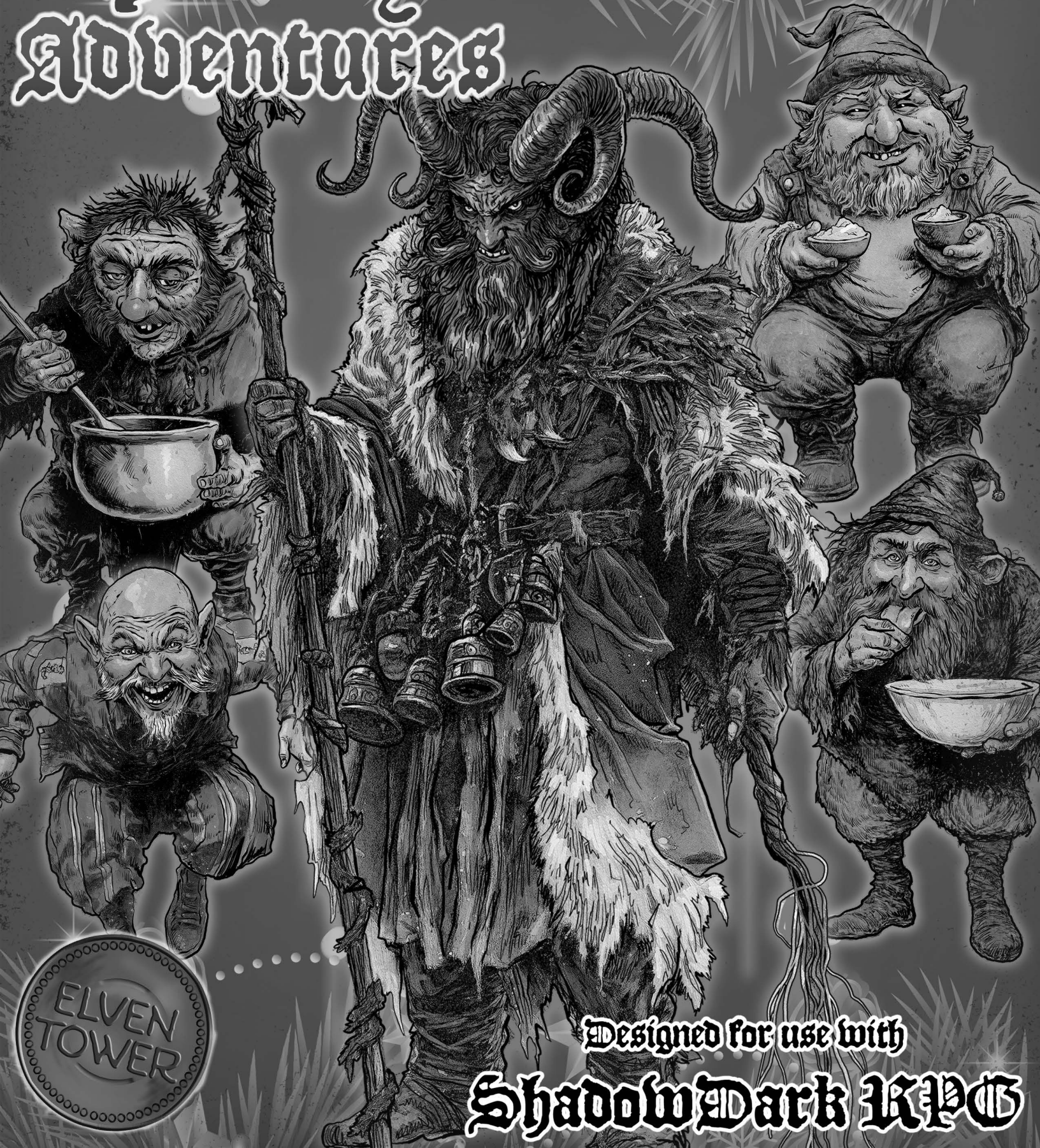


DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 53

Holiday Adventures



ELVEN
TOWER

Designed for use with

ShadowDark RPG



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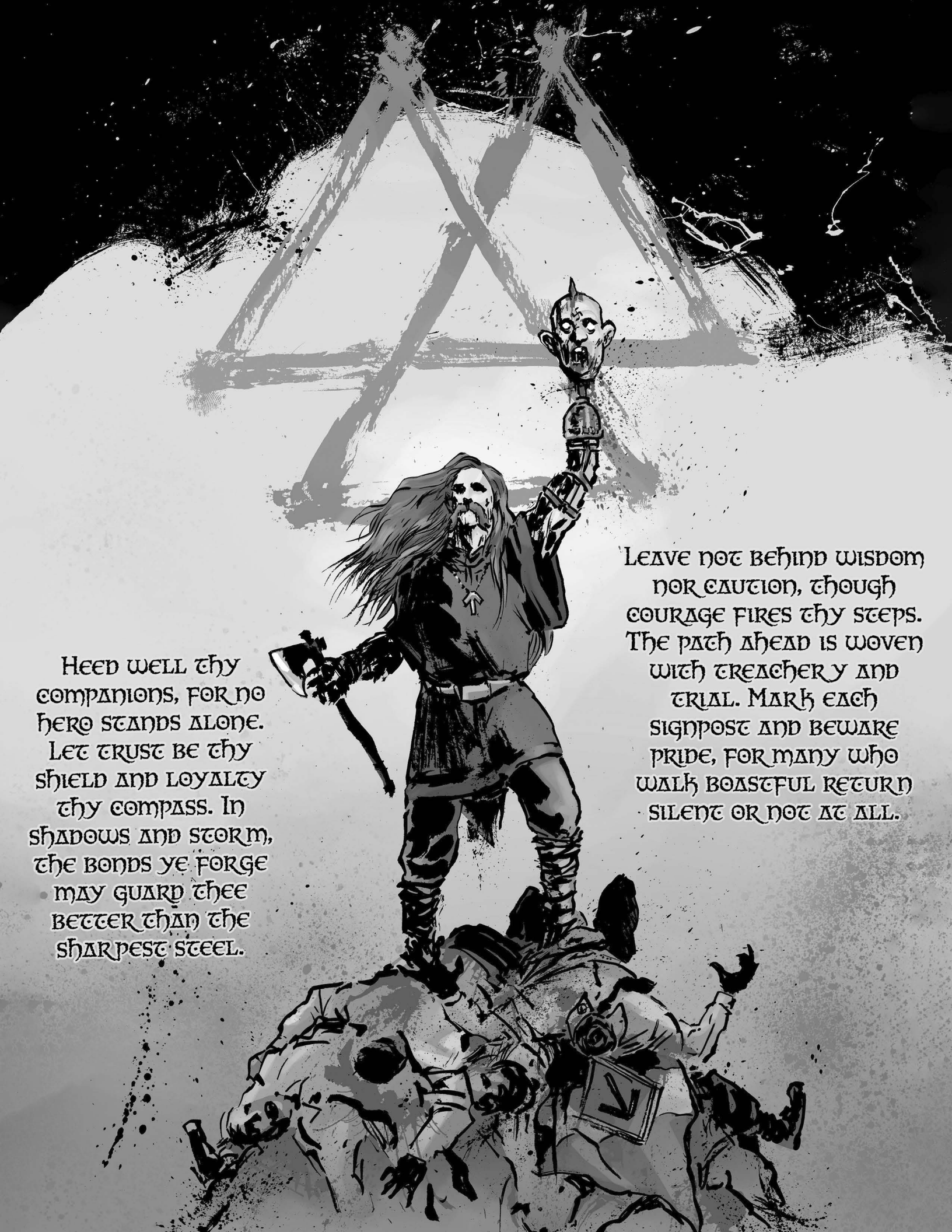




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HEED WELL THY
COMPANIONS, FOR NO
HERO STANDS ALONE.
LET TRUST BE THY
SHIELD AND LOYALTY
THY COMPASS. IN
SHADOWS AND STORM,
THE BONDS YE FORGE
MAY GUARD THEE
BETTER THAN THE
SHARPEST STEEL.

LEAVE NOT BEHIND WISDOM
NOR CAUTION, THOUGH
COURAGE FIRES THY STEPS.
THE PATH AHEAD IS WOVEN
WITH TREACHERY AND
TRIAL. MARK EACH
SIGNPOST AND BEWARE
PRIDE, FOR MANY WHO
WALK BOASTFUL RETURN
SILENT OR NOT AT ALL.

DINNER WITH THE SPIRITS



BY
**DEREK
RUIZ**



LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE

**IMMERSIVE SHADOWDARK RPG ONE-SHOT
ADVENTURE FOR THE GREATEST OSR GAME**

ADVENTURE PRIMER



during the depths of winter, as frost encrusts the land and the nights grow long, the fabric of the mortal world grows thin. The solstice marks a time when the boundaries between realms are most fragile, and moonlit mirrors become gates to the Fey Realm. It is through these portals that the winter spirits—a race of merry, gnome-like beings—spill into the mortal plane. With glittering eyes and snowy hair, they dance through forests and fields, delighting in harmless pranks and playful tricks. Although mischievous, their intentions are benign; they scatter frost across windowpanes, enchant snowflakes to shimmer, and hide trinkets only to return them with laughter.

This year, as the portals yawned open under the full moon, a foul presence slipped through—a creature born of fey trickery, but corrupted by malice. Snickel, a troll gnome, emerged from the threshold. Unlike others of his kin, Snickel twists joy into torment. His crooked grin, leonine mane, and glowing red eyes betray a dark nature. Snickel visits a different location each year. He often manifests where there is a tomb or crypt nearby.

CLOVERLEAF MANOR

THE VEIL'S BREACH occurred within Cloverleaf Manor, the sprawling estate of the affluent Whitebark family. Their hall's towering mirror, bathed in silvery moonlight, became a planar portal. What began as a benign intrusion of winter gnomes turned dire with Snickel's arrival.

The Whitebarks, familiar with the tricks of winter spirits paid little attention to the fey's antics. Alas, the troll gnome found his way beneath the grand manor, into the opulent family's crypt. Snickel channeled his envy for the human's joyful celebration. Unable to partake in the festivities, Snickel's ire and hate have caused the dead in the tomb to rise, and some of the winter spirits to transform into abominations. From the manor, Snickel's chaos starts to spread to the nearby Village of Panshaw.

THE PLIGHT OF PANSHAW

The Whitebarks fled Cloverleaf Manor in terror as the crypt's desecrated dead began to rise, their once-peaceful estate consumed by frost-laden darkness. The family, unprepared for such horrors, gathered what belongings they could and hastened to the Village of Panshaw under cover of night. There, they recounted their harrowing escape to the mayor, their faces pale with dread. The villagers, unsettled by tales of undead horrors and twisted winter spirits, took them in, offering what safety they could in the mayor's fortified manor.

However, Panshaw's fragile peace was short-lived. The very next day, a group of four frost-rimed zombies shambled into the village. Armed with pitchforks, axes, and an unyielding resolve, the townsfolk rallied to defend their home. A fierce battle ensued, and while the undead were eventually defeated, the cost was steep; six villagers lost their lives in the gruesome fight.

The mayor, desperate to restore safety, and the Whitebarks, eager to reclaim their home, pooled their resources to offer a hefty reward for any brave soul willing to clear the manor of its cursed inhabitants.

HOOK - SAVING THE HOLIDAYS

WITH THE WINTER holidays approaching, the characters arrive at the Village of Panshaw a day after the terrible fight against the frozen zombies. They find poster notices beckoning adventurers to seek the mayor in the tavern (area A5) in exchange for a grand reward (1,200 gp).

This winter threatens to be the harshest in recent years. The characters are likely to stay in Panshaw until the spring. It is urgent to secure the town from whatever evil lies in the nearby Cloverleaf Manor. It is obvious to all that the current threat this close to wintertime may spell disaster and a grim future for Panshaw's villagers. During the characters' brief stay in the village, they shall meet some NPC companions for this adventure.

RUMORS

d6

Details

- 1 The characters are told a detailed account of the valiant fight against the zombies that occurred yesterday.
- 2 A young elf urchin, Fabrín, fought alongside the villagers and survived the fight. Rumor has it that the jaded elf who lives in a barn once told the story of how his town was attacked similarly. Fabrín hates the winter holidays because of this trauma.
- 3 A lumberjack, familiar with winter spirits, was put to sleep in the snow by a spirit's bite. He came back with frostbitten fingers.
- 4 There is a strange man who lives in a forest chalet named Joseph Claus. The hermit comes to town every few weeks to trade. Joseph is regarded as strange; he speaks with the forest spirits. He brings gifts to villagers during the Winter Solstice Holiday.
- 5 A traveling merchant's wine casks were magically frozen solid by mischievous spirits. Now, the valuable wine is spoiled.
- 6 Carl Whitebark, the family's patriarch, is funding the contract to deal with the winter spirits out of his pocket.

SNICKEL'S INFLUENCE

SNICKEL'S CORRUPTING INFLUENCE seeps into the winter spirit gnomes, twisting their playful mischief into something darker. Their pranks now carry an unintended edge of malice. Frosted windowpanes shatter instead of sparkling, and enchanted snowflakes burn cold enough to blister. The gnomes, unaware of the harm they cause, still giggle and flit about as if their antics remain harmless. Their laughter takes on an eerie, hollow quality. They upend barrels of grain to spoil food stores, freeze doors shut with biting frost, and topple decorations meant for the holidays. Influenced by Snickel, they remain oblivious to the pain and chaos left in their wake.

JOSEPH CLAUS

Human ranger

He is a mysterious hermit who comes to Panshaw often to buy supplies and sell produce, nuts, and pelts. Joseph Claus smells of pine cones and soil and has a hearty, smile. The winter spirits follow him due to his usual solitude. This year, the winter spirits gather in Cloverleaf Manor following an unseen master. Joseph Claus is worried for them and wishes to find a way to restore their usual demeanor. In truth, Claus is a fey spirit himself. Often portrayed in the Material Plane as a 'Bearer of Gifts'.

Manner. Sorry for speaking so bluntly, I meant no offense. I am unaccustomed to dealing with people.

Ambition. The best thing about winter is those pesky, trickster spirits. I know they must need our help.

FABRIN'S TRAGEDY

FABRIN, A WIRY young elf with gray eyes and hair like autumn leaves, has lived most of his 19 years as a street urchin in Panshaw. Orphaned at six when Snickel unleashed terror upon his quiet forest village, Fabrín narrowly escaped the massacre that claimed his parents. Haunted by memories of Snickel's laughter and fiery red eyes, the youngster carries a smoldering anger within. He shelters in a barn at the edge of town, surviving by his wits, foraging for food, and doing odd jobs. Fabrín knows that the winter spirits are benign creatures prone to being influenced by higher fey entities, like Snickel. Fabrín yearns for an encounter with the foul troll gnome.



FABRIN

Elf urchin

Fabrín, though young and still innocent of many things in the world, has lived a rough life. He remembers little of his family or hometown, only a feeling of warmth and happiness that has been absent ever since. He knows the winter spirits are usually harmless but remembers that during the tragedy in this childhood, the winter gnomes also became erratic and aggressive. He believes that the opportunity for revenge is within his grasp. Hatred and resentment cause him to have a form of tunnel-vision.

Manner. My lot in life is loneliness and disgrace. Thus, I must do whatever is necessary to endure and survive.

Ambition. I shall avenge my family even if I cannot recall their faces. It shall put my soul to rest at last...



Save the Holidays

Darkness has seized Cloverleaf Manor, casting an ominous shadow upon the holidays! Unspeakable abominations lurk within, their wicked presence threatening the joy of the season. The town pleads for valiant souls to step forth and banish this evil before it consumes us all. Riches beyond measure await those bold enough to answer the call. Seek Panshaw's mayor in the inn-tavern to pledge your sword. The hour grows dire—act swiftly, for the holidays!



VILLAGE OF PANSHAW

“We cannot have another engagement such as yesterday’s. It is going to ruin us all. Winter closes on us and we need all our strength to endure the season.”

Mayor Barthew Kalski

The Village of Panshaw sits in a shallow valley, its thatched roofs and timbered houses clustered along a winding creek. Known for its hearty farmers and skilled woodworkers, Panshaw thrives on its proximity to lush forests and fertile fields. Its farmers’ market bustles with trade during the harvest seasons, while the village streets often host lively festivals under the watchful eye of the Mayor’s manor, the only walled structure in the village.

Perched atop a small hill, the Mayor’s manor was designed to protect the town’s leadership in times of crisis. Now, it serves as a sanctuary for villagers whose families were shattered by the undead attack. The relatives of the six killed in the engagement, as well as the wealthy Whitebarks, have sought refuge within its stone walls, their sorrow and fear palpable in every shadowed corner.

THE PLIGHT OF PANSHAW

Two days ago, the Whitebarks arrived in Panshaw, fleeing their estate, Cloverleaf Manor. Their crypt had been desecrated by a malevolent spirit. They glimpsed Snickel, the troll gnome; he is described as a small, furry demon. A day later, the four frozen zombies came from the direction of the manor, and a horrible fight occurred. Now, anxiety hangs thick in the air as rumors of more undead circulate. Worst of all, there remains no one in town with the bravery to venture into Cloverleaf Manor. With the Mayor’s manor crowded and the village ill-prepared for another assault, the townsfolk grow desperate.

NPC COMPANIONS

Joseph Claus. The hermit (**thug**) is the only one yet to come to the tavern. He cares not for the reward or the Whitebarks; instead, he wants to help the winter spirits, whom he believes are not the culprits. Joseph offers to join the party in area A5. Joseph’s presence in the manor and the dungeon below may provide a new path of action as some of the winter spirits know him.

Fabrin. The young **elf** is usually around area A8, living in a barn. He soon learns that the characters are to visit Cloverleaf Manor. If not met in area A8, he offers his help as the party leaves through the northern path. If refused, Fabrin rejoins them in areas C3 or C4.

Town Features

► **Heightened Vigilance.** After the recent attack, villagers are jumpy. Nervous watchmen patrol the outskirts, armed with lanterns and spears. Travelers are cautiously questioned upon arrival (see areas A1 and A2).

► **The Mayor’s Refuge.** The walled manor serves as a safe haven for villagers in times of danger. Currently housing families displaced by the zombie attack, the overcrowded space fosters both solidarity and tension.

► **Winter Solstice Holiday.** Though the recent attack has dampened spirits, the village’s annual Winter Solstice Holiday lingers in memory. People pray that the problem in Cloverleaf Manor is solved so that the holiday preparations can resume. It shall occur in 1 week.

► **Legends of the Frost.** Tavern-goers and traveling merchants swap chilling tales of creatures seen in the woods, their stories growing darker since Snickel’s arrival. Characters who engage in this tale-sharing gain valuable insights and lore from the **Rumors** table.

A1. WESTERN ROAD

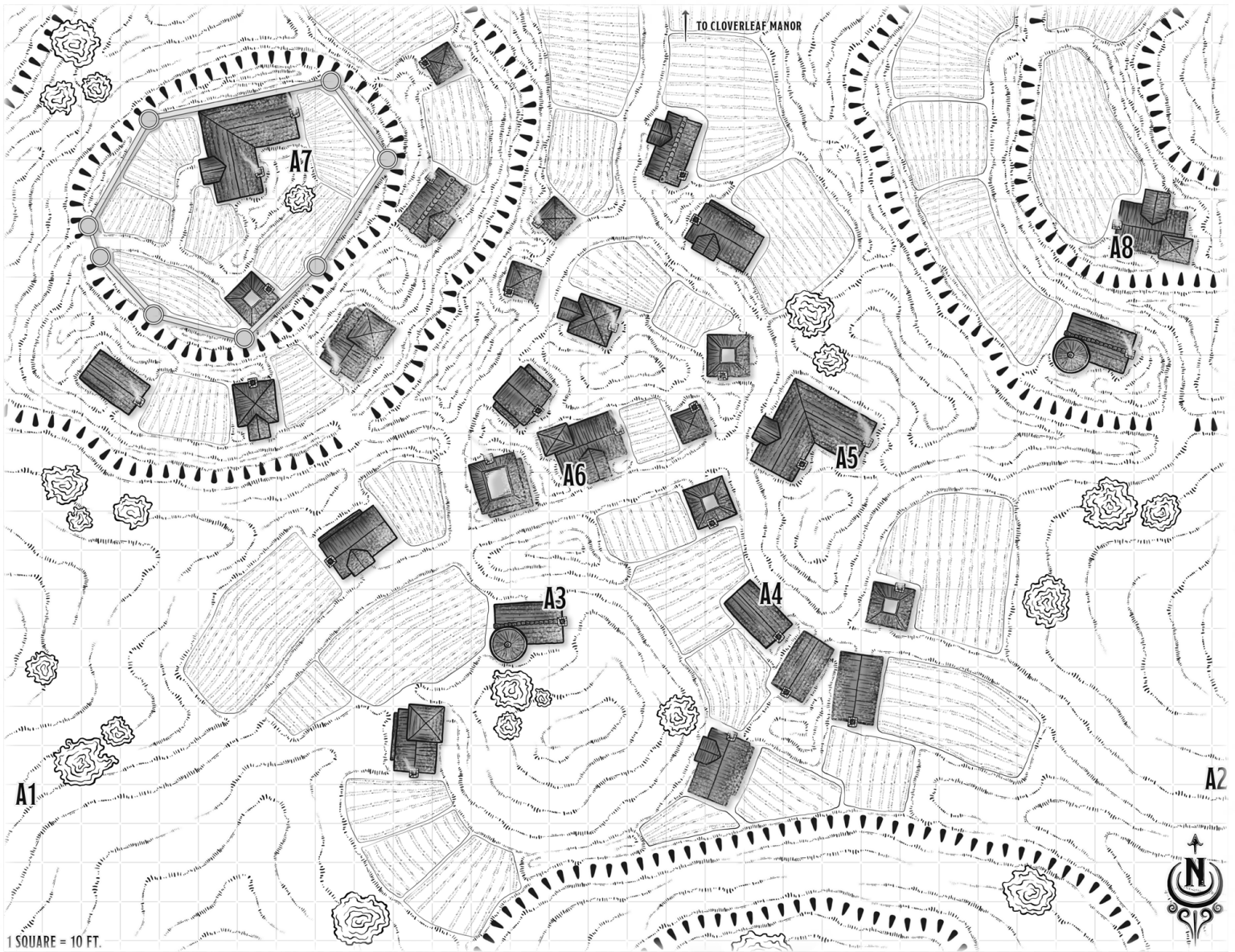
A snow-laden road bends into a frost-laden village, chimney smoke trails curling weakly. Shadows flicker under pine trees. An eerie stillness hangs over the village, broken only by the mournful howl of wind.

On their way from a previous quest, the characters arrive at the Village of Panshaw just in time for the highly-reputed Winter Solstice Holiday, which is 1 week away.

► **Concerned Guards.** The characters are stopped by four **guards** on the road. The guards are visibly nervous. They ask questions about the party and are relieved to find they hold no ill intentions. If the characters inquire about the grim ambiance in town, the guards explain what happened the day before. One of them fought against the undead and barely survived. The guards beg the characters to heed the mayor’s call. They claim mayor Barthew Kalski and Carl Whitebark offer a hefty reward for dealing with the threat in Cloverleaf Manor.

A2. EASTERN ROAD

This road leads to a region of rolling hills that are ferociously planted and harvested during the warmer seasons. The road leads to the capital, a four-day ride.



A3. GENERAL STORE

The owner, Harband, perished in the battle yesterday. His widow, Anette, is behind the counter; she is the only one not hiding in the manor. If asked, she explains that Harband did survive the fight but died during the night from his wounds. She sells groceries and farm tools.

► **The Blade.** If the characters reveal their intentions to help the locals, Anette brings her husband's *+1 dagger*. She lends it to the characters to be used in this quest.

A4. THE WINERY

Ernest, the wine-maker, uses a pickaxe to remove the frozen-solid contents from an open barrel. He claims the wine suddenly froze solid as the barrel was opened. He claims nothing like that had ever happened. A *detect magic* spell reveals a lingering aura in the barrel.

► **Mischievous Gnomes.** Two **winter spirits** emerge from behind a pine tree and laugh at Ernest's predicament. If attacked, the spirits turn invisible and try to flee.

A5. PANSHAW TAVERN

The owner, Jaggel (**peasant**), was branded a coward because he hid during yesterday's fight. To clean his name, Jaggel plans to join the characters on their expedition. Plus, he offers them food and accommodations.

The Mayor. The party meets Barthew Kalski here. He offers 1,200 gp (5 XP) for dealing with the evil spirits in Cloverleaf Manor. He wants the job done as soon as possible to ensure the village's safety before the Winter Solstice Holiday. He does not care about the spirits, their well-being, or their pranks. He wants them gone.

Claus. After their meeting, Joseph remarks his opinion that the winter spirits are not to blame for all this; he believes some other force is pulling the strings. He begs the heroes to avoid hurting the spirits during their quest.

Attack. During the characters' meeting with the mayor, shrieks of fear can be heard in the streets outside. Two **zombies**, two **gaunt gnomes**, and three **crawling hands** have barged into town. The characters are called to aid.

A6. FARMER'S MARKET - HOSPITAL

The farmers' market, closed until the spring, has been repurposed as an impromptu hospital after the battle with the zombies yesterday. Eight people are here with several degrees of injuries. Two farmers are in critical conditions and are not expected to survive the night.

► **Healing.** The two farmers in mortal danger can only be saved with magical healing. If a character uses such spells to restore their health, they gain an additional **luck token** and the gratitude of all townsfolk present. The farmers, Gallen and Rutt, gather as much as their families can spare and offer 15 gp in thanks.

► **Ally.** A lumberjack named Jarlin (**thug**) is here with most of his left hand frostbitten. He claims a winter spirit bit him and it caused him to fall asleep in the snow.

Angered after his misfortune, Jarlin offers to join the party to fight the winter spirits. He is confident he can still wield a sword one-handed.

A7. MAYOR'S MANOR

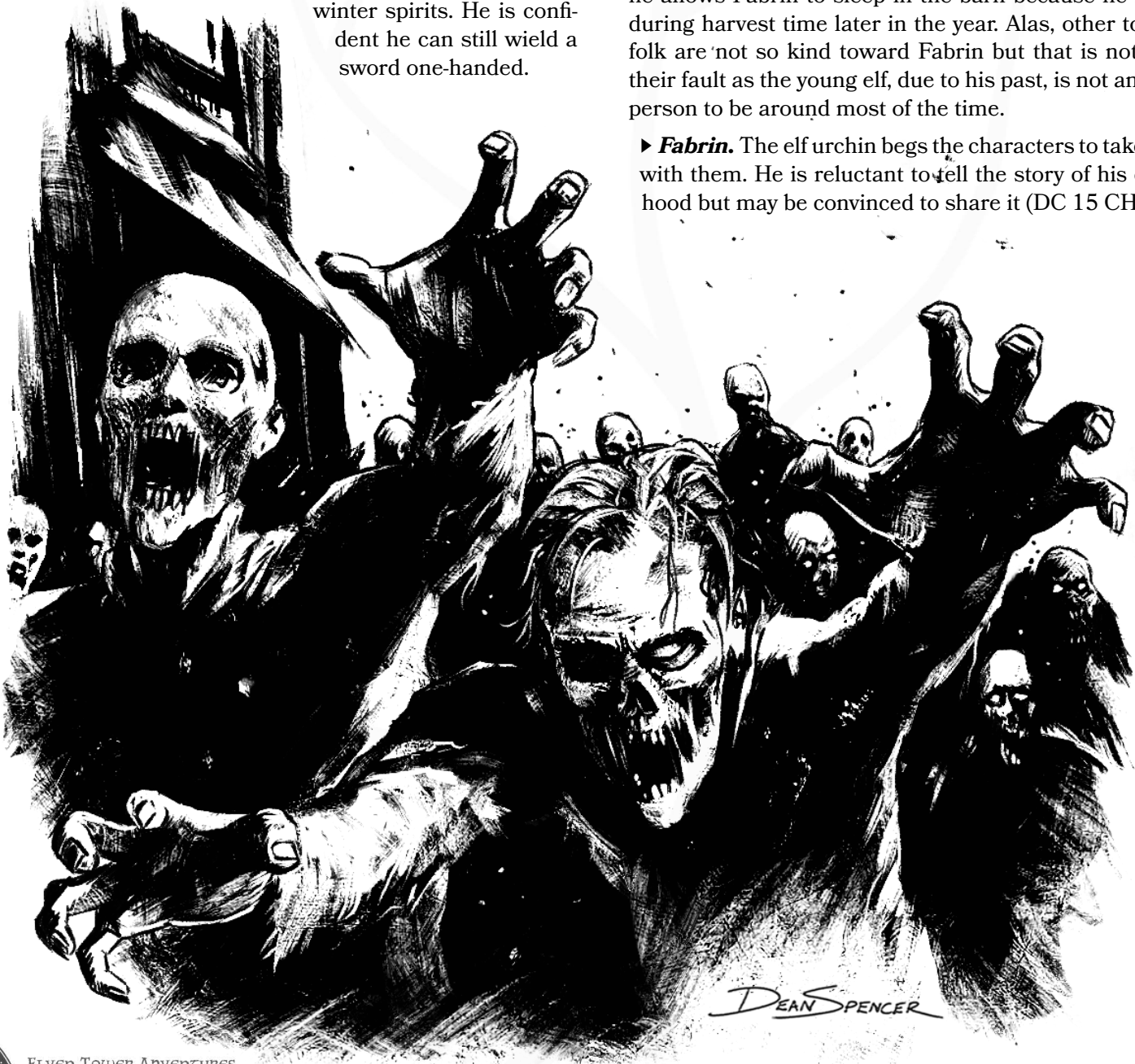
After meeting Mayor Barthew Kalski in the tavern (area A5), the characters can find him here, at the top of the hill. Other than frightened farmers, the opulent Whitebark family stays here until the problem is resolved. The characters can speak with Carl Whitebark here as he is also interested in meeting the mercenaries that his purse pays for, in this delicate matter.

► **Carl Whitebark.** The wealthy man explains that none of his five relatives were harmed in the escape; nor were their two servants. They all saw Snickel emerge from a mirror, whom they believe is behind it all. He is described as a fur-covered, axe-wielding, maned gnome.

A8. HAROLD'S FARMSTEAD

If the characters pass by this house, Fabrín and Harold come to meet them. Harold, a farmer, mentions that he allows Fabrín to sleep in the barn because he helps during harvest time later in the year. Alas, other townsfolk are not so kind toward Fabrín but that is not only their fault as the young elf, due to his past, is not an easy person to be around most of the time.

► **Fabrín.** The elf urchin begs the characters to take him with them. He is reluctant to tell the story of his childhood but may be convinced to share it (DC 15 CHA).



CLOVERLEAF MANOR

"Let's be reasonable about this. The winter spirits are mischievous, we all know that. But there is something else at play. I don't want us to hurt them."

Joseph Claus

RANDOM EVENTS

d8	Details
1	Four low-life brigands (thugs) arrive at Cloverleaf Manor. They heard it was abandoned and seek easy profits. If confronted, there is a 3-in-6 chance that their leader, Urun, yields and accepts a deal or alliance with the party.
2	Three winter spirits , affected by Snickel's presence, ambush the characters and attempt to bite them so they fall asleep. If everyone falls asleep, the winter spirits remove the characters' possessions and bring them to area C8.
3	A spider swarm emerges from nearby cracks and webs in the ceiling and attacks the party.
4	Two zombies approach the party and attack. The undead were on their way to attack the Village of Panshaw.
5	Six crawling hands fall from the ceiling. They drop on random characters and attempt to strangle them to death.
6	Two elves arrive at the manor after sensing Snickel's presence. They want to help the party. They have no relation with Fabrin.
7	Three gaunt gnomes hide under a floor tile. When the party passes nearby, the gaunt gnomes emerge and use their Puke attack, trying to hit as many people as possible with it. After emptying their innards, they resort to their Headbutt attacks.
8	Snickel's laughter, amplified magically and with a spectral echo, can be heard in all areas of the manor and the dungeon below.



REACHING THE MANOR

THE CHARACTERS AND their brave companions set out to the north, toward Cloverleaf Manor. It is a 20-minute walk. On the way, the characters find two series of footprints coming from Cloverleaf Manor. The first is consistent with five to seven people and a hand-wheelbarrow moving in haste (DC 9 WIS). It follows the road and belongs to the escaping Whitebark family. The second set of footprints is consistent with four barefoot beings that walked slowly, limping, and sometimes abandoning the road altogether (DC 12 WIS). These tracks belong to the four zombies that attacked the Village of Panshaw. It took them almost two hours to reach the settlement.

THE WINTER SPIRITS

Winter spirits in the manor and dungeon perform dangerous pranks or outright attack the party. They can be slain like common monsters but Joseph Claus turns on the characters and tries to save the spirits if they only mean harm to them. On the other hand, the characters are free to listen to Joseph and be kind. They can defeat the winter spirits without killing them. The Player must only declare such intention for it to happen. The spirit is then dispatched with non-lethal damage. Such targets fall unconscious or flee in a panic. Alas, a **critical hit** still causes death regardless of the Player's intentions.

Level 4 Location

► **Danger.** Unsafe. Check for a Random Event every 3 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (4-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** The winter spirits have kept torches and fires going since the Whitebarks left. Denizens and monsters from the family dungeon below are **dark-adapted**.

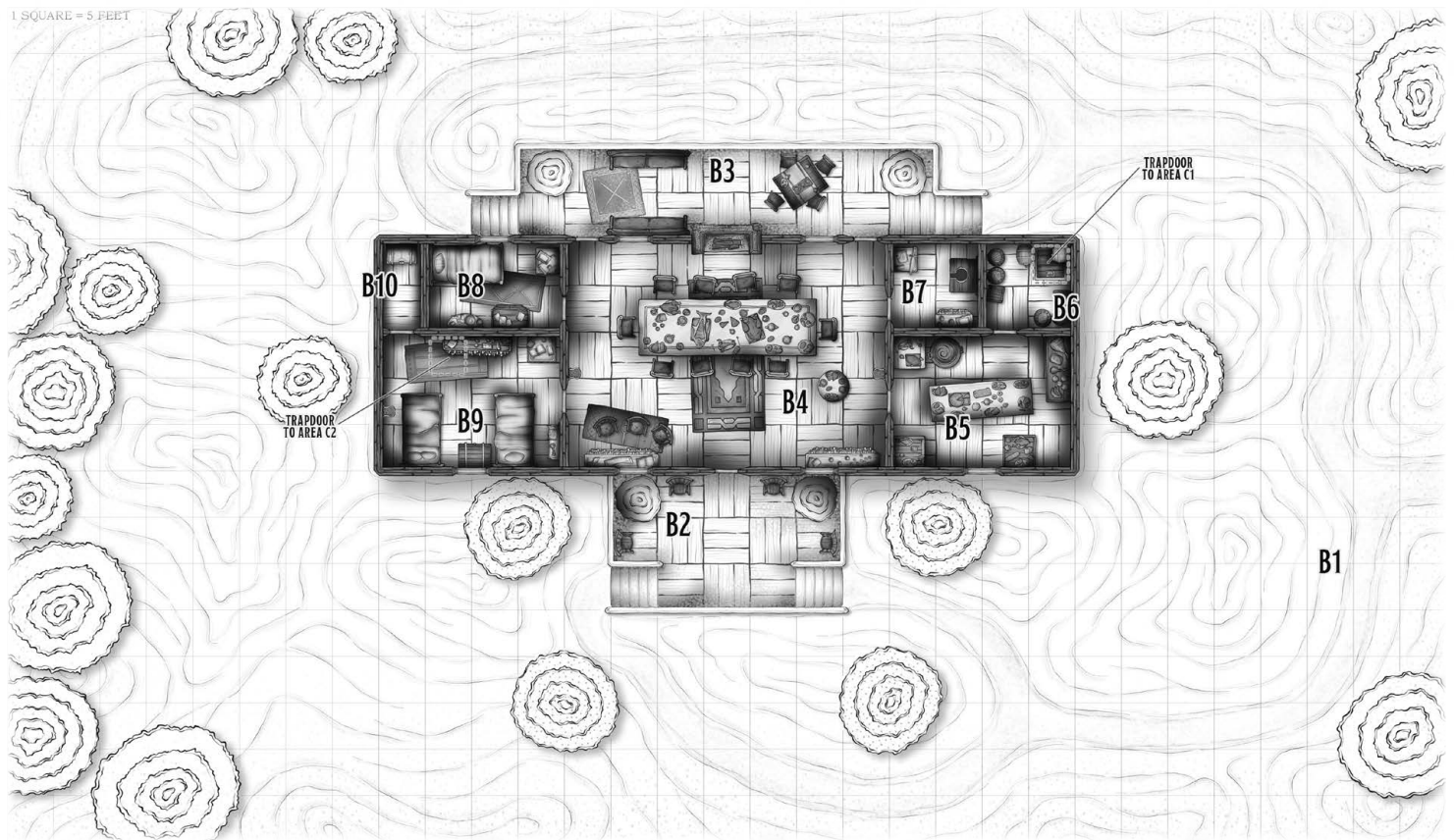
► **The Spirits.** Some winter spirits are described in the areas below. Unless stated otherwise, the spirits are neutral. They do not retaliate even after being attacked. They giggle, become invisible, and attempt to flee instead.

B1. MANOR'S SURROUNDINGS

A secluded, one-story stone manor awaits near the forest; frost blankets its peaked roof. There are four festively adorned pine trees by the entrance. Glittering baubles that swing in the wind illuminate them.

The characters can access the manor from the front door (area B2), the back-door deck (area B3), or break in through a window. Faint music can be heard coming from the main hall (area B4). If Joseph Claus is present, he remarks that the music is not from this world; the winter spirits play small instruments when they gather.

► **Unnatural Cold.** Snickel's fey magic causes the forest temperature to drop to unsafe levels. Staying out is a death sentence. The characters must enter the manor or double back to the Village of Panshaw at once.



B2. FRONT PORCH

Through frosted windows, a warm glow reveals a hall with a feast-laden table where the spirits dine.

The front door is closed but unlocked. If the characters knock on the door or try to attract the winter spirits' attention through the windows, they are ignored.

► **Mischief.** Whoever opens the door causes a bucket of freezing water to fall on themselves (DC 12 DEX).

B3. BACK-DOOR DECK

Two bearded winter spirits hunch over a snow-dusted chessboard on a creaky wooden deck.

Two **winter spirits** pretend to play chess on the table (DC 12 INT to notice it). If corrected or confronted on the illegal moves, the spirits throw the table and pieces in the air and flee giggling. Claus applauds overjoyed.

OTHERWORLDLY MUSIC

Music-inclined characters can spend 1 **crawling round** listening to the strange tune that the winter spirits in area B4 play. If they have paper for notes or an instrument to practice the song, they can learn it (DC 12 INT). After this quest, playing this tune improves the disposition of the fey who hear it. The song marks the performer as a friend of the fey. The characters have advantage on checks when interacting with these creatures.

B4. MAIN HALL

Six **winter spirits** sit at the table pretending to be wealthy people. Some of them wear the Whitebark's clothes which are too big for them. Three more, by the corner, play ancient songs from the Fey Realm.

► **Mirrors.** Four tall mirrors adorn the walls. Under the moonlight, they became portals to the Fey Realm.

► **Banquet.** The food is delicious and safe to eat. If the characters sit at the table, the spirits interact with them in broken Common. Conversations are hollow and lead nowhere as the spirits only play a part, pretending to be opulent businessmen, merchants, or princes. If the characters play along for 1 **crawling round**, the winter spirits applaud. Participants earn an additional **luck token**.

► **Abominations.** During the feast, three **gaunt gnomes** emerge from the trapdoor in area B9 and come to eat. These undead monsters initially ignore the characters and sit at the table to gorge themselves on the food. If attacked before eating, the gaunt gnomes lack their Puke ability. After eating, the gaunt gnomes attack anyway.

B5. KITCHEN

Four **winter spirits** cook more food for the banquet in area B4 by bringing more and more supplies from area B6. They sing in unison and try their best to ignore the characters. While the characters behold this spectacle, there is a 3-in-6 chance that the winter spirits start throwing food at everyone around for 1 **crawling round**.

B6. LARDER

This room contains wooden crates and barrels with the Whitebark family's supplies for the winter. At least half of it has already been used up for the endless feast in area B4. Two **winter spirits** by the roof hide from whoever enters this room. They use fey magic to levitate two crates near the ceiling. In what they confuse for a harmless prank, they drop the crates on whoever enters the room. The target takes 1d10 damage (DC 12 DEX).

► **Trapdoor.** The wooden trapdoor by the corner reveals a shaft with an iron rung ladder that leads to area C1.

B7. RESTROOM

The room contains a wooden seat with an opening that leads to a latrine-like container. The servants remove its contents every other day. The giggles and whispers of a winter spirit can be heard from the opening.

► **Prank.** Whoever looks into the opening (Joseph Claus if no one dares), causes an explosion of the latrine's contents (DC 12 DEX to avoid being drenched by them).



B8. CARL WHITEBARK'S QUARTERS

Two **winter spirits**, wearing Carl's robe, lie on the bed. The spirits pretend to be Carl and claim to be sick. They ask the characters to bring warm tea so they can feel better. If the characters comply and play along, one of the winter spirits says the following in broken Common: "*You goodhearted. We pretend... Stay unnoticed. Snickel is culprit. Snickel is rise corpses dead. Friends behave strange. We strong! Resist Snickel's bad aura.*"

► **Fey Allies.** For reasons unknown, these two spirits withstood Snickel's influence. However, the two spirits stayed around pretending to be in the same state as the others. If the characters explain their intentions to stop Snickel, the two winter spirits offer to join the party. Their sleeping bite does not affect the undead, though.

► **Treasure (2 XP).** A locked box (DC 12 DEX) in the wardrobe contains 150 gp, 400 sp, and a *potion of healing*. Stealing this treasure may earn the enmity of the Whitebark family if discovered (see **Conclusion**).

B9. FAMILY QUARTERS

Two double bunk beds, a wooden bookshelf, a side table, and a wooden chest furnish this room. The four sons of Carl Whitebark sleep in this room. Their clothes and belongings scattered across the room reveal they left in haste and picked only winter coats (DC 12 WIS).

► **Trapdoor.** The trapdoor under the rug reveals a shaft with an iron rung ladder that leads to area C2.

► **Angered Spirits.** Two **winter spirits**, affected by Snickel's foul influence, and four **crawling hands** emerge from under the beds and attack.

B10. VAULT ROOM

This wooden door is reinforced with iron bars and a high-quality lock (DC 15 DEX check to lock-pick).

► **Treasure (4 XP).** The chest contains 1,400 gp, 4,60 sp, and a *+1 longsword* engraved with the Whitebark's sigil. Stealing this treasure may earn the enmity of the Whitebark family if discovered (see **Conclusion**).

Winter Spirits



Winter Gnomes are small fey creatures, their frosted skin shimmering like fresh snow under moonlight. Cloaked in glistening garments, they emerge from the Fey Realm during winter, slipping between worlds through moonlit mirrors. Though inherently kind, their boundless mischief leaves trails of harmless chaos: icicles hung on door handles, snow-filled boots, or shifting footprints in the frost. Laughter accompanies their pranks, and their bites are said to cause a deep slumber. They delight in winter revelry, dancing beneath auroras and crafting ice sculptures.



CLOVERLEAF DUNGEON

“The winter celebrations shall be a somber mockery plagued with sadness, despair, and the presence of the dead. All shall share this tenebrous fate.”

Snickel, the Troll gnome

Beneath Cloverleaf Manor lies the family crypt, a labyrinthine burial chamber carved from cold, dark stone. Once a solemn and dignified resting place for the family’s ancestors, the crypt is now twisted by Snickel’s corrupting influence. The air is frigid, carrying the pungent scent of decay and the faint tinkling of eerie, mischievous, fey laughter.

The sarcophagi, adorned with delicate carvings of vines and roses, now serve as grotesque banquet tables for Snickel’s macabre feast. Undead servants shuffle about, arranging plates and goblets filled with strange, glowing liquids. Winter spirits, their features twisted and frost-bitten, gather in grim merriment. Ice clings to the walls and flickering blue flames cast haunting shadows. At the head of the banquet, Snickel prepares to toast his grim alliance of corrupted fey and the restless undead.

Level 4 Dungeon

► **Danger.** Unsafe. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (4-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Some areas are illuminated by magical braziers (*light*). Dungeon denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Winter Spirits.** In the dungeon, all winter spirits are aggressive. The only exceptions are the two spirits from area B8 if they come with the characters.

► **Narrow Tunnels.** Some corridors are 2-foot-wide (see map). Moving through them is done at half speed. Characters fighting in the tunnels have disadvantage on all checks. All winter spirits are unaffected.

C1. DUNGEON LANDING

The characters can enter the dungeon from here by using the ladder in area B6. The room contains a stone side table with a history book, a rotten note, and a key.

► **The Food.** The winter spirits brought food here. It is tainted by the necromancy auras in the dungeon but looks tasty. Eating it deals 1d4 damage (DC 12 CON). The first time the characters come here, the two **gaunt gnomes** from area C4 come here to eat the food (unless they have already been dealt with). The gaunt gnomes behave in the same way as those described in area B4.

► **The Key.** The copper key on the side table can be used to open the large, ornate coffers in area C8.

C2. SECRET LANDING

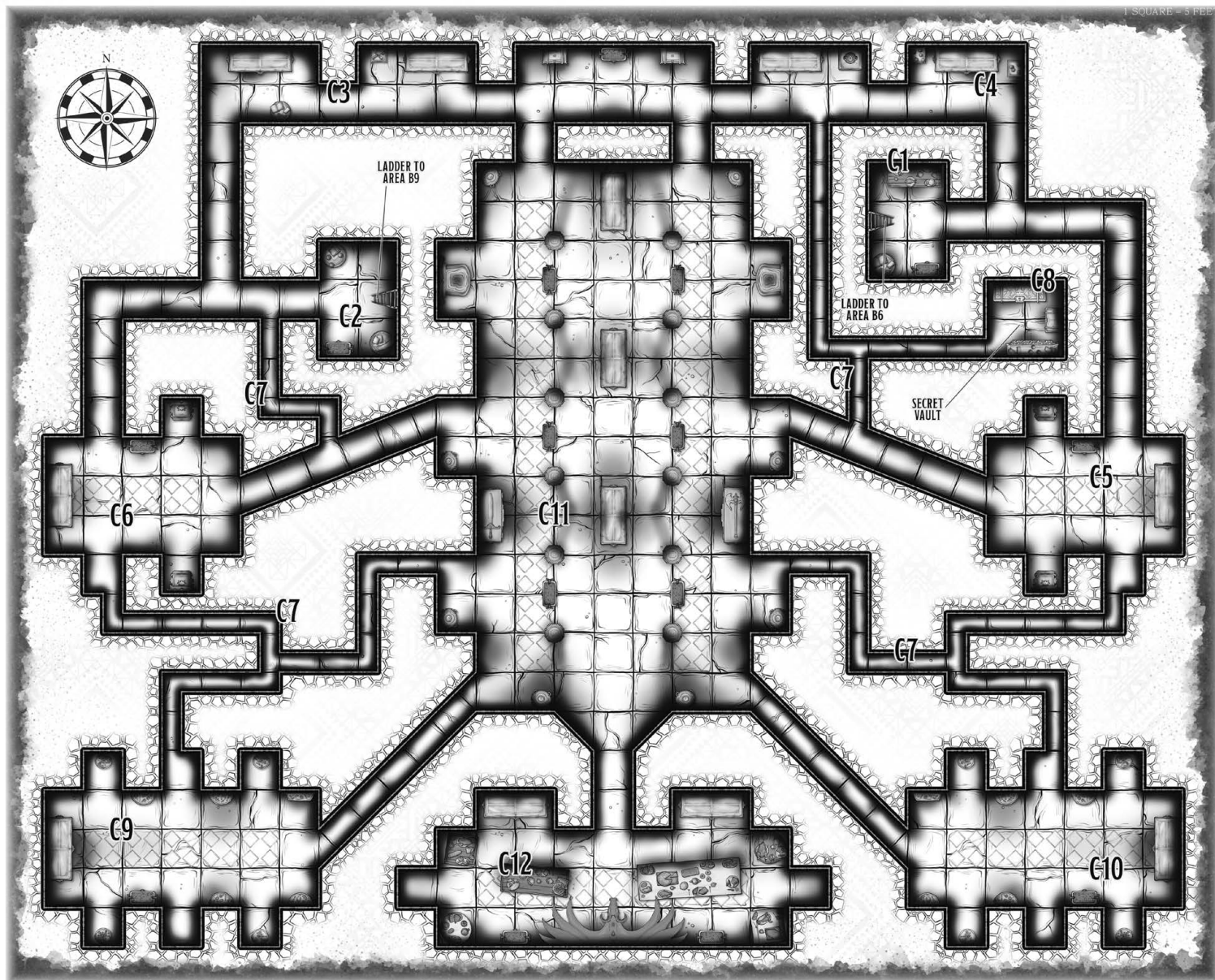
The characters can enter the dungeon from here by using the secret ladder in area B9. The room contains two stone side tables with an assortment of trinkets. There are three glass vials on one table (see below); strange concoctions prepared by the winter spirits here.

► **Red Potion.** The drinker breathes fire like a dragon once per **crawling round**, for 6 hours. The breath weapon deals 1d4 damage within near (DC 12 DEX).

► **Yellow Potion.** The drinker shrinks size in half. They also take on the likeness of winter spirits. They can blend in with the fey spirits. The effect lasts 24 hours.

► **Blue Potion.** The drinker feels nausea and lightheadedness for 1 **crawling round** (disadvantage to all checks). Then, their skin turns blue permanently.





C3. TOMB OF CHAMBERLAINS (WEST)

This area contains the tomb of two chamberlains who served the Whitebark family in a time when they owned a small castle. If the sarcophagi are touched, the lids shift aside. Two **zombies** emerge from within. If a battle breaks, the two gaunt gnomes in area C4 come fight too (unless they have already been dealt with).

C4. TOMB OF CHAMBERLAINS (EAST)

This chamber is similar to area C3 but the two sarcophagi are empty. Their occupants are part of the ones who walked to the Village of Panshaw and attacked the townsfolk. There are two gaunt gnomes here. They do not have their Puke ability available unless they eat in area C1.

► **Fabrin.** If the **elf** urchin was left behind in the village, he catches up with the characters here. Fabrin joins the characters during this fight or if they start a fight in area C3. He expects that, after proving his worth in combat, the characters will allow him to tag along with them.

SNICKEL, THE TROLL GNOME

Following Snickel's whims of a banquet for the fey and the undead, the winter spirits consume the Whitebarks' winter supplies to cook a days-long feast. Food is brought to areas C1 and C12. The gaunt gnomes and zombies gorge on this food which shall not last much longer. Snickel plans to march toward the Village of Panshaw once the manor's supplies run out.

Snickel can be encountered in areas C5 and C6 where he fights for a round or two before using the narrow tunnels to make his way to the banquet in area C12. Snickel uses his Invisibility and Illusion spells to ensure his escape. Snickel can always be found in area C12, where the fey trickster fights to the death. Due to his fey nature, he cannot be truly killed in the Material Plane (see **Conclusion**). If Fabrin is present, he recognizes Snickel from his childhood. The **elf** urchin's rage cannot be contained; he fights zealously to the death.

C5. TOMB OF MERCHANTS

A single brazier illuminates three sarcophagi, two of them standing.

► **Engravings.** Reliefs on the walls portray ancient members of the Whitebark family who dedicated their lives to being traveling silk merchants. Their wealth set them up for generations to come.

► **Combat. Snickel, the Troll Gnome** can be encountered in this chamber. Laughing uncontrollably, the troll gnome attacks the party with the aid of one **zombie** and three **crawling hands** that drop from the ceiling.

► **Treasure (3 XP).** Inspecting the sarcophagi for 1 **crawling round** reveals a hidden compartment under one that contains a pair of *gauntlets of might*.

C6. TOMB OF WARLORDS

This chamber is similar to area C5 but the carvings on the walls tell the story of three members of the Whitebark family who became accomplished swordsmen and military warlords.

► **Combat.** Snickel and an identical retinue of undead as in area C5 can be encountered here. Snickel escapes to area C12 afterward, similarly.

► **Treasure (1 XP).** Inspecting the sarcophagi for 1 **crawling round** reveals a hidden compartment that contains three *spell scrolls*: *levitate*, *knock*, and *fabricate*.

C7. CONNECTING PASSAGES

Each time the characters squeeze through these corridors (see **Narrow Tunnels**), there is a 3-in-6 chance that a pair of **gaunt gnomes** flank the party from both ends. The small undead can move freely and unimpeded.

C8. HIDDEN VAULT

This chamber can be reached by navigating through an off-shoot from a narrow tunnel (area C7).

► **Treasure (8 XP).** The chamber contains two coffers and a bookcase. The coffers are locked (DC 18 DEX). The key is in area C1. They contain 2,200 gp, 17,400 sp, a *potion of vitality*, and a *bag of devouring*. The bookcase contains a spellbook with the following spells: *arcane eye*, *divination*, *stoneskin*, *disintegrate*, and *scrying*. The Whitebarks do not know about this vault. It is safe to pilage it as long as the characters do not reveal this.



C9. TOMB OF THE ARTISAN

Gustaff Whitebark was interred here seventy years ago. In life, he was a blacksmith and a potter. Many relics crafted by this artisan are exposed on stone plinths.

► **Anger.** If the valuable trinkets are stolen, Gustaff takes great offense and emerges into the Material Plane as a **wraith**. It fights until slain.

► **Treasure (3 XP).** The trinket collection can be sold for 250 gp.

C10. TOMB OF THE SCHOLAR

A hundred and twenty years ago, Illara Whitebark was buried here. She was a historian and a student of the magic arts; renowned as the only wizard in the Whitebark family. There is nothing of value in this room.

C11. HALL OF THE WHITEBARKS

This vast underground hall features two rows of towering pillars adorned with intricate runes, funerary urns, and two stone plinths displaying bladed weapons.

► **Walls.** Masterful engravings on stone walls depict the deeds of ancient figures of the Whitebark bloodline.

► **The Weapons.** The sword and axe on display are not functional weapons and are fused to the stone plinths.

► **Guardians.** The first time the characters come here, two **zombies**, one **gaunt gnome**, and two **winter spirits** come from area C12 to stop their advance.

C12. BANQUET OF FEY AND UNDEAD

Pale gnomes and grotesquely twisted zombies feast ravenously from several banquet tables. Opulent platters overflow with rancid food.

The characters barge into an ongoing banquet. **Snickel, the Troll Gnome** sits like a king at the largest table. He is surrounded by four **gaunt gnomes** and four **winter spirits**. They all eat like there is no tomorrow. These creatures regard the characters' intrusion as a terrible insult. They fight to the death in this chamber.

► **Companions.** If Joseph Claus (**thug**) is present, he recognizes Snickel's influence over the winter spirits and tries to protect them. Fabrin (**elf**), overcome with ire, attempts to slay the troll gnome. In his rage, he mortally attacks the winter spirits if necessary; Joseph turns on Fabrin if this occurs; attacking with savage rage too.

SNICKEL AND FABRIN

When confronting the troll gnome, it is not only Fabrín who recognizes Snickel. The troll gnome, with its fey intuition, surmises that Fabrín was a survivor from that massacre thirteen years ago in the elven settlement. Cruelly, Snickel taunts Fabrín during the confrontation; recalling the destructive events, laughing at the elf's despair, and making a mockery of his relatives' last words. If Fabrín falls for it (DC 12 CHA), he attacks random targets for 1d6 rounds in his rage.

CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS REACH the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their brave deeds.

SNICKEL IS DEALT WITH

The characters defeat Snickel, the Troll Gnome in the dungeon. Mortally wounded, the fey trickster laughs uncontrollably as his body vanishes into thin air. With Snickel gone many things change: the winter spirits recover their senses and stop their cruel games and tricks. They remember their wicked deeds and are smitten with guilt for the locals. The unnatural cold that surrounded Cloverleaf Manor is dispelled. The sparsely forested area around the manor becomes warmer instantly. And lastly, the undead abominations that roam the area collapse into fine icy dust. If it is known that the tall mirrors in area B4 served as portals, Joseph Claus recommends destroying them to avoid more fey incursions.

THE VILLAGE OF PANSHAW

Upon returning, the characters are received as heroes. People drink in their honor during the Winter Solstice Holiday. If the characters were kind to the manipulated winter spirits, the surviving spirits and Joseph Claus come soon after. They arrive mounting wild hogs carrying forest berries and pine-cones. Claus reveals his fey ancestry. He bears gifts for the townsfolk and the characters. Together, they help the townsfolk rebuild and get ready for the upcoming winter. If Fabrín survives, he learns that vengeance does not mend a broken heart. He still has a lot to learn about surviving in the world.

THE WHITEBARK FAMILY

Mayor Barthew Kalski and Carl Whitebark pay the 1,200 gp (5 XP) reward when the manor is ready to be inhabited again. However, if Carl discovers that the characters have stolen the valuables in areas B8, B9, C9, or even the vault he did not know about (C8), he demands their immediate arrest. The mayor is more worried about the coming winter but he attempts to arrest the party if they decide to stay in town. Otherwise, he puts the characters' arrest off until the spring and after the holidays.

A FEY THREAT

Six months after this adventure, during the summer solstice, the characters have strange dreams where they hear Snickel's laughter in the darkness. The mischievous spirit cannot be destroyed in the Material Plane; Snickel lives. Soon, the troll gnome shall return for vengeance. Alas, that is an adventure for another day...



STATBLOCKS

Crawling Hand

Crawling on five fingers, a disembodied hand looms closer. Its flesh is infested by rot and decay.

AC: 10

HP: 6 LV1

ATK: 1 slash +1 (1d4) or 1 strangling

MV: Near (climb)

S:+1 D:-2 C:+1 I:-3 W:-2 Ch:-3

.....

Strangling. The hand attaches to its target's neck (DC 12 DEX). It deals 1 damage per round. Detaching the hand deals 1 damage (DC 9 STR).



Gaunt Gnome

Once a merry fey creature, this winter gnome has been twisted by the grim hand of necromancy.

AC: 9

HP: 11 LV2

ATK: 1 headbutt +2 (1d6) or 1 puke

MV: Near

S:+2 D:-2 C:+2 I:-2 W:-2 Ch:-3

.....

Undead. Immune to morale checks.

Puke. Once per day, the gaunt gnome explosively empties its innards' acidic contents. Creatures within near take 1d6 damage (DC 12 DEX).



Winter Spirits

Mischievous, gnome-like, fey spirits that cross into the Material Plane during wintertime. Their vexatious behavior has been magically exacerbated.

AC: 13

HP: 6 LV1

ATK: 1 bite +2 (1d4 + poison) or 1 spell

MV: Near

S-2, D+3, C+0, I+1, W+0, Ch+1

Poison. DC 9 CON or fall into a deep sleep for 1d4 hours. The target can be shaken awake.

Invisibility (CHA Spell). DC 12. Self. Become invisible for 2d4 rounds.

Snickel, the Troll Gnome

Larger than winter gnomes, troll gnomes have piercing eyes, a furry coat, and a lion's mane.

AC: 13

HP: 19 LV4

ATK: 2 axe +2 (1d6) or 1 spell +4

MV: Near

S+1, D+3, C+1, I+2, W+1, Ch+3

Magic Bolt (CHA Spell). DC 11. 1d8 damage to one target within far.

Illusion (CHA Spell). DC 11. Create a convincing visual and/ or auditory illusion within near. Lasts until dismissed.

Invisibility (CHA Spell). DC 12. Self. Become invisible for 2d4 rounds.



The Brukesian Duchy



Hexcrawl Region

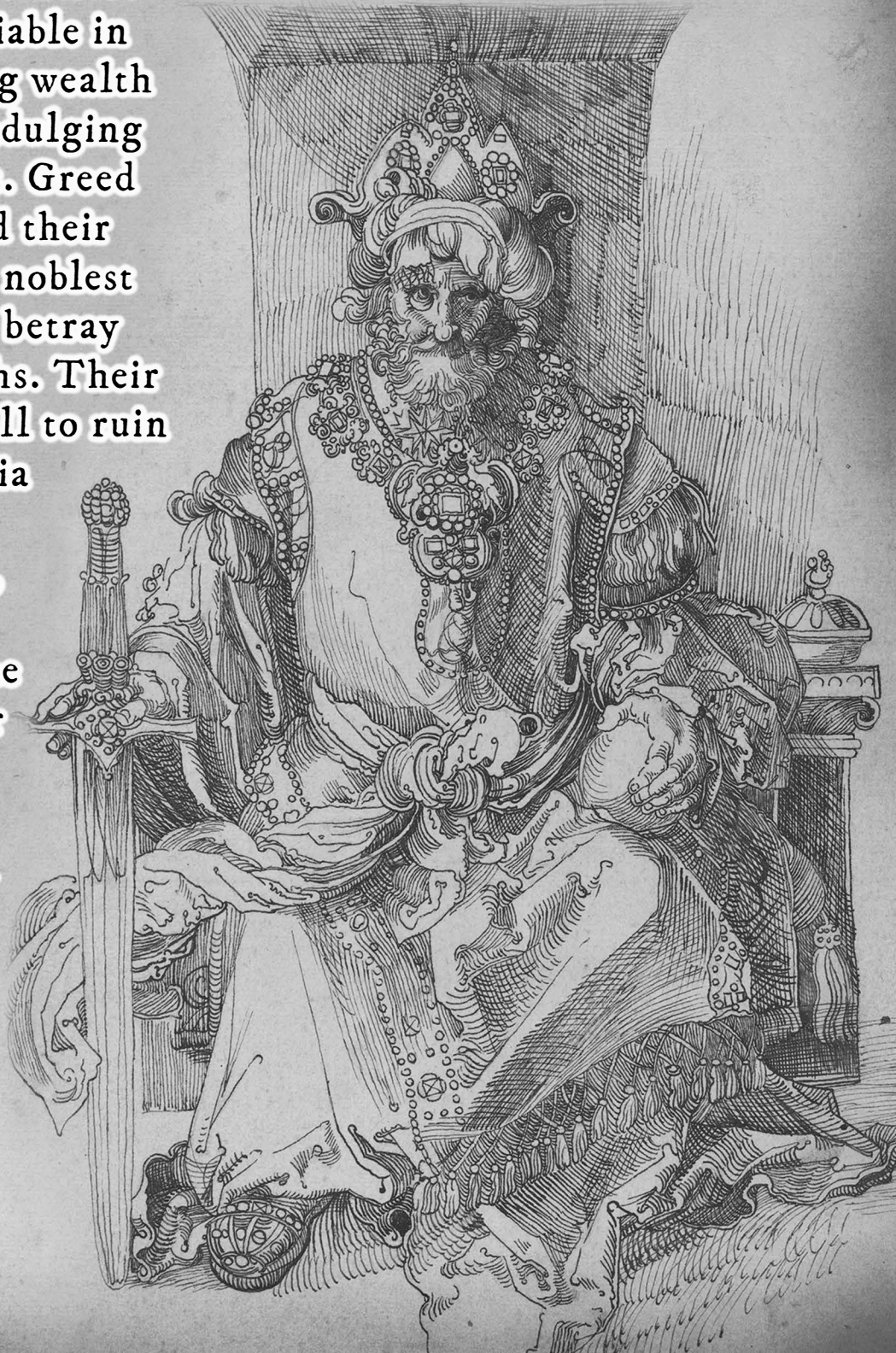
The Brukesian Duchy is a human territory by the northern border of a kingdom. The kingdom's capital is so far south that the crown's influence is negligible. It is surrounded by dangerous forests that a court of cruel fey princes rule. The regional map is generic in its contents and geography. It is easy to insert this region into any campaign setting. Both the human duchy and the fey-realm in the region are self-contained and require little to no modification to use.

The regional setting and map favor a hex-crawling approach. This document contains rules for traversing and exploring the duchy and the forest. This is an OSR product with no rules-talk or predefined RPG system. All encounters are described without rules or in-game mechanics.

[Click images to see product page](#)

Dealing with Strong Rulers

The Madness of Rulers is a dreaded affliction whispered of in courtly halls and feared in the hearts of subjects. This strange malady festers in the minds of kings and emperors, turning their judgment to rot. Those afflicted grow insatiable in their desires, hoarding wealth beyond reason and indulging in reckless conquests. Greed coils tightly around their hearts, and even the noblest rulers are driven to betray allies and forsake oaths. Their councils, once wise, fall to ruin beneath fits of paranoia and wrath. Servants vanish without cause, and jesters become trusted confidants. The kingdom groans under their rule, for the ruler's lowest whims rise to the throne, and only the fall of crown or blade brings peace.



QUIRKY NPCs

Welcome, Game Master, to a presentation of compelling personalities designed to breathe life into your world and enrich your Players' journeys. Within these pages lie three unique and memorable NPCs, each crafted to inspire dynamic encounters, foster meaningful role-play, and add narrative depth to your campaigns. Whether your adventurers wander bustling cities, quiet villages, or untamed frontiers, these characters serve as vibrant threads, seamlessly weaving into the fabric of the campaign setting. Each NPC is more than just a name or statblock; they are storytellers, antagonists, allies, and mysteries in their own right. Their motivations, secrets, and quirks ensure that even the briefest encounter lingers in the minds of your players, sparking curiosity and potential future quests. Some may offer guidance, others may pose challenges, but all are designed to evolve alongside the narrative, making your world feel rich and lived-in. Use this supplement to fill taverns, marketplaces, or remote outposts with colorful personalities, and watch as even the most fleeting interactions blossom into unforgettable tales.

AHANNI, THE RATCATCHER

Ahanni, a wiry old man with sunken eyes and a patchy beard, carries a rusted cage; dead rodent vermin hang from this contraption.

Ahanni the Ratcatcher is a peculiar figure often found lingering in the shadowed alleys of cities or creeping along village outskirts. His tattered cloak smells of damp straw and cheese. His wooden cage rattles softly with its hanging rodents.

Ahanni's reputation straddles the line between essential worker and unsettling hermit. Children whisper that he can speak to rats, convincing entire colonies to follow his pipe's eerie tune. Some claim he commands swarms to do his bidding, though whether he is a manipulator or simply eccentric is uncertain. The guilds tolerate him because no rat plague has breached the city walls under his watch.

QUIRKS AND LORE

- Ahanni refuses coins, accepting strange trinkets, pelts, or bits of string as payment.
- He hums to the rats; names them, and hangs them.
- Despite his grim appearance, Ahanni possesses vast knowledge of the city's under-crofts, forgotten tunnels, and secret smuggler routes.

QUEST HOOKS

1. Ahanni reports that rats have disappeared from their usual haunts. He suspects something darker is preying upon them beneath the city.
2. A noble's ring was stolen by a rat. Ahanni offers to retrieve it, but requires assistance descending into forgotten sewers; he normally avoids that place.



BALDRIC IRONBELLY

Baldric, the stout dwarf innkeeper, boasts a long, gray beard, and hearty laugh; his hands ever polishing a mug.

Baldric Ironbelly, the stout and jovial dwarf innkeeper, is the heart and soul of The Embered Hearth Inn. His broad shoulders make him an imposing figure behind the counter, but his warm laugh quickly dispels any intimidation. A thick, gray beard tumbles down his chest, over a weathered apron that has seen better days.

Baldric's inn is a sanctuary for travelers, adventurers, and merchants alike. While his ale flows freely, it is his ability to settle disputes and spin tales that keeps patrons captivated. His sharp eyes miss nothing. Many claim he knows every secret whispered beneath his roof. And he loves to share them, for the right price.

QUIRKS AND LORE

- Baldric can pour drinks while recounting obscure legends without missing a beat.
- He keeps a massive warhammer beneath the bar.

QUEST HOOKS

1. Baldric's prized cask of rare dwarven ale is missing. He suspects local thieves and needs help.
2. Strange noises echo from the cellar. Baldric hires heroes to investigate a forgotten crypt below.



VADRA, THE BLADE

Vadra, the half-orc mercenary, stands tall with grayed skin, piercing eyes, and her curved blade ever at her side.

Vadra, the Blade, a half-orc mercenary, is known for her unwavering presence and unmatched skill with a curved saber. Her gray skin bears the marks of countless battles, each scar a testament to her combat prowess. Vadra's gaze is calculating, always scanning for threats. Her low-pitched voice commands attention with few words.

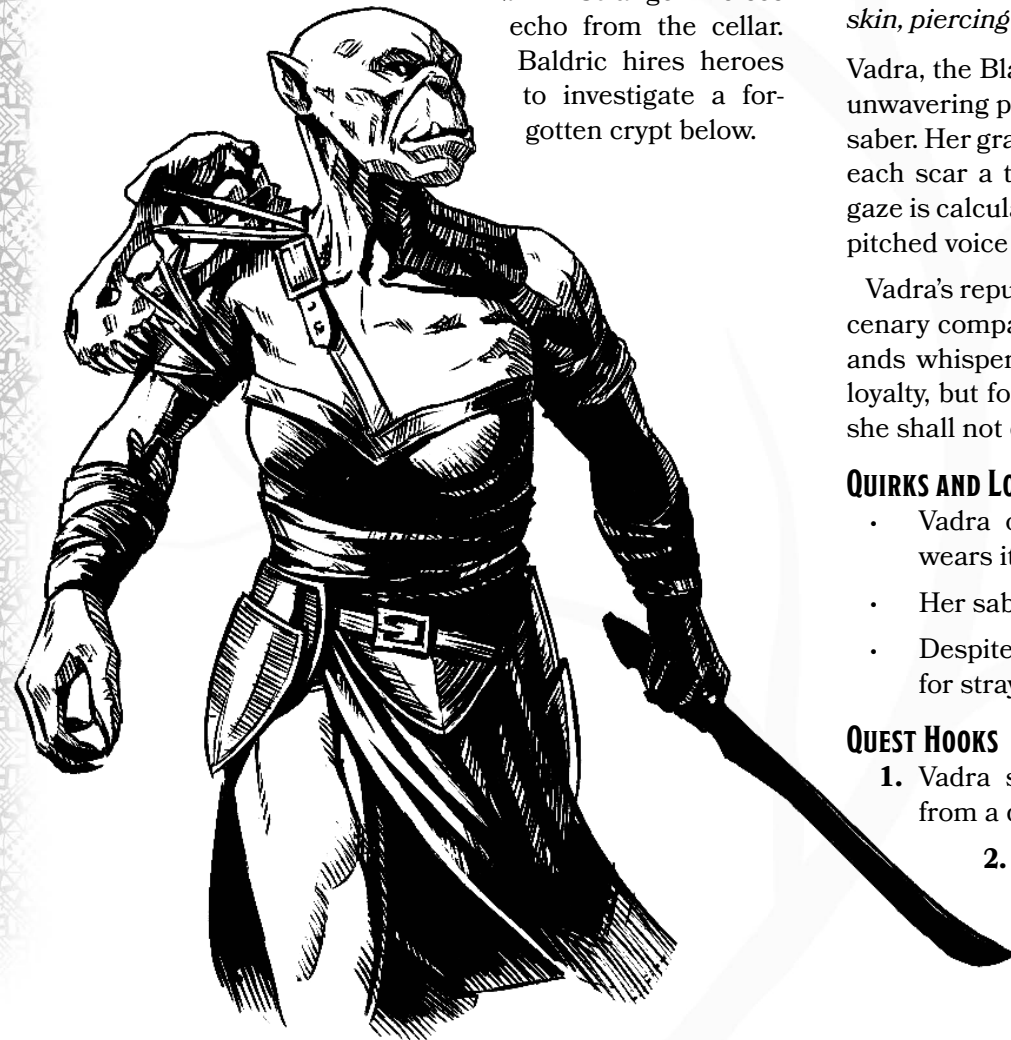
Vadra's reputation follows her wherever she goes. Mercenary companies speak of her with respect while brigands whisper her name with dread. She fights not for loyalty, but for gold and glory. She follows a strict code: she shall not draw her blade against the defenseless.

QUIRKS AND LORE

- Vadra once slain a dangerous drake. She now wears its jawbone as shoulder armor.
- Her saber, 'Bloodfang' hums faintly in her hands.
- Despite her harsh demeanor, Vadra has a soft spot for stray animals. She often tries to rescue them.

QUEST HOOKS

1. Vadra seeks to collect a long-overdue payment from a deceitful noble who fled town.
2. A notorious bandit lord has placed a bounty on Vadra. She needs valiant allies to confront the threat head-on.



A Hoard of Zircons



Deep within the mists of forgotten lore lies the Dreyvin Crypt, an opulent resting place for a family whose legacy intertwines with arcane mastery and insatiable curiosity. Hidden on a secluded demiplane, the crypt can only be reached through a precise teleportation ritual, the knowledge of which is whispered among only the most erudite of circles. The Dreyvins, a lineage both admired and envied, devoted their lives to the pursuit of knowledge and the amassment of wealth, sealing their scholarly achievements and arcane treasures within this eternal haven.

The crypt itself is said to be an architectural marvel; a blend of arcane sigils and intricate stonework. Inscribed on bronze plaques by each tomb are the exploits of the dead. Alas, many chambers have collapsed to dust as the mages have neglected to care for them.

At the heart of this story lies a rumor that has drawn the attention of the bold and the desperate: a vast hoard of orange zircons, gemstones of unique radiance, is rumored to carry traces of lingering magical essence. These gems were both a source of the family's wealth and the foci of their arcane experiments. They are said to be stored in the tomb. Alas, the dungeon keepers enchanted constructs and bound restless spirits to ensure the family's secrets remain unspoiled.

Only those prepared to outwit the labyrinthine crypt and its deathly guardians can aspire to retrieve the fabled Dreyvin treasure.

Adventure Hooks

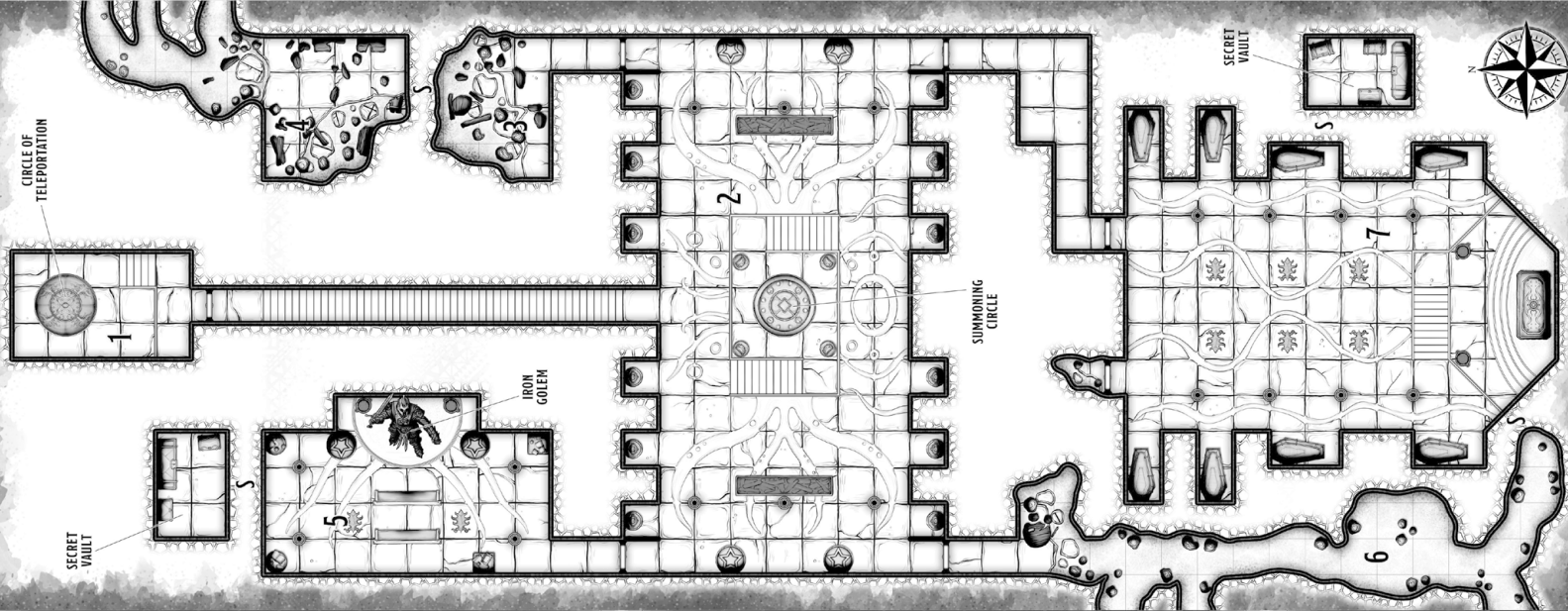
► **The Thief.** Amon Dhur, a renowned pilferer, seeks partners for a most dangerous enterprise. He is privy to the teleportation runes to reach the legendary Dreyvin tomb. Amon offers a fair deal, he wishes to split whatever riches are found in the tomb evenly.

► **The Collector.** A curator for the university's museum, with access to the teleportation runes that lead to the Dreyvin tomb, hires the characters to escort him into the demiplane for scholarly purposes. The scholar, Prof. Denishley, wants to take notes and make drawings of the scenes in the dungeon. He also wishes to keep but a single zircon from the treasure.

Random Events

Roll 1d8 for a random event inside the dungeon every 20 minutes and after loud noises.

1. Cursed, **twisting roots** lash out from the floor, attempting to entangle intruders.
2. Stepping on fragile tiles causes a collapse into a pit of acidic ichor below.
3. When hidden sigils are disturbed, a **crystal automaton** scans intruders and attacks.
4. The corridor warps, looping endlessly until dispelled by a correct arcane phrase. A skeleton lies nearby, he could not escape.
5. A Dreyvin ghost begs the characters to move all of the bodily remains elsewhere. It claims an astral worm is slowly eating the demiplane (see Area 4 and 6).
6. A faded glyph ignites in flame if crossed without proper counterspell or erasure.
7. An aloof ghost can be seen carrying a leather sack filled with gleaming zircons.
8. A damaged conduit emits wild magic, altering spells unpredictably. For 1 hour, all spells have unpredictable effects.



1. Teleportation Chamber

The characters and their companions appear here after using the teleporting runes. A pungent stench of sulfur fills the air.

► **Exit.** The adventurers must remain in the dungeon for 1 hour before the magic circle can be used again to leave this place. It leads the characters back to the Material Plane.

2. Grand Hall of Heroes

This large chamber contains numerous memory urns, granite effigies of important members of the Dreyvin, and a circle on a raised 10-foot-tall dais. The circle hums and activates when non-Dreyvin people enter this chamber.

► **Warning.** A thunderous, low-pitched voice calls out to visitors, warning them that further trespassing of the Dreyvin tomb shall be met with violence. If the characters keep exploring, four spectral knights, bound to protect the tomb, appear on the summoning circle. They step down and challenge the characters.

► **The Urns.** The ashes of middling members of the Dreyvin family are stored in these urns. Dates inscribed on the lids reveal that the most recent one was filled a century ago.

3. Collapsed Library

Once a well-packed library, all that remains are mounds of dust, tattered tomes, and rotten furniture. Most documents are illegible.

► **Lore.** Inspecting the few legible tomes scattered across the floor for 1 hour reveals that the last two generations of Dreyvin mages were not capable enough to properly maintain the demiplane's magical structure. Over time, their descendants cared less for the crypt and decided to abandon it to its faith, trusting the magic from the past to keep the place intact.

► **Treasure.** If explored carefully three *spell scrolls* can be retrieved from the ruins.

4. Collapsed Laboratory

A secret tunnel leads to this chamber. Whatever disaster befell area 3 also damaged the laboratory. There is nothing of value here.

► **Tunnels.** The collapsed north wall connects to meandering tunnels into the depths of the demiplane. A giant worm appears to have dug these tunnels a long time ago. Spellcasters know that nothing outside the bounds of a demiplane is supposed to exist. The presence of these tunnels reveals a strange behavior caused by the abandonment of this place.

► **Worms.** The most knowledgeable spellcasters know that **astral worms** consume demiplanes when the wards fade over time. The tomb is bound to be consumed and disappear if the worms have the time to eat it.

5. Chapel of the Warrior

The iron sculpture of a warring deity overlooks a chapel-like room. Astute individuals notice that the alabaster eyes on the statue move and follow the characters as they enter the room. Coming within 10 feet of the statue or the secret vault causes the **iron golem** to move and attack.

► **Secret Vault.** Perceptive explorers notice the hidden button that reveals this vault. The chests contain 400 gp, two *potions of healing*, a *+1 dagger*, and a pouch with seven zircons.

6. Broken Rooms

It is impossible to know what these rooms once were. Even the stone flooring has been ground down to fine dust in these tunnels.

► **The Worm.** If the characters explore the tunnels, they encounter an **astral worm**. The huge, mindless monster knows only the ravinous hunger that leads it to consume demiplanes. It attempts to eat the characters too.

7. Tomb of the Patriarch

Eight sarcophagi line the walls of this chamber, set in well-decorated alcoves. A larger sarcophagus with an ornate, silver-inlaid lid rests on a raised dais by the far wall.

► **The Sarcophagi.** The large enclosure is marked with the name of Duke Menneley Dreyvin, the grand patriarch of the Dreyvin family. His spirit emerges from the casket to protect the family jewels. The irate **wraith** roars and beckons eight **skeletons** to rise from their slumber. These undead, once mighty wizards and scholars, are the last line of defense. The undead fight mercilessly to protect the zircons stored in the adjacent secret vault.

► **Treasure.** Perceptive explorers notice the hidden button that reveals this vault. The chests contain hundreds of orange-hued zircons. A treasure hoard unlike any other.



Duke Menneley
Dreyvin



HOUSE OF KRAMPUS



BY
**DEREK
RUIZ**



LEVEL 6 ADVENTURE
IMMERSIVE SHADOWDARK RPG ONE-SHOT
ADVENTURE FOR THE GREATEST OSR GAME

ADVENTURE PRIMER

The end of the year approaches, and Hearthglen is famous for its grand winter festivals, sparkling lights, and the ever-glowing Winterspire Tree at the center of the square. The locals cherish this magical season and enjoy singing century-old songs to build a strong festive mood. As snow blankets the village, the air fills with the scent of pine and sweet mulled wine. But for all its warmth and joy, this year, Hearthglen had the misfortune of being chosen by Krampus, the evil spirit of the holidays.

THE HOUSE OF KRAMPUS

AS WINTER DEEPENS, strange disappearances mar the celebrations. Hunters, merchants, and even children vanish without a trace. The townsfolk whisper of the House of Krampus—a spectral mansion said to materialize within the nearest woods as the first snow falls. In the case of Hearthglen, it is in the Frostbloom Woods where this home appeared. According to ancient legends, Krampus, the devil of winter, emerges from this enchanted house to punish the wicked, ensnare the innocent, and spread fear. If allowed to continue, Krampus threatens to ruin the end-of-the-year festivities.

PROFESSIONALS NEEDED

THE TOWN GUARD, already stretched thin by harsh weather and growing unrest, has attempted to quell the menace. Twice, bands of mercenaries and brave villagers ventured into the woods, but none returned.

To complicate matters, a fanatical cult—The Dark Mistletoe—has risen in Hearthglen. This sinister group believes Krampus to be a divine force of judgment. They think that mortals must accept their fate and not interfere with the cosmic laws. Their leader, the enigmatic dark elf Lindlen Zikara, commands dangerous loyalty and stands ready to obstruct any efforts to stop Krampus. Ironically, Krampus could not care less about them.

KRAMPUS IS HERE

The heroes do not have to see Krampus in person to understand something odd is going on. Be sure to include and describe these eerie and magical characteristics while the heroes meet with Mayor Elric in Hearthglen or the NPCs described on the next page.

1. At night, the wind carries the echo of distant, hollow bells from within the Frostbloom Woods. These chimes are slow, distorted, and unsettling. Those who hear the bells often experience nightmares of dark figures lurking at their windows.
2. Strange red-tinted snowflakes fall with each snow. They melt into dark water when touched, leaving an unnatural, scarlet-colored chill on the skin. Villagers say it is the blood of the wicked, but others believe it is a warning: Krampus is watching.
3. Even on clear nights with a full moon, patches of the forest seem unnaturally dark. Shadows move and twist on the snow as if alive, and travelers often feel the sensation of being watched. In these areas, even magical light flickers weakly, and the air grows heavy, sapping strength and willpower.
4. In the fresh snow, hooved footprints appear alongside small clawed tracks, as if something unseen stalks the roads. Sometimes the footprints lead to a villager's home but never away. Those homes remain silent by morning, with doors left ajar and no sign of the occupants.

HOOK - DEALING WITH KRAMPUS

MAYOR ELRIC WINTERSONG, a jovial but resolute man with a deep love for holiday traditions, has put out a call for skilled adventurers. *"I will not let this menace darken Hearthglen's lights!"* he declares, offering a hefty reward and the honor of the town's eternal gratitude to anyone who can end Krampus's reign of terror (2,500 gp).

RUMORS

d6

Details

- | d6 | Details |
|----|---|
| 1 | Some of the locals claim that Krampus only punishes those who deserve it. Maybe the missing folk had it coming... |
| 2 | A hunter swore he saw a house in the woods move through the trees like it was walking on crooked legs. He fled, but his shadow was longer when he got back... and he hasn't left his house since. The man cannot be convinced to go out again. |
| 3 | Lindlen and his cult have been seen slipping into the forest at night. They always come back, but whoever follows them does not. |
| 4 | <i>"The hollow bells? I hear them every night now,"</i> old Gretta says. She claims they toll once for each soul Krampus plans to take that evening. <i>"If you hear three, lock your doors—and pray it isn't you,"</i> the old woman concludes mysteriously. |
| 5 | Krampus's house faces toward the Winterspire Tree in the village square. People claim the devil aims to snuff out all joy. |
| 6 | A local claims he saw cultists near the old graveyard. He claims their songs and prayers beckon Krampus to come closer. |

HEARTHGLEN

THIS PICTURESQUE VILLAGE nestled in a snow-laden valley is surrounded by the dense Frostbloom Woods. Charming timber-framed cottages line cobblestone streets, their chimneys puffing warm smoke into the icy air. A frozen river winds through the outskirts, its icy surface reflecting the soft glow of holiday lights. Despite its beauty, the Krampus has brought an undercurrent of unease during these winter months. The townsfolk are warm but wary, greeting strangers with cautious smiles. Legends of Krampus haunt their celebrations, whispered over crackling fires and mulled cider. Perhaps the heroes can help the town recover its peace.

HEDRIC WINTERSONG, THE MAYOR'S SON

Elf noble

Hedric is a spirited young elf with a fire in his heart that mirrors the glow of the Winterspire Tree. His love for the holidays rivals his father's, but so does his frustration at being left behind while others face danger. Though he respects his dad's decision to keep him safe, Hedric longs to join the fight and protect his people. He trains in secret with a silvered blade. His father sees Hedric's determination and fears losing him to the same fate as the others who never returned. For now, Hedric waits; though every toll of the hollow bells tests his resolve to stay idle.

Manner. A friend of Winter is a friend of mine. And if they like the holidays, we shall sing like a family.

Ambition. I must prove my worth, save the holidays.

THE WINTERSPIRE TREE

THE HEART OF Hearthglen's square, its ancient branches shimmer with frost and cascade with silver tinsel. Massive, sturdy, and aglow with hundreds of enchanted lanterns, the tree is said to be a gift from the winter gods. At its base, carefully wrapped presents rest as offerings to ensure a bountiful and peaceful year ahead. Icicles hang like crystal daggers from its boughs, softly chiming in the winter breeze. Elric Wintersong, the elven mayor, often lingers here, his long cloak dusted with snow, greeting visitors with a hopeful but strained smile. Beneath the tree's glow, he speaks with the heroes; knowing the town's safety hangs by a thread this winter.



GRETTA WICKLOW

Human Toymaker and Storyteller

Her cheerful demeanor contrasts the sorrow in her eyes, a reminder of the grandson she lost to the House of Krampus. Gretta warns the heroes of the red snow and hollow bells, suggesting the use of divine magic or protective charms to ward off Krampus's magic. Despite her grief, Gretta hums soft holiday tunes as she works, determined to fight back in the only way she can. "Where there's no more red snow, there's Krampus," she whispers, her bells softly jingling as she works on wood.

Manner. I shall hide my grief. Other people depend on me and I must be strong. I know help will come along.

Ambition. I shall honor my grandson by making toys for the rest of my life. I know he would like this.



Adventurers Needed

People of Hearthglen, we cannot let the shadow of Krampus dim our lights or take our loved ones! Together, we can end its curse. I call upon the brave—mercenaries, warriors, and those with the strength to face the cold and the dark. Stand with us, and Hearthglen will remember your courage for generations.

Let us drive back this terror and bring peace to our town before the next toll of those cursed, wicked bells!

- Mayor Elric Wintersong

HOUSE OF KRAMPUS

“The snow falls every year, but this time... It feels different, it looks different. No one has returned from that place. But it is my turn to try, I must go.”

Hedric Wintersong

RANDOM EVENTS (MANOR AND DUNGEON)

d8	Details
1	Three cultists and one thug stumble upon the characters. Lindlen gave them orders to restrain all intruders. In case they succeed, the heroes are imprisoned in area B3, and all their possessions are taken. The brigands attempt to flee if things go south.
2	The area becomes unnaturally cold three ice imps block the heroes' path. The devils fight to the death.
3	The heroes hear Krampus's bells. Make a group CHA check as stated in the section For Whom the Bell Tolls (happens once).
4	The ashes in area B5 help Krampus maintain its power, magic, and presence in the Material Plane. These tormented, harvested souls cause a giant wave of ashes to fly throughout the entire manor and dungeon, extinguishing all sources of light.
5	The heroes stand before an incorporeal version of Krampus . The evil spirit of the holidays fights for two rounds and vanishes.
6	The characters are attacked by four shadows . These are the roaming souls of innocents, their lives taken by Krampus.
7	A mage , two thugs , and one cultist , all under Lindlen's orders, stumble upon the characters. Despite their orders to make prisoners of any intruders, these cultists of Krampus have nothing but darkness in their eyes and fight the heroes to death.
8	A random hero fails to notice a pressure plate and triggers a poison dart trap. They take 2d6 damage (DC 12 CON for half).



THE BRAVE SON

THE CHARACTERS ARE approached by the mayor's son before they leave town. Hedric hides his identity and tells them he wants to help too. His nice clothes, jewels, and masterwork sword are proof of who he is, though (DC 9 INT). He asks for nothing in return as he believes saving the holidays is the best reward he could earn. If the characters do not want Hedric (**thug**) to tag along, the determined young man still follows them and joins later.



REACHING THE MANOR

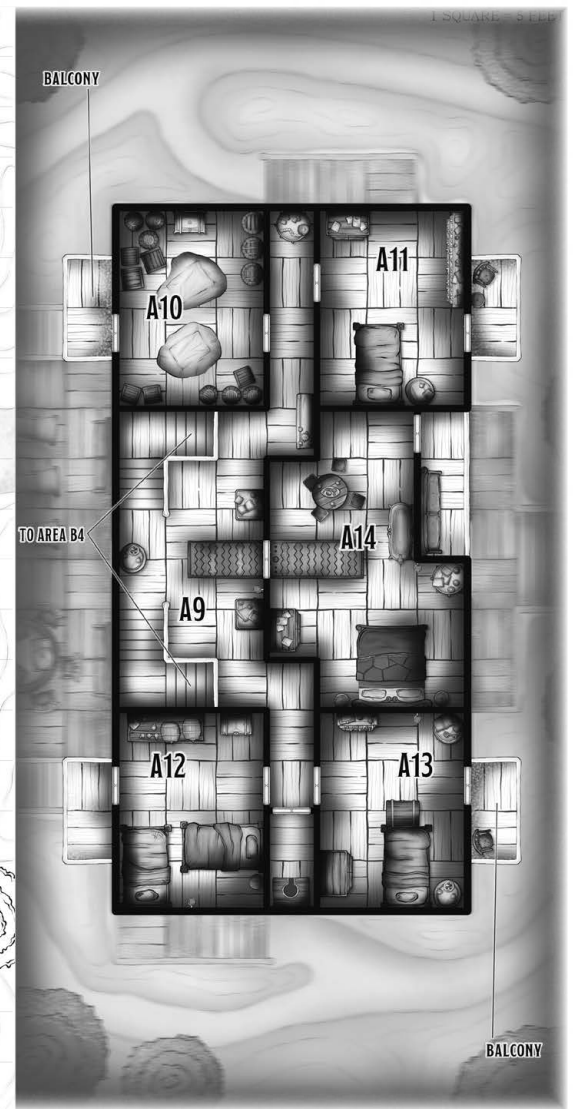
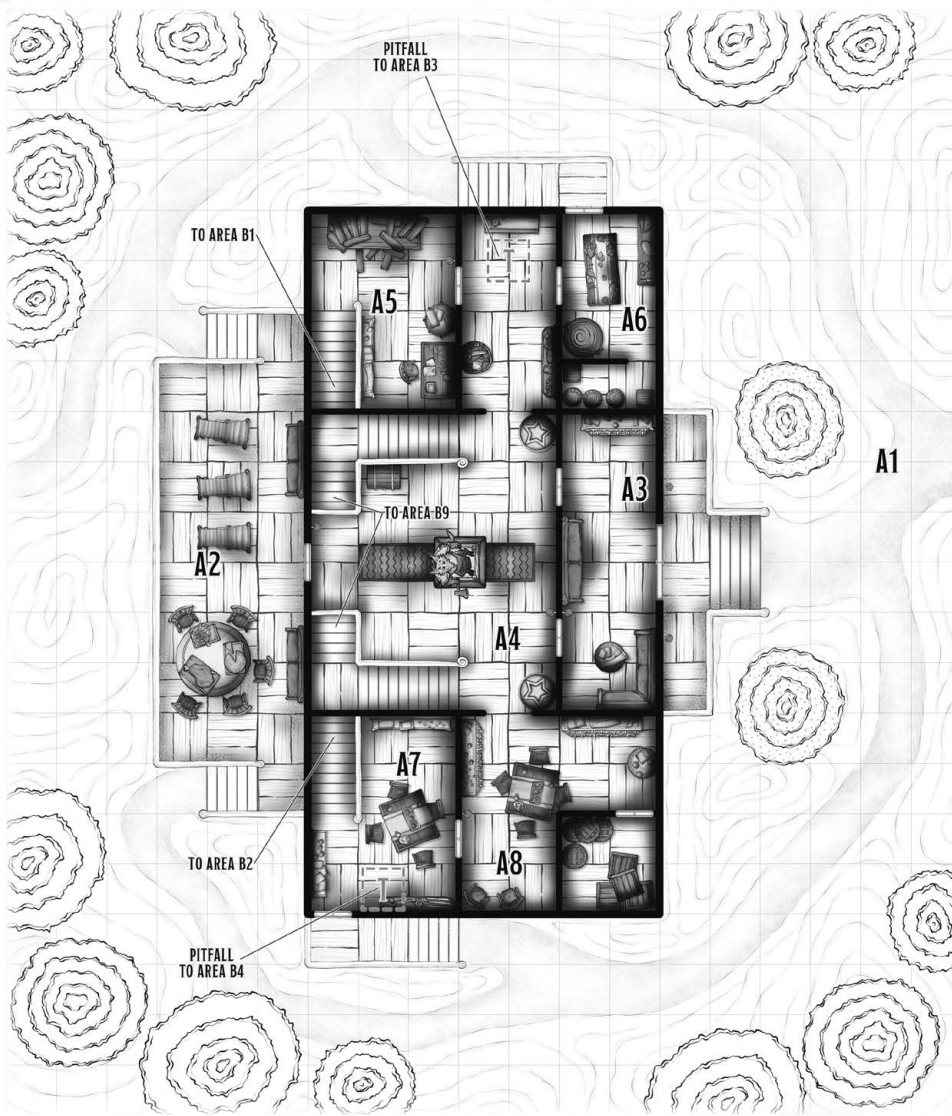
THE MANOR IS a 2-hour walk from the town. The characters must explore the Frostbloom Woods which, regardless of the time of the day, remain in a sheet of darkness and uncertainty. They find tracks that belong to various groups; the two previous expeditions of mercenaries who wished to help, innocent travelers and merchants who were ambushed by Krampus, or the poor kidnapped villagers who were taken by night. A good ranger discerns a path (DC 12 WIS). The closer they get to the manor, the louder the chimes echoing through the dark woods become. Failing the check means the heroes get lost in the woods and take an entire day to reach the manor. The unnatural cold chills their bones and gear. This causes each party member to lose a **luck token**.

Level 6 Manor

► **Danger.** Unsafe. Check for a **Random Event** every 3 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (4-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** The manor has magical sconces infused with permanent **light** spells. All the cult members or monsters present in the manor are **dark-adapted**.

► **Bells.** Krampus's bells sound the loudest in the outskirts of the house. Their ominous chimes may affect the characters' resolve, twist their thoughts, and test their will to soldier on (see **For Whom the Bell Tolls**).



A1. MANOR'S SURROUNDINGS

The manor is a twisted, crooked mansion of blackened wood and frost-covered shingles. Its windows glow with a faint red light, and the smoke from its chimneys carries the scent of burning coal and pine.

The manor is surrounded by clean, white snow. The red-tinted snowflakes that accompanied their journey are no more (DC 9 WIS). If they met Gretta Wicklow, they remember her words before leaving Hearthglen: “Where there’s no more red snow, there’s Krampus.”

► **Shiny Trees.** Red, blue, and green colors cover the branches of the two trees near the entrance. If the heroes get too close, or if they disturb the tree in any way, the fireflies leave their positions and scatter all around.

A2. TERRACE

Steaming plates of roasted meats and spiced cider await beneath the pale glow of lanterns. This food is delicious, and tasty-looking, and it stays magically warm. Hedric helps himself and eats. Besides that, a *detect magic* spell reveals a strong aura coming from below. This is because the magic circle in area B10 is located down below.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS?

Krampus’s bells may affect the characters three times. The first two times occur when they reach areas A4 and B4. And the third can be triggered by a **Random Event**. Make a group DC 12 CHA check using the highest score among the heroes both times. On a fail, roll 1d4:

1. The chimes twist time and reality. Characters make a short time jump. They ignore this, but 5 days have passed since they left Hearthglen.
2. A bell toll draws intense cold, freezing weapons, and armor. Heroes wearing metal armor move at half speed and attacks with frozen weapons hold a -2 penalty. This effect lasts for 6 **crawling rounds**.
3. The sound conjures ghostly visions of past Krampus’s victims. These phantoms reenact their last moments before vanishing. Witnessing this causes a random hero to lose 1 **luck token**.
4. The chimes stir feelings of guilt and dread, forcing characters to vividly relive their worst misdeeds. Doubting their abilities, the characters roll the next check they make with disadvantage.

A3. LOBBY

The lobby is dimly lit, with two worn sofas facing each other, their fabric dusted with faint snowflakes. A tall bookshelf stands against the wall, filled with well-loved holiday stories, while two dark wooden doors lead deeper into the house's cold, silent rooms and corridors.

A4. MAIN HALL

The main hall is vast and cold, dominated by a dragon statue at its heart, its eyes glinting with faint red light. Twin staircases curve to each side of it, leading to a shadowy second floor that looms overhead.

Two suits of armor stand at silent attention, their visors fixed forward as if watching every step the characters take. Krampus's bells sound when the characters reach this area (see **For Whom the Bell Tolls**).

► **Immortal Guardians.** After the sound of the bells, the dragon statue (**gargoyle**) and the two **animated armors** come to life and attack the intruders. Two **ice imps** join the fight in the second round of combat.

A5. STUDIO

The studio smells of melted wax and aged parchment. A leather-bound log of notes lies open, filled with cryptic writings and dark symbols; the mark of Lindlen Zikara, leader of Krampus's cult. This is proof that the so-called cultists are roaming this house unbothered. The notes have a not-very-detailed list of the people kidnapped. These notes match with Hearthglen's victims.



A6. KITCHEN

The kitchen works by magic. Utensils fly and take care of entire recipes. Consumed food at the table is quickly replaced. Everything moves like clockwork.

The heroes find three **thugs** and two **cultists** eating freely from the magical food. If battle ensues, the flying utensils continue working unbothered. After the fight, the heroes may fill their bellies. Hedric does, if present.

► **Trap.** Approaching the kitchen from inside the house could trigger this trap (see map). Whoever does this must succeed on a DC 12 DEX save or fall to area B3.

A7. LIVING ROOM

Mundane objects rest on the tables and meaningless notes lie scattered around. There is nothing of value.

► **Trap.** Any person who explores this area could trigger this trap (see map). The character that does must succeed on a DC 12 DEX save or fall to area B4.

A8. DINING ROOM

None of Lindlen's cultists are present when the heroes explore this area. There are plates of fruit on the table and lots of tomes filling the shelves and bookcases.

► **Lore.** The heroes may spend 1 **crawling round** to read the documents. They learn that, eons ago, the evil spirit of the holidays was once a mortal man. He defied the gods, demanding that they bring wealth and prosperity to everyone during winter times. The gods, insulted and upset by his insolence, twisted and cursed his soul. And now, Krampus remembers nothing of his past life. The devil's blood running through its veins fuels its desire to bring chaos, death, and despair to innocents.

► **Krampus's Heart.** The heroes learn that similarly to a lich's phylactery, Krampus requires its heart to coexist as a separate entity within the Material Plane. The heart is indeed in area B5, but this information is not here.

A9. SECOND FLOOR LANDING

This is an irregularly shaped area with two main corridors and a total of six individual doors. Each of these doors takes to a different room in the manor (see map).

A10. STORAGE

The storage room is cold and cluttered. A single chest rests beneath cobwebs, its lock rusted but intact. A piano and an ornate wooden drawer rest at the center, both shrouded in heavy white blankets.

► **Treasure (4 XP).** If characters spend 1 **crawling round** searching, they find: a bag of spices (15 gp), a ceremonial warhammer (40 gp), a crystal statuette of Memnon (50 gp), a *Kytherian Cog* (300 gp), and a *crystal ball* that shows a snowy castle while it is not being used.

A11. MISTLETOE ROOM

This room is draped in thick, hanging vines of frozen mistletoe, their pale berries gleaming faintly in the dim light. When the heroes step inside, they find themselves rooted in place, bound by spectral tendrils (DC 12 DEX). Whispers drift from the mistletoe, echoing forgotten promises and regrets. Four **ice imps** coalesce from the shadows and attack the retrained victims.

A12. PINE BEDROOM

This bedroom carries the scent of evergreen, with its walls and ceiling lined with dark pinewood panels. Two beds sit in an L-shape, their frames carved with spiraling pine branches that seem to twist when unobserved.

A *detect magic* spell notices the arcane aura coming from the beds. Whoever rests on the bed for at least 2 **crawling rounds** experiences vivid dreams; visions of Krampus and lost villagers begging for aid (DC 15 WIS). A successful check grants the subject a magical advantage against Krampus's magic and spells for 1 day. On a fail though, the subject loses any **luck tokens** they had or takes 2d8 damage if they have no **luck tokens**.

► **Treasure (3 XP).** The chest in the room is locked. If they manage to pick the lock (DC 12 DEX), they find a mahogany chess board with silver pieces (40 gp), a hand-drawn bestiary of rare creatures (95 gp), a greatsword made of blue steel (15 gp), and two *potions of healing* (150 gp/each).

A13. EGGNOC ROOM

This chamber is warm and inviting; the magical sconce casts a golden glow. Goblets of rich, frothy eggnog rest on the shelves and wooden tables. The sweet scent fills the air, and anyone who drinks feels a wave of comfort and nostalgia; but unlike the rest of the food in the manor, which is delicious and safe, this eggnog is a trap. Those who indulge may drift into a deep, enchanted state of nirvana. Their bodies become incorporeal and they drift aimlessly within the dungeon. The bodies of all drinkers reappear in an area from B1 to B9 at random (roll 1d10 to determine).

► **Hedric.** The mayor's son trusts the eggnog and drinks from the goblets as none of the food he ate before upset his stomach. If more people drink, this action divides the party.

A14. MASTER BEDROOM

The master bedroom is grand but cold. A large, well-made bed lies untouched, just like the food and papers on the tables. A sub-leader of the cult (**drow**) stands by a frost-rimmed window, his dark robes embroidered with twisted sigils of Krampus. Two **thugs** are his bodyguards, and two **ice imps** appear when combat starts.

► **Treasure (5 XP).** After combat, the heroes may recover a mithral suit of elvish chainmail (240 gp), the only existing painting of an ancient king (240 gp), and a *magical wand*, *Tier-3 spell* (250 gp) from the bodies and room.

DEVELOPMENT

THE CHARACTERS DO not need to explore all the rooms in the manor. However, some areas hold great treasures, information, or even magical tools to fight Krampus.

It is not certain that the heroes learn the lore about Krampus's Heart in area A8. That means they could descend into the dungeon ignoring what to do or look for. Additionally, take into consideration that the party of heroes may be divided in the Egnog Room (area A13).



The Krampus

In the deep heart of winter, Krampus stirs from his icy lair. With rusted chains, golden bells, and a heavy sack, it punishes those who have strayed from kindness, dragging them against their will away to his frozen realm. Some say

Krampus leaves coal in the shoes of misbehaving children as a warning, while others say the truly wicked are never seen again.

Villages light candles and hang holly wreaths to keep this devil at bay, but when the hollow bells toll at midnight, all know it may be too late.

Krampus walks, it lives, and mercy is not its gift.



DUNGEON OF KRAMPUS

“The naughty do not beg for mercy... They only beg to be surely forgotten. Just like kindness is a choice. So is fear... and I bring plenty of the latter.”

Krampus

The dungeon beneath the House of Krampus twists like a frozen labyrinth, its corridors lined with cracked icicles and tattered garlands stained deep red. Flickering lanterns cast long shadows over twisted wreaths and jagged candy canes sharpened into cruel points. The faint sound of chains rattles through the halls, in addition to the chimes, as if the very walls hum with Krampus’s dark holiday cheer, waiting for intruders to lose their way.

THE DARK MISTLETOE

THIS WICKED CULT waits in silence all year for the winter. When Krampus returns, so too does their purpose. Their strongest members are cloaked in dark robes and crowned with silver hair. They leave charred offerings of coal and broken toys at the edge of the woods to summon Krampus’s home there. Winter is their season, for it is the only time their dark master heeds their call.



Level 6 Dungeon

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (4-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Some areas are illuminated by magical braziers (*light*). Denizens of the dungeon are **dark-adapted**.

► **Secret Corridors.** There are hidden passageways in four different areas of the dungeon (see map). A perceptive hero locates the levers, buttons, or pressure plates required to reveal these connections (DC 12 WIS). Individual checks should be made for each instance.

B1. LANDING NORTH

This underground chamber is a cramped landing area, lit by flickering lanterns on the stone walls. Desks are cluttered with ledgers and parchments filled with cryptic records of the cult’s activities.

The workbenches hold a variety of crude weapons, chains, and hooks. A table nearby is stacked with coins, the cult’s ill-gotten gains from weeks of plundering. There are 235 gp, and 872 sp in leather bags (2 XP).

► **Bars.** Iron bars block the way toward area B2 (see map). The heroes can either pick the lock (DC 12 DEX), bend the bars by sheer force (DC 15 STR), or use the key, located in area B2 (see below).

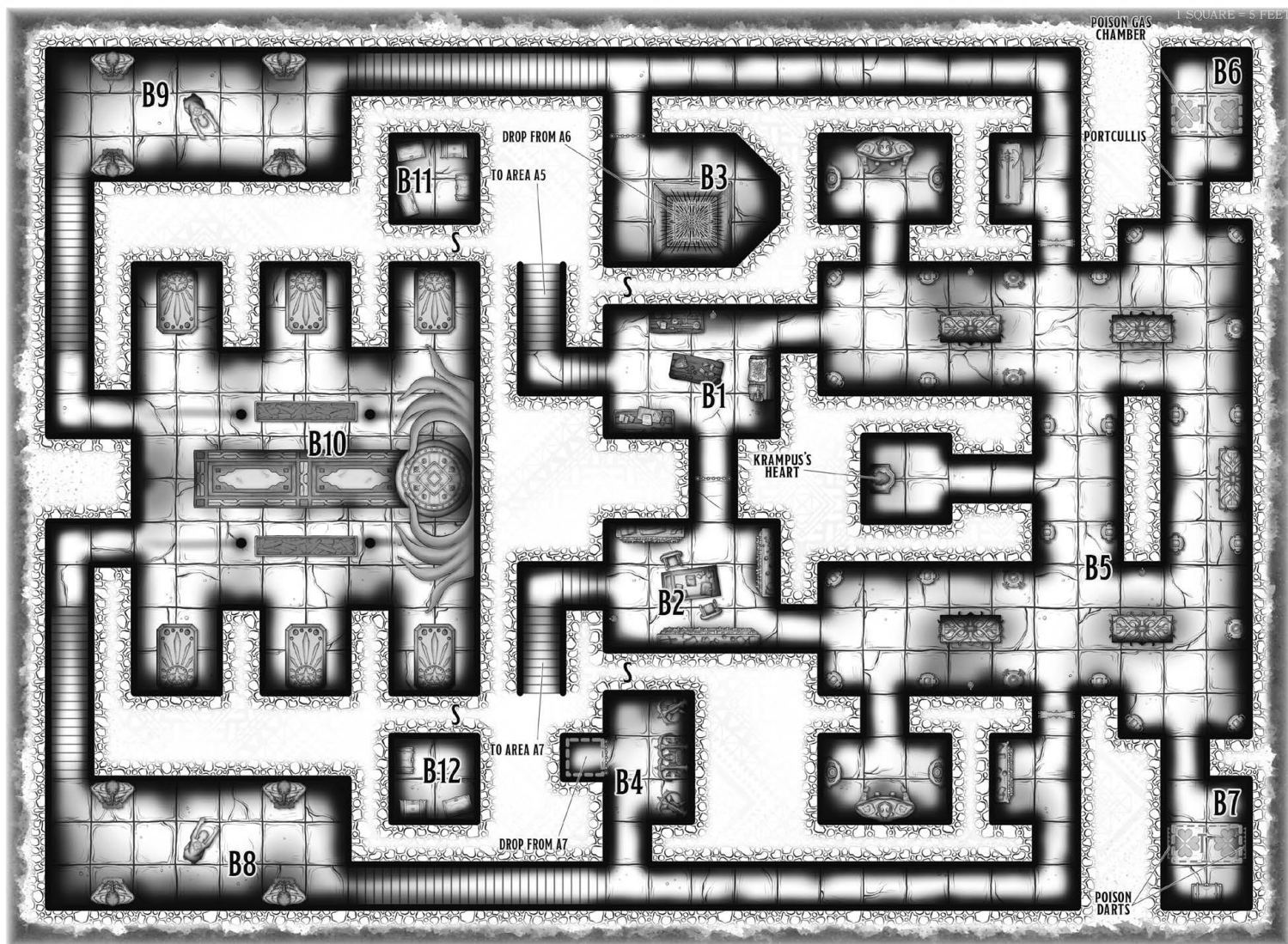
B2. LANDING SOUTH

This room is similar to its northern counterpart. But it serves as a studio, reading chamber, and library. Members of the cult are here when the heroes descend.

A subleader of the cult (**knight**), accompanied by three **cultists** attempts to subdue the heroes and strip them of their possessions. If successful, the heroes are taken to area B3 as prisoners. Otherwise, they fight to the death.

► **Lore.** The characters can spend 1 **crawling round** to read the documents stored here. They can learn the same information about Krampus and its heart as in area A8.

► **Treasure (2 XP).** A set of polished bone dice (25 gp), a mace inlaid with holy symbols (50 gp), a pearl (40 gp), and a key (it opens all iron bars).



B3. SPIKED PIT AND PRISON

The heroes can be imprisoned here by the cultists or they can fall from the pitfall trap in area A6. The latter means victims fall and get impaled, taking 4d6 damage. A hidden passage connects this room to area B1.

► **Bars.** Use the same mechanics described in area B1 for these iron bars. The key found in area B2 works too.

► **Hedric.** If the heroes do not allow Hedric to tag along, he follows their tracks half an hour later. Luck is on his side for a few hours but ultimately, he gets caught and imprisoned in this cell, where the characters find him.

B4. CELL OF DEATH

Four automated crossbows point to a small alcove closed off by iron bars. Victims of the pitfall trap in area A7 end up here. They take 1d6 damage from the fall, and the string of the crossbows is all they hear before they shoot, dealing 4d6 damage (DC 15 DEX for half damage). A hidden passage connects this room to area B2.

► **Bars.** Use the same mechanics described in area B1 for these iron bars. The key found in area B2 works too.

B5. CHAMBER OF A THOUSAND ASHES

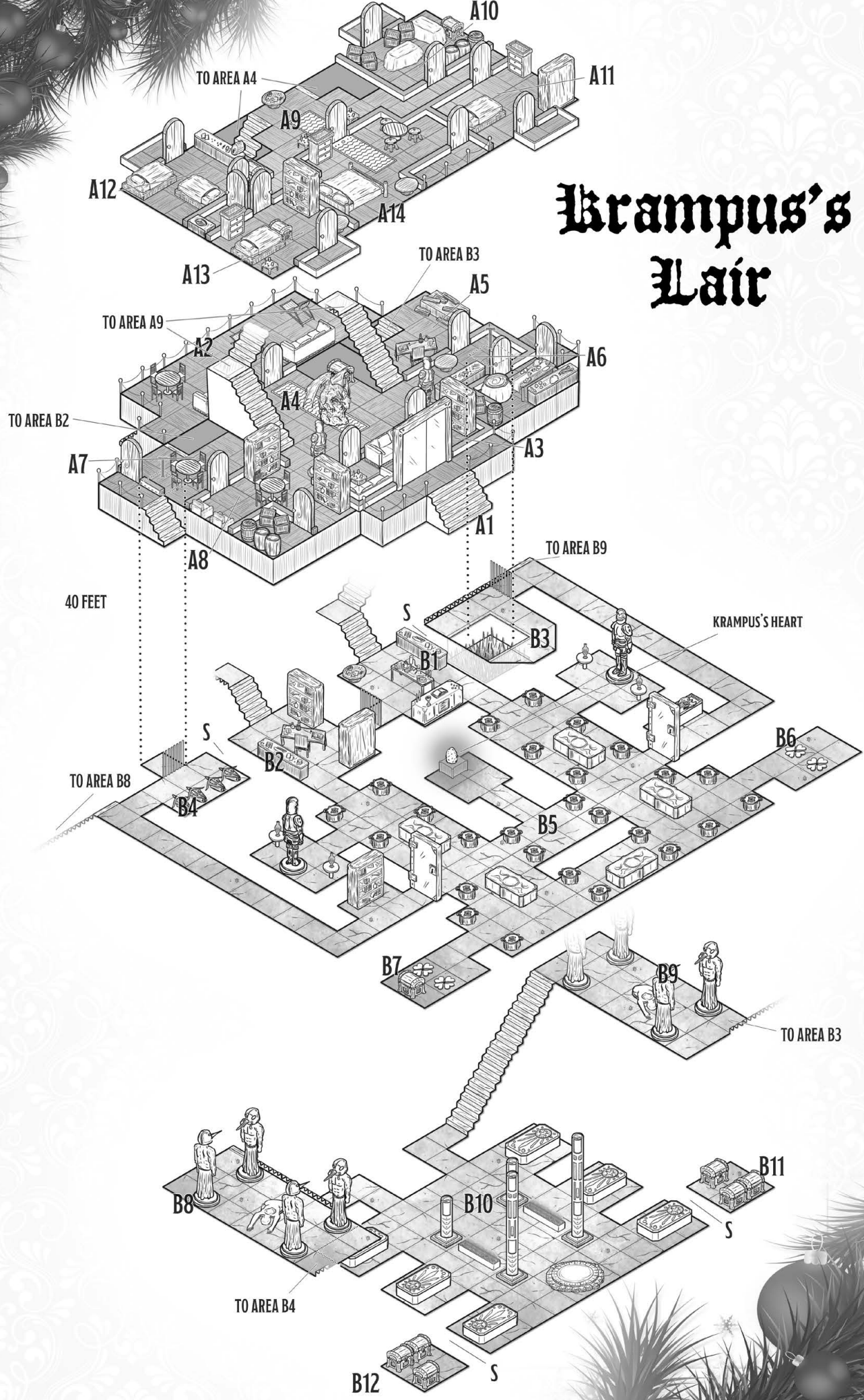
This large chamber stretches wide and cold. Five sarcophagi stand at precise locations, each engraved with grim depictions of the evil spirit of the holidays.

Along every wall, golden urns of blackened ash rest in neat rows. A faint, rhythmic thumping echoes from a central alcove, where Krampus's heart, a large, twisted mass of coal and ice, pulses within a spiked iron cage. Krampus's echoing bells sound when the characters reach this area (see **For Whom the Bell Tolls**).

► **The Heart.** The characters can only destroy the heart by using magic (15 Hit Points, AC 12). When attacked for the first time, the five sarcophagi open. Five **wights** rise, winter champions of Krampus. Note that destroying the heart does not harm Krampus in any way, it only allows for its banishment from this plane. Defeating Krampus in combat before taking care of its heart accomplishes nothing, as he reforms, unharmed, at dawn.

► **Urn.** Each urn holds the ashes of dozens of innocents killed by Krampus over the centuries. The urns crumble to dust when removed from the manor.

Krampus's Lair



B6. POISON GAS CHAMBER

This room seems empty. If the heroes investigate the area and fail to notice the pressure-sensitive plates below them (DC 12 WIS), they trigger a trap.

► **Trap.** A portcullis falls, blocking the exit (see map) as the area is filled with gas. Creatures inside take 2d6 damage for each round they spend there (DC 12 CON).

► **Portcullis.** The heroes may use sheer strength to lift the portcullis' mechanism again (DC 15 STR). Or a thief with the right tools can tinker with the trap's inner workings and deactivate it (DC 12 DEX).

B7. POISON DARTS CHAMBER

Unlike its northern counterpart, this chamber contains a stone chest resting by the far wall. However, if the heroes wish to open the chest but fail to notice the pressure-sensitive plates below them (DC 12 WIS), they trigger a trap.

► **Trap.** Darts hit all creatures stepping on the clover seals (see map). They take 2d8 damage and gain a magical disadvantage on the next check they make (DC 15 CON for half damage).

LINDLEN ZIKARA

LINDLEN HAS PALE skin marred by faint frost-bite scars. Once a scholar of winter magic, he turned to Krampus, believing fear and punishment to be the keys to true power. Lindlen seeks to unleash Krampus fully into the world, breaking the barrier that binds it to the season. He leads the cult with unwavering devotion, sacrificing innocents to fuel his masters' strength.

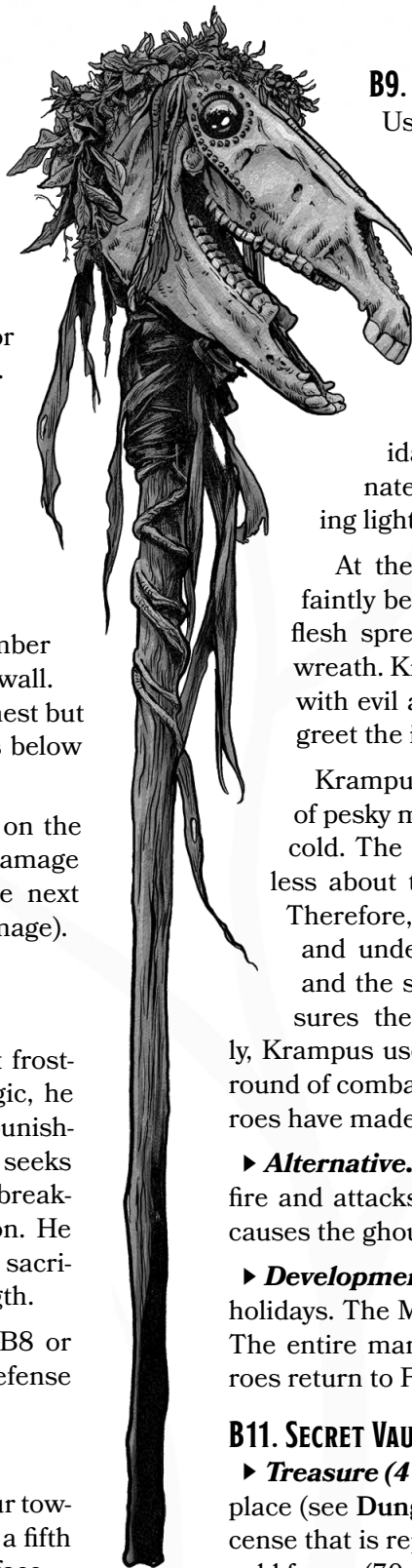
The heroes confront Lindlen in areas B8 or B9, whichever comes first. He is the last defense between his master and the intruders.

B8. ANTECHAMBER (SOUTH)

A 30-foot-descent takes to this landing. Four towering statues flank the area. At the center, a fifth statue in a genuflecting position hides its face.

► **Zealots.** Lindlen's eyes flick to the adventurers, a cruel smile curling as he raises a gnarled staff with a bovine skull, ready to defend his dark master's will. **Lindlen Zikara** is accompanied by two **cultists** and two **drow**. There is no turning back, they fight to the death.

► **Staff of Bones.** It marks him as a Krampus protégé. This magical artifact grants the wearer advantage against magical effects, but they become evil and violent.



B9. ANTECHAMBER (NORTH)

Use the same description as in area B8. If the heroes visit this area first, the confrontation with Lindlen occurs here.

B10. CHAMBER OF RITUALS

The final chamber is a vast, frozen hall where shadows cling to the walls like ancient frost. Six towering alcoves house ornate sarcophagi, their surfaces carved with twisted holiday imagery. Two massive braziers illuminate but bring no warmth, casting a flickering light that dances eerily across the stone floor.

At the far end, a pulsing magic circle glows faintly beneath an unnatural growth of sinew and flesh spreading from the wall like a dark, living wreath. Krampus stands before it, his eyes burning with evil as he unfurls his rusted chains, ready to greet the intruders with punishment long overdue.

Krampus stands proudly, confident that a group of pesky mortals cannot stop its reign of chaos and cold. The evil spirit of the holidays could not care less about the cultists and other mortal followers. Therefore, Krampus fights with the help of fiends and undead. The heroes must defeat **Krampus** and the six **ghouls** that emerge from their enclosures the moment the battle starts. Additionally, Krampus uses his Summon Imps ability on the first round of combat, increasing the number of foes. The heroes have made it this far, they cannot turn back now.

► **Alternative.** The heroes are free to concentrate their fire and attacks on Krampus alone as defeating it first causes the ghouls and summoned imps to vanish.

► **Development.** The heroes defeat the evil spirit of the holidays. The Material Plane is freed from its presence. The entire manor disappears after 1 hour and the heroes return to Frostbloom Woods (see **Conclusion**).

B11. SECRET VAULT (NORTH)

► **Treasure (4 XP).** Provided the heroes find this secret place (see **Dungeon Features** above), there is: a rare incense that is repulsive to undead (50 gp), a mirror set in gold frame (70 gp), a giant pearl (80 gp), 467 gp in leather bags, and a *potion of polymorph* (200 gp).

B12. SECRET VAULT (SOUTH)

► **Treasure (5 XP).** Provided the heroes find this secret place (see **Level 6 Dungeon** above), there is: a suit of blackened-steel plate mail (130 gp), a silver and gold ring with a miniature emerald (40 gp), 694 gp in large sacks, a *potion of flying* (200 gp), a pair of *immovable rods* (300 gp), and a *ring of feather falling* (250 gp).



CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS REACH the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

KRAMPUS IS GONE

The heroes defeat Krampus and destroy its heart. This removes its essence from the Material Plane and impedes its return for the rest of the season. Hearthglen is safe, and despite all the deaths, the villagers can recover a little joy for the festivities to come. The heroes are treated as such, and a great feast is served at the Winterspire Tree (2,500 gp, 6 XP). However, Krampus is an immortal being, a devil from another world. It shall wait for a year, until the next snowy season. Its manor shall reappear, and Krampus shall walk again.

THE HEART REMAINS

The heroes defeat the Dark Mistletoe cult and Krampus. But they never learn about the heart or they fail to destroy it. This means that Krampus's manor disappears, but it returns in the next 24 hours. The features described in **Krampus is Here** do not recede or stop. Whatever celebration the heroes have on their return to Hearthglen shall be coldly interrupted by a band of ice imps. The heroes missed or failed at something. They must return to the manor and start all over. That is, however, an adventure for another day.

A SAD, COLD END

The heroes were imprisoned and offered to Krampus as sacrifices. Or perhaps, they were unable to defeat Krampus and its frozen goons. Either way, they become arcane fodder as their souls remain trapped in the manor forever.

THE CULT OF KRAMPUS

If the heroes succeed and come out victorious, Lindlen, the other drow, and the rest of Krampus's followers are probably dead. But this matters little. Just like Krampus, the cult is immortal and cannot be completely destroyed. This is because every year, Krampus's presence and magic twist more unaware souls and innocent minds. New cultists and followers shall rise when winter comes. They only need to hear its cursed bells.

HEDRIC WINTERSONG

Hedric becomes a local celebrity if he comes back alive, regardless of his participation in the mission. Mayor Elric could not be more grateful and he grants the heroes a parcel of land to build a home in Hearthglen. Everyone thinks Hedric will be a great heir and ruler whenever his time comes. However, in case Hedric perishes during the mission, the mayor suspends all end-of-the-year celebrations, overcome with grief. And if the mayor learns that the heroes accepted Hedric's help instead of sending him home, he threatens to arrest them unless they leave at once.

STATBLOCKS

Ice Imp

Small blue devils with leathery wings. Their claws and teeth are pointy and sharp like deadly icicles.

AC: 14

HP: 14 **LV:** 3

ATK: 2 claws +3 (1d4 + freeze)

MV: Near (fly)

S: -2 **D:** +3 **C:** +1 **I:** +1 **W:** +1 **Ch:** +1

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Impervious. Immune to cold.

Freeze. DC 13 CON or move at half speed and make checks with a -2 penalty for 1d4 hours. A successful check to resist makes a creature immune to this effect for 24 hours.



Lindlen Zikara

A silver-haired elf with blue eyes. He wields a sword made of ice that glows brightly under any light.

AC: 16 (mithral chainmail)

HP: 21 **LV:** 4

ATK: 2 longsword +3 (1d8) or 2 longbow +4 (1d8 + poison)

MV: Near

S: +2 **D:** +3 **C:** +1 **I:** +1 **W:** +2 **Ch:** +1

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Poison. DC 13 CON or paralyzed 1d4 rounds.

Sunblind. Blinded in bright light.

Krampus' Champion. Lindlen makes all checks against magical effects with advantage.



Krampus

Tall and gaunt, his twisted, horned silhouette shrouded in tattered black furs, with clawed hands gripping rusted chains. His eyes burn like smoldering embers beneath a heavy brow, and his mouth splits into a sharp, wolfish grin that promises nothing but malice.

AC: 16

HP: 31 **LV8**

ATK: 3 staff +4 (1d6 + bell) or 1 spell +4

MV: Near

S+2 D+3 C+2 I+3 W+3 Ch+4

Impervious. Immune to cold.

Bells. DC 15 WIS or make next check with disadvantage. This effect does not stack.

Dark Yule (CHA Spell). DC 12. Extinguish all light sources (even magical) within near.

Summon Imps (CHA Spell). DC 14. Summon 2d4 loyal ice imps that appear within near. They stay for 5 rounds.

Evil Toast. Near range. DC 12 CHA to deal 2d6 damage to a creature; regain that much HP.

Cold Protection. Krampus makes all checks against magical effects with advantage.



Tainted Blood

“This place is truly cursed by the gods. For how long has this wretched place been beneath the wheat farm? What a harrowing legacy these priests left...”

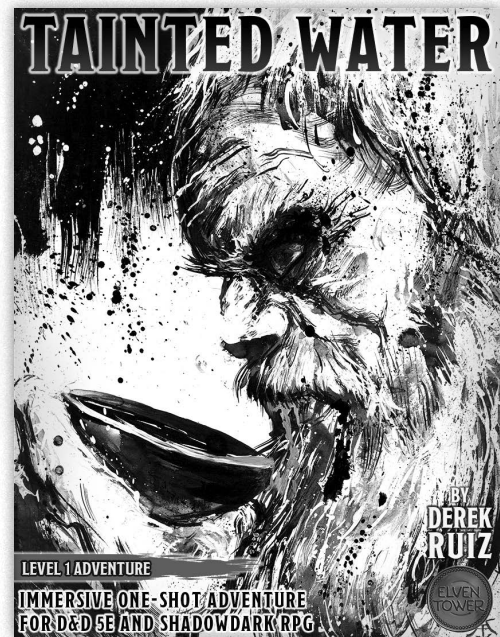
Featured Product

Tainted Water
LEVEL-1 INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURE
D&D 5E AND SHADOWDARK RPG

VTT MAPS INCLUDED

In Tainted Water, the characters are about to start their first real adventure. They rest in a small tavern in the town of Drake's Pass when a woman from a neighboring farm comes with a harrowing tale. Marianne Vadalia says her family's farm was attacked by strange, shapeless monsters that emerged from the water well and killed her sibling. Her father and another brother are still at the farm, they stayed behind while she ran for help.

The characters and a group of valiant peasants rush to Vadalia's Farm to find the root of the problem and, if possible, save Marianne's relatives. Soon, the would-be adventurers find a network of caverns under the house and a strange tomb that has remained hidden under the plantations. The imprisoned spirits of vile mages were interred therein. But now, they have broken out of their cages...



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HAG VARIANTS

► **Goblin Hags.** Born from the foul union of trickery and dark magic, they are considered oracles by goblin tribes. They use curses to incite infighting or unleash pestilence upon enemies. They can summon swarms of vermin or animate crude effigies to do their bidding. Despite their grotesque faces, they are dangerously clever, manipulating goblins and outsiders with lies and illusions.

► **Undead Hags.** The remnants of hags who sought eternal life but failed become this. They drift through ancient ruins or fog-shrouded swamps, endlessly mourning their mortal forms. Their touch saps strength and vitality, while their gaze can drive mortals to madness. They command undead minions and summon vengeful spirits to torment those who trespass in their domains.

► **Dwarf Hags.** These hags dwell in the deepest caverns, far from the light of day, forging dark pacts with underworld entities. Their skin is like cracked stone, and their eyes glow with molten fire. Masters of crafting cursed weapons and armor, these hags sell their creations to those foolish enough to seek them out. Dwarf hags' lairs are filled with stone golems and metal guardians, standing vigil over vaults of dangerous relics.



A GOBLIN HAG APPEARS!

1. **The Cursed Village** – A nearby village suffers from strange plagues and livestock deaths. The townsfolk whisper of a goblin witch seen lurking in the forest. The adventurers must track her down before the village falls to her spreading curse.
2. **Goblin Uprising** – A goblin war band led by a mysterious figure terrorizes the region, wielding unnatural magic. The hag uses her power to unite goblin tribes under her banner. The adventurers must infiltrate the war band's camp and confront the hag before her army grows unstoppable.
3. **The Haunted Cave** – Miners uncover an ancient cave marked by strange symbols and disturbing effigies. After several disappearances, they plead for aid. Deep within the tunnels, the adventurers discover a goblin hag, guarding a trove of cursed artifacts and scheming to expand her domain.



Goblin Hag

A grotesque, corrupted version of a goblin. Its hair is always wet. Its claws are narrow and sharp.

AC: 13

HP: 21 LV4

ATK: 2 claw + 3 (1d6) or 1 summon ability

MV: Near

S:+2 D:+2 C:+1 I:+1 W:+2 Ch:+1

Goblin Leader. A goblin hag is never alone. Its cry draws ally goblins to her location.

Summon Vermin. 1/day, summon one **centipede swarm** that fights for 1d4 rounds.

Summon Effigy. 1/day, summon one **animated armor** made of clay and mud that fights for 2d4 rounds. It resembles an armor-clad goblin.

UNBOUND MINOTAUR

NOT ALL MINOTAURS are bound by the curse of the labyrinth. Among their kind exist free individuals; minotaurs who walk the world with no chains of fate to shackle them. These minotaurs reject the path of isolation and rage, seeking instead to carve out lives of purpose and honor. They wander cities, trading their immense strength for work as smiths, guards, or adventurers. Though their horns and hulking forms often draw wary glances, their unwavering loyalty and sense of justice win the respect of those willing to see beyond appearances.

Driven by a desire to prove themselves, some unbound minotaurs dream of rising above prejudice to become heroes or mercenaries of great renown. They see the adventurer's path as a chance to shape their destiny, shedding the monstrous reputation that clings to their race. Through bravery and sacrifice, they strive to protect the innocent and stand as living proof that even creatures born from myth and fear can achieve greatness.

► **A New Life.** Consider adding a minotaur NPC to your adventures. They may act as a guide, a mentor, or perhaps even join the party of heroes in their quests.



Unbound Minotaur

A humanoid of towering height, impressive musculature, a stern gaze, and the head of a bull.

AC: 14 (chainmail)

HP: 39 **LV:** 8

ATK: 2 greataxe +6 (1d10) and 1 horns +6 (1d12)

MV: Near

S: +4 **D:** +1 **C:** +3 **I:** +1 **W:** +3 **Ch:** +1

Charge. In place of attacks, move up to double near in a straight line, 1 horn. If hit, x2 damage.

Spark. "I am not a monster." 1/day, the minotaur gains a **luck** token.

Protector. The minotaur gains +1 to attacks and +1 to AC against evil creatures.



A MINOTAUR APPEARS!

1. **The Outcast Protector.** A village is under threat from bandits, but a lone minotaur stands guard. Initially mistaken for a threat, the minotaur reveals himself as the village's protector. Will the heroes trust him and stand together against the bandits?
2. **The Arena Challenger.** The adventurers are drawn to the local fighting pits where a minotaur competes not for gold, but for honor. Impressed by their strength, the minotaur approaches the party, seeking companions to embark on greater quests.
3. **The Reluctant Rival.** A minotaur adventurer seeks the same artifact as the party, claiming it as a symbol of his path to redemption. Though not hostile, he views the adventurers as rivals. The party can choose to compete against him, collaborate, or convince him to join their cause. Will they become friends or sworn enemies?

POND OF UNFULFILLED DREAMS

THE POND'S VAULT

In the center of the pond floats its final guardian, a towering construct of black stone and gilded bronze, the **Sentinel of the Veil**. Its eyes glow faintly with azure light with each step it takes. The Sentinel floats motionless over the still pond, arms crossed over its chest as if waiting for intruders. The arcane guardian fights without mercy.

The **Pond of Unfulfilled Dreams** can be activated after the keeper is defeated. One must kneel at the water's edge and offer something of personal significance; a trinket well guarded and loved. As the object sinks, the supplicant sees the exact path they may take to achieve a life-long dream.

Beneath a forlorn, crumbling temple in the forest lies a subterranean compound where a deep silence lingers. The air is damp and heavy with the scent of moss, and faint bioluminescent fungi cling to the jagged walls, casting a pale, ethereal glow across the craggy path. In the depths of this dungeon lies the **Pond of Unfulfilled Dreams**, a circular basin of faintly quivering water. Its surface glimmers like flowing mercury, reflecting not the present, but the deepest truths of those who dare gaze upon it. Legends speak of how the pond reveals the long-forgotten aspirations of mortals and the burdens they left behind, offering clarity. The artifact's allure is undeniable; few are left unchanged by the revelations it bestows. A bygone brotherhood of clerics thought this pond was dangerous to mortals. In the dungeon that houses it, the clerics added wards, traps, and hazardous guardians. All to dishearten unwelcome intruders.

ANTECHAMBER OF ACID

After a long descent from the forest temple, the dungeon's antechamber is a vast, echoing hall of cold stone and flickering shadows. Cracked statues of forgotten deities are housed on alcoves that line the walls, their features worn by time. At the center sprawls a stagnant pool of acid, its surface bubbling faintly. The acrid scent lingers in the air, stinging the eyes and throat. Faint sigils glow along the walls, wards left by the ancient clerics. Dauntless adventurers can attempt to jump the 20-foot gap to reach the other side or to climb along the side walls. The margin of error is slim; those who slip or miscalculate their jump fall into the acid pond; a grim end.

CHAMBER OF SEALS

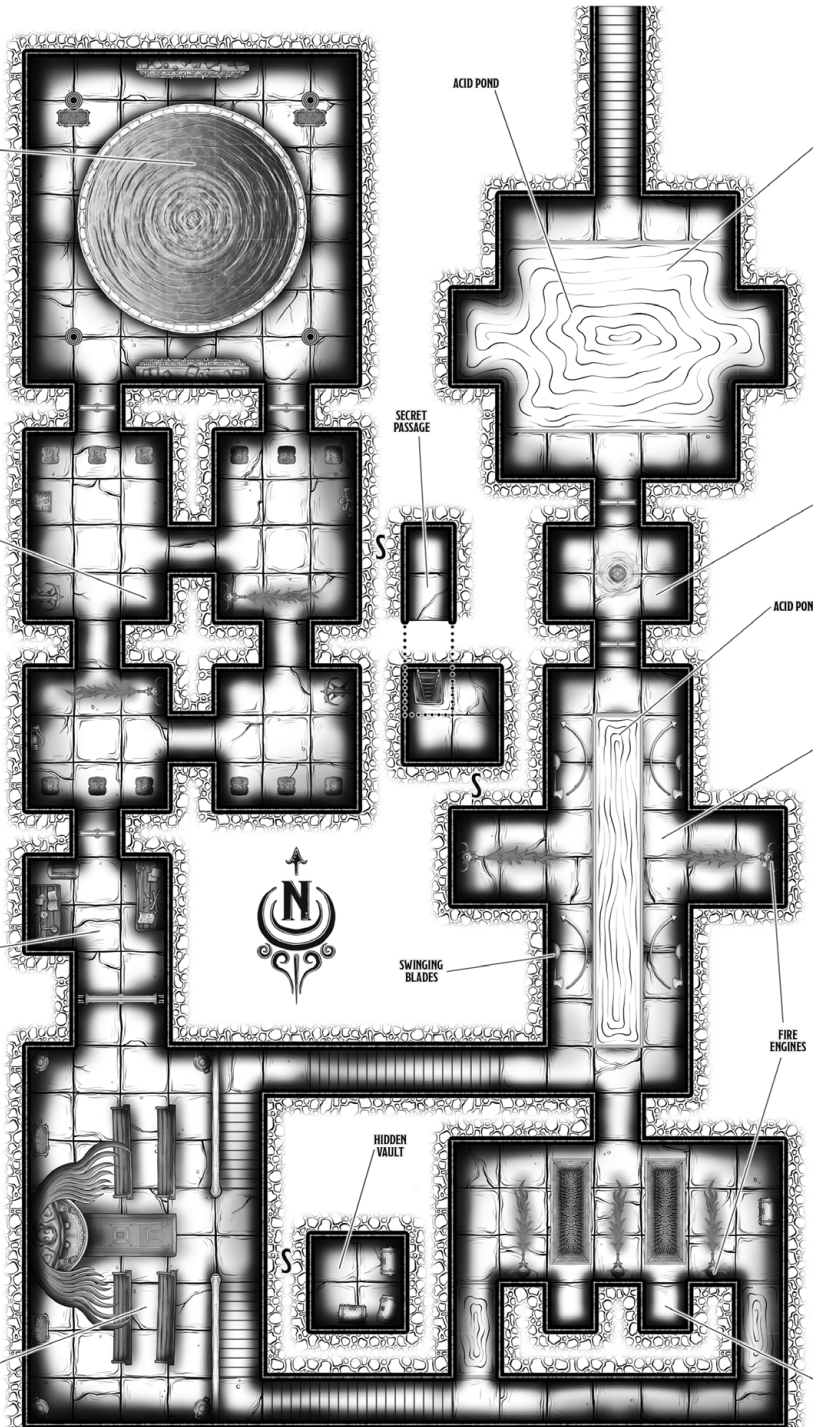
This chamber is guarded by automated crossbows, fire engines, and four **shadows**. The creatures emerge from the cracked flooring and attack. Pushing the floor seals in the correct sequence, which is inscribed in Draconic on the walls, opens the doors to the secluded pond chamber.

CLERICAL WORKSHOP

The chamber contains two wooden work tables and a chest. Decrepit wood-carving and sculpting tools lie scattered across the tables. Astute explorers deduce that the statues and holy symbols in the dungeon were carved by master artisans here. The chest is locked; only a fine locksmith can aspire to open it. It contains an accurate map of the compound, an embroidered rug, and a box of fine spices.

CHAPEL OF THE GODDESS

A grand effigy of the Goddess of Knowledge stands over four wooden pews. She smiles; her gaze appears to follow people across the small chapel. A hidden vault can be found on the opposite wall. The chests inside contain 400 gp, a set of mithral armor, and a collection of written works about the goddess.



THE ORB OF REPUSSION

A mighty enchantment causes all those who gaze into this metal orb to forget their recent memories and abandon all desire to explore the dungeon. Those affected turn their back and go on with their lives. It requires a strong will to withstand this spell and carry on exploring.

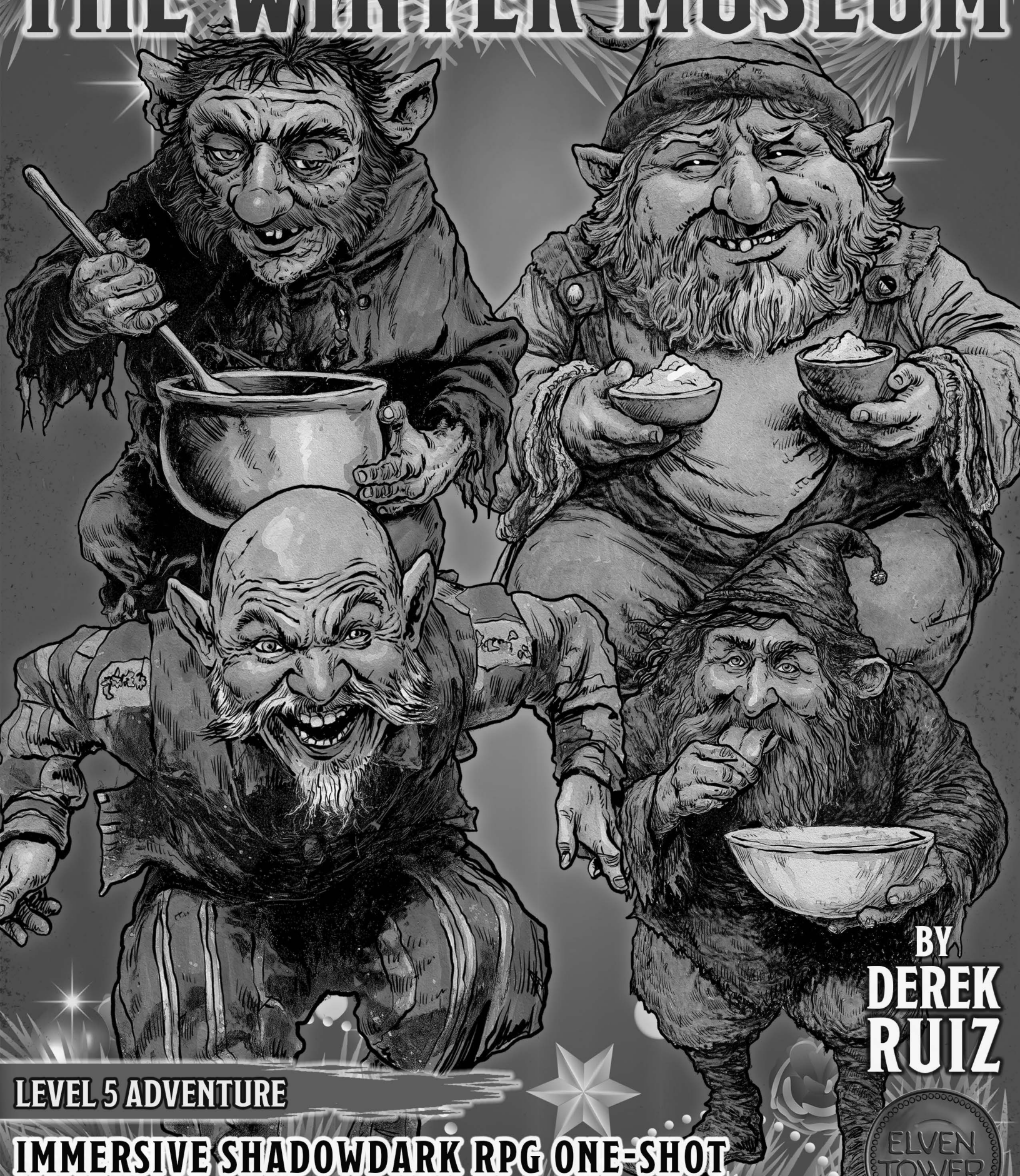
CHAMBER OF BLADES

Crossing this dangerous chamber requires grit and valor. It contains swinging axes, flame-spewing devices, and a pond of acid. Many an adventurer has died attempting to cross it, their bones litter the bottom of the pond. A tinkerer could use tools to deactivate some of these deadly machines. A hidden door next to one of the fire engines leads to a secret passage that descends to the **Chamber of Seals**.

CHAMBER OF FIRE

Three fire engines surround two 20-foot-deep spiked pits. The devices shoot flames obeying a strange pattern that shrewd individuals can study and learn. Otherwise, crossing the room is a gamble of fire and death. An old skeleton lies impaled in one of the pits. It carries a **+1 dagger** and a leather pouch with 65 gp. Is it worth it to retrieve it?

THE WINTER MUSEUM



BY
**DEREK
RUIZ**



LEVEL 5 ADVENTURE

**IMMERSIVE SHADOWDARK RPG ONE-SHOT
ADVENTURE FOR THE GREATEST OSR GAME**

ADVENTURE PRIMER



eneath the frostbitten hills of the Coldspine Reach lies a forgotten sepulcher, known only in fragments of local legend as the Tomb of Nalen'Dor. Once the resting place of a noble family whose name has long been forgotten, its halls now serve an unexpected purpose; a vault of curious relics and artifacts, overseen by four eccentric gnome siblings: Torel, Briya, Fenwick, and Mella.

It was ten winters ago when the gnomes first stumbled upon the tomb's crumbling facade during a blizzard. Seeking shelter, they uncovered what seemed to be an undisturbed series of subterranean chambers, empty save for worn carvings, undisturbed sarcophagi, and pine-cone statues. Intrigued, the siblings claimed the space as their own, deeming it the perfect hiding place for the oddities they scavenged. They vowed to return here each winter. With time, the repository grew, as each sibling contributed strange trinkets, artifacts, and enchanted baubles found on their year-long journeys.

THE GRIM AWAKENING

THIS YEAR, a cold weight hangs in the air, thick with the crackle of reawakened magic. Where once silence reigned, echoes now danced from within—echoes of something sinister. The siblings soon learned that their magical collection had stirred the ancient wards woven into the tomb's foundation. Undead abominations, long dormant, now stalked the corridors. And traps that once lay inert beneath layers of dust sprung to life.

Two creatures in particular claimed dominion of the sepulcher after this. A ghostly woman drifts through the dungeon's corridors, her heart-freezing cries rattling through the stone. And a grotesque three-headed zombie; its upper body formed by the sinew-bound amalgamation of three people. These two beings, for reasons unknown, seek each other. Alas, the ghost is deeply repulsed by the abominate zombie; a never-ending chase. The existence of these two creatures is a mystery.

LYRA AND THE SONS OF NALEN'DOR

Long ago, Lyra of Evershade was betrothed to Farin Nalen'Dor, the eldest of three brothers. Her beauty was renowned, yet it was her gentle voice and clever mind that captivated the hearts of not one, but all three siblings. Though sworn to Farin, she harbored secret passions for his younger brothers—Calric and Dain.

For a time, these affairs remained hidden beneath the veil of family bonds. But a year after the wedding, fate's cruel hand unraveled the lie. Farin uncovered letters in Lyra's chamber, revealing the betrayal. Jealousy twisted his heart, and in the stillness of night, he murdered his brothers in their sleep. Yet, stricken with guilt, Farin took his own life by falling on his ornate sword.

Lyra, witnessing the lifeless bodies of all three men she loved, was consumed by grief. She drank a vial of poison, choosing death over a life haunted by her sins.

Buried together in the family vault, their tragedy lay forgotten, until now. The tomb's arcane awakening twisted Farin, Calric, and Dain into a monstrous three-headed amalgamation, bound by hatred and regret. Lyra's ghost rose as a wailing banshee, cursed to seek the men she lost. Yet whenever her eyes fall upon the grotesque form they have taken, she recoils and cries, unable to embrace the horror of what they are. Perhaps there is a way to put these undead revenants to rest. Otherwise, they are fated to holy banishment.

HOOK - SAVING THE HOLIDAYS

THE GNOME SIBLINGS, seeking to regain access to their repository of trinkets and their winter refuge, lodge in the nearby town of White Lake. They offer a sizable reward of 1,400 gp for mercenaries willing to escort two of them deep into the dungeon to retake it. So far, people in town have refused them, fearing to leave White Lake during the harsh season. But they are hopeful that strong, valiant heroes shall take on this bounty contract.

RUMORS IN WHITE LAKE

d6

Details

- 1 The gnome collectors are known in town. They come each winter and stay a few days before leaving for Coldspine Reach; a 6-hour ride. They often share stories of strange trinkets and baubles encountered in their travels.
- 2 There is a shunned crypt in Coldspine Reach. People say the last three members of a family were buried there and forgotten.
- 3 A hunter says he saw an ephemeral woman roaming the hills near Coldspine Reach. From afar, he could see that her body was translucent. Her face betrayed despair and angst. He dared not approach her, fearing she would curse him.
- 4 Scholars visited the crypt a few years ago but were turned away by the four gnomes; they claimed it was their 'museum'.
- 5 Two years ago, the gnomes passed through White Lake hauling a full-length mirror. They claimed it was magical.
- 6 Four years ago, the gnomes boasted about a red pendant they claimed had the power to make spiders sentient.

THE FAKE SCHOLAR

MALLINEW LYRANDAR PRESENTS himself as a soft-spoken scholar of ancient relics, though in truth, he is a cunning apprentice mage with ambitions far exceeding his skill. Obsessed with power, Mallinew has traced rumors of the *Dragon Teeth Necklace*, an artifact said to summon spectral drakes, to the gnome siblings' hidden vault. Believing the gnomes too naive to recognize its worth, Mallinew feigns interest in aiding their expedition to reclaim the undead-ridden tomb. Behind his polite demeanor, he plots to steal the necklace once the dangers are cleared, fully prepared to betray the party if necessary to claim the fabled artifact for himself.

MALLINEW LYRANDAR

Human scholar

Mallinew Lyrandar is a self-taught mage, born to a family of modest merchants. Fascinated by forbidden lore, he abandoned the trade to pursue the arcane. His lack of formal training left him bitter and envious of true wizards. Mallinew survives by posing as a scholar, using charm and deception to access ancient ruins and hidden vaults. Ambitious, he seeks powerful artifacts to elevate his status. His current obsession is the *Dragon Teeth Necklace*, rumored to grant dominion over spectral drakes.

Manner. I beg your pardon. Those hieroglyphs are within my area of expertise. Allow me to translate...

Ambition. Through lies and deception, I shall attain the true secrets of magic. Nothing is beyond my grasp.

THE MIRROR OF FATE

THE MIRROR OF Fate is an alabaster-framed glass, its surface rippling like liquid metal under torchlight. This ancient relic reflects not the viewer's image, but glimpses of futures untold, or fates best left unseen. Said to have been crafted by the long-forgotten God of Time, the mirror bends the fabric of reality with each gaze. In the right hands, this artifact has the power to change the world.

It was this mirror, stored in the gnome collection, that unknowingly stirred the tomb's latent magic. Its presence fractured the arcane wards, awakening the restless dead. Now, the mirror hums with chaotic energy, a beacon that attracts otherworldly beings to the dungeon.



TOREL

Gnome Collector

Torel is the eldest of the four gnome siblings and the de facto leader of their peculiar artifact-collecting venture. Once a jeweler by trade, Torel's fascination with enchanted objects led him to a life of scavenging. Practical and sharp-witted, he takes pride in cataloging the strange relics they uncover. Though often gruff, Torel cares deeply for his siblings, seeing their collection as both a treasure trove and legacy. He carries a mechanical monocle that can detect magical auras, a gift from his brother Briya.

Manner. Oh yes! It is magical, but let me taste it. Sometimes I can feel a sharp tingle in my tongue.

Ambition. Our museum is almost full... What am I saying? We'll just get a new chamber ready. We need more!



Mercenaries Needed

Seeking capable swordsmen, spellcasters, and trackers for immediate hire. Task: Escort and defend during the reclamation of property from a family crypt infested with dangerous abominations. We offer a compensation of 1,400 gold pieces!

Applicant sellswords must possess steady hands and resilient nerves. Cowards need not apply. Interested parties meet at White Lake's tavern.

— Torel Nimbledust



A WARREN FOR GNOMES

"We come here each year, I tell you. My brethren and I have a collection of oddities down there. I wonder if their taste has changed. I need to know..."

Torel

RANDOM EVENTS

d8	Details
1	A ghostly, disconsolate figure weeps, vanishing when approached, leaving behind icy footprints. The ephemeral woman laments for her three lovers. In her whimpers, where she calls them Farin, Calric, and Dain, she claims to be sorry for what happened.
2	Two will-o'-wisps float nearby for 1 crawling round before vanishing. They attack the living if approached.
3	A spider swarm emerges from nearby cracks and webs in the ceiling and attacks the party.
4	Four zombies approach the party and attack. The undead wear tattered gambesons with the Nalen'Dor family sigil (DC 12 INT).
5	Three thugs arrive at the dungeon after hearing rumors of the gnomes' repository of magical trinkets. They are evil and greedy. If they encounter the characters, they agree to join the party but soon look for an opportunity to rob them too.
6	The banshee's wail can be heard in the distance. It is followed by a strong wind that puts out torches and natural fires.
7	A character steps on a pressure plate; a sharp axe swings from a nearby wall and deals 1d8 damage (DC 12 DEX to evade it).
8	The magical maelstrom in the dungeon causes a vivid vision (DC 9 CHA). Those affected see a married couple in a wealthy house. Then, they see the guilt-stricken wife sneaking out at night to see two different affair partners.



QUIRKY SIBLINGS

THE CHARACTERS MEET the four gnome siblings in the only tavern in White Lake. Torel, Briya, Fenwick, and Mella play cards and dice when the characters first meet them. Torel buys a round of ale for the characters and explains their predicament. He claims they visited the tomb 3 days ago but were repelled by zombies and a three-headed monster. So, they came south to White Lake. Torel (**berserk**) and Fenwick (**thug**) accompany the characters on their journey to the Tomb of Nalen'Dor.

► **Tomb Lore.** If asked, the gnomes know little of the Tomb of Nalen'Dor. They delved into the burial site and repurposed a seemingly empty hall for their collection.

THE SCHOLAR

ON THE MORROW of their expedition, the characters are approached by Mallinew Lyrandar (**Lv. 3 Wizard**). He introduces himself as a scholar and offers his service in documenting the characters' exploits and the contents of the Tomb of Nalen'Dor. He claims his work can aid the characters in earning renown with the scholars in nearby cities, bringing them more job opportunities by wealthier patrons. If the characters allow him to tag along, Mallinew hides his spellcasting qualities for as long as possible. If refused, Mallinew follows the party secretly and reappears when the characters reach areas B2 or B9.

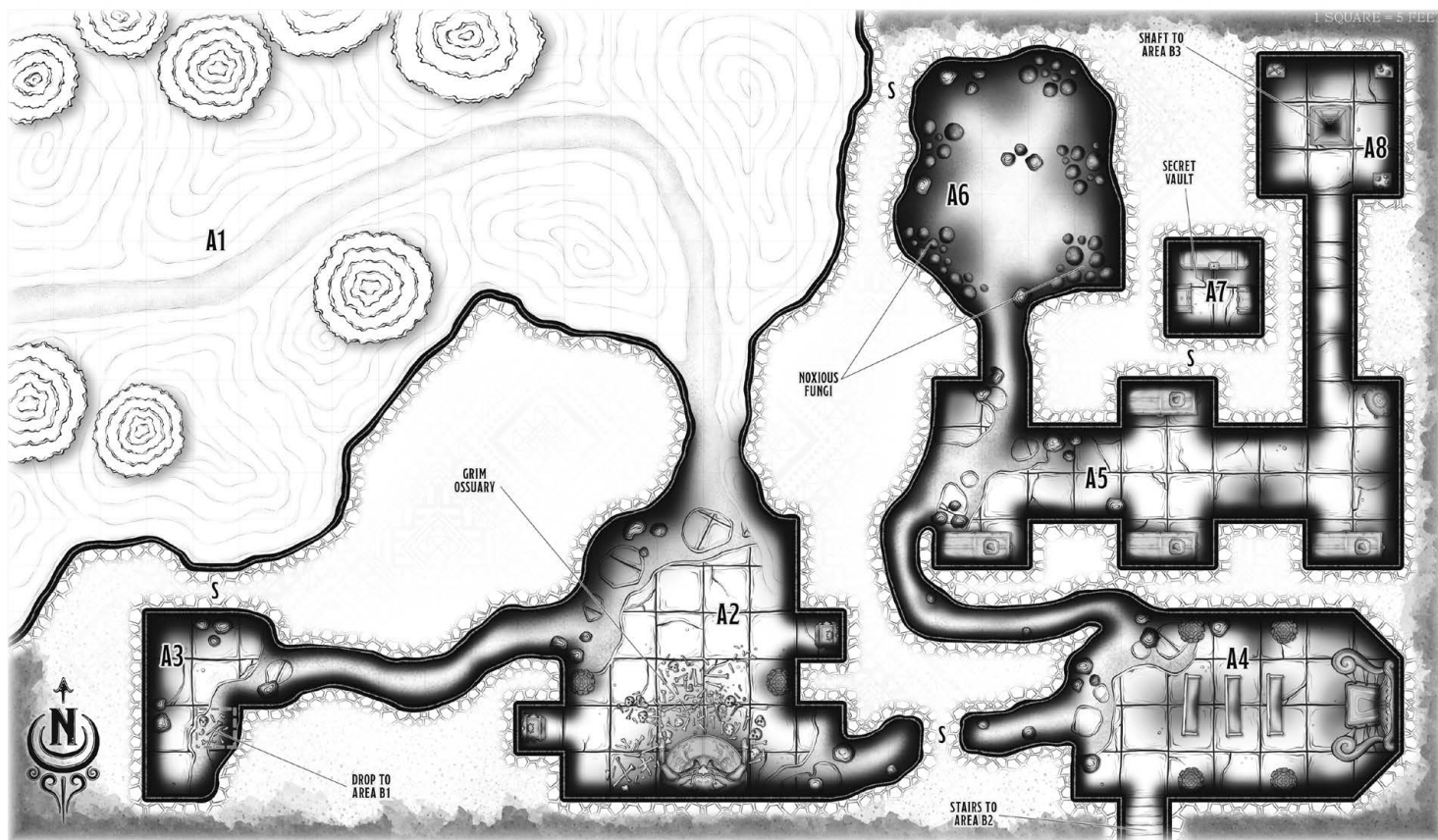
REACHING THE TOMB

THE CHARACTERS AND their brave companions set out to the north, toward Coldspine Reach. It is a 6-hour ride. Within 1 mile of the tomb, the characters encounter two corpses: one of a human, the other of a wild boar. The corpses are unrelated. When examined, they seem to be uninjured (DC 9 WIS check) but both brandish a visage that betrays utter terror. Whatever they saw before perishing must have, literally, scared them to death.

► **The Banshee.** Scholars who examine the corpses may know of a few creatures with this instant lethal power. If they have heard about the ghostly woman or encountered her, they know it is a banshee (DC 15 INT). They know that its wail can cause instant death.

MAGICAL MAELSTROM

The *detect magic* spell reveals a shifting lattice of magic auras and waves in the dungeon. A spellcaster recognizes this effect as a magical maelstrom (DC 12 INT check). They know that when strong magical power converges with a place of historical or personal significance, echoes from the past and unpredictable magical effects come into being. It can be inferred that the magical collection's presence in the tomb caused the current predicament. Removing such objects of power from the vault can help prevent further problems.



Level 5 Location

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (4-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Some chambers feature braziers with *light* spells or glowing pine-cone effigies; both of gnome construction. Dungeon denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Magical Maelstrom.** Spells cast within 1 mile of the dungeon may have undesired effects (1d6): 1). The spell fails but is not lost. 2). The spell is replaced by another of the same tier. 3). One of the spell's numerical effects is doubled at random. 4-6). The spell functions normally.

UNVEILING THE LIAR

If Mallinew Lyrandar is with the party, some clues arise that may reveal that he is more than just a scholar. When encountering strange effects, if no one in the party does it, he tries to covertly cast *detect magic* (DC 12 WIS to see him do it). If in mortal danger, he casts *invisibility* or *misty step* to escape. If seen (DC 9 WIS), he claims it was just a strange illusion caused by the dungeon's magical maelstrom. He repeatedly asks Torel about ornate necklaces that he or his siblings added to their collection, feigning a love for jewelry. If confronted, he tries to play down the fact that he knows magic: "It's only a few spells I've learned in my studies. What?, Do you think I am a powerful archmage?"

A1. DUNGEON SURROUNDINGS

The sparsely forested, snowy hills of the Coldspine Reach lead, down a barely-trodden path, to the tomb's entrance. The once ominous arched threshold has collapsed and eroded beyond recognition; all that remains is a dark cavern entrance in the rocky hillside.

► **Alternate Routes.** If the characters inspect the surroundings carefully over 1 **crawling round** (DC 12 WIS), they find two secret ways into the dungeon (see map). One leads to area A3 while the other to area A6.

A2. ENTRANCE HALL

The half-collapsed entrance hall features the statue of a gallant, silver-inlaid knight. Before it, a bed of scattered bones cover most of the cracked floor.

Torel and Fenwick remark that the grim ossuary was not there the last time they came. Torel also mentions that the east passage (toward area A4), their usual route, is obstructed. They think it was seismic activity.

► **Undead Welcome.** Coming within 10 feet of the statue causes the scattered bones to shake and form into four **skeletons**. Two **ghouls** also emerge from the standing sarcophagi and attack the unwelcome intruders. The ghouls wear the Nalen'Dor sigil on their tattered clothes.

► **Obstructed Passage.** Two characters can work to remove the boulders and debris blocking the way to area A4. This task takes 2 **crawling rounds**. If the party has spades and/or pickaxes, it takes half as much time.

A3. DILAPIDATED PRAYER ROOM

This area can be reached from area A1, before visiting area A2, if the secret entrance is discovered.

This crumbling chamber has barely withstood the passage of time and erosion. The faded remnants of intricate wall carvings can still be appreciated.

Torel explains the room is crumbling and near to collapse. Which is why they never inspected the bones.

► **The Carvings.** The markings on the walls that still stand reveal the holy symbol of Gede, a common goddess in the region. Incomplete prayers to guide the dead to the afterlife are carved on the walls in an ancient form of the Common tongue. Mallinew Lyrandar is familiar with this dialect and can read it directly.

► **The Skeleton.** The bodily remains of a long-forgotten explorer lie on the floor. Inspecting them carefully reveals that the bones are at least 3 decades old (DC 15 INT). Alas, the ground beneath the bones is cracked, unsafe, and near to collapsing. Whoever examines the remains falls into the pond in area B1 (DC 12 DEX).

A4. CHAPEL OF THE MONARCH

Three stone piers and an oversized, copper throne reflect the dim, eerie glow of four pine-cone effigies. The grand throne is decorated with fine, gold inlays.

► **The Stairs.** The passage south leads to a set of switch-back stairs that descend 40 feet to area B2. However, Torel mentions that it leads to a large sepulcher that he and his siblings never dared explore. He says that there is a descending shaft to the north (area A8), that leads straight down to their repository of odd trinkets.

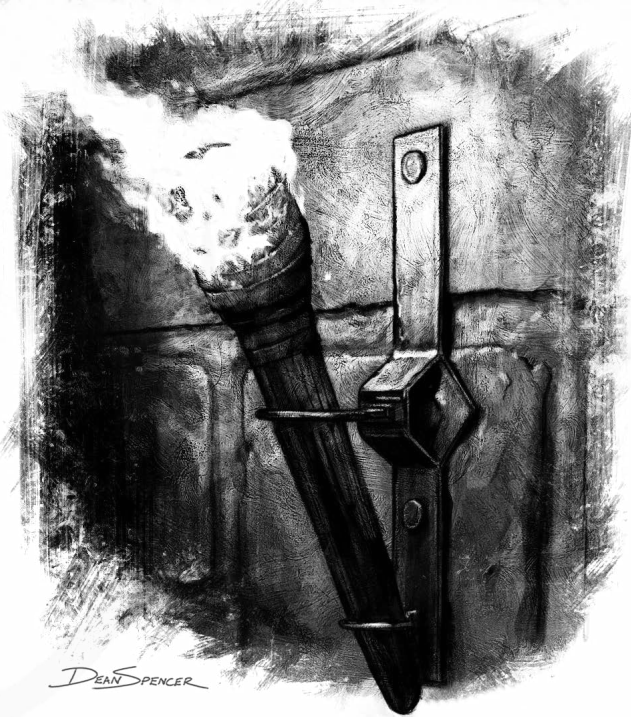
► **Treasure (3 XP).** The throne is dedicated to a bygone member of the Nalen'Dor family. The characters can spend 1 **crawling round** removing the gold inlays from its surface. It yields enough gold to mint 340 gp.

A5. TOMB OF THE NALEN'DOR

A ghostly woman cries bitterly over a sarcophagus. She utters: "I'm sorry Farin... I didn't mean to..."

Lyra of Evershade's ghost (**banshee**) is first encountered here, crying over Farin's tomb. She attacks after noticing the party but flees when dropped to half her Hit Points.

► **Tombs.** The three south sarcophagi are marked with copper plaques; they belong to Farin, Calric, and Dain Nalen'Dor, the three siblings who loved Lyra. While not a member of the Farin, Calric, and Dain Nalen'Dor family, Lyra was interred here too, in the north enclosure. From the epigraphs on the lids, it can be inferred that Farin and Lyra were married. It is odd that the four were interred together. The three siblings' sarcophagi are empty, their bodily remains became the Sinewbound.



A6. FUNGAL CAVERN

This area can be reached from area A1, before visiting area A2, if the secret entrance is discovered.

A hazy spore cloud dampens torchlight and reduces visibility to a few feet. Breathing the thick, noxious air causes an immediate irritation of the airways.

Torel and Fenwick know this place; they never ventured inside because of the poisonous fungal spores.

► **Spores.** If the characters explore this chamber, they are affected by the spores in the air unless they hold their breath. Those affected react as if targeted by the *confusion* spell (DC 12 CON). The effect lasts for 4 rounds.

► **Folk.** Two **mushroomfolk** rise from among the fungal growths and communicate telepathically with the party. They demand food or any form of edible mass that can be decomposed (wood, leaves, rations). If the characters give them at least 40 pounds of edible material, the mushroom folk recede. Otherwise, they attack the party; a telepathic call of ravenous hunger surrounds them.

A7. SECRET VAULT

A hidden button behind Lyra's sarcophagus in area A5 can be pushed to reveal this chamber (DC 12 WIS).

► **Treasure (5 XP).** The room contains three coffers. Collectively, they contain 800 gp, 1,850 sp, three flasks of oil, two *potions of healing* (150 gp each), and a *+1 shield*.

A8. THE SHAFT ROOM

This chamber contains three stone plinths that hold an assortment of random trinkets and a central shaft with an iron-rung ladder. The baubles on the surfaces were placed here by the gnome siblings; stuff that was neither magical nor valuable enough to be included in their museum. The shaft can be used to safely reach area B3.

THE SECRET BENEATH THE SNOW

“We are pain... It was all your fault, Farin... How could you kill us, Kinslayer... She bewitched all of us, see our despicable form... No, it was all you Farin...”

The Three Voices of the Sinewbound

The gnome’s repository of trinkets is on the north side of the dungeon (area B6). The rest of the underground compound is inhabited by three dangerous beings. First, the **wraith** of a long-forgotten member of the Nalen’Dor family that was empowered by the *Dragon Teeth Necklace* (B2). Second, the awakened **soulbinding spider**. It wears the *Spider-soul Pendant* but struggles to understand its reality. It uses its Possess ability to learn more about the world (areas B7 and B8). And third, the **sinewbound**, the three brothers’ tormented souls that exist in a never-ending cycle of despair, guilt, and blame-shifting (area B9).

Level 5 Dungeon

► **Danger.** Unsafe. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (4-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Some areas are illuminated by magical braziers (*light*). Dungeon denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Structural Integrity.** Evidence of geological movements and erosion is imprinted on the stone blocks and the cracked flooring of the dungeon. Deep cracks traverse load-bearing pillars and walls. Unless the foundations are repaired, the compound will collapse in a few decades (DC 12 INT to know). If the characters inform Torel of this worrying detail, they earn a **luck token**.

B1. UNDERGROUND POND

The characters that trigger the pitfall trap in area A3 fall into the 20-foot-deep pond but take no damage from the fall. The water is cold and clean. A strange species of almost-blind fish swims near the bottom of the pond. The desiccated corpse of a lizard lies by the cavern wall.

Ascent. The characters can use a rope to climb back to area A3 if it is properly secured on the upper level (DC 9 STR). Failing causes the PC to fall into the pond.

The Lizard. Studying the desiccated corpse may reveal valuable information (DC 15 INT). The scaled skin features two puncture wounds. A paralyzing poison was injected to immobilize the hapless prey. The lizards’ innards were siphoned out from these orifices, leaving only the scales-bound husk on the ground. An arachnid monster of colossal size did this. If Mallinew is present, he mentions that a vial of such a creature’s poison could fetch a great price at an alchemy shop.

B2. THE PHILOSOPHER’S TOMB

Four obsidian statues of sword-wielding knights surround an ornate sarcophagi. The family sigil of the Nalen’Dor family is carved on the silver-inlaid lid.

► **Sarcophagus.** Fine runes scripted on the enclosure’s sides mark it as Ptoleshei Nalen’Dor. Historians recognize the name (DC 12 INT). He was once a famous philosopher and a king; his reign was short but prosperous.

► **Deathly Guardian.** The magical maelstrom caused the awakening of this spirit. Ptoleshei Nalen’Dor, after rising as a **wraith**, retrieved the *Dragon Teeth Necklace* from area B6. He uses the necklace to summon a spectral drake to fight by his side (**shadow**, double HP).

► **Mallinew.** The mage recognizes the magic necklace the wraith carries. Mallinew expresses his interest in this item and asks for it to be his share of the treasure. If refused, he awaits for the first moment of chaos to attempt to steal it from whoever kept it (see **All for the Necklace**). This is the mage-in-disguise’s coveted treasure; he is willing to do anything to secure the fabled item.



Najint, the Fey Cat

B3. LOWER LEVEL LANDING

The iron-rung ladder climbs to area A8. The room contains nothing but a magical brazier and a strange-looking panel by the south wall. It can be used to deactivate the swinging blades in area B4 (DC 15 INT check).

► **The Cat.** A black, disheveled cat named Najint, a fey spirit, materializes on the magic brazier. It is immune to all damage; it is but an ethereal projection from the Fey Realm. Attracted by the magical maelstrom, Najint is curious about the strange dungeon creatures, especially the party. Najint, a lover of chaos, is an unreliable source of information in the dungeon. Ultimately, the fey spirit is here just for a good show. Tagging along, he suggests, with big round eyes and a high-pitched voice, things that are bound to end in combat, traps, or problems (DC 12 WIS to notice his intentions). In particular, Najint suggests exploring the spider caverns (areas B7 and B8).

B4. HALLWAY OF BLADES

The door that connects this hallway with area B2 features a mid-quality lock (DC 12 DEX check).

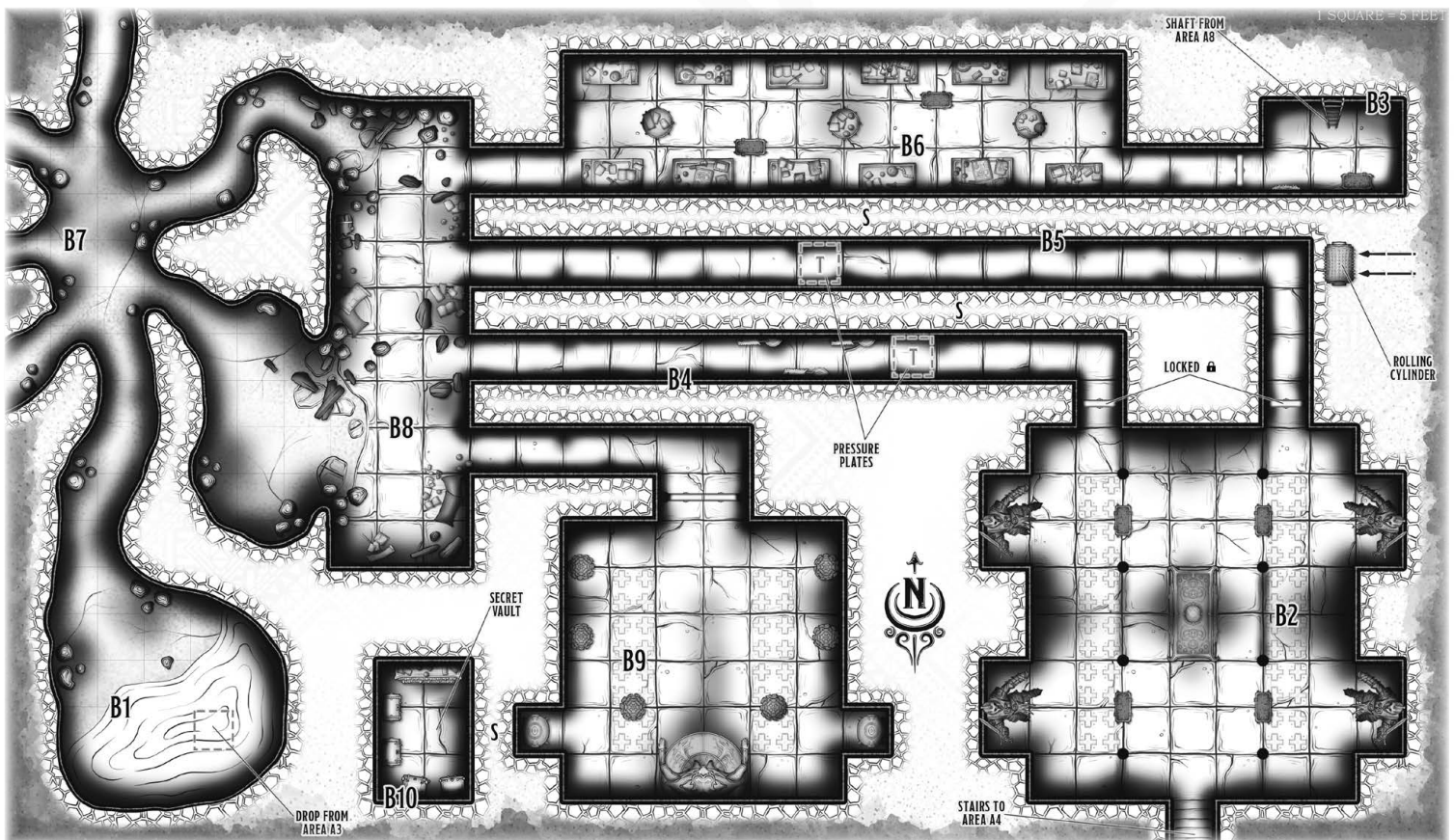
► **Swinging Blades.** Three rolling devices with swinging blades are tucked into the hallway walls (DC 9 WIS to spot). If a character steps on the pressure plate (see map), the blades start moving a few seconds after when the character is right by them. Characters within reach of the blades take 1d10 damage (DC 12 DEX to evade).

ALL FOR THE NECKLACE

After defeating the wraith in area B2, Mallinew tells the characters that the necklace should be his share of the treasure. Promising to expect nothing more in a matter of payment. The characters are likely to refuse, especially because Mallinew never before mentioned any expectation of payment or wealth-sharing.

Pretending to accept the characters' judgment, Mallinew starts plotting a way to run away with the necklace. Here are some ways he can betray the party:

1. During a battle, Mallinew casts *hold person* on whoever carries the necklace and takes advantage of the paralysis to take the item and run away.
2. Mallinew finds a way to be alone with whoever carries the necklace and casts *sleep* on them. Mallinew steals the item and flees the dungeon.
3. Mallinew sneaks into area B7 and uses a combination of *detect thoughts* and his language skills to strike a truce with the soulbinding spider. He promises the spider to bring many live prey and to aid it capture them in exchange for the necklace.
4. In desperation, Mallinew uses the *alter self* spell to grow crab pincers and attempts to choke whoever carries the necklace. Mallinew mercilessly fights to gain possession of the magical trinket.



B5. THE ROLLING CYLINDER

The door that connects this hallway with area B2 features a high-quality lock (DC 15 DEX check).

► **Secret Passages.** Two hidden ways connect this area to area B4 and area B6 (see map). They are sections of the walls that appear normal but are lightweight replicas of their surroundings. These wall-sections can be pushed aside to reveal a secret way, as long as a character is perceptive enough to notice them (DC 15 WIS).

► **The Cylinder.** When a character steps on the pressure plate (see map), the east wall parts to let a spiked cylinder into the chamber. It is magically propelled westward at high speed until it reaches area B8, where it crashes into a wall. Characters in the hallway can either outrun it to area B8 or jump over the rolling cylinder (both DC 12 STR). On a fail, the hapless character is run over by the cylinder and takes 2d8 damage.

B6. THE WINTER MUSEUM

This chamber contains fifteen stone tables filled with all manner of trinkets and objects. Some of them move, obeying their function like clocks, geared apparatuses, or floating decor. Many books open, flip their pages from beginning to end, and then close. Attire and armor pieces move from side to side, endlessly rearranging themselves. Torel remarks that the place is livelier than usual while putting an armor codpiece to his tongue to taste the rust on it.

► **The Mirror.** The *Mirror of Fate* hangs by the west wall. Its world-bending power is revealed by the *detect magic* spell. A spellcaster recognizes this powerful artifact as the culprit for the magical maelstrom and its effects in the dungeon and its denizens (DC 12 INT). They know that removing the mirror from the dungeon shall abate the maelstrom after a week and prevent further occurrences. But the monsters must still be dealt with.



B7. CAVERN NETWORK

Crumbling pillar sections and cracked flooring still remain, half-buried in dirt. But this area is now just a network of meandering, darkness-shrouded tunnels.

► **The Spider.** The **soulbinding spider** claims this area, following its primordial arachnid instincts. Within it lie the souls of many people it has killed and some that were stored in the Nalen'Dor tomb. Straining to make sense of itself, the spider attacks any living creature to absorb its soul with its Possess ability. It attempts to ambush the party by dropping from the dark ceiling (DC 12 WIS to notice). The spider wears the *Spidersoul Pendant*, which it uses to summon a **giant spider**.

B8. DILAPIDATED ARCHIVE

Once a proud repository of knowledge, this archive was been destroyed by the collapse of the chamber. Tattered scrolls lie scattered across the floor tiles.

► **The Spider.** The **soulbinding spider** from area B7 can also ambush the characters here. It jumps from the west, dark tunnels.

► **Treasure (3 XP).** Inspecting the room for 1 **crawling round** yields three Tier-2 Wizard spell scrolls: *invisibility*, *knock*, and *levitate*.

B9. HALL OF THE SINEWBOUND

The amalgamated essence of the three Nalen'Dor siblings, the horrid **sinewbound**, stands by the large statue of a long-forgotten knight. The three heads argue among themselves and shift the blame for their sins in life. Upon seeing the characters enter the room, the sinewbound is overcome by anger and attacks. Lyra of Evershade (**banshee**) appears in the 2nd round of combat and, in despair, uses her Wail ability. After this, she has a 3-in-6 chance each round to spend it crying for the consequences of her deeds. She banishes too when the sinewbound is slain.

B10. HIDDEN VAULT

The door, which opens from area B9, can be opened by pushing a brick-button (DC 12 WIS to find).

► **Treasure (8 XP).** The coffers and shelf contain 400 gp, 1,400 sp, one *potion of healing* (150 gp), a *+1 great-axe*, a *flying carpet*, and a *crystal ball*.

CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS REACH the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their brave deeds.

RECKONING FOR THE SINNERS

The characters defeat the sinewbound monster in deadly combat. If the banshee still roams the room, her will to exist collapses and her evil, filled-with-grief form is gone. With the monsters gone, the ghosts of Lyra and of Farin, Calric, and Dain Nalen'Dor reappear. But now, they have their normal humane appearance. Their faces are marked by guilt, repentance, and shame. They are unable to say anything else to one another and just gaze at their peers for a few minutes. After this, the spirits vanish into the ether. Alas, they are doomed for eternity to face their inadequacies and despair. Perhaps a priest can find a better solution (see **Peace for the Death**).



PEACE FOR THE DEAD

Priests know that these revenant spirits are bound to their sins and shall come back again as abominate undead monsters. After the sinewbound is defeated, a priest can move the monster's bodily remains back to the sarcophagi in area A5 and carry out a consecration ritual. Praying for 3 hours, the spirits of Lyra and the three siblings are summoned forth once more. Through careful guidance, the priest can guide their souls toward a path of repentance and salvation (DC 15 WIS check).

On a success, the souls part to the afterlife in peace. On a fail, they remain trapped in the Material Realm and the priest loses 1d2 WIS until the ritual is performed successfully. The ritual can be performed once a month.

THE WINTER MUSEUM

Torel, or any of his surviving siblings, thanks the characters for a job well done after the dungeon is safe again. They pay the characters the promised reward of 1,400 gp (6 XP), allow them to keep all treasures in the dungeon outside of area B6, and even allow the party to keep both the *Spidersoul Pendant* and the *Dragon Teeth Necklace*. Torel remarks that while interesting and powerful, the items seem to have acquired a bad taste after their recent use. The gnomes also have a plan for the havoc-causing magic mirror (see **The Fabled Mirror**).

Alas, if Mallinew Lyrandar betrays the party and manages to escape with the *Dragon Teeth Necklace*, Torel offers the characters 300 gp for tracking down the fake scholar and retrieving the necklace. He is outraged that the seemingly calm man turned out to be a thief.

UNWORTHY THIEVES

If the characters attempt to take other items from the museum or threaten to take control of the complete collection, the gnome siblings are aghast. They denounce the characters' actions as those of petty criminals of unworthy lives. Alas, the gnome siblings are no match for the characters and surrender momentarily. If they survive, the gnomes place a bounty on the characters' heads so big that all manner of assassins come after them.

THE FABLED MIRROR

The gnome siblings do not want to part ways with the *Mirror of Fate* but understand that the magical maelstrom that it caused must be avoided at all costs. Torel offers to lend the mirror to the characters if they have a safe place where it can be guarded. Torel writes a contract that specifies that it still belongs to their repository but it is lent to the characters for the time being. This powerful artifact draws the attention of powerful beings who may wish to take it from the characters' hands. However, that is an adventure for another day...

Magic Items

Dragon Teeth Necklace

A leather necklace with carved vertebrae and teeth from a draconic creature. It was once worn by a sorcerer.

► **Benefit.** Once per day, you can cast the *commune* spell. Instead of the spell's normal effect, the counsel is provided by a great wyrm; a millennium-old dragon.

► **Benefit.** Once per week, you can summon a **spectral drake** to your side. This draconic mount stays by your side for 1d3 days. Flying, it triples a horse's speed.



Spidersoul Pendant

A fist-sized garnet with an eerie glow within. Silver inlays on its surface cover it in spider web patterns.

► **Benefit.** Once per year, you can imbue an arachnid creature with sentience and intelligence. The resulting being knows any language you know. The sentient spider, while not loyal, retains a neutral disposition.

► **Benefit.** Once per day, you can summon a loyal **giant spider** (DC 14 WIS spell). The spider stays 1d4 rounds.



Mirror of Fate

Set on an alabaster base and frame, this mirror's surface vibrates and oscillates like a pond of molten silver.

► **Benefit.** Sentient beings gazing into the depths of this mirror see hazy glimpses of the future. Once a day, a strong mind can focus the visions into something concrete (DC 15 INT). This is equivalent to the *prophecy* spell but it is not limited by a deity's knowledge in the present. Failing causes the permanent loss of 1 INT.



STATBLOCKS

Banshee

An ethereal, woman wearing an ancient dress. Her beautiful visage is stained with despair and pain.

AC: 13

HP: 27 LV5

ATK: 2 touch +4 (1d8) or 1 wail

MV: Near (fly)

S:-2 D:+3 C:+0 I:+0 W:+0 Ch:+4

.....

Incorporeal. In place of attacks, the banshee becomes corporeal or incorporeal.

Darkness. Non-magical light sources within near are absorbed by the banshee's lamp.

Wail. Living beings within near DC 12 CON or drop to 0 HP and start dying.



Soulbinding Spider

A horse-sized arachnid with fearsome, sharp claws. Its abdomen section is etched with human-like faces.

AC: 14

HP: 15 LV4

ATK: 1 bite +3 (1d4 + poison) or 1 possess

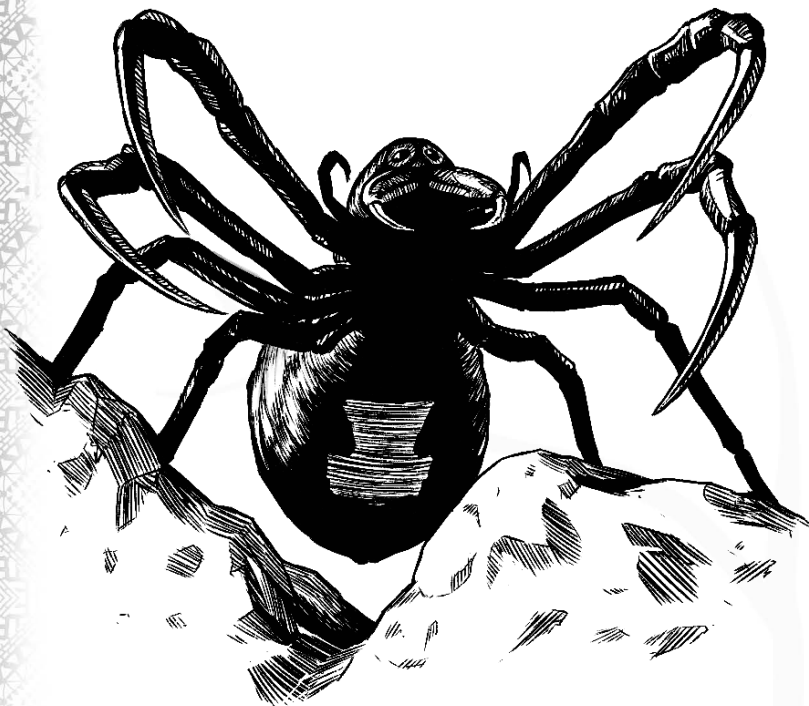
MV: Near (climb)

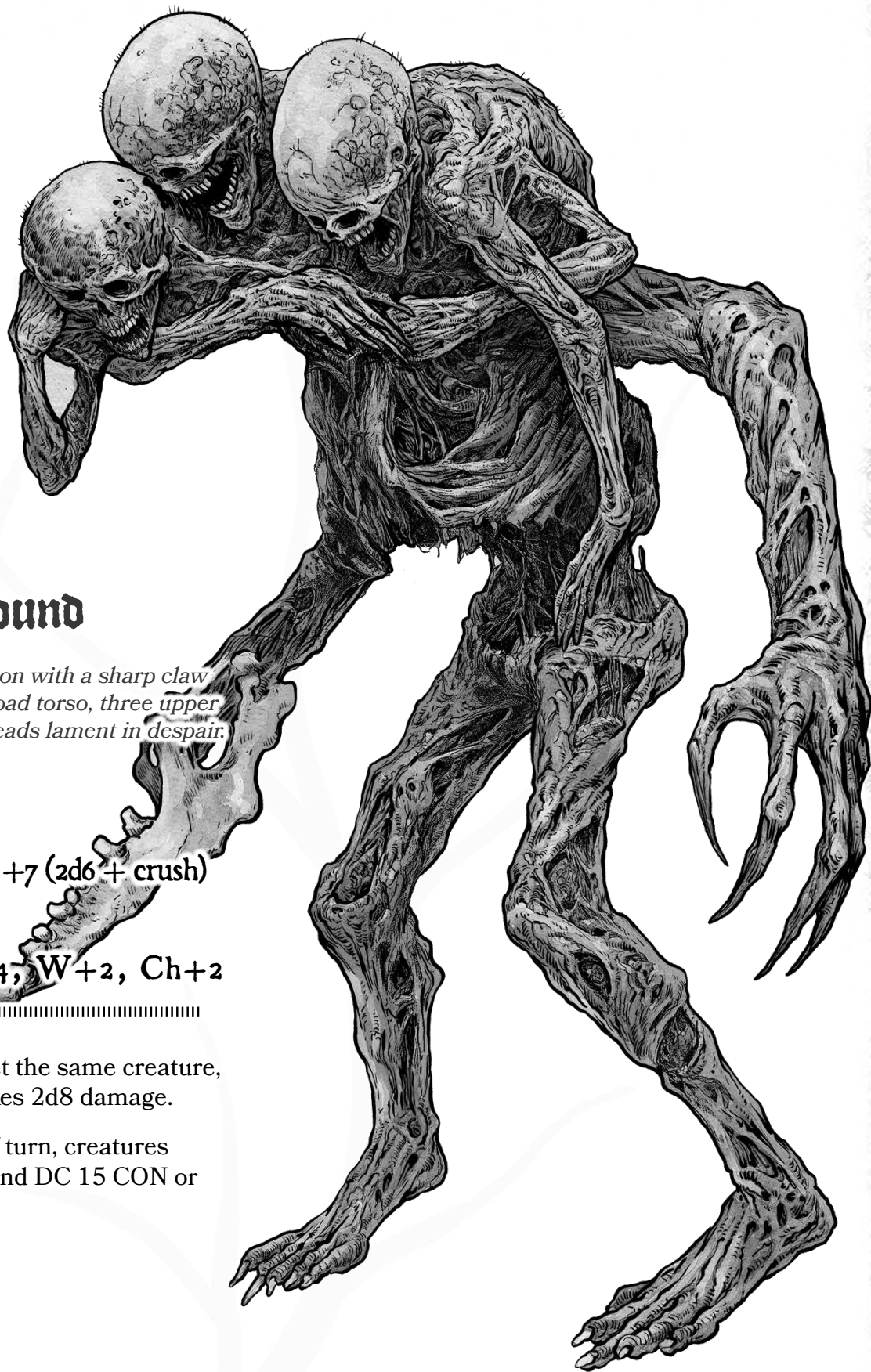
S:+2 D:+2 C:+0 I:+2 W:+1 Ch:-3

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Poison. DC 12 CON or paralyzed 1d4 hours.

Possess. One target, close range. Contested WIS check. If the spider wins, the target's soul is captured for 1d4 rounds. The person's face appears in the spider's abdomen. The target is unconscious during this time. If the target dies during this time, the effect is permanent.





Sinewbound

A leathery undead abomination with a sharp claw and a bone pincer. Over its broad torso, three upper bodies are bound. The three heads lament in despair.

AC: 15

HP: 40 LV8

ATK: 1 claw and 1 pincer +7 (2d6 + crush)

MV: Near

S+4, D+1, C+4, I+4, W+2, Ch+2

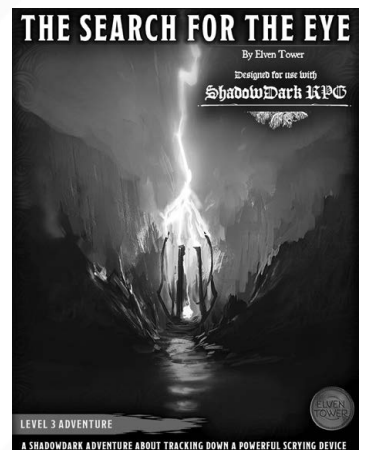
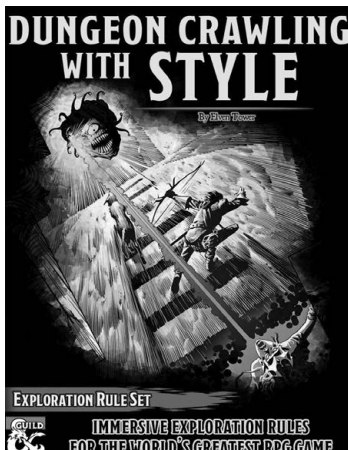
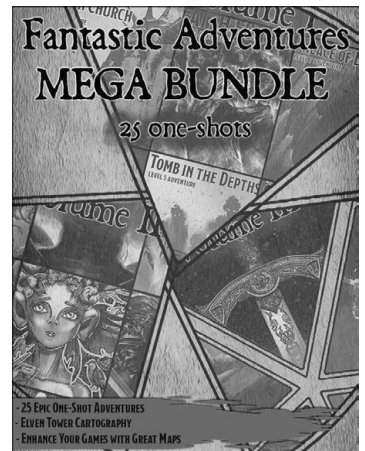
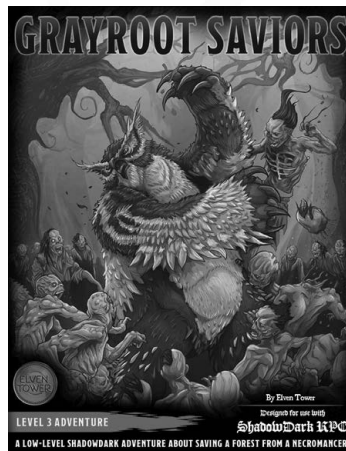
Crush. If both attacks target the same creature, DC 15 STR or the target takes 2d8 damage.

Necrotic Aura. At start of turn, creatures within near of the Sinewbound DC 15 CON or 1d6 damage.

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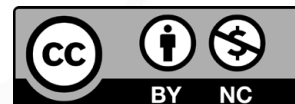


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