

BROADSWORD



ADVENTURES FOR FIFTH EDITION

ISSUE NO. 19 \$25.00 Monthly

FEATURING

13 5E ADVENTURES FOR LEVELS 3 TO 13

NEW PLAYER CHARACTER OPTIONS

NEW MONSTERS, MAGIC ITEMS, AND SPELLS

BROADSWORD

ADVENTURES FOR FIFTH EDITION

ISSUE NUMBER 19 Monthly



COVER:
Who knows what sinister entities roam the forests and the dark bowers of man's domain. Art by Tithi Luadthong.



Rules Kitbashing for Fun and Profit

So this issue I came face to face with one of the shortcomings of the 5E rules: the lack of concrete wilderness exploration processes. John Webb's Campfire adventure required a concise set of exploration rules, and the 5E System Reference Document (SRD) didn't provide them for us. Not everyone owns the *DMG*, and we needed to make sure this really cool adventure could be run by anyone who managed to get their greasy paws on *BroadSword*!

Luckily, I am familiar with one of the products of the Old School Renaissance movement, *Old School Essentials* (OSE). OSE is a reorganization and revision of the original classic Basic and Expert rules sets from 1981. These older rule sets of the world's first and most popular role playing game tend to be significantly more simple and straightforward than later editions. This simplicity would facilitate easy integration of the OSE rules into the article. Additionally, OSE was intentionally built using the Open Game License (OGL), which allows writers to legally snag rules, monsters, and cetera for their own personal and commercial use.

Thus, armed with the appropriate fragments of the 5E SRD and the OSE SRD, I was able to cobble together a useful little article for our kind readers.

The point of this tale is that *all* of you have access to an incredible amount of works that have been released under the Open Game License. As long as you follow the rules for placing the appropriate statements in your own OGL page, you have over twenty years of products to mine for ideas.

And if you are an old RPG *grogard*, the Old School Renaissance has renewed interest in the older versions of the game, and the number of adventures, monsters, and variant rules that have been published are truly astounding.

So go forth and kitbash those rules!

-Scott Craig

VOL. II, NO. 7

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It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.

- Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776)

OMERIA ONLINE

YOUR GUIDE TO THE DMDAVE COMMUNITY

Written by **Melissa Presti**
Art by **William McAusland**

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USING THIS BOOK

GETTING THE MOST FROM BROADSWORD

Written by David Hamrick
Art by Tim Hartin

Must-have Tomes

To run these adventures, you will need access to the Fifth Edition rules and associated core rulebooks, abbreviated as *PHB*, *DMG*, and *MM*.

Understanding the Format

In addition to the monsters included in the *MM* core rulebook, you will also need to use the content found in the Appendices of this book.

When a creature's name appears in **bold type**, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in the *MM*. If a stat block appears as part of this book, the adventure's text tells you where to find it.

Spells and equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core rulebooks. *Magic items* are also described in the core rulebooks unless the adventure's text directs you to an exclusive item that is described in this book.

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.





























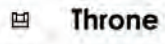
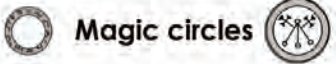


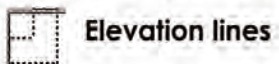



Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout these adventures:

- 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
- PC = player character
- APL = Average Party Level

Dungeon Key

1 square = 10 ft.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Door  Double door  Secret door  Secret trap door in floor  Concealed door  False doors  Pillar  Statue  Altar  Covered pit trap  Open pits  Wells  Tapestry/curtain  Downward slope arrow  Turn-around trap  Illusionary wall  Rubble  Sarcophagus  Falling block trap  Mirror 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Trap  Stairs  Bars/gate  Wooden planks  Dais/raised platform  Fountain  Pool  Chute Trap  Throne  Magic circles  Thaumaturgic circle  Pentagram  Elevation lines  Brazier  Teleporter  Teleporting pillars
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- LG = Lawful Good
- NG = Neutral Good
- CG = Chaotic Good
- LN = Lawful Neutral
- N = Neutral

- CN = Chaotic Neutral
- LE = Lawful Evil
- NE = Neutral Evil
- CE = Chaotic Evil



BLIGHT FROM BELOW

An adventure for level 3 characters

Written by **Alexander Neumann**
Cartography by **Alexander Neumann**
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

Blight from Below is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to five characters of 2nd to 4th level and is optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3.

A hunt for a ghostly creature that has terrorized the area leads the party to a tomb where their quarry turns out to be not quite what they expected. If the party decides to raid the tomb while they are at it, they will be confronted with the consequences of their actions and face an even more dire enemy lurking below.

Adventure Background

A fungus that turns humanoids into ratfolk has infested a tomb dedicated to an order long forgotten. A phase spider has made its nest in the heart of the tomb and has had its instincts altered by prolonged exposure to the fungus. Where before it would only hunt the wild animals in the tomb's vicinity, it now hunts a nearby village's livestock at night. Instead of bringing the animals back to its web, the creature leaves behind the decaying corpses, bloated from fungal spores trying to spread. This has forced the villagers to burn what remains to stop the rot from infecting the other animals and crops.

With the spider's phase ability allowing it to stalk and feed unseen through the Ethereal Plane, nothing but a ghostly white visage far beyond the outskirts of the village has been spotted. As a result, these night attacks have spawned rumors of a supposedly vengeful ghost plighting the area. If these attacks keep happening, the village will be unable to maintain their harvests and will have to be abandoned, leaving the fungus unchecked to spread the ratfolk corruption.

Adventure Hooks

The adventuring party can be introduced to the tomb in a few different ways:

Ghost Hunters. The party arrives at the blighted village, looking almost destitute due to the recent “ghost” attacks. Since the adventurers look like the capable sort, the villagers will plead with them for assistance to end their plight by hunting the ghost. If the party keeps watch over the livestock at night, the phase spider won’t attack, but an intangible ghostly form will be seen far in the distance towards the direction of the tomb. The villagers promise what little payment they can muster if the party travels to the tomb itself, clears out the ghost that’s been terrorizing them, and saves their livelihoods.

Traveler Tales. While on the road between locations or adventures, a traveler approaches the characters from the opposite direction. They give them a friendly warning about spending too much time near the tomb due to rumors that a ghost has been attacking people who camp overnight in the area. They can point the party in the right direction and will bid the group farewell, trying to make sure they clear enough distance before nightfall.

If the party camps overnight in the area, the phase spider will stalk the group from a distance, never getting too close to be within attack range. If perceived by the group, it will phase before the adventurers can discern its true arachnid form, lending only more credence to the ghost story.

Tomb of the Silver Horns

The tomb enshrines the members of a mercenary band called the Order of the Silver Horns, an ostentatious name originating from the twin minotaurs employed by the group. Once renowned for fighting a plague of ratfolk clans that marauded the lands, they have become long forgotten.

After defeating the clans and sending them back to their burrow holes, stopping the corrupting invasion, the members lived the rest of their lives rich and easy, getting drunk on the glory of their crowning achievement. As the years turned to decades and the members grew old, they commissioned a tomb for all to remember their exploits, built over the ratfolks’ burrow holes to magically ward the area against this threat for eternity. When the last member died, the tomb



was sealed, leaving the glory of the order hidden from the outside world. As the decades turned to centuries, even those who were saved from the ratfolk invasion had forgotten the long-dead order.

Over time, the tomb has become the grounds of the plague their order hunted years ago. Hidden beneath the tomb, the tunnels harboring the small clan of virulent ratfolk grew more and more populous, and now they are intent on spreading their disease and rot to the overworld above once more. This corruption seeps through the cracks in the tomb as pestilent mold and fungi, only kept at bay from the outside world due to what protective magic remains of the order's relics.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, the Tomb of the Silver Horns has the following features:

Ceiling, Floors, and Walls. The tomb has floors and ceilings composed of stone tiles, and walls made of worked stone bricks. Chambers have vaulted ceilings that are as tall as they are wide. Corridor walls come together at an arch tall enough for most Medium creatures to pass unimpeded. Pillars are smooth rounded stone with a square base.

Doors. Doors raise and lower mechanically like a portcullis. Any doors blocking a path are made of solid iron engraved with an ornate horned helmet, the crest of the Order. They have an AC of 19 and 40 hp.

Illumination. The entrance of the tomb allows natural sunlight to illuminate it. Rooms are lit with *continual flame* torches in iron brackets.

Flora. Though harmless, dark mold and fungi grow in patches in areas not lit by the *continual flame*. If any light is cast on the mold, it will shiver as if trying to recede. Residual spores in the corridor with yellow mold start to burn the nostrils and sting the eyes unless the source is purged.

Room Variations. Certain rooms will have their appearance and

encounters change with new features if the magic item in **area 5** is looted by the party. For these rooms, their descriptions will be split into two versions of the maps listed as **(a)** for the room's regular appearance, and **(b)** if it has been affected by the changes due to the removal of the item from its altar.

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to Map A on page 9.

1 - Vestibule

The entrance of the tomb leads to a circular room with a domed ceiling. Along the round wall are four unlit wooden torches spaced evenly apart in the room. One of the torches lies on the floor under its sconce. There is no other exit to the room except for the archway entrance. In the center of the room lies a large block of solid stone. The face of the sarcophagus is bare and each side of the stone features a worn fresco.

When the sarcophagus is examined, read the following aloud:

The fresco surrounding the stone is dilapidated and covered in dust. Facing the entrance, the front side shows nine armored knights fighting a battle against shadowy monstrosities whose visages are too faded from neglect to make out discerning features. The two short ends of the slab faintly make out burning pyres fueled by a skull. On the far side facing the back wall, the fresco shows the same nine figures standing in a row staring at the viewer. Six hold *buisines*, long medieval horns, embellished with silver in the stonework. The two knights on the end carry axes and are notably larger than the other knights, with horns adorning their helmets. The ninth knight in the center bears a censer in one hand, while the other points upward to a halo of four flames.

Hidden Path. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check when searching the room will notice a faint draft coming from the far end of the room, directly where the figures on the back fresco are staring. Further examination of the wall shows that the draft is coming from cracks in the wall. The cracked portion of the wall has an AC of 17 with 20 hit points. If the fallen torch is placed back into position and all four torches are relit, the cracked wall will crumble away on its own, revealing the staircase to descend deeper into the sepulcher.

2a - Antechamber

When the characters descend the stairs read the following aloud:

As you descend the steps, the air hangs heavy with the smell of dark mold and fungi from patches in the corners and cracks of the stairs and floor that lead to the antechamber. Ten columns line the hall and a brazier burns in the center of the room. A single skull stares at the would-be trespassers in the center of the brazier's flames. The walls of the antechamber feature sculpted low reliefs separated by six alcoves, split across the northern and southern walls. Within each alcove lies an open sarcophagus cradling the forgotten skeletal remains of mercenaries of yore. Among the decayed bones and dust, a gleam can be spotted from each of the skeletal hands. At the end of the hall, an iron door engraved with a horned helmet is flanked by two stone plinths.

There are three alcoves on the north and south side of the antechamber and two corridors on the eastern end of the room. The iron door on the eastern wall can only be opened when the minotaur statues (see **areas 3 and 4**) are placed on the plinths. When the first statue is placed, the door will open revealing a short corridor with a second door that will open once the second statue is placed.

The reliefs show the exploits of seven knights and two minotaurs in their crusade against unending swarms of rat-like humanoids, stacking the slain monstrosities, and the knights burning the corpses.

Encounter: Skeletons. Six skeleton mercenaries rest motionless in the open sarcophagi within each alcove. If a creature moves within 10 feet of the brazier or tries to remove a ring from any of the skeletons, all six will awaken and attack the closest respective intruders.

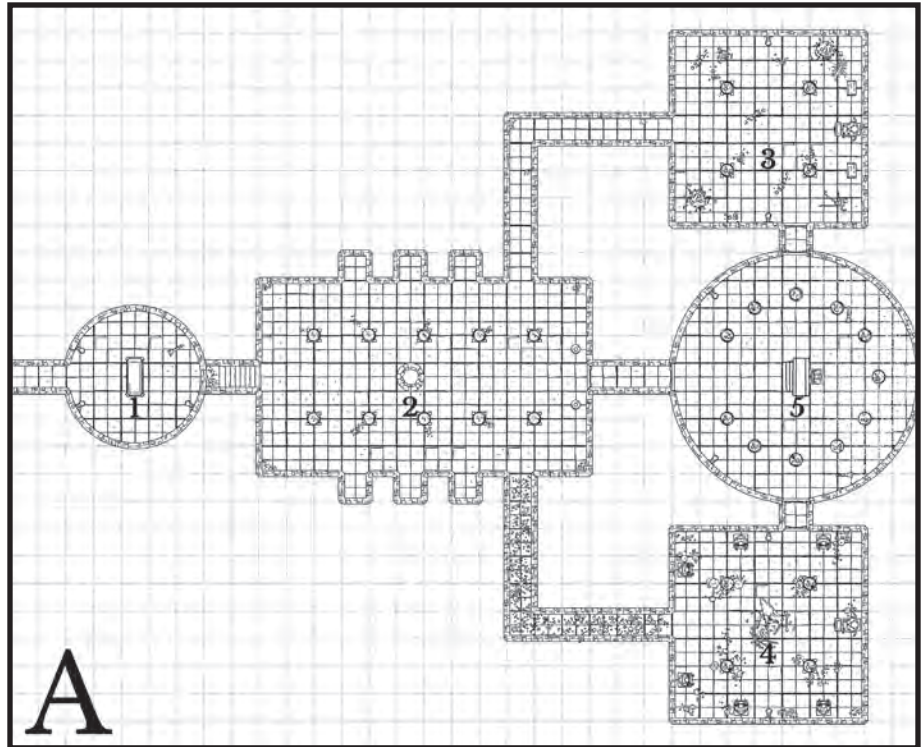
Treasure: Signet Rings. Each skeleton carries a silver signet ring set with an engraved bloodstone featuring a horned helmet worth 25 gp each. If all six rings are removed from the skeletons, the brazier at the center of the room will go out and any remaining active skeletons will immediately collapse into a pile of bones.

Hazard: Yellow Mold. The entire corridor leading to **area 4**, marked on the map, is covered in yellow mold (see Chapter 5 of the *DMG*). A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check will let the character know that the mold burns easily to clear the path.

3a - Treasury

Broken and scorched bones litter the room with two distinct piles in opposing corners. A DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals most of them to be the bones of giant rodents, some being almost human size. At the far end of the room is a statue of a minotaur with a small iron chest at its base and two wooden chests on each side. A fresco on the north wall depicts the horned knight holding up a censer, creating a protective halo of light between them and the encircling rodent hordes. There are two torches in this room.

Encounter: Minotaur Skeleton and the rats. A minotaur skeleton paces in a circle on the outer perimeter of the room, moving the distance of one wall's length per turn. Unless the party is moving stealthily, the mi-



notaur will attack once an adventurer enters the room.

Two swarms of rats lie hidden in the room, with one swarm in each pile of bones in the corners of the room. A character that makes a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check will hear faint squeaking from the bone mounds. The rats will stay hidden until the first round of combat against the minotaur ends, or if the bone piles are attacked by a character. Once this happens, the rats scatter from the bones and target the closest non-rat creature. If both torches go out without combat initiating in the room, the rats will reveal themselves from the bone piles and attack the minotaur.

Treasure: Three chests. Three chests in the room contain the following:

- When opened, the iron chest beneath the minotaur statue reveals a smaller version of the statue lying on embroidered silver fabric. When the statue is removed from the chest, the two torches will go out.
- The chest to the left of the statue contains three *potions of healing* and a *necklace of adaptation*.

- The chest to the right of the statue contains 187 sp and 56 gp. There is also an ornate helmet with engraved silver horns with a *luckstone* embedded at the center of the helmet's brow.

4a - Shrine room

Darkness encompasses the room as the magical flames that kept the torches lit in the other rooms have been snuffed out. In the center of the room lie the gnawed bones of a minotaur. The darkness has allowed fungi to spread to a much greater extent than in the rest of the rooms.

Six statues of knights stand vigilant along the walls of the room, each holding a tarnished horn in its outstretched hands. A statue of a minotaur akin to the one in **area 3** waits at the far end of the room. The iron chest at its feet has been knocked over, the minotaur statue it was carrying cast astray on the ground in front of it.

Etchings in the language of minotaurs adorn the walls of the room. Heroic tales of the exploits of the different knights as they fought back

the plague of vermin with sword and flame, burning the corrupting mold and fungi spread by their vile existence. One prose passage among the exploits explains the warding magic within the *silver censer*, and that if it is removed from its resting place at the tomb's altar, it will no longer be able to halt the plague from spreading across the lands. If the characters do not read *Minotaur*, a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation or History) check will reveal enough information from the etchings for them to understand that a censer serves as a ward of some kind.

Encounter: Giant Rats. Three **giant rats** in the center of the room gnaw on the bones of the minotaur. They attack any creature that comes near the center of the room.

Treasure: Silver Horns. Held in the hands of each knight statue is a silver buisine worth 15 gp.

5 - Altar

The fetid air that permeates the rest of the tomb is absent in this large domed room. At the center is an austere sarcophagus draped with silver cloth. A statue resembling the censer knight from the previous imagery stands guard behind the altar. The back half of the dome is covered in thick webbing. The phase spider that created the nest is currently stalking the adventurers from the web in the Ethereal Plane.

Encounter: Phase Spider. The spider stays unmoving in the Ethereal Plane as it watches the party enter

the room, readying itself to defend its nest. When a creature moves within 5 feet of the altar, the **phase spider** will shift back to the Material Plane and attack the creature. On its abdomen is a cluster of spiderlings.

Once the phase spider attacks the creature that reached the altar, the spiderlings will climb off of their mother and form a **swarm of spiders**.

The spider, having now revealed itself to the adventurers, has ghastly pale-white chitin, quickly confirming this is the apparent "ghost" they have been told about. Fungal growths sprout from the spider's cephalothorax and mold oobtrudes from its leaking joints. It is clearly infected with the disease that is infesting the rest of the tomb.

Treasure: Silver Censer. The statue grasps a *silver censer* (see Appendix C), which also serves as a flail with a silver head and chain. If the *silver censer* is removed from the altar, proceed to "Tomb Invasion."

Tomb Invasion

If the *silver censer* is removed from the altar, read the following aloud:

A loud rumbling emanates from beneath the chamber as you lift the silver censer from its guardian's grasp. The door behind you crashes shut, locking you in. The rumbling moves from beneath you to the rooms where you found the minotaur statues, and then the sound quiets until it dissipates entirely.

Trapped!

The party is trapped and the tomb changes in the following ways:

- All entryways to corridors have lowered their iron doors, sealing every room.
- The doors can only be opened by lighting the torches using the smoke from the head of the *silver censer*. Torches must be replaced in a sconce before they can be relit if originally removed. A DC 12 Intelligence (History) check can be made by the players for a hint about the torches' purpose to unlock the doors based on the frescoes depicting the knight's use of flames and light to fight the darkness, or the torch puzzle in the vestibule to reveal the hidden entrance if the party lit the torches to reveal the path.
- The two torches on the north side of **area 5** open the doors to **area 3**, and the southern torches to **area 4**.
- Both torches in **area 3** and **4** must be relit to open the doors leading back to **area 2**.

Adjusted Locations

The following locations have their descriptions adjusted. Please reference Map B.

2b - Antechamber

Once the party reenters the antechamber read the following aloud:

A thunderous roar reverberates across the stone halls. At the far end of the room, a burrow hole much larger than the two in the



other rooms has sprouted. Thick blight already has spread pestilent tendrils across the room. A large, monstrous ratfolk abomination climbs out of it. It is grotesque in appearance, with extreme hypertrophy, sparse oily fur, and scars covering its abnormal muscular build. The beast's eyes are bandaged and the skin on its snout is flayed back, revealing the vermin's skull. Exiting the hole behind this nightmare are two smaller ratfolk garbed in leather aprons whipping the beast.

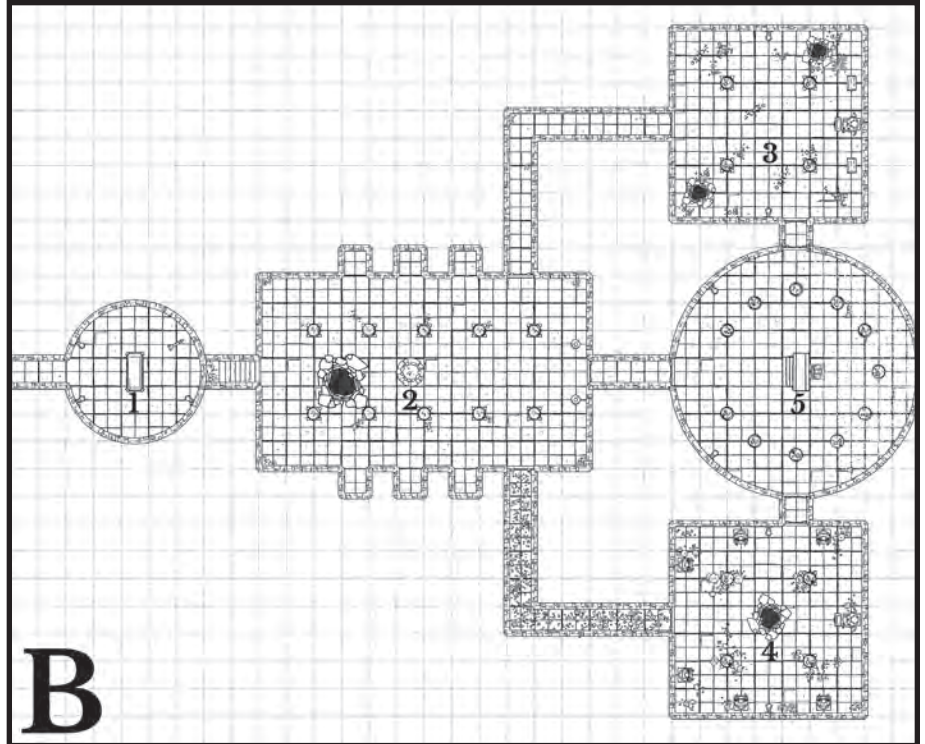
Encounter: Ratfolk Ogre and Rat-Tamers. Combat starts once the party has entered the room. The ogre, goaded by the rat-tamers behind it, snarls as it lets out a bellowing roar and begins charging down the room towards the party.

- The ratfolk ogre uses the **ogre** stat block, except it cannot be blinded and has blindsight of 10 feet (blind beyond this radius).
- The two rat-tamers use **kobold** statistics with the modification of wielding a whip (+4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage) instead of a dagger.

3b - Treasury

The entryway on the west side of the room to the corridor is blocked by the same iron doors that once blocked the pathway to the altar. Two medium-sized burrow holes have opened where the piles of bones used to be in the corners of the room, rotting mold permeating from the breaches.

Encounter: Ratfolk Runts. Six ratfolk runts (**kobolds**) skitter around the room. They are small humanoid



with matted fur and lesions striping their bodies. The creatures twitch with incessant, jittery movements as they scratch and scurry for a way out of the room, now presented by the adventurers. One of them carries an unlit torch that will need to be restored to its sconce before being relit with the silver censer.

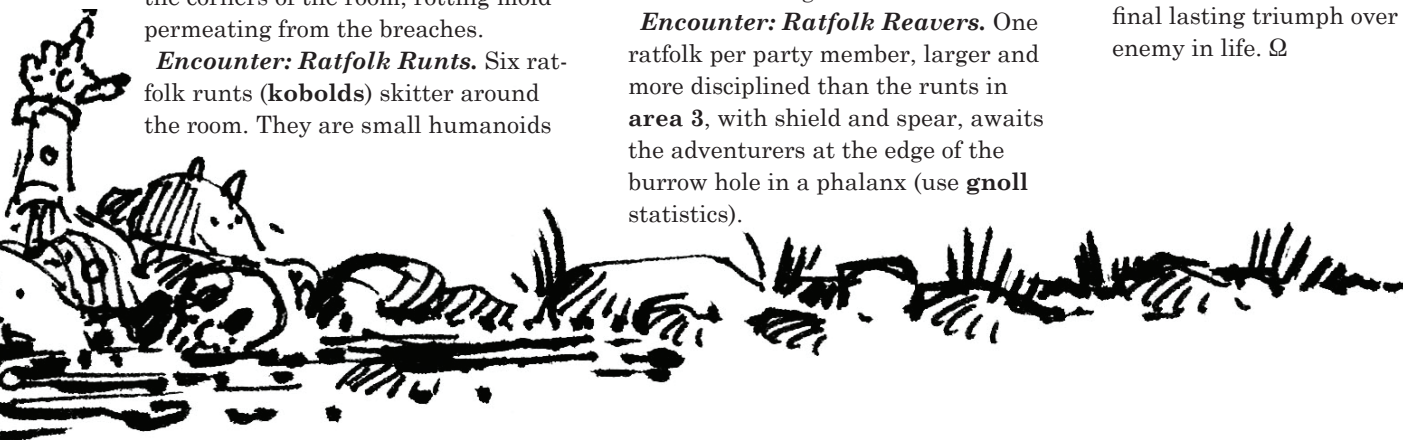
4b - Shrine Room

The Western corridor is now blocked with an iron door. In the center of the room where the bones of the fallen minotaur once lived is now a tunnel burrowed through the stone.

Encounter: Ratfolk Reavers. One ratfolk per party member, larger and more disciplined than the runts in **area 3**, with shield and spear, awaits the adventurers at the edge of the burrow hole in a phalanx (use **gnoll** statistics).

Concluding the Adventure

With the phase spider defeated, the village will be able to thrive again unmolested by the nightly raids on their livestock. If the *silver censer* was left at the altar, its warding magic will continue to stop the rats from emerging above ground at this site. If it was taken, the ratfolk invasion of the tomb was subsequently halted with their destruction by the adventurers, bringing an end to the blight from below. This battle will be remembered as a final hurrah to the legacy of the Silver Horns and a final lasting triumph over their sworn enemy in life. Ω





BLIZZARD AT KÖNIG'S KEEP

An adventure for level 3 characters

Written by **Erich Jacoby-Hawkins**

Cartography by **Dyson Logos**

Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and William McAusland**

Blizzard at König's Keep is a Fifth Edition adventure for 3 to 5 characters, optimized for a party of 4 characters of 3rd level.

This adventure takes place in a small arctic town beset by a seemingly endless winter of polar nights, where the sun shines for only four hours each day—and even then, it casts only dim light before setting below the mountains. Its formal location is left intentionally blank so you can easily insert it into any campaign of your choice.

Unseen dwarves have been sneaking around the town of König's Keep filching random items, with the most recent footprints leading to the ruined fortress the town is named after. Two local teens have also gone missing in the blizzard, and it's rumored they sometimes hang out at those same ruins. Can the characters find the sneaks and learn what they are up to, and locate the missing teens? Does anything else lurk at, or under, the ruins of König's Keep?

Adventure Background

Einar and Anja, apprentices to a dwarf guide who works with the local outfitter, surreptitiously crept under the ruins of König's Keep for some alone time during a blizzard. Now they are trapped and can't escape without help. Meanwhile Thogran, an ambitious duergar, was assigned to lead his squad to invisibly search the keep for rare crystal fragments. Leaving town in the face of a worsening blizzard, they sought shelter among the ruins. On their way, they were surprised by a web of acidic snow (a frostveil) which engulfed and killed one of them, despite their invisibility. Panicked by the web's spore attack and with the rest following him, Thogran scrambled underground, where they now hide and recuperate. Hoping not to reveal their presence or mission, they just want to get back to their outpost beside a nearby mountain. Now the blizzard has abated, but the teens have not returned, and

the duergar are debating whether it's safe yet for them to head out.

Adventure Hooks

Curiosity. Characters might wish to solve the mystery of the dwarven footprints weaving through town and leading to the ruins.

Morality. The guide is concerned about the teens being out during a blizzard and asks the characters to investigate why they haven't returned. The town in general is in a tizzy about the unseen thieves and needs help solving the mystery.

Compensation. While there is no specific reward offered, finding stolen items or a thieves' hideout may be quite lucrative. If the characters find the teens, the outfitter and guide will gratefully provide discounts on equipment or guide services.

Ruins of König's Keep

A blizzard was raging for half the night, and just recently receded in the morning, leaving the ruins partially obscured with drifts of snow.

GM note. The blizzard will resume shortly after the characters enter the vaults.

General Features: Surface (Areas 1-4)

Unless otherwise noted, locations in the surface ruins have the following features.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The ruins are mostly half-fallen walls of roughly-dressed stone blocks, which provide three-quarters cover. Within the ruin, the ground is composed of large square flagstones. Unless otherwise noted, all surface areas are roofless and open to the elements.

Doors. All doors are made of stout wood, 3 inches thick, 4 feet wide, and 6 feet tall. They have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Doors are unlocked unless otherwise noted. Breaking open a stuck or locked door requires a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Lighting. There is dim sunlight during the 4-hour day, and only moonlight and starlight at night.

Surface Locations

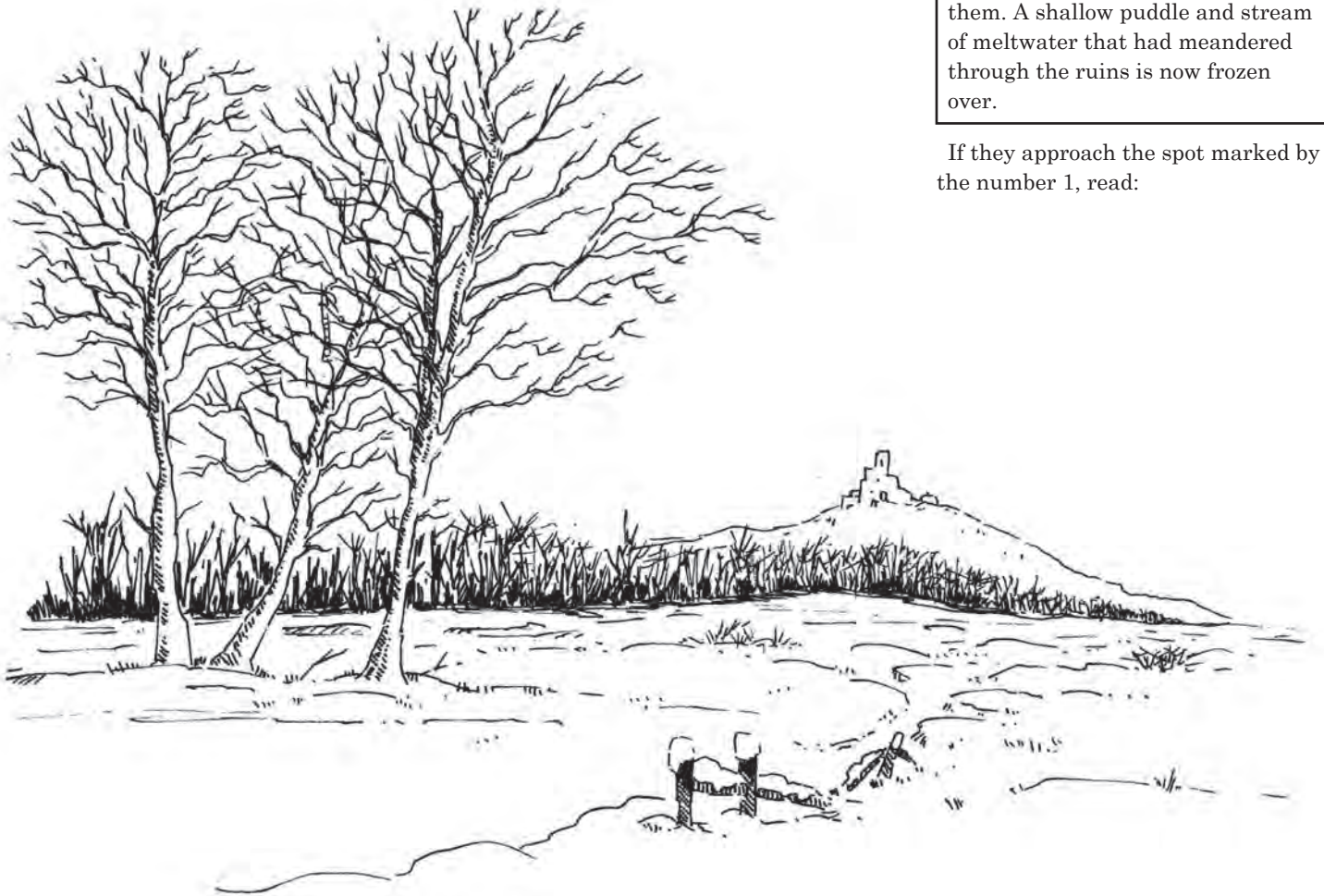
The following locations are keyed to the provided maps of the ruins of König's Keep on page 14.

1 – Ruins of König's Keep

As the characters approach the keep, read:

The ruins of the keep this town is named for are mostly half-standing walls ranging from 4 to 7 feet high, with random snow drifts around them. A shallow puddle and stream of meltwater that had meandered through the ruins is now frozen over.

If they approach the spot marked by the number 1, read:



Ahead lies a body that appears to be some kind of dwarf with a web of deep acidic burns all over its body, and several wounds from piercing weapons which have not bled very much.

This is a duergar who was surprised and engulfed by the frostveil; the wounds are from the javelins and picks of its companions, which did almost no damage to the frostveil but pierced their already-dying friend.

2 – Descent

The door to this empty room is slightly ajar. If the characters look inside or enter, read:

The barely-standing walls of this room support a partial roof overhead that screens snow from falling into the stairs that descend into the depths of the keep. There is a closed door at the far side of the room.

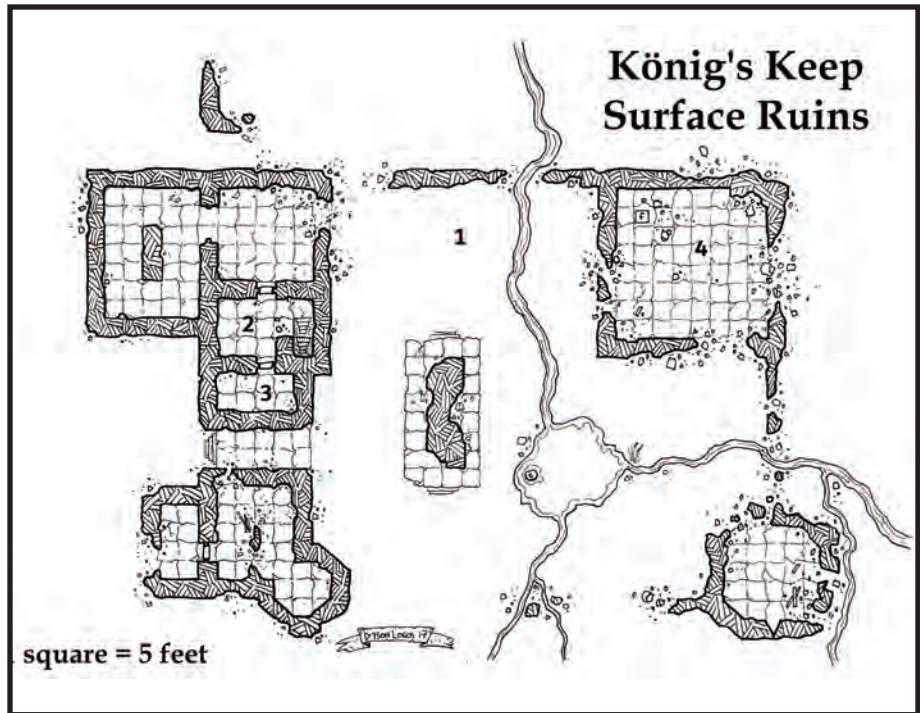
The stairs descend 12 feet south to a landing in the vaults under the keep, then turn and descend 6 feet further to the east.

If a creature pushes against the keep walls above the stairs with a successful DC 14 Strength check, it will cause a collapse that blocks the stairwell. Clearing a collapse from the top will take 8 person-hours; clearing from below will take 3 times as long, and every hour, each person involved in clearing must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity check or take 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage from collapsing rubble.

3 – Four Hundred Feet

The door to this room is frozen shut and can be opened with a successful DC 12 Strength check. If it is opened, read:

Most of the ceiling of this chamber is intact, although there are many holes where daylight spills through. There is a pile of debris in the southeast corner.



Encounter: Giant Centipedes. If the debris is disturbed, four **giant centipedes** emerge from their nest and attack.

Treasure: Rusty keys. Once the centipedes have been destroyed, the nest can be searched revealing a ring holding two very rusted iron keys. If either key is inserted into a lock and turned, it breaks off, adding 5 points to the DC to pick that lock.

4 – Barren Ruin

This area is empty when the characters arrive at the ruins, although it may be occupied when they leave (see “Leaving the Vaults” below). There is a secret trapdoor coming up from the vaults which is unnoticeable from above without magic, because it is made of thick stone and the hinges are hidden underneath.

General Features: Vaults (Areas 5 – 10)

Unless otherwise noted, locations in the vaults have the following features.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The vaults were roughly quarried from

natural fissures in the stony ridge, the stone used to build the surface structures. The walls are rough, and the floor has small amounts of rubble all over which do not hamper movement. Ceilings are arched, rising 10 feet over narrow passages and 15 feet over chambers or wider halls.

Doors. Doors are made of stout wood, 2 inches thick, 4 feet wide, and 6 feet tall. They have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Doors are unlocked unless otherwise noted.

Lighting. Vaults are unlit unless otherwise noted.

Sleepy Bear. There is a hungry **cave bear** hibernating in **area 8**. Very loud noises in other areas of the vaults will cause it to awaken and investigate, arriving in 1d4+1 rounds. Regular combat is not loud enough to disturb the bear, but shrieking, loud spells like *knock* or any effects that do thunder damage, or explosive effects like a mephit’s *Death Burst* will draw its attention. It will attack any creatures it finds in the vaults. See **area 8** for more information.

Surface Locations

The following locations are keyed to the provided maps of the underground vaults of König's Keep on page 16.

5 – Campout in the Main Hall

As characters enter the vault, read:

After the landing, the stairs descend another 6 feet to the east. The passage has a small alcove on the south side and then opens into a large hall running north to south, with another passage across the hall. To the north, a passage exits to the east, while to the south, there is a rough tunnel dug from the western corner. In the north half of the hall are the coals of a campfire.

The campfire radiates dim light in a 20-foot radius.

Four duergar (Thogran, Kromnar, Brammin, and Tisnora) rest around the north side of the fire but rise to their feet if they hear anyone coming down the stairs. Upon seeing the characters enter, Thogran declares loudly (in Dwarven), "Well, if these mooks can get in safely, it's past time for us to go!" They don't want to leave any witnesses to their presence but also aren't eager to suffer more casualties.

Encounter: Duergar squad. The four **duergar** will engage in one round of combat with the characters before realizing they aren't push-overs and declare a retreat. At that point they all go invisible, exit to the north-east and then walk stealthily down the side passage back to the main hall. In passing, several of them kick stones down the passage to **area 7** which ricochet off the debris in that room, causing one of the spiders there to move around for two rounds. This is a ploy to lure the party in the wrong direction. Once they can cross **area 5** safely, they head back up the stairs. At the top, they Enlarge and push the crumbling walls into the

stairwell, blocking it, then march off to their secret base before the blizzard resumes.

Treasure. Each duergar carries 2d6 gp plus their standard weapons and armor.

6 – Shroom Storage

This was originally a storage area for the keep; it has been cleared out and become overgrown with fungus. The door is slightly ajar. (Recognizing the smell of the shriekers inside, the duergar didn't fully open the door.)

Encounter: Primal Scream Therapy. If the door is opened, the six **shriekers** inside begin screaming, which will wake and attract the cave bear from **area 8**.

Treasure. If the shriekers are all destroyed, searching the room with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will turn up a tarnished silver ring with a malachite stone worth 25 gp that was lost in a shallow crack in the floor.

7 – Spiders' Nest

This room is choked with webbing which stretches from wall to wall and floor to ceiling. The web seems to be swaying or vibrating slightly.

The webs make the entire room difficult terrain. A creature entering webs for the first time on a turn or starting its turn in them must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained. A restrained creature can use its action to rip out of the webbing (destroying it in that 5-foot cube) with a successful DC 12 Strength check. Each 5-foot cube of webs has AC 10, 3 hit points, vulnerability to fire, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

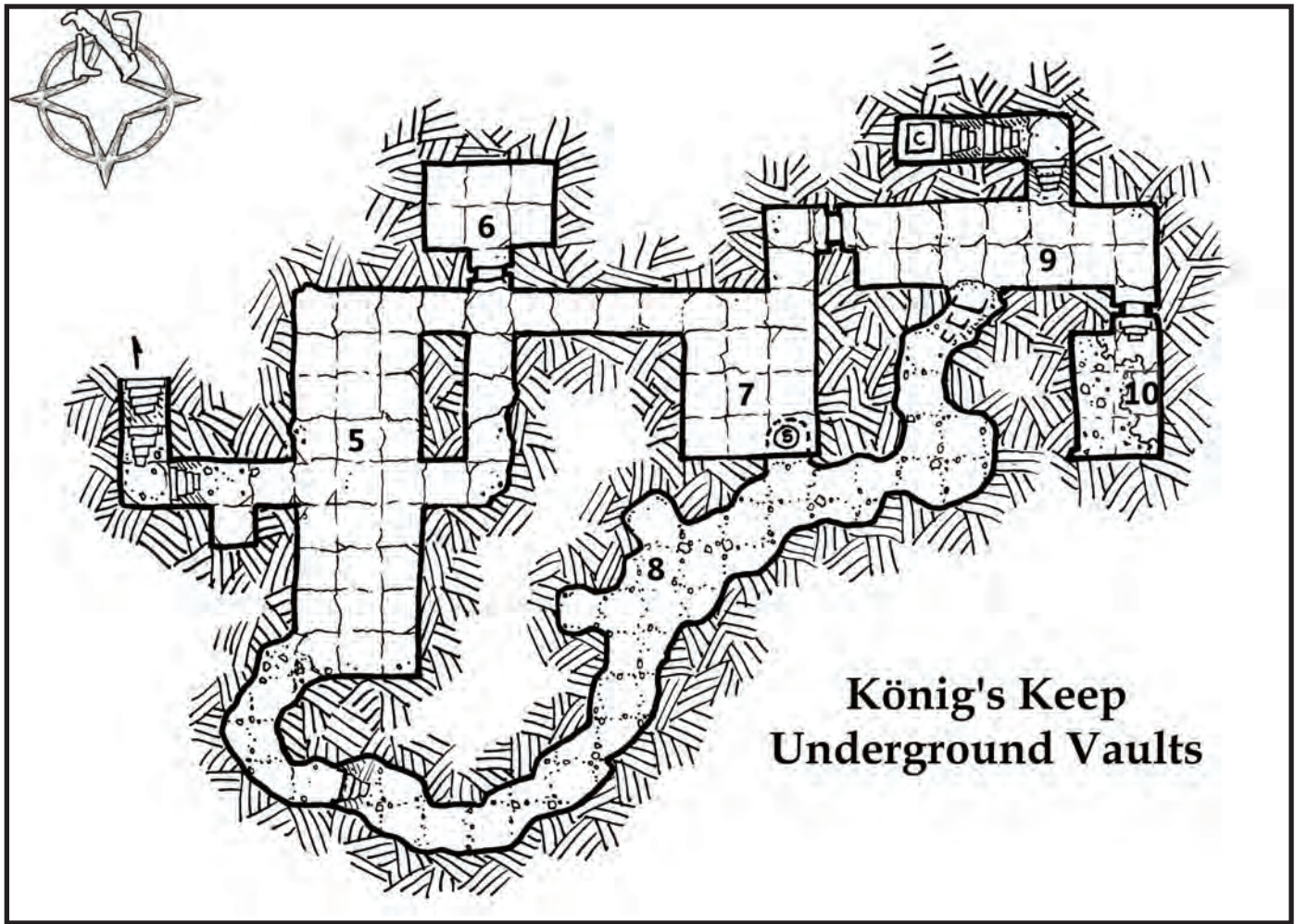
There is a trap door in the south-east corner that is obscured by debris and webs and can only be found if the room is thoroughly searched and the searcher succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A 30-inch-square flagstone can be

flipped up to reveal a natural shaft leading a few feet down into the ceiling of an alcove in **area 8**.

Encounter: Giant Spiders. Three **giant spiders** are in the south-west, south-east, and north-east upper corners of this room. They move to attack creatures restrained in the webs, or use their Web attacks against any who are not, and avoid melee attacks from unrestrained attackers by staying out of reach. Except in areas where characters have destroyed webbing, the spiders can freely webwalk throughout the room at any elevation on walls, ceiling, or webs.

Treasure: Truant Teens. Anyone searching the room will see several webbed bundles, two of which are moving slightly. These bundles each contain one of the missing human teens (**scouts**), Einar and Anja. They are suffering two levels of exhaustion from being poisoned and struggling against their bonds and have only 1 hit point remaining each. If freed, the scouts report:

"We were exploring the cellars when the duergar came in and found us and chased us into this room, where we were nabbed by the spiders. Before we ran, we overheard them talking, and we know enough Dwarven from working with the outfitter to piece together what they were saying. They'd been searching the town for some kind of crystals and were heading back to their base. Apparently, they came down here after being attacked by some kind of web of ice that killed one of their companions and were building a fire to keep it from following them until they figured out a way to escape. They complained that it looked just like a snow drift before it attacked. They were shocked that it came right at them even though they were invisible, and it seemed not to be bothered by their picks or javelins. That's all we overheard before they spotted us."



König's Keep Underground Vaults

8 – Not-So-Sleepy Bear

The worked areas of the vaults here intersect with a natural cave worn by an ancient underground waterway that has not yet been fully excavated. At either end, rough steps descend 10 feet to the natural surface.

One of the alcoves (as marked on the map) rises to a vertical shaft that ends with a smooth, flat stone. Pushing this stone upwards (assuming the character is somehow braced from below) opens the secret trap door into **area 7**. If the webbing has not yet been cleared from **area 7**, opening the trap door requires a successful DC 12 Strength check, and anyone emerging must contend with the webbing (and spiders, if they remain) as described in **area 7**.

If the characters enter the cavern without having alerted the bear, read:

Rough steps descend about 10 feet to the bottom of a curving natural tunnel. The sound of heavy snoring comes from down the tunnel.

Encounter: Cave Bear. A year ago, a cave bear (**polar bear**) stuffed its belly with several successful hunts and then settled down to hibernate in this cave, planning to break its fast on villagers once it awoke in the spring. Then spring and summer failed to come, so now the bear is very hungry and grumpy. It is sleeping fitfully near the alcoves around the middle of the natural cave area.

The party can approach without waking it with a successful DC 14 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. Individual characters can sneak past it with a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If they fail the group

check or an individual check to sneak up to or past it, it wakes up and attacks on the following round, rolling initiative with disadvantage as it comes fully awake.

If they approach without stealth, it will wake up as soon as they get within 50 feet (anywhere beyond the bottom of either cave passage stairway) by hearing them, seeing their light, or smelling burning torches or lanterns. Once awake, it will have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to follow them due to its Keen Smell and will track them down to attack and eat them.

The cave bear will break off combat if it is reduced below 20 hit points, but once it discovers the western stairs are impassable, it will feel cornered and fight to the death the next time it crosses paths with anyone.

Treasure: Bear parts. If the bear is killed, the pelt can be sold for 20 gp and the meat for 30 gp.

9 – Curling Rink

If characters listen at the door to the west or approach from the steps to the north or south, read:

You hear something sliding across the floor, and then a quiet tap of stone-on-stone.

If the western door is opened or characters enter from the steps, read:

A rounded, flat stone slides along the floor and comes to rest in a bullseye drawn at the nearest end of the hall, gently nudging aside a similar stone in the process. A faint but excited chittering sound follows, although other than icicles that adorn the walls and ceiling, the hall seems empty.

This frozen hallway has been turned into a curling rink; the iced surface is difficult terrain. The first time on a turn that a creature moves on the slippery ice, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

The stairs to the north lead upwards 15 feet to a hinged stone trapdoor that can be pushed open into **area 4**. See “Leaving the Vaults” below if the characters exit this way.

Encounter: Bonspiel. Four **ice mephits**, two at each end of the hall, are sliding rounded flat stones at bullseyes drawn on either end of the frozen floor. If disturbed, they turn their attention to harassing the characters instead, and fight until destroyed. The ones at the nearer side are watching from stillness, so will appear as icicles and can attack with surprise due to False Appearance; the ones at the far end are currently in the process of throwing (sliding) rocks.

If the cave bear shows up during the fight (probably due to a Death Burst), the surviving mephits will go mo-

tionless like shards of ice after one of them casts *fog cloud*. They will then gleefully witness the bear locating the blinded characters by smell to tear them into meaty morsels.

10 – Wine Cellar

The door to this chamber is locked but can be opened by a character with proficiency in thieves’ tools with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. If the lock cannot be opened (for example, from having a rusty key broken off in it), the door can be destroyed or battered open with a successful DC 15 Strength check, although either of those options will be loud enough to wake and attract the bear from **area 8**, if it is still sleeping.

Once the door is opened, read:

Opening the door reveals stairs leading 6 feet down into a lower vaulted chamber about 10 feet wide and 15 feet long. The floor is bare stone, slick with moisture. Bright steady light shines from a fixture in the south-west corner, fully illuminating the room. A slightly acrid odor taints the air.

This deep chamber was used to store wine, ale, and food, due to having a very stable cool temperature year-round. Ironically, it is now warmer than the rest of the vaults (other than the bear’s den) because it is further from the wintery surface, a condition the occupants find favorable.

Encounter: Slick Trio. Three **gray oozes** are in this room. One of them is lurking on the wall over the lintel of the door, the other two are lying motionless on the floor on the south-west side of the room, where they are indistinguishable from wet rock. All three attack the whole party with surprise due to False Appearance as soon as any character reaches the south half of the room.

Treasure. There is a *gem of brightness* resting inside a lamp affixed to the southwest corner of the room, about 8 feet off the floor.

Leaving the Vaults

When the characters leave the vaults via either exit, they discover that the blizzard has resumed while they were underground and will have the following encounter as they emerge.

Encounter: Web of Pain. The **frostveil** (see Appendix D) is ready for another meal. It blends with a snowdrift so as to be unseen and attacks the first person to emerge, surprising them unless they are specifically looking at or watching snowdrifts. Due to the rising winds of the blizzard, it has a fly speed of 40 feet. It will fight to the death.

If searched for, the escaping duergar left tracks heading north from the fort that rapidly vanish into the obscuring blizzard.

The town is near enough that the party can find their way back to the main streets, especially if they have the teen scouts to help them.

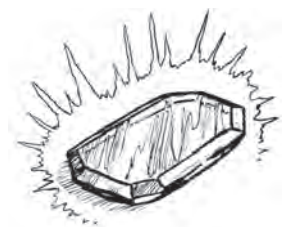
Concluding the Adventure

If the characters get the teens out alive, the outfitter and guide are very grateful and offer discounts on equipment or guide services.

The mystery of who has been sneaking around town is also solved (duergar) but the reason for their visits remains somewhat obscure. To settle this problem, the characters may try to track the duergar to their mountain outpost.

If the cave bear remains alive, it will eventually wander into town looking to make a meal of some townsfolk; characters may become heroes for stopping it or be chastised for waking it from hibernation if they don’t stop it.

If the frostveil remains alive, it may also become a serious threat to the town’s residents. Ω





CAMPFIRE: A SOLO RANGER ADVENTURE

An adventure for a level 3 character

Written by **John K. Webb**
Cartography by **John K. Webb**
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and William McAusland**

Campfire: A Solo Ranger Adventure is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for one 2nd- to 4th-level ranger character and is optimized for one ranger character of level 3.

This adventure is setting agnostic and can fit into any setting with a wilderness. After waking up alone, injured, and stripped of equipment, the ranger encounters an elf child, Myrrh (see page 21, **area A1**, for details), and must find a way back home by wits and strength of will.

Adventure Background

This adventure takes place in a little-known forest called The Warpweave, so-called because of the strange phenomena that occur there. Orbs of light, angelic voices, and visions both wondrous and terrible have been recorded on the outskirts of The Warpweave—needless to say, non-native creatures give the region a wide berth. More troubling still, no person has entered The Warpweave and returned. Just who—or what—rules this forest remains a mystery.

In truth, an awakened tree called Yewscar lies at The Warpweave's center and has gone mad due to the influence of an asteroid that fell centuries ago. The asteroid destroyed an elven civilization and deposited chunks of amethyst stone throughout the forest. The biggest piece struck Yewscar and became lodged in his flesh. Because of the magical stone, Yewscar developed incredible power over the surrounding forest, but this power came at the expense of his mind. Now, the mad tree-lord's influence consumes any humanoid that enters The Warpweave.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure presumes that the ranger was somehow incapacitated and placed in The Warpweave. How or why that happens is up to you, but the following table offers some suggestions.

Adventure Hook Table.

d6	Hook
1	A criminal organization kidnapped the ranger and left them to die in The Warpweave.
2	The ranger accidentally entered The Warpweave and was stripped of their belongings by a group of malevolent faeries.
3	The ranger's rival orchestrated their disappearance in order to remove them as an obstacle to their own plans.
4	An NPC in your campaign has lured the ranger to The Warpweave and betrayed them.
5	The ranger has been led here through their dreams by an elf child called Myrrh (NG female elf commoner), who is also lost in The Warpweave.
6	The ranger was recently ambushed by bandits and was forced to jump into a nearby river, which carried them into The Warpweave.

The Warpweave

Little is known of The Warpweave, only that it was once home to an elven kingdom that mysteriously vanished over a century ago. In truth, it was the asteroid—and Yewscar's subsequent madness—that destroyed the elves. Some of them were twisted into dryads, creatures who are eternally bound to the forest, though they tend to stay close to the center of The Warpweave.

General Features

The following features are common throughout all areas of The Warpweave and are printed here for ease of reference:

Size and Dimensions. Treat each hex as comprising an area of 24 miles.

Illumination. The Warpweave has a typical day-night cycle.

River Dimensions. There are three main rivers in The Warpweave, and several tributaries. Treat each main river as being between 300 to 1,000 feet wide at any given point along its course. Whenever the ranger wishes to check whether an area contains a safe river crossing, have them perform a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check (if a light rain has occurred in the past three days, add +4 to the DC; if a heavy rain has occurred in the past three days, add +8 to the DC). On a success, they find a section of calm, relatively shallow water that's safe to cross.

Treat each tributary as being easy to cross, regardless of weather conditions.



Mutated Flora and Fauna. The plant and animal life of The Warpweave has been deeply affected by Yewscar's influence. Whenever the ranger forages for food, roll a d20. On a 17 or higher, they encounter a mutated entity. What this means exactly is up to you (examples: a deer with two heads, awakened fruit plants, rabbits with chameleon-like fur, etc.), but whenever the ranger or Myrrh consumes mutated food, have them perform a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they expel the

food after an hour of indigestion and must find more food for the day.

Random Encounters. Whenever the ranger is exploring an empty hex (i.e. a hex without a keyed feature or encounter), check for a random encounter three times per day: once at morning, once at noon, and once at night (it is this author's recommendation to only have a single combat encounter per adventuring day). To check for random encounters, roll a d20. On a 17 or higher, roll on or choose from the following table:

Random Encounters..

d10	Encounter
1	One mutated ape swings down from the treeline and attempts to snag Myrrh, if present, in order to take her directly to Yewscar.
2	While taking a breather, a single black bear begins to sniff around the ranger's camp.
3	Two giant wolf spiders emerge from their hidden crevice beneath a nearby pile of rubble.
4	Four vultures begin following the ranger's trail.
5	A gelatinous cube is seen slowly devouring a trapped deer.
6	Two wild boars are seen grazing nearby.
7	Three moaning grimlocks are heard worshipping their profane gods.
8	A dryad cautiously approaches the ranger and wishes to communicate privately with Myrrh to discuss her role in healing The Warpweave (she must reunite with Yewscar in area E4).
9	Four pseudodragons are having a party, which delights Myrrh. If the ranger sticks around, the party gets crashed by two dire wolves .
10	A tiger decides to take its chances against the ranger. If the tiger manages to Surprise the ranger, it immediately attacks and uses Pounce.

Old and New Survival Features

Before running this adventure, familiarize yourself with the wilderness exploration rules precis provided in Appendix A. Additionally, review the following new rules for Resting and Weather:

The Weather Channel

This adventure takes place in a temperate climate (think late spring or early summer), so temperature is not a mechanical concern with regards to water consumption or warmth. This can be changed to fit your campaign setting, but exceptionally hot or cold temperatures are outside the scope of this adventure.

At the beginning of each day, roll on or choose options from the following tables to generate the day's weather conditions:

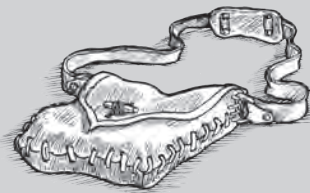
Wind Speed.

d20	Wind Speed
1-9	Normal: No effect
10-17	Light: -2 to ranged attack rolls
18-20	Strong: Disadvantage on ranged attack rolls

Rain.

d20	Rain
1-10	None: No effect
11-17	Light (Partially Cloudy): -2 to Foraging checks
18-20	Heavy (Cloudy): Disadvantage on Foraging check

Note: Mechanical effects are cumulative. For example, if a strong wind is present, all creatures get *both* -2 to and disadvantage on ranged attack rolls.



Resting & Sleep Deprivation

Because this adventure deals with a lone character in the wilderness, a full night's rest may prove to be a luxury they cannot afford. This section details a system by which you can track the character's rest level.

Threshold. A character can go a number of days without sleep (i.e. performing a successful long rest) equal to their proficiency bonus + their Constitution modifier.

Sleep Deprivation. For every 24 hours a character exceeds their threshold without performing a successful long rest, have them perform a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they gain one level of exhaustion. The DC increases by 4 per 24-hour period the character goes without resting (10/14/18/...). If this saving throw ever results in the character reaching or exceeding four levels of exhaustion, their body shuts down, forcing them to perform a long rest. Upon completing a long rest in this way, remove one level of exhaustion.

Sleep, Interrupted. If the ranger performs a long rest—either by choice or by exhaustion—you may choose to have their rest interrupted or introduce a different development. What this means exactly is up to you, but the following table has been prepared to generate developments in a pinch:

Sleep, Interrupted Developments.

d10	Development
1	If Myrrh is accompanying the ranger, they discover the elf child is missing the next morning. Visible, obvious tracks lead to a den, wherein a Warpweave witch (treat is as a sea hag , except it doesn't have the Death Glare ability) is preparing the child for a profane ritual.
2	A sudden thunderstorm (Strong Wind and Heavy Rain) descends upon The Warpweave before the sun rises.
3	Upon waking, the ranger discovers their campsite has been surrounded by hanging stick figures and small stone cairns of unknown origin. Any creature that touches one of these objects must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute by horrific visions. A creature that fails this check has disadvantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks for the rest of the day.
4	The ranger is awoken at midnight by the horrific sounds of three shriekers disturbed by an orb of light (with bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for another 5 feet) which has appeared in their rotted log home. Once the ranger attempts to interact with either the orb or the shriekers, the orb disappears and the plants fall silent.
5	The ranger has a disturbing nightmare that involves someone removing a piece of their flesh from their arm. Once awake, they realize that it was no dream. In fact, a shapeshifting creature (CE humanoid scout) has used the flesh to assume the ranger's appearance and now stalks them from the shadows. This creature will attempt to remain hidden and strike the ranger at their most vulnerable.
6	A swarm of ravens divebombs the ranger's camp in the dead of night and attempts to peck their eyes out. If Myrrh is in the ranger's camp, they will focus their attacks on her instead of the ranger. After dropping below half their hit points, the ravens will attempt to grab anything shiny nearby, then fly away.
7	In the morning, the ranger discovers eight awakened shrubs in camp: the awakened plants have arranged themselves in a humanoid shape and copy the ranger's movements and actions as closely as possible. If the shrubs are not disposed of, they will attempt to smother the ranger in their sleep the following night.
8+	No event.

Roleplaying Foraging

Foraging for food and water is a crucial component of this adventure, being a survival adventure at its core. To that end, you may wish to roleplay the act of foraging—perhaps not every day, but for notable foraging events (for instance, encountering a mutated animal). As an optional rule, for hunting a larger animal such as a deer, the ranger should be made to perform attack rolls and expend ammunition, taking weather conditions into account. On a miss, the animal may run away.

Special: Yewscar’s Swamp

Yewscar’s Swamp (**hexes F4, F5, E3, E4, E5, and D5**) presents unique challenges to the ranger’s survival.

No Medicinal Herbs. While traveling within Yewscar’s Swamp, the ranger cannot forage for medicinal herbs.

Wetland. Humanoid creatures who spend at least 4 hours traveling through Yewscar’s Swamp have

disadvantage on Constitution saving throws due to being permanently wet (and thus more susceptible to disease) and are forced to travel at a slow pace unless using a raft or boat.

Foraging Penalty. While in Yewscar’s Swamp, the ranger gets a -2 to all Foraging Checks.

Lament of the Elves. Yewscar’s dryads project a song—an eternal lament—throughout the swamp. So long as the song is audible to the ranger (which is always unless deafened through an effect, spell, or item), they have disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma saving throws.

Arrival in The Warpweave

At the beginning of the adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

Your eyes flutter open after a restless sleep. For a moment, you think you’re still asleep. Crystalline plants rise to form a kaleidoscopic canopy in the sky, and warm air kisses your face. What is this place? How did you come here? You

sit up and groan from the pain of your injuries. A forest. But not just any forest. The Warpweave, the haunted wood of strange things, from which no one has returned. At least, not yet. As you take stock of your situation, you hear a small sound, a child’s cry, coming from nearby...

Areas of The Warpweave

The following locations are keyed to the map of The Warpweave on page 22. The map has been formatted to accommodate a normal movement pace (24 miles per day).

Note. Not every hex has a keyed encounter or point of interest. If you would like to introduce a random encounter to an empty hex, refer to Random Encounters on page 19.

A1 - Starting Hex

The ranger wakes up injured in **hex A1**. They are in a lightly wooded, hilly area. A mountain range looms to the east and south.

Myrrh: Crying Elf Child. Shortly after the ranger wakes up, they hear the sound of crying coming from somewhere close by. Upon investigating, they find Myrrh (NG female elf **commoner**) standing alone along the riverbank. Myrrh is approximately eight years old and cannot speak. She can, however, communicate with the ranger via the ranger’s dreams. Her communications are image-based and have to do with her origin (see below). For food and water purposes, Myrrh requires half the normal amount of a grown adult humanoid. For movement purposes, Myrrh can travel at a normal pace, or take 1 level of exhaustion to travel at a fast pace. As an elf, her daily rest consists of a 4-hour long Trance (semi-conscious) state. Myrrh has nothing but the clothes on her back.

GM’s Note: Who Is Myrrh? Put simply, Myrrh is a child of The Warpweave, a manifestation of Yewscar. She is not Yewscar himself, but a

Starting Injury

Before the adventure begins, roll a d8 and consult the following table:

Injury Table.

d8	Injury
1-4	Scratches & Bruises. Risk of infection: Once per day at sunset, roll a d20. On an 18-20, the ranger’s wound becomes infected. Once infected, the ranger takes 2 (1d4) necrotic damage each day at sunrise and has their maximum hit points reduced by that amount for the remainder of the adventure. The ranger may attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check once per day to cure the infection, provided they’ve foraged for medicinal herbs that day. Medicinal herbs cannot be found in Yewscar’s Swamp (hexes F4, F5, E3, E4, E5, and D5).
5-7	Twisted Ankle. The ranger’s movement speed is reduced by half and cannot exceed its maximum value for 1d8 days. While traveling, the ranger must move at a slow pace. Once per day, the ranger can attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check to reduce the injury time by one day, provided they’ve foraged for medicinal herbs that day. Medicinal herbs cannot be found in Yewscar’s Swamp (hexes F4, F5, E3, E4, E5, and D5).
8	Broken Arm. The ranger loses the use of their non-dominant arm for 1d12 + 1d8 days. While the arm remains broken, they cannot use two-handed weapons and have disadvantage on grapple and Strength checks. Additionally, their swim speed is reduced by half, and foraging takes twice as long.

discreet, separate entity. She is an echo of the elves who once lived here. Important to note is that Myrrh was born the morning of the ranger's arrival, as an eight-year-old, and so doesn't have a firm grasp on language despite her age. She desires to leave The Warpweave. However, Yewscar's madness can be cured by reuniting Myrrh with the awakened creature in **area E4**.

Landmarks. The crystal tower in **area C3** is visible just over the forest canopy. The east river is also present in this area.

B2 - Overgrown Ruins

Spread throughout this 24-mile area are ruins of the old Elven empire that once inhabited The Warpweave. There are no intact buildings left, only chunks of stone and woodwork covered in a mysterious, crystalline vine.

Malevolent Vines. Inspecting the crystalline vines reveals that they are growing slowly, but measurably, and that they are somehow consuming the raw material.

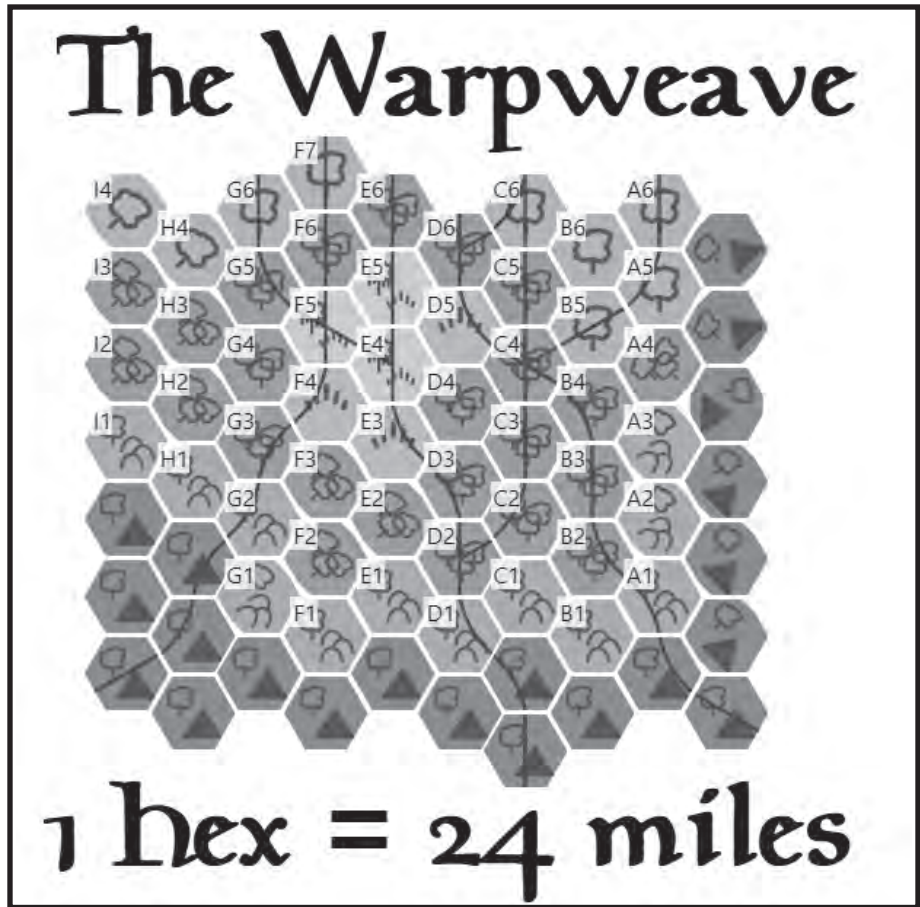
Encounter: Vine Attack! Whenever the ranger takes a short or long rest, have them and Myrrh perform a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a failure, they are surprised by three crystalline vines (treat these vines as **constrictor snakes** and characterize their Bite attacks as sharp crystals tearing into flesh). On a success, they are still attacked by the vines, but have a chance to react. If Myrrh is present, the vines will prioritize restricting and consuming her first.

Landmarks. The crystal tower in **hex C3** is visible just over the forest canopy. The east river is also present in this area.

C3 - Crystalline Tower

The dominant feature in this area is the Crystalline Tower, a 50-foot-tall spire of opaque, bluish crystal.

Crystallized Figures. Surrounding the tower are eight crystallized figures: elves caught in the asteroid's



initial blast wave. They were petrified in the act of running, hiding, cowering, etc. Small crystal flowers of kaleidoscopic color grow on the surface of these figures.

Rest Area. An inspection of the tower's base reveals a crack on its west side large enough for a Medium-sized humanoid to slip through. There is a 5-foot drop from this crack to the bottom of the tower, an irregularly shaped oval room with a surface area of approximately 15 feet. The crystal room can be used as a protected rest area or base of operations.

Encounter: Will-o'-Wisp Manifestation. At night, the eight crystallized figures manifest a **will-o'-wisp**, which represents their collective consciousness as they lay trapped in the crystal. The creature is mostly interested in inspecting Myrrh. It will approach the ranger with curiosity, but will not attack unless one of the following conditions are met:

- Provoked to violence
- Witnessed the ranger in possession of a crystal flower
- Witnessed the ranger touching one of the figures

If the ranger decides to rest within the tower's base, the creature will "check in" occasionally through the crack in the wall. If the spirit is destroyed, the eight crystallized figures instantly shatter, destroying their flowers.

Treasure: Crystalline Flowers. The crystal flowers growing along the figures are collectively worth 100 gp intact, or half as much if damaged.

Landmarks. The crystal tower is present in this area. The central-east tributary is also present in this area.

C4 - The Living Statue

The east river and central-east tributary intersect in this area. The east river continues through **hex D5** and **D6**, while the central-east tributary

continues through **hex C5** and **C6**. A new tributary emerges from this intersection (the eastern-north tributary) and continues through **hex B5**, **A5**, and **A6**.

The dominant feature in this area is a 10-foot-tall, 5-foot-wide **golem arcana** (treat it as a **stone golem**, except it has the appearance of a metallic construct and can speak Common) situated at the river intersection.

The Living Statue. The golem arcana has been frozen in place since the asteroid struck; its body fell and became fused to the earth below, so it can only move its right arm and right leg. The right side of its head is free of the earth, but it cannot move its head to look around. Local wildlife—dozens of small animals, insects, etc.—are gathered around the statue, as if engaged in conversation.

Once a humanoid creature gets within 20 feet of the golem arcana, the animals and insects scatter back to the surrounding woods.

The golem arcana is more than happy to engage in conversation. It will tell the story of the asteroid and Yewscar's corruption (and his location in hex E4). Additionally, the golem recognizes Myrrh as a product of The Warpweave but doesn't quite know where her purpose lies. Myrrh's response to the golem is friendly and familiar.

The Golem's Last Wish. Before the ranger leaves, the golem arcana will request that its present existence be put to an end. This can be accomplished by taking the anima crystal from its broken chest. The golem assures the ranger that it will continue to exist within the crystal until placed into a form that can support it.

Treasure: Anima Crystal. The anima crystal within the golem arcana is worth 500 gp to learned blacksmiths (i.e. familiar with the creation of magic items), or 50 gp to unfamiliar merchants. It sheds dim blue light in a 5-foot radius. The crystal contains the golem's personality: if placed

within a shaped figure, the anima crystal automatically bonds with the form, imbuing it with the power of movement (if given appendages) and speech (if given a mouth).

D5 - Haunted Swamp

This area constitutes the eastern edge of Yewscar's Swamp (**hexes F4**, **F5**, **E3**, **E4**, **E5**, and **D5**). Refer to the Yewscar's Swamp section to see how this biome presents unique survival challenges to the ranger.

The dominant feature of this area is its haunted nature: ghostly wails, sounds of crying, faces in the trees, etc. Most disturbing, perhaps, is the faint, ethereal song of the fallen elves.

Lament of the Elves. Yewscar's dryads project a song—an eternal lament—throughout the swamp. So long as the song is audible to the ranger (which is always unless deafened through an effect, spell, or item), they have disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma saving throws.

Encounter: Beckoning Specter. While traveling through this area, the ranger will encounter a **specter** who resembles a ghostly elf. The specter will not attack unless provoked or if the ranger attempts to exit the swamp and seems particularly curious about Myrrh. Myrrh, in turn, does not seem to fear the specter. This specter is also capable of speaking and knows Elvish. It keeps repeating the same phrase: "Come to the root of the weeping tree." The specter wants the ranger to follow it to **hex E4**.

E4 - Yewscar's Hollow

The central river continues through **hex E5** and **E6**. A new tributary emerges in this area (the central-west tributary) and continues through **hex F5**, **G5**, and **G6**.

The dominant feature in this area is the creature Yewscar, a massive, 30-foot-tall **awakened tree** submerged in the muck and filth of the swamp. As long as the ranger is occupying this hex, they are plagued by horrific visions of madness and

destruction, and can only take short rests.

Upon discovering Yewscar, have the ranger perform a DC 15 Perception (Wisdom) check. On a success, they see Yewscar's two **dryad** protectors lurking in the shadows.

Lodged in Yewscar's trunk is the 3-foot-long shard of crystal that's driving the creature mad.

Encounter: Calming The Warpweave. Yewscar is the source of the region's instability, and so may be engaged in combat if the ranger desires. In that case, the two hidden **dryads** come to Yewscar's defense. However, Myrrh will do everything possible—including getting between the ranger and the tree—to dissuade them from fighting. Instead, Myrrh will attempt to remove the poisoned crystal from Yewscar's trunk. Removing the crystal requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Upon removing the object (or defeating him in battle), Yewscar will project images of thanks to the ranger's mind, and pass away shortly thereafter, becoming a petrified husk. Similarly, every dryad, spirit, and crystalline entity in The Warpweave will pass and become petrified at once, thereby rendering the region a normal forest. Unfortunately, as Myrrh is as much a product of The Warpweave as anything else, she also becomes petrified.

Concluding the Adventure: Survival of the Fittest

The ranger can exit The Warpweave out of any hex along its northern border and find a friendly settlement nearby. If the ranger attempts to exit with Myrrh and Yewscar was not dealt with, she will attempt to physically pull the ranger back into The Warpweave, pleading with them in her wordless way. A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince her to drop her quest and live a normal life. Of course, this means that the ranger must care for the child. ♪



HOUSE OF WHISPERS

An adventure for level 3 characters

Written by **Benjamin Palmer**
Cartography by **Benjamin Palmer**
Art by **Maciej Zagorski**

House of Whispers is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach halfway to 4th level. Strange sounds have been heard in a supposedly abandoned house.

This campaign takes place in Arden, although it can be set in your own world. Any party composition should be able to finish the adventure with intelligent play.

Adventure Background

Old man Whisper lived on a hill just outside town. He was a kind old gnome, often found studying in his extensive library or performing minor magical experiments. When his age began limiting him, he hired an assistant to help him around his house. Her name was Glenda, and she was a sweet young human woman, very beautiful, and always had a smile on her face. Over the years the two grew close. Whisper became like a father to young Glenda.

When a suitor came calling for her, Whisper was hesitant, but Glenda was ecstatic. The young man was dashing and handsome. He was a foreigner, having traveled from the elven lands to the west, but that only added to his appeal. Their courtship was quick, and, within weeks, he proposed marriage. The wedding was to take place at Whisper's house in the early hours of a lazy Sunday... but it never did. Old man Whisper was found dead in his study, slumped over his desk. On the ground in front of him, the magic circle to seal the marriage ceremony was still fresh. It was assumed he died of natural causes.

However, the old man hadn't died of old age; he'd been murdered. The suitor was a cultist of a dark god. He required the life of a spellcaster and the heart of one who truly loved him to complete his own dark ritual. When old man Whisper began his incantation to seal the two love birds

in holy matrimony, a more powerful magic circle in the caves beneath the house was activated. It drained the old man of his life force and tore poor Glenda's spirit from her body. The suitor then carried her body deep beneath the house to a secret chamber he'd been using to prepare his ritual. As he went to enact the final portions of it, her spirit, now a ghost, attacked him and slew him where he stood.

With the ritual only half-completed, her soul is trapped in limbo, unable to find peace. Now, she wanders the house aimlessly, her mind mostly gone, wailing in the night. The sounds of her suffering can be heard as far as the nearby town. Fearing what might be happening at the house, the local constabulary has put out a reward for whoever can determine what is going on.

Adventure Hooks

A Call for Help. The characters respond to the local town guard's request to investigate the supposedly abandoned house.

Strange Noises. The characters are passing by the house when they hear strange wailing coming from it and decide to investigate.

A Letter From a Friend. The characters receive an invitation to the wedding from Whisper. When they arrive in town, they are informed that Whisper has been found dead.

The Whisper House

The house of old man Whisper is a single-story affair with a large porch and a sizable basement. The house sits on a hill just outside of town.

General Features

The house has the following features unless otherwise noted.

Ceilings. The ceilings are made of wood and rise 10 feet above the floor.

Floors and Walls. The floors are made of neatly laid wooden planks while the walls are made of wood covered in colorful wallpaper.

Doors. The doors are made of solid oak with metal reinforcements. They're all unlocked unless otherwise stated.

Lighting. During the day, light streams in through the windows. At night, the house is pitch black except for the room Glenda is in, as she gives off bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for another 5 feet.

Unusual Features. Glenda, the **ghost**, intermittently appears and disappears within the house. When the characters arrive, roll 1d12 to determine where in the house she is. If you roll a 12, she is not present. Whenever the characters enter a room, roll 1d12 again as above. If you roll the room number, she appears in a flash of light; otherwise, she appears in the corresponding room. The first time they encounter her, she shrieks at them and vanishes. From then on, she follows them from within the Ethereal Plane. A DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check can entice her to show herself, although she's very skittish. Her mind is fractured from the violent death she suffered, so she doesn't know much about her death or Whisper's. She asks for Reginald, her suitor, once she's comfortable speaking with the characters. If one of the characters is a male elf, she might mistake him for Reginald and begin doting on him. Only when she sees his body in **area 14** will she remember what he did and be able to move on from this world. If attacked, she flees into the Ethereal Plane and refuses to appear again until the characters find **area 14**.

Encounter Locations

Please see the maps on pp 26 and 27.

1. The Porch

From this large porch, Whisper would sit and watch the sunset each evening as he enjoyed a cup of tea. Sometimes Glenda wanders the porch around sunset, drawn to the beauty of the evening sky.

The front door is locked. It can be unlocked with a DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or with a key that is hidden under the right bench. It can be located with a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

2. Entryway

There is a small sitting area to the right of the door. People would use this area to remove their muddy boots and cloaks and hang them up prior to entering the house. Glenda's pristine baby blue cloak stands out among the other more tattered ones. It was a gift from Whisper and acts as a *cloak of protection*. If she sees a character wearing it, she'll accuse them of stealing it.

3. Main Hall

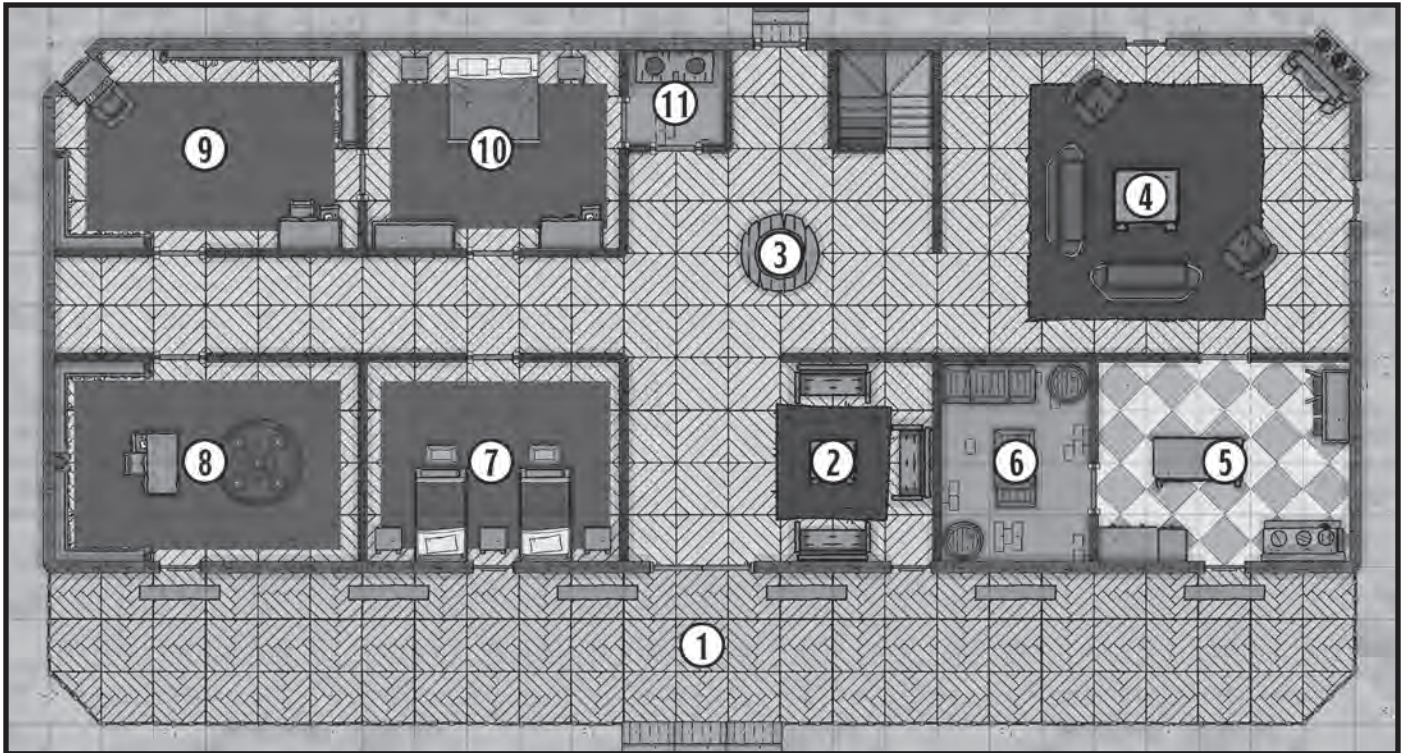
This area is the center of the house. A small table sits in the middle of it. On the table is a series of letters from various individuals expressing sadness that they can't make the wedding. The envelopes contain wedding gifts to the tune of 100 gp. If Glenda sees the characters taking her wedding gifts, she'll become angry and use her Horrifying Visage ability on them before vanishing. The stairs to the northeast lead down to the basement.

4. Living Room

In life, Whisper and Glenda would sit together after dinner discussing the events of the day here. The table is covered in papers, mostly lists of things needed for the wedding. There is a *+1 sword* (type up to GM discretion) above the fireplace. It's covered in a thin coating of dust as if it hasn't been touched in quite a while.

5. Kitchen

The cupboards here are mostly bare. Four **giant rats** are in the cupboards and have eaten all the remaining food. Smaller rats can be seen scurrying about when the door is opened. The giant rats attack only if someone disturbs their hiding place.



6. Storage

Various crates and barrels fill this small area. Two **swarms of rats**, one in each barrel, are hiding when the door is opened. If someone opens either barrel, both swarms attack.

7. Guest Bedroom

Glenda, along with any guests of Whisper's, would sleep in this room.. The bed on the left is Glenda's. Anyone who investigates the trunk at the foot of her bed finds her clothes and, more importantly, her diary. It contains the following entries in order.

- Just arrived at Mr. Whisper's house. The job offer was for an assistant and caretaker, and he definitely needs it! Poor old man, he can barely get around on his own. I hope I can make his life easier.
- Whisper is such a kind man. It's a shame he doesn't have anyone to care for him. I get the feeling he never had time for a wife or children and regrets it. He treats me like a surrogate daughter. It's so nice.
- I met a handsome young elvish man at the market today while out

shopping. He was such a gentleman! He's new to town and doesn't know anyone so I invited him over to dinner.

- It's been barely three weeks, but Reginald has proposed to me! He's so perfect! I cannot wait to start my life with him!
- The wedding is tomorrow. Mr. Whisper will conduct the ceremony in his study. Neither Reggie nor I have any family, so it'll just be the three of us. I'm so happy.

If the characters search the other trunk, they find a silver dagger and some fine elven clothing. If anyone puts on the clothing, Glenda will see them as Reginald, her suitor, and lovingly dote on them.

8. Study

This was Whisper's study. Before he was killed, he prepared the room so he could conduct the wedding ceremony. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check realizes the magic circle on the ground is one used to perform marriage ceremonies. Searching the desk reveals various notes on arcane and divine experi-

ments that Whisper was working on. A DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a hidden compartment with three random 1st-level *spell scrolls* in the bottom drawer of the desk.

9. Library

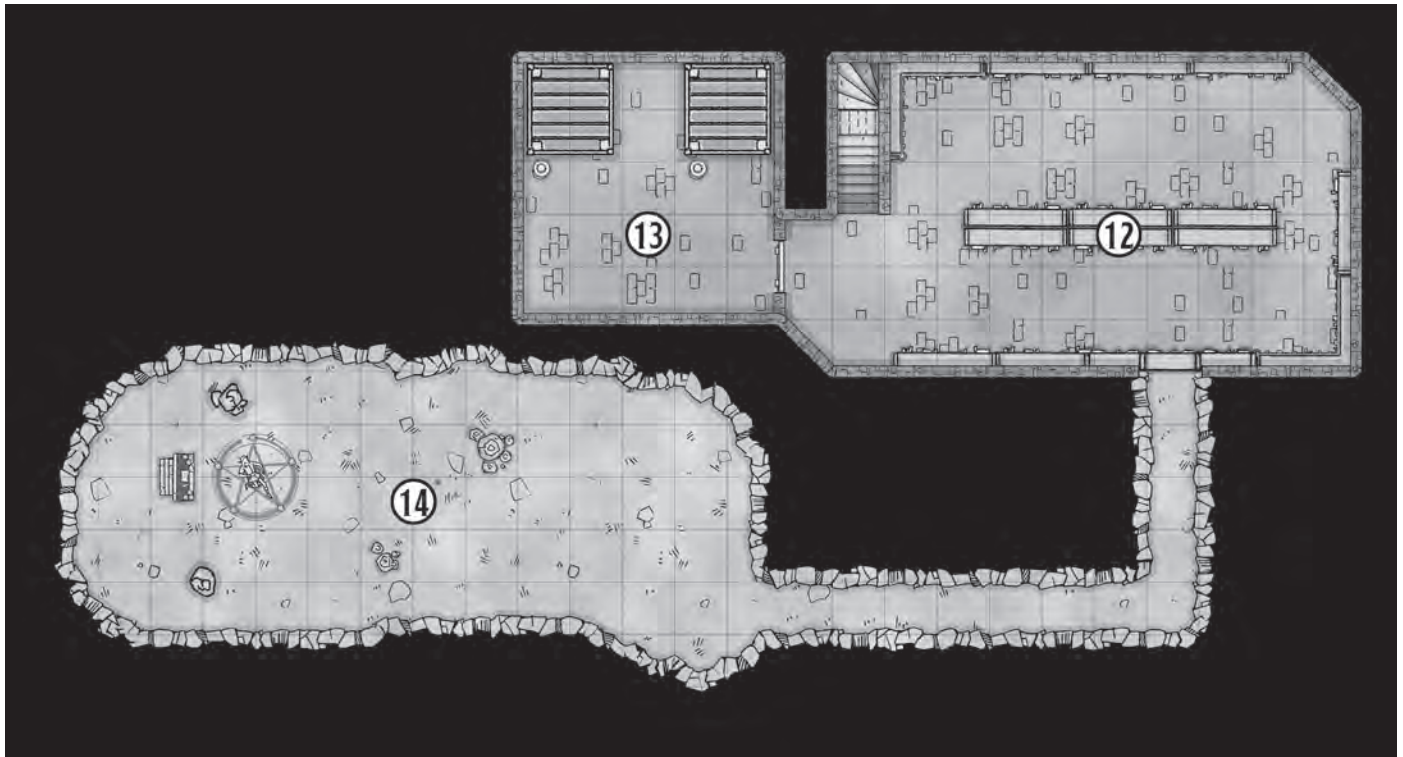
Whisper kept his large collection of books in this library. Anyone who attempts an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check in this room and uses the books gets advantage on their roll. A DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal a spellbook tucked away on one of the shelves. It has the following spells: *burning hands*, *mage armor*, and *shield*.

10. Master Bedroom

This was Whisper's bedroom. Anyone searching this room finds his clothing, assorted books he was in the process of reading, and another random 1st-level *spell scroll*.

11. Bathroom

If the characters encounter Glenda in this room, she immediately covers



herself and uses her Horrifying Visage ability before vanishing.

12. Basement Storage

Tall shelving covers the walls and fills the center of this room. Nothing of value exists on them, just supplies, sealed foodstuffs, firewood, and other such items. There is a secret door hidden behind one of the southern bookcases. It can be spotted with a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check as a rat scurries between two bookcases and vanishes into the wall.

13. Kennels

Whisper kept two large dogs as pets, Fluffy and Scruffy. They were transformed into undead monsters as a byproduct of Reginald's ritual. They use the **dire wolf** stat block, except their type is undead.

14. Hidden Altar

This chamber was discovered by Reginald one day while exploring the house. He quickly turned it into his own personal study. He built an altar and inscribed a dark sigil on the ground directly under where Whis-

per was setting up his wedding sigil above. The journal on the altar has the following entries.

- Met a naive young girl today in the market. She might be exactly what I'm looking for. Says she lives with an old gnomish sorcerer or something in a house on the outskirts of town. Perfect.
- Met the old man yesterday. He's a weak and frail old thing. I hope he can provide the life force I need for my ritual.
- I've been staying with the two for a couple weeks now courting the girl. She has no idea what I have planned for her. Discovered the perfect place to conduct the ritual. An old cave system right under the old man's study. I'll hijack the wedding ritual and use it to power my own. I really am a genius.

As soon as the characters enter the chamber and see the corpse of Reginald in the magic circle, Glenda appears behind them. Seeing him like that fully restores her memory of what happened: Reginald used his own dark magic to kill Whisper

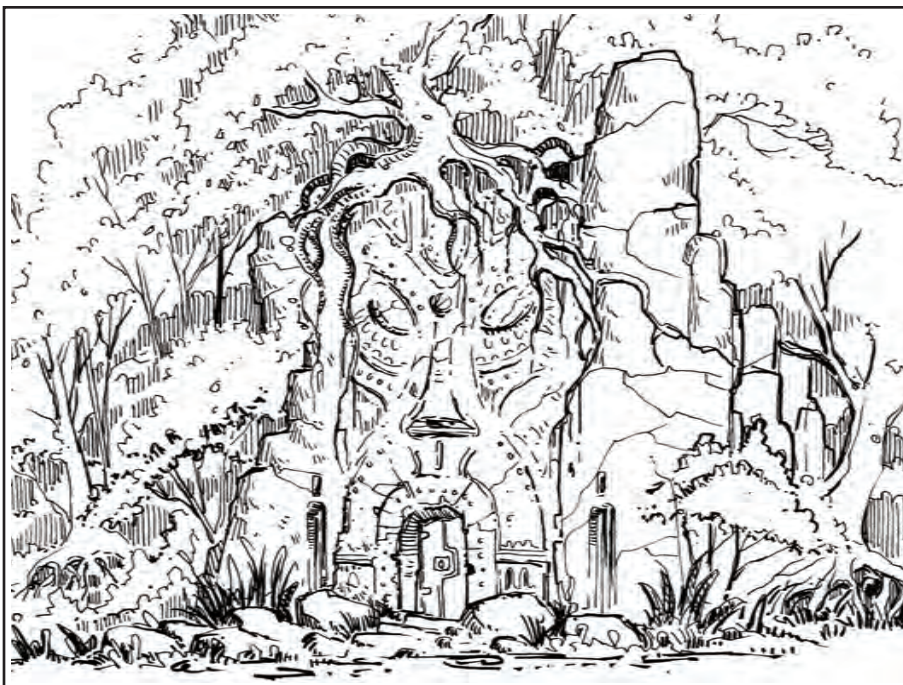
and her in a bid to complete a dark ritual for some long forgotten evil god. When her ghost managed to escape, it chased him down here and killed him. Now that she remembers what happened, she's finally able to leave this world and find peace.

If the characters search Reginald's body, they find a *wand of magic missiles* and 25 pp.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters destroy Glenda's ghost. The lights and noises people witnessed coming from the house stop. Eventually, tax officials claim it and gut it to pay off Whisper's outstanding debts. No one ever discovers Reginald's body in the secret cave or finds out how Glenda died.

If the characters help Glenda pass on. The local constabulary comes to collect the body of Reginald. As thanks for solving the mystery of the haunted house, the local officials offer to let the characters use it as a base of operations while in town. Ω



RAIDERS OF THE FORGOTTEN CRYPT

An adventure for level 3 characters

Written by **Thomas J. Firestone**
Cartography by **Thomas J. Firestone**
Art by **Maciej Zagorski** and **Jason Glover**

Raiders of the Forgotten Crypt is a Fifth Edition adventure optimized for four characters of 3rd level. This adventure is setting-agnostic and can be easily placed into any fantasy setting.

The characters must save the village of Lenker's Pass by defeating evil spirits that have been unleashed from an old, forgotten crypt by scavenging bandits!

Adventure Background

The Forgotten Crypt is the resting place of a cult dedicated to a three-headed, evil god named Traeklov. Over the centuries, the crypt has moldered due, in part, to shoddy construction and cheap building materials. The members of this cult sealed themselves inside the crypt and sacrificed themselves to Traeklov, believing that he would grant them “everlasting life” in the realm beyond. Unfortunately for the cultists, “everlasting life” actually meant everlasting undeath in the service of this god.

Recently, a notorious raider named Skath and his bandit gang stumbled upon the crypt, using stolen equipment to excavate their way inside. By breaking into this foreboding sanctum, the gang inadvertently awakened the undead cultists who sacrificed themselves centuries ago. The bandits were overwhelmed by the undead and fell one after another. Skath is the only one left. The undead cultists have one goal; win the favor of their dark lord by sacrificing the living. Now that their crypt has been unsealed, they can pursue this goal. After sacrificing the bandit gang, the undead cultists turned their attention to terrorizing a nearby village called Lenker's Pass.

The villagers of Lenker's Pass have always treated the crypt with caution and have kept their distance when hunting or gathering wood in the forest. No one in the village remembers the exact history of the crypt, but they do know that it's nothing good and nothing they wish to meddle

in. Their trepidation and fears have proved true now that creatures from the crypt attack the village nightly.

Adventure Hooks

The following plot hooks provide some possible ways for the characters to get involved in the adventure.

Bard's Song. Come nightfall in taverns and inns across the countryside, bards can be heard singing a local folksong about an evil, three-headed god and its worshipers that have been sealed away in a long-forgotten crypt. Finding this crypt and uncovering its mysteries could be a great opportunity for the party to gain some renown and perhaps even some treasure. The characters' research of the song's origin leads them to a village called Lenker's Pass.

Wanted, Dead or Alive. The merchants' guild has put up bounty posters for a gang of roving bandits wanted dead or alive for ambushing and raiding numerous merchant caravans. The merchant's guild offers a reward of 20 gp for the apprehension of any member of the gang (alive or dead). For the group's leader, a human male named Skath, the merchant's guild is offering a reward of 200 gp alive, or 20 gp dead. The gang was last seen near the village of Lenker's Pass.

Great Aunt Hessia's Note. One of the characters receives a note from their great aunt Hessia in the nearby village of Lenker's Pass begging the character for their help with recent undead attacks.

Read or paraphrase the following letter:

Dearest family,
I beg for your help... For the past several nights, angered spirits have attacked our village. These creatures float into our homes through the walls and inflict horrific wounds— it's as if they can steal our very life essence...
No doubt you've become a

sure-footed adventurer by now, please hurry and save Lenker's Pass from this terrible haunting, we won't last much longer without your help!
Love, your Great Aunt Hessia

Lenker's Pass

Regardless of which adventure hook the party decides to follow, the characters find themselves in the village of Lenker's Pass, which is on maps and easy to find.

When the party enters the village, read:

A gray, overcast sky hangs above the village of Lenker's Pass and the scant few villagers you spot upon arrival appear to have patches of withered, wounded flesh, desiccated, pale faces, and such a dull vitality that one might mistake them as walking corpses. The lingering stench of rotting flesh emanates from each hut you pass.

Shortly after arriving in Lenker's Pass, the village elder calls out to the party and quickly ushers them to her hut.

Hessia's Hut

This humble hut is adorned with all manner of plants, dried and drying herbs, brews, and poultices which are carefully organized. It smells earthy, musky, and slightly medicinal.

Hessia. Hessia (NG female human **druid**) is the village elder and healer. Spry for her old age, she walks and talks hurriedly. She is clearly concerned and troubled; her brow is in a constant furrow.

Hessia greets the characters and shares the village's troubles:

- Angry spirits have appeared for the past few nights attacking and killing villagers.
- She believes the creatures originate from the Forgotten Crypt in the forest.

- Someone must have disturbed the crypt, because she's been living in Lenker's Pass all her life and has never encountered anything like this.
- Every night, more spirits seem to attack, and she doesn't believe the village can withstand another. She implores the party to investigate the crypt to try to stop the attacks. Hessia introduces the party to her granddaughter, a teenage girl sitting at the table.

Gunny. Gunny (CG female human **scout**) is scowling angrily and furiously sharpening arrowheads at the table. She has the telltale red, swollen eyes of someone who has recently cried.

Gunny grumbles a greeting and shares what she knows with the party:

- She dourly laments that her girlfriend Marca died in the attacks.
- She is the village's most capable archer and fired upon the creatures with her bow, but her arrows passed right through them seeming to do little damage.
- She tracked the spirits back through the forest to the Forgotten Crypt, where she discovered that a bandit gang had entered the crypt with excavation equipment.
- Revenge is now her only goal; revenge on the bandits for disturbing the crypt and on the creatures for killing Marca.
- She will lead the party to the crypt and help them however she can.

When the characters are ready to go, Gunny grabs her shortbow and quiver full of arrows and leads the party to the Crypt in the forest.

Treasure: Potions of Healing. Hessia wishes the characters luck and gives them two *potions of healing*. In addition to the two given to the party, Gunny also has a *potion of healing* that she can either use on herself or give to another party member if needed.

The Forgotten Crypt

Following a trail of blackened and withered plants, Gunny can easily lead the party through the forest to the Forgotten Crypt. When the party arrives, Gunny signals to stop and be silent, then points towards the crypt entrance.

Read or paraphrase to the players:

A thin layer of fog hangs on the ground and the dense forest canopy casts a darkened, gray hue across the landscape. Through the trees, you can see the crumbling architecture of the Forgotten Crypt built into a massive hill.

The archway entrance is a gaping maw that stretches 20 feet tall.

General Features

The foul air hangs still and thick in the crypt; dust and cobwebs crowd every corner. An acrid, metallic smell permeates the deeper sections of the crypt.

Unless otherwise stated, the Forgotten Crypt has the following features.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The ceilings, floors, and walls of the crypt are made from shale rock. The walls have some crude stonework and ornamental adornment, and the floors are hewn smooth. Ceilings in the crypt are 10 feet high.

Doors. The doors in the crypt are a dark-stained wood, braced with iron. They are covered in a thin layer of algae and lichen but seem sturdy.

Polluted Water. Water seepage over the years has created small fractures in the ceiling and walls, and acidic rock drainage has leached elements from the hillside and the structure itself, leaving pools of iridescent, polluted water throughout. Some sections of the Crypt are totally submerged. Anyone whose skin comes in direct contact with this water must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion per minute of contact.

Illumination. There is no light in

the crypt unless otherwise stated. Unlit torches can be found in cobweb-covered sconces every 20 feet in the hallways. Read-aloud text assumes that the characters have their own sources of light or darkvision.

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of The Forgotten Crypt.

1. Entrance Chamber

The entrance stairs lead down into an open cavern with stairs on either side leading up to the main hallway 10 feet above. The ceiling here is 20 feet high and the lower level is lit by midday daylight. There is a 7-foot-tall statue of a three-headed humanoid creature. Tapestries with a triangular, three-skull motif hang from the ceiling. Four bandit corpses and one mastiff corpse lay withered and desiccated amongst various excavation tools and equipment.

Treasure: Loose Change. The bandits have a total sum of 53 silver and 10 gold coins on their bodies.

2. Excavated Passage

The charred corpse of a bandit rests amidst scattered bones at the foot of the closed, trapped double doors. The pillar and walls directly in front of the doors are also charred. The decorative semi-circle tympanum over the entrance doors depicts a large three-headed creature flanked by several smaller, hooded humanoid figures standing atop skulls and skeletons.

The tunnel recently excavated by the bandits bypasses the trapped entrance doors and is lit by a torch in a makeshift sconce on the wall.

Trap: Fire Breathing Statue. When a creature weighing more than 20 pounds steps on a hidden pressure plate located in front of the doors, a magical gout of flame is released in a 15-foot cone from the mouth of the three-headed statue located above the door. Any creature within the cone must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on

a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the pressure plates. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals the presence of evocation magic around the statue. Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating. A *dispel magic* spell cast on the statue destroys the trap.

3. Small Shrine

Beyond the entrance doors there is a small shrine with a candle partially melted onto a human skull.

Encounter: Shadows. Two **shadows** are hiding on the ceiling waiting for the party to descend the stairs to the western hallway before attempting to attack by surprise.

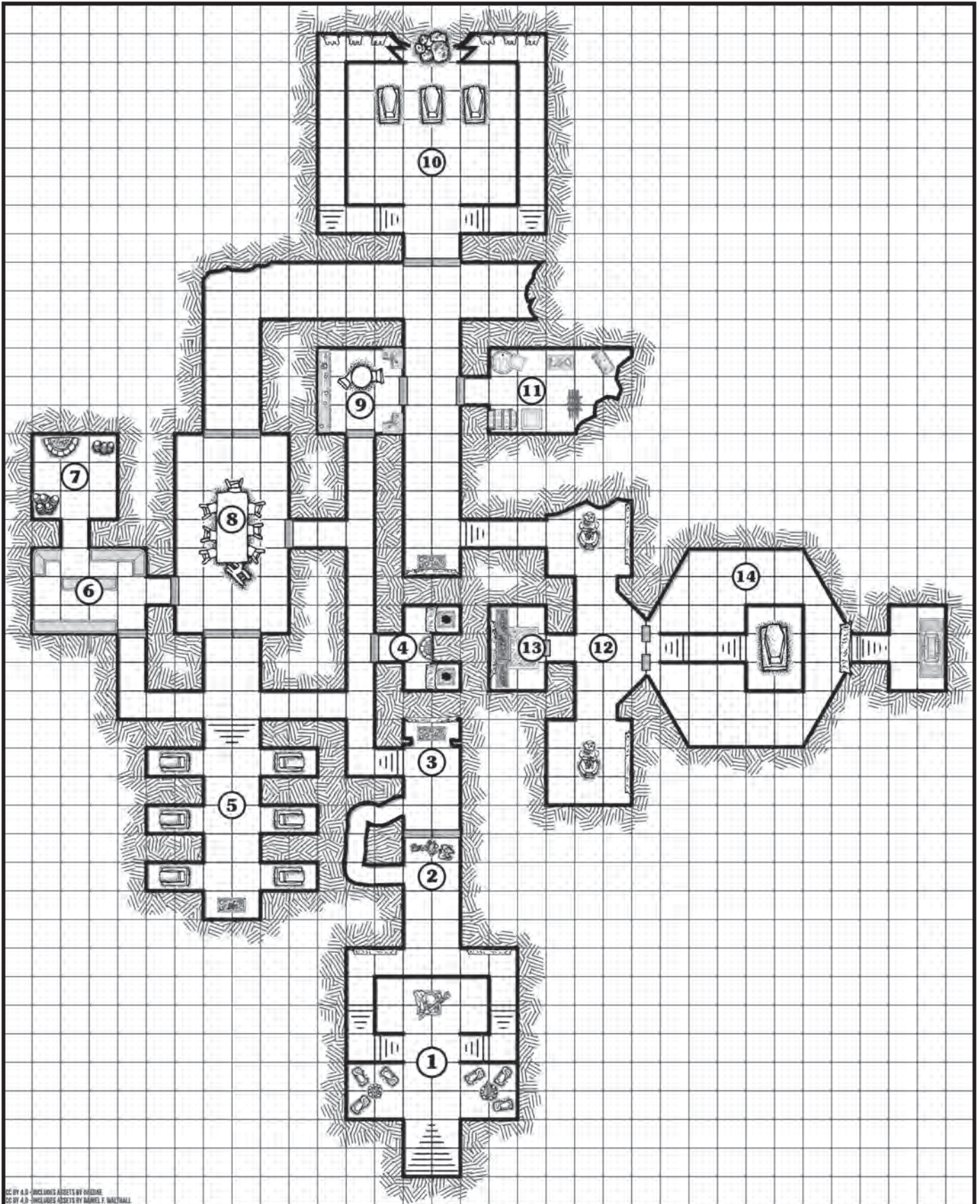
4. Lavatory

Algae clings to the walls and floors of this small, dank lavatory. A bone-dry wash basin is flanked by two closed-curtain stalls. The legs of a bandit corpse are sticking out from under the curtains of the northern stall. After a character pulls back the curtain, the party can see that this bandit's flesh has been partially consumed by roach swarms, which then crawl up from the waste hole and attack.

Encounter: Swarms of Insects. The stalls contain two **swarms of insects** (roaches) that attack when either of the curtains are drawn back.

5. Flooded Tomb

Stairs lead down into the polluted water of this flooded tomb. Six submerged stone sarcophagi sit open and empty in their respective alcoves. If the characters have a source of light, they can see a glimmer of light reflected off a glass case housing a ceremonial dagger under the water at the south end of the tomb. If a character wants to investigate, they can submerge and swim through the flooded passage. The body of a bandit is floating in the water face down 15 feet into the tomb.



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Hazard: Polluted Water. The water at the flooded south end of the tomb is polluted (see “General Features.”)

Treasure: Ceremonial Dagger. Atop the shrine sits a ceremonial dagger in an unlocked, ornate glass case. The dagger has a three-skull motif on its hilt and is worth 100 gp.

6. Kitchen

The kitchen area contains pots, pans, and utensils covered in thick layers of mold sitting atop heavy, sturdy wooden prep tables. The characters can just barely hear indistinct whispers coming from the pantry (area 7).

7. Pantry

The pantry contains barrels and crates of long-spoiled dry goods. The well on the north wall emits an acrid odor and a bandit corpse lies slumped against it. The water in the well is the same iridescent, polluted water found in area 5. The party can more clearly hear the whispering voice coming from the pantry, and it appears to originate from a shroud that is facing the well. It is cruelly and repeatedly whispering the phrase: “Come and drink, elves are left.”

Hazard: Polluted Water. The water in the well is polluted (see “General Features.”)

Encounter: Shrouds. Three shrouds (see Appendix D) are in this room. The whispering shroud facing the well will turn and attack the characters when they get within 10 feet. The other two shrouds are hiding behind the barrels and crates and will attempt to attack the party by surprise.

8. Dining Hall

Six robed humanoid figures sit at a large, lavish banquet table. The black cloth robes they wear have the three-skull emblem on the chest. Their hoods are up, and they all wear black leather gloves. Eight place settings of fine china, crystal glasses, and silverware are arranged around the table, all covered by a thick layer of dust and

cobwebs. The hooded figures appear to be eating and drinking even though there is no food or drink on the table. The sound of cutlery and glassware clinking and scraping against bone china plates echoes throughout this room and can be heard (albeit muffled) from outside any of the doors leading to the dining hall.

Encounter: Skeletons. The six hooded figures are skeletons. When the characters enter the room, the skeletons drop their utensils, pick up their weapons, and attack.

Treasure: Table Settings. The bone china, crystal glassware, and silverware are worth 75 gp total but may prove difficult to carry and/or keep from breaking.

9. Library

Bookshelves filled with moldering books and parchment line the walls of this room. Those not completely destroyed by time are filled with cult propaganda and incoherent ramblings.

There is an open book on the table covered with dust. If examined, the book is open to a page describing a sacrificial ritual to appease a three-headed god named Traeklov. The phrase: “Keep the dwarves low,” appears repeatedly in the book.

10. Northern Tomb

The double doors open to a large room with 20-foot-high ceilings and three sarcophagi. The back of the room is caved in and seeping polluted water. The catwalk framing this area stands 10 feet above the floor.

Encounter: Specters. Three specters float up from the sarcophagi and attack the characters when they enter this area.

Treasure: Three-Skull Pendants. If the characters search the sarcophagi, they find that the corpses inside wear a golden three-skull pendant worth 50 gp each.

11. Armory

Rotten wooden racks lay toppled on the floor of this room; the scattered weapons and ammunition are rusted and moldy. The eastern end of the room is caved-in and littered with rubble.

At the top northeast corner, an armoire stands with its doors swung open. Most of the wooden vial racks in the armoire have fallen onto the floor long ago, shattering the vials, but there are two intact vials still on the shelf.

Treasure: Poison. The two vials left in the armoire are *potions of poison*.



12. Hall of Statues

This long hallway contains two statues:

- The northern statue stands 8 feet tall and appears to be an elf, except there is a gold skull instead of an elven head on it. Closer inspection by a character proficient in Medicine reveals this to be an actual elven skull painted gold. A bandit corpse is slumped at the base of this statue, clutching a painted red human skull in one hand, and a vial in the other.
- The southern statue stands around 5 feet tall and appears to be a dwarf, except there is a silver skull instead of a dwarven head on it. Closer inspection by a character proficient in Medicine reveals this to be an actual dwarven skull painted silver.

The skulls are easy to remove; each skull slides up off metal rods protruding from the statues' necks.

As the party passes by the doors to the Sacrificial Chamber (**area 14**), they hear Skath pounding on the door from the other side demanding to be let out.

The party then hears him draw his weapon and shout away from the door, "Killing my men wasn't enough, you want me too? Well, you'll find Skath the Raider won't give his life so easily! Have at thee!" Skath then shouts a battle cry and runs further in the chamber. Sounds of battle can be heard from behind the doors. Before long, the party can hear Skath cry out in pain as his weapons clatter to the ground.

Treasure: Necrotic Resistance. The bandit corpse at the foot of the elven statue is clutching a *potion of necrotic resistance*.

13. Three-Skull Shrine

This small chamber contains a shrine with three pedestals. To open the barred gate to **area 14**, the correct skulls must be placed on the correct pedestals. Each of the skulls has a slightly different weight, and the ped-

estals click into place as the correct skulls are placed atop them.

The clues around the Crypt should tip off the characters as to the order:

- "The elves are left..." The gold (elven) skull belongs on the left pedestal, which stands the second tallest.
- The red skull (human) belongs on the middle pedestal, which stands the tallest.
- "Keep the dwarves low..." The silver (dwarven) skull belongs on the right pedestal, which stands the shortest.

When placed correctly, a loud click can be heard from the sealed doors leading to **area 14** as they unlock and creak slightly open.

Trap: Toxic Gas. If the skulls are not placed on the correct pedestal, the portcullis closes, trapping the characters in this room and a toxic gas trap is triggered. A cloud of toxic gas is released from a vent near the bottom of the shrine in a 15-foot sphere outward. Any creature in the cloud takes 5 (1d10) poison damage and must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for one hour. The portcullis leading back to **area 12** reopens once the skulls are placed correctly.

14. Sacrificial Chamber

The iron-banded double doors to this room are sealed shut and can be opened by solving the puzzle in **area 13**. The ceilings of this large chamber are 20 feet high, and stairs lead up 10 feet to a blood-stained stone slab sitting atop a dais. A large, threadbare tapestry hangs on the east wall and the characters can see a secret passage beyond.

A wraith hovers above a prone Skath who is lying atop the stone slab dais. The party has three rounds to stabilize Skath; after the third round, the wraith will fly to within 10 feet of Skath's corpse and use its action to Create Specter.

If the party is able to stabilize Skath, he will try to sweet talk them

into letting him go free by bribing them with 100 gp (which he has on him) and the promise of getting the party more gold later (which he has no intention of doing). If the party lets him go, he flees.

Encounter: Wraith. A wraith attacks the party on sight.

Treasure: Chest. Inside the unlocked chest in the antechamber are three skulls plated with actual gold, silver, and rubies worth 300 gp total. Also in the chest is a *spell scroll of greater restoration*.

Concluding the Adventure

The party arrives back in Lenker's Pass and tells Hessia what happened. Hessia can heal the party's wounds.

Adventure Hook Resolutions

There were three adventure hooks mentioned in the introduction. Here are the resolutions for each hook:

Bard's Song. The rumors from the song were true, and the party now has the treasures to prove they have been to the mythic Forgotten Crypt and survived to tell the tale. Bards across the land are hastily adding verses to the song including the characters' heroics. Perhaps this newfound renown will lead other NPCs to seek out the adventurers hoping to hire them, opening up further adventuring possibilities.

Great Aunt Hessia's Note. The character's great aunt Hessia is so proud of the adventurer they have become. The village is grateful and host a feast in the party's honor. The villagers reclaim the crypt and turn it into a museum.

Wanted, Dead or Alive. The party can return Skath to the local Merchant's Guild for the reward. The guild gladly pays out the promised reward of 200 gp for the return of Skath alive (20 gp dead), and 20 gp for each gang member. Ω



RUMBLE IN THE FOOD PYRAMID

An adventure for level 4 characters

Written by **John Kelly**
Cartography by **John Kelly**
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Dean Spencer, and William McAusland**

Rumble in The Food Pyramid is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4.

The party must accompany an apprentice adventurer into a battle chef cookoff hosted by an eccentric mummy wizard. This adventure takes place a few hours away from the town of Woodpine but can easily be placed in any high magic setting.

Adventure Background

After spending centuries honing his skills, an eccentric mummy wizard named Torwix has finally perfected all culinary art forms (according to himself anyway). The problem? No one cares. Most of his peers laugh at him as they snap their fingers to prepare a nine-course banquet.

Determined to show them how great he is, Torwix went to Scry Entertainment with a proposal. He will use his talents as a culinary wizard to host a show that's part dungeon crawl, part cookoff. He received approval to create a pilot episode. Torwix has now extended his challenge across the land and awaits those who will face it (in other words, he blew the budget constructing a dungeon based on the food pyramid and needs volunteers).

Soon the competition will begin, and Torwix will determine who is fit to hold the title of Culinary Wizard!

Adventure Summary

The characters begin in Woodpine, where a former adventurer hires them to assist their apprentice in winning Torwix's competition. The competition consists of two phases. The contestants first delve into his "pantry" (a food-themed dungeon filled with creatures made from/guarding ingredients), where they can collect ingredients and receive points for navigating encounters. Upon returning, the contestants are given their "inspiration" for the dish (the host) and begin a skill challenge. Mid-challenge Torwix gets bored and

decides to introduce a secret ingredient (FEAR) by unleashing a pack of velociraptors on each team. He then judges each dish, announces a winner, and offers the winners a TV deal.

Adventure Hook

The following plot hook provides a possible way for the characters to get involved in the adventure.

A retired adventurer named Ber (N male half-orc **veteran**) approaches the party and communicates the following:

- An eccentric mummy wizard named Torwix will be hosting a “battle chef cookoff” broadcast by Scry Entertainment tomorrow.
- Ber forcibly entered his apprentice Gaduk into the competition to give him some experience. However, Ber has had second thoughts and is worried about Gaduk’s safety and asks the characters to assist him.
- He is willing to pay the party 20 gp each upon safely returning to town with Gaduk.

If the characters accept, Ber gives them directions to The Food Pyramid and answers any questions as best he can.

If the characters refuse, Gaduk dies in the cookoff, and Ber continues seeking help for seven days before giving up.

The Food Pyramid

The characters travel one hour through foothills to reach the pyramid from Woodpine. It is 20 feet tall, and the sandstone sharply contrasts with the green grass hills. There is a sandstone door facing the road. Above it is a flickering purple neon sign that depicts a mummy wearing a suit and reads “Adventurers wanted.” The inside is a square sandstone room with a magic circle and a rope hanging from the ceiling with a sign that says, “Pull for details.”

If the characters pull the rope, Torwix (CN male mummy **mage**) immediately contacts them with an ability similar to the *sending* spell. He communicates the following:

- This is a battle chef cookoff.
- Contestants will fight their way through the gauntlet that is his “Food Pyramid’s pantry,” searching for ingredients, and receive points for every encounter they navigate.
- Contestants will return to the studio after three hours. Torwix will then provide a mandatory source of inspiration for the dishes.
- Competitors can win by being the last team standing or creating the best dish.
- The winner receives the *robe of the culinary wizard* (see Appendix C) and 200 gp.

He then asks if the characters would like to join and answers any questions to the best of his ability. If the characters accept, he asks them to enter the magic circle and teleports them to **area 1**.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, locations within the pyramid have the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings throughout the pyramid are 15 feet tall. They are carved from sandstone and supported by sandstone ribs.

Floors and Walls. The pyramid has tiled sandstone floors. Sandstone columns support sandstone walls decorated with murals of cooking.

Doors. The pyramid has oak doors with iron hinges. Depictions of Torwix cooking with the ingredients found in the room behind decorate them. The doors have 15 AC, 20 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Otherwise, a character must succeed on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to break the door down. Secret doors can be spotted with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. All the doors are unlocked unless stated otherwise.

Illumination. While in the pyramid, treat each area as having no light unless specified otherwise.

Watchful Host. While in **area 5**, Torwix can do the following:

- Hear and see any creatures within the pyramid through a surveillance system that utilizes the *scrying* spell.
- Choose to broadcast his voice to any number of rooms in the pyramid.
- Cast a *minor illusion* spell that affects any location in the pyramid.

He uses these features to commentate events, heckle contestants, know when to activate traps, deliver over-dramatic commentary in a serious tone, play laugh tracks, and project visual effects.

Cameraman. Torwix ran out of automated cameras and has offered Gaduk a full-time position if he



does well. Gaduk does not assist the characters and goads them into doing stupid things that make for good scryvision.

Kobold Chefs. The dragon in **area 14** has an insatiable sweet tooth and has been sending her kobold servants to collect ingredients. However, they have had trouble navigating the pyramid safely, and several of their corpses litter the pyramid. Each corpse has a crudely scribbled grocery list written in shorthand.

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of The Food Pyramid.

1 - Studio

The characters find themselves in a dimly lit room, standing by the northernmost of three sandstone workstations that are arranged in a circular formation at the center of the room. Gaduk (LE male elf **commoner**) is with them. A **medusa** can be seen preparing the eastern workstation, and six **orcs** are waiting by the southern workstation while sharpening their weapons.

Torwix teleports to the center of the room one round after the characters arrive, and a spotlight shines on him. He wears a purple suit along with a top hat, and his bandages are vibrantly multi-colored. A winged crystal camera follows him. He casts *minor illusion* to have his name and the title of “Culinary Wizard” appear before him.

After exuberantly welcoming the viewers, Torwix then declares that it is time to meet the contestants. He and the camera move to each team in turn. Torwix casts *minor illusion* to display the speaker’s name and where they’re from in the bottom left corner of the camera’s view. The two other teams communicate the following:

- Neiktosis (treat her as a LN **medusa** who can cure petrified creatures) states she is from the Shatterback Mountains and has taken up cooking because she lives alone.

- The six **orcs** are from the Blood Plains and do not seem interested in the cooking aspect of the competition. They issue several thinly veiled threats towards the other competitors.

Torwix then interviews the party and answers any questions they may have to the best of his ability. He also gives Gaduk the responsibility of team cameraman (see “General Features”).

Once the interview ends, Torwix asks each team to go to their assigned door (The orcs go south, Neiktosis goes east, and the characters go north). Once everyone is in position, Torwix gives the signal to enter the pantry.

After three hours, the contestants are teleported to **area 1** if they are not there already, and the cookoff begins. See the “Cookoff” section of this adventure for more details.

If the characters return to this room, it is empty until the cookoff begins.

Secret Door. There is a secret door (see “General Features”) on the southern wall that leads to **area 5**.

2 - Powdered Goods

Powder cakes the entire room, and clouds of flour fill the air. Two feminine figures made of wind are tearing charred sacks open to ruin the products inside. The corpse of a kobold (see “General Features”) wearing a chef hat lies on the stairs. It is holding an unlit torch and has severe burns.

Stairs lead to **area 6**.

Hazard: Spicy Storm. If someone brings fire into the room, the airborne flour explodes. Every creature in the room must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, catching fire and taking 11 (2d10) fire damage on a failure, or not catching fire and taking half as much damage on a success. Burning creatures take 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of their turns until someone takes an action to douse the fire.

When a creature ends their turn in the cloud, it must succeed on a DC

13 Constitution saving throw or be blinded as spices get into its eyes. At the end of each of its turns, the creature can make another Constitution saving throw. On a success, the effect ends on the creature.

Encounter: Food Vandals. The two **bilwis** (see Appendix D) attack if the characters become hostile or attempt to gather the ingredients in this room.

3 - Grains

The room houses small gardens containing miniature rice patties, wheat fields, and other crops. Several sinister scarecrows lie on the ground, broken.

Characters with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 11 or higher determine that Neiktosis killed the scarecrows.

The stairs lead to **area 7**.

4 - Pasta

Birch racks with multi-colored glass jars containing every variety of pasta cover the walls. A massive, blood-covered lasagna noodle lies broken on the floor, wrapped around an orc.

Characters with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 11 or higher determine that the lasagna acted as a **rug of smothering** and was killed by the orcs.

The stairs lead to **area 12**.

5 - Control Room

Torwix sits in an oversized luxury chair while working a control panel, dimly lit by the light of fourteen crystal balls that each depict a different room in the pyramid. If the characters find this room, Torwix ushers the characters in and gives a behind-the-scenes tour, demonstrating the room’s features (see “General Features”). The characters get to watch him spring the trap in **area 10** on the orcs.

The host then offers to teleport the characters to an area of their choosing. If they take more than a minute, he gets impatient and sends them to **area 10**.

The ladder in this room goes to a hatch leading to **area 8**.

6 - Vegetables and Nuts

Vegetable gardens cover the floor, and five trees with bark that looks like peanuts appear to be growing a vast array of nuts. The room is filled with over a hundred thick, taut tripwires stretched across the room in random directions. Several incessantly clicking crossbows can be seen sticking out of secret compartments. The corpse of a kobold wearing a chef hat lies on the floor (see “General Features”). Hundreds of arrows riddle its body.

Characters with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 11 or higher determine that the kobold triggered the trap, and the crossbows kept firing until they ran out of arrows.

The stairs in this room lead to **area 2**.

7 - Fruits

This room contains several trees with pitch-black bark and pink leaves. A vast assortment of fruits hangs from each branch. A few stone trees with branches covered in blood can be seen in the center of the room. The corpse of a kobold wearing a chef hat (see “General Features”) lies on the floor. Large gashes cover its body.

Characters with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 11 or higher determine that **awakened trees** attacked Neiktosis, and she petrified them.

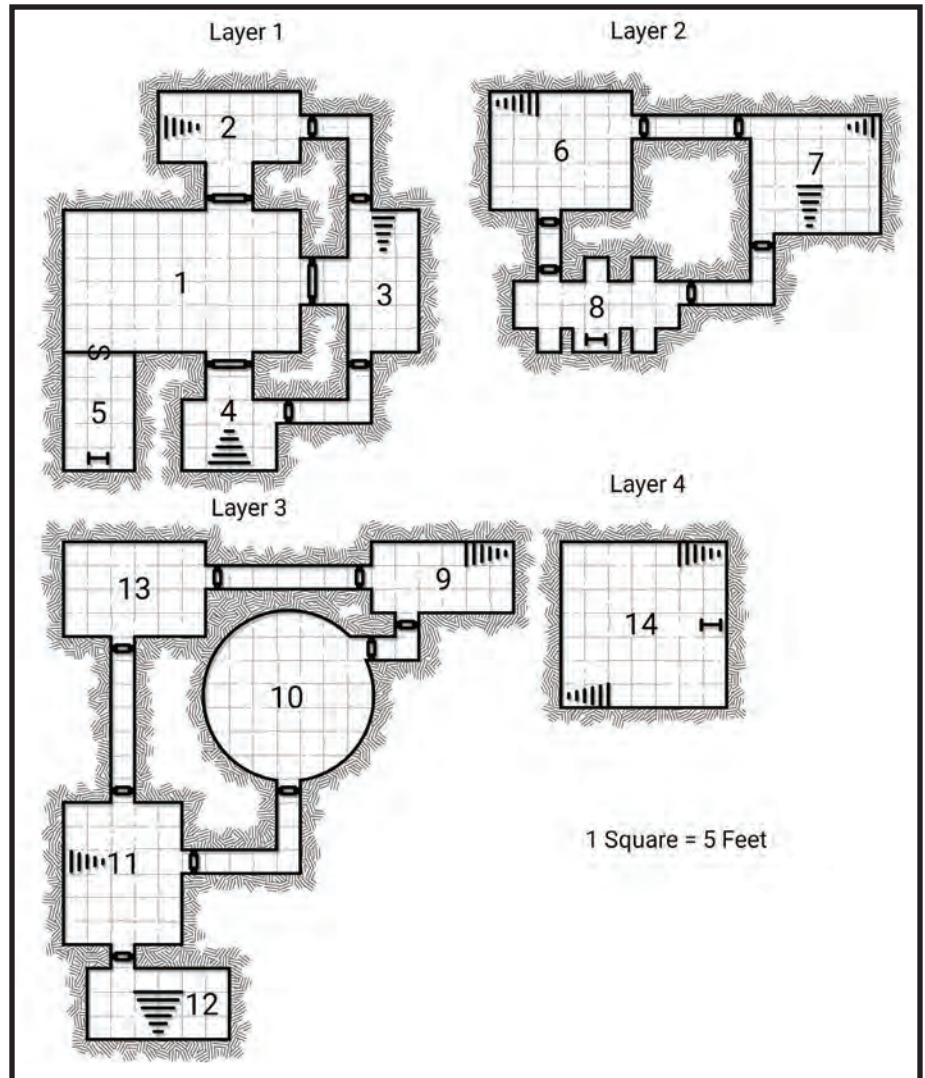
The southern stairs lead to **area 3**.
The northern stairs lead to **area 9**.

8 - Mush-room

The walls and ceilings have large ruffles filled with various mushrooms, including several porous purple fungi the size of a person. A kobold corpse (see “General Features”) that has rotted to the point where its bones are visible lies on the floor buried in spores. A bag of ripe apples lies next to it.

Characters with a passive Wisdom (Nature) of 16 or better understand that the large mushrooms are violet fungi that recently killed the kobold and ignored the apples.

The ladder leads to **area 14**.



Encounter: Fungal Fury. When a creature walks more than 10 feet into the room, four **violet fungi** attack.

Secret Door. There is a secret trap door (see “General Features”) beneath the ladder. Opening it reveals that the ladder continues down to **area 5**.

9 - Prime Cuts

This room contains a host of perfectly carved stone animals marked with chalk lines. Each statue has an expression ranging from panic to terror. Neiktosis stands by the north wall and appears to be consulting a list.

Characters with a passive Intelligence (investigation) of 11 or better understand that Neiktosis petrified the animals in this room.

The stairs in this room lead down to **area 7** and up to **area 14**.

Encounter: Lonely Cook. Neiktosis (see **area 1**) has finished her preparations for the cookoff and is double checking she has everything while waiting for the other contestants to show up. She turned the cuts of meat to stone to give the contestants an incentive not to attack her.

When the characters make themselves known, Neiktosis states that she will revitalize the meat if the characters prove that they have the culinary knowledge not to waste it, but this is not her actual motivation. She is just incredibly lonely from having no one to talk to for the last couple hundred years. However,

she is cold towards the party since adventurers tend to break into her house to kill her. The “test” is a way to talk about her hobby, and she has no intention of helping the characters. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Insight) of 14 or better understand this. The characters can change her disposition by being friendly with a successful DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) group check.

If they succeed, she revitalizes the meat and invites them to her lair for tea. See the Aftermath section of this adventure for more information.

If they fail, her attitude does not change as she assumes they are polite because she has something they want and does nothing to help them.

If the characters attack, Neiktosis becomes hostile. When reduced to half of her hit points, she offers to revitalize the cuts if they stop attacking her and flees if they refuse.

10 - Seafood

When the characters open a door that leads into this area, read or paraphrase the following.

Trap: Shark Bowl. Once two characters walk into the tubes, Torwix activates the runes. The doors shut, the glass tubing shatters, and water pressure seals the doors (see “General Features”). Each character inside the room must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) slashing damage or half as much damage on a success as glass rains down on them. The characters then begin to suffocate. (Be sure to review the rules for suffocating and underwater combat before running this trap.)

If a door breaks or opens, each creature in the room or the affected hallway must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pulled 30 feet in the direction that the water is flowing and be knocked prone. If this would cause the creature to hit a wall, they take 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage.

Any character proficient in the Arcana skill with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 14 or higher notices tiny runes that line each tunnel. These can be disabled with a successful *dispel magic* spell cast upon any of the runes.

Encounter: Shark Attack. Three reef sharks attack once the glass breaks.

If the characters teleported here from area 5, two orcs are also in the water, and two more are breaking down the southern door from outside. These are the orcs described in area 11.

Treasure: Sea’s Heart. The chest contains a *pearl of power* carved to resemble a dragon curled into a sphere.

11 - Eggs

Dispensers with egg-shaped holes of various diameters line the walls. A trail of blood from area 12 leads to a dead minotaur, and cockatrice corpses litter the floor.

Several orcs, including one made from stone, are in the room. The orcs are starting to think they will have to cook, as they have not found any of the contestants yet and are debating whether minotaur or cockatrice tastes better.

One of the orcs has hollowed out a different minotaur’s skull (its body is not present) and is wearing it as a hat, despite the blood and gore seeping from it.

If the characters already fought the orcs in area 10, there will be no orcs in this room.

The stairs lead to area 14.

Encounter: Winning is Winning. The four orcs attack the characters on sight and fight to the death.

12 - Milk Products

Dispensers filled with a variety of milk products line the walls. A minotaur corpse missing its head from the jaw up lies on the floor, and a large trail of blood leads to area 11. The remains of a kobold wearing a chef hat can be seen (see “General Features”). It has a massive hoof mark pressed into it.

13 - Ground Meat

The walls and ceiling in this room are stacks of fused animal corpses with faces twisted in agony. A large metal contraption covered in viscera can be seen moving a nozzle between corpses. It drills into the wall, collecting blood and flesh to produce ground meat and sausages. Creatures who enter this room feel something watching them.

Encounter: Lunch Special. When all of the characters enter the room, two **flesh cloaks** (treat them as **darkmantles**) form from animal faces and skin, while a pile of ground meat takes the form of a **gibbering moulder**. The creatures attack immediately.

14 - Sweets

Several kobolds in chef’s hats can be seen running around preparing food, fumbling through drawers, and reading a large book. A green dragon wyrmling sits atop a massive pile of sugar in the center of the room. It wags its tail excitedly.

The ladder descends to area 8, the northern stairs lead to area 9, and the southern stairs lead to area 11.

Encounter: Hungry Dragon. Gytin (LE female **green dragon wyrmling**) turns its attention to the party and orders them to assist the six **kobolds** in preparing cinnamon rolls as a form of tribute. If they agree, their new boss, Ker (female kobold), tells them that the kobolds have had trouble safely gathering ingredients from the dungeon. Ker requests that the characters fetch flour, eggs, milk, and cinnamon from the rest of the pyramid.

If the characters refuse, the dragon and kobolds attack.

Treasure: Complete Cookbook.

The book provides anyone attuned to it proficiency in chef’s tools and +1 on any cook’s utensils check.

Cookoff

Torwix greets the survivors over the intercom and congratulates them on surviving. He then announces that the inspiration for their dish will be coming down the conveyor belt on the west side of the room. Torwix comes rolling out while striking an alluring pose, proclaims that he is their inspiration and that they may start cooking.

Encounter: The Secret Ingredient. The characters can create a winning dish in a variety of ways.

Seven successes of any combination of the below checks are required to create a winning dish. If the party fails five checks before winning, they lose. No character may make the same check twice. Subtract 1 from each check's DC for every combat or social encounter the characters successfully navigated.

- A DC 17 Intelligence check with cook's utensils to remember a recipe.
- A DC 17 Charisma check with cook's utensils to coordinate the party's efforts.
- A DC 17 Dexterity or Strength check with cook's utensils to prepare ingredients, depending on what the character is doing.
- A DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check to guess what the host likes.
- If a character proposes another idea, allow them to make the appropriate DC 17 check, but give them disadvantage if it's particularly outlandish.
- If the characters devise a particularly creative way of incorporating the inspiration, award them a success.

As the characters complete their third check, the host thinks things are going too well. He announces a new secret ingredient (FEAR) and unleashes fourteen **velociraptors** (treat them as **compsognathus**, see Appendix D) on the characters and more still on the other contestants.

The skill challenge continues during the encounter. For every round that no one tends to the dish, the DC for each subsequent check increases by 1 as it burns.

Once the challenge is complete, the host declares that time is up and calls the contestants to the center of the room. He reviews the dishes starting with the orcs and ending with the characters.

The other contestants created the following dishes:

- If the orcs survived, they present the host with an amalgamation of ingredients that vaguely resembles food with a smiley face carved into the side. They lose.
- Neiktosis created a setup for assembling al pastor tacos and has carved the trompo in Torwix's likeness. Torwix is impressed but laments that preparing the dish will involve destroying his face.

If the characters succeed, the host starts his review with sharp criticism, but the facade quickly falls away as he starts gushing about the dish. He then grants them the title of Culinary Wizards. If they fail, the host does the opposite and pronounces Neiktosis the winner.

Treasure: Prizes. The winner receives 200 gp and a *robe of the culinary wizard* (see Appendix C). Torwix then wraps up the show, sends the contestants home, and hires Gaduk.



Concluding the Adventure

The following are a few possible consequences of the character's actions:

- If the characters return to Ber and explain what happened to Gaduk, he is upset that his apprentice has abandoned him but pays the characters 20 gp each as agreed.
- If the characters won the competition, the host contacts them via the *dream* spell two days later. He reveals that the cook-off was a pilot for a grander series and states that he would love to have them back on the show. He also communicates that the higher-ups at Scry Entertainment have given him substantial funding, so the scope of future events will be grander. If the characters accept, they are contacted again in a month with more details. If the characters refuse, see the below bullet point.
- If the characters lost, he extends the offer to Neiktosis instead. If the characters visit a city, they may see promotional posters or merchandise featuring her. The characters have a month to enter the competition of their own accord before the first season starts. A Scry Entertainment representative is present at any mages' guild and can accept the party's application in person, via letter, or magical means like the *sending* spell.
- If Neiktosis invited the characters to her lair, she can be found two days up the same mountain pass the characters used to reach the cave. Consider having the visit be interrupted by adventurers, having Neiktosis ask the party to locate a *hat of disguise* so she can get out more, or have a representative of Scry Entertainment be there to rope the characters into some other enterprise. Ω



WEREBEAR MANOR

An adventure for level 5 characters

Written by **Matthew Rowland**
Cartography by **Matthew Rowland**
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and Shutterstock**

Werebear Manor is a Fifth Edition adventure optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. Characters who complete it should earn half the experience needed to reach level 5.

This adventure takes place in Wolfsbane Manor, which is home to the evil werebear Sir Borm Krangbolt and full of magically animated taxidermic monsters. The manor sits five miles outside of a mid-sized village, which has been left unnamed to allow you to set this adventure in a setting or environment of your choosing.

Adventure Background

Borm Krangbolt killed his first monster—a direwolf that had been terrorizing his village—when he was just twelve years old. From that moment on, he was addicted to the hunt. Initially, Borm only slew monsters in desperate need of slaying, and his heroic deeds quickly earned him both rewards and titles. But as the years went on, and as Borm found himself having to travel ever-farther afield to find threatening quarries, his standards dropped. The thrill of the kill had always mattered more to Borm than protecting the vulnerable, and he began killing all manner of creatures, whether they posed a threat or not.

Two years ago, that bloodthirsty streak led Borm—by then officially Sir Krangbolt—to kill a unicorn in the woods near his home of Wolfsbane Manor. The gods of the forest were enraged by this heinous and cold-blooded act. As punishment, they afflicted Sir Krangbolt with the curse of lycanthropy, turning him into a bloodthirsty werebear. The gods also directed their divine wrath at Sir Krangbolt's home by breathing magical life into the dozens of taxidermic monsters filling Wolfsbane Manor.

Now, the cursed Krangbolt hibernates in his den. The deer, rabbits, squirrels, and other game which once frequented the local woods and

provided the villagers with food have been driven off by his evil presence. Inside Wolfsbane Manor, stuffed monsters decorating rooms and hallways sit inert but ever watchful, while exotic hunting trophies promise profit for anyone brave enough to break into the abode and liberate them...

Adventure Hooks

Consider using one of the following adventure hooks to send the characters off to Wolfsbane Manor:

Retrieve the Horn. A human **mage** named Maltinius Goza offers to pay the characters 500 gp to retrieve the horn of the slain unicorn from Wolfsbane Manor. *Unicorn horn* (see Appendix C) possesses magical healing properties, and Maltinius is eager to experiment on it. He also offers to pay the characters for any other interesting magical items they happen to retrieve from the manor.

500 gp for a *unicorn horn* is an insultingly low offer, and Maltinius knows it. A character can persuade Maltinius to increase the offer by succeeding on a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Kill Krangbolt. Pooling their resources, the villagers offer the characters 500 gp to kill Krangbolt and provide proof of his demise. They believe that the gods of the forest will allow the animals they relied on for

sustenance to return to the woods once Krangbolt is removed. The villagers are fairly certain that Krangbolt still resides within his manor, although none have seen him since he killed the unicorn two years ago.

Tall Tales at the Tavern. While inside the village tavern, the characters hear a thoroughly inebriated local halfling loudly talking about all of the exotic, valuable hunting trophies sitting inside Wolfsbane Manor, just begging to be carried off. He admits that tales of a monster fabled to lurk inside the manor have kept him from investigating the house, before loudly declaring that the creature is probably long dead and the only thing stopping him from robbing the place that very night is the exceptional tavern ale.

The drunkard enjoys talking to an audience and gladly recounts the story of Sir Krangbolt—up until his killing of the unicorn—to characters who succeed on a DC 9 Charisma check. No one in the village knows exactly what happened to Krangbolt, or whether a monster actually lives inside Wolfsbane Manor. If asked, the drunkard tells the characters that he thinks there used to be a monster and that it was none other than Krangbolt himself, twisted and cursed by the gods for spilling unicorn blood.

Wolfsbane Manor

Wolfsbane Manor was given to Sir Krangbolt by the lord of the village as a reward for vanquishing some fearsome monster or another. The property is located five miles east of the village, and a dirt road running through the woods connects the two locations. The woods are devoid of animals and unnaturally silent.

The two-story stone home boasts an open courtyard in its center. It hasn't received any upkeep since Krangbolt was cursed two years ago; its windows are filthy, its gutter channels overflowing, and its walls choked with ivy. The interior floors and surfaces are covered in a thin layer of dust and grime, and a pungent, bestial odor fills the manor.

General Features

Unless otherwise stated, locations within Wolfsbane Manor have the following features:

Ceilings and Floors. The floors and ceilings are hardwood, and ceilings are 10 feet high.

Walls. The manor's walls are made of cut stone. The exterior walls and those forming the interior courtyard are 2 feet thick; all other walls within the manor are 1 foot thick.

Doors. Doors are made of strong oak, unlocked, and fitted with iron handles and hinges. Each has AC 15, 28 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A creature can force open a stuck door by making a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Light. The manor's interior is gloomy, but the grime-coated glass windows in each room let in enough light to provide good visibility unless stated otherwise. Unlit candles can also be found in each room.

Terrifying Trophies. The curse which turned Krangbolt into a werewolf also gave magical life to some of the monster trophies cluttering the Manor. Except for Krangbolt, all monsters found inside the Manor are



taxidermied versions of their former selves. They use their regular stat blocks, with the following modifications:

- Taxidermied monsters are considered magically animated constructs.
- They do not require air, food, drink, or sleep.
- They are immune to poison and psychic damage, as well as to the blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, and poisoned conditions.
- Their only sense is 60 feet of blindsight (they are blind beyond this radius).
- While motionless, it is impossible to distinguish a taxidermied monster from an inanimate, slain-and-stuffed trophy.
- Taxidermied monsters become incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. Any taxidermied monster targeted by *dispel magic* must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute. The magic animating a taxidermied monster is dispelled when the monster drops to 0 hp, thereby turning it into a nonmagical, inanimate object.

Combat Flavor. Consider including the following details when describing the effects of damage absorbed by taxidermied monsters:

- Straw stuffing begins to fall out of the monster after it loses 15 hp.
- If the monster takes 15 points of damage from a single attack, one of its limbs completely falls off.



Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map on page 43.

1. Entrance Foyer

The front door's unoiled hinges groan when the door is opened. The entrance foyer is 35 feet wide by 25 feet long and has a 20-foot ceiling. A grand staircase is the main feature of the room, with two separate curving flights of stairs meeting to form a landing 10 feet above the ground floor before merging into a single flight which continues up to the second floor. Two doors—one set into the east wall and the other into the west wall—lead off into other areas of the manor. A door in the north wall underneath the grand staircase landing opens into the interior courtyard.

2. Storage

The musty air in this trophy storage room smells of old animal pelts. It is filled with over a dozen taxidermied monsters stuffed by Krangbolt himself. These include an axe beak, two blink dogs, three boars, a direwolf, a giant badger, a hippogriff, a worg, and two giant vultures. The heads of a panther, a giant goat, and a crocodile are mounted on the walls.

Krangbolt was a self-taught and exceptionally average taxidermist; many of the monstrous trophies appear lumpy, misshapen, and bloated due to overstuffing.

3. Servant Quarters

This room served as the living quarters for Krangbolt's two servants. The north and south walls each have a bed set against them, and chests full of personal effects sit at the beds' feet. Two dressers full of moth-eaten clothing stand against the west wall.

Treasure. The chest against the north wall contains an ivory comb worth 5 gp; the chest against the south wall holds a romance novel worth 20 gp about a torrid love triangle consisting of a vampire, a werewolf, and an ogre.

4. Kitchen

An iron stove sits in the northwest corner of the kitchen, its stovepipe running into the wall behind it. A 10-foot-long kitchen island runs north to south down the center of the room. Cutlery, plates, and flagons sit on wooden shelves; several cleavers and wicked-looking knives have their blades buried into a massive, blood-stained chopping block resting on the island. Several bags of mice-spoiled flour lie on the floor against the south wall.

Two doors are built into the east wall; the southern one leads out into the inner courtyard (**area 5**), while the more northern one opens into the dining hall (**area 6**).

Hazard: Giant Elk Head. The head of a giant elk, with pots and pans hanging from the tines of its massive antlers, is mounted on the north wall. The head begins to bellow and thrash about wildly as soon as a character comes within 5 feet of it, causing the racked cookware to noisily clang together. The cacophony is loud enough to alert Krangbolt in **area 14** to the characters' presence.

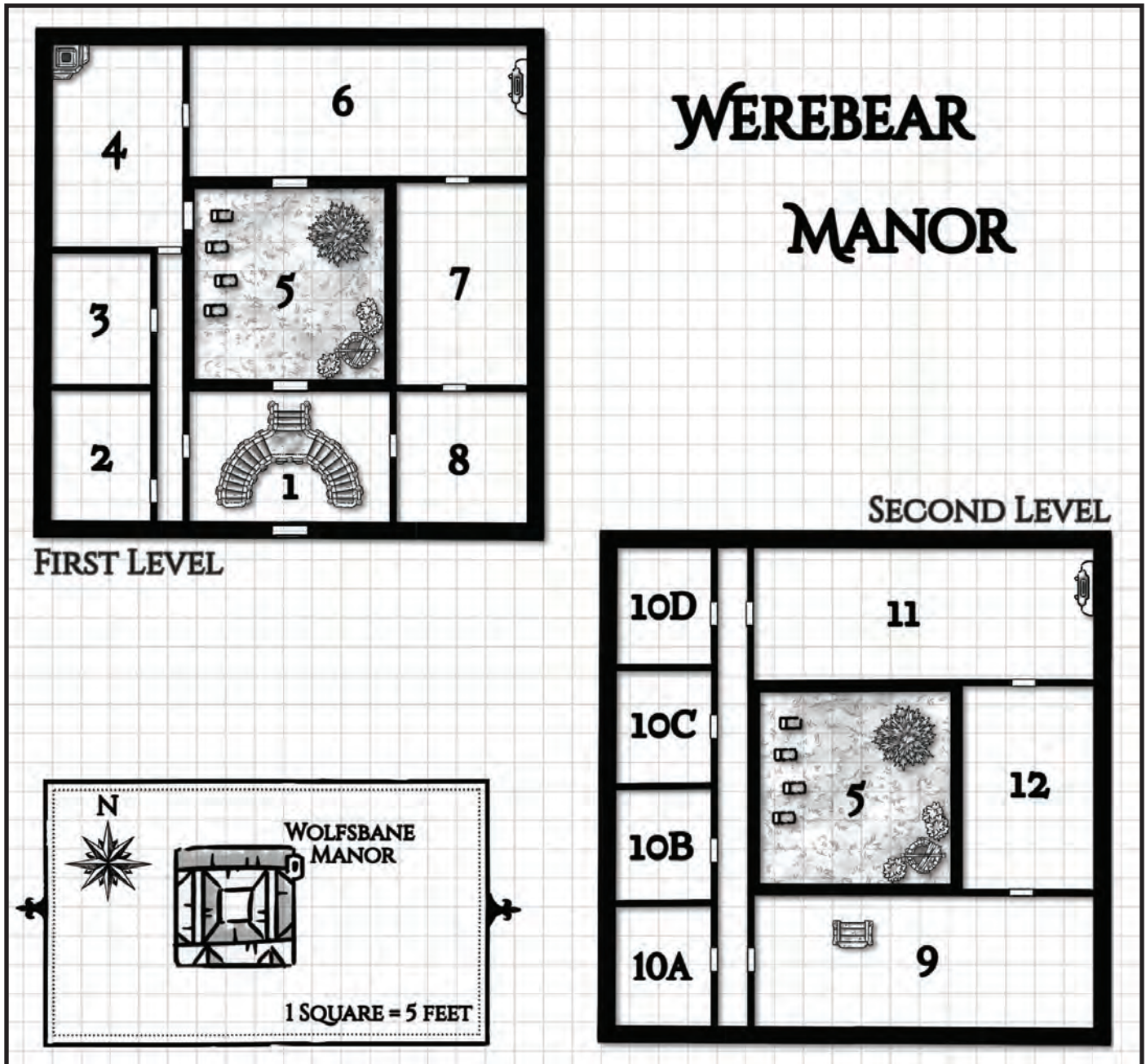
The head becomes still and silent once the characters leave the kitchen, or if it takes 10 points of damage.

5. Courtyard

An open-air courtyard is located in the center of the Manor. The squared space is 35 feet on a side, and its once-manicured lawn is extremely overgrown. Doors in the south, west, and north walls lead to the entrance foyer (**area 1**), the kitchen (**area 4**), and the dining hall (**area 6**), respectively.

An oak tree grows in the northeast corner. A stone well flanked by bushes is located in the southeast corner. Four grave mounds dug side by side are located on the west side of the courtyard.

A character who makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check can tell that the bushes near the well are gooseberry bushes stripped clean of



their fruit (the berries are a favorite of Krangbolt's).

At the bottom of the well beneath 3 feet of water lies a silvered longsword. The sword was Krangbolt's favorite weapon for close-quarters killing. Once the lycanthropic curse took hold, the mere sight of the silvered blade caused the monster hunter discomfort, and so he cast it down the well to be rid of it. A character who makes a successful DC 18 Intelligence

(Investigation) check manages to spy something reflective at the bottom of the well.

The graves contain the remains of Krangbolt's prized hunting dogs. The hounds met their end when they attacked their master after he had transformed into a werewolf. Distraught, Krangbolt buried them in the courtyard. The dogs were laid to rest still wearing their gold-studded collars, each worth 10 gp.

6. Dining Hall

The grand dining hall is 60 feet wide and 25 feet long, with a 20-foot ceiling. Six evenly spaced floor-to-ceiling windows line the north wall. A 30-foot-long hardwood dining table and benches stretch down the middle of the room. An ornate, high-backed wooden chair with hunting scenes carved into it stands at the eastern head of the table. Above the center of the table hangs a chandelier crafted

from the bones, horns, and antlers of a dozen dead monsters. A grand stone-and-mortar fireplace is built into the east wall. A taxidermied giant owl, its wings outstretched as if in mid-flight, is mounted above the fireplace. A door in the west wall leads to the kitchen (**area 4**). Two doors, one leading to the inner courtyard (**area 5**), the other to the trophy room (**area 7**), are built into the south wall.

Claw marks are visible across the hardwood floor and the drapes along the north wall are torn and tattered—both signs of the werebear’s presence. Seven taxidermied gnolls stand along the north wall, one on each side of each window. They are staged to appear in mid-run, their faces twisted in terror, the heads of some looking back in the direction of the high back chair, which used to be Krangbolt’s seat.

Encounter: Taxidermied Gnolls.

The seven taxidermied **gnolls** become reanimated and attack the characters as soon as they move 5 feet into the room. They fight until they or the characters are destroyed.

Encounter: Taxidermied Giant Owl. The taxidermied **giant owl** becomes reanimated once the gnolls are destroyed. It speaks Giant Owl, Common, Elvish, and Sylvan. It is initially neither friendly nor hostile to the characters. Food—especially rabbits—and flattery are the quickest way to secure the owl’s cooperation. Depending on how the characters treat it, the owl may either attack them, reveal that Krangbolt lurks somewhere on the second floor, or remain indifferent to the party.

7. Trophy Room

A stuffed ettin, its arms raised high in preparation for dual downward strikes, stands against the west wall. Lined up against the east wall and facing the ettin are, from north to south, a taxidermied rhinoceros, owl-bear, and griffon. Doors in its north and south walls lead to the dining hall (**area 6**) and the coat room (**area 8**), respectively.

Encounter: Taxidermied Owl-bear. The taxidermied **owlbear** attacks anything that passes in front of it or attacks it. It fights until destroyed.

8. Coat Room

A single coat rack stands beside the door in the west wall leading to the entrance foyer (**area 1**). The walls are lined with weapon racks holding one of each type of martial weapon in the *PHB*. A door in the north wall leads to the trophy room (**area 7**).

A stuffed giant space hamster sits crouched on all fours beside the west door. Krangbolt used the hamster as a novelty weapon holder; several swords are stuck into its back, giving it the appearance of a macabre pin cushion.

9. Second-Level Landing

A taxidermied minotaur and taxidermied bugbear are staged to appear locked in conflict at the top of the stairs leading up from the entrance foyer (**area 1**). A wooden sideboard is set in the center of the east wall; the head of a basilisk with its eyelids shut is mounted into the wall above it. A door in the west wall leads into a hallway; another in the north wall opens into Krangbolt’s bedroom.

Encounter: Taxidermied Minotaur and Bugbear. The taxidermied **minotaur** and **bugbear** attack the characters as soon as they reach the top of the stairs. They fight until they or the characters are destroyed.

Treasure: Pickled Basilisk’s Eye. A *pickled basilisk’s eye* (see Appendix C) floats in a sealed jar on top of the sideboard. A large black cloth with a simple rendition of a basilisk stitched into it in white thread is draped over the jar to prevent unsuspecting onlookers from staring at the eye. Characters who make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check are able to properly identify the wall-mounted monster head and the creature on the cloth as a basilisk.

10A. First Guestroom

All four guestrooms (**areas 10A-10C**) contain a medium-sized bed and footlocker, a nightstand, a sitting chair, a wardrobe, and a simple vanity with a wash basin on top.

A stuffed blood hawk with a taxidermied flying snake clutched in its talons is mounted on the wall above the bed.

10B. Second Guestroom

Two taxidermic saber-toothed tigers—one in the northwest corner of the room, the other in the southwest corner—sit flanking the bed.

Encounter: Taxidermied Saber-Toothed Tigers. The two taxidermied **saber-toothed tigers** let out low growls before attacking any character who opens the door to the room. They fight until they or the characters are destroyed.

Treasure. Characters who make a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check discover a leather pouch containing 15 sp and 5 gp tucked underneath the mattress and long-forgotten by one of Krangbolt’s former guests.

10C. Third Guestroom

A manticoreskin rug covers the center of the floor. This room contains nothing of value.

10D. Fourth Guestroom

Krangbolt was entertaining one guest when the curse took hold, and signs of the person’s unfortunate demise are strewn throughout this room. The bedding is torn and stained with dried blood, and the furniture is upended and damaged. A manticoreskin rug lies jumbled in the center of the floor.

Encounter: Manticore-Skin Rug. The manticoreskin is a **rug of smothering**. It attacks any creature that gets within 5 feet of it and fights until destroyed.

11. Krangbolt's Den

The unpleasant odor permeating the manor is strongest in this space. The den was and remains Krangbolt's favorite room. The space is 60 feet wide and 25 feet long, with a 20-foot ceiling. Six evenly spaced floor-to-ceiling windows line the north wall. Their heavy drapes are drawn shut, leaving the room in darkness. Seven taxidermied bears—four black, two brown, and one polar—stand along the north wall, with one positioned on either side of each window. Curio cabinets containing monster skulls of varying shapes and sizes line the south wall. A 40-foot-long tapestry depicting Krangbolt dispatching dragons, giants, demons, monstrosities, and all manner of vicious beasts hangs above the cabinets on an iron bar bolted to the south wall.

A grand stone and mortar fireplace is built into the east wall. Mounted on the chimney face is the stuffed head of the unicorn slain by Krangbolt two years ago. Two overstuffed high back chairs and two side tables sit in front of the fireplace. A large, ornately crafted oak sideboard is located just behind the chairs, between them and the west wall. A stuffed black dragon wyrmling posed on all fours stands on top of the sideboard. A door in the south wall leads to Krangbolt's bedroom (**area 12**); another in the west wall opens onto a hallway.

Encounter: Borm Krangbolt. The werewolf Borm Krangbolt lurks within the den. If the characters activated the mounted elk head in the kitchen or made a similar ruckus while navigating the manor, Krangbolt is awake and hiding behind the sideboard when they arrive. If the characters made their way to the den in relative silence, Krangbolt is instead sleeping soundly on the floor in front of the fireplace when they enter the room.

The curse of the forest gods prevents Krangbolt from polymorphing into his human form while alive. Two years in bear and bear-human hybrid form

have erased nearly all of Krangbolt's humanity, and he attacks the characters with a primal, bestial ferocity. However, part of him yearns to be free of the curse, and for that reason he fights until he or the characters are killed.

Treasure: Unicorn Horn & Key.

The *unicorn horn* (see Appendix C) is still attached to the stuffed head mounted on the chimney. A key on a leather cord around Krangbolt's neck unlocks the lockbox located in Krangbolt's bedroom (**area 12**).

12. Krangbolt's Bedroom

This room contains a large four-poster bed with torn curtains and canopy, two nightstands, a wardrobe, a sitting chair, a vanity and washbasin, and an iron lockbox. A 5-foot-tall portrait of Krangbolt with one foot on top of a vanquished wyvern hangs on the wall above the bed. Studded leather armor hangs on a stand in the corner of the room. A door in the south wall leads to the second-level landing (**area 9**); another in the north wall leads to the den (**area 11**).

Treasure. The lockbox has AC 19, 25 hp, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and contains 150 gp and five tiger eye gemstones worth 10 gp each. A well-made lock is built into its face; a character proficient with thieves' tools can use them to pick the lock by making a successful DC 22 Dexterity check. Its key hangs on a leather cord around Krangbolt's neck.

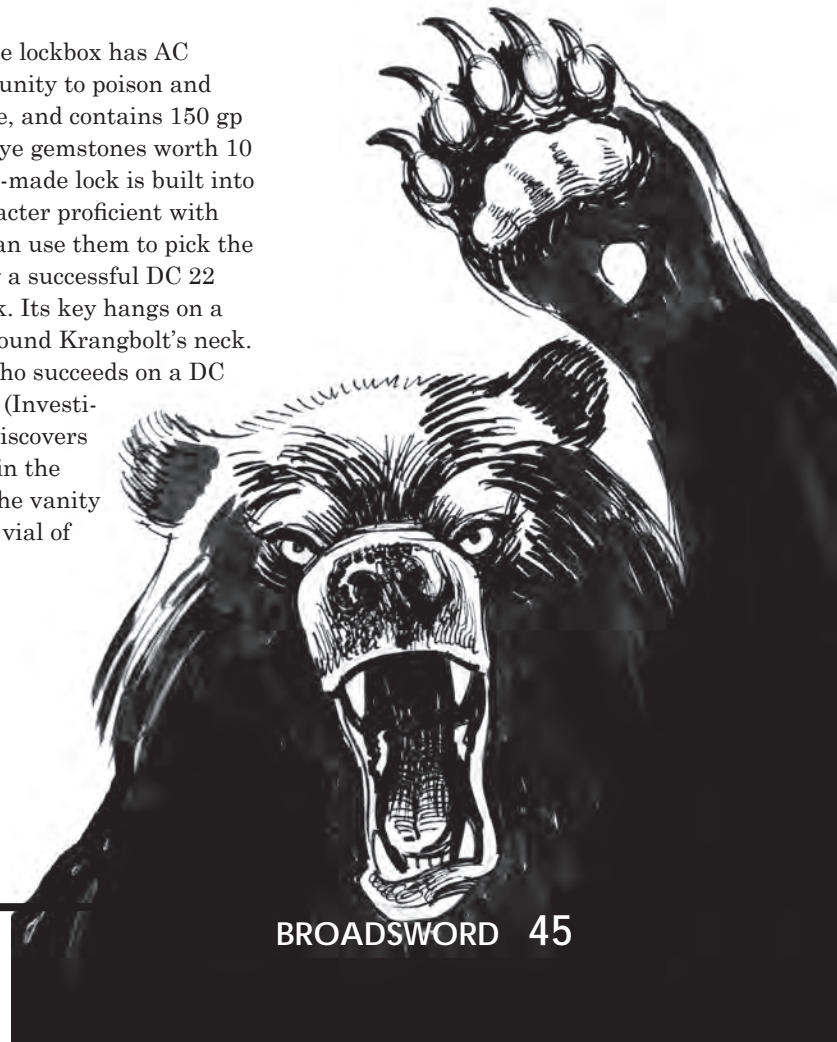
A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a false bottom in the top drawer of the vanity containing one vial of wyvern poison.

Concluding the Adventure

Retrieve the Horn. As promised, Maltinius pays the characters 500 gp in exchange for the *unicorn horn*. Maltinius will also pay the characters 250 gp for the *pickled basilisk's eye* and 500 gp for the vial of wyvern poison.

Maltinius pursues the characters if they do not return with the horn. Characters who want to lie to the mage and keep the *unicorn horn* for themselves must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma (Deception) check. On a failed check, Maltinius knows the characters are lying, and potentially becomes an enemy to be overcome by the characters in another adventure.

Kill Krangbolt. The villagers pay the characters 500 gp if they provide proof that Krangbolt is dead. Whether the animals return to the woods surrounding the village after the werewolf is slain is up to you; perhaps another, more sinister presence is driving the woodland creatures away. Ω





The Vinemaster's Realm is a Fifth Edition adventure for a party of three to five 5th- to 7th-level characters, optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 6. Characters who finish this adventure should earn half the experience needed to reach 6th or 7th level, or one-third of the experience needed to reach 8th level.

The adventure is setting agnostic and can be placed in any world with a dark forest populated by fey.

Adventure Background

The Vinemaster is a powerful fey who spends his time growing dangerous magical plants and crafting poisons in a secluded dungeon deep in the forest. He trades these plants and poisons with those who know the way to his lair, prioritizing supplies and new exotic plants over coins and gems as he rarely leaves his chambers. As his skills have increased over the years, so too have the calls to do something about him from the organizations and families impacted by the steady rise in poisoning assassinations. The Vinemaster's prized possession is a prismatic lily. Exceptionally rare and difficult to grow, the prismatic lily is renowned for its healing properties. It is the one plant that the Vinemaster will never trade.

Adventure Hooks

A Lost Sprite. While wandering through the forest, the party finds a sprite named Magnolia sobbing at the loss of her master. She explains that she was the bonded familiar of a poison mistress named Alea who was killed by the Vinemaster for a perceived slight. She is desperate for revenge and happy to inform the party that the Vinemaster grows a number of rare and valuable plants that will surely be worth their time.

THE VINEMASTER'S REALM

An adventure for level 6 characters

Written by **Ellie Hogan**
Cartography by **Ellie Hogan**
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and Stinky Goblin**

A Princess in Need. Princess Angelica's coronation is in three days, but she has been stricken with a terrible magical illness that the best clerics in the city are unable to cure. Desperate for a cure, the princess pleads with the party to acquire the prismatic lily from the evil Vinemaster. She is willing to pay 500 gp up front and another 1,500 gp once the party returns with the plant.

A Mercenary Scorned. The Malicus Mercenaries, a group of assassins and other disreputable folks, have historically been loyal customers of the Vinemaster. However, when a recent deal with one member went sour, the Vinemaster banned all members of the group from trading with him, a slight which cannot be tolerated! The mercenaries are offering a bounty of 1,000 gp to take out the Vinemaster, plus reimbursement for any plants they're able to steal from him (easily over 3,000 gp).

Regardless of which hook is used, the players will learn the following information before reaching the Vinemaster's Lair:

- Vine sentries, which are telepathically linked to the Vinemaster, protect the Vinemaster's lair. They alert the Vinemaster when they take damage or when a non-plant creature comes within 15 feet. Their benefactor will give the characters three psychic disruption orbs that temporarily break the connection between the sentry and Vinemaster. These orbs can be thrown a number of feet up to a creature's Strength score and prevent the Vinemaster from receiving any alerts for 12 seconds.
- The Vinemaster and his minions are empowered by the irrigation system in the lair. Fighting the Vinemaster without somehow destroying it first will be very difficult.

Navigating the Forest

Getting to the Vinemaster's lair is no easy feat. There is no path to follow, and the dense forest is filled with dangers. Each morning, have the group pick one character to roll a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. With a successful check, the party moves closer to the Vinemaster's lair and with a failed check, they waste their

day. After 3 successful checks, which do not have to be consecutive, the party reaches the Vinemaster's Lair.

Each day the party is in the forest, roll 1d20 on the Random Encounter Time table to determine whether a random encounter occurs.

To determine what the party encounters, roll 1d8 on the Forest Random Encounters table.

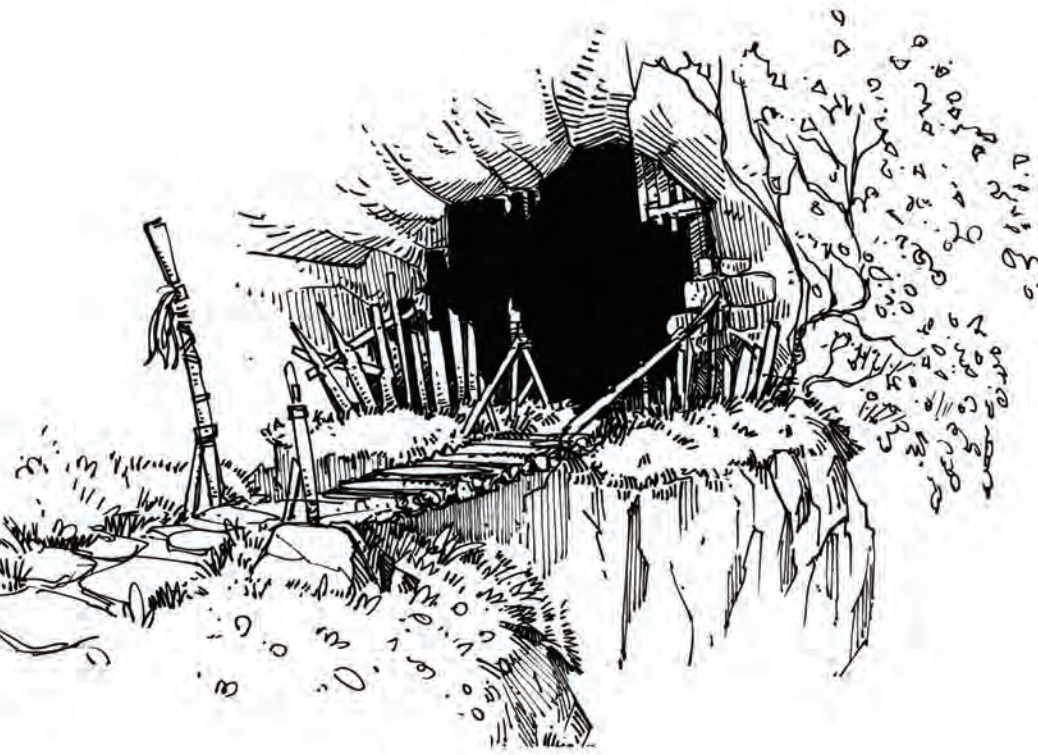
Random Encounter Time.

1d20	Result
1-11	No encounter
12-13	One encounter in the morning (6 am to 12 pm)
14-15	One encounter in the afternoon (12 pm to 6 pm)
16-17	One encounter in the evening (6 pm to 12 am)
18-19	One encounter overnight (12 am to 6 am)
20	Two encounters. Roll twice more on the table to determine the times

Forest Random Encounters.

1d8	Result
1	A group of three green hags hoping to lure adventurers to their deaths
2	A bandit camp consisting of 3d6 bandits led by 2 bandit captains
3	Two shambling mounds lurking in ambush of prey
4	Two trolls looking for a fight
5	Three owlbears looking for food
6	A hunting party of 1d4+2 centaurs
7	A druid with 1d4 awakened trees protecting its home
8	A young green dragon looking for treasure to add to its hoard





The Vinemaster's Lair

An opening in the side of a large hill leads down into the entrance of the Vinemaster's Lair.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in the Vinemaster's Lair have the following features.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The floors have a 1-foot layer of densely packed dirt over stone. The walls are 10 feet tall and made of stone. The ceiling is irregularly shaped and made of stone with an average height of 10 feet.

Doors. The wooden doors in the Vinemaster's Lair have an AC of 15, 20 hp and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Unless otherwise noted, they are latched but unlocked. Locked doors can be burst open with a successful DC 17 Strength check, or a character with proficiency can pick a lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Lighting. Unless otherwise stated in a room description, there is no illu-

mination in the Vinemaster's Lair.

Vine Sentries. Vine sentries grow at strategic locations in the lair, marked on the map with an "S". These sentries are telepathically connected to the Vinemaster and alert him if any non-plant creature comes within 15 feet of the sensory bulb or if the vine sentry takes any damage. These vines have an AC of 12 and 10 hp. Hitting a vine sentry with a psychic disruption orb will block its connection to the Vinemaster for 12 seconds. Vine sentries are connected to the irrigation system in **area 8** and will wither and die if the irrigation system is broken.

Vine Guards. If a vine sentry is triggered, or the players are otherwise detected before reaching **area 10**, the Vinemaster sends 1d4+2 **vine guards** to deal with the intruders. Vine guards are plants that use the stat block of a **giant constrictor snake** and are able to move through spaces as small as 5 feet without squeezing thanks to their long, narrow bodies.

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the provided map on page 50.

1 - Entrance Sentries

The room is dimly lit by phosphorescent moss growing on the ceiling. A faded sign reads "Approach Sentry for Service. Don't Waste My Time" in both Common and Sylvan. At the far side of the room, a bloated vine stands about 2 feet tall, a gelatinous red sphere carefully cradled at its tip—the vine sentry in question.

Any visitors are expected to write their terms of trade. When alerted to visitors, the Vinemaster sends his *figurine of wondrous power* (silver raven) to meet them. The raven will inform them that all visitors are expected to write their terms of trade on a piece of parchment. It collects the note and soon returns with a reply. Once an agreement has been reached, the visitors are permitted to enter **area 2**.

Alerting the Vinemaster to their presence here will not raise his suspicion. Only proceeding past **area 2** will raise his ire.

2 - Crossroads

The phosphorescent moss continues into this room. A small table with a single rickety chair tucked neatly under it stands at the center of the room.

This room is typically as far as outsiders can go into the Vinemaster's Lair. Here, they must wait for the Vinemaster to be ready to trade. He sends one of his **deathcap myconid** (see Appendix D) farmers to trade with all but the most trusted of clients, preferring to stay safe in his inner sanctum.

A character with passive Perception greater than 14 or who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a path worn into the floor going directly from **area 3** to **area 4**. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check can identify the faint, round footprints as the footprints of myconids, a race of sentient fungi.

3 - Farmer's Quarters

A large bed of loose earth takes up the center of the room. Two vaguely humanoid-shaped mushrooms with pale gray flesh and red caps with white spots lie in divots in the earth. A third divot sits empty between them.

Encounter: Let Sleeping Mushrooms Lie. Two **deathcap myconids** (see Appendix D) are sleeping in this room. They will not attack unless provoked and attempt to reach the nearest vine sentry to alert the Vinemaster if possible. If they take any damage, the deathcap myconid in **area 9** will sense their distress spores and alert the Vinemaster. The Vinemaster will send $1d4+2$ **vine guards** (see "General Features") to deal with the threat which will arrive in 3 rounds.

4 - Farm

Deep purple mushrooms grow in a planter at the center of the room. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies these as Darkspore Mushrooms, a valuable species of fungus that is highly photosensitive. They must be grown and stored in complete darkness to retain their potency. Each mushroom weighs 5 pounds and is worth 150 gp.

Trap: Darkness Spores. If any light touches a Darkspore Mushroom, it immediately withers and releases a toxic, darkness-producing compound: Toxic spores are expelled in a 15-foot-radius sphere around the mushroom, spreading around corners and creating magical darkness. Any creature that enters the spores' area of effect must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. The creature is blinded while poisoned this way. The darkness lasts for 10 minutes unless dispersed by wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour), such as the wind created by the *gust of wind* spell. Darkvision and natural light can't penetrate this darkness

and any light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower is suppressed while in the sphere.

5 - Shelf Fungus Farm

Large red shelf fungus grows from the walls and fills the room with sinister red light. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies these as Red Reaper, a toxic species of fungus that can be processed into a paste prized for its enhancing effects on divination magic. In total, it weighs 20 pounds and is worth 400 gp.

Trap: Sickening Light. Whenever a creature enters the light or starts its turn within it, it must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking $26 (4d12)$ poison damage and becoming poisoned for 1 hour on a failed saving throw. On a successful saving throw, a creature takes half damage and isn't poisoned.

6 - The Giving Tree

A single tree grows at the center of the room, its spindly branches weighed down by a handful of deep purple fruit. An orb shedding bright light is attached to the ceiling in a harness of vines. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies the tree as a Tree of Life and Death. Its four ripe fruits are worth 175 gp each. Within seven days of being picked, a creature can use its action to eat a fruit and regain $2d4+2$ hp. The pits are poisonous and can be crafted into a vial of basic poison over one workday with a successful DC 10 Intelligence check using a poisoner's kit by a character with proficiency.

Treasure: Let There Be Light. The vines holding the orb have an AC of 12 and 10 hp. The orb is a *gardener's orb* (see Appendix C).



7 - Fermentation Room

A huge vat bubbling with decaying plant matter takes up most of the room. Decaying vines and dead mushrooms are heaped against the walls. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to peer into the murky nutrient solution notices a pipe wide enough for a Medium-sized creature to squeeze through leading through the far wall.

Encounter: Chuul Out. Two **chuul** are tasked with keeping the fermenting vat safe. They lurk in the muck at the bottom of the tank and attack any creature that enters. If the players have magical items or have cast magic within **areas 4 to 12** of the Vinemaster's Lair, the chuul are aware of their presence and take the hide action before the party enters the room to surprise the intruders. Otherwise, a character notices them if they succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. The chuul aren't very intelligent and will fight to the death.

A large pipe at the side of the vat connects this room to **area 8** and is the only way to reach the irrigation system without getting through 5 feet of solid stone.

8 - Irrigation Room

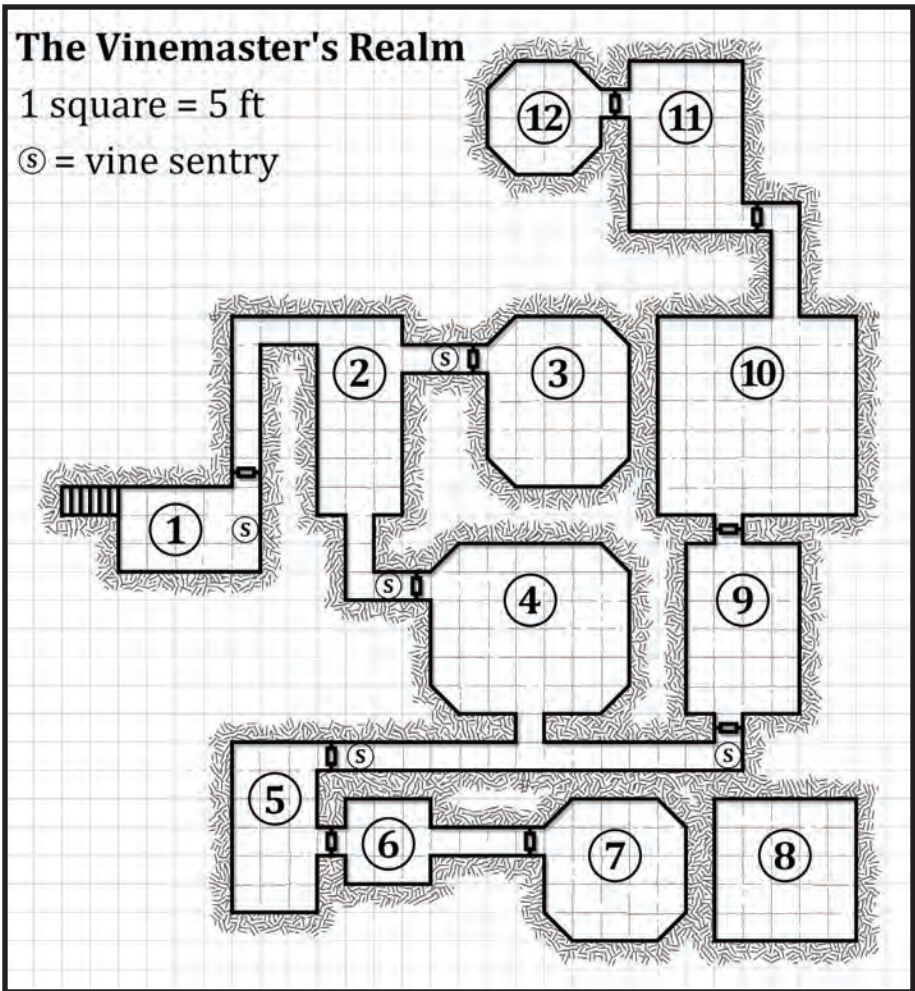
The pipe from **area 7** leads into a smaller vat. The rest of the room is dominated by a pulsating mass of vines, beating loudly and rhythmically like a giant heart. Vines draping into the pool pull the nutrient solution from the vat and pump it through cracks in the floor to the rest of the dungeon. Sharp purple spikes grow from the exterior vines.

Trap: Thorny Heart. This construct has limited sentience and requires a deft hand to dismantle without tripping its defensive mechanisms. To carefully dismantle it, a character must first succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check to understand its construction, then a DC 14 Dexterity check and DC 14 Strength check to carefully navi-

The Vinemaster's Realm

1 square = 5 ft

Ⓢ = vine sentry



gate the thorny vines and crush the key components within. A separate character can make each check. On a failed check, a thorny vine lashes out from the construct to attack the character (+8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage). If the saves are failed 3 times cumulatively, the Vinemaster is notified and sends 1d4+2 **vine guards** (see "General Features") to intercept the players in **area 7**.

9 - Farm with Farmer

Phosphorescent moss growing on the ceiling of this room provides dim light. A deathcap myconid farmer carefully tends to three leafy red plants in a large planter. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies the plant as *Malicus*, a plant that can be dried

and powdered to create the malice poison. Each plant is worth 100 gp or can be used to craft the malice poison following the crafting downtime rules. A poison crafted this way does not require the character to purchase raw materials.

Encounter: I'm Just Trying to Do My Job. The **deathcap myconid** (see Appendix D) panics when it sees the intruders and attempts to alert the Vinemaster by pounding on the door to **area 10**. If it takes damage and the deathcap myconids in **area 3** are still alive, they will come to its aid.

The door to **area 10** is locked.

10 - The Vinemaster

The door at the south of this room is locked.

This large room has four nutrient

fountains spread throughout, which the Vinemaster can use to heal himself and his vines. Any time the Vinemaster or a plant creature begins its turn in contact with a nutrient fountain, it regains 10 hp. The nutrient pools refill on initiative count 20, unless the players have disabled the irrigation system.

Encounter: Animate Everything. If the **Vinemaster** (see Appendix D) knows the characters are coming, he will have already used his Animate Vines action before the players enter the room. He will fight to the death to protect his prismatic lily and is not interested in coming to any agreements involving the party's access to his plant.

11 - Vinemaster's Quarters

This room has spartan living essentials and a well-stocked poisoner's workshop.

Treasure: Poisonous Goods.

The Vinemaster's equipment can be packed up as a poisoner's kit. A cabinet contains two completed poisons, essence of ether and malice, and one *essence of plant life* (see Appendix C). A *figurine of wondrous power* (*silver raven*) sits on the desk.

12 - Magical Plant

Phosphorescent moss growing on the ceiling of this room provides dim light. At the center of the room, a glowing lilypad with a large flower floats in a basin of nutrient solution. The flower slowly shifts colors, transitioning from one vivid hue to another.

Treasure: A Plant Most Magical.

The prismatic lily is very rare and valuable, fetching 2,000 gp if sold. It is a key component in many spells affecting a creature's magic and can even be used to bestow magic to animate objects.



Concluding the Adventure

Once the Vinemaster is destroyed, any remaining deathcap myconids attempt to surrender or flee. The nutrient solution loses its effectiveness within a week and all plants left within the Vinemaster's lair die within a week from neglect.

As specialty items, the plants harvested from the Vinemaster's lair may require downtime to find a seller willing and able to pay, at the GM's discretion.

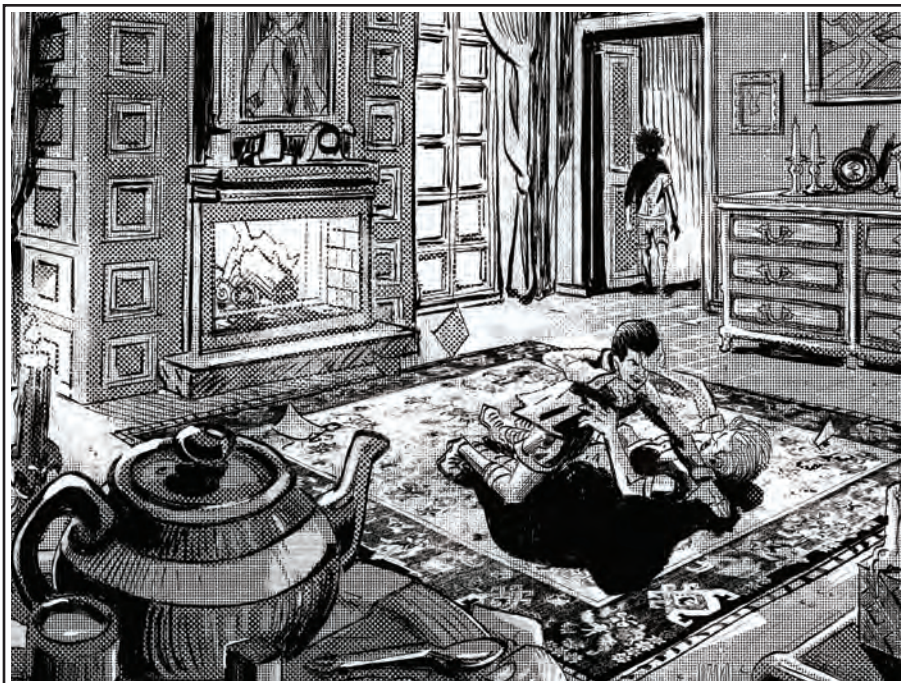
Adventure Hook Resolutions

There were three adventure hooks presented in the introduction of this adventure. Here are the resolutions for each hook:

A Lost Sprite. If the Vinemaster is killed, Magnolia feels vindicated. At the GM's discretion, she may offer to form a new familiar contract between herself and a member of the party with whom she felt comfortable or got along well with.

A Princess in Need. If the party returns to princess Angelica with the prismatic lily before the coronation, she is ecstatic and gives them their 1,500 gp as promised. She may also offer them a small plot of land or title, at the GM's discretion. If the princess did not get the prismatic lily before her coronation day, she becomes bedridden and the coronation is postponed, causing the city to fall into disarray, although she will honor her deal and give the party the promised 1,500 gp.

A Mercenary Scorned. If the Vinemaster is killed, the Malicus Mercenaries happily pay the 1,000 gp bounty and buy any plants the party is willing to sell without requiring downtime or risking complications. Ω



ORPHANAGE OF THE LOST

An adventure for level 7 characters

Written by **Torchlight Press**
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Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

Orphanage of the Lost is a Fifth Edition adventure for 3 to 7 characters of 6th to 8th level, optimized for a party of four characters of 7th level.

The characters investigate an orphanage haunted by the children its keepers failed to care for. This adventure takes place in a town, simply referred to throughout the adventure as “the town,” which can be any town of your choosing. If you would like a name to use, the name “Bellmare” is perfectly suitable.

Adventure Background

Littlest Angels Home is a modestly-sized orphanage at the crest of a hill on the outskirts of the town. The orphanage was originally built during an enduring, violent conflict between two kingdoms that resulted in an abundance of orphaned children.

The orphanage has passed through many hands since that time and is most recently headed by an old woman named Ms. Jenette and two middle-aged assistants named Amari and Roth. During their tenure, a child named Loraine, daughter of an archmage that specialized in conjuration, used one of her late mother’s scrolls to beseech a devil to enact revenge on the caretakers for placing her in timeout. The attempt went unanswered, but not unnoticed. Shortly after, a trio of enterprising succubi and incubi arrived at the orphanage and subsumed the identities of the caretakers.

The succubi and incubi, disguised as dotting old folk that love to give forehead kisses and pinch people’s cheeks, have been caring after the orphans for some time. Children that fall ill or get on the devils’ bad side are “adopted”—they’re killed in a ritual that consumes their youth and heightens the devils’ power.

Due to a misdrawn glyph during the last sacrificial ritual, a host of orphan souls that the devils had accumulated have been set loose, materializing as ghosts with varying degrees of awareness. The devils have been scrambling to recapture the souls, a task which

has proven difficult, while maintaining their crumbling ruse.

Adventure Hooks

Foreclosure. The Littlest Angels Orphanage in town has gone bankrupt and the debt collectors have attempted to send multiple collectors to examine the property. None of them have returned. The town is now seeking help from adventurers, offering 1,000 gp to assess the property and banish any untoward inhabitants.

Paranormal Investigation.

Evidence of cruelty and evil at an orphanage has reached the town's guard. They attempted to investigate, but after losing two members of their rank, determined that the threats in the orphanage were above their pay grade and sought out the assistance of adventurers. They're offering a set of plate armor from their barracks to root out whatever is haunting the orphanage.

Lost Child. While the characters are walking through the town's streets, a child wearing a tattered purple dress appears in the shadow of an alleyway. She beckons one of the characters to help her, but when the characters approach, she disappears into the shadows, leaving behind only a faint echo of laughter. After asking around, the characters are pointed toward the Littlest Angels Orphanage.

Littlest Angels Orphanage

The orphanage is situated just outside of town at the crest of a hill. The front of the house has a set of stairs leading up to it, while the back of the house is level with the ground. Anybody that approaches the orphanage by road is led to the south grounds (**area 1**). The footpath connected to the north grounds leads into the nearby woods.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in the Littlest Angels Orphanage have the following features.

Floors and Walls. Many of the exterior walls are 2 feet thick and made of stone. The orphanage's interior, the guardhouse, the gardener's house, and the stables are made with wooden walls and floors.

Doors. All of the ruin's doors are 2 inches thick, 4 feet wide, and 6 feet tall. They have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Except where otherwise noted, all of the doors are unlocked.

A locked door can be forced open by succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check. A creature that is proficient with thieves' tools can pick a locked door with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

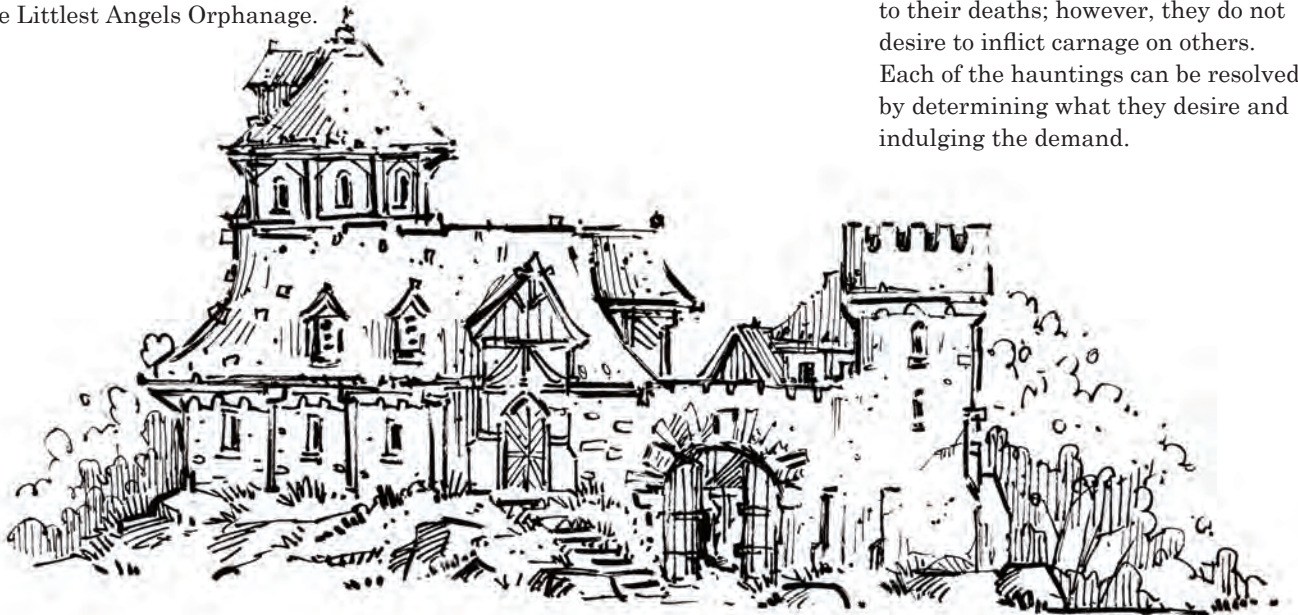
Climate. The grounds stay fairly warm from direct sunlight. Winds are buffered by the surrounding woods and the stone perimeter wall.

Outer Wall. The outer wall is 12 feet tall and made of thick stone blocks.

Soulfire Lanterns. The orphanage is lit inside and out by magical lanterns. At first glance, they appear to be simple oil lanterns; however, a creature that succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discerns restless spirits silently screaming in the flames. When a creature touches a lantern, the flames push against the glass toward the creature.

A devil within 30 feet of a lantern that it can see can use a bonus action to yank the soul out of a lantern and consume it, regaining 9 (2d8) hit points. When a devil would be reduced to 0 hit points while within 10 feet of a lantern it can see, it automatically consumes the soul and gains 9 (2d8) hit points. A lantern can only be used this way once, after which the glass bursts and the light goes out.

Haunting. As the characters explore the house, they will encounter a variety of ghastly children that haunt the orphanage. The children wield dangerous and unique powers related to the traumatic experiences that led to their deaths; however, they do not desire to inflict carnage on others. Each of the hauntings can be resolved by determining what they desire and indulging the demand.



Encounter Locations

See the map on page 55.

1 - South Grounds

A wide dirt road ascends north toward a large manor surrounded by a stone wall. Near the entrance, the road splits, branching toward a coach house connected to the wall.

Encounter: Roth. Daemaela is a **succubus** that takes great pride in her disguises. She is currently disguised as Roth, a 56-year-old man with short grey hair and a frazzled beard. He operates the guardhouse and turret, securing the perimeter from strangers. Roth attempts to turn away any visitors that do not arrive alone, stating that the orphanage is undergoing repairs and is quite busy at the moment. He speaks plainly and isn't strictly lying; though he doesn't reveal it, the devils are in the midst of cleaning up an outbreak of restless spirits. If a group of creatures is insistent, he relents and guides them to the common room (**area 12**) of the orphanage.

Soulfire Lanterns. There are two lanterns hung on the segments of stone walling flanking the entrance. Additionally, there are two lanterns flanking the entryway door to the orphanage and one lantern hung at the entrance to the guardhouse.

1a. Guardhouse Entrance. This barren, 10-foot-long, 15-foot-wide room features a wooden bench and a small shelf with a few potted plants.

1b. Guardhouse Bedroom. This 10-foot-long, 15-foot-wide room holds only basic necessities: a simple single-person bed, a dresser with a few sets of clothes, and a bedside table with a lantern.

1c. Turret. This square stone turret is 10 square feet in size and is locked behind a thick wooden door. Inside, there's a simple desk and stool set against the east wall and a shelf stocked with a variety of confiscated items on the southern wall.

1d. Grave Markers. There are twenty-four marked graves, each bearing the name of a child that died at the orphanage. The stones closest to the wall are the oldest, with engravings that have softened and become more difficult to read from weathering. Tiny holes puncture the dirt above several of the graves.

A family of six **badgers** have taken up residence in the graveyard. If the badgers are smoked out of their burrow and forced into a confrontation, they attack. If spoken to, the badgers are aggressive and refuse to abandon their home for any reason short of glorious death.

2 - Stables

When characters enter the larger chamber of the stables, read:

Massive wooden doors swing out, grating against the dirt road, to a rustic building with three horse stables, a grooming and tack station, and an old stagecoach. There is one brown horse casually eating some hay in the southernmost stall.

Medley. The **riding horse** is a brown female horse named Medley. She is smarter than the average horse and difficult to spook, but content with her station at the orphanage. She can pull the carriage back and forth to town by herself. If the characters speak to the horse, she expresses frustration at a severe shortage of apples lately and suggests that something is unusual about the gardener who usually tends to her.

2a. Storage and Workshop. This 10-foot-long, 25-foot-wide room has a fireplace, a worktable, and several storage units. Saddles, bits, ropes, nails, hammers, and all manner of mundane supplies for managing the stables can be found here.

3 - North Grounds

Dirt paths connected to the main house and the gardener's house converge at the perimeter wall of

the orphanage, leading into the neighboring woods. Inside the perimeter, gardens are set into the northwest and northeast corners.

Encounter: Amari. Jhorsan is an ornery **incubus** that despises interacting with humanoids. He is currently disguised as Amari, a 62-year-old tiefling woman with weathered purple skin and severed horns. Amari lords over the orphans for several hours each day, instructing them to perform the manual labor required to maintain the gardens. Children that disobey are sent to pick berries in the forest, a dangerous activity due to the wild creatures that inhabit it.

3a. Vegetable Garden. A wide variety of plants are grown across two large gardens; the harvest depends on what time of year it is. In the spring, lettuce, peas, carrots, and broccoli are growing. In the fall, the gardeners harvest potatoes, cabbage, and kale.

3b. Vertical Plant Posts. Climbing tomatoes, peppers, and pumpkins grow on 5-foot-tall wooden posts mounted in the ground.

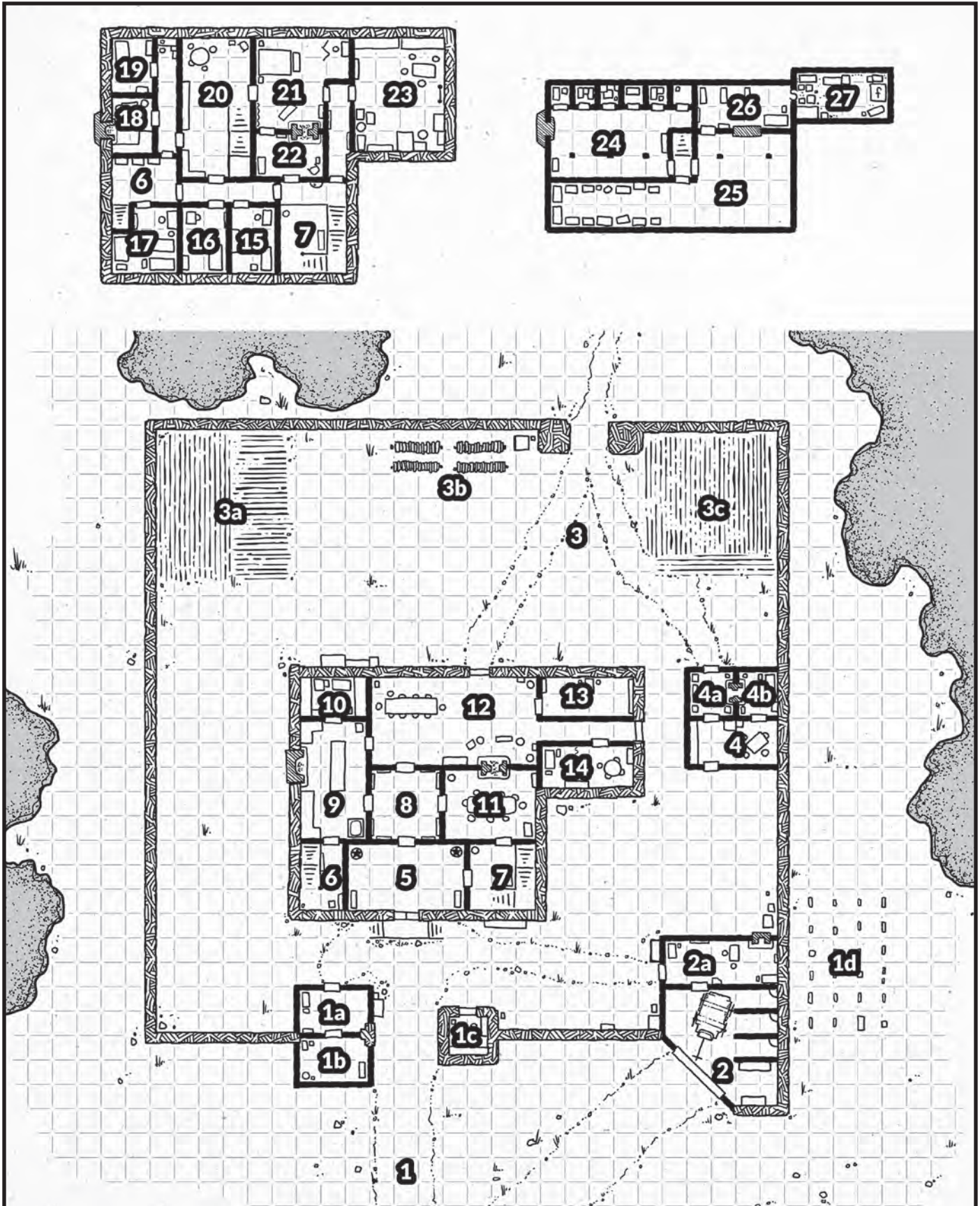
4 - Gardener's House

This small, three-room wooden building is overgrown with vines and shrubs. Inside, a slow-burning fire casts a soft warmth throughout.

There is a table and four stools for lounging and dining in the largest room. A cabinet along the north wall holds some flower pots as well as first-aid supplies.

Haunting: Wounded Child. A girl (**orphan of the black**, see Appendix D), somewhere between the ages of six and ten, with matted black hair filled with twigs and branches, is sitting quietly on the edge of the dining table. She stares outward with black, expressionless eyes and swings her feet back and forth, casting blood onto the floor from a gash in her leg.

When a lawful creature gets within 30 feet of the child, she hisses at it and tenses her fists. If a lawful crea-



ture gets within 15 feet of her, she attempts to use her Incite Violence feature on it before attacking.

Any creature that gets within 10 feet of the child must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (3d6) slashing damage as a gash appears across its leg.

To put the child to rest, the characters must first use the first-aid supplies in the cabinet or a healer's kit to patch the child's leg and kiss the boo-boo. If the characters don't kiss the wound, the child snarls, rips the bandages off, and whispers menacingly "kissy kissy." After the child's demands are met, the black of the child's eyes fades and her soul departs, leaving behind a lifeless body that collapses to the ground.

4a. This room has a selection of gardening tools such as rakes, hoes, shovels, and hatchets.

4b. This room has a small table for preparing small game and vegetables. A large pot is resting over an open flame, slowly heating up. A character that inspects the contents of the pot and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check isolates two unusual ingredients:

- A whole human heart.
- Fragments of cubed brain matter.

5 - Foyer

The east door is locked.

The foyer's wooden floor is damp and rotten from years of neglect, sagging in the center of the room. Two shoe shelves sit barren to the east and west of the entrance, with tattered shoes and boots scattered across the muddy floor around them like caltrops. There are two coat racks along the north wall, dangerously teetering under lopsided mounds of coats and jackets strewn atop them.

The north door is battered and droops on its hinges from years of careless handling. The east door is in good condition from infrequent use.

6 - West Stairwell

A steep set of stairs leads up to a room with three tall shelves and three doors. There is nothing of value in this room.

7 - East Stairwell

The north and west doors are locked.

An "L"-shaped set of stairs leads up to a balcony overlooking the room. There is nothing of value in this room.

8 - Central Juncture

The east door is locked.

Children's portraits decorate every spare inch of this four-door junction.

The portraits depict orphans that have been adopted.

Ambient Haunt: Portraits. A character that observes the portraits carefully must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they notice several portraits throughout the room have gnarled, twisting paint and wild eyes staring down at them. On a failure, the character glazes over the unseemingly portraits, but feels a lurking sense of unease.

9 - Kitchen

This elongated room features a large island, a wealth of counter-top space along the west wall, a basin for washing vegetables, and a crackling fireplace.

Three children ranging in age from seven to eleven years old are preparing food here:

- A seven-year-old, red-headed human boy named Sadon is shucking and washing corn-on-the-cob.
- A ten-year-old boy named Walter with a lopsided chef hat is cutting vegetables on the island.
- A nameless eleven-year-old girl with matted hair is stirring a boiling pot over the fire.

Haunting: Burned Child. The girl with matted hair (**orphan of the black**, see Appendix D) is focused solely on the fire in front of her. If a creature begins to approach her, the

boys caution them not to touch her.

The children can explain that the girl cooks everything she touches, literally.

Upon closer inspection of the girl, it becomes clear that she has solid black eyes and extensive burn marks running the length of her arms. A character that succeeds on a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the metal stirring paddle is glowing red beneath her grip.

When a creature touches the girl, she begins crying, turns toward them, and latches onto them in a hug. Each round that a creature or metal object it is wearing is in contact with the girl, the creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. After 30 seconds (5 rounds), the child lets go with tears in her eyes as she crumbles into ashes. A creature can easily detach itself from the girl; however, this will not resolve the haunting.

10 - Pantry

This pantry is stocked with a small assortment of dried meats, pickled and fresh vegetables, and a great deal of bread.

Blood Jars. A character that succeeds on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers four jars of human blood hidden at the back of the shelves behind a simple illusion.

11 - Servant's Hall

An eight-person table is situated in the center of this dour room, the bustle of the common area leaking through the fireplace embedded in the north wall. Two dead bodies are draped over the table, another body is thrown beneath the table, and two more are stuffed into the southwest corner of the room.

Fireplace. The double-sided fireplace is split between this room and **area 12**. It is kept lit at all hours of the day by Ms. Jenette.

Dead Bodies. The three bodies on and beneath the table belong to debt collectors that attempted to inspect the building; two have claw marks, but the third has burns across their entire chest cavity. The two bodies in the corner of the room belong to members of the city guard; similar to the debt collectors, they have claw marks on their backs.

12 - Common Room

This large room is split into a dining area with a long table with ten seats, and a collection of stools and cushions placed around a fireplace. A door to the north is ajar, allowing a breeze from outside to drift through the room. An elderly woman is seated at the far east end of the dining table watching over several children that are bickering and playing in the room.

When the characters enter this room, Ms. Jenette (see “Encounter: Ms. Jenette” below) stands up and moves to greet them. The children (see “Children” below) eye the characters curiously but otherwise do not engage immediately.

Encounter: Ms. Jenette. Wylinaela is a patient and calculating **succubus** currently disguised as Ms. Jenette, an 81-year-old human woman with curly, shoulder-length salt-and-pepper hair.

As Ms. Jenette, she interrogates the purpose of the characters’ visit and posits that perhaps they can help rid the premises of the evil spirits haunting it. She feigns ignorance as to what caused the spirits to manifest; however, a character that succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check has a feeling that she’s not telling the whole truth. If pressed, she reveals that one of the orphans, Loraine, has a proclivity for drawing arcane glyphs and may have accidentally stirred up trouble.

While the characters explore the ground floor, Ms. Jenette goes to the kitchen (**area 9**) to prepare tea for them. She returns ten minutes later

with a cup of tea for everyone. The black tea is contaminated with a rare herb, a delicacy for the devils, but a toxic addition for humanoids. A humanoid that drinks the tea must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour.

Children. There are three children in this room:

- Malkyn, a talkative fourteen-year-old black girl.
- Rose, a pale, shy fifteen-year-old girl with long red hair.
- Doran, a calm thirteen-year-old boy with sharp cheekbones.

Malkyn is reading a book by the fire. Rose and Doran are playing a make-believe game with an assortment of straw-stuffed figures.

13 - Quiet Room

A single two-person table with two stools is placed here.

14 - Study

This room features a round wooden table with four stools set around it, two bookshelves, and a cloth divider obscuring a rectangular table with two thin stools.

15 - Rose and Malkyn’s Bedroom

This bedroom has a bunk bed, a desk, and a dresser.

16 - Barda and Ivy’s Bedroom

This bedroom has a bunk bed, a desk, and a dresser.

17 - Walter, Sadon, and Doran’s Bedroom

This bedroom has two bunk beds, two dressers, and a table with two seats.

18 - Ancillary Kitchen

Smoke from the kitchen rises through the chimney on the west wall, filling the room with heat and the smell of broth. A counter along the south wall provides space for preparing simple meals and a table is situated to the north for dining.

19 - Loraine’s Bedroom

Loraine is the sole occupant of this simple bedroom. The bunk bed’s top bunk is vacant except for an imp sitting on the bed post. When the door to this room is opened, the imp instinctively becomes invisible.

If the character that opened the door has a passive Perception of 20 or higher, they notice a tiny red creature on top of the bunk bed disappear from sight as the door opens.

Encounter: Loraine and Tyim the Imp. Loraine is sitting on the floor studying a *spell scroll* of *gust*. An invisible **imp** named Tyim is sitting on one of the bunk bed’s posts. The imp was assigned by the devils to oversee Loraine’s arcane academic training and groom her into a viable warlock.

20 - Common Room

The south and west doors to this room are locked.

A bookcase runs along the west and south walls, a table with four chairs is set in the northwest corner, and a set of stairs runs against the east wall leading to the attic.

21 - Ms. Jenette’s Bedroom

The east and south doors are locked.

A queen bed is placed against the east wall, with a long, ornate trunk situated at its end. Across from the bed, in a wide alcove, is a room divider obscuring a vanity. A lit fireplace in the south wall fills the room with warmth and the smell of brimstone.

Infernal Fireplace. This fireplace is fueled by sulfur and smells like brimstone. While the fire is lit, a creature takes 22 (5d8) fire damage when it enters or starts its turn in its space. A Medium or smaller creature can squeeze through the fireplace to enter the sitting room (**area 22**).

Vanity. The phrase “patience is a virtue” is inscribed in Infernal across the top of the vanity mirror’s wooden frame.

The devils use the mirror to imprison creatures that breach their

contracts and need to be steered back into compliance. The vanity's mirror is a *mirror of life trapping*. The phrase inscribed on the frame is the mirror's command word. A creature that can't read Infernal can sound-out the command phrase with a successful DC 18 Intelligence check.

It has three creatures trapped inside:

- A 205-year-old dwarven **noble** named Duli Steelback. They believed the devils were typical merchants. They were given a magical pickaxe that let them dig with the speed and might of ten dwarves, in exchange for a share of the profits. They breached their contract when they attempted to short-change the devils by skimming off the top of the profits.
- A 32-year-old human **assassin** named Elizabeth Mistsplitter. She believed the devils were wealthy aristocrats. She was paid a retainer fee in exchange for performing assassinations at the devils' request. Elizabeth came in breach of contract when she decided she wanted out of the arrangement, which had no end date in the paperwork.
- A 105-year-old elven **druid** named Anelyen Aeraagamae. They believed the devils were powerful archfey. They were restored from near-death in exchange for preventing people from coming to the orphanage. They breached their contract when they failed to prevent the guards and debt collectors from arriving at the orphanage.

22 - Sitting Room

The north door is locked.

A single chair is placed near the blazing double-sided fireplace in the north wall.

Infernal Fireplace. This fireplace is fueled by sulfur and smells like brimstone. While the fire is lit, a creature takes 22 (5d8) fire damage when it enters or starts its turn in its space. A Medium or smaller creature can squeeze through the fireplace to enter Ms. Jenette's bedroom (**area 21**).

23 - Lounge

Directly across from the door leading into this room is an iron ladder ascending to a closed hatch. Two large bookshelves with a variety of books line the north wall next to a table with four stools. The southern half of the room is filled with an assortment of sealed boxes.

Haunting: Curious Child. A four-year-old boy (**orphan of the black**, see Appendix D) caked in dirt with solid black eyes and bloody fingernails is unsuccessfully trying to open the large box along the east wall.

A creature that gets within 5 feet of the child must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become overwhelmed with the urge to open boxes and search for a plush crab doll. The creature must pick a box at random, pry it open, and spend 1 minute digging through it. The crab toy is located in the round crate along the west wall. If it does not find the crab toy by the end of the minute, the creature takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage.

Once the plush crab toy is found and given to the child, the black covering his eyes melts away and his lifeless body falls to the ground.

Ladder and Hatch. The ladder leads to a locked hatch in the floor of **area 27** (treat this as a door).

Boxes. The boxes contain the belongings of orphans that previously lived at the house. They hold toys, old clothes, and other trinkets.

24 - West Attic

The door to this room is locked.

The ceiling of this barren room is supported by three load-bearing wooden beams and slopes downward from south to north toward six 4-foot doors along the north wall. The fireplace running through the first and second floors protrudes through the west wall, rising through the ceiling. Narrow beams of light trickle through the crumbling roofing.

Ceiling. A creature that inspects the ceiling and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines that the roofing has been deteriorating for years from negligence. A 5-foot-wide patch of the ceiling has AC 11, 5 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Haunting: Trapped Child. A light knocking and the repeated phrase "Hello?" can be heard from a random door on the north wall. A creature that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check can pinpoint the sound to the specific door. When any creature approaches the door, the sound fades away and begins again at a different door, chosen at random. Opening any of the doors reveals a small room with a handful of wooden boxes in them that is otherwise vacant. In each room, a creature that searches the room and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a set of child's bones.

When only one door remains unopened and the others are left ajar, the child appears in the frame of the last door as it opens. He is a lanky seventeen-year-old boy with solid black eyes, draped in swirling shadows. He's hunched over and crammed inside of the small room.

As long as light is being cast on him, he mindlessly attacks the source of light, shouting at the characters to conceal the light. When there is no light in the room, the boy does not attack or move; he stands still and breathes wheezily.

There are five **shadows** wrapped around the boy. They share the boy's space, and the boy cannot be targeted until they are removed. If there are no available targets, they use their reactions to attack when the boy uses his extended reach to hit further-away targets.

The boy is an **orphan of the black** (see Appendix D) with the following changes:

- His size is Medium. His body always stretches vertically to the height of the room he is in, to a

maximum of 18 feet tall, forcing him to remain in a hunched posture.

- He has 56 (9d8 + 16) hit points.
- His slam has a 10-foot reach and deals 17 (3d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

If all of the shadows are removed from the boy and he is forced to stand in bright light for 1 round, he begins to relax and stops resisting the characters. The following round, his solid black eyes fade, and his unnaturally stretched body collapses lifelessly.

25 - South Attic

This irregularly-shaped room is split into two areas: an open square chamber with two wooden support beams, a chimney, and a door, and a narrow corridor lined with crates along the walls. An arcane circle of chalk and blood is dried into the wooden flooring.

Encounter: Lemures. There are four **lemures** meandering around this room. They are the devils' servants, performing mundane tasks for them and helping perform arcane rituals. They are fearful of any powerful-looking creatures that might kill them, as they are not in the Nine Hells to be rejuvenated upon death. They do their best to comply with any demands.

They can provide the following information:

- The devils took over the orphanage 53 years ago and have successfully maintained a low profile since then.
- The devils primarily perform two rituals: one to create soul lanterns and one to extract souls from humanoids.
- The ritual to extract the most recent child's soul went awry because one of the lemurs misdrew the arcane circle. When this information is provided, the lemurs erupt into verbal disagreement about whose fault it is.

Treasure: Crates. The crates contain a hoard of arcane ritual components: 5 pounds of ash, nine black onyx stones, thirteen vials of blood,

40 pounds of clay, a bundle of thirty feathers, seven scraps of preserved flesh, 10 pounds of salt and sand, talcum powder, and an assortment of organs preserved in glass jars filled with liquid solutions.

26 - North Attic

The door to this room is locked. Inside, there are three parallel shelves and a few boxes.

Encounter: A Child and Her Ghost. Inside of this room is a black-eyed child (**orphan of the black**, see Appendix D) standing between two of the bookshelves with a metal stake embedded in her stomach, and a **ghost** of the child sitting on a box nearby. The black-eyed child is a vacant husk; she does not take any actions or respond to any activity around her. The ghost of the child is in a nearly catatonic state of dissociation. Getting the ghost's attention requires a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check or taking direct action by doing something like placing an arm through her ghostly form.

The ghost can relay the following information:

- Her name is Amber.
- She was gravely sick before Ms. Jenette decided to take her into town. On the ride, Ms. Jenette gave her tea to calm her nerves.
- She woke up in her current state, hovering over her own body, surrounded by masses of flesh (lemures) loudly squabbling with each other in distress and pointing toward her.

To successfully rejoin the child's body and ghost, the characters must remove the metal stake from the body while the ghost and the body are within 10 feet of each other. A spellcaster proficient in Arcana will know how to perform this ritual, and can rejoin the body and soul with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a failure, the child's ghost is forever lost, and the child's body lashes out mindlessly at the nearest creature.

Treasure: Shelves and Boxes.

Notable objects in this room are a carved bone statuette (25 gp), an embroidered silk handkerchief (25 gp), and 10 cp scattered around junk on the shelves.

27 - Secret Closet

Boxes are stacked high around a hatch in the floor of this room.

Boxes. Notable objects that can be found in the crates are a set of turquoise animal figurines (250 gp), a gold locket with a painted portrait inside (25 gp), and a quartz globe (50 gp).

Concluding the Adventure

At the conclusion of this adventure, the characters should have discovered the devils' ruse, resolved or killed the haunted children, and hopefully re-joined the ghost child with her body.

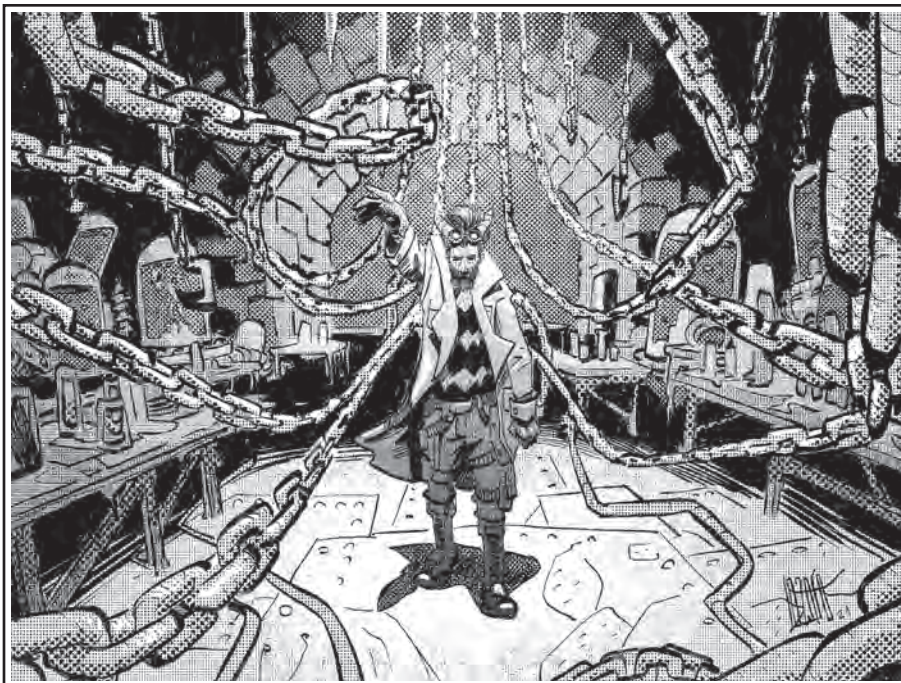
Adventure Hook Resolutions

There were three adventure hooks presented in the introduction of this adventure. Here are the resolutions for each hook:

Foreclosure. The missing debt collectors are located in **area 11**. The town pays out the promised 1,000 gp if the characters have cleansed the orphanage of the haunted children and an additional 200 gp for each debt collector and guard body returned.

Paranormal Investigation. The missing guards are located in **area 11**. The town's guard gives the characters the promised set of plate armor if they find and neutralize the threats they find at the orphanage.

Lost Child. As the characters are returning to town, the **ghost** of a little girl in a tattered purple dress appears in the shadow of the trees alongside the road. The girl is standing over a skeleton partially buried under the earth with a ring clutched in its moss-covered hand. The ring is a *ring of protection*. After the characters approach, the ghostly girl disappears, passing into the afterlife without a word. Ω



THE THOUGHT PALACE

An adventure for level 7 characters

Written by **Tim Andrews**
Cartography by **Dyson Logos**
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and JE Shields**

The Thought Palace is a 5th Edition adventure for 3-7 characters of 7th level and is optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 7. Characters who complete this adventure earn one third of the experience necessary to reach 8th level.

This adventure sees the party entering a realm entirely within the mind of a powerful creature, to retrieve a powerful magical item. Although this adventure is set in the world of Adrenon, you are free to fit it into any setting you like.

Adventure Background

The Taunters are the most powerful criminal group in the metropolis of Pamor, but are divided into four smaller factions. Each faction specialises in a particular type of crime. Although the Taunters all share a common goal, the leaders of the different bands constantly vie for dominance.

Due to the nature of their work, as well as the suspicion and bad blood that permeates the group, the Taunter's leadership only ever meet in the Thought Palace, a realm that exists in the mind of the leader of the Pensieves, the thought thieves of the Taunters. None of the other leaders are content with this arrangement and seek to find a way to wrest control of this stronghold for themselves.

With the next meeting only a day away, Quiller the Red (leader of the Cons), is seeking to use the distraction this will cause to steal the Corundrum, a clear gem the size of an apple and the heart of the Thought Palace.

Adventure Summary

The characters are approached separately by a branch of the Taunters, the Cons, who ask the party to steal the Corundrum from within the Thought Palace.

The characters must overcome the dangers within and discover the Corundrum. Once successful, they must find their own means of escaping the palace.

Beginning the Adventure

Read or paraphrase the following:

Tally's Troll on the dockside is well known for the best ale in all Pamor. It is also here that rumors and secrets can be learned for those with the sense to listen.

"Ah Pamor! The City of Shores. It is said that this metropolis has ships coming and going from every port on the Sweet Sea, bringing exotic goods and wonders for trade." A flamboyantly dressed gnomish woman stands atop a barstool, gesturing expansively around her.

If the characters do not choose to speak with the gnome, she requests the pleasure of their presence.

Quiller the Red

This gnome is Quiller the Red (N female gnome **mage** with the spells *mirror image*, *major illusion*, and *seeming* in place of *suggestion*, *fire-*

ball, and *cone of cold*). Quiller is the leader of the Cons, the con artists and charlatans of the Taunters.

She wants to hire the characters to infiltrate the Thought Palace and steal the Corundrum and thus the power to control the palace, or so she believes. She will relate any of the information contained in the first three paragraphs of the background. Through conversation and questioning, the characters can also learn the following information:

- The Corundrum is a powerful artifact that allows Morthos Ambition, the leader of the Pensieves, to control the Thought Palace.
- The Thought Palace is a realm entirely within the mind of Morthos.
- Within the Thought Palace, Morthos can manifest anything his mind conceives.
- She is going to meet with Morthos and the other leaders of the Taunters in another section of the palace. While this meeting is taking

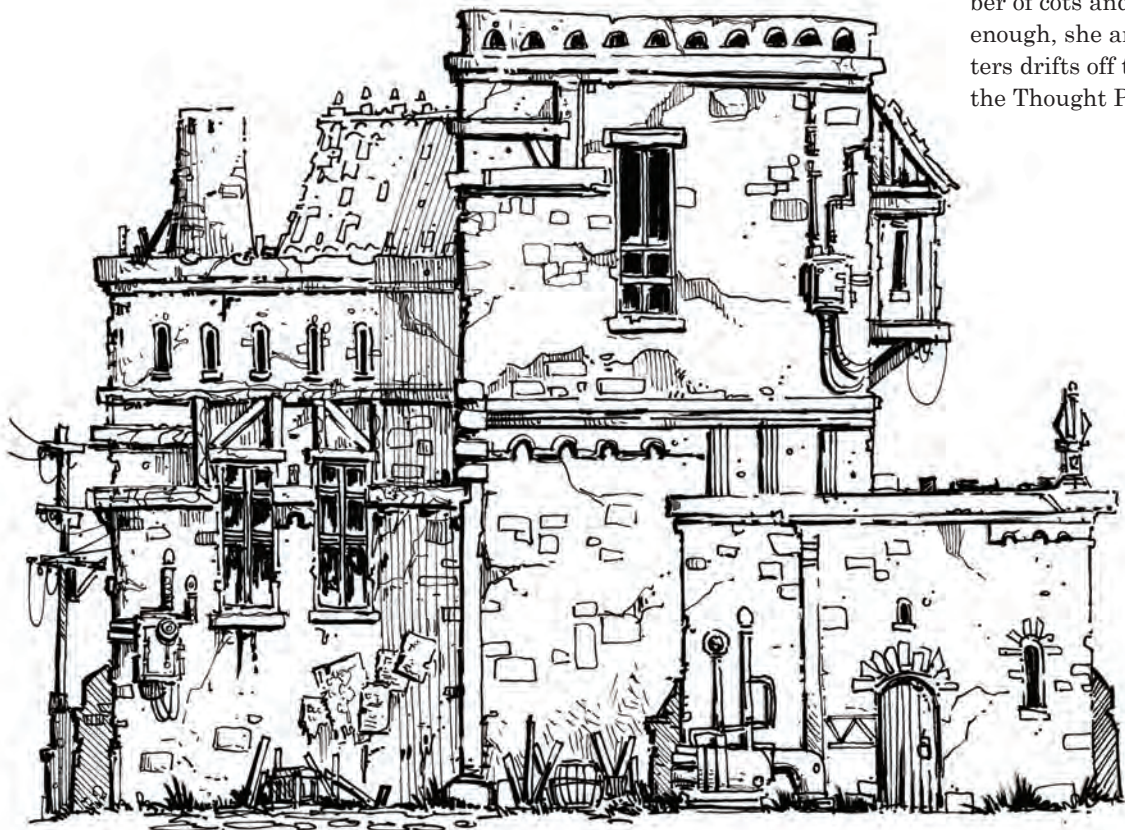
place, Morthos will be distracted, but if the characters do anything too disruptive to the palace, such as significant damage to the structure, Morthos will become aware of their presence.

- The meeting is due to last five or six hours; once it is over, Morthos will certainly become aware of their presence. She can get the characters into the palace, but they must find their own exit once they have completed their task.
- The Thought Palace will collapse shortly after the Corundrum is removed to the real world.
- She offers them 5,000 gp for the mission and anything they can find, with the obvious exception of the Corundrum.

To the Warehouse

Once the characters are done asking questions of Quiller, she leads the characters to a warehouse on the docks.

She shows the characters to a number of cots and lies down herself. Soon enough, she and each of the characters drifts off to sleep and awakens in the Thought Palace.



The Thought Palace

Unbeknownst to all but a select few, the Thought Palace is a constructed reality held within the mind of Morthos Ambition. Morthos is the leader of the Pensieves. Morthos is a **rakshasa** but disguises himself as a tiefling human with rich purple skin.

This area is used to train mid-level Pensieves and so is filled with puzzles and obstacles that a Pensieve must learn to overcome. Many die in the attempt.

General Features

Unless otherwise stated the areas within the Thought Palace have the following features.

Light. The entire palace is well-lit with a sickly pink light. The light does not seem to come from anywhere in particular but is always there.

Synaptic River. When Morthos wants to change something about the palace, he does so in small pieces using a flow of psychic energy that manifests as a river of information. If a character tries to swim across it, they must succeed in a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or be pulled 10 feet downstream on a failure.

Synaptic Water. If a creature is foolish enough to drink some of the water, it must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion and take 16 (3d10) psychic damage.

If it succeeds by more than 5, however, it gains a temporary bonus of +2 to its Intelligence score. This bonus ends when they leave the palace.

Walls and floors. The walls and floors appear to be constructed of cut stone patterned to resemble a forest.

Ceilings. Ceilings are 10 feet high.

Doors. The double doors are unlocked.

Pensieve Initiates. These enemies use the **cult fanatic** stat block with the following changes:

- Replace the *thaumaturgy* cantrip with *mage hand*.
- Swap their Intelligence and Wisdom scores and use Intelligence as their spellcasting ability.

Encounter Locations

See the map on page 63.

1 - Antechamber

This small room is filled with comfortable couches and chairs.

Encounter: Ooze! A **gelatinous cube** occupies the space immediately inside the door. It is used as a training tool for new Pensieves, teaching them about perception. The ooze is perfectly still and will not attack until a creature steps into its space.

Noticing the ooze requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

2 - Ever-Changing Room

This large hall seems to be in a state of flux. The far end of the room is submerged in a river of glowing water that flows from south to north. The floor of the west end of the room is carpeted with an abundance of purple moss.

Purple Moss. This moss is another training tool of the Pensieves. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check will identify it as memory moss and provide the following details:

When a living creature moves within 5 feet of a patch of memory moss, the moss attempts to steal that creature's memories.

A targeted creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or lose all memories from the last 24 hours. This is particularly nasty for spellcasters, who lose all spells prepared within the last 24 hours. (Only those spells actually prepared in the last 24 hours are lost; spells prepared longer than 24 hours ago are not lost.)

Once a memory moss steals a creature's memories, it does not attack again for one day. If a creature loses its memories to the memory moss, it acts as if affected by a *confusion* spell for the next 1d4 hours. Lost memories can be regained by eating the memory moss that absorbed them.

The moss is vulnerable to and will be destroyed by fire, cold, and radiant

damage, as well as sunlight or any disease-curing magic.

Treasure. At the center of the room is a chest covered in moss. The chest is unlocked and holds a *potion of healing* and fifty bars of gold, each worth 10 gp.

3a - Training Room

This small room holds a sarcophagus and a rack containing ten wooden poles. The nearest pole is 1 foot long and each subsequent pole is 1 foot longer, until the final pole is 10 foot long.

These poles are a red herring and have little to do with the puzzle this room offers.

Trapped Sarcophagus. The sarcophagus has the image of a beautiful elven woman carved into its top. It is inscribed with a *symbol* spell. Identifying the spell requires a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If opened without being dispelled, the symbol triggers a Hopelessness effect filling a 60-foot-radius sphere for 10 minutes (save DC 18).

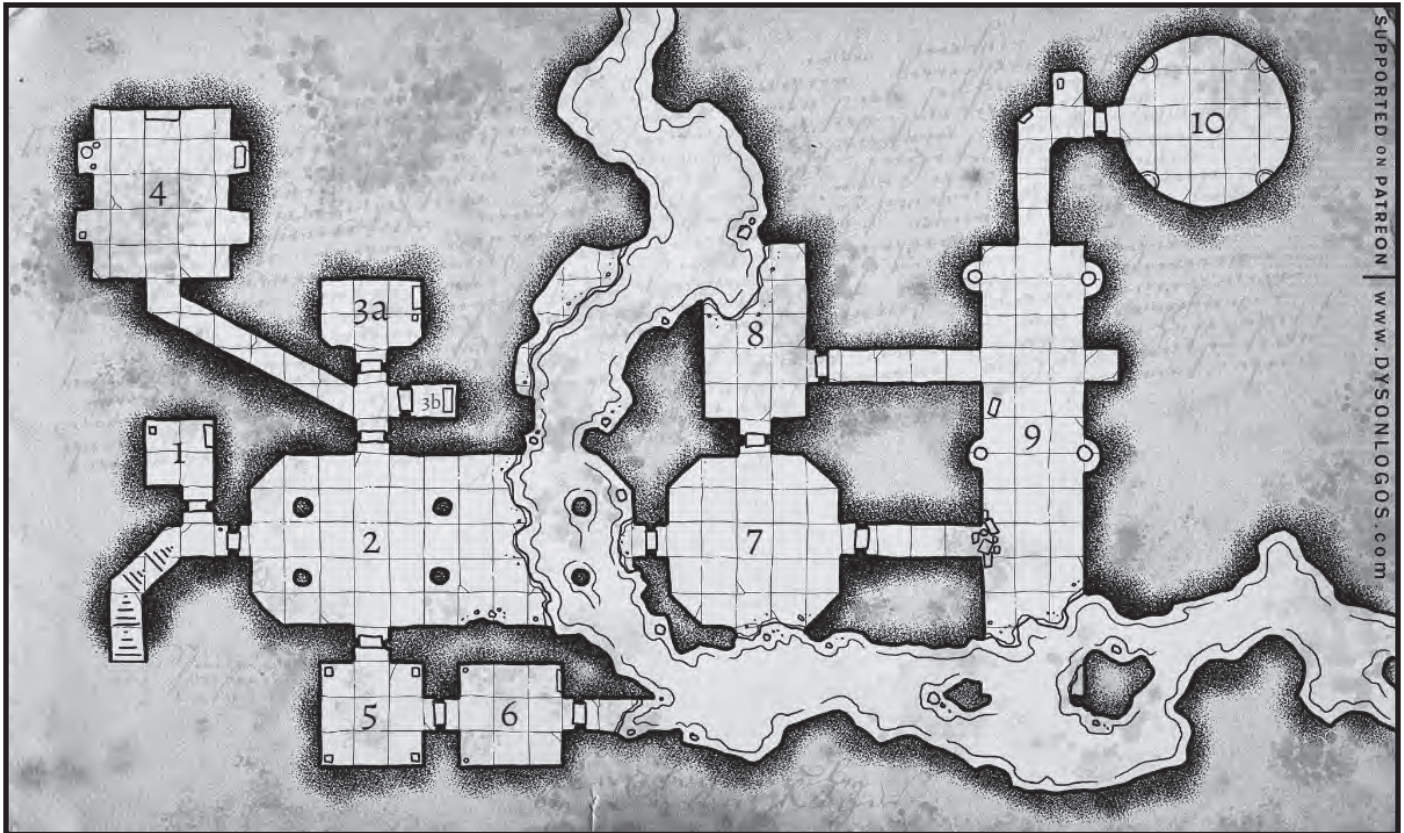
Encounter: The Shadows Are Alive! Triggering this spell alerts the two **shadows** in **area 3b** who attack. The shadows are immune to the Hopelessness effect.

Treasure Within the chest are five bars of platinum, each worth 100 gp.

3b - Library

This small room holds shelves of hundreds of books. The magic of this room, however, means that if a character attempts to find a book on any subject, they find it after a short search.

Encounter: Shadows. Two **shadows** are hidden within the tiny cracks in the walls. They will not attack unless they are first attacked themselves or the trapped chest in **area 3a** is triggered. Noticing the inky blackness within the cracks requires a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check.



4 - Martial Hall

This area is used to train the Pensieves in the martial arts. The floor is covered in a spongy material to soften falls.

Encounter: Pensieve Initiates.

Five **pensieve initiates** (see “General Features”) of various races are training in this room. They rush to attack any intruders, fighting to the death. If a Pensieve is taken prisoner, they know nothing useful about the areas on the other side of the river, but a successful DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check will force them to reveal their knowledge of the areas on this side of it.

Treasure. Resting atop a velvet pillow on a raised dais to the northern end of the room is a clear crystal roughly the size of an apple. This gem is a fake, but it requires a *detect magic* or *identify* spell or similar effect to reveal this.

5 - Puzzle Room

This room’s entire purpose is to inhibit access into **area 6**.

This room is roughly thirty foot square and the walls are of cut stone that resembles an arid desert. A caravan of merchants can be seen moving from the western wall to the eastern, stopping at an oasis on the southern wall.

Repeated along the bottom are the words, “Only the wisest will see,” written in Common.

Standing proudly atop columns are statues of four dragons, each one in a similar pose, fangs bared in an eternal snarl.

In the room’s center is a triangular stone pedestal. Resting atop the pedestal is a glass vial that appears empty.

To the east stands a door of burnished metal. It has no visible handles or keyholes.

The door is made of adamantium and there is no magical or physical way of forcing entry.

Glass Vial. Investigation of the vial reveals a label that reads “Open me” and a triangular hole in the pedestal.

The vial contains a gaseous poison that is released when opened. If a character inhales it, they must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, they are paralyzed and suffer from hallucinations.

The key that fits into the pedestal is hidden within an illusion and can only be seen when under the effects of the poison in the vial. Once a character has seen the key, they can retrieve it once the paralysis wears off.

Using the key in the pedestal opens both of the doors into **area 6**.

Encounter: Angry Dragons. If the characters damage anything in the room, the four statues animate into **brass dragon wyrmlings** (except

their type is construct) and attack. They use their first action to fill the room with their fire breath.

6 - Vault

Guarded entrance. An eastern door leads into **area 6** from the river. This door is protected by two **chuul** that patrol the river. They attack as soon as a character steps foot in the passageway leading to **area 6**, unless they have already been dealt with elsewhere.

This room is square. A painting on the north wall shows an image of a handsome elderly gentleman and on the south wall is one of a fine lady. Sat in the center of the room is a large, iron-bound chest.

Riddle Me This. If a character approaches within 5 feet of the northern painting, the gentleman animates and poses a riddle: "I can only live where there is light, but I die if the light shines on me. What am I?"

The answer is 'shadow,' but answering the riddle has no effect. This is a clue for the last riddle of the gyno-sphinx in **area 9**.

Chest. The chest in the room's center is a puzzle box. On top of the flat top of the chest is a maze of interlocking pieces with a metal bead trapped at the one side. A small hole, the perfect fit for the bead, is at the other end of the puzzle.

If a character chooses to solve the puzzle, they must succeed on three DC 15 Intelligence checks before three failures. If they fail, not only does the metal bead disappear, but poisonous gas is released from the chest that deals 11 (2d10) poison damage to the character attempting the puzzle. The bead reappears 24 hours later.

Treasure. The chest contains three hundred platinum coins. When the party leaves the dungeon, all but one disappear, but this coin holds a magic map. This could be a link to other adventures. Balanced haphazardly on top of the coins is a clear crystal roughly the size of an apple. This is the Corundrum. If a character casts *identify* on it, the crystal acts like an *ioun stone of reserve* (*charm person* (DC 16) and *mirror image* spells are currently stored within it).

The stone is, however, a ruse and is actually an **emerald eye** (see Appendix D) created by Morthos to spy on Quiller. The gem will not reveal its true nature to the party unless it is directly attacked.

7 - Training Area

This area is another training space but only for those people who have found a way across the river.

Encounter: Chuuls. Two **chuuls**, entering from the river to the south, attack any intruders that reach this far, unless they have already been encountered elsewhere.

8 - Lounge

Read or paraphrase the following:

This long, thin room is covered in the remains of comfy-looking leather chairs and no small amount of dried blood and viscera. A shining blade is all that remains intact.

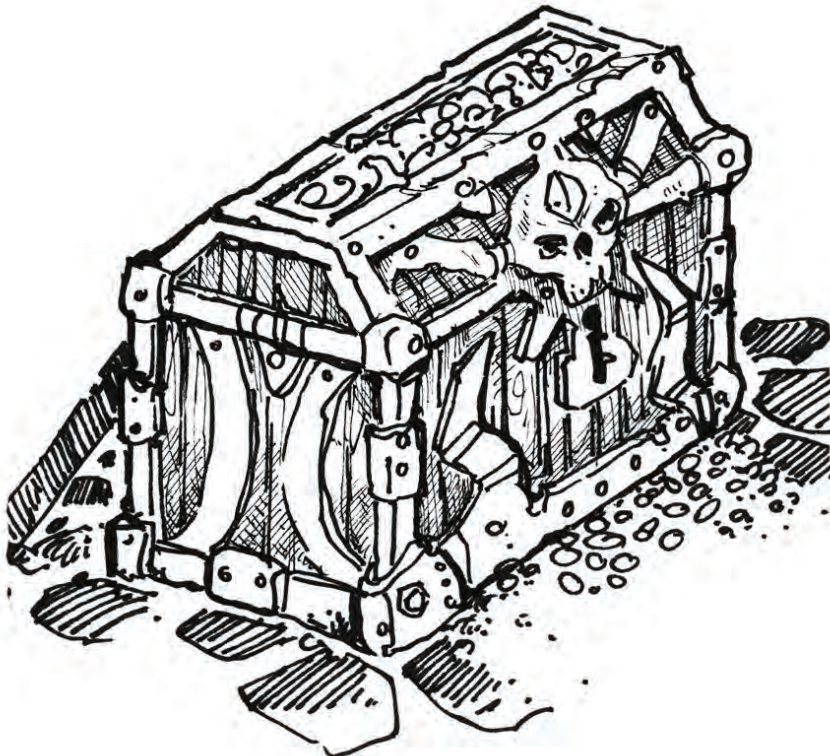
From across the room a voice calls out, "Stop! The floor is trapped!" A male halfling sits hunched into a far corner, one whole leg missing from the knee down, a ruined stump and bloody smear suggesting that his leg was crushed.

The halfling's pale face falls onto his chest.

Trapped Floor. The floor is indeed trapped, and a number of tiles will trigger the trap (see the handout in Appendix E). Spotting a trigger tile requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Disarming the tile then requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made with proficiency in thieves' tools.

Once triggered, both doors close and lock, and the ceiling lowers 5 feet per round, taking two rounds to reach the floor and crush anything still beneath it; likely killing any creatures.

In the first round, a door can be forced open with a successful DC 18 Strength check. Each door has AC 15 and 18 hp and immunity to poison and psychic damage.



Halfling. The halfling is Takrit (NG male halfling **spy**), a thief and member of the Cons. Takrit was part of another group sent into the palace. Each of them was killed by the monsters and traps.

Only Takrit survives. He is unconscious, suffering from 5 levels of exhaustion, and has 3 hp remaining. He will need help to walk, and to fight effectively, he will need his leg to be healed with a spell such as *regenerate*.

Takrit does not have long to live and will only survive for another 30 minutes. To save him, the characters will need to reach him in time to administer healing of at least 10 hp.

Treasure. One of Takrit's companions, Olfash the Bold, carried a +1 *longsword*. This rests with what is left of Olfash in the dead center of the room.

What Takrit knows. Takrit will tell the characters what he knows, but will lie about some things.

- Quiller sent him into the palace to steal the Corundrum more than a week ago. (Lie. They were actually sent to murder Morthos Ambition.)
- He does not know how to escape. (True).
- There's a massive, winged lion in the room to the east. (True, but he knows it is actually a sphinx).

9 - Hall of Ambition.

This hall is lined with the statues of cloaked figures of various races; some of the previous leaders of the Pensieves.

Encounter: Gynosphinx. A **gynosphinx** guards the passage into **area 10**. As soon as a character enters halls, read or paraphrase the following:

At the northern end of the room, a large winged lion lounges in front of a passageway that leads further northwards.

As it becomes aware of your presence, it yawns massively, revealing rows of sharp teeth. "Ah, more guests. If you would progress fur-

ther, answer me these questions three. I cover cities and destroy mountains, I make men blind, yet help them see. What am I?"

She then waits patiently.

The sphinx has three riddles in total; the answer to this one is 'sand.' If the characters answer all three riddles correctly, the sphinx moves and allows them passage onwards. If they guess incorrectly, attack the sphinx, or try to bypass it in any way, the gynosphinx attacks.

Riddle 2. "Ten men's strength, ten men's length, ten men can't break it, yet a young boy walks off with it. What is it?" Answer: Rope.

Riddle 3. "What force and strength cannot get through I with a gentle touch can do; And many in the streets would stand, Were I not, as friend, at hand." Answer: A key.

10 - Morthos' Laboratory.

This circular room is where Morthos performs experiments. It also holds the only gateway to exit the palace available to the characters.

The room has two tables to the north-west and south-east of the center, upon each of which is an experiment Morthos is undertaking. Finally the room features a beautiful piano that Morthos is quite accomplished at playing.

Hanging from the ceiling over these tables are chains, often used to hold specimens in place during experiments.

Encounter: Avatar of Morthos. Despite being absent from this section of the palace, Morthos is so accomplished in the powers and skills of the mind that he is able to leave behind a small portion of himself to continue his experiments and help guide the other Pensieves. This avatar takes Morthos' appearance but uses the stat block of a **chain devil** and is able

to animate the chains that litter the laboratory.

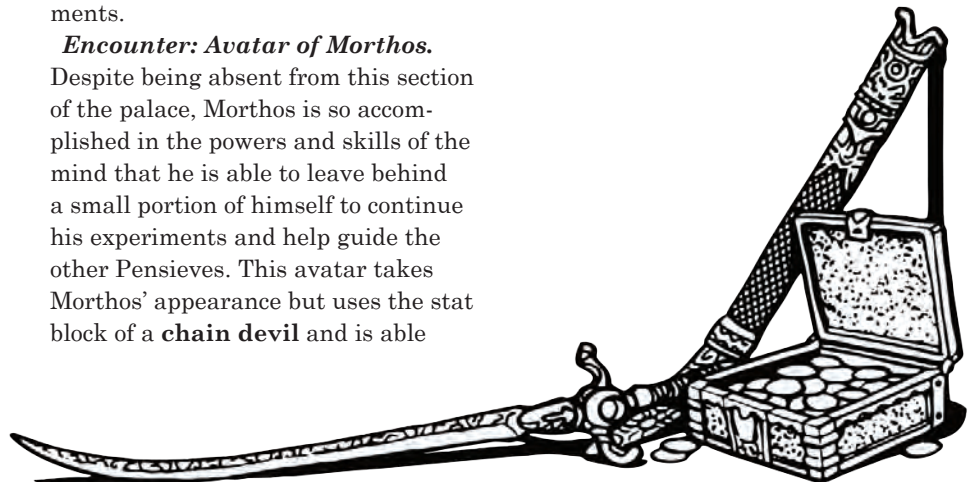
Morthos will not immediately attack, however, instead offering the characters the chance to betray their patron and work for him. He explains that, unless he wills it, none of the gold or treasure the adventurers have collected will be able to leave the palace, but that if they accept his bargain, he will ensure that they can. He will also invite them to join the Pensieves as part of this bargain.

If they accept, Morthos explains the true nature of the Corundrum and grants them access to the portal out of the palace. If they refuse, he attacks. However, Morthos wants the party to succeed and place the emerald eye as a spy among the Cons, so he does not fight to kill and will leave the characters a path to the portal.

Concluding the Adventure

With heart, soul, and steel the adventurers have made it safely through the Thought Palace and escaped through the portal with the Corundrum. Only the real Corundrum, the magic sword from **area 8**, and a single platinum piece from **area 6** are still with them when they make it back to the real world.

Quiller is waiting for them when they awaken and, if they give her the Corundrum, she pays them the reward and invites them to join the Cons. Ω





Lair of the Coral King is a Fifth Edition adventure for a group of three to six characters of 7th to 9th level, optimized for a party of four 8th-level characters.

A powerful merrow named Zurendil Nimbus has consolidated power in the waters of the Cartegenian coast. He has crowned himself the “The Coral King,” and he and his subjects have expanded their territory outwards from a sunken elven palace. All sea-faring vessels have become subject to their whims and may be sunk at a moment’s notice. Can the adventurers end this undersea tyranny before more lives are lost? This adventure is set in the waters off the continent of Cartegenia in the Siothas campaign setting but can easily be placed in any campaign that features a sunken elven palace. This adventure assumes the party will have access to water breathing, whether that be through innate capability, magical effects, or items.

Adventure Background

Legends tell the story of Triteia’s Horn, a powerful artifact crafted by the demigoddess daughter of Triton, son of Poseidon. It is said that they who wield the horn will bring the creatures of the sea to their beck and call and, by divine right, unite the merrow under the rule of a single king or queen. Triteia’s Horn has been lost for many millennia, and the merrow tribes have remained independent since. Recently, a popular merrow named Zurendil Nimbus left his tribe to scour the depths near the distant Azeshan coast to find the fabled horn of Triteia. He was ultimately unsuccessful but decided that would not stop him from becoming the leader he felt his people needed.

With his small group of loyal companions, Nimbus returned to Cartegenia with a replica horn that he claimed was the real Triteia’s Horn. His companions assisted with this lie, providing false eye-witness

LAIR OF THE CORAL KING

An adventure for level 8 characters

Written by **Alexander LeFort**
Cartography by **Dyson Logos**
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and Rick Hershey**

accounts of divine intervention and the horn's power. Though many were skeptical, enough were credulous of Nimbus's story and swore fealty to him as the Coral King. Those who did not acknowledge his new title were either slaughtered or made to do so by force. The charismatic and powerful Zurendil Nimbus has now brought together many of the scattered merrow tribes of the Cartegenian coast, with his sights set on continued expansion of his fledgling empire. He has demanded a toll from any ships that sail through the coast and ordered that any non-complying vessels are to be sent beneath the waves.

Sea trade has ground to a halt in Cartegenia as a result, and public rage has begun to boil over. Though preliminary expeditions have traced the merrow headquarters to the approximate area of Basilio's Cliffs, Cartegenia lacks the means to confront the merrow in the ocean and requires the aid of capable adventurers.

Adventure Hooks

There are numerous reasons the adventurers may be interested in confronting Zurendil Nimbus at Basilio's Cliffs. A few of these reasons are outlined below.

A Lucrative Bounty. The lawmakers of Cartegenia are desperate. They have promised a 1,000 gp reward to anyone who can bring them the head of this so-called "Coral King" who has caused so much calamity in their waters.

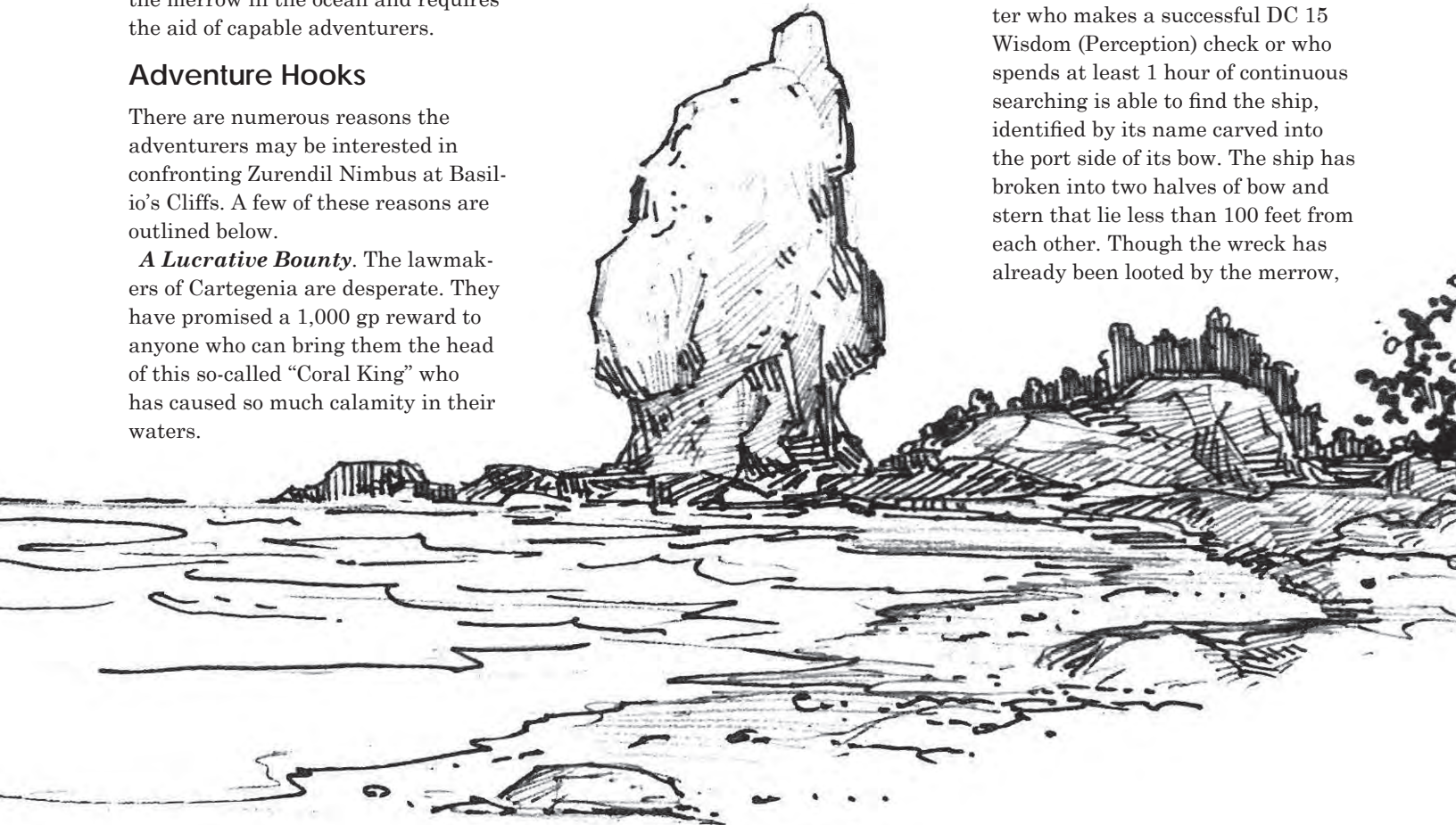
Ring of Water Elemental Command. The Coral King can apparently summon water elementals to help him sink Cartegenian ships. He must possess a rare magic item that bestows him such power. After hearing these stories, the adventurers decide that they must take such an item for themselves.

Sunken Ship. A merchant ship named *The Derrington* was sunk recently in the waters of Basilio's Cliffs. The sailors' widows are dismayed that their partners will not receive a proper burial. They have prepared a series of love and goodbye letters placed within a stoppered bottle. They ask the characters to chain the bottle to the remains of the ship so that they can give their loved ones something resembling a proper farewell. If the party can deliver justice on top of this task, all the better.

Ship Graveyard

Basilio's Cliffs are only a quarter mile out from the shores of southern Cartegenia. Their approximate location can be identified from the ocean's surface by the jagged rock outcroppings that breach the waves. From there, the wreck of *The Derrington* and the lair of the Coral King are roughly 150 feet beneath the waves. As the characters descend into the depths, they'll soon be able to spot the broken remains of over a half-dozen ships scattered on the ocean floor in a half-mile radius near the base of the cliffs. All of these ships were recently sunk by the Coral King and his supporters either to send a message or to exact revenge after the crews refused to pay a toll.

Encounter: *The Derrington*. If the characters have agreed to find *The Derrington*, they can search the graveyard for its remains. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or who spends at least 1 hour of continuous searching is able to find the ship, identified by its name carved into the port side of its bow. The ship has broken into two halves of bow and stern that lie less than 100 feet from each other. Though the wreck has already been looted by the merrow,



another scouting party is currently combing through the remains to catch anything that was missed originally. The scouting party is composed of a **merrow gladiator**, three **merrow veterans**, and three **merrow scouts** (see “Marrow Template” on page 69 for all three stat blocks). The scouting party fights until reduced to half their number, at which point they attempt to flee to the Coral King’s palace to send warning.

Searching the Graveyard. The merrow have been consistently combing through the ship graveyard for treasure and as a result the characters will have a difficult time finding anything of value amongst the wrecks. There are eight wrecks in total; for each wreck the party decides to search, a party member must make a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. Upon a successful check, the party finds some loot from the Graveyard Loot table. If the party member fails this check by 5 or more, they stumble onto an encounter from the Graveyard Encounters table.

Graveyard Loot.

d6	Loot
1	A cache containing 1d100 gp.
2	A 25 gp art object.
3	A 100 gp art object.
4	A potion of healing.
5	A pouch containing 1d4 gemstones worth 25 gp each.
6	An uncommon magic item.

Graveyard Encounters.

d6	Encounter
1	A coven of three sea hags has made a lair inside the wreck. They seek to ally with the Coral King.
2	Two sea wraiths (wraiths with a 40 feet swim speed) emerge and attack the party, fighting until they are destroyed.
3	Two swarms of quippers lurk within the wreck.
4	Two hunter sharks lurk within the wreck. They flee once reduced to half their hit points or fewer.
5	Two water elementals that escaped from Nimbus’ control found their way into the wreck. They attack the party and fight until destroyed.
6	Three chuul feast on the remains of a ship’s crew. They attack the party when disturbed and fight until they are destroyed.

Coral King’s Palace

The entrance to the Coral King’s palace is near the bottom of the ocean floor, carved into the side of Basilio’s Cliffs. The party should find it easily by following the cliffs, as it is marked with the corpses of the merrows’ victims. When the characters arrive, read aloud:

Dozens of bloated, floating corpses are suspended in the water by thick chains anchored to the ocean floor that bind their legs. Beyond this forest of bodies, a set of towering, elaborately carved double doors crusted with coral is set into the cliffside and partially ajar, flanked by two broken statues of stoic elven soldiers. Stone rubble surrounding the doors suggests a great staircase once preceded them, though it now lies in ruin.

The bodies were strung up by the merrow to mark their territory and deter trespassers. There are thirty-four bodies in total, though half of these corpses have been reanimated as **ghasts**. If a character comes within 10 feet of a ghash while approaching the doors, the creature suddenly snarls and gnashes violently at them, though it remains restrained by the chains that bind it.



General Features

Thousands of years ago, the Mulyani elves ruled the lands now known as Cartegenia. After a calamitous earthquake, the great elven city and its decorated palaces crashed into the Mantic Sea. Much of their architecture and infrastructure has been reduced to rubble, but one palace that was carved into the cliffside still remains structurally intact, nearly 150 feet below the ocean surface. Zurendil Nimbus makes his headquarters here, and his followers occupy much of the surrounding waters. Unless otherwise stated, its features are described as follows:

Beneath the Sea. The Coral King’s palace is approximately 150 feet below the ocean’s surface. All of its chambers are entirely flooded.

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The palace is constructed out of hewn marble from the surrounding cliff, and much of the stone is engraved with ornate decorative patterns. However, algae, coral, and barnacles cling to much of the walls, obscuring the original architecture beneath.

Doors. The merrow have retrofitted some doors in the palace to keep them in operation. They are made of stone, 5 feet wide and 10 feet tall, and open inward on their hinges. They have an AC of 18 and 27 hit points. Locked doors can be opened with a successful DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools or with a DC 22 Strength check.

Furniture and Seaweed Beds. Items of furniture in the palace are made of smooth, dressed stone. Coffers are 3 feet long by 2 feet wide and stand 2 feet high. Some of the area descriptions contain references to seaweed beds. These beds consist of 5-foot-square patches of seaweed, growing from the floor and rising through the water to a height of 7 feet or more. An area occupied by a seaweed bed is heavily obscured.

Light. The palace is dimly-lit with a pale blue glow emanating from bioluminescent fungi growing on the walls that the merrow gathered from deeper waters.

Merrow Template. A merrow template is applied to various stat blocks throughout this adventure. For example, a **merrow veteran** has the statistics of a **veteran**, with the following modifications:

- Its speed becomes 10 feet, and it gains a swimming speed of 40 feet.
- It speaks Aquan and Common.
- **New Feature: Amphibious.** The merrow can breathe air and water.

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed on the map on page 70.

1. Entrance Hall

This expansive entrance hall, once grand, has been largely reduced to ruin. Its exterior walls have crumbled, giving the chamber an irregular shape, and great carved pillars that supported the ceiling have now collapsed into rubble. A school of fish swirls lazily in the center of the chamber. Doorways exit to the south and west.

Encounter: Merrow Guards. Most of the time, a **merrow veteran** and two **merrow** stand guard in this chamber, rotating every 8 hours with other merrow that lounge in **area 5**. If the alarm has been sounded, the three **merrow** in **area 6** reinforce the three guards in this chamber. If combat breaks out here, one of the merrow uses a hooked rope on the west wall to open the gate to **area 2** to release the **giant shark** contained inside, which fights alongside the merrow. The school of fish are harmless; they scatter if combat breaks out in the room.

2. Shark Pen

A slotted wooden gate opens toward a short narrow hallway that leads into a larger, coral-crusted chamber. This room was used as a guard room by the Mulyani elves in times past, but it has been stripped bare and is used to keep a trained shark in captivity. The southern door to **area 2a** is open.

Encounter: Giant Shark. If it has not joined combat in **area 1**, a **giant shark** is here swimming in a frenzied circle. It is kept starving by the merrow, and it attacks in a hungry rage, fighting until it is destroyed.

2a. Shark Food

Skeletal carcasses, bare but for strings of tendon and sinew, litter this otherwise empty chamber.

The carcasses are what remains of what has been fed to the shark. There is nothing of value here.

3. Main Concourse

This concourse is nearly 300 feet long and crisscrossed with the fallen statues that used to line its flanks. At its northern end, it opens into a larger chamber lined with bioluminescent fungi. Multiple doors and passageways exit to the east and west along its length.

4. Merrow Quarters

Each of these rooms is filled by a seaweed bed, a coffer, and some spare spears and nets.

Encounter: Merrow. There is usually one **merrow** resting in the seaweed bed in each of these rooms at any given time. If an alarm has been sounded, these merrow reinforce the guards in **area 1**.

Treasure: Coffers. Though two of the coffers hold nothing of value, the coffer in the northeast quarters holds a leather pouch that contains 123 gp.

5. Messy Storeroom

This coral-crusted room is haphazardly filled with loose coils of rope, broken containers, damaged weaponry, and decayed dismembered body parts.

This room contains loose items of low priority that the merrow might have a use for later if they can be refurbished. None of it has any value.

6. Tidy Storeroom

Neatly organized grappling hooks, chains, coils of rope, leather straps, blocks of stone, and empty containers fill this room.

This room holds supplies for scouting and upkeep of the lair.

7. Secret Statue

A narrow opening in the wall of the concourse leads to a short, winding passageway that ends in front of a cracked stone door carved with the depiction of a screaming skull pierced by spikes. The passageway was formerly concealed within the concourse, but the sinking of the palace destroyed the secret door. The door at the end is unlocked, though it is jammed shut, requiring a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to open. When the characters open the door, read:

A miraculously intact statue depicting a faceless hooded figure with one handheld outstretched, its thumb and fingers together, stands before you. The walls of this small chamber are carved with elven script.

This chamber was used by a member of the Mulyani royal court to secretly worship an evil god. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check can identify the statue as a representation of the god of tyranny. Characters who can read the elven script on the walls discover a prayer to the god, as well as the line, “for gold we ask for salvation.” If a character places at least 1 gp in the statue’s outstretched hand and recites the prayer on the wall, the gold immediately begins to sizzle and melt, soon disappearing entirely. The character then receives the benefit of the *bless* spell for 24 hours. A character who attempts to destroy the statue triggers a *lightning bolt* spell (DC 16) to fire outward from the statue’s palm. The statue then crumbles.

8. Guard Room

The walls of this spartan room are lined with simple stone benches. Doors exit to the north and south.

The merrow keep a guard here when prisoners occupy the cells. Currently, the cells are empty.

9. Prison Cells

These small cells are empty.

10. Collapsed Chamber

The ceiling of this chamber has collapsed, completely filling it with rubble. This chamber is unpassable. If a character disturbs the rubble, a swarm of sea centipedes (**swarm of centipedes** with a swim speed of 20 feet) darts out from under the stone and attacks.

11. Merrow Quarters

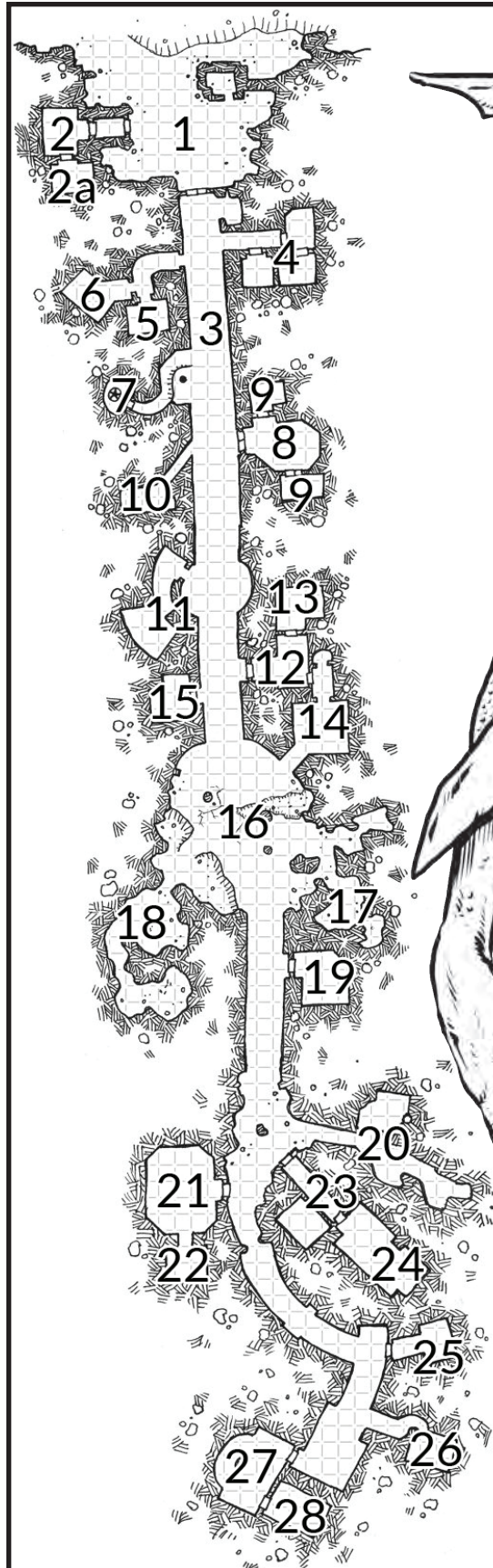
This room looks to have formerly been a small chapel. Two stone pews have been reduced mostly to rubble. Rusted knives and coils of rope are piled on an altar at the chamber's southern end. The rest of the room is filled by three seaweed beds and three coffers.

Treasure: Altar Interior. A character who makes a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the top of the altar is actually a sliding lid. One of the merrow discovered this as well and was using it to hide a small portion of treasure from their companions. Inside is a rusted, unlocked iron chest that contains three onyx gemstones worth 50 gp each as well as a small silver candelabra worth 25 gp.

12. Kitchen

Two stone tables hold rusted cleavers and knives. Assorted bones litter the floor. Stone cupboards and cabinets hang empty and ajar. Doors exit to the north and east.

The merrow occasionally use this room to butcher meat.



13. Larder

The carcasses of sharks, sea lions, and what appears to be a merfolk hang from hooks on the walls of this chamber. They have been flayed and partially dismembered. Crumbled shelves and other detritus lie on the ground.

The merrow use this chamber to store meat. They feed on larger marine life as well as the occasional merfolk they manage to catch while out scouting.

14. Mess

This dining room has seen better days. A dining table and its surrounding high-backed chairs are coated with algae, and a chandelier has fallen to the floor, consumed by barnacles. Cabinets along the walls hang open and empty.

The merrow often eat alone and never use this chamber, though they did clear it of any valuable silverware. There is nothing of value here.

15. Armory

Grappling hooks, harpoons, spears, and other assorted weaponry are sorted into piles tied off by seaweed throughout this room.

The merrow keep weapons here that they have salvaged from wrecks or crudely crafted themselves. The armory contains the following equipment:

- Seven ornately carved spears
- 200 feet of rope
- Three tridents, each with an emerald (25 gp) set into the pommel
- Eight grappling hooks
- Five harpoons

16. Battle Chamber

The worked stone of the palace's walls and ceiling gives way to natural rock towards the south as the main concourse leads into a large

central chamber lined by bioluminescent fungi, where the ceiling climbs 50 feet high. A fissure runs through the floor in the middle of the chamber, 20 feet across at its widest. A ledge slopes downward in the room's southwest corner. Two towering statues of robed elves stand at least 30 feet tall, their arms and noses broken off, buried within the rest of the rubble in the room.

Encounter: Merrow Battles. There are nine **merrow** in this chamber. Two of the merrow test their mettle in a sparring match against a **merrow behemoth** in the middle of the chamber while the other seven merrow spectate. The merrow behemoth is the strongest of Nimbus' followers and is eager to repeatedly prove its strength against all that would challenge it. Though these fights are not supposed to be to the death, the behemoth has occasionally killed challengers and discarded their bodies in the rubble. The merrow in this chamber fight viciously to the death. The merrow behemoth uses the **troll** stat block, with the following modifications:

- It has a swim speed of 40 ft.
- **New Trait: Amphibious.** The behemoth can breathe both air and water.
- **New Trait: Frenzied Charge.** If the behemoth moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 18 (4d8) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away.

17. Giant Clam

A giant clam sits amidst the rubble of this partially collapsed room. A glimmering, spherical pearl rests between its open mantles.

Hazard: Giant Clam. The clam will defend itself from anything that disturbs it. Attempts to reach into the

clam to remove the giant pearl cause the clam to slam shut. A character with its hand or other body part in range of the mantle must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save as the mantle clamps shut around them. A character caught in this way can remove themselves from the clam with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Once the clam has closed, it remains so for a period of 1d4 hours. The clam's shell has an AC of 18 and 27 hit points.

Treasure: Giant Pearl. The giant pearl inside the clam is worth 250 gp.

18. Feely's Lair

The ledge in the battle chamber descends to a short passageway that leads to an irregularly-shaped natural cavern.

The walls of this irregularly-shaped natural cavern are covered in coral, algae, and fungi. Assorted objects from the palace have been collected here and are scattered about; silverware, plates, daggers, scraps of clothing, shards of glass, and writing quills can be seen amongst the miscellany. A passageway continues to the south.

This cavern is home to a **giant octopus** the merrow have named "Feely." They are amused by the creature, and regularly bring it food and deliver it "curios" to keep it entertained. Feely most often holes up in the southern portion of his lair. When the characters enter, read aloud:

This cavern looks much like the one that preceded it; its floor is covered with a layer of assorted curious and mundane items that is nearly a foot deep.

Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher immediately spot Feely clinging to the cavern's ceiling, looking down at them. If the characters do not immediately attack, Feely swims toward them, poking his tentacles in and around their belts and

packs, attempting to grab anything that interests him. If the characters attack Feely, he flees after he has been reduced to half his hit points or fewer by using his ink cloud and underwater camouflage abilities.

Treasure: Feely's Lair. Feely will not allow the characters to remove anything from his lair unless the characters trade him something of "equal value" and succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. Most of the objects inside Feely's lair are junk, but characters who take at least 10 minutes to search can find the following items of interest:

- A small silver idol in the shape of a star worth 50 gp.
- A *scholar's pipe* (see Appendix C).
- A fossilized megalodon tooth worth 100 gp to the right buyer.
- A *potion of water breathing*.

19. Priests' Quarters

Seaweed beds occupy the four corners of this room. Along the walls are ornately carved stone benches and four coffers. In the middle of the room is a cracked urn which shakes violently and is adorned by a spectral padlock. Its lid rattles against its body.

Shaking Urn. The use of *detect magic* reveals an aura of abjuration magic emanating from the urn, as it is locked by an *arcane lock* spell. The lock can be opened with a successful DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a DC 25 Strength check. Inside the urn is a frenzied **water elemental** that the priests are having a difficult time dominating; they have imprisoned it in the urn until they can determine how to properly bring it under their control. If released from the urn, the elemental does not attack the characters unless provoked. It flees the room in pursuit of any merrow, which it immediately engages in combat, fighting until it is destroyed.

Treasure: Coffers. A character who searches the coffers in this room finds the following items of value:

- A water-proof canvas bag filled with spell components including 10 gp worth of herbal mixtures, gem-infused chinks and inks worth 50 gp, and 100 gp worth of diamond dust.
- A gold necklace worth 25 gp.
- An onyx gemstone worth 50 gp.

20. Ruined Library

This hallway extending east from the main concourse leads into two conjoined rooms that are mostly collapsed. Amidst the rubble are stone bookshelves, gold-framed paintings, disintegrating books, and splintered furniture.

This former library was much bigger when the palace was still above the waves, but its sinking caused a collapse that has completely destroyed and blocked access to the rest of it.

Treasure: Spell Scroll Container.

A character who makes a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check of the debris finds a tubular metal container decorated with gold trim. The container screws together to create an airtight seal. Inside is a *spell scroll* of *unseen servant*, a *spell scroll* of *secret chest*, and a *spell scroll* of *instant summons*.

21. Temple

Six encrusted pillars support the vaulted ceiling of this chamber. In the middle of the room is a 20-foot-diameter stone brazier ringed with gold and filled with dismembered body parts. The rotting head of a shark has been crudely tied to the shoulder of a statue depicting a robed elven figure near the west wall of the room, giving the statue the appearance of having two heads. A colorful tiled mosaic peeks out from beneath the layer of algae and coral on the east wall. Stone debris litters the ground. A short passageway extends to the south.

A character who examines the remains in the brazier and makes a

successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check can recognize them as merfolk body parts. The merrow have repurposed this temple to worship their god. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check can determine that the shark-head-adorned statue is an improvised representation of Demogorgon.

Encounter: Merrow Priests. Four **merrow priests** can often be found here speaking prayers in unison before the brazier, hoping to attract the attention of Demogorgon. They have gathered the merfolk body parts as an offering. Eager to prove themselves in the eyes of their god, the priests fight until they are destroyed.

Priests' Loot. One of the merrow priests holds the key to the chains that bind the merfolk in **area 22**.

Palace Reinforcements. Not all of the merrow loyal to Zurendil Nimbus are present in the palace at any one time. Most of them are out in the surrounding waters scouting the area, searching for merfolk, or tolling ocean channels. If the characters long rest in the palace or temporarily leave it to recuperate before returning, there is a fifty percent chance that a group of merrow return to the palace. This group includes a **merrow champion**, two **merrow veterans**, and three **merrow**.

What the Merrow Know. A character who has bested one of the merrow in combat and makes a successful DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation) check may convince them to divulge information about the Coral King, his plans, and his lair. The merrow know the following information that may be shared with the characters:

- The Coral King, named Zurendil Nimbus, has traveled the globe to recover the Triteia's Horn, which now makes him the ruler of seas by divine right.
- The Coral King will bring together the merrow tribes to crush their hated merfolk rivals and then establish dominance over the entirety of the ocean.

- The Coral King and his priests prepare rituals in service to Demogorgon, their god. Once they prove themselves worthy, Demogorgon will grant them the tools for total domination.
- The Coral King lairs in his throne room at the southern tip of the palace, often communing with Demogorgon.

22. Merfolk Prisoner

Crumbling benches and stone cabinets line the walls of this small chamber. A fatigued-looking male merfolk lies on the ground, bound by rusted chains.

This room used to be a vestry for the connecting temple. The cabinets hold nothing but crumbled detritus and debris.

Lachlan the Merfolk. This former vestry is being used as an interrogation chamber for a merfolk named Lachlan (CN male **merfolk**) who was captured along with his hunting party by the merrow. He is in rough shape, with 2 hit points remaining. He can be released from his chains with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, a DC 20 Strength check, or the key found on one of the merrow priests in **area 21**. If the characters can communicate with Lachlan, he can share the following information with the party:

- He and his band of four other merfolk were captured by a group of merrow two days ago.
- His companions were slaughtered and butchered.
- The merrow have been interrogating him for information regarding the whereabouts of other merfolk tribes.
- The merrow say that the Coral King has been gifted a demon companion by their god.

If Lachlan receives at least 5 points of healing, he is eager to join the characters in bringing the fight to the Coral King. Alternatively, he suggests the party escape the palace, return to

his tribe, and return later to confront the Coral King with the reinforcements of a merfolk war party.

Merfolk War Party. Lachlan belongs to a merfolk tribe known as the Nightridge, who make their home in a coral reef just a few miles east of Basilio's Cliffs. The Nightridge live in networked caverns and passageways constructed of coral and shells, and are led by an elder merfolk named Jeng Azel. If the characters return to the Nightridge with Lachlan, Lachlan brings them to an audience with Jeng Azel to appeal for reinforcements. Despite hearing the story of Lachlan and the adventurers, Jeng is hesitant to confront the merrow; he believes it risky, for failure could mean brutal retaliation when it is possible the merrow may simply leave their settlements alone. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required to convince Jeng Azel to send a merfolk war party with the characters to assault the lair of the Coral King and defeat Zurendil Nimbus. If convinced, the Nightridge can gather a force of four **merfolk** and two **merfolk veterans led by a merfolk gladiator** named Darvagg.

Note. The merfolk template is the same as the merrow template. The name is changed for clarity.

23. Stewards' Chamber

Three seaweed beds and three coffers line the west and south wall of this chamber. Bunches of translucent, membrane-like sacs filled with a red substance are tied off by seaweed and organized in piles around the room. A pair of rusted hammers lie on the ground.

This room is used by a trio of merrow that act as stewards for the merrow eggs in the hatchery in **area 24**. The membrane sacs are filled with extracted merrow blood, which the merrow douse over their eggs at regular intervals to facilitate healthy growth. Merrow blood is denser than the blood of humanoids, allowing it

to sink in water. Eggs not developing at a fast speed are smashed open and consumed so that weak offspring are not produced.

Encounter: Merrow Stewards. Three **merrow veterans** that protect the eggs in **area 24** can be found in this room. They are fiercely defensive of the membrane sacs as well as the eggs, and fight until they are destroyed.

24. Hatchery

This room appears to have been an art gallery in better days. Broken busts and fallen paintings litter the perimeter of the chamber. A tile mosaic on the ceiling, partially consumed by coral and grime, depicts a grand landscape scene of floating islands. Dozens of melon-sized grey eggs are bunched together in the middle of the chamber and sit in a viscous red puddle.

Any valuables to be found in this art gallery have already been gathered by the merrow, who now use the chamber as a hatchery for their young. Each merrow egg has an AC of 10 and 5 hit points. The eggs are young; destroying an egg reveals a thick red yolk within its membrane. A character who consumes some yolk must make a successful DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 24 hours.

25. Diviner's Crystal

A 3-foot-diameter crystal ball with a large crack in its surface is set into a golden claw-foot stand in the middle of this chamber. A half-dozen mirrors with ornate frames hang on the walls, partially obscured by coral and algae. A pale, flickering pink glow emanates from the crystal, filling the chamber with light.

Diviner's Crystal. This chamber was used by the elves for divination magic. After the merrow discovered the instability of the crystal ball, they

decided to leave this room alone. A casting of *detect magic* reveals an unstable aura of divination magic surrounding the crystal ball. The crystal was damaged when the palace sunk into the sea; as a result, its magic is now unstable. A character who attempts to use the crystal ball must make a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, a *scrying* spell is cast on a creature determined by the GM. On a failure, the magic of the crystal ball malfunctions, and the user is met with a horrible vision of their potential violent death and takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage.

26. Coral King's Quarters

This tidy chamber has been cleared of debris. A large seaweed bed and an ornate coffer fill the west corner of the room. The eastern wall has been cleared of algae and coral to reveal an intricately carved bas relief of an illuminated holy figure surrounded by elven script iconography. The severed head of a merfolk rests on a stone table in the middle of the room.

Zurendil Nimbus rests in this room. He enjoys the bas relief on the east wall and ordered the wall cleared of obstruction so he could better view it. The severed merfolk head on the table is a few days old; he keeps it close as a constant reminder of his ultimate goal.

Treasure: Coral King's Coffin.

The coffin in this room holds some mundane supplies, a leather sack containing three rubies worth 100 gp each, and a vial of wyvern poison.

27. Coral King's Throne

An ornate throne of silver and gold sits near the north end chamber atop a stepped dais. The ceiling climbs over 50 feet and is supported by numerous pillars, some of which have crumbled, littering their rubble over the floor. Large stone bra-

ziers flank the walls, and a fallen chandelier lies in the middle of the room.

Encounter: The Coral King.

Zurendil Nimbus (a **merrow mage**) spends much of his time here conferring with his trusted advisors, a **merrow priest** named Jimak and a **merrow veteran** named Biyoon. Zurendil is also accompanied by his **water elemental** servant and bodyguard, and keeps a casting of *mage armor* active on himself at all times. In battle, Zurendil lets his water elemental and advisors take the brunt of the characters' assault while he launches spells from the backline, using *misty step* and *greater invisibility* to protect himself as necessary. The Coral King and his loyal servants fight until they are destroyed.

Treasure: Ring of Water Elemental Command. On Zurendil Nimbus' person is a *ring of water elemental command*.

28. Treasure Vault

This room is filled with gently sloshing gold, silver, and various artifacts gathered by the merrow. A colorful jellyfish floats lazily in the waters of the chamber.

Treasure: Merrow Hoard. This treasure represents the near-entirety of what the merrow have gathered from the palace itself as well as the various wrecks they created in the surrounding waters. They have little use for it themselves but keep it in the case they need to bargain with rival powers. To determine the contents of this chamber, roll on the Treasure Hoard: Challenge 5-10 table in the *DMG*.

Hazard: Jellyfish. The jellyfish in this chamber got stuck inside incidentally. A character who makes a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Nature) check identifies it as exceedingly venomous; any character that comes within five feet of it must make a DC 18 Dexteri-

ty saving throw or be stung by one of its tentacles, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage and becoming paralyzed for one minute. The jellyfish is indifferent towards the characters.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters have defeated the Coral King, the growing merrow threat developing in the waters of Cartegenia's shores is extinguished. While merrow tribes will still remain, they persist as scattered and unorganized. If the characters sought reinforcements from the Nightridge and Jeng Azel, the merfolk reward them with a *bowl of commanding water elementals*. If the characters were introduced to the adventure with the *Derrington* hook and successfully completed their task, their actions prevent the souls of the drowned from returning as sea specters or sea wraiths that would haunt the coast. If the characters have learned of Triteia's Horn from the merrow, they may believe they have a powerful artifact on their hands. If they show the horn to Jeng Azel, he can inform the party that the horn is fake. Otherwise, unless the party has any previous familiarity with the horn, it may take them a while longer to discover that the horn Nimbus possessed is a forgery.

Alternatively, should the characters flee the lair of the Coral King and leave Zurendil Nimbus alive, the merrow threat continues to grow steadily. Any merfolk within hundreds of miles will soon be at risk of extermination, and ships will be wrecked in increasing frequency. The supporters of Coral King swell in number as Zurendil further coalesces his power. Eventually, if not stopped, the Coral King amasses a force capable of conquering the oceans of the entire northern hemisphere. Ω

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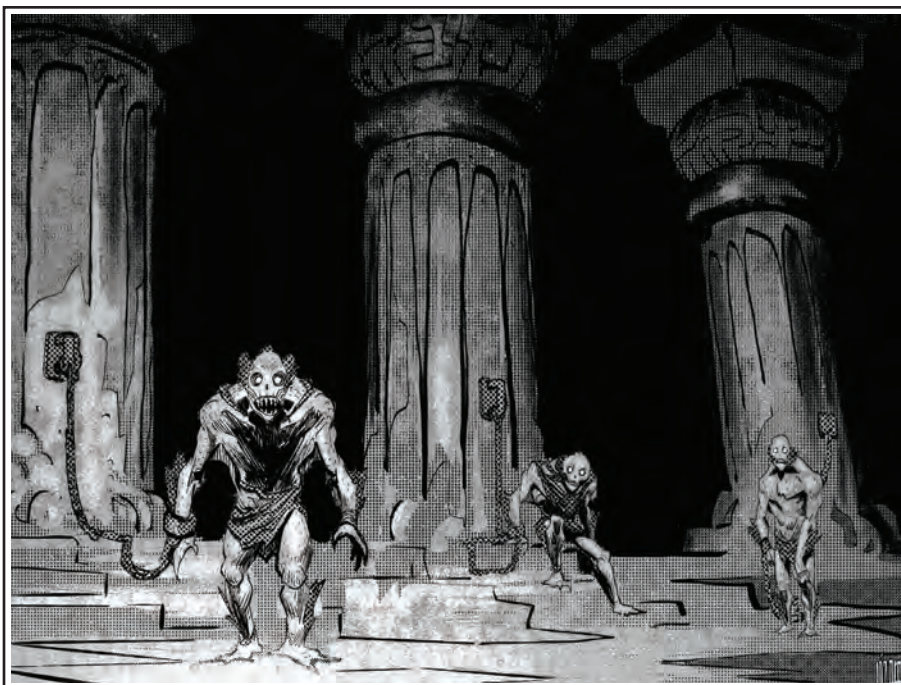


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WHISPERS FROM THE DEPTHS

An adventure for level 8 characters

Written by **Rikki Brown**
Cartography by **Dyson Logos**
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and William McAusland**

Whispers from the Depths is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for three to five characters of 7th to 9th level and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 8.

The characters are searching for a missing research party and investigate an isolated and hostile village near their last spotted location. They uncover a mysterious cult, discover a hidden traitor, and must overcome enemies, both human and aberrant, in order to survive and report their findings. This adventure can be dropped into any campaign setting that has a coastline.

Adventure Background

Aldous Fenström is a renowned scholar specializing in the Elder Gods and the communities that worship them. His interests are not purely academic, for Fenström hides a secret; he is a worshipper of the Elder Gods believing that through them he will gain more power and become one of their chosen priests. This was only amplified in his mind when he learned that he is descended from one of these communities. He discovered this when he researched his family after noticing physical changes in both himself and several of his family members. He eventually traced his bloodline back to the town of Cooper's Bay and its founder Elgin Cooper. Fenström is his direct descendent through the line of Cooper's eldest child, Isla Cooper.

Digging into its past, Fenström learned that the town was founded around two hundred years ago when Cooper started his fishing business and constructed housing for his workers. Over the years, the town grew, though they were never very welcoming to strangers—not that many visited as its location was particularly difficult to reach via land. Elgin was a very public leader of the town for many years, until ill health forced him to retire and pass the torch to his son. To this day, an unbroken

line of Coopers has been in charge of the town. What he also discovered through family records is that Elgin had an agreement with the deep ones that saw Elgin provide them with suitable sacrifices, and in turn they provided the town with an elixir that gave the townspeople perfect health. It wasn't until years later that Elgin realized the elixir had the effect of transforming the drinker into a Deep One around the age of sixty.

Fenström decided to travel to Cooper's Bay and see it for himself. He was accompanied on his journey by three of his students who believed it was a field trip for research. Upon reaching the town, Aldous found the people were sullen and morose. They ignored the most basic questions and feigned ignorance if pressed further. Many of them showed physical symptoms of transformation, though they denied this when mentioned. Expecting to be welcomed when he revealed his heritage, he was shocked when the townspeople rejected his claims as there could be no heirs from Isla as she "descended" before bearing children. They attacked him and his students, though Aldous escaped by turning invisible during the struggle and fled into the woods. Angry and confused, he spent the next two weeks spying on the townspeople and plotting his revenge. If they will not accept him, then he will destroy them. All he needs is a distraction...

Adventure Summary

The characters are approached by Aldous Fenström seeking help to rescue his captured students. While exploring the underground levels, they will discover the true history of the town, and encounter enemies both familiar and alien. They will have to survive it all and piece together the truth from many different sources in order to fulfill their quest.

Beginning the Adventure

The characters are travelling past a large forest when they are approached by Aldous Fenström. Read the following:

A disheveled figure emerges from the treeline and limps towards you, leaning on a staff. Once closer, you see it is a middle-aged man, his clothes dirty and stained as if he has spent considerable time sleeping outdoors. He stops 10 feet from you and holds his gloved hands up in supplication as he greets you. "Salutations, travellers, I apologize for my forwardness and my appearance, but my situation is dire. My name is Aldous Fenström, and I am a scholar. I was on a field trip with three of my students when we were attacked while making enquiries. I managed to escape but my students are still being held, and I cannot hope to rescue them on my own. Please, I beg that you would help me free them before it is too late."

Fenström (CE human **mage**) explains that his students are being held in the nearby village of Cooper's Bay. If the characters agree to help, he can reward them with 1,000 gp each. They must hurry, as the village is several hours away and time is of the essence. During the journey, the characters can question Fenström and learn the following information:

- When they were captured, they were forced to drink a bitter potion before being separated. Fenström took advantage of being moved to escape his captors. This was four days ago.

- While trying to find his students, he managed to steal a copy of their holy text. He learned the people of Cooper's Bay worship the Elder Gods — specifically Mal'kthinoth. They refer to themselves as the "Children of Mal'kthinoth."
- The villagers believe they are destined to live an eternal life in peace once they undergo their "Descent." The drink the prisoners were given is a means of forcing this transformation. To stop this, they must perform a magic ritual before the transformation is complete. Fenström reveals that his skin is already becoming scaly, and his fingers are beginning to web.

Church of Mal'kthinoth

Cooper's Bay is not a welcoming place. It is surrounded on three sides by thick forest that stretches for several miles and a cliffside on the other. Within this Bay sits a dreary village of around thirty buildings arranged haphazardly. Most are rustic dwellings, and the church stands out in contrast, especially as it sits near the edge of the village. The townspeople (**commoners**) walking about appear gloomy and wary, and even at a distance physical abnormalities can be seen. Bulging eyes, pallid scaly skin and hairlessness are all common traits among them. If approached, the townspeople are guarded and distrustful, refusing to answer any but the most basic of questions about the town. At any mention of deep ones, Fenström, or the missing students, the townspeople will gruffly deny any knowledge and rush away abruptly. This may draw the attention of the Children of Mal'kthinoth.



“That’s where they’re holding them,” says Fenström, indicating the church. “There’s a hidden structure beneath it. That’s where we need to get to, but there’s always guards. Any suggestions?”

Encounter Locations

See the map on this page.

1. Hall

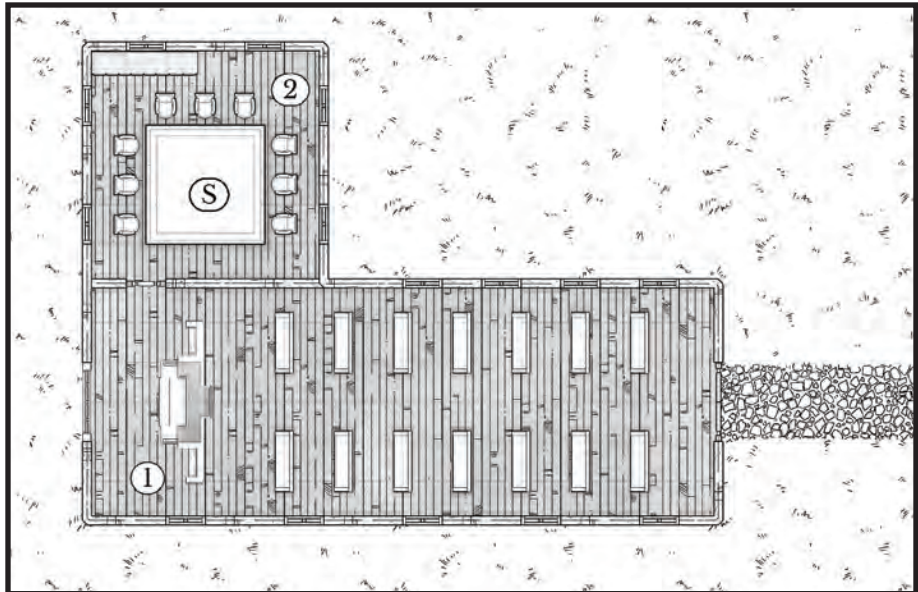
The church is an ‘L’-shaped wooden building. A double door entrance on the south wall leads into a large hall (80 feet long by 30 feet wide). Two columns of pews, separated by a wide aisle, are arranged facing the pulpit at the far end of the room. Idyllic murals of underwater life decorate the walls of this large hall. There is another door beyond the pulpit on the east wall.

Encounter: Church. Four veterans stand guard inside the church. They are hostile towards the characters, demanding that they leave the church as they are not welcome. They will attack if the characters refuse or try to enter the door on the east wall, if Fenström is present, or if the characters say they are cooperating with him.

2. Office

A large square table is the most striking feature of this room. It has nine chairs arranged around three of its sides. A long cabinet sits on the far wall. The shutters in this room are all closed, and the room is lit by oil lamps hanging on the walls.

Secret Door. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a spiral staircase hidden beneath the base of the square table. This is the entrance to the lower chambers. The table stands on rails set into the floor allowing it to be moved easily from above and below.



Lower Chambers

Children of Mal’kthinoth. The lower chambers are strictly off-limits to anyone that is not a cultist, so any trespassers will be attacked on sight. They will try to overpower and capture intruders initially, but if that proves difficult, they will switch tactics and use lethal force. Should the characters capture and interrogate any of the cultists, they can learn the following information with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check:

- The missing students are being held in area 4 of the lower chambers.
- Their transformation into deep ones is almost complete.
- There was a man called Fenström with them who claimed to be a direct descendant of Isla Cooper, but that’s impossible as she “descended” before she had any children.
- Fenström managed to escape while the others with him fought against the cultists. It was like he vanished into thin air.
- The Book of Mal’kthinoth is kept safe by the Beacon of the Church. The Beacon can usually be found in **area 12**.
- The caverns can be dangerous to pass through as there are monsters lurking within them.

General Features

Unless noted otherwise, areas of the lower chambers have the following features:

Walls, Ceilings & Floors. The walls and floors of the chambers are natural stone worked to a smooth finish. The vaulted ceilings rise 15 feet.

Doors. Doors are made of solid oak and have an AC of 15 and 18 hit points, with immunity to poison and psychic damage. Any locked doors require a DC 12 Dexterity check by someone proficient with thieves’ tools to open, or they can break the door open with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Illumination. The chambers are brightly lit by torches hanging in brackets near the ceiling. The caverns are in darkness unless otherwise stated.

Caverns. The walls are natural stone, the floor is covered in loose dirt and sand, and the ceiling varies in height and is strewn with stalactites. The caverns are cold and the sound of the ocean echoes through them.

Wandering Encounters. While the characters are exploring the lower chambers, you should roll a d20 each time they enter a room/corridor that does not have a keyed encounter to see if they meet any wandering cult-

ists. They will have an encounter on a roll of 16 and above. Roll a d10 and check against the random encounter table below:

d10	Encounter
1	2 cult fanatics and 1 veteran
2	2 cult fanatics
3	1 veteran and 1 cult fanatic
4	3 cultists
5	1 veterans
6	2 cultists
7	1 cult fanatic
8	1 cultist
9	2 cultists and 1 cult fanatic
10	2 veterans

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Lower Chambers on page 80.

1. Stairwell

The staircase descends 100 feet before opening into a large square room supported by heavy stone columns, three of them intact and debris of a fourth scattered about.

2. Vestibule

This room is dominated by a 20-foot statue in an alcove on the south wall. It shows a bulging body covered in scales and topped by a snarling fish head with bulbous eyes, the open mouth revealing rows of razor-sharp teeth. The back and neck bear large fins, sprouting like hideous plumage, which then flows down into an eel-like tail, coiled beneath it like a powerful spring. Two abnormally long arms end in webbed hands and viciously hooked claws. The statue bears the inscription “Father Mal’kthinoth.” A locked door leads west to **area 14**.

3. Font Entrance

The wall paintings in this room are badly faded but some murals remain. They seem to be underwater scenes of deep ones leading humans down towards a large city on the seafloor. A font stands on a raised dais in the

northwest corner of the room. It is filled with saltwater. A locked door on the south wall leads to **area 14**.

4. Prison

This long chamber has three evenly spaced stone pillars, with several sets of manacles affixed to each with heavy iron bolts. There are two doors leading from this room, one on the west wall and the other the east. Both are locked.

Encounter: Prisoners. This room is guarded by two **veterans** who are not particularly attentive. Stealthy characters can take them by surprise. There are also three **deep ones** (see Appendix D), each manacled to a different pillar. Tattered clothes cling to them and are strewn on the floor around them. If unchained, they will head to **area 19**, attacking anyone that tries to stop them. Once there, they will jump into the ocean and disappear.

Treasure: Shredded Clothes. Within the tattered remains of the clothes, the characters will find a journal belonging to one of the missing students. The last few entries of the journal indicate that Fenström was acting strangely since they got close to Cooper’s Bay, and that his skin condition had been getting worse. There is also a leather pouch containing 300 gp.

5. Storeroom

The room is piled with crates and barrels of mundane supplies. A locked, iron-barred gate to the east leads to **area 6**. The walls are bare save for torch brackets. This room is in darkness.

Secret Room A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the torch bracket on the south wall hangs askew. Pulling on it causes a wall panel to slide up revealing the hidden alcove. Propped against the back wall are the skeletal remains of Elgin Cooper. A monogrammed gold ring (worth 200 gp) bears the initials “EC” and hangs loosely on a

fingerbone. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals a stab wound in the back of the skull as the cause of death.

6. Armory

Racks of weapons and armor line the walls. A large wooden table sits in the middle of the room, surrounded by several stools. The exits are a door on the east wall and a locked, iron-barred gate that is shared with **area 5** on the west wall.

Encounter: All In. Seated around the table are two **cultists** and two **veterans** playing a heated game of poker.

Treasure: Stakes. The table has a total of 300 sp scattered across its surface from the card game.

7. Great Hall

The south end of the room holds two long wooden tables with benches on either side. The once-grand room now serves as a mess hall. There is some damage to the southwestern wall as it and parts of the ceiling have collapsed. Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher hear whispered voices and quiet snores coming from **area 8**.

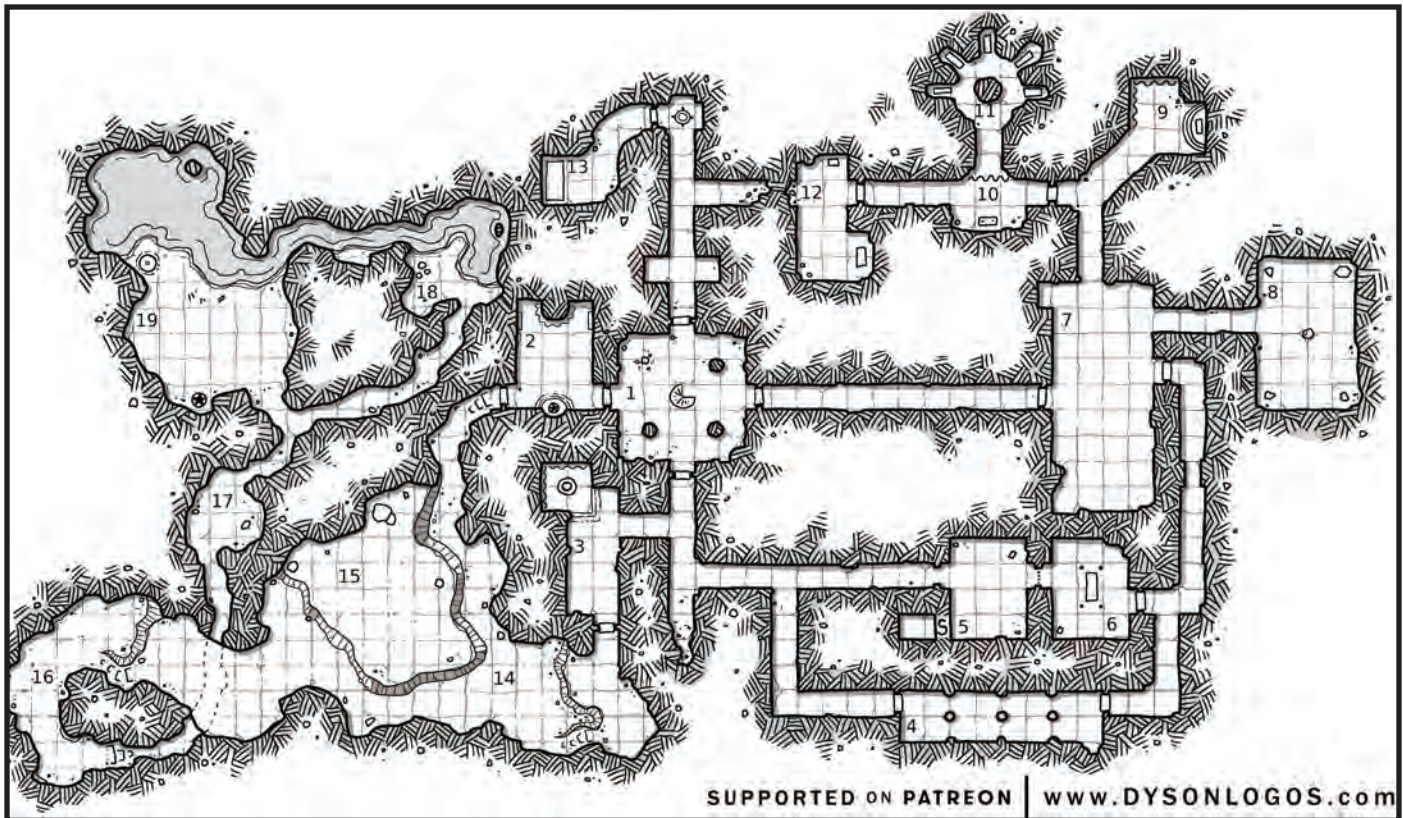
8. Lesser Gallery

Calming underwater scenes are painted on the stone walls of this room. Bunk beds are placed around the walls to make a dormitory for the gathered cultists. This room is in darkness.

Encounter: Resting. Two **cult fanatics** and six **cultists** are sleeping here. They will awaken at any noise above a whisper or if the room is lit.

9. Shrine

A raised dais and an ornately carved coral bench sit against the eastern wall in this room. A vivid mural depicting a colossal deep one with an eels tail instead of legs is painted directly behind the bench. It towers over the underwater city depicted, and the deep ones that swim around it reverently.



10. Crypt Entrance

A simple bench sits in an alcove of the corridor across from a passage leading north that is obscured by velvet curtains bearing the crest of the Cooper family. A door is to the east, while to the west the corridor continues on.

Encounter: Guards. Two bored veterans lounge on the bench and “guard” this corridor.

11. Crypt

A huge central column supports the flat ceiling in this room, and five ornate sarcophagi are placed in alcoves around the room. Each bears a name of the founding Cooper family (Elgin, Meredith, Isla, Aldous, and Derwent), and on the central column is the inscription “They have descended before us. They are our Beacons which guide our path.”

Hazard: Black Mold. Black mold has grown on the sarcophagi. Opening any of the sarcophagi causes the mold to release a cloud of spores that fills a 15-foot cube originating from the mold. Any creature in the area

must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 17 (3d10) poison damage. Sunlight or any amount of fire damage instantly destroys black mold.

Treasure: Sarcophagi. The sarcophagi contain no remains but are filled with gold and platinum jewelry worth 5,000 gp and 1,000 pp in total. There are also 350 gp worth of assorted gems.

12. Beacon’s Quarters

This room has been repurposed into a living space for the Beacon. A bed, desk, and chest are the only furniture in the room. The only exit is the door on the east wall.

Encounter: The Beacon. The Beacon (LE human priest) is here being attended to by two of the **cult fanatics**. If the fanatics are killed or the priest is reduced to half his hit points or fewer, he will surrender and attempt to parlay. He will offer the characters treasure (the stash here and in the crypt) if the characters will spare his life. He has the key to the

footlocker and the *Book of Mal’kthinoth* on his person. He also knows the following information:

- Elgin Cooper refused to honor the deal with the deep ones when he discovered the truth about the elixir.
- In retribution, the deep ones sank the ship carrying Elgin’s wife and daughter. This caused Elgin to snap and attempt to burn the town down as he believed everyone had to die because they were all destined to become those monsters.
- His son Aldous fought with him to stop him, and Elgin was killed in the struggle. Aldous then hid the body and came up with the lie that his father, mother, and sister had undergone the transformation and descended already to prepare the way for the townspeople.
- Aldous then began honoring the agreement with the deep ones again and he started the Church of Mal’kthinoth and became its first Beacon.

Treasure: Footlocker. The chest is locked but a successful DC 15 Dexterity check by someone proficient with thieves' tools, or a successful DC 18 Strength check can open it. It contains 2,000 gp, one *potion of supreme healing* and one *potion of invisibility*. It also contains Aldous Cooper's journal which holds all of the information that the Beacon can tell.

13. Kitchen

A rustic kitchen with a large counter and stove on the west wall and sacks of supplies stored against the south wall. The only entrance is the door to the east. Immediately outside this door is a shallow well of fresh water.



14. Cavern

This sprawling natural cavern winds from the entrance to **area 2** in the north, down to the eastern steps leading to the entrance to **area 3**, before curving to the west from where the sounds of the ocean emanate. The area is dotted with stalactites and stalagmites. The ceiling is 40 feet above the floor.

Encounter: Ropers. Two **ropers** are hiding here among the outcroppings. They will attack any creature that comes in range and then attempt to drag their prey away to eat in comfort.

15. Plateau

This area sits 20 feet above the cavern floor. Stalactites hang from the ceiling and a few stalagmites climb towards the ceiling 20 feet above. Otherwise, there is nothing of interest here.

16. Stairs

These roughly hewn steps seem very old and worn. They descend 15 feet before snaking back on themselves and descending another 10 feet and heading north in a narrow tunnel that passes under the cavern above.

17. Stirge Nest

The tunnel blossoms into a cave, littered with small bones. The area smells strongly of ammonia. The sound of waves lapping a shore drift from the north.

Encounter: Stirges. Twenty **stirges** hang from the ceiling in this room. They will attack any creature that enters the cavern, retreating to the south only when half of them have been killed.

18. East cove

The passage opens to a small, secluded beach but otherwise there is nothing of interest here.

19. Beach

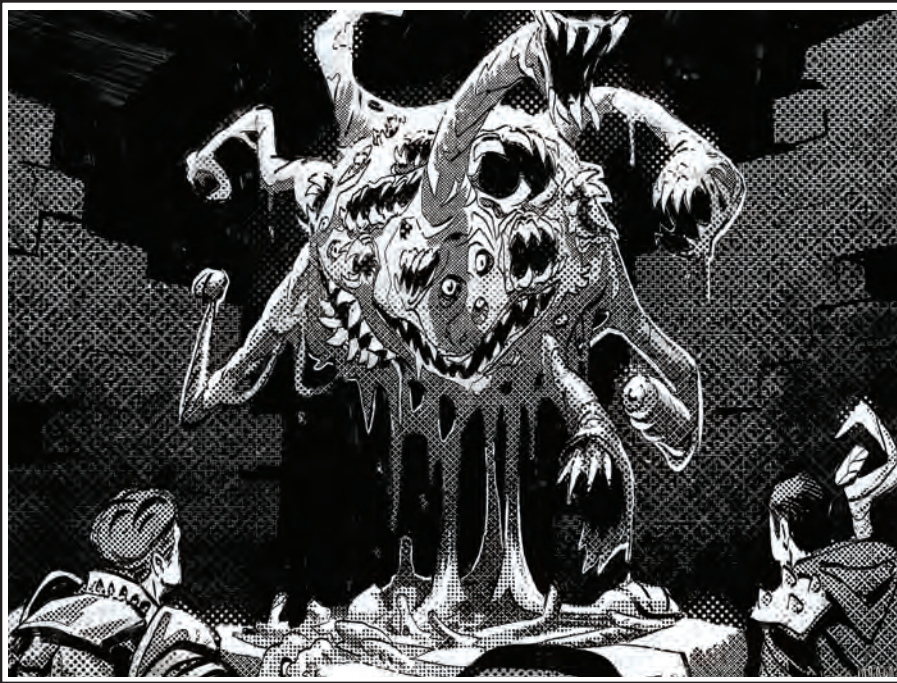
The passage opens into a large interior beach, the smell of the ocean filling the air. The dark water laps at the beach. A giant bronze bell hangs from a mount near the water's edge. Against the south wall stands another statue depicting "Father

Mal'kthinoth" (see **area 2**), though this one is even larger, standing 30 feet tall. Upon reaching the beach, the characters see Fenström as he finishes casting a powerful ritual on the beach, the ocean swelling in spiral waves as he does so. He has cast a ritual to summon creatures to destroy the town, believing he has the power to control them.

Encounter: Deep Ones. Fenström is being protected by seven **deep ones** (see Appendix D) who will attack any creature that enters the area. Fenström laughs and thanks the characters for their help as he could never have completed his plan without the distraction they caused. He will attack the characters from range with his spells. On the third round, a huge glowing amorphous blob, covered in blinking, glassy black eyes and with myriad tendrils writhing from it (**shoggoth**, see Appendix D) emerges from the roiling water. The shoggoth will attack any creature within range, preferring to use its **Engulf** attack wherever possible. The deep ones are smart enough to know this and will try to avoid the shoggoth whenever possible. If the shoggoth attacks Fenström, he automatically fails any saving throw required. He will plead for help during the attack. Should the shoggoth be reduced to 90 hit points or fewer, it will retreat back into the waters.

Concluding the Adventure

The characters can attempt to tell the people the truth about the church but most of the townspeople would rather believe the lie. Only if they have proof of the deceptions of the church (Elgin's remains and/or Aldous' journal) will they believe them. Otherwise, the people will simply ask the characters to leave town and never return. For their meddling though, the characters have drawn the attention of the deep ones, and whenever they find themselves in coastal regions, they will have the ever-present feeling of being watched. Ω



OATHBREAKER'S TOWER

An adventure for level 13 characters

Written by **Thomas Johnson**
Cartography by **Thomas Johnson**
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, William McAusland,**
and **Daniel F. Walthall**

Oathbreaker's Tower is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for three to five characters of 12th to 14th level and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 13.

A fallen paladin betrayed her oaths to gain immortality and led an army of fiends against the world. The Oathbreaker was eventually defeated and imprisoned under a cursed tower. Centuries have passed and while the memory of the Oathbreaker was forgotten, the tower's corruption is beginning to spread and threatens civilization once more. This adventure takes place in the Freelands campaign setting but easily fits into any existing campaign with only a few modifications.

Adventure Background

It's been a thousand years since the fallen paladin Leondra Nightbreaker—now called Oathbreaker—led a devil army to ravage Shadowmist Vale. Forsaking her vows and betraying Sylvanis, the goddess of life, the Oathbreaker sold her soul to an archfiend in exchange for immortality. She slaughtered hundreds in the name of her new patron and turned the once shining tower dedicated to her former goddess into a corrupted monument full of horrors.

A band of heroes cleaved through the fiends and defeated the Oathbreaker, binding her in the catacombs beneath her fortress. They were unwilling to allow her to reform in the lower planes and sealed her behind holy wards to spend eternity imprisoned. The heroes founded the Legion of the Golden Rays and dedicated themselves to watching over the Oathbreaker until they could find a way to cleanse her evil once and for all.

The legion failed in its mission, falling victim to the tower's evil, and the corruption began to spread once more. Over the centuries, the tower became home to various creatures inexplicably drawn to its evil pres-

ence but never learning of the prison hidden beneath. The most recent occupants—a nest of vampires and other undead—prey upon travelers and anyone foolish enough to attempt to enter their cursed home.

Adventure Summary

A vampire clan seeking to resurrect their fallen master; a necromancer turned into an abomination after an experiment went awry; the undead remains of the former legionnaires who once guarded the fiendish prisoners hidden below: These are the main obstacles that the characters will need to overcome as they make their way through the tower before ultimately coming face to face with the Oathbreaker herself.

Nightshade Vampire Clan. The vampire Roslyn Nightshade was killed by a band of adventurers a little over a year ago. Her loyal spawn that survived the attack—even after gaining their independence through the death of their master—secreted her remains away to the tower after being drawn to its corruption. They have been attacking and kidnapping travelers in the area to drain them on the altar and over their master's bones. In their madness, they believe they can resurrect Roslyn using the desecrated altar in the temple. Throughout the tower are clues to resurrecting the ancient vampire using a necromancer's libram and a living heart.

The Flesh Reviver. Seizar the Reviver was a powerful necromancer who used the corrupted tower as his lair for decades before he was transformed in a failed magical experiment. Trapped in his laboratory, Seizar sits in wait for someone foolish enough to free him. His gory constructs still mindlessly roam the corridors, and the spirits of his victims are trapped within the tower's walls. The other tower residents warily avoid these fleshy abominations and steer clear of the necromancer's former lair. With the help Earmung the

Worm, a necromancer trapped in his own skull, the characters will need to face down Seizar's failed experiments and put an end to the abomination that he has become.

The Undead Legion. The Legion of the Golden Rays was formed after the defeat of the Oathbreaker to cleanse the corruption and guard her prison. Years were spent in the attempt, but the legion eventually succumbed to the corruption of the tower and turned on one another. The angry undead spirits of the once bright clerics and warriors now stalk the upper floor. They knew the true secrets of the tower but took them to their graves.

The Oathbreaker. The corrupted tower stands above a hidden catacomb that holds a powerful and dangerous fiend—the fallen paladin Leandra Oathbreaker. Trapped with her devilish soldiers, she waits patiently for the tower to be cleansed and her imprisonment ended. She does not know that her own descendant is in the tower, drawn here to put an end to the ancestor whose betrayal cursed her bloodline and caused her to be born a tiefling.

Adventure Hooks

Here are a few ways to get your characters hooked into this adventure:

The Shadow Tower. A rumor reaches the party of a shadowy tower that sits in a withered forest, defiled by the undead that have corrupted the once sacred place. Its evil is spreading and affecting the locals who have felt its presence growing. The cursed tower must be cleansed before its influence grows too powerful and infects the entire region with its corruption.

Missing Persons. Reports of missing people have been increasing lately. Travelers who were last seen entering the withered forest have disappeared without a trace. Some of these missing people may be important to the characters or to NPCs they have interacted with in the past. Per-

haps the characters are hired to find a specific person who vanished.

On the Hunt. The characters may have encountered one of the vampires in the cursed tower on a previous adventure and tracked them there. Alternatively, the party may be hunting down a nemesis and found clues leading them to believe their foe could be found at the tower. Perhaps this villain is trying to unleash the Oathbreaker onto the world once more or is seeking Seizar the Reviver's notes (see *The Flesh Reviver*, above).

Brackensworth

A small city in the northeast corner of the Freelands, Brackensworth is a den of criminals, bandits, minor warlords, and general scum of the earth types. This city is where the characters can gather local information and prepare to enter the withered forest. The settlement is the closest civilization to Oathbreaker Tower, known to locals only as the Shadow Tower. Characters spending time in any of the local taverns can learn the following rumors:

- The forest to the northeast has always been dangerous, but it's become worse in the last few years. Something is corrupting the trees and land, turning them foul.
- Only adventurers brave enough—or stupid enough—venture near the Shadow Tower. The undead stalk its halls, and their evil is responsible for the corruption that is infecting the forest.
- Some say that a cult has taken root in the Shadow Tower, and they are sacrificing kidnapped travelers in rituals to their evil god. The cult wishes to bring about the end of days and flood the land with their undead armies.



Arriving at the Tower

The cursed tower sits near the base of the Motionless Mountains, surrounded by a thick forest far from civilization. The path leading there meanders through a lush wood and around the foothills leading closer to the massive mountain range to the north. The heavily overgrown path has the occasional worked stone peeking through the grass, hinting at the old road that once paved the way centuries ago. The characters may stumble upon some rare, vine-choked ruins being reclaimed by nature, the last vestiges of the ancient towns that once stood here.

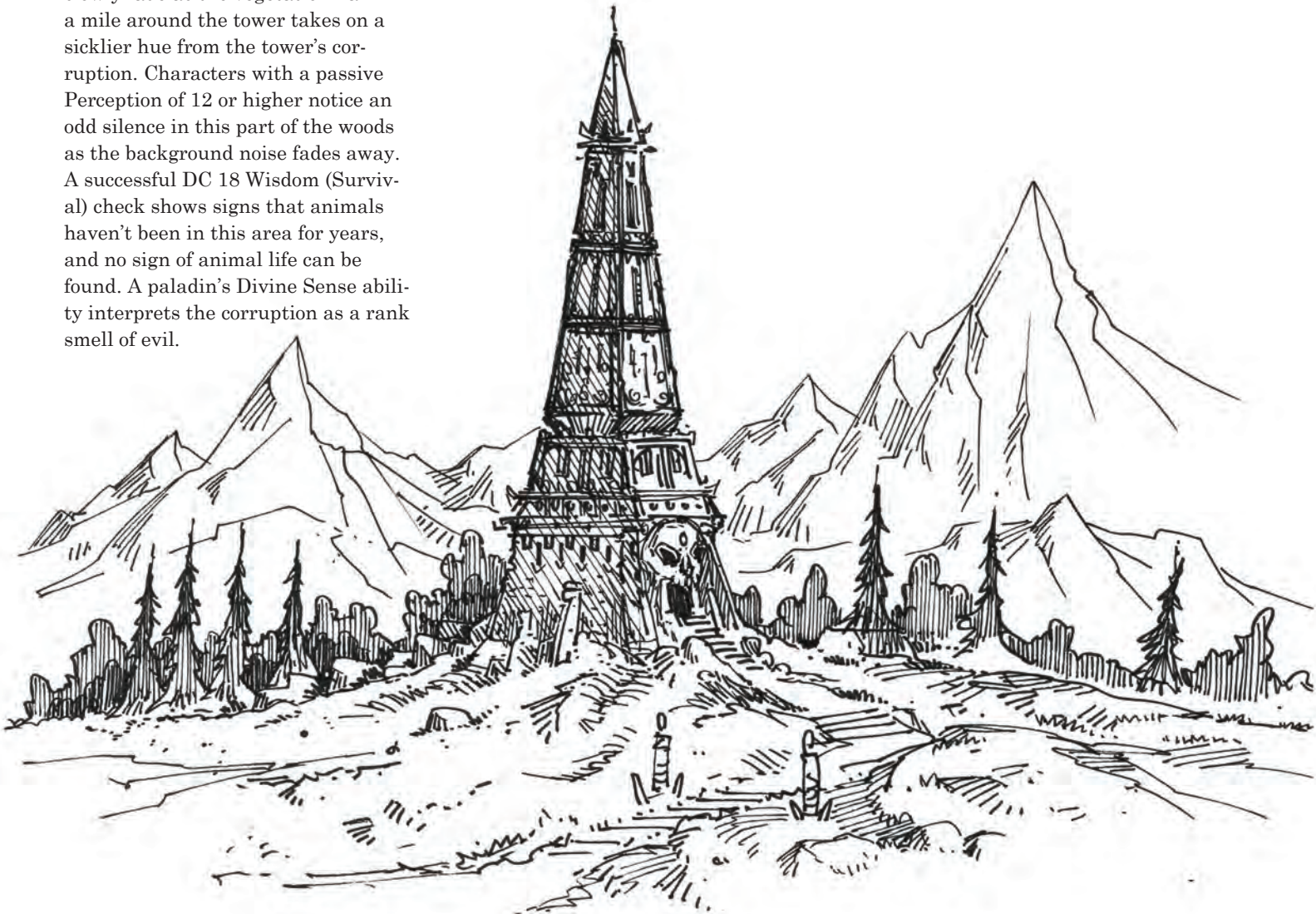
The forest's lush green begins to slowly fade as the vegetation half a mile around the tower takes on a sicklier hue from the tower's corruption. Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher notice an odd silence in this part of the woods as the background noise fades away. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check shows signs that animals haven't been in this area for years, and no sign of animal life can be found. A paladin's Divine Sense ability interprets the corruption as a rank smell of evil.

The dark tower sits nestled against a rocky hill at the base of a small mountain, thrusting high above the treetops like a dagger piercing the sky. The surrounding area is covered in corrupted plant life that gives off a stench of rot and decay. The structure itself reaches 200 feet above the forest floor and is elaborately decorated with crumbling arches, broken statues, collapsed balconies, and shattered stained glass windows. Once a majestic holy temple, the tower now exudes an evil aura and is covered with thorny black vines and rotting vegetation.

When the characters arrive at the tower, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A massive dark tower shrouded in darkness thrusts from the hilltop ahead. The air grows colder with every step closer, and the already muted sounds of the forest around you grow into a ringing silence. Thick and thorny vines cover the two-hundred-foot-high tower as if trying to pull it back down to earth. Sweeping arches and broken statues decorate the front facade, and a set of stone stairs leads up to an elaborately carved set of stone doors. The shadowy tower seems to absorb the sunlight around it, and it grows darker the closer you get.

You know that you look upon a thing of pure evil.



Oathbreaker's Tower

Once known as the Shining Citadel, this massive tower was corrupted and tainted by Leondra Nightbreaker's betrayal of her oaths. Abandoning all her principles and allying herself with an archfiend, the Oathbreaker turned the opulent temple dedicated to Sylvanis, the goddess of life, into a fortress of horrors. The desecration was reflected in the twisted appearance of the structure, the corruption turning the once gleaming temple into a shadowy dagger of nightmarish angles. Gargoyles and monsters decorate niches that once held angelic statues, and perpetual darkness pervades the building, absorbing sunlight before it can enter (see General Features below).

Tower Denizens

Various factions in the tower coexist with an uneasy truce. The lower floors are controlled by a nest of vampire spawn who found themselves drawn to the tower's corruption. They know nothing of the tower's history and are little more than feral animals. The spirits of the former legionnaires inhabit the upper floors, and they have little to no memory of their former lives after centuries of fermenting in their hatred of the living. Constructs and other creatures from past occupants stalk the halls. The experiments of one particularly nasty necromancer still roam the corridors of the second floor while he himself is trapped in his laboratory as a gibbering abomination.

The vampires are dressed in the torn rags of more modern clothing while the legionnaires wear the remnants of their ancient armor and robes. While all groups are tied to the tower through its corruption and walk freely between levels, they do not have a common shared goal, instead focusing on their particular purposes or needs.

Roaming Monsters

The tower's corruption is constantly calling out to those that resonate with its evil. Any area that the characters have cleared will have new occupants within 24 hours. Use the roaming monster table below to determine what the group will be and fill the area with 50% of the total rolled. After 48 hours, the area will be 100% filled once more. For every 4 hours that the characters spend in the tower, roll a d20. On a roll of 18 or higher, roll a d8 and consult the roaming monster table to determine what the characters encounter.

Roaming Monster Table.

d8	Monster
1	1d6 wights
2	1d3 failed experiments (p. 92)
3	2d4+2 shadows
4	1d3 flesh golems
5	1d4 wraiths
6	1d4+2 vampire spawn
7	2d6+2 specters
8	1d4+2 gargoyles

General Features

These general features are prominent throughout the tower unless otherwise noted in the area descriptions:

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The 200-foot-tall tower is built entirely of 4-foot-thick granite blocks with 1-foot-thick interior walls containing vertical iron bars spaced 2 feet apart inside of them. Ceiling heights in most rooms are 12 feet and range to 40 feet in rooms such as the Main Temple (**area 3**). The floors are made of tiled stone and, unless otherwise noted, are clear of debris. The exterior of the building is completely covered in razor-thorned vines (see wilderness hazards in the *DMG*).

Doors. The doors in the tower are 4-inch-thick stone, and each has an AC of 17, 18 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. Secret doors can be found with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Percep-

tion) check. Normal locked doors can be opened with thieves' tools and a successful DC 20 Dexterity check. Arcane locked doors can be bypassed by someone who makes a successful DC 30 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or with a *knock* spell or similar magic effect.

Cursed Darkness. The cursed tower is blanketed in perpetual darkness that cannot be dispelled unless the altar in the main temple is cleansed. This darkness cannot be pierced by natural sunlight or other nonmagical light sources. Characters with darkvision can see through this darkness, and magical light works normally. The descriptions of the areas as provided below assume the characters are using magical light or have darkvision.

Climate. No matter the weather outside, the tower's interior is cold due to the corrupted altar in the Main Temple (**area 3**). Non-living creatures in the tower are immune to any cold effects in the tower.

Desecrated Ground. The corrupted tower is considered desecrated ground, and undead have advantage on all saving throws while inside. A vial of holy water cleanses a 10-square-foot area for 1 hour, and a *hallow* spell cleanses a 60-square-foot area for 24 hours. Cleansing the altar in the Main Temple causes the desecration to dissipate from the tower in 1d3 weeks. This desecrated ground can be discerned through a *detect evil and good spell* and a paladin's Divine Sense.

Magical Travel. The upper tower is not magically protected, and the characters can use spells such as *ethereality*, *gaseous form*, and *fly* to reach the upper levels. However, the lower catacombs beneath the tower are protected by a *forbiddance* spell that prevents magical means of teleporting into it. Spells such as *passwall* create openings in the stonework, but the iron bars inside the walls must still be bent aside with a DC 25 Strength check.

Encounter Locations

The following descriptions correspond to the keyed locations on the provided map of the tower.

1. Entrance Hall

The large double doors leading to this room from the outside sit open. When the characters enter the room, read aloud the following:

The walls of this entrance hall are painted with faded yet elaborate frescos of angelic figures fighting a horde of demonic horrors. Thick stone columns reach twenty feet high, and each is carved with a nightmarish collection of gargoyles, devilish figures, and open-mouthed faces screaming in terror. The room is eerily silent as if holding its breath.

This area is under the effects of a permanent *silence* spell that is part of the room and cannot be dispelled.

Encounter: Gargoyle Guardians.

There are six three-armed **gargoyles** (their multiattack allows three attacks: one bite attack and two claw attacks) hiding among the statues and carvings that only attack living creatures. They attempt to ambush the characters from above, and each attempts to flee if dropped to a quarter of its hit points. When three of them have been defeated or flee, the rest follow suit. The gargoyles that escape regroup outside and attack the characters if they step out of the tower or onto the Main Balcony (**area 22**).

Painted Frescos. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History or Religion) check can discern that the frescos detail out battle scenes of a holy sect of warriors fighting under the banner of Sylvanis against a demonic army. The corruption of the tower has twisted them to show the fiends winning and slaughtering the sect. They also discern that the frescos are at least a thousand years old.

Secret Door. A character actively searching who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the secret door to **area 10**. It can be opened by pressing a button disguised as a holy symbol (the eight-rayed sun of Sylvanis) painted on a warrior's shield in the fresco.

2. Broken Statues

A broad set of steps leads down into a short, carpeted hallway. Niches line the walls on either side, each filled with the shattered remains of a sculpture. A rotten stench hangs in the air but has no apparent source.

Hazard: Rotten Miasma. The smell comes from a crack in the wall leading to the Rotten Well (**area 11**). While not as potent as it is in the well room, anyone walking through this hallway must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become nauseous from the smell and be poisoned for 1 hour.

3. Main Temple

A character that touches any door leading to this room can feel a sense of biting cold emanating from within. When the characters first open the door to this room, read aloud the following:

A blast of frigid air bursts through the doorway, and you instantly see your breath form a cloud of vapor. An expansive shadowy ceiling hangs sixty feet high above this large temple. Ebony, dagger-like protrusions reach downward from supporting arches, their glistening surfaces ebbing and flowing like smoke. Carved into the center of the room is an elaborate golden eight-rayed sun. Scattered bones of all types carpet the floor, leading to a short flight of stairs and an altar at the north end of the temple. Shadows pour off the altar and climb the wall behind it, feeding into the blackness covering the ceiling. A sense of pure evil emanates from the altar.

This room is colder than any other in the tower and under the effects of *Extreme Cold* (see *Wilderness Survival* in the *DMG*). The desecration of this temple is more powerful here and negates the effects of *hallow* and other cleansing spells and items. Any creature attempting to cast such a spell gets an intuitive sense that it will not work beforehand. If the creature still attempts to cast the spell, it fails, and the spell slot is expended.

Desecrated Altar. The desecrated altar is the source of the corruption and spreads the cold and darkness prevalent in the tower. Cleansing the altar removes the desecrated ground and cold effects (see *General Features*) from the tower. The altar can only be reconsecrated by a cleric or paladin spending 4 hours using the high priest's prayer book (see **area 6**) and a holy thurible (see **area 36**).

Once reconsecrated, the character who completed the ritual intuitively knows that a weapon placed onto the altar and prayed over for 10 minutes becomes blessed for 24 hours. A blessed weapon is considered magical and deals an additional 1d8 radiant damage on a successful hit. The altar can only be used once per day. Moving the 500-pound altar removes the ability and requires it to be reconsecrated.

If the high priest's skull (see **area 6**) is placed onto the consecrated altar, it creates a 30-foot-wide consecrated ground effect as per a *hallow* spell set against undead. Removing the skull or casting *dispel magic* on it ends this effect.

Encounter: Nightshade Clan.

There are four **vampire spawn** (two at the altar and two on the balcony in the area marked 3b) and two **gargoyles** perched in the area marked 3a. The spawn attack while taunting the characters, saying, "Your blood will bring our mistress back to us!" They fight to the death, frantic to defend their master's remains. If captured and interrogated, they know nothing about the tower other than its corruption drew them there, and

they are using a torn page of a ritual book in an attempt to resurrect their master.

Vampire Remains. The charred corpse of the vampire Roslyn Nightshade is splayed across the altar. The vampire spawn have been soaking it with blood in a failed ritual to attempt to use the desecrated altar to resurrect her. If the characters use the Libram of Everlasting Life from Seizar's Chambers (see **area 27**) in combination with the desecrated altar, they can revive the vampire matriarch (see Reviving Roslyn Nightshade below). This cannot be done if the altar is reconsecrated.

Treasure. One vampire spawn has a crumpled and blood-stained page ripped from the Libram of Everlasting Life found in Seizar's Chamber (**area 27**). A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check can determine that it is part of an elaborate ritual to raise the undead, but it is incomplete. Each gargoyle is wearing an onyx-studded collar worth 500 gp.

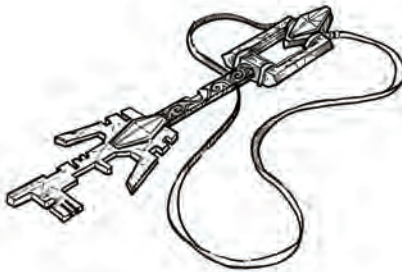
Reviving Roslyn Nightshade. Roslyn is a 700-year-old vampire who was recently killed by a band of adventurers, and her remains brought to the tower by her spawn. Once the youngest daughter of a wealthy noble family, she has spent her undeath trapped in the body of an 8-year-old girl but has the wisdom and experience of centuries. Unlike her now feral spawn, Roslyn is sophisticated, well-spoken, and not driven by bloodlust. If revived using the desecrated altar and the Libram of Everlasting Life (see area 27), she thanks the adventurers and gladly imparts the knowledge she has of the tower if they remain peaceful, or shapechanges into mist and attempts to escape if they are hostile. She knows the true story of the Oathbreaker as outlined in the Backstory.

While thankful for their assistance in resurrecting her, Roslyn has no desire to help the characters any further than imparting information,

and she flees the tower at the first opportunity.

Opening the Catacombs. The entrance to the circular tomb is hidden under the prominent sun symbol on the temple floor. The sliding panels are 4-foot-thick stone blocks lined with lead that hides the magical nature of its lock. The lock responds only to having the three linked keys placed onto the altar together: the golden sword in area 15, the golden staff in area 21, and the silver chalice in area 41. The characters learn about the keys by talking to the spirit of the high priest in area 6, researching documents in the Scriptorium (area 10), or by speaking to the treant in area 35 or the legionnaire spirits in area 38.

Once the keys are placed on the altar, a beam of light shoots from them towards the sun symbol on the floor. The four panels slide open to reveal a spiral staircase leading down into the catacombs (see page 100). Once the seal has been broken, the *forbiddance* spell it held in place is destroyed, releasing the Oathbreaker and devils trapped within.



4. Meat Locker

Six pale, decaying corpses, with chained hooks thrust through their ankles, hang from the ceiling in this room. Bite marks cover the bodies, and large chunks of flesh appear to be torn off each of them.

The bodies in this room are the missing travelers and other unfortunates who ran afoul of the vampire spawn. They were killed in the pseudo-ritual the vampires are conducting in an attempt to raise their slain master. If

the characters are searching for missing people (see Adventure Hooks), they may be found among the bodies hanging here.

Treasure. Searching the bodies uncovers a small collection of coins totaling 35 gp, 22 sp, 15 cp, and a book of bad poetry entitled *A Hundred Years of Tears* worth 25 gp to a collector. A character that searches the bodies and succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a piece of parchment tucked into a corpse's boot wrapped around a bloody pinkie finger wearing a small gold ring (25 gp). The parchment bears the cryptic message, "I know what you did, and I'm coming for you. ~ M."

The once-white robes in the wardrobes are the remains of the ancient order that used to worship in the temple, and they bear the eight-rayed sun symbol of Sylvanis on the left breast. Tucked into a drawer at the bottom of one wardrobe is a small gold holy symbol (50 gp) of Sylvanis.

5. Shadow Hall

Relief carvings on the walls of this long hallway depict crowds of humanoids being attacked by fiends, with a winged and horned woman in the center of the horde, holding aloft a golden sword. The devils appear to be flowing outward from her, and the stonework seems to ebb and flow as if it were liquid.

Trap: Shadow Elementals. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of conjuration magic. Touching the golden sword causes three **shadow elementals** (they use the **water elemental** stat block but do not have the Freeze trait, and their water is liquid shadow) to disengage from the stonework and attack the character who touched the gold. This effect can be triggered indefinitely. A *dispel magic* spell or similar effect removes the enchantment from the gold, leaving it inert. A character proficient in mason's tools can spend 1 hour to remove gold leaf worth 100 gp.

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6. High Priest's Office

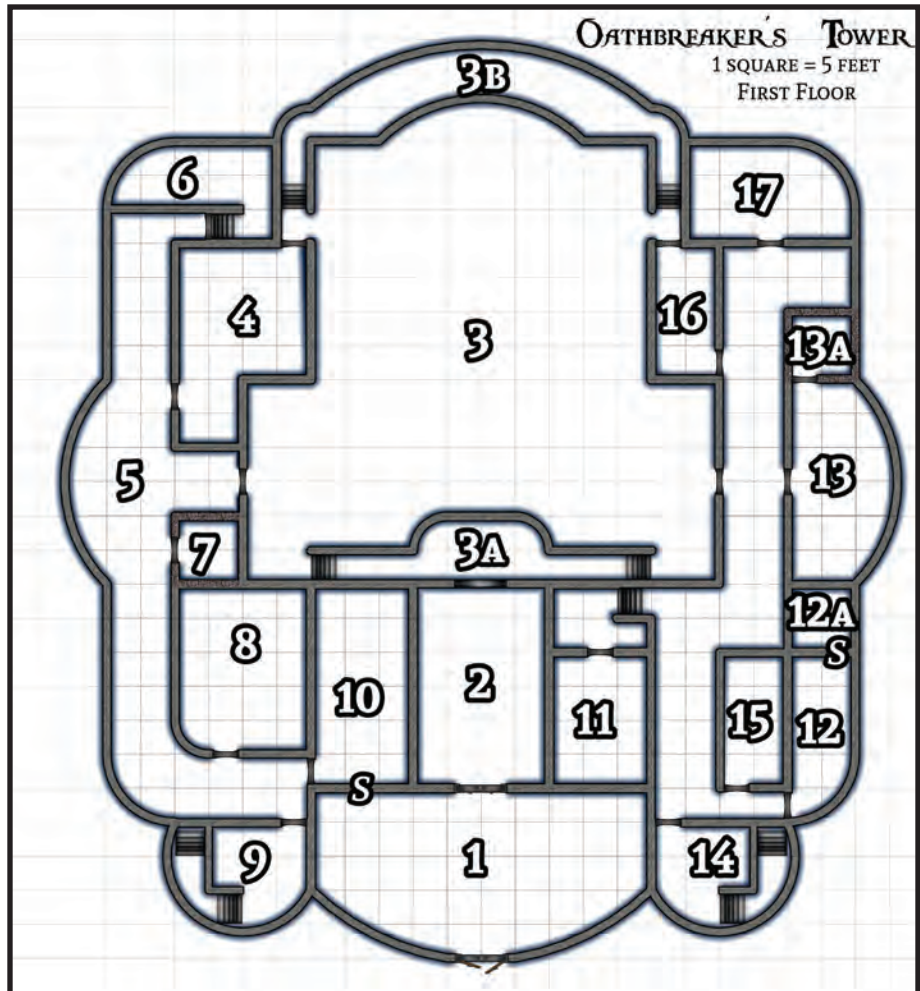
The door to this room is locked (see General Features). When the characters enter, read aloud the following:

A short flight of stairs leads to an office lined with bookshelves packed with dusty scrolls and leather-bound books. Against the far wall, a mass of glistening black stone juts from the wall and holds aloft a crystalline skeleton.

The skeleton is of the former high priest of Sylvanis named Fenian. Killed by the Oathbreaker centuries ago, the corruption of the tower has infected his remains and feeds off the power he once held. His spirit can be brought back for questioning through the use of a *speak with dead* or similar spell, and he can impart the following helpful information:

- Leondra Nightbreaker was the temple's most powerful paladin and his lover.
- The Oathbreaker betrayed the order and killed him along with the rest of the faithful.
- The altar can be consecrated using a ritual in his prayer book and a thurible of Sylvanis on the altar.
- The Oathbreaker threw her blade into the Well of Despair (area 11).
- To reach the catacombs (see page 100), the altar must first be cleansed, and the keys of the faithful placed upon them. He knows that the keys are a golden sword, a golden staff, and a silver chalice, but he does not know where they are currently located.

Treasure. Fenian's crystalline skull is the only part of the skeleton not held in stone and can be pried from the neck with a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. The stone surrounding the skeleton is immune to being worked on with tools that are not adamantine. The skull can be used as a holy symbol. If it is placed on the consecrated altar in the Main Temple, it turns an area in a 30-foot radius around the altar into a perma-



nent *hallow* spell set against undead.

Prayer Book. A character who searches the bookshelves and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check finds a *spell scroll of mass cure wounds* and the high priest's spellbook. A character proficient in Religion recognizes a ritual inside the book that can cleanse the altar in the main temple (see area 3) if used with a special thurible (found in area 36).

7. Washroom

This small washroom contains an open toilet sitting off to the side with a fetid stench wafting from it and a silver-framed mirror above a wash basin filled with congealed blood. Glowing bloody sigils cover the mirror's surface.

A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of conjuration magic on the mirror. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes the sigils as part of a teleportation spell. Anyone touching the sigils on the mirror is instantly teleported to the Oubliette (area 12a) along with anything they are carrying or wearing. If the mirror is broken, such as by throwing a heavy object against it, the teleportation magic fades.

Encounter: Toilet Pudding. A **black pudding** is in the toilet and attacks any creature that steps within 5 feet of it with its pseudopod before exiting. If the pudding or any of its Splits are reduced to less than half their hit points, each squeezes through a tiny crack in the wall to the Shrine of Darkness (area 8), where they hide on the ceiling.

8. Shrine of Darkness

A statue of a winged devil dominates the room. The devil is crushing a humanoid beneath its clawed feet and holding an iron crown aloft with a red gem in the center.

The iron crown can be easily removed from the statue's hand, and a *detect magic* spell shows it has an aura of transmutation magic. Anyone who attempts to wear the crown must make a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw, taking 75 (10d6 + 40) psychic damage on a failed save. If this damage reduces the wearer to 0 hit points, they are disintegrated as if by a *disintegrate* spell. While wearing the crown, the wearer is considered undead for the purposes of consecrated or desecrated ground. Removing the crown from the tower causes it to vanish and reappear in the hands of the statue.

9. Western Stairwell

This small tower room holds a handful of broken crates and a flight of stairs.

The door between this stairwell and **area 18** is locked.

10. Scriptorium

The walls of this library are lined with empty bookshelves. The floor is covered in the shredded remains of the books they once held.

The Nightshade vampire spawn tore this room apart in their vain search for more of the Libram of Everlasting Life (see **area 27**). A character who spends at least 10 minutes searching through the documents and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers the following pieces of helpful information about the former temple:

- The temple was dedicated to Sylvanis, the goddess of life.
- An order of paladins and monks were housed here whose mission

it was to fight against an invading horde of fiends from the lower planes.

- The temple's Captain-General was a mighty paladin named Leondra Nightbreaker.
- The tower has three floors and catacombs beneath it.
- The catacombs can be opened by placing three keys in the shape of a sword, a staff, and a chalice on the altar.

Secret Door. The secret door leading to the Entrance Hall (**area 1**) is easily discernible from this area and opens by twisting a simple door handle.

11. Well of Despair

Opening the door to this room unleashes a wave of trapped poison gas. Anyone standing within 10 feet of the open door must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) poison damage and becoming poisoned for 1 hour on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. On a successful save the creature is immune to this poison for 1 hour. When the characters enter the room, read aloud the following:

Noxious fumes pour out of an open well in the center of this room. A large iron well cover sits off to the side.

The well cover can be lifted by characters working together with a combined total Strength score of 30 or higher. After closing the well or suppressing the gas (as described below), the remaining toxic gas in the room dissipates in 1 hour. Removing the cover fills the space with gas once more within 1 minute.

Toxic Well. The bone-dry well is 5 feet across and 40 feet deep. A character climbing into the well while the poisonous gas is still active must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw every 10 feet climbed, with the DC rising by +1 each time. They take 28 (8d6) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 hour on a failed saving

throw, or take half as much damage and aren't poisoned on a successful one. A character proficient with a poisoner's kit that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check can determine that by filling the well with clean water to a depth of at least 10 feet will suppress the toxic gas for 1 hour. This can be accomplished using the *decanter of endless water* in the Eastern Shrine (**area 13**).

Treasure. A pile of humanoid skulls sits at the bottom of the well, along with a *sunblade* that Leondra Nightbreaker once wielded. The corruption of the tower has unsuccessfully attempted to eat away at the magic weapon for centuries, resulting in the toxic gas. If Nithsia (see **area 16**) is with the party, she feels an odd resonance with the weapon. Although she does not understand it, this is the bond of the sword with the blood of her ancestry.

12. Necromancer Storage

Dust-covered glass instruments and yellowed skulls sit on old shelves lining the walls of this room. The musty odor of old herbs and spices lingers in the air, and crates and barrels sit pushed up against the walls covered in chalk drawings of arcane designs. One of the skulls on the shelves has purple flames in the eye sockets and appears tied to a stone weight.

The spirit of Earmung the Worm possesses the skull with the flaming eye sockets. He awakens the moment any creature steps into the room and crankily demands they release him from the weight.

Earmung the Worm. Earmung was a necromancer who worked in the tower along with his partner Seizar the Reviver (see *The Flesh Reviver*, page 83). The pair came together after being drawn here by the corruption emanating from the tower. After building a lair and starting their horrendous experiments, they eventually fell to bickering until Earmung found

himself one day strapped to Seizar's table. He then woke up to find himself trapped inside his skull while Seizar used his body parts for one of his experiments (see **area 20**). The magic that infused the skull turned out to be stronger than Seizar intended, and it wound up being indestructible and retained some of Earmung's magic and all of his annoying personality. Seizar tied it to a weight and shoved it into this storage room, where it has waited in the dark for over a century.

The engraved skull has purple flames in its eye sockets and is immune to all damage and magic effects—nothing short of a *wish* spell can harm it. Earmung has the innate magical ability to levitate himself around and uses *mage hand* to conduct pranks and annoy those around him. Earmung is a mocking and spiteful spirit who wishes to see Seizar destroyed, but he hates the living and “good” people just as much. He entices the characters to remove him from the weight he is tied to, promising them information on his “enemy” Seizar if they do. If any of the characters release him, the cackling skull begins to follow that character around and refuses to leave their side, mockingly calling them his new best friend. The annoyingly whiny former necromancer drones on about inane topics, often ridiculing the character and giving them wrong information about the tower and its history. The only thing he tells the truth about is his wish to see Seizar destroyed, and that if they bring him to the Laboratory (**area 21**), he will show them how to enter. Because of his constant noise, while he is with the party, the group has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, and the character he is following gains disadvantage on attack and ability check rolls while he chatters at them.

Treasure. A diamond worth 1,000 gp is hidden among the otherwise useless spell components and can be uncovered with an active search and a successful DC 20 Intelligence (In-

vestigation) check. Earmung knows where this diamond is located and uses it to bargain for his release. The diamond can be changed to another equally valuable spell component that the characters currently need at the GM's discretion.

Secret Door. A character actively searching and who succeeds on a DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers the secret door to **area 12a**. It can only be opened from inside this room and swings closed on its own after 1 minute if not propped open using a piton or other object.

12a. Oubliette

A dwarven skeleton lays sprawled across the floor of this tiny chamber. Scratch marks mar the red-stained wall. The four walls are otherwise blank, and there are no exits in sight.

This room is completely enclosed with no exit, and the secret door from **area 12** can only be opened from the outside. The skeleton is that of a former adventurer who attempted to escape the tower through a botched teleport ritual in **area 7** and was trapped here. A small journal can be found on the skeleton detailing their adventuring career and how they eventually came to the tower searching for a supposed treasure hidden within. They were seeking the “Sword of the Nightbreaker, which shone like the sun.” If the characters use a spell such as *Speak with Dead*, the adventurer's spirit is woeful of the mistake that got them stuck here and can impart the knowledge that secret catacombs lay hidden under the tower, but they do not know how to get there.

13. Eastern Shrine

A pool of sizzling green liquid sits in the center of this room, surrounded by low benches. Standing above the pool is a twisted statue of a horned devil with one arm broken

off and the other held aloft.

Acid Pool. The stone pool is 5 feet wide and 10 feet deep, and any creature that enters or ends its turn inside the pool takes 22 (4d10) acid damage. Sitting at the bottom is the statue's broken arm holding a *decanter of endless water*. Directly above the pool is a spring-loaded trap door leading up into a chute connected to the Eastern Rectory (**area 28**) that can be discovered with an active search and a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check. This trap door is almost impossible to open from the outside and takes a successful DC 25 Strength check to pry open. Without magical assistance, a character must roll a 20 to successfully bend the bars apart.

13a. Transfer Room

A small plaque engraved with arcane runes sits on the northern wall of this otherwise empty room.

This room is enchanted with a teleportation effect that is only triggered by stepping into the room directly from **area 13**. Any creature that steps into this room is instantly teleported to the Teleportation Room (**area 28c**) with anything it is wearing or carrying. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of conjuration magic from the plaque on the wall.

14. Eastern Stairwell

A viscous, bubbling black tar covers the stairwell in this tower.

Hazard: Cursed Tar. The stairs are covered in a tar-like substance with the same bonding properties as *sovereign glue*, except it is in a constant liquid state while on the stairs. Once in contact with anything else, it bonds within 1 minute. Unlike *sovereign glue*, this cursed substance cannot be contained using *oil of slipperiness*. A *remove curse* spell or similar effect cast on the stairs instantly hardens the substance, rendering it inert. A

character proficient in Arcana who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will recognize the properties of the tar as similar to *sovereign glue* and will know that *universal solvent*, *oil of etherealness*, or a *wish* spell are the only ways to remove it from anything it is bonded to.

15. Screaming Chamber

Roiling smoke ebbs and flows along the walls of this room as if it were alive. Figures seem to dive in and out of the smoke, smoky hands reach out as if for help, and screaming faces appear and disappear. In the center of the chamber is a short pillar upon which sits a statue of a winged female devil holding aloft a strangely shaped golden sword.

Trap: Screaming Statue. Any living creature that touches the statue is bombarded with a chorus of screams in their mind and must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Catacomb Key. The golden sword is one of the three keys to the lock on the altar in **area 3** that opens the catacombs (see page 100).

16. Sacristy

Broken wardrobes filled with ragged robes line the walls of this room. In the center of the room, a tiefling hangs from manacles attached to a hook in the ceiling. Her battered plate armor is covered in blood, and the left side of her face is badly mangled. She appears alive, if barely.

Nithsia Shadowblade (see Appendix D). She is a tiefling adventurer captured by the nightshade vampire spawn along with the rest of her now-dead party (the bodies in **area 4**). She was next to be sacrificed and is appreciative of being rescued. Nithsia could feel Sylvanis guide her

to cleanse this temple of its corruption and failed miserably. What she does not know, however, is that she is the direct descendant of Leondra Oathbreaker, who secretly gave birth shortly after her betrayal (as detailed in the journal found in **area 41**). That cursed bloodline has been passed down through the centuries and eventually manifested itself in Nithsia.

Nithsia does not wholly trust the characters initially but begs them to help her cleanse the temple of the evil inside it. She does not know of the true story of the Oathbreaker and believes that cleansing the altar and clearing the tower of the undead should suffice.

Roleplaying Nithsia. Shunned for her blood her entire life, Nithsia has forever sought a way to be a beacon of light and hope. Taking the vows as a cleric of Sylvanis, she unwittingly followed in her cursed ancestor's footsteps. She is a well-spoken and educated woman with a no-nonsense attitude and a laser-like focus. While she may not be the life of the party, she is extremely loyal and would give her life to save another, even someone she does not particularly like. While she knows nothing of the tower's history or secrets, she has been a cleric long enough to know the trappings of her religion and its rituals very well. She instantly recognizes the holy thurible in **area 36** and knows how to use it with the high priest's prayer book from **area 6** to cleanse the altar in the Main Temple (**area 3**).

17. Spawn Lair

Bloody handprints cover the door to this room. When the characters first enter, read aloud the following:

The coppery tang of blood mixes with a stench of decay that hangs thick in the air. Mutilated bodies of animals and people lay scattered around this chamber.

Encounter: Engorged Spawn. Four **vampire spawn** are in this area, gorging themselves on fresh-

ly killed victims. If the characters attempt to be stealthy while entering the room, they can take the vampires by surprise as they are distracted by their feast.

18. Hall of Bone

The walls of this hallway are lined with collections of humanoid skulls and bones embedded into the stone and displayed in a macabre fashion. The faint sound of crying seems to be coming from the bones.

The crying sound is coming from spirits still trapped within the bones. Any attempt to communicate with the spirits or consecrate the bones through *holy water* or similar effects results in the crying escalating to screaming that eventually devolves back into sobbing. The souls here are trapped through the power of Seizar's spirit orb (see **area 21**).

Hazard: Trapped Spirits. A character that touches the bones on the walls hears a piercing scream in their minds and must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

19. Arcane Room

Workbenches and shelves covered in dusty glass beakers and other alchemical tools line the walls of this room. On a table against the southern wall sits a glass bell covering a heart that appears to be still beating.

Seizar used this room to work on material components and other experiments. Nothing of value in this room has survived the passage of time.

Trap: Pressure Plate. A pressure plate is set into the floor (as marked on the provided map) that can be noticed by a character with a passive Perception of 17 or higher, or with an active search and a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. The

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pressure plate sits above two magic runes hidden from *detect magic* spells by a thin lead lining on the plate's interior. If the plate is stepped on, the two runes trigger. A *forcecage* forms in a 10-square-foot cube centered on the plate, and an *alarm* spell calls a roaming monster (see Roaming Monsters sidebar, page 85) to rush to this room.

Living Heart. The beating heart is a magical material component for the rituals used in the Libram of Everlasting Life (see **area 27**). This heart was the last that Seizar made before ending up in his current state (see **area 21**). The glass bell has a protective stasis enchantment that has kept the heart "fresh" throughout the years, but once the glass is removed, the enchantment ends, and the heart begins to decompose and rot over the course of 24 hours.

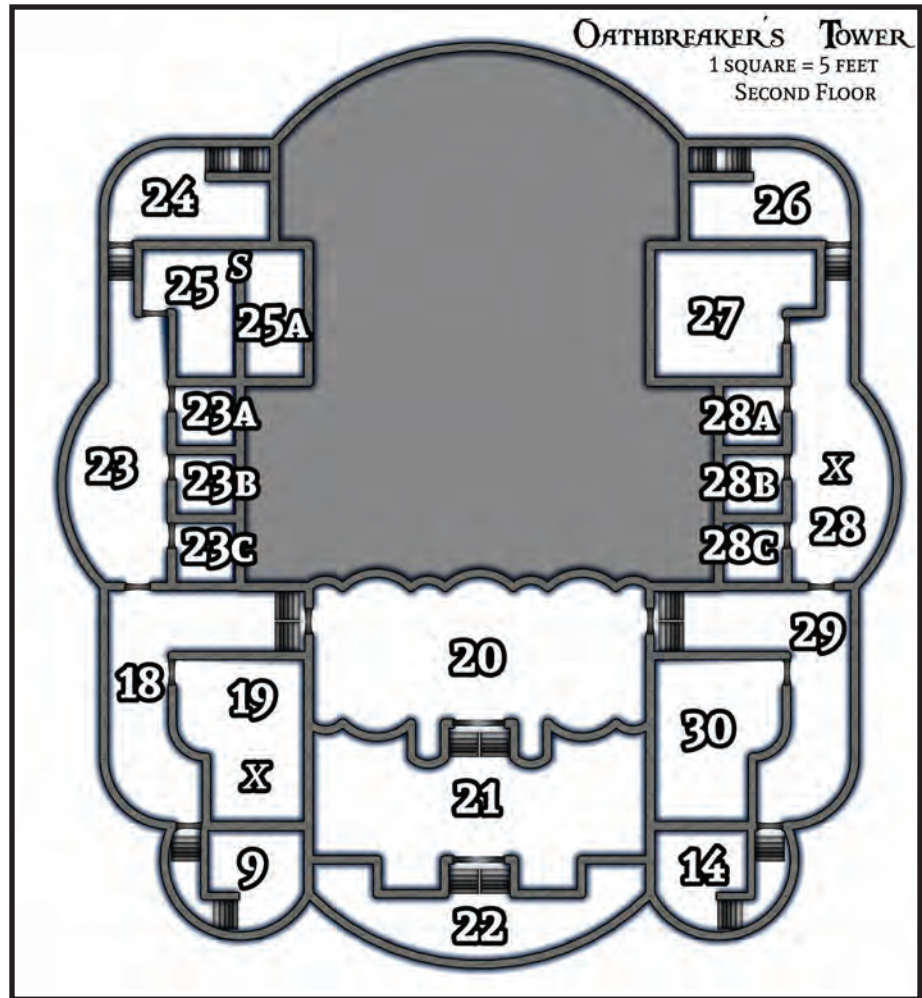
20. Hall of Flesh

The curved walls of this chamber are covered in patchwork sheets of pulsing, sweaty flesh that exude heat. A closer inspection reveals each panel is a humanoid face stretched and stitched together.

Touching the walls reveals they are warm to the touch and makes the flesh quiver as if in pain. The souls trapped in the flesh here are linked to Seizar's spirit orb in the Laboratory (**area 21**)

Hazard: Bloody Walls. If any damage is done to the room's walls, the skin splits to reveal muscle beneath it, and blood gushes out as if from an artery. This stream of blood is corrosive and sprays in a 10-foot cone from the point of the puncture. A creature standing in the spray must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid it, taking 21 (6d6) acid damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Encounter: Fleshy Guardians. Guarding this chamber are two **failed experiments** (see Failed Experiment below). Their bodies are



made from a nightmare mix of monster and humanoid parts. If Earmung is with the party (see **area 12**), he rages at seeing his former body parts used on one of the golems.

Laboratory Security Orb. Just outside the door leading to the Laboratory (**area 21**) is a small pedestal holding an opaque crystal sphere. Touching the globe and saying the command word "Eternity" activates and deactivates the *wall of force* protecting the chamber (see **area 21**). The characters can learn this by speaking with Earmung (see **area 12**) or finding Seizar's journal in his chambers (**area 27**).

Failed Experiments. Seizar the Reviver was obsessed with death and recreating living creatures from dead flesh. Unwilling to become a lich, he believed immortality could

be achieved through transferring his consciousness into a flesh creation. Over decades, the necromancer created many creatures using bits and pieces from the various victims he experimented on. As potential housing for his consciousness, these creations were more powerful and less vulnerable than their traditional flesh golem counterparts.

Each creation uses the **flesh golem** stat block with the following changes:

- Their CR becomes 7 (2,900 XP)
- Their Multiattack can make four slam attacks.
- **New Ability: Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6):** The golem sprays acid in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) acid damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

21. Laboratory

While the doors to this location are unlocked, the entire chamber is protected by an opaque *wall of force* lining the walls, floor, and ceiling that can only be controlled by the laboratory security orb in the Hall of Flesh (**area 20**). Just inside the chamber is another sphere that works in the same manner. When the characters enter the room, read aloud the following:

A disaster of broken wood, glass, and metal is scattered in every corner of this chamber. In the western half of the room is a large basin filled with chunks of meat, blood, and bone. A reek of decay wafts from it. Suddenly, a scream pierces into your mind: "AT LAST I AM FREE! YOUR BODIES WILL BE MINE!" before the bloody pool explodes upwards and a hideous mass of flesh, eyes, and mouths floats above the surface.

Seizar's last experiment failed horribly, and the body he built to house his consciousness was corrupted by the taint of the tower. Now an amorphous blob of meat and blood, he cannot even speak the words to free himself from his laboratory. The laboratory was destroyed in the resulting chaos and has lain this way for almost a century.

Encounter: Seizar the Reviver.

Seizar the Reviver has turned into a **lesser gibbering orb** (see Appendix D). The former necromancer is insane and sees the characters as a possible new body for himself. He brings all of his magical prowess to bear on them and fights to the bitter end. If he is defeated, he melts into a steaming pile of flesh and blood, mentally screaming into the characters' minds as he dissolves.

If Earmung (see **area 12**) is with the party, he stops mocking the character he has followed and instead turns his heckling onto Seizar, who is not affected by the taunting.

Golden Staff. Submerged in the 10-foot-deep pool of gore is a gem-encrusted golden staff topped with a crystal orb filled with swirling smoke. Looking closely at the orb reveals screaming faces that fade in and out. The gems on the staff are worth a total of 1,000 gp, and the staff itself is one of the three keys to the lock on the altar in **area 3** that opens the catacombs (see page 100).

Seizar used the crystal spirit orb atop the staff as a conduit for trapping the souls of his victims to use as a power source for his immortality. The orb can be used as an arcane focus, and any necromancy spell that is cast through it gains advantage on any attack rolls, and enemies incur disadvantage on any saving throw against necromancy spells. The orb is linked to the essence of a thousand souls Seizar trapped within the walls of the tower. Shattering the orb releases these souls (as noted in each location's text) to pass on to the next plane, including Earmung, whose skull falls inert. Breaking the orb does not affect using the staff to unlock the catacombs (see **area 3**).

The iron key that opens the *arcane locks* on the doors to Seizar's Study (**area 24**) is in the gore pool.

22. Main Balcony

This broad balcony overlooks the front of the entrance to the tower. A wide set of stairs leads up to a pair of stone doors. Demonic figures engraved onto them appear to be kneeling in worship to a winged and horned woman brandishing a flaming blade above her head.

This balcony can be reached from the exterior of the building by characters who climb or fly up.

23. West Rectory

Once used to house the priests of Sylvanis, these cells were converted into experimentation and storage rooms for Seizar.

23a. Moulder Room

There are four **gibbering moulter**s packed into this room who are hungry and eager to get out. They were created from dead bodies that Seizar packed into this room and left to rot and merge over decades in the tower's corruption.

23b. Discard Pile

This room is packed with discarded clothing and other adventuring gear. A character who spends 10 minutes sifting through the junk and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers a small vial of *universal solvent*.

23c. Washroom

A basin sits on a countertop filled with foul-smelling soil. A cluster of red and black mushrooms peak over the edge and give off a faint red glow.

Treasure. There are ten mushrooms in the basin, and a *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of necromancy magic. A character proficient in Nature who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check can determine that they are infused with life-giving magic. A creature that eats a mushroom gains 1d4 + 4 temporary hit points for 1 hour. A creature can only gain the benefit of a mushroom once per short or long rest.

24. Seizar's Study

Both doors leading to this room are arcane locked (see "General Features") that can be opened with the passphrase "Power" or with the key found in the Laboratory (**area 21**). When the characters enter this room, read aloud the following:

Rows of bookcases and plush furniture covered in dust fill this study. A thick maroon carpet covers the floor, and an ornate mahogany desk carved to resemble bones sits against one wall.

The desk is protected by a *glyph of warding* set to explosive runes dealing acid damage (save DC 17). Speaking the passphrase “Endless” deactivates the glyph and renders the drawer safe to open. Inside the drawer is Seizar’s spellbook which is bound in a black dragonborn’s stitched hide with a silver clasp and embossing. The spellbook contains the following spells: *arcane lock*, *black tentacles*, *cloudkill*, *cone of cold*, *counterspell*, *darkness*, *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *expeditious retreat*, *fireball*, *forcecage*, *globe of invulnerability*, *hypnotic pattern*, *ice storm*, *irresistible dance*, *magic missile*, *mind blank*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *shield*, and *time stop*.

If Earmung (see **area 12**) is with the party, he knows about the trap but does not offer the information willingly, nor does he know the password to disarm it safely.

25. Armory

The door to this room is made of iron (AC 19, 18 hit points, immune to poison and psychic damage) and locked. The door’s key is in the Charnel Room (**area 30**). When the characters enter the room, read aloud the following:

This armory holds complete sets of rusted plate armor edged in dull gold sitting on wooden stands next to racks of ancient weapons. Each is marked with the symbol of a golden eight-rayed sun.

The weapons and armor in this room are dull and weakened by time to the point of uselessness.

Cleric of Sylvanis. If Nithsia (see **area 16**) is with the party, she is familiar with the security used in the ancient temples of her religious order. When she enters the room, she raises her hand and says the phrase “We walk in her light,” to appease the armory’s guardians (see below), and she tells the characters of their presence. She also comments that it is common to have a more secure vault for more powerful weapons, though she does

not know where it might be in this particular tower.

Encounter: Invisible Guardians. Two **invisible stalkers** have guarded this room for centuries. They have resisted the corruption of the tower thus far and are still bound to their ancient duty to respect any who speak the passphrase “We walk in her light,” to which they respond in airy Auran, “And we bask in her grace.”

Treasure. While the armor and weapons are useless in their current state, they can be brought back to functionality by someone proficient with smith’s tools who spends 1 week and 5,000 gp of materials repairing them. In their current condition, the entirety of the armory is worth 2,000 gp to a collector. A refurbished collection is worth 10,000 gp.

Secret Door. The key slot that opens the secret door to the Vault (**area 25a**) is hidden behind a cleverly hinged panel that blends into the wall. A character who actively searches and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the hidden panel.

25a. Vault

The secret door to this vault is opened by inserting the golden sun medallion found in Oathbreaker’s Chambers (**area 41**) into a slot engraved in the wall. The interior walls of the vault itself are covered in iron plates and a layer of alchemical shellac that blocks the passage of creatures using a *gaseous form* spell or similar effects.

Treasure. The inside of the vault contains iron lockboxes containing a total of 160 pp, 1,800 gp, 8,000 sp, 300 cp, a *potion of fire breath*, and *oil of etherealness*. On the wall hangs a large painting of Leondra Nightbreaker standing triumphant on a field of battle with a blazing sword above her head and defeated devils at her feet. This painting strongly resembles the corrupted paintings and engravings seen throughout the rest of the tower (see **areas 5** and **22** for examples).

26. Library

The first time the characters enter this room, read aloud the following:

Tendrils of glistening black stone grow out from the tower walls and crawl over the bookshelves of this library. Roiling black smoke pours off them, covering the floor in an ankle-thick, foggy blanket.

Hazard: Necrotic Laughing Fog. Any breathing creature that spends at least 1 minute in this room must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or fall prone in a fit of hysterical laughter, becoming incapacitated and unable to stand up for 1 minute, after which they can repeat the saving throw. A creature that is prone in the fog takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage per minute. The fog can be dispersed for 1 hour by a *gust of wind* spell or similar effect.

Treasure. A character who spends at least 10 minutes searching through the books and scrolls and succeeds on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a *spell scroll of stonewalk* and a tome entitled “History of the Order of Sylvanis.” This book details the temple’s history to the goddess of light and their mission to fight fiends under the leadership of Paladin Leondra Nightbreaker. (It does not tell of her eventual fall, however.) If Nithsia (see **area 16**) is with the party, she is very interested in this book and proclaims, “I’ve never heard of this Captain-General, and we learn them all by rote in seminary!”

27. Seizar’s Chambers

The door to this chamber is locked with an *arcane lock* that can be opened with the passphrase “Undying” or with the key found in the Charnel Room (**area 30**). The spell can be bypassed by someone who makes a successful DC 30 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools or with a *knock* spell or similar effect. When the characters enter this room, read aloud the following:

An ornate four-poster bed covered in silk sheets and velvet cushions dominates this bedchamber. Alchemical beakers and other instruments cover the top of a desk tucked into a small alcove. The entire room smells of must, and a thick layer of dust covers every surface. A low growl rumbles from under the bed the instant you step into the room.

Murray. Seizar's childhood pet dog **Murray** (he uses the **death dog** stat block, but his type is construct) was one of the first victims of his experiments, and the stitched-together dog has been waiting for his master's return for a century. If a character is holding the dog collar found in the Charnel Room (**area 30**), Murray obeys that character as his new master. Otherwise, he defends this chamber to his death. If the collar is clasped around Murray's neck, his spirit is freed of the constructed body, which then disintegrates, leaving just the inert collar behind.

Libram of Everlasting Life. A character searching the desk uncovers a flesh-bound tome that details rituals for raising undead and empowered flesh golems. If the characters are aware of the vampire remains in the Main Temple (**area 3**), they can use a ritual to return the vampire to unlife. If the characters have come across the failed experiment in the Charnel Room (**area 30**), they can also use a ritual to complete the experiment. Either ritual must be performed by a character proficient in Arcana. Each takes 1 hour, requires expending a 6th-level spell slot, and a "living heart" that can be found in the Arcane Room (**area 19**). Without this last material component, the libram's rituals cannot be completed.

28. East Rectory

Once used to house the priests of Sylvanis, these cells were converted into experimentation and storage rooms for Seizar. A small fountain filled

with a collection of bones sits in an alcove against the eastern wall.

Trap: Pit Slide. In the center of this hallway (as noted on the provided map) is a 10-foot-wide spring-loaded trap door that funnels into a chute ending with a drop into the acid pool in the Eastern Shrine (**area 13**). A character can find the extremely well-hidden trap door with an active search and a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check. Anyone triggering the trap door must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling in. A creature who falls into the chute takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the 20-foot fall into **area 13** and 22 (4d10) acid damage from landing in the acid pool as detailed in the Eastern Shrine location text.

28a. Washroom

This small washroom holds a cabinet and wash basin standing next to an open toilet.

A character who searches the toilet and succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a *pearl of power* in the waste pot underneath the seat.

28b. Spirit Prisoner

The door to this room is locked. When the characters open the door to this room, read aloud the following:

A dragonborn skeleton hangs spread-eagle from chains attached to the walls of this small prison cell. A semi-ethereal spirit hangs transposed over the bones, chained in the same manner. The spirit raises his head at the open door, his eyes filled with terror. "Please... end this... please... let me die," he hoarsely whispers before he begins to sob and shake.

The trapped spirit in this room is an adventurer named Karstyn Silverhand, captured by Seizar the Reviver and imprisoned in this room. Unlike

the other souls trapped in the tower walls, Seizar had not yet infused Karstyn's body into the tower's walls. While Karstyn's essence is still connected to Seizar's spirit orb (see **area 21**), his spirit can materialize and answer questions the characters have. Karstyn's spirit is released along with the other souls trapped in Seizar's spirit orb if it is shattered. He knows the following useful pieces of information about Seizar:

- Seizar was a terrible necromancer who was obsessed with tying spirits into magically imbued flesh creations.
- Seizar used rituals written in a tome bound in humanoid skin that enabled him to raise undead and create his flesh monsters. (This is the Libram of Everlasting Life in **area 27**.)
- Seizar was insane and constantly muttering about "Eternity" and "Endless Life."

28c. Teleportation Room

A small plaque engraved with arcane runes sits on the northern wall of this otherwise empty room.

Any creature that steps into this room is instantly teleported to the Teleportation Balcony (**area 31**) with anything it is wearing or carrying. A *detect magic* or similar effect reveals an aura of conjuration magic from the plaque on the wall. This effect is only triggered by someone stepping into the room from **area 28**.

29. Hall of Blood

The walls of this hallway are covered in an eternal waterfall of streaming blood.

Hazard: Spirit Blood. A character that touches the blood on the walls hears a piercing scream in their minds and must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

OATHBREAKER'S TOWER

Hidden Niche. The spirits in the walls here are trapped through the power of Seizar's spirit orb (see **area 21**). If the souls are released, the blood waterfalls disappear to uncover beautiful murals of angels and holy warriors standing triumphant over fiendish hordes painted on the walls. A niche in the eastern wall is also revealed, containing a gem-encrusted coffer (500 gp) that holds a *spell scroll of hallow*.

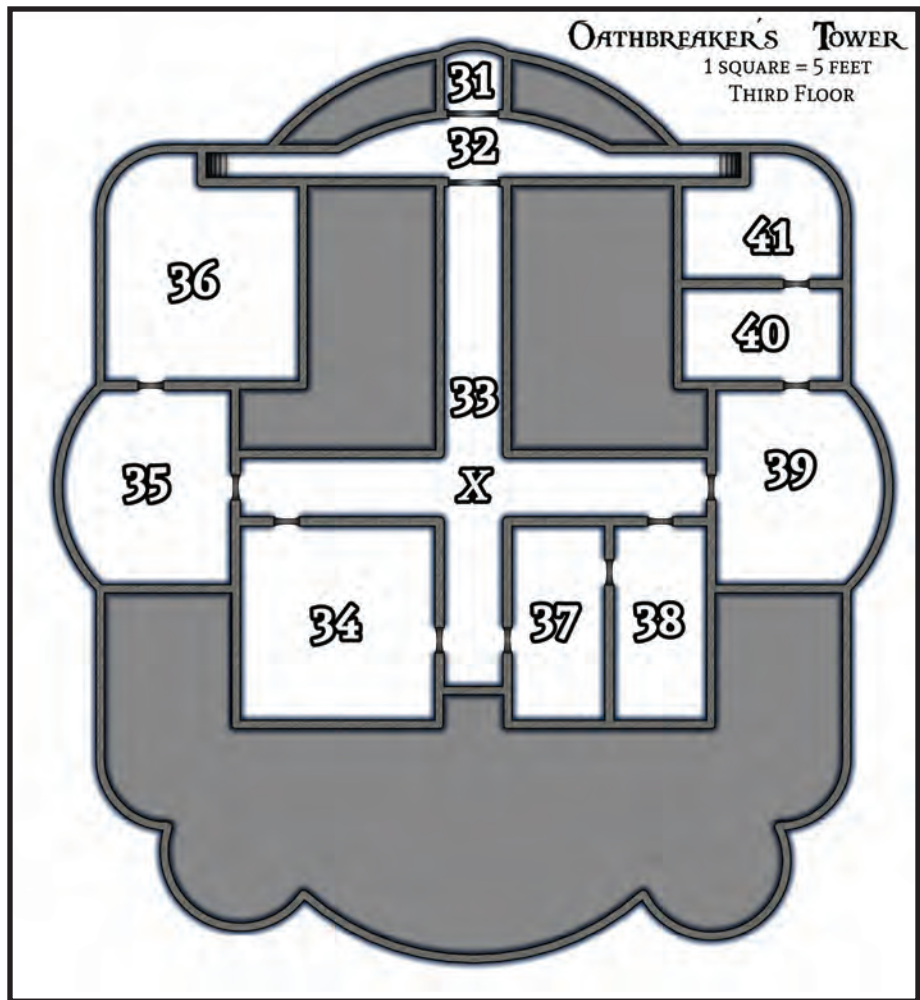
30. Charnel Room

Anyone touching the door to this room can feel a pulsing warmth coming from within the room. When the characters enter this room, read aloud the following:

A blast of wet warmth flows out from the open door followed by the rancid smell of rotting meat. Cadavers in various stages of decay hang from hooks in the ceiling, and the floor is covered in rotting offal. A nightmare figure of stitched-together body parts is lying across a table set in the middle of the chamber next to a pedestal.

Unfinished Business. An unfinished **failed experiment** (see Failed Experiments, page 92) lies inert on the table in the center of the room. A character who uses a ritual from the Libram of Everlasting Life (see **area 27**) can bring the failed experiment to life and under their control for 1 hour before it disintegrates into a gory mess.

Treasure. On the pedestal next to the experiment table sits an iron clasped dog collar with a simple brass tag that says "Murray" and a keyring with two ornate iron keys. The keys open the door to Seizar's Chamber (**area 27**) and the Vault. A *detect magic* or similar effect cast on the dog collar reveals an aura of enchantment magic. It can be used to control the construct dog in Seizar's Chamber.



31. Teleportation Balcony

This balcony can be reached by characters who fly or by climbing the exterior of the tower. The double doors are arcane locked (see "General Features"). The key to the door can be found in the Pool of Life Trapping (**area 39**).

This small balcony overlooks the rear of the tower and the rocky face of the hill. A pair of double doors stand under an engraved arch to the south.

Any creature stepping onto this balcony is instantly teleported to the Transfer Room (**area 13a**) with anything it is wearing or carrying. A *detect magic* or similar effect reveals an aura of conjuration magic coming from the stone floor. This effect is

only triggered by someone stepping into the area from the exterior of the building or through the door from **area 32**.

32. Hall of Cursed Statues

A dozen small statues of fiendish creatures sit on pedestals lining the walls of this hallway. In the center of the hall are two sets of double doors leading to the north and south.

Hazard: Cursed Statues. Any creature that touches any of the statues in this room must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or fall under the effects of a *bane* spell that lasts for 1 hour. A *remove curse* spell or similar magic ends this effect.

33. Fog-Filled Hallway

A light rolling smoke that smells faintly of incense tumbles off the ebony walls of this dark hall, covering the floor in a shin-high, foggy blanket.

Under the blanket of fog in this hallway is a carpet of hundreds of brittle bones that crunch underfoot and cause the area to be considered difficult terrain.

Trap: Pit Trap. A 10-foot-wide hinged double trapdoor covers the intersection of the hallway (as noted on the provided map). The trap is entirely hidden by smoke and a covering of bones. Putting more than fifty pounds of pressure on the trapdoor triggers the trap. A creature that triggers the trap must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage from falling 60 feet down onto the balcony (**area 3a**) on the tower's first floor.

34. Training Room

A large, raised platform dominates the center of this room. Weapon racks filled with every weapon type line the walls alongside shields painted with an eight-rayed sun.

The Legion of the Golden Rays trained in this room to keep themselves in peak physical condition. Now in undeath, they mindlessly repeat this cycle, endlessly continuing the training that dominated their lives.

Encounter: Undead Trainers. Six former legionnaires have become **wights** and wear the ragged remains of their ancient white and gold armor. In their minds, the characters are devils that need to be destroyed, and, ironically, their battle cry calls upon "the Light" to aid them.

Treasure. The weapons on the walls have turned brittle with time but are worth 1,000 gp to an antiques collector or 500 gp to a smith who can melt down and reuse the metal.

35. Dead Garden

The ceiling of this chamber is covered in sizable opaque glass panels. The darkness that pervades the tower (see General Features) does not allow any sunlight to filter through. They can be broken through from the exterior and allow entry for characters who climb or fly through them. When the characters first enter this chamber, read aloud the following:

The floor of this chamber is covered in a thick layer of earth, and a blackened tree stands with its branches scraping against a series of darkened glass panels that cover the ceiling. A statue of a robed woman with empty raised hands stands next to a dry stone-lined pool.

Weakened Guardian. The blackened tree is, in fact, a **treant** that is in deep hibernation. It has fought the corruption of the tower for centuries, and without light and water, it is on the verge of death. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check recognizes the treant and sees that it needs water

to awaken. Placing a *decanter of endless water* (found in **area 13**) in the statue's hands or using a *create or destroy water spell* or a similar magic effect to create at least 20 gallons of water to fill the pool provides the needed moisture. This water gives the treant enough energy to awaken long enough to speak with the characters. It can answer up to three questions before growing too tired and falling back into its hibernation. It knows the following helpful information if asked:

- It can impart the full story of the temple, and its fall at the hands of the Oathbreaker, as described in the backstory.
- It describes the three keys needed to open the Oathbreaker's prison under the Main Temple (**area 3**): a golden blade, a golden staff, and a silver chalice that, when placed on the altar, unlocks the catacombs. It does not know where they are.
- It knows that the altar must be consecrated by a person of faith using the high priest's prayer book (found in **area 6**) and a holy thurible (found in **area 36**).



36. Desecrated Shrine

When the characters first enter the room, read aloud the following:

A simple stone altar stands against the eastern wall under a looming obsidian statue of a winged and horned woman. Her outstretched hand holds the chain to a burning thurible that hangs above the altar, with thick smoke pouring down and carpeting the floor. Kneeling before the shrine in supplication are three shadowy figures that rise in unison and roar in anger at being disturbed.

Hazard: Cursed Smoke. Any creature that breathes in the incense smoke must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be wracked with a coughing fit and have disadvantage on all attack rolls for 1 minute. While coughing, the affected creature cannot cast spells requiring a somatic component.

Encounter: Dark Paladins. Three wraiths guard this shrine. Former clerics of Sylvanis, they are caught in an endless cycle of twisted worship at the desecrated shrine that now bears the Oathbreaker's resemblance.

Treasure. The curse on the thurible can be removed by a *remove curse* spell or similar effect. While cursed, any incense burned within it produces the effect described above for 1 hour in a 20-foot sphere around the thurible. Once cleansed of the curse, the thurible can be used in combination with the high priest's prayer book in **area 6** to consecrate the altar in the Main Temple (see Desecrated Altar, **area 3**). If Nithsia (see **area 16**) is with the party, she instantly recognizes the thurible and how to cleanse it.

37. Kitchen & Storage

The cabinets and shelves of this kitchen are crammed with jars and tins that once held cooking ingredients. Crates and barrels sit stacked against the walls, and a cold hearth has a large cast-iron pot sitting on its side.

The Mad Chef. The ghost of Barnabus, a legionnaire chef, haunts this kitchen. His ghostly form floats about the room and performs tasks visible only to him. He completely ignores the characters unless they touch anything on the shelves or tables. If the characters do so, Barnabus flies into a rage and begins to scream at the offending character and tries to possess them to initiate combat with the rest. If the characters spend at least 10 minutes in the room watching the ghost, they see him prepare an illusory meal and then pour what appears to be poison onto it. The ghost then smiles wickedly and carries the imaginary dish through the door into **area 38**.

38. Dining Room

A massive wooden dining table with simple chairs sits in the center of this room under ragged banners bearing the symbol of an eight-rayed sun. A full place setting sits in front of a robed skeleton seated in every chair at the table as if waiting for a meal that never came.

A closer examination of the skeletons reveals they are tied to their chairs with ropes, and it is obvious these people were tortured and killed here. These were legionnaire clerics that were poisoned by their companions as they went slowly mad from the corruption of the tower.

Journal. A small journal is in the pocket of one of the skeletons' robes. It reveals the story of Leromy, a cleric in the Legion of the Golden Rays, and how he and his companions were in the tower on a holy mission to cleanse it of its evil. The journal briefly mentions the "foul corruption of the traitorous Oathbreaker," and ends with the cleric's suspicion that his colleagues plan to kill him.

Speak With the Dead. If the characters use a *Speak with Dead* spell or similar effect on any of the skeletons, a spirit of a legionnaire cleric can impart the following information:

- Any information about the fall of the tower and the Oathbreaker's betrayal as outlined in the backstory.
- They do not know how to cleanse the tower of its evil; they fell victim to the corruption and killed each other before they could discover a way.
- They know that the keys to open the catacombs are a sword, a staff, and a chalice, but do not know where they are located currently.
- The chef Barnabus (see **area 37**) killed them all by force-feeding poisoned food to them.

39. Pool of Life Trapping

A ten-foot-wide pool of water sits in the center of this otherwise bare chamber. The stones that edge the pool are adorned with arcane and divine symbols. The water in the pool ripples as if a breeze is blowing across it, and something under the water is glowing.

Hazard: Pool of Life Trapping. The scrying pool of water has been twisted by the tower's corruption and now functions in a similar way as a *mirror of life trapping*. Any creature that peers into the pool must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be imprisoned within one of the pool's extradimensional cells, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. Constructs automatically succeed on the saving throw.

The pool has access to six cells, three of which are currently vacant. If the pool traps a creature when all its cells are occupied, it releases one trapped creature at random and replaces it with the new prisoner. The Pool Prisoners table lists the current occupants and how they react to being released.

The pool has two command words. Speaking the word "Imperium" while standing within 5 feet of the pool deactivates or reactivates it. The pool cannot trap creatures while it is deactivated. Speaking the command word

Pool Prisoners.

Cell	Prisoner	Notes	Reaction if Released
1	Kylrax (bone devil)	The Oathbreaker captured him in the pool after he questioned her authority.	Attacks all other creatures with glee. Will bargain his life for information if dropped below half his hit points.
2	—	—	—
3	Brunhild Stormhammer (LG female dwarf knight)	A former soldier in the Legion of Golden Rays, she has been driven insane by her captivity.	Joins the party and babbles inanely about devils and the Oathbreaker. If she sees Nithsia (see area 16), Brunhild attacks her and fights to the death.
4	—	—	—
5	A wraith	It wandered in here recently and got trapped after glancing at its reflection.	Attacks the closest living creature and flees to area 36 if dropped below half its hit points.
6	—	—	—

“Absolutio” and a cell number frees the creature trapped in that specific cell.

Casting an *identify* spell on the pool reveals its command words and magical properties. The command words are also written in the Oathbreaker’s journal found in **area 41**. The pool can be destroyed by casting a *greater restoration* spell or similar effect to remove the curse. Draining the pool deactivates its magic until it is filled once more. Destroying the pool releases all of the trapped creatures within it at the same time.

Treasure. A small silver key that gives off a soft blue glow sits in the pool. It unlocks the door to the Teleportation Balcony (**area 31**).

40. War Room

Banners bearing an eight-rayed sun adorn the walls of this simple room. A large table with chairs sits in the center covered in papers and a large map.

A character who searches through the documents finds battle plans for a war that raged over one thousand years ago. The records and maps show fiend-troop movements and supply chains as well as enemy positions. The Legion of the Golden Rays used these documents to track down and destroy the remainder of the Oathbreaker’s army after her defeat.



Treasure. The ancient map shows settlements and other locations in the surrounding area that have been lost for centuries. These locations may include places of interest to the characters in search of treasure or other artifacts.

41. Oathbreaker’s Chambers

This trap and its command word are known to Brunhild Stormhammer, imprisoned in the Pool of Life Trapping (**area 39**). A *symbol* spell set to Death (spell save DC 18) protects the door and is triggered when someone attempts to open it without first speaking the command word “Vita.” Closing the door reactivates the trap. When the characters first enter this room, read aloud the following:

Ornately carved mahogany furniture edged in gold leaf fills this magnificent bedchamber. A large painting of an angelic winged and armored woman hangs over a massive bed covered in crushed velvet and silk pillows. Sitting on top of an elaborate desk is a gem-encrusted silver chalice. This room is fit for royalty and is free of the dust and grime that permeate the rest of the tower.

This chamber was once the living quarters of the Captain-General who turned traitor. It has been enchanted with a permanent *unseen servant* spell that has kept it clean for centuries.

Treasure. The painting of Leondra was painted by a famous artist who was then killed by the Oathbreaker,

making it his last work. Properly appraised and auctioned, it is worth 5,000 gp.

Hidden Panel. A character who searches the desk and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a hidden button that reveals a secret panel in the back that hides a small leather-bound journal. This journal details the story of Leondra Nightbreaker and explains her frustration at the church's restrictions, which she felt held her back from achieving the true glory she deserved. It reveals that she was in love with Fenian, the temple's high priest, and eventually found herself to be with child. Fenian abandoned her once she told him, and she fell into despair. She abandoned her oaths and turned against everything she once believed and turned against the temple in her rage and anguish. Allying herself with the fiends she once fought against, she became a general at the head of their army and secured immortality for herself and safety for her child.

The journal also contains the command words for the Pool of Life Trapping (as described in **area 39**).

Golden Medallion. In the hidden panel with the journal is a golden sun-shaped medallion (50 gp) that is the key to the Vault (**area 25a**).

Silver Chalice. The silver chalice is worth 1,000 gp and is one of three keys needed to open the catacombs under the Main Temple (**area 3**).

Releasing the Oathbreaker

The servants of Sylvanis who were deemed to be among the most faithful were rewarded with interment in the catacombs beneath the temple. When the Oathbreaker broke her vows and took command of the tower, she turned it into her fortress. She raided the catacombs to raise an army of undead to support her army of fiends pulled from the lower planes. When the unknown heroes finally defeated the Oathbreaker, they sealed her within the catacombs and placed a

forbiddance spell to trap her. Using the three keys on the cleansed altar releases this binding and opens the catacombs below for Leondra and her devil captains to escape.

Encounter: The Oathbreaker.

Once the three keys are placed into the altar (see Opening the Catacombs, **area 3**), the golden sun on the temple floor opens to reveal a hidden flight of stairs leading down into the catacombs. It also removes the spell trapping the devils inside, allowing them to pour up and out of the stairwell. **Leondra Oathbreaker** and four **spined devils** fly out of the stairwell the instant it is open. In her ecstasy over being freed, Leondra thanks the characters as she promises them a swift death.

If someone in the party wields the *sunblade* (found in **area 11**), the Oathbreaker instantly recognizes her former blade and avoids it in frantic fear. She knows that if she is killed by her former sword, it negates her immortality, and she will not be sent to the lower planes upon her death. If Nithsia (see **area 16**) is with the party, Leondra attempts to persuade her into joining her side and reveals that she is her descendant through the daughter that she left behind when she was imprisoned. This shocking revelation explains the reason for Nithsia being born a tiefling and enrages her, motivating her to end the ancestor that cursed her bloodline. If the party also has the *sunblade*, she will realize what the resonance she felt from it must mean and tells the party to use it to end Leondra.

The Oathbreaker attempts to flee if all of the spined devils are defeated, or she drops below 50 hit points.

The Oathbreaker

Leondra Oathbreaker was regarded as a legendary paladin who shone bright with her faith and power. With her long golden hair, bronze skin, and dazzling green eyes, it was said that she could have been an avatar of the goddess of light herself. In exchange

for her betrayal, she was transformed into a fiend and gained immortality along with a pair of large feathery wings. The Oathbreaker uses the **erinyes** stat block with the following changes:

- She has max hit points: 216 (18d8 + 72).
- **New Trait: Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the Oathbreaker fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.
- **Legendary Actions.** The Oathbreaker can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Oathbreaker regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.
- **Legendary Action: Attack.** The Oathbreaker makes one longsword attack.
- **Legendary Action: Flight.** The Oathbreaker can move up to her flight speed without provoking opportunity attacks.
- **Legendary Action: Psychic Breaker (Costs 3 Actions).** Each non-fiend creature within 60 feet of the Oathbreaker must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw, taking 26 (4d10 + 4) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- **New Lair Actions.** On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Oathbreaker takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the Oathbreaker can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:
 - **Lair Action.** Shadowy tendrils erupt from a point on the ground the oathbreaker can see within 60 feet of her, creating a 20-foot-high, 10-foot-radius mass. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
 - **Lair Action.** Magical darkness spreads from a point on the ground the oathbreaker can see within



60 feet of her, filling a 15-foot-radius sphere until dismissed. The darkness spreads around corners. A creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and nonmagical light can't illuminate it. If any of the effect's area overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled.

- **Lair Action.** Part of the ceiling collapses above one creature that the Oathbreaker can see. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone and buried. The buried target is restrained and unable to breathe or stand up. A creature can take an action to make a DC 15 Strength check, ending the buried state on a success.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters can cleanse the tower of its corruption and defeat the Oathbreaker once and for all, the desecrated area around the temple dissipates over the next 1d3 weeks. The dark cloud and cursed shadow that covered the area disappears, and the faithful of Sylvanis begin to make their way back to the temple and restore it in her name. The locals are thankful for the characters and hail them as champions and heroes, further engraving their legacy into history.

If Nithsia survived and defeated her ancestor, she devotes her life to restoring the temple and erasing her ancestor's evil legacy. She becomes

the head cleric of the newly consecrated temple, and the characters have gained a strong and influential ally in the church. If she does not survive, she is held up as a martyr by the clerics of Sylvanis, and her body is interred in the tombs beneath the restored temple.

If the characters were unable to defeat the Oathbreaker and she escaped or was sent to the lower planes, this will not be the last they hear of her. While she takes her time to gather her strength, she now has the characters in her sights and vows to bring back an army of fiends to retake the temple and renew her reign of terror on the land once more. Ω

APPENDIX A

CYCLOPÆDIA

Compiled and revised by **Scott Craig**
Art by **Maciej Zagorski**

Quick Wilderness Adventuring Rules

This reference article combines rules from the 5E SRD and the SRD from the B/X clone *Old School Essentials*.

Sequence of Play Per Day

1. **Decide course.** The players decide on their course of travel for the day.
2. **Random Encounters.** The GM makes checks as applicable.
3. **Description.** The GM describes the terrain passed through and any sites of interest that the party comes across, asking players for their actions, as required. If a random encounter was rolled, choose what time of day it occurs.
4. **End of day.** The GM updates time records, with special attention to rations, spell durations, and the party's need to rest.

Random Encounters

A check is typically rolled once per day, but the GM may choose to make more checks: up to three or four per day.

Encounter Chance

The chance of encountering a wandering monster depends on the terrain being explored or what the adventure calls for. Expressed as a chance on d6.

- City, clear, grasslands, settled: 1-in-6.
- Barren, desert, forest, hills: 2-in-6.
- Jungle, mountains, swamp: 3-in-6.

Encounter Distance

Wandering monsters are encountered 3d6 × 10 feet away. If either side is surprised, this is reduced to 1d6 × 10 feet.

Result

Use the random encounter table from the adventure you are running,

or from the monster guide you have handy. For example, if you have the *BroadSword Monster Compendium*, use the Monsters by Terrain Type tables at the back of the book and assign numbers to monsters in the appropriate CR range. Then roll.

Travel Pace

While traveling, a group of adventurers can move at a normal, fast, or slow pace, as shown on the Travel Pace table. The table states how far the party can move in a period of time and whether the pace has any effect. A fast pace makes characters less perceptive, while a slow pace makes it possible to sneak around and to search an area more carefully.

Forced March

The Travel Pace table assumes that characters travel for 8 hours in day. They can push on beyond that limit, at the risk of exhaustion.

For each additional hour of travel beyond 8 hours, the characters cover the distance shown in the Hour column for their pace, and each character must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of the hour. The DC is 10 + 1 for each hour past 8 hours. On a failed saving throw, a character suffers one level of exhaustion.

Mounts

For short spans of time (up to an hour), many animals move much faster than humanoids. A mounted character can ride at a gallop for about an hour, covering twice the usual dis-

tance for a fast pace. If fresh mounts are available every 8 to 10 miles, characters can cover larger distances at this pace, but this is very rare except in densely populated areas.

Certain special mounts, such as a pegasus or griffon, or special vehicles, such as a *carpet of flying*, allow you to travel more swiftly.

Difficult Terrain

The travel speeds given in the Travel Pace table assume relatively simple terrain: roads, open plains, or clear dungeon corridors. But adventurers often face dense forests, deep swamps, rubble-filled ruins, steep mountains, and ice-covered ground—all considered difficult terrain.

You move at half speed in difficult terrain—moving 1 foot in difficult terrain costs 2 feet of speed—so you can cover only half the normal distance in a minute, an hour, or a day.

Food and Water

Characters who don't eat or drink suffer the effects of exhaustion (see page 103). Exhaustion caused by lack of food or water can't be removed until the character eats and drinks the full required amount.

Food

A character needs one pound of food per day and can make food last longer by subsisting on half rations. Eating half a pound of food in a day counts as half a day without food.

A character can go without food for a number of days equal to 3 + Con-

Travel Pace.

Pace	Minute	Hour	Day	Effect
Fast	400 feet	4 miles	30 miles	-5 penalty to passive Wisdom (Perception) scores
Normal	300 feet	3 miles	24 miles	none
Slow	200 feet	2 miles	18 miles	Able to use stealth



stitution modifier (minimum of 1). At the end of each day beyond that limit, a character automatically suffers one level of exhaustion.

A normal day of eating resets the count of days without food to zero.

Water

A character needs one gallon of water per day, or two gallons per day if the weather is hot. A character who drinks only half that much water must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion at the end of the day. A character with access to even less water automatically suffers one level of exhaustion at the end of the day.

If the character already has one or more levels of exhaustion, the character takes two levels in either case.

Foraging

In order to forage, a character must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check.

Nothing is found on a failed check.

On a successful check, roll 1d6 + the character's Wisdom modifier to determine how many pounds of food is found.

Use the same method to determine the number of gallons of water found.

Exhaustion

Some special abilities and environmental hazards, such as starvation and the long-term effects of freezing or scorching temperatures, can lead to a special condition called exhaustion. Exhaustion is measured in six levels. An effect can give a creature one or more levels of exhaustion, as specified in the effect's description.

If an already exhausted creature suffers another effect that causes exhaustion, its current level of exhaustion increases by the amount specified in the effect's description.

A creature suffers the effect of its current level of exhaustion as well

as all lower levels. For example, a creature suffering level 2 exhaustion has its speed halved and has disadvantage on ability checks.

An effect that removes exhaustion reduces its level as specified in the effect's description, with all exhaustion effects ending if a creature's exhaustion level is reduced below 1.

Finishing a long rest reduces a creature's exhaustion level by 1, provided that the creature has also ingested some food and drink. Also, being raised from the dead reduces a creature's exhaustion level by 1.

Exhaustion Effects.

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Death ☠

APPENDIX B

OPTIONS

Written by **Dave Hamrick**
Art by **Maciej Zagorski**

New Sorcerous Origin: Ethereality

At 1st level, a sorcerer gains the sorcerous origin feature, which allows you the choice of a subclass. The following Ethereality origin is available to you when you make that choice.

You straddle the border between two worlds: the Prime Material and the Ethereal Plane. This connection to two realms has unlocked a bevy of new powers and abilities for you, which makes you a formidable spellcaster in either realm.

Ethereal Spells

1st-level Ethereality feature

You learn additional spells when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown on the Ethereal Spells table. Each of these spells counts as a sorcerer spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of sorcerer spells you know. Spells marked with an asterisk are featured in Appendix C.

Whenever you gain a sorcerer level, you can replace one spell you gained from this feature with another spell of the same level. The new spell must be an illusion or transmutation spell from the sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell list.

Ethereal Spells.

Sorcerer	
Level	Spells
1st	<i>mage armor, magic missile</i>
3rd	<i>see invisibility, spiritual weapon</i>
5th	<i>chamber*, zone of revelation*</i>
7th	<i>make manifest*, secret chest</i>
9th	<i>dream, wall of force</i>

Ethereal Stash

1st-level Ethereality feature

You hide an object weighing no more than 10 pounds on the Ethereal Plane. You must touch the object to use this effect. While the object remains on the Ethereal Plane, you can use your action to speak aloud a command word of your choice to recall the object. It appears in your hand or in an unoccupied space on the ground within 5 feet of you (your choice). You can send the object back to the Ethereal Plane by using an action and touching the object. If you use this feature on another object, the first object you stowed on the Ethereal Plane immediately returns. This effect does not function in the Outer Planes or any plane of existence that does not touch the Ethereal Plane.

You can use this feature once and regain your ability to do so when you finish a short or long rest.

Voice of Revelation

1st-level Ethereality feature

As an action, you speak words of rebuke to all creatures within the Border Ethereal within 30 feet of you. Each target that can hear you must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC, or it must immediately use its next available action to enter the Prime Material Plane from the Ethereal Plane. If a target does not possess a feature or action that allows it to willingly become ethereal, it automatically passes its saving throw.

Incorruptible

6th-level Ethereality feature

You gain resistance to necrotic damage. Additionally, you have advantage on saving throws against attacks and spells that would reduce your ability scores or hit point maximum, such

as the shadow's Strength Drain or a wight's Life Drain attack.

Zone of Stability

6th-level Ethereality feature

You emit an aura of stability that extends from you 10 feet in all directions. When a creature with the Incorporeal Movement or similar trait comes within the area created by your aura, it becomes corporeal until it leaves the area. This does not affect the creature in any other way, but it can no longer pass through solid objects, even if it is on the Border Ethereal. You can suppress this aura at will, requiring no action to do so.

Forceful Spell

14th-level Ethereality feature

You can add your proficiency bonus to one damage roll of any spell you cast that deals force damage. Additionally, when a creature in the Ethereal Plane takes force damage from one of your spells and you are on a coterminous plane of existence, such as the Prime Material plane, it must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature enters your plane of existence and cannot use any traits or spells that would allow it to return to the Ethereal Plane for 1 minute. A target can repeat its saving throw at the end of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

Etherealness

18th-level Ethereality feature

As an action, you can enter the Border Ethereal from the Prime Material plane at will, and vice versa. While in the Border Ethereal, you can choose to be visible to creatures in the abutting plane.

New Wizard Arcane Tradition: Ethereal Hunter

At 2nd level, a wizard gains an arcane tradition, which allows you the choice of a subclass. The following ethereal hunter arcane tradition is available to you when you make that choice.

You've spent your life studying the Ethereal Plane and its inhabitants. Whether its ghosts, xill, or even the dreaded worm of the deep, you're ready to face whatever comes your way—no matter how incorporeal it is.

Ethereal Sense

2nd-level Ethereal Hunter feature

As an action, you can open your awareness to detect creatures and objects hidden within the Border Ethereal. Until the end of your next turn, you know the location of such creatures and targets within 60 feet of you. This effect can penetrate barriers, 2 inches of metal, a thin sheet of lead, obstacles created by magical force (such as a *wall of force* spell), and anything else that would prevent an Ethereal creature from moving through blocks it. You know the size

of unattended objects and the size and type of creatures whose presence you sense, but not its identity. Although you can sense the creature or object and its general location, you cannot see it.

Incorporeal Disruption

2nd-level Ethereal Hunter feature

You learn the *chill touch* cantrip unless you already know it. When you hit a creature that has the Incorporeality trait with this spell, the target loses its Incorporeality trait until the start of your next turn.

Voice of the Dead

6th-level Ethereal Hunter feature

You learn the *speak with dead* spell, which you can cast once without expending a spell slot. You regain the ability to cast this spell when you finish a short or long rest. When you use this trait to cast the spell, it counts as a wizard spell for you.

Additionally, you can rebuke undead. As an action, you can expend a spell slot of 1st level or higher to target one undead creature that you can

see within 30 feet of you. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is awe-struck by you for 1 minute or until it takes any damage.

An awe-struck creature's movement speed is reduced to 0 and it can't attack you or your allies.

The effect's duration lasts for 1 additional minute per spell slot above 1st that you use to create the effect.

Sight Beyond Sight

10th-level Ethereal Hunter feature

You can see invisible creatures and objects within 60 feet of you as if they were visible, and you can see into the Ethereal Plane. Ethereal creatures and objects appear ghostly and translucent.

Between Two Worlds

14th-level Ethereal Hunter feature

You learn the *etherealness* spell, which you can cast once per day without expending a spell slot. When you cast *etherealness* using this feature, the spell's duration is until dispelled. Ω



APPENDIX C

GRIMOIRE

Written by Dave Hamrick, Ellie Hogan, Matthew Rowland, John Kelly, Alexander LeFort, and Alexander Neumann

New Spells

The following spells are for use with the New Wizard Arcane Tradition Ethereal Hunter from Appendix B of this issue of *BroadSword Monthly*.

Of course, as GM, you can use these spells in your campaign as you see fit.

Chamber

3rd-level evocation

- **Casting Time:** 1 action
- **Range:** 60 feet
- **Components:** V, S, M (translucent piece of glass)
- **Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute
- **Classes:** Cleric, Sorcerer, Wizard

You create a translucent prison of pure crystalline force that surrounds a target on the Border Ethereal that you can see within range. When the prison springs into existence, the target's movement speed drops to 0, it is incapacitated, and it has full cover against attacks made outside of the prison. The prison has AC 15, 25 hit points, vulnerability to thunder damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Alternatively, the target can attempt to break out of its chamber by succeeding on a Strength check against your spell save DC. A *disintegrate* spell instantly destroys the chamber. This spell only works on the Ethereal Plane and does not work on other planes.

Make Manifest

4th-level transmutation

- **Casting Time:** 1 action
- **Range:** 60 feet
- **Components:** V, S
- **Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute
- **Classes:** Cleric, Sorcerer, Wizard

You target one creature on a coterminous or coexistent plane that you can

see within range. The target appears on your plane of existence. For the duration, the target retains all of its statistics, features, and actions, except for those which would allow it to enter other planes, such as the plane shift spell or a ghost's Ethereality. At the end of the spell's duration, the target returns to the plane it was on before it was targeted by the spell.

Mass Manifest

6th-level transmutation

- **Casting Time:** 1 action
- **Range:** 60 feet
- **Components:** V, S, M (handful of copper dust)
- **Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute
- **Classes:** Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

All creatures and unattended objects on coterminous and coexistent planes within 30 feet of a point you choose within range are instantly brought onto your plane. For the duration, a target affected by the spell retains all of its statistics, features, and actions, except for those which would allow it to enter other planes, such as the *plane shift* spell or a ghost's Ethereality. At the end of the spell's duration, the target returns to the plane it was on before it was targeted by the spell.

Zone of Revelation

3rd-level divination

- **Casting Time:** 1 action
- **Range:** 30 feet
- **Components:** V, S, M (handful of dust from the grave clothes of an undead creature)
- **Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes
- **Classes:** Cleric, Sorcerer, Wizard

All creatures within a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point within

range are made visible. This includes invisible creatures as well as those in coexistent planes, such as the Ethereal Plane and the Plane of Shadow. Natives of these planes do not lose any abilities but are simply made visible.

The spell does not dispel spells like *invisibility*, *ethereality*, or other spells, but suppresses them for the duration. Once a formerly invisible object or creature leaves the area or the spell ends, it becomes visible again.

New Magic Items

Essence of Plant Life

Wondrous item, uncommon

This magical liquid is infused with petals from a prismatic lily and can be used in a ritual to create a **vine guard**. Vine guards are plants that use the stat block of a **giant constrictor snake** and are able to move through spaces as small as 5 feet without squeezing thanks to their long, narrow bodies. The vine guard can't regain hit points and is destroyed when it reaches 0 hp.

Gardener's Orb

Wondrous item, uncommon

This small glass orb weighs 1 pound. Speaking its command word causes it to emanate the *light* spell, which lasts for 8 hours or until the command word is spoken again. The light is sunlight.

Pickled Basilisk's Eye

Wondrous item, uncommon

A creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the eye and catches its gaze must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to magically turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next

turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Robe of the Culinary Wizard

Wondrous item, uncommon

This robe looks similar to a chef's toque that continues down to the floor. It has a single pocket containing a number of handkerchiefs of different shapes and colors. While wearing the robe, you can use an action to detach one of the handkerchief, causing it to become the object or creature it represents. Once the last handkerchief is removed, the robe becomes an ordinary garment.

The robe has two of each of the following patches:

- A chef's knife (treat it as a dagger).
- Bullseye lantern (filled and lit) that expands to be a portable oven as an action.
- A small cutting board that can be made reflective as an action (treat it as a steel mirror).
- Wooden spoon that can extend to be a 10-foot pole
- Butcher's cord (50 feet, coiled; treat it as hempen rope)
- Sack

Other patches.

d100	Patch
01-08	A set of high-quality cook's utensils worth 100 gp.
09-15	An engraved pot that allows you to chill, warm, or flavor up to 1 cubic foot of nonliving material for 1 hour. Worth 500 gp.
16-22	Steel countertop that doubles as an iron door (up to 10 feet wide and 10 feet high, barred on one side of your choice), which you can place in an opening you can reach; it conforms to fit the opening, attaching and/or hinging itself.
23-30	A spice rack worth 100 gp.
31-44	A sack of 30 angry chickens (treat them as ravens without the Mimicry feature).
45-51	A knife sharpener that gives a bladed weapon the benefits of the <i>magic weapon</i> spell. One use.
52-59	A chef's hat that allows you to prepare a magical meal for three creatures. These creatures gain the benefits of the <i>aid</i> spell. Once used, the hat becomes inert.
60-68	4 sandwiches that act as <i>potions of healing</i> .
69-75	A rowboat complete with fishing gear (12 feet long).
76-83	<i>Spell scroll</i> containing one spell of 1st to 3rd level.
84-90	2 mastiffs that are disheartened if they were not brought out to hunt.
91-96	A chef's knife that can be used to cut a hole (2 feet by 4 feet, up to 2 feet deep) through any nonmagical material you can reach. Once used, the knife becomes inert.
97-00	1 premium giant goat .

In addition, the robe has 4d4 other patches. The DM chooses from the table below or determines randomly.

Scholar's Pipe

Wondrous item (pipe), rare, (requires attunement by a bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

This pipe is crafted from fine mahogany, with a row of books carved into its chamber and a small scroll tied around its stem. When tobacco or a similar substance is burned within it, it wafts a lightly sparkling purple smoke. While actively smoking this pipe, your Intelligence score is 19, and you can accurately recall anything you have seen or heard within the past month. Additionally, while smoking the pipe, you can cast *detect magic* and *comprehend languages* at will, requiring no components.

This ancient pipe was a wedding gift from one powerful court wizard to another. Its recipient grew so fond of the pipe that they smoked it incessantly, yellowing their teeth and staining their lungs black. Undeterred, they came to realize that they could not live without the pipe, for they feared what they might become in its absence.

Silver Censer

Weapon (flail), rare (requires attunement)

The head of the silvered flail sports spikes interwoven between patterned holes across its surface. When drawn, the holes begin to emanate faint wisps of smoke. When you hit with an attack using this magic weapon, the target takes an extra 1d8 fire damage.

As a bonus action, you can cause the flail to emanate a haze of incense creating the effects of the *fog cloud* spell centered on yourself. Once this feature has been used, it cannot be used again until the next dawn.

Unicorn Horn

Wondrous item, uncommon

The horn has 3 charges. You can use an action to expend a charge to touch and heal a creature within 5 feet of you. The creature magically regains 2d10 hit points, and all diseases and poisons afflicting it are removed and neutralized, respectively.

Alternatively, the horn can be ground up to provide the material components needed to craft a *potion of supreme healing*. Ω

APPENDIX D

BESTIARY

Written by Kobold Press, Thomas Johnson, and Ellie Hogan
Art by Matias Lazaro, Daniel F. Walthall, Rick Hershey, and William McAusland

Bilwis

An enraged mass of malcontents storms across the tavern, overturning tables, busting bottles, and browbeating innocent patrons.

Summoned Saboteur. The bilwis is an elemental creature. Usually summoned on behalf of another to ruin an enemy's crops, the bilwis hides in the fields until harvest draws near then rips through the crops, devouring and scattering the yield.

False Undead. The form of a bilwis leads to them being misidentified as a ghost of some kind, and they are often referred to as a "field ghost."

BILWIS <i>Medium elemental, chaotic evil</i>			
Armor Class 13 Hit Points 49 (11d8) Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)			
STR	12 (+1)	INT	10 (+0)
DEX	16 (+3)	WIS	13 (+1)
CON	10 (+0)	CHA	16 (+3)
Damage Resistances lightning, thunder Damage Immunities poison Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages Auran Challenge 1 (200 XP)			
Air Form. The bilwis can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.			
ACTIONS			
Slam. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.			
Whirlwind (Recharge 5-6). Each creature in the bilwis' space and within 5 feet of it must make a DC 12 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a success, a target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't knocked prone.			

Though remedies for a haunting fail to drive them away, the remedies do sometimes add the undead to the list of local maladies when graves are disturbed unnecessarily.

Shrouded in Superstition. Many farmers believe that if they plant and plow their fields from the outside inward, the bilwis won't be able to find its way in to damage their crops. The bilwis are also blamed for the spread of various illnesses but have no such ability.

Elemental Nature. The bilwis doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Compsognathus

The curious bipedal lizard lets out a musical chirp. More chirps respond from within the nearby grass, becoming a sinister chorus.

Compsognathus is one of the smallest carnivorous dinosaurs. Its stature leads many to underestimate the deadly nature of a pack of these beasts.

Kobold Pets. Compsognathus are often kept by kobolds as pets. Kobolds are particularly fond of building traps that feed swarms of the dinosaurs by placing them at the bottom of a hidden pit or rigging a cage full of the creatures to drop on the heads of unsuspecting adventurers.

Little Dinosaurs, Big Appetites. Though compsognathus are small, they live in large packs. Compsognathus are not afraid of larger prey when they hunt together as a swarm and will seek out a meal worthy of the pack.

Silently Surrounds. Compsognathus are naturally stealthy thanks to their size and ability to blend in with natural terrain. They hunt in tall grass or areas of dense foliage, spreading out to surround their prey before attacking.

COMPSOGNATHUS <i>Tiny beast, unaligned</i>			
Armor Class 12 Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3) Speed 30 ft.			
STR	6 (-2)	INT	4 (-3)
DEX	14 (+2)	WIS	10 (+0)
CON	12 (+1)	CHA	5 (-3)
Skills Perception +2, Stealth +6 Senses passive Perception 12 Languages — Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)			
Grassland Camouflage. The compsognathus has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in tall grass.			
Pack Tactics. The compsognathus has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the compsognathus' allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.			
ACTIONS			
Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.			

Deathcap Myconid

Deathcap flesh ranges from white to pale gray to a warm yelloworange. Their heads resemble fungal caps, often either red with white spots, red at the center with a brown edge, or a bluish-purple tone. Although deathcaps have vicious-looking fanged mouths, they use them only to ingest earth or mineral nutrients.

Mushroom Farmers. These sentient mushroom folk tend the white forests of fungi in the underworld and are allies of the darakhul. Despite their ominous name, deathcap myconids are chiefly farmers. They cultivate dozens of species of mushrooms anywhere they have water, dung, and a bit of earth or slime in the underworld deeps. For this reason, other races rarely attack them. The ghouls do not eat them, and they cannot be made into darakhul.

Toxic Spores. Although deathcaps are mostly peaceful, their spores are toxic and sleep-inducing. They make excellent allies in combat because their abilities tend to punish attackers, but they aren't especially lethal on their own. They use their poison and slumber spores to full effect against living creatures; they typically flee from constructs and undead. They count on their allies (carrion beetles, darakhul, purple worms, dark

creepers, or even various devils) to fend off the most powerful foes.

Clones. Deathcap myconids live in communal groups of related clones. They reproduce asexually, and an elder and its offspring can be nearly identical in all but age. These clone groups are called deathcap rings.

Myconids build no huts or towns, but their groups are defined by their crops and general appearance. Indeed, many sages claim that the deathcaps are merely the fruiting, mobile bodies of the forests they tend, and that this is why they fight so ferociously to defend their forests of giant fungi.

Deep One

With enormous eyes, a wide mouth, and almost no chin, the deep ones are hideous, fishlike folk, often hunched and scaled when encountered in coastal villages.

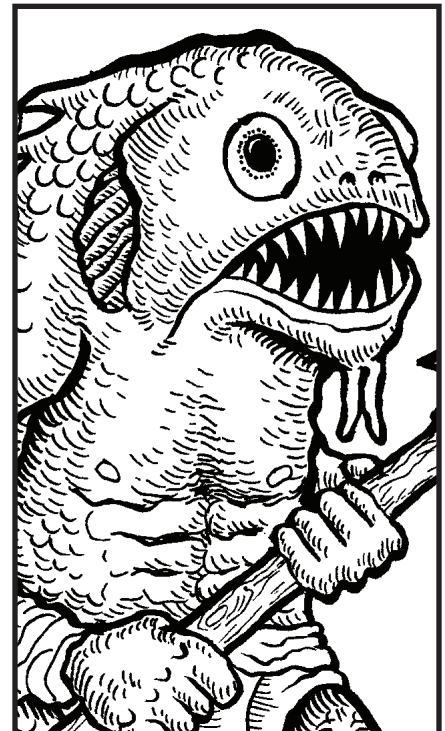
Elder Gods. In their fully grown form, the deep ones are an ocean-dwelling race that worships elder gods, and they dwell in deep water darkness. They've interbred with coastal humans to create human-deep one hybrids.

Coastal Raiders. The deep ones keep to themselves in isolated coastal villages and settlements in the ocean for long periods, and then turn suddenly, at the command of their patron gods, into strong, relentless raiders, seizing territory, slaves, and wealth all along the coasts. Some deep ones have even founded small kingdoms lasting generations in backwater reaches or distant chilled seas.

Demand Sacrifices. They demand tolls from mariners frequently; those who do not leave tribute to them at certain islands or along certain straits find the fish escape their nets, or the storms shatter their hulls and drown their sailors. Over time, some seafaring nations have found it more profitable to ally themselves with the deep ones; this is the first step in their patient plans to dominate and rule.

DEATHCAP MYCONID <i>Medium plant, neutral evil</i>			
Armor Class 15 (natural armor) Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36) Speed 20 ft.			
STR	12 (+1)	INT	10 (+0)
DEX	10 (+0)	WIS	11 (+0)
CON	16 (+3)	CHA	9 (-1)
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages — Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)			
Distress Spores. When a deathcap myconid takes damage, all other myconids within 240 feet of it sense its pain. Sun Sickness. While in sunlight, the myconid has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. The myconid dies if it spends more than 1 hour in direct sunlight.			
ACTIONS			
Multiattack. The myconid uses either its Deathcap Spores or its Slumber Spores, then makes a fist attack. Fist. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 11 (4d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (4d4) poison damage. Deathcap Spores (3/Day). The myconid ejects spores at one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 3 rounds. While poisoned this way, the target also takes 10 (4d4) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Slumber Spores (3/Day). The myconid ejects spores at one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned and unconscious for 1 minute. A creature wakes up if it takes damage, or if another creature uses its action to shake it awake.			

DEEP ONE <i>Medium humanoid, chaotic evil</i>			
Armor Class 13 (natural armor) Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28) Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.			
STR	16 (+3)	INT	10 (+0)
DEX	12 (+1)	WIS	8 (-1)
CON	14 (+2)	CHA	12 (+1)
Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4, Cha +3 Damage Vulnerabilities fire Damage Resistances cold Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9 Languages Common, Void Speech Challenge 2 (450 XP)			
Amphibious. A deep one can breathe air or water with equal ease. Frenzied Rage. On its next turn after a deep one takes 10 or more damage from a single attack, it has advantage on its claws attack and adds +2 to damage. Lightless Depths. A deep one is immune to the pressure effects of the deep ocean. Ocean Change. A deep one born to a human family resembles a human child, but transforms into an adult deep one between the ages of 16 and 30.			
ACTIONS			
Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.			



Emerald Eye

Witches and ioun mages know how to craft a speaking crystal. Its primary use is as a debating companion and ally—but many turn to treachery and hatred. These are the emerald eyes.

Servants of Logic. A mystic or psion will debate logic with a speaking crystal based on his rational mind, or discuss morality with a speaking crystal based on his conscience. Chaotic psions create speak-

ing crystals based on their primal urges, and such crystals sometimes abandon or even kill their creators. Once free, they revel in the world's pleasures.

Trapped Manipulators. Most speaking crystals are pink or purple when created, but those that betray their creators turn a dark shade of green. These floating oval-shaped crystals are physically weak, but they retain considerable magical powers to manipulate those around them. This

becomes critically important when the emerald eye discovers that killing its creator frees it from the creator's control but doesn't free it from the need to remain within 25 feet of some creature it is bound to. This is often the dead body of its creator if no other creature is available.

Shifting Goals. An emerald eye's motivations change over time. One may be purposeful, using its powers to drive its bound creature toward some specific goal. Another might

EMERALD EYE					
<i>Tiny construct, chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)					
Hit Points 54 (12d4 + 24)					
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)
Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +4, Int +4 Skills Acrobatics +4, Arcana +4, Deception +5, History +4, Perception +3, Persuasion +5, Religion +4 Damage Resistances cold, fire, piercing Damage Immunities poison Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, unconscious Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13 Languages Common, Draconic, telepathy 250 ft. Challenge 1 (200 XP)					
<p>Bound. An emerald eye cannot move more than 25 feet away from the creature that it is psychically linked to. It begins existence bound to its creator, but a free emerald eye can bind itself to another creature through its Bind action.</p> <p>Immutable Form. The emerald eye is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.</p>					
ACTIONS					
<p>Slash. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 14 (5d4 + 2) slashing damage.</p> <p>Attraction (Recharge 5-6). An emerald eye can compel one creature to move toward a particular person or object. If the creature fails a DC 13 Charisma saving throw, it feels a powerful compulsion to move toward whatever the emerald eye chooses. The target creature must be within 25 feet of the emerald eye when attraction is triggered, but the creature is then free to move beyond this range while remaining under the effect. Nothing seems out of the ordinary to the creature, but it does not knowingly put itself or its allies in harm's way to reach the object. The creature may attempt another DC 13 Charisma saving throw at the start of each of its turns; a success ends the effect.</p> <p>Bind (3/Day). The emerald eye can bind itself psychically to a creature with an Intelligence of 6 or greater. The attempt fails if the target succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. The attempt is unnoticed by the target, regardless of the result.</p> <p>Telepathic Lash (3/Day). An emerald eye can overwhelm one humanoid creature within 25 feet with emotions and impulses the creature is hard-pressed to control. If the target fails a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, it is stunned for 1 round.</p>					

FROSTVEIL					
<i>Medium plant, unaligned</i>					
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)					
Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)					
Speed 10 ft., fly 10 ft. (varies; see Windborne ability)					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)
Skills Stealth +7 Damage Vulnerabilities fire Damage Resistances bludgeoning and piercing from nonmagical weapons Damage Immunities cold Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, prone Senses blindsight 100 ft., passive Perception 10 Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)					
<p>Chilling Acid. The frostveil's frozen acidic mist breaks down flesh and organic materials into useable nutrients. Creatures who strike the frostveil with a non-reach melee weapon or an unarmed strike take 4 (1d8) acid damage.</p> <p>False Appearance. While the frostveil remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a formation of frost and ice.</p> <p>Windborne. Frostveils can catch the slightest breeze, but lack the motive power to fly unaided. Their fly speed is dependent on the local wind: Light (10 feet), Moderate (20 feet), Strong (40 feet), Severe (60 feet), Windstorm (80 feet), Hurricane (100 feet), or Tornado (120 feet). They cannot move directly against the wind but can tack at half speed.</p>					
ACTIONS					
<p>Multiattack. The frostveil makes three tendrils attacks.</p> <p>Tendrils. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If two tendrils hit the same target in a single turn, the target is engulfed.</p> <p>Engulf. When a frostveil wraps itself around a Medium or smaller creature, the target takes 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 13 (3d8) acid damage and is grappled (escape DC 15). The target takes another 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage plus 13 (3d8) acid damage at the end of each of its turns when it's still grappled by the frostveil. A frostveil can't attack while it has a creature engulfed. Damage from attacks against the frostveil is split evenly between the frostveil and the engulfed creature; the only exceptions are slashing and psychic damage, which affect only the frostveil.</p> <p>Spirit Spores (Recharge 6). In distress, frostveils release a puff of psychotropic spores in a 10-foot cloud around themselves. Creatures within the cloud of spores must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against poison or suffer hallucinations, as per a <i>confusion</i> spell, for 1d3 rounds.</p>					

feign cooperativeness, offering to share its defensive abilities in exchange for the creature's mobility. Still another might be a manipulative trickster, pretending to be an ioun stone, floating in circles around an ally's or victim's head while sparkling brightly to inspire jealousy and theft among its viewers.

Smaller than a clenched fist, an emerald eye weighs at most half a pound.

Frostveil

They took the sled dogs first, and later the seal-skinner set to guard them. We'd hear a confused, muffled cry in the wind and then we'd find them—a raven harvest, cold and stiff on the ice. Next time, we hid ourselves and watched, and saw them floating through the air like kites. A wisp of blowing snow that never dispersed, a billowing, snowflake sail moving with sinister purpose. The 'cloak of death' our skraeling guide called it.

Whipped through the air by snowstorms and resembling a spider's web dangling with delicate ice crystals, these silently gliding, beautiful killers are semi-sentient plants adapted to the merciless cold of the North.

Cloak of Death. Flat nodes shaped like large snowflakes connect their net-like bodies and trailing tails of transparent fibers. Gossamer tendrils stream behind and between the flying snowflakes, ready to grab and entangle any warm-blooded creature it detects.

Seek Warmth. Each star-like node contains crude sensory organs, able to detect warmth as meager as a living creature's breath and steer the gliding web toward it.

Spirit Spores. Northern shamans say the dance of the frostveils is beautiful when lit by the northern lights, and a powerful omen. With great care, shamans sometimes harvest frostveils for their frozen spore-shards, which grant potent visions of the spirit world when melted on the tongue.

LESSER GIBBERING ORB

Large aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d0 + 48)

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	21 (+5)

Skills Perception +12

Condition Immunities prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages All, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Hyper-Awareness. A lesser gibbering orb can see in all directions at once and cannot be surprised.

Flyby. The lesser gibbering orb doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Gibbering. The gibbering orb babbles incoherently while it can see any creature and isn't incapacitated. Each creature that starts its turn within 20 feet of the orb and can hear the gibbering must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

Esoteric Thief. When a creature dies by being swallowed whole (or when a creature killed by the lesser gibbering orb in some other fashion is eaten by it), the lesser gibbering orb absorbs the creature's known spells, prepared spells, and innate magic abilities. The orb can use one of the absorbed abilities per turn as a bonus action. Each originates from an eye that is not producing an eye ray that round. Stolen spells and innate magic abilities are lost after 24 hours.

ACTIONS

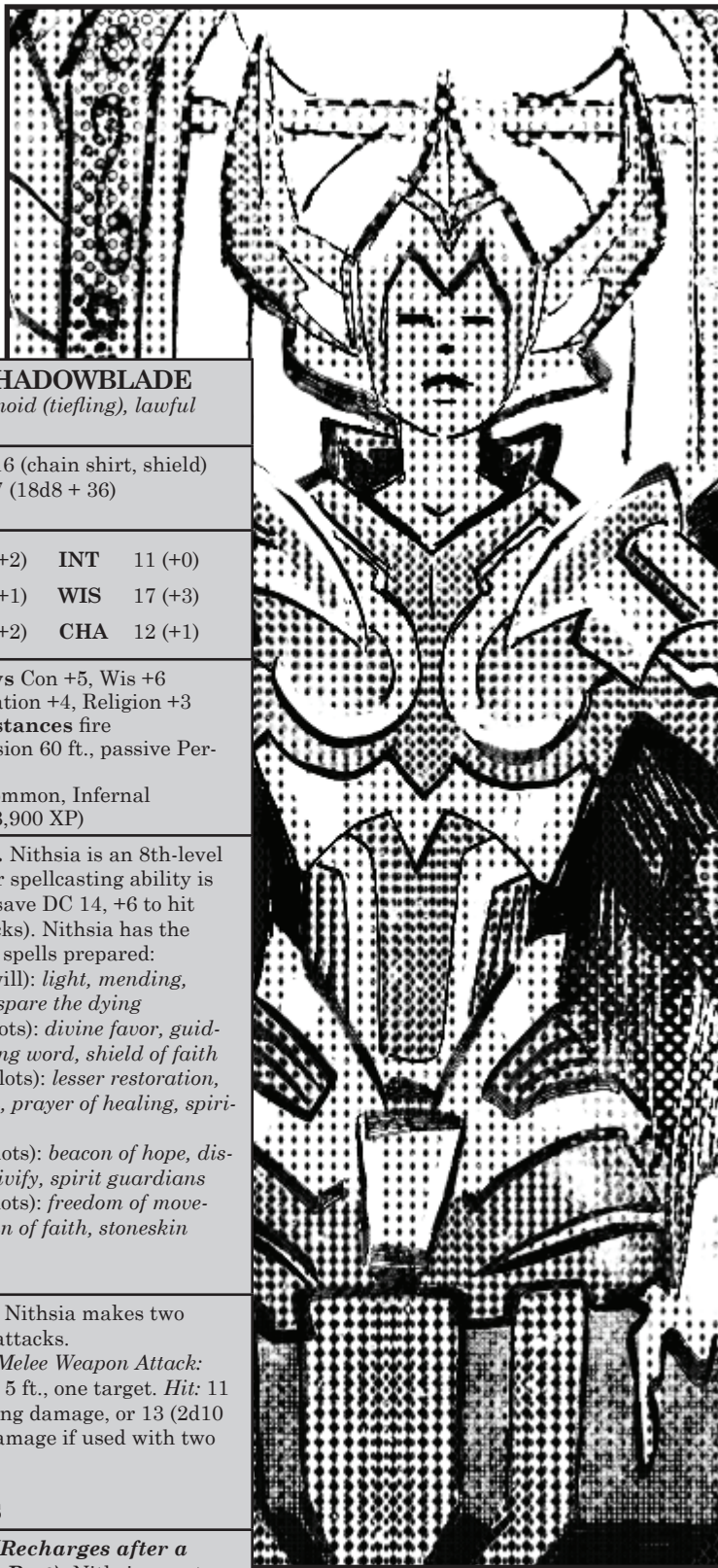
Multiattack. The lesser gibbering orb makes three bite attacks.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) piercing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 13) if the lesser gibbering orb isn't already grappling a creature, and the target is restrained until the grapple ends.

Swallow. The lesser gibbering orb makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the gibbering orb, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the lesser gibbering orb's turns. The lesser gibbering orb can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the lesser gibbering orb takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from the swallowed creature, the gibbering orb must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the orb. If the lesser gibbering orb dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Eye Rays. The orb casts three of the following spells as eye rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one to three targets it can see within 150 feet of it. The spells have a save DC of 18 and a +10 to hit.

d20	Eye Ray	d20	Eye Ray
1	<i>acid arrow</i>	11	<i>bestow curse</i>
2	<i>blindness/deafness</i>	12	<i>magic missile</i>
3	<i>chill touch</i>	13	<i>ray of enfeeblement</i>
4	<i>color spray</i>	14	<i>ray of frost</i>
5	<i>enthrall</i>	15	<i>shatter</i>
6	<i>dispel magic</i>	16	<i>sleep</i>
7	<i>flaming sphere</i>	17	<i>slow</i>
8	<i>grease</i>	18	<i>scorching ray</i>
9	<i>hypnotic pattern</i>	19	<i>lightning bolt</i>
10	<i>inflict wounds</i>	20	<i>hideous laughter</i>



Orphan of the Black

Appearing to be an unkempt human child between the ages of six and ten, this creature has bare feet and long, ragged, dirty nails. The matted mop of hair upon the creature's head has the odd blade of grass stuck in it. Its face is gaunt, with black, expressionless eyes, and its mouth is twisted into a sneer.

Neglectful Beginnings. Once children of the Material Plane, these poor souls were mistreated by their

ORPHAN OF THE BLACK

Small fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 49 (9d6 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	10 (+0)	INT	8 (-1)
DEX	16 (+3)	WIS	10 (+0)
CON	14 (+2)	CHA	13 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Forbiddance. An orphan of the black can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Sense Law. An orphan of the black can pinpoint the location of a lawful creature within 30 feet of it.

Transit Pain. A creature that hits the orphan of the black with an attack must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or take 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The orphan of the black makes two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Incite Violence (Recharge 5-6). The orphan of the black forces a creature it can see within 15 feet of it to commit an outburst of violence. The target must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must use its action on its next turn to attack the nearest creature other than the orphan of the black. On a success, the creature takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage from the violence boiling at the edge of its consciousness. A creature immune to being charmed isn't affected by the orphan's Incite Violence.

NITHSIA SHADOWBLADE

Medium humanoid (tiefling), lawful good

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	15 (+2)	INT	11 (+0)
DEX	12 (+1)	WIS	17 (+3)
CON	14 (+2)	CHA	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +6
Skills Intimidation +4, Religion +3
Damage Resistances fire
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Nithsia is an 8th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Nithsia has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying*
1st Level (4 slots): *divine favor, guiding bolt, healing word, shield of faith*
2nd Level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon, prayer of healing, spiritual weapon*
3rd Level (3 slots): *beacon of hope, dispel magic, revivify, spirit guardians*
4th Level (3 slots): *freedom of movement, guardian of faith, stonewall*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nithsia makes two melee weapon attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 13 (2d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

REACTIONS

Holy Strike (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Nithsia grants a +10 bonus to an attack roll made by herself or another creature within 30 feet of her. She can make this choice after the roll is made but before it hits or misses.

guardians or people in positions of authority. Through their sadness and neglect, they inadvertently opened doorways to the Shadow Realm, and, eager for an escape from their lives, they stepped through the doorways. Over time, the atmosphere of the Shadow Realm corrupted and twisted these children into feral creatures. Orphans of the black carry no weapons or belongings, except for a single tattered blanket or broken toy.

Problem with Authority. Orphans of the black hate those who hold command over others. Whenever possible, they attack creatures prominently displaying rank or other titles, along with those who issue orders. An orphan of the black may sympathize with a creature that feels belittled or neglected, and it might forgo attacking the creature to attempt to coerce the creature into becoming an orphan of the black as well.

Shoggoth

A shoggoth is an intelligent, gelatinous blob that can reshape itself at will. Created by an elder race as servants, the shoggoths rebelled long ago and slew their masters without pity. Since that time, they've lived in isolated or desolate regions, devouring whatever they encounter and absorbing its flesh into their own amorphous, shifting forms.

Constant Growth. When in a spherical form, a shoggoth's mass is enough to have a 10- to 15-foot diameter, though this is just an average size. Shoggoths continue growing throughout their lives, though the eldest among them grow very slowly indeed, and some shoggoths may shrink from starvation if they deplete a territory of resources.

Mutable Form. A shoggoth can form eyes, mouths, tentacles, and other appendages as needed, though it lacks the control to truly polymorph into another creature's shape and hold it.

SHOGGOTH

Huge aberration, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 387 (25d12 + 225)

Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	14 (+2)	28 (+9)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +9

Damage Resistances fire, bludgeoning, piercing

Damage Immunities cold, thunder, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, prone, stunned, unconscious

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Void Speech

Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

Absorb Flesh. The body of a creature that dies while grappled by a shoggoth is completely absorbed into the shoggoth's mass. No portion of it remains to be used in *raise dead*, *reincarnate*, and comparable spells that require touching the dead person's body.

Amorphous. A shoggoth can move through a space as small as 1 foot wide. It must spend 1 extra foot of movement for every foot it moves through a space smaller than itself, but it isn't subject to any other penalties for squeezing.

Anaerobic. A shoggoth doesn't need oxygen to live. It can exist with equal comfort at the bottom of the ocean or in the vacuum of outer space.

Hideous Piping. The fluting noises made by a shoggoth are otherworldly and mind-shattering. A creature that can hear this cacophony at the start of its turn and is within 120 feet of a shoggoth must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be confused (as the spell *confusion*) for 1d4 rounds. Creatures that roll a natural 20 on this saving throw become immune to the Hideous Piping for 24 hours. Otherwise, characters who meet the conditions must repeat the saving throw every round.

Keen Senses. A shoggoth has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Rolling Charge. If the shoggoth moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and hits it with a slam attack on the same turn, that creature must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone. If the creature is knocked prone, the shoggoth immediately moves into the creature's space as a bonus action and crushes the creature beneath its bulk. The crushed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of the shoggoth's turns. A crushed creature remains in its space and does not move with the shoggoth. A crushed creature can escape by using an action and making a successful DC 19 Strength check. On a success, the creature crawls into an empty space within 5 feet of the shoggoth.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shoggoth makes 1d4 + 1 slam attacks. Reroll the number of attacks at the start of each of the shoggoth's turns.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18) and restrained. The shoggoth can grapple any number of creatures simultaneously, and this has no effect on its number of attacks.



Shroud

Shrouds appear much like they did in life, only translucent and immaterial. Their voices are weak.

Bitter Spirits. Shrouds are transitional creatures: remnants of wicked people who died but refuse to rest in peace, yet have not grown strong enough to become shadows. They

are aggressive enemies of all living creatures and the light that nurtures life. Shrouds blend naturally into darkness, but they stand out starkly in bright light.

Thin Outlines. Shrouds look like flickering shadowy outlines of the people they were before they died, retaining the same height and body type.

Repetitive Speech. Shrouds cannot converse, but they occasionally can be heard cruelly whispering a name, term, or phrase over and over again: something that must have had meaning to them in life.

SHROUD <i>Medium undead, neutral evil</i>	
Armor Class 13 (natural armor) Hit Points 9 (2d8) Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)	
STR 4 (-3)	INT 2 (-4)
DEX 13 (+1)	WIS 10 (+0)
CON 10 (+0)	CHA 8 (-1)
Skills Stealth +3 Damage Vulnerabilities radiant Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered Damage Immunities necrotic, poison Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages Common Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)	
Amorphous. The shroud can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. Shadow Evolution. Shrouds instantly become shadows once they cause a total of 12 damage. Any damage they've suffered is subtracted from the shadow's total hit points or abilities. Shroud Stealth. When in dim light or darkness, the shroud can take the Hide action as a bonus action. Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shroud has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.	
ACTIONS	
Strength Drain. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> 3 (1d4 + 1) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by one-half that amount. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shroud rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.	



VINEMASTER <i>Medium fey, neutral evil</i>	
Armor Class 16 (natural armor) Hit Points 85 (10d8 + 40) Speed 30 ft.	
STR 18 (+4)	INT 11 (+0)
DEX 15 (+2)	WIS 12 (+1)
CON 18 (+4)	CHA 14 (+2)
Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +4, Cha +5 Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks Damage Immunities fire, poison Condition Immunities poisoned Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages Sylvan, telepathy 120 ft. Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)	
Magic Resistance. The vinemaster has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Symbiotic Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the vinemaster's darkvision.	
ACTIONS	
Multiattack. The vinemaster makes two attacks with its vines. Vine. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if the vinemaster isn't already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns. Animate Vines (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Up to four vines the vinemaster can see within 60 feet of it magically sprout razor-edged barbs and animate under the vinemaster's control, provided that the vines are not part of a creature. Each animated vine is an object with AC 20, 20 hit points, resistance to piercing damage, and immunity to psychic and poison damage. When the vinemaster uses Multiattack on its turn, it can use each animated vine to make one additional vine attack. An animated vine can grapple one creature of its own but can't make attacks while grappling. An animated vine reverts to its inanimate state if reduced to 0 hit points or if the vinemaster is incapacitated or dies.	
REACTIONS	
Unnerving Form. When a creature the vinemaster can see starts its turn within 30 feet of the vinemaster, the vinemaster can move the vines on its face to take on the appearance of one of the creature's departed loved ones or bitter enemies. If the creature can see the vinemaster, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its turn.	

Vinemaster

The Vinemaster is a powerful fey who spends his time crafting poisons in a secluded dungeon deep in the forest.

Lair Actions. On initiative count 20 (losing ties), the vinemaster takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects (no same effect two rounds in a row):

- The vinemaster chooses a point it can see within 120 feet of itself. Vines burst from the ground in a 20-foot radius of the point, causing the area to become difficult terrain. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be restrained by the vines. A creature can be freed if it or another creature succeeds on a DC 15 Strength check using its action. The vines wither when the vinemaster uses this lair action again or upon its death.
- A thick wall of thorny vines 60 feet long, 10 feet high, and 5 feet thick springs from the ground within 120 feet of the vinemaster. When the vines appear, each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) piercing damage and getting pushed 5 feet out of the wall's space, appearing on whichever side of the wall it wants on a failed save. A creature can move through the wall, but must spend 4 feet of movement for every 1 foot it moves and must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw once each round it's in contact with the wall, taking 18 (4d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Each 10-foot section of wall has AC 5, 15 hit points, resistance to bludgeoning and piercing damage, and immunity to psychic damage. The wall withers when the vinemaster uses this lair action again or when it dies.
- Flowering vines with a delectable scent bloom at the feet of one creature the vinemaster can see within 120 feet of it. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the vinemaster until initiative count 20 on the next round. Ω

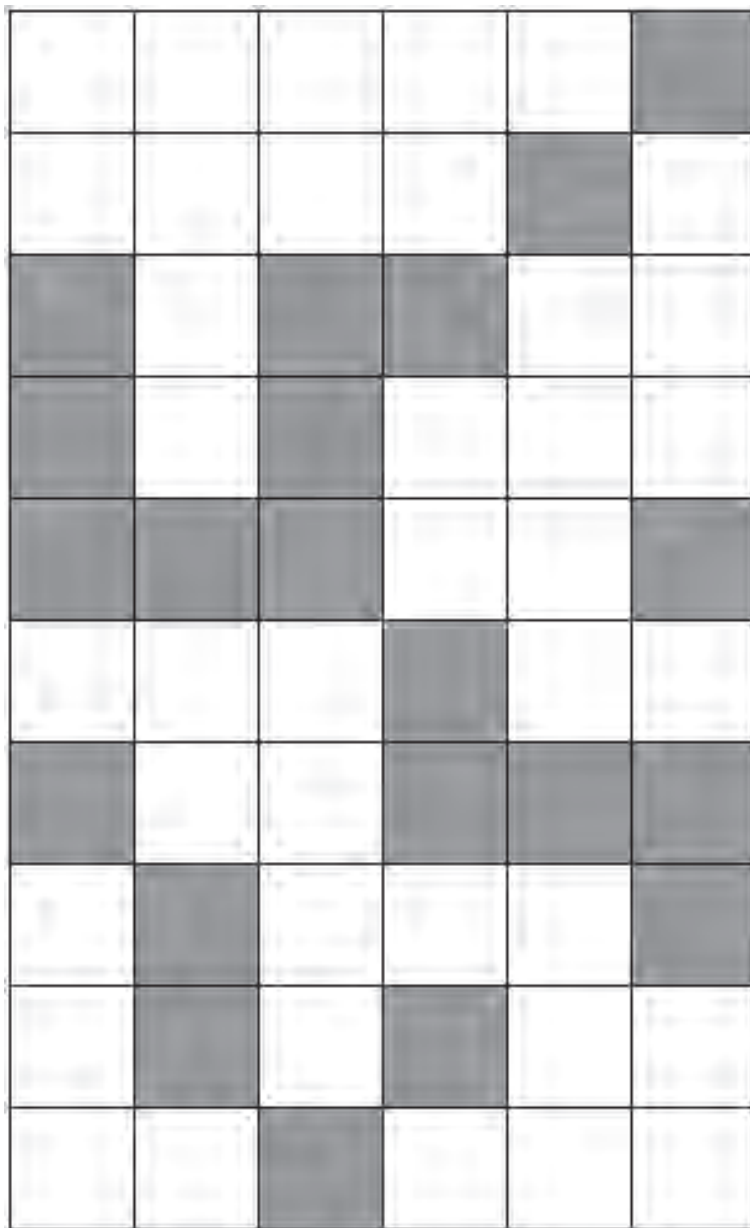


APPENDIX E

HANDOUTS


Art by Tim Andrews and TJ Firestone

The Thought Palace Handout



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WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE
For robbery & murder



SKATH & HIS GANG
200 GP **20 GP EACH**
REWARD REWARD
ALIVE **DEAD**
posted by the Merchant's Guild

Dearest family,
I beg for your help...

For the past several nights, angered spirits have attacked our village. These creatures float into our homes through the walls and inflict horrific wounds - it's as if they can steal our very life essence...

No doubt you've become a sure-footed adventurer by now, please hurry and save Lenker's Pass from this terrible haunting, we won't last much longer without your help!

Love, your Great Aunt Hestia.

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 5E SRD v5.1

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