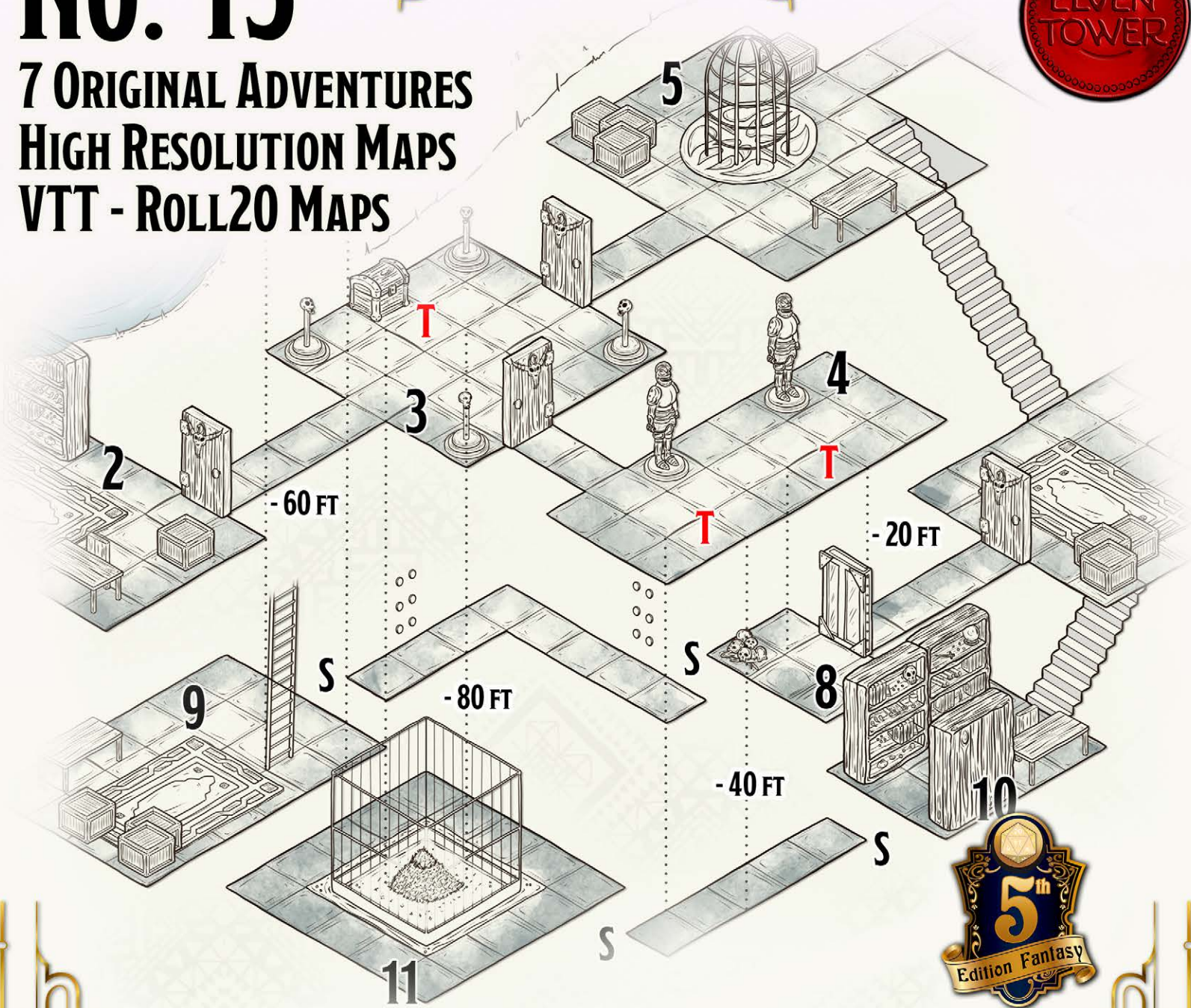


DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 15

7 ORIGINAL ADVENTURES
HIGH RESOLUTION MAPS
VTT - ROLL20 MAPS



THE BEST ADVENTURES FOR THE BEST GMS

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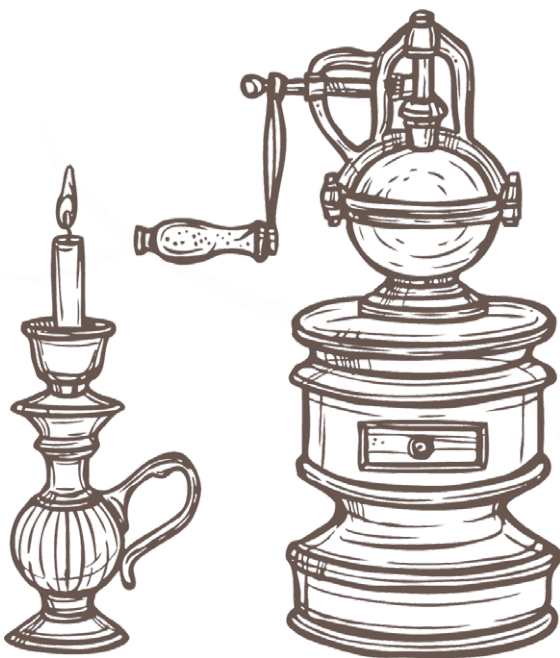


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HELPING THE WEAK

Level 3

People open their eyes when it's already late...
Life ought to teach them all a lesson soon.

Old Twig

BACKGROUND LORE

OUT OF THE many races that inhabit the various environments of the world, wood goblins belong to the rarest kind. They are smaller than common goblins and their skin is made of bark. They look like tiny, leaf-less, walking trees. Wood goblins come in different shapes, just like trees. Their hair grows like tangled twigs and roots.

Few people have seen these curious individuals. Even fewer have talked to them. Wood goblins mind their business in the forest they live in; they seldom leave their homes. Their presence improves the soil quality and the lifespan of all plants, weeds, and trees around them.

WOOD GOBLINS IN THE HOLLOW FOREST

OLD TWIG IS the leader and oldest member of a group of wood goblins that lives deep inside the Hollow Forest. There are lots of elvish and human thorps and hamlets around. Some of them know the goblins and often trade goods; wood goblins harvest unique special mushrooms.

BLACK FANG AND THE GNOLLS

THE WOOD GOBLINS led by Old Twig are having a hard time. A ravenous groll called Black Fang found their underground lair and kicked them out. They force the poor wood goblins to bring small animals from the forest for food, to give them mushrooms, and to fool travelers and people from nearby hamlets to approach the lair.

The harmless goblins have no chance against Black Fang and his gnolls. Old Twig told all wood goblins not to resist but to endure; none of them enjoy working for the gnolls but they believe that all the damage they have done is impossible to miss. "*Help shall come soon*", Old Twig keeps saying. The wood goblins remain hopeful.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

HERE ARE A few ways the characters may become involved. They are the heroes of this story:

- Old Twig is a friend of one of the characters, preferably a druid or a ranger. They receive a letter from the wood goblins' leader written on dried leaves glued together with tree sap. Old Twig begs his friend to rush to the Hollow Forest to help.
- Feran Nil, an elf leader, contacts the characters. He tells them gnolls have killed several forest dwellers and impede wood goblins to do their job, which is crucial in the forest and the communities there. The gnolls must be stopped at once. Feran Nil offers a reward of 1,500 gp for this job.
- The characters cross the Hollow Forest and they stumble upon a small human thorp. The scared people tell them that horrible, upright-walking hyenas hunt travelers, harvesters, and lumberjacks. The tracks lead to an opening in the mountain.

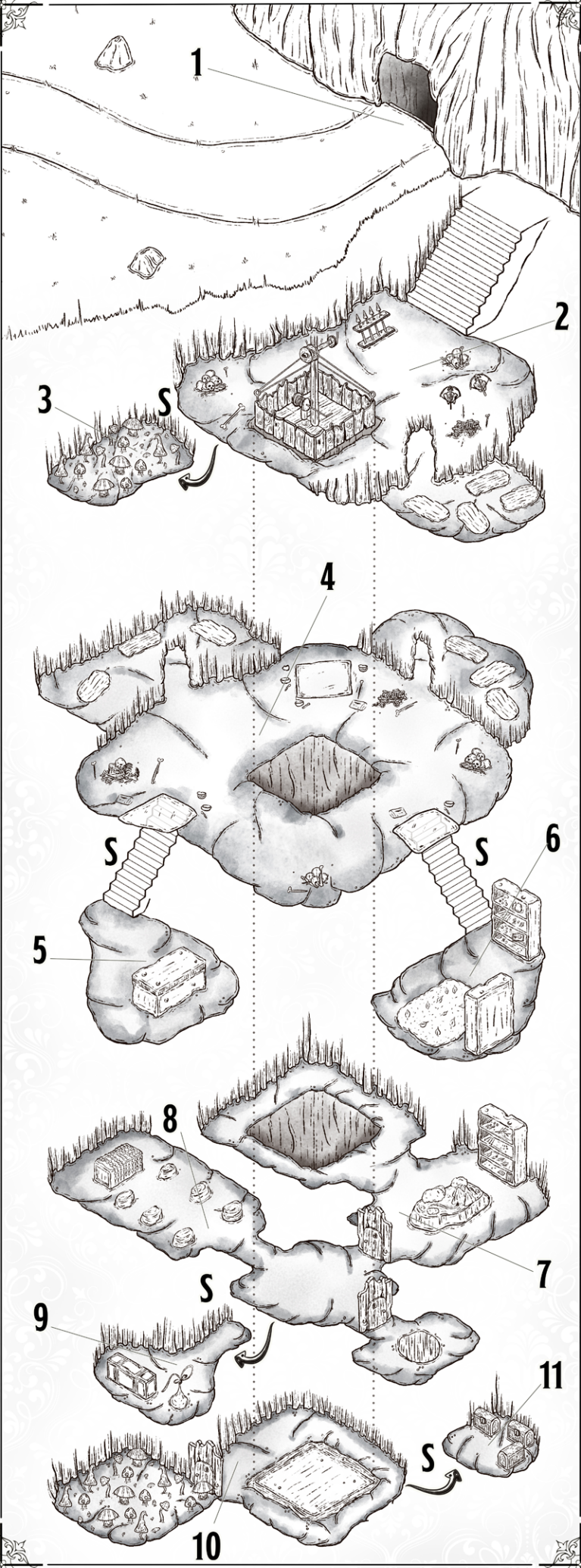
FEATURES OF THE WOOD GOBLIN LAIR

The following features correspond to all the levels of the wood goblin lair; areas 1 through 11.

Caverns. Like dwarves, wood goblins are innate carvers. Their caverns have many pieces of stone furniture.

Smells and Sounds. The gnolls have killed and eaten almost a dozen people during their stay in the wood goblins lair. Their nasty meals left rotten bones scattered all around the first two levels of the wood goblins' lair.

Elevator. A wooden elevator worked by pulleys reaches all levels of the underground lair. It can hold up to five Medium creatures. It breaks under more weight.



1. ENTRANCE

Well-tended roads cross the entirety of the forest. A side road leads to an opening in a mountain.

The characters see the entrance to the wood goblins' lair after traveling for half a day through the forest.

Gnoll Tracks. A good tracker notices faint gnoll footprints coming in and out of the cave (DC 13 Survival).

Old Twig. The wood goblins' leader sits by the road looking blue. At first, he tells the characters there are great treasures inside the cave; that is the job he is forced to do. But when he sees the characters up close, he decides to trust them, ask for their help, and explain the situation. If Old Twig expected the arrival of a friend, he recognizes them at once (see **Adventure Hooks**).

2. MAIN CAVERN

The first cave underground has an amazingly complex elevator weighed by pulleys. Wood goblins are smart and cunning creatures that love to harvest and craft stuff.

There are five **gnolls** here. Two of them use the mounted crossbows they brought when they took over the lair.

Gnoll Crossbows. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 80 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (2d8 + 2) piercing damage. A gnoll can reload the crossbow in 1 round.

3. SECRET FUNGI GARDEN

This place is hidden behind rocks that cover the entrance (DC 16 Perception). Wood goblins' mushrooms are the largest. A knowledgeable ranger notices each kind might have a different unknown property (DC 15 Nature).

Fungi. Consuming these mushrooms grants benefits (DC 12 Constitution). On a fail, creatures become poisoned for one hour and receive no positive benefit.

► **Egg Caps.** (4 doses) A portion of this mushroom heals 1d4 hit points and grants 1d4 temporary hit points.

► **Twisted Chapeau.** (3 doses) This cap increases a creature's Strength by 1d2 for one hour.

► **Striped Caps.** (3 doses) This mushroom makes a creature enter a berserk state (like a barbarian's rage) for one minute. The creature sees allies as foes too.

► **Dotted Caps.** (3 doses) This mushroom increases a creature's speed by 5 feet for one hour. When the effect ends, the creature acquires one level of exhaustion.

Ingesting more than one mushroom in the same hour increases the Constitution DC save by 2. Eating caps of the same kind does not stack their effect. A character can, however, benefit from all four mushrooms' positive effects as long as they pass the four Constitution saves.

4. CENTRAL ROOMS

Two small caves with beds made of leaves, twigs, and hay connect to the larger central chamber.

Quilted blankets of different fabrics lie on the ground with tools and utensils scattered all around.

A group of six **gnolls** eats the remains of their most recent victims: some random travelers from the road. If the battle turns against them, the remaining gnolls get on the elevator to descend. If the characters follow them, there is a possibility the elevator breaks under so much weight (see **Features of the Wood Goblins Lair**).

5. SECRET STORAGE

A perceptive individual notices the hidden trapdoor under the mat (DC 17 Perception). It contains a large stone chest where wood goblins keep their food and other materials they need for their gardening and harvesting.

Treasure. Wood goblins keep large quantities of tree sap stored in wooden containers. They have a large stash of leaf powders and other rare herbs. The right buyer would pay 500 gp for these unique ingredients.

6. OLD TWIG'S CHAMBERS

The leader of the wood goblins has an individual room where he keeps his mundane stuff and belongings.

Dire Truth. The characters find a book made up of dried leaves and bark for covers if they search the room. It is Old Twig's diary. A *comprehend languages* spell reveals crucial and shocking information about Old Twig. The leader of the wood goblins made a gruesome deal with Black Fang from the beginning (see **Conclusion**).

OLD TWIG

Wood Goblin (age 276)

Old Twig is the oldest of the wood goblins that live in the Hollow Forest. Tradition dictates he shall be their leader until his death. Old Twig is tired and jaded of the fact that almost no one knows about wood goblins' work or their mere existence. He wished elves and humans would help them more and pay what is right for their goods, crafts, and services; Old Twig has tried many times to raise his "prices" but his requests are always denied.

Manner. Old Twig spits leaves from time to time. This is a rare, but well-regarded trait among wood goblins.

Ambition. Old Twig has a plan that should result in humanoids caring more for them and accepting their requests for help and raise prices (see **Conclusion**).

7. LOWER CAVERNS

This antechamber before the elevator has a beautiful, highly detailed, stone carving of the portion of a forest where a road reaches the mountains.

A perceptive character notices the map on the rock's surface represents the portion of the Hollow Forest where the wood goblins lair is located (DC 14 Survival).

8. WOOD GOBLIN ASSEMBLY ROOM

Wood goblins gather to talk about daily chores or tasks. Black Fang (gnoll **veteran**), four **gnolls**, and any gnoll survivor from area 4 fight together here.

Crazy Fungi. To add a spice of tension to this battle, consider adding a random mushroom effect described in area 10 to each of the gnolls involved. Black Fang, of course, benefits from the effects of all four mushrooms.

Gnoll's Deal. The gnolls do not fight to the death. If allowed, Black Fang surrenders and tries to strike a deal. The gnoll leader claims the wood goblins were the ones who told him to come in the first place (see **Conclusion**).

Hole. Wood goblins use this hole to make swift trips to the Underworld and retrieve rare mushrooms and roots.

9. HIDDEN TREASURE CHAMBER

Perceptive characters notice cleverly placed rocks that cover the entrance to this chamber (DC 16 Perception).

Treasure. The bag and stone chest contain 783 gp worth of silverware and simple jewelry. Wood goblins use these things to trade and barter with elves and humans. They have no practical use for these trinkets.



10. LOWER FUNGI GARDEN

This cave has the same kinds of mushrooms described in area 3. However, the mushrooms here are larger and healthier than their counterparts. If the characters eat these mushrooms, use these rules instead.

Fungi. Consuming these mushrooms grants benefits (DC 14 Constitution). On a fail, creatures become poisoned for one hour and receive no positive benefit.

▶ **Egg Caps.** (5 doses) A portion of this mushroom heals 1d6 hit points and grants 1d6 temporary hit points.

▶ **Twisted Chapeau.** (4 doses) This cap increases a creature's Strength by 1d4 for one hour.

▶ **Striped Caps.** (4 doses) This mushroom makes a creature enter a berserk state (like a barbarian's rage) for one minute. The creature discerns allies from foes.

▶ **Dotted Caps.** (4 doses) This mushroom increases a creature's speed by 10 feet for one hour. When the effect ends, the creature acquires one level of exhaustion.

The rules for stacking described in area 3 apply here.

11. SECRET CAVE

Old Twig is the only wood goblin that knows about this cave. The gnolls never saw the cleverly placed rocks that cover the entrance when they came (DC 19 Perception).

Treasure. The stone chests here contain 2,145 gp in assorted coinage, 3 druid *spell scrolls* (GM's choice), and a *staff of withering*. Old Twig sees for his people and their prosperity. If things ever go bad at Hollow Forest, the small fortune here should allow them to move to another forest. Old Twig also makes use of this treasure to bargain for his life if he is caught (see **Conclusion**).

CONCLUSION / DEVELOPMENT

The characters reach the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

BLACK FANG FLEES

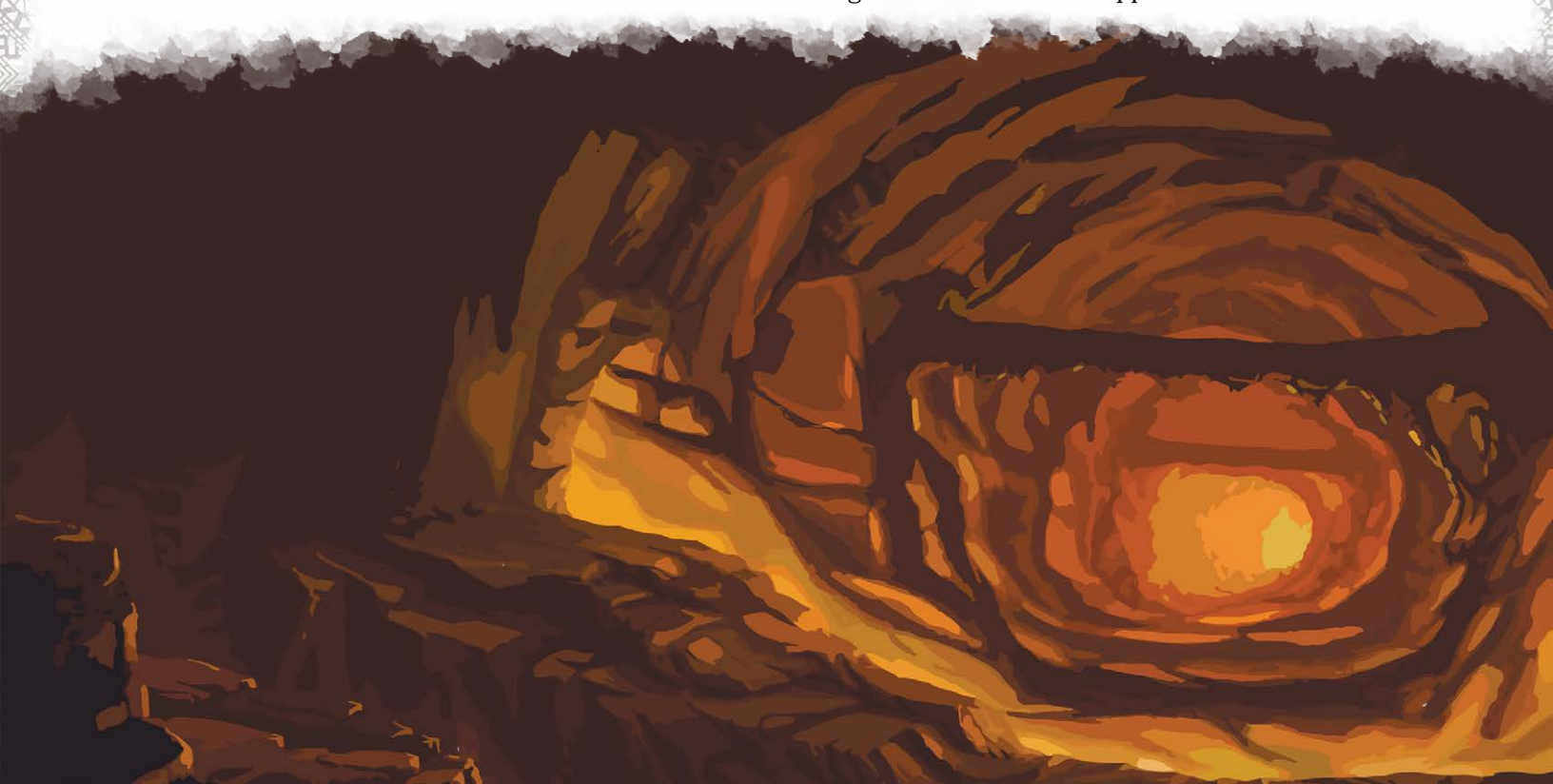
Black Fang claims that Old Twig is behind all this or the characters learn it from the goblin's diary. The characters let Black Fang go, or the clever gnoll flees at the first opportunity after the characters lay down their weapons. The characters must confront Old Twig about his crime.

OLD TWIG IS CAUGHT

Old Twig's diary and Black Fang's testimony match. The leader of the wood goblins asked the gnolls to come and he ordered his people not to resist. This is why no wood goblin lost their life when the gnolls attacked. However, the lives of all the travelers and the people the gnolls killed are Old Twig's fault too. It is true that wood goblins get unfair treatment and deserve more for what they do, but Old Twig's methods crossed a line. How to find justice and fix Hollow Forest's quagmires among their people is an adventure and quest for another time.

THE SECRET IS KEPT

The characters refuse to parley with Black Fang and kill him and his band of gnolls. The elves and humans in Hollow Forest are thankful to the heroes; they realize the importance of wood goblins during the time they could not fertilize the lands or do their job. They accept Old Twig's demands and the recognition he wanted. Not the characters, not even the wood goblins that follow Old Twig shall know this all happened because of him.



CRYPT OF THE PENITENTS

Level 4

Penitent ones in silence! Allow your brethren souls to leave this place and rest at last!

Sir Donovan Garte

BACKGROUND LORE

THE GREATEST CHARITABLE organization in the kingdom is by far the Church of Ascension. Countless holy warriors, clerics, priests, and paladins have devoted their lives to the Church of Ascension to achieve the ultimate sign of recognition: to be officially declared a saint. Only a formidable few have been recognized as such. But such is the way of life. Not everyone can succeed.

The Church of Ascension counts thousands of followers in the kingdom, with churches in most cities and even smaller settlements. People are drawn to the church by the promise of eternal salvation after a lifetime of work.

A TAINTED BELIEF

THE CHURCH OF Ascension hides a dark secret. Every altar depicts a blinding light that symbolizes the ascension of the soul. But behind it, the silhouette of a dark entity hides. Only the highest ranks of the church are privy to this secret. They call it the Old One. A strange entity behind everything the church does. It whispers orders into the high-priests' ears and oversees the faith's growth. The commonfolk must not learn of this. It would shake their faith to the core. A place where the Old One has much influence is the Crypt of the Penitents.

THE CRYPT OF ATONEMENT

THOSE WHO FAIL in the Church of Ascension's service are interred in a crypt near the city's capital. Their souls are supposed to ponder their failures for a time, to seek atonement. But in reality, an altar to the Old One holds the penitents' souls captive. The high-priests use this receptacle as an energy source for foul rituals. The undying servants of the faith buried there have come to realize the fraud of devoting their lives to the false faith.

THE PENITENTS IN SILENCE

SOME UNDEAD PENITENTS have sworn a vow of silence as a form of penance until the Church of Ascension has been destroyed. Filled with hate, these penitents have made incursions into the capital to murder people faithful to the church. They attack swiftly before returning to the Crypt of the Penitents. Even when destroyed, the guards claim they keep returning in large numbers.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The undead warriors have caused enough deaths that the city offers a bounty of 3,000 gp to whoever manages to deal with the abominate souls within the crypt. The Church of Ascension claims that the undead must be the creation of a nefarious necromancer in the crypts. They deny any involvement with the current situation.

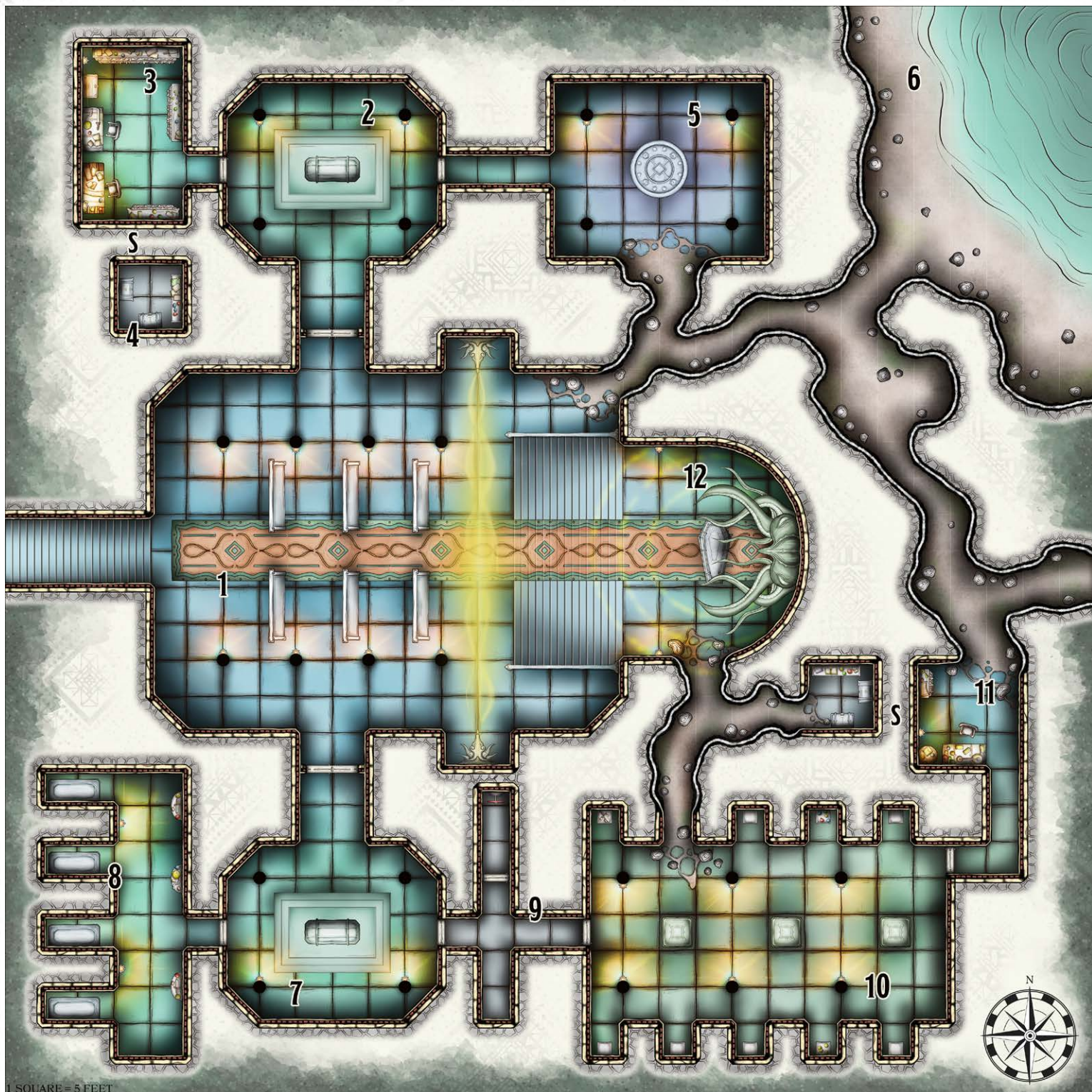
FEATURES OF THE CRYPT

The following features correspond to the underground Crypt of the Penitents; areas 1 through 12.

Penitents. Undead individuals within the crypt belong to one of three factions: those who took the vow of silence, those indifferent to their surroundings, and those who uphold the sanctity of the crypt and their penances.

Smells and Sounds. The place smells of damp stone, of ozone near the barrier, and decaying matter from the walking penitents. The humming sound from the barrier in area 1 can be heard throughout the dungeon.

The Arcane Barrier. The barrier in area 1 is equivalent to a *wall of force* spell. It can be bypassed by destroying the statues that generate it but the penitents loyal to the cause defend them. It can be turned off in area 9. The characters can bypass it from the natural cave in area 5.



1. THE CHURCH OF PENITENTS

The staircase leads to a large, underground church nave. The raised altar is barely visible behind an iridescent magical barrier that impedes passage.

The grandiose nave is in a worrying state of disrepair after the Church of Ascension's envoys stopped maintaining it due to the increasing number of undead within. While some of the undying holy warriors are indifferent, many have grown hateful and vindictive over time.

There are fifteen penitents in the nave when the characters arrive. All of them sit on the benches facing the arcane barrier. The undead remain still and quiet. If a character interacts with any of the undead or the barrier in any way, five penitents in silence (**wights**) rise from their seats and engage the characters in bloody combat. The undead fight until slain in uncanny silence. The rest of the penitents (**zombies**) remain seated and calm. If questioned, any of them can explain the vow of silence some of their brethren have sworn. They claim it is only a way to find a way out of their unending suffering.

2. SIR DONOVAN'S TOMB

A single stone sarcophagus rests on top of a three-step dais. Delicate runes are carved on the surface.

The Forgotten Knight. A friendly undead knight, Sir Donovan Garte (**wight**), stands by his stone sarcophagus. Sir Donovan disagrees with the penitents in silence and realizes that things can only get worse as time goes on. He explains that after being destroyed, the undead regenerate naturally after a month. Sir Donovan Garte explains the predicament of all those interred in the crypt and how the Church of Ascension fooled them all. He believes there is a way out, though. Sir Donovan claims that the souls are captive in the great altar in area 12.

Treasure. Sir Donovan's *+1 longsword* is engraved with the date when he was ordained to become a saint.

3. ARCHIVE OF THE PENITENTS

A well-stocked library containing biographies of most people interred in the Crypt of the Penitents. The documents contain detailed descriptions of their deeds in life and the failure that caused them to be buried here.

Treasure. A selection of unique tomes and scrolls from the archive is worth 200 gp to a scholar or researcher. There are three divine *spell scrolls* as well (GM's choice).

4. SECRET ARCHIVE

A perceptive individual notices the switch in area 3 that opens the way to this chamber (DC 15 Perception).

Treasure. The chests contain 200 gp and 900 sp. A selection of unique tomes with mithral bindings and covers is worth 700 gp to a scholar or researcher.

SIR DONOVAN GARTE

Human Undead (age 52 in life)

Sir Donovan Garte (**wight**) was a gallant and brave warrior in life and is a mournful soul in death. He led an exemplary life as an anointed knight, a warrior of the faith. Sir Donovan never became a saint and his remains were moved to the crypt five decades ago. Since then he has understood that the Church of Ascension is a fraud and that they were all deluded. He disagrees with the approach of the penitents in silence but believes in fighting back. He has a plan to set free everyone's souls.

Manner. Sir Donovan is in anguish and prone to stare into nothingness as if thinking. His attention span is low.

Ambition. Sir Donovan wishes to break the church's hold on the penitents' souls so that they can all be free.

5. TELEPORTATION CIRCLE

A one-foot-tall granite circle rests in the middle of the chamber. Faint yellow sparks emerge from the intricate, arcane runes carved on its top.

This is a permanent circle of teleportation. Spellcasters can copy the rune patterns in it to use with teleportation spells. In addition, conjuration spells cast while standing on the circle have their effects maximized. Three penitents in silence (**wights**) are here to drive off the kuo-toa scouts that come from the lake frequently enough.

6. UNDERGROUND LAKE

The shore of an underground lake begins with fine sand. The opposite side is covered in darkness.

The lake is so large that a boat or skiff is needed to traverse it. A kuo-toa community lives in the uncharted depths. The fishmen are instinctively attracted to the great altar in area 12 but the guardians or the penitents drive them off when they approach too much. Regardless, the kuo-toa never miss the opportunity of easy prey. A pack of eight kuo-toa ambushes the characters when they come within 5 feet of the shore (DC 15 Perception). The kuo-toa use their nets to retrain the characters and pull them into the waters. They don't fight to the death.

7. SIR LAMBERT VARKI'S TOMB

The chamber is identical to area 2. Sir Lambert took the vow of silence and was destroyed during the last incursion, he shall regenerate within a fortnight.

Treasure. The enclosure contains a *+1 breastplate armor* engraved with the Church of Ascension's sigil.



8. TOMB OF PALADINS

Four stone sarcophagi await in dark alcoves by the west wall. The chamber is adorned with banners, wooden sigils, and personal trinkets on shelves.

Three out of the four penitents (**wights**) here have taken the vow of silence. They rise from their enclosures and fight the characters. The remaining paladin remains motionless in his stone casket, he does not care for the plights of others and even refuses to fight in self-defense.

Treasure. Collectively, the four sarcophagi contain 500 gp, 2,200 sp, and a ceremonial bone dagger (80 gp).

9. THE BARRIER DEVICE

Operating the valve lever in this corridor causes the arcane barrier in area 1 to disappear within 5 minutes. Re-activating the barrier takes a full hour of charging up.

Poison Darts Trap. Opening the door to the barrier device causes dozens of poisoned darts to fly from the south wall to the door. They hit any creature in their way and deal 4d6 poison damage (DC 16 Constitution save).

10. THE COLUMBARIUM

The chamber's walls, pillars, and alcoves house countless funerary niches. The remains of hundreds of people give this place a somber aura.

Hundreds of individuals of lesser importance were buried here. They suffer in eternal damnation and overall nonrecognition for their deeds in life. The sudden movement of those sworn to silence has caused some of them to arise. Six **shadows** and two **specters** roam the chamber. They attack the living with cold-blooded hate.

11. EMBALMING ROOM

The room contains a collection of embalming implements and substances. Part of the room has collapsed and connects to the underground caves. A secret switch to reach a hidden vault is in plain sight.

Treasure. The vault contains 320gp and 700 sp. There are several broken flasks of embalming substances.

12. GREAT ALTAR OF THE FAITH

An elaborate effigy of the Church of Ascension's Old One looms over a single, stone sarcophagi. The divine figure dulls the senses and appears to move.

The sarcophagus is a receptacle for the penitents' souls. Opening it releases them so they can finally rest. The penitents have tried to fight the two guardians (**wraiths**) but have failed every time they attempt it. The high-priests of the Church of Ascension created two immortal guardians with the foul arts granted by the Old One.

CONCLUSION

DEFEATING THE GUARDIANS and opening the sarcophagus releases all penitents' souls from their eternal penances. Even those sworn in silence abandon their nefarious goals to reach the afterlife. They find peace at last.

Doing so stops the problem of the undead incursions and the characters can collect the 3,000 gp reward from the capital. However, this achievement conjures the ire of the Church of Ascension. The high-priests have lost a powerful and valuable receptacle with hundreds of souls. The characters know the church's horrible secret too. Their survival is a threat to the corrupt religious organization. The high-priests shall come for them soon.



THE MISSING CHILDREN

Level 3

You don't understand, they're my beloved children, I would do anything for them!

Forest witch

BACKGROUND LORE

MOST PARENTS RESORT to horror tales to persuade their children into obeying and going to bed. They often describe evil spirits that hunt mischievous children. Monsters under the bed or inside a wardrobe that eat lazy little ones are common too. However, even the most troublesome younglings tremble to the core when tales about witches reach their ears. These stories are the last resort for parents with unruly offspring.

A TALE COME TRUE

BROWNMOSS TOWN IS the closest settlement to Sun-green Forest. It oversees the several smaller settlements throughout the woods' surroundings. Nighttime tales about witches and monsters from the woods are more than common, even popular around the area.

Nevertheless, the tales stopped being fun a few months ago. Children started to disappear near the forest and were never found. The culprit is still at large as of yet. The number of families looking for their youngest members increases by the day. All fingers point to the depths of Sun-green Forest. Searching parties sent to track down the missing younglings have been attacked too.

THE FOREST WITCH

THE CREATURE RESPONSIBLE for the disappearances is a forest witch. She is a hag from the woods who fosters a deluded sentiment of becoming a mother one day. She is evil and deranged. She kidnaps little children to suck their life energy and stay forever young. In truth, she cares not for the innocent ones. Furthermore, her ancient witchcraft makes puppets of the poor children. They become horrible, purulent, tiny humans with claws that know nothing but to obey their foul creator.

THE MONSTER CHILDREN

THE KIDNAPPED INFANTS were turned into monsters. The **monster children (goblins)** are scattered all around the witch's lair. They obey her orders without hesitation and call the old hag "mother"; she refers to them as her children too. The witch's lair is well-hidden in Greensoil Forest, behind a waterfall. She has abducted more than thirty children and has drawn too much attention.

ADVENTURE HOOK

BRANDON RIGGS, THE leader of Brownmoss Town's city watch, has received too many reports about missing children for the past few months. The affected families in the region demand a swift solution. Brandon offers 2,500 gp to mercenaries and sellswords for arresting the culprit and saving as many children as it is possible.

FEATURES OF THE FOREST WITCH LAIR

The following features correspond to the underground forest witch lair; areas 1 through 11.

Smells and Sounds. The underground lair is an ancient construction below the forest soil. It has a damp smell. Grunts and growls are heard often. They belong to the monster children who cannot contain themselves.

Secret Passageways. The witch employs secret corridors to her advantage when intruders come. Hidden levers and pushable bricks reveal her secret ways. An observant character finds them (DC 15 Perception).

Traps. From poison darts to pressure-sensitive tiles that hide trapdoors, the witch placed many booby-traps throughout her lair. Perceptive characters discern the hidden traps and devices (DC 14 Perception). A capable rogue can disarm the devices (DC 16 Thieves' Tools).

1. WATERFALL ENTRANCE

The tracks in Sungreen Forest lead to a clearing with a shallow cliff-face and a gushing waterfall.

The characters find clear tracks that end at the water's edge (DC 11 Survival). They belong to the past scouting parties that either fled or failed to find the children.

Entrances. The characters notice the cave entrance behind the waterfall within 20 feet of the lake. If the characters search the area, they might find the secret escape route that takes them to area 9 (DC 15 Perception).

2. VESTIBULE

This room contains a rug, a desk with papers, and a bookshelf. Everything looks recently used. Two **monster children** scream incoherently and attack any trespasser.

Lore. If the characters spend 10 minutes searching the area, they learn that the witch is more than 300 years old. She has been in these woods all her life and her diet to keep her young consists of imbibing children's blood.

Secret Vault. Two stone chests lie by the walls of this chamber. One contains 589 gp in assorted coins, and 345 gp worth of silverware. The second has a *spell scroll of bless* and a *spell scroll of cure light wounds*.

3. FAKE CHEST

Four stone pedestals adorn the corners of this chamber. A wooden chest lies by the north wall.

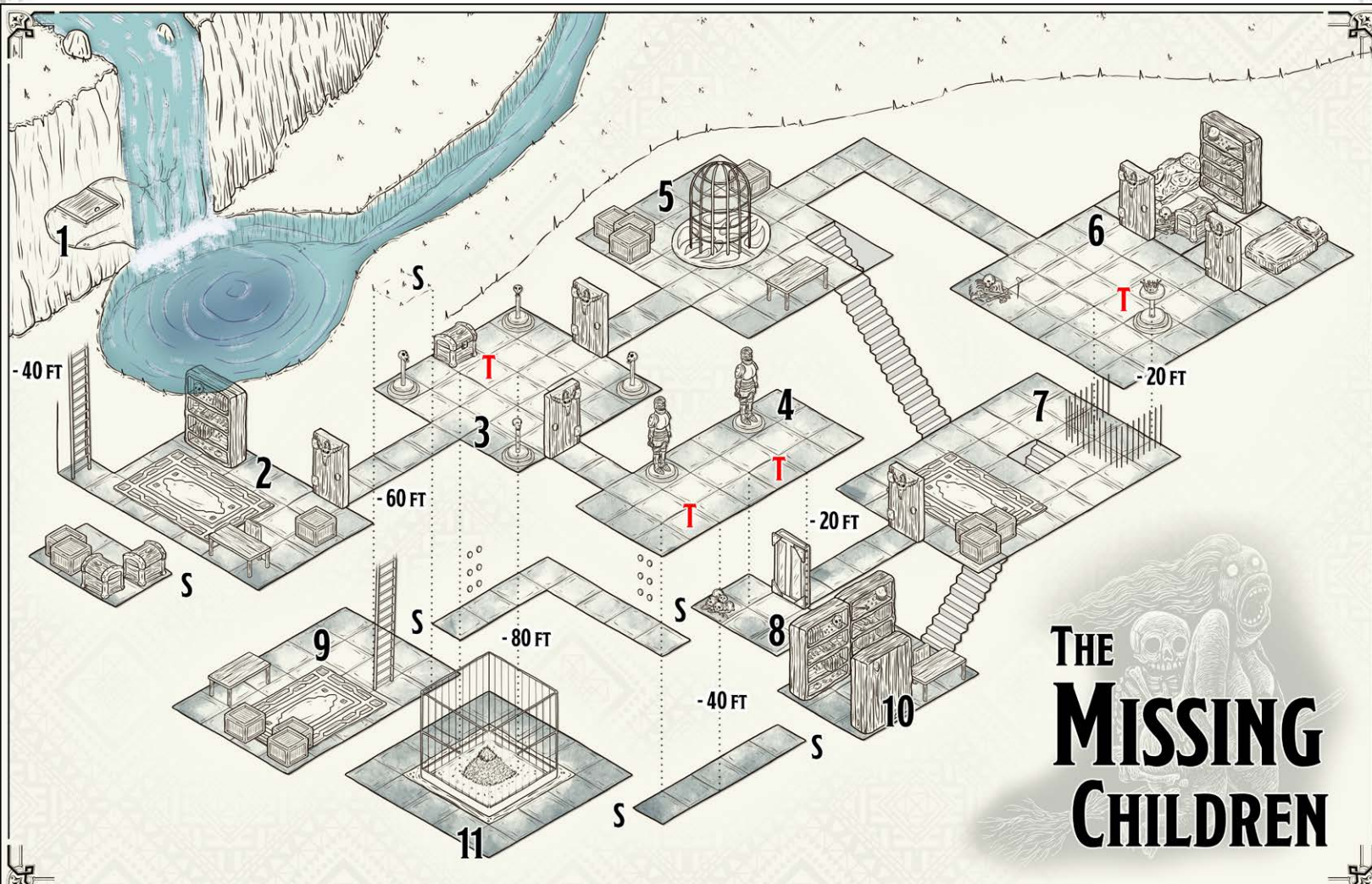
The witch placed this empty chest as a material temptation for fools who dare enter her home. Opening it triggers a double trap that may split the party.

Traps. The pedestals shoot sleep darts toward the creature that manipulated the chest (DC 13 Constitution). After that, the trapdoor opens and the creature falls 80 feet, lands in the hay in area 11, and takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 15 Dexterity for half).

4. GUARDIAN ARMORS

There are five **monster children** in this chamber. They scream and attack any intruders. If they drop to half their hit points, the children flee to wherever the forest witch is at the moment of this encounter. The two **animated armors** in this area are tasked with defending the lair from intruders. When they fight, they stand their ground and attempt to push their foes toward the two trapdoors before them. The armors fight relentlessly until slain.

Trapdoors. Both marked tiles (see map) feature pressure-sensitive plates that drop under any weight above 50 pounds. They lead to different areas of the dungeon.



5. LABORATORY

Steel bars placed together, similar to a birdcage give shape to a horrible container. Two filthy, scared children cry and sob from inside their cell.

The hag transforms children inside the cage into monsters with her witchcraft. The forest witch (**green hag** disguised as a young woman) and six **monster children** are here. The hag plays the role of a woman in distress, attacked by the hungry monster children. The witch wants the characters to fight her goons while she waits for an opportunity to backstab an unwary opponent.

The witch does not fight to the death. She employs all resources available to stay alive. Her *minor illusion* spell and Mimicry abilities are useful to fool her enemies. If needed she becomes invisible and flees to another area.

6. FOREST WITCH QUARTERS

The larger bedroom belongs to the forest witch. Infantile sobs come from inside the smaller bedroom.

Treasure. The shelves and boxes contain 238 gp, two *potions of healing*, rare arcane materials (250 gp), and two divine *spells scrolls* (GM's choice).

Trap. The silver crown (150 gp) is there for the taking. Creatures that fail to see the pressure plate fall 20 feet to area 7 and receive 2d6 damage (DC 16 Perception).

Celeste. The little girl ignores why the witch keeps her here, though the hag often refers to her as "her favorite" or "the special one". She reveals that the monsters are children. She is afraid of becoming one of them.

7. ANTECHAMBER

This large room features a central staircase that descends further underground. A small boy cries for help from inside the holding cell by the east wall.

David is here for spitting at the witch. He shall be transformed soon. Five **monster children** growl and throw pebbles at the innocent child from outside the cage.

Cell. Creatures that fall from area 6 share David's cell. The poor child has failed miserably in all his attempts to bend the iron bars and escape (DC 16 Athletics).

8. HOLDING CELL

Creatures within the cell are surrounded by stone walls with several tiny holes that almost reach the ceiling. A thick steel door blocks the only visible exit (see below). Creatures that fall from area 4 receive 2d6 damage. The steel door cannot be opened by force. The right tools bypass the lock, though (DC 17 Thieves' Tools).

Gas. This cell is reserved for the witch's true enemies. The small holes in the cell release sleeping gas whenever a creature ends up here (DC 15 Constitution).

Witch's Strategy. If the witch survives the encounter in area 5, she waits for the characters in area 11. However, if one of them gets trapped here and falls asleep, the hag approaches using the secret tunnel to area 9 and kills them while they are unconscious. The witch hopes the characters realize she is not to be messed with and demands they abandon her lair at once when they meet again. Still, her survival is more important to her and she doesn't act brave before a losing battle (see **Conclusion**).



9. SECRET CHAMBER

Spiderwebs adorn the corners of this seemingly abandoned room. Mundane objects rest on boxes.

This area is the hag's last resort. If she fails to stop the characters, she escapes through the ladder.

Traps. There are two traps in the secret corridor toward area 8. If the characters fail to notice the small holes on the walls or the pressure-sensitive tiles that trigger the darts, they take 1d6 poison damage and become poisoned for one hour (DC 12 Constitution).

10. LIBRARY

The bookshelves in this room are well-organized and stacked with books and tomes of all kinds.

Despite their evil nature, hags are intelligent magical creatures that often delve into the deepest fabrics of black magic. The monster children are living proof.

Lore. The ritual book on the desk depicts the foul ritual that turns children into mindless monsters. A spellcaster can replicate the procedure after studying it for 2d4 hours (DC 13 Arcana). The book shows no cure.

Treasure. Several tomes and scrolls are valuable to any librarian, curator, or book collector (750 gp)

11. CHILDREN'S CELL

A large cell with tall iron bars keeps a small group of infants inside. A mountain of hay is all that accompanies the innocent souls trapped here.

The witch enjoys tormenting the children before sucking their blood and transforming their poor little bodies. If the characters get here from the secret corridor, the six trapped children beg for their help. In contrast, they scream and cry if a character lands here from area 3.

Witch's Strategy. If the witch survives the encounter in area 5, she waits for the characters here. If one of them falls asleep and fell from area 3, she kills them while they are unconscious before the others arrive and leaves the body with the scared children. She puts her well-being above everything else if this fails to stop the characters.

Confrontation. The witch fights alongside eight **monster children**. The witch uses them as meat shields and fights as dirty as she can to stay alive. She uses her Invisible Passage ability to flee if the battle is lost. She won't give the characters the pleasure of healing the remaining children. The witch curses the characters and swears for her life they shall pay one day (see **Conclusion**).

CONCLUSION

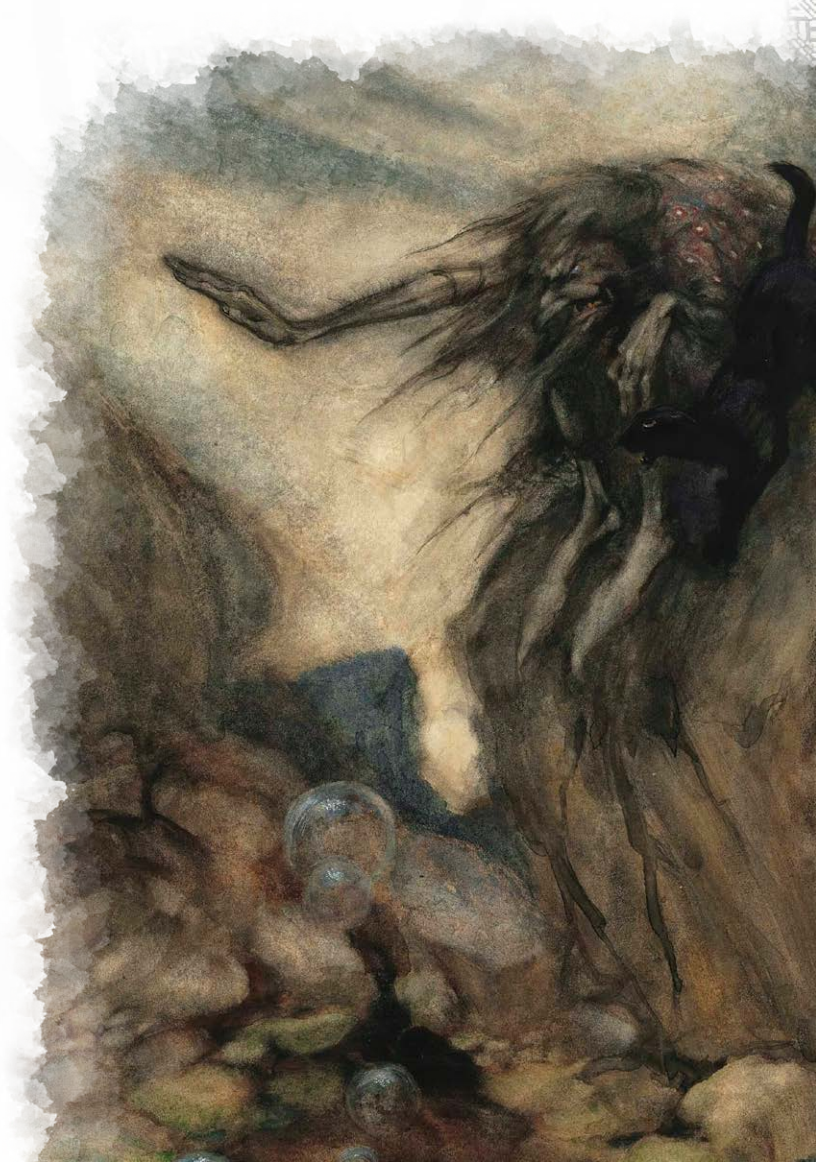
The characters reach the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

THE FOREST WITCH LIVES

THE CHARACTERS FAIL to stop the witch or she manages to escape. Celeste, David, and the other caged children are saved from a horrible fate. Monster children killed in combat, however, lose their lives. Nothing short of a *resurrection* spell can return them to life. It might be too late before the characters realize this sad truth. However, if the characters knocked the children out, divine magic can still cure them. Spells like *greater restoration* or *heal* can return a monster child to normal. Healing these children shall be an adventure for another day.

THE CHILDREN ARE SAVED

THE CHILDREN RETURN to normal when the witch's heart stops beating. Celeste, David, and the other trapped children are safe. If the characters' deeds caused the loss of innocent children's lives during this quest, atoning for their sins is an adventure for some other time.



VAULT OF SAPPHIRES

Level 6

It is impossible to retrieve those sapphires.
They are protected by evil forces from hell.

Retired Adventurer

BACKGROUND LORE

MONEY DOESN'T BUY happiness is a popular saying. No one can deny that it improves one's chances of becoming happy, though. People with gold and an important family name have it easier than most. The Harrisen family belongs to the few privileged groups in Darrendale City that benefit from all things reserved for the wealthy.

The Harrisen had so much wealth and power that members of their family could do as they pleased. They had politicians in their pockets, they controlled the most profitable farms in the realm, they picked the best candidates for marriage within their family, among many other things. They had the world and its riches in their hands.

They lived like this for generations but their reputation gained them powerful enemies as well. Decades ago, the Harrisens were ambushed near their own home. They had no chance against the well-prepared attack. Most Harrisens died that night, in a horrible massacre.

A HIDDEN TREASURE

GERALD HARRISEN, ONE of the few survivors, escaped with a small family fortune: the Harrisen sapphires. Precious stones cut into several beautiful shapes.

To protect what his family had left, Gerald transformed one of his family's mausoleums into a three-level vault; a lifelong task. The sapphires would belong to no one after his death. Gerald placed complex traps and devices in the mausoleum to protect the sapphires.

For decades, the Harrisen sapphires have become the focus of attention of many explorers, historians, and bounty hunters. They have all failed to retrieve them as of yet. Gerald Harrisen's booby-traps and the vault's guardians have thwarted all robbery attempts.

RUMORS TODAY

OVER TIME, THE Harrisen Mausoleum has become more popular. So much so that people named the mausoleum. All failed expeditions to the Vault of Sapphires feed others' motivations to go. No one knows how much treasure or gold is inside the Vault of Sapphires. But the rumors about it talk about countless, beautiful, large sapphires and decadent wealth beyond the imaginable.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters learn about the Vault of Sapphires in a previous adventure. They hear about it from a friendly contact or they are hired by a wealthy collector to retrieve the Harrisen Sapphires. Otherwise, the characters might stumble upon the vault by mere chance.

FEATURES OF THE VAULT OF SAPPHIRES

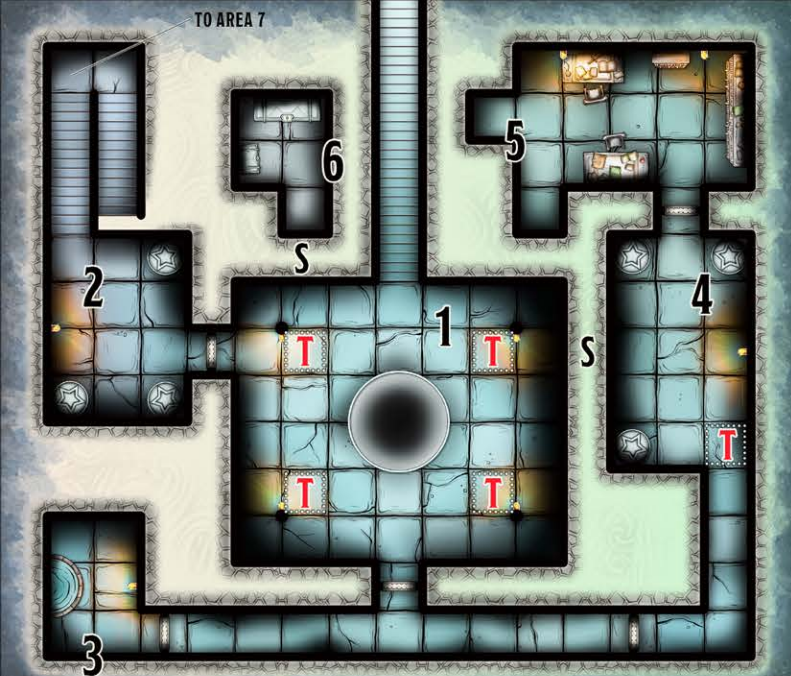
The following features correspond to the three-level dungeon, the Vault of Sapphires; areas 1 through 11.

Smells and Sounds. The Harrisen Mausoleum has a strong damp smell caused by the acid ponds and canals in the two lower levels and its lack of ventilation.

Secret Passageways. Secret doors have hidden levers or pushable bricks that open them (DC 15 Perception).

Traps. The booby-traps and trapdoors in the dungeon can be detected by an observant character (DC 16 Perception). They can be disarmed (DC 17 Thieves' Tools).

Acid. Several areas of the Harrisen Mausoleum feature acid ponds and canals. Coming in contact with the acid deals 4d6 acid damage. Creatures submerged in acid take 8d6 acid damage per round submerged and one additional round after they come out of the acid.



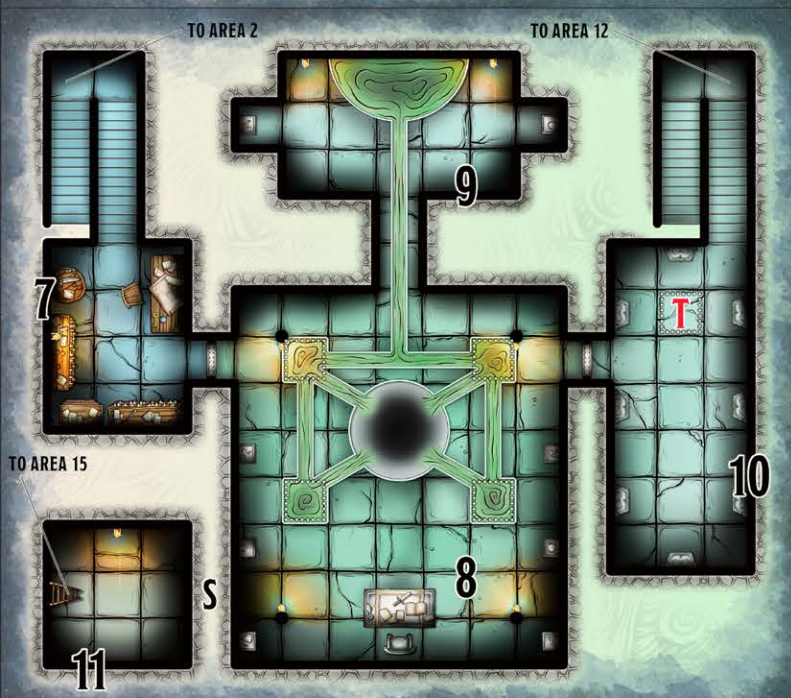
1. UPPER MAIN HALL

Four sconces illuminate a chamber with a deep, pitch-black, circular shaft in the middle.

The first level of the Harrisen Mausoleum features intricate, engraved patterns that adorn walls and ceilings.

Trapdoors. There are four trapdoors in the room. The pressure-sensitive plates yield under 50 pounds of weight. The shafts lead to the acid ponds in area 8.

Central Shaft. The hole descends 80 feet. Creatures that fall through here fall in the acid pond in area 13.



2. GUARDIAN STATUES WEST

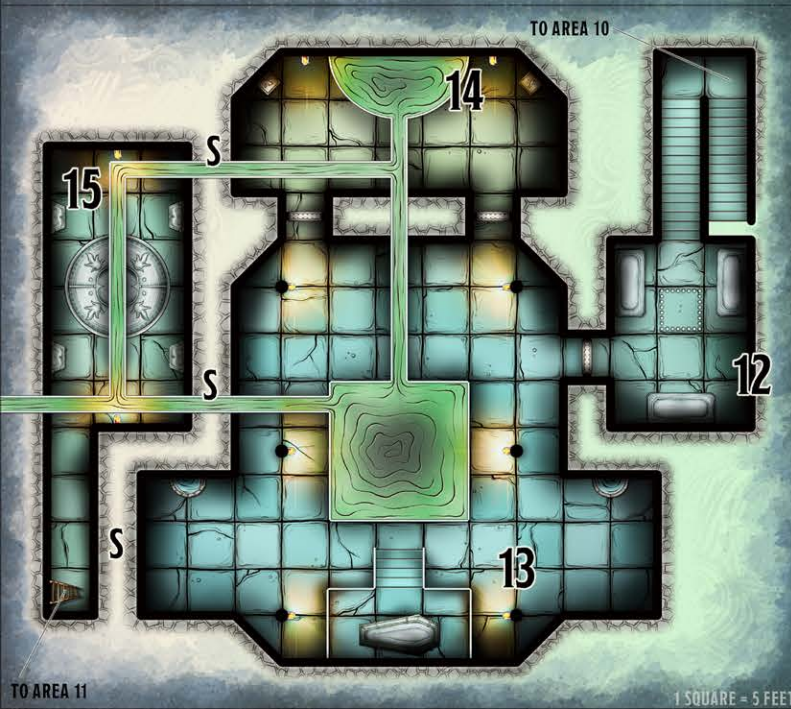
Gerald Harrisen hired mages to adapt the mausoleum and transform it into a vault. Ancient arcane spells give life to the three sets of armor here. These immortal guardians (**animated armors**) fight until slain.

3. HOLY FOUNTAIN

The still water in the small stone fountain radiates a welcoming aura. The chamber walls are etched with images of saints and kindhearted deities.

The Harrisen family had strong links with religion despite their ability to acquire anything through gold. Gerald Harrisen shared those religious values and placed a holy fountain in the mausoleum to protect and guide the souls of family members buried here, including him.

Holy Water. The water in the basin shows faint traces of divine magic. A *detect magic* spell reveals its magical properties. Creatures who drink from the fountain recover 1d6 hit points and are healed from any poison effect.



4. GUARDIAN STATUES EAST

The three sets of armor here are identical to the ones in area 2. The **animated armors** fight until slain.

Trap. The swing of a scythe deals 4d8 slashing damage to creatures that walk the south corridor (DC 18 Dexterity for half). The three animated armors in this area attempt to push the characters to this trap during the fight.

5. ARCHIVES

This chamber keeps records of all the members of the Harrisen family buried in the Vault of Sapphires.

Lore. The books here reveal important information. They suggest that black magic allows Gerald Harrisen and other members of his family to return from the dead and protect their fortune (DC 16 Investigation).

Treasure. An avid reader recognizes several valuable tomes and books that can be sold for 1,250 gp.

6. HIDDEN CHAMBER

A large stone chest lies against the north wall of this secret area. It overshadows the smaller chest beside it.

Treasure. The chests contain 2,387 gp and 12,435 sp. There is also a strange crystal tankard, inlaid with platinum (550gp), a rough alabaster cup (125gp), an antique marble goblet with a carnelian (95gp), three *potions of healing*, a *+1 dagger*, and a *+1 longsword*.

7. MAIN OFFICE

The wooden furniture here is moth-eaten. Everything on the shelves is covered in thick dust.

This office was used by Gerald Harrisen during the preparation of the dungeon's traps and devices. The architects, mages, and other people he hired worked here.

Lore. If the characters spend one hour searching through the webs and the books' vanished pages, they learn of all the secret passages built within the vault.

Treasure. The characters find a *spell scroll of hold person*, a *spell scroll of invisible passage*, a *spell scroll of meld into stone*, and a *spell scroll of glyph of warding*.

8. MID-MAIN HALL

Four acid streams pour thunderously into the central shaft that fills the chamber's middle section.

Three **shadows** and three **specters** fight the characters fiercely in this area. They emerge from the niches.

Acid. The acid fountain in area 9 pours acid into the canals in this area. Creatures that fall from any of the trapdoors in area 1 get submerged in the 5-foot-deep ponds. The undead Harrisen ambush those who fall here.

9. ACID FOUNTAIN

A half-moon-shaped stone container pours a thick acidic substance southward to feed the acid canals in area 8. Two of the Harrisen immortal guardians (**shadows**) protect the acid valves so the acid never stops flowing.

Acid Valves. The niches hide levers in the back. Pulling both at the same time stops the acid flow; the acid in areas 8 and 9 falls down the shaft after 20 minutes.

10. THE RESTING HARRISEN

Several standing sarcophagi rest on the walls of this chamber. A chilling silence fills the room.

Eight Harrisens rest in this chamber. Six **ghouls** and two **ghasts** come out of their sarcophagi and attack the characters. The undead Harrisens chase the characters if they flee. Their only objective in the afterlife is to protect their valuable belongings from trespassers.

Trapdoor. Creatures who fail to see the trapdoor fall 40 feet and reach area 12. The undead Harrisens push the characters toward this trap during the fight.

Treasure. The Harrisens' great treasure is not located in a single spot. It is divided and buried in the mausoleum's sarcophagi. Each of the Harrisens here guards a portion of the sapphire collection. Each one of the ghouls' caskets features a small compartment with a set of six sapphires inside a wooden container with burnt patterns on its surface (1,800 gp each). The two ghasts' caskets contain a set of larger sapphires (3,600 gp each).

11. SECRET CHAMBER

The hand ladder in this secret area descends to area 15. The characters learn the location of this area if they spend time reading the old documents in area 7.



12. HARRISEN GUARDIANS

The three stone sarcophagi in this chamber display the names of the Harrisens buried here. The walls portray washed-out paintings of armored knights.

The guardians (**wights**) remove the lids of their resting places to protect what is rightfully theirs. The undead knights single out those who fall from area 10.

Treasure. The Harrisens buried here were anointed knights in life. A rune-engraved silver box with the names of the interred knights in each of the enclosures guards a set of immaculate, fist-sized sapphires. Each set within the silver box container is worth 7,200 gp.

13. THE MAIN HALL

Two streams of acid pour the corrosive green liquid into a square pool in the middle of the room. A single stone sarcophagus rests on a 5-foot-tall dais.

The rest of the Harrisen treasure and the greatest danger of the Vault of Sapphires lies here. An observant character notices the acid canals go beyond the limits of the walls. This grants advantage in the Perception check to see the passageways that lead to area 15 by walking on the edges of the canal to cross the chamber walls.

Acid. The acid from area 8 falls 40 feet and splashes all squares adjacent to the acid pool. Creatures within 5 feet take 1d6 acid damage each round. Ignore this effect if the characters close the acid valves in area 9.

Gerald Harrisen. The man's soul rests in this sarcophagus. His soul (**wraith**) comes back from the dead and fights whoever dares steal his family's treasure. Three **shadows** and three **specters** fight by his side. The Harrisen knights in area 12 join Gerald if they can still fight.

Treasure. Gerald's sarcophagus has the largest share of the Harrisens sapphires. His whole sarcophagus is a pool of precious blue stones of all sizes (25,000 gp).

14. LOWER ACID FOUNTAIN

A half-moon-shaped stone container pours acid southward to area 13. Two Harrisen guardians (**shadows**) protect the acid valves so the acid never stops flowing.

Acid Valves. The valves work in the same way as those in area 9. They stop the acid in areas 13, 14, and 15.

15. CONTROL ROOM

The magic circle here keeps the necromancy spells in the Harrisen mausoleum working. A clever spellcaster identifies the runes in the circle (DC 18 Arcana). A *dispel magic* spell nullifies the reanimation effect of all undead within the Vault of Sapphires, except for Gerald.



CONCLUSION

The characters reach the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

OBTAINING THE SAPPHIRES

THE CHARACTERS DEFEAT Gerald Harrisen and all his reanimated family members. They recover the sapphires and leave the vault with a hefty bounty. The great collection of sapphires is coveted by numerous factions. It won't be easy to hide their success. The characters are hunted, ambushed, and attacked while they have them.

GERALD HARRISEN KEEPS THE TREASURE

THE FINAL BATTLE turns against the characters. Before striking the final blow to one of them, the spirit of Gerald Harrisen laughs. A dark voice from the void says:

"Who are you to deprive dead men of what belonged to them in life? Leave, never return, and be my puppets. Tell other treasure-seekers to shun and avoid this mausoleum. I shall see no more intruders in my eternal resting place, no more! Only then, shall I spare your petty, useless lives."

If the characters refuse, they die fighting or trying to flee. Otherwise, they must succeed, lest they shall meet Gerald's rage again. But that's an adventure for another time.

TOWER OF TEARS

Level 1

The screams and the wails from the Tower of Tears are unnerving. Never approach that place!

Concerned Farmer

BACKGROUND LORE

FARMERS AND HUNTERS in the region lead simple, hard-working lives and are content with their lot. They take refuge in their honest work and leave the more complex matters to the nobles and those valiant enough to fight. But something is always on the back of their minds. Something that bothers them and shall not allow them to ever relax completely. It is the cursed tower half a mile north, in the Cerulean Forest. It has been there for more than two hundred years but no one has explored past the first chamber and lived to tell the tale.

The four-story, stone tower with a carved arch in its only entrance. The arch is sculpted as if it were the mouth of a devilish creature. That alone is enough to scare away most commonfolk but the worst thing about the tower is the sounds that come from its abandoned halls and the basement. Loud, painful, and piercing screams and wails come from the tower. They intensify during the night and can be heard in the settlements close to the Cerulean Forest. People in the area call it the Tower of Tears because of the unnerving wails of the sorrowful souls that are said to inhabit the place. The locals theorize that penitent souls and the spirits of heretics live in the tower and maintain a state of eternal torment. It serves well enough to keep children and most would-be adventurers from approaching the place.

FAILED EXPEDITIONS

BRAVE INDIVIDUALS HAVE visited the Tower of Tears a few times. They have only explored the tower's entrance hall, which is in shambles. Surviving explorers claim that dark shadows emerge from the floor cracks and attack trespassers. None who stayed after the undead emerged from below ever returned to tell the tale.

THE SOUL URNS

THE TOWER WAS once the lair of a necromancer who perished hundreds of years ago. He left three arcane, soul repositories in the tower's dungeon. The soul urns were arcane batteries but they have decayed over time, allowing spirits to emerge from them and haunt the tower. The hateful spirits are in unending suffering; their thirst for killing cannot be quenched. Fortunately, the undead cannot leave the tower. They can only wail in pain.

ADVENTURE HOOK

THIS INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURE begins when the characters arrive at one of the small settlements next to the Cerulean Forest's tree-line. The characters hear the rumors about the tower and the otherworldly sounds that come from it. Vernon, a local who disbelieves the stories hires the characters to explore the tower and find the source of the wails for 400 gold pieces.

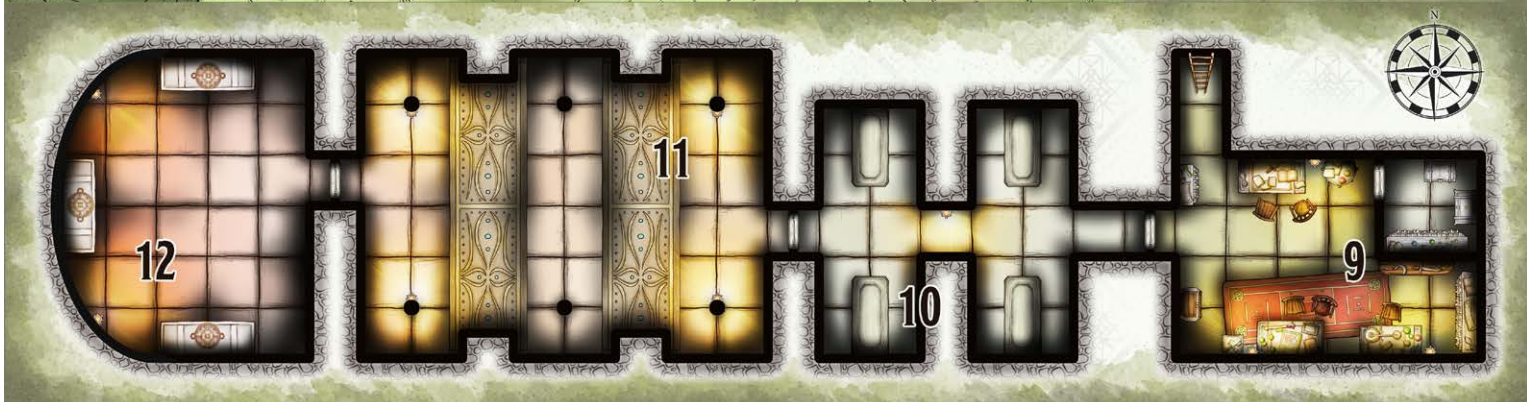
FEATURES OF THE TOWER

The following features correspond to the Tower of Tears map; areas 1 through 12.

Doors. Any door has a 2-in-6 chance of being held shut by a rebellious spirit. Such a door can be forced open with a DC 16 Athletics check or by rebuking the unholy spirit with divine power. This effect resets at dawn.

Light. Sconces on the walls feature a *continual flame* spell that has weakened over the centuries and provides dim light. Removing any sconce dispels the effect.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of decaying matter permeates the tower. The wails and screams of the souls in suffering resonate in the tower and dungeon every few minutes. The spirits' wails come in several languages.



1. TOWER SURROUNDINGS

A four-story, stone tower pierces the skyline in the forest clearing. The tower is in severe disrepair.

A narrow forest trail leads to the cursed tower. The wails and screams that come from it give the place a dark aura and cause people to become alert and uneasy. The window-less tower only has one entrance in area 2 but the characters may opt to climb to the roof. A flock of black ravens flies past the roof regularly as if hunting.

2. THE DEVILISH DOOR

The gate is sculpted in the form of a devilish entity with its mouth wide open. The devil's eyes appear to move to follow those who approach it.

The gate is designed to scare away unwanted visitors even though it poses no threat. Survivors from past failed expeditions can confirm that the door features no traps. When the door is opened, multiple wails come from the entrance hall as the spirits below prepare to surface.

3. ENTRANCE HALL

The tower's chamber is dilapidated. The ruined furniture is in shambles and litters the hall's entirety. A metallic hand ladder leads upstairs.

There is nothing of value in this chamber. The bodily remains of past explorers litter the chamber. An iron trapdoor by the west wall leads to the dungeon in area 9.

Spirits in Sorrow. Three **shadows** emerge from beneath and attack the characters in a fit of screaming rage.

4. ROOM OF ARMORS

Four intricate, armored knights surround a rune-carved stone dais in the middle of the chamber.

The necromancer created these magical guardians to protect his home. Two of them malfunctioned decades ago and shall not activate. The rune circle in the center empowers the magic that moves the guardians. A spellcaster can recognize the spell in the runes and understand they could use a tool to scratch the runes to ruin the spell and disable the knights (DC 15 Arcana). It takes 20 seconds to damage the runes enough.

Armored Knights. Interacting with the circle triggers two knights (**animated armors**) to attack trespassers. The other two malfunction and collapse.

5. WAITING HALL

The hall contains two couches and two side tables. The furniture has endured the passage of time quite well. The door to area 7 features intricate silver inlays. It is designed to attract would-be robbers to the poison trap.

6. THE NECROMANCER'S ROOM

The bedroom appears impervious to the passage of time. A faint purple glow comes from the bookcase.

The glow comes from the necromancer's journal which features an *arcane lock* spell. The journal reveals how the necromancer, Sir Vanner Dirko, killed hundreds of people and how little he cared for the lives of others. He saw people as arcane batteries. His lifelong quest was to create the ancient receptacle to contain souls for later use. The soul urns are imperfect prototypes.

Treasure. The desk's drawers contain a leather pouch with 115 gp, 200 sp, and a *spell scroll* of *animate dead*.

7. TRAPPED GUEST ROOM

The room is designed to be appealing to trespassers. There are fake silver and gold trinkets on the shelves and the bookcase. There are schematics on the side table too. Ultimately, nothing has real value and the documents contain strings of incoherent data.

Poison Darts Trap. Interacting with any of the trinkets magically triggers dozens of poison darts to fly from the walls. Creatures take 1d6 poison damage (DC 14 Constitution save). This magical trap resets at dawn.

8. TELEPORTATION CIRCLE

The tower's roof contains nothing but a one-foot-tall, circular, stone platform etched with delicate symbols. It is a permanent *teleportation circle* that the necromancer would use to return swiftly to his tower. A spellcaster can copy the runes in the circle for later use.

Forest Ravens. A wild **swarm of ravens** bewitched by the wails from the tower attacks people on the roof.



9. LABORATORY AND LIBRARY

Three work desks and several bookcases in the chamber are magically protected from exposure.

The necromancer's private library contains the secret to his evil rituals and the process to recreate the soul urns.

Evil Research. A character that spends two hours reading the documents in the room learns that the necromancer killed hundreds of people. The bodies of all those were put in mass graves under the tower. Their souls were collected in three urns and used as a source of energy for foul rituals. The foul arcane ritual to extract a person's soul and trap it in the urn is described too. The ritual is equivalent to a level 6 spell. A spellcaster may copy the information for later use.

Necromancer's Vault. A high-quality lock protects the vault's door (DC 18 Thieves' Tools). The vault contains 1,400 gp, 2,350 sp, a +1 dagger, two potions of healing, a spell scroll of animate dead, and a spell scroll of blight.

10. MASS GRAVES

Four stone sarcophagi rest in 10-foot-deep alcoves. The lids and the enclosures are unmarked.

Hundreds of soulless remains are contained under this chamber. Lifting any of the lids causes the undead to emerge after one round, one at a time (see below).

Unending Undead. Each sarcophagus leads to a 10-foot-deep shaft to a mass grave that contains at least one-hundred bodies. If open, a skeleton emerges from the shaft every minute until the lid is closed again.

11. CHAMBER OF RITUALS

Six pillars flank the empty chamber. All walls are carved with bas-reliefs of gentle spirits and souls.

A strange hum comes from beneath; it is caused by the arcane amplifier buried under the chamber's center.

Arcane Amplifier. A spellcaster notices the room's magical property (DC 13 Arcana). Spells cast within this chamber are considered one level higher.

12. THE SOUL URNS

Three clay urns with gold and mithral inlays stand on stone tables. Whispers and wails come from their interiors. This is the source of the screams.

The proximity of living creatures to the soul urns causes the cracks in the clay to deepen and release three shadows and 2 specters. These creatures are mindless representations of their living selves. They fight until slain.



CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS REACH the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds. The final confrontation against the suffering spirits in area 12 is a trial that shall prove the characters in strength and will.

ALL SOULS RELEASED

DEFEATING THE SPIRITS does not stop the suffering of the souls tortured within. Destroying the urns, however, causes a blinding explosion that releases hundreds of innocent souls. The spirits are finally at ease. They recover their humanity and embark on their journey to the afterlife. The wails from the Tower of Tears stop but it remains shunned. Nothing remains of the soul urns, they are destroyed in the arcane explosion.

A TRIUMPH FOR CYNICS

IN A DISPLAY of cynicism and selfishness, the characters leave the soul urns intact and abandon the Tower of Tears. The spirits shall remember the characters' faces, though. The characters' encounter with the urns has made them ever more frail than before. Sooner rather than later, the spirits shall be free. They shall haunt and exert on the characters their anger and suffering.

Tomb of Heroes

It happened such a long time ago that only historians know the details of that era. Mankind waged a fifty-year-long war against orcs and goblinoids and barely survived it. Few people know what it was like to live in the time of the Great Goblinoid War. People grew up in troubled times, were taught to fight for the cause, and perished before ever experiencing a period of peace.

Those who fought valiantly to help preserve the human realms were declared Heroes of the Great War. A title that brought fame a fortune to them and their families even after their deaths. Remembered for generations, their descendants enjoyed the selective prestige from the association. Over time, however, they were all ultimately forgotten. Those bygone heroes remain interred in a lavish tomb close to the capital city of their time. Today, it is nothing more than a ruin. The tomb houses the bodily remains of twenty-five individuals. They were buried with some of their wealth, weaponry, and other trinkets. A hefty fortune rip for the taking.

It was expected that tomb-robbers, pillagers, and thieves would target the burial site. A grim testament to the wealth hidden within. Thus, the architects placed traps and warnings to discourage would-be robbers and to deal with those brave or foolish enough who entered the place. Those nefarious traps have seen plenty of action in the past thousand years. Many a man lost their lives to them.

But the traps pale in comparison with the heroes who have risen from the dead to guard their tombs. Undead abominations that remember nothing but figments from their long-gone lives. Most say the former heroes grew bored of the quiet afterlife and came back looking for more adventures. Other claim death turned them greedy; they won't allow others to keep the treasures they acquired in life.

Be it as it may, the Tomb of Heroes is a shunned location that no mercenary has been able to plunder so far. It is located two miles north of an abandoned city by the outskirts of a great forest. Rumors and hearsay of the tomb's great treasures are sure to attract the attention of bounty hunters and adventurers.

Area Descriptions

1. A staircase descends to the tomb's antechamber. Many trinkets lie on two stone shelves. Ancient engravings on the stone doors dictate that visitors must leave something of personal value behind, as tribute. Placing something of value causes the doors to open. Stealing an object incurs a terrible curse upon the thief.

2. A grandiose chamber is the home of the main warden's sarcophagus. Standing on the central stone disk summons the warden back from the dead. The undead wraith gives tomb-robbers one last chance to flee in peace. Otherwise, he curses them to die a horrible death. The apparition lunges and attacks!

3. The archive keeps a precise record of all those buried in the tomb and other heroes whose bodies were never recovered. It lists their biographies, their deeds, and the valuable objects they were buried with. Thieves can get a list of most of the riches in the tomb here by spending 2 hours sorting through the books.

4. This locked crypt contains six standing sarcophagi. The lids are sculpted in the likeness of the warriors enclosed within. Four of them shall not part with their belongings without a fight. The undead warriors emerge from their enclosures to attack the trespassers. A trapdoor behind a sarcophagus leads down to area 7.

5. This is an embalming chamber in a severe state of disrepair. The utensils, tools, and materials on the table have decayed beyond usability. Some of the books on the subject may be valuable to scholars or researchers of the era.

6. A golden effigy of a knight holding a vase dominates the area. It pours a red liquid into a small pond. The corrosive liquid attracts glowing bugs that buzz around the room. Seven undead knights leave their sarcophagi to confront trespassers. The knights wield shadow-bladed swords that steal the souls of those they reach.

7. The dungeon's landing contains two small tables. A plan for the Tomb of Heroes lies on one of them. It reveals all burial sites and secret areas in the tomb.

8. The cavernous crypts are littered with small bones of underground critters. Two natural tunnels branch out into the dark, uncharted depths of the world.

9. Heroes of lesser importance rest in niches carved out of the very stone of the cave walls. They emerge in the form of shadows and specters to slay the living.



THE FABLED SWORD



LEVEL 10 ADVENTURE

**IMMERSIVE 5E ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE
FOR THE WORLD'S GREATEST RPG GAME**

ADVENTURE PRIMER

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

CENTURIES AGO, A group of holy warriors called the White-Hearted Knights protected the lands from anything that threatened the balance of the universe. These men clashed against hell titans to maintain the peace. Sir Helena Abrax, their leader, was blessed by her god and wielded a powerful magic sword, Holy Judgment.

THE END OF THE ORDER

THE WHITE-HEARTED KNIGHTS met their end when a lesser deity, jealous of the holy warriors' reputation and Helena's sword, plotted with the abyssal princes and vanquished the knights. Helena died heroically in combat, cornered and out of options. Only a few people survived.

The jealous deity disappeared and escaped from certain punishment and banishment. The few leaderless knights that remained were not enough to keep the order together. They were betrayed by the gods, who could not foresee nor prevent the massacre. The jaded knights buried their comrades and their leader in a lavish crypt and closed it off. Holy Judgment would answer to no one. The remaining paladins thought it best to leave the magical blade with its owner, resting on her stone coffin.

THE WHITE-HEARTED KNIGHTS TODAY

THE WORLD HAS little or no memory of the White-Hearted Knights. This is no one's fault. The order existed a long time ago and most written records about it did not survive the passage of time or remained lost in forgotten places. One of them was about to be found, though.

The power of the dormant sword is such that mages have sensed it. It is located in a place commonly known as "The Sword Vault". It is a three-level temple, shrine, and mausoleum. The White-Hearted Knights rest in the lower levels along with their leader Sir Helena Abrax.

Varied versions of the story of the sword "*Holy Judgment*" exist. They have awoken the curiosity of researchers, explorers, and bounty hunters. Parties of mercenaries have left in search of the magical artifact. All have failed, though. Most flee when they realize the dangers of the place it is kept and guarded. Others never returned. The magical, divine sword remains in the same place.

Ancient divine spells shall give them a semblance of life once more each time they need to defend their resting place from greedy tress-passers. The Fabled Sword has not yet chosen a worthy successor and owner.

HOLY JUDGMENT, THE SWORD

THE GODS CREATED the sword and gifted it to Helena Abrax. After her demise, the sword shall remain where it is until a worthy user appears one day (see below).

The sword, Holy Judgment, has a will of its own. It misses the days it fought evil and slew demons. Helena gave the sword a purpose and a reason to fight. The sword yearns for such action and good deeds. Thus, it has created a strong arcane aura around it to attract powerful individuals. It wants to be found, it wants to be wielded.

However, only a holy warrior with a pure heart can control the sword. Holy Judgment fights back anyone who dares grab it without its permission and approval.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

1. Heroes hear about the sword from an ally, an important contact, or a friend. The location of the Sword Vault may be the reward of a previous mission or quest.

2. A man named Gary Abrax, a retired adventurer, hires the characters to escort him to the Sword Vault. He reveals its location and promises a reward of 10,000 gp if the characters help him retrieve the legendary blade. He ignores he is a descendant of Sir Helena Abrax.

3. A paladin of a kind heart and mind is part of the characters' traveling party. They feel the sword's calling. Through this form of vague communication, the paladin learns the sword's name and its location.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This section provides a synopsis of the chapters and how the adventure is most likely to play out:

1. The White Church. The characters gain access to the forgotten Sword Vault. They explore the temple and learn more about the White-Hearted Knights, their legendary leader, and their ancient order.

2. The White Mausoleum. The characters meet some of Helena's comrades and learn they won't be able to take the sword unless they prove themselves worthy.

3. The Sword Vault. The characters explore the Sword Vault's bottom level and learn the truth of the White-Hearted Knights. In the presence of the fabled sword, they hear the sword's words in their minds. The outcome of this meeting shall be determined by the purity of their hearts and minds, as well as their deeds.

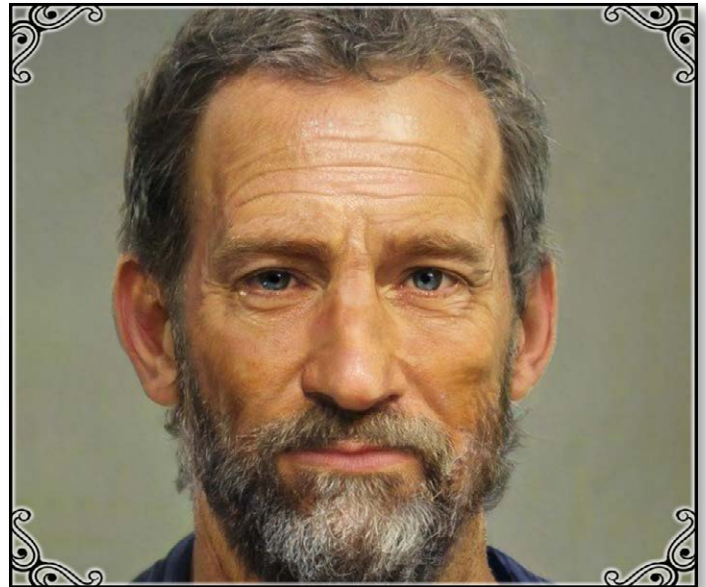
GARY ABRAX

Human (age 47)

Gary (**veteran**) is a retired adventurer and a descendant of Helena Abrax. A fact he ignores. All he knows are the tales about a holy knight who wielded the strongest sword of all, capable of vanquishing any foe. His grandfather Dan used to tell him these stories. Dan admired the holy knight of the tales. In contrast, Gary wanted to be like her and to possess the most powerful sword.

Manner. Gary shows great interest and curiosity in the Fabled Sword. He doesn't hide his interest in it.

Ambition. Gary wants the Fabled Sword. If he learns about his connection with Helena Abrax, he claims he is the rightful owner of the sword and fights for it. The self-aware sword, however, thinks otherwise.



SIR GALAR FENN

Undead

Sir Galar (**White-Hearted Knight**) was Helena's best friend and comrade. They fought countless battles together and saved each others' lives many times. Both died the same day when the knights were ambushed by all flanks. He doesn't blame the gods nor does he hold any grudge. His mind remains intact even after the resurrection. In contrast, his mindless comrades oppose anyone who wants the sword, even those with pure hearts.

Manner. Sir Galar moves with the poise and gallantry of a noble knight inside his liege's castle.

Ambition. Sir Galar knows of the sword's will. He hopes a worthy paladin shall arrive one day and take the sword. He protects the sword with his life otherwise.



HELENA ABRAX

Undead

Helena's spirit prevails due to the power of the sword and the divine spells placed upon her coffin. Sir Helena Abrax is aware of her comrades' sorry state. It saddens her to know she can only talk with Sir Galar but she feels content with the fact that the reanimated warriors still protect the sword against unworthy candidates. Helena wants to bequeath Holy Judgment to a worthy user that shall further the sword's purpose. Potential suitors shall prove themselves to Helena and the sword in a duel.

Manner. Helena demands everyone to address her by her full title and family name: "Sir Helena Abrax".

Ambition. Even before a worthy candidate, Helena won't give up the sword without a duel (see **Conclusion.**)



THE WHITE CHURCH

I've heard many things about this blade. It reminds me of the tales my grand-dad told me.

Gary Abrax

THE CHARACTERS REACH the Sword Vault after a calm and uneventful three-day journey. Gary Abrax guides them there or a paladin in the party heeds sword's call.

HELENA'S BLOOD DESCENDANT

GARY ABRAX WANTS to hire a group of adventurers to help him retrieve the sword. However, he ignores his blood connection to Helena; he doesn't even know her name. All he remembers are the stories his grandfather told him when he was a child. The stories did mention the name of the previous owner of the blade Holy Judgment. But all Gary can recall is a strong holy warrior in possession of the strongest sword of all. Through the sword's mental call, these memories came back more vivid than ever when he learned of the fabled sword. He is unaware of this, though; acting only on instinct.

A New Ally. The characters meet Gary Abrax at a town inn or tavern, where he attempts to hire them. If they agree to travel with him, he shares more information about the Sword Vault's location. He knows of some caverns and tunnels near the vault. He claims they can enter the place from there. If the characters agree, they may enter the dungeon from area A7, in Gary's company.

A Contender. If the characters reach the Sword Vault by their own means, they meet the retired adventurer outside the Sword Vault (area A1). He asks the characters to let him go with them and offers his help as a swordsman. He claims he only wants to explore the temple and see the blade. If the characters refuse to let Gary travel with them, he enters the vault alone later. He uses the tunnels in area A7 and manages to reach area C8.

Either way, Gary Abrax learns of his blood connection to Sir Helena Abrax inside the dungeon. This changes Gary's disposition. He claims the sword Holy Judgment belongs to him by right and attempts to wield it.

FEATURES OF THE SWORD VAULT

The following features correspond to the upper level of the Sword Vault; areas A1 through A7.

Building's Integrity. The general structure of the three-level underground temple remains strong but some of the chambers and halls have partially caved-in and are covered by debris. The cave-ins provide passage between otherwise unconnected areas.

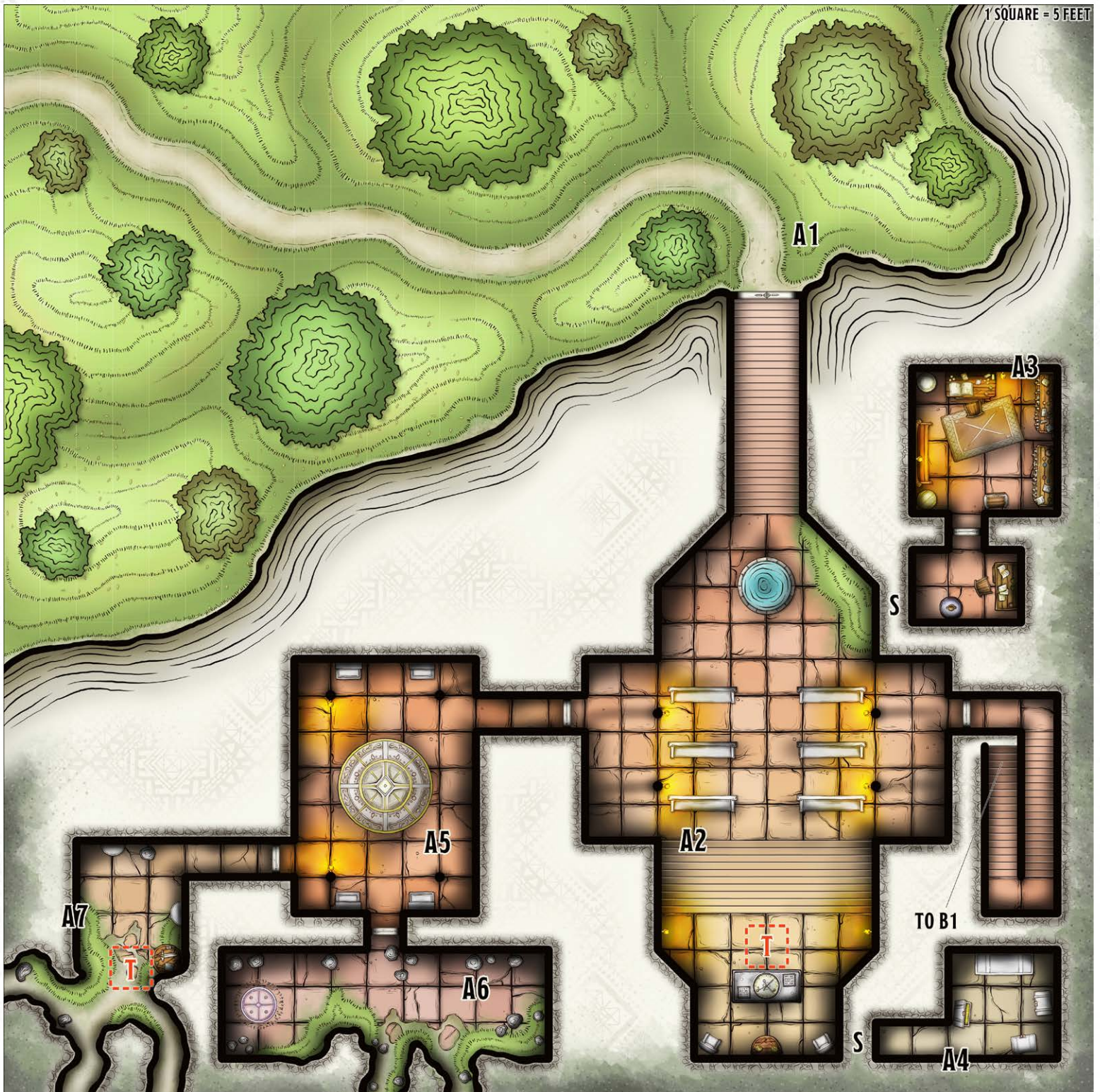
Smells and Sounds. A piercing smell of putrefaction becomes stronger the more the characters descend within the vault. Underground predators that lurk in the dark have left countless bones to rot in the caves.

Teleportation Circles. A holy magic circle with sacred runes adorns an area in each level of the vault (areas A5, B4, and C3). A character with divine spells can spend a spell slot to activate any of them. Up to five Medium individuals can stand in any of the three circles and be teleported upon its activation. A5 goes to B4. B4 goes to C3. C3 goes back to B4. No other combinations are possible.

Sir Galar Fenn. Sir Helena Abrax's best friend and comrade didn't fall to the corruption of hatred and scorn like the rest of the White-Hearted Knights in their sarcophagi. The divine spells bestowed on his resting place keep him an honorable knight even after death.

Fallen Knights. The rest of the **White-Hearted Knights** in the vault hold grudges against the gods and blame them for their deaths. This ruined the spells that were supposed to reanimate them in the same fashion as Sir Galar Fenn. They know nothing but hateful rage.

Holy Judgment. A *detect magic* spell reveals the magic of the sword from 3,000 feet away. It becomes the strongest in the lowest level of the Sword Vault. Only Holy Judgment shall decide who is worthy of its power.



A1. MAIN ENTRANCE

An almost abandoned road takes to a stone gate on the mountain's face. A beautiful circle is engraved on it. Delicate runes decorate its circumference.

The magic gate of the Sword Vault has been opened a few times but it returns to its original shut state after 1 hour. A spellcaster determines the door opens by spending a spell slot (DC 13 Arcana). Otherwise, a strong enough individual can push it open (DC 20 Athletics).

Lore. The real name of the Sword Vault is inscribed on the gate, written in Celestial. The White-Hearted Knights named this place the White Church. The two lower levels are the White Mausoleums. The name of Helena Abrax is mentioned in passing too (DC 17 Investigation).

Gary Abrax. If the characters travel alone, they find Gary Abrax by the gate. The veteran doesn't speak Celestial. He won't learn Helena's name unless the characters tell him. He offers his service as a swordsman and reveals the location of the caves that lead to area A7.



A2. WHITE-HEARTED TEMPLE

There is a circular fountain with clear water at the entrance. Six stone benches rest before a dilapidated altar in a large underground church.

The White-Hearted Knights used this church for their ceremonies. The walls have washed-away paintings of the holy knights in their prime, but little remains of them.

Lore. A curious character removes the mold by the east of the fountain and discovers a painting of Helena Abrax, portrayed as the leader of the White-Hearted Knights. Gary says: "Look at that! What are the odds?", if present.

Holy Fountain. Drinking from the fountain recovers 1d10 hit points. Drinking twice has no benefits. Drinking more than twice deals 2d10 poison damage.

Secret Passages. A perceptive character notices pushable bricks that reveal the passageways to areas A3 and A4 when activated (DC 18 Perception).

Trap. Creatures that stand by the altar activate a pressure-sensitive tile in front of it (DC 20 Perception). Creatures fall 60 feet and are impaled in area B2.

A3. SECRET OFFICE

This room is in good condition. A *detect magic* spell reveals holy magic protects it from the passage of time.

Lore. If the characters spend one hour reading these documents, they learn the story of the White-Hearted Knights and the horrible demise they experienced. They also learn that the lower level of the vault contains the remains of Helena Abrax and her sword, Holy Judgment.

Treasure. If the characters take the time to search the room, they find four magic *spell scrolls* (GM's choice).

A4. SECRET TREASURE CHAMBER

Three stone chests and a large stone coffer lay against the walls. An open chest contains a hefty treasure.

Treasure. The chests contain a total of 9,673 gp, 13,953 sp, an ornamental ceramic bowl with a banded agate (70 gp), a dragonbone ring with a mithral band (500 gp), and a *staff of fire* that leans against the wall.

A5. MAGIC CIRCLE

Intricate silver and gold edges and decorations adorn the stone circle on the floor. The walls of this chamber show beautiful paintings of holy armored men fighting demons and monsters from hell.

A divine spellcaster in the group identifies the runes in the circle and understands what must be done to use the circle and travel (DC 14 Religion). The characters can use this circle and the ones in areas B4 and C3 to fast-travel inside the dungeon (see **Features of the Sword Vault**).

Holy Guardians. This room is protected by the holy men that once served the order. Their spirits rest in the four stone plinths. Any person not from the White-Hearted Knights' order that approaches the magic circle triggers the trap. Four **invisible stalkers** attack until slain.

A6. SOUTH CHAMBER

Rocks, debris, weeds, and mold cover most of this area. A pink, runic circle glows by the west wall.

The south wall of this room has caved in and leads to two tunnels. It is dangerous to venture there (see below).

Meditation Circle. The circle on the floor is a divine meditation circle (DC 15 Religion). A divine spellcaster can spend 10 minutes meditating on it and recover one spell slot. The circle replenishes its power at dawn.

Unknown Tunnels. The characters stumble into the lair of twenty territorial **rust monsters**.

A7. DESTROYED CHAMBER

Gary Abrax may reveal the location of this alternate entrance if the characters welcome him into the party.

Gary's Advice. The veteran adventurer claims to know these tunnels. They take to a clearing north of the mountain and area A1. The tunnels are empty and barren.

Trap. Despite the sorry state of the room, this pitfall trap remains operational. Creatures that stand near the tunnels activate a pressure-sensitive tile in front of them (DC 20 Perception). Creatures fall 60 feet to area B8.

THE WHITE MAUSOLEUM

I don't blame the gods for what happened. But the sword can still do good. I must protect it.

Sir Galar Fenn

THE CHARACTERS REACH the second level of the Sword Vault. The characters meet Sir Galar Fenn in the Chamber of Knights (area B3). Gary Abrax also learns his connection with Helena in this level of the dungeon whether he travels with the characters or not. The characters' intentions and the reason for their presence are paramount for Gary, Sir Galar Fenn, Helena, and even the self-aware sword's reactions (see **Conclusion**).

B1. MAIN HALL

Two stone canals channel a fuming liquid with yellow tones. A runic circle glows faintly in the north.

The gates north and south of this large hall are replicas of the vault's main gate (area A1). They must be opened in the same fashion. Despite the White Mausoleums' age, its defense mechanisms remain working due to the powerful divine spells placed on them.

Lore. The high walls of the hall feature old paintings and sculptures. Spending a minute to inspect them reveals the White-Hearted Knights punished criminals in a rather cruel manner: they were forced to kneel before the altar at the White Church's nave. The knights read their sins and stated their death sentence in front of the congregation. The accused would then fall into the trapdoor and be brutally impaled by the spikes in area B2.

Glyph of Warding. The magic circle by the north gate has a cleverly hidden *glyph of warding* spell with explosive runes on it. It looks identical and has the same aura as the meditation circle in area A6 (DC 15 Arcana). However, creatures that interact with this circle trigger the explosion and take 10d6 fire damage (DC 16 Dexterity for half). A *detect magic* or an *augury* spell reveal its true purpose. A *dispel magic* spell removes the explosive runes and leaves a fully working meditation circle.

B2. SPIKED PIT AND ACID POOL

Creatures that fall from area A2 are impaled here and take 12d6 piercing damage (DC 15 Dexterity for half).

Acid. The substance here was formerly holy water that flowed through the canals and into the Chamber of Knights (area B3). The buried knights' hatred accumulated for centuries and tainted not only their reanimated bodies but also the holy water they cherished. Creatures that come in contact with it take 4d6 acid damage and 10d6 if they are fully submerged in the fuming liquid.

Secret Passage. There is a crack on the wall where an adult person fits (DC 14 Perception). A 30-minute walk through these dark tunnels eventually leads to area B8.

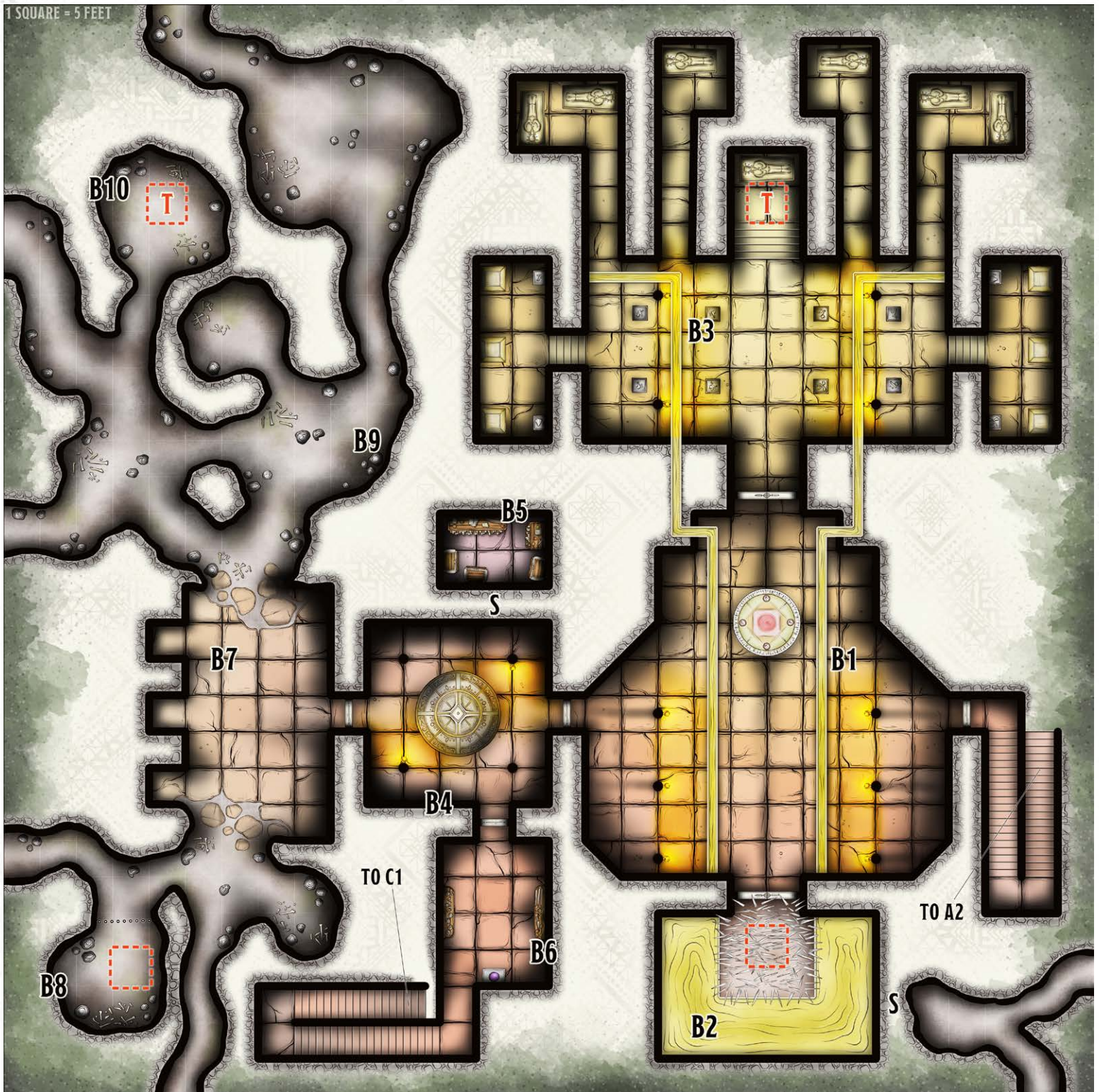
B3. CHAMBER OF KNIGHTS

This area with many small corridors and alcoves has several ceremonial plinths, sarcophagi, and niches. The remains of many of the White-Hearted Knights rest here.

Fallen Knights. The characters awake six **White-Hearted Knights** when they enter this area. The knights defend the vault with their lives. Sir Galar helps the characters only if a good-hearted paladin travels with them. He doesn't trust Gary Abrax, regardless of his bloodline.

Sir Galar Fenn. A tall armored figure welcomes the characters to the Chamber of Knights. If Gary is present, Sir Galar tells him he shares a bloodline with Helena. If the characters are alone, Sir Galar tells them a man named Gary Abrax, a descendant of Helena, has descended to the lowest level of the White Mausoleum.

Trap. A plaque on the central sarcophagus reads Helena Abrax but it is empty. Interacting with the lid triggers the trapdoor before it. Creatures on the marked square fall 60 feet to area C6 and trigger the poison trap there.



B4. MAGIC CIRCLE

The characters are teleported here by using the magic circle in area A5. If the characters come to this area without passing through area A5 first, a divine spellcaster can learn the same information here (DC 14 Religion).

Holy Guardians. If the characters explore this area before area A5, the four **invisible stalkers** use the magic circle there and appear here to fight. The circle's loud activation reveals the invisible stalkers' arrival. The stalkers are fearless apparitions that fight until slain.

Lore. The images on the walls of this chamber depict the White-Hearted Knights following Helena Abrax to battle. The mighty woman paladin holds a shining sword high, pointing to the sky. Beaming light from above bathers her and makes her look holy, magnificent. Around her and her comrades, dozens of demonic corpses lie on the ground, their hearts pierced by Holy Judgment.

Secret Passage. The secret passage to area B5 is hidden and locked by magic. Spells like *detect secret doors* or *true seeing* bypass the magic that hides it. A *dispel magic* or a *knock* spell unlock the magic barrier to pass.

B5. SECRET CHAMBER

Two wooden shelves are filled to the brim with papers and scrolls. Three chests lay by the walls.

This room is in great condition. A *detect magic* spell reveals holy magic protects it from the passage of time.

Treasure. The chests contain a total of 2,319 gp, 1,842 sp, a durable crystal ring with a square-cut diamond (550 gp), a crystal necklace (550 gp), a pewter framed painting of a White Hearted Knight (180gp), a crystal jewelry box (600 gp), and 6 magic *spell scrolls* (GM's choice).

B6. STUDIO

This furniture is not protected by magic. The books turn to dust when touched. There is nothing of value here. The stairs to the south take to the lower level of the vault.

B7. RUINED ANTECHAMBER

Next to nothing remains of the north and south walls of this chamber. Uncharted, dark tunnels and caves await those brave or foolish enough to venture further.

Connected Tunnels. The tunnels to the south of this area that go beyond the cell (area B8) are a 30-minute walk away from the small hidden cavern in area B2.

Enemies. The door that takes to this complex of caverns and tunnels had not been opened in a long time. A group of three **umber hulks** comes from the caverns north to see what is causing noise and vibrations on the ground. They flee when reduced to half their hit points.

Treasure. The three alcoves west of this chamber hide small trinkets buried in the ground (DC 18 Investigation). There are 250-gp-worth of silverware and coins.

B8. CELL

Gnawed, rotten bones lay half-buried on the ground. The dark holes on the walls look like rat burrows.

The iron-barred door's presence means this cell and the caverns existed when the knights occupied this place. Creatures that fall through the trap in area A7 take 6d6 bludgeoning damage and are trapped within the cell.

Rodents Lair. When a creature falls into this cell, a family of eight **giant rats** emerges from their burrows and attack. They flee if half or more are slain in combat.

Escaping. The rusty iron bars can be bent with enough strength (DC 16 Athletics). They can otherwise be destroyed if they take 35 points of damage (AC 12).

B9. UNDERGROUND CAVERNS

Most of these caverns did not exist when the knights still occupied this place. The tunnels have become larger and wider due to time and the umber hulks that inhabit them.

North Tunnels. If the characters travel north, they find evidence of **troglydye** activity. If they venture further, they find a medium-sized village of forty able-to-fight males and several non-combatant women and children.

B10. NORTH CAVE

There are bones and recent carcasses of underground critters and other animals eaten by giant mandibles. The ground of this cave is weak due to umber hulk tunneling.

Trap. If the characters do not notice the weakened soil, they fall 60 feet to area C4 (DC 18 Perception).

Uncharted Tunnels. The tunnels west of this area are one-hour walks to dead-ends and **giant spider** nests.



THE SWORD VAULT

The unworthy shall be purified by the holy flames. The blade cannot be controlled!

Sir Helena Abrax

THE CHARACTERS REACH the lowest level of the dungeon, known by the ancient White-Hearted Knights as the White Mausoleum. The characters must reach area C9 to find the sword Holy Judgment and the undying spirit of Sir Helena Abrax. She is glad to have potential suitors to inherit the blade to. However, she cannot allow improper individuals to take the sword without challenging them. Even those who seem worthy of acquiring the blade shall be put to the test by Helena and the sword.

Helena's descendant, Gary Abrax, is not worthy of the blade. He is jaded, greedy, and selfish. He shall do all in his power to acquire the blade and seal his fate by doing so. Gary goes as far as to offer the 10,000 gp reward or an extra 2,000 gp if the party was already hired by him. Alas, this is a promise that Gary cannot keep. His life is most likely forfeit at the end of the adventure (see **Conclusion**). Whether or not he has the money to pay is up to the GM's discretion, should he survive the adventure.

C1. DILAPIDATED CHAMBER

The western wall of this chamber has collapsed under the weight of the soil above. Green and dense currents of vapor come from the dark caves.

The toxic gas strands in this area have diffused enough that it is relatively safe to breathe here.

This chamber was once an archive of the White-Hearted Knights. It recorded all kinds of non-important minutiae but nothing survives to this day. A tracker identifies two-day-old footprints and droppings of reptilian humanoids known as troglodytes (DC 14 survival). The reptilians do venture further into the staircase toward area B6.

Treasure. A few objects of value can be salvaged from the wreck: 34 gp, 74 sp, a solid gold holy symbol (75 gp), and a ceremonial dagger engraved with flowers (110 gp).

C2. NOXIOUS CAVERNS

Bone remains of all sizes litter the barely visible floor. The bones are corroded as if bathed in acid, a testament to the corrosive qualities of the gas.

These caves are the hunting grounds of four **troglodytes** with their **basilisk** pet. Their domesticated basilisk is a valuable asset they are not willing to risk. If it drops to half its hit points, the group flees back to the dark caves.

Breathing the Gas. The gas comes from a crack half a mile west. The gas burns the throats and lungs of those who breathe it and deals 4d6 poison damage per minute. The troglodytes and the basilisk are immune to it.

C3. MAGIC CIRCLE

The characters are teleported here by using the magic circle in area B4. If the characters come to this area before area A5 or B4 first, a divine spellcaster can learn how to use the circles here (DC 14 Religion). Using this circle transports the characters back to area A5.

Lore. The images on the walls of this chamber depict the White-Hearted Knights worshiping and thanking their gods for their good fortune. However, the washed-out murals were later defaced with heretic messages written over them. Two of them remain legible, they read "It was all a lie", and "Do not trust the trickster gods. They shall take all you hold dear in this world".

The Errant Knight. A neutral White-Hearted Knight stands in this room as if confused. Verlina remains unaffected by the knightly order's hate toward the gods, akin to Galar Fenn. Unfortunately, her memory and personality were wiped by the passage of time. Verlina remembers Galar and Helena as a valiant leader but nothing else. She defends herself and the sword if needed, though.

C5. SECRET LIBRARY

A faint yellow glow covers the wooden furniture in this room. Objects, papers, and scrolls are in pristine condition, impervious to the passage of time.

An ancient spell permeates the inanimate contents of this room from the inclement passage of time.

Lore. Spending an hour to read the contents of the most recent books reveals that Helena's sword, *Holy Judgment*, spoke in a loud clear voice that warmed the heart. The legendary blade has a will of its own.

Treasure. The library contains unique journals and historical works of great value to researchers and scholars. The complete collection is worth 1,100 gp.



C6. POISONOUS GAS TRAP

The northern end of the hallway features a 3-foot-tall, stone pedestal with a magical clay urn on it. Removing the urn's lid or manipulating it in any way triggers it to explode and create a 25-foot-radius of poisonous gas. Creatures take 10d6 poison damage when exposed to this nefarious substance (DC 18 Constitution for half). Creatures that fall from the pitfall trap in area B3 crash against the urn, destroy it, and trigger the gas trap. In addition, they take 7d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Strength Thieves. The walls are decorated with images of dark knights that walk southward. Any attempt to open the door to area C8 causes six **shadows** to detach from the walls and attack the characters.

Secret Passages. A pushable brick reveals the hidden passage to area C5 when activated (DC 18 Perception).

C7. NORTHERN RUINED CHAMBER

Wooden furniture and stone features have collapsed over time. Metal fixtures are so corroded they threaten to turn to dust if touched.

The chamber contains nothing of value. A tracker identifies the rusting effect on metal objects as that of a rust monster (DC 15 Survival). Three **rust monsters** live nearby. They approach if the characters are loud.

Dark Pathways. The western wall collapsed due to sudden seismic activity. The natural cavern slants downward for miles. It leads to a large, uncharted, underground network of caverns known as the Underworld.

C8. HOLY KNIGHTS' MAUSOLEUM

The long descending stairway hall dotted with side rooms contains lavish, decorated sarcophagi with effigies of brave knights. A faint blue-tinted glow comes from the bottom of the stairs.

The hallway leads to five individual mausoleums and one collapsed chamber. The six knights buried here founded the Order of the White-Hearted Knights hundreds of years ago. Each of the remaining five stone sarcophagi contains a **White-Hearted Knight** that emerges from their decrepit enclosure when the characters reach area C9 and confront Sir Helena Abrax's spirit. Should the characters remove the lids to rob the graves or attack the still corpses, the knights wake up and fight back.

Treasure. The sarcophagi contain 530 gp, five golden medallions (400 gp each), and a mithral scepter (500 gp). Galarn Fenn or Verlina claim plundering the graves is an insult to the knights' order. If the characters disregard their rebukes, the knights fight until slain.

C9. THE FABLED SWORD

A glowing sword floats over a stone sarcophagus by the south end of the chamber. Orange sparks fly as if trying to set fire to the very air around the blade.

The sword Holy Judgment floats two feet above the stone enclosure after a 5-foot-long flight of stairs. When the characters arrive, the five **White-Hearted Knights** from the tombs in area C8 march down and stand by Helena's sarcophagus unless they have already been defeated. Then, the sword's voice is heard via telepathy:

Brave warriors! You have heeded my call but few, if any, are worthy of wielding my power! You shall be put to the test in heart, body, and mind.

If a paladin worthy of the blade is present, the spirit of Helena Abrax proposes to prove that person and their companions in battle. Sir Helena yields when dropped to a third of her hit points and allows the paladin to grab the blade. If no worthy suitor is present, Sir Helena asks all present to return home empty-handed as the blade shall answer to no one. Should the characters insist, **Sir Helena Abrax** and her knights fight them to the death.

Secret Passage. A pushable brick reveals the hidden passage to area C10 when activated (DC 18 Perception).

C10. SECRET VAULT

A *detect magic* spell reveals that the stone braziers are enchanted with permanent *continual flame* spells.

Treasure. The chests contain a 4,358 gp, 6,500 sp, a set of mithral chain mail, 3 *potions of superior healing*, a *tome of understanding*, and a *tome of clear thought*.

HOLY JUDGMENT

Legendary longsword

The legendary blade is a work of art not even the best artisans in the world could aspire to ever forge. It is a longsword with carved platinum roses in the cross-guard and a king's crown-shaped pommel. The blade itself is made of an alloy of platinum and mithral that no craftsman alive knows how to work or replicate. It radiates a blue-tinted glow and provides dim light in a 5-foot radius.

The blade is a powerful, intelligent artifact. It is good and has a strong sense of justice and selflessness. It communicates through telepathy. Sir Helena Abrax was the last and only owner of the legendary blade. The sword *Holy Judgment* yearns to further its goals and vanquish evil once more. It wants to abandon the decrepit tomb. It is a *+3 longsword* with the following properties:

Rebellious Nature. The Holy Judgment sword can only be wielded by a good paladin who shares the same ideas as the blade. Other individuals who try to use the sword must pass a DC 16 Wisdom save or be placed under a *geas* spell to return the blade to Helena's grave. Refusing to comply with this quest causes the individual to burst into flames and take 40d6 radiant damage.

Call to the Light. Once a day, the user can raise the sword to the open sky and cause a ray of burning radiance to scorch a 5-foot radius. Creatures in the area take 10d6 radiant damage (DC 16 Dexterity for half).

Forced Atonement. Presenting the blade to an incapacitated creature burns their face and eyes in a manner equivalent to their sins. Sinful individuals may be maimed or perish as a consequence of this process. The GM determines the severity of the punishment.



CONCLUSION

The characters reach the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

A WORTHY SUCCESSOR

THE CHARACTERS DEFEAT Sir Helena Abrax's spirit and her entourage of knights in combat. Helena yields to the superior force and concedes that the paladin is worthy of wielding the Holy Judgment sword. The self-aware sword agrees with Helena and allows itself to be gifted to a new owner. Despite the agreement, the legendary blade remains an autonomous force with its own goals and opinions on all matters. The blade becomes an integral part of the adventuring party. Should the paladin or the party embark on a quest or action that the sword disagrees with, the **Rebellious Nature** of the blade is triggered and it may end the relationship with the paladin.

IMPURE HEARTS

NO CHARACTER IS worthy of inheriting the capricious blade. Sir Helena informs them that no one shall acquire the blade for it shall not permit its usage. If the characters agree to leave the White Mausoleum empty-handed, Sir Helena grants them safe passage back to the surface. If the characters insist to steal the blade, the undying paladin, her entourage of White-Hearted Knights, and Sir Galar Fenn (if present), confront the characters and fight to the death. If the undead knights are all defeated, the characters can retrieve the mythical blade and try to use it. Should any of them try, the **Rebellious Nature** of the blade may prove too difficult to overcome.

Despite this disagreement, Holy Judgment allows a compromise only because it has grown tired of waiting in the tomb. Should the characters agree, the sword allows one of them to carry the sword as long as they promise to help it find someone worthy of wielding its power. The sword chooses who can carry it and the decision is final. During this quest, the sword shall not be used unless the chosen person's life is in danger. Otherwise, the **Rebellious Nature** of the sword burns the user to ashes.

THE UNBECOMING HEIR

GARY ABRAX IS overcome by greed and the desire for power. The man's involvement in the final confrontation depends on the characters' actions and the opportunities that may arise during the battle. Gary does his best to gain access to the sword one way or another. Should he succeed, the blade's **Rebellious Nature** causes the poor man to burst into radiant flames as he cries in pain and confused anguish. Consequently, Gary never pays the promised reward of 10,000 gp he promised.



STATBLOCKS

SIR HELENA ABRAX

Medium undead

Armor Class 20 (plate armor, shield)

HP 106 (14d10 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6, Wis +8, Cha +9

Skills Perception +8

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities radiant

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Abyssal, Celestial

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Radiant Weapon. Attacks with *Holy Judgment* are magical and deal an extra 3d8 radiant damage (included in the attack).

Divine Awareness. Sir Helena Abrax knows if she hears a lie.

Innate Spellcasting. Sir Helena's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect evil and good*, *hold person*

3/day each: *dispel evil and good*, *spirit guardians*, *raise dead*

1/day each: *commune*, *control weather*, *insect plague*

Actions

Multiattack. Helena makes three longsword attacks.

Holy Judgment. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1d8 + 7 slashing plus 3d8 radiant damage.

Cleansing Orb (1/day). Sir Helena Abrax hurls a ball of radiant fire that explodes at a point she can see within 60 feet of her. Each creature within 10 feet takes 10d6 fire damage and 10d6 radiant damage (DC 17 Dexterity for half). Helena's undead allies are unaffected by this attack.

Reactions

Parry. Sir Helena adds 4 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, she must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon or her shield.

WHITE-HEARTED KNIGHT

Medium undead

Armor Class 17 (breastplate armor, shield)

HP 48 (8d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Knight Phalanx. Every ally within 5 feet of the knight grants a +1 bonus to its AC (up to a maximum of a +3 bonus). The knight must wield a shield to gain this benefit.

Actions

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks, only one of which can be with its shield bash.

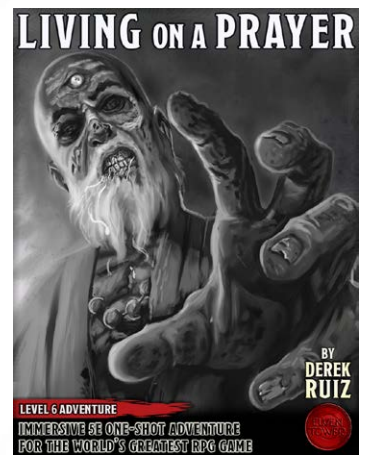
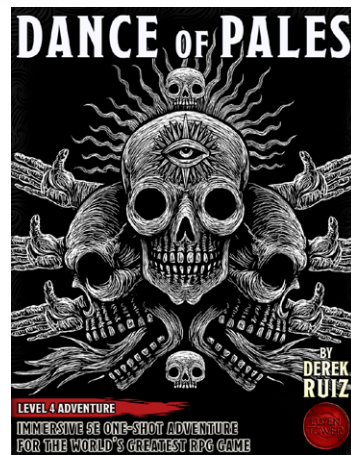
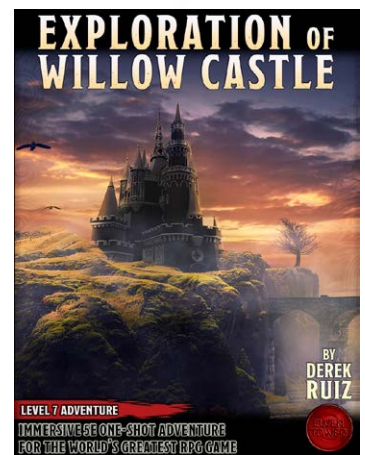
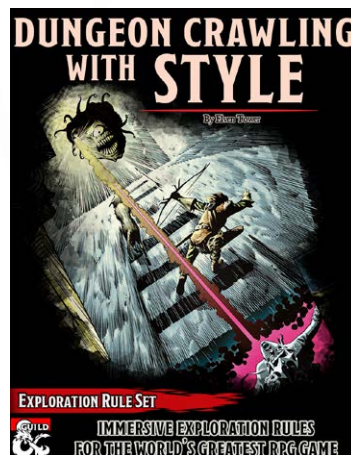
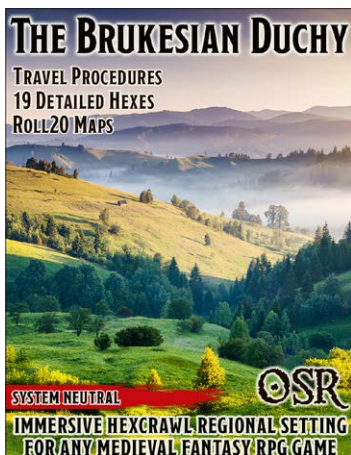
Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 slashing damage.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d4 + 3 bludgeoning damage. If the target is Large or smaller, DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

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