

VAULT OF SAPPHIRES

Level 6

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

Retired Adventurer

BACKGROUND LORE

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

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

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

A HIDDEN TREASURE

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

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

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

RUMORS TODAY

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

ADVENTURE HOOK

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

FEATURES OF THE VAULT OF SAPPHIRES

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

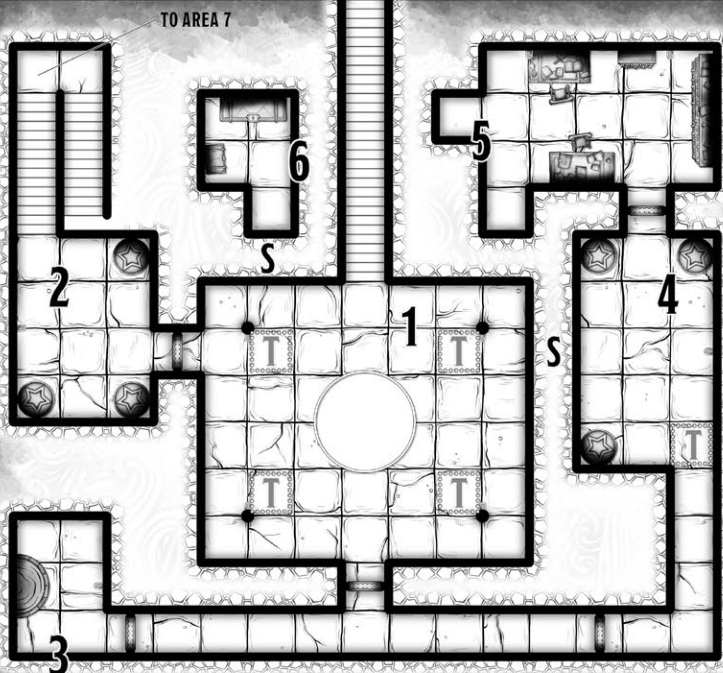
Smells and Sounds. The Harrisen Mausoleum has a strong damp smell caused by the acid ponds and canals in the two lower levels and its lack of ventilation.

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

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

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

TO AREA 7



1. UPPER MAIN HALL

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

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

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

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

2. GUARDIAN STATUES WEST

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

3. HOLY FOUNTAIN

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

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

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

4. GUARDIAN STATUES EAST

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

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

5. ARCHIVES

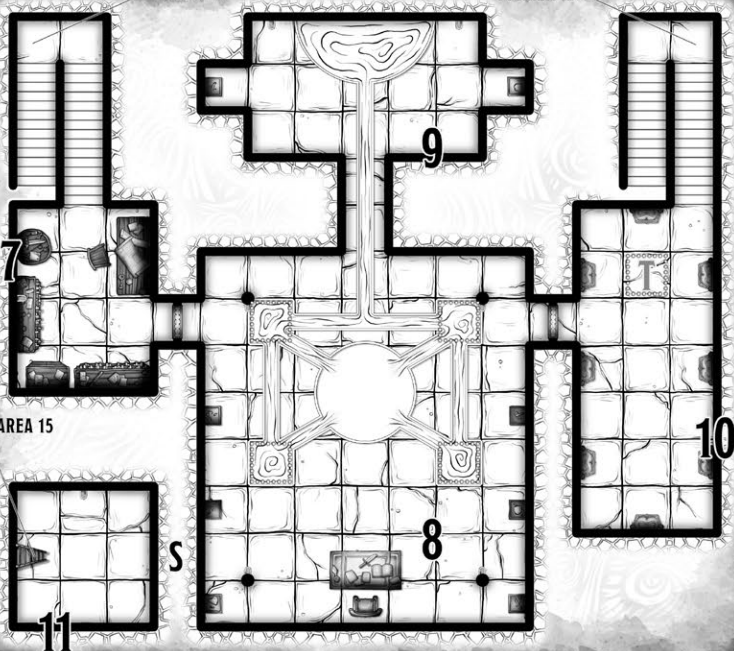
This chamber keeps records of all the members of the Harrisen family buried in the Vault of Sapphires.

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

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

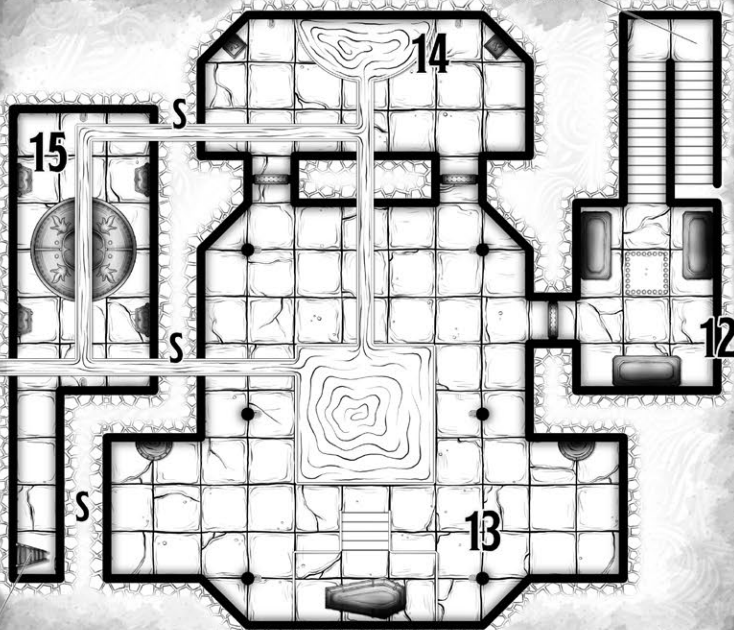
TO AREA 2

TO AREA 12



TO AREA 15

TO AREA 10



TO AREA 11

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

6. HIDDEN CHAMBER

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

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

7. MAIN OFFICE

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

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

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

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

8. MID-MAIN HALL

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

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

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

9. ACID FOUNTAIN

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

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

10. THE RESTING HARRISEN

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

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

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

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

11. SECRET CHAMBER

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



12. HARRISEN GUARDIANS

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

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

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

13. THE MAIN HALL

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

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

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

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

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

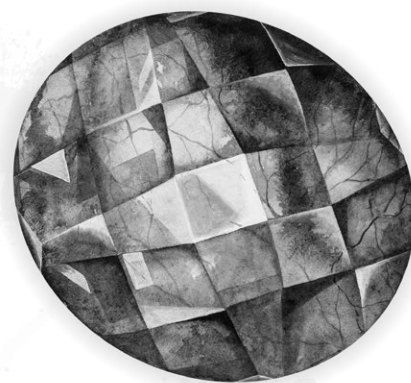
14. LOWER ACID FOUNTAIN

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

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

15. CONTROL ROOM

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



CONCLUSION

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

OBTAINING THE SAPPHIRES

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

GERALD HARRISEN KEEPS THE TREASURE

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

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

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