

The Butterfly's Dirge



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 3-5



The Butterfly's Dirge

By Benjamin Diebling

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Special Thanks

Thanks to Nadezda Ogorodnikova, Arnaud Ballerey, Samy Billioud, Damien Gosset, Fabrice Merabet, Simon Wasselin, Alexandre Bremard and David Antoniou for their feedback through the many hours of writing and playtesting this scenario. I would also like to thank Iris and Clovis for their precious support, as well as Nel for his continued trust.



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The Butterfly's Dirge

Introduction

Overview of the Adventure

The aim of this **FATEFORGE** adventure is to thrust the players into a somber and mature setting, with heavy themes such as the acceptance of a loved one's death, and the futility of struggling against fate.

FATEFORGE is a vibrant setting that offers large-scale intrigue, great journeys, and epic battles. This adventure, meanwhile, has a more intimate dimension and a heavy atmosphere, washed-out and dreamlike. Through it, the PCs will struggle through nightmarish visions melding with reality, and with very realistic moral choices. We therefore advise you to be aware of your players' sensibilities and how they might experience such a scenario.

This adventure is perfect for driving the adventurers to introspection: why did they head off to adventure? What is

the value of life to their characters? How are their families and friends doing? It may even be that one of your PCs is doomed (Curse? Disease?) and that this adventure about the inevitability of death helps them to accept their fate.

The adventurers will also have the opportunity to make an extremely powerful ally for their future adventures.

The game leader will be indifferently designated as such or as storyteller in the following pages.

In testing, this adventure spanned 2 to 4 sessions of 5 hours each.

This adventure is designed for a party of level 3 to 5 characters. However, the difficulty can be lowered for more novice characters.



This adventure is supplemented by four appendices:

1. Bestiary. Throughout the adventure, the names of creature profiles will be bolded.
2. Descriptions of the past heroes (sheets to be handed out to the players).
3. Map of Noctin (with annotations).
4. Map of the Underground for the Leader (with annotations).



Narrative Tips

You'll see this stamp several times throughout the adventure book. It will highlight tips and suggestions for framing, music, or descriptions. As game leader, you may follow these to play out the story in accordance with its intended design, or disregard them to follow a narrative style of your own.



Setting the Stage for the Adventure

This adventure is inspired by works that blend fantasy and mature content, such as: *Alice in Wonderland* by L. Carroll, *The Sandman* by N. Gaiman, *Silent Hill*, *Pan's Labyrinth* by G. del Toro, the *Bloodborne* video game, the *A Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise by W. Craven, *Paprika* by S. Kon, and *Dreams* by A. Kurosawa. Visuals and imagery have a tremendous impact on the audience's emotional response in all these works, and a great deal of the narrative is conveyed through the environment, costumes, sound, or even the lighting, rather than simply through the actions and dialogue of the protagonists. Using contextual elements to tell a story is a particularly apt tool for this kind of scenario. In this fashion, the setting is a tool that can be used to bring the players into a different atmosphere from what they are used to. In addition to the illustrations included in this book, which you can use to portray the scenery, it is advised to make prominent use of light and colors in your descriptions. For color, mention tints of violet, blue, and sometimes tinges of emerald. Restricting your players' imagined color palette to certain hues will naturally ease them into the ambiance.

Always describe where the light hits, but more importantly where it is absent. It's okay to leave some details aside: the players' feelings are what matters, not a perfect knowledge of their surroundings. This will enrich their experience and push them to ask questions. This method will suggest a particular viewpoint, anchoring your players into the narration. Therefore, don't hesitate to say, "The torchlight struggles to pierce the pearlescent fog around you", rather than give precise data such as the number of feet illuminated by the torch. This won't change the actual events, but will provoke a different reaction from the players.

The Story

Summary: The adventuring party, some members of which are suffering from nightmarish visions, are investigating a dire and mysterious plague, which leads them to a remote village. There, they'll have to find the source of the magical scourge, make sense of a place that exists outside of time, and face demons of the past. In the end, they'll find that innocence sometimes wears a broken mask...


A Nuanced Reality

The players will experience three distinct versions of the village and its surroundings.

- ☞ In the first version, they'll explore the village through the eyes of past heroes of legend. Like all stories, it's rife with exaggeration and metaphors, and so must be taken with a grain of salt. The game leader is encouraged to make this period vibrant and larger than life to bring greater contrast with the dark story awaiting the PCs in the real world.
- ☞ The second version is the present, when the players revisit Noctin looking for the artifact. This is the perfect time to make references to actions the players took in the past, playing around with the difference in tone between the versions.
- ☞ The third version only concerns those players able to perceive the Ethereal Plane. The village will always look more sinister to them, charged with an unsettling aura. They'll catch glimpses of silhouettes in the corners of their eyes; the forest's fog will be denser; they'll hear mournful whispers in the wind, and find symbols hidden in strange places. Confusion between what is real or not will enhance the dreamlike feeling of the adventure.

Atmosphere

In addition to the visions some characters will experience, which will fray their perception of reality, the storyteller is invited to sprinkle purely atmospheric details throughout the adventure.

Don't hesitate to take inspiration from the setting suggestions. You won't find any  because the adventure as a whole is set within the realm of dark fantasy and touches on horror themes.

In this adventure, it is advised to choose some musical tracks to play at select times rather than setting up an entire playlist to run all session long. Without going into too much detail, don't only use music to support your storytelling (a melancholic piece for a melancholic moment), but use it to provide an additional detail that will bring the scene, place, or character to life. It would not be particularly useful to provide a default playlist since musical choice should bring a personal touch of your own. Here are some artists that have inspired the writing of this adventure and that I've used during demos. I would suggest listening to them while reading through this adventure to see which ones connect with you: Jambinai (Connection), the OST of *The Last Door*, the OST of *The Village*, Heilung, Agalloch, Wardruna (Runaljod), Boards of Canada, Burzum, Wongraven, Die Verbannten Kinder Evas, Karl Sanders, Sunn O, Trist, Fever Ray, Nine Inch Nails, some songs by Erik Satie, Aghast, Coph Nia, Dark Buddha Rising, Dead Can Dance (Dawn of the Iconoclast and Cantara).

The Past

It all begins a few hundred years ago in the small independent village of Noctin, located near the eastern border of the kingdom. When a comet from Melancholia falls nearby, a temple in the local mountains is rocked, freeing an ancient artifact and a strange figure: the self-proclaimed Prophet of Death. This mysterious stranger, completely clad in white, infects the inhabitants of Noctin with all known diseases. With the artifact, the Prophet prevents their souls from leaving their bodies, keeping them alive and extremely contagious. Racked by pain and disease, the villagers fall into madness. Those who try to flee die as they leave, as they're no longer in range of the artifact's "protection". Noctin gains a sinister reputation after the discovery of the corpses of those who tried to find help outside the village.

After several months of isolation, the mysterious stranger sends a body to each nearby city and spreads a terrible plague. Even the most powerful clerics are unable to stymie the wave of deaths.

In response, Syrion the Headstrong, ruler of the eastern kingdom, summons his personal guard (embodied by the players, see **Appendix 2: The Heroes of the Past**) and tasks them to find the root of this scourge and eradicate it. The heroes accept, knowing this will be a suicide mission. After following a ghastly trail littered with corpses and devastated villages, the heroes of the past reach Noctin to confront the Prophet.

The Present

Back in the present day, a few centuries later, the players are searching for the artifact related to the legends of the past. They may meet patients afflicted with a strange disease and subjected to nightmarish visions showing a white silhouette. As they investigate, they'll come across witness accounts of a disease and a Prophet, as well as a legend of past heroes (which the players will play at this point). They'll understand they must go to the abandoned village of Noctin. There, the investigation continues with an ancient fable as the only clue: a tale of the eternal battle between light and dark...

As they explore the village, reality will quickly fray at the edges and show strange visions to some of the players sensitive to the ethereal. The quest will lead them to the heart of the mountains in search of what's going on and a cure for the disease. They'll find the trace of a tragically fated family and will be led into a labyrinth. Between horrific visions, investigation, and moral choices, the players will have to settle on the best way to end the story.



The Adventure's Narrative Elements

Noctin Village and its Surroundings in the Past

Once, Noctin was a dour-looking village, but one where life was good if you knew the locals. The players will never experience it in normal conditions: either the Prophet has already transformed the place in the past, or the characters in the present find a long-since empty village.

A scant hundred souls lived there, subsisting mainly on fishing and grain cultivation. The village is encircled with a low wall a little over three feet high, made of large stones. A huge tower, the residence of a reclusive wizard, used to welcome travelers near the entrance; it is now no more than a stone corpse. The most imposing building is a temple to Flora, overlooking the hamlet from a hilltop. The priest, who was the local authority, lived in this structure, which he also took care of. The Prophet took this building as its abode, giving the place a particularly sinister ambiance.

Thanks to the local presence of generations of talented sculptors, the cemetery was nicely decorated.

Here is a sample of Noctin's NPCs. The players will never meet them, but this might provide some depth to the village as the PCs explore it in the past and present.

The Ziaki Family

Noctin's craftsmen. They skillfully handled construction works and the crafting of various objects (dishes, door frames, furniture, locks, etc.). They were the richest family in Noctin, and they owned a huge mansion in the center of the village. Within the house is a woodworker's workshop, as well as a small art gallery filled with the family's many paintings and sculptures. The grandmother, a Shi-huang native, passed all her knowledge on to her son and her granddaughter, Nia, who was the same young age as another local girl, Agatha Whitters. They were held in respect owing to their know-how that gave the small town a soul: doors carefully adjusted, tastefully decorated lintels, furniture engraved with fine personalized details, etc.



The Whedons

The owners of the land preceding the bridge crossing the river, they were two families of fishermen with two sisters as matriarchs. The Whedons supplied the entire village with fish and grain harvested from the fields that stretched as far as the eye could see around the farms and along the road to Noctin. Their houses contain stores of potted salmon meat, dried fish, a small fish-glue workshop, etc.

Fuller, the Priest

A follower of a rather primitive form of Flora, this man lived on the road for a few years with Lilia Whitters. Upon finding Noctin, he felt he had found where he belonged and settled down. He was the first to be afflicted by the Prophet's enchantment and fought against the curse in vain.

The Dusk Mountains

By following the river north of the village, past the Whitters' farm, one finds a sacred forest where Fuller made frequent offerings to the spirits of the woods. Beyond this forested area lies the foot of a range of snow-capped mountains. They don't really have a name, but the locals call them the Dusk, because their size projects a shadow fairly early in the day, coloring the surroundings with the reflections of an orange, then deep-red sky.

The Ancient People

Once, a population of giants related to the dragonborn roamed these mountains and lived in its caves. The local clan studied the stars and movements of the planets, fascinated by the changes in the patterns of the light shed by the stars and sun. All their craftsmanship is related to this. Depending on how light strikes their creations, the object's appearance might change completely. To this tribe, the passage of time was a sacred phenomenon, and Death was a gift, ending one cycle to begin another one. These giants lived there as guardians of a temple within the mountains.

Nowadays, the only things that remain of them are their bones (a strange mixture of giant humanoids and reptilians), as well as engravings and the ruins of their old shelters, far too large for humans. The caves form a veritable maze and one can easily get lost for days inside them. Extremely humid and even flooded in some areas, these places are mainly inhabited by butterflies, giving them a strange dreamlike quality. A few subterranean

species have also taken up residence in the deepest galleries.

The locals don't venture into the Dusk, more out of respect for nature, due to their habits, or simply from a lack of interest, than because of any superstitions or fear.

The Mountain Temple

This ancient place was dedicated to the deity Death, worshiped under the guise of a dragon, and holds a portal to the Ethereal Plane. In the past, this temple was disturbed by the crashing of a comet, letting the Prophet escape with the artifact.

In the present, the portal is active. Agatha's body holds it open, changing space-time around the temple. The *Eulogy of Mortals* had once been trapped there along with the Prophet, whom the ancient cult of Death considered a blasphemer.

The Eulogy of Mortals

Wand, artifact (requires attunement)

The *Eulogy of Mortals* is a powerful object so ancient it cannot be dated. According to legends, it came from Death herself and is a relic of a battle against unknown opponents. The power it exudes only contributes to the tales that even the most renowned bards like to weave about the item.

Appearance

The Eulogy is made of a simple metal handle with no ornamentation, whose color varies with the light, from a deep black to a matte metallic gray. The end forms a slightly curved point, made from a shard of a dragon claw tip. If the shard is closely examined, it's found to belong to a gigantic creature, much larger than any species known on Eana. Doubts on the accuracy of this deduction remain even after prolonged study.

Effects

- Dead Magic.** The artifact emanates a quasi-divine energy, creating an area of Dead Magic (see **GRIMOIRE, Geomagic**) in a 30-foot radius around it. As an action, the wielder can shrink this area to a minimum of 5 feet or extend it up to a maximum of 300 feet.
- Inner Peace.** The Eulogy provides a feeling of deep calm and serenity, granting its wielder advantage on saving throws against mind-affecting effects.
- Temporal Nexus.** The object causes a distortion in space-time around it. Snow might fall more slowly, people might move faster (seemingly teleporting), projectiles may stop in their tracks and start to float around the wielder... In rules terms, the wielder of the Eulogy is considered permanently under the effects of a *haste* spell. They can extend this benefit to a number of creatures equal to their Charisma modifier, in a radius equivalent to the effect of Dead Magic.

Spiritual Confinement. Simply by exerting their will, the wielder can prevent the souls of the deceased from leaving their bodies. The artifact distorts the link between the Material and Ethereal Planes, preventing the souls from passing into the ether. In rules terms, this means spells and effects that can bring a creature back to life are not subject to a time limit as long as the creature's body remains in the Eulogy's area of effect. Even if a dead creature has spent 10 days after its death in the Eulogy's area of effect, they can still be brought back to life with the *revivify* spell.

Restriction

To control the item, the wielder must have extraordinary willpower, requiring a DC 15 Charisma saving throw at the end of each long rest. In case of failure, the artifact acts sporadically and randomly: all effects are inoperable, except for existing Spiritual Confinements and for Dead Magic, which is effective in a radius of 3d100 feet.

Destroying the Eulogy

Only Death can destroy the *Eulogy of Mortals*.

Game Usage

First of all, the *Eulogy of Mortals* is a plot device: it sets the Prophet's actions in motion, then Lewis's. Aside from these narrative considerations, it's a considerably powerful item that is very likely to end up in the hands of the PCs at the adventure's conclusion. How to manage such a situation?

It's possible to keep it out of the adventurers' reach, for example by having the Prophet or Lewis escape with it. The game leader may also decide that because of its function as jail key, the Eulogy only works within a few miles of the Prophet's prison. Or, once the adventure is over and the portal closed, the artifact may lose its powers, its purpose now fulfilled.

However, it's also possible to let the players enjoy the fruits of their labors... while reminding them that wielding such power comes with great consequences. The PCs now hold a legendary artifact. Beyond the powers it holds, the item should act as a narrative tool. What will they do with it? Should they destroy it? Is it a unique item or part of a collection of artifacts with even greater power? What ripples will it create? And most of all, whose attention will the PCs attract? Such a big change will certainly significantly alter your campaign's dynamic, while touching on issues of responsibility and the dynamics of power. In particular, if the PCs overuse it, it's quite possible they'll attract the attention of Death herself and her agents (both mortal followers and celestials), who will take the existence of such an artifact very seriously.





The Prophet

This enigmatic character is a legend.

A white silhouette whose face is hidden behind a silk veil, it is very tall (almost nine feet) and can move extremely fast while keeping constant control of its movements and space. It is the self-proclaimed Prophet of Death.

It moves without a trace (so quickly it appears to be at two places at once), speaks cryptically, and has a strange worldview, considering time to be a malleable dimension.

The wielder of the *Eulogy of Mortals*, it used this artifact to stop the diseased from dying after contaminating Noctin. With the inhabitants unable to die, their infections constantly mutated, becoming more and more contagious and deadly. Its plan was to send the population out to contaminate the nearby villages and towns to start a devastating plague.

It no longer exists in the present, killed by heroes of the past in the legend.

If you so wish, it's possible to set up a new fight against this being at the end of the adventure. If the players confront it in the present, a stat block is provided for it. In the past, it is advised to play the fight against the Prophet narratively rather than in strict accordance with the rules.



The Whiter's Farm (Lewis and Agatha)

In the past, Agatha and Lewis lived with their mother, Lilia, in a mill a ways to the north of the village. The structure is over a river that used to be surrounded by fields. Nets were sometimes set up to catch fish.

Their mother was a former adventuress who came to Noctin to take her retirement, joining her old friend Fuller. She instilled in her two children a thirst for knowledge, an active curiosity, and the willingness to question accepted truths. Agatha and Lewis weren't aware of all of Lilia's past. Lewis particularly enjoyed the moments they had next to the fire or on the riverbank, when his mother would tell them stories of her adventures, as reward for good behavior or simply because she felt like reminiscing.

Not long before the heroes came to defeat the Prophet, Lilia died trying to keep it away from the village. Agatha and Lewis had holed up in the mill, with their mother's last instruction to stay away from the hamlet and flee if everything was lost. They had enough food to last several months and travel packs ready if Lilia never returned.

When the heroes arrived in Noctin, Lewis decided to see what was going on. Agatha followed him in secret and died because of it. Lewis, after retrieving the artifact from the Prophet's remains after it was slain by the heroes, settled in the caves. Since then, he only comes back to the farm once in a while to rest and reconvene with the past.

Agatha

Lewis's younger sister, Agatha, was an inquisitive, cheerful, and impish little girl. She was also surprisingly mature, and impassioned about nature and its miracles. She liked to spend time near the river, watching animals frolic around her. Of a shy disposition, she only talked to her brother. She was fascinated by butterflies: their diversity, their colors, their strange bobbing flights, and the ephemerality of their existence.

She was seven when the Prophet arrived in Noctin, and she saw the change in her mother and brother's behavior, shifting from warm to anxious. Soon, she was alone with her brother and was filled with melancholy, as she didn't understand what was going on.

After the heroes' arrival, Agatha died, but she didn't find peace.

Agatha's Death

The cause of her death is at the game leader's discretion, but should resonate with the backstory of at least one player character (from the present). It might have been caused by the Prophet to solidify Lewis and the Prophet as nemeses, or brought about by a virulent disease bred by the artifact if the leader wants to stress an ineluctable, arbitrary fate.

Lewis put Agatha's body within the portal in the mountains. In so doing, he contributed to trapping Agatha in spectral form, stuck between the Ethereal and Material Planes.









Agatha loves her brother above all else and, surprisingly, has retained her joyfulness despite her unfortunate state. In truth, Lewis has found a way to protect his sister by taking in all her pain and negative thoughts until he can discover how to bring her back to life.

Agatha understands the situation and wants to free Lewis of his burden, but he's completely closed off from any such discussion. She knows that if he revives her, she will be changed by her stay in the Ethereal Plane. Killed by the artifact, she feels that something changed within her, which is the source of powers she acquired. Agatha is able to appear in the dreams of people close to Noctin, and tries to guide them to Lewis's laboratory. However, she lacks control over this ability, and sensitive individuals may think a malicious spirit is tormenting them. She often appears in a small white and dark violet dress.

Recently, she feels her brother getting close to his goal. However, she can sense that something else is trying to return to the world of the living with her, and realizes she mustn't let Lewis achieve his aim. By drawing on all her energy, Agatha is randomly sending messages through the Ethereal Plane, resulting in horrible visions among people sensitive to energies from this plane.

Characters' Sensitivity

Several times throughout the story, the occurrence of visions and their clarity will depend on the characters' sensitivity. To determine it, you can calculate a score from the following criteria:

-  Wisdom 10-11: +1
-  Wisdom below 10: +3
-  Cleric of Death: +5
-  Sorcerer (other than psychurge), Warlock, Wizard: +3
-  Psychurge Sorcerer: +5
-  Tiefling: +2
-  Awakened (not from one of the previously mentioned classes): +1
-  Elf: Elves do not dream, so they can't receive Agatha's visions.

This score only determines who is most prone to receiving Agatha's visions and nothing else. If one of your PCs does not fit within the above criteria, but has a background or narrative component that would be in line with such visions, don't hesitate to include them. On the other hand, try to avoid giving these visions to all the PCs, as it's important to create a gap in what the characters experience.



☞ Lewis and his Laboratory

Lewis was raised by an intelligent mother who pushed him to understand his surroundings and interfere with them only as needed. A young Awakened, hard-working, stubborn, self-taught prodigy, he grew up with his sister, Agatha, with whom he spent all his time. Despite his young age, he took his role as the eldest very seriously. He knew that his mother had a past full of adventures, and he himself dreamed of striking out with his sister. He pictured himself freeing towns from legendary monsters, winning epic duels sword in hand, and riding the most splendid mounts, clad in shining armor... but this was not to be.

Lewis is deeply scarred by the passing of Agatha. When he was barely eight, his mother entrusted his sister to him and left to stop the Prophet. Hunkered down in the mill for weeks, boiling with rage and a desire for revenge, he decided to venture outside when he saw a group of adventurers come to town. Unfortunately, his sister followed him without him noticing, and she died because of it.

Eaten with guilt, he found the *Eulogy of Mortals* where the heroes and Prophet fought, and vowed to revive his sister. Drawn to the temple devoted to Death, pushed by the artifact that sought to be returned to its rightful place, he set up a laboratory in the old place of worship in the Dusk Mountains. There, he saw his sister appear in spectral form with increasing regularity, until she manifested permanently. At first, Agatha was delighted, enjoying her new “life” in symbiosis with the butterflies.

In the temple’s library, Lewis found and studied numerous ancient texts. Guided by his extraordinary analytical mind and a powerful determination, he translated and analyzed the tomes at his disposal, sometimes in approximate terms. These books had lasted through the ages thanks to ancient crafting techniques. They mostly dealt with subjects such as necromancy, alchemy, transmutation, polymorphism, religion, myths, and legends, but also the ancient civilization’s priestly education. Lewis became a powerful spellcaster despite his young age, devoting all his time to the possibility of Agatha’s resurrection. Convinced that increasing his power would be the key to such a feat, he strove to master all subjects related in any way to necromancy.

In this place strangely cut off from time and space thanks to the artifact, Lewis only aged a few years while several decades (or even centuries) passed. As time went on, he built himself a small kingdom, fashioning servants to assist him in his daily life, refitting the nearby caves and cleaning up the giants’ remains. From these bones and parts from various creatures, he constructed a 12-foot-tall flesh golem, mainly to watch the surroundings and take care of Agatha while he worked.

There’s something aristocratic in Lewis’s speech and movements, the young man choosing his words and gestures carefully. His isolation has stunted his social skills, and he lacks any tact. His skin is pale from lack of sunlight. Accustomed to exploring the sprawling cave network, he has grown quite agile. He eats little and smokes a mixture of lichen and mild brown tobacco leaves he grows in a cave at the back of the temple. He spends most of his time in his study, in the celestial observatory, or looking for new specimens. His face is concealed behind multiple black, gray, and white scarves given to him by his mother. He only reveals his visage when feeling comfortable.

Lewis is close to his goal of bringing his sister back from among the dead, but it would seem that the only method within reach involves the sacrifice of an innocent life. Lacking the cruelty to kill coldly, he’s seriously considering sacrificing himself. But if someone were to get in his way...

The flesh Golem



A huge flesh golem roams around Lewis's lab. It mostly stays in the butterfly caves where it remains still for hours, letting itself be covered with insects—butterflies in particular. It also accompanies Agatha and Lewis on their occasional trips to their old mill. It rarely leaves Agatha's side, and as strange and impossible as it may seem, it appears to have formed a sort of friendship with the little girl's ghost. Agatha dressed it in a black and white suit she made, giving the marble-skinned giant a strange appearance.

The flesh golem's stat block is available in **Appendix 1**.



How to Introduce the Adventure

You have two options for including this adventure in a campaign:

-  **Start with the prologue.** Hand out the characters in **Appendix 2** and begin with the prologue. When the flashback ends, give the players their characters back and explain to them that they've just experienced a past event.
-  **Begin with Scene 1.** When the players come to learn about the legend, run them through the Prologue. Going in this order will, however, lose the element of surprise at the start of the game.

The Adventure

Prologue: Where Everything Began

Summary. The adventure begins with a prologue diving several hundred years into the past. In this flashback, the players play as a group of heroes sent by King Syrion the Headstrong to eradicate the threat of a powerful magical plague affecting part of the kingdom. **Appendix 2** details the heroes. You can randomly hand them out, or you can describe them and let your players choose. The heroes are all close to the King and have an unshakable loyalty to the kingdom. They have faith in their mission and will stop at nothing to end the spread of what appears to be the scourge of the century.

Some of the heroes also aim to eliminate the Prophet of Death. Everything points to him being the source of the disease and hiding in a small village called Noctin. The Prophet possesses a precious artifact originating from Death herself, sometimes represented as a legendary black dragon.

Depending on the importance and time you want to dedicate to delving into the past, you can start the story with the King's summoning, or when the group arrives in the village.



Death, Major Deity

Other names: Mask (Sand Kingdoms), Abysses (Barbary Islands and assorted island-dwellers), Blade (Kaani Empire)

Mysterious and often unfathomable, Death is a divinity that embodies the end, eternity, transience, silence, oblivion, and secrets. Her clergy are the inventors of seals and magic items that protect one's mind from attempts to read it or to coerce the truth out of it. Many adepts of

Death fight the undead and everything that goes against the natural cycle. They are also very involved in the study of mysteries. Other branches that worship Death exalt the morbidity and decrepitude related to her. More dangerous cults see in death the ultimate transcendence, and work from the shadows to bring it about by fomenting wars, fanning epidemics, and sowing the seeds of other disasters.



Why Play Through a Legend?

First of all, changing the setting, goal, and protagonists of the adventure will reinvigorate the rhythm and atmosphere of the game. Secondly, the aim is that when the PCs read about the tale, they feel like they have truly experienced it. The line between reality and fantasy should be blurred to fully convey one of the adventure's central themes: oneirism. Don't hesitate to stress each aspect of the legend to underline the epic nature of the tale and make it a memorable experience.

Where Does the Adventure Take Place?

The default setting is an area in the Drakenbergen. This mountainous region holds many small kingdoms. However, the adventure can be placed in just about any land by changing the environment and geographic details.

Bidding Farewell to the King

The Scene

To add some drama and turn this sequence into an adventure in its own right, here are a few scene suggestions you can include in the prologue. As early as the introduction, don't hesitate to emphasize the desperate end-of-the-world feeling and the good-and-evil duality of this part of the story. The King has organized a farewell ceremony. He delivers a heartfelt speech lauding his right-hand men before an emotional court, then ends with a more personal word to each of them, insisting on the sacrificial nature of this expedition and the last resort it represents against the death creeping in from the east.

The ensuing journey may have a symbolic and introspective nature for each of the characters (this is a legend, after all). To accomplish this, turn to classic tropes: personal flashbacks, memories coming to mind as they pass by a destroyed village or former family home, the characters sharing laughter and grief, then the slow descent into darkness before the first encounter with the Prophet...



Part of the eastern kingdom is wasting away and King Syron is at a loss. Is it some kind of divine punishment? The end of an era? The work of some malevolent creature? Whatever the case, Syron decides to gather his most valued men and send them into the heart of the infected region to investigate the cause of the epidemic. The mission is surely a one-way trip, but refusal is out of the question: there is no greater honor than dying for their kingdom. Equipped with a letter of passage and anti-plague tunics (made from linen or waxed cloth) including a beaked mask, the group must find the epidemic's source and, most of all, stop it.

A few days out of the capital, the players reach the kingdom's largest river. The army has destroyed the bridges and cut off any contact with the east, isolating and closing off that region. Military camps are scattered along the river, set up at the locations of any possible traversal. They're waiting for new orders in the snow. The group has a pass and are given a canoe to cross the river. Passing this point is to venture into a condemned region, where death and disease are rampant.

The Deserted Villages

On the other side of the river, despite a milder climate, the air feels heavy. Upon their arrival at the first town on their way, the characters discover a lifeless world.

Each village and hamlet experienced the same fate: a traveler, a couple, or a family came from a contaminated place with everything they owned, fleeing from something. The inn or other welcoming venue was quickly infected, and the rest of the village followed suit, animals included. Sometimes, an attempt was made within the first 24 hours to quarantine the sick, but in vain... In 3 days, most of the locals were dead, the toughest lasting up to 5 days.

Each town has its own set of dramatic scenes showing panic and horror: the sick hanged at mills and trees, improvised bonfires in the middle of the fields, children shot with crossbows as they tried to escape... As they follow the trail, life fades, animals grow rare, and the hot spot of this chaos reveals itself at the epicenter of the disaster: a village to the east, near the mountains. Noctin.

The group arrives at dusk. The atmosphere is cold and humid: a fine drizzle whips their faces and an inexplicable mist has crept over the area. As they come closer, they realize the place is deserted. The air hangs heavy over them as they explore the village, each sound seemingly distorted and any light appearing to lag in the air. The more sensitive characters quickly notice magic is haywire here.

Let the characters have a look before introducing the first diseased villagers. Tease the players: let them hear scraping, perceive far away lamentations, and find a few marks of insanity. This scene is the calm before the storm, the void before a torrent of action. When the group is somewhere they can be surrounded (such as the village's center), reveal to them silhouettes in the fog all around them. The villagers have plunged into madness, wracked by disease, hunger, and thirst. Their bodies are no more than shells carrying broken souls, dressed in tatters of clothes from within which ooze various corporal fluids. They give off a nasty smell that is choking, even with the anti-plague equipment.

No matter their efforts, the characters can't understand the "Help me" and "Save us" the villagers try to shout with their destroyed throats. They move slowly, and the players will probably take them for simple undead. Ravaged as they are, the characters can easily defeat them, or avoid them and keep their distance.

After or during this interaction, the Prophet will appear. Stress its presence and play up the scene: it does not walk, but levitates; it doesn't dodge strikes, but seems to slip through; its voice doesn't come from its body, but seems to echo from everywhere, etc. It starts by questioning the group, wondering about the reason for their presence here, playing as a cat does with its prey. Let the characters understand, after or during the discussion, that a great deal of its power comes from the artifact in its grasp and which it keeps hidden in its long sleeves most of the time.

The ensuing battle must be epic and cinematic: the heroes are facing the seed of the evil, the death of whom will destroy the plague's source. But they know they have little chance of coming out alive, and the fight will surely end with the group's sacrifice to kill the avatar. The scene will indeed end with the heroes vanquishing the Prophet with their lives as the price: feeling cornered, it'll draw on the remainder of its energy to destroy its opponents.

A Human Shield

If you want to spice up the scene, make Agatha and/or Lewis intervene in the midst of battle as things look dire for the Prophet. Agatha is taken hostage, and the scene climaxes at the edge of the river, atop the huge tower or a cliff, with the Prophet threatening to kill Agatha if the players don't leave. With the kingdom's safety as their goal, tragedy is unavoidable: the PCs will have no choice but to sacrifice Agatha to slay the Prophet, any attempt at negotiation being doomed to fail.






A Hero's Death

As the Prophet's claw pierced his heart, he realized this was the end. Falling to his knees in the snow in slow motion, arms limp along his body, he watched his companions struggle in vain against this quasi-divine opponent. After a few seconds that seemed like an eternity to him, bereft of any strength, he crumpled in the snow. He couldn't feel the cold as his body hit the ground. Instead, he felt himself crossing through a fine satin curtain. He experienced vertigo as the entire universe appeared to tip over, finding himself in a mirrored world, a dark place where everything looked identical, but seen through a distorted blue lens. Before he could understand what was going on, he felt his feet leave the ground, his soul slowly heading toward Melancholia, which lit the winter sky under which the heroes would end their adventures...

How is the Legend Passed On?

The game leader may opt to leave this question open—this is a minor point, after all—or choose an explanation such as:

-  **A witness from afar.** Someone (a bard?) cautiously followed the heroes and saw what happened. The events were exaggerated, altered, and embellished as they were put into writing.
-  **Visions.** The King's court included at least one mystic capable of perceiving the echoes of the heroes' last moments. The soothsayer's experience served as the foundation for the tale. However, the seer's perspective distorted the vision, becoming the epic tale known today.
-  **Survivor.** One of the heroes survived the battle. They told their story before succumbing to their wounds or disease in the aftermath of confronting the Prophet.



Scene 1: Return to the Present



The players are in the Free City at the start of the adventure. If you chose to begin the adventure with this scene rather than the prologue, the characters must be given some reason to be looking for information about the Prophet, the plague, or the artifact.

Whether they witnessed the heroes of the past's final moments or are motivated by other goals, the characters should be aware of the tragedy of Noctin. If applicable, adapt the legend's medium to the players' previous experiences. It may be an epitaph written on a monument depicting the heroes in the middle of the Free City, a tale written in an old book found in the depths of a library, or even a story known only to a single group of bards that were a challenge for the PCs to meet. In any case, the party now holds the knowledge that this story occurred in Noctin and that the artifact was there.

If the players went through the prologue, this will then be their second journey to Noctin, but this time in the real world, not a recounted one. If they believe they know what awaits them at the end of the trip, don't correct them and let them form their own expectations.

Why Are the Characters Going on an Adventure?

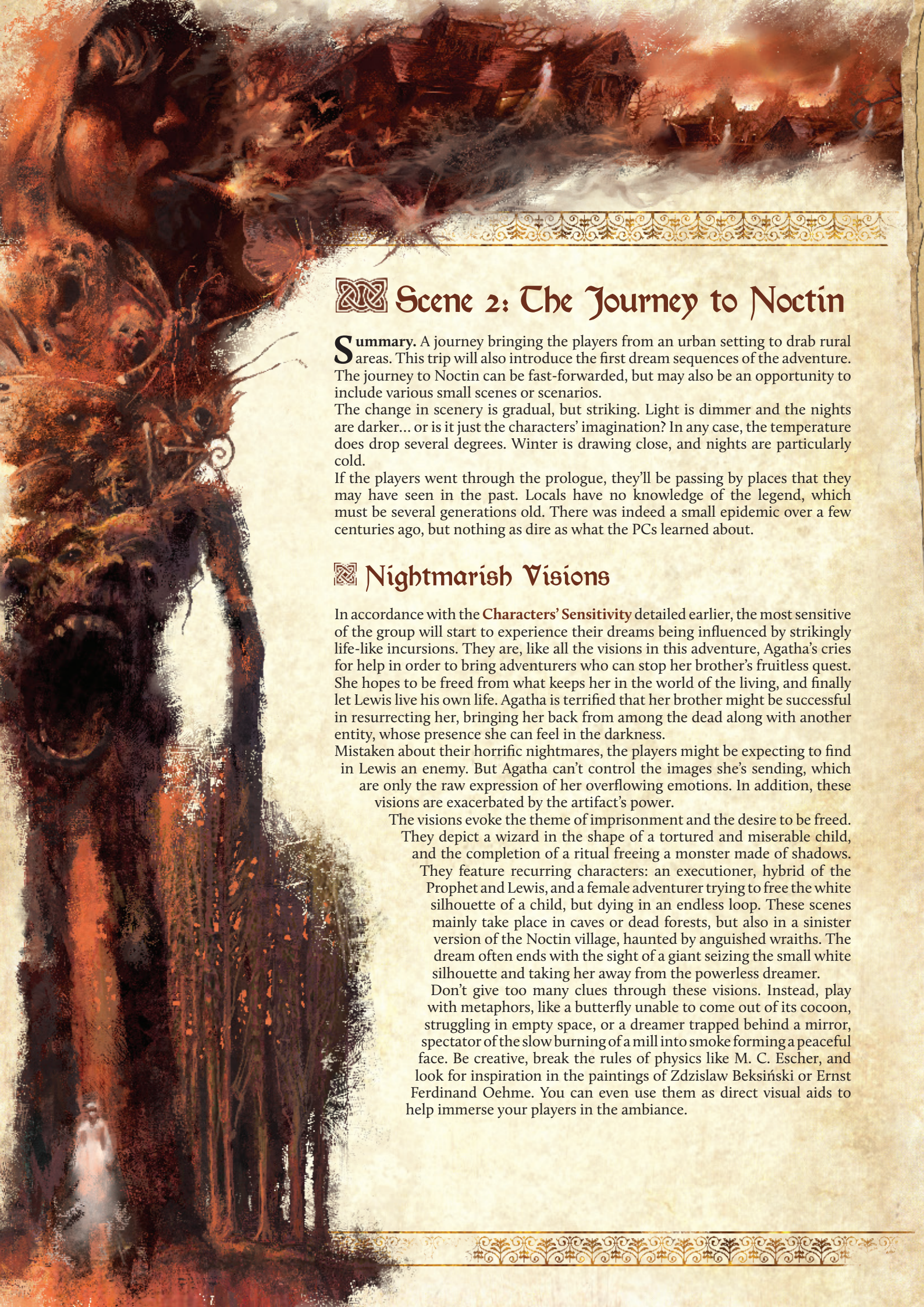
Many reasons might be pushing the PCs to travel to Noctin. Choose the one that seems most relevant for your group. We suggest customizing the adventure according to your players' preferences and the reasons their characters might have to go (money, power, information, personal goals...). Here are two examples:

-  **The artifact.** The group is hired to find an artifact that, according to legend, holds a claw tip from Death's draconic form. They may be petitioned by an order of wizards, Death's clergy, or a wealthy patron. They may also be looking for this item for personal reasons, the artifact reputedly containing immense power.
-  **Visions.** A sick friend, or even one of the PCs, receives nightmarish visions from Agatha, and this supernatural distress affects them mentally as well as physically. As they try to find out more, the characters come to learn about the legend. These visions may also be appearing to an important NPC, the PCs then being called upon to resolve them.

Starting Closer to Noctin

In this variant, the adventure doesn't begin in the Free City, but not far from Noctin. During their travels, the PCs are struck by Agatha's dream messages. A stop at an inn gives them the opportunity to hear a bard singing of the tragic epic of the heroes of the past. To the minstrel, the legend is fiction. Perhaps it stems from a real event, but in their opinion, it's mostly a fable meant to move and inspire.

This plot hook might suffice for a group of inquisitive adventurers, fascinated with history and mystery. If you select this option, scenes 1 and 2 will be combined, while the prologue will be related through nightmares experienced by the PCs as they draw increasingly closer to Noctin.



Scene 2: The Journey to Noctin

Summary. A journey bringing the players from an urban setting to drab rural areas. This trip will also introduce the first dream sequences of the adventure. The journey to Noctin can be fast-forwarded, but may also be an opportunity to include various small scenes or scenarios.

The change in scenery is gradual, but striking. Light is dimmer and the nights are darker... or is it just the characters' imagination? In any case, the temperature does drop several degrees. Winter is drawing close, and nights are particularly cold.

If the players went through the prologue, they'll be passing by places that they may have seen in the past. Locals have no knowledge of the legend, which must be several generations old. There was indeed a small epidemic over a few centuries ago, but nothing as dire as what the PCs learned about.

Nightmarish Visions

In accordance with the **Characters' Sensitivity** detailed earlier, the most sensitive of the group will start to experience their dreams being influenced by strikingly life-like incursions. They are, like all the visions in this adventure, Agatha's cries for help in order to bring adventurers who can stop her brother's fruitless quest. She hopes to be freed from what keeps her in the world of the living, and finally let Lewis live his own life. Agatha is terrified that her brother might be successful in resurrecting her, bringing her back from among the dead along with another entity, whose presence she can feel in the darkness.

Mistaken about their horrific nightmares, the players might be expecting to find in Lewis an enemy. But Agatha can't control the images she's sending, which are only the raw expression of her overflowing emotions. In addition, these visions are exacerbated by the artifact's power.

The visions evoke the theme of imprisonment and the desire to be freed. They depict a wizard in the shape of a tortured and miserable child, and the completion of a ritual freeing a monster made of shadows.

They feature recurring characters: an executioner, hybrid of the Prophet and Lewis, and a female adventurer trying to free the white silhouette of a child, but dying in an endless loop. These scenes mainly take place in caves or dead forests, but also in a sinister version of the Noctin village, haunted by anguished wraiths. The dream often ends with the sight of a giant seizing the small white silhouette and taking her away from the powerless dreamer.

Don't give too many clues through these visions. Instead, play with metaphors, like a butterfly unable to come out of its cocoon, struggling in empty space, or a dreamer trapped behind a mirror, spectator of the slow burning of a mill into smoke forming a peaceful face. Be creative, break the rules of physics like M. C. Escher, and look for inspiration in the paintings of Zdzislaw Beksiński or Ernst Ferdinand Oehme. You can even use them as direct visual aids to help immerse your players in the ambiance.

Adapting the Adventure to Your Players



More Action

If you'd like to add some more action into the adventure, the dreams and visions may draw the attention of creatures from the Ethereal Plane: **specters**, **shadows**, **wraiths**, etc. You may include an encounter with such creatures when the group arrives near the village.

No Fights

As you will see, this modular scenario can be played without any physical confrontation, aside from the dramatic battle against the Prophet as part of the legend. In this fashion, the PCs can experience a more contemplative adventure, more focused on mental and social ordeals. Of course, such a decision is up to the players, and should not be made unilaterally by the leader.

Fights in the Heart of Nightmares

The nightmares themselves can also be the setting for battles. In this case, the fight might be restricted to the PC(s) inflicted with visions, while the rest of the group enjoys normal sleep. Play these scenes as actual fights, which will end with the PCs suddenly awakening. Strange markings will remain where they would be hurt, but they'll otherwise only keep blurry and fleeting images of the experience, like regular dreams. As time goes on, each battle will feel more and more real, and so will the wounds on their bodies.

The fights happen wherever the players stop for the night, but everything seems dilapidated, ravaged, and the snow looks like ash. In the middle of combat, some PCs may have the feeling they're being watched, and will even hear a crystalline voice whisper to them in the commotion of battle. If a PC spends his action to listen and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, they'll hear "Free me... Help me...".



Scene 3: Noctin, Investigating a Morbid Landscape

Summary. The group arrives in the deserted village of Noctin, long since abandoned. The investigation quickly puts them on the trail of Agatha and Lewis, then takes them to the forest at the foot of the Dusk Mountains.

Death as the Only Landscape

When the players find Noctin, a stray blue and black butterfly flutters off toward the village, breaking up the monochrome snowy ground. The surroundings are frozen still, except for the insect and the characters' misty breath.

Noctin is a mountain village, so the air is thinner and breathing is harder. The atmosphere is morbid, reminding the characters of the place's tragic past. The leader should play up the shift in information between what the players read about (or "re-lived") in the legend, and what may have truly occurred. For example, a powerful explosion may have destroyed part of a house in the tale, but appear to have simply left a scorch mark on a wall in the present.

Here are the different locations that may present clues for the players:



Roaming the Village

Despite the buildings' advanced state of decay, their former use can still be guessed at (farm, church, fisherman's house, etc.) Refer to the village's description to sprinkle small details into the investigation, like a fishing canoe loaded with old nets near the two Whedon houses, remains of richly engraved furniture at the Ziakis', a book on magic buried in the tower's sprawling basement, etc.

The most sensitive characters will perceive a presence in the village and feel under constant watch. At the most opportune time, a new push from the Ethereal Plane into reality will occur, this time visible to all. If players stay too long in the hamlet or even spend the night in it, ghosts may appear, keeping the pressure on the party. These are spirits of villagers, tormented for years and

unable to leave Noctin. Use the **ghost** and **wraith** stat blocks—how many is at your discretion—and give each adversary some character via evocative details (rich clothing, the physique of a portly teenager, craftsman tools or fishing implements at their belt...). The horror of the undead is tied to the fact they used to be a human being before becoming an empty shell, only animated by hatred and thirst for destruction. Just as in the nightmares, some characters will be able to hear a child's voice, or even, during a lull in the fighting, catch a glimpse of Agatha peeking from behind the corner of a house. If they then examine the place, they'll find no trace of the child; only a damp smell. It's as if the little girl had vanished into thin air.

Near the River

By succeeding on a DC 11 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check, the characters can make the following observations:

Near the river, there are a few clues hinting at a child having come there: sticks put together to make figures, shelters made of pebbles, drawings of houses and butterflies in the dirt, etc. Sensitive characters will get a short vision of a confined child, suffering and trying

to escape. The PCs will also find tracks of a very large (probably between 9 and 12 feet tall) and heavy humanoid, on a direct route lacking any deviation or unnecessary movements. The tracks come from the north of the village, follow the river up to the mill, and lead on until they reach the foot of the Dusk Mountains. The players may deduce that a child came to play here, under watch by someone or something.

The Location of the Battle from the Legend

As expected, there are signs of a battle, but no bodies left. Given the length of elapsed time, determining where they were taken is complex. Only with exceptional skill (a DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check) or magical aid will a character be able to

distinguish any tracks. Even then, they'll only find a few ancient marks of armor or weapons nicking the walls on the way to the north exit of the town. The bodies were dragged out of the village in the same direction as the tracks near the river.

The Temple Used as Lair by the Prophet

The temple is huge and every sound reverberates, distorting with each echo, creating an uneasy atmosphere. Light seems to have a hard time shining through the stained glass on the sides, and the air is thick with dust. This place holds two pieces of information:

🔑 **DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check.** Flora's iconography has been subverted to create a darker feeling, or has been replaced with piles of mortuary symbols.

🔑 **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check.** More recently, the place was sacked by someone angry: someone small and not very strong. It was since left as-is. All books were also removed from the various bookshelves. (Lewis gathered them, like all those in the village).

If the players have gathered enough clues, they should be continuing their investigation looking for a house with a child, or following the tracks near the river leading

north. If the players have no idea how to proceed, Agatha may send them visions of the mill on the riverbank, or the butterfly cave further north. In any case, the village will provide no additional answers, and the party will have to press on to find out more.



If you wish the adventure to feature a longer investigation in the village, you may consider having the players need to come in contact with a spirit from the past to ask it questions. It'll remain cryptic, but shine some light on certain clues, confirming or disputing the heroic legend as the PCs know it. During the investigation, they may also come across plague doctor tunics, have to explore the tower's or temple's basement, or spend the night in the silent village. Having to placate an angry **wraith** in the Ziakis' huge mansion, filled with exotic-looking statues and curios (perhaps animated?), can make for a great scene of gothic horror.

The Old Mill

Following the river, the path leads to a mill surrounded by a few wild apple trees. A magnificent tomb is located at the foot of the largest one, from which a few butterflies fly off at the players' approach. The tomb is left anonymous and looks too perfect to have been made without resorting to magic (DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check). The place appears to be regularly visited (DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check).

The mill contains many old objects that have remained in good condition. On the ground floor, a large room mostly filled by the mill-wheel was used as a kind of workshop. The water wheel still turns with the current's whims, but almost all the paddles are broken or rotten. The room is cut off from the rest of the mill house, and can only be accessed from outside.

By taking an outside staircase, a large living room can be accessed. It contains a lot of cloth, a loom, an oven surrounded by empty sacks of grain and kitchen utensils, games, and a lot of room for books. The place looks welcoming, arranged tastefully and in an orderly manner. A pleasant tobacco smell wafts in the air. The kitchen is very well furnished, with a spacious wood countertop and two stools, so children (or small creatures) can help. The shelves are stocked with small jars filled with rare spices, several of which are missing. Exotic utensils are laying around or hanging from the walls. Several hooks are empty. This would all indicate that the household's kitchen was very active.

A wooden stairwell leads to the upper floor, with three rooms and a bathroom, all of which are still in good condition.



A New Vision

Include a more precise vision during the mill's exploration. Since the PCs are now closer to Agatha's body, the illusory scenes become sharper and more violent.

The silhouettes of two children running in the house pass through one of the PCs. As they turn around to look at them, they're suddenly in a cave, surrounded by millions of butterflies. All of a sudden, all the butterflies stop in midair for a few seconds, then fall to the ground, dead. A black silhouette observes the scene from a corner of the room.

Someone has recently played in Agatha's room. Butterflies were drawn all over the walls, along with an image of Lilia facing off against the Prophet. A scene similar to that of the river is represented by rag dolls and pieces of sanded wood. Only the most sensitive characters will feel a story there, the others only seeing randomly placed toys.

Lewis's room is rather cold, and there's nothing interesting in there. It appears to have been emptied of anything important; indeed, Lewis has long since gathered everything that mattered to him.

The Start of Another Story...

Lilia had a full and adventurous life throughout many parts of Eana. Her personal chest, filled with old belongings, may be used at your convenience as a source of hooks to prepare upcoming adventures. For example:

- ☞ Lilia searched for an artifact for a long time, and an annotated journal tells of her unfinished journey.
- ☞ The PCs find a map written in an ancient tongue, along with an old key.

Note that as detailed below, taking Lilia's things will have consequences for the PCs.



Lilia's room is decorated as abundantly as the rest of the house. It looks clean, taken care of, and entering it gives the feeling of seeing a sacred site. A ray of light from the window illuminates the wooden mannequin in the middle of the room, which proudly displays equipment: Lilia's. The armor carries the traces of many battles, and the most recent looks more serious than the others: around a laceration seemingly inflicted by a single claw, the leather and metal appear rotten and corroded for a tenth of an inch. The armor is decorated with many colorful pieces of cloth and ribbons from distant lands. These are the following protective ribbons: *good luck charm*, *charm of good health*, and *charm of seduction* (see **The Ribbons**).

If they decide to take something, the PCs will feel like they're robbing a sanctuary. The PCs who received visions from Agatha will feel uneasy with the idea. As for Lilia's exact equipment, choose something that may interest your players, but not powerful to the point of making it too tempting. Choosing to raid the room of Agatha and Lewis's mother will, of course, have consequences later. If they hold off on it, the PCs will get the opportunity to come back and retrieve them later in the adventure, with Lewis or not.

With the mill visited, the PCs can continue toward the

Dusk Mountains, whether by following the tracks left by the golem, looking for butterfly nests, or deciphering the visions touching some players. At this point in the story, they should be aware that a young girl is being held captive somewhere, and that she is the source of the telepathic messages.



The Ribbons

Woven ribbons are fairly common magical items and have many uses: reinforcing the trim, decorating one's clothing, making straps and belts... The magical effects of ribbons are generally minor:

- 🔮 **Good luck charm.** The wearer has advantage on a roll of their choosing, once per day.
- 🔮 **Charm of good health.** The wearer has advantage on all saving throws against disease.
- 🔮 **Charm of seduction.** The wearer has advantage on Charisma (Deception, Persuasion) checks to seduce.

Scene 4: Dusk Forest

Summary. Still on the trail of answers, the artifact, and the source of the visions, the party delves into the woods surrounding the Dusk Mountains. They discover a forest overrun with magic and the Ethereal Plane, and will meet Lewis's golem there.

Drawing closer to the mountains, the occasional presence of trees gets more frequent, until they form a dense thicket that impedes progress and sight ahead. The tracks slowly disappear as they go deeper into the forest. The air is heavy, and the characters can increasingly tell that something isn't right. A success on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal a growing entropy in the magical currents as they venture deeper into the woods. Agatha observes the PCs as soon as they enter the forest, and the Golem isn't far.

The forest around the characters has something magnificent and deeply morbid about it. The leafless trees look like they're slowly swaying, like in a ballet. Footsteps seem distorted. The place is magically haywire, and its very nature is affected by it. The forest is strangely decorated by many wooden sculptures and altars made by Fuller, the former village priest, adding to the heavy and mystical aura.



Into the Woods

As the characters enter the woods, the sky seems to gradually change its hue, quickly slipping toward a bold red color. On a nearby tree, a moth with a purple body mottled in white is trapped in a spider web. It struggles, catching the characters' attention. The web is located near a moth nest in the hollow tree. By dint of vigorous struggling, the insect starts to escape but remains linked by a few strands of sticky silk for a few long seconds. Against all odds, as it frees itself and it seems like victory is assured, it flies right into another section of web. A black and white spider a dozen inches across crawls from behind the tree, seizes the moth and, when it stops struggling, weaves a cocoon around it.

The Dryad

When the PCs are deep enough within the forest, a creature emerges from one of the trees, approaching the party. It's a very ancient **dryad**, thought of as the spirit of the forest. She's curious and comes closer to touch them and get a better look. She sniffs their intentions, wondering what these humanoids are doing here.

- 🔮 With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check, the PCs can understand her role in the forest, which is to maintain wildlife despite the Ethereal Plane's emanations. Although the "infection" of surrounding magic has gotten to her and given her a fearsome appearance, she maintains her position as impartial guardian.
- 🔮 The dryad only understands and speaks an extremely ancient dialect of Sylvan. Even a character fluent in Sylvan will only be able to communicate haltingly with her. She's only aware of the region's history from the perspective of woodland creatures. She speaks cryptically, and can serve as a way for the game leader to slip in bits of information about the butterfly cave or the Golem.
- 🔮 If the characters in any way disrespect her or the surrounding nature, several other **dryads** made of dead wood, butterfly cocoons, and spider nests will attack them. Unless the PCs stop her, she will then run away and fuse with a tree, disappearing without a trace.



If you wish to prolong the forest crossing or make it less linear, you can say that time and space are messy within. The characters will feel like they're going in circles, the forest slowly turning into a maze. After a few hours, the sun is still in the same spot in the sky, and the PCs find themselves back out where they started! When going back into the woods, they might understand (DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check) that they must make a pact with the forest to be let through. If they do so, the dryad will come to meet them. Only under these conditions (or if the dryad is killed) will they be able to reach the cave entrance.

Meeting the Golem

The PCs may run into the **giant flesh golem** not far from where the most recent tracks end. To reach it, they'll have to look around and follow its path of giant footprints. Players who succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check will realize it's the work of a powerful necromancer. It stands straight and blends in with the trees in the gloom, due to the evening's interplay of light and shadow. It remains still and won't attack them, but will defend itself if the players are hostile.

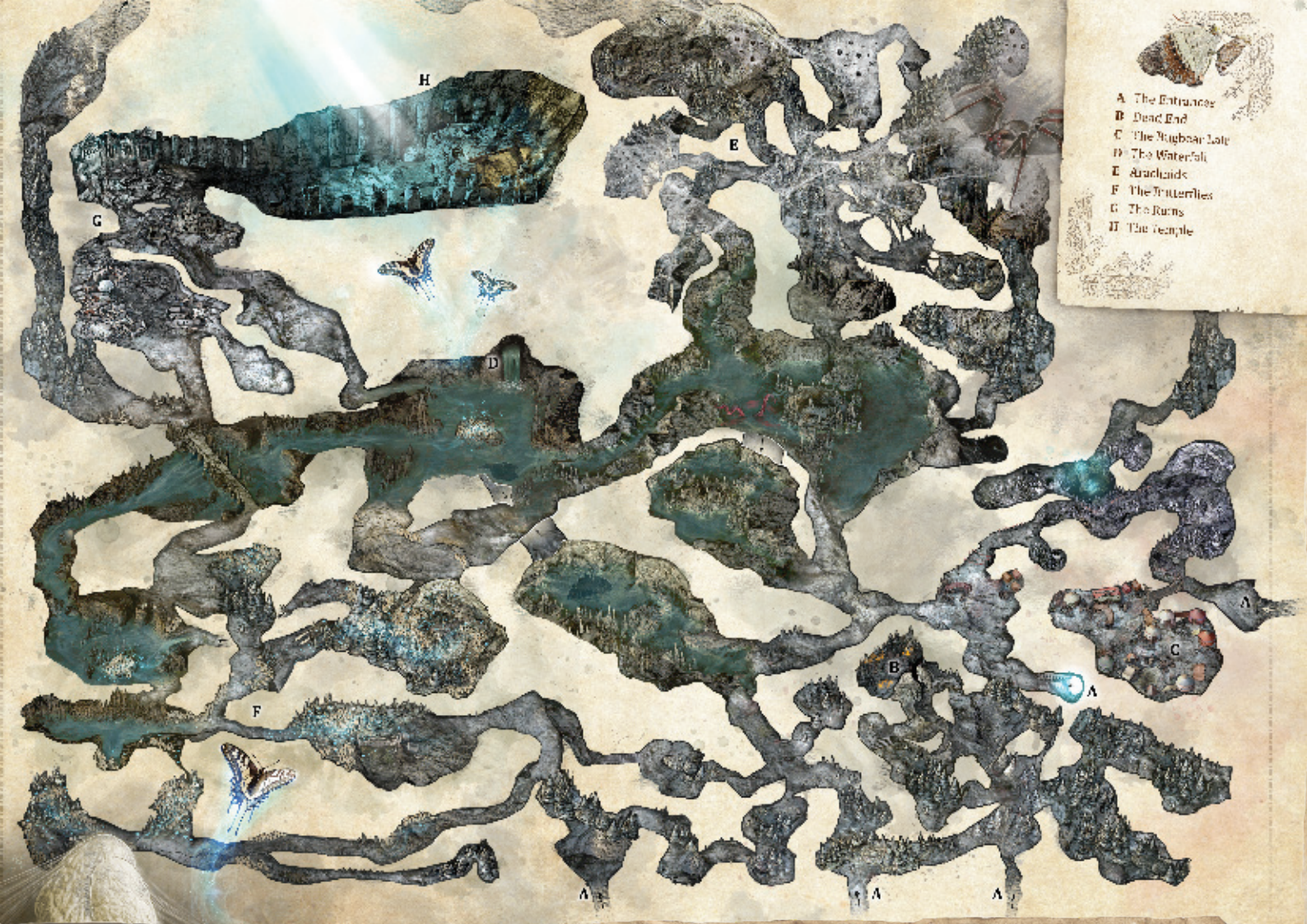
☞ If the Golem is slain, the nightmarish visions will become more virulent, dark, and aggressive. None of the party members will be able to sleep until the end of the adventure. In addition to the levels of exhaustion caused by this, their sanity will deteriorate, giving way to short-term madness (Hallucinations, Suggestibility) or even long-term madness (Hallucinations, Paranoia). Agatha will try to manipulate the PCs into killing each other by using elaborate illusions.

☞ If the characters let the Golem be and come back later, it will have simply disappeared. Agatha will put her trust in the adventurers and will try to guide them to Lewis's lair. She'll leave tracks in the caves, her visions will be a bit clearer, and she'll attempt to convey clues to explain the situation to the PCs.

☞ By succeeding on a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check, the PCs will be able to follow the Golem's tracks back to the caves.

Don't Turn Around...

Each step forward, more difficult than the last, pushed them further into this labyrinth of trees and briers. Each branch clawing at their faces made the journey more and more arduous. The eeriness of the magic pervading the area didn't help with concentration, and they belatedly realized that what they took for a tree was actually a huge humanoid shape. Its face was partially hidden by shadow and high branches. If they wanted to see what the giant looked like, they'd have to get closer to it...



Scene 5: The Butterfly Empire

Summary. Depending on your tastes and those of your players, the cave exploration can either be very quick or very long. This part's difficulty will depend on the players' previous choices. You can use the map included in **Appendix 4** for a methodical "dungeon"-style exploration while keeping in line with the adventure's ambiance. You can also use this area to include hooks to other adventures. By fitting this module and others together, you will make the world of Eana all the more real in the eyes of your players.

As they reach the Dusk, the sky is bright red. There are many possible entrances, and it's best to know where one's going, because once in the caves, it's easy to get lost. Many paths lead to dead ends, flooded areas, or the territory of possibly hostile subterranean species. The PCs will experience a constant humidity, and will find many traces of both recent and ancient forms of life, including skeletons with strange bones...

Exploring... and finding the Way

Agatha will remain not too far from the adventurers, heightening their feeling of being watched. She will point them one way or another. If the characters slew the Golem and/or stole items from Lilia, Agatha won't trust them. She'll lead the PCs to dangerous areas, far from Lewis's laboratory. On the other hand, if they understood the Golem meant no harm and were respectful in the mill, Agatha will show them the right way. The young girl remains a shy and mysterious being, however, and the clues she gives to the party will take the shape of feelings or intuitions. One of the characters might hear a child's voice from one of the passages, see out of the corner of their eye a silhouette in the distance, catch a glimpse of a burst of light or a butterfly, etc.

Describing Progress Through the Caves

Don't play this part of the adventure by detailing and describing each step forward. Don't hesitate to fast-forward, sprinkle auditory or olfactory details, add in visions that put in question what is real, etc. The area's layout intentionally includes a path without perils, but if you want the PCs to explore this maze, Agatha might offer more irregular visions—they might even be totally absent—and the Golem's trail may be too hard to track. The players will then be left to their own devices to find the path leading to Lewis.



A. The Entrances

These caves have several entrances. If the PCs look for tracks (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check), they'll be able to find traces of Lewis and the Golem's passage near the southern entrances. Around the eastern entrances, they'll see humanoid (bugbear) and wolf tracks instead (DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check to identify them).

B. Dead End

At the end of the cave, an ancient bandit cache can be discovered, hidden by a trick of the shadows. The entrance and walls carry the signs of offensive spells. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check will give the characters understanding of what occurred: a spellcaster (Lewis) found himself face to face with a group of thugs (deserters or former prisoners trying to hide at the edge of the kingdom). The battle was brief and one-sided: the child, not fully mastering his power, crushed his victims quickly despite their numbers. He then clearly brought the bodies somewhere else, since there are none left there.

C. The Bugbear Lair

Over a dozen **bugbears** and their **bugbear chief** are dressed in warm clothes and sheltered in the caves for winter. There's among them a crone (the **bugbear shaman**) and two children always hiding behind their mother's legs. This small tribe comes there every year, like a pilgrimage, to await the end of winter. They believe their god, which their shaman can commune with, makes winter go by faster, like a blessing. They're accompanied by two **worgs** that are used as the shaman's mounts and pack animals for heavy supplies. They're not hostile and stick to their part of the maze, feeling the powerful magic of the place. However, if the adventurers show up with weapons drawn, they won't hesitate to be threatening or resort to violence to defend the small tribe.

D. The Waterfall

A waterfall tumbles out of a hole in the cave's ceiling, which leads outside. A shaft of light illuminates the area in daytime. As the adventurers come closer, the noise of the waterfall increases and humidity permeates the walls and ground, turning them slippery. Because of the echoes, anyone near the waterfall is **deafened**.

Some zones are flooded and lead to much deeper pockets. To reach E, one must swim and pass by a small island. If you want to include an action scene, Agatha, fearing the PCs, may lead them to a dead end where a **rabid giant octopus** resides. Depending on the party's level, you may place several of these creatures here.

The battle will be especially challenging as a result of the water cutting down the PCs' mobility, and the waterfall's roar hindering their communications. If they push far enough, they may reach area F. Looking up at the sky through the waterfall's hole, the PCs may notice birds flying abnormally fast outside, while clouds and stars visibly move.

E. Arachnids

If the adventurers get here, it's because Agatha decided to lure them away from Lewis and bring them to a trap, or because the players wanted to explore the gloomy labyrinth.

As they arrive in this part of the caves, the PCs notice several cavities of varying sizes and heights. Succeeding on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal spider silk on the walls and an increased amount of spider webs. Only at that point will they realize they're smack in the middle of a nest of **giant spiders**, which will start to spring forth all around. These spiders have mutated as a result of the place's strong magic. There are many of them, and they attack as a pack. Play around with the description of a **spider swarm** getting tangled in the PCs' hair, slipping into their sleeves, and entering their mouths while their giant brethren try to pierce the adventurers with their heavy legs.

The PCs can make it out either by fighting or fleeing. The purpose of this encounter is to indicate this isn't the right direction, and, more to the point, to make them come out of the fight wounded and horrified, their bodies bearing the marks of many tiny spider bites.



G. The Ruins

This part of the cave contains remains of the ancient civilization of giants. Time has done its part, and only the ruins of ancient shelters, pottery fragments, and chips of paint are left. A few butterflies venture into this part of the cave, the only living presence here. If the PCs search the ruins (DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check), they'll find a chamber carved in the stone, where the ground bears recent markings. This is where the flesh golem was constructed. Motivated by a sort of strange sense of familiarity, it sometimes comes here for a few hours, staring at a large alcove that must have once been a giant couple's bed. Agatha lets it do so, and the PCs may come across it here if they didn't slay it in the forest. Once again, it will not react to their presence unless they attack it.



f. The Butterflies

The purpose of this area will be to instill in the players a mixture of fear, eeriness, and awe.

The characters enter a tunnel filled with hundreds of butterflies. They flutter about in innumerable nuances of green and blue, and the walls are covered in cocoons of the same colors. A pungent smell—a mix of incense and amber—permeates the area, assailing visitors' throats and nostrils. The sensory overload may cause the adventurers to feel threatened, but nothing here is dangerous or harmful, and despite the swarming nature of the cave, it exudes a serene aura. The butterflies react to the visitors' sudden arrival, floating around them and delicately landing on their equipment, leaving a light and harmless bluish powder in their wake.

However, if the PCs damage the insects or their habitat, the **swarms of otherworldly butterflies** will attack. The game leader can freely choose their number, or even make new swarms appear as soon as one is defeated. Present everywhere, and frighteningly powerful for their size, the butterflies may pose a serious threat to the party, and retreat may be the best plan for survival.

The butterflies are an unknown and unique species. The artifact's presence and Agatha's love for these creatures have created a place cut off from time and space. Some butterflies give off a greenish light, others a bluish one, producing a strange aerial ballet. If the adventurers haven't earned Agatha's trust, the lair will seem dark to them, and the longer they stay, the more in danger they will feel. However, if Agatha relies on them, this is where she'll appear to them clearly for the first time, giving them the chance to ask a question or two before vanishing again. The players will thus be able to learn a bit more about what Agatha is doing here, what keeps her captive, what her location is, etc. It will also become clear to them that in addition to fearing strangers, Agatha can manifest only occasionally, and that it taxes her greatly.



h. The Temple

A pathway lined with columns carved out of the rock leads to a gigantic temple, illuminated by a skylight that gives a view outside. The hole was created a few centuries earlier by the crashing of the comet that freed the Prophet and the artifact. The layout is simple, in an unknown style that demonstrates a certain level of tool mastery and architecture. Just like in the waterfall room, anyone looking up at the sky will realize time appears to flow differently outside, inducing vertigo. The PCs have now reached the structure Lewis is using as a laboratory.

Scene 6: The Laboratory

Summary. After traversing the labyrinthine caverns with a variable degree of hardship, the PCs find Lewis's laboratory. The young necromancer is about to successfully resurrect his sister, but this requires a sacrifice he is willing to make himself. The players will have the choice to either convince Lewis to give up, stop him by force, or let him finish the ritual.

At this point, the PCs might have an erroneous understanding of the situation. Typically, thanks to Agatha's visions, they should have the idea that the "jailer" of the child's spirit is here, that it's trying to perform a ritual to free something, and that it possesses great power. If the PCs didn't attack the Golem or steal Lilia's things, Agatha spoke to them in the butterfly cave. In that case, the adventurers may have learned, for example, that Lewis isn't some random necromancer, but that he holds the Prophet's artifact, the very same one that was the cause of his family's death, but which he now hopes to use to save his sister. Be careful not to give the players too much information before the final scene.

Lewis's laboratory resembles a maze-like cabinet of curiosities. The rooms, original furniture, doorways, steps, etc. are twice as big as usual, hinting at the former occupants' size. The whole building has been modified by Lewis to allow him to move about and work more easily. Chambers are strewn with corpses being studied. Here and there, bones of various species have been reassembled, creating unnatural silhouettes, while masses of fur and flesh were sewn together. The alcoves hold vats covered in indistinct notes and engraved with occult symbols at seemingly random places. A more in-depth examination (DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Medicine) check) reveals attempts to recombine various species, some gifted with regenerative powers, resistance to disease, or a lengthened lifespan. There are giant butterflies, bugbears, smugglers (see **Scene 5, B. Dead End**), dark-skinned dwarves (duergars), various hostile subterranean species, different sizes of spiders, etc. To this, you may even add the remains of the heroes of legend, at your discretion.

The walls are lined with bookshelves made from wood or carved directly into the rock, holding books both human and giant-sized. Some other texts lie open all over the place, scattered with notes and comments. The main room has a celestial observatory calibrated to look at Melancholia in particular. At night, thanks to a system of mirrors, the area is filled with the moon's projected bluish light, only broken up by the laboratory's few braziers. The many resulting reflections create a play of seemingly living

shadows. There are statues covered with butterfly cocoons depicting the dragon Death, overlooking the room and decorating its corners.

Frescoes on the walls and ceiling are greatly damaged by the passage of time, where they aren't simply obstructed from view by the general mess. They depict the Prophet sealed away by giant dragonborn using a dragon claw. The gigantic silhouette of a black dragon made of mist looms behind the artifact, facing the Prophet's white shadow floating in a parallel world.

The place is filled with the smell of tobacco, and partially smoked, tightly rolled leaves can be found crushed in empty receptacles all around. The only thing hinting at a semblance of domesticity is a makeshift bed in a corner of the room, which also holds a dying hearth, a few practically empty jars of spices, and a stock of vegetables, the whole being used as kitchen.

In a cold chamber all the way at the back, behind a huge door, a young girl's corpse floats in the air. The room is covered in arcane symbols. Here lies Agatha's body, suspended at the heart of the portal to the Ethereal Plane. The room is clean and soundless.

Once the players have looked around the area and the atmosphere is set, bring in Lewis. He arrives wrapped in his scarves, hiding his young adult face from the group. His voice is low, gravelly from the tobacco he smokes. His response to the PCs' presence will depend on their previous choices. There are several possible follow-ups to this scene: confrontation, negotiation, or collaboration.

A Place Cut Off from Time

The dragonborn's temple to Death contains a portal leading to the Ethereal Plane. Once, the Prophet was trapped in there with the artifact, until a comet crashed nearby, disrupting the prison enough for it to escape. Currently, the portal is still open, and holds Agatha's body in stasis, creating the temporal distortion affecting the entire cave system. Throughout the temple, time flows much slower than it does outside, explaining Lewis's age.

Confrontation

If the adventurers are carrying Lilia's ribbons, Lewis will attack them with no possible discussion. He will do the same if they try to take Agatha's body or interact with it. Enraged, he will use his most powerful spells to target the adventurers disrespecting his family.

☞ If the PCs only defend themselves from Lewis and try to make him listen to reason, he'll cease hostilities after a few rounds, but remain on his guard. Refer to **Negotiation** on the next page.

☞ On the other hand, if the players decide to battle Lewis, he'll fight to his last breath, using the artifact to distort reality around him. The adventurers will quickly (but probably too late) discover that Lewis isn't a dastardly

and malevolent necromancer hatching a diabolical plot, but simply a lost young man. During the fight, you can bring in other creatures, such as the Golem if it wasn't already destroyed, or any other creature Lewis might have put together in his study, like another **flesh golem** or the **animated armors** of the heroes of legend.

With Lewis slain, Agatha will appear in spectral form to take her brother in her arms, weeping real tears on the bloodied ground. She won't blame the adventurers, seeing this end as inevitable. Agatha will simply ask the party to bury them at their mother's side, under the apple tree near the old mill.



Negotiation

If the PCs have been respectful (abstaining from killing the Golem, from taking Lilia's things, from pillaging or vandalizing the laboratory, etc.), Lewis will ask the reason for their presence here. He only has one goal in mind: his sister's resurrection, and the adventurers will have to choose whether to help or stop him. If the adventurers decide to stop him, they can do so either by force (refer then to **Confrontation** on the previous page) or with discussion. Convincing Lewis to give up on his projects will require a shrewd approach. Using spells to that effect is futile, since Lewis is protected with a *mind blank* spell by default, and will interpret this act as aggression, reacting accordingly. If the adventurers won Agatha's trust, she will join the conversation to support their arguments at opportune times. Several arguments can be put forth, the main one being that Agatha is tired of the situation: she wishes her soul to be left in peace, so she can join her mother. She's suffering from being kept in stasis between life and death, not to mention the unsettling feeling of something roaming around her. If the PCs manage to convince Lewis, an emotional farewell scene will follow, Agatha crying in her brother's arms as she asks him to bury her next to their mother with a toy—a wooden butterfly she painted herself. If the Golem is still alive, it will witness the burial from afar, before vanishing into the forest.

The Resurrection's Conditions

This final scene should stay in accordance with your campaign's atmosphere and your players' initiative. The more difficult and restrictive it is to bring someone back from the dead, the more the choice of Agatha's fate will feel heavy in consequence. You can use the restrictions on resurrection spells described in **GRIMOIRE** as inspiration (see **Living Magic: Back from the Dead**)

You can also take advantage of the situation to offer your players a dilemma: what if Lewis was only able to resurrect a single person, but one of the PCs had just been killed? Going from the basis that Lewis's ritual requires the sacrifice of a life, would one of the adventurers give theirs to bring back Agatha or one of their companions? How would the other PCs react?

Collaboration

If the players opt to help Lewis resurrect Agatha, the game leader is free to place conditions fitting the campaign. In any case, insist on the fact this is extraordinary.

As a consequence of bringing Agatha back to life, an entity from the Ethereal Plane will flow into the Material Plane. **The Prophet**, clinging to Agatha's soul up until now, will appear robed in white, like in the legend. Its abilities are, however, far lesser than the PCs may have read or experienced. Its objective is simple: take the *Eulogy of Mortals* and flee. The adventurers and Lewis, surprised by this intrusion, will have to confront the Prophet. Because of his personal experience and studies, Lewis will know right away who it is and will be terrified by this figure from the past.

Try to make the fight epic and challenging. Even with Lewis's help, the outcome is far from certain: the young man is no tactician, acting recklessly. He'll prioritize protecting his sister, even putting himself in danger, and is the Prophet's primary target, whose goal is retrieving the artifact.

At the battle's climax or immediately afterwards, the game leader may introduce a tragic turn of events leading to the death of one of the two Whiter's children, leaving the other alone. The fight may also end with the Prophet's escape, with or without the artifact, leading to new adventures.

A Happy Ending?

Reaching an end where everything goes well would be contrary to this adventure's theme. The death of Agatha or Lewis is indeed tragic, but this is the kind of experience that forges a hero's life. If heroes saved princesses, slew dragons, and solved diplomatic conflicts every week without any snags, their journeys would precisely lose their heroic nature. A true hero shines in dire situations and in the number of times they get back up after being brought low. Of course, if you wish to alleviate or remove the tragic elements of the adventure, you can consider Agatha's resurrection to be the best solution. Once the Prophet is slain again, everything is solved.



If you wish to enhance the intensity and epic nature of the scenario, you can say that closing the portal isn't possible without entering it. The party will have no other choice but to venture into the Ethereal Plane, with or without Lewis. Inside the portal, there's nothing but a vast, blizzard-swept plain, where vision is obscured after a couple dozen feet. To accomplish their objective, the adventurers will have to eliminate the thing preventing the portal's closing: the **Prophet**. After some exploration, they'll see a huge silhouette through the gale, which they'll initially take for a statue. Agatha will be close by, frozen in the snow. Once the Prophet is defeated, depending on the type of ending you want, Agatha can either be brought back from the dead, or in a more melancholic tone, wish to die for good.

Epilogue: Where Only Hope Remains



Summary. The group leaves Noctin with heavy hearts and their minds preoccupied by what they've seen. This adventure's message is that the world isn't all black and white, but painted in strokes of subtle grays that give life its beauty. Lewis may be at their side, the artifact in their possession... unless it's now held by the Prophet? One thing is for certain: the adventurers now know more than ever the value of a single life, and the importance of not judging a book by its cover...

As they exit the butterfly maze, they'll quickly realize several dozen days have passed while they were inside the cave (maybe even more, depending on the PCs' choices). Whatever the ending of the previous scene, Agatha's body is no longer in the portal, which will weaken the local geomagical anomalies. If Agatha is alive again, she's kept a part of the magic powers she possessed. And if Lewis is dead, the PCs will have to watch over her to make sure she doesn't turn bad. Like her brother, she shows promise of great talent.

Lewis, on his end, depending on the players, may consider joining them on the road (or even become a PC himself), or go on his own way, alone or with his sister. Perhaps they'll have the chance to cross paths again?

If the Prophet fled with the artifact, the adventurers may attempt to track it down, perhaps in the company of one of the Whiters, seeking revenge.

Rewards

This adventure doesn't have many physical rewards. Its goal is to confront your players with complex situations that will make them grow as characters. Nevertheless, here are a list of the things the players may take: the *Eulogy of Mortals*, the forgotten civilization's books that Lewis studied, and of course Lilia's adventuring gear, including her ribbons and potentially a diary or map that may lead to other adventures. To compensate for the lack of treasure, you may offer 10% to 20% extra experience points to your players.

The End



Appendix 1: Confrontations



The opponents' might is extremely variable. Some fights might seem too easy, while others could be fatal if attempted. The table below summarizes the CRs of the creatures that can be fought, to give the game leader an overview. The most dangerous creatures are marked with

Creatures That Can Be Encountered

CR	Creatures
1/2	Shadow; Spider Swarm; Worg.
1	Animated Armor; Bugbear; Dryad; Giant Spider; Specter.
2	Swarm of Otherworldly Butterflies.
3	Bugbear Chief; Bugbear Shaman; Rabid Giant Octopus.
5	Wraith.
8	Giant Flesh Golem.
12	Lewis.
15	The Prophet.

Animated Armor

Animated Armor

Medium construct, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6) | **Wound Threshold** N/A
- **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 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

Craits

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 slam attacks.

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



Bugbear

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic neutral

- **Armor Class** 16 (hide armor, shield)
- **Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5) | **Wound Threshold** 7
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

- **Skills** Athletics +4, Stealth +6, Survival +2
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** Common, Goblin
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

Craits

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Actions

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage in melee or 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage at range.



Bugbear Chief

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic neutral

- **Armor Class** 17 (studded leather armor, shield)
- **Hit Points** 65 (10d8 + 20) | **Wound Threshold** 17
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

- **Saving Throws** Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2
- **Skills** Athletics +5, Deception +4, Perception +2, Stealth +7
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
- **Languages** Common, Goblin
- **Challenge** 3 (450 XP)

Craits

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Actions

Multiattack. The bugbear chief makes two melee attacks.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage in melee or 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage at range.

Reactions

Parry. The bugbear chief adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, it must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Bugbear Shaman

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic neutral

- **Armor Class** 11 (16 with *barkskin*)
- **Hit Points** 38 (7d8 + 7) | **Wound Threshold** 10
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

- **Skills** Medicine +4, Nature +3, Perception +4, Stealth +5
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
- **Languages** Common, Druidic, Goblin
- **Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

Craits

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

Spellcasting. The bugbear shaman is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *entangle*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger*, *barkskin*

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (+4 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, 10 (2d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands, or 11 (2d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.





Dryad

Medium fey, neutral

- **Armor Class** 11 (16 with *barkskin*)
- **Hit Points** 22 (5d8) | **Wound Threshold** 6
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

- **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +5
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
- **Languages** Ancient Sylvan
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

Ctraits

Innate Spellcasting. The dryad's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The dryad can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *druidcraft*
- 3/day each: *entangle*, *goodberry*
- 1/day each: *barkskin*, *pass without trace*, *shillelagh*

Magic Resistance. The dryad has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Speak with Beasts and Plants. The dryad can communicate with beasts and plants as if they shared a language.

Tree Stride. Once on her turn, the dryad can use 10 feet of her movement to step magically into one living tree within her reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 feet of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the second tree. Both trees must be Large or bigger.

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+4 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.

Fey Charm. The dryad targets one humanoid or beast that she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see the dryad, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically **charmed**.

The charmed creature regards the dryad as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the dryad's control, it takes the dryad's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can.

Each time the dryad or its allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the dryad dies, is on a different plane of existence from the target, or ends the effect as a bonus action. If a target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to the dryad's Fey Charm for the next 24 hours.

The dryad can have no more than one humanoid and up to three beasts charmed at a time.



Giant flesh Golem

Large construct, neutral

- **Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 210 (20d10 + 100) | **Wound Threshold** N/A
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

- **Damage Immunities** lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
- **Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

Craits

Berserk. Whenever the golem starts its turn with 80 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

The golem's creator, if within 60 feet of the berserk golem, can try to calm it by speaking firmly and persuasively. The golem must be able to hear its creator, who must take an action to make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, the golem ceases being berserk. If it takes damage while still at 80 hit points or fewer, the golem might go berserk again.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Lightning Absorption. Whenever the golem is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.



Giant Spider

Large beast, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 26 (4d10 + 4) | **Wound Threshold** 7
- **Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

- **Skills** Stealth +7
- **Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened
- **Senses** blindsight 50 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10
- **Languages** -
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

Craits

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:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) 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.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is **restrained** by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).



Lewis, Alchemist & Necromancer

Medium human, lawful neutral

- **Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
- **Hit Points** 99 (18d8 + 18) | **Wound Threshold** 25
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

- **Saving Throws** Int +9, Wis +6
- **Skills** Arcana +13, History +13
- **Tools** Alchemist's supplies +13
- **Damage Resistances** spell damage; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks (from *stoneskin*)
- **Senses** passive Perception 12
- **Languages** any six languages
- **Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

Craits

Magic Resistance. Lewis has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. Lewis is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Lewis can cast *false life** and *invisibility* at will, and has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *sudden cramp*

- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *misty step*, *web*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*, *vampiric touch*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *blight*, *stoneskin**
- 5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *screaming*, *wall of force*
- 6th level (1 slot): *circle of death*
- 7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*
- 8th level (1 slot): *mind blank**
- 9th level (1 slot): *time stop*

* Lewis casts these spells on himself before combat

Potions

- **Potion of superior healing.** This potion immediately restores 8d4 + 8 hp.
- **Potion of speed.** This potion grants the effect of the *haste* spell for 1 minute (no concentration required).

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.



Rabid Giant Octopus

Large beast, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 11
- **Hit Points** 78 (12d10 + 12) | **Wound Threshold** 20
- **Speed** 10 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

- **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
- **Languages** -
- **Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

Craits

Hold Breath. While out of water, the giant octopus can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the giant octopus takes 20 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Underwater Camouflage. The giant octopus has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made while underwater.

Unyielding. The giant octopus has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Water Breathing. The giant octopus can breathe only underwater.

Actions

Multiattack. The giant octopus makes two tentacle attacks, or it makes one attack with its tentacles and uses its Ink Cloud.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is **grappled** (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is **restrained**, and the giant octopus can't use its tentacles on another target.

Ink Cloud (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). A 20-foot-radius cloud of ink extends all around the octopus if it is underwater. The area is heavily obscured for 1 minute, although a significant current can disperse the ink. After releasing the ink, the octopus can use the Dash action as a bonus action.

Shadow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

- **Armor Class** 12
- **Hit Points** 16 (3d8 + 3) | **Wound Threshold** N/A
- **Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

- **Skills** Stealth +4 (+6 in dim light or darkness)
- **Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant
- **Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison
- **Condition Immunities** exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** -
- **Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

Craits

Amorphous. The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Actions

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

Specter

Medium undead, chaotic evil

- **Armor Class** 12
- **Hit Points** 22 (5d8) | **Wound Threshold** N/A
- **Speed** 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

- **Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

Craits

Incorporeal Movement. The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Swarm of Otherworldly Butterflies

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 36 (8d8) | **Wound Threshold** 9
- **Speed** 5 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

- **Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
- **Senses** tremorsense 10 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

Traits

Innate Spellcasting. The butterfly swarm's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). The butterfly swarm can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *dancing lights*, *light*
- 3/day each: *calm emotions*, *hypnotic pattern*, *major image*, *silence*, *sleep*
- 1/day each: *hallucinatory terrain*

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Deathly Pallor. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) necrotic damage, or 5 (2d4) necrotic damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.



Swarm of Spiders

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 22 (5d8) | **Wound Threshold** 6
- **Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)

- **Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
- **Senses** tremorsense 10 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

Traits

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

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

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

Web Walker. The swarm ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.



The Prophet

Large undead, neutral evil

- **Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 143 (22d10 + 22) | **Wound Threshold** N/A
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)

- **Saving Throws** Con +6, Wis +10
- **Skills** History +7, Insight +10, Perception +10, Religion +7
- **Damage Resistances** cold, lightning, necrotic
- **Damage Immunities** poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20
- **Languages** Ancient dialect, Celestial, Demonic, Diabolic, Draconic
- **Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP)

Craits

Spellcasting. The Prophet is a 16th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). The Prophet has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *guidance, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy, warcry*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, fateful twist, inflict wounds, sanctuary*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, compulsive strike, hold person, silence*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians, tyranny*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment, grim escort, guardian of faith*
- 5th level (2 slots): *contagion, decree, dispel evil and good*
- 6th level (1 slot): *harm*
- 7th level (1 slot): *divine word*
- 8th level (1 slot): *earthquake*

Actions

Paralyzing Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be **paralyzed** for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Wraith

Medium undead, chaotic evil

- **Armor Class** 13
- **Hit Points** 67 (9d8 + 27) | **Wound Threshold** N/A
- **Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

- **Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered.
- **Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
- **Languages** the languages it knew in life
- **Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

Craits

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the wraith has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a **specter** in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

Worg

Large beast, neutral

- **Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 26 (4d10 + 4) | **Wound Threshold** 7
- **Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

- **Skills** Perception +4
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
- **Languages** -
- **Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

Craits

Keen Hearing and Smell. The worg has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked **prone**.

Appendix 2: The Heroes of the Past

These adventurers represent the heroes of legend. Tasked by King Syrion, they go on a quest to find the source of the scourge ravaging Eana. Being legendary figures, they are archetypes, symbolic characters that bards use to populate their tales. This is also why these characters use a different system.

☞ If you wish to distance them from regular **FATEFORGE** characters, you can just hand out these simplified character sheets. They're heroes: they don't have ability scores or skills. They'll generally succeed all their actions and emerge without a scratch from a confrontation with a band of brigands. Give each player 3 tokens of one color, and one of another color. These are abilities they can use whenever they want (with the game leader's agreement). Some are left intentionally vague, and nothing's stopping you from changing one if you or the player have a better idea. The purpose of these abilities is to reflect the power of the heroes.

☞ You can also prepare character sheets as usual and hand them to your players. In this case, make them of high enough level that the difference in power with your players' normal characters is palpable.

Whichever method you opt for, be grandiose in the suggested situations, cinematic in your descriptions, and play off plot twists and moral choices. There's nothing better than seeing legendary heroes facing a situation they are at first powerless against.






These heroes have a tragic fate, so don't be sparing with them and make sure their actions will have an impact.

The characters don't have established backgrounds because they are legends. They are therefore timeless and universal. If you ever need some characteristics, here they are.



Builder

Elenion Wizard Specialized in Transmutation.






-  **Character:** Observant, precise, inquisitive.
-  **Equipment:** Alchemist's supplies, various math and science tools.
-  **Unlimited Ability:** Determining an examined object's components.
-  **3-Time Use Ability:** Changing the material of something she touches and potentially giving it life.
-  **1-Time Use Ability:** Mastering and controlling base elements for a limited time.

Builder is a very ancient elf who created entire cities by melding magic and architecture. Fascinated by matter and what defines being a "living creature", she travels to carry out her research. She observes animals, plants, and minerals to try to understand at what point a studied object can be considered to have a soul, and especially what even defines a soul.



Omen

Pious Cleric/Scholar (Mind-Delving) of Eana of an Unknown Species.

-  **Character:** Aloof, apathetic, reserved, attentive.
-  **Equipment:** Various religious objects.
-  **Unlimited Ability:** Perceiving evil.
-  **3-Time Use Ability:** Rebuking or healing from evil.
-  **1-Time Use Ability:** Destroying evil.






Omen is a mysterious and powerful being completely detached from emotion. They will sacrifice the party if they feel it is for the greater good. They may be insane, but they're convinced they're an incarnation of balance, present on Eana to keep the forces of nature in order and prevent one species from destroying another. Builder and Omen constitute a platonic duo who spend a lot of time together.





Allure






Melessë Rogue/Sorcerer. Shadow Among Shadows.

-  **Character:** Roguish, playful, sharp, eager.
-  **Equipment:** 2 khanjars, a veil that changes the face's appearance.
-  **Unlimited Ability:** Hiding from anyone's sight.
-  **3-Time Use Ability:** Teleporting herself, someone else, or a large object from one shadow to another.
-  **1-Time Use Ability:** Creating an area of shadow and duplicating herself within it.

Allure is the daughter of Builder and an unknown father. She sees life as a game, lives like there's no tomorrow, and marvels at everything. She loves to cook, laugh, play dice, and has an overflowing imagination. She enjoys sitting for hours contemplating the rain falling into a lake, or watching the coming and going of birds in their nests. She's the most immature of the group, but holds courage and power unbeknownst to herself. She's inseparable from Purloin.

Justice

Human Paladin of Blacksmith. Bulwark of Faith.






-  **Character:** Just, bold, proud, leader.
-  **Equipment:** A spear of light, an indestructible shield.
-  **Unlimited Ability:** Putting himself between danger and a target, even in sacrifice.
-  **3-Time Use Ability:** Absorbing the wounds and diseases of others.
-  **1-Time Use Ability:** Taking the place of someone about to die.

Justice is the group's pillar. He's a skilled strategist, excellent fighter, and charismatic. He can analyze the most stressful situations and know what must be done. He's good at everything he does. He has a terrible lack of trust in himself, which pushes him to be too assertive and seem overconfident, since he's never failed thus far. Omen and Builder put him ill at ease, and the only person he feels truly close to is Repentant.



Purloin

Human Rogue/Fighter from the Sand Kingdoms.






-  **Character:** Poet, hot-tempered, surprising.
-  **Equipment:** A bow that fires arrows of pure energy, the perfect thieves' kit.
-  **Unlimited Ability:** Never being surprised.
-  **3-Time Use Ability:** Seeing someone or something's weak point.
-  **1-Time Use Ability:** Anticipating and projecting himself into a future action.

Purloin had a run-in with death, and Omen managed to bring him back in the nick of time. Since then, he has developed a serene perspective of fate and a fascination with the passage of time. He likes the idea of time being relative and of each second or day not passing in the same way as the previous one. He has an inferiority complex toward Allure, whom he sees as an inexhaustible source of joy and energy.



Repentant

Old Orc Barbarian/Monk, Formerly Lord of a Horde Tribe.

-  **Character:** Wise, strong, tough, brave.
-  **Equipment:** Objects from an ancient orc tribe (his own?). An extremely heavy and powerful kwan dao.
-  **Unlimited Ability:** Divine physical strength.
-  **3-Time Use Ability:** Plunging himself into a rage that renders him indestructible for a short time.
-  **1-Time Use Ability:** Will only die at the same time as a nemesis of his choosing, no matter the injuries he endures.

Repentant has a very dark past. He was an infamous orc war leader and killed thousands of innocents in the name of foolish causes. One day, he was betrayed by his right-hand man, a powerful shaman. He spent a month left for dead in the desert when he received a divine vision and felt compelled to repent. Ever since then, he's put his strength to use protecting kingdoms. Despite his old age, he possesses a quasi-divine physical strength. He still experiences bouts of rage, during which he is almost uncontrollable. Repentant sees in Justice a great future leader and tries to give him sound counsel so that his own mistakes won't be repeated.





Appendix 3: Map of Noctin

1. Mill of the Whifers
2. Mansion of the Ziakis
3. Temple of Flora
4. Farms of the Whedons
5. Tower of the reclusive wizard

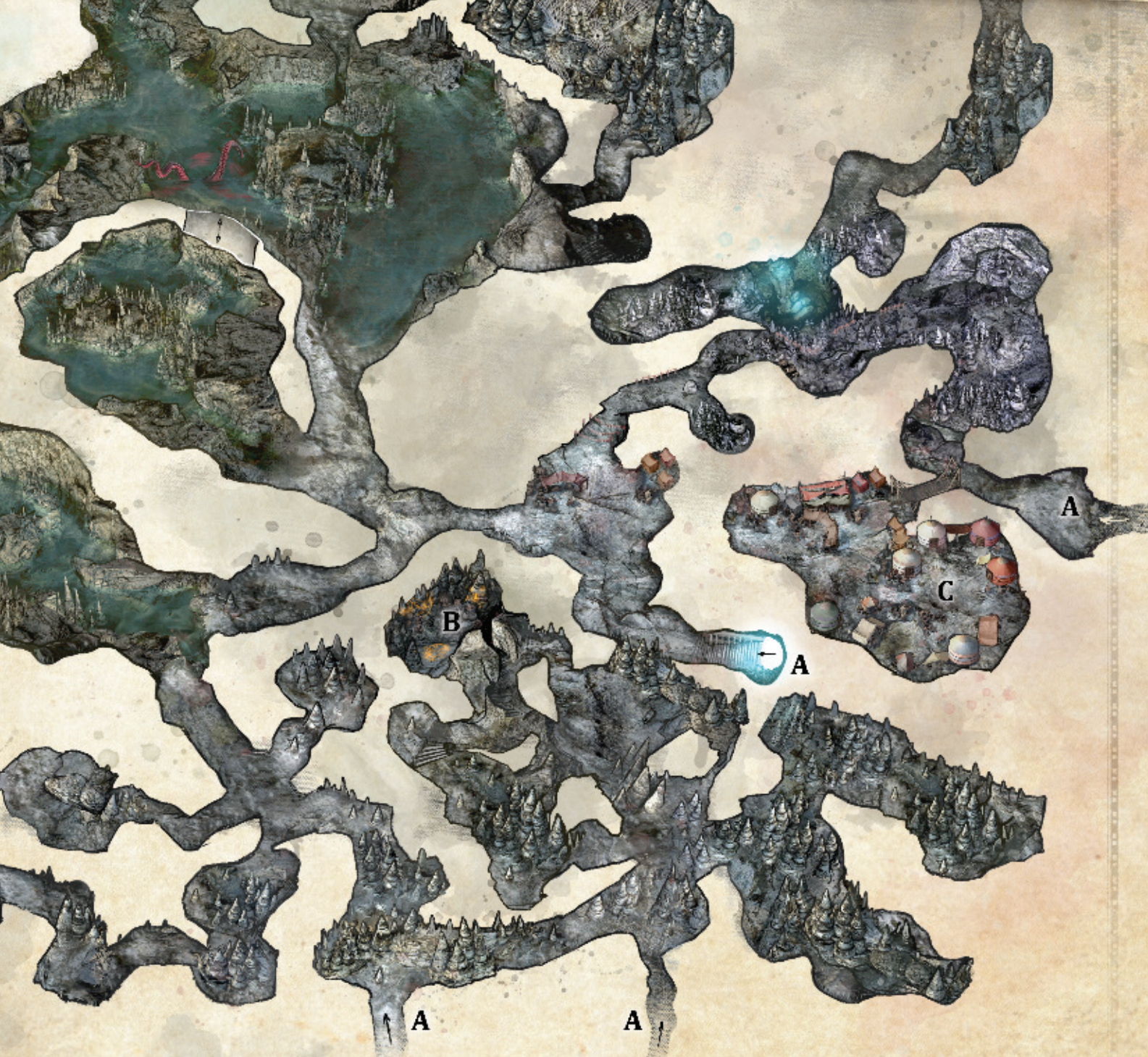



Appendix 4: Map of the Underground H





- A The Entrances
- B Dead End
- C The Bugbear Lair
- D The Waterfall
- E Arachnids
- F The Butterflies
- G The Ruins
- H The Temple





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Once, Noctin was a dour-looking village, but one where life was good, at the roots of the Dusk Mountains. Nowadays, its macabre ruins only recall the tragedy of a past that refuses to die.

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