

# DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

## JEWELS of the CARNIFEX

#70: A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE  
BY HARLEY STROH



MULLEN

Plus a bonus adventure  
with Nockmort the evil  
treant: **Lost in the Briars**  
by Brendan LaSalle







HAND OUT **B**



## A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

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# JEWELS of the CARNIFEX



## INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

This adventure is designed for 6 to 10 3rd-level characters aided by stout-hearted hirelings. The adventure can also be attempted by a smaller party of 4th- or 5th-level characters and will prove no less challenging. The adventure requires a balanced mix of warriors, wizards, thieves, and clerics, as the talents of each will prove invaluable in turn.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

**A**t the end of a forgotten back alley, in the weird and otherworldly marketplace of faiths known as the Bazaar of the Gods, stand the ruins of a forgotten chapel. All that remains are a fallen staircase, a mound of toppled stones, and a sickly, leafless tree placed squarely in the center of the ruins.

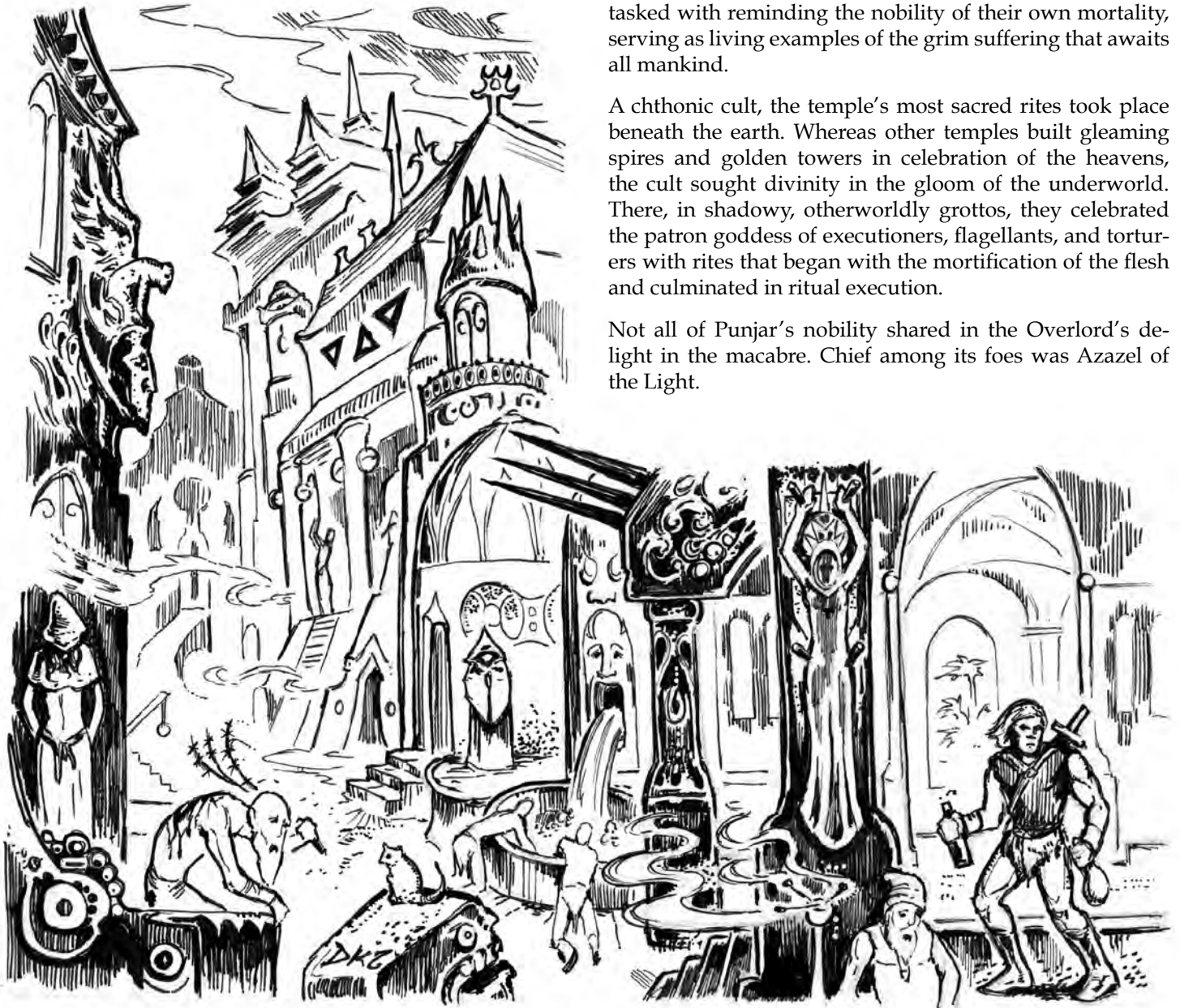
While such ruins are not uncommon in Punjar, the City of a Thousand Gates, the story of the chapel and its goddess is unique in all of Áereth.

The Cult of the Carnifex took its ranks from Punjar's lowliest castes: the diseased and crippled, the criminally insane, and the untouchables. The cult embraced suffering and the transience of the mortal coil and exalted death as a release from the agony of life.

Serving as the Overlord's handpicked executioners and torturers, devotees of the Carnifex were celebrated in the highest, most decadent circles of Punjar. Cultists were also tasked with reminding the nobility of their own mortality, serving as living examples of the grim suffering that awaits all mankind.

A chthonic cult, the temple's most sacred rites took place beneath the earth. Whereas other temples built gleaming spires and golden towers in celebration of the heavens, the cult sought divinity in the gloom of the underworld. There, in shadowy, otherworldly grottos, they celebrated the patron goddess of executioners, flagellants, and torturers with rites that began with the mortification of the flesh and culminated in ritual execution.

Not all of Punjar's nobility shared in the Overlord's delight in the macabre. Chief among its foes was Azazel of the Light.



# LOST IN THE BRIARS

## A Level 3 Adventure

By **Brendan J. LaSalle** • Editor: Rev. Dak J. Ultimak • Cartography: Gill Pierce • Interior Art: Peter Mullen • Playtesters: Brian Courtemanche, Ben Grimes, Doug Hopkins, Jeffrey Laluc, Michael Webster • Special thanks: David Hughie, Travis Callahan, Don Loffredo, Scott Snider, Carlton Spense, Jonathan Starrett

## INTRODUCTION



*Lost in the Briars* is a 3<sup>rd</sup>-level outdoor adventure. The woods around Garland's Fork suddenly go mad – a huge bramble wall springs up, trees animate and attack, animals flee, and humans are under attack from all sides. What is going on?

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Twenty years ago a fire streaked across the sky above the tiny trading town of Garland's Fork. Nockmort, a peaceful and reclusive treant priest of the primordial gods of creation and growth, investigated the impact and found a crater nearly a half-mile long, gouged by a glowing rock that fell from space.

The treant decided that the meteorite was a significant and singular natural phenomenon, one worthy of study and consideration. Nockmort took a sliver of the great rock and wore it as a pendant.

Within days, the baleful effect of the meteorite's strange glow made itself manifest in the unwitting treant. He grew hateful and angry, seething with rage at humanity and the other "despoiler" races. In time, he became a twisted and evil thing, bent on the destruction of all sentient life on earth.

The mutated creature hatched a scheme to destroy the tiny town of Garland's Fork with a petrifying poison. However, adventurers penetrated Nockmort's sunless garden and destroyed his physical form, and took away every scrap of the meteorite.

A fragment of Nockmort's body survived the bonfire, and took root in the earth, deep in the forest north of Garland's Fork, a 400 hectare old growth forest called Briarwood Deep. It took years but he managed to regrow his physical form, tapping into ancient magics and the innate power of the earth. As he put his physical self together, the earth whispered to him, the winds shared its secrets, and some unknown Power of Chaos shared with Nockmort the means to transcend his physical form and become a demigod. The ritual has taken ten years, but now, with the horrific death of twelve elves, it is about to take effect. Fortunately for the world at large, one of Nockmort's elf sacrifices managed to take his own life before he could be impaled, spoiling the ritual.

The empowered Nockmort now controls Briarwood Deep. He can see through the trees, he can listen through the winds. He willed a wall of thorny brambles to grow around the edge of the forest, trapping all within.

Nockmort needs one more elf to complete the ritual – a wizard or a Lawful cleric might work in a pinch, but another elf is necessary to insure success. But the treant cannot leave Briarwood Deep without jeopardizing the ritual.

And so Nockmort sets a trap.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Nockmort needs an elf to complete his vile ritual, and so he creates a situation that he hopes will attract adventurers. There are many ways the characters can encounter the strangeness in Briarwood Deep.

- The PCs either encounter, or hear tale of, the giant thicket wall that sprung up overnight and go to investigate.
- Nockmort attacks Garland's Fork to flush out adventurers. The bramble wall flings rocks at structures until they are mostly destroyed, but ignores humans, hoping they will flee and seek help – and of course the displaced Forkers seek out the PCs.
- The PCs discover a rough line of gold and silver coins – 2d10 of each – that leads from outside the forest up to the bramble wall. The coins were carefully pitched there by the trees to lure adventurers in. The line continues for a few more feet inside the wall (1d6 more of each coins), then stops.
- The PCs could be hunting for either Zunichte and the Northfork Lads, either for the 200 gp bounty or for reasons of their own, and discover the strangeness that has come to the forest.
- The PCs find peasants fleeing the Briarwood Deep area. They all tell the same story – the animals and birds all fled the forest once the trees went mad and started attacking people. Nockmort is letting a few humans escape every hour to attract the curious.

## BEHOLD THE POWER OF A GOD

Nockmort's near-godhood grants him supernatural influence throughout Briarwood Deep. He can perceive through every tree and blade of grass throughout, up to and including the bramble wall, as if he were standing right there. He can animate up to 13 trees at any given time. The foul treant can also control the weather over the forest, so he keeps it dark with cloud cover and rain.