

DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 34

Contributions By:
John Cunningham
Mark Tomforde
Miel Past



10 ORIGINAL ADVENTURES
HIGH RESOLUTION MAPS
VTT - ROLL20 MAPS

Designed for use with
ShadowDark RPG



CREDITS

Managing Editor. Derek Ruiz

Editor. Arthur Rouise

Authors. Derek Ruiz and Arthur Rouise

Guest Authors

John Cunningham (Experience for Killing Cunning & Dangerous Foes and Doing Interesting Things, p. 14)

Mark Tomforde (The Circle of Flame, p. 31)

Viel Nast (The Sea Clover, p. 46)

Graphic Design / Layout. Derek Ruiz

Cover Art. Kim Holm, CC-BY 4.0

Interior Illustrations. Elven Tower Cartography, CC-0 assets, Public Domain images, Dom-Critelli / shutterstock.com, art by John Latta, and art by Kim Holm.

Cartography. Elven Tower Maps, Ori the Cartographer, and Rustymaps.

Special Thanks. All of our fantastic supporters on patreon who keep on helping us create fantastic locations and adventures. Without your support, this product would not be possible.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Credits	2	Birth of a Phoenix . . . . .	.32
Table of Contents	3	<i>Level 3 Stand-Alone Adventure</i>	
Clash of Deities	5	Chapel of Lost Letters . . . . .	.42
<i>Level 4 Dungeoncrawl</i>		<i>One-Page Dungeon</i>	
Evergreen Cannibals.	8	Sepulcher of Hollows . . . . .	.43
<i>Level 1 Dungeoncrawl</i>		<i>Level 3 Dungeoncrawl</i>	
Anguish of the Eternally Damned . . .	.11	The Sea Clover . . . . .	.46
<i>Level 3 Dungeoncrawl</i>		<i>By: Viel Nast</i>	
Experience for Killing Cunning & Dangerous Foes and Doing Interesting Things. . .	.15	The Viperian Curse . . . . .	.50
<i>By: John Cunningham</i>		<i>Level 4 Stand-Alone Adventure</i>	
Plunderers of Relics . . . . .	.18	Cultists of The Lost . . . . .	.61
<i>Level 1 Dungeoncrawl</i>		<i>Level 7 Isometric Dungeon</i>	
Monstrous Electric Eel. . . . .	.20	Guest Contributions . . . . .	.64
<i>Level 6 Stand-Alone Adventure</i>		Licensing . . . . .	.65
The Circle of Flame . . . . .	.31	Thank You . . . . .	.66
<i>By: Mark Tomforde</i>			



600 + Maps

Foundry VTT

100+ Roll20 Products

ELVEN TOWER ADVENTURES

DUNGEON MAP PACK VOL. 2

WEB OF HATRED
LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE



WELCOME TO SHADOWDARK RPG

We are Elven Tower, a small team of Mexican creators who illustrate medieval-fantasy maps and write great adventures for each of them. We have been operating for over six years in the TTRPG market and have crafted 650+ cartography pieces and a similar amount of written content for them. The bulk of our recent work now consists of adventures and content for **Shadowdark RPG**.

This supplement contains many of our **Shadowdark RPG** creations. Nine low-level, original adventures; each features amazing cartography pieces. And an extra goodie, a neutral, one-page dungeon that can be ported to any fantasy system.

We compile our monthly creations into our popular *Dungeon Vault Magazine*. Within, in addition to our in-house creations, we feature paid guest writers to supply all kinds of additional content: player options, GM material, monsters, etc. Shadowdark 3rd-party content creators are sure to appear in our magazine soon!

Fresh Shadowdark RPG Content

CLASH OF DEITIES

Cursed are those who stand in the way of Gede and Arbael, for together they triumph against unsurmountable odds. They are a mountain to contend with.

Book of Gede and Arbael

Few mortals can comprehend the extent of the primordial wars and the conflicts among the known deities. Untold stories led to the apparent death and disappearance of two gods, now commonly known as The Lost. All details about them are absent from written and oral history.

Gede, the god of feasts, mirth, and the wilds, is worshiped by elves, fey, and even humans. A temple dedicated to her right-hand, the archangel Arbael, is located a mile from the nearest human settlement, Cherryplum Town. Centuries ago, the locals often went to pray. Alas, it all changed when agents of The Lost carved their way through the mud and established an altar to their forlorn deities. They cast a terrible incantation that cursed the compound and trapped the angel's essence in an inscrutable prison. Since then, the place is shunned and dangerous, and the angel has been lost to Gede herself.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Release. A bishop of Gede begs the party to explore the shunned temple after a dream. He saw Gede's archangel, they have been trapped for centuries. (0 XP).

Retrieval. A criminal leader hires the characters to retrieve the Altar of the Lost from Gede's shunned temple. They may keep other trinkets found there (80 gp, 8 XP).

Explorers. Jamil, a scholar, hires the characters as bodyguards to explore Gede's temple. He claims there are wondrous treasures and unique tomes (40 gp, 4 XP).

RUMORS

d6 Details

- 1 The temple of blessed Gede has been cursed for ages. Only the bravest priests ever visit the place.
- 2 Legend has it that cultists of The Lost committed a terrible sin near the temple to curse it forever.
- 3 A hefty treasure is said to be hidden in Gede's temple. However, it would be frowned upon to plunder it.
- 4 Some records claim that the temple is dedicated to the great Arbael, Gede's most trusted archangel.
- 5 Strange grunts and howls come from the underground temple; they keep most onlookers and explorers at bay.
- 6 The temple can be reached from a cavern system that features an underground stream. Spelunkers found this entrance a few years ago but didn't venture further.

Level 4 Adventure

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 crawling rounds and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Areas 6 and 9 have light sources; the rest of the dungeon is dark. All denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Aura of Corruption.** Each crawling round, a random character is assailed by The Lost. They become possessed and attack their allies (DC 13 WIS check). *Protection from evil* dispels this nefarious possession.

RANDOM EVENTS

d8 Details

- 1 Two **giant bats** swoop from the dark ceiling and attack random creatures. They fiercely fight to the death.
- 2 A **basilisk** spawns by the Altar of the Lost. The souls of those it petrifies are absorbed by The Lost.
- 3 Arbael speaks into the characters' minds: "*Be valiant and free me from this eon-long imprisonment.*"
- 4 1d6 **skeletons** approach the characters. The axe-wielding undead are fearsome, merciless warriors.
- 5 1d4 **giant dung beetles** emerge from the caverns and attack. They are territorial but do not pursue.
- 6 A **gelatinous cube** approaches and attempts to consume a random character. The ooze is almost invisible.
- 7 Supernatural wind blows through, snuffing out all light sources. The braziers in area 6 turn on again in 1 hour.
- 8 The sounds and smells of a recent battle attract a **giant scorpion**. The large vermin fights to the death.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

A copper-lined circle on the floor dominates the room. Two sets of inscriptions are laid on it, some delicate and lavish, others crude and improvised.

► **The Circle.** The original runes and the face carvings speak of Gede and Arbael, her archangel. The ugly etchings were carved by visitors to prove that they were here at some point. Some signatures date back decades. The stone circle's primary function was to be used as a focus for summoning spells (DC 14 INT check).

► **The Enclosures.** When the characters approach any door, four **wights** emerge from the standing sarcophagi.

► **Treasure (2 XP).** Inside the sarcophagi, there are 15 gp, 200 sp, a *potion of healing*, and a +1 *dagger*.

2. CAVERN ENTRANCE

Narrow meandering tunnels from an active mining site lead to a large chamber with a shallow, slow-flowing stream. The water is green-tinted and opaque.

The characters may access the underground compound through here if they hear the sixth rumor and actively look for this entrance. Coming through here changes the structure and allows early access to some areas.

► **Crawlers.** The tracks and droppings of a strange creature can be detected. They belong to two **cave creepers**; these caves are their hunting grounds. If the characters are noisy or bear any wounds, the insects approach.

3. ANCIENT LIBRARY

Against all preconceptions, the contents of the library have withstood the passage of time. A book floats in mid-air while a pen writes new lines into its pages.

► **The Library.** An invisible servant cares for the library and logs the characters' names and appearances in a log. The servant is impervious to all damage but can be dispelled for 24 hours. A mighty incantation protects the books and tomes from the passage of time.

► **Book of Gede and Arbael (5 XP).** The tomes are historical recounts of Gede's followers and logs of miraculous deeds. The *Book of Gede and Arbael* (50 gp) is unique among them. It tells the story of the powerful angel and how they served Gede for millennia.

4. TOMBS OF HOLLOW

The first chamber contains shallow niches with offerings and a stone coffer; the north chamber contains two lavishly-decorated, gold-inlaid, stone sarcophagi.

► **The Offerings.** Ancient tradition dictates that all visitors must leave something of personal value on the niches. They are crammed with strange trinkets and mementos. If any character refuses to do this small sacrifice out of respect, the guardians emerge (see below).

► **The Hollows.** The spirits of two renowned paladins have been cursed and corrupted by the essence of The Lost. They emerge as two **wraiths** and attack. Deeming any refusal to leave an offering as a terrible offense.

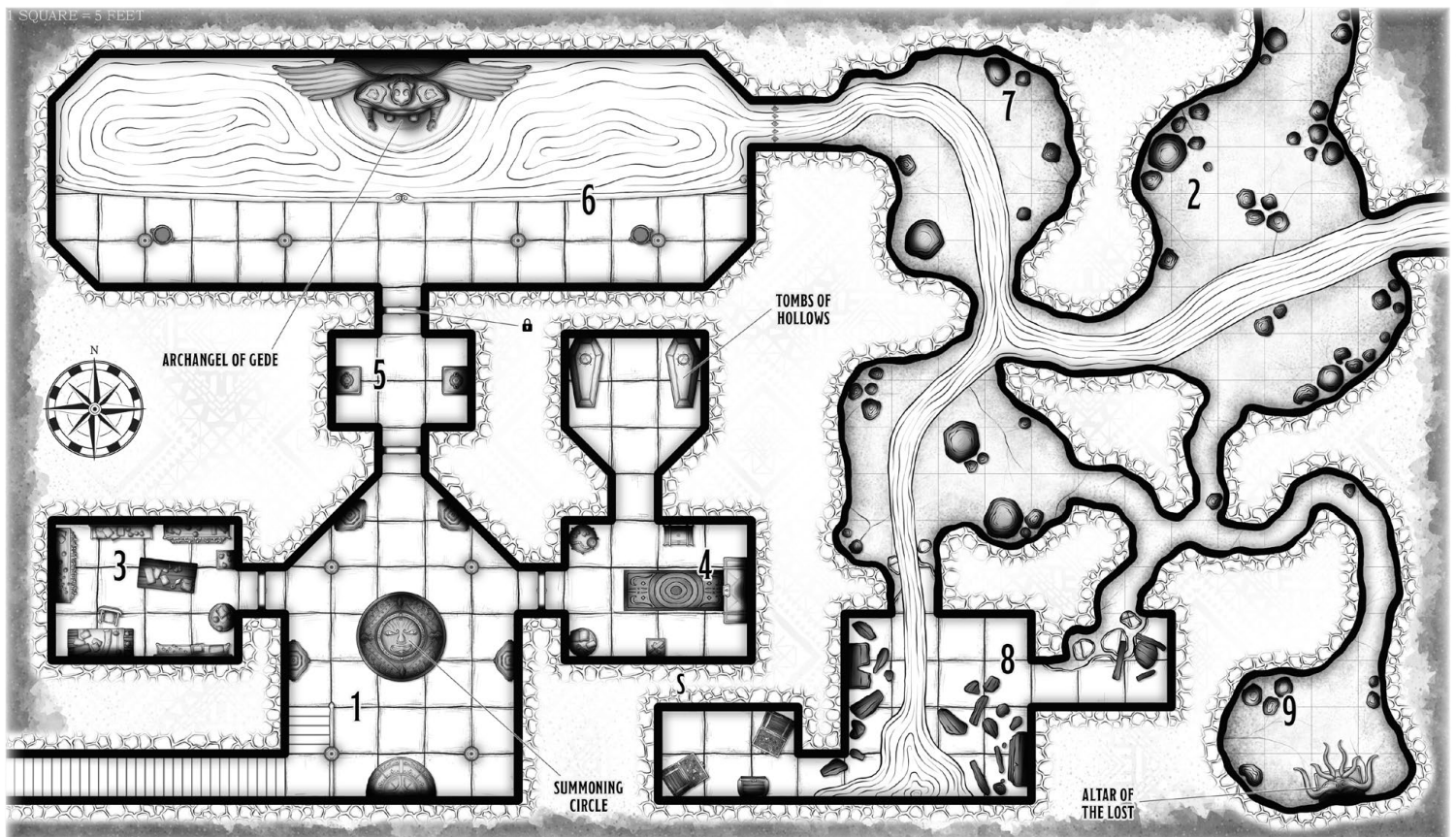
► **Secret Area.** Close inspection of the area for 1 **crawling round** reveals a hidden iron lever behind a niche. Pulling it reveals a narrow passage to area 8.

5. CHAMBER OF ABANDON

Two red vases flank a door decorated with Gede's sigil. One of the vases is cracked; sand spills from it.

The chamber once featured a terrible deadly trap but it was disabled long ago. A spellcaster learns this from the runes on the clay. Twelve people perished in this grim manner; they were turned to fine sand (DC 15 INT).

► **Locked Door.** The north door features a sturdy lock (DC 18 DEX). The area can also be reached from area 7.



6. THE ARCHANGEL'S EFFIGY

A towering statue of an armor-clad angel stands proud on a dais surrounded by green, opaque water. The angel's face is clouded in grime and mist. The water flows out of the room through a barred gate.

► **The Pond.** The water flows endlessly from two spouts on the dais. The water is polluted and toxic to drink. The Altar of the Lost (area 9) causes this. It coalesces into a **greater water elemental** when the characters arrive.

► **The Gate.** The iron bars must be broken or bent to walk across the shallow waters to area 7 (DC 16 STR).

► **The Effigy.** After dealing with the water elemental, archangel Arbael manages to project its voice from its eternal prison: "*Dauntless travelers, my name is Arbael, I have been imprisoned by The Lost. Release me and earn Gede's endless gratitude. An altar to the foul deity is nearby. You must sunder that evil artifact.*"

7. NORTH CAVERN

The characters may reach area 6 from here by bending the iron bars in the western passage (DC 16 STR). Exploring the area for 1 crawling round reveals a buried toolbox and a set of bones. The miner came to explore the place but was killed by the savage cave creepers.

8. THE LOST VAULT

This dungeon section collapsed from water erosion and seismic activity long ago. Little remains of its contents except for a chamber that was once a vault.

► **Treasure (6 XP).** The chests contain 100 gp, 2,600 sp, two *potions of healing*, and a *circlet of wisdom*.

9. THE ALTAR OF THE LOST

A bizarre-looking altar bears a glowing sculpture of a mind-bending entity with twisting tentacles, sprouting eye sockets, and maniacal faces of untold madness.

The altar embodies a sliver of the godly energy of The Lost. Its power corrupts the area, animates the nearby undead, pollutes the pond in area 6, and keeps Arbael captive within their statue. The altar has been here for centuries and does not suffer foolhardy attempts to destroy it. It releases the energy contained within when the characters arrive to protect itself from harm.

► **The Guardians.** The altar's energy is violently released, summoning a **marilith** accompanied by two **dretches**. The despotic demons are loyal to The Lost and fight to the death to protect the nefarious altar.

► **The Altar.** The limestone relic can be destroyed with hammers, spades, or similar tools in 1 **crawling round**. The stone relic weighs 1,000 pounds and may require a pulley or other equipment to haul it out of the dungeon. See **Development** for the consequences of these actions.

DEVELOPMENT

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

The characters defeat the terrible demons conjured by the Altar of the Lost and are free to destroy or move the altar as they see fit. Destroying the altar concludes its evil influence on its surroundings, clears up the stream, and liberates Arbael. The characters can meet the archangel in area 6 as they recover their senses and become a beacon of gratitude. The archangel owes the party their freedom and promises to come to their aid in a time of need. The angel gifts them a magical flute that shall summon them to their help when the time comes.

If the characters were hired by a criminal organization and manage to move the cursed altar back to Cherryplum Town, they earn their payment and are sent away. The criminal guild soon becomes possessed pawns of The Lost and causes havoc and numerous unnecessary deaths in town. The town becomes a nest for low-lives, criminals, and corrupt politicians within a year.



EVERGREEN CANNIBALS

... beasts spawned by hell! They walk like men but don't let that fool you. They are monsters! They ate my cousin! Those bastards devoured him before me!

Traumatized Survivor



Every city proudly professes its myths and tales as its own. Some may even become non-material landmarks of important places. Verbal chronicles that help local lore and part of history survive the passage of time. And the case is no different for the good folk living in Woodpine Village, located next to Evergreen Woods. Here, as children go to bed, parents tell cautionary tales of witches. There are countless versions and names for the witches. But all of them share one thing in common: the little ones that misbehave are taken to the woods and devoured alive!

A MYTH COME TRUE

TWO MONTHS AGO, three young men with a foolhardy attitude entered Evergreen Woods. They should have known better... Woodpine Village tales, which they heard in their childhood, hide a nugget of truth. There are indeed hags that lurk in the deepest part of the forest.

The naive lads looked for a treasure after being tipped by an old woman the day before. Little did they know that this frail lady was one of the witches... The hag underestimated them though; the three of them were tougher than she thought and they scarred her face. It was an unexpected and undesired outcome for the ravenous hag. She stopped playing with her prey and took revenge for their insolence. The hag cursed them with a hideous hex and turned them into merciless monsters.

It was worst than death. Of the three young men who bravely confronted the witch, almost nothing remained. Their minds were void of thought, empty. Their bodies became green carcasses, crude vestiges of human life.

RUMORS

d4 Details

- 1 It is said that witches roam Evergreen woods at night. People claim someone must have angered them. That must be the reason for the recent killing spree.
- 2 Most people in Woodpine Village fear the woods. They say that whoever enters will be most likely eaten by hags.
- 3 Children and old people are the victims of the recent kidnappings and disappearances. Some believe they still live but the majority of folk do not hold that much hope.
- 4 Witches' stories are antediluvian. But never before did the people of Woodpine Village suffer this many losses.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

A LIFE OF adventure begins! The first stop is Woodpine Village. When the characters get here, the village folk approach and ask for the characters' help. The heroes then learn of their current situation (see **Rumors**).

Hunters. An envoy from the capital has the means to hire the best mercenaries available to deal with this problem. Trenton, the city's bailiff, believes a witch is behind the recent disappearances. He offers a hefty reward to whoever brings the witch's head (30 gp, 3 XP).

Hope. Alphonse, the town speaker, is the father of one of the young men that got lost two months ago (see **A Myth Come True**). He gathers all the gold he can from among the villagers. They all beg the heroes to ignore the bailiff's assumptions and look for their loved ones. A survivor claims it was not a witch who attacked him and his friends. Alphonse believes that whoever is behind the murders may also be a hapless victim (10 gp, 1 XP).

Level 1 Adventure

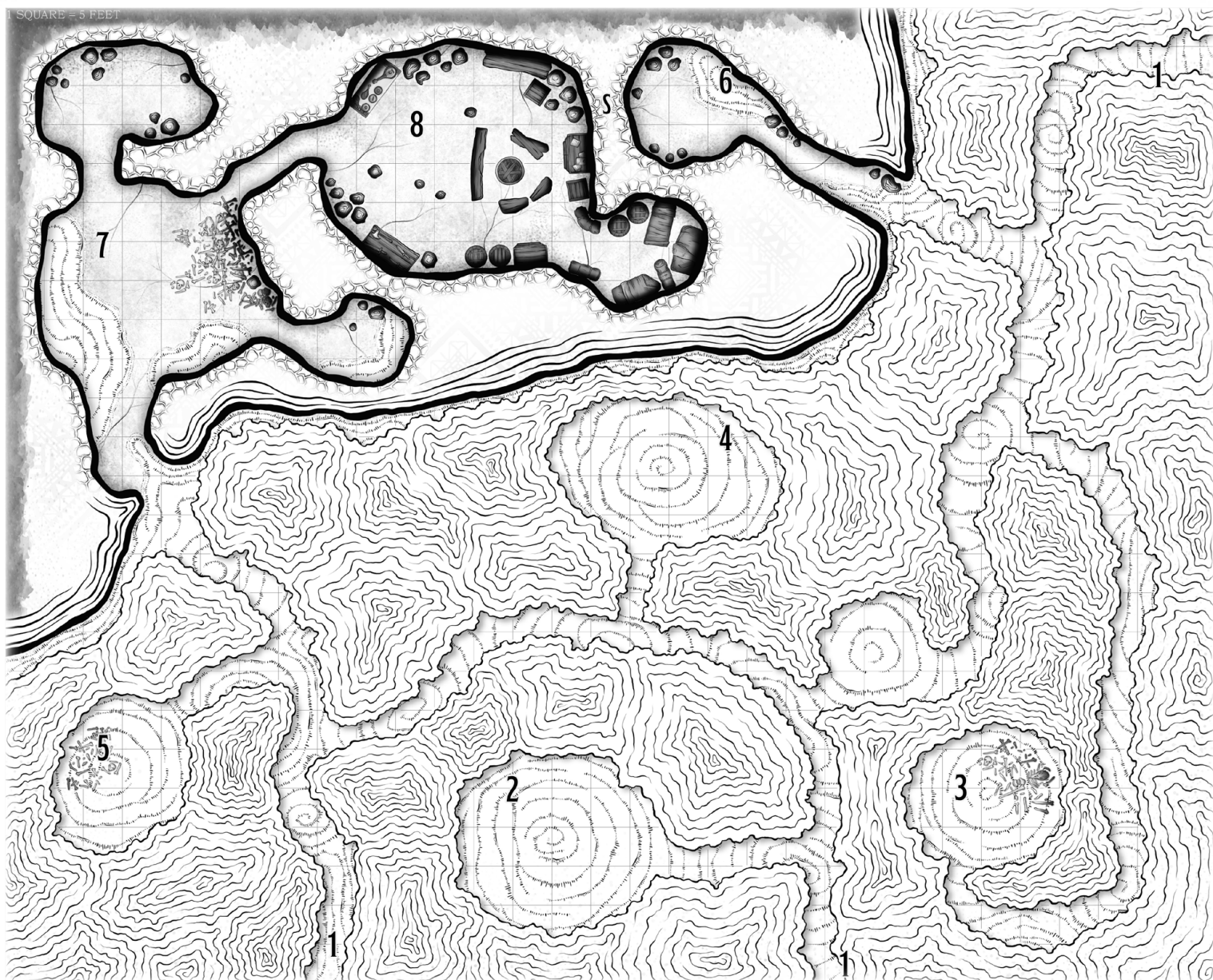
► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 crawling rounds and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Even during the day, the dense trees and foliage cover the sunlight. Traveling through Evergreen Woods at night requires torches or lamps. All denizens or monsters within the forest are **dark-adapted**.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6 Details

- 1 A **swarm of centipedes** is on their way to a pile of bones. They detect the characters and attack them instead.
- 2 A group of three **apes** appears. They are not hostile unless provoked. They just want food and leave if fed.
- 3 The characters find two bear cubs. Their territorial mother (**brown bear**) is 50 feet behind them. It attacks the characters if they interact with the cubs in any way.
- 4 The characters stumble upon the nest of a jungle reptile (**cobra snake**). The scaled creature defends its eggs if the intruders approach to interact with its nest.
- 5 A pack of six **wolves** prey on the characters. The pack attempts to surprise them. The heroes are ambushed unless they notice the stealthy canines (DC 15 WIS).
- 6 The characters stumble upon one of the three **beastmen**. After a little hesitation, it attacks but flees when injured.



1. FOREST TRAILS

The characters end up at one of these three paths after following the villagers' instructions and the footprints on the ground. Roll once on the **Random Events** table.

2. FIRST CLEARING

If the characters search this area (DC 13 WIS), they find several random objects: a couple of feathers, lizard scales, a human finger, tufts of hair, and other unorthodox ingredients. A person with basic knowledge of magic identifies these as sorcery components (DC 12 INT).

3. PILE OF BONES (EAST)

The grass has started to grow around the bones, grappling them, and forming an eerie shrine to death.

► **Clues.** It takes 1 **crawling round** to investigate the pile of bones. Most of the remains are humanoid (human and elvish). Strangely enough, the bite marks suggest an almost human-sized mandible or set of teeth.

4. SECOND CLEARING

If the characters search this area (DC 13 WIS), they find several footprints of humanoid creatures that lead to area 7. Roll once on the **Random Events** table.

5. PILE OF BONES (WEST)

A flock of carrion birds eats the remains. The swarm of carrion crows attacks the characters if they come within 10 feet of it. Use the stats of a **swarm of bats**.

► **Clues.** The characters cannot investigate the bones until they deal with the birds. It takes 1 **crawling round** to inspect the remains. Half-buried among the bones, the heroes find a silver ring (1 gp), a piece of a leather apron, a backpack torn in two, some wooden utensils, a dagger, and several torn and blood-stained pieces of clothing. They belonged to people from Woodpine Village. The three witchcraft-created **beastmen** are responsible for these deaths. The tracks and signs on the ground suggest the victims were dragged and devoured here.

6. CAVE AND SECRET PASSAGE

The monsters created by the witch live in the cavern (area 8). From there, they unconsciously started to dig a tunnel to join area 6 to their cave. When finished, this grants them another entrance to their home.

► **Weak Wall.** The characters may notice the west side of the cavern looks frail. It takes 1 **crawling round** to strike enough hits with a spade, hammer, or a similar tool and remove the debris to form a tunnel. The three **beastmen** in area 8 are alerted by the sound of this.

7. PILE OF BONES (CAVERNS)

The beginning of this small cavern network has a main chamber with two alcoves north and east. Patches of grass and moss grow within. But the main feature is the large pile of bones. It takes 1 **crawling round** to inspect the bones. The characters identify this as the main feeding chamber. Here lie the bones of the most recent victims; ants and flies flood the sad remnants of life.

8. CAVE OF THE CURSED

The characters find the three young men that antagonized the witch, or at least, what remains of them. Their skin is green and hardened, they lost their hair and developed grim, devilish features. The three **beastmen** stand their ground and defend their home with their lives. They know no fear and cannot be reasoned with.

► **Alternative.** If the characters were hired by Alphonse, they might seek a better solution: they can knock the monsters out instead of killing them outright. While unconscious, a cleric may cast a *protection from evil* spell to break the hex and free the lads from damnation.

This allows the three young men to come back to normal. They need a full week of rest and care to regain their strength and clean their bodies of their horrid diet. However, even with no recollection of what happened or what they did, their lives shall never be the same.

DEVELOPMENT

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

► **Witch Hunters.** The characters came for the head of a monster and shall not return without one. Trenton, the bailiff, is happy to know the culprits were stopped, witch or not. He pays the heroes their reward but the people of Woodpine Village kindly ask them to go. They are not welcome after displaying Alphonse's son's head.

► **Agents of Good.** The city's bailiff wants to process and judge the three young men after hearing what happened from the characters. Alphonse begs the heroes to hunt the witch for good so the bailiff leaves his son and his friends alone. That is an adventure for another day...



ANGUISH OF THE ETERNALLY DAMNED

It is the most morbid punishment of all. An eternity not living nor dead. An inextinguishable source of agony, anguish, and pain. Is it humane to allow it?

The Black Tome



Elves mages and craftsmen are to credit for some of the most marvelous creations. From sacred forges to fine weaponry. Elves have created wondrous things but they are also to blame for the most despicable uses of magic-craft. Few know the extent of the elves' magical achievements.

Millennia ago, during a despotic elvish reign, the overseers created a magical prison. It took them decades to perfect it. The Tomb of the Eternally Damned is truly a work of the sickest minds. Since then, the worst criminals have been sentenced to eternal damnation. When a person is found guilty, they are brought to the tomb, slain ritualistically, and presented to the effigy of Crucified-Gede. The person is then turned into an undead spirit; forever trapped within the tomb walls. This imprisonment is an everlasting source of loneliness, anguish, and pain in which they retain full consciousness.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Rescue. An elf named Darael claims his father has been imprisoned in the tomb for centuries. He believes the punishment has been enough (60 gp, 3 XP).

Greed. The characters learn that fantastic treasures and relics are stored in the Tomb of the Eternally Damned. They are ripe for plundering (0 XP).

Collector. An elvish necromancer offers the characters a hefty reward for retrieving the valuable *Black Tome* from the well-guarded tomb (75 gp, 4 XP).

RUMORS

d6 Details

- 1 The last person to be interred in the tomb was a despicable elvish warlord. It occurred two hundred years ago.
- 2 There have always been disputes among elvish groups about the morality of the fate of eternal damnation.
- 3 Rumor has it that a significant number of innocent people have been interred in the cursed tomb.
- 4 Many explorers have tried to plunder the tomb but it is well-protected. None have emerged victorious.
- 5 An elvish faction tried to release all the trapped souls a century ago without success. They died in the tomb.
- 6 Some people theorize that the trapped souls are later used as an energy source for the creation of elvish magical marvels and as foci for complex incantations.

Level 3 Adventure

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 crawling rounds and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Some areas have sconces or braziers with permanent *light* spells. All denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Evil Bolstering.** All undead creatures have advantage on checks versus *turn undead* and *rebuke unholy*. In addition, all undead noted in area descriptions reform at dawn unless the *Rite of Deliverance* is performed by a cleric during the new moon on the chapel (area 10).

► **Soul Stealing.** Living creatures that die in the Tomb of the Eternally Damned have their souls stolen and added to the hundreds of contained souls (DC 18 CON).

RANDOM EVENTS

d8 Details

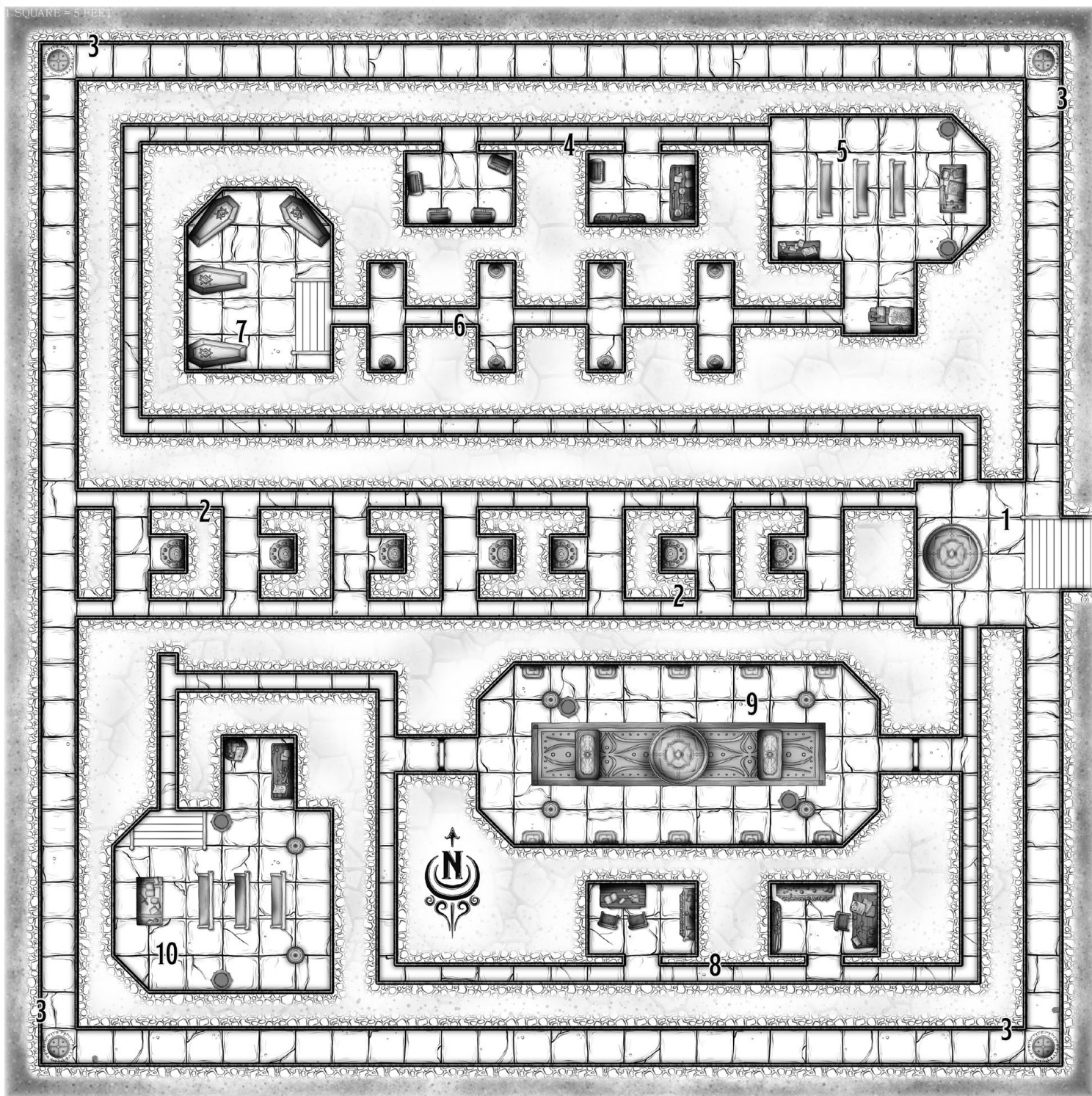
- 1 Supernatural wind blows through, snuffing out all light sources. The braziers in area 6 turn on again in 1 hour.
- 2 1d6 brave **peasants** with forks arrive at the tomb looking for treasure and renown. They ask to join the party.
- 3 A mage named Garlus arrives looking for the *Black Tome*. He is indifferent to the characters' goals.
- 4 1d4 **skeletons** approach from afar. They repeat phrases they said in their lives as they fight without mercy.
- 5 A **ghost** approaches the party asking for directions to the nearest barracks. The spirit is disoriented and lost.
- 6 A **giant leech** drops from the ceiling and attempts to attach to the character wearing the least armor.
- 7 1d6 **zombies** unearth themselves from below. They still carry tatters and armor pieces of an ancient kingdom.
- 8 The **ghost** of a corrupt priest manifests behind the party. It chants mass while attempting to slay the living.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

The mausoleum stairs lead down to a grim landing with a 1-foot-tall, stone circle etched with fine runes. A plaque with a fine script stands over the circle.

► **The Circle.** A wizard can record the rune sequence for future use with the *teleport* spell (DC 9 INT).

► **The Plaque.** The ornamental tablet reads in Elvish: "*Here await those guilty of heinous crimes. They were sentenced to eternal damnation by their peers. No one has the right to appeal to such a well-earned sentence.*"



2. JADE NICHES

Each of the alcoves along this long passageway houses a golden urn surrounded by nine jade containers. They tremble and vibrate faintly every few minutes.

The Urns. Each urn contains the desiccated bones of 2d8 people. From the remains, it can be deduced that the majority were elves, the rest humans (DC 14 INT).

► **The Jade Niches.** Each small box contains the ashes of a single individual. They are coveted by necromancers to be used as spell foci. None can be moved from their resting place without the retaliation of four **wights**.

3. CIRCLES OF DELIVERANCE

The dungeon corner features a faintly-glowing, magic circle inscribed with necromantic runes and spells.

The characters must use the *Rite of Deliverance*. The incantation is described in the *Black Tome* (area 8). The rite must be performed in each corner of the dungeon to dispel the magic circles (DC 12 WIS). Before dispelling each magic circle, 1d3 **shadows** appear in it and attack all living creatures nearby without mercy.

When all circles are dispelled, the characters must perform the rite once again before Gede's effigy in area 10.

4. STORAGE ROOMS

Two chambers interrupt the long, narrow passage. Each is filled with wooden shelves and containers.

Those brought to the tomb were stripped of their possessions, which were stored here. They belong to no one but the dead. This treasure is considered to be cursed.

► **Treasure (10 XP).** Collectively, the two chambers contain 80 gp, 3,600 sp, and 10,500 cp. There are also a *potion of healing* and a *+1 longbow of the elven kings*. Whoever touches this treasure is cursed (disadvantage on CON checks) until a *restoration* spell is used.

5. NORTH CHAPEL

A dozen dark apparitions sit in silent prayer before a painting of Crucified-Gede. They lament their fates.

If attacked or disturbed, some of the spirits retaliate. Four **shadows** rise from the pews and attack.

► **The Painting.** The striking portrayal of Crucified-Gede goes against all that the goddess stands for (DC 12 WIS). This is sacrilegious. The elves of yore used the mutilated image of the goddess to empower the necromancy that makes the prison function.

6. RECEPTACLES OF SOULS

Each alcove contains a gilded vase on a shallow plinth. The vases are sealed shut and cannot be opened. If broken (DC 16 STR check), they contain a mixture of ashes and sulfur. A wizard infers that these were used as foci when creating the prison and kept as a relic (DC 9 INT).

7. TOMB OF KINGS

Four lavishly-decorated sarcophagi hug the walls of this chamber. Each bears an intricate family crest.

Since the prison's inception, four elvish kings have been imprisoned here. Despite their crimes, they were awarded a place of honor in the Tomb of the Eternally Damned.

► **The Fabled Shield (3 XP).** Within the sarcophagus of the king, Ix-Natheer, awaits the *shield of the witch-king*. An elvish **wraith** emerges when the shield is taken.

8. THE ARCHIVES

Two chambers interrupt the long, narrow passage. They contain an accurate archive. The tomes contain historical recounts of the crimes that all those trapped in the Tomb of the Eternally Damned committed. Included are also those who participated when dictating sentences.

► **The Black Tome.** This leather-bound book contains the incantations and magic used to create the prison. It contains the *Rite of Deliverance* which can be used to deactivate the prison and release all souls into the ether. A cleric can perform the rite after studying it for 1 day. It must be cast in the four corners (area 3) and in area 10.



9. CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

This large tomb contains the remains of six elvish criminals that once served as political figures. Out of all interred in the tomb, these undead are the most aggressive and unrepentant. Coming within 5 feet of any enclosure causes six **skeletons** to emerge and attack.

10. SOUTH CHAPEL

An effigy of Crucified-Gede hangs on the west wall. Bloody tears pour down from the goddess's eyes.

The chamber is peaceful and contains nothing of real value. Before a cleric recites the *Rite of Deliverance* here, five **shadows** manifest by the despicable effigy. They were the original creators of the prison and were interred here for their wretched deed. They are compelled to fiercely attack and slay the characters.

DEVELOPMENT

IF THE CHARACTERS plunder the Tomb of the Eternally Damned, they earn the enmity of elvish factions who believe the prison is a sacred creation of elvish culture. They shall seek the characters to set things straight.

If the characters succeed in casting the *Rite of Deliverance*, the tomb collapses in the course of a few minutes and all souls are freed. Some of the beings released may soon wreak havoc upon the world. Even in death, they shall soon prove why they were better imprisoned.

**EXPERIENCE FOR KILLING
CUNNING & DANGEROUS FOES
AND DOING INTERESTING THINGS**



Designed for use with

ShadowDark RPS

BY JOHN CUNNINGHAM

SBM PRESS

EXPERIENCE FOR KILLING CUNNING & DANGEROUS FOES AND DOING INTERESTING THINGS

“I live, I love, I slay, and I am content.”

Robert E Howard (Conan)



There's nothing better than delving into dungeons, slaying monsters, and scoring sweet, sweet gold! But in Shadowdark you primarily get Experience for scoring the cash, not slaying the monsters that only live to protect that cash, or accomplishing other interesting things in the game.

There are optional Shadowdark rules to award XP for Monster killing – but that usually comes with too much bookkeeping! This rules mod streamlines Monster killing XP and makes it competitive – you only get what you kill!

Furthermore, wise travelers say that the journey is as important as the destination, so this system also considers awarding XP for unique circumstances and challenges that can also help improve your Character's skills and level.

The following are some optional XP and great award rules for your Shadowdark games.

XP FOR KILLING CHALLENGING MONSTERS

WE AWARD EXPERIENCE to characters based on how the Monster Level compares to the Character Level. They only get XP for killing challenging monsters – you don't get rewarded for easy kills.

YOU ONLY GET XP FOR THE KILLING BLOW

Yes, I know, maybe it took several people to hack that beast down – but only the Character delivering the killing blow gets the XP Award.

MONSTER SLAYING XP

Monster Level vs Character Level	XP Awarded
Less than the Character's Level	0
Equal to the Character's Level	1
More than the Character's Level	2
Twice the Character's Level	4

Example – Archibald the Weary is 2nd Level and fights a small pack of kobolds, killing three of them. Since he is Level 2 and the kobolds are only Level 1, which is less than his level, he gets no experience fighting them.

Sometime later, in the same dungeon, Archibald the Weary kills a giant bat, which is Level 2. Since the winged creature is the same as his Level, he gets 1 XP.

Still, later on, Archibald the Weary and his dungeoneers fight a Level-6 cave brute. And despite being wounded and delivering significant damage, it is another Character who delivers the killing blow – so, Archibald gets 0 XP. Life is hard in the deep, dark depths...

XP FOR CHALLENGING JOURNEYS

“The Road goes ever on and on
down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
and I must follow, if I can”

J.R.R. Tolkien (Bilbo Baggins)



The road goes ever on. The journey is the thing. How often have you heard this phrase before? And it's true – travel can represent a big challenge for you, and expose you to new things and new situations. So, let's reward that in-game with some XP.

Here is an example of how you could do it. You should consult the Journey XP table at the end of every game session, and award the Characters with exactly what it says – or as Game Master, you may award your own XP.

JOURNEY XP

Journey Event	XP Awarded
Journeying	
Easy travel (no deadly Encounters)	0
Challenging travel	1
Deadly travel	2
Delving	
Entering a new Dungeon	1
Encountering a unique Dungeon area (Under- ground Lake of Glowing Water, etc.)	1
Each hour spent in the Sha- dowdark	1
Delving down to a Dungeon floor equal to, or higher than your Level	2
Delving down to a Dungeon floor that is twice or more than Character's Level	4

JOURNEYING DEFINITIONS

Easy Travel. A journey without significant events or peril. It does not mean it did not rain or get unpleasant, only that it was not life-threatening. A walk in the rain across a country shire, say, or a journey down a smoothly flowing river.

Challenging Travel. A journey with some events or peril. Like traversing rugged terrain, fighting some beasts, or enduring some hardships from weather and spoiled food. This could be walking the road across the wilderness to an elven outpost, or traversing a snow-choked mountain pass.

Deadly Travel. A journey with great peril, fighting monsters and facing threats at every turn, meeting the face of punishing storms and disasters. Walking the wither lands of a dark lord beset by noxious fumes, ravines, and deadly foes – or perhaps a perilous voyage across a storm-wracked ocean while menaced by a giant kraken!

DELVING DEFINITIONS

Entering a new Dungeon. Yes – if it is new to you, it adds to your Character’s life experience.

Encountering a Unique Dungeon Area. Unique encounters give your Character more life experiences against which to compare new ones. And who does not want to see an underground lake of glowing water, a reverse waterfall, or a room of portal doors shimmering in the dark?

Each hour spent in the Shadowdark. More life experience under deadly conditions.

Delving down to a Dungeon floor equal to, or higher than your Level. Every time your Character pushes the boundaries, they are rewarded with new experiences – and XP! So, if your Character is Level 3 and you delve down to the 4th Level of the Dungeon, you get XP.

Delving down to a Dungeon floor that is twice or more than Character’s Level. That’s some deep and dangerous dungeon diving that brings a wealth of experience – if you survive!

Experience for Killing Cunning and Dangerous Foes and Doing Interesting Things is a supplement by John Cunningham (SBM Press), used with permission. Check it out on drivethruRPG.

XP FOR CHALLENGING TASKS

“If you never take risks, you’ll never accomplish great things. Everybody dies, but not everyone has lived.”

C. S. Lewis (Author of Narnia Chronicles)

The Game Master may also award XP for other events and in-game tasks and challenges completed by Characters that contribute to the game session. You do not see what you want? – just include it, add it! This is your game after all!

CHALLENGES XP	
Journey Event	XP Awarded
Each game session	1
Every major quest or storyline completed	1
Each Cunning Plan or Action that advances the story	1
Using your background to meet a challenge and work toward a goal	1
Best player of the session (group vote)	1



PLUNDERERS OF RELICS

It is there, all of it. Rumor has it there are guardians and an aura of fear in the tomb. I know we could plunder the treasures and set ourselves for life...

Uru, Masked Bounty Hunter



life of adventure often begins with the desire to change one's stars. The aspiration to rise beyond what peasants could dream of. Most commoners live comfortable, hard-working lives. But some people, the bravest, the dauntless, and the greediest put aside their daily affairs to risk their lives and follow the promise of riches and glory.

In this introductory Shadowdark adventure, the characters explore the tomb of six dwarvish wizards. The ancient location has been abandoned for centuries. Most of it has collapsed under its weight and become partially connected with a natural cavern. It is located on the outskirts of a forested region. Since its discovery by human explorers, many have tried to explore it and retrieve anything of monetary or historical value from within. Alas, immortal undead abominations guard the tomb. But the most powerful defense mechanism is a strange spell that causes trespassers to face their greatest fear. So far, no one has been able to overcome this test of will.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Alliance. A masked bounty hunter named Uru (**soldier**) approaches the characters with the map to a dungeon. They claim a spell keeps robbers away but together they can find a way to withstand it. Uru offers an advance and promises equal shares of any found treasure. Uru keeps secret that they already visited the dungeon but could not overcome his fear. Uru expects either to succeed this time or betray his new allies (10 gp, 1 XP).

RUMORS

d4 Details

- 1 Most people stay away from the tomb in the forest. Some say it is of Elvish construction, others say dwarves built it. Still, the burial place is older than nearby towns.
- 2 A masked individual has been asking around towns for companions to visit the tomb. None have agreed to work with them. The locals do not mess with the tomb.
- 3 Rumor has it that those who have ventured into the tomb face whatever they are most afraid of. Apparently, no one has surpassed that test. They all fled in a panic.
- 4 Dwarvish legends have records of the tomb. They claim that a clan created five makeshift shrines for the known gods. There was a pilgrimage there 800 years ago.

Level 1 Adventure

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 crawling rounds and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Some areas have braziers with permanent *light* spells; the rest are dark. All denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Aura of Despair.** Mortals in the dungeon feel dread and angst as they approach area 5. This sensation can be mostly ignored before it becomes stronger in area 4.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6 Details

- 1 Three **goblins** arrive at the tomb after robbing a merchant by a nearby road. They carry two sacks of stolen goods. They are not hostile but extremely jumpy.
- 2 A non-hostile dwarf **ghost** manifests before the characters and tells them that the treasures in the tomb are not worth dying for. The ghost begs them to leave unscathed.
- 3 The characters encounter the bones of a daring adventurer who was slain by the dungeon's guardians.
- 4 1d4 dwarven **skeletons** emerge from the darkness. The axe-wielding undead are fearsome warriors.
- 5 Two would-be adventurers (**guards**) arrive at the tomb. They are grateful to see the characters and offer to help as long as they can keep a share of the treasure.
- 6 A **swarm of spiders** gathers by a nearby wall and attacks the party. It scatters after dropping to half HP.

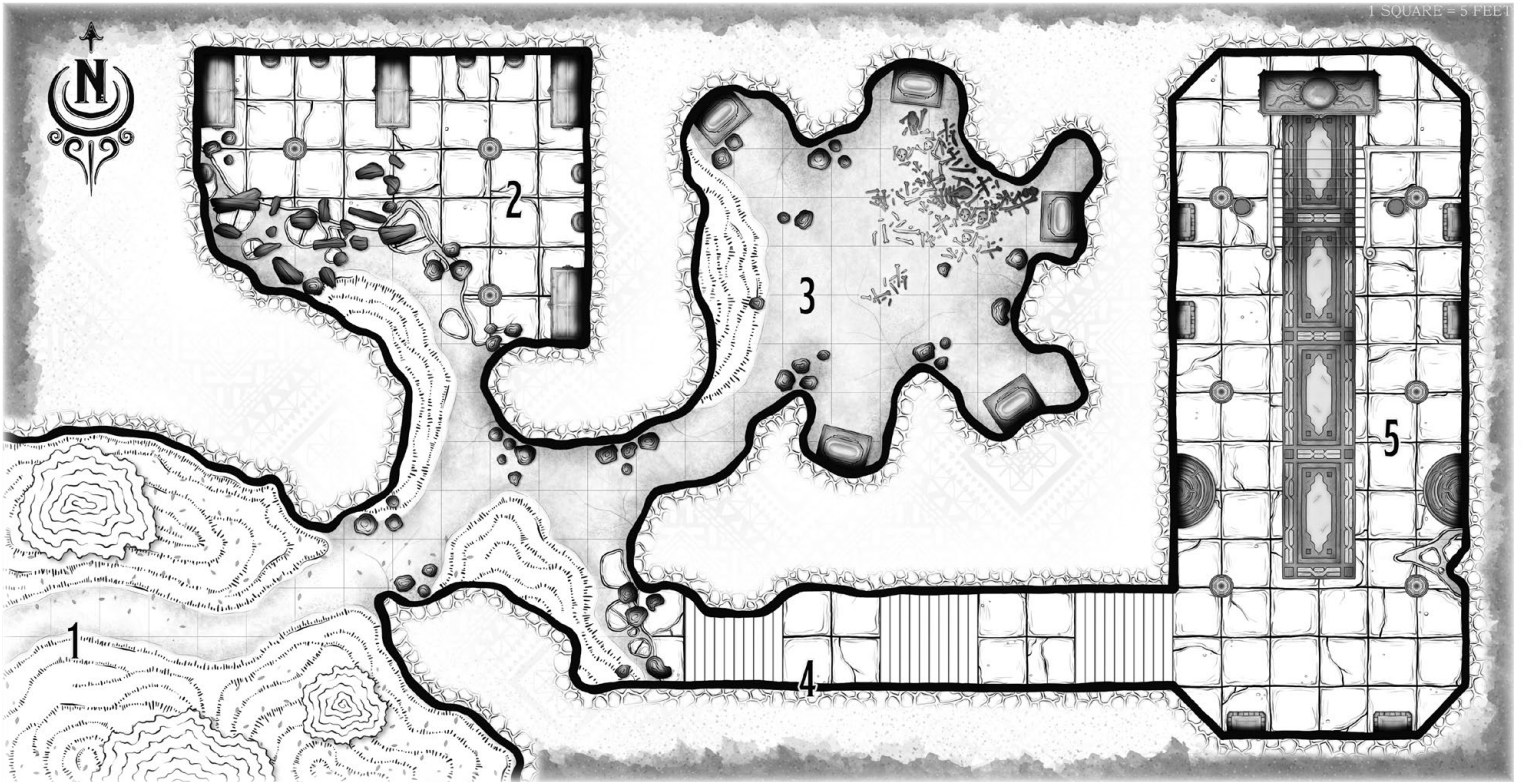
1. SURROUNDING GROUNDS

The sparsely forested region is broken by a large rock outcropping. A forlorn trail leads to a dilapidated entrance on the rocky side and into a dark cavern.

► **Getting Here.** The characters must make a journey here from the nearest settlement by following the locals' directions (DC 13 WIS). On a failure, the party runs across a **brown bear** looking for food.

► **Forest Tracks.** Careful trackers notice that someone went in and out of the dungeon in the past few days. That was Uru, the bounty hunter. If questioned, though, the mercenary denies the tracks are theirs (DC 12 WIS). They came previously but could not descend to area 5.

► **Wild Apparitions.** At dawn and sunset, a ghostly procession of dwarves in ritualistic attire come into the dungeon and descend to the tomb holding glowing candles.



2. DILAPIDATED CRYPT

Four lavishly-carved sarcophagi await in the darkness of this once-opulent burial place. More than half the chamber collapsed and became a dilapidated ruin.

Valiant elvish knights of yore who earned the honor of a ceremonial burial through their deeds are interred here. Two of the enclosures were destroyed when the chamber collapsed. The elvish spirits are protective of their crypt and do not suffer unwanted visitors.

► **Guardians.** If the characters attempt to open a tomb or remain in the chamber longer than 1 **crawling round**, one **shadow** and three **skeletons** emerge from the sarcophagi. The undead monsters cannot move further than 30 feet from their respective sarcophagi.

3. GODLY SHRINES

Five granite slabs carved with the sigils and words of known deities await dark, crudely-made alcoves. A mound of bones lies in front of Ramlaat's shrine.

► **The Shrines.** Over the course of decades, dwarvish pilgrims built shrines for Saint Terragnis, Gede, Madeira, Ord, and Ramlaat. There are worthless trinkets and hand-made offerings by some of the shrines. If a character is devout to any of those gods and spends 1 **crawling round** praying, they earn a **luck token**.

► **The Bones.** It takes 1 **crawling round** to inspect the remains. Most of the remains belong to forest creatures but there are at least four sets of human bones. Orcs, wanderers, and goblinoids devout to Ramlaat, the Horde, left these as offerings to honor the Blood Rite.

4. DESCENDING STAIRS

A sense of dread increases by the half-ruined, 30-foot-tall, descending staircase. A faint, glimmering light can be seen at the bottom of the stairs, like a lure.

► **Fear Itself.** An ancient dwarvish incantation is embedded in the runes along the stairs. Whenever a creature descends to the first landing (10 feet from the top), an illusory representation of their greatest fear manifests before them. Mortals must face that which scares them the most before descending (DC 15 WIS). On a fail, individuals cannot voluntarily move any further and do their best to distance themselves from the stairs.

5. TOMB OF SIX WIZARDS

Two ponds of greenish water and six standing, stone enclosures flank a grand coffer on a 5-foot-tall dais.

► **The Ponds.** The water in these fountains flows backward and climbs into the spouts. They are the focus for the fear-causing spell (DC 13 INT check).

► **The Mages.** Coming within 5 feet of the dais causes the standing enclosures to open and release the undead abomination of the 1d3+1 wizards (**ghouls**). They order the characters to leave at once and attack if disobeyed.

► **Treasure (5 XP).** Within the stone coffer, the characters find 20 gp, 170 sp, 600 cp, two *potions of healing*, and three scrolls with random, tier-1 wizard spells.

Betrayal. Uru betrays the characters after retrieving the treasure here or at the dungeon entrance, in case Uru failed the fear test once more in area 4.

MONSTROUS ELECTRIC EEL



By Elven Tower and Ori the Cartographer

Designed for use with

ShadowDark RPG



LEVEL 6 ADVENTURE

A MID-LEVEL SHADOWDARK ADVENTURE ABOUT SEAFOLK IN DANGER FROM A TERRIBLE EEL

ADVENTURE PRIMER

A good navigator knows when to turn back. 'Tis when you hear their singing when you must realize you are lost. Just turn back, do not listen. Turn back...

Old Sailor Saying



Sailors and pirates will both agree on one thing. One cannot compare life on land to life at sea. Staying on a boat for several weeks or months is an experience that changes your mind and heart. It molds one's personality, the sea helps you develop thoughts and values that no other can.

Entire populations of underwater humanoids live at the sea, like merfolk, sahuagin, and other sea ancestries well-known to men. But it is also the sea where some of the most fantastic creatures live. This underwater adventure brings the characters to Caliphaia, one of the most important siren cities. Regardless of their reason to come, the city is their first stop (see **Adventure Hooks**).

CALIPHAIA

THE SIRENS HAVE inhabited the Caliphus Sea for generations. Their city has been a beacon of underwater law and order for millennia. The six members of the Nautilus Court are fair rulers. They were chosen by the people. And only these people can vote them out of their stations. The sirens lead peaceful lives, and unlike many pirate tales claim, they do not spend their time looking for opportunities to lure others with their singing. Their singing is considered a blessing from their god, an underwater portrayal of Madeera, the Covenant. They follow the lawful god's values and dictates.

BETWEEN SIRENS AND MERFOLKS

JUST LIKE OTHER people, sirens have diplomatic problems and wars of their own. Today, their biggest quarrels are with none other than Siren's cousins: merfolks.

Despite the similarities that the two share, both physical as well as cultural, the two sides have not found common ground for decades. Their quarrels sometimes reach a period of tolerance that could easily be mistaken for peace. Alas, when sirens stumble upon a group of merfolks, cultural issues rise to the surface and the encounter turns sour, if not violent, in a matter of seconds.

No one can deny that the Nautilus Court is composed of the greatest minds among sirens. But their people want the merfolks gone. And not even they have been able to find a diplomatic, non-violent solution. However, merfolks have taken the upper hand in this conflict.

THE ELECTRIC EEL

MERFOLK VENERATE A distorted version of Memnon, the manifestation of Chaos and Madeera's twin, whose life goal is to destroy the cosmic laws of the Covenant, written in his sister's skin. The religious differences rub more salt in the wound for both sirens and merfolks.

The most fanatic merfolks sacrificed their lives for Memnon in exchange for a weapon capable of destroying the sirens and their beloved Caliphaia. The blood of twelve souls diluted the Caliphus Sea that day, and a living weapon was born. A monstrous electric eel that answers the merfolks' commands. They soon attacked.

The merfolks stole the *Pearl of Life* from the sirens' grasp. It is a beautiful rock of incredible arcane power. It is paramount for the Nautilus Court to rule their city and maintain order. Without it, Caliphaia is not only more vulnerable than ever; the city's downfall is imminent.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Level 6 Adventure

FRIENDS OF THE SEA

The characters know the sirens or at least one of them has been at Caliphaia before. Aeleolina, a court member, summons them. In her message, she describes the merfolks' attack and a horrible monster. Without much detail, she mentions a monetary reward and expresses desperation and urgency for them to come (70 gp, 6 XP).

NATURE'S CALL

One of the characters has a deep connection with nature. In a dream, they witness the merfolks' attack and how the *Pearl of Life* is stolen from Caliphaia. They feel compelled to go. As an agent of the neutral forces of nature, they must try to restore the order of things (0 XP).

MONSTER HUNTERS

Sightings of a gigantic eel are the trending topic on the capital's shores. The characters are hired by Hyke, a collector of monstrous trophies. He wants them to bring him a bag of the eel's scales and fins, its eyes, and its heart. He pays good money and cares little about the sirens' quarrel with the merfolks (80 gp, 7 XP).

CALIPHAIA'S NAUTILUS COURT

It is with great sadness that I must beg for your help. Our people are damned if our sacred Pearl of Life is not returned to our city. Please, bring it home.

Aeleolina, Member of the Nautilus Court



Sirens are a people that mesmerize all those who have never stepped into their reign. Their underwater domains are a view from another world. But to witness how their societies live, way beyond what the myths and stories claim, is not something one can do any day of the week.

The first problem to solve is the fact that their cities are permanently submerged. Most humanoids make use of magic or arcane trinkets to survive down below. The second is that sirens are usually wary of terrestrial people that want to trespass on their territories. But luckily for the heroes, the sirens are desperate for help. They do not mind getting outsiders' help for the current problem.

GETTING INVOLVED

THE CHARACTERS ARE friends with the sirens, they want to come and help, or they are on the hunt for a monster eel (see **Adventure Hooks**). Regardless of the reason, they must sail to the Caliphus Sea and make a journey to the sirens' city, near the bottom of the sea.

Idea. The sirens send an envoy to meet the characters at the sea surface. Lisisis, the siren, gives the heroes a set of *silver diadems* that allow the user to breathe underwater for as long as they wear them. The characters are free to use other methods to descend if they wish.

THE NAUTILUS COURT

THE CHARACTERS ARE allowed within Caliphaia. They swim to the heart of the city where Aeleolina and the other five members of the Nautilus Court sit. Roll once on the **Random Events** table when the heroes arrive at area 1 and again as they explore the underwater area.

Court Features

► **Events.** Check for **Random Events** each time a new area is visited. There is a 4-in-6 chance for an event.

► **Light.** Despite being hundreds of feet underwater, the siren city is all brightly illuminated thanks to the bio-luminescent siren homes. Other fantastic creatures glow with beautiful colors as they pass by. And to treat the visitors as guests, a bank of tiny glowing fish follows them at all times. And the intelligent fish even disperses in groups at times, to illuminate the things they want to see.

RANDOM EVENTS

d8	Details
1	A couple of sirens with their child stop to meet the characters. The father says: "Is it true? You've come to help us. You will slay the monster, right?". He turns to see his frightened child and wife, whom he hugs with force.
2	A giant jellyfish swims above the characters. A siren rides the beast with visible fear and poor skills. Behind comes the jellyfish master riding a larger beast.
3	The characters are surrounded by tiny fish called 'siren leeches'. They attach to one's body and remove dirt, stains, and other stuff they eat. They clean one's body.
4	A cute fish approaches the characters, curious. If they try to touch the spotted fish, it becomes frightened and grows in size. It is a puffer fish, common among sirens.
5	A group of three beautiful sirens wearing shells and pearls offers the characters underwater delights made with weed, fish, crab, and other local ingredients.
6	A siren blows a beautiful, ornamented horn in the middle of the Nautilus Court. This happens every 12 hours. This is how sirens keep track of time and the passing days.
7	The whistles and pulses of a gigantic fish echo through the entire siren city. Sirens say this is often a good omen.
8	The characters are intercepted by two sirens riding sea horses on patrol. They point with their spears and demand that they identify themselves (even if they already did when they traversed the crab gates in area 1). The riders escort them to the court to meet Aeleolina.

1. THE CRAB GATES

The statues of two spear-wielding sirens block the way. A giant crab stands in between both warriors.

The characters traverse the siren city and it takes them a few minutes to reach the Nautilus Court. There, a team of four sirens on sea horses stands guard. The giant crab stays idle, waiting for its master's commands.

► **Identification.** The characters must introduce themselves and state their business in Caliphaia. They are welcome and treated as good old friends if they already know Aeleolina. Otherwise, the visitors are regarded as guests of honor (see **Adventure Hooks**).

2. SQUID ROAD

The characters continue their way through the court. Sirens' homes are on each side of the path (area 3). Curious fish folk stick their face to their windows to see the visitors. Hope and admiration can be read in their eyes.



3

5

4

3

3

2

1

3. SIREN HOMES

Sirens' homes look like large jellyfish embedded with sea shells. Their walls are hard but they are almost translucent. Curious sirens observe from within.

The homes found by the Nautilus Court belong to some of the most important siren citizens, including court members and their families. The glowing fish that follow the characters to light their way assume a more formal formation near the nautilus (see **Court Features**).

4. THE NAUTILUS COURT

The heart of the siren city is a huge nautilus shell. At the characters' arrival, the shell starts to reverberate. The loud noise can be perceived in all of Caliphaia. This announces the beginning of a court session.

The characters are surrounded by six sea horse riders and asked not to swim beyond the nautilus's edge below. A team of siren servants brings shell chairs. These stand 10 feet below the court members; the riders also ask the visitors to remain seated at this level. This is because only royalty and other aquatic leaders may speak to the members of the Nautilus Court as equals.

When the sound stops, the court session starts. A siren wearing ceremonial robes introduces each member of the court, then gives the floor to the visitors. The characters must state their business in Caliphaia. The sirens do not hide their delight to see outsiders. They quickly explain what they need from them (see **Development**).

5. THE SEASHELL

The six court members look incredible and powerful from their positions. Their marvelous robes, garments, and jewels are a sight from another plane.

The six members of the court swim above the seashell, resting their tails on it as if taking a seat. They are visibly glad to grant the adventurers their hospitality. But, unlike the rest of the siren citizens, the leaders are calm. The current situation worries them, but they hide their true feelings with much skill. Such is their responsibility.

DEVELOPMENT

AFTER FORMALITIES, THE sisters Aeolonia and Lorelei, two of the court members, explain their current predicament. The court does so regardless of the characters' reason to be here (see **Adventure Hooks**).

However, Aeolonia feels responsible for the characters' fate in case she was the one who summoned them. Wishing that her friends return safe, she gives them a *trident of the seas*. She says that this is no gift. It is a promise that they must come back safe and sound. But the heroes may end up keeping it (see **Adventure Conclusion**).



INTO THE DEPTHS

Our scouts saw the eel escape with our beloved pearl through the hole in the grotto. We must stay to protect our people. We are counting on you.

Siren Warrior

Long ago, when only dragons and giants walked the earth, the seas had their gods. Ancient mammoth fish, world eaters, the all-devourers they were called. No book can settle on a name. But one thing is clear. Their size and power must have been incredible, cataclysmic. And this was confirmed when all five sightings of the legendary fish's remains featured the same phenomenon: a black hole.

THE BLACK HOLES

FIVE KNOWN PORTALS are all located in the depths, somewhere in the vast Caliphus Sea. To this day, sirens know the destination of four of the portals. Each of them is connected to its twin. They use them to cut distances between two destinations. However, sirens do not swim near the fifth, unexplored black hole. It is the territory of aggressive octopi; the sirens prefer to stay away.

The siren scouts confirmed that the black hole at the grotto was the eel's escape route. It got away with the *Pearl of Life*. The characters are escorted through the Caliphus Sea but the sirens turn back about five hundred feet from the grotto's entrance (see below). They explain that they must return to Caliphaia and protect the members of the court. They wish the heroes luck.

TRACKING THE ELECTRIC EEL

THE CHARACTERS MUST journey into the grotto and take the black hole to be transported to the eel's lair. But they must overcome all the obstacles here to do so.

Area Features

▶ **Events.** Check for **Random Events** after a loud noise or **crawling round**. There is a 3-in-6 chance for an event.

▶ **Surface.** The characters must ascend to the surface to reach the grotto's cavern. The bones of the legendary sea creature of yore still resist the passage of time. The cave is bright during the day but dark at night.

▶ **Magic Void.** No one knows what happened to the mammoth fish or how they died. But their connection with arcane forces was strong. Besides the black hole's existence, any spell cast beyond area 1 has a 5-in-6 chance of not working. The magic is sucked by the black hole. The spell is considered cast but lost.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6	Details
1	The characters are joined by four adventurers (soldiers) on their boat. They were sent by Hyke, the collector (see Adventure Hooks). If the characters were hired for the same job, they may hide this from them, strike a temporary truce to do the job together or eliminate their rivals.
2	The black hole causes strange things to occur in the area. In a burst of arcane power, part of the water becomes alive. A lesser water elemental attacks!
3	A squad of six merfolk followed the characters. The fish-tailed humanoids attempt to ambush the outsiders (DC 13 WIS). On a fail, the enemies have a surprise round.
4	The dormant power of the legendary fish also affects the water around it. For 10 minutes, it becomes harder to move and swim. All speeds are reduced by half.
5	A swarm of piranhas comes looking for prey and attacks the characters swimming around the grotto.
6	Three merfolk accompanied by two young electric eels emerge from the black hole. The squad of enemies is surprised to see the characters and attacks at once. One of the merfolk tries to flee if the battle turns against them.

1. GROTTO'S ENTRANCE

The water is crystal clear. The giant bones of a huge fish's spine are buried in the sand below.

The characters reach the grotto's edge. They must enter the black hole to continue their mission and retrieve the *Pearl of Life*. When the characters arrive, they stumble upon a group of five **merfolk** and their **shark**. After the first round of combat, roll once on the events table.

2. BONES OF THE LEGENDARY FISH

The giant osseous matter of the fish's remains is mesmerizing, but they leave a lot to the imagination.

The characters are free to study the bones from closer. If they touch them, they feel a faint connection with a higher power. Whoever does this earns a **luck token**.

YOUNG ELECTRIC EEL

Sapphire-color water serpents with yellow stripes.

AC 11, HP 14, ATK 1 bite +3 (1d10), MV near (swim), S +2, D +1, C +2, I -3, W +1, Ch -3, AL C, LV 3

Impervious. Fire immune. Healed by electricity.



3. GROTTO'S CAVERN

Whatever happened in the past had to do with how the cavern looks. The rocks' features almost draw the dead fish's shape. The entire grotto looks artificial.

When the characters approach the black hole, they all feel the ancient power of this cavern. The closer they are to the portal, the harder it is to break from its pull.

► **Scales.** If the characters spend a **crawling round** investigating the grotto's walls, they find a few scales that belonged to the legendary fish, and one **luck token**.

4. THE BLACK HOLE

Just before the characters decide to cross, four **merfolk** and one **young electric eel** come out of the portal. They are propelled forward and reach area 1. If the characters already feel the portal's pull, they must fight it to turn back (DC 15 STR). Roll on the **Random Events** table once and combine the enemies if any.

If the characters do not fight the arcane energies sucking them into the black hole, or if they fail to resist its pull, they reach it in three combat rounds. Enemies chasing the characters appear behind them once they cross (see 1. **Point of Arrival** below).

THE TRIP

IT FEELS LIKE an eternity but the trip only takes a few seconds. The characters reach the other side and are propelled forward 100 feet away from the black hole's twin at the other end. This brings them 50 feet away from area 1 (see **Merfolk Territories** map).

► **Jaunt.** The black hole journey is not a pleasant experience. They help reduce long distances but there is a price to pay. Creatures that traverse the portal become nauseated and have disadvantage on all checks and attacks for 1 **crawling round** (DC 13 CON).

DEVELOPMENT

THERE ARE A few things that could occur before the characters cross the portal that may improve their success chances when they reach the electric eel's lair. Consider the following:

► **Allies.** Depending on the events that occur and the characters' decisions, they could have made friends (soldiers sent by Hyke). They have their means for breathing underwater and if the characters accept their help, they are happy to help and give their all for the cause.

► **Knowledge.** If the characters fight the young electric eels (see above), they could learn about their **Impervious** characteristic and act accordingly when fighting the older, larger version of the mindless sea monster later on.

► **Standing.** Remember that some of the heroes might become nauseated before the final fight of this mission.

MERFOLK TERRITORIES

So now the sirens are sending others to solve their problems? This is why Memnon has given us the task to get rid of them, a weaker cousin of our kin.

Merfolk Warrior

For generations, the seas have been divided; sirens and merfolk have had periods of tolerance but never peace. Their peoples are so similar yet so different. And perhaps, their enmity is the right order of things, and to try to change it would only end in failure and frustration.

AN UNEXPECTED RETALIATION

THE MERFOLK COUP on Caliphaia was successful. They stole the *Pearl of Life* and got away with it. And despite their similarities, sirens and merfolk have heavy differences. For instance, sirens are more peaceful folk. From the merfolk's perspective, it does not look like the sirens have the power to retaliate, but this is exactly what Aeolona and her peers count on. The characters' arrival at the scene shall take the merfolk by surprise.

Area Features

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

► **Light.** Like the siren city, merfolk also illuminate their towns and settlements with natural sources (bio-luminescent fungi, fish, and jellyfish). But this only gives a nice look to their civilization, they do not need light. Merfolks and the monsters at their command are **dark-adapted**.

► **Prison Jellyfish.** A special breed of jellyfish is friends with merfolks (see areas 3). These beasts swim around and their way to help their masters is to engulf enemies and restrain them while the merfolk fight the rest.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6	Details
1	A prison jellyfish attempts to engulf a character at random (DC 14 DEX). On a fail, the character is restrained.
2	An enemy shark swims by and bites a character.
3	Memnon manifests its power and gives the monstrous electric eel a boost of energy. For the next 1d2 crawling rounds , the electric eel earns an extra action.
4	A strong ocean current drags the characters 20 feet in a random direction (DC 15 STR check).
5	If there, the monstrous electric eel casts <i>lightning bolt</i> .
6	A non-combatant merfolk priest prays to Memnon, asking for a blessing in combat. Two characters at random are targeted by a <i>blind/deafen</i> spell (DC 14 WIS).

1. POINT OF ARRIVAL

The characters reach this area after taking the portal. They find themselves in merfolk territories now.

The characters cannot attempt an ambush here if they are being chased by enemies (see 4. **The Black Hole** above). Continue this fight considering that some of the characters might have become nauseated from taking the black hole journey (see **The Trip** above).

The merfolk described in area 3 come to help their friends in the second round of combat. The monstrous electric eel has the task to protect the *Pearl of Life*. The creature does not get involved in this encounter.

However, in case the characters are not being followed, they could sneak past the merfolk warriors and ambush their enemies in a surprise round (DC 15 DEX check).

2. MERFOLK WARRIORS

A team of six **merfolk** and one **young electric eel** are on patrol duty. They may be alerted or surprised by the characters, depending on the state of their arrival.

3. PRISON JELLYFISH

Merfolk and these beasts have coexisted for ages. The sirens' cousins learned to tame and communicate with these giant jellyfish long ago. They do not sting but have a great capacity to engulf things and people.

Regardless of how the battle starts, the merfolk command the prison jellyfish to come to their aid. Have the three of them act last in the initiative order (see map).

The beasts are not intelligent enough to understand loyalty. They all flee if reduced to half their hit points.

PRISON JELLYFISH

A giant marine animal with umbrella-shaped bells and trailing tentacles. This kind of jellyfish does not sting, but its engulfing capacity may be considered deadly.

AC 12, HP 22, ATK 1 grab +3 (engulf), **MV** near (swim), **S +1, D +2, C +1, I -3, W +1, Ch -3, AL C, LV 2**

Engulf. DC 12 DEX or restrained. 1d6 damage per round. The jellyfish can hold up to two creatures. The jellyfish regurgitates all swallowed if dealt at least 6 damage in one round to the inside of its bell body.



4. COMBAT TERRAIN

The merfolk territories envy nothing of the sirens' city beauty. The mesmerizing landscape is a weird, reassuring contrast to the danger lurking around.

The combat area is large enough for the characters to fight comfortably. However, there is no cover available. Once combat starts, the heroes have little chance to flee and out-swim their opponents. The black hole is their only escape route, but it is 100 feet south from area 1.

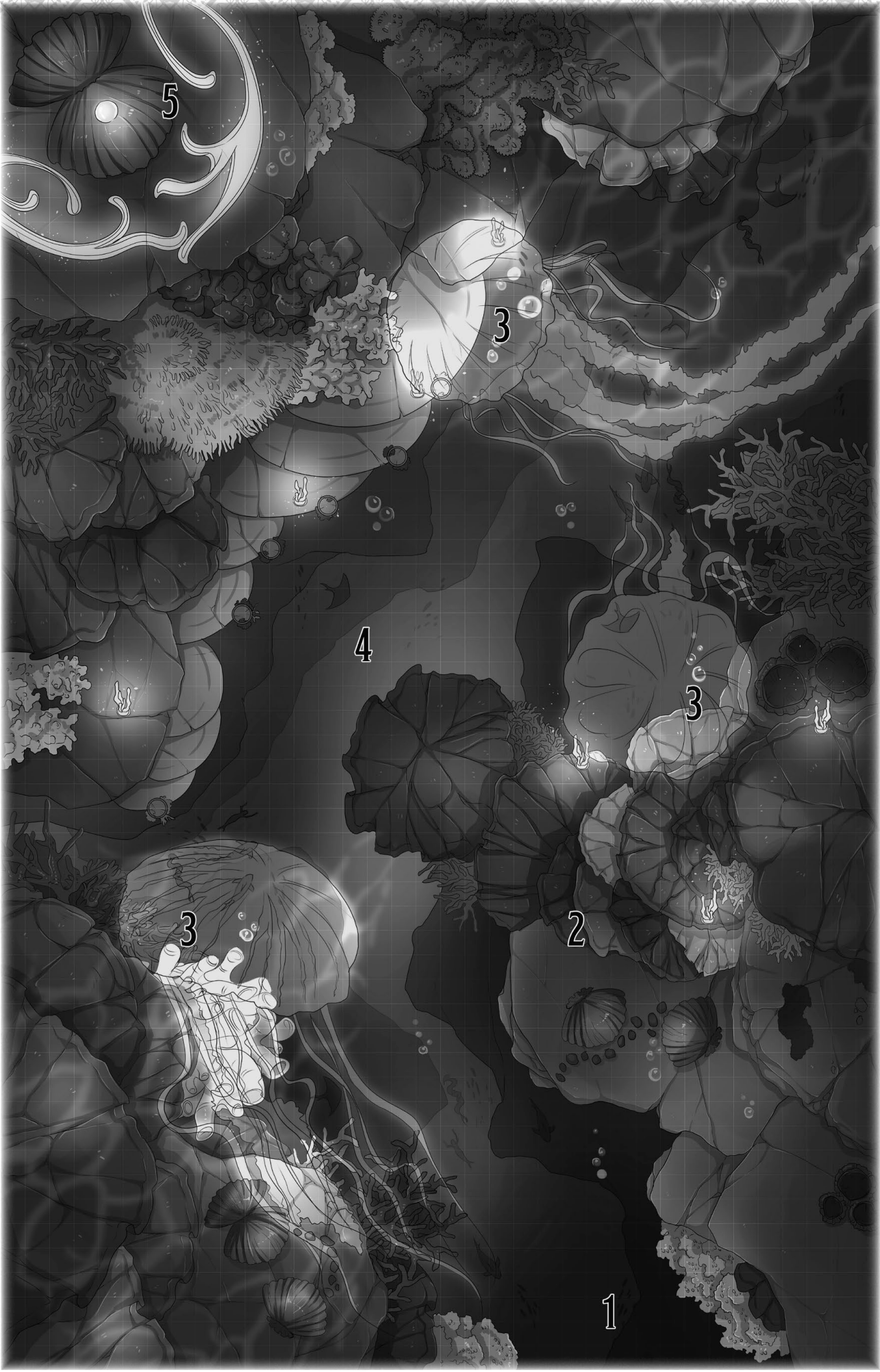
5. THE PEARL OF LIFE

The ancient rock is protected. A clam holds the pearl. It opens and closes every few minutes as if to show off its contents. Deep feelings of uneasiness and uncertainty invade the souls of those who approach.

The characters must get rid of all enemies before they can approach the sirens' beloved pearl. To the merfolk and their corrupted version of Memnon though, it does not matter if the heroes are tired or hurt. If they want the Pearl of Life, there is yet another obstacle to beat.

► **The Eel.** The **monstrous electric eel** shows itself. Memnon's dark creation is accompanied by three **merfolk**, a **shark**, and one **young electric eel**. See below to know the details of this encounter's outcome.

► **Treasure (6 XP).** If they succeed, the characters are free to search the area. They find 70 gp worth of rusty ancient coins and jewels. They also find a *kytherian cog*.



ENCOUNTER TACTICS

The characters approach the *Pearl of Life* and trigger the last encounter of this adventure. Consider the following to engage in a more thrilling combat experience.

► **Merfolk.** The characters are being watched by dozens of non-combatant merfolk swimming about 70 feet from the fight. They cheer and root for their peers.

► **Prison Jellyfish.** If any of the merfolk's beasts are still around, they get involved in this battle too.

► **The Shark.** The sea predator with a torpedo-like body protects its merfolk masters at all costs. However, it always attacks the target with the least hit points.

► **The Eels.** The young eel does what it can to mimic its older version's movements and attacks the same target if possible. The monstrous eel attacks paralyzed targets if it can, and it relies on its whirlpool ability to reposition.

MONSTROUS ELECTRIC EEL

A massive aquatic worm as tall as a castle keep. Covered in blue and yellow stripes and fairy-like fins.

AC 17, **HP** 55, **ATK** 2 bite +8 (2d8 + paralyze) or 1 whirlpool, **MV** double near (swim), **S** +4, **D** +1, **C** +3, **I** -3, **W** +1, **Ch** -3, **AL** C, **LV** 11

Impervious. Fire immune. Healed by electricity.

Paralyze. DC 13 CON or paralyzed for 1 round.

Whirlpool. All within close DC 15 DEX or be pushed 50 feet away from the monstrous electric eel.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

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

THE PEARL OF LIFE IS RETRIEVED

The characters succeed! They defeat the merfolk and their monstrous electric eel. They recover the *Pearl of Life* and return it to the sirens in Caliphaia. This grants them the title of *Seashell Lieutenants*, which is the highest honor for foreigners in siren culture.

TRUE FRIENDS OF THE SEA

The characters were summoned by Aeololina (see *Adventure Hooks*) and she lent them a *trident of the seas* to help them in their mission. She is so happy to see them safe that lets them keep the siren-forged weapon.

HYKE'S EMPLOYEES

A job well done! The monster is killed and its parts are collected. Hyke pays the characters the agreed-upon amount. However, the characters met a group of soldiers hired by the same man (see *Random Events* in Chapter 2). It is up to them if they want to share the reward.

RETREAT!

The characters are overwhelmed by the merfolk warriors, their jellyfishes, being underwater, and deep inside enemy territory. They decide to retreat and live to fight another day. Alas, the price to pay is that 1d2 heroes do not make it to the portal... The rest swim back to the black hole and turn back to the sirens defeated. The rescue mission, if any, is an adventure for another day...



THE CIRCLE OF FLAME

A system-neutral practical puzzle by Mark Tomforde

This is a puzzle that a GM can implement to test their players' wits. The puzzle can be an obstacle that players must solve to open a door or continue their dungeon delving. Or it can be a challenge with a solution that rewards players with great treasure or an item they seek or need.

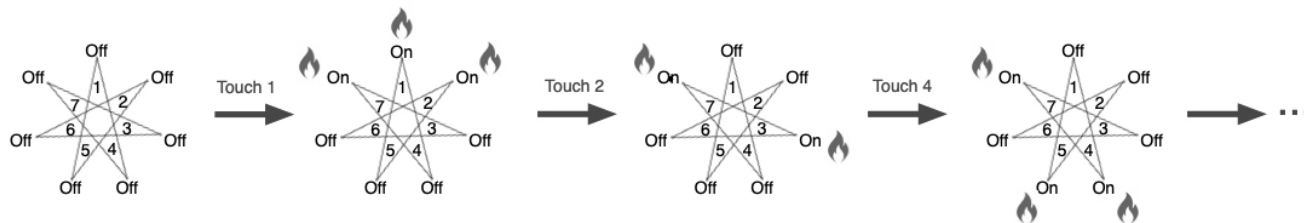
PUZZLE SETUP

ON THE FLOOR of your previously-designated puzzle room is a seven-sided star. At each of the seven points of the star is a brazier. In the center of the star is a circle with the word "Extinguish" on it. Written on the wall of the room are the words "Light All Seven".

HOW THE PUZZLE WORKS

Initially, all the braziers are off. If a player touches any one of the braziers, magical properties cause it and its two neighbors to switch their current states (i.e., a brazier that is On goes Off, and an Off brazier goes On). The goal is to have all seven braziers on simultaneously. If a player touches the "Extinguish" circle at the center of the room, this restarts the puzzle and all braziers go off. This allows players to start again from the initial state.

In the following example, you can see how the above rule works. It represents a character pressing Brazier 1, followed by Brazier 2, and followed by Brazier 4.



It's best to give players physical tokens so they can explore different moves of the puzzle and the effects they have. The GM can use flame tokens that can be set down and removed to represent the On/Off states of each brazier. Alternatively, the GM could use seven coins that can be flipped, with heads representing On and tails representing Off or vice versa. If players get stuck or confused, at any point they can press the Extinguish circle in the center of the star and start the puzzle over.

If players attempt to start or stop a fire in the braziers by other methods — whether magical or mundane — these attempts fail to have any effect on either starting or stopping the flames. The only way to start or stop the fires is by touching the braziers as the puzzle intends.

SOLUTION

To solve this puzzle, all braziers can be turned on by simply pressing them in order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. The reason this works is that as one moves around the circle, each brazier will be affected a total of three times (once before the brazier is pressed, a second time when the brazier in question is pressed, and a third time after the brazier has been pressed). Three turns or changes on each brazier result in each of them turning On, then Off, then On again. This leaves all braziers in the On state at the end.

Note: This solution is perhaps the easiest, but it is not unique. Players' attempts may result in other sequences of moves that turn all braziers on at a certain point.

HINTS FOR STUCK PLAYERS

The following are various hints that a GM can provide if players are stuck or have difficulty solving the puzzle.

Small Hint: You may share with the Players that each time a brazier is affected, it changes states between On and Off. This means that if a brazier is affected an even number of times, it is Off. If it is affected an odd number of times, it is On. So, to have all braziers on, your moves need to affect each brazier an odd number of times.

Medium Hint: Try variations of the puzzle with a smaller number of braziers. Could you solve the puzzle if there were four braziers? Five braziers? Six braziers?

Big Hint: You could tell the Players to try moving around the circle of braziers in some systematic way that affects each brazier a total of an odd number of times.

VARIATIONS

There is nothing special about the number seven, and this puzzle could be modified to have any number of braziers. For example, a more difficult version of the puzzle could have 100 braziers. At first, this seems impossible, but once one figures out the solution is to press all braziers in order: 1, 2, 3, . . . 99, 100, it is as easy to solve the puzzle with 100 braziers as with any other number.

Warning: The GM should avoid braziers arranged in multiples of three when designing the puzzle since this situation has the trivial solution of simply pressing every third brazier. For instance, if there are nine braziers, one simply has to press 2, 5, and 8 to turn on all nine.

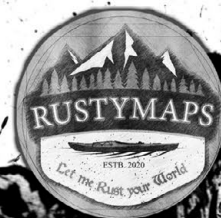
A PHOENIX'S REBIRTH



By Elven Tower and Rusty Maps

Designed for use with

ShadowDark RPG



LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

A MID-LEVEL SHADOWDARK ADVENTURE ABOUT THE REBIRTH OF A LEGENDARY CREATURE

ADVENTURE PRIMER

The bird of fire may lie dormant for decades waiting for the correct configuration of stars. When the time comes, it reignites with fiery flames.

On the Nature of Eternal Creatures



Out of all the legendary creatures that myths and legends mention, the phoenix stands out due to being technically immortal. Many extraplanar or godly entities are immortal too; they do not age or die from natural causes. However, they can be slain. A phoenix, on the other hand, bursts into flames when it dies. But its ashes hide a marvelous egg. And when the stars align correctly, the embers within the egg rekindle. The fabled bird of fire is reborn.

THE GUARDIAN OF NIGHTFALL

A MIGHTY PHOENIX lives in the skirts of Moonfall Mountain. Scholars and historians have reported the bird's appearances as they go back centuries. The townsfolk in Nightfall, the closest town, named the bird Sootbeak because of its amazing ebony beak. The historical records confirm that the phoenix comes back every 96 years during a cosmic phenomenon known as the *Line of Fire* where numerous astral bodies become aligned.

Two centuries ago, a shrine in Moonfall Mountain was built to house the phoenix's dormant remains. The place known as the Temple of Rebirth was built in gratitude for the phoenix giving its life in a deadly conflagration to save the settlers in Nightfall from invaders.

It has been so long since the phoenix was last seen that no one alive remains who remembers having seen it. The phoenix has turned into legend. Many believe it is just a tale, despite the city records claiming otherwise.

THE FIERY HEART

THE PHOENIX IS soon to be reborn. Mages discovered that the fabled bird returns when a particular configuration of astral bodies occurs, every 96 years. A despicable man, Radd Van Holtz, is the head of the Fiery Heart cult. He is aware of the phoenix's return and has taken over the Temple of Rebirth. He intends to magically bind the phoenix as it is reborn and take over its power. They drove away a few scholars and mage apprentices who traveled to the temple looking to witness the miraculous rebirth. They returned to Nightfall and alerted the bailiff of the cult's actions. Bailiff Jacken does not believe the phoenix's tales but is worried sick of any damage to the temple as he deems it Nightfall's cultural heritage.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Level 3 Adventure

THE BOUNTY CONTRACT

Bailiff Jacken summons the characters to the King's Castle after hearing of their deeds and exploits. He offers a map to the Temple of Rebirth and claims that criminals turned it into their lair. The band of brigands must be driven off the premises and arrested (50 gp, 5 XP).

WITNESSING THE MIRACLE

The party learns of the upcoming rebirth of Nightfall's phoenix. They may want to be there when it happens out of curiosity or to seek the healing properties of the fabled bird. Its tears are said to heal any ailment. The characters' first stop is the town of Nightfall (0 XP).

AIDING THE CHURCH

If a cleric is in the party, they are summoned to Nightfall's Silent Garden. Father Barley explains that a band of criminals assails the town. He asks the characters to track them to their lair and arrest them (30 gp, 3 XP).

RUMORS

d10 Details

- 1 A band of brigands has taken over the Temple of Rebirth which is a site of pilgrimage and tourism for Nightfall.
- 2 A man called Radd recently ransacked the city archives looking for data on the alleged appearances of a phoenix. Bailiff Jacken offers a hefty reward for rooting out those who took the Temple of Rebirth. People say he cares only for tourism and the good image of Nightfall town.
- 3 People say strange water folk like in the River of Ash. They often approach passersby looking to trade trinkets.
- 4 A bird with flaming wings saved the city from invaders centuries ago. Since then, there is a Festival of Fire. It marks the anniversary of a terrible war long ago.
- 5 Strange folks have been spotted after sunset in Nightfall.
- 6 People say a cult has infiltrated the king's compound. Some say they may attempt to assassinate him soon.
- 7 Strange guards are posted on the town gates. They prevent all exits toward Moonfall Mountain and the temple.
- 8 People talk of something called the 'Fiery Heart'. Whether that is a criminal guild or a religion is unknown.
- 9 If questioned about the phoenix, most people believe all of it to be myths or unfounded children's stories.

NIGHTFALL CITY

They hide in the shadows and now control the town gates. Please, root these low-lives out of our peaceful community. The brigands' lair must be nearby.

Father Barley

Nightfall owes its name to the strange climate phenomenon that causes the night sky to be brighter, clearer, and easier to study than in most other places. Some think this is just a natural occurrence due to its location in an arid region but others theorize that ancient magic may be at play.

In truth, it is the phoenix's presence and its link to the stars that causes this but none have guessed this connection as of yet. Nightfall is also known as the Jewel of the Desert for two main reasons. One is the legend of a mighty phoenix, the town's sigil and protector. The other is its crucial location by the River of Ash which makes the plantation of some arid-region crops possible.

DANGER IN THE SHADOWS

RADD VAN HOLTZ, the Fiery Heart cult leader, came to Nightfall a few months ago. He was aware that the phoenix's rebirth this year but ignored the exact location and date. Radd sacked the town's archives. He found out about the egg in the temple and the approximate time when the bird would be reborn. He bolted to the temple and set up camp there to await the miracle. Since then, no one else has been allowed into the temple. His goons also have a strong presence in Nightfall ever since.

For this adventure, the phoenix is soon to be born but the moment of its appearance is not clear. It shall occur at the most dramatic moment: when the characters battle the Fiery Heart cult within the Temple of Rebirth.

Town Features

► **Events.** Check for **Random Events** each time a new area is visited. There is a 3-in-6 chance for an event.

► **Climate.** Nightfall is located in an arid region where farming is nonviable most of the year. The River of Ash provides the water and allows for trade and fishing.

► **Night Sky.** Most nights the clear sky displays stars in a magnificent spectacle. Twice a year, during the solstices, the night sky is way clearer and brighter. This strange phenomenon attracts scholars and nightgazers.

► **Religion.** A third of the town follows a godless belief system known as the '*Divine of the Truth*' (see below). Some suspect them to be affiliated with the criminals.

RANDOM EVENTS

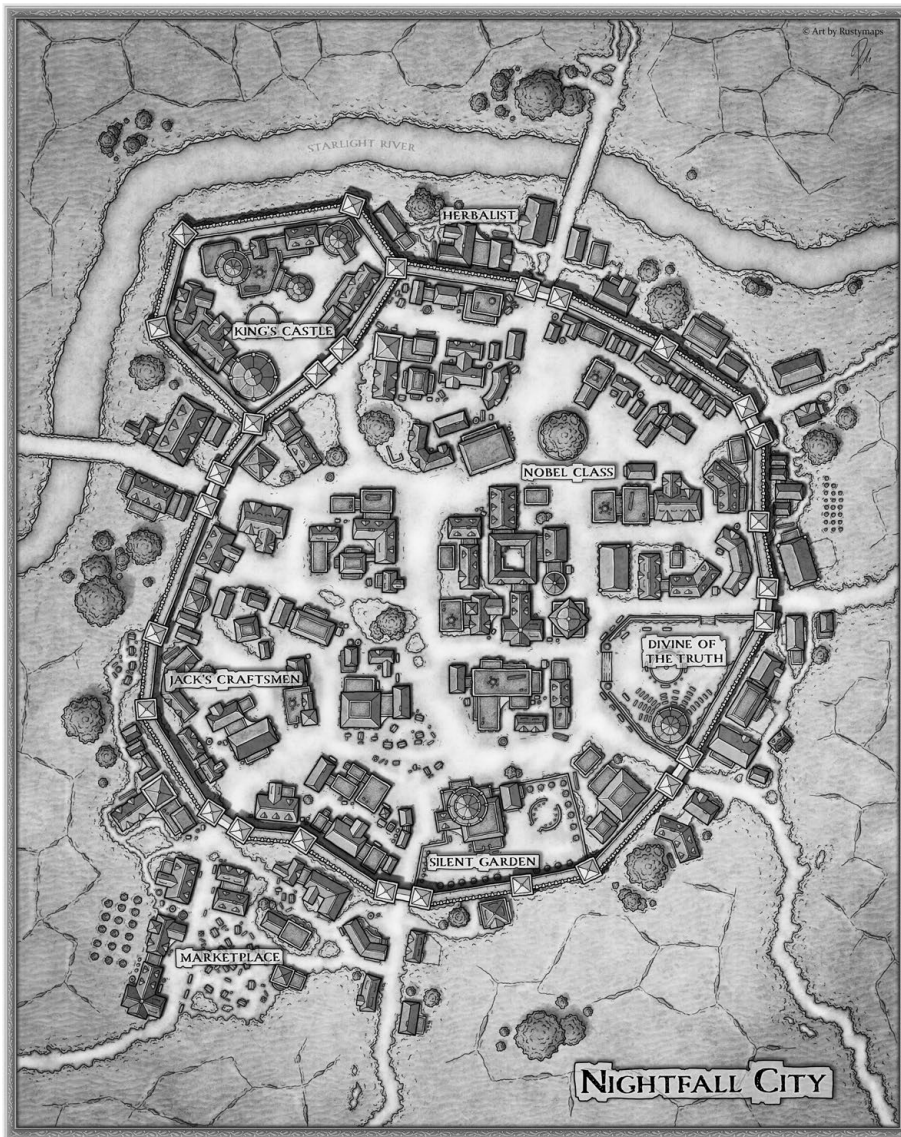
d8	Details
1	Gorentz, A Divine of the Truth monk goes around town saying that the alignment of eleven astral bodies is soon to occur. They claim it shall bring fortune to Nightfall.
2	Four fiery cultists surprise the characters and demand they surrender half of their wealth as ' <i>town contribution</i> '. A group of bankrupt scholars sleeps in the streets by the Nobel Class tree. They want to visit the Temple of Rebirth. One of them, Jasmine (peasant) begs the characters to allow her to tag along when they go to the temple.
3	A strange earthquake shakes Nightfall. The locals, mostly old folks, believe Moonfall Mountain is its source. They have become more frequent over the past few months.
4	After the characters are tasked with visiting the temple, a group of seven thugs ambushes them in the streets after sunset. They are members of the Fiery Heart cult.
5	Jarella, a monk of the Divine of the Truth stares at a random character and declares that their involvement in future events has been foretold in the star formations.
6	The characters witness three thieves rounding up a merchant and robbing him. Unless the characters intervene, the criminals mortally wound the merchant and leave. The thieves are members of the Fiery Heart cult.
7	Four dwarf pilgrims (peasants) arrive at Nightfall seeking to visit the Temple of Rebirth. An ancient dwarvish legend claims the flames from the phoenix's rebirth can craft a mighty weapon. They beg to join the party.
8	

MARKETPLACE

A place of trade and sales for the commons. Nightfall's marketplace is located beyond the south wall and in between two gates. The characters first arrive at Nightfall from here. Merchants come and go from smaller settlements to the south. The characters can acquire traveling gear, rations, and other mundane gear here.

SILENT GARDEN

Nightfall's church houses a shrine for each of The Four Lords, the lawful and neutral gods who stand for justice, order, and mercy. After hearing of the party's exploits, Father Barley summons a cleric or any devout character to ask them for help. The priest knows that the criminals have zealous motivations and may even be a cult. He does not yet know that they took over the Temple of Rebirth but he informs the party that they have a gathering spot next to Jack's Craftsmen. The priest's informants claim there are at least twelve cultists there.



JACK'S CRAFTSMEN

A businessman and guild artisan bought up all shops in the square a few years ago. Jack's craftsmen produce all manner of metalwork, clay potting, and even the production of fabrics. Round-of-the-mill quality weaponry can be purchased from the many shops here.

► **The Cultists.** A group of cultists hides in the basement of an iron foundry. The locals know about them but are wary to tell on them for fear of retaliation (**Reaction** check). There are six **fiery cultists**, four **peasants**, and two **thieves** in the hideout. If the characters defeat them and explore the hideout, they find written records in journals that reveal that their leader, Radd Van Holtz, parted to the Temple of Rebirth two weeks ago.

HERBALIST

The town's apothecary, Janna Nielsen, has had her business suffer due to the presence of cult members by the gate next to her shop in the past few weeks. She offers the party two *potions of healing* in exchange for driving away the criminals from the north gates. There are three **thugs** by each gatehouse.

► **The Tear.** If the characters talk about their quest and the phoenix's rebirth. Janna offers a reward of 20 gp if they can bring her a phoenix's tear.

THE DIVINE OF THE TRUTH

The leader of the strange, star-gazing organization is High-priestess Dinnara, an elf woman. She receives the characters if they visit the temple. She claims the stars foretold their arrival weeks ago. High-priestess Dinnara tells the characters about the phoenix's return. She explains that an alignment of astral bodies and planes known as the Line of Fire is soon to occur. It happens every 96 years and allows the phoenix to be reborn. A spell-caster is aware of this star alignment as it is also used as a focus for some summoning spells (DC 16 INT check).

► **The Companion.** Dinnara asks for one of her apprentices to tag along as a favor. The apprentice, Sara (**acolyte**), is sent to record the characters' deeds and exploits.

► **The Feather.** The high-priestess wishes to have a phoenix feather. But only if the feather falls on its own or is given freely. She disapproves of harming the bird.

► **The Secret.** Dinnara met the cult leader weeks ago (see **The Prophecy**). But she does not reveal this fact.

KING NEMOR'S CASTLE

NIGHTFALL'S RULER IS an absent-minded man who conforms himself to eating, hunting, and overindulging in alcohol and substances. King Nemor cares not for the cult, the phoenix, or the peasantry, deeming them all affairs for lowly men such as Bailiff Jacken. The king is, however, curious about the characters after hearing of their exploits and grants them an audience to satiate his curiosity. He cares not about the characters' mission, though. Any talk of present affairs and crimes in Nightfall is boring to the king who only wishes to hear the tales of valiant adventurers. He dismisses any other subject.

The audience with King Nemor is hardly to be of use to the characters in this adventure. However, while the characters spend time in the castle, a month-long plot of the Fiery Heart comes to fruition as well-placed assets attempt to assassinate the king (see **Development**) The characters' presence may be instrumental in whether King Nemor is killed or survives in this adventure.

FIERY CULTIST

A cloaked, wild-eyed zealot with a heart-shaped burn scar on their forehead chants eerie, guttural prayers.

AC 14 (chainmail), **HP** 7, **ATK** 1 longsword +1 (1d8) or 1 spell +2, **MV** near, **S** +1, **D** +0, **C** -1, **I** -1, **W** +2, **Ch** -1, **AL** C, **LV** 2

Fearless. Immune to morale checks.

Fiery Ray (Wis Spell). DC 12. 3d4 damage to one target in close range. It becomes restrained (DC 12 CON).

JINN, CULT MAGE

Fueled by unquenchable fervor, the fearsome cultist barges into battle ready to give his life to the cause.

AC 13 (chainmail), **HP** 15, **ATK** 1 dagger +2 (1d4) or 1 spell +3, **MV** near, **S** +2, **D** -1, **C** +0, **I** +1, **W** +3, **Ch** +0, **AL** C, **LV** 4

Fearless. Immune to morale checks.

Arcane Armor (INT Spell). Self. DC 12. AC 16 for 2d4 rounds.

Cancel (INT Spell). DC 12. End one spell affecting a target within near.

Death Ray (Wis Spell). DC 13. 2d6 damage to one creature within close range.

THE PROPHECY

THREE WEEKS AGO, Radd Van Holtz visited High-priestess Dinnara looking for information about the phoenix's return. The priestess had already foretold the assassination attempt on King Nemor and promptly told the cult leader about this. She claimed that the king's life would have to be endangered before the phoenix could be reborn. The cultist took this at face value and ordered Jinn, his second-in-command, to stay in town to carry it out. If the characters find out about this and confront Dinnara about her involvement in this plot, she claims it was written in the stars and that each person was bound to act in that manner. She dismisses any accusations. She firmly denies her actions brought these events to fruition.

DEVELOPMENT

WHEN THE CHARACTERS visit the King's Castle, **Jinn, Cult Mage**, is ready to attack. He waits for the characters to leave the throne room, ignoring their capacity to thwart his plans, and barges inside with weapons drawn to assassinate King Nemor. Jinn is accompanied by six **thugs** and two **soldiers**. King Nemor, fortunately, is not without protection; elite guards stand by the ruler at all times. The four king's guards (**soldiers**) defend the king to the best of their ability. If the characters do not intervene, or if they never deviate to visit the castle, King Nemor is assassinated and Jinn escapes alive. The mediocre king's survival depends on the characters' actions. However, the high-priestess' prophecy still comes to pass...



CAMPSITE AMBUSH

They went to the temple in the mountain, yes. They stole something from our village too... A sacred pearl. A jewel we'd do anything to recover. Please help...

Faddi, the Riverfolk

The path to Moonfall Mountain leads north following the River of Ash upstream. The journey takes the characters across a desolate, arid landscape broken by the river. It is not possible to reach the mountains in a single day. However, since the Temple of Rebirth is a popular stop among pilgrims and scholars, a campsite stop exists by the mountain skirts. The characters reach it by sunset and if anyone from Nightfall is present, they recommend setting up camp there as the climb to the temple is hard.

A riverfolk tribe (**sahuagin**) lives in submerged tunnels under the River of Ash. The reclusive riverfolk rarely interact with surfacers. When Radd Van Holtz first came this way toward the temple, he detected the power of the riverfolk's *Water Pearl*. With magic, the cultist leader stole the magical stone. The riverfolk tried to pursue them but had to return as they need water to breathe.

Area Features

► **Events.** 1d4 **Random Events** occur during the night.

► **Night-sky.** The seven astral bodies in the sky that form the Line of Fire are almost all in place. The clear sky is marked with dozens of bright constellations.

► **Sounds and Smells.** The chirping and chanting of bugs and night birds surround the camp. The smell of humidity, grass, and jasmine flowers permeates the area.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6 Details

- Four riverfolk (**sahuagin**) emerge from the River of Ash thinking the party are cultists and attack. If the party has already spoken with Faddi, the riverfolk are neutral.
- A merchant cart arrives at the camp on its way to Nightfall. The merchant (**peasant**) and four **guards** dine by the fire and share bland tales of their uneventful journey.
- A splinter party of the Fiery Heart, four **fiery cultists**, and two **soldiers** approaches feigning to be travelers.
- A mighty, bright thunder cracks the sky as a heavenly body slides into position in the Line of Fire.
- A former **knight** named Jonah approaches. He is an itinerant looking to regain his honor. If he learns of the Fiery Heart, he begs to join the party to earn renown.
- Two injured travelers, Adam and Jill (**peasants**), arrive at the camp. They were robbed by cultists hours ago. If the characters help them, they offer to join the party.

1. ROAD TO NIGHTFALL

The landscape is arid and desolate but the strip of land by the River of Ash remains an idyllic paradise of greenery and flowerbeds. Moonfall Mountain dominates the horizon as the expedition approaches it.

It takes the characters a little under a day of travel here. The River of Ash lies to the path's left. The flow is strong here as most of the mountain tributaries join the river less than a mile upstream. The stream is clear and deep.

2. THE CAMPSITE

A circular mound of rocks marks the place of the somewhat popular campsite stop. There is evidence of recent use and fresh bootprints on the soft clay.

The characters set up camp here to get ready for the hard ascent in the morning. Depending on the number of NPCs that join the party there may be a large campsite here. A scripted encounter with an important riverfolk occurs here at midnight (see **Faddi, the Riverfolk**).

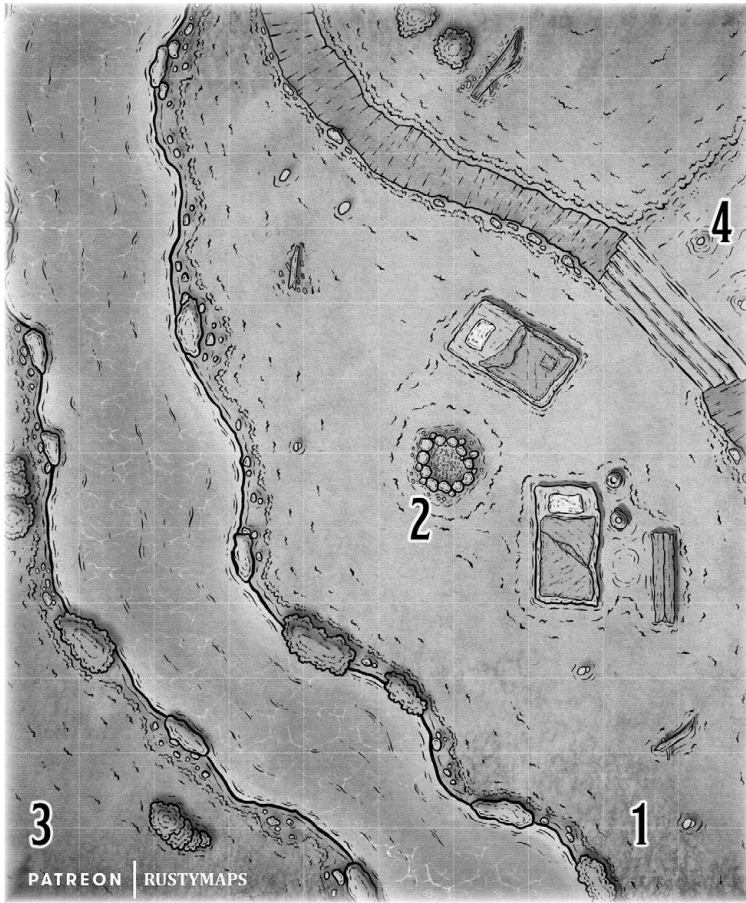
► **Tracks.** A hunter finds bootprints, disturbed plants, and bones from earlier meals. All evidence of recent usage. The most recent is only two days ago but the campsite was used continuously for 2 weeks (DC 16 WIS).

3. UNEXPECTED FOES

Four cultists (three **soldiers** and **Via, the Traitor**) hide behind bushes on the riverbank. They see the characters arrive and wait for the best moment to attack. Via, the traitor, has a proposition for the party (see **The Ambush**).

FADDI, THE RIVERFOLK

AT MIDNIGHT, FADDI (sahuagin) emerges from the River of Ash and approaches the characters. The fish-like creature speaks the Common tongue. Faddi explains that a group of evil men stole their *Water Pearl*; a large, shiny rock that is sacred to their culture. They cannot pursue them as far as the Temple of Rebirth as their kind can only survive on the surface for short periods. Faddi offers the characters the gratitude of his people and a map to a dwarvish vault in exchange for retrieving the *Water Pearl*. If the characters accept to help the riverfolk, Faddi and a friend (**sahuagins**) aid the characters in any encounter by the river that occurs after this one.



THE AMBUSH

VIA, THE TRAITOR is part of the Fiery Heart cult but resents Radd Van Holtz, envying his magical powers and the loyalty of the organization. When the characters arrive at the campsite, Via's goal is to wait for them to lower their guard and shoot from the west side of the river. However, as they spy on the characters and learn of their quest to stop the cult at the Temple of Rebirth, Via sees a chance to turn the tables and take over the cult.

Via whistles from the other side of the river and emerges from the thickets. She tells the characters that she and her companions, who are loyal to her, were coerced into joining the cult. She reveals Radd Van Holtz's identity as the cult leader and claims that he is a despicable person. Via tells the characters that she and her companions are willing to join their expedition so that the Fiery Heart cult can be stopped once and for all.

► **The Alliance.** If the characters believe her tale and welcome her into the party, Via and her goons play the part for a while. Via wishes to vanquish Radd and, if possible, usurp the phoenix's power when the time comes. If all else fails, Via flees and regroups with whatever is left of the Fiery Heart to continue growing the foul cult.

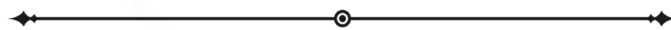
► **The Encounter.** If the characters do not believe **Via, the Traitor's** tale, and refuse her offer, the impulsive warrior orders the three **soldiers** to shoot. In case of an upcoming defeat, Via attempts to flee the scene.

To cross the River of Ash during the battle, the characters must be in great shape (DC 16 STR) failure causes the characters to be dragged 20 feet downstream.

4. THE ROAD TO MOONFALL MOUNTAIN

A short flight of stone steps marks the way toward Moonfall Mountain. Beyond, the path slants upward and is dotted by more crudely-carved steps as the trail approaches the Temple of Rebirth at the heights.

Twenty meters north from the flight of stairs. A small formation of rounded rocks stands by the beaten path. The cairn was left by pilgrims. If the characters examine it (1 **crawling round**), they find the carved signatures of travelers that came this way dating back centuries.



VIA, THE TRAITOR

An eerie magic halo surrounds the cultist with tattooed eyelids and lips. She brandishes an engraved dagger.

AC 13 (leather), **HP** 14, **ATK** 1 dagger (close/near) +2 (1d4) or longsword +0 (1d8), **MV** near, **S** +0, **D** +2, **C** +0, **I** +0, **W** +0 **Ch** +1, **AL** C, **LV** 4

Stealthy. ADV on DEX checks to sneak and hide.

Backstab. Deal x2 damage against surprised creatures.

Cancel (INT Spell). DC 13. End one spell affecting a target within near.

Faddi, the Riverfolk



TEMPLE OF REBIRTH

Pitiful pretenders! What a disservice to your mediocre households to come here to die in such a desolate place. Bow and swear loyalty to me or perish!

Radd Van Holtz



Since the temple was built, it has stored Sootbeak's scorched egg twice. The Temple of Rebirth is a place of worship and gratitude to the phoenix but it is not connected to its rebirth process, which depends solely on the alignment of astral bodies, the Line of Fire. In addition, some valorous knights and martyrs have been honored with a burial place here in the past two centuries.

Radd Van Holtz bewitched the phoenix's egg and enchanted the two magic circles in area 10 to serve his purpose. Radd learned the command word for the magic doors in area 5 and shared it with the rest of the cult. They keep all doors magically closed unless in use.

The cult's activities in the temple have caused some undead to rise. The aggressive undead seek to chase away any trespassers to protect the sacred phoenix.

Dungeon Features

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Most chambers have braziers with permanent **light**; the rest are dark. The undead are **dark-adapted**.

► **Doors.** All doors are magically locked (DC 14 DEX check). They open with the command word 'Allerenth'.

► **Magical Aura.** A *detect magic* spell reveals a magical aura coming from area 10 from as far as 300 feet.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6 Details

- 1 A **fiery cultist** deserter, Anna, approaches the characters. She lost her faith after Radd so viciously disrespected the dead in the dungeon. She offers to join the party.
- 2 Four crypt **shadows** emerge from the ceiling and attack the least-armored character. They flee on turn 3.
- 3 The next to last astral body of the *Line of Fire* becomes aligned. Thunder breaks the silence. For 1 **crawling round**, all fire spells are cast with advantage.
- 4 A despicable, merciless **wraith** rises from the eroded floor tiles and attacks the closest living creature.
- 5 A would-be adventurer, Zack (**soldier**), comes across the characters. He is on the same quest as the party and was hired independently by a wealthy patron to stop the cult.
- 6 Three **gnolls** come from area 7 looking for an easy kill and fresh meat. They fight with furious, blood-filled rage.

1. TEMPLE SURROUNDINGS

The entrance of the Temple of Rebirth is located on a mountainous plateau bathed in greenery and fertile grounds, a harsh contrast with the arid surroundings.

The phoenix's egg radiates a strange energy that causes the temple surroundings to be verdant and fertile. It can be detected (see **Dungeon Features**) and used to find the egg from within 300 of it. If inspected for 1 **crawling round**, the characters find evidence of a battle nearby.

► **Evidence.** A large spot of dry blood on the grass blades suggests a person was seriously injured. A cultist died here; an undead pursued him out of the temple.

2. TEMPLE ENTRANCE

A flight of stone stairs leads up to the temple's entrance. The doors are carved with the intricate image of a flying phoenix covered in flames and sparks.

Four men stand watch by the gate. The locked doors open once a day to allow the cultists to change guards. If the characters stake out the entrance, this occurs in 2d4 hours. Getting in this way allows the characters to hear the doors' command word in use (DC 14 WIS check).

► **Guards.** Two **soldiers** and two **guards** stand watch. If Via is present, the guards may be convinced to let the party in but only if it appears like Via has captured the characters and they are her prisoners (**Reaction** check). Such a ruse may allow the characters to go straight to Radd Van Holtz in area 10 without being stopped.

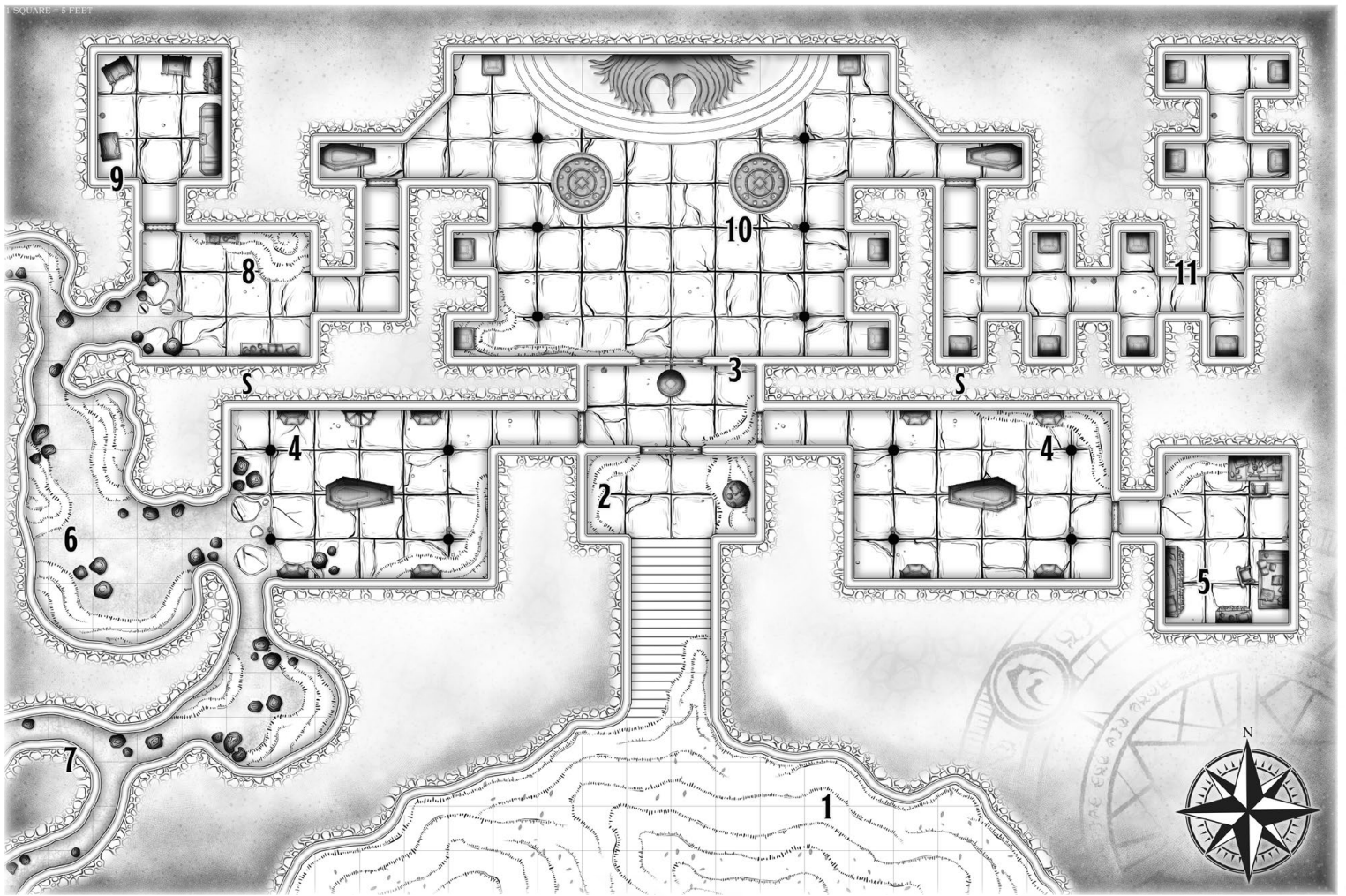
3. ANTECHAMBER

The antechamber is empty but for a stone circle by the north door. In the past, it was once enchanted with a spell that would require a splash of blood to open the door (DC 18 INT check). It was dispelled when the command word was added to all the dungeon doors later on.

4. CRYPT OF GUARDIANS

Four standing sarcophagi surround an opulent, stone, enclosure in the middle of the chamber.

► **Angered Spirits.** Two **ghasts**, two **ghouls**, and one **wight** emerge from their enclosures and attack any living creature. The characters may attract the undead to area 10 to create a dangerous three-pronged battle.



5. THE ARCHIVE

The warm room contains two working desks and a bookshelf packed to the brim with documents.

The archive contains literary works about the phoenix and historical recounts of past appearances of the fabled bird. There is also a tome about the temple's construction that mentions the command word for the doors.

► **The Acolyte.** If Sara is present, she collects all the documents to bring back to the High-priestess for review. She promises the books shall be returned later.

► **Treasure (5 XP).** The stone bookshelf contains 60 gp worth of silver figurines and trinkets. There are three *potions of healing* and one *potion of invisibility*.

6. CAVE OF GNOLLS

A tribe of nomad denizens of the Shadowdark dug their way into the Temple of Rebirth a few months ago. A few of their explorers delved into the temple but found it lacking in easy prey. They settled down half a mile from the temple in a large network of cave tunnels.

► **Rabid Spelunkers.** If the characters explore the natural caverns for 1 **crawling round**, there is a 4-in-6 chance they attract a band of 2d6 **gnoll** scavengers.

7. NARROW TUNNELS

The convoluted tunnel network reaches the gnom community before slanting downward to the hidden Shadowdark. The characters can reach down into the veins of the earth and the uncharted Shadowdark from here.

8. RUINED CHAMBER

Four **fiery cultists** who disobeyed Radd Van Holtz were chained to the walls of this room as punishment. For days, they have received nothing but water.

Allies. Disillusioned with the cult, the cultists beg the characters to be let free and promise to help them murder Radd, if the final confrontation has not yet occurred.

The New Leader. If Via, the Traitor, tags along, the chained cultists are in high spirits to see her acting against Radd Von Holtz. She assures the party that they shall be loyal to her. Turning the cultists against the Fiery Heart is instrumental in thwarting Radd's plans.

The Vault Door. The door to area 9 has been reinforced by Radd Van Holtz. Inspecting the runes on its surface for 1 **crawling round** reveals that a person must draw blood and lose 1d8 hit points to open it. Radd Van Holtz moved the cult's fund there when they took over the temple. Some other valuable trinkets are hidden there.

9. THE GREAT VAULT

The chamber contains an assortment of stone chests, coffers, and a packed-to-the-brim bookcase.

Treasure (7 XP). The chests contain 60 gp and 330 sp. There is one *potion of healing* and a *shield of the lion*. Radd Van Holtz's spellbook and information on his phoenix-binding spell are in a dark, leather-bound tome. The *Water Pearl (crystal ball)* is stored in one of the chests.

10. ALTAR OF REBIRTH

The golden effigy of a great phoenix on a raised dais dominates the far end of the domed hall. Two ornate magic circles glow before the blazing, gilded effigy

The fabled phoenix's egg lies by the feet of the gilded statue. A group of people surrounds the statue as they get ready for the Line of Fire to occur.

► **The Confrontation.** Radd Van Holtz is accompanied by two **soldiers**, two **guards**, and one **thief**.

► **The Phoenix.** For dramatic purposes, the astral alignment is meant to occur as the characters battle the cult leader. The appearance of Sootbeak (**phoenix**) is a wild card that the GM reserves for the best moment. When it appears, it may trigger Radd's binding spell and empower him (full HP and advantage on all checks). Conversely, the spell may fail and Sootbeak's appearance may be crucial to save the characters from certain death.

► **The Traitor.** If Via is present, Radd laughs and warns the characters that Via is a treacherous woman who shall betray them at the first opportunity. It is true as she and her goons turn on the party after defeating the cult.

11. TEMPORAL COLUMBARIUM

The winding columbarium contains eleven alcoves with niches. Dozens of people are buried here. Most of them worked on the construction of the Temple of Rebirth.

RADD VAN HOLTZ

Cloaked in crimson and gold, the cult leader commands respect as his heavy gaze falls upon his subjects.

AC 11 (chainmail), **HP** 27, **ATK** 1 spell +5 **MV** near, **S** -1, **D** +1, **C** +0, **I** +3, **W** +1, **Ch** +0, **AL** C, **LV** 6

Fearless. Immune to morale checks.

Arcane Armor (INT Spell). Self. DC 12. AC 16 for 2d4 rounds.

Blast (INT Spell). DC 12. Far, one target. 2d6 damage.

Cancel (INT Spell). DC 13. End one spell affecting a target within near.

Levitate (INT Spell). DC 12. Close. Focus. Hover near for duration, vertical movement only.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

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

THE CULT GONE

The characters defeat the Fiery Heart cult and either slay or bring its members for the king's justice. Bailiff Jacken and Father Barley pay the promised rewards and announce that the temple is once again open.

If King Nemor was saved by the party, he organizes a feast, a tournament in their, gifts them a large parcel of land in Nightfall City, and becomes a grateful patron.

SOOTBEAK, THE PHOENIX

The legendary phoenix is grateful for the characters' service and considers them friends. If any is injured or requires healing, Sootbeak offers two magical tears. They can heal any ailment or damage. If the phoenix participated in the battle, 1d2 feathers can be collected from area 10. The phoenix does not offer any feathers. Sootbeak flies away as its nest is at the highest peak of Moonfall Mountain. Sootbeak is curious about the party and might watch them from afar; perhaps even intervene.

Priestess Dinnara rewards the characters with a set of three *immovable rods* in exchange for the feather.

THE GRATITUDE OF THE RIVERFOLK

The *Water Pearl* is a powerful *crystal ball*. When the characters return it to Faddi in the River of Ash, the riverfolk community is overjoyed. They prompt the characters into their submerged halls in the nearby sea for a celebration. Alas, that is an adventure for another day...



Radd Van Holtz

Chapel of Lost Letters

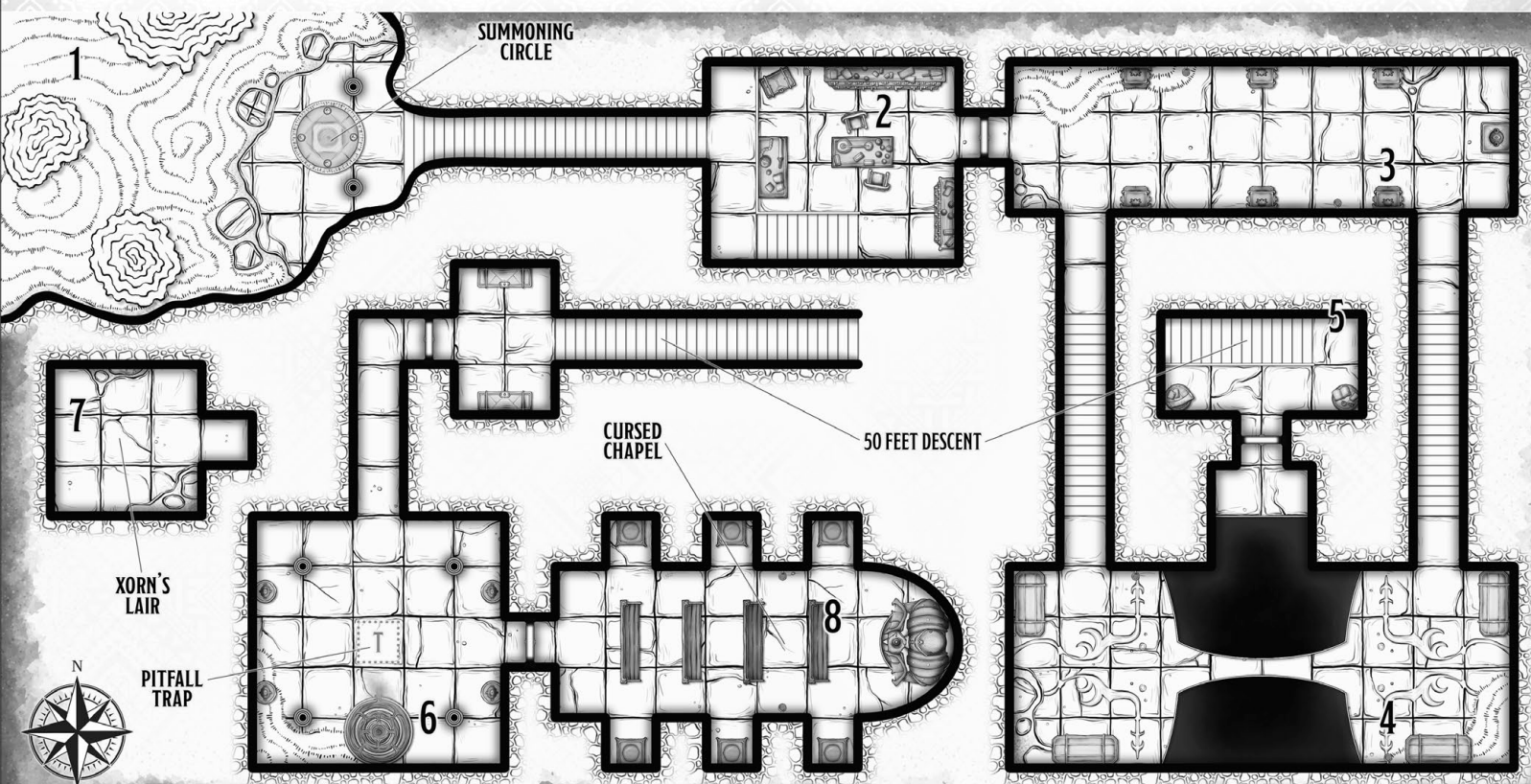
Among the common regrets that mortal beings are subject to, the worst is that of an unsaid message, a non-delivered missive, or a message that cannot be said because the recipient is gone or has passed away. These letters, which never reached their destination, are the source of unending regret, anguish, and pain. The significance of saying important things when loved ones still live is paramount.

Long ago, there was a knight who lived in times of war, Sir Harold. After a year away, he returned to his homestead only to find it torched to the ground by enemy forces. His wife and offspring mere casualties of war. Sir Harold and a few others, overcome by grief for all the words of love that were left unsaid to their families, pledged to protect the weak so that no one else would suffer this fate; the Order of Shields was born. The knightly order would deliver letters in their travels; they placed enormous importance on delivering others' messages of love and kindness. Years after Sir Harold's death, a shrine was built to honor the Order of Shields and their deeds. The knights' remains were interred there.

To eulogize the order's goals, it became a tradition to send letters for dead people to the shrine. Thus, it was named the Chapel of Lost Letters; it stores missives that grieving people believe the knights' spirits can deliver. Monks sworn in loyalty to the order keep the underground archive organized. The chapel has collected thousands of letters and has become the burial place of many valiant knights. However, the grief and pain poured into those messages have corrupted the remains and caused the crypt to become a dangerous place. The monks had to leave because of this. For a month, the corrupted knights roam the world of the living and prey on whoever trespasses on their tomb.

1. An untrodden path traverses the hills and leads to the chapel's entrance. Little remains of the once-opulent entrance to the Chapel of Lost Letters. There was once a hall here but only ruins remain. A summoning circle by the descending stairs can be used with teleportation spells.
2. The main archive contains countless letters and post-mortem messages. Each one is a droplet of anguish. All the missives are stained black as if carbon dust was spread on them. An invisible servant keeps the archive organized. The arcane apparition remains despite the corruption.
3. Six knights who pledged their lives to the same purpose as Sir Harold are buried here. Four of them have succumbed to the corruption. The **fallen knights** emerge from their enclosures and attack the living.

4. The chamber is divided by an 80-foot-deep chasm. A narrow, stone bridge connects both ends. Sharp rocks and splintered bones await those unfortunate to fall into the chasm. Four knights are interred in this chamber. They swore oaths to mighty lords who also shared their peaceful views. Each of the stone coffins features a bronze plaque that reads "*Here lies one who sacrificed everything to uphold the values of Sir Harold and the Order of Shields.*" The four knights have fallen to darkness. The **fallen knights** scorn the living, envying their life and happiness. In battle, the knights attempt to push the characters into the perilous chasm.
5. Accessible only by jumping from the bridge in area 4, this room contains two stone plinths, a descending stairway into a landing connected to area 6, and an intricate wall carving that depicts Sir Harold facing off an army by himself. Sir Harold is portrayed as brave and confident. The lower landing contains two stone coffers that contain 30 gp and a dagger.
6. A font of crimson-tinted liquid awaits by the south wall, flanked by golden vases on stone plinths. The vases contain the ashes of four sorcerers who shared Sir Harold's ideals. They too have been affected by the dungeon's corruption. The undead mages rise as **shadows** when living creatures come to this chamber. The pond is harmless. It is a distraction meant to cause trespassers to walk into the pitfall trap. Creatures that stop on the marked square are dropped 30 feet into the xorn's lair (area 7).
7. A strange creature, a **xorn**, lives in a nearby cavern system. It can move through solid rock so it comes when creatures trigger the pitfall trap. Centuries ago, it was conditioned to come here when it felt the trap's machinery working. The xorn was given precious metals and jewels as a reward. Now, the xorn seldom has access to such delicacies, if a creature enters the chamber in possession of such materials, the xorn attacks.
8. The last chamber is Sir Harold's Chapel of Lost Letters. Four wooden pews precede a large, brass statue of the great knight. Sir Harold's bodily remains are stored under his effigy. The chapel is cursed though, the countless unsent letters eroded the knight's good spirit after centuries. When the characters arrive, the spirit of Sir Harold coalesces in front of the statue. In its current state, the floating abomination is a mockery of the knight's appearance. The impassive **wraith** knows no reason and attacks the living in a bout of obsessive unquenched rage. Destroying the undead is not enough to cleanse the crypt; they reform at dawn to continue their unending plight. If a devout, religious character wishes to bring peace to the hapless dead knights. They can attempt a cleansing ritual in the cursed chapel to deliver Sir Harold and the other spirits from the feelings of terrible regret. The ceremony concluded, Sir Harold's spirit appears once more and apologizes for his lack of resolve, even in death.



SEPULCHER OF HOLLOWS

Different cultures vary in traditions. The matter of life and death, for instance, is a complex taboo for some. But for others, the dead are a part of life. They understand that for life to exist, death must occur. But it does not matter if they fear or venerate death. All cultures have this in common. They respect death and those who have parted.

SETTING THE SCENE

IN THIS ADVENTURE, the characters have just finished a mission. They travel the country roads, and today, they reach Cherryplum Town. They learn of the town's current situation from its sociable people (see **Rumors**).

No one has information or clues that point to a culprit, but someone or something defiled one of the local sepulchers, the one where the Trentons were buried. A family of knights, loyal protectors of the realm. The Trentons were granted this tomb in honor of their valiant deeds.

They all perished in combat, defending the kingdom's goals and values. But someone trespassed and interrupted their eternal rest. An unknown agent planted a seed of dark energy in the main sarcophagus, the one where the former leader of the knights rests: Kevin Trenton. Little by little, the corruption spread, and the former knights have become an army of dead, an army of hollows.

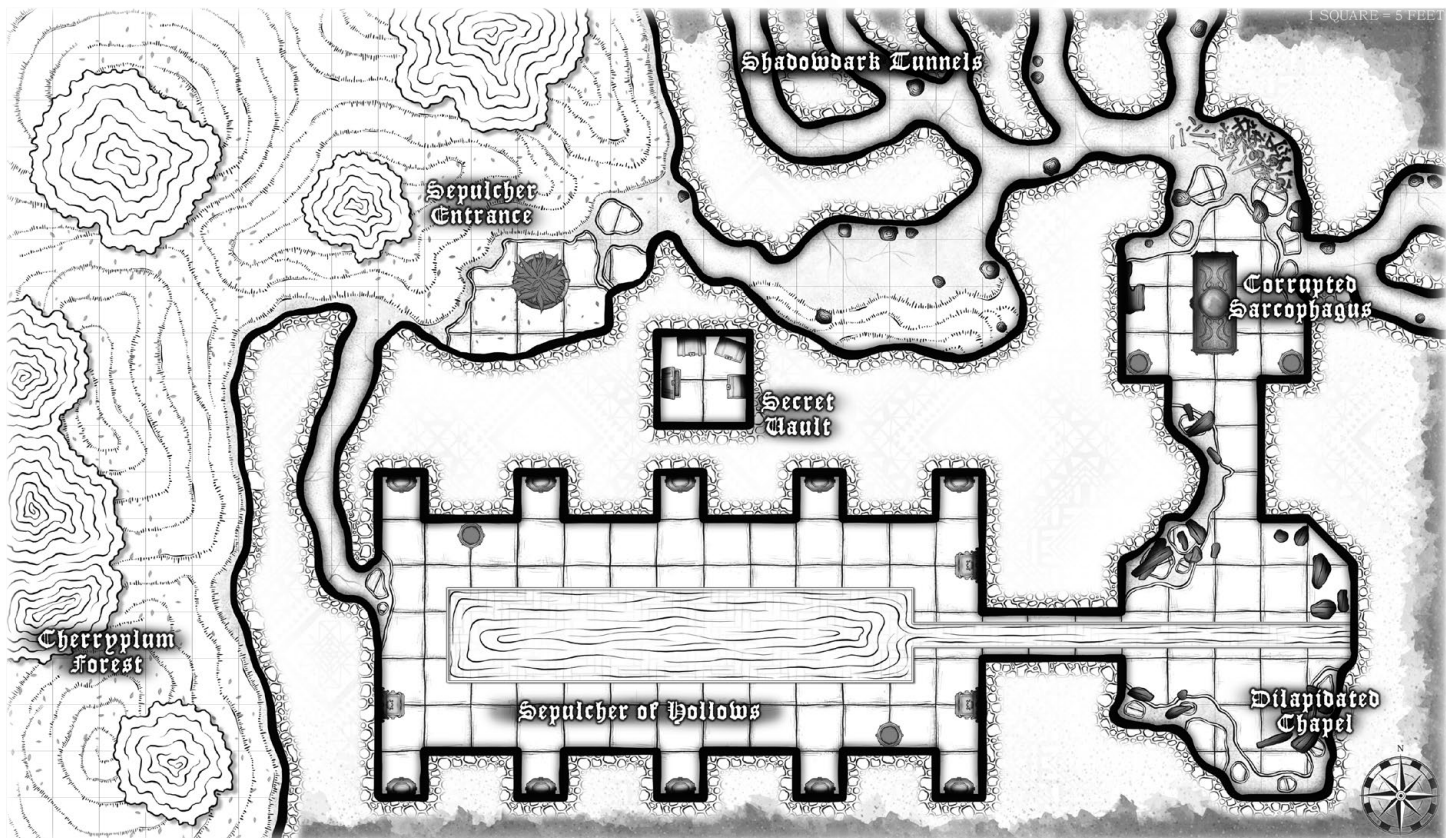
ADVENTURE HOOKS

Investigation. Skeletons and zombies terrorize the poor people of Cherryplum. They come from the Trentons' Sepulcher. Bailiff Hank summons the characters the moment he learns they are in town. He needs them to eradicate all sources of danger (60 gp, 5 XP).

Religious Deed. Father Julian summons the characters too but he asks them a different thing. He claims that he perceives dark energy coming from the sepulcher. He begs the heroes to do their best to find the source of evil and cleanse it from the sepulcher (40 gp, 3 XP).

RUMORS

d6	Details
1	People believe the dead came back to life as a punishment for their sins. Most folk can be heard praying.
2	A town guard tells the heroes Bailiff Hank needs them. The characters hear three farmers (peasants) gossiping.
3	They organize a raid into the sepulcher. They are confident they can become folk heroes and save the day.
4	The local tailor is almost blind. However, he claims he saw a cloaked figure near the sepulcher a few days back.
5	The Trentons were a family of good warriors and knights. They were loved by all people in Cherryplum.
6	Father Julian believes the core of this problem must be hiding within the sepulcher. The solution must be there.



Level 3 Adventure

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

► **Light.** Some areas have sconces or braziers with permanent *light* spells. All denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Unholy Water.** The water in the sepulcher canals was once clean and holy. But the divine spells that made it this way are gone. Coming in contact with this corrupted fluid poisons living creatures (DC 13 CON). Disadvantage on attacks and checks for 1 **crawling round**.

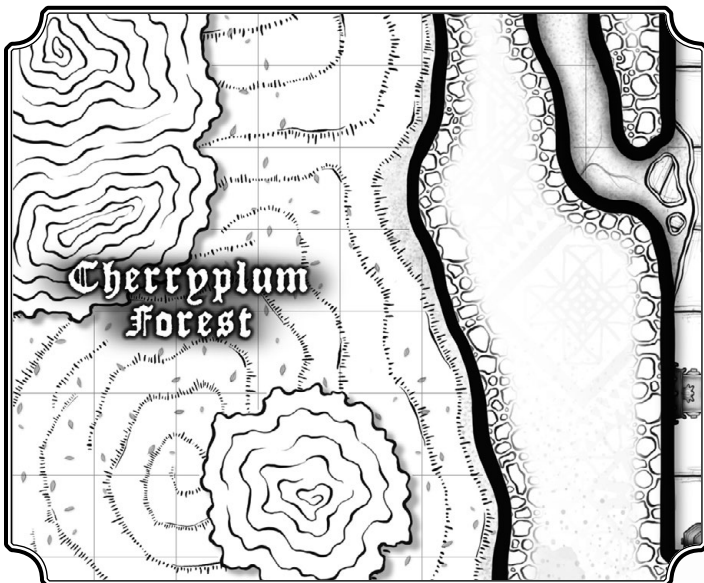
► **Evil Bolstering.** All undead creatures have advantage on checks versus *turn undead* and *rebuke unholy*.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6	Details
1	The characters hear a woman calling for help up ahead. When they arrive, they only find a laughing, hostile ghost . A group of four bandits and one thug arrive at the scene.
2	They want to go in to pillage and plunder all they can. The men fight if the heroes try to stop them. The five criminals flee if the battle turns against them, though.
3	A lonely ghast with a broken foot walks with a limp. When it sees the heroes, it runs on all fours to attack!
4	1d4 skeletons approach from afar. They repeat phrases they said in their lives as they fight without mercy.
5	The ghost of Augustus Trenton appears. He apologizes for their sepulcher's state before sobbing and vanishing.
6	A couple of rust monsters arrive from the Shadowdark tunnels (see map). They flee if reduced to half their HP.

CHERRYPLUM FOREST

The characters leave Cherryplum Town and reach the edge of the forest. It is not hard to find the sepulcher following the directions given in town (DC 12 WIS check). On a fail though, the heroes get lost for a while and stumble onto an **owlbear** cub. Its mother is 40 feet behind and becomes hostile if they interact with it in any way.



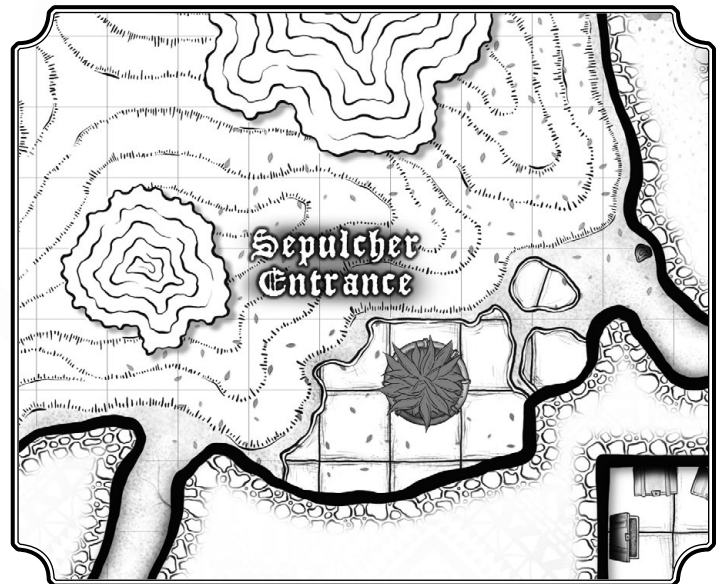
SEPULCHER ENTRANCE

A brazier illuminates the area outside the sepulcher day and night. This fire does not burn, however. It is warm to the touch but it does not harm the skin.

The characters can make camp in this area to prepare for their dungeon-delving if they wish. If they choose to do so, they draw the attention of a **brown bear**. The animal is just looking for food and leaves if given some. Otherwise, it becomes hostile and fights fiercely.

► **Options.** There are two entrance tunnels. The characters may choose where to enter the dungeon from. The south path takes the heroes directly to the **Sepulcher of Hollows** while the easternmost entrance takes them to the **Shadowdark Tunnels** (see map).

► **Battle.** Regardless of the path they choose, the characters find a group of six **skeletons** waiting at the end of the tunnels. The dead fight without mercy. When this encounter ends, roll once on the **Random Events** table.

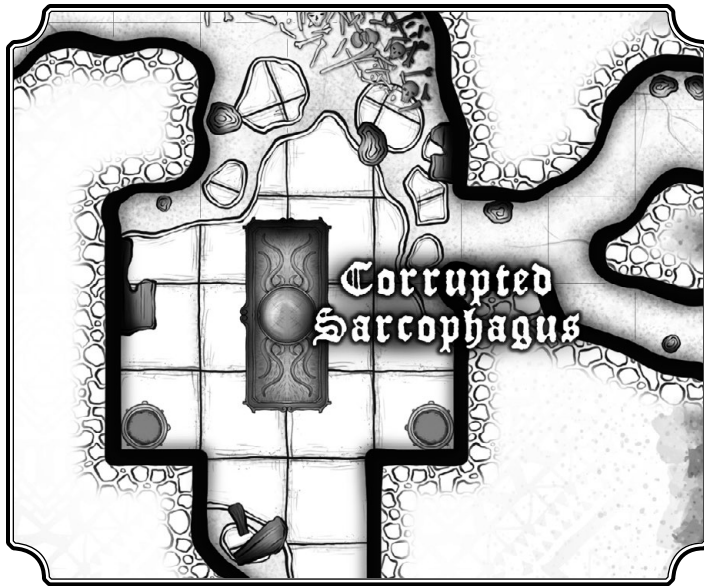


SHADOWDARK TUNNELS

The cavern forks into several narrow paths. There are tracks and slithering marks on the packed soil. The tunnels are home to darkness and silence.

The characters have nothing to do here unless they wish to spend some time as spelunkers. If they spend a **crawling round** searching this area, they discern some valuables buried in the soil. They find a golden bowl (15 gp), a silvered dagger (10 gp), a cracked emerald (60 gp), and rare incense that is repulsive to undead (50 gp).

► **Uncharted Territories.** While the heroes retrieve the treasure described above, they are surprised by a **gelatinous cube** (DC 12 WIS). On a fail, one of the characters is attacked and engulfed by the cube in a surprise round.



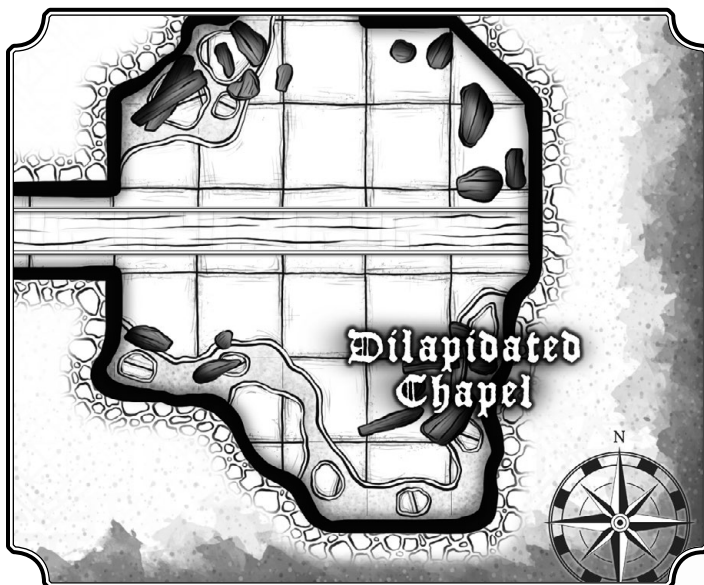
TOMB OF GREED

A strange, green, tentacle-protruding spheroid attaches to the sarcophagus like an alien, monstrous leech.

If the characters attempt to remove the corruption, dozens of eyes and lipless mouths open. The **gibbering moulder** detaches and attacks the nearest character. After combat, the heroes may search the room. The stone sarcophagus has a silver plate that reads: “Here lies Kevin, leader of the courageous Trenton knights. May his soul rest in peace.” Kevin’s remains though, are gone.

DILAPIDATED CHAPEL

Recent cave-ins changed partially collapsed this chamber, but the people in Cherryplum still cared for the chapel and kept it clean. Whoever corrupted the sepulcher made sure there were no signs of lawful gods left. Nothing remains of Gede and Ord’s shrines. Roll once on the **Random Events** table when the characters come.



SEPULCHER OF HOLLOW

The largest chamber of this tomb. Ten standing sarcophagi rest on the walls, each in their respective alcove.

The characters find no enemies at first. They are free to search the room. The undead emerge when two of the heroes stand by the edge of the pool. Ten **hollows** emerge from the enclosures and attack. They close in on the trespassers to push them into the noxious water. The hollows fight until slain and chase the heroes if they flee.

The souls of the people interred here cannot rest in peace anymore. They have become empty vessels, hollow bodies with nothing but a drive for murder and death!

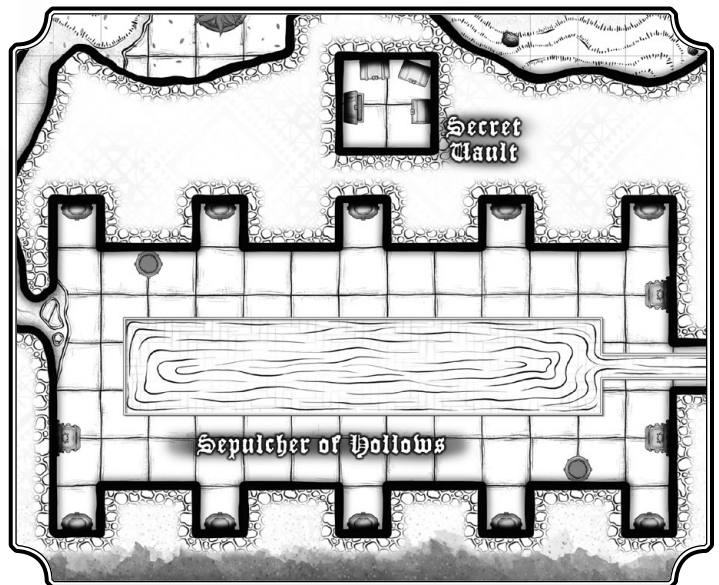


A zombie with a missing limb, a skeleton with half its skull. A mockery of life, but a relentless killing machine.

AC 12, HP 12, ATK 1 slam +2 (1d6), MV near (swim), S +1, D +1, C +2, I -2, W +0, Ch -3, AL C, LV 2

Undead. Immune to moral checks.

Relentless. If reduced to 0 HP by a non-magical source, DC 15 CON to go to 1 HP instead.



SECRET VAULT

An alcove (see map) hides a secret passage (DC 13 WIS). If the characters find it, they obtain 70 gp, 1,874 sp, a *bag of holding*, and a random 1st-tier wizard scroll.

DEVELOPMENT

THE CHARACTERS GET paid for a job well done after getting rid of the monsters. They earn Father Julian’s favor if a cleric in the party performs a cleansing ceremony to prevent more corruption. But, where are Kevin Trenton’s remains? That is an adventure for another day..

THE SEA CLOVER

A short ocean-delving adventure by Viel Nast



ΤΟ ΘΑΛΑΣΣΙΝΟ ΤΡΙΦΥΛΛΙ

Μια φορά στα χίλια χρόνια
του πελάγου τα τελώνια
μες στα σκοτεινά τα φύκια
μες τα πράσινα χαλίκια
Το φυτεύουνε και βγαίνει
πριν ο ήλιος ανατείλει
το μαγεύουνε και βγαίνει
το θαλασσινό τριφύλλι
το μαγεύουνε και βγαίνει
το θαλασσινό τριφύλλι
Το θαλασσινό τριφύλλι ποιος
θα βρει να μου το στείλει
Ποιος θα βρει να μου το στείλει
το θαλασσινό τριφύλλι
Μια φορά στα χίλια χρόνια
κελαηδούν αλλιώς τ' αηδόνια
Δε γελάνε μήτε κλαίνε
μόνο λένε μόνο λένε
Μια φορά στα χίλια χρόνια
γίνεται η αγάπη αιώνια
Να 'χεις τύχη να 'χεις τύχη
κι η χρονιά να σου πετύχει
να χεις τύχη να 'χεις τύχη
κι η χρονιά να σου πετύχει
Το θαλασσινό τριφύλλι ποιος
θα βρει να μου το στείλει
Ποιος θα βρει να μου το στείλει
το θαλασσινό τριφύλλι

Οδυσσέας Ελύτης

THE SEA CLOVER

Once in a thousand years
The ocean goblins
Inside dark seaweeds
Inside green gravels
They plant it and it comes out
Before the sun rises
They enchant it and it comes out
The sea clover
They enchant it and it comes out
The sea clover
The sea clover who
He will find and send it to me
Who will find to send it to me?
The sea clover
Once every thousand years
The nightingales sing differently
They don't laugh nor cry
Only they say only they say
Once every thousand years
Loves becomes eternal
You got to have luck to have luck
And may the year go well for you
You got to have luck to have luck
And may the year go well for you
The sea clover who
He will find and send it to me
Who will find the sea clover
To send it to me?

Odysseas Elytis (translated by Viel Nast)

INTRODUCTION



In the seaside town of Cloverport, a horrible plague has spread and all its citizens are falling ill. Green spots spread all over the bodies of the victims and they perish when every inch of their skin turns a pale, dark green. It has been a few weeks since the tragedy occurred and only a few have died but almost all people show green spots. The admiral-lord is more than desperate for a cure.

He offers a hefty reward to anyone who can save the seaside town. Cloverport is prosperous but some local myths claim that the place was built over ancient arcane waterways. Legend says that an ancient ocean being (water elemental) escaped, and since then, it has harassed the town mildly, but with everyone sick, it has finally found the chance to wreak its full revenge!

GETTING INTO THE ADVENTURE

The current plague forced the town to close its commerce routes. Only those involved with finding a cure are admitted. Heralds and messengers were tasked with bringing external help and rode away. A camp was placed outside the city walls to welcome the potential saviors!

Roll 1d6 - To know how the PCs get involved in this adventure, consider the following reasons:

1. They (or at least one of them) are originally from Cloverport and wish to visit family.
2. The characters escort a famous physician who believes he can cure the disease.
3. The heroes think they have the means to come up with a cure and collect the reward.
4. The PCs were in the city and they are sick too!
5. They arrived on a boat and are not sick. But they may not leave until a cure is found.
6. The PCs escort a priest who claims to have the magical/religious means to find a cure.

THE ADVENTURE

THE CITY HAS a gloomy atmosphere. Few people dare to walk the streets; the once-busy port is eerily empty. Still, the admiral-lord grants the heroes access to city buildings, the library, the sea temple, and the admiralty, which is housed in a huge lighthouse by the entrance.

If they try magic, the characters have no luck; no matter what spell they use, the plague is not healed. The priests of the sea god, at the great sea temple, are silent; ordered not to interfere. This angers the people. Hence, the priests were forced to stay locked in the temple (their hand gestures explain they are under a vow of silence).

RESEARCH

The PCs are free to ask around and investigate. The characters may use INT or CHA to find or elicit information from the locals. Have the PCs talk to librarians, acolytes, sailors, and any other inhabitant from Cloverport.

Information Order. The following rumors and facts are given out in order, starting from number 1.

RUMORS AND FACTS

1. The current plague exists because the Cloverport was cursed not long ago (partially true)
2. Gold is the answer to this problem (false)
3. Some priests say that no one should worry because the sea god shall protect the town (false)
4. This plague is our doom, Cloverport is soon to be destroyed and become history (false)
5. A powerful entity or being is behind all this (true)
6. This horrible plague is only the beginning, our enemies will come soon and destroy us (false)
7. There is a myth that can explain all this (true)
8. The cure exists, but crafting it is a dangerous and difficult task. The main ingredient is rare (true)



To find a solution, the characters must attempt to find clues in the three different areas (the library, the great sea temple, and the admiralty). Successful roleplaying, clever ideas, and good results in their INT and CHA checks may help them learn the following:

Temple. The characters read ancient tomes and speak with a brave priest. They learn of the sea clover, a plant that can cure all water/sea-related sicknesses.

Library. Here, the heroes read a passage in an ancient tome that describes with great detail the past struggle with the elemental and its vow for revenge.

Admiralty. The heroes discover a torn map showing an underwater route on an island where the exiled elemental lives (As per the writings, it can be inferred that the monster possesses the second part of the map).

FINDING THE CURE

The city is desperate. They offer a small but quick vessel so the PCs can travel to the island, which is a day away. The place is a barren rock with a few seagulls' nests and nothing more. Further investigation shows an underwater cave that is barely visible with the tide (DC 16 WIS). The PCs are free to try their luck through that path.

The PCs must solve the breathing-underwater problem. If the party's level is too low, the temple offers plenty of *potions of water breathing* (alternatively, they may offer magical rings or bracelets that allow the wielder to breathe underwater for as long as they wear them).

Navigating the underwater dungeon, the characters eventually track down the **water elemental** and its lair. If they have the magic to understand it, or if they speak Primordial, the PCs may make use of an air bubble nearby to communicate with it. The PCs must act with caution, though. If direct violence is their only tool, the elemental attempts to flee, fearing for its life. The elemental is the one who can lift the curse in Cloverport. If it disappears, the city is surely doomed. The GM is free to add underwater encounters before this meeting so the PCs consider against using violence twice.

N'RRONRR, THE ELEMENTAL

FROM THE START of their interaction, N'rronrr the elemental claims it alone can lift the curse. The characters must persuade it to lift its curse and offer anything it wants. However, this is a partial lie. The mischievous elemental cannot undo the curse but it knows a way to do it (see below). This means that brute force and violence cannot solve Cloverport's situation.

The PCs must negotiate with this ancient being that is both as fierce and volatile as the sea. N'rronrr, the water elemental, wants its lair back (located below the great sea temple). The elemental does not agree to lift the plague curse until the heroes accept its terms. They must do so by speaking on behalf of Cloverport.

If the PCs agree and give N'rronrr their word, the water elemental confesses that it cannot lift the curse in truth. Before things get ugly though, N'rronrr offers the other half of the ancient map and explains. Deeper into the ocean there is a colony of ocean-goblins. They tend fields of a rare sea-clover that blossoms once every thousand years! The PCs have a day to get into the ocean-goblins kingdom and get enough sea-clovers!

THE OCEAN-GOBLIN KINGDOM

OCEAN GOBLINS ARE a rare species. With their webbed feet and hands and their capacity to breathe underwater, they have adapted to life in the ocean depths. They live in deep caverns, surviving against sea monsters, sharks, and other underwater dangers. Only a few people know that they even exist (DC 16 INT check).

So deep below light is almost non-existent and at night everything is pitch black. The PCs can either choose stealth or force but they must hurry! N'rronrr offers to take them to the border of the ocean-goblins' kingdom and return them to their ship when they obtain the sea clovers. Regardless of their choice, the mission requires careful planning. The sea clover fields are in the center of the ocean-goblins' cavern system, and it is hard to gather them unseen; the ocean-goblins wait and watch as the plants blossom. So maybe the PCs can come up with a deal with the ocean-goblin king (**adventure hook**) and it may not be necessary to use violence!

In case the characters invade the ocean goblins' territory by force, they must gather the clovers while fending off the waves of enemies closing in. One or two of the PCs must gather the clovers while the rest provide cover for a minimum of 4 rounds (or 3 with two gatherers). Waves of six ocean **goblins** try to stop them. When the characters retreat once they get the clovers, N'rronrr, the water elemental, helps the party scare the goblins away, if any.



THE CURE AND THE PAYMENT

THE CHARACTERS SUCCEED! They collect enough clovers and they return. N'rronrr, the water elemental, takes them back to their ship and escorts them back to the seaport. The priests of the sea god know how to prepare the healing potion from the clovers and administer it to all people (including the characters if they are sick as well). The priests also expect all water-breathing items back.

Because of this, the characters are named '*Heroes of Cloverport*' and are offered positions of power according to their wishes and skills. Furthermore, the sea god priests are now free from their vow of silence. They promptly explain that N'rronrr, the elemental, is one of the sea god's sons and protégés. Feeling torn between his son and his beloved city, it was a divine mandate from their god when they were ordered not to interfere.

Now that the sea god priests are not under a vow of silence, they can help and speak on behalf of the Heroes of Cloverport. They are instrumental in convincing the city's rulers to relocate the temple of the sea god so that N'rronrr can return to its ancient lair and home.

FINAL NOTE

Consider this magical boon for the characters after taking the legendary sea clovers:

Be lucky for a yearlong (gain a weekly **luck token** feat for a year), or find their true love!

This is an adventure for all levels and/or game styles. The GM is free to adjust anything described in this text to fit their game or campaign. Please, feel free to add Cloverport to your campaign to further explore this beautiful city, or have fun playing this as a one-shot!



THE VIPERIAN CURSE



By Elven Tower

Designed for use with

ShadowDark RPG

LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE

A LOW-LEVEL SHADOWDARK ADVENTURE ABOUT STOPPING A GROWING VIPERIAN ORGANIZATION

ADVENTURE PRIMER

Please, come swiftly. I don't know how much longer can the populace resist this foul curse. The serpent-spawn have gone too far. You must find them soon.

Father Valorum

The struggles for geographical supremacy are common among intelligent species. Humans fight amongst themselves for territories all the time. But squabbles over pieces of land are much less common when different ancestries are involved. Still, this is the plight that those who live in Pink-Apple Village have endured for over two centuries. They contend with a dangerous covenant of snake people. Viperians are a scattered civilization of scaled folk who built their blood-soaked dynasties with sorcery and cunning. Today, the remaining ones fight for scraps.

It all started over 200 years ago when a party of viperian warriors attempted to take over Pink-Apple Village, which was a meager farming settlement back then. The viperian invaders were driven off but they claimed that the area was sacred grounds to them; a cultural heritage of their people. According to viperian legends, the area where the village exists was once the cradle of the Great Snake, a godly entity that some viperian circles worship.

THE COVENANT AND THE CURSE

THE LEADER OF the viperian circle that assails Pink-Apple Village is a viperian man named Ydriss. Through blood, effort, and perseverance, the viperian earned the title of 'coven' and decided to retake the sacred lands of the Great Serpent. Unfortunately for the viperians, Pink-Apple Village has grown substantially since the last time the viperians attacked it 8 years ago. Some areas are on the outskirts but the church and Mayor Arlette's manor lie behind a sturdy, stone wall. Coven Ydriss then opted to track down an ancient Great Snake temple that lies near the village, but underground. In there, he studied old viperian scrolls for months until a path to victory was revealed to him. In conjunction with other viperian mages, Coven Ydriss summoned the ire of ancient scaled gods and brought a curse to Pink-Apple Village.

Three-quarters of the village's population was affected. Victims suffer from a debilitating disease; weakness, mind fog, and scaly brittle skin are the horrible curse's symptoms. The poor villagers resemble reptiles. In some sick manner, the horrible curse makes people look similar to reptilian viperians. Alas, this new condition, known as '*serpent fever*', remains an incurable mystery. In most cases, it leads to an excruciatingly painful demise.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Level 4 Adventure

A CALL FOR HELP

Father Valorum sends a letter to the characters and summons them to the church for briefing. The letter explains that the populace in Pink-Apple Village suffers a strange sickness and offers a reward for their help (40 gp, 4 XP).

FINAL CONFRONTATION

The characters have been tracking the nefarious Coven Ydriss for a while now. The latest evidence indicates that the covenant of viperians came close to Pink-Apple Village. The characters journey there to find out. (0 XP).

LOVED ONES IN NEED

Two or more of the characters are originally from Pink-Apple Village. They receive written communication that a strange, debilitating disease has assailed most of the population. The characters' friends and family summon them back to the village for help. The letters state they have collected a small reward (30 gp, 3 XP).

RUMORS

d10 Details

- 1 Viperians have attacked the village in the past. The viperians believe the region is their birthright.
- 2 People avoid the Tomb of Clovers as it remains a perilous location. Rumor has it that an elvish spirit there is capable of revealing any information about the realm.
- 3 The viperian covenant is ruled by a despicable being, Coven Ydriss. The townsfolk believe he is a demon.
- 4 When the curse began, many locals had a dream where Coven Ydriss told them they would die a terrible death for opposing the covenant's goal for so long.
- 5 The curse is magical but no mage-user in the village has found a way to track this incantation to its source.
- 6 So far, the *serpent fever* has killed nineteen people.
- 7 People say that the covenant's second-in-command is a cruel woman who enjoys torture and mistreatment.
- 8 The conflict of Pink-Apple Village and the viperians in the region dates back to at least two centuries.
- 9 A herb infusion has been found to delay the effects of the curse. Unfortunately, no cure has been found as of yet.
- 10 Mayor Arlette requested aid from the capital but none will come as the crown fears a plague outbreak.

PINK-APPLE VILLAGE

I apologize for my appearance. Still, I think I've fared better than others. We must find a solution soon or most will die. I think we know a way to find them.

Mayor Arlette

When the characters arrive at Pink-Apple Village, they find a grim situation as most of the townsfolk have caught *serpent fever*. For those who have been sick for over a week, their deplorable appearance is that of a sickly old person, with scaly skin and yellowed eyes. Many in town experienced a vivid dream before becoming sick (see **Rumor 4**) which leads them to believe that the viperians are to blame but little hard evidence exists at this point.

Scaly-skinned people who see the party desperately beg them to speak with Father Valorum and the mayor, as they know more about the situation. Time is of the essence as people have begun to die from *serpent fever*.

Village Features

► **Events.** Check for a **Random Event** each time a new area is visited. There is a 3-in-6 chance for an event.

► **The Woods.** Pink Apple Village is covered by tall trees and forests. The dense, extensive woods are a great source of food and medicinal flowers and herbs.

► **Population.** The seemingly small village has a population of almost 300 people. About a third of them live within the stone walls, in Pink Church Square (area 9).

RANDOM EVENTS

d6 Details

- 1 A patrol of four **viperians** barges into town to see how the locals are faring. They rush to attack the church.
- 2 A merchant caravan arrives in town from the east. They set out back to the roads in a panic after seeing the locals and hearing about the strange, magical disease.
- 3 Eagles and owls gather on the trees and regard the diseased individuals as if they were prey but don't attack.
- 4 The royal tax envoy arrives in town to collect tithes. Mayor Arlette tells him none shall be paid until the crown helps the village. The envoy soon catches *serpent fever*.
- 5 Six **guards** from a nearby settlement heard of the problem and have come to help. They offer to join the party.
- 6 A thick mist covers Pink-Apple Village. It diminishes visibility and does not subside. This effect is magical and it is caused by the *Viperian Curse* (DC 16 INT check).

1. OLD JOHN'S HOMESTEAD

Father of a large family, Old John is the only one in the house who has not succumbed to the *serpent fever*. The old man struggles trying to move his sick children to the church (area 9). He asks for help. If they are concerned about catching the disease, the man curses them!

2. PINK APPLE INN

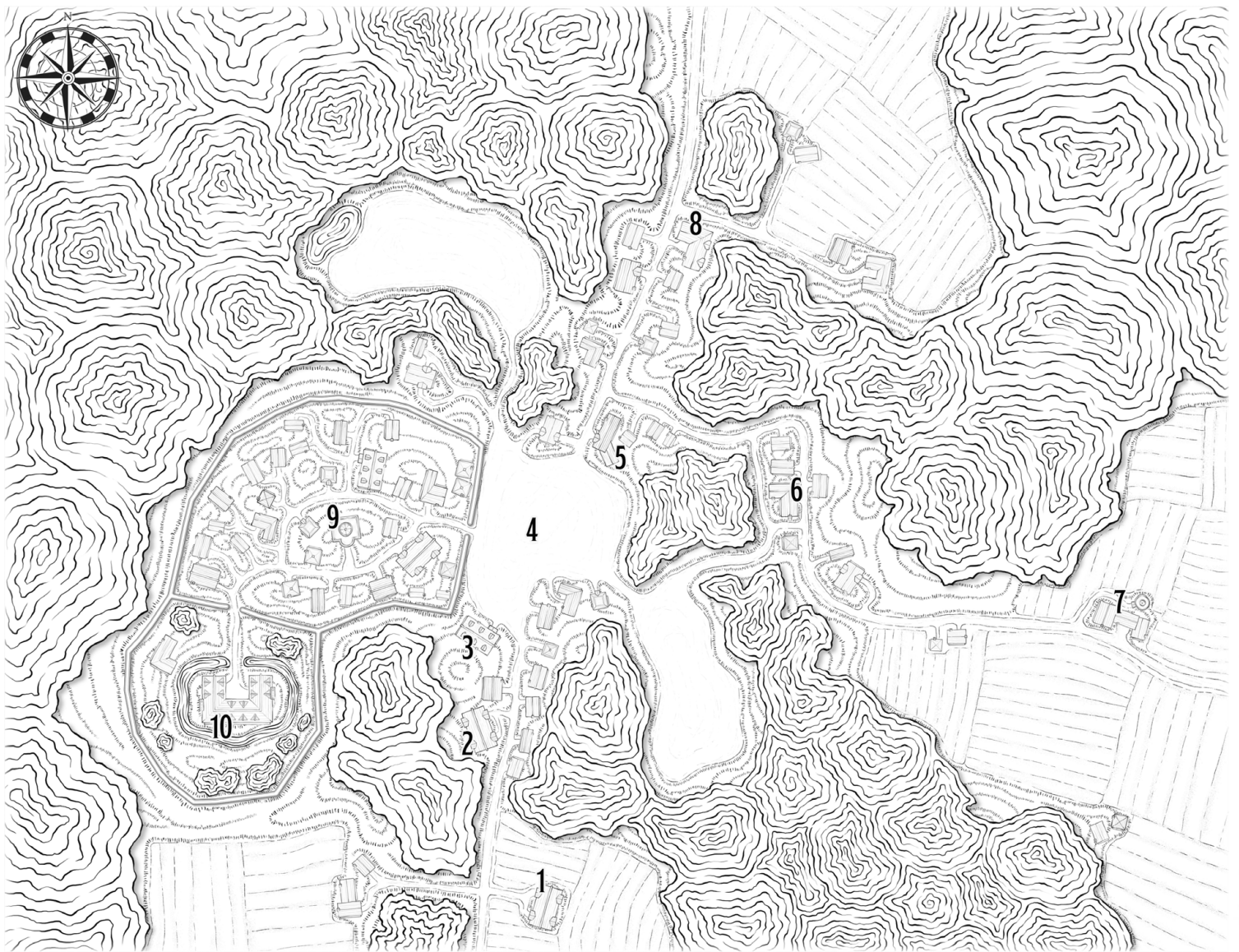
The inn's facade has a large wooden sign in the shape of an apple. It reads "Pink Apple Inn" with beautiful penmanship. A woman sweeps outside.

Lyla, the owner, is a tall, tough lady. Today is not a good day for her, though. She is entering the last stages of *serpent fever* and barely remains conscious while two of her helper boys try to make her comfortable. If the characters lift the curse promptly they may yet save Lyla and others in her state. In the meanwhile, the rest of the staff offers the characters a room if they learn that they are here to help and find a way to remove the curse.

3. MARTHA, THE DEVOUT

A thin, frail woman prays by her house door with unending fervor. Martha is the most devout believer in the church of Ord. She prays for all those who have gotten sick and assures the curious that it is, in fact, her faith that has protected her from the *serpent fever* outbreak. Alas, it is impossible to prove what she claims.





4. CENTRAL SQUARE

The townsfolk gathers in this open field for celebrations and events. Now, it is deserted and uncared for.

► **Upcoming Event.** The Apple Festival is scheduled for next week. The town celebrates this festival once a year. If the characters manage to lift the curse fast enough, they may return in time for the festival (see **Conclusion**).

5. PINK APPLE WARES

The wooden sign in the shape of several wooden apples reads Pink-Apple Wares with green letters.

This store has unique wares on sale. Brandon, the owner, is still healthy. He uses his glass-blowing abilities to create beautiful pieces with immortalized apples inside.

► **Family Matters (2 XP).** Brandon begs the characters to act swiftly against the viperians. His wife and two children are sick and may not live much longer. Brandon offers a *+1 tempered-glass dagger* as a reward for tracking down the viperians and stopping their wretched plans.

6. THE INFESTED GRANARY

This is a storage house and a granary. The town keeps grains, spices, and other goods here. Unfortunately, viperian vermin have taken over the town's food supply.

► **The Snakes.** Julian, the administrator, is in distress. No one can enter the granary since last night when numerous snakes got into the building. A **swarm of snakes** and two **cobra snakes** guard it as if it were their lair.

CATCHING SERPENT FEVER

CREATURES THAT STAY within a mile of Pink-Apple Village are cursed (DC 12 CON check). Those afflicted lose 1/4 of their hit points every 5 days unless they pass the CON check once more. The DC increases by 1 every subsequent time, making long-term success impossible.

In addition, sick individuals become gradually weaker and slower. Their skin turns hard and separates in fine scales, similar to how viperians look. This process is painful and traumatic, like extensive burn wounds.

7. THE MILL

The short, squat building features a mule-drawn mill to process grain into flour. The mules are loosely tied outside and no one is present to tend to the mill. Rats roam freely in the area as the crops languish in the sun.

8. APOTHECARY SHOP

Dania, the apothecary, discovered that a herbal infusion of a flower named Red Lily relieves patients of most symptoms, especially pain. Unfortunately, there is not enough for everyone, so Dania has been given whatever little she brews to the afflicted children.

► **Herb Hunting (0 XP).** Dania needs more Red Lilies, if the characters agree to help, they need to travel north to the forest and find the elusive flowers. After 1d3 days, the characters find enough flowers for Dania to treat most patients, at least for a few days (DC 14 WIS). Failure causes the characters to spend 3d3 days searching.

9. PINK CHURCH SQUARE

The houses in this block look better built. Some of these roads are paved. Little by little, the village turns into a small town. Most places here are currently closed. The characters are welcome. The church is dedicated to Ord, the Wise. All in Pink-Apple Village worship him.

The townsfolk do not refrain from asking the characters for their assistance. This is the case too for Father Valorum, who summons them immediately to his office.

► **Religious Affairs.** The still-healthy priest explains he could not heal the townsfolk; no magic at their disposal helps. Fortunately, the apothecary has found an infusion that helps ease the painful ordeal of debilitated patients (see area 8). Through the use of divination spells, Father Valorum has confirmed that the viperians are the culprits. He puts the church's library at the party's disposal.

► **Hidden References.** If the characters peruse the library for 1d4 hours, they find mentions of an underground, viperian temple near the city. Its location is not disclosed in the incomplete documents, though.

10. MAYOR ARLETTE'S MANOR

The manor is in disrepair. Mayor Arlette's staff of almost two dozen stewards, guards, and gardeners, are sick.

► **Desperate Measures.** Mayor Arlette is sick and in the skin-scaling phase of the disease. She begs the characters to find the viperians. She knows of an elvish burial place known as the Tomb of Clovers. Legends say a spirit there can reveal any information about the region. Many believe these are tales. Mayor Arlette knows this to be true; her uncle was kidnapped 3 decades ago. Her father went to the temple and learned his sibling's whereabouts somehow. However, she claims her father forgot he was once married and his wife's name upon his return.

DEVELOPMENT

COVEN YDRISS IS content with casting the curse from afar and letting the townsfolk slowly die a painful death before taking over the city. The viperians are not an invasion threat to the Pink-Apple Village yet. The nefarious disease shall decimate the village's population if a week or two elapse and the *Viperian Curse* is not lifted.

According to Mayor Arlette, the quickest way to track down the viperian lair is by consulting the ancient elvish spirit in the Tomb of Clovers. If the characters ask around, they receive varied accounts of whether the rumors about the place are true or not. Father Valorum thinks it is just a tale but he trusts Mayor Arlette and is willing to give validity to her late father's stories.

All in all, visiting the Tomb of Clovers is not a terrible time sink. It is a 1-day journey north to the elvish tomb. Mayor Arlette gives the characters a map of the region with the approximate location of the elvish compound. It should not be difficult to find the forlorn crypt.



TOMB OF CLOVERS

The answers you seek are within my power to give. But all revelations come with a cost. Are you truly willing to pay my fare? You may be forever changed...

Faeranduil, Elvish Spirit



Once upon a time, there was an elf sage named Faeranduil. He was a well-respected scholar among his peers and had a good relationship with druid circles and some awakened animals in the forests that surround Pink-Apple Village. Faeranduil lived for thousands of years and dedicated his life to the fastidious archiving of all manner of facts, data, and information about the region. Millennia ago, Faeranduil passed on as elves often do and his remains were interred in the Tomb of Clovers. But even in death, the elf sage continued his studies and writings. Since then, all that Faeranduil knows is recorded as silver inlaid runes that cover most surfaces in the elvish tomb.

Many fey and humans have visited Faeranduil's tomb looking for either information or treasure. However, the elf spirit places great value on his expertise and collects a ruinous price that few are willing to pay. The price is paid with blood and a part of one's soul. Faeranduil, the elvish spirit, is privy to the information that the characters seek. They need but convince him to reveal it.

Area Features

► **Events.** Check for a **Random Event** each time a new area is visited. There is a 3-in-6 chance for an event.

► **Light.** Some chambers have braziers with permanent **light**; the rest are dark. All denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **The Gift of Luck.** Faeranduil grants an answer to a question to those who overcome his tests. In addition to the crucial information the characters may learn, each of them is granted a **luck token** by the elvish spirit.

RANDOM EVENTS

d4 Details

- Four adventurers (**soldiers**) arrive at the tomb looking for information on a magic blade they seek to retrieve. Their leader, Maerk, is wary of the party (**Reaction** check).
- Six **shadows** emerge from the walls and attack. Through the haze, it is revealed that they wear elvish attire.
- A random character steps on a pressure-plate and triggers a poison dart trap. They take 4d6 damage (DC 16 CON for half). This event can occur multiple times.
- A **ghost** materializes from ethereal mist. Arfell tells the characters that he was murdered in the forest and cannot rest until his body is given a proper burial. Perhaps the elvish spirit in the tomb can reveal its location.

REACHING THE TOMB in one day requires accurately following Mayor Arlette's map and some skills for cross-country traveling (DC 14 WIS check). Failure causes the characters to get lost for a day and forces them to camp for the night. The characters are attacked by a pack of six ravenous **wolves**. The wolves do not fight to the death and roll **morale** checks with disadvantage.

1. TOMB SURROUNDINGS

The forest landscape is broken by two intricate, green, limestone sculptures of four-leaf clovers flanking the entrance to the fabled Tomb of Clovers.

The characters reach the entrance flanked by the two clover statues. Passing between the clovers triggers a magical vision (DC 13 INT check). Creatures see themselves experiencing a gruesome death. This vision has made many visitors think twice and flee. The illusion is meant to filter out those unwilling to pay Faeranduil's price

► **Trap.** A stone tile 40 feet from the tomb's entrance features a clover-shaped mosaic. Stepping on it or inspecting it without care triggers a pressure-sensitive plate and triggers a pitfall trap (DC 14 DEX check). Creatures on the mosaic fall 30 feet and land in the oil pond in area 3.

2. POOL OF OIL

A rectangular pool of a thick, greasy, substance dominates the chamber. The walls feature fine silver inscriptions. Standing sarcophagi stand by the corners.

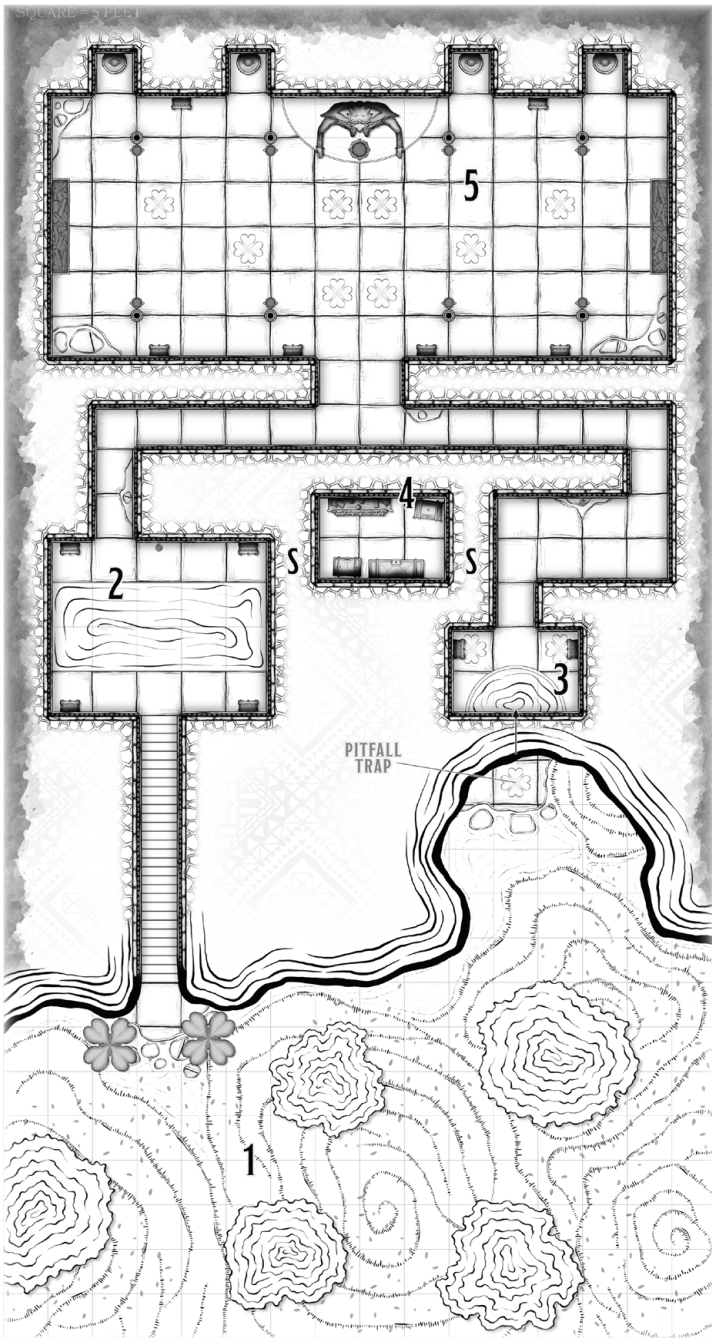
The characters must jump across the 10-foot wide pool (DC 14 STR). Failing this check causes the character to fall into the oil pool. When one character either manages to cross or fall, four **shadows** emerge and attack.

► **Oil.** Creatures submerged in the 10-foot-deep pool of thick oil can only move at 1/4 their speed (DC 13 STR).

3. THE OIL POND

Two **ghasts** emerge from their standing enclosures and attack any creature that comes or falls from area 1.

► **The Glyphs.** Living creatures that step on the clover mosaics trigger an explosion. When this occurs, creatures within a 10-foot radius take 3d6 damage, flames engulf any oil-doused creature, and the oil pond bursts into flames, including anyone submerged in it.



5. TRAIL OF CLOVERS

This large chamber is illuminated by eleven brass braziers. Six stone sarcophagi hug the walls and four gilded goblets rest on plinths on the north alcoves. A stone statue of an elvish scholar overlooks the room. Intricate, silver, elvish script covers the granite walls.

When the characters cross the threshold of this chamber, the spectral voice of Faeranduil speaks to them:

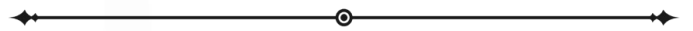
"I beckon you to approach travelers. Know that I appreciate the sentiments of bravery and thirst for knowledge that bring you to my humble abode. Alas, the information at my disposal comes at a steep price. I expect you to understand that no use of my knowledge comes for free."

The eyes of the statue that oversees the area follow the characters across the room but it remains silent.

► **The First Challenge.** Faeranduil only discloses information to those of strong bodies and hearts. To prove this, any petitioners must first fight the dungeon guardians. Six **elvish guardians** materialize by each sarcophagus, bow as a sign of respect, and plunge into battle.

► **The Second Challenge.** After proving their physical prowess, Faeranduil explains that each character may make one question. If he knows the answer, he shall collect payment from the person in one of two ways: *Blood payment* comes in the form of a permanent reduction of 1d4 hit points. *Soul payment* comes in the form of permanently forgetting something of great personal value (player's choice). The characters may take advantage of this opportunity to request information outside the scope of this adventure. They may learn important information pertaining to their overarching adventures, as long as such data is available within Faeranduil's realm.

► **The Viperians.** The spirit reveals the exact location of the viperians' lair in the forest and gives them the runes for the teleportation circle if they are on good terms.



ELVISH GUARDIAN

Robed in ceremonial attire and with a gaze that denotes fervor and courage. The spectral elvish warrior plunges into battle in complete and utter silence.

AC 13, HP 9, ATK 1 longbow (far) +3 (1d8) or 1 longsword +1 (1d8), **MV** near, **S** +0, **D** +3, **C** +0, **I** +1, **W** +1, **Ch** +1, **AL** L, **LV** 3

Noble Undead. Immune to morale checks and *turn undead*. Half damage from non-magical sources.

Incorporeal. In place of attacks, become corporeal or incorporeal.

4. SECRET VAULT

Dust and webs cover everything but all locks appear to be in optimal condition. Conversely, the tomes and scrolls on the north wall shelf remain impeccable.

► **Gaining Access.** The characters can find access to this secret vault in areas 2 or 3 if they notice any of the two pushable bricks hidden there (DC 16 WIS check).

► **The Plea.** Faeranduil's voice tells the characters that the vault contains things of special value and asks them to leave the chamber out of respect. If the heroes disregard this, there are consequences (see **Conclusion**)

► **Treasure (5 XP).** The chamber contains 40 gp, 300 sp, one *potion of legendary deeds*, a *scroll of teleport*, and one of Faeranduil's creations, a *robe of the sorcerer*.

HOUSE OF SERPENTS

You cannot understand our plight or our history. Run away like worthless vermin lest you risk threatening the true rage of the ancient viperian bloodline.

Coven Ydriss

The characters have learned the location of the viperians' lair and the source of the *serpent fever*. The lair is located 12 miles from the town in an arid, rocky region surrounded by large boulders and outcroppings. The characters must spend 1 day of travel to get there. Alternatively, the characters may access the dungeon with teleportation magic if they have access to it with the rune sequence that Faeranduil revealed. Teleportation allows the characters to enter the viperian dungeon from area 7.

Coven Ydriss is in area 9 conducting the mass-like ritual that causes the *Viperian Curse* in Pink-Apple Village. Stopping him is paramount to saving the townsfolk. His second-in-command, Priestess Uszazi (**viperian wizard**), does not have a fixed position, she appears when it is most convenient for the plot or whenever a **Random Event** calls for her presence (see below). When encountered for the first 2 or 3 times, she turns to dust when a successful attack drops her down to half her hit points.

Dungeon Features

- ▶ **Danger.** Deadly. Check for a **Random Event** every **crawling round** and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).
- ▶ **Light.** Some chambers have braziers with permanent *light*; the rest are dark. All denizens are **dark-adapted**.
- ▶ **Secret Areas.** Close inspection of an area for 1 **crawling round** reveals the presence of a hidden door.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6 Details

- 1 Priestess Uszazi (**viperian wizard**) materializes and summons 1d4 **cobra snakes** to attack the party.
- 2 A patrol of four **viperian** guards finds evidence of the characters' presence. If the characters are careful, they may still avoid becoming spotted (DC 14 DEX check).
- 3 Priestess Uszazi (**viperian wizard**) appears when the characters rest a bit and attempts to poison (**Venom**) the least armored person among the characters.
- 4 2d6 merchants (**peasants**) afflicted with *serpent fever* arrive at the dungeon looking for easy treasure. They offer to join the party but are wary about fighting viperians.
- 5 Countless serpents gather in a **swarm of snakes** and approach a random character silently (DC 13 WIS).
- 6 Priestess Uszazi (**viperian wizard**) interrupts a battle by casting **Hiss** and dispelling one of the party's spells.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

A fissure on the arid rocky terrain opens to a descending passageway with crude, stone steps. A cool wind current blows from the depths of the dungeon.

The stairs lead down a narrow passage 200 feet into the depths of the earth. The steps are littered with discarded, dry, reptile scales. Evidence of the viperians.

2. ROOM OF SCOUTS

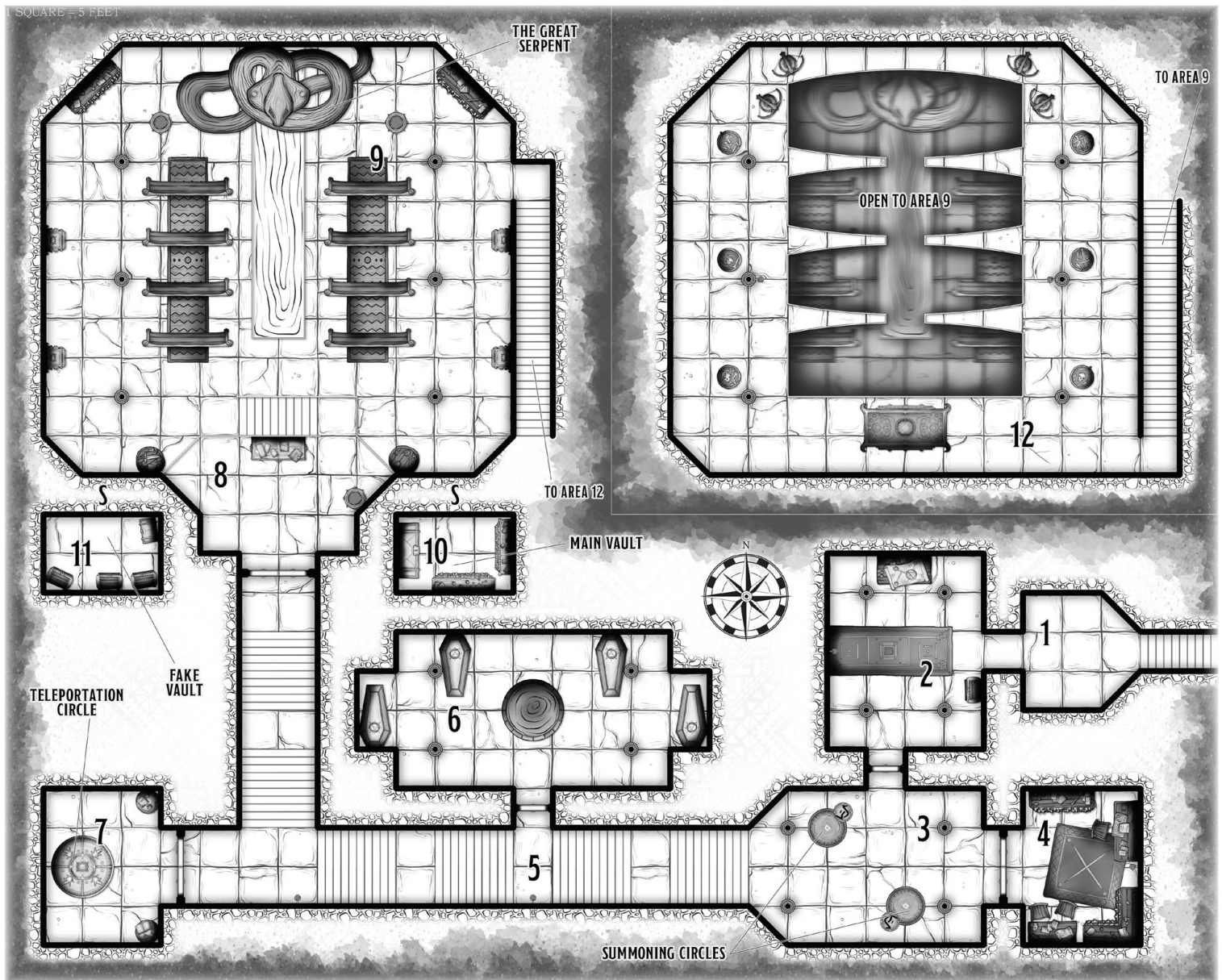
The room is used as a station for scouting parties as they come and go to spy on Pink-Apple Village.

▶ **The Scouts.** Three **viperians** rest in the room and talk in hushed voices. They are unaware of the characters and may be surprised (DC 15 DEX check). If a battle breaks, one of the scouts attempts to flee toward area 9 to warn Coven Ydriss of the approaching trespassers.

▶ **Treasure (2 XP).** The wooden chest contains 15 gp, 36 sp, a small ruby (2 gp), and a *potion of healing*.

Priestess Uszazi





3. THE SUMMONING CIRCLES

The chamber is empty except for two glowing circles on the cracked floor, marked with intricate runes.

Using *detect magic* and inspecting the circles from afar for 1 **crawling round** reveals the runes contain a summoning spell. A wizard may attempt to dispel the magic in the circles to carry on if such magic is available to them. Otherwise, stepping into the chamber triggers the circles. They summon two aggressive **giant snakes**.

4. THE VIPERIAN ARCHIVE

The archive contains countless tomes about viperian culture and of viperian authorship. The majority are too ancient and useless but a few reveal important information.

► **The Curse.** Inspecting the room for 1 **crawling round** unearths a scroll that depicts the curse that Coven Ydriss unleashed upon the village. The party learns that it only lasts as long as the ritual is cast continually. Interrupting the viperians in area 9 is the key to saving the townsfolk.

5. THE PERILOUS ASCENT

Two **viperians** stand watch at the top of the stairs. They are alerted by the sounds of battle in area 3 if the characters trigger the summoning circles. When the characters approach the stairs, the viperians throw javelins at them from above. They want to lure them into climbing unaware so that they trigger the boulder trap (see below).

► **Rolling Boulder.** The stair steps halfway to the top feature a pressure-sensitive trap that causes a giant boulder to fall from the ceiling at the top of the stairs when triggered (DC 14 WIS check). If the characters charge up the stairs to fight the javelin-throwing viperians, they have disadvantage on this check to detect the trap.

The boulder rolls down to the door to area 4, where a spell reduces its speed and stops it. Creatures on the stairs that are unable to move out of the way are trampled by the fast-rolling rock and take 4d6 damage (DC 15 DEX check). After the boulder stops, the viperians rush down the stairs to deal with any remaining survivors.

6. VIPERIAN RULERS OF YORE

Four sarcophagi with opulent gold-inlaid designs rest in this chamber. The walls are decorated with small-grain mosaics of robed and crowned viperians.

► **The Sarcophagi.** Each of the enclosures contains the mummified remains of a viperian king. They are inert and wear none of the riches depicted in the mosaics.

► **The Font.** The receptacle contains rancid, stale water. A wizard knows magic was used to turn the water into poison but the spell has malfunctioned (DC 15 INT).

► **The Apparition.** When the characters explore this chamber, a ghastly apparition of a viperian king appears and says: “*Our once-great heritage is wasted and lost. Look at all that remains. Petty squabbles and our descendants fighting for scraps in fake pride and grandeur.*” The apparition does not acknowledge the characters and disappears in a cry of anguish and despair.

7. TELEPORTATION ROOM

The characters may access the House of Serpents dungeon using the teleportation circle if they have such magic available to them. Their arrival is silent and may allow the party to surprise the two viperians in area 5.

8. HALL OF THE GREAT SERPENT

The grandiose, church-like chamber contains rows of wooden pews, a pool of green fluid, and the statue of a large cobra snake with ruby eyes. A group of reptilian individuals chants hissing syllables by the effigy.

Coven Ydriss (**viperian ophid**) and a crowd of sixteen **viperians** chant in unison to cast the *Viperian Curse* upon Pink-Apple Village. Coven Ydriss steps aside and howls at the characters they are unwelcome (see **epigraph**). The viperian leader is a murderous and extreme individual. He is not open to negotiations. He is hostile as soon as the characters burst into their sacred hall.

► **The Acid.** The pond before the Great Serpent effigy is filled with a corrosive substance. Creatures that fall into it take 2d6 damage per round of submersion.

► **Stopping the Curse.** See **The Confrontation** below to know how this fateful encounter may be played out.

9. EFFIGY OF THE SERPENT DEITY

The great statue is one of the most obscure representations of Shune, the Vile (DC 12 INT check). The viperians have worshiped this deity since the dawn of time. It is made of stone and coated in a layer of brass. The statue is not magical but can be used as a focus for rituals.

► **Treasure (7 XP).** Each of the serpent eyes is a finely-cut, fist-sized ruby worth 40 gp. A reptilian scale is suspended at the heart of each of the jewels. Owning these rubies earns the enmity of numerous viperian conclaves.

10. MAIN VAULT

The room contains two stone bookshelves and a coffer. They are dust-free and were recently used (DC 9 WIS).

► **Treasure (5 XP).** The chamber contains a collection of poems of viperian authorship (5 gp), a *staff of the cobra*, a *potion of healing*, and a *scroll of stonesskin*.

11. FAKE VAULT

The chamber contains three wooden chests and one stone chest. All are closed and covered in dust. A snake sigil is marked above each keyhole.

This is a false vault meant to deter plundering and deal with petty robbers. All of the chests are empty. The serpent sigil is meant to convey the idea that a poison needle trap is present in the chests but that is also a ploy.

► **Lightning Bolt Trap.** When any of the chests are opened, a complex evocation spell causes a bolt of lightning to strike the nearest target (DC 13 DEX for half). The bolt jumps to a nearby target as long as it is within 10 feet. It can affect up to four creatures. The first target takes 4d6 damage, the next one takes 3d6 damage, and so on. The trap resets once per day at dawn.

Coven Ydriss



12. HALL OF THE GREAT SERPENT (SECOND STORY)

A grand opening on the floor overlooks the acid pond and the great serpent beneath. Viperian zealots operate four floor-mounted crossbows by the north wall.

This area can only be accessed from the stairway in area 9. The characters visit this area during the final battle with Coven Ydriss and the viperian enclave (see below).

► **The Crossbows.** A person can operate the crossbow and gain the following attack: 1 bolt (close/far) +3 (1d10). It takes one turn to reload between attacks.

THE CONFRONTATION

AT LEAST TEN viperians must continue the uninterrupted chanting for the *Viperian Curse* to persist. Coven Ydriss (**viperian ophid**) and three **viperians** step from the ritual to confront the characters. As the viperians are defeated, more detach from the ritual chanting to aid Coven Ydriss. When the characters attack a chanting viperian and less than ten remain uninterrupted, all collapse to the floor shocked momentarily and the curse is dispelled. The viperians continue fighting desperately.

► **Baleful Transformation.** When defeated, Coven Ydriss beckons the Great Serpent and his ascendancy to aid him in this time of need. The deity ignores him but the four viperian kings interred in area 6, seeing one last chance for the viperian blood to achieve everlasting glory, manifest by the dying ophid, and reach into his body. Coven Ydriss's body is healed and transformed into a **viperian anathema**. With strength renewed, Coven Ydriss resumes his attacks while his allies' hopes return. They swiftly climb up the stairs to operate the mounted crossbows in area 12. With a speedy response, the party may reach the crossbows first. Speed is of the essence.



VIPERIAN ANATHEMA

An ineffable mound of slithering tendrils. Hundreds of mindless serpents intertwined to form strong, heavy limbs. A giant anaconda head with bright yellow eyes and black scales fuses with its monstrous body.

AC 16 , **HP** 42, **ATK** 4 snake bites +5 (1d8 + venom) or 2 acidic spit +3, **MV** near (climb), **S** +4, **D** +1, **C** +2, **I** +1, **W** +1, **Ch** +1, **AL** C, **LV** 9

Impervious. Can only be harmed by magical sources.

Venom. DC 12 CON or drop to 0 hit points in 2 rounds.

Sticky Goo. DC 12 DEX or the acid dries up, speed reduced by half until 1 round is spent removing the goo.

CONCLUSION

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

THE VIPERIANS VANQUISHED

The characters slay the abominate being that Coven Ydriss became. When the viperian anathema is defeated, all remaining viperians flee in a panic or surrender. Their fates are in the characters' hands.

When the characters return to Pink-Apple Village they learn that the symptoms of *serpent fever* have subsided. The *Viperian Curse* is lifted. Father Valorum and Mayor Arlette congratulate the characters for their valorous deeds and pay the promised rewards. If less than a week elapses since the characters left, the Apple Festival occurs and the locals arrange a grand feast to thank the party for their actions. They have saved dozens of lives!

THE SAGE'S REVENGE

If the characters plunder Faeranduil's vault. The enraged elvish spirit makes contact with several elvish factions. After learning of the characters' foul actions in the tomb, a team of negotiators is sent to retrieve Faeranduil's belongings so that they are returned to the tomb. According to elvish law, the characters are to be arrested, prosecuted, and sentenced to 20 years of prison.

VIPERIAN AGENTS

The defeat of Coven Ydriss is unimportant to other viperian factions, even if they learn of it. However, stealing the ruby eyes from the Great Serpent effigy is a heinous crime that other viperians shall pursue. Viperian priests learn of this act as soon as it occurs. The enclaves send assassins to retrieve the rubies. Alas, dealing with these assassins is an adventure for another day...

CULTISTS OF THE LOST

'Tis' a never-ending task to fight the agents of evil. Their forces can only be weakened, never destroyed. For light cannot exist without darkness...

Ancient Passage, Annals of Gede Vol. III

Fanatics and devout individuals believe that one day, Saint Terragnis and Madeera shall make their laws bend the world and bathe it in a veil of kindness. They trust this event shall reveal everyone's true colors, and that their lawful gods shall eradicate all evil from the world.

"Only extremists would defend those beliefs," would say the wiser minds. People with more calm personalities who understand the world is not black or white. For them, good and evil do not exist individually, life is an amalgam of both. Most followers of Gede believe this.

For experienced adventurers, the idea of a perfect world with no more demons and monsters to fight is stupid. They have seen enough to understand that this is impossible. The fight for the greater good never ends.

They are right. True evil lives in the hearts of criminal factions and powerful necromancers. Corrupted and strengthened by their mad beliefs, they bring physical representations of *The Lost* to the world of the living.

SEED OF EVIL

THE AUTHORITIES OF Mal, the capital, need external help. The city's history archive was wretchedly plundered. Agents of *The Lost* took over the underground compound and turned it into a laboratory of madness. They built a shrine to their faceless gods and summoned their power through it. They spawned a creature from hell, an *Avatar of The Lost*. Its mere presence was enough to alter the state of things within the archive.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

IT HAS BEEN a month since the agents of *The Lost* took over the archive. The fanatics hide in the newfound lair while their abominations approach the outskirts of the city and terrorize farmers, merchants, and travelers.

Good. The characters are hired to slay all enemies from the archive. The authorities care little about their methods as long as all threats are gone (80 gp, 7 XP).

Evil. The characters are agents of Shune, the Vile. They are hired by a mysterious necromancer via letter. They must capture the fanatic-created Avatar of The Lost and bring it to a safe location (120 gp, 10 XP).

Level 7 Adventure

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 **crawling rounds** and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Some areas have braziers with continual *light*; the rest are dark. All denizens are **dark-adapted**.

► **Evil Aura.** Clerics cast spells within the compound with disadvantage. All checks made by the characters to resist effects within the compound have disadvantage.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6	Details
1	Six animated armors fight the characters. The constructs have the sole task of stopping invaders.
2	A character must resist the evil here (DC 15 WIS). Treat as a <i>confusion</i> spell for 4 rounds. The victim may repeat the check at the start of their turn to end the effect.
3	A group of one mage and three cultists stumble upon the characters. The agents of <i>The Lost</i> fight to the death.
4	A heavy mist covers the entire dungeon for 4 crawling rounds . Visibility is reduced during this period.
5	A character steps on a pressure-sensitive plate hidden on the ground. A sharp pendulum blade swings from side to side dealing 2d8 damage (DC 15 DEX check for half damage). This event may occur multiple times.
6	The <i>Avatar of The Lost</i> appears before the characters. It disappears and returns to area 6 if reduced to half its HP.

1. ENTRANCE

The characters must take the main road south of the capital, travel for half a day, and deviate east for a few miles. The path leads straight to the archive (DC 11 WIS).

► **Encounter.** If the characters fail to track the place and follow the instructions given, they take twice as long to find the place, and a team of three **thugs**, two **cultists**, and two **fanatics of The Lost** intercept them.

FANATIC OF THE LOST

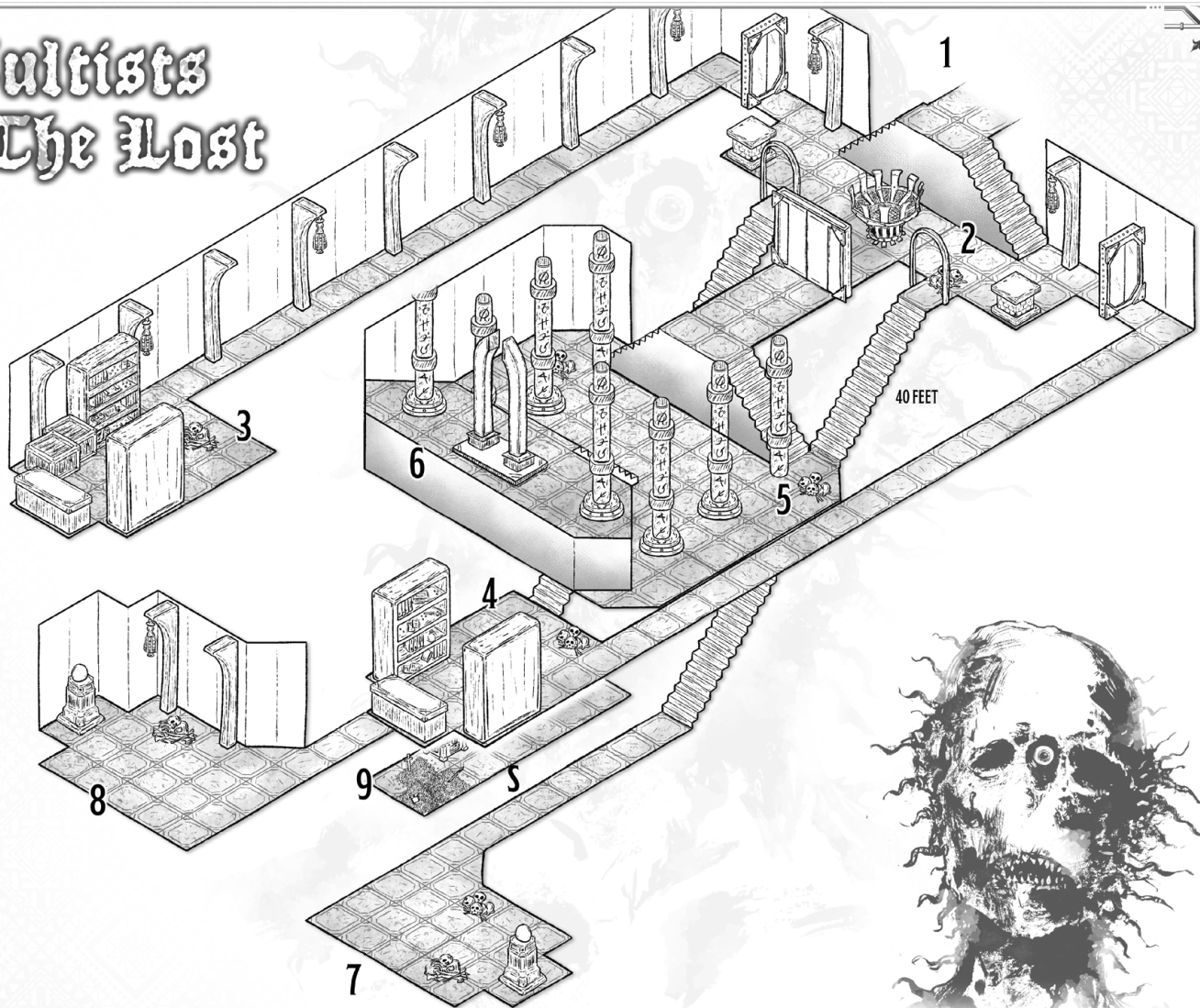
A mad zealot with a painted eye on their forehead.

AC 13, HP 13, ATK 1 dagger +3 (1d4) or 1 spell MV near **S +0, D +2, C +1, I +1, W +1, Ch +1, AL C, LV 3**

Fearless. Immune to **morale** checks.

Ray of The Lost (WIS spell). DC 12. Focus. Target is helplessly stupefied for the duration.

Cultists of The Lost



2. ENTRANCE HALL

The light of a large brazier illuminates this chamber. Light flickers as if fighting a force that smothers it.

There are five paths to take from here. Consider the following when the characters make a choice.

► **Double Door.** The shrine is off-limits. No spell or force shall budge this gate until the two power stones in areas 7 and 8 are removed from their spots.

► **Arches.** The crude-stone stairways descend 40 feet and reach the power stone chambers below.

► **East and West.** Unlike the central path, the characters may use tools to open the steel doors (DC 16 DEX). These corridors lead to the studies (areas 3 and 4).

► **Encounter.** While the characters investigate and take a minute to decide where to go, two **wraiths** materialize from the stone niches in the room. The undead spirits pass through the brazier and bathe the room in darkness before attacking. The undead spirits fight until slain.

3. EAST STUDY

The presence of the *Avatar of The Lost* brings decay and death to everything around it. The once impeccable libraries and shelves are now rotten and destroyed.

Maggots slither over almost every surface in this room. It all reeks of death and putrefaction. A person's body lies on the desk. Blood is everywhere.

► **Blood Suckers.** If the characters stay in this room to investigate, they are attacked by six **giant leeches** that attempt to ambush the intruders (DC 10 WIS check).

4. WEST STUDY

Two **thugs**, three **bandits**, and two **fanatics of The Lost** have their guard down and may be surprised (DC 13 DEX). On a fail, the enemies become aware of the characters' presence and attempt to ambush them instead.

► **Trap.** Poison darts fly and hit all creatures in the corridor when they cross it (1d8 damage). The heroes may disarm the trap if they spot it first (DC 14 WIS).

5. MAIN HALL

Eight rune-inscribed columns in arranged symmetrical flank the otherworldly, glimmering shrine on the 10-foot-tall dais at the far end of the chamber.

The runes in the columns glow with an eerie blue. The characters cannot surprise the enemies in this area (see below). Opening the gates makes them all aware.

6. SHRINE OF THE LOST

The shrine is a view from another world. Bone and sinew fused in a horrible, inhuman permutation of hatred and fear. From it, a creature detaches itself with clumsy movements but a determined pace.

The characters' main objective is here. They must destroy the representation of The Lost or capture it (see **Adventure Hooks**). Either way, it shall not be easy.

► **Encounter.** The **Avatar of The Lost** is not alone. Two **fanatics of The Lost**, two **cultists**, and three **thugs** fight together. The cultists do their best to defend the avatar as it represents everything they believe in.

► **Magic Siphoning.** Besides the aura that affects spells within the compound (see **Evil Aura** above), any spell cast within 20 feet from the shrine has a 2-in-6 chance of being siphoned by the *Avatar of The Lost*. This counts as the spell being cast, but it is considered lost. Every time the avatar absorbs a spell, it regains 5 hit points.

7. EAST POWERSTONE

The atmosphere becomes heavier. The closer to the power stone, the more a feeling of uneasiness and despair pervades the area. The small alcove at the room's end holds a pitch-black, obsidian orb.

This area is protected by two **thugs** and three **fanatics of The Lost**. The cultists were tasked with defending these artifacts with their lives. They fiercely fight until slain.

8. WEST POWERSTONE

This area is identical to its counterpart (area 7) but there are no cultists here. When the characters arrive here, the *Avatar of The Lost* appears (**Random Event 6**).

AVATAR OF THE LOST

A humanoid yet alien face and figure. Two empty eye-sockets but a central eye in place of a nose. A hideous representation and a mockery of what life is.

AC 16, HP 43, ATK 2 slams +7 (1d6 + drain) or 1 gaze, **MV** near **S +3, D +2, C +2, I +1, W +2, Ch +2, LV 9**

Drain. 1d4 temporary WIS damage. A target reduced to 0 WIS this way forfeits its soul to *The Lost*.

Gaze. The avatar's central eye hypnotizes a target. DC 13 CHA or target is helplessly stupefied for 2 rounds.



9. TREASURE CHAMBER

The characters find this hidden room if they notice the brick button that, when pushed, causes an entire section of the corridor to slide inward (DC 16 WIS).

► **Treasure (12 XP).** The characters obtain 150 gp in assorted coinage and valuable gold and silver items. They also find a *sword of the ancients*, a *staff of ord*, and a *pearl of power*. By the looks of it, not even the capital's authorities knew of this chamber's existence.

DEVELOPMENT

► **Removing Evil.** The characters remove the power stones from their pedestals and gain access to the shrine. They defeat the cultists and the *Avatar of The Lost*. Without the monster, the archive's evil is gone and a cleric may spend a day cleansing the place for good.

► **Capturing Evil.** It is not easy, but using magic, force, and their brains, the heroes come up with a way to immobilize the *Avatar of The Lost*. The party delivers it to their obscure employer. The necromancer creates an army of these abominations. What have they done...?



JOHN CUNNINGHAM

Accused of being a “Gentleman and a Scholar” by Chef Martin Yan, I’ve written RPG and wargame books & supplements as a hobby for 20+ years, and have been a lead writer and editor for Two Hour Wargames for the last 10. I write what my ADHD-mind interests me, which includes a whole range of genres - Historical & WW2, Pulp & Horror, Science Fiction, Fantasy, TTRPGs and Tabletop wargames (both Skirmish and Operational). When not working and being a Dad, Husband and Walker of Dogs, my alter-ego is a card-carrying but lapsed SCAdian, a dabbler in HEMA fencing (Longsword and Rapier & Dagger), and amateur space policy geek. Yes, that one doesn’t seem to fit – but it works for me! [Check out my blog!](#)



MARK TOMFORDE

Mark Tomforde returned to playing RPGs a few years ago after an approximately two-decade hiatus from the hobby. He plays 5e, but also discovered the OSR and enjoys the ethos of roleplaying that the OSR promotes. He plays a number of OSR and OSR-adjacent games, including Shadowdark, which he has found recapture the classic RPG feel he experienced in his youth. Mark is just starting to write and publish a variety of RPG materials, so keep an eye out for upcoming work from him. You can follow his work and subscribe to his free newsletter at the website [Quiet Sisyphus](#).



VIEL NAST

Viel “Talbot” Nast has loved all things epic since 1990. Epic metal, epic fantasy and TTRPGs! He has created the epic fantasy world of Land of Oyr and via the company Talbot Epic Press has published five books in his world. Writing anything about RPGs has become a growing passion in the last decade or two! You can find more about him and his works in his [official blog](#), his [Facebook Page](#), and his [Amazon Book Store](#).

Copyright Notice

The contents of Dungeon Vault Magazine, including (but not limited to) all written material, images (excluding those generated with machine-learning technology), logos, and company names are protected under international copyright law.

Excluding the third-party content noted below, written content, art, cartography, and trade dress is Copyright © 2023, Derek Ruiz and Arthur Rouise, all rights reserved.

3rd Party Content

Experience for Killing Cunning and Dangerous Foes, Copyright © 2023, John Cunningham.

The Circle of Flame, Copyright © 2023, Mark Tomeforde.

The Sea Clover © 2023, Copyright © Viel Nast.

Cartography on pages 23-29, Copyright © Ori the Cartographer.

Cartography on pages 35-38, Copyright © Rusty Maps.

Illustrations on pages 1, 7, 10, 13, 14, 20, 28, 30, 32, 36, 38, 41, 50, 57, 59, 60, 63, 65 Copyright © Kim Holm. [Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0](#).

Ornate classic template, Copyright © 2022 Romanova Ekaterina

This work may include material taken from the [System Reference Document 5.1](#) (“SRD 5.1”) by Wizards of the Coast LLC. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under [Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0](#).

Dungeon Vault Magazine is an independent product published under the Shadowdark RPG Third-Party License. It contains references to content and rules, as well as being designed to work with Shadowdark RPG. It is not affiliated with The Arcane Library, LLC. Shadowdark RPG © 2023 The Arcane Library, LLC.

All rights reserved, used with permission.

The following terms / assets, including (but not limited to) ‘Dungeon Vault Magazine’, ‘Elven Tower’, ‘Shadowdark RPG’, ‘The Arcane Library’, all logos, and company names, are not licensed under any Creative Commons license.

This work includes 3rd-party content in the form of writing and image assets (see **Copyright Notice**). It remains all rights reserved and is not licensed under any Creative Commons license, unless it was already available in such a form (e.g. the CC-SRD 5.1).

Except where otherwise noted above, this work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#). All content not licensed under a Creative Commons license is all rights reserved and you must request permission from the copyright owner to use this material.



Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0
International (CC BY-NC 4.0)

This is a human-readable summary of (and not a substitute for) the Creative Commons [CC-BY-NC license](#).

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format.

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

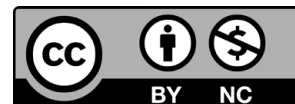


Attribution — You must give [appropriate credit](#), provide a link to the license, and [indicate if changes were made](#). You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. We suggest the following:

|| This work includes material taken from Dungeon Vault Magazine Issue 34 (“DVM-34”) by Derek Ruiz. DVM-34 is licensed under [Creative Commons CC-BY-NC 4.0](#). ||



NonCommercial — You may not use the material for [commercial purposes](#).



No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or [technological measures](#) that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

Notices:

You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable [exception or limitation](#).

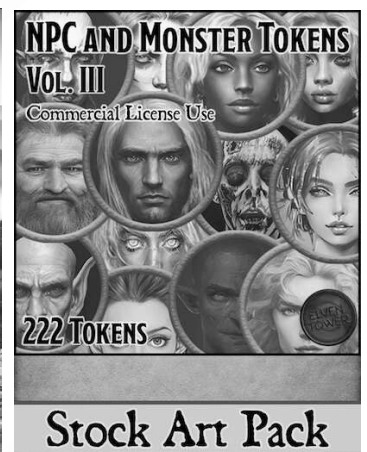
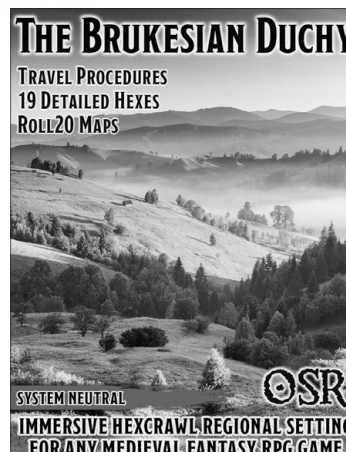
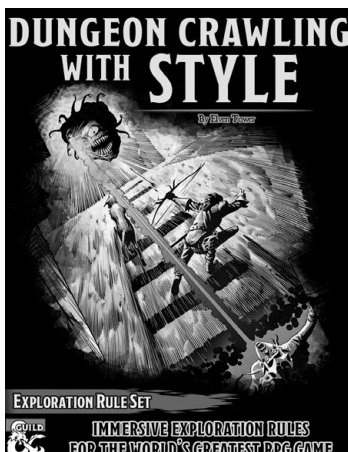
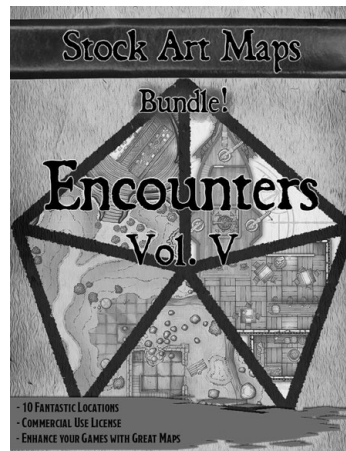
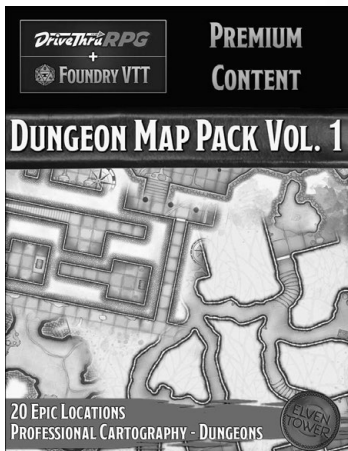
No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as [publicity, privacy, or moral rights](#) may limit how you use the material.



THANK YOU

Your support is enormously appreciated. I am grateful to you. It is because of the support from my subscribers that I can continue creating cartography and written content for RPG games.

Here are some popular products we have published:



CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

Get the latest updates about TTRPG maps, adventures, and special discounts for our products.

