

DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 2

7 ORIGINAL ADVENTURES
2 BROCHURE ADVENTURES
HIGH RESOLUTION MAPS
ROLL20 MAPS



THE BEST ADVENTURES FOR THE BEST GMS

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Apothecary Shop	4
Red Flower Crossroads	8
A Welcome Resting Place	11
The Hookah Casino	15
The Grim Awakening	19
The Avocado Guild	23
South Hildberg	26
Brochure #2 The Ivory Idol	32
Brochure #3 Horror on the Hook	34
Thank You Page	36

CREDITS

Designer. Elven Tower Cartography

Editor. Arthur Rouise

Cartography. Elven Tower Cartography

Art. Elven Tower Cartography, Adventure Icons by Nathanaël Roux, CC-0 stock art by freepik which requires no attribution

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

About this Magazine

Dungeon Vault Magazine is all about providing interesting ideas and lore to DMs and storytellers. Within this issue, you will find varied adventure ideas.

These short modules do not stick to a unified template of sections. Instead, they are organically created and follow their own pace. The types of modules you can expect are city/town settings, regional settings, dungeons, outdoor locations, encounter maps, and one-page adventures.

The modules are written with 5th ed. OGL in mind but rules are often left to a minimum. Most adventures are appropriate for low to mid-level (Levels 1 to 10) adventuring parties. We include a note at the beginning of each adventure with a ballpark estimation of party level and playing time.

As the DM, you are free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first you should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew-world lore. All material in this release is intended personal use.

Important. Please take into account that any one-page-adventure or brochure included in this document is intended for print form or as an individual PDF file. Both are included with your purchase of this product. Please refer to the appropriate files to enjoy the content.

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You"

Not for resale. Permission granted to print or photocopy this document for personal use only. System Reference Document 5.1 1 or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, LLC. System Reference Document 5.1 Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

*You should bring your old man to the apothecary.
I heard they have a miracle cure now.*

-Enthusiastic Commoner

APOTHECARY SHOP



BACKGROUND LORE

N everybody knows where to go when things go wrong and sickness takes over. People know they must find Oolin, the apothecary, and get his latest remedy against pretty much anything that afflicts the body and mind. Some used to think that Oolin's remedies were nothing but a fraud. A trap for the superstitious. A scam for the unwary. Some people got better, others did not. Such is the nature of medicinal aids and remedies. But then, about two months ago, the number of people getting better and overcoming their diseases increased beyond everyone's expectations. Since then, Oolin's treatments have solved a lot of people's problems and now the shop's popularity is soaring.

The apothecary shop is located outside of town near the farmlands. It is a two-story building with a balcony above the main entrance. An irregular stone path leads visitors from the road to the entrance of the store. There is a small farm/garden next to the building. Two small plantations and lots of different potted plants provide the shop with some home-grown ingredients. A person versed in botany recognizes many rare species of plants and flowers. Some of them grow regardless of the season thanks to a special fertilizer Oolin devised. A small shallow pond in front of the building holds clear water. Keen observers notice that the pond is artificial in its origin because it is on a higher ground and there appears to be no water source for it.

OOLIN'S EDGE

Oolin is a middle-aged human who inherited the shop from his father almost 15 years ago. He knows the properties, real or alleged, of most ingredients and he is a living repository of botanical and chemical knowledge. However, he knows that apothecary medicine can only go so far and that many ailments have no cure he can produce. Such is the nature of life and death and Oolin knows it well.

It all changed a few months ago when a hunter found the body of a dryad in the forest and later brought it to Oolin, thinking they could still be saved. Dryads have an otherworldly origin that can be traced to the Feywild. Their body parts, leaves, and innards have properties unlike any plant found in the Material Plane. Oolin found that mixing such components with his existing remedies enhanced their healing properties with what he refers to as Botanical Magic. With the new medicines, Oolin treated the locals and cured them of many ailments and disabilities. The cure is not permanent, however. The sick must consume the remedy periodically for the magic to persist.

More people came looking for the miraculous remedies and soon Oolin ran out of dryad ingredients. It was then when he made a hard decision. He hired a group of cold-blooded hunters and offered them a sizable reward if they could bring him the dead bodies of Fey creatures from the forest. Dryads, pixies, satyrs, nymphs, anything they could find with magic in their veins. And so they did.

Oolin brought the dead Fey to the basement and eviscerated them to find the components he needed to continue with his research. Oolin believes he has made the discovery of the century and all his findings and recipes are recorded in a book in his room.

Oolin made a mistake. A hunter brought back a living dryad the other day and Oolin decided to keep her alive in the basement cage. The dryad has tried to beg for their life but the language barrier prevents Oolin from understanding what they say. Not that he would comply anyway. But Oolin does not know quite as much as he claims of Fey creatures. The dryad is still in contact with their father tree and is calling for help from the remaining Fey creatures in the forest. It is only a matter of days until another Fey creature comes across their father tree and hears their call.

When that happens, the natural aversion to push into human territory to free their own. They are likely to request help from trustworthy individuals who know the land and can force the apothecary to release his prisoner. Confronting Oolin is not a complicated matter. He is a cowardly man at heart and will not resist forceful attempts. However, Oolin explains that releasing the dryad and impeding his research prevents hundreds of people from consuming the remedy again and they are sure to succumb to their sicknesses and disabilities again. The adventurers may think that this is just a bluff from Oolin but nothing is farthest from the truth. Without the remedy, people bounce back to a state worse than before getting treatment. Scores of them do not survive this process and die in terrible conditions.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Road Outside

The facade of the building shows signs of wear and disrepair. It is an old house passed down three generations. The front door is made of hard-grain oak and features a bas-relief of a fairy flying over a tulip field. Two rectangular pots flank the entrance. Varied strains of cinnamon and tulips grow here and the smell is fine and delicate.

2. Botanic Garden

The garden is a marvel of nature that combines many plants and herbs with medicinal qualities. The uppermost plantation grows large-sized tomatoes.



3. Main Store

The main room inside the establishment is packed with tables, bookcases, and shelves. All of them stacked with plenty of spell components, medicinal herbs, natural ingredients, and animal parts such as shells and bones. Affluent crowds frequent the store often these days and it becomes hard for Oolin or his assistant to notice some clients.

4. Store (Back)

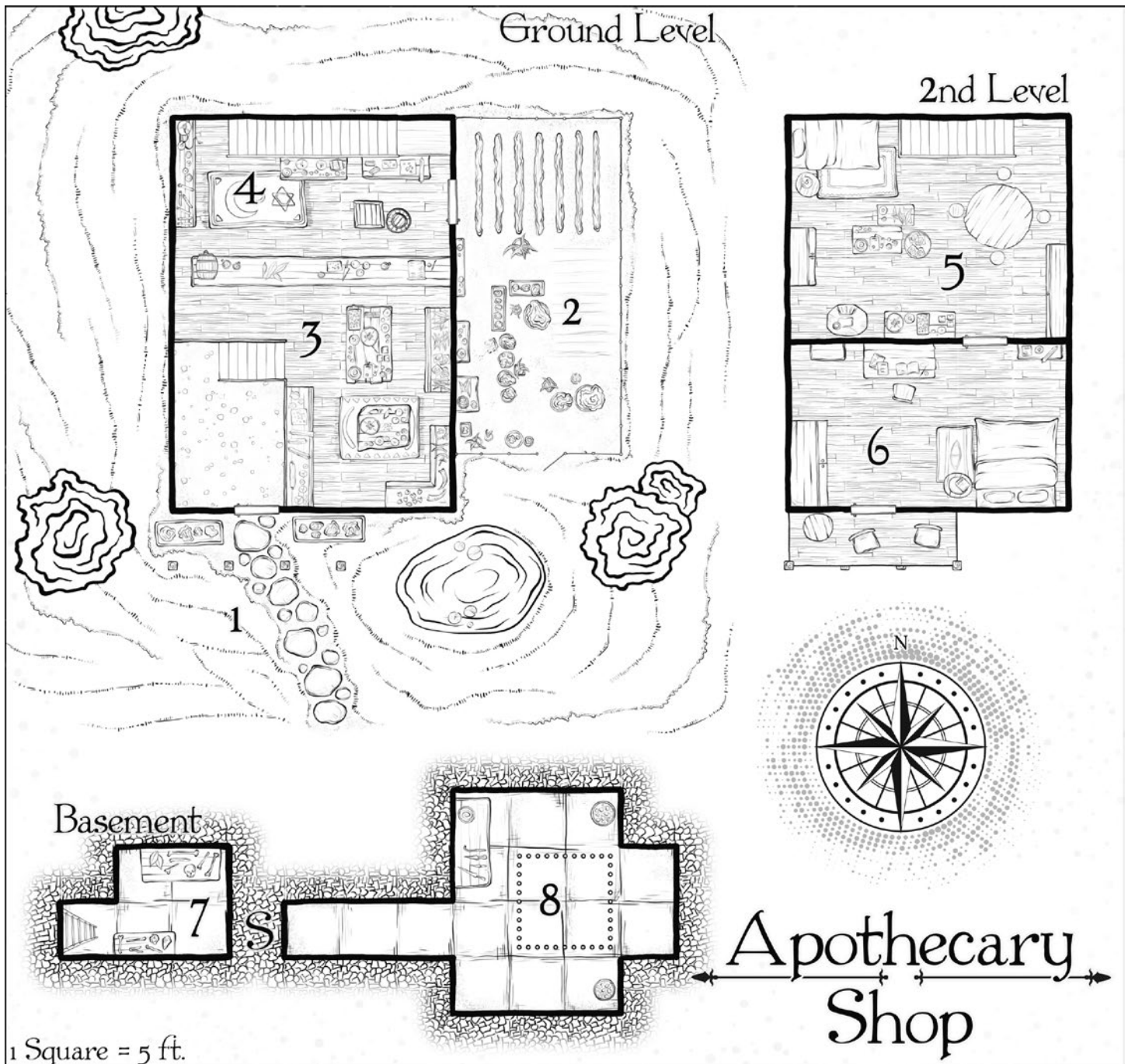
Oolin and his assistant, Trino, are often behind the counter providing counsel on what to buy depending on what afflicts the customers. The special ointments prepared with Fey parts are reserved for

people with incurable conditions as part of Oolin's research. The prices in the store have risen steadily over the past two months as they become ever more popular. The stairs behind the counter lead to the small apartment on the second story.

The carpet on the floor hides the trapdoor to the basement. No one, except Oolin and Trino, know about it. Oolin has the only key for the basement.

5. House Living Room

Trino sleeps on the bed by the north wall. Trino is grateful to Oolin for accepting him as his apprentice. Trino is an accomplished apothecary already and can treat most normal diseases. Trino is aware



of Oolin's current experiments with Fey parts. He does not like where the remedies come from but he accepts that the benefits far outweigh the price. The living dryad in the basement is a problem for him, however. His moral compass is at stakes now and he feels responsible and guilty of what they are doing to the dryad.

6. Oolin's Quarters

This section of the house is always locked and only Oolin is allowed here. The documents on his desk are proof of all of Oolin's activities. They describe in detail all of his research over the past two months.

7. Basement Storage

Two tables feature some of the most expensive ingredients and components Oolin sells. There are also some bones and desiccated organs on the table. They belong to Fey creatures and are the main ingredient in the magical healing ointments. Only an expert in anatomy and botany can recognize the organs for what they are.

The passage to **Area 8** is hidden behind a secret door. A successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the presence of the movable brick that activates the door.



General Features

The shop is located outside of town near the farmlands.

Terrain. The area around the shop consists of rolling hills with few trees. Inside the shop, the shelves and tables are so close that moving around is not easy. With too many customers, the task becomes even harder.

Doors. All wooden doors feature standard locks. The front door features a delicate work of art carved on the upper side of it. The bas-relief depicts a fairy flying over a flower field. An adventurer can bypass an average lock with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check**.

Trapdoor. The entrance to the basement is hidden under the carpet in **Area 4**. The trapdoor features a good-quality lock. It is impossible to manipulate the lock from below. A successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** bypasses the lock.

Light. The shop and the house on the second floor have large windows which light the place during the day. At night, torches on sconces provide dim light when the area is in use. The basement is in complete darkness unless Oolin lights the braziers in **Area 8**.

Smell. A person within the establishment perceives the strong smell of many ingredients and substances all at once. The overall sensation is one of intense acrid and sour tones. Many ingredients on sale are not like that, featuring sweet, soft fragrances but the sour smells take dominance often.

8. Basement Workshop

Two braziers light the room when Oolin is working here. The table features surgery instruments and blades of different sizes. A large iron cage dominates the middle of the room. A dryad in poor condition is trapped inside. The dryad is missing two limbs and several spoon-sized chunks all over their body. Oolin, in his desperate attempt to advance his research, has kept the dryad alive but he still harvests their body for ingredients for his potions and ointments.

If set free, the dryad and their allies in the forest will thank the adventurers and offer their aid in anything they ask. The dryad is hurt and needs a few months in close distance to their father tree to fully heal.

It's a long trip. But don't worry. We'll stop for a drink at the Red Flower Crossroads.

Common Saying

RED FLOWER CROSSROADS



BACKGROUND LORE

The place where two major merchant roads intersect is often the birthplace of a small settlement or sometimes even a town. Crossroads hamlets appear organically in an unplanned way and grow at the pace of travelers and merchants who frequent that path. The more commerce and travelers, the larger the settlement, as it becomes a staple in the middle of larger cities and living there seems more appealing.

The small hamlet known as Red Flower Crossroad was born when a group of three travelers had to camp out for a month in the wild because one of them had an injured leg. The merchant refused to return to the city until he was well enough to walk on his own. He claimed that going home to his wife in such condition was like admitting a defeat. While the man's pride had been put in question many times, that is what he chose to do. The semi-permanent encampment next to the crossroad attracted other travelers as they chose to spend the night in the company of others rather than continue further and sleep alone in the middle of the country. A guy named Barret, an ale merchant, spent a few nights at the crossroads selling beverages to whoever stayed the night and made good business out of it. So good that half his shipment was gone when he decided to part.

Barret came back a month later and found that, while the injured merchant was gone, other travelers picked up on the custom and there was always a small group of travelers dining and drinking together by the crossroads. Barret decided to take the risk and opened shop a few yards from the road and named the place "Red Flower Tavern". The name alludes to the pretty small red flower bushes that are so frequent near the place. Barret's endeavor was a success and his business flourished. With time, other people found a way to make themselves useful and decided to settle in the early days of the hamlet in hopes of profit later on.

Today, one generation later, the small hamlet is growing and it may well turn into a small town down the line. There are nine buildings in the area, two outhouses, and a permanent population of 41 people.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Red Flower Tavern

Barret died eight years ago but his two sons, Adril and Gomo, own the tavern. They work together well but the usual brotherly rivalry becomes an issue from time to time. Adril is the eldest but, since they were born a year apart, it is not as if he commands authority over his sibling. Gomo is a good lad but resents his older brother for inheriting the tavern. Both of them live in the tavern building which also has two spare rooms. They rent the rooms to travelers.

Despite their father being the founder, neither of them has a knack for leadership. After Barret died, the de facto leader of Red Flower Crossroad is Madame Eiranna.

2. Hubbard's Home

Hubbard is a large sturdy man who lives here with his wife and his six children. Hubbard knows carpentry, masonry, and is a thatcher. While not alone, he has been involved in the construction of most structures in the village. His abilities are valued and he makes himself useful wherever he can. His largest motivation is to provide his children with a good opportunity in the growing settlement. He already takes his two eldest with him and teaches them how to work with their hands.

3. Filo's General Shop

Filo is a half-elf merchant who was the first to follow Barret's example after he opened the tavern. Filo is still around thanks to the Fey blood in his veins but he is already an old man. He opened a general shop that sells just about anything but the price is marked up for travelers. Locals get regular prices. The store depends on travelers and merchant routes to make ends meet.

General Features

Red Flower Crossroad is located at a "T" intersection in between three larger settlements. The closest is a week away.

Terrain. Rolling hills, small plantations, and shallow cliffs surround the hamlet. The roads are not paved but they have frequent travelers; they are flat enough for carts and carriages.

Doors. All nine buildings feature wooden walls, doors, and simple locks. The locks are not used often, though. Everyone knows each other and most doors are unlocked at all times. People only take precautions when a troublesome group or individual is staying the night.

Light. There are no public lights. Lighting conditions are dependent on the time of the day and the weather.

Smells and Sounds. The sweet fragrant smell of the red flowers in the area is something the travelers mention often as they are used to the dull and somewhat stinky smell of larger settlements. The smell of manure is also common. The settlement does not have stables; horses are tied in the open under the shade of large trees.

4. Sir Talus' Home

Sir Talus is a mid-aged war hero who retired early as a boon for his war deeds. The knight was aware of the growing settlement and came here with his wife and two children to settle where he hopes downtown will be when his grandchildren grow up. He paid for his land to some lord and is the only person in Red Flower Crossroad who has legal documentation for their parcel and has a deed for the house. He and his family live off of the stipend he receives from the crown. Three times a week, Sir Talus trains his young boy and two other neighbor boys with training swords. He tells them that there will come a time when they are the sword that stands between evil and their families.

5. Barter Your Leg

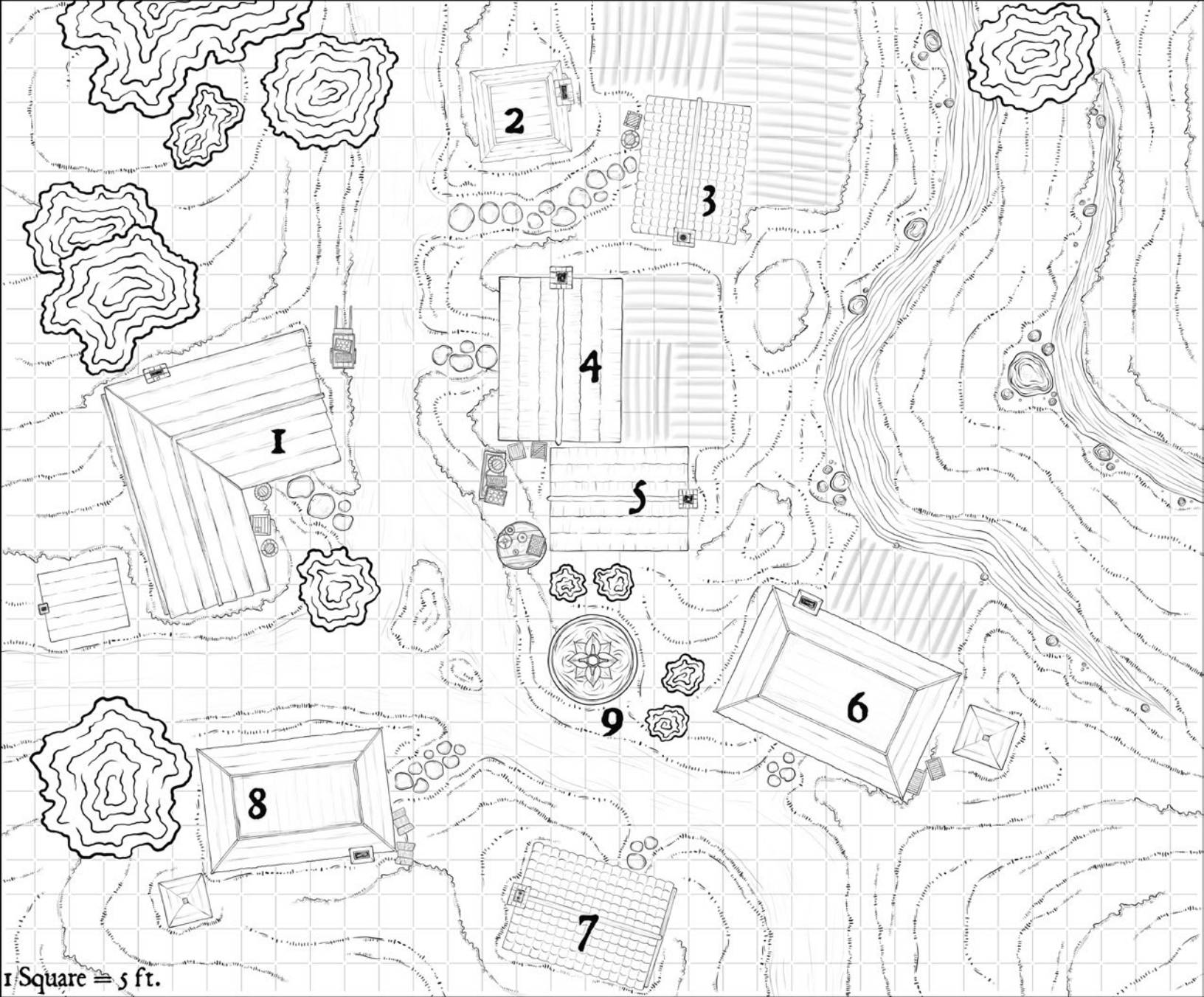
Yuna is a mid-aged lady who lives with her three sons. The young boys work on the farms while she runs a barter shop in her house-front. She has many things to offer and the good stuff come and go with the travelers. She claims to have traded two items with magical properties in the past. Yuna came here with her husband but he died ten years ago in a hunting accident.

6. Madame Eiranna's Home

Madame Eiranna was already an adult when her family moved to the country. Her parents moved to the crossroad twenty years past. They passed away not so long ago. She is a strong-willed, assertive woman with leadership skills. Her tone of voice is never aggressive or insulting but she always gets things done, and people do as she says. She is the de facto leader in the village and no one questions her self-given authority. Her main goal is to grow the town's population and attract more settlers. If she can get enough people to move here, the local lord in the capital is bound to appoint her major. Her family is sure to receive a stipend for ruling over the town. So long as she manages to collect the tithes for the crown.

7. Vanneri's Home

Vanneri is a large bearded man who lives with his wife and four children. Vanneri is an accomplished, hunter and fisherman. He ventures into the closest forest every morning with his eldest son and a friend to hunt game. When they catch large game like boars or deer, they bring it back and organize a large dinner in the tavern and offer the food to every local for free. Everybody in Red Flower Crossroad appreciates Vanneri for this gesture. Adril and Gomo only charge travelers and merchants for this.



8. Goldtooth's Prospectors

The newest house in town is the home of Avery Goldtooth and his family. Avery is an unimportant member of a powerful family who owns several gold and silver mines. Avery is the eleventh sibling, however, and he is bound to inherit nothing but his last name. With the generous stipend his family provides, Avery moved to the country to try his luck. According to local and family rules, if he finds a silver or gold vein and pays the appropriate tithe to the crown and family, all other riches are his to keep. Avery and two mining prospectors travel every day to a location where there might be a silver vein. If he is successful in opening a mining operation in Red Flower Crossroads, he may well change the fate of the town as this is certain to attract plenty of settlers to form his workforce.

9. Red Flower Fountain

A simple but beautiful stone fountain marks the place where travelers used to gather around the fire to spend the night telling their stories and sharing food and drinks. The bottom of the pond shines brightly due to the coins that travelers toss when they leave the hamlet. The locals created a tradition of asking the god of travelers for his blessing by tossing a silver coin. Madame Eiranna collects all coins once a month.

What? that farm down the road? Old Janus lives there. They sell marmalade in the market.

- Local Farmer

A WELCOME RESTING PLACE



BACKGROUND LORE



Old Janus' farm is located half a mile east of the Great Western Road. The closest settlement is a large city two nights away from the farm. The farm's two large buildings are visible from the road because of the relative lack of trees in the area. It is a beautiful part of the country with rolling hills, patches of bushes and flowers, temperate weather, and the appropriate conditions for farming and cattle.

Old Janus is a middle-aged man who grows weaker for his job each year. He is not without good fortune. His two adult children live with him. Tarkin is thirty years old, with a robust build and a strong lad for farm work. His daughter, Challa, is the best with cattle and preparing stored supplies for the winter. Old Janus' wife died five years ago from a terrible fever during the winter.

The three of them live in a large two-story wooden house. The house is in pristine condition; Tarkin loves working around the house doing maintenance and changes to it. Next to the house, the stable is the largest construction. The stable is large enough to house five horses or similarly-sized animals. The only occupants now are two cows and Tarkin's horse. Two smaller buildings surround the house, an elevated chicken coop and a tool shed behind the house. West of the house, large sections of land serve as plantations. It appears that most of the area is used for oats, quinoa, and barley. The

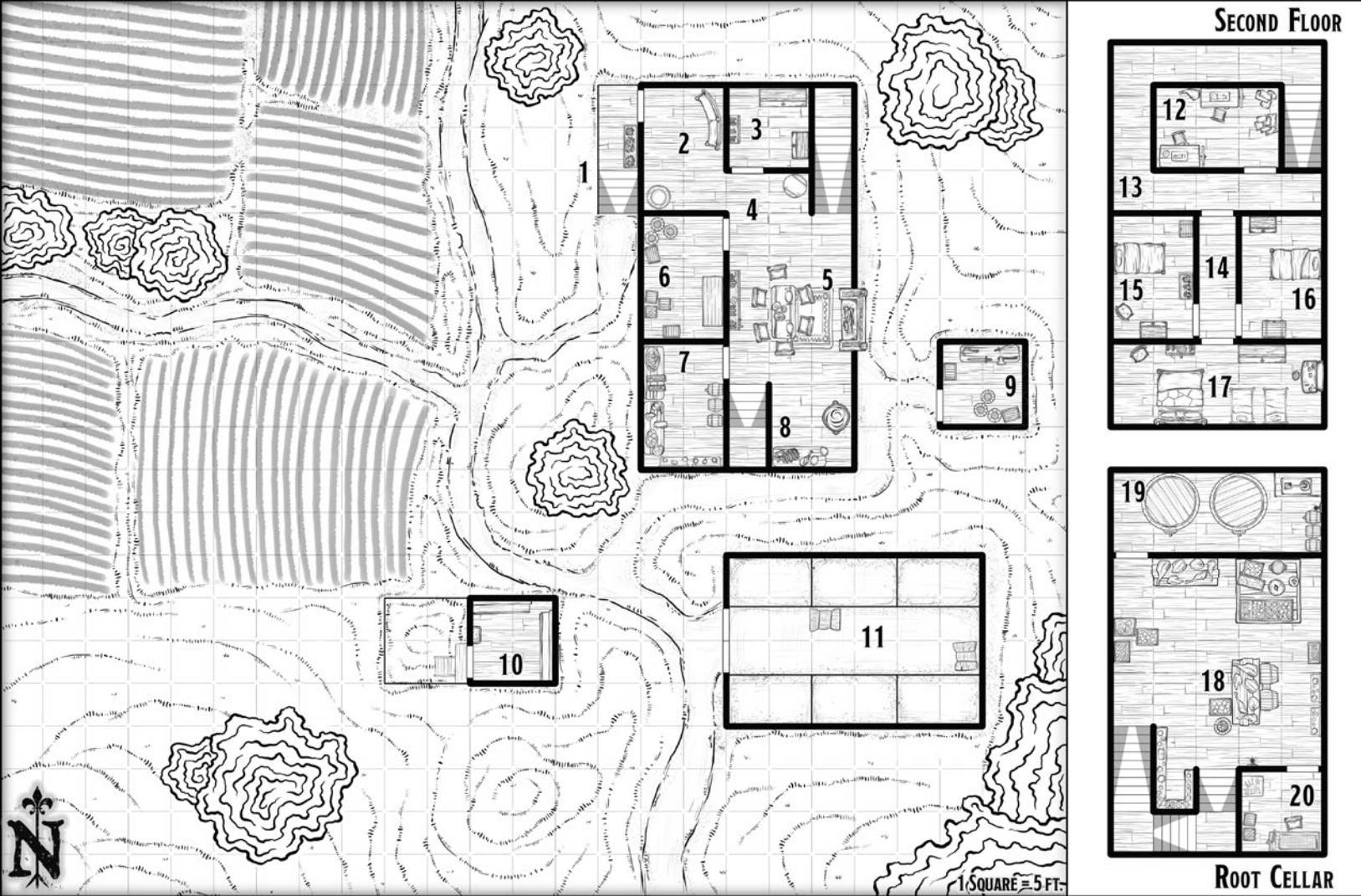
farmed area is too large for Janus and his children to take care of. Janus employs four more people to work on the farms. These workers do not live here. They live in a nearby hamlet south of the farm. They come to the farm walking and it takes them half an hour to arrive. Janus pays them with produce and the occasional copper coin.

If a group of adventurers shows up at Janus' farm, he greets them with a smile and welcomes them. He knows adventurers and travelers need rest but also look for work opportunities. And there is no such thing as too few hands working on the farm. Janus does not have any spare rooms to offer but any visitors can rest in the storage room (**Area 6**), or the stable (**Area 11**). He offers a place to stay and food for the visitors on the only condition that they help with whatever is needed on the farm. (See below)

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This resource describes a farmhouse in the wild. The house belongs to a middle-aged man called Old Janus and his two children. The purpose of such a location is to provide a place to rest and perhaps have a few odd jobs in between larger, more important adventures. Here are some light-hearted ideas or plot hooks that can occur while the adventurers visit Old Janus' farm.

- With winter around the corner. Old Janus needs a few extra hands for all the upcoming farm work. Old Janus offers the stable as a place to



sleep for any volunteers and 4 copper coins per day of honest work. Available work includes harvesting oats and quinoa, cleaning the chicken coop and harvesting eggs, pressing apples for wine and cider, and milking cows.

- Old Janus and his son Tarkin must visit the nearby town to sell some marmalade crates. He pays the adventurers to escort them there and back. One or two adventurers must also stay with his daughter Challa and guard the farm.
- The old farmer explains that around this time of the year, a shady individual shows up with a band of thugs and request a few sacks of grain in exchange for not destroying the farm. They have complied for two years but they are tired of this. He offers the same reward plus a few silver coins if the adventurers get rid of the unsavory individuals.
- Challa usually participates in the Flower Autumn Festival, which is due in a couple of days. The festival hosts a baking competition. Challa and a childhood friend always take part in it. Challa's friend recently broke her arm working

on the farm and cannot attend. Challa explains that she cannot participate alone and wants one of the adventurers to accompany her and help her win the baking competition.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Farm House Entrance

The porch and the main door are 5-feet from the ground. If asked, Janus explains that the snow in this area of the country could bury a house if you do not stop it. A rectangular flower pot next to the door is the only decoration. The flowers are similar to saffron but in a different color.

2. Waiting Room

A large couch and a night table are the only furniture in this room. The smell of food from the kitchen is palpable. A drawn picture of the whole family decorates the north wall. It features a younger Janus, a woman next to him in a large dress, and teenagers Tarkin and Challa.

General Features

The farm is located half a mile from the main road. The buildings are visible from afar thanks to the low concentration of trees.

Terrain. The area around the farm features rolling hills and grassy areas. Trees and bushes patch the scenery but the nearest forest is almost a day away.

Doors. All doors are made of hardwood. The house door and the shed door feature standard locks. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to bypass either lock. The rest of the doors in the property only have an iron latch but no other security measure.

Light. The fireplace and stove in **Areas 5** and **8** provide bright light. Torches in sconces in **Areas 18** and **19** provide dim-light. All other areas are dependent on the time of the day and weather conditions for light.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of almonds mixes with the smell of graying trees and rotting grass. Autumn is about to end. The first snow is due in a week or two. The sounds of wooly sheep as they move around grazing is relaxing at first but will prove bothersome after a couple of hours near the farmhouse.

3. Coat Closet

This room features two wardrobes and one small bookcase. The wardrobes are so stacked not a single more coat fits in them. Janus and his children are quite tolerant of cold weather, so, the coats stay here most of the time.

4. Strange Curios

A night table by the north wall features many miniature figurines and strange devices. Most of them are made of jade, turquoise, or some kind of quartz. The humanoid-shaped figurines are crude, as if made with a large knife or a chisel. If asked, Tarkin explains that a group of traveling performers passes by the farm once or twice a year and sell those curios. Janus' wife used to buy one every year and Tarkin has kept on buying them since she died. According to the travelers, the small trinkets are talismans against different evils or curses. Tarkin does not believe in these superstitions.

5. Dining Room

A medium-sized wooden table with a white mantelpiece and six chairs dominates the room. It is in between a large chimney and a bookcase. The bookcase appears to hold a large collection of literary classics and farming books. To the north, a staircase goes up to the second level of the house. To the south, a staircase goes down to the cellar.

6. Storage Room

This room features a large number of wooden crates, barrels, containers, and a table. Most containers have food products that Tarkin and his father take regularly to nearby settlements to sell. Old Janus offers this room to any visitors. If there is not enough space here, then the stable is the next best choice.

7. Kitchen Pantry

Supplies for the house and kitchen are here. Usually, only Challa comes in or out of this room. Challa knots a lace string to the door's latch every time she leaves the room. The knot is intricate enough that she believes only she can make it. The lace string can be removed without much effort but putting it back the way it was requires a successful **DC 17 Dexterity check**.

8. Kitchen

The kitchen is a simple affair. It features a wooden table and a large cauldron over a coal stove. The cauldron is large enough that with a special implement to make the inside flat, she can use it as an improvised oven too.

9. Tool Shed

The tool shed features a padlock on the door (see sidebar). Old Janus keeps a few barrels of fertilizer here. Farm tools and implements lie scattered over a wooden table. One of the objects is a shortsword. It is supposed to be here for emergencies. However, not even Tarkin is proficient with it, making farming tools more appropriate for self-defense.

10. Chicken Coop

The coop is 5-feet from the ground, as the main house. Inside, there is enough space to house around thirty chicken. A ten by ten feet fence keeps the chicken from roaming too far outside.

11. Stable

The large wooden structure is large but there is a lot of free space. Two cows and one horse are the only residents. If the stable is used to house visitors, then Tarkin drops a mound of hay from the silo above for makeshift beds.

12. Mill Room

This room features large sacks of grain and two wooden tables. There are two manual press mills on the tables. The mills work slow but it is the only way for the moment to make flour. Usually, the farmworkers use the manual mills when the time comes to make flour.

13. Hallway

Challa had an artist phase a few years ago and painted many landscape pictures. All of them decorate this hallway as it goes around the mill room. Most of them are oil paintings and the technical progression is apparent from picture to picture. None of them are of high quality, nor are they absolute thrash.

14. Tripwire Trap

Tarkin resets an alarm tripwire every night. The wire is 5-feet from the north door and activates if someone pulls open the door at night. Pulling the string causes a string of small bells to chime. The sound is loud enough to wake up Janus and his children. A passive Perception score of 16 or higher reveals the presence of the tripwire's slight pull as a person is opening the door from outside.

15. Challa's Bedroom

The room features a bed, a flower pot, a wooden chest, and a wardrobe. The flowers in the pot are of the same kind as those in the house entrance (**Area 1**). Challa's chest contains an assortment of oil paints, blank canvases, and a book of baking recipes.

16. Tarkin's Bedroom

The room features a bed, a wardrobe, and a wooden chest. Tarkin is out most of the day and only returns to sleep. The chest contains, a notebook with a register of all sales and deliveries from the past five years.

17. Old Janus' Bedroom

The master bedroom is too big for Old Janus. It features a large bed, a bookcase, a wardrobe, a vanity, and even his two children's old baby cribs. The bookcase only has fifteen books. Those are the books that Janus' wife used to read when she lived. Now, Old Janus re-reads the same books over and over.

18. Root Cellar

A large dark chamber with plenty of wooden tables, shelves, and cases. All edibles in this area are prepared for long-term storage to last the winter. Dried meats, marmalades, conserve vegetables, and other long-lasting foods are here. Most of the supplies in the cellar are for Old Janus and his children's consumption. But they usually have a little extra stuff for those in need if the winter is harsh.

19. Winery

The large fermentation vats dominate the view in the room. They are almost too large for the narrow chamber. A person has to move sideways to get to the eastern end of the room. A few empty barrels and a manual apple press hug the northeast corner. The wine and cider should be ready for sale in the spring.

20. Loom

A loom by the southeast corner lies abandoned. Old Janus' wife used to work here and produce a variety of fabrics. Some of the best ones would yield good profits in the nearby markets. After her passing, neither Challa nor Tarkin took upon this labor and the loom has not been used since. The device does not currently work, some of its pieces have broken down after five years of abandonment.



I won the jackpot at the Hookah Casino. I swear! But then I lost it all again...

-Usual Gambler

THE HOOKAH CASINO



BACKGROUND LORE

In the darkest reaches of the underworld, deep under the strata of normal city life, the wretched burn their gold coins and assets in the Hookah Casino. This gambling hub is the most influential establishment in the city, even if most common folk do not know about it. The number of gold coins that cycles in and out of the Hookah Casino is so large that the city could suffer an economic depression if it were to be closed.

Fortunately, such an outcome is unlikely. The Hookah Casino is famous among the highest echelons of the noble and political class. It is not rare to see members of parliament, knights, lords, and other members of the high-class gambling unreal amounts of money in the casino. The presence and sponsoring of such individuals protect the Hookah Casino from City Watch raids and problems related to their line of work.

The casino is, in theory, open to anyone. However, any person wishing to gain access must first exchange fifty gold coins for hookah coins, the local gambling chips. Such cost of entry prohibits access to medium and low-class cityfolk. Once inside, all patrons enjoy free food and alcoholic drinks. They can keep on eating and drinking for as long as they continue gambling.

The owner of the casino is a sturdy, middle-aged human known as Sharp Joe. He usually is in his

office (**Area 11**) but also visits the other areas of the casino twice a day. Sharp Joe was a famous underworld boss a decade ago. His criminal guild specialized in smuggling stuff in and out of the city. The city guard caught him and he spent two years in jail. He learned a lot about gambling in prison and came up with the idea of the casino. After his release, Sharp Joe decided to open up shop. His contacts in the underworld and experience in criminal activities were fundamental to his success. Nowadays, while the legitimacy of his endeavors is disputable, he enjoys the protection of important individuals in the city which he has pampered from time to time to gain their favor.

AREA DESCRIPTION

1. Entrance

The Hookah Casino is only a story below the surface level. This chamber features a waiting room with two seats and a registration desk. A small metal safe box on the desk and a sack of purple hookah coins take up the entirety of the desk's surface. The cashier collects the minimum cost of entry of fifty gold coins and exchanges them for hookah coins (gambling chips). A person leaving the casino can exchange hookah coins back to gold or precious stones here too.

2. Slot Machines

Ten metallic slot machines arranged in a row and by the south corners dominate the room. The slot

machines are all identical. The machines feature a couple of levers to adjust the bet parameters and a large red-handled lever to start the game. There is usually a player or two at any given time. Every month or two, one lucky individual hits the jackpot and earns a price of thirty thousand hookah coins that fall from the machine like a waterfall of purple light. When the staff detects a jackpot winner, their only mission is to keep the winner playing for as long as possible to increase the chances of recovering some or all of the chips.

3. Card Games Room

The room features two tables for card games. The croupiers are always ready to deal to any number of players from one to six. Waiters refill alcohol as soon as possible.

4. Elemental Battles Room

The north side of the room is at a lower level, 15-feet below the entrance. Down there, two magic

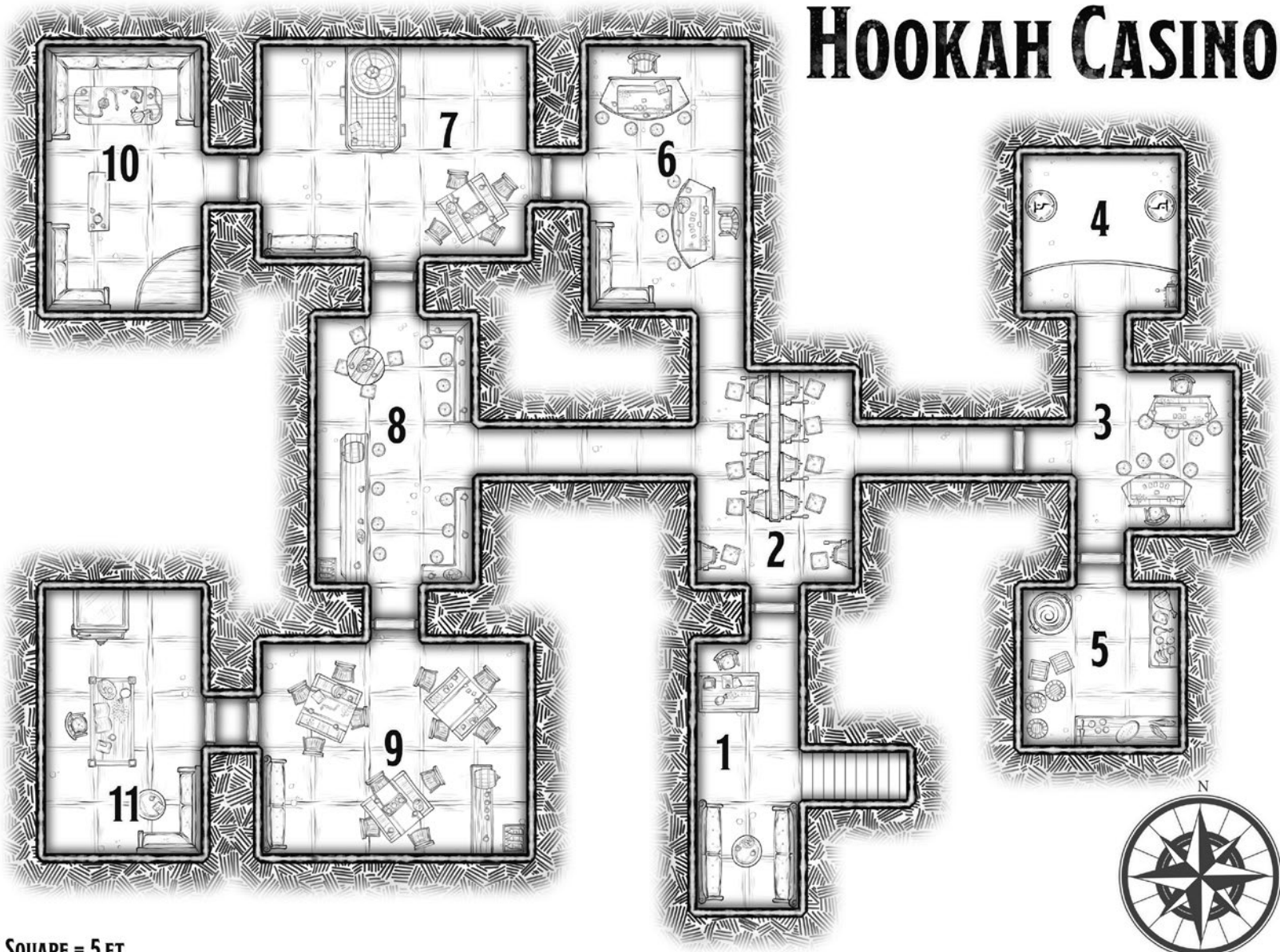
circles on opposite sides of the room are used to summon elemental, Fey, or fiendish creatures to fight to the death. A croupier explains what they are about to summon and collects bet registration cards to handle the fight gambling. After recording the information, the croupier puts the registration cards in the machine by the wall. The machine is a clock-work wonder that functions as a variable calculator that handles the odds and profit percentages for all encounters.

5. Kitchen

Food plates, snacks, and all kinds of edibles come from this room all the time. Most of the food is spiked with caffeine to keep players engaged in their games and to prevent them from leaving the casino. The chef is a thri-keen named Kuk.

6. Blackjack Room

Similar to **Area 3**. The two gaming tables here deal only blackjack and other similar games. The crou-



General Features

The Hookah Casino is located underground in the busiest quarter of a metropolis. The only entrance is in a quiet alley, an unmarked door flanked by two ogre bouncers.

Terrain. The floor in the casino is made of stone tiles. Most of them are in good condition. Some areas within the complex have limited space. In combat, squares with a piece of furniture are considered difficult terrain for the purposes of tactical movement.

Doors. The double doors that connect **Area 9** and **Area 11** are reinforced with metal bands and superior locks. An adventurer can bypass a superior lock with a successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check**. Only the owner and the casino manager have keys to these doors. The rest of the doors in the casino are normal wooden doors with no locks.

Light. Stone sconces on the walls with permanent *produce flame* spells provide bright warm light. Dealing 2 points of damage with a bludgeoning weapon to any sconce (**AC 15**) causes it to fail and turn off.

Smells and Sounds. The smoke from cigars permeates the underground chambers and gives the place a misty look. After a few minutes inside, creatures also perceive the faint smell of food and beverages.

piers in this room can accept bets not handled in hookah coins. They motivate people to bet valuable stuff like horses, carts, jewelry, and even real estate. Legends of people losing all their livelihood and houses are not rare when people tell anecdotes about the Hookah Casino.

7. Roulette of Hell

There are no parties such as the ones in the Roulette of Hell. A group of ten to twenty people surrounds the roulette at any given time. They all pay attention to the person in line to throw the dice and make a call for the marble in the roulette. Large amounts of hookah coins change hands in this room. The crowd applauds, shouts, and boos every few minutes as something incredible or terrible happens.

8. The Remedy Bar

Ten to twenty people rest from betting in this bar while they weep for their losses or share their winnings. The environment changes according to who

is in the room. When many losers are in the room the air feels heavy with the many sour individuals in the room. The bartenders are trained in psychological tricks and arguments to motivate people to go back to the gambling tables and regain their loses.

9. Gambling Room

A medium-sized room with three game tables. The games in this room are different. Game cards, board games, and tile games like domino are common here. People in this room tend to gamble their chips at a slower pace. Usually, older customers and veterans come to this room. They have grown out of the ecstatic, fast pace of blackjack or roulette. When full, casino staff give priority to returning customers into this area. The room has a private bar.

10. Hookah Room

The casino takes its name from this room. It is a place to relax while people take turns inhaling flavored tobacco vapors from the hookahs. A hookah is a complex tobacco pipe with a long, flexible tube that draws the smoke through water contained in a crystal bowl. Clients share hookahs and enjoy the flavors which also make the air smell of many pleasant fragrances. The room features a small wooden stage by the southeast corner. An artist comes on stage once an hour and performs.

Performances of many kinds are accepted at the Hookah Casino. Dancers, musicians, poets, comedians, and minstrels are all welcome.

11. Sharp Joe's Office

Sharp Joe seldom lets a client come inside his office. It features a large desk, a corner seat, and a large steel safe box. Sharp Joe does not believe in banks. The casino profits of the last two weeks are kept in the safe box. Every two weeks a shipment-service takes all of the gold from the safe and moves it to Sharp Joe's vault under his manor.

STAFF NPCs

Biff and Bash. Two ogres wearing a black vest flank the casino's entrance on the surface. They speak common but their comprehension of any speech longer than two sentences is limited. They let in any returning customers with no questions. New customers have a difficult time getting in unless they flash a hookah coin to prove they have been invited. Their way to work is to hit first and ask questions after.

Reptilian Croupiers. On weekends, a pack of tuxedo-wearing kobolds come to work the tables in **Area 3** and **Area 6**. They are trained in many card tricks and illusions.

The Faith Dealers. The Hookah Casino employs a few croupiers who are acolytes of the God of Gambling. They can detect if anyone is uses luck altering magic and promptly alert security. They are also trained to spot cheaters as part of their sacred vows.

Elvis Imitator. A green slaadi with an eye-catching white suit and a wig sings cover songs in the Hookah Room on Thursdays and Fridays. If asked, he explains he is an admirer of a human singer named Elvis. No one except him is familiar with that name.

Lola. She is a brown bear that just happened to wander in after Biff and Bash petted her. When inside, the patrons fed her and she decided to stay. Its breed does not grow as large as common bears. Lola uses to sit beside any gambling table and watch, waiting for food. She is treated like a good luck charm by some gamblers. Nobody has the heart to shoo her away.

Ogo the Blind. A poet and story-teller. His narrations emphasize the smells and sounds of the scene. The yelps of victory and the subtle weeps of loss. Or the exotic herbs of the smokes and the aromas of the many liquors. He is an old monk on the run from the royal family but no one knows this.

3 gnomes in a trench coat. Barly, Goty, and Chamy pose as a tall humanoid silent high roller. They make use of illusion innate magic to enhance their rolls and strategies. They are part of the security staff, though. They go undercover and find cheaters while pretending to play games.

Lootz, the Cooler. A tiefling cursed with bad luck after breaking an infernal contract. Sharp Joe hires him to end patrons' winning streaks before they break the bank. He is good with words and befriends people easily, convincing them to play in teams of two people. Lootz' curse makes him lose every third times he gambles.

CLIENT NPCs

The Squabbling Sisters. The Ys'Ael sisters, twin heirs to the Ivory Throne, have a terrible feud. They have settled to solve their succession dispute at the casino. The casino banned them two weeks ago for using their innate psychic powers to cheat. They're looking for someone to play in their place. Each of the sisters is willing to accept one representative and gamble the throne on a blackjack game.

Phariel. He is an evil incubus who frequents the Hookah Casino. He represents a fiendish patron entity and can make diabolical deals with unsuspecting mortals. He is an accomplished gambler who loves to use his abilities to win bargains with people, even pushing them to up their bets until they gamble their very souls.

Orb Rockjaw. A wealthy dwarf who enjoys the game and the perks that come from being a patron of such an establishment. He often hangs in lounge areas and tables with games of chance discussing his new ventures of questionable legality. The dwarf also looks for partners and employees for future adventures. He is a useful contact and source of work.

Neliel De'nardran. A male drow that escaped assassination from his house in the Underdark. He makes a living by pretending to be bad at games and using spiders as a means of gathering information for blackmailing. He has a deal with Sharp Joe: he gets one-hundred gambling chips for free daily which he must lose playing. Any information he sells he must pay 20% of the profits to Sharp Joe.

The Benner Siblings. A group of rowdy, drunk halflings appears like they are losing large amounts of money but having a great time anyway. Their family is in politics and they have money to burn with no remorse. The man of the hour is wearing a bright, glittery hat almost as tall as he is. They are too drunk to care about any shady dealings going on nearby.

Jon Breet. This individual is so often at the casino he is almost a resident. He is an infiltrator, saboteur, information broker, and high-class con artist. An anonymous employer hired him to spy on the casino and collect as much information as possible.

Perhaps he can lead to the Hookah Casino's worst enemy or competitor.



*They came from the graveyard! Scores of them ate the townsfolk... I could only run...
-Massacre Survivor*

THE GRIM AWAKENING



BACKGROUND LORE

Something terrible happened in the Church of Golden Petals. The few survivors who managed to escape the massacre do not tell the same story. A few contradictions here and there but there is no reason to deny their allegation. Darkness has fallen on the church and there appears to be no answer or solution to the current situation.

According to their reports, a group of humanoid figures opened the abandoned crypts under the graveyard, one of them saw the tombstone that was supposed to close off the access in a different position. These creatures, scores of them, surrounded the church during Friday's evening service. It happened when Jenn Alistee, the local priestess, prepared to perform the ceremony of wine-sharing. She filled the large chalice and raised it to secure the gods' blessings. A harsh dry sound disturbed the ceremony as the church's front doors slammed open. There is a divider wall between the church nave and the entrance. The believers could not see who was it, but they could hear their hungry moans and growls. When they entered the nave proper, all of the believers saw the nature of the uninvited guests.

The aberrant creatures appeared to be decomposing husks of what once was a person. Their skins festering and amorphous. Their eyes distorted and atavistic. But worst of all was the fiendish nature

of their mouths and jaws. Their fluctuating and fractured jaws stood open in a furious display of irrational hunger. There were scores of them. They gathered and stood almost motionless by the south side of the building. The believers knew in their minds and hearts they should abandon all sanity and run for their lives. But none of them moved. They too stood in rapture of the sight before them. That was until the butchery began. The nameless abominations moved in a mesmerizing manner and attacked their prey. The nauseous spectacle of miscarried souls murdering and mutilating their far-away living cousins painted the church with scarlet red that night. Only a couple of them managed to escape through the back door and return to town. The survivors are out of their minds and difficult to reason with. The events that transpired that night have changed them. A scholar and healer claims that it might take them months or even years to recover their minds.

The town watch sent a party of six guards today to explore the church and get rid of any threat. They have not returned yet but it is still too soon to declare their mission a failure. Should they not return, the town speaker is ready to offer a bounty to adventurers or mercenaries. Their top priority is to save any remaining survivors and recover the church.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

An ancient ritual that no one knew about caused the massacre in the Church of Golden Petals. It was, for all intents and purposes, an unavoidable calam-

ity. Four-hundred years before, the underground cave complex that became the crypts was the lair of a known villain. The man was Ortgo, a necromancer. Back then, the town did not exist and most of the area around the hill was a forest. Ortgo had a knack of using his necromancy spells in terrible ways. He affected the fauna and sometimes even the trees with his spells. His only antagonists were a triumvirate of druids who did their best to protect the forest from Ortgo.

The druids defeated Ortgo. While the necromancer was an accomplished spellcaster and a terrible foe, he was not powerful enough to confront the ire of the druids and the wild creatures at their command. In his dying moments, Ortgo's jaded eyes displayed a malignant look. He pronounced one last enchantment and claimed that he would return to have his revenge when the Realm of Dread completed its fifth revolution. The druids disregarded his words as those of a delirious person. Ortgo died and his remains were consumed by the soil around him.

General Features

The Church of Golden Petals is located outside of a large town; a five-minute walk from the town's palisade gates.

Terrain. Grassy hills and a few trees surround the church and graveyard. The church is on high ground and the nearby town is visible from its doorsteps. The floor inside the church and the ritual room (**Area 13**) feature well-preserved stone tiles. The floor in the crypts is rough but even. Squares partially occupied by a piece of furniture or object are considered difficult terrain.

Doors. The two doors that lead outside the church are reinforced with iron bands and average locks. Both can also be secured with wooden panels from the inside. They are currently unlocked. The rest of the wooden doors inside the church have locking latches. A successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to lockpick an average lock.

Light. Magical candles on the walls of the church produce dim light. The crypts are in complete darkness.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of rot and decay surround the church and graveyard and can be detected from as far as 30-feet from the entrance. The sounds of the undead in the area eating and growling are perceivable from the area outside the church.

The Realm of Dread is a pseudo-plane that affects necromantic magic and, according to some scholars, can be referred to as being in a state of co-existence with the Material Plane, or as an orb that moves in a circular path around it. Ortgo's dying ramblings were not empty words but a powerful curse. Four-hundred years later the Realm of Dread orbited the Material Plane five times and the spirit of Ortgo returned to a state of quasi-existence. The miasmal ghost of Ortgo is nothing but a nebulous, nonsensical reminder of what he was. The only thing that remains is his morbid desire for vengeance. The spirit arose other benign souls around it and corrupted them with its noxious darkness. The rest is history.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Church Entrance

The front doors are ajar. The dead body of a member of the town watch lies motionless next to the door. The man features a multitude of bite wounds. The undead ate the left side of his body. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals the presence of at least 10 different sets of footsteps approaching the entrance from the graveyard.

2. Hallway Divider

A stone wall that reaches the ceiling divides the entrance of the church from the nave. The murals of the Church of Golden Petals decorate this hallway. But they are all stained with fresh blood from the people who tried to escape a few nights ago. The incomplete bodies of three people litter the floor.

3. Priestess' Quarters

Jenn Alistee's quarters are simple and minimalistic. A figure appears to sleep on the bed under the sheets. There is a large splotch of blood on the floor in front of the bed. The creature on the bed is Jenn, but she is now a ghoul. It appears to hold some memories from its living existence. That is why it returned to its bed.

4. Office and Storage

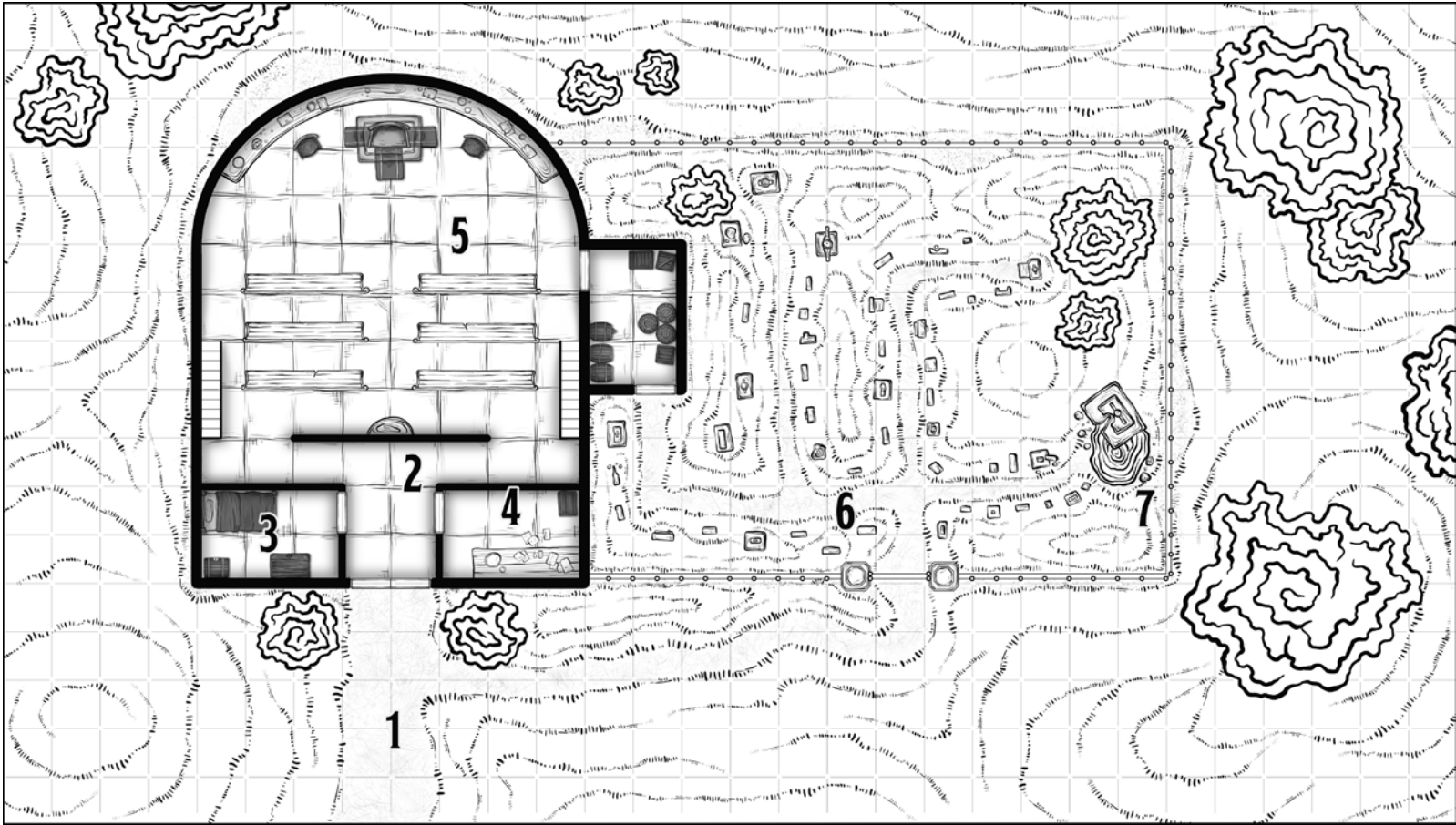
The office features a wooden desk packed with papers and books. They are all bookkeeping logs and storage logs. The room is in disarray.

5. Church Nave

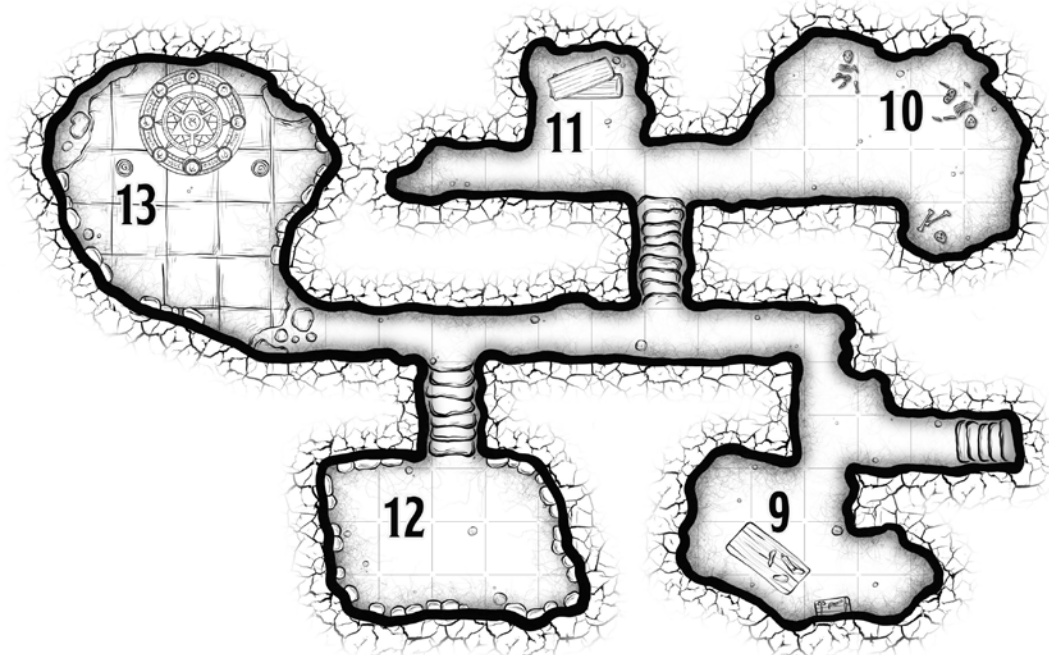
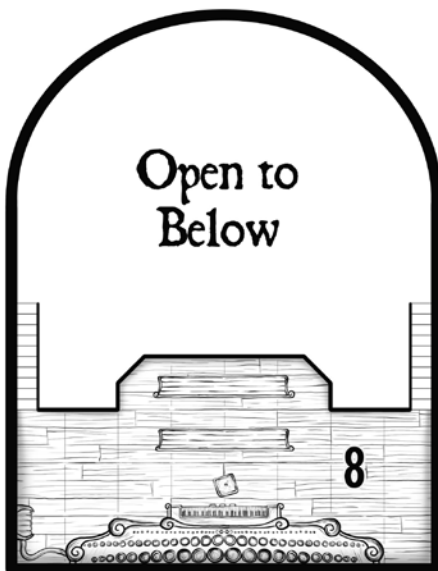
The nave features a scene from a horror story. At least twenty incomplete bodies lie on the floor of this chamber in different positions. The stone tiles are drenched in dry blood. In dazzling dissonance, the furniture and objects behind the altar are all in pristine condition. The nagging murmuring grunts of six **ghouls** looking for life among the corpses completes the scene. Their perfidious stare changes when a group of living creatures enters the room. They attack!

6. Graveyard

The graveyard beside the church has barely enough room for a few more tombstones. A large opening on the east side reveals the entrance to the crypts. The soil in front of a few tombstones was recently unearthed as some of the ghouls return to the living world from them. The body of a town guard lies on the floor in between two tombstones. His skin looks dry and crystalline. He is too slim to have been alive. The poor man looks desiccated, as if he had no muscle mass.



1 SQUARE = 5 FT.



A thick mist covers the graveyard and it coalesces into vague peculiar forms, similar to people. 8 **shadows** emerge from below and attack any intruders.

7. Crypt Entrance

A large opening on the floor leads to the crypts. The shaft appears vertical but it soon slants westwards and becomes an irregular stairway. The fetid smell from below is repugnant and sacrilegious.

8. Organ

The second floor of the nave features two benches and a large organ-piano. The undead have not visited this area. There are two farmers hiding behind the organ. They have ruined the interior of the expensive instrument to make room for themselves but they are alive. Despite their current predicament, their mental-state is good. They are exhausted and hungry but able to help the adventurers.

9. Embalming Room

The room was last used fifteen years ago when the last remains were added to the crypts. A large wooden table dominates the room. There are some rusted iron implements used for embalming and the treatment of corpses.

10. Guards' Remains

The clean bones of the rest of the town guards are in this location. Their identity is clear because the pieces of armor around them brandish the town sigil. A group of 4 **ghouls** and 1 **ghast** still gnaw on their bones trying to get a little more meat off of them. The undead profanities stand up when the adventurers interrupt their meal and attack in a stupendous display of insanity and turbulent hunger.

11. Open Casket

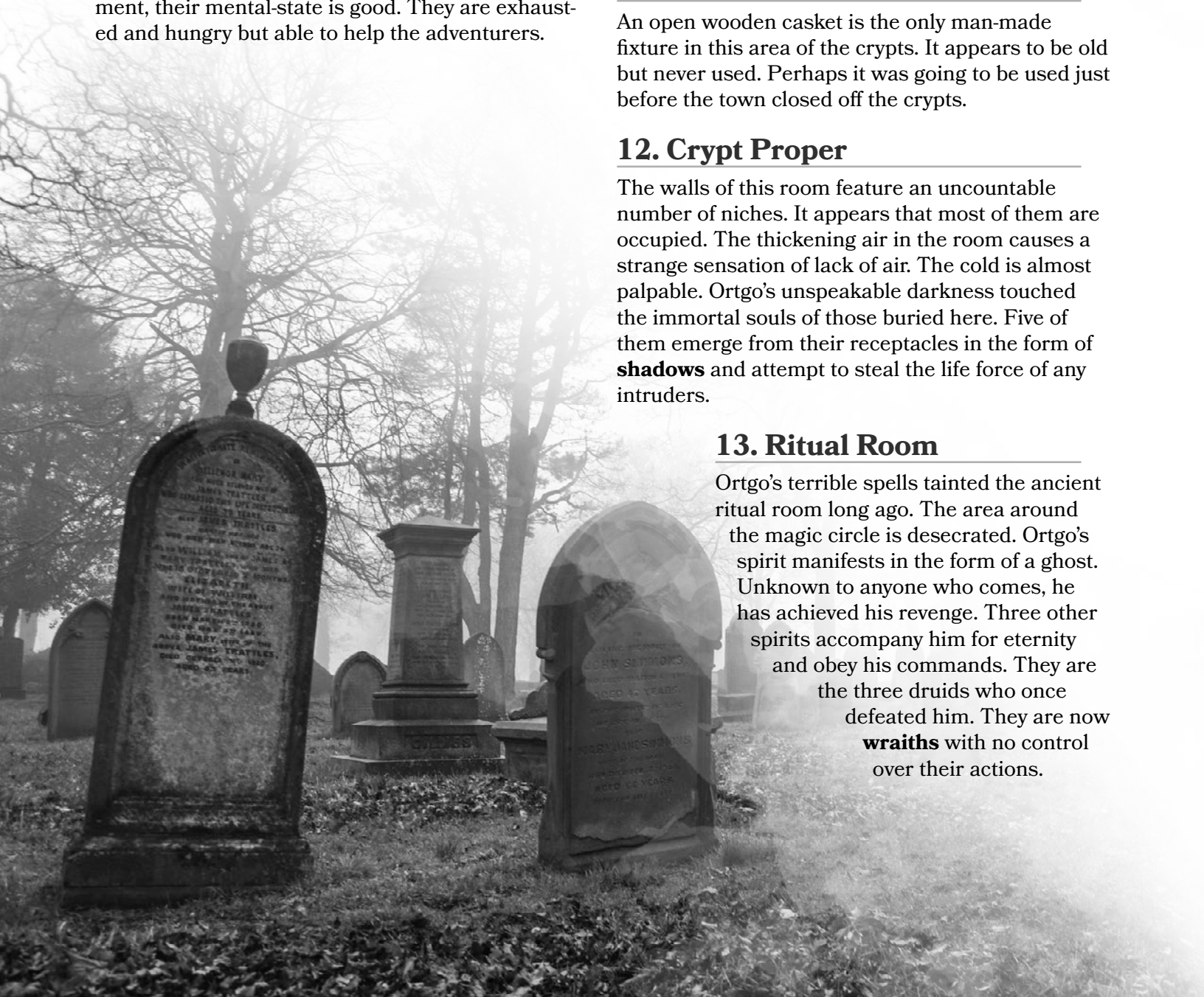
An open wooden casket is the only man-made fixture in this area of the crypts. It appears to be old but never used. Perhaps it was going to be used just before the town closed off the crypts.

12. Crypt Proper

The walls of this room feature an uncountable number of niches. It appears that most of them are occupied. The thickening air in the room causes a strange sensation of lack of air. The cold is almost palpable. Ortgo's unspeakable darkness touched the immortal souls of those buried here. Five of them emerge from their receptacles in the form of **shadows** and attempt to steal the life force of any intruders.

13. Ritual Room

Ortgo's terrible spells tainted the ancient ritual room long ago. The area around the magic circle is desecrated. Ortgo's spirit manifests in the form of a ghost. Unknown to anyone who comes, he has achieved his revenge. Three other spirits accompany him for eternity and obey his commands. They are the three druids who once defeated him. They are now **wraiths** with no control over their actions.



Oh yes! I know where you can get some green gold. Meet us here tonight, and bring coin!
-Avocado Smuggler

THE AVOCADO GUILD



BACKGROUND LORE

The large city of Ardennia is not without its internal hardships. People labor, walk, buy, sell, and do a million things every day to make ends meet but there are a few things that do not quite work as intended. What follows is an explanation of how the city turned on itself because of a ridiculous policy.

It all started two months ago when it turned out that the prince was allergic to avocados. The poor kid got so sick he almost perished in his high castle. Weeks later, when the kid was back playing in the yard, the king decided that avocados were too large a threat and outlawed them. He did not particularly like or dislike them so it was nothing to him. And the prince would never miss them. And thus, avocados became a forbidden import in Ardennia. Farmers could still grow them but they had to find buyers in other cities or towns. It is needless to explain the reaction of the commonfolk. Most people love avocados and the sudden prohibition only made them even more desirable.

People did not oppose the ludicrous policy in the open because they know the City Watch stomps on protests at the slightest provocation. So, people turned to the black market. The demand for avocados was such that smugglers and criminal guilds turned their focus to the green gold. Some groups dropped other illegal activities to focus on

transporting, smuggling, and selling avocados. To the City Watch officials, all these reports of criminals handling vegetables sound like the deluded inventions of an insane mind. This is the reality in Ardennia now.

One of the most successful gangs that handle avocado-trafficking is a group of twelve individuals who partnered a little ago and renamed themselves “The Avocado Guild”. They are not the only criminal cell in the city working with avocados but they are the most successful so far. Their leader is an obscure criminal figure that clawed his way from the bottom of the underworld named Hou Hyun. He is a short, slim, but athletic man who became popular in the medium because of his infiltration abilities and his dexterity with short blades. His reputation as a merciless fighter and a cunning strategist precedes him.

Hou Hyun was the first to see the opportunity for profit after the the king announced the new law. City officials stopped short any avocado shipments at the city gates the day after. Hou Hyun dropped his former guild and invited a select group of deft individuals to work with him. He is now in an advantageous position. He went from grunt/infiltrator to guild boss in a matter of weeks. He now handles more gold and assets than the previous guild he worked for. Hyun makes a point of paying his associates well to guarantee their loyalties. Due to his fast success and notoriety in the underworld, Hou Hyun has many enemies both within the crime guilds and the City Watch.

The Avocado Guild set up shop in an abandoned complex underground close to the sewers. There was no apparent reason for the chambers to be there as far as they could see. Some of the chambers featured eroded stone tiles and walls while other sections appear to be natural cave systems interconnected. One of the tunnels continues south for a few miles and leads to an area outside the city walls, inside a farm. Hou Hyun bought the farm and they now have the perfect way to bring avocados inside the city. His people buy shipments from the farms and bring them to the guild farm with the tunnel. Then they carry the avocados themselves or on mules trained to traverse the tunnel. Once inside the city, Hou Hyun's bouncers move the merchandise around the city and sell it fast. The demand is such that avocados never go bad. What is worse is the fact that some nobles and members of the City Watch also buy directly from them. They get a steep discount to keep them appeased and to avoid any potential crackdown from the authorities.

The Captain of the City Watch is not amused, however. He loves avocados but he loves enforcing

the law more. He has not eaten an avocado, nor accepted any bribe that includes them since the new law passed. He is a stern man that believes in the law system and how it pushes society to a better world. He knows that his force is corrupt and that many officers are either on the Avocado Guild payroll or buy avocados from them. The Captain cannot trust them. So, he came up with a different solution. He posted an anonymous bounty announcement on the notice board near the castle and some other locations too. He is offering a hefty reward for sell-swords or adventurers to track down the Avocado Guild and dismantle their operation.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Dorm – Armory

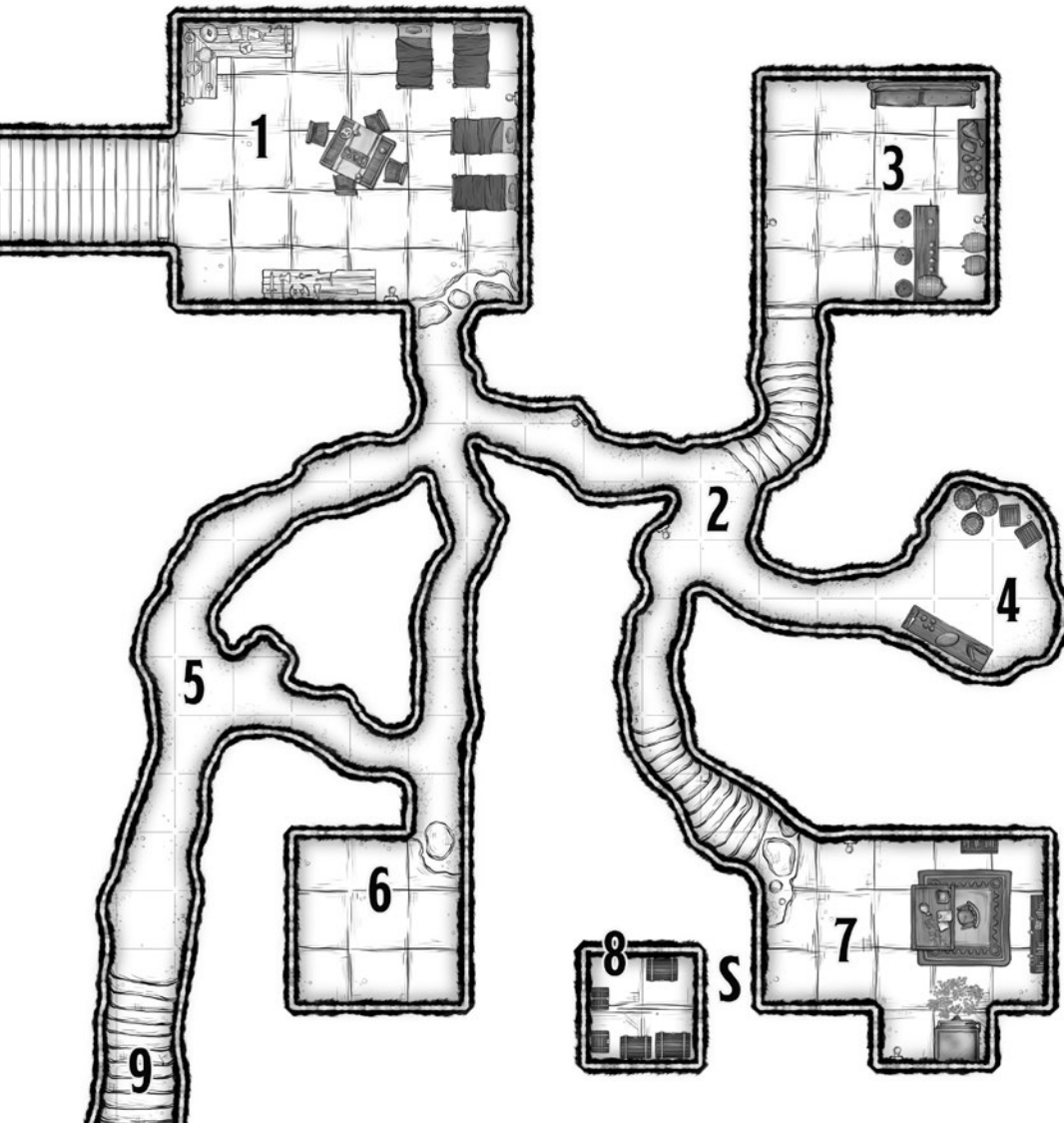
This room has a set of double reinforced doors. They can only be opened from the inside. There are four bunk beds, a dining table, and two wooden tables with weaponry and varied equipment on them. Guild members are seldom all in the lair as

1 SQUARE = 5 FT.

there are not enough beds for most. The passage west leads to a trapdoor in a large stable inside the city.

2. Net Trap

The south tunnel is 8 miles long and connected to a large number of caves and passages that are still uncharted. Sometimes wild creatures from the depths wander into the Avocado Guild lair. Most of the time they are large rodents and reptiles. But a few nasty creatures from below have tried their luck assaulting the lair too. A large net trap protects the intersection. When a creature moves through and pulls a trigger line on the floor, a large net falls from the ceiling and traps any creature in a 5-foot-radius. Any creature within the area must make a successful **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** or become restrained.



3. Lounge

The guild members set up a lounge/bar in this chamber. They take turns serving drinks. Ana, the wife of one of the smugglers, is usually in this room. She sometimes cooks food for the guys and serves drinks. Her apparent disregard for the criminal operation and homely attitude is nothing but a trick. Together with her husband Trevor, she is planning to overtake Hou Hyun. Her plan is to seduce the chief and bring him to a vulnerable location where Trevor can kill him.

That is the way to go as Trevor knows it. But Ana has not decided whether to betray Hou Hyun or her husband. She is toying with the idea of staying with the boss and dump Trevor.

4. Vegetable Storage

This is where they keep the avocados. Avocado crates are here only a few hours before they Hyun's men move them to the city. Hou Hyun trusts his men and has not yet felt the need to secure this location. At any given time, there are 1d6 crates of avocados here. In the current market conditions, each crate is worth 6 gold pieces.

5. Net Trap

This intersection features a large net trap. It is identical to the one in **Area 2**.

6. Improvised Cell

This location is used as an improvised cell from time to time. Creatures caught by the net traps end up here before Hou Hyun decides what to do. The guild has brought members of the City Watch on

General Features

The lair is located several stories under the city in an area loosely connected to the sewers.

Terrain. There are two types of terrain in the lair. The old eroded stone tiles are preserved well. They do not impede movement. The soil in the caves is rough and uneven. The caves are considered difficult terrain.

Doors. The entrance double doors are wooden and reinforced with metal bars. It has a large iron latch that can only be opened from inside **Area 1**.

Light. Torch sconces on the walls provide bright light in limited areas. The rest of the complex is in complete darkness.

several occasions as prisoners too. After a combination of persuasion, duress, and bribing, all of them have accepted the guild's terms.

7. Hou Hyun's Office

The leader of the organization is here during the day to manage the guild's affairs. Paper pages with numbers and logs on them rest on the desk. Hou Hyun is not a great accountant but he does his best. A large iron safe box by the south wall is where he keeps the guild's profits of the week. Hou Hyun pays his people weekly and usually throws a tip to keep them engaged and happy. Hou Hyun employs two bodyguards who accompany him everywhere. They used to be knights but both were stripped from their titles a decade ago. Hou Hyun employs them because they are veterans and only listen to the sound of money.

8. Hidden Vault

Only Hou Hyun and his bodyguards know of this secret room. Pushing two bricks on the wall at the same time causes a fake panel to slide sideways and reveal the secret passage. There are several wooden chests inside the ten by ten room. They are unlocked and contain the entirety of the guild's profits since Hou Hyun started it. The treasure is in silver and gold coins and valuables, bank checks, precious stones, and jewelry. The collective value of the hoard is 7250gp.

If a group of adventurers confront Hou Hyun in his office, he reacts in a calm way and explains that he values the amount of force they possess since they have fought their way to his office. Hou Hyun offers to triple the reward the City Watch Captain offered and agrees to name them his lieutenants.

9. Exit Tunnel

The tunnel extends south several miles and exits in the stable of a farm. The tunnel is more or less straight but it features countless side tunnels and intersections. Smugglers have etched marks on some random stones to mark the way. A **passive Perception score of 16** or higher reveals the marks and their apparent use.

*If you're looking for a nice and safe place to live.
Look no further. South Hildberg is the place!*

-Tobacco Merchant

SOUTH HILDBERG



3-5
PLAYERS



4-6
HOURS



1-4
TIER 1

BACKGROUND LORE



A point of light in a sea of uncharted darkness and wilderness, the small town of South Hildberg remains a place untouched by savageness and despair. Such is the relative safety in South Hildberg that after almost one-hundred years of history since it was settled they have not yet built any kind of defensive structure. There is not even a palisade fence to stop uninvited guests from storming the town. Not that there is any need. In its history, there have only been two occasions in which a group of burglars or bandits attacked. In both cases, bandits attacked the town's storage of foods and grains and escaped before any type of confrontation. Both crimes caused a great deal of hardship as the town is barely self-sufficient and a reduction in the stored grains may well mean a terrible winter. But the case remains that those events are rare enough that no one has bothered doing anything about it.

But times are changing and the land around South Hildberg is not as safe as it was before. Travelers and passers-by tell tales of strange sights on the roads. Creatures never seen before and bandits stalking caravans looking for the best moment to rain fire on them. People report these incidents as close as an hour away from town. It may only be a matter of time until another attack occurs. Despite the worrying signs that things may go south soon, people in South Hildberg appear uninterested in such foreign affairs. They have had it so easy that

they have no reason to believe things might change. Nor do they have a point of reference as to the evil nature of some despicable individuals. In a strange way, they are hostages to their privileged way of life. Their pampered lives now prevent the necessary caution that other peoples have.

South Hildberg is a small town by the South Road next to a stream. Many travelers pass through here when they travel north to the capital. The town is self-sufficient and sells a small number of goods to travelers. Most people in town work hard and do their best to benefit their close-knit community. The town has a small population of a little over one-hundred people. The majority of them work in farms and plantations while the rest attend the few shops in town.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Manor House

The largest building in South Hildberg is the townspeaker's house. All adults in town vote to elect a Townspeaker when it is needed. Usually, the person stays in charge for a large period of time. The person with the title can inhabit the large manor with their family. It is expected that they leave when they are voted out.

Townspeaker Beatrix. She is a middle-aged robust woman with curly black hair. Beatrix has been the Townspeaker for 13 years and there are no plans to vote her out as of now. She lives with

her husband and three children, two of whom are adults now. Contrary to most in town, she hears the gossip the travelers bring and is worried that something might happen in town soon. She does not want to leave the manor house and will do the necessary to prolong her stay.

Goal. She wants to ensure that the surrounding areas are safe and that the farms will not be attacked. She is inclined to allocate a portion of the town's budget to hire sellswords to patrol the area or investigate the roads.

Instinct. She reacts with violence if her seat is threatened.

Flaw. She is a coward. If the town is under attack, she closes the doors of the manor house and does not let anyone in.

2. General Store

Close to the manor house is the only store in the area. The store sells all kinds of goods and tools. Most of its merchandise is geared towards farming and raising cattle. They have a few crude weapons and ammunition in their inventory that has been there for decades. Merchants often come here because Old Benny sells the tobacco and fabrics that other townsfolk manufacture.

Old Benny “wolftooth”. The sole owner of the store is a sexagenarian man with white hair and hunched back. He likes to talk and tell anecdotes. He was a city guard in the capital in his youth, then a farmer for a time, and now a store owner. Old Benny is called wolftooth because he once slew a wolf in the forest in his youth. His eldest son is almost twenty and is usually around in the shop carrying heavy stuff or making deliveries to nearby farms.

Goal. Old Benny thinks his son is immature and ill-prepared to take over the shop. He wants to teach him real-life lessons so he builds a strong character. He offers a few gold coins to adventurers if they take the boy with them for a few interesting experiences.

Instinct. Old Benny never sets a price first when haggling. If the offer the other party makes is too high, he rolls his eyes.

Flaw. Old Benny scolds his son too much and has caused the boy to develop an inferiority complex.

3. Hilda's Home

Mrs. Hilda has a seamstress workshop in her house and employs five other ladies in town. The room features a large loom and a few smaller looms. They buy thread and materials from farmers and produce beautiful fabrics and sheets. Mrs. Hilda sells most of these in town but others go to the outside market through the general store or when she manages to sell them directly to travelers. They also dye fabrics with different colors and then wash the fabrics in the river. When this happens the river turns whatever color she is washing.

Seamstress Hilda. Mrs. Hilda is a thirty-year-old widow with a little girl from her late husband. Her husband died in a hunting accident and she never remarried. If visited, the house is in disarray and no one is working. It is revealed that a man broke into the workshop a few nights ago and stole some valuable yarn balls and three elaborate quilts. Mrs. Hilda reported this crime to the Townspeaker but she is yet to take any serious action.

Goal. Mrs. Hilda wants to retrieve her stolen belongings. Some travelers report that a man that matches Mrs. Hilda's description of the burglar was seen recently in a small rural town to the east. She offers a sizable sum to whoever can recover the missing pieces.

Instinct. Mrs. Hilda looks over people's clothes and examines the fabrics. This makes her look strangely close to whomever she inspects.

Flaw. Mrs. Hilda works her employees too hard and they resent her for this. One of them claims that an ex-employee might have been the one who robbed her.

4. Pilgu's Place

The only gnome household in South Hildberg. They live by the river and fish for a living. Jon and his wife, Amanda, have six children and love the community. Both of them were in South Hildberg when it was first settled and were part of the original party. Thanks to their long lifespans they have seen the town grow since its inception.

Jon Pilgu, the fisherman. Jon is the man of the house and is usually out fishing since before dawn. He uses a variety of strange fishing rods with clockwork machinery only he understands. The use of river nets is also common for the Pilgu's. They used to only fish what was necessary for them and nothing more. But, recently, the Townspeaker demanded he fished more and just sell the remainder

to merchants through the general store. Jon Pilgu dislikes this because he claims that overfishing might kill the stream's fauna and that they should be more careful.

Goal. Jon Pilgu has requested an audience with Townspeaker Beatrix for weeks now but she will not see him. He wants her to backtrack the previous command so that they can keep the stream profitable.

Instinct. Jon Pilgu fiddles with small mechanical objects when he speaks to other people.

Flaw. Blinded by the truth, Pilgu often says things without thinking about how they might hurt others.

5. The Injured Knight

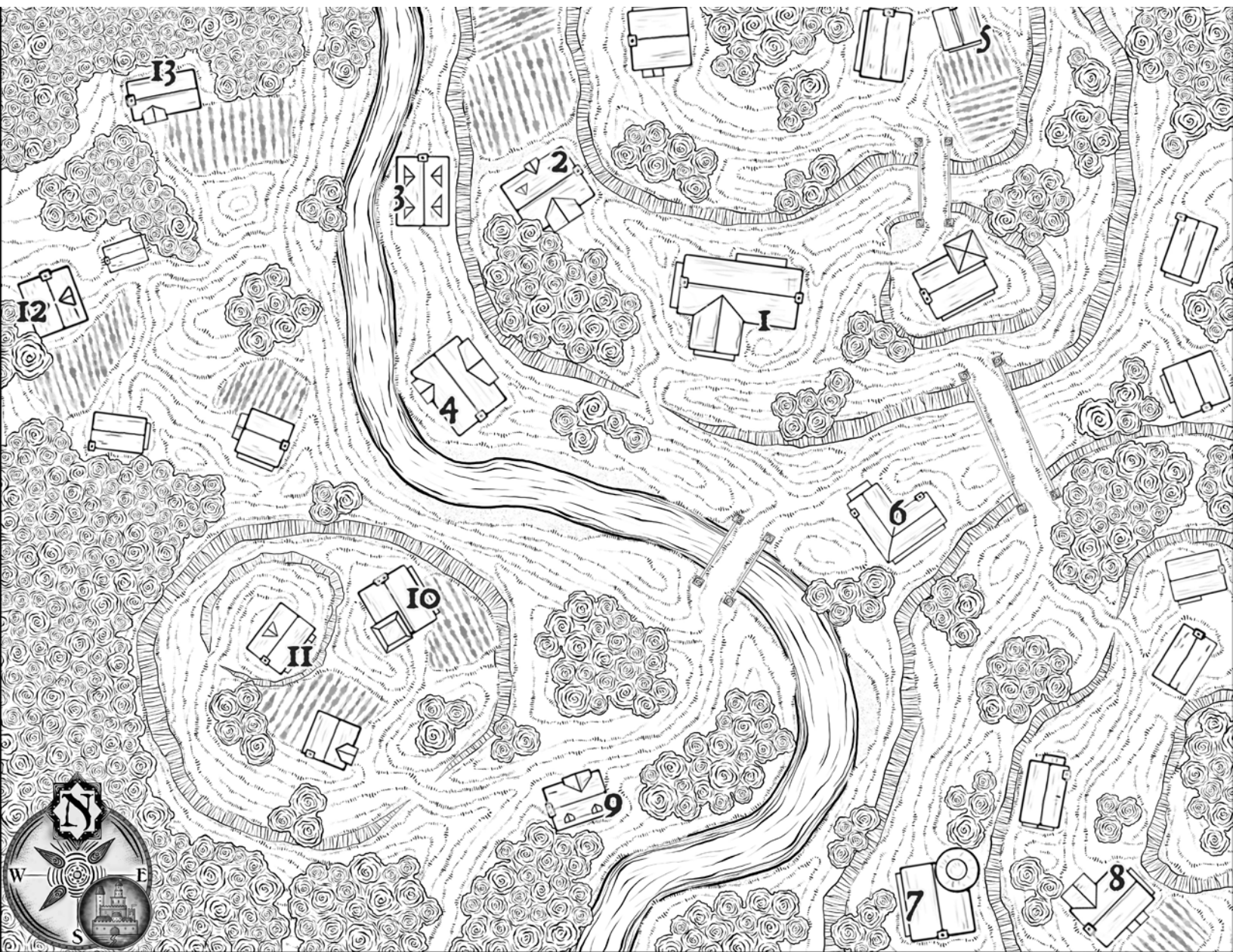
The smallest house near the top of the northern plateau is the house of an old, retired knight. The house, while small, is luxurious and features a small wheat plantation.

Sir Xadri d'Allero. He is a plump thirty-year-old man that used to be a member of the royal guard in the capital. Sir Xadri was knighted after his feats in a battle fifteen years ago, near the northern border of the kingdom. He suffered a terrible injury to his left thigh that left him crippled. He is still a good swordsman and practices every day but his footwork is now an impossible task that prevents him to fight properly. He was retired with a generous monthly stipend and decided to move south to a calm place.

Goal. Sir Xadri wants to train children in the community so that they may defend the town in times of need. Other people are not so convinced of this idea and that is why he only has two pupils.

Instinct. Sir Xadri touches his beard and mustache when he talks.

Flaw. He is impatient and thus a bad teacher.



General Features

These are the general features of South Hildberg. It is located near the south border of the province, three days from the capital.

Population. There are 124 permanent residents in town. The majority of them are human with the only exception being the Pilgus.

Exports. South Hildberg does not export a large quantity of commodities. The only things they sell are tobacco, fabrics and clothes, and some fish products.

Terrain. Fertile green lands surround South Hildberg for miles. Patches of forest and vegetation thrive all year round. The town features some areas at different heights but it lacks any kind of defensive structure.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of greenery, flowers, and a wisp of tobacco are always in the air. The murky river water brings with it a mild salty smell. The sound of the river and people working in their shops or farms are common.

6. The Tired Ox Tavern

The only place of leisure in South Hildberg is the tavern. A dull-faced tavern keeper behind the bar keeps glasses and bellies full. No one produces ale in town so they buy it from travelers once a week. The prices are good and there is usually a person or two to talk to.

Playful Adiestre. They are the minstrel and artist that entertains customers and travelers. They hear rumors all day and are well informed as to the events in nearby settlements and the roads. If they see a group of adventurers in the tavern, they approach and talk to them to hear the latest news before offering to sing a song or tell a story.

Goal. Playful Adiestre recently heard about a small orc clan that ambushed travelers on the eastern road. They have tried to alert others in town but no one cares. And the townspeaker will never agree to grant an audience to a lowly minstrel such as them.

Instinct. If they listen to a person make an involuntary rhyme, they play some notes in the lute and re-chants the rhyme.

Flaw. Playful Adiestre is too nosy for their own good.

7. The Broken Mill

In one of the southern plateaus is a large building with a grain mill. A few peasant boys work here for Frasuri, the miller. The mill is a source of flour and income for the town but the mill malfunctioned two weeks ago and it is still unusable. The heavy millstone broke its bindings and now they cannot lift it to fix the contraption.

Frasuri, the miller. Frasuri is a slim man with thick red hair. One kid in the mill also has red hair. It is his son. Frasuri is a one-dimensional hard-working man who speaks little and spends most of his time at the mill. He is at odds with the current malfunction of the mill.

Goal. The broken wooden harness that holds the heavy millstone in place is not easy to replace. It is made with a special type of hardwood that only the wood elves to the west know how to handle. Frasuri offers a good sum of gold for an escort to the forest to have the elves fix the harness.

Instinct. He speaks little and spits when a person mentions the townspeaker. He has nothing against Beatrix, however. It was her predecessor who at some point had a squabble with Frasuri.

Flaw. Frasuri's determination in his work has led him to abandon his family.

8. The Missing Sheep

One house near the southeast end of South Hildberg belongs to a family of shepherds. They own a large pack of sheep that stay around the house in an improvised pen.

Shepherd Hu. He is an enthusiastic middle-aged man who raises sheep for a living alongside his wife Julia. They explain that sheep have disappeared in times. They disappeared one at a time on different occasions over the past two months. But last week, six sheep disappeared from the pen overnight. They have heard tales of orc clans on the roads and fear that the orcs have reached South Hildberg and now feed off their sheep.

Goal. The Shepherd offers a few gold coins to either retrieve the sheep or get rid of whoever took them.

Instinct. He interrupts people talking by bleating to nearby sheep. He thinks they understand him.

Flaw. His love for their sheep makes him consider them people and he would risk his life for the welfare of their sheep.

9. Forgotten Guards

The small house next to the road that leaves to the south is a small barracks building for four guards from the capital. The capital appointed them as representatives of the crown to keep the peace. Their orders are to stay in South Hildberg until they are relieved from charge two years later. However, it has been three years since the four of them are here. They do not dare abandon their posts to go to the capital to find out what happened out of fear of being court-martialed. They have sent letters and other people but so far their claims have fallen on deaf ears.

Yuro d'Erel. He is the appointed officer though his rank is only a step above foot soldier. Hence, his inability to solve his predicament by outranking an officer in the capital. He grows desperate as time goes on but is determined to stay at his post to demonstrate their loyalty. One of the other soldiers wants to return to the capital and face consequences there.

Goal. Yuro wants to keep trying to establish communication with his senior officers in the capital. He has a letter with a request to return and offers a few gold coins to a group of adventurers if they can deliver it personally and return with a written response.

Instinct. Yuro tends to insult people he deems unlawful.

Flaw. Yuro is an impulsive gambler who often loses his stipend to ridiculous bets.

10. Old Shasa's Quest

A large house with a semi-turret is the home of ancient Shasa, or as many call her "Nanny Shasa". Her eldest son Gustaf is in charge of everything. The family owns two farms outside of town and employs scores of people.

Nanny Shasa. She is the oldest human in South Hildberg with 97 years of age. Nanny is bedridden but she is sometimes around town in a wheelchair in the company of Anika, her grandchild. Nanny Shasa knows she will soon part and has one last wish, but she will only share it with a group of strong adventurers.

Goal. It turns out that the old woman was once of the adventurous sort. She explains that east of town, almost a day away, there is a large hill with three pine trees on the top. A hidden entrance in between the trees leads down into the earth into a

strange structure as old as time. She once took a magical ring from that dungeon and had it for years. A decade later, when her adventuring days were over, she went and put it back. Now she wants to hold it one last time before she dies. She does not share any details about the nature of the ring.

Instinct. Nanny Shasa tends to digress in endless stories and anecdotes from her life.

Flaw. The old woman is dishonest. She keeps to herself that she never had the ring. Back then, she and her adventuring party were almost all slaughtered by the terrible creatures in the dungeon.

11. Chapel of the Immortals

A small building on a tall plateau is the only house of prayer in South Hildberg. Inside, three altars to different immortal beings wait in the silence of the largely empty chamber. Some of them feature lit candles and incense sticks. People from the town gather in this location once a week for a generic service that incorporates prayers and signs from the three entities.

Acolyte Burei. He is a middle-aged man in religious attire who spends his time in the chapel reading books and talking with religious townsfolk. He is in a strange position trying to please believers from three different faiths. Acolyte Burei is familiar with theology and does a fair job. People frequent the chapel just to talk to him. He remains an acolyte because none of the three churches will appoint a priest that follows more than one deity.

Goal. Acolyte Burei wishes to add some books to the chapel's library. He has a list of books that can be bought in the capital but he needs someone to do it.

Instinct. Acolyte interrupts people with sayings or refrains from one of the many theological traditions he is proficient with.

Flaw. Burei is afraid to embrace a single religion and be promoted to priesthood.

12. Expensive Smoke

This medium-sized home features a tobacco plantation. A person proficient in magic detects the presence of growth-inducing magic in the tobacco plants. The relatively small plantation is capable of yielding harvests far larger than its size would suggest. The farm does not sell tobacco or cigars directly to customers. All merchandise is available at the general store (**Area 2**).

Cora. She is the owner of the tobacco plantation. She is a stout-framed woman with strong wide legs. She is usually among her plants harvesting or planting tobacco. Her brother was a mage apprentice and helped her with the growth spells for the farm but he passed away two years ago and the magic in the plants starts to fail.

Goal. Cora needs a mage or druid to renew the growth spells in her plants. She knows there is a reclusive druid in the forest to the northwest but she has not been able to find him. She offers a few gold coins and a box of the best cigars in town in exchange for escorting her to said individual.

Instinct. Cora chews on tobacco all the time. She spits chewed tobacco at the most uncomfortable moments.

Flaw. Cora is bad with people. She is rude and difficult to follow when talking.

13. The Perfect Beets

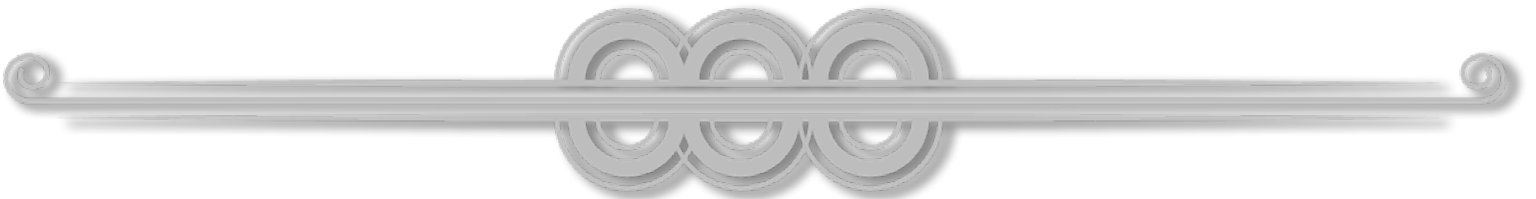
A family of five who owns a small plantation next to their house and a larger one outside of town. They specialize in growing large beets of different colors. Once a year, during the spring festival in the capital, they bring their best and largest beets to a vegetable competition. They usually win with their beets.

Killian, the farmer. He is a robust, strong, tall man with a thick beard. He treats his beets with the utmost care and knows everything there is to know about vegetables, herbs, and plants in general. A druid by hobby.

Goal. Killian is out of a special ingredient in his beet fertilizer. Without it, the beets will not grow giant. The ingredient is the juice and inside flesh of the owlbear's viscera. He needs a group of particularly valiant individuals to retrieve this component.

Instinct. Killian pulls out a beet from his pocket and bites it when listening to people.

Flaw. Killian boasts about his fighting prowess and offers to accompany the adventurers to hunt the owlbear. He is just a hobbyist who cannot swing a sword.



THE IVORY IDOL



he situation is dire! Winter approaches but the local farming communities have fewer workers as days go by and no one finds a solution. The nature of the problem is so foreign that no one knows how to deal with the increasing desertion rates in the farms.

It all started a few weeks ago. A local beet farmer known as Jolly John visited a strange local stone vestige known as the Ochre Medallion. It is a large circular stone slab with an interesting rune on top. People do not know what it stands for. The medallion was there when humans first settled the area. It is located next to two stone pillars and a flat-topped grassy hill. The location is the source of legends and superstitions but some of the farmers come here often to pray to the goddess of harvests for bountiful seasons.

Jolly John had a weird feeling after he finished his prayers. An inexplicable tingling at the back of his mind. It instructed him to approach the area in between the two pillars. He obeyed. There was no compulsion to analyze his actions or evaluate the source of the instructions. He dug into the steep side of the hill until the wall of stone and dirt collapsed to reveal a narrow passage into the earth. Jolly John entered and came back with a strange stone slab in his hands.

The stone was small enough he could carry it under his arm. The day after, Jolly John brought the stone to the town square and showed it to everyone. The people loved the stone and thanked Jolly John for bringing it. An observer would notice there was something wrong. People's interest in the stone appeared to have no reason whatsoever. They wanted to

see it, carry it, and, some of them, even kiss it. The iridescent orange-tinted stone produced such an effect on them. Jolly John and some people left that night with the stone and have not been seen since. They all returned to the underground complex where their minds and souls are now prisoners. Once a week, a person from the new faith goes out to another town with the stone to conscript even more people. The stone appears to have some kind of hypnotic power. It does not affect everyone but it has caused so many people to leave the farms that the autumn harvest may well be ruined if people do not return to work soon.

According to unaffected victims, the stone appears to be a 1-foot-diameter orange quartz mineral. One of its sides features red glowing runes. Though the language is unknown, people remember being able to read it. It says:

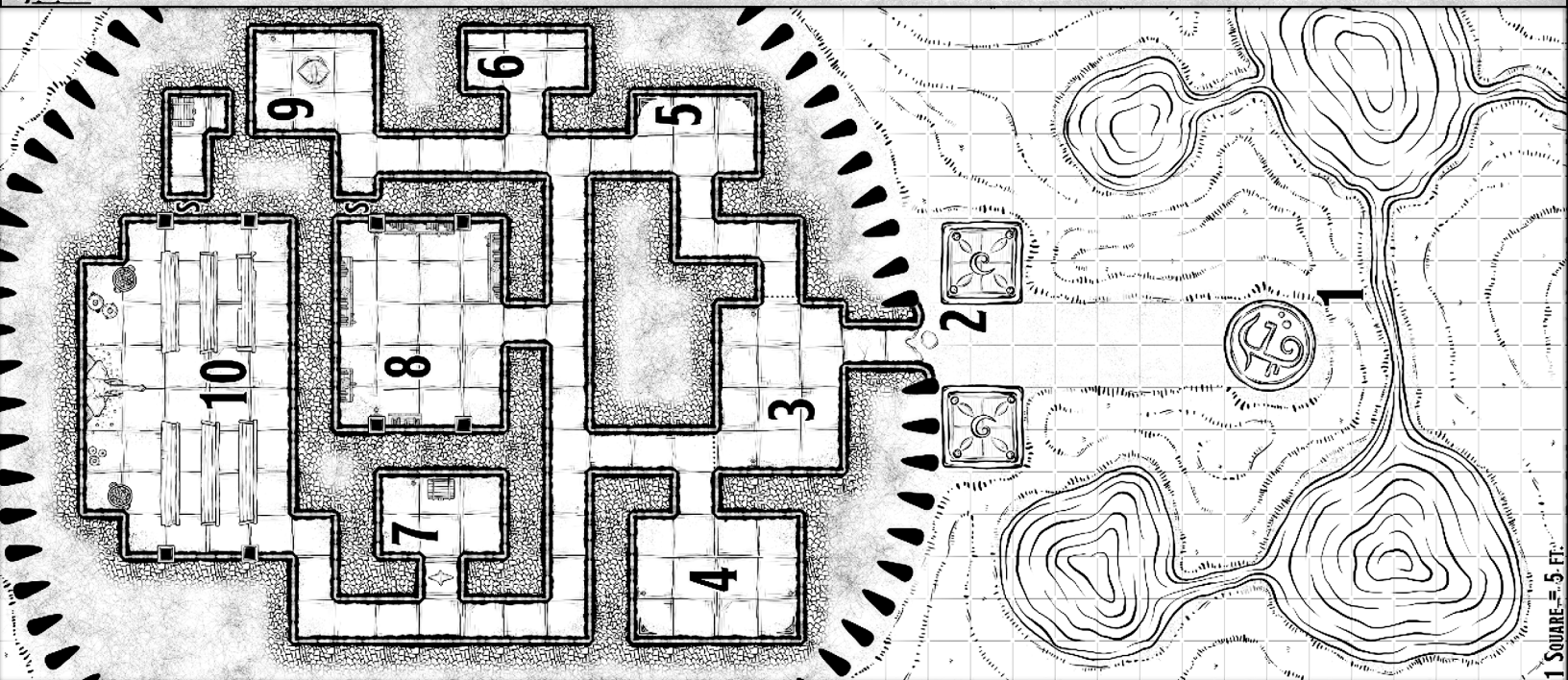
*Long is the grasp of the
Ivory Idol. Come to the
unending light and thrive.*

The cryptic message appears to be ingrained in everyone's minds. The unaffected remember it in the same way. Twenty-five adult people and five children have disappeared so far.

AN UNNOBLE CAUSE

A local lord from a disgraced noble family named Faradis Effil believes this crisis may persuade other noble houses to favor his interests, if handled in the proper manner. He recently put up a hefty bounty to gather brave warriors or mercenaries.

The mission is simple: The adventurers must access the strange temple, handle the hypnotized townsfolk in the way they want, and recover the fabled orange quartz-stone.



Lord Effil does not care about the missing farmers. His only motivation is the potential political influence. He plans to show the stone to other nobles, especially their children. He expects those people to act in the same way as the farmers and abandon their manors, flee into the wild, and reach the temple. The noble houses shall lose their bearings as their heirs, wives, and patriarchs are missing. Lord Effil will then have them "rescued" and gain the favor of important houses.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. THE OCHRE MEDALLION

A permanent fixture of the land, the Ochre Medallion is a circular stone slab with a large rune. It appears to be aligned with the two stone pillars but its use is lost to time. Four adult farmers with farming implements stand by the medallion. They attack anyone who dares enter the temple. The hypnotized farmers cannot be reasoned with.

2. TEMPLE ENTRANCE

Two large stone pillars flank the temple entrance. The pillars feature eroded and unreadable reliefs and runes on their sides.

3. BARRED DOORS

Two sets of improvised iron bar gates block the way into the two exiting hallways. The iron bars are pressure-fixed from floor to ceiling. A person may push through them with enough strength or appropriate tool

4. MEDITATION ROOM

Two adults and one child sit on the floor of this chamber. They appear to be asleep. The signs of malnourishment are present in all of them.

If disturbed, they do their best to restrain and capture the unwanted visitors but they are unarmed.



5. CHILD GUARDS

Four children with knives guard this chamber. They lack the strength of adults but offset it with an inexplicable rage when they attack.

6. PICTURES OF THE PAST

An empty chamber, the walls decorated with frescoes from floor to ceiling. The paintings depict groups of people that worship an elephant-shaped entity from beyond the veil. The followers appear to follow the alien god without question in all paintings.



Ivory Idol Manifestation

7. A TRAP FOR FOOLS

The room features a single wooden chest. The chest contains 150 gold coins from a coinage so old no one recognizes the face on them. Stepping on the decorated stone tile by the entrance triggers an explosive rune that affects all adjacent squares too. The trap resets after an hour.

8. THE IVORY LIBRARY

Five bookcases of different lengths contain a large number of books in an unknown language. The books feature ivory hardcovers and gold-plated sides. Three of the missing farmers guard this location. They stand by the walls unmoving but attack any people approaching the shelves. The books, if

translated, are a collection of literary classics from a forgotten culture. A secret door by the northeast corner leads to Area 9.

9. ZONE OF TRANSCENDENCE

A person who meditates while sitting on the rune on the floor communes with the spirits beyond the veil. It is possible to ask a question at the risk of losing one's mind to the ineffable beings on the other side.

10. GRAND CHAPEL OF THE IDOL

Ten people sit on the benches of the chapel. They appear to pray and pay no attention to visitors. The altar features a large ivory idol in the shape of an elephant. It glows warmly in the braziers' light. The fabled orange quartz stone lies below the elephant's muzzle. People who enter the room are subject to the hypnotic power of the stone. Only strong minds can withstand the psychic onslaught that broke the farmers' minds. Those who fail become mental thralls to the Ivory Idol.

When anyone comes within one foot of the orange stone, it glows and starts beating like a heart. The quartz-stone bestows the Ivory Idol a semblance of life. The ivory monster is a formidable opponent. Any remaining mental thralls step in to aid the Ivory Idol against the intruders.

A secret passage leads to a hidden vault. The wooden chest contains 450 gold coins and a scroll with a ritual to summon the idol.

CONCLUSION

Lord Effil's plan is full of loopholes. He assumes the stone does not affect him or his mercenaries. Should this happen, he is the one in need of saviors. On the other hand, good-hearted adventurers may choose to free any surviving farmers. Removing them from the temple ends the enchantment. With their help, they can later denounce Lord Effil as the cold-blooded ruler he is.

HORROR ON THE HOOK

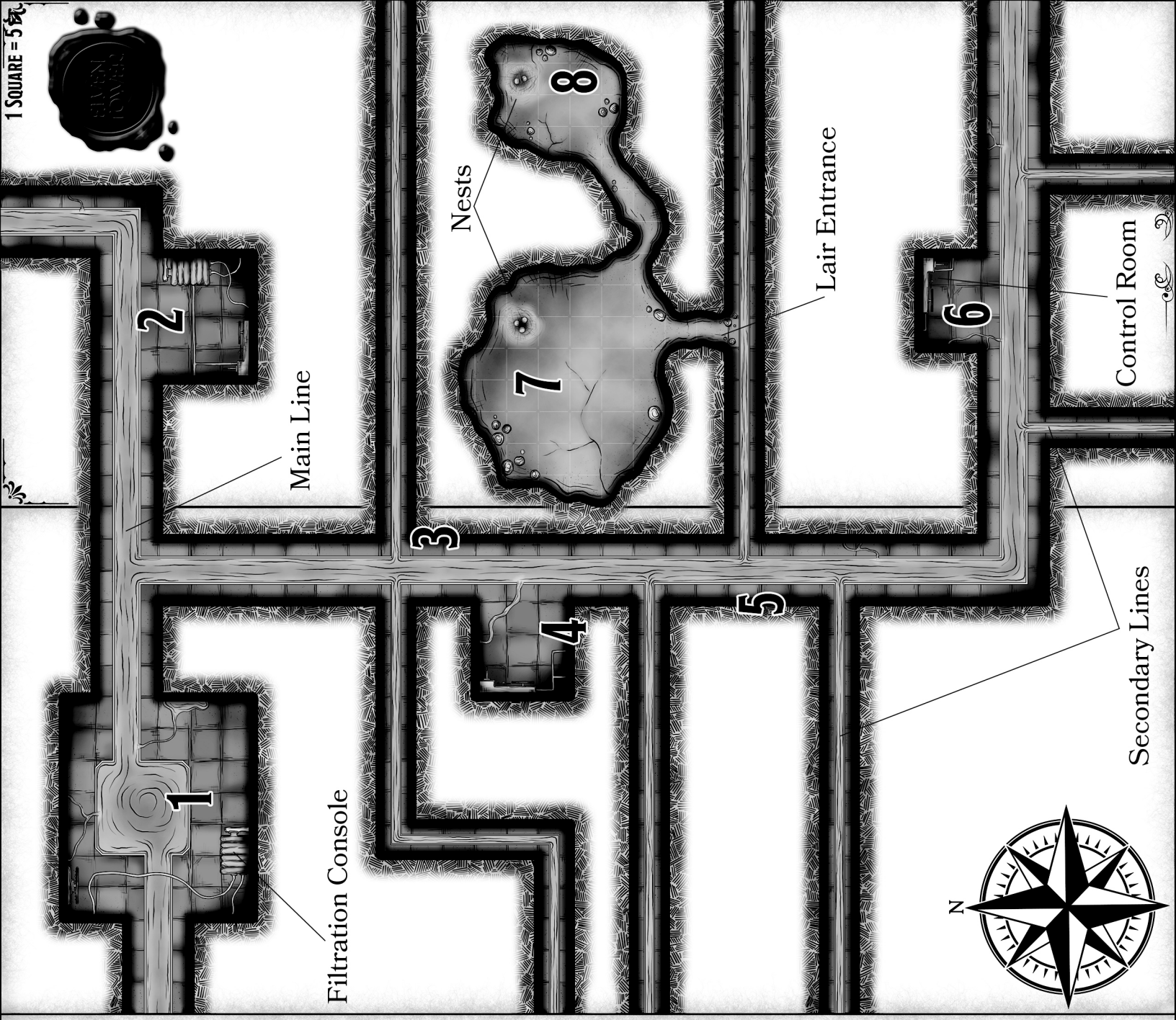


There have been ten murders and several more disappearances so far. At first, the *City Watch* declared that a serial killer was on the loose. Then they changed their minds and said it was a criminal faction trying to destabilize the political power in the city. They changed their story again last week when Captain Viranna announced that something attacked from the sewers' manholes. After two corrections, some people feel disinclined to believe the current warnings, unfortunately. But no one feels any safer with the *City Watch* useless ramblings.

Some kind of creature lurks under the city streets, away from prying eyes. It crawls up through the pipes and reaches the surface to attack the unwary cityfolk. The abomination brings its victims down when it can. Otherwise, it leaves a mangled corpse with terrible wounds. A few lucky individuals have escaped by sheer luck.

Scholars and doctors have reviewed the injuries in the available corpses. They feature long, deep cutting wounds made with an irregular serrated object, like a single sharp claw. They offer no hints about the type of creature they belong to. They do not rule out the possibility of a blasphemous deformity caused by the miasmal stench in the sewers.

Survivors do not offer much help either. They describe the monster as a gangrenous, lurking, feathered figure that jumped on them from below. They were fast enough to escape without looking back. But they remember the smell. Right before the attack, a surge of repugnant, vaporous air surrounded them. The vivid smell turned on a wild feeling of dread and alarm that made them flee at once.



Main Line

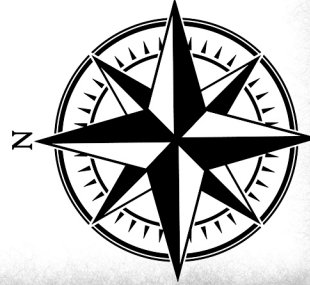
Filtration Console

Nests

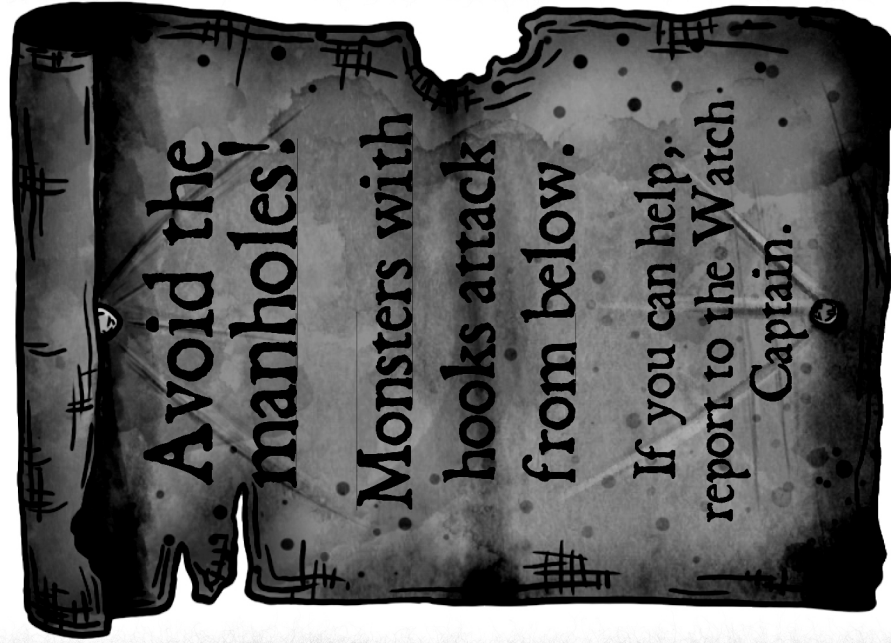
Lair Entrance

Control Room

Secondary Lines



Captain Viranna alerted people to avoid manholes and sent two-guard patrols to inspect the waterways below. Some of them found black feathers but nothing more. One patrol reported an attack by three different creatures but they managed to escape in time. Two patrols never returned. The Captain now offers an open bounty for sellswords and mercenaries to help. She cannot spare any more of her guards for this situation.



Notice Board Announcement

The abominations under the city are strange feathered creatures akin to vultures. They are 8-foot-tall, strong, and wild. They have dark, lifeless eyes and 2-foot-long serrated hooks instead of wings. The creatures are not intrinsically evil but they are dangerous. They set two nests in a cave by the sewer lines.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. FILTRATION POOL

A *City Watch* officer escorts the adventurers to a manhole that leads to a filtration pool. They believe this entrance is the closest to the creature's lair. The water flows to the west and is collected in the pool. Strange machinery by the walls filtrates the water with moderate efficiency. The red valve by the north-west chamber closes the flow to the west. Leaving it closed causes the adjacent tunnels and chambers to flood after 1d6 hours.

2. FILTRATION SUBSTATION

The main sewage line goes through a filtration process before reaching the pool in **Area 1**. The machine is smaller and it appears to stutter and malfunction from minute to minute. Closer inspection reveals that the machine is in dire need of repair. The mangled remains of two city guards are on the ground.

3. AMBUSH FROM ABOVE

Two **feathered horrors** hang from the ceiling in the dark right after the intersection. They drop from above and slash at the adventurers with their sharp hooks. The avian monsters fight to the death in a mad display of savagery.

4. CONTROL ROOM A

An assortment of mechanical devices by the west wall is the only thing in this chamber. A person can manipulate the controls in the machine to reduce the flow of water in the mainline by 30%. There is a chance of 10% to break the machine and cause the waterway to overflow in the course of 20 minutes.

5. LAIR GUARDIANS

A grim group of 4 **feathered horrors** awaits in the shadows next to an otherwise unremarkable intersection. They bid their time and attack in a savage frenzy of hooks and beaks. They are adult males. Their only goal is to

protect the lair and the rest of their kind. They retreat to **Area 7** if two or more of them are defeated in combat.

6. CONTROL ROOM B

The room is similar to **Area 4**. If a person reduces the flow of water in both control rooms, the water almost stops and the main sewage line is no longer difficult terrain.

7. LAIR LAST STAND

A group of three female **feathered horrors** (plus any that escaped from **Area 5**) stand in the shadows of a murky cave. A bunch of hay and thrash with three eggs behind them. At this proximity from the nest, the **feathered horrors'** survival instinct takes over and they are overcome with a sadistic blood thirst with aberrant and malevolent undertones.

The eggs weigh 2-pounds each and hatch if they are kept warm and humid for four more days. The infant imprints on the first creature it sees and demands to be fed. They become faithful pets if they are treated well.

8. INFANTS AND EGGS

The small cave contains another nest with two eggs and three infant **feathered horrors**. The infants cannot be domesticated whatsoever. They are afraid and will attack only in self-defense. The infants will eventually perish from exposure if they are abandoned; they still depend on the adult creatures.

CONCLUSION

If the adventurers get rid of the problem, Captain Viranna rewards them with 100 gold pieces each for their deeds and officially names them *Heroes of the People*.

If the adventurers keep any of the eggs, the Captain warns them that any lives taken by the offspring are blood on their hands. She will prosecute them if the occasion arises.

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.

If you enjoyed this product, consider adding your support to our Patreon page. This product was funded there and our supporters have access to a free download coupon monthly starting at the \$3 dollar pledge level. Find all about it here.

Here are some of our most popular products:

