

# MAD ALCHEMY

WRITTEN FOR  
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 5TH EDITION

BY BRANDON BERNADEN





# CREDITS

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**Story Design:** Brandon Bernaden

**Graphic Designer:** Michael Stegen

**Cover Design:** Michael Stegen

**Interior Illustrator:** T. Sandre

**Cartographer:** Corey Johnston

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# INTRODUCTION

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This adventure is designed for 5 level-one characters.

## SYNOPSIS

A terrible accident happened to the family that ran the alchemy shop in a town called Larkin. A power-hungry sorcerer named **Rayor** poisoned one of the alchemist's sons and then made it look like the boy's fault.

Despite all of his knowledge of potions and poisons, the alchemist never found a cure. He was desperate to save his son, and if he couldn't save the boy's body, at least he could save his soul.

The alchemist secretly constructed a new body for the child out of parts he found in the cemetery, but many of the vital organs were missing. The child didn't have much time left to live. Out of desperation, the alchemist acquired the body parts of monsters from wandering adventurers. He used them to complete the body, and transferred his son's soul into it with an artifact he found decades ago called the **Undying Tome**. In doing so, he created

a **Stitched Ogre** filled with his son's soul that eventually bursts out of the alchemy shop and rampages through the streets.

The alchemist continued to test his son's body, hoping to find the root of the poison. If he could cure the toxin he could ultimately transfer his son's soul back into his original body. The alchemist worked night and day, even closing his business to devote his time to finding a solution.

The emotional strain and financial hardship was too much for his wife to bear. She left town with their other child, but by then the alchemist was so mad with grief he barely noticed.

Sometime later, after the adventurers are already involved, Rayor approaches the alchemist and offers the antidote in exchange for the **Undying Tome**.

## SETTING

Larkin is a fictional town in the southern part of the Sword Coast located a few miles East of Candlekeep. It's a small backwater town that became infested with petty crime over the years.



The town used to be the capital of architectural beauty. Artisans from every part of the Sword Coast traveled to Larkin for their annual festival where the mayor announced the winner for the most beautiful building. The winner received such notoriety that many nobles made their homes in Larkin and competed tirelessly to build bigger and better houses.

Tragedy struck Larkin one day in the form of a conjured hurricane. The unnatural disaster damaged all the structures in the town just before the festival and ruined Larkin's reputation. Most nobility left after that, and without their income Larkin was never fully restored.

Travelers passing through often catch glimpses of the town's former beauty much like how the pieces of a shattered doll contain fragments of its former face. The stone structures are old and dark with grime. The streets are uneven and flood with rain. Even the mayor's mansion, which is a single perfect ivory spire looks old and frail like a skeletal finger.

One remarkable aspect of town is the large metal grate in the center. It swallows the heavy rainfall so the town doesn't flood, but it inadvertently acts as a lightning rod.

## ROLEPLAYING IMPORTANT NPCs

**R**ayor is a power-hungry sorcerer who grew up in Larkin as one of the impoverished minority. He fought for every small victory he could until he discovered his innate magical ability as a young man.

Rayor left the town to become an adventurer. During his travels, he learned of the **Undying Tome**, a magical artifact that eventually found its way into the hands of the alchemist. He's distrustful, ambitious, and narrow-minded, focusing only on his immediate goals.

**Mallory Ravensall**, Larkin's alchemist, is mad with pain, guilt, and grief. He blames himself for what happened to his son, **Aram**, and is so delusional that he isn't even aware that his wife, **Arryndel**, and his other son, **Mikel**, left him a few days prior. He doesn't sleep and barely eats. He spends all his time in his lab letting his house and business fall into shambles. He's become a wiry, malnourished, stuttering shell of who he once was. The only thing he cares about is bringing **Aram** back into his old body so that they can all be a happy family again.



## ADVENTURE HOOK

The local authorities are highly suspicious of any strangers in the area because of the recent dead missing from their graves. Rumors are drifting through town of a possible necromancer nearby, and so anyone who isn't from the town is immediately arrested. The rumors are false, as Mallory was the one who dug up the corpses to build a temporary body for his son.

As soon as any adventurers are within five miles of the town's borders they are arrested and bound together with a magical chain that latches onto each of their ankles.

The chain deals lightning damage to the people it's latched to if any attempts are made to break or open it without the matching key. Thieves' tools cannot pick it.

The authorities haul suspects to the largest tavern in Larkin called **The Lazy Lizard**. The tavern is used as a temporary prison for all the suspects that don't fit in the jail, and it's uncomfortably full of angry adventurers.



# IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT...

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## 1. THE INKY QUILL

A mean thunderstorm looms over the town and throws lightning bolts down to a massive metal grate in the center of the flooded street.

The tavern is full of adventurers angry about being detained in such a backwater town. Many of them boast about their accomplishments while many more took the liberty to open the tavern's casks of ale.

The authorities throw the heroes inside the tavern and lock the door. Rumors are circling around and some information can be gathered by talking to different people, such as:

- The town's guards are rounding up any suspicious strangers in the area.
- The mayor decreed the inn be used as a holding place because the prison is full of travelers.
- A lot of corpses have gone missing in the past couple of days. Some people say they rose up from the ground all by themselves.
- The alchemist closed his shop suddenly a couple of days ago and won't open the door for anyone.

- Strange noises have been coming from the back of the alchemy shop across the street.
- The large metal drain in the center of town makes sure the heavy rainfall doesn't flood the town, but something has clogged it and caused the streets to flood.

After enough information is gathered, a loud pounding emits from the back of the alchemy shop across the street.

The solid stone wall explodes open and a mangled, Frankenstein ogre bursts through.

One of the rocks hurled from the explosion breaks the window and allows for the heroes to escape. Smaller boulders land in the street and stand a few feet higher than the water.

The Ogre is a quilt of flesh sewn together to form a body. The creature has an additional arm protruding from its back, two additional legs, though one is dead and is dragged whenever the creature walks, and it also has an extra head, which



is also dead and limp. Huge metal staples keep the different pieces of flesh from coming apart. People's faces are stretched and stapled over sections of the body like large, gruesome patches.

## 2. CITY STREET

At the end of every round of combat a bolt of lightning strikes the grate and electrocutes everyone standing in the water in the street, dealing lightning damage. The boulders in the street can be used as platforms to avoid damage.

The **Stitched Ogre** kills anyone near it. If there is no one to attack, the creature pulls people out of the tavern through the hole in the window. He's actively, aggressively looking for his daddy, and talks much like a lost, angry child.

The local authorities retreat into the tavern and defend the prisoners to the best of their ability.

**Aram's** spirit leaves the **Stitched Ogre's** body as soon as he dies, and appears as a pale boy with short black hair. Aram takes the guard's key ring (that frees the heroes from their shackles), runs into **Area 3** through the hole in the back of the



### STITCHED OGRE

*Large giant, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 11 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 16 (+3) | 8 (-1) | 16 (+3) | 5 (-3) | 7 (-2) | 7 (-2) |

**Senses** darkvision 60ft. Passive Perception 8

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (350 XP)

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Stitched Ogre makes three Fist attacks.

**Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d4 bludgeoning damage.



alchemy store, and disappears. The only people who see him are the heroes.

If at any time someone investigates the drain they find dissected corpses stuck in the drain below the grate.

### 3. THE STUDY

The hole in the broken wall is ten feet wide and ten feet tall. Broken vials, books, and loose parchment cover the floor. A door leading to **Area 4** is partially covered by debris, but there isn't anything in the way that can't be easily cleared away.

There's a broken chest and a finely polished desk on one side of the room. The chest contains the **Undying Tome** and a **Red Rune Stone**. The tome isn't a book at all, but a magical stone artifact in the shape of a book. It can be opened just like a normal book, and in its center, is a hole large enough for a rune stone to be placed. If players place the Red Rune Stone into the Undying Tome the book emits faint red light and they hear the following:

*"This is so exciting. Wait. Is this thing recording? Okay. Uhm. My name is Mallory Ravensall and I've made a breakthrough in alchemical transmutation. All I need is approval from the Acanium and I can begin—"*

*"Daddy! Daddy!"*

*"What is it Mikel?"*

*"It's Aram. He snuck into your lab and he broke one of your—"*

*"My lab!"*

The desk contains 5gp and notes on monster anatomy — specifically, how each organ functions.

### 4. THE LIBRARY

The large circular room is filled with curved bookshelves specifically made to fit the room. Curved mirrors fill every gap on the wall, including the space between bookcases. There is no light in here. If any **bright light** fills the room (i.e. a torch or the *Light* spell) the mirrors reflect and intensify it inflicting everyone in the room with the **Blind** condition.



A long table with unlit candelabras sits in the center of the room. The candles, when lit, shed **dim light** in a 5ft radius, thus allowing people to see without being blinded.

There is a hidden locked door behind one of the mirrors on the north side that leads to a long hallway. It doesn't have a normal locking mechanism, but instead a circular dial with grooves etched into its face. If a hero successfully lines up all the grooves (Intelligence check) the door unlocks. If they are unsuccessful the locking mechanism causes the trap door in the ceiling to open, dropping two **Giant Wolf Spiders** to fall on the intruders.

An open door is on the East end of the room and leads to **Area 6**.

The secret locked door opens to a hallway, five feet wide, fifteen feet high, and fifteen feet long. In the corner is a dead **Giant Spider** that has calcified and stuck to the ceiling. It drops if disturbed and bursts into a fine, spidery dust that causes anyone with weak constitution (Constitution Save) to vomit. The spider is a great way to scare unwary adventurers and to set the tone of the neglected home. The hallway continues twenty feet to the right to **Area 5**.

## GIANT WOLF SPIDER

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 3 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 4 (-3) |

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60ft.,  
Passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The Spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Smaller than the giant spider, the **giant wolf spider** hunts prey across open ground or hides in a burrow or crevice, or in a hidden cavity beneath debris.



## 5. SECRET LABORATORY

The floor is sticky with dried blood and is completely dark. There are shutters on the North wall that open to a window that looks out on the street outside.

On the East wall is a worktable with surgeons' tools that are caked with blood. **Aram's** corpse lies on the table.

Body parts such as severed legs, arms, torsos, and excess bones hang from iron hooks fastened to the ceiling by long chains.

In the Southeastern corner is a pile of refuse. Chairs, tables, rugs, tapestries, and a chandelier are just some of the objects easily identifiable without looking too closely. Mallory, in a scared state of panic, pushed everything in the room into one corner to make space to construct Aram's new body. Inside the pile of junk are **50gp** worth of jewelry, a mostly intact **Scribes' Tools**, and a **Green Rune Stone**. If inserted into the Undying Tome, the book will emit faint green light and this:

*"He has no idea what he's done. Aram drank my solution. Basil Breath, Slickroot, Orinfoil; he's lucky his body didn't collapse from all the toxins. I called my friend in the next town that owes me a favor. If I can get the antidote in time, perhaps I can save Aram's life. Or maybe I should disregard the boy's body and worry about his soul."*

## 6. DINING ROOM

A faint sound like a child crying can be heard on the other side of the door before the heroes enter.

An everlasting flame burns bright in a fireplace in the corner of the room. A long table with chairs is located in the center, and expensive, but meaningless decorations clutter the walls. Candles resting on the table shed warm, cozy light throughout the room. The largest painting in the room is a family portrait depicting Mallory, Arryndel, and their twin boys, Mikel and Aram.

The room changes as the heroes walk through it, so that if they were to look back they'd see something different from when they entered. This is because **Aram's** spirit cast an illusion to cover the mess,



but once the illusion is disturbed, the truth is revealed.

If the heroes were to look back or reenter the room they'd see that the room is dark and disgusting. The only light comes from the everlasting flame, and it illuminates roaches feasting on rancid meat on the table. The decorations are broken and shattered on the ground. The large family portrait is defiled: Aram's face is cut out and fresh blood stains Mallory's.

One door on the East wall leads to a hallway that leads to **Area 7**, **Area 8**, and **Area 10**.

The door to the South leads to the kitchen, **Area 6A**.

## 6A. THE KITCHEN

The kitchen doesn't have anything of note. The food is perished and the scullery is disgusting. Rodents and insects cover the floor. This is a good opportunity to elaborate on the wretched condition of the area, helping set the mood for the rest of the house.

## 7. CHILDREN'S ROOM

Aram and Mikel's room contains a wooden bunk bed next to a boarded-up window on the southern side. Two writing desks with children's drawings are on the other side. A large chest holds some toys inside, but the rest are scattered across the floor. However, the **Key** to the shackles is in the toy box. *Dancing Lights* fill the ceiling making it look like stars are floating in the air. There is a dresser filled with clothes, and a **Yellow Rune Stone** stuffed inside a sock. If inserted into the **Undying Tome** it says::

*“Rayor still hasn't come. The boy can't last much longer. I've managed to acquire...parts from passing adventurers. Arryndel is so worried for Aram that she can't even get out of bed. Hold on my dearest. What I do, I do out of love, and may the gods grant me forgiveness for it.”*

There is also a loose stone in the room that, if discovered, can be pried open revealing a small wooden box containing an arrowhead, a wooden dagger, and **3cp**.



## 8. MALLORY'S ROOM

The bedroom is lavishly decorated with a large fine rug that covers the majority of the stone floor, purple velvet drapes envelope the bed in one corner, and polished wood furniture sit by the other wall.

An **alchemy kit** rests in one corner with a variety of reagents. If mixed correctly (Nature or Alchemy check), 1d4 vials of **Alchemist's Fire** can be created. If the check is passed using Alchemy proficiency, 2d4 vials are made instead.

The desk is tidy, adorned with only a quill and a bottle of ink. Inside the desk are **10gp**, a **Potion of Healing**, and a letter sealed with wax that if opened, reads:

*My dearest,*

*I'm afraid. The quill trembles in my hand as if caught by the wind, but these words must reach you before I leave. If there was anything in my life worth remembering, worth holding close to my heart, it's you. You never knew, but at nights I would sift through the covers and wrap my arms around your chest because your breathing chased away my nightmares. I dreamt of your laughter, and I prayed for your smile. I'm terrified that by leaving I will never again know the kind of happiness I had with you, but after the accident I couldn't bear to live with Aram's memory. There's a caravan waiting to take Mikel and me somewhere far away. I don't know where. I don't care. I will always love you.*

*Affectionately yours,  
Arryndel*



## 9. STOCKROOM

The stockroom is a large rectangle with rows of shelves containing colorful draughts. More shelves cover the western wall where the heroes enter, and these are filled with jars of reagents: gross body parts, exotic plants, and other strange liquids. A lab table on the east wall is covered with burners, empty vials, a **Blue Rune Stone**, and bowls of ingredients. A suit of plate mail sits on the southeastern corner.

If placed inside the **Undying Tome**, the rune stone says:

*“It worked! My transmutation serum worked! I can’t believe it. The boy lives, not in his old body, no, but alive. I can’t risk the town’s people seeing less they overreact, so I’ve hidden him in the study. He makes such a fuss, but it’s understandable. Now, all I need to do is find a suitable, human body for Aram, and we can go back to being a happy family. Arryndel isn’t taking it well. She doesn’t understand, but once she can hold her boy in her arms again, then she’ll see. The whole world will see what I can do.”*

There’s a door on the eastern wall that leads to **Area 10**.

**Mallory** and **Rayor** argue beside the door — Rayor demanding where “the book” is, and Mallory muttering, “you promised” over and over again.

If the heroes are quiet, they can sneak (Stealth Check) up on their conversation. Mallory is thin, pale, and sickly, and cowers on the floor in front of Rayor. In contrast, Rayor stands tall in a long sweeping black cloak. Elven ears protrude from long strait hair. His face is badly misshapen from numerous burns, and a rune glows dimly on his forehead.

Rayor magically animates the plate mail if he thinks someone else is in the room, and then flees through the door to **Area 10**. If taken by surprise he’ll fight without having time to animate the armor.

Rayor grows increasingly frustrated with Mallory, and will eventually kill him if the heroes do nothing.



## ANIMATED ARMOR

*Medium construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)

**Speed** 25 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 1 (-5) | 3 (-4) | 1 (-5) |

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60ft. (blind beyond this radius), Passive Perception 6

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The armor is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the armor must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

**False Appearance.** While the armor remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal suit of armor.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The armor makes two melee attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

## 10. STORE PROPER

The front of the Alchemy shop is much what you'd expect to see in any merchant's store. There are long rows of glass cases showing off the numerous wares. Cards inside indicate what each potion does, such as "Love Potion" or "Hair Growth". There are a few potions that adventurers might find useful: two **Potions of Healing**, a **Potion of Invisibility**, a **Potion of Flight**, and a **Potion of Water Breathing**.

There's a door on the eastern wall that's locked from the inside and leads out into the street.

If Rayor heard the intruders coming, he escapes into this room after activating the armor. He doesn't stick around to fight knowing he's outnumbered. Instead, he'll try to leave through the front door (preferably with the artifact in hand) and blend into the crowd.



## RAYOR

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 16

**Hit Points** 18

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 8 (-1) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 20 (+5) |

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Conditions.** Once Rayor reaches 0HP the rune on his forehead shines with bright white light and explodes, killing him. Spiders, small frogs, centipedes, and snakes crawl out of the open wound, and his body deflates until nothing remains but a sheet of flesh.

**Spellcasting.** Rayor has a +5 to hit with spells and a DC of 13. He can use one 1st level spell per long rest.

**Spells Known:** *Cantrips: Ray of Frost, Dancing Lights. 1st Level: Witch Bolt, Shield.*

### ACTIONS

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

## AFTERWORD

What happens now is up to the heroes. The **Undying Tome** is a powerful artifact, and it whispers dark nothings to whoever has it. This is a great way to lure adventurers to their next journey. Perhaps they'll even find more rune stones along the way, maybe even more powerful versions of the ones they found in the Alchemy Shop. Who created this magnificent magical tome, where is he or she now, and what is he doing to get it back? This is all up to your heroes to find out.

I hope you enjoyed this adventure. Fair weather and safe travels!



