



BLOOD VAULTS of SISTER ALKAVA

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A Side Trek for Four to Six PCs of Level 5–6

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Press

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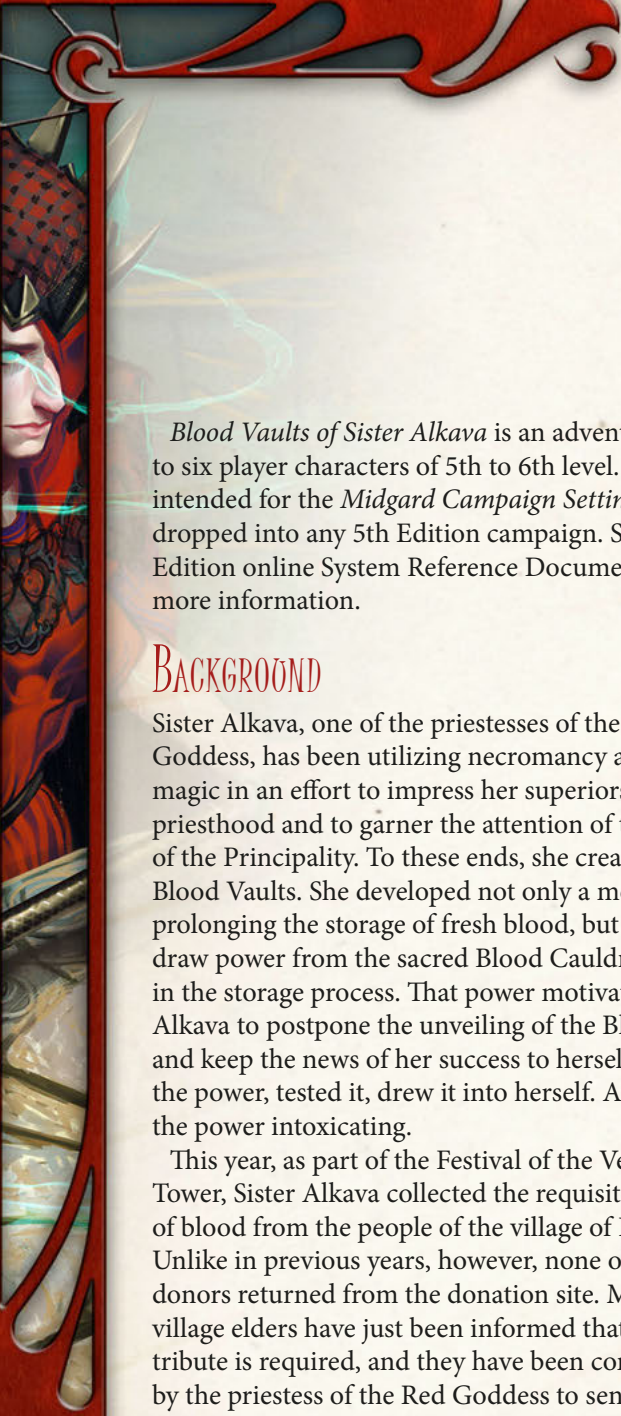
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Blood Vaults of Sister Alkava is an adventure for four to six player characters of 5th to 6th level. Though intended for the *Midgard Campaign Setting*, it can be dropped into any 5th Edition campaign. See the 5th Edition online System Reference Document (SRD) for more information.

BACKGROUND

Sister Alkava, one of the priestesses of the Red Goddess, has been utilizing necromancy and blood magic in an effort to impress her superiors in the priesthood and to garner the attention of the Elders of the Principality. To these ends, she created the Blood Vaults. She developed not only a method for prolonging the storage of fresh blood, but a way to draw power from the sacred Blood Cauldrons she uses in the storage process. That power motivated Sister Alkava to postpone the unveiling of the Blood Vaults and keep the news of her success to herself. She tasted the power, tested it, drew it into herself. And she found the power intoxicating.

This year, as part of the Festival of the Verdant Tower, Sister Alkava collected the requisite tribute of blood from the people of the village of Karvolia. Unlike in previous years, however, none of the blood donors returned from the donation site. Moreover, the village elders have just been informed that a second tribute is required, and they have been commanded by the priestess of the Red Goddess to send another dozen young men and women to the edifice of stone that looms on the cliffs overlooking the village—the dreaded Blood Vaults of Sister Alkava.

The village elders, afraid of the Red Goddess and the vampiric Shroud-eaters but even more fearful of losing more of their young people to the Blood Vaults, quietly put out the word that they are willing to pay adventurers handsomely to find a way to make this second tribute pass them by. Unfortunately, by the time the brave adventurers respond, the latest set of donors has already entered the Blood Vaults and is being prepared for the donation process.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The player characters must infiltrate the Blood Vaults, rescue the intended donors, and confront Sister Alkava—finding a way to stop her before her power grows too great to contain.

The adventure begins with a meeting with the village elders and the acceptance of a quest to save the young men and women who were recently marched into the Blood Vaults. Once inside the glorified mausoleum, the player characters explore the Blood Procession, the Blood-Letting Chamber, the Donor Pens, the Storage Alcoves, and finally the Blood Cauldron Sepulcher, the massive chamber that Sister Alkava has turned into her seat of power.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Beyond the usual desire for reward, adventure, and experience, the player characters could have a variety of other reasons for deciding to aid the village of Karvolia. Here are a couple of examples.

It's All Relative: One or more of the PCs grew up in Karvolia and has a beloved relative among the donors sent to the Blood Vaults. For these PCs, the mission is extremely personal.

A Matter of Church and State: One or more of the PCs has been sent to investigate Sister Alkava by either the priesthood of the Red Goddess or the Elders of the Principality. In the case of the former, Sister Alkava's superiors grow increasingly concerned that they haven't heard from their priestess in months. They worry that Sister Alkava has gone rogue, and for good reason. The priesthood wants to know what Sister Alkava is up to, and they want her brought back to the Temple of Apostala to answer for her infuriating silence.

In the case of the latter, the Elders of the Principality know that Sister Alkava was close to a breakthrough in necromantic techniques. When her regular reports stopped arriving, they feared that she had stolen the research for her own purposes. This cannot be allowed to stand.

Rebellion: One or more of the PCs belongs to a secret group of freedom fighters working in the shadows to topple the governments of the undead. In particular,

they seek to weaken or even end the rule of the vampires of the Principality. When they receive word of Sister Alkava's experiments to extend the Shroud-eaters' ability to preserve and store fresh blood, they know they have to destroy the process. And when they learn that the blood can also be used to increase the power of the vampires, they know that they must stop at nothing to put an end to Sister Alkava and her necromantic plans.

THE VILLAGE ELDERS: A REQUEST FOR AID

The adventure begins as the player characters are spirited away to a back room of the Bleeding Crow Tavern to meet with Karvolia's council of elders.

The back room of the Bleeding Crow Tavern smells of stale beer and old smoke. Lanterns hung at intervals along the walls provide muddy illumination, as there are no windows to let in either light or fresh air. Three ancient villagers study you from across a large wooden table—two men nursing tankards of ale and a woman who occasionally sips from a goblet of wine.

The elders present to meet with the PCs include the angry Tanner Grimm, the nervous Olan Forn (who owns the tavern), and the stern Lady Bestin (who is neither noble nor courtly, but earned the honorific by virtue of her age, her wealth, and the respect the villagers heap upon her).

The three take turns explaining the situation in Karvolia, relating what they know about Sister Alkava (which isn't much), the Blood Vaults, the secret work she's been performing these past few months, and the details of this year's Festival of the Verdant Tower.

"Our initial tribute was accepted," Lady Bestin explains, "but none of the donors returned from the Blood Vaults. When Sister Alkava demanded a second tribute, we knew drastic measures had become necessary. Save our young men and women, and a coffer of rare gems will be yours."

The elders offer a small coffer of gems worth 2,000 gp—a fortune as far as the villagers are concerned—if the PCs can save the twelve young men and women who were marched off to the Blood Vaults less than twenty-four hours ago.

Before the PCs make the trek out of the village and up the hill to the looming Blood Vaults, they might want to find out more information by talking to other people in the village. In general, the villagers appear nervous around the adventurers and suspicious of their

motives. They trust the village elders, though, and are willing to discuss certain matters, at least to some small degree. If the PCs approach the villagers politely and do their best to put them at ease, they can learn the following information:

- Sister Alkava is a Red Sister, a priestess of Marena, the Red Goddess.
- The priestess came to the village a few months ago and immediately began her work to renovate the old Sanguine Shrine and turn it into the Blood Vaults.
- Blood Vaults have been popping up throughout the Principality as storehouses for the Shroud-eaters, but the villagers have reason to believe that Sister Alkava's Blood Vaults are special.
- The villagers suspect that Sister Alkava is a necromancer, due to the supplies she has commandeered from the village in the months she's been working in the old shrine.
- The village has faithfully provided blood tributes in the past, but this is the first time their loved ones never returned after making their offerings.
- A second tribute was ordered by Sister Alkava. Another dozen young men and women have been escorted to the Blood Vaults—perhaps also never to return.
- Sister Alkava has at least a few living assistants, including a bugbear and a stony goblin.

THE PATH TO THE BLOOD VAULTS

1 Ogre Zombie (SRD)

A well-traveled path leads from Karvolia up the hill to the cliffs overlooking the village. There, a looming edifice of stone that resembles a huge mausoleum seems to watch the village like a malevolent gargoyle. The final approach to the Blood Vaults, a cobblestone trail that cuts through the trees and winds directly to the massive stone doors, is protected by a hulking ogre zombie that Sister Alkava called forth specifically to guard the way.

The ogre zombie has been ordered to keep the villagers away while Sister Alkava finishes processing the most recent tribute. It bellows and blusters, deliberately swinging wildly to drive the PCs away as they try to approach the doors to the Blood Vaults. If the PCs attack the ogre zombie, however, it ignores its orders to do no harm and tries its best to injure or even kill the intruders.

ENTERING THE BLOOD VAULTS

The cobblestone path leads up to a massive set of stone doors set into the walls of a massive stone structure. Gothic flourishes decorate the walls, but the bas relief of the Red Goddess carved into the doors strikes anyone who views it as both impressive and disturbing in its details.

The locked doors require a successful DC 15 Dexterity check to pick the complicated lock. Moreover, Sister Alkava placed a trap upon the lock: DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to spot the trap and DC 10 Dexterity check to disarm it. A PC who attempts to unlock the doors without spotting or disarming the trap triggers a poison needle that springs out of the lock and deals 2 piercing damage and 11 poison damage. The injured PC must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or suffer an additional 11 poison damage.

Once the PCs deal with the trap and the lock, they can enter the Blood Vaults.

1: ENTRY CHAMBER

4 Skeletons (SRD)

A small vestibule leads up into the main portion of the Entry Chamber, a 20-foot-tall room with three arched openings that provide access into the facility.

Tall statues on the right and left walls portray different aspects of the Red Goddess. The statue on the right depicts Marena as the goddess of sex and childbirth, showing an alluring temptress clearly pregnant beneath her filmy gown. The statue on the left represents the goddess as the patron of the realm, a wicked dagger in one hand and a decanter of blood in the other, firmly in control of death and suffering. On the far wall, two small archways stand to each side of a wider and taller archway, revealing corridors that lead deeper into the Blood Vaults. Piles of bones lie scattered between the two aspects of Marena.

If any of the PCs inspect the arches more closely, read:

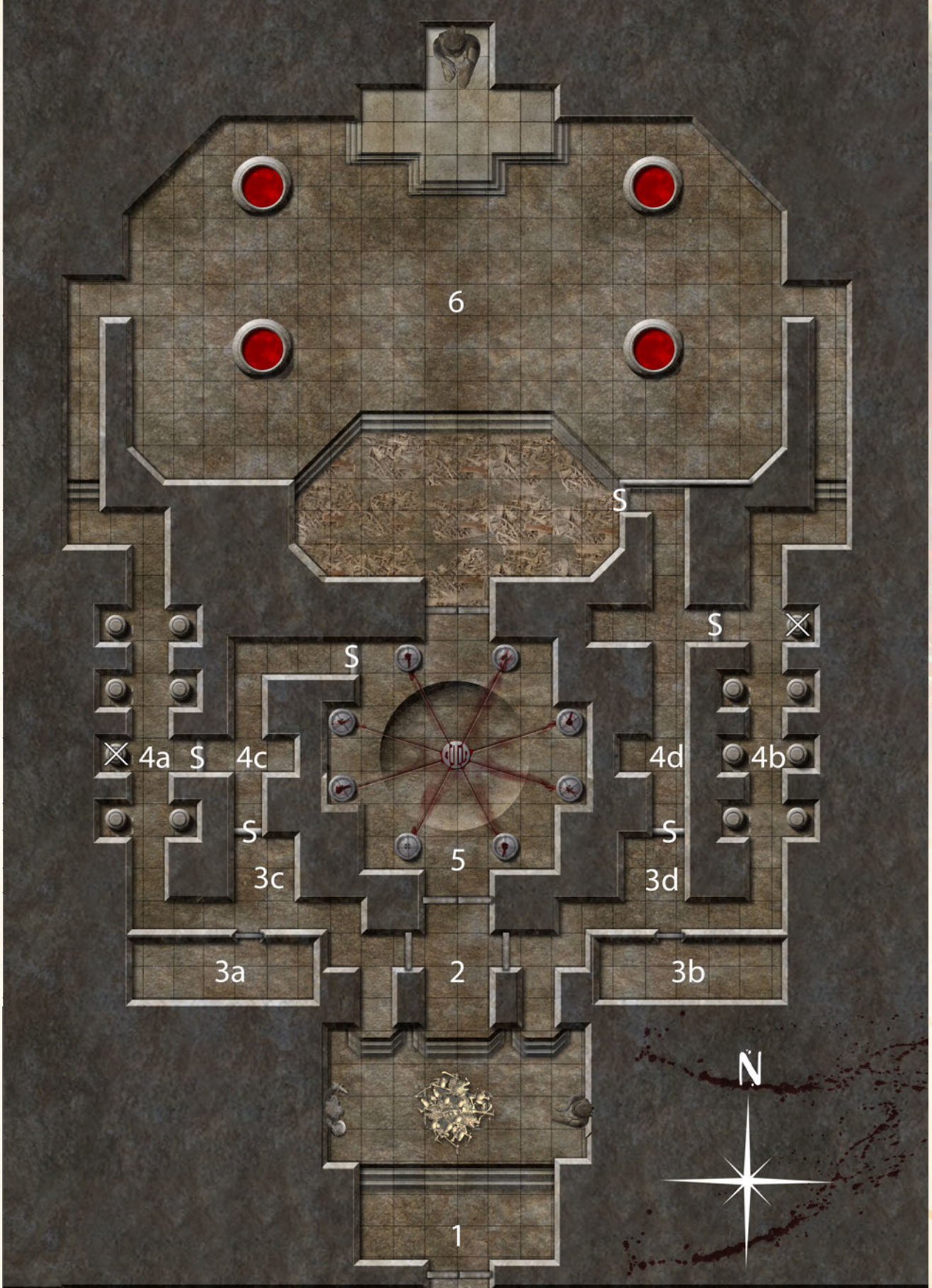
The central arch stands 15 feet high and 10 feet wide. Carved droplets of blood decorate the arch, appearing almost as crimson drops of rain that frame the passageway. The arches to either side stand 10 feet high and 5 feet wide. These smaller passages are unadorned.

Any PC who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recognizes the central passage as the Blood Procession of the Red Goddess, the traditional path taken by supplicants and other donors intent on making an offering of blood to Marena and the Shroud-eaters.

When the PCs begin to climb the stairs into the main portion of the Entry Chamber, the bone piles animate and form into four distinct skeletons, each prepared to defend the Blood Vaults from intruders.

Treasure: One skeleton wears a tattered pouch on a threadbare belt that holds a transparent piece of pale blue quartz. A second skeleton has a small, round chunk of blackest obsidian stuck into its right eye socket. These gemstones are worth 10 gp each.





2: THE BLOOD PROCESSION

2 Specters (SRD)

The central, 10-foot-wide corridor beneath the 15-foot-high arch leads to a set of double doors made of stone. Smaller stone doors separate the wide corridor from the eastern and western passages.

Carvings on the double doors show the Red Goddess at the head of a blood procession, arms outstretched, welcoming supplicants and donors ripe with rich, warm blood. Lifelike paintings of even more donors, packed tightly together and marching toward the doors, decorate every inch of the walls, floor, and arched ceiling using perspectives that make everything seem to flow to the north.

Without a sound, two undead forms rise out the walls and slide toward you.

This long hallway serves as the facility's Blood Procession, the path freely traveled by donors willing to give their blood to support the Elders of the Principality.

Two specters haunt the Blood Procession, remnants of donors who died in the process of providing sustenance to the Shroud-eaters in years past when this was still a Sanguine Shrine. The specters, composed of undying hatred fueled by their untimely deaths, strike at any living creatures in the hallway that aren't under the protection of Sister Alkava—in this case, the player characters.

3: DONOR PENS

1 Bugbear (SRD)

1 Domovoi (*Tome of Beasts*)

The eastern and western passages leading away from the Entry Chamber and the Blood Procession provide access to the Donor Pens where Sister Alkava keeps supplicants prior to sending them into the Blood-Letting Chamber (area 5 on the map).

Area 3a: Male Donor Pen. A dark, dank chamber accessed through an iron gate in the western passage contains the two male supplicants who have not yet been sent to the Blood-Letting Chamber. Olak Forn, son of the tavern owner and village elder, and Bruf Gaeron, an apprentice at the blacksmith's forge, cower in the cell as the domovoi guard (a stony goblin) watches

from the shadows of area 3c. The domovoi enjoys taunting and terrorizing the supplicants.

If the domovoi hears the sounds of battle (against the skeletons or specters or both), it prepares for the intruders by casting *invisibility* so that it can strike with surprise if the PCs approach its location. It won't leave its post unless ordered to by either Sister Alkava or the bugbear guarding area 3d.

Area 3b: Female Donor Pen. A dark, dank chamber accessed through an iron gate in the eastern passage contains the two female supplicants waiting their turn to enter the Blood-Letting Chamber. Ara Kellt, daughter of the village brewer, and Jolla Rann, who operates a small tailor shop, stand defiantly in the cell, badgering the bugbear (in area 3d) and demanding to be released immediately.

The young women's constant demands make the bugbear increasingly angrier, almost to the point where it's ready to swing open the gate and throttle the two supplicants. If it becomes aware of the PCs, it calls for the domovoi and rushes to attack. (The bugbear is slightly smarter than the tougher domovoi and has become the de facto leader of the pair.)

Secret Doors: Secret doors set in the north walls of areas 3c and 3d open onto hidden passages that lead deeper into the Blood Vaults. The domovoi and the bugbear don't know about these secret doors, since they date back to when the place was a Sanguine Shrine. A PC can spot a secret door with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while searching the chambers where the bugbear and domovoi spend the bulk of their time.



Treasure: The domovoi confiscated the pouches that belong to the two male prisoners. They contain gemstones and coins totaling 120 gp. The bugbear keeps a *potion of healing* hidden in an old boot resting in the east corner of area 3d.

4: STORAGE ALCOVES

2 Blood Puddings 1 Blood Zombie

Alcoves in the eastern and western passages contain huge stone urns that stand about 4 feet high and almost 5 feet wide. These urns hold much of the precious blood that Sister Alkava collected during this season's festival. Strange arcane symbols decorate each urn and its heavy stone lid. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check lets a PC determine that the markings aid the magic that somehow keeps the blood fresh and pure. A DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check also allows a PC to determine that the magic links each of the urns to some other vessel of power elsewhere within the Blood Vaults. When the PCs enter one of these areas, read:

Alcoves line the passage ahead. All but one of these recessed spaces contains a large stone urn, its top covered by a heavy stone lid. Strange symbols decorate each urn, unreadable runes that seem to vibrate if you look at them too long. A faint metallic tinge hangs in the air.

Area 4a: Western Alcoves. Every alcove except for the one containing the secret door holds one of the massive urns. A DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check is required to lift one of the heavy stone lids so the PCs can peer inside an urn. Thick, rich blood, magically fresh and as viscous as when it spilled from a supplicant's veins, fills each urn.

If the PCs examine the empty alcove, they have a chance of finding the secret door with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

One of the storage urns (marked with an "x") contains a blood pudding, a creation of Sister Alkava's necromancy that has been growing within the enchanted blood. It dislodges the heavy lid and flows out to attack while the PCs search the empty alcove or when they pass by the blood pudding's urn.

Area 4b: Eastern Alcoves. The urns are the same as the ones described in area 4a, and the secret door can be found as described above.

The storage urn marked with an "x" in this hall contains a blood pudding. It dislodges the lid of its urn and flows out to attack while the PCs search the empty alcove or when they head toward the northern passage.

This hall has one additional guardian. A blood zombie stalks the corridor, patrolling from the top of the northern passage to the beginning of the eastern alcoves and back again. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the blood-covered but obviously fancy scabbard attached to a belt around the zombie's waist. (See Treasure, below, for more information.)

If the blood zombie spots intruders, it immediately attacks.

Areas 4c and 4d: Hidden Passages. The secret doors here can each be found with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

BLOOD PUDDING

A blood pudding resembles a heavy mound of sticky, crimson sludge. In dim passageways, it appears to be little more than a pool of tainted water or a slick of spilled blood. Like a vampire, a blood pudding craves hot, fresh blood. It draws the blood out of its victims, leaving nothing behind but a dry and withered husk.

Blood Pudding

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 20)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)

Damage Immunities acid, fire, necrotic, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amorphous. The blood pudding can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Blood Drain. A creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 damage and the pudding gains 5 temporary hit points as it drains blood from the victim. If the pudding takes radiant damage or damage from a magic weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of the pudding's next turn, although it retains any temporary hit points it previously gained.

Spider Climb. The pudding can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without making an ability check.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft.,

one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 15 (3d10) blood drain. The pudding gains 15 temporary hit points from the blood it drained from its victim.

REACTIONS

Overflow. When a pudding is hit with a melee attack, it immediately flows over the creature that hit it to drain as much blood as it can. The victim must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the creature takes 15 damage from the blood drain. On a failure, the damage is 30. The pudding gains temporary hit points equal to the damage caused by the overflow.

BLOOD ZOMBIE

A blood zombie has been infused with necromantic magic that gives it a semblance of life. A thin coating of flowing blood covers the zombie, making it appear as though a shower of crimson constantly pours down its head and body.

Blood Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 15)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

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

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Blood Drain. A creature that touches the zombie or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 damage and the zombie gains 4 temporary hit points as it drains blood from the victim. If the zombie takes radiant damage or damage from a magic weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of the zombie's next turn, although it retains any temporary hit points it previously gained.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5

ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d10 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 4 blood drain. The zombie gains 4 temporary hit points from the blood it drained from its victim.

Treasure: If the PCs examine the urn in the western alcoves that released the blood pudding, they find an opaque yellow pearl worth 100 gp resting at the bottom of the blood-filled urn. The urns in the eastern alcoves contain only blood.

The blood zombie wears a +1 *short sword* in a scabbard at its side. Though the blade was a favored weapon in life, the zombie appears to have forgotten all about it and never uses it to attack.

5: BLOOD-LETTING CHAMBER

1 *Fellforged (Tome of Beasts)*

1 *Vampire Spawn (SRD)*

Doors depicting the Red Goddess at the head of an elaborate blood procession open to reveal the large, domed Blood-Letting Chamber. Here, Sister Alkava and her servants collect blood for use in her necromantic experiments, instead of for the Elders of the Principality



as was originally intended. When the PCs push open the doors or enter via the secret passage from the west, read:

The domed chamber features a concave floor with rivulets carved into the stone that lead to a central drain. Eight tall metal cylinders, about the height and circumference of a large man, hang on chains suspended from the domed ceiling. Space remains between the bottom of each cylinder and the highest point of the curved floor, where the carved channels begin. Blood drips from holes in each cylinder's base, pooling beneath it before flowing down the rivulets and into the central drain. A clockwork automaton moves from one cylinder to the next, prodding each with a long wooden pole so that it swings upon its chain.

In order to extract every drop of blood from the donors, Sister Alkava constructed these exsanguination cylinders. The eight cylinders each contain one of the young men and women who came to the Blood Vaults as part of the second call for a tribute of blood donors. The clockwork fellforged prods and swings the cylinders to ensure every drop of blood falls into the collection rivulets in the floor. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check lets a PC hear the muffled, fearful whimpers of pain emanating out of a swinging cylinder.

When the PCs arrive, three of the donors have already succumbed to the blood-letting and have died, but if the PCs hurry they can still save the remaining five.

To rescue a donor, a PC must move next to a cylinder and use an action to open the hinged door and set the victim free. By the time the PCs reach them, rescued donors are unconscious from the loss of a lot of blood. Once freed, a donor must be stabilized or healed within 3 rounds or he or she succumbs to the wounds caused by the exsanguination cylinder.

Any donors still inside the cylinders 3 rounds after the PCs entered the chamber must make a death saving throw at the start of every subsequent round. They have each already failed one save so far. On a third failed save, a trapped donor dies.

When a metal cylinder is opened, a PC can see that the interior features hundreds of short, razor-sharp spikes designed to pierce the surface of the flesh and allow blood to freely flow. Holes in the floor of the cylinder give the blood a way to escape and drip into the collection rivulets carved into the floor of the chamber.

Necromantic spells cast upon the drain sends the collected blood directly to the Blood Cauldrons in area 6. If characters spend a moment to watch the blood flow into the drain, they see the blood swirl, fill the drain, and simply disappear.

Defenders: A fellforged, a clockwork construct given sentience by a captured wraith, tends to the exsanguination cylinders for Sister Alkava. It ignores the PCs until they either attack the fellforged or try to free one of the donors from a cylinder. When either of these conditions is met, the fellforged attacks.

At the beginning of the next round after combat begins, a vampire spawn loyal to Sister Alkava rushes into the chamber through the northern doors to help defend the exsanguination cylinders. It doesn't care what happens to the fellforged. It only wants to protect the blood donors until every drop of blood has been fed to the Blood Cauldrons in the next chamber.

Rescuing Blood Donors: For every blood donor that the PCs save, including those kept in the donor pens, the PCs gain 100 XP. No extra experience is awarded for donors who die, either from exsanguination or by some other means.

6: BLOOD CAULDRON SEPULCHER

4 Blood Zombies
8 Skeletons (SRD)
Sister Alkava

The massive chamber in the northern section of the Blood Vaults is the Blood Cauldron Sepulcher. When the PCs approach the doors to the sepulcher, read:

The carved stone doors show an image of Marena the Red Goddess in all her power and glory, providing the blood that sustains the undead and keeps the realm safe. She stands amid huge stone cauldrons that overflow with precious blood.

When the PCs open the stone doors, or when they approach the sepulcher from the passages to the east or west, read:

The massive chamber is divided into three distinct areas. A grim entryway fills the southern portion of the chamber. Bas reliefs of skeletal forms jut from the walls and reach down from the ceiling, while the floor itself appears to be made of a carpet of bones. Stairs rise out of the bones to the central area.

The central area contains four large stone blood cauldrons. Blood bubbles and undulates in the cauldrons as magical energy sparks along the rune-carved floor.

A cross-shaped dais in the center of the northern wall features a magnificent and terrifying statue of the Red Goddess. And kneeling before the statue, her head



bowed in prayer, is a priestess in blood-stained robes—
Sister Alkava.

The climactic battle in the sepulcher can be complex due to everything happening in this chamber. The action is divided between the three key threats here: skeletons, blood zombies, and Sister Alkava.

Skeletons: When the PCs step onto the bone-covered lower level of the sepulcher, Sister Alkava's first layer of defense springs into action. (The skeletons don't activate if the PCs arrive at area 6 by way of the east or west passages.) Read:

The bone covered floor shifts and rumbles. Suddenly bones rise up and fly together, assembling to form eight distinct skeletons. The skeletons turn empty eye sockets toward you and rush to attack.

The skeletons attack the intruders as Sister Alkava continues to pray at the statue of the Red Goddess. If the PCs remain in the lower level, they can deal with the skeletons without any other interference. But if any of the PCs step into the central portion of the sepulcher, the next layer of defense is activated.

Blood Zombies: When any of the PCs enter the central region of the sepulcher, read:

The churning blood in the nearest stone cauldron bubbles over and a head rises out of the crimson depths. Blood flows down its face and neck as dead eyes open wide. The rest of the body emerges as blood continues to run down its arms and chest. Then the blood zombie opens its mouth and screams.

The first round in which any of the PCs enter the sepulcher's center region, the blood zombie inside the nearest cauldron emerges. It screams a terrible, mournful wail, an indication that it realizes the fate that has befallen it. These four blood zombies were created from the bodies of some of the villagers who arrived as part of the first tribute, used to power the Blood Cauldrons and prepared in case Sister Alkava needed undead defenders. It shambles toward the nearest PC and attacks.

In subsequent rounds, Sister Alkava uses a bonus action each round to call forth another blood zombie. She does this each round until all four blood zombies have come into play. She can alternatively use a bonus action to activate the skeletons (two at a time) if the PCs didn't step into the lower level.

Sister Alkava: The entire sepulcher has been designed to augment and enhance Sister Alkava's power. She continues to pray before the statue of the Red Goddess until one or more of the PCs enters the central portion of the sepulcher. Then she rises and turns to face them. She never addresses the PCs directly. Instead, she carries on a conversation with the Red Goddess, a one-sided monologue in which she comments on the actions of the PCs, describes her own role in the events, and otherwise prays for guidance and support. Here are some samples of what she might say:

"Look how they storm about our holy sepulcher, Red Goddess."

"Red Goddess, grant me your blood and your power!"

"That one insults you, Holy Mother. Let me smite him for you."

"I think that one would be perfect as a meal for my blood pudding."

"Their blood isn't worthy to fill these cauldrons, Crimson Mother."

The Blood Cauldrons have been necromantically enchanted to increase Sister Alkava's power. Each Blood Cauldron provides Sister Alkava with the following benefits: +1 AC bonus, 25 temporary hit points, and 1 extra action each round. So, while all four cauldrons are active, Sister Alkava has a +4 bonus to AC, 100 temporary hit points, and 4 extra actions every round. (Damage always targets temporary hit points first, if they are available.)

Sister Alkava acts normally on an initiative count of 13. She can use her extra actions on initiative counts 20, 15, 10, and 5.

When the Red Sister uses an extra action, crimson energy rises out of one of the cauldrons and flows into her. She then releases that energy as either an extra move or attack action.

Destroying the Blood Cauldrons: If the PCs realize that the priestess draws power from the Blood Cauldrons, they can deny her some of that power by destroying the enchanted vessels.

Each Blood Cauldron has AC 10 and 20 hit points. When a cauldron is destroyed, Sister Alkava loses one point of bonus AC, 25 temporary hit points, and 1 extra action (starting with initiative count 20, then 15, then 10, and finally 5). If all the cauldrons are destroyed, she loses all the associated bonuses and benefits.

SISTER ALKAVA

Sister Alkava is a priestess of the Red Goddess and a necromancer of skill and power. She wears scale mail beneath her blood-stained robes and wields a +2 *mace of destruction*. Once completely loyal to the Elders of the Principality, her experiments with preserving and



empowering blood have made her hungry for even more power and glory. She hopes to achieve a level of power that will either make the Elders offer her a place of prestige in the Principality or force them to leave her alone. Regardless, there's no way she's going to let a group of foolish adventures interfere with her plans.

Sister Alkava

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)/+1 for each active cauldron

Hit Points 60 (10d8 + 10)/+25 temporary hit points for each active cauldron

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Insight +10, Medicine +10, Religion +7

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elven

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Channel Divinity: Touch of Death. When Sister Alkava hits a creature with a melee attack, she can use Channel Divinity to deal an extra 19 necrotic damage to the target.

Inescapable Destruction. Sister Alkava's ability to channel

negative energy is extremely potent. Necrotic damage dealt by her spells and Channel Divinity options ignores resistance to necrotic damage.

Spellcasting. Sister Alkava is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Sister Alkava has the following cleric/necromancer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, guidance, resistance, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, false life, ray of sickness, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, hold person, silence*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, dispel magic, ray of enfeeblement*

4th level (1 slot): *blight*

Reaper. When Sister Alkava casts a necromancy cantrip that normally only targets one creature, the spell can instead target two creatures within range and within 5 feet of each other.

ACTIONS

Mace of Destruction. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, plus an extra 7 (2d6) necrotic damage to living creatures. The mace deals necrotic damage to any wielder who doesn't have an evil alignment.

7: CONCLUSION

After defeating Sister Alkava and her minions, the PCs should return to the village and claim their reward. The village elders remain true to their word. They hand over the coffer filled with gems totaling 2,000 gp if the PCs bring back proof that Sister Alkava has been defeated, news regarding the fate of the village's young men and women, or if they return any of the rescued donors safely back to the village. The more victims from the second tribute they were able to save, the more grateful

the elders are toward the PCs. In addition, the PCs receive 100 bonus XP for each villager rescued from the Blood Vaults.

What happens next depends on the relationship the PCs have with either the Red Goddess or the Elders of the Principality. Do they destroy the Blood Vaults? Do they try to restore the site to gain favor with the priesthood? Or do they report Sister Alkava's activities to the Shroud-eaters in hopes of earning an additional reward from the ruling class of vampires?

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