

The Forgotten Shrine

Alone in the wilderness stands a mysterious obelisk. Its purpose and its creators are long forgotten. The local people avoid it, claiming that it is still guarded by a cruel and bloodthirsty beast. What secrets does this ancient shine hold, and who is brave enough to explore its depths?

Encounter Overview

The forgotten shrine is a sidebar adventure that can be added to nearly any other adventure. The encounter is designed for characters between 4th and 6th level, although it can be adjusted to higher levels if necessary by adding additional guardians. The shrine itself is a tall, narrow stone obelisk. It can be located nearly anywhere in the campaign or adventure. The encounter doesn't need any hyping, simply allow the party to pass by the shrine in the course of their adventuring. Describe the shrine and show the party the picture of it. Curiosity and greed should fuel the rest of the encounter.

Shrine Exterior

The forgotten shrine towers above its surroundings to a height of over two hundred feet. It appears to have been carved from a single granite block, and probably originally looked somewhat similar to the Devil's Tower monument in Wyoming. The stone of the shrine has been shaped to look like three identical enormous cats, all intertwined in a spiral. The base of the shrine is uncarved, and at one point is broken by a stone archway with stairs leading upward. Local people claim not to know of the shrine's origins, and some specu-

late the place to be an ancient knük (from *Minions: Fearsome Foes*) holy site. This claim is rather dubious, however, and sages and scholars say the shrine predates even these long forgotten people.

Entry to the shrine is only through the stone archway at the base. Scaling the walls of the shrine or flying up to its peak produces no particular revelations. The stone steps are old and broken, but still usable. Anyone bothering to inspect them should be able to ascertain they were



GM's Map



constructed for use by something slightly larger than a human. Once the party has climbed about 20 feet on the stairs, the passageway begins to grow dark. By the time the party reaches the top of the stairs at about the 60 foot mark, it is pitch black, and a light source or some sort of darkvision is required.

Shrine Interior

Area 1 – Central Vault

The interior of the forgotten shrine is quite spacious. The stairs lead up into a single stone vault in the center of the obelisk. The ceiling of the vault is nearly eighty feet high, and has three separate domes,

corresponding to the three cats of the exterior. The vault is shadowy and echoing. Pillars are set throughout the room, and six small alcoves lead off of the main chamber. Carvings and statues of felines of various shapes and sizes are visible throughout the shrine. About 20 feet up a narrow catwalk rings the room, apparently accessed by rungs carved into the wall sculpted to look like part of one of the many bas reliefs here.

Area 2 – Catwalk

This narrow ledge circles the central vault below. The guardian of the shrine lurks here, and carefully observes all who enter. The whole of the interior of the shrine is visible from here, and the soft moss covering the surface of the catwalk allows the guardian to move about

on the ledge unheard. Anyone walking on the catwalk gains a +8 circumstance bonus to all Move Silently checks. The shadowy and highly decorated nature of the central vault also adds a +5 circumstance bonus to the Hide skill of anyone on the catwalk that attempts to hide from anyone on the level below.

The guardian of the shrine is the feral warcat described in the guardian section. If the party exceeds the challenge rating for this encounter, either advance it by increasing its hit dice, or add additional duplicate guardian. If any of the artifacts stored in the alcoves of the shrine are disturbed, the guardian will pounce down from the catwalk and attack. If the party has not yet spotted the warcat at this time, it gains a surprise round when it attacks.

Area 3 – First Alcove

This small alcove contains an aging diorama depicting what appears to be a powerful cat standing before a crowd of supplicant feline worshippers. The god is wearing a strange mask made from an odd type of turquoise gemstone. The only thing of note here is the mask, which radiates a powerful magic if detected.

Mask of Anonymity

Minor Artifact

If anyone puts this mask on, his identity is immediately obscured, and all around him forget who he is, reacting to him as if he were a stranger.



Anyone looking upon someone in this mask is unable to determine his identity, even through magical means. If the wearer of the mask discloses his identity to someone, such as by explaining who he is, the listener immediately forgets who he said that he was. The only means of identifying the person in the mask is the mask itself, and all who observe him think of him only as the one in the mask. If the wearer removes the mask and someone else puts it on, an observer assumes the new wearer to be the same masked person that he dealt with previously.

Caster Level: 20; Weight: 2lbs.

Area 4 – Second Alcove

This alcove contains a dusty diorama depicting a handsome cat holding aloft a primitive looking bottle. A menagerie of bizarre creatures surrounds him, cowering in terror.

The bottle here is magical, although nothing else is of much interest.

Bottle of Souls

Minor Artifact

When this opaque glass bottle is uncorked a horrible wailing sound is emitted, and strong winds fill the air. All within 30 feet of the bottle, including its holder, must make a Will save (DC 18) or their souls are drawn out of their bodies and forced into the bottle. The bodies left behind are vacant husks and slowly rot away, losing one point of Con per day until physical death occurs at 0. The bottle has Hardness 2 and 6 hit points. If it is broken, all of the souls trapped inside are released. If a soul's body is still alive, and within 100 ft, the soul can return to it, otherwise it is lost, effectively killing the person.



Caster Level: 20; Weight: 1lb.

Area 5 – Third Alcove

This area contains a stone altar surrounded by a diorama depicting a feline priest sacrificing a horrified canine creature. Cat cultists ring the altar and look on, apparently in reverence. The knife used in the ceremony is the only thing of note here.

Knife of the Cat God

Minor Artifact

This wicked looking knife does not seem particularly unusual when used in combat, only functioning as a +1 dagger. Anyone slain by the dagger discovers the extraordinary powers of the dagger, as his soul, instead of going before his god, finds itself



the eternal slave and servant of the great Cat god, far off in the outer planes of Chaos.

Any attempt to resurrect a creature killed by the knife causes the caster of the raising spell to make an opposed *dispel magic* roll against the 20th-level caster level of the knife (DC 31). Thus, a 15th-level priest who casts *raise dead* on a creature killed by the knife would have to roll a 16 or higher on a d20 to successfully raise the fallen creature.

Caster Level: 20; Weight: 2lbs.

Area 6 – Fourth Alcove

This area contains a crumbling diorama depicting a wise old cat sitting on a throne flanked by two frightening looking statues. The first, on the left side of the cat, is a humanoid looking feline crouched and baring its teeth. The second, on the right hand of the cat, is a large skeletal feline wearing an intricate leather harness and set with gems.

The gems are fake and worthless, although the skull itself is magical, as is a single large gem set into its eye socket.

Skull of the Cat God's Servant

Minor artifact

This skull radiates a powerful magic, although it doesn't seem to do anything interesting. If placed into the mouth of a large creature, the skull expands and melds with the skull of the creature, replacing its original skull and right eye. Unless the transformed creature is a feline, this reduces its Charisma score by 2 points. With the skull and gem eye in place, a creature gains a +2 natural armor bonus, as well as the effect of *true seeing*. The creature also gains a bite attack with a +2 enhancement bonus, inflicting 1d6+2 points of damage.

Caster Level: 20; Weight: 4lbs.



Area 7 – Fifth Alcove

This area contains a strange game board, arranged with carved stone game pieces of cats and other creatures. The game is vaguely reminiscent of chess, but is distinctly alien in its design. Two stone figures sit at the game, one a sly looking cat and the other unrecognizable, yet demonic in appearance.

One of the gamepieces, a black stone cat is magical, although it doesn't radiate magic if detected. Only the fact that it doesn't seem to be succumbing to the effects of age (Search check DC 18 to notice) makes it stand out from the rest of the scene.

Token of the Cat God

Minor Artifact

This ordinary looking gamepiece seems unremarkable unless it is used in a game of chance. If used in this manner, it transforms itself into a shape usable in the game (such as a card or a die for example). The token does not radiate magic, nor does it appear to be other than what it appears to be, even under magical scrutiny). When the token is used in a game of chance, the user receives a +10 luck bonus to any rolls or checks involved in the game.

Caster Level: 20; Weight: 1 oz.



Area 8 – Sixth Alcove

This area contains a single statue of a large cat, sitting stoically with a far-away look in its eyes. The figure is dressed in a number of pieces of primitive looking jewelry and fetishes. A green stone necklace around the statue's neck is magical.

Talisman of the Cat God

Minor Artifact

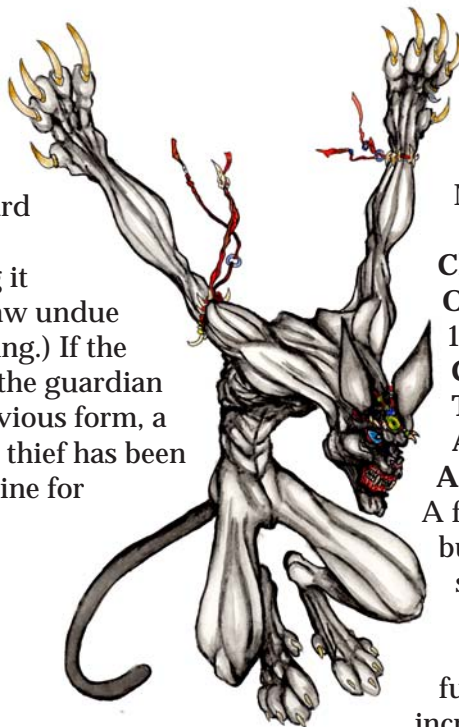
Anyone who dons this necklace gains a telepathic link with the mind of the cat god himself. This link adds a +2 insight bonus to the wearers AC and reflex saves. In times of need, there is a 20% chance that the god will offer advice or knowledge relevant to the situation at hand. If the god is displeased with the wearer, this information is likely to be misleading or dangerous.

Caster Level: 20; Weight: ½lb.



Guardian

The guardian of the shrine is a feral warcat. It is unclad except for a few fetishes and a magical ring (see the *guardian's ring* section for details). Unknown to the players, the guardian is a human who has been magically transformed and compelled to guard this shrine by the power of the ring it wears. (Don't draw undue attention to the ring.) If the ring is removed, the guardian reverts to his previous form, a human thief. The thief has been guarding this shrine for



over a hundred years, and is quite confused by his transformation back to human form. The thief has been in warcat form so long that he has been fully converted, and no longer follows the template described in the ring section. The guardian follows the encounter guidelines specified in Area 2.

Feral Warcat

Medium-size Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 7d10+28 (66 hp)

Initiative: +10 (+6 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 20 (+6 Dex, +4 natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +12 melee and bite +10 melee

Damage: Claw 1d8+5, Bite 1d6 +2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Pounce, rake

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60ft., fast healing 5, low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +3

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 22, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +16, Jump +18, Listen +9, Move Silently +18, Search +2, Spot +4

Feats: Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Climate/Terrain: Any Land

Organization: Solitary, or Pride (2-16)

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral

Advancement: By character class

A feral warcat is feline in appearance, but with a humanoid figure. It has short, dark, gray fur, tall pointed ears, and vicious claws and teeth. It is heavily muscled, and has powerful hind legs that allow it to make incredible leaps.

A feral warcat has a powerful nose, and can easily track by scent. Its has strong

eyes and ears, and has inherited the stealthy catlike grace of its cousins.

Combat

A feral warcat is a ferocious opponent, and typically fights to the death. It prefers to initiate combat with its pounce ability and likes to tear its opponents to shreds with its powerful rake attack. Its fast healing ability makes it nearly unstoppable in a fight and also adds to its bravery.

Pounce (Ex): A feral warcat can initiate a battle by leaping upon one of its opponents. The warcat can pounce from up to 20ft away. Roll its jump roll vs. the opponent's armor class. If it hits, it lands on the opponent and can make a full round attack, automatically gaining its rake attack, and gaining a +4 circumstance bonus to its claw and bite attacks for the round. If the pounce attack misses, the warcat lands adjacent to the opponent, and can make a normal attack.

Rake (Ex): If a warcat hits a single opponent with both claws in a single round, it gains a bonus rake attack with its hind legs. This attack is at a +10 to hit and does 2d8+2 points of damage.

Skills: A feral warcat gains a +10 racial bonus to its jump skill, a +4 racial bonus to its hide skill, a +4 bonus to its listen skill, and a +6 racial bonus to its move silently skill.

Guardian's Ring

The guardian's ring is a powerful minor artifact that was created when the forgotten shrine was built. It was crafted to defend and protect the shrine and to safeguard its contents. Anyone who puts on the ring is transformed into a feral warcat (see template below), and must make a Will save (DC 20) or be dominated and controlled by the guardian of the forgotten shrine. Once so controlled, the character is magi-

cally compelled to track down and return any stolen artifacts to the shrine, and to guard the shrine, protecting its artifacts from intruders. If the character makes his initial Will save, he must succeed at another, similar roll each hour the ring is worn or each time it is removed and then put back on.

Caster Level: 20; Weight: 1 oz.

Feral Warcat Template

Anyone putting on the Guardian's ring changes physically into a feral warcat, undergoing the following statistical changes.

Hit Dice: 7d10+(7xCon bonus) or original hit points, whichever is greater.

Initiative: +2 due to enhanced Dex.

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: Gains +4 natural armor bonus, +2 due to enhanced Dex

Attacks: 2 claws and bite attacks at +7/+5 base attack bonus (or at original base attack bonus, whichever is higher)

Damage: Claw 1d8+Str bonus, Bite 1d6 + ½Str Bonus

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Gain both pounce and rake attacks (described above)

Special Qualities: Gain darkvision 60ft., fast healing 5, low-light vision, and scent

Saves: Fort +5+Con bonus, Ref +5+Dex bonus, Will +2+Wis bonus (or use original base saves if they are higher)

Abilities: Str: +4, Dex: +4, Con: +4, Int: -2, Wis: no change, Cha: no change

Skills: Gains a +10 racial bonus to Jump, a +4 racial bonus to Hide, a +4 racial bonus to Listen, and a +6 racial bonus to Move Silently.

Feats: Gain the multiattack feat

Alignment: Changes to chaotic neutral
Advancement: By character class



Players' Map





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