

When Mages Fall



CCC-OAC-01-01

Fledgling wizards are being struck down in Thentia, the City of Mages. Rumors tie the deaths to the reappearance of an ancient artifact, the Bright Sword. Can adventurers solve the mystery of the mage slayings before the body count rises?

A Two- to Four-Hour Adventure for Tier 1 Characters, optimized for APL3.

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Adventure Primer

"The wizard, even now he plots against you. Defend us, strike him now, while he does not yet expect it!"

- Hazirawn

This section provides the adventure's background, a list of prominent NPCs, an overview of the adventure in play, and hooks that you can use to introduce your players' characters to the action.

Background (DM Only)

With its magic schools, the bustling city of Thentia welcomes many a student of the arcane arts.

In recent days, apprentice mages – those not strong enough to properly shield their minds – have been contacted by what appears to be a sentient sword. They opened themselves up to the invasion while performing divination spells and rituals.

The sword reached out to them telepathically, giving them visions of its location and calling for them to come free it.

One such mage is **Lustra Satille**, who is quickly seduced by the idea of gaining an ancient artifact. As she begins to research her visions, she discovers that two other mages have also received similar visions, and are on the weapon's trail. She kills both of them and sets out to claim the sword.

Meanwhile, **Batilda Dorgont**, a senior librarian at the **Thentian Library of Arcane History** learns of the murders and is concerned that there may be someone to kill more mages.

The adventure begins as the characters meet with **Batilda**, and are tasked with investigating any ties between the murders.

Episodes

- **Episode 1: When Mages Fall.** Characters are asked to look into any connection between the two dead mages.
- **Episode 2: Visions of Power.** The characters must visit the residences of the murdered mages to look for clues. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: The Bright Sword?** Having discovered the location of the sword, the characters rush there to apprehend the murderer. This is **Story Objective B**.

Bonus Objectives

This adventure includes two bonus objectives.

- **Bonus Objective A: Assassins?** There is a bounty hunter that specializes in finding magic users, perhaps she can be of help?
- **Bonus Objective B: The Mage's Secret.** What lies beneath the gnome's laboratory?

Episode Sequence

Depending on your time constraints, playstyle and environment, this adventure will take approximately two to four hours to play.

How Will You Play?

The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately 2 hours. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by pursuing the bonus objectives.

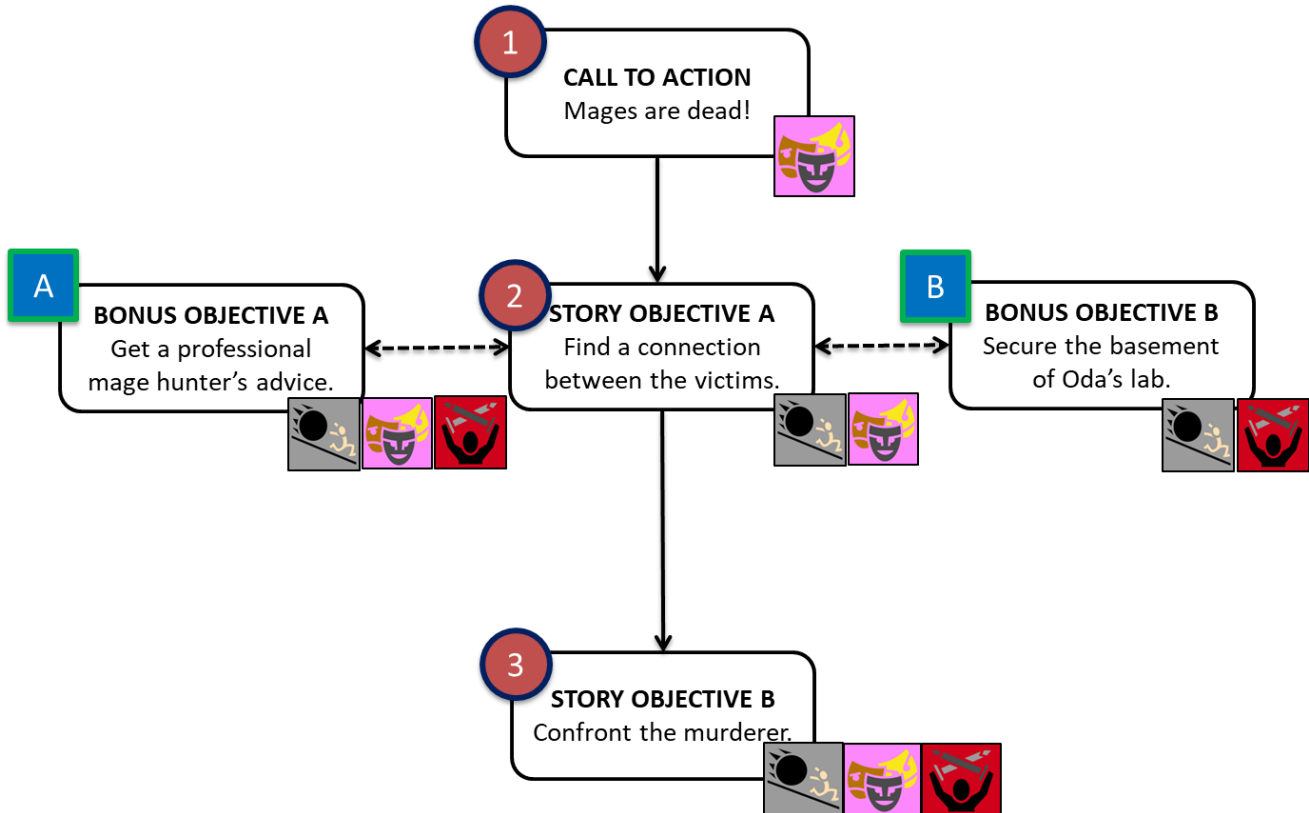
Main Objectives Only. To complete the adventure's main objective, the characters participate in Episodes 1 through 3 in order.

Bonus Objectives. You can extend this adventure by one or two hours by including opportunities for the characters to pursue the bonus objectives.

The bonus objectives in this adventure can be pursued during **Episode 2**.

Episode Flowchart

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the episode, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



Episode 1: When Mages Fall (Call to Action)

Estimated Duration: 15 Minutes

Scene A. Seek the Connection!

While looking for work in the City of Thentia, characters learn of two mage murders that have taken place in the last few days. They subsequently find themselves invited to the Thentian Library of Arcane History by someone in need of assistance. For reasons of their own, they decide to make their way to the meeting.

Area Information

No map is required for this portion of the adventure. This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Thentian Library of Arcane History is a large four-story building of well-cut stone. Inside it is furnished with fourteen large wooden reading tables, each with four benches. Countless full bookshelves line the outer walls of the first floor, and a wide stair leads up to the second.

Lighting. The library is lit with a number of light fixtures, burning with soft yet bright magical light.

Other Features. The office of the senior librarian is on the second floor.

Creatures/NPCs

Batilda Dorgont – Tiefling Female, Senior Librarian.

Objectives/Goals. **Batilda** is genuinely concerned about the mages' murders and disappointed that the authorities won't take her suspicions seriously. The fact that one of the dead mages was also a tiefling is certainly a motivating factor, but she would still care even he had not been. Her goal is to get someone to investigate her leads.

What Does She Know? **Batilda** knows that both of the murdered mages had recently checked out books. They didn't check out the books together, or even on the same day. However, they both had this same haunted look to them, would mumble and refuse any offers of assistance while they were here.

When she went to the authorities to offer her theory on the connection between the mages, they dismissed her as being paranoid – after all, there are many mages in Thentia and they all read a lot of books. Two of them checking out books is far from a solid lead.

Still, **Batilda** is very sure that there is a connection, furthermore, she's very concerned about more mages being killed – these were so young! She's gone so far as check the records for the mages' addresses, and was going to go check the crime scene herself

but got cold feet. She even pulled a huge favor with a city official to give her a writ allowing her access for a quick look at the crime scenes (she is sure he only did it to appease her, but he did do it.)

She thought of going to the bounty hunters – apparently there are some specializing in tracking mages – but decided to try “less seedy” adventurers.

About the books

Fact or Future: Real Accounts of Divination Gone Awry. Oda Waggletop – a female gnome - had checked this rather old and oddball tome that purports to be “non-fiction”. **Batilda** says that it's not a commonly looked at book. The copy they had was a decade-old reproduction of the original, which had been initially written over a century ago. It mainly deals with “supposedly first-hand” accounts of strange experiences with divination magic. Most mages consider it sensationalist trash, put together for a quick money grab at the time. This was the library's only copy, though no one is likely to miss it.

Moonblades and Memories: A Brief History of Sentient Weapons. The tiefling **Neflis Timpera** checked out this massively popular short tome about weapons. The library has four more copies, of which three have been lent out, but **Batilda** has held back the last for the investigation. “Everyone loves reading myths about powerful weapons, probably in the hopes of finding one. Plus, it's illustrated!” says **Batilda**, with clear disdain for the book. “There is little actual information in the book. It's the closest thing we have to children's lit.”

Call to Action

Batilda begs the characters to check into any connection between the two mages. If only for her peace of mind. She is not rich, but she's certain she can find a way to repay them. Plus, if they can find the murderer, there is always a city reward.

Once the characters are finished conversing with **Batilda**, they have a choice of two or three locations to visit. Two of the locations are the homes of the two mages. These are detailed in **Episode 2, Scene A**. If time allows for the pursuit of bonus objectives, they can also check with the bounty hunting office – there is apparently a bounty hunter that specializes in tracking mages.

Episode 2: Visions of Power (Story Objective A)

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

Scene A. Investigations

Prerequisites

Proceed with this scene when the characters wish to visit the residences of the two murdered mages. If they wish to take on **Bonus Objective A** and check with the bounty hunting office, refer to **Appendix B**. The bonus objective can be pursued any time before the second mage's residence is investigated.

Objectives

Characters must decide where to go first.

Area Information

This scene takes place as the party exists the **Library**.

Dimensions & Terrain. Provide the players with the map of Thentia as presented in **Appendix 5**.

Lighting. It is a clear morning with plenty of sunlight.

Development

Characters are expected to make a choice of where to go first. The map is designed to make any choice viable, and to place bounty hunting office in the middle, so that going from one residence to the next passes by it.

If there is intention to do the bonus objectives, it's recommended to go to the bounty office as soon as possible, before the sense of urgency in finding the killer really sets in.

If the bonus objective is not being done, the visit to the bounty office need not be mentioned OR the clerk at the bounty office can inform the characters that the person they're looking for left town some two weeks ago (before the murders) on a distant assignment and isn't due back for another week.

Getting into the Residences

Given **Batilda's** writ, characters have no issues accessing either residence. The gnome lived with family and her mother is willing to show the characters in and give them details of the crime. The tiefling's residence has a city watch guard posted, who is entirely disinterested in keeping anyone out, but does provide some basic details of the crime the party.

If the characters choose to investigate the residence of the tiefling **Neflis Timpera** first, proceed to **Scene B**.

If the characters choose to investigate the residence of the gnome **Oda Waggletop**, proceed to **Scene C1**.

Other Ideas

The characters may have other ideas about how to best proceed. They may wish to visit the city watch or other places. These visits should be kept short and confirm the information already gained from **Batilda**.

The mages each had teachers at different academies, and these are able to provide basic personal details on the mages, which have no relevance to discovering their fate. Neither teacher had seen them since they had been "contacted" and began their search for the sword (1-2 weeks ago).

Divinations

Any character that casts a divination spell of 1st level or higher and whose mind is not protected from telepathy (such as by a Ring of Mind Shielding) gets a vision of the sword. The vision is very brief and fleeting but intensifies with each subsequent spell cast. If the character attempts to find a master mage or a stronger caster, they do not get the same vision and think the adventurer a lunatic or novice. The sentience only reaches out to the weak-willed.

First Vision. A bright glowing sword.

Second Vision. A bright glowing sword, quickly followed by a sarcophagus that seems to be underground.

Third and Subsequent Visions. Same as second vision, but with a soft voice whispering "claim me and I will serve you".

Scene B. Residence of Neflis Timpera

Prerequisites

Proceed with this scene if the characters have chosen to visit this residence.

Objectives

Characters seek clues to the murder or any connection to the other mage.

Area Information

Neflis residence is located on the second floor of a large three-story tenement in the rather undesirable Brambles district. Despite the rough neighborhood, this building is rather well kept. Neflis chose to get a better place in a worse neighborhood rather than the other way around.

Dimensions & Terrain. The residence is comprised of a living room, small bedroom, and a wash chamber. A small fireplace/oven combination is located in the living room.

Lighting. Some light filters into the room through the closed curtains. These can be opened to provide plenty of light. Unlit candles are also present.

Other features. The living room furniture is comprised of a sparsely filled bookcase, a messy scribing desk with drawers and a chair. The bedroom contains a sectioned off area with several candles and chalk.

What Can be Learned Here?

About the Crime. Neflis's body has been removed, but there is a chalk outline on the floor of the main room where he was stabbed in the back with a dagger. The dagger was never found. There are also bloodstains. A successful DC13 Intelligence (Investigation) checks reveals that there are no forced entry marks anywhere – including the lock. This is because Neflis let his attacker into the room.

Bracelet. A DC11 Wisdom (Perception) check spots a thin metal bracelet under the table – this got knocked off Neflis when he fell. The first time that the bracelet is touched by a character, they are shocked and take 1 point of lightning damage. Prior to being stabbed, Neflis was hit by a lightning spell! (Once found, Neflis's notebook confirms the bracelet as his with depictions of him wearing it.)

Desk. The desk contains pieces of various minor components for spells (nothing usable as treasure) and a number of research notes on various non-pertinent magical subjects. One of the notes is titled "spell wishlist" and contains the names of various

spells. Some of the spells have checkmarks next to them. The checkmarks are in different shades of ink from the list itself as they have been made at different times. The last checkmark on the list is next to the *detect thoughts* spell.

Bedroom – Notebook. On the floor beside the bed is a leather covered notebook. Neflis liked to draw and the notebook contains a variety of drawings, doodles and random notes. Many of the pictures are of a tiefling (himself) in heroic poses and casting powerful spells. Where the filled-out pages end, the last two pages have been torn out. It is possible to trace out some of what was written on the last torn out page. Allow the characters to figure out some clever way of doing this, but no check is required. Once they figured out how to trace the page, they find that there used to be a drawing of a sarcophagus with a glowing sword inside it. Beside the drawing used to be a list of burial grounds surrounding Thentia. There were six on the list. It is not possible to figure out what was on the first of the missing pages.

Bedroom – Moonblades and Memories: A Brief History of Sentient Weapons. The library book is also found in the bedroom. Flipping through the book reveals that the table of contents and three pages have been removed. From marks on the following page of the book, it is possible to tell that someone had gone through the index and circled several entries. It is not possible to tell what had been circled. If the characters had borrowed another copy from library (or go back and do it), they are able to figure out that all the circled entries had dealt with magical swords and that the missing pages refer to a weapon known as The Bright Sword.

Bedroom – Ritual Area. The area next to the bed is easily identified as a ritual / spellcasting area. Aside from "common" supplies such as candles and salt, there is a small box that contains a variety of different copper coins. Copper coins are the material component for the *detect thoughts* spell. Anyone that can't cast the spell needs to make a DC12 Intelligence or Charisma (Arcana) check to realize this.

Once the characters figure out the **sword**, **divination** and **burial ground** clues, they can move on. To go to the other mage's residence, go to **Scene C1**. For the Bounty Office (**Bonus Objective A**), go to **Appendix 3**. If this was the final clue, go to **Scene D: Putting the Clues Together**.

Scene C1. The Waggletop Residence

Prerequisites

Proceed with this scene if the characters have chosen to visit this residence.

Objectives

Characters arrive at the Waggletop Estate and look to be allowed inside by Oda's parents.

Area Information

Oda Waggletop lived with her parents, in a decently sized estate. She did have a separate laboratory on the grounds and that is where she was murdered.

Her distraught mother is home when the characters arrive at the main house. Oda's father was away on family business in Waterdeep and is due to return.

Dimensions & Terrain. The estate is a medium sized older house with a fenced off front yard, and what used to be a small guesthouse. The guesthouse was converted into a laboratory for Oda to practice her magic studies. The estate does not require a map.

The laboratory is locked and detailed in **Scene C2 Lighting**. It's likely daytime when the characters arrive here, though feel free to adjust this if they have tarried elsewhere.

Creatures/NPCs

Enidda Waggletop, Female Gnome, mother of **Oda**. **Enidda** is practical and stern. She is also quite worldly. She once represented her merchant family as a trade envoy and so has travelled extensively around Faerun and met her share of adventures.

Objectives/Goals. She is distraught but is holding herself together, and is ready to assist with the investigation. She would very much like to see the murderer brought to justice. She didn't care much for her daughter's magic dabbling. She's been baking and offers the characters cookies.

What does she know? Enidda was not home when Oda has killed. It must have happened during the day though it wasn't until the evening that Enidda discovered the body.

The city investigators did not find any physical wounds on the body, however, there were signs of both magical fire, and lightning wounds. Due to the variety of magical experiments that Oda herself had performed, they could not identify the exact spells.

There was also some damage done to the lab – more than is usual for Oda. One of the walls was burned and many things were broken. Oda may have occasionally performed chaotic experiments, but she always kept things tidy.

Enidda also knows that Oda has been particularly distraught the last tenday or so. She had nightmares and looked like she was sleep deprived. She barely ate and spent a lot of time at the lab. It wasn't unusual for Oda to be consumed by ideas and research, but in retrospect, this does seem to have been very suspicious. Oda didn't talk about specifics, but she did ask – on several occasions – about different old areas of the city. She seemed to have been interested in how old the various districts were.

Enidda provides the party with the key to laboratory and lets them take a look.

If the characters inquire about Oda's room at the estate, her mother shows it to them, but it is quite bare and there is nothing to find. Oda had not spent much time here and certainly hadn't kept anything of interest.

Bonus Objective B.

If there is no time for **Bonus Objective B**, proceed to exploring the laboratory in **Scene C2**. In this case, there is no reference to the parchment cogs or the basement. The cogs are located in a thick steel case in the lab, and do not come up via *detect magic*.

If there is time for **Bonus Objective B**, it can be started here. If this is the case, **Enidda** asks the party to check for "whatever she was doing in the basement," she also tells the party about the parchment cogs. She tells the party the following:

- The guest house has a basement. At first, her mother did not think that Oda was using it, but eventually she grew to suspect that she was.
- The entrance to the basement is hidden under the metal plate on which the main lab counter rests.
- Enidda tried to get in there but believes it might be sealed with magic.
- She also thinks that she heard some noises from down there. She is aware that mages sometimes summon things, and would like the party to release or get rid of whatever is down there.
- Enidda also tells them that over the past few months, she'd seen Oda fiddle with paper cogs. There is a case of them in the corner of the lab, but she believes these may be magical and didn't want to touch them.

Bonus Objective B is to get into the basement and get rid of whatever creature is down there.

Scene C2. Oda Waggletop's Laboratory

Prerequisites

Proceed with this scene after **Scene C1**.

Objectives

Must find the clues to the murder.

Area Information

Oda's laboratory is located in what used to be the estate's single-story guest house.

Dimensions & Terrain. The building has been repurposed to be one large room. There are large windows covered by thick curtains.

Lighting. Some light filters into the room through the closed curtains. These can be opened to provide plenty of light. **Oda** used magical light, so no light sources are present.

Other features. The laboratory has a large workbench with various beakers, quills, inkpots and a variety of minor spell components. Characters find a **Potion of Growth** here. The laboratory is quite orderly, except for two areas. The wall on the other side of the room from the workbench looks to have been burned (see below for more details). In the center of the room, several pieces of small furniture and other items are knocked over and clearly out place, there are chalk markings to indicate that this is **where Oda's** body was found.

Additional Features for Bonus Objective B. ONLY if the characters are pursuing **Bonus Objective B**, they note that the desk is standing upon a metal plate (otherwise this of no significance and they do not find any sign of the hidden basement). They also notice the steel case described by Oda's mother.

Detecting Magic. So long as the gears are in the steel case and the door below is beneath the steel plate, the *detect magic* spell and other magic items that would locate such things do not pick up either the gears or the magically sealed door. The potion, various other minor magic residues and a trace of evocation magic can all be detected.

What Can be Learned Here?

About the Crime. A successful DC11 Intelligence (Investigation) checks reveals that there are no forced entry marks anywhere – including the lock. This is because **Oda** let her attacker into the room. The floor near where she died has marks from fire damage (this was done by the *fire bolt* spell).

The Burnt Wall. The burnt wall once contained a map of Thentia that has been almost completely

burned away. No check is required to find some badly burned fragments of the edges of them map. The fragments are of no use for anything other than identifying that a map once existed.

Oda had been receiving visions and was putting pins in various areas of the map where she believed they were leading her. The pins were made of wood and metal. The wood burned away, and the metal bits fell out of the wall. The metal pins can be found on the floor with a successful DC12 Wisdom (Perception) check. They also left tiny holes in the wall that can be found with a successful DC12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The holes are all around the same area of the wall (and used to be in the same area of the map). This is the main clue to the location that needs to be discovered in this area.

Even though the map has been burned away, characters are able to figure out (perhaps with an NPC's help) that this size of map is a standard one sold in Thentia. It is trivial to locate such a map and figure out that the pins – of which there were many – were all to the south by southeast of this location. This alone does not give them enough to go on, but with the clue from the other crime scene, it will!

The Spell Components. An investigation of the spell components area reveals that there is a set of freshly collect twigs that all have the same forked shape. Anyone that can cast the spell *locate object* realizes that this is the material component for it. Otherwise, they need to succeed on a DC12 Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (Arcana) check to realize this. **Fact or Future: Real Accounts of Divination Gone Awry.** Characters find the book fully intact and untouched. Oda had looked through it and did not find it helpful. The book itself is of little significance to the adventure. It hints at the fact that divination magic is involved and finding it may dismiss any theories regarding the murderer being after books.

If the characters are not pursuing **Bonus Objective B**, this is all there is to find here, proceed to **Scene D**.

Treasure

Potion of Growth

Potion, uncommon

The Gear Case and the Door Below

For interaction with these items, refer to **Bonus Objective B** in **Appendix 4**.

Scene D. Putting the Clues Together

Prerequisites

Proceed with this scene if the characters have visited both residences and have enough information to locate the **Dark Pine Crypts**.

Objectives

Characters put their clues together to locate the mysterious crypt.

Area Information

This scene doesn't have a set location. It takes place once both residences are visited, and the characters work to decide where to go next.

Development

To learn the location of the **Dark Pine Crypts**, the characters need to have found the following:

- **Neflis Timpera's** drawing notebook.
- **Oda Waggletop** had marked an area to the south by southeast of her residence with a number of pins. These pins cover too large of an area to search spot by spot.
- If the characters have found the items, but have not been able to ascertain their significance, they can make Intelligence (any appropriate) or Wisdom (Insight) checks to put it together.

They can also return to **Batilda** who finds it all disturbing – yet fascinating (she loves puzzles!) – and is able to point them in the right direction. The bounty hunter **Drystala**, may also be able to assist them if they've helped her.

If they have not found the clues, **Batilda** may send them back to look for more.

Thentia and Burial Grounds

The city of Thentia is centuries old and over the years, people have been buried in countless places. There are far too many burial grounds and cemeteries to search one by one.

However, only one of these is located within 5 miles and to the south-southeast of **Oda Waggletop's** residence. This is the **Dark Pine Crypts** burial ground. It's quite old and no longer in use. Once characters are ready to head there, they can proceed to **Episode 3**.

Bonus Objectives

Once the characters head to the **Dark Pine Crypts**, they are no longer able to undertake the adventure's **Bonus Objectives**.

Episode 3: The Bright Sword? (Story Objective B)

Estimated Duration: 60 Minutes

Scene A. The Dark Pine Crypts

Characters reach the Dark Pine Crypts and waste no time finding that one of the crypts has been very recently broken into.

Background Information (DM Only)

Although **Lustra Satille** got here 2 days ago, getting into both the outer and the inner crypts proved difficult as they had been sealed for ages. It took her some time to round up equipment and appropriate help. As a result, she is still here, resulting in a dramatic confrontation!

Area Information

The **Dark Pike Crypts** burial ground is situated near the outskirts of Thentia and has been out of use for centuries. No sign remains of the ominous-sounding “dark pines” that had grown here before the urban sprawl of the city swallowed them up. There are 30-40 stone crypts here, of various sizes. Some of Thentia’s oldest families can trace their ancestors back here, and so the grounds are occasionally maintained. The stonework, and some of the statues and gargoyles are of minor historic significance.

Dimensions & Terrain. The burial ground takes up an of a several hundred square feet.

Dimensions of the Crypt

The crypt is purposely small and makes for tight quarters. If the party is particularly large, you may want to expand the individual rooms of the crypt by 5ft in each dimension from the provided map. The passages between rooms should remain 5ft wide.

Lighting. The characters likely arrive in late afternoon, though the outdoor lighting situation is of no significance.

Other features. Finding the specific crypt is not difficult, but may take time. A successful DC12 Wisdom (Survival) check locates a whole slew of recent human tracks that all lead to and from the same crypt. If the check is successful, the characters are also able to learn that the same person has been in and out of this this area several times over the last two days, with the latest tracks being only a few hours old. If the check fails, 10-15 minutes of searching or any ability to view the grounds from above locates the recently broken-into crypt.

Crypt. The crypt is very old and has only the name ORTHEROS upon it. The name’s significance (if there was any) is long lost to history. The crypt is made of thick stone, with a large slab having been broken and partially moved aside, revealing a 3ft-wide opening that leads to a 5ft stair leading down. A successful DC12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Mason’s Tools (any) near the crypt’s entrance reveals that someone had struggled to open this door – apparently, they first tried to open it with a shovel, which lies broken, then with a crowbar – now also discarded. It is not clear what was used to finally crack the stone (it was a summoned gargoyle!), though it’s obvious that a great deal of strength would have been required to move the more than 1000lb slab of stone at the opening.

Development

Once the first adventurer steps on the stairs leading down, they feel a tiny vibration and hear the muffled grinding of stone somewhere below and in the distance. Someone is here. Proceed to **Scene B**.

Scene B. The Ortheros Crypt – Level 1 and 2

Level 1

The first room of the crypt is empty and free of dangers. However, the stair leading down is covered in thick webs. These were summoned by **Lustra Satile** as a quick makeshift trap in case anyone would follow her.

Webs. The web-filled staircase is 15 feet long and entirely full of webs. It is difficult terrain. Moreover, a creature entering a webbed area for the first time on a turn or starting its turn there must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained by the webs. A restrained creature can use its action to try to escape, doing so with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Each 10-foot cube of giant webs has AC 10, 15 hit points, vulnerability to fire, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage.

Level 2

This level is also empty, with one exit that holds a stair that leads down. Even without descending, they can hear movement on the level below. Their vision is mostly blocked by the back of a stone statue that seems to have been moved to block their way.

Scene D. The Ortheros Crypt – Dreams of Power

The characters finally catch up with the murderous mage **Lustra Satile**, who is about to open a sarcophagus. A 10ft long 5ft wide stair leads into this room and their path is blocked by a stone statue.

Objectives

Characters must confront **Lustra Satile**.

Area Information

Refer to map of the crypt in **Appendix 6**.

Dimensions & Terrain. The final crypt is 25ft by 20ft and has a 10ft ceiling.

Lighting. A lit torch gives off light from the northeast corner of the room.

Creatures/NPCs

Lustra Satile – Human Female Conjurer.

Born to a minor noble family in Waterdeep, Lustra was sent away to be magic-schooled after burning a schoolmate with an ill-timed magic spell.

Unfortunately, magic studies had the opposite effect – instead of learning control and discipline, **Lustra** was instead seduced by the promise of power. The first murder was spur of the moment, but the second was fully intentional. She has now fully committed herself to be the one to claim the artifact and its power.

Objectives/Goals. Lustra wants power and influence. She believes she's worked hard and put in the effort (killing people!) to deserve this. She is willing to kill more to get what she wants.

What Does She Know? "The sword has reached out to me. It had reached out to them too, but they were weak! I am not. It gave me the power to take it. It wants me to wield it!" Though she may believe it, this is not entirely true. The "sword" gave her no

special powers – she used her own to kill the mages. As she's close to it, the thing is indeed telepathically egging her on. **Lustra** is wearing a **Hat of Wizardry**. If she is defeated, the characters unlock this common magic item (see **Appendix 8** for details).

Development

Lustra has summoned a **gargoyle** using the *summon minor elemental* spell on which she is concentrating. The gargoyle is the statue that blocks the party's way into the room. As they approach, she says "you are too late! The sword will be mine!" and the gargoyle turns to prevent them from entering (it readies a grapple should anyone try to get by it). Lustra turns her own attention to working on the seal of the sarcophagus and doesn't engage the party unless noted.

The gargoyle's main goal is to prevent characters from getting to Lustra and interfering. It's content to stand in the doorway for this. For weak and very weak parties the gargoyle only has 25 hitpoints.

The characters are free to continue conversing with Lustra and evaluating what she's doing even as they fight the gargoyle. If they intend to engage Lustra, see the adjustment in **Scene F**.

Opening the Sarcophagus

Unless she is stopped, Lustra takes 3 turns to dispel the seal on the sarcophagus, at which point the events detailed in **Scene E** occur. She can be stopped by being restrained, incapacitated or silenced.

Scaling Tip: For level 1 characters, consider using minimum damage instead of rolling for the monsters.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Taking on the gargoyle and Lustra at the same time may prove overwhelming for the characters. For weaker parties, she ignores any attacks on her and focuses breaking the seal on the sarcophagus – she believes the sword inside will give her power.

EXPLORATION

A DC12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that Lustra seems to be looking at something on the floor, not visible from the room's entrance. She has a dispelling scroll there. A DC12 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check helps characters realize that the sarcophagus must be locked by magic somehow.

SOCIAL

Lustra has no special interest in killing the characters. She is happy to let them walk away. She doesn't deny killing the mages. "We need not be enemies. I will take what is mine. No more weakling mages will die. I know what I want."

Scene E. The Ortheros Crypt – Ghosts of Ambition

Prerequisites

Proceed with this if Lustra is engaged in combat or someone dispels the sarcophagus seal as per **Scene D**.

Objectives

Characters must deal with **Lustra** and learn the true nature of the “The Bright Sword”.

Area Information

As per **Scene D**.

Fighting Lustra

If the characters manage to prevent her from breaking the seal or reduce her below 50% HP, Lustra stops dispelling and engages them in combat.

Adjusting the Encounter

Lustra is a **conjurer**. She is alone except for her summoned gargoyle. She always starts with *mage armor* cast. Unless the gargoyle has been killed, she starts out concentrating on *conjure minor elemental*. This has been a very long and taxing day for Lustra, so she does not have all of her spell slots. Her spell list differs from the default and is as follows.

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *mage hand*, *fire bolt*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ice knife**

2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers*, * *misty step*, * *web**

3rd level (3 slots): *tidal wave**, *stinking cloud**

4th level (3 slots): *conjure minor elemental**, *stoneskin*

5th level: no 5th level slots

Very Weak: Lustra has no 2nd, 3rd or 4th level spell slots left.

Weak: Lustra has no 3rd or 4th level spell slots left.

Average or Stronger: Lustra has one 4th level spell slots left and uses it to cast *stoneskin* once her gargoyle is gone.

Once Lustra is defeated, the characters may choose to dispel the seal. A DC12 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the seal is something that is typically used to bind spirits. They can use her special dispelling scroll for this or they can physically force the sarcophagus open with a DC12 Strength (Athletics) check. Once they do, the **Ghost of Matif Ortheros** emerges and attempts to possess one of them.

Inside the sarcophagus is an old stone sword that glows with faint necromantic energy. Destroying the sword, destroys the ghost.

Adjusting the Encounter

There are no adjustments to the **ghost**, but there are to the stone sword. It is intended that stronger parties fight the ghost, while weaker parties destroy it by destroying the sword.

Average or Weaker: the stone sword has an AC of 18 and 20 hitpoints.

Strong or Very Strong: the stone sword has an AC18, 60 hitpoints and a damage threshold of 10.

Lustra Dispels the Seal

If Lustra is allowed to dispel the seal, the **Ghost of Matif Ortheros** emerges through the stone and immediately possesses her (she fails this save on account of having opened herself to it). It then attacks the party using Lustra’s abilities – use the same adjustments as for fighting her.

Creatures/NPCs

Ghost of Matif Ortheros.

In life, Matif Ortheros was the brother of a duke and had led the soldiers of a noble house. He was a particularly cruel fighter and took pleasure in executing his enemies. Constantly jealous of his brother’s power, Matif was killed as he was trying to assassinate the duke. Because of his popularity among the soldiers, the nature of the death was concealed, and he was buried as a hero. To curse him even in death, his brother had priests bind Matif’s soul to a stone sword, to suffer and go mad for eternity. As such, Matif’s ghost can’t move more than 10ft away from the stone sword without possessing another creature. After years of suffering Matif began to call out telepathically to anyone that would hear him. Not possessing strong magic, he was able to break into the divinations of weaker mages that could not properly protect their minds.

Objectives/Goals. The ghost wants to possess another body, so that it can live again and seek his brother’s descendants to slay them.

What Does He Know? His brother’s daughter **Marlenta** was married off to a prince of a neighboring kingdom. This marriage had been a great accomplishment for the family, and as a dowry, his brother had gifted the prince a priceless enchanted blade known as The Bright Sword. Knowing the sword’s legendary power, **Matif** pretended to be the sword in hopes of luring the power-hungry down to him. Anyone possessed by the ghost learns this entire history.

Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure

Objectives

The characters report back to **Batilda**.

Creatures/NPCs

Batilda Dorgont – Tiefling Female, Senior Librarian.

What Does She Know? When the party returns to Batilda, she is very curious about the story and wants to hear all the details. There is no malice in this, she simply loves stories and fancies the idea of being adventurer.

If the characters had not learned the history of **Matif Ortheros** she helps them research it, revealing all the details that would have been known by the ghost. If asked about The Bright Sword and **Marlenta**, the librarian finds out that she had been married to a **Prince Tormell**. Their story does not have a happy ending as they were both slain when their castle was sacked by rampaging orcs near **Hulburg**.

Treasure

Grateful for the characters' help, **Batilda** is eager to reward them. The library has a selection of special berets that had been donated by an archmagi and intended for use by the various librarians. She is willing to part with a few of these if the characters make a small donation to the library.

Superbly Angled Feathered Beret of the Librarian (Helm of Comprehending Languages)

Wondrous Item, uncommon

This wonderfully stylish beret is bright pink and adorned with a glorious black feather. Carefully sewn on the inside is a neatly printed inscription proudly proclaiming it as "Property of the Thentian Library of Arcane History". When worn, the beret functions exactly as a Helm of Comprehending Languages, except in the event that the wearer is located in a library and has raised their voice level above a courteous whisper. In this case, the beret ceases to function for 10 minutes.

Lustra Battille had a **Hat of Wizardry** on her that can be recovered.

Hat of Wizardry

Wondrous item, common (requires attunement by a wizard)

This antiquated, cone-shaped hat is adorned with gold crescent moons and stars. While you are wearing it, you gain the following benefits: You can use the hat as a spellcasting focus for your wizard spells.

You can try to cast a cantrip that you don't know. The cantrip must be on the wizard spell list, and you must make a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If the check succeeds, you cast the spell. If the check fails, so does the spell, and the action used to cast the spell is wasted. In either case, you can't use this property again until you finish a long rest.

Adventure Rewards

Advancement Checkpoints

The characters receive one advancement checkpoint for each objective completed:

- **Story Objective A:** Find the connection between the two dead mages and located the **Dark Pine Crypts**.
- **Story Objective B:** Confront the murderer **Lustra Satille**.
- **Bonus Objective A:** Gain the assistance of the bounty hunter **Drystala**.
- **Bonus Objective B:** Access **Oda Waggletop's** basement and clear it out.

Treasure Checkpoints

The characters receive a treasure checkpoint for every objective they complete.

Permanent Magic Items

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock the following magic items.

Superbly Angled Feathered Beret of the Librarian (Helm of Comprehending Languages)

Wondrous Item, Uncommon, Table B.

This wonderfully stylish beret is bright pink and adorned with a glorious black feather. Carefully sewn on the inside is a neatly printed inscription proudly proclaiming it as "Property of the Thentian Library of Arcane History". When worn, the beret functions exactly as a Helm of Comprehending Languages, except in the event that the wearer is located in a library and has raised their voice level above a courteous whisper. In this case, the beret ceases to function for 10 minutes.

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You can try to cast a cantrip that you don't know. The cantrip must be on the wizard spell list, and you

must make a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If the check succeeds, you cast the spell. If the check fails, so does the spell, and the action used to cast the spell is wasted. In either case, you can't use this property again until you finish a long rest.

Consumable Magic Items

Potion of Growth, *uncommon*, Table B.

Potion of Healing, *common*, Table A.

Story Award

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Mark of the Sisterhood. You have earned some favor with the *Sisterhood of the Blade* bounty hunting organization. By trading in this mark to a member of the sisterhood, you get their attention and some measure of cooperation. Benefits bestowed are detailed in adventures featuring the sisterhood and remain unknown until the mark is used.

The mark may come in handy in the following Tier 2 adventures:

- Six Summoned Swords
- Six Striking Swords
- Six Swords Unbound
- Fiendly Competition
- The Undisturbed

DM Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn advancement and treasure checkpoints and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the other rewards listed above.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

Appendix 1. Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

Batilda Dorgont – Tiefling Female, Senior Librarian of the Thentian Library of Arcane History.

Personality. *There's nothing I like more than a good mystery. I'm willing to listen to every side of an argument before I make my own judgment.*

Ideal: *Knowledge. The path to power and self-improvement is through knowledge*

Bond: *I work to preserve the library and genuinely care about the knowledge people gain here.*

Flaw: *I am easily distracted by the promise of information.*

Oda Waggletop, Female Gnome, young mage (deceased)

n/a

Neflis Timpera, Male Tiefling, young mage (deceased)

n/a

Enidda Waggletop, Female Gnome, mother of Oda.

Personality. *Despite my noble birth, I do not place myself above other folk. We all have the same blood.*

Ideal *Family. Blood runs thicker than water.*

Bond: *I seek to find out what happened to my murdered daughter.*

Flaw: *I didn't take enough interest in my daughter's magic studies.*

Drystala – Yuan-ti pureblood female, bounty hunter of the Sisterhood of the Blade.

Personality. *I am always calm, no matter what the situation. I never raise my voice or let my emotions control me. I always have a plan for what to do when things go wrong.*

Ideal: *People. I'm loyal to my friends, not to any ideals, and everyone else can take a trip down the Styx for all I care.*

Bond: *It's all about the bounty, not friends, not the right thing to do.*

Flaw: *My lack of emotions makes me an adept hunter, but at times leaves me puzzled as to others' motives.*

Lustra Satile – Human Female Conjuror.

Personality. *If you do me an injury, I will crush you, ruin your name, and salt your fields. No one could doubt by looking at my regal bearing that I am a cut above the unwashed masses*

Ideal: *. Power. Knowledge is the path to power and domination.*

Bond: *I come from a noble family, and one day I'll reclaim my lands and title from those that chose to send me away.*

Flaw: *Most people scream and run when they see a demon. I stop and take notes on its anatomy.*

Appendix 2. Creature Statistics

Drystala (Yuani-ti Pureblood Enchanter)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+)

Saving Throws INT +6, WIS +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spellcasting. The enchanter is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The enchanter has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): friends, mage hand, mending, message

1st level (4 slots): charm person,* mage armor, magic missile

2nd level (3 slots): hold person,* invisibility, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): fireball, haste, tongues

4th level (3 slots): dominate beast,* stonewall

5th level (2 slots): hold monster*

*Enchantment spell of 1st level or higher

Actions

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d6 – 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 – 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Instinctive Charm (Recharges after the Enchanter Casts an Enchantment Spell of 1st Level or Higher).

The enchanter tries to magically divert an attack made against it, provided that the attacker is within 30 feet of it and visible to it. The enchanter must decide to do so before the attack hits or misses.

The attacker must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker targets the creature closest to it, other than the enchanter or itself. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target.

Fire Snake

Medium elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (-0)	8 (-1)

Damage Vulnerabilities: Cold

Damage Resistances: Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities: Fire

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages: Ignan understands but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Heated Body. A creature that touches the snake or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The snake makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Source: *Monster Manual*

Gargoyle

Medium elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Resistances: Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Adamantine

Damage Immunities: Poison

Condition Immunities: Exhaustion, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages: Terran

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

False Appearance. While the gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

Actions

Multiattack. The gargoyle makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

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

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

Source: *Monster Manual*

Ghost of Matif Ortheros (Ghost)

Medium undead, any alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Resistances: Acid, Fire, Lightning, Thunder; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities: Cold, Necrotic, Poison

Condition Immunities: Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages: Any languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost 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.

Actions

Withering Touch. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Source: *Monster Manual*

Giant Wasp

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

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

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Sting. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) 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.

Lustra Batille (Conjurer)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws: INT +6, WIS +4

Skills: Arcana +6, History +6

Senses: Passive Perception 11

Languages: any four languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The conjurer is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The conjurer has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *unseen servant**

2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers*, * *misty step*, * *web**

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball*, *stinking cloud**

4th level (3 slots): *Evard's black tentacles*, * *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill*, * *conjure elemental**

*Conjuration spell of 1st level or higher

Benign Transportation (Recharges after the Conjurer Casts a Conjuration Spell of 1st Level or Higher). As a bonus action, the conjurer teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that it can see. If it instead chooses a space within range that is occupied by a willing Small or Medium creature, they both teleport, swapping places.

Actions

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

Tobirnax the Collector (Black Dragonborn Necromancer)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws: INT +7, WIS +5

Skills: Arcana +7, History +7

Damage Resistances: Necrotic

Senses: Passive Perception 11

Languages: any four languages

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. The necromancer is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The necromancer has the following wizard spells prepared: Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *mending*

1st level (4 slots): *false life*, * *mage armor*, *ray of sickness**

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, * *ray of enfeeblement*, * *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, * *bestow curse*, * *vampiric touch**

4th level (3 slots): *blight*, * *dimension door*, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's hand*, *cloudkill*

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death**

*Necromancy spell of 1st level or higher

Grim Harvest (1/Turn). When necromancer kills a creature that is neither a construct nor undead with a spell of 1st level or higher, the necromancer regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times if it is a necromancy spell.

Actions

Withering Touch. Melee Spell Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws WIS +0

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 8

Languages Understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Appendix 3. Bonus Objective A.

Scene A. Magic Hunter

Prerequisites

This scene should be used if the characters have decided to take on **Bonus Objective A** and travel to the Thentia Bounty office. If the characters don't have time to undertake this objective, **Assem** simply tells them that the person they seek is away.

Objectives

Characters visit the the Thentia bounty office and learn about a bounty hunter who tracks mages.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The bounty offices across the Moonsea tend to share a similarly functional layout, with a long – often narrow – hallway leading to a single pass-through window that is protected by steel bars. The Thentian office is located in the seedy Brambles district.

Lighting. Skylights provide soft light from above during the day and the office is typically closed at night. The clerk has a candle or lamp for evenings.

Other Features. As one may expect, the walls serve as a home to various current and old posters offering everything from bounties, to rewards for finding the long-missing, to tales of lost treasure and various scams. There are no local bounties posted at the moment.

Creatures/NPCs

Assem Kudar – Bounty Office Clerk

The clerk of the Thentia office is an impressively tall and muscular dark-skinned older human named **Assem Kudar**.

Objectives/Goals. Assem is a retired bounty hunter who uses his connections across the Moonsea to bring people together. Generally good-natured, but curt with those he does not know, Assem sees far too many people that waste his time.

What Does He Know? “Dead mages? What do you think this is, an assassins’ den?!” Assem is initially defensive and not interested in sharing any

information. A DC12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that he’s holding something back.

A DC12 Charisma (Persuasion) check OR showing him the official writ get him to cough up the following info:

- He doesn’t know anything about the two mages or their deaths.
- There is a bounty hunter named Drystala who specializes in tracking mages. She dropped by yesterday to say hello and find out about the higher end local taverns and inns.
- The two places that she was directed to are **The Mage’s Pit** and **The Lady’s Wink**.
- Drystala is “with the sisterhood”, typically doing higher end, secretive work. One of the few sisters who likes to work alone. If asked, Assem gives party basic info on the **Sisterhood of the Blade**.
- Drystala is a tall yuan-ti pureblood and has very pale skin. She’s likely to be in disguise. “But those eyes, you can’t mistake those eyes!” says Assem of her slit pupils.

The Sisterhood of the Blade

The Sisterhood is a generally neutral organization of female bounty hunters that operates all around Faerun. Its members tend to be well trained and known to operate only with other sisters – almost none of whom are actually related.

Members of the sisterhood do not carry identifying marks or insignias, but commonly work in trios and call each other “sister”.

Mark: It is possible that characters might possess a **mark of the sisterhood** from another adventure. **Assem** is not part of the Sisterhood and would not take it, but he would point out that **Drystala** would value it.

Development

Once the characters learn where **Drystala** may currently be, they can proceed to either of the two locations. They find her at the first location they choose to visit (and therefore don’t need to visit the second). Proceed to **Scene B** for the locations.

Scene B. The Mage's Pit & The Lady's Wink

Prerequisites

Proceed with this scene as directed from **Scene A**. Use the location information in this scene to set up the encounter described in **Scene C**. The encounter plays out similarly in either location, but there are differences in NPCs and exact layout.

Area Information – The Mage's Pit

About the Mage's Pit

When Thauguran's tower sprouted legs, got up, and literally walked away, a deep pit was left behind. When it was decided that the tower was not going to return, an ambitious halfling, by the name of Gelzira Tunnely, commissioned the construction of an inn and tavern over the pit. The Mage Pit caters to traveling wizards, sorcerers, and other magic wielders; each room of the inn has an enormous desk and work table, and accommodations can be made with Gelzira to supply goods for magical experiments and rituals. Lower levels have been built in the pit itself, to contain some of the more...cautious experiments. The deepest parts of the pit are rumored to still house experiments left behind by Thauguran, and it is said not all of them are inanimate.

Dimensions & Terrain. Only the main floor of the Mage's Pit is relevant for this adventure. Refer to map in **Appendix 7** for layout.

Lighting. The tavern is lit by a variety of lamps throughout, providing a combination of dim and bright light.

Staff/Barkeep

Dommel Dunston – Half-Orc Male, day bartender. The no-nonsense daytime bartender often needs to mind the main floor of the tavern on his own and has been hired for more than his rugged good looks. Not only physically strong, Dommel knows enough magic to dispel the occasional troublesome casting.

Objectives/Goals. His intent is to keep the peace and keep trouble out.

What Does He Know? Dommel minds his own business, though a couple of gold coins and a bit of persuasion get him to nod in the right direction (but not more).

Other Patrons

Present are a mix of travelers that have dropped by to see the famous establishment, and a few business-as-usual patrons that are either here having a regular lunch or have come in to buy something on the lower levels. There are only about 10 people in

the tavern. Many of these are spellcasters and are used to the occasional burst of magic.

Area Information – Lady's Wink

About the Lady's Wink

To the general populace, The Lady's Wink is a well-known tavern and inn, visited by locals and adventurers alike. Beneath the surface, both figuratively and literally, the Wink is home to the best gambling den in Thentia, with several floors below ground dedicated to games of fortune. It is whispered by those in the know that the goddess of luck, Tymora, must smile upon The Lady's Wink, for the illicit activities that happen there have never been found out by the local authorities, by chance or otherwise.

Dimensions & Terrain. Only the main floor of the Lady's Wink is relevant for this adventure. Refer to map in **Appendix 7** for layout.

Lighting. The tavern is lit by a variety of lamps throughout, providing a combination of dim and bright light.

Staff/Barkeep

Shandra Quickfingers – Dwarf Female, bartender, cleric of Tymora, Zhentarim spy.

One is tempted to say that Shandra is “more than meets the eye” but her tattooed, half-shaven head, her sharp gaze, and the multitude of dagger hilts protruding from her leather tunic tell a pretty compelling story.

Objectives/Goals. Shandra knows who to let by downstairs and who to keep out. Scouting out new arrivals and customers is priority one.

What Does She Know? She knows **Drystala** personally and would be found at her table “catching up” when the group walks in. Though she's too sharp to give information to others, her very presence ends up giving away the bounty hunter.

Other Patrons

The dining floor is not large and there are only 6 or 7 other patrons inside. One set is a merchant family passing through town. Two others are locals in for lunch. All of these scatter and run when trouble breaks.

Development

Once the characters enter the tavern and have had a chance to check out the establishment, proceed to **Scene C** for the encounter.

Scene C. On the Job

Prerequisites

Proceed with this scene once the characters arrive at the tavern of their choice as per **Scenes A and B**.

Objectives

Characters arriving looking to talk to the bounty hunter **Drystala** but end up in the middle of her job.

Area Information

Layout as per **Scene B** and maps in **Appendix 7**.

NPC Locations. When the party arrives, **Drystala** is sitting inconspicuously at a corner table. If the scene takes place at the **Lady's Wink**, she is joined by **Shandra**, who gets up to greet the characters, inadvertently drawing attention to **Drystala**. If the scene takes place at the **Mage's Pit**, **Dommel** the bartender is behind his counter. In both cases, the necromancer **Tobirnex** is having dinner at a large table across the room, which he occupies on his own.

Creatures/NPCs

Drystala – Yuan-ti pureblood female, bounty hunter of the Sisterhood of the Blade.

Drystala is a pale-skinned yuan-ti pureblood that looks entirely human except for her bright green eyes, which are reptilian slits. She has dressed in a simple mage robe in the local style and has her hood up, concealing her eyes except from up close.

Objectives/Goals. Drystala is here to retrieve two bodies which the necromancer Tobirnex animated and took without permission. The bounty is for the retrieval of the bodies, so her intent was to dispel the animation and steal them, rather than taking on the necromancer.

What Does She Know? She knows nothing about the dead mages, but if the characters end up helping

her, she may offer to assist them. This is resolved after the scene is played out.

Tobirnex – Male Black Dragonborn Necromancer.

Helping himself to bodies of the recently deceased is the least of Tobirnex's crimes. The necromancer is an adventurer by trade, though his morals result in his taking all manner of unsavory and illegal jobs.

Objectives/Goals. Tobirnex is here for a meal and looking for a place to store his zombies (packed into a large sealed duffel-style bag at his side).

What Does He Know? He is not aware of the specific bounty on his zombies, but is always alert for old enemies coming to get him. He can be persuaded to give up his zombies, but only if he's placed into a threatened position.

Development

By approaching Drystala, characters inadvertently blow her cover. Tobirnex realizes she's a bounty hunter, yells "you'll never take me alive!" and unleashes a spell in the direction of Drystala's table before pulling the cord on his bag out of which two zombies emerge. Drystala in turn yells "necromancer!" and flips the table forward blocking the spell from hitting her and the party, ending up next to the characters behind the make-shift table-barricade.

At Mage's Pit the other patrons calmly move out of the way and switch to other tables. Dommel shouts "Take it outside, don't make me counterspell!" (The next spell that's cast is counterspelled – smart adventurers will make sure this belongs to Tobirnex!)

At Lady's Wink the other patrons bolt out of the tavern. Shandra moves to block off the way downstairs and whispers something under her breath – readying the *silence* spell on Tobirnex location if he attempts to cast another spell.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Refer to **Scene D** for the full combat encounter with Tobirnex.

Note: if the characters choose to leave, with Drystala's help they're able to track down and confront Tobirnex later. Stage this as required.

EXPLORATION

DC12 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) checks can identify that Drystala is on the job. Realizing that a conversation is unavoidable, Drystala acts casually, as though her and the characters are old friends. Playing along (DC12 Deception) avoids Tobirnex' notice.

SOCIAL

Drystala is willing to humor the characters if they help her retrieve the bodies (by any means). If anyone has and turns in a **Mark of the Sisterhood** from a previous adventure, Drystala agrees to help immediately. This gains assistance but does not complete the **Bonus Objective**.

Scene D. Mage Brawl

Prerequisites

Proceed with this scene once the characters choose to confront **Tobirmax**.

Objectives

Characters must assist Drystala in retrieving the two zombies in Tobirmax's possession. Once the zombies emerge, Drystala may call out "the bodies, don't destroy the bodies!" to indicate that she is here for them and not the necromancer.

Area Information

Layout as per **Scene B** and maps in **Appendix 7**.

Adjusting the Encounter

This encounter is scaled not by the number of creatures, but by how much the nearby NPCs assist the characters. Between Drystala and the relevant barkeep, they are able to neutralize most of Tobirmax' spellcasting if necessary. The "shutdown" should be narrated. For example, if *silence* is used, Drystala may rush in and grapple Tobirmax, to keep him in its zone.

Once his zombies are downed, **Tobirmax** realizes he has little to fight for and either agrees to cease hostilities or escapes.

The encounter always features **2 zombies**, which the characters are looking to recover – their condition is of no great significance, but they're wanted returned intact.

Tobirmax is a necromancer. He has no 6th level spell slot in any version of the encounter. The only 5th level spell he has prepared is *danse macabre*. The only 4th level spells he has prepared are *vitriolic sphere*, *dimension door* and *stoneskin*. DM's are advised to be extra cautious with this monster's abilities versus low level characters – his motivation in this encounter is mainly to protect himself and escape, not to kill others – he uses *dimension door* to get away once he reaches the back door.

Very Weak: Tobirmax's spellcasting is fully shut down for the entire combat (used only to escape)

Weak: Tobirmax doesn't have any 3rd level or higher spell slots, and his casting is shut down for his first 2 turns.

Average: Zombies have 33 hitpoints each. Tobirmax doesn't have any 4th level or higher spell slots, and his spellcasting is shut down for his first turn.

Strong: Zombies have 33 hitpoints each. Tobirmax only has one 4th level spell slot and his spellcasting is shut down for the first turn.

Very Strong: Zombies have 33 hitpoints each. Tobirmax has two 4th level spell slots and one 5th level slot – the 5th level slot is used only to cast *danse macabre* the first time that the

zombies are brought down. His spellcasting is shut down for the first turn.

Scaling Tip: Against level 1 characters, consider using minimum damage instead of rolling for the monsters.

Drystala is a Yuan'ti Pureblood **Enchanter**. On the enchanter stat block, replace *fireball* with *counterspell* and *tongues* with *dispel magic*. She also has the following racial traits: Drystala is immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition.

Innate Spellcasting. The yuan-ti's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). The yuan-ti can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: animal friendship (snakes only)

3/day each: poison spray, suggestion

Magic Resistance. The yuan-ti has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

While both Drystala's and Tobirmax's statistics are provided to reference their abilities, it is recommended that their parts in combat be narrated for story purposes. This is not intended to be a full out fight to the death.

Drystala's Help

If the characters assist with the recovery of the two bodies (zombies), Drystala is grateful and willing to answer their questions. She does not know anything about the specific crimes but offers her expertise on the investigation – this results in advantage on any **Intelligence (Investigation or Arcana)** checks at the homes of the two mages and in putting together the clues once the investigation's done.

She will not risk her life in accompanying them to the crypt without pay. Her assistance in combat can be purchased with gold. (Calculate her total cost as 5g for every member of the party, but state it as a total number.) This number can be negotiated down to half with a DC12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, with weak and very weak parties having advantage.

If anyone in the party is in possession of a **Mark of the Sisterhood** and turns it in, they have her full assistance, free of charge.

Appendix 4. Bonus Objective B.

Scene A. The Parchment Gears

Prerequisites

This and the following scene can take place while the adventures are investigating **Oda Waggletop's** laboratory in **Scene C2** of **Episode 2**.

Objectives

The characters must find a way into the magically sealed basement and deal with the creature in there.

Area Information

Oda's laboratory as per **Scene C2** of **Episode 2**.

The Steel Plate

The steel plate under the Oda's workbench has two latches that are easily located once one knows to look for them. Once unlatched, the entire plate – with the bench atop it, slides off easily, revealing a thick iron trap door. The door is magically locked and cannot be opening by non-magical means. Oda has placed a special arcane lock on it that only opens when a *knock* spell is cast as a 3rd or higher level spell. This can be ascertained with a successful DC13 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Someone who casts *knock* on the door learns this without a check. A way to cast a 3rd level *knock* spell is hidden within the gear case puzzle.

The Gear Case

The nondescript steel case hidden in the corner of the lab is easily located given Enidda's directions. **Bonus Objective B**, they note that the desk is

standing upon a metal plate (otherwise this of no significance and they do not find any sign of the hidden basement). They also notice the steel case described by **Enidda**. The case is neither locked nor trapped.

Inside the Case, neatly stacked in cut out holes are 24 gears that seem to have been cut out of parchment. There are two gears of each kind stacked on top of each other. All gears are about two inches in diameter, some of the gears have two levels, with a smaller, one-inch gear attached to the top. The gears have different numbers of cogs (teeth). Refer to the player handout in **Appendix 8**.

Each of the gears is a spell that will be cast when the gear is removed from the case and subsequently dropped or let go. The spells are in alphabetical order, with the letters represented by the number of cogs (1 cog = A, 2 cogs = B, etc.). The double gears are two-word spells, with the smaller gear being the first letter of the first word. The objective is for the characters to figure out that one if the gears is an upcast version of the *knock* spell.

If a gear is removed from the case, the spell goes off, setting off its effect, centered on wherever it touches down. Once the characters manage to use the *knock* gear on the door, proceed to **Scene B**.

Other Uses for the Gears?

Once the case is opened the first time, the gears begin to slowly deteriorate and fully disappear after 1 hour. While it is not intended that these be used for other parts of the adventure, this is up to the DM. They do not persist beyond the adventure.

# of Cogs in Small Gear (if any)	# of Cogs in Large Gear	Spell Effect	Notes
	1	Aid	Affects everyone in the lab.
	2	Bless	Affects everyone in the lab.
3	19	Color Spray	Affects everyone in the lab.
3	1	Conjure Animals	4 giant wasps spawn and attack the party.
	4	Darkness	Lasts for 1 minute
6	12	False Life	Cast at 2nd level, affects 1 person.
	7	Grease	
	11	knock	Cast at 3rd level.
	12	Longstrider	Affects 1 person
13	9	Mirror Image	Affects 1 person
	19	Sleep	Targets everyone in the lab.
	23	Web	

Note: in the event that Giant Wasps spawn on a very weak party, it is recommended that they do minimum damage.

Scene B. The Thing Below

Objectives

The characters must deal with the creature in the basement.

Area Information

Oda's laboratory as per **Scene C2** of **Episode 2**.

The Thing Below

The thing in the basement is a **fire snake**. Oda had hoped to summon a familiar, but instead managed this, then couldn't contain it and locked it below. Upon opening the door, the snake immediately rushes up, trying to get out. If there are characters in its way, it attacks them, if not, she goes for the door. It lights stuff on fire as it goes, so it's obviously dangerous. If thematically appropriate, it may go over the case of paper gears, causing them all to go off when burned!

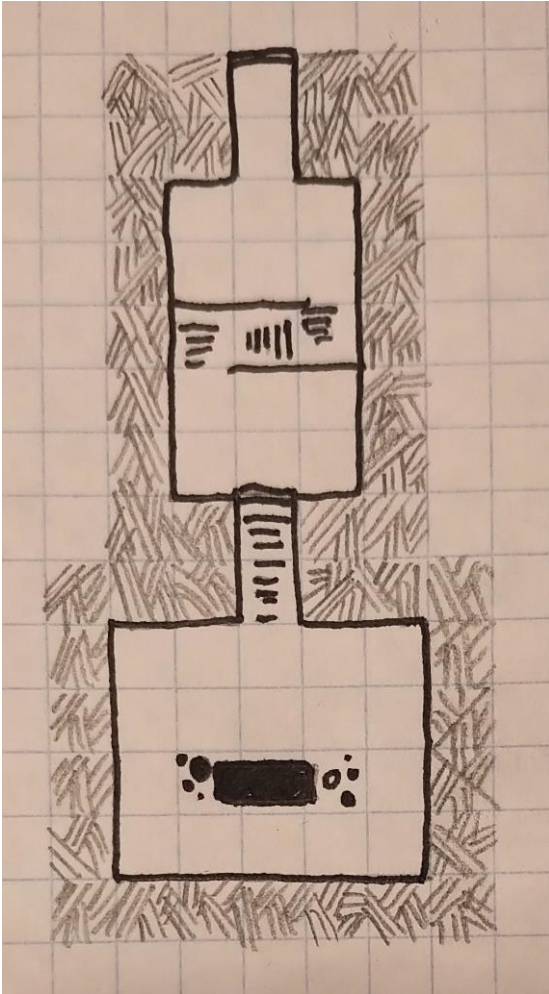
Treasure

If the characters get rid of the **fire snake**, Enidda gives them a **Potion of Healing** as a reward for their help.

Appendix 5. Map of the City of Thentia

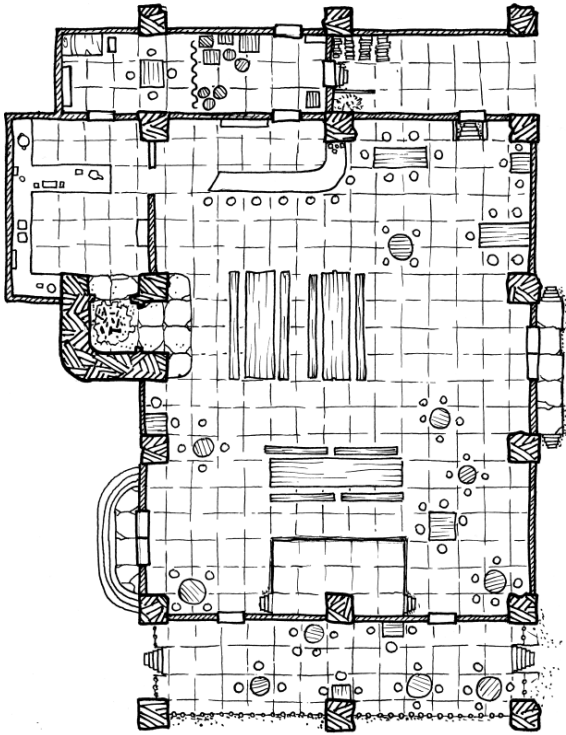


Appendix 6. Map of the Dark Pine Crypt

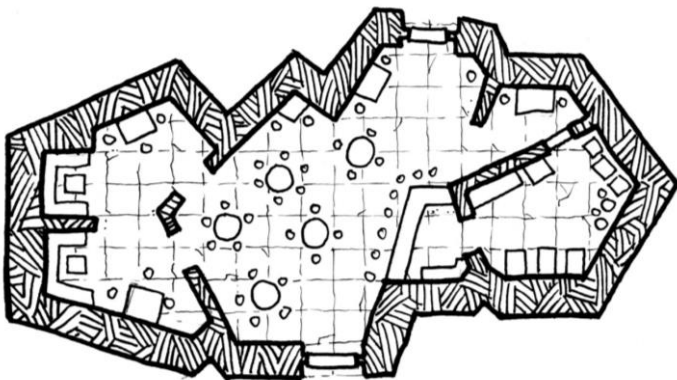


Appendix 7. Maps of the Mage Pit and the Lady's Wink

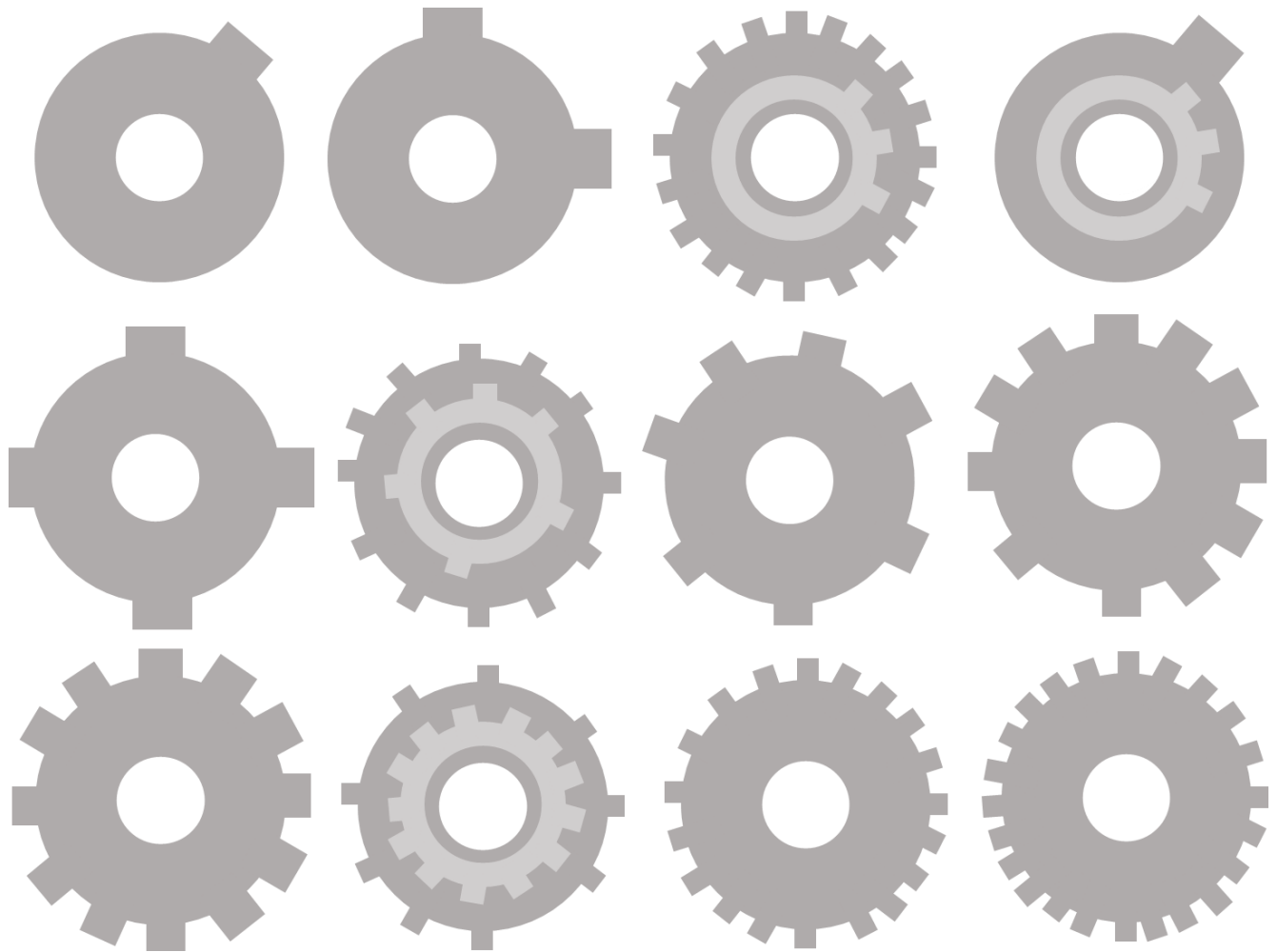
Map of the **Mage Pit** (Tavern Room – above pit area)



Map of the Lady's Wink (Ground floor only, lower levels not shown)



Appendix 8. The Gear Case (Player Handout)



Appendix 9. Magic Items & Story Awards

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock this magic item.

Superbly Angled Feathered Beret of the Librarian (Helm of Comprehending Languages)

Wondrous Item. Uncommon

This wonderfully stylish beret is bright pink and adorned with a glorious black feather. Carefully sewn on the inside is a neatly printed inscription proudly proclaiming it as "Property of the Thention Library of Arcane History". When worn, the beret functions exactly as a Helm of Comprehending Languages, except in the event that the wearer is located in a library and has raised their voice level above a courteous whisper. In this case, the beret ceases to function for 10 minutes.

Hat of Wizardry

Wondrous item, common (requires attunement by a wizard)

This antiquated, cone-shaped hat is adorned with gold crescent moons and stars. While you are wearing it, you gain the following benefits: You can use the hat as a spellcasting focus for your wizard spells.

You can try to cast a cantrip that you don't know. The cantrip must be on the wizard spell list, and you must make a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If the check succeeds, you cast the spell. If the check fails, so does the spell, and the action used to cast the spell is wasted. In either case, you can't use this property again until you finish a long rest.

Story Award

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Mark of the Sisterhood. You have earned some favour with the *Sisterhood of the Blade* bounty hunting organization. By trading in this mark to a member of the sisterhood, you get their attention and some measure of cooperation. Benefits bestowed are detailed in adventures featuring the sisterhood and remain unknown until the mark is used.

The mark may come in handy in the following adventures:

- Six Summoned Swords
- Six Striking Swords
- Six Swords Unbound
- Fiendly Competition
- The Undisturbed

Appendix 9: Dungeon Master Tips

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

New to D&D Adventurers League?

About the D&D Adventurers League
<https://dndadventurersleague.org/>

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<https://dndadventurersleague.org/start-here/dungeon-masters/>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure

that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting This Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group’s average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party	Strength
3-4 characters,	APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters,	APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters,	APL greater than	Average
5 characters,	APL less than	Weak
5 characters,	APL equivalent	Average
5 characters,	APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters,	APL less than	Average
6-7 characters,	APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters,	APL greater than	Very strong