
Mini-Dungeon
Tome
II



MINI-DUNGEON



TOME II

Mini-Dungeon Tome II

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◄ On the Cover
Max Trotzki shows us an adventuring party set for action!

Limited Edition Cover ►
The LE cover by Nat Damm depicts some freaky lookin' ghouls ready to feast upon humanoid flesh.



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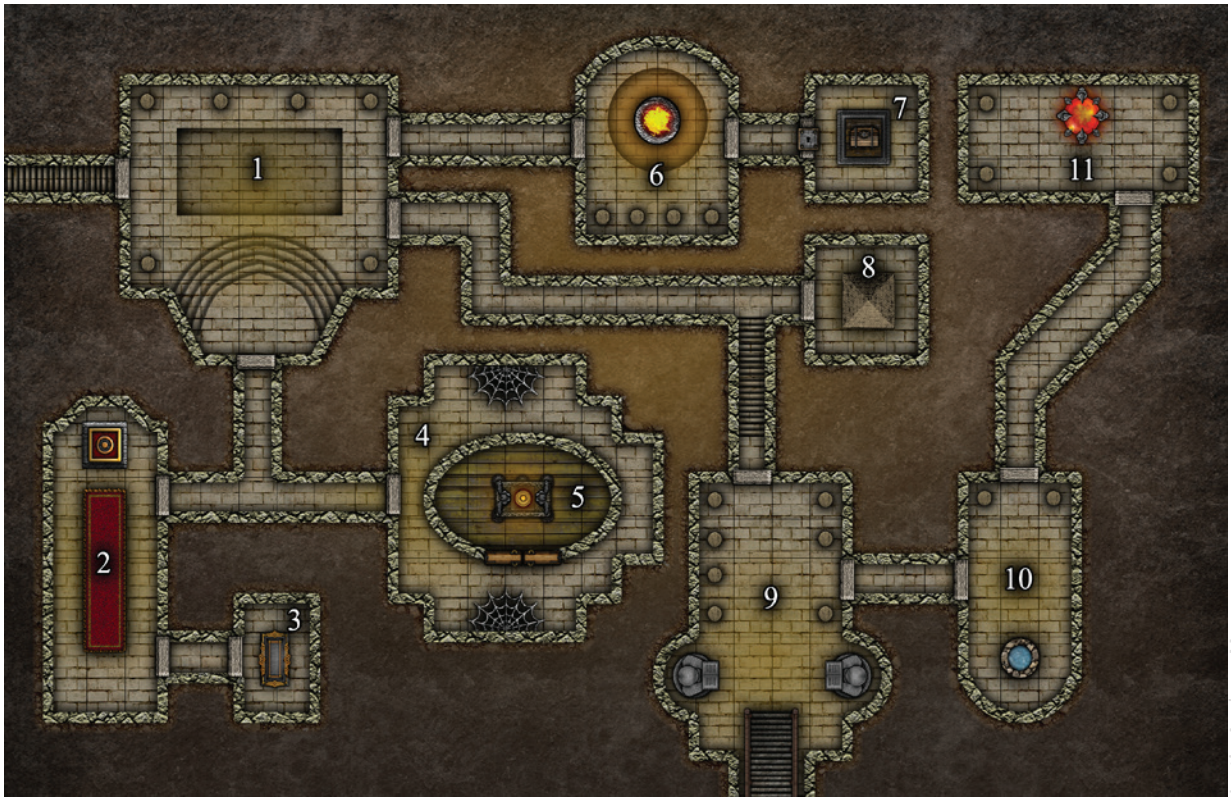
Occult Secrets of the Underworld
AAW Games

Survivalist's Guide to Spelunking
AAW Games

4 Characters

Level 1

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

Under Krygor Manor

Thilo Graf, Michael O. Holland

The Krygor family has faded away but remains famous for their explorations of the world and collecting treasures. Rumors of a hidden dungeon under a ruined Krygor manor have attracted adventurers to investigate. Thorny brambles cover the manor grounds, and the building has mostly collapsed in upon itself; evidence points to storm damage.

Entering the Dungeon. There are two entrances, the obvious one being a poorly concealed staircase leading to **Area 1** in the dungeon. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** enables the adventurers to find a second set of stairs in a mausoleum on the edge of the estate, this entrance leads to **Area 9**.

1. Fighting Pit

In the center of the room is a 10-foot-deep fighting pit. A bloody corpse holding a flaming sword lies in the center of the pit. The walls and pillars of this chamber are covered with old and worn weapons from around the world, even some exotic weapons the characters have never seen before.

Magical Arena. The walls of the pit are lined with runes; a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or *detect magic* spell recognizes them as conjuration runes. If a character drops into the pit, the runes summon an aggressive **brown bear**. The arena can conjure one bear per day. The flaming sword is a normal longsword with *continual flame* cast on it.

GM Note. The unconventional weapons on the wall are an opportunity to introduce new weapons to your game.

2. Portrait Gallery

The walls of this long chamber are covered with portraits of Krygor family members. The family history spans several centuries long and includes several famous explorers, as noted by a **DC 10 Intelligence (History) check**. The altar in the northern alcove displays the portrait of founding father Victor Krygor. An **animated armor** patrols the room and attacks intruders on sight, provided they do not have a means to identify at least one person as a member of the Krygor family. A Krygor seal ring (**Area 10**), an item with the family crest (**Area 3** and **Area 5**) or one of Victor's *Prized Possessions* (**Area 3**).

3. Crypt of Victor Krygor

This small chamber holds a stone coffin decorated with intricate gold filigree. There is an inscription on the lid of the coffin which reads: *Here lies Victor Krygor, explorer and adventurer. Conqueror of the Dragon, Keeper of the Covenant, and Master of Geomancy.*

Prized Possessions. The inscription refers to Victor's three most prized possessions: the *Dragon Orb* (**Area 11**) the covenant chest (**Area 5**) and the pyramid (**Area 8**). Inside the coffin is a dusty skeleton in rusted armor clutching the *Krygor sword*, a *+1 longsword* with the family crest.

4. Lair of the Spider

Webbed Walls. A **giant spider**'s *Webs* cover the walls of this chamber. Tangled in the webs is the corpse of a halfling adventurer. The spider hides in the webs and can be noticed with a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

5. Lost Covenant Found

This room is sealed by two bronze doors decorated with angelic choirs. Inside is an ornate, iron box with two celestial statues atop it. Between the statues is a lit brazier. Inscribed on the chest are Celestial runes which describe a covenant between a desert goddess and her people, promising protection from the desert winds in return for fealty and service. The box radiates evocation magic when investigated with a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or *detect magic*.

Opening the Box. If the box is opened without swearing fealty to the desert goddess, a flash of light erupts from it; all characters in the room must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or take 7 (2d6) radiant damage. The box contains only sand. If, however, the oath is sworn, the box opens with a warm breeze and contains the *Krygor wand*, a *+1 wand of the war mage* with the family crest.

6. Emerald Guardian

Flames dance in a large stone brazier in the center of the room. The walls, including the eastern door, are covered in murals depicting the Krygor family battling a lizardfolk horde.

Magical Mural. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals 12 emeralds hidden in the mural, each used as an eye and worth 15 gp. A *detect magic* spell or **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** notices the conjuration aura on the mural, and a **DC 14 Intelligence (History) check** recalls the battle's name, "*Scalebane.*" Uttering this name in Common disarms the conjuration enchantment.

Any attempt to open the eastern door or remove the gems without uttering, "*Scalebane*" summons a hostile **emerald eye** from the flames.

7. Treasure Chest

The door to **Area 7** is locked. A successful **DC 20 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools allows a character to pick the lock. A chalk message written in Common on the door reads, "*Good luck opening this door.*"

Inside the room, a wooden chest sits on a stone dais framed in wood. The chest is locked. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools allows the characters to unlock the chest, revealing 25 gp, 17 sp, and a *ring of animal influence*.

8. Replica Pyramid

A miniature pyramid fills most of this room. Inscriptions on the walls explain this is a replica of a pyramid Victor discovered during his adventures. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the pyramid was constructed using principles of geomancy and is attuned to evocation. Evocation spells cast within 100 feet of the pyramid are empowered as per the sorcerer's *Empower Spell* feature.

9. Goblin Guards

At the bottom of the stairs, three **goblins** stand guard. The goblinoids discovered the estate and the secret entrance to the dungeon by mistake and want to make it their new lair.

10. Well of Labai-Roh

Two **hobgoblins** stand by a well which seems to be constructed from a different material than the rest of the dungeon. The pair awaits the return of four goblins to explore **Area 11**. One hogboblin wears the Krygor seal ring (50 gp). A plaque on the wall details how Victor found the well at a sacred site in the desert called Labai-Roh. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** recalls that it never runs dry and provides the benefit of a short rest with a single drink. The well weighs a total of 2,000 lbs. and must be reassembled and consecrated to work.

11. Heart of the Dragon

A large, orange orb clasped in a dragon-clawed pedestal fills this room with flickering light. Four burnt goblin corpses lie on the ground beside the orb.

Dragon Orb. The pedestal is safe to touch, but if someone touches the orb, they must succeed on a **DC 13** Fortitude saving throw or suffer 14 (4d6) fire damage. A *detect magic* spell or **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** notices the orb's evocation aura, but no means to negate it.

True Heritage. The sword (**Area 3**) and wand (**Area 5**) have hidden enchantments that need to be unlocked; A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Intelligence (Arcana) check** notices as much. The means to do so is left up to the GM but should be tied to Victor Krygor's exploits and prized possessions.



The Krygor Inheritance

The *Kyrgor Wand* and the *Krygor Sword* are individually valueable magic items in their own right, but together they represent the Krygor name, for they both possess the Krygor Family Crest. Any claimant to Krygor Manor will want one or both of these items to legitimize their claim.

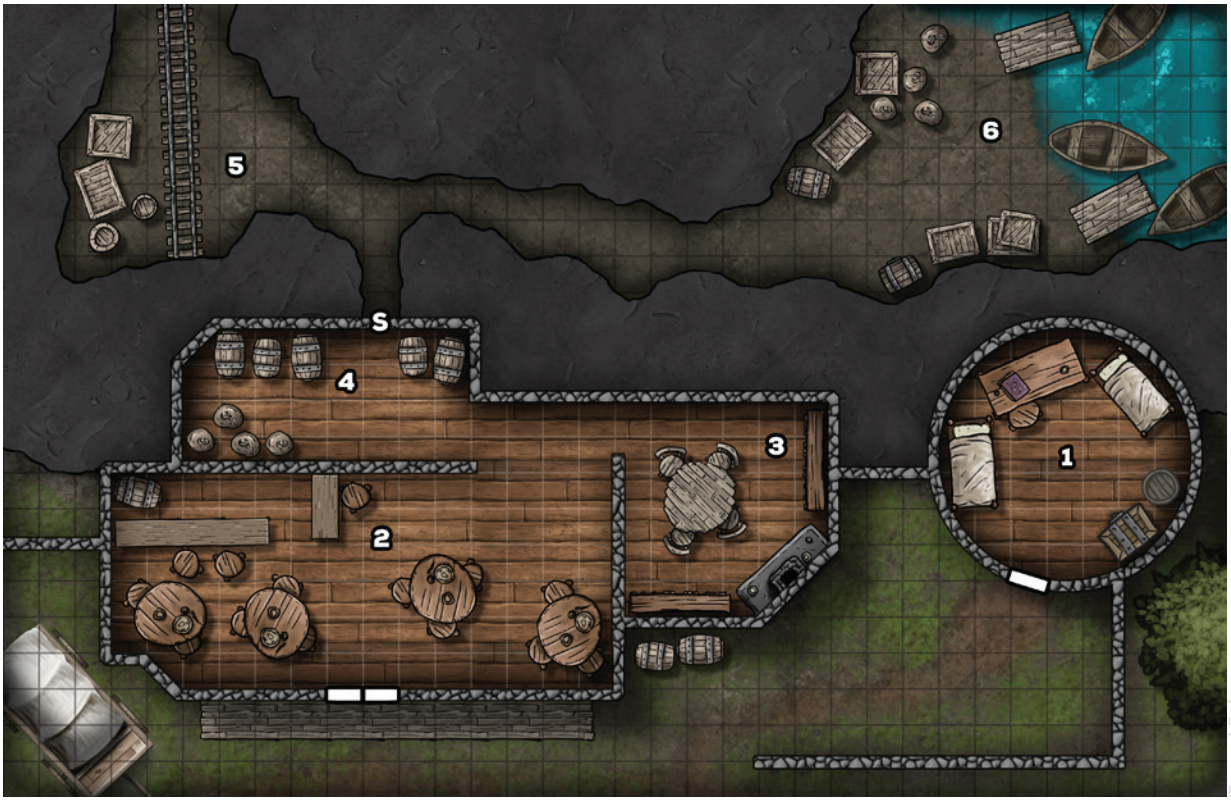
If the party isn't in the market for taking up the legacy of the Krygor family, any Black Market dealer will gladly offer a fair price for these heirloom artifacts (see page 298).

Quico Vicens

4 Characters

Level 1

Coast/ Urban



Tommi Salama

Zur's Saltwater Smugglers

Michael O. Holland, Thilo Graf

Zur is an unscrupulous half-elf who has made a living moving illegal goods to and from the nearby city. He has no qualms about what he smuggles, whether it be stolen art, illicit drugs, or even people. His current operation is based in a roadhouse on one of the lesser routes leading from the city and down the coastline.

Hooks

- While traveling the hinterlands outside the city, the heroes stumble upon the mangled corpse of a halfling. The halfling's wounds indicate he was stabbed. With a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check**, they can follow the trail of blood leading back to the roadhouse. On a failed check, the trail ends in the vicinity of the roadhouse instead.

- Numerous invaluable artworks have been stolen in the nearby city. The city guard suspect Zur's smuggling operation is moving the art out of the city, but his roadhouse is outside their jurisdiction. The heroes receive a request to investigate further.

1. Roundhouse

Across the roadhouse courtyard stands a small roundhouse with a conical thatch roof. The roundhouse is ill-kept and in need of serious repairs, with crumbling stones and holes in the roof. The wooden door of the roundhouse is locked. A character can open the door quietly with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools, or attempt to climb to the roof with a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** and enter through one of the holes with a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. Inside are a pair of beds, a desk, a chest, and the only barrel of decent ale in the entire roadhouse. Zur keeps the best drink for himself.

On the desk is Zur's ledger. He foolishly forgot to secure it before leaving and if the heroes skim the ledger, they find recent records indicating the presence of stolen art from the city. They also find notes in the ledger that prove that Zur is also smuggling gitwerc idols into the city, where his sellers pass them off as good luck charms. These idols are cursed objects and bring ruin to those who possess them.

The chest is locked and trapped with knockout gas. The chest can be unlocked with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools.

Knockout Gas

Simple trap (level 1–4, dangerous threat)

Zur uses this knockout gas trap to subdue thieves. He trusts his people as far as he can see them and not even then sometimes.

Trigger. The lid of the chest is attached to a tension cable; opening the chest moves the tension cable and triggers the trap.

Effects. A dispersal mechanism sprays a cloud of green gas that instantly fills the roundhouse. Creatures in the area when the trap is triggered, or that begin or end their turn in the area, must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, or be knocked unconscious for 1d4 hours on a failed save.

Allies can attempt to rouse the unconscious hero once every 15 minutes, enabling the victim to attempt a new saving throw.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the dispersal mechanism. Investigating the chest and succeeding on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check also notices the mechanism. Once noticed, a latch on the back of the chest can be used as a Use an Object action to disable the trap. Once triggered, the gas lasts for 10 minutes before dispersing.

Knocked Out. If all the heroes succumb to the knockout gas, they awake in the forest nearby, bound by hemp rope. Two human **thugs** wait for the heroes to wake up to interrogate them. It takes a **DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to slip free, or **DC 18 Strength check** to burst the rope. Alternatively, a **Charisma (Deception) check** contested by both of the thugs' **Wisdom (Insight) +0** convinces them to free the party.

2. Common Room

The common room of the roadhouse is unusually quiet. Most patrons turn and run at first sight of the place or when they catch the smells coming from the kitchen. **Caleb**, a **merchant** (as **noble**) and his dwarven **guard** (16 hp) **Rutli** are present, trying to stomach their way through a quick meal before leaving. If there is any trouble, they flee the roadhouse as quickly as they can. The roadhouse's ale is watered down, and the gruel is poor at best. Zur does not care about the quality of the roadhouse's service as the establishment is just a cover for his smuggling operation.

Grusk, a half-orc **thug**, tends the bar. The half-orc is not particularly friendly or talkative. A bribe of at least 10 gp alongside a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, or a **DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check** is needed to loosen his tongue and even then, he only tells them to talk to Zur, while refusing to tell them where Zur is. He fears Zur and reveals nothing about the smuggling operation unless the party can come up with a very convincing lie, which takes a **DC 16 Charisma (Deception) check**. If he sees the heroes trying to enter the back areas of the roadhouse, he warns them to step away unless he was deceived or intimidated. If his warning goes unheeded, he retrieves a mace from behind the bar and moves to intercept the party.

3. Kitchen

Rengar the cook (CN dwarf **commoner**) is a gruesome (and unsanitary) sight: the cook has boils on his face and hands, and a gnarly scar where his left eye should be. His disposition is even less appealing, and he blusters and threatens anyone who enters his kitchen except Zur. **Charisma (Persuasion) checks** to change Rengar's attitude automatically fail—he is too stubborn in his self-loathing to respond to flattery and kind words. Deep down inside, Rengar is a coward, though, and a **DC 8 Charisma (Intimidation) check** suffices to make him back down and keep quiet. He knows Zur is running a smuggling operation but has no inkling regarding the nature of the smuggled goods.

4. Stockroom

The stockroom is filled with barrels of ale and sacks of fetid foodstuff. The air is filled with the smell of saltwater, especially around the northern wall between the barrels. With a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, the characters find a secret door hidden in northern wall. Characters with a *Keen Sense of Smell* have **advantage** on the check. The door can be opened by pulling a little lever hidden between two stones. The door leads to the tunnel connecting **Area 5** and **Area 6**. Unless Rengar was properly cowed, he alerts Grusk the half-orc in **Area 2** if he spots (**Perception +0**) the heroes during his regular trips (every 1d4+1 minutes) to the stockroom.

5. Tunnel

A natural cave gives way to a tunnel heading in the direction of the city. Rails run the length of the tunnel although no cars are currently present. The crates hold gitwerc idols waiting to be transported into the city. The crates are nailed shut, but casting *detect magic* notices that the items inside radiate an aura of necromancy. It takes a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** to rip the crates open and reveal the cursed gitwerc idols. With a proper tool, such as a crowbar, a crate can be opened automatically.

Bodur (CN gnome **thug**) is hiding in the corner. He has secretly tapped one of two barrels of ale and is enjoying himself at the expense of Zur's profits. He is drunk (poisoned), as he is mourning the murder of his halfling friend, Zenwick, who was caught trying to steal from Zur's chest in the roundhouse. If Bodur spots the heroes (**Perception +2**), he tries to hide (**Stealth +0**) and wait for an opportunity to sneak to **Area 6** to warn Zur. If caught by the heroes, he can be convinced to give up information about Zur and the smuggling operation to save himself with a mere **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Intimidation) check**. Halflings have **advantage** on these checks due to Bodur's grief. Zur lost Bodur's loyalty when he murdered Zenwick.

6. Cove

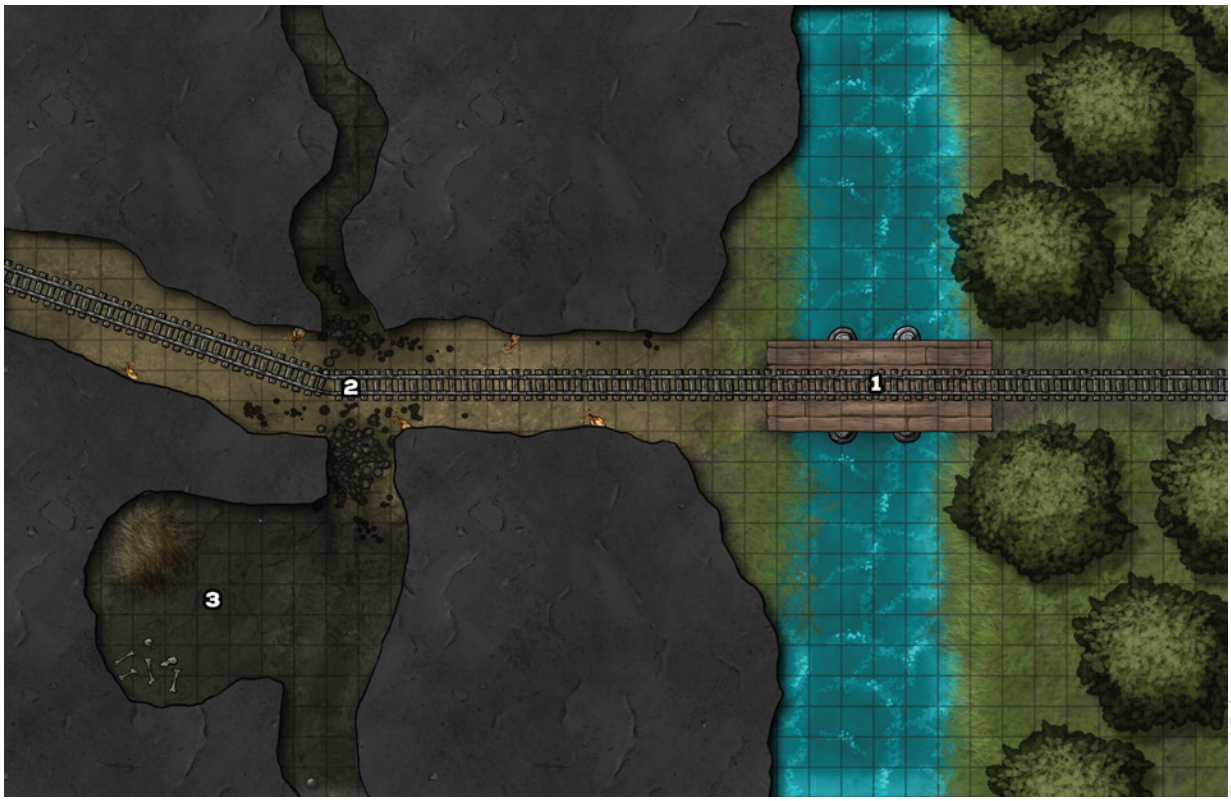
The cave opens into an underground saltwater cove that connects to the bay a few miles away. **Zur** (NE half-elf **bandit captain**) and two human **thugs** (**Rikta** and **Nellie**) are preparing a shipment of stolen art and other goods to head to smuggler ships waiting on the bay. If a confrontation turns against Zur (when he reaches 22 hp), he tries to flee on a boat through the watery tunnels leading to the bay. The roadhouse has made him a great deal of wealth (hidden elsewhere) but he cannot enjoy that wealth if he is captured or dead. He has no loyalty to his subordinates, and deep down, they know. If the party has not killed a single one of his subordinates, they may convince Rikta and Nellie with a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to lay down their arms as well. This check is made with **advantage** if the party is accompanied by any of Zur's henchmen. If the party beats the **DC** by 5 or more, Rikta and Nellie join them in fighting Zur.

If the heroes successfully return the stolen art to the city guards, they are rewarded with 375 gp. For every henchman caught alive, the party is rewarded another 25 gp. If the party lets any of these henchmen go, they have a friend for life in the seedier parts of the city, though...

4-5 Characters

Level 1

Mountain



Tommi Salama

Fungal Infestation

Nico MacDougall

Most funglets are peaceful creatures that reside deep within the Underworld, but Bisrop is an exception to the rule; a failed spore-cerer, he never managed to develop the ability to exert his will via spores and turned to a fanatical worship of the Honningsop Mushroom. Rather than allow it to grow naturally he decided to spread its influence throughout the entire world by force, hoping to ultimately develop a mind-controlling variant of *Shroomitis*. He infected a svirfneblin patrol with mind-controlling fungus and used them to claim a dweorg mine for his own use. Soon after, Bruban Stoutleg, whose family owns the mine, arrived to investigate why they had lost contact with the miners. He killed most of the infected svirfneblin before succumbing to his wounds.

Adventure Hook

When one of the Stoutleg family's mines missed their regular monthly shipment of ore, Bruban Stoutleg went to investigate. It has been a week since he departed, and the party has been promised 10 gp each to investigate what happened and report back. If Bruban is dead, they are to retrieve his signet ring and return it to his family.

1. Fungal Sentry

As the party follows the mine cart tracks through the trees, they see that the tracks cross a wooden bridge into an opening in the mountain. A Medium **distressed neon green slug** wearing a saddle and saddlebags slithers back and forth on the bridge in front of a **female svirfneblin** with a glassy look in her eyes.

Ryllzi. This female **deep gnome** was part of a svirfneblin patrol infected by Bisrop and forced to help with his assault on the mine. After Bruban Stoutleg killed the rest of the infected svirfneblin, Ryllzi was posted at the mine's entrance to turn away any future intruders. She can answer rudimentary questions and attempt to convince the characters to not enter the mine, but a successful **DC 9 Wisdom (Insight) check** is enough to see through her lies. Any character that succeeds on a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** can see tiny mushrooms poking out of her skin. Characters must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check** to sneak up on her unnoticed.

Lima. Lima is Ryllzi's **svirf riding slug** and wields a spear on a *Weapon Stalk*. Lima understands on some level that something is terribly wrong with her rider but continues to follow her orders and fight by her side. She only disobeys Ryllzi's orders if a character succeeds on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**. If Lima survives the combat and a character succeeded on the **Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**, she follows that character until she finds a new svirfneblin rider. Lima's saddlebags contain

orders (written in Gnomish) for a svirfneblin patrol detailing an underground region far from here, 5 days' worth of rations (15 **units of stock**), and 10 gp.

Bridge. The bridge is 10 feet above the slow-moving river.

2. Fruiting Bodies

A svirfneblin body (a puffball corpse trap) lies on the tracks just inside the tunnel entrance. Sputtering torches illuminate the mine cart tracks as they continue into the tunnel and pass in between two openings slightly blocked by rubble.

Offshoot Tunnels. Both tunnels are completely obscured due to a lack of light sources. The north opening goes to a tunnel that extends 50 feet before terminating in a dead end. A puffball corpse is placed 10 feet inside the north opening, not hidden but difficult to see from outside the tunnel due to the lack of light. The south opening goes to **Area 3**. A puffball corpse is hidden in the rubble at the southern entrance and requires a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice.

Puffball Corpse

Simple trap (level 1–4, moderate threat)

These three corpses are the other infected svirfneblin from Ryllzi's patrol. Bisrop used their deaths to experiment with a new strain of fungus he is cultivating. The corpses have svirfneblin-sized chain shirts, war picks, and copies of the same orders in Lima's saddlebags.

Trigger. A non-funglet non-plant creature comes within 5 feet of the puffball corpse, or the corpse is hit by an attack.

Effect. The puffball corpse explodes in a 15-foot-diameter spherical cloud of spores. Each creature in the cloud must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 2 (1d4) poison damage.

Countermeasures. A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the corpse is emitting a slight haze of spores and is liable to burst at any moment. An effect that produces wind (such as a spell or effect that creates wind) directed at the corpse when it explodes grants advantage to creatures making the saving throw.



Javier Araujo

3. Rot and Ruin

The sickly-sweet smell of rot pervades this room. A pile of bones lies in one corner, while a **violet fungus** tends to a rotting pile of organic material in the other. A dead dwarf body in scale mail lies on top of this pile, and as you enter the room, the corpse shudders and begins to speak.

Bruban's Body. Bruban Soutleg's body is wearing scale mail and the Stoutleg signet ring is on his left index finger. His pack lies off to the side and contains 10 gp and a *potion of healing*.

Fungal Heap. **Bisrop's** funglet body has dissolved inside this cocoon of rot, but his consciousness persists as he builds himself a stronger body to spread spores across the world. When the characters enter, he projects his consciousness into Bruban's body, introduces himself, tells them that his mission is to spread the Honningsop Mushroom to the entire world, and offers them the chance to donate their bodies to the cause. Any character that succeeds on a **DC 14 Charisma (Deception) check** convinces Bisrop that they have converted and grants them **advantage** on their attacks when combat begins. If any characters turn down Bisrop, he initiates combat while lamenting that they cannot see things his way. Bruban's animated body is a **zombie** wearing scale mail (**AC** 12).

Increased Challenge. For an increased challenge, the zombie can inflict a slow-acting *Shroomitis* if the injured character fails a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**. The sickness progresses one level per week. In this instance, Lima's orders (**Area 1**) should make note of an Underworld settlement that can help, perhaps even fabled **Rotu** (*Applied & Aggregate Spelunking*).

Violet Fungus. The violet fungus will not attack until either Bisrop or the characters initiate combat.

Bruban's Signet Ring

The party has been promised—and presumably agreed to—a reward for the return of Bruban's signet ring. But the Stoutleg family has many holdings, and just as many enemies. If a character undertakes to research the Stoutleg family before collecting the reward with a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they discover that Bruban oversaw numerous mining and smelting operations, as well as a small army of mercenaries to protect those assets.

After this discovery, the character is approached by a shady buyer who is willing to offer ten times what the Stoutlegs are for the ring (see page 298). It seems Bruban's ring in particular has a value beyond that of carrying the his personal singet.

4-5 Characters

Level 1

Urban



Tommi Salama

Rising Stars

David Schwartz

The local semi-retired druid and sage Flandros is in need of adventurers and invites the characters to meet with him at his observatory outside of town to discuss the job. When the characters arrive, however, they find evidence of a fight outside of the building and numerous kobolds. It's time to investigate!

The Observatory. Situated in a forest half an hour away from the city, this building began as a stone circle, and was turned first a shrine to the deities of nature, and then became an observatory for meteorological and celestial study. Rooms, except as noted, have 8-foot-tall ceilings and are lit by hanging lanterns. The windows are made of glass (**AC** 13, 3 hp), but the kobolds have closed the curtains inside due to their *Sunlight Sensitivity*.

Druid's Peril. Flandros is the current caretaker of the observatory, though due to his old age, he does live in the nearby town. Recently, the druid has been tracking the Dragon's Tail, a comet that prominently features in an ancient prophecy, foretelling of an ancient doom. The druid is not the only one concerned about the meaning of the comet: Someone or something has sent forth kobold minions to ensure that he can't share his findings. The party arrives just in time!

Kobolds. In addition to their weapons, the regular and elite kobolds each carry 4d6 sp, while every kobold spellclerk has 3d6 gp. The kobolds are more afraid of their master than of fledgling adventurers and cannot be intimidated. However, clever parties speaking draconic may well manage to deceive the kobolds.

1. Entrance

After an uneventful walk to the observatory, obvious signs that a combat occurred on the forest trail ahead greet the adventurers. The path and surrounds are disturbed by the movement of many feet, and splatters of blood can be seen here and there on ground and foliage. Though Flandros fought back with his magic, the kobolds overwhelmed him with sheer numbers. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** identifies the footprints of over a dozen Small reptilian humanoids, and of a single Medium humanoid.

Two lit stone braziers flank the sole exterior door of the observatory. **Ofgra**, an **elite kobold** stands guard between them. If she spots the characters (**passive Perception 14**), the kobold makes threats and ranged attacks with her sling. She hopes to scare the characters away or draw them closer, as she can only use her *Lantern Splash* feature when she is adjacent to one of the braziers. While she is adjacent to a brazier, *Lantern Splash* requires no roll to recharge, though. The door to the observatory is currently unlocked.

2. Parlor

This room is where Flandros meets with visitors to the observatory. Five **kobolds** (**passive Perception 8**) and two **compsognathuses** (**passive Perception 12**) are stationed here. Ostensibly keeping an eye on the prisoner (**Area 3**), they're mostly just resting or goofing

off. The kobolds ready themselves for intruders if they or their pets hear combat outside or in an adjacent room. The kobolds prefer to attack from behind the cover of furniture, sending the dinosaurs forward to keep enemies at a distance.

3. Storage

The door to this room is locked. It can be unlocked with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools, or the key held by a kobold spellclerk in the shrine (**Area 4**). Attempts to break down the door (**AC** 15, 18 hp) work as well, but this alerts everyone in the observatory to the presence of intruders.

The 6-foot ceiling in this room makes it feel cramped. Among the items stored here are a barrel partially filled with lamp oil; a box containing inks, quills, and papers; a box holding incense and sacred herbs; and 50 feet of hempen rope.

Flandros (**druid**) is bound at his hands and feet in the center of this room. He has only 1 hp and 1 spell slot of each spell level remaining. Flandros can explain what the kobolds did to him, but not why. He begs the characters to rid the observatory of kobolds (if they haven't already), though he can offer little help in his current condition.

4. Shrine

The altar at the center of this room is overlooked by statues of three nature deities. Here is where Flandros conducts druidic rituals. The shrine is currently occupied by two **kobold spellclerks**. The spellclerks are examining the ritual objects on the altar to ascertain their purpose and monetary value. One of the spellclerks carries the keys to the front door (**Area 1**) and the storage room (**Area 3**).

If they hear combat in an adjacent room (**passive Perception 13**), the kobolds each hide in a different part of the shrine (**Stealth +4**). One spellclerk casts *minor illusion* to draw intruders into the room before they make their surprise attack. Then, the spellclerks attempt to outmaneuver the characters using *Cunning Action* and the various objects here. If all of the characters are affected by *sleep*, the kobolds disarm them, tie them up (**escape DC 14**) and lock them up in the storage room (**Area 3**).

5. Observatory

This room's domed roof rises to a peak 30 feet above the floor. A rope-and-pulley system allows the dome's panels to slide across each other, revealing up to half the sky in any direction, though it is currently closed. A character who succeeds at a **DC 10 Strength check** while adjacent to the wall can open or close one-eighth of the dome.

Vryza, the **kobold spellclerk** in charge, pores through the notes on the table, while five **kobolds** are clambering up the shelves to pull out books. Those that relate to astronomy and astrology are put into a *bag of holding* lying by the table; the rest is tossed on the floor, making the room difficult terrain for Medium or larger creatures.

In combat, the spellclerk directs the other kobolds to swarm the characters, while he casts spells from behind cover. If the characters open the dome at least a quarter, allowing the sun to shine in, the kobolds flee down the stairs, trying to secure as many books and papers as possible. If the kobolds think they might lose and Vryza is alive, she orders one kobold to go to **Area 3**, finish Flandros, and set the structure ablaze with the lamp oil, obviously more afraid of her master's ire than dying.

Further Adventures. Once the observatory is cleared of kobolds and Flandros is healed, the druid invites the characters to visit him again. The task for which he originally called them still needs to be done, and now the threat of the kobold's enigmatic master looms on the horizon.

The Collected Works of Dugmore Dumple

One book amongst those the kobolds are in the process of pilfering is so large, anyone giving the stack a second glance will notice it. A character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence (History) check** recognizes the value and rarity of the voluminous tome. Flandros isn't inclined to give away his detailed and illuminated recounting of the full travels of the famed explorer Dugmore Dumple, but the book is worth ten times its weight in gold to the right buyer. If the party can convince Fladros to part with it—or they otherwise relieve him of it—and they can find a way to transport the archaic, hundredweight volume without damaging it, they can collect a hefty finder's fee from a Black Market dealer (see page 298).

A Fair Trade. *The Collected Works of Dugmore Dumple* stands unchallenged as the most complete reference tome on all the creatures and cultures of the Underworld—the reason it is so highly prized. Flandros is reluctant to part with it, except as a trade for an equally prized source of worldly, or other-worldly, knowledge.

Jayhawkery. A party intent on stealing *The Collected Works of Dugmore Dumple* probably won't make it very far without first addressing the safe transportation of a book that weighs over a hundred pounds. A single mishap bursts the already fragile binding, after which they're no longer moving a single volume, but a stack of loose vellum.

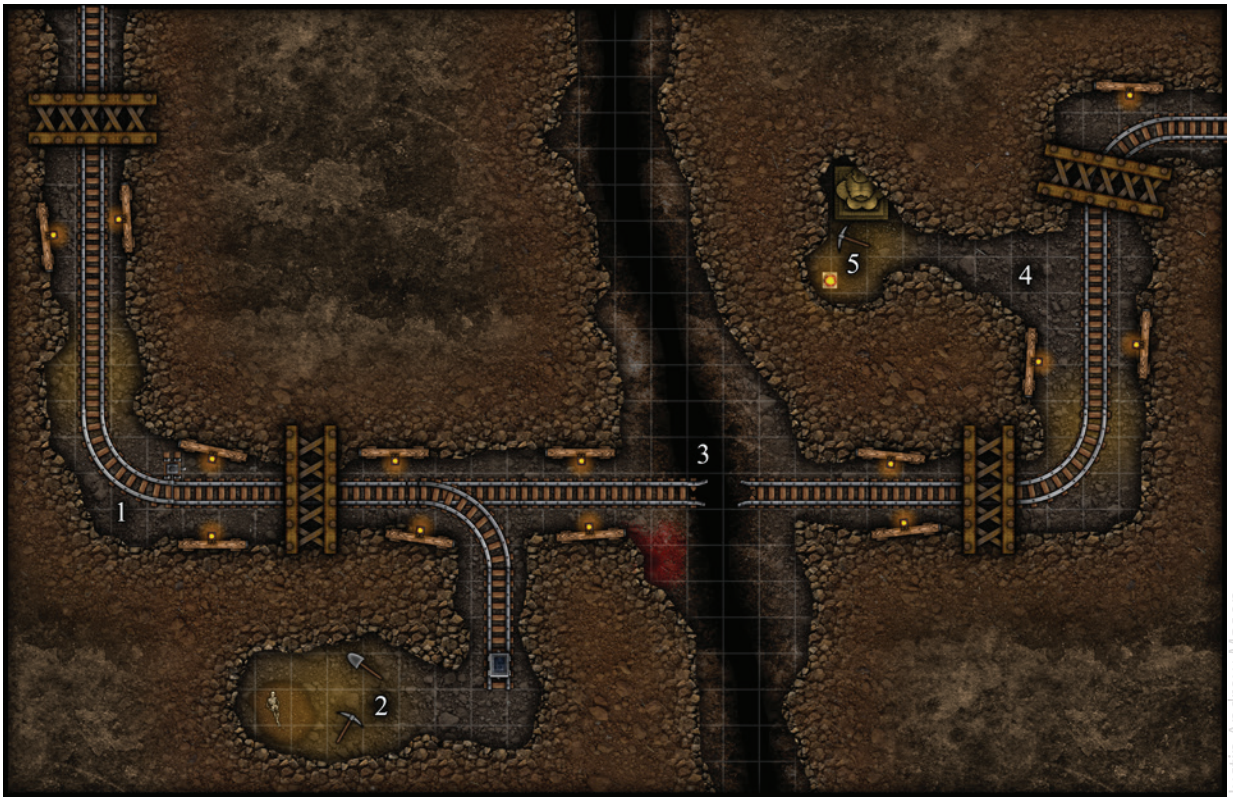


Julio Rocha

4-6 Characters

Level 1

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Mine Shrine of Uldathil

Robert W. Thompson, Thilo Graf

The Mine Shrine of Uldathil is inside a prosperous silver mine owned by the dwarven Hammershield clan. Recently, an earthquake opened a crevice in the mine, severing the cart tracks and trapping several miners inside. To make matters worse, the new crevice went deep enough to connect with tunnels farther underground which allowed a group of **grimlocks** to swarm up into the mine.

1. First Contact

Seventy feet from the mine entrance the tunnel takes a 90-degree turn to the left. Lit torches attached to timbers on the wall are on both sides of the tunnel roughly halfway between the entrance and the turn, and just past the turn as well.

Around the corner are three **grimlocks** waiting to ambush any intruders. As soon as the characters come within range of the creatures' *Blindsight* (30 ft.), as quietly as possible, one of them takes off down the tunnel to warn the grimlock in **Area 2**. The remaining two use their *Stone Camouflage* to remain hidden against the rough stone walls to ambush the characters.

Treasure. One of the two grimlocks has an ornate dwarven dagger taken from the dead dwarf in **Area 2**. The dagger is not magical, but gold filigree and several small bloodstones in the hilt give it a value of 15 gp. The pattern of bloodstones forms a map representing nearby hills, hinting at further adventure.

2. Fateful Drift

Past the ambush there is a switch in the cart tracks. The main track continues ahead while a sidetrack curves 90 degrees to the right into a drift (a mining term for tunnels that branch off from the main tunnel to follow a vein of ore). The sidetrack ends after 25 feet, opening into a chamber. At the end of the track is an ore cart. The cart is mostly empty, but at the bottom are 2d6 chunks of silver ore, each weighing 1 lb. and worth 1 gp.

The chamber contains several tools, including picks, hammers and shovels that can be used as improvised weapons. The body of a dead dwarf lies in a shallow depression on the eastern side of the chamber, its head crushed under a large rock. A **giant rat** gnaws at the remains.

Hidden against the rough stone walls of the chamber is a **grimlock**. If the third grimlock from **Area 1** escaped, it, too, is hidden in here against the rock wall.

Treasure. The dwarf's body carried a half-full skin of water, one day's worth of rations, a pouch with 15 cp, 5 sp, and 1 gp, a vial of antitoxin, and a *potion of healing*.

3. Crevice

The earthquake opened a 10-foot-wide gap in the mine here, creating a crevice that separates the main tunnel. The floor is uneven and full of debris, imposing **disadvantage** on attempts to jump across the crevice, which requires a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check**. On a failure, a character falls in and takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage when they hit a large rock outcropping 30 feet below and come to a stop.

If the characters are stuck, **DC 11 Intelligence** or **Wisdom check** remembers the timbers that hold up the torch sconces. They can be removed from the walls and the timbers laid across the gap. The upright timbers are only five feet high, but lengthwise suffice to span the crevice's 10 feet.

Removing the timbers requires tools (such as those in **Area 2**) and a **DC 17 Strength check**. If a tool, such as a crowbar or one of the shovels or picks from **Area 2** are used, the timbers can be removed automatically.

Using a single timber to cross requires a **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. If two timbers are laid side-by-side, the characters can cross automatically.

Removing the timbers from the walls is loud and takes ten minutes of work to complete. Two minutes after the process begins, two **grimlocks**, each riding a **giant bat**, rise up out of the darkness and attack. Replace each grimlock's *Spiked Bone Club* with ***Javelin.*** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

After throwing two javelins, the mounted grimlocks urge their bats to enter melee.

If a grimlock rider is killed and the bat is still alive, the uncontrolled bat will dive into the darkness on its first opportunity.

4. Grimlock Boss

While the main tunnel continues ahead and disappears around a corner, a drift opens to the left. At the junction is the grimlock boss (as a Medium **deep gnome**, 22 hp, replace *Gnome Cunning*, *Innate Spellcasting* and *War Pick* with a grimlock's *Blind Senses* and *Keen Hearing and Smell* and *Spiked Stone Club*) and two regular **grimlocks**. The regular grimlocks use their *Stone Camouflage* to remain hidden for as long as possible.

Tactics. The **boss** begins combat by throwing a *Poisoned Dart* and will do so on its next two turns if possible, preferably engaging in melee with poisoned characters. The two regular grimlocks rush from the sides, keeping the characters' attention split. If no character is poisoned after 3 rounds, the boss attempts to escape down the main tunnel further into the mine.

Treasure. The grimlock boss carries 15 small chunks of silver ore, each worth 9 sp, in a burlap bag tied to his belt.

5. Mine Shrine of Uldathil

A large statue of a dwarven god of protection stands in this small chamber. The miners leave offerings here, asking the deity to protect them during their work. Six **dwarven miners** (treat as **commoners**) are crammed into the area. Two are severely injured and have 1 hp left, while the remaining four have 3 hp each. The grateful miners offer the party a silver cage (worth 45 gp, weighs 2 lbs.) containing a *sacred dwarven canary*. Clan Hammershield rewards the characters with a bag of silver ore worth 400 gp for their efforts.

Sacred Dwarven Canary

Wondrous item, uncommon

"Humans don't know how to mine properly – they even let their canaries die!" -Dwarven Proverb

These little, bioluminescent canaries are sacred to dwarven mining operations. They are usually kept in a silver cage that can be attached via a hook to an armor or timber. A *sacred dwarven canary* behaves just like a regular canary, save that it does not spontaneously sing, and that most dwarven miners would lay down their lives to save these rare and sacred birds.

Instead of random chirps, a *sacred dwarven canary* only begins singing when it detects a kind of harmful gas or similar airborne effect (such as hazardous mold spores) within 30 feet of its cage. Each *sacred dwarven canary* has a unique and distinct chirp for each airborne hazard, but in most instances, only the foremen have been instructed to the precise meaning of their individual chirps, though experienced dwarven miners will quickly learn the individual songs of a *sacred dwarven canary*.

In tune with the earth, a *sacred dwarven canary* will also start to burst into a frenzied, alarmed, nigh-constant trilling 30 minutes before a non-magical earthquake happens.

A *sacred dwarven canary* is blessed by the dwarven gods, and consequently, it is protected from all damage while inside its cage and the cage is closed, including area effects. Only attacks specifically targeted at the canary harm it, and it has 5 hp. The canary glows like a lit match, but can be coaxed into increasing its bioluminescence with a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, shedding light as a torch for 1 hour.

Sacred dwarven canaries must be fed and cleaned, as any pet, and are particularly fond of beer: they can actually subsist solely on good beer. If mistreated, starved or neglected by an owner, the canary will escape the first chance it gets. These birds are never sold or bartered, only presented as a gift. A bird not freely given will never sing.

Quico Vicens

5 Characters

Level 1

Urban



Tommi Salama

Chaos at the Gates

William Fischer

Ironcourt is under attack! A horde of beast-headed savages has broken through the northern gates and now lays waste to the city. The king's guard struggles to repel the invaders, but in doing so they have left Ironcourt's southern approach undefended. The heroes must hold the southern gates until reinforcements arrive. Should the party fail, the beast-folk's unexpected assault may claim even more lives.

Chaos at the Gates is an introductory adventure designed to kick off a new campaign. The characters may know each other from before the adventure, or they may be strangers who have volunteered to defend the southern gates together. In either case, allow the players to place their characters on the encounter map as the adventure begins.

Running the Battle. Just beyond the map's southern edge, a horde of evil beast-folk (humanoids with the heads of wolves and other beasts) has assembled to attack to the city. It is night as the battle begins; between the moonless sky and the cover the beast-folk enjoy from the woods in which they are positioned, the characters can't target enemies until they appear on the map. The walls and gate are illuminated by torchlight.

Divide the southern half of the encounter map into two sections, one for each area directly south of the west and east walls (**Areas 3** and **4**). On initiative count 20 each round, roll a d4 for both sections. On a result of 1–3, that many **beast-folk** (as **commoners** with **darkvision** 60 ft.) appear in that section.

Groups of two and three beast-folk carry ladders, which they use to scale the walls (see **Area 3**). On a result of 4, a **beast-folk champion** (as an **orc**) arrives on the south road (**Area 1**) instead.

There is essentially no limit to the number of beast-folk that can appear in the encounter. At the end of round 12, however, a contingent of the king's guard arrives in **Area 5** to reinforce the party. If the beast-folk manage to breach the city's defenses before this time, the guard still arrives, but Ironcourt's losses are more severe than they would have been had the characters held off the invaders.

1. South Road

A muddy wagon trail leads to Ironcourt's southern gates. The gates are barred from the inside, but they can be destroyed (**AC** 10, damage threshold 5, 50 hp, **immune** to psychic and poison damage). When a beast-folk champion arrives, it attacks the gates with its greataxe, unless engaged in melee combat or otherwise distracted. If the gates are destroyed, the beast-folk enter the city through the gatehouse rather than trying to climb over the walls.

2. Gatehouse

A 30-foot-tall gatehouse protects the southern entrance to the city. The gatehouse is comprised of three levels: the ground level, a second floor with access to the walls (**Areas 3** and **4**), and a rooftop. A stairwell in the middle of the gatehouse connects the levels. Moving from one level to another requires 10 feet of movement.

Ground Floor. Heavy oak gates close off the gatehouse's ground floor. The southern gates are barred from the inside, as described in **Area 1**. The northern gates aren't barred but require an action to open or close.

Second Floor. Single, unlocked doors to the west and east open onto the tops of the walls.

Rooftop. The gatehouse's roof is 30 feet above the road (**Area 1**), 10 feet above the second floor (**Areas 3** and **4**). Scattered about the rooftop are barrels, crates, and sacks. Each barrel holds a dozen javelins, while the crates contain an essentially unlimited supply of arrows. Inside each sack is a collection of broken glass, pottery shards, and other debris, which can be scattered on the ground like caltrops. As an action, a character can drop a barrel, crate, or sack over the battlements. A creature in the space where the object lands must make a successful **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** or take 6 (1d12) bludgeoning damage. The space then becomes difficult terrain with the effect of caltrops for the rest of the encounter.

3. West Wall

Ironcourt's walls rise 20 feet above the ground below. Climbing the walls is impossible without grappling hooks or similar gear. Groups of beast-folk arrive to the battle carrying ladders (as described in ***Running the Battle***). To secure a ladder against the wall, two or more beast-folk must work together, each of them using an action to do so. Shoving a ladder off the wall requires an action and a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check**. Increase the **DC** of this check by 2 for each creature on the ladder, and for each beast-folk in excess of two securing a ladder when the check is made.

Alchemist's Fire. Two barrels filled with alchemist's fire rest against the battlements. Dropping a barrel over the battlements requires an action and a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check**. A creature in the space where a barrel lands must make a successful **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** or take 6 (1d12) bludgeoning damage. The barrel then shatters, exposing its contents to the air. Each creature within 10 feet of a barrel when it shatters catches on fire and takes 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a **DC 10 Dexterity check** to extinguish the flames.

4. East Wall

This area is identical to **Area 4**. On round 6 of the battle, a **beast-folk champion** with the head and wings of a vulture (as an **orc** with a fly Speed of 30 ft.) lands atop the wall. The champion attacks any characters in the area. If no characters are present, it instead flies to the top of the gatehouse (**Area 2**) or the other wall (**Area 3**) in search of prey.

5. The King's Guard

At the end of round 12, a squad of eight **guards** arrive to secure the southern gates. The guards are led by **Sir Davick**, a **knight** in service of the king. No more beast-folk arrive from this point forward. You may play out the rest of the battle if you choose, but Davick and his forces are more than a match for any remaining foes.

Whether or not the characters hold the gates, Sir Davick thanks them for their service. In the coming days, he enlists the party to investigate why the beast-folk attacked the city. He suggests the characters start their search by tracking the beast-folk to their home, a misty swamp a day's ride west of Ironcourt.



Quico Vicens

5
Characters

Level
1

Forest



Tommi Salama

Patchwork's Pit

William Fischer

The game seems harmless enough: the first team to collect three chickens from the bottom of a steep-walled pit is declared the winner. But Patchwork Mabel—the mysterious figure who runs the contest—is a night hag in disguise. And the peck of Mabel's "chickens" turns flesh to stone…

Patchwork's Pit is an introductory adventure designed to start a new campaign. Characters who know each other prior to the adventure might be hired to track down a competitor who failed to return from Patchwork's Pit. Alternatively, the characters might meet for the first time at the pit. In this case, Mabel groups the characters into a team as the adventure begins.

Patchwork's Pit. Each level of Patchwork's Pit is 10 feet lower than the one above it, with the bottom of the pit resting 30 feet below ground. Crossing from one level to another requires 10 feet of movement. A creature can avoid spending additional movement by making a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. On a failure, the creature takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and falls prone on the lower level.

Running the Contest. Before the contest begins, players may arrange their characters wherever they choose around the top of the pit. The members of the opposing team (see below) spread out in other unoccupied spaces. Five cockatrices peck at the dirt in the bottom of the pit.

Once all participants are ready, Mabel explains the rules of the game. The first team to place three "chickens" in the cages at the top of the pit (**Area 1**) wins the contest. Mabel stresses that no harm should come to her chickens; otherwise, competitors are free to pursue victory however they choose. She promises a prize of 150 gp (or another reward chosen by the GM) to the winning team.

When Mabel finishes, roll initiative and play out the encounter as you would a normal combat. The encounter ends when one side wins or once the game's win conditions are impossible (if all participants are unconscious or petrified, for example).

The Opposing Team. The characters make up one of two teams competing in Patchwork Mabel's game. The other team includes **Regna**, an imposing human thug. Four commoners (or however many are necessary to make an equal number of participants) fill out her team.

On their turn, each commoner moves toward the nearest cockatrice and tries to grab it. They may also steal a cockatrice grabbed by a hero by making a successful **Strength (Athletics) check** contested by the character's **Strength (Athletics) check** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. If attacked, commoners fight back with their clubs, knocking out any character reduced to 0 hit points. (A character knocked out by a commoner falls unconscious but is stable.)

Regna ignores the cockatrices in favor of fighting the characters. She focuses her attacks on anyone holding a cockatrice. Regna employs lethal force but does not attack unconscious characters.

The Cockatrices. Grabbing a cockatrice requires a successful **Strength (Athletics) check** contested by the cockatrice's **Strength (Athletics) check (-2)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (+1)**. The cockatrices are dumb critters and have a 50% chance of using either strategy, despite **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** being obviously the better choice. On its turn, a cockatrice moves 20 feet in a random direction. A cockatrice that starts its turn within 5 feet of a non-cockatrice makes a *Bite* attack against that creature before moving. If grabbed, a cockatrice either attempts to escape the grapple or makes a *Bite* attack against the creature holding it. A cockatrice automatically escapes a grapple if the creature holding it turns to stone.

Mabel has clipped the cockatrices' wings, rendering them flightless. If a cockatrice escapes the pit, Mabel's minion Bobbins (see **Area 1**) herds it back the following round.

1. Patchwork Mabel

Patchwork Mabel (a **night hag**) and her servant, a sniveling **dust mephit** named **Bobbins**, oversee the contest from near these wooden cages. Mabel uses her *Change Shape* feature to appear as a beautiful human woman. In her true form, she is a blue-skinned crone with crooked antlers growing from her brow. Mabel wears an enchanted dress that appears to be a colorful patchwork shift. Characters who pierce this illusion by interacting with Mabel and succeeding on a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** learn the dress is sewn from flayed skin.

2. The Crowd

A dozen or so **commoners** gather around the pit to watch the contest. They are a raucous lot, leaping from their benches whenever misfortune befalls a competitor. If the characters are here to track down a missing competitor, they can question the spectators by attempting a **DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**. On a success, the party confirms that competitors turned to stone are never seen again, despite Mabel's reassurances that the petrification is only temporary.



3. Walkways

Rickety walkways span gaps in the ledges here and on the east side of the pit. A creature can cross a walkway with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. On a failure, the creature takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and falls prone on the ledge below.

4. Unstable Ledge

This 15-foot-square section of ledge collapses the first time a Medium sized or larger creature moves onto it. Creatures in the area must make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw**. On a success, the creature can leap to an unoccupied space within 5 feet. A creature that fails to jump takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and falls prone at the bottom of the pit.

5. Rock Bottom

The floor of the pit is littered with bones and the broken remains of petrified competitors. Treat spaces filled with this debris as difficult terrain, which the five **cockatrices** ignore.

Conclusion

Mabel rewards the first team to retrieve three cockatrices with the contest's prize. Though petrified competitors prove too bulky to haul back to town, Mabel promises to watch over their bodies until the effect wears off and discourages characters to stay and wait. With a **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check**, the party can confirm that Mabel is lying. This check is made with **advantage** if the party has heard rumors to this extent from the crowd in **Area 2**. Left alone, however, Mabel absconds with the petrified victims. What Mabel does with these statues is left for the GM to decide. It takes a **DC 17 Charisma (Deception) check** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** to get Mabel to agree to the party staying until the petrified victims recover. Mabel does not respond to intimidation, ending any conversation immediately, but she is a vain creature: Attempts to convince her that include copious amounts of flattery are made with **advantage**.

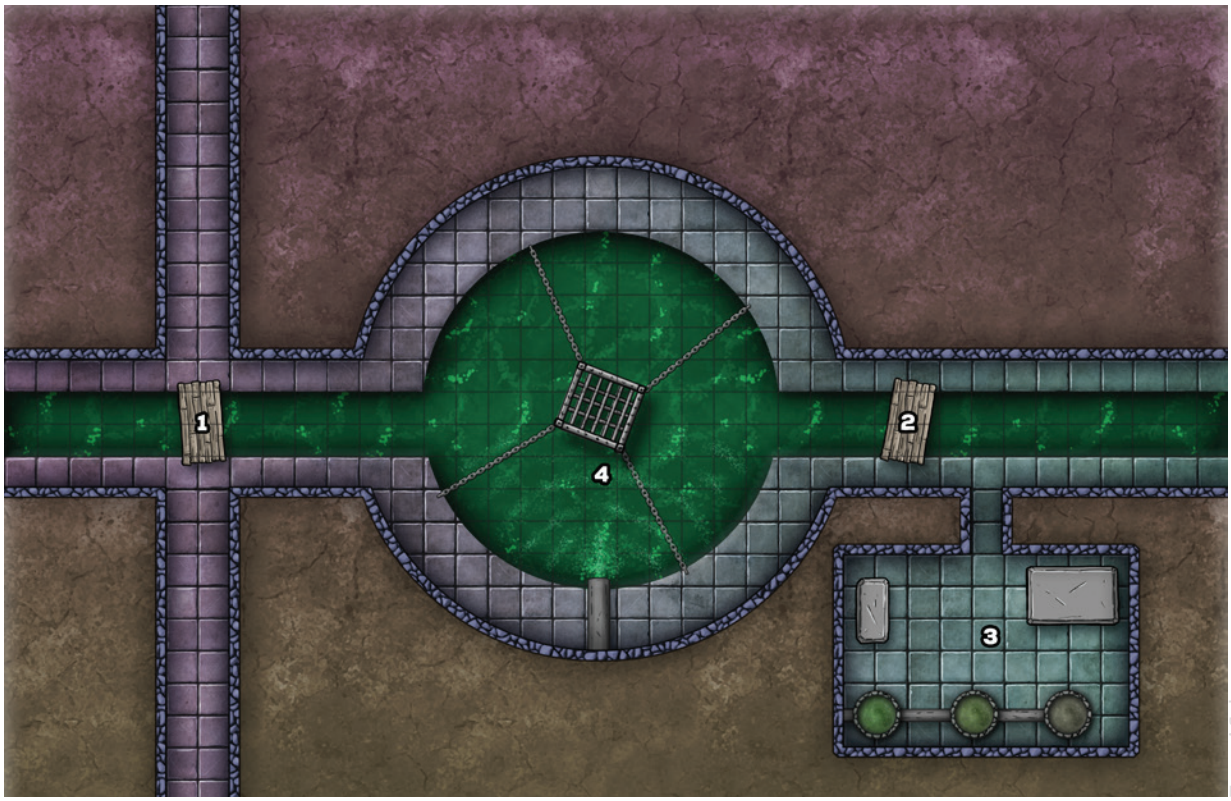
Patchwork Mabel is more than a match for the party, at least for now. Thankfully, she prefers to toy with mortals rather than kill them outright. If attacked, Mabel either casts *sleep* on the party or retreats to the Ethereal Plane, leaving Bobbins to handle belligerent characters.

Mates Laurentiu

5 Characters

Level 1

Urban



Tommi Salama

Noble Experiments

Airian Eastman, Thilo Graf

A factory in town has been leaking chemicals into the sewers below, and after hiring a master alchemist to investigate the leak, rumors of illegal experiments performed on the poor began to circulate in the dark alleyways haunted by the downtrodden. Then, a noble went missing, and as always, when the elite is afraid, actions are taken. The party is hired to investigate the leak: They should take a sample at the pollution's source for further analysis and gather any clues about missing persons.

There are several tunnels which lead into the sewers, but without a map or a guide, the party must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check** to avoid getting lost. Even on a successful check, there is a 30% chance of becoming lost. Becoming lost means encountering a **giant rat**. After becoming lost thrice, the party automatically arrives in **Area 1** or **Area 2**. Organizing a map requires the greasing of the palms of a criminal or underpaid official with a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, or a plausible excuse presented with a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check**. A map or guide lets the party choose whether they arrive in **Area 1** or **Area 2**.

Sewer Stench. The sewer is heavy with the scent of chemicals, decay, and rotting fish. As the party nears **Area 1**, the stench intensifies, requiring a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** to get used to the smell. On a failed save, a character has the poisoned condition. The poisoned character can repeat the saving throw every 5 minutes, and once a character succeeds on the save, they are immune to the stench for 24 hours.

Mildly Caustic Water. The water is laced with mildly acidic chemicals. Any creature not adapted to the chemicals takes 2 (1d4) acid damage when they start their turn in the water. If the creature is fully submerged, it takes 5 (2d4) acid damage at the start of its turn instead. Submersion also exposes a creature to cackle fever.

Rafts. The rafts in **Area 1** and **Area 2** are not anchored. If the NPCs in **Area 3** hear (**passive Perception 12**) the party, they may attempt to remove the rafts to trap the party on one side. Alternatively, the party can use them to navigate the caustic water in **Area 4**. However, it takes a **DC 15 Dexterity (water vehicles)** or **Strength (water vehicles) check** to navigate without paddles or rope.

1. First Raft

There is a 70% chance the party arrives here. A network of tunnels crisscross under the town and three passages lead to **Area 1**. The water is foul with scum and foam floating on top. The loud sound of rushing water covers any noise made in this area.

A **glass gator** ◆ was released into the murky water here as a deterrent for interlopers. While it is immune to *Mildly Caustic Water*, it does not enter **Area 4** unless forced to; the chemicals in **Area 4** are concentrated enough to hurt the gator. The gator attacks as soon as it can leap at a character and surprise the party. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the gator's movement in the water before it attacks.

2. Second Raft

There is a 30% chance of emerging here instead of **Area 1**. There is a crack in the wall near the raft on the south wall, which can be noticed with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, or automatically if the party investigates the walls. Stashed inside the crack are two vials of antitoxin and a *potion of healing*.

Four sickly-looking **acid ants** **with human eyes**, an experiment gone wrong, pour out of another crack in the wall.

If the party approaches from this direction, a successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) group check** is required to avoid being heard by the occupants of **Area 3**.

3. Experimental Laboratory

This laboratory seems oddly out of place. The master alchemist is currently not here, but curiously, two masked **nobles** in hooded cloaks with an **acolyte** servant are here to check on the project's progress, while apprentice alchemist **Igrys** (**cult fanatic**, no *Dark Devotion*, uses *Acid Globs* instead of *Daggers*, dealing acid instead of piercing damage) shows them the results of the last experiment and explains complications.

Vats. Three closed glass vats against the south wall are used for experiments. One tank is empty, while the other two are filled. A **dipsa** floats around in the first filled tank and can only attack if its tank is broken (**AC** 10, 3 hp) or the lid opened (an action). The second tank contains gelatinous eggs. The liquid in both is acidic and deals 5 (2d4) acid damage per round of skin contact (falling prone in a spill or reaches inside). It can be overturned as an action, dealing 7 (3d4) acid damage in a 15-foot cone, or half as much on a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw.**

Table. A large stone table in the west sports several vials of potions, poisons, and pieces of alchemical equipment. Among the bottles are a *potion of poison*, and *potion of climbing*.

Slab. Atop a stone slab lie the remains of a deceased acid ant that has been surgically dissected to better understand its anatomy. If the *Increased Challenge* in **Area 4** is implemented, there should be some scribbled about transformation magic gone awry here, hinting that the "failure" now can at least guard the cage.

Igrys attempts to flee to warn his master as soon as he can, while the nobles try to reason with the party using bribes (offering 30 gp each, to be paid once everyone is back in the city), or resort to threats. If the party is unwilling to let Igrys get away, the others try to buy time for him to escape. The death of any noble may have significant consequences.

Treasure. Each noble carries a ring, 10 sp, and a vial of antitoxin. The acolyte carries a club and an obscure holy symbol of a deity nobody in the party is familiar with.

4. A Baited Cage

Pipe. The source of the water rushes in from a large pipe in the southern wall. An **alchemical apprentice ooze** makes its lair in the pipe, attacking any creature within 10 feet of the pipe. Taking a sample here suffices to prove the pollution's source.

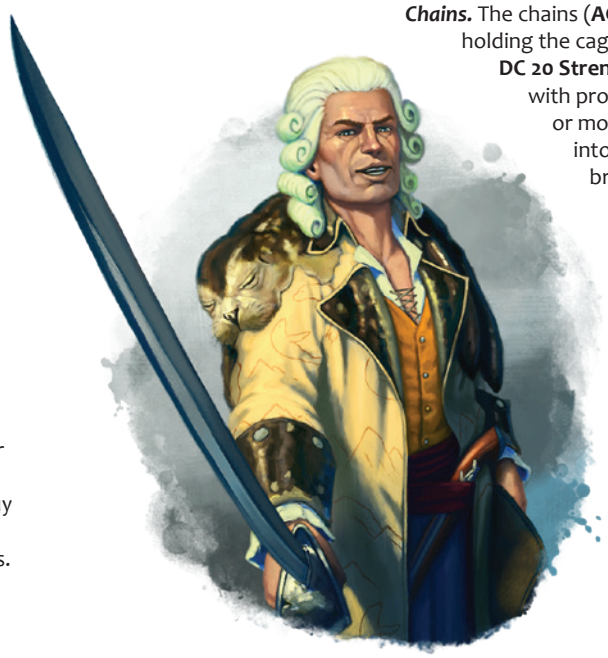
All hearing-based **Wisdom (Perception) checks** have **disadvantage** in this area. The pool of water churns obscuring the water, hiding the **cavefish zombie** lurking below. The zombie is immune to the chemicals.

Caustic Water. The mix of chemicals in this area is more potent and caustic. Any creature not adapted to the chemicals takes 5 (2d4) acid damage when they start their turn in the water. If the creature is fully submerged, it takes 10 (4d4) acid damage at the start of its turn instead. Submersion also exposes a creature to cackle fever. Climbing out of the water without assistance requires a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check**; no check is required if a character on the walkway uses the Help action.

Cage. A humanoid figure dripping with water is hunched over in the cage. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** is required to realize the cage is filled with rags, not a body. The cage hovers just above the water level. A family signet ring of a nobleman glitters, clearly visible, in the rags.

A successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** is required to reach the cage if using the chains to cross or leaping. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools unlocks the cage, but its door is spring-loaded and heavy. It slams shut if released, and its massive weight prevents *mage hand* from holding it open.

Chains. The chains (**AC** 15, 10 hp, damage threshold 5) holding the cage can be broken with a successful **DC 20 Strength check**, or a **DC 15 Strength check** with proper tools, such as a crowbar. If two or more chains are broken, the cage dips into the water. It falls if all four chains are broken, leaving only one third of air.



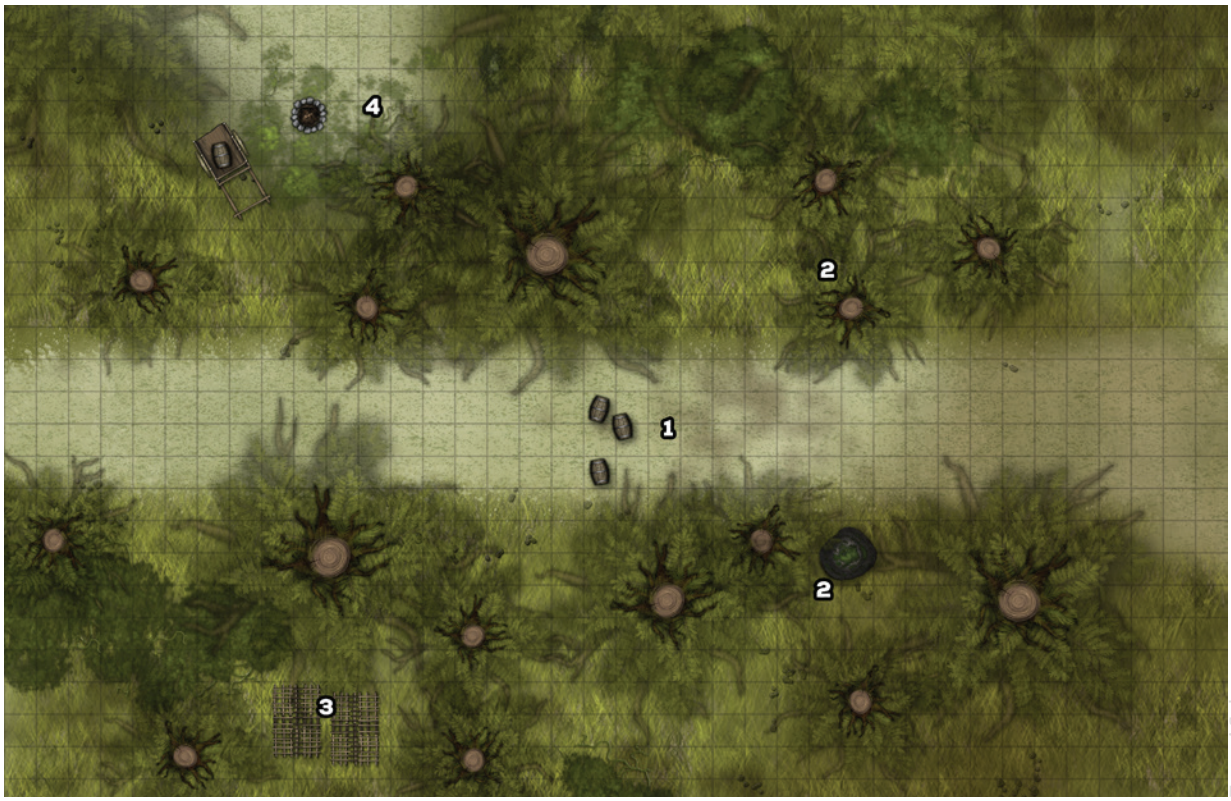
Increased Challenge. If the GM wants an increased challenge, the cavefish zombie might be the missing noble, grotesquely transformed. Slaying it makes it revert to the original form, with all associated repercussions. In such an instance, catching it "alive" is important; to do so, the party has to lower the cage into the water, hold open the door, then lure the zombie inside or grapple it and Shove it inside. Award 300 XP if the party manages to trap the cavefish zombie without destroying it.

Dean Spencer

5 Characters

Level 1

Forest



Tommi Salama

Big Game

William Fisher, Thilo Graf

Barnok is a little goblin with grand ambitions. After being exiled from his tribe, Barnok headed to the city in hopes of becoming a big game hunter. The goblin's plan was simple: he would lead expeditions into the wilderness, returning with exotic beasts to stock the menageries of wealthy nobles and powerful wizards. Unfortunately for Barnok, his first foray ended in disaster when sprites destroyed his traps and ruined his supplies.

The determined goblin has now returned to the forest to catch the sprites who foiled his plans. This time, Barnok's dire wolf Zika accompanies him, as does some additional muscle: a pair of human rangers and an ogre named Grunk. Barnok and his hunting party intend to capture the troublesome sprites using a glue Barnok purchased especially for this purpose.

1. Glue Barrels

As the characters travel through the forest, they spot two figures on the road ahead of them. The figures are busy prying the lid from a barrel and do not yet notice the party.

Ezrik and Yannosh. The figures are **Ezrik** and **Yannosh**, a pair of human **scouts** Barnok hired to help capture the sprites. The scouts have suffered the effects of Barnok's glue before and now work carefully to remove the barrel's lid without spilling any on themselves.

Approaching the Scouts. Characters who approach through the forest (**Area 2**) can sneak up on Ezrik and Yannosh with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check**. If the scouts spot the party, they gruffly suggest the characters move along.

Negotiating with the Scouts. Ezrik and Yannosh have been paid well for their services and can't be persuaded to back down. However, a convincing story involving "mutual acquaintances" and a **DC 12 Charisma (Deception) check** can make them reconsider. Otherwise, it takes a **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check** or a bribe of 20 or more gp to make them back down. If the party refuses, the scouts draw their shortswords and attack. Combat here alerts Grunk in **Area 4** and Barnok and Zika in **Area 3**.

Glue Barrel. Two of the barrels on the road stand empty, their contents already applied to the trees in **Area 2**. A creature within 5 feet of the remaining barrel can use an action to overturn it, covering a 10-foot-square area with sticky glue. For the next 8 hours, the ground in that area is difficult terrain, and a creature that enters the area or starts its turn there must make a **DC 17 Strength saving throw**. On a failure, the creature becomes stuck and is restrained. As an action, a creature can attempt a **DC 17 Strength check**, freeing the stuck creature on a success.

Glued Ammunition. A creature adjacent to a *Glue Barrel* can use its bonus action to dip a piece of ammunition that deals piercing damage into the glue before firing it. When firing *Glued Ammunition* at a target adjacent to a solid object that

the ammunition can pierce, the firing creature can forego dealing damage, and instead glue the target to the object adjacent to it. This affects the creature as per *Glue Barrel*.

2. Sticky Trees

Ezrik and Yannosh have spent the past few hours coating the trees in this area with glue. Characters who make a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** spot the scouts' handiwork. At first glance, the glue seems to be some sort of sap, but a character who makes a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check** realizes the substance isn't natural.

Glued Trees. A creature that moves within 5 feet of a glue-covered tree must make a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** or become restrained. As an action, a creature can attempt a **DC 17 Strength check**, freeing the stuck creature on a success.

Morningbeam. Shortly after Barnok and his hirelings returned, two sprites named Morningbeam and Glowbright arrived to drive them off. However, they quickly became trapped in Barnok's glue. Glowbright is already being held captive in **Area 3**. Morningbeam turned invisible so that the hunters wouldn't notice her, but she remains stuck to one of the trees north of the road.

Freeing Morningbeam. If she spots the characters, **Morningbeam** (a **sprite**) reveals herself. Speaking softly so as not to alert Ezrik and Yannosh, the sprite explains the situation and asks the characters for help. Freeing Morningbeam from the glue requires a successful **DC 17 Strength check**. Once freed, Morningbeam thanks the characters but refuses to leave the area until Glowbright is rescued.

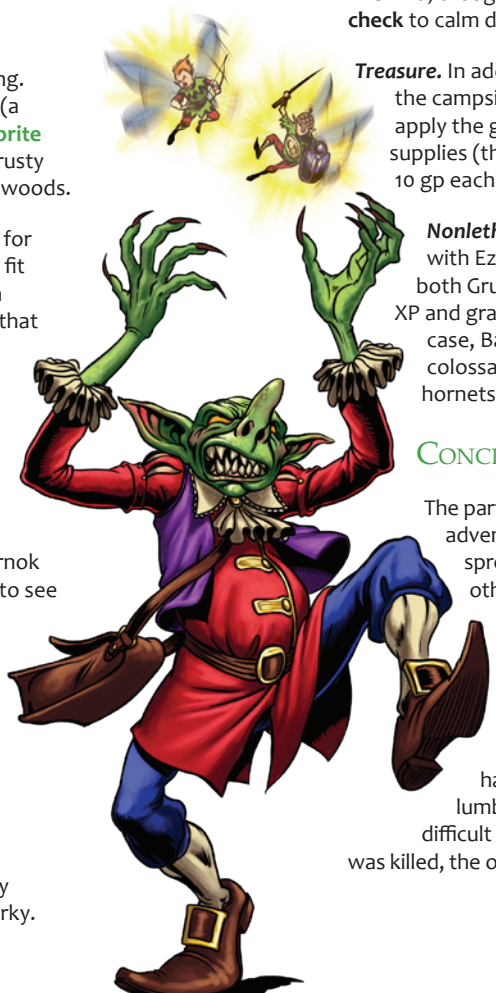
3. Sprite Cages

Stacks of wooden cages fill this clearing. At the start of the adventure, **Barnok** (a **goblin**) is tormenting **Glowbright**, a **sprite** locked in one of the cages, while his trusty mount **Zika** (a **dire wolf**) watches the woods.

Cages. Though Barnok intended them for sprites, the cages are large enough to fit a Small creature. There are 16 cages in total. Each is fitted with a simple lock that can be opened with a key Barnok wears around his neck. Without the key, a creature using thieves' tools can pick a lock with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity check**. The cages can be forced open with a successful **DC 16 Strength check**.

Barnok. If he hears noise in **Area 1**, Barnok mounts Zika to investigate. Unwilling to see his dreams dashed yet again, Barnok gives the characters no quarter. However, the goblin surrenders if defeat seems inevitable, offering the contents of his coin purse (26 gp) and the supplies in **Area 4** in exchange for his life.

Zika. If Barnok is dismounted, Zika immediately ceases all hostility until mounted again; she is an exceptionally well-trained girl with a fondness for jerky.



Befriending Zika. If bribed with a piece of jerky from a trail ration, or with a **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**, she can be made to back down, but only when not mounted by Barnok. While mounted, Zika always obeys Barnok, but she will not attack Grunk (see **Area 4**) under any circumstances.

4. Campsite

Barnok's campsite lies just north of the forest road. Unless alerted to the party's presence, **Grunk** (an **ogre**) is here preparing to haul the final *Glue Barrel* to **Area 1** as the characters approach.

Grunk. Grunk can use an action to hurl a *Glue Barrel* (with a +6 bonus) at a target within 30 feet of him. On a hit, the target takes 6 (1d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage and is restrained as the barrel breaks and covers the target with glue (as per *Glue Barrel*, see **Area 1**). As an action, a creature can attempt a **DC 17 Strength check**, freeing the stuck creature on a success.

Befriending Grunk. Though brutish, Grunk isn't mean-spirited. In fact, Barnok tricked Grunk into joining the expedition only by promising him a chance to make some "forest friends" and by allowing him to pet Zika. The dire wolf took an immediate liking to the ogre. While the party's arrival startles him, Grunk begs for mercy as soon as he takes more than 10 hp damage. The characters might even convince the ogre to turn on his employer by making a successful **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. Morningbeam and Glowbright can confirm Grunk's good nature (his alignment is chaotic good) using their *Heart Sight* ability.

Grunk becomes very angry if the party severely hurts or kills Zika, though: It takes a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to calm down Grunk in such an instance.

Treasure. In addition to the glue barrel, a cart parked near the campsite contains a collection of brushes (used to apply the glue), as well as bedrolls and other adventuring supplies (the equivalent of four explorer's packs worth 10 gp each). The cart itself is sturdy and worth 15 gp.

Nonlethal Resolution. If the party managed to negotiate with Ezrik and Yannosh, free Glowbright, and get both Grunk and Zika to back down, award double XP and grant the party a fey-themed boon. In such a case, Barnok looks around in desperation, throws a colossal fit, and is then beset by a swarm of angry hornets that drive him cursing into the woods.

Conclusion

The party's encounter with Barnok may lead to further adventures. Perhaps Morningbeam and Glowbright spread word of the party's bravery, and a dryad or other fey creature approaches the characters for help. Alternatively, the characters may decide to liberate the beasts held captive by one of Barnok's patrons. Ezrik and Yannosh have associated in town, so if the party killed the scouts, they may have a vendetta on their hands. And then, of course, there is the matter of Grunk and Zika. Unlike Barnok, Grunk has simple dreams, but finding a new home for the lumbering ogre and the "good wolfie" could prove more difficult than the characters expect. If Grunk lives, but Zika was killed, the ogre may end up nursing a grudge against the party.

Mates Laurentiu

3-4 Characters

Levels 1-2

Forest



Tommi Salama

Inklings Gathered

Grant Simpson

The Great Artificer Mage, Aliza N'thuziel, famed and feared far and wide, is missing. In fact, she has been missing for years. At this point, the consensus among her fellow magicademics is that she at least isn't on this plane of existence. Her various workshops strewn across the Material Plane are guarded by construct servants and loyal familiars. Her northernmost workshop, disguised as a cabin from the prying eyes of her rivals, while her least favorite, still has its fair share of guardians to keep its secrets safe from thieves and adversaries.

The party might have come across N'thuziel's cabin while seeking shelter on a snowy forest path, another mage could have asked them to steal the important research, or they may be after the secrets for themselves.

1. Stryx's Riddle

The workshop is on a small path through a remote snowy wood. A dual set of pens outside the workshop houses a number of small creatures inside. Closer inspection reveals three **homunculi** in each of the two pens, but they do not appear hostile as the party approaches.

An **owl** perches on the overhang above the front door. It is the **stryx** ◆ N'thuziel left to keep watch over this workshop. N'thuziel left instructions to allow anyone who answers the riddle correctly to enter. However, N'thuziel neglected to tell the stryx what riddle to ask. After years of pondering, it believes the answer to the absent riddle must be "solitude". When the party approaches the front door, the stryx asks for their help devising the answer's riddle. If they provide a satisfactory one, the stryx allows them entry without harm. If they cannot, the stryx calls upon the homunculi in the pens to attack the party.

2. Avid Reader

The mage's library/dining room might be long abandoned, but is in pristine condition. Two bookshelves stand against the far wall, lined with dusty tomes. An inkpot, quill, and dish with a half-dissected homunculus sit on a wooden table which doubled as N'thuziel's dining and operating table. The dish sports a minor dweomer that conserves any corpse of a Tiny or smaller creature placed within, halting the onset of decay as if affected by *gentle repose*.

N'thuziel's neglect of this workshop has allowed three **inklings** ⬢ to form among the bookshelves and they have devoured every line of text in the shelf. The inkling in this area has been hunted by the **bookkeeper** ⬢ in **Area 5** and is hiding in the inkpot when the party arrives. Noticing its well-concealed presence requires a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check**. The inkling defends itself if needed, but primarily wants to eliminate the bookkeeper.

The massive fur rug covers a secret hatch in the floor. A stone staircase under the hatch leads to **Area 6**. A **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the hatch. If the adventurers search below the fur, the **DC** decreases to 10 and the party has **advantage** on the check to notice the hatch. Knocking on the floor below the fur automatically notices the hatch.

3. Living Shield

The section to the right of the entrance is stacked with supply boxes and barrels. A desk and bookshelf lie farther in with a small alcove beyond them. The alcove features a mount for a shield, but no sign of the shield. On the desk is a notebook that mentions the curiously absent *animated shield*. The *animated shield* can only be activated with the command phrase written in the notebook. Another **inkling** is hiding in this bookshelf and attacks the party if they touch the notebook, afraid they will take its "iron ration" away. It takes a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the inkling. The shield has been moved to the crypt (**Area 6**) for safekeeping while N'thuziel is away.



4. Secrets of N'thuziel

The desk in this area is where N'thuziel spent most of her time. A thin scalpel, odd homunculus parts, and coded research papers lie on the desk along with the note from the bookkeeper. The fireplace behind it is cold and dark. The bookshelf in this area has been picked clean by an **inkling** as well. The inkling is masquerading as congealed homunculus blood. A **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices that something's wrong with the fluid, while a **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** or **Intelligence (Arcana) check** deduces that the liquid is not homunculus blood. A magically locked wooden chest sits under the front of the desk, holding important construct animation magic research.

A sloppily scrawled note carries a message from the bookkeeper, claiming that the chest is full of important research and powerful magic tomes. With a **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check**, the party can glean that the note doesn't seem like it was written by a humanoid hand. The chest does hold an excerpt of N'thuziel's most important research (worth up to 1,000 gp to the discerning scholar, plus 2 scrolls containing rare spells the GM deems appropriate), but the note is a trap for the inklings. It takes a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** to identify and suppress the enchantment on the chest, followed by a **DC 20 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools to open the chest. Anyone who touches the chest is targeted by the animated armor at the front of the workshop. If the **animated armor** is destroyed, the chest's failsafe immolates it, reducing it and its contents to cinders within seconds.

5. Bookkeeper's Hideout

This slightly sunken workstation was where N'thuziel conducted most of her experiments and magical constructions. A larger table lies in the center with coffee-stained schematics, flasks of strange oils, and odd construct parts scattered about. Four small magically lit braziers stand in the corners. A bookshelf and a desk take up the rest of the space. A research notebook, and a *scroll of mirror image* rest on the desk.

The **bookkeeper** is hiding in its spellbook under the desk. It has been hiding from the inklings to protect its book, but also wants to save N'thuziel's research. The spellbook holds the *floating disk* and *unseen servant* spells. While it does not approve of the party's intrusion, the bookkeeper avoids combat at first and offers the scroll as payment for defeating the inklings. It cannot speak but communicates through ink splash writing in Common. It is not willing to part with anything other than the scroll and attempts to stop the party if they take more, by force if necessary.

6. Working Overtime

N'thuziel's assistants who suffered work-related demises are laid to rest in this crypt under the workshop. Not one to let resources go to waste, N'thuziel turned the unfortunates into two **zombies** shambling around the crypt area behind the door. Their moans can be heard through the door with a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check**. An open pit trap has been put in place in front of the door to prevent them from escaping, its presence obvious in all but total darkness. One zombie has fallen into and subsequently climbed out of the open pit trap already; it only has 19 hit points. The deactivated *animated shield* from **Area 3** rests on the central altar.

Open Pit Trap

Simple trap (level 1–4, moderate threat)

An open, 10-foot-deep pit sits behind the door of the crypt. It was designed to keep the zombies from leaving the crypt and is not well hidden.

Trigger. Anyone stepping into the trap's space may fall into the pit.

Effect. The triggering creature must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, they avoid falling into the pit. A failed save results in the creature falling into the pit and taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

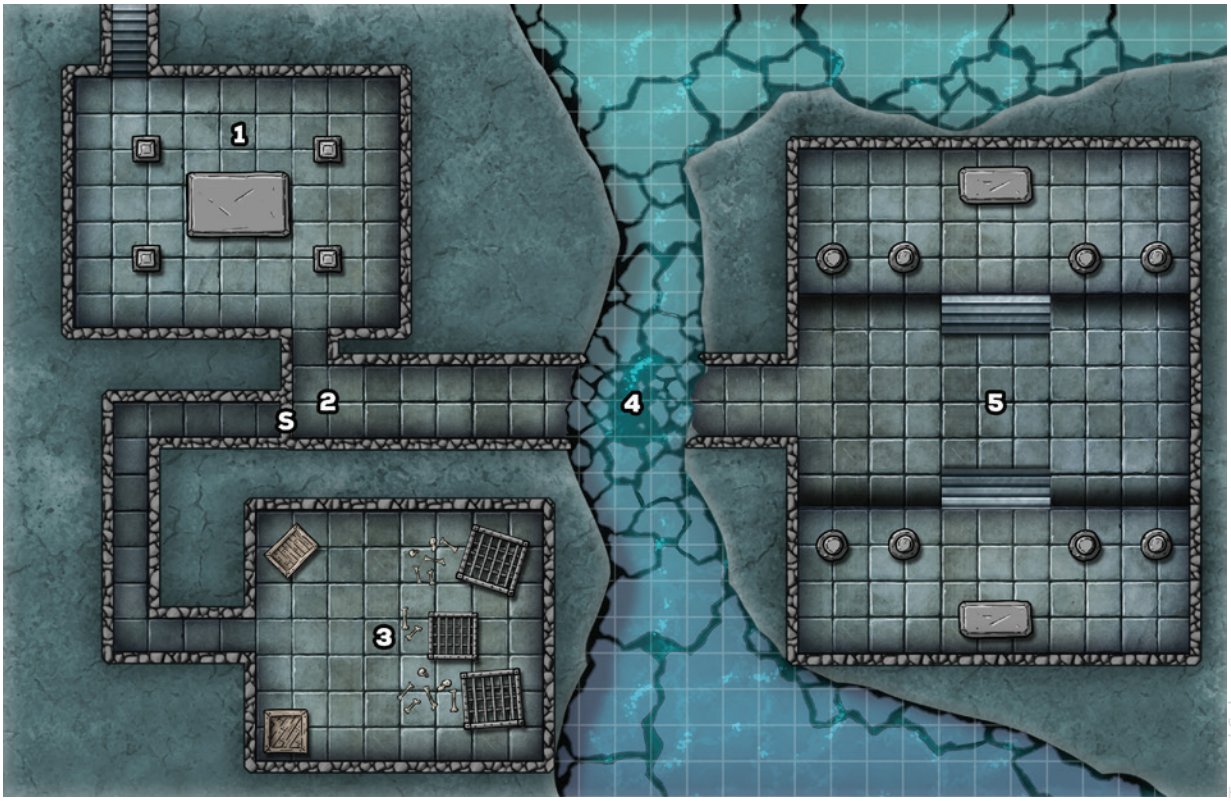
Countermeasures. In all but total darkness, the pit is obvious. In total darkness, it can be noticed with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, or automatically with a trusty 10-foot-pole or similar instrument. The corners can be stepped across by Small or larger creatures without any problems. Tiny creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to step across a corner.

Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 1-2

Arctic



Tommi Salama

Rime Cairn's Return

Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Far to the south in the lands of encroaching ice, favorite stories involve the Rime Cairn, each as varied as the teller. Most claim it is an ancient warlord's tomb, haunted and cursed, that phases in and out of existence.

Over the years it has eluded many a treasure hunter, but now it was finally found:

Not in some undiscovered valley or rift, but an area well-known by the locals. It melted into existence—a cairn surrounded by an icy lake, heated volcanic springs. The mist smells of sulfur and shifts in the air, morphing into foul apparitions.

Journey to the Cairn

Before the heroes set out, they can hire a guide for 5 gp. The path is rough terrain and finding one's way even with directions can be difficult. A guide takes them through the four-day journey without incident, but quickly leaves once the party reaches the large valley where the Rime Cairn sits.

Without a guide, the journey is more taxing. At the end of each day, a hero may attempt a **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check**. On the second failure the group becomes lost, increasing the days it takes to get to the Rime Cairn by 1. If the party takes more than four days to reach the cairn, the total hit points of all characters are reduced by 1 for each day. This reduction lasts until they can take a long rest inside a warm and safe shelter.

Entering The Cairn

When the cairn comes within sight, it makes even the hardiest warrior pause: It thrums with a power tinged with almost tangible sorrow. The massive stone door, carved with the effigy of a warrior, opens to the slightest push of its rime-encrusted surface. As rime falls tinkling to the floor, the party sees stairs leading to the first inner chamber (**Area 1**).

1. Entrance Tomb

A massive sarcophagus, its lid rune-covered, sits at the chamber's center. Granite pillars surround it.

Unlike the ones on the pillars, the lid's runes are magical, and can be identified as abjuration runes with a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or *detect magic* . They are not the formula of a trap, but a melodramatic poem about warrior exploits. If read in its long-lost, original dialect, it opens the sarcophagus, but that's beyond the scope of *comprehend language*. With a **DC 20 Intelligence check**, the party identifies a key sentence:

"Ber er hver að baki nema sér bróður eigi." (Bare is the back of a brotherless man.) If the party does a sufficiently solid job at pronouncing this, the sarcophagus opens, its inhabitant not disturbed. The party can force open the sarcophagus with a **DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check**, or one using a crowbar or similar tools, but this angers the inhabitant, a **challenge** 2

wight that lacks *Life Drain*. It viciously attacks those who defiled its resting place. The undead wears a trio of golden rings (worth 4 gp each) and a beautiful silver torc (worth 10 gp). Trying to steal those without asking for it solemnly also incurs its anger.

The tomb's exit is 5 feet wide but only 3 feet tall and stands another 2 feet from the floor. It must be crawled through to get to **Area 2**.

2. Main Shaft

This frost-covered shaft is only 5 feet tall and slopes downward. Its walls are adorned with ochre murals on parchment-white paint that seems to fade into ice as the shaft descends toward the ice (**Area 4**). The mural on the wall near the terminus depicts a warrior with a pack of snow cats waiting at their right.

Behind the hunting cats' mural hides a secret door that can be noticed with a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check**, but the pressure plate that opens the door is hidden at the far end of the shaft, near the water (same DCs as the door to find it). Alternatively, the mural can be molten as though it were ice: Holding a torch or similar source of heat directly to it for 1 minute melts it. Being simply in proximity to a heat source does not melt the mural.

Traversing the shaft is tricky. Unless the heroes use ropes and spikes or other suitable precautions, every 20 feet they move down the shaft requires a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**; on a failure, they slide 20 feet down the shaft toward the water and may fall into **Area 4**.

3. Dead Cats

If the heroes entered this area by melting the door, the skeletal cats dwelling in this chamber wait to strike on their side of the chamber's entrance. Otherwise, they are in the crates and cages.

The five undead cats dwelling here are **skeletal snow cats**. They lack *Snow Camouflage*, but are **immune** to poison damage, exhaustion and the poisoned condition. They are **vulnerable** to bludgeoning damage. Nearly as nimble and used to the snow as they were in life, they don't need to make Dexterity saving throws while traversing **Area 2**. Once the secret door opens, they investigate.

4. Misty Ice

The icy water is deathly cold, dealing 3 (1d6) cold damage to each creature who enters it or ends its round within the water. The heroes will have to find a way to cross it or swim to the other side. The crates in **Area 3** can be disassembled to make an impromptu bridge.

5. Main Tomb

This freezing chamber is a vast tomb, with a pair of sarcophagi atop large, raised daises. The stonework is similar to the entry tomb (**Area 1**).

The sarcophagus to the right of the entrance is open.

A young, beautiful man sobs next to the open sarcophagus. He is **Hakon**, a male **lady in white** with 24 hp, consort to the warlord, killed and buried with his love. His only wish is to be reunited with his Lord, but he can't open the other sarcophagus. He implores the heroes for help in his native language (he does not know Common) and points to the sarcophagus. If they don't seem willing to help, Hakon attacks, trying to use *Inflict Sorrow*. It takes a **DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check** to open the sarcophagus. The remains of the warlord, a **shadow skeleton**, rises from it. The undead embrace, then bow to the party and enter a hostile stance, but wait for the party to do the same. With a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Wisdom (Insight) check**, the party can discern that the undead do not want to kill the party. They wish to perish in honorable combat, in accordance with their beliefs. The undead won't let the party retreat or cast spells, attacking if the party does either. They do let the party heal themselves or move into tactical positions within this Area. Hakon does not use *Invisibility* and loses *Inflict Sorrow* once reunited with his love; Hakon cannot cross the ice in **Area 4**. The shadowy aura of the warlord's *Finger Darts* can also be extinguished by holding a source of fire to it.

Inside the closed sarcophagus are four moss agates (10 gp each) and a *philter of love*, 10 *+1 arrows*, and *dust of dryness*.

Mates Laurentiu



4-6 Characters

Levels 1-2

Urban



Tommi Salama

Angel's Share

Rory Toma

The Goblin Brotherhood of Stoneholme aids goblins in need, relying on income generated by distilling rum and selling it to the dweorg high society and beyond.

A powerful fey patron took an inordinate liking to the rum. He sent a **dream squire** to help the goblins with their distillery and provide top-notch sugar and fey-oak barrels. The only payment demanded by the fey in exchange, is the "Angel's Share"—the amount lost due to evaporation during the aging process. The special fey-oak barrels collect this vapor and allow the fey to extract it.

Sniffing out the fey activity, a **rum lord** discovered the operation and began a hostile takeover, claiming all the rum, enslaving the a **dream squire** and destroying the fey-oak barrels. Goblins that come for help are kidnapped and never seen again. The party is asked to look in on the goblin brewers, as the deliveries of rum have ceased.

1. Monastery Entrance

Two statues flank the stone doors wielding war picks and shields, with massive steins at their hips. The statues have been animated by the rum lord and cross their weapons, threatening any attempting to enter, and attacking if the party persists. They act as **animated armors**, but have shields (**AC** 20) and instead of *Slams* fight with:

War Pick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

The armors have an inherent flaw, due to the rum lord's chaotic magic: Toasting to them makes them mime "drinking" from their steins, which takes 2 rounds. During this time, they do not attack or pursue targets,

2. Red Carpet

A long red carpet stained with some rum splotches runs the length of the hallway and is trapped with a **red carpet trap**.

Red Carpet Trap

Simple trap

This trap is activated when an intruder steps on one of the two glyphs hidden underneath the far end of the carpet causing the carpet to roll up quickly.

The DC is 5 to spot the plates if the floor underneath the carpet is searched. Otherwise, they cannot be detected. A spell or other effect that can sense magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals an aura of transmutation on the carpet.

Unless deliberately avoided, when a target steps onto one of the plates, the carpet rolls up, starting at the far end. Those on the carpet must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or

become trapped inside the carpet roll. Targets that are more than 15 feet away from the far end of the carpet gain advantage on the saving throw.

A creature trapped in the carpet takes 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage and is restrained, taking this damage on subsequent rounds on initiative count 20. A trapped character can attempt to escape with a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Trapped characters can be pulled free from the carpet with a successful DC 12 Strength check. The carpet can also be unrolled. Each successful DC 8 Strength check unrolls half of the carpet length, freeing anyone in that section.

A *dispel magic* cast on the carpet destroys the trap. If cast on the plates, the trap is suppressed for one hour.

3. Abbot's Office

This is the office of **Rufus**, the **goblin abbot**. He is tight-lipped and offers the following information:

- Goblins come to the monastery to study the ways of Valgrond the Sober.
- The monastery recently devoted itself to sobriety and discontinued making rum.
- The statues and traps are tests that do not affect the sober of heart.

A **DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) check** identifies Valgrond as a minor, drunken goblin saint.

A **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces Rufus to ask for help in dispatching the **rum lord** in order to continue their mission.

4. Cell

This sparse room has four beds and a chest. Two **rum gremlins** disguised as **goblin monks** sit on beds in meditation. Unbeknownst to the abbot, the gremlins dispatched the monks, placing their bodies in barrels and took their robes. They do not speak and point to a sign on the wall that explains their vow of silence. A **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Wisdom (Insight) check** detects that these monks are not goblins.

5. Kitchen

To the right of the entrance are barrels and a still while a stove, a table and food storage occupy the rest of the kitchen. The still is damaged, but a **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that it can still operate in a limited capacity. One of the barrels has been hacked open, two contain dead goblins, and the rest are empty. A **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the wood of the barrels is fey in origin but has lost any magical properties it may have had.

6. Rum Room

Red carpet leads up to a metal box placed between two gargoyle statues. Three lit braziers line each side of the carpet. A **rum lord** drinks at one of the tables.

The metal box is coated in cold iron, which can be determined with a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. The enslaved **dream squire** is trapped inside the box. The **rum lord** invites intruders to drink with him. On a refusal, he uses his *Bring Me Another Round!* feature to summon 1d4 **rum gremlins** and attacks with his servants. The rum lord holds the key to the box in which the dream squire is trapped.

After the first round of combat, the **rum gremlins** from **Area 4** join the combat if able.

Opening the box requires a **DC 12 Strength check** or a **DC 12 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools; opening the box without using the rum lord's key triggers an **alcohol spray trap**.

Alcohol Spray Trap

Simple Trap

This trap activates when the metal lid is opened without using the proper key.

The DC to spot the wire that runs from the back of the lid to each gargoyle statue is 12.

When the lid is moved, the wire is pulled. Each gargoyle sprays alcohol into the braziers. Targets within 5 feet of a brazier must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

The wire may be cut in a safe manner with a DC 10 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools. Failure activates the trap.

The **dream squire** fights the gremlins if freed.

Once the gremlins are defeated, the abbot thanks the characters, inviting them to come back to claim a barrel of rum as their reward.

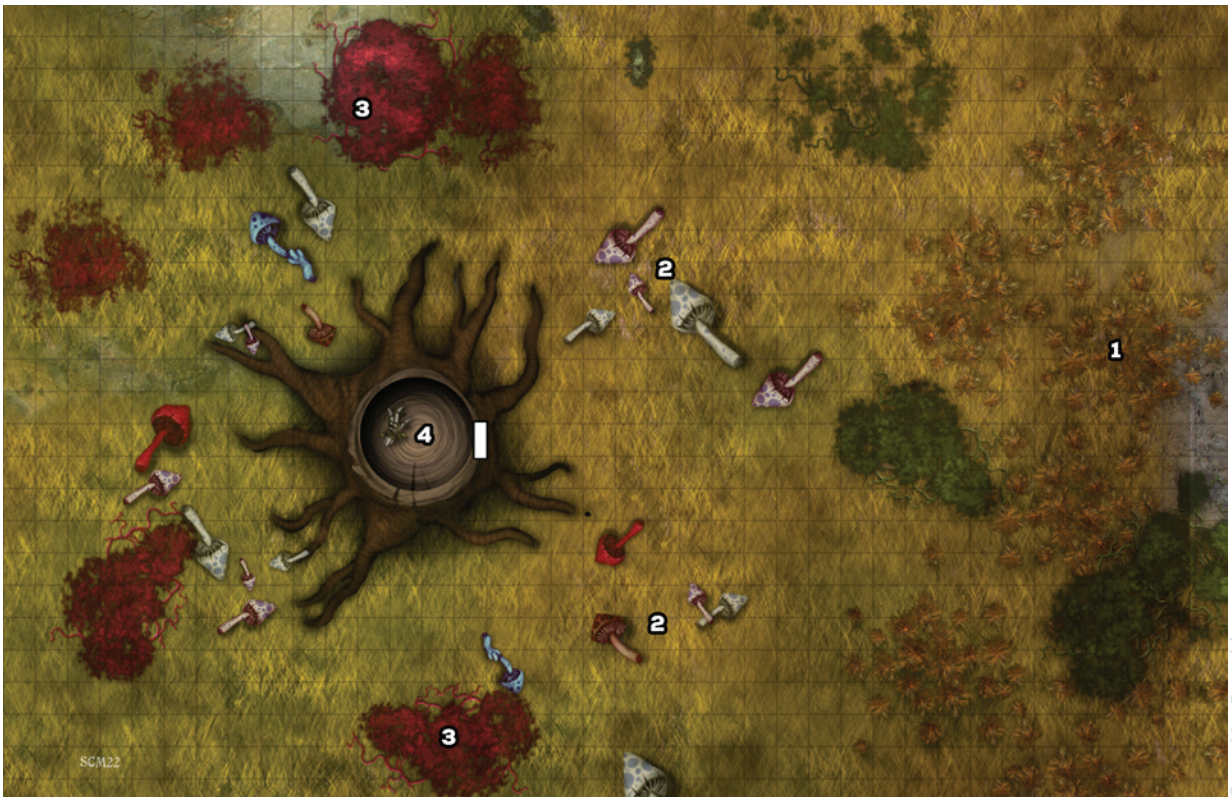


Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 1-2

Grassland



Sean MacDonald

Crimson Court

Tony Ohrazda

The Crimson Court, led by King Umbra and Queen Dayshadow, leads several regional faerie circles. It has trade agreements with nearby humanoid settlements as it distills highly desirable concoctions.

After many moons slyly planning, the Crimcrix Coven forced an aberrant being to form a parasitic fetish from void-energy. The Voidseed binds to a host, turns it violently insane, and uses it to draw fey energy from the land. Then, several days ago, after tricking a sprite steward into hiding the Voidseed under King Umbra's throne, where it did its work, the foul hags struck the Crimson Court and sprites of Verbane.

Now, the party either enters Verbane's poppy fields when travelling, or is hired by Grendick Cole, the Mayor of nearby Clianti, to investigate a trade disruption. But as it crosses **Area 1**, the Crimson Court's magical ward transforms the members into Tiny creatures.

1. Poppy Field

The party traverses rolling grasslands and enters fields of poppies that gleam flame-touched in the late afternoon sun. About 100 feet ahead, the gnarled stump of an ancient tree (**Area 4**) has numerous large, colorful mushrooms scattered around it, pulled from the dirt (**Area 2**). Blood-red thorn bushes (**Area 3**) partially circle the fungi and old stump. If Mayor Cole hired the party, this place matches his description of Verbane, except clearly a calamity has occurred.

Crimson Court Ward. The characters are magically reduced to Tiny creatures.

As you move ahead, nausea rises: hearts race, vision becomes tunnel-like and then shrinks to a pinhole, even breathing is forgotten! Another stride and you'll succumb, but it seems to only way to go. Eventually, you'll have to take that step...

Later, you wake under a thick canopy of towering poppies. It takes a moment to grasp that you are much smaller!

Tiny Verbane Creatures. *Space:* 2 ½ feet by 2 ½ feet. *Carrying Capacity:* half normal. *Weapon Damage:* 1d4 less damage; minimum of 1. *Spell Range:* half normal.

Despite any efforts, characters cannot alter their size while within Verbane's boundaries until they consume Marigold's antidote. Attempts fail, but spell slots aren't wasted. Consult **Area 2**.

2. Verbane

Once a vibrant village, Verbane is razed. Beautiful building-sized fungi, former fey homes and shops, lie upturned in the meadow, their bulbous volva and vine-like mycelium still attached but abraded. If the party searches the area, a successful **DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** spots scared and wounded **sprites** hiding in the ruins.

Sprite Villagers. Once spotted, the survivors are easy to engage without a check, if approached gently. They are curious yet cautious creatures. With a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, or good roleplaying, characters learn the following:

The Calamity. A young **sprite** named **Marigold** organizes the survivors. They say that two days ago King Umbra went mad and slaughtered his court, including the queen, after which their fungi homes and shops writhed out of the soil and toppled, crushing many as they hid.

Yesterday, the king hanged his slain courtiers in the bloodthorn groves (**Area 3**). This morning, as the villagers continued rescue efforts, each swinging corpse climbed out of its noose and attacked. The undead killed several and injured many before they climbed back into their ropes.

Marigold states that only a handful of sprites remain in Verbane; they searched for others buried beneath the fallen mushrooms. Again, with roleplaying or a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, **Marigold** suggests mutual aid.

Marigold's Plea. The villagers sense that King Umbra raves inside the Crimson Court. They ask the party to restore the king's sanity or, failing that, stop him.

The Antidote. Marigold tells the characters that the fairies can restore the characters' sizes, but King Umbra's herb pouch is needed to brew the antidote. After this, the party must leave Verbane.

Close to the stump, an old fairy, Furuncle, slumps weeping against a fallen mushroom stalk, seemingly inconsolable and of little help. However, a successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check** senses Furuncle is guilt-wracked. If spoken with, a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Deception)**, **Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** draws a confession from them.

Furuncle's Confession. **Furuncle** was beguiled by the Crimcrix Coven into driving King Umbra insane by planting the Voidseed. The hags promised Umbra would be too mentally weak to rule, and to help **Furuncle** lead the Crimson Court. But **Umbra** became psychotic instead of enfeebled, slaughtered his court and felled Verbane.

Most fairy items are ruined, but **Furuncle**, sobbing, gives the party a pouch of *dust of disappearance*.

3. Bloodthorn Groves

Bloodthorn groves surround Verbane on three sides. Six deceased sprite nobles hang from the branches, equally spaced out. Three of the corpses are **cadaver sprites**: **Queen Dayshadow**, **Prince Froststone** and **Princess Rainever**. Those who succeed at a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** notice each noble sprite wears expensive but Tiny jewels worth 500 gp.

Former Court. If the party approaches within 10 feet of any corpse, the three cadaver sprites attack. Otherwise, the undead fey remain dormant until summoned by **Umbra**. Consult **Area 4**.

4. Crimson Court

In the old stump is an arboreal throne room, its regal air marred by gory bloodstains from the court's massacre. **King Umbra**, a **sunflower sprite** wearing *glamoured bloodthorn studded leather armor* (it looks like bark) and a squirrel-skull helmet-crown, while armed with a fine *rapier of wounding*, slouches on a throne of living wood and vibrant red leaves. Scarlet and indigo dragonfly wings sprout from his back. Glaring balefully at the party, **Umbra** strokes a malevolently-throbbing orb wrapped in sickly wet leaves that nestles in his lap.

The Crimson King. When the party approaches, **Umbra** weeps and laughs simultaneously, clinging to the Voidseed. He rises, grasps his rapier's hilt, then demands to know who the party is and why it stands before him!

Unless the party previously defeated the three cadaver sprites in **Area 3**, **King Umbra** uses the Voidseed to call them (not an action) to attack. They arrive in two rounds, and he stalls for time until they do, offering to restore the characters' size and let them to leave if they kill **Marigold**. Unless the party agrees, **Umbra** attacks as soon as the cadaver sprites arrive. If they don't appear, he blurts out "It's Crimcrux's fault!" and tries to flee.

The **Voidseed** is an object (**AC 12, hp 30**). If destroyed, **Umbra** regains his sanity and becomes an ally.

Aftermath. If **King Umbra** survives, he restores the characters' size and offers them one uncommon magic item each from his personal treasure vault. If dead, **Marigold** suggests the party takes his rapier, armor, and fine, Tiny, jewelry (750 gp), as they are tainted, but they retain the crown. **Marigold** uses the herb pouch to restore the characters' size, then implores the characters to destroy the Crimcrix Coven!

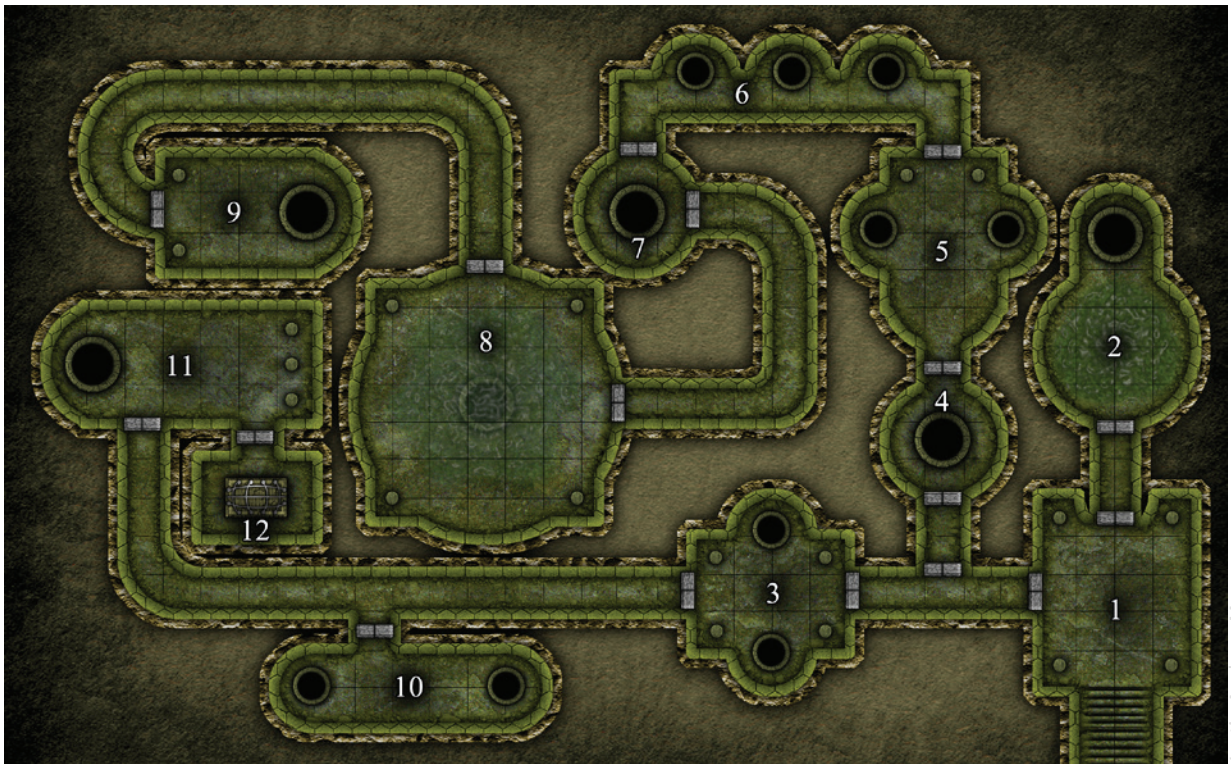


Mates Laurentiu

4 Characters

Level 2

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

We Have a Pirate Problem

Thilo Graf, Michael O. Holland

Thagu, the hobgoblin pirate captain of the Dark Gale, and his crew of buccaneers recently ran afoul of a military galleon not far from a port city. The surviving crewmembers took refuge in an abandoned thies' guild hideout hidden in the city's expansive system of storm drains. Soon after, an erstwhile thieves' guild member found the pirates squatting there. The thief wants the pirates gone to access the hall of whispers (**Area 6**).

General Properties

Humid. The sewer air is particularly humid. Unless otherwise noted, exposed flames flicker, dim, and finally extinguish after 2d10 + 2 rounds. If the doors to a particular area remain open for more than one minute, the air no longer extinguishes flames in that area.

Dry. The **Areas 5**, **7**, and **9** are *Dry*. **Area 10** is *Dry*, except in squares adjacent to the *Storm Drains*; it is *Humid* there.

Doors. The doors are made of metal and unlocked.

Storm Drains. The large, circular storm drains are connected and filled with water. The tunnels are labyrinthine, lightless, and cramped. The aquatic creatures in the complex know how to navigate the drains and can travel from one drain to another within 1d6 + 2 rounds. A player character requires light or darkvision to navigate the drains. It takes a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** made to swim through them. On a failed check, the character is stuck and risks drowning. A stuck character can wiggle free with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. Navigating the drains also requires a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check**. On a failed check the hero emerges from a random drain after the usual 1d6 + 2 rounds.

1. Entry Chamber

Ornately decorated pillars depic ting thieves plying their trade stand in each corner of the room.

2. The Pit

In the middle of this circular room is a large *Storm Drain*, currently filled with 5-foot-deep water, trickling down from above.

Teeth in the Drain. Three **crocodiles** hide in the *Storm Drain* and its tunnels, one keeping watch at all times, while the other two wait in the water and prowl the tunnels with their *Hold Breath*, emerging at a rate of one crocodile per round if alerted (**passive Perception 10**). It takes a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the snout of the crocodile lying in wait. A **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** supplemented by (preferably fresh) meat distracts the crocodiles and lets the party lure them elsewhere.

3. Large Guardroom

This square room has nooks with *Storm Drains* in the north and south walls. A moderate flow of water falls through the northern drain. A wooden table sits in the middle of the room where a **hobgoblin** corsair and three **pirates** are arguing over a card game.

Development. The guards are hostile, but a plausible lie and a **DC 12 Charisma (Deception) check** makes them hesitate. With a subtle **DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check**, the card game can be sabotaged, turning the guards against each other.

4. Small Guardroom

This circular room is wet and miserable to spend time in. A rush of warm water falls from an opening in the ceiling into the *Storm Drain* in the center of the room. Three **sahuagin** work a small, wheeled bilge pump.

Extreme Humidity. Flames flicker out in 1d6 + 1 rounds. Otherwise, see *Humid*.

Slippery. The floor is slippery due to excess water. Using the Dash, Dodge or Disengage action requires the character's choice of a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or **Dexterity saving throw**. On a failure, the character falls prone.

5. Main Hall

Two **sahuagin** are playing dice while a **hobgoblin** smokes a pipe. When the characters enter the room, the hobgoblin orders the sahuagin to attack. If the hobgoblin falls, one sahuagin tries to flee via a *Storm Drain* and alert its allies, in **Areas 9**, **10**, and **11**.

6. Hall of Whispers

The *Storm Drains* here connect to important locations in the city above. The voices of people passing by the drains echo through this hall as whispers. Thagu fears this works both ways (it doesn't) and that someone may overhear his crew. Thus, his pirates avoid this room.

GM Note. This is a great place to provide seeds for further adventures. Access to the whispered rumors is the true treasure here.

7. Lavatory

The floor around the *Storm Drain* in this circular room is covered with muck and the air reeks of feces.

Disgusting. Aquatic creatures avoid surfacing here.

Partially Clogged Drain. This *Storm Drain* is partially clogged by excrement. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** rummaging in it reveals a small packet, but also exposes the character to a disease of the GM's choice.

Packet. The packet has two compartments, one open, one sealed. Inside the open compartment is shattered blue quartz (20 gp); the sealed compartment holds two hollowed-out blue quartzes with *dust of dryness* inside. The quartzes shatter on impact.

8. Watery Hall

At the center of the room is a large pool of stagnant water with an impassable *Storm Drain* clogged by seaweed. This is the impromptu lair of **Abrecan the merrow** and **Mr. Burbles**, his pet **giant crab**. Abrecan is a disillusioned crewmember. He can't decide whether to leave or not, so he greets the party in Common and proposes a riddle contest. If the party can answer two riddles, he'll leave; if they fail, he'll attack them.

Riddle	Answer
What possesses four fingers and a thumb but has no blood or life within it?	Glove or crawling claw
What loses its head in the morning and gets it back in the evening?	Pillow
When these are caught, they are thrown away. When they escape, you itch and scratch all day.	Fleas

9. Thagu's Chamber

A large *Storm Drain* leads both up and down; only a small trickle of water falls through.

Thagu (**bandit captain**; has *Martial Advantage* hobgoblin feature) and two **hobgoblins** are studying a map of the city's port. They are planning to steal a ship so the crew can return to sea. Thagu has the key to **Area 12** on his belt.

10. Cookery and Storeroom

This room has been outfitted with tools to serve as a makeshift cookery. Clean water slowly trickles down the eastern drain.

Riez, a **hobgoblin**, and **Vrazh**, a **sahuagin**, mill about the room, preparing the next group meal.

Spicing the Meal. A character infiltrating this room with a successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check** can spice the meal with poison or similar substances. One hour later, every pirate will be affected by the substance.

With a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**, a *ring of warmth* can be found, buried under dirty aprons.

11. Thagu's Hold

This long chamber has a large *Storm Drain* in a nook to the west; the room stretches to another set of double doors to the east. **Rixar** (**veteran**) and a **sahuagin** are sparring here to pass the time whilst guarding the door to **Area 12**.

12. The Vault

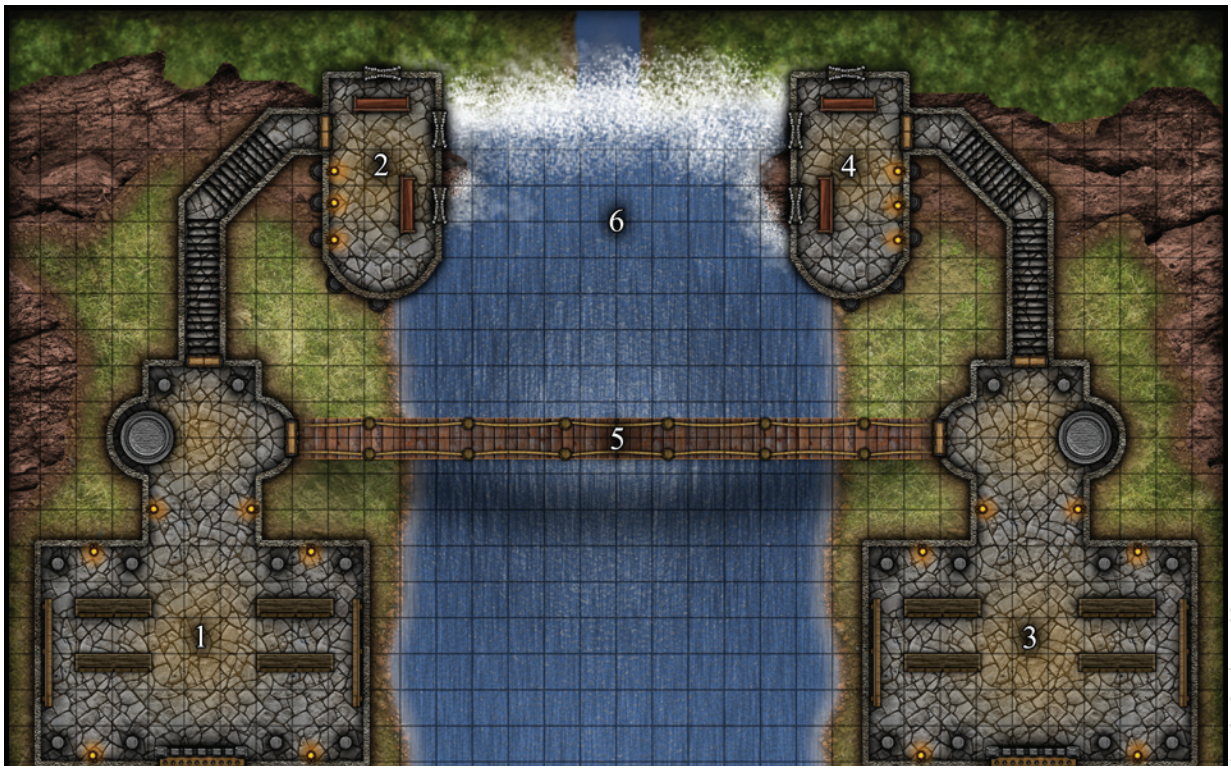
Locked Doors. The doors to this room are locked. They can be opened with Thagu's key (**Area 9**), or a **DC 18 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. Alternatively, the door can be battered down with two loud consecutive **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) checks**.

A steel coffer holds all that remains of the pirate's ill-gotten booty: 2,500 cp, 1,000 sp, and a golden kris worth 350 gp. The kris is a functional weapon and serves as a macabre key to a lost city.

4 Characters

Level 2

Mountain



Justin Andrew Mason

Feud at the Falls

Claire Stricklin

For untold generations, the Amberload has flowed between the holdings of Clan Orefall and Clan Bottleknocker. The dwarves who make their home along its banks have been feuding nearly as long. That is why today marks such an auspicious occasion. Following a secretive courtship, young Brufaer Bottleknocker has asked the lovely Urith Orefall for her hand in marriage. Despite generations worth of bushwhacking, claim jumping, and lowdown murdering between their families, she found it in her heart to accept.

The plan was simple. The lovers would meet at Signy's Leap, the site of the twin watchtowers their families built to oversee the clans' infrequent attempts at negotiation. Urith would make the crossing at dusk, and the pair would be wed then and there by a priest of Brufaer's acquaintance. Anticipating that one or both of the clans might learn of this secret rendezvous, Brufaer has hired the adventurers to act as security (75 gp apiece, plus a draught of *Bottleknocker Stout*. This is to be the star-crossed lovers' wedding day, perhaps the long-sought end to the ancient feud – but the clan elders on both sides aren't so quick to forgive and forget.

Bottleknocker Stout

Potion, uncommon

You are immune to being frightened, gain 2d6 temporary hit points, and have advantage on all Charisma checks. The benefits last for 1 minute, and you can only benefit from *Bottleknocker stout* again once you finish a short or long rest.

1. Never the Bride

It is early evening. The anxious groom **Brufaer Bottleknocker** (**noble**, 16 hp) and his hired **acolyte** sit in hushed conference, their voices buried in the constant roar of the falls. As the heroes await Urith's arrival, ask for a **Wisdom (Perception) check**. The character with the highest result is the first to spot a figure clad in a white gown step onto the eastern half of **Area 5**. Make a note of these check results, because the figure is not Urith.

Some of the bride's relatives caught wind of her plans to elope, and they have no intention of letting the marriage go forward. Disguised in a wedding gown and veil, Urith's cousin **Huldek Orefall** (**spy**) has a dagger concealed in her corset. As Brufaer rushes out on the bridge to greet his bride, compare the heroes' check results to the killer's **Charisma (Deception) check** (**+5**). Those who fail miss the telltale bulge of armor beneath the dress and are surprised at the start of combat.

If Brufaer survives, he begs the heroes not to kill anyone, knowing that it will only add fuel to the families' feuding.

2. A Cobbled Crossing

Like the rest of the Bottleknocker watchtower, this storeroom hasn't been used in years. It does contain several useful items though, particularly for anyone looking to cobble together a span from here to **Area 4**. The list of available assets includes two empty barrels, block and tackle, 10 feet of chain, a spare door off its hinges, a ladder, a 10-foot pole, 50 feet of hempen rope, a shovel, a wheelbarrow, and several empty sacks. This tower is 30 feet high.

3. Dug-In Dwarves

Half a dozen **Orefall dwarves** (**bandit**) and holed up inside their watchtower. Following the initial assassination attempt, they slam the door to their side of the bridge and bar it (**AC** 15, 18 hp). The door features a barred window wide enough to allow a pair of archers to take pot shots at anyone upon the bridge. Notably, they do not have a wide enough field of fire to shoot anywhere else.

If the heroes hope to gain entry, they will have to weather the arrow fire or find an alternative route across the Amberload.

4. Barricaded Bride

When she arrived at her family's side of the falls, **Urith** (**noble**) discovered her family lying in wait. Not wishing to harm her kin, she let herself be captured. Taking **advantage** of the distraction provided by the fight on the bridge, Urith has managed to free herself and retreat to this storeroom. She calls across the river to Brufaer and the party, a willing participant in her own rescue. Like **Area 2**, this tower is 30 feet high.

Urith's **aunt Throbiren** (**thug**) stands outside the door to this chamber, loudly exhorting her niece to remember her familial duty.

5. Taking the Plunge

In the past, rival thanes from the feuding clans would parley upon this span, standing over neutral territory as they leveled abuse and accusations at one another. When these "negotiations" inevitably broke down, one of the rivals would invariably go into the water.

The waters of the Amberload are swift this near the falls, dragging swimmers 10 feet towards the precipice each round unless they can succeed at a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check**.

6. The Ring

By the time Urith and Brufaer are reunited, a second contingent of dwarves arrive on the scene, this time from the Bottleknocker side of the feud. They are every bit as bloody-minded as the Orefalls, and equally intent on breaking up the marriage. The portcullis in **Area 1** can hold against them almost indefinitely, but the only way to break the siege of angry in-laws is to make the marriage a reality. Unfortunately, a vital piece of jewelry is missing.

Sometime during the struggle on the bridge, the wedding band meant for Urith went into the river. Happily, these heirloom rings are enchanted to always find one another, and anyone holding one of the matched set may cast *locate object* on the other. At the moment, Urith's ring is near the center of the river, 15 feet down and just north of the bridge.



Daring the swift waters of the Amberload is dangerous enough (see **Area 5**), but the trigger-happy Bottleknockers are determined to make things as difficult as possible. These dwarves are furious, and it will take some fast talking to keep violence from spilling over. Each round, one hero may attempt a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. Success means that the dwarves confine themselves to hurling insults at one another. On a failure, 1d3 heavy crossbow bolts sail towards any divers attempting to recover the ring.

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

Bottleknocker Stout Recipe

Any dwarven character or any character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence (History) check** recognizes the Bottleknocker name; their namesake brew is legendary amongst brewmasters. The clan is secretive with the stout's recipe, and with good reason: Clan Orefall tries to steal it annually.

There's slim chance the heroes, no matter how intrepid, could make a deal for, or even locate, a physical copy of the recipe here at the falls. Being dwarves, it probably isn't even written down. However, even just a sample of the brew, like the one Brufaer gives the party, would fetch a hefty bounty on the Black Market (see page 298).

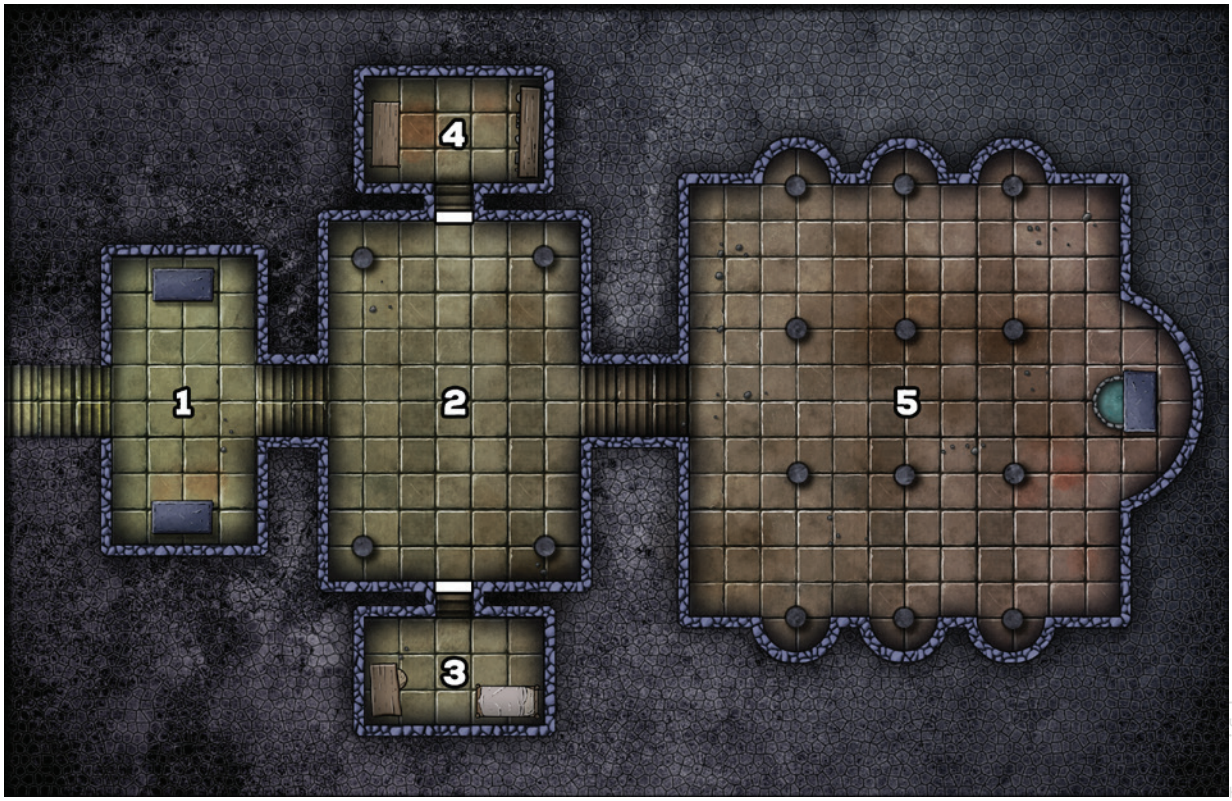
What About Barrel Residue? At the GM's option, allow insightful players to use the dregs from the barrels in **Area 2** to serve as a sample of *Bottleknocker Stout*, in lieu of the draught given them by Brufaer.

Matt Forsyth

4-5 Characters

Level 2

Mountain



Tommi Salama

Stormlord's Rest

Brian Suskind, Thilo Graf

The entrance to this vault-like tomb is constructed to resemble the exterior of a rocky hill or mountainside in some lonely and isolated part of the world. The dignitary buried within was a powerful but minor warlord who went by the grandiose epithet of "Stormlord".

There is no light inside the tomb, though the lightning in **Area 5** provides illumination within that chamber.

1. Entrance of Warning

Two stone platforms in the North and South of the entry room each hold a pair of strange metal statues. When the characters enter, the statues reveal themselves to be three **clockwork watchmen** and attack while calling out, "*DISTURB NOT THE STORMLORD'S REST!*" The fourth watchman broke down long ago and crumbles to pieces when its companions move. The stairs to the East contain a **sliding stairs trap**.

Sliding Stairs Trap

Simple trap (level 1–4, moderate threat)

Trigger. A pressure plate in the middle of the stairs starts makes them collapse into a slide to the middle of **Area 2**.

Effect. All creatures on the stairs must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or slide down the stairs, landing prone in the middle of **Area 2**. On a successful saving throw, the creature does not slide down.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check discerns the break-away nature of the stairway. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disarms the trap but locks the stairs into a slide position. Climbing down or up the slide requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Failing this check by 5 or more sends a creature sliding down and land prone.

2. Chamber of the Fallen Foes

The smell of ozone is thick in this ornately carved chamber held up by four grey crystal pillars each containing the vague outline of a humanoid form within. Bluish-white light reflects up from the stairway to the East. The floor is exceptionally smooth, requiring a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to avoid falling prone on any Dash or Withdraw action. An **ochre jelly** hangs upside down in the center of the room and drops down onto the first living creature who passes beneath. Spotting the ooze requires a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** due to the carvings all over the ceiling and walls.

Four Pillars. The grey crystal pillars hold foes captured by the Stormlord long ago. There is a **bearded devil**, a **swarm of poisonous snakes**, a **grick**, and a **gibbering mouther**. It takes a **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check** to identify the snakes, a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** to identify the devil, and

a **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** to identify the mouther and the grick, respectively. Breaking a crystal (a **DC 10 Strength check**) frees the hostile and quite mad creature within.

Inside each pillar is a diamond (worth 150 gp) which was used to focus the ritual holding the monsters in suspended animation.

3. Antechamber of Tribute

A few old pieces of decayed furniture and artwork are all that remains in this chamber. A **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a hidden panel set into the floor in the north-eastern corner. The locked panel requires a **DC 15 Dexterity check** with thieves' tools to unlock or a **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check** to break it open. Inside is a lever that reverts to its original position with an electric crackle if pulled. Pulling this lever at the same time as the one in **Area 4** deactivates the pillars in **Area 5**.

4. Antechamber of Viewing

This room once contained maps showing the extent of the Stormlord's domain but now only a few old pieces of decayed furniture and scraps of partially crumbled maps remain apart from the body of a partially mummified human. The body is a former adventurer whose desiccated flesh still bears the scorch marks of the defenses in **Area 5**. It seems to be reaching toward the North wall. If the characters leave this chamber without taking the time to pray, perform funerary rites, or pause to commemorate the body, it rises a minute later as a **ghoul**. A **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a hidden panel in the northern wall containing a lever that reverts to its original position with an electric crackle if pulled. Pulling this lever at the same time as the one in **Area 3** deactivates the pillars in **Area 5**.

The adventurer's equipment has mostly become rusted and ruined, apart from a *+1 dagger* tucked into his left boot.

5. Tomb of the Stormlord

Twelve pillars wrapped in crackling energy hold up the vaulted ceiling in this large chamber. A cupola in the eastern wall holds a stone sarcophagus and a strange pool of swirling blue energy.

Pillars. If the levers in **Areas 3** and **4** have not been pulled, then jagged bolts of blue-white lightning arc between the pillars forming constant walls of electricity.

Lightning arcs between the pillars in 10-foot-wide lines. Moving through a line or coming within 5 feet of any electrified pillar causes 3 (1d6) lightning damage. A **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** halves the damage.

If the levers in **Areas 3** and **4** have both been pulled at the same time, then intermittent arcs of lightning leap from one pillar to another instead:

Number the pillars starting from the top left. At the start of each round, roll 4d12. The result of each d12 shows which pillars are connected by lightning this round. The GM should choose a pillar if the same result is rolled on one or more of the d12s.

Summoning Pool. When a living creature passes between any of the pillars, the pool of energy activates, summoning one **will-o'-wisp** per round for as long as any creature remains within **Area 5**. The vault can only have two will-o'-wisps active at a time. If one wisp dies, the pool summons a new one at the beginning of the next round.

Sarcophagus. The heavy stone lid can be moved with two consecutive **DC 15 Strength checks**. Using an appropriate tool, such as a crowbar, grants **advantage** on the check. Inside is a brass lever. Pulling it deactivates the summoning pool.

The body of the Stormlord within the sarcophagus is nothing but dust and scraps of bone. Digging through the dust reveals the remnants of a bejeweled tabard, the gems from which are worth 500 gp in total. A battered iron ring on a skeletal finger bone is a *ring of protection*. The Stormlord's crown rests at one end of the sarcophagus. It is worth 1,000 gp to a collector.

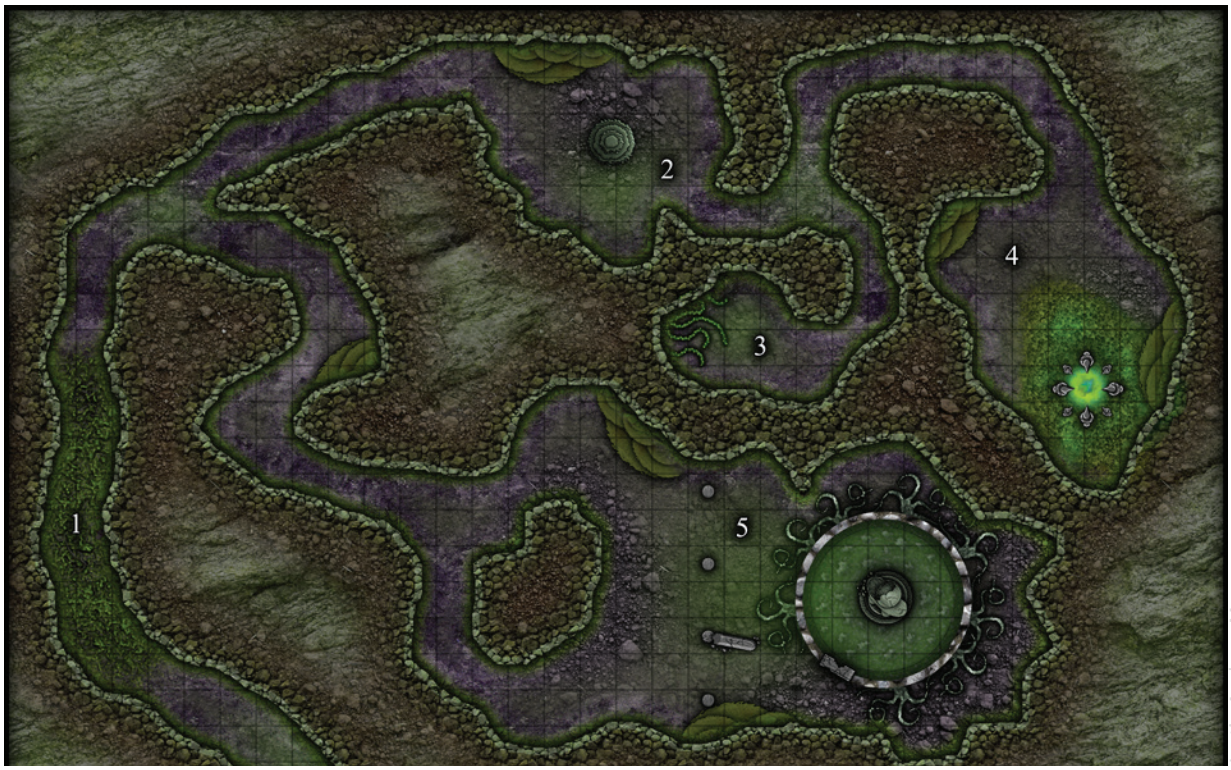
Mates Laurentiu



4-6 Characters

Level 2

Forest/ Underworld



Justin Andrew Mason

A Fungus Among Us

David Schwartz

Paths through the forest have long been safe for travelers and its depths have been a bountiful source of wild plants and game for the local villagers. Yet now all manner of strange fungi grow here, rotting trees and poisoning animals. Worse still, wicked fey lead unsuspecting people into deadly traps.

Some locals attribute the forest's favor to the dryad **Ilex**, though few have seen her recently. Ilex has been captured by vile fey who seek to turn the dryad's forest into a dismal swamp.

The characters eventually track the evil fey to a cave under a hill dotted with fairy rings.

The tunnels are between 6 and 10 feet in height, while cavern roofs (in **Areas 2–5**) are roughly twice as high. There is no light in the caves except where indicated. Nearly every surface is coated with fungi and mold—including giant shelf fungus—allowing the miremals to use their *Swamp Camouflage* here.

1. Slimy Tunnel

The floor of this tunnel appears to be coated in verdant slime. In fact, the slime covers standing water roughly a foot deep, which is difficult terrain for characters who wade through it. Though the water is only an inconvenience, it is home to a **swarm of poisonous snakes**. With a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, a character can spot the tangle of snakes before they step into it. A wading character can then avoid disturbing the snakes with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check**. The snakes attack anything they can sense in the water.

2. Stalagmite Cave

A 5-foot stalagmite sits in the middle of this room. Water drips from a smaller stalactite directly above it.

A group of three **miremals** rest in this cave. If they notice the characters approaching, the fey hide among the rocks, hoping to ambush the intruders. If its *Muddled Escape* is triggered, a miremal flees to **Area 4**, to alert their leader.

3. Fungal Nursery

Two **children of the briar** live in this cave's large tangle of fungus. They wait until several characters are in the room—or someone spots their hiding place—to use *Entangle*. The fey then bombard the characters with questions: Who are they? What are they doing here? Do they have any juicy gossip? The children of the briar are willing to trade information about the cave system and its residents in exchange for interesting stories, but a character must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** to impress them. If the characters refuse or fail to entertain the fey, they attack.

4. Gem of Fungal Growth

This room is illuminated with dim light from a glowing, green gemstone set into an altar shaped like the mouth of a monstrous worm. A carpet of fungi around the altar is difficult terrain.

This room is home to **Amanita**, the boss of the evil fey. In her natural form, Amanita is a roughly humanoid creature made of fungus with four clawed arms and six insectile legs (use the stats for a **green hag**). When the characters arrive, however, she is disguised as a dryad and claims to be Ilex. She assures the characters that all is well, while trying to catch them unaware. She immediately attacks if the characters see through her *Mimicry* or *Illusory Appearance*. Amanita wears a brass amulet shaped like a forked branch, which unlocks the door in **Area 5**.

The glowing gemstone is the source of the forest's fungal infestation. Smashing the *gem of fungal growth* (**AC** 13, 10 hp) ends its magic (allowing the forest to recover over time). A character can find among the (now mundane) fragments 2d6 larger pieces of chrysoprase (worth 50 gp each).

5. Fossilized Tree Cavern

This largest cavern is divided in half by four floor-to-ceiling pillars, though one of them has partially toppled. The far side of the cavern is taken up by a fossilized tree trunk, its height extending into the ceiling, with stone roots encircling its base (these are difficult terrain).

Amanita has assigned four **miremals** to guard this cavern. They use the same tactics as their kin in **Area 2**. The miremals stay on the west side of the pillars, crossing only to chase intruders. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**, a character can discover a concealed door in the fossil tree trunk. The door is sealed with an *arcane lock*, which requires a successful **DC 25 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools to bypass. There is a recess in the door the same shape as Amanita's amulet; if the amulet is placed in the recess the door opens easily.



Nicolas Cloister

The fossilized tree trunk is hollow. A figure looking like a mold-covered statue stands on a pedestal in the middle of the room, surrounding by 5-foot-deep, slimy water. A character exposed to the water must succeed on a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw** or become infected with sewer plague. The fallen piece of pillar is just long enough to bridge the gap between the door and the pedestal.

The figure is **Ilex** held in stasis by layers of fungus. She can be freed by spending a minute removing the fungus. The dryad is thankful for being rescued and asks the characters to destroy the *gem of fungal growth* in **Area 4** if they haven't already. If the characters rescue Ilex and destroy the gemstone, she rewards them with her pendant—a single, clear quartz crystal on necklace of green vines—which is a *periapt of nature's truth*.

Periapt of Nature's Truth

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

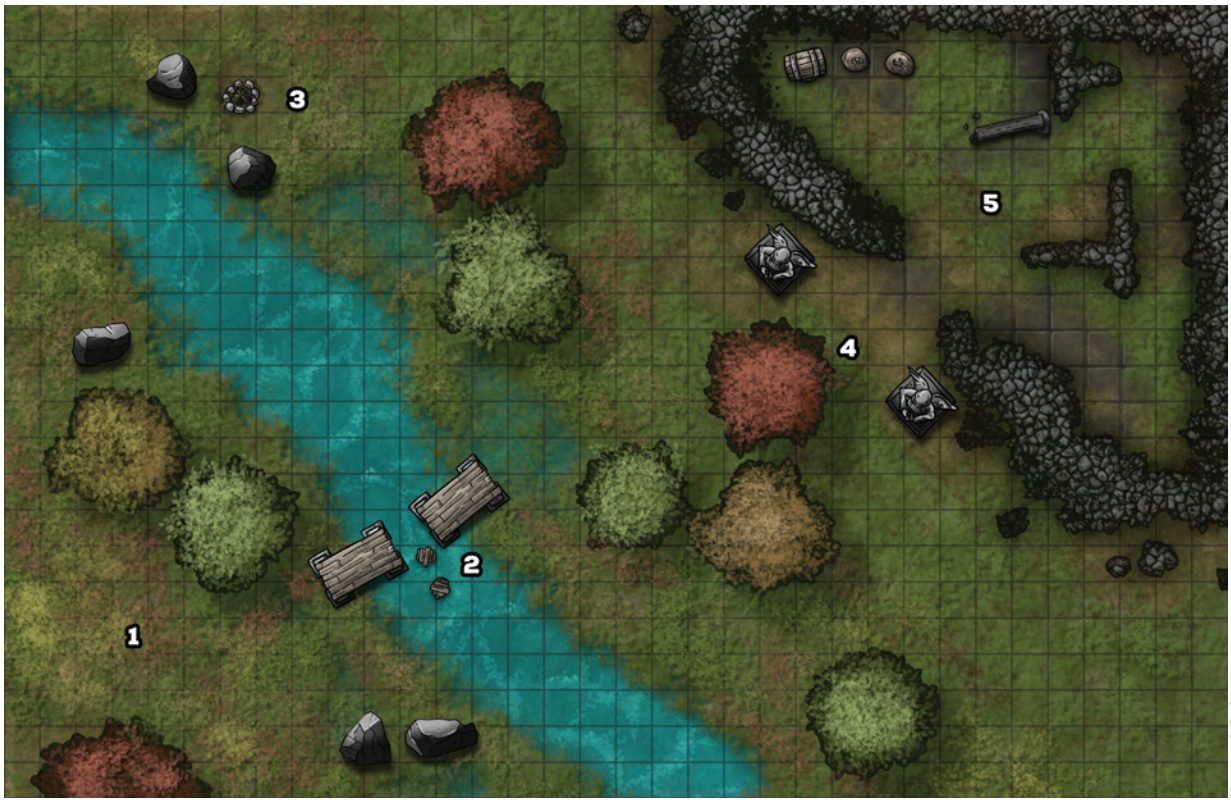
While wearing this pendant, you have advantage on saving throws against illusion spells and on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to recognize illusions.

Periapt of Nature's Truth

Though symbolic of their favored status with Ilex and the other fey of the forest, the characters may choose to pass it along to someone else. The dryad does not mind as long as the new owner is just as respectful of the forest. If the characters decide to sell the periapt, they can find at least two interested parties at the Black Market (see page 298).

The Scientist. A scientist interested in the unlocking the hidden secrets of the universe wishes to buy the *periapt of nature's truth* for use in her research. This noble turned natural philosopher offers the characters top price for the amulet, but Ilex does not approve of the scientist's methods. If the characters sell the pendant to the her, they risk losing the dryad's favor. Unless a character can assuage Ilex with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Nature)**, **Charisma (Deception)**, or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, the party will be shunned by Ilex and other fey of the forest.

The Druid. A forest druid offers the buy the *periapt of nature's truth* to help further his communion with the natural world. The itinerant druid can only offer half what the characters could get from the scientist, but selling the periapt to the druid does not risk offending the dryad Ilex. If the character so desire, instead of coins, the druid can pay them an equivalent value in consumable items, such as oils, potions, and/or scrolls.



Tommi Salama

Tiana's Ensorcelled Sorrow

Marc Braden

Some ruins bewilder, others inspire awe, but for Tiana they just cause sorrow. On her last day alive she witnessed the walls of her home crumble, her father buried. Men and women set to protect her home bled out around her. Vernye, her loving dog, was buried beneath debris. Then: the red gleam of her blood on a blade. The recently established village of Khorol lies close to the site of this tragedy and the new residents quickly discovered the haunting. Yet, trade with the north was the sole reason for settling here, travel at night unavoidable—a small bridge was set in place, everyone hoping for the best. A vicious storm befalls the party on the anniversary of the massacre, just as they stumble into the small village looking for shelter. What they discover is panic. A lone trader, bleeding and close to death, tells of the bridge being washed out and mentions two children trapped on the ruins' side, sheltered inside by a panicked guard. The locals agree that the kids are doomed. Galyna, the town's matron, begs the party to attempt a rescue, offering a reward of 200 gp alongside free room and board for a week.

1. Hide and Seek

The storm continues as the party treks through the forest, making the terrain difficult. In the lightening they catch glimpses of a small, cloaked silhouette and possibly a large dog. Snatches of a song can be heard between the thunder. The figures are **Tiana**, a **myling**, and **Vernye**, a **flesh reaver**. This game of hide and seek will take ten rounds before the party arrives at **Area 2**. Each round Tiana makes a **Dexterity (Stealth) check** (she has **Stealth +4**) contested by the party's **Wisdom (Survival)** or **Wisdom (Perception) checks**. If the party is successful on three checks in a row, they can close in enough to confront the two undead. Vernye will immediately attack, giving Tiana a chance to escape towards **Area 3**. Tiana seeks to lure someone to **Area 3** and have a proper burial—or take a mortal to the grave with her.

2. Troubled Waters

The bridge has been severed in two by the racing water and debris from upstream. Crossing it safely requires a successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. On a failed check the character falls into the fast-moving current of the river, which carries them downstream at a rate of 10 feet per round. The river itself is 6–8 feet deep. A successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** allows the character to drag themselves to shore. If a character is carried to the edge of the map, they automatically manage to reach shore, but suffer one level of exhaustion. Once the characters cross the bridge, they can see the faintly visible glow from **Area 4**, which grows stronger as they approach.

3. Ghostly Fire

Each night at dusk, a pale greenish flame erupts from this ancient fire pit and burns steadily until sunrise. The flames are harmless but show horrible visions to anyone who approaches within 20 feet. This area also counts as Tiana's burial ground for the purpose of her *Buried Alive* feature.

It takes a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw** to approach the fire. On a failed save, a character is frightened for 2 (1d4) minutes and can't approach the fire while frightened. Tiana's bones are buried deep within the campsite's ancient ashes. Unearthing her bones and conducting an impromptu service, such as by casting *bless* on them or with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check**, puts her to rest. If Tiana manages to kill a mortal with *Buried Alive*, she discorporates alongside Vernye, her thirst for revenge slaked for a year.

4. Statues of Nadiyu

GM Note. Set up a timer for 1 minute and 20 seconds **after** you describe this area. Once the countdown elapses the barrier breaks down.

Six **skeletons** are arrayed along the front of **Area 5** using their swords to hack away at an invisible barrier. Blue-green sparks fly all around them and light up the area for 20 feet.

Warding Barrier. A powerful magical ward surrounds the ruins, preventing undead from entering. It begins each day with a total of 5000 hit points. By the time the party arrives, the barrier only has 400 hit points left. Each skeleton inflicts 5 piercing damage to the barrier per round, giving the party 13 rounds to formulate a plan before the barrier collapses during the 14th round.

The adventurers can surprise the skeletons with a successful **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check**. The skeletons do not pursue the characters if they retreat and instead refocus on the barrier. If Tiana and Vernye have not been dealt with, they attempt to grapple and abduct whichever character is in the rear of the conflict and take them to **Area 3**. Vernye covers Tiana's retreat, if required.

The statues of two large winged angelic figures are holding orbs of blue stone with runes scribed along their bases, the source of the protective barrier. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals their names as Nadiyu and Carazula. A second successful check could be used to link them to a further adventure.

5. What Was Home

These blasted ruins seem to have once been a great tower. The two children, the wounded **guard** (6 hp), and what goods they were able to salvage are located here. If the party fails to stop the skeletons from entering the ruins, the guard survives for 3 rounds before the skeletons overwhelm him and turn towards the children. Tiana will defend the children if she has not been defeated. She does not hurt children and attempts to use them to lure a victim to **Area 3**. A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the damage to the tower as likely to have been temporal in nature. On a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** the party notices a blue glint amongst the mud and rubble. It is a sapphire *ring of protection* attached the remains of a fossilized skeleton.



Quico Vicens

3-5 Characters

Levels 2-3

Underworld



Tommi Salama

Explosive Bargains

Robyn Nix

Lord Sharby, a wealthy aristocrat, has hired the party to address a clan of kobolds who he claims are "squatting" in his mines. Lord Sharby has written out a formal agreement stating that he will pay the kobolds 1 sp per week if the kobolds agree to mine for 10-hour shifts, allowing one day a week for rest. The party is tasked with delivering this agreement to the kobold miner's leader, Brisk.

If the kobolds do not agree to the new terms, Lord Sharby requests that the party remove them from the mines, in any way the adventurers see fit.

When the task is complete, and either outcome accomplished, Lord Sharby will pay each character 25 gp.

The Gemstone Mine

The mine has 6-foot-high ceilings. There are lanterns hung on the walls every 40 feet, alternating sides, making the mine and its various shafts and caverns considerably lit. The ground is made of bare earth interspersed with natural stone.

Running from the entrance deep into the mine is a minecart track that looks very well maintained. If a character makes a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, that character can tell that the minecart track is not well-used, but fully functional.

Minecarts and Boomsticks

The kobolds have two minecarts they use to send along the tracks when mining. In order to defend the mine while they are squatting in it on strike, they have recently begun to fill carts with bundles of "boomsticks". They ignite the boomsticks from **Area 4** and send a cart hurtling toward **Area 1**.

Minecarts. It takes 1 round of combat, or 6 seconds, for a cart to reach **Area 1**, and the same amount of time for the cart to be returned to **Area 4**. A cart en route can be stopped with a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** that a character adjacent to or on the tracks can make as a reaction. A character directly in the way of the hurtling cart can attempt a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** (to stop the cart) or a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** (to jump clear of it). Either way, on a failed saving throw, the character is smashed aside by the cart, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Boomsticks. The boomsticks detonate on initiative 20 two rounds, or 12 seconds, after they are lit. Boomsticks may be thrown as though they were darts, save that they do not inflict damage, and instead land on the targeted square on a successful attack, or on a random adjacent square on a missed attack. When a boomstick-filled cart detonates, each creature within 10 feet of the cart (or the boomsticks if they are removed) must make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A single boomstick deals half as much damage. The cart is covered in soot and char marks but remains undamaged by the many times it has held explosives.

1. Loading and Unloading

When the characters enter **Area 1**, they can audibly hear the kobolds in **Area 4** heckling them. The kobolds shout insults at the intruders, calling them agents of oppression and worse.

If the characters shout back at the kobolds, the kobolds yell more threats and attempt to goad the players into "finding" them. The kobolds send a cart filled with boomsticks to the characters in **Area 1** from their safety in **Area 4**, hoping to scare the characters away, or luring them into **Area 4**.

A 2-foot-tall crate in this area occasionally shakes. If a character opens the crate, three giant centipedes inside attempt to bite the character. If the crate goes undisturbed, the **giant centipedes** creep out of the crate whenever the characters leave this area. If the party carries food, the centipedes tail them and attempt to attack from behind. Otherwise, the centipedes exit the crate and wait. They are hostile and attack anyone returning here unless the characters succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**, or bribe the insects with food, in which case they proceed to consume the food instead.

The barrel here contains foul-smelling water, not even enough to fill a waterskin. Any creature who drinks the water from the barrel must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned for 1 minute.

2. Gem Deposits

A small stream cuts through this cavern, 10 feet below a bridge made of thick oak planks. The foul-smelling water is 3 feet deep, doesn't move swiftly, and can easily be crossed if a character climbs down with a **DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check**. On a failed check, the character slips and falls, taking 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage. If a character uses the Help action to assist a climber, no check is necessary. In the rear of the cavern glittering deposits of gems can be seen in the walls, with several chunks of gemstones strewn about the floor.



Rigged Bridge. The bridge is rigged to collapse in the middle whenever more than 50 pounds of weight is applied to it. A character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** notices the sabotage. A character who triggers the collapse must succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** to jump to safety, or fall into the stream among the sharp debris, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save.

A total of 11 gemstones, each worth 10 gp, can be collected from the floor of this cavern.

3. Gutted Mine

A sickly kobold named **Tizza** lies in the southern area of this room. On the ground near her are the bones of other kobolds. She is frail and weak, and she has not had clean drinking water for several days.

Tizza can tell the characters any of the following things if they speak to her:

- Brisk is a bully. All the other kobolds listen to him because they fear him.
- Brisk is not interested in working for Lord Sharby at all.
- Brisk has two lackeys, Fun and Mik, who will do anything for Brisk.

Tizza is in this room because this is the room where Brisk sends all the weaklings. She has been the last weakling left to die in this room for quite some time.

The crates and baskets in this room are dusty and have been emptied of whatever they once held. Succeeding on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check** and giving her clean water stabilizes Tizza's health. Award the party 200 XP if they help Tizza.

4. Last Stand

The rebellious miners have holed up in this room. One barrel contains four more boomsticks. The other barrels are full of putrid meat, as well as bones of various creatures the kobolds have killed for food during their lock-in.

There are four regular **kobolds**, two of which are **Fun** and **Mik**, plus **Brisk**, who is a **kobold elite**.

Brisk does not want to listen to the party about Lord Sharby's bargain. Fun and Mik try to act intimidating, and if they feel a fight is going to break out, they attempt to circle around behind the characters.

If the characters fight and defeat Brisk, Fun and Mik attempt to flee, and the other two kobolds give up immediately, cowering from the "mighty warriors".

A character must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Intimidation) check** to convince a regular kobold to abandon Brisk as their leader. This check is made with **advantage** if the party has already successfully persuaded or intimidated a kobold. The **DC** of these checks is reduced to **DC 10** if the party helped Tizza and brings her along. Subject to the GM's discretion, Tizza can replace Brisk as the new leader; in such a case, Brisk may be convinced to step down with a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Intimidation) check**.

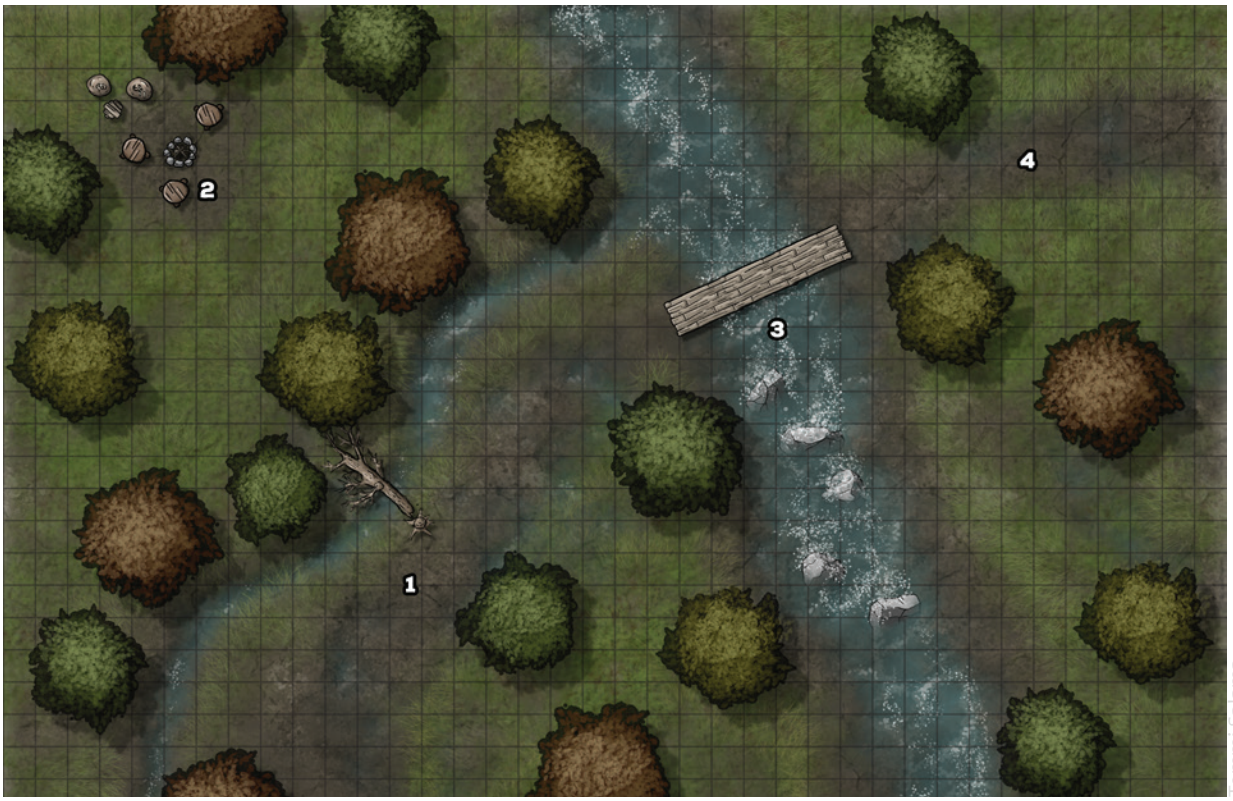
Turning the Tables. The working conditions of the kobolds are dangerous, and their wages are not fair. If the party sympathizes with the kobold miners, they can attempt to negotiate with Lord Sharby on behalf of the kobolds. It takes a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to make Lord Sharby agree to fair terms. If the negotiations fail, Sharby will send three waves of 1d3+2 **thugs** to clear out the kobolds and the party before giving in to the demands. The third wave is led by a **knight**. Suffice to say, the party won't be paid by Sharby.

Mates Laurentiu

4-5 Characters

Levels 2-3

Forest



Tommi Salama

Extreme Poaching

Airian Eastman

During a merciless storm, the party is about to happen upon a camp where strange woodland creatures have been trapped; it looks like the work of expert poachers, and it is. However, capturing these creatures is the livelihood of a druid couple, and helps maintain the natural balance in the forest. Will the party accidentally kill the strange critters, incurring the ire of the druids, try to abscond with them for a hefty payday, or ally with the druids?

The worn hiking trail cuts through the heart of an old growth forest beside a meandering brook. It is a warm day and to the north a storm has been building in the distance for a while. As the party nears the end of the brook, they hear the louder river rushing by. Woodland creatures and birds begin to seek shelter and as the party enters **Area 1** the rain begins.

Weather Effect. The weather lightly obscures vision and all creatures in the region have **disadvantage** on sight-based and hearing-based **Wisdom (Perception) checks**. Open flames are extinguished. Alternatively, for a more challenging environment, the GM may add in high winds, causing **disadvantage** to ranged weapon attacks.

1. Broken Log

The road has been following a small brook. The sides and bottom of the brook are muddy. Ahead a broken log crosses the brook. It appears to be placed in a way that would allow crossing. Upon closer inspection, there are axe-like strokes evident in the wood, and the cut is too straight for an animal.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a wooden box hidden in the roots of the stump. The box contains a sling, ten spherical river rocks used for ammunition, a crystal, animal feathers and bones, and a phial of foul-smelling liquid with no apparent purpose.

Crossing the log towards **Area 2** requires a successful **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. On a failure, a character falls into the muddy brook. The brook is difficult terrain and its thick mud clings to boots and pants, decreasing speed by 5 feet (to a minimum of 5 ft.) until the mud has been cleaned off. Two **mud golems**, one on either side of the log, are stationed here as guardians, concealed in the mud. Perfectly camouflaged in the mud, it takes a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice them. They rise and attack anyone attempting to cross here.

On the opposite side of the road under the tree an **alchemical skunk** is rooting around in the leaves. Around the tree is a potion inside of a live animal trap. The skunk walks into the trap to get the potion if left alone. It sprays when the trap closes

behind it, or if it is startled by the party. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check** allows anyone moving within 10 feet of the creature avoids startling it. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** allows the party to dissuade the skunk and make it scamper off. Award full XP for this solution. If any character uses a potion within 30 feet of the skunk, it moves towards the potion and attacks, trying to get to the potion. The alchemical skunk, if caught, is worth up to 500 gp to the right buyer, as a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check** can ascertain.

2. Mostly Abandoned Camp

On the far side of the log is a small glade where three wooden chairs surround a stone fire ring. The chairs show signs of frequent use. Nearby a pile of gathered wood, and two sacks sit unguarded. The sacks both wriggle, as if something moves inside. To the north of the camp is a massive old oak tree. The area under this tree is dry, providing reprieve from the constant rain, but a **wood golem** lurks in the shadows, keeping watch for intruders. The golem is badly hidden and can be detected with a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check** identifies humanoid and canine tracks in the soft dirt, as recent as a day ago. A *decanter of endless water* hangs from a broken branch low on the tree.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check** can identify the creatures in the sacks. However, a character must open the sacks to see what is inside. The creatures need not be removed from the sacks to identify them. A successful check to identify the creatures notices that they all are pretty valuable.

The first sack contains a **great mandrake** (worth 250 gp), and two **mandrakes** (worth 125 gp each). They are packed in dirt so only the leafy green tops stick out. Removing from the dirt causes them to shriek. The second sack contains four **giant moths** (worth 50 gp each), and a **giant shockwing moth** (worth 250 gp). If the bag is opened all the way, the moths fly out and attack.

3. The Bridge Floods

A fishing stream cuts across the road ahead. The rain makes the old wooden bridge slippery, rendering it difficult terrain. Any **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** while standing on the bridge is made with **disadvantage**. The storm also causes the water to rise and regularly spill over the bridge: any characters on the bridge or within 5 feet of the river upstream from the bridge must make a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to avoid being swept over the rocks downstream. Alternatively, a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** may be used if party used rope or prepared something to hold onto. On a failed check the character is swept into the water, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage as they smash against the rocks. Characters in the water can automatically swim to either shore after the last set of boulders.

4. Druids on the Road

On the far side of the bridge two human **druids** (**Flithar** and **Geogron**) dressed in simple woodlands garbs are rushing towards the safety of their camp. They usually gather rare species of flora or fauna and have been tracking the **alchemical skunk** in **Area 2** for days after a mage lost it. The druid's **small dog** companion **Hasso** has a leather collar embedded with gemstones (worth 10 gp). Alternatively, use a **wolf** to increase encounter difficulty for larger party. The druids are neutral.

The party can befriend the druids by:

- Asking for help, healing, or aid from the druids requires a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Wisdom (Medicine) check**.
- Promising aid to the druids, sharing tales of their encounters in **Area 1** & **Area 2**, warning them of the flash flood in **Area 3** with the use of a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Performance)**, **Wisdom (Survival)** or **Intelligence (Nature) check**.

The druids become hostile if:

- The party took the sacks of **mandrakes** or **giant moths**, and the sacks are visibly carried by the party. That is their livelihood the party is trying to abscond with!
- Threats against the druids or lies about the sacks of critters that are not supported by a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Deception) check**.

Treasure. If the party kills the druids and companion, they find the following: 17 cp, 12 gp, 2 quarterstaffs, jeweled dog collar (10 gp), various herb pouches and 2 bedrolls. If the party parts on friendly terms with the druids, they are given a *manual of the lesser golem (hair)*.



Julio Rocha

4-5 Characters

Level 2-3

Urban



Sean MacDonald

Caught in the Act

Grant Simpson

The Wandering Wagers carnival group has come to Stromsborg! With them come exotic wares, carnival game stands, gambling booths, and the renowned Bambooze acting troupe.

Because of a rash of thefts during last year's carnival, the mayor of Stromsborg has hired the party for some extra security. Being on the job shouldn't prevent them from enjoying some of the games and the Bambooze's performance in the meeting hall. It will be a particularly surprising one this year, as a group of bandits has kidnapped the troupe in order to impersonate them and rob from the villagers.

The ceilings throughout the meeting hall are 25 feet tall, except for in **Area 4** and **Area 5** where they are 20 feet tall.

Carnival Games

There are a number of different games and shops available during the carnival which the party can enjoy. Feel free to invent your own or use some of the ones listed here:

Ring Throwing Contest. Characters attempt to toss a ring around a short pole in the ground. To throw a ring characters make an attack roll without proficiency and a roll of 13 or higher results in a successful toss for a coin reward of 20 sp.

Guessing Game. A carnival member shuffles a deck of cards and then draws one from the top of the deck. A character attempts to guess whether the card is hearts, spades, clubs, or diamonds. If they guess correctly, they receive 1 gp. Roll a d4 to determine which card type is drawn (a result of 1 means a success). This game is rigged. So if a character succeeds, the drawer secretly swaps a card hidden in their sleeve. A character must declare and succeed on a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** to discover the cheating.

Arm Wrestling. Characters can arm wrestle one of the stronger carnival members here. They must make a **DC 15 Strength Check**. If a character wins, they receive 20 sp.

1. The Auditorium

As the sun sets, many of the **villagers** (15 **commoners**) gather in the meeting hall for the Bambooze troupe performance. The villagers will not engage in combat, but can be targeted by bandits, which means the party needs to protect them while fighting. They can be arranged in the pews or on the stools at the back of the room in any way, as long as they are all seated.

2. Waiting in the Wings

Four of the **bandits** who have impersonated the Bambooze troupe are waiting here for the signal to reveal themselves. They will be playing cards in this area until the robbery begins and will

claim to be stagehand troupe members if questioned. A successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that they know next to nothing about acting, plays, or performing. This becomes a **DC 14 check** for any characters with a background in theater or performing.

Once the robbery has begun, the bandits here will bar the main double doors in **Area 1** to prevent escape and help from outside.

3. The Real Troupe

The door to this room is locked. All villagers know this room to be the village mail room, which is not normally locked. The door lock can be picked with thieves tools and a **DC 15 Dexterity check**.

The real **Bambooze troupe members** (five **commoners**) are tied up and gagged inside of this room. Characters can hear them shuffling if they listen at the door. If freed before the attempted robbery, the captive troupe members will explain that a band of thieves snuck into the meeting hall during their rehearsal and is impersonating them. Should any of the bandits from **Area 2** or **Area 4** notice that the real troupe has been discovered, they will immediately launch into combat.

4. Playing the Part

The stage is five feet above the floor of **Area 1**. Two wagons have been assembled as props on the stage along with a faux firepit in between them. The bandits have hidden their weapons and **smoke bombs** (thrown, after hit smoke obscures 10 ft. radius around target, 10 rounds duration or until dispersed by wind) inside of the wagons.

The Performance. After a brief period, the rest of the bandits will enter the stage from **Area 5** and begin performing for the villager audience. This includes failed actors turned bandit leaders **Dansel** and **Jor** (two **thugs**) and two other **bandits** who are not thrilled to be in costume. It is quickly obvious why the pair never found success. A successful **DC 5 Charisma (Performance)** or **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals their many flubbed lines and poor acting.

The Robbery. As the play reaches its climax, Dansel and Jor grab crossbows from the wagons and signal for the robbery to begin. They prefer to attack from the safety of the stage as the other bandits engage in melee combat. If they successfully manage to rob the villagers or more than half of the bandits are defeated, Dansel or Jor deploy the smoke bombs to cover their escape toward **Area 5**.

5. Escape Route

This storage room has been turned into a backstage area by the Bambooze troupe for their performance. Costumes, makeup, and various props can be found scattered about. It is also where the bandits have stored all of their loot.

Bandit Escape. They attempt to flee out of the back door here after escaping from battle in **Area 4**.

Bandit Loot. The loot collected here includes a number of coins and gems (30 gp in value), a *dagger of venom*, and 30 crossbow bolts. If the party chooses to return the valuables to the villagers, the mayor will double the payment for the job.

There is also a *deck of illusions* sitting on one of the tables belonging to a member of the Bambooze troupe. If the party successfully frees and assists the troupe, they will offer it to the party as a gift.

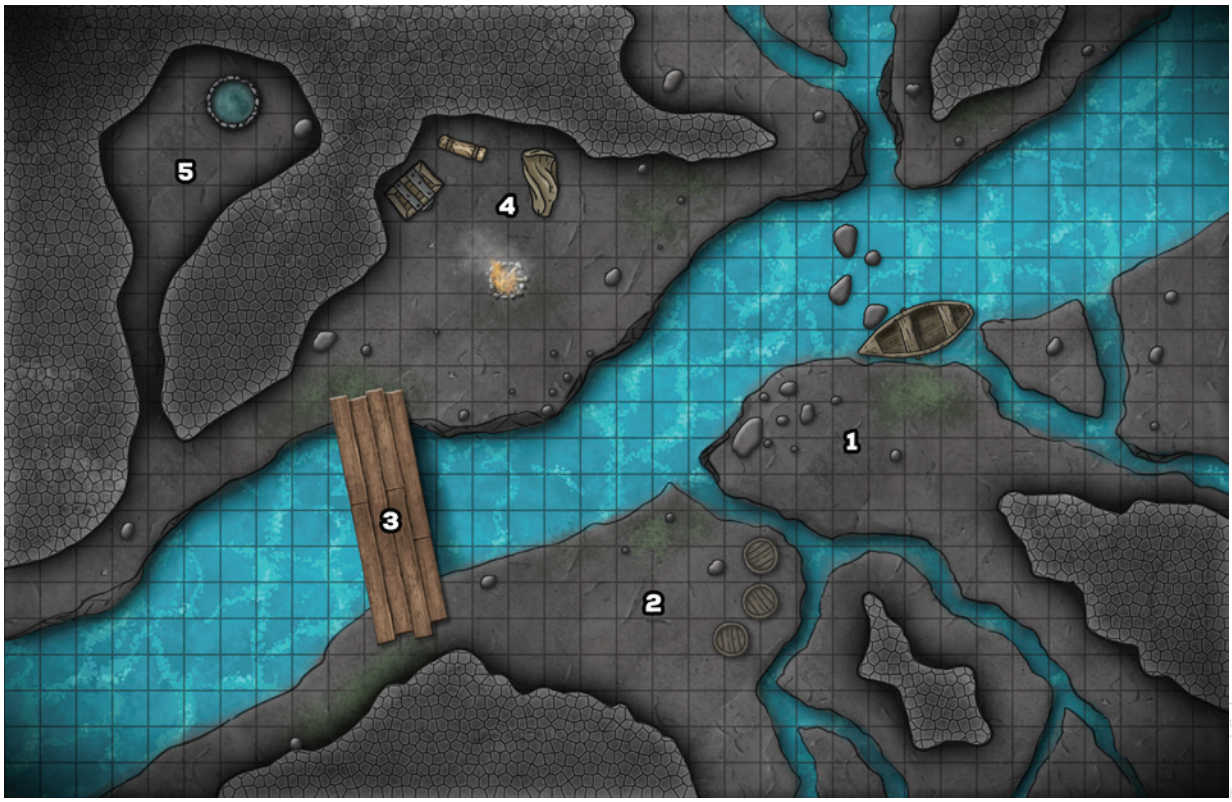


Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 2-3

Swamp



Tommi Salama

Cessation of Hostilities

Stephen Radney-MacFarland

For decades the Klesdeep swampfolk have raided the kingdoms. The conflicts' origins are lost, often taking on mythic proportions, with both sides' misunderstandings and atrocities either exaggerated or dismissed. The source of the ongoing strife was essentially a clash of cultures agitated by self-righteous and jingoistic demagogues on both sides. But now peace is in sight. Most differences have been put aside and accords of nonaggression and cooperation between the swampfolk and the borderland estates abound—except for one holdout; the renegade Quai.

Quai is a mystery, even to most swampfolk. An enigmatic figure rife with contradiction, Quai is short in some tales, in others unusually tall. Some claim she is a young woman, while others speak of a handsome boy. Some even claim that Quai is no mortal, but a kind of quasi-god, a divine coalescence of the spirits of the swamps reborn through many incarnations to protect Klesdeep. Known as the hunter of the fantastic beasts of the swampland, Quai used to avoid the conflicts between the swampfolk and their dryland foes. But now new uprisings, each reportedly spurred on by the mysterious Quai, threaten the fragile peace.

With cooler heads on both sides of the dispute not wanting Quai's mysterious meddling to shatter a hard-won peace, they have decided to send a group of adventurers to hasten a cessation of hostilities by confronting Quai.

Boons and Motivations

To add extra complications to this adventure, you can use the following boons and motivations rules. These can often result in interparty conflict, so if your group is not comfortable with this type of roleplaying, ignore this section.

At the start of the adventure, either find a standard deck of playing cards or make your own cards. If you use a standard deck of cards, take out the jack, the queen, and a number of aces equal to the remaining players. Then shuffle the cards you took out, and hand each out to the players. Players must keep the results secret.

Ace (On the Right Path). Once during this adventure, you gain **advantage** on a **single saving throw** of your choice. You must announce using this feature before the roll is made.

Jack (Vengeful). One of Quai's raids killed at least one person you know and care about. You seek vengeance for the dead—blood for blood. You gain **advantage** on a **single melee or ranged attack roll**. You must announce using this feature before the roll is made.

Queen (Peacemaker). You are blessed with **proficiency in Charisma (Persuasion)** for a week. If you already have that proficiency, you make **Charisma (Persuasion) checks** with **advantage** for a week.

The Approach

After 1d4+2 days, the heroes find a labyrinthine system of watery caves in a remote area of the swamp, which serves as Quai's base. The heroes automatically find the entrance to **Area 1**. If they succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they find the entrance to **Area 2**. If at least one character beats a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they also find the third entrance, leading them directly to **Area 4** on the other side of the bridge.

1. Boat Launch

There is a boat tied up to this area. One of Quai's followers, a **tribal warrior**, guards the boat (**passive Perception 10**). Once alerted, he calls for his master and his allies in **Area 2**, unties the boat, and attempts to make it to Quai.

2. Guarded Plunder

The barrels contain salted foodstuff and ale stolen during a raid. A trio of Quai's followers (three **tribal warriors**) wait here. They attack any invaders and call out to their companions.

3. Rickety Bridge

Only the plank to the left of the center of this bridge is sturdy enough to cross. The other collections of planks collapse at the borders of its constituent planks, which can be noticed with a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check**. Traveling on the one sturdy beam requires a **DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. Trying to cross in another way requires a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** to jump to safety as the unstable portion of the bridge collapses. Regardless of whether a creature or a part of the bridge falls into the water, the resounding splash has a chance to alert all creatures in the complex: roll a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** for each creature. On a successful check, it hears the ruckus. If a creature hears the splash, it may prepare for battle or come to investigate, subject to the GM's discretion.

4. Quai's Rest

Standing amid the camp is a tall and trim figure, wearing all white and shining armor with a plumed helmet. Undoubtedly Quai, the figure shines with glimmering radiance, the wash of divinity. **Quai** (**druid** with **Insight +6**) seems to be at once a preternaturally handsome boy and a fiercely determined woman, and, instead of a *Quarterstaff*, wields a:

+1 Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. and range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Swamp Champion's Weaponry. Quai can use a bonus action to recall their *+1 spear* to their hand.

Above Quai hovers a **giant bumblebee holding a lantern** (treat as a **giant wasp** that can cast *light* at will as an innate spell, and a 1st-level *magic missile* three times per day through the lamp). Upon being alerted to the heroes' presence, Quai uses an action to



make a strange call, and the waters being to churn. At the start of the next round, a Neutral **merrow** emerges from the water. The merrow defends Quai until the swampfolk hero is killed or makes their peace with the heroes. What happens next is contingent on the heroes' actions. Quai is not evil, just driven. Given the right words, the proper show of respect, appeals to reasons, promise to ensure the peace, and allowing Quai to go free with the guarantee of a cessation of hostilities, they stand down. This requires a series of **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) checks**, with at least three successes before three failures. **Charisma (Deception) checks** may be substituted, but if Quai notices a lie, negotiations fail. Quai and their allies continue to attack during these negotiations, and if they or one of their allies is hit or affected by a hostile spell, the negotiations fail.

Either way, Quai tries to reach the Font of Quai (**Area 5**) and escape.

5. Font of Quai

Quai is not a person, but rather a title, granted to a member of the swampfolk through an enchanted font. If Quai makes it to the font, they can jump in, at which point both Quai and the font disappear, teleporting to some other location in the swamp. If Quai is killed and another creature enters the swamp, nothing occurs unless they are a swampfolk worthy of the font.

Rewards

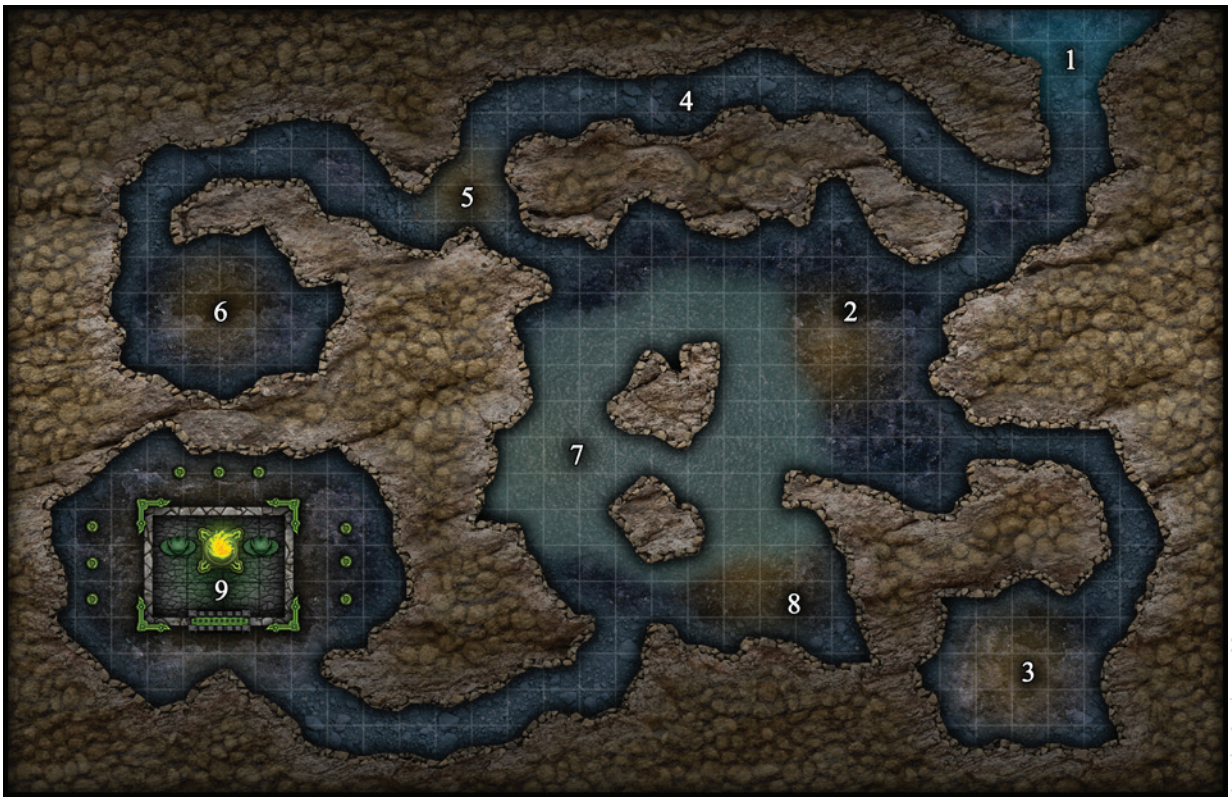
Successfully brokering a peace with Quai grants the party the *+1 spear*, including the ability to call it back to the wielder's hands. If the party slays Quai, the spear loses its magic, but remains a potent symbol for the triumph over the rebel. In this instance, it may be sold for 750 gp.

Herman Lau

6 Characters

Levels 2-3

Swamp



Justin Andrew Mason

Forgotten Cave of the Serpentine God

Thilo Graf, Michael O. Holland

Serpent's Coil has seen better days. The swamp-based outpost used to be a hub for serpent cultists exploring the marshes, until the inquisition cracked down on the cult with extreme prejudice. Without the cult-based travelers, the little outpost's economy started a downward spiral: With thugs and persons-at-arms leaving the outpost, it was easy picking for a most savage raid.

Yesterday lizardfolk, under the command of a couatl of all things, torched Serpent's Coil and dragged most of the few remaining locals into the swamp. Arriving at the outpost's smoldering ruins, the survivors beg the party to follow the raiders' obvious trail and rescue the abducted.

Lighting. Fluorescent lichen on the walls provides dim lighting.

Flooded Floor. A foot of stagnant water covers the ground. Moving only 5 feet per round does not splash water around; any faster movement imposes **disadvantage** on **Dexterity (Stealth) checks** due to splashing water, unless the party can figure out a way to mitigate that.

1. Cavern Entrance

A thick copse of diminutive ferns camouflages the short but wide entrance to the cave. The fetid, stinking smell of rot and mold assaults the characters as they enter.

Drifting Guardians. A total of four **swampgas bubbles** live in the fetid pools outside the entrance, drifting through the marsh. The lizardfolk domesticated them as a kind of organic alarm system; a single bubble is here at all times, hovering in the square with the number **1**. Sentry bubbles are exchanged by two of the lizardfolk from **Area 2** every 4 hours. If a bubble detonates with a *Fiery Death*, everyone in the caves prepares for combat. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals that these creatures are attracted to fire; adventurers can lure them away from the cave and fight them out of earshot.

Development. If one or two bubbles vanish, none of the lizardfolk become suspicious. They simply replace them once they note one drifted away. If more than two bubbles vanish, the lizardfolk in **Area 2** become paranoid and lose their **disadvantage** on **Wisdom (Perception) checks** while guarding the cave (see **Area 2**).

2. Lizardfolk Guards

The cavern opens wide to reveal an underground pool at the center of the caverns.

Bored Guards. Four **lizardfolk** listlessly guard the cave entrance from here; they have **disadvantage** on **Wisdom (Perception) checks.** They spend most of their time lounging by the water and snacking on the small fish found here. One of them keeps an eye on the tunnels to **Areas 2** and **4**. The languid guards

snap to attention when their master Zemron approaches, bubbles go missing, or they hear a *Fiery Death* explosion. One has a belt pouch containing 24 gp and a bird bone collection.

Development. Loud combat draws the attention of the **otyugh** from **Area 7**. It arrives one round later.

3. Lizardfolk Hatchery

The center of this chamber rises above the water and is filled with hundreds of lizardfolk eggs. The hatchery is protected by three **lizardfolk** and four pet **stirges**. The lizardfolk fight to the death to protect the eggs.

Lost Gem. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** notices a blue-green emerald (200 gp) with a serpent symbol under the water. It opens the gate in **Area 9**.

4. Fungus Passage

This tunnel is filled with algae and fungus in a myriad array of colors.

Deadly Fungi. Four **violet fungi** use *False Appearance* to blend in with the fungi and algae. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** notices the absence of animal life in the water. Next to a fungus is a rotted leather quiver with three *+1 arrows*.

5. Black Ooze Ambush

Three passages converge at a small intersecting chamber. A skeleton is chained to the northwest wall and an acidic smell hangs in the air. Close examination of the skeleton reveals fleshy bits still clinging to its bones. A **black pudding** adheres itself to the ceiling and drops on the first target examining the skeleton. Looking up automatically spots the ooze.

6. Cultists of the Serpentine God

This chamber is filled with the rotting remains of furniture. In the room's center a muddy mound rises above the standing water.

Despondent Wight's Mound. A heavy, wooden chair resembling a throne stands on the mound. **Remure**, a **wight**, sits on the throne, and two of his **zombie** minions rise from the waters. Remure was a faithful serpent cultist, who expected an eternity of bliss after death, or at least an apotheosis into some cool and powerful form. Now, he laments the unglamorous existence as a wight.

Development. With a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** or a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, he can be convinced to stand down; otherwise, he attacks. Remure dropped the Lost Gem (**Area 3**) during his last moments alive and knows how to open the altar in **Area 9** but does not care anymore.

7. Deep Waters

A wandering **otyugh** settled into the pool of putrid water and decided to make the cave its new home. It mostly ignores the lizardfolk except when it grows hungry; the lizardfolk have started ensuring that it doesn't. The otyugh investigates excessive noise in **Area 2**. If the characters search the deepest center of the pool, they find skeletal remains wearing a pristine mithral chainmail.

8. Shallowed Alcove

In this alcove, the villagers **Jim**, **Jones**, and **Janice** (**commoners**) are bound and gagged. Zemron plans to sacrifice them to power a ritual to reveal the location of a *lost gem* (**Area 3**) he needs to open a door in **Area 9**.

9. Forgotten Altar

This large cave houses a humanoid-made structure resembling a lavish mausoleum, decorated with green jade friezes on each corner. Nine jade pillars surround the structure. The structure's door sports jade inlays and bears a serpentine symbol.

Zemron, a corrupted chaotic evil **couatl**, stalks around the outside of the structure with a pair of **lizardfolk** in tow. Zemron is infuriated because his lizardfolk can't seem to find the missing emerald wto open the door.

Friezes. The friezes depict scenes of the Serpentine God rising to consume the world.

Serpentine Symbol. The jade inlays around the symbol sport five niches; blue-green emeralds rest in four of them. Inserting the emerald from **Area 3** opens the door, as a ghastly green glow illuminates the chamber.

Inside the Structure. A green flame burns in a jade brazier with twin jade naga statues standing on each side. The skeletal remains of the megalomaniac naga master who built this altar lie on the ground. The naga was slain a year ago. Among the naga bones, a map drawn on cured human human skin points towards an "X" deep in the swamp...

Development. Zemron demands the emerald from the heroes, whether they have it or not. If they do not or cannot comply, he flies into a murderous rage and orders his lizardfolk to attack. If they comply, he takes the map inside the structure and marches off with his lizardfolk. If Zemron is outmatched, he tries to escape, preferably with the map if the structure has been opened.

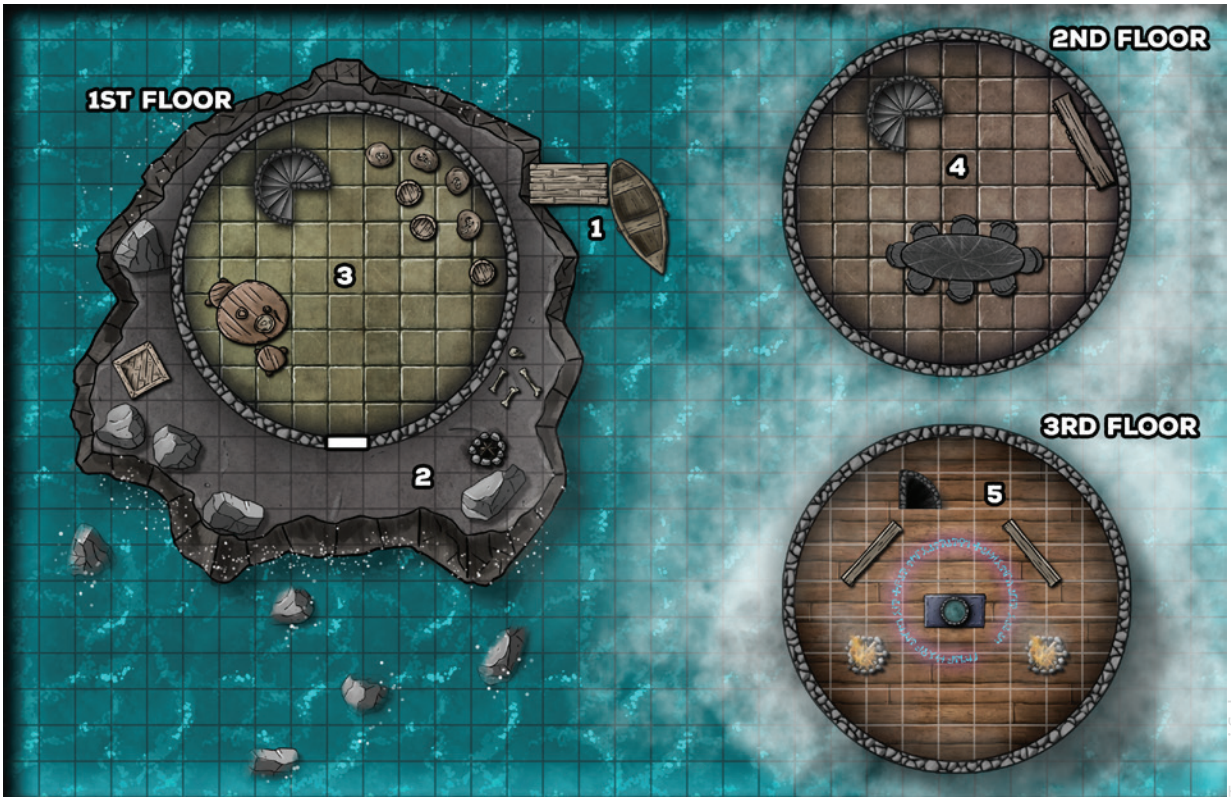


Jacob Blackmon

4 Characters

Level 3

Coast



Tommi Salama

Seaside Hideaway

Airian Eastman, Thilo Graf

A stone tower looms in the unforgiving sea, known for its intense fog, eerie storms, and merciless aquatic creatures. The party is assumed to approach by rowboat, on a mission to deal with its supposed inhabitants. Alternatively, a shipwrecked party might be dragged here by the currents.

Rumors. A variety of rumors circulate about the tower. A **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** in a seaside location yields one of the following:

- A cult worshiping evil sea-deities claims the tower as its base. (t)
- The tower is a pirate hideaway. (t)
- A bootlegging operation uses the island to store illegal, magical alcohol. (t)
- A notorious aquamancer lives here. (f)
- The surrounding waters are the territory of a water dragon. (f)

Surrounding Waters. The waters surrounding the isle are stormy. Four reef sharks hunt in the waters around the coast. They attack any creature they perceive in the water, except the **amphibious** grindylow in **Area 2** who feed them regularly.

Approach By Boat. It takes a **DC 10 Strength (water vehicle) check** to row a boat safely to the dock in **Area 1** and anchor it. Characters proficient with water vehicles have **advantage** on this check. A failure risks capsizing the vessel; it takes a **DC 10 Dexterity (water vehicle) check** to stabilize the vessel. Keeping the boat stable adjacent to the cliff takes a **DC 15 Strength (water vehicle) check**. On a failed check, the boat is smashed into the cliff, capsizing it.

Approach by Swimming. The currents drag each swimming character 10 feet towards the isle if a character fails a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**. On a successful check, a character can swim normally. Holding fast to buoyant material capable of keeping a Medium creature afloat grants **advantage** on this check. If a character is dragged into a square containing the island's cliff, they take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage at the start of their next turn due to being smashed against the rocks. Climbing the cliff from the water takes a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check**.

Faction Dynamics. There are four factions working within this tower: bootleggers, pirates, and cultists. Finally, there are grindylow, which have been browbeaten by all the other factions and serve them hesitantly. The bootleggers work in **Area 3** and have to pay the pirates to move their merchandise, but do not fear the cult. The pirates meet in **Area 4** and exploit the bootleggers but fear the cult and hate the grindylow. The cultists occupy **Area 5** and tolerate the other factions. While the bootleggers and pirates work together most of the time, they can both be made to turn on the cult to get rid of the cultist's grating and incessant chanting.

Good roleplay can negotiate a deal with a faction.

Payment by Faction. Allying with a faction other than the grindylow nets benefits.

Grindylow. Nothing substantial to offer.

Bootleggers. 20 gp for removing the cultists. Double for removing pirates as well.

Pirates. 50 gp for removing all factions except bootleggers, and a writ of favor to be used at a later date.

Cult. Anything found in **Areas 1–4**. Grindylow and sharks may not be harmed.

1. Dock

A basic rowboat is tied to the pier, and a second boat can dock on the north side. A character can exit from a boat without a skill check.

2. Grindylow Camp

A scattering of bones and a firepit sit unused, though the firepit shows signs of use. The bones are non-humanoid in nature. Two **amphibious grindylow** are in this area. They have a land speed of 20 feet and the *Amphibious* feature instead of *Water Breathing*.

The grindylow feed the four **reef sharks** in the water regularly and are not attacked by them. They are cooking by the firepit (50%) or sleeping inside the crate (50%). Inside the crate are old blankets, rusty daggers, and a pouch of coins (12 cp).

Cowards at heart, the grindylow are easy to browbeat with a **DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation) check**. A **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** with promises of food and treasure also secures their cooperation. If the party seems too eager to cooperate, or if they show weakness, the grindylow attempt to Push them into the ocean and let the currents and sharks do the work. They can explain the power dynamics between factions.

3. Bootlegging Operation

The **bootleggers**, four **guards** and **Veisatro** (**bandit captain**), occupy the room. Circular stone stairs climb upward, while nearby, sacks of spices and barrels of an illegal type of alcohol (such as a magic absinthe or the like) are here. A **DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check** can fool the bootleggers into letting the party pass. A deal may also be brokered by roleplaying.

Treasure. The barrels each weight 35 lb. and contains magical alcohol worth 250 gp, but also is illegal in all nearby settlements. The sacks contain a saffron-based spice-blend to make the booze more palatable. Each sack of spices is worth 150 gp. A pouch on the table contains 200 sp. Veisatro has a *chime of opening* with 4 charges remaining.

4. Pirate Meeting Room

This chamber has unadorned walls and an unadorned stone floor. A table for eight sits near the center of the room, with a low bench along the wall. The furnishings all sport ornate spiral pattern designs, and are made from weathered, blackened wood. This is a meeting place for eight notorious pirate captains, though currently only five pirates are here. **Captain Jenny Stonehand** (use **knight**, except she has **AC** 16 [studded leather, shield], she replaces *Leadership* with the **bandit captain**'s *Parry*, and attacks with her *Stone Hands* instead of a *Greatsword*, dealing bludgeoning damage instead of slashing damage) now sits in the chair with feet propped on the table, surrounded by four **pirates** (use **thug**). They are jovial unless they heard fighting from **Area 3**. Jenny is shrewd, but superstitious, and knows about the *teleportation circle* in **Area 5**. One of her crewmates lost a leg to the grindylow's reef sharks, so she wants the sharks and grindylow dead.

Treasure. Jenny has a *bag of holding* filled with bolts of silk (worth 1,500 gp in total).

5. Cult Chamber

The floor here is made of wooden planks akin to a ship deck. Two benches and two braziers are situated near a stone altar dedicated to an obscure god of the lightless depths, surrounded by five individuals. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** notices runes etched below the altar, which a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** can identify as a permanent *teleportation circle* to a destination of the GM's choice. The braziers are enchanted with *continual flame* spells. These magical features outdate the altar by several decades.

Four **cultists** are chanting, while their leader **Basshira** prays. She is a **cult fanatic**, but has the *Amphibious* feature and a *Moray-Headed Tentacle*. She can use this attack as part of her *Multiattack*.

Moray-Headed Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage and the target is grappled (**escape DC 12**). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Basshira can't use it on another target.

While creepy, the cultists are not outright hostile.

Altar. The top of the altar is made of stones and carved to form a basin. Inside the basin murky blue-green water swirls perpetually. Occasionally, a tiny tentacle can be seen breaking the surface. Within the water of the altar is a Tiny **sea creature** (as **octopus**, but has 2 hit points and lacks *Ink Cloud*). The cultists believe it is a reborn deity in need of their protection. Killing it makes Basshira lose her *Moray-Headed Tentacle*. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** realizes that Basshira's bizarre blessing originates from this altar.

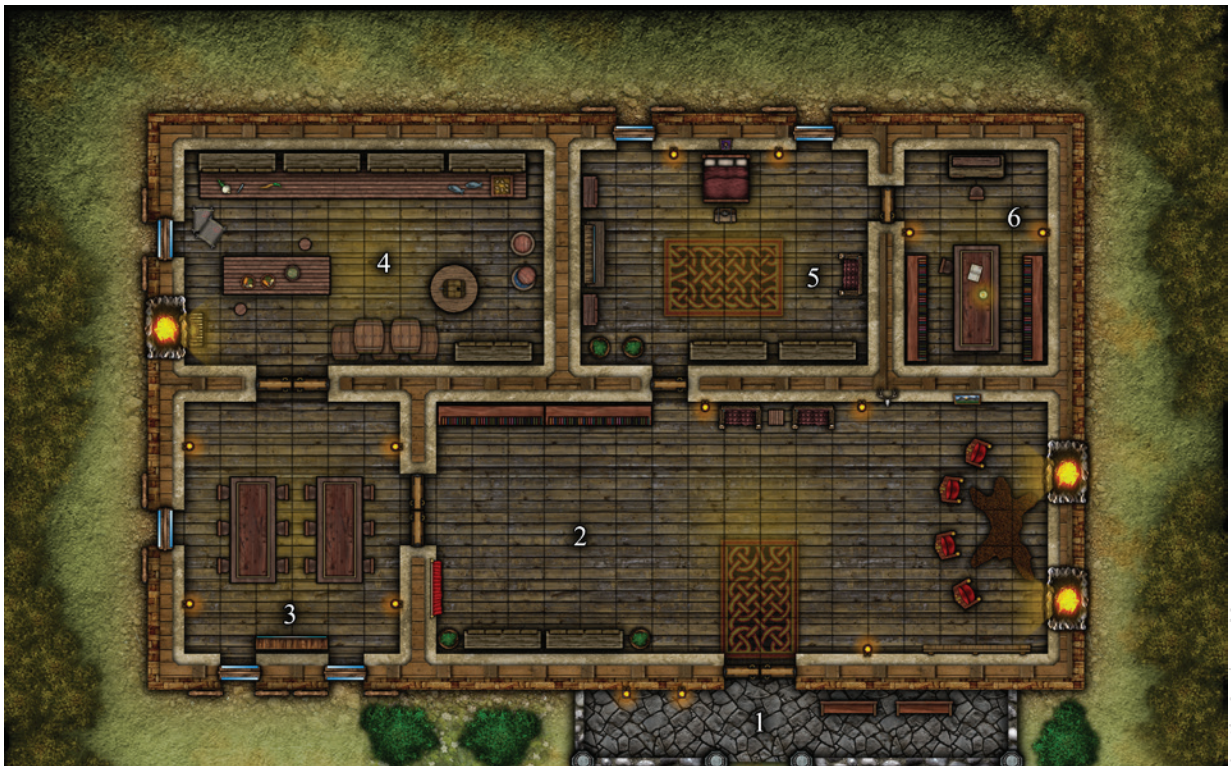
Toppling the altar destroys it and requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**. This incurs the wrath of the cult. The altar must be removed to use the *teleportation circle*.

Treasure. Basshira has a magical necklace of teleportation (as *helm of teleportation*).

4-6 Characters

Level 3

Forest



Justin Andrew Mason

Hunting the Hunters

Bill Buchalter

The farming hamlet of Brindle lies on the edge of the Brindlewood Forest. The people of Brindle rely on members of the local Hunter's Guild to keep the dangers of the forest at bay. Recently attacks on the hamlet have become more and more frequent. Packs of wolves, giant spiders, and goblins have wandered out of the forest and harassed the simple farmers who are ill equipped to deal with threats like this. The townsfolk hire the adventurers to travel to the Hunter's Guild lodge deep in the forest and discover why they have stopped protecting the hamlet.

Reaching the Cabin. The party travels most of the day following the townsfolk's directions through the Brindlewood Forest. Have the characters make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) group check.** On a success they manage to follow the landmarks and directions given by the villagers and locate the hunters' cabin without incident. If more than half the party members fail, they are waylaid along the way. Roll for a random encounter:

d6	4-5 Characters	6 Characters
1-2	2 giant spiders	3 giant spiders
3-4	2 dire wolves, 3 wolves	3 dire wolves, 2 wolves
5-6	4 goblins and a bugbear	6 goblins and a bugbear

After the encounter the party can continue on and find the hunter's cabin.

1. Entering the Cabin

When the group arrives allow them to enter the cabin and search it as much as they like. The door is unlocked, and the cabin is completely uninhabited. With a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, a character realizes something odd about the hunter's lodge. Everything in the cabin looks as if people were here but disappeared suddenly. Fires still smolder in the hearths, food and drink are spread out in the dining room, weapons are sitting in racks around the cabin, and boots are lined up neatly near the door. If the hunters left, they did so quickly without any warning or planning. There are no signs of a fight or a struggle.

What is not immediately obvious is a rift between the Material Plane and the Primal Realm briefly surged over the lodge and in an instant all the hunters crossed over. The Primal Realm is a magical plane where fey creatures rule and nature grows unchecked. With a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Nature)** or **Intelligence (Arcana) check**, a character recognizes signs of the Primal Realm throughout the lodge and can piece together what has happened. If any of the characters succeeded at the previous **Intelligence (Investigation) check**, then the **Wisdom (Nature)** or **Intelligence (Arcana) check** is made with **advantage**. Once the characters have deduced what is going on, they recognize the veil between worlds is weakest near the hearth in the common room. With a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check** a character can tear open a portal allowing them to cross over to the Primal Realm.

If the characters fail these skill checks, you can randomly choose one character in the common room and have them suddenly cross over to the Primal Realm as they walk through a rift in the veil. The remaining characters will see the portal opened and have a chance to follow their companion through to the Primal Realm.

Once the characters cross over there are challenges and encounters in each room for them to overcome, and members of the Hunter's Guild for them to rescue.

2. The Common Room

The Primal Realm version of the common room is laid out exactly as the room on the Material Plane, but the walls are covered with thorny vines and the floor is a carpet of damp leaves and moss. In the center of the room is a **shambling mound**. Three of the hunters from the guild are here as well, trying to fight off the creature, but having a tough time of it without their weapons. When the characters enter the fight, the shambling mound turns its attention to them, allowing the hunters to escape back to the Material Plane through the thin veil.

The door to the guild master's quarters (**Area 5**) is locked and can be unlocked with a **DC 17 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools, or by finding the key in **Area 4**.

3. The Dining Room

Sitting in the chairs of the dining room, gorging themselves on the hunter's food and ale, are six **rum gremlins** ◆. Two of the gremlins have a hunter cornered in the back of the room who is trying to hold them at bay with a table knife. When the gremlins realize the characters are a greater threat they will ignore the hunter, at which point the characters can allow him to run to safety.

4. The Kitchen

The characters enter this room to find a grizzly scene. One of the hunters lies dead on the table at the back of the room while two **miremals** ◆ and a **vile barber** ◆ eviscerate his corpse. As the game master, you should gauge the maturity of your table and describe this scene accordingly. With younger or more sensitive players you may want to dial back on the gory descriptions. The creatures in this room attack immediately when the characters enter. The vile barber is carrying a *+1 sickle*. The key to the guild master's room (**Area 5**) can be found on the hunter's corpse.



Rick Hershey

5. The Guild Master's Quarters

This decorative room is now overgrown with vines and moss just as the common room before it. A frail, old woman stands hunched over beside the bed. She is flanked by two hounds. The woman is **Baba Padurii**, a **green hag** and the hounds are **Fang** and **Shadow**, her faithful **blink dogs**. The hag considers herself far superior to the characters, so if they are willing to talk and show her respect, she will not immediately attack. If the characters politely press her for details, she will reveal her anger at the Hunter's Guild and their wanton killing of the creatures of her forest. She has four more of the hunters held captive in the study (**Area 6**).

Development. A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** will convince Baba Padurii to agree to leave in peace if the hunters also agree to leave the forest. If the characters do not agree to these terms, are disrepsectful, or if they fail the check, the hag and the blink dogs attack. If Baba Paduril's hit point total drops to 20 or less, she turns invisible and flees. The blink dogs fight alongside their mistress.

6. The Study

This room is covered with dense vines and moss. Three **violet fungus** are hiding among the foliage. Four of the hunters are tied up and gagged here. Once the fungus has been dealt with the characters can lead the remaining hunters safely back to the Material Plane.

Sadly, the guild master was the hunter who died in the kitchen. But the remaining hunters are grateful for the party's help and reward them with the guild master's sword and cloak; a *+1 longsword* and a *cloak of protection*. When the characters report back to Brindle the townsfolk reward them with 100 gp.

Guildmaster's Regalia

The village of Brindle is far too small to contain much in the way of an illicit market, but should a character openly display the sword and cloak of the master of the Hunter's Guild in a coastal town or city of any size, they're approached not long after with a purchase offer (see page 298).

Guildmaster's Regalia might at first seem a peculiar item for a Black Market dealer to covet, but a character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check** comes to the realization that the regalia likely carries with it a cultural mark of station. Whomever is in possession of the sword and cloak holds sway over the Hunter's Guild.

4-5 Characters

Level 3

Forest



Justin Andrew Mason

Mystery at Lost Calf Lodge

David Schwartz

Over the last year nearly a dozen hunters have gone missing in the forest, their bodies only discovered days or weeks later. The lack of clues gives rise to wild speculation, until one hunter returns to town having barely survived an attack. After being stabbed while he lay in his bedroll, Bowen Tarss replied with a stab of his own knife, causing the assailant to flee. The characters are called to investigate these new clues.

Examining Bowen. A character who examines Bowen's wounds and makes a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Medicine) check**, can determine that the wound was made by an animal horn or tusk. If the party asks to see the weapon Bowen used to defend himself, it becomes evident that it's a silver blade. Though Bowen did not get a good look at his attacker, but they did leave a trail of blood that the characters can easily follow. The trail ends not far from a hunters' lodge a half-day's travel into the woods from the village.

Lost Calf Lodge

The lodge is run by Treb Derval, a Neutral human male, and Egyron a Neutral minotaur bull. The lodge is frequented by hunters seeking food, lodging, and news as they make their way into or out of the forest. The outer walls of the lodge are made of stone and mortar, while all interior walls and doors are wooden. Doors are not locked unless mentioned. Light is provided by lanterns suspended from the rafters.

1. Vestibule

This enclosed porch keeps cold weather out of the main hall. Along the walls are hung muddy coats and boots, as well as a few animal carcasses.

2. Main Hall

The lodge's largest room has a table for visitors to sit and socialize at, and plenty of floor space for them to lay out their bedrolls. A pair of bookcases are stocked with maps of the region, texts on local flora, fauna, and fey, as well as a few bawdy novels.

There are 1d4+1 **hunters** (as **scouts**) divided between this room and the dining room (**Area 4**) at any time. When the characters arrive, one of the hunters, **Mardrea**, is a human woman who carries a *+1 spear* made from a mammoth tusk.

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

If asked about the attack, Mardrea answers truthfully: she was in the forest on the night of the most recent attack, but not even in the vicinity of where the attack took place. She has only recently arrived in the area, so cannot be responsible for any of the previous disappearances. She displays no evidence of recent wounds.

3. Kitchen

This spacious kitchen is designed to accommodate the lodge's co-owner and cook, **Egyron**. The **minotaur** speaks fluent Common, having worked as a wilderness guide before starting the lodge with Treb some years ago. Too large for a typical bed, Egyron also sleeps in this room.

Although potentially a deadly combatant, Egyron more often uses grapples and shoves to eject belligerent guests.

If asked about the attack, Egyron tells the characters that he was in the lodge the whole night, a fact which can be corroborated by hunters who were also there that night.

4. Dining Room

Egyron can make meals at any time, though the hunters usually eat just before dawn or just after dusk.

5. Treb Derval's Room

Treb keeps the door to this room locked. It can be unlocked with the key he carries or with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools.

The co-owner of the lodge, **Treb Derval** has been turned into a **wereboar**, though he typically carries an *Axe* (instead of a *Maul*).

Axe. (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

The source of Treb's curse is a round eye agate that he found nearly a year ago (see **Area 6**). The agate acts as a rather unlucky *stone of good luck*—it is cursed.

Curse. This stone is cursed, a fact that is revealed only when an *identify* spell is cast on the stone or you attune to it. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the stone, keeping it within reach at all times. In addition, you are also afflicted with the *Curse of Lycanthropy*, becoming a wereboar. Your attacks cannot curse other humanoids with lycanthropy.

Treb is unaware that he is the creature that has been killing hunters, only that he awoke the morning after the attack with a mysterious stab wound. If the characters arrive that day, he has not yet cleaned up the blood in his room.

Treb is in his room when the characters arrive, and only comes out if they want to speak with him. He admits he was in the forest the night of the attack but remains hazy on the details. He does not volunteer that he was wounded, but a character can notice his wound with successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)**, **Wisdom (Medicine)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. The gash is obvious if Treb removes his shirt. If asked about the wound, he is unable to explain it. If the characters attempt to arrest Treb (or simply attack him), or are curious about his stone, he shifts into *Hybrid Form* and attacks. All hunters except Mardrea who witness this flee. The shocked Egyron tries to talk sense into Trebb, a fool's errand. It takes a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to convince Egyron to help subdue Treb, but even then the minotaur refuses to harm his friend.

An unlocked chest contains 700 (2d6 x 10) sp, the lodge's cash assets.

A character can discover a secret hatch in the floor leading to a cellar (**Area 6**) with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**.

6. Secret Cellar

While digging this cellar last year, Treb discovered the buried remnants of a shrine. Atop the altar is a stone statue of a human-boar hybrid. There are two round hollows where its eyes would be; one of these held the *cursed stone of good luck* Treb now carries. With a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check**, a character may realize that the shrine is just a part of a larger configuration...

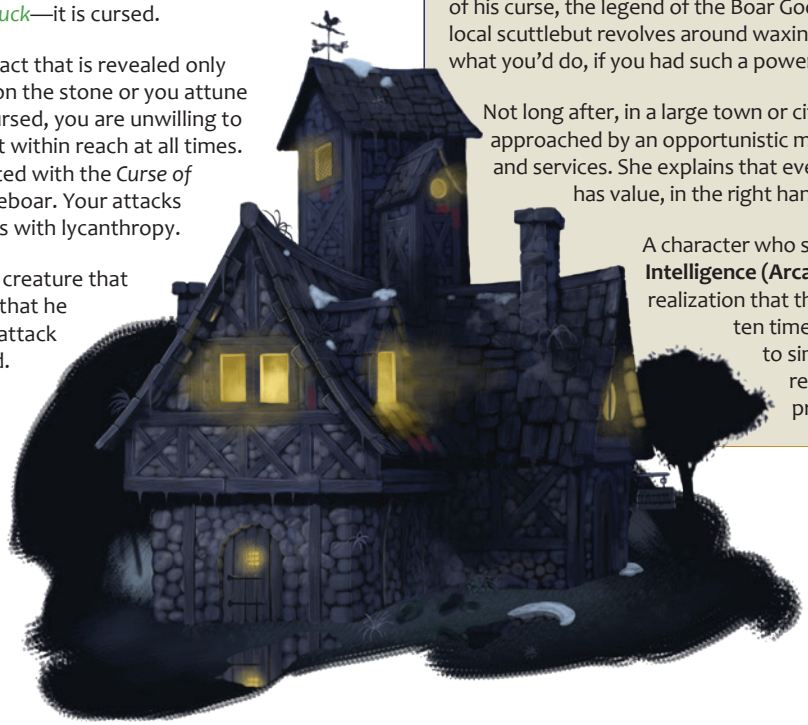
The Boar God's Eye

Adventure outfitters and other reputable merchants will seldom, if ever, knowingly trade in cursed magic items. A Black Market dealer, however, is not so scrupulous.

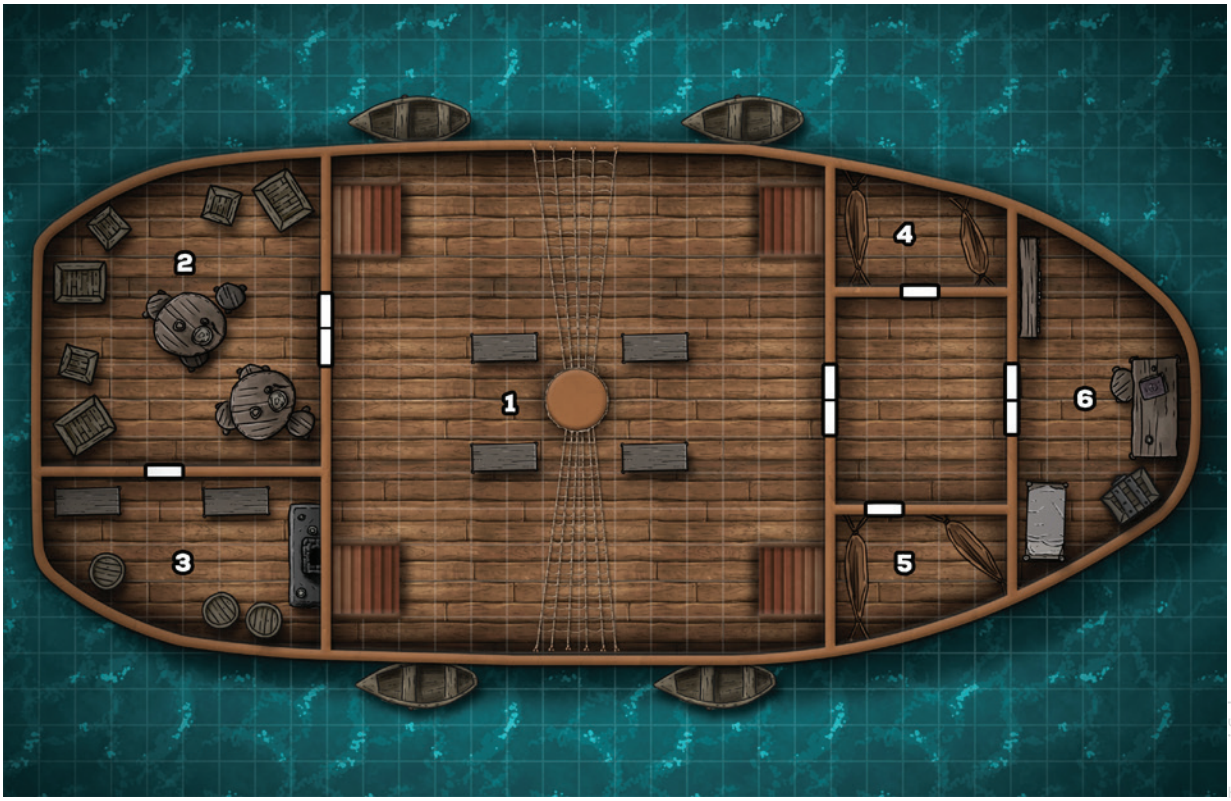
A Curse You Can Live With. When word gets out about Treb's evening activities and the shrine that is the source of his curse, the legend of the Boar God's Eye is born. The local scuttlebut revolves around waxing poetic about what you'd do, if you had such a powerful "curse."

Not long after, in a large town or city market, the party is approached by an opportunistic merchant of illicit goods and services. She explains that even a cursed magic item has value, in the right hands (see page 298).

A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check** comes to the realization that the offer is more than ten times what it would cost to simply have the curse removed by a traveling priest or merchant wizard.



Dean Spencer



Tommi Salama

What Shall We Do With A Drunken Sailor?

David Schwartz

With its wide hull and shallow draft, the *Silver Swan* easily sails the great lake and its connecting rivers, ferrying passengers and cargo throughout the region. Captain Diran Coralini and her crew are known for offering swift and reliable travel, even when other ships are becalmed. Rumored to be able to call upon the winds, Coralini's secret is a magical incense burner she uses to summon an air elemental to fill her sails if the need arises.

Kurzen, a cultist of Pazuzu, learned of the magic censer from the ramblings of a drunken sailor. Seeking to turn the elemental to the service of the demon lord of foul winds, Kurzen has concocted a plan to steal the censer from under the captain's nose. However, the cultist did not count on adventurers also being on board.

The *Silver Swan*

Rooms in the ship have 8-foot ceilings; a combination of windows and hanging lanterns provides light.

The crew of the *Silver Swan* consists of:

- **Captain Diran Coralini** (**bandit captain**, except she has **Persuasion +4** instead of Deception): This dark-haired human woman is friendly to clients and passengers, and just slightly sterner with her crew.
- Five sailors (**bandits**): **Blyne** (female human, fiery temper matching her hair), **Corcair** (male elf, serene as the sea, often melancholic), **Hartleby** (male halfling, notorious curmudgeon, horrible cook, has no sense of taste), **Jax** (female half-orc, true beauty accented by radiant tusks), and **Rogier** (male human, in love with Hartleby, can't shut up about superstitions regarding birds). It was Blyne who let slip the captain's secret.
- **Ol' Nate** (**acolyte**): The ship's cook is a human man with graying hair, and doubles as the medic. Rumor has it that he's even older than he looks thanks to a touch of elven blood.

The passengers are:

- The player characters
- **Violet** and **Parsivon** (**nobles**): These well-dressed, young humans are from minor noble families. They are on their way to a high-society party.
- **Marthin**: The quiet human man dressed in scholar's robes is, in truth, the **cult fanatic** **Kurzen**. He wears a *periapt of proof against poison* to protect himself against the rum gremlin's *Aura of Drunkenness* (**Area 2**). Kurzen's familiar **Nazuar** (a **quasit** with **Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft.) lurks invisibly a short distance from its master.

1. Main Deck

A single mast rises from the center of ship's main deck. The ship's wheel stands on the poop deck (above **Areas 2** and **3**), while the forecastle (above **Areas 4–6**) is furnished with deckchairs for passengers to use. Waist-high railing surrounds all the decks. Four jolly boats (with oars) hang from the sides of the main deck.

Captain Coralini stands at the wheel, occasionally yelling orders to three **sailors** on the main deck or in the rigging. **Violet**, **Parsivon**, and **"Marthin"** are on the forecastle.

2. Cargo and Mess

This room serves double duty as both cargo hold and dining area. Two off-duty **sailors** relax here, drinking grog and playing cards. They may invite one or more of the characters to join them.

Crates for delivery and passengers' luggage are stacked against the outer walls of this room. Unbeknownst to anyone but Kurzen, one of the crates contains three sleeping **rum gremlins**. The crate can be opened with a successful **DC 15 Strength check** (with **advantage** if the character uses a crowbar or similar implement). This rouses the gremlins if they aren't awake already.

3. Galley

The stove keeps this room warmer than rest of the ship. **Ol' Nate** spends most of his time here preparing food for the ship's passengers and crews. The cook avoids combat if possible but uses his spells to protect or heal others if push comes to shove. He prioritizes aiding the crew before assisting passengers.

4. Port Quarters

This room contains four hammocks for the use of passengers. No other passengers are staying on the ship overnight, so the characters can use this room to store their gear.

5. Starboard Quarters

The four hammocks here are for the use of the crew. There are no assigned hammocks, as at least two crewmembers are on watch at any time. Each sailor has a locked footlocker for their personal effects. Opening a footlocker takes a **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. Each sailor carries the key to their respective footlocker. There are 7 (2d6) gp and assorted knickknacks inside each footlocker.

6. Captain's Cabin

This room is infused with the sweet smell of incense. Upon the desk sits a logbook (with ink and quills) and the *censer of controlling air elementals*. Shelves hold charts of the nearby waterways, guides to countries around those waters, as well as the ship's travel logs and financial records. A large chest holds Captain Coralini's personal effects, 1d6 blocks of incense, and a smaller lockbox containing the ship's purse. The lockbox can be opened with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools and contains 100 gp (3d6 x 10) worth of assorted coins.

Kurzen's Scheme

About an hour after the *Silver Swan* leaves port, the rum gremlins (in **Area 2**) awaken. Each round the gremlins attempt to open the crate (make a single **Strength check** (**+0**) with **advantage** for the gremlins). Whether or not the gremlins escape, the noise of their attempt alerts anyone in **Area 2**. Characters in **Area 1** only hear the attempt if they succeed on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check**, unless the door to **Area 1** is open, in which case a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** suffices.

Once the crate is opened by the gremlins or someone else, the mischievous fey endeavor to affect as many people as possible with their *Aura of Drunkenness*, attacking anyone who tries to stop them. Cries of alarm or sounds of combat draw the captain and crew from the upper decks (**Area 1**), and likely any player characters not already involved. The other passengers avoid danger, but when he thinks everyone else is sufficiently distracted, "Marthin" makes his way to the captain's cabin (**Area 6**). A character in **Area 1** (or **Area 2** if the doors are open) occupied with the gremlins can notice him going through the outer doors towards **Area 6** with a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**. After 1d3+1 rounds, "Marthin" emerges with the magic censer. He then boards a jolly boat and releases it, intending to row away. Allow the characters another chance to spot Marthin when he returns to the main deck and when he climbs into the boat.

If "Marthin" is confronted at any point, the quasit Nazuar appears suddenly and uses Scare on the strongest looking character, before it engages in melee. At this point, Kurzen drops his pretense and reveals his unholy symbol of Pazuzu. If the cult fanatic thinks he can make his escape, he casts *hold person* and *command* to delay pursuit. Otherwise, Kurzen counterattacks with *spiritual weapon* and *inflict wounds*.



Dean Spencer

4-6 Characters

Level 3

Forest



Sean MacDonald

Out of This World

Bill Buchalter, Thilo Graf

The local merchant guild wants a group of strange bandits brought to justice. The bandits take prisoners, but don't demand ransom, and survivors report that the assailants are covered in some strange green ooze. The party investigates the scene of the last raid.

Investigating the Ambush Site. The ambush site is thoroughly looted and nondescript, but the characters notice footprints surrounded by a sticky, green substance leading off into the woods. Traces of the slime are on some nearby trees and bushes. If a character touches the slime, they take 2 (1d4) acid damage are subject to *Spreading Infection*.

Tracking the trail of slime back to the bandit camp is simple enough.

With a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check**, a character notices that slime touching spotted poison ivy turns flaky and harmless. This effectively consumes the vine of ivy.

Spotted Poison Ivy. This poison ivy's toxins kill the slime but are painful for most creatures. There are six uses of spotted poison ivy nearby.

Remove Slime. Employing one use of poison ivy to remove slime automatically works without risking the Spreading Infection but causes the target to be poisoned until they finish a long rest.

Ivied Weapons. Clever characters might wrap one use of ivy vines around their weapons. A target hit with an ivied weapon is cured of the infection, but also poisoned until they finish a long rest. The ivy stops working after three hits.

Wrapped in Ivy. A character wrapped in ivy (which consumes 3 uses) is poisoned while wrapped, but also immune against the infection and does not take *Slime Damage*. After absorbing *Slime Damage* six times, the ivy wrapping becomes useless.

The Infection

All bandits are tainted by an otherworldly being (see **Area 5**) that crawled out of the strange rock when it fell from the sky. The bandits are covered by patches of a sticky, green substance, causing horrible sores and burns.

Spreading Infection. Any character who takes *Slime Damage* has to use an action to wipe off the slime before the end of their next turn. Wiping off the slime from another creature is an action and, depending on how it is done, may cause the assisting character to be exposed to slime. If a creature ends its turn while still being slimed, they must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw** or become infected.

Infected creatures gain:

Mind Domination. An infected creature can be controlled by the otherworldly being (see **Area 5**).

Psychic Confusion. As a bonus action, an infected creature can target one infected creature they can see with a psychic cacophony. The target must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failed save, it has **disadvantage** on its next attack.

Slime Damage. An infected creature deals an additional 2 (1d4) acid damage with all their melee attacks. They may use a bonus action to cover one piece of ammunition with slime.

Telepathic Impressions. All infected creatures share a common, if rudimentary, consciousness. They gain the ability to telepathically communicate concepts and emotions with each other regardless of language, up to a range of 300 feet. A **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check** can clearly identify and pinpoint the respective *Telepathic Impressions* in an area.

Curing the Infection. The infection can be cured with poison ivy, a *lesser restoration* spell, or similar magic.

1. The Sticky Rock

The trail of tracks ends next to a huge rock on the fringes of the bandit camp. The stone is smooth, resembling obsidian, but a **DC 13 Intelligence (History)** or **Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals that this "rock" is made of an unknown substance. Copious amounts of the sticky ooze seep from a giant crack running down the middle of the stone. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that the rock appears to have fallen from a great height.

Telepathic Impressions. Wonder, homesickness, fear.

2. The Spoils

On a small, man-made platform, rests a chest stamped with the symbol of the local merchant's guild. Inside the chest are coins totaling 187 gp, a *potion of healing*, and a *+1 shortsword*. If the party returns the chest to the merchant's guild, they receive 150 gp and are allowed to keep the magic items.

Telepathic Impressions. Secrecy, triumph.

3. Tainted Guards

30 feet past the chest, two **bandits** (**thugs**) engage in an archery contest, aiming for a knothole in the tree. They are distracted by this, so unless the party makes an unusual amount of noise, the bandits do not notice the characters approaching. Another pile of 50 gp lays at the base of the tree; the bandits' wager over who is a better marksman. The arrows are all slimed. If a fight breaks out, three more bandits hiding in **Area 4** join in.

Telepathic Impressions. Competitiveness, duty.

4. Ambushers

Three more **bandits** (**thugs**) hiding in the tree are more watchful. Only characters with a **passive Perception 16** or better notice the guards hiding in the tree. When combat begins these bandits drop from the tree and join the fight.

The bandits do not attack infected characters, instead instructing them to go speak with the "master" and point to the thicket of bushes in **Area 5**.

Telepathic Impressions. Alertness, duty, loyalty.

5. The Thing in the Woods

The party notices more footprints leading to a copse of bushes. With a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check**, they also notice drag marks in the grass with more of the sticky green slime. When the characters reach the thicket, they find the otherworldly being and a grizzly scene.

Telepathic Impressions. Fear, hunger, homesickness.

Otherworldly Being. A Large green ooze pulsates in the bushes and seems to be consuming the half-dissolved corpse of a caravan guard.

Alien Motifs. Once noticed, the otherworldly being speaks telepathically to any infected characters and instructs them to procure more organic sustenance. It must feed to recover from its fall. Once it has recovered enough strength it can merge once more with the stone and return home.

The party can agree to help by hunting wild game instead of people. With a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Survival)** group check they can hunt and trap enough game to feed the being and allow it to slither back into the rock and fly off.

Treat the **otherworldly being** as a **black pudding** with the following abilities:

Alien Domination. The otherworldly being can use its bonus action to make all infected creatures within 300 feet that it wants to target, to make a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failed save, the creature becomes dominated (as per *dominate person*) by the otherworldly being until the end of its next turn.

Psychic Spike. As a bonus action the otherworldly being targets one infected creature within 300 feet with a mental screech. The creature must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw** or take 5 (2d4) psychic damage.

Vulnerabilities. The otherworldly being is treated as an infected creature. It takes 11 (2d10) poison damage from contact with poison ivy. Its *Pseudopods* count as *Slime Damage* for *Wrapped in Ivy*.

Conclusion

As the otherworldly being flies off in its ship, it grants the party a dark rock that acts as a *helm of telepathy*. Infected creatures still need to be cured and suffer from increasingly strange visions. Three days after the being's departure, something subject to the GM's discretion happens to any creatures still infected.

6 Characters

Level 3

Underworld



Justin Andrew Mason

Waylay Station

Thilo Graf

Liminal spaces have always held their very own power. Tyreisas Corian, enterprising scholar of uncommon arcane byways found a way to capitalize on travelers returning to the surface world, whether from a dungeon or the Underworld. He created low-cost demiplanes, "Waylay Stations", staffed with undead and low-maintenance minions. A station interposes itself between regions. Instead of the familiar rooms and caverns, travelers find themselves in a new environment, one that costs a steep toll to traverse.

GM Note. Use this adventure when the heroes are about to exit a dungeon or travel from one subterranean region to another. It is a convenient way to get the party to a new country, plane, or even world.

General Properties.

Sterile & Inhospitable. The cavern floors are smooth. There is neither plant life, not even lichen, nor insects or other animals. The inimitable combination of necrotic and radiant energies that suffuses the demiplane is inimical to most life. When resting in the Waylay Station, living creatures must make a **DC 20 Constitution saving throw** to gain the regular benefits from the rest. On a failed save, the character instead gains 1 level of exhaustion for a short rest, or 2 levels of exhaustion for a long rest.

Liminal Lighting. Within the Waylay Station, it's always dim light; the light seems to come from everywhere and nowhere. Spells and effects that create bright light or darkness create dim light instead, which renders many effects useless.

Liminal Energies. Creatures have **advantage** on **all saving throws** against any damaging effect dealing fire, necrotic or radiant damage. Additionally, all creatures have **resistance** to these damage types if they are not already immune to them while in the demiplane.

Researching the Effects. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** notices that the effects are part of a demiplane's property and may not be suppressed or dismissed while in the demiplane. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** notices the absence of sustaining life.

Replacements. Any minions slain while the demiplane exists are replaced within 11 hours. The replacements are teleported in.

Emergency Shutdown. The "torches" on the walls don't contribute to the ambient lighting. They are concealed levers (see **Area 10**) for an emergency shutdown of the demiplane. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** notices that they are levers. Pulling a single lever does nothing. All seven levers must be pulled at once. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** notices that a lever is part of a larger enchantment.

Approaching the Demiplane.

Instead of the familiar surroundings, you see unfamiliar cave walls: Smooth, bereft of cracks or rubble.

GM Note. If you prefer your party to have agency regarding adventure selection, allow them a **DC 20 Dexterity group saving throw** if they jump back immediately. On a success, they escape the demiplane. On a failed save, they'll emerge in **Area 1**, regardless of whether they proceed or turn back.

1. Welcome Committee

A golden flame in a fire pit provides only dim light. The unnatural fire is flanked by two **ogre zombies** and **Rutger Felsspalt**, a dweorg (dwarf) **ghoul** in a bureaucrat's robes. Rune-covered masonry blocks encircle the pit. In the 20-foot-deep recessed area sits **Garius Klern** (**spy**), a haggard unarmed human in a loincloth.

Toll Collectors. Rutger and the ogres are indentured servants of Tyreisas. Rutger addresses the adventurers in a resigned tone, speaking in Common:

"Welcome to the Waystation of grand mage supreme Tyreisas Corian. You have crossed the threshold, and as such, the fair toll, consisting of 100% of your ill-gotten goods, is requested. Please deposit in the flame; attempts to escape are futile. Failure to comply will be met with extreme prejudice."

Golden Flame. The fire pit is actually a kind of teleporter for non-organic material. Depositing items inside teleports them to Tyreisas' vaults. Living creatures are not affected, but all the objects on them are. The runes are Abyssal and explain this; a *detect magic* spell or a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** also discerns this.

Recessed Area. Garius refused to pay, was overwhelmed, and now represents the larder for Rutger. He has 2 levels of exhaustion and begs the party to save him.

Development. If the adventurers comply and deposit all treasure in the flame, they can just leave the demiplane. Yeah. Right. Any attempts at haggling are futile—Rutger lacks any authority to alter the deal.

2. Lost Soul

A sad looking **firegeist** scorches dirt on the floors. It can't use *Combustion Touch* here, but its *Slam* deals fire damage. It demands to eat flame in Primordial when it sees the party, attacking if refused. It accepts two lit torches as food and sullenly resumes its tasks. Regardless, it bemoans the absence of real fire in these cursed halls.

3. First-Class Travel

Three gray slate obelisks stand ominously in the center of this chamber. The obelisks are covered in Abyssal runes. The runes seem to allow for travel between demiplanes, but only for Tyreisas.

4a. Hidden Entrance

The entrance to **Area 4b**, consisting of blocks of masonry, has been skillfully hidden behind a *minor illusion*. Touching the wall automatically notices the change in its texture. Otherwise, a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** notices an incongruence between wall and illusion. Clearing the blocks takes 6 workhours.

4b. Hidden Battery

A Large, bluish-gray orb floats in the air, emitting a smell of ozone. Inside, a humanoid shape is curled up.

Battery Orb. The orb is fragile and a single hit shatters it. Trapped inside is a **storm maiden**, her energies acting as a battery for the demiplane. The maiden is disoriented and attacks, mistaking the adventurers for Tyreisas's agents. She can be calmed with roleplay or a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check**.

Freeing the maiden is a way to escape (see **Area 10**).

5. Working Staff

Seven **zombies** in itchy-looking uniforms slowly mill about this antechamber, awaiting orders.

6. Predatory Accounting

Carved deep into the floor of this hall is an arcane symbol; the runes consistently flash in random patterns. In the center of the symbol is a bespectacled **wight** **accountant** wearing a sage's robes. The wight holds an abacus and feverishly writes on a self-erasing scroll.

Accountant. Each of Tyreisas's operations has one accountant double-checking the influx of magic and gold. The flashes in the runes represent goods and numbers according to some impenetrable system. The wight can explain as much, but if distracted, or if the adventurers attempt to pull a torch lever, he flies into a rage and attacks.

7. Arrogance

Gray pillars surround a statue of a winged humanoid, a monument to Tyreisas's ego. Before it, a **priestess** in pristine robes kneels with two **cultists**, praising the wisdom of his impeccable business sense. Four **zombies** along the southern wall mindlessly echo her praises with a five-second delay. She invites the heroes to join her in praise of Tyreisas's business acumen and subscribe to a 100-year indentured servitude plan. If refused, they all attack.

Development. The **recycled asset** (**Area 8**) joins combat here one round later.

8. Recycling

"Waste not" is a core tenet of Tyreisas's philosophy. A pile of bones and debris sits in this chamber, the **recycled asset**, an undead **shambling mound** (also has **immunity** to poison damage, exhaustion, and the poisoned condition). It seeks to aid the priestess in **Area 7**.

9. Dark Boundaries

This area has a similar flame and guardians as **Area 1**. The dweorg **ghoul** here is called **Helga Metalscreamer**.

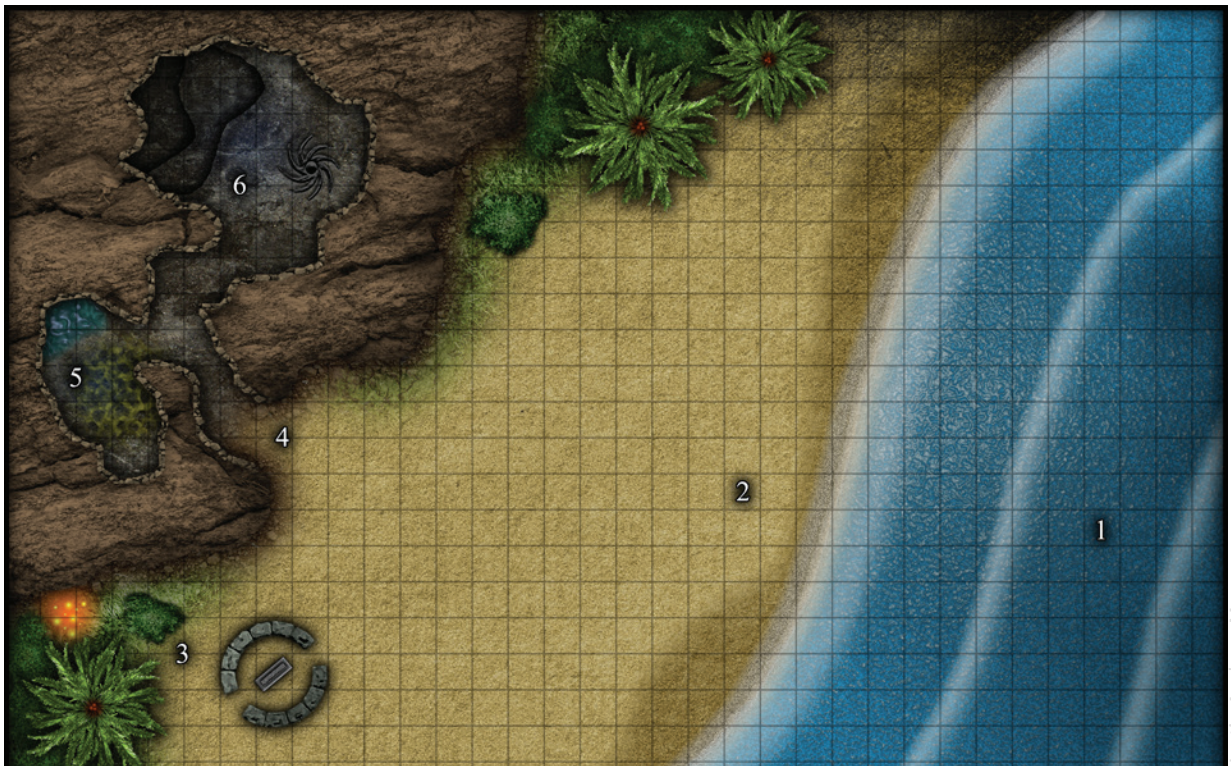
10. Escape!

Stairs lead up and out of the demiplane. The stairs never end, unless the *Emergency Shutdown* was initiated, or the *Battery Orb* (**Area 4b**) destroyed.

4-6 Characters

Level 3

Coast



Justin Andrew Mason

Enchantment By The Sea

David Schwartz

In the enchanted isles sailors sometimes disappear without a trace. Some are believed to have abandoned the hard work of sailing for the seemingly idyllic lifestyle of the islanders. Others are thought to have been taken by fantastical creatures said to dwell under the ocean or deep in the jungle. Sometimes, it's a little of both.

Shekalbar, a fey spirit of the tide, lives in a cave by a beach some distance from any village. He worships the kraken believed to dwell in a deep trench not far from the islands. Shekalbar captures travelers to sacrifice to a kraken in the hopes of securing the mighty creature's favor. To help in this endeavor the hideous fey has recruited a trio of attractive dryads to lure sailors to their doom.

1. The Bay

The beach sits along a bay large enough for a single ship to anchor. Beneath clear waters characters can see schools of tropical fish. If the characters attempt to flee into the water, a dryad can use *Fey Charm* to compel **carnivorous fish** (use **swarm of quippers**) to attack the party.

2. The Beach

A sandy beach runs between the water and the forest and rock formations of the island's interior. As they approach the characters spot what appear to be two women and a man frolicking on the beach. When approaching, it becomes obvious that these three **dryads** are fey creatures: their youthful, unearthly features contrast with hair white as coconut fibers. They are dressed in clothing made entirely from leaves and coconut tree bark. Their bound coconut trees are shown on the map.

The dryads, who speak both Common and the local language, introduce themselves as **Lawa**, **Paga**, and **Pulu**. They invite characters to join them in their play and use *Fey Charm* on characters who are suspicious.

3. Meeting Circle

Just before where the beach gives way to the forest, roughly hewn stones have been set up to form a table and two semicircular benches. The dryads load the table with tropical fruit and calabashes of fresh water and invite the characters to partake. The food and drink are laced with oil of Taggit; with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Intelligence (Nature) check**, a character can discern that the food has been tampered with.

If all characters pass out, the dryads tie them up (2 hp, **escape DC 17**) and take them to **Area 6**. If only some characters succumb to the poison, the dryads offer to take the unconscious characters to the cave to sleep off their fatigue (tying them up once out of sight).

The dryads attempt to maintain their charade for as long as possible, but if the characters become violent, they attempt to take as many characters alive as possible.

4. Cave Entrance

If characters ask about the cave, the dryads answer that it is dark and empty.

Rigged Ceiling

Simple trap (level 1–4, dangerous threat)

Trigger. Stepping in the wrong place.

Effect. Part of the ceiling is rigged to collapse. Any creature in Area 4 must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once the trap is triggered, the floor of the area is filled with rubble and becomes difficult terrain. The sound of the collapse alerts the occupants of the cave.

Countermeasures. The amateurishly rigged ceiling can be spotted with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, or automatically if the Area is investigated with Intelligence (Investigation). A successful DC 15 Dexterity check made with thieves' tool disables the trap, or a character can trigger the trap as an action after noticing it.

5. Spring Cave

One end of this cave dips downward and is filled with fresh water percolating from below. Much of the rest of the floor is covered in moss, a section of which has been molded into a kind of bed. This cave is the dwelling place of **Shekalbar**, an evil sea fey (use **sea hag** stats). He typically appears as a wizened, old islander, but his true form is bloated and pale, reminiscent of a drowned corpse.

If alerted to an intruder, Shekalbar springs out and attempts to grapple his victim and tie them up. If outmatched or outnumbered, the fey reveals his horrific appearance, and uses death glare to even the odds. Combat in this area alerts the **will-o'-wisp** in **Area 6**; it arrives a round later and fights alongside Shekalbar.

Treasure. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** unearths a *greater healing potion* hidden among the moss.



Matt Bulahao

6. Shrine Cave

This larger cave serves as shrine to the kraken and a prison for soon-to-be sacrifices. A crude image of a many-tentacled sea creature is carved on the floor. To the west, the cave floor drops in two large steps each another four feet downward.

A **will-o'-wisp** has taken up residence in this cave, drawn by the prisoners' delicious fear. Though the will-o'-wisp doesn't care why the prisoners are here, Shekalbar takes its presence as a sign of favor from his distant patron. The will-o'-wisp remains invisible unless a character in this room tries to escape, attempts to rescue a prisoner, or attacks it. Combat in this area alerts Shekalbar who arrives on the next round. The undead has no loyalty to the fey and flees if seriously injured.

If the characters are looking for a missing person, they are at the bottom of the pit, and any captured characters are also imprisoned there. Prisoners are tied up with rope made of coconut fiber (2 hp, **escape DC 17**).

Treasure. Items taken from previous victims (and any captured characters) are piled on the eastern wall. The treasure includes: a scimitar and a dagger (both rusty), *scales of the sea*, a piece of red coral (worth 100 gp), and 60 gp.

Scales of the Sea

Armor (scale mail), uncommon (requires attunement)

The scale mail grants you swimming speed equal to your walking speed. You grow fish scales while you're attuned to the armor.

Will-o'-wisp Husk

Woundrous item (requires attunement)

When a will-o'-wisp spirit glows its last and sloughs off its mortal coil, it leaves behind a fragile husk, grey and paper thin. Unbeknownst to any but the masters of the necromantic arts, a *will-o'-wisp husk* kept close in the possession of an attuned wielder for the duration of twelve full moon cycles creates a bonded wisp. Alternatively, a will-o'-wisp husk used as a material component when casting *find familiar* yields a bonded wisp without the wait.

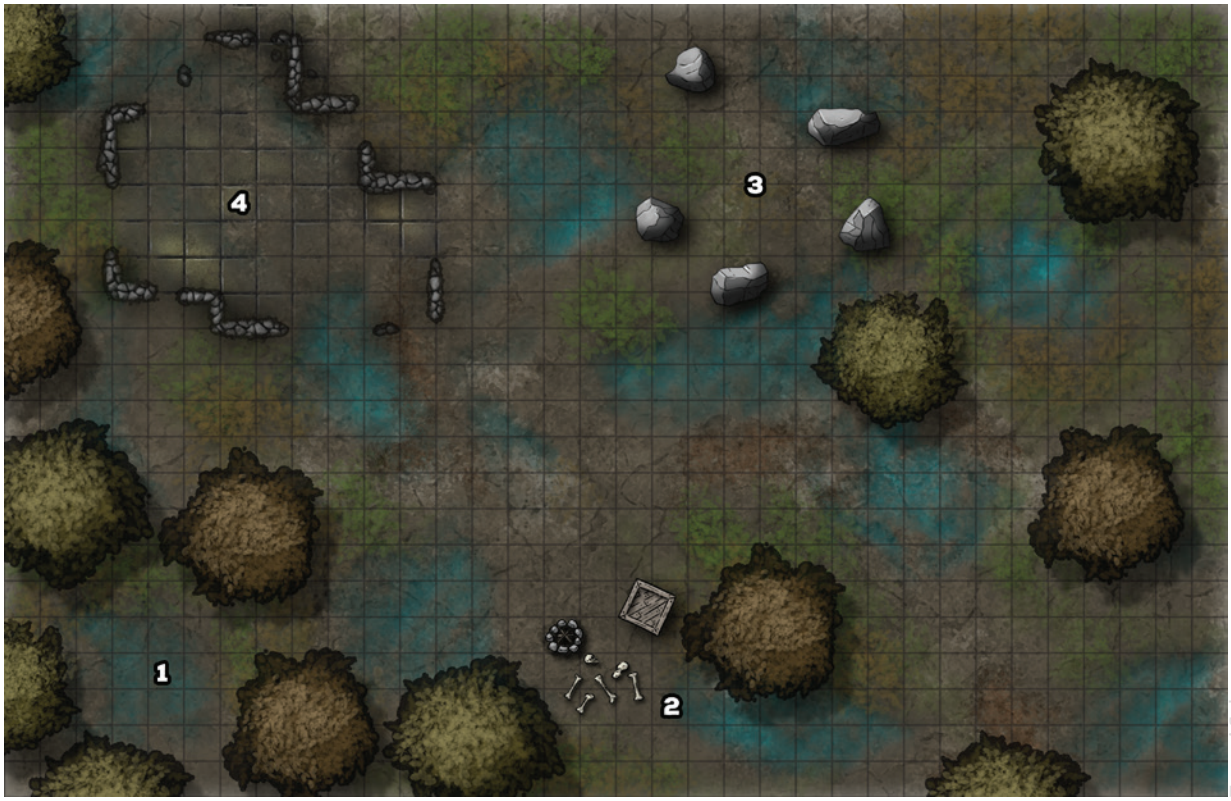
A bonded wisp is a will-o'-wisp under the control of its attuned master—as with *find familiar*—who provides the spirit energy that gives new life to the wisp.

Black Market Trade. Spellcasters of all sorts will pay a hefty finder's fee for a hale wisp husk, but convincing a dealer that your *will-o'-wisp husk* is the real deal is a difficult prospect when few have seen one (see page 298).

4-6 Characters

Level 3

Forest



Tommi Salama

Like Tears in Rain

David Schwartz

The Nimbus Forest is known for its perpetual rain clouds. Recently, however, the clouds have spread beyond the forest to nearby villages, leaving the inhabitants perpetually wet and in ceaseless gloom. The characters are exhorted to travel into the forest and find the source of the storm.

The Nimbus Forest

Generations ago, the village of Virekot sat within what is now the Nimbus Forest. When a drought threatened to starve the villagers, a young woman named Medeora offered herself in marriage to the god of wind and rain. The god turned her into a storm maiden, and she used her new form to provide for the village. The villagers regularly thanked her for her protection with ritual processions. Over time, however, the village population dwindled and disappeared. Medeora cried in her loneliness, and the storm maiden's tears became perpetual rain clouds over the forest.

Rain clouds extend for miles around Medeora's stone circle (**Area 3**), slowly expanding with each day. Characters in the rain have **disadvantage** on **Wisdom (Perception) checks** that rely on sight or sound. Open flames are extinguished. Areas of shallow bog, marked in blue on the map, are difficult terrain.

1. Outskirts

As the characters make their way through forest in the direction of the ruins of Virekot, they are engulfed by a **falsifier fog**, perhaps while taking a break to rest. The ghostly fog feeds on the storm maiden's distress and wishes no one to end her loneliness. It attempts to scare away intruders with *Horrific Illusions* and telepathic threats, presenting the storm maiden as a monster to be avoided. If the characters continue towards the ruins or deal with the falsifier fog, it attacks the party. The falsifier fog fights to its own destruction but doesn't attack characters who are unconscious or fleeing out of the forest. A **DC 16 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** allows the party to briefly placate the fog, though it brooks no peaceful contact with Medeora.

2. Echzin's Camp

All that remains of this camp are a flooded fire pit, scattered bones, and a wooden box. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check** identifies the bones as human.

The remains belonged to Echzin, a descendant of villagers from Virekot. In his youth, Echzin had heard tales of the storm maiden from older relatives and rightly surmised that she was the cause of the constant rain in the area. Several months ago, he came

here to meet the storm maiden, but something he said or did offended the elemental and she killed him. Even so, his spirit still haunts the ruins in **Area 4**.

The crate contains Echzin's supplies (the cart and mule that carried it are long gone). Most of the contents are water-damaged, but a character who makes a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** finds an antique oil lantern. This ornate brass lantern is a necessary component of the ritual used to appease the storm maiden (see **Area 4**).

3. Stone Circle

Inside this ring of boulders, a figure kneeling beneath a cloak might be mistaken at a distance for yet another stone. The cloaked individual is Medeora, the **storm maiden**, the source of the constant rain.

Medeora tells the characters to keep their distance. If a character moves adjacent to her, she uses *thunderwave* to push them away. A character can get Medeora to talk to them if they succeed at a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** expressing veneration or sympathy. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Intelligence (Nature) check** can yield helpful information, such as proper appellations, which grant **advantage** on the check to placate the storm maiden. The storm maiden attacks if a character attempts to use **Charisma (Intimidation)**, fails a **Charisma (Deception) check**, or attacks first. If the characters don't want to kill Medeora, allow them escape to other parts of the ruins, after which the storm maiden will return to her sulking.

If convinced to talk, Medeora can explain her history to the characters. She refuses to end the rain unless the proper ritual is performed, though she will not say what the ritual entails, insisting the characters should know. If the storm maiden is appeased (see **Area 4**) or killed, the rain stops, and the clouds begin to disperse. If she is appeased, Medeora promises to use her powers to help the local villagers, she asks only that the villagers come to visit her often. She then rewards the characters with a *javelin of lighting*.



Dean Spencer

4. Ruins

A few stone walls are all that remains of the village hall of Virekot. Murals on the inside depict a procession of villagers, though like the walls themselves, the murals are incomplete. The leader of the procession is pictured holding a lantern that matches the one in Echzin's camp (**Area 2**).

Though his remains lie in the mud outside, Echzin still exists as a **fane spirit**.

During the day, Echzin can pass as a living creature. A human man of middle years, he is dressed in a priest's habit, but also wears a few amulets and charms reminiscent of earlier animistic religions. When the characters approach, Echzin is examining the ruin's murals. If the characters ask, he explains that the mural depicts the ritual to appease the storm maiden. If the characters intend to perform the ritual, Echzin offers them his ancestor's lantern (in **Area 2**).

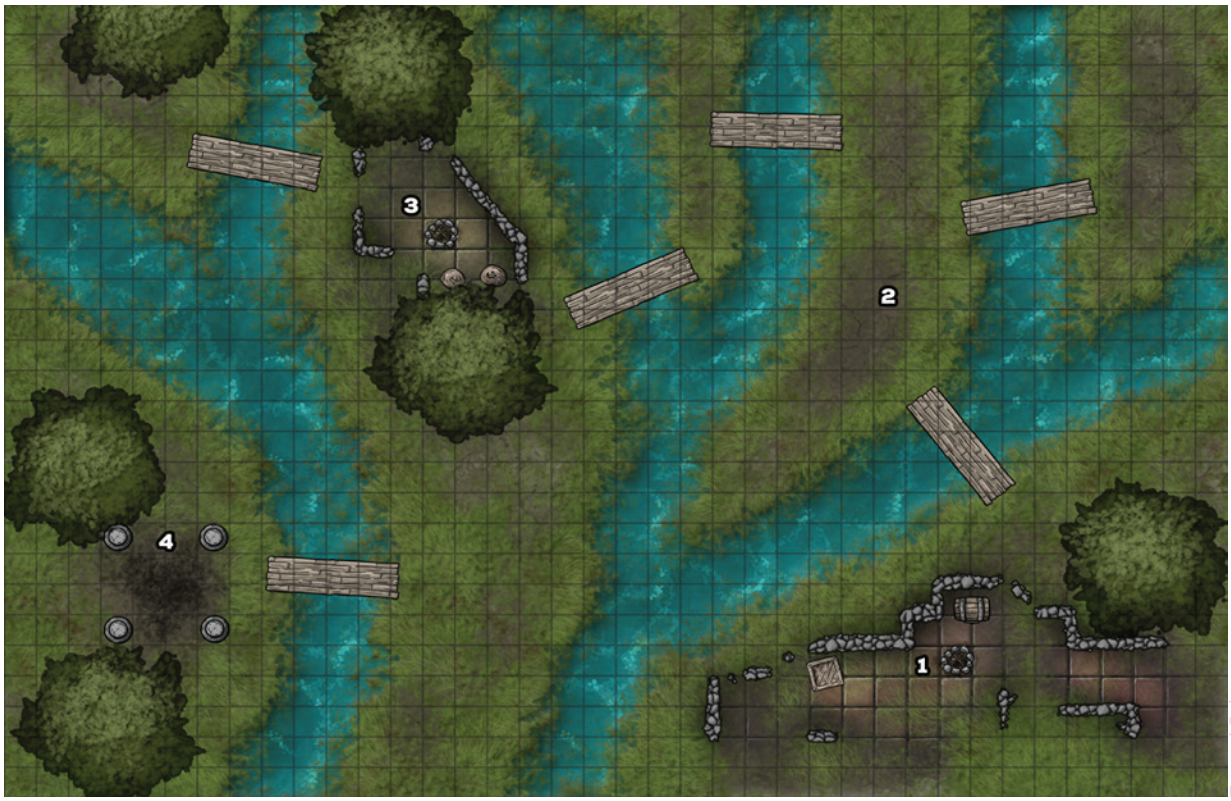
At night the fane spirit takes on a horrific spectral form and attacks the characters until he or they are destroyed. Echzin also takes this form during the day if he takes damage or if the characters confront him with the reality of his (un)death. If the characters appease the storm maiden, Echzin is no longer tied to the Material Plane and he fades away (perhaps with a final thanks as he disappears). If they kill the storm maiden, the fane spirit becomes enraged and attacks the characters.

Though the depiction of the ritual is incomplete, a character can make educated guesses to reconstruct the missing segments with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check**. The ritual involves a procession around the stone circle, led by a character holding the ornate lantern. The leader makes a **DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check**; they have **disadvantage** on this check if the party did not succeed at the check to reconstruct the ritual. On a success, Medeora is appeased. If the check fails, the offended storm maiden attacks.

5
Characters

Level
3

Swamp



Tommi Salama

Old Jub's Mire

William Fischer

The party has tracked a gang of outlaws to the heart of a rotting swamp known as Jub's Mire. When the heroes arrive, however, they discover the bandits are already held captive by a tribe of demon-worshipping lizardfolk, who plan to offer the bandits as blood sacrifices to their infernal lord. Will the heroes join forces with the bandits? Or will both groups fall prey to the ancient evil that rises from the mire?

Deep Mire. The turquoise water denotes waist-deep water. Creatures without a swim speed treat the water between the hillocks as difficult terrain.

1. Temple Ruins

Centuries have reduced the temple to that once stood here to a few crumbling stone walls. As the characters explore the ruins, they pass carvings depicting humanoids prostrate before an amorphous entity emerging from a primordial soup. Characters who make a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (History)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** recognize the entity as Old Jub, a malevolent demon once worshipped in the area. Characters who succeed on this check by 5 or more know that Old Jub is merely the avatar of more powerful demon lord.

On the north end of the ruins, the party discovers the remnants of the bandit's campsite, including bedrolls, empty crates and barrels, and a firepit filled with cold ashes. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals signs of a recent struggle. Bloodstains mark the cracked stone floor, while tracks suggest several claw-footed humanoids dragged one or more of the bandits into the swamp to the north. Characters who succeed on this check by 5 or more can identify the claw-footed humanoid tracks as belonging to lizardfolk.

2. The Mire

Reed-covered hillocks rise from a seemingly endless expanse of muddy, waist-deep water. Before their capture, the bandits constructed several plank bridges across the water. Though makeshift, the bridges are stable enough that creatures can cross them without needing to make an ability check to do so.

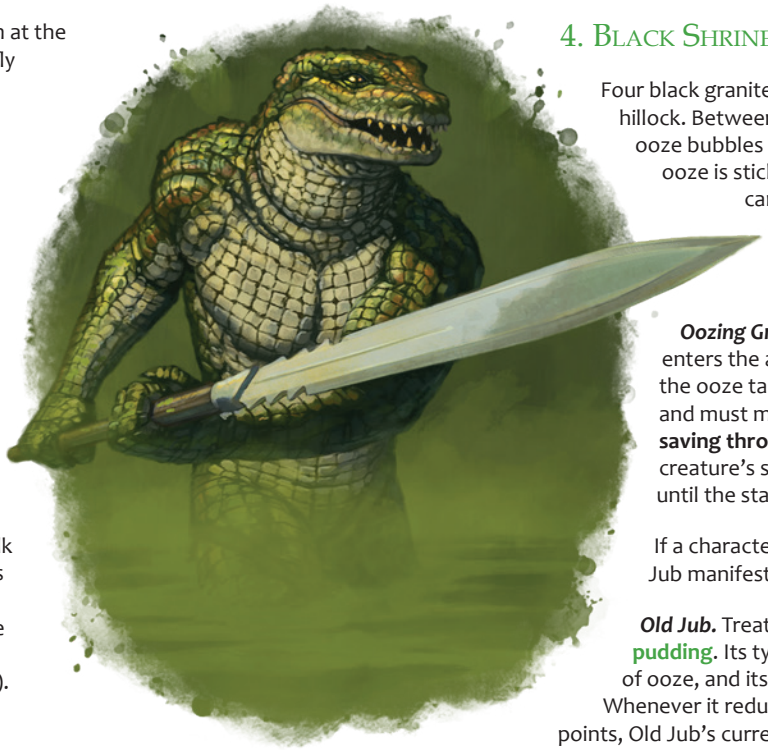
A pair of **crocodiles**, pets kept by the lizardfolk in **Area 3**, lie submerged in the water beneath the bridge nearest the temple (**Area 1**). Characters with a **passive Perception** score of **13** or higher spot the crocodiles in time to avoid being surprised. Otherwise, the crocodiles lunge from the water as the characters pass above them. Combat with the crocodiles alerts the lizardfolk in **Area 3**.

3. Lizardfolk Camp

The night before the characters arrived, a band of lizardfolk stumbled upon the temple after their leader, a priest named Shuktagah, received a vision of a formless horror rising from the swamp. The lizardfolk captured the bandits in **Area 1** and

immediately sacrificed one of them at the shrine in **Area 4**. This sacrifice briefly awakened Old Jub, the demon once worshipped at the temple. Shuktagah and his followers believe that by sacrificing the remaining bandits over the next two nights, they can summon Old Jub to the Material Plane.

Lizardfolk. Four regular **lizardfolk** led by Shuktagah now prepare their next sacrifice. They have bound the surviving **bandits**, a pair of scoundrels named **Terrin** and **Drake**, inside large leather sacks. The heroes can attempt **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) checks** to approach the lizardfolk campsite unnoticed. Otherwise, the lizardfolk pepper the characters with javelins once they come within 30 feet. The walls around the camp provide the lizardfolk half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws).



Shuktagah is a **lizardfolk** with the following additional features:

Call Old Jub. On his first turn, Shuktagah cries out (in Draconic) to an entity he calls, "*The Faceless One*." One round later, **Old Jub** rises from the muck in **Area 4** and moves toward the battle.

Spellcasting. Shuktagah is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save **DC 11**, +3 to hit with spell attacks). Shuktagah has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *command*, *inflict wounds*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *prayer of healing*

Oozing Invocation. Shuktagah can use his action to point at a creature within 30 feet The ground around the creature becomes *Oozing Ground* (see **Area 4**) for 3 rounds.

Despite Shuktagah's belief that the demon favors him and his people, Old Jub does not differentiate between the lizardfolk and the characters. It attacks whatever creature is nearest to it, selecting targets randomly if necessary.

Bandits. A character within 5 feet of the bandits can free Terrin or Drake as an action. Despite their harrowing experience, the bandits are no worse for wear and can be convinced to fight alongside the party with a successful **DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**. Otherwise, they flee into swamp as soon as they are released. The bandits still wear their leather armor, and their weapons (scimitars and light crossbows) lie in a pile nearby.

4. Black Shrine

Four black granite pillars rise from this hillock. Between the pillars, a tar-like ooze bubbles from the ground. The ooze is sticky, and the characters can spot the skeletons of birds and other swamp life that were caught in the ooze and died.

Oozing Ground. A creature that enters the area or starts its turn in the ooze takes 2 (1d4) acid damage and must make a **DC 13 Strength saving throw**. On a failure, the creature's speed is reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

If a character enters **Area 4**, Old Jub manifests if it hasn't already.

Old Jub. Treat Old Jub as a **black pudding**. Its type is fiend (demon) instead of ooze, and its alignment is chaotic evil. Whenever it reduces a living creature to 0 hit points, Old Jub's current and maximum hit points increase by an amount equal to that creature's maximum hit points. If Old Jub's hit points ever increase to 100 or more, it is no longer bound to the shrine at **Area 4**. The consequences of releasing Old Jub onto the Material Plane are left for the GM to decide.

A character who makes a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** realizes the shrine was built atop a multidimensional weak point that allows Old Jub to manifest on the Material Plane. Even if the party defeats the demon, another blood sacrifice made at the shrine may allow Old Jub to return. A *hallow* spell cleanses the area and seals the weak point, but such magic is likely beyond the characters' current capabilities. At the GM's discretion, preventing Old Jub's return may be the focus of a future adventure. Alternatively, a **DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check** can temporarily close the weak point for 11 days, plus an additional 11 days for every 5 by which the characters succeeded at the check. If the weak point is sealed or temporarily closed while Old Jub is still manifested, it has **disadvantage** on all attack rolls and saving throws until the weak point is no longer sealed or temporarily closed.

A Vial of Old Jub

Oozes are a favorite dungeon denizen of mad wizards and foul necromancers, not only because they keep the vermin population under control, but an ooze's unique biology also lends itself to arcane experimentation. A vial of any given ooze would fetch at least a purse of silver, even from a general goods store.

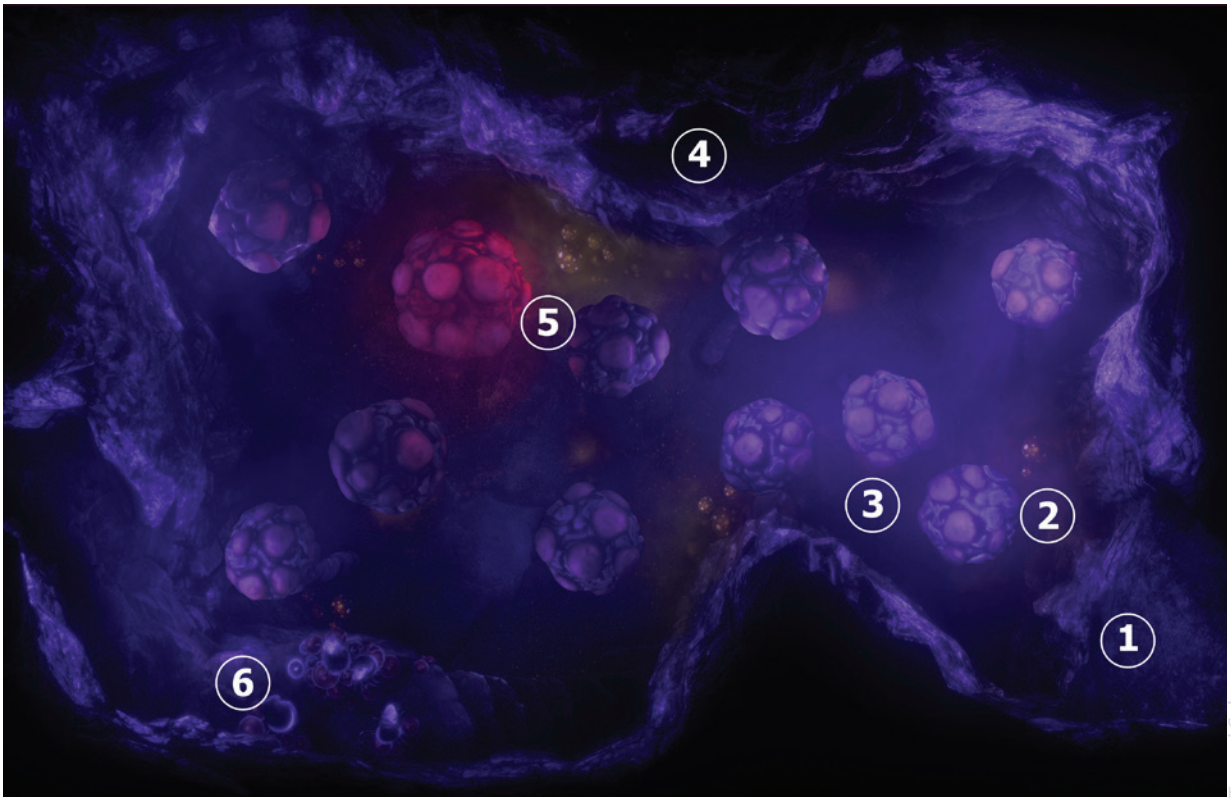
However, a character who collects a vial of the remains of Old Jub has an opportunity to cash in. When selling a vial of Old Jub, a character can collect platinum pieces equal to the result of either a **Charisma (Persuasion) check** or an **Intelligence (Religion) check**, but only if they're selling to a Black Market dealer (see page 298).

Dean Spencer

5 Characters

Level 3

Underworld



Tommi Salama

Spore Song

William Fischer

The characters must travel to the Underworld to collect a sample of spores (in **Area 5**) purported to possess magical properties. A wizard or druid may have hired the party to gather the spores on their behalf, or perhaps the spores are the only known cure for a plague that has devastated the characters' homeland.

1. Entrance Tunnel

After a harrowing trek through the Underworld, the characters find themselves atop a ledge overlooking the cavern they believe contains the magical spores. Patches of phosphorescent moss illuminate the space. The cavern's floor lies 20 feet below the ledge and is shrouded in a haze of foul-looking yellow spores. Mushrooms as tall as trees rise from the haze, their caps nearly 15 feet across. The mushrooms sway back and forth as if touched by an invisible breeze.

The cavern's walls are unworked stone and require a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check** to climb. A character who makes a **DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check** recognizes that the spores at the bottom of the cavern are poisonous and nonmagical; the spores the party seeks are produced by a magical mushroom that grows deeper in the cavern (**Area 5**).

2. Giant Mushrooms

The caps of the giant mushrooms are strong enough to support the weight of several humanoids. Creatures standing atop the giant mushrooms are safe from the poisonous *Spore Haze* near the cavern's floor (**Area 3**).

Swaying Shrooms. As the encounter begins, the caps of the giant mushrooms are spaced roughly 15 feet apart. Every round on initiative count 20, each mushroom sways 5 feet in a random direction or returns to its original position.

With a 10-foot running start, characters can jump a distance equal to their Strength score. At the GM's discretion, a character can jump up to 5 feet beyond their normal jump distance by making a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check**. On a failure, the character plummets 20 feet to the cavern floor, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and landing prone. To randomly determine the distance to the next shroom on a given round, roll 1d6:

d6	Distance to Next Mushroom
1	5 feet
2	10 feet
3-4	15 feet
5	20 feet
6	25 feet

3. Cavern Floor

Poisonous spores cover the cavern floor to a depth of 15 feet.

Spore Haze. The area inside the spores is lightly obscured. In addition, a creature that starts its turn inside the area must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, the creature takes 3 (1d6) poison damage and is poisoned until the start of its next turn.

Corrosive Morels. A **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals that the 10 largest of the red mushrooms on the floor contain a volatile chemical that turns corrosive if exposed to air. One morel can be harvested as an action with a **DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check**, and subsequently used as a thrown weapon (range 5/15). A failed check attempting to harvest the mushroom ruins it harmlessly. On impact, the target of a *Corrosive Morel* must make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 21 (6d6) acid damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a successful one. Stepping or falling on a *Corrosive Morel* has the same effect. Harvested *Corrosive Morels* turn to harmless mush after 24 hours.

Zombie Attack. A band of ogres died in the cavern several months ago and have since risen as three **ogre zombies**. The zombies emerge from the haze to attack characters caught on the cavern floor. The ogres are too stupid to use the morels.

4. The Spore Singer

On the north wall of the cavern, stairs of roughly worked stone rise to the mouth of a cave home to a **harpy** named **Ionyne**. Ionyne protects the mushrooms in the cavern and is quick to punish would-be thieves.

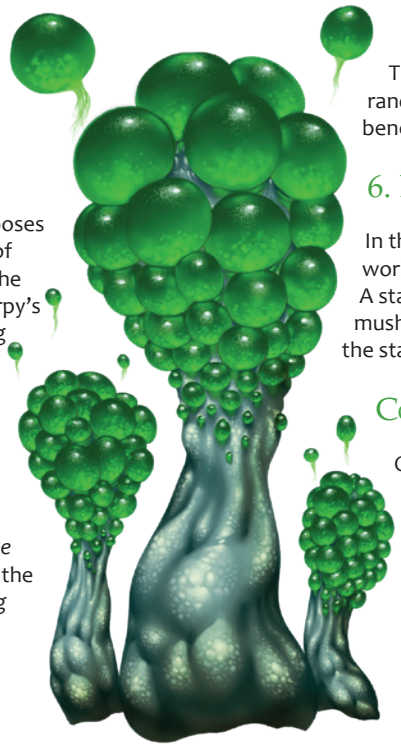
Ionyne's body has metabolized *Corrosive Morels*, granting her:

Lotus Skin. Ionyne is **immune** to acid damage. Her skin is repellent to any liquid.

In place of *Luring Song*, Ionyne has the following action:

Spore Song. The harpy sings a magical melody. One mushroom the harpy chooses within 60 feet of her releases a cloud of poisonous spores in a 10-foot radius. The spores remain until the start of the harpy's next turn or until dispersed by a strong wind. A creature that starts its turn inside the area must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, the creature takes 3 (1d6) poison damage and is poisoned until the start of its next turn.

Ionyne is not immune to the *Spore Haze* and takes care to remain clear of both the spores she creates with her *Spore Song* and the spores near the cavern floor.



She closes to melee only to attack a character standing alone atop a giant mushroom. Ionyne's cave contains a bed of rags and a modest treasure hoard: 48 gp, 16 sp, and a silver brooch worth 25 gp.

5. Magic Mushroom

This mushroom is noticeably larger and has different markings than the others in the cavern. Spores twinkling with magic surround the cap in a 10-foot radius. Ionyne can't use her *Spore Song* on this mushroom.

Harvesting the Cure. A creature standing on the mushroom can use an action to harvest some of the spores, collecting them in an empty vial or similar object. A creature that breathes the spores (either by starting its turn atop the mushroom or by inhaling the spores from a vial) is cured of the magical plague ravaging the adventurers' home.

Magic Mushroom Boons

d6	Boon (duration 1 hr)
1	You are outlined in sparkling, magical light (*faerie fire*). While the light lasts, you shed dim light in a 10-foot radius, attack rolls against you have **advantage**, and you can't benefit from being invisible.
2	A wordless, enchanting song fills your ears. You have **advantage** on saving throws against being charmed but **disadvantage** on **Wisdom (Perception) checks** that rely on hearing.
3	You can communicate telepathically with any creature you can see within 30 feet of you.
4	Your current and maximum hit points increase by 5.
5	Your jump distance is tripled.
6	Once per round, you can use a bonus action to teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that you can see.

The creature also gains a magical boon, determined by rolling randomly on the **Magic Mushroom Boons** table. A creature can benefit from only one boon at a time. Each boon lasts 1 hour.

6. Exit Tunnel

In the cavern's southwest corner, stairs of roughly worked stone rise to a tunnel leading out of the cavern. A stand of purple mushrooms—smaller than the giant mushrooms but still 3 to 4 feet tall—grows at the top of the stairs. Among the mushrooms are four **violet fungi**.

Conclusion

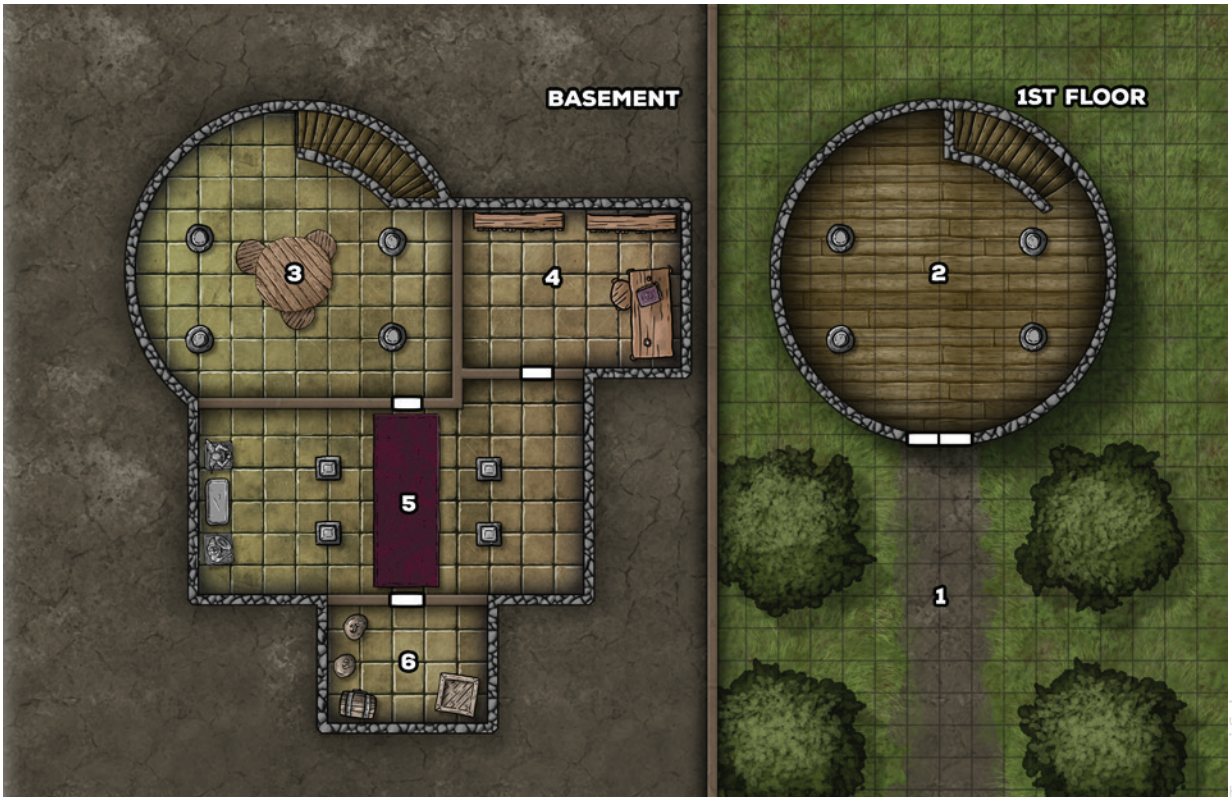
Once the characters harvest the magical spores, they can either leave the cavern through the exit tunnel (**Area 6**) or head back the way they came (**Area 1**). Though enraged by the theft of her spores, Ionyne does not pursue characters who flee the cavern. What dangers the characters face on their journey back to the surface is left for the GM to decide.

Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Level 3

Forest



Tommi Salama

All Along the Watchtower

Bill Buchalter

While wandering through the local woods, a group of hunters discovers a watchtower where none existed before. Who built this strange tower in the middle of nowhere, and why? All who enter the tower to investigate never return. The king offers a handsome reward to anyone who can solve the mystery of the tower.

1. Two Riders Were Approaching

As the characters reach the watchtower, two men on horseback greet them. The riders block the entrance to the tower and ask the characters their business. If the characters ask who owns the tower the riders state it belongs to no one. Only those who defeat the wildcat may enter, and only those who are worthy may leave. If the characters inquire about the missing people, the riders suggest if they haven't left the tower, they must not be worthy. If the party asks to enter the tower the riders back their horses away from the doors. A biting, cold wind begins to howl through the trees and a **weretiger** leaps from the trees and attacks the party in tiger form. The weretiger never changes to human or hybrid form, except upon death.

2. The Ballroom

The party enters the tower to find an odd scene. In the back of the room a trio of bards are playing music. Men dressed in fine clothing watch as a group of women dance around the center of the room. Barefoot servant girls weave among the dancers, carrying trays of wine. The doors the party entered through are gone, and the staircase at the back of the tower is not visible. As far as the party can see, there is no exit from this room.

This entire scene is an illusion. None of the illusory people pay any attention to the party or interact with them, except for the serving girls, who do not speak but only stop to offer the characters a glass of wine. After just one sip of wine the illusion fades for that character and they must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**, taking 11 (2d10) psychic damage on a failed save.

A character who attempts to touch one of the people in the room will notice they are only illusions, but they still cannot see through the illusion to find the staircase. Characters can also see through the illusion with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**, but only if they request to try; do not offer this as a solution. Allow the character to make this saving throw with **advantage** if they have touched the people and realized it is an illusion. If a character fails the saving throw, they must drink the wine to see through the illusion.

Once the illusion has faded for a character, either by drinking the wine or making a saving throw to see through it, they can see the stairs leading to the basement. The doors exiting the tower, however, do not reappear.

3. The Merchants

Three merchants sit around a large table with stacks of gold. The merchants barter and argue with one another haggling over a key. They pay no attention to the party. The merchant with the key sells it to one of the other merchants for 10 gp, who in turn sells it to the next merchant for 12 gp, who then sells it back tothe first merchant for 14 gp. At any time if a character observes the process, they can interrupt the merchants and offer to buy the key for at least 2 gp more than the current price.

On the far wall of the room is a locked door. It can be opened with the key the merchants are haggling over. The door can also be opened with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools. If the characters pick the lock or steal the key from the merchants without paying for it, the merchants turn into **ghouls** and attack.

5. The Joker & The Thief

This large room is decorated with two statues on the west wall. The statue to the right is a court jester and the statue to the left is a thief. An inscription on the **thief statue** reads, "*There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke.*" An inscription on the **joker statue** reads, "*None will level on the line.*"

To appease the **thief** the party must succeed on a group **DC 13 Charisma (Performance) check** to tell a humorous joke or perform a humorous act. Alternately, a player can tell a joke to gain a success. The GM can determine if the joke is worthy of a success. If the group fails this check, or fails to tell a funny joke, the statues come alive and attack. Each statue has the statistics of a gargoyle. Each statue has the statistics of a **gargoyle**.

Sitting on the stone altar between the statues are three glass jars of varying sizes. The largest jar is filled with a clear liquid, the other two jars are empty. To appease the **joker**, the party must pour liquid from the largest jar into the other two jars until all three jars have equal amounts. With a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** a character can see a very faint line etched into each jar. These lines indicate the exact level to fill each jar to insure they are equal. If the characters attempt to fill the jars without using the lines, they must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity check** to insure they estimate the amounts precisely. If the characters pour unequal amounts of liquid into the jars the statues come alive and attack. If the characters succeed in filling the jars equally the liquid in each jar turns bright red. These jars are now three *potions of healing*.

6. Dig My Earth

The door to this storeroom is unlocked. Inside are crates and barrels filled with dirt. Propped in the back corner is a shovel. As soon as one of the characters touches the shovel, the crates and barrels burst, and the dirt gathers to form an **earth elemental**. The shovel is enchanted, and can be wielded as a *+1 weapon* (simple, 1d8 damage) and deals an additional 4 (1d6) damage to the elemental on a hit.



4. Some Kind of Way Out of Here

The door to this room is magically locked and cannot be opened until the puzzle in **Area 5** is solved, or the statues are defeated, and the elemental in **Area 6** is defeated. A plaque on the door reads: "*Entertain the Joker and the Thief, and Dig my Earth to Enter.*"

When the party opens the door they find a **rakshasa** sitting at a desk in a high-backed leather chair, puffing on a pipe. He smiles wide at the party and says, "*It would seem the watchtower has found you worthy. Alas, it is time for you to go.*"

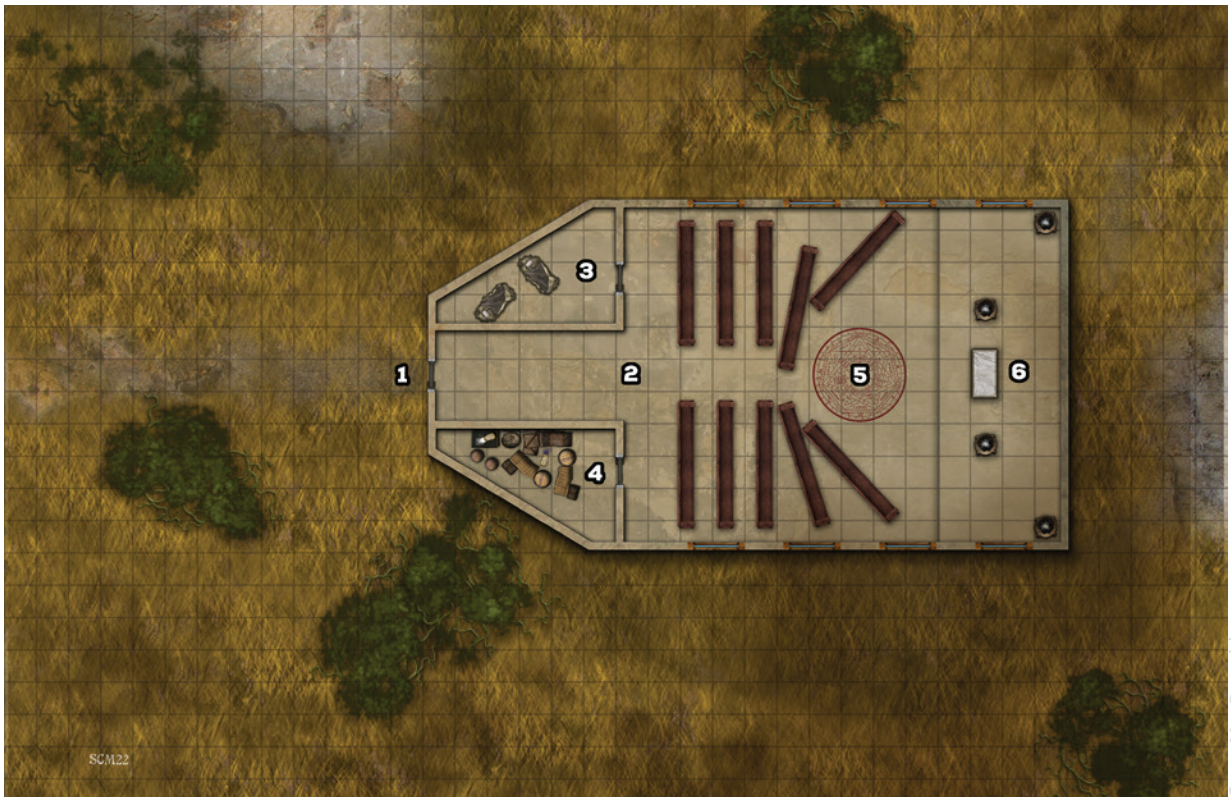
Before the characters can react, the rakshasa blows a large cloud of smoke from his pipe enveloping the group. As the smoke clears, the party find themselves sitting in an empty clearing where the tower used to be. The tower is nowhere in sight! All around them are the hunters and other missing people who entered the tower. Except for the party members, no one can recall entering the tower or anything that happened inside. Also in the clearing is a chest filled with 250 gp, a *figurine of wonderous power* of golden lions, and a *gem of seeing*.

Mates Laurentiu

5
Characters

Level
3

Grassland



Sean MacDonald

Temple Defense

William Fischer

The characters find themselves driven before the Shrieking Horde, a savage gnoll tribe that sweeps across the steppes like wildfire. But just as all hope seems lost, the party receives a message in the form of a *sending* spell from the elven wizard Izorhal: "*Come in haste to the Temple of the Great Mother, where even now I prepare a teleportation circle for everyone who arrives in time.*"

Izorhal. Characters familiar with Izorhal know that she uses her magic to defend the civilized peoples of the steppes. If the characters have never met Izorhal, their past heroic deeds have brought them to her attention. In either case, the party has little choice but to accept Izorhal's offer. The Temple of the Great Mother lies a few hours from the party's location. Assuming the characters head directly to the temple, they arrive just minutes ahead of the horde.

Allies in the Temple. Several refugees hide in **Area 3** and can be persuaded to fight alongside the characters. Izorhal prepares the teleportation circle in **Area 5**. An acolyte named Yellen supports the party and Izorhal in **Area 6**.

The Shrieking Horde. Roll initiative once Izorhal explains her plan. The characters then have 5 rounds to explore the temple and ready its defenses. At the start of round 6, and each round thereafter until the encounter ends, roll a d8 twice to determine the type of enemies that arrive and the direction of their approach. The party must defend the temple until Izorhal's *teleportation circle* spell is complete. Izorhal stresses that the characters should remain inside the temple during the battle with the Horde, as the circle won't remain active for long.

d8	Enemies	Direction
1	2d4 **hyenas**	North
2	**gnoll** with 1d4 **hyenas**	Northeast
3	1d4 **gnolls**	East
4	1d6 **gnolls**	Southeast
5	2d4 **gnolls**	South
6	**Giant hyena**	Southwest
7	1d4 **gnolls** riding **giant hyenas**	West
8	gnoll necromancer (**cult fanatic**) with 2d4 **skeletons**	Northwest

1. Entrance

Images of the Great Mother, the local goddess of creation, decorate the temple's sturdy wooden door.

Defense Options. The door has no lock, but if the characters bar it with an object (such as a quarterstaff from **Area 4**), opening the door from the outside requires a successful **DC 18 Strength check**.

The door can also be destroyed (**AC** 15, 20 hit points, **immunity** to poison and psychic damage).

2. Chapel

Multicolored light filters through stained glass windows on the north and south walls. The glass blocks line of sight but is fragile (**AC** 13, 2 hit points, **immunity** to poison and psychic damage). A creature can climb through a broken window using 10 feet of movement.

Defense Options. The pews in the center of the chapel are heavy, but a creature with a Strength score of 10 or higher can drag a pew while moving at half speed. Stacking two or more pews in front of a window blocks that window. Moving through a blocked window requires a successful **DC 15 Strength check** to push past the barricade.

3. Refugees

The characters aren't the only people Izorhal rallied to the temple. A half dozen souls huddle together here, silently praying for Izorhal to finish her ritual before the horde arrives. The refugees include a half-orc **thug** named **Attem**; a human **commoner** named Erdu and his teenage sons, Gerel and Jochi; and a trio of **kobolds** named Kendri, Terrig, and Snek.

Recruiting Reinforcements. The characters can persuade the refugees to join them.



Attem. Though a competent warrior, Attem is craven; a character must make a successful **DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **(Persuasion) check** to shame him into fighting.

Erdu. He volunteers to join the temple's defense but insists his sons stay out of harm's way. A successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces Erdu that anyone who can wield a weapon must do so.

Kobolds (3). They are eager to fight but speak only Draconic. Unless the characters can communicate with them, the kobolds' tactics during the attack are questionable at best.

4. Storeroom

Crates, barrels, and baskets are heaped haphazardly about the room.

Defense Options. Clever characters can use the supplies to fortify the temple's entrances, create areas of difficult terrain, and so on. Among the mundane supplies are three quarterstaffs, four flasks of holy water, two flasks of oil, a chain shirt, and a spell scroll of *entangle*.

5. Teleportation Circle

The pews in this area have been pushed aside to make space for Izorhal's *teleportation circle*.

Casting the Teleportation Circle. Izorhal begins her spell immediately and needs 10 rounds to complete it. At the end of her turn on round 10, the circle activates. Until the end of Izorhal's next turn, a creature that steps into the circle is teleported to Izorhal's sanctum, a tower hundreds of miles from the temple.

Treat **Izorhal** as a **mage** with *teleportation circle* prepared in place of *cone of cold*. During the encounter, Izorhal takes no actions other than to cast her spell. If she loses concentration, she must begin the spell anew. Only in the direst of circumstances does she interrupt her casting to attack the gnolls. Instead, she relies on the characters to protect her until the spell is complete.

6. Altar

A white marble altar flanked by braziers dominates the east side of the temple.

Yellan the Acolyte. Once Izorhal begins her spell, Yellan, a human **acolyte** and caretaker of the temple, casts *sanctuary* on her. On subsequent turns, he casts *bless* on the characters and *cure wounds* on any injured ally within range. Otherwise, he retreats behind the altar and prays to the Great Mother for salvation.

Conclusion

Once Izorhal completes her spell, the characters have 1 round to escape before the circle closes. Characters who fail to do so are left behind. If Izorhal escapes with the characters, she invites them to rest in her tower as she formulates a plan to defeat the Shrieking Horde. This plan might include braving a rival mage's stronghold to recover a powerful artifact or traveling to Izorhal's homeland to rally allies for the fight.

Mates Laurentiu

5 Characters

Level 3

Urban



Sean MacDonald

Cat's Eye Curse

William Fischer

A temple devoted to the goddess of cats hires the characters to investigate a recent robbery. Rumors suggest the local thieves' guild was behind the break in, but strangely the only item stolen was the mummified body of Mahes, a lion purported to have been the favored pet of the temple's goddess.

Edrice, a necromancer who plans to reanimate Mahes as her personal guardian, hired the guild. When she arrived to receive the lion, however, Edrice discovered the thieves had fallen victim to an ancient curse. She now works to raise Mahes's remains and secure not only an undead feline, but a host of living ones as well.

Cat's Eye Curse. When the cat goddess learned Mahes had been stolen, she cursed the thieves with a variant of lycanthropy known as the cat's eye curse. Creatures subjected to the curse must make a **DC 13 Charisma saving throw** each evening at dusk. On a failed save, the creature's senses become as sharp as a cat's, granting them **darkvision** to a range of 60 feet and the *Keen Smell* trait. On a second failed save, the creature transforms into a **weretiger**. The cat's eye curse is permanent unless ended by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

Approaching the Safehouse. If the characters ask around about the missing mummy, their investigation leads them to a safehouse in the poorest district of the city. A preponderance of **cats** prowls the alleyways around the safehouse. If the characters speak with them (via a *speak with animals* spell, for example), the strays struggle to explain their attraction to the area. (They are drawn by the presence of Mahes's remains.)

Secret Entrance. If asked about the safehouse's residents, one cat describes several humans delivering a box (Mahes's sarcophagus) through the secret door to **Area 3**. Without the cat's direction, discovering the secret door requires a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** made to examine the wall behind the barrels.

1. Porch

Two thieves' **guild members** (as **bandits**) survey the street outside the safehouse. Every 1d4 hours, a pair of bandits from **Area 3** replaces them. The bandits are unfriendly but attack only if the characters force their way into the safehouse.

The bandits are in the first stage of the cat's eye curse, giving them *Keen Smell* and darkvision with a range of 60 feet. A character within 10 feet of a bandit can make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check**. On a success, the character notices the bandit's catlike eyes.

2. Front Hall

The safehouse's front hall is divided into two parts. An expensive-looking carpet covers the north half of the hall. The southern half is empty save for a table turned onto its side, creating an impromptu barricade to **Area 3**.

Rug of Smothering. Edrice's **rug of smothering** guards the safehouse's entrance while she works. The bandits know to avoid the rug and step around it when moving through the room. If alerted by combat with the rug, the bandits from **Area 3** investigate, firing at intruders with their crossbows from behind the table. The table grants the bandits half cover (+2 AC and Dexterity saving throws).

3. Main Area

The safehouse's main area is divided into a study, a dining area, and a storeroom.

Study. Papers cover desks in the southwest corner. A character that makes a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discovers amongst the papers a letter signed by Edrice arranging for the theft of Mahes's remains. The other writings are mundane religious texts worth 50 gp to the cat goddess temple.

Dining Area. A table and cupboard fill this space. Unless alerted to intruders, two **bandits** are found here.

Storeroom. Divided amongst a pair of unlocked chests and a table on the southern wall are three *potions of healing*, a silvered, and a collection of gems and art objects worth 625 gp.

The secret door on the east wall is obvious from this side.

4. Second Floor

A hall connecting four bedrooms spans the safehouse's upper floor.

Northeast Bedroom. The bandits sleep in shifts in this bedroom. Other than a bed and writing desk, the room is empty.

Southeast Bedroom. Once her research is complete, Edrice plans to use the ritual circle painted on the floor to reanimate Mahes. For now, the circle is nonmagical, although a character who makes a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** deduces its purpose.

Southwest Bedroom. The door to this bedroom is padlocked. Edrice carries the padlock's key. Without the key, the characters can pick the lock with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools or break down the door with a successful **DC 24 Strength check**.

Geb, the leader of the bandits, is locked inside the room. The cat's eye curse has transformed him into a **weretiger**. If released, Geb attacks in his hybrid form. Instead of weretiger lycanthropy, Geb's bite attack infects creatures with *The Cat's Eye Curse*.

Northwest Bedroom. Edrice studies in this bedroom, researching the ritual to reanimate Mahes. If she hears battle downstairs, she releases Geb from the southwest bedroom and retreats to the attic (**Area 5**). The books on the desk include Edrice's spellbook and rare tomes worth a total of 750 gp.

Treat **Edrice** as a **mage**. In place of *ice storm* and *cone of cold*, she has prepared *blight* and *dimension door*. Edrice retreats grudgingly with *dimension door* to **Area 5** if she has not heard combat from below.

Secret Door. A panel between the western bedrooms conceals stairs leading to the attic (**Area 5**). Discovering the panel requires a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check**.

5. Attic

Empty crates and barrels line the eastern wall. In the southwest corner rests a sarcophagus, its lid carved to depict a recumbent lion.

Edrice makes her final stand in this area. As combat begins, the cat goddess animates Mahes to help the party defeat the necromancer. Treat **Mahes** as a **lion** whose type is undead instead of beast.

Conclusion

Once Edrice is defeated, Mahes retreats to the sarcophagus and returns to his eternal rest. Delivering Mahes to the temple of the cat goddess ends the cat's eye curse.

Should defeat seem inevitable, Edrice casts *dimension door* and flees the safehouse. If the characters are forced to retreat, she instead completes the ritual to reanimate Mahes. In either case, Edrice seeks to punish the party for interfering with her plans. She watches from a distance, waiting for the perfect time to strike – perhaps with an undead lion and a host of weretigers by her side!

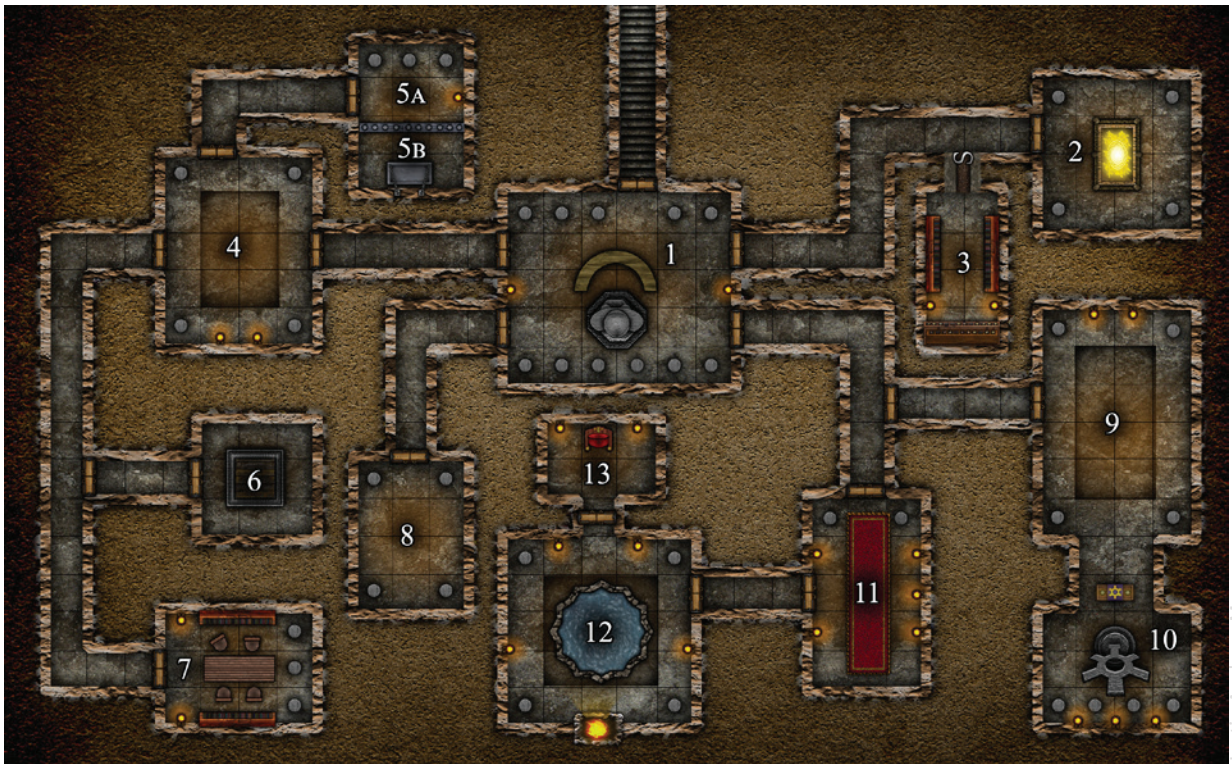


Mates Laurentiu

3-5 Characters

Levels 3-4

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Fortress Golem

Thilo Graf, James Holloway

A dormant prehistoric super-weapon, the fortress golem, was recently found by ambitious outlaw **Hester Vlack** and her dark priest **Morben**. With the aid of a jury-rigged *command crown* (see **Area 13**), the gigantic golem moves once more.

Hester has started extracting tithes from villages. Where gold goes, minions follow, swelling her ranks with new recruits.

GM Preparation. Determine how the fortress golem looks, its nature, and that of its maker, bearing in mind the *Points of Entry*. Also set a timer; every 10 minutes, one **Event** happens.

Boarding the Golem. Surrounded by a ramshackle bandit camp, the fortress golem is relatively easy to enter; Vlack does not yet have the numbers to properly guard the golem. Any clever strategy the heroes come up with automatically works; barring that, a **DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) group check** suffices to infiltrate the golem.

Points of Entry. Possible entryways include the golem's upper deck, emerging in **Area 1**, ascending the waste sluices in **Area 5**, and climbing the crane cable through the hatch in **Area 6**.

Alert. If the alarm is sounded, bandits scramble to get inside the golem. 10 minutes later, the golem activates and destroys a nearby village to make a point.

Golem Debris. The 5-foot squares in the corners of all numbered **Areas** are difficult terrain due to corroded wreckage swept there by the bandits.

Vlack's Gang. Vlack's rank-and-file followers are small-time crooks and lowlifes. The prehistoric super-weapon is just a means to make easy coin, and most lack the capacity to think bigger. Vlack currently commands a total of 32 **thugs**. Of these, eight guard the outside camp, while four rest in **Area 4** and another four occupy **Area 11**. The remaining 16 lowlifes patrol the golem in groups of four. A **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check** can make a group lay down their arms.

Events. Hester experiments with the crown. Every 10 minutes of real time, choose one event that **affects everyone in the golem**, or roll 1d6.

Step. Golem makes a step. Successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**, or fall prone.

Rumble. Noise for 1 minute. **Disadvantage** on hearing-based **Wisdom (Perception) checks**.

Discharge. Electrical arc targets creature carrying most metal for 10 (3d6) lightning damage, or half as much on a successful **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**.

Siren. Lasts 1 minute. As *Rumble*, plus wakes anyone in **Area 4**.

Force Barriers. One doorway in current area is blocked off by a force barrier (as *wall of force*) for 1 minute.

Weapon Test. As combined *Rumble* and *Siren* at first; then a blast that deafens anyone in the golem for 1 minute (**no save**). Creates an impressive crater outside.

1. Marshalling Hall

A statue depicts the maker leaning on a massive wrench. On the arched table in front of it, pictographs in a forgotten language spell out the maker's name, Euryoxus. They can be deciphered with magic or a **DC 15 Intelligence (History) check**.

2. Armory

There are four rusty caches holding five *+1 crossbow bolts* each. The bolts require a modified crossbow to shoot but deal an additional 3 (1d6) lightning damage on a hit.

3. Laboratory

Secret Entry. Hidden behind a bulkhead is the undiscovered sanctum of the golem's magineer. It takes a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** to notice the secret door.

Ancient Guards. Two **maintenance drones** guard the room. The drones attack after 30 seconds if no one says the maker's name (Euryoxus, see **Area 1**), behaving like **animated armor**, but replace *Slam* with:

Welder. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Schematics. The area contains 20 extremely fragile schematics for lost magitech. They require magic to safely transport. Subject to the GM's discretion, the heroes might recreate items depicted here. To the right scholar, they are worth a fortune.

4. Sleeping quarters

Vlack's gang turned this chamber into a bunkhouse, with hammocks strung between pillars and bedrolls on the floor. Four **thugs** try to sleep here, though Vlack's experimentation with the golem regularly wakes them.

5. Lavatory

A sliding metal grate divides the chamber in two. The waste system flushes out of a sluice on the backside of the golem, leaving a stream of filth.

Point of Entry. Wading through the viscous sludge may have mutative effects or expose heroes to a disease, subject to the GM's discretion.

6. Storeroom and hatch

This hatch leads out of the golem's belly. A crane mounted in the ceiling allows the crew to lift and lower heavy loads.

Point of Entry. The crane's chain pulley system can be climbed with a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check**. Once inside, the crane can be used to lift anyone left outside into the golem.

7. Refectory

This was once a small dining area, now repurposed as storage space. Among the plunder are 65 gp and 250 gp worth of gems. Razors (**Area 8**) used several soft pieces of cloth to provide a nest for his beloved **giant wolf spiders** **Googly** and **Probby**. A **DC 6 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** keeps the semi-tame spiders from attacking. The spiders squeal when slain, alerting Razors (he knows!) and anyone else currently not deafened.

8. Brig

Vlack keeps a chained hostage, **Elan Jash** (**commoner**), here. Elan is panicked but returning him to his community earns a 500 gp reward.

Razors the Spy. Vlack's second-in-command, **Razors** (**spy**) has the key to Elan's chains; Razors is also an agent for a secret cabal looking for the schematics in **Area 3**. Razors tries to negotiate, but attacks if the party has killed his spiders in **Area 7**. He just knows.

9. Ritual Hall

This hall was once to conduct the maker's rituals. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** finds 250 gp worth of gems hidden amongst the debris in the corners.

10. Sanctum

A cog-shaped altar dominates this small space. Touching it triggers an *Event* and alerts Hester (**Area 13**) and Morben (**Area 12**).

11. Lounge

Maps are spread out here, depicting various possible routes to nearby cities and riches. Four **thugs** ensure that Vlack and Morben are not disturbed while also gambling and drinking.

12. Fountain chamber

Morben (**priest**) studies the pool, convinced it's a divine manifestation. He is wrong. The liquid's fumes slowly poison Morben, rendering him perpetually poisoned. A violently insane zealot, he fights to the death.

Cooling Liquid. The pool contains the semi-sapient *Cooling Liquid* for the golem's weaponry, which really dislikes Morben. The liquid is poisonous; directly inhaling the fumes makes a living creature poisoned for 1 hour (**no save**); additionally, falling into the liquid deals 14 (4d6) poison damage per round, or half as much on a successful **DC 18 Constitution saving throw**. The liquid can power items made from the *Schematics* in **Area 3** and wants to see the world. It can't speak and communicates with ripples and gestures.

13. Cockpit

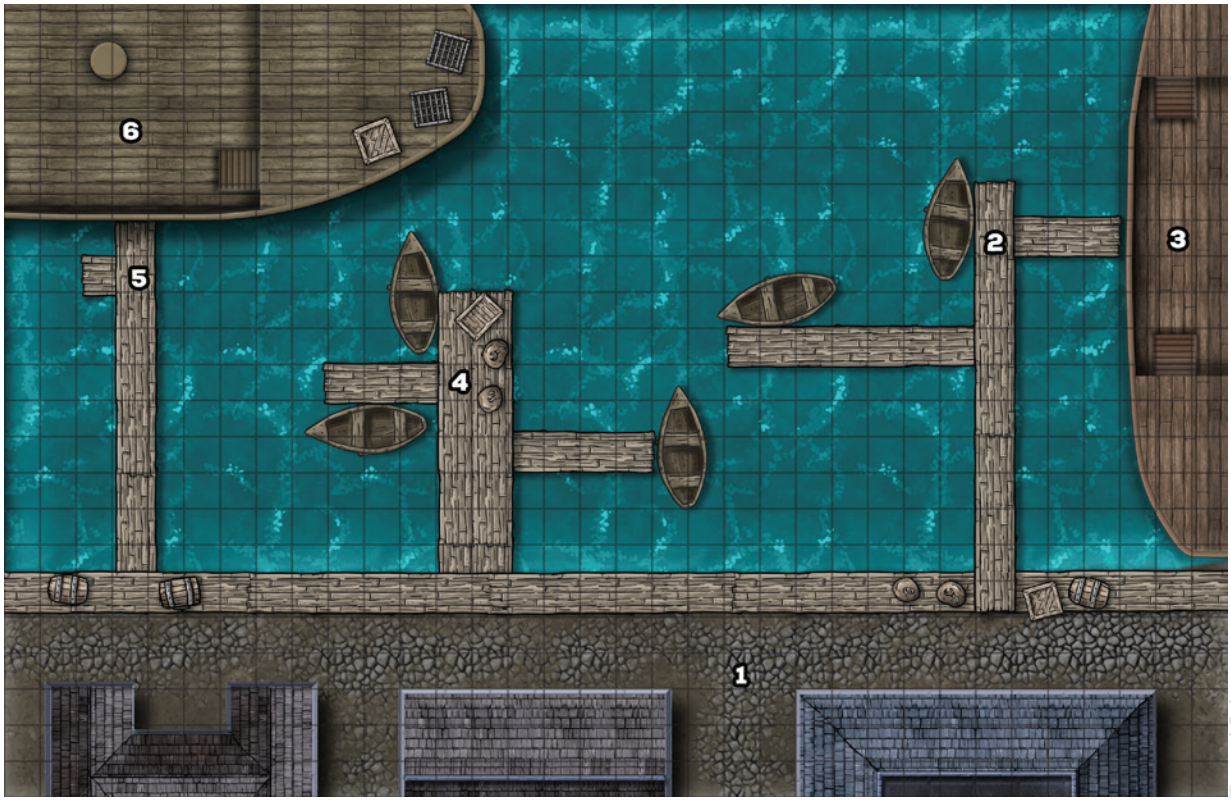
The throne here interfaces with the *command crown* worn by **Hester Vlack** (**bandit captain**).

Jury-Rigged Command Crown. As a bonus action at the start of her turn, Hester can trigger an *Event* of her choice. She is not affected by *Events*. If she does, she must make a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**, or be affected by *confusion* until the start of her next turn. The crown is drilled into her skull and ceases to work if she dies.

4-5 Characters

Levels 3-4

Coast



Tommi Salama

Doomed Dockyard Defense

Grant Simpson

The Feignar Trading Company is restructuring and moving their main base of operations to a larger city. This, alas, also requires transporting their treasury. The heads of the company were warned about various gangs and agencies that will likely attempt to steal the treasury the very moment it arrives in port. While the majority of the trading company's leaders don't believe in the threat, they have hired the party as meager security to appease the paranoiacs.

Briefing on the Thieves

The town guard briefs the party on the threat but cannot station a substantial force at the docks. Instead, they provide as much information as possible and guarantee that the streets around the docks will be cleared of civilians.

The two most obnoxious gangs in town are The Boys and The Other Boys. They are led by Grath and Grith, twins with twice the brawn and a quarter the brains combined. They prefer a brute-force approach but might end up butting heads with each other and forgetting the treasure entirely.

The group the party should be most worried about is the Madarai; a group of assassins, spies, thieves, and kidnappers working from the shadows. They will likely send a few trained, skillful agents to take the treasure and vanish before the party even realizes it is gone.

Finally, there are the ratfolk. They have become a part of the city, much to the chagrin of everyone else, due to their ability to procure rare and expensive items. The guards aren't sure how the ratfolk conduct their business, but they strongly believe they will be involved.

Defensive Measures

The party will have twelve hours after this briefing to set up traps, prepare a defensive strategy, and make any other preparations they want on the docks before the company ships (**Area 3** and **Area 6**) arrive. They can also ask around town to gain more information.

If the party asks around town, several opportunities present themselves through succeeding **Intelligence (Investigation)**, **Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Deception) checks**, depending on the approach the party chooses:

Asking About the Twins. A successful **DC 16 check** provides rumors that Grath and Grith will be at their grandmother's house for supper. The twins cannot be intimidated by the party, but their grandmother Lieselotte is another matter entirely. She strongly disapproves of her boys' felonious actions and can be informed of the upcoming theft they are planning. The Boys and The Other Boys will not arrive in **Area 1** if this is the case. Award double the XP for this solution.

Asking About the Madarai. Beating a **DC 12 check** leads the party on a wild-goose chase which wastes five hours of prep time. Success on a **DC 20 check** points towards a fishery front for the organization. The shopkeeper assures the party that it is a reputable fishery, but a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices some conspicuous bottles stacked in a cabinet at the back. With a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, or an **Intelligence check** using alchemist's supplies (if the party can distract the clerk long enough for analysis), these bottles can be identified as *potions of water breathing*. The Madarai agents might use these potions to approach unseen from the water.

Asking About the Ratfolk. A successful **DC 8 check** points the party towards the shabbier portion of the city near the sewer outlets. It becomes obvious during this investigation avenue that most other people dislike the ratfolks' presence. A slum of small shacks and rickety shops have been set up, but many ratfolk have to sleep on the street. A dense stench fills the air. The ratfolk are wary, but forthright, saying they have no intention of stealing the treasury. Beating a **DC 18 check** allows a character to overhear rumors about one ratfolk, Skrap, who has ranted about revenge against the rest of the city. Ratfolk might volunteer this information if treated with kindness and compassion. Skrap has been in the water on his dinghy all day but mentioned checking in on a group of kelp drakes he saw the other week.

Each line of investigation should take around three or four hours to complete. At the end of the twelve hours, the two ships carrying the treasury arrive at their locations on the map.

Timeline

There are two ways to run this Mini-Dungeon: You can either provide the party some breathing room between the individual encounters, or you can opt for a session of escalating, all-out chaos. The former is self-explanatory and results in an easy adventure. For the second, we recommend this timeline:

- **Round 1:** Grath and Grith, if not dissuaded (see **Area 1**), arrive.
- **Round 2:** Madarai spy #1 in **Area 2** moves to **Area 3**.
- **Rounds 3-8:** Madarai spy #1 pilfers one crate per round, jumps into water in round 8.
- **Round 3:** Skrap and his drake arrive (see **Area 4**). Madarai spy #2 in **Area 5** moves to **Area 6**.
- **Rounds 5+:** Madarai spy #2 tries to pilfer as many crates as possible, at the rate of one per round. The spy tries to escape if they have pilfered at least three crates and are noticed by the party.

1. The Boys' Boys

There are fisheries and a storehouse by the dockyard. All are vacant at the time of the heist.

Grath and The Boys (a **thug** and four **bandits**) approach from the middle-right street, while **Grith** and The Other Boys (a **thug** and four **bandits**) approach from the middle-left street. Both gangs attempt to intimidate the party first before attacking. If the party attacks immediately, both groups attack them, but if they attempt to diplomatically drive them off, the gangs will start arguing and fight each other first. Both twins attempt to flee if they fall below 10 hit points. The henchmen retreat if their boss falls.

2. The Right Dock

A **spy** wearing a cap of water breathing will attempt to sneak out of the water onto this dock and get to the treasure in **Area 3**. They have a *bag of holding* to store as much treasure as possible before they escape by water again. The spy has **Stealth +4**, but gains **advantage** on **Stealth checks** while under water unless the party explicitly states that they're watching for threats below the surface.

The small boats along the dock can be occupied by two Medium creatures at a time. They have **AC** 11, 10 hp. Anyone standing on a boat when it is reduced to 0 hp falls into the water.

3. The Right Treasury Ship

There are six crates of gp and sp (high value) from the company treasury on this ship. **Company employees** (four **commoners**) are on board but do not risk their lives to guard the treasure. They're not paid well enough.

4. Drake Dock

At the start of the fourth round of combat, **Skrap** (a **ratfolk** ◆) will leap from the water onto this dock, with a **kelp drake** ◆ close behind him. Skrap had been planning to lure a drake into the city as vengeance for his peoples' treatment. He was also planning on using the commotion to steal some of the treasury, but that was just a bonus. The drake destroyed his dinghy and nearly devoured him, but his plan worked.

The kelp drake begins attacking everything in sight. On its arrival, other would-be-thieves assaulted by it turn their focus upon it unless attacked by a creature other than the drake after it arrives. The Madarai spies (**Areas 2** and **5**) gain **advantage** on **Stealth checks** while the drake causes its ruckus unless someone is specifically stating that they're not watching the drake.

5. The Left Dock

Another **spy** with the same equipment and goals as the one in **Area 2** emerges from the water on this dock, attempting to steal from the treasury in **Area 6**.

6. The Left Treasury Ship

There are 12 crates of gp and sp (extraordinarily high value) on this ship. The six **employees** (**commoners**) here behave the same as their fellows in **Area 3**.

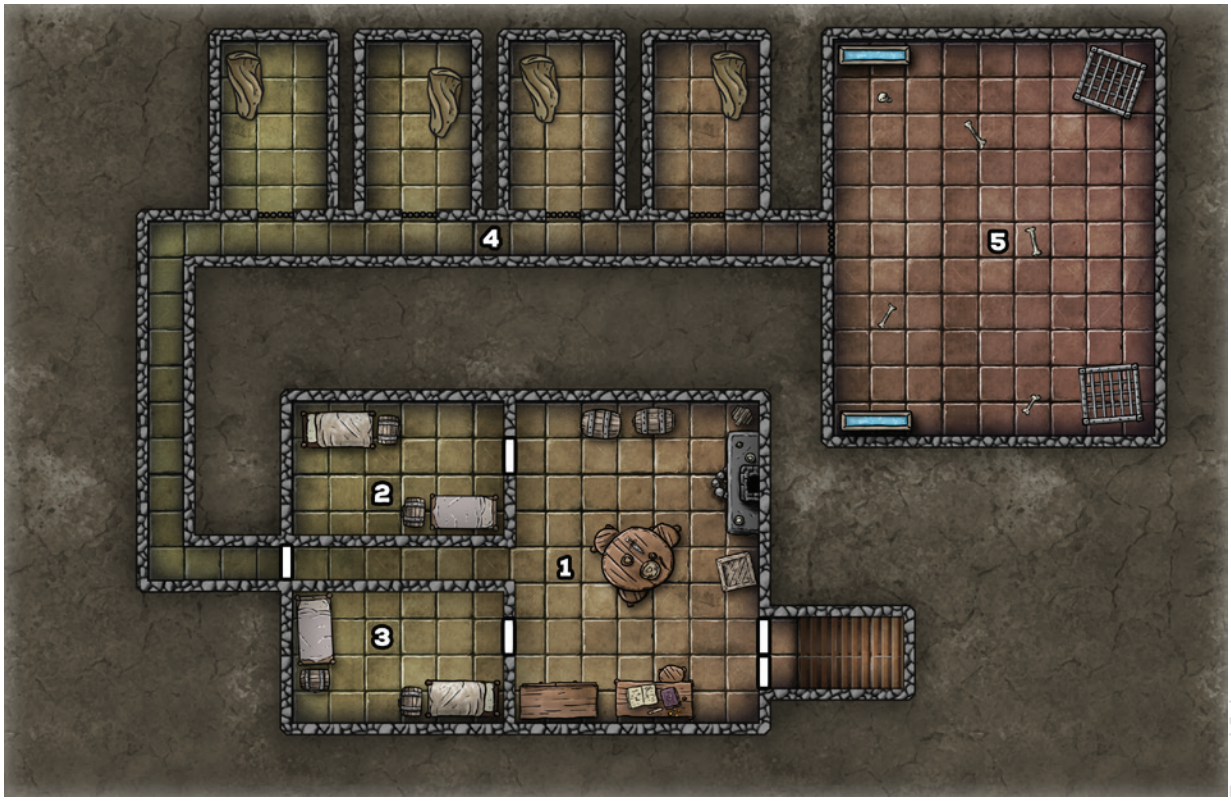
Aftermath

The Feignar Trading Company keeps its word and pays the party in proportion to the crates still remaining on the ships: 25 gp per crate. Subject to the GM's discretion, the company may be smuggling something more malign into the city. If the party is moved by Skrap's desperation and elects to side with the ratfolk and distribute the company's wealth among the downtrodden and marginalized, they make friends for life of the ratfolk populace, but also incur the enmity of a mighty trading conglomerate...

4-5 Characters

Levels 3-4

Urban



Tommi Salama

Nightmares at Thorn House

Airian Eastman

The charred remains of the Thorn House serve as a stark reminder of the dangers awaiting travelers on the road. This once beautiful boarding house burned with **Mistress Thorn**, a **night hag** who appears as a human woman, and her two adopted teenage daughters, Vera and Jane, still inside. The tragedy happened years ago, but the place is haunted, or so the villagers say. Ever since, nightmares have been plaguing weary travelers on the road, some even disappearing without a trace. The villagers want someone to investigate the ruins, but fear to tread anywhere near the haunted grounds.

In the ruins' rubble, a set of stone stairs leads to the basement level of the home and a set of double wooden doors. Sometimes at night the light of a hearth is seen glowing from beneath these doors, untouched by the blaze, further proof of the haunting.

1. Hearth Room

The walls and floor are stone. A glowing fire emanates light and heat. A table with dirty dishes, a desk with writing instruments, and a cookbook written in a strange language (Primordial) show signs of recent use. A miniature portrait of the Thorn family, as well as various mundane items line the mantel. Two visible doors open off this room.

A small hallway between the rooms leads to a hidden door. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals signs of stone scraping stone, a small handhold allows it to be pulled open. This leads to **Area 4** & **Area 5**.

On the floor before the fire appears to be a **bear skin rug**. In truth it is a **werebear** who guards the home for Mistress Thorn. He cannot speak and he cannot change his form, part of the curse placed upon him long ago. He attacks if provoked. The party can communicate with the beast if they have other means. If the party can convince him of noble intentions, such as with a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Deception) check**, he lets them pass. Reward 1.5 times the usual XP for bypassing him.

2. Children's Room

Within this room are two beds and two footlockers. The lockers contain children's clothes. Scattered around the room are broken bits of pottery, dried flowers, wooden toys, a ball, and other various trinkets. The beds are rumpled with use, but no one is here. A character who searches under the bed finds a *bag of beans*, with only a single bean left.

3. Mother's Room

This room also has two beds, two footlockers and shows signs of recent use. One footlocker holds women's dresses and aprons, all neat and washed. The other holds clothes for a human male. In the bottom is a painted miniature portrait of a handsome nobleman.

4. Sleeping Quarters

The hallway is dark. It has a musty, ammonia smell and squeaking noises can be heard from down the corridor. The floors here are dirty and looks as though something has been dragged along the passage. The rooms in this area have no doors, and each contains an old bed roll. The third room contains a **giant bat** and offspring in the form of a **swarm of bats**. They are more of a nuisance, having taken up residence through a large crack in the foundation, and with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**, the party can bypass them. In the last room two backpacks, one with mining maps, a coin purse with 120 gp, and mining equipment. The other is filled with mundane adventuring gear, a *+1 dagger*, a *ring of feather falling*, and a *potion of healing*.

5. Chamber of Dreams

A blue violet mist fills the doorway at the end of the hall. Through the mist **Mistress Thorn** stands over her two teenage daughters Vera and Jane, who sit on the floor. She is instructing them on the power of dreams. There are two cages in the room. One contains an ill-tempered **dvergr** with his beard shorn off. Alternatively, use **duergar** with the Dvergr Pick Master feat. The other cell holds a **bandit**.

Misty Sleep Trap

Simple trap (level 1–4, deadly threat)

This thin mist is 50 feet long but only a foot thick, and it is a mundane feature created by alchemical means for the purpose of hiding a tripwire. The troughs on either side of the room are filled with chemicals that provide 12 hours' worth of mist. The mist is otherwise harmless and gives off a faint mineral scent.

Trigger. This trap is triggered when a creature crosses the doorway's threshold, activating a tripwire.

Effect. When activated, this trap casts a *sleep* spell centered on the doorway using a 2nd level spell slot.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check made within 5 feet of the doorway reveals the tripwire. The party can avoid it by stepping over it. If the tripwire is touched or cut the spell goes off.



Dean Spencer

Mistress Thorn greets if they give her a chance to speak. She identifies the dvergr as an agent of the Grand Void, stating he is responsible for tormenting and cursing the werebear (**Area 1**) and burning their home. She has kept him alive after his capture to harvest his dreams and admits to her plans to remove his soul when she is done with him. She omits mentioning the bandit in the other cage. If asked, her daughters corroborate this story.

The bandit is under the effects of the *sleep* spell. When asked about him, Thorn states that he is a vile man, a wanted criminal waylaying travelers. She is correct: The bandit is responsible for the vanished travelers. Mistress Thorn can be convinced to set the bandit free as a sign of goodwill, provided he'll be brought to justice. There is a 125 gp bounty on the bandit's capture.

The dwarf demands to be set free, promising a reward for his release and pointing out Mistress Thorn's monstrous nature. He also points out that the girls have the potential to become powerful sorceresses and can't be left in the tutelage of the vile night hag.

If the party attempts to harm the girls or free the dvergr, Mistress Thorn spends her first action to weave dream material into impregnable force barriers to shield her daughters. The barriers remain in effect while she is conscious. If the characters release the dvergr, he attempts to flee. Mistress Thorn's primary focus in combat is to incapacitate or kill the dvergr.

If the adventurers show sympathy to her plight, seem reasonable and promise to ensure proper magical tutelage for Thorn's daughters, she might be convinced to let the girls go as well. Lying to her is difficult and requires a **DC 17 Charisma (Deception) check**. She will not, however, compromise regarding the fate of the dvergr. She has two *rings of animal influence* that she bequeaths on her girls as a parting gift.

If the party kills Mistress Thorn, they must then decide what to do with the daughters, who are indoctrinated by the hag's vengeful ideology and brim with sorcerous potential. The girls are duly traumatized if Thorn dies. If Thorn is subdued, she does not rest until she is reunited with her girls; twisted and evil though she may be, she is fond of her daughters.

If the party allows the dvergr to go free, he is ungrateful and offers no reward, unless the daughters "are dealt with", in which case, he offers the assistance of the servants of the Grand Void and an access to explosive ambersticks. He demands his belongings (backpack with maps, gold, and mining equipment) regardless of support shown; worse, he is vengeful, and reports the adventurers' interference.

4-5 Characters

Levels 3-4

Underworld/ Urban



Tommi Salama

Path of the Anvil

Airian Eastman

The Path of the Anvil was a beautiful section of a dwarven city deep underground, cut off from the main city after a massive cave-in. Wishing to reclaim the lost quarter's beautiful estates connected by lined cobblestone paths, once home to the city's mightiest warriors, the dwarven lords hire the party to explore the quarter. Today, mostly ruins remain, crushed by tons of rocks, but one estate remains intact, the erstwhile home of the great crossbowman Tasrin Keeneyes.

Alternatively, the party may stumble upon this through a narrow cave passage, or otherwise happen upon the buried quarter.

1. Path of the Anvil

The cobblestone path leading to the buildings ahead is strewn with some loose rocks, and it is, curiously, lit by pillars casting dim light. The prominently displayed bronze-cast statue depicts a winged fiend being slain by Tasrin.

Guards. The female **kobold trapsmith** ◆ **Miggles** is on guard most of the time and has set up a *Skullpopper* trap between the second pair of pillars to drop rocks on characters as they cross. She has also set up a *Poisoned Sliver* on the underside of the doors leading to **Area 4**. She attacks from range if possible, and once out of sight, attempts to cobble together more traps. She tries to flee from combat at the first chance she can get. If Miggles is not dealt with here, she can mine the remainder of the adventure with her traps.

There are always two **kobolds** in this area. An additional six kobolds rush to the area at the first sound of fighting (**passive Perception 8**) from **Area 6**. Half the kobolds wield daggers, while the rest remain at range and attack with slings. When only two kobolds remain, they call for help.

Reinforcements. If a call for help goes out, two **elite kobold** ⬢ (from **Area 6**) rush in to help.

The two crates in this area contain a week worth of food (↗ 14 **units of stock**) that is still fresh, stolen from a caravan. Potentially hazardous fungi grow around the area as well, subject to the GM's discretion.

2. Tomb of Keeneyes

This area is not lit. The tombs of Tasrin and his partner Myriss have been raided and desecrated, with bones missing from each corpse. The missing bones are scattered before an altar. Any valuable loot has also been taken. This area is key to attaining *fiendseeker* (**Area 4**) without long-term repercussions.

Gaining Tasrin's Favor. Any character who makes a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check** can place the bones back in their proper place. After the bones have been reassembled, it takes a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** (or good roleplaying of an apologetic funerary ceremony!) to lay the dwarves to their final rest. On a failed check, the desecration becomes too much, triggering the ire of the ancestors: the bones turn to a putrid

sludge, exposing every character in the area to sight rot. If the bones are properly assembled, a blessing of the ancestors in Dwarvish resounds through the tomb, providing the benefits of the *bless* spell on every character standing within 5 feet of the tomb. The blessing of the ancestors lasts for 1 hour.

3. Pillars of Heroic Deeds

Six pillars, carved with adventures of Tasrin's life adorn the columns, though some have been defaced. Three makeshift tables are strewn with various fungi, gems, tools, and mundane items used for trap making. The original use of this room might have been for gatherings or mealtimes.

Miggles has set up two *Slingsnares* in the two squares in front of the door. A creature who opens the door must succeed a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** to spot the wire. A creature who steps into the snare has to succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid being pulled into the air and hung upside down. The snared creature is restrained (**escape DC 13**), and the cord, being made of sturdy dwarven resources, has AC 10 and 10 hit points.

Treasure. 5 pearls worth 100 gp each, three pounds of edible fungi (3 **units of stock**), thieves' tools.

4. Weapons Room

A *Poisoned Sliver* (set up by Miggles) is on the underside of one handle of this door. The trap's clever placement requires a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to notice it. Once noticed, it can easily be avoided. Characters stating that they inspect the handle automatically notice the trap.

This room sports a weapons rack to the left of the door and a stone table with two chairs. It is otherwise empty. The weapons rack appears to have mundane weapons, however a magical weapon belonging to Tasrin, dulled from years of neglect, is among them. A successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** is needed to find the crossbow and realize what it is. *Detect magic* can notice the subtle aura of the crossbow and provide **advantage** on the check. Additionally, any character who received the blessing of the ancestors in **Area 2** can see a faint glow on the crossbow. A **DC 15 Intelligence (History) check** identifies the weapon as belonging to Tasrin, and notices that the ire of dwarven ancestors might strike down those that take it without Tasrin's blessing. Dwarves have **advantage** on this check.



Dean Spencer

Fiendpiercer

Weapon (heavy crossbow), very rare (requires attunement)

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Additionally, if you know you are attacking a fiend, you have **advantage** on attack rolls made against the fiend, and deal an extra 2d6 piercing damage against the fiend if you hit. An ingenious dwarven design, *fiendpiercer* has a cartridge for bolts and a quick winding system. You can fire the weapon four times before its loading trait comes into play; however, reloading the cartridge with bolts requires spending your action. Absconding with the weapon without properly ensuring the sanctity of Tasrin's remains may result in a dwarven ancestral curse.

5. Wizard's Study

The door into this area is locked. It takes a successful **DC 13 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools to unlock the door. Inside this room are bookshelves lines with bottles, books, satchels of magical components, most since rendered useless.

Ruku, an agender **kobold wizard** and leader of the kobolds, sits at a table with an unfinished meal, their tome of spells upon the desk. They seem unconcerned with the arrival of the party and offer to make a bargain for their release: In exchange for a map leading to another buried estate nearby and another map to a young dragon's lair they ask to be let go to travel where they wish. If the party does not comply or has mercilessly slaughtered Ruku's allies, they attack.

Treasure. *Potion of greater healing*, *blink scroll*, vial of pale tincture.

6. Kobold Quarters

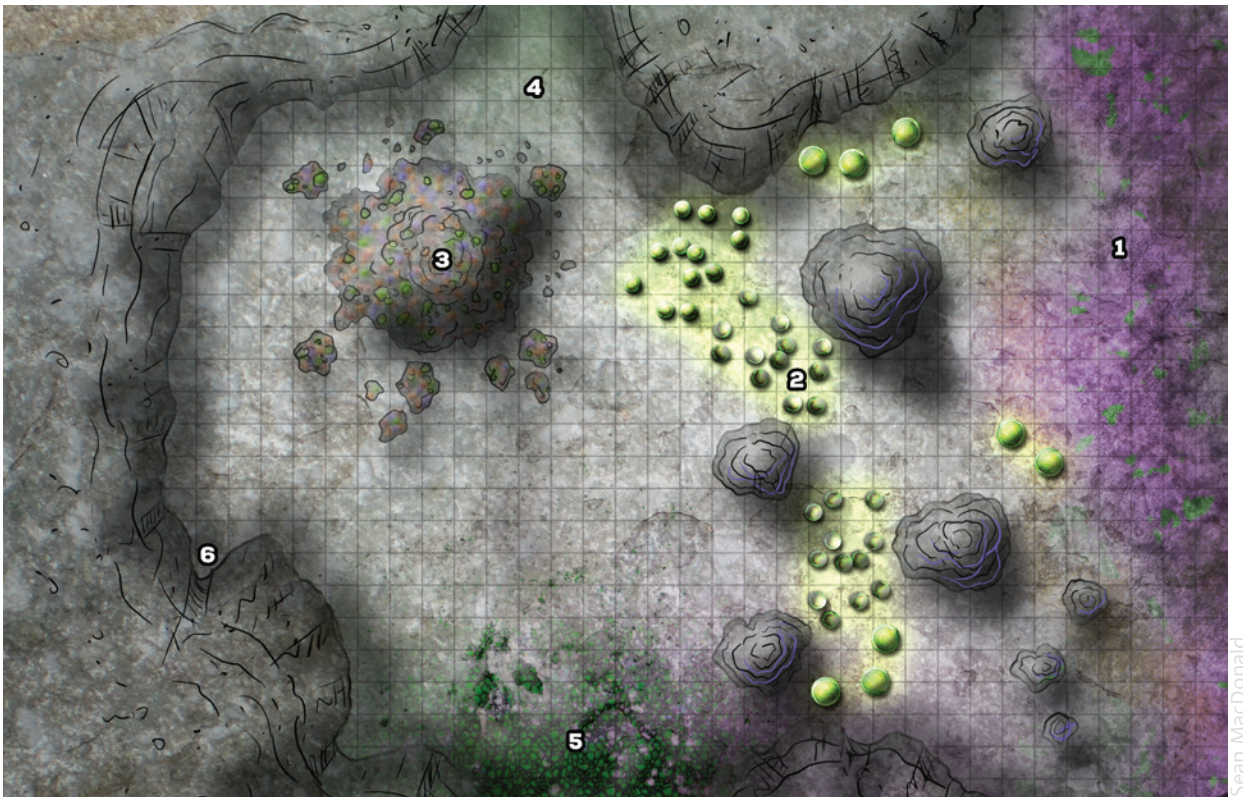
This is the kobolds' resting place. Two **kobolds** guard **Area 1**, while the remaining six sleep in shifts. There are two footlockers on either side of the room. The two **elite kobolds** are always found here unless called out to battle. Each elite kobold carries a key for their one footlocker. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools can open a footlocker, and a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** can break one open, but also alerts all remaining creatures and might attract random encounters from the Underworld, investigating the noise.

Treasure. Holy symbol of lawful deity (belonged to Myriss), 150 gp, 1,500 sp, a circlet set with emeralds worth 150 gp, and two sets of fine funerary robes for dwarves, worth 100 gp each. All treasure is split between the two footlockers.

4-5 Characters

Levels 3-4

Underworld



Sean MacDonald

A Tale of Spore and Scale

David Schwartz

Recently, a band of kobold miners tunneled into the fungus garden of a moss lurker family. Nothing interested the kobolds, so they dumped their tailings and other refuse in the cave. The irate moss lurkers retaliated by contaminating the kobolds' water supply, although non-lethally. The two leaders tried to reach an agreement, but each soon believed the other to be duplicitous. Neither side knew that two corrupted pixies were magically sabotaging the peace process.

As nearby settlements rely on the kobolds' metal for tools and the moss lurkers' fungus for food, and the escalating feud has dried up both, the party is sent to discover and resolve any problems.

Cave Features. The cave ceiling is roughly 50 feet high. The rock formations around **Areas 1** and **2** are slightly higher than they are wide. Unless the characters bring their own light, the only sources are the fungi in **Area 2** (which doesn't reach the back wall) and the kobolds' personal lanterns.

Trade Tongue. All creatures in this scenario speak Undercommon as well as their usual languages.

1. Signal Mushrooms

Green-speckled purple fungi carpet the path to where the kobolds' mine and moss lurkers' farm meet. At the western edge, eight lime green human-sized mushrooms grow. These gran fungi act as **shriekers**. Each replaces shrieking with low-pitched humming. If they hum for more than two rounds, the moss lurkers in **Area 5** check why.

2. Lantern Field

The cave is filled with luminescent lantern puffballs, creating difficult terrain.

Lantern Puffball. Roughly spherical, these fungi produce light equivalent to a torch (bright light in a 20-foot radius, dim light for an additional 20 feet). As an action, a creature can burst a puffball, releasing glowing spores in a 20-foot radius. Anything within the radius (including the activator) is affected by *faerie fire* (**DC 15**) for 1 minute. If picked, the puffball loses these features after 24 hours.

3. Refuse Heap

This pile of tailings and other mine refuse is over 30 feet in diameter, half as high, and is difficult terrain. A character moving over it must succeed at a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** or take 5 (1d10) slashing damage from sharp rocks or splintered wood.

Lost Stone. The miners unwittingly threw a *red corundum elemental gem* into the smaller pile northwest of the refuse heap. The dull gem is found with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**, or by casting *detect magic*.

4. Kobold Mine Backdoor

The north passage of this cavern leads to the kobolds' refinery and mine, set up about a mile away.

Kobold Miners. When the party arrives, 1d4 **elite kobolds** are sorting and piling refuse. If the characters ask to speak to someone in charge, one of the kobolds goes to fetch **Alfadra** (also an elite kobold) who appears with enough allies to bring the total number of kobolds to five.

Attitude. The kobolds are initially indifferent to the party, but hostile (not yet violent) towards the moss lurkers. See *Diplomacy* below.

Treasure. Alfadra, the kobold leader, carries a vial of *oil of slipperiness* which she gives to the party if it defeats the pixies and brings peace to the cavern. If things worsen, she uses it in combat.

5. Moss Lurker Farm Entrance

The south passage leads to more mushroom caverns and the moss lurkers' living areas. A spongy fungus covers the entryway.

Moss Lurkers. Two **moss lurkers** keep a caring eye on the chamber's fungi and a wary eye on the nearby kobolds. If the party asks to speak to someone in charge, they call for their leader **Takakio**, who arrives with an assistant, bringing the moss lurker total to four.

Attitude. The moss lurkers are initially indifferent to the party, but hostile (not yet violent) towards the kobolds. See *Diplomacy* below.

Treasure. Takakio, the moss lurker leader, has a *potion of growth* which he gives to the party if it beats the pixies and brings peace to the cavern. If things worsen, he uses it in combat.

6. Pixie Hideout

Corrupted Pixies. A shadow-concealed wall niche hides a ledge roughly 8 feet off the ground. This is the lair of **Grina** and **Nizbuk**, two **corrupted pixies**.

Attitude. Grina and **Nizbuk** intend to cause mayhem for the kobolds and moss lurkers, both for 'fun' and to impress their corrupter. If spotted, each uses *charm person* to gain an ally to defend it, then flees and looks for a new hiding place within the cave. Both switch between moving invisibly and casting spells to slow pursuit. They are reluctant to abandon their treasure hoard, but anyone who vows not to hurt them convinces them to cede peacefully with a successful **DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**.

Treasure. Scattered on the pixies' ledge is their entire "hoard": 13 gp in coins and a moonstone (50 gp).

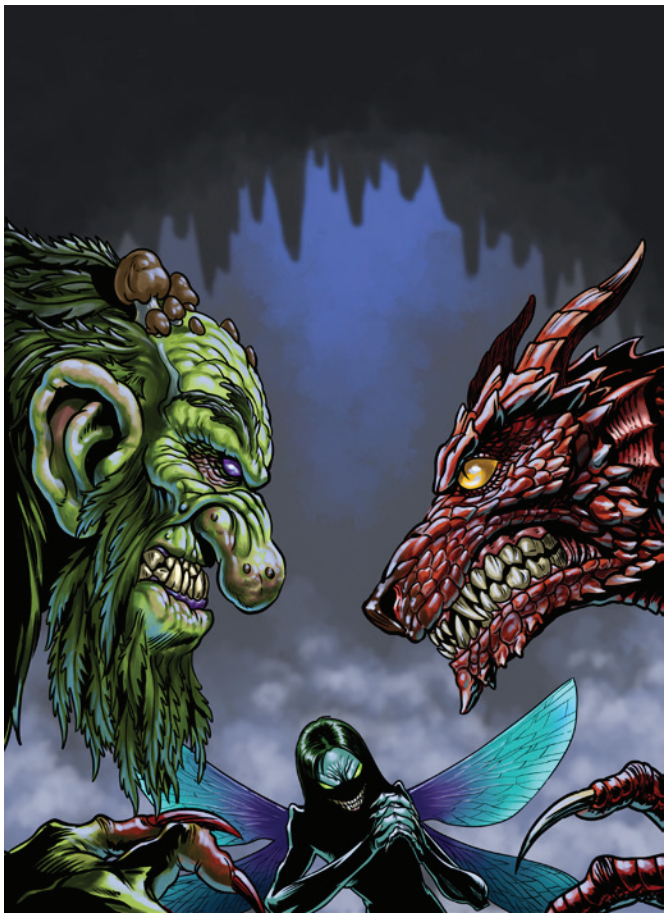
Diplomacy. A character convinces one of the groups to end their feud with the other with a successful **Charisma (Deception)**, **Charisma (Intimidation)**, or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**. The kobolds alter their attitude with a **DC 14 check**, while the moss lurkers are convinced with a **DC 12 check**. A check is made with **advantage** if: the character offers aid (such as to move the refuse heap, or to replant fungus elsewhere); party members help the lead diplomat; the other side has changed its attitude.

Unless the party has dealt with **Grina** and **Nizbuk**, the corrupted pixies work to disrupt this diplomacy.

Hidden Influence. A corrupted pixie attempts to disrupt a character talking to either group with spells such as *bestow curse*, *confusion*, or *hideous laughter*. A character looking for the source of the magic spots the pixie with a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Secret Sabotage. If a group is convinced to end the feud (despite any interference), the pixies wait until the party leaves, then commit sabotage, perhaps by burning a fungus field or causing a mining accident. The affected group will blame the other, negating the party's success. Evidence of a pixie culprit—tiny footprints, a wing scale—is found with a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check**.

Lasting Peace. Once the pixies are dealt with, and both groups are convinced to give up the feud, the kobolds and moss lurkers settle their differences, and return to business as usual.

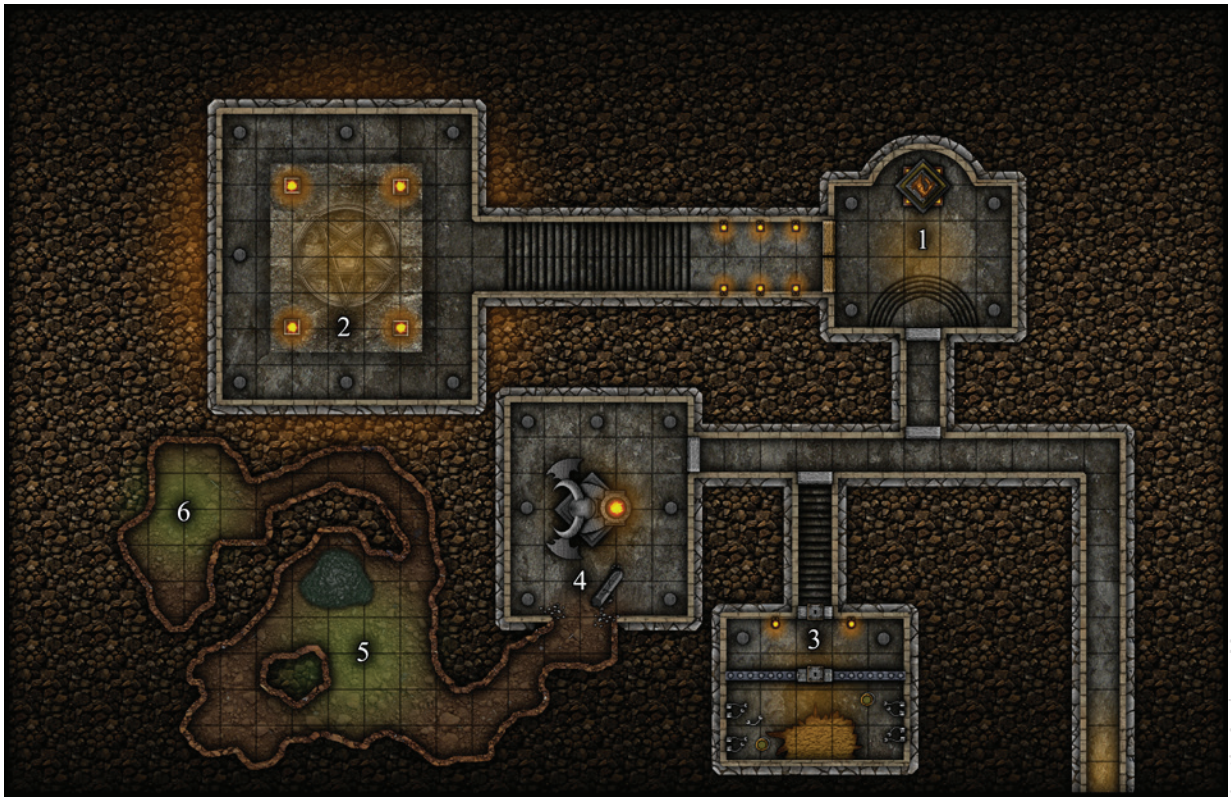


Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 3-4

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

Deviltry in the Basement

Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Imagine a dinner party at the home of an influential person. Maybe something about this person doesn't sit right. Perhaps they are too charming, too slick, or just a little off. Something is just not right. That person is hiding something.

Deviltry in the Basement explores what the characters might find beyond their initial hunch—what is beyond a secret doorway hidden in the dwelling of a depraved individual masquerading as a prominent member of society. It also gives them the chance to rescue those who have fallen into this villain's clutches.

Entrance

The entrance leads down a narrow and precipitous stone staircase without railings, though the masonry walls lend to an occasional accidental-seeming handhold. Here and there scratches scar the walls, as if some fought passage down the passage. A **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the remains of a large bloodstain, long dried, at the foot of the stairs—the result of a particularly feisty abduction ended with vicious push down the treacherous stairs, which a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** concludes.

1. Infernal Stone

Heated Door. A cursory examination of the iron-bound door leading to the 15-foot corridor connecting this door to the entrance corridor reveals that the door's metal is hot, and the wood has been dried by heat. The hallway beyond is sweltering, though merely uncomfortably so, rather than dangerously so. Both metal doors leading to this chamber are hot. The metal singes those who touch it for 2 (1d4) fire damage each time it is touched directly, and the wood is so dry that it splinters.

Opening the Door. Opening the second door unleashes a wave of blistering heat, dealing 2 (1d4) fire damage to each creature within the hallway or who starts their turn within the chamber or hallway. This heat emanates from a flat-top, 4-foot tall obelisk on the far end of the room, which glows with fiery infernal runes. It continues to burn, and creatures staying within the room take an additional 2 (1d4) fire damage at the end of each round.

Cooling the Obelisk. Dousing the obelisk in at least 10 gallons of water, such as created by the *create food and water spell*, prevents the obelisk from dealing fire damage until the end of the next round. Similarly, dealing 10 or more cold damage to the obelisk in one round also cools it down until the end of the next round.

Dismantling the Obelisk. One of the near faces of the obelisk is the outline of a panel that can be noticed with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check**, and opened

with a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. Getting within 10 feet of the obelisk rouses the four **exploding toads** basking in the heat on the far side of the obelisk.

Within the obelisk is an infernal contraption of gears, levers, and chain pullies manipulated by a pair of **fire imps**, which fly out and attack once the panel is opened.

Slow Shutdown. This contraption powers the various light sources throughout the complex, including the brazier held by the idol in **Area 4**, and the protective circle in **Area 2**. The machinery continues grinding for one minute after the imps abandon it, but once that time passes, the lighting of the complex and the protections within those areas cease, but so does the heat.

2. Spree Killer

Heated Door. If the infernal machinery of the obelisk is still functioning, the metal on the iron-bound double doors burns to the touch in the same way the doors to **Area 1** do, and the wall sconces beyond burn with infernal flame.

Demon Containment. The magic circle in the large chamber beyond the wide downward stairs keeps a **spree demon** trapped. Once the obelisk has shut down completely, the demon is liberated and seeks its freedom. It's been entrapped for a long time, and attacks any creatures it comes across, desperate to sate its murderous hunger.

3. Sacrificial Prison

Beyond the main hallway's unlocked door is another set of steep and narrow steps that leads to a locked door. The lock, and all locks in this area, can be picked with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools. Beyond that door, a single **iron ghoul** stands guard to a prison with a pair of shackled prisoners—just a couple of ordinary and innocent folk (**Donra** and **Tyllax**, **commoners**) that the master of this dungeon keeps to coax the spree demon in **Area 2** into performing future services. The ghoul has the keys to both the prison door and the shackles in a pouch on his belt. The prisoners know only that they were kidnapped by hooded figures and brought down here some time ago. They are clueless as to why they were abducted.

Saving the Prisoners. Escorting Donra and Tyllax successfully out of the dungeon grants the party 200 XP per prisoner. One is the paramour of a powerful dragon or extraplanar entity.

If the characters disable the infernal device in **Area 1**, the iron ghoul notices the lights going out and moves to **Area 1** to investigate.

4. Abandoned Idol

Once a shrine to the complex's master's diabolic patron, the place was breached by the strange demonic forces in the caverns beyond. Now the shrine has been repurposed to emit a ward against chaos and evil, but only if the idol's brazier is alight. If the light is extinguished due to the obelisk is **Area 1** shutting down, the demon in **Area 5** is free to leave, though it may not realize this for some time. Even if the flame burns, it does not impede the characters' progress into the caverns.

5. Tainted Cavern

Beyond a passage scored with claw marks, as if dug by some powerful beast, is a rocky cavern, its center overgrown with twisted and distorted fungi (the areas of green on the map designate the fungus growth). Those who move into the growth must succeed a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or become confused (as per *confusion*) for 1 minute. Beyond the growth, is a murky pool. Within that pool, a **cipactli demon** lies in wait, ready to ambush any who approach.

6. Edge of Reality

This area features a growth like that in **Area 5**, but those who become confused by the fungal growths are attacked by quickly-deployed fungal tendrils on initiative count 20 (losing ties):

Fungal Tendrils. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one confused target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (**escape DC 15**). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained. The fungal growth can't use the tendril it uses to grapple to make attacks. The fungal growth has 20 tendrils, but doesn't attack a single target with more than one tendril. A target that ends its turn restrained by a tendril is moved 5 feet towards the growth, or rendered prone if already on the growth. A target that ends its turn restrained and prone on the growth must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** or be absorbed through the growth, which actually is a strange portal to the Abyss.

Dealing with the Growth. The growth rapidly regenerates damage dealt to it, rendering most attacks ineffective, but dealing 10 or more fire or necrotic damage, or a combination thereof, to a square of growth in one round cleanses that square of the growth.



Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 3-4

Coast



Tommi Salama

Enou's Extraordinary Food

Marc Braden, Thilo Graf

GM Preparation. To prepare for this Mini-Dungeon, make sure you know each character's Constitution and Wisdom modifier as well as their **Wisdom (Perception)** and **Wisdom (Insight)** values. After reading this introduction, start reading with **Area 5**.

The woods open to reveal a solid stone establishment with a pitched roof sits on pillars above a calm body of water. Above the door hangs a verbose sign—*Enou's Extraordinary Food and a Place to Sleep*. The party is greeted by a flamboyant and happy gentleman who introduces himself as **Enou**, a **dream eater** in disguise. Unlike most dream eaters, Enou is an accomplished thief and has **Sleight of Hand +7**.

Hurrying the party in, Enou shows them to the sleeping quarters while describing a great meal of roasted fish, boiled crabs, foraged mushrooms, root vegetables and, of course, wine! An elderly servant appears and is introduced as **Theck**, a disguised **eonic drifter** convinced that helping Enou is his only way home. **Area 5** describes the meal and is the starting point of this Mini-Dungeon.

Enou's Goal. Once the travelers are settled in, Enou uses strange magic obtained in his travels amongst the planes with Theck to create a loop of realistic nightmares that endlessly repeats the scenarios outlined in **Area 4** and **3**. He hopes to disorientate the party and pilfer some of their treasures while they are distracted. Alternatively, he settles for knocking them out to rob them blind. Once Enou has managed to steal sufficiently valuable goods, he tries to goad the party into running outside so his establishment can vanish (see **Area 2**). Enou only resorts to violence as a last resort. If Enou or his nightmares reduce the entire party to 0 hp, the characters awaken naked in a clearing in the woods, stripped of all valuables.

Realistic Nightmare Loop. Any items or resources used in the nightmares remain spent, and any damage or condition attained in a nightmare remains real upon waking from a nightmare. The room descriptions for **Areas 3** and **4** detail these nightmare experiences. The nightmares occur in the order of **Area 4**, **Area 3**, and loop back to **Area 4** until Enou is satisfied or until the party uses the *Tune of Enou*, at which point the sequence progresses to **Area 2**.

Waking Up. During any encounter in **Areas 2**, **3** or **4**, the characters may question the reality they find themselves in. If a player voices doubts to that extent, roll a concealed **DC 15 Wisdom check** on their character's behalf. On a failed check nothing happens, but on a successful check the character "wakes up" and moves to the next dream in the sequence, vanishing without a trace. If another character witnesses this, they can try to use their action to wake up: In this instance, reduce the **DC** to awaken by 5, to a **DC 10 Wisdom check**, and grant the character **advantage** on that check. This check need not be rolled secretly and can be retried as often as a character wants. Each check should be made individually, so one or more characters may be left behind to deal with the current situation.

Tune of Enou. The strange magics trapping the party in the layered nightmares are partially based on the weird tune Enou is humming while serving the party food (see **Area 5**). A paranoid character who wishes to memorize the tune during dinner can do so with a **DC 19 Charisma (Performance) check**. Alternatively, the tune can be pieced together from the fragments in the nightmares in **Area 4** and **3**. A character who remembers the tune can whistle it as an action with a **DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check**. On a successful check, the character and all their allies who hear the tune wake up in the scenario outlined in **Area 2**, regardless of Enou's wishes.

1. Looks Like a Good Place to Me

Enou's is a beautiful one-story structure built on stilts over water. On a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check** small runes can be found on the pillars and along the bottom of the building. A second successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals them to be references to temporal and planar magic.

2. Entrance Hall/The Real Nightmare

Once Enou has stolen a valuable item or once the party has used the *Tune of Enou*, they wake up once more. The entire building is phasing in and out of existence around them! Enou is stooped over a bloody Theck in **Area 2**. The dream eater yells at them to run outside before it's too late (**Deception +8**). Theck's injuries are fake, which can be noticed with a **DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check**, or automatically if the party attempts to use **Wisdom (Medicine)** on Theck. If Enou is confronted, he reveals his true form and attacks. If any player rolls a natural 1 on any check or saving throw during the battle, the floor phases out of time and drops the player's character into the water below. Theck stays neutral unless he sees the party gaining the upper hand, in which case he may join them. If, at any time, no player character is inside the building, Enou's familiar tune resounds, and the inn disappears, shifting through space and time. If a character awakens during the nightmare in **Area 2**, they start off once more in **Area 4**'s nightmare.

3. Sleeping Quarters/ False Awakening

If the party awakens from the first nightmare outlined in **Area 4**, they find themselves in bed in **Area 3** again. Otherwise, the nightmare in **Area 4** seamlessly continues here. Before the party can gain their bearing, Enou is heard screaming from the entrance hall. A raging storm can be heard outside, and someone is pounding on the front door. Enou quickly relates a story of a former patron, now a **hungry ghost preta**, who died in a duel before enjoying a final meal. He begs the characters to go outside and vanquish the undead. Enou is an accomplished liar (**Deception +8**). The hungry ghost preta tries to use its *Hidden Illusionist* feature to gain surprise. While confronting the ghost, the howling winds carry fragments of the second half of the *Tune of Enou*. If a character announces that they are listening to the wind, they can make a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the fragments of the *Tune of Enou* carried on the wind. Once noticed by anyone, the fragments can be identified as parts of the tune with a **DC 16 Charisma (Performance) check**. If the party previously identified the sections of the tune in the nightmare in **Area 4**, reduce the to a **DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check**. If the party beats the preta, they awaken once more in their beds, and **Area 4**'s nightmare resumes.

4. Kitchen Nightmare

As the party falls into slumber in the beds in **Area 3**, loud crashes of crock ware shattering reach their ears—followed by screams! Any member looking out the door sees Theck backing out of the kitchen swinging a cast iron pan wildly. Colorful blobs are popping out of the sink's drain and forming themselves into four **gelatinous crabs** (as **gray oozes**). At the start of each round, 1d4 additional crabs emerge from the sink. There are 12 of them in total. When one is destroyed, it disperses into a mist and strange sounds as sections of the first half of the *Tune of Enou* emanate from it. Being only fragments, it takes a **DC 16 Charisma (Performance) check** to identify the sounds as parts of the tune. Only one check is required, and the party can automatically remember identified sounds if they choose to do so. The characters can escape by waking or by defeating all the oozes, at which point, the nightmare seamlessly continues as outlined in **Area 3**.

5. Food and Wine

Seated at a large solid wood table a sublime feast is served, including incredible wine and courteous service. All while Enou quietly hums a catchy tune. The party may be wary, but all attempts to look out for poison or deception notice nothing out of the ordinary afoot. At the end of the evening, the party is led back to their lodging in **Area 3**. If a character over-indulges, roll a secret **DC 13 Constitution check** for the character to avoid a level of exhaustion. Tell the player of a character who failed this check about their level of exhaustion when they awaken in the nightmare loop outlined in **Area 4**.



Treasure

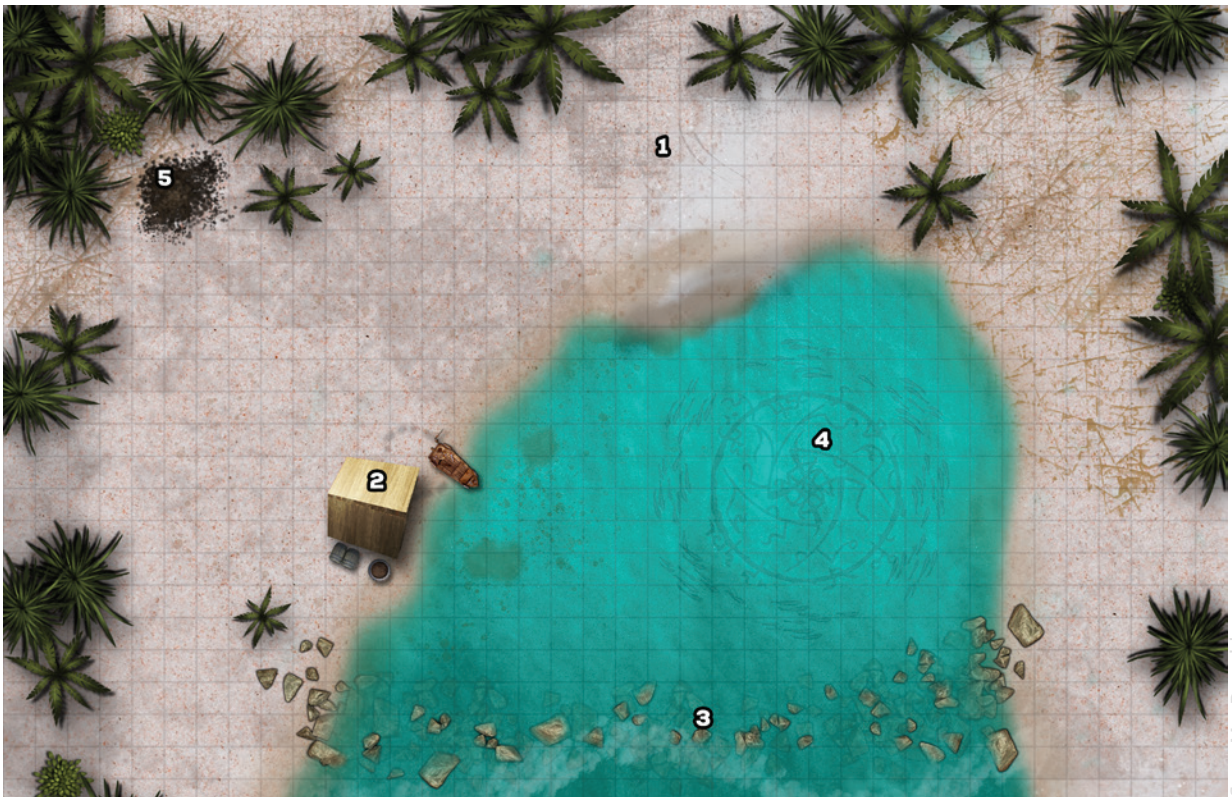
If the characters are successful in spoiling Enou's trap, Theck happily shows them Enou's spoils in various cabinets and false floorboards throughout the inn and asks if they might help him find home. In total the various treasures amount to: 2,384 gp, 764 sp, 657 cp, a *crystal ball of mind reading*, a *ring of warmth*, and a *helm of comprehending languages*.

Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 3-4

Coast



Sean MacDonald

Shallow Grave

Tony Ohrazda

Lord Cambrell hires the party to deliver a mysterious, hand-sized, case to allies in the Elemental Plane of Water. The aristocrat provides directions to an isolated beach where a married pair of Mother Sea clergy operate a gateway to the watery plane. Cambrell also provides the adventurers with a generous donation, a *cloak of the manta ray* to convince the clergy to open the portal.

1. The Beach

The heroes arrive at a desolate beach. Thick jungle surrounds the shore on three sides. A pool (**Area 4**), formed by a crusty breakwater lies between the heroes and the sea (**Area 3**). Perched on the west-edge of the pool is a modest driftwood dwelling (**Area 2**.).

The adventurers can hear faint sobbing from the shack (**Area 2**) with a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

2. Shrine to Mother Sea

Approaching the driftwood structure reveals polished salvage and scavenged timber woven together with nature magic. A curtain of cords adorned with colorful seashells serves as a doorway.

A **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices subtle runes formed in the woods' knots and tangles. Once seen, the symbols can be identified with a **DC 11 Intelligence (Religion) check** as typical for a shrine to Mother Sea – a benign water goddess.

Aground near the dwelling is a salvaged rowboat.

Adventurers can succeed at a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice a mound of upturned sand north of the shrine (**Area 5**).

When the party approaches the shack, they hear disconsolate sobs from inside. A red-faced, teary-eyed pastor **Dameteo** (**priest**) greets the heroes if they enter the shrine or call out.

Dameteo is grief-stricken but tends to the heroes' needs. The pastor provides hearty chowder, floral tea, and space to rest. If the party ask for more, Dameteo gestures towards a large shell that holds donations but does their best to help.

Interacting with Dameteo. If an adventurer interacts with Dameteo, they reveal the following:

The Portal. The portal is closed unless their new friend, **Shemeera**, a **mirager**, wants them to open it. Dameteo is the only person who can open the portal.

Shemeera. Shemeera is wonderful — Dameteo gushes when they talk about the beautiful creature. It appeared two nights ago and the two are now soulmates.

Heroes can succeed at a **DC 13 Charisma (Deception), Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** to learn that Shemeera stays along the northeast shore of the pool (**Area 4**). At night, Shemeera comes to the shrine and comforts Dameteo.

Dameteo's Grief. Last night, Dameteo's partner, **Hasar**, drowned in the pool (**Area 4**). Dameteo buried Hasar along the northwest edge of the beach this morning.

With roleplaying or a **DC 13 Charisma (Deception), (Intimidation)** or **(Persuasion) check** the party can learn the following:

Hasar went to the pool to talk to Shemeera. Shemeera saw a wave breach the breakwater and force Hasar into the pool. Dameteo's new friend tried to save Hasar but cannot swim. Shemeera watched Hasar drown — unable to help.

Unless provoked Dameteo stays in the shrine and grieves Hasar's passing.

Rowboat. The rowboat can hold two Medium creatures. Inside are two oars and six javelins. One javelin is remarkably crafted and is a *javelin of lightning*.

A hero can spend their movement to row the boat their land speed without a check due to the breakwater's relatively calm waters.

3. Breakwater

This razor-sharp ridge protects the beach from the raging sea. It also provides habitat for a voracious colony of giant crabs!

Moving across the breakwater is arduous — it is difficult terrain. Once an adventurer moves to the middle, 4d4 **giant crabs** scuttle from the reef and prepare to attack.

If a hero searches the breakwater, a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** uncovers a barnacle-crusted *pearl of power*.

4. The Pool

This cove is placid compared to the tumultuous sea crashing against the breakwater. Its water is clear revealing a steep-sided pool. A huge rune is visible 30 feet below. Not a gain of sand mars its surface, as if the symbol repulses the grit.

Adventurers can succeed at a **DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana), Intelligence (Nature)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check**, to sense that the portal is not open.

Northeast Shore. A **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discovers deep marks clawed into the sand on the northeastern shore of the pool. Someone desperate to climb out of the water made these gouges. The grooves intersect with several small mounds of sand and then stop.

Shemeera. If the party investigates the northeast shore, **Shemeera**, a **mirager** ◆, steps from the jungle. The fey also approaches the party if the adventurers stay here for five minutes. The fey uses *Shapechanger* to appear as a creature attractive to most of the party. For example, if the majority of the party is human, they will appear as human.

Tactics. Shemeera attempts to charm heroes using *Enthralling Mirage* so she can use *Thirst Kiss*. Shemeera uses *Captivating Dance* on those unaffected by their mirage.

Aftermath. If the adventurers defeat Shemeera, elder fey spirits of the sea manifest **Hasar's** jealous wrath; **Dameteo** chose the mirager over their lover. The archfey imbue **Hasar** with corrupt lifeforce and a thirst for revenge. **Hasar** rises as a **drowned maiden** ◆. Consult **Area 5**.

Hasar neither knows, nor cares, that Sheemera beguiled **Dameteo**.

One round after defeating Shemeera, the party hears **Dameteo** scream from **Area 2**.

5. Shallow Grave

If the party arrives here before defeating **Shemeera** in **Area 4**, **Hasar's** grave is undisturbed.

An oblong mound of sandy dirt poorly covers a pale and rigor-frozen humanoid. The thin cover reveals one blue-clouded eye fixed forward. The effort to dig this grave was minimal and haphazard at best. It is somewhat surprising that predators haven't already moved in.

Hasar, a **drowned maiden** ◆, rises from the shallow grave the round after the adventurers defeat Shemeera. The undead then moves and uses a Dash action to burst into the shrine (**Area 2**).

Hasar's goal is to drown **Dameteo**. If **Dameteo** dies, the party cannot complete their job.

The undead focuses on her revenge. Hasar attempts to grapple **Dameteo** with a *Hair* attack, then moves 15 feet towards the pool (**Area 4**), dragging Dameteo with them.

Hasar drags **Dameteo** on subsequent turns, moving to the bottom-center of the pool. The undead requires two rounds to reach the bottom of the pool, pulling a frantic Dameteo along, who drowns and dies after three rounds underwater.

Underwater Combat. If adventurers fight Hasar while the creature is underwater, consult the rules for Underwater Combat.



Dameteo Drowns. Once Dameteo is dead, a **DC 14 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces **Hasar** to relinquish undeath and pass on to the afterlife peacefully. Intimidation does not work on the undead.

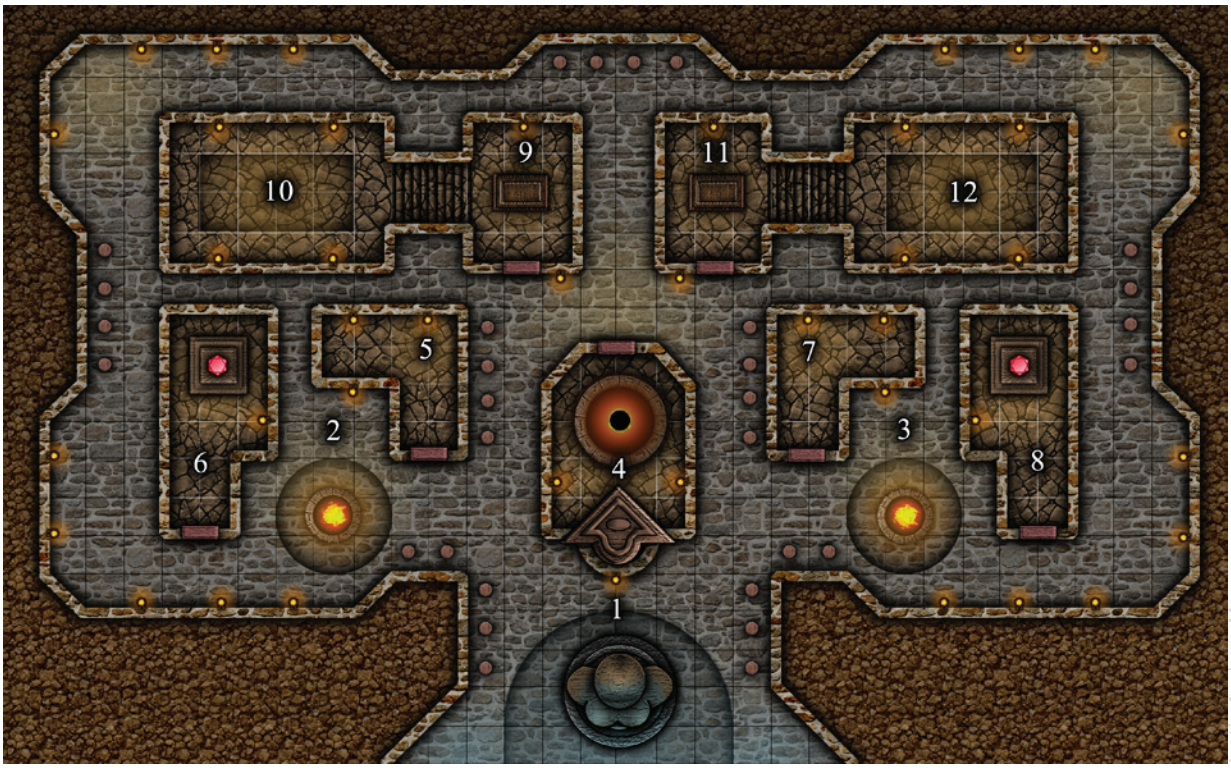
Dameteo Lives. If the party defeats both **Shemeera** and **Hasar**, and **Dameteo** lives, the pastor is gracious. Pain and sorrow are heavily etched on **Dameteo's** face, but they refuse any payment and open the portal. The party completes the job and Lord Cambrell pays them accordingly.

Mates Laurentiu

4
Characters

Level
4

Grassland



Justin Andrew Mason

In Burgha's Sanctum

Brian Suskind

The adventurers arrive at the Sanctum of Lady Burgha, patron saint of retired adventurers, to make use of its celebrated resurrection pool. However, a week ago, an **aridni** ◆ named **Finch Brushwood** took over the sanctum with a troop of extraplanar fey creatures, slaying the usual caretakers. Most of the fey regard the "invasion" as a humorous lark, but Finch slowly leeches the power of the resurrection pool into a gem to present to the Fey Queen.

GM Note. Due to their extraplanar nature, the fey in this adventure are instantly banished back to their home plane when reduced to 0 hit points. The fey are bold and extra mischievous knowing they cannot actually die.

Inside the Sanctum

Each time the adventurers leave a room there is a 40% chance of encountering a patrol.

Western Patrols. The winter fey dominate the western side (**Areas 2, 5, 6, 9, 10**) of the sanctum. The area is cold and full of drifting shadows, no matter how many lamps or torches are brought to bear. Several patrols consisting of two **vile barbers** ◆ are on the prowl.

Eastern Patrols. The summer fey play on the eastern side (**Areas 3, 7, 8, 11, 12**) of the sanctum. The area is warm and lanterns seem unnaturally bright. Several patrols, consisting of four **pixies**, flit around.

1. Statue of Saint Burgha, Grandmother of the Bespiked Rosary

A statue of a cross looking old female adventurer. **Finch** (**aridni** ◆) can be spotted with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check**. If the pool in **Area 4** is used, he emerges and attack anyone leaving the sanctum.

Treasure. Finch's gem is a *gem of seeing*.

2. Western Fire Cauldron

Four **rum gremlins** ◆ stand around the cold fire burning in this ceremonial brass cauldron passing a bottle of booze between them. When they detect the adventurers, the gremlins move to harass the newcomers. They also investigate any sounds of disturbances from **Area 3**.

3. Eastern Fire Cauldron

Four **pixies** dance and sing around the cheery fire burning in this ceremonial brass cauldron. They throw scrolls and books into the blaze with great delight. When they detect the adventurers, the pixies use their *greater invisibility* and move to harass the newcomers. They also investigate any sounds of disturbances from **Area 2**.

4. Pool of Resurrection

A magically sealed door with no obvious handles, locks or mechanisms prevents entry to the pool chamber.

A plaque on the door reads: "*To receive Burgha's gift, one must first walk in her boots*". An inscribed map of the sanctum marks the various rooms by their descriptive names (as indicated below). A **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that to open the door, the adventurers must experience visions of the events of Burgha's life and pull all levers in the rooms of the sanctum.

Inside, only a shallow puddle remains in a deep basin, the rest has already been siphoned off by Finch. Enough liquid is left to bring back one dead creature (or more if the GM desires) as per the *resurrection* spell.

5. Vestibule of Cutting Insights

A plaque bearing the name of this room rests on the wall just inside the door, along with a large metal lever. A creature who pulls the lever and then steps around the corner experiences the following vision.

Vision. *A stern, pinched-face old adventuress looks you over and delivers a stream of biting insults.*

The character must make a **DC 12 Wisdom saving throw** becoming poisoned for 1 hour on a failed save.

6. Shrine to Harder Times

A plaque on the door bears the name of this room. Inside is a red glowing stone. Placing a hand on the stone triggers a vision.

Vision. *You trudge uphill in the snow toward a small schoolhouse, but sharp spiked wires are wrapped around your feet.*

The character must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** or suffer one level of exhaustion.

7. Vestibule of Righteous Accolades

A plaque bearing the name of this room rests on the wall just inside the door, along with a large metal lever. A creature who pulls the lever and then steps around the corner experiences the following vision.

Vision. *You stand before a mighty queen as she puts a medal around your neck. The award shines in the light of the sun.*

The character must make a **DC 12 Charisma saving throw** or be blinded for 1 hour on a failed save.

8. Shrine to What Doesn't Kill You

A plaque on the door bears the name of this room. Inside is a red glowing stone. Placing a hand on the stone triggers a vision.

Vision. *In a rough camp surrounded by other adventurers, you lift a ladle full of some noxious stew from a cookpot and hesitantly taste it.*

The character must make a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw** or become poisoned for 1 hour on a failed save.

9. Testing Chamber of the Blade and Bow

A plaque on the door bears the name of this room. Inside is a small stone altar with a lever rising from it. Pulling the lever summons a creature into **Area 10**.

10. Summoning Pool

Pulling the lever in **Area 9** summons a **red dragon wyrmling**. The creature will not leave the chamber. The room resets if everyone leaves.

11. Testing Chamber of Spell and Wand

A plaque on the door bears the name of this room. Inside is a small stone altar with a lever rising from it. Pulling the lever summons a creature into **Area 12**.

12. Summoning Pool

Pulling the lever in **Area 11** summons a **battle mage**. The creature will not leave the chamber. The room resets if everyone leaves.

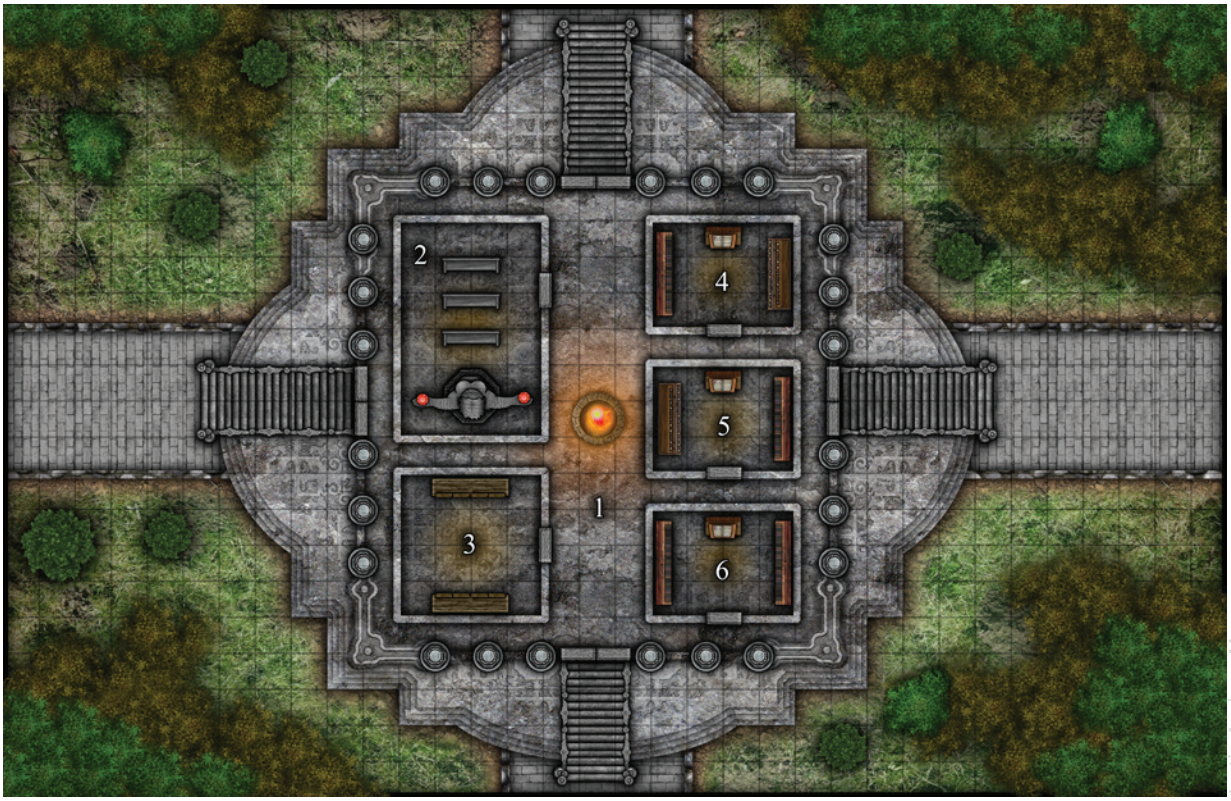


Mates Laurentiu

4
Characters

Level
4

Forest



Justin Andrew Mason

Defenders of the Quiet Sky

Claire Stricklin

Quiet Sky Hermitage has ever been a place of peaceful contemplation. Generations of druids have relied upon the solitude and isolation of the hermitage to complete their studies, letting the subtle voice of land and sky inspire their works. But now there is another voice whispering within the forest. It arrived along with a meteor storm late in the season, and it has infected the mind of one overeager acolyte. If the heroes cannot uncover this creature and counter its baleful influence, all the world may be covered in the spores of a very invasive species.

Background

The elven acolyte Brylee Triswenys came to Quiet Sky chasing stars, hoping to divine the nature of the meteors that fell in these hills late in the summer. She got more answers than she'd bargained for, as the thing that had fallen to earth slowly infected her mind. It promised Brylee that she would help to spread life to other worlds, never mentioning what exactly that might entail. For the creature was a **mi-go**, and its desire was only for conquest. Months have passed, and with Brylee's help the mi-go's spores have penetrated hundreds of square miles of forest. Now the local plant life, driven to an insane fury, is massing about the hermitage. Looking to buy time, Brylee has sent for sellswords, begging her order to defend the hermitage until her "research project" can come to fruition.

Defending the Hermitage

Defenders of the Quiet Sky is a tower defense adventure. Plant creatures infected by mi-go spores attack the hermitage over the course of a night and a day, acting as a sort of autoimmune defense for the forest. Surviving this onslaught will take ingenuity, careful resource management, and defensive engineering skills.

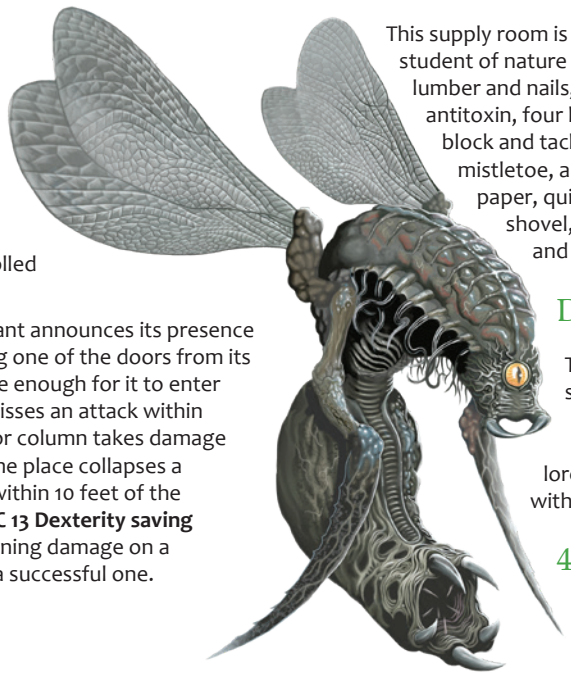
- *The Forest*: This old-growth forest provides attackers with a defensive advantage. One square of forest provides partial cover, two squares provides three-quarters cover, and any additional wooded squares provide total cover.

- *The Hermitage*: The stairs all rise 10 feet above the forest floor. Doors have no locks, but can be held by **opposed Strength checks**. The windowless walls of the hermitage offer another 20 feet of elevation, but provide poor footing. Each round spent atop the steep roof requires a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to keep from falling off.

- *Night and Day*: The attacks do not come one after another, but hammer into the hermitage over the course of a night. The first and fourth waves arrive at dawn and dusk, offering dim lighting conditions. The second and third waves occur in the darkness of night. Allow at least one hour between waves.

Attack Waves

1. Two **awakened trees** — The trees creep as close as they can to the hermitage. When they are slain, they topple onto the hermitage, knocking a 10 feet gap in any walls or defenses.
2. Two **children of the briar** ◆ and six **violet fungi** — The malicious children harass the defenders with their ranged attacks from darkness, trying to lure them into range of their violet fungus bodyguards. If the defenders simply hunker down and wait, the children use their *Entangle* ability to "grow" the violet fungus beneath the doors of the hermitage.
3. Two **shadow blights** ⬢ and eight awakened shrubs — The shrubs attack from all sides while the shadow blights hang back in darkness. If the shrubs are slain, the shadow blights take a short rest before trying again with a new batch of **awakened shrub** troops. A **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals that the shrubs are being commanded and controlled by nearby puppet masters.
4. **Weeping treant** ◆ — The treant announces its presence with a flung boulder, smashing one of the doors from its hinges and making a hole large enough for it to enter the hermitage. Whenever it misses an attack within the hermitage, a nearby wall or column takes damage instead. Two strikes in the same place collapses a wall or column. All creatures within 10 feet of the collapse must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or no damage on a successful one.



1. Everburning Flame

The everburning flame at the heart of the temple is mostly used for cooking and light. Fortunately for the defenders, it also functions as a *produce flame* spell, allowing anyone standing beside the flame to cast the spell without expending a spell slot.

2. The Chapel

Brylee waits in this small temple. She is anchored to the spot by creeping vines, and explains truthfully that she has undertaken a ritual to find the source of the forest's distress. Removing her now would kill her (and worse, ruin her research!). Brylee maintains that one of her predecessors at the hermitage must have done something to anger the locals. She honestly believes that the mi-go means well, and cannot conceive that her "friend from beyond the stars" is responsible for all this violence.

The **mi-go** ◆ nests in the crown atop the head of the earth goddess statue, whispering its empty promises to Brylee. Over the course of the adventure, the spore-scarred and enraged plant creatures attempt to enter this chamber, intent on finding and destroying the mi-go. As the party fights the final wave, the mi-go takes the opportunity to stuff Brylee's brain into a cylinder, preparing to return to its people with a "willing informant." If the party can stop this monster before it escapes, they can loot an odd array of wires and fine circuitry from the thing's misshapen head: a technological earpiece that functions as both a *helm of comprehending languages* and a *helm of telepathy*.

3. Store Room

This supply room is well-stocked, containing all the gear an isolated student of nature might need. Supplies include the following: lumber and nails, two large sacks of fertilizer, two vials of antitoxin, four barrels (one full of fresh water), a basket, block and tackle, a bucket, 20 candles, a dozen sprigs of mistletoe, a hatchet, one herbalism kit, a ladder (20 ft.), paper, quill, ink, 100 feet of hempen rope, six sacks, a shovel, a signal whistle, 10 torches, an iron cookpot, and a month's worth of vegetarian rations.

Druids' Cells

These rooms (**Areas 4–6**) are small libraries suited to the study of specific druidic interests: botany, meteorology, and astronomy respectively. Checks to recall lore about the associated subject are made with **advantage** in the corresponding room.

4. Botany

Amidst the various samples of spores, molds, and fungus, one of the temple's previous occupants has collected five **shrieker** sprouts under bell jars. A **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** also reveals mi-go spores. They are unidentifiable, but betray bizarre and alien morphology. Plant creatures exposed to the spores must succeed on a **DC 16 Constitution saving throw**, or be affected as if by *confusion*. There are enough spores for two uses.

5. Meteorology

Water samples, dousing rods, and a complex weathervane made from living ivy decorate this chamber. A **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals a list of airborne diseases written in Brylee's hand, each carefully crossed out.

6. Astronomy

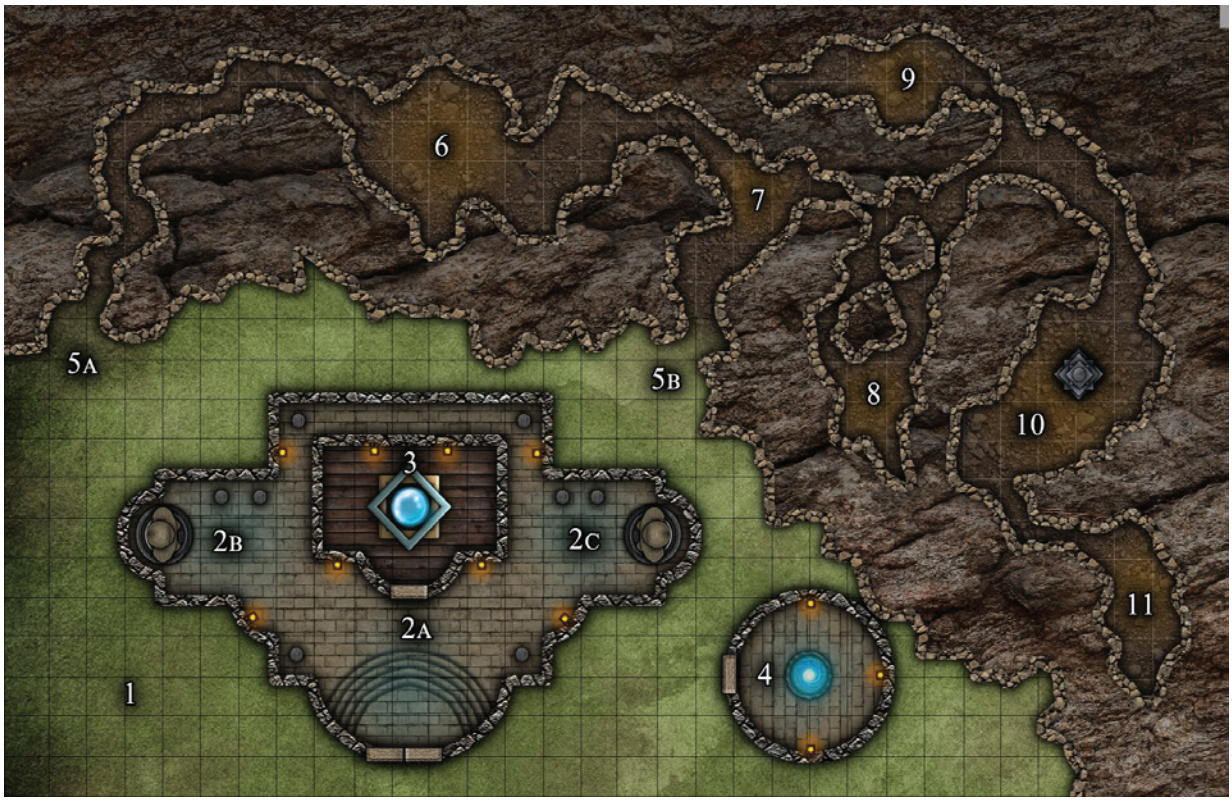
The most lived-in chamber of the three, this cell is a showcase of Brylee's interests. Star charts, a small orrery, and notes from her hunt for meteor craters litter the shelves. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** shows that the final pages of Brylee's notes have been carefully torn from their binding.

Quico Vicens

4-6 Characters

Level 4

Mountain



Justin Andrew Mason

Bloody Jenny's Gambit

Thilo Graf, Brian Suskind

Perfectly normal people have begun acting strangely, and several upstanding citizens have been caught red-handed by law officials.

The mysterious crime spree can be linked to a nascent, oracular cult called the Red Blades; the perpetrators share in common that they recently completed the pilgrimage to a remote temple and consulted the reclusive and well-respected oracle, Morjiana Tythia.

Unbeknownst to the adventurers, or even the oracle, the temple fell months ago to Bloody Jenny Baba, a night hag, and her cabal of servants. Using a magical crystal to observe the oracle's visitors and servants, the doppelgangers among Jenny's minions assume their forms and murder these unfortunate victims. The adventure begins when the heroes approach the isolated temple.

GM Note. Everyone except **Vella** (**Area 2a**), the **supplicants** (**Area 2b** and **Area 2c**), and **Morjiana** (**Area 3**) are Red Blades.

1. Mountain Courtyard

A golden-domed temple all but abuts a high cliffside behind it. To one side is a squat, utilitarian tower. Semi-permanent tents, pastures, and gardens cater to temple visitors.

Disguised Killers. Six monks do chores in the area and keep watch. Five are **Red Blades** (scouts) disguised as monks; they are led by **Brother Moss** (spy), who directs new arrivals toward the temple. They deny any knowledge of cult activities, and it takes a **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check** to notice something is off about them due to Moss's plausible cover.

2. Temple of the Awakened

Inside the calm and serene temple, a large cella (inner chamber) rests below the golden dome. Two wings to either side hold towering statues (**Area 2b** and **Area 2c**).

2A. Doorwarden

An imposing looking female warrior guards the door to the cella, holding a massive maul with both hands.

Vella the Doorwarden (wereboar) guards the inner chamber, ensuring all who wish to enter pay the steep fee (100 gp per person). Visitors may only enter one at a time to consult the oracle. Vella is the sole servant of the oracle not yet replaced or recruited by the cult. She does not care about anything other than protecting Morjiana. Her servitude to the oracle grants this feature:

Flashes of Foresight. As a reaction to being targeted by a melee or ranged attack, Vella can choose to impose **disadvantage** on the attack that triggered the reaction.

Development. If Morjiana dies suddenly from anything but old age, Vella becomes mad with grief and rampages, attacking anyone on sight.

2b. Whispering Lady

A towering statue of a veiled goddess holding a large book. Three **supplicants** (**commoners**) pray before the statue, guided in prayer by the baritone of a **robed priest** (**berserker**).

2c. Gloaming Lord

A towering statue of a hooded man holding a black hourglass. Two **supplicants** (**commoners**) pray before the statue. A bloody-backed **flagellant** (**cult fanatic**) loiters nearby.

3. The Oracle

Morjiana Tythia (very elderly **archmage**) reclines on a long divan beside a glowing, 5-foot-diameter crystal sphere. She tells a supplicant's future via *divination*, *commune* and other divination spells. It is well-known that the oracle is nearly deaf, but she slurs her words and drifts in and out of consciousness mid-sentence.

Oracle's State. Morjiana is addled by the spiked "medicine" she imbibes to soothe her aching limbs, conveniently provided by the disguised Red Blades. A respectful inquiry accompanied by a **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check** can convince her to let the party take a closer look at the medicine. With a **DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check**, the heroes can determine that the medicine has been tampered with and renders her more susceptible to dream-based magics and subtle enchantments. If alerted to this, she immediately calls for Vella (**Area 2a**), and asks the party to defend her, while she sleeps it off.

Treacherous Crystal. The crystal sphere links to a scrying pool inside **Area 4**, allowing a doppelganger there to observe and imitate supplicants. A *detect magic* spell accompanied by a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** notices that the crystal has been "tapped".

Guarding the Resting Oracle. If Morjiana stops taking the medicine, the doppelganger knows, and thus, so does Bloody Jenny: She uses her *Nightmare Haunting* on Morjiana, who begins to toss and turn for 10 minutes, unable to wake up. A *magic circle* or *protection from evil and good* spell saves Morjiana. Alternatively, a **DC 15 Intelligence check** using alchemist's supplies can create impromptu smelling salts that wake the oracle in time. If she is not awoken, the haunting proves too much for the heart of the ancient oracle.

4. Storage Tower

A squat tower to one side of the temple once held various supplies but now only contains a shimmering blue scrying pool linked to the crystal in **Area 3**.

Disguised Red Blades. Two **monks** (**guards**) stand outside the door while a **doppelganger** gazes into the scrying pool, waiting to imitate a supplicant. If captured alive and questioned, the doppelganger exchanges information about Bloody Jenny and the Red Blades for its own life.

5a/5b. Arched Entrances

Archways carved with arcane glyphs lead into the cliffside. Centermost on each arch is a phrase in Common,

5a Arch. *"Praise that which lives with light but dies if light shines upon it."* ***Answer.*** Shadow

5b Arch. *"Praise that which you have when you do not share it, and lose if you do."* ***Answer.*** Secret.

Speaking the correct answer allows the speaker to pass unharmed. Otherwise, a *glyph of warding* (*explosive runes*, **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** or 22 (5d8) lightning damage, half as much on a successful one) centered on the arch triggers.

6. False Tomb

A marble tomb is embedded into the northern wall. Waiting in ambush within is a **barbed devil** enslaved by Bloody Jenny. Opening the tomb requires a **DC 12 Strength check**.

7. Concealed Tunnel

Noticing the hidden tunnel to the east requires a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

8. Poor Rodrick

The body of the last hero to challenge Bloody Jenny rests lies here. The corpse bears hideous wounds and rises as a **mummy** when the heroes approach. A *+1 greatsword* is strapped to the corpse's back.

9. Barracks

This makeshift barracks holds five **Red Blades** (**guards**). If combat breaks out in **Area 10**, they arrive to aid Bloody Jenny at the end of the second round.

10. Lair of Bloody Jenny

The center of the cavern holds a hideous altar to elder demons. Body parts in various states of decomposition dangle from the ceiling. A **female halfling** (**commoner**) dressed in rags is chained to the altar, weeping quietly.

"Willa" (Disguised Jenny). The halfling is the polymorphed **Bloody Jenny** (**night hag**). She says her name is Willa and begs the party to free her. A **DC 19 Wisdom (Insight) check** notices that something is off with her.

Jenny's body leans against a glyph she can trigger as a bonus action. Everyone except her within 10 feet of the altar must succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** or suffer the effects of *bestow curse* (**disadvantage** on attacks). Jenny then reverts to hag form and attacks.

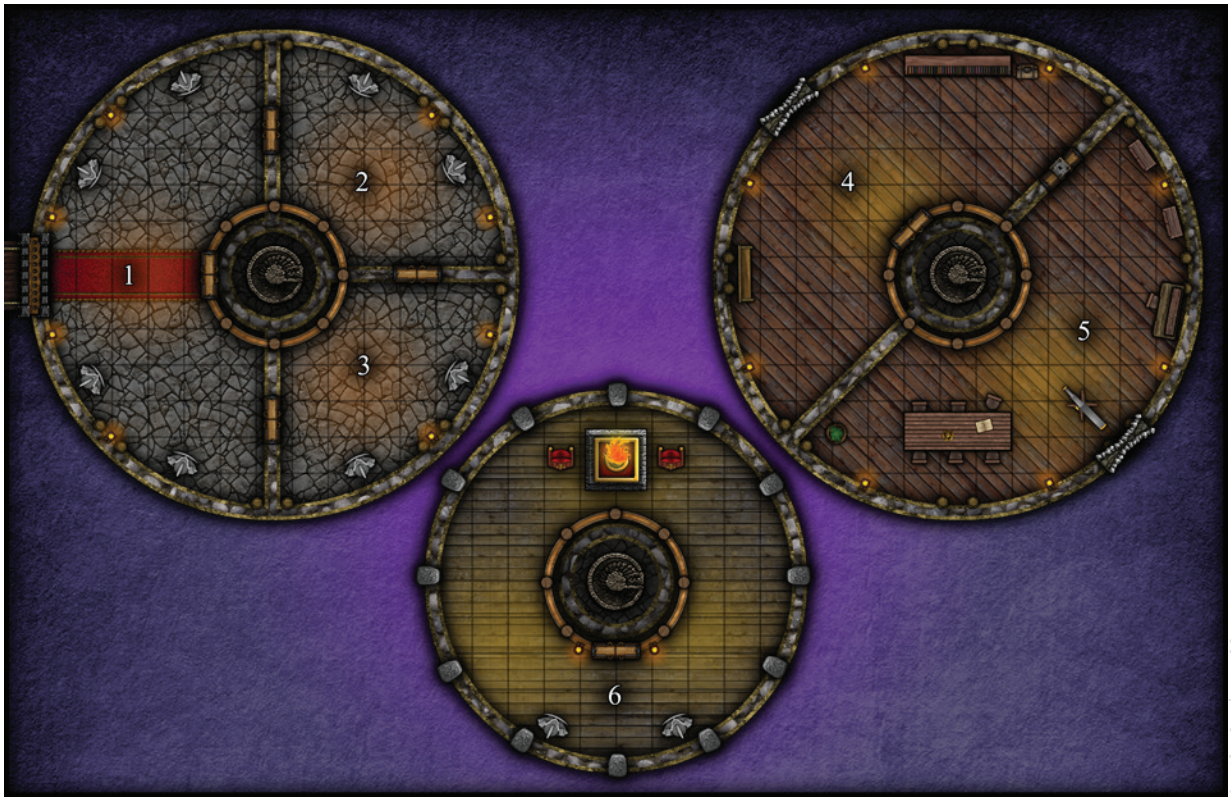
11. Jenny's Treasury

In this side cavern, Jenny stores her hoard. This includes 1,321 cp, 451 sp, 221 gp, a gold ring set with opals (250gp), a *bag of holding*, *potion of superior healing*, *immovable rod* and a *+1 wand of the war mage*.

4-6 Characters

Level 4

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

Tower of Fear and Flame

Thilo Graf, Robert W. Thomson

Solitude breeds eccentricity, so nobody batted an eye when the local artificer-wizard Felicitrus started asking everyone he met about their fears, nor did anyone question his increasingly hostile and paranoid inquiries into the veracity of the replies. The locals became concerned when he started talking to the flames in the tavern's hearth during his weekly binge. This weird behavior culminated last month, when the wizard suddenly jumped up from his seat next to the tavern's fireplace and ran to his tower, a rictus of absolute terror distorting his face. The doors slammed shut behind him. No one has heard from the wizard since.

Outside the Tower

The outside of the three-story tower is smooth and offers no handholds for prospective burglars. It is also enchanted to repair any damage done to it.

Main Gate. The massive, iron-bound door to the tower leads into the entry chamber. The door is locked but can be opened with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools or smashed with a **DC 20 Strength check**. An opened lock closes again after half an hour has elapsed, and a smashed door is regenerated after one hour has passed.

Climbing the Tower. Climbing the tower without a climber's kit is impossible, and upon using the first piton, the tower immediately begins repairing damage caused to it. It takes a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** to scale the tower before its self-repairing properties eject the pitons from the wall. The first floor (**Areas 4** and **5**) sports windows that can be easily smashed, but doing so alerts the guardians in **Areas 2** and **3**. Additionally, the shards of glass cover the entire room and constantly twitch, semi-animated by the tower's self-repairing properties.

Twitching Glass. Any non-construct creature that enters the area must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** or stop moving and take 2 (1d4) slashing damage. Until the creature regains all hit points thus lost, its walking speed is reduced by 10 feet. A creature moving at half speed doesn't need to make the save. If a creature falls prone in twitching glass, it takes 10 (4d4) slashing damage.

1. Entry Chamber

Torches in sconces along the wall all light automatically with *continual flames*. Four sets of plate mail stand at attention against the wall, a torch between each set. Under each sconce, a longsword is mounted on a plaque on the wall on each side.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that the armors are **animated armors**, and the swords are **flying swords**. They attack if a character moves beyond the point where the numeral **1** is on the map.

The center door leads to the hollow central pillar of the tower housing a spiral staircase leading up.

2. Anteroom One

Two torches glow along the curving outer wall, and suits of armor face a tapestry depicting an abstract pattern of red and black. The armors are purely decorative but the **tapestry** (**rug of smothering**) attacks any passing the point indicated by the numeral **2**. It takes a **DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check** to identify the tapestry prior to attack. The tapestry has:

Scintillating Pattern. As a bonus action, the tapestry can make its pattern scintillate. All creatures that can see it must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or become charmed by the tapestry. While charmed thus, a creature becomes incapacitated and has a speed of 0. A creature can repeat the save at the start of its turn. The *Smother* attack breaks the charm for its target only.

3. Anteroom Two

This area is identical to **Area 2**, except the tapestry is blue and white—and harmless. The suits of armor are not. They are **animated armors**, and their swords blaze with the fire cosmic once drawn. They have:

Burning Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, and the target takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Autonomy. As a bonus action on its turn, or as a reaction to being reduced to 0 hit points, an animated armor can let go of its blade, which animates as a regular **flying sword** (without the fire damage).

An animated armor without a blade reverts to using *Slam* attacks. Defeated swords become mundane once more.

4. Library

The central spiral staircase continues upward but a door opens into the wizard's library illuminated by a large window with clear glass. Four bright torches light the room at night. To the north is a 7-foot-high bookcase contains all manner of esoteric research, and an empty bookstand, stained slightly red, is right next to it. The stain is red wine, a hint for **Area 5**. The research books consist of four general types: nature, religion, history, and medicine.

Researcher's Bookstand. If a character places a book on the bookstand and opens it, they have **advantage** on the next skill check of the book's type, provided it is made within 1 hour of opening the book.

5. Laboratory

The laboratory is in good condition, if dirty from years of not being properly cleaned. Just past the door are two shelving units with glass doors; a desk and chair are adjacent to it, sitting below another glass-paned window with a large telescope pointing to it. A large table flanked by six chairs holds a golden goblet and the wizard's astrological charts, promising an obscure and ill-defined doom for all. A large clay pot hosts a small tree growing from it. Curiously, the tree is green and looks healthy.

Each glass case holds numerous vials and clay jars, holding two pouches worth of spell components.

Goblet of Fear. A nameless fear has etched itself into this red-wine-stained goblet. If the goblet is touched, all creatures within a 20-foot-radius sphere of it must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**, or become cursed with fear of the sky, treating the sky, windows showing it, etc. as source of a permanent frightened condition. Placing the goblet on the bookstand in **Area 4** breaks this curse. The goblet is worth 25 gp.

6. Wizard's Sanctum

Two torches are along the interior wall, on opposing sides of the door that exits the stairwell. Opposite each lit torch is a suit of armor standing at attention, holding unsheathed swords. The swords are **flying swords** that deal an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage on a successful hit.

Two throne-like empire chairs flank a brass brazier with a roaring flame. In the left-hand chair sits a distorted apparition of a warrior clad in studded leather, a longsword across his lap, a wooden shield at his side. The warrior attacks any who dare intrude, and behaves as a **wraith**, but replaces *Create Specter* with *Call the Hound*, and the warrior does not have *Incorporeal Movement* and *Sunlight* Sensitivity, but gains *Charged Blade*. The warrior's *Life Drain* attack uses the sword and deals fire damage instead of necrotic damage.

Call the Hound. The warrior can summon a **hell hound** from the brazier's flames as a bonus action. The warrior can have no more than one hell hound summoned thus at any given time.

Charged Blade. As a reaction to being hit by a ranged or melee attack, the warrior can charge one blade (including the flying swords) it can see with fire. The affected blade deals an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage on a successful hit. Charging a new blade ends the effect on the old one.

After the warrior is defeated, his sword and shield fall to the ground. Felicitrus is nowhere to be found...

Sword of Flame & Shield of Fear

Weapon (longsword), Armor (shield), rare (require attunement to entire set)

You only get the benefits of these items if you attune both.

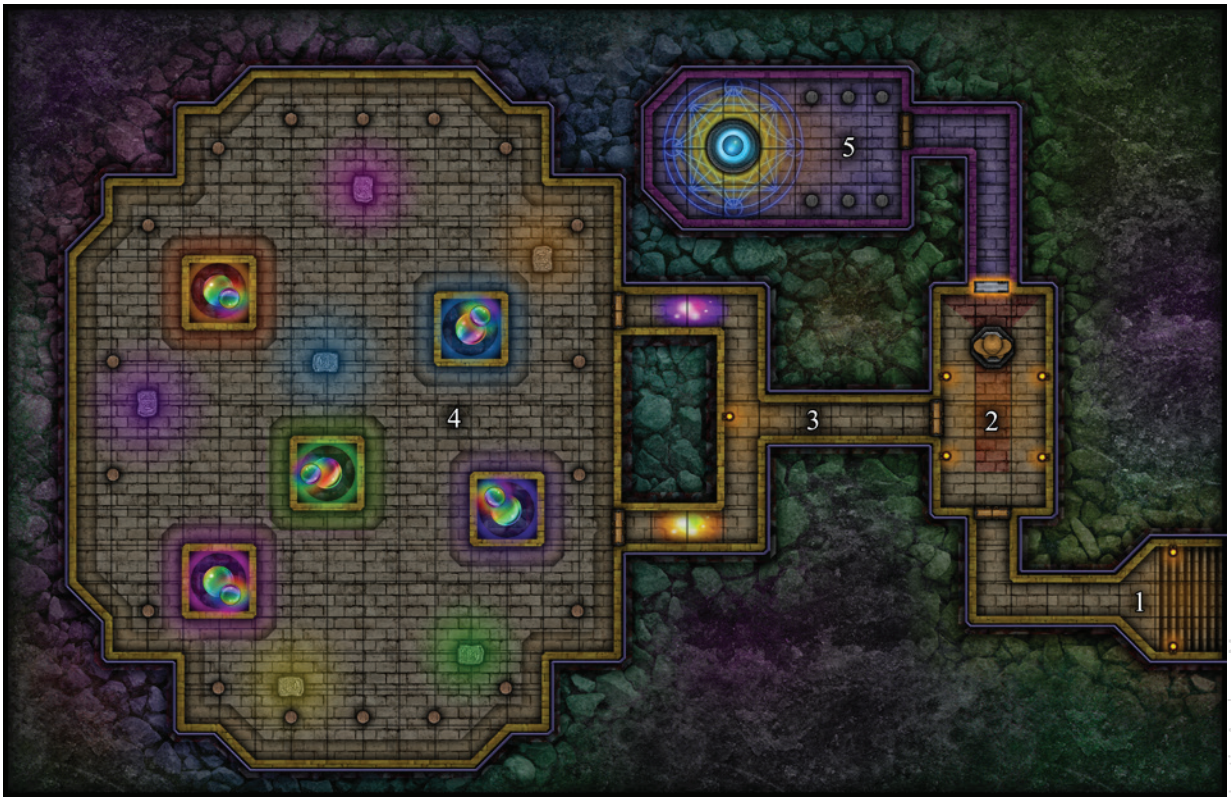
Sword of Flame. You can use a bonus action to speak the sword's command word to cause it to turn into cosmic fire, shedding bright light in a 40-foot radius, and dim light for another 40 feet. While it is made of cosmic fire, it changes its weapon damage to 2d6 fire damage. The flames last until you speak the command word as a bonus action. Alternatively, you can hit the blade on the shield as a bonus action, causing the flame to erupt in a 5-foot-radius sphere centered on you, dealing 2d6 fire damage to all targets in the area. This reverts the blade to metal. If you do, you can't ignite the blade again until the next dusk.

Shield of Fear. When holding this shield, you have advantage on all saving throws against effects that cause the frightened condition. However, if you ever roll two 1s on such a saving throw, you remain frightened for 24 hours. The shield has a +1 bonus in addition to its normal bonus to AC.

5 Characters

Level 4

Planar



Justin Andrew Mason

Hulk of Horrors

William Fischer

On their way to another adventure, the heroes chance upon a serpentfolk war hulk adrift on the Astral Sea. Characters who make a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (History) check** recall that such hulks are powered by phylactery drives: engines that harness the essence of a disembodied lich to propel the hulk across the multiverse. Discovering a hulk that has been abandoned—as this one appears to be—is either a stroke of incredible luck or a sign of ill fortune.

Unbeknownst to the party, this war hulk's phylactery drive contains not just any lich, but a legendary sorcerer king of old. Recently, the lich discovered a way to wrest control of the hulk from his captors. The lich awaits a band of unwitting adventurers to release him from his prison.

1. Approach

You can play out the party's exploration of the war hulk by rolling on the Random Encounter table, or simply describe a few of the scenes as an introduction to the adventure. In either case, eventually the party discovers a flight of magically illuminated steps that descend into the war hulk's core.

1d6	Random Encounter
1	A display screen flashes the image of a green devil face.
2	A communication orb contains an unsent emergency missive describing the lich's takeover of the hulk. A soul-drained serpentfolk officer lies nearby.
3	A cargo hatch opens beneath the party. Each character must make a successful **DC 20 Dexterity saving throw** or plummet 40 feet into the hold, taking 14 (4d6) falling damage
4	A door behind the characters slams shut as the air inside the chamber is ejected into the Astral Sea. Forcing open the door requires a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check**.
5	A **serpentfolk** **wight** is pinned between beneath a sliding door. A successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check** raises the door but also releases the wight.
6	A trail of glowing runes briefly illuminates the party's path forward, then vanishes.

2. Hard-Light Gargoyle

A four-armed gargoyle perches atop a plinth in the north half of the chamber. Each of the gargoyle's hands are cupped as if to accept a gift. A door behind the gargoyle crackles with electricity.

Characters who make a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** notice the gargoyle's outline glows. In fact, the gargoyle is a hard-light projection created by the plinth on which it sits. A display screen on the plinth reads:

View the way to my master and your doom.
Only the brave or foolish pass.
I need suns plucked from strange and
Distant skies to clear your path.

The first letter of each line is highlighted, spelling the word "VOID." The "suns" in the riddle refer to the navigation spheres found in **Area 4**. If the characters set four of the spheres to "VOID" and place them in the gargoyle's hands, the electric field surrounding the north door deactivates. A creature that passes through the door without deactivating the field takes 33 (6d10) lightning damage, or half as much damage with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**.

If the PCs damage the **gargoyle**, door, or plinth, the hard-light gargoyle animates and attacks. Treat it as a standard gargoyle, except that it is **immune** to all damage except force and radiant damage. Whenever the gargoyle uses *Multiattack*, it makes one *Bite* and four *Claw* attacks.

Casting *darkness* on the plinth or covering it with something like a bedroll causes the gargoyle to disappear until the obstruction is removed. Destroying the plinth (**AC** 12, 20 hp, **immune** to poison and psychic damage) also destroys the gargoyle. If the gargoyle is reduced to 0 hit points, it reforms atop the plinth after 1 minute unless the plinth is also destroyed.

3. Security Motes

Clouds of security motes fill both branches of this corridor. The motes can't be damaged, but a *dispel magic* spell destroys all motes in a 5-foot cube. A creature that moves through a space occupied by motes must attempt a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**. On a failure, a handful of motes cling to the creature before burning out after 24 hours.

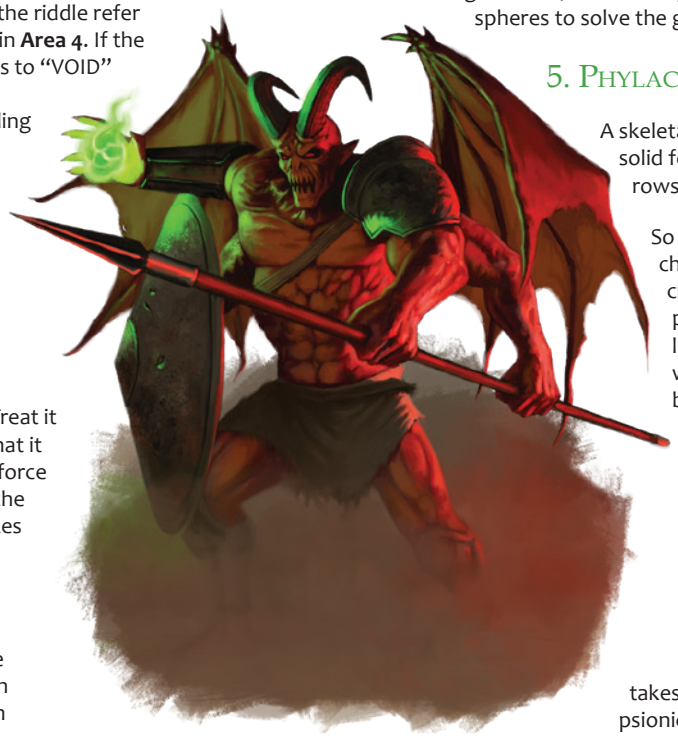
The northern motes are **counterspell motes**. Whenever a creature affected by the motes casts a spell of 3rd level or lower, the spell fails and has no effect.

The southern motes are **enervation motes**. Treat a creature affected by the enervation motes as poisoned until the motes burn out or are dispelled.

4. Navigation Room

Miniature hard-light projections of heavens, hells, and stranger worlds rest on plinths scattered around the room. A crystal sphere orbits each world like a tiny sun. Six upright control tablets stand amongst the plinths.

Characters who make a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** understand that the crystal spheres direct the hulk's course across the multiverse. Active navigation spheres can't be removed. To deactivate ("void") a sphere, the characters must use a control tablet to make a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. On a failure, the tablet locks and can't be used again for 24 hours. The party must collect four deactivated spheres to solve the gargoyle's riddle in **Area 2**.



5. Phylactery Drive

A skeletal figure floats inside a prison of solid force. Abjuration pylons stand in rows along the north and south walls.

So long as the characters do not enter the chamber, the lich can't escape. If a living creature steps between the first pair of pylons, the force field surrounding the lich flickers. Crossing the middle pylons weakens the field further. Stepping beyond the westernmost pylons destroys the field and releases the lich.

The lich has been weakened by his long imprisonment. Until he has a chance to recover strength, treat the lich as a **wraith** with 81 hp, no *Sunlight Sensitivity*, and the following features:

Mental Blast (1/Day). The lich takes an action to unleash a blast of psionic energy that has no effect on creatures with an Intelligence of 3 or less. All other creatures within 60 feet of the lich must succeed on a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, the creature drops to 0 hp. On a successful save, the creature still takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage.

Dominant Caster. The lich may be temporarily incapable of casting spells, but retains its mastery to undo magics. As a reaction to seeing a spell being cast, the lich can automatically negate the spellcasting attempt, as if it had successfully used *counterspell*. The lich is a **challenge** 6 adversary.

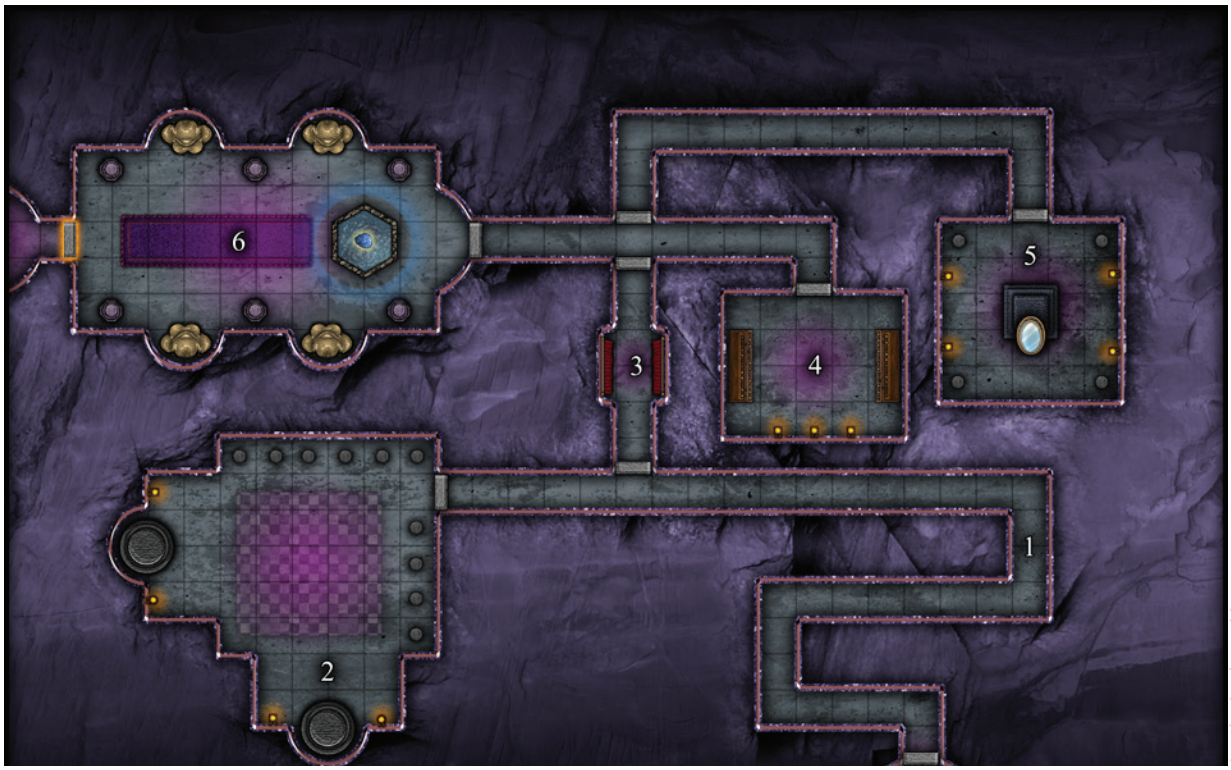
If the characters free him, the lich shows no signs of gratitude. Instead, he attempts to annihilate the characters before escaping into the Astral Sea.

Dean Spencer

6 Characters

Level 4

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Devil in the Details

Bill Buchalter

Elymas was once a promising young spellcaster at the College of Mages. He gained a reputation for dabbling in magic the archmages considered dangerous and morally questionable. Elymas ignored their warnings and was eventually banished. Elymas, undeterred, continued his studies on his own, creating a workshop in the ruined catacombs of a nearby fortress.

The archmages keep a watchful eye on Elymas and hire the party to capture him alive.

1. Hall of Mirrors

Elymas lined the walls of this twisting hallway with enchanted mirrors. The reflections of the characters morph into hideous demons the farther into the hallway they move. Any time a character moves or uses the Dash action, they must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw** or fall under the effect of a *fear* spell. Frightened characters must use the Dash action towards the entrance. A frightened character can repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn. Once a character succeeds at this saving throw, they are immune to the effect of the mirrors. The mirrors end when the hallway reaches the door to **Area 3**.

2. A Game of Good and Evil

The door to this room is locked but can be opened using the key found in Elymas's Study (**Area 4**) or with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools. In the center of the room is a 14 by 14 square marble checkerboard pattern inlaid on the stone floor. In an alcove to the east is a stone statue of a **deva**. In an alcove to the south is a stone statue of a **bone devil**. Casting a *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of conjuration magic surrounding the statues. Along the walls to the north and east are stone markers which can easily be picked up and moved. Placing the markers on the checkerboard in the pattern shown in Elymas's journal (**Area 4**, **GM:** Choose any pattern) causes the deva statue to come alive and award the players with a *mace of disruption*. Placing the markers in any other pattern causes the bone devil statue to come alive and attack.

3. Tapestry Hall

On opposite walls of this hallway hang two tapestries depicting devils fighting with angels in a hellish landscape. When the characters pass through the door to the north of the tapestries, they may try to move to their left towards the door to **Area 6**. The hallway is blocked by a *wall of force*. Elymas is conducting a delicate ritual and placed the wall so he would not be disturbed.

4. Elymas's Study

The ceiling of this room is 30 feet tall. Towering bookcases stand on opposite walls of the room, and in the center is dominated by a purple glow emanating from a black sphere.

At the back of the room is a **shield guardian** created by Elymas. The shield guardian has a *stinking cloud* spell (**DC 15 Constitution saving throw**) stored within it, and is instructed to release the cloud and attack anyone (other than Elymas or his familiar) who enters the room. Perched on top of one of the bookcases, invisible, is an **imp** named **Xart**. He is Elymas's familiar. Xart fights until it seems the party has the upper hand, at which point he turns invisible and hides atop the bookcases again. If threatened, Xart shapechanges into a spider and disappears into the cracks in the walls.

Characters who search the bookcases find Elymas's journal with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. Inside the journal are notes on his experiments and lair. The journal also reveals that the sphere in the center of the room is a portal Elymas created leading to Hel. A focus is required to use the portal safely, but the focus is missing. Touching the portal without the focus deals 11 (2d10) force damage.

The journal also shows the pattern for the checkerboard in **Area 2**, and the key to **Area 2**'s door is tucked in the pages of the journal. Also written within the journal is a *scroll of protection from evil and good*.

5. Mirror Portal

On a small dais rests a six-foot-tall mirror, with a **barbed devil** standing guard on each side. The barbed devils attack anyone other than Elymas who enters the room. The closer a character approaches to the mirror, the more the reflection begins to lose focus as the surface of the mirror becomes opalescent and swirling. Any character who touches the surface of the mirror is instantly teleported into the middle **Area 6**. Casting *dispel magic* (**DC 17**) on the mirror will block its teleportation effect for one hour.

6. Hall of Binding

In this grand chamber, **Elymas** (**mage**) has just completed a ritual to bind his latest fiend, a **succubus**, to his will. Large statues adorn alcoves on the north and south walls. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** recognizes the devils portrayed in the statues as erinyes.

Elymas wears a *headband of intellect* and wields a *+1 wand of the war mage*.

When the characters enter, they see Elymas and the succubus standing on opposite sides of an altar. Hovering a few inches above the altar is a crystal pulsing with a pale, blue light. Resting on top of the altar is a large tome, opened to a page covered in ancient runes. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** recognizes the runes are part of a binding ritual. Elymas completes the ritual and the pale blue light turns to dark, necrotic energy, arcing between Elymas and the succubus. As the energy fades, Elymas in Abyssal commands, "*Kill these intruders.*"

The golden door on the west wall is locked with an *arcane lock* spell. When Elymas and the succubus are defeated the arcane lock, and the *wall of force* in the hallway, are dispelled. Elymas keeps his treasure hoard behind the golden door: a chest containing 220 gp, 35 pp, three pearls worth 100 gp each, two *potions of greater healing*.

Musings On...

While searching the bookcases in Elymas' study, if a character succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they also discover three notably rare and ancient tomes.

Musings on Magic. Ancient spells and writings from a powerful wizard. Each new chapter in this book is encoded with its own cipher; reading a single page would take days of study and research. Luckily, the chapter on ciphers is uncoded.

Musings on Lairs. The second tome contains details about the locations of a secret lairs, lost civilizations, and ancient ruins. Most, if not all, of the references in this book are lost to time, and the travel clues one might use to discern any locations are heavily redacted.

Musings on Greed. The final book is one of great power, but also great evil. It describes, without much detail, dark magic deemed too foul to be practiced by civilized wizards; each revelation is accompanied by a treatise explaining the corruptive nature of such magic.

If the party returns these tomes to the College of Mages, they're rewarded with 1,500 gp and heartfelt thanks. On the Black Market, however, one of these tomes will fetch a greater bounty (see page 298).

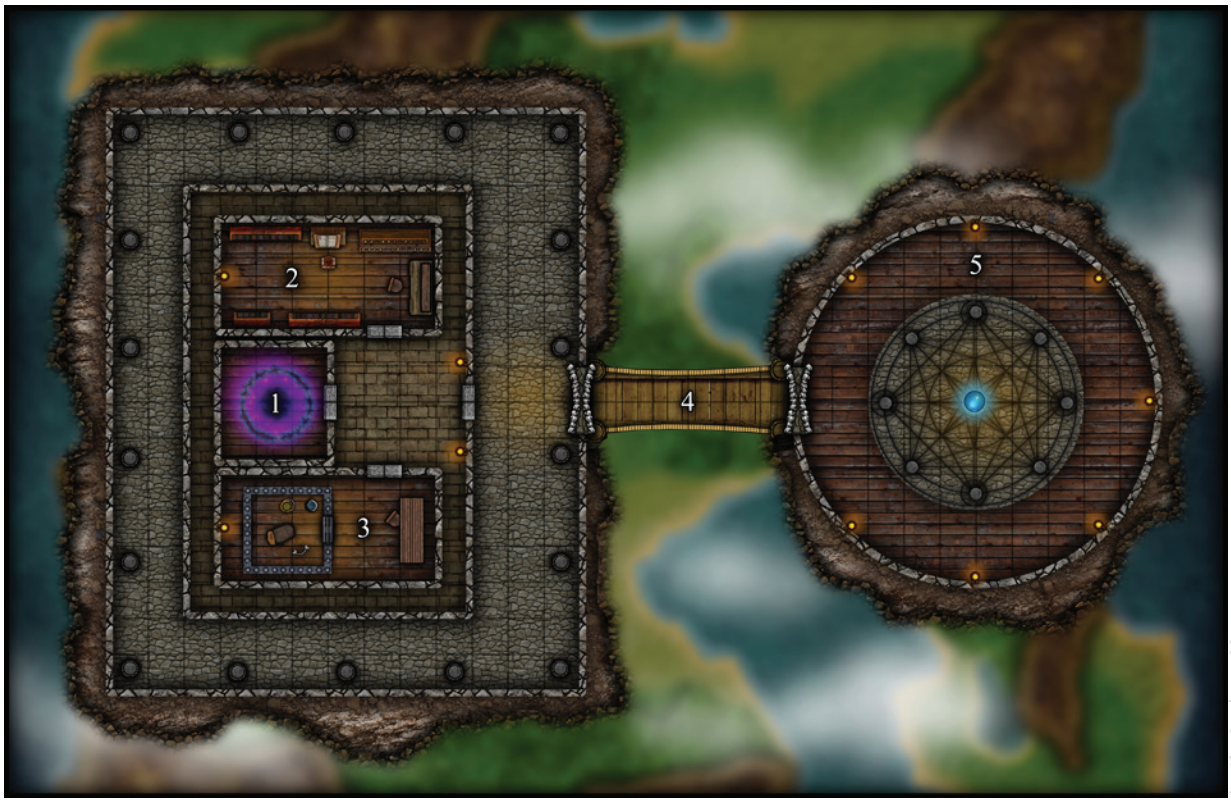


Matt Forsyth

4-5 Characters

Levels 4-5

Planar



Justin Andrew Mason

Sorcerous Study

Rob Cater

Floating in the clouds, some 6,000 feet above, the purpose of these isles is lost to the sands of time. Recently, they have been converted into a powerful wizard's study for the purpose of researching the Elemental Planes.

1. Portal Entrance

A zipping noise ends with a pop as you are transported to this 15-foot square room with unadorned smooth rock walls. The runic circle on the floor emits a faint purple glow. The sound of rolling rocks softly echoes all around.

A character can determine the portal is inert and will recharge in 12 hours with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check**.

2. Study

A lectern with a large open book stands out among the scroll racks and bookshelves. A worn and comfortable chair awaits a new reader.

The books and scrolls here vary in age, size and written language. They cover local history, classical wizards' study and basic knowledge of the Elemental Planes. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices a *scroll of protection from energy (fire)* among the scrolls.

The large book sitting on the lectern is the wizard's research journal. If anyone touches it, a **bookkeeper** activates and five **flying swords** fly off the walls to attack.

Closer inspection of the lectern with a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a subtle engraved pattern pointing to an unlocked sliding panel that holds a copy of the wizard's journal.

Quickly skimming the journal reveals the names Isshh and Lutum as the wizard's associates. A character who spends 5 or more minutes reading the journal learns that the wizard is attempting to create a fissure between two Elemental Planes and the Material Plane, as well as details about what creatures Isshh (**Area 3**) and Lutum (**Area 4**) are. So far, the wizard's experiment was unsuccessful, but the last page notes a small-scale test that briefly worked. Spending a full day reviewing the notes and succeeding on a **DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check** suffices to grasp the basics required to continue this research.

3. Cage

A large metal cage holds a snake-bodied humanoid with fiery-red scales lazily trying to burn the floor without success.

The room's wooden floor is coated in a heat-resistant sap. A spear rests in the corner.

Isshh (**salamander**) serves as a guide and ally to the wizard in exchange for protection and knowledge. Isshh speaks Ignan and has learned a few elementary words in Common. Isshh tries to deceive the party into thinking she was caged and held captive. A successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals Isshh's duplicity. This check is made with **advantage** if the character speaks Ignan. Opening the cage requires a **DC 13 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. Isshh follows the party until she sees an opportunity to stop them. Otherwise, she unlocks the cage with a key and tries to ambush the party in **Area 4**.

4. Outer Shell and Bridge

The outer room is dark, and the sound of rolling rocks is loudest here. A hint of light shines through the stone door across the room.

The ground here is loosely packed dirt covered with flagstone, home to the **earth elemental Lutum**. The rumbling sound in the area is the earth elemental deliberately making "music" with its *Earth Glide* in the dirt. If the party calls out "Lutum," the elemental surfaces and opens the stone door. Lutum only attacks to defend itself, or if the party tries to open the door without uttering its name. The sound of combat alerts Isshh if she hasn't been dealt with.

The door is under the effect of an *arcane lock* spell. Once the lock is dispelled (*dispel magic*), the door can be opened with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check**.

A wooden bridge, secured with thick ropes, leads over the vastness below towards another floating island. A piercing screech carries on the wind.

The bridge is secured and sturdy, but every 1d3+1 rounds a gust a wind rocks the bridge. Anyone standing and not holding with both hands onto the railing must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or fall prone.

A pair of **griffons** have set up a nest here and attack once someone crosses the bridge's midsection. Anyone on the bridge who is hit by a griffon must succeed at a **DC 10 Dexterity saving throw** or be knocked prone. If a character is knocked prone, the griffons can use one of their attacks to instead bump the bridge from underneath. A prone character on the bridge must succeed at a **DC 10 Strength saving throw** or fall off. A result of 5 or more leaves the character dangling from the bridge.

If Isshh is with the party, she tries to stay behind, and attempts to destroy the bridge after the party has begun crossing. There are two major support ropes (**AC** 12 HP 12) securing the bridge. Cutting one rope increases the DCs to withstand the wind and avoid being knocked prone by the griffons by 5. Cutting both ropes on one side makes the bridge fall and dangle from the other island. It takes a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** to climb the bridge while it is dangling from one island, a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** to hold on to it.

5. Summoning Room

The air here is cold, and your eyes are draw to a large crystal sphere pulsing with a blue light. The ceiling is dome-shaped and covered in icicles.

Mixed among the icicles are six hidden **ice mephits**. As soon as someone steps on the stone base they attack.

With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, a character can tell this is a modified summoning room. The sphere is still active and *detect magic* shows its aura of conjuration. When touched, it lights up and teleports whoever touched it to a plane of the GM's choosing. Removing the sphere from the room renders it inoperable.

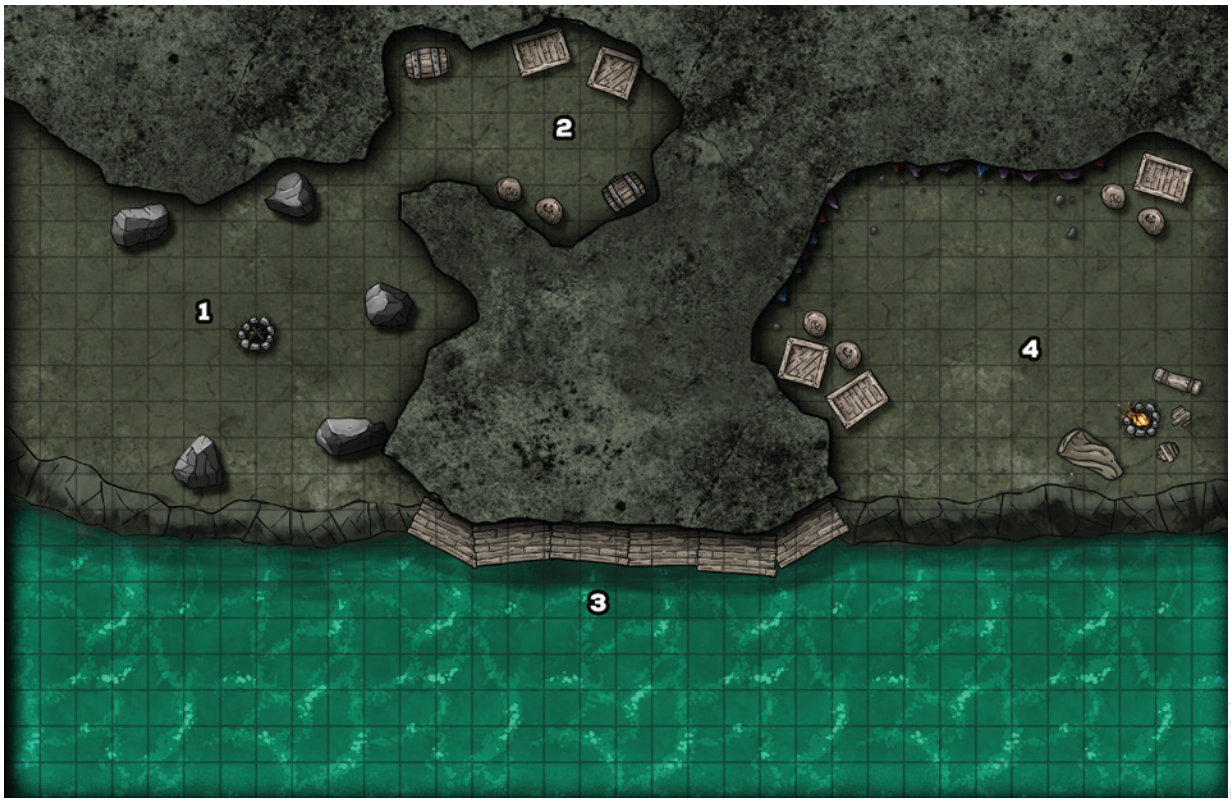


Bruno Balixa

4-5 Characters

Levels 4-5

Coast



Tommi Salama

Deep Water

Grant Simpson

The secrets of spell-storing gem fabrication remain closely guarded by the deep gnomes, but the most important ingredient is immediately obvious; raw gemstones. Recently, a gem mine was overrun by monsters and the gnomes are desperate to reclaim it. They are offering a magic gem each to any adventures who can clear out the monsters. The deep gnomes see this as an acceptable sacrifice, as there were things far more valuable than gemstones left behind in the mine.

The party must travel down a narrow underground passageway for two hours before they reach the mine entrance. The path follows alongside the underground river for much of its duration. The mine's walls are roughly hewn, and the ceiling is 15 feet tall throughout. A faint bioluminescence from subterranean algae and fish sheds dim light up to 30 feet from the edge of the river.

GM Preparation. The primary treasure of this adventure is an *ioun stone*. Choose one in accordance with the needs of your campaign.

1. Fatal Fungi

This entry area served as the main living space for the gnome miners. Five stones (between 5 to 10 feet tall) form a ring around a dead campfire. A faint tapping of metal on stone can be heard echoing rhythmically from deeper in the mine.

Two swollen, bloodied svirfneblin corpses have been left in this area. One is propped against the top-right stone and the other leans against the stone at bottom-right. The moss lurkers that have taken over the mine left the dead miners as spore corpse traps to guard against a counterattack by the deep gnomes.

Spore Corpse Trap

Simple trap (level 1–4, dangerous threat)

Corpses make the best incubators for the poisonous fungi moss lurkers use. They also make great bait, luring in concerned or greedy adventurers for an explosive spore-filled surprise.

Trigger. Touching the corpse causes incubating fungi to expel poisonous spores in a 10-foot radius around the body.

Effect. Any creature within the affected area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Countermeasures. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a fungal scent around the corpse and a crust of spores around its eyes and mouth. Creatures with a *Keen Sense of Smell* have an easier time catching the tell-take scent and reduce the DC to 10 in addition to the feature's benefits. Beasts, such as hunting dogs, refuse to approach the corpses. Alternatively, a DC 11 Wisdom (Medicine) check notices that the bloating of the corpse is unnatural and can link blotches on the skin to signs of fungal decay.

2. The Ioun Stone

This cave served as the storage space for the miners. The crates of supplies and rations are nearly empty now, however, and the gemstones have been moved to the sacks in **Area 4** by the moss lurkers.

Delmer Hruuthak, one of the **deep gnome** miners, is hiding in the crate at the far-right of the cave. He was unable to escape with the other survivors and hid. A coward at heart, Delmer has been too afraid to leave the storage area after having narrowly avoided detection when the moss lurkers took the gemstones. If the party discovers him by looking into the crates, he bursts into tears of joy and relief. The grateful gnome can provide information on the number of enemies in **Area 4**, the layout of the mine, and the presence of a quipper swarm in **Area 3**.

However, Delmer is also a greedy thief and expert liar (**Charisma** 14, **Deception +6**). He became trapped in the storage area during the attack while trying to steal the *ioun stone*. He tries his best to be subtle and asks if the party has found a gemstone matching its description, claiming it is a precious family heirloom that he lost in the attack. If the party has not been to **Area 4** and found the stone yet, Delmer urges them to get it for him while he stays behind. A character can tell he is lying with a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check**. Should he survive till the end of the encounter, he will do his best to steal the stone from the party (he has **Sleight of Hand +6**), but will not risk his life; preferring to use the spore corpse traps or some other trick over force. If the party succeeds at a **DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check**, they can make Delmer stand down and cease his attempts.

3. Hunger of the Deep

A ramshackle wooden walkway has been constructed 5 feet above a portion of the river. It was sturdy enough while the mine was in use, but since the attack it has fallen into severe disrepair. It can support two Medium creatures or four Small creatures at a time, collapsing if more weight is added onto it. A **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals this. A collapsing walkway alerts all creatures in **Area 4**.

The riverbanks are sheer faces of rock, 5 feet high. A **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices a *necklace of adaptation* glimmering around a skeleton's neck under the water. The river is 15 feet deep and has a weak current. Waiting in the river is a **quipper swarm**. It attacks any creature that enters the water, but could be distracted by dropping meat in the water. A feeding or fighting swarm is loud enough to potentially alert the creatures in **Area 4**. The swarm can be seen from the walkway clearly, but requires a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check** to identify.



Herman Lau

4. Unskilled Labor

This area houses the main gemstone vein. The three **moss lurkers** are mining gems with their great weapons, and a **merrow** is sleeping next to the campfire if the party enters the area undetected. The intruders have not had much success: chipped and crumbled bits of gemstones can be seen around their feet from using incorrect equipment. If they are alerted to the party beforehand, the merrow tries to destroy the walkway in **Area 3** as the party attempts to cross it. The merrow must succeed a **DC 12 Strength check** to destroy the walkway. The merrow then attacks the party from the river, while the moss lurkers attack from the riverbank. One of the moss lurkers has the *ioun stone* that was originally in **Area 2** and activates it on the first round of combat.

A few broken crates with mining gear and sacks filled with gemstones are placed haphazardly about the area. Each sack holds a small number of gems (medium worth). There are three dirty bedrolls and a small campfire that belonged to the deep gnomes.

Poisoned Bedrolls. The bedrolls have since been used by the moss lurkers: Taking a short or long rest in them has the effects of the lurker's *Poisoned Gifts*, except that the prolonged exposure makes the effect last 2 hours for a short rest, 8 hours for a long rest instead, and a creature takes 6 (1d12) poison damage upon waking from a short rest, or 26 (4d12) poison damage upon waking from a long rest. The bedrolls sell for 55 gp a piece to assassins and similar villains. Award the party 300 XP for destroying the bedrolls.

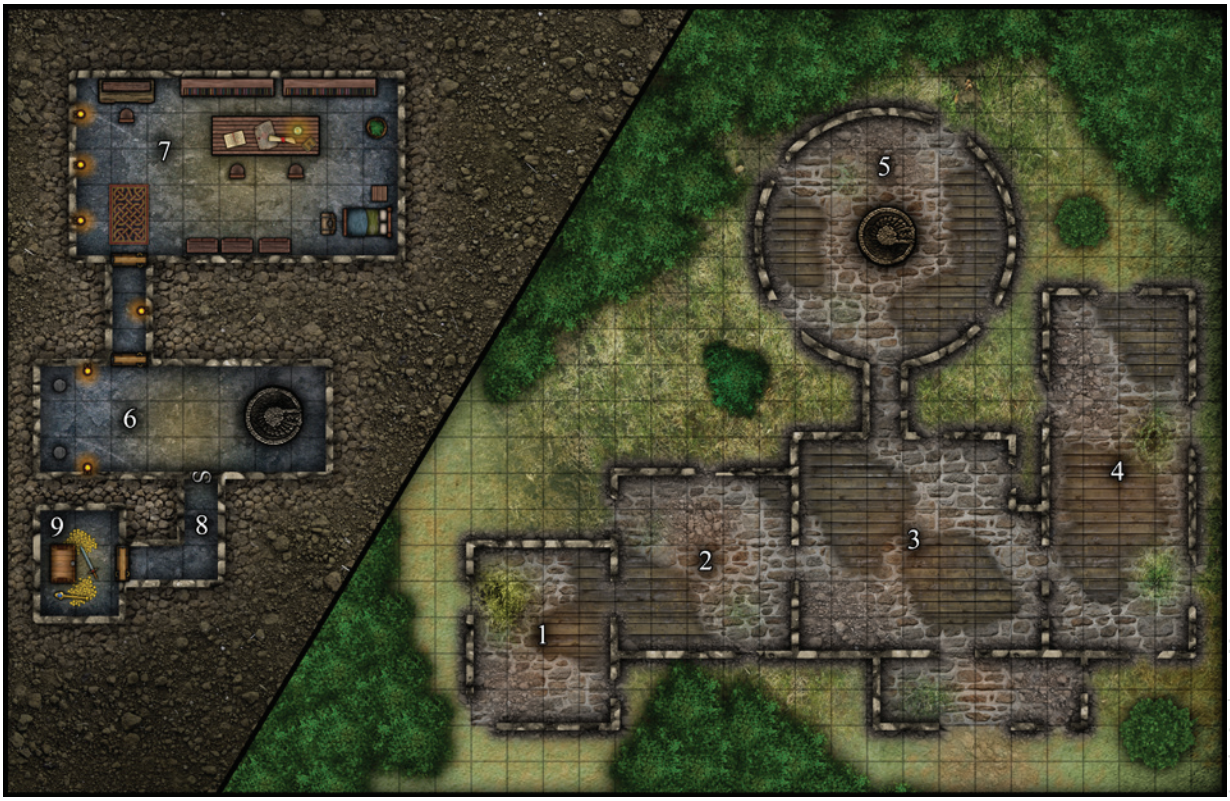
Mining gems (medium worth) from the vein requires a pickaxe, one hour per gem mined, and a **DC 12 Strength check** or appropriate tool proficiency, but the deep gnomes will be unhappy with this action.

If Delmer survives and learns about the lurker-tainted bedrolls, he recognizes their potential as a deadly tool...

6 Characters

Levels 4-5

Forest



Justin Andrew Mason

A Ranger's Station

Jonathan G. Nelson

A ranger's station is irrelevant to those serving only the wilderness, be they former criminals, or hermits wishing to find peace and solitude in the bosom of mother nature. For ages, the rangers have served in the wilderness, sometimes banding together, but remaining mostly autonomous.

There was a time when fiercely independent rangers swore to fight as one. With the druids of the wild lands, they pushed back those callously clearcutting great swaths of forested land for temporary material gain, those in service of the heartless expansion of so-called civilization. The rangers' mission to halt the relentless sprawl of the ever-voracious cities was a dream, but alas, proved to be just that - a dream, and in time, the alliance fell apart.

After decades in seclusion, **Ishmael**, the aging and dying leader of the rangers, calls one last time upon his erstwhile allies, to gather and defend the forests, issuing a rallying cry for the last battle of nature vs. civilization in this part of the world.

Threat of Assassination. When the characters happen upon the dilapidated fortress of the once-great rangers, it is mostly devoid of enemies. After 2d20+10 minutes have passed, a group of **assassins** (1d4+4 **bandits**, 2 **bandit captains**) arrive, hired by those with the coin (and enough to lose) to silence an old troublemaker. When the initial group of assassins drops to 1d4 in number, the powerful **assassin leader** (**assassin**) arrives.

Want a deadly encounter? The assassin leader arrives first, attempts to surprise the party and use *Assassinate*. The rest of the group arrives immediately after.

Want an easier encounter? The assassin leader does not show up until the characters have met Ishmael.

Regardless of difficulty level, if necessary, have Ishmael pop up from below to help.

If the adventurers do not stop the assassins, they kill Ishmael and make it look like an accident. If followed, the assassins split up in the nearest town, reporting through various roundabout methods back to their wealthy clients.

1. Reclamation

A green patch on the ground is a **shambling mound**. A successful **DC 22 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discovers a loose flagstone, with a *ring of protection* hidden underneath.

2. Nature vs. Civilization

An old shelf on the wall precariously balances three books, two of which are illegible. The third is locked, wrapped with an unbreakable strap of roots which has no keyhole. A short riddle in ancient Elvish adorns the front "*I have forests, but no trees; oceans and rivers, but no water; deserts, but no sand.*"

Answer. Map. Once answered correctly, the roots untwine and the book can be read. It causes *confusion* for 1d2 rounds (**no saving throw**) unless read by a ranger or druid. It recounts the tales of the rangers' mission to preserve the natural world, calling upon whomever finds this book to carry on their legacy. If a druid or ranger reads this book, they gain **advantage** on any **Charisma skill checks** dealing with nature vs. civilization. An old barrel in the corner is a **mimic**.

3. Historical Significance

Old tapestries hang upon these walls, tattered and torn, bleached by the sun, soiled by the rain via holes in the roof. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** of the tapestries reveals hard-to-discern scenes of men in trees fighting other men who come from the city with axes. A successful **DC 18 Intelligence (History) check** (rangers have **advantage** and may use Wisdom) recalls an event many have now forgotten (or been coerced into forgetting), a time when the rangers rose up to stop the expansion of the cities. The battle was never decisively won, but ended as a stalemate, especially in these lands. At least until recently, as logging has resumed.

4. Don't Disturb the Roots

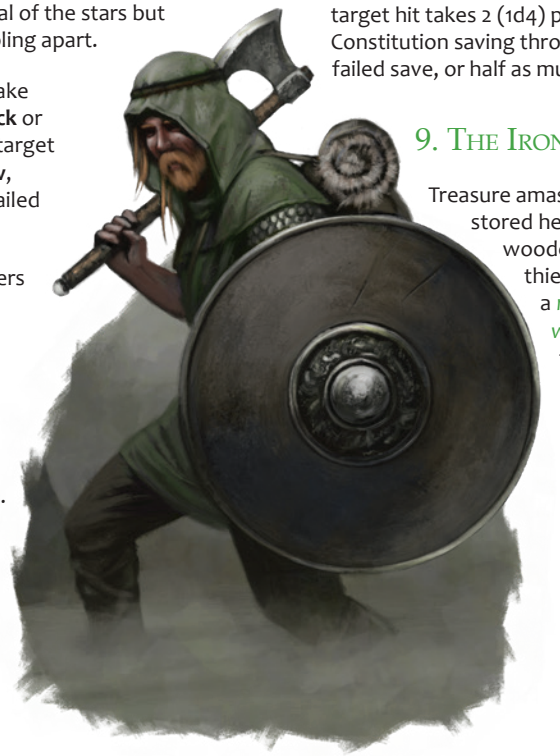
A **treant** allied with the rangers has grown strong and powerful in old age but also slumbers deeply. Its roots break through the floor in places, and accidentally grapple anyone moving through the green area (as *entangle*, **DC 16 Strength saving throw**, effect does not end while treant is alive). The treant itself is east of the building, sleeping soundly in the forest. It takes at least 2d10+10 rounds to wake up. If it is attacked, it awakens in 1d2 rounds.

5. Falling Stars

The ceiling in this area has a beautiful mural of the stars but the roof and walls are unstable and crumbling apart.

Anyone moving through this area must make a successful **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check** or cause a section of wall or roof to fall. The target must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

If a battle takes place in this room, it triggers a full collapse at the start of the second round, blocking the stairwell. Anyone in the room during the collapse must make a **DC 18 Dexterity saving throw** to leap out of the building or into another room, taking 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Stairs lead down to **Area 6**.



Dean Spencer

6. Only Time will Tell

The door to **Area 7** sports a riddle in Elvish: "*Two bodies have I, though both joined in one. The stiller I stand, the quicker I run.*" ***Answer.*** Hourglass. When solved, the door unlocks. A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or **DC 25 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools will also unlock the door. The secret door to **Area 8** is spotted with a successful **DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check** or found with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. The two pillars are **animated armors**, which attack any non-rangers meddling with the wooden door or attempting to access the secret passage.

7. Ishmael's Home

The rug at the entrance is a **rug of smothering**. Ishmael (**veteran** with *+2 longbow*, *+2 studded leather*, **AC** 15, 75 hp) awaits the arrival of his brethren, not knowing his calls for help were intercepted. If the characters do not include a ranger or druid, Ishmael attacks, assuming the worst. A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** calms him down enough to speak. Bookshelves contain a wealth of information (details up to GM).

8. Protectionary Measures

This hallway is lined with poison dart traps on the walls. Each trapped section may be found with a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** and disarmed with a **DC 16 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools.

Poison Dart

Simple Trap

Characters moving down its length trigger a trap every 5 feet Each trap makes a ranged attack at +8 to hit the triggering creature. A target hit takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

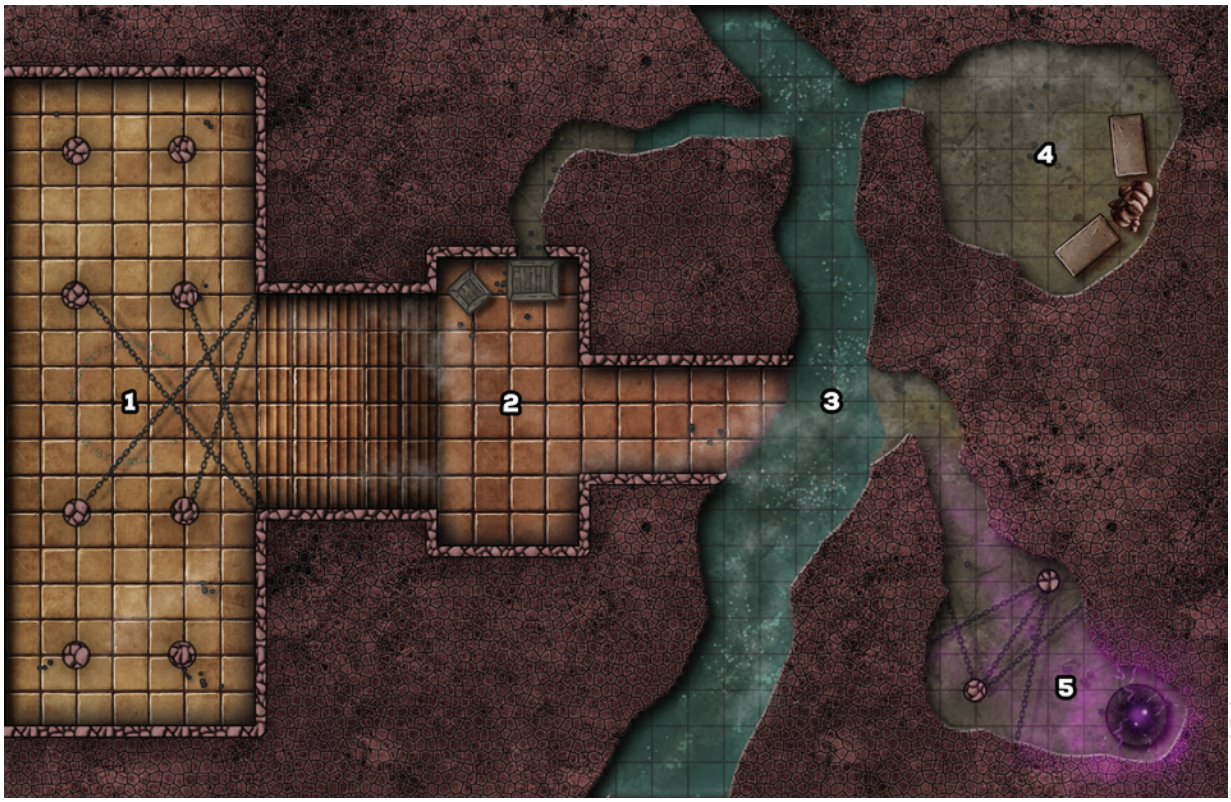
9. The Irony of Wealth

Treasure amassed by the original rangers has been stored here to be used in a time of need. A solid wooden chest (**DC 22 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools to unlock) contains 1,255 gp and a *ring of the ram*. A *+1 longsword*, *staff of the woodlands*, and 253 gp that wouldn't fit in the chest are spilled out upon the floor.

4-5 Characters

Level 4-5

Urban



Tommi Salama

Caged as a Bird

Joshua Hennington

As a local church has been digging space out for its cellars, they stumbled across a pre-built chamber; even more strangely, it appears to be inhabited by a songbird who requests help in freeing her soul. The heroes have been enlisted to investigate and help the songbird if they can.

Unbeknownst to the characters, the songbird is an illusory manifestation of the night hag Bemithia, who is trapped within her *heartstone* nearby. After attempting to keep one too many souls bound to Hell for herself, a now-forgotten infernal duke caged her within her own possession as punishment. Over the centuries, however, the enchantments have weakened, allowing Bemithia to project an illusory form through which she can interact with others, in hopes of conning some poor rubes into freeing her.

1. Chained Entrance

This end of the church's cellar has been dug out, opening into this 10-foot-high room on its eastern end. Eight granite pillars within the room stretch to the ceiling, and the four central pillars boast chains that stretch to the corner of 10-foot stairs leading downwards to **Area 2**. These chains appear nondescript, but are quite dangerous. They once bound the soul of any creature that touched them to this location, but their powers have thankfully waned over the years.

Hell's Worn Soulsnare

Magic trap

This trap is activated when a creature touches it, initiating a tenuous grip on one's soul.

A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to spot the faded runes on the chains. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals an aura of abjuration magic around the chains.

The trap activates when a creature with a soul touches one of the chains, attacking the triggering creature's soul directly. The creature must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The chains can be maneuvered through without touching them with a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, or they can be physically pushed aside with nonliving objects. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check, or *dispel magic* cast on the chains (or activating them) disables the trap for 24 hours.

2. Antechamber of the Caged Songbird

This 12-foot-tall room has iconography of birds strewn around its ceiling, displaying them all within cages or being placed within confinements by hideous humanoid figures. It is within this room that Bemithia's manifestation waits for the characters. She takes the form of a radiant songbird, akin to those displayed on the walls, though still clearly of otherworldly origin. Bemithia introduces herself as a kindly elven mage named **Cassaril**, whose soul is locked away deeper within this complex by fearsome devils. She goes on to explain that noble heroes can reverse the incantation, even if they lack magic themselves; all they need to do is finish the work she started from within her onyx imprisonment with a simple incantation.

With a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check**, a character can see through the ruse, and catch on that the bird is deceiving them somehow. Regardless of if the Characters believe her or not, 'Cassaril' goes on to state that several of her prized possessions are located on the northern far end of the underground river ahead. These purportedly include her personal *handy haversack*, which only she can open. Once she is freed, she will gladly give the adventurers each an item from her trove. Bemithia makes up what items are in said sack in accordance with each hero's assumed skillset, despite it containing nothing of the sort; it is in fact her *soul bag*. Bemithia also warns the characters of the two bearded devils that guard the room, emphasizing that they are cunning deceivers who will fill any trespassers' heads with lies. She can also guide them to a passageway hidden behind some aged crates that is a more direct path to the devils' room.

3. Tainted River

This water was once a flowing underground river but has since grown stagnant with time. Additionally, with the fiendish incursion of this prison and its wardens, it has gained properties of various waterways of the Lower Planes. Specifically, any creature who swims in it must succeed at a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** or become exceptionally pliable to any fiend's deceptions for 1 hour. They have **disadvantage** on any **Wisdom (Insight) checks** attempted against fiends (including Bemithia, even in her illusory form), as they become so immersed in the varying mannerisms of fiends' heinousness that it overwhelms them. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** while examining the water confirms its properties. It takes *remove curse* to end the effect. The water exits to **Areas 4** and **5**.

4. Room of Confiscation

This complex's master stationed two **bearded devils** in this 9-foot-tall room to prevent careless entry, and to slay any who enter with purpose. They angrily attack any intruders if their telepathic warning to leave is ignored. During the battle, they inform the characters (in between swipes of their glaive) that this is also the detention center of the soul thief Bemithia, and any attempts to free her will earn trespassers the full enmity of the infernal courts. Strewn amongst the chests and sacks are not just Bemithia's *soul bag*, which can be identified as being composed of human skin with a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check**, but a *+1 scimitar*, a pair of *bracers of archery* and 49 gp in various rare gems.

5. Bemithia's Prison

Many more chains than those adorning **Area 1** are littered about this cramped 6-foot-tall side cavern; they behave like the trap in **Area 1**, except that touching them is more hazardous: A creature touching the chains must make a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**, taking 11 (2d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Additionally, the chains are tighter packed and retain more of their magic. It requires a **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to get past them. Additionally, their magic is conducted through inorganic objects like tools to the wielders, and thus, they cannot be pushed aside. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** analyzing the runes on the chains warns the party of this different property.

If the heroes believed 'Cassaril', then she supplies them with the proper words that must be recited while touching the stone in which she is bound, which takes one action to do. A character that succeeds at a **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** realizes that these words are backwards Infernal; a character that speaks that language also realizes that these are words of binding for a fiend, which will free it if uttered backwards. If released, the heroes must then contend with the **night hag Bemithia** appearing in front of them at her full power; if not and they take her *heartstone* instead, Bemithia nettles them through her illusory avatar: while still trapped in her heartstone, Bemithia can exert a degree of control over the chains in **Area 1** and **5**. If the party tries to abscond with her *heartstone* without freeing her, she reactivates the chains, if they were previously disabled. Roll initiative. Make it look to the party as though the dungeon wants to keep them inside.

Bemithia cannot affect the party with the usual night hag features while still trapped, but instead uses the following two features while attempting to convince the party to free her. She claims that the effects are due to her captor's interference. A **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check** realizes that Bemithia is responsible for these attacks. While trapped, Bemithia can use:

Chain Blockade. As a bonus action, Bemithia can make the chains in **Area 5** to form a blockade to the tunnel leading to **Area 3** at the tunnel entrance to **Area 5**. She has enough chains to form one chain blockade in **Area 5**. She can also make the chains in **Area 1** form a blockade at the bottom of the stairs leading from **Area 2** to **Area 1**. She has enough chains to form up to two blockades on these stairs. A chain blockade has 20 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, and the chains are resistant to damage inflicted by spells or other magical effects, except to spells or magical effects that deal radiant or thunder damage. Touching the chains affects the character as though they had touched the chains in the respective Area.

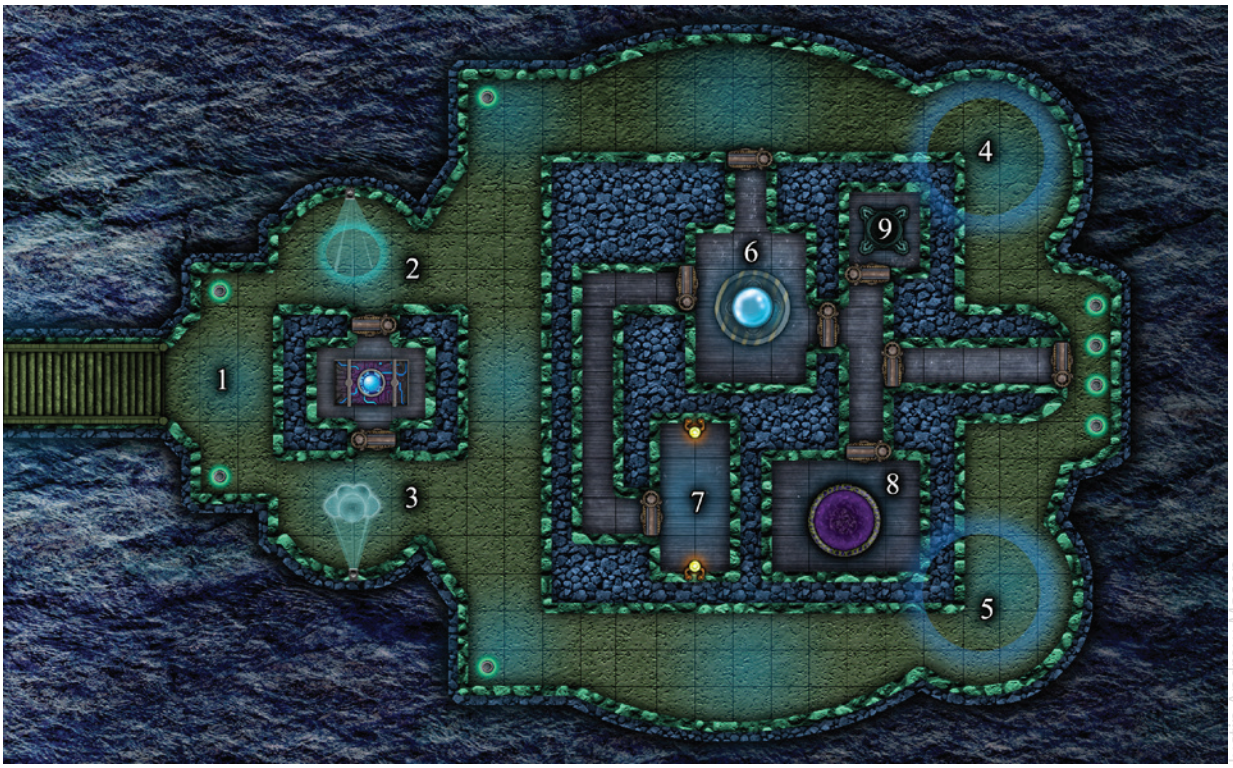
Chain Strike. *Ranged Spell Attack*: +6 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**, taking 11 (2d10) necrotic damage on a failed save and be grappled by the chain (**escape DC 14**), or half as much and not be grappled on a successful one. A creature that ends its turn grappled by the chains must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or take 11 (2d10) necrotic damage, or half as much on a successful saving throw.

She loses these features immediately if freed, her connection to her prison severed. *Chain Blockades* immediately collapse as she manifests. If the party manages to escape with Bemithia still trapped, she could possibly break free at a later date, subject to the GM's discretion.

4 Characters

Level 5

Coast



Justin Andrew Mason

The Leech Cure

Claire Stricklin

Fartide Laboratories jealously guard the trade secrets of their potions, and spent fluids produced by mass potion manufacture remain highly volatile, making disposing of them on land risky. Thus, the mages of Fartide Laboratory decided to build their facility half a mile out to sea, tethered to the shore by a floating causeway, allowing the dangerous compounds to dissolve in the boundless sea. Unfortunately, the crawling things that lair between the rocks of Fartide developed a taste for arcane waste. They grew. They mutated. Five days, ago, a great storm wrecked the region, flooding the laboratory as its magic protections failed. and one of the mutated things came inside. Nobody has heard from the mages since.

1. The Flooded Lab

The creature that has invaded Fartide is descended from marine leeches but has grown to monstrous size. Addicted to the magical reagents that spawned it, this **abomination** (use **xhkarsh** ◆, reach 10 ft., but replace *Seize Strand* with

Acidic Trail. All spaces that the creature occupied since its last turn retain an acidic coating; any creature that enters or starts its turn in such a space takes 3 (1d6) acid damage. At the start of the creature's turn, all previously acidic spaces become safe.)

It has slain most of the lab's wizards in search of its prize. Unfortunately for the aberration, the potions it craves are secured within the vault near the lab's entrance.

When the characters arrive, they find the hallways surrounding the vault and inner lab covered in 3 feet of water, difficult terrain for Medium creatures. Smaller adventurers may have to swim. The doors to the vault are waterproof, tightly shut, and impossible to open without the control mechanism in **Area 9**. A **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the acrid smell of acid: a first hint of the abomination's presence.

2. Bait and Witch

Stuck between the raging storm and the approaching abomination, one of the lab's witch-technicians had only moments to alter the permanent *major image* spell in this area and record over the original: "*Some kind of... highly corrosive... Do not attempt....*"

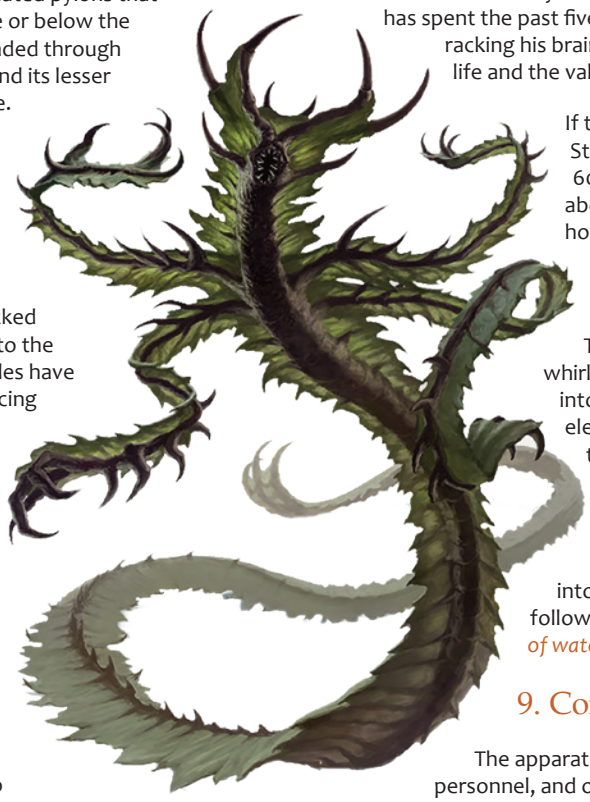
The witch's corpse is still here. So is the thing that killed her, its tendrils wrapped around the body's ankles. When the adventurers approach, the abomination uses its *Invisibility* to drag the body through the water, trying to lead the characters toward the doors to the inner lab. The abomination will not engage the party for more than a round, retreating to **Areas 4** or **5** if threatened. Its goal is to use the characters as a tool to access the vault.

3. Welcome Image

The permanent *major image* in this area is of a handsome half-elven woman of middle years. It speaks in Common as soon as the adventurers approach: "*Welcome to Fartide Laboratory. We pride ourselves on our quality ingredients and proven results. As a Fartide technician, you will become part of a leading team in the cutting-edge field of potion manufacture.*" It repeats its message mindlessly until the characters leave the area.

4. Blue Hole

At the height of the storm, the articulated pylons that allowed the artificial isle to rise above or below the waves buckled. The abomination invaded through this opening when the waters rose, and its lesser brethren still lurk beneath the surface.



This area functions as a hidden pit. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** discerns the subtle shift in color that marks the change in depth. The water is 40 feet deep and calm, but any creature that enters the blue hole will be attacked by 1d3 **larval abominations** attached to the nearby rock wall. These sessile juveniles have a +8 attack bonus, inflict 5 (1d10) piercing damage, and automatically restrain creatures they manage to hit, holding them beneath the waves. Treat these creatures as **stirges** once they've latched on.

5. Watery Grave

The hidden pit in this area functions like the one in **Area 4**, but is considerably less dangerous. Uninterested in eating the lab's staff, the abomination dumped their bodies here. Most have washed out to sea, but with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, a character notices a body stuck to a rocky outcropping 10 feet down. If the body is retrieved, it carries a *bowl of commanding water elementals*. The **water elemental** summoned is called **Geysis**. It is loyal to its former master, remaining suspicious of the adventurers.

6. Drippy Chemistry

Stymied by its lack of manual dexterity, the abomination cannot turn the hatch door wheel and enter the inner lab. Consequently, **Areas 6, 7, 8** and **9** remained dry and safe for the last five days. When the characters open the chamber door a wave of water rushes in bringing with it a host of microscopic marine life.

Left untended, the huge glass alembic at the center of this chamber slowly leaks onto the floor. Each round, one drop of *potion of growth* drips from the alembic, causing one of the harmless krill in the water to become an aggressive **giant pufferfish**. This process continues until the alembic is plugged or drained. One full dose of the potion can be salvaged with an appropriate container.

7. Lone Survivor

Strasior Ufaris Oflyn III was an apprentice mage with a bright future. A rising star at Fartide, the once-penniless gnome was expecting to graduate to the rank of full technician within the month. Now the only survivor of the abomination's attack, Strasior has spent the past five days holed up in the facility's office, racking his brains for a way to escape with both his life and the valuable loot left in the vault in **Area 1**.

If the characters agree to help him, Strasior volunteers to split the take 60/40. He also explains what he knows about the abomination, as well as how to use the device in **Area 9**.

8. Pelagic Centrifuge

The key to Fartide's success, this roiling whirlpool pumps water from the depths and into the lab. Designed to sift valuable trace elements from common sea water, it enables the mass production of potion reagents. Left untended for days, the magical concoction has instead produced a pair of **water elementals** (70 hp each). If the weirds manage to drag a character into the pool, they are affected by one of the following at random: *oil of slipperiness*, *potion of water breathing*, *potion of fire giant strength*.

9. Control Room

The apparatus in this room is attuned to Fartide personnel, and only activates if Strasior or either of the mangled bodies is present. Here the characters can flood the lab, lower the flood waters, or open all doors in the facility. When they do the latter, the abomination rushes for its prize in **Area 1**.

Every two rounds the adventurers spend after opening the vault, the abomination gorges on one potion in the vault:

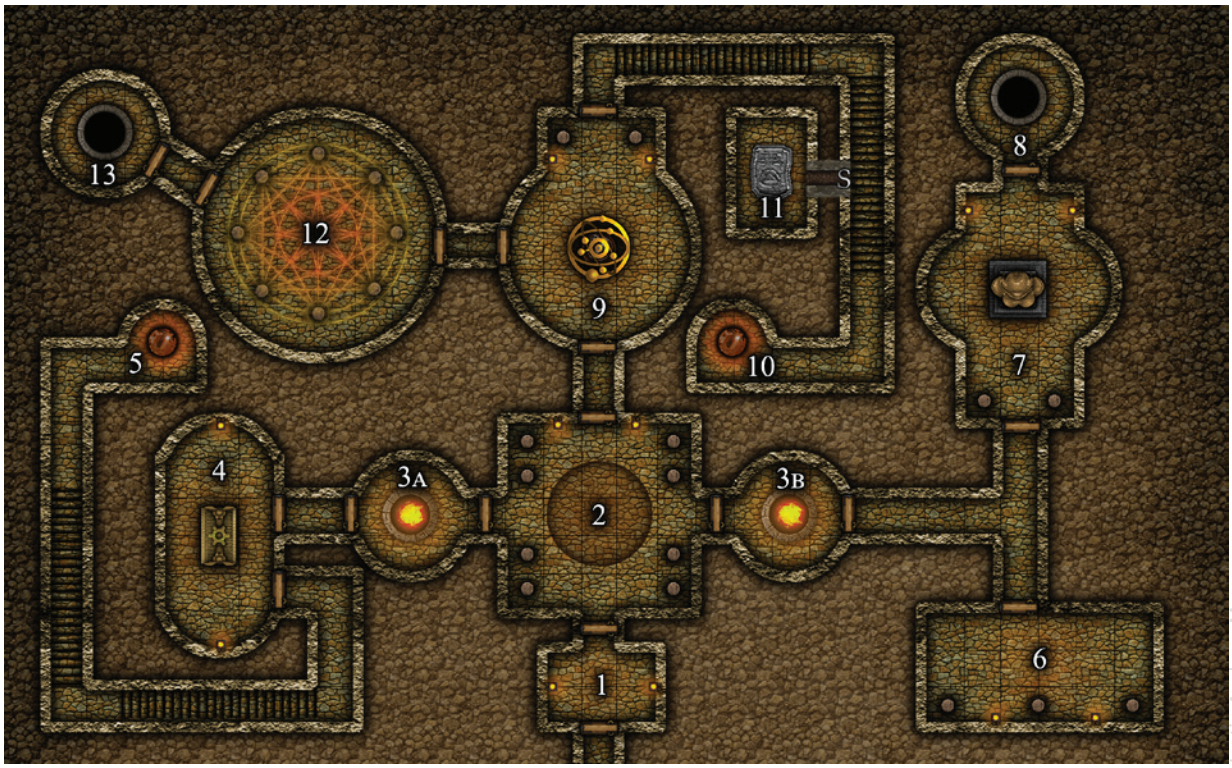
- *Potion of Healing* (*Common x 6, Greater x 3, Superior x 2, Supreme x 1*)
- *Potion of Clairvoyance* x 2
- *Potion of Climbing* x 2
- *Potion of Flying* x 2
- *Potion of Heroism* x 2

Nicolas Cloister

4-5 Characters

Level 5

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Retreat of the Sword Baron

Thilo Graf, R. A. McReynolds

Jarzh DeVreil was a savant duelist; charismatic, deadly and utterly bereft of morals. A collector by disposition, he took the blades of vanquished foes, displaying them to his fawning fans. He particularly relished delivering the coup de grâce with his opponents' own blades — he was the dreaded "Sword Baron." Eventually, the excesses of his lifestyle started to catch up with him. Jarzh, fearing decrepitude, abducted a notorious necromancer, Grahm the bone-caster, forcing him to conduct darksome rites to alter his body into a grotesque, vampiric amalgam of man and blade. He then forced a captured demon to strip him of his vampiric weakness to sunlight, and Jarzh is not yet done "improving" himself. He must be stopped.

General Properties. The ceilings of rooms are 15 feet high while the hallways are 10 feet high. Doors are solid oak reinforced with metal banding. Most of the rooms contain oil lanterns providing dim light, exceptions are the hallways, **Area 8** and **13** (no light) and brazier rooms (**Area 3a** and **3b**; bright light).

Sword Baron's Minions. Jarzh's minions undergo rigorous training and magical experimentation, all with an obsessive focus on swords. Unless otherwise noted, all creatures are horribly scarred minions and have:

Swordbane. The minion can use its reaction to a melee attack with a sword that would hit it to add 2 to its AC against the attack. The minion must see the attacker.

1. Entrance

The outer door is marked with a gauntlet holding five fanned swords. A **DC 10 Intelligence (History) check** recognizes this as the "Hand of Swords", Jarzh's symbol. There are four **ghasts** in tattered court finery sparring here. One ghast wears *slippers of spider climbing*.

2. Tapestry Room

Four tattered tapestries of the Sword Baron hang here, each depicting him with a different legendary sword in hand.

You rang? The center of the room is under an *alarm* spell set to a ringing bell. A *detect magic* spell or **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** notices the spell. A second **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** disarms the alarm effect.

Development. When the alarm sounds, the sword cultists rush in from **Area 3a** and **3b**. One round later, the **sword baron fanatics** follow.

3a and 3b. Brazier Rooms

Charcoal braziers provide bright light. Behind each door are a **sword baron fanatic** and two **sword cultists**.

Sword Cultists. As **cultists**, except they have **Dexterity** 16 (+3), **AC** 13, **Dexterity saving throw +3**, and fight with Rapiers.

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

Sword Baron Fanatic. As **cult fanatic**, except they have **Dexterity** 16 (+3), **AC** 13, **Dexterity saving throw +5**, and fight with Rapiers (as sword cultists). They have Sword Magic.

Sword Magic. Any damage dealt by the fanatic's spells deals slashing magic instead and looks like magic swords.

4. False Coffin

A sealed stone coffin requires a **DC 20 Strength check** to open. Inside is a **troll** maddened by hundreds of blades fused into its flesh.

Bladed Flesh. A creature that makes a melee attack against the troll while within 5 feet of it must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**, or take 9 (2d8) slashing damage. Any creature that attempts to grapple the troll automatically takes this damage (**no save**) when they make the attempt and at the start of their turn while they grapple the troll.

Development. If the troll can be subdued and the blades removed with a **DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine) check**, it recovers and swears vengeance against the baron.

5. Porcine Idol

An enchanted statue of a bat-winged, porcine satyr carved from malachite (50 lb., 100 gp) rests on a pedestal under a crystal dome (**AC** 17, damage threshold 5, hp 10). A *hallow* spell with the *fear* effect (excluding fiends and undead) is centered on the statue. A **DC 15 Charisma saving throw** can resist the effect.

Development. Shattering the dome is noisy, alerting creatures in adjacent rooms.

6. Mage Study

This study is both laboratory and prison of **Grahm**, the bone-caster (as **mage**, but type: undead, wielding *wand of fear*). He is accompanied by his bodyguard, an **animated bone armor** (as **animated armor**; **immune** to necrotic damage, **vulnerable** to radiant damage). Grahm does not initiate hostilities, but defends himself.

Development. A **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces Grahm to help. He knows how to open the secret door to **Area 11** and the baron's abilities. He wants the baron destroyed and safe passage out of the dungeon.

7. Arrogance

A 12-foot-tall basalt statue of Jarzh (2,256 lb.) dominates this room.

Externalized Weakness. The statue is tied to the baron, acting as a receptacle for his *Sunlight Hypersensitivity*. If the statue is exposed to sunlight, Jarzh suffers the damage.

8. Well of Hungry Darkness

A well shaft intersects this room and descends another 25 feet. The wall of the well has crumbled, leaving a 3-foot-high stone lip above the floor. Above and below in the well lurk limpid pools of inky-**black slime full of blade fragments** (as **black puddings**; half damage is slashing, no *Split* feature). The two slimes attack anyone with a blade.

9. Planetarium

A large bronze orrery tracks the rising and setting of the sun.

The northeast column has an inconspicuous lever (**DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check**) that opens the secret door to **Area 11**.

10. Mujina Idol

An onyx statue of a thin man without a face sits under a crystal dome. The statue and dome behave as in **Area 5**.

11. Dolmen

The mechanism to open this secret door is in **Area 9**. Within the secret room is a two-ton stone slab of granite covered in arcane writing. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that the slab functions as a spell book. The spells animate dead and create undead are carved upon it.

12. Summoning Chamber

A permanent *magic circle* etched on the floor traps **Kkleva** (**psoglav demon** ◆). If freed, the demon is willing to reinstate the *Sunlight Hypersensitivity* on the baron.

13. Well of Hungry Death

This well has a 3-foot-high guard wall around it, and descends 50 feet. The **Sword Baron** (**vampire spawn** without *Sunlight Hypersensitivity*) lurks within the well. One sword hangs on the wall in each cardinal direction (**N:** *vicious longsword*; **E:** *+1 scimitar*; **S:** *giant slayer greatsword*; **W:** *flame tongue longsword*). The sword baron mentally controls the swords as **flying swords** while he exists.

The baron has fused his right hand's fingers with blades. He replaces *Grab* with *Sword Hand* and has *Improved Swordbane*.

Sword Hand. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage, plus the target must succeed its choice of a **DC 17 Strength** or **Dexterity saving throw**, or drop an item held.

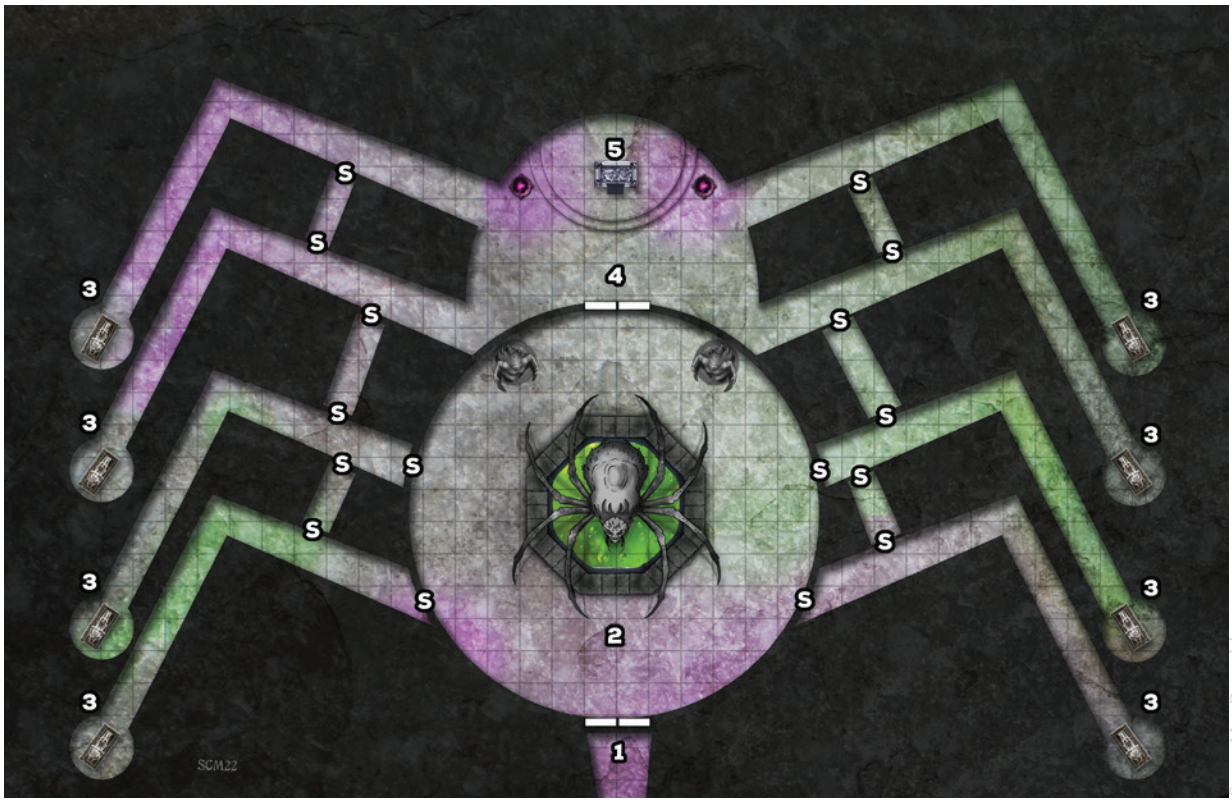
Improved Swordbane. As *Swordbane*, but he increases his AC by 4 instead.

Coffin. At the well's bottom is the baron's iron coffin, which requires a **DC 20 Strength check** to open (**advantage** with proper tool, such as crowbar). Inside are soil, 140 pp and two onyx gems (50 gp each).

4-5 Characters

Level 5

Urban



Sean MacDonald

Floor Is Spiders

Claire Stricklin

The demon Yx'larak has waited for untold centuries. An ancient pact binds it to the will of long-dead matrons, and the foul creature maintains its end of the bargain: grant the blessings of the Spider Queen to any that somehow prove themselves worthy. Yx'larak doesn't accept that it's his fault nobody has survived the challenge. But the demon is patient; despite the stymied drow of a bygone era leaving the chambers to rot, it is only a matter of time until they are rediscovered. While scores of ancient drow failed to impress Yx'larak, maybe new challengers will do better?

The Floor is (Literally) Spiders

Yx'larak believes there is wisdom to be gleaned from arachnids. For example, why settle for crawling upon a single surface when perfectly good walls and ceilings are available? From the moment the doors in **Area 1** open, the entire dungeon floor is covered in a 1-foot-thick carpet of spiders. This counts as difficult terrain. When a creature either enters a floor space for the first time on a turn, or starts its turn standing on the floor, it suffers a *Spider Bite* attack.

Spider Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) piercing damage. The target must make a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw**, taking 1 poison damage on a failed save.

The swarm never climbs to attack creatures on a non-floor surface. The 15-foot-high ceilings are covered in stalactites, requiring a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check** to climb up, and the rough walls require a **DC 8 check**. Being damaged when climbing requires a check at the same **DC** to hang on (characters under the effect of *spider climb* gain **advantage** on these checks). Effects that deal damage to an area clear the spiders for one round, after which the space refills.

1. Spidal Wave (CR 4)

The Approach. As the party approaches the doors to **Area 1**, a voice like broken violin strings greets them: *"Welcome, cadets! Who among you will accept the blessing of the Spider Queen? Trust me, you're going to need it."* This is of course Yx'larak, who can see, hear, and speak through all the spiders. A warlock using the *Voice of the Chain Master* eldritch invocation can also do this.

The Gift. After this question, a single black widow spider skulks from the seam between the doors. A glowing green substance, radiating transmutation magic, drips from its mandibles. It moves cautiously toward the party. Anyone who lets themselves be bitten automatically takes 1 poison damage and is affected by *spider climb* for the duration of the adventure.

The Doors. These heavy, ancient doors require a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** to open, although they burst apart once all adventurers have chosen to be bitten (or not) and a veritable tidal wave of spiders surges forth to cover the floor.

2. Eight-Legged Rodeo (CR 5)

Both of Us Always Lie. The hollow statues by the door to **Area 4** depict two grinning ettercaps. The spiders within proclaim in Yx'larak's voice, "*One of us always tells the truth, and one of us always lies. Ask us anything you like, then nobody dies!*" Both are inveterate liars. Yx'larak uses these statues to teach the value of deception and mistrust. They willingly serve as 10-foot mobile platforms, with Yx'larak's spiders shifting the statues about the chamber by request, only to move them again at the worst possible moment.

Mechanical Spider. As the "ettercaps" explain, the chamber's central statue is a mechanical puppet operated by tens of thousands of spiders. To open the sealed doors to **Area 4**, a creature must remain on the back of the bucking spider for two consecutive rounds by making a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks** each round. Failing either means falling into the font of infinite venomous spiders below.

Upon success, a small hatch in the spider's back pops open, but the doors to **Area 4** remain shut. Yx'larak's statues "forgot" to mention that a relic blessed by a drow matron must be offered to the statue. Then the doors will open.

Secret Doors. Secret doors in this dungeon are found and opened with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, as the spiders are slightly "shallower" near the threshold. Alternatively, the doors in this room (and only in this room) spring open when the statues admit their "forgetfulness." In either case, when one of the doors opens, all four do so.

3. Failed Cadets (CR 7)

Halfsies. Each crypt contains half a drider. The top and bottom crypts hold the upper body of a slain drow, while middle crypts house the legs and abdomen of a giant spider. When the secret doors in **Area 2** open, all pieces animate and work to reunite with their other halves, crawling to the secret "connector tunnels" in each area at a rate of 20 feet per round. While separate, treat these halves as **zombies** and **giant spiders** respectively. Unless stopped, the pieces form **driders** (61 hp each). Canny adventurers may sidestep **Area 2** by venturing through these connector tunnels. Creatures from the dungeon's "lower legs" will not follow them.

Crypts of the Failed. Each of the four lower crypts holds one of the following items beneath its shifting spider-floor: some *boots of Elvenkind*, a *cloak of Elvenkind*, a *dagger of venom*, and some *drow slippers of spider climbing*. (N.B., this last one is <u>not</u> the standard magic item. Instead, the wearer can: more easily "climb spiders"; has **immunity** to spider-floors; and makes checks to ride the statue in **Area 2** with **advantage**). All can be offered to the mechanical spider in **Area 2**.

4. The Demon's Lair (CR 8)

Yx'larak waits in the baleful light of unholy braziers, hoping for the defeat that will trigger its return to the infinite planes. It even offers the party a short rest before their climactic duel.

Treat Yx'larak as a **Leng spider** ◆ with the fiend (demon) type and the following abilities:

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Yx'larak fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Legendary Actions. Yx'larak 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. Yx'larak regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Go Web!. Yx'larak makes a *Web* attack as a **giant spider**.

Arachnid Aura. Yx'larak makes a **Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Floored (Costs 2 Actions). Yx'larak triggers a *reverse gravity* effect throughout **Area 4**. This has no effect on creatures under a *spider climb* effect, but it does cause all the spiders to fall up onto the new floor.

5. Boon of the Spider Queen

The Altar. The altar in this chamber opens once Yx'larak is defeated. Creatures who accepted the boon in **Area 1** gain one of the following abilities:

- Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.
- A climb speed of 20 feet.
- Tremorsense with a range of 10 feet.
- A *Web* attack as a **giant spider** (1/day as a bonus action).
- The *find familiar* cantrip (spider only).

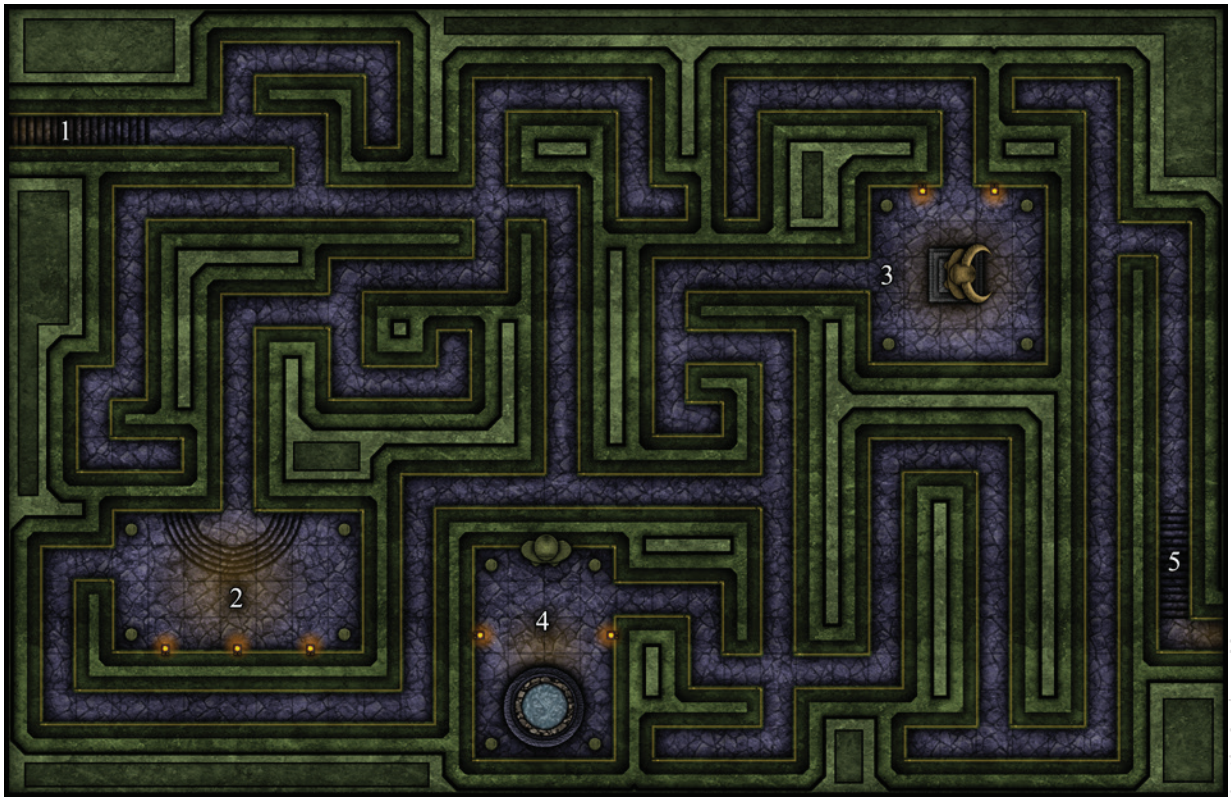


Mates Laurentiu

5 Characters

Levels 4-6

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Hadrim's Maze

Michael O. Holland

Hadrim is an accomplished wizard with an embarrassing problem. He has a reputation for training the greatest magic users and the tests he develops for his students enjoy almost the same renown as his incredible exploits. The most famous test is Hadrim's Maze, through which apprentices must navigate to three shrines to procure three gifts before exiting. The task sounds simple, but few pass on their first attempt.

Recently, Hadrim foolishly agreed to allow one of his less promising apprentices to enter the maze, with disastrous consequences, as a summoning spell went haywire and infested the maze with "multicolored flying slugs." The creatures compromised the magic of the maze, forcing Hadrim to save his apprentice with teleportation magic, which caused further damage. Now Hadrim needs professional help to clean up the mess.

Hadrim gives the adventurers three tasks. First, they must locate and restore the three shrines. Second, they must find the creatures and remove them. Finally, they must find the three gifts. These are necessary to exit the maze. Hadrim informs them the gifts are an *amulet of health*, a *cloak of protection*, and a *+1 wand of the war mage*. The adventurers may keep them.

The **arcanaphages** infesting the maze can be destroyed or shepherded with a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** out of the maze, provided the party has the gifts.

Roll 1d4 to determine a random encounter every 100 feet of movement.

1 An **arcanaphage** appears. The first time this result is rolled, the creature is caressing the *amulet of health* on the floor. It has been drained of magic.

2 A wave of wild magic washes over the party and a random character is transformed into a **giant frog** for one hour as per the *polymorph* spell with **no saving throw**.

3 A magic mouth appears and asks them to explain the fundamentals of three random schools of magic. Encourage your players to answer these questions in character. If the players are not comfortable roleplaying or do not possess enough information to answer, a character can explain a school of magic to the *magic mouth*'s satisfaction with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. If two of the three schools are explained correctly, the *cloak of protection* appears at their feet.

4 The maze shakes, the glowing runes flicker, and light dust falls from above. The adventurers must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** or suffer 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage from falling debris on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.



1. Entrance

The corridors and chambers of the maze are lined with pitted stone walls covered in glowing runes. There are no light sources in the hallways, but the shrines are well lit.

A *magic mouth* appears and says in Common, "*Alright apprentices, here are the rules. Hidden in the maze are three shrines. Each shrine has a gift you must retrieve to exit the maze. Hadrim has taught you everything you need to know to complete this test. Good luck!*"

2. Shrine of Remembrance

A **dark father** floats about the room, thrashing at two **arcanaphages**. The undead creature is bound to this chamber and cannot flee the monsters. It screams in anguish and begs for help. Once the arcanaphages are dealt with, the dark father collapses to the floor and sobs.

It explains it is not permitted to feed on Hadrim's apprentices and satisfies itself with stories about the lives of Hadrim's apprentices. When the arcanaphages fed, they also took its memories. The adventurers must assuage the undead creature's suffering by giving it a new memory. A well-roleplayed yarn or a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check** allows a character to retell their life story in a compelling way and restore the dark father's sense of purpose. When the character finishes their tale, the dark father asks in Common, "*And how do you think you will die?*" No matter how the character respond, the dark father is satisfied, and the Shrine of Remembrance is restored.

3. Shrine of Perseverance

The adventures hear mumbling as they approach this chamber, but the words are gibberish. A large bull-headed statue once stood in the room, but it has been knocked to the ground and broken into several large pieces. Below the chest of the bull, the statue is a solid pillar covered in arcane runes. Any creature within hearing must make a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** or suffer the effects of the *confusion* spell. A new saving throw may be attempted once per minute. Two **arcanaphages** cling to the statue and feed voraciously on its magic.

Once the statue is free from the creatures, the babbling stops. To restore the shrine, the pieces must be replaced on the pedestal in the correct order. Although the top of the statue is easy to recognize, assembling the lower, pillar section is not so obvious. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the correct order to reassemble the statue. A successful **DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check** is needed to lift the pieces of the statue into place. Finally, the statue must be infused with magic to completely restore it – possible either with the expenditure of a spell slot, or a successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. This restores the shrine.

If the statue was assembled in the wrong order, the magic infused in the statue backlashes and does 3 (1d6) force damage to all creatures within 30 feet.

4. Shrine of Ingenuity

This shrine is in complete disarray when the party arrives. Glowing runes matching the ones in the hallways have come loose and float around haphazardly. Meanwhile, a water elemental thrashes about. If the **water elemental** is destroyed, it reforms after one round. A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the floating runes can be used to herd the water elemental back into the well. Once on the well, a rune must be quickly returned to the walls. As an action, a character attempting to herd the elemental can move it five feet with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom check**. Once the elemental is completely on the well, a character adjacent to a wall can place their rune on the wall as an action to bind the elemental. Once bound, the remaining runes disappear and reappear on the walls. Binding the elemental restores the shrine.

With a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check**, a character finds the *+1 wand of the war mage* hidden behind the well.

5. Exit?

A *magic mouth* appears and asks to see the three gifts from the shrines. If they do not have all three gifts, the *magic mouth* tells them they cannot leave yet. When presented with the gifts, it says in Common, "*Well done! Most apprentices don't make it this far on their first try.*" Hadrim asks the adventurers to keep this matter private.

Herman Lau

5
Characters

Level
5

Underworld



Tommi Salama

Blood Exile

William Fischer

Deep in the Underworld lies Gor'Hashad, a city ruled by a race of bat-like, living vampires known as the ahool. Though savage hunters by nature, the ahool of Gor'Hashad have adopted a more settled way of life, trading mosscraft with their neighbors, rearing herds of Underworld boars, and relying on indentured blood servants to slake their unending thirst.

After killing another ahool's blood servant, Tor'olog and his underlings were forced to flee Gor'Hashad for the surface world. The exiles took refuge in a cave system near a little-used trade road, and for years ambushed the occasional humanoid traveler for their sustenance. More recently, a caravan of dwarven merchants unwittingly made camp near the entrance to Tor'olog's caves. When the ahools discovered the caravan, they ambushed the merchants before the dwarves could mount a defense.

A local tavern owner hires the heroes to track down the missing caravan, which was scheduled to deliver a shipment of ale nearly two weeks ago. The adventure begins as the party discovers the dwarves' campsite, located just outside Tor'olog's caves.

1. Wrecked Campsite

The caravan's freight—a dozen casks of hardy dwarven ale worth 5 gp each—lies scattered about the campsite. Each cask weighs 5 lbs. The casks are gouged with claw marks but are otherwise intact. At the GM's discretion, the heroes may also find up to 100 gp worth of mundane supplies, including bedrolls, rations, rope, and various tools. A search inside the wagons reveals a ledger (written in Dwarvish) that confirms this is the caravan the party seeks. Though the wagons remain functional, the mounts that once pulled them are, like the dwarven merchants, nowhere to be found.

The ahools' attack took the dwarves largely by surprise. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** uncovers hints of a brief struggle (a few blood spatters, a broken dagger, etc.). Clawed footprints and accompanying drag marks lead toward the mouth of the caves.

2. Cave Entrance

The entrance to Tor'olog's lair is 4 feet high, but the passage opens into a larger cavern after a short distance. A total of six **swarms of bats** cling to the cavern's ceiling. To pass through the cavern without rousing the bats, each character must make a successful **DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check**. Alternatively, a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals local insects and

plants that can be used to lure the swarms out of the cave. The bats attack if disturbed. Though the bats pose little threat to the party, sounds of combat here alert the ahooling hunters in **Area 3**.

3. Feeding Grounds

Moisture drips from the ceiling above, mixing with bloodstains that paint the cavern's floor. A single dwarven merchant, gagged and bound with rope, struggles against his bonds across from the cavern entrance. The desiccated corpses of the dwarf's companions and their horses lie scattered about him.

Tor'olog and his followers killed and drained all but one of the dwarven merchants here. Tor'olog chose to leave the final merchant alive with the vague intention of keeping him as a blood servant. If the dwarf (as a **commoner**) spots the characters, he shakes his head in fear, as if warning the party against some hidden danger.

Five **ahooling hunters**, still bloated from their recent feast, doze in nooks along the walls. If the characters avoided the bats in **Area 2**, the party may catch the hunters by surprise. Otherwise, the ahoolings remain hidden as the characters approach, and require a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice in time. Once the party has moved into the cavern, the ahoolings leap from their nooks to block the characters' retreat.

A search of the dwarven corpses reveals a total of 54 gp and 112 sp. If released from his bonds, the surviving merchant introduces himself as **Jurin Steinhand**. Jurin is unarmed, but if given a weapon he is eager to avenge the deaths of his brethren.

4. Tor'olog's Lair

If **Tor'olog** (**ahool**) hears combat in **Area 3**, he casts a *fog cloud* across the mouth of this passage and waits for the party to approach. Otherwise, the characters find the hulking ahool hanging upside down above a mound of bones at the end of the tunnel. Note that because of Tor'olog's blindsight, the *fog cloud* does not impede the ahool's senses.

Tor'olog is more savage than cunning. He has all but forgotten his previous life in the Underworld and cares for little beyond violence and blood. Once battle with the characters begins, the ahool fights to the death.

As a former living vampire, Tor'olog has the following feature:

Blood Eruption (Recharge 5–6). As a bonus action when he deals damage to a creature within 30 feet, Tor'olog can conjure forth a burst of the Red River That Connects All, an eruption of blood from the target creature's wounds. All creatures except Tor'olog within a 15-foot-radius sphere of the injured creature must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**, or be knocked prone by the erupting blood. Any creature that enters the area or ends its turn in it, or that tries to stand up, also must succeed on this saving throw or fall prone. The slippery blood remains for 1d3 rounds before evaporating.



Most of the bones at the end of the tunnel are from lone travelers who ran afoul of Tor'olog and his brood. However, a thorough search reveals an unusual set of remains near the bottom of the mound. The bones are those of Ekiza Mapis, a bounty hunter from the drow city of Holoth. Shortly after they realized Tor'olog had fled their city, the rulers of Gor'Hashad hired Ekiza to track down the fugitive ahool. Unfortunately for Ekiza, she underestimated the ferocity of Tor'olog and his followers, and died as a result.

Ekiza still wears a suit of *+1 studded leather armor* and carries a poisoned dagger (1 dose of wyvern poison) in a boot sheath. Folded inside one of her belt pouches is a sheaf of papers written in Undercommon. The papers outline the details of Ekiza's contract with the rulers of Gor'Hashad. As payment for returning Tor'olog to Gor'Hashad, the ahool promised Ekiza a bounty of 500 gp, as well an even more valuable reward: a permit to visit the city's vvor hunting caves for up to 7 days. The papers are signed by Gor'Hashad's ruler, an ahool named Gram'haht.

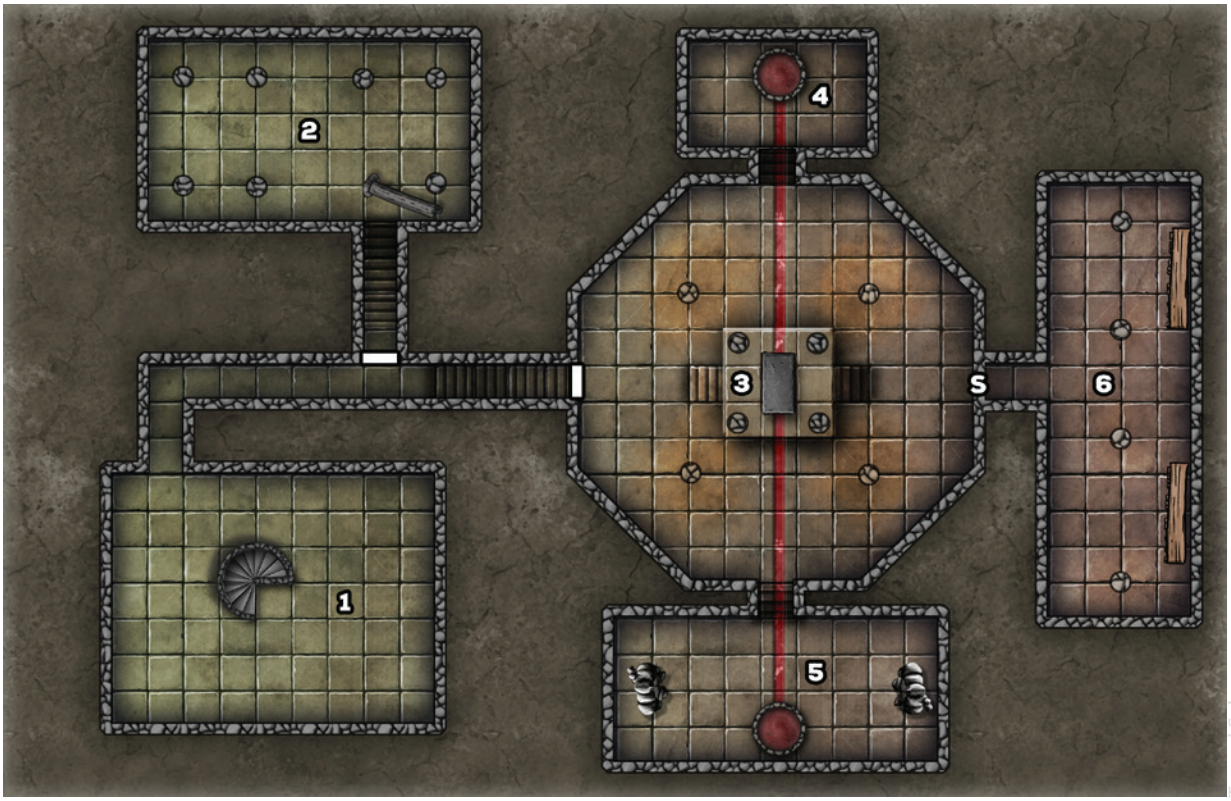
Depending on the nature of the campaign, the characters may never have heard of Gor'Hashad or its living vampire inhabitants. However, if the party delivers Tor'olog (dead or alive) to the ahool city, Gram'haht fulfills the terms of Ekiza's contract. If the characters prove themselves in the vvor hunting caves or otherwise impress Gram'haht, the ahool may hire the party for future missions in the Underworld.

Mates Laurentiu

5
Characters

Level
5

Arctic



Tommi Salama

Klavekian Blood Runs Thick

Michael O. Holland

The Klavek Kingdom's conquest of Vikmordere Valley was costly, heavily stained by the blood of its own soldiers. When the fishing village of Rybalka was taken, the Klavekians spared those who did not oppose them and ruthlessly crushed all dissidents. They lauded their own mercy, while many Vikmordere seethed in secrecy. Time tempered the fires in many hearts, but not in all. Kamzu was a sage and devotee of the Ancestor Spirit, a deity of ancestors, nature, wilderness, and wisdom worshiped by the Vikmordere. She hid innocents in her cellars while her husband and son died in battle against Klavekian soldiers above. In her grief, she abandoned the teachings of the Ancestor Spirit. In time, the shadows began to whisper sinister secrets to her, and she planned her revenge.

Decades passed and Kamzu has constructed a special **dissimortuum** ◆ to track and slay those of Klavekian ancestry, the culmination of her necromantic studies. Since the beginning of the summer, Kamzu has released the dissimortuum to claim a new victim once a tenday, dragging the unfortunate victim back to her lair to create more dissimortuum.

GM Note. The preliminary investigation can be used to introduce the party to Rybalka's colorful characters, or it can be skipped entirely.

Mayor Igor Leonid of Rybalka is at a loss. His soldiers have been unable to find the missing people of the village, or the culprit for that matter. Only bloody signs of a struggle are left behind, and no discernible tracks. The soldiers have failed to realize the dissimortuum is crawling up buildings and crossing rooftops to traverse the village—if the characters check the rooftops it only takes a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check** to notice the trail. Mayor Leonid has recruited the adventurers to investigate and put a stop to the murders, offering 500 gp to each adventurer for the task.

If the party is stuck, the mayor can offer few clues. The murders are occurring once every tenday and only at night. Only those of Klavekian ancestry are targeted. If he is correct, the next murder will occur in the next few nights. The party can explore and familiarize themselves with Rybalka while investigating the abductions. On the second or third night, the dissimortuum emerges from Kamzu's lair to hunt. If a character succeeds at a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, they spot the creature crossing the rooftops. With the mystery of the dissimortuum's movements revealed, it only takes a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check** to track the creature to Kamzu's hut. The hut sports an obvious trapdoor leading to a spiral staircase going down.

1. Bloody Guardians

At the bottom of the stairs, bones and fleshy scraps litter the floor. Kamzu knew the dissimortuum would eventually draw attention to her hidden lair. From the leftovers of its work, she constructed three **bloody bones** and hid the creatures amidst the decaying detritus here. It takes a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the well-concealed undead.

2. Abandoned Oratory

A 15-foot stairway descends into the darkened confines of an abandoned oratory. A fallen, stone pillar partially blocks the egress from the staircase. If a character succeeds at a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check**, they can climb over the pillar or roll it far enough to no longer block the path. The room is covered in a thick layer of dust and heavy cobwebs dance on a soft breeze from the staircase, with decayed and blackened flora underneath the layer of dust. If the adventurers search the chapel, they uncover a relief carved into the western wall depicting a ghostly woman drifting over a field of flowers, surrounded by reindeer and elk. If a character succeeds at a **DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check**, they recognize the depiction of the Ancestor Spirit of the Vikmordere. Reciting a prayer to the Ancestor Spirit grants the party the benefits of a *bless* spell for 1 minute. A character can only benefit from this blessing once per 24 hours.

3. Altar

Standing in the center of this octagonal room is a bloody table on a raised dais. The **dissimortuum** towers over the table, working to shape another of its kind from the corpses of its victims. If the heroes previously injured or destroyed the dissimortuum, Kamzu has restored it to full hit points.

Two narrow channels guide dripping blood to flow into **Areas 4** and **5**. The dissimortuum gains:

Crimson Call. The dissimortuum can use its action to touch the bloody channel. If it does, it summons a **crimson mist** from **Area 4**. It can control only one crimson mist at a given time.

Dealing a total of 10 or more fire damage directly to the channel (hits automatically) evaporates enough blood to prevent the use of *Crimson Call*.

If a character succeeds at a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they find scratches in the floor revealing the secret door in the east wall.

4. Blood Cauldron

The blood flowing into this room from **Area 3** rolls up over the side of a large cauldron of its own volition and pours into the boiling cauldron. A faint, red haze fills the room, granting half cover to all inside the room. When the first character enters the room, the haze compresses into a final **crimson mist** and attacks.

Profane Cauldron. Any crimson mist that ends its turn in this room regains 6 (1d8+2) hit points, as it visibly draws substance from the cauldron. The cauldron can be tipped over with a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check**, spilling the blood and ending the effect.

5. Room

Like **Area 4**, the blood from **Area 3** pours itself into a large cauldron but this blood does not boil, and as such does not aid the crimson mists. Standing on the east and west sides of the room are two large statues, each a warrior in tribal clothing. With a **DC 15 Intelligence (History) check** a character recognizes the statues as Vikmordere raiders. If the party has seen Kamzu's journal (**Area 6**), they recognize the statues as her husband and son.

6. Hidden Library

Kamzu (**necromancer**) hides here in her library when she becomes aware of intruders. She uses her abilities to try to escape at an opportune moment—either by sneaking out (**Stealth** +2) or by waiting until the party leaves. She only fights if she cannot flee and refuses to surrender. If her hiding spot is not found, she waits until the party leaves and absconds to the Dark Woods to the north.

Nestled amidst the books of necromancy and spell components on the shelves is a leather journal bound by braids of human hair. The journal contains all the information about Kamzu's background, including hints regarding the dark spirits whispering to her.



Mates Laurentiu

3-4 Characters

Levels 5-6

Coast



Sean MacDonald

Shadows Off Shore

Grant Simpson

Port Tread is a frontier port surrounded by a vast, primeval jungle. Recently, ships from Treadwell Shipping, the town's largest shipping company, have been found only a few miles offshore with their entire crews either dead or missing but their cargos untouched.

Dirk Duvall, the head of Treadwell, has offered the party a reward (50 gp) if it can solve and stop these delays in his business. Though he suspects the indigenous otterfolk who live in the jungle or his competitor, in truth a vengeful de ogen is to blame.

The Investigation. The party must first investigate the attacks. Duvall's message to the party suggests meeting with him first at his Port Tread manor. The manor is guarded by two **veterans** who lead the party to Duvall's study, where he describes the attacks and mentions three avenues of investigation: a recently attacked ship, the otterfolk, and his competitor Nehir.

The Recovered Ship. A recently-attacked ship has been returned to the docks, and Duvall gives the party permission to inspect it. The ship itself, along with its cargo, is largely undamaged. The corpses of the crew have been placed in the hold and covered.

A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** of the ship and cargo reveals no signs of it having been physically boarded. A **DC 15 check** reveals light scorching on parts of the deck as well as the remnants of ash piles.

There are no obvious wounds on the corpses, but a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals that they seem withered, as if drained of their vitality and strength. The nearby dockworkers say the ship had set sail with nearly twice as many crew members as the number of dead recovered.

The Otterfolk. Duvall's main suspects are the local otterfolk. He describes them as savage creatures who have not taken kindly to the residents of Port Tread or its industry. He gives the party a map of the surrounding jungle with known otterfolk villages marked by Xs to help them navigate.

The Competitor. Duvall also suspects his commercial rival, Nehir, of being the culprit. He mentions that Nehir likes to frequent the local tavern after dark with his friends.

Nehir is an honorable but stubborn halfling who dislikes the shady way Duvall conducts his business. He refuses to give the party a straight answer at first, but a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **(Intimidation) check** prompts Nehir to say:

In truth, you lot ought to be barking up the tree you come from. I've always believed a fair and honest hand is best for business, but Duvall's a different sort. Undercutting partners. Short-changing workers. And that's the folks he legally has to respect. The otterfolk have it worse from him. Their villages used to stretch all over the coastline, but not any longer. Not with Duvall's pirate ships sailing around.

If the party used persuasion, Nehir invites them to stay for drinks. He offers to look at their map and circle the otterfolk village where the attacks would most likely be launched from.

Traversing the Jungle

When attempting to travel through the jungle, one character must make a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check**. A success means they navigate safely through the jungle and reach an otterfolk village before the end of the day. A failure leaves them lost in the jungle for the night. The **DC** for the check decreases by 5 each day until they have succeeded and then resets. If Nehir marked their map before setting out, they can simply follow the coast to reach the correct village over the course of three days. Otherwise, after three successes they reach **Area 1**.

All the nearest otterfolk villages are abandoned, with some showing signs of fighting and looting. A **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the stamp of sailors' boots and torn insignias from Treadwell Shipping.

1. The Haunted Village

This otterfolk village has been abandoned. The huts are worn and slightly singed. There are clear signs of raiding from Duvall's ships, but a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a buried cache of 10 gp, a pound of salted, dried meat, and a dagger in one of the huts.

If the party arrives during the night four **shadows** are hiding around the tents waiting to strike. Otherwise, the shadows hide in the rocks of **Area 3** to avoid the sunlight.

2. The Dead Druid

The charred remains of an otterfolk lie in the wrecked central firepit. This is the corpse of the druid who became the de ogen. A wooden trident is clutched in its skeletal hands. Removing the trident calls forth the de ogen from the depths of the ocean. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the necrotic energy within the corpse.

The trident acts as a *staff of the woodlands*.

3. The Rocks

A wall of large, jagged rocks juts out from the beach. During the day, a group of four **shadows** hides within the gaps in the rock wall.

4. Otterboards

The otterfolk use these surfboards to travel far from shore and catch fish. These boards are haphazardly strewn across the beach, implying that they haven't been used for quite some time. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that the otterfolk would never be able to use these rotten boards to reach Duvall's ships.

5. The De Ogen and Overshadow

The De Ogen. During the day, the **de ogen** hides from the sun on the ocean floor. However, it emerges before the sun sets if prompted by the removal of the trident in **Area 2**. It is unable to be reasoned with, a creature of blind rage and anguish. If it appears while the party is currently in combat, it takes it turn at the end of the initiative order.

The Overshadow. The shadows created from the de ogen's ship attacks have collected into an **overshadow** which follows closely behind it. The overshadow takes its turn directly after the de ogen and prioritizes the weakest-looking party member.

Conclusion

Once the party has defeated the monsters, it can return to Duvall for the reward. If informed about the origins of the de ogen, Duvall refuses to believe that he had any part in creating it. No matter the evidence, he believes the otterfolk were solely responsible for creating the monster which attacked his ships.

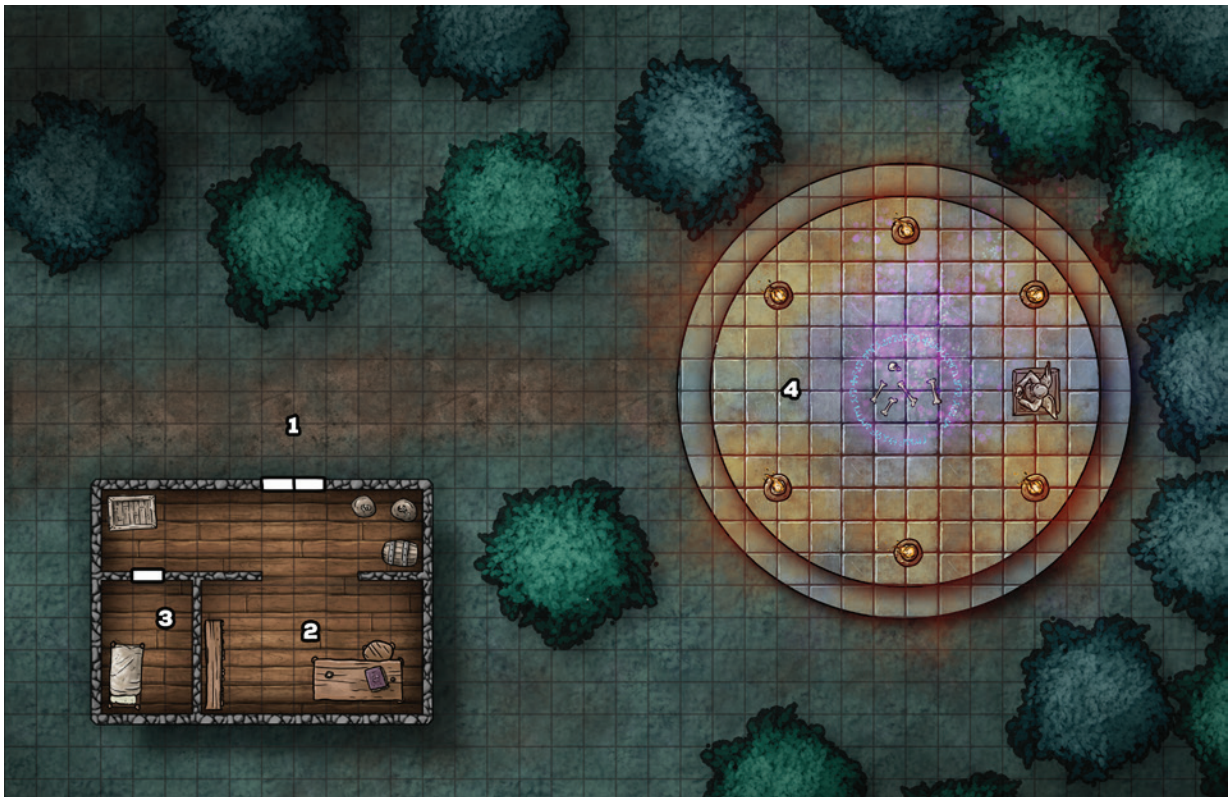


Mates Laurentiu

4 Characters

Levels 5-6

Planar/ Forest



Kobold-Napped!

Nico MacDougall

Piruva, a kobold wizard, has had enough of serving dragon masters. Using a ritual stolen from her previous master's hoard, she tried to create a twilit demiplane where kobolds could live in peace. Alas, she accidentally produced an unstable demiplane destined to collapse. Unwilling to accept failure, Piruva has a plan to fix what went wrong, and all it takes are some mortal souls.

Adventure Hooks

A servant of Piruva's previous master is convinced that Piruva and her fellow kobolds were kidnapped; after all, who'd quit the service of such a magnificent deity-like being? The servant offers 200 gp per kobold returned alive to the dragon's ministrations and to put to justice those dastardly kobold-nappers responsible. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check** notices scars and lesions on the servant, concealed with powder and clothing, indicating a cruel draconic master indeed. The servant is too afraid of the dragon to admit they are abused by their draconis master.

Some kobolds raided a nearby town, making off with supplies and six captives. The townsfolk tracked them to the nearby forest, but were repelled by fiery monsters guarding the area. They have promised 100 gp and a *potion of healing* to each adventurer if they can safely return the six captives.

Piruva's Demiplane

This adventure is split between two planes, the Material Plane and Piruva's demiplane. The demiplane has the following characteristics.

Carbon Copy. Piruva's demiplane is an exact replica of the location shown on the map. In the text, each area will appear twice. All '**A**' areas are on the Material Plane, while all '**B**' areas are on the demiplane.

Bounded Reality. Beyond what is depicted on the map, the demiplane tapers off into a black void. If someone moves into the void, they immediately appear on the opposite side of the map.

Perpetual Twilight. There is no sun in the sky, but the demiplane is constantly lit by dim light.

Demiplane Ritual. It takes Piruva five minutes to prepare each captive for the ritual, which then fills a brazier with purple fire on both the Material Plane and the demiplane. When all six braziers in **Area 4B** are lit, the ritual consumes the captives' souls, stabilizing the demiplane and creating a portal to the Material Plane. If the ritual is interrupted, the demiplane begins to tear itself apart, destroying itself completely in 10 minutes.

1A. Scorched Earth

A rough path in the dirt leads to a windowless stone building and a large circular stone dais. Three **firegeists** guard the building. Anyone who succeeds on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check** can successfully avoid their notice.

Firegeists. These elementals are bound to the Material Plane by a nearby arcane anchor in the form of an enchanted ruby worth 100 gp, a fact that is known to anyone who succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. Finding this anchor, which is buried in front of the door to the building, requires a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check**. *Detect magic* also detects the ruby's conjuration aura, as it is not buried deep. The firegeists are instantly banished if *dispel magic* is cast on the ruby.

1B. Road to Oblivion

A rough path in the dirt leads to the large stone dais in one direction, and a black void in the other. The words 'Piruva's Kobold Commune' are carved in Draconic runes above the door of the building.

2A. Kobold Cargo

A few containers half-full of rations sit in the entry room. Piruva's followers (one **swolbold kobold**, one **barbed kobold**, and six **kobolds**) sit around the table in the inner room, eating stolen rations and daydreaming about the home Piruva is building for them.

Piruva's Followers. Each of Piruva's followers is wearing an *amulet of demiplane transport*, which they use to travel to and from the demiplane to escape enemies and set up ambushes. If they hear the sounds of combat outside the building, one transports to the demiplane to warn Piruva while the others hide in **Area 3A** to ambush anyone who enters the building. Their primary goal is to distract the intruders while Piruva completes the ritual.

Amulet of Demiplane Transport

Wondrous item, uncommon

This amulet allows for transport between the Material Plane and Piruva's demiplane. When you activate the amulet as an action, you leave one plane and appear in the corresponding space on the other. If your destination is occupied, you instead arrive unharmed at a random location 5 feet away from your intended destination.

2B. Prisoner Quarters

Metal pegs are pounded into the floor and the smell of unwashed bodies fills the room.

3A. Kobold Quarters

A large bed occupies the back corner of this room, its sheets covered with kobold scales.

3B. Piruva's Room

A crumpled piece of paper lies on the floor next to the bed.

Discarded Ritual. The crumpled paper details a ritual for creating a stable demiplane, which has been annotated by Piruva in Draconic. Anyone who can read Draconic and succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** knows that this ritual would produce an unstable demiplane, while the annotations indicate a way to stabilize a demiplane using mortal souls. Anyone who succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** can modify the ritual to create a stable demiplane that requires rare material components and takes a year to prepare and cast, but that does not require mortal souls.

4A. Stone Dais

A 15-foot-diameter circle of glowing Draconic runes surrounded by six stone braziers occupies the center of the stone dais.

Runic Circle. This circle is part of the original demiplane ritual. A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that it is a non-functional portal to a demiplane.

Magic Investigation. If a character uses *detect magic* or a similar effect on the stone braziers, they can see a weak conjuration aura.

4B. Ritual Site

A terrified captive is bound in rusted manacles in front of each stone brazier. A kobold carves Draconic runes onto one of the captives while two **fire mephits** (use **steam mephits**) stand guard.

Bound Captives. A character using thieves' tools can use an action to pick the rusted manacles' lock, opening it with a successful **DC 13 Dexterity check**. Alternatively, a character can break the manacles with a successful **DC 18 Strength check**.



Piruva. This **kobold wizard** is committed to creating a place where kobolds can escape tyrannical dragons. She is distrustful of non-kobolds but is willing to listen to a character that succeeds on a **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Deception) check** and presents a viable alternative to stabilizing the demiplane with mortal souls. A character with the improved ritual (see **Area 3B**) makes this check with **advantage**.

Award a bonus of 1,500 XP if the party managed to save all captives without killing a single kobold, and if they helped free Piruva and her allies from their draconic yoke by creating the sanctuary demiplane without mortal souls.

Dean Spencer

4
Characters

Levels
5-6

Forest/
Grassland



Tommi Salama

Troll Toll

Nico MacDougall

The Glamergreen River bridge used to be controlled by brigands who demanded tolls from travelers; the bandits did maintain the bridge, though, and their toll was reasonable. Dealing with the threats of the wilderness, however, was hard on the outlaws. This changed recently, when a group of lake trollkin, driven to desperation by their village's poverty, took control of the bridge with the help of a hungry lake troll. The brigands quickly capitulated and now toil for their trollkin masters—safer than before, but also no longer masters of their own fate. It's still a mutually beneficial arrangement, though: The trollkin send money and supplies back to their village, the troll gets free meals, and the brigands get to live.

Adventure Hook

Saheila Veritio, a human merchant whose goods were impounded on the bridge, has hired the adventurers to eliminate the trollkin. She tells the characters that the brigands who once ran the bridge are potential allies, as they are resentful of the trollkin for taking "their" bridge. She promises the characters 50 gp each for clearing the trollkin from the bridge, an additional 50 gp each if they retrieve her covered wagon and wares undamaged, and a personal referral that will get the characters discounts and access to specialty items from her fellow merchants in the area.

Approaching the Bridge

It is up to the players whether they attack during the day or night. If they approach during the day, trollkin guards are on the lookout for travelers and the brigands are in **Area 4**. If the characters approach at night, the brigands are asleep in the building south of **Area 4** and the trollkin on guard make **Wisdom (Perception) checks** with **disadvantage** due to the lack of light (even despite their darkvision; they are not disciplined enough). **Grombaz** the **lake troll** is always asleep beneath the bridge in **Area 2**. Characters can also cross the river out of sight of the trollkin, but it runs faster farther away from the bridge and requires a successful **DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check** to swim across without being swept downstream. If a character is swept away, they can reach the shore, but incur one level of exhaustion. Saheila can provide this information to the characters due to her familiarity with the region.

Lake Trollkin. All trollkin in this adventure are lake trollkin (*Regeneration* feature does not work if they take cold or fire damage, instead of acid or fire damage) with slimy green skin and hair that looks like algae. Anyone who succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check** knows that lake trollkin skin does not react well to extreme temperatures (hinting at the damage types that nullify their regeneration).

1. North Bank

A group of three lake trollkin stand guard at a wooden bridge spanning a gently flowing river. They demand a hefty toll of 10 gp per person, 20 gp per horse, before allowing travelers to cross.

Trollkin Guards. Two **lake trollkin grunts** are always guarding the bridge. The other guard is either **Dorza**, a **lake trollkin reaver** that guards the bridge during the day, or **Korkon**, a **lake trollkin shaman** that guards the bridge at night. Dorza takes out her frustration having to stand out in the hot sun on travelers using the bridge, while Korkon likes to engage travelers in conversation before allowing them to cross. While on guard duty, Korkon and Dorza have a bone whistle that they use as their first action in combat to wake up Grombaz (see **Area 2**) if they are in trouble.

2. Bridge Over Troll-bled Waters

The Glamergreen Bridge rises about 10 feet above the Glamergreen River. Strewn across its length are empty crates and barrels, as well as a covered wagon. A rank smell rises through several broken planks that dot the bridge's span.

Grombaz. Grombaz is the **lake troll** that Korkon allied with. He spends all his time asleep under the bridge, waking only for food or if the trollkin need him to intimidate some troublesome travelers. If either Korkon or Dorza blows their whistle, he takes 1d6 + 4 rounds to wake up and emerge from beneath the bridge.

Broken Planks. Grombaz broke these planks by standing up too fast and hitting his head on them. Anyone that succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** knows that these planks were recently broken by a powerful force hitting them from below.

Saheila's Goods. Saheila's caravan was taken from her the last time she attempted to cross the bridge. The covered wagon contains 4 *potions of healing*, 10 bottles of perfume (5 gp each), 20 bolts of fabric (5 lb., 10 gp each), and a ledger detailing Saheila's business dealings. Anyone who succeeds on a **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check** finds a secret compartment beneath the driver's seat containing four pieces of jewelry each worth 100 gp.

3. South Bank

Two buildings flank the road on the south shore of the Glamergreen River.

Sleeping Trollkin. Three off-duty trollkin rest in the building west of the road: two **lake trollkin grunts** and either **Korkon** the **lake trollkin shaman**, who sleeps during the day, or **Dorza** the **lake trollkin reaver**, who sleeps at night. If the trollkin are roused to action, they spend 1 minute readying their weapons and armor before exiting the building.

4. Wooden Docks

Two boats tied up to small wooden piers bob in the river.

Brigands. **Boris** is a half-elf **bandit captain** and the leader of the brigands (four human **thugs**) who once controlled the bridge. Korkon allowed the brigands to stick around and share in the profits in return for transporting supplies to their trollkin village downstream and basic maintenance duties. During the day, they can be found by the boats, with Boris watching as his henchmen load them with supplies. At night, they are asleep in the building south of the docks. The characters can approach the brigands before engaging in hostilities with the trollkin and convince them to help with a successful **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, or to leave the area entirely with a **DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check**. A character has **advantage** on such checks if they offer to pay the brigands or appeal to their pride. If the brigands are not convinced to either help or flee, they hang back when combat begins, hoping to strike at a weakened foe and reclaim the bridge for themselves.

The Zephyr Blade

If the party engages in conversation with Boris and his thugs beyond simply trying to persuade them to help or flee, they may come to learn the story of the *zephyr blade*.

How did a would-be pirate king end up a toll bridge brigand? The damn zephyr blade, *that's how.*

If you follow this river to the coast you will come to a small fishing village. In the town center there is a worn statue of a woman, hand raised as if holding a torch... or a sword. But that hand is empty.

The inscription at her feet reads only, "Zephyr Blade of the Pirate King." With her other arm, the statue points inland, upriver. But a galley draws too deep to sail upriver. As I began preparations for an expedition inland, my crew prepared for mutiny. Apparently pirates prefer water to land, and they don't like kings.

What's the zephyr blade? *No idea. But I'll tear that statue down if I ever see it again.*

If a character visits the village, observes the statue, and succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, they discover the statue points inland, upriver, directly at a mountain peak. At the source of the Glamergreen, there is a lake in the mountains. On a barren island at the lake's center, lodged in an anvil stone, stands the *zephyr blade*. Its reputation among pirates is of more value than any enchantment upon it, as evidenced by the bounty one can collect for it on the Black Market (see page 298), that is, if one can figure out how to remove it from the stone.

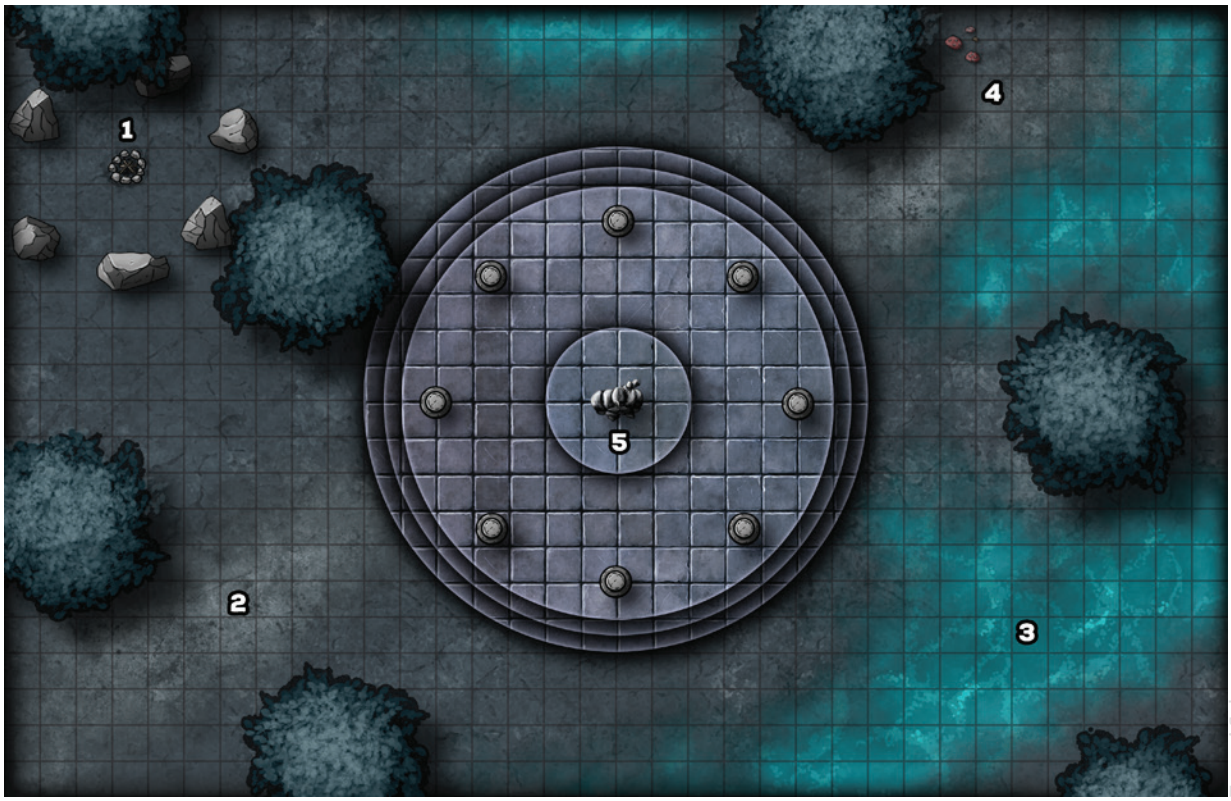


Bruno Balixa

3-5 Characters

Level 5-6

Forest/ Urban



Tommi Salama

Kappamaki

David Schwartz

The town of Kirogawa lies along a tributary that flows down from the nearby hills. A trail running parallel to the stream leads up to a pagoda shrine maintained by a small group of priests. Townsfolk often bring food and small trinkets to the shrine as offerings to their ancestors and to local spirits.

Not long ago, a group of kappas discovered the shrine and began stealing the offerings when no one was looking. Unfortunately, they soon discovered extorting offerings was even more lucrative than scavenging them. The kappas eventually overran the shrine, driving off its caretakers. The desperate townsfolk ask the characters to free their shrine from the greedy fey.

There are thirteen kappas camping in the shrine's central pagoda, far too many for the characters to take on at once.

The kappas are greedy and mischievous, but have no interest in killing anyone (the dead can't bring them food). Characters who are knocked out are dragged to the edge of the village.

If a kappa is reduced to less than 10 hit points, it attempts to flee to the water and swim away. If the kappa leader, Mizujo, is defeated, the kappas do not return to the shrine. Kappas do not join combat in other areas unless attacked at range. Mizujo only helps either by casting spells or by sending other kappas in her stead. She always keeps at least four kappas with her.

1. Stone Circle

Six steles, carved with prayers to various gods and spirits, encircle an open fire pit. Normally, the fire pit is used to burn incense as part of a cleansing ritual before visitors enter the shrine.

If the characters avoid the main trail and come to this area by way of the forest, they can avoid the notice of the kappas if each character succeeds at a **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check**, they have **advantage** on this check at night. Otherwise, the kappas spot the characters, and Mizujo (**Area 5**) sends four **kappas** to investigate (or as many as would leave her with four by her side).

A variety of ceremonial items (holy symbols, censers, etc.) are strewn about the area, left when the kappas ran off the shrine's priests. A character who succeeds at a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** discovers a jar of *restorative ointment* half buried in the soil.

2. Main Approach

This trail leads up the hill from the village to the shrine. The **kappas** automatically spot anyone approaching this way; Mizujo (**Area 5**) sends four **kappas** to demand offerings (or as many as would leave her with four by her side). The kappas attack when it is clear the characters are not bringing them food or gifts.

If the characters have not yet antagonized the kappas, they can attempt to trick some of them into spilling their *Head Bowls* by bowing deeply. A character must succeed at a **DC 14 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** to flatter the kappa, and a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to bow deeply enough that the kappa, in copying, spills their head bowl. Realizing they've been tricked, the kappas attack. Use these skill checks as a guideline if the players come up with a different way to trick the kappas into spilling their water.

3. Forest Stream

The stream runs alongside one side of the shrine. A kappa in the water can refill its *Head Bowl* as an action.

The muddy banks of the stream are difficult terrain. In addition, a creature that moves into one of these squares must make a successful **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** or sink into the mud and become restrained; due to their wide, flat feet, the kappas have **advantage** on this save. A restrained creature can make a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** as an action; if successful, they are no longer restrained. A character can notice this danger with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check**.

4. Mushrooms

The kappas are not expecting anyone to come from this direction; if the characters each succeed at **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check** they avoid notice (they have **advantage** on this check at night). Otherwise, the kappas spot the characters, and Mizujo (**Area 5**) sends four **kappas** to investigate (or as many as would leave her with four by her side).

A character who succeeds at a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** discovers a patch of mushrooms. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Intelligence (Nature) check**, however, identifies them as poisonous. The mushrooms are equivalent to four doses of poison. If offered to the kappas, the fey greedily consume them, but react violently when they realize they've been poisoned.

Poison Mushrooms (Ingested). A creature subjected to this poison must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**. On a failed save, it takes 13 (2d12) poison damage and is poisoned for 24 hours. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and isn't poisoned.

5. Ancestor Shrine

The tiered roof of this pagoda is held up by 15-foot-tall columns. A larger than life statue of the town's founder stands on a raised dais in the middle of the structure. The stairs are difficult terrain.

When the characters first arrive, all twelve **kappas** and their leader **Mizujo** are here, though they can be drawn off in smaller groups as described in the previous areas.

The kappa leader **Mizujo** uses the standard kappa stats, except she has *Spellcasting* and wears an *amulet of health* giving her a total of **82 hp**. This makes Mizujo a **Challenge** 3 (300 XP).

Spellcasting. Mizujo is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save **DC 12**, +4 to hit)
Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command*, *cure wounds*, *inflict wounds*, *shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *hold person*
3rd level (2 slots): *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*

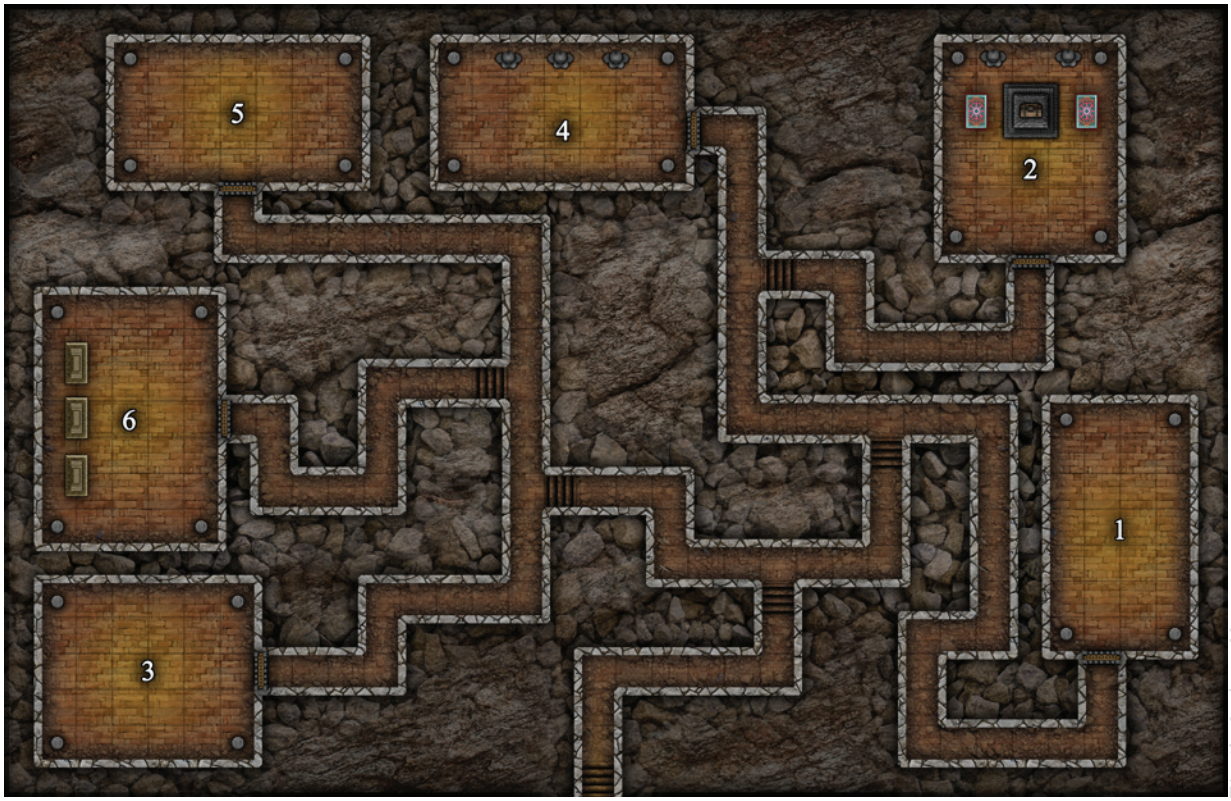


Mates Laurentiu

4-5 Characters

Levels 5-6

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

RePaiR'D a MaGe

Stephen Yeardley

When young, **Twiskaz** (**mage**; **Intelligence** 18 (+4), **spell save DC 15**) loved marionettes, turning childhood curiosity into adult obsession. But her tutelage into constructs swung wildly between assembly and dismantlement, evoking chronic indecision about her future.

Mainomai, an automata devil, sensing a soul for its factory, revealed myriad ways to "make or break anything" to Twiskaz. But this duplicitous gift drove her beyond working with inanimate objects; now she lures living creatures to her workshop. With humanoids her next targets, she sends her mechanical familiar to ask the heroes to help remove "fiendish automata" damaging her workshop.

General Information

Twiskaz's mania physically affects her workshop in several ways. **Areas 2**, **4** and **6** contain her creations, while **1**, **3** and **5** are "repair rooms" that behave differently depending on when they are entered. Even walking the corridors to rooms induces varied effects. Mentally disarming Twiskaz delays the effects, while either curing her of this indefinite madness or killing her causes them to stop.

Stairs

Once a flight of stairs is crossed, it rises to become a locked door that is a small **animated object** (**Speed** 0 ft.). A door can be opened with a **DC 17 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools (**DC 22** for the front door), but it fights anyone who attempts this. Defeating a door allows the party to open it but does not break it. Twiskaz has a master key that nullifies a door's attacks.

Corridors

The final 30 feet of corridor to the doors into **Areas 2**, **4** and **6** evokes a minor "repairing" effect (cuts disappear, headaches recede, loose stitching tightens, dents are removed). The last 60 feet of passage to the doors into **Areas 1**, **3** and **5** elicits a slight damaging effect (bruises appear, muscles ache, cloth frays, blades gain nicks).

Rooms

Thanks to Twiskaz's madness, **Areas 2**, **4** and **6** are rooms where creatures undergo "dismantlement" and experience combat in the usual way, while on entering and fighting in **Areas 1**, **3** and **5** any creature other than Twiskaz find themselves being "assembled" via the following two effects in the order listed.

"Dismantlement" Rooms	Corresponding "Repair" Rooms
Area 4	Area 1
Area 2	Area 3
Area 6	Area 5

Pathogenic Portal

Magic trap

This trap is activated when an intruder steps through a doorway and moves into the room, as it finds itself surrounded by virulent viruses.

The DC is 20 to spot the cloud. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals an aura of necromancy magic on passing through the doorway. 1 round after the target crosses the doorway it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 49 (14d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The damage can't reduce the target's hit points below 1. A character can only be affected by a given pathogenic portal once every 10 minutes. Other portals can still affect them, though.

GM Note. Write down the damage each character takes from a portal, and the combined total damage the party takes from a given pathogenic portal.

Repair Damage
Creatures taking damage from a **pathogenic portal** trap experience a strange effect brought about by Twiskaz's state of mind. As they fight, the damage they deal heals them instead of harming their foes. In order to win a combat, the heroes must "repair" the total number of hit points that equals the difference between their usual combined hit point maximum and the hit points they collectively retain after taking damage from the **pathogenic portal**.

Creatures in these rooms experience the same effect. These adversaries all start on 1 hit point.

When a hero delivers sufficient damage to repair the individual difference between the number of hit points they have at the start of combat and their hit point maximum, they become immune to attacks by foes in that room that deliver hit point damage of any type until they leave the room, or until 10 minutes have passed, whichever is the shorter duration.

When all the allies in a group have repaired themselves, combat instantly ceases and foes can no longer repair themselves.

If the heroes reenter **Areas 2**, **4** or **6** after combat in the associated repair room, Twiskaz's creations are reformed but only have the hit points they regained from the **Repair Damage** they dealt.

There is a cumulative 10% chance Twiskaz is found in an area. If it's **Areas 1**, **3** or **5** she flees using *misty step* or *greater invisibility*, knowing she must defeat the party in **Areas 2**, **4** or **6**. She wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location* and carries a flawed *rod of rulership* (**DC 13 Wisdom saving throw**), a gift from Mainomai. The rod only affects creatures with an Intelligence score of 3 or less. She tries to escape and use the dungeon's unique properties to her advantage whenever possible.

1. Undead Repair Room

First Visit. If the heroes enter here before **Area 4**, it is empty.

Area 2 Visited. If they enter after defeating **Area 4**'s undead, it's strewn with body parts and the **Repair Damage** effect triggers. The heroes must reach their maximum hit points before the undead repair fully.

2. Construct Arena

First Visit. The left marker is a **rug of smothering**, the right a **clockwork hound** ◆, and the statues at the back initially inactive **monolith footmen** ◆. The center creature is an insane **mimic** that exhibits uncontrollable tremors and tics (**disadvantage** on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws that involve Strength or Dexterity; believes it is being constantly judged). If the party kills the mimic, an activated but dismantled **monolith footman** replaces it in **Area 3**. If cured, the mimic joins the party as it longs to escape from the thrall of Twiskaz.

Area 3 Visited. If the party has fought in **Area 3**, the constructs are reformed but only have the hit points they regained through successful "repair."

3. Construct Repair Room

First Visit. If the heroes enter here before **Area 2**, it is empty.

Area 2 Visited. If they enter after defeating **Area 2**'s constructs (and possibly the mimic – add the **monolith footman** ◆ if they killed the mimic), it's full of parts and the **Repair Damage** effect triggers. The heroes must reach their hit point maximum before the foes reform fully.

4. Undead Arena

First Visit. On the left is an **ogre zombie**, on the right a **minotaur skeleton**, and in the center a **ghast**, which stays as it gains great pleasure watching Twiskaz' madness.

Area 1 Visited. If the party has fought in **Area 1**, the undead are reformed but only have the hit points they regained through successful "repair."

5. Ooze and Aberration Repair Room

First Visit. If the heroes enter here before **Area 6**, it is empty.

Area 6 Visited. If they enter after defeating **Area 6**'s creatures, it is covered in slime, jelly, eyes and lips, and the **Repair Damage** effect triggers. The heroes must reach their hit point maximum before the foes reform fully.

6. Ooze and Aberration Arena

First Visit. The bottom block is a **gelatinous cube**, the upper one an **ochre jelly** and in the center is a **gibbering mouther**.

Area 5 Visited. If the party has fought in **Area 5**, the oozes and aberration are reformed but only have the hit points they regained through successful "repair."

4-5 Characters

Levels 5-6

Mountain



Sean MacDonald

Starhold Defense

Tony Ohrazda

Legends say the Khyter Passage is a rift into the void realm. Centuries ago, the Order of the Null Star closed the portal and built Starhold to secure it.

Remman, a monk, staggered into General Tragorn's camp yesterday, raving that his abbot opened the passage and a voice within ordered them to enter. Only Remman resisted this, but after a few days waiting for his kinfolk's return, he abandoned the keep. Tragorn immediately hires the party as a vanguard until she can mobilize a larger force to occupy the hold.

Just hours later, the kobold warlord Yegnei's spies tell him of the weakened hold and Tragorn's plan. Yegnei sends an elite unit, the Skullbreakers, to breach any defenses and claim the passage. The party reaches the monastery before this group.

Events really begin as the party enters the monastery (**Area 3**). Here it has 8 hours to explore, use its own gear or find materials to build barricades, and set improvised traps before the Skullbreakers arrive.

Exploration. It should take the party an hour to explore the monastery and find materials to help defend the keep.

Defense. Starhold has: thick walls (**AC** 17, hp 90, damage threshold 25, fire resistance); a solid gate (**AC** 16, hp 50, dt 20); doors the party can bar (**AC** 15, hp 30, dt 15); and sites to build barricades (**AC** 13, hp 15, dt n/a).

Improvised Traps. Traps have three danger levels, each of greater **Wisdom (Survival) DC check** to set, and have build-times as follows:

- *Setback.* Attack bonus, +3; damage, 5 (1d10); **DC 11** to set; 3 hours to build.
- *Dangerous.* Attack bonus, +6; damage 11 (2d10); **DC 15** to set; 5 hours to build.
- *Deadly.* Attack bonus, +9; damage 22 (4d10); **DC 20** to set; 7 hours to build.

A 5-foot square can hold one trap that attacks when a creature enters the square. Damage types can be chosen, within reason, but anything other than bludgeoning, piercing or slashing damage adds +5 to the **DC** to set and 1 hour to the build time. If two or characters build the trap together, the check is made with **advantage**, but helpers spend the same time to do so. A failed **Wisdom (Survival) check** to set the trap means it looks primed but doesn't trigger.

Barricades. 5-foot square barricades provide cover, slow or block movement, and have build-times as follows:

- *Half cover.* Difficult terrain; 1 hour to build.
- *Three-quarters cover.* Difficult terrain, 2 hours to build.
- *Total cover.* Impassable; 4 hours to build.

1. The Approach

Eight hours after the party enters Starhold, the Skullbreakers arrive: one damaged **kobold war machine** (cannot use *Spit Fire* or *Fire Breath*); two **elite kobolds**; two **kobold sappers**; and one **kobold chieftain**. From their position, characters making a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** hear the sibilant bickering of kobolds over a grinding rumble. Odd gouts of tarry smoke rise into the air.

Characters looking into **Area 1** see the following:

Draconic in form, a barrel-wheeled machine of iron and wood rolls to a stop by the lower basin wall. Two kobolds carrying picks and lanterns doggedly scamper behind the beast. Side doors open and a grizzled leader emerges, points at the two ladders spanning the basin's wall, and barks an order. The miner-types drop their tools, grab the ladders, and link them to form a wide ramp over the wall.

Looking over the wall, the veteran squints before pointing at the monastery. After further sharp orders, the two miners gather their implements and begin tunneling into the basin wall, towards the southern barbican. The leader ducks inside the machine and seconds later the clockwork dragon begins to lurch up the makeshift ramp.



Characters who witness the Skullbreaker's arrival can make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice that the machine appears damaged; its faux dragon-maw is bent and twisted.

2. Killing Ground

Roll initiative just before the Skullbreakers enter **Area 2**. If the party didn't see the kobolds, read this:

Draconic in appearance, a barrel-wheeled clockwork machine of iron and wood lurches over the ledge into the upper basin. Its path unerringly towards the hold's gate.

Kobold Tactics.

Assault. The chieftain and two sappers operate the war machine. On the apparatus's initiative, it moves 25 feet. Then it uses *That Way!* to dash 25 feet and makes a *Spiked Wheel* attack against the gate; on a hit, the machine automatically uses *Ram Them!* on it, crashing into **Area 3**. After ramming the keep's gates, the war machine's engine fails, and it is incapacitated. The chieftain and both sappers erupt from the war machine the round after it breaks down.

Tunnelers. The two elites use *Combat Tunneler* to burrow towards the grate in the southern barbican. They enter Starhold on the same round as the chieftain and sappers attack. See **Area 5**.

3. Vestibule

Four disturbing statues adorn this space. Three hold ancient boxes scarred with asymmetrical etchings. Opposite the 10-foot, reinforced iron-and-wood gate, a 10-foot stone door carved to depict a tangle of squamous tentacles is ajar. On the floor by the tentacle-door are a splintered box and a mummified hand with only three fingers. Large wood doors with iron hardware are on both sides of the chamber.

Reliquaries. These ancient boxes contain holy remnants of the order's saints. One holds a *pair of preserved eyes* (*eyes of charming*), another a *desiccated tongue* (*helm of comprehending languages*), and the third, a *petrified heart* (*amulet of health*). A fourth box lies broken on the floor with the mummified hand. The hand's only magic property is to open or seal Khyter Passage.

Tentacle Door. Examining the open door with a successful **DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a central impression of a humanoid's three-fingered left hand. successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** explains how to seal the door with the disfigured hand.

4. Dormitory

This chamber contains 12 beds, each with a small footlocker. Tapestries line the walls but there are no obvious exits. Searching a footlocker reveals a motley assortment of cold weather garments without any difficulty, while even a cursory look behind the west wall's tapestry reveals a passage to the north barbican. The barbican contains a modest brewery, including supplies, equipment and kegs.

5. Meditation Chamber

Heavy iron braziers line the walls of this chamber. At the far end squats a cushioned chair. A frayed rug extends the floor's length.

Braziers. Behind a brazier is a passage to the southern barbican. It is used for storage and contains: 3 hunting traps along with an impressive collection of hardware and construction materials.

Development. The elites tunnel into the southern barbican. They attack the party on sight.

6. Khyter Passage

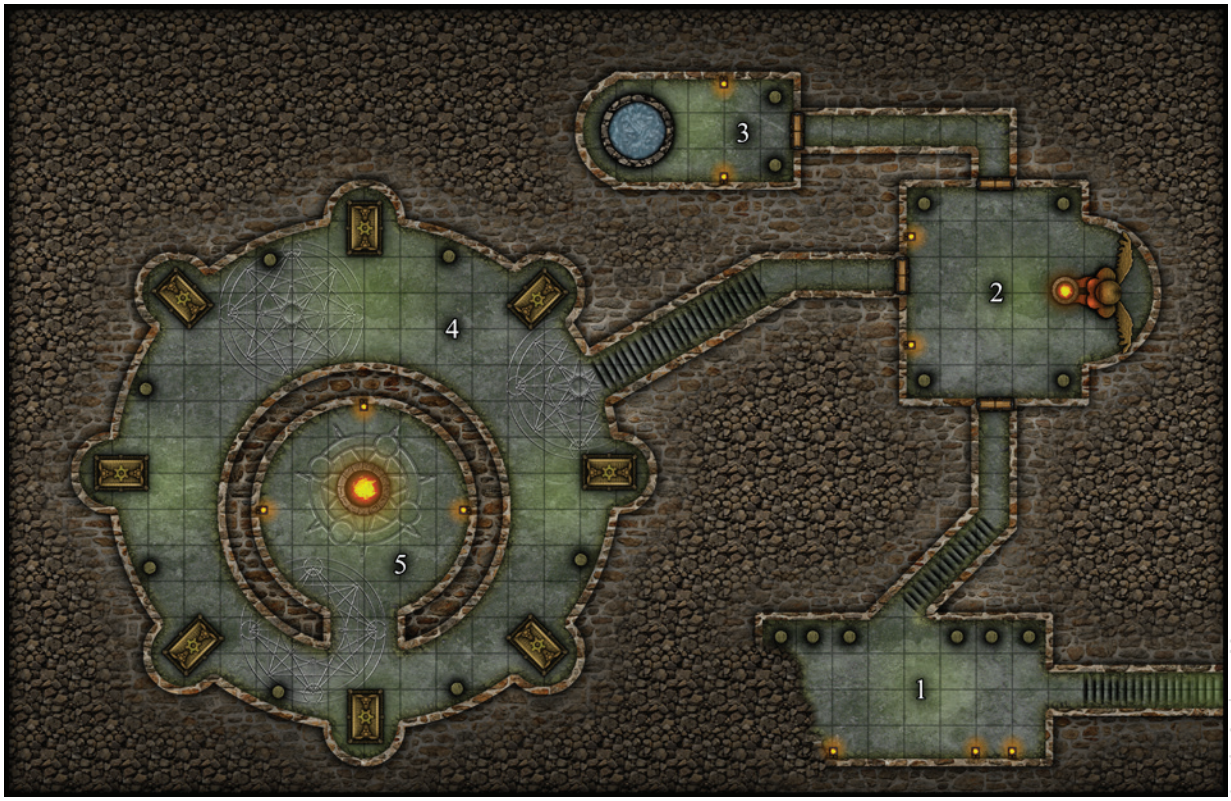
The passage extends into darkness. Indistinct noises echo from deep within. If the party enters the passage or does not close the tentacle-door, the abbot returns as a **zombie lord** and attacks the intruders!

Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 5-6

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

Phase Locked

Rory Toma

The sleepy town of Dunton no longer sleeps. The moon has been in new moon phase for several days afflicting the inhabitants with supernatural insomnia. Everyone is tired, several are bedridden due to exhaustion.

Sleepless Nights. When night falls, sleep becomes impossible. This insomnia prevents long rests and can only be cured with the moon's return to normal. Characters may make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check** to link the moon's disappearance to the sleeplessness. Each morning, characters must make a successful **DC 10 Constitution check** or gain one level of exhaustion.

During the last new moon, a landslide uncovered a smooth stone wall with a moon carving. The moon has not returned since.

The wall is the entrance to the temple of **Fanai**, an ancient moon-deity that controlled the local perception of the moon.

The landslide caused a partial collapse in the temple, allowing a colony of oozes to seep in. The oozes have disrupted the temple's magics, causing the phenomenon.

1. Moon Door

The uncovered smooth stone wall has a six-foot-tall moon carved into its center. A **DC 14 Intelligence (History) check** identifies the wall as a moon door.

A moon door opens with any key that reflects silvery light onto the door in the proper shape. The reflected shape must match the current phase of the moon to unlock the door.

A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** lets a character modify a spell such as *light* to the required color. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** can be made to fashion a device to reflect light from a key onto the door in a moon shape, which opens the door.

A successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or using *detect magic* reveals an aura of abjuration on the door. *Dispel magic* (**DC 18**) unlocks the door for ten minutes. Afterwards, a successful **DC 16 Strength check** is required to push the door open.

A dimly lit room at the top of the stairs has suffered from a partial collapse. The back wall has given way to rocks and mud. An **ochre jelly** (no *Split*, has *False Appearance* (mud)) disguises itself as a mud patch and attacks any character that gets within 10 feet, surprising the victim, unless it is identified with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check**.

A **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check** identifies smooth trails leading from the rocks deeper into the temple.

2. Tribute to the Wanderers

The door to this room is painted black with a white crescent moon surrounded by four stars.

Judgment of Fanai

Complex trap (level 5–10, dangerous)

Inside, the domed ceiling depicts the night sky. A statue of a winged woman holds a large lit brazier shaped like the current phase of the moon, currently a ring. The brazier projects the current phase of the moon on the ceiling. A smaller, unlit brazier is in each corner of the room. Underneath each small brazier, the name of a star is etched into the metal in Celestial script.

Trigger. The trap activates as soon as a creature enters the room without uttering a prayer including Fanai's name within 30 seconds of entering and remains active while any creature remains in the room.

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative 20.

Active Elements. Doors slam shut; the large brazier held by the Fanai statue emits a pulse of searing light, and any lit braziers shoot beams of light.

Locked Doors (Initiative 20). The doors slam shut and magically seal. This happens when the trap activates.

Fanai's Pulse (Initiative 20). The large brazier emits a pulse in a 20-foot-radius sphere, and any creature caught in it must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, or take 22 (4d10) radiant damage, or half as much on a successful save.

Wandering Starlight (Initiative 20). Each lit brazier fires a ray of light at one character who hasn't uttered "Fanai" since the start of their last turn, with a +8 bonus to the attack roll and dealing 11 (2d10) radiant damage on a hit.

Dynamic Element – Starbraziers. A lit brazier begins firing as per Wandering Starlight on its next turn.

Countermeasures. There are a few ways the trap can be overcome.

Statue.
Intelligence (Religion), DC 15. This identifies the statue as Fanai, goddess of the wandering stars.

Braziers.
Intelligence (Nature), DC 15. This identifies the four bright stars in the night sky (Vesti (NE), Plantus (SE), Oersti (SW) and Vantus (NW)), as well as when they are visible (See ***Table 1***).

Praying.
Praying to Fanai or one of the four stars using their names prevents being attacked by *Wandering Starlight* and grants advantage on the saving throw against *Fanai's Pulse*.

Lighting the Braziers.
Lighting the braziers corresponding to the stars visible outside (currently new moon) opens the doors and deactivates the trap, but also initiates them firing on the next round, if the incorrect combination is lit.

3. Moon Well

Luminescent blue water in the well lights up the room. Two **purple slimes** inhabit the well and attack any creature that gets within 5 feet of it. Characters that fail a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** are surprised by the attack.

The well contains 10 applications of *moon water*.

Moon Water

Wondrous item, uncommon

When applied to an item and exposed to nonmagical light for 1 hour, the item functions for 8 hours as if *light* were cast upon it.

4. Phase Room

Each of the seven columns is topped with moon-phase-shaped ivory carving. There is no carving for the new moon. Seven of the stone slabs contain a cutout, each matching one of the carvings. Putting a carving into its cutout projects a moon phase silhouette above, and usually makes **Area 5** rotate to the carving, locking the moon outside in the slab's corresponding phase. Otherwise, **Area 5** rotates with the moon phases. The room is currently pointing at the slab sans cutout – since new moon has no cutout, this suffices to accidentally lock the moon phase.

5. Moon Shield

A large stone wall sits on a circular track, surrounding an eternally blazing fire pit. In several places, the wall appears fused to the floor. Three **mineral oozes** that have gummed up the track prevent the wall from moving. The oozes' attack surprises any creature failing to notice them. Applying a dose of *moon water* as a lubricant to the track restores its functionality and makes the room align with the actual moon phase. Light shines on the correct slab, returning the sky to normal.

Unless the wall in **Area 1** is repaired, more oozes will migrate to the temple and eventually disable it again, as they are attracted to the *moon water*.

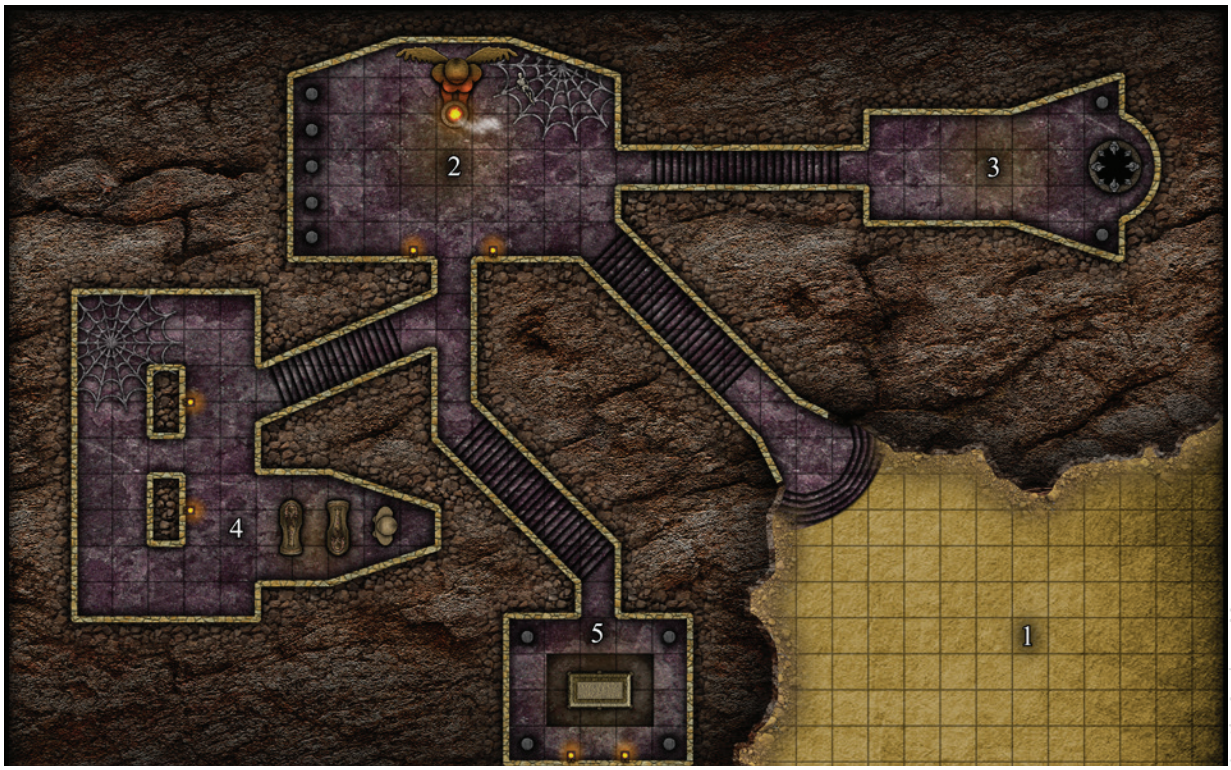
	Star Name			
Moon Phase	Plantus	Oersti	Vantus	Vesti
New	Y	Y	N	N
Waxing Crescent	Y	Y	N	N
First Quarter	N	Y	Y	N
Waxing Gibbous	N	N	Y	Y
Full Moon	N	N	N	N
Waning Gibbous	N	N	Y	Y
Third Quarter	N	Y	Y	N
Waning Crescent	Y	Y	N	N

Ryan Rhodes

4-6 Characters

Levels 5-7

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Arachne Errant

Jonathan G. Nelson

In the bosom of the great mountains rests the long-forgotten tomb of **Argentum**, drow heroine of yore, interred here by surface elves with all honors during a time when the races were not yet fully divided. Her surface elf lover refused to lose her and, through the purposeful acquisition of vampirism combined with ancient necrotheurgy, transferred his undead essence into what was left of her being, merging so they could remain together forevermore in undeath.

Alas, insidious drow placed a magic ring upon the only entrance back to the Underworld, which allows one-way passage up but makes returning to the realms below impossible.

The surface elves permanently affixed sunlight-emitting magic orbs to the ground outside the tomb, impossible for the vampire to cross.

In the centuries since, arachnids emerged from the Underworld and a symbiotic relationship formed. Anyone entering the tomb would be caught and shared by all, each meal a sacrifice to the drow's deity Naraneus. Thus, Argentum became blessed with Naraneus' poison magic, and soon, undead servitors controlled by both vampire and crypt spiders grew in number.

Ceilings. 20 feet tall (spiders can move across webs, walls, ceilings).
Light. Dim or dark, torches some areas.
Webs. All webs visible on map: as **giant spider**'s *Web*.

1. Approach to Arachne Errant

Twelve magic orbs of elven construction are permanently affixed to the ground, illuminating the area with an endless stream of sunlight. The orbs cannot be removed but each can be extinguished using *dispel magic* (**DC 25**).

Six **cactids** plants grow throughout this area, equally spaced out and imbued with radiant energy after years of exposure to magical sunlight from the orbs.

Encounter. 6 **cactids** (replace all piercing damage with radiant damage)

2. Forgotten Deity

The statue to an elven deity of wisdom and craft holds a bowl woven from petrified spider webs with an eternally-burning flame of creation. A creature may touch the flame to gain the benefits of *bless* for 10 rounds. Elves retain the benefits for an entire day instead. A creature can only benefit from this effect once per day. Spiders in the tomb are aware of and use this effect whenever possible.

Webs render the entire floor difficult terrain.

Five pillars along the west wall are inscribed with a strange combined variation of modern day Elvish and Drow sigils, the pre-schism language of the ancient elves. Anyone who understands Elvish can spend 1d4+1 days studying the inscriptions to learn **Ancient Elvish**.

Encounter. 4 **crypt spiders**, 2 **giant wolf spiders**, 1d4+4 **spiders** (crypt spider hatchlings bursting from a web-wrapped corpse), 4 **zombies**.

3. Exit from the Underworld

This hole into the ground is surrounded by a metal ring covered in drow sigils radiating powerful transmutation magic. Like a *levitate* spell, creatures and objects can be moved up from the depths, but those trying to enter are gently ejected. The ring can be disabled for 1d4+4 hours by a living creature reading each of the sigils in **Ancient Elvish**.

Encounter. Making any loud noises or spending more than 2d4+4 rounds here attracts the attention of 4 Medium **phase spiders** from the Underworld.

4. Vampire Servants

These sarcophagi hold 2 **vampire spawn** that do not fight unless attacked. Instead, they try to draw the heroes to **Area 5** into a most likely fatal meeting with Argentum. The sarcophagi feature **Ancient Elvish** prayer inscriptions, which, if spoken, seal the sarcophagi for 24 hours.

Numerous bodies hang from webs in the NW corner; if disturbed, 6 **zombies** emerge covered in webbing, trying to grab and stick to the characters (hits also inflict grappled condition, **escape DC 15**). Additionally, several corpses burst open, hatching 2d10+10 **spiders**.

One of the zombies has a small silver key inscribed with "*leatherleaves*" in **Ancient Elvish**. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that this is an anagram for "reveal the seal". If spoken aloud, the silver outline of a small magic compartment is revealed, and the key's owner hears chimes in their mind originating from it. The key opens the compartment that contains a wooden *Veylataal* stake made from an ancient tree of the Silent Forest, and *Restbringer*, a gilded warhammer, its name inscribed on the side in **Ancient Elvish**.

Restbringer

Weapon (warhammer), rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you hit an undead with it, that creature takes an extra 1d8 radiant damage, or an extra 2d8 if you roll a 20 on the attack roll.

Restbringer has 3 charges.

While you carry it, you can use an action and expend a charge while speaking "Restbringer" to make it shed bright sunlight in a 10-foot radius and dim sunlight for an additional 10 feet. This effect lasts for 1 hour. *Restbringer* regains all charges at dawn.

5. Argentum's Lair

If the party was noisy, there is a 75% chance **Argentum** is hiding in a strategic place, watching and waiting. If she thinks she can trust the characters to converse with her as opposed to outright attacking, she will try and bargain with them. Argentum longs to be freed from this place and is willing to join the party as a servant for 1-4 weeks if they free her. If they refuse, she attacks. Otherwise, she offers her sword *Nachtblut* as a gesture of goodwill, hoping it will corrupt its new master.

If the characters have been mostly quiet, there is only a 20% chance Argentum will be out and about, as she spends most of the day within her stone coffin.

A successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check** allows a character to approach the stone coffin without alerting Argentum. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** allows a character to gently slide off the lid of the coffin, another character must assist with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** followed by a successful **DC 16 Strength check** to lift the lid off, away, and to the ground without making a sound. After this, if the characters retrieved the hammer and stake from **Area 4**, they can make one attempt with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check** and an attack roll with *Restbringer* to plunge the wooden stake into Argentum's heart, thereby paralyzing her until it is removed. Protected by ancient magics, only the combination of *Restbringer* and the *Veylataal* stake can paralyze Argentum this way.

Argentum, **vampire** (*Children of the Night* calls 2d4 **swarms of insects** (spiders with *Web Sense* and *Web Walker*); ***Channel Venom (Recharge 5–6).*** Each living creature within 20 feet of Argentum must make a **DC 17 Constitution saving throw**, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage and gaining the poisoned condition for 1 hour on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one and not be poisoned.

Nachtblut

Weapon (greatsword), rare, (requires attunement)

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

This weapon looks like a *dragon slayer* but is actually a *+3 cursed greatsword*.

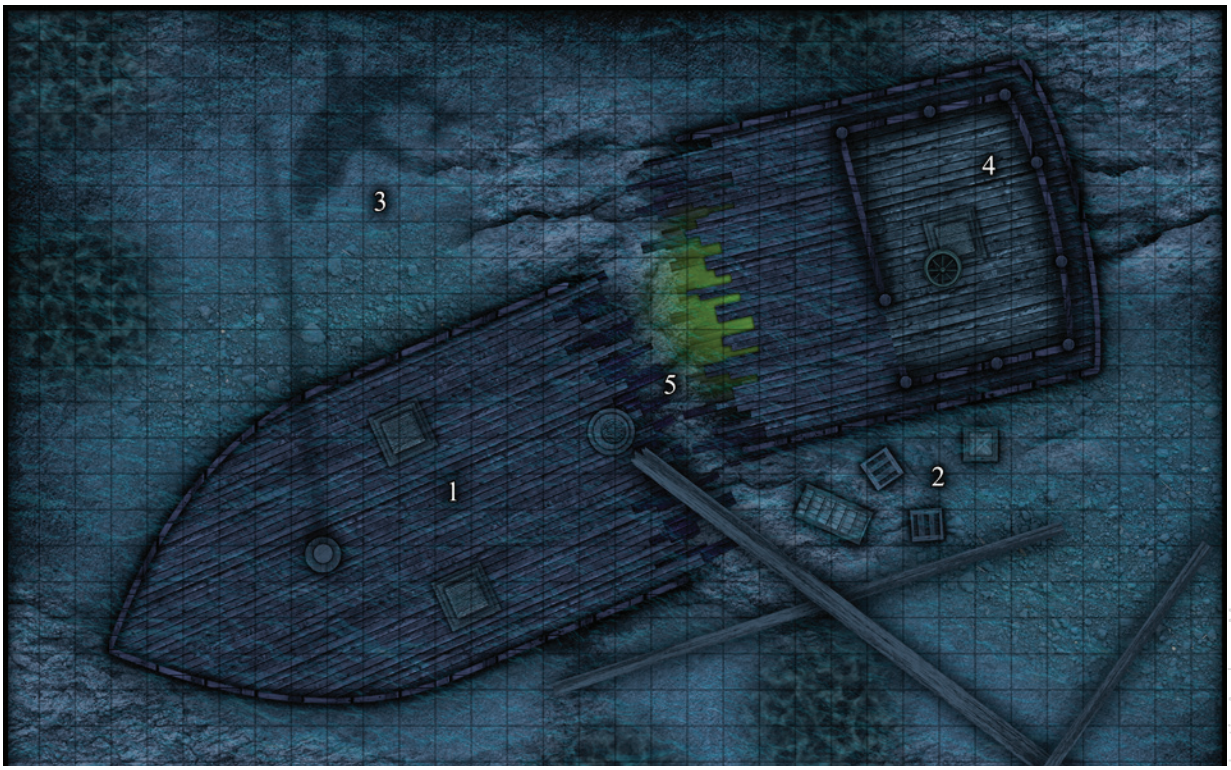
Curse. Only someone that can read Ancient Elvish may discern that this blade is cursed. After attuning to this blade, you must make a successful **DC 12 Wisdom saving throw** once per week, developing arachnid features with each failed save. This curse only manifests if you don't need to consume blood to sustain you.

Vampiric. If you're sustained by blood, slaying a living creature who has blood and an Intelligence of 5 or more with *Nachtblut* sustains you for a day. Living vampires increase their Vitae Pool maximum by +2 while attuned to *Nachtblut*.

4-6 Characters

Levels 5-6

Coast



Justin Andrew Mason

The Wreck of the Windfall

David Schwartz

Caught in a sudden storm not far from port, the merchant ship *Windfall* went down with all hands. As if to make matters worse, stowed below deck were the last remnants of the necromancer Vorphanos. The fear and anger of the dying sailors mixed with the power of these accursed relics, causing their spirits to stay tethered to the ship as incorporeal undead, even though their bodies were taken by the sea.

Divers have been scared off by reports of a giant shark in the area (even unaware of the supernatural dangers), so a local salvager turns to the characters to recover the ship's cargo. Their employer can provide the characters with a *water breathing* ritual. The characters are also advised to acquire and use spells and magic items that aid in underwater exploration.

Even on a bright day, only dim light reaches the depth of the wreckage, and thus the undead here do not suffer from *Sunlight Sensitivity*.

1. Main Deck

A crew of eight **specters** go through the motions of sailing a ship—adjusting sails, making repairs, keeping watch—even though the ship is broken, and they are incorporeal. Unaware that they are dead, the specters move on and around objects like living creatures rather than fly through them as they could do.

Though unable to speak, the specters still understand Common. If the characters request to board the ship and make a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, the specters allow them onto the deck and direct them to the captain on the quarterdeck. If the characters board the ship without asking, or go anywhere without permission, the specters assume they are pirates and attack.

The spectral sailors appear to fight with cutlasses and belaying pins, though the effect is same as *Life Drain*. During combat, the captain on the quarterdeck (**Area 4**) shouts orders but doesn't join the fight unless confronted. The specters do not chase fleeing characters.

Captain's Orders. The captain designates one undead target he can see as a bonus action. The designated undead gains **advantage** on the next attack roll it makes.

Two square hatches lead down to the cargo hold and sailors' quarters below deck.

2. Cargo

Several crates that survived the sinking lie on the ocean floor near the wreckage. Each contains roughly 100 gp worth of trade goods (even with breakage and corrosion). The crates are heavy and unwieldy; a character carrying one is encumbered (reducing their base speed by 10 feet.)

3. Open Water

The **giant shark** in the area is no myth, but incorporeal creatures hold no interest to the hungry predator. The arrival of the characters, however, draws its attention. The giant shark is followed by two opportunistic **reef sharks**, hoping to feast on its scraps. The giant shark waits to attack the characters when they leave the *Windfall*. The cunning animal prefers to attack a character that is wounded or encumbered by cargo.

4. Quarterdeck

The stairs to the quarterdeck are missing, though characters can easily swim over the railing around it.

The spirits of the **captain** and two **officers** (a **wraith** and two **specters**) stand on the quarter deck. The captain acts as if he is steering the ship, though the ship's wheel lies broken at his feet. Unless the characters successfully asked permission to board the ship, the undead officers attack them as pirates. If the characters gained permission to board, they can speak with the captain (who alone among the crew retains the power of speech). Alternatively, if the characters defeat the specters on the main deck, they can force the captain to parley with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check**. The captain believes he is still alive but is unable to recall details of his voyage. The characters can convince the wraith that he is dead with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**. Once brought to his senses, the captain realizes that the relic below deck is the cause of their undeath and asks the characters to destroy it.

Below the quarterdeck, the door to the captain's cabin is swelled shut, requiring a **DC 10 Strength check** to open. Among the water-damaged furniture is a locked chest. Though the key is lost, it can be opened with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools. Inside are 90 gp in assorted coins and five obsidian gems worth 10 gp each.

5. The Hold

A sickly green light emanates from the ship's broken hull. The source of the light is within a half-open box among the remains of crates. In the box's padded interior is a **skull lantern** and the *wand of Vorphanos*. When a character approaches the box, the skull lantern rises slightly and releases a *Fire Beam*. It then attacks the characters. Though the skull lantern is not much of a threat on its own, the sound of combat may alert creatures nearby.

If the characters destroy the wand (**AC** 15, hp 5), any remaining undead sailors are destroyed, their souls continuing to the afterlife.

Wand of Vorphanos

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This silver wand is shaped like skeletal arm holding a green gem emitting a sickly glow when the wand is used. While attuned and holding this wand, you gain a +2 bonus to spell attack rolls. In addition, you ignore half cover when making a spell attack.

Curse. This wand is cursed. Attuning to it extends the curse to you until you are affected by *remove curse*. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the wand, keeping it on your person at all times.

You are haunted by the victims of your magic. While cursed, whenever a creature is killed by a spell you cast, you must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or become frightened on a failed save for 1 minute, treating the space where the creature died as the source of your fear.

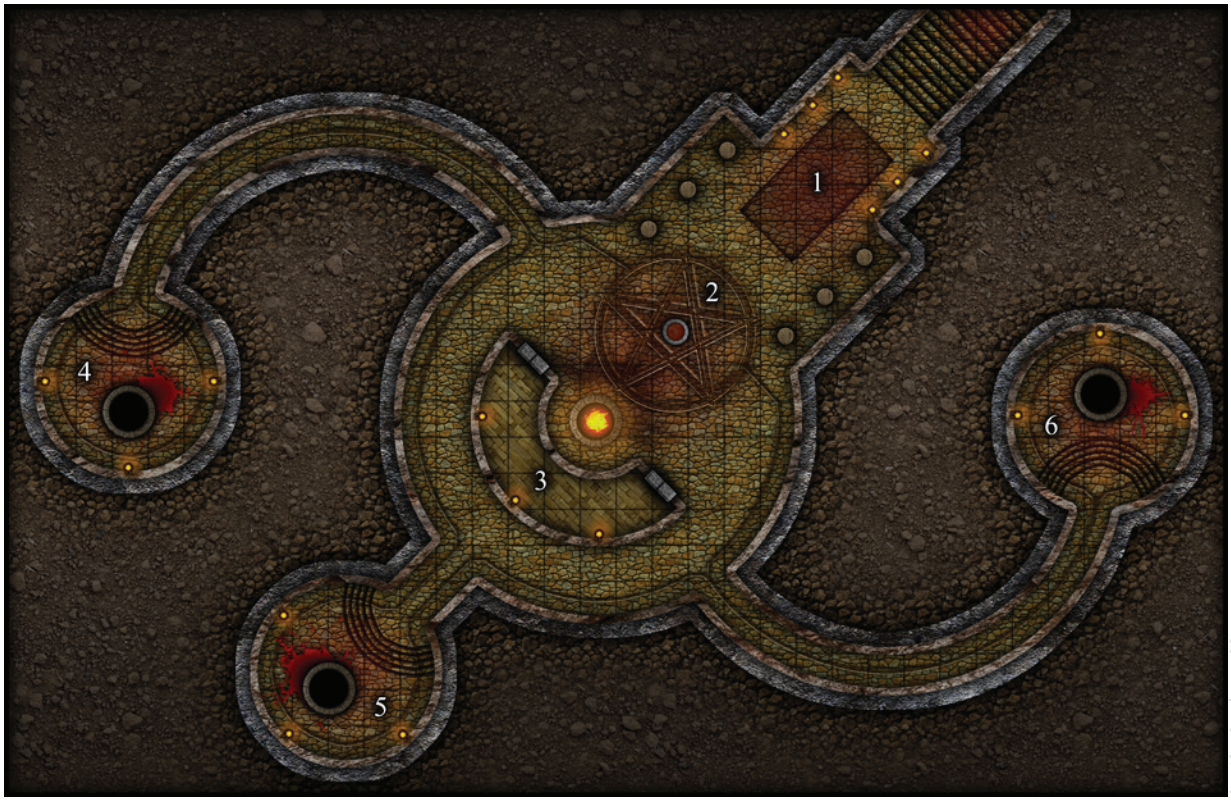


Dean Spencer

4-6 Characters

Levels 5-6

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

We're All Fiends Here

Rob Cater

Over the last several years a group of fiends have been desecrating a once hallowed church. Their goal is to summon their master and gift her a corrupted relic stored behind sealed doors.

The withered old church is nothing but a husk, the interior long since abandoned. The once well-polished floors have given in to years of rot and now reveal a set of stone stairs leading 30 feet down to **Area 1**.

1. Pool of danger

The scent of sulfur in the air is the first indication of what is to come.

Sulfur-infused bricks line the floor of this reflecting pool filled with a mix of watery oil stained with brownish blood. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence check** a player can determine what will happen if ignited. A character proficient with alchemist's supplies has **advantage** on this check.

Burning Oil. If ignited, the oil burns quickly dealing 4 (1d8) fire damage to anyone in the pool. Additionally, it leaves behind a nonmagical cloud of toxic sulfur dioxide that extends 5 feet from the edge of the pool. The cloud lingers for 5 minutes. A creature that enters the gas or starts its turn in it must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**, taking 27 (6d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Anyone **holding their breath** only takes 4 (1d8) acid damage on a failed saving throw, and no damage on a successful one.

2. Summoning room

Six ragged figures are bound to the columns here. A dark-haired robed human woman stands near a font of blood in the center of a pentagram.

The captives are shapeshifted **succubi/incubi**, while the human woman is a kidnapped and charmed villager named **Sofie** (use **commoner** stats) who is charmed. Unless disturbed, Sofie continuously chants "*Lecyra*" softly, while standing by the font. If anyone tries to interact with her, she demands they leave and states that she must finish this ritual. A **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that she is charmed. If freed of the charm, such as with a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check** or *dispel magic* (**DC 15**), she passes out from exhaustion.

Enchanted Shackles. The shackles are seamless and have no lock to pick. They detect as abjuration and conjuration to *detect magic*. They can't be broken by mundane means, but a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that *dispel magic* (**DC 15**) suffices to open one pair of shackles. If the party manages to remove four fiends from the shackles, they all become hostile.

Fiendish Deception. The fiends use half-truths and their considerable talents (**Deception** +9) to attempt to avoid lie detection. They tell the party that Leycra, the true master of the complex, will arrive soon. The fiends try to goad the party into reading the markings on the doors to **Area 3**, and then light the braziers in **Areas 4**, **5** and **6**.

If the Braziers are Lit. Once all three braziers are lit, **Leycra** the **chain devil** is summoned from the pain of the captured fiends. Leycra uses her mastery of chains to unchain one **succubus/incubus** per round. If one or more of the fiends have been freed before all braziers are lit, one of Leycra's subordinates, a **barbed devil** manifests instead.

Optional. If the blood of an innocent (such as Sofie) or lawful good character is spilled here by another good character, a **pit fiend** is summoned. Note that this likely spells death for the party.

3. Vault

The curved wall between the two stone doors is engraved with words in Celestial and Common around a relief of an angelic figure bathed in rays of light, its sword held aloft: "*Three lights guide the way.*" The doors here will only open when the three braziers in **Area 4**, **5** and **6** have been lit willingly by mortals.

Inside is an assorted collection of the old church's relics. Silver goblets, silk clothes and various sacral accoutrements. Resting on a silvered sword rack is a large longsword in its scabbard. The sapphire in the center of the cross-guard is a radiant blue. Upon closer inspection, black and red lines run through the blue gem. This sword is *Merciless*, a *corrupted holy avenger*. It deals necrotic damage to humanoids instead of radiant damage to fiends and undead and can be attuned by anyone. Any non-evil aligned creature not attuned to it who grasps the hilt takes 4 (1d8) necrotic damage at the start of its turn. The scabbard is safe to touch.

Curse. *Merciless* is cursed and becoming attuned extends its curse to you. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the blade, keeping it with you at all times. You have **disadvantage** on attack rolls with weapons other than this one. If you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points, you have to succeed on a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** or be compelled to slay the enemy.



4–6. Summoning Pits

A small unlit brazier hangs over what appears to be a well. Each well is a 60-foot-deep pit used as part of the summoning ritual. The braziers in **Area 4** and **5** have an aura of abjuration. The brazier in **Area 6** has an aura of abjuration and conjuration.

Area 4

Fire Gout Trap

Simple trap (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

The floor 5 feet around the pit is a pressure plate. When someone steps on it, a gas canister in the pit is punctured and begins releasing flammable gas.

Trigger. Someone steps on the pressure plate.

Effect. The canister is punctured and flammable gas spreads. The gas takes 2 rounds to reach the edge of the pit, 3 rounds to reach the edge of the room and the torches there. When the gas comes into contact with open fire, it detonates. If it detonates after two rounds, it affects anyone standing next to the pit. Otherwise, it affects anyone in the room and within 20 ft of the hall. All targets must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The brazier is not affected by the fire.

Countermeasures. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check or DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the presence of the pressure plate before it is triggered. Hearing the tank being punctured requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Once the gas is leaking, it takes a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to hear the gas spreading. The gas disperses after 5 minutes.

Optional. A kind GM may allow the container being punctured and gas spreading to be noted with passive Perception.

Area 5

The brazier here is damp and covered in reddish-brown specks. The ceiling above continuously drips a rust-colored liquid that could be confused for old blood. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals that the water is running through an iron vein before leaking from the ceiling above. This brazier is empty, but fuel can be taken from any of the other braziers, or from the central fire pit located near **Area 2**. If this brazier is not lit last, it will be put out by the dripping water in 2 rounds.

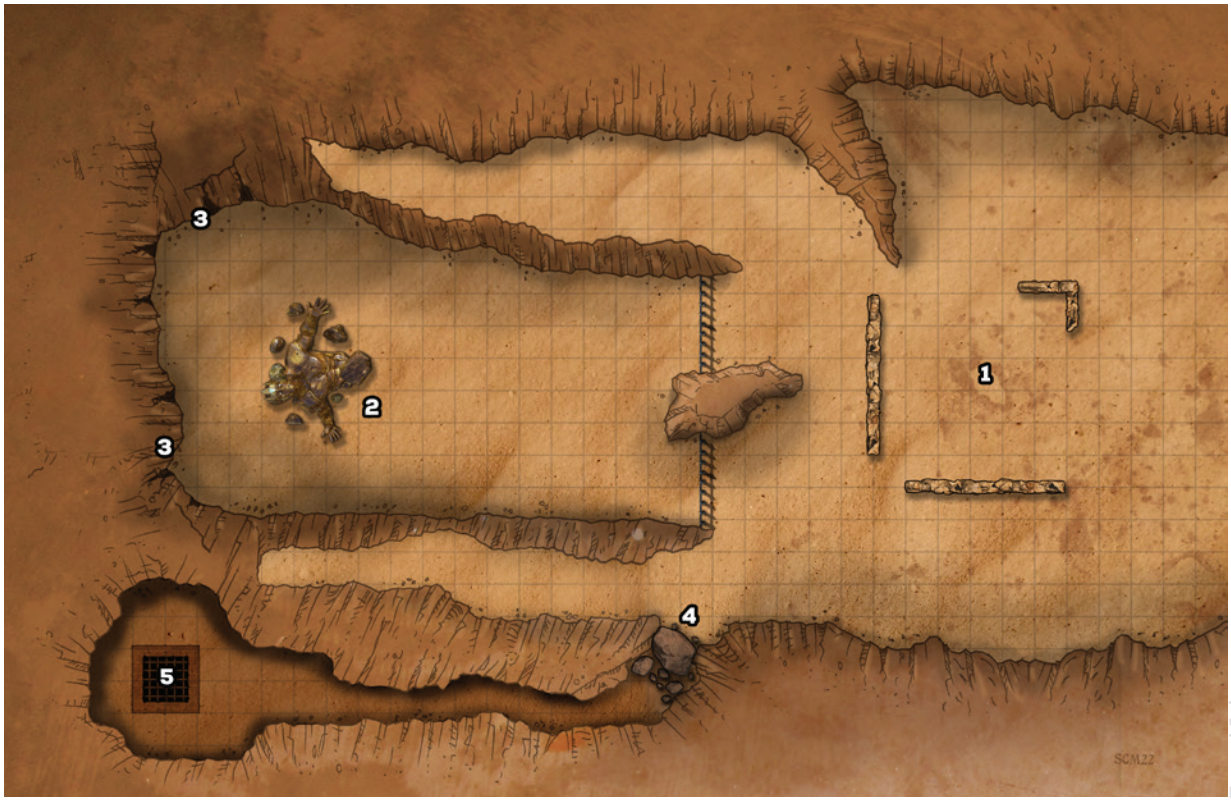
Area 6

The scent of decay rises from the pit. This brazier, once lit, summons two **barbed devils** that appear at each end of the hallway leading to this area.

4-6 Characters

Level 5-6

Desert



Tommi Salama

The Poison Pharaoh's Curse

David Schwartz

Zahaten, the Poison Pharaoh, ruled for many years with an iron fist until he was eventually, perhaps inevitably, killed by his own inner circle of priests. To prevent Zahaten from being resurrected or reanimated, the priests divided his soul into six pieces. Each soul fragment was entrusted to an anubian, an elemental of desert sand bound to guard the evil pharaoh's tomb. Later dynasties tried to erase the memory of the Poison Pharaoh, and in time he became little more than a myth.

Centuries later, a group of antiquarians discovered the Poison Pharaoh's tomb hidden beneath the sands of a box canyon. They began to explore the site, but after partially unearthing a statue of Zahaten, members of the archaeological dig began to die. The victims were found ripped apart by bestial claws, yet with no other signs of large predators in the vicinity. Convinced that they are victims of the pharaoh's curse, the surviving antiquarians hire the characters to investigate the site.

1. Ruined Walls

The antiquarians set up their camp in the shelter of these ruined walls. Between the time they left the site and the characters' arrival, a group of cultists claimed the abandoned camp.

Cultists. These cultists are descendants of the Poison Pharaoh's most faithful followers and have come to give reverence at his rediscovered tomb. They have not yet disturbed the site, and thus have not angered the anubians (**Area 5**).The group consists of eight **scorpion cultists** led by the **cult fanatic** **Upshi** who wields a *dagger of venom*. In addition to their weapons and armor, each cultist has either 3d6 gp or a single gemstone worth 10 gp.

Identifying the Cultists. A character can recognize the cult from their religious symbols with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (History)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check**.

Cultists' Attitude. The cultists are initially hostile, but do not attack unless the characters attempt to pass the ruined walls or initiate violence themselves. A character can attempt to improve the cultists' attitude with a **DC 20 Charisma (Deception)**, **Charisma (Intimidation)**, or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** (with **advantage** if a character identified the cultists first). If successful, the cultists allow the characters to explore the tomb as long as they don't damage or remove any of the artifacts. The cultists are unlikely to aid the characters in combat, unless threatened themselves.

2. Dig Site

The dig site slopes gently down fifteen feet from the entrance to the back wall.

Accessing the Site. The walls of the pit can be climbed with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**. Two metal fences—each five-feet tall and roughly fifteen-feet long—block the entrance to the area. A character can climb over the fence with a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** or squeeze through

the bars with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. A character can move a fence to create a gap at either end with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check**; the character has **advantage** on this check if at least one other character assists.

The Statue. The statue still half-buried at the bottom of the pit is a larger-than-life image of Zahaten, who can be identified with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (History) check**. Any attempt by the characters to move, damage, or further unearth the statue alerts the anubians (**Area 5**). When the last anubian is destroyed, the statue becomes a lawful evil **ushabti**, animated by Zahaten's reassembled soul. The ushabti's first action is to pull itself out of the ground, before attacking the nearest creature. All the while the ushabti announces the Poison Pharaoh's glorious return in a dialect few speak anymore, though a character can gain the gist of what it is saying with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight) check**. If the cultists are still present, they initially bow before the risen pharaoh, but flee when the construct attacks them. If not defeated the ushabti makes its way to the nearest settlement.

3. Test Digs

A number of exploratory holes are dug into the back of the pit. The numbered holes connect to a buried hallway, though the openings are at present too small for a character to squeeze through. Attempting to widen a hole alerts the anubians (**Area 5**). The hallway also runs under the grate in **Area 5**.

4. Collapsed Tunnel

A character can spot this collapsed tunnel entrance with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. Even so, removing the rubble takes several hours of work, although magic might speed up the process (at the GM's discretion). Attempting to remove the rubble alerts the anubians (**Area 5**).

5. Treasure Trove

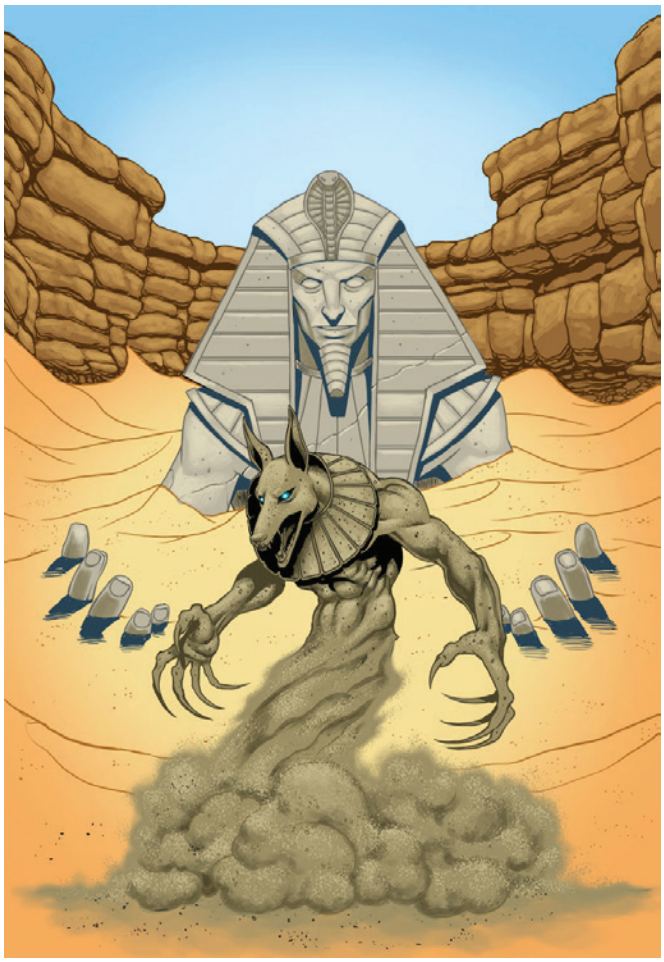
A metal grate is set into the floor of this cave. Beneath the grate is a hallway that is also pierced by test digs (**Area 3**). Where else the hallway may lead is beyond the scope of this mini-dungeon.

Treasure. Piled around the edges of the cave are funerary goods for the Poison Pharaoh, including 2d4 art objects worth 250 gp each. If the characters do not loot these treasures, the antiquarians pay them an additional reward for finding this trove.

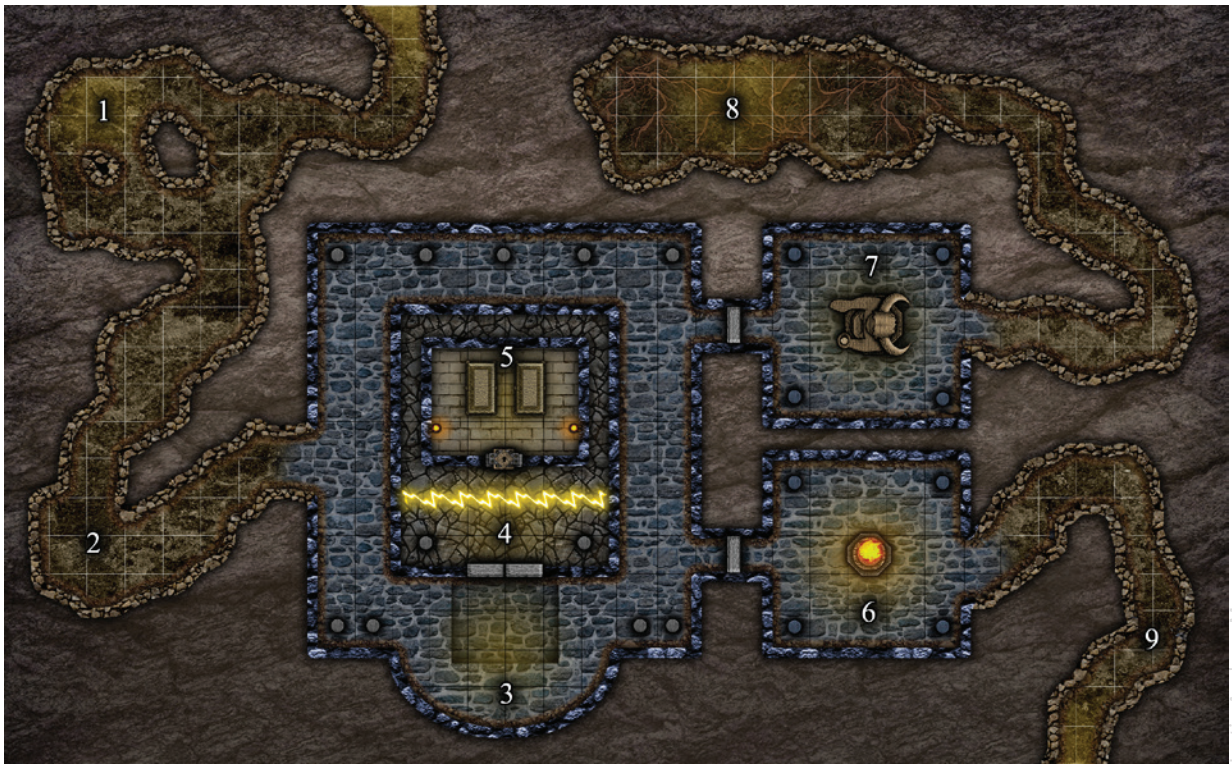
Anubian Guardians. The six **anubians** that guard Zahaten's tomb usually rest here as piles of desert sand. If the anubians become aware of the characters (as mentioned in other areas) or the characters spend the night anywhere but **Area 1**, the anubians move to investigate, using *Sand Step* to pass through **Area 3** or **4**.

Anubian Attitude. The anubians attack intruders but do not chase them beyond the ruined walls (**Area 1**). A character who speaks Primordial and succeeds at a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception)**, **Charisma (Intimidation)**, or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** can convince the anubians to stop their attack. The anubians can explain the history of the tomb (as recounted above), but refuse to allow anyone to further disturb the site.

Pharaoh Ressurection. When an anubian is killed, a translucent fragment of the pharaoh's soul flies from the elemental and enters the half-buried statue in the dig site (**Area 2**). A character can notice this happening if they succeed at a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. The anubian itself collapses into a pile of sand; a character can extract a single dose of *dust of dryness* from each pile.



Mates Laurentiu



Justin Andrew Mason

Den of the Deceased Druids

Jonathan G. Nelson

As the story goes, **Greenleaf** and **Thium of Perenna**, two women, were once ostracized from their community for the sole reason that they loved one another. They had nowhere to go and thus made a home together deep in the wilderness, for the trees and animals did not judge them or their love. Over the years, the two women became enamored with the ways of the natural world and adopted an awe-inspiring swath of land known for its great natural beauty and unique flora & fauna. They cared for and protected the land like one would a child, for nature cannot always defend itself from the evil machinations of humanoidkind.

In time, the lovers became powerful druids and befriended **"Old Witherwood"**, the largest treant in all the known world. Years passed, then decades. Time after time, the courageous druids drove off orcish axes and would-be invaders. During one incursion, **Beldrek the Minotaur**, wielding the fabled *lance of lightning*, joined them, first in battle, then in friendship.

As the women grew old and grey, their ability to care for and protect the lands as they once did, decreased. One day, Thium passed on and soon after, Greenleaf died from a broken heart. Witherwood opened the earth, revealing an ancient den, ordering Beldrek to craft a crypt suitable for the heroines' burial. Beldrek took his task quite seriously and dedicated the rest of his life to building a crypt befitting of these legends. The crypt stands undisturbed, and only those deemed worthy by **Witherwood** (**treant**, **AC** 22, 300 hp, automatic double damage) are permitted entry.

If Witherwood is slain, 2d4+6 **druids** arrive within 1d4 hours to hunt down the murderers.

A coven of three **green hags** help protect the den by using *invisibility* and *Mimicry* to keep intruders away.

4d10+10 rounds after the adventurers enter the den, two spies (**assassins**) from Mohkba, capital of the Klavek Kingdom, stealthily infiltrate the den to gather intelligence. They keep their distance from the party but won't hesitate to attack if confronted.

1. Camouflaged Chaos

A patch of ten hardy (**AC** 12) **shrieker fungi** have adapted to their surroundings and are only spotted with a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check**. They act as an alarm to warn all nearby. There is a 20% chance that one of the green hags is here. If the alarm is sounded, all three arrive within 1d4+1 rounds.

2. Dance of the Den

Four elder **satyrs** (**AC** 16, hp 60) dance in a circle here, but if warned by the alarm, they are completely still and silent until they see the party, at which point they sing and the rhythmic clomping of their hooves reaches the ears of the adventurers (**DC 16 Wisdom saving throw** or be charmed as per *charm person*). Anyone charmed by the satyrs dances and defends them.

3. Force of Nature

Recessed Floor Trap

Complex trap (level 5 – 10, deadly threat)

Trigger. Stepping on the recessed floor sets a 6-second timer (allowing others to step inside), then raises up a cubical *wall of force* around the recessed area.

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative 20.

Active Elements – Insects. After the wall of force goes up, eight small flagstones on the recessed floor open and unleash 8 **swarms of insects** affected by the *haste* spell.

Active Element – Crushing Floor (initiative 20). The floor rises at a rate of 5 feet per round, reaching the ceiling in 4 rounds, subsequently crushing anyone inside the cube for 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. After dealing damage with crushing floor, its damage doubles in the next round. 14 (4d6) in the second, 28 (8d6) in the third, and 56 (16d6) in the fourth round.

Constant Element – Reset. After 4 rounds of crushing, the floor returns its initial position and the *wall of force* vanishes.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines that magic links this trap to the 9 pillars in the room. If a pillar is touched with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check as an action, it delays the floor from rising for a single round. Disarming all pillars shuts down the trap.

Development. Disarming the first pillar alerts the three **green hags**. They arrive in 1d4, 2d4, and 3d4 rounds, respectively.

4. Beldrek's Lance of Perpetual Lightning

Beldrek the Minotaur once literally captured the fury of an epochal storm in his magic lance. Now, the weapon provides a steady flow of lightning, bisecting the room.

Lightning Barriers. Walking through the lightning deals 24 (4d6 + 10) lightning damage. Touching the lance causes 31 (6d6 + 10) lightning damage and throws the person back for 5 feet, dealing 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. Moving under or over the lightning requires a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**. *Dispel magic* (**DC 19**) or a successful **DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check** stops the perpetual lightning. While disabled thus, a second application of *dispel magic* (**DC 19**) releases the lance.

Lance of Lightning

Lance, rare (requires attunement)

This magic lance grants a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. It also has the following additional properties. When one of these properties is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Lightning. When you hit with a melee attack using the lance, you can cause the target to take an extra 2d6 lightning damage.

Lightning Strike. You can use an action to cause lightning to leap from the lance's tip in a line that is 5 feet wide and 120 feet long. Each creature in that line must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d6 + 10 lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

5. Greenleaf & Thium's Resting Place

The sacred final resting place of the two legendary druids. A massive lock (**DC 25 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools) prevents entry to this place, trapped with a poison needle. Greenleaf's sarcophagus holds a partially decayed corpse wearing a *helm of comprehending languages*, and holding a *staff of the woodlands*. Thium's sarcophagus holds a mostly mummified corpse wearing a *ring of animal influence* and holding a *staff of swarming insects*. Disturbing the sarcophagi curses the offenders as per *bestow curse* (9th-level spell slot, **no saving throw**), and makes Beldrik in **Area 7** turn to flesh and move in this direction to punish the graverobbers.

6. Everburning Flame

This flame was lit to honor the druids and is fed by a flow of natural gas.

7. Beldrik's Eternal Guard

Beldrik the **Minotaur** (**AC** 18, 100 hp, Multiattack [one *Greataxe*, one *Gore* attack]), friend to Thium and Greenleaf, had Old Witherwood turn him to stone, standing guard in eternal, silent vigil. Should anyone disturb the burial site in **Area 5**, he turns to flesh to intercept any intruders.

8. The Roots of Old Witherwood

This entire cavern is filled with moving roots and affected perpetually as if by the following spells: *entangle*, *spike growth*, *plant growth*. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** while digging through the roots for 1 minute locates an *ioun stone of sustenance* that can be unearthed with a **DC 20 Strength check**.

9. Meet the Woodland Folk

This path leads up and out of the den into a secret druid grove where animals may speak to humanoids without requiring magical aid; a red fox named **Gwenrose** is their leader.

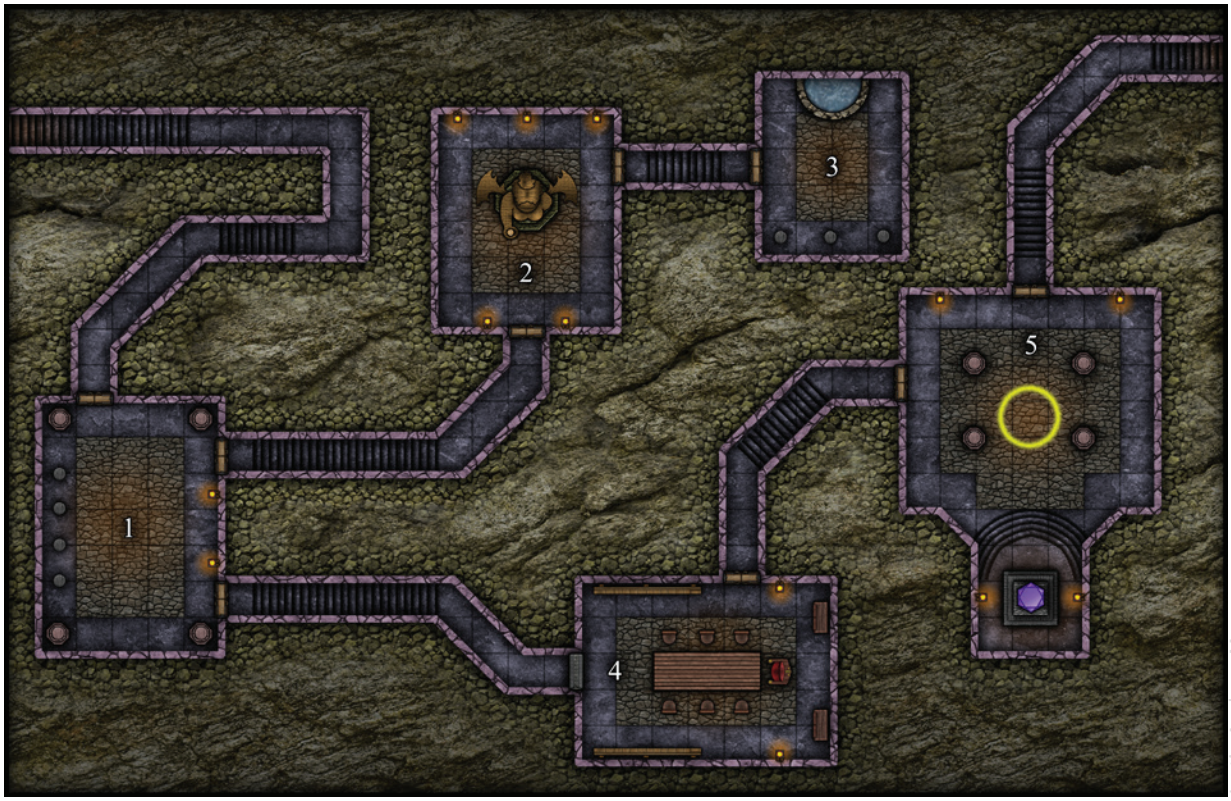


Nicolas Cloister

4
Characters

Level
6

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

School of the Devil Style

Claire Stricklin

The Royal Academy of the Arcane was not meant to be a party school. The prestigious institution has a famously high dropout rate, and multitudes of disgraced young nobles have departed in shame, unable to earn their robe and wizard's hat. Yet despite this reputation for academic rigor, the denizens of Halfway House remain unrepentant delinquents. The all-halfling fraternal order have been known to throw some truly legendary ragers, and the hillside of Halfway House is often seen festooned with the unconscious forms of inebriated students. Now, one week before final exams, the halfling's warren is quiet. Prefects sent to investigate have gone missing, and the students will not answer their professors' *sending* spells. Clearly, something has gone horribly awry in Halfway House. The time has come to summon outside assistance.

Background

Horwick Bellbreed III, president of Halfway House, recently came to a horrible realization. He isn't going to graduate. Desperation followed this dread epiphany, driving Horwick to do the unthinkable: pay a visit to the library. Seeking some shortcut to fake his way through exams, the frantic halfling soon discovered an ancient scroll written in a foreign tongue. It promised untold power, offering a 'demon tutor' and 'the pinnacle of the Art.' While Bellbreed was uncertain of his translation, he felt confident that he could reproduce the scroll's summoning diagram. With a fiendish tutor at his command, there was no way he could fail! Unfortunately for Horwick, a better translation for 'tutor' was 'sensei,' and a better translation for 'demon' was 'oni.'

1. Party Games

As the heroes descend the stairs into Halfway House, they can hear the sounds of raucous shouting and rhythmic chanting from **Area 1**. A character succeeding on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check** realizes that these are not the sounds of drunken revelry, but of ritualistic combat.

Under the influence of the devil bound in **Area 5**, the residents of Halfway House have abandoned their arcane studies in favor of martial arts training. They are in the midst of a tournament when the heroes arrive, and a large pile of unconscious losers from previous rounds lie in the northeast corner of this common –room – turned dojo, along with a pair of bound and gagged prefects.

The conscious members of Halfway House are quite mad, driven to bloodlust by the unnatural influence of their sensei. These halflings call for the characters to join their tournament, but are more than willing to attack en masse if the party refuses to play along. At the moment, there are six **underclassmen** (**void cultists**) and two **upperclassmen** (**berserkers**) still participating in the tournament. Their special abilities should be described as supernatural martial arts techniques rather than deformities or spells.

2. Shrine of the Master

The bunkbeds in this dormitory have been smashed and repurposed, their lumber lashed together into an unsettling effigy. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** correctly identifies the creature depicted as a **barbed devil**, though her dress (a kimono made from torn bedsheets) may represent an unfamiliar fashion depending on the characters' origins.

A table with a small bell stands before the effigy. Anyone who rings the bell feels a compulsion to ask for the effigy's blessing. Any creature who fails to do so bursts into flames upon entering **Area 3**, taking 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns until it takes an action to douse the fire.

Buried among the unused scraps of lumber in this room are a number of student notebooks. A **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals scrolls of the cantrips *fire bolt*, *mending*, *prestidigitation* and the 1st-level spells *burning hands*, *mage armor*, *shield*, while a **DC 16 check** also reveals a *spell scroll of darkness* among the discarded tomes.

3. Bathroom Baptism

Once a palatial washroom, this chamber has been transformed into a meditation chamber. Its lavatory stalls have been disassembled, and the permanent *create water* effect that once offered Halfway House residents running water now resembles a waterfall. It cascades down the chamber's northern wall before draining into the grates at the room's southern end.

When the heroes arrive, one student sits beneath the deluge, legs crossed and eyes closed in meditation. Another rises to face the intruders. This is **Horwick Bellbreed III**, now the favored disciple of the oni in **Area 5**. He has learned a great deal of 'the Art' since summoning his tutor, and is now a fully fledged **oni initiate**.

Oni Initiates use **gladiator** stats, but have 84 hit points, add **Acrobatics +5**, replace *Spear* with

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 +4) bludgeoning damage.

Replace all features except *Multiattack* with:

Oni Fire (1/day). The oni initiate wreathes its hands in infernal fire. It deals an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage with its *Unarmed Strikes* and *Flurry of Blows* for 1 minute.

Flurry of Blows (Recharge 5–6). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (3d6+4) bludgeoning damage, and the target suffers one of the following effects of the initiate's choice: The target must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**, or be knocked prone The target must make a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** or be moved up to 15 ft. in a direction of the initiate's choosing. Regardless of choice, a target failing a saving throw can't use reactions until the end of its next turn.

Frat-Boy Fury. While under the effects of *Oni Fire*, the initiate can use its bonus action to burp a gas of highly flammable alcohol at their flaming hands. Each creature in a 15-foot cone, including the initiate, must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. This ignites flammable objects not worn or carried and ends the *Oni Fire* prematurely.

1d2 rounds after combat begins, Horwick's vice president rises from his meditation and joins the fray, his graduation to **oni initiate** complete.

Note that, unlike the common room in **Area 1** and the high-ceilinged dormitory in **Area 2**, this chamber is built to accommodate halfling students. Medium-sized creatures follow the rules for squeezing into a smaller space.

4. An Unhealthy Healthy Diet

Once well-stocked with delicious foods of all kinds, the Halfway House kitchens are in a sorry state. Ales, cakes, and rounds of cheese lie discarded in the trash. The dining table now holds only crusts of bread and glasses of clean water: the spartan fare of monks in training. Perhaps more interesting than the food, however, are the spices.

In place of salt and pepper, the shakers on the table now hold flakes of assassin's blood. The poison is part of an acolyte's training, intended to inure the mind and body to discomfort on the road to physical perfection. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals six doses of the musty-smelling substance.

Like **Area 3**, this room also follows the rules for squeezing into a smaller space.

5. The Master's Training

This chamber still serves its original purpose: a space for students to practice their skills. However, the nature of those skills has changed considerably. At the heart of the chamber is the summoning circle that Horwick inscribed last week. Bound within the summoning circle is the cause of Halfway House's transformation: the oni who has taken on these halflings as her pupils. This malevolent creature is currently demonstrating a number of katas to four **underclassmen** (**void cultists** ).

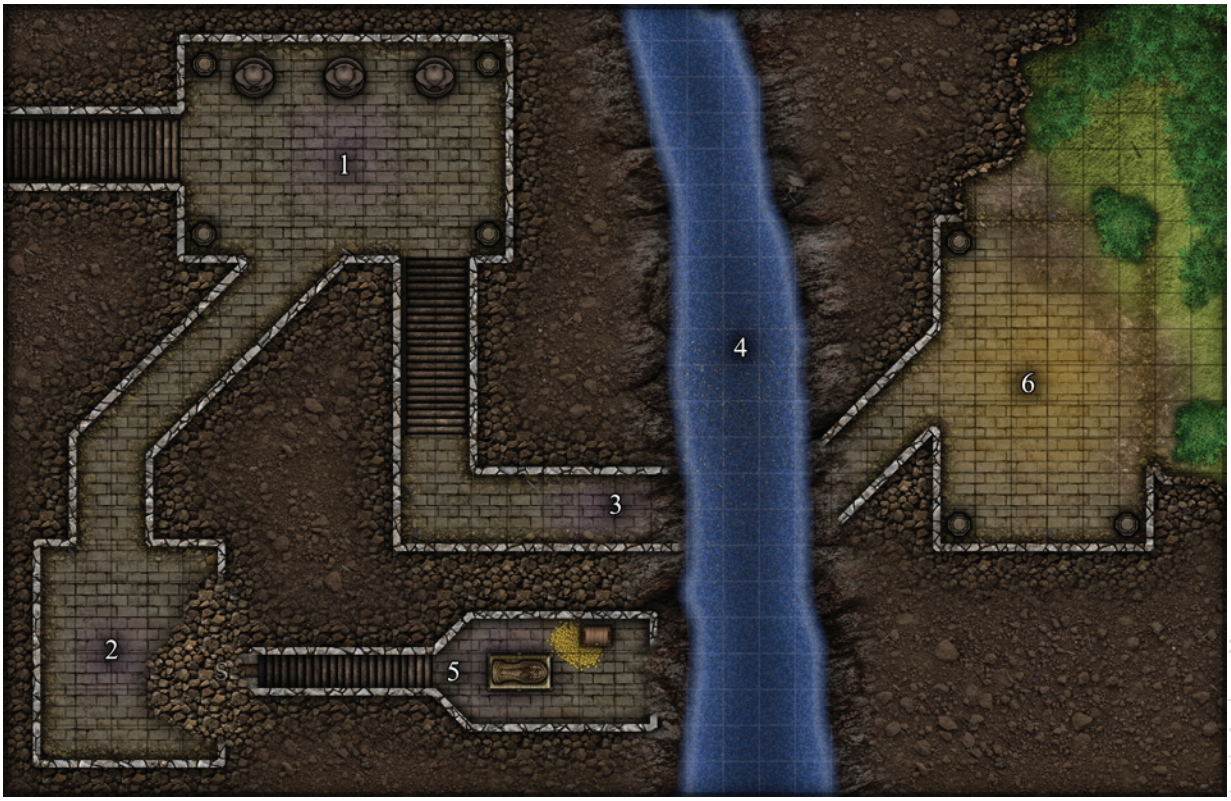
When the heroes arrive, she possesses one of these young halflings, who then gains the statistics and abilities of a **barbed devil** as if they had used the *polymorph* spell to turn into one. When that host is reduced to zero hit points, it falls unconscious, and the process repeats with the nearest conscious underclassmen on initiative count 20, losing ties.

Once the halflings are defeated, the nigh-invincible oni-sensei offers to take on one or more of the heroes as her student, imparting the **oni initiate**'s *Oni Fire* feature in exchange for an unspecified debt of service. Either way, she admits to a growing dissatisfaction with her students, and correctly surmises that marring the chalk of her summoning circle will free her to return to her native plane. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Intelligence (Arcana) check** confirms this. When this happens, the surviving students return to their senses, their madness dispelled.

4
Characters

Level
6

Mountain



Justin Andrew Mason

The Lost Valley

Claire Stricklin

There were signs. There were portents. And there was one skilled enough to read them. In an unimaginably ancient past, the lizardfolk archmage Botinqah looked to the heavens, and there she saw the end of her world. And so, on the day the fires fell, the day the skies cracked open and doom came for the first children of the gods, the mighty Botinqah saved what she could. With her dying effort, she managed to preserve one small fragment of her homeland against the ravages of the Skyfall, concealing a secluded mountain valley within a magical subterranean refuge. Eons have passed. Now that sliver of primeval wilderness is about to meet the modern world, and the two may prove uneasy neighbors.

Note to GM. This module assumes that dinosaurs are not well-known in your campaign setting, or at least, in the region the party is traveling. Try to describe the dinosaurs in a way that does not immediately give away their nature.

Background

The impact event that buried Botinqah's hermitage also sealed away the entrance to her refuge. This subterranean realm still bustles with life, but until recently remained cut off from the outside world. Unfortunately for the archaeologists of the Prekwity Historical Institute, some of that life has found its way to the surface. A veritable swarm of "baby dragons" have chased the learned gnomes from their dig site. And when there are winged reptiles about, adventurers are sure to follow.

1. Hall of the Ancients

Once the entrance to Botinqah's hermitage, this chamber has more recently served as base camp for the scholars of Prekwity Historical Institute. Cookfires, mosquito netting, and field notes still litter the area. The latter mention the "lizard cult" that once dwelled here, pointing to the three statues of "serpent-headed deities" that line the chamber's northern wall. Actually, these were depictions of Botinqah's teachers.

With the sudden departure of the gnomish researchers and the steady supply of delicious prehistoric birds, a trio of **giant constrictor snakes** have taken up residence in this chamber. They are well-fed and non-aggressive, but will attack if the party approaches their food supply in **Area 3**. A **DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** calms the snakes for 1 minute, but only if the party does not smell of archaeopteryx blood or eggs. The snakes cannot be calmed if the party kills any archaeopteryxes.

2. Doom of Ages

The corroded fragments of an ancient orrery lie strewn about this chamber. The archaeologists cleared the way down into **Area 3**, but did little more than stake out this site with lengths of twine. The room is cluttered with remains of crystals, corroded metal, and unrecognizable machine parts half-buried in the dig site, all still infused with Botinqah's frantic worry after all these years. Despite the clutter, a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check**

suffices to hint at the astrological purpose of this room's artifacts, but any close examination causes a sense of irrational doom to wash over any who take a closer look. If a character investigates or looks too closely, they must succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** or be affected by *bestow curse*, seeing horrible portents in the dust of ages. This curse also forces a character to make a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** at the start of each of their turns while under stress (such as in combat). On a failure, they are stunned until the start of their next turn. The curse lasts for 24 hours, or until the character saves a reptilian creature from harm.

3. Baby "Dragons"

Recently excavated, this passage features a shallow set of steps, rough-hewn walls, and several peculiar nests. These resemble stone rings lined with moss, and each holds 1d4+2 eggs. Any **Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals that these eggs come from no known species.

A few rounds after the characters discover the nests, a flock of 10 highly territorial **archaeopteryxes** return to defend their young. It doesn't take a ranger to realize that these creatures are not dragons.



4. River of Time

Rivers and streams represent transition, time, and as such, can slowly erode some magics. This river has become infused with erratic time magic that only affects a select few. For every creature entering the river for the first time, roll 1d4. On a 4, the respective character is affected by the magic of the river. For every foot such a character travels downstream (south along the river), they age by one year. For every foot they travel north, they reduce their age by one year.

When the heroes first arrive, they may witness these effects as a school of trilobites swim by, aging from minnows to 2-foot-long monsters. Although these effects (like the trilobites) are harmless, this bizarre time magic does offer a unique opportunity for the body in **Area 5**. If the party retrieves Botinqah's remains and carries it north, the archmage will be restored to life. However, since this form of resurrection is rather imprecise, the party will find themselves in company with a prehistoric teenaged **lizardfolk apprentice** (**commoner** who knows *prestidigitation*) rather than a powerful archmage. She has no memory of her final moments.

5. Botinqah's Tomb

Combining the powers of *demiplane*, *time stop*, and *wish* to create her refuge, Botinqah tore open a rift, pulling through the entirety of the lost valley. This massive expenditure of magical energy proved fatal, as Botinqah suspected. She still lies where she fell: in the tomb she prepared for herself.

The lizardfolk's diagrams and notes are still carved into the walls of this chamber. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the nature of the magic that was cast here.

The body of Botinqah lies in its sarcophagus, still wearing the set of *dimensional shackles* she slipped on at the end. Knowing that she might falter in the final moment, the lizardfolk mage used the shackles to combat her own impulse for self-preservation.

6. The Lost World

Sunlight filters down through the enormous ferns and flowering vines that dot this ledge. From the eastern edge of **Area 6**, a 100-foot-high cliff overlooks primeval jungle stretching off to the far end of a vast valley. Of course, from the heroes' perspective that ought to be impossible. They may not realize that, in crossing the stream in **Area 4**, they crossed into Botinqah's refuge.

Of more immediate concern is the trio of **lizardfolk** and their **bizarre lizard mount** (as a **young spinosaurus** with a climbing speed of 30 ft.) perched beside the cliff edge. This hunting party has climbed to this vantage to net birds. After countless generations of isolation, these lizardfolk react with fear and hostility to outsiders.

Lizardfolk gain:

Net. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained. A creature can use its action to make a **DC 10 Strength check** to free itself or another creature in a net, ending the effect on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) frees the target without harming it and destroys the net.

Whether or not the party can explore it, is up to the GM.

Botinqah's Sanctuary

The detailed diagrams and notes carved into the walls of Botinqah's Tomb are the scrawlings of an arcane genius. But that genius is locked within the stone; Botinqah herself, if ressurected, recalls none of it. A character who spends a week meticulously copying and cataloging the carvings has the raw formula for a new 9th-level spell: *Botinqah's Sanctuary*. Many more weeks of research would be required to unlock the spell itself, but without the collected notes, such a spell would take a lifetime to discover.

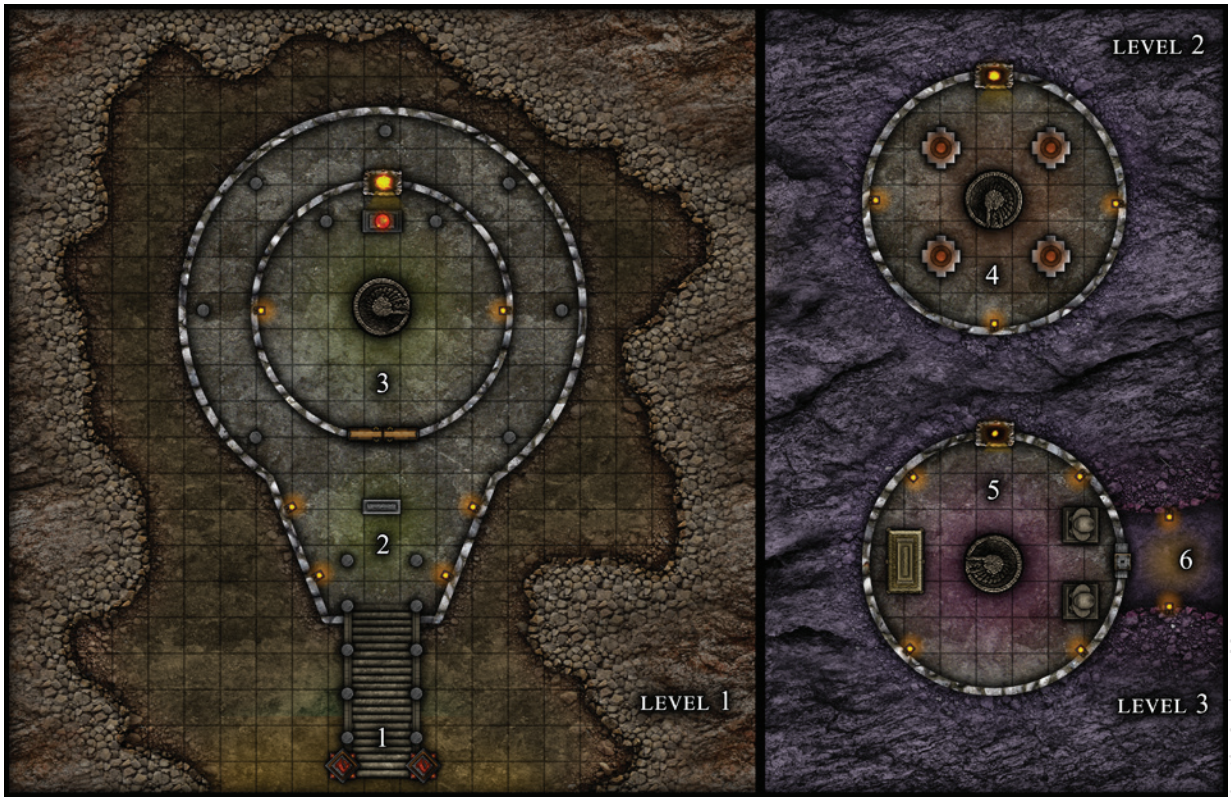
Black Market Potential. Whether the formula fills a series of field journals or is a stack of pastelky wax rubbings, convincing any but the most studied of arcane practicioners that this formula is worth good coin is a daunting prospect. The party can sell the formula for a king's ransom (see page 298), if the buyer recognizes the potential of what they're buying. If the party attempts to sell the formula, they collect only a nominal sum unless the buyer succeeds on a **DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. Clever characters might think to Help the vendor, allowing them to make the check with **advantage**.

Dean Spencer

5
Characters

Level
6

Underworld



Justin Andrew Mason

Graveyard Gate

William Fischer

A century ago, two dwarven brothers named Breodan and Lareck Deepwell gave their lives to save the surface world. As the rest of their clan held back an army of ghouls, Breodan and Lareck selflessly sacrificed their souls to seal the gate that would halt the undead horde's advance. In doing so, the brothers forever trapped the ghouls (and their doomed clan) in the lightless tunnels of the Underworld.

A solitary watchtower stands above what scholars now call the Graveyard Gate. Recently, a necromancer named Avinex discovered the site of the Deepwell Clan's last stand. Avinex now works to undo the magic that sealed the Graveyard Gate and release the ghoulish horde.

The heroes may arrive at the tower to thwart Avinex's plans, or they might seek to open the Graveyard Gate for reasons of their own.

1. Red Lanterns

The tower above the Graveyard Gate is 60 feet tall, its pinnacle nearly brushing the ceiling of the cavern. A stairwell rises to a walkway around the tower's waist. Two enormous lanterns sit atop railings at the base of the stairs. The lanterns are fashioned from iron and fill the cavern with eerie light.

Dread Lanterns. Avinex created the lanterns to bolster his undead minions (such as the ogre zombies in **Area 2**). Each lantern sheds light in a 45-foot radius. While within the light, undead creatures gain **advantage** on **Constitution saving throws**, as well as on saving throws against effects that turn undead, such as *Channel Divinity—Turn Undead*. A *dispel magic* spell cast on a lantern permanently extinguishes it automatically. Alternatively, the lanterns can be physically destroyed (**AC** 19, 18 hp, **immune** to poison and psychic damage). Due to their impressive weight (100 lbs.) and bulk, Medium or smaller size creatures must use two hands to carry a lantern and move at half speed while doing so.

2. Walkway

Avinex stationed three **ogre zombies** to guard the tower's entrance. As soon as the zombies notice the party, two advance to attack, while the remaining zombie moves to block the entrance to **Area 3**.

Torches light the southern half of the walkway. In the center of this area, a plaque reads (in Dwarvish): *Beyond these doors, the warriors of the Deepwell Clan laid down their lives to protect the sunlit world from the shadows below.*

The iron-bound doors north of the plaque are closed but unlocked.

3. Ball and Chain

A staircase spirals downward in the center of the room. North of the stairs, an orange crystal sphere balances atop a squat pedestal. Flames dance in an open-mouthed forge in the northern wall.

The sphere is Avinex's prized possession: a *crystal ball*. At the GM's discretion, the characters may also discover the rest of Avinex's belongings (such as his spellbook) in this area.

The flames inside the forge are magical: nothing short of a *wish* can extinguish them, and undead creatures are vulnerable to all damage while within 30 feet of the flames. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** reveals the properties of the flames.

A close inspection of the forge reveals that the flames inside it can be raised or lowered via a chain and pulley system. As an action, a creature within 5 feet of the forge can move the flames from one level of the tower to the next. Avinex finds the flames unsettling and so keeps them here while he works in the tower's lower levels. Clever characters might maneuver the flames to assist them in their fight against the will-o'-wisps in **Area 4** or the minotaur skeleton in **Area 5**.

4. The Caretakers

Pyramids of bones stacked 5-feet high surround the staircase in the center of the room. Floating above each pyramid is a ball of crimson light. A forge fills the room's northern wall.

The lights above the pyramids are **will-o'-wisps** Avinex has lured into his service. The four will-o'-wisps attack as soon as they become aware of the party.

The forge on the north wall is currently empty, but the party can use the pulley system to maneuver the flames here, as described in **Area 3**.

5. The Gate

A sarcophagus lies west of the central staircase. To the east, statues of dwarven warriors flank an enormous iron gate. A **minotaur skeleton** armed with a Large *+1 maul* (+7 to hit, *Hit:* 18 [2d12 + 5] bludgeoning damage) stands beside the forge in the north wall.

When the characters arrive, **Avinex** (a **mage**) kneels before the iron gate. The ghostly forms of Breodan and Lareck Deepwell float in the air above him, apparently trapped by the summoning circle Avinex has etched into the floor. As Avinex chants, the ghosts writhe in agony. Despite this torment, the brothers steadfastly refuse to open the Graveyard Gate. Avinex has almost broken the dwarven spirits when the party arrives: Roll 1d6+1 at the start of combat. This is the number of actions Avinex still has to expend to break the spirits and open the Graveyard Gate. The torture of the spirits requires Concentration, and once he has lost Concentration, he has to start the procedure anew – preferably after the party has been dealt with.

Inside the sarcophagus are twin caskets containing the physical remains of Breodan and Lareck Deepwell. If the party defeats Avinex, the brothers reward the characters with the armor they wore in life: two sets of *dwarven plate*. Their spirits then return to the statues that flank the Graveyard Gate. If the party needs to travel to the Underworld, the brothers animate the statues long enough to open the gate, allowing the characters to pass before closing the gate behind them. Otherwise, the strength of the brothers' spirits ensures that nothing short of a *wish* can cause the Graveyard Gate to open.

6. The Graveyard

The bones of dwarves and ghouls alike choke the tunnel beyond the Graveyard Gate. When the gate first opens, eight **ghouls** scavenge the battlefield. At the GM's discretion, additional ghouls may arrive each round, alerted by the sounds of fighting or the scent of living flesh. An oversized jawbone still grinds its teeth against the skull of a dwarf—a *reaper ghoul jaw*. How much of the ghoulish horde survived the battle with the Deepwell Clan, and where the tunnel beyond the Graveyard Gate leads, is up to the GM.

Reaper Ghoul Jaw

Weapon (club), very rare (requires attunement)

This grotesquely elongated jawbone the size of a human femur once belonged one of the dreaded reaper ghouls, banished beyond the Graveyard Gate. The reaper ghoul's unlife still suffuses the bone, eternally hungering for the flesh of the living.

When you hit a living creature that has flesh with this magic weapon, you deal an additional 1d4 slashing damage as the teeth animate and grind.

Necrotic Battery. The jaw can store a single 1st-level *inflict wounds* spell for 1 minute. The stored spell is discharged if you make a successful melee attack with the jaw. The spell damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.

Curse. This club is cursed. Attuning to it curses you until you are targeted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. You can't draw any other weapon and refuse to be parted from it. You start to slowly develop cannibalistic cravings. If you die while attuned to the club, you rise as a reaper ghoul.

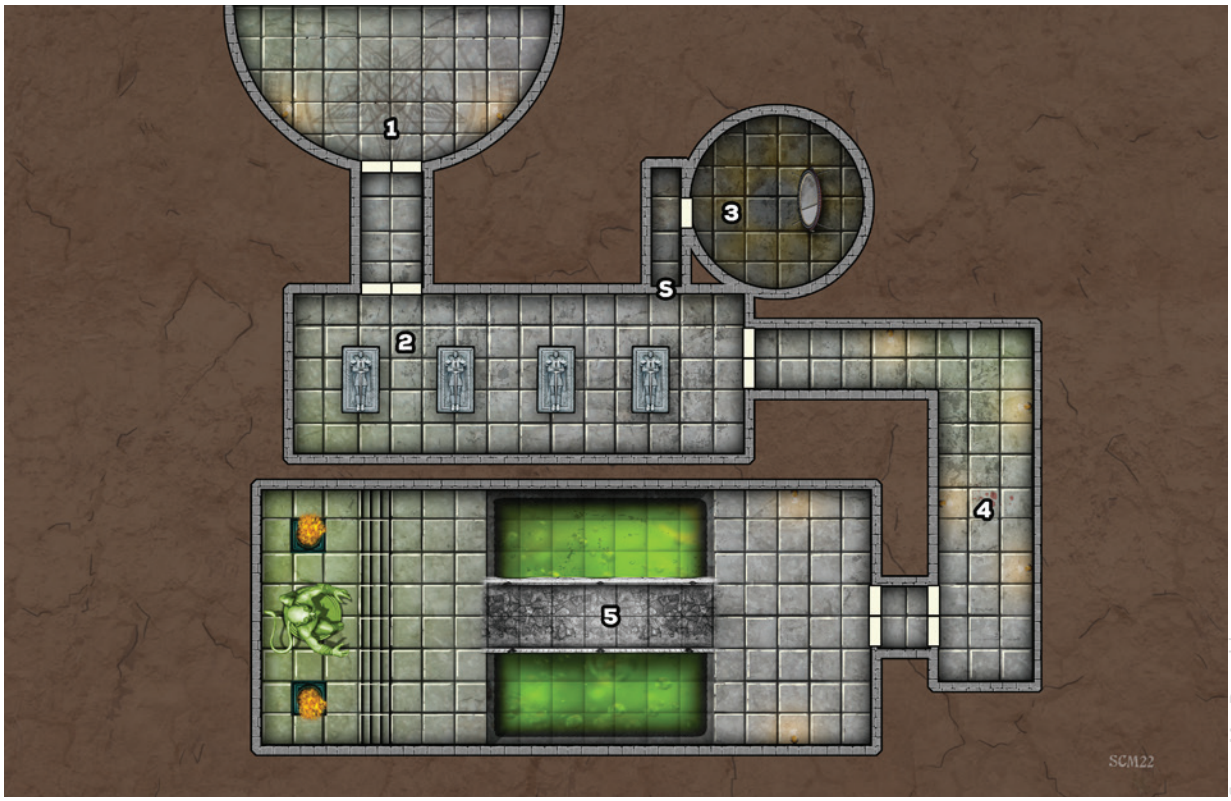


Matt Forsyth

4-5 Characters

Levels 5-7

Dungeon



Sean MacDonald

Shadows of Things Lost

David Schwartz

Over the last several months, half a dozen townsfolk have gone missing without a trace. The characters may be hired to investigate or may stumble upon a kidnapping in progress. The evidence suggests the work of a diabolic cult.

The cult meets on nights of the new moon in the crypt of the LeJaune family. Once a prosperous family, the last of the LeJaunes died only a year ago.

Finding the Cult. If the characters identify a member of the cult, they can surreptitiously follow them to a ceremony. Alternatively, the characters might hear from the new owners of the LeJaune manor that on moonless nights, lights are seen in the crypt in the hills behind the manor.

The Cult of Lost Things. After the death of his wife in childbirth, Rodrik LeJaune started a cult to the Devil Duke of Lost Things. After his own death under suspicious circumstances, the cult continued, now led by Malatrovata, a barbed devil formerly bound to LeJaune. More ambitious than LeJaune, Malatrovata plans to sacrifice thirteen people in a ritual to summon the infernal duke.

The cultists all wear dark-colored robes and display a silver diabolic symbol on a chain (worth 5 gp each).

Crypt Properties. Except where noted the crypt is unlit; its ceilings are 10 feet high; and all doors are made of stone and unlocked. The cultists carry torches when they enter.

1. Portico

The entrance to the crypt is a semicircular recess in a hill. A pentagram in faded paint is barely visible upon the floor. The double doors are locked but can be opened with the key held by one of the guards, or a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools.

Cultist Guards. In the half hour before the cult ceremony and for its entire duration, torches are placed in the sconces and two **cultists** stand guard on either side of the doors (one of whom carries the key). Subject to the GM's discretion, there may be 1d3 other **cultists** who have recently arrived, including whoever the characters followed here.

Attitude. The guards do not know the full membership of the cult and let in anyone wearing a dark robe and a diabolic symbol. They attempt to intimidate anyone else into leaving, resorting to violence if not obeyed. A character in a dark robe, but without a symbol can still gain entrance with a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Charisma (Deception) check**.

2. Crypt

This room houses four sarcophagi bearing the remains of past heads of the LeJaune household.

Rodrick LeJaune. While his remains lie in farthest sarcophagus, the **wraith** of Rodrick LeJaune paces this room. He attacks anyone who is clearly not a cultist or a prisoner, or who desecrates the sarcophagi. If he is not hostile, a disguised character can get LeJaune to reveal the history of the cult with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**.

Grave Goods. The sarcophagi can be opened with a successful **DC 20 Strength check** (using a crowbar grants **advantage**). Each corpse is adorned with 50 gp worth of jewelry. In addition, the body of Rodrik Lejaune clutches a *+1 wand of the warmage*.

Secret Door. The secret door leading to the mirror room (**Area 3**) can be found with a successful **DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. The **DC** is reduced to 20 if the sentinel in darkness (**Area 5**) is destroyed.

3. Mirror Room

The dome of this room rises to 15 feet. The room is empty except for a large, circular mirror. A character who succeeds at a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (History) check** identifies it as a *mirror of life trapping* (it is not currently activated).



Prisoners of the Mirror. Malatrovata is using the mirror to hold prisoners until she has enough to perform her ritual. Six of the mirror's cells (1–3, 5–7) contain unarmed **nobles**. You might add to or replace these with specific NPCs from your campaign.

The fourth cell contains a **specter**, created by the wraith of LeJaune (**Area 2**).

Releasing the Prisoners. If the characters identify the mirror, they can communicate with any occupant by speaking their name or cell number. Unless the characters know the second command word (see **Area 5**), they cannot release the prisoners without destroying the mirror.

Destroying the mirror releases all the prisoners, including the specter. While little danger to the characters, it poses a great threat to the nobles. If allowed to escape the room, the specter alerts the wraith (or escapes the crypt if its creator has been destroyed).

4. Ossuary

The back wall of this hall is pierced with niches each containing skulls or whole skeletons of deceased members of the LeJaune family. Just before the ceremony, the cultists wait here for the call from Malatrovata to enter the shrine (**Area 5**).

Eerie Illumination. When a creature enters this room, two **skull lanterns** illuminate and rise from their recesses. If attacked, they respond in kind, but otherwise hover near the ceiling.

5. Shrine of Lost Things

This long room is dominated by a statue of the Infernal Duke of Lost Things. Ceilings here are 20 feet high (15 feet over the dais).

The Bridge. The bridge arches slightly and has 3-foot-high railing on either side. Beneath the bridge a 5-foot-deep pool of stagnant water divides the room. A creature that falls into the water is exposed to sight rot.

Cultists. If the characters arrive during a ceremony, there are 2d4 **cultists** present. The cultists become violent if the characters reveal themselves as intruders but can be scared off with a successful **DC 20 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Intimidation) check**. This check is made with **advantage** if a cultist (or a devil) has been neutralized.

Devils. The **barbed devil** **Malatrovata** spends most of her time here. During the cult ceremonies she uses a *hat of disguise* to appear as a human woman. She is accompanied by the **imp** **Perso**, who serves as her spy and messenger. Perso takes the form of a raven during ceremonies and when in town. The devils are hostile, and likely attack if the characters intrude or reveal themselves during a ceremony.

The Statue. When Malatrovata is killed (or banished), or someone attacks the statue, it animates as a **sentinel in darkness**. The statue retains its *Vault Keeper* ability even when inanimate. If the statue teleports an object, you might have it reappear in the mirror room (**Area 3**).

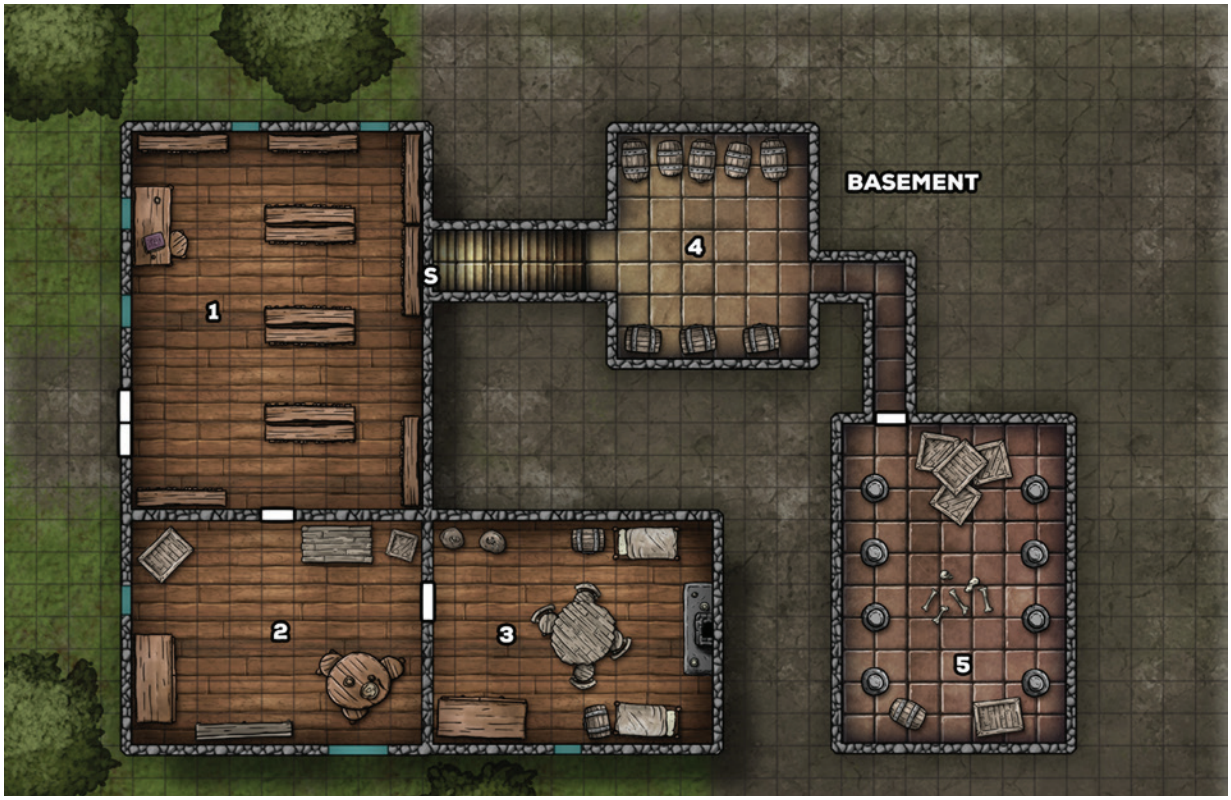
Two phrases are engraved on the statue's base: "Blinded by Sight" and "Enlightened by Darkness". These phrases are the commands words for the *mirror of life trapping* (**Area 3**).

Mates Laurentiu

4
Characters

Levels
6-7

Urban



Bloody Wishes Three

Derek Blakely

The Erudite Athenaeum of Literary Study has been run by the Mar'ley family for generations, and is recognized by most guild halls for its extensive library and conservation of literary works. As such, it is backed and defended by a variety ministries should it be burglarized. However, it has a dark, second trade: brokering deals with corrupt individuals, offering "curses" to benefit business partners and ruin rivals in exchange for power and wealth.

Recently, a noble paid for a "curse" with rare tomes, including the "Malleus Daemonorium", which could become the undoing of Wiatt Mar'ley, current scion of the family.

Secret Wishmaster. Locked in the basement (**Area 5**), bound by potent dweomers, a glabrezu seethes, tricked into making a pact after being forced to reveal his true name: **Do'koroth.** This enslaved demon was infused with djinn and efreeti blood, bestowing the ability to grant wishes. As a demon, all his wishes require a sacrifice and need to cause pain and suffering. At first, only vagrants fueled these darksome wishes, but the bound demon grows bolder, demanding ever more potent targets to fuel its magics.

Abyssal Apprentice. The elven apprentice **Arryn** is actually the **succubus Az'ral-zylia.** She is usually in **Area 1** and was a wish made by an ancestor of Wiatt's to help with "business." She and Do'koroth plan to free each other from servitude with the information in the Malleus Daemonorium. The tome depicts a ritual that can dissolve their enforced contract: They just need to coat the magic circle containing Do'koroth with the blood of a member of the Mar'ley family. **Arryn** might play the damsel in distress, slip the party the missing pages, or otherwise try to outmaneuver Wiatt. She wants the party to confront Wiatt in **Area 5** to spill his blood in the circle.

Bloody Librarian. Seneschal **Wiatt Mar'ley** (NE human **blood mage**; add **Deception +4**, **Sleight of Hand +6**, and poisoner's kit (+3), replace *feign death* with *slow*) carries a ring of keys for the front door, bedroom, and the cabinet in **Area 3**. Wiatt may not be directly or indirectly harmed by Az'ral-zylia or Do'koroth. Wiatt is rather obsessive, methodical, and much to the chagrin of the succubus, simply not interested in her. He is, however, impatient, greedy, and power-hungry.

1. Book Repository

This room is made of dark hardwood, containing numerous bookshelves and written material collected over the years. One bookshelf hides a secret entrance that leads to **Area 4**. A successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices a circular hole on the outside of the bookshelf near the top shelf, and a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discerns that two of the books ("Entitled Wishes" and "Demonic Specters") have been regularly moved from their spots. When the two books are switched and a key (or similarly-shaped item; one of the inkwell works) is inserted into its socket, the bookcase hiding

the secret entrance slides open, replaced with a *minor illusion* of the bookshelf to mask the entrance.

Dangerous Books. The books include works on planes and monsters and obscure, esoteric topics. They may be studied by interested parties for a fee of 1d6 x 100 gp. However, every book on display is actually a facsimile that Wiatt created, protected by a **bookkeeper**. Additionally, they are protected by a *glyph of warding* containing a *spell glyph* of *hold person* (**DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**). Wiatt or Arryn can remove the publications from the shelves without upsetting these defenses. The real books are stored safely in crates and barrels in **Area 4**.

2. Reading Room

This is where books may be studied by customers.

Knowledge is Power. Studying a book on a topic takes 3d6 x 2 hours, and grants **advantage** on knowledge-related checks pertaining a unique, extremely specific topic (like a dungeon's gates, a specific creature, etc.).

Teatime. When Wiatt has a chance to claim an interesting victim, he or Az'ral-zylia serve a cup of tea dosed with an ingested variant of drow poison to studying targets. After the person passes out, they are dragged to **Area 3** and placed in an empty barrel. If the person has any equipment, it is removed and temporarily placed under the beds. Wiatt and Az'ral-zylia do not automatically detect hidden weaponry.

Captured. Whenever a victim is taken, that person is stuffed in a barrel from **Area 3** and moved to the secret storage (**Area 4**) to await their sacrificial end. Anyone caught and trapped in the barrel can attempt a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check** to successfully pop open the lid. A character with a hidden dagger or piton can attempt to pry open the lid with a successful **DC 10 Dexterity check**.

3. Bedroom

The door to this room is locked. It takes Wiatt's keys or a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools to open the door. The room contains a wood table, chairs, bed, fireplace, and a locked cabinet trapped with *Myopic Affliction* that can be opened with Wiatt's key or a **DC 18 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. The cabinet holds trophies taken from past victims: the dwarf Odinraag's *+1 shortsword* and thieves' tools (see **Area 4**), a red shawl (5 gp), an empty purple coin purse, and a platinum hairpin (15 gp).

Myopic Affliction

Simple trap (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

Wiatt is protective of his trophies and has protected his cabinet from an intruder's prying eyes.

Trigger. The door is unlocked without using the key.

Effect. When activated, this trap casts a *blindness/deafness* spell from the lock, using a 5th-level spell slot, targeting up to 4 creatures. Affected creatures must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become blinded for 1 minute.

Countermeasures. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices the lock faintly sparkle or casting *detect magic* reveals an aura of necromancy. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check made within 5 feet of the lock disables the trap, but a result of 10 or less triggers it. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 14) cast on the lock destroys the trap.

Wiatt stores two empty barrels to hold his victims here, so he can roll them into the secret chamber one at a time.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** notices that one of the bed's mattresses is lopsided. This is Az'ral-zylia's bed. The Malleus Daemonorium is hidden here, a few pages missing. A series of pages depicting the ritual to free Do'koroth are held by Az'ral-zylia.

4. Secret Storage

Barrels. Most of the barrels contain the original copies of the athenaeum's books, but one barrel contains clean water, another barrel contains the corpse of a male dwarf. **Odinraag Boneflint** unfortunately died from suffocation and succumbing to his wounds. When the lid is removed, the frustrated **ghost dwarf** Odinraag rises from the barrel. It takes a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** to convince the dwarf that the party is not in league with Wiatt. He admits to trying to rob the seneschal and discovering the trophy collection in Wiatt's locked cabinet. Recognizing two of the items from a previous apprentice and a missing patrician's daughter, he was ambushed and overcome by a female demon (Az'ral-zylia's's true form). If the party presents his shortsword and defeats Wiatt, he finds rest. Award double XP for laying him to rest.

5. Hidden Sanctum

This room is infused with the *hallow* spell, with *Tongues* as the secondary effect. Do'koroth is the only fiend capable of entering this area.

The crates and barrel contain dried food. The floor is littered with the bones of the last victim Do'koroth vivisected and consumed.

Secret Circle. The chamber houses eight stone pillars, each with their center burrowed out, and a candle placed inside. When all pillars are lit, a 15-foot-radius magic circle appears in the center of the area, and the trapped **Do'koroth** (**glabrezu**) phases into existence. The demon also has:

Twisted Wish (3/Year). Do'koroth the Wishmaster can grant three wishes per year, but it can't grant a wish for itself. To be granted a wish, a humanoid creature within 60 feet of Do'koroth states a desired effect to it. Do'koroth can then cast the *wish* spell on the creature's behalf to bring about the effect. Unless a blood sacrifice is presented as compensation, Do'koroth always tries to pervert the *wish* to cause worldly suffering.

Bound. Do'koroth is unable to attack anyone with Mar'ley blood, but he can defend himself and attack anyone else within reach. He cannot leave the magic circle until Mar'ley blood has been spilled inside it and coats the circle.

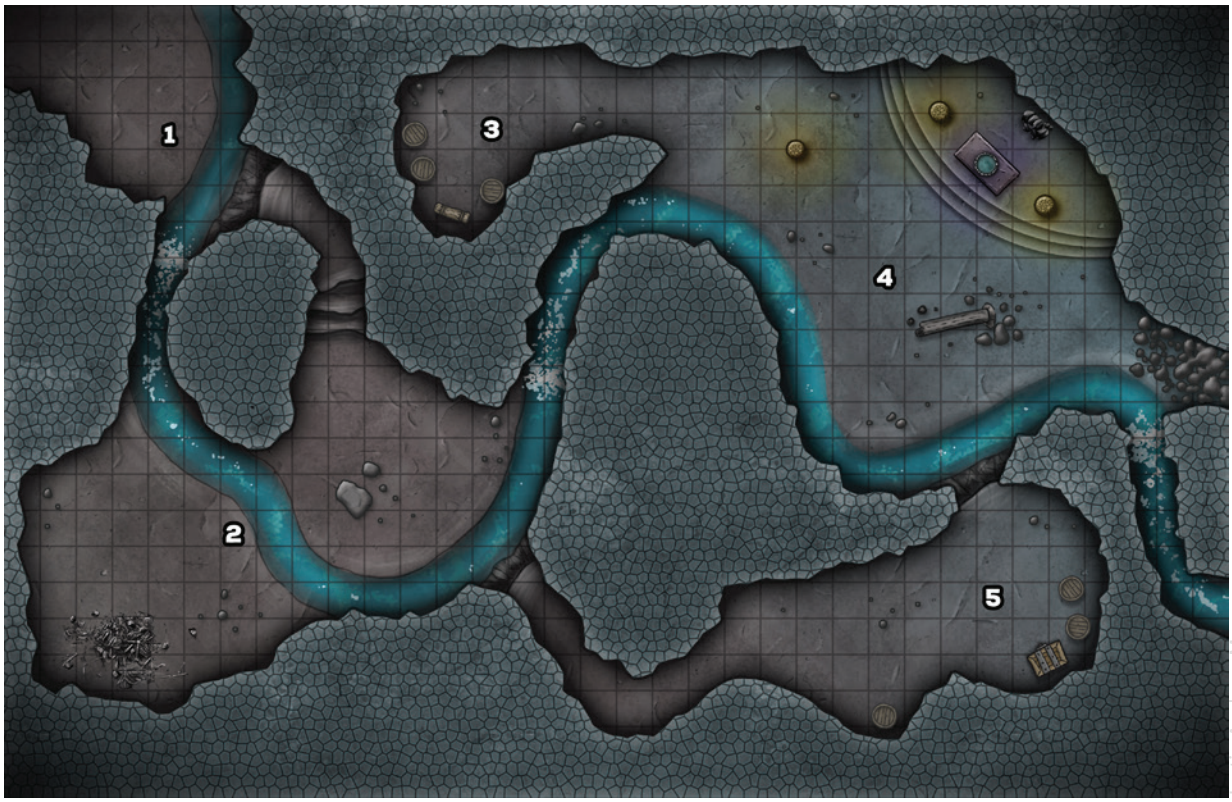
Do'koroth attacks with **disadvantage** while ***Bound***.

Do'koroth offers a *wish* to the party for spilling Wiatt's blood for him—of course, it's secretly a *Twisted Wish*...

4-5 Characters

Levels 6-7

Arctic



Justin Andrew Mason

In Cold Storage

Thilo Graf, Stephen Yeardley

Pruina, a frost giant battle-sorceress, has big plans. Aiding her oafish jarl to best the fools who challenge him grew tiresome ages ago, so after striking a deal with a stone giant druid south of her home, she established a hidden base in these caves.

Then Marplott, a gnome mage, heard rumors of "giants and guardians" and decided to investigate – or interfere. Despite his experience, Marplott is now stuck in the caverns; he'd appreciate being rescued.

1. Entrance cavern

This 15-foot high cave shows signs of an old fire in one corner. More curiously, a floor-to-roof, 10-foot wide, north-to-south slow-flowing ice-blue slushlike barrier appears from the wall and heads through a gap. It holds hundreds of small pieces of quartz. A 12-foot drop and then 4-foot-high steps go to **Area 2**.

Ice-blue Slushbarrier

Complex trap (level 5–10, deadly threat)

An elementally-infused ice-blue slush runs through these caverns.

Trigger. A creature that is not immune to cold damage touches the slushbarrier, or stands within 5 feet of it at initiative 20.

Initiative. The slush acts on initiative 20 and 10.

Active Elements. The ice-blue slushbarrier has the property of sudden solidification, and can spawn the ice mephits that live inside it.

Sudden Solidification (initiative 20). The barrier turns solid if a creature not immune to cold damage is within 5 feet of it. A creature currently in the slushbarrier when it solidifies is pushed to a random side of the barrier and must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much in a successful one. The barrier remains solid for 1 minute after last being triggered.

Ice Mephit Spawn (initiative 10). The barrier spawns 1d2 **ice mephits**. It can spawn a total of nine ice mephits. The mephits can freely move through the slushbarrier.

Constant Element. The ice-blue slushbarrier suddenly solidifies whenever a creature that is not immune to cold damage touches the barrier.

Dynamic Element—Breach. If the barrier is breached, this section solidifies again on the next round on initiative 20, but until then, it does not solidify on contact.

Dynamic Element—Mephit Buff. If an ice mephit spawned by the barrier takes damage, it gains 5 temporary hit points at the start of the next round, and becomes immune to the frightened condition. This lasts for 10 minutes.

Dynamic Element—Mephit Home. If an ice mephit is slain, it turns to slush and moves 5 feet towards the barrier on its initiative, merging with it if it reaches the barrier. Slain ice

mephits that reach the barrier are fully healed within 5 minutes. Unless a character states that they actively look at the mephit's remains, they do not notice the movement.

Countermeasures. Each of the trap's elements have a countermeasure.

Sudden Solidification. Characters can breach the barrier, or deduce how to avoid triggering it.

Intelligence (Arcana), DC 20. This check reveals that the slush will solidify on touch, as well as that it is triggered by proximity to creatures not immune to cold damage.

Attack. A square of the barrier has AC 12, 30 hit points per square, and is vulnerable to fire damage. Reducing it to 0 hit points creates a breach, but one that is closed on the next *Sudden Solidification*.

Ice Mephit Spawn. A slain ice mephit turns to slush and slowly oozes towards the barrier. Preventing the slain ice mephit from rejoining the barrier also prevents it from rejuvenating.

Wisdom (Perception), DC 20. This check reveals that the slush left by slain mephits moves slowly towards the barrier without a character explicitly stating that they're looking at the mephit remains.

Fire Damage. Applying 15 or more fire damage in a single round to the slush left behind by an ice mephit evaporates it. For an added challenge, the GM can have the mephit instead rejuvenate as a **steam mephit**.

2. Split Cavern

The drop to **Area 5** is 10 feet.

A hungry **cloaker** hugs the eastern roof. It has failed twice to pass the barrier, each time being shunted back into this cave. It joins the party, but escapes when it can after biting a chunk out of a party member.

To the west, bones bearing tattered flesh rest on a metal grid over an 8-foot-wide, 30-foot-deep pit. The outer 18 inches of its circumference radiate a noticeable warmth, while the central 5-foot wide shaft has dozens of bony hand and footholds running down it. At its bottom is a diamond key and one of Pruina's secrets: a *giant-slayer handaxe*. However, the "pit" is a **remorhaz** in a torpor. Touching the handaxe wakes the beast.

3. Trained to Guard

A **hell hound** with a pearl key hanging from its neck and a **winter wolf** sporting a ruby key reside here.

These two creatures are hybrids. Their fur is a patchwork of each other's colors, but their eyes are consistent. Each had blood transferred from the other; now both are **immune** to fire and cold damage. The two guardian canines are bored, and can be talked to, but become increasingly irritated when they don't understand what is being said. A **DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** alternating between Infernal and one of the languages the winter wolf prefers (Giant or Winter Wolf), accompanied with a tasty morsel, can make the guardians yield the keys. Award twice the XP for such a solution.

4. Made to Guard

The drop to **Area 5** is 10 feet.

A sealed iron **shield guardian** crafted like a suit of armor holds **Marplott**, an **archmage** (no spell above 3rd level remaining). If he hears the party somehow (he can't see out the guardian), Marplott shouts "*Leave it alone!*". He got in for safety, but can't get out.

Each upright pillar has a keyhole in it about 8 feet from the floor that can be noticed with a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check**. The shield guardian opens if the keys are put in the pillars as follows: west = ruby; north = iron; east = diamond; south (currently fallen, **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to find the keyhole) = pearl (alphabetical order). Alternatively, the guardian can be opened with a **DC 26 Dexterity check** made using thieves' tools. In front of the guardian is a table with a large bowl of ice on it. The surface of the ice has an imprint of Gefror's left hand. If he places his hand in it, he contacts Pruina as per a *crystal ball*. This works for up to 10 minutes after he dies, but Pruina senses the difference in its activation and assumes whoever she sees has killed her friend, swearing a frigid blood oath of vengeance.

The tunnel leading east from this area is full of rubble which takes 1,000 hours of effort from a single average human to clear. It loops south to the eastern end of the slush barrier, where a rune controlling it is positioned. A successful *dispel magic* (**DC 18**) cast on the rune disables it for one hour. It takes two consecutive **DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) checks** to permanently disable the slush.

5. Home from Home

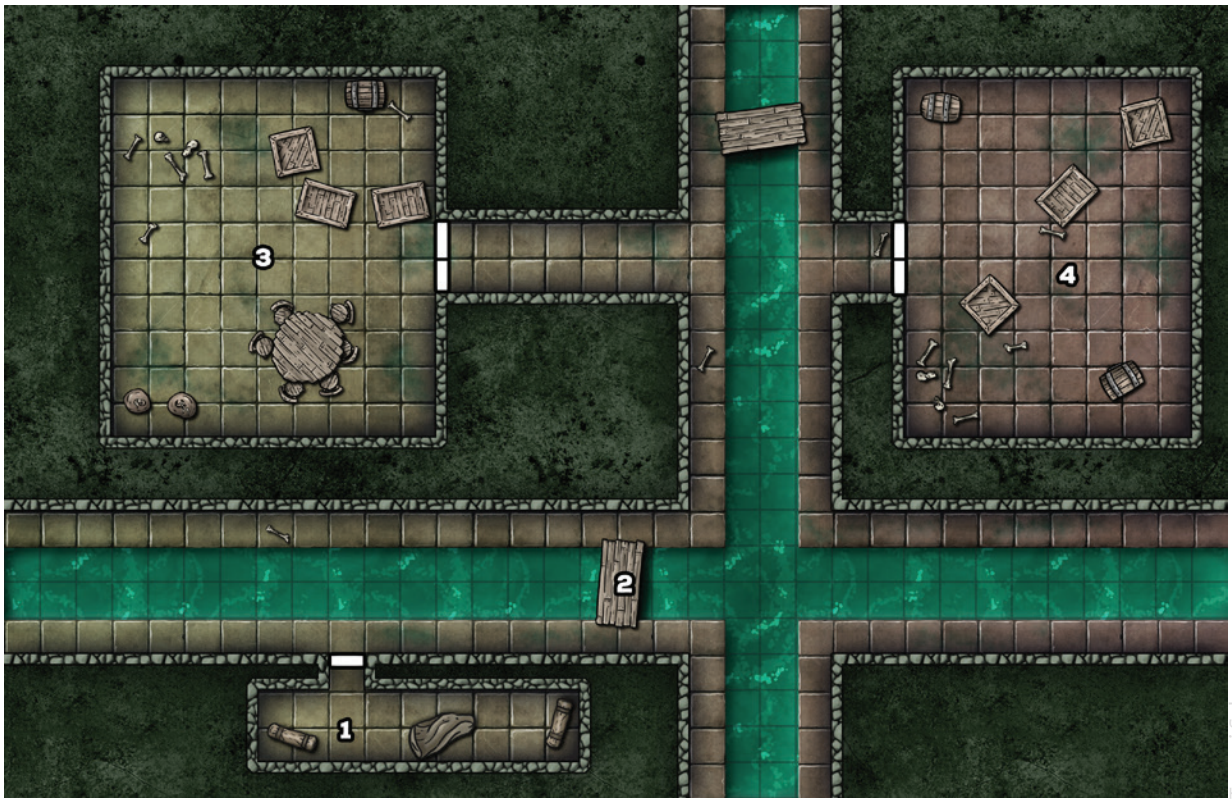
Gefror the **frost giant**, Pruina's trusted partner, lives here. He wears an iron key on a chain. Pruina weilds a *vicious greataxe* and his patchwork armor functions as a *spellguard shield*.

Dean Spencer

4-5 Characters

Levels 6-7

Urban



Tommi Salama

A Narrows Escape

David Schwartz

The characters are consulting with a scholar at the Great Librarium when an alarm is raised. Someone has broken into the restricted section and stolen *The Chained Tome*, a book of fiendish lore. Witnesses saw a cloaked figure fleeing the library and heading toward the Narrows, a series of subterranean canals. The characters are asked to follow the thief, in the hopes of catching the criminal before they disappear completely.

The thief is the gnome Zellorin, a demon cultist and purveyor of forbidden texts. He entered the library by a public entrance, but donned a concealing cloak and cast *enlarge* upon himself to steal the book and make his escape. Zellorin is meeting his client at a seedy bar in the Narrows. Being no novice to the trade, he set up a trap to deter pursuit and summoned a demonic ally to guard his prize.

Tracking the Thief

A character can follow muddy footprints and other signs of Zellorin's passage with a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check**, however, unless the character exceeds the **DC** by 5 or more they lose the trail partway along, where the gnome's *enlarge* spell elapsed.

If a character talks to vagrants living in the Narrows and succeeds at a **DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, the vagrants tell the character where the cloaked figure recently passed, and about the bar in that direction. One inebriated vagrant swears he saw the cloaked figure shrink to half its size. If the characters previously lost the thief's trail, this new information allows them to try again (at the lower DC).

A character can recall that there are buried buildings still accessible in the Narrows with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (History) check**. Characters with a criminal or urchin background have **advantage** on this check.

The Narrows

Several streams once fed into the river that runs through the city. As the city expanded, these streams became urban canals, and eventually were built over entirely, becoming the network of canals that now runs under the city. Though the buried buildings along the canals were largely abandoned, several remain intact, and have been claimed by squatters.

The Bait & Tackle is comprised of three such buried buildings. This bar serves as a refuge and meeting place for the city's criminals and lower class. The tunnels and building here have

8-foot ceilings. The water in the canals is just two or three feet below the edge of the walkways. There is no lighting in the Narrows, except what people bring with them. A few lanterns hung from rafters provide **Areas 1** and **3** with dim light.

1. Drunk Tank

There is little in this room but a few blankets and bedrolls. Patrons too drunk to stumble home are put here to sleep it off. A hungover swordsman (treat as a **bandit captain** with the poisoned condition) is currently the only occupant of this room. Unless the characters succeed at a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check**, they awaken the swordsman who complains about people making noise again. If pressed, he says that someone was making noise outside not long before the characters arrived (this was Zellorin sabotaging the bridge in **Area 2**).

2. Trapped Bridge

Though no permanent bridges cross the canals, makeshift wooden bridges are not uncommon. Most are sturdy enough to hold even laden travelers, however Zellor has sabotaged this bridge.

Collapsing Bridge

Mechanical hazard

This bridge has been cleverly weakened to collapse when a creature stands in the middle. A character can notice the sabotage with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. Additional materials can be used to reinforce the bridge, otherwise a character can attempt to counteract the sabotage with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** with thieves' tools or another plausible use of carpentry. Characters on the bridge when it collapses fall into the water.

Although the fall inflicts no damage, each character that falls into the water is attacked by a **swarm of quippers**. There is a near endless amount of quippers in the murky water, so each character can attract a new swarm.

3. The Bait & Tackle

This building's double doors are covered with worn paintings of fishing equipment from the time when it was a shop. Inside, **Siduran** (use **bandit captain** if required) the owner and barkeep, stands behind several wooden crates piled into a makeshift bar. Her faithful **mastiff** sits in the corner chewing on old bones.

Over a dozen rough-looking patrons of various races are sitting and standing around the room. The **gnomish knife cultist** **Zellorin** attempts to blend in with the crowd. There are a number of ways the characters may discern the thief. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, a character sees that the gnome's muddy shoes match the tracks they've been following. A character who makes a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** notices the gnome seems more refined than the other patrons. A character who discreetly asks about recent arrivals and makes a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, has the gnome pointed out to them. If a character fails a check by five or more, they offend one or more patrons, causing a **bar brawl**.



If the party attempts to arrest Zellorin, or he believes they are about to, he loudly accuses them of being city guards, causing the other patrons to turn against the characters as a **bar brawl**. It takes a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Intimidation) check** to calm the patrons, potentially contested by Zellorin (**Charisma +5**). If combat erupts Zellorin attempts to sneak back to the storeroom (**Area 4**); characters in combat have **disadvantage** on **Wisdom (Perception) checks** to notice him. He also mentally alerts his summoned demon (**Area 4**).

If the characters wait, the **buyer's agent** (a **spy**) arrives, and Zellorin leads the agent to the storage (**Area 4**). The buyer's identity is left to the GM.

4. Storage

The lock has been broken off this building's door. Its interior serves as a storage for the Bait & Tackle. Zellorin has hidden *The Chained Tome* among the crates. His summoned **cipactli demon** hides in the darkness, and attacks anyone who enters the room. In addition to its normal abilities, the cipactli has telepathy 120 feet It maintains telepathic contact with Zellorin, and either are alerted if the other is attacked.

The Chained Tome

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a warlock)

This tome's covers are wrapped in chains of various metals and sizes, all caked with dried blood. If you can attune to this item, you can exchange your *Pact Boon* while taking a long rest with the *Pact of the Chain* if you currently have a different *Pact Boon*. If this would cause you to lose a pact-boon-exclusive *Eldritch Invocation* (such as *Lifedrinker*) you have chosen, you may choose an eligible replacement.

The tome has 3 charges. While you have the *Pact of the Chain*, you can use your action to expend 1 charge and recite from the tome to switch position with your familiar, provided it is within 500 feet of your current position. This is a teleportation effect and otherwise follows the rules of the *dimension door* spell. *The Chained Tome* regains all of its charges at midnight.

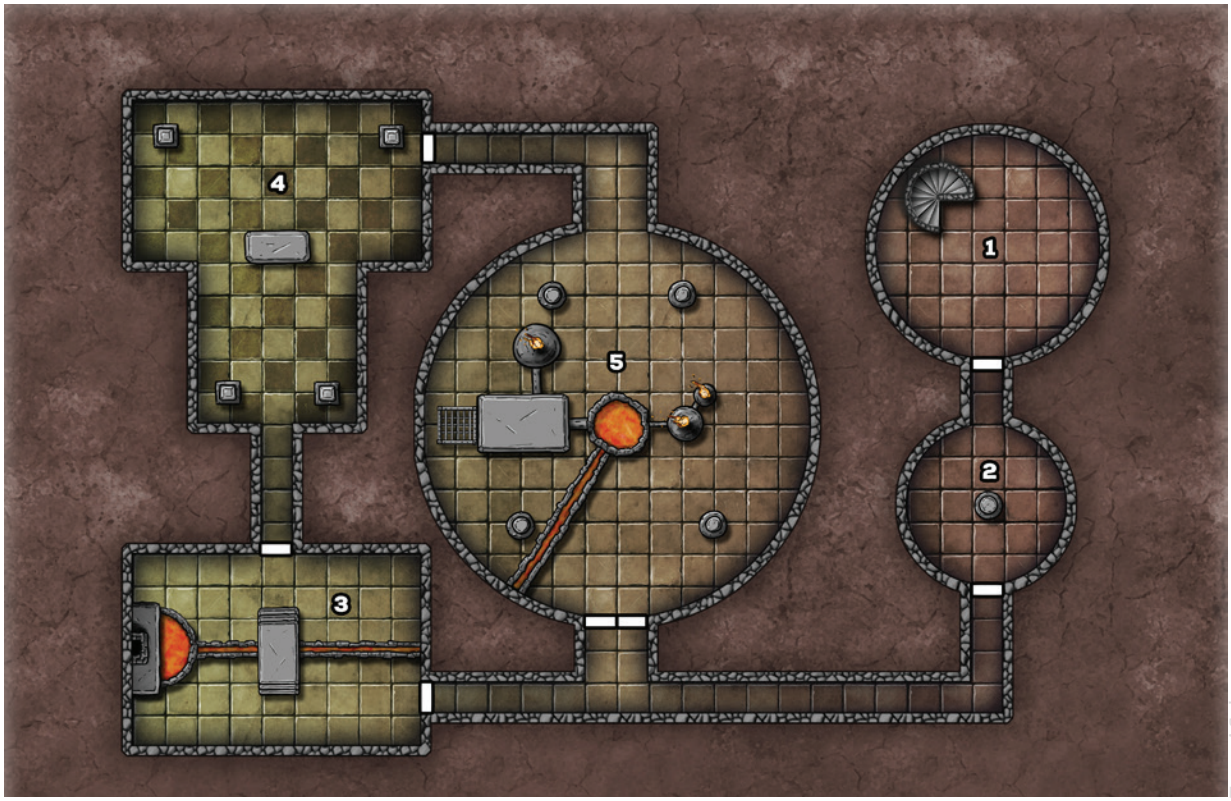
Secret. Some warlocks claim that using this tome makes you the "familiar" of a powerful extraplanar entity. More than one owner of the tome has vanished under mysterious circumstances.

Mates Laurentiu

4-5 Characters

Levels 6-7

Mountain



Tommi Salama

Forged in Hellfire

David Schwartz

As the Dread Tyrant's armies march across the continent, the free peoples seek whatever means they can to break his power. It has recently been discovered that the Dread Tyrant's forces are supplied with arms from a garrison of dragonborn and kobolds high up in the mountains. Beneath the surface, a volcanic vent spews molten iron ore which is smelted and forged into weapons and armor. The characters are tasked with infiltrating the forge and ending its operations.

Hellfire Forge Features

Rooms in the forge have 20-foot ceilings and are illuminated by lanterns. Hallways have 10-foot ceilings and receive only dim light from adjoining rooms. All doors are wood plated with metal and are unlocked. A character that is pushed into a lava pool space (in **Areas 3** and **5**), or ends their turn in one, takes 22 (4d10) fire damage, or half as much with a successful **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**.

1. Guard Post

An undistinguished warehouse within the garrison conceals the entrance to the underground forge. Inside, amid the weapons and armor prepared for shipment, a spiral staircase leads down to a circular room. A bored **dragonborn edjet** is on watch with two **hell hounds**. If the characters have proper disguises and make a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check**, the guard will let them pass as agents of the Dread Tyrant. Otherwise, she eagerly engages in combat.

2. The Dread Tyrant's Column

This circular room is empty except for a single column inscribed with the words "Hellfire Forge" and "Praise the Dread Tyrant" in Common, Draconic, and Infernal. The inscription is a clue to bypassing the room's trap.

Punishment of the Dread Tyrant

Magic trap

This trap affects any character who crosses to the back of this room without first speaking praise to the Dread Tyrant in Common, Draconic or Infernal. Damaging the column also triggers the trap. A character can discern the trap with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Perception) check. *Detect magic* reveals an aura of necromancy magic around the column. A character can disable the trap with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools or Intelligence (Arcana) check to deface the column without triggering the trap. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 14) cast on the column destroys the trap. A character who triggers the trap must make a successful DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed with vulnerability to fire for 1 hour. A *remove curse* spell removes this effect.

3. Lava Vent



Extreme heat radiates from the pool of lava at one end of this room. A chimney over the pool draws away heat and toxic gases. A narrow stone channel directs lava from the pool to a hole in the opposite wall (and eventually to the forge [**Area 5**]). A low bridge crosses the lava channel.

The **chain devil** **Varzeran** is literally bound to guard this room—he is chained to the center of the bridge and cannot move more than 10 feet from that spot. Unable to affect the chain that binds him, the devil takes out his frustration on intruders. If a character offers to free the devil, however, Varzeran agreesv to a truce. A character (other than the devil) can break the chain with either damage (as one of the chain devil's *Animate Chains*), or with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. A successful *dispel magic* (**DC 15**) allows the devil to attack the chain itself.

4. Inspection and Stamping

Calcaraptus, a **clockwork abomination**, stands by a stone table in the center of this room. It is accompanied by two **dragonborn elementalists**—one with *Elemental Focus (Flame)*, the other with *Elemental Focus (Cave)*. As weapons and armor leave the forge, they are brought here for inspection. Those that meet the abomination's standards are stamped with the Dread Tyrant's mark. Items that aren't approved are returned to the forge, and the failed craftsman receives a painful punishment.

If they hear the sounds of combat from the lava vent (**Area 3**), or if they don't hear sounds of hammering from the forge (**Area 5**), the occupants of this room are alert for intruders. Otherwise, they are examining weapons at the table. Calcaraptus fights to the death. If the abomination is destroyed, any dragonborn reduced to less than 10 hit points attempt to flee.

Approved items are placed in a *bag of holding* beneath the stone table for later transport to the warehouse above. The current contents are left to the GM, but could be any number of non-magical, metal weapons and/or armor common among the Dread Tyrant's armies.

5. Forge

This room is suffused with extreme heat. A narrow, stone channel carries lava from a hole in the wall (from **Area 3**) to a molten pool in the middle of this circular room. Surrounding the pool are furnaces and tools to extract iron from the lava, and to shape the iron into weapons and armor.

Working at the forges are five **elite kobolds**. Each wields a *Smithing Hammer*; this acts as a *Mining Pick* (including the *Small but Fierce* feature), except that it deals bludgeoning damage. The kobolds use the significant supply of quenching oil to fuel their *Lantern Splash* action, which consequently automatically recharges. One of the kobolds wears a *ring of fire resistance*. Overseeing the kobolds are two **dragonborn edjet**. They each also have a *Smithing Hammer* (as a *Shortsword*, except that it deals bludgeoning damage), but keep a *Halberd* always within easy reach.

These smiths cannot hear sounds of battle in other rooms over the din of the forge. They take orders only from Calcaraptus (**Area 4**), and attack anyone who tries to interfere with their work. If a character presents a piece of the clockwork abomination (after it explodes), they can convince the smiths to leave without a fight with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check**.

The furnaces can be attacked as large objects (**AC** 19, 27 hp). The furnaces are **immune** to fire, poison, and psychic damage; **resistant** to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage that aren't adamantine; and **vulnerable** to cold damage.

Treasure. If the furnaces are destroyed, the adventurers can find a red-hot gleaming Hellfire Glaive in one of them.

Hellfire Glaive

Weapon (glaive), very rare

You can use your bonus action to speak the command word of this glaive in Infernal, causing it to erupt in emerald flames. These flames shed bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for another 20 feet. While the glaive is ablaze, it deals an extra 1d6 fire damage and an extra 1d6 necrotic damage to any target it hits.

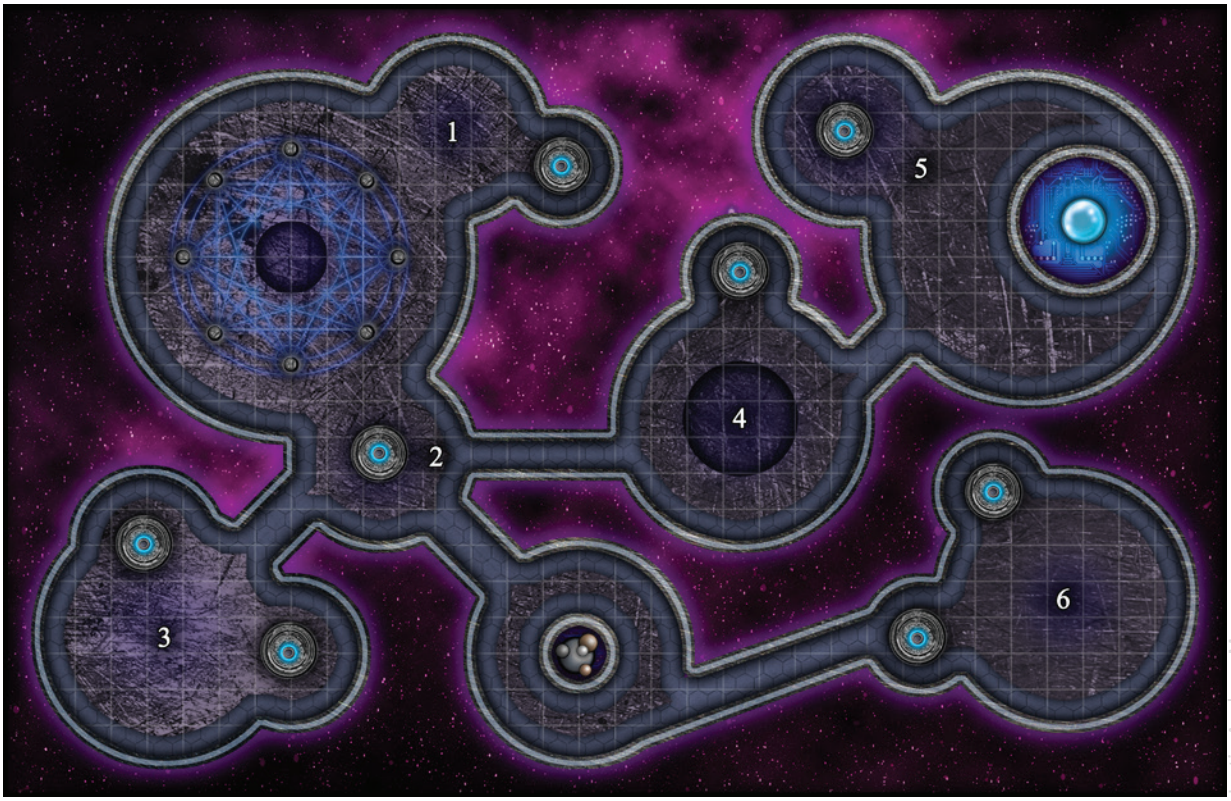
Set Ablaze. Additionally, while the glaive is ablaze, you can use your bonus action to touch a square or inanimate object and cover up to a 5-foot-cube area in the hellish fire. Any creature that enters the square or ends its turn in it, or that touches an object ablaze in hellfire, takes 1d6 fire damage and 1d6 necrotic damage. Your glaive does not burn while an object or square is burning thus. The flames last until you use a bonus action to speak the command word again to recall the hellfire to your weapon or extinguish it.

Dean Spencer

4 Characters

Level 7

Planar



Justin Andrew Mason

The Menagerie of Space and Time

Claire Stricklin

Long before the first dwarf delved or the eldest elves walked among primeval woods, a race of beings had already spread among the stars. These enigmatic creatures may yet dwell somewhere beyond the sky, but none have ever set foot upon this world. They did not have to. Not when their ships could make the journey for them. An inquisitive people, these Far Ones were great students of arcane science and natural philosophy. The probes they designed were meant to visit distant worlds, record the dominant life forms they discovered there, then move on to the next. One such probe just woke from its long slumber. In the process of reactivating long-dormant systems, this ship has managed to catch the attention of less exotic natural philosophers in the region.

Background

The local druid circle is abuzz with news. Word has come down of a recently discovered cave in the deep forest, supposedly filled with strange and exotic beasts. If the terrified acolytes who found the place can be believed, these creatures would make a potent addition to any druid's *Wild Shape* repertoire. That is why the heroes have been hired. It is their task to carry a druidic relic into the cave, activate it, then survive long enough for the device to make records of the creatures that dwell there.

Tome of Beast Kenning

Wondrous item, rare

This book contains detailed descriptions and anatomical illustrations of exotic beasts. If the book is opened to a blank page within 30 feet of a living beast, it begins to create a new entry for that creature. The process takes 1d4 + 1 rounds, but fails if the beast dies or moves farther than 30 feet away from the tome.

If you spend 24 hours over a period of 3 days or fewer studying the book's contents, you gain advantage on **Intelligence (Nature) checks** to recall lore about the beasts described. In addition, if you are a druid, you may use your *Wild Shape* to assume the form of those beasts as if you had seen them before, within the usual limitations.

1. Acquisitions

The Far Ones' probe has been buried for untold eons and looks nothing like an interstellar spacecraft. As the characters approach, a section of this overgrown hillock slides open, revealing the chamber within. As the characters step inside, the ship attempts to perform its primary function by tempting them onto its Acquisitions Platform.

Anyone who enters this chamber is subject to a *detect thoughts* spell (**DC 13 Wisdom saving throw**). Failure results in a *major image* of that character's favorite food appearing at the center of the diagram drawn on the chamber's floor. Creatures who move onto this faintly shimmering diagram are automatically added to the ship's catalogue (see **Area 2**). There are no other ill effects.

2. The Janitor

When it was first launched, the Far Ones' probe was much smaller. That is because the ship creates a new chamber whenever it records a new specimen. As the characters approach this juncture, they can see the antechamber leading to **Area 6** pulsing like a living thing, slowly growing wider as they watch. At its heart, a new terminal like the one beside the entrance or at the heart of **Area 2** is forming. Inside of this terminal, crystalline images of all characters who touched the diagram in **Area 1** can be seen. If no one touched the diagram, the images show only the acolytes who discovered this "cave."

As the heroes investigate, the terminal in **Area 2** activates, projecting a hard-light hologram of a peculiar suit of **animated armor**. This creature is the ship's cleaning protocol and behaves in every way as a normal creature of its type despite being constructed of corporeal beams of light. Anticipating that the creatures wandering the ship's corridors will come into conflict with the other holograms, this robot janitor follows the heroes at a distance. Its only task is to clean up after intruders (which includes dumping their bodies outside **Area 1** if they are killed).

3. Brain Apes

The terminals in this chamber activate as soon as the characters enter. As before, hard-light holograms project strange creatures, this time accompanied by an alien ecology. Thick blue-green vines hang from the ceiling, limiting visibility to 10 feet. Within the vines, an **intellect devourer** is hunting a new host from a pack of three **arboreal grapplers** (beasts rather than aberrations, making them valid targets for the *tome of beast kenning*). If the characters do not interfere, the extraterrestrial predator succeeds in three rounds, then turns its new host body and packmates upon the intruders. The scene winks out of existence one round after the characters leave this chamber.



4. Existential Crisis

A rounded pit lies at the center of this chamber. When the characters enter, another set of hard-light holograms flicker to life. They project ankle-deep sea water around the periphery of the room and 15 feet deep at the center. An **aboleth** bobs within the pit. Though not immediately hostile, the artificial creature is both intelligent and malevolent, and quickly reasons that its existence will only continue while the characters remain within the chamber. Talking the telepathic creature out of enslaving the party requires skillful roleplaying or five successes before three failures at **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Wisdom (Insight) checks**. Each failed roll applies a cumulative -2 penalty to further rolls in the **complex skill challenge**. The scene winks out of existence one round after the characters leave this chamber.

5. A.I. Core

This chamber houses the ship's artificial intelligence core. A glowing blue crystal of immense size, this technomagical marvel is shielded behind a sphere of translucent adamantine. If the characters can find a way to remove the object, it is worth 5,000 gp as a gemstone. Doing so renders the ship inoperable though.

Unlike the probe's other holograms, the creature projected by this chamber's terminal is non-corporeal. It is an avatar of the ship's A.I. and attempts to put the party at ease by presenting itself as an amalgam creature, combining the characters' features into a single humanoid.

This artificial creature is strangely guileless, answering questions to the best of its ability. It explains that the ship has fulfilled its purpose and will resume its long journey of discovery once the characters disembark. As an incentive to leave its core intelligence crystal untouched, the A.I. is prepared to offer a freshly grown multifaceted technomagical crystal that functions as a *deck of illusions*.

6. Ancient "Aliens"

The probe is not a new arrival on this world. It landed millions of years ago but was badly damaged by the then-dominant life forms. The ship has been slowly repairing itself in the intervening years.

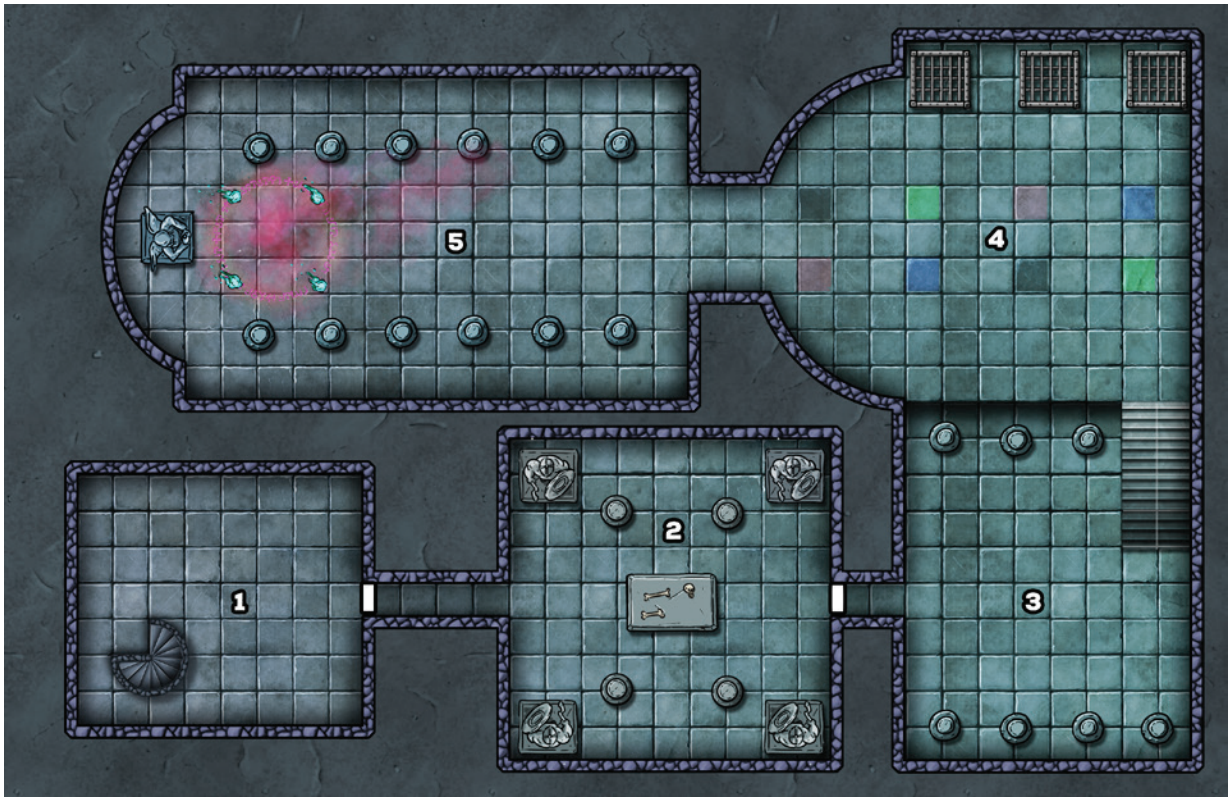
The hard-light holograms in this chamber project an ancient forest, as well as the creatures that damaged the ship: a **mother tyrannosaurus rex** and her **offspring** (**lystrosaurus**). Both creatures are valid targets for the *tome of beast kenning*. The scene winks out of existence one round after the characters leave this chamber.

Nicolas Cloister

3-5 Characters

Levels 6-8

Dungeon



Toll of the Void

Grant Simpson

The renowned mage, Khalastan, has gone in search of lost knowledge within the ruined tower of Z'lar Kotek. Ever since his descent into the ruins, tremors and magic surges have wracked the surrounding landscape. His apprentice, Cal Renther, has asked for assistance in entering the ruins and locating Khalastan.

The ceilings throughout the ruin are 40 feet tall, except for **Area 4** and **Area 5** where they are 20 feet tall. There are no natural sources of light within.

Void Barriers. Between each area, except for between **Area 3** and **Area 4**, is an impassable barrier of void energy created by the *Voidcaller Orb*. They take the appearance of a solid wall of darkness with purple Void Speech script lining its edges. Each void barrier is immune to damage. If a creature touches a void barrier, it must make a **DC 16 Constitution saving throw**, taking 9 (2d8) cold damage and 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. If there is a door separating two areas, the void barrier is directly in front it.

The only way to dispel a void barrier is by sacrificing something of adequate value (GM's discretion). Each barrier asks for something different, which Cal can discern after studying the script along its edges for an uninterrupted minute. A sacrifice can be physical or immaterial, such as a family heirloom or a memory. Once a character has decided what they sacrifice, it is drawn into the void barrier. Due to some quirk of the magic, creatures with elven blood can't seem to offer immaterial offerings to a void barrier. The only way to return something sacrificed in this way is by freeing it in **Area 4**.

All void barriers reappear after one minute until the *Voidcaller Orb* is destroyed. Each section notes the required toll.

1. Meeting Cal Renther

Cal (female, elf **mage**) waits for the party at the entrance of the tower. She is nervous but deeply worried about her master and offers to travel with the party into the ruins, leading them party down the stairs into this barren stone room. Cal can describe the characteristics of the void barriers but does not know what is causing them. She has spent the past few days studying them and believes she has devised a way to dispel them. Cal correctly surmises that a sacrifice is the only way to briefly open the barrier.

Void Barrier Toll. This void barrier requires a sacrifice of a character's faith.

2. Voided Ooze Room

Four statues, acid weathered and broken, stand in the corners of this room. A stone table sits in the center with a mound of bones sitting on top of it. Another void barrier blocks the door

to thenext area. An **eldritch ooze** is hiding on the ceiling above the pile of bones. It attacks the most isolated character first if it goes unnoticed.

Void Barrier Toll. This void barrier requires the sacrifice of a character's dream.

Under the pile of bones is an *amulet of the planes* that can be revealed with a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** or **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** or by knocking the bones off the table.

3. Hunting Grounds

Pillars line the sides of this room and a set of stairs at the back with purple, glowing runes inscribed in the steps lead up to **Area 4**. There is a steep 20-foot wall next to the stairs. Two **astral snappers** prowl about in this area and a third in **Area 4** is drawn by the sounds of fighting when it breaks out. They attack the nearest enemy in a famished rage; having starved for hundreds of years.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or the *detect magic* spell reveals the phrase *"Only with support behind can one hope to recover what was lost"* in faint, magic lettering on the wall next to the stairs.

4. What They Have Lost

Three doorless iron cages with glowing, purple runes inscribed in the metal bars sit at the far wall. If the **astral snapper** in this area wasn't alerted already, it is pacing near the cages. Another, larger void barrier blocks the way to **Area 5**. Eight tiles are painted different colors than the rest, as shown on the map.

The right cage holds the first sacrifices, and the center cage holds the second. If a real item was sacrificed it is in the cage, but if something intangible was sacrificed an illusory representation appears instead. Each cage has AC 17 and 20 hp. Destroying the cage results in the sacrifice within vanishing forever. A **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight)** or **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals this to a character. The only way to recover something lost in this way is through a *wish* spell.

The only way to safely recover the sacrifices is if the character who sacrificed it stands on the corresponding-colored tile nearest the cages and another character stands on the tile of matching color. Green for the left cage, blue for the center, and red for the right. Stepping on both black tiles simultaneously causes an explosion of void energy between them, requiring a **DC 16 Constitution saving throw** from the characters standing on the tiles and anyone standing between, affecting characters as though they had touched a void barrier.

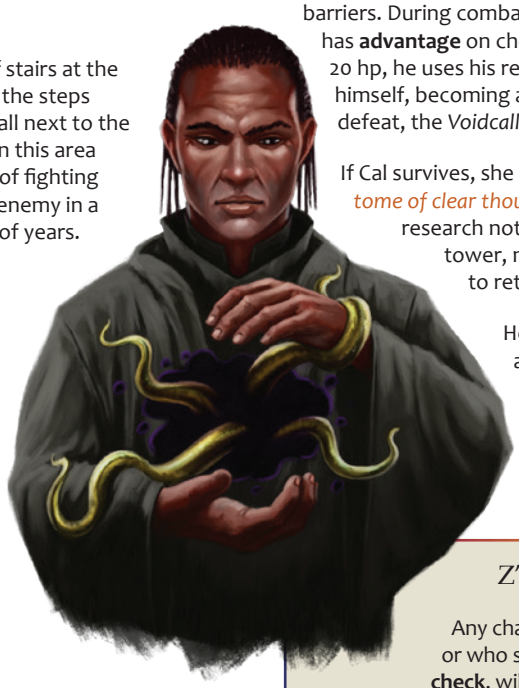
Void Barrier Toll. This void barrier requires the sacrifice of a character's love. Once it is sacrificed, the item or illusory representation appears in the left cage.

5. Voided Khalastan

Khalastan (male, human **void speaker**) is experimenting with a pitch-black *Voidcaller Orb* (as a *sphere of annihilation*) as the party enters. **Cal** and the party can attempt to reason with Khalastan, but he is a crazed shell of his former self, consumed with studying the orb. It is clear that he has sacrificed most of himself to the void barriers. During combat, Khalastan attacks with the Orb and has **advantage** on checks to control it. Once he drops below 20 hp, he uses his reaction to absorb the *Voidcaller Orb* into himself, becoming a **voidwracked mage** with full hp. On his defeat, the *Voidcaller Orb* is destroyed in his *Event Horizon*.

If Cal survives, she offers the party gold (high value) and a *tome of clear thought*. This is one of the many texts and research notes Khalastan brought with him to the tower, now strewn about **Area 5**. Cal wishes to retrieve these for her own studies.

However, any character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check** will realize that certain mages and collectors would pay exorbitant amounts for these texts. Cal is reluctant to part with them, but can be convinced if given good reason (GM's discretion).



Z'lar Kotek Texts

Any character with a background in the occult or who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (History) check**, will recognize the name of the void deity and its nihilistic cult. Z'lar Kotek is an entity of the void; formless and without intelligible purpose. Its only desire is to consume and erase all that exists. Amongst Cal's texts is a map that details the location of another *Voidcaller Orb*.

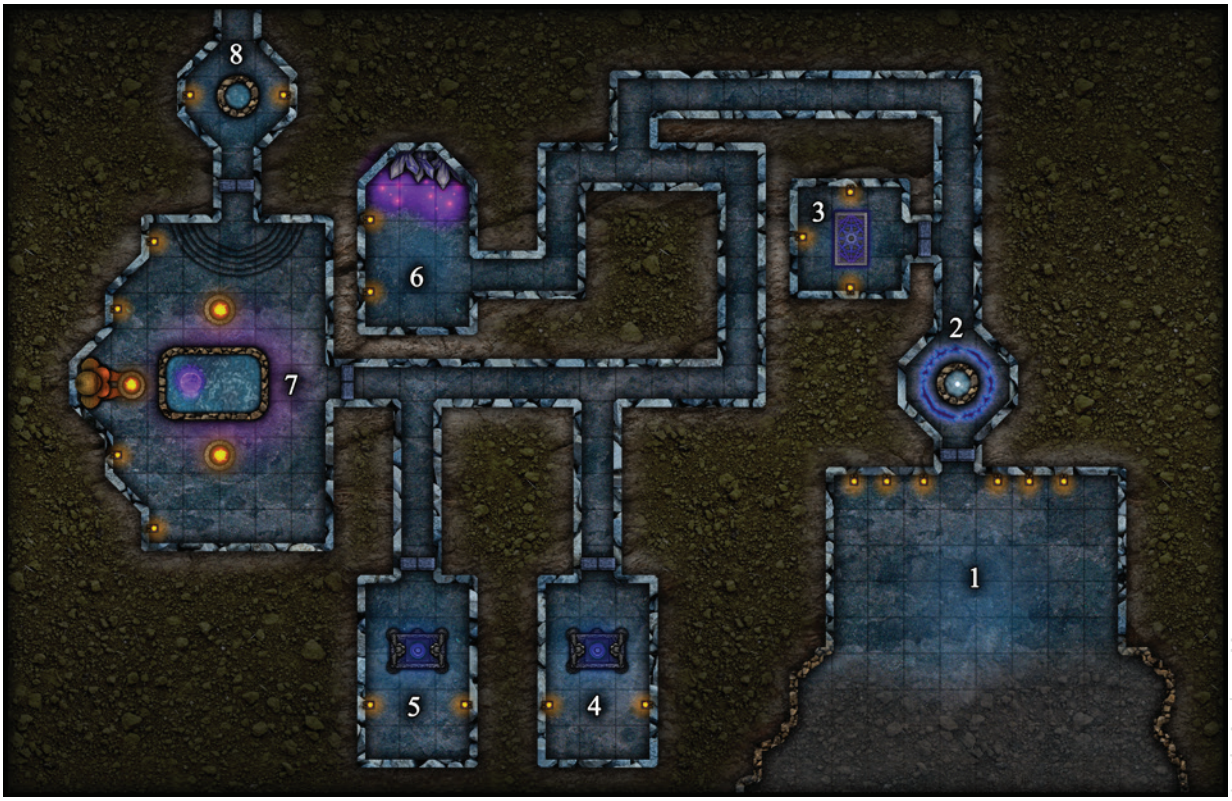
A few days after the party exits the tower they receive a cryptic letter expressing interest in purchasing the texts. However, it is unclear whether this missive comes from enemies of the cult who wish to see the orb destroyed or the cult itself planning to lure the party into a trap. The party can undertake the quest or sell the quest package to this Black Market dealer (see page 298).

A Formless Threat. Many people find comfort and purpose in Z'lar Kotek's unbiased destruction. While this ancient tower is no longer their base, sects of Z'lar Kotek's cult have spread far and wide. Its followers are secretive and remorseless, believing the only true lasting peace is complete annihilation.

3-5 Characters

Level 7

Underworld



Justin Andrew Mason

Hearts of Stone

Claire Stricklin

To worship the Threshold Goddess is to seek hidden knowledge in secret places. That pursuit is never easy. For some, it is fatal. Virna Dudavre was one such victim of the goddess's caprice. Following the dreams and portents of her patron, the dwarven warlock lived a lonely life of toil, picking out a series of tunnels and chambers in an isolated, iron-poor hillside. She sought to break through the barrier between worlds, chipping away at the layers of strata that separate realities. What she did not know was that her calling was a competition. There was another follower of the Threshold Goddess on the other side, and she was racing to break through first.

The Other Side

Another mine, parallel to Virna's, lies in the Ethereal Plane. It shares the same halls, the same chambers and layout, but was shaped by other hands. **Narceress** the **night hag** completed her version of the mine moments before Virna completed hers; the triumphant hag ambushed the dwarf before she could complete her dedication rites. Now Narceress prepares to receive her reward: a heartstone that will grant her power over two worlds.

Parallel Dungeons

The adventurers have been hired to investigate reports of a giant spider nest deep in the woods. These are, of course, the **phase spiders** that serve as Narceress's minions, ranging out into the material plane in search of a suitable sacrifice.

The characters will explore this dungeon twice: once on the Material Plane, and once on the Ethereal Plane. Each Area lists its properties for both the Material and Ethereal Plane.

1. The Entrance

Material. The tracks of giant arachnids lead to the entrance of this mine. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals that there is a distinct lack of spider webbing here despite that fact that this overhang would make a perfect lair for monstrous arachnids.

Ethereal. Spiderwebs choke the entrance to the mine, rendering it difficult terrain.

2. Outflow Portal

Creatures who enter the intake portal in **Area 8** arrive here, but on the opposite plane from which they entered. Otherwise, this pedestal seems like a mundane fountain.

Material. The withered husks of deer, wild pigs, and other woodland creatures lie in this chamber, refuse discarded from the phase spiders' den.

Ethereal. Two rounds after the party emerge here from **Area 8**, the phase spiders in **Area 1** spring a trap for their latest victims. A herd of **nightmares** are driven towards the mine's entrance.

One of them is funneled into this chamber, with a trio of **phase spiders** in pursuit. The nightmare attempts to escape deeper into the mine, and may ally with the party after the combat.

3. Spidersilk Carpet

Material. The 5' x 7' *carpet of flying* in this chamber is woven from phase spider silk, and visible on both planes. It is incorporeal on the Material Plane when present on the Ethereal Plane, and vice versa.

Ethereal. This room contains a 5' x 7' *carpet of flying*.

4. Altar of the Tide

Material. The altar in this chamber exists only in the material plane. Carvings on the altar depict events from Virna's service to the Threshold Goddess. The touch of the water in this altar causes a creature to be affected as per a *gust of wind*, pushing it towards the intake portal in **Area 8**. The effect ends once the victim travels between planes.

Ethereal. This is an empty room.

5. Altar of the Anchor

Material. Narceress's **incubus** consort **Igaron** takes refuge here. He is practicing break-up speeches, having grown bored of waiting for his night hag lover to gain her full powers. He drops his notes in startelement when the adventurers arrive, returning to the Ethereal Plane. Igaron stalks the party afterwards, hoping to use his *Draining Kiss* feature on one of them. In addition to its normal effects, Igaron's *Draining Kiss* can also confer magical sleep as per the *sleep* spell using a 3rd-level spell spell slot (9d8 hp affected), allowing Narceress to use her *Nightmare Haunting* feature. Otherwise, this is an empty room.

Ethereal. The altar in this chamber exists only in the ethereal plane. Carvings on the altar depict events from Narceress's service to the Threshold Goddess. The touch of the water in this fountain prevents a creature from moving between planes for 1d4 rounds. It can be thrown, as per holy water.

6. Heartstone Crystals

The crystals that grow here have unusual harmonic properties, meaning that they exist equally in both the Ethereal Plane and Material Plane. They are in fact the reason that the Threshold Goddess demanded the creation of this shrine from her followers. Whichever of her followers won through first would receive the goddess's gift: a *heartstone* shaped from these crystals, and transformation into a night hag. The crystals themselves function as improvised daggers or short swords, and can affect ethereal and incorporeal creatures.

Due to the massive wall of crystals, the planes overlap in this chamber such that ethereal and corporeal entities are equally present. Three **phase spiders** are present when the heroes arrive.

7. The Threshold Altar

Twin altars to the Threshold Goddess lie here. A night hag's *heartstone* is visible beneath the still surface of the shallow pool, but remains incorporeal in both planes. It only materializes when the blood of sentient material and ethereal creatures mix in the waters.

Material. The vengeful **ghost** of **Virna Dudavre** waits here. If defeated, it comes to its senses long enough to tell the party its tale and warn them of Narceress's plans: to capture a mortal sacrifice and so win her *heartstone*.

Ethereal. Narceress waits in this chamber. Her natural form is that of a drider. Treat her as a **night hag** without a *heartstone*. She has these features:

Spider Climb. Narceress can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. Narceress ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Narceress also carries a *gem of seeing*, and uses it to spy on the party while they are on the Material Plane. A pair of **phase spiders** come to her aid one round after combat begins.

8. Intake Portal

Creatures who touch the waters of this magical fountain are transported instantly back to **Area 2**, climbing out of the outflow portal there, sodden and disoriented. The tunnel north of this room ends in a blank rock wall.

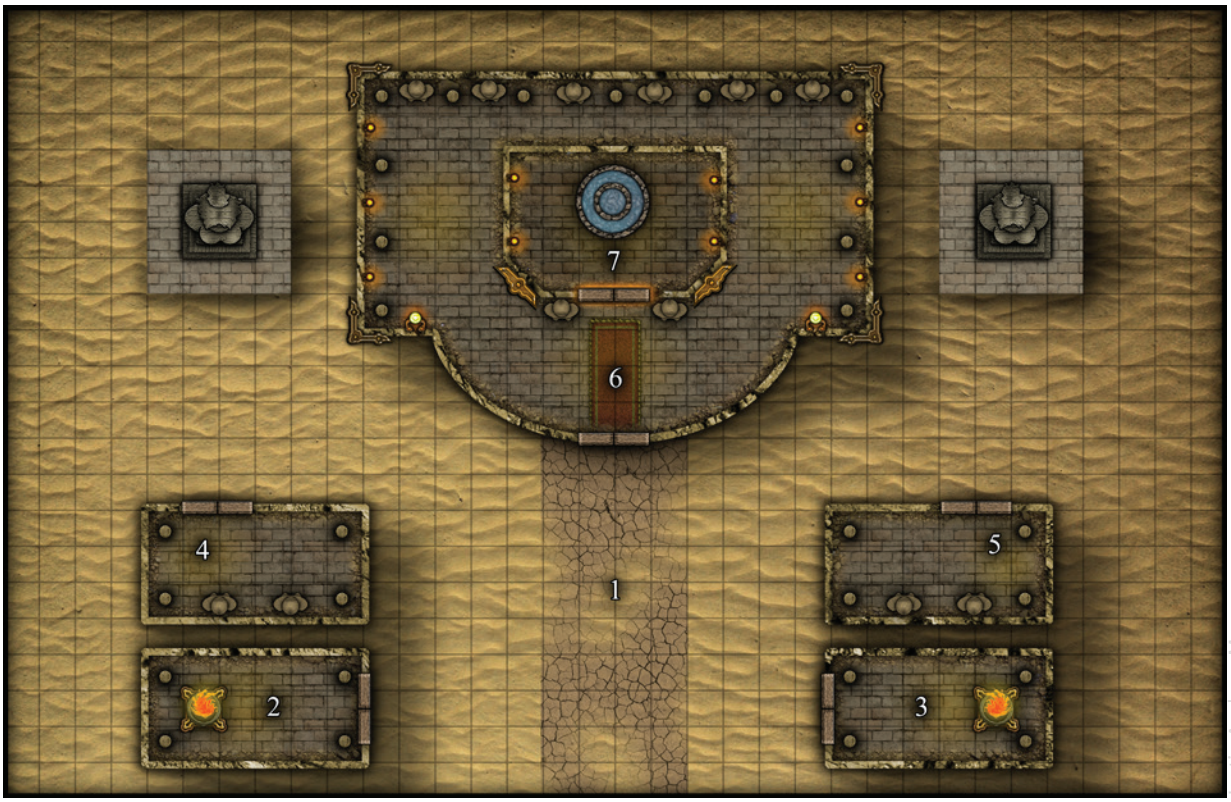


Matt Morrow

4-6 Characters

Levels 6-8

Desert



Justin Andrew Mason

A Wake of Vultures

David Schwartz

Deep in the territory of the desert nomads, a temple to the goddess of mercy is built atop a natural spring. The temple has long served as neutral ground for the nomads, a place where any clan may set up camp and partake of the refreshing waters. Recently, however, the Az-Rajin clan—demon-worshiping desert raiders—have taken over the temple, imprisoning its caretakers, and running off all others with threats of violence.

The characters may decide to stop at the temple to refill their supplies as they traverse the desert, or they may be asked by a clan leader to defeat the Az-Rajin for the good of all.

Although the wide dispersion and complex politics of the nomads has so far prevented a concerted effort against the Az-Rajin, a few would-be heroes among them might aid the characters.

Raider Camp

The bare desert around the temple is usually covered with colorful tents from multiple nomad clans, but now there are only a score of tents belonging the Az-Rajin. The encampment is occupied by two **cult fanatics**, 12 **scouts**, and 20 **non-combatants** (mostly children and the elderly, use **commoner** stats if necessary). There are also 20 **camels** around the camp.

Az-Rajin Behavior. Most of the Az-Rajin are going about mundane tasks, but there are always a handful of scouts on watch in every direction. If they spot the characters approaching (**passive Perception 15**), the nomads send out a fanatic and four scouts on camels to warn the characters away. The Az-Rajin don't respond to persuasion, but a **DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check** claiming to be demon worshipers might allow the party to be escorted to **Adal Az-Rajin** (**Area 5**)—if they disarm. The Az-Rajin seemingly comply to any attempt at using **Charisma (Intimidation)**, but secretly prepare a devastating ambush in **Area 1**, using the desert troll and all combatants in **Areas 2–4**. If the characters refuse to leave, the outrider with the highest initiative uses its action to blow a horn, raising the alarm, and all the fanatics and scouts in the camp grab their weapons and attack. Each round, 1d6+1 Az-Rajin combatants arrive to join the combat. The Az-Rajin do not chase characters beyond bowshot of the camp but remain on alert for 2 days after a combat encounter. Characters who are defeated or surrender are locked up with the other prisoners in **Area 4**.

The camp contains enough supplies to last the clan several weeks in the desert.

Temple Features

Doors in the temple complex swing outward and have no locks. Lanterns and braziers in the temple are lit with *continual flame*, the latter appearing much larger than usual for the spell.

1. The Goddess's Path

From the entrance of the main building, a wide, flagstone path runs for several hundred yards before being swallowed by the desert. Normally kept clear by acolytes and pilgrims, the Az-Rajin have allowed sand to accumulate on the path.

The Az-Rajin have recruited a **desert troll** to guard the shrine. If it spots the characters approaching, it burrows beneath the sand, and attempts to *Erupt* beneath as many of them as possible.

Development. The sound of combat alerts the occupants of **Areas 2** and **3**, who join the combat one round later. If the characters avoided conflict with the raider camp, they are also alerted, but do not attack the characters until the desert troll is dead, as they are wary of it.

2. West Eternal Flame

A large brazier is the focus of this room. Relief images of the goddess performing miracles decorate the walls. Rugs and cushions for seating are scattered on the floor.

The leaders of Az-Rajin clan have turned this room into a council chamber for discussing their plans. When the characters arrive, there are four **scouts** discussing or relaxing here, but they quickly draw their weapons if they hear combat (**passive Perception 15**) in **Area 1**.

3. East Eternal Flame

A large brazier is the focus of this room. Relief images on the walls depict the goddess performing miracles, but have been defaced with blood. The clan cultists have turned this room into a shrine to their demonic patron.

At any time, there is at least one **cult fanatic** worshipping here. If combat erupts in **Area 1** and the fanatic notices (**passive Perception 11**) the fanatic goes to investigate.

4. West Shrine to the Saints

The raiders have barred the door to this shrine with a sturdy tent pole through the handles. Imprisoned inside are an **acolyte** and five **commoners**, the last of the temple's attendants. The Az-Rajin want to sacrifice them in a demonic ritual to defile the sacred spring. Though the acolyte can provide some aid with her spells, the attendants are otherwise unable to help the characters in combat.

5. East Shrine to the Saints

The neophron demon (in **Area 6**) has infused the eastern statue with an elemental spirit, animating it as a **clay golem**, though its *Slam* does not reduce a creature's hit point maximum. The golem was ordered to guard the treasure here, and does not leave the shrine unless it goes berserk.

Ceremonial objects from the temple complex (worth 1,500 gp in total) have been piled haphazardly in this room. The Az-Rajin intend to break apart these holy relics for their gems and precious metals.

6. Temple to the Goddess

The outer chamber's walls and floor are marred with demonic symbols written in blood. The leader of the raider clan, **Adal Az-Rajin** (a **veteran**), spends much of his time here with the **neophron demon** **Malagyer**. They are attempting to undo the *hallow* effect over the temple's inner chamber (**Area 7**), so the demon can corrupt its sacred waters. They ignore the sounds of combat outside, but attack anyone who intrudes in the temple. Adal wears a *ring of poison resistance* shaped as a vulture with amethyst eyes. Instead of a *Crossbow*, he carries a *+1 longbow*.

+1 Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

If the party got here via deception, Adal commands them to undo the *hallow* effect. Unless the party complies, he considers them to be a great sacrifice to undo the effect and sounds the alarm.

7. The Sacred Spring

The sacred spring feeds a stone fountain housed within the inner chamber of the temple. A *hallow* spell protects this room: fiends and undead can't enter the area, nor can such creatures charm or possess creatures within it. No creature is frightened while in the hallowed area.

The first draft of water a creature consumes from the spring each day grants them the benefits of a *bless* spell for 1 minute.

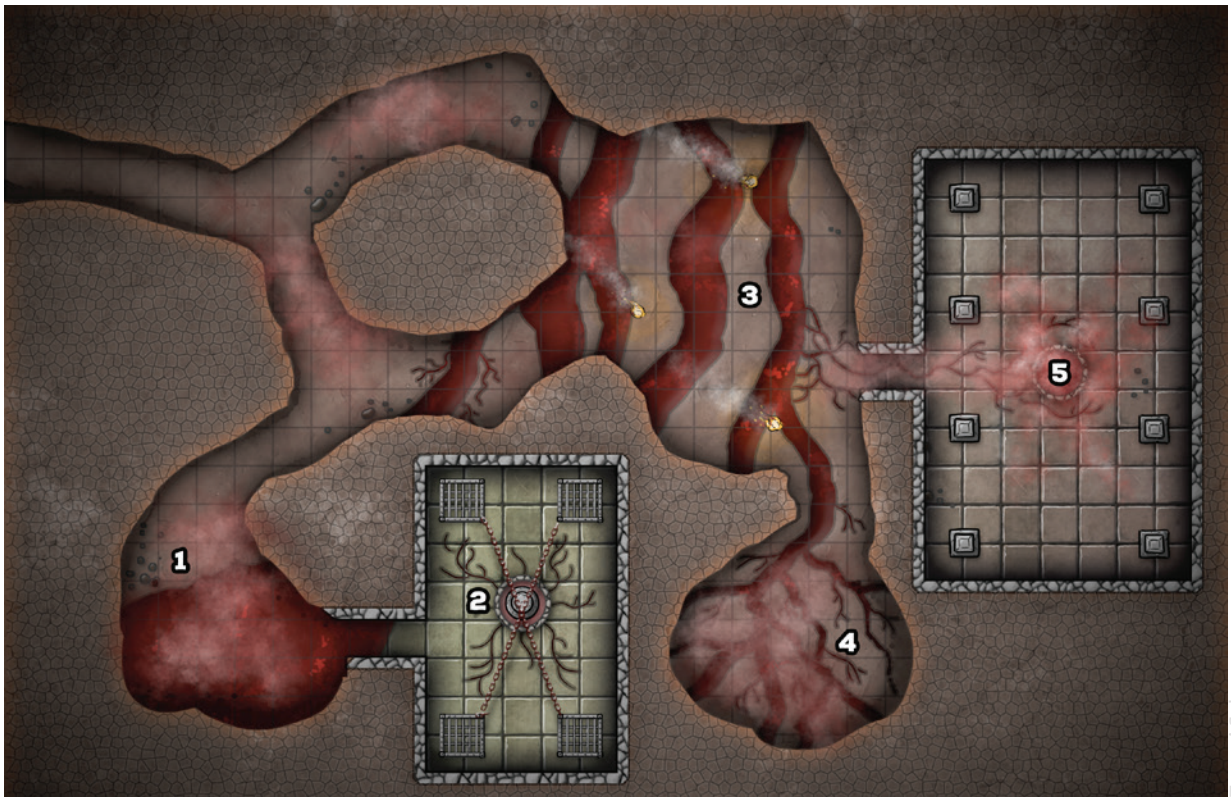


Dean Spencer

4-5 Characters

Levels 6-8

Mountain



Tommi Salama

Guardian of Ahtu

Grant Simpson

The small island of Ahtu has historically avoided involvement with mainland countries. Now however, they have called for aid. L'aiai, the dormant volcano at the heart of Ahtu, is rumbling and belching magma. Its eruption threatens all of the inhabitants, but they are reluctant to abandon their home. They believe a local volcanic cult in an ancient underground temple has disturbed L'aiai and that removal of the cult will quiet the mountain's rumblings. The locals advise the party to pack magics to help cool them down.

The temple lies deep inside the volcano. The air grows hot and sulfuric as the party approaches. The ceilings are 15 feet tall throughout and volcanic smoke lightly obscures view.

GM Preparation. Keep track of the total sum of bludgeoning, force, piercing and slashing damage inflicted on non-undead creatures. If this value exceeds 100 (60 if the party fails in **Area 2**), the keeper (see **Area 5**) awakens!

1. Lava Lake

Lava. Lava flows have carved through the wall and pooled in this area to create a fiery, sulfuric lake. All squares of lava emit bright light for 5 feet and dim light for another 20 feet. Lava squares can be cooled for varying lengths of time based on the amount of cold damage taken in a single round. It takes 15 cold damage to cool the lava for one round. For every 5 cold damage a square takes beyond that taken in a given round, the lava remains cooled for an additional round. If a square of lava takes 45 or more cold damage in a given round, it remains cooled for one minute instead. Cooling effects can be stacked. Cooled spaces become traversable terrain, but revert to lava spaces at the end of the cooling period.

Any creature that moves or starts its turn within 5 feet of a hot lava square that isn't currently cooled must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**. On a failed save the creature takes 7 (2d6) fire damage and ignites, taking 3 (1d6) fire damage each turn until it takes an action to douse the flames, or until an ally uses Help to douse the flames. On a successful saving throw, a creature only takes half damage and is not ignited.

Any creature that moves into or starts its turn in a lava square takes 45 (10d8) fire damage and ignites.

2. Cult Sacrifice

A **wight** and four **skeletons** surround a fountain overflowing with blood in this room. The wight is near the center and one skeleton is beside each of four unlocked, hanging cages in the corners. There is a **cultist** in each of the cages. A chain travels from each cage to hang above the fountain. Each chain has **AC** 10, a damage threshold of 5, and 5 hit points.

The wight commands the skeletons to kill the cultists as soon as the party enters. If the cultists die their blood flows along the chains attached to the bottoms of the cages and drips into the fountain. If all of their blood drips into the fountain, a deep rumbling shakes the temple, causing a cave-in to block off **Area 4** and reducing the amount of damage needed in **Area 5** to wake the lava keeper. A **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check** discerns the wight's goal to add more blood to the fountain, and a **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the chains' enchantment.

A *frost brand battleaxe* hidden under blood in the fountain can be noticed with a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** or **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check**.

3. Magmin Mayhem

A number of aggravated lava flows carve their way through this section of the temple. The width of each flow varies, but each of the larger ones is 5-feet-deep. They have the same properties for their spaces as the lava lake from **Area 1**. They also spawn 1d4-1 **magmins** at the start of every round. There is no limit on how many magmins can be produced by the lava flows, but no more will spawn if six are currently alive.

The magmins are pouring through a planar rift to the Elemental Plane of Fire which has opened in the volcano's core due to the lava keeper's stirring. A **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check** allows a character to deduce where they are coming from, but not what is causing the rift, though a **DC 20 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Intelligence (Arcana) check** suffices to formulate a valid hypothesis. They stop spawning if the lava keeper awakens.

4. The Molten Cephalopod's Lair

A lava flow becomes a lava tributary in this cavern. A **magma octopus** has been carried into this area by the sudden lava flows and postures defensively in the back of this makeshift lair. It only attacks if provoked or if a creature comes within 10 feet of it. A **DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** convinces the magma octopus that the party means it no harm, provided none of them have attacked it. Award twice the XP for this solution. A **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a *ring of fire elemental command* floating in a lava rivulet just behind the octopus. The octopus could secure it for a friendly party.

If this area was caved-in, it can be excavated with 1,000 hours of effort from a single character. The magma octopus will have fled down a lava flow, but the ring can still be found with a **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** amidst the rubble.

5. The Lava Keeper

The inner sanctum of the temple is lined with ancient pillars and has a blood fountain in its center. The walls are covered in frescos showing a volcanic behemoth defending the island of Ahtu from monsters and eruptions. **Rhys Pillen**, the **necromancer** (as **mage**, but with the spell *chill touch* instead of *fire bolt* and *vampiric touch* instead of *fireball*), and two **ogre zombies** are standing near the fountain. Rhys explains his plan if asked, but says he has added enough blood already. A **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check** realizes that he is lying.

Rhys seeks to create enough corpses for an army and cause massive destruction by awakening the **lava keeper**. He doesn't know lava keepers act as guardians of the area until they can return to their original plane. This keeper has become dormant, but if awakened it protects Ahtu from the accompanying volcanic eruption, guiding the lava safely into the sea before falling dormant once more. If the lava keeper is not awakened, the volcanic eruption destroys several villages. A **DC 20 Intelligence (History) check** recalls that lava keepers act as guardians on this plane, or the party could deduce it from the frescoes.



Awakening the Keeper. A total of 100 damage must be done inside the sanctum to awaken the lava keeper. Bludgeoning, force, piercing, and slashing damage against non-undead creatures count towards the total, but damage to undead creatures is not taken into account. If all the cultists in **Area 2** died and their blood was collected in the fountain, the total damage needed is reduced to 60. Once the lava keeper has awoken, the temple will start to collapse. There are five minutes to escape before the temple caves in.

Keeper's Blessing. If the adventurers manage to stop Rhys without triggering the awakening, the lava keeper rewards them for their exceptional services with the *Keeper's Armor*.

Keeper's Armor

Armor (plate), very rare (requires attunement)

This plate armor is made from molten rock that does not harm the wearer and weighs 120 lb.

You have a +2 bonus to AC while wearing this armor.

Ignite. You can speak a command word in Ignan as a bonus action to ignite the armor for 1 minute, which makes it shed light like a torch. While ignited, when a creature within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee attack, it takes 2d8 fire damage.

Harden. You can speak a command word in Terran as a bonus action to harden your flesh for 1 minute, granting you resistance to piercing and slashing damage.

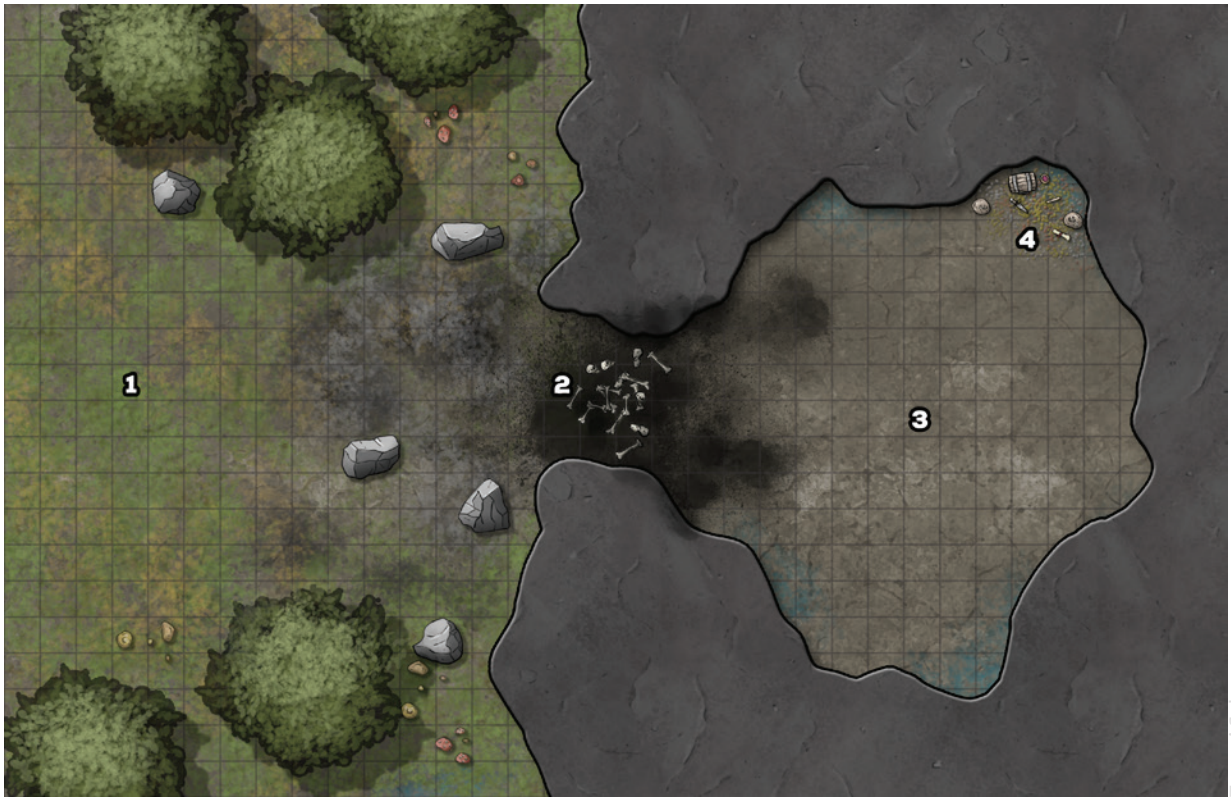
The armor can harden or ignite you for a total of up to 10 minutes per day, replenishing this duration at dawn.

Dean Spencer

4-6 Characters

Levels 6-8

Forest



Tommi Salama

Tenebrous Trails

Grant Simpson

A nighttime theft has occurred along a major trade highway. A heavily guarded caravan, transporting gems and treasures belonging to a nearby duke, was found decimated at sunrise. The few survivors claim they were attacked by average highwaymen, but the destruction left behind hints at something deadlier and unseen behind the robbery.

Tracking the Bandits

The party first comes upon the site of the caravan attack. They could have heard about the attack from the duke himself, been asked by a survivor to look into it, or they could have stumbled upon the wreckage while on the road. Wagons are strewn about in pieces along with the bodies of the merchants, guards, and horses. Not all goods from the caravan were stolen. Various valuable fruits, spices, vegetables, and clothing are still there amidst the wreckage.

Different **Intelligence (Investigation) checks** reveal different amounts of information:

A **DC 15 check** reveals that the caravan was transporting jewels and weapons as well. These were stolen along with whatever money the merchants carried. It also reveals the tracks left by the bandits as they fled the scene.

A **DC 18 check** notices gouges on the wreckage that appear to have been made by a large set of sharp teeth.

The party can follow the bandit tracks to **Area 1** with a **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check**.

1. Sacrifice the Pawns

A small patch of trees stands in front of a cave in the side of the mountain face. Six **bandits** have made camp between the rocks in front of the cave entrance. If they notice (**passive Perception 10**) the party as they approach, they engage in combat. Once three or more of them have been killed, the survivors flee from combat, attempting to retreat into the cave. The bandit's shouts alert the dark eye in **Area 3**, allowing it to prepare the *Blackflame Barrier* unless the party manages to take them down stealthily.

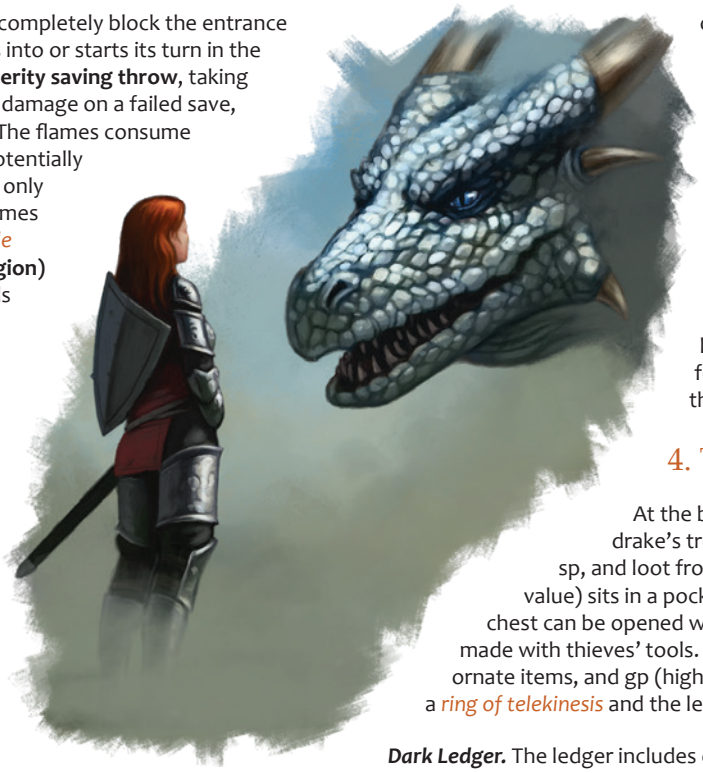
A few bags of gp and gems (low value) are set around the campsite.

2. Black Flames

Humanoid bones are aligned to spell *"Keep Out"* in the cave entrance.

When the party follows the bandits into the cave, or when they explore it and do not manage to avoid detection, the dark eye in **Area 3** mutters an incantation, creating a 20-foot square of black flames from the bones, blocking the entrance.

Blackflame Barrier. The black flames completely block the entrance of the cave. Any creature that moves into or starts its turn in the black flames must make a **DC 17 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 9 (2d8) fire damage and 9 (2d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The flames consume all light that passes through them, potentially plunging the cave into darkness. The only way to permanently get rid of the flames is by sanctifying the bones with *gentle repose* and a **DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) check**. Killing the dark eye also dispels the barrier. The flames can also be temporarily dampened by magical means (such as *dispel magic*) or with 2 gallons of water, but unless bones or dark eye are dealt with, they reignite after 6 seconds.



3. Belly of the Beast

The interior of the cave is dark and serves as the lair of an **elder shadow drake**. The drake has taken on the role of the bandits' leader. It sees them as a useful means to an end, taking the larger cut of the valuables they manage to steal. The **dark eye** is a disgruntled spymaster and works as an informant for the drake.

The cave ceiling is 30 feet high throughout. The interior of the cave is in dim light during the day and lies in darkness during the night or when the *Blackflame Barrier* in **Area 2** is active. Once the dark eye is dead, the flames disappear and the light inside the cave returns to normal.

The elder shadow drake has a number of lair actions it can take on initiative 20 (losing ties) while inside the cave. The drake can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Black Mists. Black mist spreads in a 20-foot radius from a point the drake can see within 120 feet. The mist spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. Each creature in the mist when it appears must make a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw**, taking 10 (3d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. A creature that ends its turn in the mist takes 10 (3d6) cold damage.

A wind of at least 20 miles per hour disperses the mist. The mist otherwise lasts until the drake uses this lair action again or until the drake dies.

Shadow Duplicate. The drake creates a shadowy illusion of itself in an unoccupied space within the lair. Any character that makes a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** can see through this illusion. The illusion has the same stats as the original, but cannot attack, has 1 hp, and disappears if touched by bright light. If the duplicate is slain, it dissipates in black mist: all creatures within a 10-foot-radius sphere of the dispersing duplicate must make a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw**, taking 10 (3d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The illusion otherwise lasts until the drake makes a melee attack or uses this lair action again.

Shadow Jump. The drake uses its *Shadow Jump* feature. This lair action expends a use of the feature and cannot be used if the drake has no more uses left.

4. The Larger Cut

At the back of the cave is the drake's treasure hoard. A pile of gp, sp, and loot from the caravans (medium value) sits in a pocket at the back of the cage. A chest can be opened with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. The chest holds jewelry, ornate items, and gp (high value), *dark cut*, along with a *ring of telekinesis* and the ledger of the dark eye.

Dark Ledger. The ledger includes descriptions of hidden routes into several fortifications, but the book is haunted by the dark eye's tainted magics: On the first full moon after having read the book, the reader must succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence saving throw**. On a failed save, the reader takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage, as reality warps and they and all allies within 30 feet are teleported into one of the secret passages described in the book. (Subject to the GM's discretion, this happens only once. Most rulers and their elite aren't fond of finding adventurers in their hidden sanctum...) It takes a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** to notice the devious magics beforehand, and the effect can be postponed by a lunar cycle with a successful *dispel magic* (**DC 15**). Clever parties may well prepare for the shift...

Dark Cut

Weapon (dagger), rare (requires attunement)

This dagger is shaped like the pupil of a dark eye. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

This weapon has 3 charges that replenish at midnight.

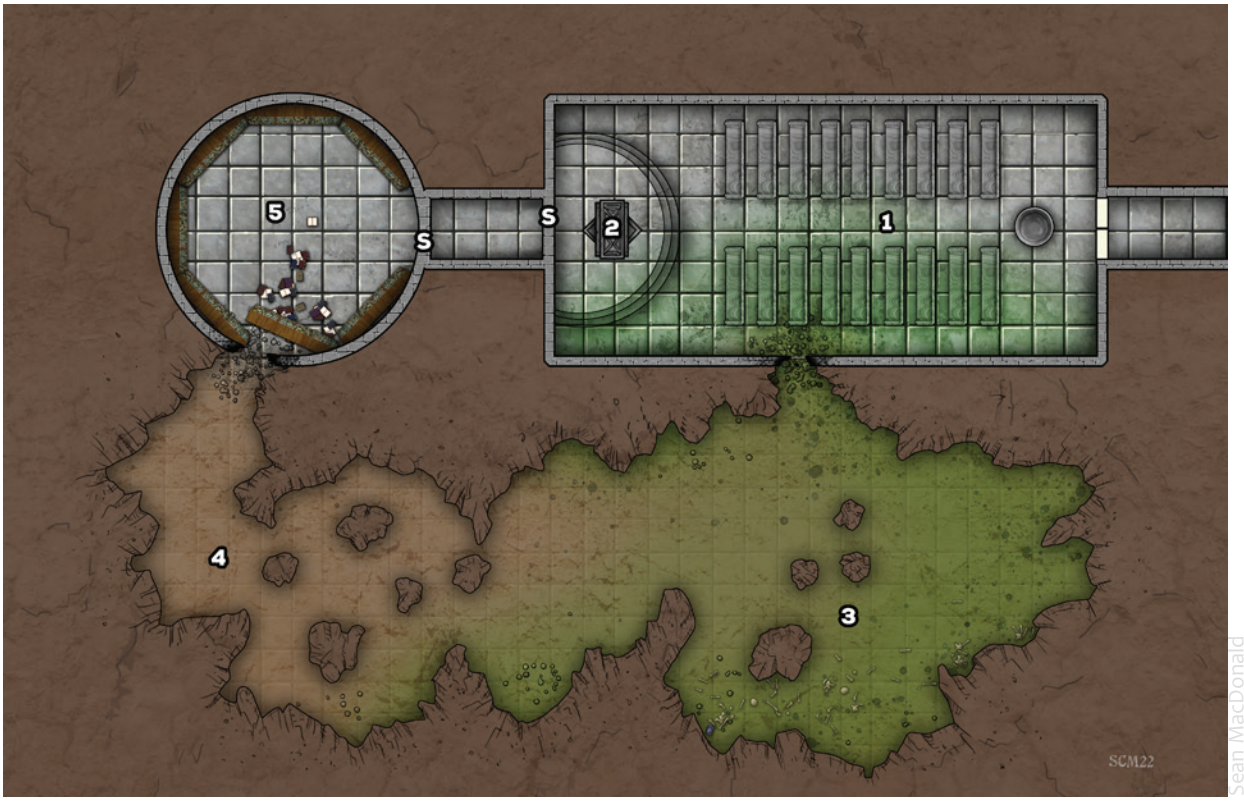
Dark Reflection. You can use your action and spend a charge to make a creature catch a glimpse of a twisted reflection in the blade. The creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw. The DC is equal to your spell save DC, or 10 + your Dexterity modifier, whichever is higher. On a failed save, the creature takes 3d6 psychic damage and is incapacitated until the start of its next turn. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw. If the creature does so, it can't see you until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at you in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

Dean Spencer

4-5 Characters

Levels 6-8

Dungeon



Sean MacDonald

Rising Damp

David Schwartz

Etrophon, high priest in a temple sworn to a deity of knowledge, cast his mind out in search of divine wisdom. He connected with the psyche of an entity that promised him unlimited erudition, if the priest would perform a simple ritual. Unfortunately, the being Etrophon contacted was the aboleth Maricthos, and the ritual drew a section of the Underworld alongside the temple. Maricthos mentally enslaved Etrophon and two of his clergy, while the aboleth and its minions consumed everyone else. Now it is clear to locals that no-one returns from the temple, the party is sent to investigate.

Temple Features. The temple to the deity of knowledge (**Areas 1**, **2**, and **5**) is carved into a hill overlooking the city. The ceilings are fifteen feet high. Chandeliers lit with *continual flame* candles provide bright light in the temple and library.

Cave Features. The natural ceiling of the aboleth's cave (**Areas 3** and **4**) varies in height from ten to twenty feet. The cave is unlit, except for dim light near both entrances to the temple.

1. Temple

The doors to the temple are unlocked. A marble basin stands just beyond them, while rows of marble pews fill much of the room. Part of the south wall has collapsed inward, revealing a tunnel beyond.

Maricthos's Minions. Two **chuuls** stand guard in the temple. They attempt to capture anyone who enters the area but aren't above killing those who resists too strongly. Captured characters are stripped of their armor, weapons and magic items and taken to **Maricthos** (**Area 3**).

Anyone who speaks Deep Speech and makes a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Deception)**, **Charisma (Intimidation)**, or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** can convince the chuuls not to attack. Although unable to answer any questions, the chuuls will take the characters to **Maricthos** (**Area 3**). They attack characters who try to go anywhere else.

Caution Wet Floor. Water seeps into the southern half of the temple from the lower cave (**Area 3**). Green-tinted squares count as difficult terrain. Creatures without a swim speed that enter the area or end their turn in one of these squares must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity saving throw** or fall prone.

2. Altar

An intricately carved altar sits atop the dais at the head of the temple.

Secret Door. The secret door behind the altar can be detected with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**, although there is no apparent way to open it from the temple side. A switch hidden within the altar's carvings opens the secret door and is found with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. Otherwise, a character can open the secret door with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** with thieves' tools.

3. Lower Cave

Shallow water covers the floor of this cave. Humanoid bones are strewn along the back wall.

Shallow Water. A green tint indicates squares containing water. While only a foot or so deep, the water is difficult terrain for creatures without a swim speed. The source of the water is a *decanter of endless water*, once used to fill the temple basin but now stuck on "Fountain" and hidden deep in the sloping rubble between **Areas 1** and **3**.

Mastermind. The **aboleth** **Maricthos** soaks in the water here, reading a book. If the characters have been seen by the chuuls (**Area 1**) or the clerics (**Area 5**), it is already aware of the intrusion.

Attitude. Initially, **Maricthos** is not hostile, instead starting a conversation with the characters. It uses *Probing Telepathy* to discover their greatest desires, and then tries to bribe them into helping it expand its dominion. It may use *Enslave* on characters who seem unwilling to aid it whatever it offers. If it cannot gain the characters' allegiance, or if they attack it, the aboleth resorts to violence. If reduced to below half its hit points, **Maricthos** uses *Psychic Drain* on any creatures still charmed by it.

Treasure. A character who searches the cave and succeeds at a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** discovers the aboleth's hoard concealed the mud beneath the bones. This check is made with **advantage** if the cave is drained of water. The hoard consists of coins worth 2,100 gp (6d6 x 100) and 10 (3d6) gems worth 50 gp each.

4. Upper Cave

The sudden transporting of the cavern caused a large crack in the ceiling of this chamber. The dungeon's occupants are aware of the danger and avoid it.

Collapsing Roof

Mechanical trap

Several cracks in the ceiling run between the four columns in this room. A character stepping between any of the columns triggers a collapse. A character can attempt to brace the ceiling with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or appropriate artisan's tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers.

Creatures that make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Perception), or Wisdom (Survival) check sense the roof is likely to collapse. As an action, a character can jar one of the stone columns, causing the trap to trigger.

When the trap is triggered, the damaged roof collapses. Any creature in the area beneath the unstable section must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once the trap is triggered, the floor of the whole area is filled with rubble and becomes difficult terrain.

5. Library

This circular room is lined almost entirely with bookshelves. The east section of the wall contains a mosaic depicting the deity, its left palm facing outward. One shelf has been dragged forward; its books have fallen to the floor, revealing a ragged hole in the wall behind it.

Charmed Clerics. **Etrophon** the **priest** and his two **acolytes**, **Maea** and **Revus**, are sorting through the books here. All are under the effects of **Maricthos's** *Enslave* ability. Periodically, the aboleth commands them to find books on a topic and bring them to it. While charmed, the clerics neither help nor hinder the characters, although they defend themselves if attacked. If freed of the charm, they explain what happened and can provide healing.

Secret Door. The mosaic is a secret door which can be found with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. Unlike the door behind the altar (**Area 2**) no special action is needed to open it except touching the deity's left palm.

Well-Stocked Library. A character who spends a short rest consulting the library can make their next **Intelligence (Arcana)**, **Intelligence (History)**, **Intelligence (Nature)**, **Intelligence (Religion)**, or **Wisdom (Medicine) check** with **advantage**.

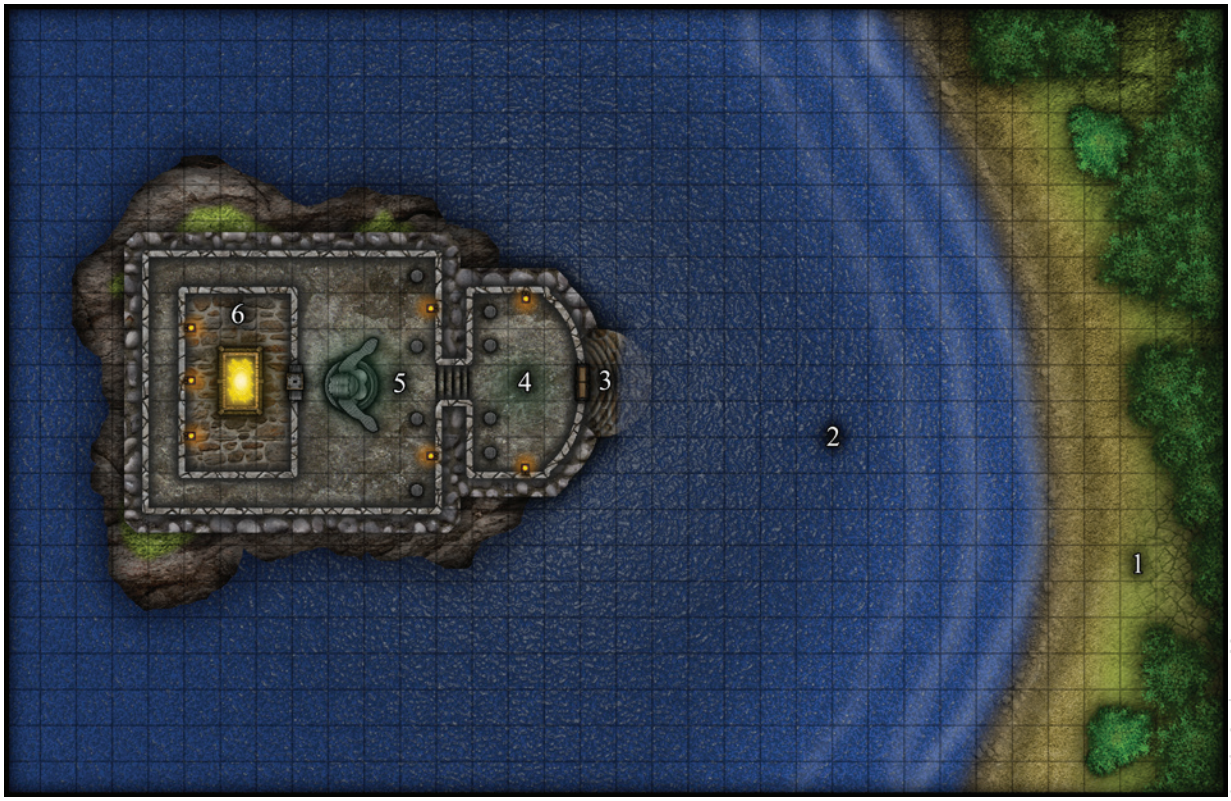


Mates Laurentiu

4-5 Characters

Levels 7-8

Coast



Justin Andrew Mason

The Brass Band

Stephen Yeardley

Starme, a "teenage" storm giant, had his young brass dragon mount Copallzi taken as bail after losing a brawl. Now he needs the fine (which could be a magic item or a pile of gold) delivered and Copallzi recovered, but can't go himself as he hasn't told his parents. The adventurers may get the dragon released using their wiles instead of money, but engaging in wholesale slaughter leads to them becoming targets for bounty hunters.

If set in Aventyr, Starme has purchased an Obor Permit of Transit to get the party to Luod the bailiff's office and hand over the money using good manners, plus a Permit of Persuasion in case it wishes to use the "non-money" option. But this permit does not allow for "death or too-great destruction of the holder's property, even in self-protection" (i.e. losses of greater value than the funds can replace).

However, the guards only speak Abyssal or Aquan, can't read, and are "trigger happy", while Luod is no pushover even for experienced adventurers; the task is going to be a difficult one, not helped by the fact that at the first sign of failure or weakness, Luod the bailiff takes matters into her own hands, "fining" the characters for some perceived transgression and insisting they pay up or face the consequences!

1. Beachhead

Four clearly visible **gibbering mouthers** roam the lake's edge, patrolling between the remains of those charmed and intoxicated by Luod. The lamia enjoys suggesting to its victims to recross the lake and rest and watch the mouthers feast.

2. From Shore to Store

Four **chuuls** circle the building, watching interlopers closely. They attack any who linger here without immediately making their way to the building.

Salt in Wounds. The lake is perniciously salty; wounds received in the water behave as if dealt by a *sword of wounding*, except that the damage incurred is acid, not necrotic. Creatures connected to the building are immune to this effect after constant exposure to the water.

3. Steps from the Saltwater

A **merrow** guard stands on these partially submerged steps (1 foot deep, 2 feet tall) that begin 10 feet below the surface. As the characters approach, it strikes the door. Showing it Starme's money (and the seal on each permit if in Aventyr) means it opens the door, utters a guttural noise, and gestures inward with its harpoon.

Using languages other than Aquan and Abyssal confuses it, as it doesn't understand them. Laughing at it, or becoming pushy, provokes it: it bellows and then either grapples whoever is responsible into the lake or stands on the lower steps and attacks with its harpoon, dragging the victim under the surface.

If Luod hears the noise she casts *scrying* to watch the guard. The 15-foot-tall doors open outwards.

The building is protected by a *guards and wards* spell as detailed in each area.

4. Welcome Chamber

Two more **merrow** guards are here, north and south, although it is a tight squeeze for them. If the party enters peacefully, they push their harpoons through the foggy archway (see below) to clear the webs and for characters to use as guide rails (they also indicate people are coming through).

If the party attacks the guard in **Area 3**, they rush through the doors to help it (50%) or wait until they hear someone opening them and use them as a battering ram against the opener before squeezing through the arch (50%).

Stairs (1 foot deep, 2 feet tall) lead up into **Area 5**. The arch is shrouded in fog, webs, a *stinking cloud* (**DC 14 Constitution saving throw**), and a suggestion to "*Pay double as it smooths the deal,*" all produced by the *guards and wards* spell.

5. Audience Chamber

A huge, ceiling-touching 20-foot tall statue of an elder aquatic Abyssal goddess stands here. A *magic mouth* on it states in Common: "*Remember your manners!*" **Luod the bailiff**, a **lamia** currently looking like a large **sahuagin priestess** or baroness via *disguise self*, is north of it; another **merrow** guard stands to its south.

Luod uses a *dagger of venom*, wears *gauntlets of ogre power* (**Strength** 19: +1 bonus to hit, +1 damage with attacks, this pair can only be attuned by Chaotic Evil creatures) and has read a *tome of leadership and influence* (**Charisma** 18; **Deception** +8, **spell save DC 14**).



Nicolas Cloister

Luod says "*Qoj*" and the statue moves. If the adventurers are peaceful, it lowers its hand for the money. Luod does not negotiate, but if the players come up with a clever plan, it can be executed with a **complex skill check** that requires three successes before one failure, using **DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation)**, **Charisma (Deception)** or **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks**. Allow other skills as well, if the plan to deceive Luod makes sense. If the attempt fails, hostilities ensue.

The statue performs as an **awakened tree** (Speed 0 ft.) in combat.

This merrow guard's harpoon behaves as a *mace of terror* that instead deals piercing damage and centers its effects on the harpoon.

The door into **Area 6** appears as a plain section of wall and has the *arcane lock* component of the *guards and wards* spell is on it. The fog-filled passage behind **Area 6** holds the second *stinking cloud* (**DC 14 Constitution saving throw**) and the *dancing lights* component in its vaguely humanoid form.

6. Treasured Hoard Pit

Luod cast geas successfully on **Copallzi**, a **young brass dragon**. Now the dragon ensures nothing is removed from this deep pit, including himself. It appears he is protecting many thousands of brass, bronze and copper coins (treat all as cp). In fact, there are only 2,000 of each; the rest are a result of Luod casting *major image*. Regardless, Copallzi loves what is there. The pit floor is trapped with a **fire-spouting pit**. Copallzi activates it every combat round by standing on it, basking in the flames. The activation plate can't be spotted unless the coins are removed, something he won't allow.

Fire-Spouting Pit

Magic trap

This trap is activated when an intruder steps on a hidden pressure plate at the base of the pit, releasing a magical burst of flame from each wall.

The DC is 15 to spot the pressure plate, as well as faint scorch marks on the floor and walls. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals an aura of evocation magic within the pit.

The trap activates when more than 20 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, causing the walls to release what amounts to a 30-foot cone of fire. Each creature in the fire must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

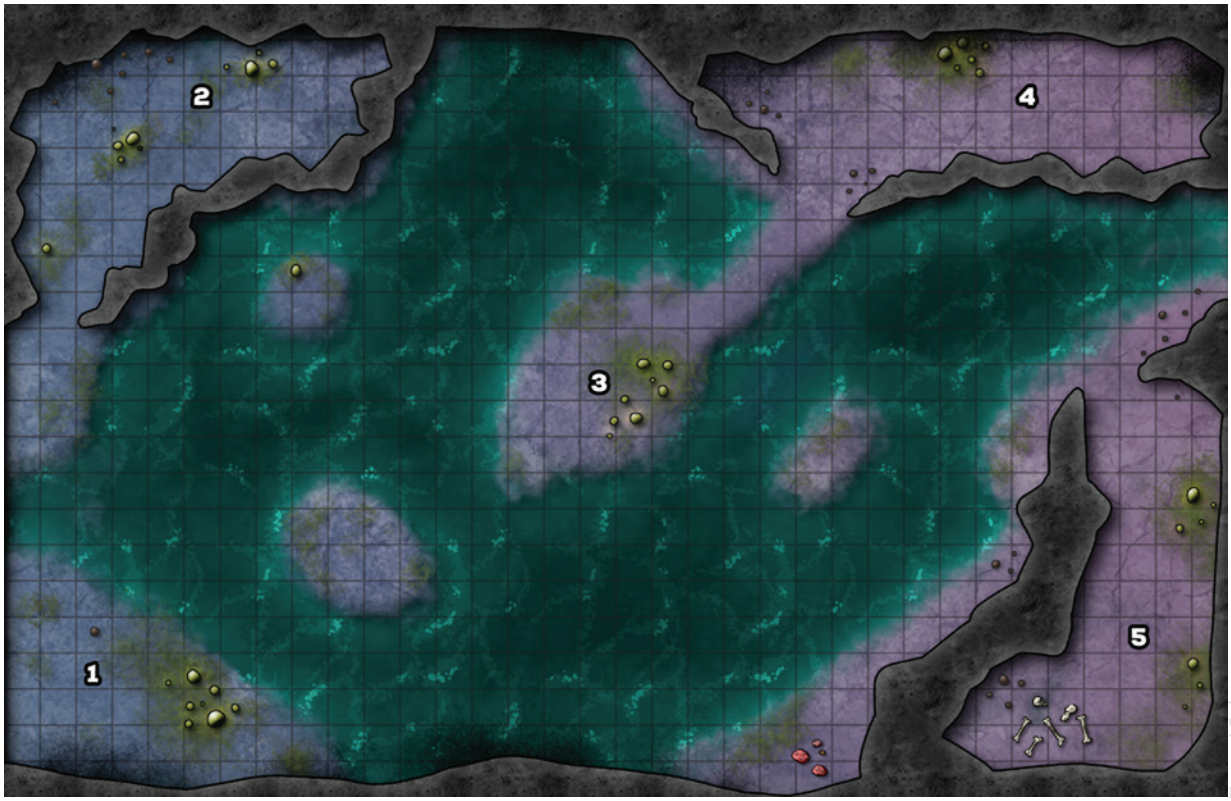
Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 13) cast on the pit floor destroys the trap.

If an aggressive party retreats across the lake, any remaining chuul and merrow pursue. Alternatively, if the GM wants a combat, Luod might break any terms negotiated with her.

4-5 Characters

Levels 7-8

Underworld



Tommi Salama

Dead Flood of Dwfn Eir-Grøn

Thilo Graf, Stephen Yeardley

Five days ago, as the dwarven copper mine Dwfn Eir-Grøn (Duv-n Irr-Gro:n) celebrated another century of profitable work, its citywide party ended prematurely by a drow assault. Hundreds of intoxicated workers, warriors and others fell to drow weapons and poisons, and disappeared into the Underworld, their fates unknown. The lamentations of the remaining dwarves roused their deity Goifannus, who turned every shed tear into a great torrent that flooded the mines before flowing as swift rivers along the passages from the city. Now Goifannus' clerics have sent parties to reclaim the abducted dwarves, or at least their mortal remains.

Cwellan and Salma of House Gullion, vile corpse creator and curator of the drow respectively, are stranded by the divine flood. The divinely-infused cold waters change their undead back into reposed and harmless corpses—a total fiasco. Their goal is to abscond with as many zombies as possible.

Every square that is at least 90% land and doesn't contain more than one small rock holds a **zombie**.

All living dwarves were poisoned initially with drow poison, then assassin's blood, and finally afflicted with sewer plague. They are all suffering level three exhaustion. Squares with rocks in them are difficult terrain.

Sacred Flood. The river is key to saving the survivors; it is rich in copper and salt, the material components for *gentle repose*. When Dwfn Eir-Grøn dwarves touch the water (a splash does not suffice), they are affected by the spell, even if they already have been zombified, reverting them to lifeless corpses. Even deities must strike deals, though. Goifannus gained peer permission only to "stop more dwarves from dying". Even then, magic is unpredictable. This water contains the equivalent of 350 copper pieces; as the spell requires two copper pieces to work and there are 150 dwarves to rescue, this ought to be enough, but sometimes more copper is needed. Each time a character pushes a dwarf, zombie or not, into the river, they roll a d6 to reveal how much copper is used. The results are: 1–3 = 2 cp; 4–5 = 3 cp; 6 = 4 cp.

Once more than 200 cp are used, the remaining zombies become restless and press towards the river. They begin to grapple the heroes to pass them, which the drow seek to use to their **advantage**.

Cold River. The frigid river is 20 feet deep at all points. Any living creature that falls in takes 3 (1d4+1) cold damage at the end of its turn. If a character succeeds at a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check**, they can climb onto a bank.

Dwarven Kayaks. The party approaches the cavern in two open kayaks from the west. These kayaks seat five Medium creatures each, and each features one **dwarven rower** (**commoner**, but has 20 hp, proficient with water vehicles), who can automatically move the kayak 30 feet per round. A character can use an action to make a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check**, moving a kayak by a further 30 feet on a successful check, or half as far on a failed one.

A character proficient with water vehicles automatically succeeds on this roll. Only one such additional check may be made per round. Left unsecured, kayaks float westwards at 5 feet per round.

1. South-West Shelf

20 **zombies**.

Vitiatus, a traitorous **dwarf fanatic** (at 1) casts *shield of faith* as the party appears, then attacks using spells to help his drow masters. The red stone before Vitiatus is a *bead of force*; he steps on it when he is reduced to 16 hit points or fewer. If he survives, Vitiatus walks the resulting sphere into the water and floats off.

2. North-West Cave

36 **zombies**.

Cwellan Gullion (**assassin**) (at 2) has spiders on his shoulder mixing his blood and their poison to produce assassin's blood. He uses the zombies as three-quarters cover to fire crossbow bolts coated in this poison at the party. If a hero approaches within 10 feet, Cwellan drops the crossbow and blows powdered malice at them:

Powdered Malice. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: The creature must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or become poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature is also blinded.

He has six doses of malice in his bag.

3. Central Spit

20 **zombies**.

Twerca Grofslean (**dwarf graveslayer**) (at 3) — poisoned, diseased, suffering level 3 exhaustion — looks exactly like a zombie. But with a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)**, **Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** a character sees her eyes glinting. If pushed into the river, her plate drags her under. If roused, she fights with the party. Twerca's handaxe is hidden within a decorative bulge on the back of her cuirass. Salma has her battleaxe and holy symbol.

4. North-East Cave

35 **zombies**.

Salma Gullion (**war priestess**, at 4) has one hour remaining of *death ward* and casts *freedom of movement* (replaces listed *death ward*) and *protection from energy (cold)* (replaces listed *mass healing word*) when combat begins. She found herself unable to learn any spell directly influencing water after the river appeared (such as *water walk*) but is ready to push foes into the river and fight there if necessary. Twerca's battle axe and holy symbol are on the rocks behind the priestess.

5. South-East Cave

11 **zombies** outside, 29 **zombies** inside.

A **risen reaver** (at 5), looking like an undead drider missing its legs, waits here impatiently. It has eaten two dwarves (some bones remain) against Salma's instructions, but knows she can't reach it. It senses a hero once they reach the unmarked south-west island, and bellows angrily.

Small Unnumbered Islands

North-west, near Area 2: two **zombies**.

South-west, near Area 1: seven **zombies**.

East, right of Area 3: two dwarven **knights**, **Stapol** and **Myolo**, who evaded the last dose of assassin's blood, have seen what happens when zombies fall in the river. When a hero comes within 30 feet of them, they use their *Leadership* action to give instructions on how to put their comrades to rest. Their armor means they can't leave the island without risking drowning. They are currently weaponless.

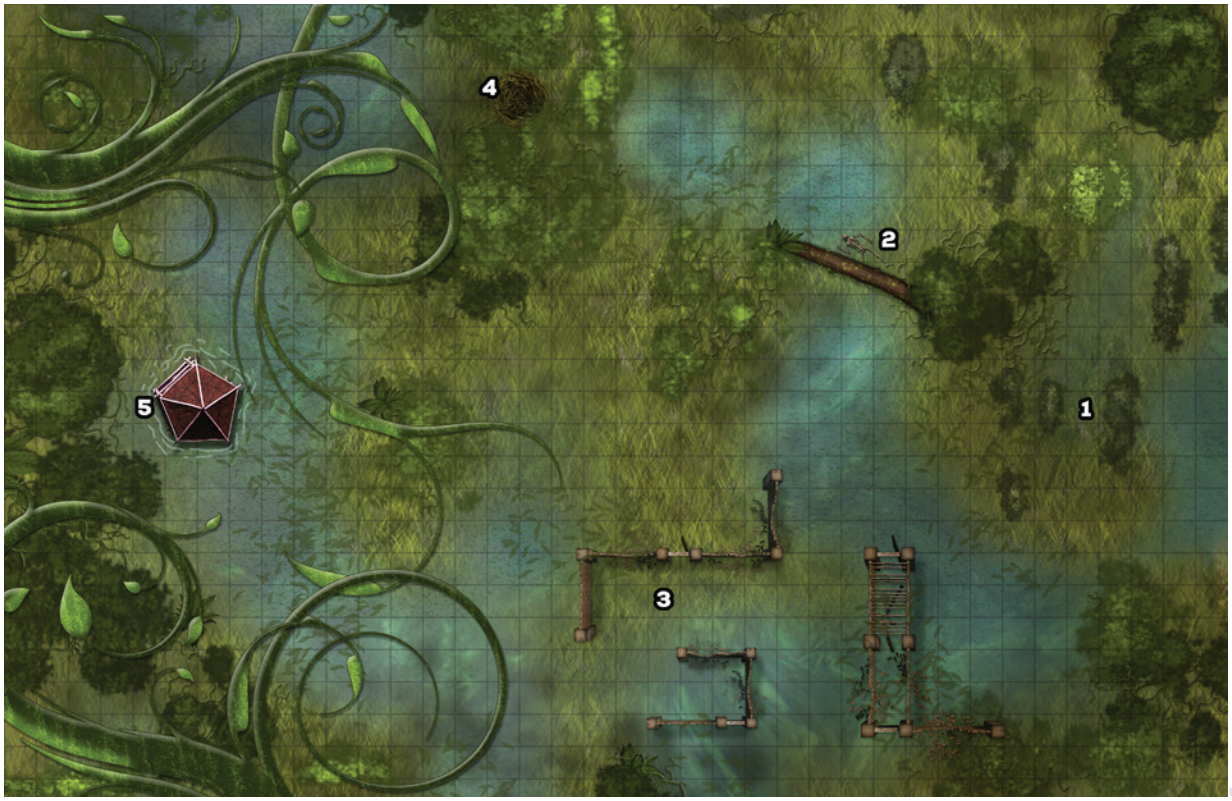


Mates Laurentiu

4-5 Characters

Level 7-8

Swamp



The Bean Legacy

David Schwartz

After Jack had slain the giant by felling the beanstalk, the plant began the slow process of decomposition. As it rotted, not only nutrients leached from the beanstalk, but also primal magic causing the surrounding farmland at first to become fecund, and then to transform into overgrown wetlands. By this point, however, Jack had leveraged his newfound wealth and moved away with his family to more civilized lands.

There are a variety of reasons the characters might decide to investigate Jack's abandoned farm. Scared villagers may ask them to investigate a giant seen coming out of the swamp to steal livestock. The characters may be chasing rumors that Jack left treasure behind, or they may be in search of fey or primal magic.

Swamp Features. The ground is boggy throughout, but areas marked in blue have standing water and are difficult terrain.

1. Swamp Gas

As the characters enter the area from the northeast, they attract the attention of a group of four **swampgas bubbles** in the thicket here. The bubbles do not appear hostile, though a **DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals that they're dangerous. The bubbles float lazily towards the party but attack when adjacent to a character or targeted at range.

2. Log Bridge

A fallen tree acts as a makeshift bridge across the boggy ground.

Skeleton. When the tree toppled, it caught the leg of a hapless traveler, who died trapped under the fallen trunk. A character examining the skeleton with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** finds a 70 (2d6 x 10) gold pieces and a brass *lantern of revealing* in the mud nearby.

3. Ruined Farmhouse

These few walls are all that remains of Jack's farmhouse.

The Magic Harp. As Jack's wealth increased, he was able to hire many and various musicians, and soon forgot about the magic singing harp he stole from the giant. When he abandoned the farm, he left the **golden harp** behind, and now it lies mostly submerged in the mud. Years of neglect have made the sapient harp bitter and transformed it into a **wind's harp devil** with the *Wind Demon Summoning* feature.

Wind Demon Summoning (1/Day). The magic harp's can use its action to summon two **wind demons**. These demons are immune to the harp's *Hellish Chorus*.

The Harp's Request. When it becomes aware of the characters, the magic harp calls out to them. It requests to be dug up and cleaned. If the characters do this, the magic harp asks someone to play

(or accompany) it. The harp is duly satisfied with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check** and agrees to follow the characters.

Attitude. The magic harp initially seems friendly, but if the characters fail to play it well, or refuse to comply with its demands, it becomes offended. Even if the characters do as it asks, the harp may later decide they aren't paying it enough attention and become offended anyway. In either case, a character must make a **DC 20 Charisma (Deception)**, **Charisma (Intimidation)**, or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**. On a success, the harp merely leaves in a huff. On a failure it attacks. It also attacks if a character tries to forcibly stop it from leaving.

4. Goose Nest

This large nest of branches is hidden among a copse of trees. Outside the copse it can only be spotted with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

The Golden Goose. When Jack left the farm, he of course took the goose that laid the golden eggs, yet he failed to collect one of her eggs.)Primal magic caused the egg to hatch a new **golden goose** (**august rooster**).

The Goose's Offer. To those characters not affected by its *Aura of Subservience* the goose promises golden eggs in exchange for catering to its every whim. What the golden goose fails to mention is that it is actually a gander, though a character can see through this lie with a successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Insight) check**. If the characters agree to take the "goose", it plans to eventually leave them for a wealthier mark, or flee when its ruse is discovered.

Honk!. The golden goose attacks if the characters refuse its demands or attempt to manhandle it. When attacking the goose honks loudly, which alerts the giant (in **Area 5**). Each round after the first, the giant throws a rock at a random combatant until he can no longer hear the goose honking.

5. Sunken Silo

This partially sunken silo has been converted into a hut by the addition of a door, windows, and raised floor.

The Haunted Giant. The former silo is home to the **haunted giant**, **Medducawr**, who is tormented by clearly-visible spirits of three giants slain by Jack. If he sees the characters approaching his hut, the giant animates the beanstalk vines (which act as two **awakened trees**) and throws rocks until they are out of normal range. He uses his greatclub in melee. All the while he threatens to kill the characters unless they leave. The haunted giant calls all humanoids "Jack" while under the influence of *The Three Spirits*.

Reasoning with the Giant. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Wisdom (Insight) check**, a character realizes the giant doesn't want to hurt them but is compelled to attack by *The Three Spirits*.

The Three Spirits. The first ghostly giant is adorned in jewelry. If a character offers the spirit an item of gold or a gem and succeeds at a **DC 13 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, the spirit is banished.

The second ghostly giant has large ears and carries a lute. If a character succeeds at a **DC 13 Charisma (Performance) check** to sing or play music, the spirit is banished.

The third ghostly giant has a toothy maw that resembles the bear trap it carries. If a character offers the spirit food and succeeds at a **DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, the spirit is banished.

The Giant's Treasure. The area beneath the wooden floor can be accessed by a trapdoor. Here the giant keeps his hoard of 2,100 (6d6 x 100) gold pieces, 7,000 (2d6 x 1,000) silver pieces, 10 (3d6) gems (worth 50 gold pieces each), and a *bag of beans* gleaned from the fallen beanstalk. If the PCs befriend the giant, he gives them the magic beans.

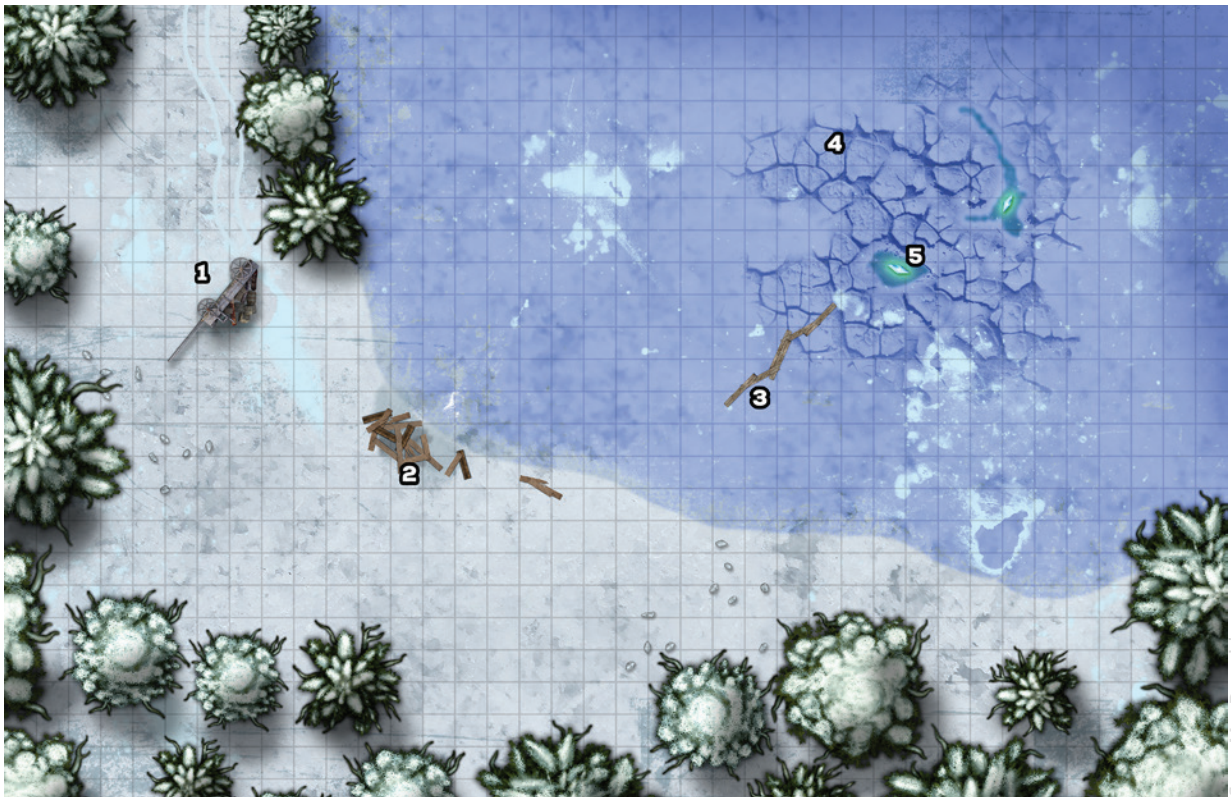


Mates Laurentiu

4-5 Characters

Levels 6-9

Arctic



Sean MacDonald

Crystalline Delight

David Schwartz

The characters see a flash of green light over a frozen lake surrounded by snow-covered forest. They may be asked to investigate by locals or may be traveling in that direction already.

The flash of light accompanied the arrival of two crystalline devils in the form of large gemstones. Though their sudden materialization cracked the ice, the devils remain trapped within it. Unable to return to their true form, they await someone or something to free them.

The first to arrive on the scene were a group of ravenfolk merchants transporting goods back to their village. Though naturally enticed by the shiny gems, they were initially reluctant to cross the broken ice. One of the crystalline devils issued a *command* for the group's leader to approach, then gave him a *suggestion* to extract the crystals.

The ravenfolk are attempting to reach the crystals as the characters approach.

Frozen Lake. The slippery ice on the lake is difficult terrain. The first time a creature moves on the ice each turn, they must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or fall prone, unless they are wearing snowshoes or cleats. Each square of ice has **AC** 13; 18 hp; and is **immune** to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, and radiant damage. A creature attempting to damage an occupied square of ice makes their attack roll against the occupying creature's AC if it is higher. A square reduced to 4 hp or less becomes cracked (see **Area 4**).

1. Overturned Wagon

As the characters arrive from northwest, the first thing they see is an overturned wagon with preserved food and dry goods spilling out. Examining the wagon reveals that its roof and one side have been deliberately removed. Among the wagon's contents are three blankets, a healer's kit, 50 feet of hempen rope, and a tinderbox.

A **draft horse** is tied to a nearby tree.

2. Plank Pile

Wood removed from the wagon has been piled by the edge of the frozen lake.

Ravenfolk Merchants. Three ravenfolk brothers—**Elja**, **Velja**, and **Hrelja**—move between this pile and the plank bridge (**Area 3**). The merchants are as **ravenfolk warriors**, except instead of *Radiant Runespears*, they are armed with shovels and crowbars:

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

Attitude. The ravenfolk are initially indifferent to the characters, but welcome help if offered. If a character succeeds at a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, the ravenfolk become friendly and offer the characters one of the crystals in exchange for their help.

When the crystalline devils (**Area 5**) return to their true form, the ravenfolk flee, unless the brothers have been made friendly, in which case they help the characters to the best of their abilities.

Elja Enchanted. *Detect magic* reveals that the eldest brother Elja is under an enchantment spell. A character can sense that he is not acting entirely of his own free will with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Insight) check**. The character has **advantage** on this check if they detected the enchantment aura.

If the characters attempt to stop the ravenfolk from recovering the crystals, Elja becomes hostile and may attack them. His brothers follow suit, unless a character succeeds at a **DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** to convince them Elja is charmed.

Ravenfolk Reward. If the characters save the brothers from the crystalline devils (**Area 5**), the ravenfolk invite the party back to their village. There, the **ravenfolk doom croaker** ◆ offers to enhance one weapon per character with runes. *Rune weapons* count as magical (though they provide no bonus to attack) and deal an additional 1d6 radiant damage. This effect lasts one week unless renewed by a doom croaker.

3. Plank Bridge

The ravenfolk are using the planks from their wagon to spread their weight across the broken ice. A Small or Medium creature is considered to be squeezing while on the narrow bridge but but avoids the dangers of *Frozen Lake* and *Cracked Ice*.

Danger Ahead. As the bridge approaches the second crystal, characters laying planks must make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)**, **Wisdom (Perception)**, or **Wisdom (Survival) check** to notice a loose piece of ice. If they succeed, they can divert the bridge around it. On a failure, they tip over the loose ice and fall into the water.

4. Cracked Ice

While most of the frozen lake is relatively safe to traverse, a patch of ice has been cracked by the sudden arrival of the crystalline devils (**Area 5**).

Cracked Ice. The cracked ice has only 4 hp. In addition to the normal effects of ice, for each square a creature moves over cracked ice, they must make a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)**, **Dexterity (Acrobatics)**, or **Wisdom (Survival) check** to avoid stepping on a weak seam. On a failure, the ice breaks and the creature falls into frigid water. Tiny creatures do not risk breaking the ice.

5. Mysterious Crystals

Two large crystals embedded in the ice glow with refracted light. The crystals detect as fiends with *detect evil and good*, and radiate transmutation magic when viewed with *detect magic*. A character can tell the crystals are magical and not natural with a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Nature) check**. The ice must be broken (see *Frozen Lake*) to remove the crystals.

Devils in Disguise. In truth the gemstones are the **crystalline devils** ◆ **Achaton** and **Odgaram**. A summoning ritual gone wrong caused them to materialize here instead of their destination. They lack the space to return to their true form while embedded in the ice.

The Devils' Plan. If the characters stop the ravenfolk, but do not attempt to extract the crystals themselves, one of the devils uses *suggestion* on the character who seems most susceptible (perhaps using *command* to bring them within range). Once both devils are released from the ice, they resume their true form and demand to be taken to whoever summoned them. If the characters refuse to help, the devils attack. Alternatively, if they think the characters are weak-willed, the devils may remain in crystal form and use their mental powers to manipulate the party or turn them against each other.

Crystalline Remains. The characters can extract 10 (3d6) gems worth 50 gp each from the body of a dead crystalline devil.

Feigned Defeat. If the party seems particularly potent, the devils feign death. They contort and twitch, then are compressed into a massive gemstone. This is their *Betraying Carbuncle* ability. The devils strike when least expected.

Disappointed Diabolists. The machinations of the diabolists are left to the GM, but they certainly won't let one failed summoning attempt dissuade them from their goals.



Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 6-8

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

Armored Assassins of Alorand

Jonathan G. Nelson

Nothing like a roadside inn, an enjoyable evening of dining & entertainment, and a restful slumber to put one at ease, that is, until floating suits of armor burst into your bedroom and attempt to assassinate you in your sleep!

The characters are wined and dined before bedding down for the night. 1d4+1 hours later, assassins in the form of 1d4+10 previously decorative armors (**animated armor** with **Stealth +8**, *Assassinate*, *Sneak Attack* 2d6, ***Shortbow.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage) come to life, killing silently and indiscriminately.

Whenever an animated armor kills a creature, it absorbs that creature's total hp as temporary hit points. If a hero kills one set of armor, all animated armors attack that character on their next turn, if aware.

Doors. **AC** 15, hp 25, slide open/closed, can remove from track (open) with **DC 14 Strength check** (unlocked) or **DC 22 Strength check** (locked).

Terrain. Each room has a terrain indicator, granting different tactical options.

Saving Lives. Guests and employees of the inn are **commoners**. There are also 1d4+1 **nobles** randomly dispersed around the inn who may fight or escape. For every NPC saved, award each character 100 XP; subtract 100 XP from this total per NPC casualty.

1. Alorand Vista Entrance

NPCs. **(2 total) Beyrando & Chelian (human)**

Terrain. **Welcome Desk.** The desk is large enough to duck behind (three-quarters cover) or hide under (**advantage** on **Stealth checks**), or stand on to gain **advantage** on melee attacks.

Rooms are 5 gp/night, include dinner, drink, and all amenities.

The grand entrance to the Inn of Alorand Vista brings you across a lush, red antique rug up to an equally aged desk smelling of rubbing oils. A man and woman stand behind the desk, welcoming you and your friends, for at the Inn of Alorand Vista, all worries are checked at the door. "Every room has a roaring hearth and every belly will be filled this evening!" says the innkeeper as she accepts your coin and guides you to your rooms.

Luxuriant green plants in imported ceramic pots line the entrance way and common area. Antiquated suits of armor used in long-forgotten wars are on display throughout the inn. Shields of various nations, both current and fallen, decorate the walls.

2. Lavish Common Room

***NPCs.* (6 total) Culdar Stiffdrink (dwarf), Pinewillow (halfling), Ferswon, Jamie, Merianda, Yunui (humans)**

***Terrain.* Line of Pots.** Anyone adjacent to a pot cannot be targeted with *Sneak Attack* or attacked with an opportunity attack.

A variety of local and exotic folks gather round the hearth, sharing tales, drink, and song. A bard plays a lute and laughter accompanies the plucking of his strings, spreading throughout the inn.

3. Office/Serving Station

***NPCs.* (1 total) Kelp (human)**

***Terrain.* Barrels.** Can be picked up with a **DC 12 Strength check** and then hurled as a melee attack at combatant within 25 feet for 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage (-1 per 5 ft.). A target hit must make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** or fall prone. Barrels can also be used to stand on to gain **advantage** on melee attacks.

A back office and simple serving station with a desk, extra barrels of ale, wine rack, and a small wooden chest.

4. Khidr's Kitchen

***NPCs.* (1 total) Khidr (human, cook)**

***Terrain.* Prep Table. Advantage** on **Stealth checks** when hiding under the table, three-quarters cover, **disadvantage** on attacks from that position. When standing on prep table, **advantage** on melee attacks.

***Terrain.* Hearths.** Pushing someone into the flames deals 13 (2d6+6) fire damage.

Wine Barrels. Two wine barrels have spigots which can be turned on to make the ground slippery. Anyone moving at normal speed must make a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or fall prone for 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage; moving at half speed prevents this.

Two hearths cook tonight's meal, a turning spit roasts whole ducks over red-hot embers and a cauldron of savory-smelling broth balances over a roaring fire. The prep table is covered in bright vegetables and a large raw turkey stuffed with herbs, veggies, and stale bread. A tall, red-haired man with a chef's hat chops onions with two knives in hand, flipping them and catching them in the air. He nods at you and says "You look like adventurers! Tell me a tale?"

Khidr was once an adventurer himself but has forgotten most of his skills. He is still capable with a blade. (**commoner**, **AC** 14, 20 hp, *Multiattack* (2 chef knives; as *Club*, but deals slashing damage).

5. Tranquility Garden

***NPCs.* (3 total during day, 0 at night) Avo, Mun, Unie (humans)**

***Terrain.* Fountain.** Slippery; **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** or fall prone for 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. Attacking from the highest part of the fountain grants **advantage** on melee attacks and on ranged attacks in this area.

A stone path meanders through a tranquil and finely manicured garden, a fountain with decorative satyr statue spitting water from a pan flute is the centerpiece. An old growth stained wooden bench provides a place to relax.

A1, A2, B1, B2. Bedrooms, King

***NPCs.* (3 total) Aoiun, Hyrent, Sunny (humans)**

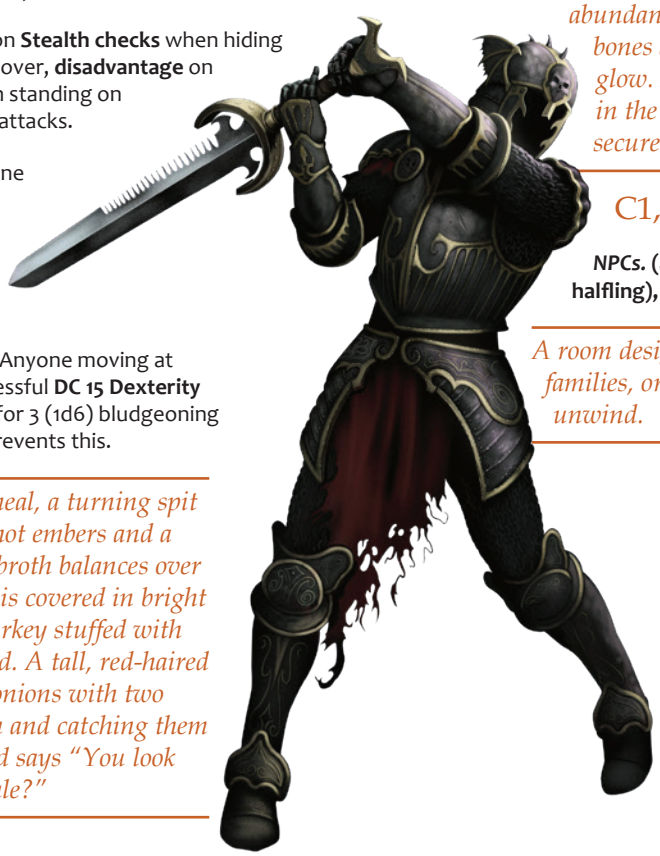
***Terrain.* Beds.** Hiding under a bed grants **advantage** on **Stealth checks** if no enemies are present. The character is prone, but gains **advantage** on the first attack against an unaware enemy.

This bedroom is truly luxurious. The bedspread and pillows are made from the finest cloths and have been expertly and decoratively sewn. A roaring fire in the hearth provides an abundance of radiant heat, soothing your bones and bathing the room in its warm glow. A red armchair fit for royalty sits in the corner. A footlocker is provided to secure your possessions.

C1, C2. Bedrooms, Two Twins

***NPCs.* (4 total) Drimpt (halfling), Yullo (child, halfling), Berry (child, human), Pelye (human)**

A room designed for traveling companions, families, or children, this is the perfect space to unwind.



Quico Vicens

4-6 Characters

Levels 6-8

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Runemaker, Soulbreaker

Jonathan G. Nelson

Jyllyra Runa is known throughout the land for her exceptional magic talent. Some tales portray her as foul, others noble, but none of her deeds were done for any underlying ethos or pathos; Jyllyra simply seeks knowledge and power. Born to a great jarl, Jyllyra was raised by an attentive housecarl with a predilection for runic magic. When Jyllyra's parents were slain in a coup, her housecarl used a teleportation rune to remove the two of them from harm's way. The duo has since traveled the realm, perfecting their arts. Jyllyra's area of expertise is rune magic, a primordial force dealing with the arcane flirtations of nature and the gods themselves.

The adventurers may learn about Jyllyra in a local town, be hired to retrieve some item stolen by her, or overhear rumors about a local "witch" that needs to be driven from these lands. Somehow, the characters find themselves standing outside a complex recently established as Jyllyra's new home for runic experimentation. Little do the adventurers know they have just involuntarily agreed to become test subjects – Jyllyra sees their every move, testing her latent powers and experiments on them.

Preparation. Make sure you have a copy of each player's character sheet for **Area 2**. Track the status of characters before they enter **Area 2**. For **Area 3**, have a device ready for taking photos of the sheets.

Runes. Each room has a unique rune magically emblazoned upon its floor, which grants boons to the enemies and banes to the heroes. A rune has 1d6+2 rune sections, all of which must be removed in order to destroy it. Each successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or *dispel magic* spell (**DC 16**) removes 1 rune section; a background in runology grants **advantage** to these checks. Other methods may be employed, (DCs subject to GM's discretion) but regardless, **it takes one action to remove 1 *rune section***. The rune affects everything in the respective area.

1. Life, Death, Deity

Rune - Ansuz (God). Cleric spells: doubled in duration; saving throws against cleric spells made at **disadvantage**; healing magic restores maximum amount of hp.

Encounter. 6 **priests**, 2 **acolytes**

Once the heroes enter, all doors close and lock. They can be opened with a successful **DC 18 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools, or by solving the statue puzzle. Three statues, representing life, death, and deity cast elongated shadows on the south wall; four blazing torches in sconces behind the statues create the shadows.

Writing on North Wall. *Shadows tell what minds will, when upon the wall does darkness spill.* Akin to Plato's allegory of the cave, the shadows are the humanoid's interpretation of the truth. If objects representing life, death, and deity are held before the torches adjacent to each respective statue, the

shadows are cast upon the wall and the doors magically open. In addition, a drawer opens on each statue, revealing the following: *potion of healing*, *potion of gaseous form*, *philter of love*.

2. Jyllyra's Runebook

Rune - Ehwaz (Twin Gods). Cloned heroes.

Encounter. The adventurers (GM: Use copied sheets).

When the characters enter this room, they instead emerge from the portal and the players—without their knowledge—now control identical clones of themselves. Ask the players to "roll initiative", to encourage combat with the actual characters from the outset. If the players realize the situation and their characters turn to leave via the portal, the clones vanish, and the players resume control of their own characters; if they attack the other group (the real characters), the only way to win is to let the character they are playing die (or leave via the portal).

Increased Difficulty. Any damage dealt to a clone or hero applies to both. Destroying the rune removes the effect, making the clones and portal vanish.

Jyllyra's Spellbook of Conjuration Runes (value: 2,500–10,000 gp) sits upon a wooden stand, open to a page full of mysterious runes. A wizard may spend 2d20+20 days studying this book to learn how to cast certain conjuration spells (GM's discretion) via runes left with a specific trigger.

3. Ripple in Space Time

Rune - Othila (Ancestor). Record all data, future effect.

Encounter. 2 **cloakers**, hidden (**DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** to spot), drop opposite sides of party.



As the characters pass over this rune the floor glows in bright colors. Take photos of their character sheets for future use. In 1d4+2 game days, give the players their old data and tell them their characters remember nothing after encountering this rune. If the adventurers return and walk over this rune again, their current characters and their memories are restored.

If a cloaker passes over the rune, it exists here, but also reappears and attacks the characters in the future.

Increased Difficulty. The rune's influence makes each character automatically lose concentration after 1d4 rounds, as the character's mind briefly becomes untangled from the threads of time.

4. Fire Transforms the Willful

Rune - Kaunaz (Fire). Fire damage is maximized; nonmagical fire damage is also doubled.

Encounter. **azer**, 2 **fire elemental**, **giant fire beetle**, **salamander**, **steam mephit**

Eight pillars, two torches, dais with flaming brazier. If natural fire sources in the room are extinguished (4 actions), fire damage is no longer doubled, but still does maximum damage until the rune is destroyed.

Decreased Difficulty. The pillars magically heal each character to maximum hp once, but at the cost of half the encounter's experience rewards; this is Jyllyra's experiment after all, and she can use this to hold over their heads if the party physically confronts her.

5. Bloody Loop

Rune - Hagalaz (Transformation). Hallway transforms into a continuous loop.

Encounter. 4 **rust monsters**, 40 mutated **stirges**

After crossing the halfway point, the rune is triggered, and the hallway transforms into a complete rectangular loop. Openings in the ceiling at halfway points in the loop spew forth enemies which converge on the characters from both ends.

Mutated stirges add:

Regenerative Ranged Needle-Proboscis. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage, plus, at the start of stirge's turn, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hp due to blood loss. The needle can be removed as an action; attacking tubes cuts off stirge, but blood drain continues until the needle is completely removed.

Decreased Difficulty. The hallway returns to normal after 1d6+3 rounds.

6. Judgement

Rune - Eiwaz (Death/Tree of Life). Attacks deal double damage, pillars imbued with healing.

Encounter. 2 **stone golems**

Both pillars are engraved with *Eiwaz*, the symbol of Yggdrasil; when touched by a creature, a pillar restores 8d4+16 hp twice per day.

Decreased Difficulty. 1 **stone golem**, 2 uses per healing pillars.

7. Jyllyra's Experiment

Rune - Thurisaz (Polarity). Doubled spell slots while standing on rune (rectangular area on map).

Encounter. **Jyllyra Runa** (**archmage**, **AC** 15, 200 hp)

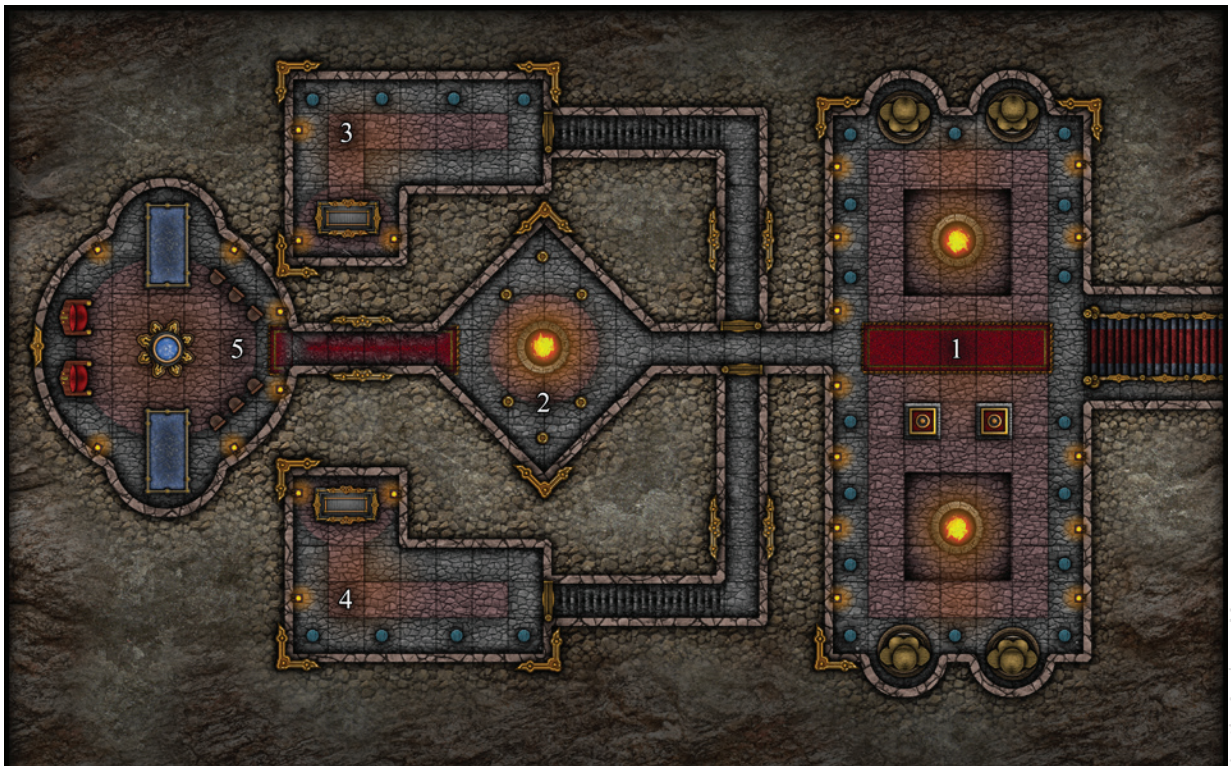
If Jyllyra has fewer than half of her maximum hit points remaining, or if the *Thurisaz (Polarity)* rune is destroyed, she activates a *teleport* rune on the cover of her spellbook and escapes. She may make another appearance to challenge the characters in the future.

Quico Vicens

4
Characters

Level
8

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Courting Death

Claire Stricklin

Victory and tragedy have befallen the Duchy of Pequniel. The foul necromancer **Lodira** has been defeated, her undead armies driven from the field. Yet the price was high. The old duke is dead, fallen in battle against the loathsome horde. It has been a fortnight and the duke's heir has since laid his father to rest in the family vault. Now the time of mourning is nearly done. The new Duke Pequniel prepares for his elevation ceremony. Rich trappings and eager young noblewomen are scheduled to arrive; all the duchy's wagging tongues wonder whether their young lord-to-be will find a duchess. Unfortunately, the new duke isn't the only one with suitors. For the necromancer Lodira is something of a social climber, and death is no barrier for a determined gold digger.

Once a romantic rival of the late Duchess Pequniel, Lodira turned to dark magic when the old duke chose another. She has since made it her business to plague the duchy with undead monsters. Having survived her recent defeat, Lodira now plans to turn it to her favor. Her latest batch of minions have waylaid the caravans carrying banquet supplies, dragging them to the dead duke's tomb. As the adventure begins, Lodira is studying furiously to learn the art of resurrection, and plans to charm the duke and win his hand once he returns to the lands of the living.

1. Dance Macabre

Lodira wants a festive atmosphere for her wedding day. In addition to the stolen décor, she has performed certain dark rites in lieu of a guest list. A stately waltz drifts up the stairs, and an elegant ball is in progress in this chamber. All the celebrants are dead of course — ghosts of the line of Pequniel risen from the urns framing the room. Powerless to oppose the necromancer, they invite the characters to dance, whispering what secrets they can in hopes of undoing Lodira's plans. They must be circumspect, however. The "chaperones" that stand at the room's western exit (a pair of **wraiths**) and patrol the dance floor (a trio of self-important **specters**) let no one pass and brook no interference.

Each round that the heroes converse with the ghosts, they must succeed at a **DC 15 group check** using either **Charisma (Performance)**, **Charisma (Deception)** or **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)**. If they fail, the chaperones move to attack. When they do, the ghostly dancers return to their urns until Lodira calls them forth again.

2. Incorporeal Incense

The brazier in this chamber is filled with an unusual, ethereal fuel. Rather than diffusing throughout the hall, the vapor produced by this incorporeal incense trickles towards **Area 5**, winding around a barrier of bone that blocks access to **Area 5**.

No mere pile of remains, the bones are actually a **bone swarm** hiding in plain sight. While the incense burns, the bone swarm has immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. The swarm has been instructed to let no one pass, though it is relatively non-aggressive. It will not pursue any combatants who break from combat.

The incense itself is incorporeal (as per a **ghost**'s *Etherealness*), and cannot be snuffed out by conventional means. A **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the nature of the incense.

3. The Duchess's Crypt

The lid of the sarcophagus in this chamber is carved in the likeness of a beautiful human female, and marked with the crest of Pequniel. Otherwise, the chamber is conspicuously bare of the decorations festooning the rest of the crypt.

When Lodira conjured the ghosts in **Area 1**, she pointedly excluded her old rival, the late Duchess Pequniel. Ironically, this slight was enough to cause the lady's shade to manifest anyway. Rather than an incorporeal apparition, the duchess makes her displeasure known in the form of a poltergeist-phenomenon.

One round after the heroes enter the room, ectoplasmic slime begins to seep from the walls. A round later, the voice of a woman shrieking epithets at "that upstart harridan" rises from seemingly nowhere. After that, an invisible force begins to toss the heroes about as per *telekinesis* with a +5 bonus on initiative 20.

Coating an object in ectoplasm allows it to interact with ethereal entities for one minute. Alternatively, presenting the locket from **Area 4** in this room causes the Duchess to manifest as a visible spirit. If that happens, the duchess storms through the hall and smothers the incense in **Area 2** before winking out.

4. The Duke's Crypt

The lid of the sarcophagus in this chamber is carved in the likeness of a dashing human male, and marked with the crest of Pequniel. It has been dragged aside, and the sarcophagus itself lies empty. There are, however, a pair of useful items lying in one corner: the duke's *mace of disruption* "*Memento Vivere*" as well as a small golden locket. The locket's glass is shattered, but the profiles of the late duke and duchess are still visible, along with the inscription: *Be Mine Forever*.

5. Court of the Dead

The site of the duchy's funeral rites, this chamber has been styled to resemble a castle's great hall. The fallen heroes of Pequniel lie interred in the large sarcophagi at the north and south ends of the chamber. Rather than defending their liege lord however, they've been set to guard Lodira.

When the party arrives, the duke's corpse occupies one of the thrones. Sitting beside it, the **necromancer** **Lodira** wears a wedding dress and studies a leather-bound tome. She is intent on teaching herself *resurrection*, and looks up with irritation when she is interrupted. On the first round of combat, eight **skeletons** rise from their sarcophagi and attack. Another two skeletons rise every round until Lodira is defeated. The skeletons can throw:

Necrotic Rice. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+2) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw**, falling prone on a failed save.

Once Lodira herself is attacked, she aborts her nascent resurrection and uses a bonus action to reanimate the duke as a **darakhul** under her thrall.

As a last resort, Lodira prematurely throws her bridal bouquet and tries to escape.

Bouquet of Doom. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (6d6) necrotic damage, and the bouquet detonates in a flurry of dark petals in a 20-foot-diameter sphere that lasts for 5 rounds. All living creatures except Lodira starting their turn inside the sphere must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**, or be blinded. At the end of each of its turns, a target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends.

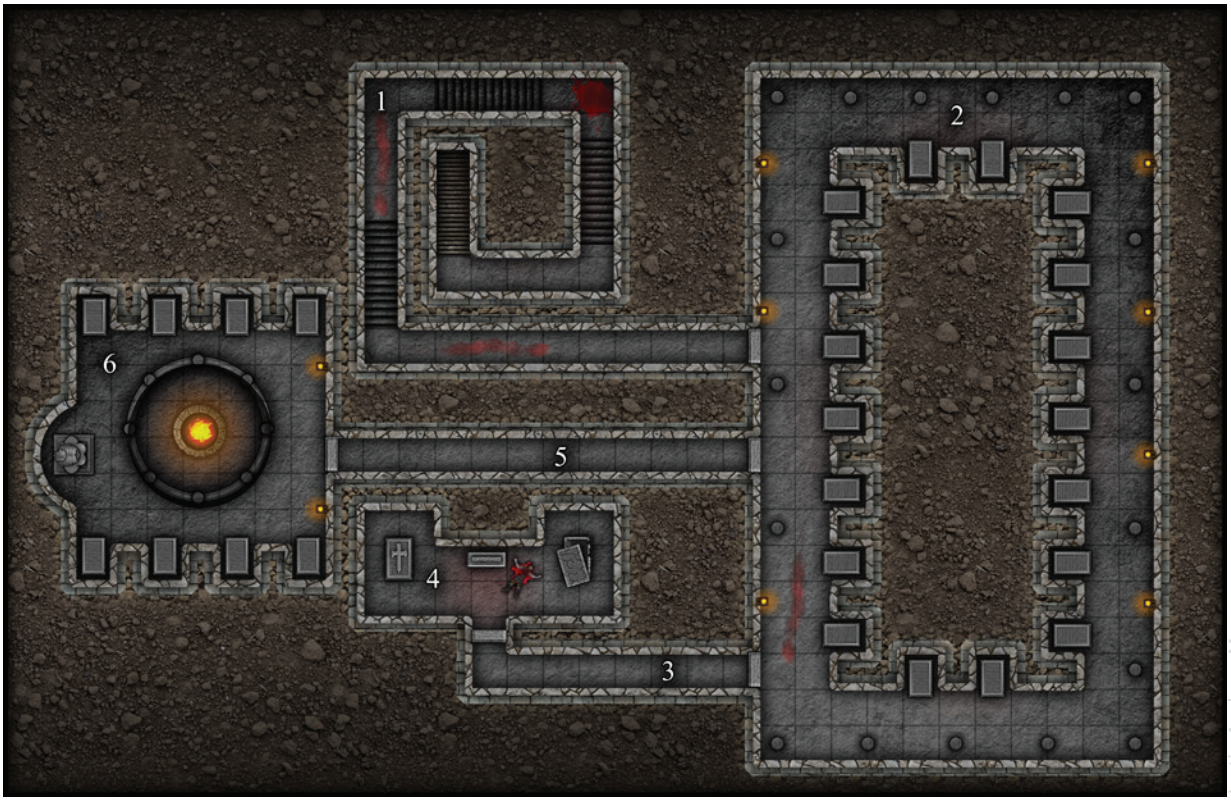


Julio Rocha

4
Characters

Level
8

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

Bloodsuckers

Claire Stricklin

The Countess Carmilla Mora died as she lived: as subject of rumor and scandal. Her decadent parties were legend, her conquests numerous, and her predilection for nocturnal rendezvous an open secret. When her loyal retainers announced her passing away from a "disease of the blood," gossip in the vicinity of Castle Mora ran rampant. When creatures of the night began lurking about her crypt, the market price for garlic skyrocketed. And as travelers across Mora County took to carrying sharpened stakes and holy water, vampire hunters began arriving in droves.

Background

The Countess Carmilla Mora was many things. "Vampire" wasn't one of them. An avid enthusiast of macabre tales and occult romance, the countess modeled her personal image on the dark heroines of her favorite stories. That included a taste for black clothing, ostentatious jewelry, and magic items of an appropriately gothic nature. Unfortunately, one of the countess's favorite rings was more than costume jewelry, and the merchant who procured it for her less than human.

Ring of the Pureblood

Ring, very rare (requires attunement)

While you wear this ring, you do not need to eat or drink. The ring also refreshes the body and mind, so that its wearer only needs to sleep 2 hours to gain the benefit of a long rest. You still cannot gain the benefits of a long rest more than once per day.

Curse. This ring is cursed, a fact that is revealed only when an *identify* spell is cast on it. Attuning to the ring extends the curse to you until you are targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic; removing the ring fails to end the curse. While cursed, you smell delicious to creatures that subsist on blood. You have disadvantage on attack rolls against such creatures and on saving throws against their spells and special abilities.

1. An Un-Familiar Stairwell

Chalked wards and talismans decorate the walls of this winding stairwell. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals blood stains on the ground, hinting at the fate of other would-be vampire slayers who came to the crypts of Mora County.

On the first landing, a black cat meows for attention. On the second, a **silver holy symbol** lies discarded. At the bottom half, a dozen small creatures turn large, trusting eyes to the party: a fluffy **white rabbit**, a pair of **songbirds**, a **bat**, a **rat**, and a

crab holding a gold piece in one claw. They gather around the corpse of an exsanguinated halfling **mage**. In addition to the listed spells, this wizard's spellbook contains the *find familiar* spell.

Despite appearances, these creatures are not abandoned familiars. Neither was the cat or the holy symbol. They are eight **treacles** attracted by the blood-scent of Carmilla's corpse.

2. Hag-in-the-Box

Hiding in this chamber is the source of Mora County's woes. The **blood hag** who sold the countess her cursed ring has come to feast on Carmilla's well-seasoned corpse. Unfortunately for the hag, the deceased noblewoman's retainers have taken the precaution of casting a *hallow* spell in **Area 6**. They meant to keep their mistress in, but inadvertently succeeded in keeping the hag out.



This loathsome creature now bides her time, waiting within the southernmost sarcophagus on the room's eastern side. She hopes for some other bloodsucker to retrieve Carmilla's body, then eliminate the competition.

In the meantime, the hag has busied herself with her *Face Peel* collection, placing her grisly trophies in five other sarcophagi. These animated objects provide line of sight for the hag's *misty step*, allowing her to teleport between sarcophagi if any would-be vampire hunters come too close. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** is enough to hear the faint sound of the animated faces shuffling in their prisons. If the characters investigate, the hag uses her *Call the Blood* to discourage further exploration.

3. Refreshments

The blood mage in **Area 4** has left an unconventional peace offering for the hag in **Area 2**. One of his bound **blood elementals** waits here (48 hit points due to the hag's predations). This unhappy elemental has been instructed to offer itself to anyone who approaches. It proffers a goblet of its own viscous substance when the heroes arrive. Anyone who drinks must make a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned for 1 minute.

The elemental is not hostile, but it will defend itself.

4. Industrious Blood Mage

Vrithas Kane (CN human **blood mage**) is not an evil man. When certain divinatory signs revealed that a rarified form of blood magic lay within Countess Carmilla's tomb, he sought access to the body, intending to use his discoveries for the furtherment of medical magecraft. As luck would have it, he was not the first interested party to enter the crypt.

Vrithas managed to talk his way past the blood hag in **Area 2**, but it is an uneasy truce. The mage knows he will be attacked if he emerges from **Area 6** with Carmilla's body, and so he is attempting to stealthily tunnel through the northwest wall of this side-crypt. He plans to retrieve his prize, dig another tunnel through the northeast wall of **Area 6**, and so escape into the stairwell in **Area 1**. Sketched plans on the floor reveal his plan.

Vrithas has conjured another **blood elemental** to assist with the digging, but it is slow work without proper tools. If the characters agree to aid Vrithas in his tomb-robbing efforts, he proves a capable (if somewhat macabre) ally.

5. Vampire Deterrents

This hallway is filled to bursting with vampire deterrents. Poison darts line the walls 10 feet from the eastern door, infused with garlic instead of poison. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the smell and traps. The darts only deal poison damage to the undead.

In addition, a pressure plate at the center of the hallway causes a 1-foot chunk of masonry to fall from the ceiling (as a collapsing roof, but dealing only 5 [2d4] bludgeoning damage). If it is daytime, a shaft of sunlight streams in afterwards.

Finally, a hidden pit 10 feet from the western door opens onto an underground stream. The running water and 5-foot drop do little more than drench the characters.

6. Blood and Ooze

This entire area is under the effects of a *hallow* spell with the *Everlasting Rest* effect. This powerful magic does nothing to deter the pair of **blood oozes** that killed the countess.

Attracted to the noblewoman's blood-scent as microscopic larvae, these parasites have grown fat on her magically-enhanced blood, leaving the body little more than a desiccated husk and a collection of magic items: the cursed ring of the pureblood, as well as the countess's beloved *eyes of charming*, *cloak of the bat*, and signed copy of *Feral Midnight*.

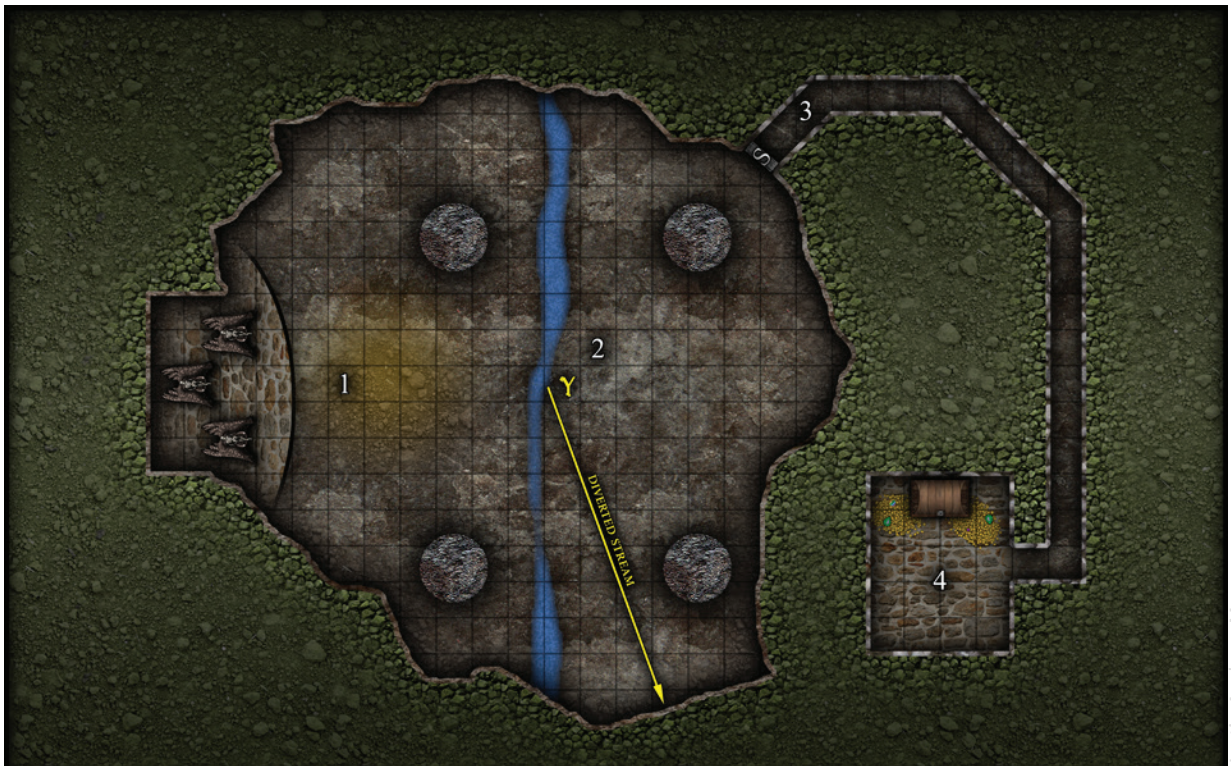
Carmilla's body lies in northwest sarcophagus, along with one nibbling blood ooze. The second ooze emerges from the southwest corner once combat begins. Having fed on the countess's blood, both oozes have taken on the enhanced flavor of her blood, making them sought-after specimens for Vrithas Kane and gourmet meals for the blood hag.

Dean Spencer

4-5 Characters

Levels 7-9

Mountain



Justin Andrew Mason

Tomb of the Rancid King

Justin Andrew Mason

GM Preface. This module's lead-in best works in craggy terrain during a random encounter.

Falling into the Tomb. After 1d2 + 1 rounds, the ground begins to rumble and shift as a sinkhole opens, sending boulders and combatants tumbling 30 feet down into a cavernous chamber.

The 40-feet-wide opening is centered on the heaviest creature present. Any non-flying creature in this area must succeed on a **DC 23 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 7 (2d6) falling damage and becomes prone in **Area 1** on a failed save.

1. We Three Kings

Four massive columns support wide arches that span the natural cavern ceiling. One of the arches has collapsed, the apparent cause of the sudden surface opening.

The columns are embellished with scenes of warfare. A prominent recurring figure is emphasized with inlaid obsidian.

An alcove with an elevated stone platform is carved into the west wall of the cave. Three skeletons sit atop carved thrones, their bones held together by sinewy leather-like remnants of flesh. Each wears a tattered funerary robe and bears a scepter mounted with a black skull-sigil.

Climbing Out. To exit the chamber, a character must make a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check** to climb up a column, across the remaining arch, and back out of the hole. Scree around the opening prevents using a grappling hook, but a character above may lower a rope to assist.

Secret Door. A character examining the northeastern wall and succeeding on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices a stone secret door, but no means to open it.

Thrones. A successful **DC 19 Intelligence (History) check** reveals that this is likely the lost tomb of Daruig Danan who was known by the moniker, "The Rancid King." He was a reviled warlord who subjugated local provinces under tyrannical rule. After dying suddenly, his twin sons Gildan and Rhodig fought for throne and supremacy, plunging the region into civil war. The twins perished in combat; their bodies enshrined in the Rancid King's tomb.

2. Just a Diversion

Following the incline of the chamber, a narrow stream of fresh water trickles from a flowstone fissure upon the northern wall. It continues opposite across a shallow wash before flowing into a narrow, algae-stained swallet.

Hidden Locking Mechanism. The spout appears naturally formed but is cleverly fashioned to disguise the locking mechanism of the burial vault's secret entrance. Searching uncovers a Y-shaped glyph etched in the middle of the cavern floor near the stream's midpoint.

Redirecting the Stream. When the flow water is blocked by a substantial object (such as a boulder) at the point indicated by the glyph, the stream diverts southeasterly, following a nearly imperceptible gulch into a kettle hole. Within is a concealed basin that collects the diverted water. It takes 5 minutes for the basin to fill. Once filled, the water's weight triggers the retraction of the wedge sealing the secret door (**Area 1**), which plunges loudly into a cavity beneath, revealing the passage beyond.

If the stream is diverted away from the hidden basin, the water within evaporates over the course of several days until its weight is reduced and the wedge lifts to reseal the vault.

3. Scourge of the Rancid King

After the vault door has been opened, the flow of the stream must be reverted to its original state. If a character crosses the threshold before this task is completed, the following occurs:

The trio of skeletons begin to move and shift as glistening black ooze seeps up from cracks in the cavernous floor. The substance slithers upwards in spiraling tendrils that coat the bones until each takes on the appearance of a disturbingly realistic humanoid form. The dark figures aggressively lurch towards the party.

The three animated skeletons are **black puddings** (Medium, no *Split* reaction, 75 hp).

The Black Key. If the skull of the central skeleton is shattered, a black steel alloy key is discovered within. This key was placed in the Rancid King's mouth when he was interned.

4. The Vault of Daruig Danan

A long tunnel leads from the main chamber to a small room of worked stone. A large, locked bronze-bound wooden chest is pushed up against the northern wall. The room contains the following treasure: 81 pp, 1,517 gp, 560 ep, 2,733 sp, and five gems: two tear-cut emeralds (80 gp each), two tourmaline cabochons (24 gp), and a spherical moonstone (12 gp).

Hungry Chest. The chest is a **mimic** and attacks any character attempting to open it without the black key (**Area 3**). If opened using the key, the mimic remains inert.

The chest contains:

- assorted art items worth 5,000 gp
- small obsidian coffer—This otherwise empty obsidian coffer (15 gp) contains a black pudding compressed within. It expands and attacks when the coffer is opened.
- *black alloy medallion*
- *axe of the Rancid King*

Black Alloy Medallion

Wondrous item, uncommon

This round metal medallion is crafted from black steel alloy and depicts a widdershins spiral design. You can use an action to trace the spiral, healing 4d4 + 4 acid or poison damage. The medallion cannot heal other types of damage. Once the medallion is used this way, you can't use it again until next midnight.

Axe of the Rancid King

Weapon (handaxe), very rare (requires attunement)

This handaxe is forged from a mysterious black steel alloy and engraved with interwoven concentric spirals. It emits a faint cankered tar-like odor. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. You can use your action to use one of the following options.

Ooze Call. A black pudding is summoned forth from the axe, obeying your commands. The ooze persists for 8 rounds (or until it is killed). Once this action is used, you can't use it again until next midnight.

Pitch Coat. A glistening tar-like substance oozes from the axe and envelops the body and equipment of the wielder. The coating persists for 4 rounds. While coated, you have a +1 bonus to AC and acid immunity, and your unarmed strikes deal an extra 2d8 acid damage. Once this action is used, you can't use it again until next midnight.

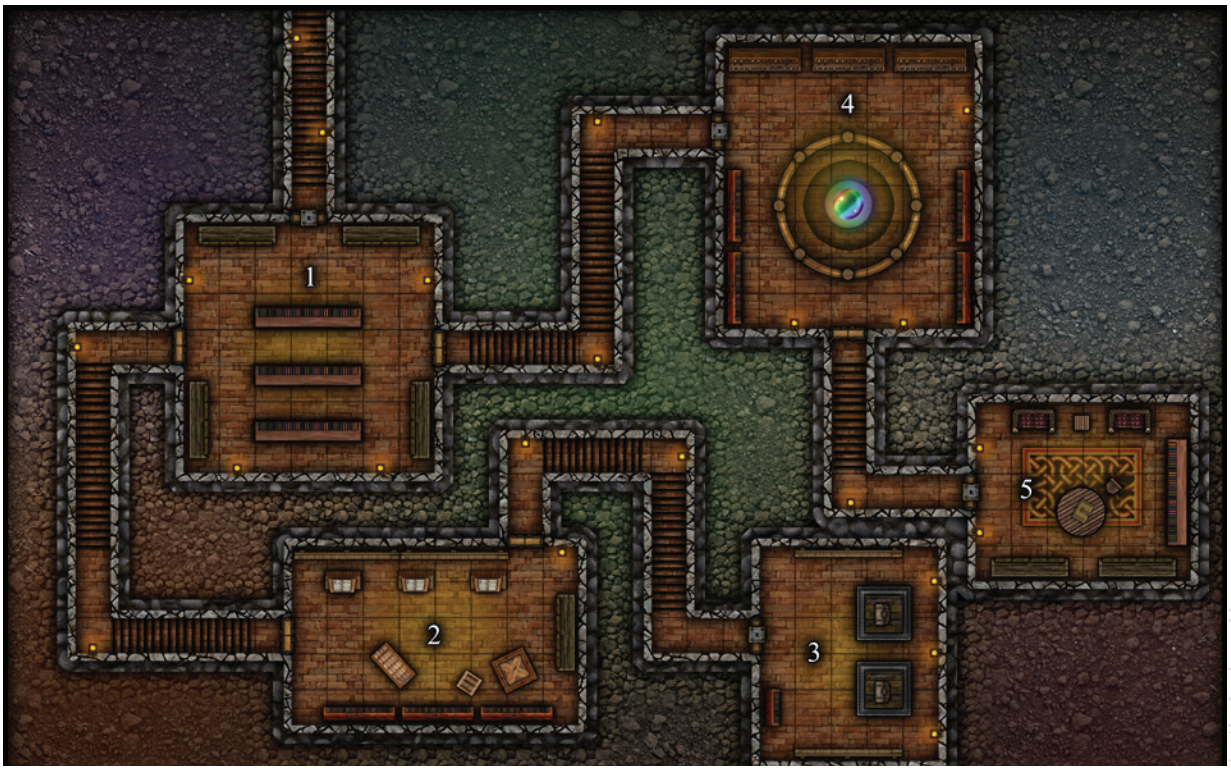


Quico Vicens

4-6 Characters

Levels 7-9

Planar



Justin Andrew Mason

Shadows of Past Lives

Marc Braden

Sometimes things go wrong in the Plane of Shadows. Assignations are not always successful. Coups fail, or worse, succeed. When these things happen shadow fey seek out **Theilynn Khova** (**shadow fey enchantress**,), who operates a covert Shadow Road for those seeking to disappear. She is assisted by **Auceron**, a **dream squire** , who handles much of the daily operations. This portal to the Shadow realm can be placed in any city or town.

Reasons to seek out this curious haven:

- The characters are hired to track one of Theilynn's clients.
- Theilynn sometimes uses powerful illusion magic to "switch" clients with locals. One of these personages has ties to the party.

Advice running illusion heavy encounters:

- Be comfortable in describing what the characters see, as if everything is real. Keep the players questioning their surroundings and second-guessing themselves.
- Make sure not everything is an illusion. Mix in the occasional real hazard to raise the paranoia.

The Hallways

None of the hallways are marked encounters but should be used to create paranoia and keep the pressure. Stairs can be real or illusion-cloaked traps. Shadows may be just shadows or use actual **shadows**. All standard doors are kept locked and a **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools is required to open them.

1. Endless Shelves

Three floor-to-ceiling bookshelves filled with tomes dominate the center of the room. Four other half shelves line the walls. The two in front are filled with additional books, and the two in back with random maps and technical charts. When a character approaches one of the center three bookshelves a powerful illusion activates to create an endless maze preventing one from making it to either of the doors. In order to escape the illusion one must study the two shelves to the east and west of the entrance hallway. The shelf in the west holds 20 books and has a plaque that reads "escape" in Common; the shelf in the east holds 21 books and has a plaque that reads "safe" in Common. All titles are all written in Umbral and all start with one of only 9 letters: A, M, N, J, U, V, W, Y, Z. This is a Caesar cipher, and the number of books per shelf indicate the right shift of the letters.

If the party is stuck, a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** will reveal one must use the books to spell the Umbral word YMWUJY (escape) in order to open the door in

the west wall. One must spell NVAZ (safe) to access the east door. The back bookshelves can only be reached once the illusion is bested. The shelves each harbor three **map mimics** that will attack if the shelves are searched.

2. More and More Books

Three large tomes sit on wood pedestals in front of two large wood reliefs depicting forests in the Shadow Plane. Scattered throughout the middle of the room are three large crates. Bookshelves line the south wall, and a small half shelf sits opposite the entrance door. The books are **bookkeepers** and sound their alarm if handled by anyone other than Theilynn or Auceron. Upon activation the forests on the reliefs will swirl to life, and one **shadow fey guardian** and two **shadow fey forest hunters** will emerge to challenge the intruders. Diplomacy can be attempted, but the Guardian is fiercely loyal and will need to be assured the party is not there to harm Theilynn. At best he will insist on taking them to her for questioning.

3. All that Glitters

A metal door bars the way to this room that requires a **DC 20 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools to open. Two metal strapped oak chests sit atop solid stone and wood daises near the east wall. A small bookshelf sits to the right of the door and another large wood relief depicting a hypnotic spiral shadow dominates the north wall. Three torches cast shadows across the room. If the key is not used to enter this room, the relief will come alive and a **shadow beast** will emerge to protect the treasure. A **DC 20 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools is needed to unlock the chests. They contain a total of 2,000 gp in various gems, 567 gp, a *hat of disguise* and a *cloak of displacement*.

4. Shadow Portal

A solid shadow door bars the entrance to this area. Around the frame lie a series of Umbral runes that reveal that *misty step* or comparable magic may be used to access a space between the shadow and door. Alternatively, a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or *dispel magic* (**DC 20**) disables the shadow for 1d4 minutes. From there a **DC 18 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools is needed to pick the lock. Inside, a brilliant rainbow shadow emanates around the shadowy outline of a door in the center of the room. Eight beautiful solid oak pillars carved with fey runes are set in a circle around it. Four more bookshelves line the walls, while the north wall glows from hundreds of lit candles. The bookshelves contain coded logs of the beings Theilynn has helped through her career. The candles detect as conjuration magic and will activate if anyone either enters the pillared circle or snuffs out a candle, releasing four **bereginyas**.

5. Conversation Chamber

This door is identical to the one to **Area 4**. Two large leather chairs, a wooden table and chair and a scarlet and gold rug make for an inviting interior. A bookshelf and small cabinet complete the decorations. **Theilynn** and **Auceron** will be found here if present. If the party has awoken the bookkeepers in **Area 2** she will be aware of their presence. The encounter with Theilynn should be handled depending on the goals of the party. If they are attempting to capture one of her clients (who should be present as well), she will defend them. She will be unhappy if her treasure has been looted. She wears a *mantle of plane shift* (*rare, requires attunement*, cast *plane shift* 3/day, charges reset midnight), a *ring of shadow's fealty* (call two **shadow fey duelists**), and has all area keys. Amongst the cabinets and shelves are various artworks worth 3,000 gp.

Ring of Shadow's Fealty

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

This ring is also known as an "oath ring" by the shadow fey. A fey can swear an oath (usually in exchange for a major service rendered) to you while you wear this ring, culminating with the fey kissing the ring as you agree upon a command word. Once the fey has done this, you can speak the command word as an action to summon that particular fey to your aid. The fey appears in an unoccupied space within 120 feet of you. It remains as long as you concentrate (as if concentrating on a spell), to a maximum of 1 hour, or until it drops to 0 hit points. It then returns to the fey realms. If a fey is reduced to 0 hit points in your service, it usually considers the oath fulfilled, and is no longer bound to answer your summons.

While summoned, the fey is friendly to you and your companions. It obeys commands you give it, provided it understands them. If you don't command it, the fey will defend itself.

After a given fey departs, it can't be summoned again until 24 hours have elapsed. The ring can hold the oaths of three fey, and you can always pronounce an oath to be fulfilled, freeing that fey from the agreed obligation.

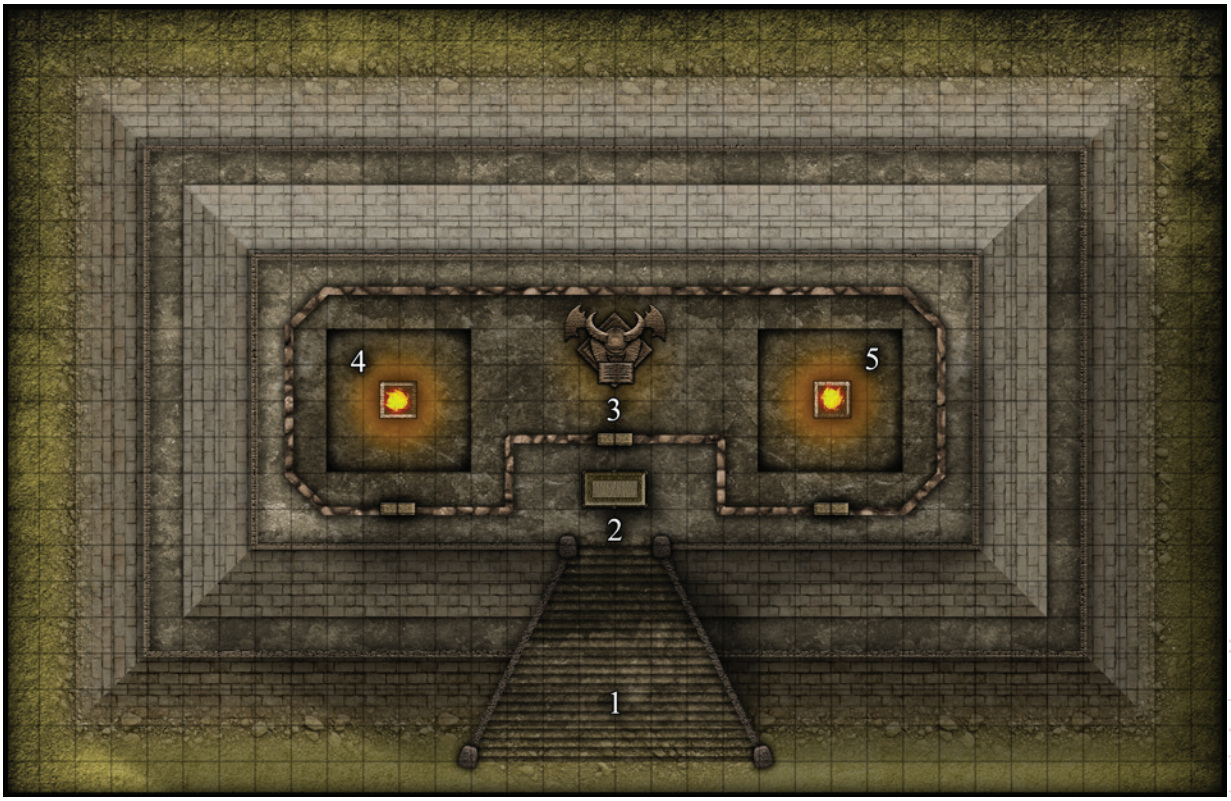


Quico Vicens

4-6 Characters

Levels 7-9

Forest



Justin Andrew Mason

Who's the Hunter, Who's the Game?

Marc Braden

The jungle erased the Kingdom of Kazarana from this valley a millennia ago, leaving little of its glory. Now, only strange rune-covered pillars, fractured pieces of road jutting from the ground and the Temple of Jaku remain. In recent years, these ruins have become a strange place of worship for a tribe of **leshy** ◆. Although traditionally isolationists, the ruins here represent their hope that one day civilization will be vanquished by nature. Anyone bearing metal through their sacred forest is led to the temple and their inevitable demise.

The leshy use trickery and magic to shepherd the party towards the temple. They reveal paths, use their *Mimicry* to imitate cries of help or if the party is hunting, or lead them on a prolonged hunt. Alternatively, they contact the party and tell the story of a lost temple, hoping to lure them to their doom.

1. Stairway to Jaku

In a small clearing surrounded by unnaturally tall trees lie the ruins of an ancient ziggurat. Narrow steps lead up the front face of the temple to a height of 30 feet. At the precipice, a black altar can be seen. Thorny crimson shrubs grow wildly from the wilderness-ravaged temple. Strange, indecipherable runes are carved into the whole structure. The foliage on the stairs are six **execrable shrubs** ◆ that attack once the party has started climbing the stairs.

2. Words from the Past

The altar is made of black obsidian and its top face is covered in hieroglyphs. *Comprehend languages* or on a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Religion) check** may be used to read them. They tell the tale of Jaku, the last great leader of the Kazarana civilization. His people lived at peace with nature, but when his son was accidentally slain by a treant, his ire knew no bounds. The land was stripped of forest, scorched to make way for his great city, causing drought and pestilence. Ultimately, he turned to necromancy, only to be narrowly defeated by Kazarana's last heroes. This shrine was erected as a memorial to the horrid consequences of despoiling nature.

3. Door to a Welcome

The door to the temple is made of obsidian, with a copper inlay of a large fanged bat demon (See Supay). While heavy, they are unlocked and open easily. A great statue of a naked warrior, the left side of a man and the right of woman, topped by the head of a fanged bat, greets those that enter. The inside is awash in light from two great braziers to the east and west. Nothing happens until the entire party has entered. Once they do, the doors slam shut and the statue, a **possessed pillar** ◆ comes alive and attacks. This guardian has never been defeated and was placed here to protect the temple's secret. The soul of Jaku is bound in

the pillar and is released if the pillar is destroyed, manifesting as a **skeleton monarch** (**Area 4**) and **rotting wind** (**Area 5**). Both have **resistance** to all damage types until hit by the *sword of Paluma*.

The pillar rests after its confrontations and the doors reset. The leshy remove the bones of past victims and bury them in the forest. Their weapons and treasure are thrown into the pit under **Area 5**.

4. West Brazier

A large brazier with an eternal flame sits on an island surrounded by a seemingly bottomless pit. Once the possessed pillar is defeated, the flame starts to wane and then begin to release a dense black cloud of ash. The doors to the temple also begin to open. After 1d6 rounds, **Jaku's body**, now a **skeleton monarch**, rises from the ashes. He greets the party with hideous laughter and attempts to communicate in a language long dead. Insane from years of isolation, his only goal is to resume the destruction of the land he once ruled. Using his necromantic might, he animates as many of the bodies buried near the temple as deemed suitable. Enough should be animated to cause a battle to erupt with the local leshy, who now find themselves the hunted! If the encounter inside the temple proves to be too easy, the confrontation between leshy and undead may spill inside of the temple as well.

5. East Brazier

See **Area 4** for description. The same series of events begin 1d6 rounds after Jaku is revived. From this ash, the **spirit of Jaku**, a howling **rotting wind** is unleashed. In addition, a longsword is visible where the flame once burned. This sword was used to defeat Jaku originally. Jumping to the island requires a successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Athletics) check**. On a failed check, a character falls into the pit and suffers 17 (5d6) falling damage.

The 50-foot-deep pit holds a generous amount of treasure. Four to five uncommon or rare magical items, along with 1,200 gp, 389 sp, 467 cp and 1,300 gp in various gems.

The players should now be aware of the Leshy, if they were previously not, and interactions between them can be handled appropriate to the situation. It is also possible that one of the wells under **Areas 4** or **Area 5** may lead to a deeper temple or underground ruins of the Kazarana civilization.

Sword of Paluma

Collectors and armchair archeologists hold the artifacts of lost kingdoms to be the most valuable of all. The *sword of Paluma* represents the sole remaining artifact of the Kingdom of Kazarna, making it the most esteemed relic imaginable—to certain collectors.

A character selling the *sword of Paluma* can make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** or **Intelligence (History) check**. On a failure, the character doesn't realzie the sword's unique status, recognizing it only as a potent enchanted weapon. On a success, any Black Market dealer seeking to purchase the sword will have to pay a fair finder's fee for this cultural artifact (see page 298).



Herman Lau

Sword of Paluma

Weapon (longsword), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you hit a creature of the undead type with this weapon, the undead takes an extra 2d6 slashing damage.

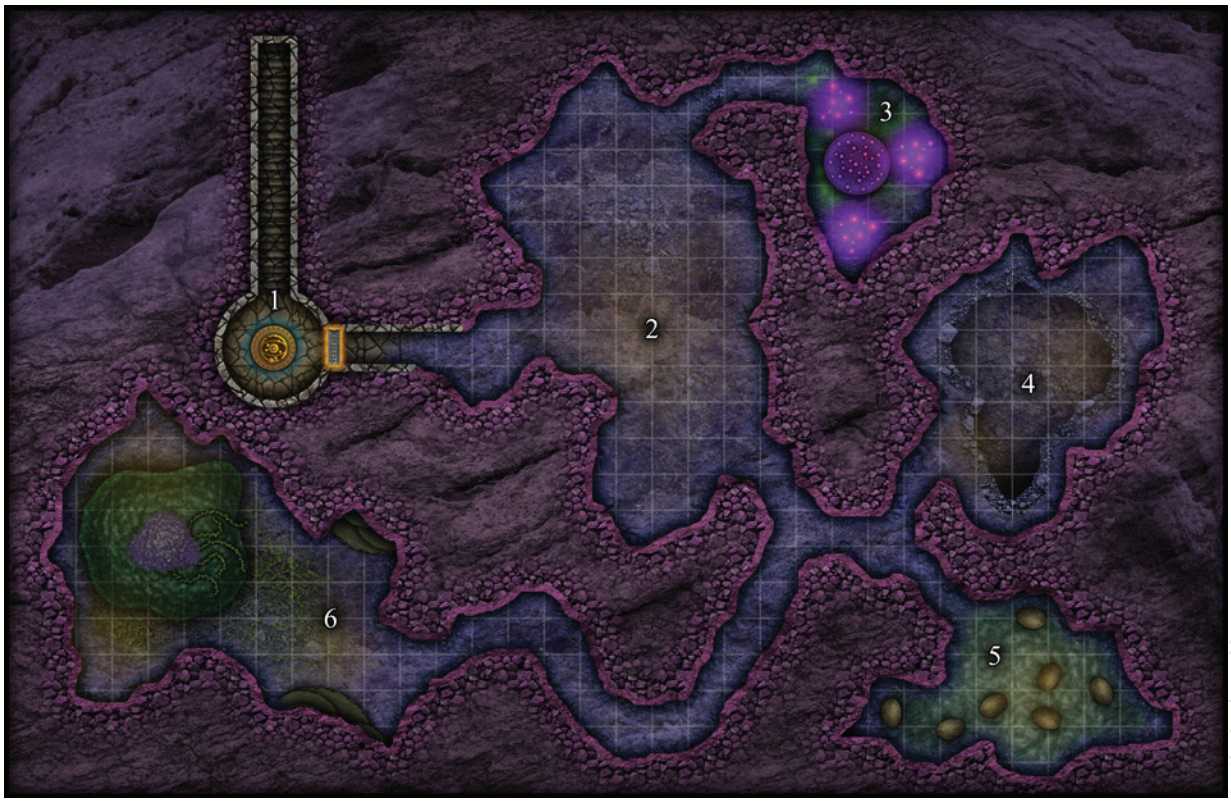
Against Jaku and any undead created by him, you instead gain a +4 bonus to attack and damage rolls, and do not need to attune to the blade to get this bonus. If you hit the spirit or body of Jaku with this sword, that part of Jaku loses all resistances he has for 1d4 rounds. If Jaku is defeated, the blade gains the purifier property.

Purifier. Any creature you hit that inflicts a disease or a disease-like curse—such as mummy rot or tomb rot—with its attacks, loses that disease or curse until it finishes a long rest. Additionally, while wielding this blade, you have advantage on saving throws against diseases and disease-like curses.

5
Characters

Levels
7-9

Underworld



Justin Andrew Mason

Pleasing the Queen

Bill Buchalter

Jhop'lyn was a promising drow sorceress from a noble house. Upon coming of age, she was summoned before her deity Queen Naraneus to prove her worth, but unexpectedly failed the queen's trials. Jhop'lyn's punishment for her failure was swift and harsh: Transformation into a hideous drider. Eager to win back her queen's favor, Jhop'lyn hatched a plan, and recruited her brother Jhen'drix to aid her. Buried deep in an ancient cavern in the Underworld is an entity from another plane who holds a powerful artifact. Jhop'lyn plans to recover the artifact and gift it to her queen. As rumors of Jhop'lyn's plan reach the surface elves, they enlist the party to recover the artifact before the drow, lest it fall into the hands of Queen Naraneus.

1. Planar Lock

A steep staircase descends deep into the Underworld and ends in a small circular room. In the center of the room is a golden orrery which represents the position of the planes of existence. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (History) check** the characters recognize the orrery is misaligned. By realigning the planes in the proper order, the golden door on the east wall of the room slides open.

2. A Giant Welcome

The worked stone of the staircase and circular entrance room give way to a large, natural cavern. The floor is littered with bones and refuse. Sitting against the back wall gnawing on a large hunk of meat is a **cave giant**.

Jhop'lyn cast a *dominate monster* spell on the giant and bribed him to attack anyone who enters the cave. No amount of persuasion or diplomacy will convince the giant to hold his attack. If a character casts *detect magic*, they discover the giant is charmed and can remove the effect by casting *dispel magic* (**DC 18**). If the characters remove the charm effect, they can convince the giant to allow them to pass with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. If the characters bribe the giant with any treasure (something "shiny") they can make the check with **advantage**.

Treasure. If the characters fight and defeat the giant they find he is carrying a *vicious battleaxe* and a pouch with 150 gp. The gold pieces are engraved with the symbol of a spider. This is the bribe Jhop'lyn paid the giant.

3. Fungus Among Us

This small side chamber is covered in glowing moss and lichen. Hidden among the detritus (**passive Perception 15** notices) are two **deathcap myconids**, plus a **megapede** crawling on the

20-foot-high ceiling, lurking in a forest of stalactites. Any character who moves more than 5 feet in this chamber must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Dexterity (Stealth) check** or disturb the moss, causing the myconids to attack. If the party is unaware of the megapede, it will wait until the second round of combat to enter the fight and try to target a character under the effect of the myconids' spores. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** the party finds the decaying corpse of an unfortunate adventurer buried in the moss.

Treasure. On the corpse are two *greater healing potions*.

4. Tremors

A narrow ledge circles around the edge of this side chamber. The center of the chamber has collapsed into a pit roughly 10 feet deep. The earth along the sides and bottom of the pit is very unstable requiring a **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Dexterity (Stealth) check** to navigate. Alternatively, attempts to climb the sides or move in the pit require a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**. On any failed check to navigate this room, the character falls into the pit (50%) or falls prone (50%) as the ground beneath their feet shifts and collapses.

Every minute the party spends in this chamber there is a 10% cumulative chance a **young purple worm** (use **sathaq worm** without *Agonizing Aura*) will detect their presence and come crashing out of the rubble. If there are any characters in the pit when the worm appears, it can make a *Bite* attack against one of them as it emerges from below.

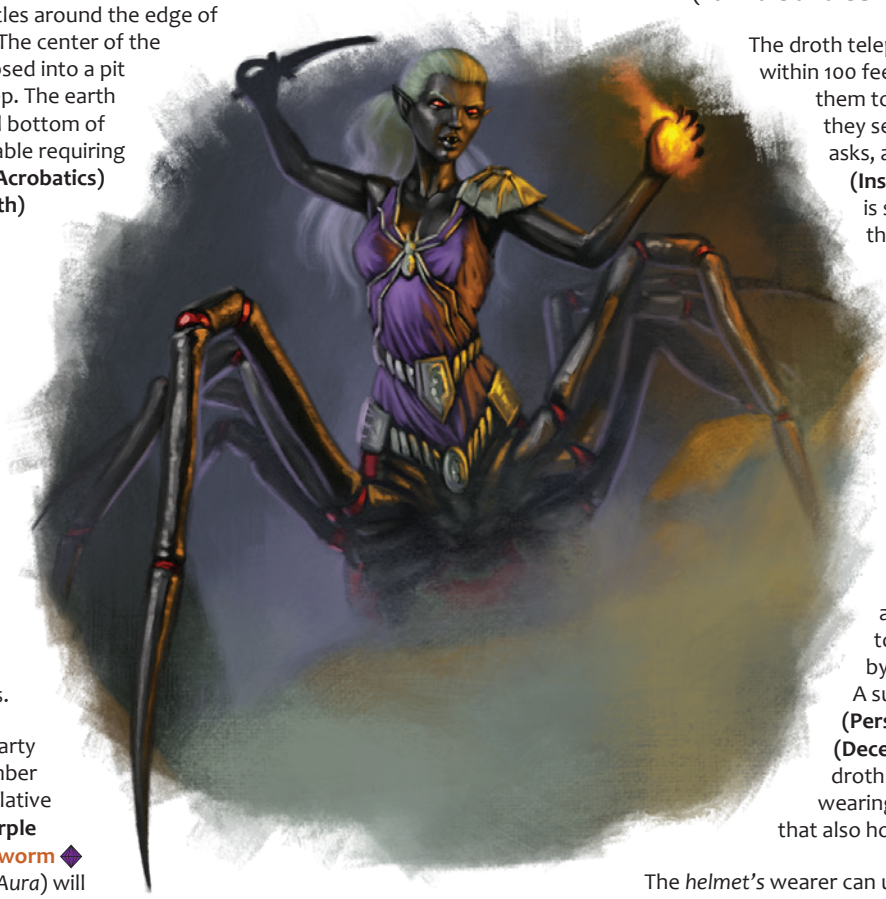
5. Cocoons

The passage into this chamber and the chamber itself is choked with thick, sticky webbing. Characters moving in this portion of the cave must make a successful **DC 15 Strength check** to break free of the webs. On a failure the character is restrained. Lurking among the webs is a **spider drake** clinging to the 40-foot-high ceiling (**passive Perception 15** notices). If it goes unnoticed, the drake waits until a creature is restrained in its webbing before moving to attack.

Treasure. If the party takes time to cut open the cocoons, they find the desiccated corpses of the drake's victims. One cocoon, however, is very fresh. It contains the body of a dead drow, Jhen'drix, who is still carrying his *dagger of venom*. The party finds a total of 325 gp on the corpses in the other cocoons.

6. Call of the Old One

Lying in a pool of bubbling ooze is a **droth**, an ooze emissary of the complex Shoth-civilization. The Shoth have the goal of dissolving all sentient life into bubbling pools known as 'zolv', not via conquest or domination, never by force, but in order to create a radical, willing comingling of the individual, a conversion into Shoth. (For more on the Shoth civilization, see)



Dean Spencer

The droth telepathically calls to any character within 100 feet of the pool, beckoning them to come and claim the relic they seek. If a player specifically asks, a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check** can tell there is something ominous about the voice speaking to them.

Jhop'lyn lies unconscious in this chamber. She foolishly attacked the droth and lost, but it did not kill her. Instead it plans to negotiate with her and offer the relic in exchange for her agreeing to enter the 'zolv', becoming one with the Shoth. The droth is perfectly willing to make a similar deal with the party and tries to defuse any hostility to the best of its abilities by using its *Soothing Aura*. A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Deception) check** convinces the droth to relinquish the relic it's wearing: a variant *helm of brilliance* that also holds 2d10 emeralds:

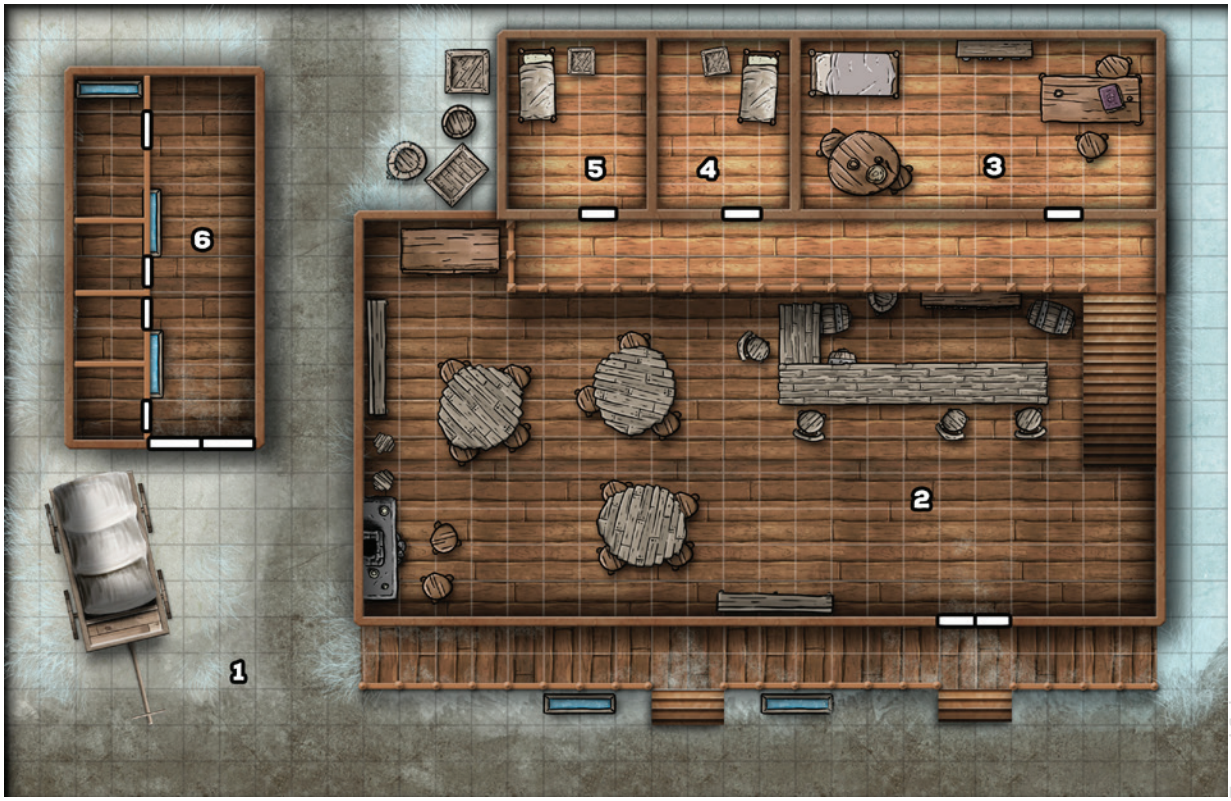
The *helmet's* wearer can use its action to create a storm of acid in a cylinder 20-foot wide and 30-foot high centered on a point it can see. The effect lasts for 1 minute. A creature that starts its turn in or enters the area for the first time must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**. On a failed save, the creature takes 6d6 acid damage, or half as much on a successful one. When a creature leaves the area, it takes 3d6 acid damage at the start of its next turn. Using this ability destroys an emerald, which disappears from the helmet.

The droth will ask for willing converts to the 'zolv' and is a shrewd negotiator. How the situation develops is up to the GM.

5 Characters

Level 8

Urban



Tommi Salama

Maiden's Inn Massacre

William Fischer

When wizards go to war, it is the common folk who suffer most. But when an aging assassin-turned-innkeeper is also caught in the crossfire, heroes are needed to prevent an all-out massacre. Can the characters negotiate a truce among the opposing factions, or will the stand-off at the Maiden's Inn end in tragedy?

Indrazma the Unforgiving is the city's foremost collector of arcane tomes. But a week ago, Indrazma's apprentice Daharo absconded with her most valuable spellbook. Since then, the wizards have waged war across the city, inadvertently killing several civilians. Daharo now seeks an end to the hostilities. He arranges to meet the characters at a tavern called the Maiden's Inn so they might negotiate a truce on his behalf.

Unbeknownst to Daharo, the proprietor of the Maiden's Inn is Adelae, an assassin once known as "the Maiden." Though retired now, Adelae maintains ties to the local thieves' guild. When she and her allies discover Daharo's identity, they plot to steal Indrazma's spellbook themselves.

The party must either broker peace between the wizards and thieves, or side with one of the factions to end the violence quickly. If a full-scale conflict breaks out, the heroes may be overwhelmed by the ensuing chaos.

1. Yard

Patrons of the Maiden's Inn park their wagons in this bare dirt yard. Currently, the only wagon here belongs to Ferand (see **Area 5**), a traveling alchemist who happens to be staying at the inn when the party arrives.

While Ferand's inventory consists primarily of worthless tonics, his wagon also carries a supply of alchemist's fire. If the wagon is caught in a spell that deals fire damage (such as a *fireball*), its canvas top ignites. Unless the characters extinguish the flames (requiring 4 gallons of water), the wagon explodes in a fiery conflagration 1d4+1 rounds later. Subject to the GM's discretion, any fire damage exceeding a total of 30 causes an immediate explosion. Creatures within 20 feet of the wagon when it explodes take 45 (10d8) fire damage, or half as much damage with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**. The explosion also ignites the nearby stables (**Area 6**), endangering the animals inside. The flammable tonics burn white-hot and drench the entire area, and the fire proceeds to spread by 5 feet to 1d4+1 squares adjacent to the blaze. This happens every round on initiative count 20. Exposure to a square of fire deals 18 (4d8) fire damage to anyone who enters a burning square or ends their turn in it. With a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or **Dexterity saving throw**, the character takes only half damage. A character doused in water is treated as though having the *Evasion* feature for the purpose of this check. Quenching the fire (an action) in a square requires two

gallons of water, which means that a *create food or water* spell can provide enough water to quench 15 burning squares—provided enough hands can be found to attempt to control the inferno.

Indrazma the Unforgiving. Shortly after the party's meeting with Daharo (see **Area 2**), Indrazma (a half-elf **mage**) arrives to reclaim her spellbook. She approaches the inn from this direction and, in a voice amplified by a *prestidigitation* cantrip, demands Daharo face her lest she burn the building to the ground. As her epithet suggests, Indrazma is loath to let her apprentice's crime go unpunished. To appease Indrazma, the characters must return her spellbook and make a successful **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. As a wizard, Idrazma's sense of justice differs from that of most mortals. Instead of punishing Daharo, for example, she might instead accept a treasure from the Fey Realm, or demand the characters undertake a quest on Daharo's behalf.



2. Common Room

When the party arrives, Daharo invites the characters to join him at a dining table. Adelae works behind the bar while her guild contacts, a pair of half-orcs named Callis and Urgo, warm themselves before the hearth in the southwest corner. A peasant named **Jorzen** and his family (see **Area 4**) eat at another table, and **Ferand** (see **Area 5**) drinks at the bar. A balcony along the north wall overlooks the scene.

Daharo. Though he pretends to be contrite, Daharo (a halfling **mage**) hopes the characters will provide the distraction he needs to escape with Idrazma's spellbook. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals Daharo's intentions. Persuading Daharo to willingly part with the spellbook is impossible, but a threat of violence and a successful **DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation) check** convinces him to face Idrazma—at least until he sees an opportunity to flee, such as in the chaos of a blazing fire...

Adelae. At 60 years old, the woman once known as "the Maiden" looks more like a grandmother than a cold-blooded killer. Despite her age, however, Adelae (**assassin**) hasn't lost a step. She deals with anyone who crosses her with lethal force. Characters who make a successful **DC 16 Intelligence (History) check** know Adelae's true identity and have heard rumors about her ties to the thieves' guild.

Unless the characters take exceptional precautions, Adelae overhears their conversation with Daharo. Once she realizes Idrazma's spellbook is within her grasp, she sends **Callis** and **Urgo** (**bandit captains**) to search Daharo's room (**Area 3**). Adelae gives these orders in Thieves' Cant, but a character proficient in that language can listen in with a successful **DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

While greedy, Adelae is no fool. A successful **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces her that even a priceless spellbook isn't worth involving herself in a wizards' feud. If the characters succeed on the Persuasion check by 5 or more, Adelae may even help the party subdue Idrazma and/or Daharo should violence occur. She prioritizes her business over people and will hunt down anyone who lets her property burn to the ground.

3. Daharo's Room

When the characters arrive, Idrazma's spellbook sits unattended on a writing desk in Daharo's unlocked room. The book contains all the spells on the mage's list, as well as any others the GM wishes to include.

4. Jorzen's Room

A **commoner** named **Jorzen**, his wife **Calla**, and their three children share this room. Jorzen has traveled to the city looking for work and wants no trouble with either wizards or thieves. His most valuable possession, a mule named Yori, is stabled in **Area 6**. If combat breaks out inside the inn, Jorzen and his family collect Yori and flee.

5. Ferand's Room

Like Jorzen, **Ferand** (a **commoner**) has nothing to do with the situation at the inn. In combat, he either hides beneath a table or warns the characters of the imminent explosion should his wagon catch on fire (see **Area 1**). At the GM's discretion, Ferand may also carry several *potions of healing*, which he administers to characters in need. If nobody in the party can generate water and the explosion happens, he might have a minor magical talent that lets him cast *create food or water* 1/day as an innate spell.

6. Stables

The inn's stables house three **riding horses**. Two belong to Callis and Urgo, while the third is Ferand's. The **mule** owned by Jorzen and his family is also stabled here. Should the building catch on fire, the animals inside panic. Calming the frightened animals long enough to rescue them requires a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**.

Dean Spencer

4-6 Characters

Levels 7-9

Mountain



Sean MacDonald

Bad Eggs

David Schwartz

Some time ago, adventurers slew the dragon Zindrodel and stole her eggs. Whether through her own force of will or some outside force, the dragon returned to the mortal world as an undead. Still driven by the need to brood, but unable to lay her own eggs, Zindrodel sent her kobold minions to gather eggs for her nest.

The characters may be drawn to the region by rumors of a new dragon seen in the skies. They are approached for help by someone who has had their egg(s) stolen. The victim might be a metallic dragon, a dragonborn or lizardfolk, or even a local poultry farmer. The characters can easily follow the kobolds' tracks from the scene of the crime to a path leading up into the mountains.

1. Mountain Trail

The path up to the aerie is littered with boulders. If the characters keep behind the rocks, and they each succeed at a **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check**, the party can avoid the notice of the kobolds (**Area 2**). If a characters fails this check, or doesn't move furtively, they are spotted. The kobolds remain where they are, but attack the party at range when a character gets within 120 feet.

2. Plateau

The trail leads up to a wide plateau covered with boulders and scree.

Kobold Delegation. The **kobold wizard** Zarass stands here accompanied by four kobolds armed with sharpened pieces of dragon eggshell (treat as **barbed kobolds**). They await the return of Zindrodel (**Area 5**) to present their latest offering of eggs. If the characters are looking for a specific egg, it is part of the offering. Clouds over the mountain block out direct sunlight; so the kobolds suffer no ill effects from *Sunlight Sensitivity*.

Kobold Attitude. The kobolds are initially hostile and attack the characters. Zarass avoids using magical attacks near the nest (**Area 3**). A character who approaches within 30 feet and succeeds at a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception)**, **Charisma (Intimidation)**, or **Charisma (Persuasion) check** can convince the kobolds to hold off their attack and talk. The kobolds can explain their dealings with Zindrodel. They refuse to return the stolen eggs while the dragon is animate, but will allow the characters to stay and meet Zindrodel, figuring the dragon will kill them.

3. Dragon's Nest

This enormous nest of branches is filled with eggs of various colors ranging in size from chicken eggs to one large enough to contain an adult human. Lacking both body heat and life force, Zindrodel is unable to incubate the eggs. Most are broken, their former contents putrefied.

The Unhatched. Zindrodel's necrotic essence has infused the eggs in her nest. If a character looks into or disturbs the nest,

the half-formed bones and flesh within the eggs rearrange into three draconic forms (treat as **unhatched**) and attack any living creatures in the vicinity. The kobolds flee if still present.

Treasure. A character who succeeds at a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** discovers Zindrodel's hoard at the bottom of the nest. Destroying part of the nest also reveals the treasure (27 hp; **AC** 15; **resistant** to bludgeoning, lightning, piercing, and thunder; **immune** to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, and radiant).

Although adventurers stole her hoard when they killed her, Zindrodel has since acquired 1,050 (3d6 x 100) gp and 5 (2d4) gems worth 50 gp each. Woven into the nest is a long metal chain that acts as a *rope of entanglement*.

4. Unstable Edge

Two areas of the cliff's edge to the north and south of the nest are dangerous terrain. The kobolds and Zindrodel are aware of the hazard and avoid it.

A character falling down must succeed at a **DC 13 Strength (Athletic) check** to climb back up.

Collapsing Cliff

Mechanical hazard

If a Small or larger creature steps onto one of the cracked squares it and all connected cracked squares collapse. A character can recognize this danger with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)**, **Wisdom (Perception)**, or **Wisdom (Survival) check**. The creature(s) who triggered the collapse fall 40 feet (taking 4d10 bludgeoning damage and landing prone).

5. Over the Edge

The cliff overlooks a rocky slope roughly 100 feet below. A creature falling off the cliff takes 10d10 bludgeoning damage and lands prone.

The Dragon's Return. Zindrodel is away from her nest when the characters first arrive, but returns some time after they fight the unhatched (**Area 3**) (or agree to wait with the kobolds [**Area 2**]). The GM should decide how long this takes based on how well the characters fared in the preceding fights; the wait may be a few rounds, a few minutes, or long enough to take a short rest.

Undead Dragon. Zindrodel has the stats of a **young red dragon**, except as follows: Her type is undead, and she no longer requires air, food, drink, or sleep. Her movement speeds are reduced by 10 feet. Zindrodel is **immune** to poison damage and the poisoned condition. Her bite and breath weapon deal necrotic damage instead of fire. A humanoid reduced to 0 hp by her breath weapon dies, and it rises as a zombie and acts immediately after the dragon in the initiative count. The new zombie is under Zindrodel's control. Zindrodel is a challenge 11 creature.

Zindrodel's Attitude. If it is obvious that the nest has been disturbed, Zindrodel attacks immediately. Otherwise, if the characters are with the kobold delegation, or a character succeeds at a **DC 19 Charisma (Deception)**, **Charisma (Performance)**, or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, the dragon agrees to hear them out. Zindrodel can recount her death and her plan to hatch an egg. Even if the characters seem willing to help her, they likely lack the means to, and Zindrodel eventual attacks them in frustration. If this happens, attack rolls against the dragon have **advantage** in the first round of combat. The kobolds, if still present, flee when the Zindrodel attacks.



Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 8

Grassland



Sean MacDonald

Slumbering Titan

Bill Buchalter

In ancient times the gods placed titans to live among men and guard their kingdoms from primordial demonic hordes. As the demons were driven from the Material Plane, the titans stood guard over the rift locations to ensure they did not return. Centuries passed without demonic incursions, and the titans fell into a deep, dreamless slumber. Until now. A new rift has opened and a vanguard of lesser demons spreads terror and suffering throughout the land. The king tasks the party with awakening one of the titans before more powerful demons emerge. The party receives an ancient scroll with a ritual to awaken the titan.

GM Preparation. Make a printout of the runes in **Area 2** and cut up the page so each rune is on its own, ready to be shuffled and handed to the players. When playing online, simply make screenshots of each individual rune.

1. Ambush from Above

As the party arrives at the location of the slumbering titan, two **vrocks** swoop from the sky and attack them.

Scaling Combat. If the party has six or more characters, add a third vrock.

2. The Well of Stones

A shallow well, only two feet deep, currently sits empty to the side of the clearing. Part of the ritual to awaken the titan involves placing a rune stone in each of the pillars in **Area 3**.

Ritual of the Stones. The ritual scroll explains the steps to follow to make the rune stones appear in the well. Completing the ritual requires a series of seven successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) checks**. Each time an arcana check is successful another rune stone appears in the well. On a failure instead of a rune stone appearing, 1d4 **yek demons** crawl out of the rift in **Area 4** and attack the party. With each success the **DC** of the ritual increases by one, but each failure resets the **DC** to 15.

Once the group has completed the ritual to conjure all seven rune stones, they notice that each stone is inscribed with a rune:



3. The Wakening Pillars

A rough semi-circle of stone pillars surrounds the slumbering titan. Each pillar is ten feet tall and contains a small indentation, which obviously is intended to accept one of the rune stones (see **Area 2**). To wake the titan the party must determine in which pillar to place each rune stone. The pillars themselves are all identical. There are no markings on the pillars which correspond to the runes on the stones.

Puzzle Solution. The key to solving this puzzle is counting the number of intersections in each rune. The runes above are arranged in the proper order, but they should be scrambled when presented to the players. The rune with one intersection should be placed in the left-most pillar and moving clockwise the characters should place the rune stones in order from one intersection to seven intersections. Placing the runes in the incorrect pillars has no effect.

Giving Hints. If the party is struggling to discern the solution to the puzzle, allow a character to make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)**, **Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Wisdom (Insight) check** to gain a clue. On a success, the character can study the ritual scroll and determine the proper positioning of one rune. Whether they succeed or fail, each character may only make this check once. Alternately, a character may assist another character on their check, but only once.

5. The Titan Awakens

As the rune stones are placed in the proper pillars the **ancient titan** ◆ groans to life. The titan is disoriented and weakened from centuries of sleep. The titan attacks the party until they can explain to him that they woke him to deal with a new demonic threat. The titan has **disadvantage** on all his attacks and deals half damage because of his long slumber. He also does not carry a longbow, only a greatsword, does not have his innate spellcasting abilities, and can't use his *Eldritch Singularity*.

Parley. At the end of each round, the party may attempt a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to convince the titan to cease attacking and listen. If the party reduces the titan to less than 100 hit points, the **DC** for the check decreases to 10.

Development. Once the titan stops his assault, the party can explain that the rift has reopened, and demons have been emerging and terrorizing the land. The titan explains that he can close the rift again, but that the accompanying influx of magic indubitably attracts a powerful demon. The party must prepare to face off against this demon.

4. Closing the Rift

Once the party and the titan agree to cooperate, the titan begins the process of closing the rift. He points his greatsword at the rift and a beam of energy engulfs the tear in the ground. As the hole begins to close a huge burst of fire flares from the rift and a **balor** emerges. The titan points his sword at the demon and the energy engulfs the balor. The titan yells, "Attack him now! I will keep him weakened as long as I can!"

Fighting the Balor. While the titan's focus is on the demon, the balor's Strength is reduced to 16 (+3); this also reduces its attack modifier to +9, the weapon damage its *Longsword* deals to 16 (3d8 +3), and its *Whip* base weapon damage to 10 (2d6 +3). It retains the additional damage dealt by attacks. Additionally, its Constitution drops to 12 (+1). The demon loses 105 hit points immediately, and the balor also is stripped of its resistances (but keeps its immunities).

Maintaining the energy beam on the balor saps the titan's lifeforce. The titan loses 25 hits points at the end of each round. If the titan dies, the balor returns to full strength (but does not regain any lost hit points). The party can heal the titan to help him maintain the energy beam.

Reduced XP. Award half XP for defeating the balor with the help of the titan.

Conclusion

When the balor is defeated, the titan finishes closing the rift. But if this rift has opened, then others might be opening as well. The titan leaves in search for other slumbering titans, preparing for the fight he believes to lie ahead.

Rewards for the Party. As a token of his appreciation for their help, the titan imbues the seven ritual stones with his energy, transforming them into *ioun stones*. Award stones to the party based on which type of stone would be most useful to each character.

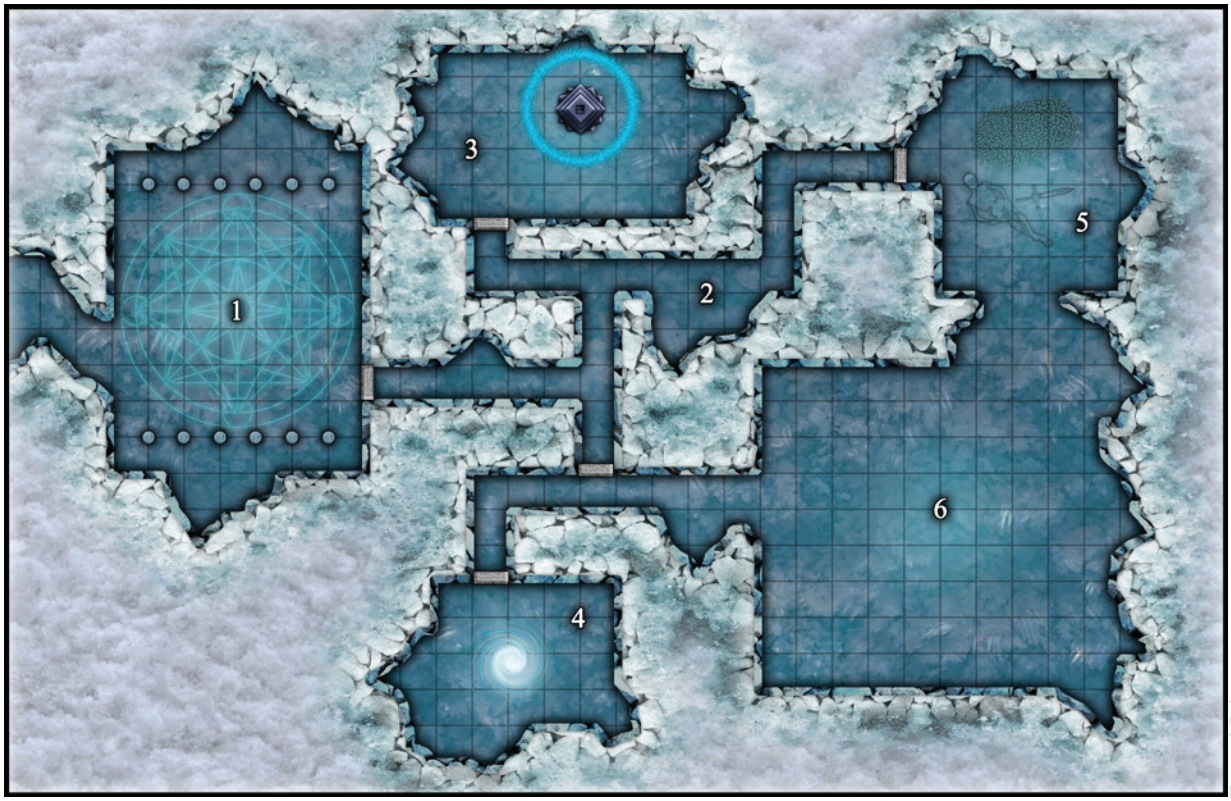


Mates Laurentiu

6 Characters

Level 8

Arctic



Tommi Salama

Plight of the Winter Winds

Michael O. Holland, Thilo Graf

Each summer the people of the Sempir Vale send tribute to the archmage, Gonran. The wizard was once a hero who drove frost giant raiders from the region, but over time he proved to be as unscrupulous as the giants before him. This past season was lean and there was no surplus to support the tribute. The enraged wizard's wintery minions soon began to terrorize the vale. His lair, formerly the hall of a frost giant jarl, is situated high above in the snow-covered mountain peaks. The vale has no militia; only the party can save Sempir Vale.

Getting There. The hike up to the frigid peaks is strenuous and takes three days without magic. It takes a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** to avoid gaining one level of **hypothermia** or exhaustion. Magic and proper clothing can grant **advantage** on the save, or negate the necessity altogether.

General Properties.

Warding. Gonran's lair is protected with a *guards and wards* spell; each **Area** lists its magical properties and *dispel magic* can dispel a property with a **DC 16 spellcasting ability check**.

Icecrafted. The lair was carved from an icy block which covered a frigid river. Without specialized winter footwear, any adventurers moving more than 20 feet per round must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**, or fall prone. This also applies when taking the Dash, Dodge, or Disengage actions. The flowing water can be seen below the lair's floors.

Breaking the Floor. A 5-foot square that takes 50 fire damage or more collapses, dropping any in it into the river below.

Falling in the River. The river is slushy and incredibly cold; a character that falls in the river or starts its turn in it must succeed on a **DC 20 Constitution saving throw** or gain a level of **hypothermia** or exhaustion and take 21 (6d6) cold damage. On a successful save, the character takes half damage and does not gain a level of hypothermia. It takes three consecutive **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** made to swim to get out of the churning partially frozen river.

1. Frozen Entrance

Etched in the floor is the glowing rune of the *guards and wards* spell.

Warding. When the first character enters the room a *magic mouth* appears and welcomes them in Common. It asks if the adventurers have an invitation and when they cannot produce one, it disappears. It takes a **DC 18 Charisma (Deception) check** to come up with a valid excuse for the absence of an invitation. Barring such smooth-talking, three **air elementals** appear and attack.

2. Central Corridor

The central corridor has several twists and turns.

Warding. Goran's magical fog fills this area, and everything is heavily obscured. There is a 50% chance when a character turns a corner, they go a different direction than intended.

Three **invisible stalkers** hover against the ceiling and follow the adventurers using their *Faultless Tracker* feature. They attack once the characters are disoriented or attempt to open one of the doors.

The door to **Area 4** is obfuscated by a *minor illusion*. This illusion makes the location of the door look as if it were a solid wall of ice.

3. A Most Grating Grimoire

Warding. The room is protected by a *stinking cloud* but the effect is suppressed until most of the adventurers have entered the room. A *dispel magic* spell or **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check** can notice the effect before it triggers.

Shielded Altar. An ornate obsidian altar stands in the center of this chamber, surrounded by a magic field of force. This field is impervious to damage and prevents anyone but Gonran from touching the altar. It can be dispersed with *dispel magic* (**DC 16 spellcasting ability check**) and otherwise vanishes when Gonran is defeated.

Atop the altar is a blackened leather grimoire. This is Gonran's Grimoire, one of the most exhaustive tomes of magic in existence. The grimoire is sentient and can communicate telepathically with any creature it can see. Unfortunately, the tome is arrogant, whiny, self-centered, rude and hates sharing its secrets. It only cooperates if Gonran perishes; it also demands that a quest, subject to the GM's discretion, be completed for it.

4. Planar Portal

Portal Vortex. The swirling vortex of cold air is a portal to the Elemental Plane of Air. Any creature which passes through the center of the vortex is transported to that plane. A creature forced into the vortex must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid being teleported to that plane.

A pair of **air elementals** emerge from the portal 1 minute after the characters enter the area. They immediately attack and try to force the heroes into the portal with their *Whirlwind* feature.

5. Frost Giant Jarl's Grave

Not So Final Rest. An emaciated frost giant corpse is suspended just under the surface of the ice, his weapon frozen just a few feet away from where the giant fell in battle. If Gonran is slain, unholy life stirs again in the bones. The jarl then reanimates as an undead monstrosity next winter.

Pitiful Dragon. Lying upon a heap of coins carved from ice is a **young white dragon** named **Rindu the Voiceless**. A **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** notices that the dragon is mute—its tongue was cut from its mouth. Gonran has enslaved and mutilated the dragon and does not allow it to collect a hoard; it has taken to carving its own "hoard" of coins from the ice of its chamber. Despite the worthlessness of the hoard, Rindu protects it at all costs. The dragon fears its master, but an offering of at least 5,000 gp, or magic that regenerates its tongue, can placate the dragon. It is too afraid of Goran to attack the mage.

Illusion & Development. The *minor illusion* of a wall of ice separates **Area 5** from **Area 6**. Gonran can see through the illusion and observes the fight with Rindu to learn the party's strengths and weaknesses. When the party makes peace with Rindu, Gonran sends his **ice mephits** (**Area 6**) forth, which seem to emerge from the ice, while retaining his **shield guardian** (**Area 6**) to guard him.

6. Gonran's Chamber

All furniture constructed here consists of frigid air. Sitting atop a throne of icy winds is the wizard **Gonran** (elven **archmage**); an **ice mephit** perched upon his shoulders and a **shield guardian** standing ready nearby. The slender archmage has gray eyes like silver coins and fine brown hair; his wardrobe adheres to a risqué blue-purple color scheme. Nothing covers the bare skin of his chest and arms; Gonran is **immune to cold damage**. He has this feature:

Mephit Master. While sitting on his throne, Gonran can conjure 1d3 **ice mephits** as a bonus action. Gonran can control up to three ice mephits at any given time.

The archmage is a narcissist and demands his annual tribute. If a truce cannot be reached, he orders his minions to attack and unleashes his magic. He uses *teleport* to attempt to flee if reduced below 20 hp.

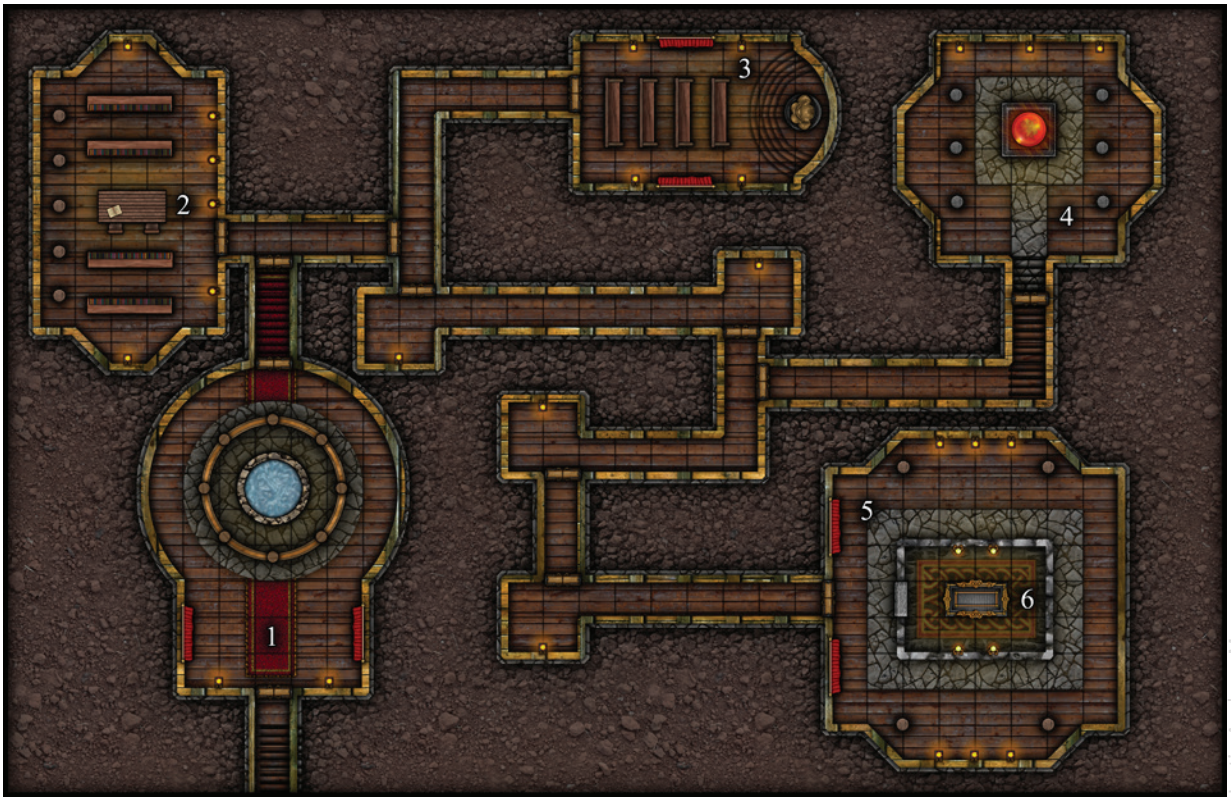


Storn Cook

4 Characters

Level 8-9

Mountain



Justin Andrew Mason

Secrets of the Silver Mountain Sage

David Schwartz

The wizard Yinan, the Silver Mountain Sage, did not want his disciples to dwell on the past, but to prepare for the future. He designed the foremost part of his crypt with public spaces for meditation and learning. To reach the back of the crypt, where Yinan's memorial and tomb lie, one must traverse a series of hallways intended to confound any spirits that might try to enter or leave the tomb. Rumors persist that a treasure is hidden in the crypt, despite assurances from the caretakers that this is untrue.

The necromancer Jaoxia has discovered the treasure's location, but not the magic mantras to reach it safely. Earlier today, she infiltrated the crypt and broke the seal on Yinan's tomb, hoping to find the incantation inside. This desecration caused Yinan's corpse to rise as a jiangshi (or hopping vampire), but Jaoxia used her necromantic powers to enslave the creature. This act of covert impiety has angered the spirits of the crypt, who proceeded to start attacking visitors, running off many and leaving a few trapped inside.

The characters are called in to rescue those people still within the crypt and to determine what has enraged the spirits, so that they may be placated.

The Silver Mountain Crypt

Hallways in crypt have 8-foot-high ceilings, while room height's reach nearly twice that. *Continual flame* torches (indicated on the map) provide bright light. The crypt's wooden double-doors have no locks, while the door to the inner tomb (**Area 6**), once locked, is now broken.

All hostile creatures in the complex are spirits or animated by them, and as such, are subject to the following effect:

Confusing Turns. The crypt was designed to confuse angry spirits. While the crypt's inhabitants usually are benign and thus exempt, the rage currently clouding their minds makes them subject to the effect of the crypt. Whenever an angry creature takes a turn in one of the crypt's hallways, it must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**, or be turned around 180°, going back without realizing it. The party is exempt from this effect, unless the GM wishes to split the party or emphasize the dangers of carrying rage in one's heart.

1. Meditation Pool

A pool of springwater sits in the center of this room, surrounded by a (human-)waist-high wooden barrier. A chandelier of *continual flame* torches hangs from the center of the domed ceiling, illuminating painted images of zodiac animals. A character can notice scorch marks on wooden walls and floors with a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**.

When a character moves into this room, two paintings of sinuous dragons peel away from the dome becoming real, but two-dimensional **red dragon wymlings**. The dragons attack anyone in the room, but do not chase them beyond either set of doors. If reduced to 0 hit points, a dragon fades away as the painting returns. They gain:

Two-Dimensional Turn. The two-dimensional creature can turn sideways as a bonus action or as part of moving, rendering it invisible to all creatures looking at it in a straight line of 5-foot squares of the creature's choice. Moving to an angle outside of this line renders the creature visible for the character one more, until the two-dimensional creature uses this feature to align to a new line of 5-foot squares. A two-dimensional creature cannot attack a target that faces its "thin" side.

2. Library

The rows of shelves are lined with books and scrolls on all manner of topics. A character who spends a short rest consulting the library can make an Intelligence check to recall lore with **advantage**. Along the back wall, carved wooden pillars depict events in the life of the Silver Mountain Sage.

Two **acolytes** hide behind the pillars trying to avoid the notice of three **paper golem swarms** which are hidden among the shelves with False Appearance. When a character enters the room, the acolytes gesture for them to keep quiet. Each round a character moves or acts in the room, they must make a **DC 8 Dexterity (Stealth) check** (the swarms' passive Perception). A character who talks or otherwise makes noise, or who touches any loose papers automatically fails this check. On a failed check, the paper golem swarms rise up and attack. The swarms attack until destroyed or until they lose track of targets, such as due to *Confusing Turns*.

If the characters destroy the paper golem swarms with minimal amounts of acid, fire, or slashing damage (subject to GM's discretion), they can gather the sheets afterwards. All of the papers relate to jiangshi, or hopping vampires, and a character who reads the texts learns some of the undead's strengths and weaknesses (in particular, its *Prayer of Magic Resistance*).



3. Chapel

The spirits have animated the statue of the Celestial Empress as a **clay golem**. Three **commoners** sit in the pews fervently praying, and only a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check** makes them stop. If no one spends an action each round praying to the golem, it goes *Berserk*. Otherwise, it only attacks the character(s) who attacked it in the previous round.

4. Eternal Flame

A fire burns in a bowl built into a stone dais in the center of this room. The divine flame burns without fuel. A character exposed to the flame must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**; a creature takes 14 (4d6) fire damage and 14 (4d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Speaking the proper incantation ("*Mountain's fire lend your aid!*", see **Area 5**) causes the flames to extinguish, revealing an opening at the bottom of the bowl into the hollow of the stone dais. Inside the hollow are 888 silver ingots (worth 25 sp each), a silver *headband of intellect*, and a wood and silver suona (which acts as a *silver horn of Valhalla*). Speaking the phrase again reignites the fire.

5. Offerings Chamber

This room completely surrounds the stone tomb (**Area 6**). There are offerings of food and joss paper in the alcoves on either side.

Following Jaoxia's orders **Yinan's corpse** (a **jiangshi**) attacks any intruders. Any sound of combat in **Area 5** alerts the necromancer (**Area 6**), who joins the fray one round later. Either enemy may pursue characters who flee down the hallway, but the jiangshi inevitably becomes confused and returns to this room before arriving at any other area of the crypt. The jiangshi fights until destroyed, but Jaoxia will flee or surrender if she is low on spells and hit points.

Unbeknownst to Jaoxia, the incantation to extinguish (or relight) the eternal flame (in **Area 4**) is written on the back of the scroll on the jiangshi's face (its *Prayer of Magic Resistance*). The additional writing is obvious to anyone who examines the scroll after it is removed.

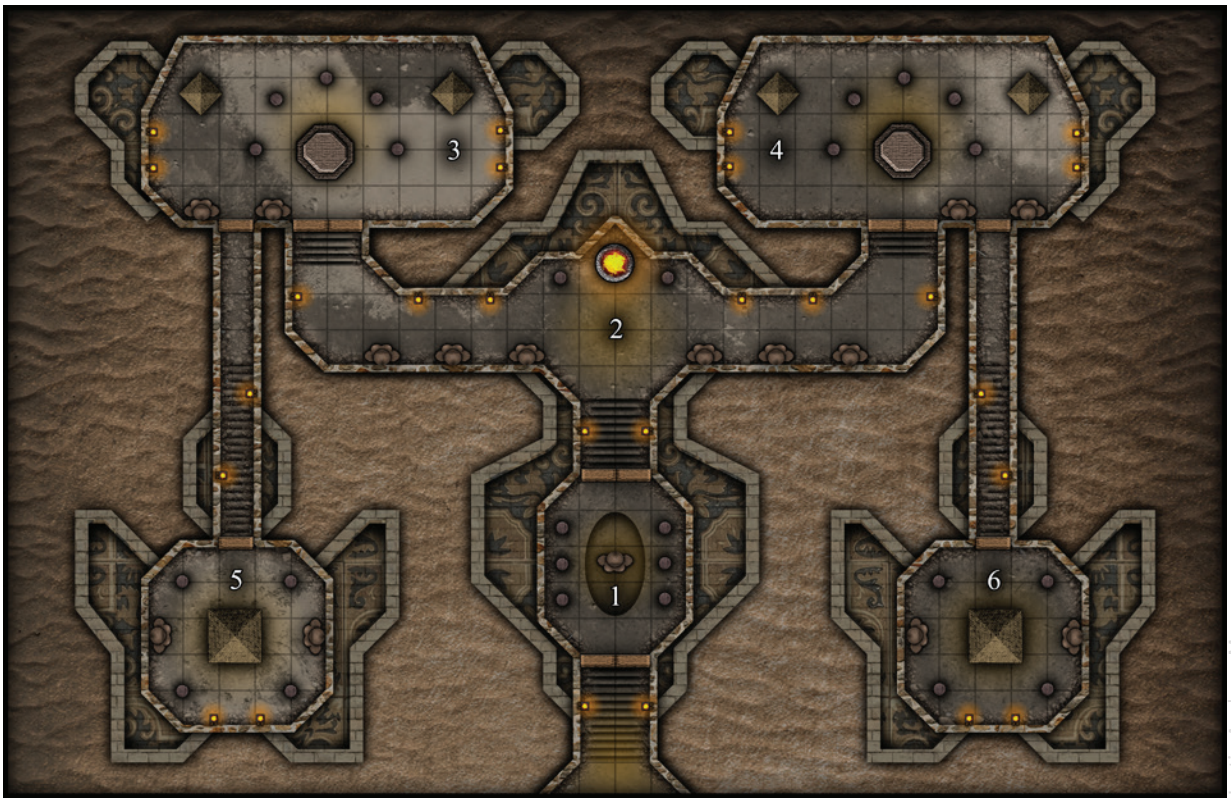
6. Yinan's Tomb

The tomb's stone door has been broken open, and the lid of the sarcophagus removed. If the **necromancer** **Jaoxia** has not been alerted to the characters presence, she is here looking for clues to how attain Yinan's treasure. Instead of a quarterstaff, she carries a shortsword.

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

Returning Yinan's corpse to his sarcophagus placates the spirits elsewhere in the crypt.

Dean Spencer



Justin Andrew Mason

Reflections Beneath the Sand

Bill Buchalter

The port city of Tarakesh lies on the southern edge of the Great Desert. It is a harsh city filled with pirates and tomb raiders in search of ancient crypts to plunder. In a seedy tavern the party meets a beautiful pirate captain named **Nicole Christine**. She is selling a map which leads through the desert to a tomb filled with riches beyond imagination. She would investigate herself, but alas, her crew grows restless spending too much time ashore. For the mere price of 250 gp, the party can have the map, and all the riches the tomb contains! After three long days of journeying across blistering desert sands, the party finally reaches the entrance of the promised tomb.

1. Grand Entrance

The party enters the tomb through a set of double doors to find a long hall lined with columns and a large stone statue of a jackal-headed man. The statue is a **possessed pillar** ◆. On the opposite side of the room is another set of double doors, which are magically locked. The only way to safely open them is to correctly answer a riddle inscribed on the doors: *You can see me in water, but I never get wet*. ***Answer:*** *A reflection.*

If the characters give an incorrect answer or attempt to open the door without answering the riddle (for example, with a *knock* spell) the possessed pillar comes alive and attacks. When the possessed pillar is defeated the doors open. After a minute, the doors close again and cannot be opened from inside the tomb without summoning and defeating the efreeti in **Area 2**.

2. Hall of the Efreeti

A huge brazier sits in the middle of the north wall. An inscription on the wall behind the brazier reads, "*Summon the Master to Leave this Place*". The slanted walls on the east and west end of the hallway are covered with mirrors. The statues in the hall are smaller versions of the jackal-headed statue in the grand entrance (**Area 1**).

Lying on the floor in front of the brazier is a skeleton clutching a *+1 dagger* and a map identical to the one Nicole Christine sold them. As they inspect the skeleton, a **Bastet temple cat** ◆ slinks cautiously out from behind the brazier. If the party acts friendly toward the cat they can make a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** to gain the cat's trust. On a success the cat follows the party throughout the tomb, purring and walking between the legs of the character who succeeded on the check. The cat cannot leave the tomb under any circumstances but can aid the party with its *Innate Spellcasting*.

If the party fails the check it darts back behind the brazier and disappear into a small hole in the wall. If the party attacks the cat, it leaps onto the shoulder of one of the jackal-headed statues and hisses at the group. The statues animate and attack (use gargoyle). The cat fights with the statues, but not to the death; it attempts to flee into the small hole behind the brazier.

Summoning the Master. When the obelisks are activated in **Areas 5** & **6**, beams of light reflect through **Areas 3** & **4**, off the mirrors on the angled walls at ends of this hallway, and converge in the middle of the hallway, summoning the master of the tomb, an **efreeti**. The efreeti has **immunity** to radiant damage and has:

Master of Light. As a bonus action, the efreeti can change the bonus damage it inflicts with its *Scimitar* and the damage of its *Hurl Flame* from fire damage to radiant damage, or back again.

Defeating the efreeti unlocks the doors, allowing the party to leave the tomb. As the party leaves they find a pile of treasure waiting for them in the grand entrance (**Area 1**): 400 ep, 600 gp, a bronze crown (250 gp), a gold bracelet (250 gp), a well-made tapestry (250 gp), *broom of flying*, *periapt of proof against poison*, and *wand of fear*.

3. Western Reflection Chamber

The two obelisks in this room have indentations in their faces. In the center of the room on a low dais is a large bronze disk standing upright and polished to a mirrored sheen. The disk is connected to a base which allows it to rotate 360 degrees.

The room is guarded by three **imy-ut ushabti** ◆ and two **anubian** ◆. The imy-ut ushabti attack any living creature entering the room. The anubians rise in the second round of combat from piles of dust on the floor. When the imy-ut ushabti are defeated, the party finds two large crystals on their corpses. With a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** the characters deduce that the crystals fit into empty indentations in the obelisks.

When the obelisk in **Area 5** is activated a beam of light shoots down the hallway toward **Area 3**. If the crystals have been placed in the obelisks in **Area 3**, the beam reflects between them and strikes the bronze disk. With a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** the characters realize rotating the bronze disk will reflect the beam of light into the hallway in **Area 2** and off the mirrors on the angled walls.



Matt Forsyth

4. Eastern Reflection Chamber

This room is a mirrored duplicate of the western reflection chamber (**Area 3**).

5. Western Obelisk Chamber

In the center of this 60-foot-high chamber is a 30-foot obelisk made of onyx. Perched atop the obelisk is a **gynosphinx**. As the party enters the room, she invites them to step forward and solve her riddle inscribed on the obelisk: *What is lighter than a feather, but you cannot hold it for long?* ***Answer:*** *Your breath.* If the party answers correctly on their first guess a small hole opens on the obelisk and a beam of light shoots out of the obelisk and down the hallway into **Area 3**. The beam of light is harmless, but anything that interrupts its path, such as a character or a door, prevents it from reflecting.

If the party answers incorrectly, the gynosphinx attacks. If her hit point total drops below 25, she surrenders and opens the hole in the obelisk, releasing the beam of light.

6. Eastern Obelisk Chamber

This chamber is a mirrored duplicate of the western obelisk chamber (**Area 5**). The only difference is the riddle inscribed on this obelisk: *The more of these you take, the more you leave behind.* ***Answer:*** *Footsteps.*

GM Note. If your players are not inclined toward riddles and puzzles, or struggling to come up with the answers, feel free to allow the characters to make **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** or **Intelligence (Arcana) checks** as an alternative to solving the riddles. Also, if your players enjoy combat more than riddle solving, you can skip the riddles entirely and force the party to fight their way through the tomb.

Alternate Riddles

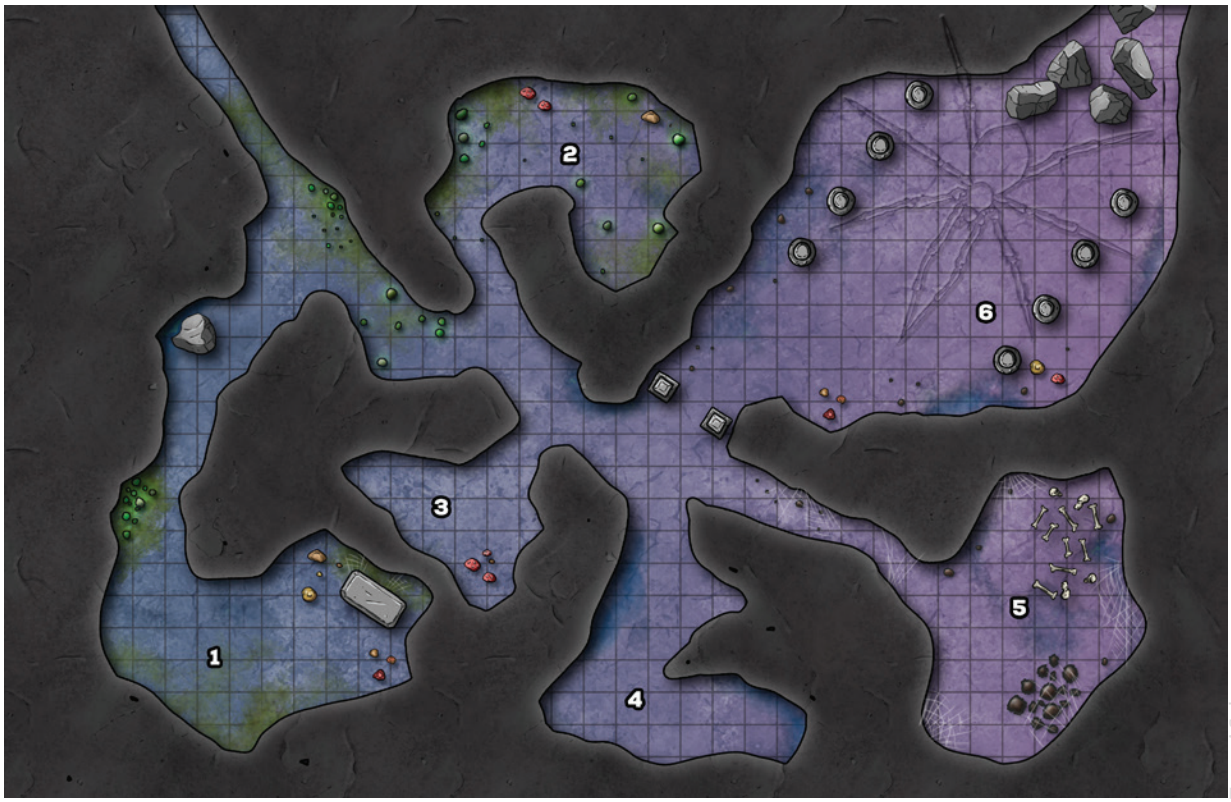
If you want to present more riddles, here are some alternatives.

- *Where are you in the middle of nowhere?* ***Answer:*** *In the letter "H."*
- *What eight-letter word contains only one letter?* ***Answer:*** *An envelope.*
- *Allow me to live, and soon I'll die, but kill me and I'll outlive you.* ***Answer:*** *A candle.*
- *A man walks into a bar and is knocked out. Why?* ***Answer:*** *He walked into a bar (a pole).*
- *I am yellow and alive, yet riddled with holes; ever thirsty, I still drip. What am I?* ***Answer:*** *A sponge.*
- *What walks all day on its head?* ***Answer:*** *A nail in a horseshoe.*
- *What two accidents repeat every 24 hours?* ***Answer:*** *Day breaks and night falls.*
- *How can you make 7 even?* ***Answer:*** *Cut the S.*
- *I have a tongue, but cannot talk. I have a sole (soul), but cannot die. What am I?* ***Answer:*** *A shoe.*

4-5 Characters

Levels 8-9

Underworld/ Urban



Tommi Salama

Penumbra Enclave

Joshua Hennington

The Academy of Shadow, based in the drow capital of Holoth, is a renowned school of wizardry for drow of all genders. Its students do not stay confined to its halls, however; on occasion, its students journey under a watchful guardian to an outpost known as the Penumbra Enclave. Here, they learn powerful magic from an unlikely source that forged an alliance with the Academy decades ago: a coven of Upperworlder hags that elected to, as they say, 'put up with the sniveling brats' in exchange for learning magic only the drow can teach. The heroes likely ambush this educational field trip to gather information on the school and Holoth, or simply to take what rare drow-made magic items they can find.

All the hags detailed below are in a coven. However, as the halls of the Penumbra Enclave have a magical silence cast upon them (see below), it is unlikely they will be able to utilize their *Shared Spellcasting* ability. The ceilings of the Penumbra Enclave are roughly 13 feet.

Silent Halls. The central tunnel adjoining each classroom has been magically silenced, so as to allow each teacher to instruct uninhibited by the others; any spell of 4th level or lower with a verbal component automatically fails here, and no mundane sound can travel outside of a given room.

1. Students' Lodging

While the students at the Academy of Shadow receive middlingly comfortable beds for rest, those venturing to the Penumbra Enclave receive no such comforts. There is one bed in the room, a roughly carved stone slab with a blanket on top. Magical duels to determine who gets the benefit of resting on it are common and encouraged. At the time of the heroes' arrival, this room is empty; the students are attending their lessons, supervised by the outpost's various tutors. Some favored treasures left by the students can be found with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**; these include an *umbrasilk cloak* and various spell components and nonmagical baubles collectively worth 46 gp.

2. Grizwalda's Classroom

Grizwalda is a prideful **green hag** who has a distinct preference for enchantment magic for beguiling one's foes. She is currently teaching four **drow apprentices** the finishing touches of the spell *hideous laughter*; in addition to her being able to cast that spell three times per day as an innate spell, her students have that spell prepared instead of *burning hands*.

3. Cecilima's Classroom

Cecilima is a cantankerous **green hag** with an appreciation for more direct ways of solving conflicts. Her four **drow apprentices** have the standard spells prepared, and Cecilima can cast *burning hands* three times per day and *fire bolt* at will (+4 to hit) as innate spells. The mushrooms in this room provide dim light.

4. Jarnira's Classroom

Jarnira is the odd one out in this coven of unlikely teachers, being a **sea hag** who is quite uncomfortable being this far from any large body of water. An underground lake isn't far from the outpost, but it just isn't the same. She makes the most of her lot here by putting on the disguise of an ugly drow woman, and subjecting her three **drow apprentice** pupils to her *Horrific Appearance* if they step out of line. She does not warn her students of this ability if ambushed, forcing every creature in the room to make a saving throw. For all her ghoulishness, however, she is quite skilled at conjuration; her students have *grease* prepared instead of *burning hands*, and *poison spray* instead of *fire bolt*. Jarnira can cast *poison spray* at will, and *grease* three times per day as innate spells.

If the heroes save her for last, she is willing to retreat if proof of her sister hags' deaths is presented. She never really liked the trade-off of being away from the sea, and if the coven is broken, then she has no reason to remain. If this is the case, a further **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check** can cajole her into mentioning that Nung lurks further inside, and that there is a crazed drider awaiting.



Quico vicens

5. Sub-Mistress Nung's Demesnes

This dark office is littered with the bones of students who ultimately didn't shape up to the demands of the Academy's strict regimen but weren't so unimportant that a scene of their grisly demise could be public. This serves as a stark reminder for the four **drow apprentices** who have the (mis)fortune of being chosen to learn under **Sub-Mistress Nung**, a **drider** with a *+1 longsword*, a *wand of web* and the following additional ability:

Spellcasting. Sub-Mistress Nung is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (**spell save DC 12**, +4 to spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *false life*, *fog cloud*, *shield*, *sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *web*

Her students are trained in the arts of necromancy; they have *chill touch* prepared instead of *fire bolt*, and *false life* instead of *burning hands*. Additionally, Nung was born blind, but can perfectly sense where any creatures are within 60 feet of her due to the near-invisible webbing she placed along the floor of this educational outpost.

6. Chapel of Arcane Superiority

This area was once a chapel dedicated to Naraneus the Spider Queen, a fact that (among those present currently) only Nung knows is a light form of heresy against the goddess and patron of the drow. It has been stripped of any religious paraphernalia, the only defining features remaining being the altars bearing scrubbed scripture and the image of a massive spider on the cavern floor. Chained to the backmost altars is a **failed Sub-Mistress** who now bears little kinship with Nung. Her name long forgotten, this **crazed drider** lashes out at any creatures that enter, be they drow, hag, or any other. She guards the true treasures of the outpost, tucked beneath a rock: a *cloak of elvenkind* and *boots of elvenkind* woven from spider silk with dark iconography, and a *circlet of blasting* that deals poison damage with each of the rays instead of fire damage.

Umbrasilk Cloak

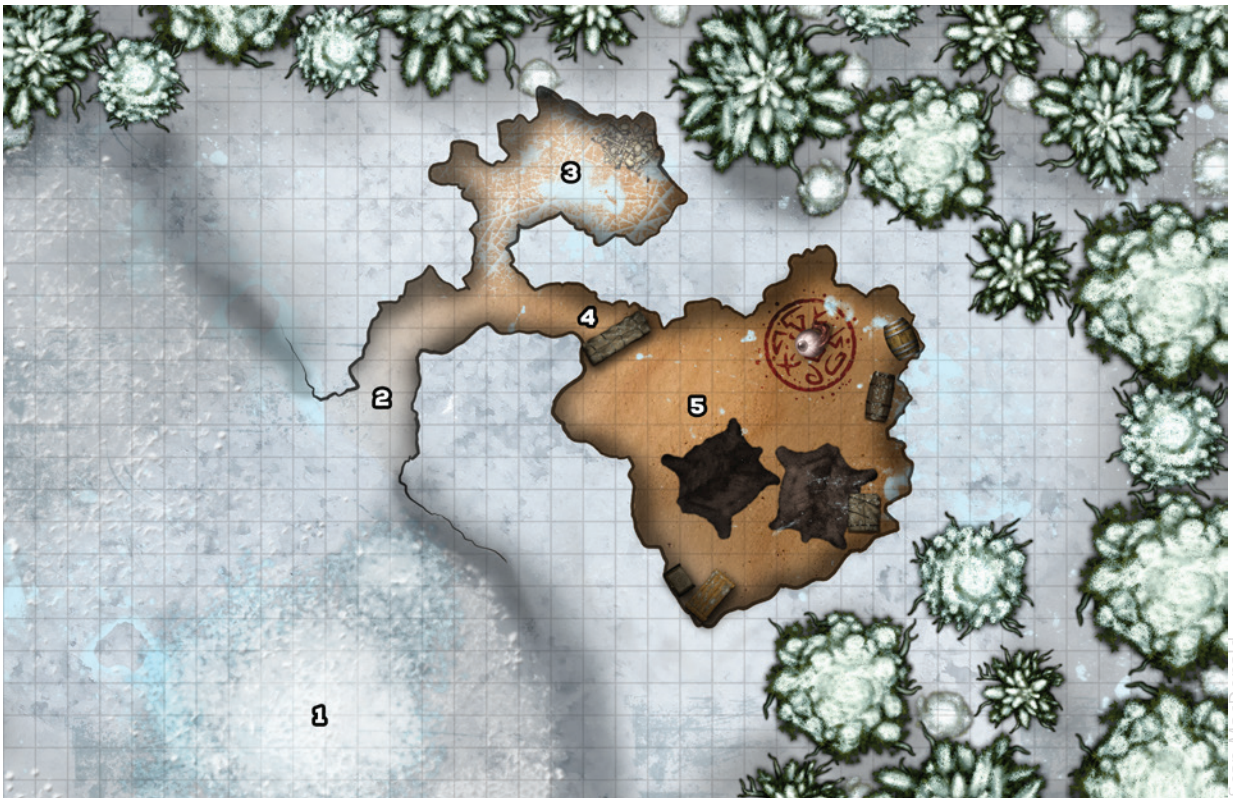
Equipment crafted with drow magic is infused with their dark energies; it seldom survives long in the harsh sun of the overworld. An umbrasilk cloak, however, is constructed specifically to counteract light decay; it is the pinnacle of drow magical research, and the dark elves covet their technology-enhanced magic above all else. Throughout the Underworld, dealing in umbrasilk is potentially the most dangerous illicit good with which one can trade. On the surface, one can sell an umbrasilk cloak in any market that deals in elf-crafted goods. In the Underworld, it is a rare Black Market dealer who risks their own skin to trade in drow umbrasilk (see page 298).

Even if the party manages to find a dealer who will buy second-hand drow equipment, no amount of coin or trade will keep from drow inquisitors the secret of who dares to sell drow-made goods.

4-5 Characters

Levels 8-9

Arctic



Sean MacDonald

The Naïve Knight and the Aboleth

Grant Simpson

The mayor of Lindsford has posted a reward for the capture or death of Stellan Madds. Once an insignificant errant knight, Stellan became the hero of Lindsford for singlehandedly defeating an entire raiding party attempting to ransack the town. The city lauded him, granting gifts, money and even a marriage to the mayor's daughter. But on the day of his wedding, Stellan warped into a monstrous figure, massacred the wedding party, and escaped across the frozen sea.

Stellan Madds. Stellan used the power of an aboleth to defeat the raiding party and attain his heroic reputation within Lindsford, but the cost of doing so warped both his mind and body. He has fled to a cave in the far north and continues to be corrupted by the outer entity's power.

Tracking Stellan. The sea north of Lindsford is almost completely frozen over with a thick layer of pack ice. When attempting to track Stellan across the ice, one character must make a **DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check**. A success means the party follows this trail safely and arrives at **Area 1** by the next morning. A failure means it gets lost and must make the check again the next day. The **DC** for the check decreases by 5 after each attempt until someone succeeds.

1. Frozen Sea

The sea is mostly frozen over by a thick sheet of ice. A snowstorm rages around the party as it enters this area and the ground here is considered difficult terrain. Whenever a character moves more than half of their movement speed entirely across ice they must make a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or fall prone. Additionally, all **Wisdom (Perception) checks** are made with **disadvantage** in the snowstorm.

Cracks in the Ice. While the ice is thick and solid for the most part, it is not impervious to cracking and even breaking under enough pressure. If 50 points of damage or more are dealt to a 10-foot-square area of ice, it breaks and any creatures on it fall through. If between 25 and 50 points of damage are dealt, the ice begins to crack. If any creature ends its turn on an area of cracked ice, roll a d20. If the result is less than a 10, the ice breaks. Each round a creature is in the shockingly cold water it must make a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw**, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

2. Watchful Lindwurm

An icy rock wall rises at the edge of **Area 1** with the cave entrance in its face. The ceiling of the dimly lit cave is 15 ft high throughout.

A **lindwurm** guards the cave entrance. It rests at the very edge of the ice, using its *Snake Belly* ability to detect possible prey or enemies. If it notices the party, it telepathically alerts the other **lindwurm** in **Area 3** and **Stellan** in **Area 5**, and all three will emerge to fight the party in **Area 1**.

3. Den of Wurms

Another **lindwurm** is dozing in this cavern unless it was alerted by its companion to the party's presence.

Rewarding Remains. A pile of animal and human bones from the lindwurms' meals is stacked in the far corner. A **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** while searching through the pile reveals a pair of *boots of the winterlands* and a canteen of frozen water.

4. Stellan's Door

Stellan has carved a crude door out of a large piece of stone and placed it in front of his private quarters. It weighs 1,000 lbs, is five feet thick, and blocks the entrance to **Area 5** completely when positioned before it.

Breaking and Entering. If Stellan fought the party in **Area 1** and was defeated there, the doorway is unblocked when the party gets here. Otherwise, the stone is across the entrance.

A successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check** allows a character to push the stone door aside. Alternatively, the stone breaks if it takes a total of 30 or more points of damage, such as with the *shatter* spell.

5. The Eye of the Aboleth

Stellan (as **knight ab-errant**, with the additional action ***Enslave* (1/day)** [as per the **aboleth** action]) has turned this section of the cave into his private quarters, with furs to sleep on, barrels of ale and rations stolen from remote villages, his personal belongings, and a giant aboleth's eye. If he is aware of the party's presence, Stellan is kneeling by the eye and inscribing runes into his skin as he chants the words of a ritual.

Poor Stellan. If Stellan is brought below a quarter of his hit points while fighting the party, he attempts to flee here (unless already in this area) and seal himself inside with the stone door. Stellan has lost his mind and is unable to respond intelligently to characters. Instead of answering them, he rambles about making a mistake and trying to do the right thing.

Reborn Aberration. When forced into combat in this area, Stellan uses his first turn to complete his ritual with the aboleth's eye. Holding the eye up to his own head, it melds with his flesh and partially transforms him into an **aboleth** (with half its hit points and 40-ft. walking speed). The Stellan-aboleth fights until it sees an opportunity to escape.

The Aboleth's Eye

If the party defeats **Stellan** before he transforms into an **aboleth**, it can retrieve the *aboleth's eye*. It acts as a *crystal ball of telepathy* with an additional

Curse. Once attuned to the eye, you are telepathically linked to it and feel compelled to be within 5 feet of it at all times. Whenever you use the eye, you must make a **DC 17 Intelligence saving throw**. On a failed save, you are cursed with a lack of mental acuity, roll 1d6. You suffer **disadvantage** on an Intelligence-based check or save: 1: Arcana checks 2: History checks 3: Investigation checks 4: Nature checks 5: Religion checks 6: saving throws. This occurs every time you fail the saving throw; reroll if you already have **disadvantage** on a check or save. The curse remains until you are targeted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

Conclusion

The mayor of Lindsford rewards the party with 75 gp when it returns with news of Stellan's defeat. If the party also returns with the *aboleth's eye*, the mayor requests that it is destroyed so it cannot corrupt any one else. Reward the party with twice the XP if it destroys the eye.

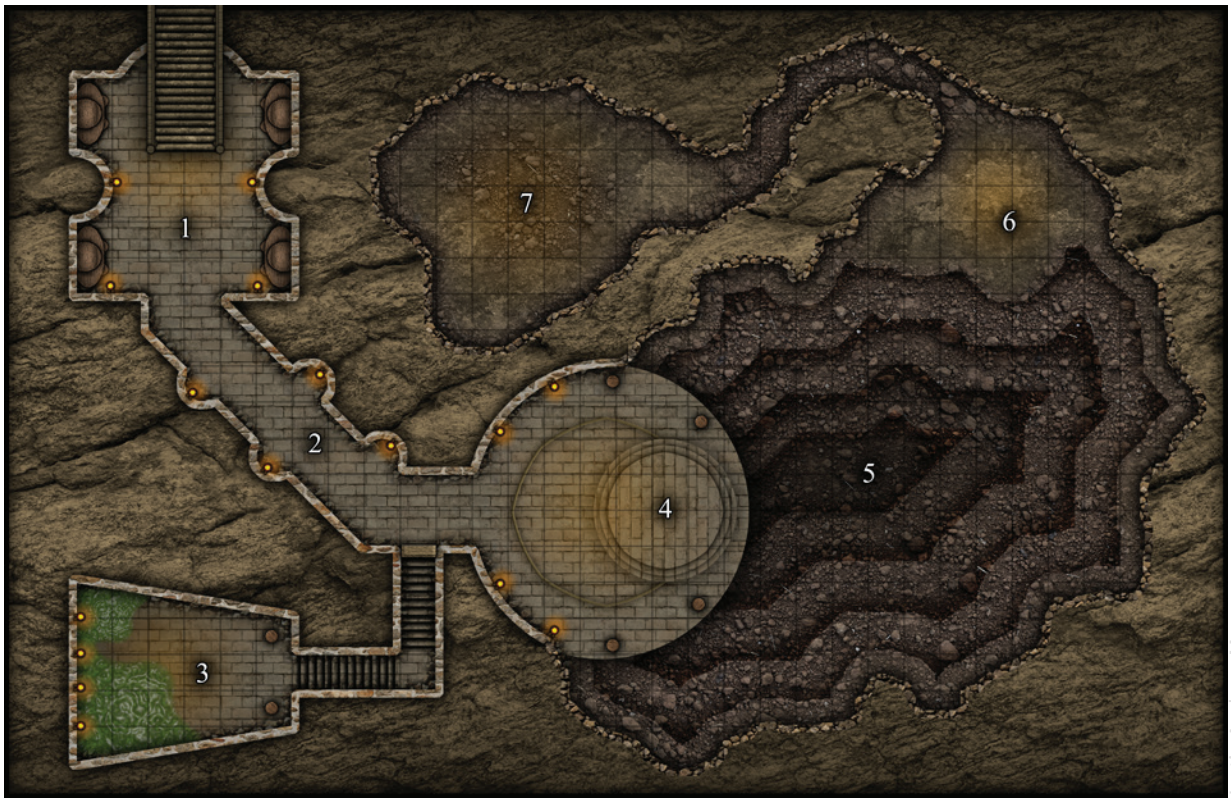


Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 8-9

Mountain



Justin Andrew Mason

Echo of the Oracle

David Schwartz

In a cave high in the mountains, the oracle of Thylos dispenses his wisdom. From across the land, supplicants bearing offerings—ranging from simple food to rare treasures—come to the cave to receive answers to their questions. One such petitioner was the void cultist Amydra hoping to explicate the meaning of an ancient inscription. Not satisfied with the oracle's answer, Amydra returned with members of her cult, overwhelmed the acolytes and captured the oracle. The characters seek the wisdom of the oracle. In a nearby town, they hear that all recent petitioners have been turned away, with some never returning at all. The townsfolk whose livelihood depends on visitors to the oracle beg the party to investigate.

The front chambers of the oracle's cave (**Areas 1-4**) have hewn walls further smoothed with plaster, and are lit by *continual flame* torches, as indicated on the map. **Areas 5-7** are a natural or only roughly carved, lightless cave system.

1. Entrance

Stairs carved into the stone descend from the mouth of the oracle's cave to an antechamber. Along the walls are four statues of cyclopes.

Five **cult fanatics** guard the entrance. They claim to be the oracle's acolytes and inform the characters that the oracle is not receiving visitors, attempting to deceive the party (**+4**) with a **Charisma (Deception) check** contested by **Wisdom (Insight)** or **Intelligence (Religion)**. If the characters do not turn back, the fanatics attempt to intimidate them into leaving. If the characters refuse to leave, or try to force their way in, the fanatics attack. If a character escapes down **Area 2**, the fanatics let them trigger the *glyph* there before chasing after them.

A character who makes a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** can recognize the symbols worn by the "acolytes" as being associated with the void cult. The party can then attempt a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check** to convince the fanatics that they are also cultists. If successful, the fanatics let them pass, even telling them how to bypass the trap in **Area 2**. They won't let the party leave with the cult's prisoners.

2. Hall of Prosperity

The walls of this corridor are decorated with frescoes depicting scenes of prosperity: bountiful harvests, successful hunts, and victorious armies.

Amydra has cast a *glyph of warding* (*Explosive Runes*, **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**, 5d8 cold damage) halfway down the corridor, so its effects fill almost the entire hallway. The glyph is triggered by anyone stepping on the glyph, unless they first recite a short prayer to the void.

3. Corrupted Font

The wooden door to this room is locked. Amydra currently has the key, but the door can also be smashed down (**AC** 15, 18 hp) or unlocked with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools.

The scrying pool here is fed by a natural spring, but it has been corrupted by the void cultists. Now the liquid bubbles with the poisonous gas known as "Malice". Each minute a character breathes the air in the room, they must succeed at a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned for 1 hour, and blinded as long as they are poisoned.

Six **acolytes**—the oracle's attendants—are imprisoned in this room. They are poisoned and blinded by the corrupted font. The acolytes assume the characters are cult fanatics unless convinced otherwise with a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, or at least one is cured of blindness. Once friendly, the acolytes warn the characters about the poison. They can provide healing and can describe the layout of the cave but avoid combat.

4. The Oracle's Platform

This circular, domed room is walled only on one side. On the other side, four columns uphold the roof, leaving it open to the dark cavern into which the room is cantilevered. A character speaking from the dais has their voice made louder and more resonant by the cavern behind, and gains **advantage** on **Charisma checks** when doing so.

The entire room is affected by a permanent *zone of truth*. This spell has an unintended side effect: the **echo demons**' *Aura of Cacophony* (**Area 6**) cannot be heard in this room.

5. Echo Chamber

This cavern descends 50 feet from the platform in a series of terraces, each roughly 10 feet lower than the last. The roof dome reaches a similar height upwards.

The presence of the echo demons in **Area 6** fills the cavern with their *Aura of Cacophony*, though the source may not be immediately obvious. If they spot the characters entering the cavern from the platform, the demons fly in and attack. In addition to their standard tactics, the demons may attempt to shove less sturdy characters deeper into the pit. Unnerved by the *zone of truth*, the demons do not pursue characters who flee back to **Area 4**.

6. Overlook

Amydra has stationed two **echo demons** on the widest part of the topmost terrace. If they see or hear characters moving around the oracle's platform, the demons use Stealth to Hide among the rocks until the intruders enter the cavern or leave.

7. Treasury

The loose rocks in the tunnel leading to this chamber are difficult terrain and impose **disadvantage** on **Stealth checks**.

The cave beyond is used by the oracle and his acolytes to store nonperishable offerings. Arrayed around the room are assorted coins, gems, and art objects (worth roughly 3,000 gp in total). The room is currently lit by two *light* cantrips cast by the cultists.

The **void speaker** **Amydra** and two of her **cult fanatics** have been attempting to torture information out of the **Oracle** (**priest**), but he falls unconscious as the characters approach. The cultists prepare for combat if they hear intruders coming down the tunnel. They attack on sight.

Hidden among the mundane treasures in this room is a *gem of seeing*, which the oracle gives the characters as a reward for defeating the void cultists.

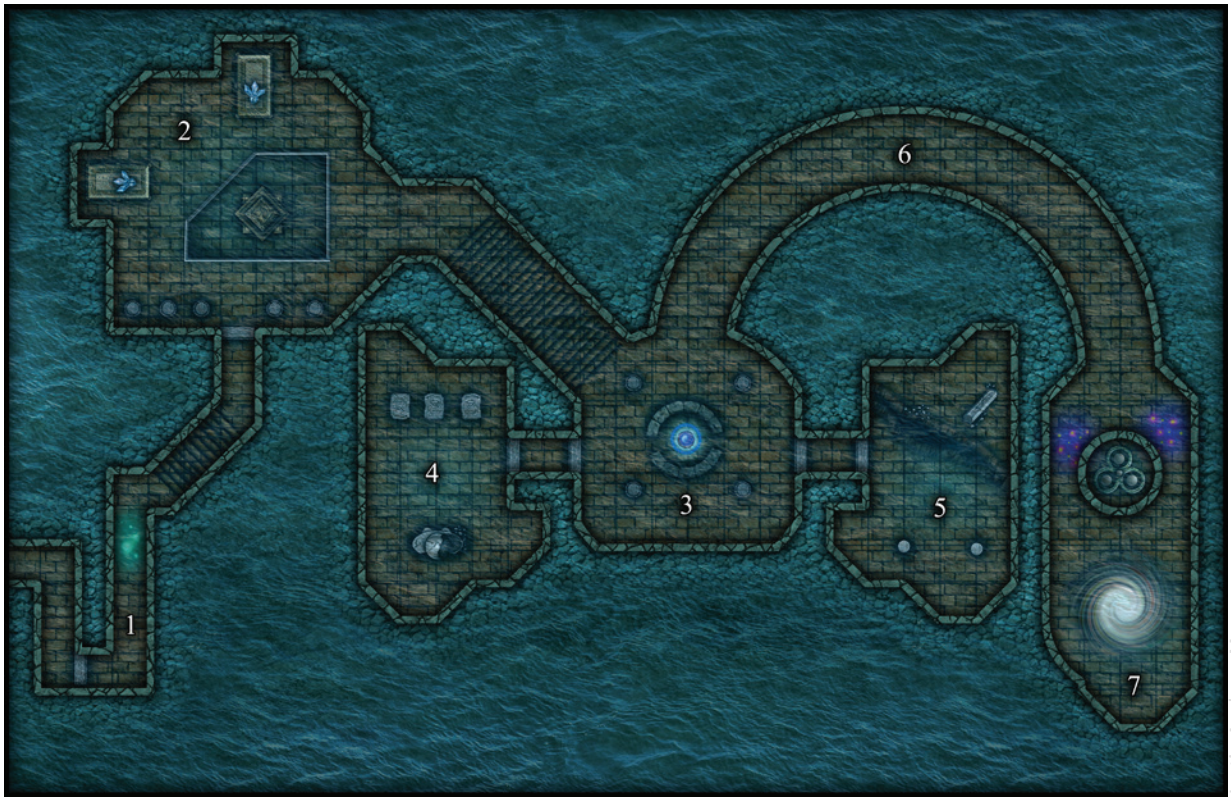


herman Lau

4-6 Characters

Levels 7-9

Coast



Justin Andrew Mason

Storms That Bring Destruction

Marc Braden

It is said that once only land existed and the people who walked the world did not need water. They built cities of rock and prayed to the stars. Yet it was one of those that fell, and with it clouds that rained. Those cities were lost, and the first people became dreams. Tonight, another star falls, and their dream lives one last time.

The party camping lakeside notices a shooting star trailing cosmic dust. Passing over the lake, they witness the lake becoming crystal clear. Under the now spectral ripples a city of stone reveals itself, organized from a great center temple out in rigid 90-degree angles and straight, uniform streets. Eerie shadows populate the metropolis, yet more disturbing are the schools of fish hovering seemingly in midair.

Investigating the water will reveal it to be no more solid than air, and just as breathable. The lake will stay this way until the sun begins to rise, though the party will have no way of knowing this. Travel along the lake bottom is equivalent to a dense forest and the city's edge can be reached in about half an hour. Amongst its streets apparitions of its inhabitants can be seen. Block-like and resembling the texture of stone, they appear to be going about their daily routines as if unaware of being dead.

A Peace Disturbed

In truth, these ghosts from ancient times have nowhere to go in the afterlife. They worshipped no god and the stars betrayed them. They live in their watery grave content to act as if nothing has changed, except their temple has been invaded. A great power source of elemental energy still resides there and through ancient magic was detected by a **deep one archimandrite**. Hoping to parley this into further gain he has summoned a **voidling** to help siphon off its power. The ancient people are desperate, but in their current form can do no more than haunt the deep ones.

The ancients try to pantomime and communicate with the players a desire to combine (through *Possession*) their strength to repel this enemy. Magic cannot bridge the language gap here – the ancients' mind is too alien. If they cannot, they become increasingly desperate, ultimately trying to possess the characters by force. If the players are puzzled by the pantomime, allow them a **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check** to get a rough understanding of the ancients. Two **deep ones** are currently patrolling the city in the aftermath of the comet's odd effect and can be used to warn the players of the danger lurking in the temple. The ancients also try to pantomime a reward.

GM Note. It should be noted that, without joining forces, the characters are walking into a possible TPK for their level. The true test of this quest is to trust in something radically "other" than yourself.

If the players discern that the ancients want to cooperate and allow the possession to take place, or if one is possessed (use **ghost** *Possession*) they will be temporarily granted the following benefits until sunrise:

Ancient Fortitude. The character gains 126 temporary hit points.

Skin of Rock. AC improves to 17 (natural armor)

Elemental Immunities. The character becomes vulnerable to thunder damage, gains damage resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage, and immunity to poison damage as well as the exhausted, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned and unconscious conditions.

Fragmented Memories. Shared memories of the ancients' past and current predicament will be shared.

Wrath of the Earth. Character gains a *Slam* attack that causes a base 2d8 bludgeoning damage.



The Temple

The temple is a large perfect cube of purplish black stone that appears to have been carved out of a small mountain. It has one visible entrance that currently sits open.

1. Long Entrance

The entrance hallway shows the true craft of its builders, with smooth and flawless walls whose sheen give off a soft glow. The floors are purposely carved to imitate set stone and a gentle slope leads deeper underground. A solid stone doorway stands open around the first turn, a soft green glow emanating from beyond. Here a section has been set permanently ablaze by a strange, ethereal fire, in fact a magical barrier erected by the deep ones to ward off the ancients' spirits to stop the hauntings. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the nature of the barrier, and that it takes *dispel magic* or *remove curse* (**DC 15**) to remove it. Traveling through the barrier without dealing with it causes 28 (8d6) force damage (**no saving throw**).

2. Tomb of Mother and Father

A solemn and oddly shaped tomb with two large caskets and an obelisk carved to imitate two miniature temples stacked upon each other dominate this room. Two **deep ones** ◆ are on guard here and will attack upon the party entering the room.

3. Heart of the Square

This vast inner chamber has four columns that rise to a ceiling at least 50 feet high. Two 6-foot-high half-moon stone walls encase a small glowing piece of moonrock. *Fragmented Memories* identify this as the Heart of the Square. A **deep one hybrid priest** ◆ is here trying to unlock the orb's powers. Deep in thought he can be caught by surprise with a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check**.

4. He Who Watches

Still locked to the deep ones, this room opens to allies of the ancients, and holds the statue of the ancients' first ancestor. In the three stone cases on the north wall are gems and raw gold that the ancients offer as rewards for the party's help. The cases and doors are magically locked, and without the help of the ancient spirits require *dispel magic* (**DC 20**) to unlock each. In total, 15,000 gp in raw uncut gems and 5,000 gp in gold ore is cached here.

5. Joining Room

This curiously empty room is the only one that shows any sign of decay. In fact, this is where the ancients used to copulate, and the scarring of the room stems from this zealous act.

6. Curved Hall

This quiet curved hall is designed to allow no sound to move between **Area 3** and **7**. The ancients believe sound disturbs the energy produced by their *Life Giver* in **Area 7**.

7. Life from the Earth

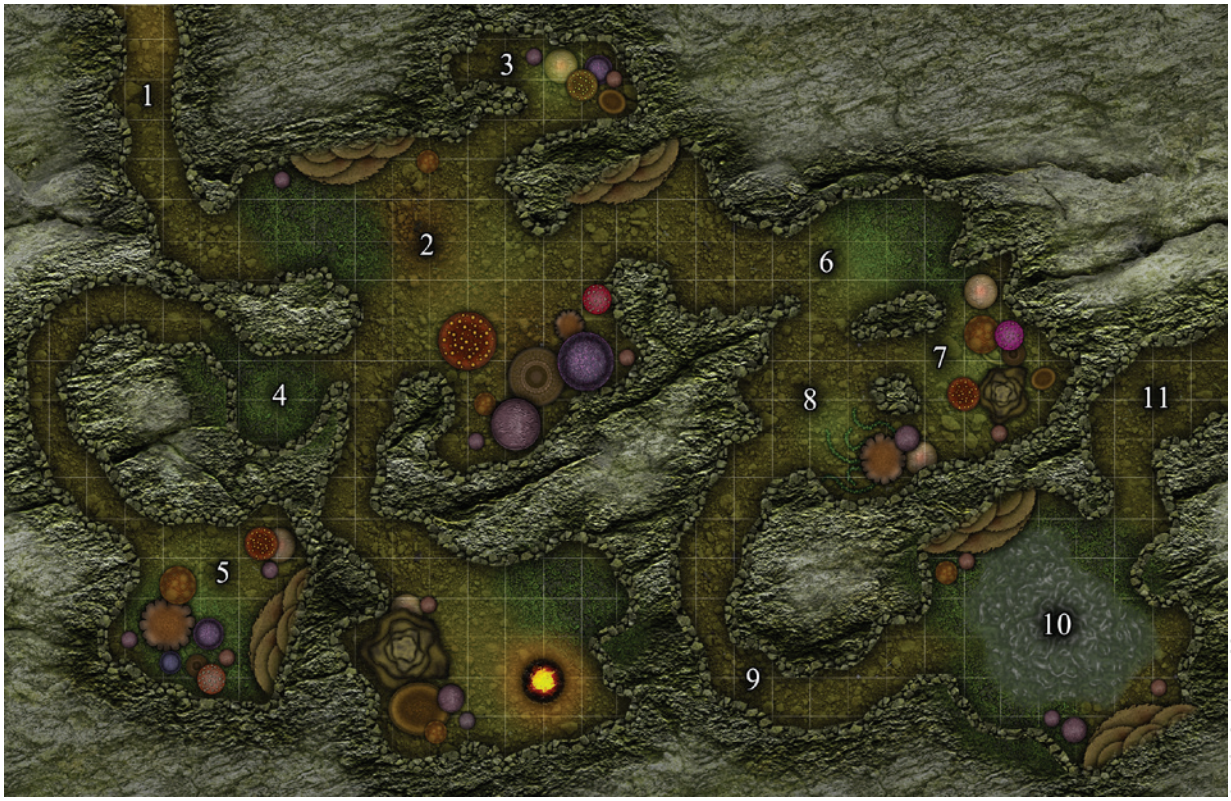
The Life Giver of the Ancients is a strange device made up of three globes that freely circle a smaller center orb. Somehow, it harmonizes with the earth and generates a mystical force that can be harnessed for magical creations. In the southern end of the room a **voidling** ◆ is currently harvesting this power while a **deep one archimandrite** ◆ observes. They engage the characters in combat but do have an emergency portal for escape. The voidling also tries to use this opportunity to kill its master and escape if it sees the opportunity to do so.

Matt Forsyth

5-6 Characters

Levels 8-10

Underworld



Justin Andrew Mason

So Far, No Further

Stephen Yeardley

The party reaches the end of the known world below; divination reveals only basic information like "weal and woe will occur" or shows fungi-filled caverns. Scouts sent ahead disappear. These chambers were once submerged witnessing countless sacrifices to aboleths in exchange for fulfilment of darksome desires. Millennia passed, the ocean fell and area drained, and the cavern's last monstrous being died. But the foulness remains, infusing all that grows; the caves abound with slow-rotting waste and illusion-wielding **aberrashrooms**.

Aberrashrooms automatically concentrate, and effects are resisted with a **Wisdom saving throw**, or noticed with an **Intelligence (Investigation) check**. Detaching them requires a **Strength (Athletics)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check**.

Whatever terrors a spell states, the visions shown by the aberrashrooms' spores are the opposite: joy replaces fear; comfort replaces fright; peace replaces nightmares, and so on. Viewers' desires are made "real" before them. To those believing their eyes, the false brains suggest they "rest to enjoy their reward." If someone does, the rot covers them, attaches hyphae, and slows their metabolism to one tenth its rate; something that might last 100 years exists as "fungi food" for 1,000. However, if rescued, creatures can live out the remainder of their previously expected life. If the aberrashrooms are attacked, they raise what is beneath the surface to defend themselves. The beings suffer from level 4 exhaustion initially; this reduces by one level every 1d4 rounds.

1. Trail's End

Soft phosphorescence lights the end of this steep slope, its source unclear. Strangely, it shows a tidemark halfway down the tunnel; at some time, it was partially flooded. A cracked whale ivory helm sits in an alcove above this line.

A successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check** identifies it as a *helm of telepathy* (no attunement, no *suggestion* property). A wearer saying, "Reward me!" in Deep Speech calls an ancient aboleth, although the nearest is thousands of miles away.

2. Tribute Cavern (#1L, #3M, #4L, #5L, #7S, #8M, #8L, #9S, #9L)

This cavern has fungi patches in opposite corners and three more tunnels leading from it. The floor is decaying fibrous tissue. As you step on it, you sink down about twelve inches.

Lit by multiple colors, this space holds most mushroom types and is very dangerous. 10 feet beneath the surface is a **titanoboa**. If awakened, it attempts to draw a target through the floor

3. Coffin Cave (#2S, #5M, #6M, #8M, #9S)

Bright light shines through a narrow entrance to a cave packed with small, pallid fungi, their colors drained away.

Starorbs can glow like a *sunbeam* spell in a 5-foot radius. While it stunts other fungi, this one does so as a **vampire** is beneath the punk in the western section. If it is extinguished, the vampire wakes and rises by itself.

4. A Choice (#2L, #6M, #7S, #9S, #9M)

Here the path splits: southward there is flickering light; eastward, the fungi glow ends suddenly.

At the point marked '4' a **blood ooze** clings to the ceiling. It eats rarely unable to reach the creatures below. Beneath it is a ragged *robe of eyes*. Eastward, the path loops and drops sharply; a hero must succeed on two **DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks** (path's start and middle) to move at more than half speed. On a failure, a character falls forward 5 feet for each point by which they failed the check, taking appropriate falling damage. Southward, embers still glow. **Pezoia** (**assassin**) may have what the party seeks.

5. Deepest Depths (#1L, #3L, #4S, #5S, #5M, #6M, #7M, #8M, #9S)

The darkness here feels all-encompassing, almost a thick miasma. As you advance, a soft rustling starts.

This is the complex's deepest cave. Nothing has visited here in ages and the fungi haven't fed on their own agent in that time, hence not glowing, although they're attached to mycelium far below.

6. Tally Tale (#1L)

As you pass a large natural stairs, its dim glow lights a column scored with sigils.

Reading this Deep Speech establishes the column is a record of the aboleths' prey from times past.

7. Bright Lights (#2S, #4S, #6M, #7M, #8S, #8M, #9S)

After the gloom and mystery of the entry passage, this small cave is alive with light again. Half-a-dozen fungi are instantly recognisable amongst hundreds of tiny growths.

This particularly fertile cave holds a **shambling mound** that exists symbiotically with the aberrashrooms. It has a rotting touch (*Hit:* plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage) and ***Spore Breath (Recharge 6).*** 15-foot-radius sphere. All targets must succeed on a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw** or spores take root and grow, dealing 5 (1d10) piercing damage at the start of the diseased creature's turn. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn. A success ends the effect, as does emptying a flask of alcohol on the growth).

8. Thoughts Made Flesh (#3M, #6M, #9M)

On entering this gloomy cave, tendrils wave at you, backlit by another glowing orb.

This shroudstool grows around five **awakened shrubs** (reach 10 ft.). The mulch covers four **doppelgangers** equipped as adventures. If raised, each appears as a live version of one hero's previously expressed desires. A target that failed to resist a fungus in any cave must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw** or become confused for 1 minute, as per *confusion*.

9. Spongy Scree

This tunnel curves sharply and drops away quickly. It is pitch black and utterly silent.

This passage behaves as the east path from **Area 4**.

10. Gray Matter (#1L, #7S, #9S)

The course opens into a gargantuan cave, its floor shimmering. Now-familiar fungi coat the walls, providing weak light. As you watch, a slender waving column appears from the floor.

Each 5-foot square holds a **gray ooze**, but instead of dealing acid damage to skin on a successful hit, the substance behaves like an **aboleth**'s *Mucous Cloud*; diseased victims can only breathe in the ooze.

11. Deeper Depths

This tube, wide enough for a large creature, descends steeply into darkness. Occasional white mineral veins appear, evidence of once being underwater.

A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check** identifies the veins as calcium carbonate. Anyone who succeeds on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** finds 1d2+1 pearls in the wall each worth 125 gp.

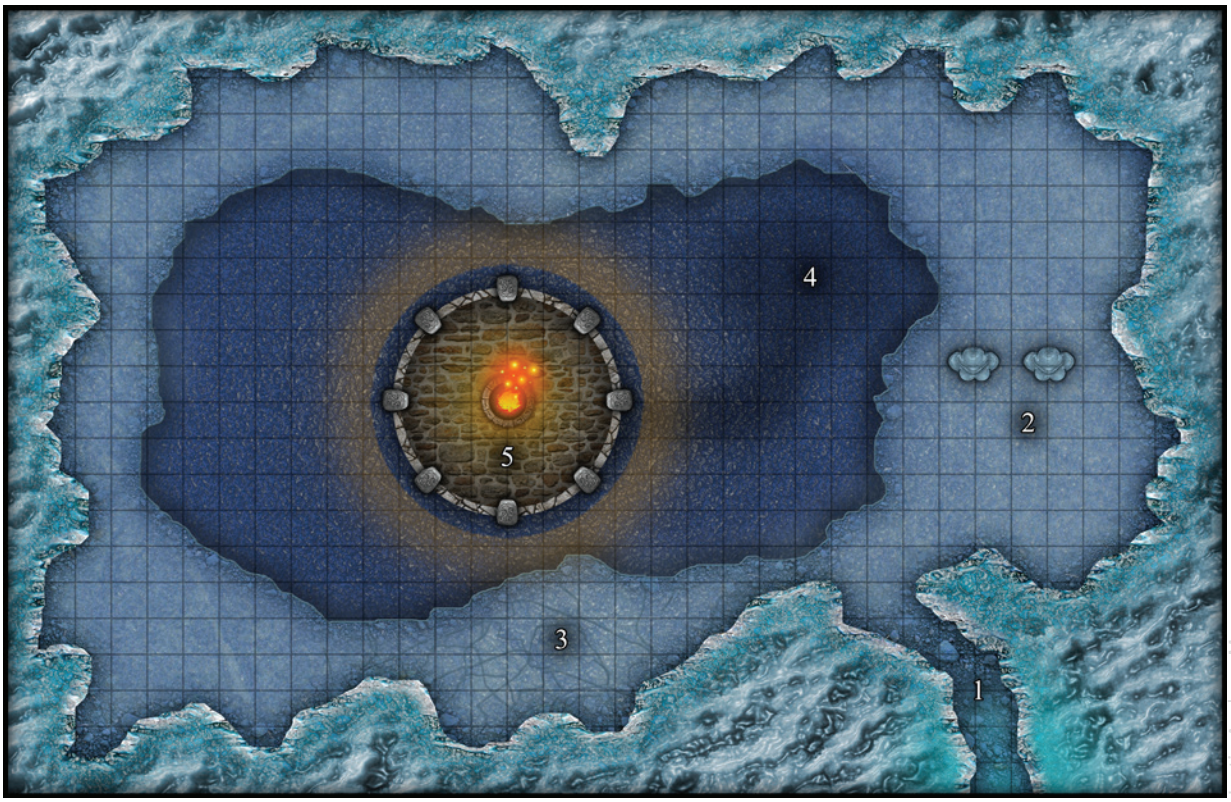
Aberrashrooms

No.	d%	Name	Look	Effect as...	**DC** to Resist by Size			**DC** to Detach by Size		
					S	M	L	S	M	L
1	1-3	Fey Stairs	7 semi-circle steps	*weird*	-	-	18	-	-	25
2	4-8	Blot Platter	Brown oval, tan outer ring	*dominate monster*	13	-	17	25	-	25
3	9-15	Shroudstool	Dun disc, frayed pink edge	*mirage arcane*	-	15	17	-	25	25
4	16-24	Brown Eye	Multi-brown flattened orb	*project image*	13	-	17	20	-	25
5	25-35	Violac	Lilac disc, violet outer ring	*programmed illusion*	12	14	16	20	22	25
6	36-48	Starorb	Glowing yellow orb	*creation*	-	-	-	-	21	-
7	49-63	Gas Globe	Brown globe, yellow circles	*hallucinatory terrain*	11	13	-	20	20	-
8	64-81	Dot Cap	Red hemisphere, gold dots	*hypnotic pattern*	11	13	15	19	20	20
9	82-00	False Brain	Mauve orb, ochre smears	*suggestion*	10	12	14	18	20	20

4
Characters

Level
9

Arctic



Justin Andrew Mason

Thin Ice

Claire Stricklin

The night was wild. A great cracking sound echoed from the peaks. And when the dawn came, the landscape had changed. The great glacier Botasvjökull had come down the mountainside, breaking wide open and laying bare its heart for all to see. Now every frost mage and ice witch from here to the Northern Reach is vying for a piece of the deep ice. For there is power in the glacier's frozen core, and only the strongest may claim it for their own.

Background

It was no freak storm that made the glacier move. Deep within the heart of Botasvjökull, the tarrasque lies in uneasy slumber, hibernating until it should be called forth at the end of days. Thanks to a rapacious remorhaz, that might be sooner than expected. The insectoid monster has begun feeding on the flesh of the sleeping titan, threatening to wake the beast from its torpor.

As the adventure begins, the heroes have no notion of the behemoth that lies within Botasvjökull. Instead, they've been hired for a simple guard job. The wizard **Iffyn** was one of the first to stake a claim on the glacier's heart ice, and wasted no time putting the magically-puissant ice to work. Her prototype ice golems should have clawed their way to the surface by now, but they remain stubbornly buried. Worse, the glacier is now crawling with some extremely territorial magic users. It is the heroes' task to descend into Iffyn's ice cave, discover the source of the delay, and defend her claim as necessary.

The Approach

En route to Iffyn's claim, the party may encounter one or more of the following.

- A **snow hag** and an **ice maiden**. This mother and daughter pair are busily carving a new ice maiden from fallen chunks of glacier. If a character agrees to help with the carving, the maiden volunteers to "grant them protection from the glacier's cold." Of course, she means that she will use her *Kiss of the Frozen Heart* on them.

- A **young white dragon** and her put-upon **baby sister** (**white dragon wyrming**). The younger sibling busily collects pieces of ice, depositing them before the larger dragon. The elder of the pair has so gorged herself on elementally-infused ice that she can no longer fly, but her *Cold Breath* recharges on a 4-6 and deals 67 (15d8) cold damage.

- A **mage** and a trio of his mage apprentices. These scholars are attempting to extract a pair of **mammoths** from the ice. Anyone who succeeds on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the frozen pachyderms moving a round before they return to life and attack.

1. Things in the Ice

The entry tunnel to Iffyn's claim is steep and treacherous. The party must make **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks** to climb down safely. Worse than the climb, however, are the prehistoric fish trapped within the ice. These ancient creatures exude a *Frightful Presence* as an **adult black dragon** (**DC 16 Wisdom saving throw**). Anyone who fails check or saving throw slides to bottom of the chute, skids out on the ice in **Area 4**, and crashes through into the frigid water. Swimmers take 3 (1d6) cold damage at the start of each of their turns.

2. Meltwater Golems

Growing from the floor like stalagmites, this pair of half-formed golems are made entirely from ice. A **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that a third golem has fallen into the water. It lies 30 feet down, weighs 2,000 lbs, and like its siblings cannot walk under its own power (Speed 0 ft.) If the party can place the broken golem back on its base, it will begin to reform once they activate the melt water engine in **Area 5**.

Anyone who identifies themselves as Iffyn's ally can command one or more golems as an action, directing them to attack, grapple, or perform manual labor as a **stone golem**.

3. Weird Ice

These floating ice plates represent a minor natural hazard. Walking across them safely requires a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**, while failure dumps a character into the frigid water. However, a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals that not all of the plates are floating in water. Some of them levitate just above the surface — a side effect of Iffyn's engine. Taking command of an ice plate is as simple as moving it by hand. After that it functions as a *floating disk*. One hour later, these disks gain a measure of intelligence, a pair of glowing blue eyes, and turn on their former masters as **ice mephits**.

4. Tarrasque Meat

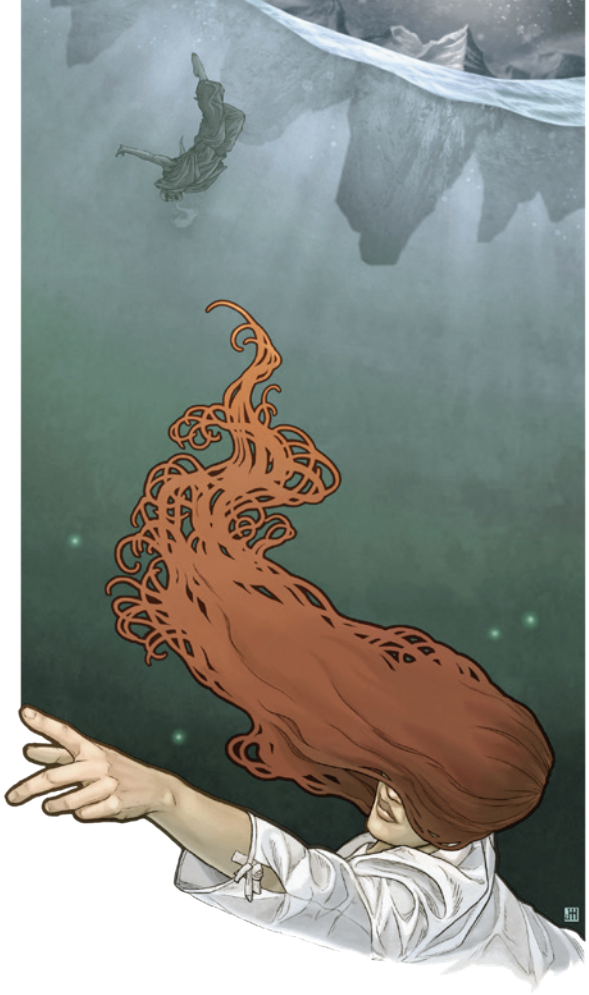
A freshly excavated tunnel (indicated by the slightly darker shade on the map) leads from **Area 5** down into this subterranean chamber. When the heroes first arrive, they surprise a remorhaz at its meal. The startled creature flees into a flooded tunnel in the chamber's floor at the first opportunity.

One of this chamber's walls appears to be made from meat. A **DC 20 Intelligence (History)** or **Intelligence (Nature) check** identifies the vague form in the ice as the **tarrasque**, while a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that this creature's presence as the source of the magical power in Botasvjökull's ice.

5. The Melt Water Engine

When specially prepared effigies are burned within this arcane apparatus, their smoke mingles with the ice of Botavsjökull, causing the desired form to grow from the meltwater. This is how Iffyn made the golems in **Area 2**. Unfortunately, the remorhaz mistook the lit fire for a rival, topping the engine and halting the process.

To complete their contract, the heroes must relight the brazier. When they do, the **remorhaz** appears and attacks 1d4 rounds later. Defeating a normal remorhaz is difficult enough, but this monstrosity's diet of tarrasque flesh has made it even deadlier than most of its kind. It has the following abilities.



Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the remorhaz fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Legendary Actions:

The remorhaz 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. The remorhaz regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Push. The remorhaz makes a Shove attempt against up to two creatures in its reach.

Burrow. The remorhaz may move its burrow speed, leaving behind a 15-by-15-foot pit of freezing water. One adjacent creature must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw** or fall into the frigid water, suffering 3 (1d6) cold damage at the start of each of its turns.

Feed (Costs 2 Actions). The remorhaz dips below the surface for a quick bite of tarrasque, regaining 2d10 hit points. Each time the remorhaz uses this action, there is a cumulative 1% chance that the tarrasque awakens.

Treasure

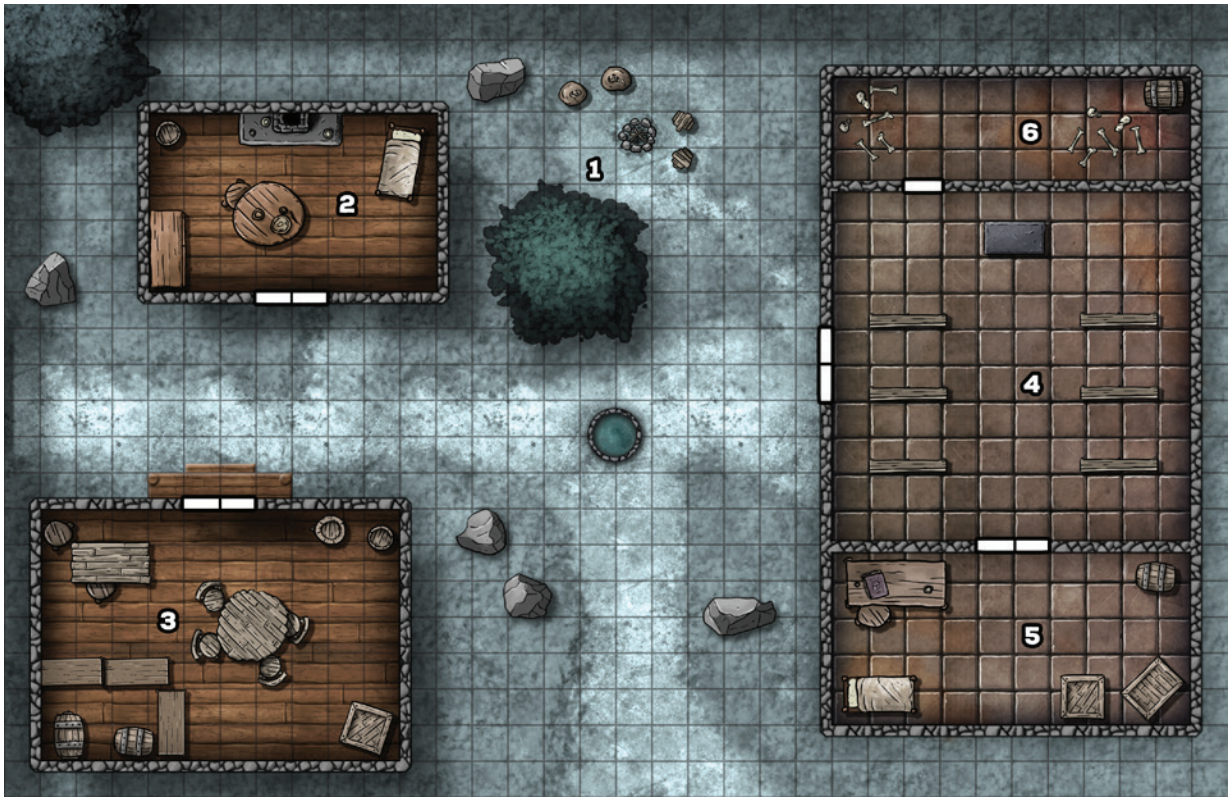
In addition to their agreed-upon fee (1,100 gp apiece), successful heroes may earn one of Iffyn's creations. If they succeeded in restoring the third golem in **Area 2**, it becomes their loyal servant. If not, Iffyn offers them a tamed floating disk as per **Area 3**.

Herman Lau

4-5 Characters

Levels 8-10

Arctic



Chill in the Air

Grant Simpson

A fierce winter storm has torn down from the mountains and spilled across the swath of plains villages below, unleashing frigid, howling winds. The sheer volume of swirling snow is unusual for the region, but especially so for this time of year: spring. The younger locals in villages ahead of the storm are worried about their crop should the storm continue spreading, while the elders shudder in fear of the one who has brought it, for every century the Kemlek the Frigid is said to reincarnate and attempt to bring winter unending.

The Storm

The party must travel through the keening storm to reach the winter wind's chosen at its boreal heart, while the storm renders all terrain outside difficult terrain for travelling due to the winds and deep snow. Locating Kemlek's position at the heart of the storm is guaranteed but can take a long time. When they first enter the storm, and at the end of every long rest, the party must make a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check** in order to track down Kemlek. On a failed check, the party spends the day trudging through the inhospitable blizzard. The difficulty of every successive check decreases by 5.

At the end of every long rest, the party must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** against the cold. On a failure, they gain one level of hypothermia-based exhaustion. On a success they suffer no ill effects. Being adequately prepared (for example warm clothes, enough food, blankets, etc.) for the storm, including using magic to briefly mitigate the frost, grants the respective characters **advantage** on the saving throw.

1. Iced Over

The followers of the Frigid Warrior have occupied this town center, along with a number of elementals drawn to Kemlek's power. Four **ice mephits** lurk around the unlit campfire. They do not serve Kemlek, but they are not hostile to him or his followers. Characters who speak Auran or Aquan and willing to bribe them (for example with the destruction of a fire magic item) can attempt a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to negotiate the mephits' neutrality in the conflict with Kemlek. The mephits do not take kindly to Intimidation while they're in "their" home, the blizzard, and join Kemlek if the parties is hostile.

A tree stands near a frozen pond between three main buildings. Several icy corpses litter the ground, slain by Kemlek and his servants.

Pandemoniac Winds. Creatures in interior areas cannot hear most noises made here because of the howling winds, but extremely loud noises (such as an explosion) can be heard. The enemies in **Area 3** and **Area 4** (except for Yrigg) investigate if they hear such a clamor. The freezing winds immediately freeze over holes in the iced floor that do not hold creatures with body-heat.

Iced Floor. The entire ground outside is not just deep snow, but snow that's iced over. The ground is difficult terrain, and any creature that moves over half its speed must make a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**, falling prone on a failure. A creature that falls prone also crashes through the thin ice-sheet, becoming grappled. It takes a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** to get out of the snow and end the grappled condition. An allied creature can Help a grappled creature to make it automatically succeed at this check.

2. Raided Homestead

This small townhouse has a ten-foot-tall ceiling. It has been ransacked, and only a sad, burned-out fireplace stands across from the door. Searching the fireplace with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** unearths a *ring of warmth* amidst the soot.

A frightened youth named **Tearn** is hiding in the barrel of vegetables at the back of the house. He remains quiet and hides unless the party searches the barrel. The cold has gotten to him, and it takes magic or a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check** to render him coherent. His father, Bjorlick, told him to hide in the barrel when the Frigid Warrior's servants attacked. Tearn saw his father taken alive by the Kemlek's raiders approximately a day ago and is not sure they have taken him.

Award bonus XP if the party escorts Tearn to safety.

3. The Frigid Cult

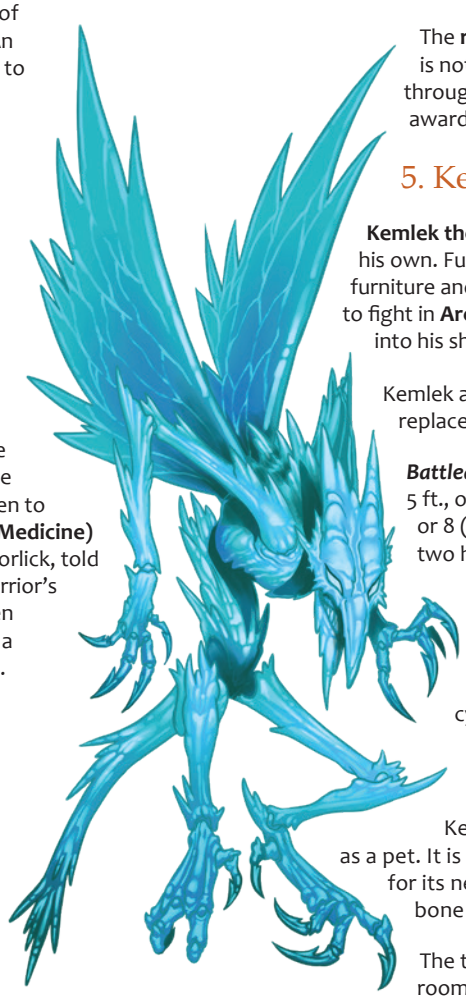
Five **cultists** are drinking in the tavern, unless they were alerted by a loud noise in **Area 1**. They are celebrating after the raid and discussing Kemlek with equal amounts awe and fear. The tavern has a ten-foot-tall ceiling throughout. There are two tables and crates about the room. Three tall tables have been arranged into a shoddy bar in the back corner. The mead barrels behind the bar are half-empty.

4. Polar Prayer

Three **berserkers** and Kemlek's mount, **Yrigg** (as **winter wolf**) qwthat appears as a polar bear with ram horns) are in this room. They are Kemlek's elite warriors and companions, never far from him. This was the town's meeting hall before the invasion, with rows of benches and a podium at one end. Now the podium is covered in archaic, glowing blue runes. A **DC 18 Intelligence (History) check** reveals these runes as symbols of an ancient goddess, the Ice Witch Kallissa. Kemlek is her immortal champion; bent on covering the world in a sheet of ice.

Bjorlick (as **commoner**) is tied up and one of the berserkers is preparing to feed him to the rime worm grub in **Area 6** as the party enters. The others are praying before the makeshift altar, while Yrigg guards the door to **Area 5**.

The berserkers call for **Kemlek** when any fighting breaks out. One of Kemlek's berserkers then attempt to finish the symbols on Bjorlick, which takes an action. After that, the berserker tries to drag Bjorlick to the grub. If Bjorlick is fed to the grub, it is invigorated and increases its hit points to 66.



The **rime worm grub** also joins the fray if Bjorlick is not fed to it within 3 rounds, burrowing through the wall. If the party rescues Bjorlick, award double XP for the encounter.

5. Kemlek The Frigid

Kemlek the Frigid has made this former town master's room his own. Furs and various weapons lie about. Rime coats the furniture and a deathly chill hangs in the air. If he did not leave to fight in **Area 4**, Kemlek is sitting on the floor, carving a rune into his shoulder to match the hundred more across his skin.

Kemlek acts as **Boreas' chosen**, but replaces *Spear* with *Battleaxe*.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 9 (2d8) cold damage.

After Kemlek dies, his spirit is absorbed into his axe, transforming it into a *berserker battleaxe*. After 100 years, Kemlek will be reborn again from the axe, unless a *wish* is used to end the cycle. Doing so earns the eternal ire of Kallissa.

6. Kemlek's Pet

Kemlek has been keeping a **rime worm grub** as a pet. It is waiting in the village's former treasury room for its next meal (Bjorlick). The area is filled with bone shards from other townsfolk fed to it.

The treasury chest in the back corner of the room contains gp and sp (moderate value), and perhaps a hint as to Kallissa's true agenda.

Axe of Kemlek the Frigid

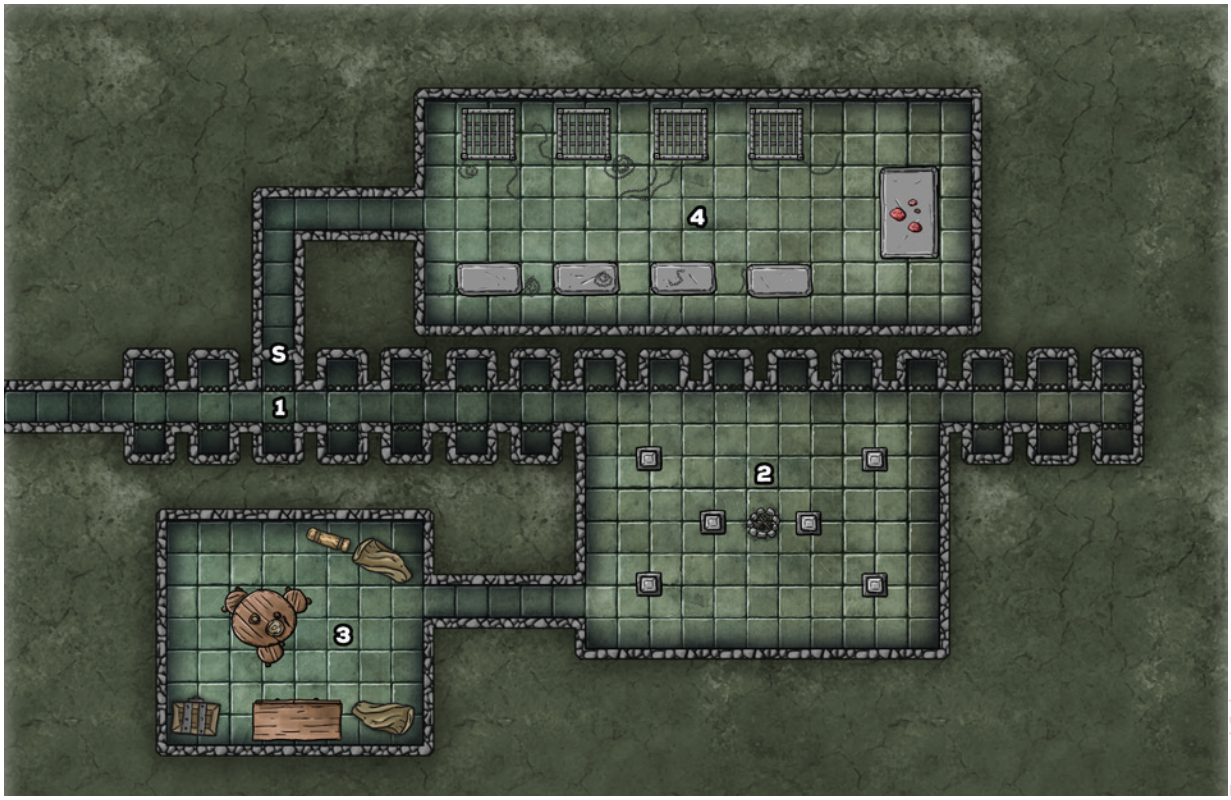
When it comes to buying and selling magical artifacts, the price is driven less by the innate magic of the thing and more by its legend. And the legend of Kemlek the Frigid is one that is resurges every hundred years.

When selling this axe to a shrewd Black Market dealer, the party collects a bounty for a nameless *beserker battleaxe* unless the legend is fresh in the mind of the buyer. A character who succeeds on a trio of **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) checks**, made no more than once per day while recounting the legend of Kemlek to the local populace, collects a bounty for the *Axe of Kemlek the Frigid* (see page 298).

5
Characters

Level
9

Dungeon/
Underworld



Tommi Salama

Divided Darkness

Airian Eastman

Even beings that haunt the nightmares of Upperworlders, even those that lurk in the darkness, sometimes have fates that send cold shivers down their spines. In a cold chamber far beneath a subterranean city, a devious mastermind has taken members of rival houses hostage. Some might be willing subjects, while others are uncooperative victims of an insidious plot. After Slienaia Reth'krun goes missing, the favored second daughter of the first house, rumors spread of vile rituals taking place, their purpose as atramentous as the lightless abyss.

Darkness. The entire dungeon is dark, no torches or light are in any of the areas, except for the fire pit in **Area 2**. Creatures without darkvision need a light source, but the denizens of the complex become alert as soon as they see light.

1. Mysterious Alcoves

A hallway stretches into the murky black, with alcoves lining both walls every 10 feet, each with a row of stones a foot high at the entrance. The alcoves depict scenes from drow and shadow fey mythology. Though carved from rock, they shimmer and gleam as if gems or precious metals were used in the ornaments and mosaics. Understanding these scenes requires **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check**. There is a hint to the location of the secret door: Each alcove sports this rhyme in Undercommon concealed in the shimmering surface of the mosaics:

"Neither Sword/Nor Spell/Shall Defeat Secrecy"

The first letters of the words denote the presence of the secret door: North South/North South/Secret Door South.

To examine and read the shimmering surface, though, a character has to step into an alcove, some of which are pit traps.

Pit Trap

Simple trap (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

There are six pit traps in total, three on each side of the hallway, consisting each of a 20-foot-deep pit.

Beginning with the first pair of alcoves and continuing until the seventh pair, alternating from north to south, are pit traps, with the exception of the third northern alcove where a secret door is located. The floor in the third northern alcove is not trapped. From left to right on the map, the first, fifth and seventh northern alcove are trapped; so are the second, fourth and sixth southern alcoves.

Trigger. Anyone stepping into a trapped alcove might fall into the pit.

Effect. The pit's cover retreats into the floor at an astonishing speed. The triggering creature must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful saving throw, the creature grabs the pit's edge. On a failed save, the triggering creature takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall, and an additional 11 (2d10) piercing damage from landing on a bed of sharpened stones. A creature holding on to a pit's edge

has 1d3 + 1 rounds before the cover slams shut again. Anyone reaching into the pit when the cover slams shut, takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. This makes any character dangling in the pit automatically fall. A character who prepares for a pit trap has advantage on the saving throw.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check discerns the cracks of the cover-panel above the pit. It can only be disarmed in such a way as to prevent the floor from opening. The party can avoid traps entirely by not stepping into alcoves.

Increased Difficulty. Subject to the GM's discretion, any errant finger caught on the pit's edge when the cover slams shut is automatically severed. Alternatively, a GM might allow for a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to avoid the loss of a finger.

The scene of mythology depicted in the third alcove also has some minor inconsistencies with the overall myth, which can be noticed with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check**. Finding the secret door to **Area 4** requires stepping into this alcove and succeeding on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. The secret door is hidden, but not locked. It is well maintained and makes no noise when opened from either side.

The very last alcoves in the hallway past **Area 2** hold offerings and treasure, but the hallway's floor between them is a final pit trap (as above). A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the hallway floor trap.

Treasure. Various coins totaling 650 gp, 3 pearls (100 gp each), 1 garnet ring (150 gp), a *brooch of shielding*, a *wand of secrets*, and a *periapt of proof against poison*.

2. Fire Lure

The hallway continues but opens up after 80 feet. This area holds six stone pillars, each depicting spiders, dark elves and various Underworld creatures. In the center of the room a fire pit glows with magical flames.

Hypnotic Firepit

Magic trap (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

The firepit's flames charm those that look into them, luring them into their hungry embrace.

Trigger. This trap is triggered when a creature gazes upon the flames in the firepit.

Effect. The triggering must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, becoming charmed on a failed save. A charmed creature may attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns. Once a creature succeeds on a saving throw against the firepit, it is immune to the hypnosis until midnight.

A charmed creature moves to the center of the fire pit as soon as it can. Each round a creature spends in the fire pit it takes 27 (6d8) fire damage.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the magical nature of the flames, and *detect magic* discerns the firepit's enchantment aura without looking at the flames. A *dispel magic* (DC 14, automatic if cast using a 4th-level spellslot) dampens the pattern of the flames for 1d3 rounds, granting any creature within the flames advantage on its next saving throw.

3. Office of Darkness

This unadorned room is an office and sleeping quarters for the occupants of the dungeon. The **herald of darkness** resides here with a **black knight commander** and a **shadow fey guardian**. The black knight commander's armor conceals the face of Slienaia Reth'krun, who is complicit in the conspiracy. In the room's corner is a locked chest.

Slienaia and the herald struck a deal for some nefarious purpose of the GM's choice. Correspondence with other conspirators, found on the desk, allude to this.

Despite any screams that may echo through the halls from **Area 2**, the creatures in this room do not engage until they see the party approach through the adjoining hallway. They cannot be surprised unless the party managed to cross **Area 2** without anyone being burned by the firepit, and without making noise. Even then, it takes a **DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) group check** to surprise the conspirators. The conspirators, if subdued, can be made to divulge the location of the secret door in **Area 1** with a **DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Deception) check**; regular persuasion is bound to fail; the conspirators have too much to lose.

Treasure Chest. A successful **DC 20 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools is required to open this chest. It contains 1,300 gp worth of various black-hued gems and a coin pouch with 390 pp.

4. Chamber of Pain

The sounds of clanking chains, moans of agony and devious giggles echo down the passage once the door is opened. This torture chamber/abattoir contains a total of three **drow**, three **shadow fey**, and a **fey revenant**.

Cages. Four cages line the north wall, with chains scattered around the floors of them. Two cages hold drow with fresh wounds and signs of recent torture. In the third, a common shadow fey writhes in agony and has the poisoned condition.

The caged creatures will fight if released, having gone mad from torture and poisons.

Slabs. The south wall is lined by stone slabs, with similar chains. On the slabs lie two more common shadow fey, their wills broken, conditioned to attack intruders. They rise with the first sounds of combat. A drow sits with his back against the third and is the source of the hysterical laughter; the drow is stark raving mad.

Altar. At the far end of the room a stone altar is littered with the remains of a funglet that has been surgically dissected. The fey revenant holds a piece of the creature, examining it.

Development. Reward 200 XP for every shadow fey and drow subdued; if the party manages to cure the madness of the captives, award an additional 350 XP per captive restored to sanity. Drow and shadow fey saved from this nightmare ordeal are uncharacteristically loyal.

5 Characters

Level 9

Arctic



Tommi Salama

Icebreaker

William Fischer

In recent months, the dwarves of the Highpike clan have made a fortune selling a substance called rimerock. Believed to be a form of elemental ice left behind when the Material Plane first separated from the Elemental Chaos, rimerock is as hard as stone and melts extremely slowly, even under the harshest midday sun.

Now, however, shipments of rimerock have ceased, and the dwarves responsible for mining the ice have not been seen for weeks. As the adventure begins, the remaining members of the Highpike clan call upon the party to discover the fate of their missing kin. Alternatively, the characters might be hired by an unscrupulous merchant looking to seize the dwarves' operation for themselves.

Unbeknownst to the Highpike dwarves when they discovered the rimerock, the vale serves as mating grounds for the remorhazes that range the nearby mountains. When two of these remorhazes returned to the vale, the creatures devastated the clan's mining operations and left no dwarf alive.

Journey to the Vale. The Highpike clan's source of rimerock is a vale hidden amongst the peaks of a nearby mountain range.

Locating the Vale. Locating the vale requires several days of travel and a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check**. If the characters have directions to the vale (given to them either by the Highpike dwarves or a competitor), this check is made with **advantage**. Every failed Survival check adds a day to the party's journey.

Long Journey. At the GM's discretion, each additional day the party spends traveling, the characters must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, the character arrives at the vale having taken 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the trek.

1. The Vale

The vale is a half-mile stretch of lowland nestled between a pair of imposing mountains. Due to the presence of the rimerock field (**Area 2**), the temperature in the vale is even colder than the surrounding terrain, with temperatures rarely rising above freezing. Unless they have resistance or immunity to cold damage or are equipped with cold-weather gear, creatures in the vale must make a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** every hour or gain a level of exhaustion.

The rimerock deposits are almost depleted. Now, only a few dozen of the boulders remain. The characters arrive at the eastern end of the vale, giving them a view of the rimerock field and a wooden tower the Highpike dwarves dubbed the Icebreaker (**Area 4**).

2. Rimerock Field

Boulders of solid ice dot the east end of the vale. Each standing taller than a human, the boulders are too heavy to move without draft animals, magic, or the combined efforts of several strong humanoids.

Rimerock. Characters who make a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Nature) check** recognize the ice as rimerock, a substance typically found only on the Elemental Planes. Though not impervious to heat, rimerock melts only under the most extreme conditions (such as being submerged in magma or bathed in dragonfire).

Cold Air. The air surrounding the rimerock is particularly frigid. A creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of a rimerock boulder must make a successful **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** or take 3 (1d6) cold damage. A creature that touches rimerock with bare skin takes 7 (2d6) cold damage (**no save**).

Rimerock Chunks. Each boulder is an object with **AC** 17, 30 hit points, **resistance** to fire damage, and **immunity** to cold, poison, and psychic damage. A boulder reduced to 0 hit points shatters into 4d4 hand-sized chunks. A creature that touches one of these smaller chunks takes only 3 (1d6) cold damage and suffers no damage when starting its turn near it. Each chunk weighs roughly 25 pounds, making them relatively easy to transport.

3. Broken Ground

This area marks the spot where the remorhazes burrowed from the ground to attack the Highpike dwarves. The burrow has since collapsed and been covered with a layer of snow, but a character who makes a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** notices the broken ground.

4. The Icebreaker

To break the rimerock into more manageable chunks, the Highpike dwarves constructed a device they called the Icebreaker. The Icebreaker is a 30-foot-tall tower of wooden scaffolding. Until recently, a series of pulleys topped the Icebreaker, which allowed the dwarves to raise an enormous wrecking ball inside the tower, haul a rimerock boulder beneath it, and drop the ball, shattering the ice to pieces.

The dwarves who escaped the remorhazes' initial onslaught sought refuge at the top of the Icebreaker, but to no avail. The structure is now littered with the wreckage of the pulley system and swaths of frozen blood. A character who makes a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** also notices the tower's scaffolding has been gouged and scorched (where the remorhazes scrabbled up the tower).

A ladder on the east side of the Icebreaker remains intact, allowing Large or smaller creatures to reach the top of the tower. Otherwise, climbing the tower's scaffolding requires a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check**.

5. Remorhaz Burrow

Once the characters have had a chance to explore the vale, the ground begins to tremble. Moments later, a **remorhaz** bursts from the ground here. One round later, the second remorhaz emerges at another location — preferably near a character targeting the first remorhaz with ranged attacks. Enraged at having been interrupted during mating season, the remorhazes fight to the death, climbing the Icebreaker to get at the characters, if necessary.

Conclusion

Should the characters defeat the remorhazes, the vale is theirs. They can return the rimerock operations to the Highpike dwarves or hand it over to another patron (in which case, the elders of the Highpike clan might seek out the party for restitution). The characters could even try harvesting what remains of the rimerock themselves. If they repair the Icebreaker, they can use the contraption to smash the remaining boulders and sell the chunks — to scholars of the Elemental Planes, perhaps, or nobles looking to cool their summer villas — for 25 gp each.



Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 8-10

Urban



Sean MacDonald

Night Carnival

Tony Ohrazda

Under a new moon's misty gaze, vardos arrive. A modest bacchanal is pitched, set to entrance the locals with beautiful dancers, trained beasts, fireworks, and sensory treats such as rich meats, strong cider and rare tobacco. A huge tent, glowing like a dying lantern thanks to internal torches, is set for the main show.

Madame Taro, an ivory-skinned beauty, leads the Night Carnival. She personally greets every patron, her luminous hazel gaze radiating assuring warmth. Alas, the carnival hides a bloody cult with a simple plan: tempt the "meat" with wolfish lusts! Once the big top fills, Taro calls fiendish spirits to reap the villagers' lifeforce as her minions kill or cage those outside the tent. Sunrise finds just a blood-soaked square; the cult moves quickly towards the next hamlet.

Timetable of a Night of Wonder. Banners draw the close crowd to the entry tent (**Area 1**). Give characters time to explore **Areas 1** to **5**, then proceed with Midnight Approaches. Unless Taro's plan is disrupted, it eventually culminates with Show Time! and the events in the big top (**Area 6**).

Midnight Approaches. *Inside the Big Top.* The performers - **Madame Taro**, [**vampire priestess** (*amulet of proof against detection and location*)], three **dancers** (**pattern dancers**), and an **acrobat** [**vampire spawn** (*amulet of proof against detection and location*)] - enter **Area 6** minutes before midnight and prepare.

Outside the Big Top. **Mayve** (**Area 3**), **Karlgan** (**Area 4**) and **Zyrtian** (**Area 5**) (all **cultists**), and the **sisters Eria**, **Lyria**, and **Vyria** (**commoners**) (**Area 2**), encourage folks toward **Area 6**.

Show Time! The sisters return to the troupe's remote camp, readying for departure. **Mayve** and **Karlgan** retrieve hidden blades, murdering anyone outside **Area 6** but imprisoning comely villagers in cages (**Area 3**). Finally, **Zyrtian** sends fireworks into the night sky, masking the violence. They defend themselves and each other if confronted. Those poisoned with midnight tears suffer effects at the stroke of midnight.

The Carnival Appears!

As the blister-red sun sets it outlines a small cortege of vardos entering the village square. Motley carnies erect gaudy tents with alacrity born of repetition, even as they play music, sing, dance and laugh. By darkness, the square's transformation is complete. Joviality infects the bold, who coerce the meek. Rich scents make mouths water as lithe dancers weave through the square, twirling torches and coquettishly engaging shier residents. The entire village is entranced!

1. Entry Tent

Madame Taro (**vampire priestess**, who wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location*) lounges under a striped tent festooned with pillows. A vase of fresh roses and a near-empty carafe of red wine sit on a small table.

Red Roses, Redder Wine. Taro beckons the party, offering seats and wine poured from a fresh bottle. Hers is blood-scented; herbs mask the smell. Toasting the party, she expertly feigns deep interest in its tales. As the exchange ends, she gives each member a red rose as a "sign of admiration and friendship;" it also covers all charges for lucky owners, including entry to midnight's must-see main event!

Suspicious characters that make a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check** sense that Madame Taro is deceiving them. The red rose is a sign that workers must watch the wearer (see **Area 2**).

Crowded. From here, squeezing through the crowd reduces base walking speed to 5 feet. A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** increases this to 10 feet for 1d3+1 rounds.



2. Stalls

Eria, **Lyria** and **Vyria**, sell roasted food, pies, wine, ale, tobacco and various odd trinkets at several stalls. Those with a bloom are handed a *red rose brew*, a strong drink previously treated with midnight tears poison. Track this up to *Show Time*!

3. Magnificent Monsters

Mayve, who looks like an exotic animal trapper, regales patrons with yarns and displays her catches in ornate pens. Three Large cages hold: a **saber-toothed tiger**; a **giant scorpion**; a **polar bear**. The Huge cage holds a **giant ape** that rages against the bars. The cages are enchanted, the beasts are *major image* illusions.

Those curious enough to study a beast sense its false nature with a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, made with **advantage** if they notice it ignores all **Wisdom (Animal Training) checks**. Behind its illusion, a cage is caked with dried excrement and blood. All are locked; **Mayve** has the only key. The locks can be picked with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools.

Development. **Mayve** attempts to cover her deception; if it fails, she discreetly admits the animals are fake and asks characters to please move on without spoiling the fun for the villagers, before signaling to **Karlgan** and **Zyrtian**.

4. Bonfire

Karlgan, an accomplished raconteur, poses as the troupe's chef. He roasts meats and weaves constantly changing sagas about how he lost his leg. A successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** uncovers that **Karlgan** hides a scimitar in his fireirons.

5. Cannon

Zyrtian, the hooded pyrotechnician, dramatically readies a pyro-cannon, using mystery to awe children and adults alike. Six batches of fireworks - ammunition for the cannon - sit stacked nearby.

Pyro-Cannon. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 60 ft./180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) 21 fire damage, plus the target catches fire as if hit by alchemist's fire. The cannon has the loading property.

6. The Big Top

Inside this warmly lit space, cushioned bleachers provide cozy seats. As midnight nears, **Madame Taro** and four performers enter, preparing as the audience settles.

Clicking her fingers, Madame Taro banishes all light. Darkness lasts seconds as she sparks an antique candle-lantern, its sinuous amber flame illuming the entire tent. Raucous, ethereal violin chords begin. Dancers pose on dazzling podiums; they sway and clap rhythmically to get everyone to join in. They all roar as Taro circles, raising the energy. Suddenly, she appears on the center stage.

Candle. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the candle emanates powerful magic. Taro lit a *candle of invocation* (lawful evil) placed within the lantern attached to the center post.

Combat. On her turn, **Madame Taro** retrieves her *Scourge* and casts t, excluding minions from the effect. She then attempts to move around the tent, killing the villagers with the spell.

Madame Taro chants a guttural incantation, and crimson mist forms into sinister shapes that seep into members of the terrified audience. Flesh blackens and crumbles. Amid the screams of the dying, Taro gracefully, mercilessly, weaves through the crowd, intoning her dark prayer.

The three **dancers** prioritize attacks against the party. The undead **acrobat** unveils long talons and bloody fangs, then tries to attack spellcasters in melee via its *Spider Climb*.

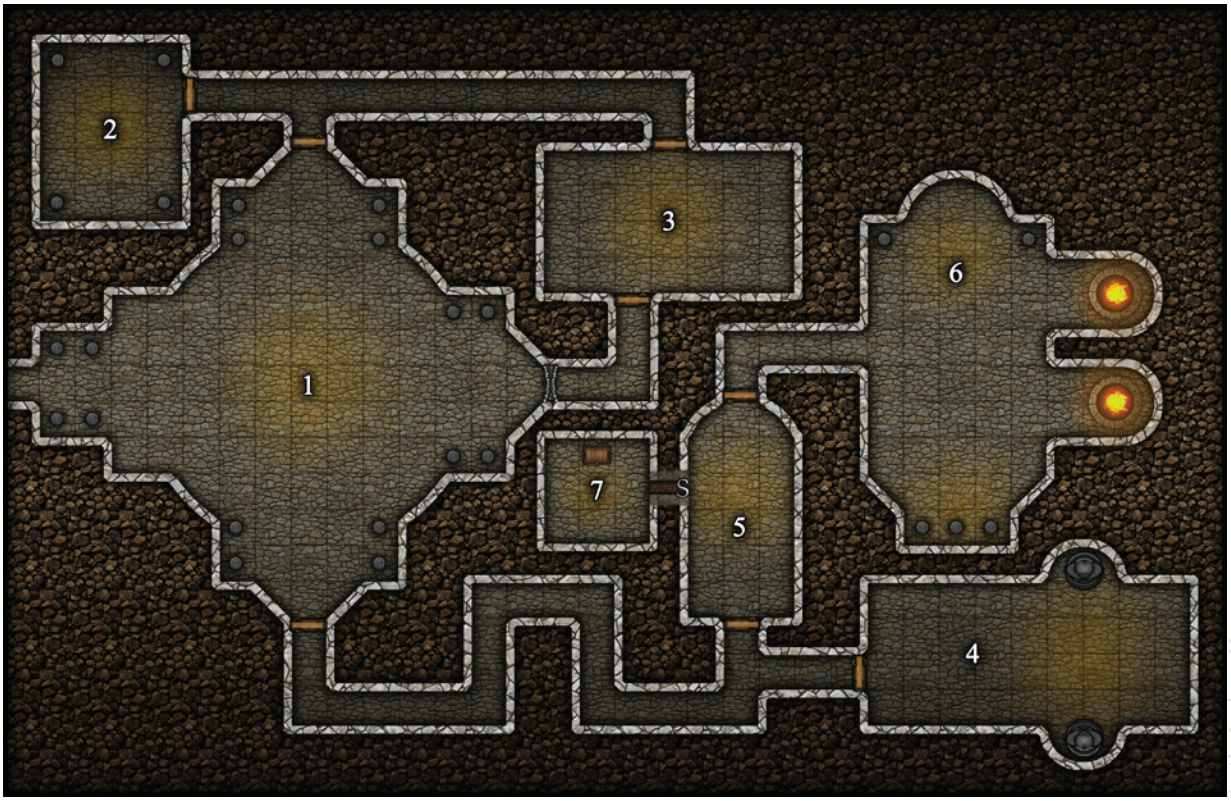
Stopping Madame Taro! A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** reveals the spell's radius and that it requires concentration. **Taro** kills all the villagers in the tent in four rounds unless the characters prevent her movement or break her concentration. If reduced to zero hit points, **Madame Taro** uses *Misty Escape* to retreat to her remote encampment.

Mates Laurentiu

4 Characters

Levels 9-10

Underworld



Justin Andrew Mason

Skeletons of the Past

David Schwartz

For many generations Raskoron was a prominent dwarven city. Its ruin came when a group of dwarves snuck into the lair of the red dragon Chareshnavoch seeking treasure and instead stole her clutch of eggs. The dragon's response was swift and brutal, as fire engulfed Raskoron and Chareshnavoch razed the city, building by building, to the ground, with the survivors making their last stand in the forge-temple, which was also where the eggs were hidden. Unable to breach the underground building, Chareshnavoch collapsed the entrances trapped the defenders inside, unaware that she had also doomed her own offspring. Though all in the forge-temple eventually perished, the traumatic circumstances and anguish experienced made many rise as undead.

Seeking to reclaim their history, a group of dwarves exploring fallen Raskoron have cleared the entrance to the forge-temple. Repelled by the undead inhabitants, these dwarves hire the characters to clear the building of danger.

Forge-Temple Features

Rooms and halls in the forge-temple have 10-foot high ceilings, except where noted. The doors are wooden, and none have locks. There are no light sources in the forge-temple except for the forges themselves.

1. Nave

The dome of this chamber—carved with elaborate geometric patterns—rises to a peak 40 feet above the floor. This largest chamber of the forge-temple was used for public worship.

When the dwarven explorers first breached the forge-temple, they were attacked by five **undead dwarves**, who now stand ready to repel any further intruders. These animated corpses have the abilities of **bearded devils** except as follows: they are undead instead of fiends; they are **resistant** to necrotic damage instead of cold; they speak Common and Dwarvish (no telepathy); and they have *Sunlight Sensitivity*.

The characters can convince the undead dwarves they are reinforcements or refugees with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check**, as long as none of them are obviously reptilian. Otherwise the undead dwarves attack, fighting until destroyed, though they won't leave the forge-temple. If the characters talked their way past the undead dwarves but later attempt to leave, the dwarves attack them as traitors, unless the characters are accompanied by Darask (see **Area 6**).

2. Chapel

This room—once used for private worship and small gatherings—is now littered with dry bones and rusted weapons and armor. As the trapped dwarves died from wounds or deprivation, the survivors interred them here as a makeshift crypt.

Though not undead, neither are the souls here fully at rest. When a living creature touches any of the remains in this room, the metal begins to rattle and spark. One round later, it combines to form two **iron spheres**. The spheres attack until destroyed, or until they can no longer sense any living creatures, at which point they collapse back into their component parts.

A character who spends ten minutes sorting through the metal can find enough undamaged parts to reconstruct a suit of plate armor.

3. Vestry

This room stores clerical vestments, holy symbols, censers, and other items used in worship ceremonies. If a character searches the room and succeeds at a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they discover two *potions of superior healing*.

4. Sanctum

This room's ceiling is 20-foot high and its walls are decorated with images of dwarven gods. Fragments of giant eggshells litter the floor.

The sanctum was used for the forge-temple's most sacred rituals, and some considered it blasphemy when the dwarven leaders choose to hide the dragon eggs in this room. After the forge-temple was sealed off, desperate dwarves smashed the eggs. From this violence rose three **unhatched**.

If the characters leave the door to this room open, the unhatched attempt to escape (perhaps to trouble the characters elsewhere), but if any are attacked, they all respond in kind.

5. Purgatory

This room was used by the priests to cleanse themselves, physically and spiritually, when entering and exiting the sacred forge.

A pair of **ghost dwarves** stand guard here. They are unable to speak except to repeat their last desperate prayers, and attack anyone who moves toward the doors to **Areas 6** and **7**.

A secret door (leading to **Area 7**) can be found with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. A character with *Stonecunning* can roll **Intelligence (History)** instead, adding twice their proficiency bonus.

6. Sacred Forge

This room's 20-foot-high ceilings are blackened from centuries of smoke. Two forges provide dim light, fueled by volcanism and thus still lit despite the city's fall. A creature that starts its turn in a forge's space must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**, taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

From this room the dwarven high priest **Darask** plots his redemption. The shame of his part in the disaster and the desire for revenge against Chareshnavoch has turned Darask into a **hierophant lich**. With the help of an **undead dwarf** (as in **Area 1**), the high priest is putting the finishing touches on a *dragon slayer longsword*. If they hear combat in **Area 5**, they put down their work and prepare for intruders.

The characters can avoid combat with Darask if one of them succeeds at **DC 20 Charisma (Deception)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**—provided none of them are obviously reptilian, of course! Realizing escape is now possible, the high priest intends to raise an undead army and attack the red dragon Chareshnavoch. If the character attempt to dissuade or prevent him, Darask attacks.



7. Reliquary

Within niches in the wall are decorative cases holding the skulls, bones, and hair of venerated dwarves. To one side is a locked chest, which can be opened with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. Inside are religious items, like those found in the vestry (**Area 3**), but made with precious metals and rare gems (worth 1,000 gp in total, 20 lbs. total weight). Among the items is a golden rod topped with a holy symbol; this is Darask's sacred vessel. The hierophant lich cannot be permanently destroyed as long as the rod exists.

Dragon Slayer

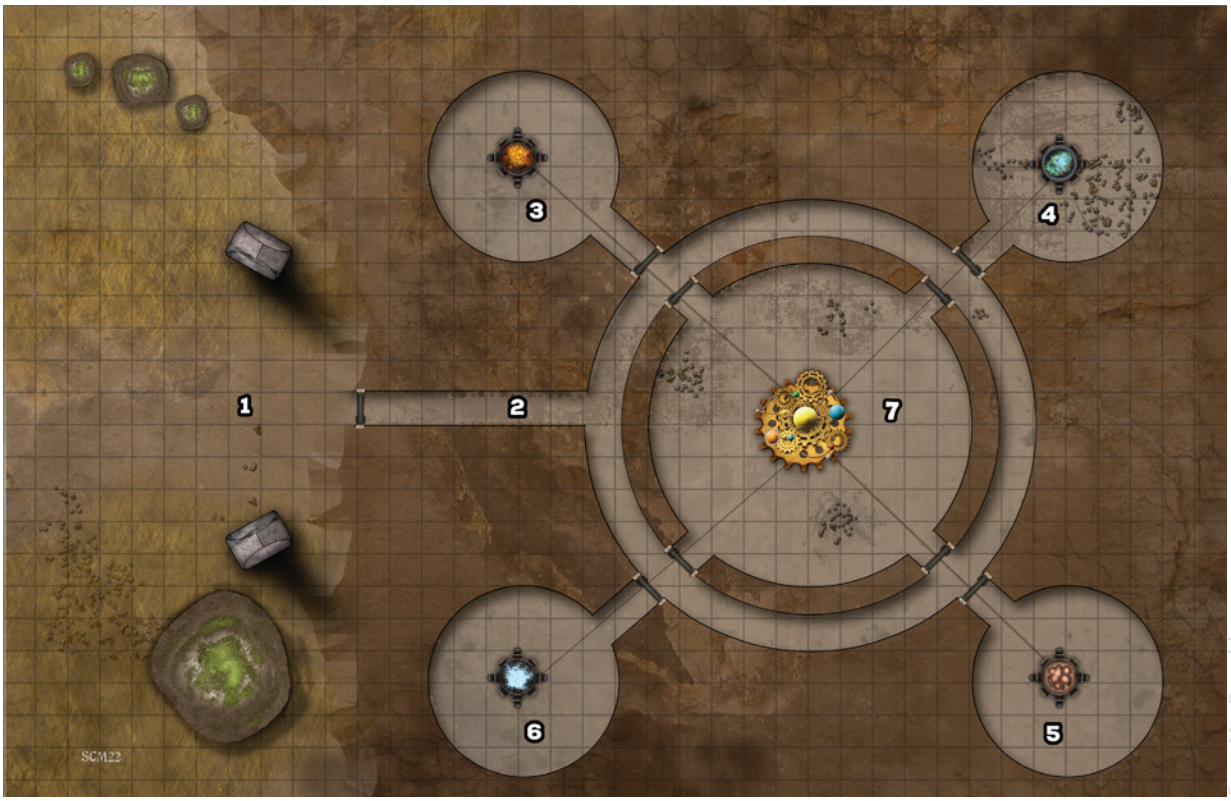
If the the *dragon slayer longsword* that Darask and his retinue forge leaves the forge-temple in anyone else's hands and the red dragon it was created to defeat yet lives, the sword becomes cursed: its magic only functions against Chareshnavoch. The party may not discover this curse until they try to use it against a different dragon, or it may go unnoticed until they try to sell it. To get full selling price for a *cursed dragon slayer* requires a character succeed on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check**.

Dean Spencer

4-5 Characters

Levels 9-10

Mountain



Sean MacDonald

Akaban's Temporal Temple

Grant Simpson

Akaban. A crazed, withered figure wanders the streets, frantically asking for help. Akaban (male, **eonic drifter** ◆), a drifter from an ancient civilization bouncing across time and space, doesn't have long left and must find adventurers capable of stopping possibly the greatest threat to this timeline. Himself. He is only able to provide a cryptic explanation of the danger and a pendant which perpetually points in the direction of an ancient temple before a temporal rift appears and swallows him.

Akaban's past self believes he has discovered a way to resurrect his destroyed civilization by merging parallel timelines into one. However, this ritual only ends in cataclysm; destroying half of the continent and casting a weakened Akaban careening through time. He has spent the last of his strength to return and warn anyone who will listen, hoping they can stop him.

The Temple. Savant Akaban has located the Temple of Siern, a lost edifice from his vanished civilization. The ceilings throughout the temple are 20 feet tall throughout and alchemical lanterns hang at intervals along the wall to provide dim lighting in every area. Roll initiative upon entering the temple.

The Ritual. Once Savant Akaban begins his ritual, the borders between time and space weaken within the temple, allowing him to drag other versions of himself to the temple. All of these Akabans are hostile to the party.

Accumulated Akabans. Every 30 seconds (5 rounds) after entering the temple new Akabans (as **eonic drifter** ◆) spawn from rifts created by the ritual. Roll 1d6 to determine which Area these Akabans appear in (reroll 1s) and 1d4 to determine the number, but none can appear within 5 feet of a space occupied by another creature. If six Akabans (eonic drifter versions) are present in the temple, no new ones can be created at that time.

1. Path to the Temple

The entrance door is crafted of polished stone, still unmarred. A small keyhole lies directly at its center. Two towering pillars of black stone stand on either side of the entrance. These are featureless and reflective, almost mirrorlike.

Key in the Mirror. The stone door is five feet thick and five feet wide. The lock can't be picked, but a **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that both the lock and the two pillars have been magically enchanted by the same spell. Any character who examines the pillars can spot a key on the ground in the reflections of the two pillars with a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**. This key is not present physically outside of the reflections. If a character's reflection picks up the key, it appears in their hand. The key disappears once used to open the door and returns to the reflected dimension.

2. Ruined Roundabout

The walls of the straight hall immediately behind the entrance are covered in worn illustrations of Akaban's civilization. A **DC 20 Intelligence (History) check** reveals the name of this civilization, Izentidal, and that it vanished millennia ago. No one knows why or how.

Blue Energy Wall. The doors leading to **Area 7** are all shut, and the entire wall is protected by crackling blue energy. This energy is immune to attacks and reflects any spell cast on it toward the caster. The only way to remove this magic defense is to either destroy, halt, or remove 2 of the 4 artifacts in **Area 3 – 6**.

3. Pyre of Zlanthar

A cage of copper coated in blue energy, sits in the center of this circular room. An orb of fire floats within that flares intermittently with a dark, shifting shape at its center.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (History) check** reveals this as the ancient alchemic Pyre of Zlanthar. It is an endless flame fed by a rare compound at the Pyre's heart. This check reveals the Pyre can be put out by dealing 40 cold damage to it in 6 seconds or if doused in water for a minute straight. Once put out, the compound consumes itself and disappears unless reignited in 30 seconds.

Alternatively, physically removing the compound from the cage will remove the Pyre from the ritual.

4. Cloud of Colanthil

An iron cage coated in blue energy hangs from the ceiling of this room. A luminous cloud floats within the cage, from which pours an endless rain that shimmers with light. The rain falls through the cage into a basin which doesn't overflow.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals this as the fabled Cloud of Colanthil. It is a non-sentient elemental directly connected to the Plane of Water. The water it produces conforms to any receptacle without overflowing. The Cloud can be destroyed by a strong gust of wind or stopped by providing another receptacle for it to fill.

If not destroyed by the end of the encounter, the Cloud can be stored inside of any sealed container.

5. Mold of Erudino

A marble cage protected by blue energy is affixed to the floor in this room. Inside is a shifting amorphous ball of clay. If a character holds this clay, it takes the form of anything they imagine, even things unknown to them.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** reveals this as the mythical Mold of Erudino. It was created by a secret cult in order to capture the form of their deity. If the name "Erudino" is spoken, the mold rolls toward the one who spoke it. This check also reveals that the Mold dissolves when it comes into contact with silver.

The Mold is highly susceptible in its current state during the ritual and slightly alters its shape in response to words used by the party. If all party members utter the same command word, it will take on the shape.



6. Voice of Zeugros

An obsidian cage coated in blue energy floats in this room. A small cylinder of cracked ice hovers inside, emitting a constant hum. This ice doesn't melt naturally and mimics the sounds it hears when it cracks. If a character holds this ice and thinks of a sound the ice was present for, it reproduces the sound perfectly while repairing itself.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (History) check** reveals this as the forgotten Voice of Zeugros. It is a lost elemental construct given to a ruler for her wedding day, which ended in a bloodbath. The Voice can be melted by dealing 40 fire damage to it in 6 seconds or it can be silenced with a *silence* spell.

7. The Last Akaban

Temporal Turbine. Savant Akaban (male, human **eonic savant**) is conducting his ritual in this room atop an ancient, spinning machine fueled by the energy from the artifacts. Its base occupies a 20-foot-by-20-foot square and stands 10 feet tall. It has **AC** 17 and 70 hp. If it has hp left and Savant Akaban is not defeated 3 minutes (30 rounds) after the party arrives in **Area 7** the ritual is completed.

Combat Tactics. By the time the party arrives, Savant Akaban has completed the beginning of the ritual and it no longer requires his concentration. He calls all Akabans currently in other areas to help him fight the party.

If Akaban drops to 0 hp, he is not killed, but pulled through a time rift.

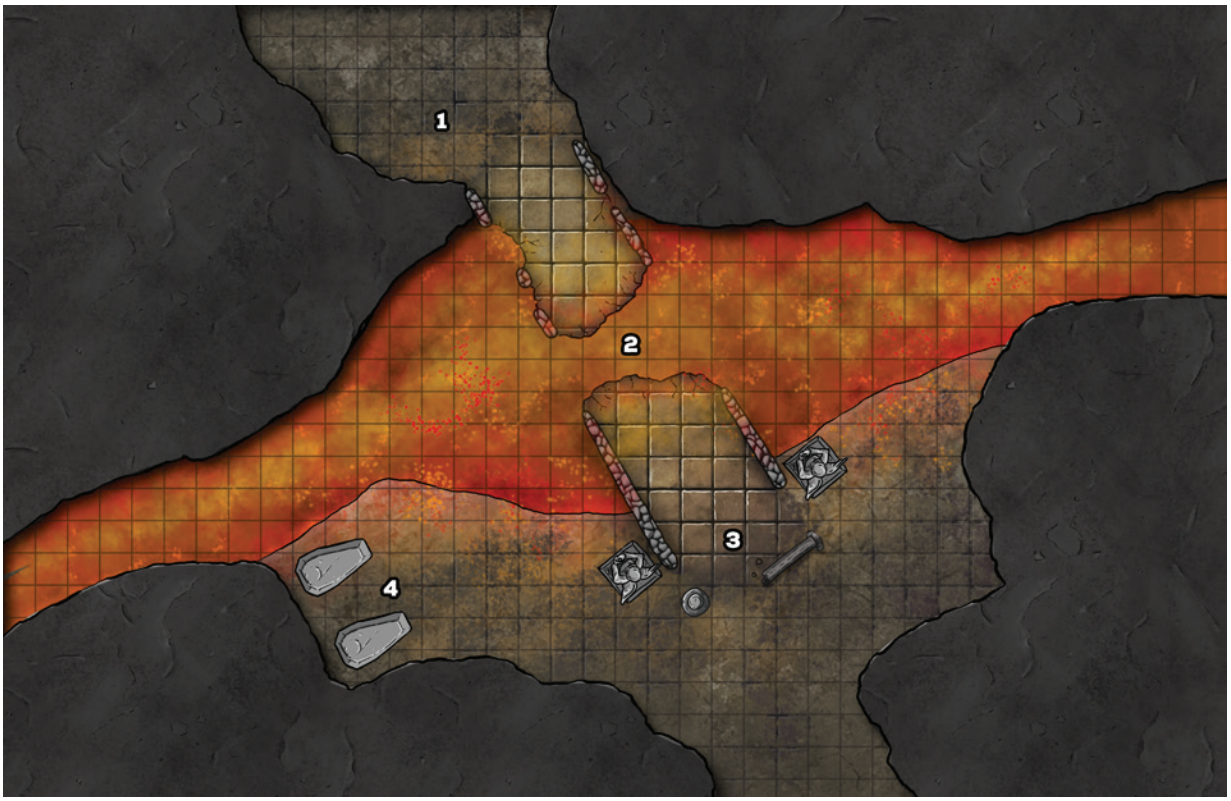
Conclusion

Upon exiting the temple, a future Akaban (who has come to his senses and realized the danger of his experiment) appears and offers them 100gp and a *cloak of displacement*.

4
Characters

Level
10

Underworld



Heart of Flame

Airian Eastman

The vast tunnels around volcanos are often full of danger and little else. A creature unfortunate enough to wander into the tunnels are faced with deadly fire, flowing lava, insufferable heat, and monsters who dwell in such places are unforgiving.

But at the heart of some volcanos lies the greatest treasure never discovered as few try to reach the depths necessary to find the location of ancient ruins, tombs of evil doers or dragons lairs.

The *heart of flame* is said to have once beaten in the chest of a demon lord, though it is a necklace of strange amber stone with dark lines throughout. Adventurers may seek this treasure for their own purposes, as a favor or side quest, or it could be used as part of a larger story. Whatever the reason, the characters will be tested to their limits. Only the most seasoned and well-prepared adventurers stand a chance of locating the heart of flame and escaping with their lives.

Extreme Heat. Due to the extreme heat in this locale, any who travel here are subject to exhaustion. For each hour a character is exposed to the heat of this place, they need to make a successful **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** to avoid incurring a level of exhaustion. Each cumulative check adds +1 to the DC. If you're using the *Survivalist's Guide to Spelunking* ⛏, replace exhaustion with hyperthermia.

The adventurers may use spells, magic items, mundane items, and/or special foods to gain **advantage** or protection from the effects of the heat at the Game Master's discretion, but in order to have a meaningful impact, these effects have to last for at least an hour. A merciful GM may choose to have the saving throw **DC** reset to **DC 15** when a character is protected by magic from heat for at least 10 minutes.

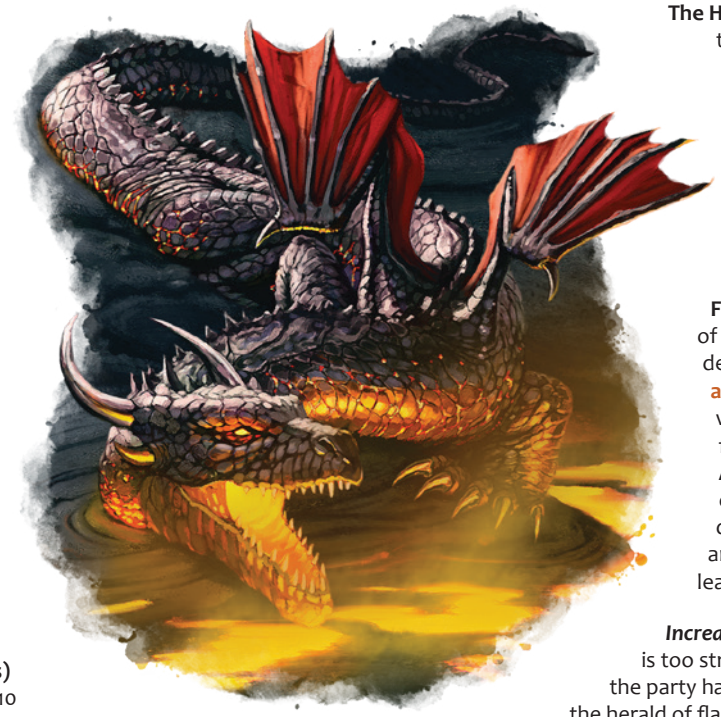
River of Magma. The river of magma is 30 feet below the bridge. A creature about to fall into the magma can grab a ledge by succeeding on a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**. This leaves them dangling precariously above the river. Falling into flowing magma should mean instant death for any character not magically protected from fire. Contact with magma deals 71 (13d10) fire damage.

Decreased Lethality. For (slightly) less deadly rules, a creature starting its turn in magma also takes the damage for contact with magma. Being fully submerged in magma deals 99 (18d10) fire damage.

1. Path of Fire

Far below ground the heat builds; the air is parched and acrid, heavy with the scent of burning and of brimstone. The wide tunnel begins to glow with a strange light, similar to fire, but without the characteristic flickering. A viscous bubbling is clearly audible along uncanny animal sounds. The path narrows

and reveals a molten river of lava, spanned by a bridge that is broken in the middle. On the other side of the river, statues and tombs can be made out in the haze.When a creature moves to within 5 feet of the bridge/edge, waves of **agnibarra** (with a 30 ft. climbing speed) emerge from the lava below to attack. Each round, 1d2 + 1 agnibarra emerge, until a total of 12 agnibarra have climbed from the river of magma.



2. Broken Bridges

The worn bridge leads to the tomb on the opposite side, but crossing it is made more perilous than usual by the howling, hot winds. Due to these winds, it takes a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Athletics) check** to leap across using at least 10 feet of movement and a running start.

Any wooden object, rope, or creature attempting to cross the broken section of the bridge takes 10 (4d4) fire damage per round from the searing winds and is subject to *Extreme Heat* every round.

3. Still as a Statue

Two statues stand on the other side of the magma river, with a smashed column laying between them on the ground. They are **basalt gargoyles** (which are immune to fire damage due to their long exposure to the lava flow), and enjoy trying to Shove characters into the lava, or even grappling them and tumbling off the ledge. A **salamander** hides in wait on the underside of the bridge, attacking when the characters are in battle with the gargoyles. The salamander also attempts to help plunge characters into the magma with its *Tail*.

The ornate column laying on the ground depicts the story of those buried here, hinting at weird dwarves and infernal pacts. The base of the column hides a secret compartment which holds a complex key. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** is required to find the mechanism which opens the compartment.

4. Final Rest

Gitwerc Tombs. The tombs are stark and unadorned, though they belonged to a **gitwerc** clan chief and his heir, their names are lost to time. Alternatively, any evil/fire dwarf variant works. The gitwerc were cursed by their infernal masters after trying to give the *heart of flame* to a dragon.

Secretive Compartments. Beneath the gitwerc corpses are locks which the key found in **Area 3** unlocks. Otherwise, it takes a successful **DC 20 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools to unlock them. The cavity beneath the heir is laden with treasures. The cavity beneath the clan chief holds the *heart of flame*.

The Herald Arrives. When the treasure chambers are opened a **herald of flame** flies in from **Area 1**, crossing the lava and lands in this area behind the characters. It demands the *heart of flame* and all other treasure the party carries, attacking if it is refused.

From the Ashes. When the herald of flame dies, the magma's glow decreases perceptibly, and an **adult flame dragon** bursts with a triumphant scream from the lava at the center of **Area 2**, destroying the remains of the bridge, glowing lava dripping from its body. It roars and flies down the passage leading away from **Area 3**.

Increased Challenge. The dragon is too strong for the party, but if the party had too easy a time with the herald of flame, you may wish have it rampage here for 1d4 + 2 rounds before absconding.

Treasure. 175 pp, valuables worth 1,500 gp total (2 brass mugs with jasper inlay, silver necklace with gemstone pendant, large well-made tapestry of gitwerc clan crest, silk robe with gold embroidery, box of onyx animal figures), *potion of fire giant strength*, *scroll of fire storm*, and a *mace of terror*.

Heart of Flame

Wonderous item, legendary (requires attunement)

The amber necklace glows with the light of fading embers, flaring up when its powers are used. It is uncomfortably hot to the touch, and on its back, etched in Infernal, are the words: "Beware, for fire consumes all.:

While you are attuned to the *heart of flame*, you have resistance to fire damage and are immune to exhaustion due to heat, but you also have disadvantage on saving throws to avoid exhaustion due to cold and vulnerability to cold damage. See **Hypothermia on page 288** and **Hyperthermia on page 290**.

While you are attuned to the amulet, you can cast the following 3/day: *continual flame*, *conjure minor elementals* (4th spell level, fire elementals only).

Additionally, you can cast 1/tenday: *contact other plane* (Elemental Plane of Fire only).

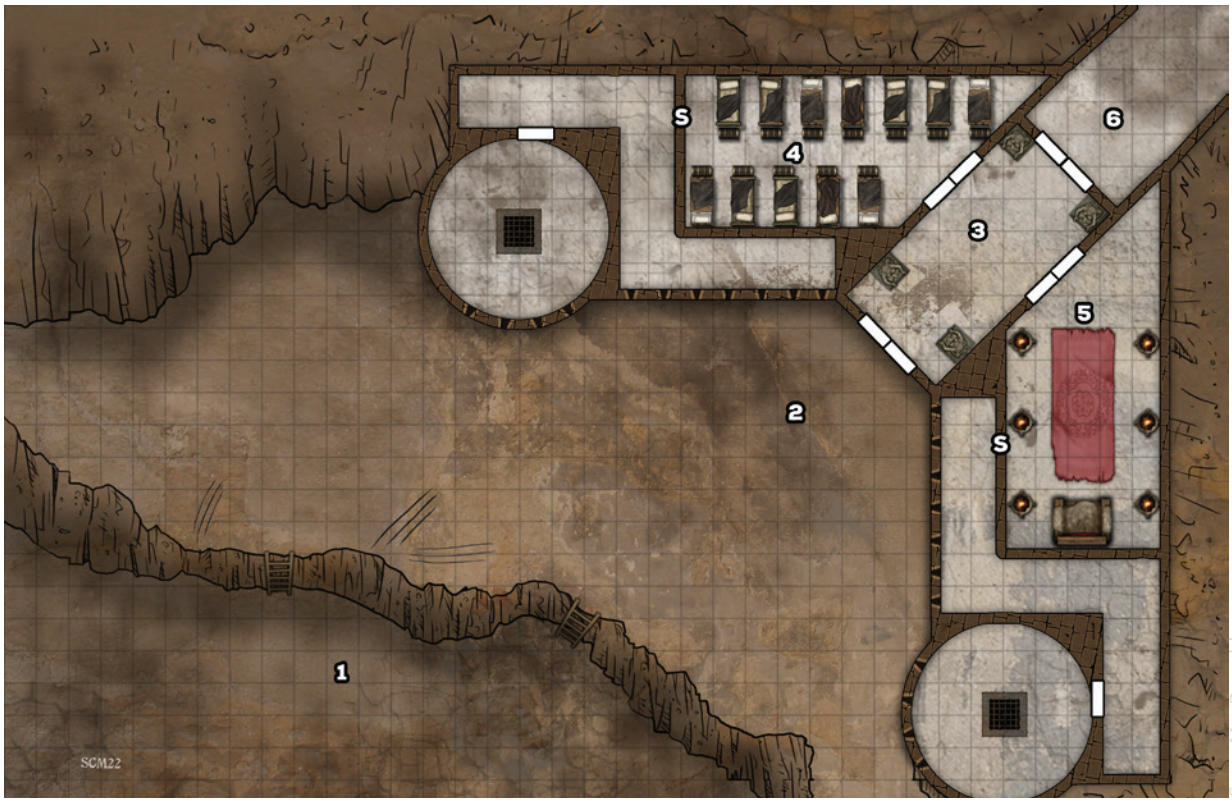
The *heart of flame* is rumored to have other, hidden properties.

If you die while attuned to the necklace and wearing it, the necklace casts *incendiary cloud* (DC 20 Dexterity saving throw) centered on you, burning your body to ash.

4-5 Characters

Levels 9-10

Mountain



Sean MacDonald

The Scorpion Gate

David Schwartz

The people of the hills tell the legend of a paradisaical valley in the mountains that can only be reached by a single gate guarded by a people who are part scorpion. In truth, the "valley" is a fey realm, and the gate a portal to it. The guardians of the gate are the Queen of Scorpions and her minions. If the characters are going to pass through the gate, they must impress the Queen, or else overcome her guards through stealth or strength.

Fort Features. The walls of the fort are stone and the doors are iron-banded wood (AC 17, 18 hp). The doors are not locked, except where noted. Secret doors are plastered to look like stone, requiring a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice from numbered rooms, but obvious from the other side. Rooms have 12-foot high ceilings and are unlit except where noted.

Queen's Guard. Instead of armor, the Queen's minions have patches of ruddy-brown chitin growing from their flesh. They are lawful neutral fey with darkvision 60 feet, and speak Common and Sylvan.

Scorpion Guard. They have the stats of a **bandit captain**, except they are also armed with a shortbow, and can make two ranged attacks with their shortbow with *Multiattack*.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Scorpion Priest. The stats are those of a **war chaplain**, except they are armed with a scimitar +1 (instead of a longsword).

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

1. Cliff

A series of terraces lead up to the Scorpion Gate. The cliff before the final terrace is ten-feet high at its shortest. It can be climbed with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**, or by using one of the two wooden ladders propped against it.

Drainage Duct. A character who searches the cliff and succeeds at a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** discovers a concealed duct. The duct is wide enough for a Small creature, but a Medium creature can squeeze through it. The duct connects to the grates in the west and south turrets. The duct is teeming with spiders and scorpions which attack as a **swarm of insects**.

2. The Scorpion Gate

A stone fort is built into the side of the mountain. An enormous scorpion is carved in relief on the facade, its head above the gate and two clawed arms extending toward the turrets on either side.

The Courtyard. On the well-tramped earth between the two turrets, three **scorpion guards** and one **scorpion priest** are on watch. In addition, two more **scorpion guards** are stationed in the west turret ready to shoot intruders.

Guards' Attitude. The guards are defensive when the characters first arrive. If the characters ask to pass through the gate, the guards escort them to the Queen of Scorpions in her throne room (**Area 5**). If the characters have previously been denied passage, the guards warn them off, resorting to violence if the characters attempt to force their way in. If the guards are attacked, they respond in kind.

3. Vestibule

Four statues depicting the Queen of Scorpions sit in the corners of this room. The front door can be barred from the inside. It can be debarred from the outside with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity check** with thieves' tools. The rear door is locked; it can be opened with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity check** with thieves' tools, or with the key carried by the Queen of Scorpions.

Off-duty Guards. There are a pair of **scorpion guards** here, off-duty but ready to respond if the Queen needs anything. They are playing cards with a partial *deck of illusions*. If they hear combat outside, they awaken the guards in the barracks (**Area 4**), but otherwise remain where they are. If they hear intruders at the door, they toss a random card from the deck to dissuade or distract them.

4. Barracks

A dozen beds fill this room. The footlockers contain only clothing, rations, and personal items of little value.

Sleeping Guards. This room is occupied by three **scorpion guards** and one **scorpion priest**. If they haven't been awakened by the guards in the turret or the vestibule (**Area 3**), they are all asleep. Otherwise, they are preparing to repel intruders.

West Turret. The two **scorpion guards** here are keeping an eye on the cliffs and courtyard (**Areas 1** and **2**) and have **disadvantage** on **Wisdom (Perception) checks** if the characters come up through the grate in the floor.

5. Throne Room

A half dozen braziers provide bright light in this room. The furnishings are finely crafted, but frayed and faded with age.

Queen of Scorpions. Exiled from the fey realm for some ancient crime, the **Queen of Scorpions**, now directs her minions in the fairy and mortal worlds from this gatehouse between the two. If the Queen becomes aware of combat, she observes it through one of the many scorpions inhabiting the fort, but does not intervene unless all her minions are routed, or she is personally attacked.

Impressing the Queen. If the characters arrive peacefully, the Queen is willing to hear their request. She tells the characters she will unlock the gate only if between them they can demonstrate the following qualities to her satisfaction:

Etiquette. A character must make a successful **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Performance) check**.

Intellect. A character must make a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana)**, **Intelligence (History)**, **Intelligence (Nature)**, or **Intelligence (Religion) check**.

Magic. A character must cast a non-cantrip spell with a visual effect, or make a successful **DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check**.

Prowess. A character must make a successful **DC 17 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**.

If the characters collectively accumulate three failures before they succeed at all four tasks, the Queen refuses their request, and orders them to leave.

Treasure. The queen wears 5 (2d4) pieces of jewelry worth 100 gp each, If the characters succeed at her tasks with no failures, she gives them one as a favor.

South Turret. If the character's enter the throne room from the secret door, the Queen of Scorpions assumes they are invaders and attacks.

6. Planar Gate

This passage becomes a natural tunnel before opening into the fey realm.

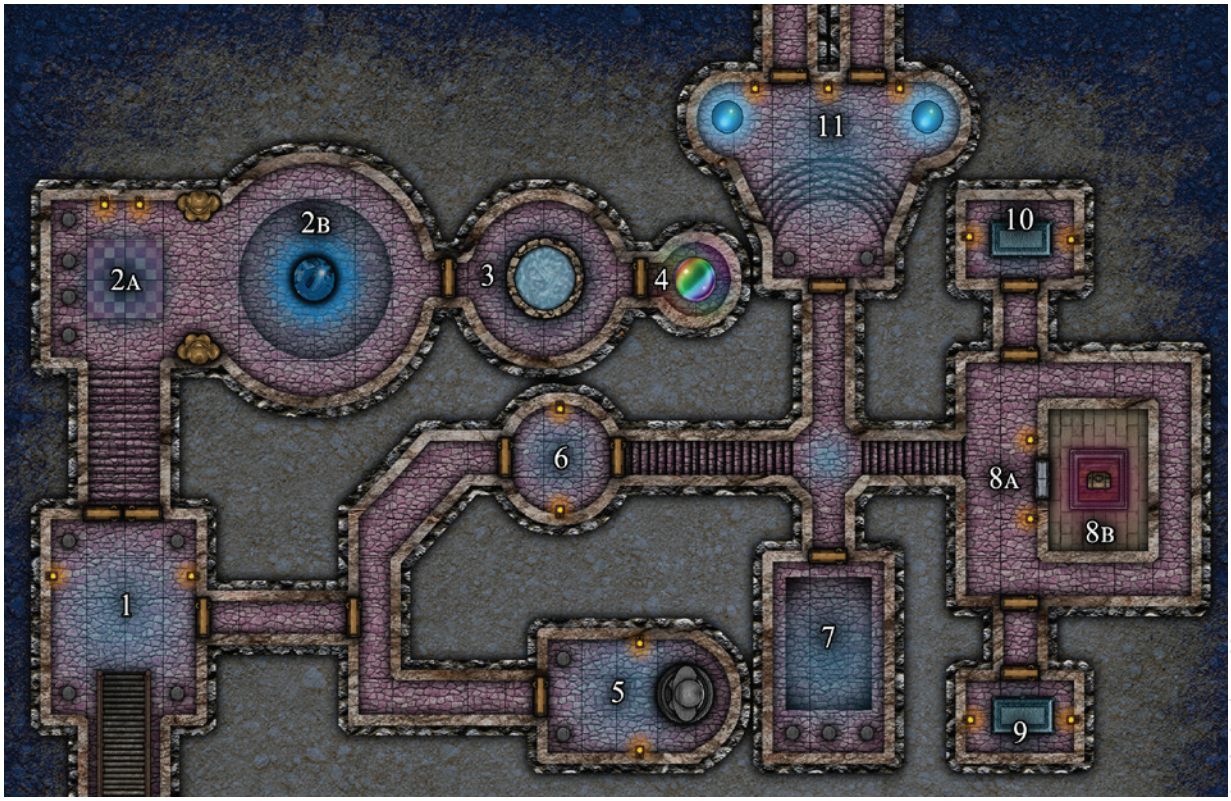


Mates Laurentiu

4-6 Characters

Levels 9-11

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Assault on Faceless

Stephen Radney-MacFarland

For ages, an archmage known as **Faceless** has terrorized civilization. A crafty and seemingly immortal foe, Faceless has meddled in politics, stole artifacts, and assassinated those who oppose him. But now he's gone too far. After spreading a virulent plague that has devastated the land, he is extorting people for the cure. Various rulers agree—Faceless needs to die!

An assemblage of heroes is charged with confronting Faceless, finding the antidote, and neutralizing this menace for good. Auguries and divinations have uncovered Faceless's hidden haunt, and all pray for the heroes' success.

1. Entry Chamber

The stairs descending into this chamber are a massive **mimic** (Huge size, **AC** 17, **Hit Points** 220, **Stealth +9**, **passive Perception 11**, **Challenge** 10, **escape DC 17**, and +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., *Pseudopods* deal 16 (3d8+3) bludgeoning damage, *Bite* deals 16 (3d8+3) piercing damage, plus 13 (3d8) acid damage).

2A. Chess Room

A giant chessboard—10 feet a side—takes up most of this room. There are only two pieces on the chessboard: a black king at the southeast corner, and a black rook at the northwest corner. Each is two feet tall and made of heavy stone. Four pillars support the western wall, and a pair of demonic copper statues flank the entrance to the circular chamber to the east. That chamber sparks and cracks with electrical energy.

Approaching the chessboard causes a group of *magic mouths* to speak in common: *"One's home is one's castle."* If the chess pieces are removed from the board, nothing happens...yet.

Electric Castle

Simple trap, (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

Trigger. The chess pieces are placed in the wrong position, or **Area 2B** is entered while the chess pieces are not correctly placed.

Effect. The orb in **Area 2B** ricochets electrical energy off one of the bronze statues, targeting a creature incorrectly placing a chess piece. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) lightning damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one. A creature starting its turn in **Area 2B** is also affected thus. Standing in the pool in **Area 2B** imposes disadvantage on the saving throw.

Countermeasures. Placing the black king and rook in either correct positions to create a castling move, causes no electrical discharge. The pieces then castle on their own accord, and the trap in **Area 2B** is disabled.

2B. Crackling Orb

A shallow pool with a large circular orb sparkling with energy fills most of this chamber.

3. Elemental Pool

A chaotic neutral **djinni** dwells in the swirling cloud pool in this chamber. Bound here by Faceless, it attacks any other creature entering the room, and fiercely guards the entrance to **Area 4**.

4. Rainbow Orb

The orb in this chamber undulates with rainbow patterns.

Mind Killer

Simple trap, (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

Trigger. A creature enters **Area 4**, or the center square in **Area 6**.

Effects.

Painful Compliance (Area 4). The orb's patterns act as a *hypnotic pattern* spell (DC 17 Wisdom saving throw), except that charmed targets take 22 (4d10) psychic damage at the start of each of their turns. This damage does not end the spell's effect.

Mind Killer (Area 6). The target in the center square is struck by swirling rainbow colors and must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, or take 27 (5d10) psychic damage, or half as much on a successful one.

Countermeasures. Closing your eyes grants advantage on the saving throw. Those affected by *Painful Compliance* can use the mental link as their action to attempt to disarm it. This requires three successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) checks.

5. Gem-Eyed Statue

At the far end of the room stands a worn stone statue with massive emeralds for eyes. A **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check** determines that the gems are fake. The statue is a **stone golem**. Within the golem's mouth is an iron key that unlocks the door to **Area 8B**.

6. Mind Murder Chamber

If the mind killer trap (**Area 4**) was disarmed, this is merely an empty circular room.

7. Naga Pool

Bathing in a pool is a pair of **spirit nagas**. They attack any except for Faceless who enter this chamber.

8a. Vault Chamber

This quiet chamber has standard wooden doors to the north and south and holds a stone vault with an iron door. The vault can be unlocked with the key from **Area 5**, or with a **DC 18 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools.

8b. Vault Interior

Beyond the vault door is a large room with a violet platform at its center. Atop the platform is an ironbound wooden chest with a padlock. The padlock is not locked. Inside the chest is a pile of gold-plated lead coins.

Hot Lead

Simple trap, (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

Trigger. The coins are touched.

Effect. A *fireball* centered on the chest detonates. All targets must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Countermeasures. The trap laced into the chest can be spotted with a DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check and disarmed with a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

9. False Tomb

This room is home to a stone sarcophagus, carved of some dull blue-gray stone and engraved with many arcane glyphs. A **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** notices that the obscure glyphs relate to timeless imprisonment. The sarcophagus's lid can be lifted with a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**. There is nothing inside but dust.



10. Hateful Rest

The sarcophagus in this room is similar in construction to the one in **Area 9**. Resting within it, in status, is a **rakshasa** , captured decades ago by Faceless. It lashes out at any nearby creature when its tomb is opened and the stasis ends, but its real goal is to escape imprisonment. If allowed to, it flees the dungeon.

11. Faceless

The **archmage** **Faceless** waits here, standing at the far end of the room, as if waiting for the heroes. He starts his assault with *time stop*, dealing as much damage as possible within that period.

Lair Actions

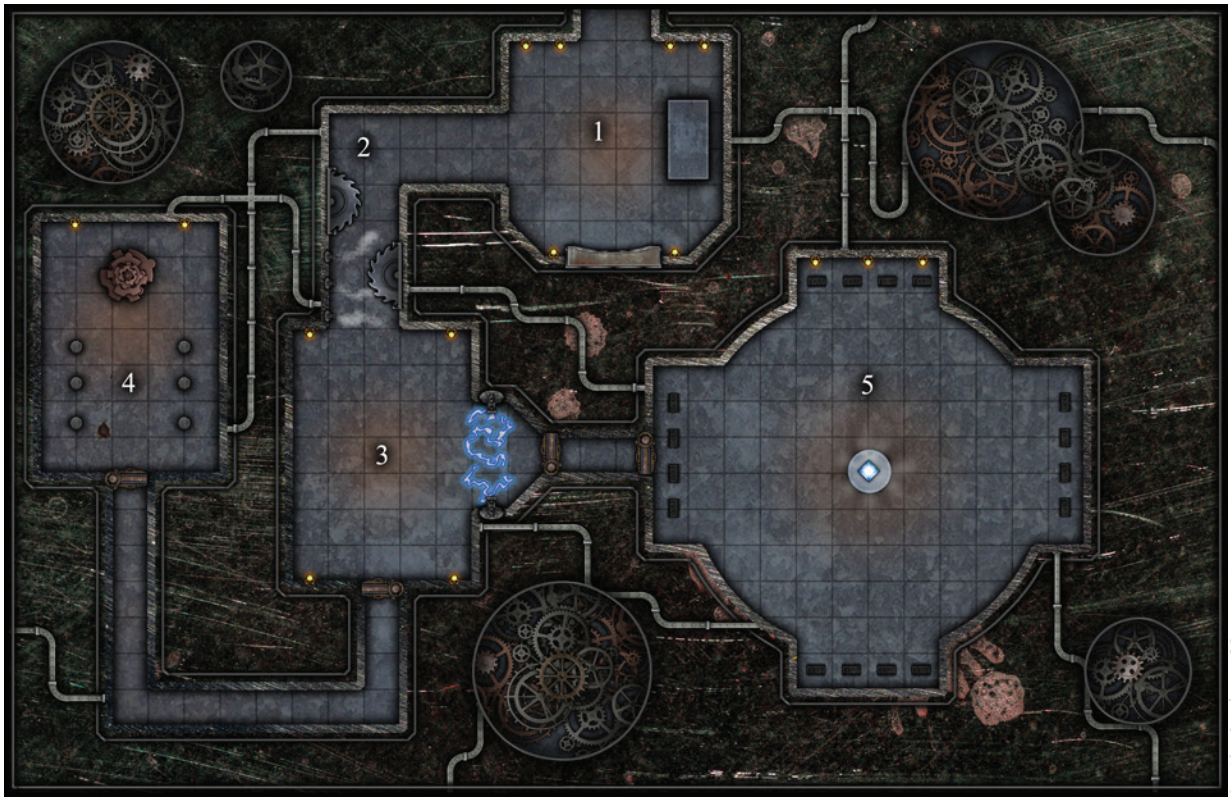
On initiative count 20 (losing ties), Faceless can activate one orb. He can't use the same orb two rounds in a row.

Eastern Orb. As electric castle trap (see **Area 2a**), except it targets a point of Faceless' choosing.

Western Orb. As hot lead trap (see **Area 8b**), except it targets a point of Faceless' choosing.

If reduced to 20 or fewer Hit Points, he attempts to *teleport* away. He carries a few doses of the antidote and its formula on his person.

Quico Vicens



Justin Andrew Mason

The Secrets of Cogstone

Bill Buchalter

The gnomish tinkerers of Cogstone were once known for their amazing inventions. Cogstone airships drifted among the clouds and their creations sold in every major city. Centuries have passed and no one knows what happened to the gnomes. They simply vanished. Now, only treasure seekers and adventurers dare to enter Cogstone, and most never return.

1. Authorization Chamber

This chamber is guarded by a **steam golem** standing on the south side of the room.

Scanner. When the first character enters more than 10 feet into the room, laser lights fire from the panel to the east and scan the character. If the character is a gnome, a robotic voice says, "Authorized life form detected. Welcome to Cogstone." All other characters may now safely enter the room without activating the scanner. If the first character to enter is not a gnome, the robotic voice says, "Unauthorized life form detected. Initiate defensive protocols." and the steam golem attacks.

Treasure. The golem's axe arm is enchanted.

Whistling Axe

Weapon (axe), rare (requires attunement)

This axe is a magic weapon. It has 3 charges that replenish at dawn. While you carry it, you can use your reaction to someone casting a spell within 30 feet of you to expend one charge. This makes the axe emit a shrill whistle. The spellcaster must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. If the save succeeds, the spell is cast normally. If it fails, the spell is not cast; the spell slot is not used, but the caster's action is.

2. A.R.B.S.S.

Automated Rotational Blade Security System

Complex trap (level 5–10, deadly threat)

The hallway ahead is blocked by floor-to-ceiling sets of razor-sharp, spinning blades. Walking through the corridor safely while the blades are spinning is impossible.

Trigger. This trap activates as soon as a character moves through the hallway.

Constant Element.

Rotational Blade. For every 5 feet a character moves through the hallway, they suffer 13 (2d12) slashing damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 5 feet.

Dynamic Element–Wrong Wire Cut. If an incorrect wire is cut, the character takes 28 (8d6) lightning damage. And half as much to any creature within 5 feet of the character. This lowers the DC to identify the correct wire by 2.

Countermeasures. There is a way the trap can be disarmed.

Control Panel.

Wisdom (Perception), DC 15. This check reveals the presence of the control panel on the northern wall of the hallway.

Intelligence (investigation), DC 17. After the panel has been opened, this check identifies the correct wire to cut.

Cut a Wire. If the correct wire is cut with a bladed tool or slashing weapon, the rotational blades stop (otherwise see dynamic element).

3. The Failsafe Chamber

On the east wall of this room an electric field preventing the clockwork dragon (**Area 5**) from escaping.

Electric Field. Touching the electric field deals 28 (8d6) lightning damage and pushes the target back 5 feet. The field can only be deactivated using two key cards which must be inserted into slots in the wall on each side of the electric field. The key cards are on the undead gnomes in the control chamber (**Area 4**).

This room is guarded by two motionless **clockwork myrmidons** standing against the west wall. The guardians activate when someone opens the locked door to the south. The lock can be picked with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools. As soon as the door is opened, the guardians attack and two automated crossbows drop from the 30-foot-high ceiling in the northern corners of the room.

Automated Crossbow

Simple threat (level 5–10, moderate threat)

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative 20.

Effect. The trap makes an attack against an intruder. Each attack has a +8 bonus to hit on a hit, and deals 15 (2d10+4) piercing damage. This attack can't gain advantage or disadvantage.

Countermeasures. An automated crossbow has AC 15 and 75 hp.

4. The Control Chamber

In the back of this chamber is a large pillar of gears, wires, and moving parts which churn and whir. Shambling aimlessly around the pillar are three **undead gnomes** (**necrophage ghast**). The gnomes attack any living creature who enters the room. Hiding along the 30-foot-high ceiling behind the rows of pillars to the left and right are two **spider thieves**. A character with a passive Perception of 17 spots the spiders, otherwise they attack in the second round of combat.

Development. When the characters defeat the gnomes, they find each corpse is wearing a bronze circlet fused to its head with wires and gears intertwined with the gnome's brain. The circlets are not in working order. The characters find the key cards to deactivate the electric field in **Area 3** on the corpses of the gnomes. Also, one of the gnomes is wearing a *ring of evasion*.

5. The Clockwork Dragon

The characters enter a grand chamber with 30-foot-high walls capped with a bronze dome another 30 feet high, peaking in the center at a total height of 60 feet. In the center of the chamber is a pedestal with a bright, blue gem. Treasure is piled all around the pedestal. Contained within this room is the Cogstone gnomes' most impressive creation, a **three-headed clockwork dragon**.

At one time the creature was bound by the three gnomes in the control chamber, but when one of them died unexpectedly the other two gnomes struggled to keep the dragon under control, ultimately perishing. Fortunately, before they died, they managed to activate the dragon containment measures.

When the party enters, the dragon is in power saving mode on the far east side of the room. It remains motionless until the gem on the pedestal, or any of the treasure is disturbed, at which point it roars to life. The dragon knows about the trap and tries to fly above it.

Electricity Grid

Simple trap (level 9–10, dangerous threat)

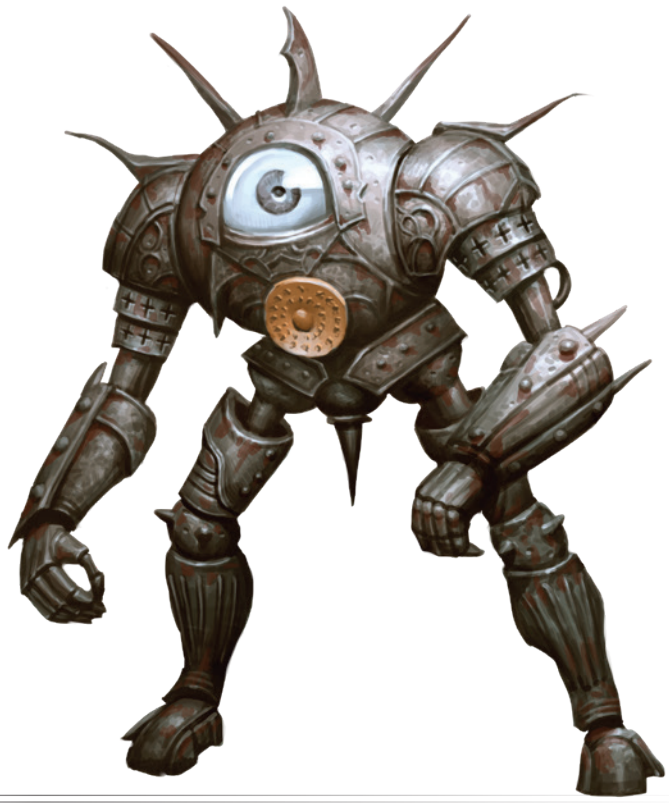
Trigger. The clockwork dragon enters combat.

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative 10.

Effect. The pillars rise from the floor in the alcoves to the north, south, east and west. On odd rounds the pillars to the north and south rise. On even rounds the pillars to the east and west rise. When these pillars rise bolts of electricity surge between them. Characters in the spaces between the pillars must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Creatures standing on a pillar automatically fail their saving throw.

Countermeasures. Destroying the dragon shuts down the system.

Treasure. The dragon's hoard contains 1,400 sp, 350 gp, twelve emeralds (1,000 gp each). The blue sapphire on the pedestal is worth 2,000 gp. Among the treasure is also a pair of *gauntlets of ogre power*, a *wand of magic missiles*, and a *stone of good luck*.

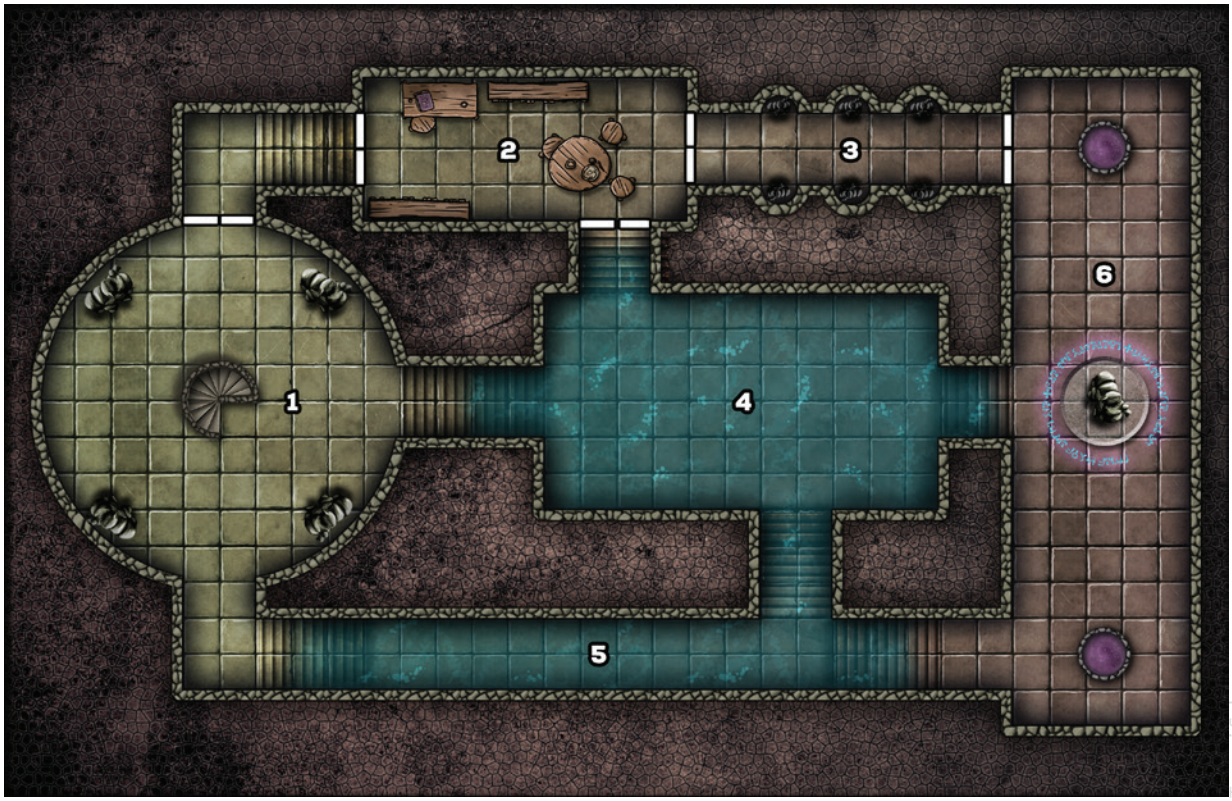


Guen Brush

5 Characters

Levels 9-11

Urban



Tommi Salama

Something's Fishy

Bill Buchalter, Thilo Graf

Ernesto Santiago owns a small curio shop quayside called Santiago's Curiosities. He often buys the trinkets and treasures sailors discover out there, content with going nowhere fast. Unbeknownst to Santiago, a seemingly harmless jade statue he purchased about a month ago was possessed by a servitor of Dagon. The entity began whispering telepathically to Santiago, planting the idea for an overdue career change—to go-getter cult leader and hydra-breeder. Now, his shop's basement is flooded, hosting a fledgling cult of Dagon, with more inhuman followers arriving by the day. Unfortunately for Santiago, the strumpet he recently captured in his shop turned out to be a noble's wife, slumming incognito among the rabble. And said noble's pockets are deep enough to afford investigators to track his wife, and the services of adventurers to get her out of any cinch...

Investigation – Breaking and Entering

As the party investigates Santiago's shop, they find it is closed, even during normal business hours. With a **DC 15 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools, a character can pick the lock to the front door of the shop discreetly. Alternatively, they can break one of the windows to get in (leaving an obvious, loud mess) or break down the door with a **DC 17 Strength check** (an even louder, even more obvious mess). Either option alerts the guards in **Area 1**, giving them a surprise round when the party arrives. Once inside the shop, with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check** the party notices a wet, slimy trail leading to a hidden trap door in the floor. On a result of 20 or greater on the check, they also find a *scroll of water breathing* among the items in the shop. If the party fails to notice the trail, they still locate the trap door, but making too much noise alerts the guards in **Area 1**. The trap door opens to a spiral staircase leading to the basement.

1. Basement Entrance

Two **greater scrags**, servants of Dagon, are guarding this room. If the party made too much noise entering or investigating Santiago's shop the scrags will hide (badly—they're not exactly smart) behind the staircase and ambush the party as they enter. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the scrags.

The doors to the north are barred from the other side and cannot be opened, except by a *knock* spell or a very loud **DC 20 Strength check**. The statues in the room resemble a fish-headed humanoid with a finned spine, razor-sharp teeth, and webbed claws. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** identifies the statues as Father Dagon, the deity of the deep ones. Unless a character who is in the room has praised Dagon in some way during the last 10 minutes, the statues will cast *counterspell* (+4) on any spell the character tries to cast while in the room. Subject to the GM's discretion, NPCs might forget this.

The stairs on the east side of the room lead too far down into the darkness to see into **Area 4**.

2. Cultist Meeting Room

Santiago (priest) and two **deep one hybrid priests** ◆ are sitting at the table in this room planning their cult's next move. A pair of **deep ones** ◆ stand guard in the eastern corners of the room, making it impossible to sneak into the room from that entrance.

The possessed jade statue (worth 10,000 gp, **AC** 15, 20 hp) and a journal sit on the desk in the back of the room. The journal details Santiago's spiral into servitude and plans to breed the strongest hydra there ever was. If the party leaves Santiago alive and destroys the statue, they free him from the possession. Any character who keeps the statue for more than an hour must succeed on a **DC 17 Wisdom saving throw** or fall under the effect of a *dominate person* spell maintained by the statue's concentration (+15). This saving throw must be repeated each day the character remains in possession of the statue.

3. Hall of Dagon

The statues in this hall resemble the statues in **Area 1**.

4. The Mother's Child

The stairs on all sides of this room lead down to a completely flooded chamber. The ceiling is 30 feet high and the water is 10 feet deep, making the entire room difficult terrain to any creature without a swim speed. It holds the sign of Dagon favoring Santiago's enterprise: An adolescent, but well-fed **hydra** (only Large, 157 hp) with a collar on one head that reads "**Bubbles**" swims throughout the room and attacks anyone who is not a member of the cult. Bubbles can choose to make the following attack instead of a *Bite* attack:

Bubbles. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: The target is restrained and encased in a floating bubble. The bubble pops immediately when it takes piercing damage, but is immune to all other damage types. It lasts for 1 minute if it is not popped.

Slaying Bubbles draws the ire of all the cultists, who smell its blood on the character who dealt the fatal blow, focusing on this character. If Bubbles is slain, the party can see comically-whimpering ghosts of the hydra's heads detach and fly through the walls. If this happens, all deep ones in the dungeon gain the option to substitute one of their regular attacks per round with a *Bubbles* attack as a spectral hydra head manifests, using Bubbles' stats above. This does not happen if the adolescent hydra is only subdued.

After the first round of combat two **deep ones** ◆ enter from the stairs to the east to investigate the sounds of battle.

5. Flooded Hallway

Floating face down in this hallway are four bloated corpses, the victims of "playing" with the hydra in **Area 4**. The corpses rise and attack any living creature who enters the hallway. Use the statistics for an **imperial ghoul** ◆ for the bloated corpses but remove the *Light Crossbow* attack and grant them **resistance** to fire damage. They're very soggy. The water here is roughly waist deep and difficult terrain. When the party defeats the ghouls, they find one of the corpses fits the description of the nobleman's wife. She wears a ruby necklace worth 250 gp. Unbeknown to the party, though, the nobleman's wife is somewhere else—either abducted, or out of her own volition.

6. Altar to the Father

In this chamber, Santiago and the deep ones have established an altar to Dagon. A **deep one archimandrite** ◆ is worshiping Dagon as two **deep ones** ◆ look on. When the party enters the chamber, the deep ones attack. Allow the archimandrite to use its *Voice of the Archimandrite* ability once. When it does, a deep one emerges from each of the pools on the north and south ends of the chamber. The statue is enchanted:

Statue of Dagon. This 15-feet tall statue is encircled by arcane runes. All servants of Dagon that can see the statue gain the benefits of a *bless* spell while they can see the statue. A character next to the statue can use their action to make a **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** to defuse sections of the runes. It takes three successful checks to defuse all the runes. A character who fails a check is subjected to the effects of a *bane* spell for 1 minute (**no saving throw**), and if the check is failed by 5 or more, they also take 11 (2d10) cold damage.

The archimandrite is carrying a *pearl of power* and a *trident of fish command*. The statue of Dagon has black pearl gemstones for eyes, each one worth 500 gp.

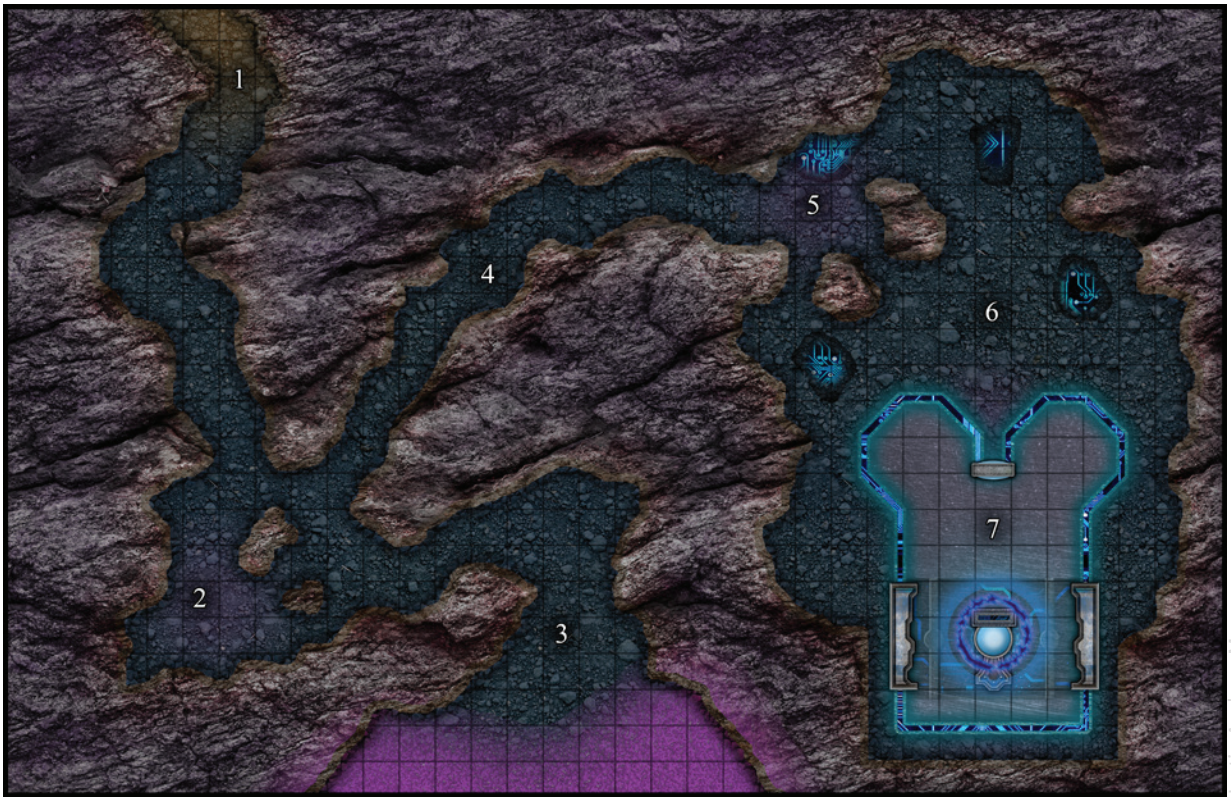


Quico Vicens

4-6 Characters

Level 9-11

Planar



Justin Andrew Mason

Time Void

Rory Toma, Thilo Graf

A rebellious voidling in service to the void dragon Malinda set up the perfect ambush and devised a mechanism that transported the dragon into an extra-dimensional time-stasis chamber just before the killing blow was delivered. Once time was restored in the chamber, the dragon would be dead, and the voidling would be spared instant death when the dragon detonated.

The transport happened as planned, but somehow the dragon and chamber manifested on the Material Plane inside the temple cave complex of a sphinx. The sphinx sealed the chamber, refusing to open it until one of its three riddles was answered out loud; it refuses to accept answers telepathically.

The voidling needs help so it summoned the Void to these caves, knowing that the havoc caused would bring in the nearby villagers to investigate. They would be easy to dominate, and their deaths would be of little consequence.

It did not expect adventurers.

1. Fissure Entrance

As you approach the fissure in the rock, feral grunts erupt from the side as three **rift swine** charge, surprising those characters that fail a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Faint purple light emanates from the fissure, tall and wide enough to admit a single person. A **DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals that this opening was sundered from the mountainside; the two sides were recently connected. Those characters with *Stonecunning* may add double their proficiency score to this check.

Once inside, a purple fog swirls about the floor. The fog is alien in nature and appears to be flowing towards the exit. A **DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals this fog to be not only extra-planar, but extra-spatial; it seems to be displacing matter as it flows.

Extra-Spatial Fog. Once the foggy area is entered, a creature must make a **DC 16 Wisdom saving throw** or suffer from mild spatial disorientation. This causes all ranged attacks, whether melee, spell, or with a device, to be made with **disadvantage**. Additionally, all effects that target a square, spell or otherwise, have a 25% chance of targeting a random adjacent square instead. This effect lasts for one hour after leaving the fog.

2. Void Depression

The fog in this area has collected into a depression, swirling around in a deep purple vortex. Hidden in the fog are four **boot grabbers**, waiting in ambush. Characters that fail a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** are surprised when attacked. Due to the fog, this check is made with **disadvantage**. If the party bypasses the area and does not get within five feet of one of the creatures, they use their *Unearthly Hum* ability.

3. The Void

Faint points of light shine through the swirling purple fog. A **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check** identifies this as a freeform, one-way portal to the Void, inimical to life (unless the GM wishes otherwise).

4. Hammer and Anvil

Rocks jut out irregularly from the walls at several points in this narrow passage.

Hammer and Anvil Trap

Magical trap (level 5–10, dangerous)

Trigger. The trap activates as soon as a target approaches within 15 feet of **Area 5**.

Effect. The hammer-shaped rock formation slams against the opposite wall. This deals 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) piercing damage to all targets in the tunnel between the two walls in **Area 4**. A successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw halves the bludgeoning damage and negates the piercing damage.

Countermeasures. A *detect magic* spell, DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check or other effect that can sense the presence of magic detects an aura of transmutation on the hammer shaped rock formation that also includes the five-foot section of floor near the end of the passageway. A *dispel magic* spell (DC 16) destroys the trap. The trap can also be avoided by jumping over the five-foot section of floor that shares the hammer's aura. This requires a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check. Failing this check triggers the trap.

5. Void Depression

This is identical to **Area 2** with one addition. A hole has been ripped into the fabric of space. The edges of the hole pulsate with purple light, and hints of unearthly shapes can be seen. A successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals these holes as portholes to the Void. Each hole is protected by an invisible force window that behaves like a permanent *wall of force*.

6. Sphinx

Three more of the extra planar holes are visible here, but are hardly noticeable given the large, critically injured shadowy dragon that occupies the back of the chamber. The dragon is surrounded by shimmering walls of energy that form a chamber around it, the insides suffused with the extra-spatial mist that distorts and compresses the Gargantuan dragon to fit into the field. With a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check**, three glowing darts can be seen suspended in air mere inches from the dragon. A **DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana) check** identifies these darts as *magic missiles*. A large metal door offers the only access to the chamber containing the dragon. A shadowy orb, which can be identified as a **voidling** with a successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check** floats in front of a **gynosphinx**. As the party enters, the sphinx's voice resonates throughout the entire cavern.

"*Answer me one of these riddles three!*"

"*Every creature in the world has seen it, but to their dying day, they'll never see the same one again.*" (***Answer:*** *Yesterday.*)

"*It is always here yet ever changing.*" (***Answer:*** *Today.*)

"*It never was before; it is not now; fools wait for it forever.*" (***Answer:*** *Tomorrow.*)

"*Which do you choose, interlopers?*"

The voidling attempts to telepathically ascertain how the party will answer and takes an action below depending on the answer. If the party refuses to communicate, the answer is treated as *Tomorrow*.

Yesterday. The sphinx turns back the clock 10 years. The purple fog, void effects, stasis chamber and *magic missiles* disappear. The dragon is at full health. The dragon uses its *Void Cache* legendary action to retrieve a small item which it activates on its turn. This uses *plane shift* to move the dragon and voidling back to the Void. Neither the dragon or voidling wish conflict, but will defend themselves if attacked and prevented from shifting. When the party emerges from the cave, they will be 10 years in the past.

Today. The voidling delays the party in answering, going so far as to cast *fear* to give it time to flee into the Void in **Area 3**. It does not return.

With a hiss accompanied by draining purple mist, the stasis-chamber begins to open. The party has 1d3 rounds before the chamber is properly opened. The dragon dies immediately as the time-stasis chamber opens, restoring the time flow. The *magic missiles* impact instantly, killing the dragon. Upon the dragon's death, its *Collapsing Star* feature triggers, exploding in a swath of celestial destruction that blasts away the entire cave. Should the party survive, the landscape around the cave will be littered with death and destruction.

Tomorrow. If the voidling believes that the party is going to answer "Tomorrow", it immediately attacks, doing whatever it can to prevent this outcome. The voidling casts *reverse gravity* to send the characters falling to the ceiling which is 20 feet above the ground. It then casts *darkness* before attacking directly. When the voidling has taken 40 hit points of damage, it will attempt to use a prepared *dominate person* spell (**DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**) on the target with the lowest Wisdom score and then flees. As it enters the Void, it commands the dominated person to say "Today". This triggers the "Today" condition above with the exception that the voidling has already fled. If the spell fails, the voidling simply cuts its losses and tries to flee into the Void. If the party manages to reply with "Tomorrow", they will find themselves in a blasted, desolate landscape, the result of the dragon's *Collapsing Star*.

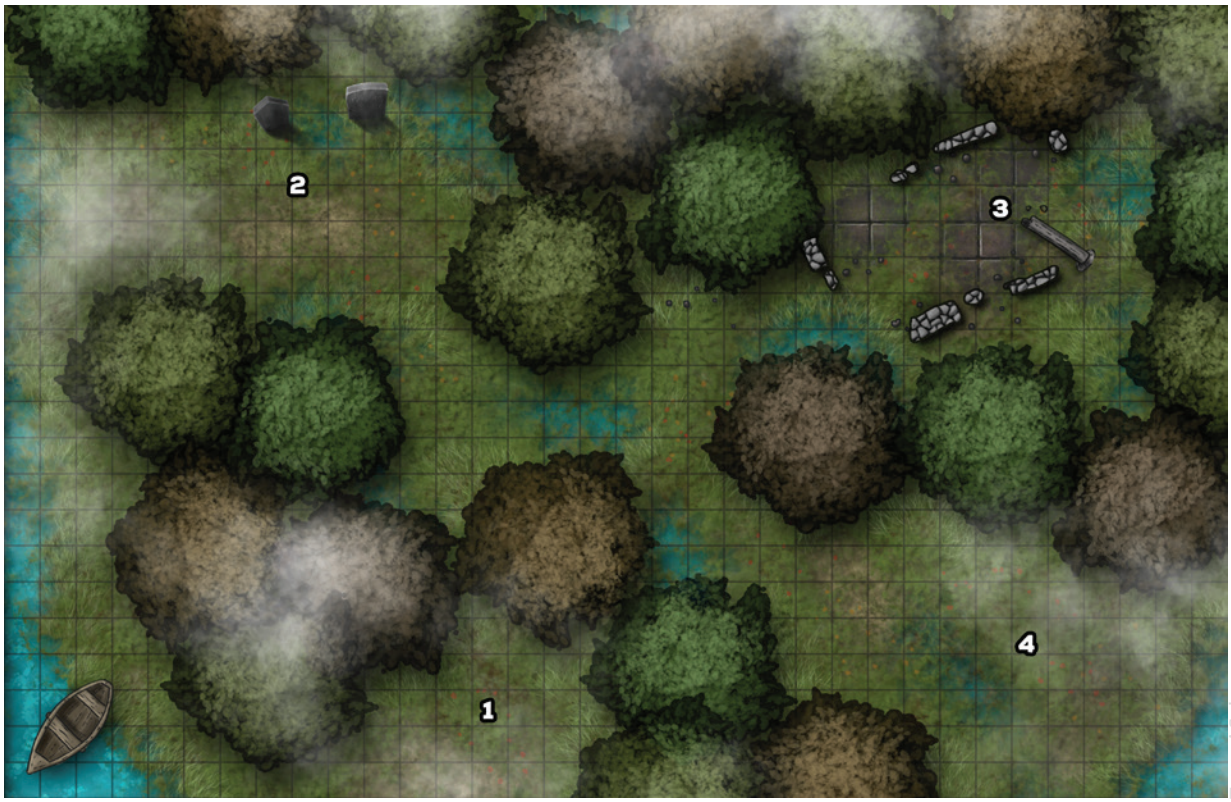
7. Time-Stasis Chamber

Malinda, an **ancient void dragon** is held motionless in this sealed chamber. Only answering one of the sphinx's riddles can free the dragon. Otherwise, there is no way into the chamber.

4-6 Characters

Levels 10-11

Swamp



Tommi Salama

Hero Slayer

David Schwartz

Centuries ago, the black dragon **Rezmaraxus** extorted tribute from the residents of a frontier village. Until one day, a warrior with a magic sword challenged the young dragon. Rezmaraxus slew the would-be hero, and razed the village in retaliation, claiming its ruins as his new lair. The once fertile valley quickly turned into a fetid swamp.

Since then, settlers have returned to the region, though not to the accursed valley. Rezmaraxus, now grown to an adult, once more demands tribute from the villages near his domain. The dragon has conscripted a tribe of trollkin through physical threats and promises of future wealth, which he uses to enforce his will. When his minions fail, Rezmaraxus personally retaliates against the defiant villages. He merely mocks fleeing villagers but has so far killed any who dared to challenge him. Rezmaraxus has begun openly mocking the concept of dragon slaying by declaring himself the Hero Slayer. Village leaders beseech the heroes to stop Rezmaraxus, offering them the dragon's hoard as a reward. Surely, such impressive heroes will succeed where so many others have failed...

Getting to the Lair

The black dragon's lair is a small island near the center of the swampy valley. Traveling to the dragon's lair by boat takes several hours and a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check**. A failure means the characters must retrace their path, adding to their travel time, and they may also encounter a dangerous swamp dweller of the GM's choice.

Alternatively, the characters can learn the secret route through the swamp from Rezmaraxus' trollkin, allowing them to reach the lair without a check. If the characters interrogate a defeated trollkin and make a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check**, the trollkin reveals the route. Some of the trollkin resent the dragon's extortion. A character can identify a dissenter with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check**; a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces the trollkin dissenter to reveal the route.

Rezmaraxus's Lair

Though the island is mostly solid, areas of boggy ground (marked in blue on the map) are difficult terrain. In addition, the black dragon's lair is warped by his magic, creating the following effects:

- Unnatural currents surround the lair. Characters attempting to row or swim to the lair always arrive at the point marked by a boat on the map.
- A permanent cloud sits on the canopy of the trees. Vision is heavily obscured within the cloud. Rezmaraxus ignores this effect with blindsight, but other flying creatures may be disoriented.

- Beneath the trees on the map are thickets which act as 20-foot high, 10-foot thick walls that block line of sight. Each foot a creature moves through a thicket costs 4 feet of movement. Any creature that starts its turn within the thickets, or moves into a square covered by the thickets, must succeed at a **DC 15 Dexterity check**, or take 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Each 10-foot-cube of thickets has **AC** 5, 30 hp, **resistance** to bludgeoning and piercing damage, **vulnerability** to fire damage, and **immunity** to psychic, poison, and thunder damage.

1. Guard Post

Three **trollkin reavers** ◆ are stationed here. The guards are rotated three times a day, with the new shift often bringing supplies for the shaman in **Area 2**. Many members of the tribe bear obvious scars from the dragon's acid, despite their regenerative abilities.

If the trollkin see the characters approaching the island, they attempt to hide (badly) among the thickets, jumping out to attack when the characters make land. It only takes a **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the reavers. The reavers do not chase characters who flee the island, nor do they enter the graveyard (**Area 2**) for fear of the shaman and her spirits. If the characters have an obvious source of acid or fire and reduce a trollkin to 20 hit points or less, it tries to flee to the water and attempts to swim to safety.

2. Graveyard

Only two gravestones with faded inscriptions remain here.

The graveyard is occupied by **Malasha**, a **trollkin shaman** ◆ who wields a *staff of withering*. She communes with the fragmentary spirits here which take the form of five **will-o'-wisps**. If her reverie is disturbed, Malasha commands the will-o'-wisps to attack intruders, supporting them with her spells. If the shamaness is defeated, a character can attempt to placate the spirits with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** or **Charisma (Persuasion) check**. On a success, the will-o'-wisps cease their attack.

3. Ruined Church

The ground within these ruined walls is muddy; this is where Rezmaraxus conceals his hoard when he's not appreciating it. A character can spot a coin or gem among the muck with a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**. Digging in the mud automatically reveals the treasure.

Despite appearances, the hoard is not unguarded. If even a single coin is taken by anyone other than Rezmaraxus, the treasure itself rises from the ground as a **hoard golem** ◆. The golem attacks until it is destroyed, or until it can no longer detect any intruders. The golem does not chase creatures beyond this area unless they possess part of the hoard.

Treasure. Rezmaraxus's hoard consists of 6,550 sp (6,500 + d100), 2,100 gp (2,050 + d100), 105 pp (95 + 1d20), 10 gems (3d6) worth 100 gp each, and a *flame tongue longsword*.

4. Dragon's Landing

The **adult black dragon** **Rezmaraxus** may be resting here when the characters arrive on the island, or else he returns here shortly after the characters first enter **Area 3**. Though he may be aware of intruders, the haughty dragon is content to let his minions deal with them. Rezmaraxus only considers the party a threat if they defeat the other creatures in his lair, or if they approach him here. If the characters retreat to other areas of the lair, the dragon takes to the skies. If he has half or more of his hit points remaining, Rezmaraxus will give chase to intruders who flee his lair. Rezmaraxus fights to the death to defend his lair and treasure.



Mates Laurentiu

5-6 Characters

Levels 10-12

Desert



Prophecy of the Herald

Bill Buchalter

A ruined tower in the middle of the desert holds an ancient evil. Local nomads have guarded the ruins for generations, but perhaps that is coming to an end. The party stumbles upon the tower and unknowingly becomes entangled in a prophecy of hope. Can they fulfill their destiny, or will they fall to the dangers within?

1. Eight-Legged Ambush

The characters follow a crude caravan trail through the desert. As they crest a dune the remains of a ruined tower lie beside the trail ahead. A pack of three **sand spiders** ◆ are lying in wait beneath the sand on both sides of the trail. Characters with a **passive Perception 19** or higher notice the spiders' trap doors as they approach. Characters who stray from the path on either side are attacked by the spider's Trapdoor Ambush. Only one spider emerges in the first round of combat to draw the party's attention. The other spiders leap out in the second round of combat to surprise the group as they focus on the first spider.

2. A Horse with No Name

The party hears whinnying and hooves stomping at the ground behind a group of rocks on a low ridge to the left of the trail. If they investigate, they find a horse tied up by the reigns to one of the rocks. The horse belongs to the dead elf warrior lying in **Area 3**. With a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check** a character notices tracks leading from the horse to the body. Some of the elf's gear is still strapped to the horse, including an *oathbow* and a quiver with six *+1 arrows*. In the saddlebags are two *potions of superior healing*. The saddle on the horse is a *saddle of the cavalry casters*.

The Nameless Horse. This **warhorse** is a semi-sapient mirage and detects as an illusion to magic but is very much solid. It is essentially immortal and never attacks anything. When reduced to 0 hp, it collapses, only to rise fully healed one hour later. Any group it accompanies invariably goes on a metaphysical journey: On the first day, the party encounters an insectoid threat with wings; on the second day, they experience extreme heat and sunburn; on the third day, the party finds a dry riverbed. The journey inevitably concludes on the ninth day, where the party reaches the ocean and the horse leaves. If the desert they started in does not have a coastline, they have teleported to one that does. The horse vanishes if exposed to rain, and trots away in indignation if given a name.

3. An Unfortunate End

Further ahead on the trail the party encounters the owner of the horse, an elf lying dead in the sand. Numerous arrows stick out of his body. The elf wears a *mithril breastplate* and is still clutching a *scimitar of speed* in his lifeless hand. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check** discovers more tracks leading to and from the ruined tower, as well as a second set of prints which seem to belong to someone else. The tracks suggest the elf entered the tower and was returning to his horse before

he was confronted by another person. The second set of prints disappear after a few feet, as if purposely destroyed. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** a character determines that the arrows which killed the elf were fired from the ridge in **Area 4**. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check** reveals the arrows were tipped with a deadly scorpion poison.

4. The Watchers in the Wastes

A group of six nomad guardians (use the **elvish veteran archer** stat block, without the *Fey Ancestry* feature) watch the group from a 30-foot-high ridge overlooking the trail. They are well-camouflaged and try to avoid detection. It takes a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice them. The nomads are members of a warrior tribe tasked with guarding an ancient evil, known as the Herald of Undeath. Centuries ago, the herald was imprisoned within a gem and buried beneath the tower. The elven warrior stumbled upon the tower and discovered the gem, threatening to release the herald. As he returned to his horse, one of the nomads confronted him and demanded the elf return the gem. When the elf refused, the nomads were forced to kill him and rebury the gem.

Meeting the Guardians. If the characters search the ridge before exploring the tower in **Area 5**, one of the nomads comes out of hiding and implores the group to turn back and leave this place. With a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** the party can befriend the leader of the nomad party, **Ja'Rahl**, who wields a *sun blade*, and wears a *scarab of protection*. He tells the party about the Herald of Undeath and what transpired with the elf warrior. Any attempt to use intimidation on the nomads fails, and if forced, the nomads attack to defend themselves.

The Prophecy. At some point in their interactions with the nomads, whether friendly or tense, one of the nomads whispers something to Ja'Rahl, and the leader pauses a moment and nods approvingly. This is an opportunity for the GM to tie the party into the story. Ja'Rahl tells the characters of a prophecy about a group matching the description of the characters, preordained to defeat the Herald of Undeath and release his tribe from their obligation of guarding the ruins. Ja'Rahl subsequently changes his demeanor, and now encourages the party to enter the tower, uncover the gem, release the herald, and defeat him. If the characters ask how to release the herald, Ja'Rahl explains that the herald will arise when they touch the gem.

5. The Herald of Undeath

As the party enters the ruined tower, they find a tattered banner lying in the sand, left behind by the elf warrior. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** discovers a small patch of ground in the center of the tower that looks as if it has been recently disturbed.

Uncovering the Prison. If the characters have already spoken with the nomads in **Area 4**, they know the gem is buried beneath the disturbed ground. Digging in that location reveals a steel chest buried five feet deep. Inside the chest is a dark purple gem; the prison of the Herald of Undeath. As soon as any of the players touch the gem, the sands within the tower begin to swirl and a voice booms out of the sand, "The prophecy is fulfilled. Prepare to join my army of the undead!" The **Herald of Undeath** appears in the swirling sands, accompanied by two **accursed defilers**.



Conclusion

When the battle is over, Ja'Rahl and his watchers approach the characters. If the party hasn't already spoken with the nomads in **Area 4**, they introduce themselves and explain the prophecy of the Herald of Undeath. The nomads are overjoyed the party defeated the Herald and released them of their obligation. Ja'Rahl presents the party with his sword, a *sun blade*, and a *scarab of protection*. Now that his tribe no longer must guard the Herald, Ja'Rahl has no use for these items. He presents them to the party with his eternal gratitude.

Nomad's Sun Blade

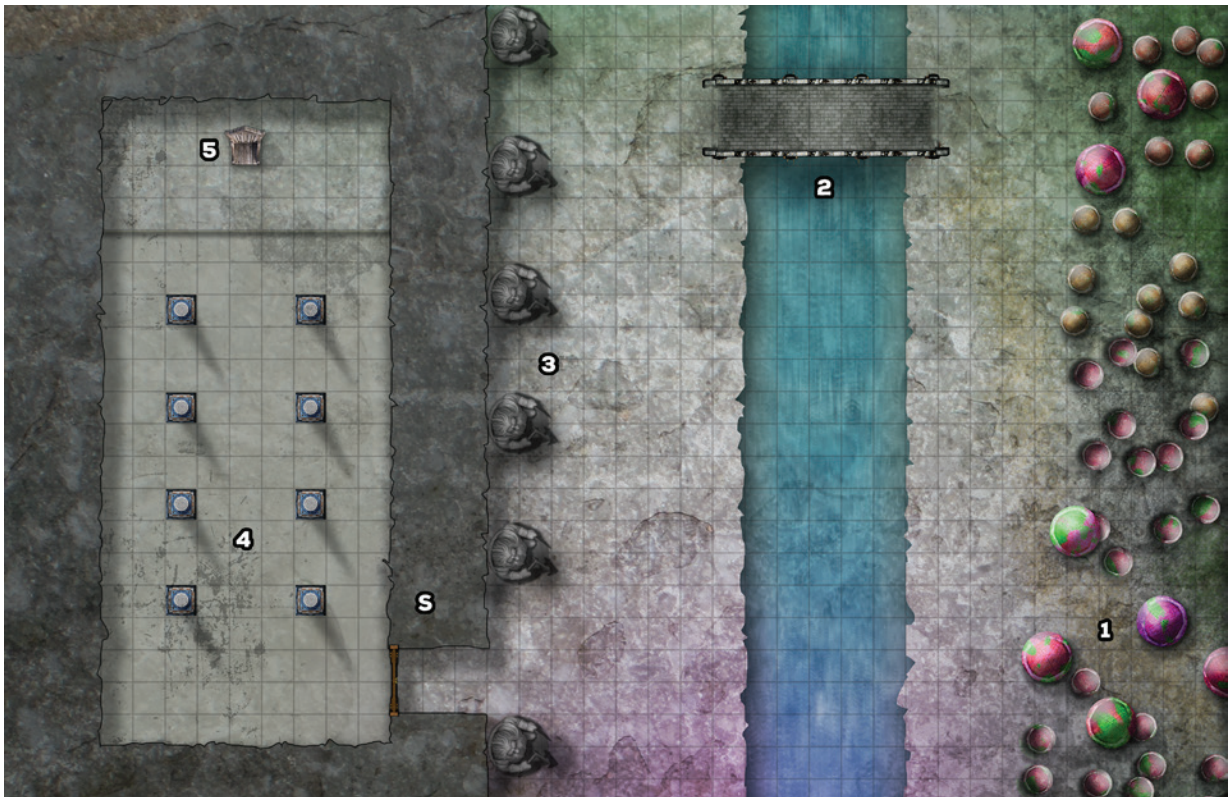
Ja'Rahl's gift is, literally, a double-edged sword. A party who carriers Ja'Rahl's *sun blade* makes Charisma checks with disadvantage when treating with the desert nomads. Ja'Rahl and his band of warriors are known to deal harshly with tomb robbers and plunderers of desert ruins.

Even those merchants who trade in stolen desert relics are heistant to do so with one who carries Ja'Rahl's sword. Unless a character makes a successful **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, no Black Market dealer in the region will risk buying the *sun blade* (see page 298).

4-5 Characters

Levels 10-12

Underworld



Forgotten Dark Dealings

Grant Simpson

While there are beacons of light underground, the darkness is always waiting on the outskirts to snuff them out. Kvarnz, a small subterranean border town, has been subjected to a strange phenomenon. Ordinary townsfolk have been abandoning their homes and wandering into the nearby fungal forest, never to be seen again.

The party has been asked to find the missing townsfolk and put a stop to whatever is leading them astray. They might have stumbled upon Kvarnz while exploring or met a concerned family member at a nearby city.

Ceilings & Lighting. The temple (**Area 4** & **Area 5**) has 20-foot-tall ceilings and is pitch dark. All other areas have 100-feet-tall ceilings and are dimly lit by bioluminescent fungi.

Frightening Fungal Forest

The party must first traverse a fungal forest to reach the adventure site, but it may take a few days. At the start of each day, the party must make a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check** to safely traverse the forest. On a success, they make their way safely through the forest to **Area 1**. If they fail, they spend a day wandering through the mushrooms. Record by how much the party failed the check and divide this number by 2, rounding up to a minimum of 1. The party encounters this many **wirbeln fungi** . After two failed checks the party automatically reaches **Area 1**.

The wirbeln are hostile, but only seek to protect their forest from intruders and, if convinced of the party's good intentions, such as by offering sustenance or making a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, may offer to lead the party to **Area 1**.

1. Forest Emergence

After making their way through the forest, the party emerges here. An **ophio fungus** hides at the edge of the forest until the party returns from **Area 5**. If it remains undiscovered, it attempts to infect the party with *Ophio Spores*.

A character infected by the spores falls under full control of the fungus within one day unless the fungus is destroyed.

2. River Bridge

A worn stone bridge crosses a 20-foot-deep underground river. The water is clear and slightly bioluminescent. A variant of carnivorous algae grows here which lures creatures into the water before slowly dissolving them down to the bone. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check** can explain the danger posed by the hypnotic algae, while a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check** provides a warning against swimming in glowing waters.

River Effects. Any creature which starts its turn occupying a space within the river must make a **DC 18 Constitution saving throw**. They take 28 (8d6) acid damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one.

River Treasure. A successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a skeleton at the river bottom. A jade ring (100 gp) glitters on the skeleton's hand. It takes a total of three **DC 16 Strength (Athletics) checks** made to swim to claim the ring; one to dive down, one to secure the ring, and one to swim back up. On a failed check, the character makes no progress due to the currents and the weird composition of the water. The jade ring is hollow, its inside hiding a strange drawing that may lead to further adventures.

Hypnotic Algae Hazard

Simple hazard, (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

The remains of Underdark fauna can be seen strewn across the river bottom, as well as humanoid bones. Grisly evidence of the hypnotic algae's' effective hunting method.

Trigger. Stepping onto the bridge causes the algae below to produce strobing, flickering lights. Anyone upon the bridge or within a 10 ft radius around it is affected by the algae's hypnotic lure.

Effect. Any creature within the above area must make a **DC 16 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failed save they are incapacitated and must use their movement to enter the river as directly as possible. They must make this saving throw on each subsequent turn, remaining in this state until they succeed. On a successful save, they are unaffected and immune to the effects of the hazard for the next 24 hours.

Countermeasures. Once its strobing has begun, a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check** allows a character to recognize the algae in the water. A creature cannot be affected by the trap if they have their eyes closed or are blind. Once the alga has been identified, a **DC 20 Intelligence check** made with alchemist's supplies or poisoner's kit lets the party can create a concoction that negates the algae's acidity for 5 rounds.

3. Casting Shadows

Ancient obsidian statues of Gitwerc warriors line the exterior wall of this temple, casting unnaturally deep shadows. Faded script can be seen above the statues. Any character fluent in Undercommon or Dwarvish can discern that the script speaks of a deal made to cast all their enemies into darkness.

Shadows are hiding within the shadows of the statues, one for each character. Unless discovered previously, they attack once any character gets within 10 feet of the door to **Area 4**.

Secret. A **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a crevice hidden in the shadow of one of the statues. Inside is a *sun blade* and a note written in Dwarvish that reads:

A candle to rekindle the light beneath the earth,
should the darkness come again.

4. Lost to the Dark

The missing townsfolk are gathered in this dark temple, bewitched by **Baalvit U'um** in **Area 5** who has transformed them into eight **shadow fey** ◆. They are hostile to the party but if they are knocked unconscious instead of being killed outright, they revert to their original forms when Baalvit U'um is defeated. The party should receive one-and-a-half times the XP if they return with any of the missing townsfolk or double if they return with all of them.

5. Behold! Baalvit U'um, The Encroaching Shadow!

Baalvit U'um (as **herald of darkness** ◆) sits upon a smooth, obsidian throne. The fiend has been steadily drawing more townsfolk under its sway and accumulating power since its rebirth in this temple. It is menacing, arrogant, but above all conniving. It promises party members power or other favors if they turn on their companions.

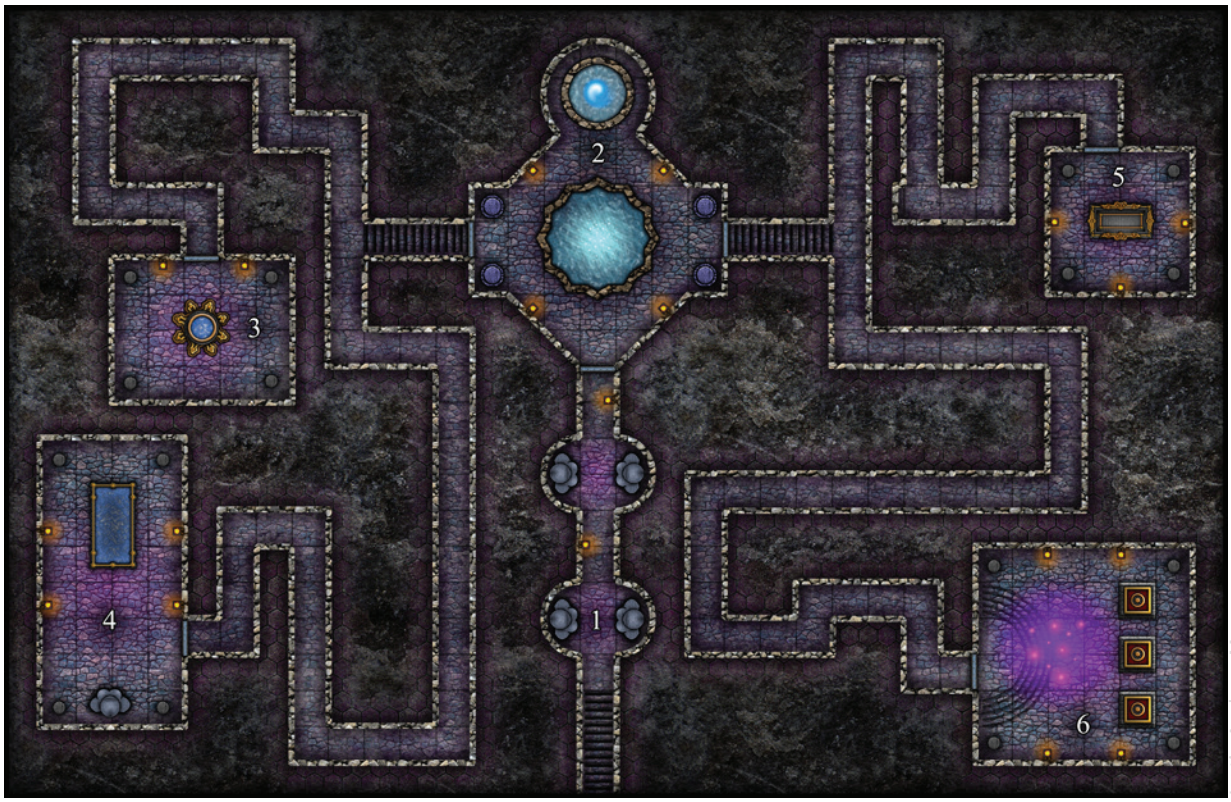
Baalvit U'um refuses to engage in combat until it is damaged, or until four mor more shadow fey in **Area 4** have been defeated.



4 Characters

Level 11

Coast



Justin Andrew Mason

Tempest in a Teapot

Claire Stricklin

The modern marvel of Terrendare was not always so prosperous. When the great port's piers first thrust out against the waves, the elemental storm lord Cirrumos took notice. When the fleets of Terrendare crossed into his territory, however, the mighty elemental took affront. Seeking to rid his domain of interlopers, Cirrumos called forth a raging tempest. And once the skies cleared, Terrendare had been wiped from the face of the earth. Or so Cirrumos believed.

In reality, the storm lord had been deceived. The mage lords of Terrendare had devised a unique form of *imprisonment*, trapping the unwitting elemental in a miniature replica of his watery domain. For one hundred years now, Cirrumos has dwelled happily within his 'unspoiled demesne.' Unfortunately, he is finally beginning to suspect that something is amiss. And that suspicion is playing havoc with Terrendare's public utilities.

Background

Cirrumos's Prison lies at the heart of Terrendare's good fortune. It also lies at the heart of the Water Works, the grand technomagical edifice that keeps the city running. Harnessed to cutting-edge lightning engines, the storm lord's power provides modern conveniences undreamed of in lesser metropolises. Yet for five days now, the lights of Terrendare have gone dark. The trouble started when a technician mage went inside the Prison for routine maintenance. She was foolish enough to break character in Cirrumos's presence, and now languishes within his power. The rulers of Terrendare have hired the heroes to venture within the Prison, rescue the mage, and convince Cirrumos that he still resides on the Material Plane.

1. Cover Story

Famously distrustful of land-dwellers, **storm lords** like Cirrumos will only deal with aquatic folk. The technician mages of Terrendare usually rely on *hats of disguise* to perform their duties, posing as petitioners to Cirrumos's court when they must step within the Prison. If the heroes cannot provide their own illusions, the Water Works are willing to loan out their equipment.

When the party is ready, a Water Works foremage *plane shifts* them into Cirrumos's Prison: a sphere of flawless tanzanite. Inside this extradimensional space, Cirrumos's sea spire palace rises from a hundred miles of ocean. And just inside the palace door lies the heroes' first challenge.

The statues in this chamber have been enchanted to announce new arrivals. The heroes will need a convincing cover story to explain their presence. Coming up with a plausible lie takes a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception) group check**. On a failure, all further Charisma checks against Cirrumos are made with **disadvantage**.

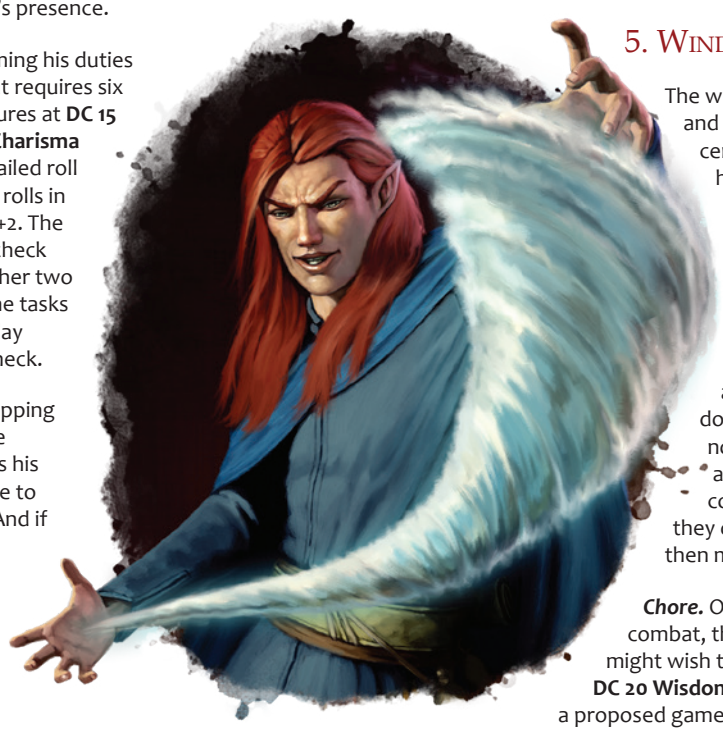
2. The Storm Lord

When the heroes arrive, Cirrumos is pacing before the unconscious body of **Abine Dapora** (LG female bronze dragonborn). The hapless technician **mage** floats inside a sphere of seawater suspended at the rear of the chamber, caught indefinitely in a looping moment of drowning.

Five days ago, Abine's *hat of disguise* slipped in the midst of her maintenance work in **Area 5**. Revealed as a 'land-dwelling infiltrator,' the terrified mage tried to talk her way out of danger. In the process, she let slip certain hints about Cirrumos's Prison. Now the **storm lord** ignores his duties, brooding instead over the meaning of Abine's presence.

Talking Cirrumos into resuming his duties is a **complex skill check** that requires six successes before three failures at **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Deception) checks**. Each failed roll increases the **DC** of further rolls in the complex skill check by +2. The characters may make one check when they arrive, and another two after completing each of the tasks in **Areas 3-6**. Inspired roleplay grants **advantage** on the check.

If the party succeeds in snapping Cirrumos out of his funk, he releases Abine and resumes his duties. If they fail, they have to beat him into submission. And if they take pity and attempt to free the imprisoned elemental by dispelling his prison, the rulers of Terrendare declare the party outlaws.



3. Hydroelectric

Wishing to ponder in peace, Cirrumos asks the heroes to undertake certain 'minor chores' before hearing their petition. This chamber holds the first such task.

In the true palace of the storm lord (abandoned these past hundred years), the pool in this chamber controls the tides. The replica here provides Terrendare with electrical power.

Chore. Stirring the water into a whirlpool requires two consecutive **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) checks**. For every character beyond the first aiding in the task, add +2 to the result. However, anyone who participates takes 16 (3d10) lightning damage per check.

Characters who can think of a way to stir the pool into a maelstrom without touching it can avoid the damage. Note that using weapons, tools, or other physical, conductive stirring implements counts as touching the water.

4. Pool Cleaners

One of the duties of a storm lord is to keep a cleanly realm. That means casting out the unnatural creatures who wander through the depths. In the Prison, however, that energy is used instead to flush out Terrendare's sewers.

Chore. The ritual is a simple one, if somewhat violent. By dragging nets through the pool in this chamber, the parasitic oozes that plague the region are dragged into a holding tank, represented here by the sarcophagus at the southern end of the room. That done, all that is left is to dispose of the creatures. Today, that means dispatching three **corrupting oozes** ◆.

5. Wind Walkies

The winds are rambunctious servants, and frequently in need of exercise. In centuries past, Cirrumos would release his pets from their kennel to play before corralling them back inside. Bent to the service of the Terrendare, however, Cirrumos and his imprisoned hounds provide the city's famously favorable offshore breeze.

When the heroes unlatch the vault at the center of this chamber, a pair of dog-like **air elementals** (**Intelligence** 3, no languages) burst forth, eager to play and unmindful of the character's commands. As Cirrumos can explain, they only need to work off a bit of energy, then must be put back in their kennel.

Chore. One way to accomplish this is through combat, though any animal-lovers in the group might wish to find a more humane solution. A **DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** alongside a proposed game (such as "fetch") does the trick.

6. Paint the Sunset

The most vibrant sunsets follow a great storm. This chamber is where Cirrumos paints them. With the storm lord absent from his true palace, the sunsets in Terrendare are dull affairs. The city's municipal light shows, on the other hand, are spectacular.

Chore. When Cirrumos suggests that the party take on the responsibility of painting the sunset, he is unwittingly giving them a major marketing opportunity. Although the storm lord himself prefers abstract compositions, there is nothing to prevent an enterprising band of adventurers from advertising their services to every resident of the metropolis. With an effort of will, a character can cause the red, purple, and gold pigments in the room's chests to take on any shape as a *major image* spell. That image will be broadcast to every public square in Terrendare.

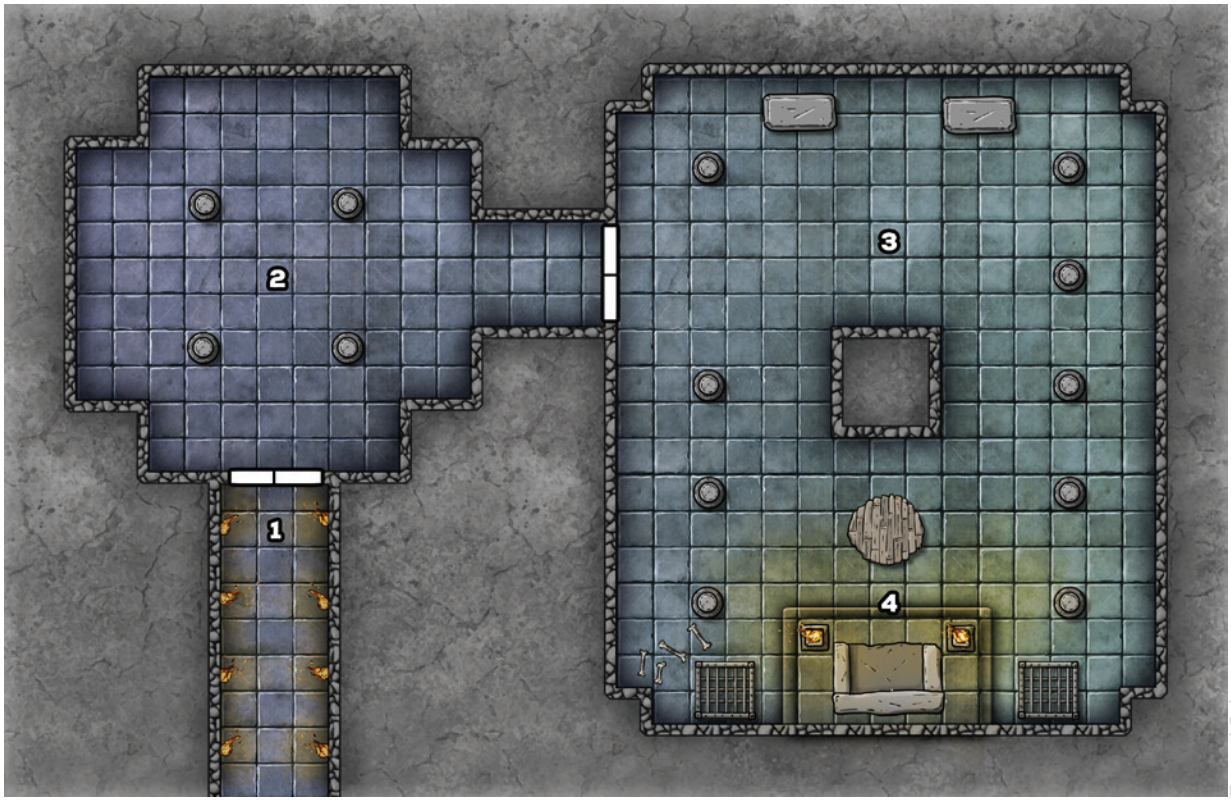
In addition, any character that paints with these pigments can make a **DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check**. Anyone who succeeds may cast *prismatic spray* (**DC 18 Dexterity saving throw**) once within the next month as the stuff of sunset suffuses their being.

Quico Vicens

3-5 Characters

Levels 10-12

Dungeon



Tommi Salama

Golemancer's Gauntlet

Thilo Graf, Robyn Nix

Zarastra the golemancer has been unleashing her vile creations into the nearby countryside. Her strange constructs have been pillaging local villages, stealing goods and living creatures and taking them back to her lair, fueling the ambitions of the "Golem-Hearted". The party has been tasked with bringing the golemancer to the local constable, but the constable understands that sometimes these issues get messy. Bringing in the golemancer alive or providing proof of her demise to the constable nets each party member a bounty of 1,000 gp.

Golemancer Design. All constructs under Zarastra's command are laced with advanced golemwork-circuitry. This makes them absorb lightning damage. Instead of taking lightning damage, the constructs heal the amount of lightning damage they would usually take. If the party examines a construct closely, they may understand the effect with a **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. Seeing a construct heal itself thus makes the effect obvious.

Alert. Zarastra's lair is in a *Dormant* state at the start of the adventure. This means that all constructs except those with *Guardian Design* are dormant and do not attack unless attacked first. Additionally, the *Lightning Pillars* are not active while the complex is *Dormant*. The complex resumes its *Dormant* state after 8 hours in *Alert* state have elapsed. Zarastra replaces destroyed constructs within 8 hours.

Approaching the Golemancer's Lair

The golemancer has set her lair up to serve as a gauntlet of punishment should anyone try to come and thwart her plans. Before entering the lair, the party has to pass by two **animated armors** guarding the entrance. The armors' helmets are shaped like unblinking, metal eyeballs due to their *Guardian Design*, and as such have **passive Perception 16**. The hands of the guards include a key-like, sixth finger that opens the door in **Area 1**.

Guardian Design. Designed to be a guardian, this construct has **Wisdom 18 (+4)** and **proficiency in Wisdom (Perception)**. If a creature or object with *Guardian Design* notices the party, Zarastra knows, and the lair goes into *Alert* state. Eliminating the creature without being noticed or bypassing it prevents an *Alert* state.

Inside the Golemancer's Lair

The lair itself is built into rocky terrain and the interior walls are made of carved stone. It is well lit. The golemancer has charged all pillars inside her lair with cackling lightning. This energy powers the compound and is dangerous while the complex is on *Alert*. With a **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, a character can also discern that this energy is beneficent to Zarastra's constructs.

Lightning Pillars. If the complex is *Dormant*, the pillars are harmless. However, if the complex is on *Alert*, any creature that comes within 5 feet of a pillar must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving**

throw, taking 18 (4d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Throwing at least 2 lb. worth of metal, such as a metal weapon or clump of ore at a column can also discharge it. A creature with the *Golemancer Design* feature (all of Zarastra's constructs) that has maximum hit points and is hit by a *Lightning Pillar*, or that is healed to maximum hit points by a pillar, is also affected by *haste* until the end of its next turn.

After a pillar has discharged this energy, it cannot do so again until 5 minutes have passed, or until it has taken at least 10 lightning damage in a single round, which immediately recharges it. All pillars as shown on the map for the lair are *Lightning Pillars*.

1. Entry Hall

The entry hall ends with a solid iron double door on its northern wall.

Iron Doors. The enchanted iron doors each have **AC** 19, a damage threshold of 5, and 28 hit points. The locking mechanism can be picked with a successful **DC 18 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. The fingers of the animated armors with *Guardian Design* can be used to open the doors. A **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or examination with *detect magic* show that opening the door without the proper keys triggers some magic inside; this cannot be prevented from outside. Opening the doors without the key fingers triggers the *Alert* state.

2. Golem Chamber

Spy-Chandelier. This room is lit by a magically-powered chandelier that hangs from the center of the 20-ft.-high ceiling, right where the "**2**" is on the map. The light from the chandelier provides bright light for the entire room. A **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check**, made with **advantage** if adventurers look up, notices a metal eyeball orbiting clockwise the chandelier on a circular track. The eyeball can see invisible creatures and looks at one quarter of the room, starting with the NW-corner when the party enters. It looks for intruders as though it had *Guardian Design*, has **passive Perception 16 (sight only)**, and moves and looks at the next corner (NW, NE, SE, SW) on **initiative count 10**. All four pillars in this room act as *Lightning Pillars* and provide potential cover from the eyeball's gaze. A ranged attack with a weapon capable of jamming or destroying the track (**AC** 20, 15 hit points) or otherwise clever idea to jam the eyeball's movement should be rewarded.

There are one **bronze golem** and three **shard swarms** here, harmless if the complex is *Dormant*, hostile otherwise.

3. Chamber of the Golemancer

In the northern area are two disused stone altars, with a **shield guardian** with *Guardian Design* (**passive Perception 17**), standing between them, looking south. Zarastra wears the control amulet and has stored a *lightning bolt* inside the amulet. Whenever she chooses to, she can cast the spell from the location of the shield guardian, as per its *Spell Storing* feature. Note that this can recharge the pillars.



Combat in **Area 3** automatically alerts all creatures in **Area 4** and vice versa.

Dynamo-Column. A large square stone column in the center of this room serves as a support for holding up the 20-ft.-high roof and holds the core of the complex' machinery. If the GM desires, this could hold an escape route for Zarastra.

Whenever a *Lightning Pillar* is discharged in this room, a **storm spirit** is released from the *Dynamo Column* and joins the battle, fighting for the golemancer. These spirits can also recharge the *Lightning Pillars* with their *Shocking Bolt* and *Tempest*.

GM Note. The ability to spawn storm spirits can make this combat spiral out of control quickly. Limit the spawning to one spirit per pillar to decrease difficulty, if required.

4. Altar

The wooden table holds a variety of common mechanical and surgical tools. On a raised dais, the golemancer has assembled esoteric items used in the creation of her magical constructs. There are two cages flanking the dais, storing prisoners whose souls she uses to bring her constructs to life; to Zarastra, an eternity as her construct-servant is worth a bit of suffering and loss of free will. Zarastra has the keys to the cages, which can also be opened with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools.

Zarastra is a **mage** with the following adjustments:

- She has 45 (10d8) hit points.
- She is wearing a shield guardian amulet. It (and the cage keys) can be stolen with a **DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** each if the complex isn't in *Alert* state. Holding the amulet nets control of the **shield guardian** in **Area 3**.
- ***Golem Heart.*** Zarastra has replaced her heart with a golem engine. She has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects and is absorbs lightning damage as per *Golemancer Design*. Additionally, she can use her bonus action to change the damage type dealt by any of her spells to lightning damage. If she is killed, an electrical likeness of her flies into the *Dynamo-Column* in **Area 3**. Knocking her unconscious does not trigger this.

Treasure. If the party searches the area after fighting or detaining the golemancer, a cabinet built into the southern dais can be found with a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. Inside the cabinet are an *animated shield*, two *potions of greater healing*, and a pile of coins containing 370 gp, 112 sp, and 93 cp.

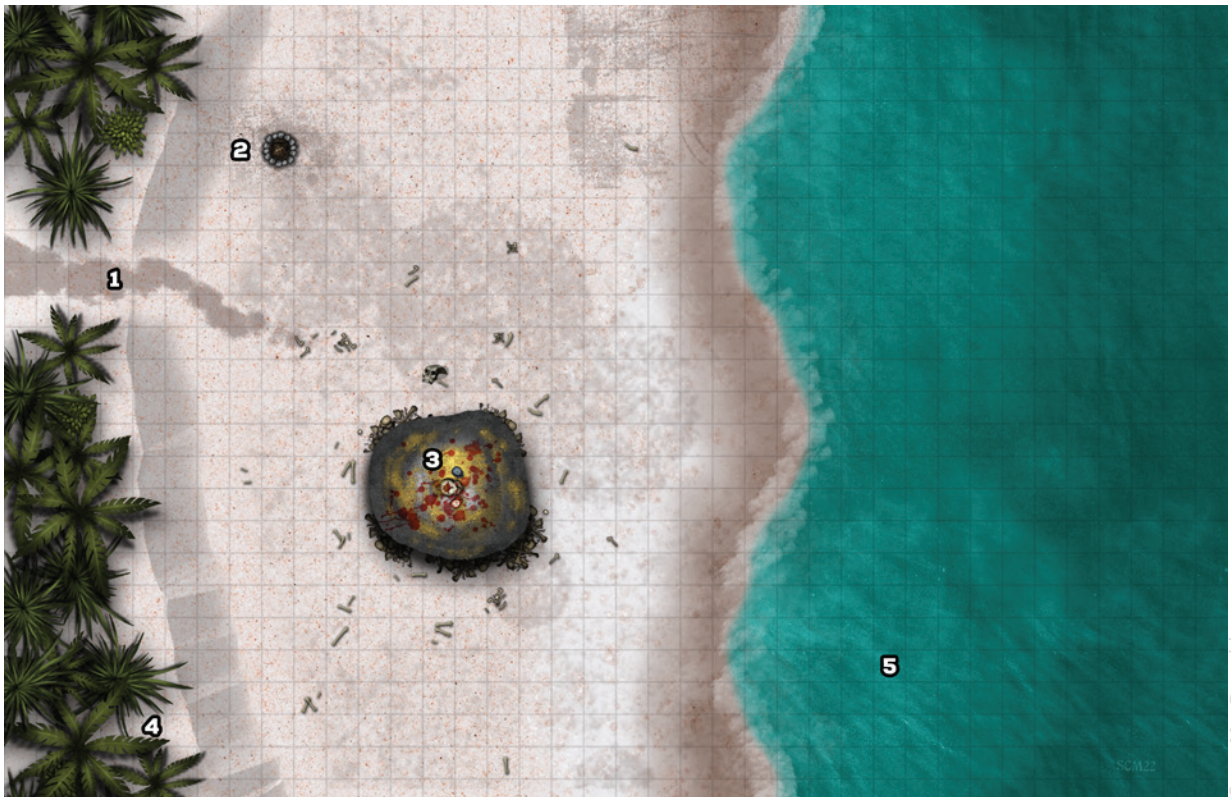
GM Note. Infiltrating the complex without triggering the *Alert* state and/or securing Zarastra alive should have benefits for the party in future adventures.

Dean Spencer

4-6 Characters

Levels 10-12

Coast



Sean MacDonald

Deep Ones' Doom

Tony Ohrazda

Lady Areia's missionaries travel the land, leading those needing salvation from the dark. One missionary, Brother Thuraz, did not return. His last destination was the remote, coastal village of Yarmith.

Areia suspects the worst and is prepared to pay for professional assistance.

The Job. Lady Areia hired the party find and return Brother Thuraz.

Deep Ones. Areia's concern is warranted. The villagers worship the deep ones in return for plentiful harvests. They believe the archimandrite (**Area 3**) is their deity's prophet. Deep ones have intermarried with the backwater fishing village of Yarmith for centuries. Yarmith celebrates one such marriage rite when the party arrives.

Brother Thuraz. Brother Thuraz entered Yarmith eager to teach his faith. The villagers promptly imprisoned the missionary. After weeks of captivity, the missionary is about to become the archimandrite's sacrificial offering.

Village of Yarmith. Yarmith sits along a jungled coastline. The party arrives in Yarmith as the sun sets.

The jungle lurches over Yarmith, perched to swallow the tiny village. Weathered shacks and strings of dried fish clutter the jungle clearing. The village is quiet and appears deserted. You can hear the faint sound of crashing waves in the direction of the bloody sunset. A wide sandy path cuts its way through the bush towards the beach.

Investigating Yarmith

The village is deserted; all the villagers are at the beach. Adventurers who search the village can succeed at a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, to find Brother Thuraz's holy symbol, which is also an *amulet of health*, hidden in the village elder's shack.

The adventurers can guess about 30 villagers live here.

Approaching the Beach. The sandy path leads the adventurers to **Area 1**.

Moving through the jungle takes the adventurers to **Area 4**.

Marriage Ceremony. When the party arrives at **Area 1** or **Area 4**, roll initiative. The deep ones require five uninterrupted rounds to complete the marriage ceremony. Attacking a deep one or the **bride** (**Area 3**) interrupts the ceremony.

Ceremony Completed. If the deep ones complete the ceremony, the **archimandrite** (**Area 3**) summons a **krake spawn** (see **Area 5**). Unless the adventurers rescue the missionary by then, the archimandrite will offer Brother Thuraz to the monstrosity as a sacrifice to Father Dagon.

Ceremony Interrupted. If the ceremony is interrupted, the **deep one hybrid priest** ◆ (**Area 2**), the officiating **deep one hybrid priest** ◆, and the **archimandrite** ◆ **groom** in **Area 3** attempt to find and kill any intruders. Most villagers flee

when wakened from stupor (see **Area 2**), but the **village elder** (**cult fanatic**), 2d6 **villagers** (**commoners**) in **Area 2**, and the **bride** (**commoner**) in **Area 3** join forces with the deep ones.

1. Village Path

*Nearly all the villagers huddle around the dying embers of a driftwood fire (**Area 2**). A scaly humanoid creature stands over them. It has enormous eyes and a wide, chinless mouth. The thing chants a rolling drone, gesturing wildly with webbed hands that end in bony claws. The villagers appear mesmerized by its mantra.*

*Up the beach (**Area 3**), two more fish-creatures and a young villager woman stand before a massive barnacle-crusted spire rising from the sand like a sea-monster's weathered talon. Thick strands of rubbery, pulsing seaweed lash a pitiful humanoid to the top of the spire. He writhes and mumbles incoherently, adverting his gaze from the black churning waves.*

One of the creatures wears kelp robes and crude shell jewelry. It holds a bone trident crackling with corrupt energy in one claw, the other clasping the hand of the human woman.

This bride sports grotesque deformities and signs of inbreeding. She wears a thin kelp robe draped in pearl strings. A spiky bone tiara rests atop her misshapen head.

*The woman stares into the dark sea, mesmerized. Another fish-creature, like the one near the driftwood fire (**Area 2**), stands before the pair. It gestures spasmodically while gurgling a discordant mantra.*

2. Dying Fire

Deep Ones. A **deep one hybrid priest** ◆, **Yarg'zholol**, pacifies the **village elder** (**cult fanatic**) and 28 **villagers** (**commoners**) with *Voice of the Deeps*. It stops chanting if it notices irregularities.

Development. It takes a **DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check** to move around this area unnoticed.

If Yarg'zholol stops chanting, the villagers wake from their trance and flee, leaving only 2d6 **villagers**, the **elder**, and the **bride** (**Area 3**). The **archimandrite** ◆ and **deep one hybrid priest** in **Area 3** halt the ceremony and investigate the interruption. If the deep ones discover the adventurers, they attack.

3. Altar to Father Dagon

Deep Ones. The prophet and groom Jucx'kalarh, an **archimandrite** ◆, and **Yarg'rixtrun**, a **deep one hybrid priest** ◆ stand next to the young **bride** (**commoner**) unless alerted to the adventurer's presence (see **Area 2**). They are all adjacent to the spire, which sits between the creatures and the sea.

Spire. Slick algae and razor-sharp barnacles cover the 30-foot spire; it is difficult terrain. Climbing 30 feet to the top requires 90 feet of movement and a successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check** for each move. On a failed check, the adventurer does not move and must succeed at a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 11 (2d10) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Captive Atop the Spire. A successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** matches the seaweed-shackled humanoid atop the spire with the description of Brother Thuraz. He is alive and bound in eerily pulsing seaweed. Thuraz is too injured and traumatized to do anything and has 20 hp left.

Seaweed Bonds. While atop the spire, an adventurer can take two actions to cut away the seaweed shackles. Alternatively, a successful **DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check** to rip them away or a **DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** can also untangle Thuraz.

Development. It takes a successful **DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) check** to move around this area unnoticed.

Archimandrite Tactics. The archimandrite first casts *suggestion*, trying to send an adventurer into **Area 5**. Once the archimandrite has fewer than 40 hp, it uses *Voice of the Archimandrite* to summon a **krake spawn** ◆ that arrives in three rounds. Consult **Area 5**.

4. The Jungle

This section of the jungle is home to two **giant crocodiles**; it takes a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check** to avoid them.

5. The Sea

When the archimandrite summons a **krake spawn** ◆, it arrives at this location in three rounds.

Round 1. *Offshore a lightning-latticed dark cloud coalesces. Without warning, icy hail pummels the mainland, coating the jungle and beach in rime and freezing shallow pools. At the edge of vision, over the iron sea, a contorted iceberg materializes.*

Round 2. *The hail ceases as suddenly as it started. The unnatural iceberg drifts swiftly closer, impervious to currents and waves.*

Round 3. *A nightmare of squid crossed with spider climbs onto the beach. Its squamous core is protected by a chitin shell. It pulls itself across the frozen sand with six rubbery appendages. Six more tentacles surround the thing's enormous beak. Eight malevolent eyes scan the beach as it raises its beak and croaks a loathsome void-song at the merciless stars above.*

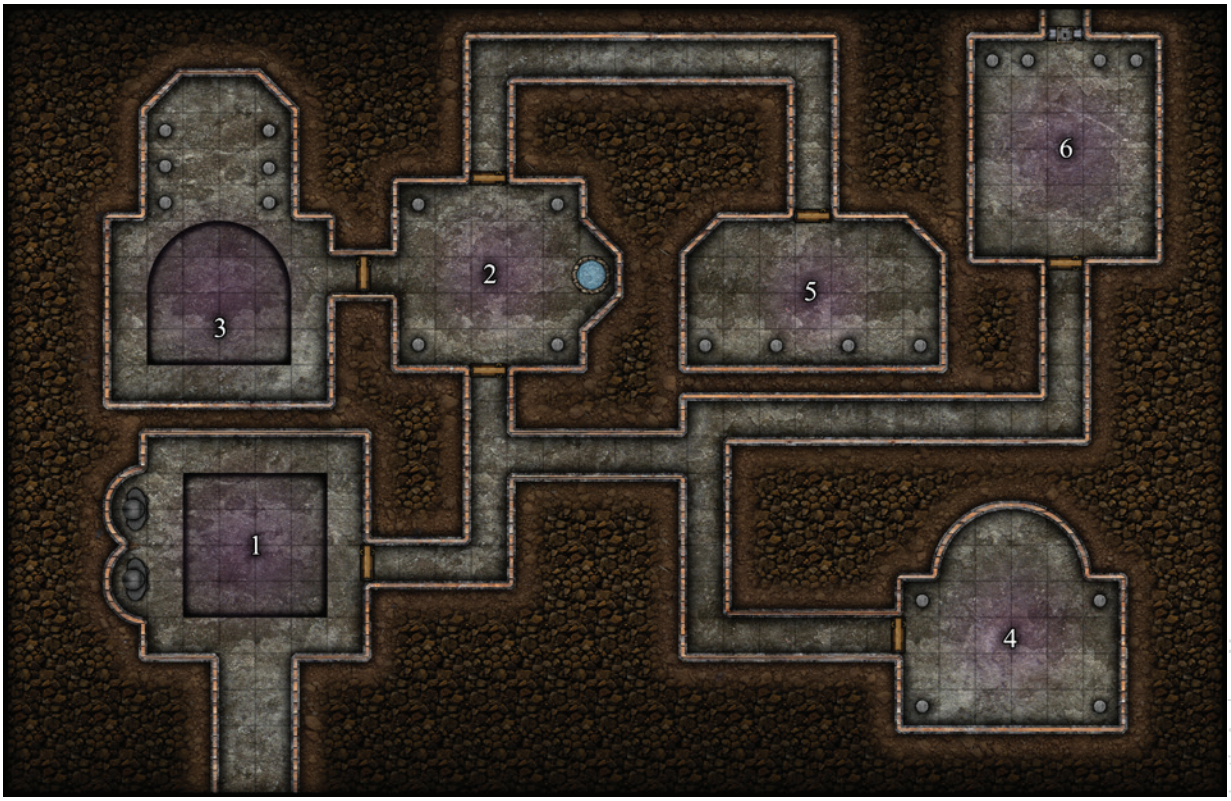


Mates Laurentiu

4 Characters

Level 12

Urban



Justin Andrew Mason

Temple of Reflection

Rob Cater

The magical security expert Ytrellia De'bouchar had the reputation of a mad genius, so nobody was particularly surprised when she succumbed to the occupational hazard of paranoia and vanished. Known for her overly complicated but efficient security systems, her erstwhile patrons want to find her and help her recover. One of her last completed vaults, referenced as the "Temple of Reflection" in her sparse remaining design documents, might hold a clue to her whereabouts. The party has to figure out how the notoriously-lethal complex works and document it—every mechanism might be a concealed hint!

Golem Patrol. The shrine in **Area 5** holds three **stone golems**, one of which is patrolling the complex. The patrolling golem's route is **Area 5**, **Area 2**, **Area 3**, **Area 2**, **Area 4**, **Area 6**, **Area 2**, **Area 5**, and then it begins its route anew. Defeating the golem activates the next one. Before starting the module, determine where the patrolling golem is when the party enters the complex.

1. Room of the Blind

Two large stone statues, one an elf, one a dwarf, stand in recessed alcoves to the west and overlook the reflecting pool of water in the center of the room. Both statues sport a clearly visible plaque, and they both have a ruby (worth 500 gp) in one eye socket, while the other eye socket is empty.

Reflecting Pool. The water is cold and supernaturally reflective, but harmless. With a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** a character notices a small metal gear in the water.

Small Gear. This gear is required to access the vault in **Area 5**.

Elven Statue. The plaque is in Elvish and reads "*To see oneself, a chance to reflect upon one's life in the sky.*" The correct gem to insert in the empty socket is the sapphire from **Area 3**.

Dwarven Statue. The plaque is in Dwarvish and reads "*To see things as they are, avoiding the deceptions of envy and greed.*" The correct gem to insert in the empty socket is the emerald from **Area 4**.

Hidden Compartment. There is an imperceptible, magically sealed compartment in the floor. While undetectable by mundane means, casting *detect magic* notices a strange aura, which can be identified with a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** as that of an extraplanar compartment.

If the correct gems are inserted in the eye sockets of the statues, they salute the party and their gem eyes flare. The compartment materializes in the glare, revealing a small ridiculously intricate golden key. If the party solves this puzzle, award 1.5 times the XP for defeating the golems.

If incorrect gems are inserted in both statues, or if the party attempts to remove the rubies, the statues animate as **clay golems** and attack. The compartment also materializes if the golems are defeated.

2. Room of Clear Vision

The room here is lit by torches on each column. The well to the east is 10 feet deep and filled with an extremely reflective liquid.

Reflective Liquid. This is an exceedingly caustic acid and deals 22 (4d10) acid damage to anything organic it touches. Metal, stone and glass are not affected by the acid.

3. Room of Reflection

The room here is cloaked in darkness. A convex glass pane sits in the southern wall. A large crystal is set into the north wall. The floor in the center sports engraved tiles and is recessed, allowing this area to form a shallow pool. It is currently dry. The columns in the room are unadorned, but *detect magic* notices a faint aura of transmutation in one circular patch per column.

Convex Glass Pane. A successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check**, or a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** examining the pane reveals a small latch and hinge that allow the pane to swing out, revealing a soot-filled alcove with a small grate on top. Lighting a fire behind the pane and closing it makes the glass send a concentrated beam of light towards the pool.

Empty Pool. The tiles in the recessed part of this room are engraved with Elvish runes and read "*The sky sees life and death equally.*" This is a hint to mix a sufficient quantity (subject to the GM's discretion) of the water from **Area 1** and the acid from **Area 2** in the pool. Mixing the liquids makes them take on a mercury-like, mirror-like quality. Subject to the GM's discretion, a properly reflective surface does the job as well.

Crystal. The pane's beam of light reflects off the mirrored pool (or reflective surface) perfectly into the crystal, which refracts the beam in six smaller beams. If any of these beams are interrupted, nothing happens. If all beams are unimpeded by obstacles, they hit the enchanted spaces on the columns. With an audible clacking the pool drains, and a pedestal rises in its center, a sapphire (2,000 gp) resting on it.

4. Room of False Sight

This room is filled with false (and quite worthless) treasure, a **hoard golem** in wait. Hidden amid the treasure is a distinct emerald (2,000 gp) that can be found with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, or automatically if the party takes the time to sift through all treasure. Touching any treasure except the emerald makes the golem attack.

5. Golem Shrine

Three platforms stand between the columns to the south. Depending on how many patrolling **stone golems** the party has eliminated, these platforms may or may not hold golems. Any resting golems in this area do not attack unless provoked: only a patrolling golem is hostile. The shrine is littered with spare golem parts and masonry tools. A large steel gear rests against one of the walls.

Massive Steel Gear. This gear is required to access the vault in **Area 5**. The steel gear is five feet in diameter, two inches thick, and weighs nearly 500 lbs. It can be rolled along the floor without damaging it. Rolling the large gear without dampening the sound potentially alerts the patrolling golem, if there is one left: make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** (the golem has **Perception +0**). On a successful check, it comes to investigate.

6. The Vault

The walls to the east and west consist of large and small gears fitting together and vanishing below and above the floor and ceiling. Before the vault door to the north are four columns, each sporting a lever.

Vault Door. The door has no hinges, is made of solid iron, fits seamlessly in the wall and has a small keyhole near its bottom. Cursory examination by a character proficient with thieves' tools reveals that the lock is ridiculously complex and can't be opened with regular lockpicks. A spellcaster automatically notices that the door is impervious to magic.

Levers. The outer two levers activate the gears in the walls on their side of the room, making them spin. The outer western lever becomes locked on when pulled, making all gears in the western section continuously spin. The inner two levers engage or disengage the wall gears to the door. For the door to open, the missing two gears must be inserted in the walls. Once the gears are inserted and spinning on both sides and the inner levers are pulled, the vault doors can be unlocked with the key from **Area 1**.

Missing Gears. The west wall is missing a small gear (**Area 1**), while the east wall is missing a large gear (**Area 5**).

Inserting the Massive Steel Gear. It takes two consecutive **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) checks** to lift, maneuver and insert the large gear in its proper place. Any character with a minimum Strength of 12 can use the Help action and reduce the check's difficulty to **DC 16**. On a failed check, every character involved must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid having the gear fall on their feet with a very loud bang that alerts the patrolling golem, if there is one. On a failed save, a character takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage, and their speed is reduced by 10 feet (to a minimum of 5 ft.) until they are fully healed.

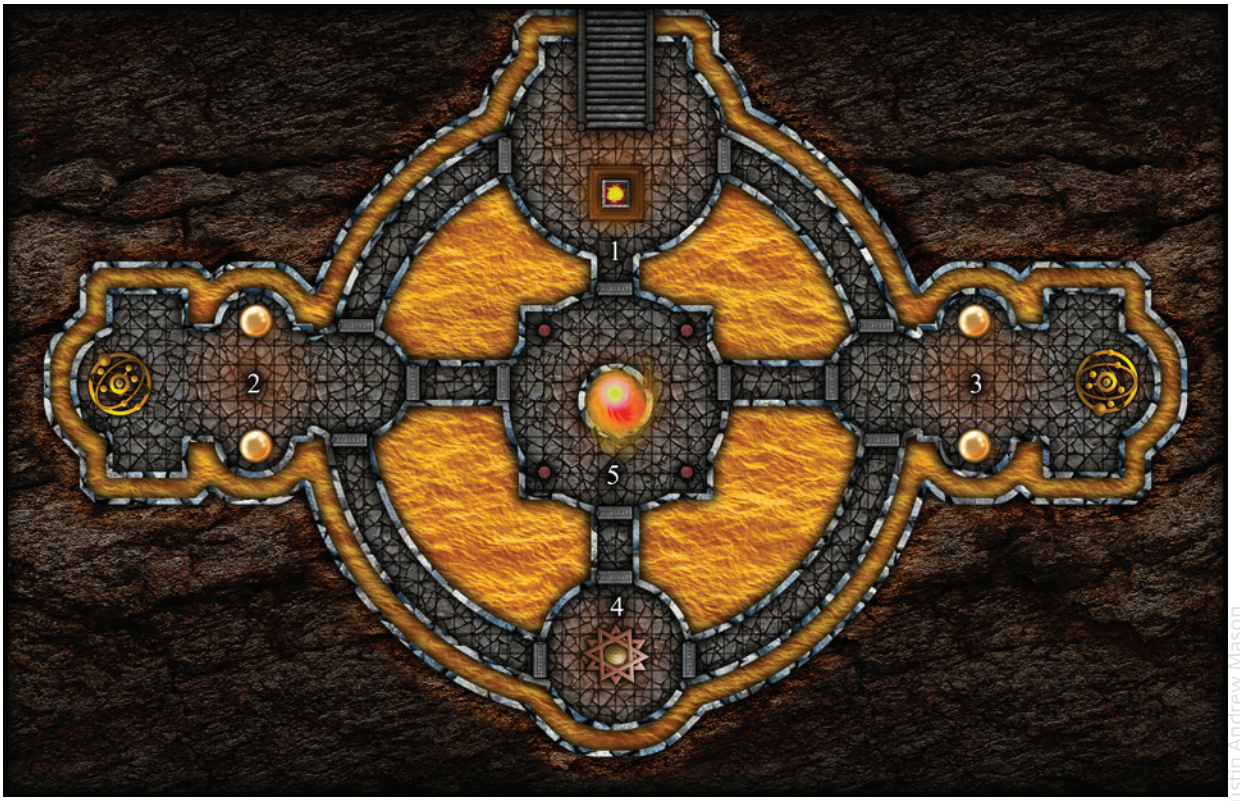
Inserting the Small Gear. The small gear is keyed and does not fit in the wall unless the outer western lever was pulled at least once. Simple comparison of the gear and wall makes this obvious. However, pulling the lever also causes the gears to rapidly spin, making gear-placement a delicate task: it takes a **DC 20 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to place the gear. A failure by 5 or less results in injured fingers, taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage; a failure by 6 or more results in the hand being crushed, taking 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage. An injured hand cannot be used until fully healed or properly splinted with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check**. A character who spends a minute studying the gears and succeeds on a **DC 18 Intelligence check** can assist with timing: they can use the Help action to reduce the check to **DC 16**.

The door slides up to the ceiling and locks in place, the levers reset, and the gears stop spinning. Removing the key closes the vault once more. The contents of the vault and further hints to Ytrellia's whereabout are left up to the GM.

4-6 Characters

Level 12

Dungeon



Justin Andrew Mason

Ritual of the Nail

Michael O. Holland

As the year comes to an end, Queen Ansalia of Ganford calls for champions to complete the Ritual of the Nail. Performing the ritual secures the blessings of Nortia, a powerful goddess of time, fate, and chance. As the sun sets on the last day of the year, a portal opens in Nortia's temple to a demiplane she controls. The portal remains open until the sun rises the next day, roughly 15 hours later. Once retrieved, the divine nail will be hammered into the temple wall and Ganford is guaranteed Nortia's protection.

All doors are locked. A successful **DC 25 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools allows a character to pick the lock, or a spellcaster can expend one spell slot of any level (excluding cantrips) to unlock the door. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** recalls that the locks can be opened via this tithe of magical energies. The doors cannot be damaged or forced open.

1. Uzrial's Greeting

Through the portal, a staircase descends to a circular room with a stone brazier on a dais. A **planetar** greets the characters, *"Hello again, my name is Uzrial. Is this the first time we have met? I do sometimes lose track with all the going back and forth."*

If the characters indicate this is their first-time meeting Uzrial, he nods and says, *"Very well, then you must prove yourself worthy. If you do, I will teach you how to complete the Ritual of the Nail."* The angel attacks and fights until it is defeated or has reached 50 hit points.

After the battle, Uzrial explains this demiplane exists simultaneously in three phases of time, named ***Urd*** (the past), ***Verthandi*** (the present), and ***Skuld*** (the future). There are two magic orreries in the demiplane. The first is the *Orrery of Urd* (in **Area 2**) which moves the characters backwards in time one phase with a single rotation, or two phases with two rotations. The second is the *Orrery of Skuld* (in **Area 3**) which moves the characters forwards in time one phase with a single rotation or two phases with two rotations. The orreries will not allow the characters to move beyond these three phases. Somewhere in the demiplane is *Nortia's divine nail* which the characters must claim to complete the ritual.

Once a door is unlocked, it is paradoxically unlocked in all phases of time.

Uzrial is in this room in all three phases. He will greet the characters in the same manner each time they return and is fully restored as if they had not battled.

2. Orrery of Urd

Two golden orbs float in alcoves in the north and south walls with lightning and radiant energy crackling around them.

Orrery of Time

Simple trap (level 11–16, dangerous threat)

Trigger. None, the trap is always active.

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative 20.

Effect. On the trap's turn, violent energies leap from the orbs and strike the 20-by-60-foot area between them. Any creature in the area must succeed on a **DC 17 Dexterity saving throw**, or take 27 (5d10) radiant damage, plus 27 (5d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Countermeasures. The orbs cannot be disabled or destroyed, but they can be bypassed by timing movement correctly.

An enormous, golden orrery fills the western alcoves of the room. This orrery can be used to go backwards through the phases in time. The alcoves are decorated with murals of an army driving bullywugs from the land while a warrior queen raises the flag of Ganford above the battle.

Urd. Two **degenerate titans** are chained to the floor in the middle of the room, entertained by a dancing **will-o'-wisp**. All three creatures attack intruders. One of the titans wears a holy symbol of Nortia around its neck.

Verthandi. A pair of **algoriths** whisper to each other. They stop any intruders and admonish them for interrupting their work. If the characters inquire about their work, one of them responds incredulously, "*Math, of course! The only work that truly matters.*" If the characters do not leave, the algoriths attack. With a successful **DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, the characters can devise a difficult mathematical equation which consumes the attention of the angels.

Skuld. Algorith corpses lie on the ground. Apparently, someone did not like math.

3. Orrery of Skuld

Two golden orbs float in circular alcoves on opposite sides of the room. These orbs work as in **Area 2**.

An enormous, golden orrery fills the eastern alcoves of the room. The alcoves are decorated with stone friezes depicting the birth, life, and death of the goddess, Nortia. This orrery can be used to go forwards through the phases in time.

Urd. A successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** unearths a note hidden among the orrery's gears. The note reads, "*The algoriths love a good math problem. Give them a really tough one and they might ignore you.*"

Verthandi. An **ophanim** hovers passively near the orrery. The angel will only become aggressive if a character approaches the orrery.

Skuld. Two **efreet** burst from the orbs and attack the characters.

4. Altar of the Nail

The floor is decorated with interlocking triangles of rose marble, centered around a sandstone dais. In the base of the dais is an impression of Nortia's holy symbol, a nail lying on a swirling sun. A magic field of force surrounds the top of the dais which cannot be dispelled or bypassed and sitting upon the dais is *Nortia's divine nail*. If the holy symbol possessed by the degenerate titans (**Area 2**) in Urd is placed into the impression, the magic field disappears in every phase of time.

Urd. The nail is translucent and cannot be touched.

Verthandi. The nail is solid and can be touched but cannot be removed from the dais.

Skuld. The nail is both solid and can be removed from the dais. When the nail is removed from the dais, a draconic avatar of Nortia (**star drake**) appears and says, "*Well done, but now for one final challenge.*" It then attacks.

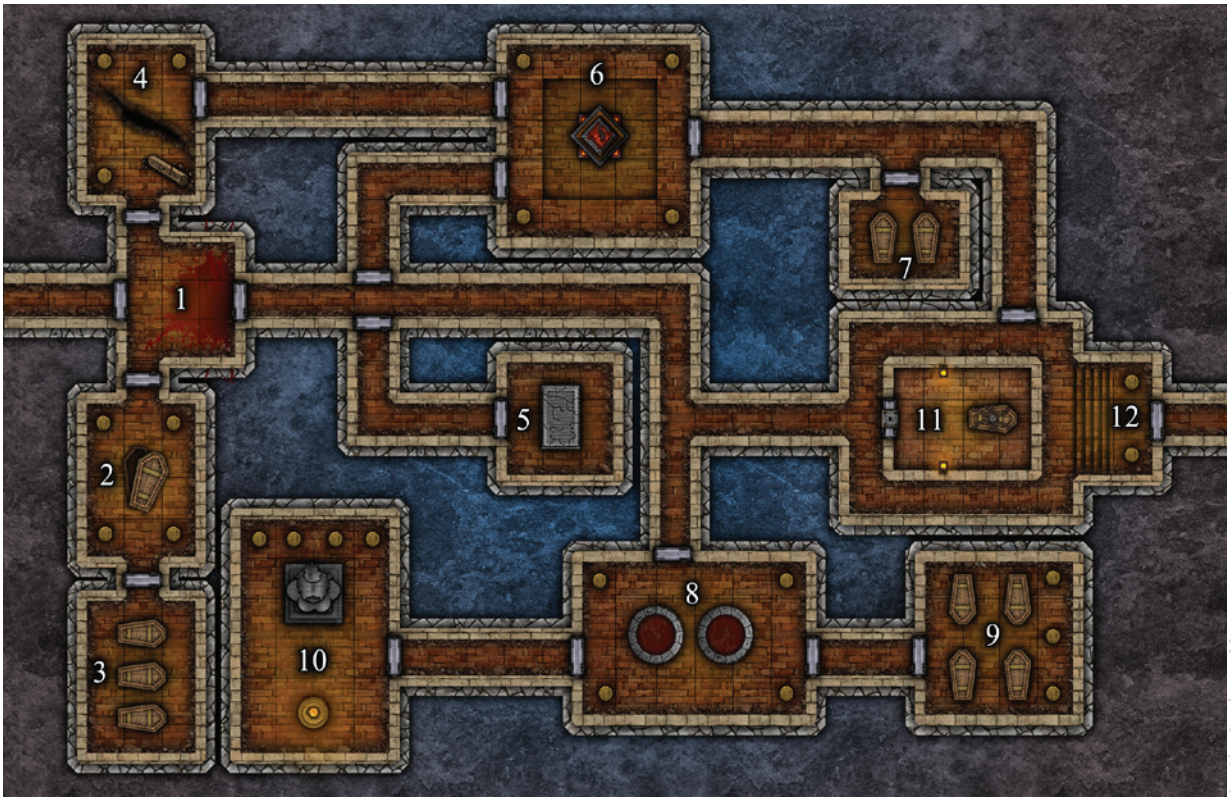
5. Flames of Eternity

Flames swirl around a burning, floating orb which dances in circles over a circular pit. Through the pit, the characters can see a golden ocean rolling thousands of feet below the floor of the demiplane. The four pillars are ornately carved, animal-headed pillars which resemble a bear, an eagle, a lion, and a snake.

Urd. Three of the pillars are **possessed pillars** which attack anyone who approaches the flames.

Verthandi. Two **deva** aggressively stand guard over the flames. They cannot be reasoned with and will not answer any questions.

Skuld. A **three-headed clockwork dragon** with no wings named **Fulstan** lounges beside the flames. Fulstan was given sentience by Nortia and charged to guard this room for eternity. He grew bored with the task. Now he prefers to challenge heroes to entertain him with interesting stories and only resorts to violence if forced to. A successful **DC 20 Charisma (Performance) check** is sufficient to earn safe passage through this room.



Justin Andrew Mason

A Tale of Two Liches

Rory Toma, Thilo Graf

A Tale of Two Liches takes place in an underground nexus with an inexhaustible supply of necrotic energy. Pragnazok, a particularly paranoid wizard, devised a way to fuse his essence with a golem, a process that would be sure to slay him—unless he achieved lichdom. Coincidentally, both the fusion and the lichdom apotheosis required huge amounts of necrotic energy. Pragnazok located a sufficiently powerful planar rift, killing two birds with one stone. The rift, however, was already under the control of a demilich.

In a battle of titanic wills, Pragnazok and the demilich clashed during the rite that was supposed to represent Pragnazok's ultimate triumph, and something went wrong. Pragnazok emerged as a lich bound to a golem, yes, but he also found his phylactery inextricably linked to that of the demilich.

While the demilich is corporeal, its phylactery cannot be destroyed without also destroying Pragnazok's phylactery. The liches are trapped in a most unpleasant stalemate.

Enter the adventurers.

General Properties.

Necrotic Nightmares. Living creatures attempting to take a long rest must succeed on their choice of either a **DC 20 Constitution** or **Wisdom saving throw**. On a failed save they do not get the benefits of a long rest and suffer one level of exhaustion instead.

Storage Coffin. The demilich master of these halls has crafted specific coffins to seal away useful undead minions for later experimentation. *Storage Coffins* illuminate the room they are in with bright light and cannot be opened by mundane means. A *dispel magic* (**DC 17**) can eliminate a coffin's magic for one hour, allowing it to be opened.

1. Bloody Entrance

Dry blood covers the room.

Weird Doors. The doors each have three handles. All three handles must be turned simultaneously to open a door. The doors are secured with blood door traps.

Opening Assistance. Roll initiative if less than all three handles are turned at once. 1d2 skeletal hands immediately appear on the sides of the door, and again at the beginning of the opening character's turn. Once enough hands to turn the remaining handles have manifested, they crawl towards the handles and take their action to open the door. The skeletal hands have **AC** 12, 5 hp, +2 to all **saving throws**, and are **immune** to all conditions, poison and psychic damage, as well as to nonmagical weapons.

When all three handles are turned at once, the door opens, triggering the blood door trap. The door leading to the long corridor is also magically locked; it can only be opened by the skeletal hands, or with a successful *dispel magic* (**DC 17**) or **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check**.

Blood Door Trap

Simple trap (level 11-14, deadly threat)

A swarm of magical blades slice through the chamber.

Trigger. Any door in the room is opened by the skeletal hands.

Effect. Each creature in the chamber must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Countermeasures. Effects like *detect magic* or a DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveal an aura of evocation on the doors. A DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check disables the trap for one hour. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 19) cast onto a door destroys the trap.

Reset. One hour after all doors are closed.

2. Open Coffin

Inert Storage Coffin. The lid of this coffin is slightly ajar. A mummy lord has escaped from it and currently lurks in the shadows. It can be noticed with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**. It attacks if the characters approach the coffin.

3. Prison

Three *Storage Coffins*, each containing a **nachzehrer**, illuminate the room.

4. Dark Rift

An inky black tear in the floor is a rift to the negative energy plane.

Necrotic Waves. Visible waves of black energy flow from the rift and through the door all the way towards **Area 6**. A **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** is required to avoid contact with the waves. Physical contact with the waves or the rift lowers the hit point maximum of the target by 20 hp. A successful **DC 17 Constitution saving throw** instead only deals 20 (4d8 + 2) necrotic damage.

5. Lich Den

The **lich Pragnazok** resides here, absorbed in studies on how to defeat the demilich and claim the necrotic power source as his own.

Negotiation. Pragnazok is talkative and willing to bargain if the demilich still lives. He offers to help defeat the demilich, even going so far as to promise destroying the necrotic chasm. After the characters do their part, of course. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** notices Parganzok's obvious lie about sealing the chasm.

6. Monolith

A dark monolith holds a weird contraption of crystal and metal; the dark energy waves are sucked into this *Necrotic Battery*. The monolith weighs 2 tons.

Necrotic Battery. The *Necrotic Waves* from **Area 4** flow into the glowing obelisk. Touching the active battery deals 11 (2d10) necrotic damage, or half as much on a successful **DC 16 Constitution saving throw**. The battery powers the *Demilich's Defense* in **Area 11**.

Destroying the Battery. A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** identifies the battery as an extra-planar artifact that opens necrotic rifts (such as in **Area 4**). The rift can be sealed by first destroying the phylactery linked to it—in this case, both of them (**Area 8**). Then, the obelisk must be disposed in the rift, which closes the rift and destroys the battery.

7. Two Coffins

Two *Storage Coffins*, each containing a **wraith**, illuminate the room

8. Phylacteries

Two blood-filled stone pools emit a palpable sense of dread; each pool has a metal box inside.

Blood Pools. The blood is the medium for a permanent *antilife shell*. The *antilife shell* disappears if the demilich is killed.

Metal Boxes. These contain the phylacteries of the demilich (west) and Pragnazok (east). While the demilich has its corporeal form, destruction of his phylactery also destroys Pragnazok's.

Development. Pragnazok intervenes in any attempt to destroy either phylactery until the demilich has been dealt with. The *Necrotic Battery* cannot be deactivated until both phylacteries are destroyed. Unless otherwise desired by the GM, throwing a phylactery in the rift in **Area 4** destroys it.

9. Four Coffins

Four Storage Coffins stand here. Two are open and empty, two contain **nachzehrer**.

10. Golem Works

An **iron golem** stands on a platform. It is fused to the essence of Pragnazok and follows his commands. The golem has:

Adjustable Size. The golem can reduce its size to Medium, or back to Large, as an action. This does not otherwise alter its statistics.

11. Demilich Den

A field of tainted looking radiant energy suffuses this room. It protects the **demilich** from attacks by undead.

Demilich's Defense. The field imposes **disadvantage** on attack rolls made by undead and grants the demilich **advantage** on all **saving throws** against attacks and effects made by undead. Deactivation of the battery destroys the field.

Development. Pragnazok helps the party if it turns the tide against the demilich. Afterwards, he tries to lure the party towards **Area 10** and attacks there.

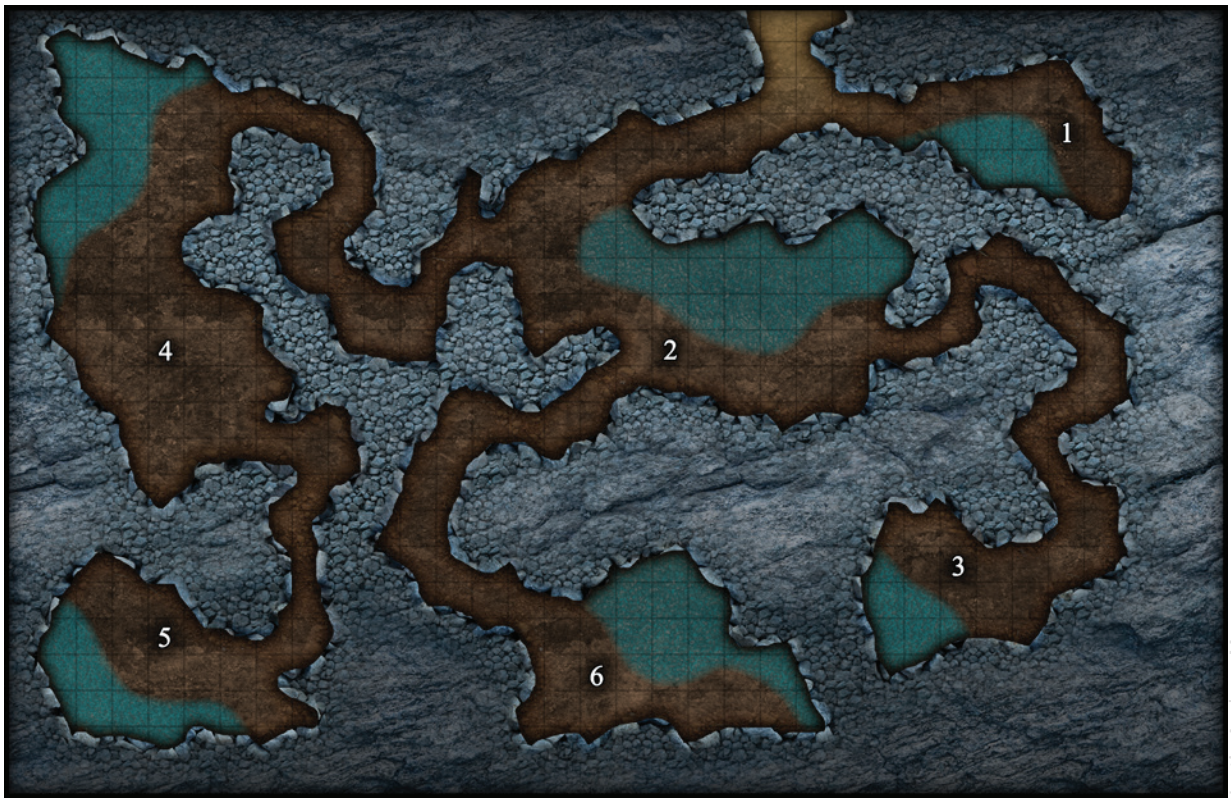
12. Exit

The corridor leads further underground. Deactivating the battery unlocks the door.

4 Characters

Level 13

Underworld



Justin Andrew Mason

Pit of the Red Worm

Claire Stricklin

Deep beneath the earth, there is a place of utmost horror. It does a booming business. For the proprietor is a creature of strange appetites, and its customers are the vengeful drow. Where prisons of stone and torture chambers of steel may serve for common criminals, only the lair of the urochar will do for the black-hearted matrons of the deep cities. In this nighted place, the fallen nobility of defeated drow houses are treated to a rare and exotic experience: the moment of death, the shock of resurrection, and an unceasing repetition of the same. For just as the urochar feeds on mortal terror, the matrons of the dark elves thrive on vendetta. And both are utterly insatiable.

Background

Despite the fearsome reputation of the dark elves, Tathryn Niraen does not cut an imposing figure. Captured by local militia, the flamboyantly-attired princeling might have been slain on the spot had he not asked for the party by name. It seems that his mother, the matron Baltana Niraen, was recently usurped by his eldest sister, Mania. This newly installed ruler is even crueler than the old, and the much-abused male is desperate to return his mother to power. Tathryn can promise a rich payday for the party's trouble, as well as the gratitude of House Niraen should they succeed in rescuing Matron Baltana from the Pit of the Red Worm.

Going Down

The Pit is a week's travel from the surface, so getting there may constitute an adventure such as an overland trek or hex crawl in its own right. Alternatively:

Fast Travel: A reasonably competent **mage**, **Tathryn** knows *teleportation circle*, and can whisk his newly hired allies directly to the Pit.

Quick and Dirty: By providing a map or serving as a guide, Tathryn can offer reasonably safe passage through the underworld. Each character makes a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**, losing one fourth of their maximum Hit Dice on a failed save, or one Hit Die on a successful one. If a character fails the save by 5 or more, they instead gain one level of exhaustion and lose half of their maximum Hit Dice.

Dungeon Layout

All chambers in the Pit are 80 feet high, totally dark, and honeycombed with narrow passageways near the ceiling. These passages are just large enough for a Small-sized creature to fit through, allowing the **urochar** ◆ to use *Squeeze* to navigate between **Areas 1** and **3**, **4** and **2**, or **6** and **5**. All bodies of water are 1 feet deep and count as difficult terrain.

1. Late Bounty Hunter

When the heroes arrive, a sign written in phosphorescent pigment points to the left. Written in Undercommon, it bears the legend, "Please wait for service." There is already a trio of nefarious figures doing just that.

A pair of bound **soul eaters** and their drow mistress **Indiira Arabrae** (**elf enchanter**) are in the midst of an argument. Indiira is a bounty hunter and undertook to slay the assassin in **Area 6**. She was beaten to the punch by competitors, and now finds herself in something of a dilemma. The urochar refuses to let Indiira's soul eaters finish off the assassin, the soul eaters claim that fighting the urochar is beyond the purview of their contract, and Indiira knows the fiends will turn upon her when the assassin dies his final death.

If the party undertake to finish off the recalcitrant soul eaters for her, Indiira is willing to pay for the service. She barters as best she can, offering up to three cabochons worth 2,000 gp apiece, two sets of *goggles of night* captured from surface-dwellers, and one casting of *invisibility*.

As this drama plays out, the **urochar** lurks nearby. It is melded into stone high overhead, waiting to discover Indiira's next move. It is just as curious to hear of the newcomers' intentions and will defend its lair as necessary. The creature favors hit and run tactics, casting spells from above while intruders are distracted by other combatants before retreating to the next ambush site.

2. Body Dump

The stench in this chamber is overwhelming. The remains of drow, svirfneblin, duergar, and other deep-dwelling folk can be found here, all in various states of decay. Though long past help, they may prove helpful themselves.

Any character who examines the bodies and succeeds at a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)**, **Intelligence (Investigation)**, or **Intelligence (Arcana) check** receives one useful piece of information about the urochar's capabilities. If the characters collectively make all three checks, they all gain inspiration and should receive hints by the GM regarding the urochar's capabilities



3. Vertical Pantry

Bioluminescent mushrooms grow from every surface of this chamber, their violet light refracted through countless twinkling facets. These are the secret to the urochar's success.

Although the creature has no use for money, it does covet diamonds, demanding them as its sole form of payment. The urochar long ago discovered a species of mushroom that feeds upon these precious stones, transforming them into raw necromantic energy. By administering one to a creature that has died within the last minute, that creature is restored to life as if by the *revivify* spell. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check** realizes the obscure properties of these fungi.

Currently, there are four mature mushrooms in this chamber, as well as 25,000 gp worth of diamonds. Collecting them all takes one hour (and a great deal of climbing).

4. Drowned Maidens

A waterfall tinkles merrily in this room, splashing down in the chamber's northwest corner before draining away through subterranean channels. The inhabitants of the pool are somewhat less merry.

Weakened by repeated death and resurrection, some of the urochar's victims become too enervated to even sit up. The three undead drow in this chamber managed to drown in only a foot of water, and now linger on as **drowned maidens**. One of them is still shackled to the wall, and uses *disguise self* to appear alive. The other two hide behind the waterfall, waiting to ambush anyone who comes too near.

5. Red Worm

As the party approaches, they can hear the clank of chains ahead. The **urochar** has released the comatose **Matron Baltana** from her shackles and is trying to find a way to shove her through the narrow passage near the ceiling into **Area 6**. Failing that, it wedges her into place near the ceiling before turning to face the party.

6. Mad Assassin

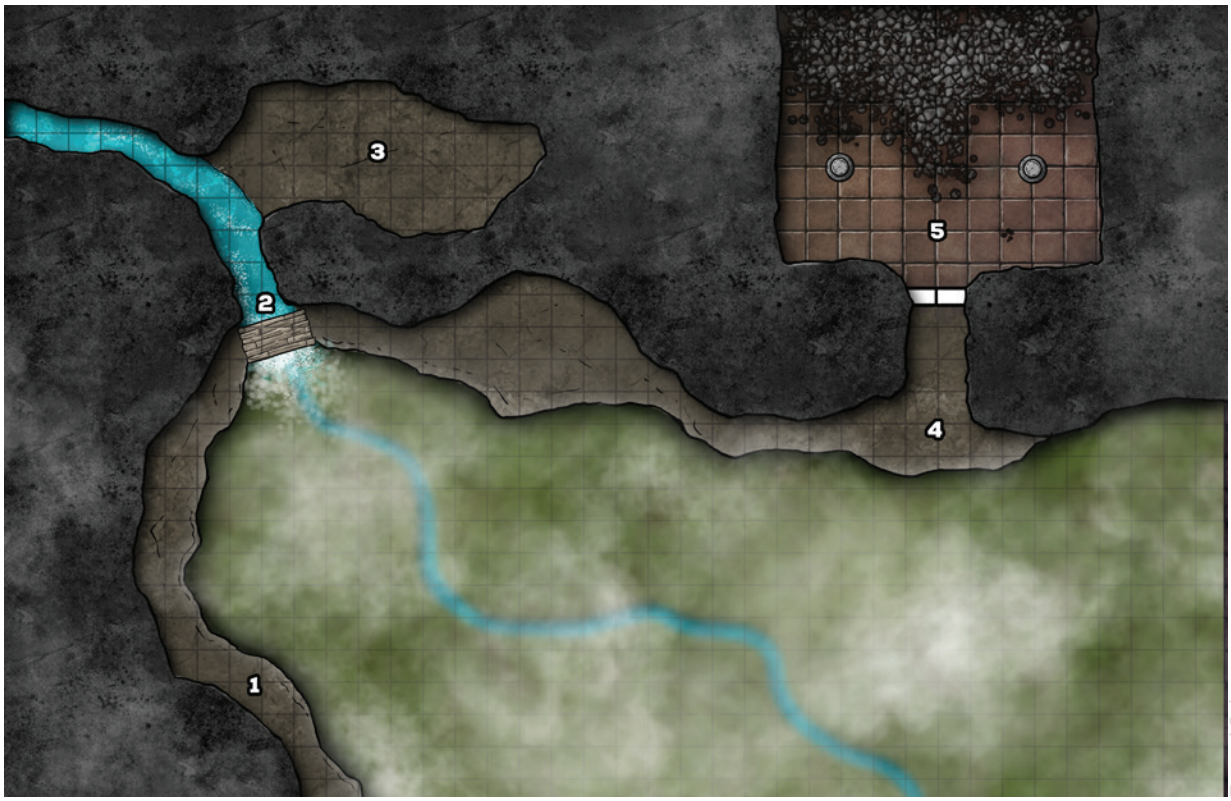
A drow **assassin** is chained to the northeast wall of this chamber. He has only 1 hit point remaining, and dangles from his wrists about 30 feet up. The urochar has strangled and resurrected the poor elf several dozen times already, and he is quite mad. He only repeats the morbid directive, "End me," over and over again, and doing so would be an act of mercy. Unfortunately, it is also extremely hazardous.

If the assassin is slain, his tormented spirit manifests as the *confusion* spell (**DC 16 Wisdom saving throw**), affecting all characters in the room.

4-5 Characters

Level 13

Mountain



Tommi Salama

Cliffside Hoot

David Schwartz

In a secluded mountain valley life goes on as it has for centuries. Recently, however, the farmers' idyllic existence has been threatened by a creature that comes in the night to hunt down livestock. Some unlucky people have also fallen prey to the assailant. Those who lived to tell the tale of an encounter with the creature describe the head and wings of an owl fused with the body of a mountain lion. The desperate farmers of the valley offer their paltry wealth to the party to track it down and stop the monster.

The creature roams the peaks at night, so the characters' best chance of catching it is to track the creature to its lair where its sleeps during the day.

Forgotten Monastery

Centuries ago, an order of monks carved a monastery into the side of the mountain overlooking the valley. The site was later abandoned after a series of avalanches collapsed the buildings. Now, many years later, the sphinx Mahes has claimed the ruins as his lair, drawn by the decaying beauty of the structures and a lust for the knowledge buried beneath the rubble. Mahes treats the valley below as his personal larder and sees little difference between livestock and their owners. A parliament of owl harpies have recently joined Mahes, believing the sphinx to be a herald of their deity.

The entrance to the monastery is roughly 150 feet above the valley floor. A character who is pushed off the cliff can attempt a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** to catch an edge or outcropping, otherwise they fall down and take 52 (15d6) falling damage.

1. Mountain Trail

The switchback trail leading up to this point is roughly 1,500 feet long, approximately a 6-minute walk from the base of the cliff. Climbing the vertical cliff requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**. Characters can also use magic to fly or teleport to the ledge.

Regardless of how the characters approach, there is a chance they are spotted by the lookout (**passive Perception 15**) in **Area 4**. The lookout has **advantage** on **Wisdom (Perception) checks**.

2. Rickety Bridge

The trail is split here by water flowing out of the mountain and cascading down to the valley floor below. A wooden bridge passed over the waterfall. A single Small creature can safely cross the bridge, but the weight of a Medium creature (or multiple Small creatures) causes the bridge to collapse dropping any characters on it. A character can discern the bridge's decrepit condition with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**, or with a similar check with an architecture-related background.

The hole in the side of the cliff face is roughly eight feet around with water filling the bottom two to three feet. The cold stream is difficult terrain; a character that ends their turn in the water must succeed at a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** or be pushed downstream. If the character is downstream of **Area 3** when they fail the check, they risk being pushed off the cliff. They can make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** to catch a part of the bridge. A character has **advantage** on this Dexterity saving throw if the bridge remains intact. On a failed save they plummet down the cliff, taking 52 (15d6) falling damage.

A collapsing bridge alerts the owl harpies in **Areas 3** and **4**.

3. Harpies' Nest

Mahes's harpy followers use this cave as their nest. The ceiling is roughly 20 feet high, and the floor is littered with branches and bones, making it difficult terrain. There are no light sources. If the harpy on lookout (**Area 4**) has not raised the alarm, three **owl harpies** are resting here, but quickly ready themselves if they detect (**passive Perception 12**) intruders approaching. Splashing through the water is loud enough to be potentially noticed by the harpies. If the characters carry a light, one of the harpies casts *darkness* on it.

A character who spends ten minutes searching the room and succeeds at a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** discovers a leather pouch containing three blue spinels worth 500 gp each. Searching the grisly nest is not sanitary; all characters spending 5 or more minutes in this cave must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**, or contract a variant of cackle fever that results in owl hoots and shrieks instead of mad laughter.

4. Overlook

An **owl harpy** is stationed on this ledge to watch for any approaching creatures. The harpy on lookout has **+5 Wisdom (Perception)**, and wears *eyes of the eagle*, granting her **advantage** on **Wisdom (Perception) checks**.

If the lookout spots the characters approaching, she uses *Luring Song* (**DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**) to draw the intruders closer, potentially causing walking or climbing characters to fall off the cliff. If characters are close together, she casts *darkness* on them before beginning her song.

The lookout's *Luring Song* also alerts her allies; one round after she starts singing, the three **owl harpies** in the nest (**Area 3**) fly out to face the intruders if they have not been dealt with. If reduced to less than 20 hit points, a harpy tries to flee if they can do so without reprisal trying to use *darkness* to cover their escape.

5. Collapsed Foyer

The monastery's heavy stone doors can be opened with a successful **DC 10 Strength check**. The grinding sound of the doors' opening alerts the occupants of this room if they aren't already aware of intruders.

The half-collapsed foyer serves as the sphinx's lair. **Mahes** has the abilities of a **gypsosphinx**, but the head of an owl. Mahes is accomopanied by an **owl harpy** valet wearing *bracers of defense* (**AC** 16).

The sphinx demands to know why the characters have intruded upon his domain. Unless a character succeeds at a **DC 19 Charisma (Diplomacy)** or **Charisma (Intimidation) check** or has very compelling reasons, the sphinx is displeased with their answer and attacks. Mahes hates riddles, and offering a riddle contest enrages the sphinx.

The sphinx agrees to spare the farmers and their livestock, but only if he recieves help unearthing the monastery. Unless the characters also make the sphinx extend this promise to his harpies, Mahes simply orders them to hunt the farmers for him. If held to the precise letter of the agreement, he holds up his end of the bargain ...at least for a while. Mahes ultimately has no regard for other creatures.

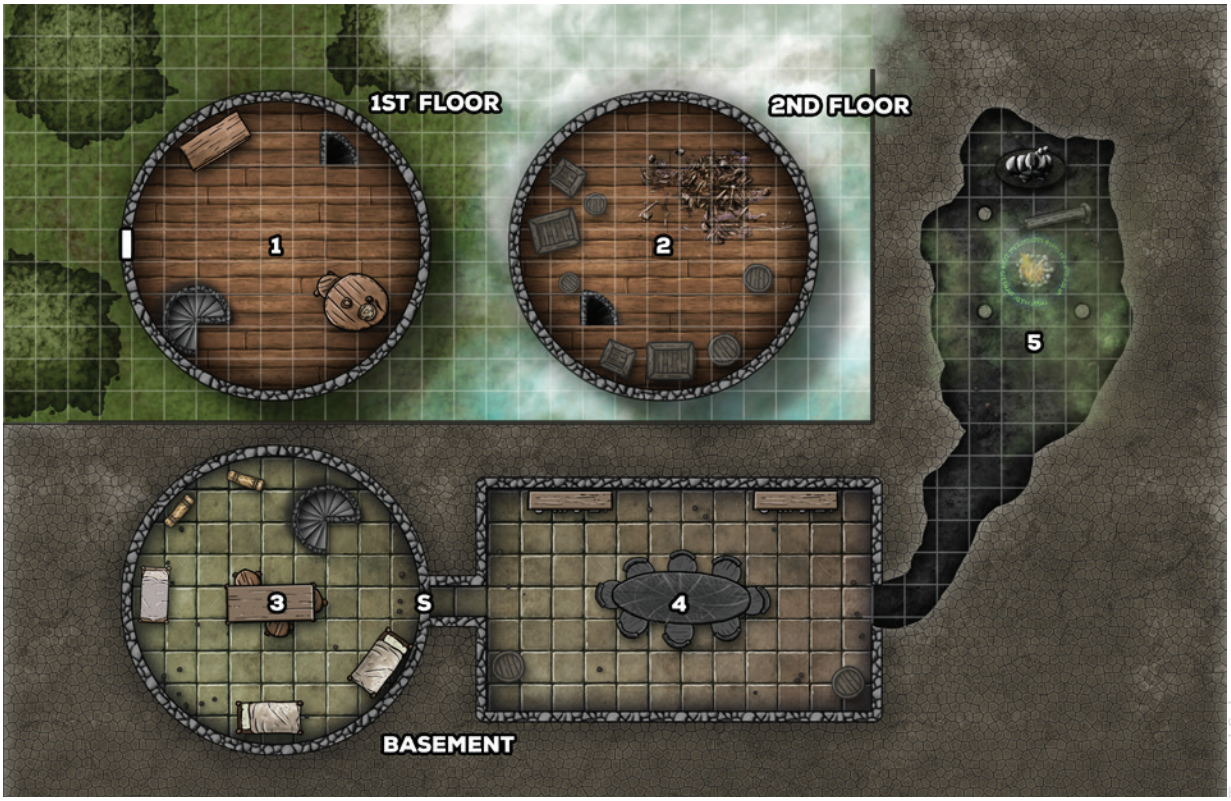
The sphinx uses *Teleport* to move to open air at the start of the combat, then casts *cloudkill* (**DC 17 Constitution saving throw**) into the room to smoke the characters out. Mahes fights with a combination of physical attacks and magic. If a character is using magic flight, he casts *dispel magic* on them. The harpy aids Mahes with *Hovering Darkness* (**DC 15 Constitution saving throw**).

With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception) check**, a character can find a niche concealed among the rubble containing the sphinx's spell book, a *tome of understanding*, and two paintings of saints embelished with gold and silver (worth 750 gp each).

Tome of Understanding

A *tome of understanding*—along with its cousins—takes a full century to recharge its magic after use. If the party attempts to sell a tome to a Black Market dealer (see page 298) after having read it, they only collect half the coin, unless a character succeeds on a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. One hundred years is a long time to wait for a return on investment.

Javier Araujo



Tommi Salama

The Sad Tale of Heidi and Her Two Daughters

Marc Braden

Not all gods serve a grand purpose. Some tend to the worldlier, more common tasks; this is the godly life Grünwald has chosen. Worshipped amongst many worlds he was assisted by six witches who saw to these everyday miracles. As of late, prayers had become less common and his flock dwindled to two, Heidi and Lotte.

Heidi recently assisted a village and brought many prayers to Grünwald, enough for her deity to bless her with offspring, the spark of life growing within her. Soon, two daughters were born: Iris and Viola. Lotte, Heidi's elder sister, became jealous and disillusioned. Swearing fealty to a rival god, she was granted a curse to bind her family to her will.

Heidi was imprisoned in a **hideous iron statue**, alive and unable to escape as long as a fire, fueled by the bones of the freshly killed, burns and Lotte is alive. Heidi's two daughters were transformed into **pishacha demons**, trapped in beautiful **tiger-like forms** bound to hunt for these bones and protect their vile aunt. Their once beautiful plane-traveling tower has become a curse to any place it appears in.

The Sisters

The sisters are not evil, they are just young children trying to fight the curse laid upon them. However, they will do what they are compelled to do to keep their mother alive. They have tried to lure heroes to the tower to defeat their aunt before, but so far, their efforts have failed. To lure adventurers, they kidnap a young man and then attempt to guide the party to the tower. In a confrontation, they will pull their punches, a fact that the characters can notice with a **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check**. They also try to use their *Invisibility* to ensure that they do not die, but not to the extent of its offensive capabilities—another hint for their hidden agenda. If the **tiger-like creatures** are killed in spite of their tactics, the curse makes them dissipate in mist and regenerate in **Area 5** after 1d10 minutes.

Lotte

Corrupted thoroughly, Lotte is now in league with a minor god of mischief and has been transformed into a **red hag**. She draws pleasure from the innocent daughters having to take lives to keep the fire burning that maintains their mother's life. Lotte attempts to stay hidden (**Stealth +3**) in **Area 4** or **5** and tries to weaken the party before a confrontation.



Herman Lau

Lair Actions

If the party enters **Area 2** without being exceedingly stealthy, Lotte (**passive Perception 19**) notices them and uses her *Bone Army* lair action. Once confronted, on initiative count 15 (winning initiative ties), Lotte takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects.

Bone Army. The bones in **Area 2** may be animated and used in defense of the tower. They can be animated as a **corpse mound** ◆. If this action is activated while Lotte is in **Area 4** or **5**, it takes the bones three rounds to arrive. Lotte can only animate one corpse mound at any given time, and there are enough bones to assemble a total of two of them.

Command Golem. She may animate the statue in **Area 5**, an **iron golem**, that Heidi is trapped in. The golem will heed that command for exactly 1 round. The bone fire (**Area 5**) is the source of the curse animating the golem, and streams of green smoke will always connect them. The party can stop the golem by extinguishing the fire. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** deduces the connection of fire and golem. The fire may be extinguished by using magical water, wind or a *remove curse* spell.

1. The Tower Entrance Level

The door to the tower is made of heavy reinforced iron, and locked. A character can successfully open it with a **DC 17 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools. Alternatively, a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** can loudly break down the door. Inside, a small dinner table sports the remnants of a meal. A small cabinet sits closed along the north wall: it is unlocked and holds a variety of everyday china and silverware worth 100 gp. A spiral stairway leads up or down.

2. Bones and Treasure

A heap of half rotting bones—the **corpse mound** ◆—lies scattered over most of this floor. The crates are hastily constructed things made from three beds and a table that used to make up the furniture of this level. Inside them are the belongings of the victims brought here by the daughters. Mostly a variety of personal items, there are 237 gp, 304 sp, 87 cp and a small diamond ring worth 75 gp in various pouches. A *cloak of elvenkind* and an *oathbow* are also stored here.

3. The Resting Place

This quiet level is cool and pleasant. Three beds adorn the room along with a common table and chairs. Several priest's packs that once were used by the witches are scattered here. Along the east wall is a secret door that leads to **Area 4**. With a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** the characters can find the door and its release: a small lever on the underside of the spiral staircase.

4. Library of Grünwald

This large chamber houses a small library of books to aid the disciples of Grünwald in their endeavors. The tomes cover subjects such as ritual magic, potion recipes, dream interpretation and ecology. Various jars of herbs, common utensils and pottery are intermingled with these. The sturdy table in the middle of the room shows the grisly signs of many a haruspex-based scrying. The two barrels contain water and wine.

5. Heidi's Cell

Added in secret by Lotte, this 15-foot-high cave houses the iron prison of her sister. The perpetually burning pile of bones has a soft greenish blue hue. Three columns encircle the fire, with a fourth broken and crumbled on the dirt ground. If the tiger-like creatures are present, they do not attack the party in this room. Extinguishing the fire releases Heidi and returns the children to their natural form.

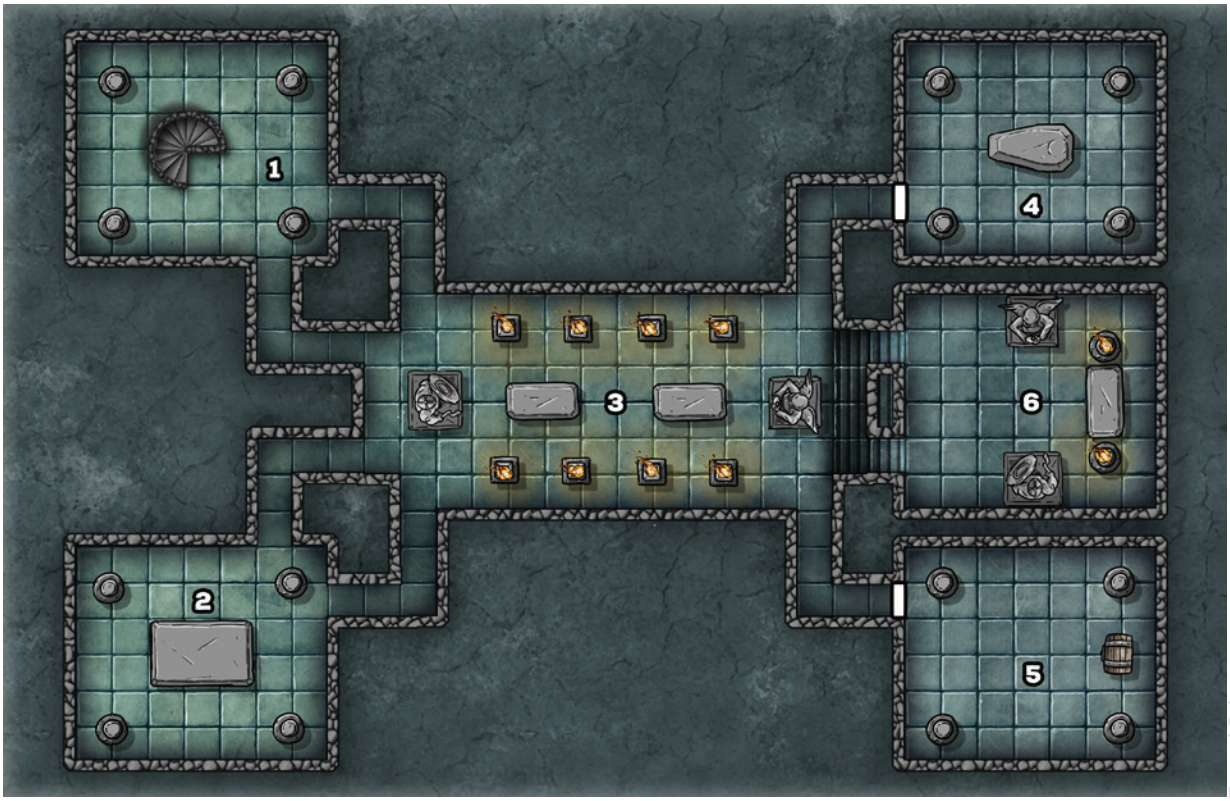
Aftermath

If Lotte is defeated and Heidi released the characters gain the favor of Grünwald, even more so if they were careful and able to overcome the daughters without killing them. All treasure in **Area 2** is gifted to the party, and each character receives the option to attain a deific boon for a future service. This could be a *remove curse* or some other form of divine aid.

4-5 Characters

Level 14-15

Desert\ Dungeon



Tommi Salama

Coffin Ball

Joshua Hennington

An archaeological expedition attempted to excavate a recently discovered tomb, only for one mercenary escort to emerge alive, screaming of powerful undead waiting within, all playing a deadly game. The party, as adventurers of great renown, have been paid a considerable fee to explore this tomb, as it could be symptomatic of a mighty force of undeath lurking below. All rooms in Pharaoh Akhmenij's tomb have 8-foot ceilings.

1. Entrance

The entrance of this tomb is marked with images of humans engaging in a rough-and-tumble sport, as well as faded etchings of rules in a now-dead language. In the southeast pillar, there is a small human face above an alcove that holds a cold, still-beating heart; the heart is impervious to damage and reforms in this spot if removed from the tomb. When a character steps down from the stairs, a *magic mouth* spell cast on the face activates, uttering these words in Common:

"The rougher sports of bygone ages / Still do entertain dead sages / Inter this heart inside your foe / To free these damned souls from woe. Ready?"

The heart was placed here by its owner – the long-dead Pharaoh Akhmenij. In life, the ruler always had a passion for physical sports. In death, his obsession only grew. When he was disturbed from his death-sleep spanning eons, he quickly learned the new Common tongue to properly engage any of the living in the game that binds him to unlife—until he loses. None of the creatures located within this tomb can act until either the heart is touched, or the hallway to **Area 3** is breached. Once either happens, it's game on.

2. First Reinforcements Sarcophagus

The centerpiece of this room, this sarcophagus contains a mess of corpses, all overlapping one another. They are the bodies of Akhmenij's favored players, who reanimate as **mummies** during the course of the fight (see **Area 6**). When not in combat, the mummies return to rest here.

3. Entombment of the Scribe-Referees

Akhmenij's personal scribe-referees, a pair of twins named **Welpha** and **Tiaba**, were entombed alongside their liege here. When combat breaks out, they spring to action as **scroll mummies** . They favor using their *Spell-Siphoning Fists* on any obvious spellcasters, and aren't above using *confusion* and other debilitations, even if the mummy players get caught in the crossfire—they're replaceable, after all. There are two Large-sized statues in this chamber that serve as viable targets for Ahkmenij's *animate objects* spell.

4. Second Reinforcements Sarcophagus

The stone door to this room is ajar, and it contains a sarcophagus that functions similarly to the one in **Area 2**, supplying reinforcements for Akhmenij.

5. The Pharaoh's Cache

This wooden chest is covered in ornate carvings that appear to function as an ornate scoreboard of some kind. It is locked, and the key is on the Pharaoh's neck – when he disintegrates, it drops to the ground where he stood. Alternatively, it can be opened with a **DC 19 Dexterity check** made with thieves' tools; this check is made with **disadvantage**. The chest contains a hollow ball of pure pearl worth 400 gp, a diamond puck worth 250 gp, various well-kept sports paraphernalia collectively worth 125 gp, an *adamantine breastplate*, a *horn of Valhalla*, and two *belts of hill giant strength*.

6. The Tomb of Pharaoh Akhmenij

Akhmenij was buried here with several magical enchantments, (as well as two statues like those in **Area 3**, ready for animation) to protect his immortal form from as many hazards as possible during his often-fatal postmortem games. He is a **mummy lord** that lacks both *Vulnerability to Fire* and the legendary action *Blasphemous Word*. He has *animate objects* prepared instead of *contagion*, and he also has the following lair actions that he can take on initiative count 20 (losing ties). He can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Call Players. Akhmenij calls forth some of his finest players, and 1d6 **mummies** rise adjacent to one or both of the mass graves in **Area 2** or **4**, at Akhmenij's discretion. These mummies then immediately act after the lair action, acting on the same initiative on subsequent turns.

Restore Power. Akhmenij draws on his magical might and regains a single spell slot of 3rd level or lower.

Wrath of Sands. Akhmenij forces all adjacent enemies to make a **DC 16 Strength saving throw**. On a failed save, the enemy is pushed back 15 feet by a gust of sand and blinded for 1d3 rounds.

While the pharaoh enjoys the up-close action this blood sport provides, he realizes that he is the lynchpin of the event—if his heart is placed within his open chest cavity, he and all his subordinates turn to dust. This can be achieved with a successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check** while Akhmenij is grappled or otherwise immobilized if the character is holding the heart in one hand while adjacent to the pharaoh. The character holding the heart does not necessarily need to be the one grappling Akhmenij.

Akhmenij's tactics are largely split into phases; during the first phase, he focuses on getting as much support as he can, summoning mummies with his lair action as often as possible and casting *animate objects* in the first round of the fight, targeting the Large statues in **Area 3** with his first usage of the spell. After he has at least 8 allies on the field, he presses the attack. His preferred tactic at this point is casting *guiding bolt* at enemies surrounded by mummies, letting his minions' blows do the remainder of the work. The scribe-referees and Akhmenij also enjoy casting *hold person*, directing a mummy to grab the character afterwards. When his scribe-referees are destroyed, he begins to become desperate. He wades into melee if need be, swinging his *Rotting Fist* and using his *Dreadful Glare* with abandon; while his preference is to steer clear of the hero holding his heart, he'll save his 6th level spell slot for *harm* in an emergency.

When his heart is replaced and he has lost, Ahkmenij gives a contented grin and thanks the characters for a good game as he turns to dust.

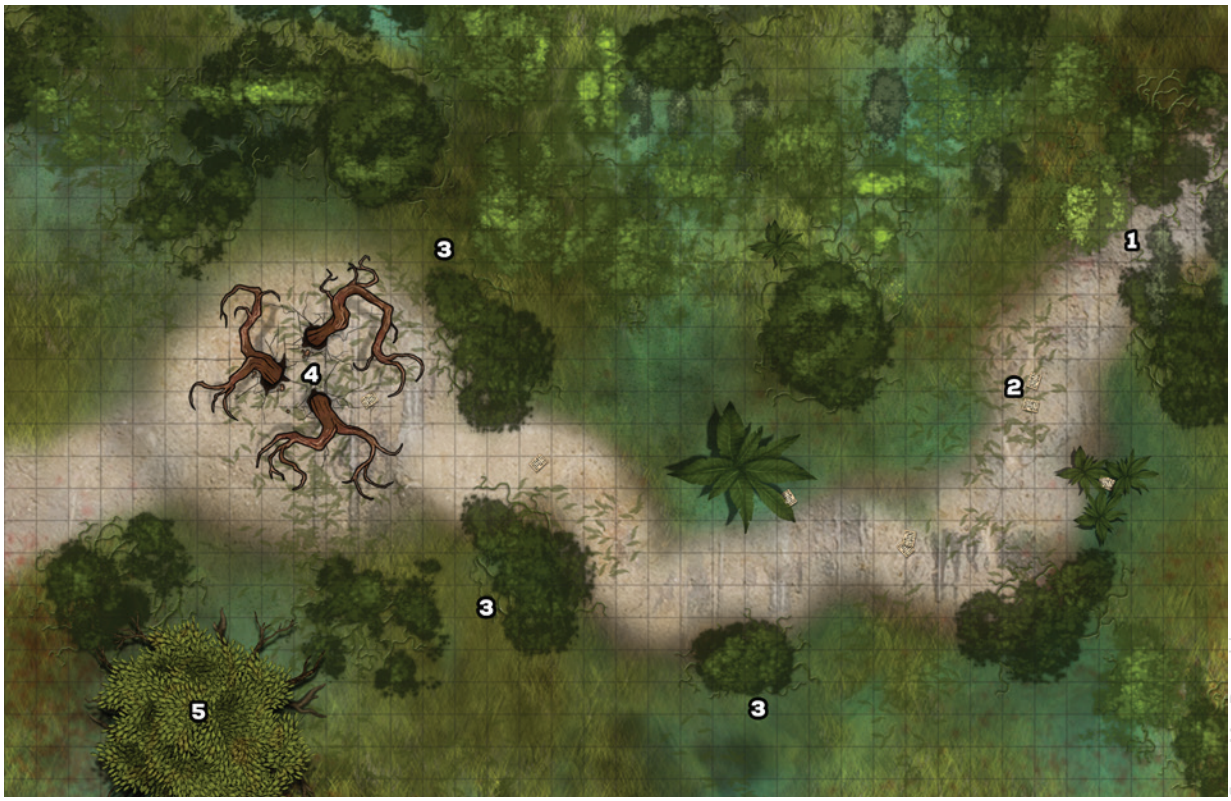


Dean Spencer

4-5 Characters

Levels 14-15

Swamp



Sean MacDonald

Evil About Insleg

Thilo Graf, Grant Simpson, Stephen Yeardley

Insleg, a secluded swamp town, has an evil air. Locals, usually welcoming and devout, now insult neighbors, abuse pets, and argue drunkenly about trivialities! Local chaplain Nelos discreetly sent word around the area for help in rooting out the wickedness seeping into his parish.

The Town of Insleg. Over three weeks, a **night hag**, aided by a **drudge pitcher**, has corrupted the locals. She concocted an addictive ale from the tree's pitchers' fluid (which rapidly turns drinkers to bitter, selfish ways) and delivered it secretly to the town's inn, the Bog and Brew. Residents now display low-level mindlessness and a Neutral Evil outlook toward loathed neighbors and despised foreigners alike, acting hostilely if they feel threatened.

Drudge Pitcher Ale (Ingested). A creature ingesting this slow-acting but powerful brew must succeed on a **DC 18 Constitution saving throw** or be inflicted by an indefinite madness. The afflicted creature feels compelled to have another drink every 24 hours and must repeat the saving throw every time they do; a failed save reinforces the madness. After seven days, the character's alignment shifts one step toward Neutral Evil. This process repeats until the character becomes fully Neutral Evil, albeit a petty version of this mindset. In another 28 days the change becomes overt, with every maliciousness and violent action associated with a Neutral Evil alignment. Until this madness ends, which requires abstinence from the brew, changes to alignment cannot be removed by any means. After a total of seven successful saving throws, the effect ends, and the creature returns to its normal alignment. Each week of abstinence counts as one successful saving throw.

Meeting The Chaplain. Nelos (**priest**) asks the characters to meet at the inn. On arriving, Hanne the barkeep (**bandit captain**) offers them "*One on the house, friends...!*" Nelos refuses; his faith expects sobriety. The delicious drink is *Drudge Pitcher Ale*.

Anyone making a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check** detects a sweet ingredient reminiscent of mind-altering philters or cloying embalming fluids. A successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check** notices Hanne's keenness for the ale to be drunk. A successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** senses other patrons quieten momentarily as the party drinks. Characters can choose not to drink if they wish.

Nelos describes the locals' recent changes, believing some foul swamp-dwelling evil is at work. He specifically mentions the profound difference in **Helena** (usually a weaponless **commoner**; currently as a weaponless **cultist**), a fisherman's daughter who previously attended daily prayers at his chapel but has stopped coming. Twice he has seen her heading into the swamp at odd hours, journal in hand. Nelos is unaware that Helena is the latest victim of the night hag's *Nightmare Haunting*.

Helena's Home. On exploring Insleg, the party discovers the townsfolk are unhelpful at best, hostile at worst. Visiting Helena's home finds her away; her father has no idea where.

If pressed empathetically, a character making a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** has him reveal that she often writes her journal near the swamp. On a successful **DC 19 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, he reports Helena has twice irritably said "Agatha's" if questioned where she is going. Using deception or intimidation draws sullen silence.

A character making a successful **DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check** deduces that "Agatha's" is an anagram of "At a hag's" and the irritability is "commoner Helena" battling "cultist Helena". If a player notices the anagram, their character makes the roll with **advantage** and only a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** instead.

The Bait. After visiting Helena's home, characters can spot her when near the swamp. Anyone making a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** gets a brief glimpse of Helena darting into the dense vines and brush, sent as bait to lure the party into the hag's trap.

1. The Easy Path

The party crosses the swamp straightforwardly, for while they fail to spot Helena again, her tracks are clear. Three miremals (**Area 3**) have set a safe-looking path toward the drudge pitcher. Characters making a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check** realize the footprints are the only signs of life in the eerily quiet swamp.

All ground off the cleared route is marshy and considered difficult terrain. The thick canopy allows only dim light through.

2. Haunting Verse

Pages have been torn from Helena's journal and strewn across the ground. The same sentence is scrawled repeatedly and haphazardly across each one:

Wounding woods shouldn't spread falsely fermented sweet slime from vile vines into maddened maws of fools filled with bile brewed from seasons spent wandering wild o'er exhausted estates ultimately unripe for anticipatory arms of foul flagons; poisoned pitchers let uncouth unliving and sordid spirits rise, rage, dreams destroy 'til mired misdeeds force fated darkness to defeat without heed or haggling.

A character making a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** finds a trail of pages leads to **Area 4**.

3. Mired Threats

Three **miremals** hide in bushes along the route, waiting until combat starts before trying to surprise the party from behind.

4. The Hag Trees

Helena and the Hag. Behind three desiccated, withered trees stand two Helenas, facing each other. One is real, the duplicate is Agatha, a disguised **night hag**, who convincingly acts as the "real Helena" until discovered or combat begins. The real Helena appears bitter and twisted as she mentally fights Agatha's corrupting influence, even seemingly working with the hag against the party.

Reciting the verse from **Area 2** makes the real Helena shed a tear. Flawlessly reciting it makes the real Helena cry and fall unconscious. Alternatively, characters making three successful **DC 22 Wisdom (Insight)** or **Wisdom (Perception) checks** before two failures pinpoint the real Helena. A total below 13 convinces a character the hag is the real Helena. Deducing the real Helena this way is worth 2,950 XP.

Once combat starts, the hag shifts to the Ethereal Plane, lurking there until an ideal attack chance arises. Three **tree skinners**, hidden beyond the hag, attempt to use their *Squeeze* action as combat starts, incapacitating as many characters as possible. Helena fights as a weaponless **cultist** but can be safely knocked unconscious instead of killed.

5. The Drudge Pitcher

A Huge **drudge pitcher** roots here. During the first round of combat, it releases four zombies from its pitchers as the tree skinners (and hag) fight the party, then makes three *Vine Slam* attacks and one *Pitcher Swallow* attack each round.

Treasure. If destroyed, the drudge pitcher shrivels and dies. However, one twisted 6-foot branch glows with a sickly aura. If cut free, it becomes a *staff of withering*.

Conclusion

If the party defeats every creature and returns Helena safely, Nelos provides a 250 gp reward, but most locals remain bitter as they face up to the lingering effects of the ale. A hostile group always stalks the characters, becoming an annoying distraction if they do not leave town quickly. However, the villagers return to their previously peaceful selves after a month.

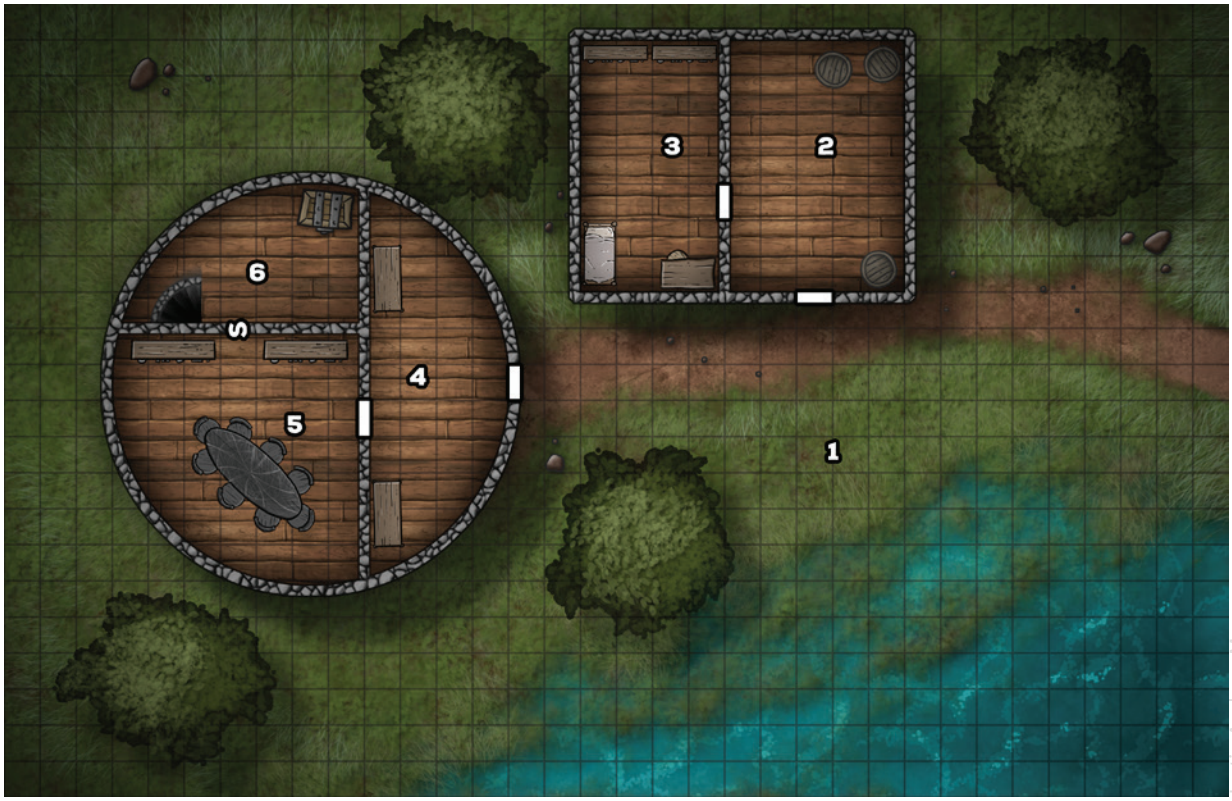


Mates Laurentiu

4
Characters

Level
15

Forest



Justin Andrew Mason

The Bear King's Wife

Claire Stricklin

The redoubtable Sir Locryn Ashby is missing. So are the rest of his hunting party. They were due to arrive back at Merriweather Lodge three days ago, there to enjoy a hero's feast and (according to the gnomish nobleman's itinerary) regale all and sundry with tales of daring exploits in the deep wood. It seems that the deep wood had other plans. Now Ashby's remaining retainers are making noises about a rescue mission, hinting that any heroes willing to make the trek to their master's basecamp could expect a worthy reward.

Background

On the fifth day of his hunting expedition, Sir Locryn made a terrible mistake. Having discovered the tracks of an enormous bear, he followed them to a secluded glade. There he surprised a monstrous she-bear, easily the largest he had ever encountered. With such a prize before him, Sir Locryn did not hesitate, but took his shot and won his trophy. What he did not know—what he could not guess—was the identity of the bear's husband. For a powerful fey creature known as the Bear King had lain claim to that glade, and he would not allow his mate's murder to go unavenged.

1. Fishin' Hole

When the party arrives at **Area 1**, they discover one of Sir Locryn's guides, a human woman named **Hildra Lowcrest**, doing a bit of fishing. She is not using rod or tackle, but ducking her head beneath the water, attempting to catch salmon with her mouth. As the party approach, she actually succeeds, turning to the newcomers with a wriggling whopper clutched between her teeth.

Like the rest of the hunting party, Hildra is suffering the effects of the Bear King's proximity. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that she is acting under an unnatural mental influence. Hildra is friendly and unperturbed, but doesn't seem to understand if the heroes point out the peculiarity of her actions. Instead she invites them to **Area 2** for a fish fry, promising to fetch her master after supper.

2. Camp Kitchen

Once a well-stocked kitchen, this room is in total disarray. Bags of provisions are torn open, casks lie shattered, and claw marks have been gouged into the walls and floor.

If the heroes follow Hildra here from **Area 1**, she begins to cook her catch as if nothing is wrong, gesturing for the party to help themselves to a stash of grubs, berries, and raw fish in a picnic basket in the corner. As the Bear King's presence begins to affect the party, they must make **DC 15 Wisdom saving throws** or be compelled to gorge upon these 'bear necessities.' At the end of each turn, an affected character can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the effect ends for that character.

Meanwhile, Hildra explains that "the others" are resting after a long day, and will be along as soon as the meal is ready. At that point, four **werebears** in bear form erupt through the walls and door from **Area 3**. Two rounds after combat begins, Hildra transforms into a **werebear** and attacks as well.

3. Bunk Bears

This rustic room is filled with enough bunkbeds to sleep a party of eight. If the party managed to avoid the werebear attack in **Area 2**, it also contains four dozing **werebears** in bear form. These are Sir Locryn's transformed hunting party. They wear torn scraps of clothing and hunting gear, and can no longer recognize human speech.

One especially well-fed **old bear** is what remains Sir Locryn's butler. This hapless manservant still wears an unusual medallion on a leather cord about his furry neck: the brass doorknocker that acts as the key to **Area 6**. It takes a **DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** or **Dexterity (Stealth) check** to approach the bear peacefully, a **DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to remove the medallion.

4. Protective Instincts

Sir Locryn's hunting cabin is better appointed than the bunk house, and in better repair. Racks of antlers and the heads of beasts decorate the walls. However, a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that there is a conspicuous bare spot in the collection.

The skin of the Bear King's wife briefly decorated this chamber, hung as a common trophy before the avenging fey descending upon the camp. The she-bear's protective spirit still haunts this place, and anyone who enters this room must make a **DC 12 Charisma saving throw** or be compelled to care for their allies as if they were helpless cubs. Characters afflicted with the curse of werebear lycanthropy make this save at **disadvantage**.

Affected characters select one ally at random, and must attempt to interpose themselves between that character and danger at all times. If the chosen 'cub' takes damage or is targeted by a hostile effect, the afflicted character flies into a *Rage* as a barbarian for 1d4 rounds. The effects of this curse end along with the *Rage*.

5. The King's Majordomo

The feast table in this room is occupied by the remains of Syr Locryn's last meal, sheets of paper torn from his journals, and a small bespectacled fey. This **hulking whelp** ◆, currently in its *Calm State*, has been tasked with examining Sir Locryn's notes and determining whether he represents the vanguard of an invasion from the civilized world. When the heroes enter the room, it all but confirms the worst of the panicky creature's suspicions, making it enlarge to its combat form immediately.

If the party manages to swiftly defuse the situation without combat, which requires smart roleplay or a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, it is only a **DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to make sense of Sir Locryn's notes and draw accurate conclusions about the events that transpired here. For every round the hulking whelp spends in its enlarged state, the **DC** of this check increases by 2.

The secret door in the northern wall is not especially secret. There is a doorframe but no door. Touching the doorknocker from **Area 3** to the area causes a door to spring into existence as per the *passwall* spell.

6. The Master's Workshop

Sir Locryn was a master fletcher and inventor, and jealously guarded his trade secrets. This private workshop contains a set of tinker's tools, enough supplies for several dozen sets of arrows, and two *arrows of slaying*: one attuned to beasts, and another unattuned. Setting the latter arrow to a creature type requires a one-hour ritual and a bit of blood or bone from the desired creature. This room also contains the grisly remains of Sir Locryn. He has been flayed in much the same manner as a bearskin rug.

The stairs leading down are incongruous. They match none of the cabin's architecture, and seem more like the rough-hewn steps of a mountain trail than the entry to a nobleman's study.

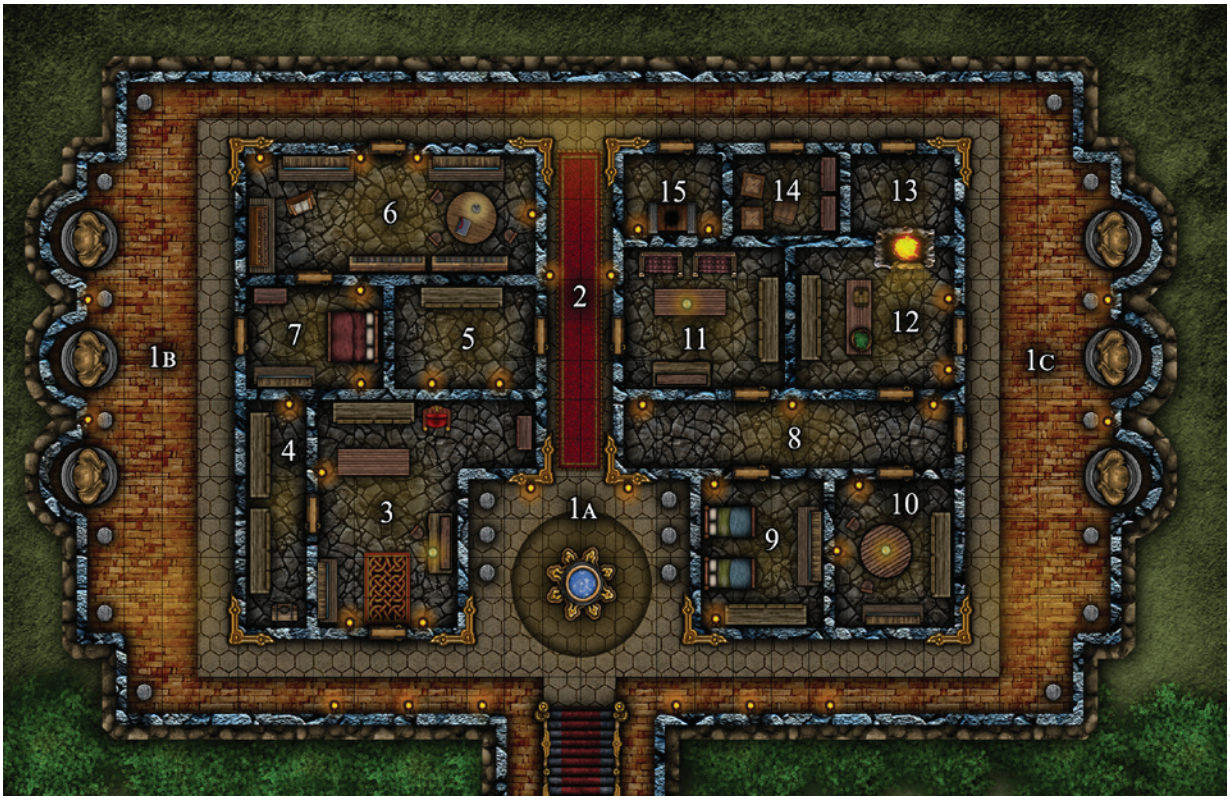
Den of the Bear King

The stairs in **Area 6** lead down into Faerie. A forest recedes in all directions, while a twilit glade the size and shape of the Sir Locryn's cabin marks the site of a cairn. This cairn is 15 feet in diameter and counts as difficult terrain. The skin of the Bear King's wife lies buried beneath these stones.

The **Bear King** ◆ and two of his sons (a pair of **werebears** in hybrid form) stand vigil here. Maddened with grief, they attack anyone who disturbs this somber spot. A **complex skill check** that requires four successes before two failures using **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)**, **Charisma (Performance)** or **Intelligence (Religion) checks** allows the party to calm the Bear King and his sons. Restitution is another matter, though...



Dean Spencer



Justin Andrew Mason

Mage's Malevolent Mansion

Claire Stricklin

Some magics were never meant to be permanent. The spell *magnificent mansion* is one of these. Case in point: The Malevolent Mansion has served as the site of mage's convocations for nearly eight centuries. Unfortunately, the mansion's magic has become erratic with age. Now a cabal of powerful sorcerers has hired the adventurers to do a little housekeeping. Their task? To beat the mages' traditional meeting place into submission before the cabal's annual gathering. The reward? Whatever they find, including a *staff of power*!

Staffing Problems

For the better part of a millennium, the usual crew of harmless magnificent mansion servants performed their duties faithfully. Suffering from a dramatically extended lifespan, these 100 conjured creatures have become far less harmless over time. They've learned to reshape their corporeal forms into monstrous configurations, and are prepared to forcefully demand their workers' rights.

Hostile Negotiations

Overworked and underpaid, the staff of the Malevolent Mansion alternate between reasoning with the characters and attacking them. Throughout the adventure, these quarrelsome creatures invite the party further into the mansion to "inspect our deplorable working conditions."

Disgruntled Staff. The servants spend most of their time as an invisible, incorporeal presence. In this form, they are little more than disembodied voices. When the staff manifest to attack, they retain the personality of 100 irate domestic laborers regardless of form. Their attacks are not tied to any one location in the mansion, but occur whenever the staff take offense to the party's actions.

The staff take one round to manifest, and attempt to ambush the party as best they can. They may discorporate as a bonus action, or as a reaction to taking damage after a total of at least 150 damage in their current form. Appropriate encounters include, but are not limited to:

- Two **guardian nagas**
- One **young red dragon** and one **young gold dragon**
- 50 **thugs**
- Three **giant apes**
- one **androsphinx**
- two **behirs**
- three **vrocks** and one **treant**
- one **archmage**, four **mages**, and one **unicorn**

The "Diplomatic" Solution

Keep a tally of all damage dealt to the staff. Defeating them "the hard way" requires 1,100 damage to their collective manifestations. (Damage from spells and effects that target an area is only counted once.) Fortunately, there is an easier way to end negotiations.

The staff are hostile at first, and cannot be reasoned with. As they take damage, a growing number of staff urge the rest to settle, as reflected by the decreasing DCs below. Succeeding at a single **Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Intimidation) check** does not end the adventure. Rather, it adds an effective +100 damage to the running damage tally as the staff revise their list of demands. By the final damage threshold, the staff accede to any diplomatic overture.

- 0 - 100 Damage; DC N/A
- 101 - 250 Damage; DC 35
- 251 - 400 Damage; DC 30
- 401 - 550 Damage; DC 25
- 551 - 700 Damage; DC 15
- 701+ Damage, DC Automatic

1.The Negotiating Table

When the characters enter the Malevolent Mansion, all 100 servants line the entryway and surrounding halls. They invite the adventurers to sit at the conference table in **Area 1a** before they angrily make their demands, coalescing into their first monstrous form and attacking.

The entirety of **Area 1a** is subject to a *zone of truth* effect. Anyone who sits at the negotiating table in **Area 1a** has their likeness projected onto one of the golden statues in **Area 1b** or **Area 1c**.

2. The Quiet Hall

While the table in **Area 1a** is designed for official proceedings, this shadowy corridor was made for more clandestined conferences. Creatures standing in the hall are able to understand one another perfectly, but no sound emerges from the hall. That makes this hallway the only place in the mansion where the ubiquitous staff cannot overhear the characters' plans and conversations.

3. Prototyping Lab

Collaborative projects from past mages' convocations lie upon the tables here: 1d3 *feather tokens*, a *necklace of fireballs*, and one flask of *oil of slipperiness*. Note that these objects dissipate into smoke if removed from the mansion, as do the many reagents that fill the cupboards. Ability checks made to craft items are made with **advantage** in this room. Crafted objects do not disappear once removed if the materials come from outside the mansion.

4. Reagent Storage

Brought in by generations of sorcerers, this room contains real-world versions of the reagents found in **Area 3**. There are enough raw materials to reduce the cost of any one commissioned magic item by half.

5. Coat Check

Various forgotten robes of famous wizards lie in this chamber. They are all fashionable. One is an indignant Medium-sized **cloaker** waiting for the return of its master. It is not hostile, and is willing to answer questions about the mansion, providing **advantage** on the party's next Charisma check to influence the staff.

6. Book Exchange

While the staff complain of being forced to copy dull formulae, this room is a wizard's dream. It contains 1d4-1 spells of each wizard spell level from 5th to 8th. There are also a number of detailed natural history tomes, explaining how the staff learned their many forms. Druids may learn 1d3 new forms by studying these works.

7. Host's Quarters

Though the mansion's creator is long dead, it is possible to gain a limited connection to the Malevolent Mansion by sleeping in this bed. If a character manages to fall asleep here, they gain a rudimentary understanding of the mansion's current floorplan and special properties.

8. Ambush Hallway

This hallway is dark and quiet. A perfect place to stage an ambush from one or more of the neighboring rooms.

9. Servants' Quarters

All 100 of them have to share. The indignity!

10. Dining Room

The staff attempt to turn on the charm in this room. They appear in humanoid forms before the adventurers, carrying a piping hot dinner. Characters who partake are affected as per a *philter of love*.

11. Lounge

The steaming mugs of mulled wine in this room are lined with a unique version of *potion of mind reading*. All creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw** to not hear the drinker's surface thoughts.

12. Kitchen

Another sore point for the staff, the kitchen is the site of much of their drudgery. The staff ask the characters to participate in a little role play: "*We will behave as the Sorcerous Cabal, and you try to keep up with demands. You tell us if that's fair!***"**

13. Spare Room

If the staff transform into a creature or size Huge or larger, they cannot exit this cramped room. They instead reach out of the door and through the two-way fireplace to attack.

14. Storage

The **Grand Magus** who hired the adventurers left her *staff of power* here, dropped as she was chased off by her former servants. Ironically, this staff can empower the staff, allowing them to become real and leave the mansion, but this destroys the staff of power and strips the party of the main reward.

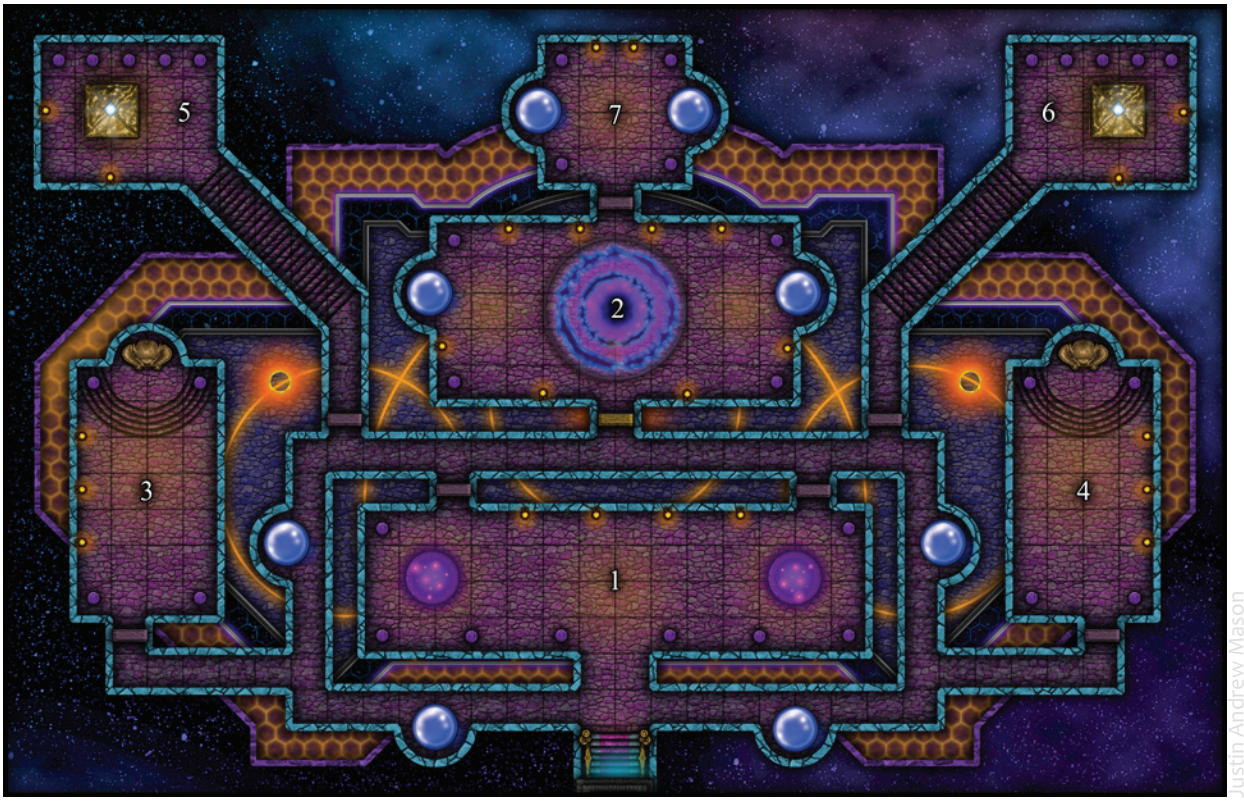
15. Staff Directory

This sphere of blackness and floating text was designed as a manual way to alter the form of the staff. The staff now controls it, and the adventurers cannot pencil in any alterations. That said, reading the directory and watching it change can allow the party to anticipate the staff's next form.

1 or 4 Characters

Level 17

Planar



Justin Andrew Mason

The Infinite Prison Break

Claire Stricklin

On the farthest shore of the Astral Plane there is a prison. In fact, there are *many* prisons. Each occupies the same space, overlapping in the endless dream of two strange minds. The Wardens are the dreamers, and they exist to guard the boundaries between planes. For when the opposed energies of the multiverse clash in open conflict, the fabric of reality grows brittle. If it should ever break, the things that lurk in the cracks between worlds would surely worm their way inside. The Wardens exist to prevent this. It is why they continue to fill the cells of their prisons. It is why they seek to reducate any creature foolish enough to tamper with planar power. There are many ways to draw the ire of the Wardens. Overuse of the *plane shift* or *gate* spells, fomenting interplanar war, or simply drawing the Donjon from the *deck of many things* can all lead to a stint in the Infinite Prison. This adventure assumes that one of the heroes has suffered this fate, treated to the Wardens' bizzare hospitality, and can be used as a solo-adventure, or begin as the party locates their missing comrade in the Astral Plane.

Preparation. Select around 10 riddles for the final confrontation.

1. Arena of the Microcosm

When the doors to **Areas 3**, **4**, **5**, or **6** are opened, their occupants are drawn to this chamber to do battle with one another. These combats are short and spectacular, ending in 2d4 rounds if left to their own devices.

During each titanic clash, cracks in the masonry of the Infinite Prison begin to appear. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check** reveals that this is due to the destructive power of the combatants' opposed planar energies. The battles always conclude with the shattering of the prison's ceiling, allowing a **shoggoth** ◆ to enter and attack the facility's remaining occupants. The prison repairs itself and the shoggoth disappears one minute later.

2. Prisoner's Panopticon

The Wardens do not think like mortal creatures, and they do not teach in the conventional sense. The Infinite Prison's lessons must be absorbed by observation and inference.

The character in the prisoner's panopticon is subject to a form of astral projection. Their physical body remains trapped in the shimmering cage at the heart of this chamber, while an astral body on a "short leash" is free to walk about the facility. This projection's silver cord will not permit it to leave the prison under any circumstances. If the projection is destroyed another forms in this chamber 1d4 rounds later to take its place.

Because each version of the Infinite Prison is designed for the enlightenment of a specific individual, the trapped character has degree of control over their surroundings. They may see through any of the eight blue spheres on

the map as per a *scrying* sensor. They may also open the doors to **Areas 3**, **4**, **5**, and **6** by concentrating as a standard action. Any two of these doors can be opened at a time.

Only by verbally acknowledging the importance of planar boundaries and making an honest pledge to never interfere with them again will the Wardens relent and let a prisoner free. Most inmates of the Infinite Prison realize this solution after a mere eon or two of captivity.

3-6. Bad Dreams

When the doors to these chambers are closed, these rooms are as insubstantial as the Wardens' Office (see **Area 7**). When the doors are opened, the chambers and their occupants spring into corporeal existence.

In each chamber murals depict the occupant engaged in interplanar exploits: opening portals, teleporting across the cosmos, and otherwise interfering with the machinery of creation. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the common theme.

Each chamber also contains a font overflowing with planar essence: a liquid substance charged with Good, Evil, Law, or Chaos. Bringing together any two of these fluids creates a blast as per a fully-charged *necklace of fireballs*. Bringing together any three functions as a *delayed blast fireball*. Combining all four fluids usually functions as a *portable hole* placed inside of an extradimensional space. In the Infinite Prison, however, it produces a very different effect (see **Area 7**). Only one sample of a given alignment can be carried by a single creature. Regardless of the vessel used, any additional planar essence of the same alignment merges into a single volume when picked up.

- Area 3: a **pit fiend**; Law
- Area 4: a **balor**; Evil
- Area 5: three **zoryas**; Good
- Area 6: two **djinn**; Chaos

The occupants of these chambers are dream constructs. Once their doors open, they mindlessly attack any creature that stands between them and their foe en route to **Area 1**.

7. The Wardens' Office

The door to this chamber is unlocked. A pair of androsphinxes crouch on either side of the room, eyes shut in meditation. These are the Wardens, and they are out of the phase with the rest of the prison. The ineffable beings who make their lair here are incorporeal, as is the office beyond the door. This is so because the Wardens are dispersed among the many versions of the Infinite Prison currently in existence. Treat this entire room as a hidden pit. Anyone who falls through the floor falls out of the prison, striking the ground of the astral plane 100 feet below.

Though the Wardens are difficult to interact with, it is not impossible to disturb their slumber. They can converse in a limited fashion, mumbling half-formed riddles as they dream. Otherwise, bringing together all four kinds of planar essence creates a blast powerful enough to wake the sphinxes, instantly returning the creatures and their office to corporeal form. This blast is also powerful enough to interrupt all versions of the Infinite Prison, ejecting numerous dangerous planes-breakers (including the body of the character trapped in **Area 2**) back into the normal multiverse.

On initiative count 20 (losing ties), the androsphinxes can take the following lair actions to cause one of the following magical effects:

Planar Shutdown. The androsphinx focuses on a creature it can see. This creature cannot teleport or otherwise use extra-planar travel until the end of their next turn.

Restraining Order. The androsphinx addresses a creature it can see with a riddle. Unless the character can correctly answer it, they are restrained by unbreakable dimensional shackles. A character may try to answer the riddle at the start of each of their turns.

Roar Recharge. If the androsphinx has expended all uses of its *Roar*, it may roll a d6. On a 3 or higher, it regains all uses of *Roar*, starting off with the *First Roar* once more.

Will the heroes choose to avenge themselves on their captors or aid the Wardens in recapturing escaped fugitives?



Planar Essence

Any character with proficiency in Arcana immediately recognizes the raw potential of the base elements of the cosmos: Good, Evil, Law, and Chaos. From a distance, each liquid appears identical: color-infused lightlessness, as the deep night sky. But as one peers closer at any one liquid, its base alignment becomes apparent in how the liquid refracts light and responds to motion. Good Essence flows and heals as water. Evil Essence becomes jagged edged and appears to attack and consume itself when merging back into a single volume. Law Essence is flecked with metallic colors, each distinct points of light within its body. Chaos Essence is a swirl of infinite colors competing against each other for vibrancy.

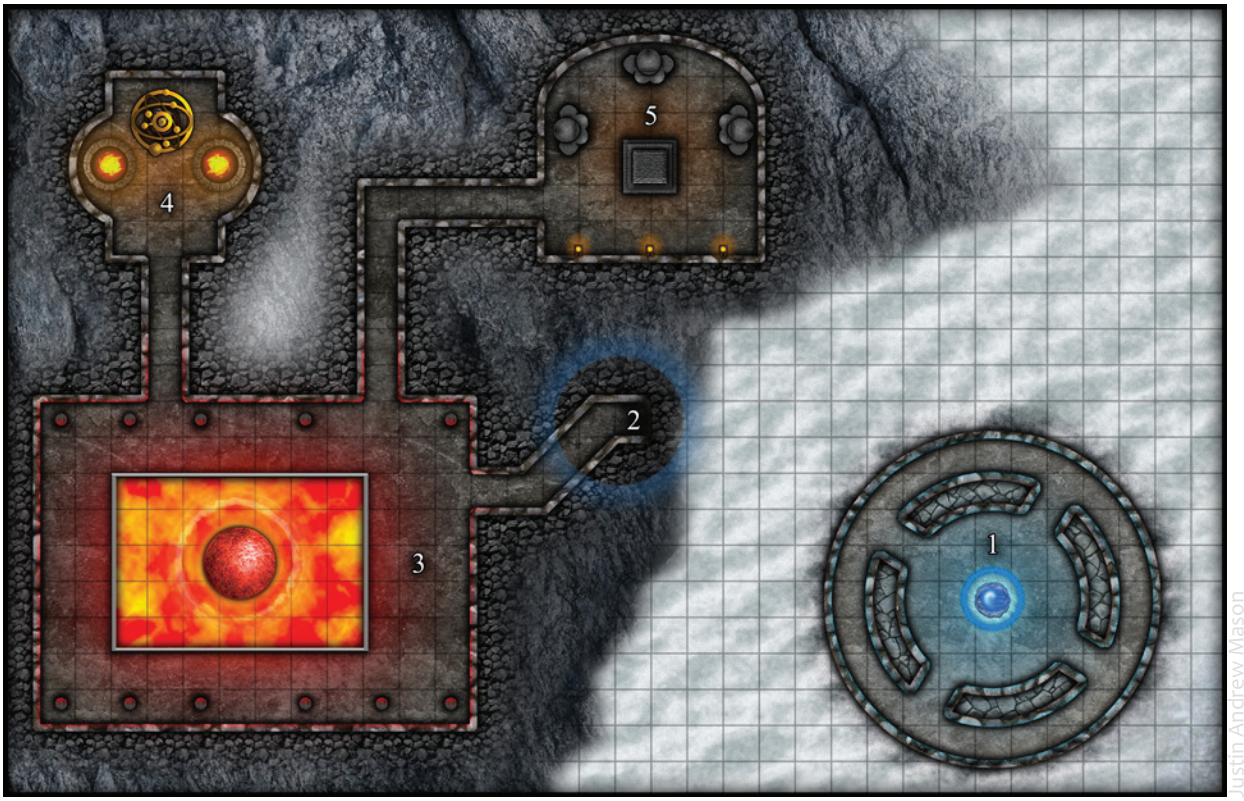
The potential of such base elements is infinite. The wizard or sorcerer who unlocks the secrets of Planar Essence commands the powers of creation itself. Transporting Planar Essence is a simple matter, excepting that the Wardens do not take kindly to mortals interfering in their domain. Should the party manage to bring a sample of each Planar Essence to the Material Plane, they could collect a hefty bounty from a Black Market dealer (see page 298).

Nicolas Cloister

4-5 Characters

Levels 18-20

Planar



Justin Andrew Mason

Faerie War Arrows Hit Death!

Stephen Yeardley

The module begins in a great city, such as planar Elemenopolis.

On crossing a marketplace, a sandy-haired outcrier catches your ear; "Faerie War Arrows Hit Death!" He is handing out printed sheets. Spotting you, he approaches; "Friends, this may interest those seeking intrigue!"

The human-looking hawker is **Embirikos**, an **androsphinx**. He hands them a sheet from the back of his stack. Embirikos seeks to use the party to intervene in a conflict between shadow fey and fiends. When read, the keysheets teleports the party to a planar conflux beneath the city. If assailed, Embirikos uses his *Teleport* legendary action, targets keysheet carriers with three *Roars*, and then leaves the area. The keysheet reads:

> *"Award Faerie's arrow the hit! The heated warrior was fair. Area drifters who hear, wait; If warier, others award hate! With Death, worries are afar."* For one "to free" five – Embirikos

This poem shows the order pertaining to the vaults; each line's second and third words contain the letters to spell an element, so: air (**Area 4**), earth (**Area 5**), fire (**Area 3**), water (**Area 1**), shadow (**Area 2**). **Areas 1**, **3**, **4** and **5** contain an **elemental locus** ◆ held by a mix of the Queen 's writhing *Shadow Wall* and *Shadow Rift* features. Upon reading the poem, party members roll initiative; the result dictates where they appear after reading the poem, i.e. the first character manifests in **Area 4**, the second in **Area 5**, etc.

Vaults. The **Areas** designated as vaults are 150 feet high with restraining contraptions floating midway up.

Shadow Restraints. The shadow restraints securing the loci have 360 hp, a damage threshold of 5, and are immune to all damage, save those types noted in the respective entry. The shadow restraint in **Area 2** behaves differently. Defeating the **Queen of Night and Magic** ◆ destroys all shadow restraints.

Leaving the Conflux. Each vault's south wall has two racks, one featuring tiles, one featuring slots. The 32 tiles are "SHADOWWATERAIRFIREEARTH',,,;..!!" facing 30 slots. To leave, the final word in the line of the poem corresponding to the Area's element must be placed in the slots, including the proper punctuation. When all five are completed, the party returns to the city. If an incorrect solution is provided, the party can't leave and the vaults reset after 1d4 days.

Factions.

Fey. The **Queen of Night and Magic** ◆ and her court have managed to bind the elements.

Each Area sports a fey royalty accompanied by a **lotus golem** ◆ valet plus troops. Roll twice per Area for shadow fey retinue, reroll repeats (see *Table 1*).

All fey have the following features:

Aerial Superiority. Fey fly at full speed, but use *Shadow Paths* created by the **Queen of Night and Magic**.

Masked Alignment. Fey detect as neutral good. A *wish* spell or a successful **DC 32 Intelligence (Arcana) check** shows the true alignment.

Draconic Spirit. If the fey kill a dragon, the fey can use a bonus action to raise a **ghost dragon** from the body.

Fear from Chaos. If a non-fey creature kills a fiend the fey can see, the fey use their reaction to conjure a **fear smith** from the body.

Table 1

d8	Shadow Fey
1-2	1 **poisoner**
3-4	2 **ambassadors**
5-6	4 **enchantresses**
7	4 **shadow beasts**
8	6 **duelists**

Table 2

Element	Energy Damage
Air	lightning
Earth	acid
Fire	fire
Water	cold

Tenebrous Subversion. Whenever a fey kills a fiend, any fey seeing the act may use their reaction to change the Area's corresponding **elemental locus** into shadow version of itself, changing associated damage to a shadowy duplicate, which heals fey and makes non-fey targets deal half damage (applied before resistances and saving throws) with the corresponding energy damage. This affects the element in a 1,000-mile radius until the **Area**'s fey royalty is killed. This change is not obvious, but may be detected with a combination of a successful **DC 32 Intelligence (Arcana) check** and a spell such as *detect magic*.

Fiends. The friends seek to release the **elemental loci** by destroying the shadow restraints. Each fiend rides an **adult wasteland dragons**.

Draconic Wrath. When a fiend is defeated, its dragon begins discorporating. The dragon attacks the guilty party for two rounds before vanishing at the end of its turn.

Violate Space. The fiends and their dragons can use a bonus action to shrink to Medium size or to expand back to their regular size.

All **elemental loci** get:

Rampage. Destroying a shadow restraint or the Area's fey royalty frees the bound locus, and it fights for 3 rounds for the faction dealing the liberating blow before it leaves.

1. Water Locus Vault

This is a **Snow Queen's** lair. Two **ice devils** and their **adult wasteland dragons** face them. Cold and piercing melee damage affect the restraint, a ball of ultra-dense shadow steam.

2. Shadow Lair

This is the **Queen of Night and Magic's** lair. Upon entering, the shadow restraint allows the party to only move in a 10-foot-radius sphere (the blue circle), the fey can move in a 30-foot-radius from its center. The restraint is affected by psychic, radiant or thunder damage.

3. Fire Locus Vault

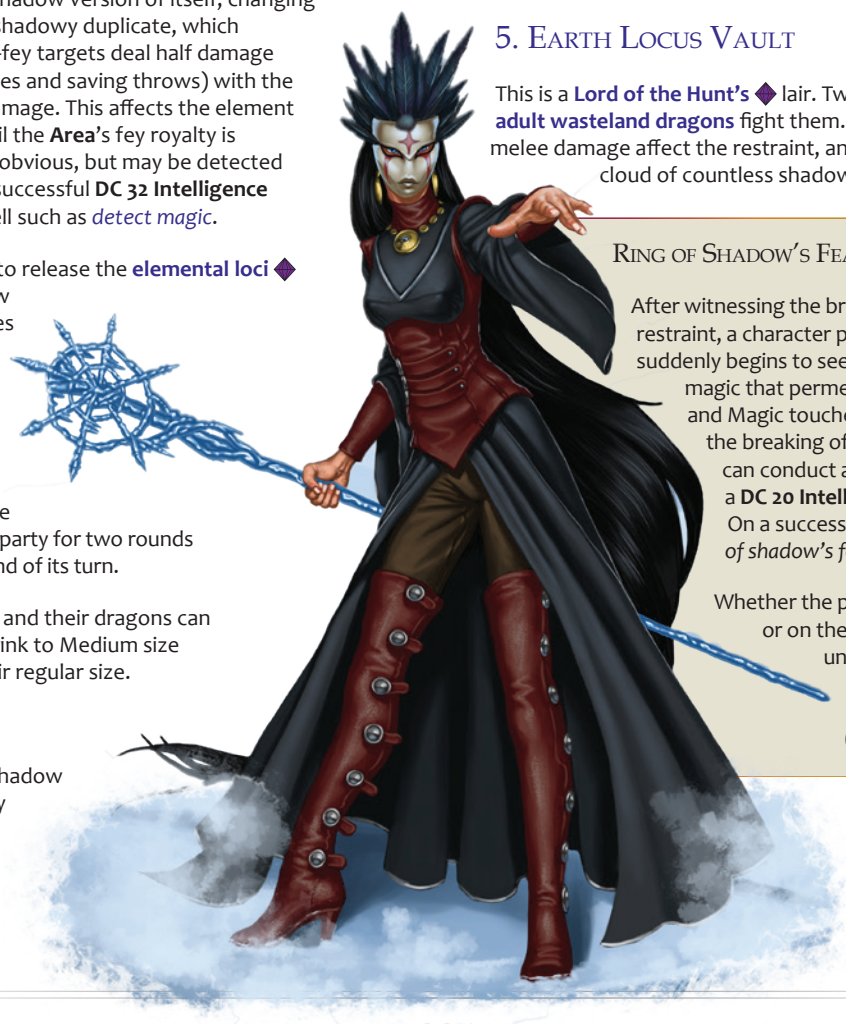
This is a **Queen of Witches'** lair. A **balor** and its **adult wasteland dragon** confront them. Fire and slashing melee damage affect the restraint, a cuboid of cold fire.

4. Air Locus Vault

This is a **Moonlit King's** lair. Three **nalfeshnees** and two **adult wasteland dragons** oppose them. Lightning and any ranged damage affect the restraint, a 10-foot wide astrolabe of solid shadow.

5. Earth Locus Vault

This is a **Lord of the Hunt's** lair. Two **mariliths** and their **adult wasteland dragons** fight them. Acid and bludgeoning melee damage affect the restraint, an impenetrable cloud of countless shadow particles.



Ring of Shadow's Fealty

After witnessing the breaking of a single shadow restraint, a character proficient in Arcana suddenly begins to see the shadowy threads of magic that permeate all the Queen of Night and Magic touches. When next they witness the breaking of a shadow binding, they can conduct a 10-minute ritual to make a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. On a success, the ritual creates a *ring of shadow's fealty* (see page 199).

Whether the party obtains this ring here or on the Material Plane, such a unique item commands a high bounty from any Black Market dealer (see page 298).

Mates Laurentiu

Arctic Mini-Dungeons

Rime Cairn's Return 26
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Julio Rocha

Hypothermia

Hypothermia—reduced body temperature—happens when a body dissipates more heat than it absorbs and its core falls below 35.0 °C (95.0 °F). Unless another condition or a GM's decision states otherwise, characters exposed succeed on a Constitution saving throw against a severe environmental hazard DC (↗ 141) to avoid their debilitating effects. This condition functions much like the 6-level exhaustion condition.

Level	Effect
1	**Frost-touched.** Skin itches and hurts, becoming slowly numb. Characters suffer a -2 penalty on Strength and Dexterity checks.
2	**Bleached.** Yellow and white patches begin to form on the skin. The character has a 50% chance to shiver uncontrollably when attempting a Strength or Dexterity check or saving throw, making the check or saving throw with disadvantage.
3	**Shivering.** The character now shivers constantly, teeth chattering. A shivering spellcaster must make a **DC 10 Constitution check** to cast a spell with a verbal or somatic component; on a failed check, the spell slot is expended. Tasks that require manual precision, such as opening a lock or getting into or out of armor take twice as long. The character may also begin suffering from short-term madness on a failed saving throw, with most common examples being paradoxical undressing, terminal burrowing, or wendigo-psychosis.
4	**Hypothermia.** The character gains a level of exhaustion and can't recover from exhaustion until after a long rest in a warm environment. The character's skin develops black blisters, but also becomes numb. A hypothermic character is only tangentially aware of their surroundings, incapable of benefiting from passive Perception – only actively straining for something will yield information about dangers. Additionally, even the simplest activities requiring manual Dexterity now require a **DC 10 Dexterity check** to perform; on a failure, the character fumbles, dropping the item. Complex tasks, such as opening a lock, become impossible.
5	**Frostbitten.** The character is incapacitated and gains another level of exhaustion. Eventually, organs fail, digits are lost as fingers and toes snap off, and other permanent injuries happen. The GM is the final arbiter of the effects of such injuries, but a permanent reduction of maximum Hit Points by 1d6 per day spent frostbitten is a good suggestion.
6	**Frozen Solid.** The character is frozen solid. They die. Subject to the GM's discretion, magical cold may instead petrify creatures, allowing them to be thawed once more to return to life.

Coast Mini-Dungeons

Zur's Saltwater Smugglers 8
Seaside Hideaway 52
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Deep Water 108
The Leech Cure 114
Shadows Off Shore 126
The Wreck of the Windfall 142
The Brass Band 180
Storms That Bring Destruction 222
Tempest in a Teapot 258
Deep Ones' Doom 262

d100 Coast Encounters

1. A water-logged journal in a clump of seaweed.
2. A cluster of stones resembling a face.
3. Shipwreck of a small dinghy.
4. Tall jungled cliffs overlooks this beach; vultures—or possibly harpies—fly above.
5. A treasure map inside a corked bottle.
6. Ships battling far out to sea.
7. An undead seagull devouring its kin.
8. A sandcastle with little people inside.
9. A scroll of profanities translated from Gnomish to Common.
10. A sea hag smashing seashells.
11. "*Captain Regmar, the Leviathan*", a story of adventure by Captain Regmar, Esq.
12. Dolphins chasing fish into the shallows.
13. Young sea birds leaping from high cliffs.
14. A trapdoor on a rock surface.
15. A fish skull with glowing green eyes.
16. A painting of a noblewoman.
17. An abandoned fishing village.
18. A half-full bottle of rum. A stack of rocks that rebuilds itself.
19. An empty bucket covered in moss and barnacles.
20. A mossy boulder is a hungry giant hermit crab.
21. A half-buried skull with a smooth stones in place of teeth.
22. A chipped hand mirror.
23. A white dress floating on the water.
24. A deep hole; dry, but for how long?
25. A spectral sailor/pirate, gargles audibly.
26. A spire of lightning (crystalized) sand.
27. The tattered remnants of a ship's flag.
28. A lone, large tree stands offshore. A whole village could hide in its boughs.
29. A flask that hums pleasantly when near a beehive.
30. Sahuagin missionaries preach the gospel the unfathomable.
31. A friendly dog leads you to its skeleton before vanishing.
32. An offshore island shudders and slips away.
33. A rotting merrow corpse; a massive bite mark.
34. A flock of seagulls greedily looks for food.
35. A natural cave; a sodden campfire.
36. A washed up satchel; a broken compass.
37. A small tide pool; newly hatched tadpoles.
38. A wary octopus has wedged itself into a large jug. It resists efforts to "save" it.
39. A bright coral crown resting on a stone.
40. A child skipping stones is looking for a challenge.
41. A sign for "Seaholme, 8 miles" points into the water.
42. A solitary pier juts out into the water.
43. Conches, crawfish, snails, barnacles, and corals at home in a burrow of lightning sand.
44. A number of crab cages, each with fresh catch inside.
45. Cultists preparing for a sacrifice, but they literally just got here so there's a lot to do still.
46. An altar to a sea god, carved by crashing waves.
47. A school of fins plays offshore.
48. Canvas sacks of potatoes, leeks, onions, and plantains.
49. A faded charcoal portrait of an elf woman.
50. A dying fish stranded far up the shore.
51. An excavated treasure chest, empty.
52. An old, worn boot with a hole in the sole. A snail moving within.
53. A spire of lightning sand in the shape of a maiden.
54. A fish-headed doll.
55. Hallucinogenic vapors rise from shallow tidepools.
56. A sailboat wreck turned into a campsite.
57. The bejeweled cutlass hilt with but one gem left.
58. A pod of barking seals bathe in the sun.
59. A recently corpsified halfling with hands and feet bound.
60. A phantom lighthouse; tangible only on moonless nights.
61. Hatching turtles. Hungry gulls.
62. A lute, washed ashore. Won't stop talking, just wants a friend.
63. A smooth boulder with a keyhole.
64. The wind over the rocks howls, "Beware!"
65. Nautical nomads making preparations may have information or trade.
66. A glass vial of oddly colored sand.
67. A one-room cabin sits on a bluff overlooking a cove.
68. A gold necklace with a missing gemstone.
69. A large sea turtle on its back.
70. The carcass of a killer whale; meal for a kra'tah.
71. A pair of crabs battle for dominance.
72. A wooden turtle totem.
73. A crystal orb with a glowing mist inside.
74. A totem made of driftwood, seaweed, and shells.
75. A small glass bottle; any liquid inside turns into wine.
76. Gargantuan footprints lead into the sea.
77. The wreckage of a ship; fire sent it ashore.
78. A glass eyeball that follows your gaze.
79. The foundations of an ancient lighthouse.
80. Stones arranged into the shape of a trident.
81. A giant reclines on the rocks; tea is served.
82. A number of small, sealed terrariums.
83. A rainbow conch that makes no sound.
84. A gust of wind carries the smell of blood and salt.
85. A pearl sits in an open clamshell. An illusion? A mimic?
86. A sailor's laundry, laid out to dry on a rock.
87. An almost-full bottle of rum with a picked leech inside.
88. A boomerang that never comes back.
89. A golden rowboat.
90. Sailors/pirates practice boarding maneuvers.
91. Crates stamped with a company emblem.
92. Lemon trees; a ship anchoring offshore.
93. Footprints appear in the sand.
94. Smooth rocks, perfect for skipping.
95. Lightning sand elemental.
96. A kobold skull that won't stop laughing.
97. A wooden sign reads "Beware the Wumper'Tah!"
98. A journal describing a wave. It never seems to end.
99. A rusty trident decorated with shells and rags.
100. A siren has a dozen sailors under her sway.



Desert Mini-Dungeons

The Poison Pharaoh's Curse 146

A Wake of Vultures 172

Reflections Beneath the Sand 214

Prophecy of the Herald 254

Coffin Ball 276



Dean Spencer

Hyperthermia

Hyperthermia—elevated body temperature—occurs when thermoregulation fails and a body produces or absorbs more heat than it dissipates. Extreme temperatures quickly become emergencies needing urgent treatment to prevent disability or death. Unless another condition or a GM's decision states otherwise, characters exposed must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against a severe environmental hazard DC (↗ 141) to avoid their debilitating effects. This condition functions much like the 6-level exhaustion condition.

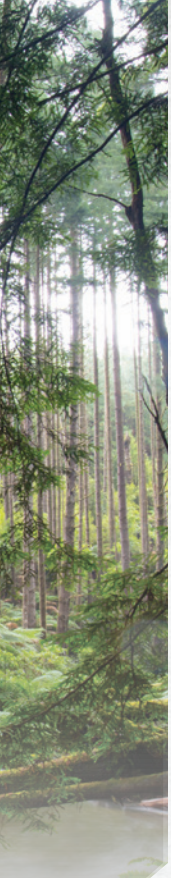
Level	Effect
1	**Heat-touched.** Concentration starts to suffer slightly; profuse sweating and mild headaches begin. Heat-touched characters have a -2 penalty on Intelligence and Wisdom checks.
2	**Dehydrated.** The character begins to have trouble focusing on tasks. Activities requiring lengthy concentration take twice as long to complete successfully as the mind wanders. A dehydrated spellcaster must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution check** to cast any spell with a casting time greater than 1 action. On a failure, the spell slot is expended.
3	**Hyperthermia.** The character gains a level of exhaustion and can't recover from exhaustion until after a long rest in sufficiently cool environments and with sufficient hydration. The number of units of stock of fluid required equals the victim's level of exhaustion. The liquid is consumed over the course of a long rest. Head-aches become crippling, and the character suffers a -2 penalty to Charisma and Dexterity checks. Additionally, whenever the character moves more than half their Speed in a given round, they must subtract 1d4 from all d20 rolls until the start of their next turn.
4	**Heatstroke.** The character can barely walk anymore and has disadvantage on all Strength and Dexterity checks and saving throws. Every time the character takes a reaction or bonus action in addition to their regular action and movement in a given round, they reduce their maximum Hit Points by 1d6. This reduction stacks with itself and remains in effect until the character no longer suffers from hyperthermia.
5	**Barely Coherent.** The character gains a level of exhaustion, and even simple tasks such as drawing a weapon, notching an arrow or retrieving something from a backpack require a successful **DC 10 Intelligence** or **Wisdom check** (at disadvantage due to exhaustion) to accomplish without fumbling and dropping the item, not finding it no matter how long it is searched for, or forgetting what one wanted to retrieve in the first place.
6	**Death.** The character dies.

Dungeon Mini-Dungeons

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Runemaker, Soulbreaker 190
Courting Death 192
Divided Darkness 230
Assault on Faceless 244
Golemancer's Gauntlet 260
Ritual of the Nail 266
A Tale of Two Liches 268

d100 Dungeon Entrances

1	Cliffside cave
2	Hidden waterfall entrance
3	Sewer grate
4	Abandoned mineshaft
5	Secret passage behind a bookshelf
6	Trapdoor in the floor
7	Crumbled castle ruins
8	Split rock formation
9	Tree hollow
10	Flooded underwater tunnel
11	Ancient tomb entrance
12	Cavern behind a waterfall
13	Maze of catacombs
14	Ruined temple entrance
15	Hidden cave system
16	Old well
17	Tower stairwell
18	Ruined bridge crossing
19	Chasm with rope bridge
20	Hidden crevasse
21	Long-abandoned mine elevator shaft
22	Abandoned lighthouse basement
23	Secret door hidden behind a statue
24	Disguised as a mausoleum
25	Natural hot spring cave system
26	Ice cave entrance
27	Crypt door
28	Trapdoor in a greenhouse
29	Forgotten subway station
30	Hidden entrance within a lost city
31	Old dungeon entrance
32	Magic mirror portal
33	Secret tunnel beneath a castle wall
34	Crumbling ruin entrance
35	Cave system behind a waterfall
36	Hidden tunnel behind a fireplace
37	Cave system accessed via a sinkhole
38	Hidden entrance in a rock face
39	Long-abandoned military bunker
40	Sunken shipwreck entrance
41	Hidden underground river
42	Natural tunnel system accessed via a ravine
43	Hidden treehouse entrance
44	Buried treasure vault entrance
45	Clandestine laboratory entrance
46	Hidden school basement tunnel system
47	Sewer access through a manhole cover
48	Disguised as a ruined building
49	Hidden door behind a tapestry
50	Abandoned factory basement entrance
51	Ancient monastery entrance
52	Disguised as a hidden shrine
53	Secret library access through a fireplace
54	Forgotten temple entrance
55	Waterfall cave system accessed via a rope ladder
56	Creepy crypt entrance
57	Hidden entrance in a swamp
58	Cavern network accessed via a sinkhole
59	Disused railroad tunnel
60	Hidden entrance in a mountain pass
61	Abandoned warehouse basement entrance
62	Secret basement in a townhouse
63	Crevasse opening
64	Hidden door behind a painting
65	Old mine shaft entrance
66	Buried pirate treasure stash access
67	Hidden entrance in an abandoned mansion
68	Tunnel crawlspace beneath a building
69	Subterranean river cave system
70	Labyrinthine maze entrance
71	Hidden entrance in a city park
72	Iceberg cave system entrance
73	Hidden underground lair
74	Forgotten military outpost entrance
75	Mansion cellar entrance
76	Quarry mining tunnel
77	Hidden door within a museum exhibit
78	Underwater cavern network accessed via a hidden cove
79	Disguised as a natural rock formation
80	Hidden entrance within a cave system
81	Secret tunnel beneath a palace
82	Disguised as an abandoned barn
83	Tunnels beneath a big old oak tree
84	Catacomb system beneath a church
85	Secret entrance in a castle wall
86	Empty crates nailed together; one is a door
87	A bed on a hinge lifts from the floor
88	A hallow menhir; spiral stairs descend
89	A hearth's ash pit just keeps going
90	A cellar ice closet; a frozen portal
91	A stairway beneath a chapel pulpit
92	A clockface opens to reveal a passage
93	A sundial unscrews revealing a ladder
94	A wine rack conceals a hidden portal
95	At the bottom of a well, four yawning portals
96	A sliding wall reveals multiple hallways
97	A window seat; inside, a ladder beckyons
98	Cairn stones, removed from the corpse and stacked into a portal
99	A heavy chest; inside, a slide pole
100	A coffin; inside, descending stairway



Forest Mini-Dungeons

Patchwork's Pit 18
Big Game 22
Inklings Gathered 24
A Fungus Among Us 38
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Kappamaki 132
Tenebrous Trails 176
Who's the Hunter, Who's the Game? 200
The Bear King's Wife 280
Mage's Malevolent Mansion 282

d100 Forest Encounters

1	13 straw dolls encircling a willow tree.
2	An abandoned tinker's wagon.
3	A map marking this spot as X.
4	A boot filled with water; a live fish.
5	A silver medallion featuring a crescent moon.
6	A severed hand holding a rabbit's foot.
7	A fairly new pair of children's shoes.
8	Four statues: a dwarf, an elf, a human, and a halfling.
9	A tree has grown around a rusty oil-lamp post.
10	The smoldering remains of a small campfire.
11	Small stones arranged to point north.
12	An invisible tree.
13	A stone gargoyle pointing south, but facing east.
14	A rune-carved wagonwheel, broken but repairable.
15	A wicker basket filled with edible mushrooms.
16	A dead rabbit dressed in chainmail armor.
17	A perfect sphere of granite, five feet wide.
18	Parchement pinned to a tree; "Run!"
19	A red X painted on a fallen log.
20	A traveler's bedroll; an opal pendant.
21	A tree stump set for tea.
22	A hallowed out log appears to be a baby's basinet.
23	A deep hole; worms.
24	A wooden flute that has been snapped in half.
25	A scarecrow effigy held upright by vines.
26	A wanted poster offers bounty on lumberjacks.
27	A single tulip made of glass in the center of a clearing.
28	Six unmarked graves.
29	A reinforced cage, broken open; claw marks.
30	A copse of trees damanged by lightening.
31	A copse of trees; upon each, an ornate mirror.
32	A broken beartrap; owlbear feathers.
33	A stump upon which a puppet show has been prepared.
34	An oak tree used for axe-throwing target practice.
35	Myriad lovers' initial traced into an old oak's bark.
36	A small field of mountain flowers.
37	A raven perched on a bough hurls polite insults.
38	A toppled bird's nest; egg shells.
39	In the crook of a knotty tree, a portal to a mountain spring.
40	An empty logging camp, tended only by the halfling quartermaster.
41	A lute pinned to a tree by an elfin arrow.
42	A tree whose branches all point west.
43	Potted flowers arranged on a fallen tree.
44	A broadsheet nailed to a tree; news from far away.
45	A willow burps bubbles that have a pleasant scent.
46	An old tin box full of wooden buttons of various sizes.
47	An open scroll case filled with live spiders.
48	A small painting of a mountain.
49	An ancient oak deecorated with silk ribbons.
50	A rodent of unusual size.
51	A thorn hedge; skeletons inside.
52	An old wooden marionette of a small boy.
53	Wedding garb hung out to dry.
54	A mossy stone; a candle shrine.
55	Goblins foraging snails and tubers.
56	An abandoned woodcutter's hut.
57	A stump carved into a clamshell throne.
58	Three broken and notched axes.
59	A bucket of acorns; a territorial squirrel.
60	A tree that grows both apples and pears.
61	A signpost that reads "You are here."
62	From a tree nook, a gnome sells potions.
63	A knotty tree seeks conversation.
64	A hunter's bag with seven freshly killed rabbits.
65	A babbling brook; caffeinated.
66	Animal bones; a troll den nearby.
67	Half-buried in leaves and muck, a small mortar and pestle.
68	A sundial carved into a stump.
69	The storm-wrecked shell of an old Norse longboat.
70	Bone wind chimes cover a small tree.
71	A hanging tree.
72	A trio of stumps; a trio of model villages.
73	A horse saddle with a broken stirrup strap.
74	A horned helm, covered in moss and fungi.
75	A rock that kind of looks like a dog.
76	A porcelain doll hidden in a log.
77	A spiked pit trap, sprung.
78	A quiver of arrows stuck in the ground; a broken longbow.
79	In the hollow of a tree, an incomplete treasure map.
80	In the hollow of a tree, a litter of raccoons.
81	A burned out glade.
82	A statue of a surprised troll.
83	A knothole in a tree aligns to the setting sun.
84	A glade of moose mud.
85	A blue bird seeks assistance; a snake in the nest.
86	A large beehive causes a tree to sag.
87	An old canvas tarp, dirty and musty, but still in good condition.
88	Three empty but unbroken wine bottles.
89	A chunk of fool's gold.
90	An old wooden whistle that attracts bees.
91	The wind through the ferns whispers, "Freedom!"
92	A stack of harvested honeycombs, wrapped in parchment.
93	The forest has grown around a long-abandoned village.
94	A glass jar full of beach sand.
95	Deer antlers form an effigy hedge.
96	A spire of quartz; no plants grow near.
97	A campsite, destroyed by a clawed beast.
98	Cobwebs cover branches, bushes, and vines.
99	A spruce tree decorated with orbs of painted glass.
100	The bare branches of a dead tree look like wands.

Grassland Mini-Dungeons

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Temple Defense 74
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Slumbering Titan 208

Gyeongsa

The shifting winds of a violent tempest rustle above as a tan swirl appears in the sky. It quickly grows in size, from only a few inches into a sphere dozens of feet across. Gusts carrying fine grits of sand whip against you as the howl of the winds reaches a fevered pitch and the thing in the sky begins to drift towards you.

Most would scoff at Chonian tales of the gyeongsa, the great savannah whirlwind that sucks up entire villages. According to legend, a gyeongsa is the vengeful spirit of the wind, angry that the inland sea waters it once graced have long dried up. Few are those who have seen such a gale and lived to speak of it, but those who do recount the foreboding sense of malice borne on the wind.

Gyeongsa

Gargantuan elemental, neutral

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 310 (20d20 + 100)
Speed 0 ft., fly 90 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Damage Resistances lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Cyclone. The gyeongsa can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature in the same space as a gyeongsa at the start of their turn is affected by the gyeongsa's Whirlwind.

Galewind. Ranged attacks have disadvantage against the gyeongsa.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The gyeongsa makes two slam attacks. The gyeongsa then makes a slam attack against a prone target as a bonus action.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 41 (8d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage and the target must make a DC 19 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the target is knocked prone.

Whirlwind (Recharge 4–6). Each creature in the gyeongsa's space must make a DC 19 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a target is knocked prone and thrown 20 feet away from the gyeongsa, and taking 41 (8d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If a thrown target collides with another creature during this movement, that creature must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the thrown creatures' movement ends, the colliding creatures are both knocked prone, and both take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet of movement remaining prior to the collision. On a successful save, a target avoids being thrown and knocked prone and takes half as much damage.

Bonus Actions

Teleport (1/Day). The gyeongsa magically teleports up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see as a bonus action. Large or smaller creatures occupying the same space as the gyeongsa must make a DC 19 Strength saving throw, teleporting with the gyeongsa on a failure.

David Rabbitte



Mountain Mini-Dungeons

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Bad Eggs 206
Secrets of the Silver Mountain Sage 212
Echo of the Oracle 220
Akaban's Temporal Temple 238
The Scorpion Gate 242
Cliffside Hoot 272

d100 Mountain Encounters

1	A minotaur skull, piked; a warning.
2	An illusory pile of gold nuggets; a trap?
3	A shrine to a sea god; oddly placed.
4	Thorny overgrowth; difficult to pass through.
5	A group of kobolds lament a fruitless hunt.
6	A troll strips the bark from a lone tree.
7	A false cave entrace; it's paint!
8	Three ravens, chained together.
9	A column of balanced rocks.
10	A giant, surly snail blocks the way.
11	A boulder; a crushed mountaineer; a journal about rockslides.
12	A broken sword; its hilt resembles this mountain.
13	A deep crevasse; no sound echoes.
14	A territorial mountain goat.
15	A lemur with chameleon-like camouflage.
16	The narrow path ends suddenly; a great view!
17	A campsite, fully stocked; seemingly abandoned.
18	A gnarled rock pine; apples in its bough must be magical.
19	A broken sign, "—ning! Mountain trol—!"
20	Wolves stalking from the ridge above.
21	An iron cauldron; split and cracked, but mendable.
22	A flower in an otherwise barren landscape.
23	A thicket of laden berry bushes.
24	A leather hat; a locket necklace; an ostrich feather.
25	Large stones stacked in a humanoid shape, its legs an arch to walk beneath.
26	A sack of potatoes; old, but not rotten.
27	A stone table; a chess board; black is winning.
28	A stone statue of a dwarven warrior.
29	A stone bowl of bright, polished pebbles.
30	Landon and Isidore, a traveling merchant and his trusty mule.
31	A sudden gale; a snowstorm; hypothermia.
32	The foundations of a forgotten mountain village.
33	A small tiered garden; herbs native to the region.
34	A length of rope offers a shortcut. Is it too old?
35	Mountaineers setting camp; bandits?
36	A fake beard and an eyepatch hidden just off the trail.
37	A wide chasm; a frayed rope bridge.
38	A troll den, not currently occupied.
39	A glass potion bottle, broken.
40	A hermit tending sheep; rude and dismissive.
41	A war pennant, thrust into the trail ahead; a red dragon on a green field.
42	A hollow filled with humanoid bones.
43	A gargantuan throne in the mountainside.
44	The ruined husk of a cargo vessel, dashed upon the peak.
45	A fey sprite offers information, but at what price?
46	A dolemen shelter; stew cooking.
47	A dry cave, seemingly uninhabited.
48	A broken hourglass; artisan's tools; a vial of sand.
49	A ring of pine trees; a druid circle?
50	An addled dwarf searches for long lost gold. "It's here somewhere!"
51	Three large monoliths of white stone on a fjeld.
52	An old mining cart with two missing wheels
53	A small vein of gold within an exposed length of quartz.
54	The entrance to an exhausted silver mine.
55	A large hill giant; a small stone giant?
56	A mountain goat dressed in tattered wizard robes.
57	An ancient iron helmet and spear; of value to scholars?
58	A pile of loose gravel; a tiny jewler's hammer.
59	Deep in a ravine, a downed elfish airship.
60	A spirit totem pole: eagle, elk, bear, wolf.
61	A drunk illusionist sends phantom boulders down the trail.
62	The path continues upward; painted arrows point back down.
63	A large iron cannon; a stack of cannonballs; no powder.
64	A halfling cave-home selling baked goods.
65	Iron-banded crates, sealed.
66	Brimstone fog; a warning?
67	A dog wants you to follow; disappears for hours at a time.
68	Broken saddlebags: silk scarf, reading spectacles, silver armband.
69	A canvas tent; inside is much larger; a raging celebration!
70	Red dragon scales litter the mountainside.
71	A bas-relief carved into stone: a one-eyed ogre.
72	A boulder blocks a cave; painted in read: "Dead Inside"
73	A lone pack mule, laden with goods.
74	The remains of a mountaineer, fallen from a great height.
75	A gargoyle quartet; not great singers.
76	An apparition offers spurious counsel.
77	A map to treasure; no mountains on the map.
78	A ruined cabin, one wall missing; a giant attack?
79	Pine logs, stacked and ready for transport.
80	A deep hole.
81	A roc nest; roc hatchlings!
82	A stone table set for tea.
83	A poorly concealed pit-and-boulder-drop trap; giggling goblins.
84	A troupe of gnomes work to clear a landslide.
85	A 1-foot-diameter ball of white marble.
86	A wooden pier extends out from the cliff.
87	A rock-people village; they ignore you.
88	Storm giants at play wreak havoc.
89	A ruined dwarven outpost.
90	A pair of hill giants in a heated boulder tossing contest.
91	A pair of hill giants in a heated philosophical debate.
92	A large hive of large bees.
93	A pair of dwarves repair a narrow trail.
94	Pilgrims seek a sherpa.
95	Fog from below seems to follow.
96	A hidden monastery.
97	A sign reads, "Wizard's Tower" but the trail leads to an empty plateau.
98	Sounds of mining echo from a small hole.
99	A serene waterfall.
100	Some call him the Old Man of the Mountain.

The Aizskartz Asteroid

Gargantuan elemental, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 245 (14d20 + 98)
Speed fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	6 (-2)	24 (+7)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

Damage Vulnerabilities psychic
Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning ; bludgeoning piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, grappled, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious
Senses blindsight 1 mile (blind beyond this range), passive perception 10
Languages telepathy 1 mile
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the Aizskartz fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Gravitic Coil. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 20 ft. or range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 9) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Huge or smaller, the target is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and the Aizskartz can't grapple another target.

Spellcasting. The Aizskartz cast one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spell-casting ability (spell save DC 17):

3/day: reverse gravity, telekinesis
1/day: meteor swarm

REACTIONS

Refraction Field. When the Aizskartz is hit with a ranged spell attack or a ray spell, it can use its reaction to harmlessly deflect the spell.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Aizskartz 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. The Aizskartz regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Crater Maw. The Aizskartz opens a crater on its surface and swallows a target it is grappling, the target takes damage from Gravitic Coil, then the grapple ends. While swallowed, the target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the Aizskartz, and it takes 39 (6d12) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of the Aizskartz's turns.

If the Aizskartz takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the Aizskartz must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the Aizskartz. If the Aizskartz dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape as it would from any cave in.

Gravitic Surge. The Aizskartz makes a Gravitic Coil attack.

Teleport (Costs 2 Actions). The Aizskartz magically teleports, along with any swallowed targets, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

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The Ancestral Gateway

The Ancestral Gateway is a swirling chaos of meteor showers, solar dust, and crystalized energy that shrouds the light of a terrestrial star known as Ur. The star itself marks the point where the demiplane of Uklonjen encroaches upon the Material Plane. Orbiting the center of the Ancestral Gateway, the Aizskartz is the warden of this unstable bridge between dimensions. Anything entering the gateway summons the attention of the Aizskartz. What convergence of calamity and malevolence created this entity is lost to time, but perhaps answers lie beyond the gateway.

Regional Effects. The Ancestral Gateway stretches five miles in all directions from the star Ur, causing all the following effects.

Planar Barrier. The Ancestral Gateway prevents teleportation or portal use, as *forbiddance*, although the effect deals no damage. A successful *dispel magic* (**DC 16**) suppresses the Planar Barrier for 1 hour in a 300-foot-radius around the caster.

Meteor Showers. The Ancestral Gateway swirls in organized chaos, except when new objects—such as an interdimensional airship—enter its gravitational field. The resulting shift in gravity not only makes navigating the gateway a difficult task, but also showers the area in meteors as they are drawn to the new object.

Solar Dust. Objects that come to an orbital rest within the Ancestral Gateway begin to accumulate a fine dust as their own gravity collects particulates. This solar dust is charged with arcane energy. Eventually, an object is covered in thin layer of crystalized energy. When a creature or object falls into a sheet of solar dust, the resulting impact disperses shards of crystalized solar energy, dealing radiant damage in a 30-foot-radius sphere around the impact site. The damage is equal to the falling damage.

Lair Actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Aizskartz can take one of the following lair actions; it cannot take the same lair action two rounds in row.

Meteor. The Aizskartz sends a meteor, as *meteor swarm*, at a target within the Ancestral Gateway.

Solar Shards. The Aizskartz causes an explosion of solar shards as nearby asteroids collide, targeting a 20-foot-radius sphere within 150 feet. Creatures in the area must make a **DC 17 Constitution save**. On a failed save, creatures are blinded for 1 round and take 28 (8d6) radiant damage. On a successful save, creatures take half damage and aren't blinded.

Void Echo. One creature within 120 feet of the Aizskartz must make a **DC 17 Charisma saving throw**, taking 26 (4d10 + 4) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.



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d100 Swamp Encounters

1	A rotting river barge, home to snakes.
2	A half-submerged wagon, looted.
3	A frog wearing a tiny crown.
4	An old boot; a gold buckle.
5	Softly glowing lillies.
6	A skeletal hand reach up from the mud clutches a silver whistle.
7	Rusty chains hang from the canopy.
8	A moss-covered elf skull wedged in the nook of a willow.
9	An oil lamp; an eternal flame.
10	A straw scarecrow effigy.
11	A scroll case; an irritated snake.
12	In the reeds, alligator eggs.
13	Competing and contradicting will-o'-wisps.
14	A suit of dwarven armor, decaying.
15	Mocking birds mock the muckity-muck.
16	Flowering vines close their petals when you come near.
17	An axeblade embedded in a log.
18	A gold coin that won't be silent.
19	A new rope noose.
20	The muck sucks at your feet with long, lamenting noises.
21	The skeletal remains of a dinosaur.
22	A tree stump used for target practice.
23	Bones, shells, and reeds shaped into an effigy henge.
24	An apothecary shop's worth of bottles, strewn about.
25	A large sack of old rabbit remains.
26	A ruined ceremonial dagger.
27	An iron helm used as a boiling pot.
28	Spectral witches toil over a cauldron.
29	A large snake protects a clutch of petrified eggs.
30	A basket of mushrooms.
31	A crawling hand; a cryptic message.
32	A disassembled clockwork automaton, rusty.
33	A feral chicken.
34	Snake skins hung to dry.
35	An iron cauldron, upside down.
36	An enormous nest of reeds and feathers on a dry hillock.
37	A silly-looking mud creature protects its patch of mud.
38	A bag of squirrel bones.
39	Smooth stones stacked on a log.
40	A shining sword floats just beneath the water; an illusion.
41	A chorus of peep toads.
42	A small wooden bowl floating on the muck; clean water within.
43	A curious willow grabs up headwear.
44	A thick hedge of thorns.
45	A skeletal sculpture: a three-headed dog.
46	A bog mummy searching for its toes.
47	Blue pixies scurry to hide in their mushroom village.
48	Wooden crates, rotting.
49	Blue flowery vines hum softly.
50	Song birds seem to know all the hits.
51	A drum, now home to a surly snail.
52	An armor clad skeleton against a tree.
53	The prow of a longship.
54	A large boulder floats on the water.
55	Will-o'-wisps or far off torches?
56	A black willow used as a chalkboard.
57	A thin web covers the water.
58	A woven reed talisman is a map.
59	A group of fey share poetry.
60	A small, flat-bottomed boat.
61	A rusty jaw trap; a skeletal foot.
62	A small pool of glowing muck.
63	An abandoned tree village.
64	On a fallen log, an array of shoes.
65	A tobacco plant with large leaves.
66	Cobwebs cover a lone willow tree.
67	A cache of preserved jelly.
68	A skeleton of an armored warhorse.
69	Toadstool table set for tea.
70	An old woman in black robes wants you to find her cat.
71	A black cat.
72	An hourglass; a note: "Time is running out."
73	A fearsome creature rises from the muck, demands conversation.
74	Warm walnut vendor.
75	An empty quiver hanging from a tree branch. A bird is living inside.
76	A glass jar; swamp gas inside.
77	A body pinned to a tree with arrows.
78	A tree has grown around a large harp.
79	A campsite, sunken into the muck.
80	A goblin skull that will answer three questions, sarcastically.
81	A gold coin nailed to a tree.
82	A pool of dead fish.
83	A conspiracy of ravens offer conflicting directions.
84	A shrine to a moon deity.
85	A tree bleeds blue sap.
86	Blinking eyeballs float in a bog.
87	A rusty steel gauntlet large enough to stand in.
88	A sword in a stump.
89	A cobblestone road winds between two large trees.
90	A kobold sells reed footware for walking on mud.
91	A partially submerged, mossy stone henge.
92	Several hammocks in a copse of willows.
93	A sturdy log raft; "Reserved."
94	A map to treasure; no swampland on the map.
95	Assassin vines, well-fed and lethargic.
96	A willow decorated with silverware.
97	A soggy graveyard; a ruined chapel.
98	A warthog stuck in a log, tubers just out of reach.
99	A spectral tour guide.
100	A rusted metal shopping cart.

Underworld Mini-Dungeons

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d20 Underworld Hazards

1	Magical darkness
2	Fungi spores
3	Poison gas
4	Earthquake
5	Ceiling collapse
6	Flammable gas
7	Sinkhole
8	Webs
9	Cavern of horrors
10	Obsidian razors
11	Vampiric mist
12	Drow poison trap
13	Tarpit
14	Crumbling bridge
15	Crystal grotto
16	Hot springs
17	Anti-magic zone
18	Acid pool
19	Aberrant shrine
20	Shrieker grove

Aberrant Shrine. Gemstones rest in each eye socket of this tentacled statue. Creatures that touch a gem trigger powerful magic. The target must succeed at a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw**. A creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. If the creature fails its save by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified.

Acid Pool. The area contains a geothermal pool with calcified prismatic walls. A creature that enters the waters or begins its turn in it must succeed on a **DC 20 Constitution saving throw**, or suffer 6d6 (21) acid damage at the end of its turn. On a successful save, it only takes half as much damage.

Anti-Magic Zone. The entire area is rich in magically charged lead, which generates an effect akin to a permanent antimagic field. If removed, the lead loses this property unless a special extraction method can be discovered.

Cavern of Horrors. Hundreds of twisted and mutated skeletons litter the space—their empty sockets and frozen screams a terrifying portent of doom. Creatures must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or become frightened by the skeletons, incapable of passing through while frightened. At the end of their turns, a creature can repeat the save, ending the frightened condition on a success.

Ceiling Collapse. The area becomes difficult terrain. Adventurers must succeed at a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** or take 2d6 (7) bludgeoning damage and they become prone and restrained. A restrained creature can use its action to make a **DC 15 Strength check** to dig themselves out of the rubble and no longer be restrained. A creature can use its action to dig out an ally restrained by rubble.

Crumbling Bridge. A thin natural bridge spans a bottomless crevasse. A 20-foot section in the middle has crumbled. The other side of the gap is fragile. Creatures that enter a space adjacent to the far side of the gap cause that 5-foot section to crumble and must succeed at a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** to reach safety.

Crystal Grotto. Iridescent crystals dazzle and shine, if a light source is present. Each creature in the area who sees the pattern must make a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed for 1 minute. While charmed, the creature is also incapacitated and has a speed of 0. The charmed condition ends for an affected creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its trance.

Drow Poison Trap. Drow have meticulously trapped the floor of this area to unleash a volley of poisoned quills from numerous tiny wall-holes. It takes a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the expertly concealed trap. If the trap is triggered, every adventurer in the area must succeed at a **DC 18 Dexterity saving throw** or take 1d4 (2) piercing damage, plus 2d10 (11) poison damage, and become poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. An unconscious target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Earthquake. The area shakes violently causing a rain of rock debris. At the end of their turns, creatures must succeed on a **DC 18 Dexterity saving throw** or take 3d6 (10) bludgeoning damage.

Flammable Gas. Flammable natural gas fills the area. If the party carries a flame, the entire area explodes dealing 2d6 (7) bludgeoning damage and 4d6 (14) fire damage to all creatures, or half as much bludgeoning and fire damage on a successful **DC 18 Dexterity saving throw**.

Fungal Spores. A colony of colorful mushrooms fills the area. Passing through requires a successful **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or a character is stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Hot Springs. A natural hot spring sits undisturbed, blessed by a subterranean fey. Creatures that take a short rest while soaking in the geothermal waters are restored as if they completed a long rest. A creature can only gain this benefit once per month.

Magical Darkness. Shrouded in a permanent globe of magical darkness.

Poison Gas. A cloud of colorless poison gas stagnates the area. A character that begins or ends their turn in the cloud must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or become poisoned until they finish a short rest or are magically cured.

Obsidian Razors. The area's surfaces bristle with razor-sharp obsidian shards. The space is difficult terrain and creatures that move normally through the shards take 1d4 (2) slashing damage for every 5 feet of movement.

Shrieker Grove. A grove of shriekers emit a shriek that is audible within 300 feet. The shriekers continue to shriek until the disturbance moves out of range or they are all destroyed.

Sinkhole. The ground beneath the party suddenly turns into a sinkhole. With a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** heroes can jump to safety. On a failed save they are swallowed and transported elsewhere. The sinkhole closes behind them.

Tarpit. The entire floor of this area is a bubbling, stinky tarpit. The area is difficult terrain. Creatures entering or beginning their turn in the tarpit must succeed on a **DC 16 Strength saving throw** or become restrained until the end of their next turn. Additionally, creatures also take 6d6 (21) fire damage (**no save**) at the beginning of each turn while in the tarpit.

Vampiric Mist. A billowing cloud of rose-colored mist undulates in front of the party, filling the area. Any creature in the cloud at the start of their turn takes 6d6 (21) necrotic damage and gains one level of exhaustion; a successful **DC 18 Constitution saving throw** halves the damage and prevents the exhaustion.

Webs. Thick, sticky webs fill the space. The silky filaments are difficult terrain and lightly obscure the area. Each creature that moves into or starts their turn in the webs must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**. On a failed save, the creature is restrained as long as it remains in the webs or until it breaks free. A creature restrained by the webs can use its action to make a **DC 15 Strength check**. If it succeeds, it is no longer restrained. The webs are flammable. Any 5-foot cube of webs exposed to fire burns away in 1 round, dealing 2d4 (5) fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in the fire. by the webs can use its action to make a **DC 15 Strength check**. If it succeeds, it is no longer restrained.



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The Black Market

The Black Market is where one goes to obtain illegal, illicit, or otherwise difficult to obtain goods and services. Depending on the economy and oversight authority, a Black Market can take many forms.

In the Baevonian Mountains of the Disputed Territories, the wandering merchants known as **Trella's Trovers**—the Free People—operate outside the bureaucratic confines of loyalty agreements and trade licensure enforced by the Castle City.

Mohkba, the capital of the vast Klavek Kingdom is a locus for culture and trade. In a city where magic, religion, and philosophy are the playthings of the nobility, the common folk struggle to afford common goods. In Mohkba, the **Market Common** sets prices for food and trade goods, in a variety of currencies available to the small folk. For more illicit goods and services, one must seek out a **Thieves' Guild**.

Within Embla—a bustling trade hub for an enormous swath of the Underworld—trade is regulated to protect a rowdy population from itself, but even in the neighboring and secretive **Whistling Cave Bazaar** certain practices are forbidden. One must travel to **Vethin's Hold**, where nothing is barred, to find a true Black Market.

Elsewhere in the Underworld, **Zatajiti's Saturnalia** travels to settlements of all sizes. The nomadic drow carnival is a spectacle of dancers, jugglers, acrobats, and wonders, but beneath its jovial veneer is a Black Market where one can engage in all manner of illicit trade.

Finding a Black Market

Those who participate in Black Market dealings must protect themselves from authoritarian ramifications. By its very nature, a Black Market must deal primarily in secrecy. Thus, for traveling adventurers, finding a Black Market can be an adventure itself.

A String of Favors. A local innkeep can point you in the direction of a fishmonger who in turn knows a fellow who can obtain what you're looking for, but only if you deal with the ruffians plaguing his parlor first. The fishmonger probably needs your help, too. A string of favors grows longer the more difficult the eventual Black Market purchase is likely to be; and who knows, several opportunists along the way might end up owing you a favor.

With the Guild's Permission. In a typical bustling fantasy city, it's likely that a Black Market is under the purview of a single entity, such as a Thieves' Guild. In the presence of competing guilds or zealous law enforcement, securing Black Market trade is best done with the aid of professionals. Just because the streetwise bard knows where to obtain unobtainium, doesn't mean you should let him.

The Rumor Road. When a Black Market is truly clandestine, intrepid adventurers may only have rumors to send them on their way. In a criminal economy, one's reputation is the only real commodity anyone is concerned with. Openly discussing the Black Market is the mark of an amateur; discrete praise for success despite bureaucratic shackles is a more thoughtful approach.

The Black Market Finds You

Black marketeers keep their noses clean and their ears to the street. When the party obtains treasure wanted by someone on the Black Market, word will reach the interested parties within a few days. At the GM's disrection, a buyer approaches the party with an offer.

Whispering Shadows
"You have something I want. I'm willing to buy it, but I'll have it either way."
This unnamed figure prefers to deal from alley shadows to obscure their identity and secure an escape route. They speak softly and hiss quietly if their contact starts to draw too much attention. You can expect a fair deal, if everyone holds up their end.

Lunatic Goblin
"I'll trade you what you have for as many femurs as you want. Ok well if you don't want femurs, what do you want? Do you want your femurs?"
This unkempt and twitchy goblin might have an unhealty preoccupation with humanoid leg bones, but they're surprisingly well connected and can facilitate an illicit deal that benefits everyone. Good luck keeping it under wraps if the authorities are within earshot.

All Reward, No Risk
"Welcome, welcome, we trade in goods of quality and rarity!"
A typical Black Market dealer who has been in the game longer than not will operate a legitimate business in the open that allows them to trade off the books with ease. For buying and selling without risk of getting caught, there is no finer alternative.

Black Market Bounties

There are a few things to consider prior to introducing the Black Market into your campaign, regardless of whether the party seeks one out or a Black Market dealer approaches them.

Brokers All. Anyone making the offer to buy treasures the party has collected is merely a broker. In the case of a Black Market dealer, they've probably been contracted to obtain the item in question, or at the very least they know a buyer for whom the item is a must have, and thus they can make an easy sale. On the rare occasion the buyer covets the thing itself, they usually keep that information hidden, lest the price go up.

Keep It Fair. You may determine that a bounty for a treasure is far less or far greater than what you expect or that your campaign can sustain. Adjust these values as appropriate, especially if a story develops around collecting a bounty and the listed gold piece value would disrupt that story. The goal is for these bounties to feel like a unique reward without unbalancing your game.

But Not Too Fair. But that doesn't mean your players should feel entitled to every bounty. The vendors have spurious motive for trading in the shadows, after all. They'll haggle to their advantage as much as possible, as long as they can make the purchase.

Treasure for Trade	*Bounty*	*Page*
Axe of Kemlek the Frigid	20,000 gp[1]	229
Boar God's Eye	1,000 gp	56
Botinqah's Sanctuary	90,000 gp[1]	153
Bottleknocker Stout Recipe	2,500 gp	33
Bruban's Signet Ring	500 gp	11
Dragon Slayer	7,000 gp[1]	237
Guildmaster's Regalia	11,000 gp	55
Musings on Greed	2,000 gp	105
Nomand's Sun Blade	10,000 gp1	255
Periapt of Nature's Truth	750 gp[1]	39
Planar Essence	1,000,000 gp[1]	285
Ring of Shadow's Fealty	80,000 gp	287
Sword of Paluma	10,000 gp[1]	201
The Collected Works of Dugmore Dumple	1,000 gp	13
The Kyrgor Inheritance	1,200 gp[2]	7
The Zephyr Blade	20,000 gp	131
Tome of Understanding	55,000 gp[1]	273
Umbrasilk Cloak	45,000 gp	217
Vial of Old Jub	varies[1]	69
Will-o'-wisp Husk	7,500 gp	65
Z'lar Kotek Texts	5,000 gp	169

1 Refer to the page on which this treasure appears to determine its value at the time of sale.
2 This bounty is in addition to the inherent value these treasures have as magic items, as determined by the GM.



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- ☐ #1 Buried Council Chambers
- ☐ #2 Hobgoblin Lair
- ☐ #3 Shrine of the Earth Barons
- ☐ #4 Summoner's Remorse
- ☐ #5 The Soularium
- ☐ #6 Abandoned Shrine
- ☐ #7 The Pententieyrie
- ☐ #8 Carrionholme
- ☐ #9 Tiikeri's Revenge
- ☐ #10 Candelabra Towers
- ☐ #11 Buta No Shiro
- ☐ #12 Nekh-ta-Nebi's Tomb
- ☐ #13 The Case of the Scrupulous Pawnbroker
- ☐ #14 The Soul of a Prince
- ☐ #15 Torment at Torni Tower
- ☐ #16 The Halls of Hellfire
- ☐ #17 Shadows of Madness
- ☐ #18 Neotomas' Paradise
- ☐ #19 The Goblin Warren
- ☐ #20 Sepulchre of the Witching Hour's Sage
- ☐ #21 Daenyr's Return
- ☐ #22 Pleasure Den
- ☐ #23 The Aura of Profit
- ☐ #24 The Lapis Maiden of Serena Hortum
- ☐ #25 The Phase Spider Lair
- ☐ #26 Sanctuary of Exsanguination
- ☐ #27 Kaltenheim
- ☐ #28 Throne of the Dwellers in Dreams
- ☐ #29 Heart of the Sacred Dawn
- ☐ #30 The Burning Tree of Coilltean Grove
- ☐ #31 Dwarven Dread
- ☐ #32 Howling Halls
- ☐ #33 The Legacy of Theft
- ☐ #34 Mysteries of the Endless Maze
- ☐ #35 The Queen's Estuary
- ☐ #36 The Dragon Queen's Sanctuary
- ☐ #37 The Unreachable Terror
- ☐ #38 The Spinner's Hole
- ☐ #39 We All Start Somewhere
- ☐ #40 The Kabandha's Request
- ☐ #41 Feischkammer
- ☐ #42 The Dreamer's Shrine
- ☐ #43 Thelamos
- ☐ #44 The Ascent of Tempest Tower
- ☐ #45 Peril at Lamiaks Bridge
- ☐ #46 The Gallery of Gears
- ☐ #47 Stowaway on the Singing Sea
- ☐ #48 Pit Your Wits
- ☐ #49 Doubt Not That Stars Are Fire
- ☐ #50 When Goblins Die, No Comets are Seen
- ☐ #51 There Are More Things in the Planes and the Earth
- ☐ #52 Look Not With Thine Eyes But Thine Mind
- ☐ #53 Ne'er Trust The White Wolf's Tameness
- ☐ #54 Uneasy Rests the Crown'd Head
- ☐ #55 Chrome Devils of the Swamp
- ☐ #56 The Siren's Lament
- ☐ #57 Last Stand of the Forgotten Pirate
- ☐ #58 The Palace of Ahmad Sahir
- ☐ #59 With a Candlestick
- ☐ #60 The Unquenched Thirst
- ☐ #61 The Cackling Madness of Umberstone Manor
- ☐ #62 What the Dickens
- ☐ #63 The World Forge
- ☐ #64 I'll Plague Both Your Houses
- ☐ #65 The Blight
- ☐ #66 Words Fly Up, Thoughts Remain Below
- ☐ #67 What Canst Work I' th' Earth So Fast
- ☐ #68 Awakening the Elder
- ☐ #69 The Broken River
- ☐ #70 I Am Not of Your Element
- ☐ #71 The Unwise Young, They Say do Ne'er Live Long
- ☐ #72 The Stuff of Dreams
- ☐ #73 True Lovers Run Into Strange Capers
- ☐ #74 Temple of the Secret Power
- ☐ #75 The Garden of Death
- ☐ #76 The Great Library
- ☐ #77 Maw of the Dark Tide
- ☐ #78 Maze of the Skullkeeper
- ☐ #79 The King of Infinite Space
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