

# FLOWERS IN THE DEAD HOUSE

A 3-4 HOUR ADVENTURE FOR 1ST-4TH LEVEL



WRITTEN BY JACOB MCNAMARA

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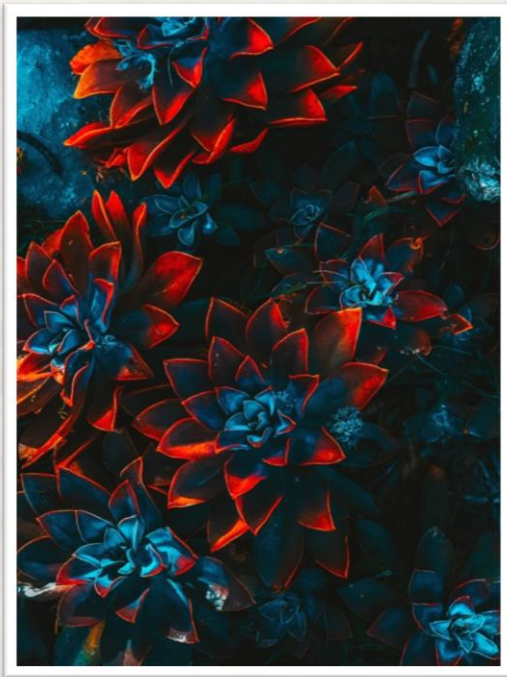
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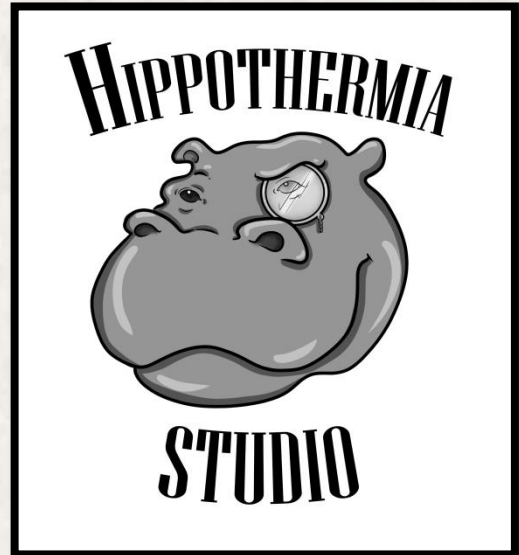
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## ON THE COVER

A beautiful photograph of some liriums from Juanjo Menta



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# INTRODUCTION

*¡Blessed be Kelemvor, Judge of the Damned! ¡And blessed be his guide which protects us, even in death!"*

— Rarder Cyne, preaching in the streets.

*Flowers in the Dead House* is a 3-4 hour adventure designed for a party of 1st-4th level characters.

## USING THIS ADVENTURE

*Flowers in the Dead House* will provide a sidebar that helps you determine the best adjustments for combat encounters, in order to create an appropriate challenge. This adventure is optimized for a party of five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. To figure out whether you have to adjust the adventure, you need to calculate the appropriate challenge level for your party.

To calculate the APL, add the total levels of all characters and divide the sum by the number of characters (rounding up for .5 or greater). This is the **group's average party level (APL)**. To approximate the party's strength for the adventure, check the table below.

### Determining Party Strength

#### Party Composition Party Strength

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

In the appendices are the maps indicated for the DM. Along with the adventure, you have the clean map files, and a printer friendly version. For all maps (see Appendix): 1 square = 5 feet.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Rarder Cyne is a former paladin and adventurer, devoted to Kelemvor, who after losing an arm decided to retire and serve the town in another way. With his savings he bought a small piece of land in the city and established himself at a place known as Kelemvor's Dead House. There, Rarder and their acolytes receive the bodies of the poorest and those that nobody claims, and give them an appropriate funeral. This way, they ensure the corpses are not victims of plagues or necromancy before burying them, doing a great service to the city.

Several weeks before the adventure, an explorer and hunter named Thezuef Erneyn (NE, human hunter) succeeded in hunting Zielaph, a forest spirit with the ability to strengthen the life around it. Thezuef had been after this trophy for years. Encouraged by his ambition and trying to surprise his fellow hunters, he killed Zielaph and took its remains with him to show them off. But, what the hunter didn't know was that those who kill a forest spirit like Zielaph are disrupted by a curse that kills them in a short time and triggers a flowery revenge from inside his body.

On his return, Thezuef Erneyn became seriously ill and tried to perform the ritual to stop the curse, but failed. He died a few days later. With no family, and isolated from his fellow hunters, his corpse was collected by Kelemvor's acolytes in the streets and taken to his Dead House. Now, Thezuef's body has unleashed a plague that suddenly infested the whole place with aggressive vegetation. This is Zielaph's revenge and if nobody solves it, soon it could affect the whole city.

To save the day, the adventurers will have to discover the fate suffered by the hunter, find the ritual that allows the curse to end and obtain the necessary components for it.

## OVERVIEW

The adventure is spread over three episodes that take approximately two to four hours to play.

- **Episode 1: A surprising Infestation.** The city guards are forced to close down the Dead House after the appearance of a strange infested corpse. Several workers have been trapped inside and if the problem is not solved, it could infest the entire city.
- **Episode 2: The Hunter's Mysterious Prey.** After discovering that the origin of the infestation is Thezuef Erneyn, the adventurers can investigate his past and get information about Zielaph in order to discover how to end the curse. They can travel to some locations and talk to the hunter's former companions.
- **Episode 3: How to End a Curse.** Thanks to their discoveries, the adventurers will be able to obtain the necessary elements to stop the rebirth of Zielaph, although that implies facing criminals and an angry fey.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

Any of the following hooks may justify the party's presence in the Kelemvor's Dead House.

- This adventure can be linked to the events described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist campaign*. A key character has hidden inside the Dead House to avoid being found or to repel the attack of a rival gang, and has been surprised by the infestation along with the workers. He is in serious condition and if the adventurers don't manage to end the curse they won't be able to talk to him again. Another option could be that *Thezuef Erneyn* had dealings with some of the city's factions and among his belongings is some element of information that should not fall into the wrong hands.
- If you want to link this adventure with *Descent into Avernus campaign*, the most advisable moment is during chapter 1, after conquering the dungeon of the Dead Three and before going to Candlekeep. It is possible that *Rarder Cyne* has information about the cultists of the Dead Three or the refugees thanks to his work with the poorest of the city. It is also possible that the adventurers go to the Dead House to look for clues about a corpse and find out about the situation.
- Rarder Cyne is the leader of the Dead House and the priests of Kelemvor who work there. Convinced that something is happening in the basement, before the infestation becomes obvious, he decides to look for some adventurers to help him with the investigation in exchange for 500 gold coins.

- When the adventurers find themselves near Kelemvor's Dead House, they discover that the city guard has closed the place, shortly after a violet fungus escaped from there and attacked the citizens. A desperate Rarder Cyne comes to the group to help rescue the workers still inside, before it is too late.

## HANDLING THE LOCATIONS

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This adventure has four different locations. You can place them wherever you want, although here are some indications if your game is located in Baldur's Gate or in Waterdeep.

- **Kelemvor's Dead House:** In Baldur's Gate, it is recommended that it be located somewhere in the Lower City, near the Elfsong Tavern. In Waterdeep, it's in the trade pavilion, near the City of the Dead.
- **Thezuef Erneyn's house:** In Baldur's Gate, somewhere in the Upper City, perhaps near Villa Vanthampur. In Waterdeep, it's in the Castle District.
- **The Hunters Guild:** In Baldur's Gate, it is located in the Manoborn neighborhood. In Waterdeep, it's in the trade district.
- **The Smugglers' Ship:** In Baldur's Gate, it is located on the east side of the harbor, near the Stormshore Street Dock. In Waterdeep, it's in the Dock Ward.



# CHAPTER 1 — A SURPRISING INFESTATION

*Estimated duration:* 30 minutes

## SCENE A. WELCOME TO THE DEAD HOUSE

The adventure begins in Kelemvor's Dead House, where Rarder Cyne is trying to save his acolytes. To set the scene, read or paraphrase the following.

The sun shines in the sky, reflected in the beautiful garden that surrounds the Dead House. Colorful flowers and solemn statues of the god Kelemvor surround the small white stone house. Crossing its main door, you see a welcoming environment, illuminated by dozens of candles, where silence and the smell of the forest prevail.

The Dead House is a small but beautiful white stone building, surrounded by a well-kept garden, with several statues and other Kelemvor's sacred symbols. Rarder Cyne is outside, attempting to find help to save his acolytes and stop whatever is happening in the cellar.

### AREA INFORMATION

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The main floor of the Dead House is built with carved stone and wooden pillars. The place is dirty, stained with the dirt from the outside garden, but the staff cleans it up as fast as they can. The ground floor is formed by tunnels carved into the ground, similar to a mine, and the ground is irregular. Currently, a large part of the walls are covered with plants, flowers, and fungi that appear to spring up from everywhere.

**Light.** The main floor has large windows that let in the light from the outside. The light in the lower floor is dimmer, lit by candles and torches.

**Smell.** The smell of corpses, candles and alchemical components has almost completely disappeared, hidden behind the strong natural aroma of the plants and flowers that cover the ground floor.

### CREATURES/NPCs

In the Dead House, the characters can talk with the following NPCs. Azohke and Kiraed are paralyzed and seriously ill in the M4 location.

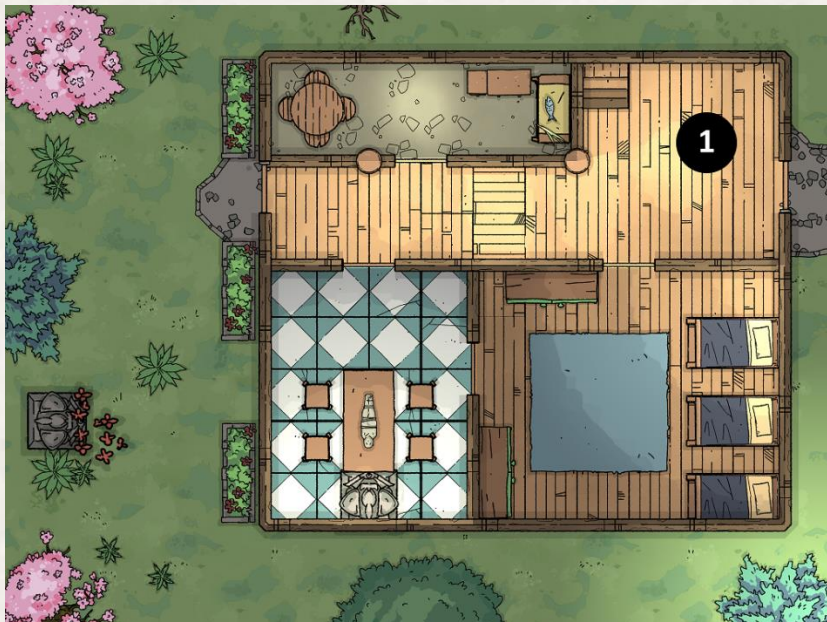
- **Rarder Cyne** (LG human priest) is the founder and leader of the Dead House. A former paladin of Kelemvor, he retired after losing an arm in a fight with several undead. His goal is to prevent diseases and acts of necromancy in the city. He is used to giving orders and although he has good intentions, he is not socially skillful.
- **Azohke** (NG half-orc acolyte) is a young, affable and good-hearted girl, who was taken in as an orphan by Rarder Cyne and now works cleaning the temple and ground floors. She has an admiration for adventurers, and she herself aspires to become a famous champion in the future.
- **Kiraed** (LG dwarf acolyte), an elderly craftsman, after losing his family has decided to spend the last days of his life taking care of the dead and praying to Kelemvor. He is stubborn and can spend hours arguing loudly, especially to defend his fellow workers.

### SPEAKING WITH RARDER CYNE

Rarder Cyne is obviously nervous, and desperate to help his acolytes and save the Dead House. If asked, he won't have a problem answering questions, as long as these are relevant. He can give limited information about what happened, he went downstairs and found the vegetation covering the corridor, so he couldn't go further. He has been afraid of entering, so he will alert the adventurers that the masks of the autopsy station may be useful to them. He will also tell about Azohke and Kiraed, the two acolytes who were downstairs

### AREA 1. DEAD HOUSE'S MAIN FLOOR

On this floor, Rarder keeps a small chapel where the most recent bodies are honored before being stored on the lower floor. There is also a bedroom for the acolytes and a small kitchen. Next to the entrance, a wooden staircase leads down to the ground floor, where most of the work is done.



## SCENE B. A GARDEN IN HONOUR OF KELEMVOR

To set the scene, read or paraphrase the following.

Down the stairs, the poorly illuminated rock corridor leads in a single direction. A strange fog hardly allows one to see well, and the smell is fetid and dizzying, even for a morgue. In the distance, lots of roots and vines seem to sprout from everywhere, with the crackle of the wood, and adorned with beautiful and colorful blossoms.

### AREA 2. CORRIDOR

This corridor provides access to the rest of the rooms. The deepest area is slightly covered by weird vegetation. Branches, tendrils, large groups of brightly colored flowers and even fungi and mold cover the floor and walls. At the moment, they do not obstruct very much the way, but you can see them growing by the second and they will end up covering everything. In fact, the tendrils have already torn off two doors.

Camouflaged in the undergrowth are three violet fungus, invoked as part of the curse. They just move around the place, and won't attack anyone, unless they attack the vegetation, or they have to defend themselves. At that time, they will attack without mercy all those present.

#### ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** There is a single violet fungus.
- **Weak:** The violet fungus lose their multiattack.
- **Strong:** Add on a third violet fungus.
- **Very Strong:** Replace the violet fungus with a Awakened Tree

### THE TOXIC VAPORS

As part of its spreading, the Zielaph curse releases a huge number of spores and pollen both poisonous to most races. In addition, someone who has been exposed to these vapors for too long will feel the vegetation growing inside their body, provoking death within a few hours.

Each creature that is completely within the underground floor at the start of its turn must make a CD 10 Constitution saving throw against poison. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d6 poison damage. Creatures that don't need to breathe or are immune to poison automatically succeed on this saving throw. Each creature that fails three or more saving throws against the toxic vapors gains the Poisoned condition and will die in 24 hours if the curse is not finished.

### AREA 3. AUTOPSY STATION

In this room, workers treat the bodies before storing them in coffins. Small ceremonial Kelemvor rites are performed, but also some medical, magical and alchemical tests are done to check that there is no trace of necromancy or illnesses. Next to the corpse of a young

elf still waiting to be treated, they can find an herbalism kit, alchemist's supplies and a Kelemvor's holy symbol.

In the wardrobe, among other tools, six gas masks are stored (See sidebar).

### AREA 4. MORTUARY

This room houses the recent corpses, kept in coffins, waiting to be removed for burial. Many of them have been destroyed or displaced by the vegetation.

#### FINDING THE BODY

The tendrils and vegetation cover a large amount of the coffins and the corpses in this room, so discovering the origin of the vegetation is a challenge. In order to find it, is necessary a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check. Spells such as Locate Animals or Plants or Speak with Plants can also be useful. The focus of the curse is the body of Thezuef Erneyn, from whose heart the main tendrils sprout. Attempting to destroy the physical corpse is useless. Burning, mutilating or trying to remove the body from this room is ineffective and practically impossible. Nature springs up in the instant again, grabbing the body tightly and trying to trap anyone who is nearby. In fact, if the body is destroyed, a completely ethereal, greenish sphere will remain in its place, and it will be the center of the curse (and will make the tree from Chapter 3).

#### EXAMINING THE BODY

Examining Thezuef Erneyn's coffin or corpse allows to find some key clues to solve the mystery:

- The body has been buried with a chainmail. On his chest, a strange symbol of a crossed arrow and sword is engraved. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) identifies it as the Amethyst Hunters Guild's symbol.



- The personal items he was carrying when he was found have not been removed. A bag attached to his belt contains a set of keys and a piece of paper with the handwriting text "Our Lady of Gold".
- A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check identifies the style of the keys as belonging to a high-class house, and probably to a particular district.
- A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check allows to identify "Our Lady of Gold" as one of the names of the Waukeen goddess, very frequent among moneychangers and smugglers.
- A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check allows knowing that Thezuef died victim of the vegetation that had plugged his lungs.
- There is no reference to his name, and the Dead House workers do not know him either. The body was found dead on a nearby street.

### KELEMVOR'S GAS MASKS

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

Designed by Rarder, they are used by acolytes when they suspect a corpse may be infected. These uncomfortable masks cover the entire face and are made of leather and restraints. They have a small vessel with a fluid distilled from Potions of Protection from Poison. While wearing this mask, you can use a bonus action to obtain immunity against being poisoned and against poison damage during the next 10 minutes. This feature can't be used again until the next dawn.

## AREA 5. STORAGE

A discreet storage room where the workers accumulated food and other goods, taking advantage of the cold. The door has been ripped off by the tendrils that cover the interior, as well as several boxes and furniture from the inside. Two of the acolytes are here, trapped and unconscious.

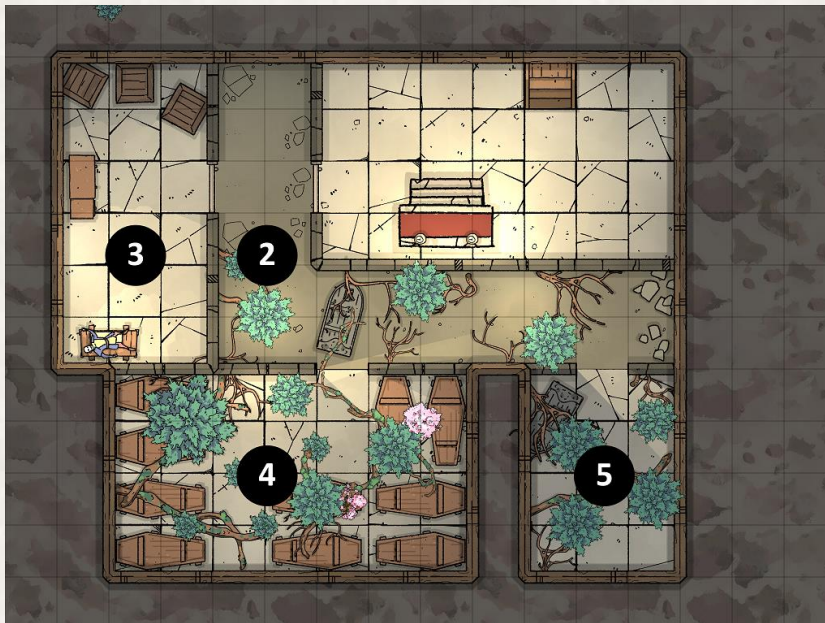
### HELPING THE ACOLYTES

Azohke and Tiraed were cleaning up this storage room when the curse exploded and they were trapped inside. As time passed, the toxic gases affected them and they lost consciousness. When the characters arrive, both are on the ground, trapped by some tendrils (CD 14 to release them). They are in poor condition and will die if not evacuated from the site within the next few minutes. Even so, if the curse is not stopped, they will die within 24 hours.

If the adventurers wake them up, they will be shocked, but they can answer a few questions. They don't know much about what happened, although they might know something about the stored corpses.

## DEVELOPMENT

At some point, the adventurers or Rarder Cyne himself will understand that little can be done to stop the curse there. Their next step should be trying to discover something about the corpse, hoping to find clues about what is happening and how to stop it. Sooner or later, the city guards will close down the Dead House, hoping that way the problem will be solved.



# CHAPTER 2 — THE HUNTER'S MYSTERIOUS PREY

*Estimated duration:* 90 minutes – 2 hours

The city guard will have no problem allowing the characters to leave the Dead House to gather information about what happened. On his part, Rarder Cyne will try to help if he sees them stuck, but he won't be able to leave the building until the curse is ended.

This investigation should be carried out as quickly as possible, to prevent vegetation from absorbing the building completely, and later the rest of the neighborhood. The characters must feel this urgency, and the pressure to end this matter as soon as possible.

In Chapter 1 there are clues that lead to three locations, although it is not necessary to discover all of them. In each place there are also clues pointing to the other areas. The order of scenes is not important, and will depend only on where the characters go first. In fact, they may need to retrace their steps at some point.

## A THREE-PIECE MYSTERY

To end the curse, the characters must find three key clues that together will allow them to carry out the ritual. Each of them is located in one of the three locations in this chapter, whose existence can be deduced from many clues. These three pieces are;

- *"Zielaph's Story"*, the ancient book in which the hunter had read about the forest spirit, and which he became obsessed with. Its pages contain the steps for the ritual to end his curse. The book belongs to the library of the Amethyst Hunters Guild.
- A *cold iron sword*, imbued with the blood of a red dragon in the moonlight. This is the weapon that Thezuef Erneyn used to kill Zielaph, and currently rests displayed in his house.
- A *handful of crimson poppy seeds*, an exotic plant from the Nelanther Isles. Because the seeds can be treated to make a powerful drug, very popular among the dwarves, the main holders of them in the city are the

### PLAYING THE THREE PILLARS

Although ultimately it all depends on the player's attitude, each of the locations is designed to enhance one of the three pillars.

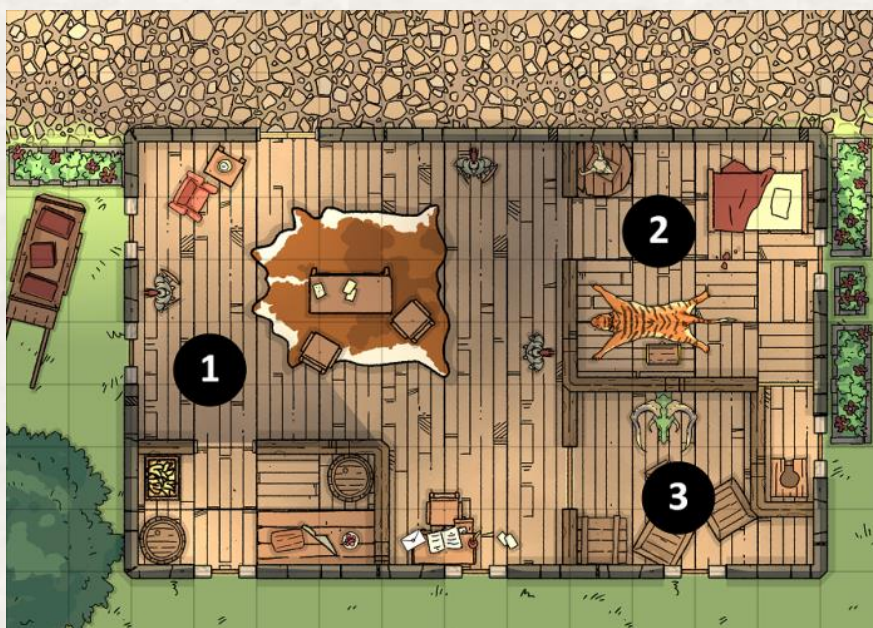
**The Thezuef Erneyn's Estate** is a large house with a few secrets, where research and infiltration should be key. **The Amethyst Hunter's Guild** is a purely social place, where good manners, lies or the right questions will get much more than swords. **The "Our Lady of Gold" ship** is full of violent smugglers willing to defend their merchandise at all costs.

smugglers. Thezuef Erneyn tried to steal some from the crew of "Our Lady of Gold", but failed.

Of course, these components can be obtained in other ways if the characters take another course of action. It is up to the DM to determine if other actions the characters perform might be helpful or not in solving this mystery. Avoid being too restrictive, but don't make it easy either.

## SCENE A. THE THEZUEF ERNEYN'S ESTATE

The hunter lived alone in an elegant mansion in the rich area of the city, a legacy of his wealthy parents. However, he had squandered a good part of the family fortune on his hunts, and at the time of his death there was hardly anything left beyond his fame. If the characters have the keys, they can easily enter through the main door. Sneaking in through the windows or breaking in the door is not difficult, but the place is usually well guarded, and it is difficult to commit criminal actions without attracting the attention of the guard or a gossiping neighbor who puts them on alert. In that case, a successful roll of Dexterity (Stealth) to CD 14





is necessary to avoid alerting a patrol and making things more difficult.

When the characters get into the estate, read or paraphrase the following.

The luxurious facade of the estate encloses a dirty interior, smelling of damp, dust and old furniture. Everywhere you can see weapons, armor, furs and stuffed animal heads, all the trophies of the late Thezuef Erneyn. For such an elegant house, everything seems old and untidy.

## AREA 1. THE LIVING ROOM

The largest area of the house contains a large living room, escorted by three worn-out armors. In the rear, next to the window, there is Thezuef's office, quite messy. There is also a small kitchen with a little food stored and a couple of barrels with not very good wine.

If the characters have not succeeded in accessing the library (Scene B), it is possible to find a page copied from "Zielaph's Story" (Handout #1, see Appendix D). This page contains the necessary ritual to end the curse that Thezuef tried to carry out without success when he discovered what was happening to him.

The armors in the room are quite neglected and their only purpose is ornamental. They belonged to the ancestors of the house of Erneyn, and they include shields and swords. A thorough research and a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check allows the player to discover a longsword in much better condition than the rest. It is the sword that Thezuef used to kill Zielaph, made of cold iron and imbued with the blood of a red dragon in the moonlight. It is one of the three components needed to carry out the ritual and end the curse.

## AREA 2. THE BEDROOM

The only bedroom in the house, adorned with a leather rug of a saber-toothed tiger and the skull of a giant elk on a table. The floor of the room is covered with small blood stains, after the wound Thezuef suffered in "Our Lady of Gold". In addition, a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check allows to find a longshoreman's costume, also stained with blood, hidden under the bed. On the table, next to the skull, there is a glass bottle with a few drops of liquid remaining inside. A magician could recognize it as a worn-out invisibility potion.

Also, next to a wall there is a luxurious chest that contains the hunter's most valuable belongings. However, the saber-toothed tiger carpet is really a **Rug of Smothering** with the order to attack anyone who tries to open it. Inside there are 239 gp (1,900 cp, 1,300 sp, 90 gp) and 6 gemstones (10 gp each).

## AREA 3. THE WAREHOUSE

An old dormitory, reconverted into a warehouse. Inside there are a lot of boxes containing the possessions of Thezuef Erneyn's parents, mostly clothes and books. There is also the huge skull of a plesiosaurus, but it has not been properly maintained and is partially destroyed. A thorough search of this room reveals the Amethyst Hunters Guild symbol. It is a medal of belonging to the

club, which was thrown against the wall by Thezuef before he died, full of rage.

## SCENE B. THE AMETHYST HUNTERS GUILD

The Amethyst Hunters Guild is an elite club, formed by city nobles who are hunting enthusiasts, who compete socially for the recognition of their companions through their hunting trophies. They are mostly wealthy people with a lot of spare time and not much respect for animal wildlife. Several years ago they bought a small house to make it their clubhouse. The interior contains a meeting room, a small bistro, a library and, of course, a trophy room. Everything is protected by two hired **thugs** and managed by **Lord Arna Silverwood** (LE human noble), founder and leader of the guild.

Unless they belong to the nobility, the characters will not be welcome to the guild, but some good stories about hunting can open the doors for them. Also to mention the name of Thezuef Erneyn, or the Zielaph spirit. They will not be allowed to move freely around the place, but will be forwarded to the meeting room for an interview with Lord Silverwood. He is an elderly, opulent and slightly overweight man who enjoys listening to stories of adventure and reviving his youthful days. He will not tolerate lack of education or accusations about himself or the guild. A polite chat with him can provide the characters with the following information.

- If they don't already know him, Silverwood can give them Thezuef Erneyn's name and home address. He is the only one of his members who has disappeared in the last few days, so it is easy to think that the corpse is his. Besides, everyone knows he had no family.



- About Thezuef, Silverwood will admit that he was not very popular in the guild. Many considered him arrogant and disrespectful, even to his standards. In fact, they were wondering whether to expel him after his last hunt, a forest spirit that he had been chasing for months. Many members considered that such prey only brought bad luck.
- Thezuef Erneyn had dedicated his last efforts to reading about a forest spirit (Zielaph) and how to kill it, thanks to a book from the library called "Zielaph's history" (See Appendix D). If they have remained respectful, Silverwood has no problem letting them read it, but will not allow it to be removed from the library in any way, so they will have to copy it or steal it.
- The last time he was at the club, a few days ago, he was already exhibiting symptoms of illness. The only thing relevant to his presence was an angry argument with **Lady Amalie Whitemantle**, no one knows why. Lady Amalie has not returned to the club, but Silverwood knows her home. However, a successful check of Wisdom (Insight) on CD 13 will reveal that he is hiding something. If they insist, he will warn them to beware of her, as her contacts with the harbor smugglers are known. Although Silverwood doesn't know it, Thezuef tried to get the crimson poppy seeds through Lady Amalie without success.

Also, if the characters examine the trophy room (Silverwood's pride will prevent him from showing it if they ask) they may find Zielaph's head, a piece of wood that looks like a friendly face, hanging on the wall.

## SCENE C. THE "OUR LADY OF GOLD" SHIP

This small ship docked at the harbor is part of a large drug smuggling network in the city. It is captained by Carle Bitesword, a veteran sailor, and is frequently used to bring crimson poppy seeds to the city from the Nelanther Isles, camouflaged among exotic cooking spices. They are currently waiting for permission to land the cargo and for their local contacts to come and get the seeds. It seems that everything has been delayed by the lack of appropriate blackmail.

To set the scene, read or paraphrase the following.

The small docks of the harbor are a place full of activity at any moment. Under the perpetual noise of the seagulls and the smell of saltpeter, "Our Lady of Gold" can be found among other similarly discreet ships. It is a small galley with two black sails, watched over by two sailors and with light inside.

### AREA 1. THE WHARF

Two thugs are watching the entrance to the ship at any time, and they will raise the alarm to the rest of the crew if they get the chance. Impersonating a guard or port authority requires a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check.

### AREA 2. THE MAIN ROOM

The rest of the crew who are not in the city are usually in this room, playing dice but prepared in case of trouble. There are three **thugs**, a corrupt city **guard** and a young **acolyte** from Waukeen (change Sanctuary for Inflict Wounds).

#### ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** There are only the three thugs.
- **Weak:** Remove the young acolyte.
- **Strong:** Add other thug and other guard.
- **Very Strong:** Replace the guard with a veteran.

At the end of the gangway leading to the ship, smugglers have established a trap to prevent intrusions after someone sneaked in invisible days ago. The trip wire is 3 inches off the ground in the end of the gangway. The DC to spot the trip wire is 13. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disables the trip wire harmlessly. A character without thieves' tools can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap rings an alarm bell.

The boxes here are full of exotic spices brought from far away places, which are not very valuable. However, a blow onto one of the boxes can fill the whole



environment with a spicy cloud.

### AREA 3. THE WAREHOUSE

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Behind this door is a more discreet warehouse, where the most valuable goods are stored. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) allows to discover, hidden among the boxes full of spices, small leather bags. These contain small handfuls of crimson poppy seeds, one of which is enough for the characters to fulfill their mission.

### AREA 4. THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN

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Captain Carla Bitesword (NE half-elf **bandit captain**) rests in this room. If she hears combat noise on the ship, she takes 1d3 rounds to prepare and join her men in combat. Carla is aggressive in both combat and business, but knows when to give up and negotiate. If the characters make a demonstration of power, she will be open to talking to them, even giving (or selling) them one of the seed bags as long as they leave her alone. Other relevant information that Carla can give to the characters is the following.

- Recently, a stranger with a longshoreman's outfit tried to sneak onto the ship, even using an invisibility potion to escape. He was injured before he could steal anything from the ship.
- Carla managed to disarm him and has kept his spade, a long sword of good quality. A review of the weapon

shows that it has the Amethyst Guild symbol engraved on the guard.

- Carla has just received a letter from her patron, Lady Amalie Whitemantle, warning her that another nobleman, a certain Thezuef Erneyn has been asking questions about the ship and that he might be up to something (Carla has not linked the two events).

#### ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Carla Bitesword has 13 ac and 39 hp.
- **Weak:** Carla Bitesword has 14 ac and 52 hp.
- **Strong:** Carla Bitesword is a veteran.
- **Very Strong:** Carla Bitesword is a veteran and has a white dragon wyrmling as a pet.

The chest in the room contains Thezuef 's sword and Lady Amalie's letter. It also contains a potion of healing, 215 gp and 7 moonstones (50 gp each).

### DEVELOPMENT

After that, the characters should already have an idea about what happened and how to stop the curse. Once they have the objects, they must return to the Dead House to perform the ritual. If the characters are struggling with the investigation, Rarder Cyne gives them hints to expedite the solution.

# CHAPTER 3 — HOW TO END A CURSE

*Estimated duration:* 30 minutes

The characters must end the curse before the Dead House and its adjacent buildings are completely under the vegetation and the toxic gases cause more deaths. Rarder Cyne will be waiting for them in front of the Dead House, helping the city guard to contain the vegetation, hoping the players have found a solution.

The characters need to find the three elements of the ritual: the text of the ritual, the cold iron weapon and the crimson poppy seeds. Only then can they perform the ritual.

## AREA INFORMATION

**Dimensions & Terrain.** Since Chapter 1, the plants have continued to aggressively expand throughout the Dead House, covering almost every corner. Moving 1 foot in the Dead House costs 3 feet of speed, unless you have a way to avoid it or quickly destroy the vegetation.

**Light.** The candles and torches inside are off. The only light is the one the characters bring with them.

**Smell.** Although the smell is still strong, it seems that the toxic gases have been dispersed and are no longer lethal.

## ADVANCING THROUGH THE VEGETATION

During the time that has passed, the interior of the Dead House has been transformed by the curse, covered with vegetation, but also with other elements. The spirit of vengeance tries to defend itself and for this purpose, some of its parts are constantly mutating to create traps or creatures that prevent anyone from reaching its heart. If you like to and have plenty of time, feel free to roll on the random encounter table below. Characters may encounter some of them.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

### D6 Encounter

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | Violet fungus (4)            |
| 2 | Poison Darts (see below)     |
| 3 | Poisonous pollen (see below) |
| 4 | Swarm of Insects (3)         |
| 5 | Tendrils (see below)         |
| 6 | Gelatinous Cube              |

**Poison Darts:** When a creature enters in this room, three poison-tipped darts shoot from colorful big flowers. With a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check, a character can deduce the presence of the flowers. Each dart makes a ranged attack with a +6 bonus against a random target in the room. A target that is hit takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Poisonous pollen:** The next room is covered by a poisonous pollen of a strange reddish plant. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage, and must repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its turns. On each successive failed save, the character takes 3 (1d6) poison damage. After three successful saves, the poison ends.

**Tendrils trap:** When a creature enters in this room, some big tendrils fall from the ceiling. The DC to spot the tendrils is 12. When the trap is triggered, the tendrils are released, covering a 15-foot-square area. Those in the area are trapped by the tendrils and restrained, and those that fail a DC 12 Strength saving throw are also knocked prone. A creature can use its action to make a DC 14 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. The tendrils have AC 12 and 25 hit points. Dealing 5 fire damage to the tendrils (AC 12) destroys a 5-foot-square section of it, freeing any creature trapped in that section.

## PERFORMING THE RITUAL

The characters must reach the hunter's body, in the Mortuary on the lower floor, to perform the ritual. Now, in its place, there is a leafy whitish tree, 10 feet wide, rooted in the stone floor. Its branches run across the ceiling, covered with wide leaves and colorful red and blue flowers. The characters spot corps parts merged with the tree by making a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check or having a passive Perception of 13+. It looks like the tree has grown to absorb all the room's content.



According to the ritual, the characters must place five seeds in front of the tree, in a row, while they pronounce each of the sentences aloud. While they do so, the tree will start moving, getting stronger, as if the wind as shaking it. When they do so, they should stick the sword into the bark. This doesn't require any check, but as a consequence the character must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage caused by the tree.

Then, the bark of the tree cracks and falls, revealing its hollow interior. From there arises the Zielaph's spirit of revenge, attacking the characters. It is mad by pain and the desire for revenge, and will not attend to any attempts at conversation. There is really nothing left of the peaceful spirit of the forest that Zielaph once was. Use the statistics of the *primordial vengeful spirit*, in Appendix A.

### ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** The primordial vengeful spirit is no longer resistant to non-magical weapons and has 36 hp.
- **Weak:** The primordial vengeful spirit is no longer resistant to non-magical weapons.
- **Strong:** The primordial vengeful spirit has CA 15 and 59 hps.
- **Very Strong:** Add two dryads.

### RESOLUTION

When the spirit of Zielaph is defeated, the tree will immediately decompose and the seeds of the ritual will burn to ashes. The rest of the vegetation will also begin to die, but its process will be slower. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check or having a passive Perception of 14+ allows the characters to find among

the remains of the tree a green seed, the size of a fist, that shines with a dim golden light. It is the seed of a new spirit of the forest. It is up to the characters to plant it in some forest to make it sprout or destroy it.

### CONCLUSION

If the characters do not succeed in destroying the spirit of revenge, the Dead House and several adjacent buildings will be completely destroyed before anyone manages to solve the problem. Rarder Cyne's acolytes will die, and it's probable that Rarder will die too, trying to fix the problem by himself.

If they manage to end the curse, it will take weeks to clean everything up, but everything will return to normal. Rarder Cyne will be extremely grateful, and the city guard will take it from there. More religious characters will feel that Kelemvor is pleased with their actions. If the characters participated in the adventure looking for help or information of a bigger plot, they will be able to access it without problems.

The spirit of Zielaph finally rests, in peace, after the horrific acts committed by Thezuef Erneyn. If the seed is planted in a forest, a beautiful tree will sprout which over the years will be transformed into a new spirit of the forest.

### REWARDS/XP

The party receives 500gp in total for saving the Dead House or 250gp if Rarder Cyne dies during the adventure.

#### XP Rewards

Put an end to the curse	250 px/each
Save the acolytes	150 px/each
Stop the seeds smuggling	150 px/each



# APPENDIX A: CREATURE STATISTICS

## VIOLET FUNGUS

Medium plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 5  
**Hit Points** 18 (4d8)  
**Speed** 5 ft.

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

**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened, frightened  
**Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6  
**Languages** --  
**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the violet fungus remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary fungus.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The fungus makes 1d4 Rotting Touch attacks.

**Rotting Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

## ACOLYTE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Medicine +4, Religion +2  
**Senses** passive Perception 12  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The acolyte is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The acolyte has following cleric spells prepared:  
Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*  
1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*

### ACTIONS

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

## PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt)  
**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)  
**Speed** 25 ft.

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

**Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4  
**Senses** passive Perception 13  
**Languages** any two languages  
**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Divine Eminence.** As a bonus action, the priest 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 priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

**Spellcasting.** The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest 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*

### ACTIONS

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

## VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**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** passive Perception 12  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The 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.

## RUG OF SMOTHERING

Large construct, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 33 (6d10)

**Speed** 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

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

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

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

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

**Damage Transfer.** While it is grappling a creature, the rug takes only half the damage dealt to it, and the creature grappled by the rug takes the other half.

**False Appearance.** While the rug remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal rug.

### ACTIONS

**Smother.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. Hit: The creature is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is

## GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 16 (chain shirt, shield)

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

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

## BANDIT CAPTAIN

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

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 65 (10d8 + 20)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Saving Throws** Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

**Skills** Athletics +4, Deception +4

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any two languages

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

### ACTIONS

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

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

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

### REACTIONS

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

## THUG

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

**Armor Class** 11 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Intimidation +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

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

### ACTIONS

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

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

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

# PRIMORDIAL VENGEFUL SPIRIT

Sometimes, when a forest spirit is killed in a cruel or unnecessary way, the hatred it feels transforms their vital energy into a creature thirsty for revenge. These primordial vengeful spirits often curse their killers in different ways, depending on the power they had in life. They also pursue them with the intention of destroying everything near them, bringing chaos and death to their loved ones, sometimes for several generations.

When they take a particular form, or when they are forced to do so in order to destroy them, these spirits are even more dangerous. Their spectral form makes them very difficult to destroy, and their touch destroys all life within their reach. Also they are capable of spreading their desire of revenge to nearby creatures, by making them remember any affront, no matter how little it may be, and letting themselves be carried away by anger.

Curiously, when one of these spirits is destroyed, it usually leaves in its wake the magical seed of a new spirit, cleansed of hatred, which will be reborn if properly cared for.



## PRIMORDIAL VENGEFUL SPIRIT

*Medium fey, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (10d8)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Str +5, Con +4

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Sylvan

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

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

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

at will: *dancing lights, minor illusion, vicious mockery*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The primordial vengeful spirit makes two attacks: one with its withering touch and one with its infusing touch.

**Withering Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 3) necrotic damage.

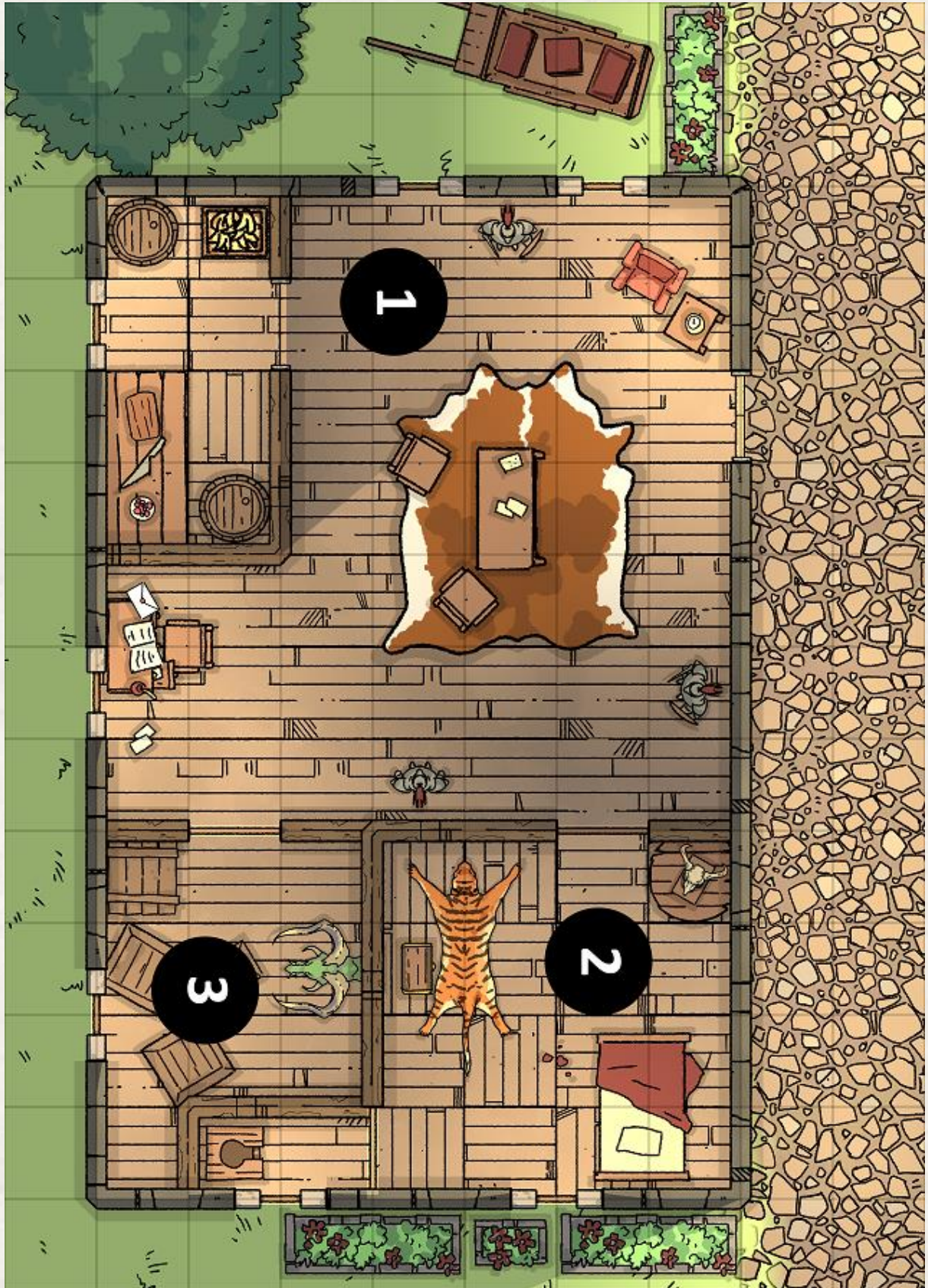
**Infusing Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or the next turn the target uses its action to make a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach.



# APPENDIX B: MAP OF THE DEAD HOUSE



# APPENDIX C: MAP OF THE THEZUEF'S HOUSE



## APPENDIX D: ZIELAPH'S TEXT (HANDOUT)

### *ZIELAPH'S STORY*

Legends also tell that whoever knows its secret and is capable of killing Zielaph will be a victim of its curse for all eternity. For ugly spirits, like humans, they can pursue their killers from the lands of the dead and bring suffering to those around them.

An ancient druidic writing tells the story of how a young warrior killed one of Zielaph's brothers using a cold iron sword, imbued with the blood of a red dragon in the light of the full-moon, as the tradition says. The young warrior died soon after and his entire tribe was threatened. In desperation, they went to the Arch-Druid, and he explained to them the ritual they had to perform to destroy the vengeful spirit.

In front of the body of the murderer, five crimson poppy seeds were to be arranged. With each one, a song should be sung in honor of Silvanus, the Forest Father.

- (1) Father of the forest, we offer you our sacrifice, we ask for your blessing.
- (2) May the wind be always at your back
- (3) You are the deer, the mighty Old Father Tree, which roams the autumn forest
- (4) May the sun shine warm upon your face,
- (5) Father of the forest, we offer you our sacrifice, we ask for your blessing.

Then, the murder weapon must be used to figuratively stab the spirit. Only then will it become visible and can be purged, and then give a way to a new spirit free of hatred.

# APPENDIX E: MAP OF THE SMUGGLERS SHIP

