

# THE PALACE OF BONES



RMH-08



*By Kat Kruger*

AN ADVENTURE FOR 6TH LEVEL CHARACTERS



# THE PALACE OF BONES

## *A Ravenloft: Mist Hunters Adventure*

The Urn of Dreams lies somewhere within the Palace of Bones, and you've been tasked with finding it. Along the way, you learn you aren't the only ones in pursuit of the elusive artifact. To have any hope of recovering the urn before your mysterious rival, you must discover the palace's secrets, and use them to your advantage.

The ninth adventure in the *Ravenloft: Mist Hunters* series of adventures.

An adventure for 6th-level characters.



CONTENT WARNING: nightmares, possession (loss of agency), gore (dismemberment), food (rot), abuse (stalking), death (execution, mention), confined spaces, oppression (slavery).

Reference the [Mist Hunters' Safety Kit](#) article and *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* for tips and tools on running a safe and fun game.

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# ADVENTURE PRIMER

*You tied your family to this twisted world and now one can't exist without the other.*

—Agatha, *WandaVision*

**T**his adventure can be played by **three to five 6th-level characters** and is optimized for **four 6th-level characters**.

*The Palace of Bones* occurs in I'Cath, a domain trapped in the dream of a Darklord.

## BACKGROUND

Continuously impressed by their accomplishments, **ALANIK RAY**, an investigator hired by the **ORDER OF GUARDIANS**, dispatches the heroes to **I'CATH**, a domain of dreams and the pursuit of unachievable perfection. The trail of clues found in **KARTAKASS**, **FALKOVNIA**, and **BAROVIA** has led them to the **URN OF DREAMS**—which Alanik believes can be found within a library in the **PALACE OF BONES**, the home of the domain's **DARKLORD**, **TSIEN CHIANG**.

The doors to the Palace of Bones lie open before them.

## OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over **two parts** and takes approximately **3 hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene. "Extending Play" sidebars in the adventure provide guidance on how to expand the adventure to occupy a roughly four-hour time slot. These estimations don't include time spent in pregame and postgame discussion:

**Call to Action: The Gates of Bones.** The characters arrive at the Palace of Bones to find the gates mysteriously open. Their view is impeded by a spirit screen protected by a *glyph of warding*.

**Part 1: The Palace of Bones.** Once inside, the characters must search the grounds for clues to the library's location before Tsieng Chiang returns at dawn. Not only are the characters in a race against time, but they quickly come to realize a competitor is also searching for the urn.

**Part 2: Shhh!** Entering the library, the characters are met by the collection's protector, the Curator. The construct must be dealt with in one way or another before the Urn of Dreams can be retrieved.



## STORY AWARDS

At certain points in the adventure, you may see this glyph along with an entry describing how the specified story award is earned or how it impacts the story. Ignore the entry if it refers to a story award none of the characters have. If it refers to a story award the characters just earned, the entry instead provides information for you and the players.

## CHARACTERS HOOKS

The adventure picks up immediately after the events of RMH-07 *The City of Dreams*. The characters find themselves at the gates of the Palace of Bones, having been tasked with finding the Urn of Dreams in the palace library.

## CLOISTERED SCHOLARS AND CITY WATCH

Characters with the cloistered scholar background receive preferential treatment at the library as a professional courtesy; they have advantage on Charisma checks made to interact with the Curator. However, because the library is a place of such importance, these characters are highly suspect to the jiangshi agents patrolling the palace—imposing disadvantage on Charisma checks made to interact with them. Characters with the city watch background easily notice the jiangshi watchtowers around the palace. These characters have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks when searching for Minister Suen and other jiangshi agents within the palace. Unfortunately, their presence spells trouble for the minister; imposing disadvantage on Charisma checks made to interact with jiangshi.

## I'CATHAN CHARACTERS

A character from I'Cath is someone who managed to escape from the control of the Darklord Tsieng Chiang, a perfectionist mastermind whose jiangshi agents carry out her work. Minister Suen, who leads the jiangshi, would find their escape unacceptable since all I'Cathan residents have the responsibility to strive for perfection within the city. Such a character faces exceptional scrutiny under his watch and is surely marked for death if discovered.





# CALL TO ACTION: THE GATES OF BONES

**Estimated Duration:** 10 minutes

The adventure begins exactly where RMH-07 The City of Dreams left off—with the characters standing before the slowly opening gates to the Palace of Bones.

The characters are in I'Cath, having been sent to locate the Urn of Dreams. After investigating the city, they spoke with the Darklord's daughters to gain more clues. After accomplishing their goal, they must escape the domain—a difficult task considering that the only way through the misty borders is by the Four Trees Gate—which is never found in the same place twice. Once there, the characters have a Mist talisman keyed to Dementlieu, a tarnished silver shrimp fork, that they can use to return to Alanik Ray—hopefully with the urn in their possession.

**Themes:** psychological horror

## I'CATH

**Darklord:** Tsien Chiang

**Hallmarks:** Endlessly changing labyrinth, inescapable dreamworld

When the inhabitants of I'Cath fall asleep, they enter an alternate version of the city they call home—a city dreamed into being by the domain's Darklord. Over time, these poor souls can't remember which version of I'Cath is real and which is the dream.

In the physical world, I'Cath is a twisted maze of row houses and windowless walls. It's also hauntingly quiet; most of the residents lie slumped against walls, in the street, or wherever they may have succumbed to sleep. These unfortunate souls are trapped in a collective dreamworld created by Chiang. Within this shared dream, they labor without end—striving to create their Darklord's impossible, perfect city. Jiangshi emerge from their tombs each night to reshape the city and hunt down those who've woken from the dream.

For more information about I'Cath, refer to *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

## CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each character a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and the reason they're here. Give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop people if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you, the DM, to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to the characters.

Award inspiration (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) once everyone's had a turn.

## PROMOTED!

Impressed by the characters' investigation in previous adventures (or by their reputation, if this is their first

*Ravenloft: Mist Hunters* adventure), Alanik promotes the characters to lead field operatives within the Ray Agency. While this means additional duties—such as searching for the urn—it also means opportunities for greater rewards and other possible benefits, firsts and foremost being the removal of the gp limit on nonmagical equipment that the characters have access to.

## OUTFITTING FOR THE INVESTIGATION

Before proceeding on this leg of their investigation, the characters decide what they brought with them on their journey:

**Mundane Equipment.** The Order of the Guardians has offered the characters access to its substantial resources to aid in their investigation. Each character has access to any mounts and nonmagical equipment from the *Player's Handbook*, as well as the material components for any spell they have prepared (or known for casters who don't prepare spells). Following the characters' promotion, the gp limit on these acquisitions has been removed. The characters are still bound to the normal rules regarding carrying capacity and, at your discretion, may find themselves in a situation that precludes being able to haul around too much—while their resources are great, the Order discourages frivolous requests.

**Magical Equipment.** As they adventure, the characters “unlock” magic items for later use. The group begins this adventure with one copy of each of these unlocked items and then decides who'll use them. At the end of the adventure, each item is returned to the character who brought it with them. Magic items that are destroyed or that lose their magic, such as a quaffed *potion of healing* or an exploded *horn of blasting*, however, are removed from the character's investigation journal and are no longer unlocked; the character must find another one if they want to use it in a later adventure. The character who brought an unlocked item to the table has ultimate discretion in who gets to use it. They should, however, note that their investigations require teamwork and cooperation.

## EXAMPLE: OUTFITTING FOR INVESTIGATION

Peter's character, Gregov the Fighter, is preparing for their next adventure. He requisitions a greatsword, a longbow and some arrows, and a suit of plate armor. He's also heard rumors of werewolves, so he asks for a silvered dagger . . . just in case. In his previous adventures, Gregov unlocked a *horn of blasting* and a *potion of healing*. The group decides who should carry the horn and the potion. At the end of the adventure, both items are returned to Gregov. However, if a character uses the potion, or if the *horn of blasting* explodes during the adventure, Peter crosses it off the investigation journal where it was unlocked.



## ORDER OF THE GUARDIANS RING

Characters with this magical ring (more information can be found in the [Mist Hunters Safety Kit](#) article) can obtain another dose of the anti-charm tonic from Alanik—provided the last dose they obtained has been used.

## THE BAGMAN'S GAMBIT

In addition to their own equipment, the characters were lent the use of a magical container called *the Bagman's Gambit* (handout 1). This item is returned upon returning to Dementlieu.

## ENTERING THE PALACE

The palace wall stands high before you, an imposing fortification with a decorated pavilion above. Five white gates glint in the moonlight, constructed of polished bone. The archway of the central gate is ornately engraved. A slow creak breaks the eerie silence.

All five gates swing open as the characters approach. The gate is divided into two levels: the fortress like base structure, and the more elaborate, palatial upper level, all made of bone. The upper-level pavilions have unobstructed views of the city. The ground level has five entrances, the central one of which is reserved exclusively for the Darklord's use and is decorated in a flame motif.

A character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices well-worn footpaths in all but the central passage, indicating that the other entrances are more heavily trafficked. In fact, the central passage is trapped.

The bone gates close behind the characters after the last one passes through.

### CENTRAL PASSAGE TRAP

When a creature other than Tsien Chiang or her daughters moves 15 feet into the 30-foot-long corridor, they trigger the *glyph of warding* engraved on the ceiling. The glyph requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to spot. Any creature that isn't specifically investigating the ceiling has disadvantage on the check. The glyph contains a *phantasmal force* spell (save DC 15) that creates an illusion of a collapsing roof made of bones. A creature who fails the saving throw is knocked prone and restrained (escape DC 15) under the perceived weight of the bones. At the start of its turn, a creature restrained in this way takes 3 (1d6) psychic damage—which it perceives as bludgeoning damage.

### THE GATES OF BONES

A 50-foot-wide, 15-foot-tall wall of bone blocks the characters' view upon reaching the end of the corridor. The wall is detailed in exquisitely carved mountains with a sleeping dragon nestled between them. The wall is trapped. A character notices a haunted emanation coming from the wall with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher. Regardless of whether they interact with the wall or not, characters may reach the inner court by navigating around the wall to the east or west.



### SLEEPING DRAGON TRAP

This haunted trap triggers when a creature other than Tsien Chiang or her allies approaches within 5 feet of the wall. The trap's emanation manifests as a Gargantuan ghostly gold dragon. When the dragon appears, any creature that can see it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of it for 1 minute. If a frightened creature ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to the dragon, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Each creature within a 20-foot-radius sphere (use a point along the wall 5 feet from the triggering character) must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The dragon doesn't pursue the characters and disappears after 1 minute.



# PART 1: THE PALACE OF BONES

**Estimated Duration:** 2 hours

The characters must explore the Palace of Bones in order to locate the library. If they treated peacefully with Tsien Wai-Ching, Darklord Tsien Chiang's daughter, they already have a lead on where the Urn of Dreams might be located. They soon learn, however, that they aren't the only ones in pursuit of the mysterious artifact.

**Themes:** Surprises around corners, dark shadows, "What was that?"

## THE INNER COURT

This area can be accessed via the east and west walkways around the entrance screen.

The palace's inner court is enclosed on all sides by a fortified wall made of bones. Watchtowers loom in darkened corners. A pale bridge leads over a shimmering moat toward the palatial halls. The elaborate architecture is hauntingly beautiful, yet ancient and unmaintained.

The palace walls and supports are built from the bones of those who died as a result of the Darklord's harsh governance over her homeland. A 20-foot-high wall encloses the inner court. Within the walls are rooms that can be accessed by doors leading from the inner court or connected by hallways. Pavilions top the watchtowers on each of the four corners. At the center of the court, wide steps lead up to a two-story building with arched bridges that connect the upper level to smaller buildings to the east and west.

## AREA FEATURES

Although the palace grounds retain some of their former splendor, everything has deteriorated with age. The blue-tiled curved roofs were once colorfully glazed but are now dull and faded. Ornamental columns at entryways are carved with exquisite floral designs now worn by time. The following features are common throughout the palace:

**Ceilings.** Unless specified otherwise, ceilings in the palace interior and fortification walls are 8 feet high in corridors and 12 feet high in rooms.

**Lighting.** All areas of the palace are unlit unless noted otherwise.

**Staircases.** Stairs in the palace are made of bone. The skulls of dead enemies fill niches along the walls of each staircase.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The first time the characters enter an area of the palace that isn't otherwise occupied, roll a d10. On a 1, a random

encounter occurs. To determine what the characters encounter, consult the Random Encounters table below.

### RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d8	Description
1	Many ghosts haunt the palace. This particular <b>ghost</b> was executed by Minister Suen and is searching for a loved one.
2	A horror trinket (see <i>Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft</i> ).
3	Minister Suen, a <b>jiangshi</b> , is heading out of the palace to deliver blueprints to the jiangshi agents who build Chiang's perfect city. (See "Dramatis Personae.")
4	2d6 <b>crawling claws</b> skitter around the area. One wears a signet ring belonging to a wealthy former resident of l'Cath.
5	1d4 l'Cathan <b>commoners</b> search for rations and a means of escape while hiding from jiangshi.
6	A wizard's <b>rat</b> familiar attempts to hide in a character's backpack. It makes a Dexterity (Stealth) check contested by the character's passive Wisdom (Perception) score. If the rat loses the contest, the character sees the rat crawl into the backpack. If the rat wins the contest, it waits until the character takes a short or long rest before stealing a magic item and scurrying away.
7	A scrap of ghost hair silk.
8	See "Competing Interests, below."

## COMPETING INTERESTS

As the characters explore the palace, they're occasionally made aware of a presence lurking nearby. Roll a d10 on the Competing Interests table and read the descriptive text aloud.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

d10	Description
1	You catch a glimpse of a humanoid silhouette.
2	The sound of footsteps patter on a tiled roof nearby.
3	You have an uncanny feeling you're being watched.
4	A set of footprints on the ground ends abruptly.
5	An unseen presence sneezes nearby.
6	Something moves past you, but you don't see it.
7	An unknown shadow is cast on the floor, but it disappears just as quickly as you see it.
8	The character closest to the exit feels a breath against their skin.
9	You hear someone stumble.
10	The sound of furniture scraping across the floor resounds briefly.



The same entity that possessed Radaga and Sheyleth now controls **Vaira**, a resident of I’Cath, and is also searching for the Urn of Dreams. For every 40 minutes the characters explore the palace, Vaira makes a DC 16 Strength (Acrobatics) check, a DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check, and a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Keep track of how many successes and failures Vaira accumulates. Vaira’s number of successes determines who retrieves the Urn of Dreams during part 2 (see the Vaira’s Search table, below). If Vaira accumulates five failures, they cause too much of a disturbance searching the palace. Tsien Chiang (a **mage**) wakes up and the characters earn the The Sleeper has Awoken story award. Add one failure to Vaira’s total whenever the characters trigger a trap in the palace.



## THE SLEEPER HAS AWOKEN

You’ve awoken Tsien Chiang, the Darklord of I’Cath.

### VAIRA’S SEARCH

Successes	Outcome
0–3	The characters beat Vaira to the urn.
4–6	The characters and Vaira arrive simultaneously.
7+	Vaira beats the characters to the urn.

### DON’T AWAKEN THE SLEEPER

While exploring the palace, there’s a possibility the characters might accidentally awaken Tsien Chiang. Should this happen, she dispatches **jiangshi** to investigate and to guard the watchtowers.

**Note:** If any character has the **Family, Reunited** story award from RMH-07 *The City of Dreams*, Tsien Chiang woke before the characters arrived at the palace and is in the city itself, attempting to quell the chaos following the collapse of her dream.

## PALACE EXTERIOR LOCATIONS

The palace exterior has the following locations:

### 1. SERVANTS’ ROOM

The north-facing room is located by the eastern access point to the inner court. The remains of a half dozen beds are crammed into a plainly furnished room which contains nothing of value.

### 2. WATCHTOWERS

Four 30-foot-tall watchtowers overlook the inner court, one on each corner of the fortification wall.

**Creature Information.** Although unoccupied when the characters arrive, Tsien Chiang dispatches one **jiangshi** to guard to each tower if she’s awoken, to oversee the inner court and deal with intruders. Other jiangshi patrol the grounds, but are only encountered when specified within the adventure. The guards work in 12-hour shifts, retreating to the crypts below the mausoleum during the day. A creature stationed in a watchtower has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to notice activity in the inner court. Each watchtower can be accessed by a staircase from the first floor.

### 3. BRIDGE OF ABUNDANCE

An arched bridge crosses a 40-foot-wide moat filled with murky, 15-foot-deep water. Drainpipes from the palace walls fill the moat, passing under the 2-foot-tall wall that lines it. Gemstones litter the bottom of the moat—invisible from above the surface, but a character probing the moat with a pole or jumping in and groping through the muck can find them with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Any character who splashes around in the moat attracts the attention of carnivorous bone-white fish (six **swarms of quippers**).

### 4. STOREHOUSE AND KITCHEN

The deserted palace storehouse is attached to the kitchen by an open archway, through which drifts the sickeningly



sweet stench of decay. Clay pots and metal cauldrons filled with moldering, unidentifiable food lay abandoned around the room alongside barrels and crates filled with rotted provisions such as rice, millet, salted eggs, fruits, and vegetables. Characters who move objects around to search them must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check or their noisy activity attracts the attention of Minister Suen (a **jiangshi**) in area 5 (unless he has left the palace).

### 5. SECRETARIAT'S OFFICE

The doors to this office are ajar; within the rustling of papers can be heard. A character who makes a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check is able to peer into the room unnoticed and sees that it is kept in perfect order.

**Creature Information.** Minister Suen (a **jiangshi**) sits at a black-lacquered writing desk bent over drawings and blueprints; an inkstone, an inkstick, and a brush at his side.

If undisturbed, he eventually gathers the documents and leaves the palace. Otherwise, if the characters are detected, they must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) group check to convince him that their presence is of no concern. The minister is privy to many of Chiang's machinations, but he doesn't know the Urn of Dreams' purpose. He also knows the library's general location and that it's protected from divination magic.

#### MINISTER SUEN

##### *Jiangshi bureaucrat*

Minister Suen (SOO-en) has served Tsien Chiang faithfully since she assumed control of I'Cath, overseeing the orders for the execution of invaders and the insurrectionists that rebelled against Chiang's control. The minister now oversees I'Cath's reconstruction based on the Darklord's ever-changing plans.

**What They Want.** The minister wants to retain his position of power at Chiang's side, as her chief advisor.

**Official Business.** Suen is a stoic executor of Chiang's vision who values orderly conduct and obedience to the Darklord's will. He is ruthless toward those who stand in the way of these plans. Additionally, anyone within 10 feet of him can hear the wails of those he has executed in Chiang's name.

### 6. SCHOLAR'S GARDEN

This garden fills the entire area behind the palace halls. A small reflective pool in the center is surrounded by overgrown foliage and weeds. The garden features peony, chrysanthemum, plum, rose, bamboo, almond, peach, and persimmon.

An intricately carved white bench sits by the pool with an open book—entitled *Four Trees*—lying face down on it. If the characters treated the daughters with kindness in RMH-07 *The City of Dreams*, Man-Yi has left a handwritten note in the book that reads “Look to the stars.” From the garden, the characters have a full view of view the rear of the palace. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the windows on the back of the upper floor are shuttered. The window frames are decorated in constellation motifs.

### 7. MAUSOLEUM

The mausoleum is located near the garden within the fortification wall. Inside, a dust-covered statue stands on the wall opposite the entrance. Several incense burner lanterns are knocked over on the floor.

A character who inspects the statue and makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that it's built atop hidden stone rollers and can be moved to the side. A subsequent successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check reveals a 5-foot-square hole in the floor with a steep staircase that leads down to a crypt roughly the size of the inner court. Two stone pillars engraved with “Loyalty rewarded eternally, likewise must treachery be punished” mark the entrance to the crypt. The crypt houses hundreds of the Darklord's former soldiers—each represented by a tomb effigy that stands as if awaiting a command.

The crypt is suffused with chaotic magic. Any spell cast within the crypt has no effect and triggers a Wild Magic Surge (see the Sorcerer in the *Player's Handbook*).

**Creature Information.** One of the statues—the general of the army that once invaded I'Cath—is now a stone cursed. The stone cursed doesn't leave the crypt and can't move beyond the stone pillars that mark its entrance.

A character who destroys the stone cursed or otherwise rids it of its curse is, themselves, cursed:

**Curse of Moments.** At the start of combat, the cursed creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or, for 1 minute, it can't use reactions, its speed is halved, and it can't make more than one attack on its turn. In addition, the creature can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

The curse can be ended by performing an act of loyalty to the Darklord Tsien Chiang or with a *remove curse* spell.

## THE PALACE HALLS

The palace halls stand in the center of the inner court.

Wide steps lead up to the main palace hall where two worn statues of animals crouch by the columned entrance. At the top of the steps, a sundial stands between two bronze cauldrons. Above, two wings are attached to the second story by way of arched bridges.

The statues are guardian animals of some sort but are too worn by age to be identifiable. The palace has two visible wings, each accessible by exterior bridges. The characters may enter the palace halls through the open archways at each of the cardinal directions. To do so, they must walk up a wide set of steps that surrounds the main building. A walkway surrounds each of the three buildings with a guardrail. The cauldrons are filled with rainwater.

Inside, the grimly beautiful palace displays its splendor with elaborate architecture and bone murals, while revealing its neglect with disrepair and emptiness. Areas 1, 2, and 3 are on the first floor while the hidden library and areas 4, 5, and 6 are on the second floor.



## PALACE INTERIOR LOCATIONS

The palace interior has the following locations:

### 1. FRONT HALL

This ceremonial hall once served as the main area for hosting foreign ambassadors during diplomatic exchanges. Faded and deteriorating scrolls hang from the walls.

**Treasure.** If the characters investigate the scrolls, they find one that they identify as a *spell scroll of haste*.

### 2. MIDDLE HALL

ICath was once a radiant center of learning and art, and the performance hall held many concerts. This hall is open to the gallery above (area 4) with staircases leading up from the west and east. An ancient zither is placed atop a plinth in the center of the room; it's trapped. A character notices a haunted emanation coming from the instrument with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher.

**Nightmare Trap.** When a character approaches within 20 feet of the zither, the sound of distant, mournful music plays for 1 minute. A moment after the music starts, illusory jiangshi block the exits. Any creature that enters or starts its turn within 20 feet of the zither must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or take on the appearance of a jiangshi and be forced to dance for 1 minute (per the *seeming* and *Otto's irresistible dance* spells respectively). If either effect ends before the song finishes, the illusory jiangshi hiss menacingly. If a creature's saving throw to resist the trap or to stop dancing is successful, the creature is immune to the haunted trap for the next 24 hours.

While the music plays, creatures outside the haunted trap's area can use an action to inspect a target affected by the trap and make an DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, it becomes aware that the target is disguised. When the zither stops playing, all creatures affected by the haunted trap are freed from its effects and the illusory jiangshi disappear.

### 3. REAR HALL

Tsien Chiang once entertained loyal guests in this banquet hall, throwing lavish feasts and dances with her daughters. These banquets occurred during a time when her empire flourished under almost perfect conditions.

The hall hasn't seen use in recent times and stands in a state of abandonment. Two large ebony tables with elaborately carved dining chairs stand in the middle of the room. The red-and-gold-lacquered walls are chipped and covered in grime. Porcelainware wrought in animal shapes and lavish utensils of exquisitely crafted bronzeware can be found in wooden cases in a nearby bureau.

### 4. GALLERY

This area features art collected during Tsien Chiang's rule: painted urns, ceremonial swords, and paintings—among which are four portraits of the Darklord's daughters. Each has an unlit lantern made of fine wood set overhead, decorated with spun silk and glass with colored drawings or patterns. The portraits are situated as follows:

- Tsien Lei-An's portrait hangs on the northern wall.
- Tsien Man-Yi's portrait hangs on the eastern wall.
- Tsien Wai-Ching's portrait hangs on the southern wall.
- Tsien Seu-Mei's portrait hangs on the western wall.

On the northern wall of the gallery is a scroll with a poem entitled *Daughters of Emptiness*. It reads as follows:

Four seasons move uninterrupted,  
Until another year comes to an end.  
Winter brings cold winds from the north,  
Crying plaintively through the mountains.  
Spring thaws the snow into the earth,  
Bringing forth the beauty of fresh flowers.  
Summer heat burns brightly through midyear,  
While autumn ushers in cool days.  
Then turn to winter once again.  
O light the way to a future unknown.

Additionally, the northern wall of the gallery is windowless. Characters who noticed the shuttered second-story windows from the garden below, may wish to investigate further. On closer inspection, the walkway around the building leads to the rear of the palace, where false windows mark a hidden room. The room is accessible by a secret door in area 4a.

### 4A. SECRET DOOR

The poem in the gallery is a puzzle. Following the words of the riddle, players should light the lanterns in front of the portraits in this order:

**Winter:** Tsien Lei-An is dressed in furs with a mountain in the background.

**Spring:** Tsien Wai-Ching is seated in the scholar's garden, by the pool surrounded by flowers.

**Summer:** Tsien Man-Yi poses with a parasol to protect against the summer sun.

**Autumn:** Tsien Seu-Mei stands on the Bridge of Abundance feeding fish in a moat where red and yellow leaves float.

Lighting the lanterns in this order opens a secret door in the northern wall that leads to the library in part 2. If your players are having trouble solving the riddle, consider alluding to the importance of the weather in the poem and that its reference to "lighting the way" may have some greater meaning. If the characters light the lanterns in the wrong order, two **ghosts** appear—likely to attack the characters. If the characters are able to placate the vengeful spirits, the ghosts have information about the library that the characters may find useful:

- The library is protected against divination magic from the outside.
- To navigate the stacks, a character must know where they want to go.
- A guardian protects the library.
- The library is much larger than it appears from the outside.

**Treasure.** When the secret door opens, the characters discover a *wǎn of fiery spirits*.

### 5. WESTERN WING

In this wing of the palace, characters find the residences of each of the Darklord's four daughters.



### 5A. TSIEN LEI-AN'S ROOM

Many fine but moth-eaten clothes and tarnished accessories can be found in this room.

### 5B. TSIEN MAN-YI'S ROOM

Beautiful vases adorn the room, each filled with dead flowers from the gardens.

### 5C. TSIEN SEU-MEI'S ROOM

This room is decorated with fish motifs.

### 5D. TSIEN WAI-CHING'S ROOM

Several toys can be found in this room as if abandoned in the middle of play.

## 6. EASTERN WING

The bridge that connects to the palace's eastern wing leads to Tsien Chiang's residences. A statue of a snarling hell hound rests on the railing in the center of the bridge. The statue is trapped. If the characters cross the bridge, they find the doors to this wing locked by powerful magic beyond their ken. A character notices a haunted emanation coming from the statue with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 16 or higher.

**Vermilion Hell Hound Trap.** When a character approaches within 10 feet of the hell hound statue, the trap triggers—filling the area with the sounds of distant snarling and a rush of warm air. Any creature within 10 feet of the statue must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for 1 minute. While charmed in this way, the creature is incapacitated—content to stare into the moat below—until it takes damage, or another creature uses an action to shake it. If the creature remains charmed for the full minute, it is subjected to the *magic jar* spell—their soul entering the statue and being replaced by the spirit of an angry fiend (save DC 15). Aside from *dispel magic*, the spell ends early if the statue is destroyed. The statue has AC 17, 15 hit points, resistance to piercing and slashing damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.



## TO SLEEP IS TO DREAM

As a bonus action, Tsien Chiang (a **mage**) causes a creature with this story award that she can see to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it falls unconscious for 1 minute. Another creature can awaken the creature by using an action. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.





## PART 2: SHHH!

**Estimated Duration:** 1 hour

The characters find their way to the library. There, they find a mysterious creature—the library’s curator. Within the library, they find the urn and convince the Curator (through persuasion, guile, or combat) to release it into their custody. Hopefully, their competition hasn’t gotten to it first!

**Themes:** labyrinth, solving a mystery

### THE LIBRARY

Once the characters uncover the library, they may enter without obstruction.

Sturdy, floor-to-ceiling shelves made of opalescent stone stretch as far as the eye can see. Row upon row of reading materials fill an expansive space.

Only Tsien Chiang’s library sees regular use within the palace. The Darklord spends her days here, drawing up new plans for her city and analyzing mysterious forces and mystical fortunes in pursuit of the ultimate harmonious design. Tsien Chiang’s library in the Palace of Bones holds secrets about the border between dreams and reality. The characters must find the urn and the information they need to leave the domain before Tsien Chiang returns at dawn.

### AREA FEATURES

Tsien Chiang built the library in pursuit of knowledge that could help her create the perfect city. It has the following features:

**Magical Maze.** After I’Cath was pulled into the Mists the library was expanded from the smaller, existing one.

The magic the Darklord used to create the library affects perceptions of reality for all intruders within its walls. Though divination magic works normally within the library, divination can’t be used outside the library to discover any creature, object, or location within it.

**Bigger on the Inside.** Much like I’Cath itself, the library interior continually expands as content is added to it. Although the library takes up a small portion of the palace’s upper level, the magic stretches it out over many floors and rooms.

**Classification System.** The library has a unique classification system that relies on a visitor to determine the topic they wish to locate. Whenever a character searches for a specific location or topic in the library, they must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom check to find that location. On a failure, the character takes a wrong turn and must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to avoid waking the Curator.

### CREATURE INFORMATION

The Curator (an **iron golem**) mills about the library, reading books about dreams and dream interpretation. Another, more malevolent creature may be lurking around based on the characters’ progress through the palace—**Vaira** (see “The Possessed Seeker”).

While the characters search for the Urn of Dreams, they must contend with the Curator—who is wholly determined that the characters shouldn’t be there. The Curator wakes when an intruder takes a wrong turn and fails a Dexterity saving throw. At that point, the Curator searches the stacks for the intruders, who must make a Dexterity (Stealth) group check contested by the Curator’s Wisdom (Perception) check.

Treasure. If destroyed, one of the iron golem’s eyes is a magical gem. If crushed in the hand, the gem acts as a *potion of stone giant strength*.

### THE POSSESSED SEEKER

As detailed in part 1, a competitor has also been searching for the Urn of Dreams, using **Vaira**, a possessed I’Cathan commoner. Depending on the result of Vaira’s rolls (see “Competing Interests”), the following outcomes are possible:

### VAIRA’S SEARCH

Successes	Outcome
0–3	The characters beat Vaira to the urn.
4–6	The characters and Vaira arrive simultaneously.
7+	Vaira beats the characters to the urn.

### LIBRARY LOCATIONS

The library has the following locations:

#### 1. THE STACKS

Tsien Chiang has assembled an impressive library and has acquired books covering a broad range of subjects. It contains over one thousand books, quartos, and manuscripts covering the history of I’Cath, illusion and transmutation magic, war, art, and more.

If the characters search for Tsien Chiang’s study and succeed on their Wisdom check (see “Classification System”) they find an area of the library where a lantern enchanted with a *continual flame* spell hangs above a rosewood table. Intruding into this area alerts the Curator (an iron golem), who confronts any trespassers. Searching the table, characters find another poem on a sheaf of paper with an image of an urn in the corner. It reads as follows:

The dragon’s heart breaks  
For the ghosts who stand in ruins  
Wishing on three stars.



As the characters explore the library, they may cross paths with the possessed seeker, **Vaira**, if they haven't already fled with the urn. Vaira pretends to be a librarian and greets the characters cautiously. While the characters are still seeking the urn, Vaira attempts to glean information about the object from them including what they know about its whereabouts. If Vaira's ruse is discovered, they flee until the urn is discovered, at which point, they attempt to wrest the urn from the characters.

## 2. LIBRARY VAULT

If the characters can convince the Curator to reveal the urn's location, they send the characters to the library vault. As a guardian of the library, the Curator doesn't know how to access the urn. If the characters fail to convince the Curator, they must continue to search for clues to the urn's whereabouts, which they can find in the Darklord's study or by outwitting Vaira.

The vault is a 30-foot-square room with a mirror in each corner and a *driftglobe* in the middle. On the floor are stone tiles, some of which have constellations etched on them.

**Constellations.** The constellation runes in room are as follows: dragon, basket, plough, ox, ancient ramparts, net, three stars, well, ghosts, chariot.

**Secret Door.** Following the poem found in "1. The Stacks," the players must turn the mirrors to light the runes in the correct order with the *driftglobe*. Once lit, the runes glow and a secret door opens in the floor revealing the Urn of Dreams. The correct order to light the runes is: dragon, ghosts, ancient ramparts, three stars.

To escape from the palace undetected by the Darklord, the characters must stash the urn in *the Bagman's Gambit*.

## WRAP-UP: THE FOUR TREES GATE

If the characters defeat Vaira, they discover that Vaira, like the ranger Sheylyth in RMH-06 *Amber Reclamation* and Radaga, had been possessed by forces unknown (the same entity in fact). If captured, the entity ends its possession, restoring Vaira's mind. They recall nothing of their possession but the word "Valachan."

If Vaira escapes with the urn, the Curator relates that they heard Vaira speaking to herself. The only thing of note that Vaira mentioned was the word "Valachan." If Vaira escapes with the urn, the characters earn the story award *The Urn is Ours!*

In either case, the characters are now faced with the task of finding a way out of I'Cath. Always reluctant to let her subjects escape her clutches, the Darklord keeps the misty borders of I'Cath closed at all times. The only way out of the city is the Four Trees Gate. The Curator knows of the gate, but not where it is. Search as the characters may, the only souls who know where the gate can be found are Tsien Chiang's daughters. Assuming that the characters were kind to them earlier, they happily provide the characters with the gate's location.



## THE URN IS OURS!

You and your companions reclaimed the Urn of Dreams from the library.

## INVESTIGATION JOURNAL

Provide each player with a copy of the Investigation Journal (handout 2). Before the session is over, each player must choose which of the items found during the adventure they'd like to keep and line out others.





# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

## MINSTER SUEN

*Jiangshi bureaucrat*

Minister Suen (SOO-en) has served Tsien Chiang faithfully since she assumed control of I'Cath, overseeing the orders for the execution of invaders and the insurrectionists that rebelled against Chiang's control. The minister now oversees I'Cath's reconstruction based on the Darklord's ever-changing plans.

**What They Want.** The minister wants to retain his position of power at Chiang's side, as her chief advisor.

**Unliving Majordomo.** Suen is a stoic executor of Chiang's vision who values orderly conduct and obedience to the Darklord's will. He is ruthless toward those who stand in the way of these plans. Additionally, anyone within 10 feet of him can hear the wails of those he has executed in Chiang's name.

## THE CURATOR

*Construct librarian*

The Curator was created by Tsien Chiang to protect the ever-expanding library and has guarded the stacks since the Darklord magically enhanced the library.

**What They Want.** During its time protecting the stacks, the Curator has developed an interest in dreams because they are themselves incapable of dreaming.

**Bookish Brute.** The Curator has knowledge of all parts of the library and is concerned with the preservation of the knowledge contained within. Any attempt to destroy books or other information inside the library is met with brute force.

## TSIEN CHIANG

*Darklord of I'Cath*

Tsien Chiang rules over a divided domain: a blighted waking city and a radiant, beautiful city that exists only in her dreams. She doesn't suffer dissent, and is quick to quell disobedience through the jiangshi that root out the waking residents in attempts to return them to their sleep where they serve their Darklord in her pursuit of perfection.

**What They Want.** Tsien Chiang wishes to see that every plan is executed to perfection.

**Always Renovating.** Each evening, Tsien Chiang dispenses orders for her underlings—and is always disappointed when the following night arrives.





# CREATURE STATISTICS

## COMMONER

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Alignment

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 4 (1d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

### ACTIONS

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

## CRAWLING CLAW

Tiny Undead, Typically Neutral Evil

**Armor Class** 12  
**Hit Points** 2 (1d4)  
**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Damage Immunities** poison  
**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned  
**Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10  
**Languages** understands Common but can't speak  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Turn Immunity.** The claw is immune to effects that turn Undead.

### ACTIONS

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning or slashing damage (claw's choice).

## GHOST

Medium Undead, Any Alignment

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

**Ethereal Sight.** The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

**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 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

**Etherealness.** The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

**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 × 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 Horrifying 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.

**Possession (Recharge 6).** One Humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn Undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.



## IRON GOLEM

Large Construct, Unaligned

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 210 (20d10 + 100)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +6

**Fire Absorption.** When the golem is subjected to fire damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

**Immutable Form.** The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

### ACTIONS

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

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

**Sword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 23 (3d10 + 7) slashing damage.

**Poison Breath (Recharge 6).** The golem exhales poisonous gas in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## JIANGSHI

Medium Undead, Typically Lawful Evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 119 (14d8 + 56)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	3 (-4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Con +8, Int +7, Wis +6, Cha +5

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** any languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +4

**Jiangshi Weaknesses.** The jiangshi has the following flaws:

**Fear of Its Own Reflection.** If the jiangshi sees its own reflection, it immediately uses its reaction, if available, to move as far away from the reflection as possible.

**Susceptible to Holy Symbols.** While the jiangshi is wearing or touching a holy symbol, it automatically fails saving throws against effects that turn Undead.

**Unusual Nature.** The jiangshi doesn't require air.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The jiangshi makes three Slam attacks and uses Consume Energy.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Consume Energy.** The jiangshi draws energy from a creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The jiangshi regains hit points equal to the amount of necrotic damage dealt. After regaining hit points from this action, the jiangshi gains the following benefits for 7 days: its walking speed increases to 40 feet, and it gains a flying speed equal to its walking speed and can hover.

A Humanoid slain by this necrotic damage rises as a wight (see its entry in the *Monster Manual*) at the end of the jiangshi's turn. The wight acts immediately after the jiangshi in the initiative order. If this wight slays a Humanoid with its Life Drain, the wight transforms into a jiangshi 5 days later.

**Change Shape.** The jiangshi polymorphs into a Beast, a Humanoid, or an Undead that is Medium or Small or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the jiangshi's choice). It reverts to its true form if it dies.



## MAGE

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Alignment

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)  
**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +4  
**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6  
**Senses** passive Perception 11  
**Languages** any four languages  
**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*  
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*  
2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*  
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*  
4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*  
5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## RAT

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 1 (1d4 - 1)  
**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Keen Smell.** The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

## STONE CURSED

Medium Construct, Typically Lawful Evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 19 (3d8 + 4)  
**Speed** 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning  
**Damage Immunities** poison  
**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, petrified, poisoned  
**Senses** passive Perception 9  
**Languages** the languages it knew in life  
**Challenge** 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Cunning Opportunist.** The stone cursed has advantage on the attack rolls of opportunity attacks.

**False Appearance.** While the stone cursed remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal statue.

### ACTIONS

**Petrifying Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage, or 14 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage if the attack roll had advantage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, or it begins to turn to stone and is restrained until the end of its next turn, when it must repeat the saving throw. The effect ends if the second save is successful; otherwise the target is petrified for 24 hours.

## SWARM OF QUIPPERS

Medium Swarm of Tiny Beasts, Unaligned

**Armor Class** 13  
**Hit Points** 28 (8d8 - 8)  
**Speed** 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing  
**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Blood Frenzy.** The swarm has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**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 maggot. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

**Water Breathing.** The swarm can breathe only underwater.

### ACTIONS

**Bites.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.



# VAIRA

Medium Humanoid (Elf), Neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (17 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 104 (16d8 + 32)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Dex +8, Con +6

**Damage Immunities** necrotic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion

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

**Languages** Common, Elvish

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +4

**Burden of Time.** Beasts and Humanoids, other than shadar-kai, have disadvantage on saving throws while within 10 feet of Vaira.

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

**Innate Spellcasting.** Vaira's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *arcane eye*, *mage armor*, *speak with dead*  
1/day each: *arcane gate*, *bane*, *compulsion*, *confusion*, *true seeing*

**Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** If Vaira fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Spellcasting.** Vaira is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She regains her expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. She knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch* (3d8 damage), *eldritch blast* (3 beams, +4 bonus to each damage roll), *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*

1st–5th level (3 5th-level slots): *armor of Agathys*, *blight*, *contact other plane*, *darkness*, *dream*, *fear*, *hypnotic pattern*, *invisibility*, *major image*, *vampiric touch*, *witch bolt*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Vaira makes two spear attacks and casts one spell that takes 1 action to cast.

**Shadow Spear.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands, plus 26 (4d12) necrotic damage.

## REACTIONS

**Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** When Vaira takes damage, she turns invisible and remains so until the start of her next turn or until she attacks or casts a spell.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Vaira can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Vaira regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Attack.** Vaira makes one attack.

**Misty Escape (Costs 2 Actions).** Vaira, along with any objects she is wearing or carrying, teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space she can see. Each creature within 5 feet of Vaira before she teleports takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.

**Shadow Strike (Costs 3 Actions).** Vaira makes one Shadow Spear attack. After the attack hits or misses, Vaira can teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space she can see.



## VENOM TROLL

Large Giant, Typically Chaotic Evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 94 (9d10 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Giant

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +3

**Keen Smell.** The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Poison Splash.** When the troll takes damage of any type but psychic, each creature within 5 feet of the troll takes 9 (2d8) poison damage.

**Regeneration.** The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of each of its turns. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage, and the creature is poisoned until the start of the troll's next turn.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage.

**Venom Spray (Recharge 6).** The troll slices itself with a claw, releasing a spray of poison in a 15-foot cube. The troll takes 7 (2d6) slashing damage (this damage can't be reduced in any way). Each creature in the area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 18 (4d8) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned. A poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.





# HANDOUT 1: BAGMAN'S GAMBIT

## THE BAGMAN'S GAMBIT

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*Wondrous item, rare*

This backpack has a central pouch and two side pouches, each of which is an extradimensional space. Each side pouch can hold up to 20 pounds of material, not exceeding a volume of 2 cubic feet. The large central pouch can hold up to 8 cubic feet or 80 pounds of material. The backpack always weighs 5 pounds, regardless of its contents.

Placing an object in the haversack follows the normal rules for interacting with objects. Retrieving an item from the haversack requires you to use an action. When you reach into the haversack for a specific item, the item is always magically on top.

The haversack has a few limitations. If it is overloaded, or if a sharp object pierces it or tears it, the haversack ruptures and is destroyed. If the haversack is destroyed, its contents are lost forever, although an artifact always turns up again somewhere. If the haversack is turned inside out, its contents spill forth, unharmed, and the haversack must be put right before it can be used again. If a breathing creature is placed within the haversack, the creature can survive for up to 10 minutes, after which time it begins to suffocate.

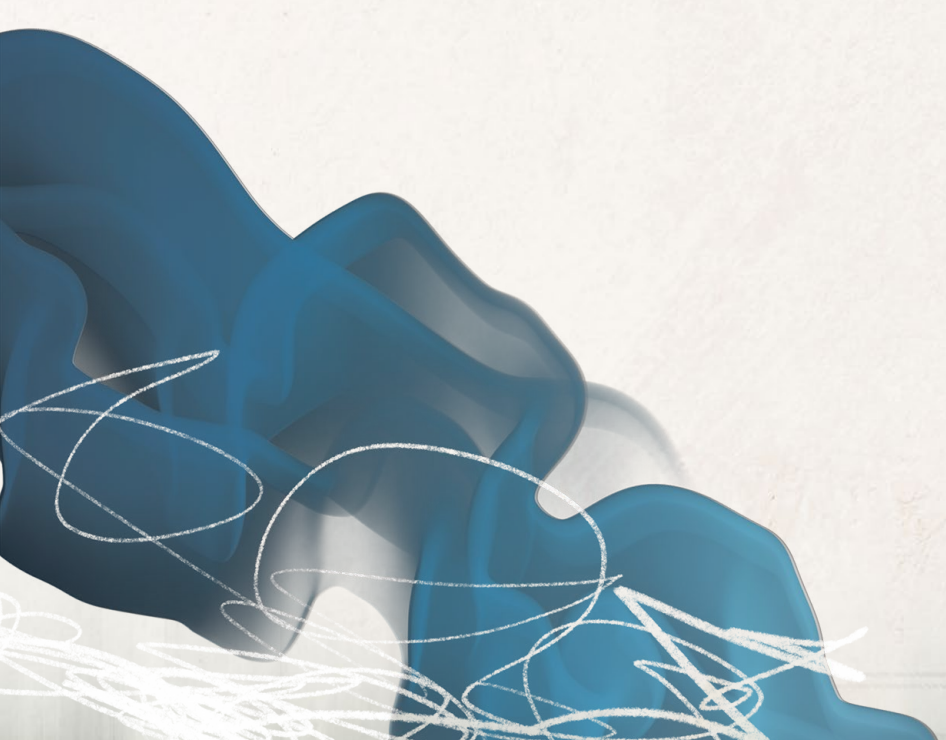
Placing the haversack inside an extradimensional space created by a bag of holding, portable hole, or similar item instantly destroys both items and opens a gate to the Astral Plane. The gate originates where the one item was placed inside the other. Any creature within 10 feet of the gate is sucked through it and deposited in a random location on the Astral Plane. The gate then closes. The gate is one-way only and can't be reopened.

Anything put inside *Bagman's gambit* is magically concealed and can't be detected, divined, or scried upon. Additionally, it's been filled with a variety of useful consumables. At any time, as an action, a character may reach inside and pull out one of the following magic items:

- One dose of *Keoghtom's ointment*
- One *potion of greater healing*
- One *potion of heroism*
- One *potion of vitality*

When a character pulls any item out of the haversack, they must roll a d10. On a 1, the Bagman (use the **venom troll** stat block) comes out of the haversack and attacks the characters. If the Bagman is defeated, he reforms inside the backpack the next day, ready to wreak havoc again. For more information about the Bagman, see *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

*Bagman's gambit* functions as a *Heward's handy haversack*, which is found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.





## HANDOUT 2: INVESTIGATION JOURNAL

The Palace of Bones presented many dangers, but you met them with aplomb as I knew you would. You have also provided us with invaluable information about the palace itself.

Nonetheless, of great concern is the one who also sought the Urn of Dreams. Who are they and what are their intentions? This is troubling news indeed. Though you have another task ahead of you, I do ask that you keep an eye out for this unknown figure. I believe a pattern is repeating itself and we must get to the bottom of it all.

Yours in reason,

Alanik Ray

PS: The item that you found along the way is safe at my chateau should you have need of it in the future.

Choose one item from the list below by checking the box next to it.

- Spell scroll of haste
- Potion of stone giant strength
- Wǎn of fiery spirits\*

\*A wǎn of fiery spirits functions as a *brazier of commanding fire elements*, which is found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. This large bowl is made of finely glazed ceramic painted with various depictions of malevolent arson. Old cracks have been filled in with gold, creating an impeccably beautiful spiderweb of contrasting art. When used, thick, acrid smoke fills a 10-foot-radius sphere around the bowl, heavily obscuring vision.

### STORY AWARDS

- The Urn is Ours
- The Sleeper has Awoken



# APPENDIX A: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To run this adventure as a DM, you must have three, four, or five players, each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see the "Adventure Primer" section at the start of the adventure).

## NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

Information about the Adventurers League, including finding places to play, organizing events, and a list of supporting resources and documents, can be found here: [https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal\\_general](https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal_general)

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running it, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use during combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendixes and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running the adventure, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battle maps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception) score; and anything the adventure specifies as notable (such as backgrounds and story awards).

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a player or ran as a DM, but they can do so only once with a specific character. Ensure each player has their character sheet (if not, get one from the organizer)

## PREPARING THE CHARACTERS

The adventure is designed to be played with characters of a specific level; characters of a different level should be modified accordingly. If necessary, the characters should be afforded the time needed to adjust their characters to suit.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they can't, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Characters that died during a previous adventure return to life, free of any conditions, curses, or other effects that would remove them from play—such as vampirism or lycanthropy. They keep any story awards they have, as any spells they might have copied during their adventures.

During the Call to Action, the characters are likely to review their available magic items among themselves and determine who is carrying what. Make sure they have a few moments to outfit one another.

## NEW PLAYERS? NO PROBLEM!

With starter adventures like this one, it's possible you might have players new to D&D, or new to fifth edition D&D. As the DM, it's up to you to ensure these players have fun with the game, and that they learn the basics of how to play. At this level, having fun is more important than learning every rule exactly right. Be gentle with new players who make mistakes.

Make sure to keep your players smiling and rolling dice. Be positive and enthusiastic when describing the action, and you'll notice the players will quickly follow suit.

If you're a new DM, then welcome—and thank you! New DMs are the lifeblood of the D&D community. To help you run your game, some adventures include sidebars like this one that provide an explanation of the game's rules as they're used in the adventure.

## ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, assess the **party strength** by consulting the table below.

### DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
Three characters	Weak
Four characters	Average
Five characters	Strong

## SAFETY TOOLS

Safety tools help ensure players aren't pushed beyond their comfort levels. These tools let your players know you want them to have a positive experience. Some common safety tools are provided below, each with a summary of how they work. An [article about one such safety kit](#) is provided to help with further information. Ensure that you discuss these tools with your players before the game:

- **Code of Conduct.** This is a group agreement for play. It outlines desired and prohibited behaviors, confidential reporting, and possible consequences.
- **Pregame and Postgame Discussions.** Use time before the game to explain content warnings, set boundaries, and collaborate on a safety plan. Then decompress and discuss improvements at the end of the game.
- **Be Welcoming.** Welcome and encourage respectful and open conversations about issues as they arise. Show that you're listening by avoiding defensive responses.
- **Confidentiality.** Provide contact information for private and confidential conversations between players and DM. Only disclose another player's name if that player gave unpressured permission for you to do so.
- **Safety Tools.** Learn about the safety tools that TTRPG community members have created and compiled. A broad range of such safety tools are available for you and your players online, or you can get more information by reaching out to your event organizer or [community@dndadventurersleague.org](mailto:community@dndadventurersleague.org).