 5 | **Dex (+2)** | 2 | 9 | 2 | 11 |

*See below.*

“Aw, frogs!” he protested his own poor judgment and execution. “Let me try again.”

“Just take your time,” Eldrin comforted his friend. “Doesn’t look like we’re pressed for time right now.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability****& Mod.** | **Misc.****Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Korik, Open Lock** | 5 | **Dex (+2)** | 2 | 9 | 16 | 25 |

*See below.*

The second try was much better informed and carried out, and the chest was now unlocked.

“Careful,” Eldrin cautioned his friend yet again.

Korik took a deep breath, his fingers gently lifting the lid of the chest. He moved with precision, ready to react if anything unexpected happened. As the lid creaked open, the dim light from Eldrin’s spell illuminated the contents within.

Inside the chest, they found an array of items: several pouches filled with a hodgepodge of ancient artifacts of varying levels of sophistication, these being: a brooch, a sash, a meat hook, a toe ring, a wristwatch, an icepick, a glove, a monocle, and a chisel.

“Look at this, Eldrin,” Korik whispered, his voice filled with awe. “What on Toril would someone have wanted to store all these things... and together in one chest?” he asked rhetorically, carefully picking up the chisel, examining its craftsmanship for any signs of its cultural origin. It was exquisite, and Korik felt a sense of reverence as he held it. “This is dwarven metalwork,” he boasted to his gnomish friend.

There had been a passage in the adjacent dining area that had led westward, but it was too far south for them to have gotten a line of sight to what lay beyond earlier. As they beheld the items, they wondered what other rooms had been deserted for a millennium down here.

Korik marveled at the quality of the dwarven chisel in his hands. “It’s incredible how well-preserved these items are. Whoever placed them here must have taken great care to ensure their protection.” He gently placed the chisel back into the chest, his mind racing with possibilities.

His attention was drawn to the passage in the adjacent dining area that led westward. “Eldrin, what do you say we check out that western passage? There might be more treasures or clues about the history of this place.”

“I’d like to take these items if you don’t mind,” Eldrin commented as he reached in and opened his haversack, emptying the contents of the chest into it.

Korik chuckled to himself as he led the way back to the dining area, moving cautiously and keeping his senses sharp. Korik knew they had to be prepared for anything, whether it be traps or more of those unsettling magical auras. As they approached the western passage, he signaled for Eldrin to stay close and ready to cast if needed.

Returning to the mess hall, Eldrin reported no magical auras in the much larger chamber, and made his way south to explore the other passage.



It led further downward into a tunnel that descended into pure darkness. The *light* spell cast before they’d slain the carrion crawler had expired about an hour ago, and they had no other means of creating light, so they relied on their vision to guide them. They walked for the better part of two minutes, at times slipping on the uneven surface, and finally happened upon an intact wooden door with metal hinges, locking hardware, and reinforcements.



There was an unlit torch in the sconce that may just light, and Eldrin took a bit of tinder and struck it a few times until it successfully caught a light flame that soon engulfed the tip of the dry-pitch-coated stick. Two other torches were found on the ground, and they lit those too, putting the first one back in the sconce and each holding one of the other two.

“If it were stone,” Eldrin said as he faced the door, “We’d just take another *stone shape* spell to it, but this seems more like a job for the *heat metal* spell or *warp wood*.”

“What do you suppose is on the other side?” asked Korik.

“With any luck, the malaugrym’s laboratory,” Eldrin responded. “I do have a *flame blade* that I was hoping to save for a confrontation, but this is as good a reason to cast it.”

Korik, thought, “What about the torches?”

“It’ll take longer to light the door on fire that way, but you’re right we’re not in a hurry. We may have to deal with more smoke, though.”

They put both torches on the floor at the foot of the door, and even brought the third one over. It did start to smoke quite profusely as the fire grew, and they backtracked about 40’, keeping an eye on the doorway as the planks began to be engulfed by the consuming flames.

Korik watched the flames grow, the smoke curling up and filling the tunnel with a dense haze. He kept his distance, but his eyes remained fixed on the door, ready to move at a moment’s notice. The wooden planks crackled and burned, and the heat from the fire was almost palpable even from their position.

“We’re making progress,” Korik muttered to Eldrin, keeping his voice low. “Let’s hope this door doesn’t take too long to burn through. The smoke might attract unwanted attention.” As the flames intensified, Korik took a moment to scan their surroundings, ensuring they were still alone in the dark, damp tunnel. The flickering light from the torches cast long shadows on the walls, adding an eerie ambiance to their already tense situation.

In the first round, Korik continued to monitor the door, checking to see if it was weakening under the fire’s assault. He listened for any sounds that might indicate the door giving way or the presence of any creatures drawn by the commotion.

In the second round, he turned to Eldrin, “Once this door is down, we need to move quickly. Be ready to cast any protective spells or summon allies if needed. We don’t know what’s waiting for us on the other side.”

Eldrin nodded, his eyes focused on the door. “I’m ready, Korik. Let’s see what secrets lie beyond this door and be prepared for anything.”

Together, they waited, the tension building as the fire continued to consume the wooden door, inching them closer to uncovering the mysteries of the malaugrym’s laboratory.

When the fire had mostly dissipated, and they could confidently walk through the aperture without singing their hair, they went in, and beheld the study.



Korik stepped cautiously into the malaugrym’s study, his eyes widening at the sight before him. The room was a chaotic blend of arcane and alchemical paraphernalia, illuminated by a single flickering candle atop a stack of ancient tomes. Shelves lined the walls, filled with an assortment of bottles and jars, each containing mysterious substances. In the center of the room, a large cauldron sat, with gnarled roots twisting out of it, supporting an open book that seemed to shimmer with magical energy. The floor was adorned with an intricate circular pattern, possibly a summoning circle or a protective ward, its colors faded but still vibrant enough to hint at its former power. The air was thick with the scent of old parchment and strange herbs, and tiny motes of light floated lazily around the room, adding to the otherworldly atmosphere.

“This place is incredible!” Korik whispered, his voice filled with awe and caution. “We’ve definitely stumbled upon a place of great power and danger.”

He motioned for Eldrin to stay alert as they began to explore the secrets hidden within the malaugrym’s study. Korik moved carefully, his eyes scanning for any traps or magical protections that might still be active. He approached the cauldron, intrigued by the shimmering book resting within the twisted roots.

They then saw that the roots in the cauldron came to life, and took on the aspect of a malaugrym’s tentacles. “By the gods!” gasped Eldrin. “It’s the malaugrym!”

Korik’s heart raced as the roots transformed into the writhing tentacles of a malaugrym. Reacting swiftly, he drew his rapier, ready to defend himself and Eldrin. He knew they were facing a formidable foe, and they had to act quickly. He took a defensive stance, positioning himself between Eldrin and the malaugrym. “Eldrin, get ready to cast!” he shouted, his voice steady despite the adrenaline surging through him. “We need to take this thing down fast!” He focused his gaze on the creature, preparing to strike at any opening it presented. The room’s eerie glow added to the tension, casting shadows that danced around them as they faced the resurrected malaugrym.

Eldrin, meanwhile, drew upon his Dark Knowledge of aberrations, and did his best to... wait... no....

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.***silent image* | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Notes** |
| **Eldrin, Will** | **4** | **Wis (+2)** | 0 | 6 | 16 | 22 | +2 vs. Enchantment & Illusions |

*Success.*

As he reached for Dark Knowledge, and found a dead link, he came to the realization that this was, in fact, an illusion triggered by their presence. They must have stepped on a magical sigil, and now that his *detect magic* spell had expired as they’d waited for the smoke to dissipate, he was at a loss to identify any further traps.

“Hang on a tick,” Eldrin explained the illusion to Korik, and soon they could again see the inanimate roots behind the illusion that would presumably expire in a few minutes.

“Phew!” Korik sighed. “I was like ‘Round 1!’” Korik relaxed his grip on his rapier, letting out a sigh of relief. “Good catch, Eldrin. That illusion almost had me ready to leap into battle.” He sheathed his weapon and took a moment to steady his nerves. “This place is full of surprises,” he remarked, glancing around the study once more. “We’ll need to stay on our toes. There could be more of these illusions or other traps waiting for us.”

He moved cautiously back to the cauldron, keeping an eye out for any more magical sigils or hidden dangers. “Let’s see if we can find anything useful in that book,” he suggested, pointing to the shimmering tome supported by the twisted roots.

Eldrin nodded, his eyes still wary. “Agreed. Let’s proceed with caution. There’s no telling what other surprises this place has in store for us.” They approached the cauldron, ready to uncover more secrets hidden within the malaugrym’s study.

They gradually relaxed as they perused the contents of the room, spending the better part of two minutes browsing and fingering things that hadn’t been messed with in a thousand years. Their shuffling and searching had caused enough constant sound that they hadn’t noticed the rasping of the bodak that now entered the room via the burnt doorway, the only passage leading into or out of this chamber. Eldrin immediately identified the demonic undead, and noted its desiccated state after all these years down here. It had likely been roused by their presence, and there may have been others on the way.

Round 1

“Oh, crappers!” Eldrin immediately said and cast *sanctuary*, subjecting the bodak to a Will save if it chose to attack him.

Korik saw the desiccated bodak enter the room, its rasping breath sending chills down his spine. He quickly assessed the situation and knew they had to act fast. Drawing his rapier, he moved to position himself between the bodak and Eldrin, ready to defend his companion. “Stay behind me, Eldrin!” Korik shouted, his voice steady despite the fear gripping him. He focused on the bodak, preparing to strike with precision. Knowing the bodak’s weakened state, he aimed for a critical point, hoping to exploit its vulnerabilities.

The bodak manifested his death gaze upon the valiant Korik.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**Death Gaze | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Korik, Fortitude** | **3** | **Con (+2)** | 1 | 6 | 17 | 23 |

*Success.*

Round 2

Korik stated, “If I recall these buggers are immune to electricity, and resistant to other types of energy and weapon damage. Give it all you’ve got, lad!”

Eldrin had cast his best spells for the day, and would likely have to resort to some scrolls if they were going to survive this formidable undead’s onslaught. He cast *spiritual weapon [expired on Round 7]*, unleashing Oghma’s longsword upon the bodak.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Spiritual Longsword | 1d8 | 1 | 0 | 19-20, x2 | Slashing | 0.0 | +5 | 16 | 21 |

*Hit. Dmg: 8 + 1 = 9 magic [force].*

Korik then lunged forward with his rapier, aiming for a vital point. The rapier struck true, piercing the bodak’s desiccated flesh.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Silvered Rapier | 1d6 | 1 + 2charge | 1 + 2charge | 18-20, x2 | Slashing | 2.0 | +8 | 14 | 22 |

*Hit. Dmg: 3 + 1 + 2 charge = 6.*

The bodak slammed Korik with a fist.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Desiccated Bodak | Slam | 1d6+1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 11 |

*Miss.*

Round 3

Eldrin lost his sanctuary spell a moment ago when his longsword attacked the undead demon. He drew his crossbow and tried seeing what that would do to it.

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| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Light Crossbow | 1d6 | 0 | 1 | 19-20, x2 | 120’ | 4.0 | +6 | 8 | 14 |

*Miss.*

The longsword swung at the undead again.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Spiritual Longsword | 1d8 | 1 | 0 | 19-20, x2 | Slashing | 0.0 | +5 | *19* | 24 |

*Threat. 1d20 = 9 + 5 = 14, not a critical hit. Dmg: 7 + 1 = 8 magic [force].*

The protector of this sanctum was weakening, and would fall soon. Korik took a deep breath and delivered a hopefully final, decisive strike with his rapier, aiming to put an end to the bodak’s unnatural existence.

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| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Silvered Rapier | 1d6 | 1 | 1 | 18-20, x2 | Slashing | 2.0 | +6 | 17 | 23 |

*Hit. Dmg: 6 + 1 = 7.*

The bodak remained a threat, and swung again at Korik, whose will he could not subdue with its gaze.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Desiccated Bodak | Slam | 1d6+1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | **20** | 26 |

*Threat. 1d20 = 5 + 6 = 11, not a critical hit. Dmg: 4 + 1 = 5 [24/29 hit points].*

Round 4

Eldrin came up behind Korik, and said, “On your left with healing,” before casting *cure light wounds*.

*Korik gained 3 + 5 = 8 hps (capped at 5) [29/29].*

The longsword swung again.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Spiritual Longsword | 1d8 | 1 | 0 | 19-20, x2 | Slashing | 0.0 | +5 | 10 | 15 |

*Miss.*

Korik felt the warm energy of Eldrin’s healing spell wash over him, restoring his strength. With his resolve renewed, he focused on the weakening bodak, determined to end the threat once and for all. He tightened his grip on his rapier and lunged forward, aiming for a final, decisive strike. His movements were swift and precise, targeting the creature’s vital points to ensure its defeat.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Silvered Rapier | 1d6 | 1 | 1 + 2flank | 18-20, x2 | Slashing | 2.0 | +8 | 8 | 16 |

*Miss.*

Korik’s determination was unwavering as he missed, and the bodak struck at him again.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Desiccated Bodak | Slam | 1d6+1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 19 |

*Hit. Dmg: 1 + 1 = 2 [27/29].*

Round 5

Eldrin reloaded his crossbow and tried again.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Light Crossbow | 1d6 | 0 | 1 – 4Melee | 19-20, x2 | 120’ | 4.0 | +2 | 12 | 14 |

*Miss.*

The longsword tried to end the bodak’s existence.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Spiritual Longsword | 1d8 | 1 | 2 flank | 19-20, x2 | Slashing | 0.0 | +7 | 12 | 19 |

*Hit. Dmg: 3 + 1 = 4 magic [force].*

Korik knew this was the moment to strike with all his might. With Eldrin’s support and the spiritual longsword’s continued assault, he felt a surge of determination. His rapier gleamed as he aimed for a decisive blow to finally bring down the desiccated bodak. He lunged forward once more, targeting the creature’s vital points, hoping to end its threat once and for all.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| MW Silvered Rapier | 1d6 | 1 | 1 + 2flank | 18-20, x2 | Slashing | 2.0 | +8 | 11 | 18 |

*Hit. Dmg: 6 + 1 = 7.*

That destroyed the bodak, whose body began to deflate like a rubber mannekin.

Korik watched as the bodak’s body began to deflate, its dark energies dissipating into the air. He let out a breath he hadn’t realized he was holding, feeling a wave of relief wash over him. The room seemed to lighten, the oppressive atmosphere lifting with the demise of the undead guardian.

“We did it, Eldrin!” Korik said, sheathing his rapier. “The bodak is finally defeated.”

Eldrin lowered his crossbow, and handed Korik a cure potion, his expression a mix of relief and exhaustion. “That was a close call, Korik. Thank Oghma for his guidance and protection. Let’s make sure there are no more surprises waiting for us.”

Korik nodded, “Agreed. Let’s take a moment to catch our breath and then continue our exploration. There’s still much to uncover in this malaugrym’s study, and now we can do so without the fear of being ambushed.”

Together, they stood amidst the remnants of the battle, ready to uncover the secrets that lay hidden within the ancient laboratory.

In the aftermath of the battle, Korik and Eldrin took their time exploring the malaugrym’s study. Among the remnants of ancient artifacts and magical items, Korik discovered a Ring of Sustenance, its intricate design glinting in the dim light. He slipped it onto his finger, feeling a strange but comforting energy emanating from it. The boots of Elvenkind, their soft leather and delicate craftsmanship evident, were also among the treasures. Korik marveled at their lightness, knowing they would enhance his stealth capabilities. Finally, he found Heward’s Handy Haversack, its enchantment allowing for increased carrying capacity—a perfect addition to their adventuring gear.

Meanwhile, Eldrin’s scholarly eyes were drawn to an ancient tome, the pages filled with arcane symbols and scholarly annotations. He carefully placed it in his bag, knowing it would be invaluable for his research and spellcasting. Among the other items, he found a Dwarven Thrower, a magical warhammer that seemed to resonate with Korik’s dwarven heritage. He handed it to his friend, recognizing its potential to bolster their combat prowess. Together, they stood amidst the treasures, feeling a renewed sense of purpose and readiness to face whatever challenges lay ahead in their quest.

They spent the better part of an hour filling up the newfound haversack with tomes, treasures, and all manner of artifacts from the dig. Eldrin had a duty to log these into the municipal archives, and as usual, they would allow him partial oversight as to the curation and cataloguing of the items. He usually was compensated with such a handsome stipend that he instead took some of the items as recompense, and in this case, he was going to ask for the haversack, and Korik would request the dwarven thrower. They would also have to inspect the ancient tome before deciding its value, purpose, and rightful keeping.

~\*~

Morning, 25 Marpenoth

The dwarf and gnome were sitting in the curator’s office, both helping to document their find. In the last day, they’d returned twice with a salvage team, and recovered even more inventory from the malaugrym’s study. In addition, law enforcement was dispatched to secure the area, and stone shaper wizards would eventually seal up the area to prevent ne’er-do-wells from setting up shop there in the future.

“Well,” smiled Eldrin after they left the Museum of Arcane Sciences in Secomber. “What kind of trouble can we get into now?”

Korik chuckled. “Trouble will find us soon enough, friend. I’m glad we were able to carry out this little mission, and it’s gotten me some street credit with the local dungeon delvers. I might even get a regular gig with a spelunking company.”

“Best wishes spelunking, Korik.”

They hugged briefly, and agreed to meet again soon at the reading parlor where they’d bought the *stone shape* scrolls. “Good ambiance, that place.”

As the dwarf and gnome parted ways, the streets of Secomber bustled with the usual afternoon activity. The successful expedition had not only fortified their friendship but also enriched their reputations among the city’s adventurers and scholars. Eldrin felt a sense of pride in contributing to the municipal archives and preserving the knowledge for future generations. Meanwhile, Korik looked forward to new opportunities that awaited him in the underground caverns and tunnels, his trusty dwarven thrower now an integral part of his arsenal.

Walking towards the reading parlor, Korik’s thoughts drifted to the myriad possibilities that lay ahead. He could almost hear the echo of hidden chambers and forgotten dungeons calling to him, promising adventure and untold treasures. As he approached the quaint establishment, he knew that this was just the beginning of many more thrilling escapades with Eldrin by his side. The future held countless mysteries, and he was ready to face them head-on, one exploration at a time.