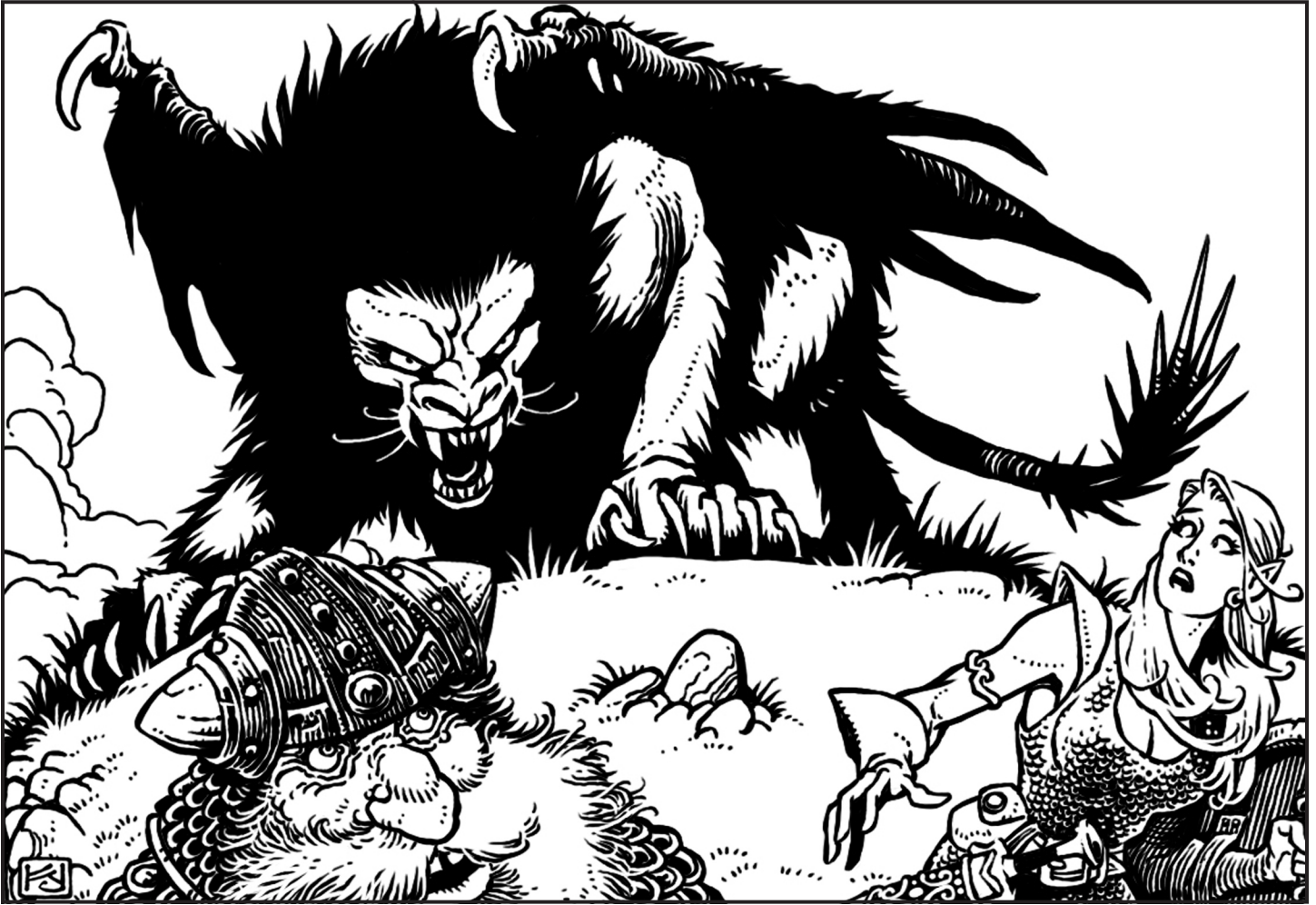


DUNGEON DELVE ADVENTURE #6

Lords of shadow

by R. Nelson Bailey

A FIRST EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 4–7 CHARACTERS LEVELS 5–7



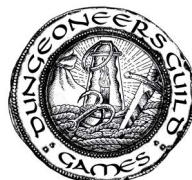
Though legends say only ghosts inhabit Orclase Castle, recent activity suggests otherwise. Fearful locals report seeing strange lights and hearing eerie howls and cries echoing in the night. Most disconcerting are the brigands and monsters that prowl the lonely moors around the castle. Some claim that its rightful rulers—the long-lost Orclase family—have returned to their ancestral home.

Designed for mid-level characters, this module includes four detailed maps, fully keyed encounter locations for the Game Master, seven new monsters, and five new magic items to enrich your campaign.

DUNGEON DELVE SPECIAL adventures by Dungeoneers Guild Games are classic-style modules designed to fit into any campaign for the Advanced 1st Edition game. With a little effort, they can easily be adapted to most fantasy role-playing games, including the Advanced 2nd Edition game, the Original game, the BECMi (“Basic”) game, and most old-school renaissance (OSR) role-playing systems.

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DUNGEON DELVE ADVENTURE #6

Lords of Shadow

Lords of Shadow is an adventure for 5 to 8 characters of levels 5 to 7 (approximately 36 levels in total). In this adventure, the **player characters (PCs)** investigate strange happenings surrounding a ruined castle that looms over a desolate moor. Because of the many undead encountered within the castle and its dungeons, the party should have at least one cleric, though two or more would be preferable. Fighters, magic-users, and thieves should round out the rest of the party. Player characters with psionic powers would be advantageous in countering the psionic-using shades featured in the module.

Introduction

Dilapidated Orclase Castle lies in the county of Ergoza. A few decades ago, the Orclase family—nobles of ancient lineage—ruled this region of forlorn moorlands. While excavating new chambers to expand the dungeons beneath the castle, workers discovered a cave with a mysterious stone that pulsed with an eerie radiance of black, blue, and purple. Count Arnau, the lord of Ergoza, soon determined that this “shadow stone” possessed strange powers originating from the Plane of Shadow. Arnau and his siblings used this singular object to enter that darkling plane. There, by some unknown means, they transformed into shades—creatures that are partly alive and partly composed of shadow substance.

Following this malignant transformation, the Orclase family no longer felt at home in the sunlit world of humankind. They secreted themselves in the castle’s darker places, forsaking the company of mortals and their duties as rulers. Far more troubling, their rule shifted from benevolence and restraint to callousness and depravity. Their reign quickly became a time of horrors for the common folk of Ergoza.

Once the Orclases embraced the Shadow Realm, Inasus, the patriarch of the castle’s chapel, accused them of blasphemy and of consorting with devils and other malicious spirits. This act, the holy man declared, was a grave apostasy against the gods of Good. Outraged by these accusations, the nobles hid the chapel’s relic, the *Heart of St. Ansion*, before sentencing Inasus to death. As the cleric was dying on the gibbet in the castle courtyard, he cursed the Orclase name. The gods of Good will only lift the curse when the Orclases atone for their sins and return the *Heart*.

Soon thereafter, the five Orclase shades and their most loyal servants left to dwell on the Plane of Shadow. Their castle quickly fell into disrepair, and its remaining servants fled. Rumors spread among the local peasantry that the Orclase demesne had become haunted. Common were reports of blazing witch-fires that limn the castle’s battlements with an unholy glow. Locals sometimes witnessed columns of spirits marching out of its gates. Even more dire, a spectral huntsman and his hounds stalked the countryside at night. Those unlucky souls who crossed paths with the nightmare huntsman were never seen again. Over time, many fear-wracked peasants abandoned their villages and hamlets in the moors to settle in more hospitable lands. Thereafter, only the foolhardy ventured near the cursed stronghold of the **Lords of Shadow**.

BACKGROUND & NOTES FOR THE GAME MASTER

After spending the last fifty years on the Plane of Shadow, the Orclase family returned to their ancestral home. Now, they seek to reestablish their rule in Ergoza. To this end, they have enlisted a band of brigands and hobgoblins to garrison Orclase Castle. Having built an undead army of skeletons, zombies, and shadows, they will soon retake their lands and those of their neighbors, restoring the dark glory to their family name.

During the adventure, the player characters will explore Orclase Castle to thwart the schemes of the evil shades and their minions. The castle’s **GROUND FLOOR** (AREAS 1 to 45; use **MAP 2**) and **UPPER LEVEL** (AREAS 46 to 78; use **MAP 3**) house the brigands and hobgoblins who serve as foot soldiers for the lords of Orclase. These forces have reclaimed and occupy only a portion of the rooms on these floors. The shades dwell in the castle’s **DUNGEON LEVEL** (AREAS 79 to 104; use **MAP 4**) along with their more powerful servants. Deep within this level, the *Shadow Stone* lies in the **Caves of Shadows** (AREAS 105 to 107).

The Orclase Family

Family Crest: A great helmed head with antlers, black on dark blue with a gold flame.

Motto: “*Between Life and Death, Shadows Fall.*”

The last members of the Orclase family are Maldrav, Oolparn, Segullian, Lucera, and their leader, Count Arnau. Through an eldritch process known only on the Plane of Shadow, all five were transformed into shades. All Orclase family members possess psionic abilities, as detailed in the statistics listed below.

Shadow Weapons & Armor: Most of the Orclase shades possess special weapons and armor crafted from shadow substance. The “**New Magic Items**” section, p. 42, completely describes these strange objects.

Standard Shade Abilities Summary

All shades possess the following abilities, many of which change depending on the lighting conditions. (See **MM II**, p. 108, for full details.) Changes in ability scores also alter the number of psionic ability points of each shade (see below):

- Immune to all diseases.
- **Regenerates** 1 hit point per turn and lost limbs or body parts in 1d4 weeks (excluding the head).
- Can *hide in shadows* as a thief of equal level; thief-class shades gain a +2% or +5% bonus to this ability depending on lighting conditions.
- Lighting conditions alter a shade’s powers and abilities as follows:
 - In **shadowy lighting conditions**: +2 to all ability scores; +1 hit point per experience level; 5% magic resistance per level of experience; can *shadow walk* and *create shadow images*.
 - In **twilight conditions**, they have 5% magic resistance per level of experience and can *shadow walk*.
 - **Bright light** (e.g., full sunlight or a *continual light*) or **complete darkness** reduces the potency of these abilities; see **MM II**, p. 108, for full details.



Count Arnau: The eldest and leader of the Orclase family, Arnau is not only self-controlled and confident, but also ruthless and megalomaniacal. He has a heavy brow and stern countenance, and is a forceful orator with a commanding voice. He single-mindedly strives to rebuild his family's lost glory at any cost. The Count rules over his family, servants, and underlings with an iron fist. The adventurers can usually find him in the vault (AREA 82) in the DUNGEON LEVEL.

Arnau wears shadow armor and wields either a **shadow bastard sword** or a **shadow footman's flail**. He employs a **large shield** +3 emblazoned with his family crest.

Count Arnau, male human shade, 9th-level fighter: AC -3 (*shadow armor, shield* +3); MV 12"; hp 70; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+4 *shadow bastard sword* or 1d6+5 *shadow footman's flail*; AL NE; Size M; xp 4480; THAC0 12; S 18/55; I 13; W 17; D 10; C 15; CH 18.

Psionic Ability: 210; **Attack Modes:** A, C, E; **Defense Modes:** F, G, H, I; **Disciplines:** *cell adjustment, energy control, ESP, shape alteration.*

Lucera: The eldest female of the clan, Lucera, worships a dark god who grants her divine power. Didactic and paranoid, the cleric wears a perpetual scowl. Humorless Lucera is prone to violent outbursts. Of her siblings, she is the most loyal to Arnau, carrying out his commands without hesitation or complaint. Lucera frequently stays in her bedchamber in AREA 100 on the DUNGEON LEVEL. She wears **shadow armor** and wields a **shadow footman's mace**.

Lucera, female human shade, 7th-level cleric: AC 0 (*shadow armor, shield*); MV 12"; hp 46; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 *shadow footman's mace*; AL LE; Size M; xp 2335; THAC0 16; S 16; I 16; W 16; D 11; C 16; CH 11.

Psionic Ability: 204; **Attack Modes:** E; **Defense Modes:** F, H, I, J; **Disciplines:** *clairvoyance, mind over body, object reading.*

She typically has the following spells prepared:

Level 1: *bles*, *cure light wounds*, *darkness*, *detect good*, *protection from good*

Level 2: *aid*, *hold person* (×2), *know alignment*, *silence 15' radius*

Level 3: *dispel magic*, *prayer*

Level 4: *cloak of fear*

Segullian: An illusionist with a mercurial mind, Segullian is the least wicked of the clan, leaning more toward Neutral than Evil. He laces his words with sardonic humor and stinging barbs. Impulsive and abrasive, the illusionist truly believes that he should be the one to rule Orclase Castle instead of Arnau. He quarters in AREA 101 on the DUNGEON LEVEL. Segullian has **bracers of defense** (AC 3), a **wand of illusion** (34 charges), and a **shadow dagger**.

Segullian, male human shade, 7th-level illusionist: AC 0 (*bracers of defense*, Dex); MV 12"; hp 25; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 *shadow dagger*; AL CN(E); Size M; xp 2125; THAC0 19; S 11; I 18; W 16; D 17; C 15; CH 11.



Psionic Ability: 184; **Attack Modes:** D; **Defense Modes:** F, J; **Disciplines:** *clairaudience, empathy, precognition.*

Segullian keeps his spellbook in his bedchamber. It contains the spells listed below. Spells shown in **bold** are those the illusionist typically memorizes.

Level 1: *change self*, **chromatic orb**, **color spray**, *dancing lights*, **darkness**, *phantasmal force*, *read illusionist magic*, **spook**

Level 2: **blindness**, *blur*, *detect magic*, **fascinate**, *fog cloud*, **mirror image**

Level 3: *continual darkness*, **fear**, *non-detection*, *rope trick*, **suggestion**

Oolparn: Trained as a monk, Oolparn possesses a brooding malice and somber temperament. Dispassionate and calculating, he often speaks in dry platitudes. He excels in the cruel art of torture, honed through years of practice. Oolparn practices his art in his torture chamber (AREA 91) on the DUNGEON LEVEL. The monk relishes the psychological torment of his victims before slowly killing them on the rack or with the strappado. His bedchamber (AREA 94) adjoins that odious room. Oolparn wears a **ring of free action** and carries a **scroll of protection from magic**.

Oolparn, male human shade, 8th-level monk: AC 4 (none); MV 22"; hp 36; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2d6 open hand; SA *stun* with fist, surprised 20% of the time, other monk abilities; SD dodge normal missiles (save vs. Petrification), other monk defenses; AL LE; Size M; xp 3332; THAC0 16; S 15; I 16; W 18; D 16; C 15; CH 10.

Psionic Ability: 114; **Attack Modes:** C, E; **Defense Modes:** F, G, H; **Disciplines:** *astral projection, detection of magic, shape alteration.*

Maldrav: The youngest of the clan, Maldrav has the abilities of an assassin. Suspicious and cynical, she revels in killing and terror through her murderous trade. Maldrav relishes sparring wits with others, overwhelming them with a torrent of black-humored threats. Maldrav loathes her siblings, Oolparn and Lucera, with unrelenting malice. Only the fear of Arnau's wrath stays her hand from slaying them. Maldrav wears **shadow armor** and a **ring of mind shielding**. She wields a **shadow long sword** and a **dagger of venom**.

Maldrav, female human shade, 8th-level assassin: AC -3 (*shadow armor*, Dex); MV 12"; hp 40; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8+1 *shadow long sword* and 1d4+1 *dagger of venom*; AL CE; Size M; xp 3980; THAC0 16; S 12; I 17; W 10; D 18; C 15; CH 16.

Psionic Ability: 146; **Attack Modes:** B, C, E; **Defense Modes:** F, H, I; **Disciplines:** *body equilibrium, reduction, shape alteration.*

Encounters with the Shades

While the party explores Orclase Castle, the five shade lords periodically confront them. Employing *shadow walk*, a shade can materialize almost anywhere inside or outside the castle instantaneously. At no point should the players feel safe or beyond the reach of these malevolent nobles. Their appearances should remain unpredictable, left entirely to the Game Master's discretion. Some key areas where a shade might appear include the library (AREA 29), the feast hall (AREA 37), or near the chapel (AREA 62). These attacks on the party become more frequent as they clear the castle and descend into the DUNGEON LEVEL.

With each confrontation, 1d2 shades, accompanied by 1d3 shadows, use *shadow walk* to appear at the party's location and engage them in combat. The shades are cunning foes—highly intelligent, and neither foolish nor suicidal. They employ their innate shade powers, class abilities, and psionic disciplines to their fullest in melee, rather than merely engaging in brute combat with weapons. In short, *don't let the players have an easy time!* If combat goes against them, a shade will always retreat using *shadow walk*. Only when the party reaches the **Cave of the Shadow Stone** (AREA 107) do all surviving shades challenge the party as a group.

The Curse of Inasus

The holy curse bestowed on the Orclase family by the slain cleric Inasus evokes a palpable sense of dread. Any non-Evil-aligned creatures feel oppressive heaviness while in the castle. The curse also inflicts intense emotional and physical torment on the Orclase family members. The curse prevents the shades from entering the castle's chapel complex (AREAS 62 to 66). If they travel more than one hundred yards from the castle, the shades suffer -4 to all attack rolls and saving throws. Their powers—including spells, psionics, and shade-based abilities—do not function in these locations. The shades cannot use *shadow walk* to reach these sanctified areas, nor can they scry upon them through magical means.

All Evil-aligned creatures, including those under the Orclases' control, refuse to enter the chapel complex. Those who do are immediately overcome with terror and flee. Only creatures of 10th level or with 10 or more Hit Dice may save vs. Spells to avoid the effect.

Returning the *Heart of St. Anscion* to the chapel breaks the curse and frees the castle from the grip of evil. See AREA 62, p. 24, for complete details. However, the Orclases seek to prevent this from occurring. Lucera believes the curse can instead be lifted through a method advantageous to the Orclases. This can be done by first banishing Inasus's spirit using an *exorcism* (i.e., 4th-level cleric spell), then cleansing the chapel's altar with a *consecrate item* spell (a 1st-level cleric spell from the *ceremony* list).

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

This DUNGEON DELVE module contains no predetermined hook to get the PCs involved in the adventure. It also avoids imposing a rigid storyline that the **Game Master (GM)** and players must follow. Instead, these elements are left to the GM's discretion, allowing adaptation to individual campaigns and play styles. Consider the module's text as the foundation and framework of a structure that you, the GM, will shape—siding, shingling, and painting it to suit your campaign's needs. Read carefully through the module's text. Within, you can find seeds to help build a story hook and narrative, or make your own. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

1. The clerics from the **Shrine of the Grotto** (AREA A) seek to locate their missing head priest, Rodaric. One of them approaches the party to plead for their help in this matter. See pp. 8–9 for further details.
2. A long-lost relative of the Orclase family (or someone claiming to be) wishes to claim their lands and holdings. If the claimant is not a player character, then they offer to pay the party to clear Orclase Castle of monsters so they may reinhabit it.