

Finder's Fiend

A Sisterhood of the Blade Opportunity



CCC-SVH-03-01



Souls bound to a deadly fiend have escaped the Nine Hells and taken over denizens of Thentia. The devil wants the souls back and if they're not delivered quickly, she intends to come for them herself, endangering more innocents. To save the lives of the unsuspecting hosts, adventurers must track them down and send the stray souls back to Hell.

A Two-to-Four-Hour Adventure for 5th through 10th Level Characters (APL 8).

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Adventure Primer

Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.

—John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th – 10th -level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in and around the city of Thentia, located on the Moonsea.

Background

Over centuries, the horned devil **AVIXXARLIA** has collected many mortal souls. A tenday past, a band of mortal marauders swept through her palace in **AVERNUS**.

In a failed attempt to steal the souls, the interlopers released several of the souls onto the material plane, where they quickly took possession of unsuspecting mortal bodies in and around the city of **THENTIA**.

Enraged, but preferring for others to do her dirty work, the devil has passed a message through a leader of her mortal followers **SIMION NEFAR**: “Return my souls to Hell within a month, or I shall come to claim them and many a mortal will suffer as collateral damage.”

Simion has passed the message on to various authorities in the city, all of whom publicly declined to have any dealings with a devil’s cult. One of these authorities has chosen to deal with the problem anonymously, by offering a bounty for each of the souls brought in. This information was passed on privately to **ASSEM KUDAR**, the bounty office clerk in Thentia, who in turn contacted the highly reputable **SISTERHOOD OF THE BLADE** organization to take on the job.

Unfortunately, the Sisterhood’s interest was limited to only one of the bounties, leaving Assem and Thentia’s mysterious benefactor in need of other adventurers to recover the rest.

Overview

The adventure’s story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **2 hours** to play. The first of these parts is a Call to Action scene. It

also contains **two optional bonus objectives** – each taking one additional hour to play.

- **Call to Action: A Fiend in Need.** The characters meet with Assem Kudar and learn of the bounty on souls and the dire threat to the city should they be left unrecovered.
- **Part 1: Soul Searching.** The track down one of the escaped souls. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Part 2: Witch is Which.** The last remaining soul has proven difficult to locate, but the clues all point to the distant land of Rashemen. This is **Story Objective B**.

Bonus Objectives

This adventure contains two optional bonus objectives—each taking **an additional hour** to play once they’ve been discovered:

- **Bonus Objective A: A Second Soul.** The characters must locate a second soul. This bonus objective is described in **Appendix 1**.
- **Bonus Objective B: A Third Soul.** The characters must locate a third soul. This bonus objective is described in **Appendix 2**.

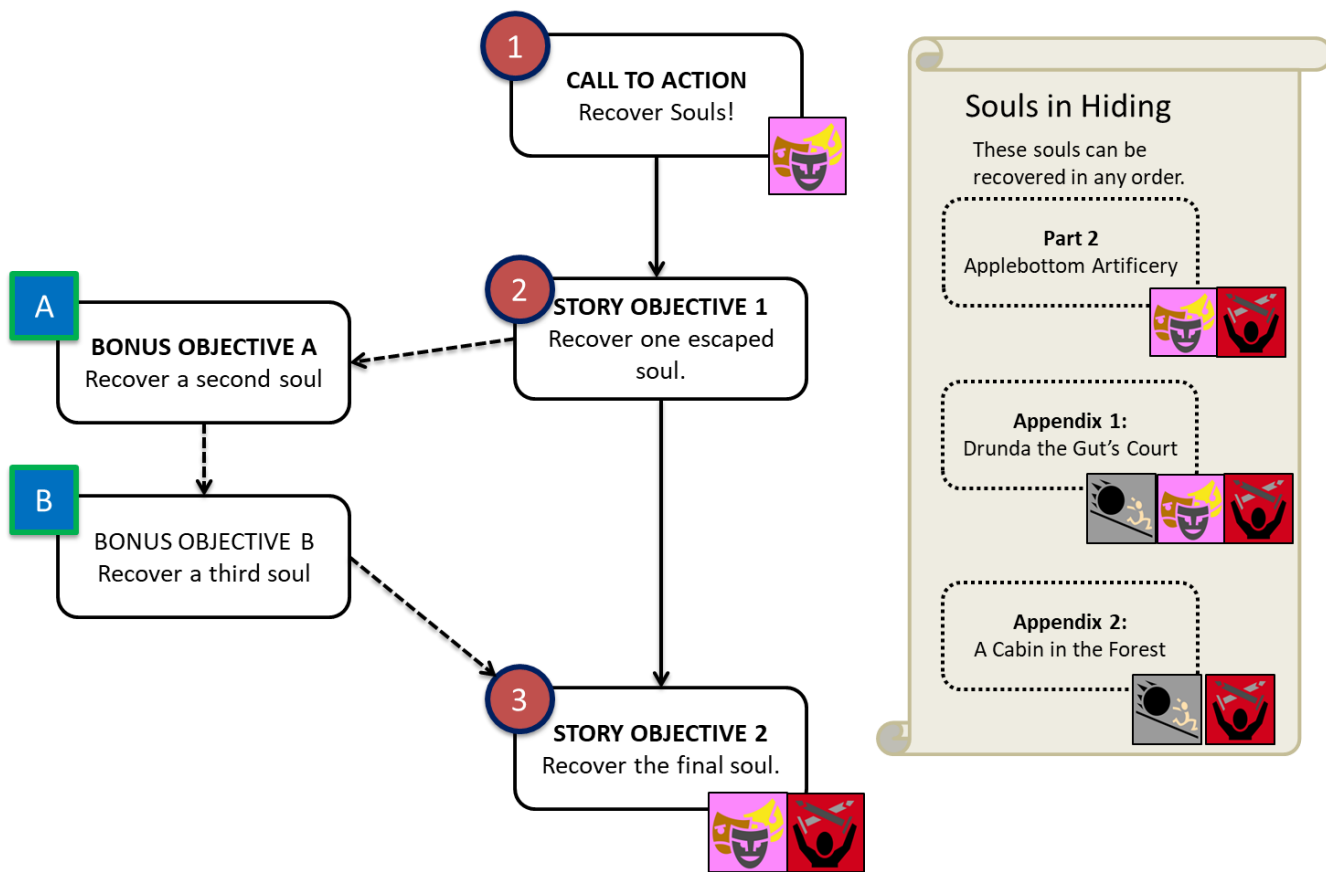
Adventure Hooks

Good Characters or Faction Agents. Word of the devil’s ultimatum and the danger it may pose to innocent lives has made it to various persons of influence within the city. Any number of these may be interested in preventing such an event and therefore passing the information onto skilled adventurers. Others – such as the Zhentarim or various mercenary outfits – may simply pass on the opportunity to make coin to its members. In all cases, they’re directed to speak to Assem Kudar at the bounty office for further details.

Bounty Hunters. Thentia is home to a thriving bounty hunting trade, which the characters may be familiar with from previous adventures such as *Fiendly Competition* and *When Mages Fall*. In this case they may have been contacted about the opportunity directly by Assem Kudar from the bounty office.

Adventure Flowchart

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



Call to Action: A Fiend in Need

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

The Bounty Office

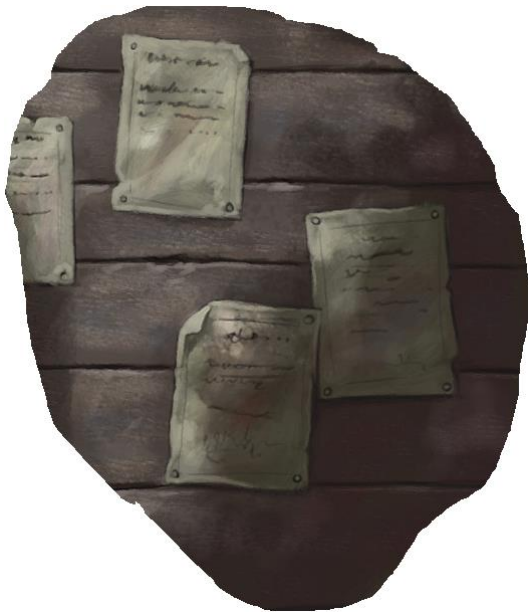
The City of Thentia

With its magic schools, the bustling city of Thentia welcomes many a student of the arcane arts. It is also a city of commerce, with the true power residing among wealthy noble families. Private security forces and independent operators such as adventurers and bounty hunters can often find employment – legal or otherwise – easily, drawing many to the city.

The first scene of the adventure takes place at the Thentia bounty office. Based on the adventure hooks provided, this is a good opportunity for the players to introduce how their character came to be here by elaborating on which power, faction, or person influence directed them to the job.

Mark of the Sisterhood.

Prior to proceeding, check whether any of the characters possess a mark of the sisterhood story award from a previous adventure. Make a note if at least one mark is present in the party.



Area Information

The area has the following 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 Thentia office is located in the seedy Brambles district.

Light. Skylights provide soft light from above during the day and the clerk has a candle or lamp for evenings.

Other Features. As one may expect, the walls are home to various current and old posters detailing everything from bounties, to rewards for finding the long-missing, to tales of lost treasure, and various scams.

Creature Information



Assem Kudar, N, human male (swashbuckler).

The clerk of this office is an impressively tall and muscular dark-skinned older human named Assem Kudar. When the characters arrive, he is in the process of recounting a tale of one of his old adventures to a robed and hooded acquaintance who listens intently.

Unbeknownst to the characters, this is the yuan-ti pureblood bounty hunter **Drystala**. She notices the characters and excuses herself, waiting outside while he sees to business.

Characters who participated in *When Mages Fall*, may recognize her as someone whose expertise they sought out in that adventure. Otherwise they notice her a merely as pale-skinned woman with briefly-flickering green eyes. Assem welcomes them as she departs.

Personality. Assem is a retired bounty hunter who uses his connections in Thentia and 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 Want? Assem's demeanor changes visibly from pleasant reminiscence to the dire intensity of the situation he has been placed in. His genuine concern for the city has made him particularly invested in getting adventurers to take on the not-so-well-paying bounties associated with the "missing souls".

What Does He Know? Due to the highly unique nature of the bounty on the souls, Assem was fully briefed by an anonymous benefactor regarding the situation. He shares what he knows with the characters.

- **Missing Souls.** Several souls have escaped Hell and taken over bodies of mortals in and around Thentia. The souls belonged to a powerful devil, who has threatened to come to the material plane to claim them – endangering not only their unsuspecting hosts, but many others.

While authorities refused to be seen acquiescing to a devil, an anonymous noble has offered up bounties to have these souls tracked down and sent back to Hell.

- **Sisterhood of the Blade.** Assem had hoped to deal with the matter quietly, by having the notable and discreet members of the sisterhood take care of the problem. However, the money offered was not nearly enough and they chose to take on only one of the bounties. This left Assem in the unfortunate situation of needing to find altruistic or opportunistic adventurers willing to recover the others at a discount rate and under the devil's deadline of one month. He has already sent out a few other adventurers, but needs more.
- **Finding the Souls.** When the souls returned to the material plane, they were able to possess

the bodies of anyone unconscious at the time. They took over the bodies entirely, often creating incidents and making themselves known. This has allowed for some of the souls to be identified by friends and kin, and found quickly. Given their ties with Assem, the sisterhood has been passing him information on the suspected identities and locations of those they decided not to go after.

- **Returning Souls to Hell.** Destroying the body returns the soul back to Hell, but also results in the death of the body's original owner. To save the body's owner, the soul must be banished using a special ritual. Assem provides the party with a scroll for this ritual, which can be performed by anyone, but requires the target body to be incapacitated for at least 1 minute while the ritual being performed. Upon successful use, the scroll becomes permanently marked with a magic rune indicating that it was successfully used. One unique mark appears per use. The ritual is harmless to those not possessed.
- **One Soul at a Time.** Assem currently has information on a few bodies which are suspected of being possessed. However, he only gives the party a single mission at a time once they agree to take it on.
- **The Missing Soul.** The approach of locating souls by reports of bizarre behavior of the host bodies has worked well and Assem has been able to put together leads for all but one of the missing souls. He is extremely concerned about having been unable to locate the last.

Assem wants to try a different approach for locating the last soul – as looking for the host has been fruitless, he thinks that learning about the soul's identity may help lead to its location. As all the souls had been stored together in Hell, they may know something of who the other souls were. He requests that the characters attempt to question the souls about the missing soul, so that it might be found.
- **About the Souls.** Assem knows little about he souls at this point, but expects to receive information as other bounty hunters check in. He was told that all the souls had made deals with a devil – whether this means they'll be open to negotiation or not is unknown. Two

things are certain - none want to return to Hell, and all should be considered dangerous.

Development

Assem provides the party with information on the first soul they need to track down and return to Hell. This adventure contains information on up to 3 known souls, of which any can be tracked as the characters' first mission.

If playing this adventure in a 2-hour timeslot, it is recommended that the soul detailed in **Part 2** is used.

If playing with more time, it's possible to start with any of the three souls from **Part 2**, **Appendix 1 (Bonus Objective A)** or **Appendix 2 (Bonus Objective B)**.

If the characters succeed on a DC13 Charisma (any relevant) check, Assem may even let them choose which soul to pursue first.

deserve to be sent back to Hell. The only way to learn the latter by interacting with them.

- Attempting to gain information from the souls is desired but optional. If one soul is not willing, another may have the required information. Other adventures are concurrently attempting to get this information from the souls they're tracking.

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.

If any of the characters possess a **mark of the sisterhood** story award which they are willing to turn in, Assem introduces them to Drystala, who provides them with additional information on their target. The specific tip provided is listed in a **Drystala's Tip** sidebar at the start of each soul's individual section. One mark is sufficient to gain tips for all the souls.

Call to Action: Return a Soul to Hell!

Track down and return to Hell – by any means necessary – the soul assigned to you by Assem.

If possible, question that soul about the others that it was kept with, in order to obtain clues on the missing soul.

DM Tip: Setting Up Soul Interactions

Aside from the need to recover the souls, there are two more key points that the characters should take away from their briefing:

- While the souls in question must be returned, the nature of their debt to the devil is not known. Good characters may rightfully wonder whether they

Part 2: Soul Searching

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

Getting to the Applebottom

Intel provided by Assem leads the characters up to the **Applebottom brothers' Artificery**. The owners had reported strange behaviour in one of their companions, leading to suspicions that this is where an escaped soul is located.

The workshop itself is located within the Temple of Gond, the god of all smiths, which itself is situated in the Hilt, a growing commercial district of Thentia between the Sword Trail's end and the new Dusk Gate in the western wall.

Drystala's Tip

If the adventurers turned in a **mark of the sisterhood** and secured Drystala's help, she provides the following additional information:

Party spellcasters should be careful if facing tinkered contraptions. These are often resistant to many types of magic, especially charms. Sometimes, when not properly enchanted, they can be temporarily disabled by the *dispel magic* spell, though it's difficult to tell whether it'll be effective without trying.

A. The Applebottom Artificery

Area Information

Applebottom brothers' Artificery has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Artificery is a small almost stand-alone workshop that is located within the temple of Gond building. It is filled with vials, decanters, mechanical wonders, and delicately crafted automatons. Bolts, gears, pieces of copper, and other metals litter the counter and shelves. Inside the workshop, the ceilings are 5 feet high, forcing taller creatures to hunch.

Sounds & Smell. Sounds of moving gears, rotating wheels, springing coils, steam whistles,

and carillions fill the place. Perfumes of spices, herbs, and mechanical grease create an odd mix.

Light. Exterior light permeates the workshop through its tinted windows, complemented by several lanterns.

Chronology Note

The timeline in this section assumes that this encounter is done first. If it is not and the characters have spent time tracking down other souls, the timeline may need to be adjusted accordingly. The best way to adjust the timing is to remember that all the souls escaped at the same time. The first couple of "adjustment" days spent in the new body can easily be expanded to fill a period longer than two days.

Creatures/NPCs



Gene and Jean Applebottom, LN gnome males, (commoners)

Of the two Applebottom brothers who own the workshop, Gene is the more lighthearted, while Jean is the more pessimistic. Both act friendly yet tend to be judgemental of others.

What Do They Know? The brothers are worshippers of Gond and tinker all day long. Several other gnomes in Thentia follow the same creed, including **Bimpnottin "Poppy" Turen**.

In the Thentia gnome community, "Miss Poppy" is well known for her expertise in alchemical work, so the brothers found it "quite suspicious indeed" when she came in seven days ago to borrow many books on automatons. She then came back again four days later to purchase specific mechanical parts well out of her normal area of expertise.

“Folks do best sticking to what their area of expertise, you know. That is the way.” Furthermore, when the brothers asked her what her intention was, she vaguely (“very vaguely indeed!”) responded that she was building a new kind of oven. The Applebottoms know for a fact (“Anyone competent would know this!”) that an oven does not need actuators, servomotors, or many of the other parts she asked for.

Finally, they thought Miss Poppy was looking particularly stressed, and seemed to be in quite a hurry, for she agreed to all prices without negotiation. “Very unlike Miss Poppy to simply forego negotiation! Very unlike indeed!”

What Do They Want?. The brothers are genuinely worried about their colleague and would appreciate if adventurers would check on her. Professional courtesy prevents them from doing so themselves. “Don’t mention us of course. That would be very unprofessional!” They provide the characters with directions to Miss Poppy’s home and workshop.

B. Miss Poppy’s House

Miss Poppy’s house is located in the southwestern area of the city, and directions from Jean and Gene are easy to follow.

Background (DM Only)

A tenday ago, Miss Poppy tripped on a rat and fell down the stairs to the basement floor, losing consciousness. The soul of **Kestrel Hope**, freed at that very moment, wormed its way inside her body and has been possessing her since then.

Seven days ago, feeling that Miss Poppy was pushing hard to reclaim her body, Kestrel started to design a mechanical body that she could inhabit. Clearing space in the study, she assembled every piece of information she could on nimblewrights and automatons, proceeding to draft the schematics of her future self. As both practice and protection, she then built a mechanical dog.

Four days ago, a cultist of Avixxarlia showed up at her doorstep. After a brief exchange, a fight ensued. With her dog’s help, Kestrel was able to overpower and kill the cultist. She then hid the body in the downstairs pantry. The fight revealed some flaws in the design of her dog’s

body, so she constructed a second one with her remaining components.

Satisfied with the second prototype and with her human-shaped schematics ready, Kestrel went to the Applebottom brothers again, to purchase remaining components. Annoyed by their inquisitiveness but undeterred in her mission, she purchased everything needed and returned to quickly begin work.

Feeling her grasp slowly slipping and worried about further cultist attacks, Kestrel has been working as fast as she can, driving Miss Poppy’s body to exhaustion.

Throughout the tenday that she’s been in possession of Miss Poppy’s body, some of the gnome’s neighbours and acquaintances have dropped by. To help with the charade, Kestrel got into the habit of each day “baking” some of Miss Poppy’s prized recipe carrot muffins. If anyone nosy showed up, she would give them a muffin, claim she was “critically busy” and send them off.

Not wanting to waste time on baking, Kestrel combined her knowledge of spellcasting with Miss Poppy’s knowledge of alchemy and has been using an altered *burning hands* spell to cook the muffins, resulting in various degrees of burning when’s she not careful.

Area Information – Exterior

Miss Poppy’s house has the following features:

General Information. Miss Poppy lives in a gnome sized one story bungalow set in the middle of an overgrown lawn, with larger human-sized houses on either side. From the front gate one can see a small yard and an outhouse at the back. Refer to the map in **Appendix 4** for an overview.

Sounds & Smell. Sounds of passersby, carts, wagons and horses fill the busy street outside the house. Once inside, however, external sounds are muffled, and one can only hear the sound of an old cuckoo clock.

Light. Because the small house is encased by normal sized houses, only when the sun hits the zenith is the place in full daylight; it otherwise remains in soft shadows.

Outhouse. The outhouse is located behind Miss Poppy’s house and is empty other except for a simple toilet.

Means of Entry. Assuming the characters don't simply knock on the front door, the house can be accessed through a number of windows and doors each leading to a different area. See **Playing the Pillars** section for ways to get in.

DM Tip – Exploring the House

It is not intended that characters spend a lot of time finding and access point or exploring every room. If they're stealthily exploring, allow them to quickly glean that no further clues are available in their room.

Area Information – Interior

The general theme of the house's interior is that a mild-mannered gnome lives here, but something is clearly amiss. Descriptions of various rooms confirm this in different ways. Refer to **Playing the Pillars** section for ways to get into the different rooms.

Lobby. An old cuckoo clock hangs on the wall, and the lobby contains some neatly arranged pairs of shoes, a few umbrellas, and a raincoat.

Kitchen. This modern kitchen contains all the amenities a cook could enjoy: a gas oven, meat and vegetable grinders, numerous utensils, Karatanean plateware, rows of glasses, etc.

Living/dining room. This living/dining room is littered with mechanical parts that Miss Poppy has been tinkering with. A **human sized mechanical body** in a very early stage of construction lays on the dining table.

Study. All vials, tubes, and other alchemical lab equipment has been pushed on a side, and several **automaton schematics** now litter the tables and desk.

Bedroom. This large bedroom contains a gnome-sized queen bed, a dresser, a makeover table, and a library filled with romance novels.

Basement and Pantry. The basement contains several crates filled with old souvenirs and houseware as well as unused furniture draped with linens. The pantry is right under the staircase, and contains cheese, meat, and other long conservation food items. The **corpse of an Avixxarlia cultist** remains in the pantry, bearing (mecha dog) bite marks and several stabbing wounds.

Creatures/NPCs

Kestrel Hope's Backstory

Kestrel Hope soul comes from a different and distant land. In this land evil has prevailed and where the son of a demon prince and a witch has ascended to godhood.

Born as a bastard daughter to noble human mother and a travelling Tiefling bard, she was hidden by the family and upon reaching adulthood, took the first chance to flee home with an adventuring party.

Lacking any martial training, a passion for divinity, or the patience to learn magic, she resorted to a pact with a devil that gave her the edge she needed. In time she even developed sound strategic and leadership skills.

For years, her band of adventurers defied both the holy paladins of the surrounding kingdoms and the usurper's demonic hordes, until they eventually fell to an ambush.

Kestrel's life was lost and her soul snatched up by a devil. It wasn't until many years later that the soul came into Avixxarlia's possession.

DM Tip: Kestrel's otherworldly and jumbled story intentional. She is a very old soul from a distant place.



(Soul possessing Miss Poppy, NG gnome female) Kestrel Hope, CN female (warlock of the fiend)

When the characters arrive, Miss Poppy has just finished "baking" a dozen carrot muffins and is either in the kitchen if they sneak in, or responds to the door wearing a floral apron if they knock (at this point she offers them a slightly burnt muffin and hopes they go away.) She has up to two mechanized dogs at her disposal (check the

Adjusting the Encounter section below for the state of the dogs.)

Personality. Kestrel is displaced and doesn't recognize the world as her own. She has lost count of the years her soul had been held captive in the lower planes. She knows the loneliness of being locked out of time for so long and is ready defend herself with everything she has to avoid being returned to Hell.

Kestrel's vague memories of life in her distant land have left her with particular distrust for paladins and clerics. At the same time she hates demons and any form of oppression. She was a freedom fighter of sorts, though these memories are now foggy.

What Does She Want? Kestrel does not wish Miss Poppy harm if she can help it, but nothing matters as much as avoiding a return to Hell – another opportunity to escape may never come! She wants to transfer into the metal body and be left alone.

What Does She Know? Kestrel has both her own and Miss Poppy's knowledge. She knows that other souls have escaped and can provide clues to the missing "mystery soul" as part of negotiation. (See **Appendix 3** for clues).

Playing the Pillars.

Exploration. Refer to the map in **Appendix 4** and the **Area Information** sections above for the layout of the house.

All windows and doors leading into the house are locked and can be unlocked with a successful DC13 Dexterity check using Thieves Tools. Windows can be broken with ease, however a DC15 Dexterity (Stealth) check is required to keep Kestrel from noticing this.

Inside the house, only the doors leading to and from the study are locked. Easy checks (DC10 suggested) in the rooms can be used to confirm Miss Poppy's general harmless nature as well as that something is clearly amiss in her house – it hasn't been cleaned in a tenday, things are left in disarray, something broken hasn't been picked up, etc.

Inside the study, a successful DC13 Intelligence (Investigation or Arcana) can be used to learn that the schematics are for a mechanical soul vessel. Characters proficient with Tinkerer's Tools can make this check with advantage and add double their proficiency bonus to it. On a result of 20 or above, the character also notices a flaw in the design schematics of the dogs – they are susceptible to the *dispel magic* spell. (If the characters

had learned about such a flaw from Drystala, a result of only 13 is needed to confirm it.)

Social Interaction. Kestrel is on edge and has her dog(s) at the ready. She is apprehensive of more cultists, but is willing to have a civil discussion given that she may be outmatched. Ultimately, she cannot be convinced to willingly abandon Miss Poppy's body so long as there are other souls free.

She can be easily convinced to promise to not harm Miss Poppy (no check required). Additionally, she can be convinced to remain in town while they track down the other souls (DC15 Charisma check of choice) – in essence to delay their fight until it's necessary – in an honorable samurai-like way. The construction of the body is expected to take several more days anyhow.

The following arguments or points should influence the social interaction. (Consider which are weightier to grant advantage or disadvantage or to adjust the difficulty of the second charisma check up or down by up to 3 points):

- (Negative) Any paladins, clerics, or other characters strongly devoted to a deity
- (Negative) Acting as though they're working for Avixxarlia
- (Negative) Any demonic presence
- (Positive) Good-aligned characters
- (Positive) Warlocks who sympathize with her
- (Positive) Acting for the greater good – to prevent atrocities
- (Positive) Offering advice on how to faster and more effectively create the body (requires a successful DC13 Intelligence (any relevant) check).

Combat. If the characters are caught breaking in and don't quickly de-escalate the situation (DC13 Charisma check of choice) or if they refuse to leave without sending Kestrel's soul to Hell, combat ensues.



Adjusting the Encounter

Miss Poppy for as long as she is possessed by the soul of Kestrel, is considered a **Warlock of the Fiend** and is always part of the encounter, she has not recovered enough to be able to cast either *feeblemind* or *plane shift*.

The two dogs are named **Bennie** and **Jet**. Bennie uses the **Iron Cobra** stat block while Jet uses the **Stone Defender** stat block. When removing dogs from the encounter for balance purposes, they can still be part of the story – perhaps Kestrel ended up dismantling them for parts and their remains can be seen during exploration!

Adjustments:

- **Very Weak:** remove both dogs, and Kestrel/Miss Poppy has used one spell slot to bake her cupcakes with a *Burning Hands*.
- **Weak:** Remove Bennie.
- **Strong:** Kestrel has 110 hitpoints
- **Very Strong:** Kestrel has 110 hitpoints, Bennie (Iron Cobra) has 70 hitpoints, Jet (Stone Defender) has 77 hitpoints.

Dog construction flaw. The *dispel magic* spell has a special effect on the dogs as follows:

Disabled. When subjected to the *dispel magic* spell, this creature is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Wrap-Up

If the adventurers send Kestrel's soul to Hell, they're able to free Miss Poppy. If they agree to leave her until they've collected the rest, the situation is resolved as follows – but only after their final battle in **Part 3**:

If during the final encounter the characters side with the witches and defeat Avixxarlia, they return to find Miss Poppy safe and having a happy debate on tinkering with Kestrel, in her mech form. Kestrel felt Avixxarlia's destruction and is now free. She waited to honor her word.

If they side with Avixxarlia, the devil reveals as she departs that her minions have already recovered Kestrel (by killing Miss Poppy).

Where to Next?

Regardless of runtime, characters are expected to return to Assem at the Bounty Office after dealing with each soul.

If running the 2-hour version of the adventure or if this soul is being tackled after the two bonus objectives, proceed to **Part 3**.

If running a longer version of the adventure that includes Bonus Objectives, Assem provides the party with newly gained information on another missing soul, as detailed in either **Appendix 1** or **Appendix 2**. The two bonus objectives can be done in any order.

Bonus Objective A (Appendix 1) is potentially longer and features great social interaction opportunities, as well as combat.

Bonus Objective B (Appendix 2) is the shorter of the two and features exploration and a combat focus.

Part 3: Witch is Which

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Background (DM Only)

Years before the events of this adventure, **WYCHLARAN SVETLINA** – a powerful Rashemi witch and hero of her people – became deathly afflicted by a magic curse. Believing that without her strength and guidance her people would fall victim to their Thayan enemies, she made a deal with the devil **AVIXXARLIA**. The devil gave her vitality and life, in exchange for her powerful warrior soul – which Avixxarlia intended to use in the Blood War.

Svetlina lived for another two dozen years, leading and protecting her people. As her health began to fade once again, the witch made plans to free herself of the bargain with the devil – even if it meant escaping Hell itself. She prepared a number of enchantments and magic items, including an amulet that would protect her from detection. When she felt her death coming, she stored these things in a pocket dimension.

Upon death, Avixxarlia claimed the wychlaran’s soul and set to work on breaking it – wishing for Svetlina to use her experience and leadership to lead legions of devils in the war below. It was during this time, that Avixxarlia’s palace was attacked and several of the souls got loose.

Unlike the other souls who had little control of which body they possessed, the witch purposely sought out one with magical powers. The irony of the body she found was palpable as she took control of a Thayan wizard named **THAZAL VORN**. The human wizard was part of a Thayan delegation visiting Thentia, and had passed out as result of sampling some local intoxicants.

Upon taking possession of the body – disgusted as she was by it – Svetlina was able to retrieve her things, including the magic medallion and a scroll allowing her to contact another Wychlaran, far away in Rashemen.

The other Wychlaran – **FELDARRA** – immediately set off on the long journey to meet

Svetlina, who would in turn make her way east, away from civilization, and through the **GALENA MOUNTAINS**.

About Rashemen and the Rashemi

Rashemen is a mountain-encircled country of harsh winds, huge cold lakes, and mystical connections to Feywild magic. Situated hundreds of miles east of the Moonsea, Rashemen borders Thay, and its people have fought off Thayan conquest attempts for generations.

Rashemi society is famed for its berserker warriors – fighting in packs called “fangs”, and for their magic users called “hathran”. The hathran – meaning “learned sister” are powerful magic practitioners and are given the title “Wychlaran” and shown the greatest respect in Rashemi society - their orders unquestioned.

As part of their defenses against Thayan incursions over water, the Wychlaran make use of “witchboats”. These magically controlled craft has special defenses against spells.

Back at the Bounty Office

While the adventurers were out tracking souls, the Sisterhood, as well as other adventurers also tracked down others. By the time that the party returns to Assem at the bounty office, only one soul remains outstanding. The yuan-ti pureblood bounty hunter Drystala is also there when the characters return. She commends the characters on their work or makes another appropriate comment on it.

Assem asks the characters what they’ve learned about the last soul. If they’ve been able to question several of the escaped souls, allow them to put some of the pieces together themselves, before having Assem or Drystala point them in the right direction. If the characters had only encountered one soul or have not had much luck, Assem has put together information – from the other adventurers – about the soul’s identity, while Drystala – upon hearing the theory – is able to provide them with a lead on location.

Wychlaran Svetlina. The clues provided by the party and/or other adventurers have allowed Assem to put together Svetlina’s name and identity. Having spent some time in both Rashemen and Thay during his adventuring

days, Assem can also enlighten the party on the cultural context.

Journey of a Thousand Miles. Assem believes that if this is indeed a Rashemi witch, she would try to make her way home. Rashemen is a thousand miles away, so this is not a simple journey. Taking a ship from Mulmaster or further south on the Sea of Falling Stars is the fastest way. But with Mulmaster being under Thayan control, it's unlikely to be the chosen path for a Rashemi. At this point, he asks Drystala to chime in.

Witchboat Spotted. Drystala – who specializes in tracking mages -- has had her ear to the ground and immediately shares that the sisterhood received word of a Rashemi witchboat – a rarely-seen-sight outside landlocked Rashemen – having been spotted departing the port of Uthmere. The boat had made its way through the Great Dale by land set sail across the Eastling Reach a few days ago.

Tracking Svetlina. If this boat is coming to pick up Svetlina, then she's likely heading across the **Glacier of the White Worm**, to where the **Sidewinder River** begins. Getting there first may be the only way to intercept her, but she does have a head start.

Development

Allow the players to brainstorm ideas of how to get past the Glacier of the White Worm quickly. A DC10 Intelligence (History or Navigator's Tools) check informs them that the only settlement in that area is the Monastery of the Yellow Rose.

If the characters have some method of fast travel such as the *wind walk* spell, means of teleportation, or other, allow for these to be used to travel to the Monastery of the Yellow Rose.

If they do not have any such means, Assem – through his mysterious politician benefactor arranges for them to be teleported near to the Monastery.

At the monastery, they can quickly learn that the only stranger seen in the last few days has been a lone figure that was seen going east from the glacier only yesterday. The characters can set off to catch up with it.

B. Shores of the White Wash

The final confrontation takes place on the shores of the Sidewinder River, just few hours east of where it first flows out of the Glacier of the White Worm. This part of the river is colloquially known as the **White Wash**.

Traveling from the high ground, characters have no trouble spotting the witchboat – standing still in the middle of the river – from a distance. The witches are on high alert and likely aware of the approach, but so long as the characters stay on shore, peaceful parlay is possible.



Area Information

The White Wash is a fast-flowing, shallow river, full of glacier ice and sharp rocks. Were it not for the magical nature of the witchboat, it would have been impossible to sail this far upstream.

Dimensions. Refer to map in **Appendix 5** for the layout of the area. Note that while the witchboat is accurate in size, it does not look like its map icon. The witchboat starts 30feet from the southern shore, so it is possible to use magic such as *misty step* to get on and off.

Light. It is an overcast day with light snow falling, resulting in bright light but no sunshine.

Sound. The sound of the rushing river fills the area and can help mask whispers, otherwise it is quiet and it is easily possible to hold a conversation across the river.

Icy Shores. The 10 feet closest to the river edge are a mixture of ice from the glacier and frozen pools. Any creature stepping on this area must succeed on a DC12 Dexterity saving throw or slip and fall prone. On a result of 7 or below, they fall through the ice into shallow (but still cold) water. Heavier creatures (DM discretion) have disadvantage on this saving throw.

Cold Rushing Water. The water of the White Wash is freezing cold and has a strong current. For medium or smaller creatures, a successful DC12 Strength (Athletics) check is required to move through the river, otherwise the creature wastes their movement and makes no progress. A creature that enters the river for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in it must succeed on a DC15 Strength saving throw or be pushed 10 feet eastwards along the river's path.

Additionally, any creature that enters the river for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in it must succeed on a DC15 Constitution saving throw or take 1d6 cold damage.



Creature Information

(Soul possessing Thazal Vorn, LE human male), Svetlina CG female, Warlock of the Great Old One.

Wychlaran Svetlina is the soul currently in control of the body of a young red wizard of Thay named **Thazal Vorn**. Instead of wearing the traditional wychlaran mask over her face, she wears it over the back of her head – to symbolize that the very body she now inhabits is a mask.

Personality. Svetlina is old, wise and unflinching. In the face of Thayan conquest and oppression, she led and defended her people without fear. In the face of death, she made a deal to live longer, so that she could continue the fight. In the face of losing her soul, she escaped from Hell itself, so that she could return and serve once again.

What Does She Want? Svetlina's duty is to her people, to lead and protect them. Even when it was unlikely, she had planned her escape from Hell. She wants to return to her people – to continue to do good there. She won't let anything stand in her way – certainly not the life of a mortal enemy such as a red wizard. She is willing to fight to the death against the wizards and Avixxarlia, but she cannot be convinced to relinquish the body.

What Does She Know? The red wizards are still the enemy – they wish only death upon anyone that doesn't submit to their will. She is disgusted by the thought of letting one go free. She has come up with many plans for how this body can be used to help her people. She has learned about some of the things that this particular Thayan knew about – the attempted conquest of Chult, the destruction and subjugation of Mulmaster, and other red wizard atrocities. She throws these in the characters' faces if they try to negotiate for his life.



Feldara, NG female human (Rashemi) evoker.

Wychlaran Feldarra wears a horned tribal mask.

Personality. Feldarra is not as old as Svetlina, but is experienced and the two have fought

many battles together. Feldarra is thoughtful and deliberate.

What Does She Want? Feldarra's mission is to bring Svetlina back to Rashemen.

What Does She Know? Like many, Feldarra once considered Svetlina a great hero. Also like many, she disapproved of the infernal deal that Svetlina had made – even though this deal saved many lives. Although Svetlina's methods have now earned her great disapproval among the other witches, Feldarra still believes that Svetlina's very presence would be a great boon. Feldarra had no idea that Svetlina was inhabiting the body of a red wizard. After initially finding it appalling, she is still coming to terms with her hero's "new form".

Playing the Pillars

Social Interaction – The Witches. So long as the characters approach peacefully and do not forcefully board the witchboat, Svetlina and Feldarra will treat with them. Both Svetlina's appearance and Feldarra's hidden doubts can serve as good talking points, preparing the players for the choice to be made. While the witches cannot be convinced to leave the body, they can easily be swayed to fight Avixxarlia (which they have no choice in once she appears anyhow – see below).

Social Interaction – Avixxarlia & the Red Wizards of Thay. If the characters do not attack the witches and look to be making progress in their negotiation, Avixxarlia, accompanied by several red wizards of Thay teleports in (teleport courtesy of the Thayans). Their demands are simple and non-negotiable. Remove the witch's soul from its body, kill the other witch, and take the witchboat for the Thayans to do research on it. See combat.

Exploration.

- A successful DC13 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) checks can reveal information about the river (see Area Info above).
- A DC13 Intelligence (Arcana) can inform the characters that the boat is somehow magical to have come up the rushing water and be holding steady.

Without seeing it in action, A DC15 Intelligence (History) check allows the party to learn that witchboats are telepathically controlled by the witches.

- During combat, a DC13 Intelligence (Arcana) check is needed to learn its capabilities (note that these vary based on scaling).

Combat.

- If the characters choose to attack the witches from the outset, Avixxarlia need not make an appearance.
- Otherwise, if the characters agree to Avixxarlia's deal, they must fight the witches as the others watch – they receive no help from the wizards or the devil, who all prefer to let others do their dirty work.
- If the characters decide to side with the witches, some of the wizards attack the witches, while Avixxarlia and the rest take on the characters.

Avixxarlia, LE horned devil female

The horned devil **Avixxarlia** is furious and ready for battle when she arrives.

Personality. Typically preferring to let others do her dirty work, Avixxarlia was contacted by the Red Wizards, informing her that she is likely to be betrayed. They sought out and aided her followers in bringing her to this plane – easily making a pact to find her soul if it means recovering their comrade and killing witches.

Objectives & Goals. Avixxarlia is here for Svetlina's soul. She has made a deal with the Thayans to ensure that any witches are killed and the witchboat left to the Thayans. She also wishes to either punish the characters for their betrayal or to tempt them into killing the witches – either way she wins.

What Does She Know? Avixxarlia knows that the red wizards hate the Rashemi and vice versa. She fuels this hatred to achieve her ends.





Red Wizards of Thay, LE humans (Thayans)

The Red Wizards are here to ensure that their comrade's body does not end up in the witches' hands. Their leader is named **Ramix Toal**.

Personality. The Thayans hate the Rashemi, but are oddly practical in their dealings. All their plans are long term and as long as they get what they want now, they are appeased.

What Do They Want? The red wizards want the body of Thazal Vorn – preferably alive, but they'll take it dead. They also want the witches dead – this is a must as they believe that the witches have somehow accessed Thazal's secrets. Finally, they want the witchboat, but if it is destroyed in battle, that is not enough to void a deal with them.

What Do They Know? Between their communication with Avixxarla and their own research, they have figured out what has happened with Thazal Vorn's body.

The wizards are also aware of some of the witchboat's capabilities and watch with great curiosity its use in combat. If the characters fight the witches, the Thayans can be seen talking excitedly after seeing any of the witchboat's abilities. A successful DC13 Charisma (any appropriate) check gets them to reveal info about that particular capability of the witchboat.

Adjusting the Encounter

Fighting the Witches.

This encounter always consists of the two witches and their witchboat. Svetlina – while actually the more powerful of the two, has not fully regained her powers.

Witchboat. The witchboat uses the statistic of an **oaken bolter**, with the specification that all of its abilities deal lightning damage instead of the stated type. While it is represented by a separate creature and acts on its own

turn, the witchboat is telepathically controlled by the witches. If both witches are incapacitated or unconscious, it does not act. While aboard the witchboat, the witches move along with it and have half-cover from all attacks originating outside and advantage on all saving throws against spells originating outside.

Very Weak: Svetlina is a **Warlock of the Great Old One**, Feldarra is a **Mage**.

Weak: Svetlina is a **Warlock of the Great Old One**, Feldarra is an **Evoker**. The witchboat is not capable of taking any actions other than movement.

Average: Svetlina is a **Warlock of the Great Old One**, Feldarra is an **Evoker**.

Strong: Svetlina is a **Warlock of the Great Old One**, Feldarra is an **Evoker**, Feldarra has max hitpoints of 94, additionally, remove one of Feldarra's 6th level spellslots, instead, consider that a *globe of invulnerability* spell has been cast on the witchboat, with the witchboat itself maintaining its concentration.

Very Strong: Svetlina is a **Warlock of the Great Old One**, Feldarra is an **Archmage** – on her stat block, replace *teleport* with *whirlwind*.

Adjusting the Encounter

Fighting Avixxarla and the Red Wizards.

This encounter always includes Avixxarla (**horned devil**). Depending on party strength, the witches play different parts in the battle. Avixxarla appears with several red wizards of Thay. If they are challenged, some or all of the wizards engage the witches – who are only too happy to be fighting their nemeses. Consider those witches and wizards not part of the combat.

Very Weak: Avixxarla (**horned devil**) fights alone, the party is assisted by Svetlina (**Warlock of the Great Old One**) – on Svetlina's spell list, replace *arcane gate* with *eyebite* and *dominate beast* with *slow*. In the event that Avixxarla is banished in the first 4 rounds of combat, one of the red wizards (**mage**) engages the party and attempts to break the banishment.

Weak: Avixxarla (**horned devil**) fights alone. In the event that she is banished in the first 4 rounds of combat, one of the red wizards (**mage**) engages the party and attempts to break the banishment.

Average: Avixxarla (**horned devil**) is assisted by one red wizard (**mage**)

Strong: Avixxarla (**horned devil**) is assisted by two red wizards (**mage**)

Very Strong: Avixxarla (**horned devil**) is assisted by two red wizards (**evoker**)

Wrap-Up:

If the characters defeat the witches, both Avixxarlia and the red wizards are satisfied and depart. (Remember to provide the party with the resolution for the soul in **Part 2** if required.)

If the characters defeat Avixxarlia, they must still make a decision on the witches and the red wizard's body – though its recovery is no longer of consequence to the characters.

At this point – only with Avixxarlia and the red wizards defeated – Feldarra may be convinced that it's wrong to take the wizard's body, and to volunteer to serve as a host for Svetlina's soul. This requires a DC17 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Allowing the witches to take the body is also acceptable.

Treasure

Wycharan Svetlina carries an *amulet of protection from detection and location* which she had used to hide from Avixxarlia. If Svetlina is killed, the amulet is found on her body. If Avixxarlia is killed, Svetlina gives the amulet to the characters as a reward.



Upon returning to Assem, he thanks them and provides them with a unique token – on behalf of the Sisterhood of the Blade. The characters earn the **Mark of the Sisterhood** 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.

Rewards

At the **end of the session**, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments

Character Rewards

The characters earn the following rewards:

Advancement

Upon successfully **completing** this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind your players that the amount of gold that their characters can earn per level is limited; declining advancement means that they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

Gold

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold that you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

Magic Item(s)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in **Appendix 8**:

- *Amulet of protection against detection and location*
- *Spell scroll of mind spike*
- *Spell scroll of danse macabre*

Dungeon Master Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement** and **treasure checkpoints** for the characters' completion of objectives, above.

You may complete DM Quests for running this adventure. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League*) about DM Quests.

Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

Avixxarlia (a-vee-ksar-lee-ya). Horned devil. •

- **What She Wants:** To have her missing souls returned to Hell, also to make people do evil things while recovering them.
- **Dangerous, but would rather not get her hands dirty:** Avixxarlia would rather have others do her dirty work. Her threats to come wreak havoc on the material plane are very real, but so is her lack of desire to actually do it.

Assem Kudar (ass-em koo-dar). Bounty Office clerk.

- **What He Wants:** The former bounty hunter prides himself on staying neutral and out of other people's business. But with the Sisterhood of the Blade choosing to stay out of the devil's work, he feels a responsibility to at least try and prevent a disaster.
- **The Middleman:** He doesn't pay anyone and he doesn't kill anyone. Assem lives to bring people together and act as intermediary when required.

Drystala (dree-stah-la). Bounty hunter.

- **What She Wants:** Drystala is in town on business of her own, but she too has some concerns about the devil's plans and is passing information to Assem as a gesture of good will.
- **Cold-blooded Mage Hunter:** Drystala uses her yuan-ti blood to maximum benefit in tracking down mage bounties. She is a senior member of the Sisterhood of the Blade and is well-informed.

Creature Statistics

Important Note

Creature statistics are presented here entirely unchanged from how they appear in their original resource. Please refer to individual encounter text within the body of the adventure for all adjustments.

Archmage

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)

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

Damage Resistances Damage from Spells; Nonmagical Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing (from Stoneskin)

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Any six languages

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

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

Spellcasting. The archmage is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The archmage can cast disguise self and invisibility at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *identify*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *fire shield*, *stoneskin**

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *scrying*, *wall of force*

6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*

7th level (1 slot): *teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *mind blank**

9th level (1 slot): *time stop*

*The archmage casts these spells on itself before combat.

Actions

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

Assassin

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 15 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws DEX +6, INT +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +3, Perception +3, Stealth +9

Damage Resistances Poison

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Thieves' cant plus any two languages

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Assassinate. During its first turn, the assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the assassin scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Evasion. If the assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the assassin deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the assassin that isn't incapacitated and the assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The assassin makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Bandit Captain

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 15 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws STR +4, DEX +5, WIS +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

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

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

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

Champion

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (Plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws STR +9, CON +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Senses Passive Perception 16

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Indomitable (2/Day). The champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The champion makes three attacks with its greatsword or its shortbow.

Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Cloud Giant

Huge giant, neutral

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 200 (16d12 + 96)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws CON +10, WIS +7, CHA +7

Skills Insight +7, Perception +7

Senses Passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Keen Smell. The giant has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Innate Spellcasting. The giant's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *fog cloud*, *light*

3/day each: *feather fall*, *fly*, *misty step*, *telekinesis*

1/day each: *control weather*, *gaseous form*

Actions

Multiattack. The giant makes two morningstar attacks.

Morningstar. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (3d8 + 8) piercing damage.

Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. Hit: 30 (4d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Drow House Captain

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (Chain Mail)

Hit Points 162 (25d8 + 50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+1)

Saving Throws DEX +8, CON +6, WIS +6

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Battle Command. As a bonus action, the drow targets one ally he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see or hear the drow, the target can use its reaction to make one melee attack or to take the Dodge or Hide action.

Fey Ancestry. The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

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

At will: dancing lights

1/day each: darkness, faerie fire, levitate (self only)

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

Actions

Multiattack. The drow makes three attacks: two with his scimitar and one with his whip or his hand crossbow.

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Whip. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is an ally, it has advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also

unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

Reactions

Parry. The drow adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, the drow must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Racial Adjustments

There are no drow in this adventure. When using the **drow house captain** stat block, replace the **fey ancestry**, **sunlight sensitivity**, and **innate spellcasting** features with appropriate racial traits where required.

Evoker

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

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. The evoker is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The evoker has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, * *light*, * *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost**

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, * *mage armor*, *magic missile**

2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image*, *misty step*, *shatter**

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, * *lightning bolt**

4th level (3 slots): *ice storm*, * *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's hand*, * *cone of cold**

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*, * *wall of ice**

*Evocation spell

Sculpt Spells. When the evoker casts an evocation spell that forces other creatures it can see to make a saving throw, it can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. These creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell. If a successful save means a chosen creature would take half damage from the spell, it instead takes no damage from it.

Actions

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

Ghast

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-2)

Damage Resistances Necrotic

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the ghast must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the ghast's Stench for 24 hours.

Turning Defiance. The ghast and any ghouls within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Actions

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

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 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.

Gladiator

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (Studded Leather, Shield)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws STR +7, DEX +5, CON +6

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +5

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brave. The gladiator has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The gladiator makes three melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. and range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Shield Bash. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Reactions

Parry. The gladiator adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the gladiator must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Horned Devil

Large fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws STR +10, DEX +7, WIS +7, CHA +7

Damage Resistances Cold; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and

Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Silvered

Damage Immunities Fire, Poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Infernal, Telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the devil's darkvision.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The devil makes three melee attacks: two with its fork and one with its tail. It can use Hurl Flame in place of any melee attack.

Fork. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or lose 10 (3d6) hit points at the start of each of its turns due to an infernal wound. Each time the devil hits the wounded target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 10 (3d6). Any creature can take an action to stanch the wound with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Hurl Flame. Ranged Spell Attack: +7 to hit, range 150 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (4d6) fire damage. If the target is a flammable object that isn't being worn or carried, it also catches fire.

Iron Cobra

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Skills Stealth +7

Damage Immunities Poison; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Adamantine

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages understands one language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or suffer one random poison effect:

1. Poison Damage: The target takes 13 (3d8) poison damage.
2. Confusion: On its next turn, the target must use its action to make one weapon attack against a random creature it can see within 30 feet of it, using whatever weapon it has in hand and moving beforehand if necessary to get in range. If it's holding no weapon, it makes an unarmed strike. If no creature is visible within 30 feet, it takes the Dash action, moving toward the nearest creature.
3. Paralysis: The target is paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

Mage

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

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

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.

Master Thief

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws DEX +7, INT +3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Thieves' Cant plus any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the thief can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. If the thief is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the thief instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The thief deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the thief that isn't incapacitated and the thief doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The thief makes three attacks with its shortsword.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. The thief halves the damage that it takes from an attack that hits it. The thief must be able to see the attacker.

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.

Oaken Bolter

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (Natural)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities Poison; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Adamantine

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages understands one language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

Actions

Multiattack. The oaken bolter makes two lancing bolt attacks or one lancing bolt attack and one harpoon attack.

Lancing Bolt. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Harpoon. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 50/200 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). While grappled in this way, a creature's speed isn't reduced, but it can move only in directions that bring it closer to the oaken bolter. A creature takes 5 (1d10) slashing damage if it escapes from the grapple or if it tries and fails. As a bonus action, the oaken bolter can pull a creature grappled by it 20 feet closer. The oaken bolter can grapple only one creature at a time.

Explosive Bolt (Recharge 5–6). The oaken bolter launches an explosive charge at a point within 120 feet. Each creature within 20 feet of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Skeleton

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (Armor Scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Bludgeoning

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

Languages Understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

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

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Stone Defender

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (Natural)

Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities Poison; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Adamantine

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages understands one language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

False Appearance. While the stone defender remains motionless against an uneven earthen or stone surface, it is indistinguishable from that surface.

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

Actions

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it is knocked prone.

Reactions

Intercept Attack. In response to another creature within 5 feet of it being hit by an attack roll, the stone defender gives that creature a +5 bonus to its AC against that attack, potentially causing a miss. To use this ability, the stone defender must be able to see the creature and the attacker.

Thug

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

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

Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Warlock of the Fiend

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws WIS +4, CHA +7

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +7, Perception +7, Religion +4

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

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages any two languages (usually Abyssal or Infernal)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The warlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *alter self*, *false life*, *levitate (self only)*, *mage armor (self only)*, *silent image*

1/day each: *feblemind*, *finger of death*, *plane shift*

Spellcasting. The warlock is a 17th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *fire bolt*, *friends*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st–5th level (4 5th-level slots): *banishment*, *burning hands*, *flame strike*, *hellish rebuke*, *magic circle*, *scorching ray*, *scrying*, *stinking cloud*, *suggestion*, *wall of fire*

Dark One's Own Luck (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When the warlock makes an ability check or saving throw, it can add a d10 to the roll. It can do this after the roll is made but before any of the roll's effects occur.

Actions

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Warlock of the Great Old One

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws WIS +4, CHA +7

Skills Arcana +4, History +4

Damage Resistances Psychic

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Telepathy 30 ft. any two languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The warlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *jump*, *levitate*, *mage armor (self only)*, *speak with dead*

1/day each: *arcane gate*, *true seeing*

Spellcasting. The warlock is a 14th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *guidance*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st–5th level (3 5th-level slots): *armor of Agathys*, *arms of Hadar*, *crown of madness*, *clairvoyance*, *contact other plane*, *detect thoughts*, *dimension door*, *dissonant whispers*, *dominate beast*, *telekinesis*, *vampiric touch*

Whispering Aura. At the start of each of the warlock's turns, each creature of its choice within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage, provided that the warlock isn't incapacitated.

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.

Appendix 1: Snakes in a Pit (Bonus Objective A)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Chronology Note

The timeline below assumes that this encounter is done first. If it is not and the characters have spent time tracking down other souls, the timeline may need to be adjusted accordingly. The best way to adjust the timing is to remember that all the souls escaped at the same time. The first couple of “adjustment” days spent in the new body can easily be expanded to fill a longer than two days.

Background (DM Only)

The court of Thentia’s notorious gangster **Drunda the Gut** is full of shady characters, none better known than her master of household **Majordomo Fantina** – a conniving yuan-ti pureblood. Fantina’s position is a source of envy for many in Drunda’s court, chief among them the greedy smuggling operations overseer **Lindo the Scoundrel**.

Three days ago, Lindo managed to ambush and strike down Fantina. Believing his rival to be dead, Lindo left her body in a dark alley and fled.

What he had not counted on was that precisely at the moment of Fantina falling unconscious, the escaped soul of a long-dead Amnian wizard would possess her body and use magic to keep it alive. Equally surprised in this situation was the wizard himself, when Fantina’s yuan-ti nature helped her resist the possession and assert control.

Thus, the great and powerful **Thoros of Amn** found himself in the body and under the control of a betrayed gangster.

Fantina now finds herself able to tap into Thoros’ abilities. She does however feel that this control won’t last forever, and she needs to get rid of the soul before it overcomes her.

Fantina has spent the last couple of days fighting Thoros’ control and identifying who perpetrated the assassination. This took away her ability to effectively manage the business and has left a vacuum within Drunda’s organization.

Eventually Fantina pieced together that Lindo was the culprit and returned to court.

To make the matters worse, during Fantina’s brief absence, Lindo has convinced Drunda to gather her lieutenants and guests for a game of three-dragon ante, during which he plans to make his final move on Fantina’s role.

It is during the time of this gathering that the characters arrive.

A. Hive of Villainy

Additional information from Assem leads the characters to an unnamed warehouse known to belong to local gangster Drunda the Gut.

The Sisterhood has passed on in a tip that something is amiss in Drunda’s organization. Apparently her most trusted lieutenant – Majordomo Fantina – briefly went missing and now rumours spread of an internal assassination attempt. Yet striking out at Drunda’s most trusted advisor is very risky and out of character for most of the gangster’s lieutenants.

A number of said lieutenants were spotted going into a warehouse, so it is the best place to start.

Drystala’s Tip

If the adventurers turned in a **mark of the sisterhood** and secured Drystala’s help, she gives the following additional information:

- Be wary of Drunda’s guards. They look like grunts, but only the toughest orcs serve as her personal retinue and are likely well beyond the characters capability to challenge on their own, nevermind with others around.
- Drystala has met Majordomo Fantina – a fellow pureblood – in person. She is cold and calculating but always open to making a deal if there is an angle for her in it.

Area Information

The unnamed warehouse building has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The building is encased between two other warehouses within the Seaside Docks district. Its front faces the street while the back faces a water channel.

The warehouse is three stories high, and has a beam and pulley extending from its front entrance, to help load wares. See map in **Appendix 6** for layout.

Sounds & Smell. The warehouse smells of dust, wood, embers from the nearby Moonsea, and hay used for packing. The place is quiet, with the silence broken up only by the occasional burst of laughs coming from the upstairs office, where the boss and her guests are playing cards.

Light. It is late evening and streetlights provide the only light outside. Inside is kept quite dark except for the upstairs office. Oil lamps hang along the walls of the storage area.

Storage Area. The crate-filled storage area occupies most of the warehouse floor.

Hanging Walkway. The third floor houses a hanging walkway that connects the upstairs office to the storage floor via two sets of stairs.

Upstairs Office. This large office is full of ledgers and paperwork that have been removed from the large ground table where Drunda and her guests are currently playing cards.

Bathroom. Located on the ground floor, the bathroom is exactly what one would expect from a warehouse toilet.

B. Investigating the Warehouse

The adventurers can ask passers-by or dock workers for information about the warehouse. They could even involve their contacts, friends, or factions to gather information. Not all features may be applicable here as this may take time that they do not possess. In this case, they may be told that “favors will be called for, old debts invoked, but that will take some time...”. Regardless of how it is approached, the following bits of information can be gained:

- The warehouse belongs to Drunda the Gut and is best avoided if one values their life.
- The warehouse is on tight lockdown. Short of somehow destroying a thick stone wall, the only way in and out is the front door.
- Drunda is apparently holding an exclusive card game tonight, with many of her lieutenants present.

- Drunda has nothing less than a small army of thugs and guards at her disposal, so an assault is definitely ill-advised.
- If the characters specifically ask about Fantina, they can learn that she was seen going inside.
- The front door to the warehouse is made of sturdy steel and those approaching it identify themselves through a small latch before being let in. (Listening at the door overhears bouncer smalltalk in orcish.)

If the characters do make public inquiries, word quickly gets back directly to Majordomo Fantina who sees it as an opportunity. If the players are spending too long trying to come up with a plan, action can be moved forward by having Fantina send a runner to invite them to approach the front door.

C. Getting In

So long as their approach to the front door is non-violent, it results in a chat with the bouncers and subsequently a conversation with Majordomo Fantina herself.

Barging in Uninvited

Every opportunity should be given for the characters to realize that barging in or otherwise starting open trouble is a bad idea here. It is expected that they do not do this.

If they choose to do so, the characters quickly find themselves in a situation where things couldn't get any worse for them. The whole crew gangs up against them, and they have no way to figure out who is being possessed. These are overwhelming odds and they are likely to be incapacitated or killed. A final opportunity to yield or “give us a reason we shouldn't kill you” can be given.

At this point, the situation can still be salvaged if the characters yield, but then bring up the possession either openly or to Drunda. This results in accusations from Fantina to Lindo and a shootout during which Drunda and her guards do not take sides. Fantina tells characters that she will give them the soul if they help her with Lindo. (See **Playing the Pillars** for more ideas on how to work this scenario.)

At the entrance, Majordomo Fantina supervises the two orc bouncers, Ghama and Rhean as they respond to inquiries through a

small latch on the doors. They have instructions to talk through the latch, but never look through it, and to close the latch if anyone attempts at performing any music, singing, poems, etc. Meanwhile, Fantina takes note of anything being said and determines the best way to engage with the characters in order to use them for her own ends.

Eventually, she instructs the two bouncers to give her a private moment and reopens the latch to talk. Whether they've spoken of the soul or not, she offers them a deal.

Creatures/NPCs

Gama and Rhean, LE orc guards (champions).

Drunda's bodyguards are named **Ghama** and **Rhean**. Both are short and stocky, with large tusks extending out of their mouth; their skin tends towards dark green. They are loyal to Drunda first and foremost, but obey Majordomo Fantina.

What Do They Want? To protect Drunda at all costs.

What Do They know? Drunda pays well and they enjoy certain privileges for as long as their employer remains alive.



Majordomo Fantina, yuan-ti pureblood female, LE

Majordomo Fantina uses the Conjurer stats (include her racial traits) for as long as she controls Thoros of Amn.

Yuan-ti Pureblood Racial Traits

If required, yuan-ti purebloods have the following racial traits:

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.

What Does She Want? First, get rid of Lindo, then get rid of Thoros before the soul assumes control. (This order of operations is important as the soul has abilities useful to her for getting rid of Lindo).

What Does She Know? She had to take a couple days to pull strings and investigate, to ascertain that Lindo tried to kill her but failed. Now he is trying to make her lose face and take her position.

She feels Thoros continually pushing to assume control over her and is looking for a way to get rid of the possession without her employer becoming aware.

Fantina is expecting to use the characters to help with Lindo, but it is an unexpected bonus that they can get rid of the soul also. It's an entirely unexpected win-win.

Majordomo Fantina's Offer

Through the latch, Majordomo Fantina makes the following offer to the adventurers:

- She will let one or two individuals with good manners join a private game of three-dragon ante, as her personal guests. She expects them to blend in and behave. Others may accompany them act as guards.
- She wants the cardplayer(s) to provoke a human named Lindo the Scoundrel, either through subtle verbal innuendos to enrage him, or by accusing him of cheating. Being impulsive, Lindo is likely to attack them, backed by his thugs. She will then do her part with a whisper in Drunda's ear, getting Drunda to allow the matter to be settled "for her entertainment" and without interference from others – leaving them free to take out Lindo.
- Fantina warns the adventurers that neither Drunda nor any other personnel of her retinue must be harmed for the deal to stand (and for them to survive), even if some of the other lieutenants decide to defend Lindo.

- If the characters mention the soul, she promises to help them return it to Hell once they've accomplished the task. She assures them that they'll have no difficulty capturing it.
- If they do not mention the soul, Majordomo Fantima promises them a favor (which later turns out to be her willingness to part with the soul).

D. Here Be Three-Dragon Ante

The gangster card game is being played in the office on the third floor. There is a large table with 10 seats, of which 7 are occupied. Two more orc guards (**orc champions**) guard drunda. When the characters are escorted up by Ghama and Rhean, they send their counterparts to mind the entrance and take their places near Drunda.

Creatures/NPCs

A Hive Full: NPCs at a Glance

This section contains information on a large number of NPCs. This summary as well as the card table map below may also be useful for quicker reference. Drunda, Fantina and Lindo do most of the of the talking.

Drunda the Gut – female half-giant, notorious Thentian gangster. The boss.

Majordomo Fantina – female yuan-ti pureblood. Master of household. Looking to get rid of Lindo.

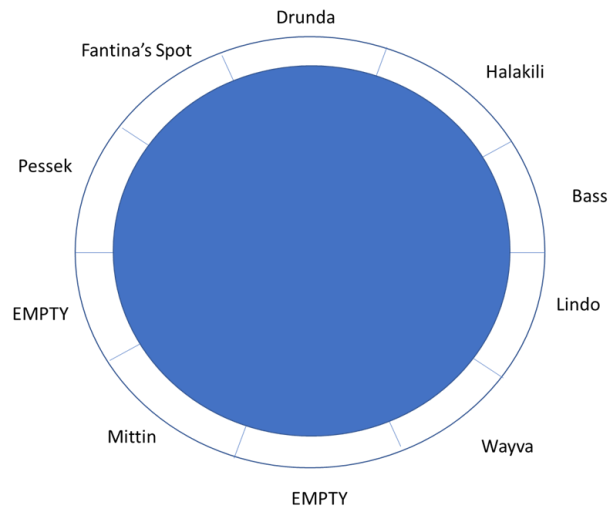
Lindo the Scoundrel – male human. Overseer of smuggling operations. Secretly attempted to assassinate Fantina.

Bass and **Wayva** – female humans. Corrupt members of Thentian militia. Part of Lindo's personal crew. Loyal to him over Drunda.

Halakili – male human. Overseer of Drunda's beast menagerie. Secretly aware that Lindo is behind the assassination, but not on anyone's side.

Pessek -- female turtle. Drunda's chief accountant.

Mittin – female halfling. Drunda's master of thieves. (not playing) **Ghama** and **Rhean** – guards. Drunda's orc guards are as massively strong as they are fiercely loyal.



Drunda the Gut, half-giant female, LE (use the cloud giant stats, though Drunda is not actually a cloud giant)

Drunda's nickname is understood immediately by any who lay eyes upon her. Her huge belly is typically on full display, festooned with colorful tattoos and runes.

In Thentia, **Drunda's House of Trade** is officially a merchant establishment, yet most know that it is merely a front for many illicit activities.

What Does She Want? Staying alive, and profit, profit, and profit.

What does she know? Majordomo Fantina has been acting a little out of the ordinary the last couple of days, but she has served her well for many years. Lindo has something up his sleeve, and Drunda suspects to be tied to Fantina's behavior.



Lindo the Scoundrel, male human, LE (assassin).

What Does He Want? Kill Majordomo Fantina or find a way to make her lose face in front of Drunda, to replace her.

What does he know? He had planned an ambush against the Majordomo and was certain that her wounds were fatal when he left her in the alley.

He has noticed something seems a bit off about her lately. She seems to have acquired new abilities that she did not have previously (he has seen her cast a few spells), and she sometimes remains absentminded for a few seconds.

He has suggested to Drunda to organize a game of cards today, with the intent of finding a flaw he can exploit and pushing out Majordomo Fantina.

Bass and Waywa, LE human females (bandit captains).

The two are part of the militia of Thentia and are on Lindo's payroll. They do not display any insignias during the game but make allusions once in a while when playing.

What Do They Want? Stay on Lindo's payroll while remaining a part of the Militia.

What Do They Know? They are fully aware of what is going on here, and they expect a substantial payment from Lindo once the matter is settled.

They are crooked militiawomen and the arrangement works well for them as long as their cover is not blown and the gold keeps flowing.

Drunda's three other lieutenants present at the game are Halakili (**LE Human Male Thug**), Pessek (**LE Female Turtle Thug**), and Mittin (**LE Female Halfling Master Thief**).

What Do They Want? Stay alive, wait and assess the situation, then take the side of whomever is about to win a conflict.

What do they know? Halakili cares for Drunda's menagerie of exotic animals. He is not involved in the gang's politics, but overheard Lindo plot Fantina's assassination with someone. He hasn't told anyone.

Pessek is the gang's accountant, a task at which she excels. By accruing a few spendings earlier and delaying some profits, she has been able to make a few personal fruitful investments; so far so good, neither Drunda nor Majordomo Fantina have noticed anything.

Mittin excels at acquiring particular goods kept in well guarded coffers. She recently got promoted to lieutenant after the previous master thief was locked in a Halakili's Barghest cage by Ghama and Rhean, at the behest of Drunda. She intends on not ending up locked in a cage.

Playing the Pillars.

Exploration. Refer to the map in Appendix 6 and the Area Information sections above for the layout of the warehouse.

Entry into the warehouse is all but impossible unless characters are let in. Given that the characters do not know the inside of the warehouse, using magical travel such as *dimension door* is likely to result in failure and damage. If, by chance, a PC manages to teleport inside the warehouse, this most likely triggers combat (refer to the **Barging in Uninvited** sidebar earlier in the adventure).

Most unexpected emergencies or threats result in Drunda and Fantina making a getaway – possibly by water and the characters losing their chance.

Social Interaction. This is the occasion to roleplay a card game with gangsters and exchanging insults that may end up in a fight at any moment! Lindo is a gambler and a snappy sore loser, so he is easy to provoke. Any characters participating in the game must play at least 3 hands in order to give themselves enough time to subtly provoke Lindo. See **Running the Game** section below.

Combat. If the characters try to force their way in, the whole gang defends themselves while Drunda leaves the place with Fantina. They may jump through windows at the back of the warehouse down to the lake if they need to.

If the characters accept Majordomo Fantina's offer and join the card game, when combat erupts, only Bass, and Waywa back Lindo, while Ghama and Rhean seek to interpose between everyone and Drunda, even if that means pushing other characters around or knocking them down. Other lieutenants may be swayed to individually join the fight by any side; as an action, a lieutenant can be called upon with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. The check is made with Advantage if the party that exhibits a clear chance of winning, and disadvantage if the calling party is clearly losing.

Running the Three-dragon Ante Game

The gangsters are playing three-dragon ante. If the characters join in, they should be aware that

either winning or losing can work for them. Each hand, during their own turn as well as during Lindo's turn, they're able to say something to help rile up Lindo. The rules below are not intended to simulate actual rules of three-dragon ante, but to act as a stand-in for a longer game.

Real Three-dragon Ante

The actual Three-dragon Ante game exists as a stand-alone board game and is available for purchase and play. It is played with a maximum of 6 players takes 30-45 minutes to play and definitely cannot be incorporated into the adventure in a convenient manner or so as to run on time.

However, if you have access to the game, do have an additional hour of time, and players who are interested in actually playing three-dragon ante, it can be integrated as follows:

- Two players would be playing the game while roleplaying their own PC, up to 3 others would be roleplaying the NPCs. The DM would be playing as Lindo.
- Play the game as normal, then use the results to determine whether Lindo wins or loses and return to the adventure when done. (Use DM discretion if the game's victory conditions aren't an exact match for those in the adventure.)

Alternatively, DMs well-versed in Three-dragon Ante may replace the percentile dice mechanic below with a substitute of their own design that uses Three-dragon ante cards. Keep it simple for the players!

Each round – called a “gambit” in three-dragon ante - requires a 25vgp ante to play and should be resolved as follows:

- Have each player with a character participating in the card game roll a percentile die. The result of the roll represents how good the player's hand is – the general odds to win with that hand.
- If the player is attempting to win, they must succeed on an Intelligence (Gaming Set -Three-dragon Ante) check. The DC of the check depends on their hand. It starts at DC10 and goes up by 1 for each 10% that their odds are below 100% (11 for 80-89, 12 for 70-79, etc.) Characters with the Gambler background have advantage on the check. If they succeed on the check, they beat all others at the table, with the

exception of player characters and Lindo. The winner between PCs and Lindo is decided based on the percentage roll itself, rerolling on ties (assuming that Lindo hasn't folded).

- If the player is attempting to lose, this is trivial – they can simply fold. Allow them to make some sort of remark as they do so. (Note: real three-dragon ante does not have a fold mechanic, the term is used here to represent a player who knows they can't win a gambit performing card actions to help them in the next one.)
- Roll a percentile roll for Lindo. Lindo folds with any odds below of 39% or lower. (Be sure to play this up to happen after a player comment, etc.!) If Lindo has a hand of 40% or higher and the players have folded, his skill allows him to win the hand.

In order to reasonably accuse Lindo of cheating, the players have to wait until he wins at least 2 round (gambits).

In order to get him upset about losing, the character(s) must win at least 2 total rounds (gambits).

Lindo is not actually cheating, but he has a short fuse and as long as the characters work at riling him up, he uses his hidden hand crossbow to shoot one of them, starting hostilities. Weapons are immediately drawn by all parties and her guards block Drunda who calls for a halt. At this point Fantina whispers something in Drunda's ear, who says “This looks fun, I will allow you to settle this amongst yourselves. If you're not with Lindo or with this one, you best back away now.”

Involving Other Players

Those characters who are not playing cards need not be sitting idle! Involve them by allowing each to make a relevant check per card round. Reveal information about the other lieutenants, guards, or let them learn things that may provide the card players with advantage on their rolls or chime in with clever insults.

One possibility here is allowing a non-participating character to look at another player's cards or read their body language, then signal the playing PCs. (DM discretion on DC13-15 checks). On a success, increase the odds of a PC winning by 5% (not above 100%).

If the game is taking a while, have Halakili lose his remaining money and bail out of the game (no new entrants allowed at this point) and join the bystanding characters for a chat. With some prodding he reveals what he knows about Lindo's assassination attempt.

Treasure

If the characters win – in total – more hands than they lose, they recover all their money and also end up winning a *spell scroll of mind spike* which had been used as ante in previous games. The treasure is resolved after the combat.

Adjusting the Encounter

The average version of this encounter features Lindo (**human assassin**) backed by Bass and Wayva (**bandit captains**). For more difficult versions, upgrade Lindo from an **assassin** to a **drow house captain**. In this event, remove the drow racial traits from the drow house captain stat block: remove *fey ancestry, innate spellcasting and sunlight sensitivity*.

Adjustments:

- **Very Weak:** neither Bass nor Wayva want to get their hands bloody, and don't join the fight. Instead, they join Drunda's bodyguards in watching.
- **Weak:** Bass refuses to join the fight despite Wayva's invectives and sides with Drunda's bodyguards.
- **Strong:** Lindo uses the **Drow House Captain** stat block.
- **Very Strong:** Lindo uses the **Drow House Captain** stat block, while Bass and Wayva use the **Gladiator** stat blocks.

Lindo shot first. Lindo's single hand crossbow shot happens before initiative is rolled.

Wrap-Up

Once the adventurers have defeated Lindo, Drunda's entertained enough for the night and departs, leaving Fantina to clean up the mess and escort "her guests" out.

At this point, she reveals that she is harboring the soul and wants it out. She willingly submits to the ritual to have it removed.

If the characters wish to converse with **Thoros of Amn** to gain info on the other soul, Fantina asks that they bind her and not allow him to cast or do anything else and lets him gain control. Thoros quickly realizes the futility of his situation and that he is to be returned to Hell. He gives them information freely and purely out of spite – if he failed, he wants others to fail too. He's fairly vile.

Where to Next?

Regardless of runtime, characters are expected to return to Assem at the Bounty Office after dealing with each soul.

If running the 2-hour version of the adventure or if this soul is being tackled after the two bonus objectives, proceed to **Part 3**.

If running a longer version of the adventure that includes Bonus Objectives, Assem provides the party with newly gained information on another missing soul, as detailed in either **Part 2** or **Appendix 2**. The two bonus objectives can be done in any order.

Part 2 can be tackled via either social interaction or combat.

Bonus Objective B (Appendix 2) features exploration and a combat focus.

Appendix 2: Within the Woods (Bonus Objective B)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Chronology Note

The timeline below assumes that this encounter is done first. If it is not and the characters have spent time tracking down other souls, the timeline may need to be adjusted accordingly. The best way to adjust the timing is to remember that all the souls escaped at the same time. The first couple of “adjustment” days spent in the new body can easily be expanded to fill a longer than two days.

Background (DM Only)

A month ago, a band of four bandits – **Rowland**, **Sami**, **Truce**, and **Fede** – fled Phlan to escape Lords’ Alliance scrutiny after a series of violent crimes that have left several people dead.

Fleeing toward Thentia, they found an abandoned hunting lodge and settled in with the intent to lay low. At first, they survived on poaching, but their lack of skill in this respect pushed them to steal livestock from the local farmers, drawing attention yet again.

Luckily, their cabin turned out to have a tunnel that ran from the basement to a riverbed 300 ft. away from the lodge, making it easier for bandits to hide their whereabouts.

As the thefts increased, local farmers grew frustrated with the militia’s lack of action and began to search for the thieves themselves. They also began keeping night watches.

Seven days ago, during a night raid, one of the farmer sentries hit Rowland with a rock, knocking the man unconscious. As he was being dragged back to the cabin by his associates, the soul of the netherese necromancer **Nomikon** possessed Rowland’s body.

Upon waking, Nomikon immediately killed the three men who he found himself sharing the cabin with. He did it slowly, enjoying the killing. His first victim, Fede, he strangled with his own bedsheets. The second man, Truce, he smothered in his sleep, while the third, Sam, he stabbed repeatedly with a kitchen knife.

Nomikon dragged the corpses to the basement and cut them up for materials needed to recreate his spell book – which like all great necromancer spellbooks had been made of human flesh. He

then animated their skeletons as the first step to rebuilding his armies for conquest of this modern world.

A day ago, a family of farmers who had been tracking the bandits finally discovered the cabin. Led by a man named **Jayk**, the farmers set out to confront the bandits, ignorant of the horrific events at the cabin.

Waves of toxic fumes from a glyph trap set by the necromancer at the cabin quickly killed the hapless farmers. Nomikon himself hid in the tunnel while the *cloudkill* dissipated.

The necromancer then returned to the cabin, reset the glyph and dragged the bodies to the basement.

What Nomikon had not realized was that the farmer’s family had one more member – the youngest daughter, who had been left to look after the farmers travel camp.

It is this young woman that the characters come upon.

Unbeknownst to any of the above parties, a bounty hunter from the Sisterhood of the Blade had also recently tracked down the bandits. Upon seeing magic at work in the cabin, she decided it wasn’t worth her time and took off – passing information on to the Sisterhood and Assem. The sudden use of magic from previous non-practicioners is what makes Assem suspect that something more may be afoot here.

The Cabin in the Woods

Information from Assem leads the characters to the small hunting lodge about 2 hours riding (or 4 hours walking) distance Northwest of Thentia. It rains heavily the entire way there .

As they approach, a figure standing atop a mossy rock waves frantically at them. Once she has their attention, she lowers her hood to reveal half-elven features and invites them to follow her to a nearby temporary camp.

Drystala’s Tip

If the adventurers turned in a **mark of the sisterhood** and secured Drystala's help, she gives the following additional information:

Drystala tells them that years ago she had tracked a bounty to a cabin in that area. She's not sure if it's the same cabin, but the one she knew of had a secret passage that led to a nearby river.

A. Stranger in the Woods

Area Information

The temporary camp has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Three two-people tents have been assembled around a circular rock formation, and a dug firepit with cold embers lies in the center. Seven horses are tied to nearby trees. The camp is located a few hundred feet from the cabin and hidden from it by a small wooded hill. The hill itself makes for a perfect observation spot.

Sounds & Smell. Rain drips from the canopy above and hits the layer of leaves and moss underneath, creating a staccato. The whole area smells of forest, nature, and a little burnt wood (from the firepit).

Light. Wells of light pierce the canopy here and there, allowing natural illumination throughout the scene.

Creatures/NPCs

Mya, NG half-elf female (scout)

The 17 years old half-elf **scout** was left to keep watch over her family's campsite while her father, three older siblings, and a pair family friends went to confront poachers in the cabin.

What Does She Want? Mya wishes to enroll the help of the adventurers to investigate the situation and make sure her friends and family are safe. She can be convinced to accompany the characters with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check.

What Does She Know? About a month ago, a gang of poachers moved into the area. Initially they only poached wild animals, but soon started to steal farm livestock. Despite complaints to the militia, no one intervened.

Exasperated, Mya's father, Jayk, enrolled his three adult daughters (Lenda, Chereel, and Mya), son (Ashby), and two friends of the family

(Arthus and Henrie) to confront the thieves. Only her elven mother, Sheyila stayed behind at the farm.

They had been tracking the sneaky thieves through the woods for some time and finally found their cabin last night. They assembled this camp to observe the cabin from afar. Just before dawn, Jayk asked her to keep watch over the camp while he and the rest of the group went after the poachers.

Shortly after her relatives entered the cabin, Mya heard a wail and saw a strange cloud of fog pour out of the cabin's interstices. She hasn't heard or seen anything else since.

It has now been several hours, and no one has returned. She is worried something terrible has happened, but is torn between her father's instructions to keep an eye on the camp, and the need to investigate. At one point she had also heard the creaking of nearby branches and retreated to the horses, in case it was the poachers.

Development

If the characters are slow to investigate the cabin or decide to wait and observe, Mya grows irate and impatient. She begs them to go check quickly and if they do not – emboldened by their presence – she walks out into the open and starts walking toward the cabin, yelling: "Hey in there! Dad? What's going on?! Are you ok?"

Not getting any response by the time she gets there, she pauses, hesitant to go inside and pleads once again with the characters to help her and investigate. If they do not, she goes in, triggering the trap.

B. Approaching the Cabin

Area Information – Cabin Exterior

The cabin's surrounding has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The cabin has a simple rectangular shape, with a front porch and gallery protected by a roof made of mossy shingles. It is old and somewhat decrepit.

All blinds have been shut closed, and there are two doors leading to and from the cabin: an

unlocked front door, and a locked back door leading to the kitchen.

Sounds & Smell. A heavy silence reigns in this place; not even birds or squirrels dare chirp or sing. The stench of death and rot permeates the cabin when one comes within 30 feet of it.

Light. Wells of light pierce the canopy here and there, allowing natural illumination throughout the area.

Hidden tunnel exit. 300 feet west of the cabin, is a small graben where a cart and four undead horses wait. A tunnel, shored up by timbers, leads from the natural sink up to the cabin's basement. Unless the characters know to look for it, it is unlikely that they would find this area. Under such circumstances, it requires a DC20 Wisdom (Survival) check that is purposely conducted in the surrounding area rather than by the cabin. If the adventurers received the tip from Drystala and know to look for the passage, a DC10 Wisdom (Survival) is sufficient due to the fact that once the characters search the river area, the undead horses stand out.

C. Getting Rid of the Body

Area Information – Cabin Interior

The cabin has the following features

Sounds & Smell. The inside of the cabin is dead silent. The inside reches of putrefaction and rot, easily overwhelming anyone entering the place. Any creature entering the cabin without protection from the retch needs to succeed a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. Those who succeed are immune to the retch. Those who fail are poisoned and may attempt the saving throw again after 10 minutes, if the retch clears, or if they are more than 30 feet away from the cabin. The retch can be dispersed by a strong wind spell of first level or higher.

Light. The whole cabin is unlit, and blinds have been shut close, hence plunging the place into darkness. Any character with a Passive Wisdom (Perception) of 15 or higher notices faint light coming through the cracks in the wooden flooring.

Gallery/Porch. Old creaking planks form the floor for the gallery/porch, from which one can

peek through the blinds inside the cabin's main room.

Main room. The main room contains a table and five chairs (two of which have been tipped to the floor), two doors (leading to the hallway and the kitchen), a dirty carpet (that hides a trap door), and a large stuffed Moose Head that hangs above the hallway door.

A brownish trail goes from the kitchen up to under the carpet.

An audible *alarm* spell has been cast on the Moose Head, and the head wails loudly if any creature comes within 20 feet of it.

Kitchen. The kitchen table has been smashed and a large kitchen knife rests on the ground of the kitchen, in the middle of a blood stain that trails away through a door leading further in.

Two doors lead out of the kitchen: an unlocked one to the main room and a locked one to the back of the cabin.

Bedrooms. Two tiny bedrooms each have a bed and a side table. In the first bedroom, the bedsheets have been twisted in the shape of a makeshift rope, and the floor's dirt has been frantically scrapped by human fingernails.

Basement. The cabin's basement occupies the full dimensions of the cabin above, and has two access points: a trapdoor in the main room, and the tunnel that leads out to the river.

Five corpses hang from the ceiling: two human males and three young half elves (Mya's family and friends), while a sixth body lays on a large table in the middle with its stomach wide open.

Nomikon has left piled up viscera, skin and muscles around the room, and larva and mosquitoes are hard at work over them.

A desk next to the tunnel entrance contains a book filled with arcane scriptures written in blood (Nomikon's spellbook).

Anyone entering this room is required to succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the room for 1 minute.

Creatures/NPCs

Nomikon's Backstory

Nomikon was born a minor noble of the Netherese Empire, circa -670 DR and lived at a time where floating cities were common and archwizards were all powerful. He dabbled into Necromancy early in his studies and

had a secondary interest in Planar Travel and Realmspace.

He got to study under tutelage of Karsus for a few years, before meeting with Lord-General Hazirawn to study warfare tactics.

Nomikon used Necromancy to prolong his life and had no remorse in sacrificing entire villages to harvest whatever life essence he needed.

He perished when the Netherese empire fell. His soul was immediately snatched by devils.

A prized soul at first, Nomikon's relevancy dwindled as centuries passed and his memories slowly vanished to become a mere shell of who he once was: a hateful spirit motivated by destruction and death. Eventually his soul ended up in Avixxarlia's possession.

Nomikon the Netherese (soul possessing Rowland), CE

When the adventurers arrive, Nomikon is busy removing skin from Jayk's corpse. He has already turned Rowland's former companions into skeletons that he has animated (check the **Adjusting the Encounter** section below). As long as Rowland is possessed, he uses the **Necromancer** stats block.

Personality. Nomikon doesn't remember much of his past and identity. All that remains are figments of his former magical abilities and a pure hatred for anything living. He isn't interested in talking and would have trouble doing so since he only speaks Netherese and Loross (an old form of High Netherese used by nobles).

What Does He Want? Nomikon is driven by hatred towards anything living and wishes to slay, maim, and animate anyone who will cross his path.

What Does He Know? Nomikon vaguely remembers he once was in position of power, able to bend the winds of magic to his whims. After eons trapped in Hell, not much of his old personality remains, and whatever he once knew is now irrelevant. He does, however, remember that other souls were freed at the same time. If given the opportunity, he brags about looking especially forward to finding and slaying some of them – this gives away some clues to the others' identity (See **Appendix 3** for clues).

Playing the Pillars.

Exploration. Refer to map in **Appendix 7** and the Area Information sections above for the layout of the cabin.

All blinds are closed but can be pulled open easily to pry inside the various rooms.

The doors inside the cabin are made of simple wood planks and can be locked from either side by a simple hook mechanism. A locked door can be forced open with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics), and has 15 AC, 12 Hit Points, with immunity to poison and psychic damage.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) confirms the brown stain and trail in the kitchen and main room is dried blood.

Any creature with a passive Dexterity (Stealth) score of 12 or lower causes the flooring to emit a ghostly creaking sound.

Social Interaction. Nomikon is not interested in talking and views any living being as expendable material for his magic. He babbles and brags constantly in Netherese and Loross, so a character with an ability to understand those languages may be able to pick out clues to the missing soul from his ramblings.

Combat. Nomikon is working in the basement and is alerted of the adventurers' presence if make any sound, trigger his glyph, or the moose head *alarm*.

Once alerted, he prepares to attack. If the adventurers haven't entered the basement yet but are inside the cabin, he casts *Cloudkill* through cracks of the floorboards before grabbing his spellbook and retreating through the tunnel on Round 2.

If they have entered the basement without triggering the alarm, he sends skeletons to delay them as he attempts to make his getaway through the tunnel with his book.

In the event Nomikon manages to flee down the tunnel and to his horses without being stopped, he attempts to make a getaway but his wagon breaks down and falls into the river, forcing Nomikon to finish the combat.

Adjusting the Encounter

Rowland is a Half-Orc **Commoner**; however, for as long as he is possessed by the soul of Nomikon, he is considered a **Necromancer** and is present in all versions of the encounter along with **3 skeletons**.

Adjustments:

- **Very Weak:** Nomikon does not have his 5th or 6th level spell slots available.
- **Weak:** Nomikon does not have his 6th level spell slot.
- **Strong:** add 1 ghaſt
- **Very Strong:** add 2 ghaſts.

All versions: on Nomikon's spell list, replace *web*, *bestow curse*, *dimension door*, and *bigby's hand* with *misty step*, *counterspell*, *vitriolic sphere* and *enervation* respectively.

Wrap-Up

Upon defeating Nomikon, the characters make the choice on what to do with Rowland's body – leave it unconscious, kill him, or turn him in. This choice has no specific consequences other than wrapping up the storyline.

Treasure

The necromancer carries a *spell scroll of danse macabre*. In the event that he uses it in combat, he has another one with him. (Only one such scroll can be obtained in the adventure.)

Where to Next?

Regardless of runtime, characters are expected to return to Assem at the Bounty Office after dealing with each soul.

If running the 2-hour version of the adventure or if this soul is being tackled after the two bonus objectives, proceed to **Part 3**.

If running a longer version of the adventure that includes Bonus Objectives, Assem provides the party with newly gained information on another missing soul, as detailed in either **Part 2** or **Appendix 1**. The two bonus objectives can be done in any order.

Part 2 can be tackled via either social interaction or combat.

Bonus Objective B (Appendix 2) features both social interaction and combat.

Appendix 3: Hints to the Missing Soul

Each of the souls encountered by the characters provides them ONE of the following clues about the final soul, if the adventurers are able to get it out of them.

Be sure to adjust individual lines to the situation and voice of the soul providing the clue.

Note that it is not intended or required that the characters collect all three clues or identify Svetlina on their own. If they're not collected by the characters, other adventurers in Assem's employ gather them, allowing for Svetlina's identity to be put together.

Clue 1.

"She had not been there long. I don't think so. It's hard to tell. She spoke about fighting the wizards of the red coast. Or was it red wizards of the coast? Or red wizards on a coast? Or wizards on a red coast? I am not sure. But she was not afraid of them."

Deciphering the Clue. A DC10 Intelligence (History) check reveals that this likely refers to the Red Wizards of Thay. In recent years, famous battles with the red wizards took place in and near Mulmaster on the coast of the Moonsea and in the far away land of Chult, which has numerous coasts. The country of Thay itself is not situated on a major body of water, though their attacks on neighboring Rashemen are sometimes water based.

Clue 2.

"She seemed fearless, and she remembered things. Avixxarlia came to talk to her. Even called her by name. But I do not remember it exactly. It was a strange name. Like, Svelise or Sevelle or Svitalla"

Deciphering the Clue. A DC12 Intelligence (History) check identifies that from the sound of it, the names likely (but not certainly) belong to the following nations: Sevelle is an unusual, but sometimes used Chondathan name in the Moonsea Region, Svelise could be Turami, and Svitalla is likely Rashemi.

It is not intended that this clue alone can identify Svetlina, however, additional information on the mentioned human cultures is provided here to help answer immediate player questions.

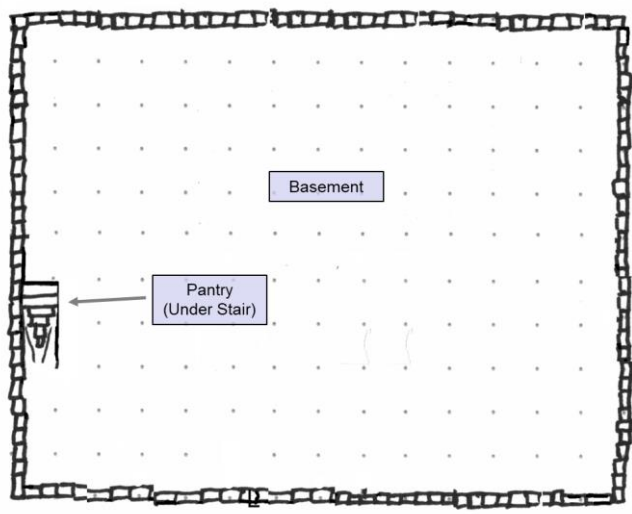
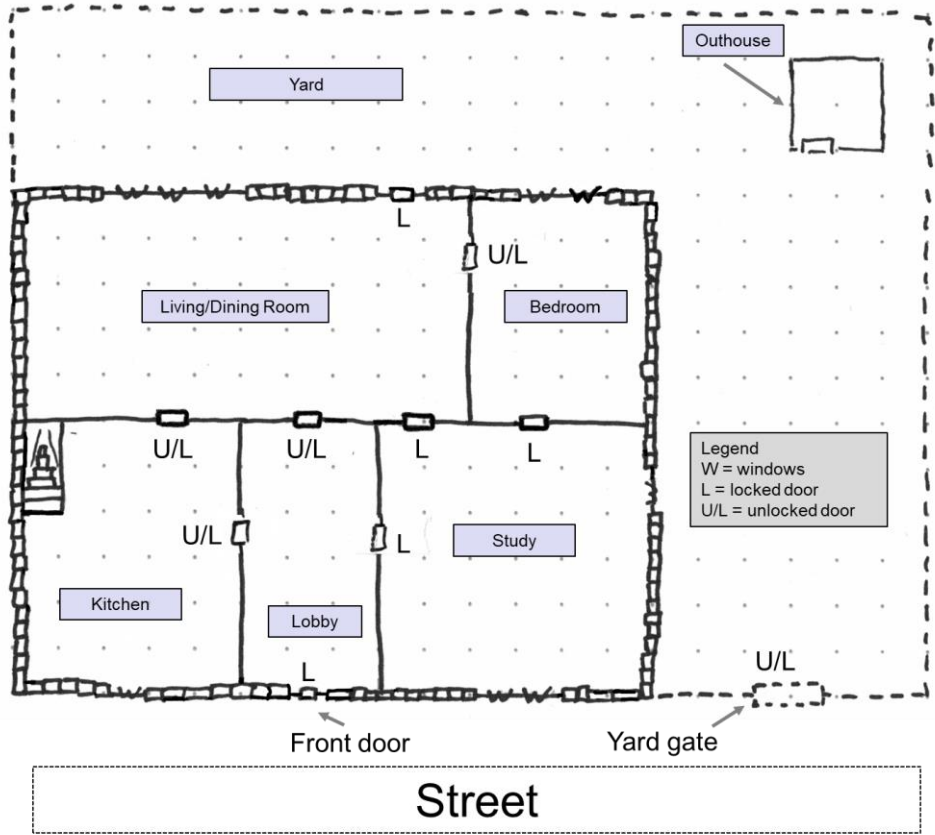
- Humans of Chondathan descent are extremely common, especially in central Faerun, around the Sea of Fallen Stars.
- Turami people are most commonly found in the nation of Turmish, on the south side of the Sea of Fallen Stars.
- Rashemen is a nation far to the east of the Moonsea, near Thay.

Clue 3.

"She said she was a protector of her people, and that she had a duty to get back to them, to protect them. She said she was a witch-something. Svitkala was her name, back when she was human."

Deciphering the Clue. A DC12 Intelligence (History) confirms that the name is indeed Rashemi. Additionally, depending on the result, provide some additional information on the witches (wychlaran) of Rashemen as detailed in the sidebar of the background of episode 3.

Appendix 4: Map of Miss Poppy's House

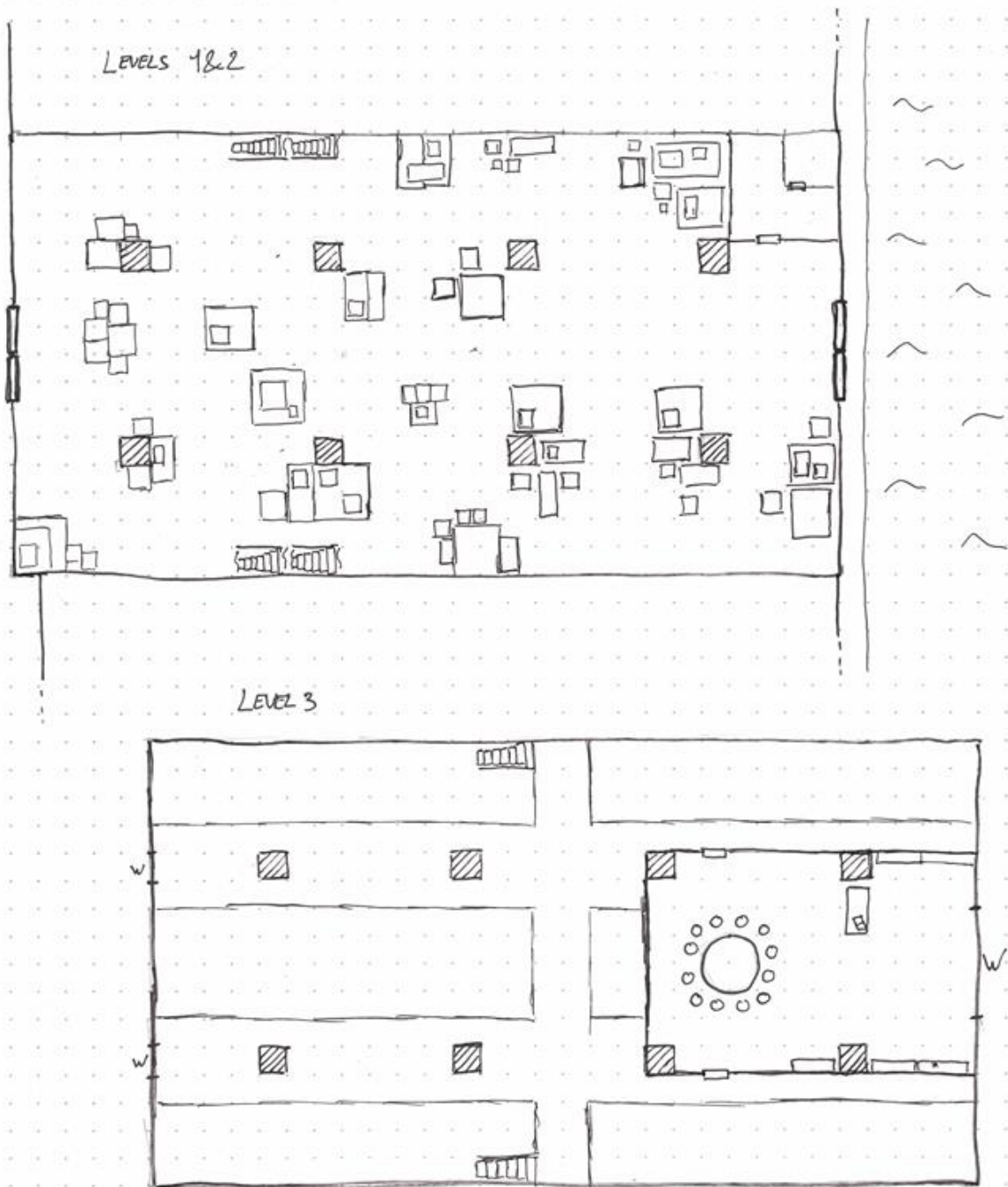


Appendix 5: Map of the White Wash

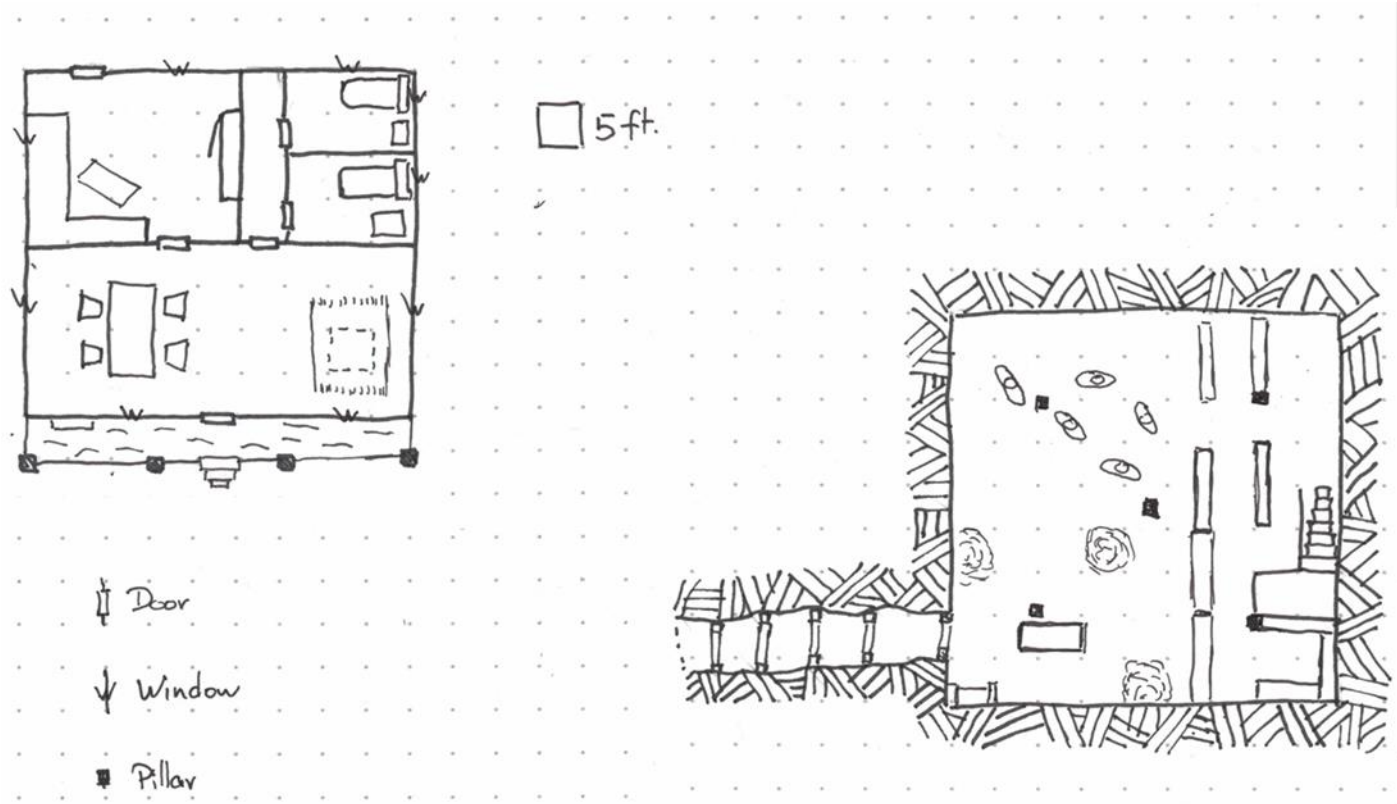
DM Tip: If redrawing this map for table use, only the southeast (bottom right) quarter of the map is relevant.



Appendix 6: Map of Drunda's Warehouse



Appendix 7: Map of Forest Cabin



Appendix 8: Magic Items and Story Awards

Amulet of proof against detection and location

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

A description of this item can be found in the
Dungeon Master's Guide.

Spell scroll of *mind spike*

Spell scroll, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the Dungeon Master's Guide.

Spell scroll of *danse macabre*

Spell scroll, rare

A description of this item can be found in the
Dungeon Master's Guide.

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.