

the
Chapel
on the  *Cliffs*



AN ADVENTURE FOR
3RD LEVEL CHARACTERS

the Chapel on the Cliffs

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The Chapel on the Cliffs is a site-based adventure with some Gothic horror trappings, suitable for use with PCs of levels 2 to 4. It draws on some classic ghost story imagery – thick fog, jagged rocks, lonely buildings high on the cliffs, ghost ships, distant lanterns

twinkling in the darkness, and so on – and you should play these up as much as possible to enhance the atmosphere of the adventure.

The main location is a haunted chapel up on some coastal cliffs, a mile from an abandoned fishing village. The adventure involves the characters exploring the village and chapel: mercenary PCs may want to loot the place, whereas good-aligned characters may be more interested in putting the spirits that haunt it to rest, thus making the village habitable again. Either way, they are likely to be drawn into conflict with its undead inhabitants, and may swiftly discover that it is easier to enter the chapel than it is to leave...

Adventure Background

The village of Kennmouth used to be one of the more prosperous fishing settlements in the region, with a small but well-sheltered natural harbor and good access to the rich fisheries in the waters beyond the cliffs. Unfortunately, about fifty years ago, a fisherman named Mark Elson dredged up a weird-looking object in his nets: an ancient stone idol, carved in the shape of a howling face. Hoping that it might be valuable, he decided to show it to the most educated man in the village: Brother Thomas Morton, the village priest, who presided over the village chapel up on the cliffs. Morton, sadly, succeeded only in triggering a ghastly curse: he was transformed into a monster, the Guardian Beast, and the corpses in the chapel's graveyard were animated into undead horrors that prey upon anyone who comes too close to the idol's location. By their standards, "too close" includes the whole village of Kennmouth; and when a small army of walking corpses attacked the villagers, they abandoned their homes and fled for their lives. The village has remained empty ever since.

Adventure Synopsis

The goal of the adventure is the lifting of the curse afflicting Kennmouth. After a short stop in Hather Bay to gather information and secure their payment (see "Part 1: Hather Bay"), the characters make their way to the haunted village.

In the second part of the module, the adventurers explore the ruins of Kennmouth and its surroundings, in search of clues to the origin of the curse (see "Part 2: The Haunted Village"). The PCs will eventually visit an ancient barrow mound, talk to Kennmouth's last remaining inhabitants, and discover that grave robbers were pillaging Ilmer burial sites.

The source of the curse only becomes obvious at nightfall, when the PCs notice an eerie glow coming out of the chapel overlooking the village. The characters will then need to sneak into the chapel (see "Part 3: Saint Sidvela's Chapel"), snatch the idol, and destroy it before its undead guardians can take it back from the characters.



Running the Adventure

When preparing to GM this adventure, several tools can help you start strong and run it smoothly.

Getting the PCs Involved

Kennmouth has stood empty for years, but now an energetic local businesswoman named Kathryn Reed has decided that it's high time someone put its harbor to good use. She owns a fleet of fishing vessels operating out of a nearby town, but she's convinced that she could increase her profits if she could put the wharves of Kennmouth back into service, and thinks it's ridiculous that some wretched old curse should stand in the way of economic progress. She's not rich enough to offer a large bounty herself, but she's pressured some other local notables into offering rewards to anyone who can sort the situation out. She's also asked her business partners to keep an eye out for any adventurers who might happen to pass through, and to let them know the following:

- † A few decades ago, the nearby fishing village of Kennmouth was abandoned due to some kind of curse.
- † A businesswoman by the name of Kathryn Reed and her associates are willing to offer 1,000 gp and looting rights to any individual or individuals who are able to end this curse, and render the village habitable again.
- † Anyone who shows any interest is to be directed to meet with Kathryn Reed herself, in her offices in the bustling little port town of Hather Bay.

Chases and Sieges

In the course of the adventure, the PCs will most likely face an army of about one hundred skeletons. That is far more than any group of 3rd level characters can defeat. The PCs will either have to run away or find refuge inside one of the abandoned houses of Kennmouth. In either case, if you use the normal combat rules of the SRD, or the Chase rules in your Game Master's Guide, the characters will die. If the PCs ever need to run away from the skeletons or barricade themselves inside a house, you should use the variant combat rules described in "Appendix I: Chases and Sieges" instead.

In your Game World

A few places, gods, and civilizations are mentioned in the adventure, but everything has intentionally been left vague so that you may easily adapt this module to whichever game world you play in. These are the ones that appear in the adventure:

Alcross. Alcross is the last civilized settlement between Hather Bay and Kennmouth. The PCs pass through Alcross on their way to the haunted village.

Fareth. Fareth is the god of life, renewal, and healing. The Church of Fareth asks the characters to recover the Hand of Saint Sidvela in Kennmouth.

Hather Bay. Hather Bay is a bustling little port town, where the descendants of many refugees from Kennmouth live. The PCs need to travel to Hather Bay to meet their employers and to gather information about the haunted village.

The Ilmer. The Ilmer were a nomadic civilization that lived in the region some two thousand years ago. They lived in temporary settlements made of wood. The only traces of them that remain are the barrow mounds where they buried their warlords and seers. In the adventure, the PCs discover that a group of teenage girls pillaged an ancient Ilmer barrow mound shortly before the curse struck Kennmouth.

The Ruins of Kennmouth. Kennmouth is the adventure's main site. You can replace it with just about any abandoned village of your game world.

Monster Statistics

This adventure features new monsters and NPCs. You can find their statistics in "Appendix I: Monsters and Magic Items." Except when otherwise specified, all NPCs are **commoners**.

Roleplaying

The adventure lists the information that the NPCs know as bullet points for your convenience, but feel free to roleplay the interactions if you wish to, and reveal what the NPCs know as part of a conversation. For example, if the characters wish to gather rumors, you can ask them where they go and make up a fisherman who tells them what he knows about Kennmouth in exchange for a mug of ale at a tavern.

Part 1: Hather Bay

The PCs need to visit Hather Bay in order to meet with Kathryn Reed and agree to the terms of their reward. Impatient PCs may want to head out to Kennmouth straight after this meeting, but additional information is provided for those who wish to learn more about the cursed village.

Kathryn Reed

Kathryn is a tirelessly ambitious woman in her early 30s. In her youth she worked on the fishing boats, and has the calluses to prove it; but a lucky inheritance combined with a canny business sense have ensured that it's been years since she had to haul a net for herself. These days she owns a small fleet of fishing vessels, and is itching for a chance to expand her operation. She never seems to run out of energy, and mostly gets her way simply by wearing other people down. (This is how she got the Church of Fareth to offer their bounties for lifting the curse and retrieving the hand, for example, neither of which they really care very much about at all.)

Talking About the Job

Kathryn Reed wishes to hire the PCs to lift the curse of Kennmouth. She's a shrewd judge of character and tailors her narrative to her audience: if the characters seem noble and high-minded she dwells on the need to put the tormented spirits of the dead to rest; if they seem more mercenary-minded she instead stresses just how many valuable offerings there used to be at the shrine of Saint Sidvela. She tells the adventurers the following:

- † She is willing to offer 500 gp to anyone who manages to end this curse and make Kennmouth habitable again.
- † The village priest disappeared on the night of the curse. He must be long-dead by now, but his elderly niece, Susan Morton, is willing to pay 100 gp to anyone who can find his remains and bring them back for a decent burial. Kathryn suggests talking to Susan for more information about her uncle (see "Susan Morton" below).
- † The village chapel contained a holy relic, the Hand of Saint Sidvela, and the local clergy of Fareth (the god of life, renewal, and healing) are willing to pay

400 gp to anyone who can recover it. It was kept in a silver reliquary box atop her shrine.

- † The chapel itself contains all kinds of valuable treasures that wealthy donors left as offerings over the years. The Church of Fareth has decreed that anyone who manages to end the curse is free to take possession of whatever riches they find there, with the sole exceptions of the Hand of Saint Sidvela and its reliquary. (This last one is a bit of an exaggeration – the church has given this permission, but only because there was nothing of special value there in the first place!)
- † The head of the clergy in Hather Bay, Father Andrew Wakely, can give the PCs more information about the Hand of Saint Sidvela (see "Consulting the Clergy" below). Andrew spends most of his time in the town church.

Talking About the Curse

Kathryn doesn't know much about the curse (she knows what's described in "The Curse of Kennmouth" sidebar), and doesn't have any idea where it might have come from. She also tells the characters that many people who fled Kennmouth found refuge in Hather Bay. She suggests visiting the local inns and taverns, and talking to the locals. The descendants of these refugees might have an idea on the origin of the curse (see "Gathering Rumors" below).

The Curse of Kennmouth

Many refugees from Kennmouth started new lives in Hather Bay and shared their grim pasts with their neighbors. Most people in town know the following:

- † The curse hit Kennmouth with no prior warning, and had no obvious cause.
- † The first manifestation of the curse was walls of fog and strange lights up in the chapel, swiftly followed by walking corpses loping down from the graveyard to drive everyone from their homes.
- † Boats that sail into Kennmouth harbor always seem to sink with no survivors.
- † The undead only seem to be active at night.
- † Passing ships report seeing strange lights shining from the chapel windows after dark.

Gathering Rumors

If the PCs ask around, they soon discover that very little is known about the Kennmouth curse (see “The Curse of Kennmouth” sidebar on page 5), and that just about everyone in Hather Bay has their own theory or family tradition about what caused it. Here are some possible stories that the townsfolk might tell the characters over a drink or two in the local alehouses:

- † “It was divine vengeance! They seemed like normal folks, but there was something rotten about that village: some secret they all kept hidden, well-stowed in locked basements and behind barred doors. They were all guilty, and they were all punished! Never trust a man with Kennmouth blood...”
- † “It was Saint Sidvela’s curse upon them, to be sure! They allowed her shrine to fall into ruins; they stole her offerings, and invoked her name in vain quarrels, and abused the powers of her holy healing hand! It doesn’t do to anger the saints, you know...”
- † “It was the mermaid! The one Sidvela brought with her! People say that they were friends, but that can’t be right, for everyone knows that the merfolk are a godless race. Much more likely Sidvela bound her with her holy power, only one day the spell wore off, and the mermaid returned to wreak her vengeance upon the town...”
- † “My father sailed past Kennmouth harbor one night, and he swore he saw a ghost ship sailing to and fro. It’s that ship that brought the curse, you mark my words. Sink the ship and you’ll sink the curse with it!”
- † “My grandmother said that they hanged a witch, there, just the month before the curse fell, and it was her dying curse on them that brought them all this woe. I bet the whole curse would end if only someone could exorcise her bones...”
- † “You know the barrow mounds, out on the moors? Terrible bad luck to meddle with them. The folk that built them knew curses and secrets the likes of which have vanished from the good green earth nowadays, luckily for us. My great-aunt said that there was an old barrow mound just outside Kennmouth, and my guess is that some damn fool just couldn’t leave well enough alone. Tampering with barrow mounds...what do you expect?”

Nobody in Hather Bay knows what happened in Kennmouth. If pressed for details about their theory, the townsfolk tell the characters that they don’t really know, but that one of their ancestors got the information from Andrew Wakely or Robert Keymer (see “Consulting the Clergy” and “Finding an Eye Witness” below).

The Barrow Mounds. When the PCs learn about the barrow mound, they can make a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check to remember that the marshes north of Kennmouth are riddled with old tombs of Ilmer warlords and seers (see the “In your Game World” sidebar on page 4 for more information about the Ilmer). If a character rolls 15 or higher on this check, they also recall that a burial site lies just outside of Kennmouth, to the north.

The Mermaid. When one of the townsfolk mentions the mermaid, the PCs can make a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check to remember that, according to the legend, Saint Sidvela was friends with a mermaid. On a roll of 20 or higher, the PC also knows that Saint Sidvela used to meet with the mermaid in a cave beneath her chapel.

Susan Morton

PCs interested in gathering more information before they set off might visit Susan to ask her about her uncle. She’s a sweet old lady in her late sixties, who has been widowed for many years, and now lives in Hather Bay with three cats and her visiting grandson.

The PCs can learn the following by talking to Susan:

- † She barely remembers her uncle Thomas, but she recalls him as a kindly and pious man.
- † She hadn’t thought about him for decades, but after being badgered by Kathryn, Susan conceded that it was a dreadful pity that he was never buried in the family grave-plot, and agreed to offer 100 gp for the return of his bones.
- † Morton always wore a jet mourning ring in memory of his childhood sweetheart, whose tragic early death led to him joining the clergy; she remembers the ring clearly, and won’t believe that any corpse brought to her is his unless the ring comes with it. (By the same token, however, she’ll believe any old heap of bones to be the remains of her uncle provided the ring looks right.)

- † She doesn't know much about the curse. She heard so many rumors about it when she was young that she doesn't know what to believe anymore. All she's certain of is that undead overran Kennmouth some fifty years ago.
- † The people of Hather Bay love sharing stories over a mug of ale. She suggests going to a tavern and asking around for more information about the curse (see "Gathering Rumors" above).

Consulting the Clergy

The voice of religious authority in Hather Bay is Father Andrew Wakely. He's a harassed-looking man in late middle age, who struggles to cope with the administrative demands of presiding over the religious needs of dozens of far-flung fishing villages. The last thing he needs is another problem to deal with, and he agreed to offer a bounty for the recovery of Saint Sidvela's hand and looting rights to anyone capable of lifting the curse on her church, largely because it seemed the easiest way to make Kathryn stop bothering him about it. Unless the PCs seem extremely capable, he tries to dissuade them from actually going to Kennmouth, warning them that those who visit the abandoned village have a habit of not coming back.

Talking About Saint Sidvela

If the PCs seem determined to go, Father Andrew can offer the following information about Saint Sidvela:

- † Saint Sidvela was the patroness of both the chapel and the village. She came to the region from a far-off country from beyond the sea and settled there, working many miraculous cures with her healing powers.
- † Local legend states that she befriended a mermaid, who used to tell her stories of strange wonders from the depths of the sea.
- † The shrine of Saint Sidvela used to be a minor pilgrimage destination for the faithful of Fareth (the god of life, renewal, and healing), but the pilgrims stopped coming years before the curse fell, after her shrine was upstaged by the much flashier Shrine of Saint Fabio a hundred miles down the coast. Her preserved hand was said to be able to ward away evil and affliction.

The Mermaid. When Father Andrew mentions the mermaid, the PCs can make a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check to remember that in the legend, Saint Sidvela and the mermaid used to meet in a cave beneath the chapel.



Talking About the Curse

Father Andrew only knows what most people do about the curse (see “The Curse of Kennmouth” sidebar on page 5), but he can help the characters make some sense of the theories they might have picked up in Kennmouth’s many taverns:

- † He doesn’t know what caused the curse. As a man of science, he doesn’t want to speculate on its origin.
- † He doesn’t believe the mermaid had anything to do with it.
- † Brother Morton’s reputation was spotless. He strongly doubts Thomas would have let the villagers desecrate Saint Sidvela’s chapel, or could have had anything to do with the infliction of the curse.
- † There’s an ancient Ilmer barrow mound, in the marshes, north of Kennmouth. The Ilmer were an ancient civilization that lived in the region some two thousand years ago. They protected their tombs with powerful magic. It’s possible that someone might have disturbed it and triggered the curse.
- † A ghost ship could explain why the boats approaching Kennmouth sunk. He doesn’t have an opinion on whether this could be the source of the curse or not.
- † He heard rumors about the witch the villagers of Kennmouth hung before the curse. Traditionally, priests of Fareth keep records of the events that occur in their parish. Brother Morton might have mentioned something about this in his notes. The PCs will need to go to the ruins of Kennmouth and search for them; neither Brother Morton nor his notes ever made it out of the village.

Finding an Eye Witness

As Kennmouth was (just) abandoned within living memory, the PCs might try to track down someone who was actually there. The townsfolk can point them in the direction of Robert Keymer, an old man who makes his living repairing fishing nets on the outskirts of Hather Bay. Robert was just a boy when the curse fell, but he remembers it vividly, and for the price of a few drinks he describes it in chilling detail. Read or paraphrase the following:

“It was the screams that woke us. Those terrible screams. Those folks who lived nearest the chapel. . . they never stood a chance. Pa threw open the shutters, and the streets. . . the streets were full of corpses. Walking corpses. Skeletons with rags of old flesh on them, all grimy with grave-dirt or dripping and sandy like they’d just walked out of the sea. . . They smashed the doors down. They swarmed over the houses like flies. Ma grabbed my sister and me, and we ran as fast as we could, and the screams followed us all the way. . . I looked back, and there was this light burning in the chapel, shining out of every window. This terrible, blue-green light. . . Pa tried to fight them off, but there were too many. . . Hundreds. There must have been hundreds. I’m never going back.”

If asked what he thinks caused the curse, Robert is swift to blame it on “that evil hag,” a woman hanged in Kennmouth for witchcraft a month earlier.

“Her dying curse, it must have been, coming down upon us. . . We buried her under the old rowan tree, but it wasn’t enough. We should have burned her to ashes and thrown them into the sea. . .”

Robert doesn’t remember anything else about Kennmouth. He believes the witch is to blame, and dismisses the other theories as mere superstitions.

Getting to Kennmouth

Kennmouth is a day and a half’s travel from Hather Bay. The fishing village of Alcross, which lies roughly halfway between them, is the closest inhabited settlement. From there to the ruins of Kennmouth is a five-hour hike across the marshes and the moors. The countryside is rough, and thick fog blows in from the sea, adding to the sense of isolation. Kennmouth might be less than twenty miles from Alcross, but it feels like the edge of the world.

Assuming the PCs leave Alcross at dawn, they arrive at Kennmouth just before midday. Depending on the season, they will have roughly five to seven hours before night falls. It’s important to track this time accurately, as Kennmouth by day and Kennmouth by night are very different places!

Part 2: The Haunted Village

The adventure proper takes place in the ruins of Kennmouth and their surroundings. Every night, a small army of skeletons rises from their graves to drive out any living beings they find within three miles of Saint Sidvela's chapel, which includes any PCs in or near Kennmouth after dark.

In this part of the adventure, the PCs will have to explore the haunted village and the area around it. If the characters are thorough in their investigation, they will meet the only two people who still live in Kennmouth, get a sense of how to lift the curse, and learn that a group of grave robbers plundered the barrow mound north of Kennmouth.

The Curse of Kennmouth

The source of Kennmouth's curse is a strange stone idol that Mark Elson dredged from his net some fifty years ago. Every night the idol awakes, along with Brother Morton and an army of skeletons. You can find below a description of Kennmouth by night and of the skeletons that patrol it after dusk. The idol and how to destroy it are described later in the adventure, in "Part 3: The Chapel of Saint Sidvela."

A Nightly Routine

As soon as the sun drops below the horizon, three things happen. First, Brother Morton ascends the chapel tower and rings the bell three times, its sonorous notes audible for miles around.

Secondly, he places the idol upon the altar inside the chapel; the idol's eyes and mouth then open and fill with blue-green flame, causing a pale eerie light to pour from the chapel's windows. Due to the chapel's position up on the cliff top, this light is visible for miles around. Anyone turning to see where the sound of bells is coming from immediately spots the light.

Thirdly, every adult human corpse in the ruins of Kennmouth and its surroundings climbs out of its grave and patrols the area until the sun rises, after which it returns to its grave.

Skeleton Patrols

At nightfall, every human skeleton in a three-mile radius around the chapel crawls out of its grave to patrol the area. PCs who are in any of these places when the sun sets witness these skeletons climb out of the ground. The arrangement of nearby graves is as follows: ninety-two in the graveyard, one under the rowan tree, nine in the marshes, and fourteen in the village itself. There are one hundred and sixteen **skeletons** (melee weapons only) in total.

Unless the PCs attack these undead immediately, they break up into small groups and begin to patrol the area. PCs who are within three miles of the chapel after dark encounter a patrol of 1d12 skeletons every 1d10 minutes.

A single, central intelligence (the idol) controls all the skeletons; as soon as one of them sees the PCs then all one hundred and sixteen of them immediately become aware of the intruders and start heading in their direction. 1d12 skeletons arrive 1d10 minutes after a patrol spots the PCs; 2d12 skeletons arrive another 1d10 minutes after that, 4d12 another 1d10 minutes after that, and so on until all one hundred and sixteen skeletons are chasing the characters, or the adventurers leave the affected area.

The size of the dice used to determine how large the patrols are, and how quickly reinforcements arrive, decreases as the PCs dispose of the undead. The table below shows the die used based on the number of remaining skeletons.

Number of Skeletons	Die Size
90 to 116	d12
60 to 89	d10
30 to 59	d8
Less than 30	d6

For example, if the PCs already killed 60 skeletons (56 remaining), they encounter patrols of 1d8 skeletons instead of 1d12, and only 1d8 skeletons arrive after 1d10 minutes.



Disposing of the Skeletons

Once the adventurers realize that they're dealing with a hundred-odd skeletons, PCs may try to wear them down through attrition, perhaps by killing a couple of dozen per night, but the curse, alas, is not so easily broken. Skeletons that the PCs "kill" drop to the ground, inanimate, but at dawn they pick themselves up and crawl back to their graves. Over the course of the day their broken bones knit back together, and when dusk falls again they're ready to resume their patrol once more.

Because the skeletons regenerate in their graves during the day, no amount of simply killing them (or digging them up and smashing their bones) ever gets rid of them; even being turned by a cleric of level 5 or higher only renders them inanimate until the following night. However, there are at least four ways to dispose of them permanently.

Destroying the Bones. If the bones are completely destroyed (burned to ash, dissolved in strong acid, etc.) then they don't revive. Note that burning human bones to ash is a serious undertaking: a simple campfire certainly doesn't suffice!

Bringing the Bones out of Kennmouth. The power of the idol only extends a maximum of three miles. Any bones the PCs bring outside the radius of the curse don't reanimate. (Simply throwing the remains off the

cliff isn't enough: the tide doesn't carry them far enough out to sea before dusk, and when night comes they just come wading out of the water again.)

Imprisoning the Skeletons. The skeletons can only heal within their graves. If the PCs forcibly prevent their bones from returning to their graves at dawn (by locking them in boxes, say), then they just rattle around for a few hours and then de-animate.

Bringing the Bones inside the Chapel. As long as the chapel is still consecrated, no skeletons within it or its vault animate. (If Brother Morton wakes up and finds someone's been throwing bones in through the windows during the day, however, he just throws them straight back out again at dusk.)

Evading the Skeletons

Evading the walking corpses shouldn't be too difficult for most parties. If one skeleton knows the PCs location, so do all other skeletons,

but the undead aren't omniscient. If the characters encounter a skeleton patrol, they can easily avoid the others by defeating the undead who spotted them, and leave the area before the others arrive. If the PCs stay on the scene, they might be forced to flee, or seek refuge in one of the houses to survive, in which case you should use the variant combat rules described in "Appendix I: Chases and Sieges." If you use the normal combat rules, the PCs will get slaughtered!

Claws of the Deep

Kennmouth Bay is the final resting place of many unfortunate souls who have drowned in its waters, and whose bodies were never found. When the curse fell, their remains didn't turn into skeletons like the rest of the corpses; the ones that were still mostly intact became claws of the deep, and the others continue to lie at the bottom of the bay. There are a total of five claws of the deep in Kennmouth Bay.

These undead don't participate in the general nighttime patrol of the area, instead remaining always within the confines of the bay. They automatically detect the presence of any creature or boat in its waters, and hastily swim toward them to attack them by surprise.

If "killed," the claws of the deep reanimate the following dusk like all the other skeletons in Kennmouth (see "Skeleton Patrols" above).

The Ruins of Kennmouth

You can find below what the adventurers discover when exploring the ruins of Kennmouth. If the characters are thorough, they will learn that a group of teenage girls pillaged the barrow mound that is located in the marshes, north of Kennmouth, a couple of months before the curse fell (see “The Grave Robbers” sidebar on page 12). Following this lead won’t help the adventurers lift the curse, but it will draw their attention to the ancient Ilmer burial site, which contains a magical axe capable of destroying the idol (see “The Barrow” on page 21).

When the PCs arrive in town, read or paraphrase the boxed text below.

The village of Kennmouth is a sad sight. A cluster of houses which once provided homes for a few hundred people now lie in states of decrepitude and disrepair: fallen timbers lie everywhere, and not a house in the village has retained its roof intact. Weeds and creepers cover every surface. The wharves have all fallen into the water, with only the rows of rotten wooden stumps which once held them up now showing where they once stood. The remains of a path leads up from Kennmouth toward a chapel, which dramatically overlooks the village from the cliff top to the east.

Exploring the Ruins

You can find below general information about the ruins of Kennmouth.

Fortifying a Building

After their first night in the ruins of Kennmouth, some PCs will want to turn one of the sturdier houses into a fortress that they can run to if necessary. They will typically need to seal the windows shut with heavy wooden planks, find solid wooden beams that they can use to bar the door, etc. Getting a house ready to face a horde of skeletons trying to force their way in takes about 4 hours with proper tools, or 8 hours with improvised tools. The characters will also need to find supplies such as wooden planks, nails, metal bars, and so on, all of which they can find in the ruins of Kennmouth (see the “Finding Supplies” sidebar on page 15).

Fortifying a house will give the PCs a safe place to stay during the night, but the constant banging of the skeletons prevents any form of gainful rest.

Graves

PCs searching between the houses notice fourteen patches of disturbed earth scattered around the village. Digging each of these up reveals a human skeleton, buried a few inches beneath the surface in a shallow grave of rubble and dirt. These are the skeletons of people killed during the chaotic abandonment of the village itself. They animate as soon as the sun goes down (see “Skeleton Patrols” on page 9; fourteen **skeletons**; melee weapons only).

Scavenging the Ruins

Searching among the ruined houses reveals all kinds of personal items amongst the sands and rotted timbers that fleeing families abandoned here all those years ago: corroded cookpots, illegible books, rotted fishing poles, and so on. A really determined looter could scavenge about 1d4 gp worth of miscellaneous junk for every hour spent digging around here, up to a maximum of 32 gp.

Timekeeping

You can find below typical things the PCs will do while exploring the ruins, and the time each one takes.

Activity	Duration
Walking Around Town	30 minutes
Visiting the Lighthouse	30 minutes round-trip
Visiting the Smithy	15 minutes (including the fight with Ruth)
Visiting the Town Hall	15 minutes
Reading Rory Volgard’s Journal	1 hour
Exploring the Workshop	2 hours (including clearing the debris)
Digging Up Graves	4 hours with proper tools, or 8 hours without them
Fortifying a Building	4 hours with proper tools, or 8 hours without them
Scavenging the Ruins	1 hour per 1d4 gp worth of junk

Wandering Ghouls

When the curse fell, the Greensplinter triplets turned into ghouls instead of skeletons (see “The Grave Robbers” on page 12). The three creatures are still wandering in the ruins of Kennmouth, looking for something tastier to eat than rodents. You can run this

encounter whenever you want to add tension to the exploration of Kennmouth, preferably during the day. Read or paraphrase the text below.

As you walk through the streets of Kennmouth, three ragged figures wearing tattered carpenter's aprons suddenly burst out of a nearby house. Identical in height and build, their skin is stretched tightly across their rotten bones, and their eyes burn with terrible hunger as their mouths gape open in three identical, fang-filled grins.

The three **ghouls** are starving and attack the characters on sight.

The Ilmer Artifact. One of the ghouls is wearing a copper bracelet worth 25 gp. The characters can make a DC 11 Intelligence (History) check to learn that the bracelet is thousands of years old. On a roll of 15 or higher, a PC also knows that the bracelet comes from a burial site, and that it's an item the Ilmer typically placed on their dead to help their souls find their way into the afterlife.

Treasure. The ghouls have carpenter's tools that the PCs can loot. They're a bit rusted, but they're good enough to fortify one of the houses of Kennmouth or make a raft.

A1. The Lighthouse

This crumbling stone lighthouse stands on top of a hill, overlooking the town of Kennmouth. A whole section of one of its walls has collapsed, and faint squeaking sounds are coming from the other side of it.

The lighthouse is now the roost of a colony of large carnivorous bats. The flying rodents are sleeping during the day and go out to hunt at night. If the PCs make too much noise when approaching the lighthouse by day, two **swarms of bats** storm out of the building and attack them.

Climbing to the Top. If the PCs climb to the top of the lighthouse by day, they can make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot Richard's Cabin and the barrow mound in the distance to the north (see "The Marshes" on page 20). The adventurers automatically succeed on this check if they actively scan the marshes for landmarks.

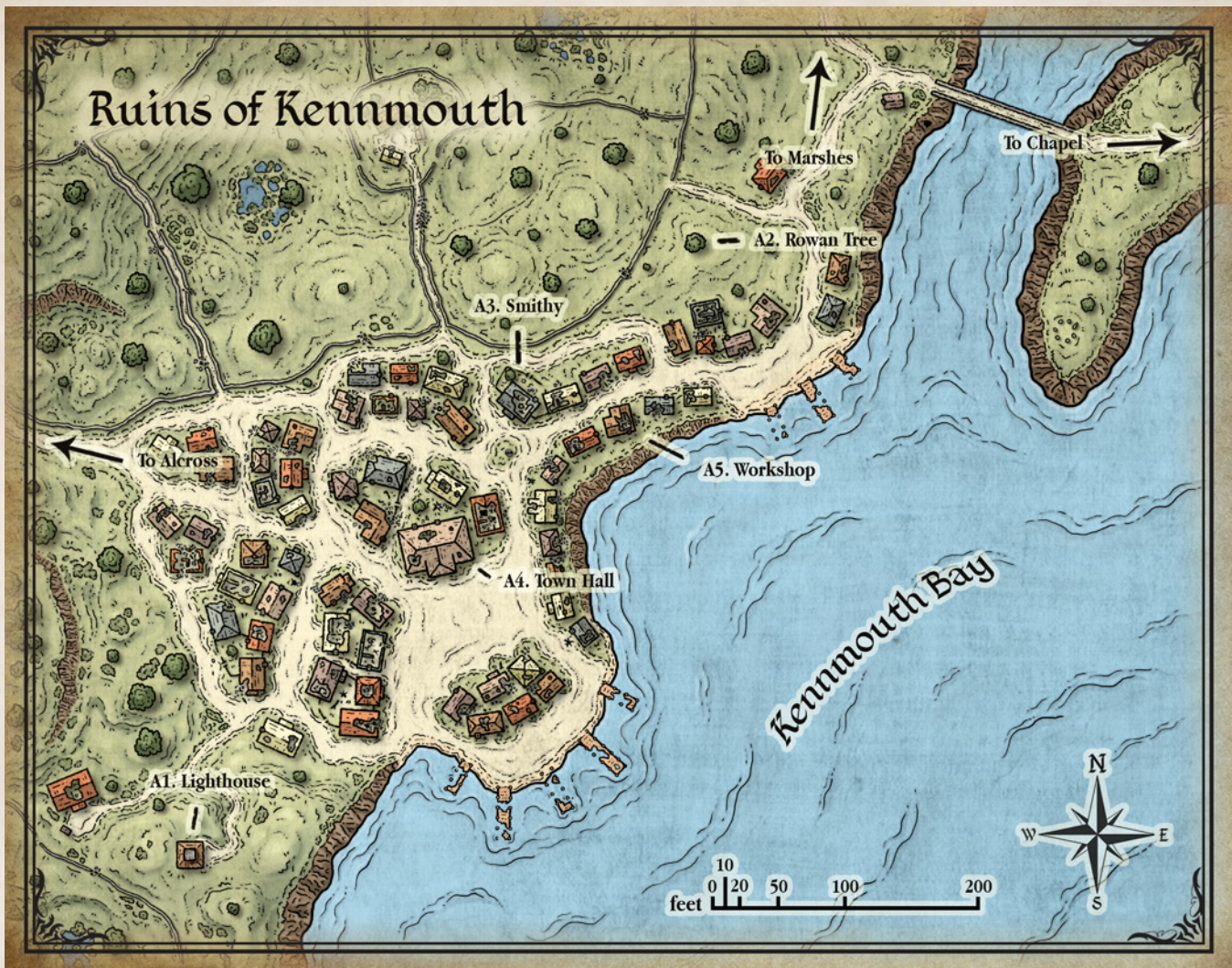
The Grave Robbers

Two months before the curse struck, Ruth Collfield, the blacksmith's youngest sister, and her three best friends, Edelmira Ravensworth and the Greensplinter sisters, Melka and Yana, went to the barrow mound north of Kennmouth, and pillaged the tomb. The four teenage girls were not ready for such a dangerous place. They came back with items covered in a deadly magical fungus called grave mold and were infected (see the "Grave Mold" sidebar on page 16).

As the fungus grew inside of them and released its toxin, the four young girls started losing their minds. Edelmira went to see Brother Morton for help, but the priest confused her symptoms with those of demonic possession, and had her hung for witchcraft shortly after (this is the "witch" that the PCs might have heard of in Hather Bay). Worried that the same might happen to his sister, the blacksmith locked Ruth up in his shop, and started searching for a more agreeable doctor.

In the meantime, Yana and Melka couldn't hold their tongue, and told their brothers, Gustavo, Ronaven, and Burlastic what they had done. They also brought the triplets to the "secret" room under their father's workshop, where they hid the artifacts. Naturally, the three Greensplinter brothers were also infected with the deadly fungus.

When the curse fell, its dark magic interacted strangely with the weird energies of the grave mold, transforming Ruth, Yana, and Melka into ghouls rather than a common skeletons. The Greensplinter brothers, who only had recently been exposed to the fungus, turned into ghouls. These creatures still live in the ruins of Kennmouth, imprisoned in a pantry or a basement, or roaming freely in the streets. Unlike the other undead in Kennmouth, Ruth, Yana, Melka, and the Greensplinter brothers don't reanimate when killed; once the exotic combination of unholy powers which sustains them has been snuffed out, it is gone forever.



A2. The Rowan Tree

This is the rowan tree that the villagers used to hang Edelmira Ravensworth just before the curse fell. They buried her in an unmarked grave nearby. PCs who have spoken to Robert Keymer in Hather Bay easily identify the tree by its bright red berries.

The witch's grave is a shallow one, and the soil over it is disturbed and churned by the nightly rising of the skeleton within, making it easy to locate. If the PCs dig the grave up, they find a human skeleton within, with a few scraps of clothing clinging to the bones and a battered ring of black iron around one finger. The cause of death was obviously a broken neck.

PCs may try to exorcise or destroy this skeleton, but doing so doesn't affect the curse, as Edelmira had nothing to do with it.

Treasure. The black iron ring around the witch's finger is an Ilmer *ring of protection*.

A3. The Smithy

This small stone building is in better shape than any of the others in the village, although its roof fell in decades ago. The smith's main task here was the manufacturing of fishbooks, hundreds of which lie scattered across the floor, each in the middle of a puddle of rust. The furnace is more or less intact. An old wooden door, swollen shut with rain, provides the only means of access to a windowless pantry. You hear moaning and thumping noises coming from behind this door.

Before the curse fell, the pantry served as the makeshift prison of Ruth Collfield, the youngest sister of the town blacksmith. Ruth's trafficking with unholy forces left her so warped in mind and body that her brother finally decided to lock her away (see "The Grave Robbers" on page 12).

When Brother Morton accidentally triggered the curse, Ruth was transformed into a **ghast** rather than a common skeleton. If anyone enters the pantry, she lashes out at them with a fishing net hung with hundreds of fishhooks (as a bonus action). If this attack hits (+5 to hit), her victim takes 1d4 damage and is restrained. As an action, a character can break the net with a DC 10 Strength check, though the restrained creature takes another 1d4 piercing damage as all the fishhooks rip free. Ruth then attacks ferociously.

Burning the Skeletons. Characters who previously tried to burn the bones of the skeletons haunting Kennmouth by night and failed can make a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check when entering the smithy. On a successful check, the PC knows that with enough coal or wood, the furnace should be able to destroy the bones of a human. (The PCs can find coal in the vault of the chapel; see area “D6. The Vault” on page 29.)

The Ilmer Artifact. Searching Ruth’s body reveals a golden talisman shaped like a three-eyed face. This is an ancient Ilmer artifact that Ruth and her friends took from the barrow mound. The characters can make a DC 11 Intelligence (History) check to learn that the item is thousands of years old. On a roll of 17 or higher, the adventurer also knows that it’s some kind of Ilmer holy symbol, probably from a god of mischief. The talisman is worth 500 gp.

Destroying the Idol

Bringing the idol to the Smithy’s and heating it in the furnace until it cracks is one of the few ways the PCs have of lifting the curse. Destroying the idol in this way is described in detail later in the adventure (see “Lifting the Curse” on page 25).

A4. The Town Hall

The second floor of this large building has collapsed, leaving the area covered in fallen timber, broken furniture, and rubble. A skeleton wearing rusted chainmail, a torn tabard, and a well-preserved shoulder bag is half-buried under a pile of debris, his sword lying just a few feet away from him.

The corpse is what remains of the captain of the village’s militia, Sir Rory Volgard. When the undead overran Kennmouth, Rory didn’t want to leave without his belongings, and spent some time packing before fleeing. This proved to be a fatal mistake, as it gave the skeletons enough time to surround the town hall. He

fought bravely, but eventually died. For a while, Rory patrolled Kennmouth at night with the other skeletons, until a part of the roof collapsed on him, ensuring that he would never again reach his grave.

Treasure. Rory’s shoulder bag is actually a *bag of preservation* (see “Appendix II: Monsters and Magic Items”). It contains 35 gp, two small citrines worth 10 gp each, a crowbar, a hammer, a pickaxe, 10 pitons, a tinderbox, a waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope, and a leather bound journal (see “Sir Rory’s Journal” below).

The Wooden Beam

Shortly after the PCs have entered the town hall, read or paraphrase the text below.

A violent slamming noise startles you. As you look in the direction it came from, you see old wooden shutters swinging in the wind. Moments later, a strong gale causes the entire building to tremble, and the wooden beams above you to make an ominous creaking noise.

If the PCs ignore the warning, a heavy wooden beam falls from the roof a few minutes later, crushing anything below it (the PCs can safely grab Rory’s bag and leave). There’s a 25% chance that it crashes on a randomly determined character. A PC caught in the path of the falling timber must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage.

Sir Rory’s Journal

Rory kept a journal which contains his thoughts and notes. Most of it is fairly boring. He talks about his love for a married woman, his job chasing petty thieves or breaking off fights between drunken fishermen, and so on.

The last pages, however, contain something more interesting:

“Thomas is nothing but a clueless bigot. That poor girl Edelmira isn’t a witch, she’s sick or cursed. He’s going to kill an innocent girl! He should be looking for facts, not praying for answers!”

A few pages later . . .

“Today is a sad day for Kennmouth. Morton got his way, and Edelmira died for nothing. That imbecile even left her there, hanging on the old rowan tree. He said he needed to make an example. . . Maybe I should start looking for another job in a more hospitable place.”

After flipping a couple more pages...

"I was right! I showed the ancient-looking necklace Edelmira was wearing to a merchant passing through, and he said it was an Ilmer artifact. I went to the marshes, and someone pillaged the barrow mound! There's no way Edelmira could have moved the massive stone door sealing the tomb on her own. She must have had help, and if she was under an Ilmer curse, the others probably are too."

Finding Supplies

If the characters decide to fortify one of the houses of Kennmouth or build a raft to explore Kennmouth Bay, they will need supplies, and the carpenter's workshop will be the obvious place to start searching. Fortunately, the shop's sign is still hanging above the door, and anyone casually walking through the streets of Kennmouth notices it (no check required). If the adventurers have already visited the ruins when they begin to search for supplies, they can make a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to remember seeing a carpenter's sign on one of the houses (see area "A5. The Workshop" below).

A5. The Workshop

There isn't much of the carpenter's shop left. The roof and the walls have mostly collapsed, and the stairs going down are obstructed with debris. When the PCs enter the building, they can make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the stairs. They automatically succeed on this check if they search the workshop. Clearing the stairs of the rubble takes a little under two hours. The stairs go down to the basement.

The Basement

The basement has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in the areas to which they apply.

Ceiling. Ceilings are 8 feet high.

Light. There are no natural light sources in the basement. The entire area is unlit.

B1. Storage Room

You go down the stone stairs and arrive at what appears to be a storage room. Dozens of planks of wood, nails, beams, and other supplies a carpenter might need are neatly organized in storage racks and shelves.



This room contains everything the PCs need to make a raft or barricade a house against a skeleton assault (see "Fortifying a Building" on page 11).

The Concealed Door. The door that leads to area "B2. The Hideout" is concealed behind a closet full of nails, hinges, and metal bars. The PCs can make a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the upper part of the door, which sticks out from behind the armoire. The closet can slide to the side, allowing the characters to access the door behind it.

B2. The Hideout

This basic room looks like a children's hideout. A small table with chairs around it sit in the middle of the room, and a shelf full of wooden toys is leaning against the eastern wall. A closed wooden crate almost completely covered in green fungus is on the opposite side of the room with two ghoulish-looking creatures in front of it.

When the curse struck Kennmouth, Yana and Melka turned into **ghasts** (see "The Grave Robbers" sidebar on page 12). The two undead attack the PCs on sight.

The Fungus-Covered Crate

The crate contains the rest of the Ilmer relics that the grave robbers took from the barrow mound. The container and the items inside of it are covered with a dangerous magical fungus called grave mold (see the “grave mold” sidebar to the right). If the characters manipulate or move the crate, the fungus releases a dark green cloud of spores that quickly fills the room.

Identifying the Mold. When the PCs first see the fungus, they’re entitled to a DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check or a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check to identify it. On a successful check, the character knows that moving the crate or the artifacts will release a cloud of toxic spores, and that a *protection from evil and good* spell is the only ward against them.

The Ilmer Artifact. The crate contains dozens of copper and silver trinkets, such as bracelets, rings, necklaces, and so on. The characters can make a DC 11 Intelligence (History) check to learn that the trinkets are thousands of years old. On a roll of 14 or higher, a PC also knows that the items come from an Ilmer burial site, and that they’re supposed to help a dead person’s soul find its way into the afterlife. The trinkets are worth 1,000 gp.



Grave Mold

Grave mold is a magical fungus that feeds on the dead. It’s typically encountered in ancient burial sites, in patches of 5 to 10 feet in diameter. It appears as small irregular green dots, and is easily recognizable by the acrid smell it leaves in the air. Identifying the mold requires a DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check or a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check.

Grave mold is extremely dangerous to living creatures. If the fungus is even slightly disturbed, it immediately releases a cloud of toxic spores in a 15-foot radius around it. The cloud lingers in the area for almost an hour, but the spores lose their toxicity after about a minute. Any living creature that comes in contact with the spores becomes infected with the fungus. Covering one’s mouth and nose with a cloth offers no protection, as the mold can infect a creature through the skin. The only way to safely manipulate grave mold is under the effect of a *protection from evil and good* spell, which prevents the spores from afflicting the target of the spell.

An infected creature doesn’t present any physical symptoms. The mold silently grows inside its body during the first eight to twelve days. When the mold is mature enough, the toxins that the fungus releases in an infected creature’s blood start to affect its nervous system. At first, it experiences short episodes of mild confusion and minor hallucinations, but as the mold continues to spread, the effects get worse and worse. About a month after being contaminated, an infected creature is almost constantly hallucinating and confused, and presents symptoms that are often mistaken with demonic possession. If untreated, an infected creature dies within twelve to sixteen weeks.

The grave mold is a magical fungus. Mundane treatments and lesser curative magic have no effect on it. Only a *greater restoration* spell, or similar magic, can destroy the mold growing inside an infected creature.

Kennmouth Bay

You can find below what the PCs find when visiting Kennmouth Bay. There are only two places of interest in the bay: Aina's Cave and the Ghost Ship (see "Aina's Cave" and "The Ghost Ship" below). The former is the prison of Saint Sidvela's "mermaid" friend who can help the PCs determine the origin of the curse. The latter is the ghost of Mark Elson, the fisherman who first found the idol.

Exploring the Bay

You can find below general information about Kennmouth Bay.

The Bay by Day

By day, the bay is simply a smooth, tranquil stretch of water, and the PCs can swim in it without ill effects. Unencumbered PCs should have no difficulty in swimming around the headland to the entrance of Aina's cave.

The Bay at Night

By night, anyone who can see the bay immediately notices an eerie glow in the dark. Read or paraphrase the following.

As you look out to the sea from Kennmouth, you see a small fishing boat sailing slowly across the mouth of the bay, about a mile from the shore, a lit lantern dangling from its prow. A human figure stands on the deck, ceaselessly casting and drawing his fishing nets.

This is the ghost of Mark Elson, the young fisherman who first brought the idol ashore. Each night he combs the bay with his nets, endlessly searching for the idol, longing to return it to its resting place and undo all the harm that it has done. PCs may try to call or signal to him from the shore, but he doesn't look up from his solitary task.

If the PCs try to reach Mark Elson's ghost ship or Aina's cave by night, either by swimming across the bay or rowing out on an improvised raft, a band of five **claws of the deep** attacks them (see "Claws of the Deep" on page 10). The skeletons swim silently up beneath the PCs, and are almost certain to take them by surprise; they punch holes in rafts to sink them and pull swimmers down to drown them.

The Ghost Ship

The PCs can easily row or swim over to Mark Elson's boat after they deal with the claws of the deep. When the adventurers get close to the boat, read or paraphrase the following.

This is clearly no ordinary vessel. Its rotten timbers are slimy, incrustated with barnacles, and full of holes. By rights, it shouldn't be able to stay afloat for a moment. A terribly pale fisherman is standing on the boat, and as he draws and casts his nets he mutters to himself ceaselessly, constantly repeating, "Where is it? Where is it? Here? Here? Here?"

These are the timbers of Mark's old boat that his ghost brings to the surface at night, and allows to sink back down to the seabed each dawn. Mark doesn't reply to questions; spells and attacks just pass straight through him, and anyone who actually touches him takes 1 point of cold damage per round as they feel the chill of the grave.

PCs who get close enough to see Mark in detail notice that he only has three fingers on his left hand, a remnant of an accident which befell him as a child. (This is a clue that will help the characters identify whom the bones in the chapel belong to; see "D1. The Altar" on page 28.)

If the PCs mention the idol in his presence, he nods anxiously and his muttering changes: "The idol. Yes, the idol. Where's the idol? Is it here? Is the idol here?" He pays no attention if the PCs tell him where the idol actually is.

The Ghost of Mark Elson. When the PCs first get close to Mark's ghost, they're entitled to a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check to understand that the ghastly figure that stands before them is some kind of ghost. On a successful check, the adventurer also knows that Mark may find rest if he completes whatever task he failed to achieve before he died.

Resting on Mark's Boat

PCs who are looking for somewhere to hide from the skeleton patrols could potentially ride around on Mark's boat all night; the skeletons don't harass them there, but they also don't get any sleep, as constant vigilance is necessary to avoid contact with Mark's ghost

and the cold damage that he causes to everyone he touches. Up to four people can fit aboard the boat, but as soon as the sun rises it sinks below the waters of the bay, only to re-emerge the following dusk.

Putting Mark to Rest

PCs who have been to the chapel, or who go there after meeting Mark, may realize that the skeleton laid out by the altar must be his. If ghost and skeleton are reunited, however, the effect is dramatic. As soon as he sees his skeleton Mark suddenly realizes that he's been dead for years. He utters a single, piercing shriek of horror and then vanishes. Seconds later his boat falls apart and sinks to the bottom of the bay. Once this has happened, nothing can possibly call Mark's ghost back again; his spirit has passed on to the afterlife at last.

Lifting the Curse

Bringing the idol to the ghost of Mark Elson is one of the few ways the PCs have of lifting the curse. This, however, is easier said than done. The obstacles the characters need to overcome to bring the idol to Mark are described in detail, later in the adventure (see "Lifting the Curse" on page 25).

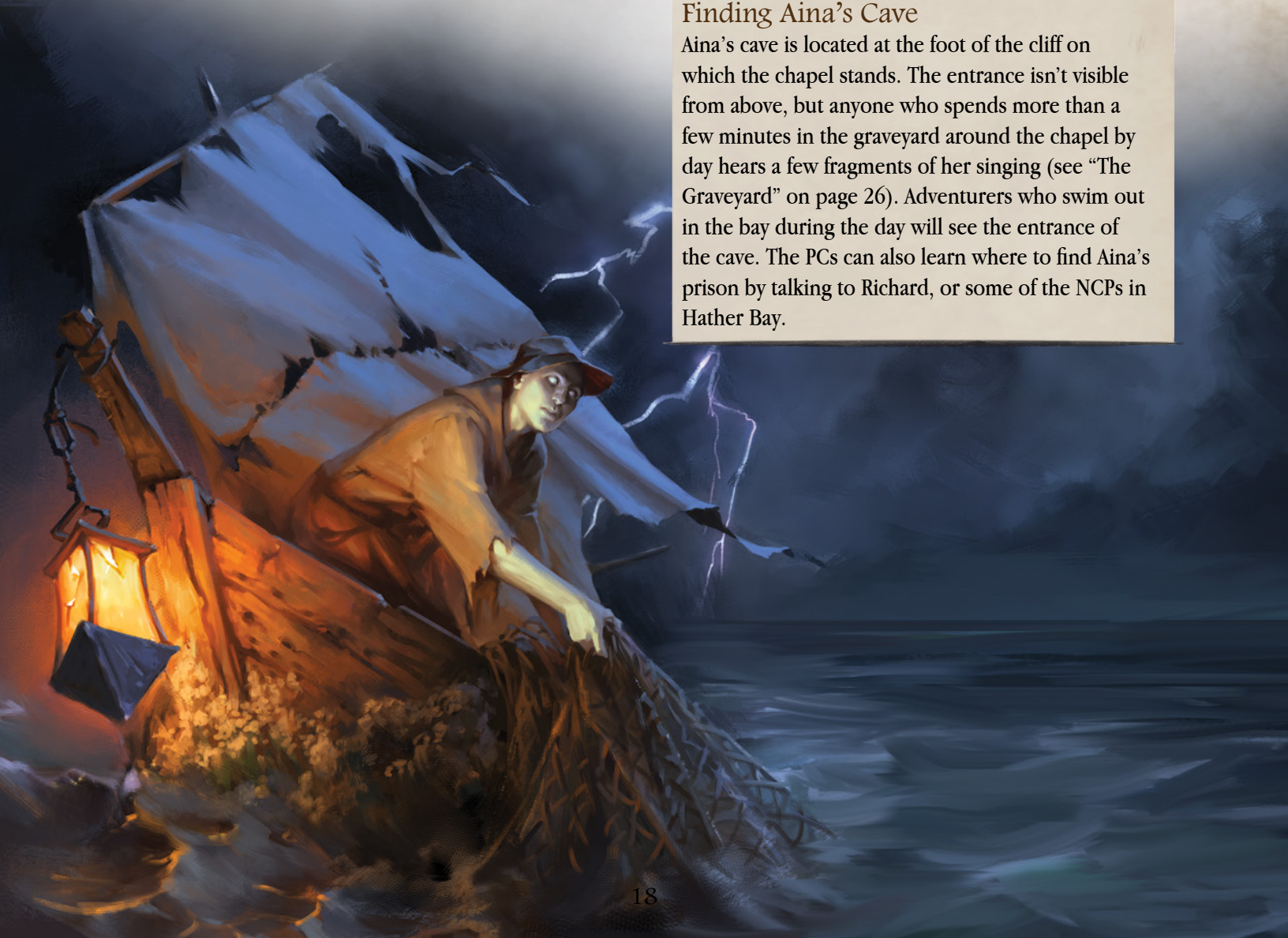
Aina's Cave

This cavern is the home and prison of Aina, a nixie, who was once the friend and companion of Saint Sidvela. (The local legend about the mermaid is a distorted version of this historical truth.)

During the saint's life, Aina used to meet with her in this cave, and after her death Aina continued to revisit it at intervals, for old time's sake. Unfortunately for her, it was during one of these visits that Morton activated the idol's curse, leaving her trapped within by its unholy magic. She's been stuck there ever since.

Finding Aina's Cave

Aina's cave is located at the foot of the cliff on which the chapel stands. The entrance isn't visible from above, but anyone who spends more than a few minutes in the graveyard around the chapel by day hears a few fragments of her singing (see "The Graveyard" on page 26). Adventurers who swim out in the bay during the day will see the entrance of the cave. The PCs can also learn where to find Aina's prison by talking to Richard, or some of the NCPs in Hather Bay.



Approaching Aina

PCs who approach the cave, whether by swimming around the headland or by climbing down the cliff, hear fragments of eerie singing echoing out from within at irregular intervals. At low tide the cave is dry, and Aina crouches right at the back of it, hiding in the darkness; at high tide it's half-flooded, and she sits near its entrance, running her fingers through the water and staring longingly out to sea. When the PCs first meet Aina, read or paraphrase the following.

The woman before you is a shocking sight. She looks as though she has spent years trapped in this cavern, leaving her thin and pale. She wraps herself in her long, long, hair like a cloak, with only her wide, staring, sea-green eyes looking out from between the tangled tresses. She wears a ragged gown made from the scales of fishes, once glittering and iridescent, but now filthy and torn.

After so many years alone, Aina's initial reaction to the arrival of the PCs is one of confusion; she runs and hides in the shadows at the back of the cave, and replies to questions only with disconnected song fragments or strange "hssshhhh...." noises that sound like the receding tide.

If the characters treat **Aina** aggressively, she attacks, but if they approach with sufficient patience and gentleness she eventually manages to pull herself together.

Treasure. Aina wears a pearl-studded anklet worth 500 gp around her left ankle. She happily gives this to the PCs if they manage to break the curse.

Talking to Aina

Once the characters manage to calm Aina down, they can learn the following.

- † She says her name is Aina. She was Saint Sidvela's friend before the saint passed.
- † Some kind of evil magic is keeping her trapped here: she's not sure exactly what it is, but she knows from the taste that it leaves in the air that its source must be some creature or relic from an ancient fallen civilization which she refers to only as "The Drowned Ones."

- † If the PCs press her for details about the "The Drowned Ones," she becomes agitated and replies, "Long ages have passed since the seas drank their cities. Do not mourn for them. Some nations deserve to be forgotten."
- † She begs them to break the curse that keeps her fettered here, and tells them that it must be anchored in some kind of creature or object within the chapel above. If this can be destroyed, then the curse will end.
- † The thought of such a vile magic staining Sidvela's shrine is a torment to her. She promises to reveal the location of a great treasure in exchange for the PCs' help lifting the curse.
- † If the PCs describe the idol to her, she becomes excited, insisting that this must be the source of the curse, but warning them that it is likely to be difficult and dangerous to destroy. (If the PCs actually bring the idol into the cave then she becomes hysterical with fear, and begs them to remove it, attacking them if they refuse.)
- † Curious PCs may ask Aina about her time with Saint Sidvela. Aina eagerly shares any number of stories about her travels with the saint, all of them emphasizing Sidvela's holiness, charity, and courage; she speaks of the saint with enormous affection, and it is obvious that she misses Sidvela terribly.
- † She doesn't know how to lift the curse of Kennmouth, but she can assist the characters with her divination magic.

Reward. If the PCs do succeed in breaking the curse, she keeps her end of the bargain, telling them about the hidden treasure in the shrine (see "D2. The Shrine of Saint Sidvela" on page 29) before swimming away.

Divination Magic

Aina is a nixie oracle. She will gladly help the PCs with her divination magic, as long as their goal is the lifting of the curse. Aina occasionally has premonitory dreams that you can use to help the characters if they're having trouble finding a way to destroy the idol. For example, she could dream of a young fisherman with only three fingers on his left hand, and tell the PCs that this man's fate is tied to Kennmouth's.

The Marshes

These marshes are soggy, misty, treacherous, and entirely pathless. Anyone walking across them for more than a few miles is at risk of getting horribly lost. Movement across them is at half normal speed. The only landmarks they contain are Richard's cabin and the barrow, where the PCs can find a safe shelter and a magical axe capable of destroying the idol. At night, of course, the marshes are swarming with skeletons, who move with horrible agility across the bogs to chase down their stumbling prey...

Finding the Landmarks

Richard's Cabin and the Barrow Mound aren't visible from the ruins of Kennmouth. The PCs need to climb to the top of the lighthouse to see them (see "A1. The Lighthouse" on page 12) or search the swamp to locate them. The adventurers can also see the cabin by following the trail that leads to the marshes from the haunted village (the trail is marked as red dots on the regional map of Kennmouth).

Exploring the Marshes

You will find below general information about the marshes.

Graves

Various unfortunates have drowned in the marshes over the years; their resting-places are unmarked, and are nearly impossible to find unless the PCs actually watch them climbing from their graves. At nightfall, they animate as nine **skeletons** (melee weapons only) and rise from the swamp to join the patrols (see "Skeleton Patrols" on page 9).

Random Encounters

Many dangerous creatures call the marshes their home. Every hour the PCs spend exploring the swamp, roll 1d20 and consult the table below to determine what they encounter. Note that these threats are in addition to the skeletons patrolling the marshes at night.

d20	Random Encounter
1-2	2d4 + 3 stirges
3-4	1d3 + 1 giant toads
5	1d2 will-o'-wisps
6 or higher	Nothing

Timekeeping

You can find below the typical things the PCs will do while exploring the marshes, and the time each of these activities takes.

Activity	Duration
Reaching Richard's Cabin	15 minutes (or 45 minutes from the barrow mound)
Reaching the Barrow Mound	1 hour (or 45 minutes from Richard's Cabin)
Opening the Barrow Mound	1 hour
Searching area "C1. Hall of Heroes"	15 minutes
Exploring the Barrow	15 minutes

Richard's Cabin

From across the marshes in the distance, you see a cabin raised up above the swamp on a sturdy wooden platform. A humanoid figure is moving slowly alongside it as though in great pain. When he sees you, he raises his hand as though to salute you. As you approach, his withered features become clearer, and you realize that what you had thought was a human is in fact a walking corpse.

This is the home of Kennmouth's one remaining resident, Richard Hart, who had the dubious good fortune of being terminally ill when the curse struck. His almost-dead body was reanimated as an undead one, but his mind remained intact, leaving him free to do as he chose rather than simply serving the will of the idol. His not-quite-deadness means that the magic also preserved his flesh, leaving him as a **zombie** (Richard has Intelligence and Wisdom 10 and his alignment is Neutral) rather than a skeleton, and he's free to move about by day as well as by night. Like all the other undead, however, he's unable to go more than three miles from the idol itself.

For several years after the curse struck, Richard simply stumbled around Kennmouth, mad with horror and grief; but as the decades passed, he's become more philosophical about his weird un-living state. He's built himself a cabin out in the marshes, and furnished it as best he can with reminders of his old human life; there's always some work on the place that needs doing, and repairs take forever in his zombified state, so he keeps himself busy.

He fights only in self-defense. If the characters refrain from killing him, they find Richard quite helpful, even if the slow, moaning tones in which he speaks are rather disturbing at first.

Richard's cabin is furnished in an approximation of human style; it contains a bed (which he never sleeps in), a stove (which he never cooks on), and so on. It also contains tools (picks, spades, hatchets, etc.), which he'll happily lend to PCs who want to use them to make rafts, dig up graves, and so on.

Treasure. Three polished silver dishes, which Richard inherited from his mother, are on the mantelpiece. They're worth 10 gp each, but Richard won't willingly part with them.

Talking to Richard

Richard's memories of the night the curse fell are very garbled – he was in the process of dying at the time, after all – but he can tell the PCs about most of the cursed town's features. The characters can learn the following by interacting with Richard.

- † Skeletons roam in the town by night.
- † The characters can safely rest in his cabin if they want. (The skeletons don't search within it unless the PCs do something to call attention to their presence, such as lighting a fire or standing in the windows looking out.)
- † Some sort of ghost ship appears in Kennmouth Bay every night.
- † He's physically incapable of entering the chapel.
- † He knows from looking in through the windows that some kind of monster now lives in the chapel and places a weird idol on the altar every night. He believes (correctly) that this idol is the source of the curse.
- † If the PCs are keen to follow up the theory that the curse is the witch's fault then he can tell them where she's buried. (See "A2. The Rowan Tree" on page 13.)
- † If asked about the mermaid, he doubtfully says that local legends linked her with the cave under the chapel (see "Aina's Cave" on page 18), but that he used to go in there as a boy and he never saw anything out of the ordinary.
- † He strongly attempts to discourage the PCs from meddling with the barrow.
- † He doesn't know how to lift the curse of Kennmouth, but he can help the PCs try to figure it out (see "Destroying the Idol" below).

Destroying the Idol

Richard doesn't know how to break the curse of Kennmouth, but he's a practical man with a very vivid imagination. If the PCs ask him if he has any idea how to destroy the idol, he suggests the following methods:

- † Using a sledgehammer or a lumberjack's axe to smash it.
- † Pouring holy water in its open mouth.
- † Immersing the idol in holy water.
- † Feeding it poisonous berries when its mouth is open.
- † Burning it.
- † Obliterating it with a magical attack.
- † Sticking a sword or the Hand of Saint Sidvela in its mouth.
- † Trying to break it with a magic weapon.
- † Drowning the idol when its mouth and eyes are open.
- † Killing the monster defending it.

Feel free to add more suggestions. The idea is to give the PCs a few things to try, without outright giving them the solution to their problem.

The Barrow

This ancient barrow mound sticks up out of the surrounding swamp, and anyone with any knowledge of history or earthworks recognizes it as artificial at a glance. It's sealed shut; the people of Kennmouth closed it back after Ruth and her friends robbed it, and the grass has long-since regrown over its entrance. If the PCs are determined to open it, it takes an hour's worth of digging to clear the turf over the door-stone, which they then have to lever open with a strong branch or a crowbar.

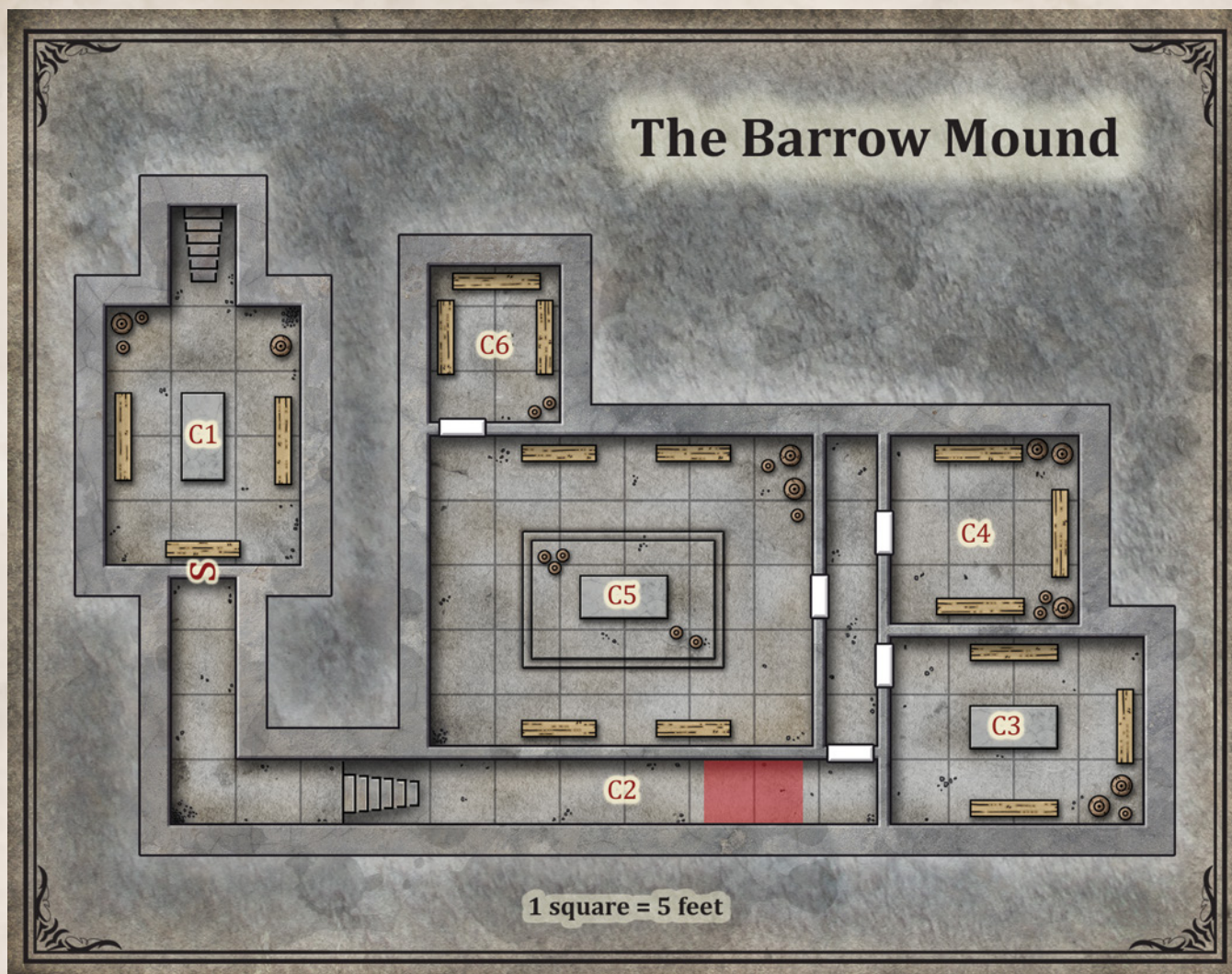
General Features

The barrow mound has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in the areas to which they apply.

Ceiling. Ceilings are 7 feet high.

Light. There are no natural light sources in the basement. The entire area is unlit.

Defenders. Entering the barrow awakens the ancient barrow-wight inside (see area "C5. Burial Chamber"), which attacks any intruder on sight. The undead doesn't leave its barrow mound during the hours of sunlight, but gleefully pursues intruders for any distance after dark.



C1. Hall of Heroes

You arrive at a plain room with old mortar walls and washed-out paintings on them. An unembellished stone bed with the remains of a warrior lying on it are in the middle of the room. The entire skeleton is covered with green mold that somehow survived all these years.

This barrow mound is the final resting place of an Ilmer warlord. When an Ilmer war-chief died, his most trusted general would normally let himself be buried with his former master, at the entrance of the tomb, so as to protect it.

Two **will-o'-wisps** entered the barrow mound after Ruth Collfield and her friends decided to pillage it. They were still inside the burial site when Sir Rory Volgard closed it a few weeks later, and have been stuck there ever since. The will-o'-wisps are invisible when the characters enter the tomb; they attack the PCs on sight.

The green fungus covering the dead warrior is grave mold (see the “Grave Mold” sidebar on page 16). If the characters touch the mold, or manipulate the skeleton, the fungus immediately releases its spores.

Grave Mold. When the adventurers first see the fungus, they’re entitled to a DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check or a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check to identify it. On a successful check, the character also knows that a *protection from evil and good* spell can protect them from the mold’s deadly spores.

Ilmer Lore. The paintings that once adorned the old mortar walls have practically disappeared. The character can only discern a few scenes of epic battles, but they can make a DC 13 Intelligence (History) check to understand that they’re in the tomb of an Ilmer warlord. On a successful check, the PC also knows that they’re standing in front of the warlord’s most trusted general, and that there must be some kind of secret passage in the room that leads further into the barrow.

The Secret Door. Upon entering the room, the PCs can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice a small gap covered with dirt and mortar that outlines the secret door. If the adventurers carefully inspect the room, they can make a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to notice the gap.

A stone handle located under the skeleton opens the secret door when turned. The PCs find the opening mechanism if they move the dead warrior (no check required), but doing so releases the grave mold's toxic spores. The PCs can also smash their way through the mortar door.

C2. Corridor

The corridor is trapped. Anyone who steps on the pressure plate located at the end of the hallway triggers a **poison darts** trap (the section highlighted in red on the map indicates where the pressure plate is). The trap is identical to the one described in the SRD, except that it fires eight darts instead of four, and it can target any creature inside the corridor.

C3. Concubine's Tomb

An engraved stone bed with the remains of a woman wearing a silk dress is in the middle of the room. The mural paintings in this room are better preserved than the ones you have seen so far, and represent scenes from the life of a beautiful woman with dark hair.

This is the burial chamber of the warlord's last concubine who was buried in the same barrow as her companion many years after his death.

Treasure. The woman was wearing her favorite jewelry when she was buried. The PCs find a gold hair pin encrusted with lapis lazuli worth 250 gp, an engraved gold bracelet worth 100 gp, a gold chain with an emerald pendant worth 1,000 gp, three gold rings inlaid with gemstones worth 100 gp each, and a pair of gold anklets worth 250 gp apiece.

C4. Hall of Rebirth

This small room has two tables with various finely crafted clay pots on them. The few paintings that haven't completely faded over the years show scenes of young children playing and living a happy life.

The pots contain various symbolic items that are supposed to help the warlord when his soul returns from the netherworld.

Treasure. The ancient pots and the grave goods are worth a total of 250 gp to a collector, but are so fragile that they break easily. (They shatter if the PCs place them in their backpacks and subsequently engage in combat, for example.)

C5. Burial Chamber

A finely engraved stone bed lies in the middle of the room. A withered warrior with glistening blue eyes is standing behind it.

The barrow-wight (**wight**) attacks anyone who steps inside his burial chamber, and pursues intruders to the barrow's limit by day, or relentlessly in the marsh by night. The wight is carrying three flasks containing a highly volatile and poisonous substance. The wight can toss them anywhere within 50 feet in lieu of a longsword attack, causing the flask to shatter and release a cloud of poisonous gas. Anyone within 5 feet of the vial when it breaks takes 2d6 poison damage, or half as much on a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw.

Treasure. If the PCs defeat the wight, they may help themselves to its treasure haul. It wears a gold torc worth 100 gp, and seven engraved silver armbands worth 20 gp each.

C6. Treasury of the Gods

This place appears to be some sort of treasure room. Two tables are leaning against opposite walls. The first table is covered in coins, gemstones, and the occasional jewel. A finely carved ivory rack with an axe of exquisite craftsmanship stands on the other one.

This is the treasury room. The Ilmer believed that they need to pay a toll to the gods before being granted access to the netherworld.

Treasure. The PCs find the following items in the treasury: 250 gp, 130 sp, 290 cp, six polished amethysts worth 50 gp each, two pieces of amber (100 gp each), a small ruby worth 500 gp, a silver comb worth 25 gp, a solid gold chalice worth 500 gp, an ivory rack (250 gp), and *Ulruf the Mage-Slayer* (see "Appendix II: Monsters and Magic Items"). *Ulruf the Mage-Slayer* is a powerful magical axe that disrupts magic. Its power is such that the PCs can use it to shatter the idol and end the curse (see "Lifting the Curse" on page 25).

Part 3: Saint Sidvela's Chapel

The adventure reaches its climax when the characters enter this old chapel surrounded by graves. In this part of the module, the PCs will need to defeat Brother Morton, snatch the idol from him, and then destroy it.

When the characters reach the chapel, read or paraphrase the following:

The Chapel of Saint Sidvela is not a graceful building; indeed, were it not for the bell tower on its southern side, it would be little more than a gray stone box about thirty feet wide, fifty feet long, and fifteen feet high. To add to the sense of desolation, its stained glass windows are all broken, and jagged shards hang in the edges of the windows.

Scattered around the chapel are dozens of grave markers, ranging from simple wooden signs to heavy slabs of carved stone. This, for generations, is where the people of Kennmouth buried their dead, trusting that its proximity to Sidvela's shrine would guarantee the serenity of their rest. The soil of every grave is heavily churned, suggesting that someone or something has recently disturbed the graves.

Brother Morton and the Idol

The source of Kennmouth's curse is a strange stone idol that Mark Elson dredged from his net some fifty years ago. The PCs can find it in the chapel's vault with Brother Morton by day, or lying on the altar after dusk. Whether by day or night, an army of undead quickly surrounds the PCs the moment they set foot in the chapel, and makes sure they never leave the place.

The Idol

The idol is a grotesque stone carving, the size of a human head, depicting a monstrous face. Its mouth is too wide, its eyes huge and bulbous, and its lips are pulled back to reveal row upon row of sharp, shark-like teeth. During the day, both eyes and mouth are closed, but at dusk they open in a soundless howl, and ghostly blue-green light pours out from them, flooding the surrounding area in weird illumination.

Fighting near the Idol

Any living being within 50 feet of the idol, except Brother Morton, who is caught in the blue-green light experiences horrible nausea and crippling headaches, and their sight is impeded by weird twisting shadows which seem to play across their field of vision. As a result, all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws made within the light of the idol are made with disadvantage.

Blocking this light – by dropping a blanket over the idol, for example – ends this effect, although the idol's guardians are well aware of the idol's power and try to keep it uncovered as best they can.

The Hive Mind

The idol controls all 116 skeletons that patrol the ruins of Kennmouth by night. If one skeleton knows where the PCs are, all the other skeletons do. The undead are also constantly aware of the idol's whereabouts. If the PCs manage to leave the chapel with the idol, by day or night, all 116 skeletons immediately flock toward it, and try to bring it back inside the chapel, either by giving it to Brother Morton, or by throwing it through a window.

The idol also controls the claws of the deep that defend Kennmouth Bay. These skeletons, however, are incapable of leaving the bay, but they will try to recover the idol if the PCs try to reach Mark Elson's boat by night.

Brother Morton

Brother Morton was once a pious man in late middle age, but there's not a lot left of the human being he once was. The idol's magic has warped him into the Guardian Beast: he's hugely strong, grotesquely fat, and covered in what look like glistening fish-scales. Like the idol, his eyes are huge and bulbous, and his mouth opens impossibly wide to reveal a truly shocking number of teeth.

The PCs likely encounter **Brother Morton** and the idol together in the chapel, either in the vault (by day) or in the chapel (by night). He fights to the death to protect the idol from theft or harm. The only time he lets it out of his sight is at dusk, when he goes up the bell tower to ring the bell. Clever PCs may seize this opportunity to grab the idol and run with it, possibly

after pushing Morton off the bell tower first. If anyone leaves the chapel carrying the idol, Brother Morton pursues the thief until it recovers it, and then brings it back to the chapel.

Treasure. Morton wears a jet mourning ring on his right hand, although his fingers are so hugely swollen that the PCs need to hack one off to remove the ring. On its own, it's worth 10 gp, but if the characters present it along with a heap of bones to his niece, Susan Morton, she pays 100 gp for it. (See "Susan Morton" on page 6.) She doesn't accept that the body of the guardian beast is her uncle's corpse, regardless of whether it wears his ring or not.

Defeating Morton

Morton cannot be killed until the idol is destroyed. If the characters slay Morton or drop him to 0 HP, he remains there, lifeless, for 2d4 hours. At the end of this timespan, Morton's body fully regenerates in 1d4 + 1 rounds: the guardian rises completely healed, and cured of all his afflictions.

Disabling Morton

Even though Morton cannot be killed, there are a few ways to get rid of him for the duration of the adventure. Morton is immensely strong, but he cannot break free of heavy chains or drag himself from under a few tons of rubble. Anything that can permanently immobilize a creature with a Strength score of 20 can disable Morton. If the PCs manage to incapacitate the guardian beast, the skeletons will try to free him at nightfall.

Lifting the Curse

The PCs need to destroy the idol in order to lift the curse. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done; any blow or spell directed against it simply rebounds harmlessly. Moving the idol is also of very little use: the curse is centered on the idol and just moves with it. There are, however, at least three ways to permanently dispose of the idol that are described below. At the GM's option, other forms of powerful magic may also be sufficient to destroy the idol.

Burning the Idol

Throwing the idol into the Smithy's furnace, and using the coal from the chapel vault to reach a high enough temperature, is one of the few ways the PCs have of destroying the idol and lifting the curse (see areas "A3. The Smithy" and area "D6. The Vault" on pages 13 and 29). This, however, is easier said than done. The characters will need to bring the idol and fifty pounds of coal from the chapel with an army of undead on their tail (see "Leaving the Graveyard" on page 28), and then wait for the idol to shatter. After ten hours in the furnace, the superheated idol cracks apart into hundreds of whizzing pieces, ending the curse.



The PCs' best bet to survive all this time is to barricade the Smithy's doors and windows ahead of time (see "Fortifying a Building" on page 11). They'll also need to disable Brother Morton before running to the Smithy's (see "Disabling Morton" on page 25), otherwise, the infuriated guardian beast will make short work of their makeshift defenses (Morton is strong enough to smash through a stone wall).

Trial and Error. If the PCs try to burn the idol using a heat source that isn't hot enough to destroy it, they notice that it's warm to the touch. The characters can then make a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check to know that most rocks become brittle and shatter when exposed to intense heat for a prolonged period of time, and that, oftentimes, destroying a rock with fire is only a matter of reaching a high enough temperature.

Mark Elson

The ghost of Mark Elson, the young fisherman who first found the idol, is desperate to undo his wrong. If a PC hands Mark the idol (or drops it into his net), his eyes light up with delight; he places it on his boat, and then turns and rows out to sea with superhuman speed. The curse ends, and neither the ghost nor the idol are ever seen again.

The difficulty here lies in bringing the idol to Mark Elson. The characters will need to wait until dark for the ghost to appear, enter the chapel, grab the idol, fight their way through the skeletons that might get in their way (see "Leaving the Graveyard" on page 28), and make it to the ghost ship. If the adventurers haven't defeated the claws of the deep guarding the bay (see "Claws of the Deep" on page 10), the undead will try to intercept the PCs on their way to the boat. Also, Brother Morton is a superb swimmer who can easily catch up with runaway thieves, even in the bay.

Ulruf the Mage-Slayer

Ulruf the Mage-Slayer is a powerful enchanted axe that has the ability to disrupt magic. The characters can pick up the weapon in the barrow mound, after defeating the wight (see "The Barrow" on page 21).

Using Ulruf to destroy the idol is convenient because the PCs can bring the axe inside the chapel, but it's also risky. The first time the PCs hit the idol with the enchanted weapon, it leaves a large dent, but it also creates an invisible shock wave that deals 3d6 force

damage to anyone within 30 feet of the idol. At that time, the PCs are entitled to a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check to notice that Ulruf and the idol are negating each other's magic. On a successful check, the PC also knows that if they continue to hit the idol with the axe, it will destroy both the weapon and the idol, and provoke an even bigger explosion.

Hitting the idol a second time with Ulruf the Mage-Slayer results in an appalling magical blast: anyone within 30 feet of the idol takes 3d6 force damage. Creatures reduced to 0 HP are disintegrated, their bodies turned into a pile of dust (they're dead and cannot be brought back to life with a *raise dead* spell). When the smoke clears, both axe and idol have blown to atoms, ending the curse.

The Graveyard

Ninety-two adult humans are buried in the graveyard around the chapel. Their graves are heavily churned by the nightly rising, and are easy to locate.

PCs who spend more than a few minutes in the graveyard hear a few fragments of song whipped up to them by the wind: these are from Aina (see "Aina's Cave" on page 18), the nixie, who is trapped in the cave at the foot of the cliff on which the chapel and graveyard stand. PCs following the sound soon work out that it's coming from below, down where the cliff meets the sea, although the entrance of the cave isn't visible from above.

Climbing Down. The cliff is ninety feet high. Climbing down the cliff without rope requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. A character who falls onto the rocks below takes 2d6 piercing damage in addition to the falling damage.

Digging up the Graves. The PCs need four man-hours to dig up a single grave with suitable tools (picks and shovels), and twice that if they're doing it with their hands. There are 92 graves here with restless occupants. Each grave has a 10% chance of containing some small valuable item (e.g. rings, bracelets, etc.) worth 1d10 gp. If the PCs dig up the whole graveyard, rather than rolling for every grave you can simply assume that they find grave goods worth a total of 10d10 gp in the process.

The Chapel

This plain stone building stands in the middle of the graveyard.

Exploring the Chapel

You can find below general information about the chapel of Saint Sidvela.

Entering the Chapel

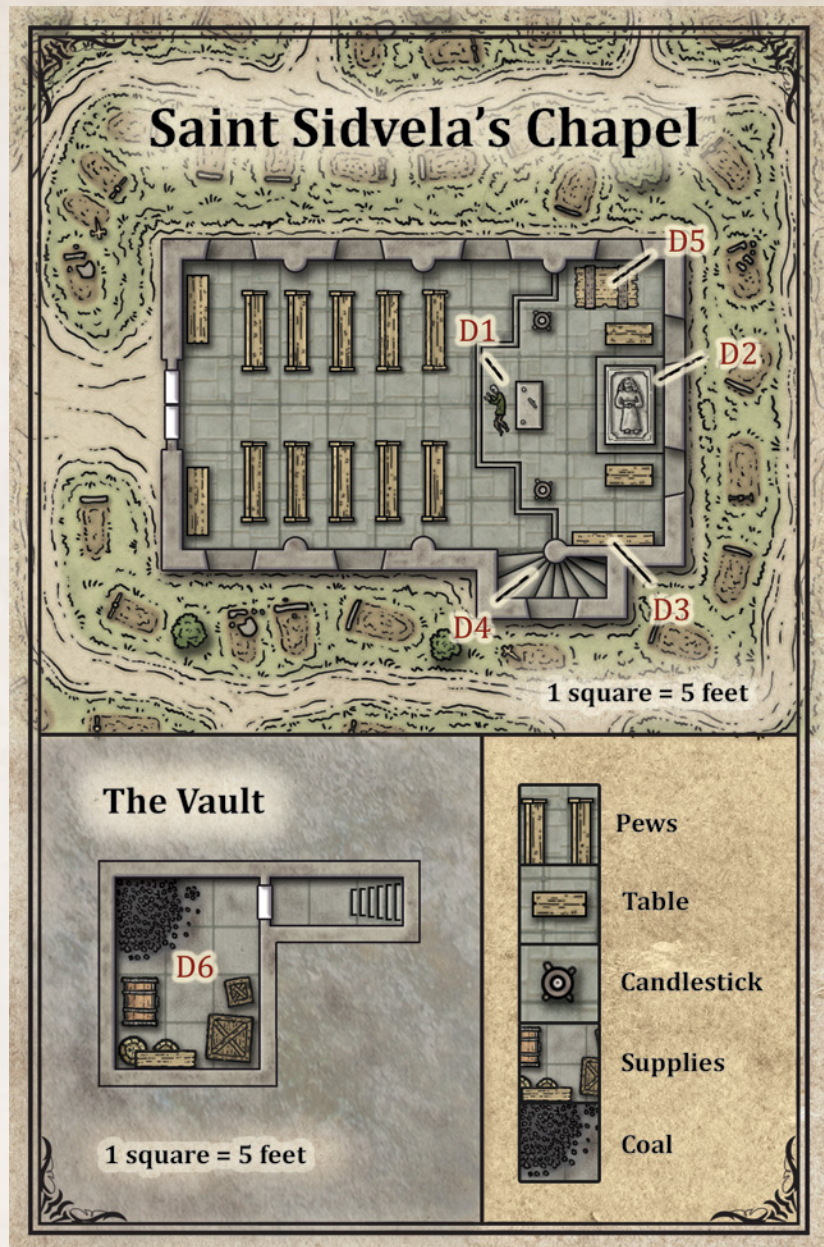
There are two ways into the chapel: through the windows or through the door. The adventurers can easily smash away the shards on the edges of the window, but if for some reason a PC has to jump through a window without spending a round clearing it first, they take 1d3 slashing damage from the resulting lacerations.

Nobody has opened the doors of the chapel for decades, and the damp air has caused the wood to swell, jamming them hard into their frames. A sturdy wooden bar also lays across them from the inside, meaning that climbing in through the windows is likely to be an easier means of entrance. PCs who are determined to get in through the doors can hack them down using axes after two man-hours of exhausting work. (Two *knock* spells, one for the bar and one for the jam, would also do the trick.)

After the characters enter the chapel or if they look through the windows, read or paraphrase the text below.

The chapel of Saint Sidvela isn't in nearly such a sad state as might be expected after such a long abandonment. Lines of wooden pews dominate the nave, and the walls are covered in votive carvings recording the gratitude of various pilgrims for the miracles performed at Saint Sidvela's shrine. At the front of the apse is the altar, and behind it stands the shrine of Sidvela herself.

Some fragment of Brother Morton's reverence for the building remains even in his transformed state, and he compulsively cleans and repairs the place as best he can with his warped and clumsy hands.



Skeleton Guardians

As soon as someone tries to enter the chapel during daylight hours, either by stepping through the doors or climbing through the windows, every grave in the graveyard immediately starts to churn as the idol calls the skeletons within to rise up and defend it.

If the PCs immediately abandon their attempts to enter, the churning subsides; otherwise, over the next ten minutes every skeleton in the graveyard half-digs and half-swims its way through its grave-dirt and up to the surface, until the chapel is surrounded by all ninety-two skeletons (melee weapons only). (Twenty-four more, from the marshes, village, and rowan tree, arrive over the next half hour.)

If anyone enters the chapel by night, while the skeletons are already patrolling the ruins of Kennmouth and its surroundings, they immediately break off whatever else they're doing and rush back to the chapel. 1d12 arrive after 1d10 minutes, then 2d12 after another 1d10 minutes, then 4d12 after another 1d10 minutes, and so on until the whole force is assembled.

The size of the dice used to determine how quickly the skeletons arrive decreases as the PCs dispose of the undead. The table below shows the die used based on the number of remaining skeletons.

Number of Skeletons	Die Size
90 to 116	d12
60 to 89	d10
30 to 59	d8
Less than 30	d6

For example, if the PCs already killed 60 skeletons (56 remaining), 1d8 skeletons arrive after 1d10 minutes, another 2d8 skeletons arrive 1d10 minutes later, and so on.

The Chapel's Consecration

The skeletons are unable to enter the chapel itself due to its consecration. They form a loose ring around the building, standing almost shoulder to shoulder. If subjected to sustained missile fire from within the chapel, they take cover by crouching down behind the surrounding tombstones, but otherwise maintain their perimeter as best they can.

Leaving the Graveyard

The only objective of the skeletons is to protect the chapel; they attack anyone who leaves it, but once the intruders flee or fight their way out of the graveyard the skeletons don't pursue, unless they're carrying the idol.

If the PCs attempt to leave the chapel, you should use the Chase rules described in "Appendix I: Chases and Sieges". Unlike in a normal chase, the skeletons lose interest in the characters after the fourth round; from that point on, you should stop rolling for reinforcements. Once all the intruders are out the graveyard, the skeletons linger for an hour or so, and then return to their graves (if it is daytime) or resume their normal patrolling (if it is night).

If anyone exits the chapel carrying the idol, the skeletons pursue that person forever, attacking them constantly until the idol is recovered (use the normal Chase rules describe in "Appendix I: Chases and Sieges"). If the undead manage to get the idol back, they return it to the chapel, either by giving it to Brother Morton, or by tossing it through one of the broken windows.

Timekeeping

You can find below the typical things the PCs will do while exploring the chapel, and the time one takes.

Activity	Duration
Exploring the Chapel	15 minutes
Reading Morton's Journal	1 hour
Opening the Vault Door	4 hours

D1. The Altar

The altar is a humble affair, cut from simple gray stone and topped with a rain-worn carving of a local god, with Saint Sidvela depicted kneeling at its feet. A carefully laid-out human skeleton is lying at the foot of the altar.

Despite its simple appearance, the altar is the keystone of the chapel's consecration. If the PCs remove the carving from the altar, then the skeletons are able to enter the chapel and immediately start swarming in through every window. (If the PCs replace the symbol, they restore the consecration and the skeletons go scrambling back out as quickly as they can - but if they break the symbol then the skeletons are able to enter at will). By night, the altar is also the location of the idol, which Brother Morton (see "Brother Morton" on page 24) brings up from the vaults each day at dusk after ringing the bell.

Mark's Bones

The bones at the foot of the altar are the remains of poor Mark Elson, who tried to destroy the idol as soon as Morton first activated it, and paid for it with his life. Brother Morton has kept his remains intact ever since. If the characters remove Mark's bones from the chapel, they animate after dark just like anyone else's. The skeleton's left hand only has three fingers; this should help the PCs determine who the corpse belongs to.

D2. The Shrine of Saint Sidvela

The shrine of Saint Sidvela is much more impressive than the altar: a huge, imposing stone tomb, carved with images of Sidvela's life. All around it are old wooden shelves, densely packed with the votive offerings made to Sidvela over the years: silver images of the saint, mostly, but also silver plates, silver goblets, silver rings engraved with her image, and so on. On the top of the tomb is a glass-and-silver box containing a withered human hand: the relic of the saint, by which the chapel's priests worked her miracles after her death.

The Hand of Sidvela (see "Appendix II: Monsters and Magic Items") functions as a magic item that can ward off undead creatures and heal anyone who comes in contact with it.

Treasure. Unbeknownst to anyone except Aina herself, one panel of the Shrine of Saint Sidvela contains a secret cache that conceals a beautiful crown of sea-gold (1,500 gp), which the nixie left there as a mark of respect after Sidvela's death. If the characters return to Aina after lifting the curse, she tells them about the secret cache. The adventurers can also grab all the offerings around the shrine and sell them for a total of 1,100 gp.

D3. The Bookshelf

On a bookcase against the southern wall of the chapel lie its holy books, all totally ruined by wind and rain. PCs who remove them find, concealed behind them, a smaller book in which Brother Morton kept a log of events in Kennmouth; shielded from the weather by the scriptures, it has survived the years mostly intact. The last entries describe Brother Morton's anxiety about the terminal illness of Richard Hart, his bad dreams about the witch they hung and buried beneath the rowan tree, and his worries about the local children playing too close to the old barrow mound in the marshes.

D4. The Bell Tower

On the southern wall of the chapel is a simple opening, behind which is a spiral staircase that leads up to the top of the narrow bell tower. PCs may wish to use it as a sniping platform for shooting the skeletons below.

D5. The Trapdoor

The only other exit from the shrine is a trapdoor in the corner, behind the shrine, which leads down to the vault. Opening the trapdoor in the chapel reveals a narrow flight of steps going down, cut into the rock of the cliff itself. These terminate, after a short distance, at an iron door set snugly into its stone frame.

D6. The Vault

The door hangs open during the night, but by day it's held shut both by a metal bar on the far side, and by the weight of Brother Morton (see "Brother Morton" on page 24), who has a habit of sleeping against it. (It has a keyhole, but the key is long lost).

There are several ways the characters can enter the vault: they can tunnel their way down through the chapel floor with pickaxes (although this is likely to take several hours), ram the door down (although given that both the door and the bar are made of sturdy iron, this will probably take a few hours with a battering ram), or wait until Brother Morton leaves the place and sneak in during the night. The characters can also use a *knock* spell to remove the bar, but this also wakes up Brother Morton; the PCs then have a single round to shove the door open (pushing against Morton's Strength of 20) before the guardian shoves the bar back in place again.

The vault isn't very large, and the villagers mostly used it as a kind of communal safe storage area. Along one wall of the vault is a shelf cluttered with odds and ends of woodwork and stonework, left over from the last renovation of the chapel several decades ago. During the day the idol is left here along with the other carvings. (The PCs are unlikely to notice it unless they use a *detect magic* spell, or unless Richard described it to them.) The vault also contains barrels of ancient, rotted grain, coils of disintegrating rope, cauldrons of old coals, and other worthless refuse ruined by the passage of time.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs permanently dispose of or destroy the idol, the curse lifts from Kennmouth. Richard and Brother Morton collapse lifeless to the ground, along with any remaining ghouls, ghosts, and skeletons. The barrow-wight goes back to sleep. Kennmouth is safe again. A few days later, Kathryn lands in Kennmouth bay with a construction crew and starts to work on a new wharf. Within a year, the village is back in business once again.

Story Awards

The PCs gain 5,800 XP for defeating all 116 skeletons when they destroy the idol. You should deduct any XP you already awarded for defeating the skeletons from this total.

Rewards

In the course of the adventure, some people in Hather Bay and Aina the nixie offer the adventurers a reward for helping them:

- † If the PCs met Aina, she gives them her anklet in gratitude (500 gp), and keeps her promise to reveal the location of the hidden treasure in the shrine (which contains a crown of sea-gold worth 1,500 gp); otherwise, she'll just swim away, glad to be finally able to leave the cave.
- † Kathryn Reed gives the PCs 500 gp in exchange for the clearing of the village.
- † Father Andrew Wakely gives the characters 400 gp for the return of Saint Sidvela's hand.
- † Susan Morton happily keeps her end of the bargain and gives the PCs 100 gp in return for a skeleton wearing Brother Morton's ring. (Susan doesn't accept that the guardian beast is her uncle; the PCs need to place Morton's ring on another skeleton to get this reward.)

Adventures in Kennmouth

PCs may still have unanswered questions. Who were the Drowned Ones? Where did Mark dredge the idol up from, and is anything else still down there? Did the grave robbers, or the medallion they found on Ruth have any connection to the evil which fell upon Kennmouth? Any of these could provide the seeds for future stories, perhaps with Kathryn, Aina, and Father Wakely acting as allies or sponsors. But such further adventures lie beyond the scope of this module.



Appendix I: Chases and Sieges

If the skeletons patrolling Kennmouth by night ever manage to surround the characters, the PCs' best bet for survival is to either barricade themselves inside a house or run away. In either case, if you run these scenes using the combat rules described in the SRD, the adventurers will most likely die. Below you will find variant combat rules for chases and sieges. These rules have been designed to give characters a fighting chance and to spare you the trouble of micromanaging one hundred skeletons. As usual, feel free to modify them as you see fit.

Chases

A chase scene occurs when the PCs decide to run away. The rules below assume that a large group of skeletons is trying to catch the characters. In any other case, you should use the normal combat rules.

Participants

If the characters decide to run away from the skeletons, it probably means that they're facing overwhelming numbers. In this case, you don't want to keep track of each skeleton's initiative or micromanage their actions. You should instead separate your skeletons into two pools: active skeletons, which are within 100 feet of the PCs, and reinforcements, which are more than 100 feet away from the characters. At the beginning of a chase, you should assume that 10% of all the undead surrounding the PCs are within 100 feet of them (rounded up).

Active skeletons are the ones that can actually prevent the PCs from escaping; you should roll their initiative and manage their actions as normal. They start the pursuit in front of the characters or on the sides, 2d10 x 5 feet away from the PCs.

The rest of the skeletons are reinforcements (the other 90%). They're a disorganized bunch of undead chasing the characters from a distance. They don't have an initiative count nor do they take actions, but some of these skeletons have a chance of catching up with the PCs at the end of each round (see "Reinforcements" below).

Running the Chase

Chases work like normal combat between the PCs and the active skeletons except when noted below.

Dashing

During a chase, a participant can freely use the Dash action a number of times equal to 3 + its Constitution modifier. A participant can only take one free Dash action per round, on their turn. A creature can take more free Dash actions during the chase, but each time they do so, they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution check. On a failed check, they gain one level of exhaustion at the end of their turn.

Taking Actions

Participants can take actions as normal. They can make attacks, cast spells, and so on. Because everybody is assumed to be running, participants can't take opportunity attacks.

The End of the Turn

At the end of each turn, remove from the battlefield any skeleton that is more than 100 feet away from the PCs and add them to your pool of reinforcements. The characters managed to outdistance these undead and they are no longer active skeletons. You then roll to determine whether any of the walking corpses catch up with the characters (see "Reinforcements" below). If, after rolling for reinforcements, there isn't a single active skeleton left, the PCs managed to outrun the undead and the chase ends.

Reinforcements

Undead are immune to exhaustion, which, in theory, makes them the most difficult opponents to run away from. Fortunately, the skeletons of Kennmouth are fairly clumsy pursuers. During the chase, many skeletons will tumble and fall, dislocate their knees, crawl on top of each other, lose their leg and hop back to get it, and so on (feel free to add a bit of humor and use every single horror movie cliché you can think of when describing the pursuers).

At the end of each round, roll once on the table below for every 10 skeletons in your pool of reinforcements (rounded up).

d20 Result

- 1-5 Four skeletons drops out of the chase. Something bad happened to them: other undead trampled them, they got stuck in a bush, they broke a leg or it fell off, etc. Permanently remove these undead from your pool of reinforcements.
- 6-10 The skeletons keep up with the PCs but none of them manage to catch up.
- 11-15 If any of the characters didn't move at least 45 feet away from the horde of skeletons chasing them since the end of the last turn, one of the skeletons catches up with the PCs (as if you had rolled 16-20; see below). If the entire party moved at least 45 feet from the horde, nothing happens.
- 16-20 One of the undead catches up with the PCs and becomes active. New skeletons appear 3d6 x 5 feet away from the characters, typically behind them, but some of the undead might have tried to cut the PCs off and appear in front of them or on the sides.

For example, if 54 skeletons are in your pool of reinforcement, you would roll 6d20. You would remove four skeletons from the pool for every roll under 5, and you would make one skeleton active for every roll above 16.

Note that the reinforcement rules above are only an approximation that allows you to easily determine how many skeletons catch up with the PCs each round. If the characters don't make an effort to flee, you should assume that the horde of skeleton catches up with them.

Random Events

A fast pace chases requires a lot of attention, and many are those who will accidentally tumble into a bush or run into a low tree branch while trying to escape their pursuers. If you wish to use random events, there's a cumulative 10% chance that one occurs at the end of each round. You can either roll on the table below to determine what happened, pick one from the table, or make up your own! Once a random event occurs, the probability of one happening resets to 10%.

d6 Random Event

- 1-2 A randomly determined character can immediately make a single melee weapon attack as a Reaction against an opponent standing next to them.
- 3-4 A randomly determined character can immediately take the Shove action as a Reaction against a creature standing next to them.
- 5 A randomly determined creature loses its balance because of a minor obstacle (it steps into a hole in the ground, it gets entangled in tall grasses, it tumbles on a bush, etc.). The creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage.
- 6 A randomly determined creature loses its balance because of an obstacle (it rams into a low branch, it slips on animal dung, etc.). The creature falls prone, and takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw.

Escaping with the Idol

The idol controls every single skeleton in Kennmouth. It instructs them to rush toward the PCs for as long as they're carrying the idol. Even if the characters manage to escape the chapel with the idol and outrun the skeletons pursuing them, they still risk encountering the undead that didn't participate in the pursuit. After the chase, the adventurers encounter 1d2 patrols of undead for every mile they travel with the idol. The size of the patrol depends on the number of skeletons that didn't participate in the chase.

Number of Skeletons	Die Size
90 to 116	d12
60 to 89	d10
30 to 59	d8
Less than 30	d6

For example, if 82 skeletons were chasing the PCs when they left the chapel, there are only 34 skeletons left in Kennmouth, and the PCs encounter 1d2 patrols of 1d8 skeletons each for every mile they travel.

Sieges

A siege scene occurs when the PCs are surrounded by skeletons and decide to find shelter in one of the abandoned houses of Kennmouth. Most of the buildings in the ruined village don't have a roof, or have many holes in the walls, and aren't defensible. The rules below assume that the characters pick the nearest suitable house.

The House

A siege is all about securing the access points of a house before too many skeletons enter the building. The number of doors and windows, and the dimensions of the house the characters find refuge in are determined randomly.

d20	Dimensions	Access Points
1-4	20 feet x 25 feet	1 door, 2 windows
5-16	20 feet x 30 feet	1 door, 3 windows
17-20	25 feet x 40 feet	1 door, 4 windows

If you have a large or particularly powerful group of characters, you might consider adding an extra window or even an extra door in each of these houses.

Running a Siege

A siege works like normal combat except when noted below.

Skeletons

If you use the combat rules as written, dozens of skeletons will swarm through the doors and windows of the house before the characters have a chance to take their first action. This is neither realistic nor fun for the players.

At the beginning of the encounter, place three **skeletons** outside each door, and one **skeleton** outside each window. These are the only skeletons that can take actions for now; all the other skeletons are assumed to be waiting for their turn to get in. Since the latter are passive combatants, you shouldn't bother tracking their HPs, initiative, etc.

On their turn, the skeletons try to enter the house, taking opportunity attacks if necessary. As soon as a skeleton makes its way inside, add a new **skeleton** outside the access point it came in through, and roll for its initiative. Newly added skeletons must wait until the next round to take their first turn, even if they rolled low on their initiative.

If a skeleton leaves the house or is forced to leave the access point it is trying to cross, for example, because the party cleric used their Turn Undead class feature, the skeleton is removed from the fight. Skeletons that were outside an access point are replaced with a new one as normal.

Barricade

As an action, a PC can try to barricade a single access point. To do so, a character must succeed on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check for a window, or a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check for a door. On a failed check, the skeletons manage to get the obstacle out of the way before the PC can secure it. On a successful check, the barricade is sturdy enough, and holds until dawn (the adventure can move on to the next access point).

Skeletons still behind the access point when a character seals it shut are removed from the fight.

Random Events

All sorts of unlikely things happen during a siege, many of which can quickly become a thorn in the characters' sides. If you wish to use random events, there's a cumulative 10% chance that one occurs at the end of each round. You can either roll on the table below to determine what happened, pick one from the table, or make up your own! Once a random event occurs, the probability of one happening resets to 10%.

d6	Random Event
1-2	Randomly select a PC who is standing next to a wall. A skeleton manages to punch a hole through the wall and attacks that character with its claws (+2 to hit; 1d4 slashing damage). Ignore this result if none of the PCs are standing next to a wall.
3-4	Tiles fall from the roof onto anyone in the house, or the skeletons manage to throw a large stone through a hole in the roof. Randomly select a target in the house (including skeletons). That creature takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a successful DC 11 Dexterity saving throw.
5-6	A skeleton manages to enter the house through the roof. The skeleton takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall. It can take its first turn on the next round.

Appendix II: Monsters and Magic Items

This section presents the new creatures, NPCs, and magic items that appear in the adventure.

New Monsters and NPCs

You can find below the new monsters and NPCs that appear in “The Chapel on the Cliffs.”

AINA

Medium fey, neutral good

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 54 (12d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Aquan, Common, Sylvan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)



Amphibious. Aina can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. Aina can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

At-will: *control water, create water, water breathing*
2/day: *augury*

ACTIONS

Freezing Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) cold damage.

Aina is a nixie seer who was once the friend and companion of Saint Sidvela. Aina is a benevolent creature who prefers to avoid combat when possible.

BROTHER MORTON

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural)

Hit Points 97 (13d8+39)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Condition Immunities exhaustion

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands common but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Amphibious. Brother Morton can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Brother Morton can make two attacks: one with his bite, one with his claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4+5) slashing damage.

Brother Morton was once a kind and pious man. When he accidentally triggered the ghastly curse inscribed on a strange idol that Mark Elson had dredged up his nets, he became the guardian beast.

CLAW OF THE DEEP

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 26 (4d8+8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4+2) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the claw of the deep can't use its claws attack against another target.

Drown. The claw of the deep makes an attack with its claws against a grappled creature. If the attack hits, the target and the claw of the deep sink 30 feet. If the target is holding its breath, it also runs out of air and begins to choke (see the "Suffocating" rules in the SRD).

Claws of the deep are the animated remains of people who have drowned, and whose bodies were never recovered. Their favorite tactic in combat is to sneak under boats and rafts, and capsizе them. They then attack with their claws, and try to drown their victims.

New Magic Items

You can find below the new magic items that appear in "The Chapel on the Cliffs."

Bag of Preservation

Wondrous Item, uncommon

This ordinary-looking shoulder bag protects its contents from harsh weather, humidity, and contamination.

Items stored inside the bag cannot become wet, even if the bag is immersed in water, and food placed inside of it takes ten times longer to lose its freshness.

The Hand of Sidvela

Rod, artifact (requires attunement)

The Hand of Sidvela is a withered human hand. While holding the hand, you are constantly protected by a *protection from evil and good* spell. It also has 7 charges. You can expend 1 charge as an action to produce one of the following spells: *cure wounds* (5th level version) or *greater restoration*. The Hand of Sidvela regains all its expended charges after spending at least 24 uninterrupted hours in its reliquary, in a place that is holy to the Church of Fareth (for example, the Shrine of Saint Sidvela).

Ulruf the Mage-Slayer

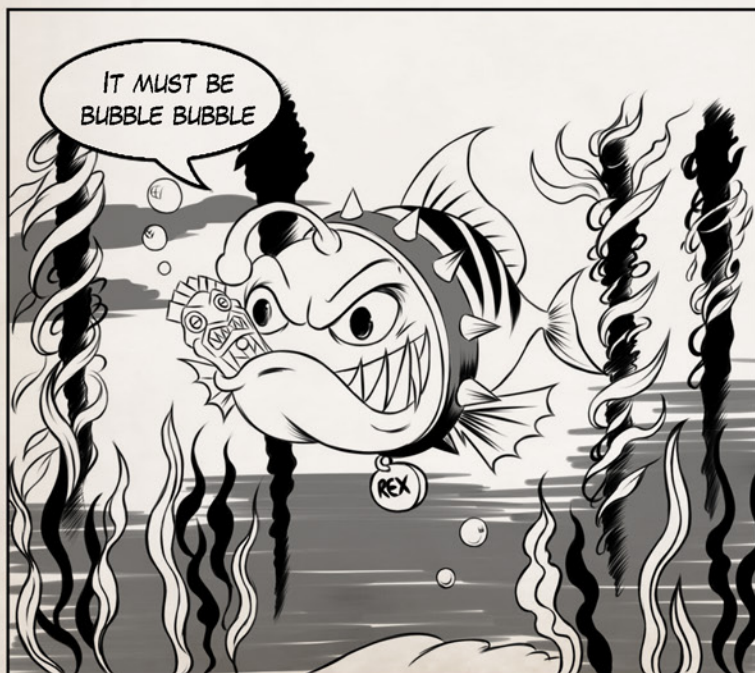
Weapon (battleaxe), very rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When used to attack an unattended magic item, Ulruf the Mage-Slayer deals double damage. This axe also has 3 charges, but using them requires you to be attuned to the axe. Once on your turn, after a successful melee weapon attack with the battleaxe, you can expend a charge to produce one of the following effects: *smite corruption* or *cleave magic*. The axe regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Smite Corruption. If the target of the attack has the ability to cast bard, sorcerer, wizard, or warlock spells, the attack deals an additional 4d8 slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or lose an unexpended spell slot of the highest level it still has. The target regains this spell slot at the same time it regains its expanded spell slots.

Cleave Magic. Any spell of 3rd level or lower on the target ends. For each spell of 4th level or higher on the target, make a Strength check. The DC equals 10 + the spell's level. On a successful check, the spell ends.

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