

# LABYRINTH OF THORNS

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BY ASHLEY WARREN

THE LABYRINTH OF ST. VALENTINE ENSNARES ALL WHO ENTER

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# A LOVELY CITY WITH A DARK SECRET...

## SUMMARY

The city of St. Valentine is home to Dante's Casa di Dolci, a world-renowned bakery — and tucked within the bakery is the entrance to a secret labyrinth, created by a mischievous, merciless god. Every February, an unsuspecting resident from St. Valentine is pulled into the maze. Some return after years spent in the labyrinth, but most do not.

When Dante's beloved wife, Simonetta, is pulled into the labyrinth, he must enlist the help of adventurers to get her back. The journey that follows is one of strange doors, riddles, and dangerous creatures that lurk among the hedges...

## ADVENTURE HOOK

The players have heard a rumor about a very beautiful city called St. Valentine, known for its vibrant food and art culture. They have also heard that every year, people seem to go missing in St. Valentine. As such, they have traveled to St. Valentine out of curiosity, and to offer their services.

If the party has played the previous module, *A Night of Masks and Monsters*, which exists in the shared universe of this story, the characters can travel to St. Valentine after saving Ibrido from the Marquis di Maschera.

**This adventure is recommended for level 4 characters in a party of 4 or more, and level 5 characters in a party of 3 or less. DMs are welcome to remove or change encounters to adjust difficulty.**

## THE WAR OF EMBEREZ

**This module is a stand-alone story and does not require the following lore.** However, it's included here for additional context. Both this module and *A Night of Masks and Monsters* are part of a longer campaign called *A Requiem of Wings*, which follows a war between angels and demons, and the people caught in between.

Continuing the events in *A Night of Masks and Monsters*, the ongoing war between seraphim and demons embroils all of Emberez, the demiplane that is home to both Ibrido and St. Valentine (among many other towns and cities, each of which have taken a side in this war). As such, the characters will encounter additional people and creatures involved in this feud. Emberez has been split into two territories: West Emberez, currently the seat of the seraphim order called the **Aureum**, and East Emberez, currently under the domain of the demons known as the **Malum Animus**.

But the war in Emberez is not a simple war, for the angels are not always good and the demons are not always evil..

### A MAZE... AND A TRAP

The labyrinth was created by Shar, the goddess of death and trickery, who sought to lure victims into the maze and claim their souls once they had perished. She has appointed a human paladin named **Rafael** to oversee the labyrinth. After years in her service, Rafael has grown born and restless, and seeks a companion. Rafael has made a sport of the labyrinth, and will choose a spouse only from those who have found the center of the maze. If Rafael is killed, the labyrinth will also be destroyed.

## THE CITY OF ST. VALENTINE

St. Valentine is a lovely, rustic city nestled among lush green hills and winding rivers. The fertile ground has provided St. Valentine with an abundance of delectable produce, and people travel from all over to partake in its offerings — wine, food, flowers, and desserts.

When the characters arrive, St. Valentine is preparing for its annual celebration — St. Valentine's Day, a holiday honoring love in all of its forms. The city is decorated with garlands and floral arrangements, and vendors provide free wine and treats for several days leading up to the holiday.

The atmosphere is fun and festive, but a sense of unease permeates the whole affair. Every year around St. Valentine's Day, a resident of the city mysteriously goes missing. And every so often, a missing resident *returns*, stumbling back into the city after months or years away, disheveled and driven to madness. The returning residents have difficulty explaining what happened to them.

St. Valentine is densely populated, and its buildings are built close to one another. There is a sense of uniformity to the city — most buildings share the same red-tinted roofs — but new visitors will notice a curious array of doors. The doors of St. Valentine are very colorful and ornate, each a work of art and craftsmanship.

# SCENE 1 — THE FESTIVAL OF ST. VALENTINE

An ornate horse-drawn carriage delivers the party to the city center of St. Valentine. It is morning, and the air is cold but not frigid. Still, breaths produce visible puffs in the air. It is winter, after all, although the sky overhead is a clear blue.

**Read or paraphrase the following:**

Merchants are setting up tables and tents in the square, and there is a pleasant rumble of chatter as they converse with one another.

Several tall buildings loom over the city square. The tallest bears a clock, and it chimes when the characters step out of the carriage. The clock depicts more than just the time: surrounding the clock face are the phases of the moon and astronomical symbols.

The buildings in the square share a unique aesthetic: their façades are covered in veined white marble tiles and outlined in darker tiles of burgundy and navy. Beyond the city square, in narrow streets that splinter off of the square like the legs of a spider, the buildings are comprised of reddish stone.

The merchants setting up for the festival are busy. However, there is one who notices the characters, and she will come over and greet them.

Her name is **Paula Floria**, and she is a human woman with dark hair and dark eyes (see *Characters*, pg. 12). She will greet the characters warmly. Paula is a floral vendor, and she wears a flower crown of roses and baby's breath. She also wears a golden amulet depicting the symbol of an eye, which is the symbol of the **Aureum**. If asked about St. Valentine, she will say that the city is preparing for St. Valentine's Day, a holiday celebrating love.

## THE STORY OF ST. VALENTINE

*"The city is named after a paladin named Valentine, who was, many years ago, the King of West Emberez. When he died serving his goddess, Sune — the goddess of love — they named the city after him, and devote a day every year to celebrating love." — Paula Floria*

When asked about the rumor of people going missing every St. Valentine's Day, Paula doesn't know much; she has not lived in St. Valentine for very long. She moved there to expand her floral business, knowing that the land of St. Valentine is lush and fertile. She recommends talking to the baker Dante Gallo, who owns Dante's Casa di Dolci and has lived in St. Valentine for many years. She points the characters down the widest of the streets, and says his bakery is on the right.

## DANTE'S CASA DI DOLCI

As you head down the cobblestone street, you will see garlands above you, strung from building to building. The flowers and the leaves are large and vibrant. The scent that emanates is heady, perfumed, and floral. But another scent overpowers this — a delicious aroma of chocolate, bread, and sugar wafts down the street.

The scent has an easily-identifiable source: Dante's Casa di Dolci. A wooden sign bearing the name of the bakery hangs outside a large slatted window. An array of breads, cakes and pastries are on display in the window, all sitting upon round marble trays. The desserts are works of art, impeccably crafted.

A bell rings when the door opens, and an elderly man appears from the back, wearing a black apron liberally smeared with flour. The bakery itself is warm and comforting, filled with the aromas of sugar and yeast. Tapestries of vineyards and farms cover the walls, alongside paintings depicting floral arrangements and scenes of pastoral St. Valentinian life. A **DC12 passive Perception** will also alert the characters to a curious painting, hung on the wall behind the counter: a very detailed painting of an intricate labyrinth.

The man, **Dante**, is an elderly half-elf. Despite his age, he stands quite tall, and his grey hair still displays streaks of black, the hair color common to many who reside in West Emberez. He is very handsome, with twinkling dark eyes and a strong jawline.

He welcomes the characters into his bakery and asks where they are from. Dante is very charismatic and an easy conversationalist. When asked about the missing people, he will say that the rumors are true.

## MUTTERINGS OF A MAD GIRL

*"Five years ago, a 16 year old girl named Adalina went missing. She returned just last week, dressed in the same garments she had been wearing when she disappeared! She was rambling incoherently about a monster with three heads, some sort of hybrid beast." — Dante*

A **DC12 Insight check** will confirm that Dante is being sincere. In an effort not to dampen their experience in St. Valentine, Dante goes behind his counter and pulls out a tray of chocolate truffles. Each is decorated with a tiny frosting rose. He offers a chocolate to each character as a welcoming gift to St. Valentine.

The chocolate is rich and decadent, truly delicious. After a few moments, the characters will begin to feel... funny. Suddenly, colors and sound amplify, and the world is significantly more vivid than it was just a minute ago. A **DC10 Perception check** will bring to attention strange noises nearby, like creatures rustling in bushes...

## SCENE 2 — THE ENTRANCE TO THE LABYRINTH

If the characters ask Dante what is happening, his demeanor grows desperate. Dante will assure them that the effects of the chocolates are not harmful; they contain flowers grown in a labyrinth, and ushers them to the back of the bakery. Dante will point to a hole in the stone wall: a few weeks ago, he discovered a mysterious labyrinth by accident when he broke through the wall to expand his bakery. He has learned more about it by speaking to Adalina, whose mad ramblings were actually true. Because of the ongoing war in Emberez, he wasn't sure who he could trust to tell about the labyrinth.

Through the hole, characters can see stone walls and green hedges dotted with bright red roses. The effects of the chocolate will begin to wear off. Dante will beg them to help him — his wife, Simonetta, was taken into the maze the night prior. He promises the characters **1,000 g** if they are able to bring Simonetta home to safety.

### THE PLEA OF A DESPERATE MAN

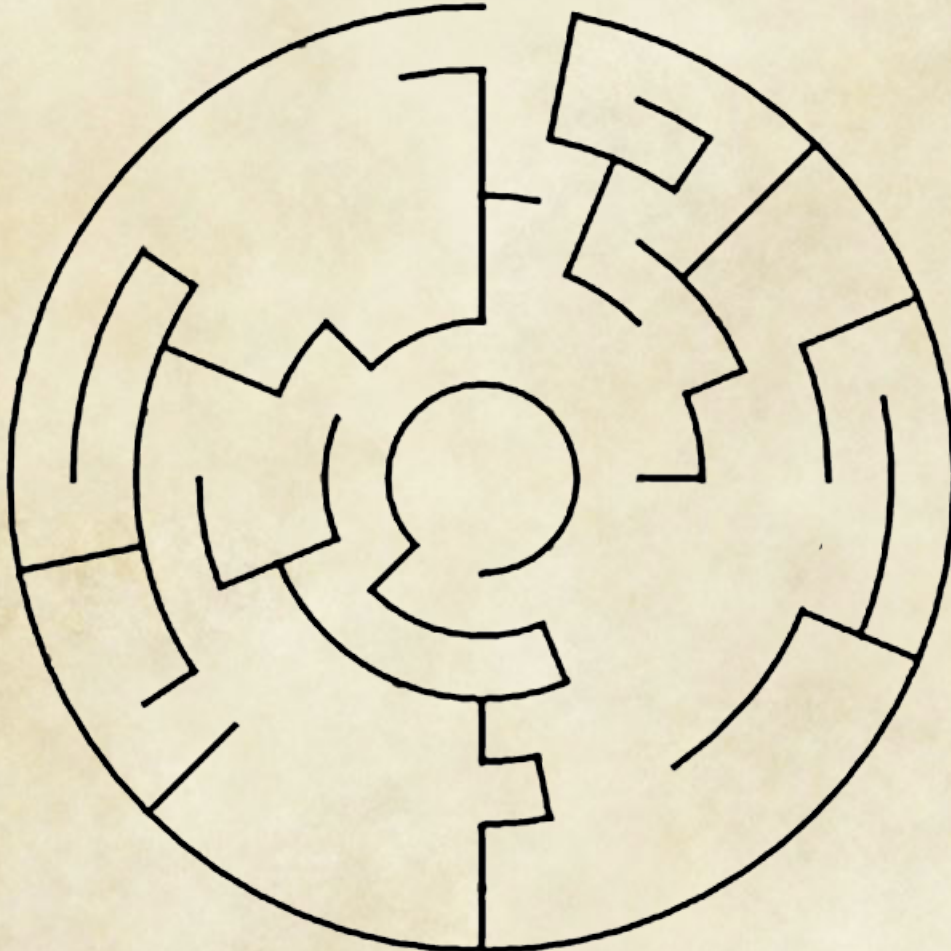
*"When you stepped into my bakery, I hoped you would be the ones who could help me. Rafael has taken my dear Simonetta and seeks to make her his companion forever!" — Dante*

When asked about **Rafael**, Dante will tell them that Rafael is a **paladin** of the goddess **Shar**, an evil trickster goddess. (See *Characters* on pg. 13 for more information about Rafael, although characters will not meet him until later.) Shar has appointed Rafael as her champion to guard the labyrinth, but the paladin has grown bored and seeks a partner. Dante's wife, Simonetta, is a respected bard (a singer), and Dante thinks this is why she was chosen. Rafael likely heard her singing voice through the hole in the wall when they first discovered the labyrinth. Not knowing it was the work of an evil deity, Dante took some of the flowers to use in his baked goods, and found that the flowers had short-lived, but curious, effects on people.

The characters must find Simonetta before she is either killed by the dangers of the labyrinth, or before she is claimed by Rafael. Dante himself is not a fighter or an adventurer, and feels helpless to rescue his wife.

Since the maze was created by Shar, it is likely they will encounter more than just monsters, and warns them to be wary of everything and everyone they meet. Dante has sketched what he thinks the labyrinth looks like, based on what Adalina told him, but it is pretty sparse in details.

## DANTE'S MAP OF THE LABYRINTH



## SCENE 3 — VINES AND VOICES

**D**ante has little to provide the characters with before they step into the labyrinth, but he gives them each another chocolate. These, too, are medicinal in a helpful way — they each contain **1 point of health**, should they need it. **(Note for DMs: These can be stacked, should the characters want to give theirs to a member of their party who has been injured.)**

He bids them good luck. At this point, the characters may proceed into the labyrinth. The hole in the stone wall is large enough for them to step through.

### THE FIRST PASSAGE

Read or paraphrase the following:

You step out of the kitchen and into a narrow passage, about the same width as the streets of St. Valentine (20 feet). The labyrinth, too, is paved with cobblestone. Tall hedges and stone walls heavy with foliage line the maze. The stone is almost entirely obscured by rose bushes growing up through the cracks in the cobblestone. Above the labyrinth, you see the open sky, which looks cloudless and blue.

The roses may be plucked, but will quickly wilt and crumble. Characters will not be able to fly higher than the height of the walls (15 feet). One may sense that they have somehow traveled into another realm. A **DC15 Arcana check** may confirm suspicions that spells pertaining to plane shifting, such as *Banishment*, will not work while in the labyrinth. **(Note for DMs: Characters will not be able to long rest while in the labyrinth. One short rest is permitted.)**

If the characters turn around, the hole in the bakery wall will have vanished; a stone wall has taken its place.

### ENCOUNTER WITH THE VINE BLIGHTS

Read or paraphrase the following:

The maze appears to head straight. As you proceed, the rustling sound grows stronger.

The characters will come to a bend in the maze. As they round the corner, three **vine blights** amble forward and will attack (see *Enemies*, pg. 14).

After the battle, the characters can proceed. A **DC12 Perception check** will alert them to more rustling; however, they won't encounter any more vine blights in this section.

### ENCOUNTER WITH THE HARPY

Read or paraphrase the following:

You hear a beautiful voice wafting through the maze. From where you stand, you can't see the source, but the voice is lovely and haunting.

Characters may recall that Dante's wife, Simonetta, has a lovely singing voice. However, the voice belongs to a **harpy**, which they will not yet see (see *Enemies*, pg. 14). Each character will have to make a **DC11 Wisdom saving throw** or be charmed by the harpy (full effects of the charm are included in the harpy's stats).

If they head toward the voice, the harpy will swoop in and attack. Regardless of if the characters encounter the harpy, or choose to go in the opposite direction, they will eventually discover a **door**. The recommended location for this is marked as 2 on the *Map for DMs* on pg. 11.

### THE FIRST DOOR

Read or paraphrase the following:

Before you is an arched wooden door, painted gold, embedded in a wall and flanked by two stone pillars.

If a character reaches for the ornate door knob, the door opens automatically. **Read or paraphrase the following:**

The door opens and you see a rectangular courtyard outside of a tall, stone building. There is a fountain in the center, gurgling pleasantly, surrounded by well-manicured rose bushes filled with roses of different colors. Arched porticoes line the four sides of the courtyard.

If the characters step through the door, it will disappear behind them, leaving them in the courtyard. Something soars in the air above the characters, casting a shadow over them. It is a **peryton** (see *Enemies*, pg. 15). A **DC12 Stealth saving throw** will ensure the characters are unnoticed by the creature. If it sees them, it will attack.

They can seek cover in the porticoes, and the peryton will not seek them there. There are several windows along the interior walls, but strangely, it's difficult to see inside. There is a faint glow, like candles, flickering behind the tinted glass.

A **DC14 Perception check** will confirm that there does not appear to be a way into the castle. If a character chooses to fly up, they will be able to see the courtyard and the castle, surrounded by green rolling hills, but no doors. Attempts to break windows will not work.

After a moment, the characters will see a door across the courtyard. It resembles the one they entered, but this one is painted red. Curiously, if they approach, it disappears. If they turn around, they will once again see the door across the courtyard. They can proceed toward it again, but again it disappears.

The characters will hear the sound of panpipes coming from across the courtyard. The encounter with the harpy will likely have made them wary. Regardless, there is nowhere else to go. Either the characters will proceed toward it, or a voice will call out to them.

# SCENE 3 — VINES AND VOICES, CONT.

The voice belongs to a **satyr** named **Bartolomeo** (see *Characters*, pg. 13). He blows into his panpipes and dances a little jig in front of a bright red door. Bartolomeo grins mischievously at the characters. He is not evil and will not attack unless provoked. However, the characters will need to solve a riddle

before they can proceed through the door. Depending on how easily the characters solve the riddle, the DM may choose to have them solve more than one before being granted passage.

If asked, Bartolomeo will say that the castle they see is in fact a temple, built in honor of the goddess Shar. He will not give out information freely, so the characters may have to answer additional riddles.

## THE TRICKSTER'S CHALLENGE

"You think you can outsmart Bartolomeo? Let's put that to the test, shall we?" — Bartolomeo the Satyr

## BARTOLOMEO'S RIDDLES

Select a riddle from the list below or use one of your own!

### RIDDLE #1

**Riddle:** Marking mortal privation, when firmly in place. An enduring summation, inscribed in my face. What am I?

**Answer:** A tombstone.

### RIDDLE #2

**Riddle:** When I'm used, I'm useless. Once offered, soon rejected. In desperation oft expressed, the intended not protected. What am I?

**Answer:** An alibi/excuse.

### RIDDLE #3

**Riddle:** All about, but cannot be seen. Can be captured, cannot be held. No throat, but can be heard. What am I?

**Answer:** Wind.

### RIDDLE #4

**Riddle:** At night they come without being fetched. By day they are lost without being stolen. What are they?

**Answer:** The stars.

### RIDDLE #5

**Riddle:** You heard me before, yet you hear me again. Then I die, 'til you call me again. What am I?

**Answer:** An echo.



# SCENE 4 — THE RANGER AND THE RIVER

Once the characters appease Bartolomeo, he will step aside and let them pass through the red door, which leads them to another section of the maze (see 3 marked on the *Map for DMs*, pg. 11). For the element of suspense, it would be better to not point out this location on the unmarked map the characters can see.

## Read or paraphrase the following:

You step back into the maze. The sky above is no longer blue. In this area, the atmosphere feels more sinister; the sky is grey and the air is colder. The red door disappears. Behind you are stone walls and hedges.

As they proceed, a **DC12 Perception check** will alert the characters to more rustling sounds, similar to the blights.

## ENCOUNTER WITH THE SNAKES

When the characters round the corner (before they pass by 4 on the *Map for DMs*), they will run into a **swarm of poisonous snakes** (see *Enemies*, pg. 15).

## ENCOUNTER WITH DIANA

A woman wearing torn linen clothing and leather sandals will emerge from around the corner, her bow and arrow readied. She is **Diana** — in actuality, she is **Artemis**, goddess of the hunt. But to the characters, she will appear to be a human ranger (see Diana's stats on pg. 12).

If a character is injured, she will offer to cure their wounds to the best of her ability. If asked, Diana will say that she was pulled into the maze the year prior, but that time passes much slower in the maze, and to her it feels like only a few days have passed. She has yet to meet Rafael himself, and will be an ally to the characters until they can escape.

A **DC15 Perception check** will call to attention Diana's golden amulet, bearing the symbol of the Aureum. If asked, she will say she supports their cause against the Malum Animus, which is true — if not the whole story. Diana's true motivation, which she will not share until the end of the game, is that she is on a secret mission for the Aureum. Although all gods across the pantheon are part of the Aureum by default, the Aureum seeks to rid it of the evil trickster gods, such as Shar. Diana hopes to eliminate Rafael and Shar's labyrinth without causing a civil war within the Aureum, and partnering with adventurers who have arrived by accident will provide her with a good cover.

Diana will let them know there is a door nearby, marked 5 on the *Map for DMs* (pg. 11). If the characters express an interest in avoiding the door, Diana can share that she thinks that going through the doors takes them closer to the center of the maze. Lingered too long in the maze will expose them to other dangers (see *Random Encounters*, pg. 17). However, the choice is up to them.

## THE SECOND DOOR

### Read or paraphrase the following:

You come to another door embedded in a wall. This door is larger than the first door. It is also arched, and painted a deep cobalt blue. There are three roses painted on the door, in this order: one in mid-bloom, one still tightly budded, and one in full bloom. On the right side is a row of three locks.

The door is a puzzle. If a character has lock picks, that would be ideal. However, the DM can reward creativity however they see fit, so characters do not have to be proficient in lock picking. Brute force will not open the door. Diana does possess lock picks (thieves' tools) in the event that the team is unable to come up with another option; however, the characters will need to be the ones advising her so they can still be part of solving the challenge.

### FACILITATING THE PUZZLE

- The correct order for opening the door is: **Lock 2, Lock 1, Lock 3**. The bloom stages of the roses are the indicator of the order.
- If the character rolls successfully for each lock, but in the wrong order, the key holes will close for five minutes. During this time, the DM should roll for a random encounter (see list on pg. 17).
- A failed roll will make the lock turn upside down, and the character will have to roll with disadvantage on the following attempts.
- If the characters fail to open all of the locks twice in a row, a yellow **poisonous gas** will puff out from the keyholes. Characters within 5 feet of the door will need to make a **DC14 Constitution save**, or take **2 points of poison damage**.
- Three successful rolls in the correct order will open the door.



# SCENE 4 — THE RANGER AND THE RIVER, CONT.

## LACRIMOSA RIVER

Read or paraphrase the following:

The cobalt door opens into a large, rectangular stone hall, about 80 feet long and 30 feet wide. The architecture matches that of the courtyard, complete with arched ceilings and slatted windows. Floor candelabras line the walls.

A river runs through the room, in the center of it. It appears to be manmade, formed by a large trench that has been carved into the stone floor, about 8 feet wide. The water within is brackish, and loose flower petals float lazily on top.

A **DC12 Passive perception** will bring the characters' attention to what's *in* the river: it is filled with dozens of bodies, an assortment of creatures (humans, gnomes, dwarves, and so on). All of the creatures appears to be dead and lay face-up floating on their backs, with a gold coin placed over each eye. Each clasps a bouquet of roses to its chest. Diana will mention that she has heard of a river that transports souls to the afterlife: Lacrimosa River. She wonders if these are the souls of those who have perished in the maze. (**Note for DMs: "Lacrimosa" means "tearful/weeping" in Latin.**)

The river flows to the left. Curiously, the wall on the far right, where the river begins, is entirely comprised of stone. The characters can touch it and investigate it if they so choose. The river seemingly originates from nowhere, and yet the river continues to move, bringing with it new bodies that appear to pass through the stone.

On the left wall, where the river leads, is another door. This door is black with a large, gilded doorknob. The door is about 4 feet wide, and is partially submerged in the water, positioned in the center of the river.

There is nothing else in this room. The only escape seems to be the door on the left wall. There are two feet of river on either side of the door. Every character will have to roll a successful **DC17 Dexterity check** to get through the door without touching the water. If the first attempt is successful, the door will swing open back into the maze. The river will not run into the maze, but will disappear into the empty space of the door frame.

## ENCOUNTER WITH THE SPECTERS

If any of the characters fail this check, or touch the water at any point before that, three **specters** will spring from the river and attack the characters. See *Enemies* on pg. 16.

## ENCOUNTER WITH OPHIRA

At some point during the battle, another spectral being will emerge from the river. It is a **ghost** in the form of a young human woman wearing a simple white shift, her hair bound in a braid. She is barefoot. This ghost will aid the players in their fight against the specters and is not harmful toward the players. Once the specters have been defeated, or before the characters continue through the maze, the ghost will introduce herself as **Ophira**. She was taken into the labyrinth several years ago and died trying to fight her way out. She hopes that enacting revenge on Rafael will set her soul free. Ophira will ask the characters if she can join them on the rest of their journey, and offers to serve as their ally. See Ophira's stats in *Characters* on pg. 13.

If the black door is not yet open, Ophira will open the door for the characters and will help them through, back into the labyrinth, placing them at 6 on the *Map for DMs* (pg. 11).



# SCENE 5 — THE PALADIN OF SHAR

The characters will emerge into a new section of the maze. Heavy grey clouds roll in the sky above. Thunder rumbles, reverberating through the stone walls, and every few minutes, lightning cracks and bolts across the sky. As they proceed, it will start to rain, a pounding torrent. The rain makes it difficult to see and hear, so characters who attempt **Perception checks** should roll with disadvantage.

The characters are close to the center. Ophira will say she has made it to the end, but was killed by Rafael's pet **chimera**, a three-headed beast he stole from a member of the **Malum Animus**.

## THE THIRD DOOR

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you make your way through the storm, the center of the maze opens up before you. It is a circular clearing, with one remaining stone wall erected in the center. A large golden door has been built into the wall, similar to the first but twice as wide. A single beam of sunlight breaks through the clouds, illuminating the door. On the façade are painted red roses and a large knocker in the shape of a lion's head.

The door will open when the knocker is used. It opens slowly into a huge cathedral, about 400 feet long and 100 feet wide.

Grey light streams in through the tall arched windows, and a long ornate rug stretches from the doorway to the chancel. The side aisles are filled with dark wooden pews. A woman dressed in a black beaded gown stands on the stage in the chancel. She is singing a haunting melody, and her voice fills the chamber.

Lacrimosa River continues into this cathedral, and it runs along the right side of the room. It comes to a stop in front of the chancel. A creature with a dragon head, a lion head, and a goat head — a **chimera** — is crouched before it. When a soul tries to emerge from the river, the lion head will bare its teeth, and the soul will lower back into the river, and the current reverses directions. This prevents the souls from leaving their purgatory.

## ENCOUNTER WITH RAFAEL

In the middle of the stage, a man dressed in black armor sits on a throne, his legs draped over the arm. When the characters step into the room, he quickly stands up. The man is **Rafael**, the paladin of Shar and the keeper of the labyrinth. At the sight of the characters, he will clap his hands.

Rafael has long, black hair pulled into a ponytail. His black armor gleams in the feeble light. Emblazoned on the front is Shar's symbol: a black disk with a border.

## SURPRISE PARTY GUESTS

"Welcome to the temple of Shar. I'm so pleased you've made it through the labyrinth. I was not expecting new guests! You're just in time to meet my new bride, Simonetta. Doesn't she have such a wonderful voice?" — Rafael the Paladin

The singer is, in fact, an older elven woman named **Simonetta**. Her auburn hair is streaked with grey, and despite the situation, she stands with regality and projects her voice into the chamber.

## FIGHT AGAINST RAFAEL

If the players instigate a fight in any way, Rafael will whistle, summoning his pet chimera, and both will attack the characters. (See *Enemies*, pg. 17.)

## RAFAEL'S THREAT

"You'll die before you leave here with Simonetta!" — Rafael

Simonetta will stop singing, and will join the party in their battle. **Note for DMs: This provides the characters with three (optional) allies: Diana, Ophira, and Simonetta. However, depending on the existing party size, the DM may choose to include just one of the allies if there are too many characters in the initiative order. Another option for scalable difficulty is to have the chimera enter the battle first, and bring Rafael in later; this makes it a bit easier for the characters to attack them one at a time. This choice can be justified by Rafael's hubris: he assumes that the characters are weak enough to be defeated by his chimera alone.**

## CONCLUSION

Once Rafael and the chimera are defeated, Ophira's spectral form will begin to dissipate. She thanks the characters for their help and disappears, her soul put to rest. The souls in the river, too, are released from their captivity, and the river turns from murky to clear, before evaporating entirely. Diana will tell the characters the truth about her mission for the Aureum and offers her aid, should they ever need it.

Blackness envelops the cathedral and the characters. They come to consciousness in Dante's warm kitchen, and the hole in the wall is now gone. Dante will tearfully embrace Simonetta. She, too, will thank the characters for their bravery and pledges to write a song about their heroics. Dante will award the characters **1,000 g total and heart-shaped boxes of healing chocolate**. Each box contains five chocolates that possess 1 point of healing.

Dante invites the characters to celebrate with them at the St. Valentine's Day festival, and everyone may proceed back to the city square.

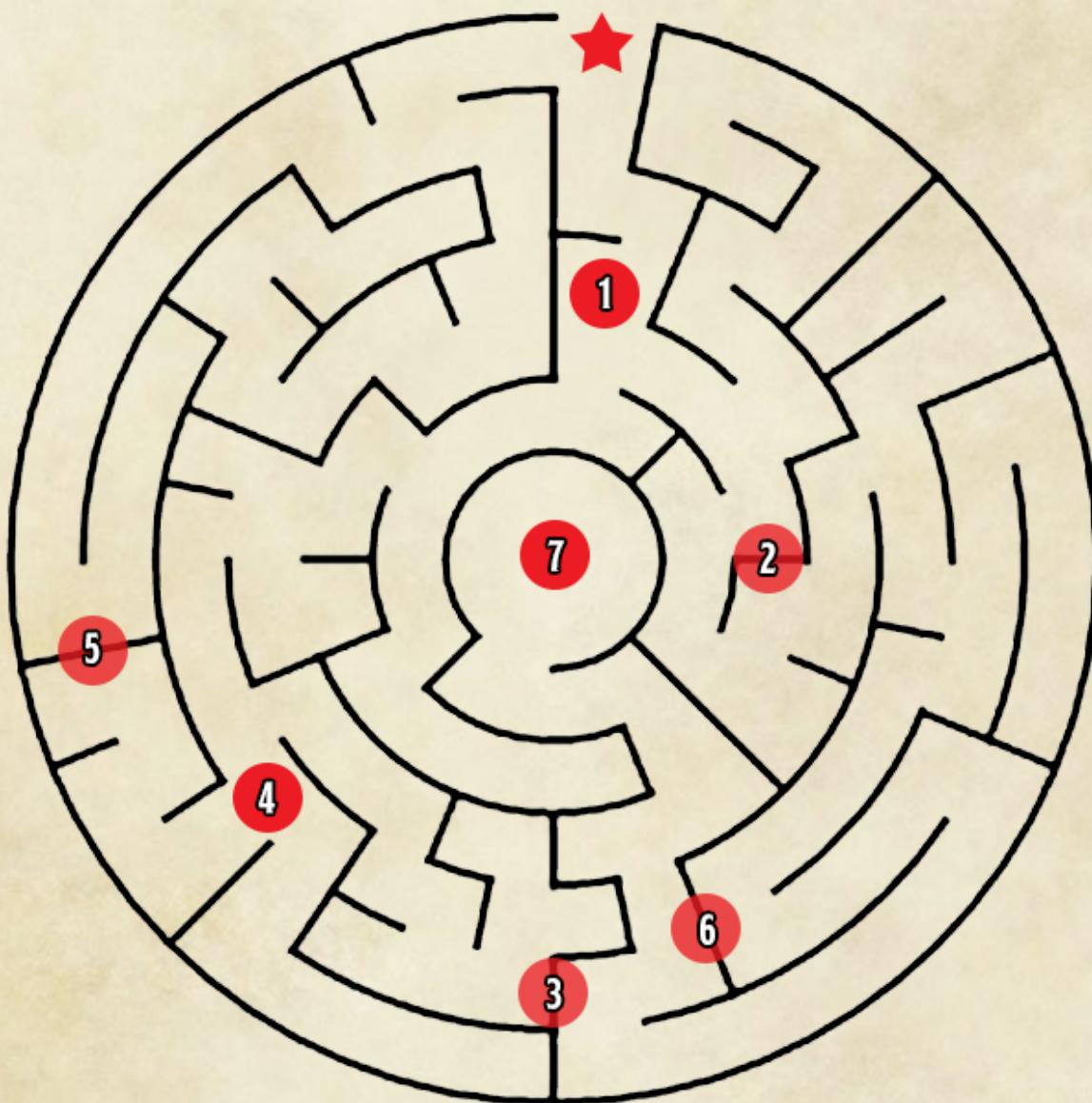
## THE END

# MAP FOR DMs

THIS MAP IS ONLY FOR THE REFERENCE OF THE DMs. PLAYERS CAN LOOK AT THE UNMARKED MAP ON PG. 5.

## MAP KEY:

- **Star:** Entrance from the bakery kitchen
- **1:** Vine Blights (3)
- **2:** Door/Room 1 Entrance
- **3:** Door/Room 1 Exit
- **4:** Diana
- **5:** Door/Room 2 Entrance
- **6:** Door/Room 2 Exit
- **7:** Door 3



# CHARACTERS

## PAULA FLORIA

Paula is a **human woman** and a florist vendor. She moved to St. Valentine to grow her floral business, She is in her 50s and has dark hair and dark eyes, and wears a flower crown of roses and baby's breath.

## DANTE GALLO

Dante is a world-renown baker and the owner of Dante's Casa di Dolci. He is a **half-elf**, and his dark hair is streaked with grey. He is quite handsome and is typically quite jovial. His wife's plight has made him frantic and desperate.

## SIMONETTA GALLA

Simonetta is Dante's wife and a respected bard. She is a **half-elf**, and has auburn and grey hair. Simonetta has a regal presence. She was taken into the labyrinth when Rafael heard her lovely singing voice through the hole in the bakery.

### SIMONETTA GALLA

*Medium humanoid, bard*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 24 (3d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (0)	16 (+3)

**Proficiencies** +2 proficiency bonus. Performance  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12  
**Languages** Common, Elvish

#### Actions

**Vicious Mockery.** *Cantrip.* Unleash insults laced with subtle enchantments at a creature seen within range. If the target can hear, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or take 1d4 psychic damage and have disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.

**Hideous Laughter.** *1st Level Spell.* The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or fall prone, becoming incapacitated and unable to stand up for the duration. At the end of each of its turns, and each time it takes damage, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. The target has advantage on the saving throw if it's triggered by damage. On a success, the spell ends.

#### Other

**Spellcasting.** *Spell Save DC: 13. Spell Attack Modifier: +5. Spell Slots: 1st-level (5).*

## DIANA/ARTEMIS

Diana appears to be a **human ranger** and claims to have been taken into the labyrinth the year prior. In actuality, this is simply a cover, for she is **Artemis**, goddess of hunting, the moon, and wild animals. She is a prominent member of the **Aureum**, and is on a secret mission to help rid the Aureum of corrupt and evil gods and goddesses. However, she uses the characters as a cover so that she does not cause a civil war within the Aureum.

### DIANA THE RANGER

*Medium humanoid, ranger*

**Armor Class** 16  
**Hit Points** 32 (4d10)  
**Speed** 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

**Proficiencies** +2 proficiency bonus. Thieves' tools, Survival, Animal Handling  
**Senses** passive Perception 15  
**Languages** Common, Celestial

#### Actions

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 4

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 4 piercing damage. (15 arrows.)

**Cure Wounds.** A creature the ranger touches regains a number of hit points equal to 1d8 + 5. This spell has no effect on Undead or constructs.

#### Other

**Favored Enemy.** *Monstrosities.* (Rafael's chimera is a monstrosity.) The ranger has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track their favored enemies, as well as on Wisdom (Perception, Insight) involving their favored enemies and on Intelligence checks to recall information about them. They also gain a +2 bonus to damage with weapon attacks.

**Spellcasting.** *Spell Save DC: 13. Spell Attack Modifier: +5. Spell Slots: 1st-level (3).*

## OPHIRA

Ophira is a **ghost** who will aid the characters in defeating Rafael. Ophira made it to the center of the maze but was killed by Rafael's pet chimera. Her soul was then trapped in Lacrimosa River, destined to an eternity in purgatory, until the characters disturbed the river and awoke some of the spirits within. Ophira's spectral form reflects her former appearance as a young woman dressed in a simple white shift, her hair bound in a long braid down her back. When the party defeats Rafael, her soul will be released to the afterlife.

### GHOST OF OPHIRA

*Medium undead, neutral good*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 45 (10d8)

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

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

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

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

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

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** any languages it knew in life

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

### Actions

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

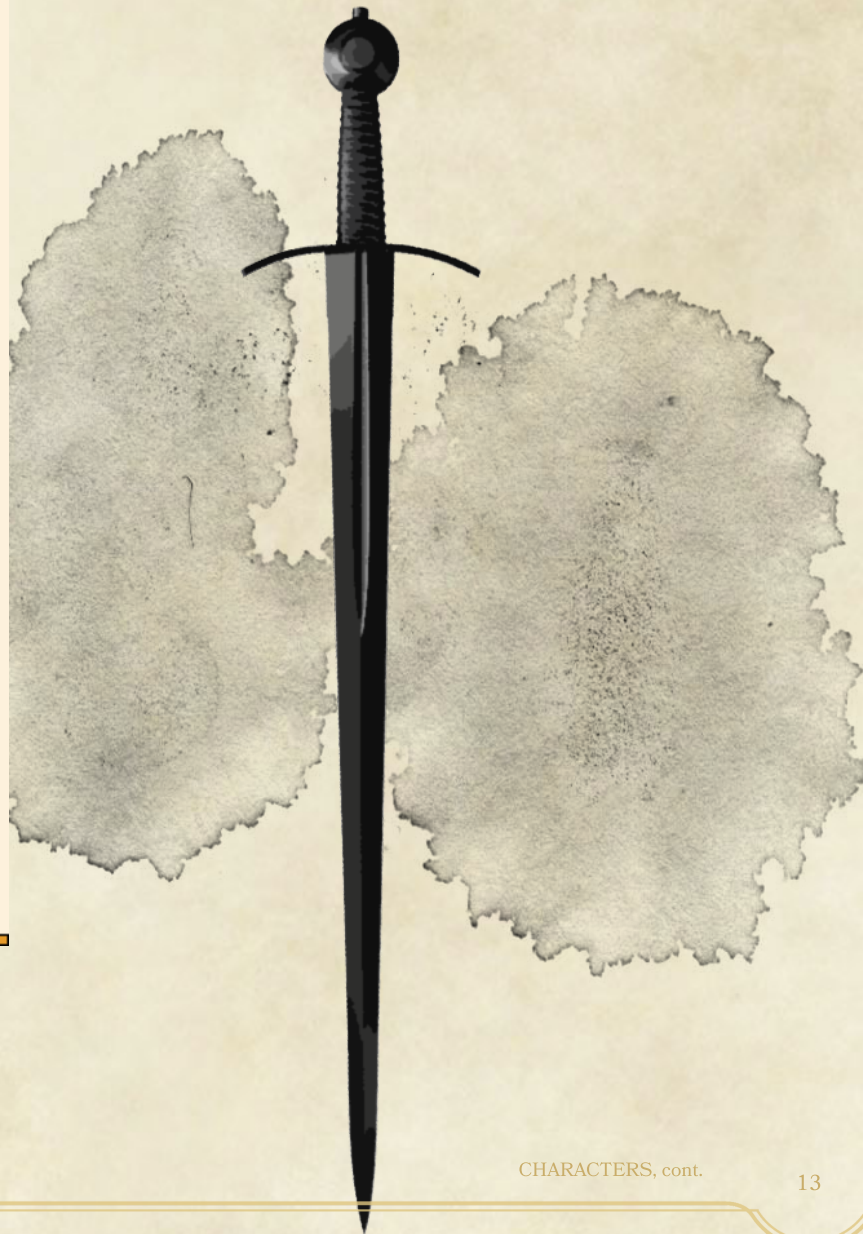
**Horrifying Visage.** Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each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

## BARTOLOMEO

Bartolomeo is a **satyr**, placed in the labyrinth by Shar. He is unclothed, and the lower half of his body is covered in fur. Like others of his kind, Bartolomeo has the horns, hooves, and tail of a goat. He has been tasked with guarding the door leaving the courtyard, so he demands that those trapped in the maze answer his riddles before proceeding. He enjoys taunting people with his panpipes. (Satyr stats are on pg. 267 of the *Monster Manual*)

## RAFAEL

Rafael is a **human paladin** who has devoted his life to serving Shar. Several decades ago, Shar created a labyrinth to lure souls to their deaths and keep them in purgatory. Rafael was appointed to guard the maze. He has a pet **chimera** which he stole after killing a member of the **Malum Animus** who bred and raised chimeras. Because he serves an evil goddess, Rafael himself is an evil trickster and enjoys seeing others suffer in service to Shar. However, he grows bored being in the maze, and has spent many years luring people, of all races and genders, into it. As a paladin, he has chosen the Oath of Conquest, and seeks to dominate people and control their free will.



# ENEMIES

## VINE BLIGHTS

Medium plant, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 26 (4d8 + 8)  
**Speed** 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Stealth +1  
**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened  
**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10  
**Languages** Common  
**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the blight remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a tangle of vines.

### Actions

**Constrict.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and a Large or smaller target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the blight can't constrict another target.

**Entangling Plants (Recharge 5-6).** Grasping roots and vines sprout in a 15-foot radius centered on the blight, withering away after 1 minute. For the duration, that area is difficult terrain for nonplant creatures. In addition, each creature of the blight's choice in that area when the plants appear must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 12 Strength check, freeing itself or another entangled creature within reach on a success.

## HARPY

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 11  
**Hit Points** 38 (7d8 + 7)  
**Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

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

**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** Common  
**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The harpy makes two attacks: one with its claws and one with its club.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage.

**Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 6 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

**Luring Song.** The harpy sings a magical melody. Every humanoid and giant within 300 feet of the harpy that can hear the song must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until this song ends. The harpy must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing. It can stop singing at any time. The song ends if the harpy is incapacitated.

While charmed by the harpy, a target is incapacitated and ignores the songs of other harpies. If the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from the harpy, the target must move on its turn toward the harpy by the most direct route, trying to get within 5 feet. It doesn't avoid opportunity attacks, but whenever it takes damage from a source other than the harpy, the target can repeat the saving throw. A charmed target can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If the saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it.

A target that successfully saves is immune to this harpy's song for the next 24 hours.

# ENEMIES, CONT.

## PERYTON

*Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +5

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** understands Common and Elvish but can't speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Dive Attack.** If the peryton is flying and dives at least 30 feet toward a target and then hits it with a melee weapon attack, the attack deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage to the target.

**Flyby.** The peryton doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Keen Sight and Smell.** The peryton has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The peryton makes one gore attack and one talon attack.

**Gore.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage.

## SWARM OF POISONOUS SNAKES

*Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 36 (8d8)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

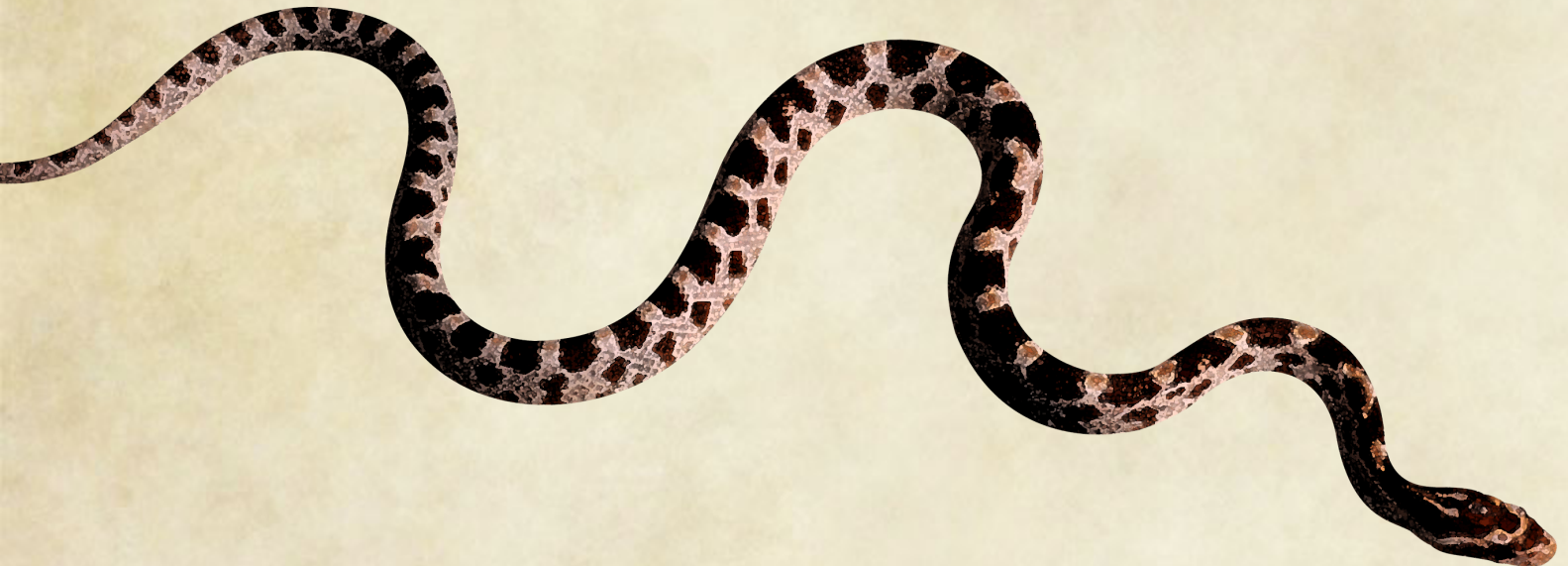
**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing  
**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10  
**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Swarm.** The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny snake. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

### Actions

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.





# ENEMIES, CONT.

## SPECTER

Medium fiend, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**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, unconscious

**Skills** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

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

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** The specter 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.

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

### Actions

**Life Drain.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its point maximum to 0.

## CHIMERA

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +8

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** understands Draconic but can't speak

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The chimera makes three attacks: one with its bite, one with its horns, and one with its claws. When its fire breath is available, it can use the breath in place of its bite or horns.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Horns.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Fire Breath (5-6).** The dragon head exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 31 (7d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

# ENEMIES, CONT.

## RAFAEL THE PALADIN

Medium humanoid, Oath of Conquest, lawful evil

Armor Class 19

Hit Points 60 (7d10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Proficiencies** +3 proficiency bonus. Persuasion, Charisma.

**Saving Throws** Wis +5, Cha +6

**Immunities** disease

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Celestial, Infernal

### Actions

**Attack.** The paladin can attack twice, when using the following:

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 slashing damage.

**Javelin.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 piercing damage.

**Lay on Hands.** As an action, the paladin can touch a creature and draw power from a pool (35 points) to restore a number of hit points to themselves or a designated creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in the pool. Five points is needed to neutralize a poison.

### Options

**Conquering Presence.** The paladin can use Channel Divinity to exude a terrifying presence. As an action, the paladin forces each creature of their choice that they can see within 30 feet of them to make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes frightened of the paladin for 1 minute. The frightened creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Aura of Conquest.** The paladin constantly emanates a menacing aura while they are not incapacitated. The aura extends 10 feet from them in every direction, but not through total cover. If a creature is frightened of the paladin, its speed is reduced to 0 while in the aura, and that creature takes 3 points of psychic damage if it starts its turn there.

# RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

ROLL A D10 FOR ONE OF THE FOLLOWING RANDOM ENCOUNTERS. ALL STATS CAN BE FOUND IN THE MONSTER MANUAL.

- 1: PERYTON — PG. 251
- 2: DEATH DOG — PG. 321
- 3: FIRE SNAKE — PG. 265
- 4: GIANT VULTURE — PG. 329
- 5: VINE BLIGHT — PG. 32
- 6: SHADOWS (3) — PG. 269
- 7: IMP — PG. 76
- 8: HARPY — PG. 181
- 9: DUERGAR — PG. 122
- 10: BUGBEAR — PG. 33



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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**THIS ADVENTURE WAS WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY ASHLEY WARREN.**

- *Dungeons & Dragons* is the property of Wizards of the Coast. Please support their world-changing work.
- Document designed using <http://homebrewery.naturalcrit.com>.

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## OTHER ADVENTURES IN EMBEREZ

### A NIGHT OF MASKS AND MONSTERS

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In the city of Ibrido, locals enjoy a life of splendor and frivolity. Every week, a lavish party is held at the Castel di Maschera, hosted by the Marquis di Maschera, Prospero, who has a reputation for being a generous party-thrower and avid patron of the arts. Receiving an invitation to a Marquis di Maschera party is coveted, and those who enter his social circle never leave it.

But the Castel di Maschera holds many secrets. When a strange, hybrid creature — half bird, half man — is found brutally murdered in Ibrido's city square, tattooed with the Marquis's signature symbol of two masks, rumors have begun to spread throughout Ibrido that something more sinister may be occurring.

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A dense forest surrounds the city of Magra, a place known for its spired buildings and talented artisans. The Magran Forest not only provides artisans with the materials for their trade, but protects and hides the ruins of a long-destroyed temple, said to have once served an old, ancient deity that precedes the existing pantheon.

When luthier Vela Kapra learns of the temple's location by accident, she knows this is where the ancient relic known as the Starlight can be found. But this information is dangerous, for there are many who would die to find the Starlight — and just as many who would kill for it.

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