

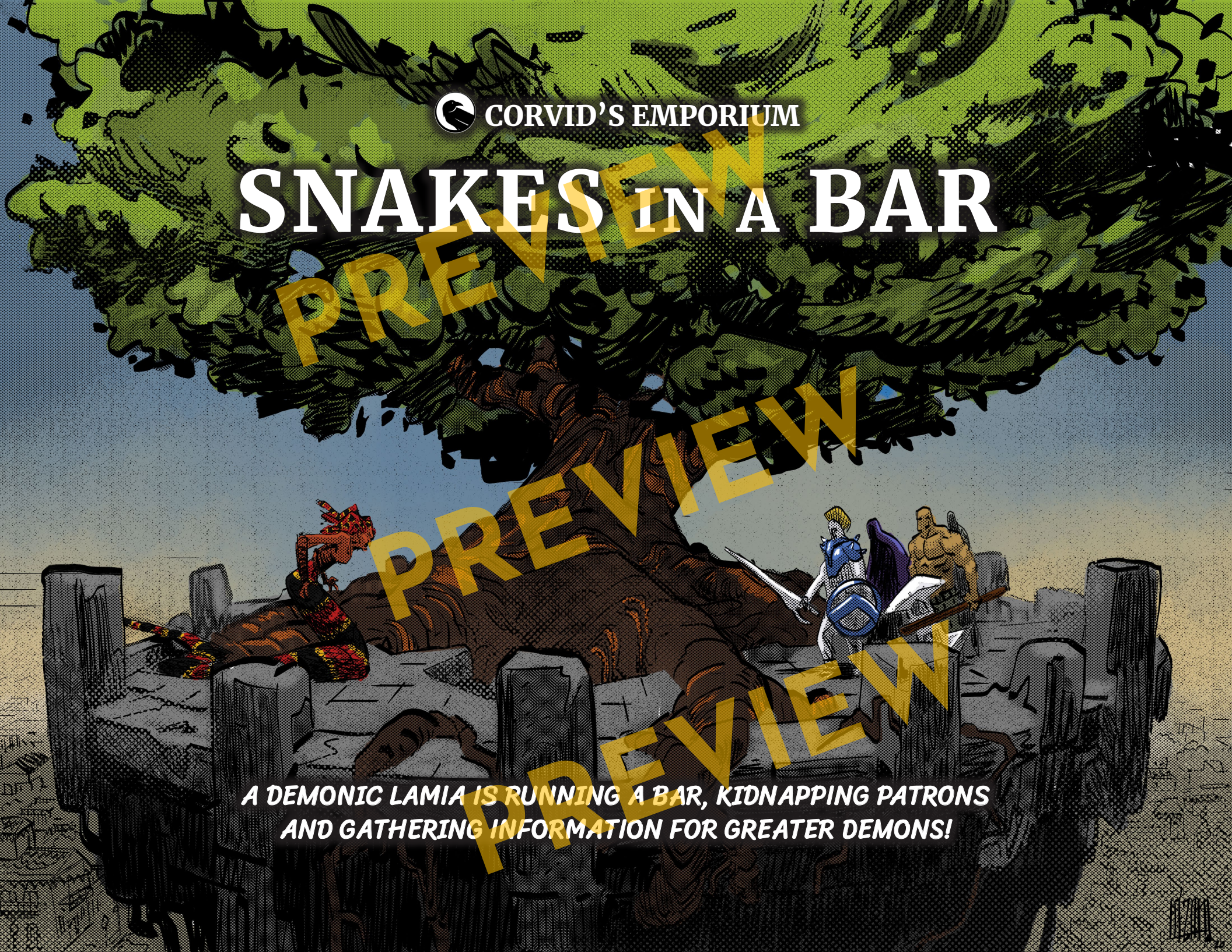


CORVID'S EMPORIUM

SNAKES IN A BAR

PREVIEW
PREVIEW
PREVIEW

*A DEMONIC LAMIA IS RUNNING A BAR, KIDNAPPING PATRONS
AND GATHERING INFORMATION FOR GREATER DEMONS!*



Adventure Primer

CREDITS

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RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run this adventure, you need the Fifth Edition core rulebooks.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance, as described in the text.

The core 5th Edition monster book contains stat blocks for most of the creatures found in this adventure. Monster stat blocks created specifically for this adventure will be included at the end. When a creature's name appears in bold type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in the core monster book. If the monster is not included in the core monster book, it will be included in the appendices of the adventure.

Adjusting Encounters

This adventure contains advice for adjusting encounters based on the number of characters in the party. You are empowered to modify the number of enemies in an encounter and their hit point totals as you see fit. If you need to adjust the difficulty of an encounter during combat, you can alter hit point totals without the player characters ever knowing and have enemies retreat or reinforcements arrive as needed.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this adventure:

hp	hit points
AC	Armor Class
DC	Difficulty Class
XP	experience points
pp	platinum piece(s)
gp	gold piece(s)
ep	electrum piece(s)
sp	silver piece(s)
cp	copper piece(s)
NPC	nonplayer character
LG	Lawful good
CG	Chaotic good
NG	Neutral good
LN	Lawful neutral
N	Neutral
CN	Chaotic neutral
LE	Lawful evil
CE	Chaotic evil
NE	Neutral evil

Snakes in a Bar

Snakes in a Bar is a Fifth Edition adventure for **3 to 7 characters of 3rd to 4th level**, and is optimized for **4 characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters who survive this adventure should earn half of the XP required to reach the 4th level.

This adventure takes place in a bar. This adventure assumes placement in DM Dave's Blutstrom campaign setting. However, it can just as easily be placed in any campaign setting that has a city and demons.

BACKGROUND

The Frightened Flower was built decades ago by a peculiar wizard whose name has been lost to history. All that anybody remembers is that she had a black thumb when it came to plants and was extremely protective of the only plant she ever successfully kept alive: the tree at the center of the tower. After the wizard passed the tower changed hands several times before eventually falling into Minetta's possession.

Minetta, a stout human woman with short black hair and a stern gaze, is the bar's current owner. She and her staff got along well before the demons showed up and displaced everybody. Minetta managed to escape, but some of the staff ended up trapped under the effects of *geas*, performing the demons' bidding.

Now, the lamia Castys, disguised as Minetta, and her minions have taken over the bar. The information they gather from loose-lipped patrons is sent to a marilith named Ar'al to aid in further corrupting the city. Ar'al is a powerful marilith demon, the characters can face off against her in *Snake Queen's Lair*.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

You can use the following adventure hooks to key your players up for this adventure.

Cleansing. An exhausted acolyte named Kessia suspects that there are demons lurking in The Frightened Flower abducting clients. They offer 100 gp for successfully clearing out any demons in the area.

Ain't Dead Yet. Minetta, the bar's owner, managed to escape the demons when they overtook her establishment. Minetta is angry and frustrated by her displacement and offers the characters 500 gp to reclaim her tower.

Missing Persons. The city guard have received an influx of missing persons reports and the bar is one of the suspected locations. The guards don't have a huge budget and are only able to offer 200 gp for information leading to the recovery of the missing people.

THE FRIGHTENED FLOWER

The Frightened Flower is a four-story stone tower built around a hulking tree.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in The Frightened Flower have the following features.

Ceilings. The oak wood ceilings are 10-feet high.

Floors and walls. The exterior walls are made of stone. The interior walls and floors are made of oak wood.

Doors. Doors are seven feet high and made of thick, sturdy wood with metal hinges and locks. All of the doors on the mezzanine are kept locked during most hours.

A locked door requires a character with proficiency in thieves' tools to succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity check to pick. Alternatively, a door can be broken down with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. The doors have AC 15, 18 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Light. The entire building is well-lit by oil lanterns hung on the walls.

ENTRY FLOOR





BASEMENT



MEZZANINE

PREVIEW
PREVIEW
PREVIEW



10

ROOFTOP

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the Tree Tower map.

1 - Entrance

When the characters arrive, read the following:

A burly woman in a chain shirt sits in a chair beside two muscular dogs. The entrance to the tavern is next to her.

Encounter: Guard. There is one lawful evil human female **guard** and a **death dog** magically disguised as two dogs. They are bored and don't pay attention to anybody passing through.

2 - Tavern Floor

When the characters enter, read the following:

A massive, 20-foot wide tree trunk fills the center of the room. A bar with a dumbwaiter is immediately off to the east, and a smattering of tables wind around the tree to the west, eventually meeting the bar again. The sounds of idle chatter, eating, and drinking fill the room.

A waiter/waitress (LE human **commoner**) invites the characters to take a seat at tables 2e and 2f.

Menu. The bartender offers a basic meal for 5 sp, delectable meat chunks for 3 sp, and wine for 2 sp.

2a. Bar. There is one **cult fanatic** at the bar.

2b. Table by the door. There are two **dretches** disguised as gnomes sitting at this table.

2c. Southwest table. There is one **thug** (N human female) eating a chunk of meat with her bare hands. She sizes up the characters when they enter.

2d. Westmost table. There is nobody sitting at this table.

2e. West table. There are two human **nobles** sitting at this table drinking wine with a cheese platter.

2f. Northwest table. There are four halfling **commoners** laughing over stew and wine.

2g. North table. There are two **dretches** disguised as gnomes greedily eating meat.

2h. Northmost table. There is one human **noble** and two dwarf **commoners** chatting over beers.

2i. Northeast table. There are two **dretches** disguised as gnomes sitting on top of the table.

2j. East table. There is a neutral good human **priest** and a tiefling **commoner** chatting quietly over wine.

Flickering Illusion. An illusion disguises several dretches as commoners and obscures the tree's fiendish taint. As a result of imprecise spellweaving, the illusion flickers every 10 minutes. Any creature with a passive Investigation of 13 or higher notices immediately, otherwise a creature can spot the illusion with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

When the characters succeed in noticing the illusion or after the third flicker, the illusion collapses. Read the following:

The illusion draped over the tavern fades away, revealing four dretches seated around the tavern and dark bloody sap leaking through the tree's bark. One of the demons spits and the bartender proclaims exasperatedly "The magic has failed again. Somebody deal with the patrons."

Encounter: Tavern Brawl. When the illusion (see above) is revealed, the tavern erupts with activity.

The fight begins with two **dretches** from table 2g attacking the characters. The **cult fanatic** at 2a kills one **commoner** each round.

In round one, the following occurs:

- The entrance door is slammed shut by the **guard** in area 1 from outside. They assume the demons and cultists inside will take care of the problem.
- The **priest**, **nobles**, and **commoners** hide under their tables.
- The **dretches** at table 2b attack the **thug** at table 2c.
- The **dretches** at table 2i drag the **priest** at table 2j out from under the table.

In round two, the following occurs:

- The thug from table 2c kills one of the dretches from table 2b but is killed by the other dretch.
- The dretches from table 2i kill the priest and turn their attention to the characters.

When the cult fanatic is the last hostile creature remaining they stop killing commoners and begin attacking the characters. If outmatched, they yell to the guard in area 1 to help them and retreat up the ladder to area 5.

Trap: Warded Ladder. When a creature that does not bear an abyssal brand reaches the top of the ladder, they trigger a **glyph of warding** set with a *sleep* spell cast at 2nd level. A creature at the top of the ladder that succumbs to *sleep* falls unconscious and takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage from falling.

3 - Cellar Storage

Read the following:

A moderately sized wooden platform in the southeast section of the tower holds a variety of crates, boxes, and barrels used to store food. Two shelves to the east are lined with kitchenware. A ladder on the southeastern wall leads upwards.

Crates, boxes, and barrels. Most of the containers hold salted foods and vegetables. One of the barrels is labeled “for dretches only,” which contains chopped up humanoid bodies.

Treasure: Shelves. There is 40 gp worth of kitchenware stocked here weighing a total of 200 lbs.

4 - Cellar Floor

Read the following:

A handful of plants accent the massive tree at the center of the room. A dozen humans, elves, and gnomes are standing completely still in their own excrement throughout the area. There is one dead man on the ground.

Dead man. The man died attempting to ignore the *geas* that was cast on him by Castys.

Captives. The humans, elves, and gnomes (all **commoners**) standing in this area are restrained from moving or speaking to anybody except for Castys by the effects of *geas*. The *geas* will expire in 2 days. Once freed from the effects of *geas* they can explain to the characters that the lamia Castys was using them as operatives throughout the city.

To move a captive, each round characters must succeed on a contested Athletics check to grapple or shove the captive.

5 - Foyer

Read the following:

A sink, table, and a couple crates of food occupy this 30-foot wide room. There’s a dumbwaiter on the southeast wall next to a ladder and a trapdoor, and doors to the north and west.

There is nothing of value in this room.

6 - Southwest Room

Read the following:

There is a large pile of dirt and hay against the southwest wall and a door to the west of this small room. The bones of several dead rats litter the floor.

Encounter: Snakes. There is one **giant constrictor snake** and two **poisonous snakes** hiding in the hay. They hiss whenever a creature enters the room and attack if a creature gets within five feet of them.

Hazard: Barking. Characters that stir up a commotion in this room wake up the death dog sleeping in the adjoining room, area 7, which begins barking. One round later a **dretch** from area 8 arrives to investigate the disturbance.

7 - West Balcony

Read the following:

This 20-foot wide balcony overlooks the entry floor below. There is one hell hound sleeping against the eastern door.

Encounter: Hell hound. There is one **hell hound** which attacks characters on-sight.

8 - Northeast Room

Read the following:

This 20-foot wide room is filled with vile, stinking garbage.

Encounter: Dretches. Unless they were summoned to area 6, there are five **dretches** in this room.

9 - North Balcony

Read the following:

This 20-foot wide balcony overlooks the entry floor below. The room is otherwise bare.

There is nothing of value in this room.

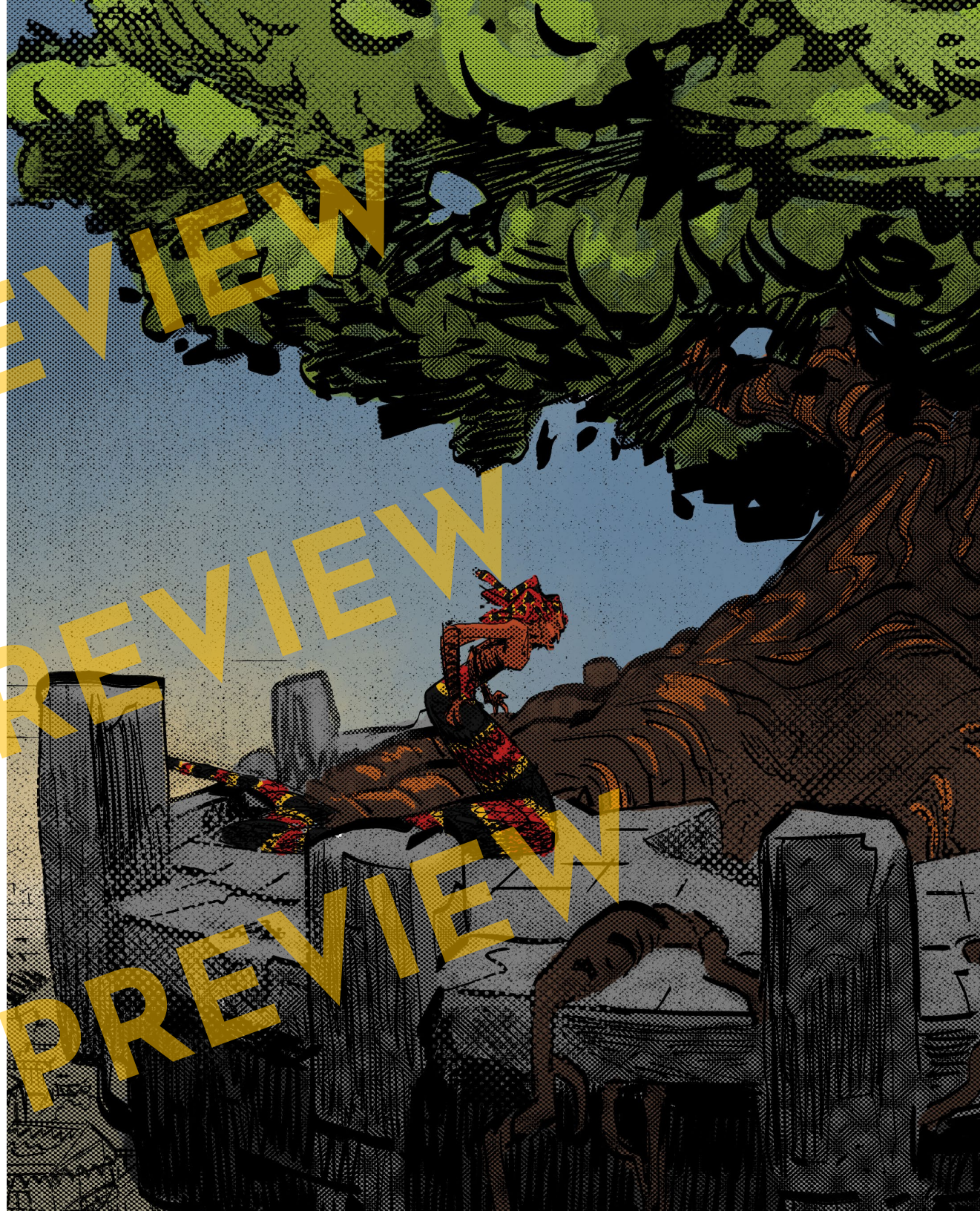
10 - Roof

Read the following:

The top of the massive tree rises through the center of the roof. A human woman is looking out over the rampart at the city beyond. She muses out loud “There is so much livestock beyond these walls, just waiting to be harvested. Why must you intercede?”

Encounter: Castys the Lamia. The lamia Castys stands on the roof looking over the city. She uses *disguise self* to obscure her demonic nature, instead presenting herself as a human woman dressed in a fine suit. She has used *screaming* throughout the tower and is aware of the characters’ exploits throughout her tower. When the characters arrive, she begins casting *geas* by asking rhetorically why the characters why they have wrought destruction throughout her tower and offering forgiveness if they surrender and vow allegiance to her. If asked about the captives in the basement, she simply shrugs and says “every organization needs its rank and file”. She attempts to speak for at least 1 minute, after which *geas* is cast on the brawniest character. A character can determine that her speech is laced with enchantment magic with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If her attempt to enchant one of the characters is disrupted, she ends her *disguise self*—revealing her half-human, half-snake form—and uses *mirror image* to attack.

Treasure: Castys. Castys is holding 20 pp in a pouch and wearing an *amulet of proof against detection and location*.



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

At the end of the adventure the characters have killed the demons in the building, dealt with the lamia Castys, and discovered the enchanted people in the basement.

Adventure Hook Resolutions

There were three adventure hooks mentioned in the introduction. Here is the resolution for each adventure hook:

Cleansing. Kessia, the exhausted acolyte, is relieved to hear that the characters were able to successfully deal with the demons and gives them the 100 gp reward as promised.

Ain't Dead Yet. Minetta invites the characters to sit down for a drink and demands to know what the demons were doing in her bar. At the end of the conversation she hands over the 500 gp reward to the characters.

Missing Persons. If the characters discover the people in the basement and report the discovery to the guard, the guard immediately set to taking care of the people and coordinating with the local clergy to remove the magic affecting them. The characters are compensated the promised 200 gp for finding the missing people.

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