

Adventures from the **Potbellied Kobold**



Jeff Stevens Games

**A COLLECTION OF ADVENTURES FOR THE
FIFTH EDITION OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST ROLEPLAYING GAME**

Jeff Stevens Games Presents:

Adventures from the Potbellied Kobold

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Tort, one of the Potbellied Kobold's servant constructs





INTRODUCTION

By Jeff Stevens

Welcome to *Adventures from the Potbellied Kobold* – a book of short adventures for the fifth edition of the world’s greatest roleplaying game.

The adventures within are designed for the Game Master who needs a quick encounter, short adventure, starting point for a larger campaign, or even a short campaign. Though the adventures are designed to be run individually, the Potbellied Kobold gives you a way to link them together.

KOBOLD PRESS CREATURES

Not only do we use creatures from the fifth edition basic rules, we’ve also incorporated creatures found in Kobold Press’s *Tome of Beasts* and *Creature Codex*. If you don’t have those assets, that’s okay. You’ll find the stat blocks for most of these creatures in appendix: Kobold Press Creatures.

AVERAGE CHARACTER LEVEL

The adventures in this book are designed for a party of four to five characters of a specific Average Character Level. To calculate the Average Character Level (ACL) add each character’s level together and divide the sum by the number of characters. For instance, your party contains a 1st-level fighter, a 3rd-level cleric, and a 2nd-level wizard. $1 + 3 + 2 = 6$. 6 divided by 3 (the number of characters) = 2. Therefore, the average character level of the party is 2. If the party is weaker or stronger than the stated character level, or there are fewer or more than four or five characters, considering adjusting the adventure based on the Scaling Suggestions sidebars.

USING THIS SUPPLEMENT

Text in these boxes is to be read to players.

Text in these light purple boxes are important notes for the GM.

MONSTERS

Monsters used in the adventures come from three different sources and are called out in the text in the following ways:

- Monsters from the Basic Rules (SRD) are noted in **black bold** lettering.
- Monsters from either *Tome of Beasts* or *Creature Codex* are noted in **purple bold** lettering and can be found in the back of this book.
- Monsters that are unique creations for the adventure are noted in **green bold** lettering and can be found at the end of the adventure where they appear.

Unless otherwise noted, use **commoner** for all NPCs.

MAPS

Unless otherwise noted, for all maps 1 square = 5 feet.

BEING A GOOD GAME MASTER

You don’t have to run these adventures as written. Part of the job of the Game Master is to facilitate the story and make sure the players are enjoying themselves. Below are a few things I think help make a good Game Master:

- Change things up as you see fit.
- Watch the players. If they seem bored, try something else.
- Allow the players to make decisions that may not follow the story in the adventure.
- Be prepared to be unprepared.
- Don’t let the adventure get out of hand. Even though we want the players to have a great time, we still need to maintain a little order.
- Be sure to engage each player and their character during game sessions. It’s not always fun to sit through a game when all the focus is on one player and their character.

USING THE ADVENTURES IN THIS BOOK

This book provides you with 15 short adventures that you can use however you wish. You can add these adventures to your ongoing campaign, use them to start a new campaign, or use them as one-shot adventures. You don't even have to mention Potbellied Kobold or Krisalee Tingletoe!

If you do want to link the adventures together, you can use Potbellied Kobold as a source of adventures and information, adding your own flair to her backstory. Change her as you see fit. She isn't a cursed gnome? That's okay with me!

Want to use these adventures to create a short and quick campaign? We have you covered! The Curing the Curse section of the introduction describes a way to link them together, with characters leveling up after each completed adventure.



The Potbellied Kobold



BACKGROUND

Krisalee Tingletoe is an experienced gnome mage cursed to live her life as a potbellied kobold while sequestered within 30 feet of her covered wagon. Using her arcane ingenuity, she created a pocket dimension within her small, covered wagon prison, allowing her ample space to rest, relax, research a cure for her curse, and continue tinkering as gnomes are wont to do. She lives a comfortable life as the Potbellied Kobold, the name merchants and travelers have given her.

The Potbellied Kobold isn't often allowed access to residential areas, so she hires passersby and adventurers to run errands and go on the occasional adventure for her. Being the kind kobold that she is, most are often happy to lend a hand. It doesn't hurt that she pays well, too.

Recently, the Potbellied Kobold acquired a magical book that allows her a glimpse into the future, into upcoming events in surrounding areas if things are not changed. The book also shows her the location of items which may help her remove her curse.

THE POTBELLIED KOBOLD

Though a powerful mage, the Potbellied Kobold is kind and gentle. Her rival, the elven wizard Belisana Bane (CE elf **archmage**), cursed her during their last confrontation. Belisana is a power-hungry woman seeking the darkest of magical knowledge. From the safety of her lair, she rules a nearby land.

The Potbellied Kobold speaks with a deep, raspy voice and her movement is twitchy, not flowing. She knows she is Krisalee Tingletoe but doesn't mind being called "the Potbellied Kobold" since visitors, merchants, and townsfolk seem to like that name. She realizes some may not find her appearance to be friendly, so she'd rather have a well-known name that people can quickly identify to her.

KRISALEE TINGLETOE

If all the required items are collected, Belisana's curse is removed and the Potbellied Kobold reverts to Krisalee's true, gnome form (see page 138). Krisalee's prismatic finch named Joy, who was suppressed during the curse, also manifests. Joy has bonded with Krisalee and only leaves her side if Krisalee perishes. In addition, Krisalee is no longer forced to stay within range of her covered wagon.

After being cured, Krisalee is not certain what she wants to do. She enjoys helping others and working with adventurers, but she knows Belisana is up to no good. She may attempt to thwart the evil mage, either by con-

fronting her in her lair or by surprising the mage while she travels.

BELISANA BANE

Though a confrontation with Belisana Bane does not occur in this book, we do include her statistics and minion information if the adventurers want to confront her, or if Krisalee decides to battle Belisana.

THE COVERED WAGON

Though the exterior of Krisalee's covered wagon seems simple enough with its mud-covered wheels and dirty bonnet, the interior is a small, magical pocket dimension which she created to make her imprisonment more comfortable.

Krisalee loves color, which is obvious to anyone who is invited into the wagon. The soiled canvas bonnet of the exterior is replaced with a solid roof with round, stained-glass windows. Inviting large, cushioned chairs and couches decorated with bright, colorful throw pillows fill the large interior while long, pretty banners hang from the ceiling, flapping gently in a magical, cool breeze.

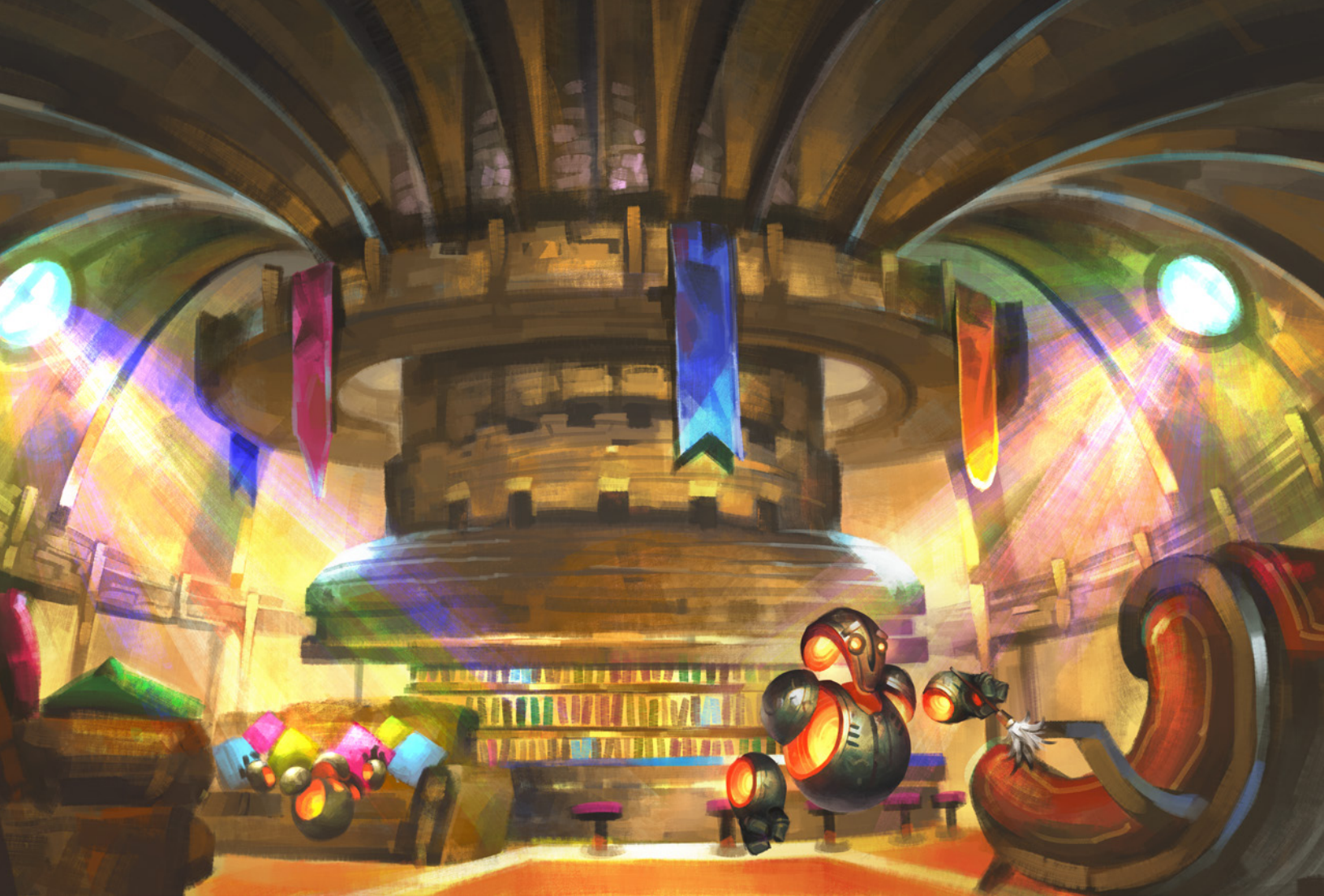
Books fill the shelves of a central pillar while Tort and Kiss (use **clockwork hounds**), the Potbellied Kobold's constructs and friends, clean and maintain the interior. The two constructs are friendly and inquisitive, often invading one's personal space to smell them or even brush off a bit of dust. If Krisalee, Tort, or Kiss are attacked, the two constructs can merge their bodies, transforming into one creature (use **shield guardian**, with a stored *magic missile* cast at 3rd level, or **clockwork abomination**).

USING THE POTBELLIED KOBOLD

The Potbellied Kobold can be used several ways:

- As a merchant with magical items and services for sale.
- As a place of refuge, allowing the adventures to rest inside her wagon while they heal.
- As a source of information about the surrounding area.
- As a quest giver with short adventures for the characters.
- As a campaign, using the suggested Curing the Curse campaign arc in this book.





The covered wagon interior

CURING THE CURSE

The Potbellied Kobold needs help! Using her magical book, she senses distress in neighboring villages, which she mentions to the adventuring party. Also, she senses things in these villages that may help her cure her curse.

Plot Hooks: The list below includes plot hooks that you can use when the Potbellied Kobold speaks with the adventurers. Her knowledge of the adventures is limited, as her magical book only provides her with a sense of distress or danger, or a brief glimpse of the situation.

Rewards: You may change the rewards the Potbellied Kobold offers the adventurers. Your characters may not find some of the listed rewards useful. In addition to the rewards listed, the Potbellied Kobold tells them they can keep whatever they find, if she doesn't require it to cure her curse.

What She Needs: Many of these items are easily found during the adventure, while some may require additional roleplay or changing the treasure listed in the adventure.

Each adventure has this symbol with its associated number inside.



Please refer to the Scaling Suggestions within each adventure, adjusting up or down based on the party's level and relative strength.

ADVENTURE 1 - TINKER TAILOR GOBLIN

Plot Hook: "I sense someone needs help in a small goblin hamlet. Look for the sign and you'll find them."

Reward: 20 gp each, or a *potion of healing* each.

What She Needs: She needs the adventurers to return with either a *magical picnic basket*, or a purple tunic (which Din can make for them).

ADVENTURE 2 - INTO THE CLOUDS

Plot Hook: "I sense distress in the village of Ivyford, where they are about to celebrate their harvest with a festival called Leavesfall. I believe the villagers need your assistance."

Reward: She offers a reward of 25 gp each, or a total of three +1 *arrows or bolts*.



What She Needs: The Potbellied Kobold needs the characters to return with a 7-inch-long gray whisker, which they can obtain from the cloud giant or from Edeltot Handy (LN human), an elder with a long beard in the village of Ivyford. Edeltot isn't accustomed to giving out his whiskers to strangers. Acquiring the whisker may require a little persuasion or trade.

ADVENTURE 3 - REDEEMED WITH FIRE

Plot Hook: "A nearby noble's daughter is missing. Please, help this mother find her daughter."

Reward: 30 gp each, or one of the below:

- *bag of holding*
- *+1 dagger*

What She Needs: A golden tooth, which they can find on Flamboigne, or a pearl necklace, which Lady Henreeda Haversdown can give them as a reward.

ADVENTURE 4 - SLIME CAVE OF NORWAL

Plot Hook: "I see a green ooze covering the village of Norwal. Go there and investigate. Save the village!"

Reward: 50 gp each, or a *cloak of protection*.

What She Needs: A sample of green slime. If the adventurers do not possess an empty container, she provides a glass vial with a cork stopper.

ADVENTURE 5 - TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Plot Hook: "I sense an unnatural creature roams the hillside not far from here. I'm scared it may enter villages and hurt innocent people."

The Potbellied Kobold points the party in the direction of the danger.

Reward: 100 gp each, or two *potions of healing* each.

What She Needs: A *potion of resistance to poison* or the tooth of something dead but still living (for example, a zombie's tooth).

ADVENTURE 6 - INSTABILITY OF ISOLATION

Plot Hook: "I sense great sadness. I can just barely see the tear-streaked, freckled face of a young girl."

Reward: 100 gp each, or one of the below:

- *+1 longsword*
- *+1 leather armor*
- *+1 shield*

What She Needs: An orange-sized ball of spider's webbing, or the lips of a child. (Not literally the lips of a child, but perhaps the imprint of the lips using makeup and a piece of parchment.)

ADVENTURE 7 - RACE FOR THE CROWN

Plot Hook: "There is to be a race in the village of Tonwindale. I sense the prize may have dire consequences. Go there and make certain all is safe."

Reward: 200 gp each, or one of the below:

- *bracers of archery*
- *bracers of defense*
- *boots of speed*

What She Needs: A gold earring with two dangling teeth, which the orc rogue Shar'moh wears. Depending on the outcome of the adventure, the characters may need to negotiate or trade for Shar'moh's earring. She likes all items associated with thievery and gemstones.

ADVENTURE 8 - SHATTERED GRACE

Plot Hook: "A king is in misery, his heart broken. Please, go and help mend it."

Reward: 150 gp each, or one of the below:

- *+2 wand of the war mage*
- *necklace of fireballs*

What She Needs: A purple heart, which the king provides as reward if the adventurers save his children, giving them a purple satin pillow in the shape of a heart. Or, an amulet with a cracked face.

ADVENTURE 9 - SPARE PARTS

Plot Hook: "A mother's son has perished in a freak accident and she can't find his body. You will find her in the warehouse district of the port city of New Shard."

Reward: 200 gp each, or one of the below:

- *wand of magic missiles*
- *+2 leather armor*
- *cloak of displacement*

What She Needs: A bottle of embalming fluid, which they can purchase from the morgue for 25 gp, or the ring finger of a flesh golem. Attempts to steal the embalming fluid require a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check. If caught, the adventures are kicked out of the morgue.

ADVENTURE 10 - TICK TOCK

Plot Hook: "A young woman named Sera seeks her family's missing fortune."

Reward: Two *potions of superior healing* each, or one of the below:

- *+2 splint mail*
- *+1 platemail*
- *oathbow*

What She Needs: A creature of time, preferably alive, or a platinum flute.



THE POTBELLIED KOBOLD

The Potbellied Kobold prefers to negotiate or control rather than duel to the death. If engaged in combat, she attempts to put her attackers to sleep, using her highest-level spell slot while calling for Tort and Kiss. If the *sleep* spell is not effective, she then attacks with her *magic missiles*.

Krisalee Tingletoe is a high-level mage, but the curse inhibits her arcane abilities. In addition, Krisalee's kobold form cannot prepare 3rd-level spells or higher. She uses those spell slots to increase the potency of her lower-level spells.

POTBELLIED KOBOLD

Small humanoid (kobold), neutral good

Armor Class 13 (16 with mage armor)

Hit Points 31 (9d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +7, History +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Gnomish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The Potbellied Kobold is a 9th-level spellcaster. Though, her curse prevents her from preparing any spell 3rd level or higher, she still has those spell slots, allowing her to cast lower-level spells with greater effect. She can cast those spells by performing a ritual if allowed.

The Potbellied Kobold's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *message*, *poison spray* (2d12), *prestidigitation*

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

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

3rd level (3 slots): N/A (9d8 *sleep* or 5 *magic missiles*)

4th level (3 slots): N/A (11d8 *sleep* or 6 *magic missiles*)

5th level (1 slot): N/A (13d8 *sleep* or 7 *magic missiles*)

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

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

ACTIONS

Thieves' Breath. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

EQUIPMENT

JADE BRACELET OF IDENTIFICATION

Wondrous Item, rare

This bracelet has 3 charges, and it gains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. While wearing this bracelet, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the *identify* spell.

NECKLACE OF PHANTOM STEED SUMMONING

Wondrous Item, rare

This necklace has 3 charges, and it gains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. While wearing this necklace, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the *phantom steed* spell.

RING OF MIND SHIELDING

Ring, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing this ring, you are immune to magic that allows other creatures to read your thoughts, determine whether you are lying, know your alignment, or know your creature type. Creatures can telepathically communicate with you only if you allow it.

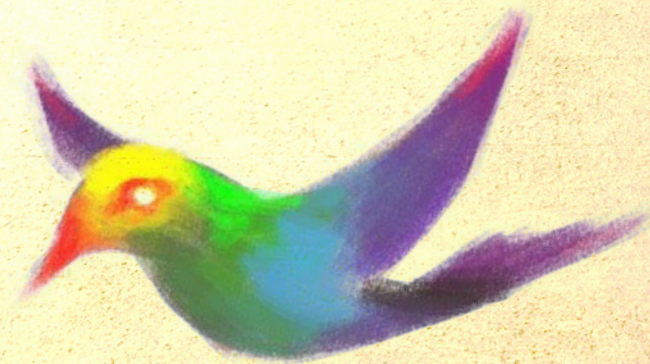
You can use an action to cause the ring to become invisible until you use another action to make it visible, until you remove the ring, or until you die.

If you die while wearing the ring, your soul enters it, unless it already houses a soul. You can remain in the ring or depart for the afterlife. As long as your soul is in the ring, you can telepathically communicate with any creature wearing it. A wearer can't prevent this telepathic communication.

THIEVES' BREATH

Weapon (dagger), rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls you make with this weapon. While holding it, you can cast the *misty step* spell once per day.



Joy - prismatic finch



KRISALEE TINGLETOE

Once cured of her curse, the Potbellied Kobold transforms into her true, gnome form and gains complete use of her spells and spell slots.

KRISALEE TINGLETOE

Small humanoid (gnome), neutral good

Armor Class 13 (16 with mage armor)

Hit Points 81 (18d6 + 18)

Speed 25 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +7

Skills Arcana +13, History +13

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Gnomish

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

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

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

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

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

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

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *haste**, *slow*

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

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *dominate person*, *scrying*

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

7th level (1 slot): *teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *power word stun*

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

*Krisalee casts these spells on herself before combat.

ACTIONS

Thieves' Breath. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

EQUIPMENT

- *jade bracelet of identification*
- *necklace of phantom steed summoning*
- *ring of mind shielding*
- *thieves' breath*

JOY - PRISMATIC FINCH

Tiny beast (bird), neutral good

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 11 (5d4 - 1)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The prismatic finch's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *light*

1/day each: *blur*, *faerie fire*

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

ACTIONS

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage plus 2 radiant damage.

Prismatic Breath (Recharge 5–6). The finch exhales prismatic energy in a 30-foot cone, which manifests as eight multicolored rays of light. Each ray is a different color and has a different power and purpose. Each creature in the area of effect must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, an affected creature rolls a d8 to see which color ray affects them:

1. **Red.** The target takes 6 (1d12) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
2. **Orange.** The target takes 6 (1d12) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
3. **Yellow.** The target takes 6 (1d12) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
4. **Green.** The target takes 6 (1d12) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
5. **Blue.** The target takes 6 (1d12) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
6. **Indigo.** On a failed save, the target is restrained until the end of its next turn.
7. **Violet.** On a failed save, the target is blinded until the end of its next turn.
8. **Special.** The target is struck by two rays. Roll twice more, rerolling any 8s.



BELISANA BANE

Belisana enamours creation magic, using it to create minions of golems, elementals, and undead. Gulunaught, her **clay golem** bodyguard, is never far from her side.

During combat, Belisana uses her magical censer to create an air elemental. She also uses her spells to create elementals, creating a wall of minions so she can attack from a distance.

BELISANA BANE

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (cloak of protection, 16 with mage armor)

Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)

Speed 35 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +10, Wis +7, *cloak of protection*: +1 to all other saving throws.

Skills Arcana +13, History +13

Damage Resistances damage from spells; nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from *stoneskin*)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Ignan

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Elf Weapon Training. Belisana is proficient with the longsword, shortsword, shortbow, and longbow.

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

Mask of the Wild. Belisana can attempt to hide even when she is in an area only lightly obscured by foliage, heavy rain, falling snow, mist, and other natural phenomena.

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

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *light*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*, *produce flame*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *fog cloud*, *mage armor**, *shield*, *unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *flaming sphere*, *misty step*, *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *sleet storm*, *stinking cloud*

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

5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill*, *conjure elemental*, *screaming*

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

7th level (1 slot): *plane shift*

8th level (1 slot): *incendiary cloud*

9th level (1 slot): *wish*

*Belisana casts these spells on herself before combat.

ACTIONS

Oathbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. The target takes an additional 10 (3d6) piercing damage if it is the current sworn enemy.

Produce Flame. Ranged Spell Attack: +9 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (4d8) fire damage.

EQUIPMENT

CLOAK OF PROTECTION

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws while you wear this cloak.

OATHBOW

Weapon (longbow), very rare (requires attunement)

When you nock an arrow on this bow, it whispers in Elvish, "Swift defeat to my enemies." When you use this weapon to make a ranged attack, you can, as a command phrase, say, "Swift death to you who have wronged me." The target of your attack becomes your sworn enemy until it dies or until dawn seven days later. You can have only one such sworn enemy at a time. When your sworn enemy dies, you can choose a new one after the next dawn.

When you make a ranged attack roll with this weapon against your sworn enemy, you have advantage on the roll. In addition, your target gains no benefit from cover, other than total cover, and you suffer no disadvantage due to long range. If the attack hits, your sworn enemy takes an extra 3d6 piercing damage.

While your sworn enemy lives, you have disadvantage on attack rolls with all other weapons.

Proficiency with a longbow allows you to add your proficiency bonus to the attack roll for any attack you make with it.

CENSER OF CONTROLLING AIR ELEMENTALS

Wondrous item, very rare

While incense is burning in this censer, you can use an action to speak the censer's command word and summon an air elemental, as if you had cast the *conjure elemental* spell. The censer can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

This 6-inch-wide, 1-foot-high vessel resembles a chalice with a decorated lid. It weighs 1 pound.



TINKER, TAILOR, GOBLIN, DIE

By Kat Kruger

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

This short adventure is designed for five 2nd-level characters and features social interaction, exploration, and combat. Scaling suggestions are included for weaker or stronger adventuring groups.

BACKGROUND

Rhogar Drachedandion (RO-gar DRAK-uh-DAN-dee-on) was an eccentric and well-traveled dragonborn merchant who recently passed away. He spent his lifetime accumulating furnishings from around the realms and across the planes with which to decorate his mountain-top manor house.

Although he acquired a great wealth in possessions, he had a dearth of friends or even those he would call acquaintances. For in the valley below his vast estate is the little hamlet of Harborage, home to goblins who have taken refuge from hostility to resettle the area in peace. They feared the dragonborn merchant and would shutter themselves away whenever he came down from the mountain.

Upon his death, the Drachedandion Estate fell into disrepair for many years until a halfling rogue stumbled upon it. After attempting to loot the manor of some of its treasures and being met with a ghostly presence, he turned his attention to Harborage. There, he forged a property deed that transferred ownership of the estate to a tinkerer goblin for a modest sum of gold.

PLOT HOOK

The adventuring party is traveling through the area when they happen upon the remote hamlet of Harborage. An antiques shop has an “Adventurers Wanted” sign in its window.

THE ADVENTURE

The adventuring party can easily make out a small settlement from a mountain pass. An overgrown path branches off and leads into a valley, surrounded by steep and treacherous bluffs.

Small earth shelters with grass rooftops and brick fronts dot the valley.

The houses and storefronts are proportioned appropriately for size Small creatures. Harborage is home to a population of under a hundred good-hearted goblins.

Citizens are frightened of any creature size Medium or larger and retreat into their homes if approached. As a result, an adventuring party may find the houses and shops locked up except for the antiques shop. Alternatively, wary citizens may direct them to the antique shop.

A wooden sign hangs above the door, proclaiming the premises to be “Re-Store.” A tailor’s mannequin and a beautifully restored, mahogany rolltop desk sit quietly in the window display.

The door is 4 feet tall by 2 feet wide, making entry difficult for Medium or larger creatures. Inside, the ceiling is 5 feet tall and the shop takes up a modest 20-foot-square footprint filled with refurbished furniture.

Opening the door causes a bell to chime. The proprietor, Din (CN female **goblin**) wears patchwork coveralls and greets the characters with cautious optimism. Din restores home furnishings and is also the local tailor. She recently purchased the Drachedandion Manor and needs able-bodied adventurers to assist in ensuring the premises are indeed clear before transporting the contents of her shop to the manor. She hasn’t visited the manor yet. The dragonborn merchant who lived there was a reclusive and

she's afraid there may be traps, or worse. No one in the village has seen the dragonborn for several months. Though he never came to the village, the goblins often saw him watching them from atop the hill.

If asked who she purchased the manor from, Din states, "His name was Ace." Din can also share that Ace was a well-dressed halfling real estate broker who acquired the deed during an estate auction. She has never met Ace before, but he was charming and very precise with their transaction.

She offers the party a reward of 15 gp each. Additionally, she can sew bespoke outfits for the adventuring party.

Ace is a halfling thief who, after entering the mansion and stealing away some valuables, forged a deed and sold it to Din.



Din, tailor and shopkeep

DRACHEDANDION MANOR

The party can reach the manor by way of a single switch-back road that winds up the mountain side. It is slightly overgrown, suggesting years of disuse.

Drachedandion Manor overlooks the hamlet below. Once a grand estate, it is now overgrown with vines and even the two small gargoyle statues perched on the watches above have forlorn expressions on their stony faces.

A character succeeding on a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception)** check notices one of the gargoyles is no longer on its perch.

The front door is shut but unlocked.

If the adventuring party searches the exterior, to the southwest and near the kitchen entryway (Area 10), they find a small compost heap that appears to be quite old, with no new compostable material noticeable. Digging through the heap reveals nothing special, perhaps a few old eggshells and clumps of tea leaves. The door is unlocked.

GENERAL FEATURES

The manor has the following features:

Lighting. Natural light comes in from murky windows during the day. At night, characters without darkvision require a torch or other source of light.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. The manor is in a state of disrepair; most rooms have been ransacked. The air is musty.

Terrain. The interior of the manor is made of stone walls and hardwood floors.

As the characters move through the manor, four creatures—a **mimic** disguised as a table, an **awakened cherry tree**, a suit of **animated armor**, and a **gargoyle**—attempt to hide in plain sight. They are friends of the now-deceased Rhogar Drachedandion, who is a **ghost**, and makes his appearance known if the adventurers kill his friends, or if they attempt to leave the manor with the original deed.

Ordinarily, the creatures move about the manor freely. However, when the adventuring party arrives, they become motionless in an attempt to remain hidden. As such they may appear in rooms where their placement makes little sense.

The manor has ten areas. Each is described below.

Creatures encountered in the rooms fight if they notice the characters pick up any items or disturb Rhogar's skeleton.

AREA 1. FRONT LANDING

Stone steps lined by 4-foot-tall stair rails lead up to a set of wooden double doors.

The stone steps were once trapped, but the halfling thief triggered the trap while attempting to disable it. A creature succeeding on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** while searching the stairs finds a small dart embedded in the northern stair rail. A small spring-loaded firing mechanism is installed in the southern rail. A character succeeding on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discerns that, due to the lack of weathering and rust, the trap was probably triggered within the past four months.

The double doors are unlocked, but the hinges are rusty and squeak loudly when the doors are opened. A character with a **passive Perception of 12**, or one succeeding on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the rusty hinges before they open the door. Applying any liquid to the hinges stops the squeaking.

AREA 2. FOYER

The entrance hall is fit for royalty. A red velvet rug leads directly into a courtyard. Large archways open to the north and south. On the southern wall is a portrait of a silvery male dragonborn dressed in a purple silk kaftan. He has a desolate expression on his face as he looks toward the courtyard.

A character with a **passive Perception of 10**, or one succeeding on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the painting is hanging crooked.

TREASURE

The portrait is of good quality and could be sold for 50 gp. Hidden behind the painting is a small safe, built into the stone wall. A character succeeding on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices fine scratches along the keyhole and face of the safe. A thief or a character proficient with thieves' tools recognizes these markings, as they are often made when a lock is picked using thieves' tools.

The key to the safe is hidden in a wooden breadbox in the

pantry. The safe can be opened with the key or with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**. It can also be battered open and has an AC 16 and 40 hit points.

When opened, the safe holds a single playing card—the ace of diamonds. The other loot was stolen by the halfling thief.

AREA 3. GREAT HALL

A chandelier hangs in the center of the great hall. Wide leather chairs and animal rugs are scattered around the room. Several bookshelves line the walls, and the hearth on the northern wall is filled with cobwebs. There are glass doors leading north to an outdoor overlook and south to a greenhouse, as well as another wooden door shut to the east.

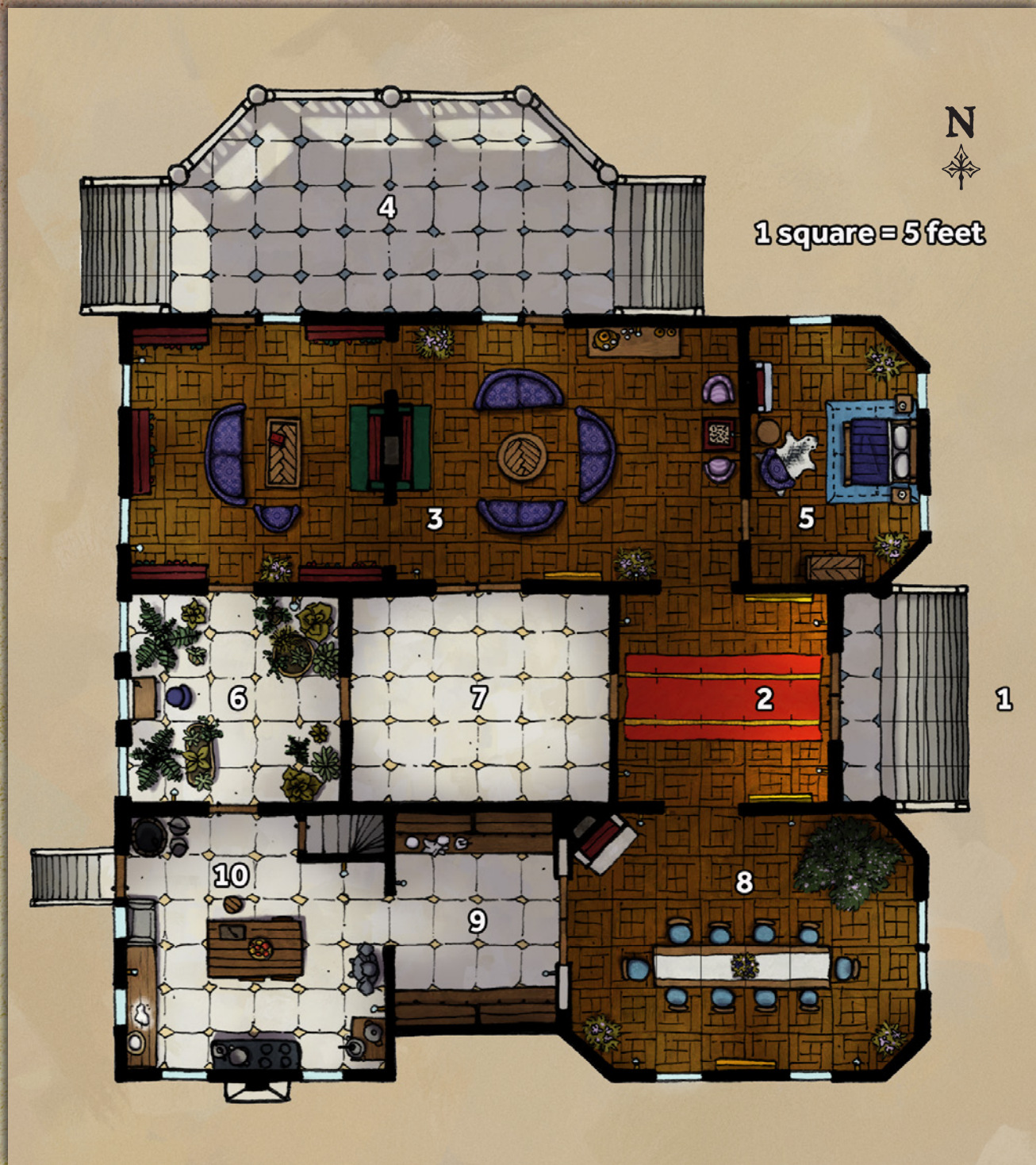
TREASURE

Bookshelves. A character searching the bookshelves finds books of random fiction, with titles like:

- *Traveling Among the Stars*, a book with various short stories about what it would be like to travel in space.

Portrait of Rhogar
Drachedandion





- *Is There Anything Else Out There?*, A book with several essays questioning the existence of life on other planets.
- *Isben Crutter: Otherworld Explorer*, a book featuring the character Isben Crutter, a dragonborn with a ship that allows him to travel to other planets.

A character succeeding on a DC 12 Wisdom (**Perception**) check, or one searching the bookshelves for 10

minutes, also finds a small folder containing the following spell scrolls:

- *animal friendship*
- *create or destroy water*
- *comprehend languages*

Chandelier. Though large, the chandelier is worth 75 gp. It is attached at the ceiling and requires the use of a ladder to reach it (see Area 5). Proper precautions



must be taken to avoid the chandelier from crashing to the floor when it is being removed from the ceiling. A creature attempting to remove the chandelier from the ceiling and succeeding on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** safely removes the chandelier. On a failed check, the chandelier crashes to the floor and each creature in a 15-foot radius must succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** or take 1d6 piercing damage from shards of glass.

AREA 4. WATCH

Leaves and detritus carpet the lookout which features a view of the hamlet below. In the middle of the stone banner is an empty pedestal.

If the adventuring party failed to notice the missing gargoyle when they first arrived, they have another opportunity to investigate here. With a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, a character determines a small statue recently stood on the pedestal, denoted by the color and weathering of the stone.

AREA 5. BEDCHAMBER

The bedchamber is well-appointed. Bookcases filled with dusty tomes stand on the southernmost wall opposite a large canopy bed where a skeleton lies.

Chip (CN size Small **gargoyle**) is perched precariously above the door frame. He is suspicious of the intruders but if they can somehow communicate that they mean no harm, he leaves them be. He does appear to be quite saddened and reticent. He misses watching the dawn and dusk of each day with his old friend. Chip attacks if the adventurers disturb his friend's skeleton; though, he does not mind them looking under the bed.

With a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check** any character can determine the skeleton belongs to a dragonborn.

Scaling Suggestions:

Weaker: The gargoyle has AC 14, 40 hit points, and no damage immunities.

Stronger: The gargoyle has AC 16 and 60 hit points.

TREASURE

Under the Bed. A character searching under the bed while succeeding on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** finds a loose floorboard. Removing the floorboard reveals a small leather satchel which holds the original deed to the manor and 20 platinum pieces.

If the characters attempt to leave the manor with the original deed, Rhogar appears and confronts them (see Conclusion).

Bookcases. The characters can easily find books about goblins, kobolds, and cooking. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals an old, torn and weathered spellbook containing the following spells:

- 1st level: *color spray, jump*
- 2nd level: *blur*

AREA 6. GREEN HOUSE

The garden is thriving. It houses many unusual plants from around the realms, all lush. A large oak desk, crammed in between two ferns, sits along the west wall.



The Desk. The desk is one of Rhogar's friends named Pudding—a **mimic** in disguise. If approached, Pudding attacks the party, fearful for its life.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: The mimic has 38 hit points.

Stronger: The mimic has 72 hit points.

A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a mark on the floor, as if a bucket had been recently removed from the room. These are tracks left by Blossom, the awakened tree found in Area 8. She recently moved from the green house to the dining room.

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** also reveals a 4-foot-tall A-frame ladder hidden in the shrubbery near the entrance and along the wall.

AREA 7. COURTYARD

Moss covers this cobblestone courtyard, with several patches of moss overturned.

The halfling thief searched the courtyard for hidden treasure but found none. A creature succeeding on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices recent footprints within the moss. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals the footprints were made by a Small-sized humanoid.

AREA 8. DINING

A long dining table, set with 14 dust-covered place settings, fills most of the room. In the far corner stands a large cherry tree full of blooms.

The large cherry tree (**awakened tree**) goes by the name of Blossom, knows Common, and speaks fondly of her friend who treated her to the freshest water from a nearby stream along with dirt from a compost heap he maintained. She only attacks the characters if they attack her, or if she witnesses them stealing from the manor. If any of the characters are openly carrying anything they have found in the manor, roll a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** to see if Blossom notices. If she succeeds, she confronts the party, asking them why they are stealing from the mansion.

Blossom is also concerned about what may happen to her, her friends, and the manor.

Blossom hides a magic item deep in her branches—a small picnic basket. A character succeeding on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices something in her branches, but can't discern what it is. Blossom doesn't tell them what the item is, stating that it's her special memory of Rhogar. See Rewards below for more information on the magical picnic basket.

On pleasant days, Rhogar and Blossom often went on picnics, sitting at the edge of the mansion while watching the goblin village below.

TREASURE

Any character examining the dining table determines the flatware and candelabras were recently removed, evidenced by the dust outlines on the table. A character succeeding on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices a few small handprints within the dust, left there by the halfling thief when he took the silverware.



If asked, Blossom doesn't know what happened to the missing pieces. She only recently moved to this room. She also doesn't recall seeing anyone in the manor recently. She does admit that she's been napping more and more lately, so she may have been asleep.

AREA 9. PANTRY

The pantry brims with ingredients from around the world. However, the pungent scent of decay offsets the fragrant spices.

TREASURE

Searching the pantry easily yields 10 gp worth of rare spices. A successful DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals a large, decaying rat caught in a spring-loaded trap. On a result of 14 or more, the character also finds a bread box containing a brass key which opens the safe hidden behind the painting in Area 1.



AREA 10. KITCHEN

The kitchen features a large wood oven. Pots and pans dangle from an overhanging wrought iron rack and a large suit of armor stands by the doorway.

The suit of armor is Clank, an **animated armor** that knows sign language and is another of Rhogar's friends. Clank stands motionless unless attacked, or if it witnesses the characters stealing from the pantry. The armor saw the halfling thief moving about the kitchen, but since the thief didn't take anything, Clank didn't attack it—it looked harmless.

For this adventure, casting *comprehend languages* allows the adventurers to communicate with Clank.

If the characters attempt to take anything from the pantry, roll a d20. On a result of 12 or higher, the animated armor sees them steal from the pantry and attacks.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: The animated armor has AC 16 and 25 hit points.

Stronger: The animated armor has 48 hit points.

Using Tome of Beasts

Clank is a clockwork watchman with 90 hit points. For a stronger party, Clank is a clockwork huntsman.

A small staircase leads down to a 15-foot-square root cellar. A character searching the debris in the cellar finds three glass jars of cherry jam, a small barrel of brandy, and a dirt-covered wheel of cheddar cheese. Taking any of these items disturbs three **giant rats**.

REWARDS

Much of the treasure was stolen by the halfling who sold the forged property deed. However, Blossom hides a magical item in her branches: a *picnic basket of feasting*. If the characters successfully negotiate her safety, she gives them the basket.

PICNIC BASKET OF FEASTING

Wondrous item, uncommon

Upon uttering the command phrase “Let the feast begin,” the basket produces 45 pounds of food and 5 jugs of mead, enough to sustain up to fifteen creatures for 24 hours.

The food and mead are simple but delicious, and spoils if uneaten after 24 hours.

CONCLUSION

Characters may choose to fight all the creatures as they move through the rooms. If they do so, and defeat all of them, the ghost of Rhogar Drachedandion appears, saddened at the loss of his friends. Successful **DC 14 Charisma checks** may calm the ghost to the point where he can be spoken to. Otherwise, Rhogar attacks those who hurt his friends.

Rhogar’s ghost also appears if the characters attempt to leave the manor with the original deed. In this instance, the ghost is not threatening. Rather, he asks what the characters intend to do with the deed, mansion, and his friends.

Rhogar lived a lonely existence and only ever wanted to make friends with the residents of the neighboring hamlet. He studied their cultures and cuisine but to no avail. Now he is tied to the estate in the afterlife.

The adventuring party may attempt to broker an agreement between the residents of Harborage and the ghost who offers his protection in exchange for their friendship.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the hamlet befriends Rhogar Drachedandion, Din is given much work restoring items and offers her restoration and tailoring services to the adventuring party at a steep discount to cover the cost of materials only. Though she’s upset that she was fooled by the halfling thief and sold a forged deed, she’s willing to let Rhogar and his friends stay in the mansion.

She may ask the adventurers to confront Ace, asking for her money back if they stumble upon him. She recalls he has red hair and wore a black and white scarf

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Rhogar’s ghost uses the statistics for a specter and can speak Common and Draconic.

Stronger: The ghost has an AC 11 and 60 hit points. Its save DC is 14.



INTO THE CLOUDS

By JVC Parry

Estimated run-time: 1 to 2 hours

This adventure is designed for four to five 3rd-level characters and includes scaling suggestions for weaker and stronger parties.

BACKGROUND

In the lead up to Leavesfall—the harvest time—the village of Ivyford has been a buzz of activity. Each year, the local temple puts on a wonderful Harvest Festival with folk song and dance, vegetable and fruit competitions, and a harvest play that draws not only the local populace but visitors from miles around. This year, the preparations have been cut short. The lead carpenter, Maryn Thatch, is missing. Without her, the decorations that bring Leavesfall to life will never be completed on time.

Maryn was kidnapped while on a hike in the Hindwoods, an activity she undertook alone to survey trees for felling. She was taken by the injured cloud giant Cirraal, whose arm was recently bitten off by a dragon. Cirraal took Maryn to his palatial abode atop the clouds and is keeping her captive while she creates an enormous carved arm for him. Cirraal is capable of permanently animating objects, and will use the new arm like the one he lost.

Meanwhile, in Ivyford, the priests are desperately canvassing adventurers for their assistance in locating the lost carpenter. They know she was last spotted heading for the Hindwoods, and send the characters in that direction.

PLOT HOOKS

The plot hooks below allow you to introduce adventurers into the plot at different points, depending on available play time and preference.

- Father Isafar, a priest in need of assistance, approaches the characters. He tells them that he is from the nearby village of Ivyford, and that during

the preparations for their famous Leavesfall festival, their lead carpenter has gone missing. The priest does anything he can to help the characters in their search and offers to reward them with free food, lodging, and healing. Isafar explains that Maryn was last seen heading toward the Hindwoods.

- While the characters are travelling through the Hindwoods, they hear a startled cry from nearby, and the rending of trees. Following the noise, they discover a freshly made clearing and see a one-armed cloud giant with a woman grasped in his hand flying toward the clouds. Dropped onto the forest floor are plans of decorations for the festival of Leavesfall at Ivyford.
- Similar to the first hook, except Father Isafar knows that Maryn was taken by a cloud giant, gives them the *leafwing tokens* (see Appendix B), and asks them to pursue the giant immediately!

FINDING MARYN

THE HINDWOODS

After speaking with Father Isafar and establishing that Maryn disappeared from the nearby Hindwoods yesterday, the priest asks the characters to head into the forest to investigate. When they arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

The Hindwoods is dominated by towering pines, whose red bark flakes away in hand-sized plates. Brambles and ferns grow around the base of the mighty stands, though three well-walked paths snake through the undergrowth, paved by chunks of fallen bark. The sound of clashing steel and squealing animals rings through the forest.

Characters with a **passive Wisdom (Perception)** score of 14 or higher determine the sound is coming from 30 feet into the forest. If no character in the party can locate the sound, the characters must succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check** to locate the ambush.

AMBUSH!

When characters find the cause of the noise, read or paraphrase the following:

You follow a path around a rocky outcropping revealing a wagon, atop which two halflings stand, firing arrows into a mob of frenzied satyrs surrounding them. The pony pulling the cart rears up in fear. The pathway is surrounded by ruined walls, and off to one side is an ivy-covered podium that pulses with magical light.

Late Arrival. If the characters couldn't locate the source of the sound immediately (see above), Rutterun has already cast *thunderwave* to knock the wagon over, knocking the halflings onto the ground where they can be attacked.

Wagon. The wagon belongs to the two halfling alchemists, Eran and Tawna Greenbottle (NG female halflings armed with shortbows +0 to hit, range 80/320 ft., dealing 3 (1d6) piercing damage on a hit). They cannot be hit by the satyrs while atop the wagon. Their pony, Flurry, is too distressed to escape, leaving the wagon stranded.

Creatures. There are four **satyrs** surrounding the wagon led by **Rutterun** (see creatures). The influence of the podium (see below) has driven them into a frenzy, causing them to attack on sight. Characters can determine this with a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check**. During the first round of combat, Rutterun uses *thunderwave* to knock over the wagon, so the other satyrs can attack the halflings.

Podium of Mania. Whenever a creature takes damage within 30 feet of the podium, the creature must succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** or go berserk. While berserk, a creature must use its action each round to attack the closest creature to it, moving to attack the next closest creature after if the target is reduced to 0 hit points. If it has multiple possible targets, it attacks one at random. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success.

The podium can be destroyed by casting *dispel magic* on it, succeeding on three **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) checks**, or by attacking it (AC 17, 30 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage, resistant to piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks, vulnerable to bludgeoning damage). Destroying the podium causes the satyrs to stop attacking.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters manage to save the halflings, they are extremely grateful and offer the characters two *potions of healing* as thanks. If Flurry is still alive, they offer to escort the characters anywhere they like within ten miles. The Greenbottles mention that their journey through the Hindwoods has been bizarre: a whole clearing appeared overnight, their second wagon was stolen in their sleep, and now the satyr attack. The clearing they mention is where Maryn was kidnapped, and they can take the characters there.

If the satyrs are calmed by destroying the podium, they apologize whole-heartedly and do anything they can to help repair the wagon and look after the Greenbottles. Rutterun can use *speak with animals* to help the characters discover the clearing from which Maryn was kidnapped, and learn that she was taken by a one-armed cloud giant.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Each satyr has 25 hit points.

Stronger: Each satyr has 56 hit points.

Using Tome of Beasts

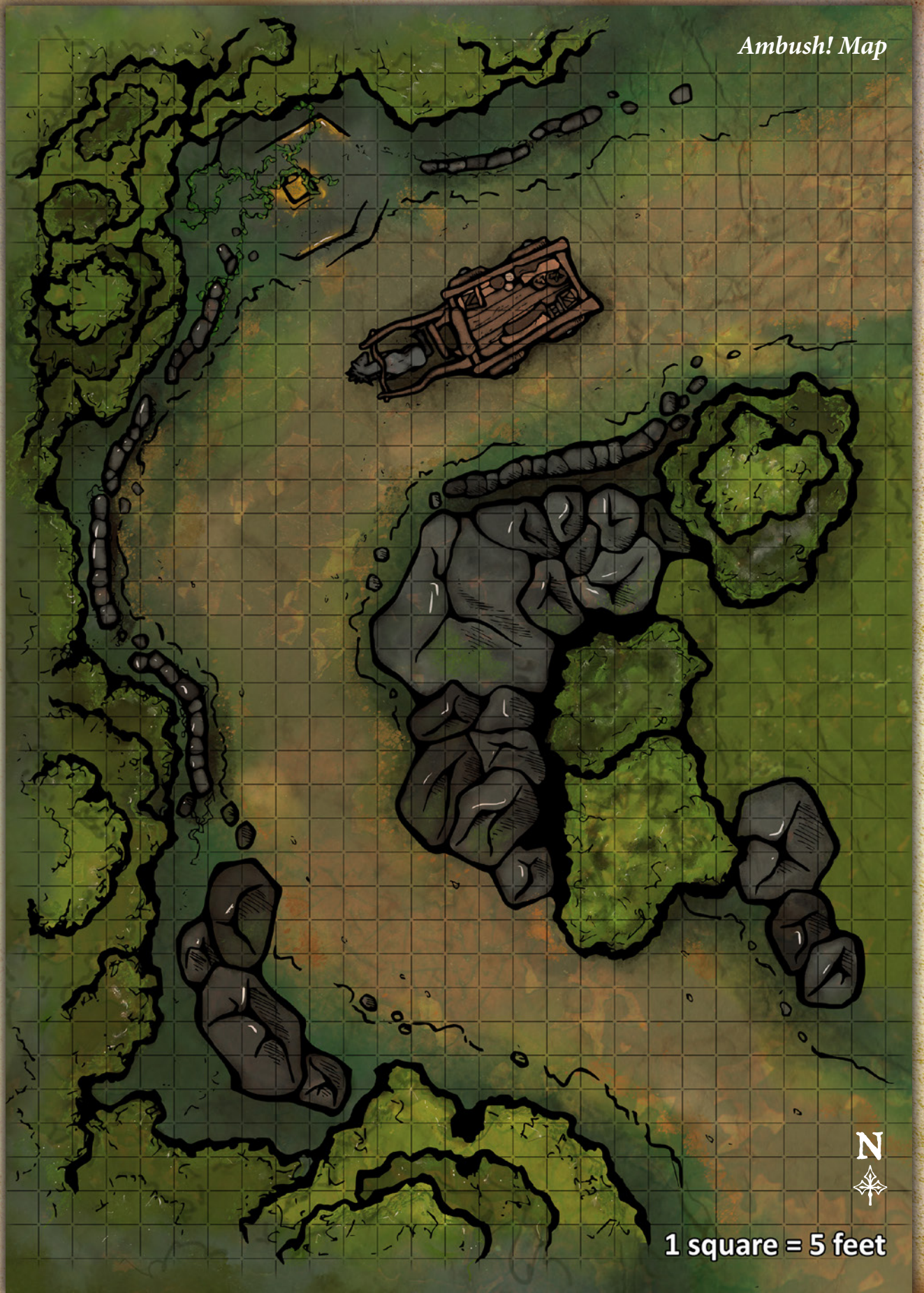
Replace all references to satyrs with ravenfolk.

Remove Rutterun's Ram attack.

THE CLEARING

If the characters do not find the clearing with help from Rutterun or the Greenbottles, they can discover it on their own with a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check**. Failure on this check means they arrive many hours later, during which time they are attacked by a pack of 2d4 **wolves**.

Ambush! Map



1 square = 5 feet



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

Before you is a freshly made clearing. The tall pines are snapped like twigs on the ground, and the entire area is covered with red bark shavings intermingled with scattered pieces of parchment. Clearly, something enormous crushed the trees here.

Clues. There are numerous clues the characters can find in the clearing that point them in the direction of a cloud giant kidnapping.

- **Broken Trees.** Characters who succeed on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check** can tell the trees have been snapped by downward pressure. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, they know it must be a giant.
- **Sketches.** Characters who search the clearing find sketches of Leavesfall decorations that belonged to Maryn scattered around.
- **Footprints.** Characters who succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check** realize the clearing is made of several enormous footprints, which could only have been made by a Huge-sized creature.
- **Clouds.** Characters who enter the clearing notice a strange cloud formation above it. If they succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, they spot the blurred outline of buildings atop the cloud.

DEVELOPMENT

Without a way to get to the cloud, the characters should return to Ivyford and Father Isafar. If they don't come to this conclusion on their own, prompt them using the Greenbottles, Rutterun, or by describing night closing in and the requirement of shelter.

REACHING MARYN

When the characters return to tell Father Isafar of Maryn's abduction, he immediately knows that he can help. He gives each character a *leafwing token* (see magic items). These items allow the characters to reach the palace of Cirraal the cloud giant.

CIRRAAL'S PALACE

Cirraal's Palace is built atop a fluffy cloud formation, which hangs 5,000 feet above the clearing Cirraal created in the Hindwoods. Although the palace is extensive, there is only one entrance, and all the windows are locked from the inside.

AREA C1. ENTRANCE HALL

The chamber ahead is filled with marble columns and statuary. Enormous statues of giants line the walls and life-sized statues of hippogriffs border the edge of the walkway. An imposing pair of double doors at the end of the hallway stand ajar.

Creatures. Characters who walk past a pair of **hippogriff statues** cause them to animate.

If characters avoid walking past the pair of hippogriffs, such as by flying over them or vaulting them with a successful **DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check**, the hippogriffs do not animate.

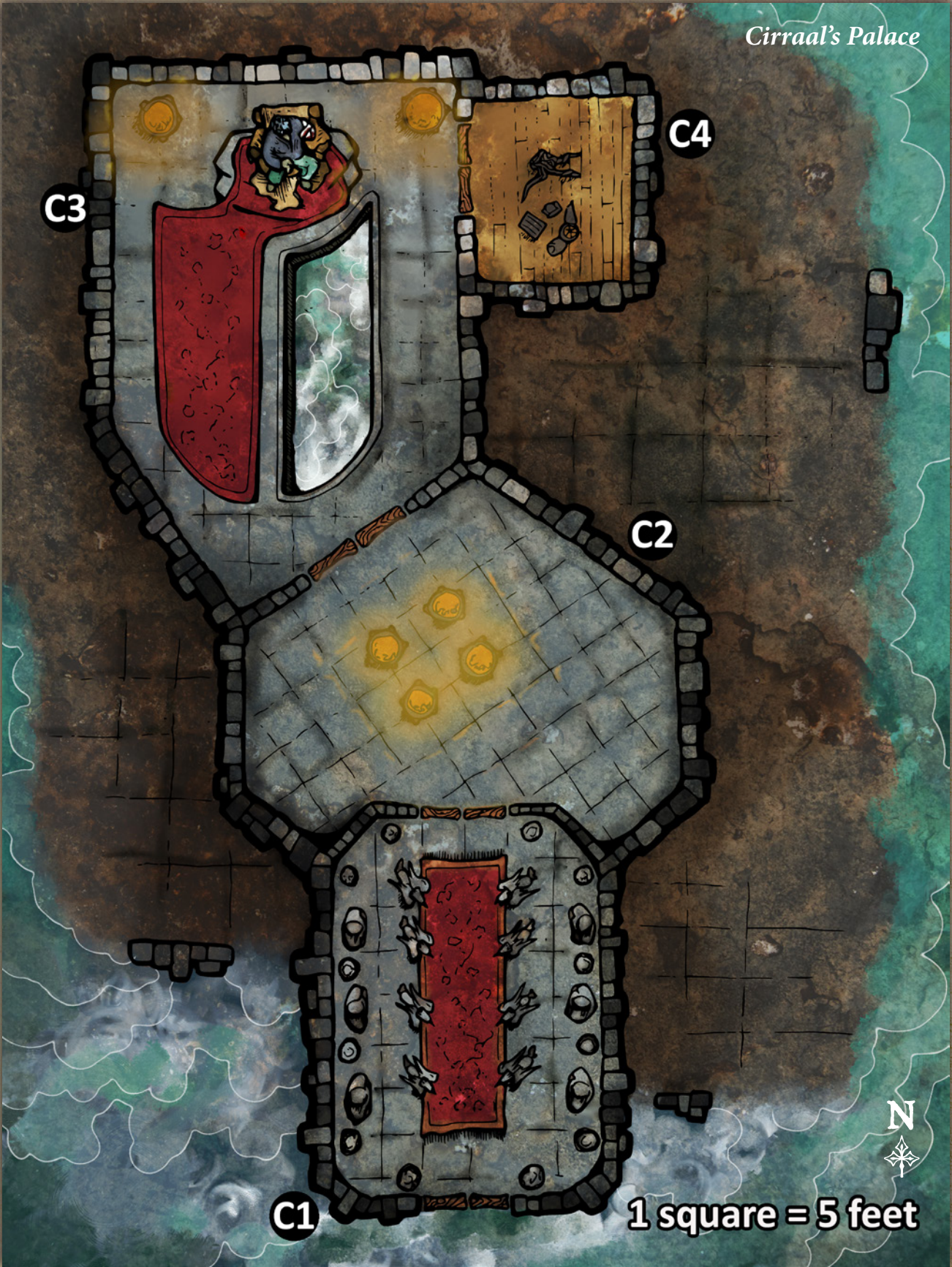
Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: The hippogriff statues have an AC of 15 and lose multiattack.

Stronger: The hippogriff statues each have 33 hit points.



Cirraal's Palace



C3

C4

C2

C1

1 square = 5 feet





AREA C2. TRAPPED ANTECHAMBER

In the center of this expansive antechamber are four braziers crackling with lightning and rumbling with the sound of distant thunder. Each brazier is made of metal and painted a different color: red, silver, coral, and white. The door on the far side of the chamber is surrounded marble frame displaying different weather scenes.

Trap. When a creature enters the room, the braziers crackle to life, filling a 50-foot diameter sphere around themselves with lightning. A character that starts their turn within a sphere must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 5 (1d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Characters who come within 10 feet of the far door notice parts of the marble frame are removable. Each is a symbol: a raindrop, sun, cloud, and gust of wind. Characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence check** realize that the first letter of the symbol corresponds with that of the color of the braziers. The symbols are placed at different heights, requiring successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** to climb and reach them. Flying characters can reach them with ease.

Placing a symbol into the correct brazier (for example the wind symbol into the white brazier) causes it to deactivate. Placing a symbol into the wrong brazier causes it to immediately shoot lightning at the character, who must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw** or take 5 (1d10) lightning damage. Characters make this saving throw with disadvantage.

When all four braziers are deactivated, the marble-framed door swings open.

AREA C3. THRONE ROOM

At the far end of this vast throne room is a colossal cloud giant, well over twenty feet tall. The giant, who seems to be missing their right arm, is slumped in a throne covered in furs, snoring fitfully. The remaining stump, just below the shoulder, is bound with bloody wrappings. Cut into the floor in the center of the chamber is a long, bottomless trench revealing the clouds below.

Cirraal. **Cirraal** (see creatures) awakens unless the characters sneak past with a successful **DC 12 group Dexterity (Stealth) check**. Attacking him, or making loud noises,

causes him to wake.

If attacked, Cirraal defends himself by knocking characters into the trench.

Cirraal explains himself if given the opportunity. He was fighting a white dragon in the nearby mountains a few days ago when the dragon bit off his arm. He fled but desperately needs a new arm to replace his missing one. He kidnapped Maryn after seeing her make the amazing Leavesfall decorations. He is capable of permanently animating objects and intends to do this to his new arm upon completion.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Cirraal has 70 hit points.

Stronger: Cirraal has 135 hit points.

AREA C4. WORKSHOP

This room is empty, save for some human-sized furniture in the center. Working here is a haggard-looking woman with her hair tied up in a tight bun. She is chiseling away at a gigantic tree stump, making it resemble a hand. Behind her is a huge arm with a wagon wheel elbow.

Maryn. The woman is Maryn Thatch, the carpenter of Ivyford. She has been tasked with making Cirraal's new arm, after which she will be freed. She knows Cirraal's story and is helping him, despite being held captive. She trusts the giant will return her home once the arm is finished. However, she is keen to escape if given the chance. She knows Cirraal wears a *ring of feather falling*, which would help her escape.

Sneak Her Out. If the characters succeed on a **DC 12 group Dexterity (Stealth) check**, they can sneak up to Cirraal. A character must then succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to steal his *ring of feather falling* and give it to Maryn, allowing her to escape.

Bust Her Out. If the characters can defeat Cirraal, they can take the *ring of feather falling* and give it to Maryn, allowing her to escape.

Help Her Out. If the characters have sympathy for Cirraal, they can help Maryn complete the arm. With their help, the arm is finished by the following day, and the giant returns them safely to Ivyford after attaching the arm to his stump and animating it to work like a living arm. Cirraal gives the characters his *ring of feather falling* as thanks.





CONCLUSION

If the characters managed to escape with Maryn, they are rewarded with free lodging, food, and healing at the temple as Father Isafar promised. They can also keep their *leafwing tokens*. Additionally, they are given the *ring of feather falling* either by Maryn or Cirraal, depending on who they helped and how.

CREATURES

RUTTERUN

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13 (16 with barkskin)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 40 ft.

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

Skills Perception +5, Performance +6, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 1 (250 XP)

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

Spellcasting. Rutterun is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh**

1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger*, *barkskin**

*Rutterun casts these spells before combat

ACTIONS

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage.

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+5 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.



HIPPOGRIFF STATUES

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Sight. The hippogriff statue has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hippogriff statue makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

CIRRAAL

Huge giant, neutral good

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (16d12 + 96) *injured*

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

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

MAGIC ITEMS

LEAFWING TOKEN

Wondrous item, rare

This wooden token, carved to resemble paired oak leaves, has 3 charges. While on your person, you can expend 1 of its charges to cast the *fly* spell, targeting yourself only. When the spell is cast, a wind whips around the character, blowing with it autumnal leaves that form wings beneath their arms.



BENG'MUN ULACROY

Though he started his adventuring career as a fighter, Beng'mun Ulacroy found a love for music that he just could not resist. His bardic training has focused on performance, learning spells like *disguise self* and *major image* to create grand costumes and illusions, all to impress the crowd. He still swings the steel when needed but prefers to encourage and heal his companions.

Personality. Beng'mun is a jovial person with a deep and hearty laugh. A talented musician, Beng'mun not only plays the lute beautifully, but his deep, menacing voice produces music that causes most to stop and listen.

Desires. Beng'mun creates songs and poetry from real life experiences. He's happy to sit and talk to adventurers, but even happier when he's invited to assist in their next foray. He works cheap, since he sees the experience as part of the payment.



BENG'MUN ULACROY

Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic good

Armor Class 13 (studded leather)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +5, Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Performance +5, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Giant, Goblin, Orc

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Save Attacks. When Beng'mun scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, he can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Spellcasting. Beng'mun is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Beng'mun has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *prestidigitation*, *vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *comprehend languages*, *cure wounds*, *disguise self*, *sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions*, *lesser restoration*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *major image*

Powerful Healer. Whenever Beng'mun casts a healing spell, he adds 4 to the total amount healed.

Weapons Master. Beng'mun is proficient with martial weapons.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Beng'mun makes two longsword attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) if used with two hands.



REDEEMED WITH FIRE

By Shawn Merwin

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

This short adventure is designed for five 3rd-level characters and features social interaction, exploration, and combat. Scaling options are provided weaker or stronger parties.

BACKGROUND

Shyllylli Villoni (*pronounced "shy-LIL-ee"*) is a gnome criminal mastermind who runs a network of beggars and burglars in the city or large town where the GM chooses to run this adventure. She's taken notice of the exploits of the adventurers, and fears their growing power and influence might soon steer them into the path of her countless devious criminal enterprises. A gnome of great cunning and foresight, she's decided to eliminate the characters before they become a problem.

After having her network delve into the pasts of the characters to help understanding their motives and goals, Shyllylli sets up a trap. She hopes to lure them on an adventure that finds them in a conflagration, ending their adventuring careers—and maybe even their lives.

PLOT HOOK

How you choose to introduce the events of this short adventure depends on the actions of the characters up until this point in your campaign. The premise of the adventure is that the characters have drawn the attention of a powerful criminal mastermind, so that mastermind tries to manipulate and draw the characters into her web and then eliminate them... with extreme prejudice.

Use the following example as a guide to a possible plot hook. You can replace the NPCs mentioned in the example with NPCs from your campaign that the characters are already be familiar with.

The characters are approached just before sundown by Lady Henreeda Haversdown, a powerful and influen-

tial landowner, merchant, and noble in the city. As she approaches them on the street, a pair of elvish bodyguards (use **veteran** stat block) flanks her, keeping their hands near their swords and their eyes darting around, ever vigilant for trouble. A successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** check also reveals two halflings (use **spy** stat block)



Flambogue's warhammer

loitering nearby but keeping an eye on the situation—this pair also guards Lady Haversdown.

Lady Haversdown insists that the characters pledge not to speak publicly of what she is about to tell them before she continues, and she promises generous payment if they decide to assist her in the problem she is about to describe.

Use the bullet points below to guide the conversation:

- “I’ve heard that you are skilled at what you do, and more importantly that I can count on you to be discreet. I have an important and sensitive task that I would like you to undertake on my behalf.”
- “As a leader in this community, eyes are always on me and on those around me. My daughter, I fear, may have gotten herself mixed up with some unsavory characters. I have not seen her in several days, and I need her to be brought back to me by dawn tomorrow for an important family ceremony.”
- “My daughter, Hesstella, grew up alongside a commoner lass called Saava. Saava is the daughter of my stableboss Grangella. The two were inseparable as youngsters, and I saw no harm in their friendship. It’s preferable to have your staff love you, and they should think that you are fond of them—within reason, of course.”
- “The girls are grown now, and Saava has been acting the fool. I’ve offered to keep her in my employ in any position she desires. She, unfortunately, has notions of becoming an entertainer. Worse yet, she has infected Hesstella’s mind with romantic notions.”
- “The pair continually disobey my direct orders to give up this foolishness. They sneak out at all hours, going to ill-reputed public houses, where Saava performs for coins like a common trollop. It’s disgusting and dangerous. And Hesstella is always there at her side.”
- “Five days ago, I gave Hesstella an ultimatum. If she continued to disobey me, I would disinherit her and leave her without a copper to her name. She must have known I was bluffing, for she stormed away from our estate. I have not seen her since. I’m too embarrassed to talk to the city guard, for it would show how I can’t even control my own daughter. I cannot have my partners and rivals using this knowledge against me.”
- “I’ve learned Hesstella and Saava were frequenting a filthy tavern called the Stone in the Fire. If you accept my offer of employment, start your inves-

tigation there. It’s important that you retrieve her and bring her to my estate before sunrise tomorrow. And make no mention that you are under my employment. I don’t want my enemies knowing of my involvement.”

The characters likely have questions or desire more information. Use the further bullet points below to continue the conversation:

- Hesstella is short and stout with dark skin, like her mother. She recently cut her black hair very short. Saava is a pale-skinned young woman with long red hair and slightly elven features.
- If the characters ask what means they might employ to bring Hestella home, Lady Haversdown says that as long as her daughter is returned to her unharmed and in good health, she doesn’t care what the characters do.
- She offers each of the characters a 50-gp payment: 10 gp now, promising the remaining 40 gp each after the characters bring Hesstella home.
- The Haversdown Estate is on the northern side of the city. The characters will be allowed in by the guards at the front gate. It is vital that she be home for an important family religious ceremony that must take place exactly at dawn.
- As it is now just before sundown, the characters have exactly 10 hours before dawn.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Shyllylli Villoni is pulling strings here, using this family drama to draw the characters into a situation that she hopes to control. Shyllylli manages the criminal elements that run the Stone in the Fire tavern, and she uses her influence there to keep an eye on Hesstella, knowing she is the scion of Lady Haversdown.

When she learned of the rift between Hesstella and her mother, the manipulative gnome decided this was the trap in which she could snare the characters. She sent her own informants, in the guise of concerned citizens, to reveal to Lady Haversdown where her daughter was, and even suggested the characters as the best people to hunt her down.

Now that the characters are on the case, Shyllylli plans to lead them on a merry chase, then lure them to a private, secure location where she can dispose of them quickly and quietly—and possibly frame them for criminal activities if the lethal trap fails to snag them.



THE ADVENTURE

The Stone in the Fire is an unremarkable alehouse and gambling den in the wrong part of town.

When the characters arrive at the tavern, read:

No sign adorns this tavern. The only marker designating it as the Stone in the Fire is a blackened piece of granite resting next to the front door. The smell in the area indicates that soot isn't the only substance covering this stone.

STONE IN THE FIRE TAVERN

The interior of the place is plain, the bar and furniture rough-hewn, and the crowd rowdy but peaceful. The patrons understand this tavern is under the protection of a powerful underworld figure (although they're not sure who), and people who cause too much trouble at the Stone in the Fire end up in the fire themselves. That's not to say there isn't some violence, drunken foolishness, gambling, and debauchery—it's just kept to a reasonable level and policed carefully by the staff of the tavern.

Stone in the Fire Tavern



POTASH – THE MANAGER

The manager of the Stone in the Fire is an elderly dwarf (use **bandit** stat block) who goes by the nickname “Potash.” She usually sits in a lone chair in the corner of the tavern, chewing a wad of stinkweed, spitting its dregs into a bucket at her feet, and watching the goings-on in her establishment like a hungry griffon looking for prey.

TAVERN STAFF

The server and the barkeep (use **thug** stat blocks) are siblings, a brother and sister half-orc pair called Uzzmund and Relik. The two prowl the tavern with purpose, putting up with no tomfoolery, delivering watered-down drinks and watered-down stew with efficiency. They keep weapons behind the bar to deal with problems.

The rest of the tavern staff are bar backs, kitchen help, and a hostile halfling cook named Draeno with a cleaver for a hand and a bad attitude. They are **commoners** who avoid contact with the clientele if possible.

MOOD IN THE TAVERN

Tonight, that clientele is being “entertained” by a rather untalented minstrel who goes by the stage name “Delicious.” His barely passable musical talents might be acceptable to a drunken audience on a normal night, but the regulars here have been treated to the superior creations of Saava for the past several days, so Delicious’s skills pale in comparison.

THE ENTRANCE

When the characters enter the tavern, set the scene:

Everyone in the Stone in the Fire stares at a human standing on a large table in the corner of the common room. At first it seems the crowd is entranced by the performance; however, it quickly becomes apparent that they are stunned by the performer’s inept lute playing and singing.

THE SITUATION AT THE TAVERN

The characters enter just as mayhem is about engulf the Stone in the Fire. Incensed that amazingly talented Saava has been replaced by the tone-deaf Delicious, the unrest in the crowd begins slowly but reaches a fever pitch quickly.

The bullet points below give the order of events. The characters can, of course, intervene at any point to change the encounter. Once that happens, use your best judgment for how the encounter plays out.

In the end, the characters’ goal should be to find out where Saava and Hesstella have gone, and Potash makes

sure they gain that information, but not before pretending to protect the information.

- One of the patrons, a dwarf in a white shirt and green breeches, shouts: “This is rubbish! We want Saava back!” He hurls a full tankard of ale at the minstrel, striking him squarely in the face, causing him to drop his lute and fall backward off the table.
- Another patron, a heavily muscled woman in leather armor, punches the dwarf in the face, screaming, “Hey, that’s my cousin you just hit!” The dwarf topples over.
- Seven patrons (use **scout** stat blocks) jump into the fray, fighting each other for four rounds, but no one lands any significant blows.

If the characters have involved themselves in any way, a dwarven **veteran** named Graylin Gravestone steps into the melee and challenges the characters.

If the characters have not gotten involved, two drunken **thugs** roll out of the general melee into them, swinging their weapons.

What’s most important here isn’t how well the characters do in the combat, it’s how well they keep their composure. If they can find a way to diffuse the violence with ability checks, magic, or roleplaying, they can avoid a fight.

As long as the characters don’t kill any opponents (knocking foes unconscious is fine), they don’t face any repercussion from the authorities, who arrive as the melee ends if the characters got involved (see Town Watch below).

TOWN WATCH

If the characters resort to violence, six members of the town watch (use **guard** stat blocks) arrive to find out what’s happened. Assuming the characters didn’t kill anyone and only fought in self-defense, the guards, led by a human named Sergeant Elluwyn Merges, questions them and releases them with just a warning.

Any character who struck a killing blow is arrested by the town watch—or at least they attempt an arrest. Any characters who are arrested are taken to a nearby jail and thrown into a cell, and held until dawn when a magistrate arrives to hear the case.

Incarcerated characters can escape with a successful **DC 10 Dexterity check with thieves’ tools**. They can also slip through the bars of the cell or break them with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Athletics) check**. This allows them to get out for long enough to complete the job for Lady Haversdown, although they should have to answer to the authorities later.

PASSING ALONG THE INFORMATION

If the characters find a way to diffuse the tension with no (or at least very little) violence, Potash hobbles over to them and thanks them for saving the tavern from further destruction. She offers free drinks and food for the evening.

If the characters mention Saava or Hesstella, Potash shakes her head and sighs, but doesn't say anything. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that Potash is angry and conflicted about the pair, while a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that she is simply acting like she is conflicted.

If they press, Potash finally admits that she is upset that Saava refused to continue playing at the Stone in the Fire because she got a better offer to perform at another location earlier in the week. Potash has been unable to find someone with any skill to replace her.

Potash admits she doesn't exactly know where this other venue is, as it's in another part of town. She only knows she couldn't afford to match the offer, and it's apparently a private club catering to a higher class of clientele. Of course, any class of clientele is higher than hers. She gives the characters directions to where this private club is supposed to be located, and she mentions a name she heard in passing: Flambogne (pronounced "flahm-BOH").

THE IRON PENDANT

She also tells the characters that Saava left a possession of hers at the tavern, and the characters can give it back to her if they find her. Potash hands them a simple, unadorned pendant made of iron on a leather strap, meant to be worn as a necklace. The thing looks unremarkable; however, a *detect magic* spell shows it to be magical, and a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that it contains evocation magic.

INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE

Finally, Potash tries to trade any information she provides for a worthless but easily identifiable item that a character owns. She was instructed to do this by Shyllylli, so that the item could be placed at a crime scene to implicate the character, such as the site of Saava and Hesstella's upcoming attempted murder.



Saava's necklace



SEARCHING FOR FLAMBOGNE

When the characters go to the part of town where Saava and Hesstella now frequent, they can ask around about them, or seek anyone with knowledge of the name Flambogne.

It doesn't take long for the characters to learn that Flambogne is well known in this area. He moved here recently, purchasing a small building that recently acted as a minor temple. Rumor has it that Flambogne was going to turn it into a private club, but the building has remained shuttered and locked.

In reality, Flambogne is a lieutenant of Shyllylli. This tall, thin, crazed-looking human, his body covered in red flame tattoos, is a devoted follower of a fire deity. He performs acts of arson, kidnapping, and murder for Shyllylli, and she's rewarded him with a place to call his own. The gnome mastermind encourages Flambogne to gather a flock of fire cultists to his ministry, which she can then use as her own private army to carry out grander and more dangerous crimes.

No one knows of this connection between Shyllylli and Flambogne, except for the parties directly involved. To the outside world, Flambogne is simply an eccentric club owner.

THE HOUSE OF FIRE

The characters have no problem finding Flambogne's building, assuming they ask the locals where it is. When they arrive at the place, use the following text to describe it.

Aside from wisps of smoke emanating from the door, the building's exterior is unremarkable. It's made of plain gray stone, and where there were once windows, more stone has been mortared into place to seal them. An iron door is the only visible means of entrance or exit, although a small metal pipe emerging from the roof indicates a fireplace within. Smoke currently pours from the pipe.

The building is 40 feet square, and the interior ceiling is 10 feet high. The building is empty of furnishing except for an open central fireplace, 10 feet square. Although it currently rages with a magical fire, the characters must first get through the door to see the interior of the building and its occupants.

THE SMOKING DOOR

If the characters approach the iron door, which is set in the center of the south wall, they notice wisps of white smoke originating from faint runes etched into the door with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**—a



Flambogne

magic trap waiting to be sprung. The door has a locked iron handle.

If the characters touch the door or try to pick the lock before deactivating the runes, they set off the trap, which summons five **magma mephits**. These creatures emerge from the door and attack any creatures in the vicinity of the door.

The runes can be deactivated with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check**. The characters get only one chance to do so—a failed check triggers the trap. After the trap is triggered or deactivated, it remains inactive for 1 hour.

The door's lock can be opened with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools**, or it can be broken with a **DC 20 Strength check**. The door has 50 hit points and an AC of 12.

THE CONFLAGRATION

Four rounds after the characters first touch the door, or as soon as they get it open, a larger conflagration springs up inside the open fireplace. When they enter, describe the scene:

An open fireplace in the center of the building holds a raging fire, although no obvious fuel feeds it. Two struggling forms, fitting the descriptions of Saava and Hesstella, are chained by the wrists to two iron pillars supporting the fireplace. A human wielding a burning warhammer shouts at a pair of heavily armored figures and points at you. "Kill them!" says the figure in a voice that roars like a bonfire.

THE FOES

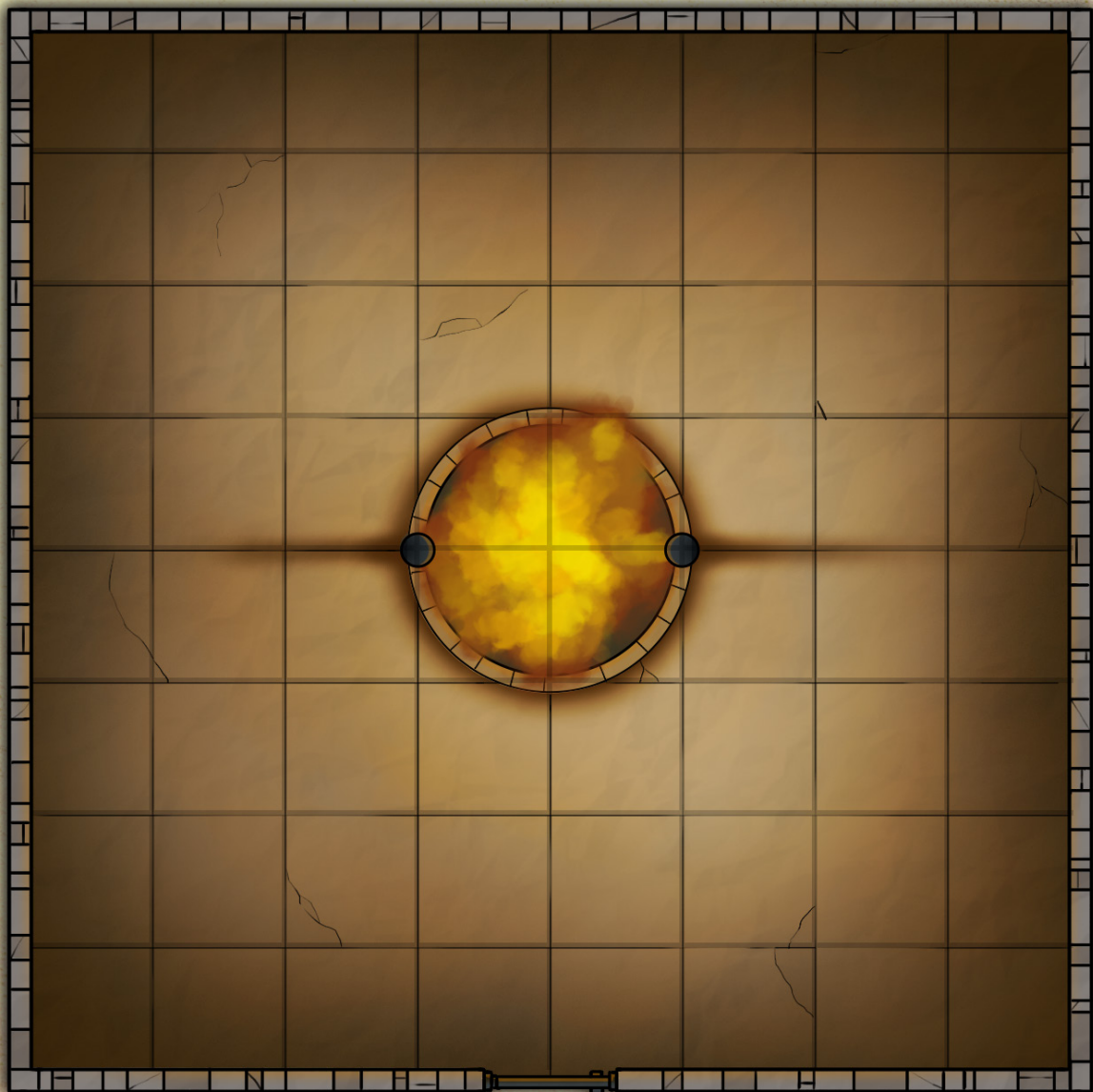
Flambogne is a flame priest (use **azer** stat block), and he commands two flame knights (use **animated armor** stat block, adding fire immunity). They all fight to the death, although the two flame knights disintegrate when Flambogne is killed.

THE RESCUE

The characters must free Saava and Hesstella within six rounds or the pair are consumed by the growing fire. Anyone entering or starting their turn in the fireplace takes (4) 1d8 fire damage.

A character adjacent to either Saava or Hesstella can use an action to attempt a DC 15 **Strength (Athletics)** check to snap the chains or a DC 15 **Dexterity** check with **thieves' tools** to unlock the chains.

House of Fire



THE PENDANT TRAP

If a character is wearing the pendant that Potash gave them, Flambogne smiles when he sees it. As an action, he says a magic phrase in Ignan, causing the pendant to burst into flames. The person wearing it takes 21 (6d6) fire damage, with no saving throw. Any creature within 5 feet of that explosion must make a **DC 10 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failure, or half damage on a success.

In addition, any equipment that the characters traded Potash are hidden in the building, left as evidence that the characters were responsible for this situation.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Remove one of the flame knights, and add 2 rounds to the time limit before the fire consumes the hostages.

Stronger: Add one flame knight, and remove 2 rounds from the time limit before the fire consumes the hostages.

REWARDS & TREASURE

If the characters defeat Flambogne, they can take his *+1 warhammer*. The warhammer's wielder can choose to deal an additional 1d6 fire damage on a successful attack 3 times per day. He also carries a holy symbol of his fire god that fetches 200 gp from a collector.

If they escort Hesstella to the Haversdown Estate before dawn, Lady Haversdown supplies the promised reward, plus an extra 100 gp to the party if her daughter is totally uninjured.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of the outcome, the characters have made an enemy. If they failed to rescue Hesstella, Lady Haversdown is incensed—even more so if the characters fail to find and remove the evidence that Shyllylli planted in the fire temple. Her attitude might be of resentment to actively trying to see the characters' lives ruined.

If the characters succeed, Shyllylli redoubles her efforts to bring about their downfall. The characters might return to the Stone in the Fire tavern to question Potash about her betrayal of them... only to find the old dwarf dead from the blade on an assassin. The characters had best watch their backs!

Using Creature Codex

Replace each magma mephit with a devil, fire imp

Replace each animated armor with an agnibarra

BLUE MOON

By Catherine Evans

Estimated run-time: 3 hours +

Blue Moon is designed for a party of five 3rd-level characters.

BACKGROUND

Hundreds of years ago, a holy warrior by the name of Madeleine led the armies of good to victory over an army of demons, witches, and monsters. Omens point to those powers rising again... and to them seeking Madeleine's bones for some dark purpose.

The ruler of the region has called for a group of adventurers with no ties to the crown to discreetly retrieve Madeleine's remains from their resting place, as a precaution. The cemetery where she is interred is accessible only rarely—the result of ancient magics laid down to keep her safe. If the adventurers don't succeed tonight, the cemetery sinks back underwater, inaccessible to the living—but not to the forces of darkness—for a hundred years.

By default, the ruler is Queen Chana IV, a stern and capable warrior queen, and part of a dynasty that has ruled the region for almost a millennium. Adapt or substitute this character as appropriate for your campaign.

PLOT HOOK

The characters have been hired by an agent of the crown to retrieve Madeleine's bones from their resting place.

Alternatively, they have been hired by a power that opposes the monarch, or a group that wants to exploit the queen's desperation, to obtain Madeleine's bones and either keep them from the monarch's grasp, or sell them to the queen at an extortionate price.

The appendix includes some possible NPCs to use as quest-givers, if you wish to run a prologue. To jump right in, assume that the characters arrive at Galen's Mile at dusk, just as the cemetery rises out of Blackthorne Swamp.

GALEN'S MILE

Madeleine's remains rest in the cemetery known as Galen's Mile. When the characters approach the cemetery, read or summarize:

A mossy strand of earth winds through green swamp water and between tall, petrified, trees. The water is higher than it should be, displaced by the acres of wet earth that have risen out of the water, topped with grave markers and mausoleums. There's no way of telling, in the weak light of dusk, which grave might be Madeleine's.

GENERAL FEATURES

- **Terrain.** Galen's Mile is only technically dry land. It's extremely wet and soft. Moving through it is tiring, unpleasant, and smelly.
- **Light.** Galen's Mile rises at dusk and sinks by midnight. Moon and stars provide dim light.
- **Smells and Sounds.** Swamp creatures call to one another, unnatural things prowl out of sight, and every breath tastes like swamp water.
- **Deep Water.** Everything outside the mapped area is deep swamp water. It is 20 feet deep, and full of weeds, submerged trees, and other hazards. Characters with a Swim speed move at half speed, and those without move 10 feet per round. Also, there are alligators waiting for foolish land creatures to get into difficulty and make themselves easy prey.

RISING WATERS

The characters have limited time to complete their mission in Galen's Mile. From the moment the cemetery rises from

the water, it begins to sink. Within hours, it will be fully submerged once again.

Every time the characters complete an encounter, add one to the Water Table (below). Add two for a short rest. Some encounters have special conditions that add more than one to the total. The more time the characters spend exploring Galen's Mile, the more challenging their final encounter will be.

WATER TABLE

Counter	Effect (cumulative)
0	No effect
1-2	-10 feet to Speed
3-4	Disadvantage on saving throws vs. cold damage
5-6	Debris in the rising water makes the area difficult terrain
7+	LAIR ACTION: The thick, sucking mud makes it hard to move. At the beginning of their turn, every creature must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be restrained until the start of their next turn.*

* Occurs on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), in each combat round.

AREA 1. THE CAUSEWAY

When the characters are ready to enter Galen's Mile, read or summarize:

Every squelching tread on the narrow causeway forces foul, green water up to fill in your footprints. With every bubble, the air gets thicker and more rotten.

The causeway is 75 feet long and a little less than 10 feet wide. Two Medium-sized creatures can walk side-by-side.

The footing is treacherous, and the smell is awful. Characters who fail a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check** to forge forward stumble and fall, losing one vital piece of their equipment in the process. Let the player choose what they lose, but it should be something that their character frequently uses or that they value.

Characters who fail a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw** are poisoned for 10 minutes.

AREA 2. CEMETERY GATE

When the characters inspect the cemetery gate, read or paraphrase:

The cemetery gate is rusty but sturdy, and taller than a human. A design in the center shows deities of the moon, the stars, and calm water gazing down on a mausoleum. There's a keyhole-shaped design where the mausoleum's entrance should be, but it's solid metal.

The gate and fence are 8 feet tall.

There is no 'correct' way to get into the cemetery. Climbing the fence, ripping the gate off its hinges (requires a combined Strength of 20, no die roll), using the knock spell, or anything else the characters attempt are all valid approaches.

DEFENSES

Detect magic reveals that the gate and fence radiate illusion magic.

Ancient magic affects the first creature to climb the fence or gate. When they reach the top of the fence, they must make a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw**. If they fail, they are invisible and silent (as per the *invisibility* and *silence* spells, *silence* affects only that creature, not a radius) for one minute. Over the centuries, this has proven a very effective tool to scare off would-be graverobbers.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters are particularly noisy (for example, due to damaging the fence or gate), they draw the attention of the guardians in Area 3.

When the characters open the gate and enter the cemetery, add 1 to the Water Table.

AREA 3. CENTRAL MOUND

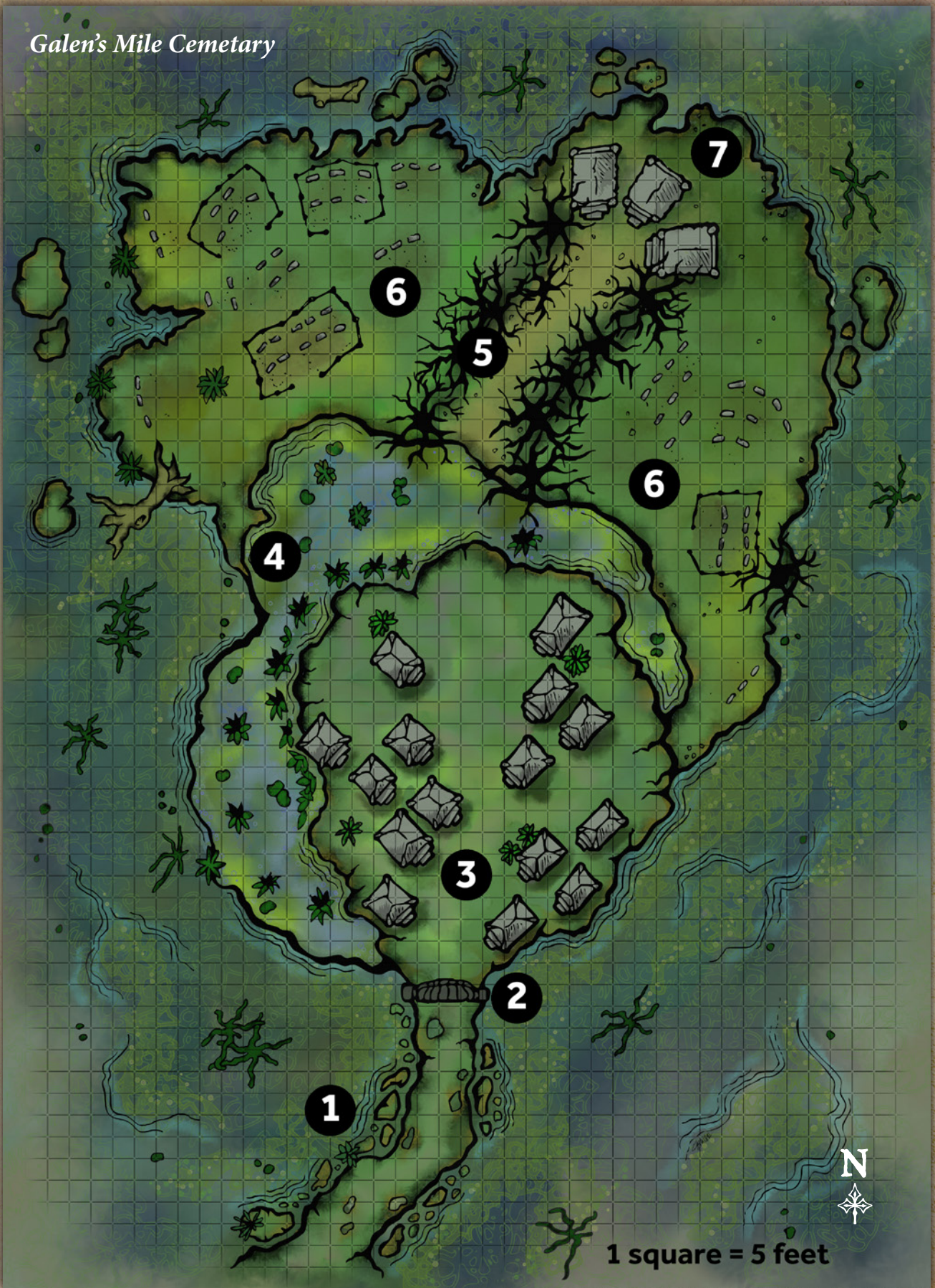
The front section of the cemetery contains the mausoleums of wealthy families.

Madeleine is not the only hero buried here. Two of her lieutenants, Iona (a **ghost**) and Rin (a **wight**), were also laid to rest in Galen's Mile when they died. Their tombs are to the left and right of the gate, respectively, and they emerge when a living creature enters the Central Mound.

Using Tome of Beasts

Use vaessir statistics for Rin. Reduce the damage of Iona's withering touch to 14 (4d6) to compensate.

Galen's Mile Cemetary



1 square = 5 feet



The grinding of stone tears at your attention as the slabs blocking two of the tombs shift. Tides of green water, thick with slime and weeds, drain out, soaking the ground around the tombs. A soft clicking, like bone on stone, sounds from inside.

"Who goes there?"

The guardians do not recognize the monarch's authority (they are loyal only to Madeleine). The characters have one opportunity to persuade the pair to let them pass. They can be swayed by any argument or plea that focuses on keeping Madeleine's bones safe from harm, if the characters succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check**. The creatures cannot be intimidated or threatened into letting the characters pass.

Grant advantage for compelling arguments. If the characters roleplay particularly well, the guardians warn them when Gravelda and her allies arrive later in the night.

If the characters don't persuade Iona and Rin to let them pass, they attack and fight until they are destroyed or the characters leave the cemetery.

TREASURE

Iona and Rin don't care if the characters loot tombs (other than theirs; robbing their tombs triggers combat). There are thirteen other tombs here, each containing between one and six stone sarcophagi. They have the following statistics:

- **Tombs:** AC 14, damage threshold of 10, and immunity to nonmagical piercing and slashing damage. Twenty points of damage destroys a section large enough for one Medium or smaller creature to pass through, or opens with a combined Strength of 18.
- **Sarcophagi:** AC 13, damage threshold of 7, and immunity to nonmagical piercing and slashing damage. Ten points of damage breaks open a hole large enough to reach both arms into; 15 points of damage destroys the entire lid; the sarcophagi open with a combined Strength of 15.

TOMB CONTENTS

Each sarcophagus has a 25% chance of containing an undead skeleton. For each tomb ransacked, roll on your favorite treasure tables, or choose one of the following treasure hoards:

TREASURE HOARD

d4 Treasure

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 ceramic vases worth 25 gp each
1 <i>potion of healing</i>
One <i>1st-level spell scroll</i> |
| 2 | 5 art objects worth 25 gp each
1 <i>potion of greater healing</i>
A <i>wand of magic detection</i> |
| 3 | 5 art objects worth 50 gp each
<i>Boots of the winterlands</i>
a <i>circlet of blasting</i>
a <i>ring of mind shielding</i>
a <i>ring of warmth</i> |
| 4 | 3 art objects worth 50 gp each
An <i>immovable rod</i> |

DEVELOPMENT

Add one to the Water Table. Add an additional one point for every three tombs ransacked (+1 for 1–3, +2 for 4–6, etc.).

AREA 4. PAUPERS' GRAVES

The area to the left of the central mound is much more waterlogged than the rest of the cemetery. There are no grave markers here, but the cattails and reeds rise out of the waist-high water unevenly enough to suggest many unmarked grave mounds beneath. This is the paupers' graveyard, and more than half of those buried here have risen as ghouls.

Initially, they prowl amongst the plant life, out of sight unless characters succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**, and strike if a living creature appears distracted or is separated from its companions. After a few minutes these emaciated, wretched, creatures are overcome with hunger, and eight of them attack. Three (1d6) more ghouls join the combat each turn, up to a total of 14. The ghouls cannot follow the characters into the Avenue of Claws, or out of the cemetery.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: The starting number of ghouls is six.

Stronger: The starting number of ghouls is eight.

One ghoul (Ingold Vesareon) does not attack, watching from behind a mausoleum on the central mound, and gnawing on the stumps of its own fingers to stave off its

ravenous hunger. Characters with a **passive Perception of 13** or higher spot him, others only when he overcomes his fear and approaches after any combat concludes.

INGOLD VESAREON

Ingold alternates between keeping his hands where the characters can see them, and gnawing at his own withered flesh. He is hunched and bowed, and obviously hungry; his long, grey tongue flicks over his lips, and his mouth waters unpleasantly. He stays at least 20 feet from the characters unless invited to approach.

In a high, keening voice, he begs the characters to help him. If attacked, he flees into the deeper water, but continues to beg until the characters leave the area.

If given the opportunity, Ingold explains that he was wrongly convicted of murder, executed, then buried in an unmarked grave. He wants to join the rest of his family in their plot deeper in the graveyard, but he cannot. If the characters take his grave goods to the family plot, he'll be able to join them. They're free to take anything they want from his possessions, as long as they bury one of his possessions in the family plot.

Ingold suggests that they dive for his grave: dozens of ghouls will likely attack if Ingold leaves them long enough to do so himself.



DIVING FOR GRAVE GOODS

Diving for Ingold's grave requires a successful **DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check** and a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check**. Failure on the Strength check means the character can't swim well enough to retrieve treasure, and failure on the Wisdom check means they can't find the grave.

An amphibious **swarm of poisonous snakes** nests in the grave, and attacks when disturbed.

There are six items in the grave:

- Badly decayed leather armor (no value).
- A brass pendant bearing the insignia of the goddess of the moon (5 gp).
- A pair of bone dice (2 gp).
- A tin whistle (4 sp).
- A silver snuffbox (3 gp).
- A shortsword in pristine condition (*shortsword of wounding*).

Characters can grab two items in one dive without making any more ability checks. If they succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity check**, they can grab up to four items, or up to six if they succeed at DC 15. Characters may dive multiple times.

DEVELOPMENT

Add one to the Water Table if the characters stop and talk with Ingold for more than a few seconds.

AREA 5. AVENUE OF CLAWS

The Avenue of Claws is slightly elevated, making it the driest land in Galen's Mile (reduce the Water Table by 1 while characters are in this area).

A long line of petrified trees, draped with weeds dredged up from the deep swamp, rises to either side of you, their branches grasping like gnarled hands.

Time, and so many trapped souls, have given these trees a form of sentience (four of them are **awakened trees**). Worse still, the plant life hanging from the pale branches is also intelligent. Two of the normal (not awakened) trees are home to creeper shrouds (use the stat block for **ropers**, but change the type to plant).

DEVELOPMENT

Add one to the Water Table when the characters leave this area.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Each roper has AC 18 and 45 hit points

Stronger: Each roper has 125 hit points

AREA 6. HUMBLE GRAVES

To both sides of the Avenue of Claws, the graveyard stretches off down to the swamp. These are the graves of common folk, properly buried and resting in peace. Ingold Vesareon's family plot is amongst them. A character searching in the right area, who succeeds on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check**, finds the fenced-in plot, which includes a stone marker carved with the family name. A failed check adds an additional +1 to the Water Table.

All the characters need do is place at least one of Ingold's belongings into the fenced area. That gives him a right to be there, and shortly after he is heard jogging into this part of the cemetery. He thanks the characters profusely before climbing into the family plot and curling up against the grave marker, waiting for his eternal rest.

DEVELOPMENT

Add +1 to the Water Table for investigating the Humble Graves or reburying Ingold's grave goods, plus additional increases for failed rolls.

ARMIES OF DARKNESS

As the characters enter Area 7, read or paraphrase:

An almighty screech, metal twisting and collapsing, alerts you to a disturbance back at the cemetery gates.

The dark powers have sent their own agents to retrieve Madeleine's bones:

- Gravelda, a **cult fanatic**
- Maldregar, a **minotaur**
- 4 **wolves**, under Maldregar's command
- A **specter**



Using Tome of Beasts

Gravelda, a cult fanatic

Maldregar, a wolf reaver dwarf

4 wolves, under Maldregar's command

A wampus cat

They move rapidly toward Area 7. If the characters persuaded Rin and Iona to let them pass, the two lieutenants oppose these newcomers, and Iona shouts a warning to the characters ("Foes! Foes! The enemies of the light are upon us!").

If Iona and Rin fight the new group, they are weakened when they confront the characters:

- Two wolves are dead.
- Gravelda has used one 1st-level and one 2nd-level spell slot.
- Maldregar has 55 hit points.
- The characters have time to complete one more action (see *The Approach of Evil*).

If the characters are working for someone other than the monarch, they face the monarch's forces instead of the armies of darkness.

Sir Kirlian, a **knight**, replaces Maldregar

Lady Revesh, a **cult fanatic**, replaces Gravelda

Haelin, a **spy**, replaces the specter, and

4 hunting dogs (use **wolves**) are under Kirlian's command.

AREA 7. MADELEINE'S TOMB

Madeleine's resting place stands at the far end of the cemetery. Three small buildings are arranged in a crescent. Built from smooth, white, stone, they have resisted the damage time and foul water has inflicted on the rest of Galen's Mile.

OPENING THE TOMBS

Heavy stone slabs seal the entrance to each tomb. There is no means of unlocking them or dragging them out of the

way. Above each slab is a circular stone ornament depicting one of the same goddesses as on the gate:

- Left (real tomb): Goddess of Calm Waters
- Center (fake tomb): Goddess of the Moon
- Right (treasury): Goddess of the Stars

The ornaments simply need to be placed in the same order as the goddesses appear on the cemetery gate:

- Left: Moon
- Center: Stars
- Right: Calm Waters

When an ornament is correctly positioned, the magic that seals that tomb is disrupted, and the stone slab moves slightly: it can now be pushed open by anyone with a Strength of 10 or higher.

If the players don't remember the gate's design, or don't make the connection, ask for an **Intelligence (Religion) check** from each character. Tell whomever rolls highest that the goddesses are often depicted together, usually with the Goddess of the Moon on the left, Stars in the center, and Calm Waters on the right.

BREAKING IN

Each structure has AC 15, a damage threshold of 12, and immunity to nonmagical piercing and slashing damage. Thirty points of damage is enough to open a hole large enough for a Medium or smaller creature to pass through.

THE CENTRAL TOMB

This tomb is empty, except for a magical trap set to catch graverobbers: the first person to enter must succeed on a DC 14 **Wisdom saving throw** or be affected by *hold person*.

THE ARMORY

The tomb on the right is a treasury, containing Madeleine's weapons, armor, and battle standard (see *Magic Items*). While in the cemetery, they can be used without attunement.

THE REAL TOMB

The tomb on the left holds Madeleine's remains. In a white stone sarcophagus (see Area 3 on rules for opening), her bones lie under a shroud of white silk, waiting to be carried away.

THE APPROACH OF EVIL

The characters have time to do three things before Gravelda and her minions arrive. For example, break open two tombs

and explore one; move around the stone ornaments and explore two tombs; and so on. Alternatively, have them arrive whenever it is dramatically appropriate—preferably while one character is under the effects of *hold person*.

THE FINAL BATTLE

Gravelda and the others attack as soon as they are close enough.

- Gravelda (or Lady Revesh) stays back at sufficient range to use her spells, targeting spellcasters or archers.
- The wolves split their attacks between the two least-armored characters.
- Maldregar (or Kirlian) targets the most heavily armored character.
- The specter (or Haelin) chooses any target not otherwise engaged.

DEVELOPMENT

Gravelda flees if all her allies are killed, but otherwise the forces of darkness fight to the death (even if given Madeleine's bones), and they do not accept surrender.

CONCLUSION

With evil defeated, and a holy relic in their possession, the characters have won this battle. They are entitled to whatever reward they are promised—but they would be wise not to relax: the forces of darkness are known to bear grudges.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

RIN AND IONA

- Former lieutenants to the hero Madeleine.
- **Appear:** Rin is a grey-fleshed, armored, undead figure with empty eye-sockets and a whispering voice. Iona is a spectral figure dressed in archaic, elaborate, mage's robes.
- **Act:** Quiet, commanding, presences.
- **Want:** Protect Madeleine's remains from any harm.

INGOLD VESAREON

A wrongly convicted murderer.

- **Appears:** Emaciated, hunched, and damaged.
- **Acts:** Chews on his own flesh to stave off hunger; is submissive and pathetic.
- **Wants:** To be properly buried.

GRAVELDA

- A selfish cultist.
- **Appears:** An elderly, gray-haired, woman who appears far too delicate and frail to be out in the swamp.
- **Acts:** Brash and insulting. Holds her enemies in contempt.
- **Wants:** The glory of retrieving Madeleine's bones for dark powers. Failing that, to escape with her life.

MALDREGAR

- A warrior minotaur.
- **Appears:** Huge, with rippling muscles, shaggy reddish fur sticky with blood, and dozens of scars.
- **Acts:** Alert and observant. Has difficulty adjusting to rapidly changing situations.
- **Wants:** An honorable battle against worthy foes. Blood.

MAGIC ITEMS

The treasury next to Madeleine's tomb contains the following:

- An *animated shield*. A shield of highly polished steel, emblazoned with Madeleine's heraldry: a rearing lioness wielding a lance.
- A *breastplate +1*, with the same heraldry.
- A blue and gold silk banner with the same heraldry, which functions as a *lantern of seeing*.
- A *vicious longsword* with a lion's head pommel.

Whoever commissioned the characters asks if they retrieved any of these items, and expects them to turn over the treasure if they admit to having any. Whether the characters are able to hide any of it away is up to the GM.



CLUNKSPINDLE'S CLOCKWORK CONUNDRUM

By MT Black

Estimated run-time: 1.5 to 3 hours.

Clunkspindle's Clockwork Conundrum is a fifth edition adventure for four 3rd-level characters. It is set in the city of Anchorstone.

MONSTERS

The monsters in this adventure are sourced from the *Tome of Beasts* and *Creature Codex* by Kobold Press. See appendix: Kobold Press creatures for stat blocks.

BACKGROUND

Anchorstone is a prosperous city on the shores of the Twisted Sea. About a century ago, it was home to a gnome called Willima Clunkspindle, reputed to be the greatest artificer of the age, and certainly the most eccentric. Willima built an imposing stronghold in the middle of town, called the Bastion of Oil and Brass.

Willima took offense to something the burgomaster said and responded by stealing the Mace of Ostarius, a ceremonial item borne by the mayor since time immemorial. It is greatly valued by the townsfolk, as tradition says that Anchorstone can only prosper when the burgomaster possesses the mace.

Willima left a message stating that the item could be found somewhere in the Bastion of Oil and Brass, which only opens its doors once every 25 years, and then for a mere 25 hours. She then disappeared and was never seen in the town again.

SYNOPSIS

The characters must make their way through the Bastion of Oil and Brass, solving puzzles, avoiding traps, fighting clockwork creatures, and collecting pieces of a key. If they

make it to the final room and assemble the key correctly, the Mace of Ostarius is revealed.

GETTING STARTED

Over the previous century, the Bastion has opened three times. Many brave souls have ventured inside but none have returned. The Bastion is due to open again next week, and the burgomaster is offering a rich prize of 800 gp to anyone who can retrieve the Mace of Ostarius.

THE BASTION OF OIL AND BRASS

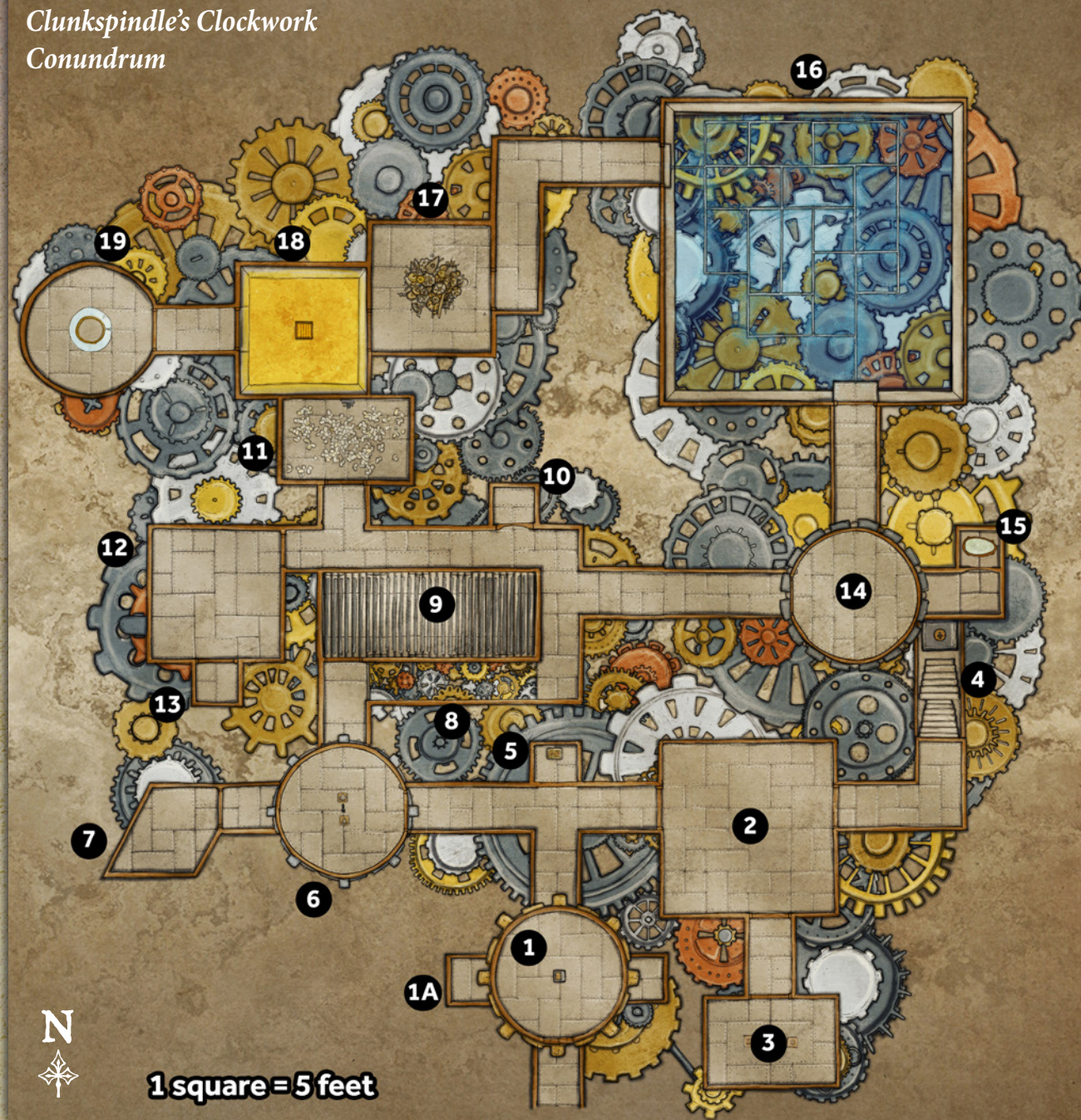
The Bastion of Oil and Brass is shaped like an enormous gear wheel. The exterior wall is covered in brass panels and has no windows, and a single, vault-like door made of iron. The characters are taken there on the appointed day. The door silently swings open at sunrise.

INTERIOR FEATURES

The Bastion has the following interior features.

- **Construction.** The interior walls and ceiling are covered in 1-inch hexagonal brass tiles, of varying shades and patterns. The floor is covered by 5-foot-square polished brass panels.
- **Light.** Narrow slits at the top of the wall provide bright light everywhere.
- **Sound.** The ticking and whirring of giant clockwork mechanisms can be heard throughout the bastion.
- **Doors.** The doors are made from a single polished panel of brass and open smoothly using pull handles. They are not locked unless specified.

Clunkspindle's Clockwork Conundrum



AREA I. ENTRY FOYER

There is a green glass button next to the single door in this room. A glass podium topped with a plate of brass stands in the center of the room.

Green Button. Pressing the button causes the entire room, including the door, to rotate 90 degrees clockwise. This gives access to the other rooms and passages.

Podium. There is an inscription on the brass plate (give the players Handout 1). The answer to the puzzle is

2—pressing the green button twice means the door faces the north passage, enabling the party to continue.

See Player Handout 1 for the inscription and the circles.

AREA 1A. CASTIGATION CLOSET

There are 6 **clockwork watchmen** in each of these otherwise bare closets. They immediately attack when revealed.





Scaling Suggestions

Very weak. Remove 4 clockwork watchmen.

Weaker. Remove 2 clockwork watchmen.

Stronger. The clockwork watchmen each have 85 hit points.

Very strong. There are 2 clockwork watchmen and 1 clockwork huntsman in each room.

AREA 2. CHAINED HOUND

There is a **clockwork hound** here, walking the perimeter of the room. The hound attacks anything that enters the room but does not follow characters out of the room unless they start making ranged attacks from the corridor.

Scaling Suggestions

Very weak or weak. The clockwork hound has 33 hit points.

Stronger or Very strong. The clockwork hound has 110 hit points.

AREA 3. BRIDGE LEVER

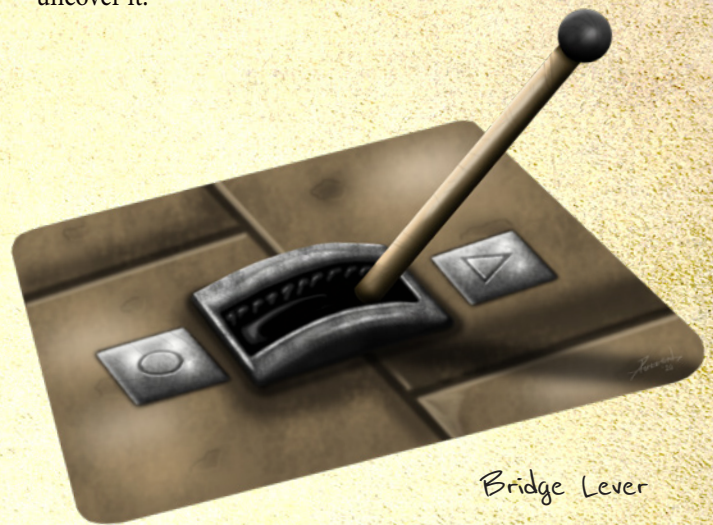
A brass lever with a rubber handle is embedded in the floor.

Lever. A silver plaque on one side of the lever has a triangle engraved on it, while a silver plaque on the other side has a circle engraved on it.

The lever is pointing toward the triangle when first found. Moving the lever to the circle causes the bridge in Area 8 to extend. Moving the lever to the triangle causes the bridge to contract.

TREASURE

Anyone searching the room who makes a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** finds a tin triangle lying on the floor near the south wall (see Player Handout 5). If the characters know they still require the tin triangle and spend 10 minutes searching the room, they automatically uncover it.



Bridge Lever

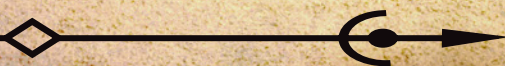
AREA 4. STAMPER TRAP

As the characters approach the secret door from the south, they hear a soft, regular pounding noise. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** locates a circular brass tile in the wall. If the characters know they still require the tin triangle and spend 10 minutes searching the room, they automatically uncover it. Pressing the tile causes the secret door to swing open.

Beyond the secret door is a set of descending brass plate stairs. At the base of the stairs, a large block on a chain rises and falls, slamming down on an iron plate.

TREASURE

In a small alcove behind the stamper is a thin iron triangle (see Handout 5 in Appendix B). Anyone trying to snatch the piece must make a successful **DC 12 Dexterity check**, suffering 3d6 bludgeoning damage on a failure.

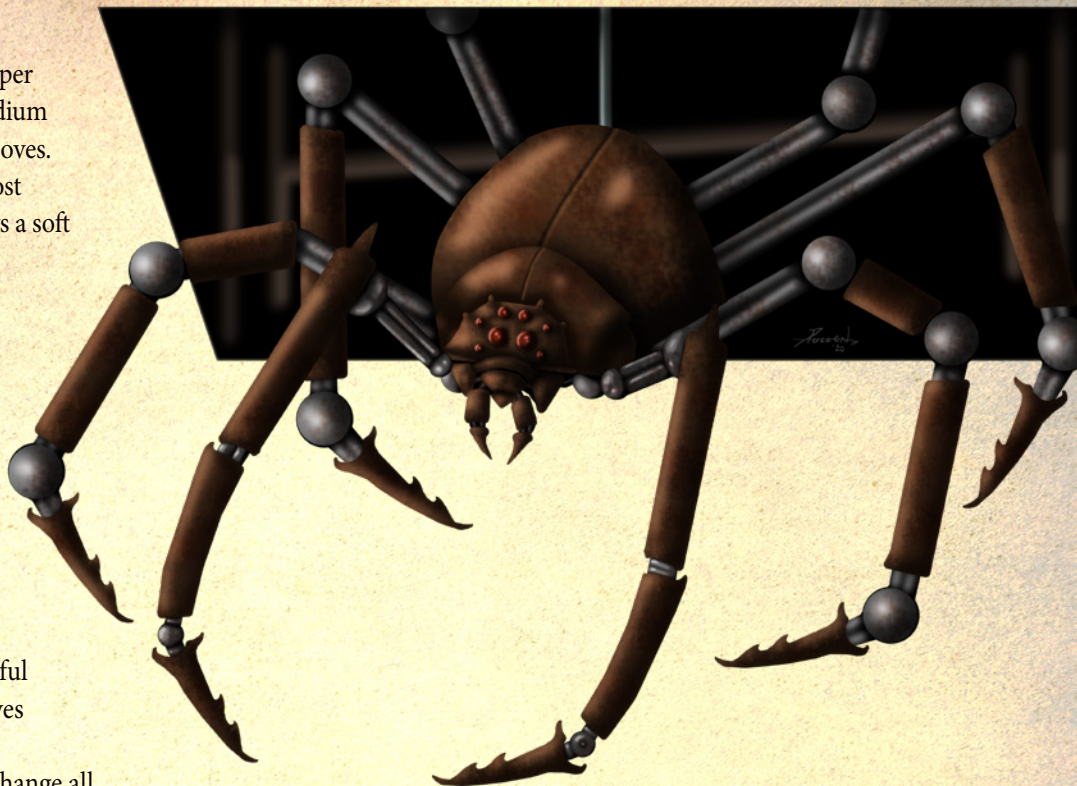


AREA 5. GEAR SHIFT

There is a brass podium with an angled upper surface in the middle of the room. The podium contains a series of holes connected by grooves. There is also a glass gear stick in the leftmost hole. A round crystal above the holes glows a soft amber. Give the players Handout 2.

Puzzle. This gear stick can be moved from hole to hole along the channels but cannot be pulled out. Each time the stick passes a hole, that hole begins glowing green. If you attempt to move the stick back over a green hole, lightning bursts out from the podium. Everyone in the room must make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 3d6 lightning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful save. At the same time, the gear stick moves back to the starting position.

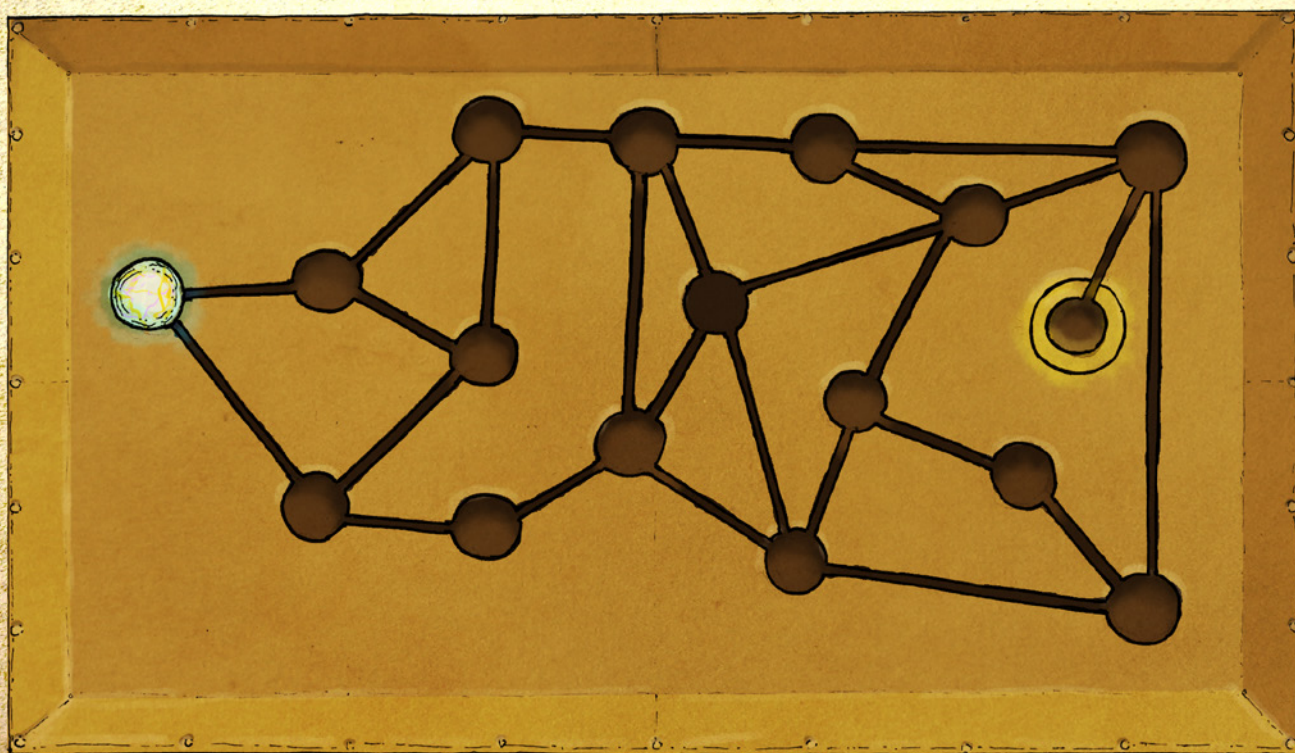
Green Light. If someone manages to change all holes to green, and move the gear stick to the golden circle at the end, the round crystal begins glowing green and the door to Area 14 unlocks.



AREA 6. DEAD BY THREAD

There is a button of green glass next to the single door in this room. There is a brass lever in the middle of the room. The room otherwise appears bare, but anyone searching the floor and making a successful **DC 13**

Gear Shift Puzzle



Wisdom (Perception) check finds a short piece of thread and a sliver of glass.

Green Button. Pressing the button causes the entire room, including the door, to rotate 90 degrees clockwise. This gives access to the other rooms and passages.

Brass Lever. A brass lever with a rubber handle is embedded in the floor. A silver plaque on one side of the lever has a triangle engraved on it, while a silver plaque on the other side has a circle engraved on it.

The lever is pointing toward the circle when first found. Moving the lever to the triangle causes a tiled hatch to slide back in the ceiling, and 2 **clockwork weaving spiders** spool down and attack the party.

Scaling Suggestions

Very weak or weak. Remove 1 clockwork weaving spider.

Stronger or Very strong. Add 1 clockwork weaving spider.

AREA 7. GLASS CUBE

There is a cube of solid glass in the middle of the room. Anyone looking at the cube can see a piece of metal embedded in the middle of it. Touching the cube causes it to explode, sending shards of glass everywhere. Everyone in the room must make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw**. A target takes 3d6 piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the cube is magically trapped, though it does not reveal what the trap does. Casting *dispel magic* or a similar spell negates the trap, and the cube does not explode when touched. The trap can also be detected by the *find traps* spell.

TREASURE

In the center of the cube is a thin copper parallelogram (see Player Handout 5).

AREA 8. RETRACTABLE BRIDGE

This long pit is 30 feet deep. The bottom of it is filled large, spinning cogs. Anyone falling into the pit takes falling damage and must make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw**

Glass Cube



every round to avoid being hurt by the cogs. On a failed save, they take 1d6 bludgeoning damage. Climbing out of the pit requires a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check**.

Bridge. There is a retractable iron bridge that extends out from beneath the floor in the west all the way to the eastern corridor. It is controlled by the switch in Area 3.

AREA 9. TREADMILL

The entire floor of this chamber is a fast-moving treadmill. There is a small silver sphere next to the eastern wall, suspended 3 feet above the ground by a bronze chain.

Treadmill. The floor is made of long, narrow, bronze slats and moves toward the west wall at a speed of 30 feet. Anyone on the treadmill attempting to move in the opposite direction must make a **DC 13 Dexterity check** every round. On a failure, they fall prone. Anyone colliding with the west wall while on the treadmill takes 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

Silver Sphere. As soon as someone touches the silver sphere with their hand, the treadmill stops. Engraved on the sphere are these words:

The beginning of eternity,

The end of time and space,

The beginning of every end,

The end of every place.

TREASURE

If anyone says “E” while touching the sphere, the sphere cracks open and reveals a thin nickel triangle (see Player-Handout 5).

AREA 10. CLUNKSPINDLE CONSTRUCT

In the middle of the room is a brass booth with a glass window, resembling a fortuneteller machine. Inside is a gnome-sized clockwork automaton.

There are four glass buttons on the front of the booth, labelled “15,” “20,” “25,” and “30.” As soon as someone enters the room, the automaton comes to life and says:

Greetings! I am Willima Clunkspindle and I hope you are enjoying my little bastion. I have a conundrum for you to solve. Answer correctly and I will give you what you seek. Answer wrongly, and it will cost you dearly.

When I was 40 years old, I said to my apprentice “I am four times the age you were when I was the age you are now.”

How old was my apprentice?

The construct repeats the question if asked but has nothing else to say.

SOLUTION

When Clunkspindle was 25 her apprentice was 10. Now that Clunkspindle is 40, her apprentice is 25—A fifteen-year gap in both cases.

TREASURE

If someone presses “25”, a thin silver triangle (see Player Handout 5) is ejected from a previously hidden slot in the machine. Anyone pressing another button has their physical age increased by 1d6 + 6 years. This effect can only be reversed by a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell, or similar magic.

AREA 11. WHEEL GOOD TIME

There is an iron wheel attached to the north wall of this room. The floor is covered in sheets of paper, each one filled with clockwork drawings. This is a **paper golem swarm**. Anyone touching a piece of paper causes the swarm to rise and attack the party.



Scaling Suggestions

Very weak or weak. The paper golem swarm has 20 hit points.

Stronger or Very strong. The paper golem swarm has 90 hit points.

The Wheel. Turning the iron wheel clockwise causes the boiling oil in Area 18 to drain away.

AREA 12. NOT ALL LEVERS

A loud whirring can be heard from above the brass ceiling. A brass lever with a rubber handle is embedded in the floor.

Lever. A silver plaque on one side of the lever has a triangle engraved on it, while a silver plaque on the other side has a circle engraved on it. The lever is pointing toward the circle when first found.

Moving the lever to the triangle causes multiple panels in the ceiling to flip open. Spinning iron rods descend, each one with several long, metal whips attached. Everyone in the room must make a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**. A character suffers 2d6 slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

After briefly touching the ground, the rods retract, the panels close again, and the lever moves back toward the circle.

AREA 13. ABOUT TIME

A tall block of black marble has four gold embossed clock faces embedded in it. A gold statue depicting a gnome with a clenched fist stands atop the block. Anyone searching the room finds a pair of silver clock hands. Anyone touching the gnome statue suffers 2d6 lightning damage.

TREASURE

Each clock face is 11 hours and 15 minutes apart. If the clock hands are placed on the final clock face to show the time 8:50, the statue opens its fist and drops a thin gold square (see Player Handout 5).

AREA 14. LOCKED COG

The door facing west is locked when the characters first encounter it. There is no keyhole, so it can't be picked. It must be opened from Area 5 or by using a *knock* spell or similar magic. Inside the room, there is a green glass button next to the single door.

Green Button. Pressing the button causes the entire room, including the door, to rotate 90 degrees clockwise. This gives access to the other rooms and passages.



AREA 15. TUB OF QUICKSILVER

There is a lead tub in the middle of the room, with an open top. It is full to the brim with a particularly acidic quicksilver alloy. Anyone touching the quicksilver takes 1d6 acid damage per round. Characters with a combined Strength of 20 or more can push the tub over. Once done, the quicksilver covers the floor of the small room and a 10-foot-square section of corridor beyond the door.

Engraved on the bottom interior of the tub is the word "SCATTERJUNK."

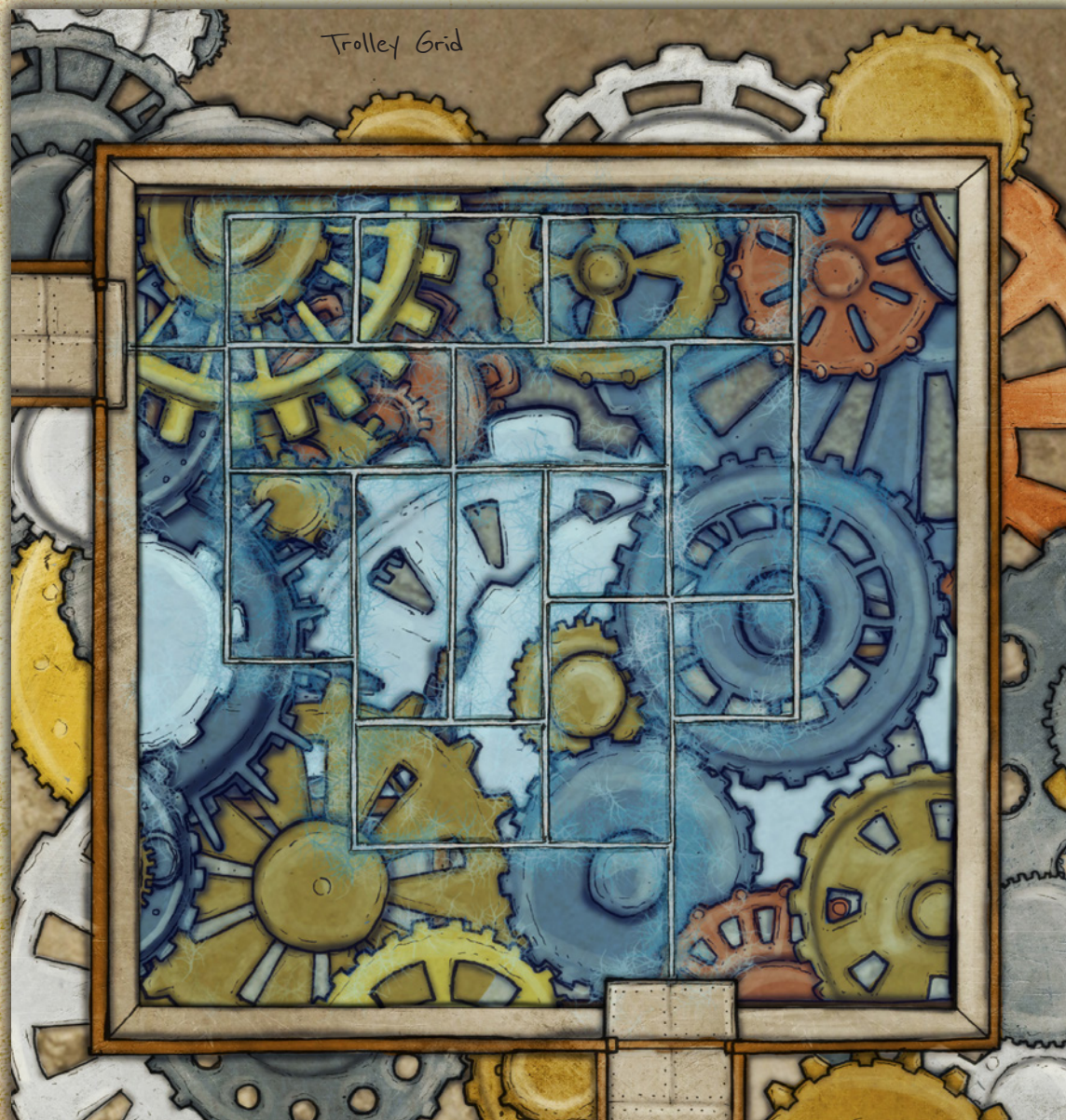
AREA 16. TURN RIGHT

A complex framework of thin steel girders hangs over a 60-foot-deep pit in this capacious room it (see Player Handout 4). The girders hum with power and let loose sparks as the trolley moves along its path.

Pit. Gears of iron and bronze grind away at the bottom of the pit. Anyone falling into the pit takes falling damage and must then make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** every round to try and avoid being hurt by the cogs. On a failed save, they take 2d6 bludgeoning damage. Climbing out of the pit requires a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check**.

Trolley. There is a small copper platform jutting out from the south door. Adjacent to it is a 4-foot-by-8-foot trolley made of brass, capable of carrying up to 6 Medium-sized creatures. The trolley has six brass legs which point inward and grip the steel girder.

There are two green glass buttons on a beveled panel at the front of the trolley, each with an arrow inscribed on it. One of them points forward and the other to the right. Pressing the forward button causes the trolley to move forward (it makes a trotting motion as the legs release



and grip the steel girder). Pressing the right button causes it to turn 90 degrees to the right. You can only press the right button once before moving forward again. You cannot push it twice to turn 180 degrees, for example. The characters must negotiate the path by moving forward and making right-hand turns only.

Girders. Anyone touching the girder must make a DC 13 **Constitution saving throw**, taking 2d6 lightning damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one.

Exit. There is a platform next to the door in the western wall. After this door is opened, the girders no longer inflict lightning damage when touched.

AREA 17. HEAP OF JUNK

A large pile of junk lies in the middle of the room, including cogs, gears, pistons, springs and so on. If the characters take 15 minutes to scatter the junk across the room, they can safely open the west door. Otherwise, when they open the door, the junk assembles itself into a **clockwork abomination** and attacks.

Scaling Suggestions

Very weak. The clockwork abomination has 30 hit points and no Bite or Breath weapon attack.

Weaker. The clockwork abomination has 40 hit points and no Bite attack.

Very strong. The clockwork abomination has 112 hit points.

TREASURE

Anyone searching through the junk pile (or the remains of the clockwork abomination) and making a successful DC 13 **Wisdom (Perception) check** locates a thin platinum triangle (see Player Handout 5).

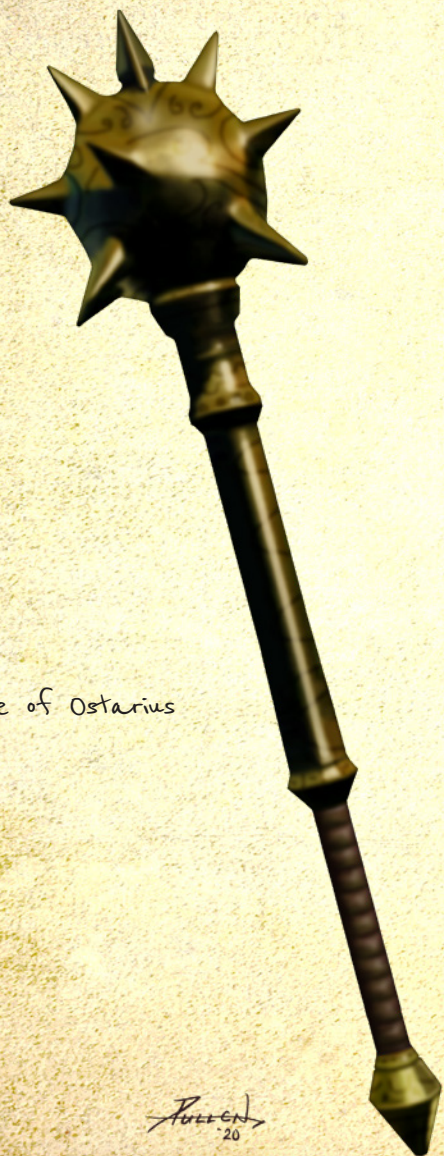


AREA 18. BOILING OIL

The entire floor is a 10-foot-deep pit filled with boiling oil. Anyone touching the oil takes 2d6 fire damage when they first enter the area or if they start their turn there. If the characters turned the wheel in Area 11, most of the oil has drained away from an open sluice at the bottom of the pit.

AREA 19. LOCK AND KEY

There is a 10-foot tall cylinder of glass here, which is 5-feet wide. There is a key-shaped indentation on the eastern side (see Player Handout 5). If the characters assemble the pieces of the key into the correct shape and place them in the indentation, the glass pillar drops revealing the Mace of Ostarius, and a secret door opens leading back to the outside world. The Mace is not magical but is gold-plated and decoratively engraved. It is worth 1,500 gp.



Mace of Ostarius

Fullen
20

APPENDIX: HANDOUTS AND KEYS/SOLUTIONS

Please see the accompanying pdf files for printer-friendly versions of these handouts.

HANDOUT 1

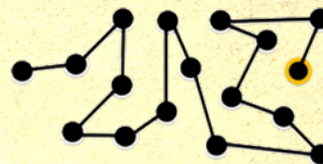
Welcome to Clunkspindle's Clockwork Conundrum! Here's something simple to ensure you are worthy. Solve the puzzle below to safely proceed. Make a mistake and you will be severely castigated!



Solution: bottom circles squared and added together. $25 + 9 = 34$. $36 + 4 = 40$. The square root of $4 = 2$. The answer is 2.

HANDOUT 2

Solution for Area 5. Gear Shift. (Handout 2)

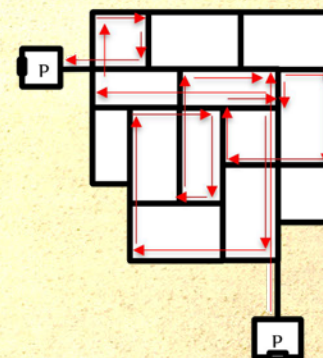


HANDOUT 3

The clock hands must be placed to indicate a time of 8:50 to solve Area 13. About Time. (Handout 3)

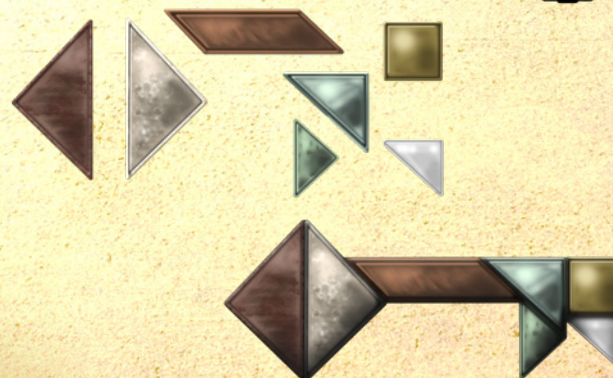
HANDOUT 4

Solution for Area 16. Turn Right. (Handout 4)



HANDOUT 5

Key pieces and solution for Area 19. Lock and Key.



MURDER AT SABLE MANSION

By Oliver Darkshire

Estimated run-time: 1.5 to 2 hours

Murder at Sable Mansion is a murder mystery adventure designed for four 3rd level characters. Scaling suggestions are provided for weaker or stronger parties.

SUMMARY

There's been a murder at Sable Mansion. The characters are invited to dinner at the established mansion at the behest of Mr. Sable, a well-known figure of high repute and deep pockets. Alas, when they arrive, their host is already dead, and the other guests are each determined to pin the blame on the newcomers, or each other. An evil doppelganger, the cause of the disaster, plagues the house throughout the evening.

BACKGROUND

Mr. Sable was an eccentric elderly gentleman who lived alone at his large mansion, accompanied only by his familiar "Erskine" and a few select house staff who have dwindled with the passing of years. He's known to have amassed a large fortune, and has a habit of making extravagant financial gifts to his dinner guests out of whimsy—to be invited to one of his dinners means you have caught his eye in some fashion. Alas, Mr. Sable was killed by a doppelganger just prior to his latest dinner. The doppelganger intends to have some deadly fun at the expense of the guests.

PLOT HOOK

The characters each receive a letter from Mr. Sable, with his distinctive panther crest seal. It contains an address, and a time (in the early evening) at which each character is invited to dine with him at Sable Mansion.

ALL IN AGREEMENT

The characters meet several guests in the house, all of whom have different opinions on what happened. All guests are highly uncomfortable, and can explain the following to anyone who cares to ask.

- There are six guests in the house already. When they arrived earlier, Mr. Sable was alive, but someone killed him shortly afterward.
- None of the guests who were in the house at the time of the murder can be trusted to hold an honest investigation, but as the characters weren't in the house at the time, they make the perfect detectives to apprehend the culprit.
- The guests, Granny Vert, Lady Gules, Professor Purple, Colonel Or, Madame Azure and Mrs. Argent, are elsewhere in the house.
- The body was found in the lounge horribly brutalized, but while the guests argued about what to do, the body vanished leaving only bloody traces behind.

MURDER MOST FOUL

There is a murderer in attendance at the party. One of the guests is a doppelganger, and uses their abilities to hide from the investigators, murdering as many partygoers as they can before they are caught. Keep in mind the following:

- The doppelganger killed Mr. Sable, but the identity assumed of the doppelganger when the game starts is up to you. One of the guests present when the characters arrive is actually the doppelganger—this guest never really existed.
- The doppelganger can read the surface thoughts of those around it, and change its form at will. Use these abilities, and the abundant hiding spaces

around the house, to confuse and implicate all the guests in various ways.

- Many of the guests have legitimate dark secrets of their own. These can be used as red herrings to the murderer's advantage.

Playing the Doppelganger

As mentioned, any of the NPC guests could be the doppelganger. For your reference, we've included these boxes with suggestions on how the doppelganger can be played using Lady Gules.

CHANGING FACES

Contrary to usual adventuring practice, this adventure works best if the characters are convinced to split apart and investigate the house alone or in groups. This allows you to use both the doppelganger and the shapeshifting abilities of the other guests to drop clues something is not right to your players while keeping the characters in the dark. For instance, having the same character appear in two different rooms at the same time makes for a delightful twist, should the group meet a dead end in their investigations.

APPROACHING THE HOUSE

As the party approaches the house, read or summarize:

It's a dark and stormy night as you approach Mr. Sable's remote, cliffside mansion which teeters dangerously over the sea, else surrounded by dark and dangerous woodlands. A full moon shines overhead, visible occasionally through swift moving black clouds. As you near the house, a tree creaks and falls in the howling storm nearby. It's not safe out here. Ahead of you, lights in the house promise both sanctuary and succor.

The house is well appointed, and modest enough to support a single gentleman of means without seeming overwhelming.

GENERAL FEATURES

- **Exterior Walls.** Bricks and mortar, 5 feet thick.
- **Internal Walls.** Stone and wood, covered in plaster, paint, or paper in some places, 1 foot thick at most.
- **Light.** Unless otherwise noted, the house is lit by dim candlelight.

- **Doors.** Doors in the house are wooden and unlocked unless otherwise specified. They have 10 AC, 3 hp, and are immune to poison and psychic damage.

As the characters near the house, it becomes clear that the door is ajar, and that people are gathered in the foyer. Up some wooden steps and across a porch, the front door waits.

AREA 1 - THE FRONT DOOR

As the party enters Area 1, read or summarize:

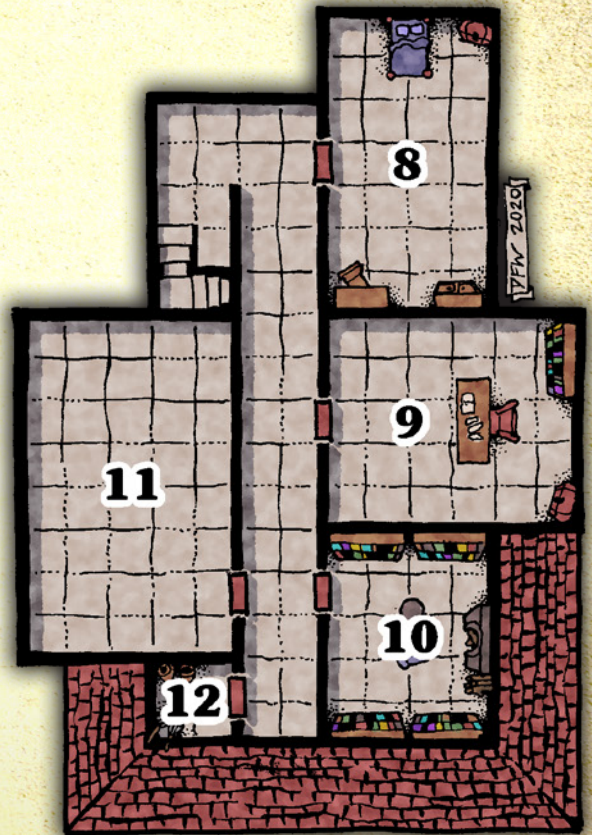
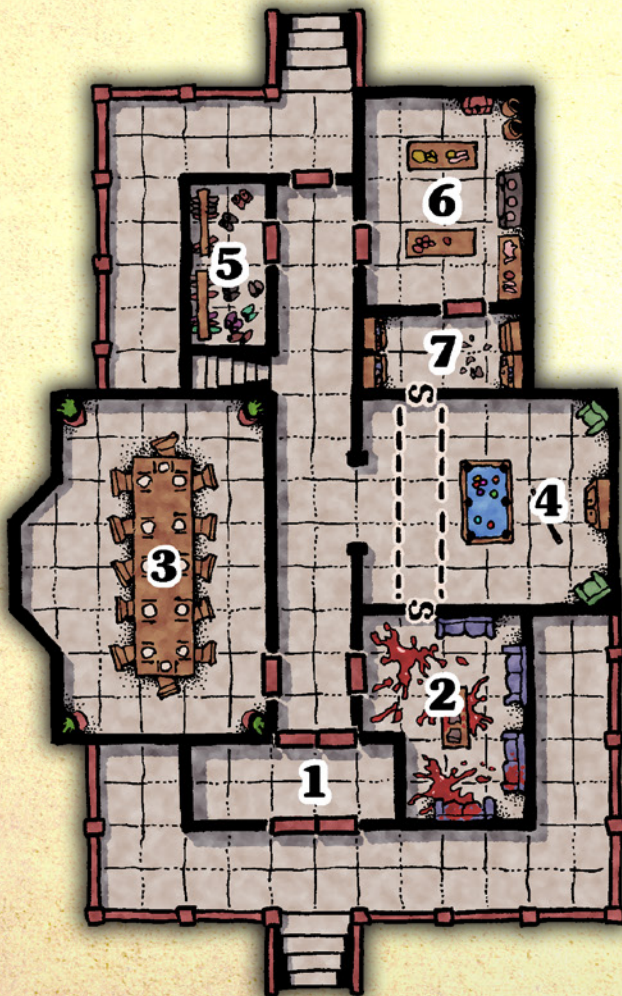
Light spills out from inside the foyer into the dark. A dumpy little woman in an apron with shocking green hair is scrubbing the floor vigorously while a tall, languorous woman in a red dress smokes a long cigar and watches anxiously.

The two suspects are not expecting more guests.

GRANNY VERT

Granny Vert is a **green hag** who usually does Mr. Sable's underwear, cooking, cleaning, and chores about the house. She started off doing it ironically, but after a while realized she rather enjoyed the routine of it (and finding small ways to make Mr. Sable miserable). She's cleaning mud off the floor tracked in by everyone from the storm.





NAIL IN THE COFFIN

Granny Vert is likely to come under suspicion early on, due to her eerie nature and the fact her illusion is not physical. Her long claws (crusted with dried blood from an animal she killed on the way in) make her a prime suspect should her charade be discovered.

LADY GULES

Lady Gules is a **ghoul** in a cocktail dress doing her best to appear human through the use of an unreasonable amount of makeup. She is very critical of others, and makes the following snap judgments:

- Colonel Or has the table manners of a hound; disgusting man.
- Professor Purple is strange and far too whimsical for her taste.
- Madame Peacock won't stop drinking. She might be a violent drunk.

HUNGRY

Lady Gules is doing her best to suppress her undead appetite, but alas her love of fresh meat undoes her as the evening progresses. As soon as the bodies start piling up, she begins to lose control, eventually (when it seems dramatically appropriate to you) descending into an eating frenzy on the nearest corpse available to her.



Using Tome of Beasts

Lady Gules is a darakhul ghoul who uses an enormous and noticeable amount of perfume to mask her stench. Remove Stench from the stat block.

Playing the Doppelganger

Lady Gules is the doppelganger. The original Lady Gules is dead, murdered by the doppelganger earlier that evening and stashed in Area 13 – The Attic.

AREA 2 – LOUNGE

As the party enters Area 2, read or summarize:

This sedate drawing room is decorated in deep, sea green colors. Ugly, lumpy sofas are placed around a small reading table. A large, floor length painting of a stern man in black hangs on one wall. There's a black cat on one of the sofas. The entire room is covered in horrible, drawn out, jagged bloodstains.

SALTIRE

The cat is called Saltire, and used to belong to Mr. Sable before its owner's demise. The cat is a contrary beast, only taking a liking to people who don't seem to want it anywhere near them. Talking to the cat with a spell or other feature allows the cat to divulge that Granny Vert is a witch who has an ugly form under the skin she wears. The cat wasn't present in the room at the time of the murder. It also thinks Colonel Or smells like dog, and keeps away from him where possible.

BLOODSTAINS

The bloodstains are vicious and everywhere. A character can attempt the following checks to make deductions.

- **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine):** The amount of blood on the furnishings is extraordinary. Mr. Sable must have been attacked in a brutal manner by something large or particularly savage.
- **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation):** The body wasn't here long before it vanished. There's no trace of an indent or pattern of staining on the carpet where it should have fallen.



- There's something wrong with Lady Gules. She doesn't blink as much as she should.
- That body disappeared awfully quickly.
- The body was a horrible mess, as if something with long knives was tearing at it. Or perhaps teeth.

FULL MOON

It's the full moon outside, which is why the Colonel is so agitated. He has the curse just about under control, but at some point during the evening, particularly if his stress level becomes high or he smells blood, he might turn unwillingly. In this case, he assumes his hybrid form and becomes hostile to all present, attempting to kill any living creature he can smell.

Playing the Doppelganger

Lady Gules kills Colonel Or while the party investigates Area 9. If they revisit the dining room, the party finds Colonel Or hunched over the table, a silver dagger in his back.

- **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception):** There's no windows, and no way out other than past the hallway.

SECRET DOOR

There's a secret passageway hidden behind the painting. It can be located by anyone who thinks to look. It leads to Area 7 – The Pantry.

AREA 3 – THE DINING ROOM

As the party enters Area 3, read or summarize:

This large room has a long window that runs across the wall, looking out over the storm-whipped sea which crashes below you. Lightning flashes occasionally, illuminating a table laden with kitchenware and set for many guests. It appears the food never made it to the table, however. A man sits at the table, staring out at the typhoon.

COLONEL OR

The man at the table is called Colonel Or, and is a werewolf. He's burly but suited, with a thick sword strapped to his side and his war medals attached to his lapel. He confides the following:



AREA 4 - THE BILLIARD ROOM

As the party enters Area 4, read or summarize:

This game room has been fitted with a large table on which to enjoy tabletop pursuits. A large cue and colorful balls have been left mid-game on the table.

This room is dusty and drab. A character who comes here alone might attract the attention of the doppelganger.

Playing the Doppelganger

If a character enters this room alone, Lady Gules may assume the form of another party member, entering the room behind the character as she looks to subdue this adventurer. If this occurs, give the changed player the Dinner at Sable Mansion Player Handout and have them ask those questions of the character who entered the room.

AREA 5 - STORAGE

As the party enters Area 5, read or summarize:

This cramped room holds two racks of dusty coats stretching from wall to wall, and the floor is covered with sets of boots.

The coats and shoes here obstruct the view, encouraging someone to climb in and investigate. A character who heads to the back may come under covert attack from the doppelganger.

At the back of the storage cupboard, a small door opens to a wooden stairwell that ascends to the second level of the mansion.

A creature succeeding on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices drops of blood on the floor and on a few of the coats, leading to the door at the back of the cupboard.

AREA 6 - KITCHEN

As the party enters Area 6, read or summarize:

This kitchen is piled high with half-finished dishes and ruined food. A dinner – no, a banquet – was undergoing preparation here, but it appears to have been abandoned.

In the kitchen, a character can make the following checks to come to one or more deductions:

- **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation):** A large bread knife has been removed from the wall where it should be hanging alongside the others.
- **DC 10 Intelligence (Nature):** There are lots of herbs in this kitchen. Some of them could be dangerous in the right quantities. Perhaps even soporific.
- **DC 10 Wisdom (Cooking Utensils):** It doesn't look like whoever was cooking here planned to get past the main course, there's no sign of dessert.

AREA 7 - PANTRY

As the party enters Area 7, read or summarize:

This small pantry has been gutted, with only some pantry dry goods remaining scattered across the shelves.

A small door at the back of the pantry connects to Area 2.

AREA 8 - BEDROOM

As the party enters Area 8, read or summarize:

A large four poster bed draped in noir fabrics suggests this is where Mr. Sable turned in for the night. His pajamas have been laid out on the bed – they have ducks on them. A tiny gnome clad in a purple robe is laid out on the bed, and starts awake, "Oh," he chimes. "Oh my goodness, who are you?"

PROFESSOR PURPURE

The gnome is Professor Purpure, a forest gnome **mage** with the following spells prepared:

Level 1: *disguise self*, *silent image*

Level 2: *invisibility*

Level 3: *major image*

The gnome came up here for a sneaky nap after the stressful events of the day. He reveals the following suspicions upon interrogation:

- Colonel Or seems very nervous about the sky, and he kept asking what day it was.
- Granny Vert's shadow looks different to her outside appearance.
- Lady Gules has a weird smell, don't you think?
- Madame Peacock was watching the Colonel strangely all evening.



ILLUSIONS

Professor Purpure's illusions are an asset to you, throwing everything the characters see into doubt. Make time to introduce the possibility of illusory tricks about halfway through the evening.

AREA 9 - STUDY

As the party enters Area 9, read or summarize:

A large wooden desk stacked with financial papers lies at the center of this room. Pens, ink, and other stationery are scattered around in a fit of disorganization. A woman in a long, blue dress is sat back in the chair, pouring herself a glass of something pungent.

MADAME PEACOCK

The woman is Madame Peacock, a human spy who has had just about enough of the day's events. She doesn't trust any of the other guests, and reveals the following suspicions to anyone who will share a drink with her.

- Colonel Or smelled of wet dog when he entered the house.
- Granny Vert makes no noise when she moves, did you notice?
- Professor Purpure is a magician, he was performing tricks earlier.
- Lady Gules looks a bit haunted by the bright lights in this place.

UNRELIABLE WITNESS

Madame Peacock has been drinking heavily all day, and has a lot of opinions about what might have happened. Perhaps she even saw someone changing their face. Alas, she's drunk and there are several shapeshifters among the guests.

AREA 10 - LIBRARY

As the party enters Area 10, read or summarize:

This stately house library has a small ladder railing running around the inside of the shelving. Books on mathematics and economics line the shelves, many of which look like they are seldom disturbed. There's a lady sitting by the crackling fireplace in a large armchair—it looks like she's fallen asleep while reading.





DOCTOR ARGENT

The woman is Doctor Argent, a human noble, and she fell asleep while reading some endless tract on political science. If awoken, she has the following to say about her fellow guests:

- Madame Peacock clearly has a drinking problem. You can smell it on her breath.
- Lady Gules looks gravely unwell. Perhaps a contagious sickness?
- Colonel Or is a poor conversationalist, he won't stop looking outside or over your head.
- Professor Purple is less a wizard, and more a charlatan. Parlor tricks, and nothing more.

BLISSFUL IGNORANCE

Doctor Argent is not particularly genre-savvy. She wanders off into dark places alone all the time, and seems almost hell-bent on getting murdered at an inconvenient moment. Accompanying her is almost certain to lead into danger, if not certain death. She is usually face first in a book, regardless.

AREA II - THE DEFENESTORY

As the party enters Area 9, read or summarize:

This large room is empty, and the bare floorboards creak under your feet. The only light in the room comes from lightning flashes visible through two large windows on the far wall.

This room is where Mr. Sable would come to stare out at the sea and muse on his poor life choices. If the murderer gets a chance, they lure someone up here alone and shove them through the window some 200 feet to sharp rocks below.

AREA 12 - THE UPSTAIRS CLOSET

As the party enters Area 12, read or summarize:

This small closet is being used to house brooms, mops and other cleaning gear. A small hatch in the ceiling leads upwards, presumably to the attic.

Pushing on the hatch (possible only by a Medium or larger creature) causes it to pop open, letting down a rope ladder through which to access the attic.

A creature succeeding on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices bloody scuff marks on the floor. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the creature also notices a bloody fingerprint on the hatch.

AREA 13 - THE ATTIC

As the party enters Area 13, read or summarize:

This creaking attic is quiet, aside from the peals of thunder outside. Rain drips through cracks in the roof, and large wooden beams cast long shadows crisscrossing throughout the room. On the floor, in the middle of the chamber, something is huddled under a cloak.

This is where the doppelganger has hidden Mr. Sable's body.

DEAD SERIOUS

In the attic, a character can make the following checks to come to one or more deductions:

- **DC 12 Intelligence (Medicine):** Mr Sable has been dead for hours, likely since before the guests arrive. Knife wounds in his chest are the likely cause of death, though there are bruises from a struggle, or perhaps being hauled up here.

- **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation):** Whoever dragged Mr Sable up a rope ladder would need to be strong, or physically adept at least. Perhaps supernaturally so.
- **DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine):** The number of blows here are quite unnecessary. Mr. Sable would have died with half of these wounds. Whatever did this continued stabbing out of unusual malice, rage, or cruelty.

Alas, Mr. Sable is not resting easily in the afterlife. Touching the body causes it to rise as a zombie, groaning and attacking wildly.

If the doppelganger kills any other creatures and needs to dispose of them, it may hide the bodies here if it gets the chance.

CONCLUSION

The denouement to this adventure largely depends on how quickly the characters deduce the possibility of an extra party at play, conspiring against them. The doppelganger attempts to murder as many people as it can without being caught, and frames various suspects for these murders if given half-a-chance. The paranoid guests rarely agree to be left alone in a group, instead constantly splitting up to investigate and getting ganked for their troubles.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: reduce the doppelganger's AC to 12 and hit points to 35

Stronger: increase the doppelganger's AC to 15 and hit points to 80.

DINNER AT SABLE MANSION PLAYER HANDOUT

You are still you, but your likeness has entered this room. Your likeness knows everything you knew until you entered the mansion, and can carry on a regular conversation with anyone to whom you are acquainted. However, if your likeness feels the person in this room questions who they are, your likeness makes a quick excuse to leave the room.

As you converse with the individual in the room, your likeness seeks the below information. Slip a few of these into your conversation.

- So, who do you think did it?
- What should we do now?
- How long do you think we will spend investigating?
I am already rather bored.

Optional:

- I would not put it past (party member name) to pull a stunt like this. (elaborate if necessary)



ANNAMARIE REDTOE

Annamarie found a passion for her religion at a young age. An internal fire fuels her desire to share the good word of her church and deity. She took up adventuring to thwart evil in the world, and to preach while traveling from one area to the next.

Personality. Annamarie is a strong-willed, no-nonsense halfling who doesn't suppress her emotions or thoughts. A constant herald for her deity, Annamarie donates to charities, orphanages, and churches. She respects other religions as long as the gods are not evil.

Desires. With her trusty *Diamond Blade* in hand, Annamarie is quick to ally with those who battle evil and the undead, requiring a paltry sum of gold to take up arms with others—just enough to keep her modestly comfortable and provide donations.



ANNAMARIE REDTOE

Small humanoid (halfling), lawful good

Armor Class 20 (plate + shield)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +5, Persuasion +5, Religion +3

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Halfling

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Brave. Annamarie has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Spellcasting. Annamarie is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Annamarie has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (3 slots): *bless*, *protection from evil and good*, *shield of faith*

Healing Pool. Annamarie has a pool of 15 hit points she can use for healing. As an action, she can touch a creature and draw power from the pool to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in her pool. This healing pool replenishes after Annamarie completes a long rest.

Divine Attack (2/day). When Annamarie hits a creature with a melee attack, she can choose to deal 2d8 radiant damage to the target, in addition to her weapon's normal damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Annamarie makes two diamond blade attacks.

Diamond Blade (shortsword). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and 3 points radiant damage if the target is undead.

DIAMOND BLADE

Weapon (shortsword), rare (requires attunement)

This magical weapon ignores resistance to piercing damage. When you hit an undead creature with this weapon, the target takes an extra 3 points of radiant damage. While the shortsword is in your hand, you may cast the following spells from it:

At will: *light* cantrip as a bonus action.

1/day: *hypnotic pattern* spell (spell save DC 14) as an action.



SLIME CAVE OF NORWAL

By James Introcaso

4

Estimated run-time: 1 to 2 hours

This short adventure is designed for five 4th-level characters and features social interaction, exploration, and combat. Scaling suggestions are provided for weaker or stronger parties.

BACKGROUND

The farm village Norwal attracts a few tourists annually with the ruins of Orthive's tower and the famous Slime Cave. The ruins are just the foundation of the semi-famous conjurer's tower that blew up in a mysterious accident. The river that cuts through Slime Cave flows with glowing sludge that gives the caverns an eerie glow.

Anthla Tremal leads the Cult of Slugidor, the ancient deity of oozes. She brought the cult to the caves five days ago after learning Orthive's tower was destroyed when

the now-deceased wizard tried to summon Slugidor. The cult found the basement of Orthive's tower connected to the caves and captured and questioned Orthive's ghost. According to Orthive, the cult needs a "worthy sacrifice" to offer the demon lord. Anthla sends the minor oozes created in the slime to terrorize the people of Norwal, hoping heroes track the monsters back to Slime Cave.

PLOT HOOKS

The following plot hooks can help get the characters into the adventure:

- The characters live in Norwal and witness an attack as two **ochre jellies** move through the village consuming farmers. If the characters do not kill the oozes, the jellies move into the wilderness.



- The characters visit Norwal and see the recent acid-scarred fields and streets of the village.
- Norwal is less than a day of travel from wherever the characters are staying. A messenger rides into town, begging for help from adventurers. The messenger was sent by Constable Royla Swiftfoot (see “Constable’s Offer”).

Scaling Suggestions

If you use the first plot hook, you can scale the encounter in the following ways:

Weaker: Remove one ochre jelly.

Stronger: Make no changes.

DESCRIPTIVE BULLET POINTS

Instead of boxed text, Slime Cave uses descriptive bullet points to help DMs parse information the first time the characters enter a new area.

- *Text that is in italics like this can be read aloud or paraphrased to the players.*
- (Text in parentheses like this contains information that is likely hidden from the characters when they first enter the area.)



NORWAL

Norwal is a village of less than two hundred people. The settlement is mostly farms, though a small city center supports the area’s light tourism and includes the following points of interest:

- **The Oozing Inn and Tavern.** A gruff-but-matronly black dragonborn called Scaldy Ma (neutral good female **commoner**) runs this modest inn. Her menu features filling meals themed after Norwal’s tourist attractions, like Orthive’s Tower of Pancakes, Extra Oozy Eggs, and Slime Pea Soup. Scaldy Ma offers a Slimy Spa Service for 10 gp, which involves a mud bath.
- **Wizardly Gifts.** The talkative Toldy Barrelsniiff (chaotic good male rock gnome **commoner**) dresses in a blue robe and pointed hat embroidered with stars as he runs his shop, which sells small pots of slime for 1 sp each, statuettes of the Orthive’s Tower for 1 gp each, and other tourist gifts. Toldy supplements his income by also operating his shop as a general store.
- **Constable’s Station.** The only authority in town is the elderly Constable Royla Swiftfoot (lawful neutral female lightfoot halfling **veteran**). She can normally call upon a small militia of farmers to defend the town in an emergency, but they were killed in ooze attacks.

If the characters are from Norwal or if one of them succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence (History) check**, relay the information in the first paragraph of the “Background” section of this adventure. Royla can also relay this information in “Constable’s Offer.”

CONSTABLE’S OFFER

After using the plot hook of your choice, the characters meet Constable Royla Swiftfoot (see “Constable’s Station”). She gives them the following information:

- Oozes began attacking the town five days ago. The first attack was a measly gray ooze, but more and stronger oozes appeared each day since, eventually killing all Norwal’s militia.
- If the characters find the source of the oozes and stop it, she promises to give them a magic shield she found during her adventuring days.
- If the characters ask for more, Royla offers them each a Slimy Spa Service from the Oozing Inn and Tavern.



- Royla recommends the characters begin their search by following the path of acid-scarred plants and grass the oozes leave in their wake.

TRACKING THE OOZES

A character who succeeds on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check** leads the group down the astringent trail back to the entrance of the Slime Cave. A character who fails this check still finds the entrance of the cave, but four **gray oozes** attack the characters before they reach the cave.

Scaling Suggestions

Weakest: Remove three gray oozes.

Weaker: Remove two gray oozes.

Weak: Remove one gray ooze.

Stronger: Replace one gray ooze with an ochre jelly.

Using Creature Codex

Weakest: Use one suppurating ooze

Weaker: Use one suppurating ooze and one gray ooze

Weak: Use one suppurating ooze for every two characters

Normal: Use four suppurating oozes

Stronger: Use four suppurating oozes and one ochre jelly.

APPROACHING SLIME CAVE

When the characters approach the Slime Cave, read or paraphrase the following boxed text:

The sound of bubbling and an eerie glow come from the gaping mouth of a cave ahead. All of the grass before the entrance is gone. Only dirt and acid-scarred stones remain. Atop the cave's hill stand the overgrown remains of a tower—the foundation and crumbling pillars.

ENTERING THE CAVE

The obvious entrance to Slime Cave is the cave mouth. A character who climbs the hill and succeeds on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to explore the ruins finds a trapdoor covered by rubble. This door opens into the ceiling of Area 3, but the ladder used to climb down has disintegrated.

SLIME CAVE FEATURES

Slime Cave has the following features:

- **Ceiling.** The ceilings in the natural areas of the cave (Areas 1–3) are 15 feet high. In the finished areas of the cave (Areas 4–6), the ceilings are 10 feet high.
- **Lighting.** Each area of the cave is brightly lit by the *continual flame* spell cast on torches in wall sconces or the glow of slime.
- **Secret Doors.** A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** finds a secret door, if one is present in the area.
- **Sights, Sounds, and Smells.** The finished areas of the cave (Areas 1–3) are covered in dust and cobwebs. The bubbling of the slime can be heard throughout the complex. A musky, earthy smell comes from the river that penetrates the place.
- **Slime.** The slime river and pools are opaque and 10 feet deep. The first time a creature enters the slime on a turn or if it starts its turn in the slime, it takes 3 (1d6) acid damage and must succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom saving throw** or gain a random form of short-term madness (see page 201 of the SRD).
- **Terrain.** The natural areas of the cave (Areas 1–3) have a dirt floor and rough walls that can be climbed without equipment with a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check**. The finished areas of the cave (Areas 4–6) have a smooth stone floor and walls that can be climbed without equipment with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**.

DENIZENS OF SLIME CAVE

Unless otherwise noted, the creatures in Slime Cave act as follows.

CULT OF SLUGIDOR

Cult of Slugidor members are all chaotic evil humans. They dress in different adventuring outfits and pretend to be explorers excavating the basement of Orthive's tower when the characters encounter them. The cultists claim the oozes started appearing once they uncovered Area 6.

They offer to lead the characters there; a successful **Wisdom (Insight) check** opposed by the cultist's **Charisma (Deception) check** recognizes the lie.

The Cult of Slugidor members only attack if the characters initiate combat. Each cultist fights until reduced to half its hit points, then attempts to flee to Area 6 where they fight to the death alongside Anthla Tremal.

A captured cultist reveals any of the information in the second paragraph of the "Background" section of this adventure with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check**.

Each member of the cult carries a wood carving of an ooze devouring a planet. A character knows this is the holy symbol of Slugidor with a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Religion) check**.

OOZES

The oozes attack any non-ooze creatures they notice, fighting to the death. The exceptions are members of the Cult of Slugidor. The oozes follow the commands of any cultist.

AREAS OF SLIME CAVE

The following encounter areas are keyed to the Slime Cave map.

AREA 1. RIVER CAVE

This entry cave contains the following features:

- *A bubbling river of glowing green slime cuts across the cavern and fills the space with a wet soil smell.*
- *With a quaint appearance, a wood footbridge crosses the river's middle.*
- *The face of a smiling dwarf wizard with a forked beard is emblazoned on a rusty iron door.*
- (A black pudding hides in the river.)
- (Cultists watch this area from areas 2.)

Black Pudding. The **black pudding** acts as described in "Denizens of Slime Cave."

Cultists. Four cultists in Area 2 hide and watch the battle between the ooze and the characters. A **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14** or higher notices the cultists. When the battle is done, the cultists appear, thank the characters, and act as described in "Denizens of the Slime Cave."

Door. If the characters are residents of Norwal, they know this door and hall were previously blocked by rubble. A dwarf character or a character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** knows rubble was recently cleared from in front of the door. A character

who succeeds on a **DC 14 Intelligence (History) check** knows the door depicts Orthive.

Scaling Suggestions

Weakest: Replace the black pudding with two gray oozes.

Weaker: Replace the black pudding with a gelatinous cube.

Weak: The black pudding has 55 hit points.

Stronger: The black pudding has 105 hit points.

AREA 2. CULT LOOKOUT POINTS

When the characters enter Slime Cave, each area holds one **cultist**, hiding and watching Area 1. Their names are Bona, Ellegy, Movasque, and Tulip.

AREA 3. SECRET CAVERN

Anthla Tremal learned of Orthive's hiding place from the mage's ghost. She keeps the treasure she found in the tower's basement in this cavern, which is accessible via secret door, swimming through 65 feet of the slime river, or a trapdoor in the ceiling (see "Entering the Cave").

This chamber has the following features:

- *An iron chest with a keyhole facing the slime river sits near the bank.*
- (A gelatinous cube stands in front of the secret door.)

Chest. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the chest radiates an aura of evocation magic. The chest is locked. Anthla holds the key. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools** picks the lock, and a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** forces the chest open. The chest has AC 19, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

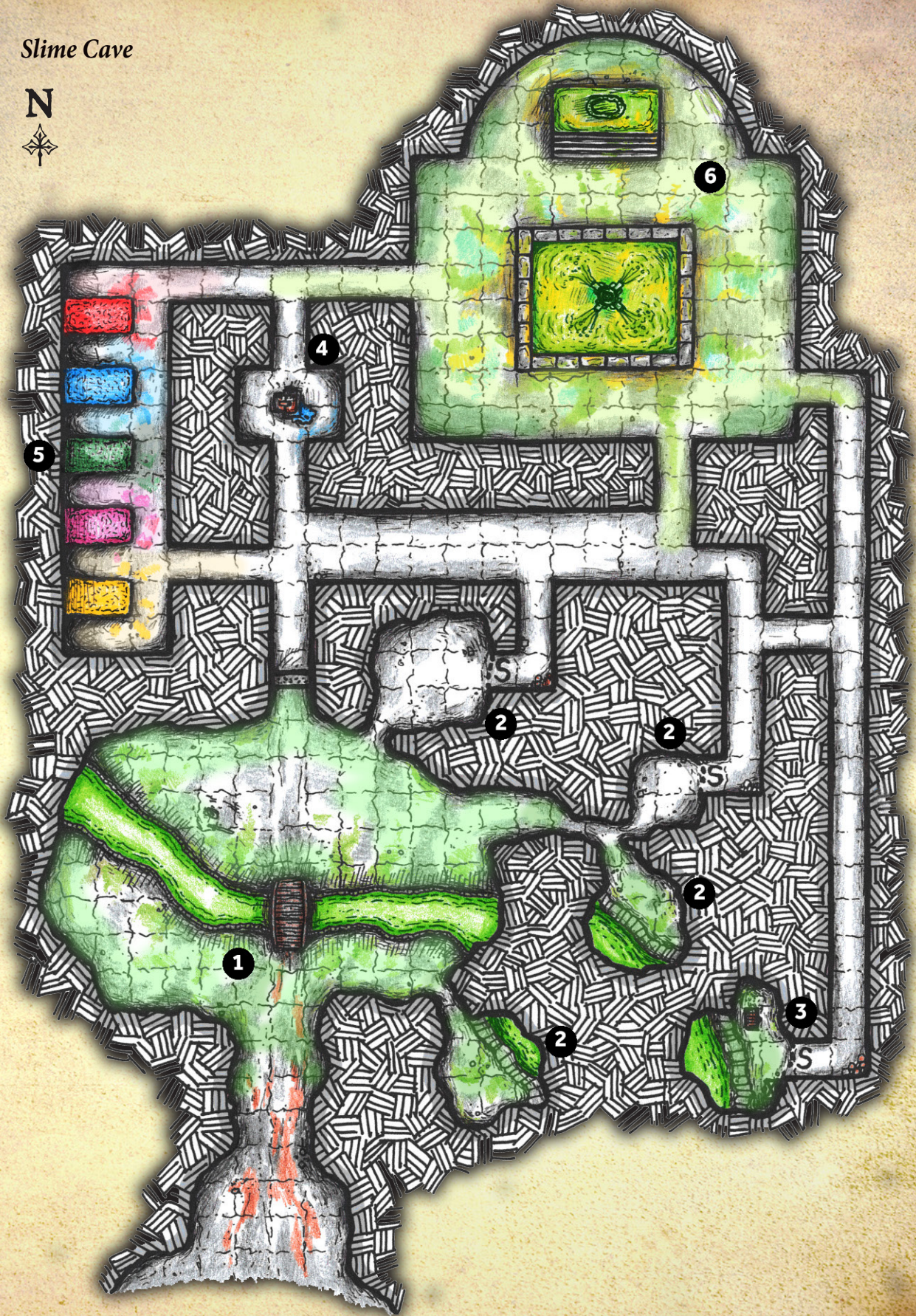
If a creature fails to pick the chest's lock, attempts to force the chest open, or damages it, a *wave of force* erupts from it. Each creature within 5 feet of the chest must succeed on a **DC 12 Strength saving throw** or take 3 (1d6) force damage and be pushed 10 feet away from the chest, which could push them into the slime river or the gelatinous cube.

Gelatinous Cube. The gelatinous cube acts as described in "Denizens of Slime Cave."

Rewards and Treasure. The chest contains a *potion of diminution*, a small diamond (worth 50 gp), 3,256 sp, and 543 gp.



Slime Cave





AREA 4. ORTHIVE'S PRISON

Anthla Tremal imprisoned Orthive's ghost in a trap of the wizard's own design. This area has the following features:

- *Two humans stare into a glass keg that gives off an eerie blue glow and a mournful moan.*
- *The baleful face of a dwarf with a forked beard appears within the container, begging the humans as it cries, "Give it back!"*

Cultists. Two **cult fanatics** are named Granthor, a man, and Aylis, a woman. They have all the information they want from Orthive's ghost, but they enjoy watching him squirm. Aylis has captured Xorvo, Orthive's **homunculus**, in a small bag and whispers she will beat it upon the ground just to watch the ghost suffer. A character with a **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 16** or higher hears these words upon entering the area. A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the bag Aylis holds is moving.

If the cultists notice the characters, they claim to be trying to figure out what the ghost trapped in the glass wants and act as described in "Denizens of Slime Cave."

Glass Keg. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the glass keg radiates an aura of abjuration magic. The keg keeps Orthive trapped within, but if it is destroyed, the ghost is freed. The keg has AC 13, 4 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Orthive. As long as the cultists have Xorvo, Orthive, a **ghost**, simply continues to wail from the keg. If the homunculus is saved, Orthive thanks the characters and begs them to free him while conveying everything he knows:

- Orthive knows the information contained in the first two paragraphs of the "Background" section of this adventure.
- Orthive tried to summon Slugidor as a bet with another wizard. He was young and foolish! He also now knows he was missing an important component: the souls of great heroes to sacrifice to the demon lord.
- Orthive created the slime in the cave as part of the ritual to summon Slugidor. The cultists now want to use it to do what the ghost could not.
- Orthive begs the characters to stop the cultists, telling them that if they stop the scheme, he can teach them a new ritual to remove the slime from the cave.

Orthive is terrified of the cultists and doesn't fight them, but does aid the characters by answering any questions they have about the complex.

Scaling Suggestions

Weakest: Replace each cult fanatic with a thug.

Weaker: Replace one cult fanatic with a cultist.

Weak: Each cult fanatic has 20 hit points.

Stronger: Add a third cult fanatic.

AREA 5. SLIME POOLS

Orthive once crafted magic weapons in these enchanted pools, which are now filled with slime. This area has the following features:

- *Five glowing pools slowly shift through all colors of the rainbow as they bubble.*
- *The word "FORGE" is carved into the wall above the pools.*

If asked about the pools, Orthive can explain to the characters how they work. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the pools radiate auras of transmutation magic. If a non-magical suit of armor is dipped into one of the pools and coated with slime, the wearer is resistant to acid damage for 1 hour. At the end of the hour, the armor disintegrates.

AREA 6. SLUGIDOR TEMPLE

What was once a meditation room for Orthive has become a demon lord's shrine. This room has the following features:

- *Green slime bubbles from four stone gargoyle heads, creating a grotesque fountain.*
- *Stairs lead up a platform where a woman covered in slime chants wildly inside a stone tub filled with sludge.*
- (A chain net is suspended over each entrance to this room via a rope anchored next to each entranceway.)

Anthla Tremal. When the characters enter, Anthla, a **cult fanatic** with immunity to acid damage, cackles, saying a champion of Slugidor will gladly accept the characters' sacrifice before attacking. She fights to the death.

Chain Nets. A creature can use an action to cut a rope and lower the 5-foot-square net from the ceiling. A creature standing 5 feet inside of the room's entrance must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** or become restrained in the net. A creature can use its action to make a **DC 12 Strength check**, freeing itself or another creature within reach in a net on a success. Dealing 18 bludgeoning damage to the net (AC 19) also frees the creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the net.

If the characters are led to this area by cultists, those cultists try to trap the characters in a net.





Slugidor's Champion. When the characters enter this chamber, a Huge-sized **black pudding** with 130 hit points emerges from the fountain and attacks.

Scaling Suggestions

Weakest: Instead of the creatures in this encounter, Anthla turns into a Huge-sized ochre jelly with 50 hit points when the characters enter and attacks them.

Weaker: Replace the black pudding with a Huge-sized ochre jelly that has 60 hit points, and the cult fanatic with a thug.

Weak: Replace the black pudding with a Huge-sized ochre jelly that has 72 hit points.

Stronger: Replace the cult fanatic with a mage.

Using Creature Codex

Weaker: Replace the black pudding with a Huge-sized shadow ooze that has 45 hit points, and the cult fanatic with a thug.

Weak: Replace the black pudding with a Huge-sized shadow ooze.

Normal: Replace the black pudding with a Huge-sized freezing shadow ooze with 110 hit points

Stronger: Replace the black pudding with a Huge-sized shadow ooze, and the cult fanatic with a doomspeaker.

CONCLUSION

If the characters fail to kill or rout the cultists, the cult summons Slugidor, and the massive ooze devours the world!

If the characters kill or rout the cultists from the cave, Constable Royla Swiftfoot rewards them as promised (see “Rewards & Treasure” below). If the characters also freed Orthive, he shows them how to remove the slime from Slime Cave, which Norwal’s villagers grudgingly admit is the safest course of action.

REWARDS & TREASURE

If the characters kill or rout the cultists, Constable Royla Swiftfoot rewards them with a +1 *shield*.

DEVELOPMENTS

Here are a few ideas for continuing the adventure:

- Orthive can perform a ritual to clear the slime from the cave, but he needs special material components the characters must gather.
- The Cult of Slugidor does not give up so easily! They continue to try to summon the demon lord, but luckily a journal left behind by Anthla Tremal indicates the cult’s future plans.
- With the Slime Caves cleaned up, Scaldy Ma thinks Norwal needs a new attraction—a zoo! She hires the characters to capture exotic monsters for her.

TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

By Hannah Rose

Estimated run-time: 1 to 2-hours

This short adventure is designed for five 4th-level characters and is focused on exploration and combat. Scaling options are provided for weaker and stronger parties.

BACKGROUND

The elven mage Albern, self-styled “the Ingenious,” was outlawed from his academy for unlawful experimentation with the dead. Bitter and angry, he fled to a nearby cave and vowed to continue his experiments until he could create a creature powerful enough to enact revenge upon

his former colleagues.

Albern’s attempt to create a homemade zombie ettin by attaching an additional head to an ogre zombie was technically successful—but unfortunately for him, the enhanced zombie killed him in a fit of mindless rage.

PLOT HOOKS

Whether this adventure is used for a standalone session or as part of a long-term campaign, here are some suggestions for drawing the players into the action:



Albern's Cave



Entrance

1 square = 5 feet



- **Bones on the Road.** While the characters are en route to their next destination, they come across two acolytes being attacked by a group of three skeletons. More bones scattered alongside the road lead to a cave beneath the rocky cliffs.
- **Grotesque Glimpse.** A goat herder approaches the characters to tell them about a large two-headed figure she's seen prowling the hills at night. If they can make sure the monster won't threaten her herd, she'll offer them one of her three magical ivory goat figurines of wondrous power.
- **Minion Elimination.** If the characters are bent on thwarting a particular villain, introduce a rumor that their enemy is being assisted by a necromancer reputed to live in a certain cave. If they can take down the necromancer, they'll prevent undead reinforcements from plaguing them in the future.

ALBERN'S CAVE

The cave's entrance is a 3-foot-wide crack in the cliff face, partially hidden behind a large boulder. Large or larger creatures have to squeeze to fit through the gap. Characters with a **passive Perception score of 12** or higher identify the faint aroma drifting from the opening as the smell of rotted meat.

AREA 1. BONE ZONE

The cave's narrow opening widens into an open cavern about 40 feet in diameter. There's another opening in the back of the cavern that leads to Area 2.

- **Lighting.** A sliver of daylight is visible near the entrance, but the cave itself is completely dark.
- **Sights, Sounds, and Smells.** The dusty floor of the cave is worn smooth, but it's covered with scattered bones of all shapes and sizes. The fetid odor of old meat is stronger in here—some of the bones are picked clean, but others have scraps of rotting flesh and gristle clinging to them.
- **Terrain.** Heaps of bones are piled against the walls.

SKELETONS, ASSEMBLE!

If the characters are trying to be stealthy, they can avoid disturbing the dismantled skeletons with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check**. If any of the characters fail the check, or if they don't try to be stealthy, read the following aloud:

The scattered bones begin to rustle and move of their own accord. Vertebrae rapidly skitter across the floor and snap together, femurs attach themselves to hipbones, and skulls roll across the floor to join with reassembled spines. Several skeletons lurch upright and advance menacingly. Roll initiative!

The ten skeletons that attack the intruders have disadvantage on initiative since many of them are still reassembling themselves. If there's a paladin or cleric in the party, this may be an easy fight, but that's fine—let the players have fun bashing skeletons left and right.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Reduce the number of skeletons to three per average party level.

Stronger: Add a second wave of skeletons (at least one per character) that reassemble themselves and enter initiative at the top of the second round of combat.

Using Creature Codex

Use one clacking skeleton and one shadow skeleton.

TREASURE

There is a set of slightly rust-stained chain mail and 15 sp hidden in the piles of bones.

AREA 2. MUSHROOM TUNNEL

A natural crack in the rock has been enlarged to form a 5-foot-wide tunnel that curves to the right as it leads to Area 3. As the characters proceed, read the following aloud:

The walls of the tunnel are smooth in places and rough in others, showing where it was expanded to make a usable passage. Small clusters of pale grey mushrooms cling to the rough patches on the walls and floor.

A character who wishes to avoid coming into contact with the mushrooms must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. On a failure, the character disturbs a patch of mushrooms, which release puffs of poisonous gas in a 5-foot-radius area around the mushrooms.

Creatures exposed to the gas must succeed on a DC 14 **Constitution saving throw** or take 10 (3d6) poison damage and become poisoned until the end of their next turn. The gas lingers for 10 minutes, or until dispersed by a moderate or strong wind.

If the characters make a great deal of noise in this area, the skeletons from Area 1 may reassemble themselves and attack, at the DM's discretion.

AREA 3. ZOMBIE GUARDS

The tunnel curves into another open cavern, approximately 20 feet long by 30 feet wide.

- **Lighting.** The cavern is completely dark except for any light sources brought by the characters.
- **Sights, Sounds, and Smells.** This cavern is no less malodorous than the last.
- **Terrain.** There is a large wooden door set in a niche on the far side of the cavern.

As the characters enter this area, read the following aloud:

Within the cavern, two creatures that were once ogres sit against the far wall, gnawing on bones ripped from a still-flailing skeleton at their feet. As you enter, they lurch to their feet, spittle and saliva dripping from their rotting teeth as they throw the bones aside and advance toward you.

The **ogre zombies** are eager for tastier targets. The skeleton (which has 5 hit points remaining) attacks the closest combatant every turn. Since it's missing its sword—and an arm—its attacks don't deal damage, but if it hits a creature, that creature has disadvantage on its next attack roll or ability check.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Reduce the number of ogre zombies to one.

Stronger: Add an additional ogre zombie and additional skeletons as necessary.

DEADBOLT DOOR

This heavy wooden door (AC 15, 18 hp) has been secured to the stone wall with sturdy iron hinges to keep the ogre zombies from accessing the rest of the cave. It's locked with a simple deadbolt, which can be opened with a successful DC 11 **Dexterity check using thieves' tools**.

AREA 4. LABORATORY

This chamber is set up as a makeshift laboratory. Wooden crates support a long bench laden with jars containing fleshy blobs and bilious liquids. A rickety table in the corner is covered with papers. In the far corner, a sheet stained with dried blood is draped over a large, low table.

- **Lighting.** Like the rest of the cave, this room is devoid of light.
- **Sights, Sounds, and Smells.** There's an unlit candle on the small table, and several unlit oil lamps on the benches. The astringent smell of chemicals mostly covers the familiar odors of rot and old blood.
- **Terrain.** The ceiling is stained with soot, and the floor around the large table is suspiciously stained. Another door, this one unlocked, leads to Area 5.

RECIPE FOR DISASTER

The makeshift desk holds several notebooks and loose sheets of grimy paper. Albern's notes are written in Elvish. A character who can read Elvish and spends at least 10 minutes studying the notes gains the following information with a successful DC 13 **Intelligence (Arcana) check**.

- The author, who calls themselves "Albern the Ingenious," hoped to develop new necromantic techniques through a combination of magic and experimental science.
- Albern had successfully created ogre zombies "without difficulty," and he wished to "upgrade" to a two-headed zombie—but couldn't find any ettins in the area.
- The most recent notes detail plans and sketches for an "ambitious innovation" to create a homemade zombie ettin.

On a failed check, the character may obtain parts of the above information, or misinterpret the notes entirely, at the DM's discretion.

TREASURE

Among the stacks of papers on the desk is a *spell scroll of animate dead* and a *spell scroll of revivify*. The smallest of the dubious jars on the bench is actually a *potion of resistance to poison*. There's also a key that opens the door between this room and Area 3.

DEVELOPMENTS

When the characters are nearly finished exploring this room, describe the sounds of muffled banging and the ring of metal on stone coming from Area 5.



AREA 5. ALBERN'S UNPLEASANT END

An unlocked door in Area 4 opens into this final cavern, which is 25 feet wide by 40 feet long at its largest point.

- **Lighting.** Like the rest of the cave, this area is devoid of light.
- **Sights, Sounds, and Smells.** This chilly cavern contains the necromancer's final creation—a **zombie ettin** (see Creatures). Toward the back of the cave is the crumpled body of an elf wearing bloodstained robes.
- **Terrain.** In one corner there's a small tunnel that leads back outdoors, offering an easier exit from the cave.

When the characters enter this area, read the following aloud:

A large, grotesque creature wielding a morningstar in one meaty hand and a battleaxe in the other is mindlessly smashing both weapons against the stone wall. As it turns toward the door, you can see that it has two heads, one of which is attached to its shoulders with large, jagged stitches.



The zombie ettin quickly turns from attacking the wall to attacking the characters.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Reduce the zombie ettin's hit points by 20.

Stronger: Add a regular ogre zombie or give the zombie ettin an additional 40 hit points.

DEATHLY CHILL

The traces of unstable necromantic magic suffuse the air, making the cavern uncomfortably cold and channeling the life force of living creatures into the dead. Living creatures regain half the normal amount of hit points from any effects that restore hit points, and undead creatures regain 10 hit points at the start of their turns.

TALKING HEAD

Although Albern was able to attach an additional head to the body of an ogre zombie, his magic was unable to animate the head—until his creation killed him, and the necromancer's own consciousness was drawn into the extra head.

Zombies usually can't speak, but the magic that siphoned Albern's consciousness into the additional head allows him to talk through its relatively intact mouth. The original head grunts and groans, but as the zombie ettin attacks the characters, the other head cries out in Common:

“Please! I can't do anything while I'm trapped in here, but just finish this brute off and put me back in my body! Hurry—before it gets you, too!”

The necromancer entreats the characters to assist him, promising them magical secrets, wealth, and loyal service if they'll kill the zombie ettin and use the spell scroll of *revivify* from the laboratory to capture his consciousness as soon as the zombie is dead. If the characters didn't find the spell scroll in Area 4, Albern describes its location and begs them to hurry.

Albern knows that his own hubris got him killed, but even in his panic, he's defensive about his own experimental research, refusing to acknowledge that the current situation is largely his own fault.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters decide to help Albern, they can use the *spell scroll of revivify* to restore him to his body within 1 minute of killing the zombie ettin. See the Basic Rules for the rules on using spell scrolls, especially if the characters are 4th-level or lower.

TREASURE

If Albern survives, he thanks the characters profusely—and sincerely—though he also expresses his disappointment that his “technically successful” experiment backfired so spectacularly. He offers the characters the *potion of resistance to poison* from his laboratory (only slightly put out if they already took it) and 75 gp.

Otherwise, a pouch tied to his robes contains 90 gp and 120 sp.

CONCLUSION

The characters may wish to destroy Albern's notes to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands. You can also use this adventure to foreshadow future events—perhaps Albern was merely emulating the work of a more powerful sorcerer, or perhaps someone from his old academy secretly built upon his research to create their own undead abominations.

CREATURES

ZOMBIE ETTIN

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +1

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common and Giant but can't speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Two Heads. The zombie ettin has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The zombie ettin makes two attacks: one with its battleaxe and one with its morningstar.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

THE INSTABILITY OF ISOLATION

By Toni Winslow-Brill

6

Estimate run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

The life of the adventurer is a dangerous one, often fraught with pain and suffering—trauma that haunts the body and soul for the rest of their days. There are special homes that these poor, lost souls can retire to; places of refuge and compassion for those that might not otherwise receive it. But are these places truly a haven or is there a more sinister purpose festering within their walls?

This short adventure is designed for five 5th-level characters and features social interaction, and combat. Scaling options are provided for lower and higher-level parties.

BACKGROUND

The Instability of Isolation takes place in any large city or area that has a regular and steady influx of adventurers. The specific location isn't important, so long as it is someplace that makes sense to have a home for those unlucky souls who have been cursed or damaged for their good deeds.

The Sword's Respite is a sort of retirement home for adventurers. Adventurers lead difficult lives, often with heavy consequences.

This is a place for those unable to continue adventuring to live their days. Within there is one individual, Ryland Sable, who is convinced there is more going on within the complex than meets the eye. Unfortunately for Ryland, she is living within the Sword's Respite and is a victim of the skittering haunt that lurk beneath its halls. Having lost many of her memories, she has difficulties focusing enough to express her fears and has begun to confuse the simulacrum created by the haunt as herself. However, within Ryland's rambling words is an ugly truth.

Dark creatures have taken up residence beneath the halls of the Sword's Respite; feeding off the memories and souls of those that reside within the building, exacerbating

the inhabitant's conditions as they lose parts of themselves forever.

PLOT HOOKS

Because this adventure takes place within any major city, there are numerous reasons why the party is in town. Whatever the reason, once having entered the bustling town, the following options are plot hooks for visiting the Sword's Respite:

- Someone within the party has a curse or an illness that is not easily cured. It is common knowledge that the best healers and medical practitioners reside within the compound.
- Childish signs are posted throughout the town seeking adventurers to help rescue someone named Demelza's older sister. Payment is one crusty loaf of bread and her favorite stuffed doll. The flyers indicate that she waits for those interested near the market next to the Sword's Respite.
- Someone in the party is at the end of their adventuring career and has heard about these places to help adventurers popping up around the region. They go to check it out and see if it is something they are truly interested in.
- The party happens to be traveling by the Sword's Respite just as there is a commotion outside. One of the inhabitants is angrily screaming about being ignored before being hustled back inside.
- A party member has a relative that resides within the establishment and they are visiting them.

Regardless of what hook you use, the party eventually makes their way to the Sword's Respite and speaks to Demelza.

A SISTER'S WORRY

The party stands in the market square in front of the Sword's Respite. A wide range of goods and services are offered and the market bustles with laughter and merchants. The characters are able to purchase whatever goods and services fit this area of the world. Once they are done shopping, they meet Demelza, who waits anxiously outside on the steps of the Sword's Respite.

NPC

Demelza Sable (CG female half-elf) — Demelza is a thin child of about ten winters, with wild red hair and a smattering of freckles covering her pert little nose. She anxiously grasps a small, ratty, stuffed doll and is blatantly ignored by other market-goers. The girl is sweet and surprisingly intelligent for her age though she speaks very quickly, twitching and fidgeting as if filled with a thousand bees. Demelza perks up once she sees the party and races over to them.

Demelza
Sable



Rumors

If the party decides to speak to the townsfolk, they pick up the following bits of information:

“A saintly group of monks and healers run the Sword's Respite, many of whom used to be adventurers themselves. I guess they know firsthand the troubles that follow that lifestyle.”

“The Sword's Respite is a home for those who have dedicated their life to serving others and fighting evils. This doesn't come without cost. The Respite is for those whose afflictions can't be cured with traditional means.”

“The Sword's Respite is a godsend for most of those adventuring folk who live there. Some of them are a danger to themselves and others. One fellow in there has a demon arm he can't control that constantly tries to murder people!”

“The Sword's Respite attracts the best healers and magic users to help combat the hardest illnesses. People come from all over to study those within the Respite.”

“It concerns me having all those afflicted people living within the city. I mean, what if they have something contagious?”

“There is a little girl that has been trying to get people to rescue her sister from the Sword's Respite. Doesn't she know that people live there voluntarily?”

“I think they are doing unwholesome experiments on the residents of the Sword's Respite. I mean, isn't that what always happens to adventurers?”

“There is talk of other cities adopting something similar to the Sword's Respite. There are lots of people who need the sort of services they offer, right?”

“The building that the Sword's Respite uses is the oldest in town. It has had many different functions over the years, but this is the happiest.”



Demelza asks the group if they have arrived to help rescue her sister, Ryland Sable, who is held hostage in the Sword's Respite. The girl frantically pulls out one of the hand-drawn posters that have been plastered around town to wave at the group. When given the chance, she explains that Ryland left her in the care of their aunt, who is a sweet lady but isn't Ryland. Demelza is convinced her sister would not have left her if she had any choice and believes the Sword's Respite is holding her sister hostage. When pressed, Demelza admits that her sister is a powerful warrior who came back home from an exciting adventure covered in black, strange, swirling marks that never seem to stop moving. If the party helps her save her big sister, she offers them all she has — a single, crusty piece of bread and her stuffed doll.

Should the party agree to seek out Ryland, Demelza suggests they speak with Pernella, as she is the head caretaker of the Respite. Demelza admits that Pernella has been kind to her and allows her onto the compound. However, the child is convinced the person that she saw was not really her sister as she acted 'weird' and was too quiet.

ENTERING THE SWORD'S RESPITE

All are welcome within the Sword's Respite; this is a place of healing, after all. The complex itself is made of columns of huge stone with magnificent flying buttresses, delicate stone carvings of trees reaching high, and at least at one point, was a temple to an unknown, lost goddess. Those of a more dangerous nature are kept separated from the general population. Also, there is an unknown cavern beneath the Sword's Respite.

HEALERS AND MONKS

In addition to Pernella, there are a total of ten healers and monks on the campus at any one time. They can be found tending to residents, cleaning, cooking, or relaxing in the common areas.

RESIDENTS OF THE SWORD'S RESPITE

The residents of the complex are a colorful cast of characters: retired adventurers with a whole host of problems. This allows for great creativity on what sort of folks and ailments to showcase. However, the only people within the Sword's Respite that are truly important for the characters to meet are Pernella, Ryland, and Ehorin.

Tabitha Maks: an elderly human woman who once owned a small bakery. She constantly complains about the smell in the Sword's Respite, stating, "Can you smell that?

What is that? It makes my nose tingle?"

Butross Nor: An elderly gnome fighter who enjoys spending time conversing with others. If the characters attempt to leave, he opens his small chest, pulls out a leather satchel (a bag of holding), and then tells the adventurers he's had this satchel since he was a young boy. He's taken it everywhere and look how well it's held up! It holds a lot of things, too.

He then continues telling stories about the time he:

- First tried cauliflower and didn't like it, but now he loves it!
- His first love and how he misses them.
- His dog Sparkles—he didn't pick the name, his sister did.

Gustov: A middle-aged human druid who has a demon arm that tries to murder people (and its owner) if they get too close.

Kalina: A middle-aged elven woman who is so involved in reading a book that the monks must feed her.

Brutok: An elderly half-orc man who has some awful leech creature attached to his head.

Stibles: An elderly halfling woman who keeps sticking her hand into the fireplace and delights in not feeling the pain of her burns.

A special section of the complex (Area 8: The Zoo) holds numerous animals of all shapes and sizes and if asked, the characters are told the creatures are people whose *polymorph* spell has yet to break.

AREA 1: RECEPTION

When the adventurers enter the Sword's Respite, read or summarize:

The wooden double doors open to a reception room with a dwarf sitting behind a mahogany desk in the center. A small plant sits in each far corner of the room and the walls are lined with comfortable-looking stuffed chairs and couches.

Visitors are prohibited beyond this point unless they state a reason for their visit and sign in with Pernella, the dwarf behind the counter. Pernella then gives the visitor a small, wooden chip attached to a length of leather, which is to be worn around the visitor's neck while they are on the Sword's Respite campus.

NPC

Pernella (LG female dwarf **priest**) — She is the head of the caretakers at the Sword's Respite. Once an adventurer



herself, she struggled when one of her traveling companions was blinded by a lich and no one seemed able to remove the spell. Eventually, she founded the Sword's Respite to help those souls who had nowhere else to turn. She is soft spoken and seems highly distracted and flighty, as if seeing or listening to something only she can perceive.

Pernella is highly disturbed at Demelza's accusations, explaining that she's spoken to Demelza on more than one occasion about her Ryland and even going so far as to arrange visits for the two sisters. Pernella explains that she understands why Demelza might have these fears, pointing out that it was by far not the reunion that the child hoped for as Ryland seemed exhausted and unwilling to talk. She assures the party that Ryland is not a prisoner and is free to leave at any point she wishes.

If pressed, Pernella admits that lately a lot of their residents have fallen ill, have begun to see things, or have been stricken mute. It is concerning but something she attributes to the afflictions various residences carry. To calm any fears the party has, Pernella grants them permission to explore the complex and warns them of the residents that have the most extreme and dangerous afflictions.



Extending the Adventure

If you want to extend the adventure, a mishap occurs within the more dangerous section of the Sword's Respite. Gustov, the druid (**mage**) with the demon arm (use the **ghast** stat block, but the ghast shares a space with the mage and has a movement of 0) has lashed out at her caretakers, killing one of them and setting that portion of the Sword's Respite on fire.

AREA 2: LOUNGE

When the adventurers enter this area, read or summarize:

Stuffed chairs and couches along with a couple of small end tables are grouped in a circle in the center of this room. Several wooden doors line the far wall and hallways extend to the west, north, and east.

The wooden doors lead to single-person bathrooms.

AREA 3: PANTRY

This pantry contains sacks of flour, boxes of dried foods,

and casks for salted fish.

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a small, silver flask of brandy hidden behind the larger casks. No one claims the brandy and the staff ask the adventurers to take it with them as alcohol is prohibited on the campus.

AREA 4: EATERY

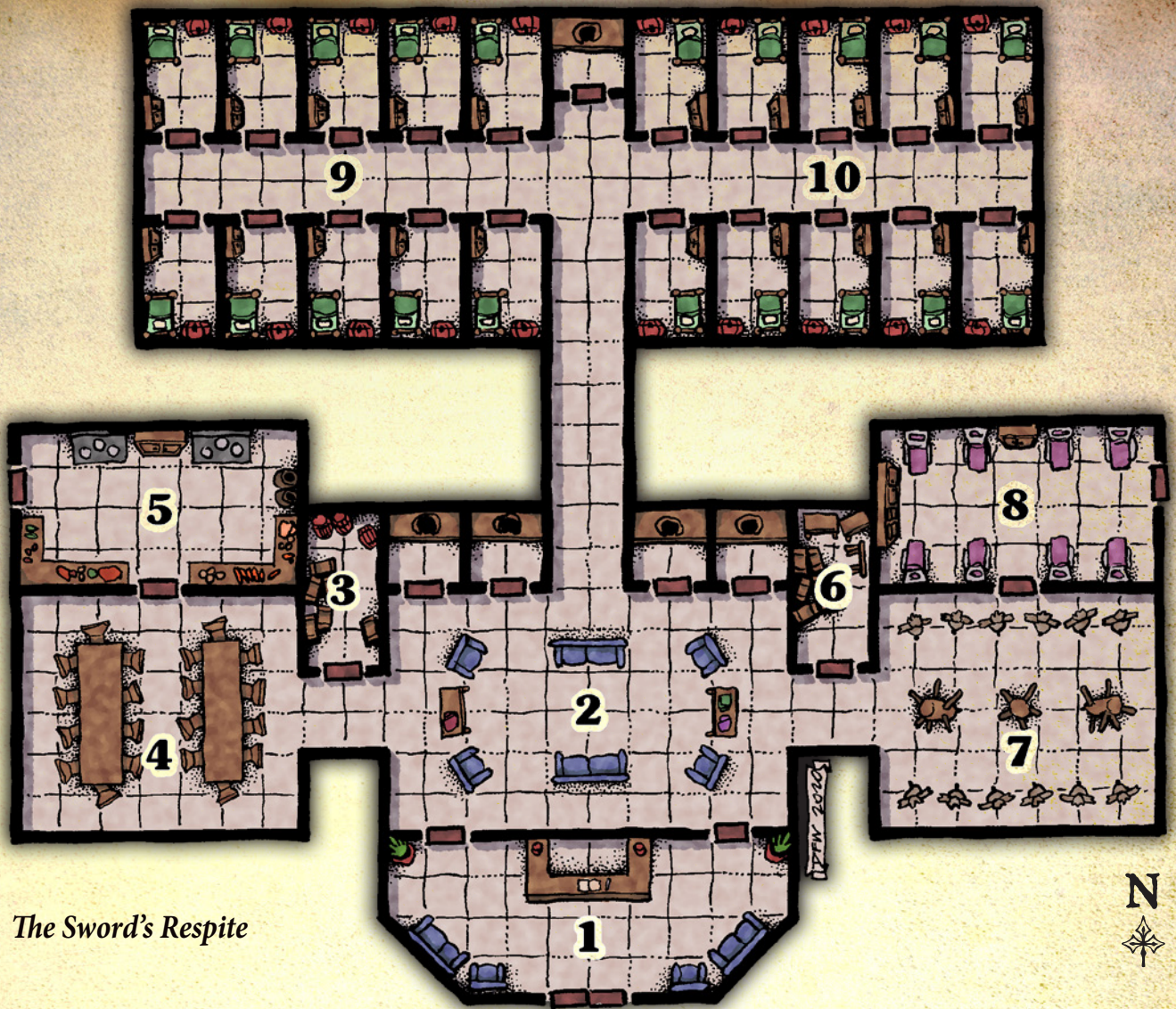
Two large oak tables surrounded by high-back oak chairs fill this room. This is the main eatery, which residents are encouraged to use. Though, if they prefer, meals are delivered to their rooms.

NPC

Ryland Sable (NG female half-elf **guard**) — Once a noteworthy warrior, years prior Ryland was cursed by a devil lord. The curse manifested as the writhing tattoo-like swirls her young sister mentioned previously and fill her with an uncontrollable bloodlust. Unable to remove the curse, she feared for the safety of her family and decided to see if those of the Sword's Respite would be able to help her. A daily dose of a special herbal tea sates her bloodlust.

When the party meets Ryland, she is sitting at a long table in the Eatery, sipping her special tea while pruning a small bush and stroking its tiny flowers. She smiles empti-





The Sword's Respite

ly at the group, not speaking to them unless spoken to and her answers are as short as possible. She struggles to find words at times, and when this happens, she unconsciously pinches one of the bright red flowers off the bush. Ryland has been a victim of one of the skittering haunts that live in the cavern below, having slowly been losing parts of herself in the process. She mumbles constantly about how she lives within the walls, eating the memories of those in the complex and how she plans to destroy herself to save those she loves. Eventually, she mentions the cavern beneath the building and how she followed herself through the walls and the floor to discover her secret. With enough prompting, Ryland instructs the adventurers on how to find the cavern, telling them to look under the bed in the northeast bedroom.

AREA 5: KITCHEN

Along the far wall, a tall shelf containing spices and herbs sits nestled between wood stoves.

A door on the western wall leads outside, to a rubbish heap. Long, wrap-around tables, on top of which rest fresh fruits and vegetables and a cured ham, line the rest of the room.

If searched, the adventurers stir up three rats, which scurry past them and into Areas 4 and 5. If the party kills the rats, Pernella thanks them, stating the rats have been a nuisance for several weeks.

AREA 6: STORAGE AREA

The closet is filled with extra wooden chairs and end tables, which are used when the Sword's Respite has game nights. Several board games and roleplaying games are

found in the storage area, too. A resident or two might enjoy playing a game if the adventurers have the time.

AREA 7: FITNESS ROOM

With many of the residents being retired adventurers, the Sword's Respite thought it best to provide them with a means to exercise. This room contains several training dummies and wooden targets, which many of the residents use while reenacting battles from their past. A small rack of wooden swords and clubs hang from the south wall.

Brutok, the half-orc with the leech attached to his head, likes to spend his days in the training room, clubbing away at a straw training dummy until he has battered it into a pile of straw and burlap.

AREA 8: THE ZOO

This section houses the residents still under the effects of a *polymorph* spell. The door on the eastern wall leads to a fenced area where the animals are allowed to nibble on grass, stretch their legs, and frolic.

AREA 9 AND 10: RESIDENT ROOMS

These two areas make up the bedrooms for the guests of the Sword's Respite. Each bedroom contains a small chest, a small bookshelf, and a feather mattress dressed with cotton bedding.

Some of the rooms are vacant, while others may contain a random resident (see Residents of the Sword's Respite). Ehorin (see sidebar), who must be encountered, is in one of the occupied rooms.

Small Chests: If the characters search a room, there is a 50% chance that its chest is locked. If locked, a successful **DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** opens the lock. Each chest has AC 12, 20 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

The chests contain anything you like. You could even add clues or maps which tie to your campaign.

You may roll on your favorite random treasure table, or use the below treasure suggestions:

- A stuffed baby doll toy.
- A shaving kit.
- A leather purse containing five platinum pieces.
- A new pair of highly polished black dress shoes.
- A jar of pickled cabbage.
- A silvered shortsword.

NPC

Ehorin (CN male halfling **bandit captain**) — Ehorin was a jovial halfling and had friends in surprising places. Drawn to the high seas, he ran a successful pirating and smuggling operation for years until he ran afoul of a coven of sea hags. He survived the encounter but was left completely blind. Though his magical eye patch no longer helps him, he wears it for appearances, frequently moving it from eye to eye as if that would help his sight.

Unfortunately for Ehorin, he was one of the first victims of the skittering haunts that reside underneath the complex. As such he has since perished, his memories completely drained, his body eaten by one of the monster's swarms and replaced using the web of mimicry ability. With a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, a thin sticky tether is noticeably rising from a cracked floorboard under the bed, connecting to Ehorin. Those that succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** notice the faint smell of rot in the air. If the web is cut, a handful of spiders disappear quickly into the floorboards. Those characters with keen eyes have the disturbing feeling that they had tiny humanoid faces.



AREA II: HAUNTING THE HUNTED

Having explored the building and spoken to the residents, the characters need to descend below to remove the true threat to the home and its inhabitants once and for all. The entrance to the cavern is located under the bed in the northeast bedroom in Area 10.

Within the cavernous chamber, sound echoes eerily as water drips irregularly nearby. In the center of the room is a large, purple, pulsing monstrosity. Too many spindly legs jut out in all directions from its bulbous body and a bleeding gash splits its body in two. Delicate strands of an oily web shoot outwards, disappearing into various cracks and crevices of the cavern.

GENERAL FEATURES

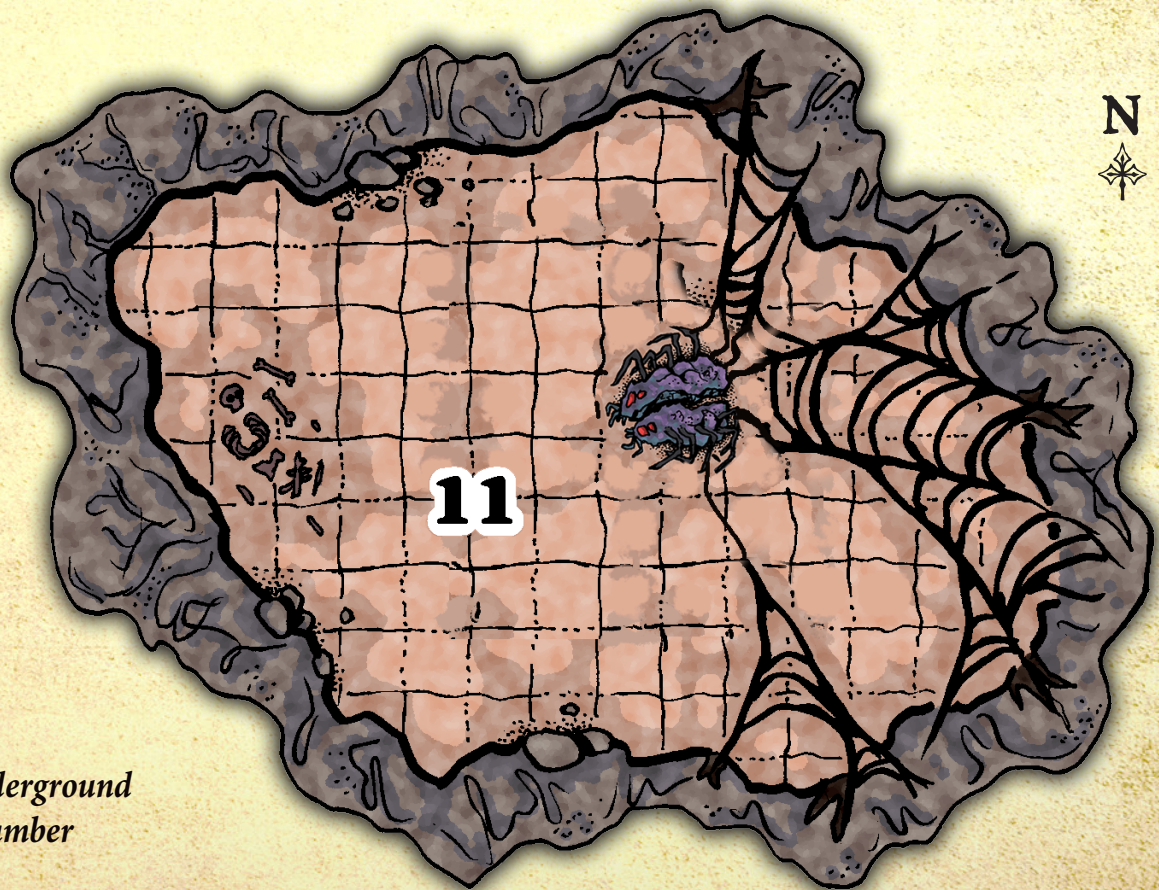
This irregular cavern chamber is 60 by 70 feet with a 100-foot tall ceiling. The area is faintly lit by small fissures in the ceiling that lead to the building complex above. The floor and the walls are smooth; a response to the creatures'

many legs running from one area to another.

The true threat is two **skittering haunts** that live underneath the building, having been accidentally brought to the Sword's Respite when they were tiny memory spiders. Once they became large enough, they slowly began feasting on the inhabitants using their web of mimicry and memory syphon abilities.

Characters that succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** have heard rumors of foul experiments that created highly intelligent creatures that feed off the souls and loneliness of their victims.

Once the characters are within the haunts' range they attack, knowing that this group poses a threat to the easy and pampered living they have secured. As they fight, the creatures often use their web of mimicry to transform a web into someone the adventurers have met during their investigation. These simulacra plead with the characters to leave them alone, trying everything in their power to distract and cause confusion. They do things such as cry when hit or angrily yell, reminding the characters of any blossoming friendships.



Underground Chamber

USING THE SIMULACRA

When the simulacra plead with the adventurers, have each adventurer within 5 feet of the simulacrum make a **DC 12 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failed save, the adventurer has disadvantage on their next attack roll.

Being highly intelligent, if things begin to go poorly for the haunts, they attempt to flee deeper into the unknown cavern complex. If the haunts are unable to flee and are killed, they turn into a liquid goo upon their death.

Scaling Suggestions

Very Weak: Remove one of the skittering haunts and the ability to use *Expel Swarm*.

Weaker: Replace one of the skittering haunts with a reskinned ankheg that appears to be a larger version of one of the memory swarm spiders.

Stronger: The two skittering haunts have max hit points.

Using Tome of Beasts

The Skittering Haunt can be substituted with a *Xhkarsh*

REWARDS & TREASURE

EYEPATCH OF VISION

Wondrous item, requires attunement

This is battered eye patch worn by Ehorin was found among the liquid remains of the haunt. While wearing this eye patch, you gain the following benefits:

- Blindsight out to a range of 10 feet.
- You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
- You are immune to magic that allows other creatures to read your thoughts or determine whether you are lying. Creatures can communicate telepathically with you only if you allow it.

CONCLUSION

Should the party defeat the skittering haunts, Demelza is very grateful and promptly pays the agreed upon reward—one crusty and slightly moldy piece of bread and her dirty doll. If the party refuses either, she is elated and gives them a hug, saying when she is a mighty druid, she'll repay them properly.

Pernella is shocked at the discovery of the cavern below the *Respite*, promising that she and others of their order plan to explore the area further to make sure there is no remaining danger. Heartbroken, she states that they will immediately begin to try to find a way to repair the souls of those who fell victim to the skittering haunts. She then respectfully asks the characters to keep what transpired to themselves, explaining that since this complex is the first of its kind in the area, having such an atrocity become common knowledge could jeopardize having similar endeavors. If they agree without prompting, Pernella gives the characters an additional 5 gp each and tells them that if they ever have any issues or ailments, she and the other monks will happily do what they can.

DEVELOPMENTS

Should the GM wish to continue the adventure, the following ideas are stepping stones:

- One of the inhabitants has crucial information but this memory has been eaten by the haunt. They are the confidant of a king or lord and have knowledge of some massive calamity that is about to befall the area. The characters need to find a way to return the missing memory as spells are not working.
- One of the inhabitants is a clone but the haunt has eaten that memory. They are convinced that someone is going around impersonating them and asks the characters to put a stop to it.
- A portion of the haunt was able to escape into some deeper tunnel complex, which the party discovers upon the monster's defeat. What lies within this system of tunnels is anyone's guess.
- Discover the original or future purpose of the *Sword's Respite*. Was it something sinister? Was it something grand that should be restored? What warring political factions have plans for this building?

SKITTERING HAUNT

Large aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +7, Cha +4

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, restrained, stunned

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common plus two more languages

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Expel Swarm. As a bonus action, the skittering haunt's abdomen grotesquely splits open and expels a swarm of spiders, which appear in an unoccupied space within 10 feet of it. The expelled spider swarm wears the faces of those the creature has Memory Syphoned and acts on its own initiative count. After a swarm is expelled, roll a d6. On a roll of 1, the skittering haunt runs out of swarms to expel and loses this trait. If the skittering haunt still has this trait when it dies, 1d4 swarms erupt from its corpse at the start of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The haunt's innate spellcasting ability is its Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

3/day each: *charm person* (as a 5th-level spell), *hold person* (as 3rd-level spell), *poison spray* (as a 5th-level cantrip).

Web of Mimicry. The skittering haunt can extrude a special web that assumes the appearance of one Medium or smaller creature whose memory it has stolen. This simulacrum appears, feels, and sounds exactly like the creature it impersonates, though it smells faintly of rot. The skittering haunt can impersonate 1d4 + 1 different creatures, each one tethered to its body by a strand of oily web that can extend up to 160 feet away. For all practical purposes, the simulacrum is the skittering haunt, meaning that the haunt occupies its space and the simulacrum's space simultaneously. The sticky tether has an AC 10 and 15 hit points and is severed if there is no opening at least 1 inch wide between the haunt's main body and its simulacrum. The simulacrum disappears if the web is severed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The skittering haunt makes one claw attack and uses Memory Syphon.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 5 (2d4) psychic damage.

Memory Syphon. The skittering haunt targets one creature it can see within 15 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take 18 (4d8) psychic damage and have a memory stolen from it, which manifests as a tiny black memory spider with the head of the creature that lost its memory. Constructs, oozes, plants, and undead succeed on the save automatically.

The target has disadvantage on attack rolls and suffers the below for each memory lost:

Lost Memory	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Unconscious for 2 hours

Completing a long rest removes all the above conditions. However, the memory is still lost unless the memory spider is targeted by the *greater restoration* or *wish* spell, after which the memory spider dissipates into a cloud of dust while the target regains its lost memory.

A memory spider can sense the creature whose memory it holds and is friendly toward it.



JE'SONA AHNAOMI

The fastest runner in Queen Richeal's messenger service as a child, Je'Sona was recruited into the Royal Scouts the moment she came of age. Rapidly rising through the ranks, she was gifted her *hunter's gauntlets* after the successful rescue of a foppish prince who was held for ransom by a band of hobgoblins. During her fourth year of loyal service, a sinister betrayal toppled her queen's regime, forcing Je'Sona into exile. Now, Je'Sona travels the lands, picking up work where her skills are needed while doing what good she can for others.

Personality. Confident, strong willed, bright, and compassionate, Je'Sona is slow to trust, but once trust is earned, she is loyal to a fault. Intolerant of bullies, Je'Sona has found herself in more than one scrap defending those who could not defend themselves. Thoroughly competitive, she never backs down from a challenge, embracing both the satisfaction of success and the lessons of failure.

Desires. Je'Sona takes great pride in her talents, especially when they are put to use helping those in need. A wanderer by nature, she has little desire for material goods, and is known to donate payments to local causes, though she is sure to keep enough to enjoy a hearty meal and lodging when the opportunity presents. She hopes, someday, to topple the regime that overthrew her queen. Until then, she'll do what good she can where she can.

HUNTSMAN'S GAUNTLETS

Wondrous item (gauntlets), rare (requires attunement)

While wearing these gauntlets, you may use a bonus action to magically create either a shortbow, longbow, light crossbow, or heavy crossbow which manifests as if it were made of brilliant blue light. In addition, the weapon has unlimited ammunition and the damage dealt is radiant damage. The weapon remains until dismissed as a free action.

JE'SONA AHNAOMI

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 72 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +5, Nature +3, Performance +5, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish, Orc

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Je'Sona can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Keen Senses. Je'Sona has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Sharp Shot. If Je'Sona does not move on her turn she gains advantage on her ranged attacks that turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Je'Sona makes two attacks.

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

Manifested Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) radiant damage.



RACE FOR THE CROWN

By Alan Tucker

7

Estimated run-time: 3 to 4 hours

This adventure is optimized for five characters of 5th level. It features social interaction and combat with rewards for those who don't cross swords first and ask questions later.

BACKGROUND

GM BACKGROUND

Long ago, a demon known as Kazzlezan found its way from its dark pit and ravaged the countryside around where Tonwindale now stands. The residents weren't powerful enough to destroy the demon, but a prophet of the time foresaw a future where the ever-warring tribes of orcs and humans would band together to end Kazzlezan for good. Buoyed by the prospect, a human sage named Tonwin crafted an object which could imprison the demon until the prophesized time arrived. The *Crown of Authority* successfully bound Kazzlezan within a large ruby set in front and the crown was disassembled into three parts. The central piece with the ruby was placed inside the burial tomb of a forgotten king and the other two pieces were gifted to the rulers of the humans and orcs without explanation beyond being items of great importance. Neither side knew the other possessed a similar piece. If all three sections were ever reunited, Kazzlezan would be freed, presumably to be defeated by the combined might of humans and orcs.

Over time, Kazzlezan's prison has weakened to the point where the demon could subtly influence the outside world. It created a rumor regarding the pieces of the crown that, if restored, held the power to utterly destroy the opposing faction. The piece in their possession is the "key" to unlocking the one in the tomb. Both parties believe this to be true and now seek what they understand to

be the "second half" of the crown within the tomb, wary of the other faction attempting to thwart their goal.

PLAYER BACKGROUND

War with the orcs of the Ember Hills has been a way of life for decades for the people of Tonwindale. Now, rumors surrounding an ancient relic have sparked hope that the orcs can be defeated once and for all. All that remains is finding and securing the other half of the relic. Unfortunately, these rumors have spread and it's likely the orcs are trying to locate the object as well to keep it out of the hands of Tonwindale.

Making it Your Own

Race for the Crown is designed to fit into nearly any campaign. Simply substitute Tonwindale and the Ember Hills with two long-warring, neighboring locations in your own world. Don't like orcs, or they don't fit in your setting? No problem! The competing adventuring party of orcs can be any race or faction that makes sense for your setting. Just eliminate or replace the Aggressive trait in the stat blocks and you're done!

PLOT HOOKS

The following ideas can help start the adventuring party along the path.

For King and Country. If one of the characters is from Tonwindale or the vicinity, the city's ruler beseeches them to retrieve the valuable artifact so the people of Tonwindale can finally live a life of peace.

Cold Hard Cash. The leadership of Tonwindale is desperate! They're willing to pay handsomely for a group of adventurers to retrieve an object of great value, but time is of the essence.

Relic. The party comes into possession of a piece of the crown and discovers the other half is hidden in a tomb nearby.

ADVENTURE

MEETING THE LEADERSHIP

Once your desired plot hook is established, it's time to learn the details of the mission. If the characters are unfamiliar with Tonwindale, brief them about the Player Background information above before meeting with the city's leaders. If you are using "Relic" as your hook, skip to A Forgotten Tomb below.

"Thank you for coming." Regent Valessa Erkin sits tall on the throne while young Prince Arex fidgets in his slightly smaller seat next to hers. "I assume you've been briefed on the importance of your task at hand?"

If the characters aren't familiar with the Player Background information, Regent Erkin can summarize it for them. Otherwise, she continues:

"Excellent." She reaches down and pulls a golden half-circlet from beside her seat cushion. "This is our half of the *Crown of Authority*. While it is a priceless relic in its own right, it's main worth right now is being the key to unlock its other half. Once united, the *Crown of Authority* is fabled to grant us the power to defeat our enemies and end this conflict which has gone on for far too long. Reginald Trueheart will bear this piece and accompany you to the tomb." At this, an elderly knight steps forward from the side of the throne room and accepts the gleaming crown fragment, bowing to Regent Erkin.

The regent then bids the party to make haste as she believes the orcs are already plotting to thwart their efforts. She answers any questions they may have, though she seems agitated by any delays. The town provides any mundane supplies and equipment the party requires before they set off.

Reginald Trueheart was a trusted royal guard, now retired. Use the **veteran** stat block for him. He will defend his kingdom's piece of the crown until his last breath and doesn't part with it for any reason outside the tomb. Once inside, if the party has proven trustworthy, he can be persuaded with a successful **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to pass it off to a party member for a sound reason. If he becomes aware of the orcish opposition, he advocates for combat rather than negotiation.



Piece of the
Crown of
Authority

A FORGOTTEN TOMB

The tomb lies beyond a forest, nearly a day's journey from Tonwindale, in a series of foothills adjacent to the Ember Hills. The trip is uneventful, unless the GM chooses to have the party encounter an orcish patrol or some other wildlife along the way.

As daylight begins to fade, you see some hills rise through the trees and know you are close. A booming *whump* you feel in your chest emanates from your objective ahead, followed shortly by a second concussive blast.

The orcs have arrived ahead of the party and set off explosives to block anyone from following them into the tomb to claim the prize.

You break through the last of the trees to see the remnants of a cloud of smoke and dust billowing from a cave entrance mostly concealed by thick brush. The sound of tumbling rocks echoes within.

KAZZLEZAN'S PRISON

Features: Rooms and hallways have 15-foot ceilings unless otherwise noted. All surfaces are made of stone.

Lighting: There is no light source within the underground prison unless stated otherwise in the area descriptions. Characters who do not possess darkvision are completely blind without some source of light.

AREA 1: ENTRANCE

This is no tomb, but the prison of the demon Kazzlezan. Two paths and two trials lay within to test anyone seeking to unite the crown and release the demon in order to defeat it. The trials are one of brawn and one of wit. The orcs chose brawn, and proceeded to cause a cave in of both pathways to prevent anyone from attempting to follow, knowing they could escape using a magical teleportation stone in their possession. Their explosives at the entrance to the trial of wit, however, didn't quite do the job, leaving a small opening for someone to fit through.

Stifling a cough, you enter a dark chamber, made darker by the still-swirling dust and smoke. Loose stone and rubble cover the two far corners of the room and cracks have spidered across the walls and floor from the substantial explosions. Ruined frescoes and ancient carvings decorate the walls. You are unsure of the structural safety of the chamber, but so far it appears to be holding.

A cursory examination of the room reveals the left exit is completely impassable without major excavation efforts. The tunnel on the right side, however, can be accessed with a small amount of work. A mostly broken archway framing the entrance has some runes carved across the top, but the only legible script remaining is the word "wit."

Characters who perform a more thorough search of the room can glean the following with successful **Intelligence (Investigation)** checks. Allow each character who engages in the search to discover something based on their roll.

DC Information Obtained (Cumulative)

- | | |
|----|---|
| 0 | The phrase "Allies Over Enemies" is carved into the floor at the entrance. |
| 5 | The word "wit" is legible in the mostly broken archway on the right side of the room. |
| 12 | The damaged frescoes depict images of war and destruction. |
| 15 | Some of the writings still legible on the walls tell of two trials waiting within. |
| 18 | There is no mention of who, or indeed if anyone, is buried here. |

AREA 2: TRIAL OF WIT

This rectangular room is expertly carved with few evident seams in the stone work. Opposite where you enter, another heavy stone door awaits. The only other features to the chamber are four, 1-foot-wide pillars that occupy each corner, set about 2 feet from the walls. They appear to have carvings on them, but you'll have to get closer to determine what they are.

The carvings are letters and the pillars constitute the trial of wit as detailed below. The room itself has a permanent *antimagic field* and as soon as the last character enters the chamber, a stone slab seals the party inside. They must defeat the challenge to move forward.

Each pillar has four letters carved into it, one on each side. The face of each pillar pointing toward the closest



side wall of the chamber is the “active” letter, as shown by the triangles in the diagram. Currently, the pillars spell the word “LOCK,” starting with the northwest pillar and working clockwise.

The pillars can be twisted in the directions indicated on the diagram, but only one face at a time and once one has been turned, another pillar must be turned before the first one can be turned again. The characters must spell the word “OPEN” for the far door to slide away. Other words, however, have consequences.

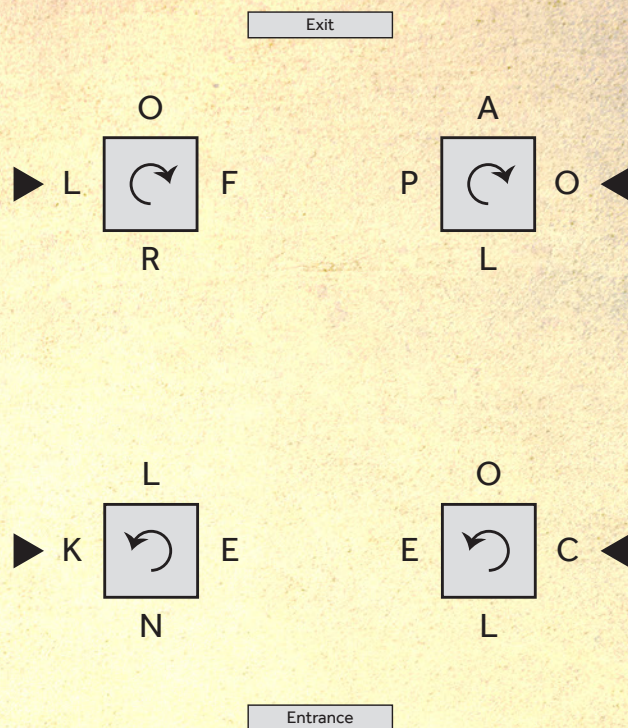
Word Consequence

LOCK	Starting position. Door is locked.
ROCK	The ceiling falls away and rocks crash into the room. The party must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d10 bludgeoning damage, or half as much damage on a success.
FALL	The floor swings open, revealing a pit 30 feet deep. The party must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or fall in, taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage. There is a 3-foot-wide ledge around the edge of the room to stand on. Any characters standing on those spaces when the floor collapses have advantage on the saving throw. Climbing out of the pit requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check .
RACE	Several 1-foot-wide openings appear along the tops of the side walls and sand begins pouring into the room. The party has 10 rounds to solve the puzzle before the room fills completely. If the pit is open, the time is extended to 30 rounds.
OPEN	Puzzle solved and the door slides away, revealing the bridge.

If, after several minutes, the party seems hopelessly stuck, the GM can offer the following hints:

- The character with the highest passive Perception notices small marks on the side walls where the pillars are (indicating the “active” letter).
- The character with the highest Intelligence score realizes the letters when they entered the room spelled “LOCK” when read clockwise, starting with the northwest pillar.
- A character with the scholar background, a bard practiced in poetry, or a similar character realizes there are several words the pillars can spell.

PILLAR PUZZLE DIAGRAM



AREA 3: CHASM AND BRIDGES

As the thick stone door slides away, a breath of cooler air caresses your face. A 5-foot-wide, flat stone bridge recedes into the looming darkness ahead. It spans a yawning chasm and the only sound you hear is an occasional drip of water impacting on rock far below.

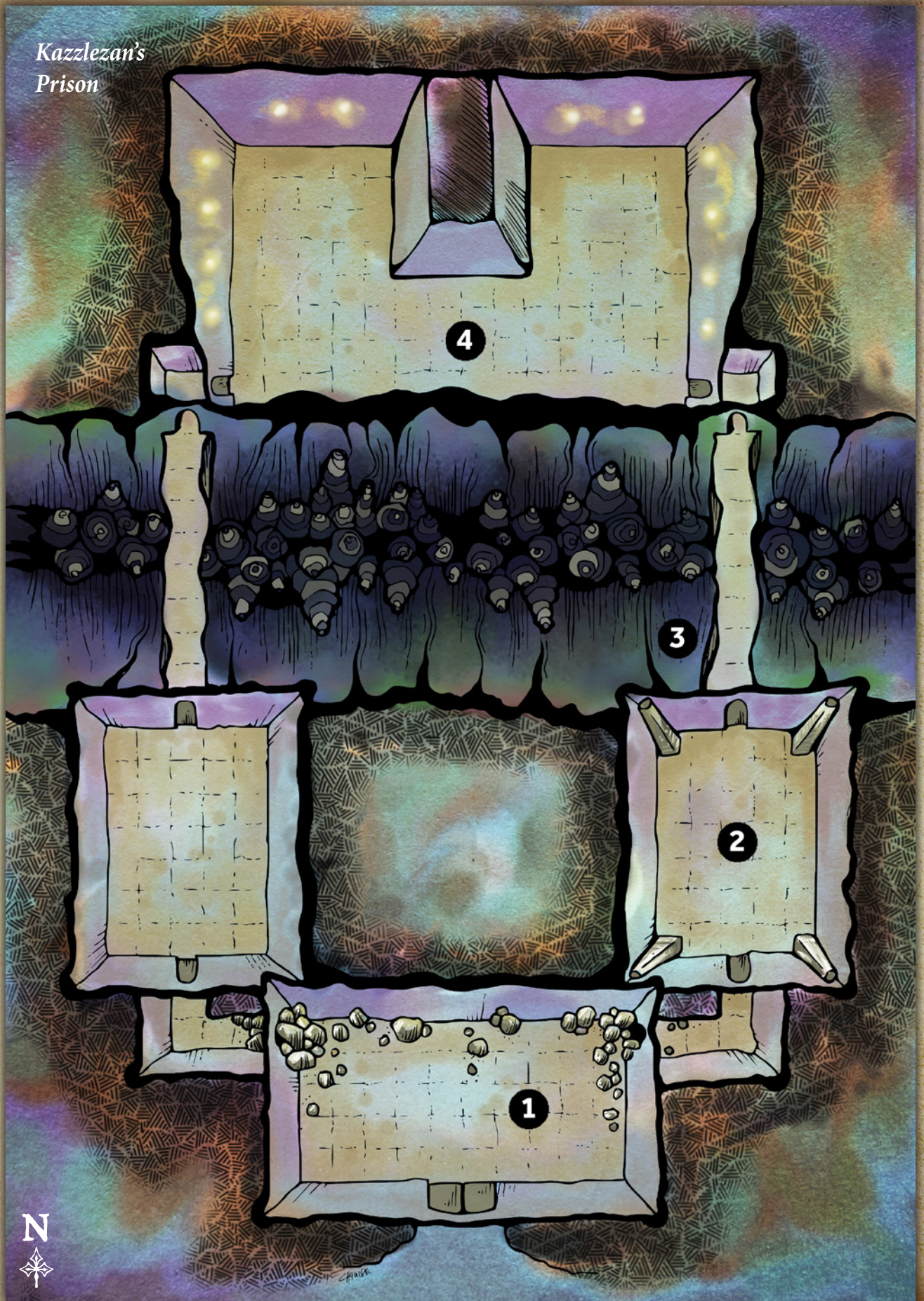
As soon as the first character begins moving across the bridge, the orcish party does the same on their side. The bridges are 90 feet apart, so normal darkvision won't provide a visual. Sound, however, travels extremely well inside the cavern. Any **Wisdom (Perception) checks** relying on hearing are made with advantage. GMs should play up the frightening nature of this encounter and let the players' imaginations run wild.

Stalactites hang from the ceiling, but their ends don't reach any closer than 20 feet from the bridge. The chasm floor is 60 feet below and is filled with stalagmites. Any creature falling takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall and 2d10 piercing damage from the rocks.

The orcish party (see creatures) is confident they are alone and only move with caution because the chasm is an unknown. They are not attempting to be stealthy and do make noise as they begin to cross the bridge. Any character with a **passive Perception score of 12** or higher hears



Kazzlezan's
Prison



the sounds coming from the western side of the chasm.

If the party is not proceeding with stealth, or if any of them fail a **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check**, the orcs hear them and immediately stop to listen and assess the situation. A few moments later, Rala'kah casts *dancing lights*, which he moves slowly across the chasm toward the characters. As soon as any characters are visible, or the characters take action, roll for initiative.

Krim'mok chooses a lightly armored character and immediately fires arrows. The leader, Moh'tak, gives their piece of the crown to Shar'moh and instructs her to sneak ahead and secure the missing piece while they hold off the adventurers. Tor'rag and any other melee members spread out across the bridge and hurl javelins (at disadvantage because of the range). Rala'kah keeps concentration on *dancing lights*, focusing all the lights on the characters' bridge, and casts damaging spells of the GM's choice.

The GM should allow one of the characters to see Shar'moh sneaking ahead across the chasm. They can then choose to continue combat with the orcs, rush across the bridge themselves, or split up as the orcs have done. They still don't know that the orcs have their own piece of the crown.

AREA 4: KAZZLEZAN'S END

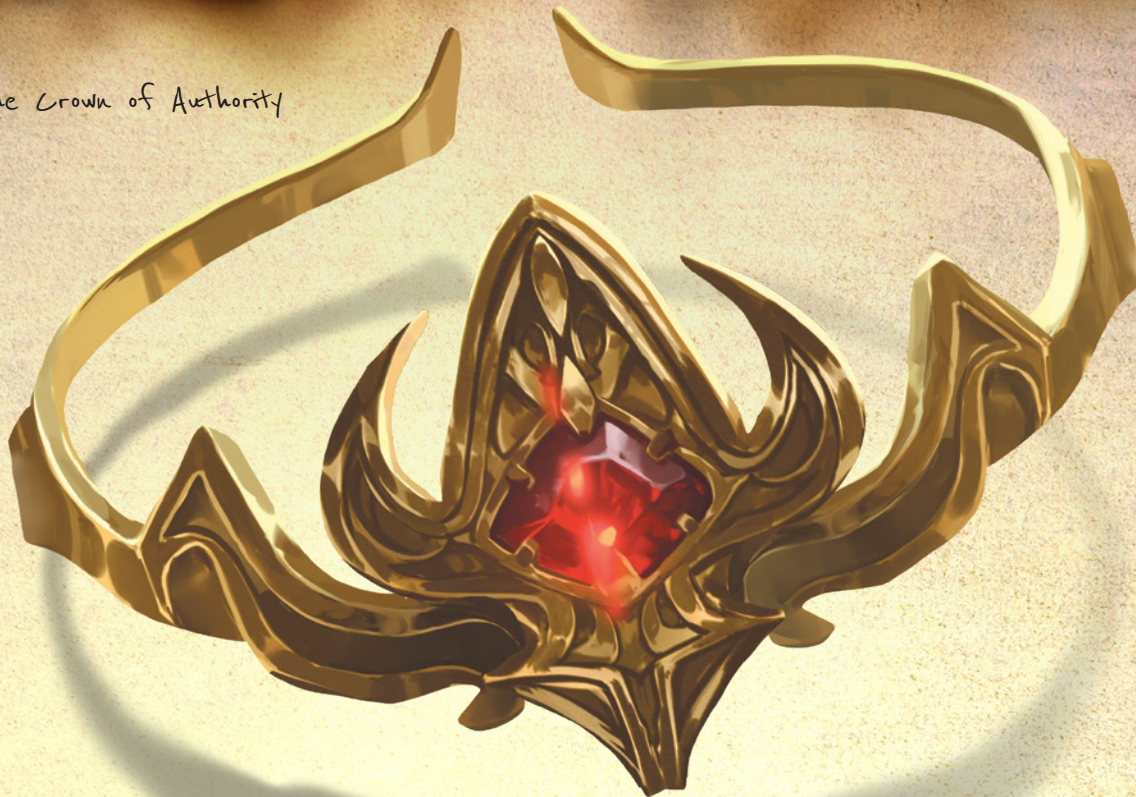
The hallway turns and ends in a simple stone door. It is not locked or trapped and opens with a push. The final room measures 50 feet by 70 feet and the ceiling is 30 feet high.

You see a huge chamber, dimly lit by orange glowing stones placed every 20 feet in the walls. A monolithic block of stone dominates the otherwise empty room on the north wall about 30 feet away from you. A female orc stands in front of it, studying something before she notices your arrival and spins toward you with a familiar-looking golden piece of metal in her hand.

This will play out very differently depending on how the party approached the conflict on the bridges. In any case, it should be very clear to everyone that something is off about the story they were told about their piece of the crown being the key to unlock the other. If Shar'moh is alone in the chamber, she tucks the crown piece in her belt and backs away slowly from the monolith. Characters with a **passive Perception of 12** or higher see another glint of gold about 4 feet off the floor in the center of the stone



The Crown of Authority



block. Shar'moh became confused when she saw the lock required a third piece and did not attempt to insert the one she carries.

The characters can pause and attempt to discuss matters with Shar'moh, and the other orcs if they are present. Or, they can fight and try to take the orcs' piece of the crown. Reginald, if he has survived to this point, is bloodthirsty and eager to face his lifelong enemies, though he is also confused as to why they also have a piece of the crown.

Once the characters approach the monolith, read the following:

Dwarfed by the massive stone before you, a worked piece of gold sits embedded in the rock. An impressive ruby, larger than a gold coin, is set in the center. The gem glints as if it had a life of its own, even in the dim light of the chamber. Below the piece of gold are two carved impressions in the stone, with deep holes on either end. The shapes are an exact match for the crown piece you bear—except, shouldn't there only be one?

If tested, the end of the crown piece slides neatly into its appropriate hole and locks into place beneath the head-piece if fully inserted. The orcs' piece does the same. If both are placed, read the following:

As the second golden piece locks into place, there is an instant of complete silence. Just as you think nothing will happen, a rumble begins deep within the stone. Pieces crack and break off as the whole thing crumbles and falls away. Dust obscures your vision and a stench of burning rot assails your nose. It is then you hear a booming, guttural laugh.

Kazzlezan (see creatures) has been freed and is hungry for destruction and blood. If any orcs are still alive, they set aside any differences with the humans and fight the beast. Working together confers a great advantage to the party: as a part of its imprisonment, Kazzlezan becomes vulnerable to damage after he has been hit by both human and orcish hands.

AFTERMATH

If the characters succeed in defeating Kazzlezan with the help of the orcs, they may have sowed the seeds for a peace between the two peoples and their efforts can be rewarded by both sides of the conflict. It is left up to the DM to decide appropriate treasure to bestow upon the party which best fits your campaign.

If they manage to defeat Kazzlezan, but also destroyed the orcs in the process, their efforts are heralded by the people of Tonwindale. The crown, however, is not what the regent had hoped for to end their conflict with the orcs.

If Kazzlezan prevailed and defeated the party or forced them to retreat, a new frightening threat has been unleashed on the land. Once the demon claws its way out of the prison complex, Kazzlezan begins wreaking havoc on anything in its path. Perhaps this, or another group of adventurers can save Tonwindale and the Ember Hills from the demon.

CREATURES

ORCISH PARTY

Orcish Aggressiveness

The orcs all share a common trait. Add the following to all of their stat blocks: **Aggressive**. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Moh'tak Hurn, Honor Guard Captain

You can use the stats for **knight**, or **gladiator** for Moh'tak, depending on the strength of the party.

Krim'mok, Hunter

You can use the stats for **scout** for Krim'mok, but increase their hit dice and hit points to 60 (11d8 + 11).

Rala'kah, Shaman

You can use the stats for **priest** for Rala'kah. Replace the *light* cantrip with *dancing lights*.

Shar'moh, Rogue

You can use the stats for **spy**, or **bandit captain** (adding the sneak attack trait from the spy) for Shar'moh, depending on the strength of the party.

Tor'rag, Fighter

You can use the stats for **veteran**, or **gladiator** for Moh'tak, depending on the strength of the party.

Using Creature Codex

Rala'kah is a black sun priestess. Replace the *resistance* cantrip with *dancing lights*.

KAZZLEZAN, PRINCE OF CHAOS

Gargantuan fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 222 (12d20 + 96)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	15 (+2)	26 (+8)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances see Varied Resistance trait

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, plus the language of demons

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). When Kazzlezan fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Varied Resistance. Each round, Kazzlezan is resistant to a different type of damage. The GM can roll on the table below at the beginning of each round, or cycle through the damage types round by round.

d6	Damage Type
1	Acid
2	Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing
3	Cold
4	Fire
5	Lightning
6	Thunder

United Vulnerability. When Kazzlezan takes damage from both a human and a full-blooded orc in the same round, it becomes vulnerable to all subsequent damage until the beginning of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kazzlezan makes 4 tentacle slam attacks each turn.

Tentacle Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d4 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Spew Chaos (Recharge 5–6). As a bonus action, Kazzlezan expels a blob of goop at every creature in a 20-foot radius around them. Each blob deals a random type of damage (rolled on the table below) and creatures within the area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (4d6) points of the damage type rolled, half on a success.

d4 Damage Type

1	Acid
2	Cold
3	Fire
4	Lightning

LAIR ACTIONS

If the party has teamed up with the orcs, begin the lair actions on the first round of combat. If the party is taking on Kazzlezan alone, wait until the third round of combat to begin them, or remove them altogether for weaker parties.

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Kazzlezan takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; they can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

Center of Gravity. Kazzlezan becomes a gravity well and every creature within 100 feet of them must make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be dragged 20 feet closer to the demon.

Fog of War. Kazzlezan summons a misty cloud in a 100-foot radius of them which obscures vision and confuses the other senses. Attacks and Dexterity saving throws for creatures other than Kazzlezan are made with disadvantage until the next round when the fog clears.

Quake. Kazzlezan initiates a ground quake requiring all creatures within 100 feet to make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.



Kazzlezan,
Prince of Chaos



THE ORB OF ENVY

By J. A. Headley

Estimated run-time: 2 to 3 hours

This short adventure is designed for five 6th-level characters and features social interaction, exploration, and combat.

BACKGROUND

Alina, youngest daughter of a noble family, showed signs of magical aptitude in her early teens and was apprenticed to Master Wizard Roondar Quinnius. Over the years, the princess and her family exchanged many letters, and Alina often visited. She has served her parents and their court well, but always returned to Master Roondar to continue her studies.

A little over a year ago, Master Roondar took possession of an emerald green scrying orb. Having several such orbs already, he gave this one to Alina to study and learn the arts of divination. Unfortunately, the orb was cursed. The more Alina experimented with it, the more the curse transformed her until she became a green dragon in form as well as temperament. Eventually, she killed Master Roondar and claimed the tower as her own.

PLOT HOOKS

The heroes have gained a reputation for being good folks. Alina's parents haven't heard from their daughter in six months. With rumors of a dragon floating around, they have tasked the characters with bringing Alina safely home.

The heroes hear rumors of a green dragon that recently took possession of a wizard's tower just outside the town of Howling Rock.

The heroes are passing through the town of Howling Rock and hear from the locals about the dragon menacing the area, and the missing noblewoman the townsfolk consider "their princess." The dragon leaves the town alone

except for demanding books, jewelry, and pastries but it's also eating the local sheep, and now the town has run out of books, jewels, and flour.

The heroes witness the green dragon fly overhead, headed for a foliage-wrapped tower in the distance.

APPROACHING THE TOWER

Four stories of stone tower rise from the surrounding countryside, the crenelations looking like giant gray teeth. Dark green foliage completely wraps the tower, but a well-maintained gravel path leads to the covered doors.

The presence of a green dragon caused all of the plants around the tower to grow thick and twisted, completely covering the door and all the windows. The springy vegetation has an AC of 15, is resistant to piercing damage, and has 30 hp.

Attacking the vegetation disturbs the 2 **shambling mounds** living within it.

GENERAL FEATURES

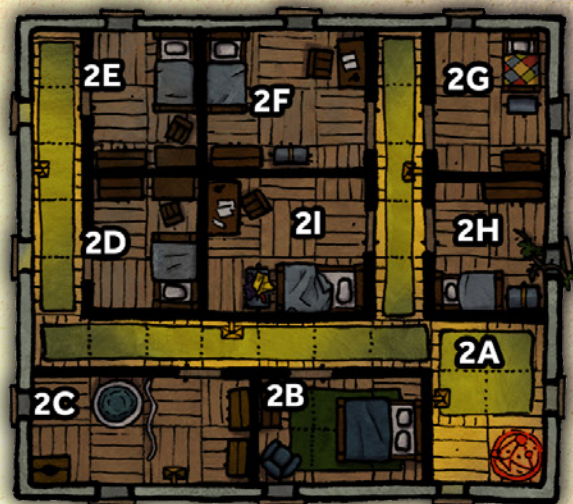
Lighting. Except where noted, the rooms are lit by small brass lanterns with continual flame cast inside them.

Terrain. The first floor has stone walls and floor, and a wooden ceiling. The rest of the tower has wooden floors and ceilings, and interior walls of wood. The ceilings are 10 feet high.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Each shambling mound has 85 hit points

Stronger: each shambling mound has 136 hit points



Roondar's
Tower



Using Tome of Beasts

Replace both shambling mounds with one vine lord, applying the suggested hit points per the scaling suggestions.

AREA 1A THE DINING HALL

The great double doors of the tower open onto the dining hall. A long oaken table with matching benches and chairs occupies the center of the room. An archway in the north wall leads into the kitchen. Farther along, a hearth juts into the room. A cupboard stands against the east wall. In the southeast corner, a circle of glowing runes is inscribed into the floor. Beside this circle stands a halfling man in embroidered robes.

Angus (chaotic good male halfling **mage**), one of Master Roondar's students, stands next to a teleportation circle in the southeastern corner. Angus is completely under Alina's sway, and has orders to guard the tower. He does not attack unless the heroes attempt to use the teleportation circle. He asks what tribute they have brought, and tells the heroes to leave it on the table. He will take it to Her Highness later.

Casting *dispel magic* or *remove curse* (DC 15) on Angus might release him from Alina's compulsion. If the heroes manage to free Angus, the psychic shock renders him unconscious. A character must succeed on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** to decipher the runes on the circle and use it. The circle teleports the user to a similar circle on the second floor (see Area 2A).

AREA 1B THE KITCHEN

A low fire in the hearth bathes the room in its warm, flickering glow. The kitchen smells of herbs, onions, and good stew. A cauldron hangs over the fire, the stew inside steaming.

Two long worktables stand against the north wall. A smaller table stands against the east wall, and a fourth table stands between the archway and the hearth.

Pots, pans, and utensils hang from the ceiling. A copper wash tub is tucked under one of the long tables. A



rack on the far table holds a dozen or so knives of different sizes and shapes.

There is a door in the west wall.

AREA 1C THE LARDER

Boxes, crates, and barrels fill the south side of this room. Affixed to the north wall, shelves hold sacks and buckets; bins of potatoes, beets, and turnips; baskets with apples and pears; jars filled with preserved fruits and vegetables; crocks filled with honey or butter. Smoked hams; strings of onions, peppers, and carrots; and dried herbs hang from the ceiling. A well against the west wall provides the tower with fresh water.

AREA 2A THE ENTRY

There are twelve arrow slits, three on each side of the tower. Unless otherwise noted, the windows are shuttered. If the heroes open the shutters, they find the windows are blocked by the dense vegetation that has grown around the tower. The floors are carpeted, muting footsteps. The bedrooms are dark, the lantern shades closed. The magic circle allows the user to teleport to either the first or third floors.

You appear within a magic circle in the corner of a small open area. The east and south walls each have one window, and corridors lead north and west. Small brass lanterns, placed at regular intervals, keep the corridors brightly lit.

AREA 2B THE GUEST ROOM

This well-appointed room holds a large, canopied bed, a wardrobe, and a sturdy chair with a soft cushion. A carpet covers the floor, and bright tapestries cover the walls. There is a window opposite the door.

AREA 2C THE BATH

The runes allow the user to fill the tub with fresh water, adjust the temperature, and remove the water after bathing. Anyone succeeding on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** can decipher the runes and how to use them.

Not all students master the *prestidigitation* cantrip, so the tub serves as a laundry as well.

A curtain divides this room in two. In the outer half stand two chests of drawers, containing towels, wash cloths, soaps, perfumes, emollients, and salves. The other half of the chamber holds a large, round tub made of smooth stone and etched with runes around the rim. There are two windows in the bathing area, one in the south wall and one in the west wall.

AREAS 2D AND 2E EMPTY BEDROOMS

These rooms are currently unused. The wardrobes and desks are empty. Room 2E has one window in the north wall.

These are sparsely furnished bedrooms. Each one contains a bed, a wardrobe, and a small desk and stool. The rooms are dusty and musty.

AREA 2F ALINA'S ROOM

A bed stands against the west wall. A desk and chair occupy the northeast corner. A wardrobe and chest stand along the south wall. There is a single window in the middle of the north wall.

The dust in this room shows that it hasn't been used or maintained in some time. The clothes in the wardrobe are made of silks, satins, and heavy brocades: clothing suitable for a lady of noble birth. Two sets of common robes, like those of the other students, hang in the wardrobe as well. The chest holds bed linens and a half dozen older journals. The desk drawers hold blank spell books, paper, quills, bottles of dried ink, a wax jack, sealing wax, and Alina's personal seal.

Alina's most recent journal lies on the desk, open to the last entry: "I will have it all!"

A cursory examination of the journal shows that the first entry dates from two years ago. The handwriting is neat and precise. The last dozen entries show the handwriting becoming progressively more erratic.

With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, a character can find that the entries began to change after Alina's second use of the scrying orb. After that, the regular day-to-day musings gradually stop,

The Bell of Shattering



replaced by an obsession with the orb. A few months later, and the entries all consist of things that Alina wants.

With a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, a character finds the following entry: “Huzzah! Simply speak the words, ‘I want to see,’ while concentrating on the person, place, or thing which you wish to scry, and the orb shows it to you!” Decrease the difficulty by 1 for every 15-minute period the character spends searching the journal.

A bed stands against the west wall. A desk and chair occupy the northeast corner. A wardrobe and chest stand along the south wall. There is a single window in the middle of the north wall.

AREA 2G ANGUS’S ROOM

A small bed with a colorful quilt stands against the east wall. A chest sits at the foot of the bed, and a wardrobe occupies the southeast corner. The north and east walls each have one window.

The chest holds bed linens, a pair of worn boots, and a set of sturdy clothes. Two yellow robes hang on the right-hand side of the wardrobe. On the left side are four drawers. The top drawer holds writing supplies: a bottle of ink, several quills, a pen knife, twenty-five sheets of paper, and a wand with a broken crystal. The second drawer holds underclothes, the third holds shirts, and the bottom drawer holds trousers. A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** finds the *bell of shattering* tucked among the underclothes, a set of wood carving tools under the shirts, and a *wand of binding* between the trousers. All of the clothes and furnishings are sized for a halfling.

The *bell of shattering* is a magic item that Angus created. By speaking the command word “Sing,” the holder can cast *shatter* at 4th level. The bell can cast this spell once per day, and recharges at dawn. The phrase, “Command me sing to hear me ring,” is etched around the inside rim of the bell and requires a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to notice.

2H NARISHA’S ROOM

A wardrobe stands against the north wall of this tidy room, a bed against the south wall, and a chest at the foot of the bed. There is a window in the east wall. The shutters are open, and vines intrude into the room.

A wardrobe, a bed, and a chest occupy this room. The chest holds a backpack, a shortbow, and a full quiver of twenty arrows. The backpack contains a change of clothes, a tinderbox, a mess kit, an empty waterskin, and a canvas pouch that smells of herbs. A coil of rope lies beneath the backpack.

The wardrobe holds a *cloak of elvenkind*, a pair of well-used boots, and two sets of blue and green robes.

The top drawer of the wardrobe holds eight small bags, each labeled in Elvish and containing dried plant material. A ninth bag holds a dozen small, black balls that smell of sulfur. The second drawer holds a medicine kit and four *potions of healing*. The bottom drawers hold various underclothes.

For heroes that read Elvish, the bags are labeled as basil, mint, feverfew, willow bark, nightshade, red pepper, valerian, and pennyroyal. The ninth bag is labeled “fireball.”

AREA 2I VINCENT’S ROOM

This room has a bed, a chest at the foot of the bed, and a sturdy desk and chair.

This spacious bedroom looks lived-in. A desk stands against the west wall with a sturdy, well-used chair. A bed rests along the south wall, the covers ruffled. A large chest sits at the foot of the bed, a pile of clothes dumped on top.

A quill, a bottle of ink, and a few sheets of paper lie on top of the desk. The top drawer holds another twenty sheets of paper, three unused quills, and a pen knife. Vincent cast *arcane lock* on the second drawer, which holds Vincent’s current journal and two small diamonds worth 50 gp each.

A character must succeed on a **DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check** to force open the drawer, or a **DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves’ tools** to pick the lock.

The journal contains entries about daily life in the tower, the spells that Vincent is working on or has mastered, and the other students. A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** finds an interesting entry near the end of the entries:

“Alina is getting more and more eccentric. Ever since she started working with that green orb, she’s been touchy. Today she practically took my hand off when I snagged a biscuit from her plate. It was just a tease. Nothing we haven’t done to each other for years. I swear, for a moment, she had golden snake eyes. I wish she’d give up the cursed thing and move on. She’ll never master divinations anyway.”

Vincent cast *arcane lock* on the chest. A character must succeed on a **DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves’ tools** to pick the lock. The chest has an AC of 25 and 10 hp.

The chest holds a set of fine clothes, two yellow robes, a pouch containing five pearls, each worth 100 gp, four scrolls (*acid arrow*, *alarm*, *find familiar*, and *knock*) and an empty *bag of holding*.

Casting *dispel magic* on the locked drawer or the chest dispels the *arcane lock* on that object, reducing the DC of the lock to 15, and reducing the AC of the chest to 15. Casting *knock* opens the lock for 10 minutes.

AREA 3A THE WORKROOM

This large, open room has no windows. Two work benches and a chest with many small drawers stand against the west wall. A 10-foot-wide circle of runes is inscribed on the floor next to the east wall. Two archways in the west wall lead into a library. Numerous small statues are scattered throughout the room, made of crystal, stone, and wood. A large, carved wooden door stands against the north wall.

The students practice spellcraft and alchemy in this large chamber. Strong wards protect the room from mistakes. The wards also protect the contents of the room from damaging spells like *fireball*—any spell that deals damage cast inside or into the room is immediately dispelled.

The magic circle in the southeast corner allows the user

to teleport down to the second floor (see Area 2A).

Affixed to the north wall is an intricately carved magical wooden door, which accesses Master Roondar’s private quarters on the fourth floor.

The large carvings are easy to discern within 20 feet. The left panel portrays a boar in a forest. The top panel portrays a howling wolf. The right portrays a troll in a cave. The bottom portrays an ape in a vine-covered tree.

When any creature comes within 15 feet of the door, it activates a puzzle trap. Immediately upon activating the trap, four **giant boars** appear to guard the door. On initiative count 20 each round thereafter, other creatures appear, replacing the previous guards. They don’t attack unless they are attacked first, or unless someone moves to within 5 feet of the door without the proper key.

The creatures that appear, in order, are:

- 4 **giant boars**
- 4 **winter wolves**
- 3 **trolls**
- 2 **giant apes**

The keys are four wooden statuettes corresponding to the four types of guardian creatures. They are scattered about the room along with statuettes of crystal and stone.



Each key requires an action and a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation)** check to spot. Each round a character spends looking for the keys, the DC is reduced by 1 for that character only.

As an example, on the round that the wolves appear, a character may approach the door with the statuette of the wolf and place it onto the small shelf on the door next to the wolf carving. They may then step through the door, which sends the statuette back to its place in the room, and resets the door. If all four statuettes are placed on the door, the creatures disappear and the door is unlocked until the statuettes are removed.

AREA 3B THE LIBRARY

Long floor-to-ceiling bookshelves fill the middle of this room, and line the west wall. Two desks sit against the north wall, and another two against the south wall. Comfortable chairs sit in the northwest and southwest corners. A small work table and a pair of chests with small drawers stand against the east wall.

This is the student library. The two chests contain handwritten, alphabetized cards detailing the contents of the library.

Narisha (lawful good female elf **mage**) is in the library studying when the heroes teleport to this floor.

Narisha doesn't notice the heroes until they either activate the door or enter the library. If they activate the door first, Narisha joins the battle by flanking the heroes through the south archway. She fights to disable the heroes so they can become Alina's minions. If the heroes enter the library first, they can face Narisha alone, and possibly dispel the charm that keeps her loyal to Alina. The DC for *dispel magic* or *remove curse* is 15.

If the heroes manage to free Narisha from Alina's influence, Narisha tells them that Alina is the dragon and that the orb is responsible. *Remove curse* has been ineffective. Master Roondar devised a plan to free Alina from the curse by shattering the orb using a magic bell. Narisha believes Angus succeeded in creating the bell, but was too late to use it. If they can keep Alina distracted long enough, they can use the *bell of shattering* on the orb and free Alina, and the entire tower, from the curse. Narisha helps them through the door, and assists them in their bat-

tle against Alina. She casts *mage armor* on herself before leaving the library.

When the heroes meet with Vincent (chaotic neutral human **mage**), Narisha casts *hold person* (spell save DC 14) on him. Narisha exhausts her 2nd-level spell slots trying to hold Vincent.

AREA 4A MASTER ROONDAR'S CASTING CHAMBER

In the center of this large chamber, a summoning circle is inlaid into the wooden floor. An alchemist's bench stands against the north wall, next to the magic door leading down to the library. There is a door in the west wall, a cold fireplace a few feet from the door, and several small work tables farther along. An overstuffed chair sits against the south wall, a side table beside it. There is a teleportation circle in the southeast corner. There are three windows, one each in the north, east, and south walls.

AREA 4B MASTER ROONDAR'S BEDROOM

The furnishings here are not gnome-sized, but they are a well-made matching set. There is a window in the west wall.

This spacious, comfortable bedroom has a carpeted floor. A tapestry depicting a forest scene covers the south wall. The fireplace from Master Roondar's work room extends into his bedroom. A large bed stands against the west wall, next to a window. Below the window is a step stool. On the other side of the bed sits a night table with a brass lantern on it, the shade closed. At the foot of the bed sits a carved chest. A matching wardrobe stands against the north wall.

The chest holds bed linens. The wardrobe holds gnome-sized clothing. The night table holds two pair of spectacles and Master Roondar's latest journal.

The journal contains notes and thoughts about his research, his students, his daily routines, and things the tower needs. The last page reads, "I believe we found a way to destroy the orb. Unexpectedly simple. Though the cursed thing is invulnerable to physical damage and so far has resisted all spells cast at it. Narisha noticed that it reacted to the thunder of the recent storm. I believe if we



find the proper frequency, we can shatter it. Perhaps if we focus the spell on a bell....

“The other students have fallen under some sort of charm. Is this a draconic ability of which I was unaware? Or is this a side effect of the orb. I hope Angus has finished the bell.”

A tapestry in the middle of the south wall covers a secret, locked, and warded with an *arcane lock*. A character must make a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** to find the door. A character must make a successful **DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves’ tools** to unlock the door. If a character casts *dispel magic* or *knock*, the door is unlocked.

If the heroes did not find the *bell of shattering*, lower the DC to open the secret door to 15. The spell scrolls inside are meant to help the party in their battle with Alina. If the heroes have freed Narisha, she offers to cast *knock* for them. Narisha does not know the secret room exists; she has never been inside Master Roondar’s room before.

AREA 4C MASTER ROONDAR’S PRIVATE LIBRARY

Master Roondar kept his old journals here along with books and notes on his most dangerous research. Alina took most of the books, leaving the library virtually empty.

This concealed chamber is a library. A chair sits in the northeast corner, and an alchemist’s bench stands against the east wall, both gnome-sized. A chest sits in the southwest corner. There is a 10-foot-long, floor-to-ceiling bookcase, but the shelves are mostly empty.

The chest is a **mimic**, brought here for Master Roondar to study.

REWARDS & TREASURE

On the bookshelves in Master Roondar’s library are four spellbooks containing the following spells: *dispel magic*, *misty step*, *remove curse*, and *shatter*.

AREA 5D SHOWDOWN WITH THE DRAGON PRINCESS

Since changing into a dragon, Alina has been living here. She has gathered a modest “treasure” pile consisting mostly of costly fabrics, books, and plants. Hidden in the pile is a leather coin pouch with a total of 278 gp.

A crenelated parapet encloses the top of the tower. The merlons stand six feet tall, giving plenty of cover to archers, or mages, fighting from the battlement. A pile of fabric, books, and plants lies clumped in the northwest corner. In the northeast corner stands a human man in yellow robes. And in the southwest corner lies a large, green dragon, one claw curled protectively around a small table with an emerald green orb.

Vincent (chaotic neutral human male **mage**) is standing in the northeast corner, waiting for orders from his princess.

In the southwest corner, a small table holds the *orb of envy*. Alina, currently a young green dragon, is gazing into the orb when the heroes arrive.



Vincent

THE ORB OF ENVY

This is a 10-inch diameter sphere made of green and gold crystal. Speaking the command phrase, "I want to see," allows the user to cast *scrying* on a person, place, or thing the user desires. The orb can only be used once per day in this manner, recharging at dawn.

The orb appears fragile but is as strong as mithril. It has an AC of 21, and 60 hp. It is immune to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks, and to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage. It is resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from magical weapons, and resistant to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and radiant damage. However, it is vulnerable to thunder and force damage. Additionally, using the *bell of shattering* within 10 feet of the orb causes the orb to immediately shatter.

Curse: The orb is cursed and attuning to it extends the curse to you. Each time you use the orb to scry you become more obsessed with the acquisition of precious things. What is considered precious is not necessarily valuable in terms of gold. After six attempts to use the orb, you become a green dragon who is completely absorbed with using the orb to collect more precious things. The curse is lifted only if the orb is destroyed, or if you fall to 0 hit points. Upon lifting the curse, you immediately revert to your true form, and fall unconscious for 1d4 hours.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Alina has an AC 17 and 100 hit points

Stronger: Alina has an AC 17 and 120 hit points

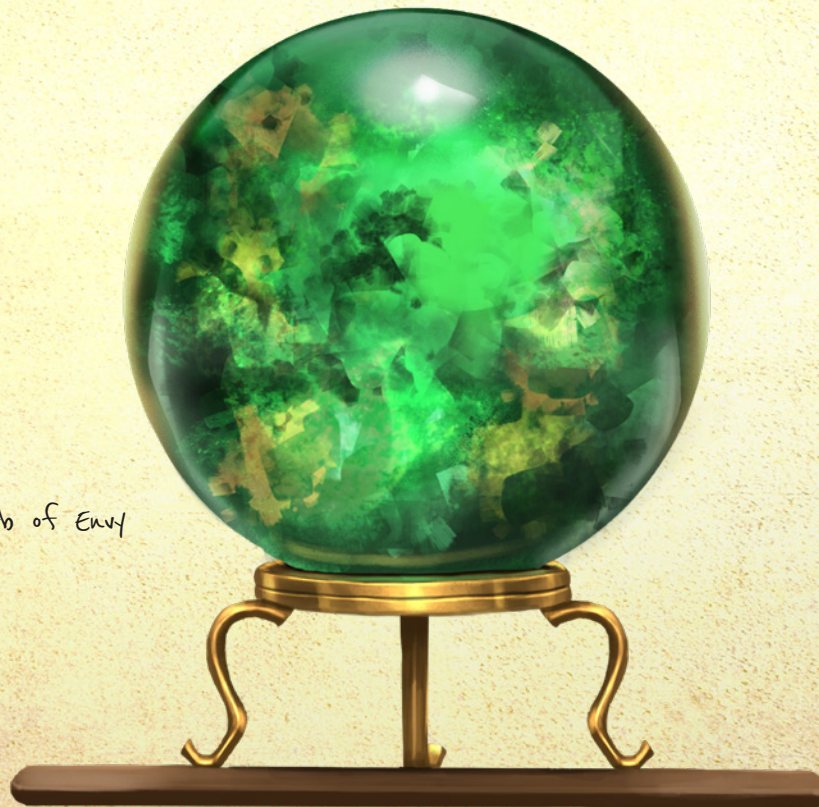
Very Strong: Alina has an AC 18 and 145 hit points

REWARDS & TREASURE

Grateful to the heroes, Alina and the students offer their meager possessions (detailed at the end of Section 2 above) and the pouch of 278 gp as reward, which may lead to an awkward moment if the heroes have already looted the tower. They also offer their spellcasting services, one free spell per day, per hero.

The town council rewards the heroes with a feast, a guarantee of lodgings any time the heroes are in Howling Rock, and a 10% discount on all purchases. Alina's parents also grant the heroes lodgings in Alina's home city and 500 gp to each hero. They might also grant a knighthood or honorary title at the GM's discretion.

The Orb of Envy



CONCLUSION

If the heroes destroy the *orb of envy*, Alina immediately reverts to her true form and falls unconscious. The surviving students fall unconscious as well, freed from the influence of the orb.

When Alina and the others finally wake, they remember all that has happened and all they have done. They begin to make amends by returning as many things to the town as they are able, and paying for what cannot be returned. Alina casts *sending* to her mother to assure her family that she is safe and well. She begins making arrangements to have Master Roondar resurrected.

Over the next few weeks, the plants around the tower return to normal, as does everyday life in the surrounding countryside.

If the heroes slay the dragon, she immediately reverts to her true form, and the curse is finally broken. The surviving students fall unconscious. If the heroes revive Alina, the adventure concludes as above. If the heroes allow Alina to die, Alina's parents refuse to pay the gold that was promised, using the funds to pay for a *resurrection* spell instead.

If the heroes flee, Alina's power grows and the curse eventually extends to the town, turning Howling Rock's citizens into Alina's minions. Alina's parents, believing the dragon killed their daughter, sends a stronger group of heroes to slay the dragon.

If the heroes are defeated, Alina or one of the surviving students stabilizes any unconscious characters. The heroes wake under the influence of the *orb of envy*, believing they owe their allegiance to their princess, Alina. Eventually, another group of heroes will assault the tower and, hopefully, free the inhabitants from the curse.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the heroes destroy the *orb of envy* and free Alina and the other students, the town of Howling Rock makes a great base of operations.

After Master Roondar is resurrected, the heroes can safely retreat there, rest, and regroup. Master Roondar frequently needs rare ingredients and items, and could be a source of quests for the heroes. Narisha is an accomplished adventurer and could be sent with the heroes. The Master is certainly curious about the origins of the cursed orb. As an ongoing campaign, he could enlist the heroes's aid in discovering where the *orb of envy* came from, who created it, and why.



ATHENAEUM OF DUST

By Alex Clippinger

Estimated run-time: 2 to 4 hours.

This adventure is intended for four 6th-level characters and features social interaction and combat. Scaling options are provided for stronger and weaker parties.

BACKGROUND

Centuries ago, the archmage Amora sought to hide her private library inside a cleverly-disguised demiplane. She constructed a library surrounded by an endless desert and called it her Athenaeum of Dust, the entrance disguised as a book of the same name. After Amora's death, the Athenaeum of Dust began to deteriorate. With a will of its own the book began capturing all manner of creatures that crossed its path, suspending them in its demiplane library as their life-force kept the library from winking out of existence.

Map Note

Due to the size of the Athenaeum, this adventure may be better played as theater of the mind. We've included maps for reference, which you might be able to use during your game session.

PLOT HOOK

This adventure can occur anywhere, as the Athenaeum of Dust can appear in any book shop or collection of tomes in the world. This brown leather-bound book is unusually rough to the touch, its spine and cover stamped with its title in gold lettering.

If the characters are together when they find the book, it transports them immediately; otherwise, it might keep showing up in a character's path or possessions until the book senses a 'sufficient' number of targets

to draw into itself.

Read or paraphrase the following:

A torrent of sand erupts from the book's pages, buoyed upon an arid wind that sweeps the grit into a whirlwind around you. The ground drops sickeningly away as the dust obscures your vision and the cyclone sends you tumbling head over heels. You land sprawled on a warm stone floor as the sandstorm subsides.

The characters have arrived in the Athenaeum of Dust, sprawled on the floor directly in front of the circulation desk (see below).



The Athenaeum of Dust



The Rotunda

1. Circulation Desk
2. Stack Labyrinth
3. Rotunda, Second Level
4. Exit Doorway



GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ATHENAEUM

The Athenaeum is a self-contained demiplane and has the following features:

- A creature in the demiplane that finishes a long rest must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw** or have its hit point maximum reduced by 2 (1d4) as the Athenaeum feeds on its life-force. A creature whose hit point maximum is reduced to 0 by this effect crumbles to sand. Piles of sand can be found randomly throughout the Athenaeum, marking where previous victims succumbed to the demiplane's effects.
- There are no day or night cycles in the demiplane, only a constant warm light and a cloudless, sunless sky.
- Spells or other magic used to teleport to another plane or a location other than the Athenaeum automatically fail.
- There are no doors out of the Athenaeum. If a

creature escapes the building, they find themselves surrounded by featureless desert. A creature walking in any direction will find themselves back at the Athenaeum in 1d4 hours.

- Creatures in the Athenaeum don't require food or drink to survive.
- The magic that preserved the library's contents has faded over decades; most of the books are collections of blank pages with occasional legible words or diagrams. Books that leave the Athenaeum crumble to sand.

THE ROTUNDA, GENERAL FEATURES

The center of the Athenaeum is a massive circular room with a glass-domed ceiling. The rotunda acts as the library's general collection of biographies, historical accounts, and other nonfiction works. It is the largest section of the library and has two levels, unlike the Athenaeum's other wings.

Lighting. The Rotunda is brightly lit by the warm light streaming in from its glass dome.



THE ROTUNDA, CIRCULATION DESK

Central to the rotunda is the circulation desk, which is staffed by a library automaton named Dewey.

Portrait. On a decorative half-column behind the circulation desk is a detailed portrait of Amora herself, a stern-faced elderly human woman. The hood of a silver robe pools around her shoulders and a distinct gold pendant gleams just below her neck.

Dewey. This library automaton tries its best to keep the fading books organized and sees itself as a helpful resource for newcomers. It has served the Athenaeum since the days of Amora. It can explain the nature of the Athenaeum, the library's origin, and (with reluctance) the degradation and curse-like nature of the demiplane.

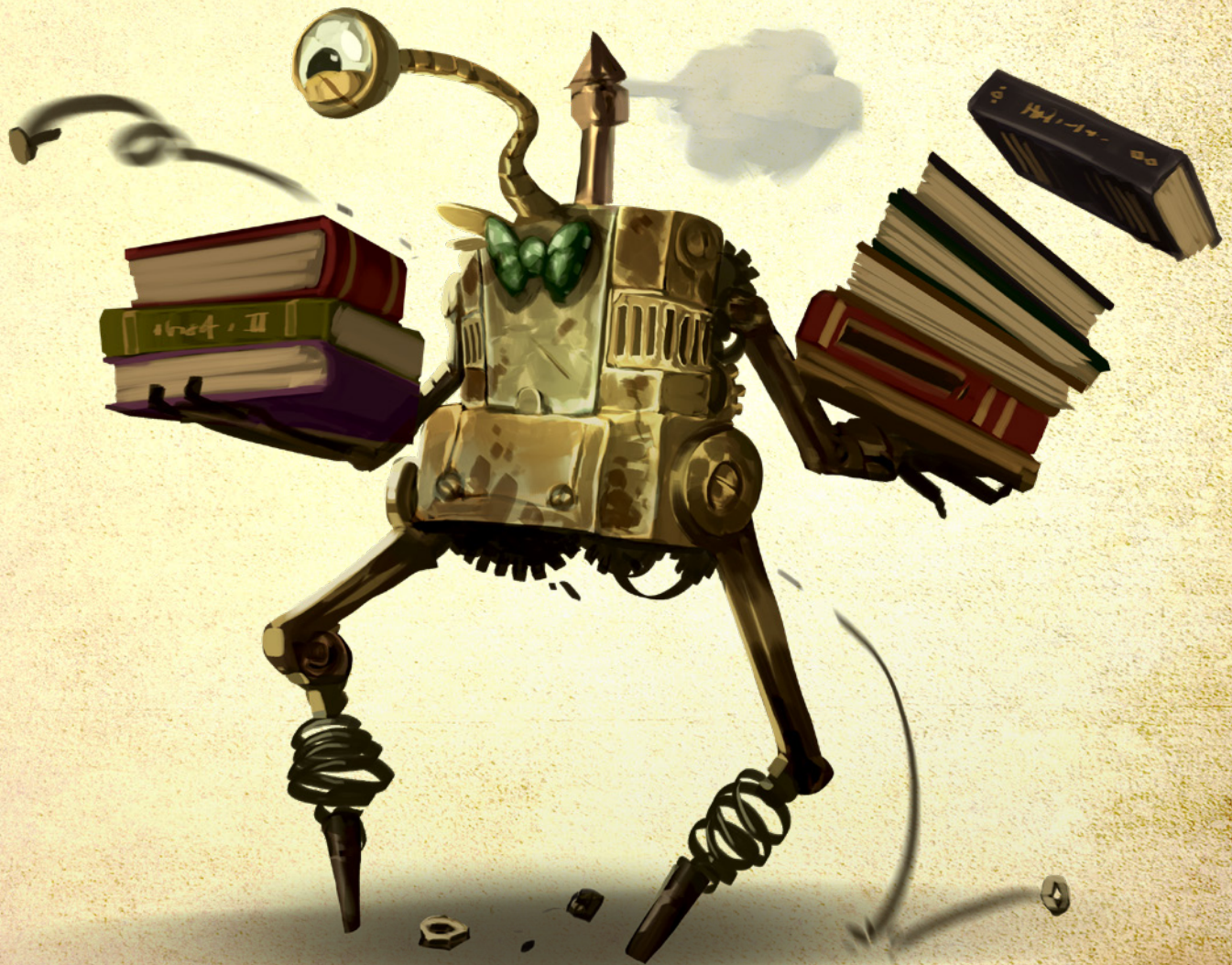
Dewey is preserved by the Athenaeum; if Dewey is destroyed, it reappears within 3d4 minutes, probably annoyed.

Details About Residents. Dewey shares that there are other creatures trapped in the Athenaeum:

- An 'ill-tempered' dragon lives in the east wing reading room.
- Auntie Waxspinner has made a home in the west wing of the library.
- Auntie and the dragon are the longest still-living residents in the Athenaeum.
- A dwarf hunter and his pets, and a small group of kobolds, were living in the stack labyrinth the last Dewey knew about it.

Amora's Key. Dewey has been looking for newcomers to help it with a problem; the other automaton, Dickinson, went rogue years ago and now stalks the stack labyrinth. Dewey would like to see Dickinson put out of its misery.

Dickinson



Dewey offers the key to the exit as a reward, but sadly notes that it won't do the characters much good, as only Amora is allowed to approach the door (see The Rotunda, Second Level).

THE ROTUNDA, STACK LABYRINTH

The enormous rotunda collection is spread out among 10-foot-high shelves that surround the circulation desk in haphazard rows and pathways. It takes 30 minutes to navigate through the stacks when going from the circulation desk to a particular edge, or to navigate 90 degrees around the perimeter of the rotunda to another point on the perimeter.

Stack Residents. Characters wandering through the stacks for at least an hour are likely to stumble across one of its residents. Characters taking a short or long rest in the stacks have a 10% chance of one of these residents stumbling across them.

Kobolds. Nogge the Pagemaster is a kobold chieftain wearing a cape made of woven book pages and leather armor made of book covers. She is accompanied by a **kobold alchemist** and two **kobold trapsmiths**.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Remove the kobold alchemist

Stronger: Add 1 kobold alchemist

Nogge possesses Amora's gold pendant, which can aid a character's attempt to fool the **possessed pillars** on the rotunda's second level. Nogge gives the characters the pendant if they kill Rolbun the dwarf.

Rolbun. This **wolf reaver dwarf** sees his imprisonment in the Athenaeum as a test of his prowess. He's currently occupied with hunting down Nogge and the other kobolds in the stacks. He's accompanied by three **dire wolves** under his command. Rolbun has a very individualistic view of the Athenaeum and prioritizes personal gain or survival over any alliance he makes.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Rolbun has one dire wolf

Stronger: Rolbun has four dire wolves

Dickinson. Formerly the other library automaton of the Athenaeum, Dickinson has transformed into a berserk **clockwork abomination** after becoming possessed by a fiendish entity that the *Anathaeum of Dust* book drew into the demiplane.

THE ROTUNDA, SECOND LEVEL

The second floor consists of a wide balcony around the periphery, lined with tall shelves and intermittent alcoves housing art objects such as sculptures, pottery, and paintings. Characters can access the second level via staircases found near the entrances of both the east and west wings of the Athenaeum.

EXIT DOORWAY

The exit to the Athenaeum lies at the end of a short hallway that extends from the north side of the second-level balcony. The hallway is 30 feet wide and 40 feet long, ending with a pair of Large statues flanking a blue wooden door. The hallway radiates a magical aura that suppresses illusion and invisibility.

Both statues are **possessed pillars** that animate when anyone approaches the door, and move to block anyone from interacting with the door unless they are accompanied by Amora. They attack anyone who continues to approach or attempts to open the door without 'Amora' present. They become suspicious if a character without the key attempts to pick the lock and fails (see Opening the Door below). If the door is opened and the statues realize the ruse, they may attempt to force the door closed again.

Fooling the Pillars. The statues don't know Amora is dead but are programmed to allow the door to be opened only in her presence. Characters can fool the statues into believing Amora is present in the following ways:

- A character with a wax mask of Amora's face from Auntie Waxspinner, her silver robe from Baleblaze's lair, and her golden pendant from Nogge the Pagemaster arouses no suspicion.
- A character with the silver robe but no mask can have the hood up, but will become suspicious to the statues within 1 round. If a character succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence check using a disguise kit** to make the character with the robe look like Amora, the character doesn't arouse suspicion as long as they can quickly open the door.

Opening the Door. The blue door is locked. Dewey has the key to the door, which it keeps in its extra-dimensional repository. The lock can be picked with a successful **DC 21 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**. The lock re-engages if the door is closed.

Behind the door is a veil of gray mist. Any creature passing through it (or reaching through it, for larger creatures) escapes the Athenaeum and reappears adjacent to the *Athenaeum of Dust's* current location.



EAST WING AND READING ROOM

The far end of the east wing is a reading room, where the **young flame dragon** Baleblaze makes his lair.

GENERAL FEATURES

The reading room has the following features:

Lighting. The entire reading room is dimly lit thanks to the large fireplace. A thin layer of ash coats all windows.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. Rows of reading tables and chairs are burned to ash and book carts lie in twisted heaps of half-melted metal. The crackle of the blaze in the fireplace fills echoes faintly in the heights of the vaulted ceiling. The smell of burnt wood and paper pervades the air.

Terrain. The stone floor of the library and all intact objects are coated with a thick layer of ash, which moves slightly (see below).

Magical Repair. No matter how often Baleblaze lays waste to the reading room in a fit of fiery rage, the ashes slowly gather to re-form into undamaged furniture and books.

Occupant. The far end of the room is dominated by a massive stone mantle and fireplace, which is permanently lit with merrily-dancing flames. This area of the library is controlled by Baleblaze, a **young flame dragon** who enjoys resting among the flames of the enormous hearth. Baleblaze rages against his imprisonment by laying waste to the reading room with his fire breath, and finds it even more maddening that the room is usually repaired within a day.

The Silver Robe. One of Baleblaze's few prized treasures is a silvery hooded robe that belonged to Amora. The robe is immune to fire, so Baleblaze keeps it in the back of the burning fireplace for safekeeping. A creature attempting to retrieve the robe takes 2d10 fire damage for each space it travels within the fireplace.

Baleblaze is willing to surrender the robe in exchange for a possession of equal value: Auntie Waxspinner's head. The flame dragon won't part with the robe otherwise and reacts to challenge or theft with a fiery rampage.

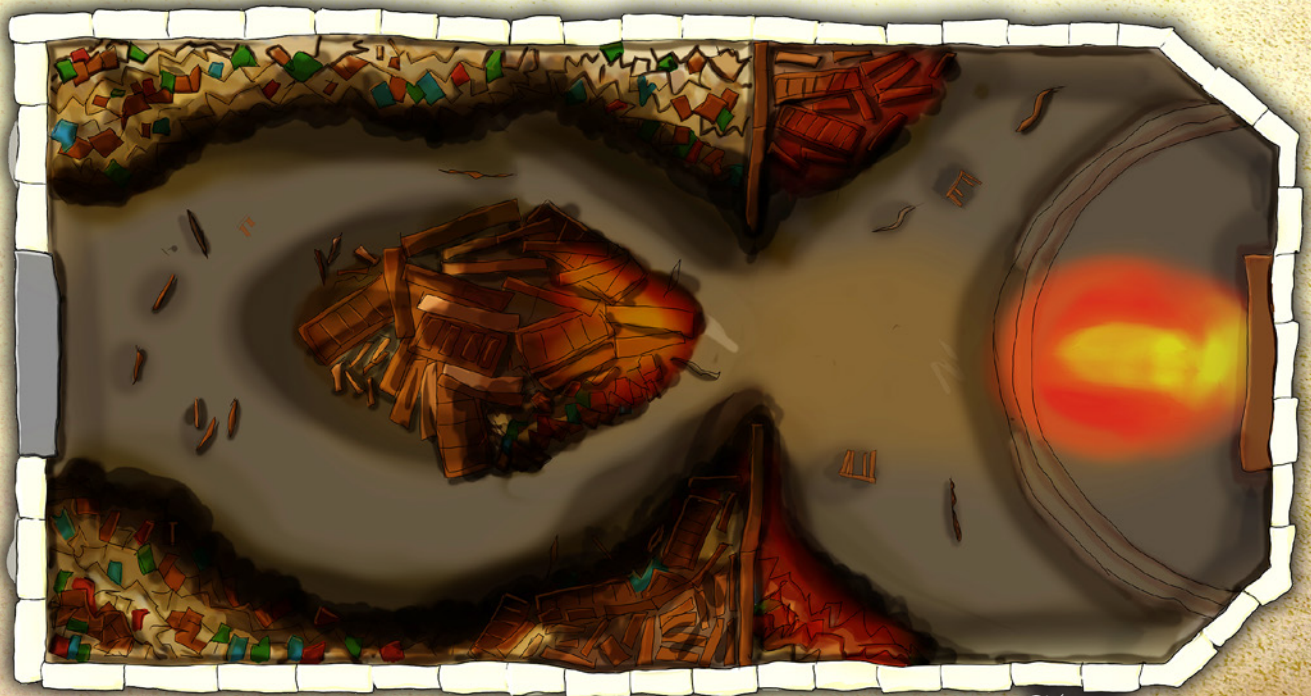
Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Baleblaze's has an AC of 17 and 125 hit points.

Stronger: Baleblaze has 190 hit points.



East Wing and Reading Room



© Alex Clippinger





THE WEST WING

The stacks in this area of the library are lined with books on the arcane, from treatises of general knowledge to lengthy dissertations and unproven theories from numerous mages. Now it's home to Auntie Waxspinner, a **sand hag**.

GENERAL FEATURES

The west wing has the following features:

Lighting. The entire reading room is brightly lit by the natural light from the windows and the lit chandeliers.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. Book-lined shelves have been pushed together to form makeshift barriers and allow only a single pathway into the center of the wing. Dried drips and rivulets of yellowed wax can be found on almost every surface. Several of the massive windows of this wing have been broken in by the pressing sand; the air in this wing is noticeably hot and dry.

Terrain. The encroaching sand from the wing's broken windows covers the floor. The areas beneath broken windows are piled high with sand and are difficult terrain.

Auntie Waxspinner's Home. The sand hag Auntie Waxspinner lives in a reading area of low shelves in the center of the west wing. It contains the following features:

- Nondescript humanoid figures made of yellowing wax are frozen in twisted positions throughout the room, such as crawling piteously across the floor or pressed up against the shelves.
- Pools of dried or semi-dried wax cover almost everything in the area.
- More wax figures are draped limply over the candelabra of chandeliers above, stalactite-esque wax drippings from a few of them approaching the floor.
- A large, magically-heated cauldron bubbles lazily with the wax in hot liquid form.

The wax figures are **living wicks** under Auntie Waxspinner's command, which she can light and activate with a command word on her turn. Each living wick was once a humanoid that Auntie Waxspinner transformed in her cauldron; as the living wicks burn, Auntie's own life-force is spared.

Wax Mask. Auntie Waxspinner can provide a character with a wax mask of Amora's face, for a price. The characters must bring her four humanoid corpses or two still-living humanoids as payment for the mask, whom she will turn into new living wicks. The wax mask looks exactly like the painting of Amora in the rotunda, but applying it deals 2d6 fire damage to the character as burning wax.



seals to their flesh; the wax deteriorates over the course of 2d6 days and cannot be removed beforehand.

COMBAT

Should a fight occur, Auntie Waxspinner activates 4 **living wicks** to assist her; destroyed living wicks are replaced on initiative count 20 of each round until Auntie Waxspinner is killed or deactivates them with a command. Auntie Waxspinner uses her powers of stealth, magic, and tremorsense on the sand-covered floor to avoid harm or ambush foes while her living wicks whittle down opponents.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Auntie Waxspinner has only 3 living wicks active at a time.

Stronger: Auntie Waxspinner has 6 living wicks active at a time.

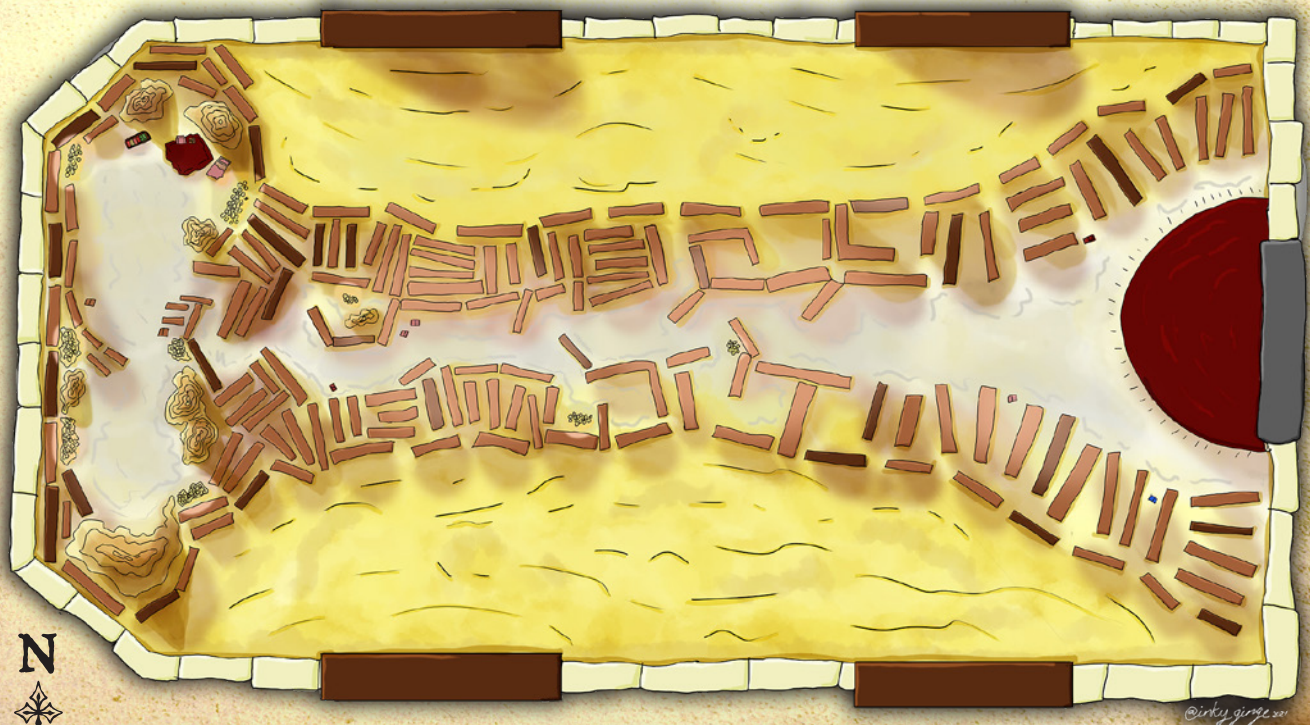
Using the Basic Rules

Auntie Waxspinner is a night hag with tremor sense.



Wax Mask

West Wing



CONCLUSION

Characters that successfully open the door on the second level of the rotunda and escape appear adjacent to the *Athenaeum of Dust's* current location. Any of Amora's possessions, such as the key or robe, are left behind in the demiplane. Within 1 minute of the last creature's escape (as determined by the GM), the book crumbles into a pile of diamond dust worth 1,200 gp. If at least one creature is still in the demiplane, the book reappears in a random suitable location on the same plane where it disappeared.

DEVELOPMENTS

Creatures left behind in the Athenaeum's demiplane could escape at a later date and confront the characters based on their interactions. Friends, family, or followers of creatures still in the demiplane could track down the players for information about the *Athenaeum of Dust*. Allies of powerful entities like Auntie Waxspinner or Baleblaze could rescue or resurrect these individuals, who then vow revenge on the characters for their actions.

Living Wick



SHATTERED GRACE

By Michael E. Shea

8

Estimated run-time: 2 to 4 hours.

This adventure is intended for five 8th-level characters and focuses on exploration and combat.

BACKGROUND

Centuries ago, Annesia Arakhos was consort to a king now long forgotten. Wanting no competition for his new heirs, the king commanded Annesia and her two children to be executed. Annesia escaped the sword. Her children did not. In her grief, Annesia called to a prince of demons who transformed her into a lamia to enact her revenge.

Using her new powers, Annesia stole away the king's heirs and devoured them. Yet this did not sate Annesia's hunger. Every few generations the lamia continued to use her illusions to enter royal chambers, steal infant heirs, and devour them. Yet the kingdoms continued.

Many years ago, Annesia kidnapped the king's son, a half-elf named Grayson. In a moment of precognition, Annesia did not devour the boy and instead kept him as her own child, raising him in the ways of wizardry.

Learning of Annesia's story, Grayson convinced the lamia to follow a new course. Instead of killing the heirs, she could recondition them and send them back into the kingdom as commoners, tradesfolk, and farmers. The heirs of the kings would still live and, one day rise up, announce their bloodlines, and cause such chaos that they would shatter the monarchy forever.

Today Annesia and Grayson, along with a half-dozen hidden royal heirs, reside in the Temple of Shattered Grace, a ruined temple to a goddess of beauty. Six days ago, Annesia used her illusions to infiltrate the current king's court and steal his two heirs: a boy and a girl.



PLOT HOOKS

King Sython Wyrmsblood (LN human male **noble**) needs adventurers to rescue his 8-year-old twin children (Becca and Henry) who have been kidnapped by their nursemaid, a woman named Anna. The King explains that Anna is likely to be Annesia Arakhos, a monster who gave her soul to a demon prince to seek revenge against royalty. She has taken the children to the ruins of the Temple of Shattered Grace. There she will supposedly devour the children as she has in generations past. The king offers the characters 500 gp each for the safe return of his children.

Southabee Willington (CN human male **spy**), a slender, smooth-talking man of ill-repute, approaches the adventures and offers them a deal. If they rescue the kidnapped children of King Sython Wyrmsblood, he is certain he can negotiate a grand reward with the king. Southabee can share information in the Background and Secrets and Clues sections.

If the adventurers successfully rescue the children and return them to Southabee, the man waits for them with an army of 11 **bandits** and one **bandit captain**. Southabee plans to ransom the children himself.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

This adventure begins as the characters are summoned to the royal chambers of King Sython Wyrmsblood. The king describes the kidnapping of his two children, Becca and Henry; his desire to have them returned; and his desire to have the lamia who stole them killed.

The king's advisor, Corwin Nightwhisperer, gives the characters directions to the Temple of Shattered Grace where the lamia lairs. The king worries that sending a larger force may put his children's lives in danger.

SECRETS AND CLUES

The characters can spend time in the king's court or in the neighboring village to learn more of the history of the king and the lamia. During their investigation they may learn one of the following clues:

- Centuries ago, the king executed the children of his consort in order to ensure the royal line of his heirs.
- Their mother, the king's consort, made a pact with a demon prince for revenge. The demon prince cursed the mother, turning her into a lamia.

- The lamia used illusions and beguiling charms to work her way back into the court of the king where she kidnapped and devoured the king's heirs.
- The lamia has kidnapped and devoured the heirs of dozens of kings in the centuries since.
- The lamia resides in the Temple of Shattered Grace, a ruined temple to the goddess of beauty that lies three days out of town.
- The ruined temple now floats in broken earth-motes above a crater that sits where the temple once stood.
- Hoping to destroy the lamia, a mad king hired a cabal of wizards to blow up the temple. The spells backfired, killing the wizards and freezing the temple in a half-destroyed state.
- Annesia has beguiled a tribe of gnolls who worship the same demon prince she does to protect her lair.
- The lamia has children of noble blood protecting her in the ruins of the floating temple.
- One cannot simply approach the Temple of Shattered Grace. Illusions steer travelers wayward. Only one of Annesia's amulets can show the way.
- Annesia's gnoll chieftain in Area 6 has one of the *amulets of shattered grace* that allow passage through Annesia's illusions.

THE TEMPLE OF SHATTERED GRACE

A guild of wizards hired by the local king roughly two centuries ago attempted to destroy this temple. They failed and died in the attempt. The temple indeed exploded but it froze in place, parts of it floating and rotating in mid-air, while the remaining energy roared back into the wizards and destroyed them. To this day the ruined temple floats above a large crater in the shattered ground below it.

A tribe of gnolls has a lair built within the rock walls of the crater. Rope ladders and bridges connect the shattered remains of the temple to its ruined central sanctum. This sanctum looks pristine, an illusion kept up by Annesia. In her sanctum, royal children, now grown up, guard their adopted mother.



THE AMULET OF SHATTERED GRACE

Annesia's illusions make it impossible to either climb or fly up to the temple. Those that attempt it find themselves landing on earthmotes that don't exist, being attacked by flying monstrosities, or becoming hopelessly lost in the mists.

Annesia has gifted a number of amulets featuring a cracked visage of the goddess of beauty. The amulet creates a 20-foot-radius bubble. Each creature within this radius can see past Annesia's illusions, allowing them to see the rope ladders dangling from the guard tower earthmotes in Areas 7 and 8.

An Amulet of Shattered Grace



Timing This Adventure

You can use the location of the amulet of Shattered Grace to change the length of this adventure. For a shorter adventure, Corwin Nightwhisperer can give the characters the amulet at the beginning and let them skip the gnolls completely. For a longer adventure, acquiring the amulet may be more difficult, requiring clearing out or dealing with the gnolls.

APPROACHING SHATTERED GRACE

The temple has the following general features:

Lighting. The temple and crater are brightly lit by natural light during the day. The gnoll caves are completely dark. The inner chambers of the temple are dimly lit by glowing amber stones.

When the characters arrive at the crater's edge, read or summarize the following:

Huge blocks of worked stone, including the shattered head of a statue of a goddess, hang suspended in the air above a deep crater in the earth. Rope ladders hang down near caves carved into the crater's walls. A network of rope bridges connects the shattered blocks leading up to a pristine and shining palace at the floating temple's apex. A narrow switchback path leads down into the crater.

AREA I. THE CRATER

If the characters descend into the crater, read or summarize the following.

Stone rubble lies at the bottom of this wide crater. A narrow switchback path leads down the natural stone walls to the crater's bottom. Three cave entrances lie in the northern circumference of the crater, one at the base of the crater and two 15 feet above. Rough rope ladders lead up to the higher caves. Smoke pours out of a narrow fourth cave thirty feet below the edge of the crater's northern face.

The Gray Tooth gnoll clan, followers of Annesia and her demon prince patron, uses these caves as their lair. Numerous rope ladders lead up to the edge of the crater

Area 1: The Crater



and three hang down from the shattered floating rock temple above. A narrow 3-foot-wide chimney full of smoke leads to Area 6.

Creatures. At any given time, six **gnolls** and four **hyenas** lurk among the wreckage at the bottom of the crater or are climbing up the ladders. If attacked, some stay while others flee into Areas 2, 4, and 6 to gather the rest of their clan.

AREA 2. THE DEN

Six **gnolls** are found sleeping in this den. If the characters are being stealthy when they enter this room, they must succeed on a group DC 14 **Dexterity (Stealth)** check. On a failure, the gnolls awaken and attack.

The gnolls have formed beds from rotted hides and torn cloth in this room. If the characters search the furs, they find 52 gp worth of coins and gemstones.



Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: There are 4 gnolls in this area.

Stronger: There are 3 gnolls and a gnoll veteran in this area

Using Tome of Beasts

For the Stronger suggestion, the gnoll veteran is a gnoll havoc runner.

AREA 5. THE REFUSE PIT

A narrow walkway leads to a 20-foot-deep pit filled with rotting carcasses, bones, and waste. A gleam of bone and shining metal sparkles within the waste.

Creature. An **otyugh** hides in the pit and awakens if anyone drops into the pit or attempts to take the treasure.

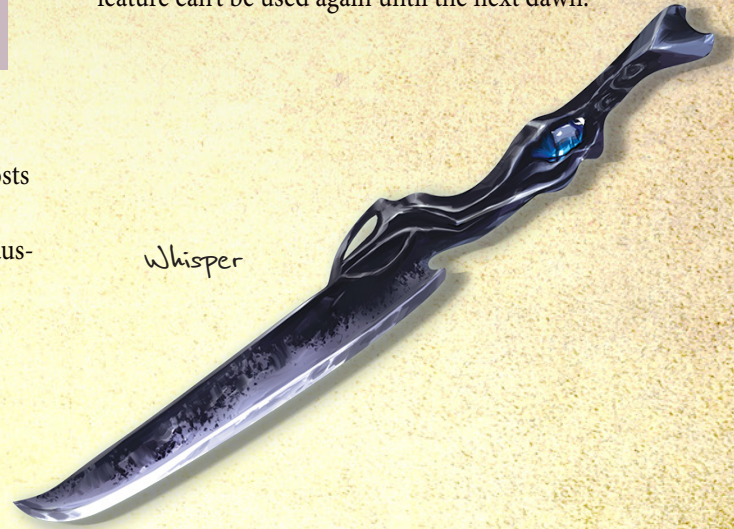
Treasure. Within the refuse lies a bone-hilted +1 *shortsword* named “Whisper.” A creature wielding Whisper can use an action to cast the *suggestion* spell. This feature can’t be used again until the next dawn.

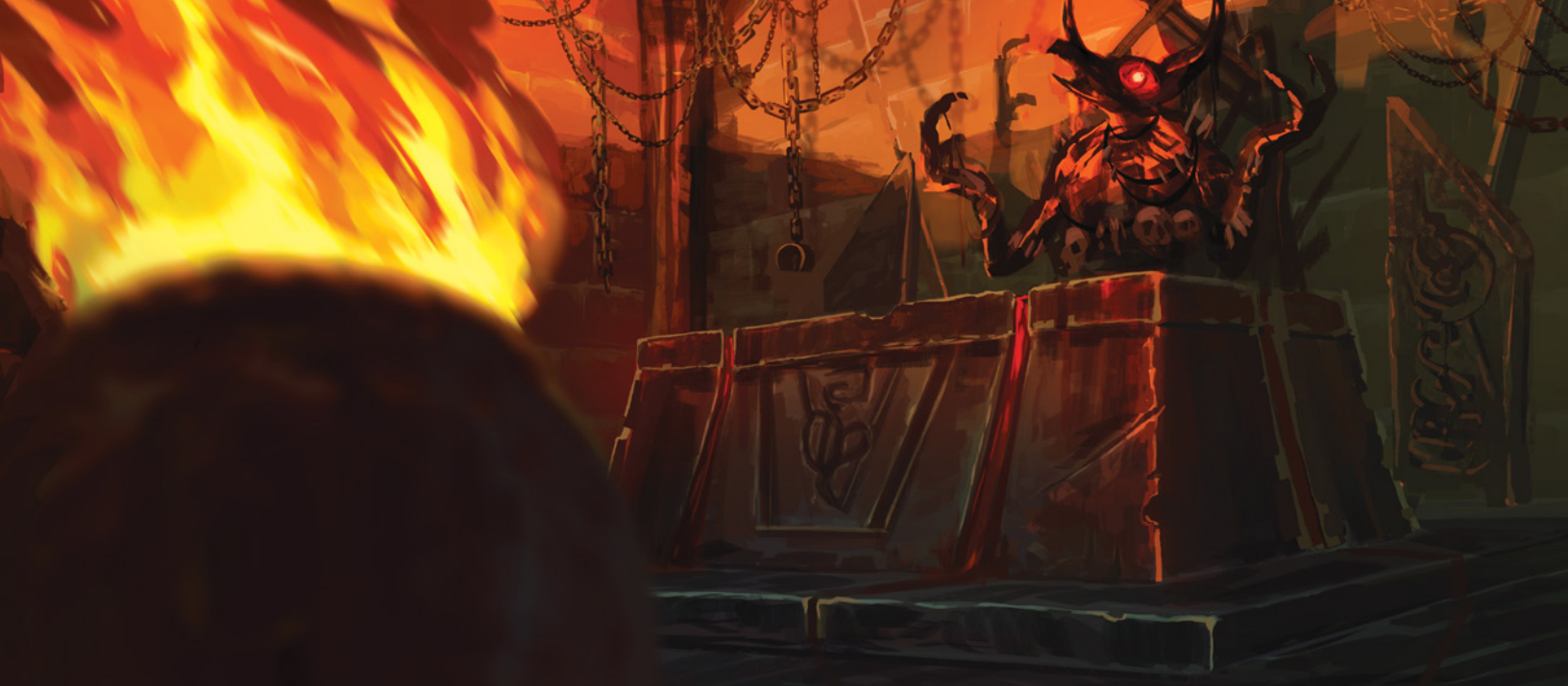
AREA 3. THE KENNELS

Eight **hyenas** are attached by rope and harness to six posts in the gnolls’ kennels. If attacked, the hyenas break free from the harnesses and retaliate. Fighting the hyenas causes the gnolls in Area 2 to investigate one round later.

AREA 4. THE FEEDING CHAMBERS

Three **gnolls** feed upon the rotting corpses of two large cows and a horse in this chamber.





AREA 6. ALTAR OF THE DARK PRINCE

When the characters arrive in this area, read or summarize the following:

A large fire in a central cauldron illuminates this large chamber. An effigy of a horned demon stands on the northern wall, eyes gleaming with sparkling red light, and body formed from blackened leather and bone. Its upper torso resembles a human man while its lower torso has legs like a large goat. A waved bone sword rests in its six-fingered hand pointed to the ground. A bloody altar sits in front of the effigy.

The smoke from the central cauldron in this room floats up through a 3-foot-diameter chimney chute, 20 feet off the floor leading out to Area 1.

Creatures. Six **gnolls** pray to the effigy of their dark prince, a demon lord of desire. A **gnoll chieftain** conducts the ceremonies.

Treasure. The two gemstone eyes of the effigy are worth 100 gp each. A creature holding the left gem can take an action to cast the spell *hypnotic pattern*. A creature holding the right gem can spend 1 minute to cast the spell *dream*. These spells are expended once used and the gemstones lose their magical property.

Searching the body of the gnoll chieftain easily reveals an *amulet of shattered grace*. A character wearing the amulet sees through Annesia's illusions when they return to Area 1, noticing the rope ladders leading up to the earthmotes.

AREA 7 AND 8. WATCHTOWERS

A pair of ruined towers sit atop floating earthmotes. 50-foot-long rope ladders lead up from the crater floor to the edge of the earthmote. Rope bridges lead to Areas 9, 10, and 12.

Creatures. A **gnoll** and a **gnoll veteran** watch from each watchtower for creatures below or flying above. The veterans move to face the characters in melee combat while the gnolls stay on the towers, shooting arrows. These gnolls do not have to make Dexterity checks to successfully navigate the earthmotes or bridges.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: remove the gnoll veterans, changing them to gnolls

Stronger: change all gnolls to gnoll veterans

Using Tome of Beasts

Change the gnoll veterans to gnoll havoc runners

AREA 9. THE MONOLITH

A large stone monolith floats one hundred feet above the ground below. Numerous rope ladders lead to Areas 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13. The smooth angled stone makes

walking difficult. Any creature who takes damage on the monolith must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

AREA 10. THE SHATTERED BEAUTY

The half-head of a massive statue of a beautiful woman floats above the surface of the ground. A rope ladder leads 100 feet to the surface below. Rope bridges lead to Areas 7 and 9.

AREA 11. THE PIT

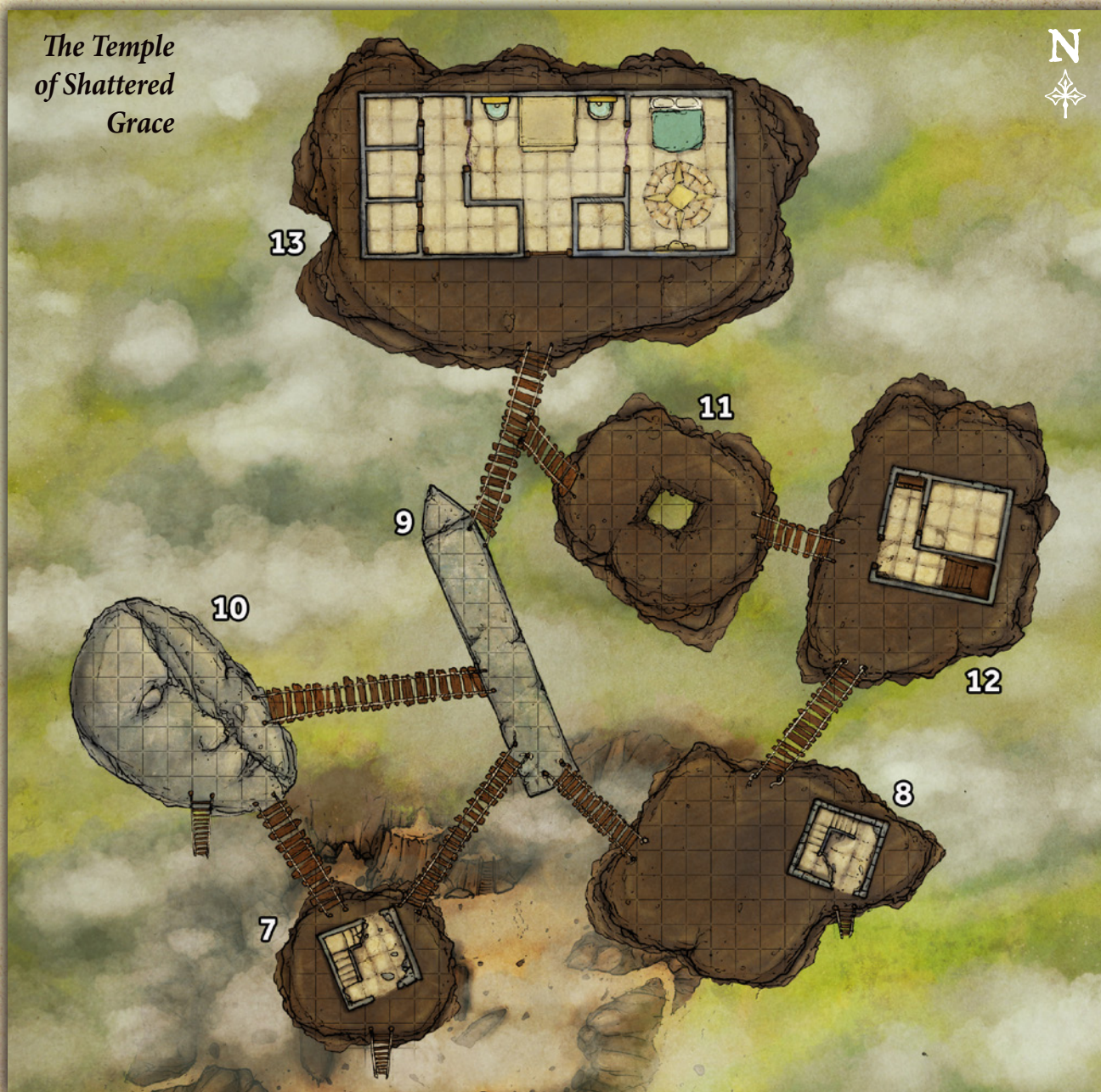
A large pit in the center of this earthmote leads 150 feet to the surface below. This is the base of stone that the monolith in Area 9 once sat in.

AREA 12. THE WIZARD'S TOWER

When the characters arrive at Area 8 or 11 and look at Area 12, read or summarize the following.

A solitary three-story tower sits atop a large earthmote. Unlike the ruined watchtowers, this tower appears well maintained. A swirling blue disc above the tower depicts a dazzling starscape.

Grayson Lightspire, a half-elf **mage** and advisor to Annesia, stands outside of his tower observing the characters if they have not fought their way here. Otherwise, if he believes they are a threat, Grayson uses his *fly* spell to fly to Area 14 and warn Annesia of hostile intruders and stays by her side.



Grayson uses the tower in Area 12 as his personal residence. The first floor contains a bedroom, hallway, and stairs to the second floor. The second floor contains his study. Nearly one hundred books on the lineages of kings and queens all across the land line his shelves.

A lectern holds a book of Grayson's own writing that describes each of the royal children that Annesia has taken from their parents and reconstituted into the world. This book provides clear evidence of the shattered lineages of dozens of kingdoms. If exposed, many of these kingdoms would crumble or fall into civil war.

The third floor of the tower is open to the sky above. A bronze telescope and astrolabe are aimed up at the swirling starscape, one of Annesia's illusions, that lets Grayson study the nighttime sky regardless of the time of day.

Roleplaying Grayson. Grayson is a very intelligent if naïve half-elf who, like Annesia, believes that monarchies are inherently evil. If given the chance, Grayson explains that Annesia no longer devours children but plans to free people from the tyranny of monarchy. He explains his own history and shows the characters the book. If he believes the characters will harm Annesia, he attacks the characters, eventually fleeing to Annesia.

AREA 13. THE SANCTUM

When the characters arrive at Area 9 or 11, read or summarize the following:

A beautiful shining temple of gold and granite sits atop a floating ruin of worked stone suspended two hundred feet above the ground. Gilded statues of beautiful men and women adorn the central temple. A pair of large doors shaped into mosaics of smiling faces leads into the central temple.

Annesia has repeatedly used her *major illusion* ability to create a wonderous temple from the wreckage of its reality. The illusion is wrapped closely around the wrecked temple, making it difficult to detect its false nature. These illusions extend into the temple itself, giving it the appearance of untouched beauty and decadence.

Creatures. Two human **veterans**, Evelda and Jorras, stand guard outside of the temple. They are adult children of previous kings in neighboring kingdoms, and thus royalty themselves, although they care not for it. They are well trained and have sworn themselves to protect Annesia. They can be convinced to give audience to the characters if they believe the characters wish no ill intent to Annesia. Otherwise, they fight to the death.



Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Evelda and Jorras each have 48 hit points.

Stronger: Evelda and Jorras each have 85 hit points.

AREA 14. ANNESIA'S SANCTUM

When the characters enter Area 14, read or summarize the following:

Shining silver water flows from marble fountains flanking a large dais of carved stone. Statues of beautiful celestial figures serve as pillars supporting the arched ceiling.

Creatures. Annesia spends nearly all of her time here or in Area 16. Annesia is a **lamia** (AC 14 due to +1 *breastplate* and 120 hit points) with the body of a tiger and the upper torso of a beautiful woman. She wears a golden breastplate and a veil that continually swirls around her face. Annesia speaks few words, preferring that those she faces expose their intentions as they fill up the silence. She is unwilling to give up the children under any circumstances.

If he is not in his tower in Area 12, Grayson is attending Annesia. She is also accompanied by Yeshra, a **priest**, and Taleth, a **veteran**. Both are adult children of neighboring kingdoms whose parentage can be found in the tome found in Area 12.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Annesia has AC 14 and 97 hit points.

Stronger: Change Taleth from a veteran to a gladiator. Annesia has AC 15, 135 hit points, and has **Legendary Resistance**.

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If Annesia fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Treasure. Annesia's golden breastplate is a +1 *breastplate*.

AREA 15. THE QUARTERS OF THE CHILDREN

Ornate doors lead into small but well-furnished apartments containing fine jewelry and artwork. Like the rest of the temple, these riches and fineries are an illusion created by Annesia. The king's two children (Becka and Henry) can be found in the northern-most apartment playing with animated toy soldiers fighting an animated dragon; both illusions.

AREA 16. ANNESIA'S BEDCHAMBER

A large bed lays on the floor in the north of this chamber. The walls are adorned of images of kings and queens. In each image, the queen's image shifts into that of Annesia in humanoid form. A large arcane circle is embedded in the floor that Annesia uses to perform her illusionary rituals to keep up the appearances of the temple.

Secret Door. A lightning-based *glyph of warding* (**spell save DC 15**) protects a secret door in the southwestern chamber. A character can detect the secret door with a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check**. The door leads into a small room containing the decayed remains of the king who murdered Annesia's children and began her curse.

Treasure. A *dagger of venom* has been pierced through the body's chest and continually drips poison into his body.

CONCLUSION

This adventure can conclude in many ways. The characters could face off against Annesia and her followers, slay them, rescue the children in Area 15, and return them to the king. They are considered heroes and well compensated for their effort. They may instead choose to leave the temple without the children and release the information contained in Grayson's book revealing the broken lineages of the local kings. Doing so shatters many kingdoms in the area and leads to civil war.

The characters might come to another agreement with Annesia and not return the children to their father; such consequences are yours to decide.

What marks are left on the world as the characters conclude this adventure are left to the choices of you and your group.

GNOLL CHIEFTAN

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Gnoll

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the gnoll chieftan can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the gnoll chieftan expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The gnoll chieftan is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The gnoll chieftan has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

Rampage. When the gnoll chieftan reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll chieftan can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

GNOLL VETERAN

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Gnoll

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Rampage. When the gnoll veteran reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll veteran can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gnoll veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.



SPARE PARTS

By Maxine Henry

9

Estimated run-time: 90 to 120 minutes.

Spare Parts is a short adventure designed for five 8th-level characters. Scaling suggestions are provided for stronger or weaker parties.

This adventure is a sandbox style adventure, with no set linear frame for the characters to follow. We recommend reading the adventure at least once before running it.

IMPORTANT NPCs

Delus – Delar’s son. He perished in a freak rock fall accident at the rock quarry, where he worked. There are no strange events around his death. Delus purchased an insurance contract several months before his death. The contract paid his surviving wife Ositi 1,250 gp, which allows her to live comfortably for several years. It also included the disposition of the body, at no charge.

Delar (LN female human) – This is the first NPC met at the harbor district. Her son has passed away and she doesn’t know what happened to the body, offering a 150 gp reward for information or its return. Delar and her daughter-in-law are not close. Delar is not aware of the insurance contract Delus signed, nor of the 1,250 gp Ositi was paid.

Ositi (NG female human) – Delus’s surviving spouse and Delar’s daughter-in-law. Ositi recently fell down a flight of stairs and wears a cast on her left leg. She is not concerned about Delar’s missing body. She doesn’t reveal anything about the gold or insurance policy unless persuaded or intimidated to do so. If this occurs, she may provide a copy of the signed insurance contract which lists an address in the harbor. She also explains the body disposition was included in the insurance contract and she was paid 1,250 gp.

Dandy Hollowhair (LN male halfling noble) – Owner of Hollowhair Quarry and Delar’s employer. Dandy is a



well-liked member of the community. He is cooperative and there is nothing out of the ordinary at the quarry. Delus’s death was an accident.

Filee (NG nonbinary half-orc noble) – Filee is the administrator of the morgue. They state the body was picked up and signed for, all in accordance with Ositi’s wishes. There is nothing unusual occurring at the morgue.

Pothus (CN female human thug) – The manager of Nolu Arena. Pothus purchases flesh golems and their control rings from a disguised Cantar for 250 gp. In addition, Cantar receives 20 percent of the weekly arena revenue. The flesh golem fights have been very successful. Pothus’s transactions with Cantar are legal.

New Shard
city map.



- 1 Delar's home
- 2 Ositi's home
- 3 Morgue
- 4 Arena
- 5 Warehouse



Cantar (CN female gnome **mage**) – Cantar is the flesh golem creator and insurance dealer. She uses the bodies to create flesh golems, which she sells to Pothus for 250 gp. She also receives 20 percent of the arena’s weekly revenue. The insurance contracts are legal. Cantar uses *disguise self* to keep her identity secret when dealing with Pothus.

BACKGROUND

The port city of New Shard is the perfect place for entrepreneurs. Cantar, a gnome necromancer, decided to set herself up as a supplier of flesh golems to a city that didn’t know it needed them. Pothu, manager of Nolu Arena, a small venue known for hosting blood-sport, was very interested in a venture that would increase seats at bouts. As a result, after a chance meeting with a disguised Cantar, the two became business partners.

Flesh golems don’t spring out of thin air, however, so the ever-enterprising Cantar started a side business selling life insurance with the rider that she gets the body after the policy holder dies. Things have gone well; in fact, Cantar has just collected on a policy.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED UNTIL NOW

A few months after signing Cantar’s life insurance policy, Delar was killed in a natural accident, occurring at the stone quarry where he worked. Ositi viewed his body at the morgue and collected on the 1,250 gp insurance policy. Cantar, always wary of being a necromancer caught in a city, disguised herself, went to the morgue, signed for the body, and then transported it to her warehouse, where she makes flesh golems.

Pothus met with a disguised Cantar and the two struck a deal. Cantar would supply Pothus flesh golems for the arena fights, and Pothus would pay Cantar a sum of gold and a percentage of the arena’s weekly income.

Delus is upset that she has not viewed her son’s dead body. She also wants to make sure his body is being respected. Ositi has been less than helpful with these matters. Delus wants help locating Delar’s body and she wants to know what happened to it.

PLOT HOOK

Delus, a human stonewright, died on the job. When his mother arrived at the morgue to claim the body, the attendants said that the body had already been taken away. The grieving mother, Delar, hires the party to find her son’s corpse.

PART I: IN MOURNING

The party meets Delar, a textile broker, in her home (Area 1). Delar tells the party that her only son, Delus, died and his body went missing from a local morgue. She offers 150 gold if the party finds out what happened. She also gives the party the following information:

- There’s a rumor of flesh golems at Nolu Arena. “What if they carved him up?”
- Ositi, Delus’s widow, hasn’t said anything about the body going missing. “Maybe all this is her fault.”
- People have been getting kidnapped to force debt repayment. “But he could always have contacted me for help!”

APPEASING DELAR

Perhaps unusual in these sorts of investigations, everything that has occurred is legal. Still, Delar wants to know where her son’s body rests.

If the party tell Delar that her son’s body was acquired legally, but they have not discovered its location, Delar only offers to pay 25 gp for the party’s time, since they didn’t locate his body.

If the party discovers that Cantar has the body and they agree that it was obtained legally, they may wish to end the investigation. If they tell Delar where the body is located, and that Cantar is a necromancer, Delar pays the agreed upon 150 gp. She also states that she will discuss this matter with the church.

GM Notes

If the party goes to see Ositi, go to Part 2A.

If the party goes to the morgue where Delus’ body should have been, go to Part 2B.

If the party goes to Nolu Arena, go to Part 2C.

The optional encounter in Part 4: Gargoyles Amok! can be run at any time after the party has talked to Delar.



Filee



PART 2A: TO THE WIDOW!

Ositi is at home (Area 2) when the party arrives. She has recently broken her leg and wears a cast. She tells the party:

- She's not worried about the missing body. She visited the morgue to confirm it was Delus.
- She's sad that Delar's sad, but she and her mother-in-law were never close. She's not invested in Delar's happiness.

A character succeeding on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check** believes Ositi is hiding something. A successful **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces her to reveal:

- Delus had purchased an insurance contract three months before he died.
- The insurance paid Ositi 1,250 gp and has given her financial security for a substantial time.
- She didn't want to say anything earlier about the 1,250 gp because she didn't want Delar to hassle her about sharing the money. ("That woman doesn't need it—she has everything already!")
- The insurance contract covered the disposition of Delus's body. ("I didn't have to pay the burial fee. I know it's small, but rent keeps going up.")

Successful **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) checks** convince Ositi that the party won't take the information back to Delar, and she shows the party the insurance contract, which includes an address of an office closer to the harbor.

If the party goes to the address near the harbor, go to Part 3: Spare Parts.

PART 2B: VIEWING DEAD PEOPLE

At the local morgue (Area 3), the party is directed to Filee, the administrator on duty, who tells the party:

- This body was picked up and signed for, but on review, the signature was illegible.
- The party is welcome to investigate if they choose. Filee calls their Personal Assistant into the office. "Qith (NG female tiefling) will show you around."

Note: The morgue is a two-story structure, with offices and viewing and waiting rooms on the main floor, and body cold-storage in the basement. There is nothing odd or out of place; Filee runs a tight ship.

PART 2C: AT THE ARENA

At Nolu Arena (Area 4), the bout is close to starting when the party arrives. The manager, Pothus has the control rings for the golems, so she must be on-site during the



Pothus



*The Arena
(Day)*



An alternative “Night” version of this map is available in the digital files.



bout. Having no time to answer questions beforehand, she offers the party free entrance to watch the match.

During the match, one of the golems goes berserk and attempts to attack the spectators, climbing the wall and entering the stands. Whether the party helps or not, after two rounds of actions, Pothus comes within range of the flesh golem and uses the control ring to contain the chaos. If the party helped, Pothus is more friendly to **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) checks** to get information. If the party did not help, she is distracted, and the DC increases to 17. Pothus cannot be intimidated, especially since the crowd loved the entire performance, including the chaos.

After the match, Pothus tells the party:

- She is very excited to have something the other arenas don't. "Flesh golems are the next THING!"
- The creator of the golems is secretive, and wisely so, because "some people are jealous and don't want change."
- A different person delivers the flesh golem and control ring each time she purchases a flesh golem. (Cantar uses her *disguise self* spell to keep her identity secret)

Pothus has additional information, which may include:

- She purchases the flesh golems for 250 gp, plus 20 percent of the weekly arena earnings.
- These battles bring in nearly 50 gp per day.
- Each week, a different person comes to the arena to collect the 20 percent share of the weekly income.

Successful **DC 14 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) checks** convince Pothus that the party is serious about wanting just information, as opposed to stopping the flesh golem creation process, and in return she gives them Cantar's warehouse address in the harbor.

PART 2D: THE QUARRY

If the party goes to Delus' workplace (Dandy Quarry—a rock quarry to the northeast, out beyond the cannery district), the manager, Dandy Hollowhair (LN male halfling **noble**) is cooperative. He states there was an unexpected rockfall, and four workers died. There is nothing suspicious about the death. If the party inquires with other townsfolk, they learn Dandy is a respected individual, supplying jobs to the community and he treats his employees very well.

PART 3: SPARE PARTS

The harbor address is a warehouse (Area 5) near the water. The office is a 20-foot-square room, with a second

10-foot-square office through a connecting door. There are paintings on the walls, as well as a large wall tapestry (both are animated, and may attack if the party attempts to enter without authorization), and a suit of armor (**animated armor**) that serves as after-hours security in the corner opposite the main entrance. The six paintings use the **flying sword** stat block but deal bludgeoning damage. The tapestry is a **rug of smothering** with 55 hit points.

ENTERING THE WAREHOUSE

There are no windows and two doors; one at the front and one at the back. The front door is trapped with a *glyph of sleep* (casts 3rd-level *sleep* spell if triggered, **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** to avoid). A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** disarms the trap and reveals that the door is a fake. If the entire party is trapped, Cantar's assistant brings the party members into the warehouse. The back door is locked but not trapped.

Once inside, the 40-foot-square warehouse resembles an operating suite. Surgical tools and gurneys abound. Searching the warehouse reveals body parts in containers. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices strange glyphs and symbols on the floors and walls. A character succeeding on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** realizes these symbols are used by necromancers.

Arriving During the Day: They find an office staffed by Ella, (LN female human **noble**) who informs the party that the boss is out of the office for the day, and is returning the next day. Ella answers general questions about the insurance contracts. She can't provide a copy, but she can supply proof by way of a payment ledger that Ositi was paid 1,250 gp for her Delar's death.

Arriving at Night: Combat in this encounter is optional. If the party comes back after dark, only the animated objects pose a threat.

After resolving the combat or burglary encounter, successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) checks** find the following:

- Hand-drawn anatomy diagrams in a locked and trapped drawer of the agent's desk (an acid trap, **DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to disarm; Dexterity save halves 3d10 acid damage).
- A blank insurance contract in the unlocked and trapped administrative assistant's desk (a lightning trap, **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** to disarm; Dexterity save halves 3d10 lightning damage). The blank insurance contract uses the address of this office/location. The contract appears to be a reasonable legal document. It states who is insured, the



Cantar



name of the beneficiary, and the amount to be paid at death. It also includes a note that the disposition of the body is taken care of at no extra cost.

Next Day: When the party enters, **Cantar** is disassembling a body (Delus). There are other body parts in their respective containers. There are also two suits of **animated armor** (which animate and come to Cantar's assistance when called) within 30 feet of where Cantar is working.

If the party attacks, Cantar casts *animate objects*, which animates several of the surgical instruments in the room, creating 10 Tiny allies appearing as pliers, knives, clamps, syringes, and needles. Also, Cantar has a personal warning device which prevents her from being surprised and gives her advantage on initiative checks. If she is killed, the device crumbles into pieces of decayed bone and sinew.

Given the opportunity, Cantar makes her case of legally obtaining the body, and offers a copy of the contract to the party. Successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) checks** show that the contract is sound, almost as if written by a qualified and capable fiend. The party can choose to go their way with a copy of the insurance contract, buy into Cantar's project, or any other option that makes sense.

Cantar doesn't think about this, as her goal is to get back to work; however, if the encounter is resolved peacefully, she offers the party her staff, a *quarterstaff* +1, as a gift.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: No animated creatures, other than the animated objects Cantar creates, join the battle.

Stronger: Cantar has 72 hit points, and a putrid haunt (*Tome of Beasts*) animates, rising from a covered gurney and fighting by Cantar's side.

PART 4: GARGOYLES AMOK!

(Optional Combat)

In the docks area, the party sees a male halfling engaged in energetic discussion with a fair-haired male human (a **mage**). The discussion abruptly ends when three **gargoyles** swoop down on the halfling, taking swipes at the party along the way.

Tactics: The gargoyles and the mage fight as a team with the goal of taking the halfling. He owes a debt, and they are taking payment out of his skin. If things aren't going well, the mage attempts to escape. If killed, the mage has a *ring of spell storing* that has one remaining charge of *acid arrow*.

If rescued, the halfling mutters something about "always read the fine print" and hurriedly leaves.

CANTAR

Medium humanoid (gnome), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 25 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 Common, Gnomish, Infernal, Undercommon,

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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

Cantrips: *chill touch* (2d8), *mage hand*, *mending*, *poison spray* (2d12)

1st level: *disguise self*, *mage armor*, *shield*

2nd level: *blindness/deafness*, *gentle repose*, *ray of enfeeblement*

3rd level: *animate dead*, *counterspell*, *fly*

4th level: *blight*, *greater invisibility*

5th level: *animate objects*

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.

Krisalee Tingletoe and Joy



TICK TOCK

By Greg Marks

10

Estimated run-time: 1 to 2 hours.

This short adventure is designed for five 9th-level characters and primarily features exploration and combat. Scaling options are provided for weaker and stronger parties. This adventure can begin in any empty forest in your campaign world.

BACKGROUND

As his age grew, Dwor Methian became obsessed with avoiding death. To that end he retired into the woods and quietly devoted his fortune and all his efforts toward controlling time, hoping to manipulate his personal timeline and cease aging. Mastering arcane magic and gathering items of power, he eventually managed to capture the Vozmonzal, a fragment of living time spawned of a dead and forgotten god. Unfortunately, the magical clock that he crafted to control the creature captured him as well, leaving his isolated cabin empty... until now.

PLOT HOOKS

The characters could find their way to the cabin a number of different ways:

- **On the Job:** A decade has passed and Dwor's distant relative Sera Yalsa has inherited the cabin. Hoping to locate his missing fortune, but worried that whatever caused his disappearance may still lair in the cabin, she hires the characters for any magic items and 25% of whatever coin they recover. If they find nothing, Sera plans to sell the land and will give the characters a share of the profits.
- **Relative:** One of the characters is contacted by an advocate claiming the character is a distant relative of Dwor and that they have inherited the cabin after their distant relative's mysterious disappearance.

- **In Need of Refuge:** While fleeing some other situation or danger, the party finds the abandoned cabin and seeks refuge inside. Unlike the other hooks where the characters have a reason to explore, this hook relies on the characters' natural curiosity.

THE ADVENTURE

Dwor's abandoned cabin lies derelict in the deep forest. A small lean-to shed half-filled with rotting logs and a collapsed outhouse are all that remain of the outbuildings. An overgrown trail leads down a slight slope to a nearby stream.

The cabin has weathered its neglect better than the outbuildings, but is not unscathed. A shutter hangs loose from one rusty hinge and another lies on the ground. Lichen and mold have begun to grow on the walls, but they otherwise appear intact.

GENERAL FEATURES

The cabin has the following features:

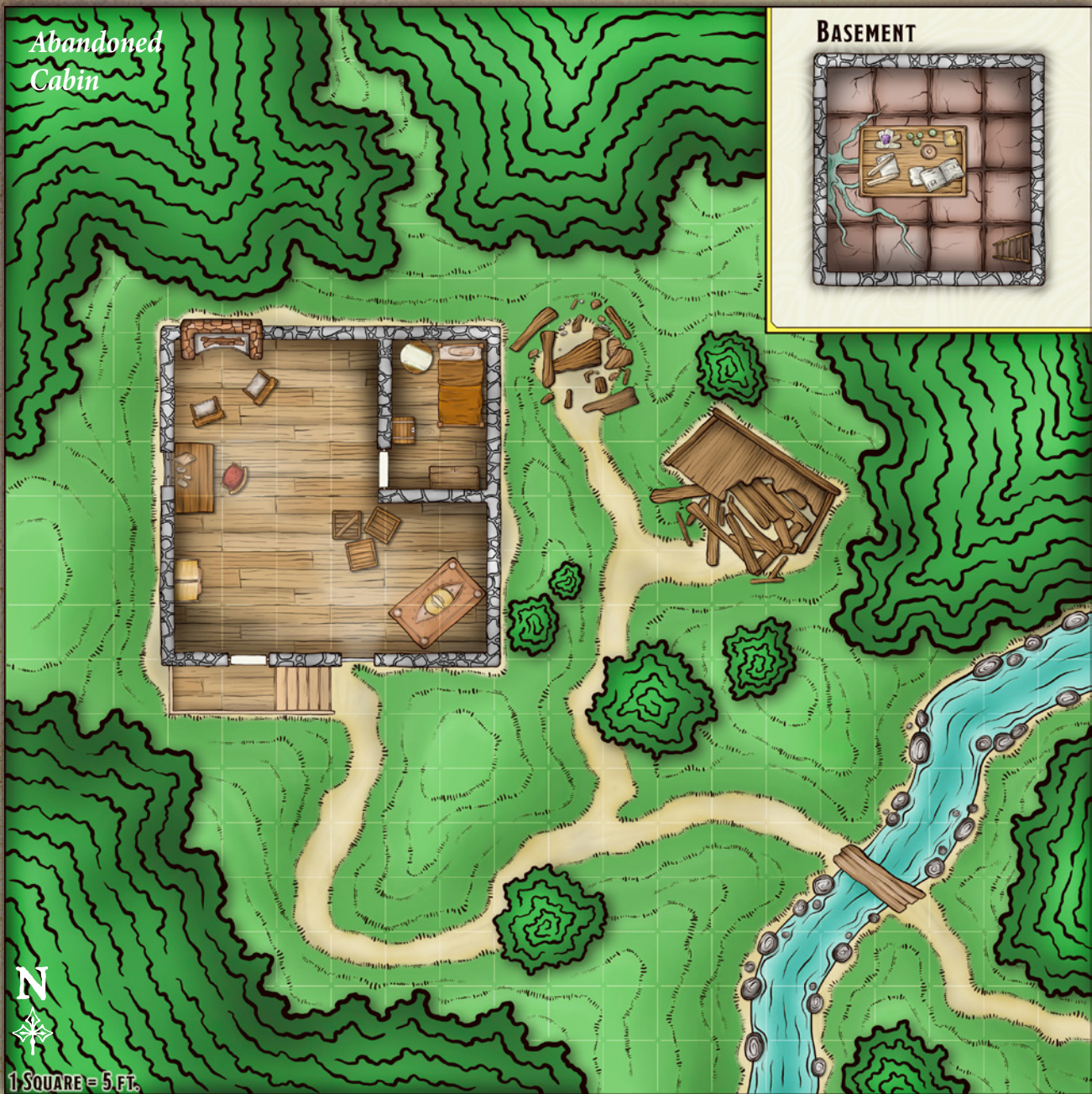
Lighting. The cabin is dark unless the characters have light sources.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. The cabin creaks in the wind. Dust and dirt cover all surfaces, with the worst of it being in the main room near the window with broken shutters. The entire cabin smells of mold, mildew, and rotting leaves.

Terrain. Belongings are scattered about making the place feel lived in, as if someone left expecting to come back in a few minutes.

MAIN ROOM

The main room cabin has two windows, on one of which the shutters have broken open. The flimsy wooden front door is unlocked. A pair of boots and a well-used walking



staff are next to the door. A table sits under the broken window, badly damaged from exposure to the elements. Two large chairs face a hearth with dishes and cookware stacked next to it. A door exits to the bedroom.

Two key features of this room are:

Trapdoor. In one corner, underneath a lone rug, is a trapdoor sealed by a padlock that can be opened with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** or a successful **DC 20 Strength check**. Once open, the door leads to stairs going down to a dirt basement.

The Clock. Where everything in the cabin is old and rustic, an ornate standing clock of the finest woods and brass stands against a wall. The clock is extremely valuable

and doesn't match the rest of the décor. Its face plate has a crack; it has wound down, but is otherwise in good repair. Its key is not present.

The clock is covered in arcane symbols. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** recognizes them as symbols relating to time and binding creatures. If investigated using *detect magic*, the clock radiates conjuration and transmutation auras.

BEDROOM

The small bedroom has a bed with a musty, straw-filled mattress housing a family of mice. An empty oil lamp sits on a large trunk next to the bed. Inside are several sets of



clothes that fit a slim human man, a well-crafted dagger, a pouch with 37 sp, and a key to the lock on the trapdoor. The clothes are of fine quality but quite worn.

BASEMENT

Beneath the cabin is a low-ceilinged dirt basement dominated by a large and cluttered table. Water has leaked through the floor under the broken window above, damaging many of the papers. Searching the table reveals the following:

- Many moldering books and scrolls, too waterlogged and decayed to be salvaged. The few snippets that can be read suggest they detail forgotten creatures and the study of chronomancy.
- Under a large piece of quartz is a thick stack of receipts for rare spell components and valuable arcane tomes. The outlay is tens of thousands of gold, and all are dated a decade ago or more.
- There is a small iron box with velvet lining that protects a gold clock key that fits the clock upstairs.
- A second small iron box with velvet lining. The box is empty, but the velvet reveals indentations shaped like a key.

- A spellbook and journal that describes much of Dwor's search to control time (see sidebar next page). In addition to information that points to the clock, Dwor's journal contains the following spells:

1st-level: *alarm, identity, protection from evil and good, shield*;

2nd-level: *arcane lock, locate object, rope trick*;

3rd-level: *magic circle, tiny hut*;

4th-level: *conjure minor elemental, secret chest*.

- A magical tabletop orrery that moves in time with the stars.
- A set of clockmaker's tools.
- A leather sack containing a *potion of bottled time*. Sadly, the recipe to recreate this mysterious potion is among the destroyed pages.

Under the table is a large trunk filled with the clothing. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discovers that from the different sizes and styles, they are from thirteen different individuals. Some of the clothes have blood stains.

Golden Clock Key



POTION OF BOTTLED TIME

potion, very rare

When you drink a potion of bottled time, you harness a small fragment of stored time, allowing you to accomplish more than you normally could. Once within the next 10 minutes on your turn, you can take one additional action.

REWARDS AND TREASURE

Dwor's spellbook and potion of bottled time are very valuable and unique. In addition, the orrery could be sold for 50 gp and the clockmaker's tools and gold clock key are both worth 25 gp.

Potion of
Bottled
Time



Excerpts from the Journal of Dwor Melthian

I have been fortunate. Gold and jewels aplenty, but my most precious fortune is time, which I can never acquire enough of.

My most recent acquisition speaks of the Vonmonzal, a creature of pure time birthed of a dead and forgotten god. The author rambles, as though mad, but if to be believed, the thing and its spawn exist outside of time. This is the power I have sought all along.

I may not be able to control time, but I can imprison it and force it to serve me. I have crafted a magical clock that is strong enough to capture the Vonmonzal once I summon it. The tomes I have purchased are incomplete but I believe I have enough to create a place within the clock. There, housed in the cage of my fortune, I shall twist the creature to my will and live forever.

I have already sacrificed the first twelve. I need but one more and the clock will be empowered. I have but only to wind the clock and my greatest fortune shall be within!

INTO THE CLOCK

Whether it's because all evidence in the basement points toward the clock, or because the characters are simply curious, it is likely that they eventually wind the clock and are pulled into the demiplane within.

With the twist of the golden key, the clockworks begin to move and the pendulum swings. After a sickening lurch, everything changes. You feel stretched too thin, your vision blurs, and with a pop you are somewhere else.

The twelve-sided room is made of dark wood, edged in brass. There is a numbered door in each wall; one of the doors, labeled zero, has just slammed shut. The clock stands in the center of the room, glowing.

The clock, walls, and doors cannot be damaged. The doors are labeled 0 through 66, counting by 6. The doors cannot be opened by any means other than by correctly



operating the clock. Without the mithral key in room 18, the clock can only advance forwards. Left alone, it proceeds through normal time, opening a door every 65 minutes when the large and small hands of the clock overlap, with the exception of the final door that opens 5 minutes after the eleventh door. Each door stays open until the next door opens.

One minute before closing a door, the bells of the clock begin tolling ominously. If a door closes with a creature inside, it is trapped in time. If the clock is manually advanced using the gold key, the character doing so witnesses all the rest of the characters moving in accelerated speed while their frame of reference remains normal.

GENERAL FEATURES

The clock demiplane has the following features:

Lighting. The area is lit by ambient light with no specific source.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. The faint ticking of a clock fills all of the rooms, a reminder of the steady advance of time.

Terrain. All of the twelve rooms are 30 feet square made of plain white marble, unless otherwise noted. The ceilings are 15 feet high.

Creatures of Time

New creatures have been created for this adventure. However, scaling suggestions may mention elemental creatures from the basic rules. Re-flavor the mephits and elementals from their normal descriptions, to whirling distortions in space. Any fire immunity or damage type they cause should be replaced with force. The elementals speak Primordial.

The numbers on the doors correspond to the following times on the clock.

DOOR 0. 12:00 - THE ENTRANCE AND EXIT

This door leads into and out of the clock demiplane. It can only be opened again by opening all the other doors. Even with the mithral key, the clock cannot be wound backwards to 12:00.

DOOR 6. 1:05 - THE SOUL BATTERIES

Thirteen large metal canisters are attached via metal pipes to the walls of this room. Arcane runes cover the canisters; a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** recognizes symbols relating to life, time, and the transfer of energy.

The soul batteries powered the creation of the demiplane. While no longer needed, they are still active. Each canister has five holes irregularly spaced such that one could place their fingers into them. If a creature does so, they lose one hit die at the beginning of each round and then must attempt a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**. A creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each round.

If the creature fails, it cannot remove its hand this round and it has its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the amount rolled on their Hit Die plus Constitution

modifier. The target dies if this reduces its hit point maximum to 0, leaving behind a withered husk. The reduction lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

The canisters have an AC of 18 and 30 hit points. If broken open, they explode dealing 21 (6d6) radiant damage to everyone in the room.

DOOR 12. 2:10 - MOTES OF TIME

Whirring cogs and flywheels are tightly packed through this room. Three **time mephits** are tasked with maintaining the works, but one of them, who goes by the name Terbit, has become particularly bored with eternity and is willing to leave the task to the other two.

Terbit takes an interest in the characters and comes out of the room to inspect the party. If the characters can speak to it, Terbit flits about asking many questions about what it's like to live in linear time. He is generally not helpful and snarky. Terbit wants to see what they do and occasionally adds mischief to the party's trials for the fun of it; Terbit never fights the characters unless forced. Terbit never tells the characters what is in a room, but the characters can encourage it to assist in solving some of the obstacles (see below) if the characters can do something that entertains it (GM discretion).



DOOR 18. 3:15 – THE MASTER KEY

A mithral key floats in the middle of this otherwise empty room, as if someone had thrown it there and it just stopped part way through its flight—which is exactly what happened. Moments after entering the room, any creature or object freezes and no longer experiences the advancement of time. This means that it is impossible for any creature experiencing linear time to remove the key. Regardless of what the characters might do—go in themselves, attempt to snag the key with rope, or use magic—they freeze in the room. Fortunately, Terbit and the other time elementals are immune. If one of the elementals can be controlled or convinced to aid the characters, they can retrieve the key... and any characters stuck inside.

The Mithral Key. The mithral clock key is a mirror image of the gold key found in the basement, but oddly still fits into the same socket in the clock—it allows the characters to wind the clock backwards! Thus, they may open doors they have previously opened, and free any members of the party trapped inside.

REWARDS AND TREASURE

The mithral key is worth 50 gp.

DOOR 24. 4:20 – SANDS OF TIME

The floor of this room is filled with fine sand that falls from a hole in the ceiling into a 10-foot-radius sinkhole in the center of the room. Two expensive-looking chests are located on the far side of the room.

Moving through the room is difficult terrain and requires a successful DC 10 **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or the character falls prone and slides 5 feet towards the sinkhole. If the character falls into the sinkhole, they fall through the floor, and come out of the ceiling taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage when they crash to the ground.

Opening one chest causes the other to open as well, freeing two angry **time elementals** which vent their frustration on any linear-time beings in this room or in the clock room. The elementals fight until destroyed.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Replace one time elemental with two time mephits.

Stronger: Add two time mephits.

REWARDS AND TREASURE

Inside the chests is 120 gp, a *breastplate of resistance (force)* and a *potion of resistance (force)*.

DOOR 30. 5:25 – CLOCKWORK LABORATORY

A **shield guardian** (size changed to Medium and a stored *blur* spell, which it casts on itself) and two suits of **animated armor** are working in this laboratory, endlessly constructing clockwork pieces. Anyone who picks something up causes the constructs to stare at the creature, but if the object is not taken from the room, the constructs return to work. They fight until destroyed if attacked or a creature tries to remove something from the room.

Books scattered about have details about the construction of the clock. A character who spends one hour skimming through the books and succeeds on a DC 15 **Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check** can determine how the gold and mithral clock keys function to control the clock.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: The shield guardian has 115 hit points and a stored 3rd-level *magic missile* spell.

Stronger: The shield guardian has 200 hit points and a stored *haste* spell which it casts on itself.

Using Tome of Beasts

Replace the shield guardian with a Medium-sized clockwork myrmidon

DOOR 36. 6:30 – BRIEF RESPITE

This room is filled with beds, a hearth, comfortable chairs, fresh water, and plenty of bland, dried food. It is perfectly safe.

DOOR 42. 7:35 – THE TIME VAULT

The walls of this room are covered in valuable clocks, sundials, telescopes, star charts, watches, and other objects used to calculate time.

REWARDS AND TREASURE

The large number of clocks in this room are bulky and

fragile to move, but if entirely liquidated, they could be sold for 200 gp.

DOOR 48. 8:40 – REPLAY ETERNAL

When the characters enter this room, they see twelve pedestals, arranged like a clock face and labeled with the same numbers as the doors. Approaching one causes a miniature illusion to spring to life. It plays out in normal time with whatever the characters have done in the corresponding room. While the characters cannot actually touch the illusion, if they move to grasp it, it moves with them allowing the character to zoom in, fast forward, rewind, or pause the image. This gives the characters a chance to revisit rooms they have been to and potential figure out their mistakes.

The pedestals for the rooms they have not yet visited remain dark.

DOOR 54. 9:45 – TOLL OF THE BELL

Painted on the walls of this room are images of various clock bells and chimes. The words Sound the Bell are emblazoned upon the back wall. Also in the room are racks of instruments: a violin, drums, flute, trumpet, and dozens more, but no bells or chimes. In order to solve the riddle, a character must play the trumpet, the only brass instrument present and the only instrument that has a “bell.”

If the characters cannot figure out the riddle, a bard or a character proficient with wind instruments may attempt a **DC 12 Intelligence (History) check**. On a success, the character recalls a trumpet has a bell. Characters who possess a trumpet automatically succeed on this check.

REWARDS AND TREASURE

If a character sounds the trumpet, an opening appears in one of the painted bells revealing a *wand of secrets*, a *portion of greater healing*, and 100 gp. The flute is crafted from platinum and worth 300 gp.

DOOR 60. 10:50 – THE REDOUBT OF DWOR METHIAN

Dwor (**mage**) has been trapped in this room with his shield guardian studying the demiplane he had just created when the door closed. When the door opens, he is wary, but thanks the characters for rescuing him. He realizes that the characters likely know too much about the construction of his demiplane, so he tries to get them all to come into his study where he goes on at length about the construction of the clock. He hopes to distract the characters and run out at

the last moment, trapping them inside. A **passive Insight of 13 or better** realizes he is stalling for time.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Replace the shield guardian with an earth elemental.

Stronger: Replace the shield guardian with two earth elementals.

REWARDS AND TREASURE

Dwor is wearing a *shield guardian necklace*.

DOOR 66. 11:55 – THE PRISON OF VOZMONZAL

Vozmonzal's prison looks like the inside of a clock. The back of a clock face with all its gears exposed take up the rear wall. Large chimes hang from the center of the room, a massive pendulum swings back and forth in the center of the room.

Vozmonzal seeks to kill all living things within the prison and break free. By opening the door, the characters are all that remain between it and the exit (door 0) that opens in five minutes!

CONCLUSION

Having escaped the clock, it is clear that Dwor squandered his wealth on its creation—there is no grand fortune to bring back to Sera. Sera offers the land to the characters if they pay her 2,000 gp or she will sell it to someone else. If she sells it, the party earns 500 gp in a month once she completes the sale.

DEVELOPMENTS

If your campaign has a great evil, it's possible that the clock could be used to capture other powerful beings. Studying the clock to creating similar but more powerful time prisons could be a grand quest in order to stop the threat of an even greater foe!



TIME MEPHIT

Small elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 21 (6d6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Damage Immunities necrotic

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Primordial

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Death Burst. When the mephit dies, it explodes in a cloud of multi-colored, sparkling dust. Each creature within 5 feet of the mephit must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or age 1d4 years.

Innate Spellcasting (1/Day). The mephit can innately cast *blur*, requiring no material components. Its innate spellcasting ability is Charisma.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage.

Slow Breath (Recharge 6). The mephit exhales a 15-foot cone of multi-colored, sparkling dust. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be slowed until the end of their next turn. A slowed creature suffers the following:

Its speed is halved.

It takes a -2 penalty to AC and Dexterity saving throws.

It cannot use reactions.

On its turn, it can use either an action or a bonus action, not both.

It can't make more than one melee or ranged attack during its turn, regardless of its abilities or magic items.

A creature attempting to cast a spell with a casting time of one action while slowed must roll a d20. On an 11 or higher, the spell doesn't take effect until the creature's next turn, and the creature must use its action on that turn to complete the spell. If it can't, the spell is wasted.



TIME ELEMENTAL

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Primordial

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Flow of Time. The elemental can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without squeezing. A creature that touches the elemental or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage. In addition, the elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.

Innate Spellcasting. The elemental can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components. Its innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11).

1/day each: *blur*, *haste*, *hold person*, *slow*

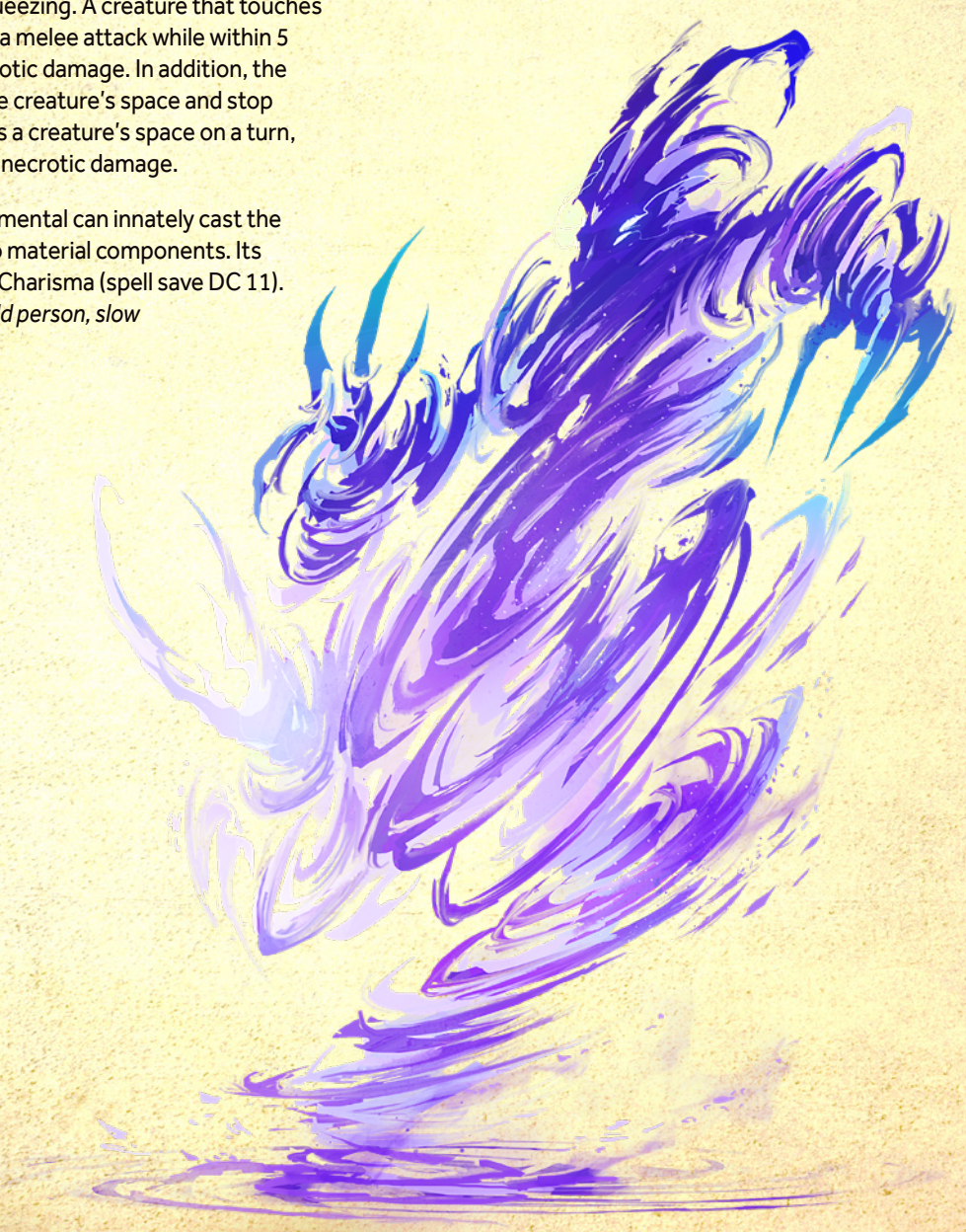
ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage plus 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.

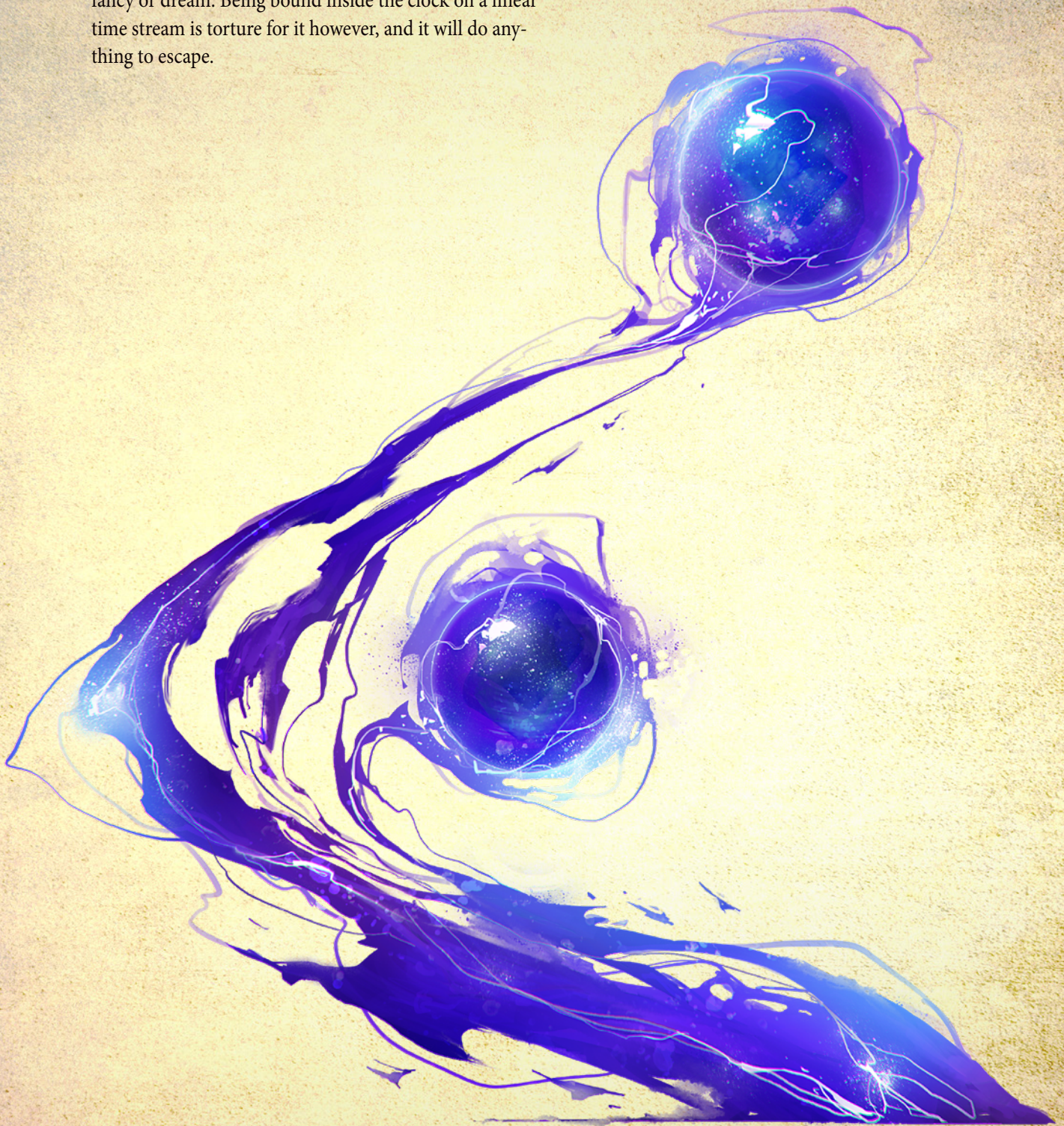
REACTIONS

Temporal Blur. The elemental adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the elemental must see the attacker.



VONMONZAL

Looking like globules of color and motes of swirling light, Vonmonzal is more force of nature than thinking creature; at least as creatures of linear time might understand it. It has no care for creatures of linear time than for a flight of fancy or dream. Being bound inside the clock on a linear time stream is torture for it however, and it will do anything to escape.



VONMONZAL

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 172 (15d12 + 75)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10(+0)	23(+6)	21(+5)	14(+2)	13(+1)	17(+3)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +10, Wis +6, Cha +8

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Damage Immunities force, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages –

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Vonmonzal fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes three claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) force damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5–6). The elemental uses one of the following breath weapons.

Force Breath. The elemental exhales force in a 60-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (13d6) force damage, pushed 15 feet away from the elemental, and landing prone on a failed save, or half as much damage and is not pushed away on a successful one.

Sleep Breath. The elemental exhales sleep gas in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 10 minutes. This effect ends for a creature if the creature takes damage or someone uses an action to wake it.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The elemental can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The elemental regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. Vonmonzal makes a claw attack.

Frozen in Time. Vonmonzal casts *hold person* on one creature (spell save DC 18).

Skip Through Time. Vonmonzal teleports 30 feet.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Vonmonzal takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Time stutters and all creatures concentrating on a spell must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw lose concentration.

Space warps and each creature with 30 feet of Vonmonzal must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be pushed 5 feet in a direction of Vonmonzal's choice.

Scaling Suggestions

Weaker: Vonmonzal has 142 hit points, save DCs are 15, and attack bonus is +8

Weaker: Vonmonzal's save DCs are 17, and attack bonus is +10

Stronger: Vonmonzal has an AC of 19, 212 hit points, save DCs are 19, attack bonus is +12, and attacks deal an additional 5 (1d10) necrotic damage instead of 3 (1d6).



APPENDIX: KOBOLD PRESS CREATURES

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AGNIBARRA

Small monstrosity, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 39 (6d6 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Damage Vulnerabilities cold

Damage Immunities fire

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Ignan

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Body in Flames. A creature that touches the agnibarra or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage, and flammable objects within 5 feet of the agnibarra that aren't being worn or carried ignite.

Illumination. The agnibarra sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light an additional 10 feet.

ACTIONS

Burning Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Spit Fire. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 15/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

BLACK SUN PRIESTESS

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Skills Insight +6, Intimidation +6, Religion +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the priestess can move up to her speed toward a hostile creature that she can see.

Black Sun Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the the Black Sun priestess' darkvision.

Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the orc has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Spellcasting. The priestess is a 6th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priestess has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, resistance, sacred flame*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, cure wounds, detect magic*

2nd level (3 slots): *augury, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, bestow curse, spirit guardians*

ACTIONS

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

CLACKING SKELETON

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	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 2 (450 XP)

Horrid Clacking. If the clacking skeleton moves at least 10 feet, each beast or humanoid within 30 feet of the skeleton that can hear it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The clacking skeleton makes two attacks: one with its glaive and one with its gore or two with its shortbow.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

CLOCKWORK ABOMINATION

Large construct (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d10 + 32)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4 Con +7

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +4, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Additional Legs. Four legs allow the clockwork abomination to climb at a speed equal to its base speed and to ignore difficult terrain.

Piston Reach. The abomination's melee attacks have a deceptively long reach thanks to the pistons powering them.

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

Infernal Power Source. When a clockwork abomination falls to 0 hp, its infernal battery explodes. Creatures within 10 feet of the clockwork abomination take 14 (4d6) fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The clockwork abomination makes one bite attack and one slam attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The clockwork abomination's Infernal Power Source allows it to breathe fire in a 20-foot cone. Targets in this cone take 22 (4d10) fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw.



CLOCKWORK HOUND

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)

Speed 50 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +4

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +4

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages understands Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

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

Diligent Tracker. Clockwork hounds are designed to guard areas and track prey. They have advantage on all Wisdom (Perception) and Wisdom (Survival) checks when tracking.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Tripping Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Explosive Core. The mechanism that powers the hound explodes when the construct is destroyed. All creatures within 5 feet of the hound take 7 (2d6) fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw.

CLOCKWORK HUNTSMAN

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 110 (20d8 + 20)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +4

Skills Perception +4, Survival +4

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages understands Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

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

Net Cannon. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one target, size Large or smaller. *Hit:* the target is restrained. A mechanism within the clockwork huntsman's chest can fire a net with a 20-foot trailing cable anchored within the huntsman's chest. A creature can free itself (or another creature) from the net by using its action to make a successful DC 10 Strength check or by dealing 5 slashing damage to the net. The huntsman can fire up to four nets before it must be reloaded.

Explosive Core. The mechanism that powers the huntsman explodes when the construct is destroyed, projecting superheated steam and shrapnel. Every creature within 5 ft. of the construct takes 10 (3d6) fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw.



CLOCKWORK MYRMIDON

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 153 (18d10+54)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +11, Dex +5

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +6

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages understands Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The clockwork myrmidon makes two attacks: two pick attacks or two slam attacks, or one of each.

Heavy Pick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Alchemical Flame Jet (Recharge 5–6). The clockwork myrmidon can spew a jet of alchemical fire in a line 20 feet long and 5 feet wide. Any creature in the path of the jet takes 26 (4d12) fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. The clockwork myrmidon can use this attack four times before its internal reservoir is emptied.

Grease Spray (Recharge 5–6). As a bonus action, the clockwork myrmidon's chest can fire a spray of alchemical grease with a range of 30 feet, covering a 10-by-10 foot square area and turning it into difficult terrain. Each creature standing in the affected area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. A creature that enters the area or ends its turn there must also succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. The clockwork myrmidon can use this attack four times before its internal reservoir is emptied.

Alchemical Fireball. The clockwork myrmidon's alchemical flame reservoir explodes when the construct is destroyed, spraying nearby creatures with burning fuel. A creature within 5 feet of the myrmidon takes 19 (3d12) fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. This explosion doesn't occur if the clockwork myrmidon has already fired its alchemical flame jet four times.

CLOCKWORK WATCHMAN

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Con +3

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +4

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.

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

Net Cannon. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one target, size Large or smaller. *Hit:* the target is restrained.

A mechanism within the clockwork huntsman's chest can fire a net with a 20-foot trailing cable anchored within the watchman's chest. A creature can free itself (or another creature) from the net by using its action to make a successful DC 10 Strength check or by dealing 5 slashing damage to the net at AC 10. The watchman can fire up to four nets before it must be reloaded.



CLOCKWORK WEAVING SPIDER

Tiny construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 25 (10d4)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages understands Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The weaving spider makes two trimming blade attacks or two needle shuttle attacks.

Trimming Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage and possible unmaking.

Poisoned Needle Shuttle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

Unmaking. The weaving spider's speed and its slim, sharp blade can slice cloth, leather, and paper into scraps very quickly. Whenever a weaving spider's trimming blade attack roll exceeds the target's armor class by 5 or more, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or one of their possessions becomes unusable or damaged until repaired (GM's choice).

DARAKHUL GHOUL

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail; 18 with shield)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Deception +3, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Darakhul

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Master of Disguise. A darakhul in a prepared disguise has advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks made to pass as a living creature. While using this ability, the darakhul loses its stench.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the darakhul must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. A successful saving throw makes the creature immune to the darakhul's stench for 24 hours. A darakhul using this ability can't also benefit from Master of Disguise.

Sunlight Sensitivity. The darakhul has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight and on attack rolls while it, the object it is trying to see or attack in direct sunlight.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The darakhul bites once, claws once, and makes one war pick attack. Using a shield limits the darakhul to making either its claw or war pick attack, but not both.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage, and if the target creature is humanoid it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or contract darakhul fever.

Claw. *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 make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A paralyzed target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a humanoid creature is paralyzed for 2 or more rounds (the victim fails at least 2 saving throws), consecutive or nonconsecutive, the creature contracts darakhul fever.

War Pick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.



DOOMSPEAKER

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (shield)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +4

Skills Religion +6

Damage Resistances necrotic

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any two languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Aura of the Funeral Feast. The doomspeaker gains 10 (3d6) temporary hp whenever a creature dies within 10 feet of it.

Pervasive Unholy Smite. Whenever the doomspeaker deals damage with a melee weapon attack, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) necrotic damage (included in the attack). This damage increases to 13 (3d8) if the target is a celestial, a good-aligned dragon, or a fey.

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

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *searing smite*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *locate object*, *magic weapon*, *protection from poison*

3rd level (3 slots): *aura of vitality*, *blinding smite*, *dispel magic*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The doomspeaker makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

FIRE IMP

Tiny fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 14 (4d4 + 4)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

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

Skills Deception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silver

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Fire Absorption. Whenever the imp is subjected to fire damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hp equal to the fire damage dealt.

Heat Metal (1/Day). As a bonus action, the imp casts the *heat metal* spell without expending any material components (spell save DC 12).

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

ACTIONS

Fire Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) fire damage and if the target is a flammable object that isn't being worn or carried, it also catches fire. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take another 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of its next turn.

Hurl Flame. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) fire damage and if the target is a flammable object that isn't being worn or carried, it also catches fire.



GNOLL HAVOC RUNNER

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Gnoll

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Harrying Attacks. If the gnoll attacks two creatures in the same turn, the first target has disadvantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Lightning Lope. The gnoll can Dash or Disengage as a bonus action.

Pack Tactics. The gnoll has advantage on its attack rolls against a target if at least one of the gnoll's allies is within 5 feet of the target and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gnoll makes one bite attack and two battleaxe attacks.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used in two hands.

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

GREEN ABYSS ORC

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +4, Perception +2, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

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

ACTIONS

Poisoned Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hp, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hp, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

KOBOLD ALCHEMIST

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 44 (8d6 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +5

Skills Arcana +5, Medicine +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Apothecary. As a bonus action the kobold can select one of the following damage types: acid, cold, or fire. Until it uses this action again, the kobold has resistance to the chosen damage type. Additionally, the kobold is proficient with a poisoner's kit.

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

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The kobold makes two attacks.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) poison damage.

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) poison damage.

Alchemical Protection (Recharge after a Short or Long Rest). The kobold chooses up to six allied creatures within 10 feet. It releases alchemical vapors that grant those allies resistance to poison damage for 10 minutes. Instead



of poison damage, the kobold can grant resistance to the damage type currently in effect for its Apothecary trait.

Explosive Flask (Recharge 5-6). The kobold throws a flask of volatile substances at a point within 30 feet. The flask explodes in a 15-foot radius. Creatures in the area take 17 (5d6) poison damage and are poisoned for 1 minute, or take half damage and are not poisoned with a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. A poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poisoned condition on a success. Instead of poison damage, the kobold can deal the damage type currently in effect for its Apothecary trait.

KOBOLD TRAPSMITH

Small humanoid, lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather)

Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the kobold trapsmith has disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

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

Thieves' Tools. The kobold trapsmith has proficiency with thieves' tools and is seldom without them. If its tools are taken away or lost, it can cobble together a new set from wire, bits of metal, and other junk in 30 minutes.

Traps and Snares. The kobold trapsmith excels at setting mechanical traps. Detecting, disarming, avoiding, or mitigating its traps require successful DC 13 checks or saving throws, and the traps have +5 attack bonuses. With thief's tools and basic construction materials, a trapsmith can set up one of the simple but effective traps listed below in 5 minutes. Triggers involve pressure plates, tripwires, small catches in a lock, or other simple mechanisms.

- **Choke Bomb.** This small incendiary device burns rapidly and releases choking smoke in a 20-foot sphere. The area is heavily obscured. Any breathing creature that's in the affected area when the cloud is created or that starts its turn in the cloud is poisoned. Once a poisoned creature leaves the cloud, it makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of its turns, ending the poisoned condition on a success. The smoke dissipates after 10

minutes, or after 1 round in a strong wind.

- **Poisoned Sliver.** A poisoned sliver or needle can be hidden almost anywhere: inside a lock or a box, in a carpeted floor, on the underside of a door handle, in a cup of liquid or a bowl of gems. When someone meets the conditions for being jabbed by the sliver, the trap makes a *melee weapon attack* with advantage: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target; *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage, or one-half poison damage with a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
- **Skullpopper.** This trap consists of either a heavy weight, a spike, or a blade, set to fall or swing into a victim. When triggered, a skullpopper makes a *melee weapon attack* against the first target in its path: +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target; *Hit:* 11 (2d10) damage. The type of damage depends on how the skullpopper is built: a stone or heavy log does bludgeoning damage, a spiked log does piercing damage, a scything blade does slashing damage, etc.
- **Slingsnare.** A concealed loop of rope or wire is affixed to a counterweight. When a creature steps into the snare, it must make a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be yanked into the air and suspended, upside down, 5 feet above the ground. The snared creature is restrained (escape DC 13). The cord is AC 10 and has 5 hit points.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage, or one-half poison damage with a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw.

Shredder (Recharge 6). The kobold trapsmith primes and throws a device at a point within 30 feet. The device explodes when it hits something solid, flinging razor-sharp spikes in a 15-foot-radius sphere. Every creature in the area takes 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or half damage with a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. The ground inside the spherical area is littered with spikes; it becomes difficult terrain, and a creature that falls prone in the area takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

Stunner (1/Day). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is restrained (escape DC 13). While restrained, the target takes 7 (2d6) lightning damage at the start of its turn and falls prone. The trapsmith has advantage on the attack roll if the target is wearing metal armor. A stunner is a bola made of metal wire, magnets, and static electricity capacitors. A kobold trapsmith can recharge it during a long rest.



LIVING WICK

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 28 (8d6)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)	5 (-3)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

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

Senses sight 20 ft. (blind beyond the radius of its own light), passive Perception 10

Languages shares a telepathic link with the individual that lit its wick

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Controlled. Living wicks cannot move, attack, or perform actions when they are not lit. Living wicks only respond to the telepathic commands of the individual that lit them.

Light. Activated living wicks produce light as a torch.

Melting. A living wick loses one hit point for every 24 hours it remains lit.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Consume Self. A living wick can be commanded to rapidly burn through the remains of its wick, creating a devastating fireball. All creatures within 20 feet of the living wick take 7 (2d6) fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. The fire spreads around corners and ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried. The wick is reduced to a lifeless puddle of wax.

PAPER GOLEM SWARM

Medium swarm of Tiny constructs, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 8

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

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

False Appearance. While the paper golem swarm remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from ordinary sheets of paper.

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

Ink Blot (Recharge 4–6). As a bonus action, the paper golem swarm applies ink to itself. The next time it hits a creature with a paper cut attack, the creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. It can also apply to the swarm's whirlwind.

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

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

ACTIONS

Paper Cut. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) slashing damage, or 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Whirlwind (Recharge 5–6). The air is momentarily filled with paper golems. Each creature within 5 feet of the swarm must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



POSSESSED PILLAR

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d10 + 40)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

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

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

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

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

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

Steal Weapons. The eldritch magic that powers the pillar produces a magnetic power that seizes metal objects that touch it, including metal weapons. When a creature successfully strikes the pillar with a metal melee weapon, the attacker must make a successful DC 15 Strength or Dexterity saving throw or the weapon becomes stuck to the pillar until the pillar releases it or is destroyed. The saving throw uses the same ability as the attack used. The pillar can release all metal weapons stuck to it whenever it wants. A pillar always drops all weapons stuck to it when it believes it's no longer threatened. This ability affects armor only during a grapple.

False Appearance. While the pillar remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a statue or a carved column.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pillar makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

PUTRID HAUNT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning and piercing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dead Still. Treat a putrid haunt as invisible while it's buried in swamp muck.

Swamp Shamble. Putrid haunts suffer no movement penalties in marshy terrain.

ACTIONS

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

Vomit Leeches (Recharge 6). A putrid haunt can vomit forth the contents of its stomach onto a target within 5 feet. Along with the bile and mud from its stomach, this includes 2d6 undead leeches that attach to the target. A creature takes 1 necrotic damage per leech on it at the start of the creature's turn, and the putrid haunt gains the same number of temporary hit points. As an action, a creature can remove or destroy 1d3 leeches from itself or an adjacent ally.

RAVENFOLK SCOUT

Medium humanoid (kenku), neutral

Armor Class 14 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 21 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex+4, Con +1, Wis +4, Cha +3

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

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Feather Speech, Huginn

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Mimicry. Ravenfolk scouts can mimic the voices of others with uncanny accuracy. They have advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks involving audible mimicry.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ravenfolk scout makes one peck attack and one other melee or ranged attack.



Ghost Wings. The ravenfolk scout furiously “beats” a set of phantasmal wings. Every creature within 5 feet of the ravenfolk must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the start of the ravenfolk’s next turn.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Peck. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SAND HAG

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +6, Perception +5, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Giant, Gnomish

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

At will: *invisibility*

2/day each: *hallucinatory terrain, major image*

Mimicry. The sand hag can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations only with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Scorpion Step. The sand hag walks lightly across sandy surfaces, never sinking into soft sand or leaving tracks. When in sandy terrain, the sand hag ignores difficult terrain, doesn’t leave tracks, and gains tremorsense 30 ft.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The sand hag makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

Scouring Sirocco (Recharge 5–6). The sand hag generates a blast of hot wind in a 30-foot line or a 15-foot cone. Creatures inside it take 14 (4d6) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage and are blinded for 1 minute; a successful

DC 14 Constitution saving throw halves the damage and negates the blindness. A blinded creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The affected area (line or cone) is heavily obscured until the end of the sand hag’s next turn.

Change Shape. The hag polymorphs into a Small or Medium female humanoid, or back into her true form. Her statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn’t transformed. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

SHADOW OOZE

Medium ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 76 (9d8 + 36)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	6 (–2)	18 (+4)	2 (–4)	6 (–2)	2 (–4)

Skills Stealth +2

Damage Immunities acid, necrotic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Aura of Darkness. The ooze devours all natural and magical light within 30 feet of it. This area is heavily obscured by darkness for all creatures except shadow fey.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ooze makes one pseudopod attack and then uses Snuff Out.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and 3 (1d6) acid damage.

Snuff Out. The ooze extinguishes one natural or magical light source within 60 feet of it. If the light source is created by a spell, it is dispelled.

FREEZING SHADOW OOZE (VARIANT)

Some shadow oozes are touched with freezing elemental energy. They are immune to cold damage and gain the following trait.

Frozen Defense. When a creature wielding a metal melee weapon hits the ooze, it takes 5 (2d4) cold damage.



SHADOW SKELETON

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Damage Resistances fire, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

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

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shadow skeleton makes two scimitar attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Finger Darts. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, it must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is surrounded by a shadowy aura for 1 minute. While surrounded by the aura, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) necrotic damage when hit by the scimitar attack of a shadow skeleton. Any creature can take an action to extinguish the shadow with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check. The shadow also extinguishes if the target receives magical healing.

SUPPURATING OOZE

Medium ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

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

Saving Throws Con +5

Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Seeping Death. A living creature that touches the ooze or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract a disease. At the end of each long rest, the diseased creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its Dexterity score is reduced by 1d4. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest after the disease is cured. If the disease reduces the creature's Dexterity to 0, the creature dies and its body becomes a suppurating ooze 1d4 hours later. The disease lasts until removed by the *lesser restoration* spell or other similar magic.

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

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become infected with the seeping death disease (see the Seeping Death trait).

VINE LORD

Medium plant, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +6, Cha +7

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened

Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Green Strider. The vine lord ignores movement restrictions and damage caused by natural undergrowth.

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

Regeneration. The vine lord regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is within its home forest or jungle.

Root Mind. Within its home forest or jungle, the vine lord's blindsight extends to 60 ft., it succeeds on all Wisdom (Perception) checks, and it can't be surprised.

Spore Sacs (1/week). The vine lord can release seeds from specialized sacs on its tendrils. These seeds sprout into 1d4 green spore pods that reach maturity in 3 days. The



Pods contain noxious spores that are released when the pod is stepped on, picked, or otherwise tampered with. A humanoid or beast that inhales these spores must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw against disease or tendrils start growing inside the creature's body. If the disease is not cured within 3 months, the tendrils take over the creature's nervous system and the victim becomes a tendril puppet.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vine lord makes two claw attacks and four tendril attacks. A single creature can't be the target of more than one tendril attack per turn.

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

Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Awaken the Green (1/Day). The vine lord magically animates one or two trees it can see within 60 feet of it. These trees have the same statistics as a treant, except they have Intelligence and Charisma scores of 1, they can't speak, and they have only the Slam action option. An animated tree acts as an ally of the vine lord. The tree remains animate for 1 day or until it dies; until the vine lord dies or is more than 120 feet from the tree; or until the vine lord takes a bonus action to turn it back into an inanimate tree. The tree then takes root if possible.

WAMPUS CAT

Medium monstrosity, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Persuasion +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Focused Animosity. The wampus cat has advantage on melee attacks against any male she has seen employ divine magic or wield a holy symbol.

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

At will: *disguise self* (appearance of a female human), *mage hand*
2/day: *hex*

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

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Yowl (Recharge 5–6). Intelligent creatures within 60 feet of the cat who are able to hear its voice must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. Those who fail find the sound of the wampus cat's voice pleasant and alluring, so that the cat has advantage on Charisma checks against them for 1 minute. The affected characters cannot attack the wampus cat during this time unless they are wounded in that time.

WOLF REAVER DWARF

Medium humanoid (dwarf), any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 76 (9d8 + 36)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	9 (–1)	11 (+0)	9 (–1)

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Danger Sense. The wolf reaver dwarf has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against attacks it can see when it is not blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Dwarven Resistance. The wolf reaver dwarf has advantage on saving throws against poison.

Pack Tactics. The wolf reaver dwarf has advantage on attacks if at least one of the dwarf's allies is within 5 feet of the target and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the wolf reaver dwarf can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wolf reaver dwarf makes two melee or ranged attacks.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

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

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.



XHKARSH

Large aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (natural and mystic armor)

Hit Points 133 (14d10 + 56)

Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Cha +5

Skills Insight + 6, Perception +6, Stealth +8

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Deep Speech, Undercommon

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The xhkarsh makes two claw attacks and two stinger attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or have its fate corrupted. A creature with corrupted fate has disadvantage on Charisma checks and Charisma saving throws, and it is immune to divination spells and to effects that sense emotions or read thoughts. The target's fate can be restored by a *dispel evil and good* spell or comparable magic.

Seize Strand. The xhkarsh targets one creature within 5 feet of it whose fate has been corrupted. The target creature must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or a portion of the xhkarsh's consciousness inhabits its body. The target retains control of its body, but the xhkarsh can control its actions for 1 minute each day and can modify its memories as a bonus action (as if using the *modify memory* spell, DC 15). The target is unaware of the xhkarsh's presence, but can make a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check once every 24 hours to notice the presence of the xhkarsh. This effect lasts until the xhkarsh ends it or the target's fate is restored by a *dispel evil and good* spell or comparable magic. A creature becomes immune to this effect for 24 hours when it succeeds on the saving throw to resist the effect or after the effect ends on it for any reason. A single xhkarsh can seize up to four strands at the same time.

Invisibility. The xhkarsh turns invisible until it attacks or casts a spell, or until its concentration ends. Equipment the xhkarsh wears or carries becomes invisible with it.

YOUNG FLAME DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 161 (17d10 + 68)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +8, Wis +5, Cha +8

Skills Deception +8, Insight +5, Perception +9, Persuasion +8

Stealth +6

Damage Immunities fire

Senses blindsight 30 ft. darkvision 120 ft. passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Draconic, Ignan, Giant, Infernal, Orc

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Fire Incarnate. All fire damage dealt by the dragon ignores fire resistance but not fire immunity.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes one bite attack and two claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area takes 56 (16d6) fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw.



CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

By Cody Faulk

These four brand new backgrounds, the barber, butcher, bodyguard, and vagabond were unlocked by our amazing Kickstarter backers!

BARBER

A barber is a central part of many communities not only because they provide a vital service, but also because trying on yourself normally ends in disaster. Whether cutting hair, shaving, lending an attentive ear, or even performing minor acts of surgery with sharpened razors, barbers usually find no shortage of patrons in their chairs.

Skill Proficiencies: Perception, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Three pairs of well-made scissors, a good-quality comb, a small mirror, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: FILL THE SILENCE

Perhaps not everyone visits the local barber, but many people certainly do. When one sits in the barber's chair for a shave or a haircut, that usually means a long stretch of time alone with the barber. It's only natural for some patrons to chat with or even confide in the barber to fill the silence. Any barber worth their salt knows how to facilitate that conversation to put the patron at ease, but if they can gain some useful information at the same time? All the better.

While barbering for a patron, the GM should treat an indifferent NPC as friendly for the purposes of determining their willingness to chat and share information with you. A hostile patron is not affected by this feature unless you can first successfully shift their general attitude to an indifferent one. You might accomplish this via any number

of approaches, such as by simply acting friendly, offering them things they desire, or making them feel vulnerable with an "accidental" slip of a razor.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Consider these questions when determining how this background applies to your character: How did you get your start as a barber? Where did you learn how to cut hair? How do you feel about your patrons? Do you have a particular type of clientele? Do you enjoy your work?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you become an adventurer because of something you learned from one of your patrons? Or did you end up working as a barber somewhere along the way as you went about life as an adventurer? Is there a link between your life as a barber and your life as an adventurer?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I smile even in the face of great danger or discomfort.
- 2 I am uncomfortable with silence and go out of my way to avoid it.
- 3 I despise being interrupted when I'm working.
- 4 I need new and exciting experiences to keep me from getting bored.
- 5 I am definitely a morning person.
- 6 I do my best to stay on the cutting edge of style and fashion.
- 7 When I cut someone's hair, I expect people to recognize my work.
- 8 My services do not come cheaply, and I'm not afraid to say it.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Prescription.** There is a right way to do any task, and barbering is no exception. (Lawful)
- 2 **Equality.** Weak or powerful, rich or poor, everyone desires to look their best if they can help it. (Neutral)
- 3 **Leverage.** No one is ever more vulnerable than when you have ears to hear and a razor to their throat. (Evil)
- 4 **Encouragement.** I'm glad when a nice shave or a smart haircut helps people feel better about themselves. (Good)
- 5 **Impermanence.** The wonderful thing about cutting hair is that if you don't like how it turns out, it won't stay like that forever. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Dedication.** Ultimately, I just want to do a good job. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I consider myself an artist, a painter of sorts, and my patrons are the canvas. I create for art's sake.
- 2 I stumbled into this role quite by accident. It's a funny story involving a very hairy monster. You know, the one from that famous story.
- 3 I never planned on being a barber long term, but once I met my partner, I felt like I couldn't walk away from it.
- 4 My father was a barber, and I was expected to take up the trade when he retired.
- 5 I got swept up in the last war barbering for the soldiers in camp during the campaign. I made a few friends among them along the way.
- 6 I once gave a haircut so bad that the recipient still tries to make my life miserable whenever they can.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I like to ask uncomfortable questions to make people squirm.
- 2 I voice my opinions to anyone anywhere without regard to the audience or situation.
- 3 The smallest slights against me sometimes keep me up at night.
- 4 My reputation is more important than anything else about me.
- 5 I'm always eating something and frequently talk with my mouth full.
- 6 Some people might think it's creepy that I secretly keep locks of hair from my patrons.

VARIANT BARBER: BARBER SURGEON

Injuries and disease are bound to occur in any community, and when such a malady requires surgery, a sharp knife and a steady hand are vitally important. In many communities, the local barber is the person with the keenest implements and the surest touch. These barber surgeons may not have intended to use their talents in this way, but as is often the case, necessity pushes some beyond their usual limits. If you choose the Barber Surgeon variant, this background gives you proficiency in the Medicine skill instead of Persuasion.

BODYGUARD

As long as there has been violence, there have been those who feared its touch enough to hire protection. You are one of those protectors, either for hire or sworn to your charge's service for other reasons such as loyalty, tradition, or even coercion. Regardless of your motivations and the particular type of bodyguard you embody, you have made a living out of providing personal security.

Skill Proficiencies: Your choice of two from Insight, Intimidation, and Perception

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A dossier concerning a recent, prospective, or otherwise important client, a small keepsake from one of your previous charges, a set of manacles, a set of common or traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: ASSESS THE THREAT

As a bodyguard, you are used to putting yourself in harm's way to protect other people. Part of that responsibility includes locating and identifying the routes by which enemies or other threats may approach so that you can better remain vigilant. Whenever you are in an area or room and spend a short amount of time looking around (one action for a room or relatively small area, or one minute for a large area, several rooms, or one floor of a building), you notice details about the layout that inform you about the various ways threats may enter. This feature does not necessarily help you prevent such threats from arriving, but it does inform you of all apparent and visible routes of ingress.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Consider these questions when determining how this background applies to your character: How long have you



been a bodyguard? Do you represent an organization, or are you self-employed? If the former, how do you feel about your organization? What sort of clients do you usually protect? Have you always protected the same person, or do you typically work on a temporary basis? How do you feel about your charges?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did one of your assignments go sideways and lead you onto the adventurer's path? Or were you an adventurer first, but took to the life of a bodyguard over the course of your adventures?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I believe that anyone who has to pay for my protection is inferior to me.
- 2 I always take note of the entrances and exits whenever I enter a new place.
- 3 I like to learn everything I can about the people I protect.
- 4 I enjoy traveling to new, faraway places.
- 5 I find clarity in the tumult of violence.
- 6 I secretly resent my employers; what makes them so special?
- 7 I treat everyone like a potential threat.
- 8 I am always searching for excitement.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Duty.** It is my solemn duty to protect my charge. (Lawful)
- 2 **Survival.** Just as people pay for food and shelter, paying for protection is just another way to trade resources for survival. (Neutral)
- 3 **Deception.** The longer all eyes are fixed on my charge, the longer it will take them to notice what I'm up to. (Evil)
- 4 **Sacrifice.** I will gladly give my life to protect someone who can do more for the greater good than I can. (Good)
- 5 **Unpredictability.** The best way to protect someone is to make sure their behavior can't be predicted. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Reward.** The best part about a dangerous job is that it usually pays well. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I protected the same person throughout my entire career.
- 2 I still bear a great shame for failing to protect one of my early employers.
- 3 I belong to a well-known agency of bodyguards.
- 4 One of my charges eventually became my best friend.
- 5 I treat all of my charges like family while they are under my care.
- 6 There is an assassin whom I consider my arch-nemesis.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am hyper vigilant and don't know how to relax.
- 2 I snore loud enough to wake the dead.
- 3 I have a furious temper that is easily provoked.
- 4 I get irritable if I don't have a soft bed or a full belly.
- 5 I tend to gamble away most of the money I make.
- 6 I am unreasonably superstitious.

BUTCHER

In settled communities where meat is consumed as a dietary staple, there's at least one butcher. Butchery may not be a simple profession, but the concept itself is a simple one: you have made your living slaughtering animals, cutting the meat into pieces, and selling it. This has given you an eye for what parts of animals are the most sought after and the knowledge to know who might be interested in such things if you acquire them.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Cook's utensils

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Cook's utensils, a well-made cleaver, a leather apron, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: RED HARVEST

As a butcher, you are experienced with breaking down the carcasses into their constituent parts. While this primarily involves separating and dividing the meat into manageable pieces, it also includes removing the bones, organs, skin, and other body parts. When you harvest meat or other parts from a carcass, you are able to do so in half the time it would take someone without your training, and your result is also twice as successful in terms of the yield's



quality and quantity (though you obviously cannot exceed the maximum amount available).

Additionally, you are able to locate and attract any prospective buyers for your harvests in settlements with minimal effort (provided they exist), and you know the market values of such items.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Consider these questions when determining how this background applies to your character: How long have you been a butcher? Do you enjoy it? Who taught you your trade? Do you specialize in any particular type of meat? How do you feel about your patrons?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you learn the butcher's trade during your early days as an adventurer? Or did you encounter someone or something during your time as a butcher that set you on a course toward a life of adventure? If so, who or what was it?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I enjoy meeting new people.
- 2 I love animals, but people need to eat.
- 3 When confronted by good fortune, I am always waiting for the other shoe to drop.
- 4 A knife is best when it's useful; the same is true of people.
- 5 I can rise to any challenge if I try hard enough.
- 6 If someone is nice to you, they're just trying to trick you.
- 7 Sharing gossip and news is an important part of any society.
- 8 I never tell the whole truth if I can help it.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Function.** Farmers harvest. Hunters hunt. Butchers cut. We all have a job to do. (Lawful)
- 2 **Perspective.** If you ask a monster, we're the meat. (Neutral)
- 3 **Control.** Control what people need and you control the people. (Evil)
- 4 **Generosity.** You never know when giving away a scrap might brighten a day or save a life. (Good)
- 5 **Casualness.** Why bother measuring? A little less here, a little extra there: it all evens out. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Practicality.** If your choice is between eating or being eaten, choose the former. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I learned my trade from my parents. I took up the cleaver to honor them.
- 2 I genuinely respect the sacrifices made by the animals we eat.
- 3 I keep the tools of my trade in impeccable condition. An artisan is only as good as their tools.
- 4 My community is very important to me, and I occupy a valuable place in that community.
- 5 I am always looking for exotic new meats to sample and learn about.
- 6 I owe a favor to the people who helped me get started in my trade.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I never wash my hands. They're just going to get dirty again.
- 2 I never let go of a grudge.
- 3 I make as much of a mess when I eat as when I ply my trade.
- 4 I struggle to find meaning in life. We're no more special than the animals we eat.
- 5 I beat myself up even for small mistakes.
- 6 I have no confidence in the abilities of my allies.

VARIANT BUTCHER: RITUAL SLAUGHTERER

Not all butchers ply their trade for love of meat or to turn a profit. Some consider the task a holy one, and perform their work in accordance with sacred standards. They slaughter animals according to these sacrosanct traditions and learn more about the religious aspects of the work than the creatures themselves. If you choose the Ritual Slaughterer variant of the Butcher background, this background gives you proficiency in the Religion skill instead of Nature.



VAGABOND

As a vagabond, home is a transient concept and is best defined as wherever you happen to lay your head at the moment. You spent the majority of your life with no long-term residence or occupation, instead choosing to drift from place to place solely at your own whim. You accomplished this by either staying in constant motion or by simply avoiding the notice of others entirely. In either case, your wandering gives you ample opportunity to collect rumors and knowledge about the lands you travel.

Skill Proficiencies: History and your choice of either Athletics or Stealth

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A walking stick, a bindle, an extra pair of boots or shoes, 50 feet of rope, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: HOBO CODE

You have encountered other drifters over the course of your itinerant lifestyle, and in that time you learned how to read and write a set of hieroglyphic-like symbols typically known as "hobo code." This code is known only to those with the Vagabond background or those who are specifically instructed in its usage; the symbols appear as meaningless scrawls to all others. Hobo code is not a fully developed language used to communicate complex or abstract ideas, but it is instead used to convey simple information, typically about the locations such symbols are scrawled upon.

Examples of hobo code include an indication where one might find a free meal, whether or not work is available at a certain place, how dangerous a person or place may be, how strict laws in a given location are, whether or not a place welcomes strangers or drifters, how well a building may serve as a hideout, and other topics relevant to the lifestyle of a vagabond.

It is important to note that while hobo code is somewhat similar to the written aspects of thieves' cant, they are two different codes, and both are used by different groups to convey different types of information.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Consider these questions when determining how this background applies to your character: How do you feel about being a vagabond? Would you prefer to have a permanent home? If so, why do you not settle down somewhere? What do you like best about your lifestyle? What do you like least about it? Do you typically prefer to drift alone, or do you prefer company during your travels?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. While wandering as a vagabond, did you find yourself in a situation that led you toward questing and adventures? Or did your life as a vagabond simply come about as a natural extension of your existing life as an itinerant adventurer?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am extremely careful with my money.
- 2 I am perfectly willing to perform honest labor to achieve my goals.
- 3 I prefer the company of animals over people when it comes to traveling companions.
- 4 I am embarrassed by my lifestyle, so I try to conceal my nature as a drifter as much as possible.
- 5 Every journey is easier if you carry a song in your heart.
- 6 I greet everyone with a smile and a friendly word.
- 7 Simple entertainment and cheap thrills are my favorite diversions.
- 8 I avoid scrutiny and attention as much as possible.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Law.** It is important to observe the laws of the land wherever you find yourself. (Lawful)
- 2 **Anonymity.** The open road allows everyone to be a stranger. (Neutral)
- 3 **Evasion.** The best way to avoid answering for your crimes is to leave before they find you. (Evil)
- 4 **Improvement.** Leave every place better than you found it. (Good)
- 5 **Freedom.** There is no greater freedom than being beholden to nowhere and no one. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Prudence.** It's important to know when it's time to move on. (Any)



d6 Bond

- 1 A magic curse has afflicted me with wanderlust.
- 2 I always take a souvenir from the places I visit.
- 3 I used to drift from place to place with two close companions, but I haven't seen them in a long time.
- 4 I make it a point to sample the best local food and drink everywhere I go.
- 5 The love of my life went missing, and I won't stop looking until I find them.
- 6 There are several towns where I'm not welcome anymore because of some unfortunate situations and misunderstandings.

d6 Flaw

- 1 When things get too stressful, I tend to wander off without telling anyone.
- 2 I have trouble remembering specific details.
- 3 I can never relax while indoors; I crave the open sky.
- 4 I'm tempted to indulge in illicit pleasures wherever I go—the more illicit, the better.
- 5 I get extremely irritable when I'm tired.
- 6 My stories get increasingly exaggerated the more I tell them.



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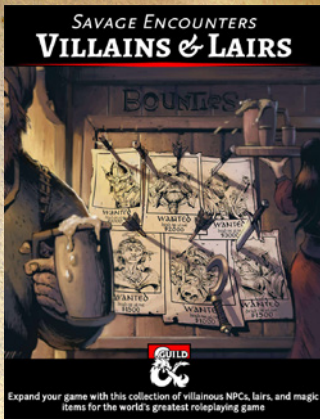
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