

# WATERDEEP SAFEHOUSE

Side Trek

# Safehouse

The characters are hired to retrieve relics of the ancient Ebondeath Sect from a safehouse maintained by the Cult of the Dragon. After the events of the Rise of Tiamat, the characters' employers expect that opposition at the safehouse is limited. However, he would like the characters to act quickly in case the cult comes looking for the relics.

Safehouse is side trek for a party of four characters of levels 4-5. The module is based in Waterdeep, but can easily be changed to any large town or city. The module also includes a subtle (and optional) connection to the White Plume Mountain adventure in the Tales from the Yawning Portal publication.

by EBRun



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2016 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK.

# Safehouse

*“She lifted her veil slowly. What a sight presented itself to my startled eyes! I beheld before me an animated corpse”*

- The Monk by Matthew Lewis (1796)

Introduction	2
Casing the Joint	3
Break In	4
Aftermath	6
Important NPCs	7
Safehouse Map	10

## Introduction

---

Five hundred years ago Strongor Bonebag, a Priest of Myrkul, became fascinated with the burgeoning Cult of the Dragon. He merged the teachings of Myrkul and Sammaster and formed a cult cell at the Uthtower in the Mere of Dead Men. The charismatic priest convinced the ancient black dragon, Ebondeath, that the dragon was chosen by Myrkul to become part of a pantheon of ascended dracoliches. Although Strongor died a few years later, his cult – the Ebondeath Sect – continued serving Ebondeath. As Myrkul’s powers waned, so did those of the cult. Ebondeath’s body disintegrated into a pile of dust and bones, but his spirit remains tethered to his skull.

When Myrkul died, the cult collapsed and the Uthtower sunk into the mere. A hundred years ago, a band of adventurers found the tower and retrieved Strongor Bonebag’s Dark Sermons and the skull of Ebondeath (see *Dungeon Magazine* #73). Over the years, these relics changed hands multiple times before making their way to an agent of the Cult of the Dragon based in Waterdeep.

Through his previous associations with the Cult of the Dragon, Thayzar Ontak – a Red Wizard rebel - knows that the Ebondeath Sect’s Dark

Sermons are held by the Cult of the Dragon at a safehouse in Droxnir’s apothecary. Ontak hires the characters to retrieve the sermons.

In **Casing the Joint**, the characters can uncover rumors about the Dark Sermons of the Ebondeath Sect and the safehouse. **Break In** describes the safehouse and opposition. The **Aftermath** provides a wrap-up and describes any unique treasures.

**Thayzar Ontak** is the quiet, male, human Thayan proprietor of the musty Ontak’s Antiquities in the Castle Ward. Ontak is friendly and often lets his customers in on conspiracies - especially those involving the Red Wizards. It doesn’t take long for a customer to realize that Ontak harbors a burning hatred of Szass Tam.

The smell of cloves is thick and the shelves of his shop are crammed with oddities, antiques, and religious artifacts from many denominations (good, evil and in-between). The shelf above his desk holds a silver skull and a lacquered skeletal arm fitted with thin wires that allow the hand to be manipulated (a religious icon of Myrkul). On occasion, a lucky shopper can find a low-value magic item in his shop. Ontak is assisted by Grebak (use the **berserker** entry), a silent and dim-witted half-orc. This description of Thayzar is from **Faction Folio: Waterdeep DM’s City Guide** found on [www.DMsGuild.com](http://www.DMsGuild.com). Additional notes on Ontak are found at the end of this module.



## Casing the Joint

The characters receive a note at their normal hangout with a request for them to meet at Ontak's Antiquities later that afternoon. Ideally, Thayzar Ontak is a contact of one of the characters. If not, a different contact can vouch for Thayzar and has set up the job opportunity.

When the characters enter the small shop, Thayzar invites them to a back room, barely large enough to hold Thayzar's desk and a few chairs for the characters. He states-

Welcome, thank you for coming. I need your help. As you know, the Cult of the Dragon is reeling from their mishaps over the past months. I don't know what happened, but every villain is now trying to pick over the ruins of the cult. I need you to retrieve one of their relics, hidden at a safehouse here in Waterdeep. I know the Red Wizards are looking for it, and I can't let it fall into the hands of Szass Tam. Will you do it? I can pay 100gp to each of you.

A **persuasion** check (DC 15) will allow the characters to negotiate for an additional 50gp each. If the characters agree, read the following.

Oh, thank you...thank you! I need you to retrieve a book of sermons from the ancient Ebondeth Sect. It is bound in dark leather and has a silver dragon skull embossed on the cover. It is being held in a safehouse in **Droxnir's Apothecary** in the Trade Ward. I don't know what safeguards they have, but I don't think you should have much trouble. The Cult of the Dragon has collapsed, so they have almost completely abandoned Waterdeep.

### Observations

The characters can learn information about the safehouse through observation. **Droxnir's Apothecary** is adjacent to the **Crooked Tooth Tavern** in a four-story building (see the **map** on page 10). The building is located on a fairly busy side road in the Trade Ward. The shop is open from late morning until late evening. The second

floor consists of a common sleeping room managed by the tavern and an apartment (Droxnir's). The third and fourth floors are comprised of apartments.

If the characters attempt to observe in a stealthy manner roll an appropriate skill check (e.g. **stealth** for hiding or **disguise** if posing as street beggars) with a DC 10. If the characters fail the check, Droxnir is **alerted** that someone is casing her place. She will not confront the characters, but will be **prepared** when the characters infiltrate the safehouse.

**Droxnir**, a middle-aged human woman, tends to the store while it is open (Her statistics are included in the **Important NPCs** section **Page 7**). Business is slow. If the characters observe for a full day, they only see 1d4 shoppers enter the store. None stays for more than 10 minutes and usually (75%) of the time leave empty handed or with a small parcel (25%). If characters enter the store, Droxnir is polite and helpful. She has a variety of (non-magic) concoctions and remedies. Characters can also purchase up to 4 healing kits from her.

If the characters observe the shop at night, they observe **Droxnir** retire to her 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartment. The rooms are brightened by candle light for about an hour before she heads to bed.

Each night, there is a **33%** chance **Droxnir** will sneak out of her apartment (in disguise) through the tavern's side door. She will sneak out at least once every three nights. If the characters observe her leave (**Perception** check, DC 15), they notice a slim figure carrying a greatsword. If the characters do not follow, she will return in 20-40 minutes. Note: If the characters break in while she is gone, she will return at an inconvenient time (see **Break In**).

Characters can choose to follow **Droxnir**. She winds through alleys, attempting to lose any possible tails (**Perception** or **Survival** skill check DC 15 to keep tracking her). Pursuing characters can attempt to use **stealth** (DC 10) to

remain hidden. If they are spotted, Droxnir will confront them after 10 minutes of being followed. She will attempt to convince them to leave her alone. If she can't, she will attack. If the characters are not spotted, she will continue to walk through alleys until she finds a lone drunk to attack and kill with her black-bladed greatsword.

### Rumors

The characters can also learn the following information by asking appropriate contacts (for information about the Cult of the Dragon Ebondeath sect) or customers at the Crooked Tooth Tavern (for information about the apothecary).

Cult of the Dragon & Ebondeath Sect:

- The Cult of the Dragon was almost wiped out a while ago. Apparently, they were trying to raise some dragon goddess.
- The Cult? They believe that undead dragons were the rightful rulers of Faerun. Pretty crazy!
- I did some library research on that Ebondeath Sect you mentioned. Apparently, the cult worshipped the undead dragon, Ebondeath, a few hundred years ago. They were based in the Mere of Dead Men and led by a priest named Strongor Bonebag. He preached some sort of a prophecy based on an amalgamation of the beliefs of the Church of Myrkul and Sannath's Cult of the Dragon.

Droxnir's Apothecary

- Droxnir is nice enough, but kind of creepy.
- Her stuff is pretty good. Some of her concoctions work really well with the ladies...if you know what I mean!
- I'm pretty sure that she has an apartment on the second floor.
- Come to think of it, I have never seen her leave her shop or apartment.
- Business has been really slow for her. I'm not sure how she stays open. It used to be busier, but that stopped a few months ago. No idea why.

## Break In

---

See the map on **page 10**.

Before starting this encounter, have each character roll three **perception** checks. Record their results for use during their explorations.

**Droxnir's Activities** depend on when the characters break in. During the day, Droxnir will be in her shop, without her greatsword. At night, she will be in her apartment and have access to her greatsword.

If Droxnir observed the characters casing her shop, she prepares by retreating to **Room 5** at night.

If Droxnir was not aware of danger from the previous section, she will be resting in **Room 2**. Droxnir becomes alerted if the characters fail a total of two or more individual **stealth** checks (DC 10). She is immediately alerted if the characters do not attempt to be stealthy (including breaking down doors). Depending on the location of the characters, she will:

- Hide in **Room 2** and prepare to ambush the players. In this case, any character with less than 15 on their perception roll are surprised and can not act during the first round of combat.
- Or - if she has time - she will retreat to **Room 5**.

### The Safehouse

Droxnir's shop and apartment has a few access points. The front door of her shop is barred from the inside. It can be quietly shimmed open with a **Thieves' Tools** check (DC 12) or broken open with a **Strength** check (DC 15). Her apartment door is locked **Thieves' Tools** or **Strength** check (DC 10). The outside of the building can be easily climbed (**Athletics**, DC 10) and the windows opened (**Thieves' Tools**, DC 12) or broken.

**Room 1:** The Apothecary shop is lined with shelving containing all kinds of herbs, kits, and concoctions. If the characters decide to loot, they find 185 gp worth of stuff. If the characters search under the sales counter, they find a locked box (**DC 15**) The box is trapped (**DC 15**) with a poison needle causing 1d10 points of damage, **Constitution** save (DC 10) or become incapacitated for 2d10 minutes. The box contains the following potions:

- 2 potions of extra healing
- 1 potion of fire breath
- 1 potion of hill giant strength
- 1 dose of dust of disappearance.

A rickety stairwell (disadvantage on stealth checks) leads to the second floor.

**Room 2:** Droxnir's sleeping room contains a chair with side table, a bed, and bookshelves. The books are useful to any apothecary and can be sold for 50 gp. The trapdoor can be found on an **investigation** check (DC 10). If Droxnir is unprepared, she may be laying on the bed or sitting in her chair reading. If she is alerted and still in the room, she will be hiding in the corner adjacent to the stairwell wall.

**Room 3:** Droxnir's sitting room is furnished with five wood chairs and a small table. The furniture is covered with dust and does not appear to have been used in a long time.

**Room 4:** A ladder from the trap door in the second floor descends to this bare stone room. The room is dimly a greenish color from the glowing eyes of three skulls hung from the walls. The skulls are dragon shaped, but human sized. **Shatterskull Trap:** All three skulls will explode when triggered by anyone crossing the line of sight (e.g. walking to the door) of the skull mounted to the east wall. The explosion causes 3d8 thunder damage to anyone in the room. A **constitution** save (DC 12) results in half damage. The visible door in this room is fake – leading to a brick wall. The **Secret Door** can be found with an **Investigation** roll (DC 10).

**Room 5:** Characters listening at the secret door in Room 4 hear a soft rustling noise that sounds like shifting wood or bone. The room is lined with heavy red velvet curtains and the floor is tiled a dark grey. Four half-dragon skulls with glowing eyes (not trapped) are mounted to the walls and provide dim light. Ornate wooden double doors, carved in the likeness of a black dragon lead out to the south.

The room is occupied by a **skeletal guard drake**. The skeleton attacks anyone not accompanied by Droxnir. Droxnir herself may also be in this room.

**Skeletal Guard Drake - Medium Dragon**

AC 14, Hit Points 52 (7d8+21), Speed 30 ft  
STR 16(+3) DEX 11(+0) CON 16(+3)  
INT 4(-3) WIS 10(+0) CHA 7(-2)

**Skills:** Perception +2

**Damage Vulnerability:** bludgeoning weapons

**Damage Resistance:** Lightning

**Immunities:** exhaustion, poison

**Senses:** dark vision 60ft passive perception 10,

**Languages:** Understands Draconic, but can't speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 xp)

**Attacks.**

*Multiattack:* The drake attacks twice, once with its bite and once with its tail.

Bite. Melee attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. Hit: 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

Tail. Melee attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. Hit: 6(1d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

**Room 6:** The walls of the Temple to Ebondeath are composed of stone, painted bone white. The grey tiled floor is embossed with a giant symbol of the Cult of the Dragon. The west wall is painted with a mural of a black dragon overlooking a broken tower in a swamp. A large black stone altar dominates the south end of the temple. A large black dragon skull rests on top of a horde of coins piled on top of the altar. Two half-dragon skulls (not trapped) mounted on the north wall provide light for the room.

If the characters approach the altar, they hear a faint murmuring in a harsh language (draconic) before the dragon skull, now blurred and glowing a dark purple, rises into the air, growling, "I am Ebondeath, who disturbs me?"

Use **flameskull** statistics for Ebondeath. Before rising, he has cast **blur** on himself (attackers have disadvantage for one minute). He will cast **fireball** (describe as an exploding ball of acid, causing acid damage instead of fire) during the first round. He will then use his **Ray of Fire** attacks (describe as jets of acid instead of fire) during the rest of combat.



*Credit: Cover, Dungeon Magazine Issue #73*

The horde on the altar consists of the following:  
2,388 Copper  
1,338 Silver  
75 Gold  
5 blue jasper worth 50 gp each  
9 eye agate worth 10 gp each  
2 pale green zircon worth 50 gp each  
1 silver bracelet (75gp)  
1 stone hourglass w/ dragon etchings (500gp)

**Room 7:** Droxnir's workshop is lined with benches covered with potion-making equipment (200 gp). A bookshelf holds a variety of mystic books appropriate to crafters (250 gp). Many of the books are written in draconic. A dark leather book (the Dark Sermons), embossed with a silver dragon skull, sits on a pedestal in the northwest corner.

A half-dragon skull sits on one of the benches next to a scroll (in draconic). The scroll describes how to create a shatterskull trap using any humanoid skull and a variation of the **shatter** spell.

A young dwarven girl is unconscious and bound to the table on the northern wall. A small metal tube has been inserted into a vein on her arm and is connected to a set of glass flasks.

A cage in the northeastern corner of the room holds a live **phase spider**. A silvery mesh covers the bars and keeps the spider imprisoned.

## Aftermath

Thayzar Ontak happily pays the fee for retrieval of the Ebondeath Sects Dark Sermons. He will also purchase any of the books looted from the safehouse for 50% of value (contested **persuasion** tests can increase his offer to 70% of the value). Ontak is also interested in Droxnir's sword. He will gladly take it from the characters. The sword would rather be with Ontak, so the curse is broken...

**Ebondeath** is a **flameskull**. If the characters take the skull, don't forget that he will

reconstitute in an hour. When he revives, he will be confused and attempt to determine where he is...and demand that anyone nearby worship him. If they show proper respect, he will not attack.

*During playtest, my group was in for a rude shock when Ebondeath reconstituted in their room at the inn. The bard convinced him that he was rescued and that they were going to take him to his worshippers. The party led him through the streets of Waterdeep until confronted by a group of mages from the City Guard. The party happily turned Ebondeath over to them...*

The dwarven girl, Brograre, was kidnapped while playing in the fields near Loudwater. Her captors chained her with other slaves into the bowels of a ship. She was sold a few times in a great underground city before being taken to a cell guarded by a monster. She was drugged and does not know how she got to this room. Kept her drugged, so she slipped in and out of consciousness. She has no idea how long she has been held captive.

## Important NPCs

**Thayzar Ontak** is found in **Faction Folio: Waterdeep DM's City Guide** on *DMSGuild*.

He is the quiet, male, human Thayan proprietor of the musty Ontak's Antiquities in the Castle Ward. Ontak is friendly and often lets his customers in on conspiracies - especially those involving the Red Wizards. It doesn't take long for a customer to realize that Ontak harbors a burning hatred of Szass Tam.

The smell of cloves is thick and the shelves of his shop are crammed with oddities, antiques, religious artifacts from many denominations (good, evil and in-between). The shelf above his desk holds a silver skull and a lacquered skeletal arm fitted with thin wires that allow the hand to be manipulated (a religious icon of Myrkul). On occasion, a lucky shopper can find a low-value magic item in his shop. Ontak is assisted by

Grebak (use the berserker entry), a silent and dim-witted half-orc.

**Dungeon Master Notes:** Ontak appears to be an excellent contact for the PCs. He is generally well connected and often has useful information and items. He also provides PCs with an opportunity for jobs retrieving interesting items. However, Ontak is actually a necromancer obsessed with gaining enough power to destroy Szass Tam. On orders from the Cult of the Dragon, he organized the assassination of a member of the Council of Waterdeep. He knew this was a poor strategy that doomed the cult's plot to raise Tiamat, so he quickly severed connections. Ontak has a number of agents that he uses to carry out his plots. Currently, his most trusted agent is *Whisper*, a female half-elven assassin. Thayzar has recently made a deal with Baba Jazinka to aid his sinister research.  
**Stats:** Use the **mage** entry for Thayzar, but select spells appropriate for a necromancer.



**Location:** Ontak's Antiquities sits across The Street of Silks from the Cynosure in the Castle Ward. The upper floors of the building contain storage, a small apartment for Grebak, and Ontak's residence. The basement is connected by tunnel to a series of abandoned rooms under the Cynosure. Ontak uses these rooms as his study and vile workshop. His necromantic arts are boosted by the taint from Myrkul's Ruins - the brown murk that settled on the site of the Cynosure after the god was destroyed above Waterdeep during the Time of Troubles. These abandoned rooms are also connected to the Underdark through the sewers.



**Droxnir** is an agent and researcher for the Cult of the Dragon. Besides providing sanctuary for traveling cultists, she conducts research on transformative magic (e.g. creating dracoliches). Her research into Strongor Bonebag's Dark Sermons has led to her discovery of a method to turn herself into a unique form of undead. Droxnir usually uses disguise self to portray herself as a plain-looking middle-aged woman. However, in combat she will show her true, hideous visage.

**Droxnir** - Medium Undead

AC 11, Hit Points 44 (7d8+18), Speed 30 ft

STR 16(+3) DEX 11(+0) CON 15(+2)

INT 16(+3) WIS 12(+1) CHA 10(+0)

**Saving Throws** Wis +2, **Skills:** Perception +2

**Immunities:** necrotic, poison

**Senses:** dark vision 60ft passive perception 11,

**Languages:** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 3 (700 xp)

**Spellcasting.**

Haste 1/day (when holding her greatsword), Disguise Self, at will

**Attacks.**

*Multiattack:* Droxnir can use her Dreadful Glare and attack once with either necrotic touch or her Greatsword.

**Necrotic Touch.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 12 constitution saving throw or feels weakened and is afflicted by a degenerative disease. Starting the next morning, the victim gains one level of exhaustion each day until cured with remove curse, cure disease, or similar magic.

**Greatsword.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

**Devour Soul:** If Droxnir strikes a killing blow with her sword, she gains 10 temporary hit points.

**Dreadful Glare.** Droxnir targets one creature she can see within 60 feet. If the target can see her, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened until the end of Droxnir's next turn. If the target fails by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. If the target succeeds on the saving throw, it is immune to Droxnir's future uses of this feature.

Droxnir wears simple clothing and carries a small pouch with 26 gp and 32 silver pieces. She does not wear armor, but carries her magic greatsword.

**Droxnir's Greatsword:**

Droxnir's greatsword has a black blade, bone hilt and is cold to the touch. The sword begins as a +1 weapon. If the weapon strikes a killing blow against any sentient creature, the wielder gains 10 temporary hit points that last for 24 hours. The weapon automatically attunes to the wielder after this first kill and changes to a +2 weapon.

This sword is cursed. The wielder will preferentially use this weapon in combat. Additionally, if the wielder tries to dispose of the weapon, it will magically reappear the next round. The curse can be broken by a remove curse spell or by being willingly taken by another evil aligned creature (like Ontak!).

The sword also causes the wielder to have a recurring nightmare of a faceless black robed humanoid speaking with a soft scratchy voice, "Kill them....Kill them....Kill them all!"

For every day without a kill, the wielder must make a Wisdom check (DC 10+days since the last kill). On a failed save, the sword compels the wielder to sneak away and kill.

**Alternative:** Droxnir's sword is the infamous greatsword, Blackrazor (DMG 216). This is one of three weapons stolen by the wizard, Keraptis as the motivator for the **White Plume Mountain** adventure. This adventure is part of the [Tales from the Yawning Portal](#) anthology. By introducing this weapon to characters earlier in a campaign, you provide a natural hook for engaging your players in White Plume Mountain.

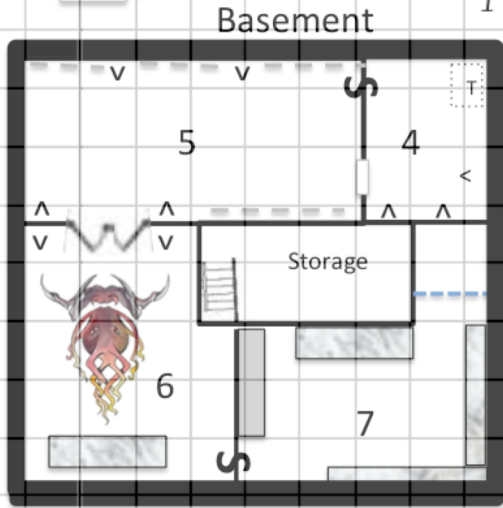
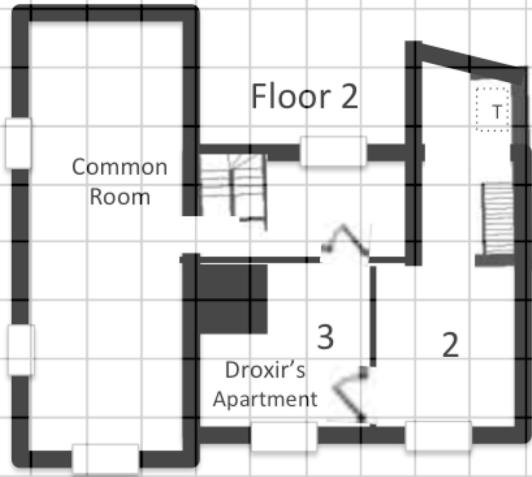
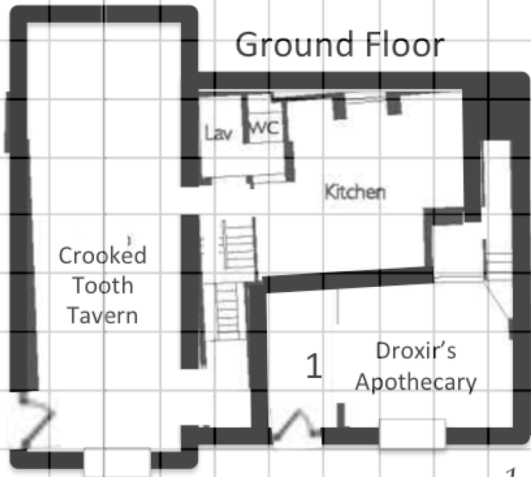
Blackrazor shines like the night sky filled with stars and has a black scabbard studded with obsidian. Of course, this legendary weapon is ridiculously overpowered for a 5<sup>th</sup> level character. If you use Blackrazor, it is dormant and only has the powers described earlier. The

full powers of Blackrazor can either be revealed after it is retrieved from White Plume Mountain or after events of your design.

## Credits

---

The artwork used in this adventure is from many of Patrick Pullen's collections available on the DMs Guild. The image of the book on page 2 is from By Veleys (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons. The cover was created using [www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com).



1 sq = 5 feet