

THE DM TOOL CHEST

KARMA'S CALL AT MIDNIGHT

NIGHT OF THE END'S KISS PART II



STRANGE EVENTS PLAGUE THE AUTUMN FESTIVAL



KARMA'S CALL AT MIDNIGHT

Karma's *Call at Midnight* is designed for **four characters with an Average Party Level (APL) of 5th to 10th level**. Strange events plague the town of Voleubeuge during the autumn festival and a stranger approaches them to propose a heist. This adventure is the second half of the Night of the End's Kiss, but can be played separately from the first half if desired. It can easily fit into any campaign setting with only a few name changes and modifications.

BACKSTORY

The Grey Guards were a famous adventuring party that was a favorite of bards because of the many legendary or mythical creatures they encountered. The founding members Arxot Karma and Bolger quickly pulled in others after failing to take on a displacer beast setting up a den in a nearby forest. Arxot pulled in their childhood friend, Kroske, who suggested a cleric they'd worked with before named Nishru. It happened that fate decided that Arxot and Nishru would fall in love as they adventured together - outsmarting hags, defeating a djinn, hunting a dragon, and more, forged their relationship. Eventually, the group recruited Gravnis, a new wizarding school graduate who was wet behind the ears and in need of real-world experience. As they aged, Arxot turned to saving and planning for retirement, eventually buying a long-abandoned manor in Voleubeuge and renovating it himself. One day Arxot received a letter asking for help too late and arrived at a

scene of her former friends and party dead. With a large blackened key clutched in the hands of Nishru, something that Arxot took back with them to add to their collection of items from adventuring as the featured item of the memorial section of the display.

Unknown to Arxot, this large blackened key is *Erzith's Crux* (see Appendix B), the last remaining item keeping a powerful fiend imprisoned. It was discovered by a friend of Bolger's who sent word of needing a powerful group that could help retrieve and protect it. Knowing this was dangerous and needed to stay quiet, they reached out to the three people they trusted most - Nishru, Kroske, and Gravnis. They retrieved it from a dark cult trying to perform a ritual to release *Erzith* before the cult could complete it. As the cult was chasing them, Nishru managed to get a message to Arxot, who arrived after a group led by Ruk Tux slaughtered them. But being too injured, Ruk Tux hid as Arxot arrived with hired swords to see her friends slain. Following them back to Voleubeuge, they have been plotting how to steal the item back for a long time. Recently, Ruk was able to sneak into Arxot's manor but was spotted before they could take the item; however, they were able to awaken some of its dark magic, which is the cause of all the weird things happening in town when the party arrives.

Should Ruk Tux get his hands on *Erzith's Crux*, he will attempt to finish the previously interrupted ritual to release his dark master.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The party arrives in town just in time for a week of parties, food, and games as De'chra Kon'sie kicks off. But what was supposed to be a relaxing week of fun quickly takes on a different tune as an explosion of some magical disturbance awakens them suddenly. The mysterious events appear to be linked to an eccentric noble's magical collection. The characters are given an enticing offer of a funded heist to retrieve and cleanse the item. They will explore the city to investigate the strange happenings and talk to the locals about the manor and its peculiar residents. Will they be able to pull the heist off, or will their failure bring ruin to the city?

GETTING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure is designed to follow *The Falling of De'chra Kon'sie*, but can be used as a stand-alone adventure as well. The following is an adventure hook that can be used to lure the characters to the town of Voleubeuge:

MYSTIC WARNING

As the characters are traveling the roadways, a hunched-over woman with milky white eyes dressed in tattered rags lurches from the brush at the group, gripping the closest player by the front of their clothing. The blind woman manages to gasp out, 'Voleubeuge, you must make it to Voleubeuge before it's too late! He can't be released, or we will all burn!' before falling stone dead at their feet.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout the adventure text are notes on where to add additional creatures to encounters or extra rolls on tables depending on the party's current level. While none of these changes are drastic, they are intended to keep the same level of intensity or sense of urgency as the base encounters for characters of 5th level APL. You'll find helpful GM tips and roll tables throughout the adventure texts. We encourage using these, but you are also welcome to select only those that you find most useful or interesting for your group.

You can run this adventure as a stand-alone experience for a complete story arc or pair it with *The Falling of De'chra Kon'sie*. If paired with the mentioned adventure, give the group a day between the fire at the manor and the strange occurrence at the inn they are staying at. We will be providing notes along the way for those continuing over from the adventure to make them work seamlessly together or as separate adventures.

KARMA'S CALL AT MIDNIGHT

Our heroes begin this adventure enjoying a beautiful celebration thinking all is quiet before an explosive magical episode sets their plans on its head. Soon after, a stranger approaches them, claiming to know the answer, and points them toward a reclusive noble named Arxot Karma. The stranger, Ruk Tux, is secretly a cult leader interested in the cursed item and intends to use it to release a powerful fiend from its magical prison. But not one to get his hands dirty, he plans to use the party to further his plans.

NOTES FOR THE GMS

If you are continuing over from *The Falling of De'chra Kon'sie*, this is the second time Ruk Tux has approached the group with strange tales of Arxot Karma. Since the fire incident, the noble has also gotten even more paranoid and isolationist, and this would increase the tension when the weird magic stuff starts happening again around Voleubeuge.

RUK TUX THE STRANGER



PART 1:

RUDE AWAKENING

A sound of commotion below awakens the group, and they follow the sounds down to the central area of the Middle Roost Tavern.

THE MIDDLE ROOST TAVERN

A typically pretty ordinary tavern is a disaster scene with two figures in its center.

Chairs and tables whirl around in the area, dive-bombing a cluster of figures trapped in its midst. A finely clothed figure shouts something as they gesture widely. Cracking wood explodes as furniture slams into each other and the tavern walls.

MIDDLE ROOST TAVERN INCIDENT

Tornado of Furniture: Any attempts to move through the whirlwind of chairs and tables will cause 2d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet of movement.

Living Objects: The furniture seems to fight any attempts to stop the whirlwind, gaining resistance against magic for its duration.

Buffeting Winds: Wind ripping outwards forces a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be flung back 10 feet and knocked prone.

More Weirdness: In addition to the constant whirlwind of furniture, roll twice on the Strange Events table.

Cause and Effect: Trying to shout something at the Inn Keeper (Trist, **commoner**) before attempting to run away, Arxot will try to run out the door. Landing an attack or spell on her will cause another roll on the 'Weird Things (medium to hard) table.' If they make it out of the Middle Roost Tavern, the whirlwind will suddenly stop if they give chase thru the town roll again on the table for something that will happen in the most densely packed area of festival-goers.

Burst of Power: If caught or grappled, a force bursts out from Arxot, forcing a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone and stunned for 1 minute.

Shaken Tavern Owner: A shocked Trist will do their best to tell the group what happened as they know it. Arxot had come in to see about a shipment of alcohol they had purchased from them when the whirlwind suddenly started. If the group can calm Trist by a DC

STRANGE EVENTS

d8 WEIRD THINGS

- 1 Gravity forgets how to work for a moment, raising everyone in a 10-foot radius up 15 feet before going back to normal. A successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw is needed to land without taking damage.
- 2 Objects get flung through the air by an invisible force, and all characters must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage.
- 3 Flashing lights shoot out of a random person in the crowd as if a *hypnotic pattern* spell were cast on them, but they can't control it. This effect lasts for 1 minute before fading away.
- 4 Suddenly, three **boars** appear in the crowd and panic before charging the group.
- 5 Hail begins to fall in a 15-foot radius, causing 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage for anyone starting or entering the space.
- 6 Flames shoot up randomly out of the ground. Characters must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) fire damage.
- 7 Each character must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or fall unconscious for 1 minute. If failed, they cannot wake them until the time ends, but they wake with no side effects.
- 8 One **crocodile** appears very confused as people begin screaming.

16 Charisma (Persuasion) check or spell-like *calm emotions*, they'll mention all of the weird stuff that has been happening in town over the last few weeks. It has been a long time since most people have seen Arxot; they tend to shut themselves away in their manor. In their opinion, it's as if something has changed them.

Exciting Offer: A cloaked figure says they know a cleansing spell to save the town, but only if they had the item. They may be willing to offer coin and resources if the characters are interested. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check shows they are serious about the offer; a roll of 20 or higher hints that it's not for the reasons they stated.

Considerable Commotion: A DC 18 Wisdom saving throw is needed; anyone that fails misses the stranger leaving. Those who make it see them leave a card on the table before getting up to move out the door and into the crowds. A DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to track them.

NOTES FOR THE GMS

The cloaked figure is Ruk Tux if they are still alive. If the group is coming from 'Night of the End's Kiss Part I' and Ruk escapes, he will be in disguise. Should he have been killed, a new female half-elf NPC named Kailu Xildi is the cloaked figure and uses Ruk Tux's stat block. Moving forward, if Ruk Tux is dead, all his interactions are hers.

VOLEUBEUGE





PART 2: DEAL BROKERED

Once the group has decided to accept the deal, they'll need to head to the abandoned warehouse. More detailed information about the rooms inside the warehouse is in Part 6: Parting Ways. For the purposes of this section, Ruk Tuk insists the characters stay in area 1 at the heist planning table.

ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

A destroyed-looking old warehouse is in the middle of a slowly dying warehouse district. It is very isolated, quiet, and has no prying eyes. The economy has shifted to other pursuits rather than manufacturing, and the town currently has no use for these buildings.

Read aloud the following the first time the characters visit the warehouse:

A behemoth shadow of a falling apart building looks as if it's ready to lurch forward at the group from where it's set into a long-abandoned lot. The darkness seems to drape itself over the patchy roof and rotting walls. No sounds of any normal nightlife can be heard.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted in the area descriptions, these general features are prominent throughout the Abandoned Warehouse.

Flooring. Creaking boards give disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made.

Lights. There is only a single flickering candle on the Heist Planning Table, providing 10 feet of dim light; the rest of the warehouse has no light source.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the keyed locations on the provided map of Abandoned Warehouse.

1. HEIST PLANNING TABLE

A haphazardly put-together table of several odd pieces of furniture holds a spread of notes, sketches, and layouts. A flickering candle casts moving shadows across the table. Someone took a pallet, leaned it against a broken box, and began nailing up different papers as if putting together a puzzle.

Ruk Tux's Deal: If the group agrees to steal the item for Ruk Tux, he will give them each 200 gp now plus another 300 gp each on delivery. He will also provide them with essential resources and connections as the group asks for them. He doesn't care what the group steals and encourages them to take whatever they want as additional payment from the nobles collection.

Starting Info: Ruk Tux gives the group what he knows about the town so far regarding the festivities and suggests that the Night of Filiolum is the best night for the heist. He freely gives the group the layout of the gate and grounds, and a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) roll can get him to admit he also knows some of the staff. This includes Jirn (**guard**), who drinks at the Crinkled Tavern after getting off work.

The Target: Ruk Tux gives the group the following info on Arxot Karma - they are a former pirate and adventurer who used the items and gold taken during their travels to set herself up pretty as one of the only wealthy nobles of the town. A DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check will show that's not all he knows about Arxot. If pressed, he'll admit that he knows they used to have a group of their own but rumor has it that Arxot killed them all off in a fit of madness one outing to keep the item causing all these problems for herself. A DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal he isn't being honest, but he'll brush it off as him repeating a rumor.

More Than He Lets On: A DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check will show that Ruk Tux knows more about the manor than he is letting on. If called out on it, he'll admit he's tried to do this himself before finding a group and could not pull it off. He'll claim that they've changed security since his attempt, and his knowledge is no longer helpful.

Contacting the Sponsor: Once Ruk Tux is satisfied that the group is starting, he'll excuse himself to leave for other business. He'll leave behind instructions to let the barkeep at the Crinkled Tavern know when they need him, and he'll return to the Abandoned Warehouse.

2. HIDDEN ENTRANCE

A large pile of broken, empty boxes, covered in torn open tarps wrapped up with old fraying rope appears to be holding up the wall behind it.

Secret Door: A hidden trapdoor leads down to Ruk Tux's basement, where he lives. An *alarm* spell on the trap door is set to silent alert. A DC 20 Intelligence (In-

vestigation) check will discover the door behind a hinged pile of broken boxes; a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check is needed to discover the trap, and a subsequent DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check to disarm it.

Slipper Ladder: Grease has been added to the ladder leading below. Anyone using it must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone at the bottom of the ladder, taking 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

3. RUK'S QUARTERS

A short, dark, dank hallway almost seems to wrap back on itself as it opens to a rough dirt floor. The far half of the room has been scrapped till smooth and a ritual circle painted with a dark substance sits in the center of the room surrounded by pulsing runes. Large black candles burn with incredibly high flames to illuminate an overly crowded altar in front of which sways Ruk Tux chanting.

Guarding Cultists: Guarding Ruk Tux as they begin the ritual is one **assassin**; for every level starting at 8th, add two additional **bandits**.

Potent Magics: The dark energy flying around creates effects at the top of the round, starting on the 3rd round.

- 3rd round - the area becomes difficult terrain for only the players.
- 4th round - enemies have advantage on all attacks.
- 5th round - any dead enemies from the above floor or the basement rise as banshee with half HP and rush the group.

The Great Lord: The ritual will summon a **horned devil** once completed.

Explosive Run: The magics used for the ritual are so destructive that if stopped before completing the ritual will cause Ruk Tux to explode with magic. This forces a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be thrown against the walls for 3d6 bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a success.

PART 3:

FALLING INTO PLANS

It's time to plan the heist! Let your group make decisions, gather intel and resources, and attempt to keep their best-laid plans from going off the rails.

VOLEUBEUGE

Waves of people have descended on Voleubeuge, allowing a diverse mix of sights and items you usually wouldn't find all in one area. The town embraces all of this and encourages visitors to show off what they have or can do. You'll often find citizens of Voleubeuge hosting contests or dragging visitors into the spotlight. There are only 6 days till the ball on the Night of Filiolum.

Those groups coming in from 'The Falling of De'chra Kon'sie' will only have 3 days until the ball on Night of Filiolum. They have already been in Voleubeuge for several days and had opportunities to get more information about Axrot Karma and her manor.

DE'CHRA KON'SIE IN FULL SWING

The 'Features of Voleubeuge during De'chra Kon'sie' all still apply in addition to the new features below.

Colorful Characters: The strange is pretty standard at this point, the usual stick out like a sore thumb giving disadvantage to any skill checks or saving throws to go unseen or have actions ignored.

No Shortage of Options: With all the stalls, pop-ups, hawkers, and sellers as the group is looking for unusual things to help with their heist, there is an 85% chance they will have it available. But anything rare or higher will be at double its regular price.

RUNNING A HEIST

We suggest using a 'Ticking Clock' or 'Progress Clock' system when trying to run heists or other timed events. Each activity a character does to help plan the theft moves the clock forward. When the clock is completed, it is the night of the heist. We suggest that easy or quick activities move the clock forward 1 tick, medium difficulty or activities taking 2 - 4 hours move the clock forward 2 ticks, and that hard/dangerous tasks or activities taking more than 4 hours move the clock forward 3 ticks. For our example activities below, we will show how many ticks we think it should take in parentheses at the end of the description.

When the group hits 4 clicks, a whole day has gone by, which means Exhaustion rules would apply to anyone who hasn't rested. Regardless of when the group agrees they are done for the day, the clock moves forward 4 clicks to show it's the following day, OR the re-

maining clicks needed to reach a total of 4 to indicate that day's progress.

For groups of 8th level or more, we suggest also moving the clock forward a tick for any failed attempts as it will raise the suspicions of the noble household on what is happening and force the group to speed up their plans.

Weird Things Continue: At the start of each new day, roll on the 'Weird Things (medium to hard)' table for something your group witnesses happening in the town.

Counting Guards: Counting guards and noting patrol patterns will require a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check to remain unspotted by the guards at the gate. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to count guards in the yard; succeeding by 5 or more will also show the pattern of their patrols. Rough count - 6 guards in the yard (1 tick).

Checking Security: Finding the best way into the house can only be done at night. A DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) is needed to remain unseen. A DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the wall around the manor will find besides the main gate, there is a side one for deliveries; a success of 5 or more will show a weak part of the wall towards the back of the manor (1 tick). A DC 18 Intelligence check is needed to memorize where they are avoiding but will require several hours and an additional Stealth check (+1 tick).

Finding Good Staff: If the group wants to find some of the staff that works at the manor, they'll need to ask around with a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) to get pointed in the right direction. Roll on the table below for what staff they manage to find, +1 tick for each staff sought after. After each conversation, there is a 15% chance the staff will inform Arxot (1 to 3 ticks depending on time spent).

d4 MANOR STAFF

1 **Sionia Thenorin** (female high elf) is the gardener and groundskeeper. She only cares to talk about the grounds she cares for, finding insult in any questions to do with the manor itself or other staff.

2 **Nevni** (nonbinary red kobold) is the museum caretaker. Extremely loyal to Arxot, any attempts to get information out of them around the security without raising suspicion requires a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If failed, they clam up on any info and tell Arxot.

3 **Kreancur Lumighull** (male green dragonborn) is the manor healer. An old friend of Kroske that Arxot sought out after her friend's death, they see each other as family. But Kreancur has loose lips once he becomes drunk, and he needs to consume enough alcohol to fail a DC 15 CON save twice (with a +3 modifier), and then he will drunkenly talk about anything asked.

4 **Movirae Ponsieqa** (transwoman satyr) is a guard. It would take a lot of coin and charm to get much from her about work, but she'll entertain casual questions, and each question increases the chance she'll tell Arxot. A newcomer, they still know that loose lips sink ships in their line of work, and she'd become unhirable.

PART 4:

NIGHT OF FILIOLUM

The whole of Voleubeuge is dressed in extravagant outfits with crazy masks to celebrate the night Fall was created. It is a night of partying, couples confessing to each other, and open debauchery.

MANOR KARMA

Though the party is in full swing, the manor seems to be too calm and business as usual. Arxot Karma is still inside and hasn't come out to join the town's celebrations; their staff is thinner than usual as many have taken off around 10 pm to join the masked ball. Those remaining are highly loyal and a bit jumpy if the party has raised suspicions.

The manor seems to be a point of quiet in the storm of noise that the streets have become. Guards patrol diligently make their way around the grounds as you watch the light from a room downstairs turn off. Moments later, a light on the second floor turns on, and a brief movement of something passes by the window. Distant music, shouting, and revelry echo from the town's square.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted in the area descriptions, these general features are prominent throughout Manor Karma.

Windows. All of the windows are trapped with a *shocking grasp* spell. A DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) is needed to spot the trap, and it can be disarmed with a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check or a spell-like *dispel*.

External Doors. All doors leading into the manor from the outside are trapped with wards *hypnotic pattern*. When opened, the group must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be hypnotized by the flashing patterns in the air. The flashing pattern also alerts the guards on patrol to your presence. A DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) is needed to spot the trap, and it can be disarmed with a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check or a spell-like *dispel*.

Alert. Guards have advantage on checks to spot intruders.

MANOR GROUNDS

Solid-looking stone walls topped with wrought iron spikes circle the property. Decorative hedges, roses, and statues form mock mazes to traverse to reach the manor itself. A small guard shack sits next to the walkway leading from the gate to the front door.

External Patrols: There are 3 groups of two **guards** patrolling the grounds and two **guards** at the guard shack watching the gate and front door. The guards at the shack will not leave their post but will use sending stones with the patrols to call in anything unusual. A DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check is needed to make it from the wall to the manor unseen.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the keyed locations on the provided maps of Manor Karma.

1. ENTRANCE HALL & LOUNGE

Marbled floors that look like they require some care echo with each gentle footfall. High ceilings give a sense of the immense size of this place as dark doorways look at you as if from empty eye sockets—the furniture of the sitting area looks like shadowed figures waiting to pounce.

Internal Patrols: Only three **guards** patrol the first floor by themselves. Each one calls in an all-clear on a sending stone once they've looped around to the entryway.

Guard Dogs: Inside a total of five **mastiffs** roaming the halls of the first floor, and they have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to spot intruders. They will follow the group upstairs (to area 5) if they make noise on the upper floors or wake up the Sleeping Dog.

2. DINING HALL & KITCHEN

A long wooden table with slashes and hacks out of it sits in the center of the room with several broken chairs stacked to one side. Through an open doorway, you see a well-lit kitchen with a small gathering laughing over a game of cards.

Late Night: A small group of three **commoners** and two **guards** sit in the kitchen around a wooden table, joking and playing cards. A DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check is needed, on a failure, one of them spots something in the other room and goes to investigate, and the group must roll future Stealth checks at disadvantage.



3. HOUSE STAFF QUARTERS

Small rooms that fit two staff in them are closed. The doors have been allowed to be decorated by the staff, so miniature paintings and plates hang up. A large window at the end of the hall provides some light as the moon shines through.

Slumbering Staff: Four **commoners** are sleeping in the rooms; a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) is needed. On a failure, a staff member wakes up to check on the sound. If they discover the group, they will sound the alarm to bring the guards.

4. BALLROOM

This ballroom's polished marble floor gleams from light reflected from the mirrored ceiling. A small stage sits against one wall, waiting for musicians to take their seat and begin to play.

The servants keep the doors to this area locked, requiring a successful DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open.

Treasure. There is a box of fine cutlery edged in silver and gold tucked away in a cupboard meant for buffets occasionally placed in the ballroom. The set is worth 200 gp.

MANOR SECOND FLOOR

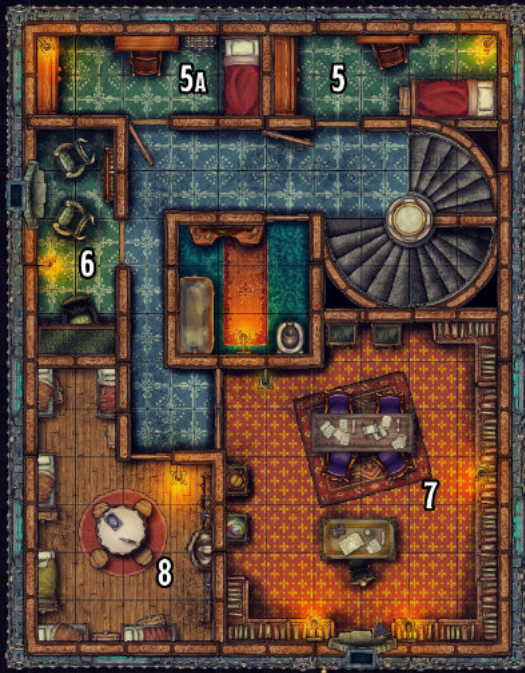
5. BEDROOMS

The stairs take you to a charred hallway that still smells heavily of smoke. As the hallway continues down, some doors offshoot it, most with no doors or doors leaning awkwardly in the hallway. It seems passable but very much in need of repairs.

Bedrooms of the Past: If the party enters Nishru's bedroom (marked on the map as 5a), they will need to make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, or a vision will hit them; they can choose to fail this save. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check or *detect magic* will show this

KARMA MANOR: FLOOR 2

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



KARMA MANOR: FLOOR 3

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

to be a harmless Illusion spell that seems to be memories.

If the vision is triggered, read aloud the following:

You are only able to glimpse a burnt skeleton of a room before it shifts into a room full of frills, delicate touches, and a small bookshelf of romance books before another illusion takes over. You see flashes of a young half-orc and triton sitting together in a field laughing. Then another scene overtakes it of the triton, a little older sword slicing through undead as the half-orc raises a holy symbol from which blinding light washes out. Finally, you see a scene of the half-orc and triton up there in years laying on the bed together as the half-orc reads a romance book, and the triton watches her smiling. The scene freezes and then slowly fades away till the room is in front of you once more.

6. LIBRARY

Each item in the library appears new, with the owner unsure how they want the space to be. Floor to ceiling bookshelves cover every wall, and large tables in the center hold stacks of scrolls and loose papers. The faint smell of smoke seems to linger over everything though there is no fire in the fireplace.

Encounter: Dangerous Reading. The library has two **rugs of smothering** that attacked when stepped on.

7. STUDY

A desk mainly takes up a small office along one wall, the space in the middle taken up by a pair of comfortable chairs beside a cold fireplace. Hip-high bookshelves against the wall opposite the fireplace are stuffed with ledgers and papers.

Sleeping Dog: One **mastiff** is sleeping outside the study on the second floor. A DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check is needed not to wake the dog. If awakened, the dog is elderly and has disadvantage on checks using sight, but advantage on checks using sound or smell, and his speed is also halved. They will start loudly barking to draw attention if attacked.

NOTES FOR THE GMS

If Arxot was killed in 'Night of the End's Kiss Part I' and the new curator is not a cultist, then they will be the one attacked, and a staff member will frantically call out for help while running towards the front door. Should a cultist be in the position, they'll be found dead just past the line of water that holds the water guardians, and you can skip the 'Frantic Familiar' and 'Strike of Midnight' developments.

Frantic Familiar: At midnight, a frantic ZauZau will seek out the group and try to get them to follow them to the study on the second floor.

Strike of Midnight: At midnight, something invisible will start attacking Arxot Karma as they are in the study. When the group enters, a black spot starts to burn outwards from Arxot; the effect of any caught in that circle is the *circle of death* spell. Arxot Karma has no idea what is happening but heard some guttural language before being attacked (infernal). If the group doesn't check on them, Arxot is found dead the following day.

8. GUARD BARRACKS & ARMORY

Hidden Swords: The armory has 1d8 + two **flying swords** triggered when the group enters the room.

Snoozing Guards: Six **guards** are sleeping in the barracks; a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) is needed. On a failure, a guard wakes up to check on the sound; if they discover the group, they will sound the alarm to bring the rest of the guards.

STEALTH CHECKS

When having a group roll for a group Stealth check, you count up the number of those that failed vs. those that saved to see which way the scales tip. A critical success counts as 2 successes, while a critical failure counts as 2 failures.

PART 5:

HAUNTED HALLS OF ARXOT'S MANOR

The 3rd floor of Arxot's manor is an indoor garden and museum to their past adventures.

MANOR THIRD FLOOR: MUSEUM OF THE PAST

The museum is set up with the displays in the front being the earliest adventures, and as you move through the exhibit, you move through Arxot's exploits and the adventures of the Grey Guards. Each item has a display case and a brass nameplate.

As you reach the top of the long stairs, you see a room laid out open before you, full of display cases. Huge murals cover the walls in various styles as if painted at different times. Dancing lights fill the room to show 6 large trees growing from the floor; a small stream circles the room.



GENERAL FEATURES

These general features are prominent throughout the Museum of the Past unless otherwise noted:

Magical Lighting. The space is well lit, so any attempts to hide or remain unseen have disadvantage.

Strong Pillars. Each display pillar is made of stone and is tall enough to provide three-quarters cover.

Alarming. If any of the display's traps are triggered, an *alarm* spell triggers, notifying the guards and Arxot.

Ceiling. The ceilings here are 40 feet tall.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the keyed locations on the provided map:

9. GARDEN MUSEUM

A single stairwell leads to a landing of open space as the entire 3rd floor has been turned into some sort of museum with hand-cut stone tile flooring. Display cases are raised on pillars behind glass with magical lights flying over them. A small, easily stepped over 2-foot wide stream encircles a large grassy patch in the center of the room. It flows endlessly from an ornate fountain of elven design, looping in on itself.

Deceptive Depths: In the water running around the room are two **water guardians** (neutral good, see Appendix A) that will rise against the party if they enter without Arxot or if they spot Arxot in trouble in the Museum. Add two **water guardians** if the group is 8th level or higher.

ANCIENT TREES

Mythical Friends: When the group takes something near one of the trees, it will trigger 1d6 **dryads** to appear and attack to defend the items. Add two **dryads** for groups of 8th or higher level. If the group replaces the stolen items and shows they mean no harm, the dryads will stop attacking; otherwise, they will defend the items to the death.

DISPLAY CASES

Organized into loose groups, the display cases are staggered about the room. Each one lays on top of a pillar whose height has been adjusted to keep the item at eye level. A single dimmed dancing light hangs over the case, the shined brass nameplate on the front catching the light slightly.

Trapped Displays: When triggered, anyone able to see it must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become blinded for 10 minutes as the whole thing flashes. A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to notice the trap, and a DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check is required to disarm it.

On Display Loot: Roll on the 'Magical Momentos' table below to fill out the items in the display cases. Please feel free to pick from it instead to control what loot your party might pilfer.

d4 Magical Momentos

- 1 Bribes Gifts - two slightly gnawed on femur bones of different creatures piled together that vibrate as you approach. (2 **Boomerang +1**)
- 2 Cutting Words - Small stone hand-carved pen with scenes of plays wrapping around it that move when held. (2 **charges of vicious mockery, recharges at dawn**)
- 3 Contemplation Cup - Pewter goblet whose stem is the thinking man, silver rim. Full of a cloudy golden liquid. (**Potion of Clairvoyance**)
- 4 Krotux - Floating bubble of smoke that seems to form and lose shape. (**Spell Scroll, darkness**)
- 5 Felled Gretchu - White Dragon Scale fashioned into a shield with protective runes etched along the edges of the front that give off divine energy. (**Animated Shield**)
- 6 Atratus' Last Words - A leather-bound, slightly charred book with huge silver straps keeping it closed. Smells of burnt paper. (**Arcane Grimoire, rare**)

Ezrith's Crux Display: Located at the back of the room and isolated from the others is the display holding *Ezrith's Crux* (see Appendix B). A massive mural behind the display shows the Grey Guard members as dead except for a Triton on their knees broken among the bodies of their friends. A DC 17 Intelligence (History) check will show this to be the moment the Grey Guards fell at the hands of cultists. The item on the display case will start to pulse with energy as the group approaches it. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check will spot the first trap; a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check or a spell like *dispel* is required to disarm it. If tripped, it triggers a *teleportation* spell which drops the target outside the manor walls. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will spot the second trap; a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check or a spell like *dispel* is needed to disarm it. It triggers a *hold person* spell that can capture 3 targets if tripped.

PART 6: PARTING WAYS

Now the group must meet back up with Ruk Tux to hand off the item and finish the job. Ruk Tux has other plans, which involve killing the party and releasing his dark master from the prison that holds him.

Once the characters return to the abandoned warehouse, refer to the location descriptions and map of the warehouse provided in Part 2.

ARRIVING AT THE WAREHOUSE

The following development occurs once the characters arrive with Ezrith's Crux in area 1.

Development: If the group used the warehouse as their HQ for planning the heist, it looks exactly as they left it, except now Ruk Tux sits on top of the table waiting for them. If the group used another location, Ruk Tux used the place to keep tabs on their progress.

Encounter: Bearded Betrayal. Once the group has handed over Ezrith's Crux from the shadows behind the group appears two **bearded devils** with an additional **bearded devil** for groups of 8th level or higher. Unless the group succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check or has a Passive Perception of 20 or higher, they are under the surprised condition.

As the bearded devils attack, Ruk Tux turns invisible and dashes to the hidden entrance to his quarters (area 3), where the ritual is ready to begin.



CONCLUSION

If Ruk Tux succeeds in releasing Erzith and slays the party, the demon will use the spilled blood and sacrifice Ruk Tux to summon an additional three **horned devils**. The four horned devils of the end days will ride into the night to plan their next move.

Should Ruk Tux succeed but is killed by the party, it will take Erzith's Crux 1d20 x 25 days for the fiend to regain enough strength to start plotting their escape again. Should Erzith escape rather than be killed, it is suggested that they be used as a recurring BBEG; otherwise, they'll work to release their siblings to herald the end of days.

If the ritual fails, the cult will send in a hooded figure 1d12 days later to investigate things quietly. They'll begin the work to try and track down Erzith's Crux to start again. Should the magic item be returned to the museum with the whole story, Arxot or the new curator will store it in a thick iron shield safe to block attempts to track it down magically. If the group decides to take it with them, they will likely find the cult to be recurring antagonists.

If Arxot Karma survives the midnight attack on them, and the group tells them of Ruk Tux's involvement, they will use the bulk of their resources to put together a small army to take the fight to the cult. Using their time now to hunt down the cult members in the name of the Grey Guards, they'll need a new curator for the museum. Arxot first offers the position to the group with the option of expanding the mansion with more rooms for the group to use. If turned down, then they will work with the mayor to assign a curator and promote a butler to oversee the house and staff when away.

With a deceased Arxot Karma, a massive funeral procession is held the next day in the streets. Everyone is dressed in mourning garb. The mayor gives a speech about the importance of community before announcing that Arxot donated the manor for use as a museum and library for all of Voleubeuge. The cult will try to get its own member set up as the curator while searching for Erzith's Crux.

Regarding the museum, if the items were stolen and not returned, Arxot and the Mayor will start posting jobs for trackers, investigators, and wizards that can locate the items. The mayor will also do this if Arxot is dead.

If the group kills the dryads, their trees will slowly die over 2d10 x 3 days. A living Arxot will be inconsolable and work hard to make sure a seedling or a tree transplant makes it back to the original spot of their home. Should all the water weirds be killed, Arxot refuses to risk any more. If the group slaughters only some of them, she will release the remaining ones to do whatever they like, even arranging a wizard with the ability to planeswalk to get those that wish it back home.

APPENDIX A:

MONSTERS & NPCs

WATER GUARDIAN

An old elemental that befriended Gravnis long ago has stuck around to protect the last living member of the Grey Guards as thanks for destroying the being that had tried to enslave their people. They will try to scare off trespassers rather than kill them, but they will subdue without mercy if attacked.

Modifications for Water Guardian

A water guardian uses the **water elemental** stat block with these changes:

- **One with Water.** When fully immersed in water, they are invisible.
- **Slower.** They only have a single slam attack.
- **Hush Now.** The water guardian can use its action to engulf a grappled creature and begin to drown it, and it only needs to use its bonus action to continue the process in the subsequent turn. Once the creature is unconscious, the water guardian will set them aside to look after them till the guards arrive. Dealing any damage to a drowning creature will reduce the amount of air they have.

RUK TUX, THE STRANGER

Working on behalf of a fiend, Erzith, interested in Erzith's Crux because it is the key to their prison being unlocked. The fiend has promised Ruk to provide immense power to them once they are released and no longer bound from granting that power to mortals. Ruk Tux was also leading the cultists who slaughtered the other members of the Gray Guards.

Modifications for Ruk Tux

Ruk Tux uses the **assassin** stat block with these additions:

- **Darkvision.** 80 ft
- **Friendly Face.** Ruk Tux has advantage on Charisma skill checks made, and when making Charisma saving throws, if successful the creature that triggered the save now believes Ruk Tux and wants to help them. This lasts until Ruk Tux successfully hits them with an attack or damages them.
- **One of Those Faces.** When Ruk Tux leaves someone's sight they need to make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or find they can't remember what they looked like. If Ruk Tux enters their sight again, they can choose if the target remembers them automatically or if they must make another Wisdom saving throw to do so.

NISHRU

Half-orc Cleric of the Gray Guards, deceased. The former lover of Arxot Karma, Nishru kept a room in her manor and spent every moment they weren't adventuring with Arxot among the streets of Voleubeuge. Nishru had plans to propose to Arxot when they returned from the mission that ended in their death; the engagement ring was on them among their things.

APPENDIX B: ITEMS

EZRITH'S CRUX

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

A large blacked key made of hardened volcanic rock in the style of a skeleton key. It seems to vibrate slightly when held. Once a day, while attuned to this item, you can link a shadowed space at least 5 feet in size that you can touch to another shadow of at least the same size. You must have seen and touched the destination shadow at least once before. For the next round, it acts as a teleportation circle. After this ability is used, it can not be used again until you have finished a long rest.

Curse. This item is cursed, a fact that is revealed only when an identify spell is cast on the item. If in your possession for a day without attuning to it, then it will begin to whisper promises of power to you. Make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw; on a failure, you instantly become attuned to it, losing an item of your choice if no attunement slots are free. You are cursed until you are targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic, even if the item is unattuned. The item can not be lost, removed, or given away while the curse remains; it will instead reappear in your pocket. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the key, keeping it within reach at all times.

While cursed, the shadows whisper to you, driving you to great bloodlust when in battle. In combat, you must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or lash out with the shadows themselves. You must attack the weakest-looking creature using your bonus action, the shadows stabbing out like lances for 3d6 piercing damage. If your shadows kill a creature, then its soul is consumed by Erzith, and its voice is added to the whispers that you hear, increasing the DC on the save by +1 per soul.

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