

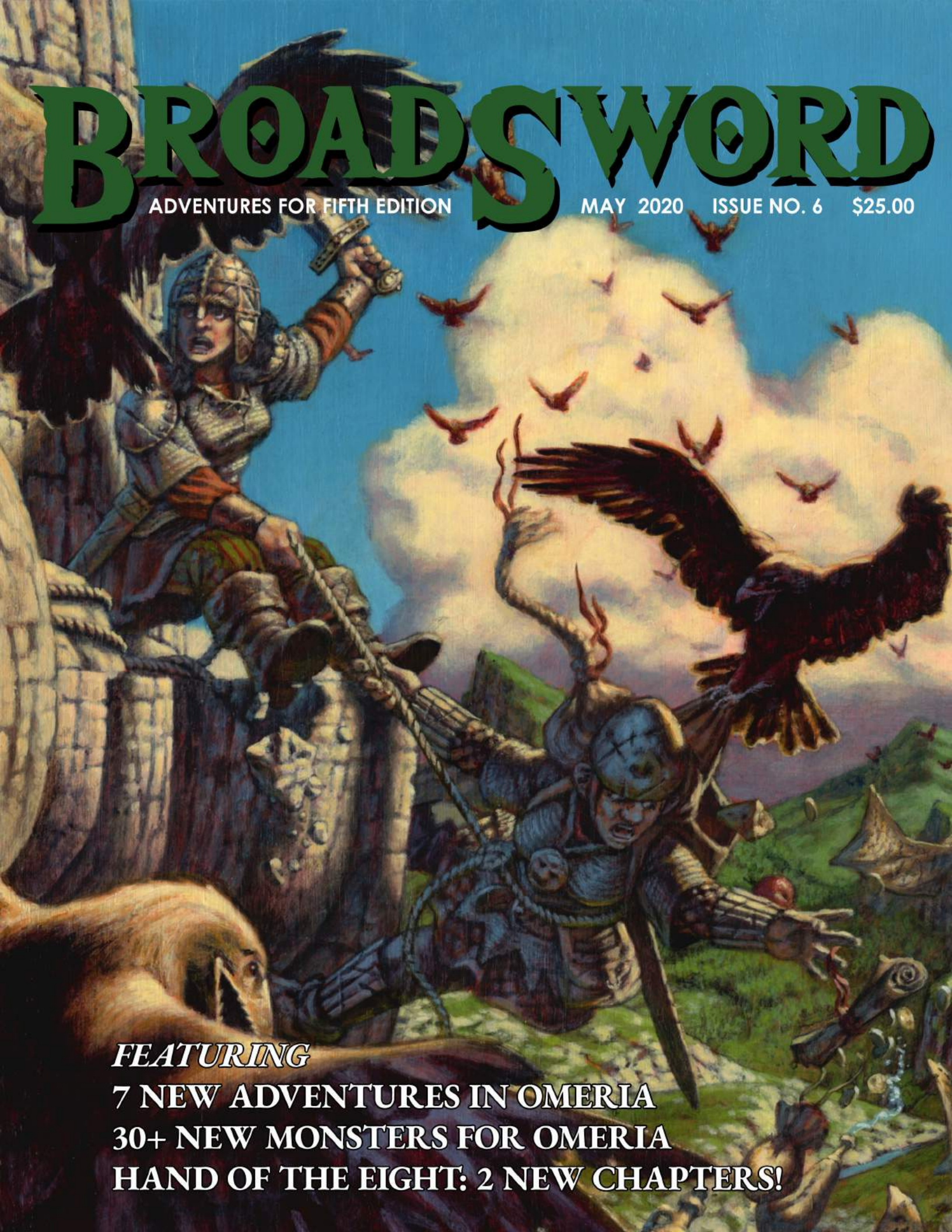
BROADSWORD

ADVENTURES FOR FIFTH EDITION

MAY 2020

ISSUE NO. 6

\$25.00



FEATURING

7 NEW ADVENTURES IN OMERIA

30+ NEW MONSTERS FOR OMERIA

HAND OF THE EIGHT: 2 NEW CHAPTERS!

BROADSWORD

ADVENTURES FOR FIFTH EDITION

MAY 2020 ISSUE 6 Monthly



COVER: The Von Doral Bezgerbush Sisters lose a day's worth of work thanks to the minions of the nefarious Overcrow. Original painting by Justin David Russell.



Free at last!

April 17th 2020 is a day that will live in infamy; it's the day that I officially quit my day job as a blogger for a tech company to focus on DMDave full time. This means that I'm gaining another 40-50 hours per week to create content, get things organized, and get rocking.

There have also been some other exciting developments. The DMDave brand has hired no less than three new folks to help take us through 2020 and beyond. Those people are:

- **Benjamin "Sarge" Gilyot** will be joining DMDave full-time starting in June as the DMDave Community Manager.
- **Matias Lazaro** will be joining us as the primary illustrator for DMDave. You will notice his awesome artwork throughout this publication and more to come.
- **Adam Zlotnik**, an old buddy from my days in tech blogging, and his agency, Wayfinder, join the DMDave team to help with our marketing efforts. If you've seen one of our ads, chances are Adam created it!

I'm very excited to be working with all these folks and I'm very excited about the future of DMDave.

Thank you all for making this possible!

-Dave Hamrick

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*"If you make people think they're thinking, they'll love you;
 but if you really make them think, they'll hate you."*

-Harlan Ellison

HOW TO WRITE 5E ADVENTURES PART 2 - OUTLINING YOUR ADVENTURE

BY DAVE HAMRICK

ART BY WILLIAM MCAUSLAND

This is the second part of my “How to Write 5e Adventures” series which started in *BroadSword Monthly* #5. In the last installment, I discussed the different elements of an adventure. Now I want to take a deep dive into how to properly outline your adventure. The adventure that we will outline will be a pretty simple location based adventure. For more details on location-based adventures, check out Chapter 3 of the DMG.

Write Your Overview First

In many ways, the overview of your adventure is a small outline. Not only does it help you plan the course of the adventure, but later, when another GM references your material (if that’s what you want to happen), they can read the overview to get a quick top-level view of what your adventure is about.

In modern Fifth Edition design, the overview usually consists of 3-4 bullet points. The first bullet point is the Call to Action and the additional bullet points are the remaining parts of the story. The Call to Action leads the characters to the first part of the story and each part of the story has a story objective which the characters must accomplish in order to further the plot.

Additionally, your overview may have 1 or more bonus objectives. Bonus objectives can either be side treks which the characters can take that eventually lead back to the main story or they can be different outcomes depending on the actions the characters take as the story progresses.

Here is an example overview using the random adventure tables found in Chapter 3 of the *DMG*.



Overview

The adventure’s story is spread over three parts and takes approximately three hours to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene.

It also contains two optional bonus objectives—each taking one additional hour to play.

- **Call to Action. Oh, Look, Ruins!** While traveling in the wilderness, the characters notice ruins. If the characters can clear the ruins, the ruins may be able to be rebuilt.
- **Part 1. Into the Ruins.** The characters enter the ruins and face the dangers within. This is Story Objective A.
- **Part 2. Secret of the Villain.** The adventurers must discover the main villain’s secret weakness before they can hope to defeat the villain. This is Story Objective B.
- **Part 3. The Final Conflict.** Armed with a weapon/knowledge of how to defeat the villain, the characters fight the villain. This is Story Objective C.
- **Bonus Objective A. Help!** The characters must rescue a captive in the ruins. This is Bonus Objective A.
- **Bonus Objective B. The Weapon of Doom.** The characters must find a specific item rumored to be in the ruins. This is Bonus Objective B.

And there we have it: an outline for our adventure. All it took was a few dice rolls on the DMG’s random adventure charts and a little organization.

From here, it’s simply a matter of fleshing out the details for your adventure.

Adventure Flowchart

While optional, you might create an adventure flowchart that helps you organize the details of your adventure. This is especially helpful if there are non-linear elements, such as the Bonus Objectives. This gives you and the person reading the adventure a basic understanding of the flow of the adventure and an outline of the different paths that the players may take in reaching the objectives. Below is an example of a flowchart created for the sample adventure above.

Next Time: Creating an Enticing Call to Action. Ω



USING THIS BOOK

GETTING THE MOST FROM BROADSWORD MONTHLY

BY DAVE HAMRICK
ART BY DYSON LOGOS

Must-have Tomes

To run this adventure, you will need access to the Fifth Edition rules and associated rulebooks.

Understanding the Format

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance, as described in the text.

In addition to the monsters included in the core rulebooks, you will also need to use the content found in the Appendices of this book.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in the core rulebooks. If a stat block appears as part of this book, the adventure's text tells you so.

Spells and equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core rulebooks. *Magic items* are also described in the core rulebooks unless the adventure's text directs you to an exclusive item that comes with this book.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this adventure:

- hp = hit points
- AC = Armor Class
- DC = Difficult Class
- XP = experience points







































- pp = platinum piece(s)
- gp = gold piece(s)
- ep = electrum piece(s)
- sp = silver piece(s)
- cp = copper piece(s)

NPC = nonplayer character
PC = player character

LG = Lawful Good
CG = Chaotic Good
NG = Neutral Good

LN = Lawful Neutral
N = Neutral
CN = Chaotic Neutral
LE = Lawful Evil
CE = Chaotic evil
NE = Neutral evil Ω

DELVING INTO DEEP DUNGEONS WITH DYSON

 Natural Wall	 Secret Trap Door	 Bars or Portcullis	 Stone Bridge
 Worked Wall	 Double Door	 Pit Trap	 Rope & Wood Bridge
 Archway	 Elevated Ledge	 Curtains or Tapestry	 Sloped Elevation
 Doorway	 Ledge with Ramp Down	 Trap or Trap Trigger	 Crypts
 Secret Door	 Ruined Wall	 Boxes and Barrels	 Sarcophagus
 Stairs	 Lake or Pool	 Bed or Cot	 Small Ledges
 Natural or Rough Stairs	 Battlements	 Table and Chairs	 Crevasse
 False Door	 Ladder	 Throne and Dais	 Cave Under Ledge
 Passage Underneath	 Statue	 Altar	 Debris, Rocks or Scree
 Trapdoor in Floor	 Pillars or Columns	See all of these icons interacting with each other at http://rpgcharacters.wordpress.com/maps	

OMERIA GAZETTEER

A CATALOGUE OF INTERESTING LOCALES

BY DAVE HAMRICK

ART BY WILLIAM MCAUSLAND

CARTOGRAPHY BY MAPS BY OWEN

The Continent of Omeria and Environs

Omeria is a land of mystery and high adventure. Herein you may find an overview of some of the most interesting locations.

Aegreya

A large island off the coast of The Summer Land, Aegreya is home to the Great Chromatics and their draconic descendants.

Aspaeth

The first major colony settled by the Pressonians, Aspaeth fell into ruin following the Transmuter Wars of the early 7th century.

Black Swamps of Barkor

These vile, lifeless mires surround Shred, the home of the danaavrakt. Contested Lands

Once part of the fallen nation of Karnione, the Contested Lands are locked in a four-way civil dispute between the nation of Dorithell and the city-states of Ingum, Nadorith, and Naqqad.

Dar

Also known as the Isle of Winds, Dar is a trading nexus for all of eastern Omeria.

Desolation of Ditimaya

This colossal desert that reaches coast to coast in Central Omeria was once a fertile savannah. The Tadju Confederacy rules the northern end of the desert.

Dorithell

The Exile Nation of Dorithell is ruled by the Dinzer lich Fazel Rastkar.

Elsath

Often classified as a “large island”, the continent of Elsath is a land of untamed beauty and danger.

Fairknot Region

The Kingdoms of Man—Desneorus, Knotside, and Murktown—call this region surrounding the Fairknot River home.

Hag Peninsula

A haven for pirates, bandits, and assassins, the Hag Peninsula’s greatest defense is its position relative to the Obsidian Plain and the Wither.

Karnione

Believed to be the oldest human nation in Omeria, possibly predating Presson’s Enclave and The Summer Land, Karnione’s once-great cities have been absorbed by The Wither.

Majiambayo Hayamalizi

Also known as The Sea of Man, these waters are heavily patrolled by Dinzer warships both on and over the water.

Majiambayo Huluntu

Meaning “The Sea of Arms” in the Dinzer tongue, this great ocean hugs Odonburg’s eastern and southern coasts.

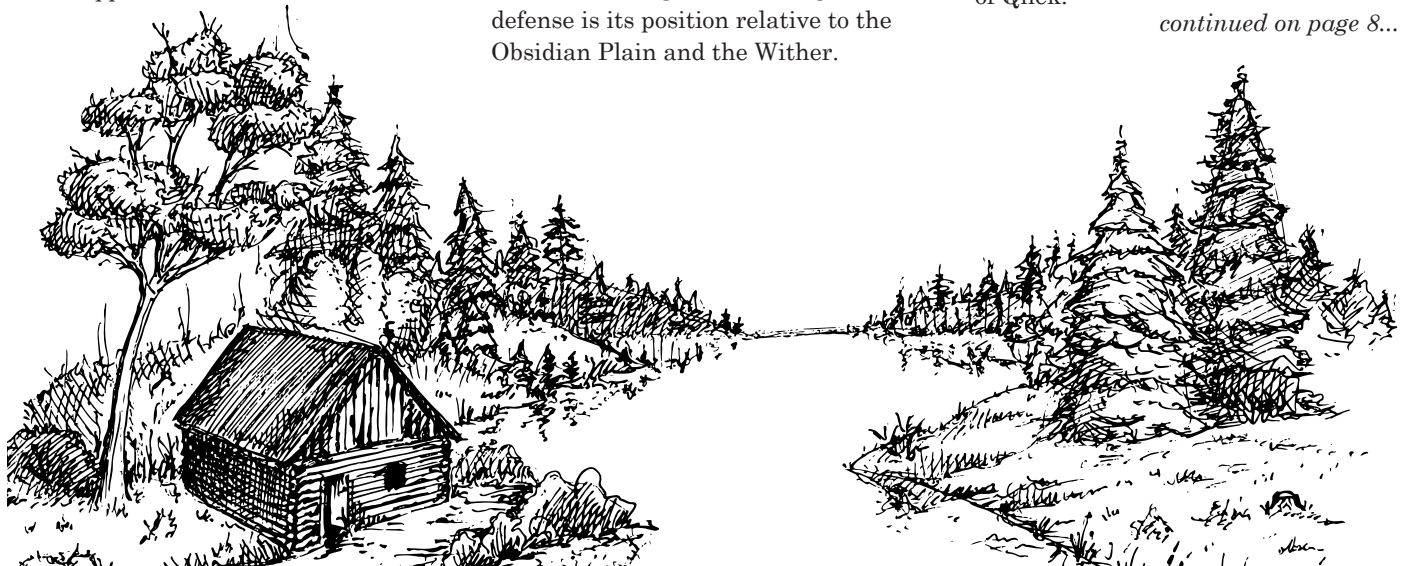
Obsidian Plain

Dividing The Wither and Desolation of Ditimaya, the Obsidian Plain is recognizable by its jagged mountains, angry volcanoes, and merciless inhabitants.

Ocean of Warna

The largest ocean to the east of Omeria is home to the Marid-ruled nation of Qhek.

continued on page 8...





Odonburg

The most magically advanced nation in all of Omeria, Odonburg takes up roughly one-third of Omeria.

Omerian Ocean

The cruel, impassable ocean to Omeria's west bears the continent's name.

Portsfil Waves

The large body of water sandwiched between the Ocean of Warna and Majiambayo Huluntu has long been a battleground between the Marids of Qhek and the elves of Ebirai.

Rasgax Highlands

Dangerous to most humans, the unsettled lands north of the Fairknot Region are home to the Rasgax tribes.

Sea of Chimes

The Dinzer tribes built their first villages along this great sea.

Smoen Brana

Once Karniothian slaves, the dogfolk canids call this rocky island nation home.

Summer Land

Along with the tribes of Odonburg, The Summer Land is the only early human nation that remains. It is ruled by the Pressonians of Presson's Enclave.

The Wither

Those who've never traveled to The Wither often mistake it as part of the Desolation of Ditimaya. Of course, The Wither is far more dangerous than Ditimaya or even the Obsidian Plain.

Tears of Karnione

The body of water which the ruined Nation of Karnione once filled with its sailing vessels is now the site of regular naval battles between the Contested Land's challengers.

Tyrant's Riddle

Tyrant's Riddle is the large body of water north of Aegreya and Xenem Dynasty.

Vong

Vong, the Black Claw, was once a powerful Pressonian colony a few miles off the Scorched Coast. Many of the horrors borne from the Transmuter Wars now hide in the blackened ruins of its fallen cities.

Weysevain Coast

Second only to Odonburg in population, the Weysevain Coast is home to the city-states of Arruquetta, Cabal, and Castlegrasp. Along with Tadju, these three realms are seen as the Four Great Powers of Central Omeria.

Xenem Dynasty

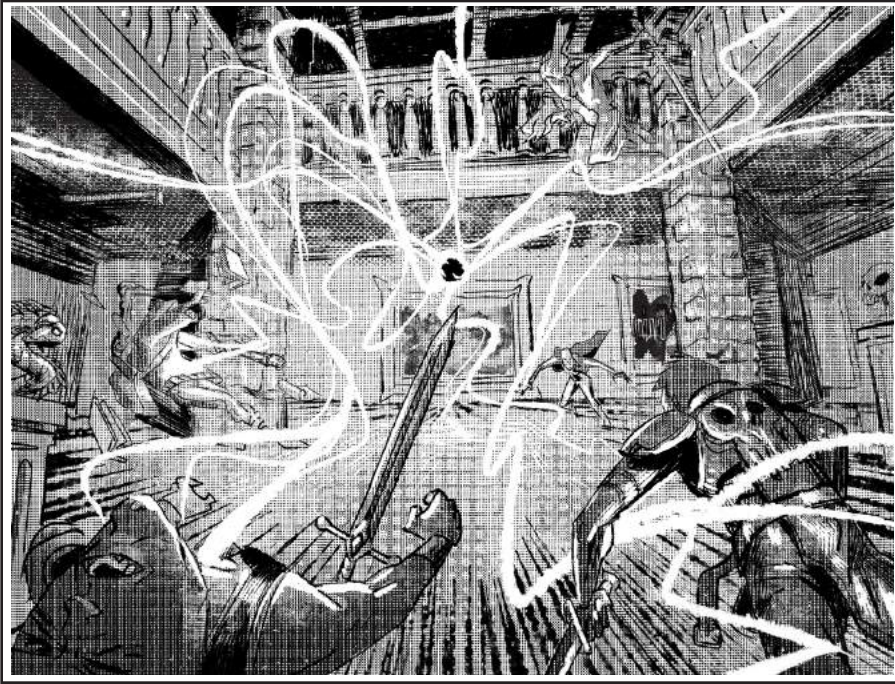
Xenem is a vampire-controlled island known for its extensive slave trade.

Yucraria

Sometimes referred to as "The Fierce Lands", Yucraria is the home of the wanderer halflings. Ω



HAND OF THE EIGHT CAMPAIGN



CHAPTER 7: THE SUMMER LAND

BY DAVE HAMRICK

5th-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Cze/Peku and Tom Gibbons

Art by Matias Lazaro, William McAusland, Joyce Maureira, Luigi Castellani, and Paper Forge

This adventure is designed for three to five 5th- to 10th-level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 5. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in the town of Greatwell, located in The Summer Land of Omeria. Greatwell is detailed in Appendix A.

Background

Five years ago, a party of adventurers destroyed **The tower of burshai** (see *The Fantastic Lie* in *BroadSword Monthly #4*), ending the effect of a centuries-long *mirage arcane* spell cast over large swaths of **Central Omeria**. With the illusion dispelled, large deposits of **Emerald Odonburgite** appeared all across the **Weysevain Coast** and **The Desolation Ditimaya**. The **Dinzers of Odonburg**, a powerful nation of spellcasters, blamed the event on a terrorist organization and promised to help “clean it up.” Most of the Central Omerian nations agreed with the Dinzers’ claim and vowed to stay out of their way. However, the city-state of **Arruquetta** opposed the Dinzer’s operation in Central Omeria, accusing the Dinzers of trying to monopolize the valuable material. Within a month, war broke out between the two nations. Soon, other nations joined in and now all of Omeria is locked in **The Emerald War**. Many Omerians believe that the Emerald War will be what leads Omeria and all of Casar to destruction, as foretold in **The Hand of the Eight Prophecy**.

As the battles rage on, the characters are invited to **Greatwell** in **The Summer Land**. There, they will meet the warlock **Vadriken** who claims to have discovered a way to stop the war, and potentially the end of the world.

The Hand of the Eight Campaign: The Story So Far

The Summer Land takes place five years after the events of *The Fantastic Lie*. If you've been running the entire Hand of the Eight campaign, naturally, the players will have some questions regarding what happened to their characters during the time jump. If this is the case, please see Appendix F.

If this is your first experience with the Hand of the Eight and Omeria, no worries. This adventure works both as a continuation of the previous story or a jumping off point for new characters.

The following is a summary events that have transpired in the Hand of the Eight adventure path.

Storm of Mega

In the first chapter of the Hand of the Eight, a gang of pirate orcs storm the coastal town of Haver during an intense hurricane. The characters learn that the storm is actually a distraction created by a vile wizard who hopes to steal an ancient, unreadable tome from his guild mates.

The Ghost Holm

Mega, leader of the orcish pirates, kidnaps an important noble's daughter and holds her ransom on his fortress island, The Ghost Holm. The characters must sneak onto the island and rescue the girl before it's too late.

The Black Bird

Following his incarceration in The Ghost Holm, the orcish pirate, Mega, escapes prison and flees north across the Desolation of Ditimaya. The characters must track the fugitive and bring him to justice before bounty hunters can stop him. In addition to the characters and bounty hunters, a mysterious figure known as the Black Bird is also chasing Mega across the desert.

The Secret of the Book

All of the mysteries and occurrences in the first three chapters are tied to a mysterious, unreadable book of which multiple dangerous parties hope to gain possession. The characters track the book to the canyon-town of Orbea.

A murder mystery sets the tone for the adventure which reaches its climax in a popular casino.

Wallingmiotta

Fleeing a dangerous construct, the characters crashland in the wild forests of the Wallingmiotta. They are still being hunted by the construct who hopes to claim the book for itself. The characters must explore the forest and locate the elusive illusionist Aruxius, the only one who is able to decipher the contents of the unreadable tome.

The Fantastic Lie

Aruxius points the characters to the Basilisk's Spine Mountains' tallest peak, Trenrock. Atop the mountain the characters discover the Tower of a Burshai, a magical structure that has stood on the mountain for over a millennium. The tower casts a powerful illusion over the northern portion of Central Omeria, masking a valuable resource from the land's inhabitants.

Overview

The adventure's story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **four hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene. It also contains **two optional bonus objectives**—each taking **one additional half-hour** to play.

- **Call to Action: Vadriken the Three-Timer.** The characters arrive in the town of Greatwell and meet the warlock Vadriken at a farm north of town. Vadriken doesn't know why the characters have been asked to meet him but has been given an address to the Pressonian History Museum.
- **Part 1: Knight at the Museum.** The characters scope out the

Greatwell Museum and discover clues that suggest the Museum may have a secret basement. This is **Story Objective A**.

- **Part 2: Museum Heist.** The characters must develop a plan to break into the Museum in order find what is in its secret basement. There, they discover a kidnapped boy. This is **Story Objective B**.
- **Part 3: The Boy Awakens.** After the characters bring the boy to safety, they are accosted by a group of powerful creatures. Before the characters are destroyed, the boy awakens and stops the creatures. This is **Story Objective C**.
- **Bonus Objective A: The Aegreyan.** The characters start to unravel a dark plot involving the Aegreyan

owner of the museum.

- **Bonus Objective B: The Tip of the Spear.** A group of Arruquettan adventurers notes the presence of the adventurers in Greatwell and confronts them.

Adventure Hooks

The following plot hooks provide some possible ways for the characters to get involved in this adventure.

Reunited and It Feels So Bad. The characters are the same adventurers who destroyed the Tower of Burshai five years ago. Mysteriously, they've been asked to come to The Summer Land and meet the warlock Vadriken.

Faction Agent (Secrets of the Righteous). The Dinzers of Odon-

burg have reason to suspect that there is something of great power being held in Greatwell. The characters are encouraged to meet with the borrower Vadriken.

Faction Agent (Black Rose Clan). Something strange is happening in Greatwell. The warlock Vadriken has appeared and rumor has it that he's supposed to meet a group there but doesn't know what they look like. The Black Rose Clan asks the characters to assume the role of the mystery characters.

Pressonian Characters. Instead of being randomly invited to Greatwell, the characters are already in Greatwell. They are approached by Vadriken who seeks their assistance.

How to Adapt the Adventure

This section details how to separate this adventure from the Hand of the Eight storyline as well as tips for scaling it up and down for parties of different strengths.

Stand Alone Adventure

If you wish to run this adventure separate from the Hand of the Eight storyline, make the following adjustments:

- Remove the "Reunited and It Feels So Bad" adventure hook and use one of the others.
- Avoid mentioning the details of the war happening in Omeria as it may cause confusion to the overall plot.
- Vadriken's invitation doesn't claim to stop the end of the world, but instead, explains that there is an artifact of great power within the Pressonian History Museum he needs help learning more about.
- Vadriken never received a letter of his own. He is acting on his own volition and he wants the characters to help him because his reputation in Greatwell isn't so great.
- There is no boy in the museum. Instead, the goal is to learn as much as possible about the *throne of greed* in **area B28**. The throne

The Letter

The characters each receive a letter asking them to come to Greatwell. There, they are told to speak with the warlock Vadriken. Supposedly, Vadriken has discovered a way to stop the Emerald War and potentially the end of the world.

Any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (History) will have heard of Vadriken. Vadriken is a warlock who borrows power from three patrons. Considered chaotic and extremely dangerous by Odonburg (and most other Omerian nations), Vadriken is rarely seen in Omeria.

Roleplaying Vadriken. Vadriken is an unusual fellow, to say the least. While extremely intelligent and devilishly charming, he lacks Wisdom and often misses even the simplest things.

exudes evil, making it obvious that it's an object of great power. Qiu Xiang uses the cyclopes skulls to diminish its power.

- Exclude Part 3 from the adventure. Instead, the characters return to Vadriken and reveal what they know about the *throne of greed*. Vadriken pays each character 100 gp for the information..

Scaling the Adventure

This adventure is optimized for a party of four 5th-level characters. However, it can be adjusted up or down depending on you or the players' needs.

Increasing the Challenge. If the party is more experienced, consider making the following changes:

- Incorporate the Bonus Objective A and have Qiu Xiang lock down the museum right before the heist begins.
- Have the Tip of the Spear turn on the characters while they are in the museum.
- Give Hell the **regeneration** trait. Hell regains 10 hit points at the

start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point. Change its CR to 11.

Decreasing the Challenge. Similarly, if the party is inexperienced, add these changes:

- Remove the *guards and wards* spell element from the adventure. Instead, the doors are all securely locked (DC 20 to break or pick).
- Hell has half its normal hit points. Its CR is 8.

Vadriken the Three-Timer

The characters arrive in the town of Greatwell. How they arrived in Greatwell is ultimately up to the characters with your approval. Appendix A covers Greatwell in greater detail.

Greatwell

Greatwell stands at the edge of The Wharf Of Berthiergus on the Wound. Boasting a population just over 2,000, Greatwell is one of the few major Pressonian towns in the Summer Land to survive the War of the Burning Plains in 965 AT. Like most Pressonian settlements in the Summer Land, Greatwell is managed by a Mydon Prince—Prince Orsilochus "Lochi" Castellanos Tomydon. However, Prince Castellanos is rarely seen in Greatwell, preferring to live a lavish lifestyle in Presson's Enclave proper. Enes Castellanos Tomydon, the town's steward, presides in Prince Castellanos' absence. Enes is Lochi's cousin.

Area Information

Greatwell has the following features. For additional information, refer to Appendix A.

Dimensions & Terrain. Likely, the characters will travel through the crowded Docks and Market wards of Greatwell. Walking east to west through the town can be somewhat of a tiring affair as Greatwell is built onto a great slope that dips towards the sea. The streets are crowded and

everyone is always in a hurry to be somewhere. Greatwellians are known for their rudeness.

Light. The characters arrive in Greatwell at the start of the summer, shortly after the Festival of Ilwyn, the Summer General.

Sound. Rapid haggling, animals bleating in the market, bells from a ship in the harbor, screaming babies—Greatwell is a noisy town, especially in the southern end.

Creature Information

It doesn't take long for the characters to find Vadriken. The townsfolk mention that he's renting a farmhouse roughly ten miles north of town. When the characters find Vadriken, he's relaxing outside of the farmhouse sipping tea and speaking with an old boot. Vadriken's statistics can be found in Appendix A

What Does He Want? Vadriken is not only one of the most powerful spellcasters in all of Omeria, but he's also one of the smartest living humanoids in all Casar. Rarely does a mystery pique his interest. However, the mysterious letter Vadriken received was enough to bring him to Greatwell. Although he won't outwardly share it, he is very excited to pursue this adventure.

What Does Vadriken Know? Already, Vadriken has scoped out the Museum, but he encourages the characters to do the same. So far, he hasn't discovered anything in the museum that seems out of the ordinary. Nor has he figured out what the number 93 means. Finally, he isn't sure where the letters came from, either.

Development. Vadriken shares what he knows with the characters. He's already been to the museum and so far believes it's a dead end. However, he admittedly has a short attention span and is terrible at noticing things. Therefore, he encourages the characters to travel back to Greatwell and visit the museum to see if they can learn why it was mentioned in

the letter and what the number 93 could mean.

Meanwhile, Vadriken will remain at the farm and try to learn who sent the mysterious letters that the characters were given.

Call to Action: Go to the Pressonian History Museum in Greatwell

The characters must travel back to Greatwell and visit the **Pressonian History Museum**.

Part 1: Knight at the Museum

The characters arrive at the Pressonian History Museum in Greatwell. The museum has three floors. A map of the ground floor is on page 14, a map of the upper floor is on page 20, and a map of the secret basement is on page 23.

The Pressonian History Museum in Greatwell

It's likely that the characters arrive at the Pressonian History Museum in Greatwell during normal operating hours. There, they can explore the areas of the museum open to them without too much trouble.

Story Objective A

Scoping out the museum is **Story Objective A**.

Area Information

Unless otherwise noted, the museum has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The entire museum is approximately 160-foot wide by 100-foot long and two stories high. Its walls are made of brick and limestone with windows placed at regular intervals all around. A wrought-iron fence wraps the building, housing a well-manicured garden that clutches the sides of the building. During hours of operation, the front doors are wide open. At night, all of the doors are locked and magically warded.

Vadriken's Letter

Vadriken, like the characters, was invited to Greatwell by way of a mysterious letter. Vadriken's letter had four details:

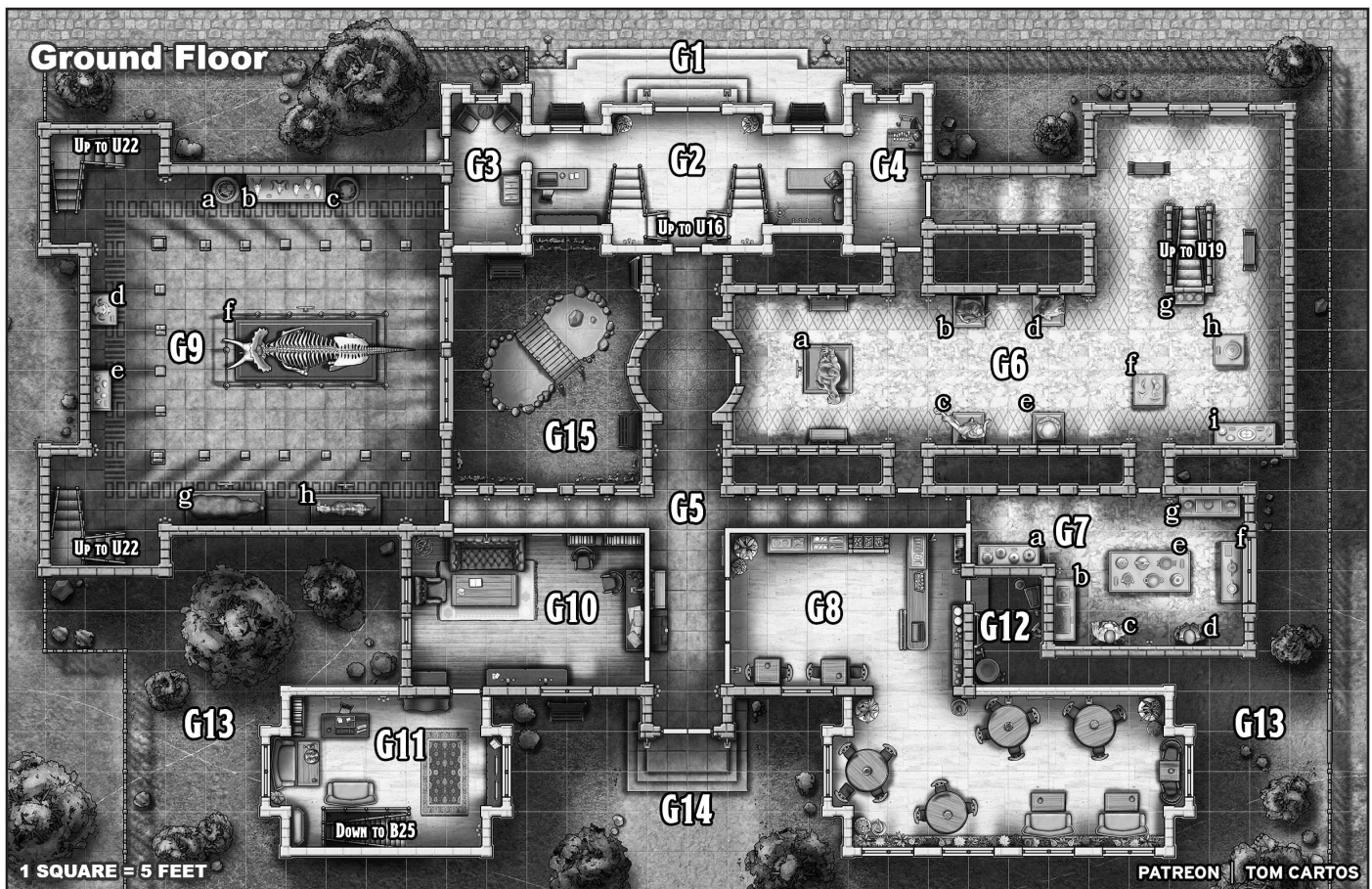
- Go to Greatwell.
- Wait for the characters to arrive (the characters' names and brief descriptions of each are given).
- The Pressonian History Museum's address in Greatwell.
- The number 93.

Alarm. There is an *alarm* spell cast on every exterior door and window. The only exception is the rear and front doors which are open during hours of operation and the door that leads from **area G8** out to **area G12**. The door to **area G10** is also *armed*, as are all the doors in the basement. Anyone who speaks the passphrase "dakai" can pass through the *armed* portal without triggering it. When triggered, the *alarm* telepathically notifies Qiu Xiang. During the night, it also alerts the nightmare orb in **area G6**.

Guards and Wards Spell. At night, the museum is protected by a *guards and wards* spell (DC 15) that protects **areas G2, G3, G4, G5, U16, U20, and U23**. The spell lasts until Qiu Xiang dismisses it. If someone speaks the passphrase, "dakai" they are immune to the effects of the

Pressonian Law

It should be evident that causing trouble during the day could be quite dangerous as it's well-guarded. Furthermore, Greatwell is a town of strict laws. Causing a ruckus will undoubtedly lead to prison time or worse. Not only are guards around to ensure that trouble doesn't happen at the museum, but the museum's wealthy patrons, House Barbakis, won't take kindly to outsiders hurting their investment.



guards and wards spell. While active, the *guards and wards* spell creates the following effects in the aforementioned areas:

- Fog fills all of the warded areas, making them heavily obscured.
- All of the doors in the warded areas are magically locked as if sealed by an *arcane lock* spell.
- The door leading from **area G5** to **area G10** is concealed by an illusion that makes it appear as a plain section of wall.

Hours. The museum is open to the public six days a week, closed only on Surek. The museum is open from two hours past dawn until two hours before sunset.

Lighting. Most of the museum's interior is lit by *continual flame* spells cast in lamps hung on sconces on the wall. During the day, light floods in through the dozens of windows throughout the complex.

Nightmare Orb. A **nightmare orb** (see Appendix D) rests in a large container in **area G6**. Once the orb detects the presence of intruders, it hunts the intruders down until they are destroyed or leave the museum. It then returns to its container.

Visitors. During the day, there are $1d6 + 2$ visitors present in the museum throughout most of the day. Most of the visitors are **commoners** or **nobles**.

Ground Floor

The easiest way to enter the museum is through its ground floor.

Creature Information

During daytime hours of operation, there are three **guards** working in the museum. One guard stands at the front door while a second makes regular rounds. The third works in the front office **Area G4**. They are not

part of the regular town guard but instead on the museum's payroll.

What Do They Want? The guards work the museum to collect a paycheck. As such, they have no loyalties to the museum. Their knowledge is easily bought with a few gold coins.

What Do They Know? The guards don't carry keys to any of the doors in the museum. Only the museum's caretaker, Qiu Xiang, holds the keys. The guards are allowed anywhere in the museum except for **areas G10** and **G11**. The door to **G10** is kept locked at all times. At night, there are no guards present; the museum is locked and left as it is. However, the guards believe that Qiu uses abjuration magic to ward the place from intrusion. Finally, the guards believe that there is a secret basement in the museum. However, no one has ever seen it, nor do they know where the staircase would be located.

G1. Public Entrance

The museum is an impressive building, taking up two blocks of Greatwell's Noble's Ward. A short flight of steps leads up to the main (public) entrance.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The public entrance is at the north end of the building. The street on which the museum stands is a busy street in the Noble Ward of Greatwell.

Front Door. The front door that leads to **area G2** is a set of large, oak double-doors on iron hinges set into a stone frame. At night, the doors are locked. It requires a DC 15 (25 with *guards and wards*) Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to pick the lock. Breaking the door open requires a DC 18 Strength check. The door has AC 15, 18 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. At night, this door is protected by the *guards and wards* spell.

Lighting. The museum stands alone on the street. During the day, it is well illuminated and at night, the lights cast by street lamps keep it visible from all angles.

G2. Entry Hall

The entry hall is a large, open area where visitors can get information and start tours of the museum.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ceilings here are 40-foot high.

Coat Check. The museum is a popular location to host events for Greatwell nobles and other important Pressonians. During these events, coats are checked to the left of the grand staircase. There is a hidden bottle of Castlegraspiian brandy in the cabinet against the eastern wall.

Doors. At night, all of the doors are locked and warded as described on page 8. During hours of operation, however, the doors are open.

Grand Staircase. A large pair of staircases rise to the second floor.

Information Desk. Joeliyn (LN female Pressonian human **noble**) sits at the information desk during hours of operation. There is a light crossbow kept in a hidden compartment in her desk which she can use if necessary. On Murns, Qiu Xiang meets visitors and leads tours through the museum.

Lighting. A large globe hangs over the entryway. Within the globe are four *continual flame* spells that wash the room in warm, white light.

Mezzanines. Two mezzanines flank the western and eastern ends of the room. They are both 20 feet above the floor.

G3. Pipe Room

Just off the entrance, visitors to the museum can rest and smoke a pipe in this small room.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The pipe room has 20-foot high ceilings. During the day, there is a 30% chance that one or more visitors are in the room enjoying a pipe.

Chairs. Visitors can sit in two plush chairs against the northern wall.

Doors. At night, all of the doors are locked and warded as described above. During hours of operation, the door leading to **area G9** is open, however, the door to the courtyard is kept locked and enchanted with the *alarm* spell.

Painting. The south wall is covered by a painting of Libby of the North banishing Donnaman painted by Lord Ibsis. The painting is over 100 years old and worth 250 gp.

Scroll Case. The case holds four scrolls important to the history of Presson's Enclave. Each was penned by Libby of the North, the first Pressonian Abjurer. The scrolls are *protection from evil and good*, *warding bond*, *death ward*, and *banishment*. Each scroll is worth 100 gp per spell level or twice as much if sold to a col-

lector who understands the historical significance of the scrolls.

G4. Business Office

Adventurers and treasure-seekers who have objects of historical significance to offer the museum meet with Qiu Xiang here.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The business office has 20-foot high ceilings. Usually, this room is empty unless Qiu is conducting business here. During hours of operation, visitors can pass through here and admire any historical objects Qiu is currently observing.

Desk. The business desk is where Qiu sits to discuss business. Qiu is currently valuing a set of arrowheads donated by the Tip of the Spear from Arruquetta that they discovered in the ruins of Lala Kunat. Altogether, the arrowheads are worth 100 gp if sold to a collector who understands what they are. A sign reading "PLEASE DON'T TOUCH" was left on the desk next to the arrowheads.

Doors. At night, all of the doors are locked and warded as described above. During hours of operation, the doors leading to **area G6** are open.

Painting. Tostrasz the Enormous battles Pressonian Knights during the Battle of Seven Fields in a huge painting hung on the western wall. The painting was painted by Lord Ibsis and is valued at 250 gp.

G5. Main Hall

Almost the entire museum is connected to the main hall that runs from the front and rear entrances then to both the eastern and western wings of the museum.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The halls have 20-foot high ceilings. The walls are made of unpainted clay brick and the floors are made of gray marble.

Doors. At night, all of the doors are locked and warded as described on page 8. During hours of operation, all of the doors are open with the exception of the door leading into **area G10**.

Bench. There is a comfortable wooden bench in the south section of the hall. A plaque on the bench reads “Donated by Keti Barbakis.”

Libby’s Seal. The floor of the rotunda has been engraved with a recreation of Libby’s Seal, the same one she used to trap and interrogate Donnaman.

Lighting. The eastern and western hallways are well lit both by *continual flame* sconces and plenty of natural light pouring in through the myriad of windows.

Murals. The south walls of the eastern and western halls are covered in painted murals depicting the history of The Summer Land from the start of the Age of Triumphs through the War of the Burning Plains.

Painting. Next to the door to **area G8** is a Lord Ipsin painting of Libby of the North praying to the Four Generals. The painting is valued at 250 gp.

G6. Age of Triumphs Wing

This is the main gallery of the museum containing many important artifacts from Presson’s Enclave and The Summer Land during the Age of Triumphs.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This wing has 20-foot high ceilings. Most of the floor is made of marble with mosaic designs along the walls. The walls are unpainted red clay brick.

Benches. There are various benches placed throughout the room. Each has a plaque denoting the bench was donated by one of Greatwell’s nobles.

Doors. At night, all of the doors are locked and warded as previously described. During hours of operation, all of the doors are open.

Playing at Higher Levels?

To add a challenge to this adventure, grant Hell the following action:

New Action: Animate Object.

Hell targets one inanimate object within 30 feet of it. The object comes to life as the *animate objects* spell, but Hell does not need to concentrate. Hell can have up to ten nonmagical objects animated using this action at a time. Medium targets count as two objects, Large targets count as four objects, and Huge targets count as eight objects. If Hell is destroyed, all animated objects revert to their normal mundane states.

Exhibits. There are nine exhibits in this wing. Exhibits f, g, and i are kept in protective glass cases. Opening a case requires a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves’ tools. Otherwise, the case can be broken open: a case has AC 13, 2 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

- **A. Libby of the North.** The largest statue in the wing, the marble statue of Libby of the North simultaneously demonstrates her ferocity and perseverance.
- **B. Silas of Greatwell.** Greatwell’s greatest hero was the bard, Silas. This statue is made of cast stone.
- **C. Godefroi Barnemouth.** One of the most cherished Pressonians, Godefroid Barnemouth is shown in his twilight years wearing a robe (as he preferred). This statue is made of cast stone.
- **D. Camor of Jost.** Another of the great heroes of the Age of Triumphs, Camor of Jost defeated the demon god Vapul in melee combat. This statue is made of cast stone.
- **E. Xaltix.** Xaltix was a gnomish mage who accompanied Camor and Barnemouth across the Basilisk’s Spine and into the Wallingmiotta. Xaltix sacrificed himself to save his companions. He is commemorated

with a cast stone statue.

- **F. Anorian Trinkets.** This display case is filled with four trinkets recovered from Knotside. They were owned by Anorian Priests of Vapul. None of the items are magical but are worth 250 gp to a collector.
- **G. Ashes of the Monks.** The ashes of three White Pillar monks are kept in urns on this table. The monks were Kef, Nuun, and Mor, three contemporaries of Otar. The urns are worth 300 gp each.
- **H. Hell’s Pot.** This large ceramic pot was recovered at the site of the Battle of Aspaeth. It is inscribed in ancient Asperthi. A *comprehend languages* spell or a character who can read any text will read the word “Hell.” Within the pot rests the **nightmare orb** Hell. The orb is dark brown and smashed on one side. A character who sees Hell and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check will know the orb for what it is.
- **I. Pressonian Dishes.** After the fall of Presson’s Enclave during the War of the Burning Plains, historians entered the scorched city to recover important items from the Otari temple. Among those items were this tea set and flatware collection. Altogether, the set is worth 500 gp to a collector.

Lighting. Globes of *continual flame* hang from the ceiling. In addition, the windows bring in plenty of light during the day.

Paintings. There are eighteen paintings in the room. Each painting depicts different periods of Pressonian history. A single painting is worth 1d4 x 100 gp when sold to a collector.

Staircase. A staircase leads up to **area U19**.

G7. Vaskil Valley Room

The items in this room were collected from the Vaskil Valley and surrounding areas. Many of the items were donated by Anorian ambassadors from Vaskil.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This wing has 20-foot high ceilings. Most of the floor is made of marble with mosaic designs along the walls. The walls are unpainted red clay brick.

Doors. At night, all of the doors are locked and warded as described previously. During hours of operation, all of the doors are open.

Lighting. This room is relatively dark compared to the rest of the museum. Only the large windows at the eastern end of the room bring in light. The exhibits themselves have permanent yellowish *light* spells cast over them to illuminate the contents.

Exhibits. There are seven exhibits in this wing. Exhibits a, b, f, and g are kept in protective glass cases. Opening a case requires a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools. Otherwise, the case can be broken open: a case has AC 13, 2 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

- *A. Dragon Urns.* Four urns containing the ashes of four Great Chromatics killed by the Anorians and brasugas of Vaskil. Each urn is worth 250 gp.
- *B. Anorian Jewelry.* The jewelry locked in this case were owned by Anorian families pre-Age of Triumphs. The entire collection is worth 500 gp.
- *C. Vapul Priest Vestments.* This collection of blood-stained vestments were worn by priests of Vapul. The set is worth 50 gp to a collector.
- *D. Vaskilish Dragon Armor.* This suit of studded leather armor was worn by an Anorian soldier during the War of the Burning Plains. Other than its historical significance, it is worth no more than an ordinary suit of studded leather armor.
- *E. Anorian Pottery.* This collection of pottery was recovered from Imfe Mythse Anore and kept in a museum in Knotside until it was donated following the War of the Burning

Plains. The entire collection is worth 100 gp.

- *F. Anorian Pottery.* The pots in this case were donated by the current Lord of Vaskil Zszzyr Desplyl and his family.
- *G. Royal Crowns of Imfe Mythse Anore.* The crowns in the case are replicas of the crowns worn by the last royal family of Imfe Mythse Anore, the Despdars. They are worth 50 gp altogether.



G8. Cafe

The museum hosts a small bakery and cafe.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Doors. The door leading out of the cafe to the small alley between the wings (G12) has had its *alarm* spell dispelled. However, it is kept locked during all hours. The door requires a DC 15 Strength check to break down or Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick the lock. It has AC 16, 8 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Lighting. This room is well-lit most of the day thanks to all the large windows.

Service. The cafe offers comfortable meals, coffee, and even wine. During hours of operation, the baker and one server manage the entire bar (**commoners**). Greatwellian nobles enjoy meeting here.

Treasure. There is a small lockbox under the bar. The baker has the key. Without the key, a creature proficient with thieves' tools can pick this lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity

check. The lock has AC 17, 3 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Inside the box is 30 gp.

G9. Natural History Wing

Within this wing, one can learn about the creatures who have lived in The Summer Land since before the elves.

Dimensions & Terrain. This is the largest room in the entire museum. The ceilings here are 30-foot high terminating in a large skylight. A gallery 20-foot up wraps the entirety of the room, accessible by two staircases at the southwest and northwest corners of the room.

Lighting. This room is well-lit by the skylight overhead. At night or when it is particularly overcast, the sconces on the walls light the room.

Exhibits. There are eight exhibits in this wing. Exhibits b, d, and e are kept in protective glass cases. Opening a case requires a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools. Otherwise, the case can be broken open: a case has AC 13, 2 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

- *A. The Discs.* A model of the Omerian Cosmology stands here. The model is made of solid brass and weighs close to 500 lbs.
- *B. Animal Skulls.* This case contains the skulls of an assortment of Pressonian fauna.
- *C. Globe of Casar.* A globe of Casar stands on a large, oaken base. The globe weighs close to 300 lbs.
- *D. Kruuntar Skull.* A kruunatar's skull is stored in a case lined with lead. It still reeks of sulfur and radiates heat. Kruuntars are now (thankfully) extinct.
- *E. Squaga Skulls.* A collection of Pressonian squaga skulls are kept in this case. Squagas are now extinct.
- *F. Pressonian Triceratops Skeleton.* The skeleton of an ancient Pressonian triceratops is the centerpiece of this room. In life, the creature

was 20% larger than most Dinzer triceratopses. Pressonian triceratopses are now extinct.

- *G. Pressonian Grizzly*. Another extinct creature, a Pressonian grizzly has been stuffed and placed against the southern wall. Naturally, its eyes have been replaced with glass replicas for safety reasons.
- *H. Pressonian Bloodcat*. A stuffed Pressonian bloodcat is on display against the southern wall. Pressonian bloodcats have been extinct since the War of the Burning Plains.

G10. Qiu Xiang's Sitting Room

This is the museum curator Qiu Xiang's sitting room.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Magical Wards. Qiu Xiang's office is a magical fortress unto itself. Within this office, **area G11**, and the secret basement, divination spells of 6th level or lower do not function (including *detect magic*). In addition, teleportation spells do not work, nor does the *passwall* spell or any spell that would alter or affect the walls. The office, however, is not protected against ethereal creatures and effects; thus, Hell can enter the areas with no issues if it needs to. A *dispel magic* spell cast against a 6th-level spell temporarily removes the enchantments for 1 minute.

Books. The two bookcases on the northern wall hold roughly 250 books, mostly hand-written, leatherbound journals. The journals mostly cover Omerian history, specifically Qiu Xiang's findings, and date back as far as 850 AT.

Desk. The desk against the eastern wall contains maps and blueprints. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check will recognize one map as a map of The Skeleton Key, an island in the Ocean of Warna. There is a mark on the map at the southern end of the island labeled "Grihoo." The blueprint appears

to be the plans of a temple of some sort. The following numbers have been sketched on the blueprint: 72, 78, 85, 90, 91 (with a question mark), 92 (crossed out), and 93 (circled).

Doors. The door leading from **area G5** to **G10** is *arcanely locked* (DC 25 to break or pick) and *alarmed*. Like the other doors, only the phrase "dakai" will open the door. However, it's magically trapped with a *glyph of warding* (DC 15). When triggered, any creature within 20-feet of the door must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 22 (5d8) lightning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. A second key phrase, "woshokai" temporarily removes the enchantments and traps.

The door leading to **area G11** is actually a **mimic**. The mimic only answers to Qiu Xiang. It waits for trespassers to touch it, then attacks when they adhere to its resin.

False Windows. The windows into this room and **area G11** are actually powerful illusions. First, the windows are not actual windows, but stone walls. A creature who looks through the window from inside this room can see the outside of the office as normal. However, a creature who looks in through the window from the outside sees the illusion of a dusty, old storage room.

Journal. The coffee table in the seating area has an open journal upon it. The journal is half-written. A character with an Intelligence score of 10 or higher can spend 1 hour reading through the journal to learn from it. At the end of the hour, the character discerns that it is a journal recalling the apprehension of a young boy on an island called The Skeleton Key. The author (likely Qiu Xiang) frequently writes that the boy must be hidden from "Naeyer's servants." The last line reads: "The boy is possibly the most powerful creature on all of Casar. He cannot be allowed to escape."



G11. Qiu Xiang's Office

Refer to **area 10** for notes on the Doors, False Windows, and Magical Wards active in this room.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Bookcase. The bookcase against the southern wall contains books of arcane study. Stacked oddly is a collection of books with an attached note: "From the Diamond estate sale, thought you might enjoy - R." The books are *The Blood Jungle* Elsath, *Elsathian Flora and Fauna*, *The Legend of Hearth*, *Black Tezcatlipoca*, and *The Obsidian Plain*.

There is also a large wooden box kept on the shelf. The box is locked with an intricate lock, requiring a successful DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. The box itself is an uncommon magic item that has AC 20, 40 hp, and is immune to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical attacks. Within the box is a shriveled severed head of what-looks-like was once an old woman. The woman's eyes and mouth have been sewn shut. Three circles in a triangle have been carved onto her brow. Any creature that opens the box or touches the contents of the box becomes cursed. Until a *remove curse* spell or similar magic is cast upon the creature, all

ghasts, ghouls, and similar undead have advantage on Perception checks and attack rolls made against that creature.

Desk. An invoice for The Tip of the Spear sits on top of Qiu Xiang's desk. There is a charge on the invoice for eight items labeled "YC skulls", each costing 1,000 gp. The invoice is signed both by Qiu Xiang and Euklides Olabbari and marked paid.

Painting. A massive painting of Qiu Xiang, an orange-scaled dragonborn, hangs over his desk.

Stairs. The stairs in this room lead to the museum's hidden basement, **area B1**.

G12. Back Alley

A dark alley is tucked between the cafe and the eastern wing of the museum. See **area G8** for details on the door leading to G8.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The alley is easy to miss by anyone walking on the grounds. Thanks to the proximity of the walls, this is also one of the easiest areas to scale the walls to gain access to the roof.

Light. Even in the daytime, the alley is blanketed in shadows thanks to the high walls at either side.

G13. Grounds

Well-manicured grounds wrap the entirety of the museum. Enclosing these grounds are 10-foot high wrought-iron fences. Climbing a fence requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

G14. Rear Exit

Although the rear exit is available for museum-goers to use, primarily, this exit is used for deliveries to the cafe.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The rear of the museum is quieter than the front thanks to the gardens.

Rear Door. The rear doors that lead

to **area G5** are a set of large, oak double-doors on iron hinges set into a stone frame. At night, the doors are locked. It requires a DC 15 (25 with *guards and wards*) Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to pick the lock. Breaking the door open requires a DC 18 Strength check. The door has AC 15, 18 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. At night, this door is protected by the *guards and wards* spell.

G15. Courtyard

A peaceful courtyard with a goldfish pond hides between the main hall and the western wing of the museum.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. A peaceful goldfish pond fills the center of this small courtyard.

Doors. The door leading into **G5** is protected by the museum's *guards and wards* spell.

Ladder. A ladder against the eastern wall leads up to the roof.

Upper Floor

With the exception of **area U21**, the upstairs of the Museum has a little less security in place than downstairs.

U16. Upstairs Hall

Similar to the hall directly below it, the upstairs hall connects all sections of the upper museum.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The halls have 20-foot high ceilings. The walls are made of unpainted clay brick and the floors are made of gray marble.

Doors. At night, all of the doors are locked and warded as described above. During hours of operation, all of the doors are open.

U17. Tholona's Walkway

The exterior walkway connecting the upstairs hall to the upstairs eastern wing hosts a statue of the Goddess

Tholona the Dawn holding a wreath of roses. The roses are real, replaced periodically by the museum's staff.

U18. Courtyard Balcony

A balcony overlooks the courtyard (**area G15**) from 20-feet above.

U19. Omerian History Wing

This section of the museum holds artifacts collected from all over the long continent.

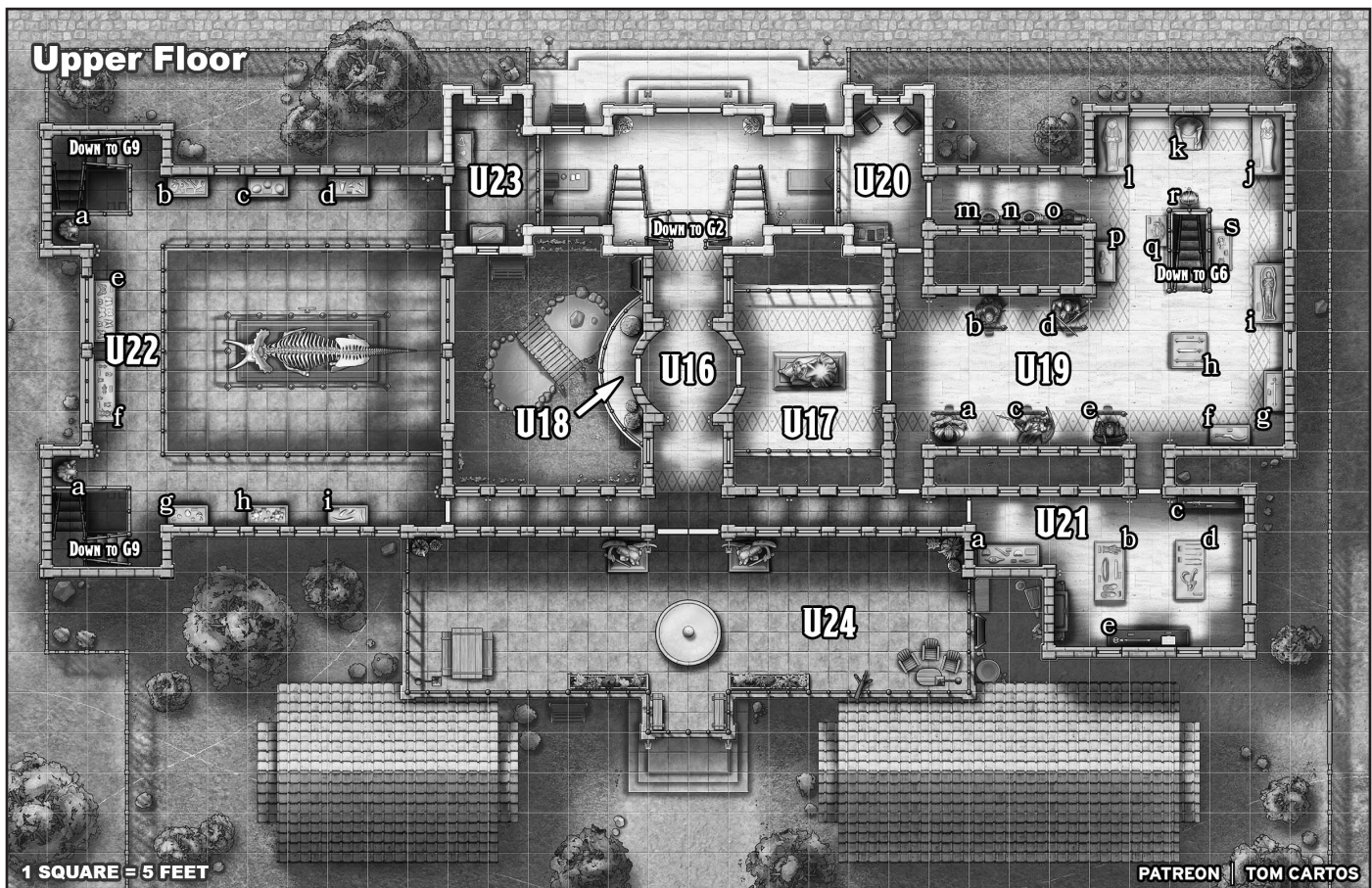
Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This wing has 20-foot high ceilings. Most of the floor is made of marble with mosaic designs along the walls. The walls are unpainted red clay brick.

Doors. At night, all of the doors are locked and warded as described on page 8. During hours of operation, all of the doors are open.

Exhibits. There are 19 exhibits in this wing. Exhibits f, g, h, p, q, and s are kept in protective glass cases. Opening a case requires a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools. Otherwise, the case can be broken open: a case has AC 13, 2 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

- **A. Dinzer Remote Traveler.** This suit of armor is a model 721 remote traveler suit. It is no longer operational and it cannot be worn.
- **B. Aegreyan Battle Armor.** This suit of armor only fits dragonborn.
- **C. Knotsider Legion Armor.** This is a suit of Knotsider legion armor worn during the Attack of Regrets of 1025 AT.
- **D. Arruquettan Battle Armor.** Donated by the Queen Emgavel herself, this armor is worn by her secret police force, the Cords.
- **E. Garrish Battle Armor.** This suit of armor was worn by a hobgoblin ally during the War of the Burning Plains.
- **F. Dorithellian Kopesh.** This curved blade was given by Qiu Xiang by Tradjuni merchants. It functions



- the same as a scimitar.
- *G. Kingslayer.* Kingslayer is a +1 longsword. Legend has it that the soul of the original owner, the Knight of Clubs, rests inside.
- *H. Castlegraspian Arms.* These weapons are used by the Castlegraspian militia as well as the Stone Arms.
- *I. Okset the Dreamer.* Okset the Dreamer was one of Tarodun's disciples. His body is on display in the museum, still in its ceremonial wrappings. Okset's soul is long-gone, but urban legend states if you listen closely you can hear him whispering.
- *J. Amset the Gorgeous.* Amset the Gorgeous was Dorith the Grotesue's successor as ruler of Dorithel. This is only the sarcophagus; Amset's body was never actually recovered.
- *K. Statue of Soheila Esfahani.*

- Soheila Esfahani was a Pressonian woman who taught the ways of the Four Generals in Naqqad. She was slain in battle by a Dorithellian arrow. The statue is carved of cast stone.
- *L. Tarodun the Preserver.* Tarodun was a high priest of Meri-em-a, the Naqqadi God of Rain. His tomb was robbed and the body was removed by members of The Tip of the Spear, then sold to the Lonni of Naqqad.
- *M. Fierce Lands Breastplate.* A suit of breastplate armor built to fit wanderer halflings was donated by an Aegreyan Cartographer's guild.
- *N. Murktown Breastplate.* This suit of breastplate is worn by Murktown's militia.
- *O. Stone Arm Regalia.* The stone arms of Castlegrasp wear similar armor.

- *P. Tadjuni Ceremonial Helm.* The Tadjuni Ceremonial Helm was donated to the museum by Prince Loqari of Ugash.
 - *Q. The Ark of Baswadi.* The Ark of Baswadi from Nadorith once held the remains of the Three Karnione Brothers. The remains were stolen by necromancer raiders from Xenem during the Sixth War. The Ark is worth 1,000 gp to a collector.
 - *R. Headdress of Athothes II.* Athothes II, Empress of Karnione's Crystal Dynasty, wore this headdress. It is valued at 1,000 gp.
 - *S. Dorithellian Relics.* Various Dorithellian relics decorate this display. The relics were used as arcane focuses by Dorithellian mages. All three are worth 200 gp each.
- Lighting.** Globes of continual flame hang from the ceiling. In addition, the windows bring in plenty of natural light during the day.

Stairs. The stairs at the center of the room lead down to **area G6**.

U20. Room of Otar

This sitting room overlooks the museum's entry.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This balcony overlooks **area G2**. When the *guards and wards* spell is in place, this room is affected by it.

Books. A table at the south end of the room has three books on top of it. The books are replicas of three different versions of the Epochal holy book, the Testaments of Otar.

U21. Room of Artifacts

This wing is full of replicas of magic items.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This room is cluttered with all manner of seemingly magical items.

Doors. During all hours, this room is locked and warded. Only those with Qiu Xiang can enter the room.

Magical Wards. Behind Qiu Xiang's office and the basement, this is the most protected room in the museum as it holds the museum's most valuable artifacts. Teleportation spells do not work in this room, nor does the *passwall* spell or any spell that would alter or affect the walls. It is not protected against ethereal creatures; thus, Hell can enter the area with no issues if it needs to. A *dispel magic* spell cast against a 6th-level spell temporarily removes the enchantments for 1 minute.

Lighting. This room is fairly well lit by natural sources.

Exhibits. There are six exhibits in this wing. Exhibits a, b, and d are kept in protective glass cases which have been warded with permanent *wall of force* spells. The open-air items in exhibits c and e are protected by an effect that increases the relative weight of the item. Unless the

effect is dispelled (as a 7th-level spell) the object will not move, similar to the effects of an *immovable rod*. All of the magical effects can be temporarily removed by the command word "bata-gaewo."

- **A. Central Omerian Artifacts.** The magic items in this glass case supposedly come from Central Omeria. The items are:
 - Helm of telepathy*
 - Efreeti bottle*
 - Eversmoking pipe*
 - Dagger of venom*
 - Pipes of the sewers*
 - **B. Knotside/Wallingmiotta Artifacts.** The magic items in this glass case supposedly come from the Knotside and Wallingmiotta area.
 - Gauntlets of ogre power*
 - Oathbow*
 - Immovable rod*
 - Boots of elvenkind*
 - **C. Echo, Greatsword of the Earth.** This sword was owned supposedly by Khan Hayyan Harrak III of Castlegrasp, the Exile Khan. The plaque reads that it was discovered in the Desolation of Ditimaya, roughly 300 miles from the city.
 - **D. Anorian Vaquero Wands.** All five wands in this case were supposedly owned by well-known and respected Anorian Vaqueros who assisted the Pressonians during the War of the Burning Plains. The helmet in this case is supposedly a *helm of teleportation*.
 - **E. Danaavrakt Artifacts.** The artifacts in this exhibit are supposedly a *mace of terror* and an *instant fortress*. The plaque reads that both were taken from the felled danaavrakt Yajud.
- Fake Magic Items.** All of the magic items are fakes. They have a *magical aura* spell cast upon them to give the illusion that they have power. Many of the real items are downstairs hidden in the secret basement.
- Creature Information.** This room is protected by an **invisible stalker** who remains dormant until it is

called upon or someone attempts to break one of the display cases. The invisible stalker fights until it is destroyed or the characters exit this room.

U22. Natural History Gallery

The gallery above the natural history wing contains more exhibits detailing The Summer Land's creatures.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This is the largest room in the entire museum. The ceilings here are 30-foot high terminating in a large skylight. A gallery 20-foot up wraps the entirety of the room, accessible by two staircases at the southwest and northwest corners of the room.

Lighting. This room is well-lit by the skylight overhead. At night or when it is particularly overcast, the sconces on the walls light the room.

Stairs. Both sets of stairs in this room lead down to **area G6**.

Exhibits. There are ten exhibits in this wing. Exhibits b through i are kept in protective glass cases. Opening a case requires a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools. Otherwise, the case can be broken open: a case has AC 13, 2 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

- **A. Barbed Devil Statues.** The petrified form of Drozzamol the **barbed devil** stands by the north stairs and his sister, Tragemok stands by the south stairs. Should a character cast a *greater restoration* spell or similar magic on either Drozzamol or Tragemok, the barbed devil attacks then flees.
- **B. Ancient Human Bones.** These bones were found in a cave in the Basilisk's Spine Mountains and are believed to be the bones of The Summer Land's ancient ancestors.
- **C. Czego Stones.** The three stones in this case are Czego stones. Although the stones aren't magical, ancient humans believed that the

stones possessed the power of the gods. They are worth 100 gp altogether.

- *D. Dragon Teeth.* The teeth in this case were collected from the drakes felled during The War of the Burning Plains. They are worth 100 gp altogether.
- *E. Dartwood Butterflies.* The butterflies in this case were captured in the Dartwood Forest.
- *F. Summer Land Scarabs.* The scarabs in this case were collected in the plains and deserts of the Summer Land.
- *G. Warna Shells.* Pulled from the banks and coastline of the Ocean of Warna, these shells were part of a fundraiser for the museum. They hold no value.
- *H. Depleted Magic Gems.* The gems in this case were once emerald Odonburgite and ruby Blutvekeznite. Their power is long since depleted. The Blutvekeznite, however, still fetches 250 gp even without its power.
- *I. Dragon Bones.* The bones in this case were taken from felled Great Chromatics during the War of the Burning Plains.

U23. Duda Weysevain Room

The great Pressonian explorer, Duda Weysevain is remembered in this sitting room. The room overlooks the museum's entry.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This balcony overlooks **area G2**. When the *guards and wards* spell is in place, this room is affected by it.

Exhibits. Multiple relics owned by the explorer Duda Weysevain are kept in glass cases. Opening a case requires a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools. Otherwise, the case can be broken open: a case has AC 13, 2 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

U24. Rear Balcony

This large balcony overlooks the rear grounds.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The balcony is 20 feet above the exterior grounds.

Doors. The doors that lead to **area G5** is a set of large, oak double-doors on iron hinges set into a stone frame. At night, the doors are locked. It requires a DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to pick the lock. Breaking the door open requires a DC 18 Strength check. The door has AC 15, 18 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. At night, this door is protected by the *guards and wards* spell.

Fountain. A large water fountain is at the center of the courtyard. Visitors have tossed copper coins into the fountain; in all, there are 1,200 cp. The fountain is periodically drained and the coins removed as donations to the museum.

Lighting. Exposed to the elements, this area is lit by the sun or the moonlight. However, there are two *continual flame* lamps over the tables in the southeast and southwest corners.

Pressonian Statues. Two statues of Pressonian abjuration knights flank the rear doors.

Basement

Qiu Xiang jealousy guards the existence of this secret basement. It possesses the same magical *wards* detailed in **area G10** (and then some.)

B25. Trapped Hallway

The entirety of this room is trapped with red beams of light.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This hallway is 15-foot wide and 40-foot long. 2 1/2 foot square stone tiles cover the floor. The ceilings are 10 feet high.

There are ten columns in place to support the ceiling.

Doors. The doors leading to **area B26** and **B27** are protected by the *guards and ward* spell. Because of the antimagic aura in **area B28**, the northern door is not affected. However, it is made of solid iron and heavily locked. Breaking the door down requires a successful DC 24 Strength check. There are six locks on the door. Each lock requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. If a check to pick one of the locks fails, a poison needle dart flies out from the respective lock; the needle makes an attack roll against the lockpicker with a +5 to hit. On a hit, the needle deals 1 piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 18 (4d8) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 hour on a failed saving throw or half as much damage and isn't poisoned on a successful one. Noticing this trap requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character with proficiency in thieves' tool can disable it with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

Lighting. There are lamps set with *continual flame* spells. If the *guards and wards* spell is active, these lights do not function.

Red Beams. The entirety of this area is protected by narrow red beams that stretch from wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling. Qiu Xiang is immune to the effects of the rays as is the nightmare orb, Hell. Any creature that moves into or through the room must make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid touching the rays. The check is made at the start of the creature's movement. The DC to avoid the rays is 10 + 1 for every 5 feet the character moves through the room on their turn. For example, a character who moves 30 feet must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If a character spends 1 round observing the placement of the rays in the

room, they can make their check with advantage. However, if the fog created by the *guards and wards* spell is active, these checks are made with disadvantage (thus, observing the area would cancel the other out).

A character who fails their check when moving touches a ray, taking 18 (4d8) radiant damage as a result. In addition, their movement speed becomes 0 until the start of their next turn.

The rays can be disabled with three successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) checks. Each check requires an action. A creature must be near one of the pillars to attempt the check, and only one creature can work on this task at once. Once a creature attempts a check for this purpose, no other character can do so until the end of that creature's next turn. Alternatively, the rays can be disabled with three successful castings of dispel magic (DC 13) targeting the pillars.

Stairs. The staircase at the south end of the hall leads back up to area G11.

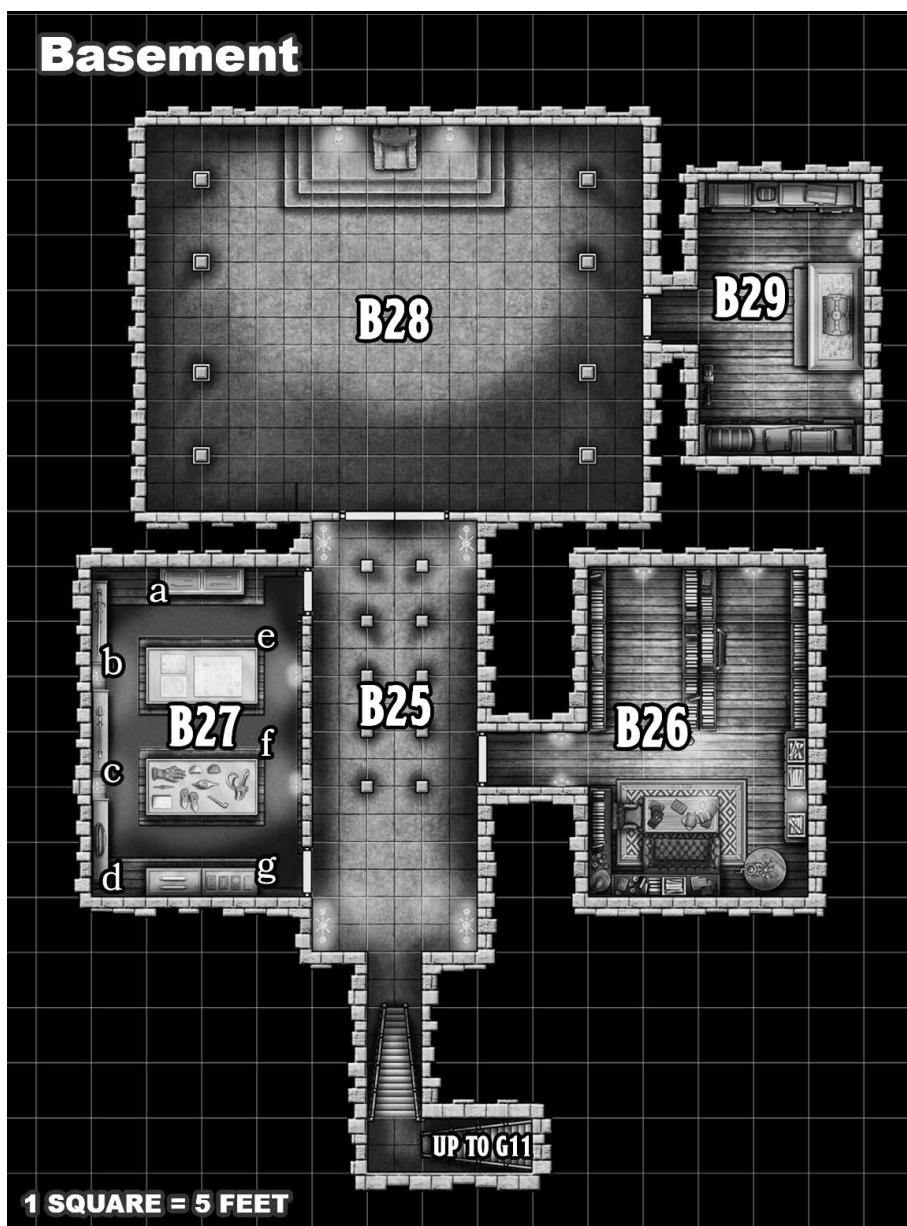
B26. Qiu Xiang's Private Library

A wealth of knowledge is stored in this room.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ceilings here are 10-foot high. The bookshelves run from the floor to the ceiling.

Bones. The cabinets and boxes in this room contain hundreds of bones. Many of the bones were gathered from various sites of interest throughout the continent, particularly those that were rumored to have high degrees of undead present. Each bone has a label denoting where the bone was found and the species of creature from which it once belonged to. Nearly 4 out of 5 bones are noted to come from the Wallingmiotta at a site called Kongradol's Rest.



Books. There are close to 2,000 carefully curated books in this library. All Intelligence checks made in this room are made with advantage, as are research downtime checks. The books on the table are a set of books detailing the Legendary Titans of Omeria. The books are as follows:

- *Calanshop the Wise.* This lengthy tome describes a mythical owl-like creature and its storied history throughout Omeria.
- *Dhucabra the Illuminator.* Draw-

ings depicting the titan show him to be like a colossal, four-eyed frog with a long antenna ending in a glowing bulb.

- *Grihoo the Traveler.* The superhydra, Grihoo, hides at the bottom of a great temple on an island called The Skeleton Key. This book is bookmarked repeatedly, especially in sections covering the temple, the temple's guardians, and the layout of The Skeleton Key island.
- *Uduzmoth the Obese.* The great

tarrasque, Uduzmoth the Obese, is detailed in this old, torn tome. There is a note tucked into the book that reads, “No, I don’t think so. - M. Trask.”

- *Kongradol the Conquerer.* Kongradol is a gargantuan worm whose tomb is rumored to be located on the east side of the Wallingmiotta. A map of the Wallingmiotta has been folded into the book. Someone has circled an area on the map and written “Kongradol’s Rest” then made a note that reads, “Site of the battle between Subject 91 and the Aiquan Queen, Caustis Meyor.”

B27. Qiu Xiang’s Artifact Collection

All the magic items reproduced in area U21 are actually stored here.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ceilings in this room are 10-feet high. Plush carpeting dampens most sounds in the room.

Lighting. This room is lit by *continual flame* sconces on the wall.

Exhibits. There are six exhibits in this wing. Exhibits a, b, and d are kept in protective glass cases which have been warded with a permanent *wall of force* spell. The open-air items in exhibits c and e are protected by an effect that increases the relative weight of the item. Unless the effect is dispelled (as a 7th-level spell) the object will not move, similar to the effects of an *immovable rod*. All of the magical effects can be temporarily removed by the command word “bata-gaewo.”

- *A. Anorian Vaquero Wands.* All five wands in this case were owned by well-known and respected Anorian Vaqueros who assisted the Pressonians during the War of the Burning Plains. All five are *wands of firebolt*.
- *B. Echo, Greatsword of the Earth.* This +2 *greatsword* was owned by Khan Hayyan Harrak III of Castlegrasp, the Exile Khan. It was discovered in the Desolation of Ditimaya, roughly 300 miles from the city.
- *C. Mace of Terror.* The mace in this exhibit is a *mace of terror* once owned by the danaavrakt Yajud.
- *D. Oathbow.* This *oathbow* was owned by Alok Erlana of the Northern Road, an Aiquan King.
- *E. Maps of the Casarian Cosmology.* Detailed maps of the multiple spheres and how they intersect are kept in this case. These maps contradict the model found in area G9.
- *F. Omerian Artifacts.* The magic items in this glass case come from various parts of Omeria. The items are:
 - Helm of telepathy*
 - Efreeti bottle*
 - Eversmoking pipe* (functions the same as an eversmoking bottle when lit)
 - Dagger of venom*
 - Pipes of the sewers*
 - Gauntlets of ogre power*
 - Boots of elvenkind*
 - Helmet of teleportation*
 - Instant fortress*
- *G. Rods and Tomes.* The two rods in the case are both *immovable rods*. The four tomes are actual copies of

the Testaments of Otar. The value of each book depends on its edition:

First edition - 10,000 gp

Libby’s Version - 7,000 gp

Mezud’s Version - 800 gp

Brocorr’s Version - 200 gp

B28. Qiu Xiang’s Throne Room

This room serves two functions. First, it contains the *throne of greed*, a powerful cursed artifact. Second, it is where Qiu Xiang is holding the child, 93.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ceilings here are 10-feet high. The walls, floors, and ceilings are lead-lined preventing the skulls’ antimagic fields from affecting anything outside the room.

Cyclops Skulls. Eight Yazurian cyclops skulls are built into the pillars of this room. Not only do they keep the child, Ninety-three, from using his innate magical powers. Unfortunately, they do not work on the *throne of greed’s* or its regional effects. Unless the skulls are destroyed, the room is under the effects of an *antimagic field* as per the spell. Each skull has AC 15, 4 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Doors. The door into this room is heavily locked as detailed in area B25. The door leading to area B29 is a vault door with a combination lock on it. The combination is 8-8-1-0-8-8. The vault door has AC 20 with 100 hit points and it is immune to poison and psychic damage. Opening the door requires a character with proficiency in thieves’ tools to make three suc-



successful checks, each DC 15: Wisdom (Perception), Dexterity using proficiency in thieves' tools, and Wisdom (Perception). All three checks must be made in that order and each check requires an action. A creature must be near the door in order to attempt the check, and only one creature can work on this task at once. Once a creature attempts a check for this purpose, no other creature can do so until the end of that creature's next turn. Alternatively, the vault can be opened using the lever in **area B29**.

Lighting. *Continual flame* sconces illuminate the room.

The Throne of Greed. The throne of greed is an inscrutable cursed artifact with harmful regional effects (see *Greatwell's Curse* in Appendix A). If you do not wish to utilize the throne of greed, assume that the throne is a normal stone throne that does not possess any magical abilities.

Creature Information. Chained to the floor by his neck at the center of the room is the child, Ninety-three. The boy is unconscious. He is malnourished and covered in small cuts from where Qiu Xiang has collected his blood. Only Qiu Xiang holds the key. The chain has AC 18 and 15 hit points, plus immunity to poison and psychic damage. Without the key, a creature proficient with thieves' tools can pick the lock with a successful

Too Much Treasure?

There is a ton of valuable items to be gained from this adventure. Of course, the point of the adventure isn't to totally loot the museum. The point of the adventure is to save the boy. However, unchecked greed comes with great consequences. For one, many of the items within the museum aren't easy to sell; the characters will have to find a way to fence the goods. Also, stealing from the museum will not only make an enemy out of Qiu Xiang, but all of The Summer Land will seek vengeance against those who would steal cherished artifacts.

DC 15 Dexterity check. The boy has a strange mark on the back of his neck. Finding and freeing the boy is **Story Objective B**.

What Does He Want? Ninety-three has been held captive by Qiu Xiang for close to five years. In that time, Qiu Xiang has kept the boy heavily sedated and surrounded by Yazurian cyclops skulls. Any spell or effect that removes poison will rid the boy's system of the sedative. Remember that the skulls prevent magic while in the room. Overall, his life has been filled with pain and misery and he just wants to live a normal life.

What Does He Know? Even though he's only ten years old, Ninety-three remembers very little of what's happened in his life. When he was younger, he remembers waking in a place called The Skeleton Key in a strange temple filled with women serpent worshippers. He escaped and was later protected by an older man whom he considered his "brother." He does not remember what happened to the man. Qiu Xiang and a gang of thugs tricked the boy and his brother into coming on board their sailing vessel. Shortly after they set sail, a massive explosion rocked the ship. Then, they were under attack; he isn't sure what it was.

B29. Treasure Vault

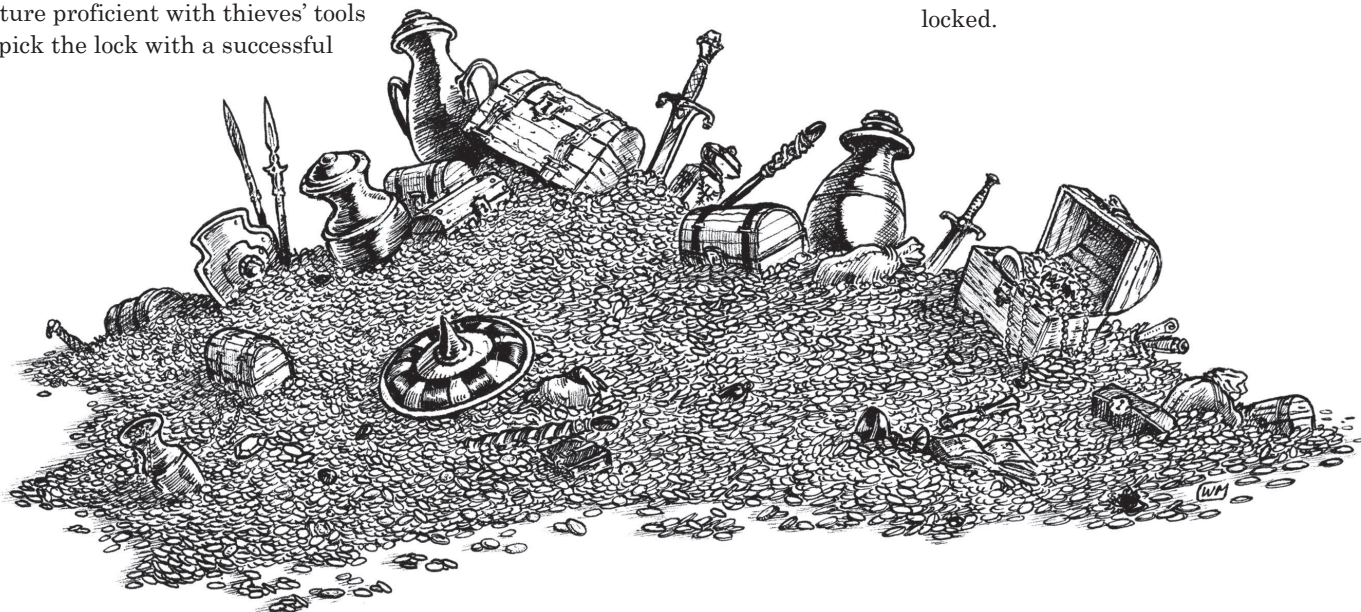
This vault contains the museum's liquidable treasure.

Area Information. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This room has relatively low ceilings compared to the rest of the basement, only 8-feet in height.

Lever. Pulling the lever opens the vault door.

Treasure. Among the chests and crates in this room, the characters will find 70,700 cp, 2,500 gp, and 100 pp. The chests and crates are unlocked.





Part 2: Museum Heist

The characters must break into the Museum and find what is in its secret basement. There, they discover a kidnapped boy. While it's possible for the characters to rush into the museum, "spell wands blazing", likely they will end up getting themselves killed, arrested, or worse. Years of exposure to the *throne of greed* has turned Qiu Xiang into a vile and nasty villain. He won't take a break-in to his museum lightly.

Story Objective B

Successfully breaking into the museum and freeing the boy is **Story Objective B**.

Learning More About the Museum

The characters will want to first visit the museum and get a feel for its layout as described in Part 1. Then, they will want to learn as much as they

can about it. There are a few ways to do this.

Interview the Guards

There are three guards who work at the museum during its normal hours of operation. A little persuasion and gold goes a long way with the guards. What the guards know is detailed on page 14.

Research the Museum

The characters must use the downtime rules (described in the *DMG*) to learn as much as they can about the museum, its curator/owner Qiu Xiang, and everything that might be inside it. Note that performing research is a time-consuming activity and could take weeks or even months for the characters to accurately perform. Of course, characters aren't restricted only to research. During this time, they can get into other misadventures in and around the Greatwell area or perform other appropriate downtime activities.

Resources. To perform research, a character needs access to the Greatwell Library or other sages in town. Examples of people that they could speak with are included in the Greatwell detail in Appendix A. Assuming such access is available and the characters haven't endangered themselves or made enemies around town, conducting research requires one workweek of effort and at least 50 gp spent on materials, bribes, gifts, and other expenses.

Resolution. The focus of the research is the museum. After one workweek, the character makes an Intelligence check with a +1 bonus per 100 gp spent beyond the initial 100 gp, to a maximum of +6. If a character has access to the Greatwell library or any important town sage, such as the heads of House Barbarkis, they gain advantage on this check. Divide the result of the check by 5 and round down; this is how much lore the characters learn through research.

Lore of the Museum.

Order	Lore Learned
1st	The museum is owned by a retired adventurer named Qiu Xiang who acts as its curator.
2nd	During the museum's hours of operations, there are three guards who keep watch over the entirety of the museum. Rumor has it that they're only loyal to whoever pays them the most.
3rd	The local chapter of the Tip of the Spear recently delivered eight large cases to the museum.
4th	Qiu Xiang was once a paladin of the Four Generals, and a devout follower of Epochal Law and the Testaments of Otar.
5th	At night, the museum is protected by a <i>guards and wards</i> spell.
6th	There is a room on the second floor that is filled with magic items. No one is allowed in the room except for Qiu Xiang and whomever else he allows.
7th	In the Age of Triumphs Wing on the ground floor, there is a strange orb locked in a container. It does not fit in with the rest of the items in the wing.
8th	It's believed that there is a secret basement in the museum. However, no one knows how to access it.
9th	The museum was built over the site of an archaeological dig. Rumor has it there was a cursed item within the dig that the founders of Greatwell wanted to hide.
10th	Five years ago, Qiu Xiang returned from a trip across the Ocean of Warna. He refuses to speak about the experience.
11th	Qiu Xiang is obsessed with Titan's Lore. He has met with many Omerian sages to discuss the subject.
12th	The magic items on the second floor are all fakes. They were planted to detract would-be burglars from the real prize: the museum's secret basement.
13th	Everyone else who traveled with Qiu Xiang across the Ocean of Warna died. Although Qiu Xiang won't talk about it, it's believed that the ship on which he was traveling was attacked from the sky by powerful creatures.
14th	When the museum was being developed ten years ago, Qiu Xiang met with multiple mages from all over Omeria. He spent the majority of his fortune.
15th	The orb kept in the container in the Age of Triumphs wing is actually a rare nightmare orb. It is unknown whether or not it is active. If it is active, it may be what defends the museum during the museum's downtimes.
16th	The two devil statues on the second floor of the natural history wing are actual devils, turned to stone by a Castlegrasian Stone Arm.
17th	Qiu Xiang uses a magic phrase to disable his security systems.
18th	Every door and window in the museum is enchanted with an <i>alarm</i> spell. If someone attempts to break in, Qiu Xiang is alerted.
19th	The nightmare orb is active. In fact, it is the infamous orb Hell. Hell killed three hundred witch slayers during the battle at Aspaeth.
20th	About a month ago, a mysterious stranger appeared in Greatwell asking questions about the museum and its founder. While the stranger was in town, odd occurrences happened. The entirety of a local farmer's livestock spontaneously burst into flames. Three different pregnant women gave birth to twins on the same day at the same hour. One day, the clouds in the sky rolled overhead like boiling milk.
21st	Before Qiu Xiang left for his trip across the Ocean of Warna, he became obsessed with the arnitiko sub-race of elves, interviewing dozens of the strange, colorless creatures.
22nd	Qiu Xiang's passcode is "daki." Speaking the word before the <i>alarms</i> and <i>guards and wards</i> will protect those who say it from the spells' enchantments.
23rd	Hell can be stopped by speaking the command "nastamatieste." Once spoken, it returns to its container.
24th	A krig from Orbea visited the museum last week. It met briefly with Qiu Xiang in his business office. It then said something to Xiang that angered the curator so much, he asked the guards to escort the krig from premises.
25th	No one heard what the krig said to Qiu Xiang. However, Joelyn, the lady who works at the information desk, swears that she saw Qiu Xiang write the word "HULAY" onto a slip of paper before he placed it into his pocket.

Once you know how much lore the character learns, they learn one or more pieces of lore from the Lore of the Museum on page 27. The lore they learn must be learned in the order shown on the table and the characters have no way of knowing how many total pieces of lore there are.

Complications. Because the museum's secrets are so well-guarded, there is always a chance that the characters could draw attention to themselves. When this occurs, it triggers one of the **bonus objectives** detailed at the end of this adventure. If you wish, you can include either one or both of the **bonus objectives**.

Track Qiu Xiang's Movements

Not only is Qiu Xiang in charge of all the museum's defenses, but he is also a powerful spellcaster in his own right, more than capable of defeating an entire party of adventurers in single hand-to-hand combat.

Using the downtime rules, the characters can keep tabs on Qiu Xiang's movements throughout the week.

Resources. Tracking Qiu Xiang's movements requires three workweeks of effort.

Resolution. At the end of each workweek the character spends tracking Qiu Xiang's movements, the character makes a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If the character succeeds on all three checks, the character learns Qiu Xiang's schedule.

Complications. A character who fails their Dexterity (Stealth) check by 5 or more attracts the attention of Qiu Xiang.

Execute the Plan

Once the characters have all of the information they can gather as it pertains to the museum, they must put their plan into motion. There is no one way to solve the museum heist, so don't feel limited to the information included in this section.

The recommended course of action for the character is as follows:

Qiu Xiang's Schedule

Qiu Xiang spends nearly all of his time at the museum. During hours of operation, Qiu Xiang walks around the museum, leading tours, meeting with donors, and visiting with guests. Every 15 minutes, he makes sure to walk past the door to **area G10** to ensure that nobody is near it. When the museum is closed, Qiu Xiang retires to his offices and the secret basement.

There are two times each week when Qiu Xiang leaves. Every Murn, an hour before midday, Qiu Xiang travels to House Barbarkis' manor to deposit coins using their banking service. He is gone for approximately 15 minutes.

The second time Qiu Xiang leaves is the middle of the night on Mahns to meet with black market dealers from the Black Rose Clan at Greatwell's docks. He is gone for approximately 1 hour.

1. Execute the plan during the day time.

During the day, there are less wards in place. Qiu Xiang's arrogance prevents him from thinking that anyone would be careless enough to break in during daylight hours, especially during hours of operation.

2. Pay off the guards.

The characters pay the guards to look the other way. Each guard can be bought with 25 gp adjusted for successful Charisma (Persuasion) checks versus the guards' Wisdom (Insight).

3. Trap Hell in its container.

Hell is the most dangerous creature in the entire museum. Through the use of magic or other creative means, the characters should find a way to keep Hell from emerging. They can also learn the command word which stops it through research.

4. Make sure Qiu Xiang is offsite.

As a powerful spellcaster and someone capable of implementing all of the museum's *guards and wards* tele-

pathically, the characters will want to get him as far away as possible. Unfortunately, very little will cause Qiu Xiang to leave. Furthermore, his paranoia causes him to think that any disaster that befalls the museum or Greatwell is done so with intent to rob the museum.

5. Get into Qiu Xiang's office.

Learning Qiu Xiang's passcode to get through his defenses is key in reaching the office. Otherwise, the adventure will prove quite difficult. There are two ways to discover Qiu Xiang's passcodes.

First, a character can put his- or herself in earshot of Qiu Xiang when he uses his passcode. Note that Qiu Xiang is always very aware of his surroundings when he uses the passcode. Therefore, a character will need to succeed on a Dexterity (Stealth) check contested by Qiu Xiang's Wisdom (Perception). Even then, Qiu Xiang always whispers it, so the character will also need to succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to hear the words Qiu Xiang uses.

Second, the characters can learn the passcode through dedicated research.

Once they can open the door, there is still the matter of the *glyph of warding* that protects the door. If the glyph is triggered, it sends a telepathic *alarm* to Qiu Xiang.

Next, they must handle the mimic. For a party of 5th-level adventurers, this should be an easy combat.

6. Disable the red beams.

Once in the basement, the characters will have to avoid getting hit by the red beams and know what to do in order to disable the trap.

7. Unlock or destroy the door to the throne room.

The characters must get through the large door to the throne room.

8. Save Ninety-three.

The characters will have no information on what lies beyond the door to

the throne room. Within, they will find the boy Ninety-three. To save him, they must unlock the chain around his neck and remove him from the room. Once Ninety-three is taken out of the warded areas and into an area that isn't protected against divination, Erathaol is alerted to Ninety-three's presence. See Part 3 for details.

Part 3. The Boy Awakens

Once the characters remove Ninety-three from Qiu Xiang's wards, the solar, Erathaol is alerted to the boy's presence and begins to head that way. At the same time, Vadriken uses a *sending* spell to warn the characters that something big and bad is coming.

Story Objective C

Getting the boy to Vadriken's farm is **Story Objective C**.

Vadriken's Farm

Vadriken immediately sends a mental message to the characters that he doesn't know what they've done, but he's learned who sent the letter and is terrified of what it could mean. He tells them that he is "the only thing that has the power to protect them from what's coming."

If the characters agree, Vadriken is waiting at the farm for them.

Wrap-Up: Naeyer's Servants

Once Vadriken sees the boy, read or paraphrase the following.

"By the Three! I saw this moment. That boy—he is called Ninety-three. I've spent the last five years looking for it—*him!* He is the key. He is the answer to the riddle. This is the boy that will stop the end of the world."

Suddenly, a high-pitched ringing disrupts the tranquility. In the distance, perhaps four miles from where you stand, the clouds split open and a streak of light cuts

across the sky. Your heart leaps from your chest as you watch eleven more such points of light join the first and form into a single large point of light.

Headed. Your. Way.

Vadriken gasps and steps in front of you as the light approaches.

"They're coming."

"Whatever happens!" he yells as the high-pitched ringing becomes a deafening roar. The light from the fast-approaching missiles bathe the entirety of his farm in a warm, radiant glow. "Stay behind me! And keep the boy away from these bastards."

Crossing his forearms in front of him, Vadriken speaks an incantation:

"Brar'enaath, lend me your strength."

The missiles are now only 1,000 feet from you, moving at unearthly speeds.

"Ereyth, lend me your wisdom."

The glow now encompasses everything. All you see is white and the silhouette of Vadriken.

"T'qin, lend me your mind!" he screams through the sound.

The light fades and everything stops momentarily.

You can't move. But you're aware of what's happening.

Before you, you see eleven winged, robed figures flying straight towards Vadriken, each one as large as an horsecart. Although the spell Vadriken cast has slowed them down, it has not permanently stopped them. The centermost figure, a golden-skinned creature with glowing white eyes, comes within mere inches of touching Vadriken—that is until Vadriken pushes his palms forward, screams, and emits a cone of tri-colored, arcane energy.

Your ear drums burst from the sound Vadriken's spell creates.

The eight angels are bathed in the warlock's energy.

Immediately, seven of them are

destroyed, screaming as they're torn apart by the warlock's power.

The remaining angels and their leader are pushed back 10 feet. The leader's golden form temporarily wears off revealing something—*in-describable*—beneath it all. But in seconds his golden face and glowing eyes return. Hundreds of yards behind the angel, the landscape lies in ruin, utterly destroyed by Vadriken's magic—felled trees, destroyed buildings, burning earth.

You can move again.

Vadriken drops to one knee, exhausted by the effort. The angel dusts itself off and smirks. It then walks towards Vadriken.

Vadriken, his breathing ragged, looks up and gasps, "You can't take him. That boy is going to come—"

With one swift movement, the angel uppercuts Vadriken; a hit so mighty, it causes a small explosion in a 10-foot radius around the warlock. The flash from the hit temporarily blinds you. Once the dust settles and you can see again, to your horror, you see that there's nothing left of Vadriken save for the crater where he had once stood.

The angel then turns to you.

"Give me the child," it tells you in a booming voice.

The **solar**, Erathaol, knows that it can easily destroy the characters if it wishes to. However, it is still a creature of law and good. It gives the characters only one chance to make the right decision.

While the characters make their decision, they notice seven more angels join Erathaol and the other survivors of Vadriken's spell.

The angels lift their arms into the air and begin a divine incantation. Rising from the ground around you at all sides like a reverse waterfall, *walls of force* begin to surround you and the farm. The walls rise into the air, then curve towards each

other. Finally, all of the force touches at the center, forming a 100-foot radius dome. Eleven of the angels remain outside the dome.

The twelfth, their leader, continues to wait for your response.

The characters are trapped by a dome which acts as a massive *force cage*. They have no method of flight. Only fight.

Should the characters battle the angel, make it obvious that it is far more powerful than they are. However, it is not afraid to kill them if it needs to. Just as it is about to destroy all the characters (or if the characters willingly handed the boy over to the angel), the boy, Ninety-Three stands up to the angel.

“No.”

The boy stands and raises a palm to the angel. You watch in amazement as the boy’s eyes start to glow. For a moment, his features distort to look almost like a tiger’s, but something different. His flesh swirls around him like serpents. And when he opens his mouth—now a horrible maw—red light slowly seeps out of it like smoke.

Without moving his mouth, the boy speaks in a language you don’t understand.

The angel takes a step back and gasps, “It is true. He *is* The Hand of the Eight.”

Everything goes dark.

Concluding the Adventure

The adventure continues in the *Hand of the Eight: Chapter 8: The Shores of Shadow*.

Advancement

Upon completing this adventure, each character gains enough experience to reach half way to the next level (ideally, 6th level).

In addition to the experience gained by this adventure, it’s likely the

Time in Omeria

Most Omerians use the Pressonian Common Calendar to track the passage of time. A year on Casar is 336 days which is divided into twelve months of twenty-eight days each. The months are further divided into four weeks of seven days each.

The current year in which this adventure takes place is 1045 AT. AT denotes the Age of Triumphs, the period of time following the siege of Imfe Mythse Anore (since renamed to Knotside) and the fall of the demon god Vapul at the hands of the Paladins Three.

characters have accrued some wealth. However, it may be a while before they are able to sell the items they found or spend the gold they earned.

Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs, locations, and events feature prominently in this adventure. Stats may be found in Appendix A.

Greatwell. Greatwell is one of the largest cities in all of The Summer Land. Narrowly surviving the War of the Burning Plain, Greatwell thrives thanks to the strong trade connections it has with the city-states of Central Omeria, particularly the Tadju Confederacy.

Hell. Hell is a centuries-old nightmare orb tasked by Qiu Xiang to defend the museum from vandals and robbers. The nightmare orbs were created by dark transmuters as servants and hunters. They are incredibly dangerous and notoriously difficult to destroy.

Presson’s Enclave. Presson’s Enclave is the largest city in all of The Summer Land and the oldest human city in all of Omeria. The city is best known for its legendary knights, the Abjurers, the first of whom was Libby of the North.

Qiu Xiang (CHEE SHANG). Qiu Xiang, a dragonborn, is a retired

adventurer and former paladin of the Four Generals. He is also the owner/curator of the Pressonian History Museum.

- **What He Wants.** Qiu wishes to know more about the boy 93 and how he can contain or steal the boy’s power.
- **Arrogant but Paranoid.** Although he believes he is one of the wisest creatures alive, Qiu constantly fears that someone or something is out to deceive him.

The Summer Land. The Summer Land is the name of the countryside that lies between the eastern side of the Basilisk’s Spine Mountains, the Ocean of Warna, and the north side of The Wound. The oldest civilization in all of Omeria, Presson’s Enclave, was founded in The Summer Land. In the year 965 AT, much of The Summer Land was destroyed by an army of dragons and dragonkin led by an Ancient Red Dragon named Tostrasz the Enormous.

Monika Urganate (MON i KA ur GAR a TAY). Monika is the leader of a party of adventurers that quest for the Tip of the Spear, an adventurers guild from the city-state of Arruquetta.

- **What She Wants.** Monika only wants one thing: wealth. And she will do anything (or kill anything) to get it.
- **Clever and Shrewd.** Monika possesses no loyalties to anyone. She will turn on an ally in a heartbeat if it means more gold in her pocket.
- **Vadriken the Three-Timer (VAD ri KEN).** Vadriken is one of the most powerful spellcasters in all of Omeria, borrowing his spellcasting abilities from three patrons.
- **What He Wants.** Vadriken wants to know who sent him the letter and why. He also wants to know what is in the museum.
- **Dangerously Aloof.** Vadriken’s mind is frequently preoccupied.

Bonus Objective A: The Aegrean

While the characters are learning about the museum, there is a good chance that the museum's caretaker/founder, Qiu Xiang takes note of their interest. Qiu Xiang is paranoid, but he's also patient.

Bonus Objective A

This bonus objective consists of a confrontation with Qiu Xiang. This encounter can happen anywhere, but it's likely it occurs at the museum. Confronting Qiu Xiang is **Bonus Objective B**.

Creature Information

Qiu Xiang's stats can be found in Appendix D. If you wish, you can substitute a dragonborn **archmage** in its place.

Objectives and Goals. Qiu Xiang hopes to keep Ninety-three a secret

from everyone. Everyone else who was involved with Ninety-three's capture at The Skeleton Key is now dead, either at the hands of solars or Qiu-Xiang himself. Not even Qiu Xiang's closest allies know of the boy's existence.

Since "rescuing" the boy from The Skeleton Key, Qiu Xiang has been looking for a way to tap into the boy's power. So far, he hasn't discovered anything that will help.

The moment Qiu Xiang suspects that something could conflict with those goals or someone could learn of the boy, he employs defensive strategies. He will immediately change the passcode to all of his enchantments to "fangyu" and take extra precautions to ensure no one hears it. He will also activate Hell even when there are no trespassers, asking the nightmare orb to patrol the museum when it is

closed. He will then stay within his domain (his office and the secret basement) during all hours until he feels that enough time has passed that the characters lose interest.

What Does He Know? Qiu Xiang knows that the boy was created through dulon magic within the belly of the Temple of Grihoo on The Skeleton Key. The magic combined his powers with eight of the most powerful spellcasters to ever live in Omeria. Although Ninety-three is still young, should the power within him awaken, it could lead to the total and complete destruction of Casar. Thus far, the only defense he has against the boy is the antimagic created by the Yazuri-an cyclopes skulls.

Confronting Qiu Xiang

Here are some suggestions for this encounter.

Combat. Qiu Xiang would prefer not to enter combat unless absolutely necessary. The old dragonborn is a dangerous combatant, more than capable of handling the party. If he does goad them into combat, he only does so on his terms out of site of Greatwell militia.

Social. The best way for Qiu Xiang to learn about his would-be opponents is to approach them directly. The curator continues to feign ignorance during social interactions, but a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) is all it takes for a character to recognize that Qiu Xiang knows what they are up to.

While speaking with the characters, Qiu Xiang wants to learn everything he can about the his adversaries, specifically who their patron is (likely, the warlock Vadriken). If Qiu Xiang realizes that it is the warlock Vadriken who wishes to learn more about what is being hidden in the museum, he will go into extreme defense mode.



Bonus Objective B: The Tip of the Spear

While the characters are researching the museum and working with Vadriken, it's possible that they draw the attention of the local adventurers' guild, the Tip of the Spear. The Tip confronts the characters away from the museum.

Bonus Objective B

Confronting the Tip of the Spear is **Bonus Objective B**.

Area Information

The Tip will likely confront the characters away from the museum, preferably in a crowded place in view of the militia to discourage the characters from starting a fight.

Dimensions & Terrain. The confrontation takes place on a crowded city street within view of the Greatwell militia.

Lighting. The confrontation happens in the day time.

Creature Information

The Tip of the Spear is represented by four NPCs. Monika Urganate (NE female half-Anorian **gladiator**) is the group's leader. Joining her are a male gnome **mage** Pukwin, a female **orc** warrior named Blynka, and a male Pressonian human **spy** named Alcovos. Like Monika, they are all neutral evil.

Objectives and Goals. Monika and her flunkies are interested in only one thing: money. And they will do anything to get their hands on it. Once Monika catches wind that the characters have an interest in the museum, she wants in.

Monika knows that she and her group are tough and will make threats to get her way. She is also a great observer of talent and will likely recognize that the characters are also dangerous combatants in their own right. Instead of using might to get what she wants from the characters, she makes them an offer: they cut

Playing the Tip of the Spear

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. The Tip doesn't want combat with the characters because combat will draw undue attention. If the characters attack, the Tip withdraws and tries to get the guards involved. After all, if the characters are imprisoned or exiled from the town, then they're out of the picture and the Tip can investigate the museum on their own. Still, the job is a lot easier if there are patsies available to take the fall.

Exploration. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that the Tip are a heavily funded group from the powerful city-state of Arruquetta. As such, the characters may suspect that Monika's group has friends in high places.

Social. The Tip wants the characters to do most of their dirty work for them. The less involved the Tip can get in performing the actual heist at the museum, the better. However, Monika won't budge off a 50-50 split. In her mind, less than 50% of the take isn't worth it. She'd rather turn the characters in and find another job worth her time.

them in on the deal and she won't inform Qiu Xiang or the authorities of their plans. "Even if it isn't true, you don't want that kinda heat on you with a job like this, do you?" She even offers what she knows (pick the next two pieces of lore that the characters haven't yet unlocked on the lore chart) in exchange for the deal. Plus, if goaded, she'll offer the assistance of the Tip.

What Do They Know? Monika's team recently pulled a job raiding a ship coming from Yazur Island. The group stole eight lead-lined crates from the ship. Each crate contained the skull of a Yazurian cyclops, a creature known for its anti-magic effects. The museum's owner,

Qiu Xiang paid the group 1,000 gp for each skull, a huge take. This happened three days prior to the characters taking an interest in the museum. The skulls haven't been put on display, so Monika suspects that they're being used for other reasons.

Monika also suspects that all of the artifacts in the museum are easily worth close to 100,000 gp. She adds that there is an entire room filled with magic items on the second floor that Qiu Xiang keeps locked at all times.

The Tip and the Heist

If the Tip gets involved with the museum heist, they can lend their skills to the characters. However, it's more likely that their greed gets the better of them and they cause more problems than they solve.

Optionally, using the Tip in the heist is a great way to demonstrate the danger of certain traps and defenses. For example, a member of the Tip could turn a corner and run into Hell. Before the Tip member a word or making an attack, Hell vaporizes the creature leaving nothing more than a pile of gray dust on the museum's marble floors.

"Run!" screams Monika. ♪



THE ILLUSTRATORS OF BROADSWORD MONTHLY

BY SCOTT CRAIG

ART BY WILLIAM MCAUSLAND

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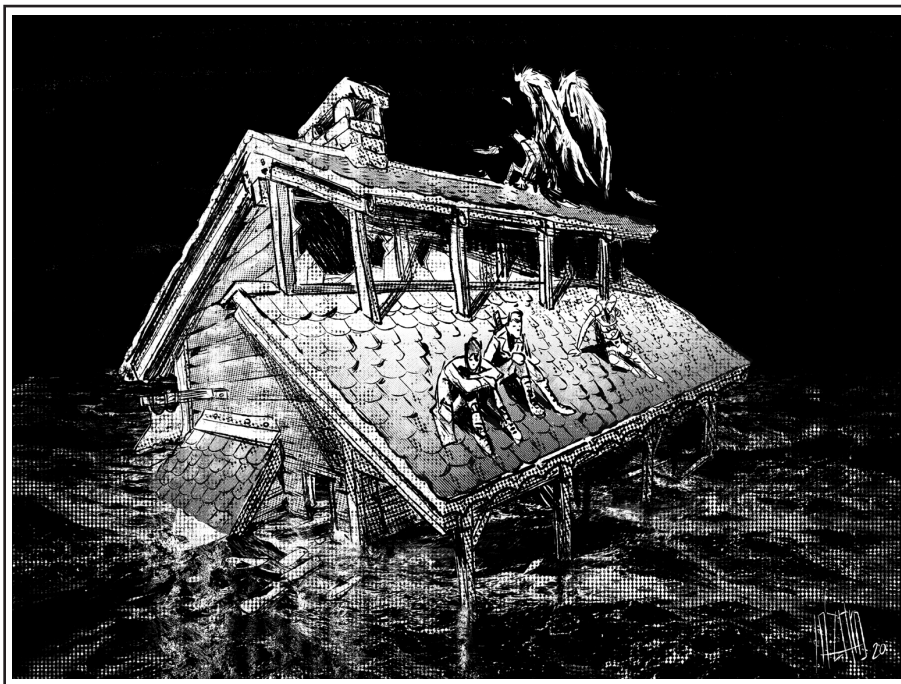
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CHAPTER 8: THE SHORES OF SHADOW

BY DAVE HAMRICK

5th-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Jog Brogzin and Tom Cartos
Art by Matias Lazaro and William McAusland

*This adventure is designed for three to five 5th- to 10th-level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 5. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. This adventure occurs in the dark plane of existence, *The Other*.*

Background

Previously, the characters rescued a young boy named **Ninety-three** from the hidden basement of the **Pressonian History Museum**. Just as the characters were delivering the boy back to their patron **Vadriken**, a group of **Solars** arrived to claim the boy for their god **Naeyer**. Although Vadriken defeated the majority of the solars, their leader **Erathaol** destroyed Vadriken. The angels then placed a dome over the character's location, preventing them or the boy from leaving. But before the characters could surrender the boy, the boy's sorcerous abilities awakened. The last thing the characters remember was a bright flash.

The characters and everything around them was transported to **The Other**, a realm of infinite shadow. And the boy was nowhere to be found.

Overview

The adventure's story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **four-to-seven hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene. The third part has **three different paths** the characters can take. They can take one, some, or all of the paths. Each path has a different estimated duration.

- **Call to Action. *The Other*.** The characters find themselves in a great sea of liquid shadow, *The Black Cauldron*, the "border" of *The Other*. They must find their way out of the plane.
- **Part 1. *The Path of Sinking Stars*.** After meeting the Collectors, the character must travel along the Path of Sinking Stars towards

Eqqaros, the City of Light. This is **Story Objective A**.

- **Part 2. The Goddess in Light.** Once at the City of Light, the characters meet with the Goddess in Light, Queen of Eqqaros. The characters learn about the nature of The Real, The Other and what it could mean for their world. This is **Story Objective B**.
- **Part 3a. The Aerie of Judgment.** The characters travel to The Aerie of Judgment to ask the servants of Usteus for access to The Tunnel back to Casar. Returning to Casar is **Story Objective C**.
- **Part 3b. Dakh Wabrizz.** The characters must rescue the failabra Imidio from the shadow goblins of Dakh Wabrizz. Returning to Casar is **Story Objective C**.
- **Part 3c. The Shores of Despair.** The characters must enter the Growing Spire to find an artifact rumored to open a portal to The Real. Returning to Casar is **Story Objective C**.

Adventure Hook

Overall, this adventure assumes that the characters have been following the *Hand of the Eight* adventure path up to this point. However, if you wish to run this adventure as a one-shot, you can make the following changes:

- Whether by choice or by accident, the characters end up stranded in The Other.
- Remove all mention of The Boy, Ninety-Three.
- Remove Omnaweahl or Oxon, or, if you keep those characters, position them as sages from The Real that can help the characters find their way back to the Real.
- The Goddess in Light does not give expository speech. Instead, she (or another NPC within Eqqaros) offer the characters advice on how they can return to The Real.
- The other godlike beings of The Other will help the characters,

but only if the characters can offer something of value to those creatures (similar to dealing with the Loyk in Part 3).

The Other

With no memory of how they arrived, the characters find themselves within the Black Cauldron, literally an infinite sea of liquid shadow that encompasses The Other. They must find a way to survive. If the characters were transported to the Other following the 7th chapter of the *Hand of the Eight*, the boy, Ninety-three is no longer with them.

The Black Cauldron

The Black Cauldron is a literal sea of liquid shadow that stretches into infinity. Although there are points of light within The Other which Lost Ones—those from the Real who find themselves trapped in The Other—can cling to, those beacons are far away from where the characters find themselves.

Area Description

The Black Cauldron has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. While the liquid shadow of The Black Cauldron might feel like water, it is anything but. It is an opaque liquid formed from the remains of dead shadows, those that have slipped through the Real and into The Other. The Black Cauldron not only stretches on for infinity, but it is infinitely deep as well. All manner of light-loathing horrors swim within its depths. Furthermore, it is not bound by the laws of physics. Although there are great stretches of calm waters, there are also giant walls of waves where the liquid shadow curves upon itself. Great tornadic columns of liquid shadow pour upward into the dark, starless sky above. Random waterfalls appear from seemingly nowhere, and whirlpools can form without any warning. Overall, The Black Cauldron should

seem like a hopeless, empty nothingness.

Light. Within the region of The Black Cauldron where the characters find themselves at the start of the adventure, there is absolutely no light. Only creatures with darkvision or other means of seeing in the dark will be able to see their surroundings.

Liquid Shadow. Liquid shadow is a dense and opaque substance with the consistency of water but it is not wet. A creature can still drown in the shadow as if it were water. And the shadow applies all the normal disadvantages for being underwater. It can even be drunk like water. But no one should ever make the mistake that it is water. Instead, it is the shadow of water.

A creature submerged in liquid shadow must make a Wisdom saving throw at the end of each hour that they are in the water or gain a form of short-term madness that lasts for 1d10 minutes. The DC equals 10 + 1 for each hour the creature remains submerged. Undead, constructs, and creatures with resistance or immunity to necrotic damage automatically succeed on the saving throw.

Unless a creature has a swim speed, staying afloat in the liquid shadow is a tiring affair. A creature can remain afloat in the liquid shadow for a number of hours equal to their Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 hour). For each additional hour that a creature remains within the liquid shadow, the character must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of the hour. The DC is 10 + 1 for each hour past their Constitution modifier. On a failed saving throw, the creature suffers one level of exhaustion. If the creature's movement speed becomes 0, it sinks and begins to drown.

A creature who drowns in The Black Cauldron returns as a **shadow** in 24 hours.

Sounds & Smells. Although The Black Cauldron's liquid shadow mimics the sound of ocean waves, the

sound is slower and muffled, almost as if those who heard it were moving faster than the shadow itself. The shadow has no smell of its own, but overall, The Other has a smell that Lost Ones who've escaped The Other claim the plane smells like chalk.

The Roof. Although the characters find themselves within the liquid shadow with no memory of how they arrived, the roof of a farmhouse drifts on top of the shadow like a life raft approximately 60 feet from where they are. The roof is sturdy and stable enough to hold all of the characters aloft should they reach it.

Creature Information

If this is the eighth chapter in the *Hand of the Eight* storyline, it is likely that the solar, Erathaol traveled with the characters to The Other. However, the lack of the sun and Erathaol's connection to Naeyer greatly weakens the angel. While in The Other, Erathaol is a **commoner**.

What Does He Want? Being in The Other is literally killing Erathaol. Powerless, he becomes a wreck of emotion, a whining, scared former-god who begs the characters to set him free from the place, promising them anything they can imagine if they do.

What Does He Know? Erathaol knows that he and the characters are trapped in The Other and he is familiar with its "geography." Although Erathaol knows that there have been creatures who have escaped The Other in the past, he is not sure how they did it. He suggests that the characters find the City of Light, Eqqaros. There, he wagers, the Goddess in Light will be able to send him and the characters back to The Real. The only trouble is that he is not entirely sure where he and the characters are within The Black Cauldron.

Why Did The Angels Want The Boy? The characters likely have some questions for Erathaol. Erathaol, fearful for his life within The Other,

will tell them everything he knows without too much provocation.

Supposedly, the Boy, Ninety-Three, is the *Hand of the Eight*, a being of immense power who can effortlessly bend all eight paths of magic to his will. Naeyer, Erathaol's God, spoke of a prophecy wherein the boy would destroy Casar and Omeria, thrusting the realm back into the Void. Naeyer, comfortable in his position as Casar's Sun God, naturally wants to destroy the boy to avoid the prophecy.

Stranded in a Sea of Shadow

Once the characters pull themselves to safety on the farmhouse roof in the sea of liquid shadow that is The Black Cauldron, their fight for survival begins. Unfortunately, the farmhouse roof is hardly an ideal vessel for travel; thus, the characters are at the whims of The Black Cauldron and its currents.



Survival in The Black Cauldron

As the characters start to adjust to this grim disposition, they will need to learn to survive. Use the following rules for survival.

Equipment & Supplies. Fortunately, the characters have all of the gear that they were carrying with them before they found themselves in The Other. As it's possible that the characters could be stranded in The Black Cauldron for many days, be sure to review the rules on food and water (chapter 8 of the *PHB*).

Navigating. There are no directions

within The Other. Therefore, navigation is impossible. No survival checks will lead the characters where they need to go.

Time. While time does not exist within The Other, the character's bodies still age as normal. Therefore, they will need to eat, drink, and sleep as normal suffering the usual consequences if they don't.

Random Encounters. Each "day" that the characters are stranded in The Black Cauldron, roll a d20. On a 17-20, the characters have a random encounter. Choose or roll randomly on The Black Cauldron Encounters table below to determine the nature of the encounter. If the characters have been stranded for a while or the players are tired of their characters being trapped at sea, feel free to skip ahead to Part 1 of this adventure where they meet the Collectors. Encounters marked with an asterisk are detailed after the table.

Black Cauldron Encounters.

2d4	Encounter
2	A 1d8 x 5 square-foot island made of solid shadow.
3	1 liquid shadow elemental*
4	1d4 will-o'-wisps
5	2d4 shadows
6	1d4 fadraxes
7	1 kraldos
8	A liquid shadow whirlpool.*

Liquid Shadow Elemental. A liquid shadow elemental uses the stat block of a **water elemental** except that it immune to necrotic damage.

Liquid Shadow Whirlpool. A whirlpool 10d10 ft. in diameter appears near in the water near the characters. If the characters are on a vessel (such as the farmhouse roof), the characters must work together by making a group check. Each character must spend 5 minutes trying to steer away from then whirlpool. Then, each character makes a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. If at least

half of the characters achieve success, the characters successfully steer their vessel away from the whirlpool.

If more than half of the characters fail the check, the vessel enters the whirlpool. The characters must spend another 5 minutes trying to escape the whirlpool, this time with disadvantage on the checks. If half or more succeed, they escape and steer clear of the whirlpool. If half or more fail, the vessel is destroyed by the whirlpool.

A character that moves into or starts its turn in the whirlpool must make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failure, the character is restrained by the whirlpool and is pulled 15 ft. down into the liquid shadow.

Part 1. The Path of Sinking Stars

Having been stranded in The Black Cauldron for some time, the characters eventually meet the collectors, servants of The Goddess in Light, who pull traveler orbs from the liquid shadow to deliver to Eqqaros, the City of Light.

Traveler Orbs

At some point, the characters notice shimmering, translucent spheres floating on the surface of the liquid shadow, approximately 3-4 feet in diameter. Once they are able to get close enough to the orbs, they can see what looks like a humanoid within.

The humanoid in the sphere does not appear to be fully formed, nor is it completely fetal. Instead, it looks to be an “echo” of a life. It’s almost as if the orb contains a soul that is trying to grow back into a full form.

The orbs themselves function the same as the *resilient sphere* spell. Unless they are targeted by a *disintegrate* spell, they cannot be destroyed or harmed. However, they can be picked up and moved. If the orb is destroyed, the soul inside rapidly decays. The orbs radiate bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for

another 5 feet. In the darkness of The Other, they are noticeable from hundreds of yards away.

As the characters float through the liquid shadow, they notice more and more of the orbs, floating in The Black Cauldron like fish eggs.

The Collectors

Among the traveler orbs are four **collectors** who are being watched over by a single **ouobra**. See Appendix D for details on these two new monsters.

Creature Information

Collectors are humanoids who have been reborn in The Other that work for the Goddess in Light. They paddle rowboats carved from solid shadow-stuff in order to reach the traveler orbs and pull them out of the liquid shadow.

What Do They Want? The collectors and ouobras wish to collect the traveler orbs from The Black Cauldron before they can be claimed by malevolent creatures. They will immediately take an interest in the characters.

Dario de Luca. One of the collectors will paddle towards the characters and put his hands up in surrender. Then, in perfect Common (with a thick Arruquettan accent) calls out to the characters.

“Hello, friends! Do not be afraid. We mean you no harm.” The man in the rowboat pulls the hood of his cloak down. Although he looks human, his skin, hair, and eyes are completely white—totally devoid of color.

“We are the collectors. We protect those who become lost here in The Other. If you need help, we can grant it.

This collector’s name is Dario de Luca. He was once a scientist and arcanist who lived in Omeria. He was pulled into The Other following

a massive explosion in the Omerian town of Qola. Now, he serves the Goddess in Light as a collector.

What Does Dario Know? Dario understands that the characters may be in a tense situation and unlikely to trust him and the other collectors. He and the other collectors carry a little food and water with them (conjured, of course) just in case some of the traveler orbs “hatch” on their way back to Eqqaros.

Dario explains that he and the other collectors have captured as many traveler orbs as they are able to and will now head back to Eqqaros, the City of Light. They will use the ouobra’s magic to create a “Path of Sinking Stars”, a clear path of light that will guide them back.

While the characters will probably have plenty of questions, Dario assures that he will answer all he can. Assume that Dario knows most things about The Other, The Black Cauldron, and Eqqaros.

The Umbra Attack!

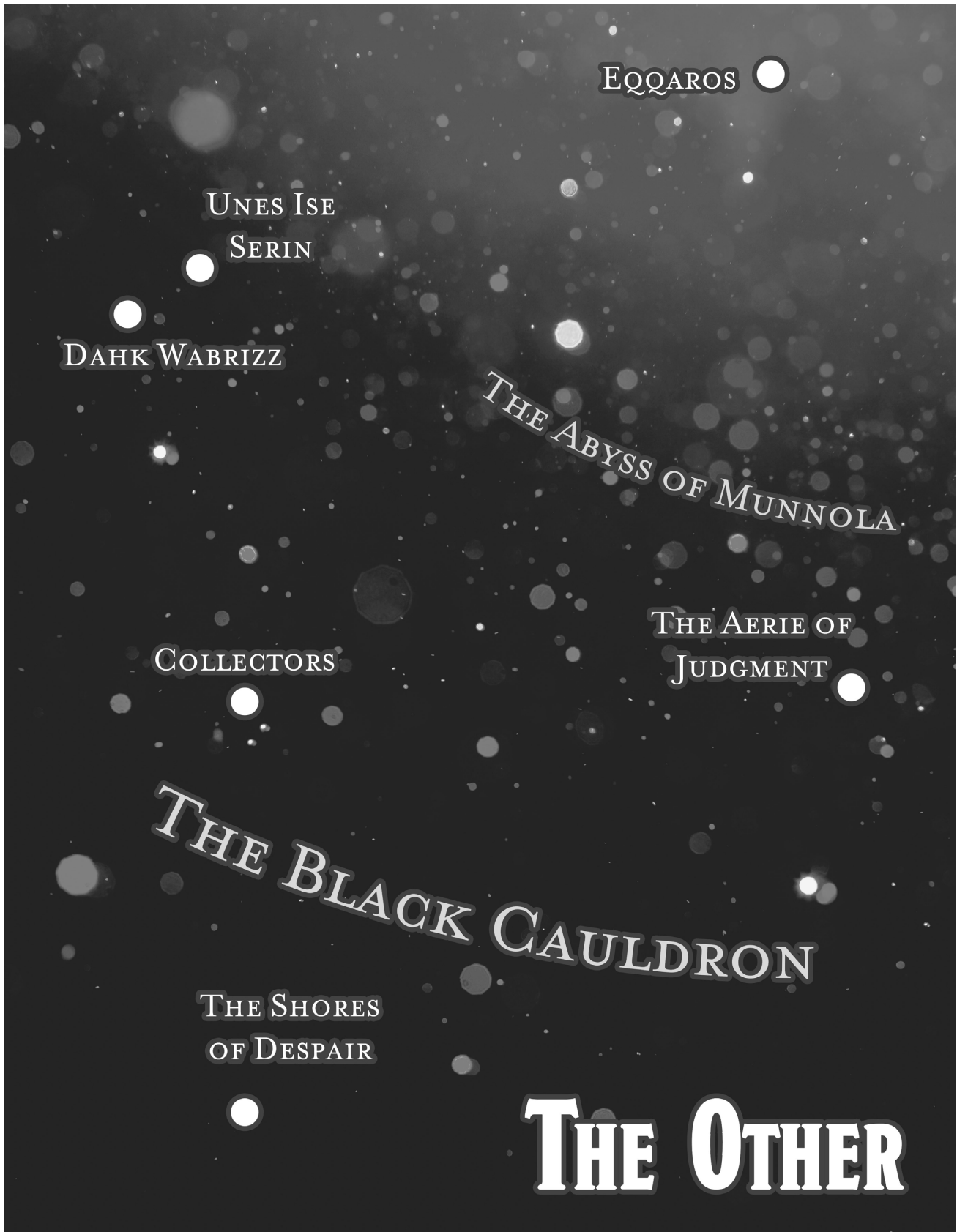
Just as the characters are getting to know Dario, the collectors, and the mysterious ouobra, a group of ten **umbra** raiders sailing on black kites attacks. See Appendix D for details.

Creature Information

The umbra are shadows reborn into light-hating, elf-like creatures. They serve a dark war chief named Desperon who presides over the umbra from the Growing Spire at the center of The Shores of Despair.

What Do The Umbra Want? Each traveler orb that survives adds another soul to the Goddess in Light’s growing army. Therefore, they must be destroyed. Furthermore, they will take notice of the characters and also see them as a threat.

What Do The Servants of Light Want? The Servants of Light are dedicated to their mission to protect the traveler orbs, the Lost Ones, and the



characters. They will fight with equal devotion and sacrifice themselves if necessary.

Fighting the Umbra. The umbra wants nothing more than to destroy all of the collectors, the ourobra, and the characters. They are fanatical and will fight until the death. During the fight, the collectors and ourobra assist the characters.

Umbra vs Collectors.

d20/d10	Result
1-3	1 umbra is destroyed by the collectors.
4-5	2 umbra are destroyed by the ourobra.
6-7	1 collector is destroyed by the umbra.
8-10	The ourobra takes 20 damage.
11-20	The ourobra uses its <i>sunburst</i> spell, instantly destroying 1d4 umbra. After rolling this result, roll a d10 for future Umbra vs Collectors checks.

D. The Path of Sinking Stars

Following the encounter with the umbra, the Servants of Light start their journey along The Path of Sinking Stars. Time does not pass normally while within The Other, and distances are subjective. Have each character make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the journey feels as if it takes months. And for those who succeed on the saving throw, the journey feels like it takes just a matter of minutes.

Behold: The Other

While the characters travel along The Path of Sinking Stars, they will witness all manner of oddities in The Other. Below are some examples of the strange things that they will see while traveling with collectors.

- A gigantic “fish” with glowing scales leaps from the water and splashes a few dozen feet from the

Making the Combat Easier to Run

With ten umbra, four collectors, and the ourobra in the battle—not to mention that they’re all on vehicles—this battle can be somewhat difficult to run. To make this combat easier to run, have the characters take their actions and make attacks as normal. And roll for any creatures that are in direct conflict with the characters. For all other participants, roll a d20 and refer to the Umbra vs Collectors table on this page. If a result rolled on the table contradicts something that has already happened during the combat, feel free to reroll the result, choose another result, or ignore it completely.

boats. It then vanishes below the liquid shadow.

- A shadow storm drops liquid shadow rain on the boats. Red lightning streaks through the clouds of shadow above.
- Figures made of smokey white wisp walk on the liquid shadow a few hundred feet from the boats. When asked what they are, the collectors reply: “life echoes.”
- Strange bats fly overhead. Upon closer inspection, the bats are nothing more than black spheres with sinewy wings attached to the sides. The creatures are harmless.
- Glaciers of obsidian glass float on the liquid shadow. The collectors paddle a path through with no issue.
- A spout of liquid shadow rises hundreds of feet in the air then hits the sky as if it was hitting the a solid surface. It remains there, shimmering above.
- Dots of formless light fall like hail stones, fizzling when the hit the water. The light is harmless when it hits a creature.
- The collectors paddle past an area where 1-foot-diameter pockets of

water “suck in” on itself, creating splashes and “HUCK” sounds.

Random Encounters. Following the combats and the attack of the umbra, additional combat encounters during the journey to Eqqaros might be seen as tedious by the players. Still, if you need to change things up a bit, feel free to use the same random encounters table on page 36.



Part 2. The Goddess in Light

Finally, the characters arrive at Eqqaros, the City of Light. There, they meet the Goddess in Light and learn more about The Other, its connection to The Real, and the danger that the world of Casar faces.

The City of Light

The characters are given time to recover from the harrowing journey they had from The Black Cauldron to Eqqaros. The Goddess in Light will call for them when she wants

Area Description

Eqqaros has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. Eqqaros resembles a colossal tree built from spheres of shimmering, semi-transparent light that extends miles into the formless sky of The Other. The spheres range in size from as small as 20-feet in diameter to a quarter of a mile. Artificial gusts of wind allow the inhabitants of Eqqaros to travel between the spheres.

Alien Inhabitants. Eqqaros is not limited to just humanoids. All kinds of creatures live in the City of Light as servants of the Goddess. There are intelligent animals and mon-

strosities, giants, and even strange and off-putting aberrations who walk the shimmering streets. Most are friendly, although not all of them are trusting. Many of the humanoids who live in Eqqaros have shed or have begun to shed the color from their skin, hair, and even their color, becoming arnitikos (see Appendix D for details). Most of the creatures who live in Eqqaros are of good or lawful alignment (usually both). Evil creatures are not permitted in Eqqaros.

Light. The entire city emits a vivid, yellowish-glow that cuts through the shadow like a knife. The first time the characters see it, they will need a minute to adjust as their time in the deep shadow has likely affected their vision. Not only is the light breathtaking to behold, but it is necessary for the survival of Eqqaros' inhabitants.

Sounds & Smells. Eqqaros is alive with chatter, laughter, and overall, a sense of optimism. For the most part, there are no smells within The Other other than the faint smell of chalk that pervades the entire plane. Most creatures who live in The Other no longer require food for sustenance, there is no smell of food anywhere.

Reunion

If the characters are following the *Hand of the Eight* campaign and participated in **Chapter 6. The Fantastic Lie**, chances are they will run into a familiar face or two while in Eqqaros. The person they run into depends on how the end of *The Fantastic Lie* played out.

Omnaweahl. If Omnaweahl sacrificed herself destroying the remote traveler alpha in *The Fantastic Lie*, she is now in Eqqaros. In the five Real years that she's been in The Other, she's become affected by the plane's nature. All of the color from her skin, hair, and eyes have drained away and she no longer requires food or water. Regardless, she's still the same. She now serves the Goddess in

Beste

The common language of The Other is Beste, also known as shadow-speak. It's a softly spoken language characterized by frequent use of "sh" and "ch" sounds with very few vowel sounds. Common-speakers believe Beste sounds like crinkling paper or strong wind when spoken aloud.

Light as an advisor on evocation.

Omnaweahl is pleased to see the characters but fears for their safety in The Other. Should the characters mention that they encountered the Boy, Ninety-Three (or the characters are still traveling with Erathaol), she immediately recognizes that the characters should meet with the Goddess in Light.

Oxon. If it was the Dinzer mage and co-founder of Odonburg Oxon who sacrificed himself to destroy the Tower of Burshai and the remote traveler alpha, he recognizes the characters but can't quite place them. His reaction is not as warm as O's would be, however, he is interested in their reasons for being in The Other. Once he learns that the characters encountered Ninety-Three, he immediately recommends that the characters speak with the Goddess in Light.

The Goddess in Light

The Goddess in Light lives in one of the largest and highest spheres in all of Eqqaros. When she learns that the characters are in Eqqaros and that they previously encountered the child, Ninety-Three, she immediately requests their presence.

Area Description

The Goddess' palace has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Goddess's palace is a massive, 500-foot diameter sphere of solid light. Multiple platforms of glowing force energy divide the palace into different chambers, passages, and rooms.

Defenses. Only the Goddess's most trusted advisors and servants are allowed in her palace. In addition to the Goddess in Light, there are 10 **arnitikos**, 3 **light golems**, and her personal guardian, Scovis the **fire giant**. See Appendix D for the other creatures.

Light. The Goddess's palace is the brightest sphere in all of Eqqaros. Magical darkness does not work within her realm and the light has the same effect as sunlight on creatures who are sensitive to it. In addition, all spells or attacks that deal radiant damage deal an extra 1d8 radiant damage when cast within this sphere.

Creature Information

The Goddess in Light is anxious to meet the characters.

What Does She Want? The Goddess in Light recognizes that the characters may be the only ones who can save the Real from totally collapsing into the Void. And although she nor any of the greatest diviners of both The Other and The Shadow can predict what will happen with the boy, Ninety-Three, she is optimistic that Ninety-Three is not the cause of the end of the world, but the one person who can actually save it.

The Goddess in Light asks that the characters escape The Other, find Ninety-three, and protect him. She also requests that they take Dario de Luca with them as Dario is familiar with how The Void, The Other, and The Real work together.

What Does She Know? The Goddess in Light knows who the boy, Ninety-Three actually is.

In the beginning, there was only the Void, a great infinite nothingness that came before the Cosmos. Within the Void there was nothing more than raw energy. In time, the hundreds of billions of stray bits of energy decayed and withered away.

Eventually, there were only twelve such energies left. As the only survivors of The Void, these energies sought each other out until they finally all converged on a single point, violently crashing into each other. This collision spawned the Cosmos, creating The Other, The Real, and all the other planes of existence.

The collision also created the first race of creatures: the dulons. The dulons were unlike the humanoids and creatures we know now. Early on, they experienced time and space as one. But as the energies within them started to wither, so, too, did their existence. Eventually, they became the basis for life, separate from the Fabric of All. Desperate to save their kind, they retreated to the simplest of the planes, The Real, and your world, Casar. There, using their innate connection to the twelve energies of the universe, the dulons started to create new lifeforms.

First, the dulons created twelve creatures of immeasurable power, the titans. The titans were created to absorb and preserve the magical energies of the Real in order to slow down its decay. No two titans share the same appearance. Some appear as colossal beasts. Others are formless, often mistaken for gods. For millions of years, the titans roamed Casar alone while the dulons worked to create their next race of creatures: the danaavrakti.

The danaavrakt were a race of creatures capable of wielding the energies of the Cosmos nearly without limitations. Although powerful and seemingly immortal, the danaavrakts were far too chaotic and impossible to control. The danaavrakti wished to recreate the Cosmos in their own image. Fearful of the danaavrakti's ambitions, the dulons limited the creation of the creatures and prevented them from ever propagating.

Third, the dulons created the elves. Certainly wiser than the danaavrakti, the elves believed that they should allow the Cosmos to do with itself as it pleased; even if that meant the total destruction of their own world. Intensely connected to the magic that served as the basis Casar and The Real, the elves now grow ill as those energies atrophy.

Finally, the dulons created humankind. Humans were not innately magical like the danaavrakt or the elves. Instead, humans had the power to understand and control magic. Humankind's greatest weakness was mortality. It took generations for humans to understand the value in magic, and then centuries longer for them to recognize its destructive potential—good and bad.

As the last of the dulons started to die out, one of their kind, Maf, retreated to a hidden location on Casar. Maf believed that if the powers of the four great dulon races could be combined, they could create a single being who could stop The Real's decay and collapse, and potentially, the rest of the Cosmos.

Maf toiled for centuries to create and combine the best parts of the titans, danaavrakti, elves, and humans. His first breakthrough came after his sixty-sixth creation, which he immediately duplicated. Sixty-six and Sixty-seven would eventually call themselves by different names: Odon and Oxon. They were the first true great evokers of The Real. But they were not perfect.

Maf continued his research, creating more and more beings. Finally, he created a being he dubbed Ninety-one, who could effortlessly wield eight of the twelve powers. Unfortunately, it was too much for Ninety-one to handle, and he went mad. Maf sacrificed himself destroying Ninety-one.

All seemed lost. That is until two more of Maf's creations were discovered in the temple where he

had hidden for so long. The ninety-second creation was a man who lacked magical powers. And the ninety-third creation was a boy who was more powerful than even Ninety-one; potentially more powerful than anything in the Cosmos. Although Ninety-two lacked the power of those who came before him, he was good and just. He protected the boy, Ninety-three, and taught him what it meant to be human. For this reason, Ninety-three is the perfect creation; he contains the power of the titans, the danaavrakt, the elves, and humans. But he also has empathy, fear, and love.

The boy, Ninety-three, is the Last of the Mafti. And he must be protected at all costs.

Where Must the Characters Go?

Escaping The Other is easier said than done. There are three ways to do it:

- The characters can travel to the Aerie of Judgment, home of the servants of Usteus, The God of Judgment. If the characters can convince the Usteusian celestials to give them access to The Tunnel, they can travel through The Tunnel back to the Real. The Goddess of Light warns that Usteus' servants do not permit purely evil or chaotic creatures anywhere near the Aerie.
- The three remaining failabras, Maaso, Onet, and Imidio, can create a portal to the Real. Unfortunately, Imidio was captured by the shadow goblins of Dakh Wabrizz who seek to drain the celestial whale of its powers. The characters will have to travel to Dakh Wabrizz and rescue Imidio. Details of failabras are included in Appendix D.
- The umbra of the Shores of Despair are rumored to have an artifact that can open a temporary door to The Real. However, it's believed to be highly unstable and dangerous to any creature that uses it.

Part 3a. The Aerie of Judgment

The characters travel back into The Other to find the Aerie of Judgment, home of the servants of Usteus. They join Dario de Luca on a shadowstuff sailing ship and head into the Abyss of Munnola.

The Abyss of Munnola

The Abyss of Munnola is a chaotic zone of liquid and gaseous shadow.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Abyss of Munnola is a realm of chaotic shadowstuff, liquid, gaseous, and solid. Their first day in the Abyss, the majority of their surroundings are similar to those in The Black Cauldron. However, as they navigate the Abyss, they will may find areas of gaseous shadow, solid shadow, or everything in between.

Navigating. When the characters and Dario first enter the Abyss of Munnola, have the players designate one party member as the navigator. The navigator might be an NPC such as Dario or Erathaol. The party can switch its navigator day to day.

At the start of each new day in the Abyss of Munnola, the navigator tells the GM what their destination is. Then, the GM makes a Charisma (Survival) check—Charisma, as one’s sense-of-self, is a much more dominant attribute within The Other than one’s ability to perceive and make decisions—on behalf of the navigator. Refer to the Navigating the Abyss of Munnola table below to determine the result of the check.

If the party achieves the “Destination found!” outcome, they arrive exactly where they intended to. Otherwise, they end up in another part of the Abyss of Munnola and must spend another day navigating the Abyss.

Random Encounters. The Abyss of Munnola is just as dangerous—if not more so—as The Black Cauldron. Each day that the characters are in

Navigating the Abyss of Munnola.

Check Result	Outcome
5 or less	The party is lost and attract the attention of a dangerous creature. Roll on the Abyss of Munnola Random Encounters table.
6-9	The party is lost. Subtract 5 from the next navigation check.
10-14	The party is no closer to reaching its destination.
15-19	The party is one step closer to reaching its destination. Add 5 to the next navigation check.
20-24	The party is very close to reaching its destination. Add 10 to the next navigation check that they make.
25+	Destination found

Abyss of Munnola Encounters.

2d8	Encounter
2	A 1d8 x 5 square-foot island made of solid shadow.
3	2 cloakers
4	1d4 liquid shadow elementals (see page 36)
5	3d4 will-o’-wisps
6	2d6 shadow goblins on a shadow sailing vessel.
7	2 wraiths
8	2d6 + 1 shadows
9	1d4 specters
10	2 kraldoses
11	2d4 fadraxes
12	Collapsing columns of solid shadowstuff.*
13	Ghostfire.*
15	Obsidian coral.*
14	Wail of Munnola.*
16	Whirlpool of liquid shadow (see page 36).

the Abyss, roll a d20. On a result of 17-20 a random encounter occurs. Refer to the Abyss of Munnola Encounters table on this page to determine what the characters encounter. Encounters marked with an asterisk are described after the table.

Collpasing Columns of Solid Shadowstuff. A “field” of massive, 100-foot tall columns of solid shadowstuff rise from the water then collapse back down. If the party goes around, subtract 5 from the next navigation check that the party makes.

Otherwise, one of the characters

must make a DC 15 Intelligence check using proficiency in water vehicles. On a successful check, the party successfully navigates the columns without getting hit. Otherwise, a column comes crashing down onto the party’s ship. The ship is destroyed and each character must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving, taking 4d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. If stranded, collectors show up in 1d4 days to rescue the characters.

Ghostfire. Ghostfire is a strange phenomenon where light and shadow

combine and create an effect that looks like gray flames. The navigator must decide if the group goes around or goes through the coral. If the party goes around, subtract 5 from the next navigation check that the party makes.

Otherwise, one of the characters must make a DC 15 Intelligence check using proficiency in water vehicles. On a successful check, the party successfully navigates the ghostfire without being affected. Otherwise, the ship runs into the ghostfire. Each living creature on the ship must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) necrotic plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Obsidian Coral. The ship comes into a field of sharp obsidian sticking out of the liquid shadow. The navigator must decide if the group goes around or goes through the coral. If the party goes around, subtract 5 from the next navigation check that the party makes.

Otherwise, one of the characters must make a DC 15 Intelligence check using proficiency in water vehicles. On a successful check, the party successfully navigates the coral without running aground. Otherwise, the ship becomes stuck in the coral. If stranded, collectors show up in 1d4 days to rescue the characters.

Wail of Mannola. Strange cries that resemble humanoid wailing travels over the liquid shadow. Any creature that hears the wailing must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a creature's hit

points drop to 0 and the creature remains unconscious as long as the party remains within the area of the wailing, even if it regains hit points. On a successful saving throw, a creature takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage. A creature who succeeds on their initial saving throw or the effect ends for it is immune to the wailing for 24 hours.

The wailing continues for 1d4 minutes. During that time, there is a 50% chance the characters encounter 1d4 specters.

The Aerie of Judgment

Eventually, the characters traverse the Abyss of Munnola and arrive at The Aerie of Judgment, home to the Usteusian Celestials.

Area Description

The Aerie of Judgment has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Aerie of Judgment is a colossal, 1-mile diameter sphere of shadowstuff pocked with numerous caves, cliffs, and other passages. In many ways, it resembles a hornets' nest, especially since the two sects of Usteusian celestials—the punishers and liberators—buzz about it like insects. There are numerous ledges that the characters can land their ship and disembark. Unafraid of the characters (or anything, for that matter), the Servants of Usteus allow the characters to approach the Aerie without confrontation.

The Aerie itself is a vast network of tunnels headed in all directions. Most of the walls are carved from solid shadowstuff although there are slick pockets of liquid shadow throughout as well as dense, dark mist throughout.

Light. A stark juxtaposition to Eqqaros, the Aerie of Judgment lacks light of any sort (the celestials don't need it). The characters will have to have darkvision or their own sources of light in order to see their way through the Aerie.

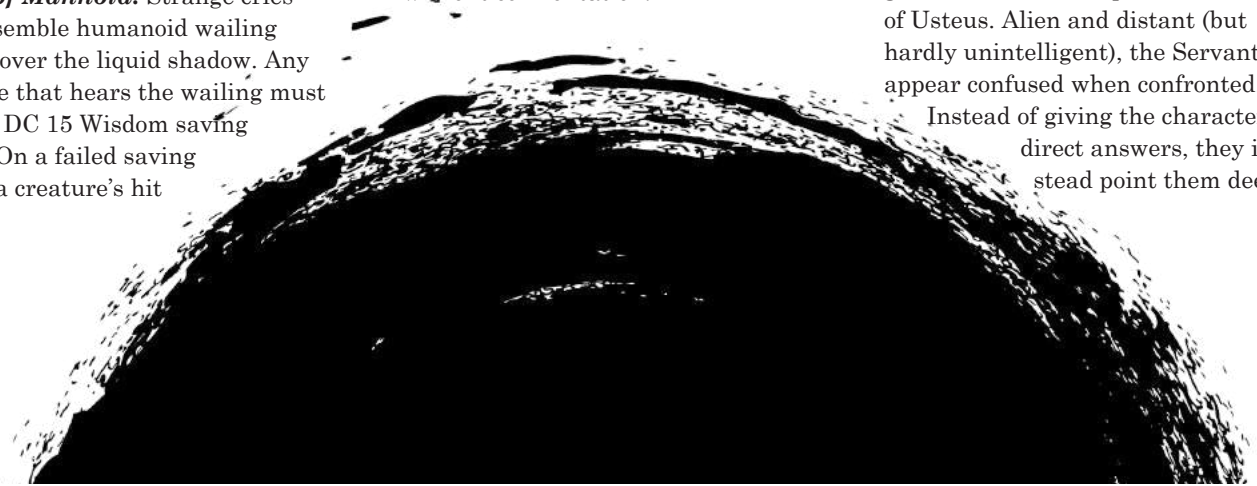
Sounds. Not only does the Aerie of Judgment look like a hornets' nest, it sounds like one, too. The Servants of Usteus speak mostly in Beste to each other which can sound a lot like buzzing or burning paper to those unfamiliar with the language. The punishers who move through tunnels often drag their massive mauls behind them which can sound a bit like nails on a chalkboard. Meanwhile, liberators click their claws together and blink their multiple sets of eyes as they slink behind the characters, observing them.

Creature Information

The Aerie of Judgment is home to hundreds of Usteusian celestials and Lost Ones seeking help from the Servants of Usteus just as the characters are.

Asking For Help. The characters' goal is to ask the help of the Servants of Usteus. Alien and distant (but hardly unintelligent), the Servants appear confused when confronted.

Instead of giving the characters direct answers, they instead point them deeper



into the Aerie (see the section titled Usteus below).

Evil and Chaos. The Servants of Usteus are diametrically opposed to creatures of opposite alignments than they. The liberators refuse to help creatures whose alignment is evil, and will even go as far as to threaten those of Neutral Evil alignment. Meanwhile, the punishers attack first and ask questions later when they come face to face with purely chaotic creatures. Should Neutral Evil or Chaotic Neutral characters be in the party, those characters will find themselves in grave danger.

As a party with characters of these alignments approach the Aerie, and so they aren't demolished the moment they set foot in the Aerie, have one or two Servants approach the ship and command them to leave in the Beste tongue (Dario can translate). Unless the characters can hide the alignments of those characters, they will not be allowed to enter the Aerie of Judgment nor will they be able to convince the Servants of Usteus to give them access to The Tunnel; not without being attacked by literally hundreds of celestials. The characters must find another way back to The Real.

Usteus

As the characters go deeper into the Aerie of Judgment, they eventually come across a chamber nearly 500-foot in diameter with hundreds of tunnels connecting to it. The servants of Usteus buzz around the center where a single, globule of liquid shadow floats at the chamber's center like its nucleus.

As the characters approach, the liquid shadow globule changes shapes becoming a head with two faces.

"I am Usteus," says the liquid shadow. "And I know why you have come."

Creature Description

Usteus is not actually in the Aerie of Judgment, but the God of Judgment can speak through its globule.

What Does Usteus Want? Usteus never makes preemptive decisions. Instead, he observes the situation from all possible angles, then carefully considers it. Once a decision is made, The God of Judgment sticks with it. And there is never a "gray area" with Usteus; things are always black and white.

Usteus wants the characters to make their case for using The Tunnel. The best way for them to do this is to appeal to Usteus' liberator side. Have the players make persuasive arguments on behalf of their characters. Then have one character act as a representative of the party. That character must make a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the character tries to appeal to Usteus' good side, they can make the check with advantage. If successful, Usteus agrees to let the characters use The Tunnel to return to The Real.

What Does Usteus Know? Usteus knows who the characters are and knows their alignments. If a chaotic or evil character somehow made it this far into the Aerie, he will not listen to anything that they have to say; furthermore, all persuasion checks made to convince Usteus will be made with disadvantage in the company of Neutral Evil or Chaotic Neutral characters.

The Tunnel

After the characters convince Usteus to let them use The Tunnel, he tasks 9 liberators to travel with the characters through The Tunnel. From there, the globule of darkness collapses in on itself and becomes a "blister of color" that constantly explodes then implodes. Essentially, The Tunnel is a *gate* spell that will deliver the characters back to The Real. Proceed to the Wrap Up for details on what

happens to the characters once they travel through The Tunnel.

Part 3b. Dahk Wabrizz

Goblin for "Dark City", Dahk Wabrizz is the home of the shadow goblins of The Other. The goblins were pulled into The Other nearly three hundred years ago. They've since evolved to their surroundings. Furthermore, they've continued their crusade against non-goblinoid creatures.

The characters must invade Dakh Wabrizz and reclaim the failabra Imidio. The Goddess in Light and Dario de Luca suggest that the characters do so with the help of the arnitiko elves of Unes Ise Serin.

Back Into The Shadow

The characters must first sail back through The Black Cauldron and reach Ise. Refer to page 36 for details on The Black Cauldron, its dimensions, terrain, and any encounters that may occur. With Dario de Luca at the helm, it will take the party 1d4 days to reach Unes Ise Serin.

Unes Ise Serin

Nearly three hundred years ago, a portal opened in the center of the Olythyrian village of Ise Serin and pulled its inhabitants into The Other. Many of the elves perished. Some escaped The Other and returned to The Real. Then, there were a few who rebuilt their livelihoods in The Other. These elves renamed their village to Unes Ise Serin and now act as the first line of defense between the dangerous creatures who inhabitant The Black Cauldron and Eqqaros, the City of Light.

Area Description

Unes Ise Serin has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Unes Ise Serin is a city built onto a 2,500-foot diameter island of shadowstuff that floats on the liquid shadow. Sail-

ing vessels carved from white wood and shadowstuff are tethered to the island's edges.

Groves of tall, pale trees with glowing fruit cover the island—like the pale arnitiko elves who live in Unes Ise Serin, the trees have adapted to their new environment. Animals such as deer, squirrels, and other forest creatures can be found on the island, too, and they, just like anything else that survives in The Other, lack color of any sort.

At the center of the island's grove are the 20-30 homes of the arnitiko elves. The homes are made out of the wood from the pale trees as well as shadowstuff and even items that traveled with the first generation of arnitiko elves who entered The Other three centuries ago.

Light. The trees of the island provide dim light throughout. Still, much of the island is bathed in shadow. Arnitikos do not need light to see in The Other, nor do they require fire for warmth or food. Therefore, there are no sources of light beyond the light created by the trees.

A single piece of fruit plucked from a pale tree continues to glow for 24 hours, providing bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet. The fruit itself has no taste, and any non-arnitiko that eats the fruit must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, all of the creature's color is drained from its body for 24 hours. At the end of the 24 hour period, the creature must repeat its saving throw. If it fails its saving throw a second time, it becomes an arnitiko.

Sounds & Smells. The arnitikos are usually silent, preferring to watch and listen more than speak. The colorless trees' leaves occasionally shift and shake (on their own, as there's no wind) and the fruit sometimes gives off a soft ringing sound that echoes all over the island. Like most of The Other, Unes Ise Serin smells strongly of chalk.

Creature Information

The arnitikos are expecting the characters. Their chief, Sihnton Herfiel, greets the characters at the Shores of Shadow, explaining that he was made aware of the situation. Already, the arnitikos are preparing to storm Dahk Wabrizz to create a diversion so the characters can save the failabra.

Sihnton (LN male arnitiko **gladiator**) travels with the characters along with 20 **arnitiko** soldiers on four Serinese sailing vessels.



Dahk Wabrizz

The arnitikos and the characters arrive in the shadow goblin's city. The characters have been given directions to where the arnitikos believe they are keeping the failabra, Imidio. Sihnton suggests that the characters sneak onto another part of Dahk Wabrizz's platform.

Area Description

Sihnton and his arnitikos attack Dahk Wabrizz from the front while the characters must maneuver to the rear of the platform.

Dimensions & Terrain. Dahk Wabrizz is built atop a 200-foot wide platform of solid shadowstuff that stands 100 feet above the liquid shadow on five, 20-foot thick pillars. From a distance, it looks like a great spider or octopus. The platform has a few mounds on top in which the shadow goblins live, but for the most part, the goblins live inside the thick platform itself, their homes accessed by holes cut into the shadow.

Pillars. The five shadowstuff pillars that surround Dahk Wabrizz have handholds carved into them that the shadow goblins use to climb to the surface of the platform. Therefore, the pillars do not require ability checks to climb. However, the going is still slow, thanks to the storm. Unless a character has a climbing speed, they move at a rate of 2 feet per 1 foot of movement speed. If using the Dash action, it will take a character with a movement speed of 30 feet 3-4 rounds to reach the top of the landing zone. And a character with a movement speed of 25 feet will take 4-5 rounds.

Shadow Storms. Shadow storms constantly rock Dahk Wabrizz, raining liquid shadow on the characters and arnitikos as they approach. Use the rules for strong wind and heavy precipitation (Chapter 5 of the *DMG*) while exposed to the exterior of Dahk Wabrizz.

Creature Information

Dario de Luca and the characters will approach the landing zone while the arnitikos distract the goblins from the front. Even with the majority of the Dahkish forces focused on the arnitikos, the characters will still run into some trouble.

In the landing zone, there are six **shadow goblins** keeping watch. The shadow goblins use a ballista (see Siege Weapons in Chapter 8 of the *DMG*), targeting de Luca's ship's hull. The hull has an AC of 13. If the hull takes 50 damage or more, it starts to sink.

Once the characters are past the shadow goblins, they can enter the Well of Haunts.

The Well of Haunts

The Well of Haunts is a cavern that descends into the platform upon which Dahk Wabrizz was built. Within the cavern, the shadow goblins keep the failabra, Imidio. There is a map of the cavern on the following page.

Area Description

Unless stated otherwise, the Well of Haunts has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Well of Haunts is a “natural” cavern found on the side of the platform upon which Dahk Wabrizz was built. The walls, ceilings, and floors are made of solid shadowstuff which feels like soft rock to the touch. Most of the tunnels are fairly wide with plenty of clearance, however, there are unusual ascents and descents all throughout.

Light. The goblins of Gar Wabrizz have no need for light and prefer to keep things dark. However, Imidio’s blood spilled throughout **areas 1** and **2** offer enough dim light for creatures who lack darkvision to see their way around the tunnels.

Sounds & Smells. The moment the characters enter the Well of Haunts, they can hear the moans of the gargantuan celestial, Imidio, from within. It’s relatively easy to follow the failabra’s sounds to the cave in which it is being kept.

1 - Entrance

There is only the one entrance into the Well of Haunts.

Area Description. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The floors of the entrance descend at a steep, 45-degree angle. It is also the narrowest part of the cavern.

Light. There are scrapes all along the side of it where the goblins dragged Imidio into the cavern. The scrapes have traces of dimly-glowing blood, spilled by the failabra.

Creature Information. There are four **shadow goblins** guarding the entrance. They wait at the bottom of the curve, hiding around the bend. Recognizing that Dahk Wabrizz is currently under attack, they keep their eyes and ears open for intruders hoping to liberate the failabra.



2 - The Failabra

The majority of this cavern is taken up by the 100-foot long failabra Imidio’s body.

Area Description. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. Getting around the cavern is difficult as Imidio’s body takes up a lot of space. The characters and goblins will have to fight on top of the celestial whale or on its sides. Fighting on its sides, however, imposes disadvantage to creatures that are Medium size as they will have to shimmy beside it. Large and larger creatures are unable to shimmy through.

Binds. The failabra is bound to the floor of the cavern by ropes made of shadowstuff. Each rope has an AC 13 and 2 hp.

Light. The failabra’s glowing blood is everywhere. The entire area is cast in dim light.

Creature Information. The **failabra** is bound to the floor of the cavern and its head is covered with a shroud made of pliable shadowstuff, preventing it from seeing or using its telekinesis or psionic blast. There are 10 **shadow goblins** protecting Imidio led by a **shadow goblin ripper**. See Appendix D for details on these new monsters.

Freeing The Failabra. The best move for the characters to make in this combat is to remove the shroud from the Failabra’s head. Once the failabra is free of the shroud, it will make short work of the shadow goblins using its psionic blast to melt their minds and then its tail to smash those that remain.

Using its telepathy, Imidio thanks the characters for helping it. Free of its binds, it encourages the characters to step into its mouth (where they will be protected). The failabra then shim-mies out of the cavern and escapes. It then flies back to Eqqaros to rejoin its fellow celestials.

3 - Failabra Juice

The shadow goblins have been drawing cerebral fluids from Imidio. They are storing barrels of the stuff within this cavern.

Area Description. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. There are seven barrels of cerebral fluids collected from Imidio. A creature who drinks the fluid may have an adverse reaction to the substance (GM's discretion).

Light. This cavern is completely dark. However, the cerebral fluids glow in the dark.

Creature Information. A shadow goblin named Zel has been sampling the cerebral fluids. Zel hides in the darkness of this cavern, babbling to itself. Zel's head is four times the size of a normal goblin's and his eyes bulge from his skull. For the most part, his body has begun to wither. Stones of shadowstuff float around him as his errant psychic abilities are starting to manifest. Zel is a non-combatant. He only stares at the ceiling and counts to eight in Beste over and over again.

4 - Barracks

The goblins who watch over the failabra rest in this cavern. Because the goblin village is on high alert, all of the goblins are in other places of the cavern.

Area Description. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. There are tendrils of pliable shadowstuff that extend from wall to wall. The goblins

use their large, hooked toes to hang onto the tendrils while they sleep upside down.

Treasure. There is a *folding boat* kept in this cavern, shoved into one of the corners. The boat is made from shadowstuff.

Return to Eqqaros

Having saved the failabra, Imidio, the characters and the surviving arnikos return to Eqqaros. However, it soon becomes apparent that there is something wrong with the failabra. During its flight, it starts to drift. It is clear that it has been weakened by the goblins' experiments upon it. By the time Imidio reaches Eqqaros, the celestial whale crashes into the liquid shadow just in front of the location. Immediately, Eqqaros' fellow failabras rush to its aid, using their telekinesis to lift the creature from the shadow.

Bad News

The characters are encouraged to wander around Eqqaros while Imidio rests. After a day, the characters learn troubling news from one of the citizens of Eqqaros (Dario, Omnaweahl or Oxon, or the other two failabras): if the failabras open a Door to the Real, the strain will likely kill Imidio.

The Door to the Real

No matter what the characters say, Imidio understands how important their mission is. Against the protests of the other two failabras and even the Goddess in Light, Imidio starts the ritual to create the Door to the Real. Reluctantly, Onet and Maaso join Imidio. Dying, Imidio entreats the characters to run through the gate the three create.

The moment the characters escape through the gate, Imidio collapses and dies. Proceed to the Wrap Up for details on what happens to the characters once they travel through The Door to the Real.

Part 3c. The Shores of Despair

The Shores of Despair are home to the umbra, vile creatures recreated from destroyed undead. They are led by their chaotic war chief, Desperon, who makes his home in a dangerous settlement

Back Into The Shadow

The characters must first sail back through The Black Cauldron and reach the Shores of Despair, home of the umbra. Refer to page 6 for details on The Black Cauldron, its dimensions, terrain, and any encounters that may occur. With Dario de Luca at the helm, it will take the party 2d4 days to reach the Shores of Despair.

The Shores of Despair

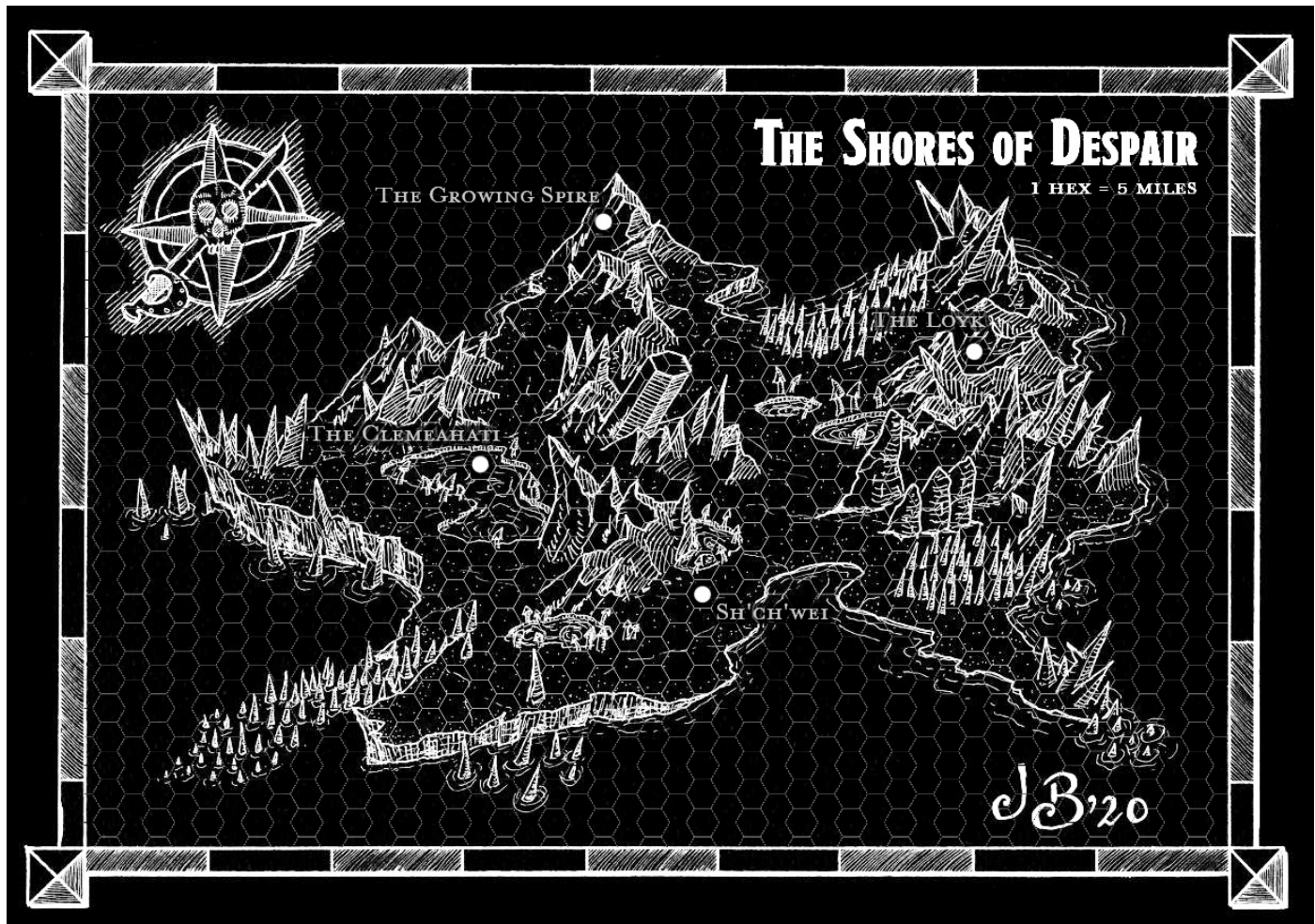
The Shores of Despair is the name for the only true solid "continent" in The Other.

Area Description

A map of The Shores of Despair is located on page 48. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Shores of Despair is approximately 32,000-square-miles of solid shadowstuff and towering, black pillars of night that rise from The Black Cauldron like a festering rash. It could almost be considered beautiful if it wasn't so dreadfully evil. While everything in The Shores of Despair are made of shadowstuff, it consists of four main types of terrain: black peaks, dark mire, obsidian forests, and shadow flats.

Black Peaks. The mountains of The Other aren't formed the same way that they are in The Real as there is a distinct lack of geological activity, wind, and water in The Other. Instead, they are created from coalesced necrotic energy. The greater the necrotic energy in a place, the greater the mountains that form. Black peaks jut from the ground in random shapes



and sizes. One mountain of shadow might be an octagonal cylinder that rises thousands of feet into the air. Another might appear long, flat, and filled with razor-sharp spikes made of shadowstuff.

Dark Mire. In locations where liquid shadow pools, dark mires form. A dark mire looks like a black swamp, but instead of trees and other types of real-world foliage, dark mires are covered by necrofungi, a volatile type of plant that grows within The Other. Some of the necrofungi looks like black moss, blanketing the ground like a carpet. Other necrofungi are like tall, cylindrical mushrooms whose narrow caps hiss and moan. Even the umbra who live in The Shores of Despair avoid its dark mires.

Obsidian Forests. In places where the shadowstuff takes on a hard, glossy, glass-like nature, obsidian forests grow. An obsidian forest is less a forest than it is a collection of jagged, twenty-foot high spires of dark crystal. Although less dangerous than the black peaks and dark mires, they are still difficult to traverse nonetheless.

Shadow Flats. Finally, the “safest” way of travel through The Shores of Despair is through its shadow flats. Just as the name implies, the shadow flats are long stretches of empty territory with a ground of solid shadowstuff.

Traveling Through The Shores of Despair

On the map of The Shores of Despair, each hex measures 5 miles across. If

the party is moving at a normal pace, they can cross through 1 hex of black peaks or dark mire per day, 2 hexes of obsidian forest, and 3 hexes of shadow flats.

If the party is moving at a fast pace, they can cross through 3 hexes of obsidian forest and 4 hexes of shadow flats per day. To move at a fast pace through black peaks or dark mire, the party’s navigator must make a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check. If the check succeeds, the party can move one additional hex that day. Otherwise, the party moves through only 1 hex. Regardless of the check, the party still suffers a -5 penalty to passive Wisdom (Perception) scores.

If the party moves at a slow pace, they only cross through 1 hex of obsidian forest and 2 hexes of shadow

flats per day. To move at a slow pace through black peaks or dark mire, the party's navigator must make a successful DC 10 Charisma (Survival) check. If the check succeeds, the party can move through 1 hex as normal. If the check fails, the party does not make any progress that day. Regardless of the check result, the party is able to use stealth while moving at a slow pace.

Navigating The Shores of Despair

Have the players designate one party member as the navigator. The navigator might be an NPC, such as a Dario, and the party can switch its navigator day to day.

At the start of each new travel day, the GM makes a Charisma (Survival) check on behalf of the navigator. The result of the check determines whether or not the party becomes lost over the course of the day. The DC for the check is based on the day's most common terrain: DC 15 for shadow flats, or DC 20 for all other types of terrain. If the check succeeds, the navigator knows exactly where the party is on the players' map of The Shores of Shadow.

If the check fails, the party becomes lost. Each hex on the map is surrounded by six other hexes; whenever a lost party moves 1 hex, roll a d6 to randomly determine which neighboring hex the party enters, and do not divulge the party's location to the players. While the party is lost, players can't pinpoint the group's location on their map of The Shores of Shadow. The next time a navigator succeeds on a Wisdom (Survival) check made to navigate, reveal the party's actual location to the players.

Random Encounters

The Shores of Shadow is a dangerous place. Random encounters with the umbra and the horrid creatures that make their home there are inevitable. In addition, the characters may

discover important locations or NPCs who can help them find discover clues that lead to the artifact rumored to be there.

While the characters are exploring or camping in The Shores of Despair, roll a d20 three times per day of game time, checking for encounters each morning, afternoon, and evening or night. An encounter occurs on a roll of 16 or higher. Roll percentile dice and check the Encounters in the Shores of Despair table on page 50 for the terrain appropriate to where the characters are.

If your players tire of random encounters, make such encounters less common by having them occur on a roll of 18 or higher, or only 20. Note that these random encounters aren't tailored to the characters' level. If the characters encounter hostile creatures beyond their ability to defeat, give them opportunities to run, hide negotiate, or otherwise avoid certain death.

The Village of Sh'ch'wei

The characters arrive at the umbra village of Sh'ch'wei. Its location is on the map of "the Encounters in the Shores of Despair table on page 50. The umbra are dangerous, but crafty characters might realize that if there's any creature that lives in The Shores of Despair that will know where the artifact is located, it's likely one of the umbra.

Note that this village description will work for any random encounter result of Umbra Village on The Shores of Despair Encounters table.

Area Description

The village of Sh'ch'wei has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The village consists of a dozen round structures built of shadowstuff. The structures look like 4-foot high walls with a simple opening and no roof. All of the buildings surround a pillar of black glass at the center of the village.

The Arnitika. An arnitika is chained to the pillar. The umbra have been torturing the arnitiko and draining her strength. At first glance, she looks like an undead creature of some sort. Her Strength score is down to 2; her pale skin wraps around her flesh like tight leather and she is too weak to stand or speak.

Sounds & Smells. Unless they are in war mode, the umbra hum a bizarre dissonant note that tickles the ear of any non-umbra creature that hears it. For them, this is their way of praying to Desperon, the high chief of the Umbra who rules the shadow elves from his place of power, the Growing Spire. The entire village reeks of chalk and festering flesh (from the dying arnitika).

Creature Information

The village is home to 25 umbra led by an umbra night chief.

What Do They Want? The umbra only want war. The moment they notice that there are invaders, they attack with their full might. Umbra have no children or elderly, therefore, they have nothing more to protect than the glory of Desperon. Thus, they always fight to the death.

The umbra aren't completely without fear, however. Radiant energy and sunlight is torturous to them, so much so, in fact, that if the characters apply either during interrogations, the characters will have advantage on ability contests to get the umbra to reveal what they know.

What Do They Know? Although no single umbra will know exactly where the artifact that the characters seek is located, they know that there are at least two creatures who might. The first, of course, is Desperon. However, the Growing Spire is heavily defended by hundreds of umbra, shadows, and other creatures of the dark. All of them will gladly perish to protect their chief. The second creature is the Loyk, a strange, aberrant creature that lives within the black peaks. All

THE SHORES OF SHADOW

umbra know where the Loyk lives and can point to its location on a map. They describe the Loyk's mountain as looking like the "talons of a great creature grasping at the infinite nothing above."

The Loyk

Once the characters learn about the Loyk, they can set out to find its lair.

Area Description

The Loyk's lair has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Loyk lives within the black peaks of The Shores of Shadow surrounded by three spires that stretch into the sky like the talons of a great eagle. Stairs were carved into the solid shadow-stuff leading up to the Loyk's lair.

Red Fog. A strange, glowing, red fog seeps from the Loyk's lair. The fog is harmless but certainly off-putting.

Sounds & Smells. Within 1 mile of the Loyk's lair, the characters can hear whispers at the edges of their minds. The whispers are in the languages that they understand best, but just as soon as they are spoken, the characters can't remember what they said. Instead, they are only left with a single emotion: loss. The closer the characters get to the Loyk's lair, the louder and more frequent the whispers become, then, just as they are about to step within the Loyk's lair, the sounds stop.

Creature Information

Stepping into the Loyk's lair, they immediately see what it is. The Loyk, a danaavrakt, appears as a vaguely female humanoid creature with three arms, three legs, and one head on a long, slender neck. Its flesh is dark purple and it has no distinguishable features beyond dozens of pale, white eyes with blue irises covering almost every inch of its body—not even a mouth or ears.

The Loyk is a danaavrakt (**rak-shasa**) with telepathy out to 120 ft.

Encounters in The Shores of Despair.

Encounter	Black Peaks	Dark Mires	Obsidian Forests	Shadow Flats
1d4 barbed devils	01—02	01	01—02	01
1d4 basilisks	03—10	—	03—07	02—04
1 black pudding	11—14	02—10	—	05—07
1 bone devil	15	—	08	08
1 cloaker	16—17	11—15	09—13	09
1d4 chuul	—	16—20	14—19	10—13
2d8 darkmantles	18—23	21—23	20—26	14—16
1d10 + 3 dretches	24—25	—	27—30	17—19
2d6 duergar	26—30	—	—	—
1d4 doppelgangers	31	—	31—32	20—21
1d4 fadraxes*	32—35	24—28	33—36	22—26
1d6 gargoyles	36—39	29—32	37—42	27—28
1 ghost	40	33—34	43	29
1 ghast leading 1d6 ghouls	41—46	35—40	44—50	30—35
1d4 gibbering mouthers	45	41—42	—	36—37
1d4 + 1 gray oozes	45—50	43—50	51—53	—
1d4 gricks	51—53	—	—	—
1d4 grimlocks	54—55	—	—	—
1 kraldos*	—	51—58	—	—
1d4 mummies	—	—	54—56	38—39
1 or 3 night hags	—	59	57—59	40
1 nightmare	56—59	60	60	41
1 oni	60—61	61	61	42
1 revenant	—	62	62	43
1 roper	62—65	63—65	63—66	—
3d6 shadows	66—74	66—74	67—76	44—54
1 shadow behemoth*	—	75	—	—
1d6 shadow goblins* <i>led by a shadow goblin ripper*</i>	75—79	76—79	77—79	55—63
2d4 specters	80—82	80—82	78—80	64
2d6 umbra*	83—91	83—87	81—89	65—89
1d4 vampire spawn	92	88	90	90
1 vrock	93	89	—	—
3d4 will-o'-wisps	94—97	90-96	91—97	91—97
1 wraith	98—99	97—98	98—99	98—99
2 cloakers	00	99—00	00	00

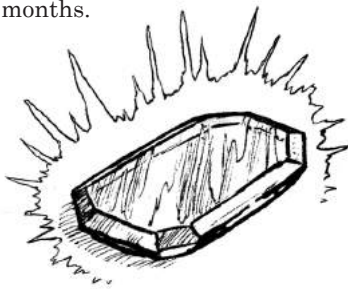
Monsters marked with an * are detailed in Appendix D.

It speaks to the characters through telepathic whispers.

What Does The Loyk Want? The Loyk has not yet decided its stance on whether or not it wants to help the characters find Ninety-three or destroy them before they are able. When the characters meet the Loyk, they must offer it something to persuade it to help them in their cause. Unless the characters have something better to trade, the Loyk will give the characters three potential tasks that they can perform in exchange for the information. The Loyk does not explain the benefits or drawbacks of any of these tasks beforehand, only the action that the character must take. See the Loyk's Offers sidebar for details.

What Does the Loyk Know? The Loyk knows the item that the characters seek: a white stone called silingfashi shi. Although most silingfashi shi exists only in The Real, there is at least one fragment of it located in an ancient temple called The Clemeahati. The Loyk tells the characters where they can find the Clemeahati at the center of a dark mire. The Loyk explains that if the fragment is destroyed by intense force energy (such as a *disintegrate* spell) it will disrupt and create a hole back to The Real. The Loyk only shares this information if they perform one of the tasks above (or an equally as strange task of your own design).

Fighting the Loyk. The characters may seek to destroy the Loyk or attack it in order to make it reveal what it knows. The Loyk gladly demonstrates its might before the characters. If the Loyk is destroyed, it reforms somewhere in The Other in 1d4 months.



The Loyk's Offers

“Consume my vision.” The Loyk pulls an eyeball from its form and offers it to a character. If the character agrees and consumes it, the next round an eye grows from the character's palm. The eyeball functions exactly the same way as the *arcane eye* spell except that its duration is until dispelled. The eye remains until a *remove curse* or similar magic is cast upon the character. However, doing so is likely to anger the Loyk. As an added incentive, the character can use the eye to fire a beam of necrotic energy. If they do, they must target a creature that they can see within 60 feet of them. The target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + the character's proficiency bonus + its Constitution modifier. The target takes 2d6 necrotic damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. The necrotic damage the eye deals goes up by 1d6 when the character reaches 11th level (3d6), and again when the character reaches 17th level (4d6).

“Listen to my true voice.” If the character agrees, it must kneel before the Loyk. Once kneeling, the glowing, red fog that surrounds the Loyk's lair contracts and surrounds the character. The character's companions are unable to see their ally. Have the character that took up the Loyk's offer make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the other characters listen as the participating character screams from within the fog. Otherwise, the participating character remains silent during the ritual. Once the ritual is done, the Loyk vanishes along with the fog, leaving only the character behind. The Loyk has possessed the character but does not have control over the character. Instead, the character can hear the Loyk's voice in his or her head at all times. The character can mentally ask the Loyk questions (as if the Loyk was the respondent of an *augury* spell) and the character can also convince the Loyk to use its

innate magic. The character must make a Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, the Loyk allows the character to use one of its spells. The DC for the check is 18 for its at-will spells, 23 for its 3/day each spells, and 28 for its 1/day each spells. So long as the character remains possessed, its eyes are blue and move independent of each other (it has no effect on the character's sight, just looks really strange). The possession lasts until the character drops to 0 hit points, the Loyk ends it as a bonus action, or the Loyk is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the Loyk reforms in The Other.

“Show me death.” The Loyk offers a blade made of jagged obsidian. It will not tell the characters what they must do, only asking that they show it death. If the characters turn the blade on the Loyk, the blade shatters against its flesh. The Loyk scoffs and makes the same offer again. If the characters kill one of their own, the Loyk responds: “I am pleased.” The Loyk then revives the character. The revived character no longer has a shadow (a feature that they probably will not notice until they leave The Other) and the character is invisible to all undead creatures. On its turn, an undead creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the creature can see the character for as long as it maintains its concentration (as if concentrating on a spell). Additionally, the Loyk now owns the character's shadow. As long as the Loyk owns the character's shadow, it can use its action to force the character to make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character takes 7 (2d8) necrotic damage and is poisoned until the end of his or her next turn. The only way to free the character's shadow from the Loyk is to destroy the Loyk. Once the character's shadow returns, they are no longer invisible to undead creatures.



The Clemeahati

The Clemeahati was once a structure created by four dulons who believed that the answer to slowing the inevitable destruction of the Cosmos was hidden somewhere within The Other. Eventually, they succumbed to the same degenerative disease that kills all dulons. The dulons' servants placed the lifeless bodies of the dulons within a tomb beneath the temple and deserted the area.

Area Description

Unless stated otherwise, The Clemeahati has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The Clemeahati sits on a platform of shadowstuff at the center of a dark mire. The temple itself is not made of shadowstuff; instead, it is made of soft, pliable stone. If the characters were at the Tower of Burshai or deep in the

bowels of the Temple of Grihoo, they may recognize the building material as the same ones used in both those locations. The temple itself is a 45-foot diameter circular structure. The topmost level is an open-air forum accessible via a natural ramp of shadowstuff. The main level is accessible via a pair of doors. Finally, the temple has a secret lower level accessible via a secret staircase within the main level.

Light. Like the majority of The Other, there is no light here at The Clemeahati.

Sounds & Smells. Only the sloshing of the dark mire's waters can be heard at the ancient temple as well as the cries of the horrid creatures that infest the shadowy terrain. Instead of the chalk smell that pervades most of The Other, the area around The Clemeahati smells like burnt leather.

1A - Entrance

While the characters are free to climb up the sides of the shadowstuff cliffs surrounding the temple, it's easier to approach the temple from its front. The bases of four pillars destroyed long ago mark the path leading to The Clemeahati.

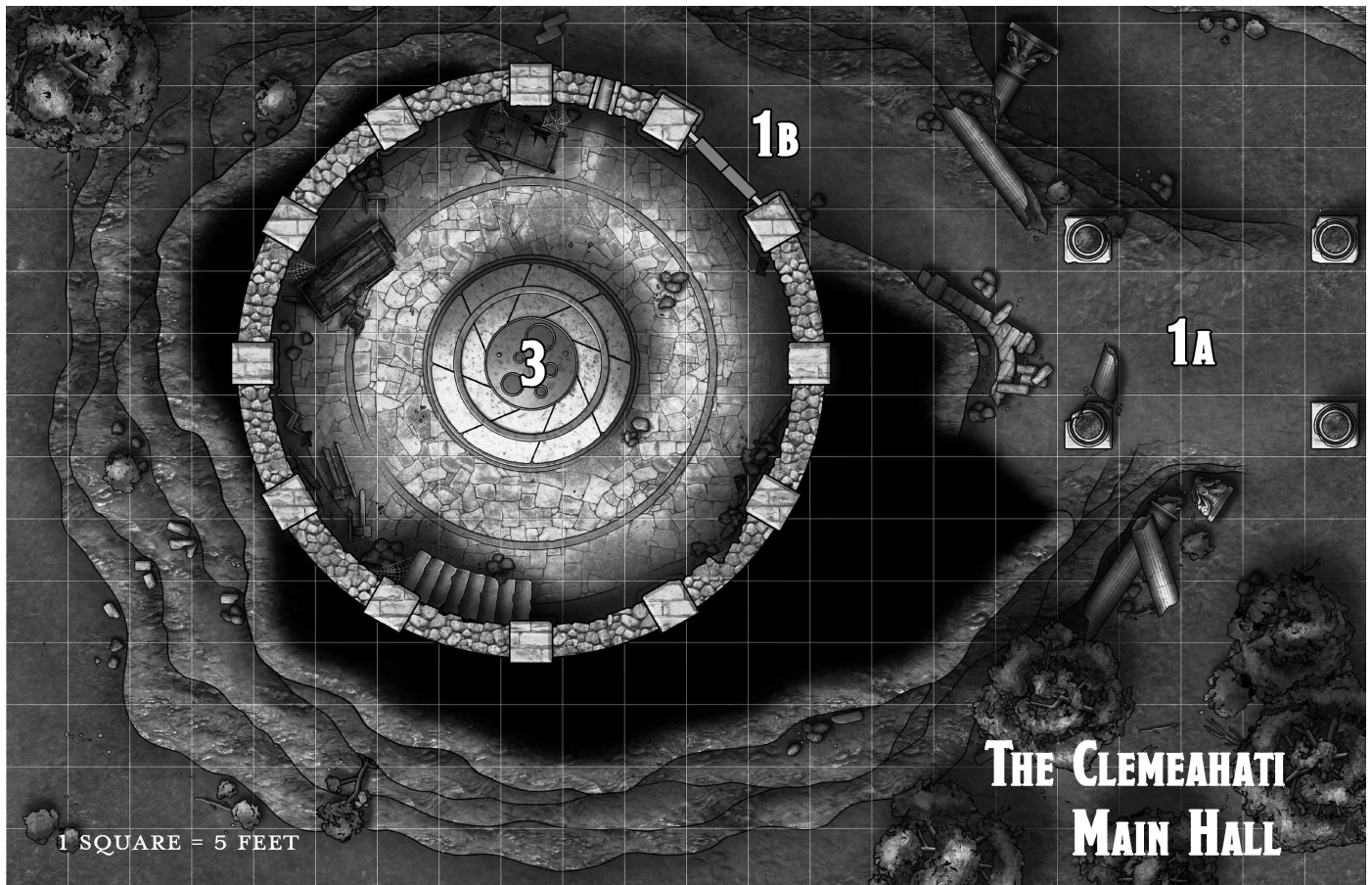
1B - Main Doors

The doors leading into the Main Level are locked shut.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Control Panel. Set into the wall beside the doors is a screen. Once upon a time, it opened the door. However, the screen no longer functions.

Doors. The front doors are made from soft steel that is unlike anything the characters have likely ever used or seen. The only way through the doors is with a successful DC 15 Strength check to pull them apart.



2 - The Forum

The top floor of The Clemeahati was once an open-air tower and forum.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The walls surrounding the forum stretch 20-feet upward. However, the forum lacks a ceiling.

Bleachers. There are two sets of bleachers in the forum, both positioned across from each other on either side of the fountain.

Fountain. At the center of the forum is what looks like a water fountain. However, the fountain does not hold water. Instead, it holds a gelatin-like globule of liquid shadow. If a character touches it, it wriggles slowly. Should a character place their hand into it, it will momentarily envelop the character's hand, then casually retract back into its dish.

Stairs. A staircase leads down into the temple's main level (area 3).

Statues. There were once four great statues that stood apart from each other. Two of the statues have since collapsed and lie in shatters on the floor. At first glance, the statues look to be representations of knights. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check recognizes that they look vaguely like the depictions of the Four Generals, the Gods of Presson's Enclave and The Summer Land (of course, any Pressonian will immediately recognize the statues).

What's unusual, however, is that a closer inspection of the statues reveals that while the statues look like the Four Generals in their armor and infamous helmets, the details look more organic. For example, Ilwyn's visor seems less like a helmet with

spikes, and more like the head of a one-eyed creature with a dozen horns on its brow. The four statues are made of the same, strange soft stone as the remainder of the temple.

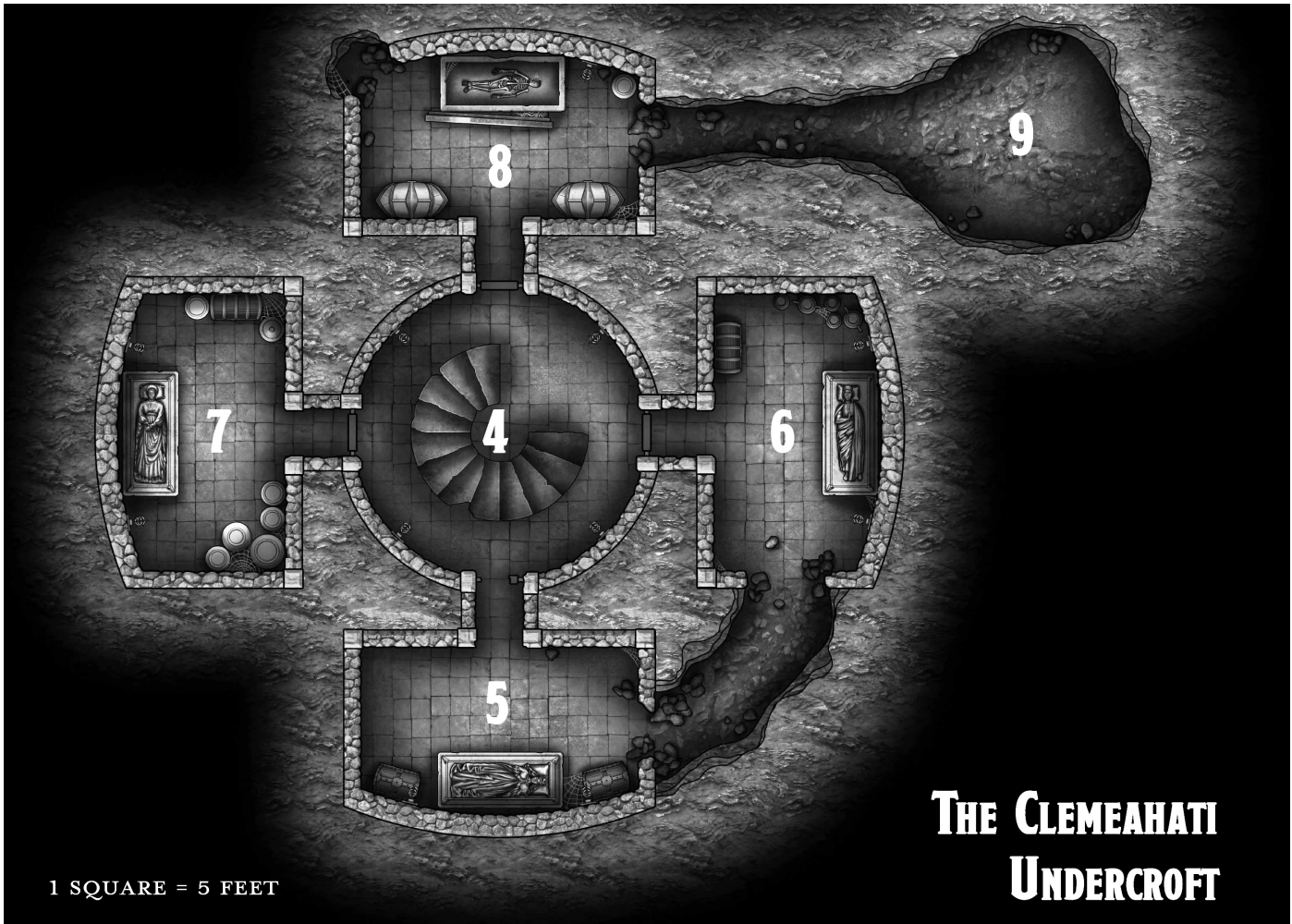
3 - Main Level

The main level was once used by the servants of the dulon to study and carry out the wishes of their aberrant masters.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The entire room is 45-feet in diameter and its floors, walls, and ceiling are made of the same, strange soft stone found throughout the rest of the temple.

Doors. The front doors are made from soft steel that is unlike anything the characters have likely ever used or seen. The only way through the doors is with a successful DC 15



Strength check to pull them apart.

Hatch. At the center of the room is a strange, beveled steel hatch. It is marked with various symbols. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 recognizes it as a map of the Casarian Cosmology. However, it contradicts any that the characters have seen before (unless they saw Qiu Xiang’s map in the museum’s basement in Chapter 7). The steel hatch is magically sealed and immune to all damage. The only way to open the hatch is to cast a spell from each school while within the chamber. Each time one of the schools of magic is cast in the chamber, one of the discs representing a plane of cosmology lights up.

If the characters lack one or more schools of magic, feel free to adjust the challenge as needed, requiring

only a few schools of magic. Alternatively, you make the hatch removable with a successful DC 25 Strength check, or another relevant skill.

Once the hatch is open, it reveals a spiral staircase that descends into the temple’s lowest level, down to **area 4**.

Staircase. A set of stairs leads up to the top level (**area 2**).

Wooden Furniture. Oddly, wooden furniture is scattered all over the room. Without wind or real water, the wood has not decayed while it has been in The Other. It is in the exact same state it was when it was left behind centuries ago.

Creature Information. There are six **shadows** lurking in the darkness of this chamber. They attack intruders on sight.

4 - Rotunda

The staircase from **area 3** leads into a rotunda.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The walls, floor, and ceiling are made of the same soft stone found throughout the rest of the temple.

Control Panels. Set into the wall beside each of the doors is a screen. If a dulon or the servant of one of the dulong waves its hand in front of the door, the door opens.

Doors. There are doors leading to **areas 6, 7, and 8** are sealed. However, they can be opened if a dulon’s hand is waved in front of the door’s respective control panel.

5 - Thinir's Tomb

This small, oddly shaped room is a tomb.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. A large hole has been blasted into the corner of the room, revealing the shadow-stuff behind the walls. The tunnel leads to **area 6**.

Chests. Flanking either side of the sarcophagus are two chests made of realstuff wood and iron. Both chests are empty.

Sarcophagus. A sarcophagus made of the same strange metal found throughout the temple rests against the wall opposite the door. The lid of the sarcophagus is extremely heavy. Two or more creatures with a combined Strength of 40 can use their actions to lift the lid away. Inside the sarcophagus is the withered body of a strange-looking humanoid. The creature has bluish-purple skin with tan, star-shaped blotches at random intervals. It has four arms and eight legs each with three joints. Each arm ends in three triple-jointed fingers. Its "head" extends from its neck like a soft mound, with a single, black double-lidded eye at its center. This was a dulon.

6 - Tuteus' Tomb

This small, oddly shaped room is a tomb.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. A large hole has been blasted into the corner of the room, revealing the shadow-stuff behind the walls. The tunnel leads to **area 5**.

Chest. A chest made of realstuff wood and iron is in the corner of the room opposite the tunnel through the wall. The chest is locked and trapped.

Antimatter Trap. Any creature who attempts to open the chest without first disabling its lock or attempts to disable the lock and fails the check

by 5 or more triggers an antimatter beam. The creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A target takes 27 (6d8) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, and a successful DC 15 Intelligence check using proficiency in Arcana disables it.

Lock. The lock is magically locked. Removing the lock requires a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. It can also be removed with a successful dispel magic spell cast upon it against a 5th-level spell.

Inside the chest is a long, metallic rod with three holes at one end. If a character places three of their fingers into the holes, the rod fires a beam of antimatter energy from the opposite end. The rod functions like an *anti-matter rifle* as described in Chapter 9 of the *DMG*. It holds 10 charges, but only 3 remain. If it is exposed to a 6-ounce fragment of silingfashi shi for 1 minute, it regains all of its charges.

Sarcophagus. A sarcophagus made of the same strange metal found throughout the temple rests against the wall opposite the door. The lid of the sarcophagus is extremely heavy. Two or more creatures with a combined Strength of 40 can use their actions to lift the lid away. Inside the sarcophagus is the withered body of a strange-looking humanoid. The creature has pale skin with multiple folds, almost like tree bark. Where its head would be are instead two thin tentacles that end in pink balls covered in stubbly, red hair. The creature has four arms and four legs, each with multiple joints. This creature was a dulon.

Scorch Marks. There is a large, black spot on the floor just in front of the treasure chest.

Urns. Small urns clutter the corners of the room. Within are the ashes of the dulon's servants.

7 - Ilwyn's Tomb

This small room is a tomb.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Unlike the other tombs, this area has not been disturbed since it was sealed hundreds of years ago.

Chest. A chest made of realstuff wood and iron is in the corner of the room opposite the tunnel through the wall. The chest is locked and trapped.

Antimatter Trap. Any creature who attempts to open the chest without first disabling its lock or attempts to disable the lock and fails the check by 5 or more triggers an antimatter beam. The creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A target takes 27 (6d8) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage if successful. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check; a successful DC 15 Intelligence check using proficiency in Arcana disables it.

Lock. The lock is magically locked. Removing the lock requires a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. It can also be removed with a successful *dispel magic* spell cast upon it against a 5th-level spell.

Inside the chest is a long, metallic rod with three holes at one end. If a character places three of their fingers into the holes, the rod fires a beam of antimatter energy from the opposite end. The rod functions like an *anti-matter rifle* as described in Chapter 9 of the *DMG*. It holds 10 charges, and all 10 charges are still present. If it is exposed to a 6-ounce fragment of silingfashi shi for 1 minute, it regains all of its charges.

Sarcophagus. A sarcophagus made of the same strange metal found throughout the temple rests against the wall opposite the door. The lid of the sarcophagus is extremely heavy. Two or more creatures with a combined Strength of 40 can use their actions to lift the lid away. Inside the sarcophagus is the withered body

of a strange-looking humanoid. The creature has dark, black skin covered in golden chitinous plates. Its head is like an insect's, with a single, multi-faceted eye at its center. A dozen sharp, golden spikes jut from its brow. The creature has four arms and four legs, each with multiple joints. This creature was a dulon.

Urns. Small urns clutter the corners of the room. Within are the ashes of the dulon's servants.

8 - Asnas' Tomb

This small room is a tomb.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. A hole has been blasted into the wall to the right of the door. A tunnel leads away from the tomb to **area 9**.

Remote Travelers. Two large suits of armor flank either side of the door exiting the room. The armor can't be worn. Any character familiar with Dinzer remote traveler technology will immediately recognize that these suits have similar functionality, except seem much more complicated.

Sarcophagus. A sarcophagus made of the same strange metal found throughout the temple rests against the wall opposite the door. The lid has been removed. Resting inside is a humanoid skeleton.

Sounds. Just as the characters enter the tomb, they can hear shuffling coming from **area 9** through the tunnel in the right wall.

Urns. Small urns clutter the corners of the room. Within are the ashes of the dulon's servants.

9 - Asnas, the Last of the Dulons

The tunnel from **area 8** leads into a shadowstuff cavern.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Antimatter Aura. The first time a creature enters the room and the start of each of their turns that they remain, the antimatter radiation given off by the silingfashi shi deals 1

necrotic damage to the creature.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ceilings, floors, and walls of this cavern are made of solid shadowstuff. The ceilings are relatively low, only four feet high at their highest point.

Light. The light from Asnas' silingfashi shi gives the room a soft glow.

Creature Information. Huddled in the corner of the room is a strange-looking creature. Its skin is green with thin, red stripes crisscrossing over its form. Where its head should be instead is a hoop of flesh, a faint light seal shimmering at the center like soap bubbles in a ring. The creature has four arms and four legs, each with multiple joints. As it sees the characters, it lifts its hand revealing a glowing, white rock: silingfashi shi. It speaks in clear Common.

"Hello, little ones," comes a voice from the direction of the strange creature. "For thousands of years I have waited for you to come and now you are here. This stone is your key home. Target it with high levels of force energy such as that created by this wand."

The creature lifts an object that looks like a magic wand.

The wand is a *wand of disintegrate*. It has only 1 charge remaining. Once used, the wand cannot be recharged.

"You will find the Last Mafti in a place called Dubufi. Protect him. And beware of the one called Hulay. If Hulay gets the boy, he will use the boy to destroy all of creation."

The creature then shifts in its spot, its strength fading.

"Once more I rejoin the stars. I am happy. I have created many wonderful things in my long life and I am happy."

The light at the center of the creature's head-loop vanishes and it says nothing more.

The characters now have a way to return home. If they target the

silingfashi shi with the *wand of disintegrate*, it destabilizes the stone creating a tear in the fabric of The Other. Regardless of when or where the characters do this, the stone explodes, showering the characters and everything within a half-mile radius of the stone in white light. Proceed to the Wrap Up for details on what happens to the characters once they destroy the silingfashi shi.

Wrap Up: Return to Casar

No matter if the characters used the servants of Usteus' Tunnel, opened the Door to the Real with the fail-abras, or disrupted the silingfashi shi given to them by Asna, the last dulon, they return to Casar and Omeria.

The characters find themselves on a sandy dune in the middle of a blistering hot desert. Judging by the position of the sun and the hint of the two moons in the stark, blue sky, they are likely somewhere in the Desolation of Ditimaya.

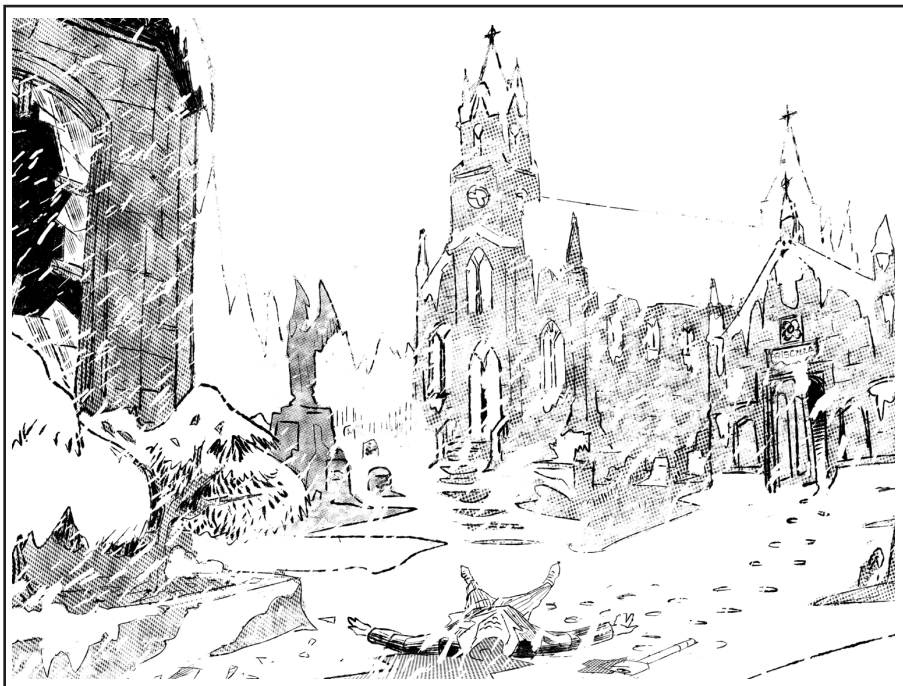
Before they can react, animated suits of armor bearing the Eye of Odonburg surround them, aiming *wands of magic missile* at their heads—Dinzer remote travelers, dozens of them. Overhead, Dinzer Condor-class flyers streak past. Dinzer Flamestrikes roll over the sandy dunes followed closed by Dinzer militia marching in orderly ranks. Ghost Scouts on lumibikes thread through the soldiers. It's an entire Dinzer battalion.

The adventure continues in the ***Hand of the Eight: Chapter 9: A Boy and His Tarrasque***.

Advancement

Upon completing this adventure, each character should earn half the experience needed to reach the next level. Characters who are following the ***Hand of the Eight*** storyline will likely reach 6th level. If the characters followed The Shores of Shadow track, they may be half way to 7th level at the adventure's conclusion. Ω

ADVENTURES IN OMERIA



TETHER: THE MYSTERY OF SKIRVIN MANOR

BY TEAM SUPERHYDRA

3rd-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by CZE/Peku

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***Tether: The Mystery of Skirvin Manor** is a Fifth Edition mystery adventure for four 3rd-level adventurers. The characters should reach 4th level by the end of the adventure. While the adventure can be custom built to support all types of adventurers, rogues and clerics will find their features especially useful. Also, there are a lot of Insight, Investigation, and Perception checks required, so characters who have proficiency in those skills will also be valuable on the adventure.*

Introduction

Forty years ago, almost all of the population of the village of Camor mysteriously vanished. Even then, the few that remained weren't willing to discuss what happened that night. Ghost-hunters and adventurers speculate whatever happened in Camor had something to do with the strange, old estate atop Camor Hill. Once known as Skirvin Manor, the inhabitants of the old home vanished, too. Only an old man named Earvin Skinship lives in the manor with his servants. And no one has actually seen him.

Occasionally, travelers caught in winter storms or exhausted from traveling through the thick forest surrounding Camor stay at Old Skirvin Manor. While they say the staff is friendly, they do feel that the place is haunted. At night, they can hear the laughter of a small child, tiny footsteps running through the balustrade. Others swear they saw the figure of a woman overlooking the courtyard from the second-floor ambulatory. And then there are those who hear heavy breathing from behind the walls.

There is no one way to solve the mysteries of Skirvin Manor. As the GM, be sure you read the entire adventure before running it, as there are many details and clues that the characters will need in order to progress.

Story Overview

Hot on the trail of a wanted criminal with a sizable bounty on her head, the characters arrive in the sleepy, wooded village of Camor. While the citizens of Camor are quiet and reserved, it's clear that they may be hiding something. Certain clues point to Old Skirvin Manor just outside of town.

At Skirvin, the characters meet Bianca, the estate's caretaker. She and her staff of four handle the day-to-day operations of the manor as the manor's invalid proprietor, Lord Earvin Skinship, rests in his room on the second floor's eastern wing. Along with the characters, the Manor is hosting other guests who hope to avoid the coming blizzard.

Their first night in the manor, a ghost-hunter named Arrow Diamond is murdered, his headless corpse discovered in the snow. The blizzard prevents anyone from leaving. From there, the mystery begins to unravel.

What the characters don't realize is that other than themselves and one of the guests, all of the inhabitants of the old manor are members of a fiend-worshipping faction known as the Hand of Vapul. It has been 1,000 years since the Paladin Camor banished the Ice Demon Vapul to the Frozen Realm, and now his cult members hope to revive him with a ritual known as the Binding of the Three.

There are six plot threads and clue paths that the characters can follow to learn the secrets of the manor. All eventually lead to the discovery of the house's secret basement and inevitably a den of foul ghouls. This is where the Hand makes their final stand as they attempt to revive Vapul.

The characters must overcome the cult, halt the ritual, and defeat the ice demon Vapul before he can fully manifest himself. Failure could lead to the destruction of Camor, Knotside, and potentially the entire region—or even the *world*.

Running the Adventure

To run this adventure, you will need access to the Fifth Edition rules and associates rulebooks.

Adventure Summary

The adventure is likely to play out as follows.

Set during a particularly cold winter, the characters start in the city of Knotside. There, they are given a bounty on Roundabout Jen, an infamous criminal known throughout the region. Her trail leads to the town of Camor in the Amber Forest, due west of Knotside. After speaking to the townsfolk, one or more clues point towards Jen being at Old Skirvin Manor at the northwestern end of town. Once the characters reach Skirvin Manor, they, along with the manor's servants and two other guests, are asked to stay the night as a powerful winter storm quickly approaches. That same night, one of the guests—an eccentric ghost-hunter—is murdered.

From there, the mystery of Skirvin Manor begins to unfold. The characters will follow one or more of the six separate paths of clues that ultimately lead to the Manor's greatest secret: it is the home of a fiend-worshipping cult known as The Hand of Vapul. Unknown to the characters, the clock is ticking. If they fail to stop the Hand before they complete a ritual known as the Binding of the Three, a dangerous fiend will enter the world and wreak havoc in the region, damning it with eternal winter.

Handling Insight Checks

A lot of the adventure involves interacting with the NPCs within the mansion. Likely, the characters will wish to use their proficiency in Insight to determine whether or not the NPCs are telling the truth. When such occasions arise, one or more characters can make Wisdom (Insight) checks. The DC for the Insight

checks are contested by the NPC's Charisma (Deception) check. Instead of giving individual results for each character, add together the amount by which any successful characters passed the check, then subtract the amount by which any unsuccessful characters failed the check. Once you have this number, refer to the Group Insight Check Results table below to determine the outcome:

Group Insight Check Results.

Total Check	Result
-3 or less	It seems like they're telling the truth.
-2 to 2	You can't tell whether or not they're telling the truth.
3 to 9	You suspect that they might be lying to you (telling the truth).
10 or higher	They are definitely lying to you (telling the truth).

Of course, you're free to use Insight checks as normal. Using this method, however, the characters will question among themselves who is telling the truth and who isn't. A low outcome, despite a few high rolls, can throw off the entire party. Only through one-on-one interrogation will an individual character get a good sense of who is lying and who is not.

Dealing with a Slow-Down

Tether is a mystery adventure. And while there are plenty of combat opportunities, some players may find the adventure slow-paced, especially if the characters are having difficulty solving puzzles or can't find the next step. Here are a few ways to handle this situation.

Toss in a Random Encounter.

Just like any good story, a character who "falls off the path" may find themselves the target of a monster or ghost. After all, Skirvin Manor is a cursed place. Each room has sugges-

tions for a random encounter or supernatural event that can occur while there. Try to use these encounters sparingly, as too many can distract from the overall mystery.

Actions Have Consequences. If the characters decide to wipe out all of the inhabitants of the mansion while the blizzard continues, then the ghouls and any living members of the Hand of Vapul will remain downstairs where they are theoretically safe. They realize that it's only a matter of time before Vapul returns. And Vapul won't take the actions of murderers and robbers kindly.

Drop a Hint. If the characters are really stuck and getting frustrated, don't be afraid to drop an obvious hint. For example, you can have Nurse Joy forget to lock the door to the ambulatory. Or Bianca can brush her hair aside, revealing the Mark of Vapul on the back of her neck. The characters might even catch a glimpse of Kerrin butchering a human arm while standing in the hallway.

Let Them Leave. The blizzard is definitely meant as a way to keep the characters involved in the story, but it shouldn't railroad your characters into an adventure that they aren't interested in. If they're determined to leave, allow them. The blizzard is dangerous, certainly, but a party of well-equipped adventurers should be able to make it out and to safety.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure's default starting location is in the city of Knotside. However, any large settlements near a heavily forested mountain range will do.

To get things rolling, read or paraphrase the following introductory text to the players. It assumes that the characters are already known for their past deeds. Feel free to edit if necessary.

Thanks to your recent exploits, you find yourselves called into action once again. Roundabout Jen, the Scourge of Knotside, is wanted by the city's magistrate. Theft, murder, kidnapping, money laundering, and fraud are just a few of the ugly misdeeds on her impossibly long rap sheet.

The magistrate will pay 300 gold pieces to whoever can bring her corpse back to Knotside, or 1,000 gold pieces if she's brought back alive.

And you're in luck: Jen was seen just a day ago heading northwest into the Amber Forest. The local guard believes she'll probably stay in the village of Camor to wait out a nasty incoming blizzard the diviners have forecasted.

If you can manage to catch her in Camor before the blizzard hits, chances are you'll collect on the bounty.

The promise of an easy reward should be enough to attract most of the adventurers. If asked about how dangerous she is, the magistrate explains that Jen is dangerous, but probably a pretty easy fight for a

band of experienced adventurers.

Should the characters need more motivation for taking her on, here are a few things that the magistrate can mention to further whet their appetites:

- Jen carries a jewel-studded dagger with her initials, RJ, carved into the dagger's hilt. The dagger is easily worth 100 gp by itself.
- The last crime Jen committed was tearing the page out of a valuable book in the Knotside Arcane Library. The page contained a map that's rumored to lead to the long lost city of Hearth.
- Referencing one of the character's bonds, Jen may have unintentionally hurt one of the characters' allies, friends, or even a family member.

If the characters agree to tracking Roundabout Jen to Camor, they are given a brief description of her. Jen is a human female with short blonde hair and a scar on her lip. Both of her arms are heavily tattooed. She's known for dressing lavishly, often wearing purple and green scarves and sashes. She's dangerous with a crossbow and a dagger and is exceptional at blending into her surroundings despite her motley garb.



Part 1: Arrival in Camor

Camor hides among the tall, dark pines of the Amber Forest to the northwest of Knotside. Other than acting as a hub for foresters, not much else is known about Camor. For the most part, the hamlet keeps to itself. Decades ago, however, it was a fast-growing community and the home-away-from-home for many important Knotside politicians.

As the characters approach Camor, read:

Eventually, the road breaks through the trees and puts you before a small village tucked comfortably into the towering pines of the Amber Forest. This must be Camor. It's a small village certainly, but oddly well-developed. Cobblestones pave the way over an arched bridge crossing a creek. A fountain sits at the center of the town square, a weathered statue of an armored knight watching you as you approach. The plaque below the statue reads 'Sir Camor of Jost, Paladin of the Realm.'

The friendly waves and smiling faces you're accustomed to in Knotside are largely absent in the village. Instead, the Camorians keep their heads down and say little. Even the few children you see seem to lack joy.

Thunder rumbles to the north beyond the Basilisk's Spine. A storm is moving in, a nasty blizzard just as the magistrate in Knotside mentioned. For a moment, you notice a hill some 500 feet away, atop which sits an old, crumbling manor surrounded by a sturdy, brick wall. The boiling, dark clouds of the coming winter storm frame its snow-capped rooves, giving it an ominous appearance.

The buildings in Camor are either made of sturdy stonework or they are half-timbered. The windows are



thick, colored glass with lead frames. Strong, steel-bound doors and shutters decorate the outside. In the spring, the village is beautiful, decorated with bright-colored flowers and well-manicured shrubs and lawns.

Camor is surprisingly unfriendly towards outsiders, especially adventurers. It lacks an inn, and beyond a few general stores, there aren't a lot of supplies to be found. Most of the buildings in the town square are residential homes.

Other than lumber trade with nearby Knotside, Camor survives through communism; neighbors trade freely among each other and only create what's needed. If the characters ask for a place to stay, a few Camorians may offer up their barn or sheds for the night. Others mention that Old Skirvin Manor up on Camor Hill sometimes takes in travelers. Already two such travelers that came into town have headed that way.

Most Camorians don't practice religion, while others are admitted atheists (despite clear proof that gods exist). They do, however, maintain their spiritual connection with the forest around them. They leave offerings to the forest spirits at regular shrines places in the hollows of old, twisted pines.

There's a curiously high number of elves and half-elves that live in Camor, too. Interestingly, they dress and

carry themselves like rugged humans. Some go as far to hide their ears under knitted caps. Either way, there seems to be no ill will between the mixed races.

The village's only drinking hole, The Falling Oak, is small and dark. The regulars are all lumberjacks; they're quick to throw dirty looks the adventurers' way as they enter. The bartender overcharges for drinks and only pours the cheapest beer. If the characters ask for anything else, the sour-faced, middle-aged woman replies, "We ain't got that."

Clues to Roundabout Jen's Whereabouts

If Roundabout Jen is in Camor, nobody's talking. Even given the ridiculous description of Jen's general appearance, either no one can or wants to give useful information. The only clue that the people of Camor do give the characters of Jen's presence in town is that at least two individuals were recently seen going to Old Skirvin Manor to seek refuge during the coming blizzard. Unfortunately, no one remembers what they looked like, how they dressed, or whether or not they were male or female.

Constable Sarra. If the characters press enough, eventually the town's law enforcement agent, Constable Sarra (N female half-elf **veteran**) approaches. Unlike most of Camor,

Sarra is friendly and willing to help the characters find Roundabout Jen. She initially tells them that she isn't sure where Jen is. Given the description, though, she vaguely recalls seeing her.

“Oh yeah. All the purple. Real attitude on that one. Think I saw her head into the forest headed towards the Basilisk’s Spine. It’s likely she’s trying to find a place to hideaway up there.”

Sarra is lying. The moment Roundabout Jen stepped into town, Sarra recognized her from wanted posters. Knowing that Jen wouldn’t be missed, she sent two of her rangers, Igil and Lowen to follow her. The pair caught up to Jen and incapacitated her. Then, they dragged the rogue to Skirvin Manor as an offering to Kerrin and Eflor Vale.

Sarra has been lying for the Vales for years. She has advantage on all Deception checks made to determine whether or not she is lying about Jen’s whereabouts. With the storm fast approaching, the characters should try to seek shelter before it gets too bad. Of course, they are free to try to follow Jen’s trail. Sarra won’t stop them—so what if a few nosy adventurers get killed in the storm, what’s it matter to her?

The Messenger

No matter which way the characters head, eventually a young boy approaches the group carrying a note (handout in Appendix E). The note reads:

“Everyone here is lying. Follow the creek a half a mile north of the village and meet me at my wagon in one hour. I’ll tell you everything.”

The note is signed “a friend.” The boy tells the characters that the note was given to him by a strange old woman. She paid him one copper piece, instructing the boy he had to

wait at least thirty minutes to give it to the characters. That’s all he knows.

The letter is from Alin. She worked as a servant in Skirvin Manor forty years ago, narrowly avoiding the Slaughter of Camor. She’s returned to Camor on the anniversary, hoping to put a stop to the evil that resides within.



The Wagon Massacre

If the characters decide to follow Alin’s instructions, they simply need to travel north along the creek for half a mile. Flurries start to drift from the dark clouds above. The rumbling thunder intensifies. It takes about twenty minutes for the charac-

ters to reach Alin’s wagon. Unfortunately, they weren’t the first to arrive.

In a small clearing beside the creek, you discover the wagon described in the note. Unfortunately, it looks like you might be too late. The wagon’s been tipped over, ransacked goods strewn all over the ground. Riddled with arrows, a packhorse lies dead in a pool of its own blood. And there, lying face-down in the creek water is an old woman. She has three arrows in her skull and five more in her back.

After Alin gave the message to the boy to deliver, Sarra’s rangers, Igil and Lowen noticed her and followed. The pair asked only a few questions of the woman before opening fire. From there, they destroyed her encampment, working to make it look as if it was attacked by orcs. Unfortunately, they weren’t able to finish the job before the characters arrived. Unless the characters were stealthy, the two rangers (LE male elf scouts) are hiding in the forest. After taking a moment to size up the characters, they emerge. If the characters got the drop on them, they see the two scouts still at the scene of the crime.

“Hail!” waves one of the rangers. He puts his bow away and bows his head. Judging by the way the two are dressed, they’re from Camor. “My name is Igil. This is my brother Lowen. I apologize for our stealth, but we thought you might be the orcs returning to this camp to cause more havoc.”

Igil then goes on to explain that the massacre was “clearly the work” of the Drakescale orc clan from the north.

“With the winter setting in, they’re being pushed further and further south. I’m glad that adventurers such as yourselves are around. You can undoubtedly help us.”

Igil does his best to ingratiate himself with the characters. Unfortunately, the pair have done a terrible job of staging the crime scene. Any character with proficiency in the Survival skill will immediately notice that the only tracks around the camp are the elves'. Furthermore, the arrows lodged in the horse and Alin's body have the same fletching details as the ones the two elves carry. Finally, Lowen has a bright purple scarf hanging from one of his pockets; it perfectly matches the description given of Roundabout Jen's clothing.

Once their deception is obvious, the pair attack the adventurers, hoping to add them to the "orc's massacre." Fearful of reprisal by the Vales and Sarra, they fight to the death, even when it's clear they don't want to.

After one of the two are killed or both are reduced to half their hit points or less, they surrender, swearing to tell the truth. Here is what the two divulge:

- They were sent by Sarra to investigate the old woman. When she revealed that she was connected to Skirvin Manor's past, they had no choice but to kill her.
- Both are members of a forty-year-old sect known as Camor's Blind. Their purpose is to deter any trouble that comes into Camor, especially parties of adventurers.
- Usually, the Blind give misleading directions to interlopers. But sometimes, they offer "unlucky travelers" as offerings to the people who reside in Old Skirvin Manor.
- They don't know anything about Skirvin Manor. Neither have entered. In fact, they're not allowed to come within 200 feet of the estate's walls. They only deal with a hulking brute of a man that only comes out at night; they don't know his name, just where to meet him. They've nicknamed him "the Big Man."

- The meeting place is 300 feet outside of the Manor. There is a bell attached to a rope that the elves ring. Then, they wait for 10 minutes, after which, the Big Man arrives, takes their "catch" and hands them a bag of 10 gp. Lowen is carrying the bag of 10 gp.
- The last person that the elves caught was a human woman with blonde hair wearing all purple. Their description perfectly matches Roundabout Jen.
- All members of Camor's Blind are kept in the dark about the origins of Skirvin Manor. Their tenets have been handed down through generations. "No questions. No answers. Potential troublemakers must be dealt with." Sarra, the current leader of the Blind, sizes up everyone that comes into Camor. Most are sent on their way, but a few—especially those she feels "won't be missed"—are handed over to the Big Man.
- Among the woman's possessions, they discovered a diary. They offer it to the characters swearing it's all that know. The contents of Alin's diary are in Appendix E. The rangers beg that the characters release them. However, they share that they're more afraid of what the people in Skirvin Manor will do to them should they discover it was the two of them that revealed the Manor's secrets. If freed, the elves grab their possessions and head north away from Camor.

The Bell

Should the characters go to the meeting point and ring the bell, nothing happens. Eflor, using his spyglass, sees that it's adventurers ringing the bell and not the brothers. He informs Kerrin, who then sends a message to one of her spies in Camor. An hour later, Constable Sarra is found dead in her office—poisoned.

Part 2: Skirvin Manor

Black and bleak against the densely forested mountains of the Basilisk's Spine stands the 50-year-old Skirvin Manor. The moment it was built on Camor Hill by a wealthy Knotsider named Phineas Skirvin, the house was rumored to be cursed. Forty years ago, something happened at the Manor, but all historical evidence has been erased from the record books. Anyone that's gotten too close or asked too many questions either got turned around or vanished themselves.

Eventually, the characters will want to investigate Skirvin Manor. That's where the adventure really begins.

The History of Skirvin Manor

Phineas Skirvin was a wealthy importer living in Knotside. Shortly after marrying Marren Groethal, daughter of one of his business partners, he commissioned the construction of a large house on a barren hill on the outskirts of the town Camor. At the time, Skirvin Manor was one of the most modern buildings ever created. It boasted a sturdy stone perimeter wall, its own chapel, greenhouse, and large kitchen. The entire estate could be managed by a staff of five. After it was built, Phineas hired a man named Oaken as the chief caretaker for the estate.

Two years later, Marren gave birth to their first daughter, Esme. Then, two years after that, their second daughter Priscilla was born. Finally, Marren gave birth to Petro, a son, three years after Priscilla.

One summer, the Skirvins met with tragedy. While Phineas was away on business, Priscilla, five at the time, was bitten by a poisonous snake while playing in the forest. The venom took hold fast; she died in the night. Unable to access Phineas' bank accounts, Marren could not pay a priest the requisite funds to revive her daughter. By the time Phineas' returned,

Priscilla was more than ten days deceased. At that

point, Priscilla's soul had already passed on. They created a mausoleum for Priscilla, interring her on the estate.

Marren never forgave Phineas for his absence and mistrust of the family funds. Phineas, desperate to make amends to his family, retired, serving only as counsel at his old business. He settled permanently in his estate with wife and two surviving children.

Ludra Vale

Two years passed. Marren barely said anything to Phineas. To take his mind away from his failing marriage, Phineas turned towards local politics—he would set his sights on becoming Camor's next mayor. Meanwhile, Oaken kept Skirvin Manor running without issue. After one of the older servants retired, Oaken hired a twenty-year-old woman named Ludra Vale to replace the retiree.

Immediately, Phineas felt a connection to Ludra Vale. Ludra felt the same, falling in love with the older gentleman. The two spent long nights talking to each other. Ludra told Phineas her plans of attending a university for spellcraft. Phineas told Ludra of his frustrations with Marren, his regrets, and his burgeoning career in politics. The conversations turned to intimacy, and intimacy turned to lust.

A few weeks after their tryst, Ludra started showing signs of morning sickness. Oaken, privy to his employer's affair, knew that a scandal could ruin Skirvin's future in local politics. Immediately, Oaken pulled Ludra aside and terminated the woman, threatening that if she returned he'd have her arrested.

Seven months passed. Lord Skirvin was treating donors to a dinner party in his home when Ludra returned, anxious to see her former lover. Pregnant and unemployed, she was desperate. Before she could make a

Solutions to the Puzzles

There are multiple puzzles all throughout Skirvin Manor along with a large number of red herrings. To help cut through the mystery yourself and see the most direct path for the characters to follow, refer to Part 4. Mystery Paths.

scene, Skirvin intercepted her outside and tried to calm her down. Ludra threatened that she would spoil his political career if he didn't do something to help her. She grabbed at Skirvin's breast coat, tearing at the man's ascot; Oaken, defending his lord, pulled Ludra away. But Ludra slipped on the snow and hit her head against the side of the manor well. Ludra's eyes rolled back into her head and she started to convulse. Panicking, Skirvin backed away. "No worries, m'lord," Oaken assured his shocked master. "I'll take care of this. Please, return to the festivities."

Skirvin stumbled away while Oaken handled Ludra—he pulled open the seal to the well and dragged her inside. One hundred feet Ludra Vale fell, down into the frigid water below. Oaken sealed the well.

Esme and the Water Fairy

The following summer, an older woman named Kerrin started working at the estate as a cook. The Skirvins found her friendly and talented. The other servants enjoyed her cooking, too, especially her beef stew which she served as the cool autumn winds started to sweep down the Spine. Unknown to the family and staff, Kerrin's real name was Ishta Vale—Ludra's mother. And she wanted revenge.

Ishta was a warlock of Vapul. While it's unknown if Kerrin knew about the estate's connection to her dark patron before her daughter started working for the Skirvins, she was bound and determined to use Vapul's might to destroy the Skirvins after the girl's

death. Even a year later, Ludra's body laid at the bottom of the sealed well. Restless and angry, her soul was easy to wake.

As the snow started to fall that year, Esme Skirvin was often seen playing near the sealed well. She spoke to the well, almost as if she had an imaginary friend there. When the servants or her family would ask who she was talking to, she replied, "Oh, just my friend, Elle. She's a water fairy."

Then, one day, while she and Petro were playing, Esme slipped and tumbled into the open well, hitting the cold water far below. Immediately, the servants acted, calling for help. Lord Phineas himself descended into the well, rescuing his daughter. Before the servants pulled him and Esme up, Phineas thought he saw something dark and angry in the water—the ghostly face of Ludra.

Despite the tumble, Esme was uninjured. The girl was put into her room to rest while a local priest looked over her. Of course, Esme wasn't pulled out of the well alone. Ludra's ghost touched the young Skirvin, possessing her.

Oaken sensed trouble immediately. After all, *wasn't the well sealed?*

Deaths in the Family

Marren Skirvin was the first person Esme/Ludra killed. She slashed her mother's wrists as she bathed, then framed it as suicide. Phineas shrieked in agony as he held his dead wife in his arms. Esme watched in silence.

Next, Petro fell, tumbling over the balustrade railing onto the foyer below. The poor boy broke his neck, dying instantly. "An accident", Esme told her father

Oaken died next, slaughtered by Esme with a wood-chopping axe. Kerrin helped hide the body.

"Evil, Lord Skirvin," said the priest Skirvin had hired to watch Esme. "It permeates the entire estate. Three accidents in as little as a week. One wonders: is there a reason an angry

spirit would target your family like this?”

Weeping, Phineas told the priest everything—his affair with Ludra, the murder, the cover-up, even the ghost he saw at the bottom of the well. Finally, he looked into the priest’s eyes, begging, “Can you revive Marren and Petro?”

“Yes,” assured the priest. “But only after I remove the curse on the manor.”

Of course, the priest had no intention of removing the evil. The priest’s true name was Eflor Vale, wife to Istva, father to Ludra.

“To perform the ritual, you will need to invite all who were here the same night the servant girl died.” Phineas understood and reached out to his colleagues.

Slaughter at Camor

The day of the priest’s ritual, all of the servants except Kerrin grew ill. Regardless, they worked diligently to make preparations.

Everyone who was present the night of Ludra’s murder gathered in the estate chapel. Marren and Petro’s bodies lied in state at either side of the priest as he began he ceremony. Grief-stricken Phineas knelt before the priest, begging Ludra for forgiveness.

“Confess to all your sins, Lord Skirvin,” the priest commanded.

Phineas complied. All present heard him describe his relationship with young Ludra, her pregnancy, and subsequent murder. His colleagues lowered their heads in shame. The servants, still sick, gasped.

“Forgive me, Ludra.”

The candles fluttered. Lightning crashed. The doors to the chapel slammed shut.

“No!” shouted Ludra through Esme. “I will never forgive you!”

Just then, the servants all screamed in unison. They crumbled to the floor of the chapel and started to change. Their hair fell out and their skin

turned gray. Their eyes burned with hatred and their teeth turned to points. They became ghouls.

The night before, Istva Vale cooked a special meal for the staff, her infamous beef stew, but this time with a secret ingredient: the remains of Oaken. The actual ritual the priest performed wasn’t to exorcise Ludra’s ghost but to change the cannibalistic staff into undead monstrosities.

All of the attendees charged for the door, shouting for help as the ghouls approached. But the doors wouldn’t budge. Ferociously, the horrible creatures tore into Phineas Skirvin’s political allies as the Lord watched.

“You killed our daughter, Skirvin. And you lied to the world. And now you suffer,” proclaimed Eflor the Priest as his wife, Isha joined him. Skirvin snapped out of his shock and drew his rapier. He was able to run Eflor through before Ishta stopped him with a spell. Then, the ghouls turned to Skirvin, paralyzing the Lord of the Manor with their claws. They tore at his arms. They tore at his legs. As he screamed, they started eating him.

“No,” Ishta barked at the ghouls, holding the body of her dead husband. “He doesn’t get to die. He gets to *live*. He gets to live so he can continue to witness the horrors he brought upon this home and himself.”

She set the ravenous ghouls free from the chapel. The former servants descended into Camor, committing horrible genocide on the Camorians. Meanwhile, Ishta and Esme treated Skirvin’s amputated limbs ensuring he didn’t bleed out. They removed his tongue and burned it on an altar to Vapul.

Almost forty years later, Skirvin still lives, bed-ridden, mind destroyed. Ludra maintains her incorporeal grip on Esme. Ishta still works in the kitchens, and even Eflor, revived by Ishta’s dark magic, patrols the estate as a hulking, animated corpse named Gogo.



Arrival at Skirvin Manor

When the characters finally approach Skirvin Manor, read or paraphrase the following.

Snow slowly drifts down onto the dark walls and rooves of the old manor house. Despite its foreboding appearance, overall, the manor and grounds are in fantastic shape. Just inside the perimeter wall, adjacent to the main building is a large chapel crowned with a bell tower. And before that a small, stone mausoleum with the name “Priscilla” written over the door. From one of the chimneys comes the smell of warm food.

If the characters approach the front door, they can knock or ring the bell. When they do, Esme Skirvin—who now goes by the name Bianca—answers. Esme, now in her late ‘40s is an attractive woman with long dark hair that boasts a single silver strand. She wears dark clothing with maroon accents, and often wears red poppies in her hair.

Roleplaying Bianca/Esme/Ludra

Perhaps the most important NPC in the entire adventure, Esme is a deceptive character who drives the

flow of the story. She is a human noble possessed by Ludra Vale, a **ghost matron** (see the D). Esme has had the Bianca persona for so long, that she's grown accustomed to lying about it—she makes all Charisma (Deception) checks regarding her true identity with advantage.

Esme stays quiet most of the time, only answering questions when she's asked. She comes off as very shy and is easily embarrassed. When she's no longer needed, she often excuses herself to take care of business in other parts of the estate, typically the ambulatory. Overall, she is very friendly and catering, perfect at playing the role of a servant.

If confronted aggressively, she breaks easily, sobbing and pleading. Only if attacked will she reveal her true nature. Even then, she flees instead of fights, preferably with her physical vessel. If truly pressed, Ludra will separate from Esme and slides into the basement where she can recuperate.

Ludra's is dedicated to her mother, Kerrin/Ishta and her father, Eflor, despite his crude, revived form. She also wants to keep Lord Skirvin's presence a complete secret and will do all she can to prevent trespassers from entering the ambulatory.

Should Ludra separate from Esme, Esme's soul is broken from forty years of possession. She only has enough time to explain a little of what has happened to her before passing away from exhaustion.

With the blizzard coming, Esme/Bianca wishes for the characters to stay the night, offering up the old servants quarters for them to stay in. The servants' quarters, while clean, has been empty for years.

Where is Roundabout Jen?

The characters will likely wish to question Bianca/Esme about the presence of Roundabout Jen. Bianca thinks for a moment then mentions that the groundskeeper Gogo (the

name by which Eflor now goes) intercepted a pair of elves in the forest with someone with such a description. She assures that Gogo must have taken the wanted criminal to town to be handed over to Constable Sarra.



The Guests

When the characters arrive, there are two other guests in attendance.

Arrow Diamond (LG male human noble) is a ghost hunter and occult scholar. He's been researching the lore of Camor and the Skirvin Manor for years, following the legend of an undead fiend named Vapul who was rumored to have been vanquished in the village 1,000 years prior. Somewhat eccentric and standoffish, Diamond is staying in the guest room on the first floor (**area G12**).

Rogger Blickor was one of the original servants of Skirvin Manor. Like the others, he was transformed into a **ghoul** by Kerrin's "Oaken-stew." He disguises himself as a world traveler and musician, haplessly strumming a lute during most hours of the day. Rogger wears a black tricorn hat with a long feather—it's actually a *hat of disguise* that helps mask his true, undead appearance. Any characters with a heightened sense of smell

may catch the whiff of a corpse when standing near Rogger. Rogger claims he was sprayed by a skunk about a month ago.

The Staff

In addition to Bianca, there are three "staff members" who operate in Skirvin Manor.

Gogo/Eflor is the manor's **reanimated groundkeeper** (see Appendix D). When Lord Skirvin ran Eflor through with his rapier, he killed the old man. Kerrin used dark magic to revive Eflor, but only as a crude imitation of his former self. Eflor—now Gogo—acts as the Vales' muscle, going by the name Gogo. The silent, grunting hulk lumbers around the chapel and outside of the manor with two **ghostly hounds**. If trouble arises, he and his undead canines handle it.

Kerrin is the old, friendly cook that hides away in the kitchens. Of course, she is secretly Ishta Vale, a **warlock of Vapul** (see Appendix D) and mother to Ludra Vale.

Nurse Joy, like Rogger, is a **ghoul** and she, too, was one of the original servants. Disguised as a medical practitioner thanks to a *hat of disguise*, Joy ensures that the locked-away Lord Skirvin is fed and lives.

Other Inhabitants

The Vales and disguised ghouls aren't the only ones present in Skirvin Manor when the characters arrive.›

Six more **ghouls** are in the basement of the manor. Seen as "less tame" by the Vales, Joy, and Rogger, these ghouls aren't often permitted to come upstairs.

Roundabout Jen is actually in the Skirvin Manor, kept caged in the basement's dungeon (**area B4**). Since her capture by the elven rangers and Gogo, Jen's been slowly carved away by Kerrin and fed to the ghouls—and guests!

Lord Phineas Skirvin remains upstairs in his bedroom, locked away.

The servants of the manor may occasionally mention him, but he is never seen. No one is allowed in the ambulatory. To hide his true identity, Bianca refers to Skirvin as Lord Earvin Skinship. She claims he purchased the manor after the original family vanished.

Marren Skirvin's ghost haunts different chambers of the manor. First, her presence can be felt in the upstairs bathroom (**area T5**). But she also plays the organ in the locked library (**area T12**). If confronted, Marren does not use her Possession feature. She will, however, use her Horrifying Visage and flee.

Petro Skirvin's ghost is seen all throughout the house, as well. Petro's ghost uses the normal **ghost** stat block except his size is Small and he does not have the Horrifying visage or Possession features.

Oaken continues to haunt his old job as a headless **specter** whose individual body parts don't entirely connect to his incorporeal body. If he is destroyed, he rejuvenates within one hour. Oaken can only be completely destroyed if his skull is found, then destroyed, and holy water is sprinkled on its remains.

Timeline of Events

Once the characters settle into Skirvin Manor, they're (mostly) free to go where they please. Bianca and Nurse Joy spend most of their time in the ambulatory. Gogo never comes within 100 feet of any of the guests, preferring to stay outside in the blizzard. And Kerrin stays in the kitchen. The first night, Diamond examines all that he can, focusing primarily on the paintings and books lying around the house. Rogger is the only one that tries to ingratiate himself with the characters as his given role is to keep tabs on all of the guests. However, his immediate focus is more on Diamond who poses more of a threat than the adventurers (at least, for the time being).

The Blizzard

The blizzard finally hits in the evening, dumping snow and wind on Skirvin Manor, and continues for the next 48 hours. Blizzards aren't completely uncommon coming off the Basilisk's Spine, but this one is particularly deadly as it's powered by the dark magic of Vapul. The blizzard creates the following conditions outside (including the courtyards of Skirvin Manor).

Blinding Snow. While outside, everything is heavily obscured by the snow and wind. Creatures are effectively blinded.

Difficult Terrain. The snow that falls acts as difficult terrain for creatures. The first night, it costs 2 feet of movement per 1 foot moved, and by the second night, it's 3 feet of movement per 1 foot moved outside.

Extreme Cold. Creatures that aren't resistant or immune to cold damage or wearing cold-weather gear must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw the moment they're exposed to the cold. Failure results in the creature gaining one level of exhaustion. The creature must repeat this saving throw at the end of each hour they spend out in the cold.

Strong Wind. All ranged weapon attacks rolls are made at disadvantage. Open flames are extinguished as well, and flying creatures must land or fall.

Arrow Diamond's Murder

Sometime just after midnight the first night the characters stay, a **ghoul** emerges from the secret passage in Arrow Diamond's room (**area G7**). The two fight in the room briefly, then both collapse through the window into the storm outside. Arrow fights valiantly, but as he is unable to see clearly in the blizzard, the ghoulish gets the upper hand, killing Arrow, and then removes his head. The ghoulish then retreats to Priscilla's mausoleum (**area G26**).

If the characters arrive first, they

find Diamond's axe, the *tether tearer* (see Appendix C) in the snow. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals claw marks on his body. The claw marks are laced with a mild poison that numbs to the touch. The ghoulish's tracks lead directly to the mausoleum.

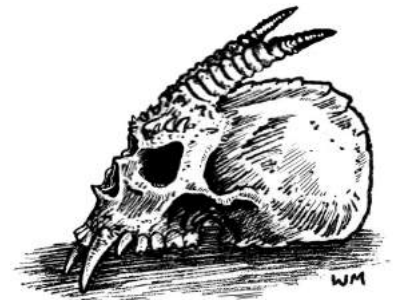
Before the characters can enter the mausoleum, Bianca appears, horrified by the scene. With the blizzard imminent, she fears they won't be able to properly dispose of the body. Instead, she suggests they carry it to the woodshed to store until the proper authorities arrive.

Roundabout Red Herring. To distract the characters from the murder, Bianca mentions that Gogo has not yet returned from bringing Roundabout Jen to town. She suggests that Jen may have attacked Diamond and escaped. She "fears" for Gogo's safety.

The Binding of the Three

The ritual to recall Vapul can happen one of two ways. The moment the characters discover the basement and ghoulish' den (**Area B2**)—regardless of the time of day or night—they happen upon the ceremony. Otherwise, the ceremony happens at midnight the second night that the characters stay at the mansion.

During the ritual, all of the servants and ghoulish that have survived begin the ritual to revive Vapul. See Part 3 for details on the ritual. Note that it's possible the ritual can happen without the characters ever being aware of the evils in the basement below.





Skirvin Manor - Ground Floor

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

General Features

Unless stated otherwise in the description, Skirvin Manor has the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings in Skirvin manor are generally 15 feet high and braced with timbers.

Clues. Many of the rooms contain clues that are part of one or more of the mysteries of Skirvin manor. There are six mystery paths in all: *Disappearance of Roundabout Jen*, *Ghost House*, *Murder in the Night*, *the Old Man's Secret*, *Return of the Ice Demon*, and *Screams in the Chapel*, each detailed in Part 4. If you choose to ignore a mystery path, you can remove the clue from the

room, or keep it as a red herring.

Doors. The majority of the doors throughout the manor are sturdy oak doors hung on iron hinges. They are all equipped with locking mechanisms allowing anyone inside a room to lock it with a twist of a latch. Any of the skeleton keys (see Part 4) can open a locked door. Otherwise, a character can burst open a door with a successful DC 17 Strength check, or a character with proficiency in thieves' tools can pick a lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Doors have an AC of 17, 25 hp (50 hp if double doors), and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Floors. Hardwood floors cover the majority of Skirvin Manor. The

floors, especially on the first floor, feel quite drafty, despite the fireplaces lit throughout the house. Many of the floors have intricate woven rugs to compensate.

Light. Gas lamps, candles, and even the odd *continual flame globe* are lit throughout the house, providing plenty of light (and plenty of long shadows).

Supernatural Occurrences. As described in the section on Game Slowdowns in the Introduction, strange happenings might occur as the characters investigate the mysteries of Skirvin Manor. You're free to use the events described or ignore them entirely.

Walls. Exterior walls are made of

fieldstone masonry. Interior walls are plaster and timber. Almost all of the walls are thoroughly decorated—almost garishly so—typically with detailed paintings of the family (see page 90 for details on the paintings) hung in every room.

Windows. Most of the rooms in Skirvin manor have windows. A window has an AC of 13 with 5 hit points, and they are immune to poison and psychic damage but vulnerable to bludgeoning damage.

Ground Floor

The following areas correspond to the labels on the ground floor map of the house on page 68.

G1 - Front Door

When the characters arrive at Skirvin Manor, if they knock at the front door, Bianca answers. Read the following:

After a few moments, the large, black doors open, revealing a thin, pale-skinned human woman in her late 40s/early 50s wearing all black. She smiles warmly at you. “Hello, how may I help you?”

This, of course, is Bianca. She’s quick to get the characters inside from the cold and immediately recommends they stay the night in the Manor as the storm approaches.

The front doors are much sturdier than the rest of the doors in the home. Breaking the doors open requires a DC 20 Strength check. The pair’s AC is 18 with 75hp, immunity to bludgeoning and slashing. It can also be barred from the inside, which gives it an additional 25 hp and increases the DC to break it open by 5.

G2 - Foyer

This round room is flanked by three doors. 15 feet above you a railed balustrade overlooks the room. There are also five marble busts here. The westernmost bust



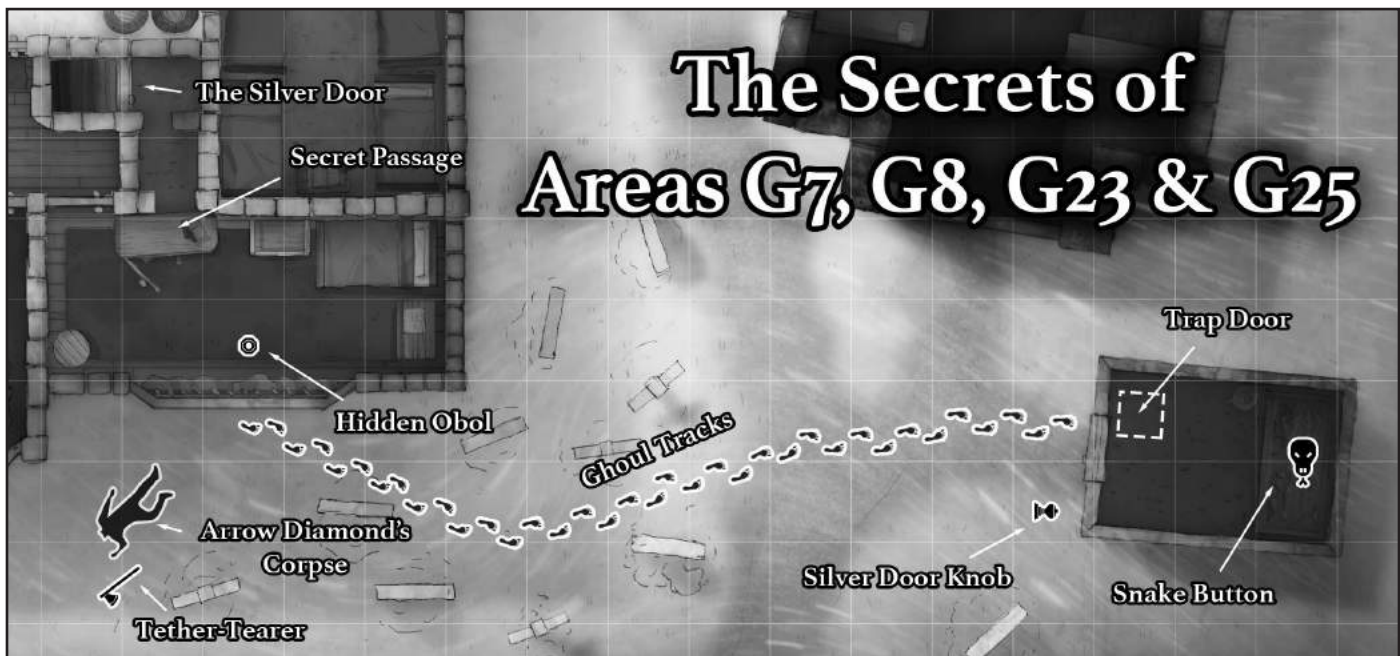
is of a solemn-faced girl with pig tails. Next, comes a cheery-faced boy. A man with a stern look is the centermost bust followed by an attractive older woman with her hair pinned up. The final bust is of a girl with a bow in her hair.

Plaques under each of the busts read (from west to east): Esme Skirvin, Petro Skirvin, Lord Phineas Skirvin, Lady Marren Skirvin, and Priscilla Skirvin.

Murder in the Night. Priscilla’s bust is not like the others. A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check while examining the bust may notice

that the eyelids of the statue can be moved. If a character pulls down her eyelids (as if she were dead), it opens the statue’s mouth, revealing her tongue. On her tongue is an octagonal slot. Placing the obol found in the guest room Diamond was staying in (area G7) unlocks the wardrobe from its position hiding the secret stairs (area G8).

Strange Occurrences. There is a chance that a character walking through the foyer may notice Petro’s ghost on the balustrade (see the description of Petro’s ghost earlier in this Part). This may also play into the Ghost House mystery paths.



G3 - Sitting Room

A red sofa flanked by two red armchairs faces towards a large bay window obscured by thick, crimson curtains. An intricately carved coffee table sits in the center. Behind the furniture is a massive painting of family: a well-to-do husband and wife, two daughters, and a young son.

Strange Occurrences. While in the sitting room, a shadow moves past the window—there's someone outside. If the characters pull open the curtains, there's nothing there. It was one of the ghouls from the basement moving around outside.

G4 - Coat Closet

Just a bunch of coats, hats, and umbrellas.

There is nothing of importance or value in the coat closet, although, if the characters need winter clothing, they can find all they need here (although, there's no guarantee it fits).

Strange Occurrences. If a character opens the closet alone, for a moment they see the ghost of a young

boy who laughs, "You found me!" before disappearing. It was Petro's ghost playing hide and seek.

G5 - Privies

These small, cold rooms are host to a wooden toilet seat with a clean chamber pot below it. Fresh herbs and flowers hang from the back of the door.

G6 - Service Room

Supplies for tea are kept here to serve any who retire to the sitting room (Area G3). The door to the inner courtyard is kept locked by key (it's one of the few that doesn't have a latch mechanism).

Supernatural Occurrences. There is a chance—especially late at night—that a character may come across Oaken's **specter** putting together a tea set here. The specter looks as Oaken did, except that its head is missing, and its body parts float apart from its body separately (representing the way he was butchered by Esme and Kerrin). Ectoplasmic blood drips all over everything. If Oaken's specter is destroyed, it rejuvenates within one hour. Oaken can only be completely destroyed if his skull is destroyed

and holy water is sprinkled on its remains.

G7 - Guest Room

Before Diamond's murder, the guest room is kept relatively untidy. Diamond keeps his possessions strewn about, with the exception of his axe, the *tether tearer*, which he wears on his hip. His possessions include the contents of a scholar's pack and a burglar's pack. He also has a waterskin filled with holy water.

After Diamond's murder, read the following:

Diamond's room has been torn apart. The bed's mattress is shredded, stuffing and springs spilling from it. All of the cabinets and drawers in the room are open, contents tossed about. Cold air and snow drift inside from the destroyed window, the curtains flapping in the strong breeze.

It's likely that Rogger, one of the ghouls in disguise, appears on the scene before the characters do. Any obvious notes that Diamond had on Skirvin estate, Vapul, or his recent findings were put into a waste bin and set on fire by Rogger before

characters could arrive. Of course, he suggests it was done “by whoever did this” and was “that way when he found it.”

Among the rubbish, the characters find a jeweled dagger with the initials “RJ” in the hilt. The dagger was Roundabout Jen’s, stolen from her when Eflor captured her and placed her in the dungeon. Rogger planted the dagger to make it seem like she was the murderer.

Murder in the Night. No matter what mystery paths your characters follow, Diamond is killed by the ghouls. However, clues leading to his murderer and eventually the secrets of the manor can be found with the Murder in the Night mystery path. While the characters have access to the room, a character that succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the rug and floor of the room have been disturbed. Below one of the floorboards, Diamond hid an octagonal coin made of bronze wrapped in a torn piece of yellow fabric. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check will realize that the coin is an obol, placed into the mouth of the dead as payment to ferrymen in the afterlife.

The wardrobe against the northern wall of the room holds its own secrets. The wardrobe is completely empty save for a single, yellow dress, sized for a young girl. Part of the dress has been cut away. That’s what Diamond used to wrap the obol under the floorboards. Behind the wardrobe is a hidden hallway that leads to the basement.

The wardrobe can’t be moved. This should be the first indicator that it’s hiding something. A character can make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check revealing that the wardrobe is bolted to the wall, and that it’s likely there’s a hidden passage behind it. Thick steel bolts keep it locked firmly in place—it requires a DC 24 Strength check to pry open the door behind the wardrobe. There is no

way to trigger the wardrobe’s mechanism outside of placing the obol in the mouth of Priscilla’s bust in the foyer (area G2).

G8 - Secret Stairs

Once the characters get past the wardrobe’s secret door in Area G8, they discover a hidden passage between the walls.

Cold and dark, this hidden chamber is no more than 10 feet in length before it deadends. There is a solid iron door to the left. It appears to have no door handle. At the center of the door are nine tumblers with letters on them.

The door can only be opened by placing the silver door handle into it (see Area G26), and then the tumblers (see the diagram in Appendix E) must be set to “PRISCILLA.” Once this is done, the door opens revealing the narrow staircase down to the basement Area B1.

On the other side of the wardrobe door is a latch that temporarily removes the steel bolts holding it in place, allowing a character to step out into Area G7.

Strange Occurrences. It’s possible that there is a **ghoul** waiting here, having been alerted by the wardrobe’s opening.

G9 - Dining Room

This impressive dining room seats twelve at a massive, dark-stained oak table. Above you is a balcony with a gallery of expertly painted paintings. At the north end of the room, a pair of double doors

If and when the characters agree to stay the night in Skirvin Manor, they’re served a delicious meal of beef stew and red wine by the Manor’s eccentric cook, Kerrin. Joining them for dinner is Rogger, Bianca, and Arrow Diamond. This is the perfect opportunity for the characters to get to know

the NPCs of Skirvin Manor.

The doors to the library (Area G12) are kept locked.

Ghost House. While the characters are at dinner and at regular intervals, organ music can be heard coming from the adjoining library (Area G12). It’s the ghost of Marren Skirvin playing a sad melody. Bianca, if questioned about it, lies, explaining that the organ in the library is magically enchanted to play at certain intervals. Unfortunately, they haven’t taken the time to disenchant it.

G10 - Main Hall

The main hall connects most of the manor’s downstairs. The doors to the greenhouse (Area G11), library (Area G12), and kitchen (Area G13) are kept locked.

Disappearance of Roundabout Jen. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals blood on the small table behind the staircase. When Gogo was pulling Jen towards the kitchen, she bled onto the table and on the rug. Noticing the blood on the red rug is a little more difficult, requiring a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

G11 - Greenhouse

Other than a few herbs and evergreen plants, most of the greenery in this greenhouse have withered for the winter. Snowdrifts pile on top of the glass, including the roof and exterior door. The first night of the blizzard, pushing the door open requires a DC 13 Strength check. The second night, the DC increases to 16.

Skeleton Keys. The warlock Kerrin/Ishta Vale hides her key in the greenhouse. The key itself is hidden at the bottom of one of the plants’ pots. Her key is the most protected of the three. Touching it without saying the phrase “Praise Vapul” activates all of the plants in the greenhouse to attack, acting as **thorny strangler vines** (see D). They continue to attack until destroyed, someone speaks the phrase

“Praise Vapul”, or the triggering creatures leave the greenhouse.

Like Bianca’s skeleton key, there are no obvious clues that point to its location. No amount of torture or non-magical interrogation will cause Kerrin to reveal the location of her key.

G12 - Library/Parlor

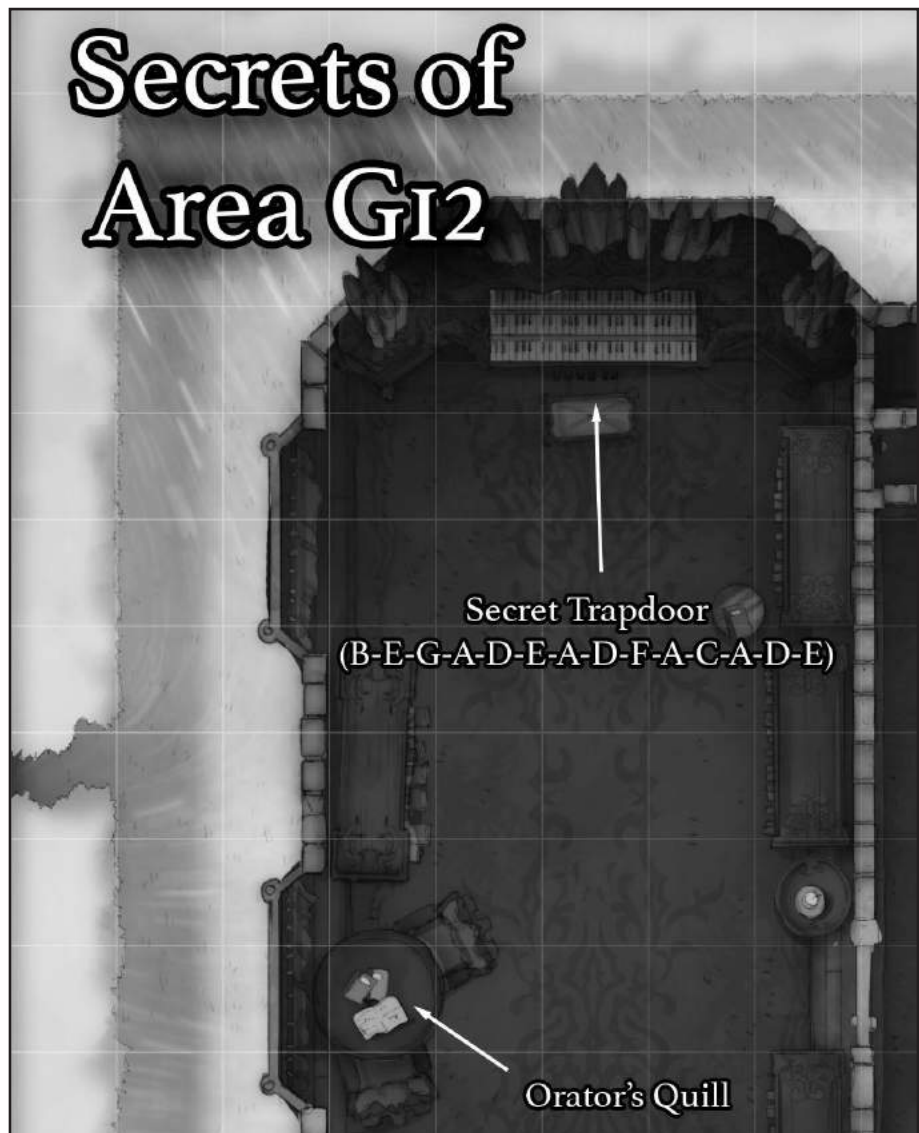
This grand room probably once doubled as a parlor and library. However, it’s clear that it’s sat empty for years. An impressive pipe organ dominates the northern end of the room, thick dust covering its keys.

Due to Marren’s ghost frequenting this room, Bianca and the others have decided to keep it “off-limits” to guests at the manor. “Lord Skinship prefers to keep this room locked as it was his private study before he grew ill,” she’ll lie.

Ghost House. If the characters break into the room while they hear Marren playing the pipe organ, they catch a brief glimpse of her. She bleeds spectral blood from her wrists onto the keys and turns to the characters. She then speaks in a slow, groaning tone, inaudible.

Later, while Marren isn’t present, they discover Petro’s ghost in this room (usually in the mornings just before midday). Petro sits at the table by the window, crying. Looking up through spectral tears, he says, “Mommy used to help me with my letters. She would tell me what to write and I would write it. But now I never see her anymore.” Once he’s finished speaking, he vanishes.

Examining the table, the characters find the *orator’s quill* (see Appendix C). Its activation word is written on the side of it—“Petro Skirvin.” Its best use in this adventure is to record the words Marren Skirvin says when she appears. Sped up, she says aloud, “BEG A DEAD FACADE” (handout in



Appendix E).

While it may seem meaningless at first, the phrase actually refers to different notes on the organ. If the notes are played into the organ—B-E-G-A-D-E-A-D-F-A-C-A-D-E—a hidden compartment at the base of the organ opens, revealing a narrow staircase down to the basement (Area B3).

Supernatural Occurrences. While helpful, Marren can also turn quite bitter. She can command the books of the library to come to life and attack as two swarms of **possessed books** lead by a **possessed spellbook** (see Appendix D).

G13 - Kitchen

At first glance, the Skirvin’s kitchen doesn’t seem out of the ordinary. It has all the tools Kerrin needs to prepare meals for the servants and guests (and ghouls, of course).

To get into the kitchen, the characters will need to distract or kill Kerrin (a **warlock of Vapul**, see Appendix D). Kerrin is pretty protective of the kitchen and will do her best to shoo away snoopy characters. Failing that, she’ll summon Efore and his ghost hounds to handle them, especially if they start unraveling the secrets of the manor.

There are a few times each day where she will leave the kitchen. Before each meal, she goes into the greenhouse to collect herbs. And after each meal, she uses the privy across the courtyard. No matter which way she goes, she locks the kitchen behind her and is gone for exactly 15 minutes. If the characters wish to break into the kitchen without being noticed by Kerrin, set a timer in the real world for 15 minutes. The players have exactly 15 minutes in real time to sneak in and get out before they are caught. In this time, they can do a quick search of the kitchen, making a (Wisdom) Perception check. Refer to the Searching the Kitchen table to determine what they find.

Kerrin always keeps the doors locked when she's away.

Disappearance of Roundabout Jen. The moment that the characters enter the kitchen, they must quickly search it. Have the characters make a passive Perception check. Depending on the result, they find one or more items in the kitchen as shown on the Searching the Kitchen table below.

Treasure. Roundabout Jen's signet ring is worth 10 gp. The tome of dark rituals contains the following rituals within its pages: *augury*, *commune*, *contact other plane*, *detect magic*, *divination*, *feign death*, and *gentle repose*. There is also a *tote of tricky treat sugarbombs* in one of the cabinets (see Appendix C).



Searching the Kitchen.

Perception	
Check	Result
9 or lower	The characters find nothing.
10-14	A stockpot boils over the fireplace. Looking in the stock reveals the bones of a human leg. A character that has proficiency in Medicine can make a successful DC 10 Wisdom check to reveal that they're human. They were Jen's, Kerrin having's severed the limb and served it.
15-19	The characters discover the bones. In addition, hanging on one of the pot hooks is a brass signet ring with the initials "RJ" for Roundabout Jen. Kerrin removed it and set it aside while butchering the woman's arm.
20+	Along with the other objects, behind the dishes on the stone-ware cabinet is the outline of a secret compartment. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a latch that unlocks it. Inside, Kerrin keeps a book bearing the mark of Vapul on the cover, its pages written in Abyssal. The book is a tome of dark rituals.

G14 - Water Barrels

When the well "ran dry" 40 years ago, the Skirvins started purchasing tuns of water from Camor to supply the mansion. Gogo also collects snow for Kerrin to boil and keep.

The iron door here is magically locked. It can be opened when the Abyssal word for "open" is spoken aloud. (It's likely that the characters notice at some point that Kerrin curses under her breath in Abyssal.) Until the *arcane lock* is dispelled, the DC to break it open or use thieves' tools to pick the lock is 25. The door itself is like any other door in the house in terms of AC and hit points, except that it also has immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage caused by nonmagical weapons and resistance to fire.

G15 - Abattoir

The first time the characters enter the abattoir, read the following:

Cold cuts, slabs of meat, and more hang from hooks in this cluttered meat locker. A table in the southeastern corner of the room is covered in fresh blood. You'd suspect it was animals' blood if you didn't au-

tomatically notice a severed human hand covered in tattoos amidst the gore.

The hand is Roundabout Jen's. Kerrin kept it to make stew for later.

Supernatural Occurrences. While the characters are in here, the room grows remarkably cold, almost as if they were standing outside. Suddenly, in one of the collection bowls, a severed head wearing an eye patch appears, gurgling on his own blood. It's Oaken's specter. Like Oaken's headless body, the head is dangerous, using telekinetic attacks to harm any living creature it comes across. Treat Oaken as a **poltergeist**, except make the following changes:

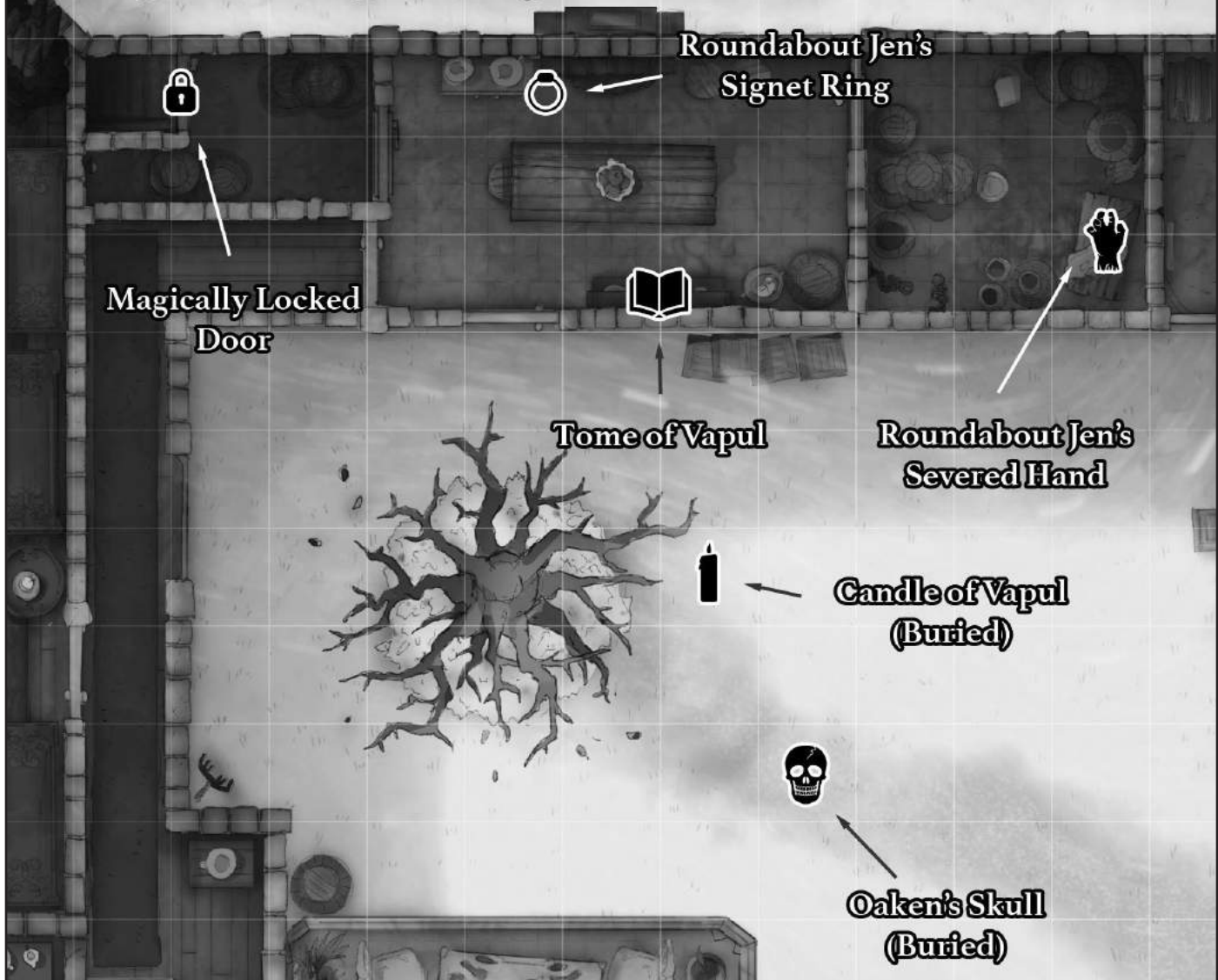
- Oaken is not invisible—attacks can be directed at his head.
- Remove Oaken's forceful slam attack.
- If Oaken's head takes 10 or more damage or any radiant damage, he instantly disappears.

G16 - Inner Courtyard

The courtyard is covered in snow, the blizzard's winds pounding against the manor. However, frequent travel between different parts of the manor

Secrets of Areas

G13, G14, G15 & G16



creates easygoing paths. The inner courtyard doesn't suffer from the difficult terrain conditions explained earlier in this Part.

Kerrin keeps the door to the kitchen locked as well as the door to the greenhouse.

The Old Man's Secret. The characters might see Nurse Joy watching them from the southern ambulatory (area T10). For a brief moment, her eyes seem to glow. She then turns away from the window, closing the curtains behind her.

Return of the Ice Demon. The map inside the *tether tearer* shows a spot in the courtyard with the mark of Vapul. Brushing away the snow there, the characters discover stones arranged in the mark. Digging there reveals a human skull. Where its

right eye should be is solid bone. This is Oaken's skull (see Part 4 on details on how to activate Oaken's skull).

Screams in the Chapel. The treasure map in Petro's room (see **Area T4**) shows an "X" just to the east of the large tree in the courtyard. Characters who dig there (takes 2 rounds) find a black candle wrapped in bur-lap. This is one of the Candles of Vapul, used to open the secret passage under the altar in the chapel

Supernatural Occurrences. Marren's ghost occasionally looks out the windows of the ambulatory above the inner courtyard.

G17 - Servant's Quarters

Five neatly made beds clutter this small, cold, austere room.

Before they turned into ghouls, this is where the servants slept. Bianca offers this room as a place for the characters to stay during the blizzard.

The Return of the Ice Demon.

Oaken's eyepatch is kept in a drawer in the table at the southern end of the room. Placing it on his skull temporarily revives him (see Part 4 for details).

Supernatural Occurrences. When a character is alone or all but one of the characters are asleep, a figure bursts in through the door outside. They appear to be ill, clawing at their throat and writhing. Before the character can help, the person tears away their own flesh, revealing a horrible ghoul beneath. The apparition then ends, almost as if nothing had happened.

G18 - Servant's Bath

This cold room is used for taking baths during the warmer months.

G19 - Scullery

Dirty dishes are brought here. Sometimes, Kerrin is here washing the dishes, using heated water from the kitchen.

G20 - Wood Storage

Usually, this door is kept locked. Wood for the fires and other household tasks are kept here. A staircase leads up to the servant stairway on the second floor (**Area T8**). After Arrow Diamond is murdered, his headless body is dragged here for safekeeping. Sometime between the night of his murder and the second murder, his body disappears—Kerrin and the ghouls drag it downstairs for feasting (and to destroy evidence).

G21 - Outer Courtyard

The narrow courtyard that runs between the house and chapel is piled with snow.

Supernatural Occurrences. The ghost of Ludra Vale occasionally walks past the well where her corpse is kept. Before anyone can get close enough to stop her, she vanishes.

G22 - Sealed Well

Forty years ago, Ludra Vale was pushed into the manor's well by Oaken. The lid was then placed over top and sealed permanently. Removing the lid requires a DC 13 Strength check.

The well is 100 feet deep and its stone walls are covered in ice. Without a rope, climbing the well requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check at the start of a character's movement. If the check fails by 4 or less, a character fails to move but doesn't fall. But if the check fails by 5 or more, the character loses their footing and falls the rest of the way, taking 1d6 damage for every 10 feet that they fall.

G23 - Family Graveyard

These snow-covered gravestones lack epitaphs and markings of any kind. The graves actually mark the bodies of those who were killed during the Slaughter of Camor.

Murder in the Night. Following Arrow Diamond's death, the footprints of a humanoid lead from the

crime scene to the mausoleum (**Area G25**). *Tether tearer* lies in the snow.

Supernatural Occurrences. Some nights, the spirits of the dead Camorians rise from the graves. They can be seen from any window that faces the graveyard as well as by any character that is outside. The twelve **ghosts** aren't malicious, but they do exude a frightful presence. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the ghosts and can see them must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute.

G24 - Chapel

Both sets of double-doors leading into the chapel are bound with thick chains and a lock that can be opened with one of the skeleton keys (see Part 4). The lock can be picked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check by someone with proficiency in thieves' tools. Alternatively, the chain itself can be broken one of two ways. It can be burst with a successful DC 22 Strength check. Or it can be attacked. The chain has an AC of 19, 10 hp, and is immune to bludgeoning and psychic damage. Fortunately, the blizzard outside masks most of the sounds made by characters attempting to break into the chapel.

Once the characters are in the chapel proper, read or paraphrase the following:

The interior of—what you can only guess—this once beautiful chapel is in ruins. The pews are cracked and broken, blanketed by thick cobwebs. Bloodstains, blackened with age, paint the floors suggesting some long-forgotten crime. On the wood, stone, rugs, everywhere are treacherous claw marks created by something likely not human.

Other than the bodies of the Camorian politicians being removed, the chapel was left the way it was following the Slaughter of Camor.

Encounters. Unless already killed somewhere else, the **reanimated groundskeeper** Gogo/Eflor and his two **ghostly hounds** (see Appendix D) reside in the chapel. Knowing that entering the chapel reveals many of the mysteries of Skirvin Manor, Gogo defends the chapel without hesitation. Unless the characters were quiet about entering the chapel, he attempts to hide before he attacks.

Also, the spirits of those who died in the chapel 40 years ago are angry and wish to cause harm to any who enter. There are three **poltergeists** that attack.

Screams in the Chapel. An old hymnal sits atop one of the pews. One of the hymns has been bookmarked (handout in Appendix E). The hymn is a clue to opening the sarcophagi in the chapel basement. It reads:

*Come with me, brothers and sisters
Down into the dark
By our sleeping sister Jane
From her bed, we shall embark.*

*First goes brother Michael
A hero and brave knight
Then goes Amory the scribe
Many books did she write.*

*Soon follows Erin
People called her a witch
Then pugnacious Lord Tyrus
Famously fat and rich.*

*Next is Mark the Priest
Who protected us with words
And finally the Druid Misha
She so loved her birds.*

*Come with me, brothers and sisters
Down into the dark
By our sleeping sister Jane
From her bed, we shall embark.*

Along with the hymnal, there is another important secret hidden in the chapel that assists in both the Screams in the Chapel and Murder in the Night mystery paths. The

altar hides a secret door. There are two candlesticks on either side of the altar. If the two candles of Vapul are placed into the candlesticks, a trap door opens. Stairs lead down into the secret basement below the chapel (**Area B8**). The secret door is difficult to notice, requiring a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) to find. Thick, steel rods keep the trapdoor in place until the candles are set into their proper place or the trap door is opened from within the basement. A character can pry it open with a successful DC 24 Strength check.

G25 - Priscilla's Mausoleum

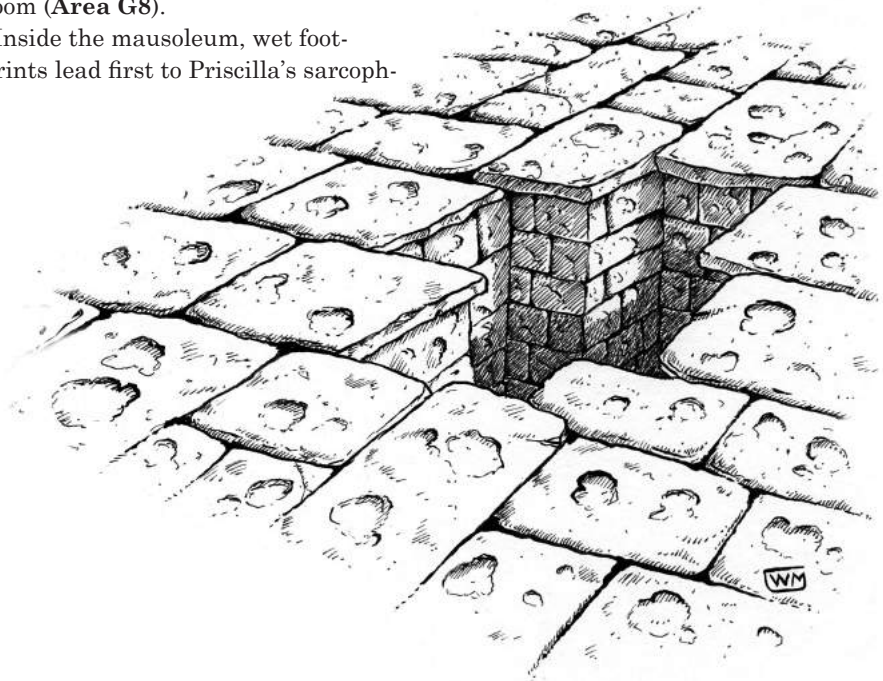
Priscilla, the youngest of the two Skirvin daughters, was interred in this mausoleum. A plaque over the stone door reads "PRISCILLA." Following the murder of Arrow Diamond, footprints lead to the closed door of the mausoleum. The mausoleum's door is heavy, but given a proper push by any character with a Strength score of 10 or higher it opens.

Murder in the Night. In its haste, the ghoul dropped the silver door handle into the snow to the right of the door. The silver door handle acts as a key to the secret door in the guest room (**Area G8**).

Inside the mausoleum, wet footprints lead first to Priscilla's sarcoph-

agus, and then to the northwestern corner of the room to the right of the door. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that the footprints are humanoid-like and bare.

The carving on Priscilla's sarcophagus depicts many animals surrounding the deceased girl Priscilla. One of the animals is a snake with its mouth open. A closer look—a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check—reveals that there is a finger-sized hole in the snake's mouth. A character can place their finger into the hole; if they do, the snake bites down. The character must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character takes 9 (2d8) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 hour; on a successful one, the character takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned. After one round, the snake releases its grip on the character. Suddenly, the door to the mausoleum shuts and a trap door in the floor of the northwestern corner opens. The trap door remains open until the mausoleum door opens again. Through the trap door, the characters find a tunnel that leads to the chapel basement (**Area B9**).





Skirvin Manor - Top Floor

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Top Floor

The following areas correspond to the labels on the top floor map of the house on this page.

T1 - Balustrade

This balcony overlooks the foyer from the first floor.

Both the door to the ambulatory (Area T10) and the office (Area T11) are locked.

Ghost House. If a character is following Petro's ghost—or if they're just walking along the balustrade—they hear a disembodied voice yell, "I want my mommy!" Petro, invisible, then

shoves the character. Have the character make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, they tumble over the railing and down to the foyer (Area G2) taking 7 (2d6) damage from the fall. On a successful saving throw, they feel something shove them into the railing, then hear his footsteps run down the hall. He runs downstairs to the library and disappears. Listening at the door, they hear him crying from within.

The Old Man's Secret. If the characters are upstairs investigating and are standing on the door to the balustrade, it's likely they hear the moaning of "Lord Earvin Skinship." Before they can react, Nurse Joy steps out

from the ambulatory (Area T10) and locks the door behind her. She says nothing to the characters before walking away.

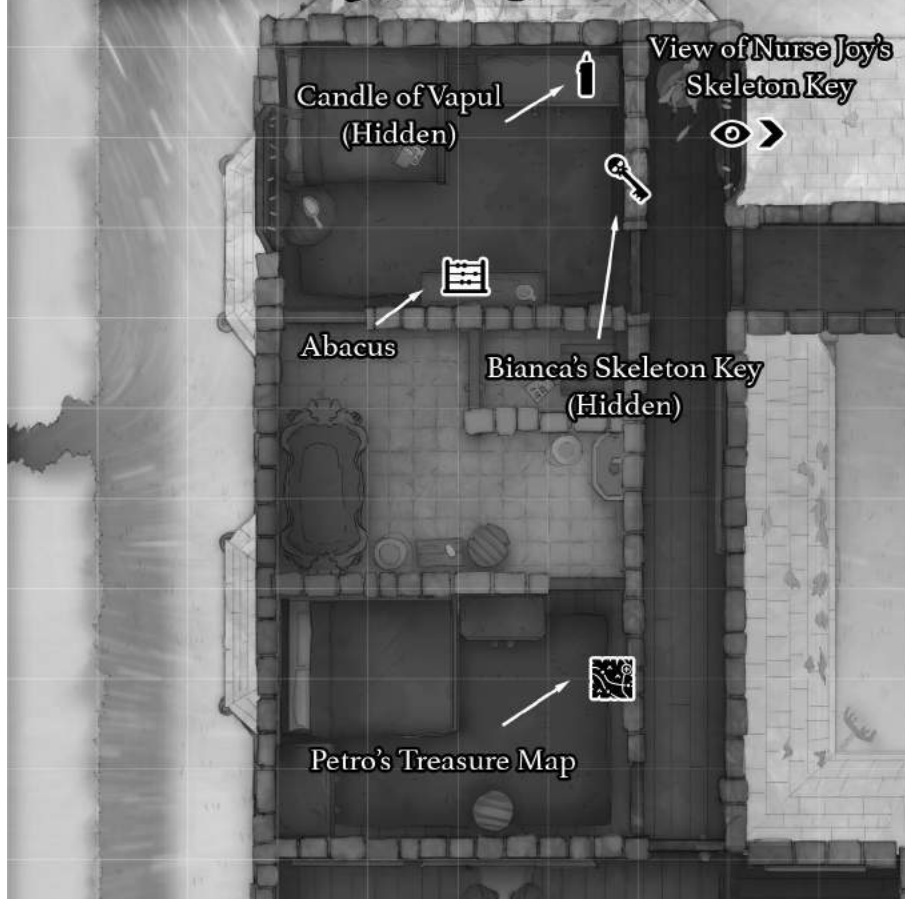
T2 - Gallery

This luxurious balcony overlooks the dining room. Covering the walls are intricately framed paintings of what could only be the family that once lived here.

T3 - Upstairs Hallway

This hallway runs the length of the upstairs, connecting the balustrade to the children's bedrooms and the master bathroom. There is a large

Secrets of Area T3, T4, and T6



window that faces east at the end of the hallway.

Skeleton Keys. A character that looks out the window may notice that the snow on the roof in front of the northeastern dormer (**Area T8**) has been recently disturbed as if it has been brushed away. Although they can't tell from where they are, it's where Nurse Joy hides her skeleton key.

T4 - Petro's Bedroom

Although it's been converted into a guest room with a proper size

bed, it's clear that this was once the room of a small child. Toys still decorate furniture surfaces. A hand-drawn treasure map is pinned to the wall just by the door. There's even a tiny pair of boots propped by the wardrobe.

This is the room where Rogger claims he is resting. However, he's never to be found here, even late at night.

Ghost House. There are two instances where Petro can appear in his old bedroom. First, as the characters are walking down the hall towards

the bedrooms, they hear his laughter from within. When the door is opened, they find nothing inside. However, some of his toys decorate the floor and bed. Then, if a character spends the night in the room, they awaken to the sound of a child asking, "Can we practice my words now, mommy?" When they look around for the voice, they see Petro running out of the room into the hallway.

Screams in the Chapel. The treasure map is a rough drawing of the house. In the courtyard, just in front of the old tree, is an X. Digging there reveals the right candle of Vapul is hidden (see **Area G16** for additional details).

T5 - Master Bath

A massive copper tub dominates this luxurious bathroom. It smells of flowers, incense, and other sweet smells.

This is the room where Esme Skirvin (possessed by Ludra Vale) killed her mother 40 years ago. She made it look like a suicide.

Ghost House. If one or more characters are in the master bathroom, the doors lock and the room becomes extremely cold. Suddenly, the characters notice that there is water on the floor mixed with blood. In the bathtub is the still, pale form of Marren Skirvin, her wrists bleeding. She mouths something: the only sound that comes out is a groaning, croaking sound, almost like someone speaking in slow-motion. Before the characters can attack her or communicate her, she vanishes.

T6 - Esme's Bedroom

This guest room was probably once a child's room. Stuffed animals and top the furniture surfaces. On the desk, a rainbow-colored abacus still sits. The wardrobe is slightly open, revealing a young woman's clothing.

Bianca/Esme still calls this room her own, although she's often tending to Lord Skinship in the ambulatory.

Screams in the Chapel. There are five articles of clothing hung in the wardrobe; each belonged to Esme. The clothing actually acts as a combination lock. Sliding the hangers from left to right in a set pattern unlocks a secret compartment in the bottom of the wardrobe. The compartment hides the left candle of Vapul.

The abacus on the desk is a clue. Its beads have been permanently glued into place. The combination of the wardrobe matches the positions on the abacus (handout in Appendix E). The combination is 3-left, 2 right; 1-left, 4-right; 0-left, 5-right; 4-left, 1-right.

The wardrobe was expertly crafted and magically sealed. Noticing the secret compartment requires a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Breaking it open requires a DC 22 Strength check. The entire wardrobe can be broken, too: it has an AC of 20, 50 hp (threshold 5), and is resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons, and immune to poison and psychic damage.

Skeleton Key. Bianca/Ludra keeps her skeleton key hidden, realizing that if she's killed or harmed and has the key on her, it gives her killers immediate access to the ghoul's den. She keeps the key in her old bedroom behind one of the stones in the wall near the door. Typically, she uses the end of her silver hairbrush to move the stone out of the way; hence scrapes on the end of the brush's handle.

If Ludra is severed from Esme, Esme will reveal the location of the key to the characters. Otherwise, there are no clues that point towards its secret location. If a character happens to search the wall directly to the right of the bedroom door, they can find the hidden stone with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Otherwise, it's difficult to notice with a cursory glance.

T7 - Ambulatory North

The ambulatory passages are cold, poorly lit, and not nearly as well furnished as the rest of the Old Skirvin Manor.

This passage is always locked.

Supernatural Occurrences.

The ambulatory is particularly well-guarded by the evil undead that infests Skirvin Manor. There is a chance that one of the **ghouls** from the basement snuck into the ambulatory to "stretch its legs." It might even be the same ghoul that killed Arrow Diamond. When noticed, it attacks immediately, fighting until its hit points are reduced to half or more. Fleeing, it slams doors behind it, locking them as it goes.

T8 - Servant Stairway

Leading up from the wood storage below, this old servant stairway allowed the Skirvin's servants to work without disturbing the residents.

The door leading to the eastern ambulatory is kept locked at all times.

Skeleton Keys. Nurse Joy keeps her key hidden just outside of the window. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals water around the window sill; melted snow. The window is easily opened. From there, a character can see disturbed snow on the roof. With a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check a character can find the skeleton key tacked to the underside of one of the roof tiles.

T9 - Ambulatory East

Similar to the other ambulatory halls, this area is cold and poorly lit. However, there are three paintings here that deliver clues to the locations of the three skeleton keys (see page 90 for details on the paintings).

Supernatural Occurrences. Occasionally, the ghost of Marren Skirvin can be seen walking along this hallway gazing at the paintings. She van-

ishes before she can be confronted, although, if you're running the Ghost House mystery path, she makes the same slow-motion groaning sound she does when encountered elsewhere.

T10 - Ambulatory South

The south ambulatory is very well-protected by Nurse Joy and Bianca. The door is always kept locked. Unless the characters are quiet, it's likely Nurse Joy hears them coming and prepares by locking the door to Lord Skirvin's room and hiding.

The Old Man's Secret. If the characters heard moaning from the balustrade (**area T1**), then the moaning intensifies once they reach the ambulatory; it's coming from the door at the eastern end of the hall.

T11 - Office

This old office is littered with papers, scrolls, and other old objects. A fine layer of dust covers everything and cobwebs are in every corner.

No one has set foot in Skirvin's office in years. Characters can discern certain elements of Skirvin's past here.

- Banners and pins reading "SKIRVIN FOR MAYOR OF CAMOR!" are kept in his desk and pinned to the walls.
- There is a love letter from Ludra Vale. It reads, "Phineas, my love. I have never known passion such as the passion I know with you. Hopefully, we can meet again soon. May nothing short of death ever come between us."
- There is an accounting ledger kept locked in a drawer.

Treasure. A quick look around the room and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a disturbance in the carpet. If someone pulls back the carpet a little, they find a locked trapdoor (DC 13 Dexterity with proficiency in thieves' tools to unlock). Within the trapdoor is a steel combination safe. The combination

is long lost, but a character can open it by making three DC 15 Perception (Wisdom) checks in a row. Within the safe are a bag of 100 gold pieces and a *wand of magic missiles*.

T12 - Master Bedroom

The door to this room is always kept locked by Nurse Joy, even if she’s inside. The first time the characters enter the room, read or paraphrase the following.

The smell; that’s the first thing you notice. Like human waste mixed with rot. It’s dark in here, too, the windows covered with an additional layer of blackout curtains. Thousands of tiny hash marks deface the walls and ceilings. From the large bed, you hear something moaning, groaning, crying. There seems to be something hiding under the covers.

Once the characters feel brave enough to pull back the sheets, read:

He has no legs. He has no arms. Other than a soiled loincloth, the old man is completely nude, writhing under tight leather restraints. Small gashes mark nearly every inch of his skin—some fresh and still bloody, some scabbed over, many turned to scars. Gasping, the poor soul reveals he has no tongue. “Kuh muh!” he begs, staring at you through the tears in his lidless eyes.

This, of course, is the tortured form of Lord Phineas Skirvin who has been held a prisoner in this room for 40 years. Nurse Joy keeps him stuck in the bed using the paralyzing agent in her ghoulish claws.

The Old Man’s Secret. If the physical torture wasn’t enough, Joy keeps a copy of *tome of dreams* (see Appendix C) beside the bed which Nurse Joy forces him to read each night. Having read it to him for forty years,

Skirvin’s own nightmares have since imprinted on the book. Once the character finishes reading the book, they fall into a slumber and have a nightmare. Each round they are asleep, they catch a glimpse at Skirvin’s past:

- **Round 1 - Meeting Ludra Vale.** Ludra Vale is hired. Lord Skirvin, younger, introduces himself to the young woman. It’s clear there is an attraction.
- **Round 2 - Skirvin’s Affair.** Ludra and Skirvin meet and make love in Priscilla’s Mausoleum.
- **Round 3 - Oaken Fires Ludra.** Oaken informs Lord Skirvin that he fired Ludra. He tells Skirvin that their little “secret” is safe with him.
- **Round 4 - Ludra Threatens Skirvin.** Ludra and Skirvin meet outside near the old well during a party. Oaken strikes Ludra in the back of the head with a log. He then tells Skirvin he’ll take care of the situation. Skirvin, terrified, leaves as Oaken drags Ludra’s body to the well.
- **Round 5 - Marren’s Suicide.** Skirvin weeps as a physician informs him that Lady Marren has committed suicide. While listening, he notices his daughter Esme, seemingly unaffected by the news.
- **Round 6 - The Priest.** Skirvin begs a priest to raise the bodies of his dead son and wife who both died within the last 48 hours. The priest tells Skirvin that he won’t be able to do it until the Manor’s curse is removed. Skirvin confesses his involvement in the murder of Ludra Vale. The Priest then agrees to help.
- **Round 7 - The Slaughter of Camor.** After killing the priest, Skirvin watches in horror as the chapel is overrun by ghouls who kill all of Skirvin’s political colleagues. Esme approaches carrying an axe. In Ludra’s voice, she says, “Hello, my love,” then attacks with the axe.
- **Round 8 - The Prisoner.** The revived priest places the limbless

Skirvin into the bed while Esme (as Ludra), Kerrin, and ghouls watch. Esme, in Ludra’s voice, tells him that he will stay there forever and suffer for what he’s done. Kerrin marks the wall with a knife. “Day one,” she cackles. Beyond this round, the dream repeats.

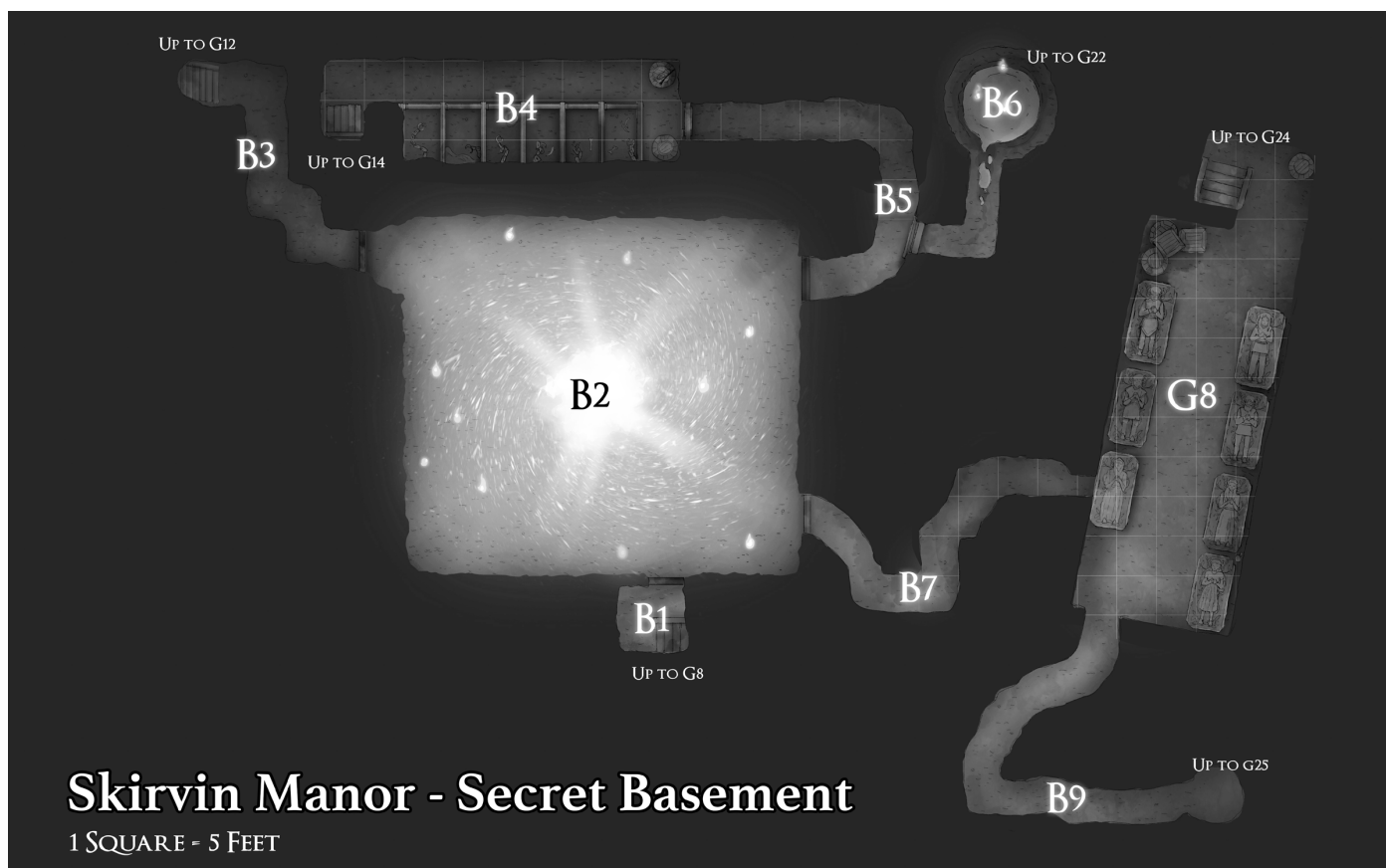
While a character is asleep experiencing Skirvin’s past, it might be a good time for Nurse Joy to reveal her true nature. The characters must fight her and two more **ghouls**.



T13 - Belltower

An “easier” way to get into the locked chapel is by scaling the bell tower. The parapet surrounding the bell tower (**area T12**) is 30 feet high. Climbing the bell tower without ropes and grappling hooks requires a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check thanks to the ice on the stone. The doors leading into the staircase of the bell tower have not been locked. From there, the characters can easily descend the stairs into the bell tower.

Treasure. In a satchel kept in the tower is a small spyglass Gogo used to spy on the grounds as well as anyone ringing the bell. The spyglass is rusty and cracked; it’s worth only 100 gp when sold to an expert in spyglass repair who can salvage the lenses.



Skirvin Manor - Secret Basement

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Secret Basement

The following areas correspond to the labels on the basement map of the house below. The walls, ceilings, and floors of the basement are made from hewn stone, occasionally supported by timber. It's always cold and damp here.

B1 - Secret Stairs

The stairs from the silver door behind the wardrobe (**Area G7**) leads into this small chamber.

B2 - Ghoul Den

See Part 4 for a full description of the events in this room.

Doors to the Ghouls' Den. The four doors that lead into the Ghouls den (**Area B2**) are made of iron and decorated with the mark of Vapul. In addition to being tough to break open and pick on its own, its been *arcane locked* to prevent intruders. Only one of the three skeleton keys can surpass

the enchantment open the door without trouble. Otherwise, it requires a DC 35 Strength check to break each door down and a DC 35 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick one of the locks. When opened, it sends an alarm to Kerrin, Bianca, Nurse Joy, and Gogo; each one arrives in 1 to 4 rounds.

B3 - Secret Passage

The stairs below the secret compartment in the organ (**Area G12**) leads to this passage.

B4 - Dungeon

The first time the characters enter this chamber, read:

A small, trembling voice calls out in the darkness, "Hello? Please. Can someone help me. Please..."

Six four-foot-tall animal pens are secured to the hewn stone walls. Various bones—obviously humanoid—litter the cages. In the third

cage from the left, however, a human woman wearing dirty purple and green clothing lies. She's missing her left leg and left arm. She looks ill with infection.

"Please help," she begs.

A large cleaver stained with blood hangs against the wall directly across from her cage.

Since Gogo captured her, Jen's been held captive in this small dungeon. Periodically, Kerrin comes downstairs to remove a piece of Jen's body to bring it back upstairs and prepare it for her infamous stew.

Unlike the other cages, Jen's cage is chained shut. Being an accomplished rogue herself, she already picked the lock once and nearly got away. The chain was the first defense against that happening followed by Kerrin removing all of the fingers on her remaining hand. The chain can be broken with a successful DC 22 Strength

check, or the lock can be picked with a DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools. The cell door has an AC of 19, 20 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. Loud sounds attract one of the ghouls from the door leading to **Area B5** who immediately attacks.

Normally, Jen would have the statistics of a **spy**. However, her injuries have made her into a noncombatant. Desperate to escape this hell, she offers double the reward of her bounty—2,000 gp.

Should the characters find themselves captured, knocked unconscious, or you need a "get-out-of-TPK" card, they might find themselves locked up here.

The door leading into **Area B5** is kept locked.

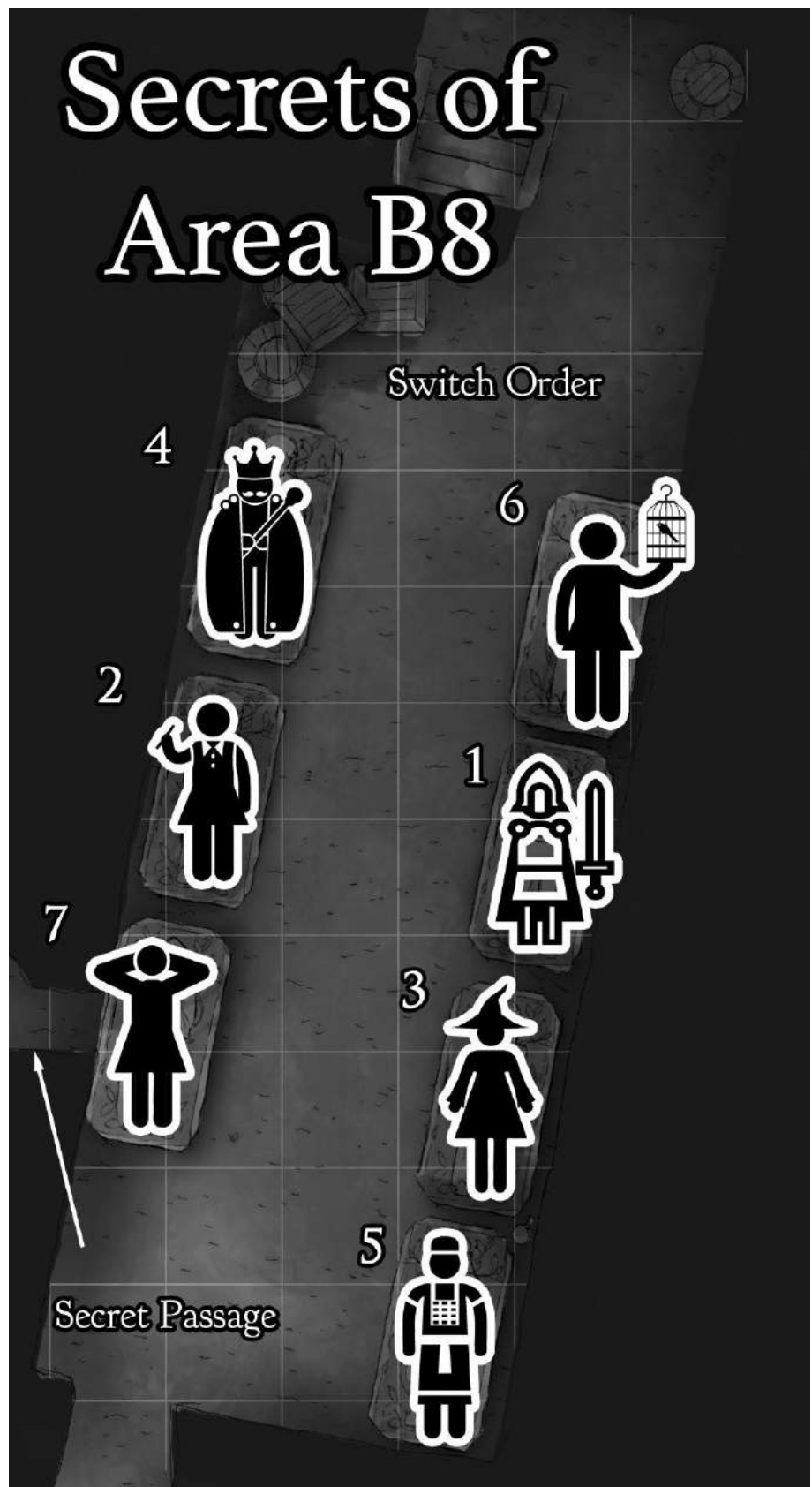
B5 - Passage

This winding passage connects the dungeon to the ghouls' den (**Area B2**). The passage into **Area A6** is boarded over.

B6 - Well Bottom

One hundred feet below Skirvin Manor's grounds, this long-abandoned well is nothing more than a solid block of ice. But you're not alone. Against the wall rests a long-withered skeleton. In its dying moments it grappled its stomach, protecting something.

Here lies Ludra Vale and her unborn triplets. No matter where Bianca is, Ludra will break her hold on the woman and rush to defend her remains, potentially freeing Bianca for the first time in years. Ludra, a **ghost matron** with three **wispsborn** (see Appendix D) fights until destroyed, viciously attacking. To end her curse and instantly destroy her, her bones must be sprinkled with holy water or burned. Doing either instantly destroys her, even if she has hit points remaining.



In addition to climbing back up the well itself, a rough tunnel leads back up to **Area B5**. Climbing up the tunnel is extremely difficult. A character must make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb up without a rope, and unless the creature has a climb speed, it counts as climbing. Furthermore, the ice makes the climb slippery, making it difficult terrain.

Finally, the way into **Area B6** is sealed. A character can break it open with a successful DC 18 Strength check. Otherwise, the seal has an AC of 18, 20 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Breaking the seal attracts the attention of three ghouls from the ghoulish den (**Area B2**) who wait to ambush the characters in the passage beyond (**Area B5**).

B7 - Secret Passage

After solving the riddle of the Sarcophagi, the characters can find their way to this secret tunnel which leads to the ghoulish den (**Area B2**).

B8 - Family Sarcophagi

The trap door below the altar in **Area B25** leads into this basement as does the secret tunnel below Priscilla's Mausoleum (**Area B9**). There is a button on the wall by the staircase that reopens the trapdoor (it shuts automatically after a few minutes).

This dark, earthen basement hides a few rotting crates and six adult-sized stone sarcophagi. The stench of death and mold consumes you.

All of the sarcophagi in the chapel's basement are fake. Refer to the diagram on page 82 and Appendix E for the placement and description of each sarcophagus.

Characters with a combined Strength score of 18 can remove one of the stone lids. The sarcophagi are empty except for a lever on inside floor of the sarcophagus. When the levers are pressed in the right order, the southwestern sarcophagus (Sleeping Jane) slides revealing the secret

passage (**Area B7**).

The order of the levers is as follows: the knight, the scribe, the witch, the lord, the priest, and the druid.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that Sleeping Jane's sarcophagus hides something. Another DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that it's trapped. It requires a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to disarm the trap, then another DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to trigger the mechanism that opens the secret passage. If the trap goes off, the room fills with poison gas. Each creature in the room must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 2d8 poison damage on a failed saving throw and becomes paralyzed for 1 minute on a failed saving throw, or takes half as much damage and doesn't become paralyzed with a successful saving throw. If all the characters are paralyzed, three of the ghouls from **area B2** arrive and drag the characters off to the dungeon in **area B4**.

B9 - Secret Passage

Just below Priscilla's mausoleum is a narrow, low passage. It leads to **Area B8**. A trap door leads back up to **Area G25**.

Part 3: The Binding of the Three

Once the characters solve the clues that lead to the secret basement of the Manor and collect one or more of the skeleton keys, they can enter the Ghoulish Den (**area D2**). No matter how the characters find their way into the basement, they arrive just as the surviving members of the Hand of Vapul are beginning the Binding of the Three. This Part details the final battle and incorporates any changes that might need to be made.

The Ghouls

There are eight total **ghouls** in Skirvin Manor including Nurse Joy and

Rogger. If the characters have killed any ghouls while searching the house, subtract any ghouls they killed from the eight. At the very least, there should be four ghouls present. The ghouls fight until destroyed; they will risk anything to ensure the ritual continues.

If the characters are in possession of Oaken's skull (see Return of the Ice Demon in Part 4) the ghouls fear it. As an action, a character can present the skull to turn the ghouls; the character can do this even if they don't possess the Channel Divinity: Turn Undead class feature. Each ghoulish within 30 feet of the character that can see Oaken's skull must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the ghoulish is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. While turned by Oaken's skull, the ghoulish is paralyzed as it cowers in fear of its former master.

Bianca/Esme/Ludra

Unless the characters killed Bianca or severed Ludra's grip on the girl, she is the centerpiece for the ritual. She stands at the center of the ghouls' coffins, bathed in blood. Kerrin reads from her tome (if she still has it), activating the Binding of the Three.

The first round of combat, Vapul starts to take over Ludra's form, joining Esme and Ludra. Refer to the section "The Return of Vapul" section below to determine Vapul/Ludra's statistics.

Kerrin/Ishta Vale

Summoning Vapul is Ludra's mother, Kerrin. Unless her tome was stolen, she reads from the book. Nothing will stop her from reading, even if she takes damage.

The ghouls and Eflor work to protect her from the characters so she can complete the ceremony.

The Groundskeeper

Unless he has already been destroyed, the **reanimated groundskeeper**

Gogo/Eflor appears during the second round of combat and attacks with his **ghostly hounds**. He attacks even if the characters have stopped the ritual, hellbent on destroying them.

The Ritual's Participants

Depending on how the characters arrived at this point, different combinations of characters may participate

in the Ritual of the Three.

To perform the binding of the three, there must be a living host, a dead host (ghost or specter), and someone to perform the ritual. The hierarchy for each role is below. If a particular NPC is dead when the characters reach this point, refer to the next NPC in the hierarchy.

Living Host. Esme Skirvin, Roundabout Jen, Phineas Skirvin, an unnamed commoner.

Dead Host. Ludra Vale, Marren Skirvin (against her will), Petro Skirvin (against his will), Oaken, a ghost of one of Lord Skirvin's colleagues.

Summoner. Kerrin, Eflor, a ghoul.

The Return of Vapul

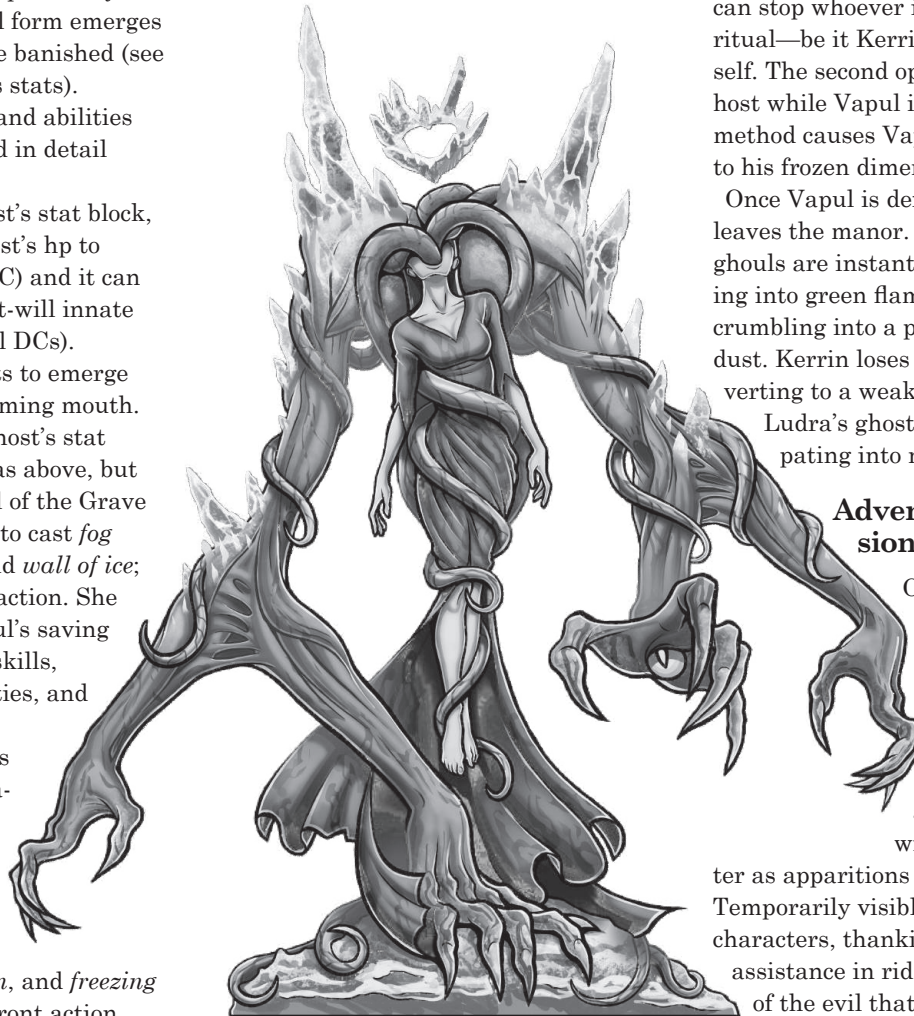
No matter who the catalyst for Vapul's return ends up being, he enters the fray during the first round of combat, crawling from the open mouth of his host (likely Bianca). Unless he and his host are destroyed, on each subsequent round of combat, Vapul regains a portion of his power. By the fifth round, Vapul's full form emerges and he can no longer be banished (see Appendix D for Vapul's stats).

Details of his powers and abilities per round are described in detail below:

- **Round 1.** Use the host's stat block, except change the host's hp to match **Vapul's** (see C) and it can cast any of Vapul's at-will innate spells (using his spell DCs).
- **Round 2.** Vapul starts to emerge from the host's screaming mouth. Continue to use the host's stat block the same way as above, but it gains Vapul's Chill of the Grave trait; Vapul's ability to cast *fog cloud*, *sleet storm*, and *wall of ice*; and Vapul's Freeze! action. She also gains all of Vapul's saving throw proficiencies, skills, resistances, immunities, and senses.
- **Round 3.** Vapul takes over at this point. Vapul's movement is 0 while he tries to escape the host. He can use all of his abilities except for *cone of cold*, *ice storm*, and *freezing sphere* spells, Cold Front action,

and all his Legendary Actions.

- **Round 4.** The same as round 3, except Vapul gains access all his spells and his Cold Front action.
- **Round 5.** Vapul returns! By the fifth round, **Vapul** fully emerges at full strength. He has all of his traits, actions, and legendary actions.



Defeating Vapul

The characters have exactly five rounds to stop Vapul. Failure to stop him in time releases his full might, creating a challenge that the characters are unlikely to handle. At that point, their only resource is to escape.

To stop Vapul before he emerges, the characters have two ways. First, they can stop whoever is performing the ritual—be it Kerrin or Bianca herself. The second option is to kill the host while Vapul is emerging. Either method causes Vapul to retreat back to his frozen dimension.

Once Vapul is defeated, his evil taint leaves the manor. Any remaining ghouls are instantly destroyed, bursting into green flame. Eflor falls apart, crumbling into a pile of insect-ridden dust. Kerrin loses her magic, reverting to a weak, old woman. And Ludra's ghost is destroyed, dissipating into nothing.

Adventure Conclusion

Once Vapul and his cult are destroyed, the ghosts of Skirvin Manor are freed of their curse. If Lord Skirvin is still alive, he joins his wife, son, and daughter as apparitions in the courtyard. Temporarily visible, they wave to the characters, thanking them for their assistance in ridding Skirvin Manor of the evil that's tainted it for so

long.

If Roundabout Jen is still alive, the characters can choose to let her go—after all, she is missing a leg and an arm—or turn her into the magistrate in Knotside to collect the bounty. Although a criminal, Jen, if freed, she lives up to her promises and pays the characters 2,000 gp. Furthermore, she promises that she will forever be in the character’s debt.

This may be the first of many ghost-hunting adventures for the characters. In fact, clues left by Arrow Diamond lead the adventurers to Rivertown, a wealthy trade town to the west, where he once lived. Of course, Rivertown is about to have its own problems with a demon.

But that’s a story for another time...

Part 4: Mystery Paths

The adventure has multiple methods of discovering the secrets of Skirvin Manor, finding the secret basement, and defeating the evil that resides within the old house. What follows are the most popular solutions to the puzzles. Each lists recommended scenes and beats for you to follow. You are free to incorporate one, some, or all of these solutions into your adventure.

Be sure to fully read and understand each of the solutions and the area of the house that they reference before running the adventure.

The Disappearance of Roundabout Jen

Roundabout Jen is a career criminal and rogue. She’s wanted by the magistrates of Knotside. They’re willing to pay 1,000 gp alive or 300 gp dead. Jen was passing through Camor when two elf scouts working for the Cult of Vapul ambushed her. They took her to Skirvin Manor as an offering to the Vales and their ghouls. She’s now kept in the dungeon. This particular thread is violent—suggestively and otherwise—and may disturb some players.

Mystery Paths.

Mystery Path	Adventure Theme
The Disappearance of Roundabout Jen	A violent and disturbing horror story following the disappearance of a young woman.
Ghost House	A very atmospheric Victorian ghost story with plenty of mystery and puzzle solving.
Murder in the Night	Purely a murder mystery with lots of puzzle solving.
The Old Man’s Secret	A disturbing story with difficult moral quandaries. Lots of story background offered.
Return of the Ice Demon	A fast-paced, combat-heavy story best for players who like tough fights.
Screams in the Chapel	Good mix of all the previous themes with ghosts, puzzles, combat, and exploration.

Mystery Hook. While at the scene of Alin’s death (see Part 1), one of the characters might notice that one of the elves is carrying one of Roundabout Jen’s trademark purple and green scarves. If defeated, the elves reveal that they knocked Jen unconscious and took her to Skirvin Manor.

Scene 1: Arrival at Skirvin Manor. The characters arrive at Skirvin Manor (Part 1) and meet Bianca. The characters might have questions for Bianca, the Vales, and the other guests regarding Jen.

Here are the answers that the NPCs offer regarding the whereabouts of Roundabout Jen:

Arrow Diamond (telling the truth) : “I heard the woman, Bianca, greeting the rangers at the door. I couldn’t really see what they were doing, but they dragged someone into the hallway and carried them to the hall. I don’t remember seeing the groundskeeper get involved. In fact, I haven’t even seen this groundskeeper they keep talking about.”

Bianca (lying) : “Yes, the rangers from Camor brought the woman here. We immediately recognized her for who she was. Our groundskeeper, Gogo, delivered her back to Constable Sarra in chains. I’m glad to see that horrible woman brought to justice.”

Kerrin (lying) : “I don’t know anything about any woman. I just work in the kitchen.”

Rogger (lying) : “I’ve just been wandering around. Didn’t see anything.”

Scene 2: Finding Gogo. The characters never get a chance to find this “Gogo” that Bianca keeps referencing. Gogo/Eflor actually moves between the locked and hidden areas of the Manor, especially the chapel.

Scene 3: Blood in the Hall. At some point, one of the characters might notice blood on the floor in the main hallway (**Area 10**). Tracking the blood, it leads to the manor’s kitchen (**Area 13**).

Scene 4: Getting Into the Kitchen. Kerrin is almost always in the kitchen; she refuses to let anyone enter that isn’t one of the Hands of Vapul. If necessary, she will even bar the door. And then, if the characters press too much, she’ll command Eflor to attack. To get into the kitchen, the characters will need to distract or kill Kerrin. There are a few times each day where she will leave the kitchen. Before each meal, she goes into the greenhouse to collect herbs. And after each meal, she uses the privy across the courtyard. No matter which way she goes, she locks the kitchen behind her and is gone for exactly 15 minutes.

Scene 5: The Store Room and Abattoir. The characters can then explore the rooms adjacent to the

kitchen, the water store (**area G14**) and the abattoir (**Area G15**). It's likely that the characters will have to hide in one of the rooms when the timer runs out and Kerrin returns. Clues eventually point to Roundabout Jen somewhere on the premises.

Scene 6: Entering the Dungeon. The iron door in the water store (**Area G14**) is magically locked. It can only be opened when the Abyssal word for "open" is spoken aloud. Otherwise, the door cannot be opened unless it is dispelled. It's likely that the characters notice at some point that Kerrin curses under her breath in Abyssal.

Scene 7: Finding Jen Roundabout. Jen is held in a cell in the dungeon (**Area B4**). When the characters find her, she's had one of her arms and one of her legs removed—Kerrin's been feeding her to the guests and ghouls. Loud sounds attract one of the ghouls from the door leading to **Area B5** who immediately attacks.

Scene 8: Getting to the Ghoul Den. After saving Jen, the characters may follow the passage to the ghoul den (**Area B5**). The door is locked, requiring one of the skeleton keys—refer to the section "Skeleton Keys" below. Once in the den, they must face Vapul's Resurrection as detailed in Part 3.

Ghost House

The ghosts of Petro and Marren Skirvin try to warn the guests of the manor about the evil that resides within. This thread relies heavily on the atmosphere and plays like a ghost story with light puzzle solving.

Mystery Hook. When any of the characters are wandering outside in the inner courtyard or on the northern end of the outer courtyard, they notice someone watching them from one of the windows. It's the ghost of Marren Skirvin. They could also hear

Marren's organ playing in the parlor/library (**Area G12**).

Scene 1: Marren's Ghost. Once the characters notice Marren the first time, she continues to appear. Below are some of her appearances: in the bathtub in **Area T5**, in the library in **Area G12**, looking at the paintings in **Area T9**, or near the well in **Area G22**. She always says something, it but it's in slow motion and inaudible without magic or an innate ability such as mimicry.

Scene 2: Petro's Ghost. Like Marren, Petro's ghost can be found at different parts of the house. Here are some of the locations Petro appears: in the foyer (**Area G2**), playing hide-n-seek in the coat closet (**Area G4**), in the parlor (**Area G12**), on the balustrade (**Area T1**), or in his old bedroom (**Area T4**). Petro hints that he's trying to communicate with his mother but can't understand her.

Scene 3: What is Marren saying? Each time the characters run into Marren's ghost, she says something that they cannot understand, almost as if she's speaking in slow-motion. The characters may wish to recreate the sound and speed it up to understand what she's saying. They can do this with a *minor illusion* cantrip or similar magic. If they lack the magic to recreate the effect, there is an *orator's quill* in the library that can record audio onto the page. It turns out that Marren has been saying "BEG A DEAD FACADE."

Scene 4: Beg a Dead Facade. "BEG A DEAD FACADE" references the notes on the organ: B-E-G-A-D-E-A-D-F-A-C-A-D-E. If a character plays the notes into the organ, a compartment below the organ opens up, revealing a trapdoor down into the basement (**Area B3**). From there, the characters will need a skeleton key to open the door as described below. After they get through the door, they must stop the Ritual of Vapul, detailed in Part 3.

Murder in the Night

Arrow Diamond is a ghost-hunter investigating Skirvin Manor and the Slaughter of Camor. He discovers a part of the secret but is killed in the night while fighting a ghoul. This thread involves a lot of puzzle-solving.

Mystery Hook. Late at night, a ghoul sneaks into the room Diamond is staying in and attacks him. Details of his murder and how the NPCs react are detailed in Part 2. The characters should find clues leading them either to the Mausoleum (**Area G25**) or Diamond's room (**Area G7**).

Scene 1: Investigating the Mausoleum. Within the mausoleum, wet footprints stop at the sarcophagus then end at the hidden trapdoor. The characters should find the silver door handle dropped in the snow. It's one of the two keys used to open the door to the secret stairs (**Area G8**).

Scene 2: Investigating Diamond's Room. The characters may want to investigate Diamond's room where the fight occurred. When they arrive, they discover Rogger in the room. All clues Diamond had regarding the manor have been destroyed by Rogger who claims to have found it that way. As long as the characters stay in the room, Rogger sticks around to "help" them. All of Diamond's possessions are spread around. Any coins he had were stolen by Rogger to give the illusion that it might have been a bandit. The presence of Jen's dagger under the bed further corroborates Rogger's story.

Under the rug in the room, Diamond removed a floorboard and hid something below it. Within is an octagonal obol wrapped in yellow fabric.

Scene 3: The Missing Sister. Using one of the paintings as clues (or just searching on their own) they notice that pulling down the eyes on Priscilla's bust in the foyer (**Area G2**) opens her mouth. Inserting the obol unlocks the secret door behind the wardrobe in **Area G7**.

Scene 4: The Wardrobe and the Silver Door. After the coin has been placed in Priscilla's mouth, the wardrobe in the guest room unlocks and opens slightly, revealing the secret passage behind it. The door blocking the stairs remains locked. Oddly, the door lacks a doorknob, but it has a hole where one should go. To open the door without springing the alarm downstairs, the characters must perform two tasks. First, they must insert the silver doorknob they found in the snow. Then, they must turn the tumblers on the door to read "PRISCILLA."

Scene 5: To the Ghoul Den. Once the silver door is open, characters can descend into the basement, appearing just before the door leading to the ghoulish den. They will need one of the skeleton keys to go inside (see below). Once through the door, they must stop the Binding of the Three ritual as detailed in Part 3.

Return of the Ice Demon

Hints of Vapul's legacy are found everywhere in the Manor. Following this threat, the characters will discover that Bianca and the Vales hope to revive the fiend. This thread is combat-heavy, good for players who enjoy a good fight.

Mystery Hook. Following dinner the first night, if any of the characters speak with Arrow Diamond, they learn a bit about why he is there. He explains that he is an archaeologist who believes that the Skirvin Manor is built on the site of an ancient battle. Specifically, Diamond details the history of Vapul and his battle with the Knight Camor 1,000 years ago. Diamond also believes that around 40-50 years ago, something horrible happened in the village of Camor, but it was covered up. He's determined to find out what it is.

That evening, Diamond is killed by a ghoulish in his room (see Part 1). In addition to the mystery of his murder,

other clues lead to the presence of Vapul and his followers.

Scene 1: Tether Tearer's Secret.

Not only is Diamond's axe a powerful weapon against the undead, but it holds a secret compartment in its handle. When the characters first take it, a successful DC 13 passive Perception reveals that the nob at the base of the handle has been slightly unscrewed. Within are some of Diamond's notes that didn't get destroyed. The notes are a crude drawing of the Mansion (see Appendix E). He's marked a location on in the inner courtyard with the sign of Vapul.



Scene 2: The Courtyard. Following the map, the characters can brush away the snow over the area Diamond marked. There, they find stones in the ground laid out in the pattern of the mark of Vapul. If they dig below the mark, they discover Oaken's buried skull. Soon after, the corpse tree (see Appendix D) attacks.

Scene 3: Oaken's Eyepatch. A box of Oaken's possessions can be found in the old servant's quarters. Among his possessions is an old eyepatch. If the eyepatch is placed on Oaken's

skull, it temporarily brings Oaken's spirit into the skull. The skull speaks the following warning:

*My soul returns in this time of darkness and despair
I am cursed to speak only the truth,
to tell you what I know
You are granted five questions, and
I will grant five answers
After that, I can return to my eternal rest.*

From there, the characters can ask Oaken's skull up to five questions. Oaken knows all of the secrets of the manor including its full history, the nature of the Hand of Vapul, and more.

Scene 4: Bianca's Mark. Eventually, the characters may recognize that Bianca bears the same mark of Vapul seen on Diamond's notes and on the ground. When confronted, Bianca tries to brush the characters off as being insane. If they continue to press her, Ludra reveals her true self as a ghost matron, angrily attacking the characters. Ludra fights until her hit points are reduced by half or more, or her tether is torn by *tether tearer*. She and the three children immediately retreat.

Once Bianca is free of Ludra, she reveals that her true name is Esme Skirvin and that she has been the unwilling vessel of Ludra for forty years. Ludra forced Esme to kill countless people over the years, including her own mother and brother. Free of the curse, Esme's lifeforce fades. Before she dies, she explains that the only true way to defeat Ludra is to destroy her body which still lies at the bottom of the sealed well.

Scene 5: The Well. Following Esme's guidance, the characters head to the sealed well. Realizing the danger the characters pose, Eflor the reanimated groundskeeper and his ghostly hounds attack the characters. Once Eflor is defeated, the characters

can remove the seal. A crowbar easily pries it off (one can be found in the wood storage), or a successful DC 17 Strength check.

The seal has an AC of 17, 10 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. From there, there the characters must descend into the well which is 100 feet deep and frozen at the bottom. At the bottom, Ludra attacks, defending her bones. This time, she's joined by her three wisp-born children.

Scene 6: Secret Passage. Once the characters are in the Secret Passage, they must retrieve one of the skeleton keys to open the door leading to **Area B2**. After they get past the door they must stop the Hand of Vapul (see Part 3).

The Old Man's Secret

There's something unusual about the ambulatory upstairs. It's obvious that Bianca and the other members of the staff are hiding something. Of all the mystery threads, this one is by far the most disturbing (although it lacks true gore). However, it's great for players who are interested in the history of the adventure.

Mystery Hook. A mysterious woman wearing all white occasionally descends the staircase from upstairs and heads for the kitchen. Returning from the kitchen, she carries a tray with a bowl of cold porridge. After going back upstairs, she enters the ambulatory's south entrance by the balustrade (**Area T1**). The staff refers to her as "Nurse Joy." They claim that she is taking care of the sick owner of the house, Lord Earvin Skinship.

Scene 1: Moaning in the Ambulatory. If the characters are upstairs investigating and are standing on the door to the balustrade, it's likely they hear the moaning of "Lord Earvin Skinship." Before they can react, Nurse Joy steps out and locks the door behind her. She says nothing to the characters before walking away.

Scene 2: Breaking into the Ambulatory. Three of the doors leading into the ambulatory are locked: the one in the balustrade (**Area T1**), the one in the office (**Area T11**), and by the Servant's Stairway (**Area T8**). Nurse Joy carries the key on her on a chain (but not her skeleton key).

In this thread, the ambulatory is magically trapped with an *alarm* spell that signals Bianca and Kerrin. They arrive within 3 rounds to investigate.

Scene 3: The Old Man's Room.

Lord Earvin Skinship is kept in the bedroom (**Area B12**). He has no arms, legs, or tongue, and is permanently bed-ridden. Skinship is actually Lord Phineas Skirvin who's been kept a prisoner in this room for the last 40 years, punishment for the murder of her daughter, Ludra.

Unless the characters have a way to magically regenerate his tongue or communicate telepathically, Skirvin cannot speak with them. However, he motions to a book on his nightstand.

Scene 4: Skirvin's Nightmares.

With the book in their possession, a character can sleep next to it and see into Skirvin's nightmares. Each round that the character sleeps, the scenes that tormented Skirvin unfold. See Part 2 for details on Skirvin and the *tome of dreams*.

Scene 5: Confrontation. Once the members of the Hand of Vapul learn that the characters have stolen the book and discovered Skirvin, they attack. Nurse Joy, who is revealed to be a ghoul, and two other ghouls attack the characters. Where the ghouls attack the characters depends on the proximity to one of the secret entrances down into the basement. For example, if the characters are near the kitchen, the ghouls attack from the water storeroom. In their haste, they leave the door open, circumventing any traps or special keys required to find the exit.

Scene 6: Finding the Skeleton

Key. This thread, more so than any other, makes finding the skeleton key a time-sensitive matter. Once the creatures who live in the house learn that the characters are onto them, they will begin the ceremony. The characters have 30 minutes in real-time to search the house, find the key, and stop the ceremony (see Part 3).

Screams in the Chapel

This story thread invites the characters to explore the mysterious chapel on the Skirvin Manor grounds. Following the clues, they're lead into the basement of the chapel and eventually discover the ghouls that live below the property. The main villain of this story is Eflor, the Death Priest of Vapul and eventually Vapul. This path has a little bit of everything from combat, to ghost stories, to puzzle solving.

Mystery Hook. While exploring the grounds, the characters notice the massive chapel. Its doors are chained on all sides. Bianca explains that it's dangerous to go in there as the chapel is falling apart. She also warns that it's cursed as the old family that once owned the manor were killed in there.

In the middle of the night or early in the morning, one or more of the characters wake up to what sounds like dozens of people screaming through the blizzard. Following the sound, they're lead to the chapel. Once they touch the chapel doors or any part of the chapel the screaming stops.

Scene 1: Breaking Into the Chapel.

After the screams, the characters may wish to sneak into the Chapel itself to investigate what's going on. If any of the Cult of Vapul see the characters trying to break in, they first try to convince them to stop. The characters can enter either by breaking the chains on the doors or climbing into the bell tower.

Scene 2: Exploring the Old Chapel. Once the characters are inside the chapel (**area G25**), they find the place in ruins, left almost as it was 40 years ago following the Slaughter of Camor. It's likely they confront Gogo, the reanimated groundskeeper and his two ghostly hounds here. To add to the danger, you can also have three poltergeists, spirits of the dead Camorians, attack. Following combat, the characters should discover the hymnal. A search of the altar also reveals that it's likely a secret door.

Scene 3: Finding the Candles of Vapul. To open the altar, two candles must be placed into the altar at the same time, then twisted. Both are hidden in the house. One of the paintings in the gallery acts as a clue to where the candles are located.

Left Candle. The left candle is hidden in Esme's old room hidden in a secret compartment in her wardrobe. To unlock the compartment, the hangers act as a combination lock, clues given by the abacus on her desk. Once the hangers are slid into the right positions, the compartment unlocks revealing the candle (see **Area T6** for additional details)

Right Candle. Within Petro's room is a treasure map that crudely represents the house (see Appendix E). Finding the X on the map and digging there reveals where the candle is hidden (see **Area T4** for additional details).

Step 4. Opening the Altar. Once the candles are placed into their proper positions and turned, the altar slides revealing a staircase that descends into the chapel basement (**area B8**).

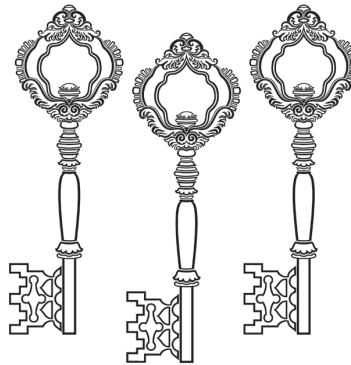
Scene 5: The Seven Sarcophagi. All of the sarcophagi in the chapel's basement are fake. See C for detailed descriptions of the lids of the sarcophagi. At the bottom of each one is a lever. When the levers are pressed in the right order, the southwestern sarcophagus (Sleeping Jane) slides revealing a secret path that leads to

the ghoulish den. From there, they must open the door with a skeleton key (see below). Then, they must battle Vapul and his minion as detailed in Part 3.

Skeleton Keys

Regardless of the mystery path you and the characters choose to follow, to enter the ghoulish den (**Area B2**) and confront the Hand of Vapul, the characters must possess one of the three skeleton keys in the house. Each of the three keys opens all four of the doors leading into the den. And each skeleton key is carefully hidden by its owner.

What follows are details on how to locate one or all of the three skeleton keys.



Bianca's Skeleton Key

Bianca/Ludra has hidden her own skeleton key, realizing that if she's killed or harmed and has the key, it gives her killers immediate access to the ghoulish den. She keeps the key in Esme's old bedroom behind one of the stones in the wall near the door (detailed in **Area T6**).

Kerrin's Skeleton Key

The warlock Kerrin hides her key in the greenhouse. The key itself is hidden at the bottom of one of the plants. Her key is the most protected of the three. Touching it without saying the phrase "Praise Vapul" activates all of the plants in the greenhouse to attack.

Like Bianca's skeleton key, there are no obvious clues that point to its location. No amount of torture or non-magical interrogation will cause Kerrin to reveal the location of her key.

Nurse Joy's Skeleton Key

Nurse Joy, the ghoulish in disguise who cares for Phineas Skirvin/Earvin Skinship, hides her key in the ambulatory. If a character looks outside the east-facing window in the upstairs hallway (**Area T3**) looks towards the outer wall of the tower containing the servant's staircase (**Area T8**), with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check they notice that the snow on the roof tiles have recently been disturbed.

If the characters make it into the servant's stairs (**Area T8**), it's clear the window has been opened within the last day. See Part 2 for details.

Failing the Adventure

It's possible that the characters may lose this adventure.

The Binding of the Three ritual has one of three triggers: the characters arrive in the basement at any time, the characters catch onto the presence of the Hand and the Hand is aware, or the characters fail to learn anything before midnight the second night they are in the manor.

With the **first trigger**, the characters have three rounds to stop Vapul before he fully forms. Once formed, the characters are far outmatched by the full power of the demon prince and should immediately escape. Otherwise, they may face certain death.

The **second trigger** happens when the Hand of Vapul becomes aware that the characters wish to stop them. They immediately lock themselves below the house and start the ritual. Although at least one of the secret passages is left open, the characters must still find one of the skeleton keys to enter **Area B2** and put a stop

to the ritual. The player have 30 minutes of real-time to have their characters get into the basement. As soon as they enter B5, the clock stops and they have 5 rounds to stop Vapul's return, as normal.

Finally, the **third trigger** occurs if the characters fail to learn anything about the Hand of Vapul after two days have passed. The Hand starts the ritual 30 minutes before midnight the second night the characters stay in the manor. Again, the players have 30 minutes of real-time to stop the ritual.

The latter two situations happen without the characters even knowing about it. When the timer starts, read the following:

Suddenly, the entire house jolts as if hit by a colossal boulder. Furniture slides, paintings fall, fragile antiques break. From there, the entire place starts to shake.

Spectral, blue light pours of the basement. If the characters are inside, they can see it rising through the floorboards. If they are outside, it starts bursting through the snow—particularly the courtyard. All of the undead of the manor that hasn't been destroyed attacks in a frenzy: the **corpse tree** comes to life in the courtyard, twelve **specters** rise from the family graveyard, Oaken's **specter** rises once more, even Petro and Marren's **ghosts** join the fray.

If the characters can't stop Vapul before the clock runs out, the house erupts in blue light and cold, dark Abyssal energy. If the characters are still at Skirvin Manor, they must all make DC 18 Dexterity saving throws. On a failed saving throw, a character takes 4d8 bludgeoning damage plus 4d8 cold damage and is knocked prone. On a successful saving throw, a character takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.

As they recover, they see the demon

prince of Ice and Death, Vapul, rise from the destruction, renewed and vengeful.

Addendum: Painting Clues

Many of the mysteries of Skirvin Manor may not be immediately obvious, even to the most observant and clever players/characters. Fortunately, the presence of the positive ghosts who inhabit Skirvin Manor—Marren and her son Petro—has affected the manor's many paintings, each offering up clues to those who could end their eternal curse, stop the Vales, and defeat Vapul.

When the characters are stuck or can't seem to find the next step, have them suddenly notice one of the paintings described below. The Paintings Location table lists each of the rooms that contains paintings and the number there are in each.

There are 22 paintings in all, 19 of which are described below. You're free to give details to the remaining three paintings that better match the characters' current scenario.

Paintings Location.

Room	# of Paintings
G3 - Sitting Room	1
G9 - Dining Room	3
T1 - Balustrade	2
T2 - Gallery	11
T3 - Upstairs Hallway	1
T9 - Ambulatory East	4

Painting Descriptions

When describing one of the paintings, use the suggested description.

The Disappearance of Roundabout Jen

The following clues point help during the Disappearance of Roundabout Jen mystery path.

Bowl of Fruit Still-Life. If the characters fail to notice the blood

spilled in the hallway, this painting perfectly recreates the scene.

This simple still-life oil painting depicts of a bowl of fruit sitting on a counter in what looks like a long dark hall. Oddly, there appears to be a drop of blood on the bowl.

Working in the Greenhouse. If you read the following, this gives the characters a hint as to the time they can successfully sneak into the kitchen without Kerrin noticing.

In this painting, an old woman toils away in what looks like a greenhouse, her back to you. She looks very similar to the woman who works in the kitchen. To her right is a grandfather clock, its little hand pointed at the 8 and its big hand at the 9.

Open. If the characters have trouble opening the door in the storeroom (**Area A14**), this clue helps them find the correct password. Any character who can read or speak Abyssal reads that it says "OPEN".

This unique print shows a tall iron door surrounded by barrels. A plaque at the bottom of the painting reads something in an unusual language.

The Store Room Door. If the characters have trouble opening the door in the storeroom (**Area A14**), this clue helps them find the correct password. Any character who can read or speak Abyssal reads that it says "OPEN". If no character understand the words, a character with an Intelligence score of 13 or better can remember the word and phonetically speak it.

This unique print shows a tall iron door surrounded by barrels. A plaque at the bottom of the painting reads something in an unusual language.

Ghost House

The following paintings help the characters solve the riddles of the Ghost House mystery path.

Petro Writes What Mother Says.

This painting helps the characters understand how to use the *orator's quill* to record what Marren is saying.

In this beautiful painting, a young boy sits in the foreground writing with a rather ornate feather quill. In the background, seated at-what-looks-like a large pipe organ is a handsome woman wearing a dark blue dress. It looks like she is saying something to him.

The plaque reads "Petro Writes What Mother Says"

Marren Plays the Organ. Once the characters have the words Marren speaks, this paintings clues them in to its purpose.

A woman wearing a dark blue dress sits at a large pipe organ in this painting. She is sight-reading the sheet music for a song titled "Beg a Dead Facade."

Murder in the Night

The following painting clues help characters with the Murder in the Night mystery path.

Under the Rug. This painting points the characters to the bronze obol hidden in Arrow Diamond's room.

What an unusual painting: it shows a red rug over a hardwood floor. Half tucked under the rug is what looks like some sort of bronze coin.

The Lost Sister. Armed with the obol, this painting instructs the characters what to do next.

A young girl in a yellow dress lies on a cold, stone slab. Her eyes are

closed and mouth is open: on her tongue rests an octagonal, bronze coin. She appears to be dead.

The Silver Door. After the wardrobe opens, the characters will find the silver door. This clue helps solve both riddles of the door: the missing door knob and the name Priscilla.

In this painting, a little girl in a yellow dress stands before a tall silver door. Oddly, the girl is holding what seems to be the door's handle in her hands. The plaque below reads "Priscilla and the Silver Door"

Return of the Ice Demon

The following paintings refer to the Return of the Ice Demon mystery path.

The Axe and the Map. Once the characters have *tether tearer*, this clue helps them find the map hidden in its handle.

This brightly colored painting showcases an axe lying otop of a neatly drawn map.

Alas, Poor Oaken. The map within *tether tearer* points the characters to the courtyard. This painting assists them if they have trouble finding Oaken's skull.

In this painting, a man with long, black hair and an eye-patch is shown digging in-what-looks-like the courtyard of a large manor house—possible this one. But what's he digging up?

Ludra and the Well. If the characters haven't learned about the well yet, this painting will help.

A mousy young woman wearing a servant's dress sits at the edge of a well. It looks like she is waiting for someone.

The Old Man's Secret

Only one painting is related to the Old Man's Secret mystery path.

The Nurse. This painting eludes to Nurse Joy's true nature.

A woman wearing all white stands near a window, her back turned towards you in this painting. She looks slightly over her shoulder—but there's something unusual about her eye. Its almost animal like.

Screams in the Chapel

These paintings reference the puzzles in the Screams in the Chapel mystery path.

The Hymnal. This painting eludes to Nurse Joy's true nature.

This painting depicts an open red hymnal. While the words of the chosen page are unreadable, you can make out the title: "Song of the Seven." It looks like the book is sitting on a church pew.

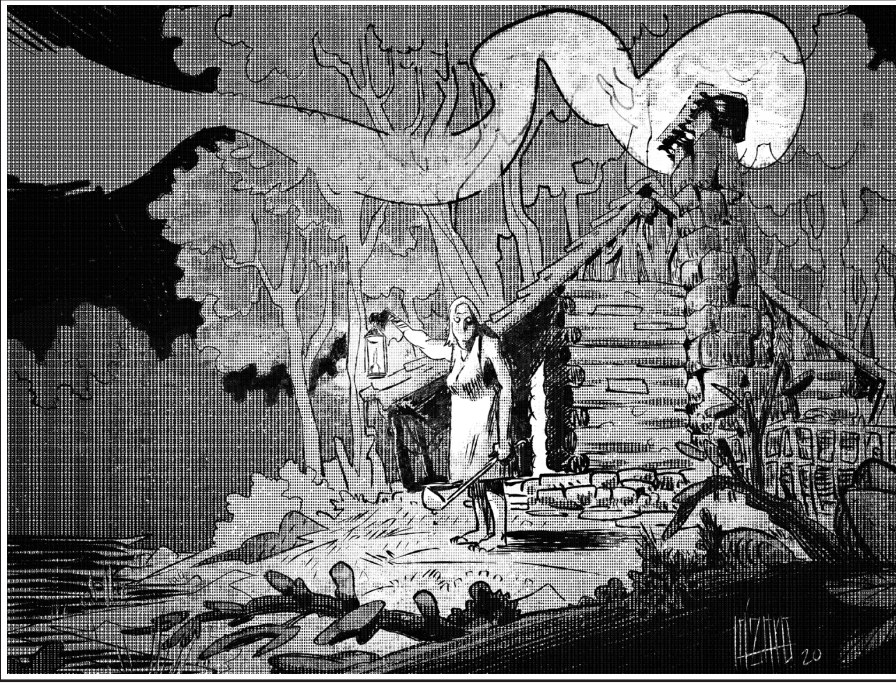
Let This Song Show You the Way. Once the characters have the hymnal, this painting shows them how to use it.

In this painting, a priest stands at the center of seven sarcophagi. He reads from a red hymnal. The plaque under the painting reads "Let This Song Show You the Way"

The Skeleton Keys

There are three paintings in the eastern ambulatory. If the characters have trouble finding any of the skeleton keys, use these paintings for this description:

These three side-by-side paintings depict three different keys. One is surrounded by vines. One is placed within a cubby of a stone wall. And the third is framed by a snow-covered window. Ω



TALES OF OMERIA: MIDNIGHT IN THE ASHEN GROVE

BY DAVE HAMRICK

1st-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Cze/Peku
Art by Matias Lazaro and Earl Geier

This side trek is designed for three to seven 1st- to 4th-level characters and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 1.

Hags are wicked fey witches who haunt dark forests, dismal swamps, foreboding shores, and even the darkest reaches of the Other. Like many of the greater monsters of Omeria, the number of hags that roam the long continent have dwindled in the last few centuries. Even still, there are tales from those who live along the Scorched Coast that there is a treacherous hag who dwells in the Ashen Grove, the craggy, gray forest northwest of The Obsidian Plain.

The Hag

The Ashen Grove is a deadly forest filled with all manner of dangers, all empowered by the hag's wickedness. You can place the forest in the path of traveling characters as part of a side quest of a greater odyssey. Or the characters could be asked by a concerned local to confront the hag and rid the forest of it. The hag may possess an artifact in its hut one of the party's patrons requires.

The Hag's Goals

Hags rarely sit idle. Should there ever be a lull in wickedness in the world, a clever hag will no doubt try to fill that void. On the Hag's Goals table below, choose an appropriate goal or roll randomly on the adjacent table to decide the hag's latest schemes.

The Ashen Grove

The Ashen Grove is a clump of horrid, dark forest overrun with vile monstrosities, ravenous undead, and dangerous humanoids.

Area Description

The Ashen Grove has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The grove itself covers 36 square miles of notori-

Hag's Goals.

d8	Goal
1	Capture a maiden in order to take over her body and become younger.
2	Exert influence over a local town or village.
3	Carry out the wishes of its demon/devil overlord.
4	Spread a dark plague that turns all children into old people.
5	Win the love of a local lord or lady.
6	Gain the favor of a powerful rakshasa/danaavrakt.
7	Curse those who've hurt and her kind in the past.
8	Locate long lost ancient ruins.

ously difficult terrain and is situated between two craggy ridgelines. Ash and silt carpet the forest floor and paint its leafless trees gray. Anyone who spends long enough time within the grove finds themselves covered in similar soot.

Sounds and Smells. The forest oscillates between alive with the ceaseless buzz of insects, toads, and cawing birds, to deafly silent. In some parts of the forest, the area reeks of burning wood, while in other parts, it stinks of festering flesh and mold.

Tainted Trails. The hag's evilness pervades the entirety of the Ashen Grove. Birds, rodents, snakes, spiders, and toads are found with great frequency. Beasts of low Intelligence scores (2 or less) act aggressively while in the forest—including horses. Whispers, weeping, and wailing are heard in the dark and between the scorched trees; but when one turns to find the source, it's gone.

Weather. No matter the time of the season, the sky is always overcast and stinging, acidic rain is common.

Exploring the Ashen Grove

Use the following rules while the characters are traveling through the Ashen Grove.

Travel. Crossing through the grove takes a party traveling at a normal pace approximately 4 hours (1.5 miles per hour).

A party moving at a fast pace can pass through the grove in 3 hours (2 miles per hour). However, a group moving at a fast pace takes a -5 penalty to passive Wisdom (Perception) scores.

A party moving at a slow pace can pass through the grove in 6 hours (1 mile per hour). Parties moving at a slow pace can use Stealth while they travel.

Getting Lost. The hag's taint makes it easy for characters to become lost in the Ashen Grove. Have the players designate one party member as the navigator. The navigator might be an NPC, such as a guide, and the party can switch its navigator if the need arises. At the start of each hour that the characters are in the grove, the DM makes a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check on behalf of the navigator. The result of the check determines whether or not the party becomes lost over the course of that hour. Apply a +5 bonus to the check if the group sets a slow pace for the day, or a +5 penalty if the group is moving at a fast pace.

If the check succeeds, the group continues to move through the Grove without interruption.

If the check fails, the party becomes lost somewhere in the center of the forest, regardless of however long they've been traveling. The edge of the grove is now 3 miles away in every direction.

If the hag is slain by the adventurers, they can continue traveling through the forest without further interruption

Random Encounters. Every four hours that the characters are in the

grove, roll a d20. During the day, on a result of 16 or higher, a random encounter occurs. And if it's night time, an encounter is automatic (so long as the hag is living). Choose or roll randomly on the Ashen Grove Encounters table to determine the nature of the encounter.

Foraging. Edible food and potable water are hard to come by within the grove, but it's still there to be found. While traveling, a character can keep an eye out for food and water, finding some with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. If successful, roll 1d4 + the character's Wisdom modifier to determine how much food (in pounds) the character finds, then repeat the roll for water (in gallons).

Ashen Grove Encounters.

d10	Encounter
1	1 glossy
2	1 worg
3	1d4 swarms of insects
4	1 swarm of poisonous snakes
5	1d6 kobolds
6	1 overcrows and 1d4 swarms of ravens
7	1 giant vulture
8	1 giant toad
9	1d6 zombies
10	An illusory duplicate of the hag (in its true form or as an attractive female humanoid) goads the party into a natural hazard such as quicksand, razorvine, or another monster ambush.

Tracking the Hag

The trouble with hags is that they don't often wish to be found; especially not by pesky adventurers who'd hope to alleviate them of their warty, green heads. Still, the best way to escape the Ashen Grove is to track down the hag's lair and confront her. The hag can be found with three

successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) checks. Each check requires 1 hour of traveling through the forest toward its dark heart—which exists in a pocket dimension unto itself and not at the center as one might expect. Only one creature can track the hag at once, and creatures of good alignment make the checks with advantage. If the creature tracking the hag fails two checks in a row, the characters find themselves lost at the center of the Ashen Grove once more (as described above) and must start the process over.

Once a creature has two successes tracking the hag, the hag sends one of its minions to thwart the creature and its allies. Roll or choose randomly on the Hag Minion table to determine the nature of the encounter.

Hag Minions.

d10	Encounter
1	1 glossy
2	1 manitcore
3	1 owlbear
4	1 ghast
5	1d6 gnolls
6	1 bearded devil
7	1 awakened tree and 1d4 awakened shrubs
8	1 ogre zombie
9	1 hell hound
10	1 doppelganger

The Dark Heart

The hag’s lair lies at the dark heart of the Ashen Grove. She uses the **green hag** stat block.

Area Description

The Ashen Grove has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The dark heart is a pool of murky green water. The hag itself lives within a small cabin roughly 20 feet from the water.

Sounds & Smells. The hag’s lair is eerily quiet. Only the sound of the green water sloshing against the muddy banks breaks the silence. Wood smoke drifts from the hag’s chimney.

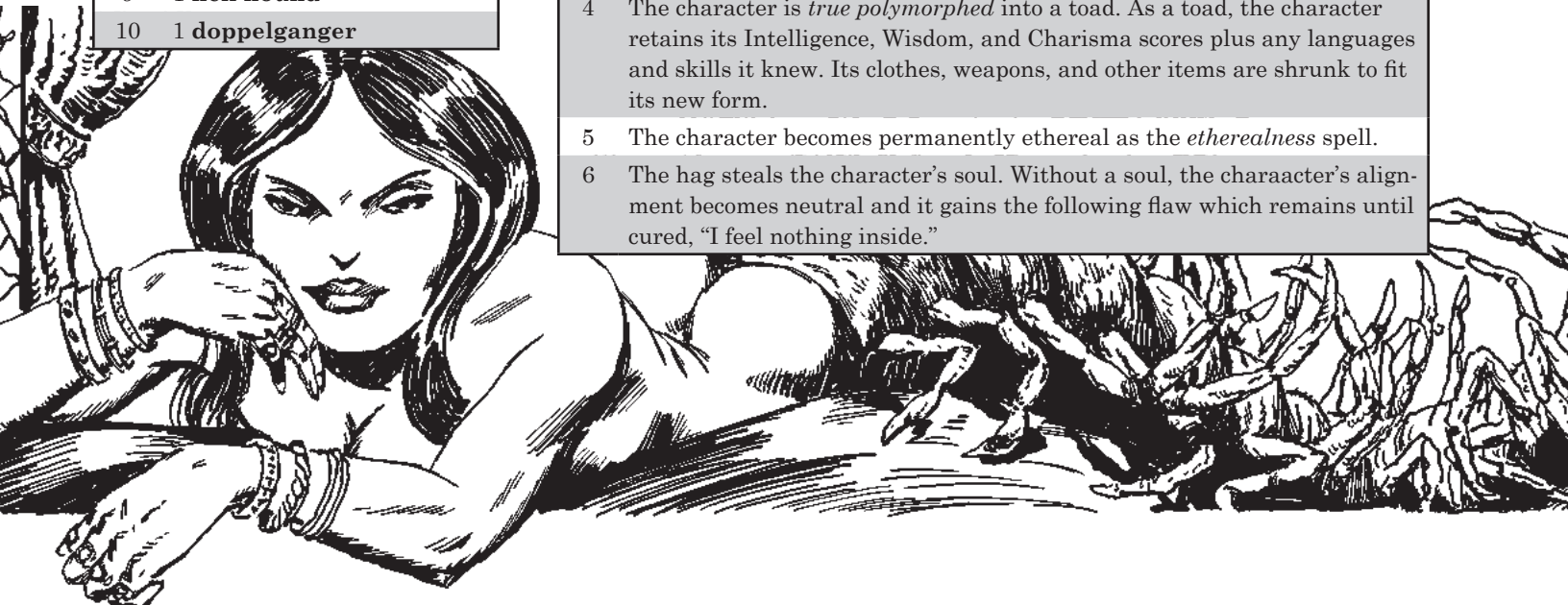
Creature Description

Before the adventurers can confront the hag, it’s already made preparations to defend itself. It uses one, some, or all of the following strategies:

Bribe & Barter. The hag possesses a magic item of some import or a healthy amount of gold that it’s willing to part with should the characters leave it alone. First, determine what the bribe is by choosing or rolling randomly on the Hag Bribe table. Then roll to determine the bribe’s disposition on the Hag Bribe Disposition table.

Hag Curses.

d6	Curse
1	The character starts aging backwards at a rate of 1 year per week.
2	Both of the character’s eyes become sentient and leap from its head. The character is blinded until the curse is removed and a <i>greater restoration</i> spell or similar magic is cast upon it.
3	The hag switches minds with the character. The hag has total control of the character’s body and vice versa. However, both the hag and the character retain their respective Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as their understanding of any languages and traits. It does not know any of the skills, languages, or spells that the other knew. If the character’s body dies with the hag’s mind still inside, then the hag’s mind dies and the character cannot return to its body unless it does so via a <i>wish</i> spell (and vice versa). Otherwise, the character’s mind returns to its body and vice versa once the curse ends for it.
4	The character is <i>true polymorphed</i> into a toad. As a toad, the character retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores plus any languages and skills it knew. Its clothes, weapons, and other items are shrunk to fit its new form.
5	The character becomes permanently ethereal as the <i>etherealness</i> spell.
6	The hag steals the character’s soul. Without a soul, the character’s alignment becomes neutral and it gains the following flaw which remains until cured, “I feel nothing inside.”



Hag Bribe.

d6	Bribe
1	The hag promises the secret to immortality.
2	The hag promises it can bring a dead loved one back to life.
3	The hag knows the only weakness of a greater villain.
4	The hag offers a magic item from Magic Item Table C in the <i>DMG</i> .
5	The hag knows the location of a chest filled with 10,000 gold pieces.
6	The hag will grant a single <i>wish</i> .

Hag Bribe Disposition.

d6	Bribe
1	The item or information is legitimate.
2-3	The item or information given is cursed.
4-6	The item or information given is a fake/lie.

Curse & Ransom. If the bribe doesn't work, the hag turns to its magic. Choose or roll randomly for one of the curses on the Hag Curse table below. The hag then bestows that curse upon the creature for which it would be most effective; the creature must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw to avoid the effects of the curse. It then makes a promise to remove the curse should the characters immediately leave the Ashen Grove and never return. Whether or not she upholds her end of the bargain is your discretion. She also threatens that if she is killed, the curse becomes a death curse that can only be removed via a *greater restoration* spell or similar magic. Again, this is up to your discretion.

Fight or Flight. Finally, if its bribes and curses won't work, the hag will flee, using its invisible passage

ability to escape into the forest (where she can be tracked only by magic). If she is somehow cornered, she fights to the best of her ability, lashing out at the weakest members of the party first. If she's dropped to half her hit points or less and she cannot escape she resorts to begging for her life.

Treasure

Hag lairs are full of trinkets, baubles, and unique magical items. The characters find 6d6 x 100 cp, 3d6 x 100 sp, and 2d6 x 10 gp, usually kept in a mildewy bag, a hollowed-out skull, or some other ominous receptacle. In

addition, they find 2d4 items on the trinkets table in the *PHB* as well as 1d6 items on the Magic Item Table A in the *DMG*.

Wrap-up: Free of the Forest

If the hag survived its encounter with the characters, it may see them as a worthy opponent, one worth studying further; or it might see them as a frustrating foe, one worth destroying at a later date. Should the characters kill the hag, it's inevitable that another horrible creature—another hag or perhaps something worse—will take her place as the Grove's caretaker. Ω





TALES OF OMERIA: BELOW

BY DAVE HAMRICK

3rd-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by watabou.itch.io, Dave Hamrick, and Maps by Owen
Art by Mafiad Lazaro and William McAusland

This side trek is designed for three to seven 1st to 4th level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. This is a survival horror adventure. Characters who charge headfirst at the purple worm will quickly find themselves in the gullet of the beasts. Only careful planning and smart decisions will prevail in this adventure

The uncontrollable, burrowing horrors known as purple worms are the scourge of subterranean and desert settlements across the globe. These beasts can grow as long as 120-foot feet and have mouths capable of swallowing a full-grown warhorse whole. When a purple worm has its attention turned towards a target, it attacks it relentlessly, until there is nothing left.

Purple Worm Siege

This adventure takes place in the town of Pantmawr, but it can just as easily be placed in any other small, remote desert or wasteland town secluded from the rest of the world. The reasons the worms are attacking is up to you, but shouldn't be the focus of the adventure. Choose an event or roll randomly on the Purple Worm Trigger table on the next page.

The Village of Pantmawr

Pantmawr (PANT mow ar) is small, barely 30 humanoids living in and around the fortress village. During the Hand of the Three and the Unlimited Eruption, it acted as a supply point for armies marching south to battle the Burning Hordes of Vividus. Largely forgotten by the other Central Omerian city-states and neighboring Tradjuuni states, it is now home to goat herders and wanderers.

Area Description

Pantmawr has the following features:
Dimensions & Terrain. The village

sits atop a mesa known as Pulvi's Arms. A single road connects it to the lands to the west. Two more roads branch north and west into the Dreadfields and Tribal Confederacy of Mighty Tradju respectively.

Crumbling Walls. The walls surrounding Pantmawr have fallen into disrepair in the centuries following the Hand of the Three. In some areas, entire sections are missing, overgrown with Ditimayan cacti. Anyone can access the walls, although the local guards advise against it.

Fields. The sands of the Desolation of Ditimaya make growing crops difficult. Regardless, Pantmawri farmers grow alfalfa for their livestock, as well as tomatoes and other hot-climate staples.

Goats. On the city streets, on the walls, even inside many of the buildings—everywhere you look there's a goat. In fact, goats easily outnumber Pantmawri citizens 5:1.

Towers. Like the walls that connect them, the guard towers surrounding Pantmawr are in varying states of decay, especially those furthest from the fortress. The towers possess the only means of climbing onto the walls, each with a staircase inside.

1 - Pantmawr Keep

The old keep hasn't seen a battle in almost a century.

Area Description. The keep has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The keep itself is a 100-foot-wide by 35-foot-deep sandstone fortress adorned with Karnionic architectural motifs such as minarets, domed towers, and ogee arches. Although the majority of the village's defenses are in a state of disrepair, the keep has kept up its conditions with frequent renovations.

Doors & Locks. The portcullis at the northern end of the keep's walls still functions and the main doors leading into the keep proper are still as solid as ever.

Purple Worm Trigger.

d6	Trigger
1	Recent battles in the area have stirred the worms from their deep caverns.
2	The worms are part of an ancient prophecy, one of eight signs of a coming apocalypse.
3	Local miners, greedy for gems, dug too deep. Now the worms are closer to the surface and hungry.
4	Due to a recent ecological disaster, the worms' normal food source has been eradicated. They must rise to the surface to find a replacement form of sustenance.
5	Dark conjurers, leftovers of the ancient times, used forbidden magic to draw the worms from their deep homes to the surface.
6	The worms have just awoken from a centuries-long hibernation.

The Vault. Within the old, crumbling cellars of the keep is a magically-warded stone vault that contains a few hundred barrels of alchemist's fire. The only thing keeping the barrels in place are a few 100-foot lengths of rusted chains. The chemicals have sat for years and have grown dangerously unstable. Instead of the 1d4 fire damage it normally deals on impact, the fire deals 7 (2d6) fire damage. Furthermore, a creature who uses its action to extinguish the flames must make a DC 13 Dexterity check instead of DC 10. The only hint at what is inside is a worn sign written in Common: "DANGER!"

The keys to get into the vault are long lost. The door is made of solid iron (AC 19, 100 hp, damage threshold 10, immunity to poison and psychic damage). A DC 26 Strength check can break it open. Similar-

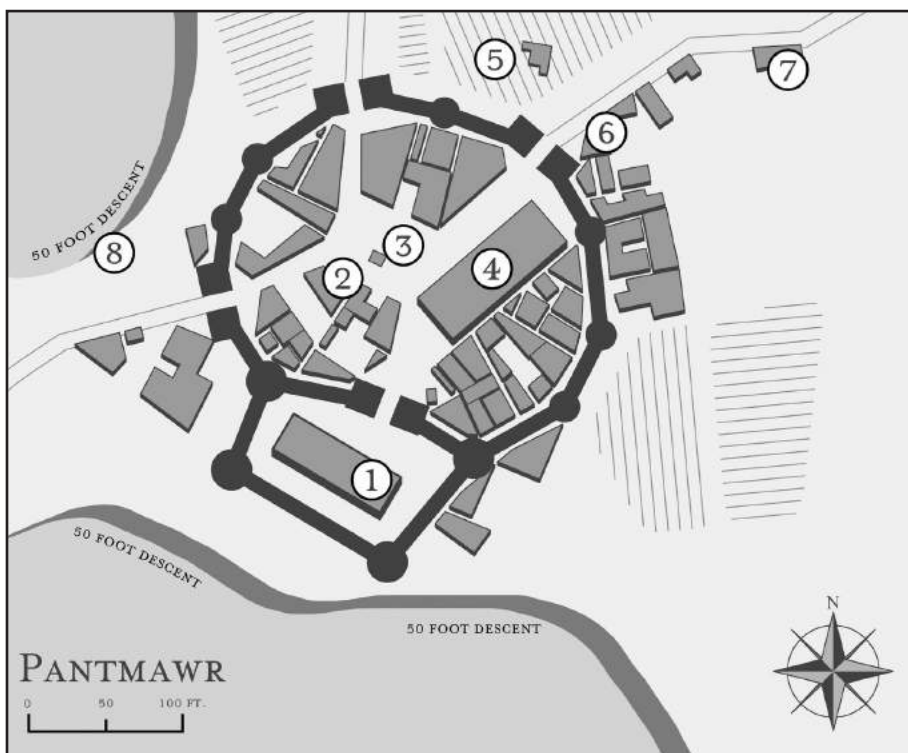
ly, three creatures simultaneously succeeding on a successful DC 18 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools can unlock it.

Each time a creature attacks the door or tries to break it down, a roll of 1 on the d20 results in a catastrophic explosion. When the explosion occurs, each creature within 60 feet of the vault must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a success. Then, each creature within 300 feet of the vault (including those that made the first saving throw) must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, or take 10d6 thunder damage and be knocked back 30 feet, landing prone, or take half as much damage and not be knocked back.

Creature Information. A small, poorly-trained militia of three **commoners** patrols the keep and walls at all hours of the day, each in 8-hour shifts. They're led by the one Pantmawri citizen who's actually seen combat, the venerable Jafar al-Fousad (LN male Ditimayan **guard**). Jafar works roughly 12 hours per day, primarily in the daylight hours with two hour periods overlapping his afternoon and evening deputies' shifts. Jafar al-Fousad is a tired, old man who always plays by the rules. No matter how dire the situation, he refuses to let anyone other than the militia into the keep. Interestingly, Jafar is completely unaware of the alchemist's fire kept in the vault (as are most of the folks who live in Pantmawr). He doesn't even know how to get into the vault as the three keys needed to get inside are long lost.

2 - The Black Palm Inn

It's rare that the Black Palm Inn ever sees travelers come through, so the owners, a pair of Von Doral dwarves (**commoners**) named Lubek and Cecilia Stonehouse will be excited to see the characters. The place isn't



the nicest inn in the world, but it's at least of modest condition. However, the laws of supply and demand dictate a high price: 8 sp per night per character. And that doesn't include food or drink.

However, the Stonehouses are more interested in unique collectibles. Any rare items or trinkets that the characters are willing to part with might be enough to cover the cost of stay overnight (GM's discretion).

Area Description. The inn has the following details.

Dimensions & Terrain. The inn only has two rooms each with two beds and then a larger common room with four bunks. A small dining room/bar is at the front of the inn which also acts as the lobby. The Stonehouses themselves have a small room in the inn's cellar.

3 - Village Well

All of the villagers get their water from the town's central well. The well is 200-feet deep. Once per month, Melika Tarokh of the Temple of Naeyer

climbs down into the well to cast a *purify food and drink* spell on the waters to ensure it remains potable.

4 - Temple of Naeyer

While the majority of the Pantmawri citizens practice atheism, the large, open-air Temple of Naeyer remains at the center of town, a relic of the times before.

Area Description. The temple has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The temple is the largest structure in Pantmawr. However, it is in pretty rough shape. Most of the columns are crumbling, the floors are cracked and overgrown with violet vine and Ditimayan cacti, and it looks more like a ruin than a place of worship. By design, the temple lacks a ceiling.

Offerings. Although most of the citizens in Pantmawr don't believe in the gods anymore, superstitions still run rampant. Offerings of flowers, food, and sometimes even valuables are left around the temple's sundial as a way to appease the harsh sun god.

Sun Dial. At the center of the temple is a large sundial used by the citizens of Pantmawr to track the time throughout the day. It is the only element of the temple that is kept in good condition.

Creature Description. The temple is managed by Melika Tarokh (CN female Ditimayan **acolYTE**). A devout Naeyeric worshipper, Melika keeps her head shaved. Her skin is burned and blistered thanks to frequent, unprotected exposure to the sun. She even has a few cancerous blotches. Melika doesn't see as well as she used to due to frequent staring into the sun, so she keeps her eyes covered by thick Dinzer-quality dark lenses. Despite her off-putting and cold personality, overall, Melika wishes the best for the town and helps those in need—even if they don't share her love for Naeyer.

5 - Madaawi Farm

This old farm has been abandoned for a few years and has definitely seen better days. Occasionally, it's used as a holdover spot for nomadic shepherds traveling through town.

6 - Spoogum's General Store

"Need something? Spoogum's got it!" At least that what Spoogum tells anyone who enters his shop. Unfortunately, that's far from the truth. Spoogum carries only items valued at 2 gp or less from the *PHB*. and even then, there's only a 50% chance that he carries the requested item. He does, however, always have dried meats, fruits, and goat cheeses in his shop, as well as water tuns.

Creature Information. Spoogum is a (LN male canid **commoner**). While a good fellow, he's got a big mouth and loves to spread rumors. When speaking with Spoogum, it's likely he'll drop a tidbit that he's heard, regardless of how well he knows the listener.

7 - Underguard Brothers Mining Company

The Underguards are friends of the Stonehouses who were invited to seek opportunities in Pantmawr. The Underguard brothers Broga and Feck recently discovered a long-abandoned old mine shaft roughly 8 miles outside of the village. Within the shaft, they discovered a deep, 20-foot diameter well that dropped 500-feet into the earth. Crisscrossing the shaft were dozens of 15-foot diameter creature-created tunnels littered with slime-covered gems.

The brother's shack-like home/office sits on the outskirts of town.

8 - Airdock

Five years ago a temporary landing pad and dock were built for a Dinzer warblimp that was collecting zoo animals stranded in the village.

Area Description. The dock has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The desert hasn't been kind to the dock and some parts of it have already started to collapse into the canyon fifty feet below.

Tank. An old Dinzer Flamestrike is parked by the airdock. Its fuel cell was removed by the Dinzers who left it. Details of how the vehicle functions are found in Appendix C.

Events

Overall, this side trek is an event-based adventure. The first few events, the **hooks**, establish the overall story. Run these events in order.

Next, are the **conflicts**. These can occur at any time and should be used to establish the futility of certain actions as well as potential dangers. You are free to introduce as many or as few of these as you need.

Finally, there are **resolution** events. These are the events that will lead the characters and Pantmawri to safety.

Spoogum Gossip.

d8	Rumors
1	“Supposedly, them two teenage brats Kazen and Abbas done found them some sorta magic wand in the desert. They been causin’ all sorts of ruckus north of town with it.”
2	“Word ‘round the village is that them Underguard brothers found themselves an abandoned mine up along the cliffs. They ain’t sayin’ what’s in there, but they sure been actin’ excited about it!”
3	“Now, I don’t know what kinda priestess of Naeyer’s using emerald odonburgite as jewelry, but that’s just what Melika Tarokh’s—the priestess of the temple of Naeyer here in town—got hangin’ around her neck.”
4	“Just west of the town there’s an old air dock built for some zoo animals about five years ago. Just last year when the war got goin’, them fools from Odonburg dropped off one of their war machines. Thing don’t run, but it sure is impressive to look at!”
5	“Ol’ Buman Zenor used to be some kinda fancy zoologist. Supposedly, he and a buddy of his got on a bad flight few years and were stranded on some island in the middle of the Warna for a few months. Lost his eye in the process, too. He don’t talk about it, but you can tell it’s changed him.”
6	“Old man Jafar over at the keep sure is a big ol’ grouch. He don’t let nobody into the keep for nothin’. However, I bet you can convince one of his lackeys to let you in. Word has it that he’s got a basement full of magic items under the keep that he don’t want nobody to get their hands on.”
7	“The two dwarves that run the Black Palm, Lubek and Cecilia are about the nicest pair of folk you’ll ever meet. Unless you’re a goblin, of course. They absolutely hate the goblin Klak who you’ll see pushing his cart around here. Don’t make no sense, either. Klak wouldn’t hurt a fly.”
8	“That old, blind soothsayer Faatih keeps telling everyone that doom won’t come from above, but from below. Most of us here in Pantmawr that seen the Dinzer Condors flying overhead think he’s probably full of it.”

Hooks

The following hooks should occur in order.

1 - Where’s Old Man Abedi?. Hossein Abedi is a goat herder who lives five miles north of the Maadawi farm. He was expected to bring in a few of his goats for trade at Spoogums but is now two days late. Spoogum offers to pay the characters in supplies (he’s a little gold-light at the moment) if they will travel to the farm and find out what happened to him.

Area Description. Abedi’s farm is an 8,500-square-foot fenced-in lot surrounded by alfalfa fields. The house itself is nothing more than a single-room building where Hossein and his wife Mahnaz sleep and eat.

Footprints. There are footprints in the sand all around the farm. A character can make a Wisdom (Survival) check to determine what the footprints reveal. Check the result of the check on the Abedi Farm footprints table overleaf.

Goats. According to Spoogum, Abedi has 50 goats. When the characters arrive, they only see a handful of goats behind the fences. The goats welcome the characters with panicked bleating.

Holes. One large, 15-foot diameter hole opens up just behind the Abedi’s farmhouse and descends close to 200-feet into the earth below. The hole is surrounded by scree for 50-feet in all directions—whatever created the hole burst through the earth. Surrounding

the hole are innards and blood. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) or DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling or Medicine) reveals that the remains are from goats.

A second hole is approximately 50-feet away from the first hole. This time, there is no scree or piled dirt around the hole. Whatever created the hole dived back into the earth, dug 200-feet down, then headed south.

Abedi Farm Footprints.

Check Results	Outcome
9 or less	It's too hard to tell what happened.
10-19	There are two sets of footprints. Abedi and his wife left their house to investigate a disturbance, likely whatever came out of the hole. It's unclear what happened to them after that.
20+	Same as above, except there is one set of tracks that leads north of the farm, like Mrs Abedi's. Dried blood in the sand follows the trail. 1,000 feet to the north, the characters discover the dead body of Mahnaz Abedi being picked apart by vultures. Her arm was torn off at the shoulder, a look of intense fear frozen on her face.

Mounds. As the characters walk up the path to Abedi's from the main road through the alfalfa fields, they notice strange mounds of raised dirt crisscrossing Abedia's fields, the road, and even the yard just in front of Abedi's house. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check suggests that the mounds were created by some large, subterranean creature.

2 - Pillar. While traveling back from Abedi's to town, the characters notice

puffs of smoke rising into the air at unusual intervals—a smoke signal.

If the characters investigate (the location marked "Pillars" on the regional map on page 7), they find the Underguard brothers at the top of a 70-foot-high pillar of stone. They've managed to create a small fire on top of the stone and are using cloth from their robes to send signals. More of the crisscross mounds of dirt surround the pillar. There is also a pair of holes similar to the ones found at Abedi farm.

Creature Information. The brothers have been stranded on the pillar for an entire day. They're tired, hungry, and have been badly exposed to the sun. Each has one level of exhaustion.

What Do The Brothers Know? The brothers were traveling back from the abandoned mine when they were starting to be chased by one of the worms. They aren't sure what it was beyond it being long with purplish hide and hundreds of teeth. It ate their cart and donkey and then chased them to the pillar. They were able to scramble up it in time, but they've been too scared to move since.

3 - Explosion. As the characters travel down the road (or they're with the Underguard brothers at the pillar), they hear an explosion a mile away. If they go to investigate, they find the teenagers Kazem and Abbas playing with the *wand of fireballs* that they found in the desert (location marked Wand Testing Grounds on the regional map on page 7). They are using the wand to blow up clumps of desert cacti.

The Worm Attacks. After firing another fireball, there is a loud screeching sound heard north of the testing grounds.

The sound is enough to stop the boys in their tracks. When the **purple worm** emits its screech, it is 1,000 feet away. It then charges to attack. The characters and boys have 1 min-

ute to react before the worm arrives. See "The Worm is Coming" sidebar adjacent for details on signs that the worm is near.

4 - Return to Pantmawr. Inevitably, it should become pretty obvious that the characters need to warn the folks at Pantmawr about what's coming their way. They should return to Pantmawr and start making preparations.

Conflicts

The following events can occur at any point in the story. Some of the events have specific triggers and conditions which must happen before they occur. Others can be used to break up slower points or keep the adventure moving.

"It's coming..." The blind soothsayer Faatih el-Dib can feel the vibrations of one of the worms in the ground as it approaches. He hunches over and touches the ground. Then with a dire look on his face, he warns, "It's coming..."

"It got him." Just when everything seems fine, a wormhole opens in the ground and swallows an NPC whole. Choose an appropriate NPC or roll on the NPC Victim table in the Appendix to determine who gets eaten.

"There's three of them..." While watching the town from the top of a wall or tower, one of the characters notices a mound-forming on the surface heading straight for the town. Then, two more mounds coming from different directions join the first mound and run parallel to it. All three charge for the village.

"Whoops..." This event happens after the characters are already aware of the coming worms. So long as he is still living, Klak attempts to save his cart full of goods, mostly steel pots and pans he's collected from abandoned farmhouses. Unfortunately, the cart hits a rock and tumbles to its side, sending the items crashing into the sand. The sound is enough to

disturb the worms into action.

If the characters aren't willing to help Klak, then an NPC of good alignment (preferably one that the characters like) will rush out to save the goblin. The NPC might even die for his or her heroics.

“Well, who put YOU in charge?”

This event happens after the characters are already aware of the coming worms. Two or more NPCs with opposing points of view on how to handle the worms get into an argument. Unless the characters intervene, words turn to action and someone gets hurt. If you aren't sure which NPCs roll randomly on the Random Pantmawr NPC table on page 105. The argument may even attract the attention of the worms.

“By the gods, they're below us!”

If one or more of the characters or NPCs have taken defense on the top of a large building, the worms get smart and decide to attack it. Each round, the worms use their action to slam into the base of the building.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 22 (3d8 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

The stats for the buildings are determined by the building's size and the building materials used to create it as detailed in the Pantmawr Building Stats table above. All buildings are immune to psychic and poison damage.

“Wait... what happened to that goat?” One moment there's a goat a two hundred feet away bleating. Then, silence. When the characters turn back to look, it's gone. Then, the ground starts to shake.

Resolution

The resolution events occur when the characters and Pantmawri recognize that fighting the purple worms may be next to impossible. The characters will need to escape and try to save as many of the Pantmawri as they are able. So long as the characters

The Worm is Coming

The worms are not stealthy creatures. Unless it burrows up from below, it is quite obvious when one is near. Use the following signs to give the characters plenty of warning that a worm is fast approaching.

500 Feet Away. The blind soothsayer, Faatih el-Dib can sense the purple worms at this distance.

300 Feet Away. The ground starts to tremble. Loose objects start to fall over.

100 Feet Away. The ground bulges and a mound forms where the worm is traveling only a few feet below the surface. The characters have 1 round to act before the worm is within melee attack range.

Less Than 20 Feet Away. The worm erupts from the ground. Any creature standing within 10 feet of the hole created by the worm when it emerges must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or fall prone in its space.

can travel 20 miles or further from Pantmawr, they will be safe from the worms.

Here are a few suggestions on how to do this.

Call for Help. If the characters have a way to call for help they might be able to contact someone who can send a flying vehicle such as a Dinzer blimp or even adventurers to handle the worms.

There are a few ways the characters can call for help.

- One of the characters might be able to cast the *sending* spell or similar

Pantmawr Building Stats.

Building Type	AC	Hit Points	Damage Threshold
Large wooden or clay structure (10 ft. by 10 ft.)	14	30	—
Huge wooden or clay structure (15 ft. by 15 ft.)	14	60	5
Village walls (per 30 ft. by 10 ft. section)	16	75	5
Stone tower	17	75	5
Pantmawr Keep	17	150	10

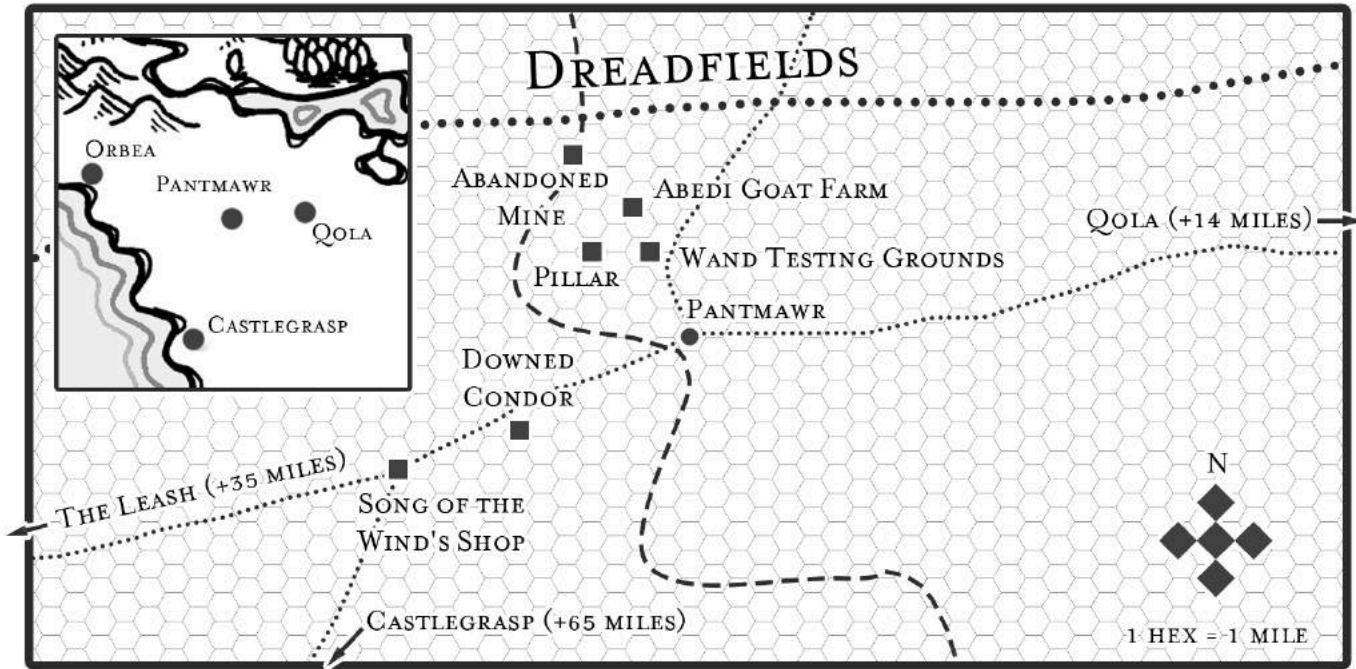
magic. The time it takes for help to come depends on who the characters contact—GM's discretion.

- Klak owns a *sending stone* which he keeps in his lean-to. It was left behind by a doppelganger bounty hunter five years ago. The stone connects whoever uses it directly to the Captain of the Cords in Orbea, Santxa Goytino. Santxa is reluctant to send help but eventually agrees to send a unit of three **Arruquetan Spearwielders**. However, it will take the Spear Wielders three days to arrive in Pantmawr.
- The keep has a rookery of carrier ravens. Jafar uses the ravens to send messages to Castlegrasp. It takes a raven two days to reach Castlegrasp. Once the Castlegraspians agree to help, they send three **Stonearms** to help in 1d4 + 2 days.

When Help Arrives. How helping arriving plays out is ultimately up to the GM. The helpers could find themselves quickly overwhelmed by the beasts. The worms could destroy the transports.

The Tank. Next to the loading dock (**area 8**) is a decommissioned Dinzer Flamestrike. A Dinzer warblimp passing through a year ago dropped the vehicle off in order to reduce the ship's weight. The vehicle's fuel cells have been removed, but it still drives (see its statistics in Appendix C). Unfortunately, the tank requires a command word to activate it and it needs a piece of emerald odonburgite placed into its core.

Odonburgite is hard to come by, but



MAP KEY

● VILLAGE/TOWN

■ POINT OF INTEREST

----- CLIFFS

..... DINZER PYLONS

..... ROAD

there are a few people in town who possess some.

- The *wand of fireballs* owned by the teenagers Kazem and Abbas has a small shard of emerald odonburgite inside of it. This shard is enough to run the tank for 1 hour before the shard needs to recharge (24 hours).
- Melika Tarokh wears a glowing, green amulet with a hunk of emerald odonburgite inside. She won't part with it easily, so the characters may have to persuade her or fight her for it. Melika's shard is enough to run the tank for 4 hours before it needs to recharge (24 hours).
- There is a large hunk (apple-sized) core of emerald odonburgite kept in the vault below Pantmawr Keep. It has enough power to run the tank indefinitely.

Once powered up, a character can "hot wire" the vehicle by passing a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Where to Go? The best direction to head is due southwest or west toward Orbea or Castlegrasp. Everything north, south, or east of Pantmawr is either in ruins or a wasteland. Most Pantmawri will share this insight. Headed west, there are two points of interest:

- *Downed Condor.* A Dinzer Condor-Class airship crashed in the desert a little over a year ago. Although it's completely destroyed, it's heavy and made of metal, making it difficult for the worms to pull into the earth.
- *Song of the Wind's Shop.* Song of the Wind (N male devilkin **guard**) manages a small stopover supply shop at the crossroads between the road to Castlegrasp and the road that connects to The Leash (the main road of the coast). While Song's shop has no more defenses than most of Pantmawr, it might have valuable supplies that can

help the characters cross the desert. Song is completely unaware of what's happening.

Worms vs Tank. The tank is too large for the worms to pull into the ground or consume. However, the worm alpha recognizes that it's worth stopping as it is likely "covered in food." The worms might set a trap, creating a hidden pit along the tank's path. Or they may all attack it as one, hoping to yank it into the ground.

Set a Trap. Once the characters learn that there is a basement full of highly unstable alchemist's fire below the keep, they might attempt to set a trap for the purple worms. With close to 100 barrels of the stuff, all of it extremely destructive, it might be enough to kill at least one or more of the worms.

For dramatic effect, the explosion might even kill two of the worms and badly injure the third, dropping it below 100 hit points. The characters

Purple Worm Behavior and Tactics

At CR 15, purple worms are powerful, deadly creatures, but they're not perfect. Here are a few things to know about purple worms, the way they act, and how they fight in combat.

Melee combat is almost useless against them.. Unless the characters are exceptionally powerful, fighting toe-to-toe with a purple worm is a quick way to die. Not only does their 10-foot reach bites deal 22 damage in a single hit, but if one swallows a low-level character, it's unlikely that the character will escape before the worm's stomach acids completely dissolves him or her.

Instead, the characters should find a way to fight at long range.

They can take short and long rests, too.. If a worm takes damage, during a short rest (1 hour or more), it can heal up to 15-hit dice worth of damage. If it takes a long-rest, it can heal even more.

If the characters allow a worm to escape and remain where they are, there is a chance the worm will return fully healed and more pissed off than before.

They're fast on the ground.. A purple worm underground moves nearly as fast as most humanoids. But above ground, unhindered by sand and terrain, they can move 100 feet per turn.

Once a purple worm emerges, the characters should immediately run to safety.

They're strong and tough.. A purple worm is a Gargantuan creature with a Strength score of 28. This means that they're capable of pushing, dragging, and lifting objects up to 3,410 lbs. without it affecting their speed, or up to 6,720 lbs. with their movement reduced to 5 feet. Furthermore, their impressive +11 Constitution saving throw all but ensures that they will survive any attacks that require the save.

They're not dextrous. A purple worm has -2 on Dexterity saving throws, making them great targets for area of effect spells or any attack that requires the save.

They're extremely simplistic.. Purple worms have the intelligence of simple insects. They only live to eat and breed and not much else. Anything that they detect with their senses falls into one of two categories: food and not-food. And until they determine that something is not-food they assume that it's food.

The characters will be able to easily fool them without too much issue. Furthermore, the worms won't learn from their mistakes.

They have limited sensory range.. Purple worms have two useful types of senses: blindsight out to 30 ft. and tremorsense out to 60 ft.

Although these are valuable senses, there are some major holes in their senses that should be considered.

- They can only see 30 feet underground or up to 60 feet if they detect any sort of vibrations.
- If it's dark and the worms are aboveground, they can only see out to the limits of their blindsight or can feel any creature that is contact with the same surface as it through its tremorsense. Therefore, operating at night might benefit the characters so long as they don't touch the ground.
- The worms always move towards the loudest sound possible.
- The worms have terrible Perception and can be somewhat easy to sneak past undetected.

Option: The Alpha

Of the three worms that attack Pantmawr, one is the group's alpha. The alpha uses the typical **purple worm** stat block except with the following changes:

- The alpha has 300 hit points.
- Its Intelligence score is 3 (-4), Wisdom score is 11 (+0), and Charisma score of 4 (-3). While still not incredibly intelligent, it has the reasoning capabilities of a dog or cat and can even devise simple tactics. It is also cognizant of its own size and the effect it has on the terrain. The two other worms follow its lead.

will still have to fight the creature, but stand more of a fighting chance against it.

Wrap-Up: Can you fly, you sucker?

This is no doubt a hard adventure. But with a little ingenuity and perseverance, the characters will survive

and live to fight another day. Should the Pantmawri and the characters escape, the worms will eventually flee the area once they eat most of the local fauna. Desperate for food, they might even hit the coast and lay siege to the loudest towns and villages there including Orbea and Castle-grasp.

Advancement

A tough adventure, each character who survives the adventure should earn enough experience go gain the next level. If the characters successfully kill one or more of the worms, award experience accordingly—just know that a single worm is worth a whopping 13,000 experience.



Addendum: NPCs of Pantmawr

A big part of this survival adventure involves working alongside the inhabitants of Pantmawr. The 12 most important NPCs are described below. If you need to create an additional NPC, use the details for creating NPCs found in chapter 4 of the *DMG*.

Faatih el-Dib (N male Ditimayan human **commoner**) is a blind soothsayer and purported mystic. Typically, he sits cross-legged outside of the Black Palm Inn (**Area 2**) in front of a small charcoal fire.

How does Faatih act during the attack? Faatih shows no fear as he has a strong sense of destiny. Should his time come, he accepts it with open arms.

What does Faatih know? Although he is blind, Faatih has an excellent sense of hearing and can feel vibrations better than most. He can sense the presence of purple worms when they are within 500 feet.

Jafar al-Fousad (LN male Ditimayan **guard**) is the seventy-two-year-old captain of the guard. Although he has a small house within the village walls, he spends the

majority of his time at the keep (**area 1**).

How does Jafar act during the attack? Even when things are bad, Jafar sticks to his role as the town's captain. He refuses to let any non-militia members into the keep and isn't afraid to draw his spear to ensure that rule doesn't get broken.

What does Jafar know? Although he doesn't know what is in the vault below the keep, he suspects that it might be a weapon of some value left by the Dinzers a century ago.

Kazem and Abbas (CN male Ditimayan human **commoners**) are a pair of teenagers who grew up around Pantmawr. Kazem is Jafar's grandson whereas Abbas is an orphan who is watched over by Melika. The pair spend their days north of town playing with rare items they've discovered in the desert.

How does the teens act during the attack? Kazem and Abbas put on a big front, but in reality, they are easily shaken. They latch onto anyone who can keep them safe.

What do the teens know? The teens found a discarded *wand of fireballs* to the south of town. They've

been testing it in the ruins of an old farm three miles north of the village. The wand is powered by emerald odonburgite, therefore, it has unlimited charges.

Klak is a forty-something **goblin** who is known for wheeling a small cart of detritus through town. The Stonehouses don't care much for Klak and use any opportunity they can to blame Klak for something the goblin didn't do.

How does Klak act during the attack? Although Klak is careful to keep his head down and obey the laws of Pantmawr, he is still a Garrish goblin at heart with an evil streak a mile wide. The goblin delights in seeing those who've treated him poorly during his time in Pantmawr suffer at the hands of the worm and will use any chance he gets to avoid helping those in need.

What does Klak know? Although he is somewhat dim-witted and unobservant, Klak is smart for a goblin (Intelligence 11). Overall, Klak knows the weaknesses of everyone in Pantmawr and isn't afraid to use that information to quietly turn the town against itself during the worms' attack.

Spoogum (LN male canid **commoner**) is a thirteen-year-old canid (that's thirty-two years old in human years) and wheeler and dealer at general store that shares his name. He's overall pretty friendly even if he does love to gossip.

How does Spoogum act during the attack? Spoogum follows the rules like a good boy. Overall, he looks to Jafar for direction on what to do.

What does Spoogum know?

Spoogum's store is well-stocked when the attack occurs, with roughly 500 pounds of food and 500 gallons of water. The supplies are enough to last the citizens of Pantmawr for two weeks, or twice as long if rationed.

Lubek and **Cecilia Stonehouse** (NG male and female Von Doral dwarf **commoners**) are a husband and wife team in their late 200's. They run the Black Palm Inn. Lubek tends to be somewhat argumentative whereas Cecilia is usually quiet.

How do the Stonehouses act during the attack? Something about the entire event pushes the Stonehouses to help as much as they can to the point where they are willing to sacrifice their own well-being to ensure the survival of Pantmawr.

What do the Stonehouses know? The stonehouses suspect that there is a considerable amount of explosives kept below Pantmawr Keep. However, no one in town—including Jafar and his militia—have ever seen the stuff.

Melika Tarokh (CN female Ditimayan human **acolyte**) is in her late forties. Overall, she prefers to remain neutral in most debates but generally favors any course of action that benefits Pantmawr. She wears an amulet that glows green; she claims that it was given to her by Naeyer himself. In truth, she found it in a nearby field.

How does Melika act during the attack? Melika has frequently butted heads with Jafar and the militia at

Random NPC.

1d20	Result
1	Abbas
2	Faatih el-Dib
3-5	One of the town militia.
6	Jafar al-Fousad
7	Kazem
8	Klak
9	Spoogum
10	Lubek Stonehouse
11	Cecilia Stonehouse
12	Melika Tarokh
13	Broga Underguard
14	Feck Underguard
15	Buman Zenor
16-20	One unnamed NPC

Pantmawr Keep. If the characters aren't willing to storm the keep during the worm attacks, she will gladly step in.

What does Melika know? Melika suspects that the Underguard brothers may be keeping a secret from the other villagers, however, she isn't sure what exactly.

Broga and **Feck Underguard** (NG male Von Doral dwarf **guards**) are both in their early 100s. Mostly, they're good men but tend to be somewhat reactive and irresponsible.

How do the Underguards act during the attack? The brothers are terrified of the worms, almost comically so, with chattering teeth, stuttering, leaping into each other's arms when there's a random sound, the works. They'll help where they're able, but when it comes to fight or flight they almost always prefer the latter.

What do the Underguards know? The brothers knew that there were potentially purple worms in the area,

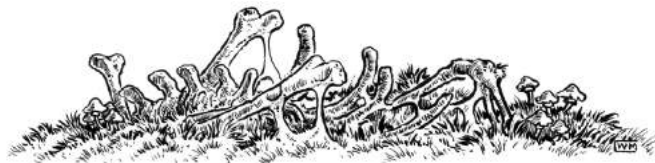
but waited too long to tell people, mostly out of fear. When things turn bad, they reveal what they know.

Buman Zenor (NG male Knotsider human **noble**) permanently repatriated in Pantmawr two years ago. The one-eyed zoologist keeps to himself and lives in a semi-permanent room in the Black Palm. He's prone to panic attacks and refuses to ride on any sort of aircraft.

How does Zenor act during the attack? Zenor freezes up during any sort of confrontation. Roll for a form of short-term madness whenever combat happens or someone (even an NPC) shouts at Zenor. The rules for madness are found in Chapter 5 of the DMG. There is nothing short of being knocked unconscious that will get Zenor to step onto an aircraft.

What does Zenor know? An expert in zoology, especially Ditimayan fauna, Zenor is intricately familiar with purple worms. So long as he hasn't retreated into his own mind from a panic attack, he can explain all of the features of the purple worm stat block. Instead, of giving numerical values, he offers the following qualities:

- **Armor Class:** "Their hides are as thick as stone."
- **Hit Points:** "They're extraordinarily difficult to kill. I've heard tales of one taking three Dinzer fireballs head-on with hardly a scratch to be seen."
- **Strength:** "They're stronger than even the largest giants and can punch a hole right through a stone wall without even slowing down."
- **Damage:** "The worms can eat an entire stable of fully-grown warhorses and still hunger for more. And their tails deliver enough poison capable of dropping an ogre with a single prick." Ω





TALES OF OMERIA: LOST CASTLE OF DREAMS

BY DAVE HAMRICK

9th-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by watabou.itch.io

Art by Matias Lazaro and William McAusland

This side trek is designed for three to seven 5th- to 10th-level characters and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 9.

This unusual encounter can be placed as a side quest or at the end of a major quest. While set in the world of Omeria by default, it can easily be placed in any campaign setting that fits the description (dark forest, far from town, etc.)

Lair of the Chicken Lich

The Lost Castle of Dreams is situated deep in the forest, far from the nearest town. Currently, it is infested by chickens. It is rumored that countless treasures of gold are stored here.

The Chicken Lich

The Chicken Lich was once a powerful spellcaster named Zeek. Zeek intended to have his soul stored in a decorative golden egg. Unfortunately, the egg went missing the day of the immortality ceremony and one of Zeek's henchmen substituted a normal chicken egg. The ritual went awry and three weeks later, Zeek hatched as a newborn chick. Zeek still had his memories and spellcasting abilities but was much shorter and covered in feathers. Needless to say, Zeek immediately *disintegrated* the henchman who caused the mishap. The rest of Zeek's disciples and henchmen were then turned into chickens to share in Zeek's misery.

Area Description

Unless stated otherwise in the individual room descriptions, the chicken lich's lair has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Chicken Lich's lair is a cellar where the top layers have long since been swallowed by a primordial forest. Creeper vines run down the walls and onto the cracked pavers in the ancient floors. Inside the cellar, the ceilings are roughly 15 feet high and braced with

ancient, rotten timbers. Old, moldy tapestries of some long-forgotten royal family still hang from the walls.

Doors. What few doors there are have been left open, granting access to Zeek’s henchchickens. In some locations, however, the doors are protected with traps, as noted in the individual areas.

Lights. With the exception of **area 1**, *continual flame* spells have been cast all around the establishment.

Sounds & Smells. The place reeks. Mold coupled with chicken feces attacks the nose immediately upon entry. Then there’s the sound of clucking throughout.

1 - Entry

Finding the actual entrance into the Lost Castle might prove difficult for the characters as they travel through the forest. However, the telltale sign of chicken prints might give away its location.

Stairs Out. The stairs leading into the castle’s old cellar are terribly overgrown and count as difficult terrain.

Trap: Hold Person Glyph. At the bottom of the stairs, Zeek has set a *glyph of warding* trap. Any creature that steps onto the bottom step without disarming the trap automatically triggers it. The *glyph* targets the creature that triggered it with a *hold person* spell (DC 17). Noticing the *glyph* requires a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check, then a second successful DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check to disarm it. Creatures that are not proficient in the Arcana skill cannot find or disarm the trap.

The trap also alerts the **chicken disciple** and **shield guardian** from **area 4**. The pair arrive 1 round after the glyph is triggered.

Stoneshape Door. The entrance to **area 2** is blocked by a wall created by the *stone shape* spell. It is clear that there was once a door there that has since been bricked up.

2 - Prison Cell Main Area

Zeek keeps those who’ve wronged him or those he finds important here. Roll randomly or choose one of the following NPCs from the Zeek’s Prisoner table to determine the identity of the prisoner.

Zeek’s Prisoner.

d6	Prisoner
1	A lawful good mage .
2	A chicken guardian who turned on Zeek.
3	A rogue (spy) who tried to break into the cellar, looking for Zeek’s treasure.
4	A commoner Zeek needs for a sacrifice.
5	A vampire spawn whose blood Zeke needs.
6	A goblin named Boop.

Stoneshape Door. The door leading back to **area 2** is blocked by a wall created by the *stone shape* spell (the same one described in **area 1**). It is clear that there was once a door there that has since been bricked up.

3 - Prison Cell Pool

Stagnant water pools in this room.

Cell Bars. Old, rusted bars give anyone standing in **area 5** a clear view of this area.

4 - Guards

One of Zeek’s **chicken disciples** stands guard here. The chicken disciple has a large amulet around its neck which it uses to control the **shield guardian** that is also present. The shield guardian has a stored *slow* spell within it (DC 17).

Double Door Riddle. A creature that steps in front of the set of double doors is stopped by a *magic mouth* that appears on the wall over the door. The *mouth* looks like a chicken’s beak. It asks the following riddle:

“To proceed, answer this riddle correctly. To perish, answer this riddle incorrectly.”

Of Chickens and Men

The Chicken Lich’s lair is ruled by Zeek and his henchchickens.

Zeek, The Chicken Lich uses the **archmage** stat block with the changes described for chickens below.

Zeek’s **chicken disciples** use the **mage** stat block with the changes described for chickens below.

Zeek’s **chicken guardians** use the **rat** stat block and a **swarm of Zeek’s guardians** uses the **swarm of rats** stat block. Either way, the guardians have Intelligence scores of 10 and can speak Common.

- In addition to their own stat blocks, the chickens have the following changes:
- The creature’s size is Tiny, its type is beast, and its alignment is Lawful Evil.
- The creature’s Strength score is 2 (-4).
- The creature does not have a melee or ranged weapon attack that it can use.

What Does Zeek Want? Ultimately, Zeek wants to be left alone to his own devices. Sometimes, his needs cause trouble—for example, he may require the blood of a virgin to complete a spell. And he’s been known to accidentally open doors to the Other here and there. This events draw attention to adventurers.

What Does Zeek’s Henchchickens Want? Overall, most of Zeek’s henchchickens are okay with their current predicament. After all, the work is good and there’s plenty of seeds to go around. However, some do long to become human again.

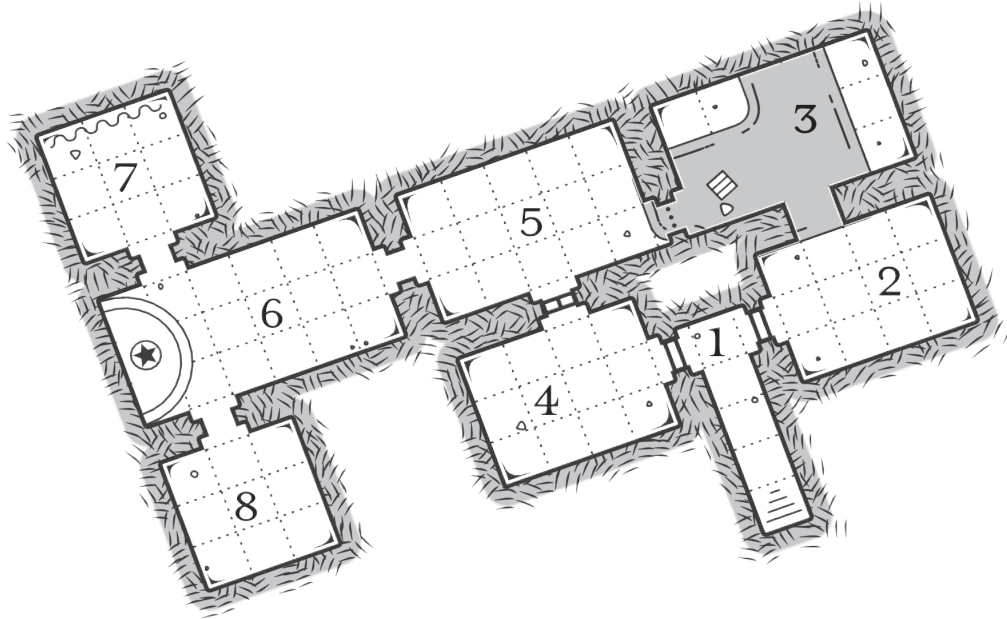
“I have ten or more daughters. I have less than ten daughters. I have at least one daughter. If only one of these statements is true, how many daughters do I have?”

If the *mouth* has any daughters, there will always be two statements which are true. Therefore, the correct answer is “no daughters.”

Failure to answer the riddle correctly causes the *mouth* to cast a *power word kill* spell on the answerer. Then, the door *arcanelly locks* and will not open for another 24 hours, at which point it asks the question again.

Lost Castle of Dreams

The castle is situated deep in the dark forest, far from the nearest town. Currently it is infested by chickens. It is rumored that countless treasures of gold are stored here.



While locked, the door requires a DC 25 Strength check to break open or a DC 25 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to unlock. The doors have AC 20, 50 hp, threshold 10, and immunity to poison and psychic damage; and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

If the prisoner saved from **area 4** is the mage or the chicken henchmen, it will automatically know the right answer.

Treasure. The belongings of the prisoner kept in **area 4** are in this room. To determine the nature of the belongings, refer to the Prisoner's Belongings table below using the identity of the Prisoner as determined by Zeek's Prisoner table (see **area 2**).

Prisoner's Belongings.

Prisoner	Belongings
mage	a spellbook containing all the spells from the mage spell list
chicken guardian	—
spy	all of the spy's normal equipment
commoner	a pouch with 10 sp
vampire spawn	+1 <i>longsword</i> , chain-mail
goblin	short bow, scimitar, dungeoneer's pack

5 - Chicken Guardians

Two **chicken disciples** and three **swarms of chicken guardians** are

in this area. They can see into **area 3**. Therefore, if an intruder enters that area without being careful, the entire complex will be on high alert.

6 - Zeek's Lair

Zeek, The Chicken Lich is in this area. If alerted to the presence of the characters, he is ready for battle. He's cast a *globe of invulnerability* on himself. Meanwhile, he uses his two shield guardian amulets to call forth his two **shield guardians**. While the shield guardians distract the characters, he retreats to **area 8** to prepare his belongings and escape. The shield guardians each have a stored *slow* spell (DC 17) which they can use to slow down faster characters (such as rogues or monks).

He keeps his *time stop* spell handy in case he needs to flee to **area 8**, which he can defend with a *wall of force* long enough to gather the most valuable treasure and *teleport* away.

7 - Zeek's Chambers

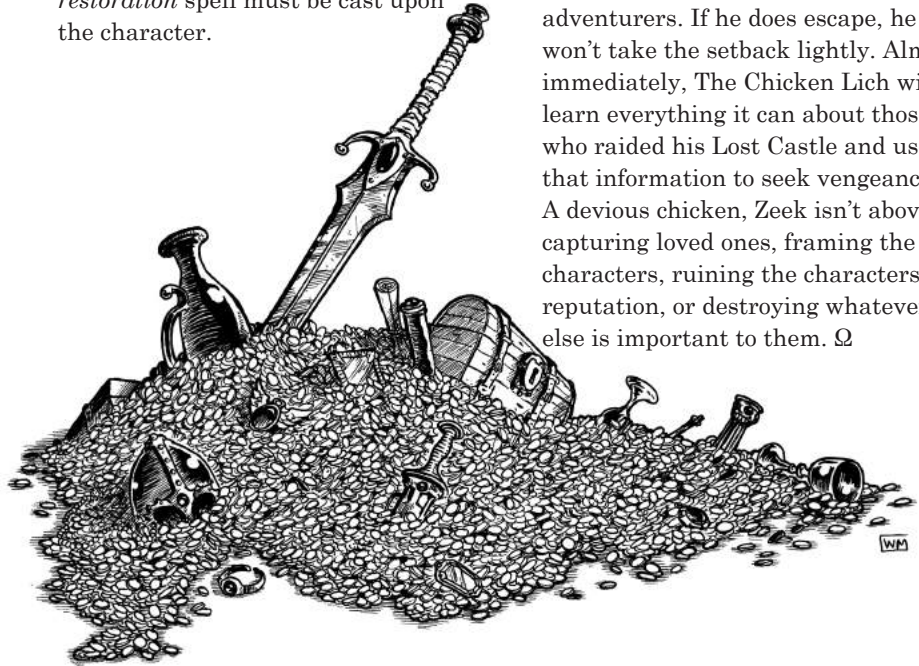
This area is where Zeek sleeps. The floor is covered in hay. Unlike the other chickens who reside in the Lost Castle of Dreams, Zeek keeps his regular areas free of his own droppings.

8 - Zeek's Treasure

All of Zeek's treasure is in this room contained in a stone sarcophagus measuring 10 feet by 4 feet. If Zeek must flee to this room to escape intruders, he can easily *teleport* away with this sarcophagus.

Treasure. The sarcophagus holds the following treasure: 13,500 gp and 1,500 pp in linen bags, 10 gems worth 1,000 gp each, +1 *chain mail*, +2 *wand of the war mage*, and a *sword of vengeance*. The *wand of the war mage*

is cursed. Any creature that attunes to the *wand* is permanently polymorphed into a chicken. While a chicken, the creature's size becomes Tiny, its Strength score becomes 2 (-4) and it can't wear or carry anything. To change back into a chicken, a *greater restoration* spell must be cast upon the character.

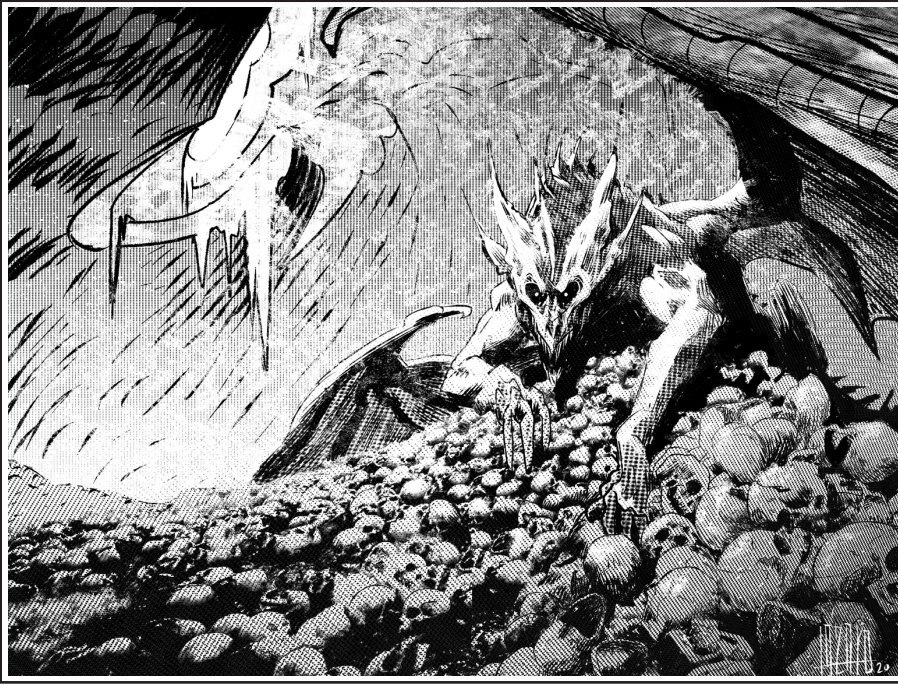


Wrap Up: Don't Cross The Chicken Lich

Zeek is over a hundred years old and plans to see his 200th birthday. He will try to escape if he feels that the odds are against him and failing that, he'll try to cut a deal with the adventurers. If he does escape, he won't take the setback lightly. Almost immediately, The Chicken Lich will learn everything it can about those who raided his Lost Castle and use that information to seek vengeance. A devious chicken, Zeek isn't above capturing loved ones, framing the characters, ruining the characters' reputation, or destroying whatever else is important to them. Ω



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TALES OF OMERIA: THE BLIND CAVERN

BY DAVE HAMRICK

10th-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dave Hamrick
Art by Matias Lazaro

This side trek is designed for three to seven 8th to 10th level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 10.

The Blind Cavern is an icy passage leading through part of the mountain. The terrain just outside the cavern is difficult to traverse, making the cavern ideal. Despicable creatures who know this often use it as an ambush point for passersby.

Recently, Skullcollector's squad captured an old hermit who lives just south of the cavern. The hermit may have information that the characters seek. Only through the hermit's liberation will the characters be able to move on to their next story objective.

The White Dragon's Lair

While they're not the smartest of the dragons, white dragons are certainly some of the most dangerous. And the **adult white dragon** Skullcollector is no exception. Born with a proper name, Skullcollector gained its vile nickname from its dreadful hobby: collecting skulls. Currently, Skullcollector is holed up in the old Blind Cavern near the base of The Knife, one of the tallest and most dangerous mountains in the tail (northeastern bend) of the Basilisk's Spine. Temperamental and flakey, Skullcollector has trouble finding good help. However, a ragtag group of hobgoblins led by a one-eyed fire giant named Graam have teamed up with Skullcollector to help the dragon find new skulls to add to its hoard. In exchange, the crew keeps the treasure Skullcollector doesn't want—basically everything else.

Regional Effects

The region containing Skullcollector's lair is warped by his magic, which creates the following effects.

- Chilly fog lightly obscures the land within 6 miles of The Knife.
- Ice and snow falling from heavy, dark clouds pound the area within 6 miles of The Knife. Blizzards are

common, especially when Skullcollectors is hibernating.

- If Skullcollector dies, the fog and precipitation fade within 1 day.

Area Description

Unless otherwise stated in the description, The Blind Cavern has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The walls of the cavern are made of thick sedimentary layers of limestone, marble, shale, and pelite. In some areas, water has frozen over, giving the interior walls a glossy sheen. The ceilings are low in most parts, often 12 feet. Standing 16 feet tall, Graam dislikes this feature.

Light. Most of the cavern is dark. Because of the grim conditions outside, natural light doesn't get in either. The area descriptions assume that the characters have darkvision or other sources of light.

Slippery Floors. In many places throughout the cavern, condensation has frozen over and made for slippery walks. Whenever a creature uses the Dash action, it must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check first. If the check fails, the creature falls prone in its space before it moves.

Sounds. All sounds bounce off the walls in the cavern, making it difficult to pinpoint where certain sounds are coming from. Therefore, Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing are made with disadvantage.

1 - First Passage

There are two entrances into the cavern. This is the first one. The two **hobgoblins** hiding in **area 2** watch and listen for anyone that approaches from this passageway. If they spot someone coming in, the two carefully retreat to **area 3** to alert the others.

2 - Hobgoblin Watch

Two **hobgoblins** keep watch here. If intruders come from the entrance at **area 1**, they retreat back to **area 3** to warn the others. If intruders come

from the left passage, they Stealthily follow the intruders until they are within range of their allies at **area 2**, then shout to warn the others.

3 - Graam's Camp

Graam, the one-eyed **fire giant**, and three **hobgoblins** make camp here.

Area Description. This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Graam chose this cavern for the camp as it has the highest ceilings in the entire complex: 25 feet.

Horse Meat. Graam and the hobgoblins are roasting a horse carcass over the fire. The hobgoblins captured the horse after killing its devilkin rider.

Light. The light from the fire pit casts the area in bright light and keeps ice from forming on the floors. Creatures can take the Dash action with no penalty in this area.

Creature Information. Graam and the hobgoblins are mostly lawful creatures, but they also don't care much for their job.

What Do They Want? Graam and the hobgoblins enjoy easy targets. Once it becomes clear that the characters aren't a pushover, the one-eyed fire giant looks to cut a deal. The hobgoblins, loyal to Graam, go with the plan.

However, if Graam sees an opportunity to turn against the characters and pay Skullcollector in fresh character skulls, he'll gladly take it.

What Do They Know? Graam knows where Skullcollector rests. Although he'll share the location of the other hobgoblins near **area 6**, he will purposely fail to mention the roper over the bridge.

Treasure. Graam and his minions keep two loaded treasure chests here, the spoils from their ambushes. Between the two chests, the characters will find 10,650 cp, 6,000 sp, 1,100 GP, and 205 pp. In addition, there are 10 gems worth 100 gp each

(GM's discretion), an *elixir of health*, and *horseshoes of speed*. Also, there is a brightly colored suit of splint mail here.

4 - Dead-end Cave

Nothing here but a bunch of gnawed-on animal bones.

5 - Steep Slope

At the south end of the cavern, a creature can notice the danger inherent in the descent with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. They can make the check with advantage if they have proficiency in Survival. A character moving at half their normal speed can descend the pathway without any issue. However, a creature who moves their normal speed must make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone. At the start of a prone creature's turn, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or slide 30 feet toward **area 6**. While sliding, a creature is incapacitated and its movement speed (other than sliding) is 0.

If a creature fails to stop itself before it reaches the abyss in **area 6**, it falls into the abyss. Just before the creature falls into the abyss, it has one last chance to catch itself on the suspension bridge. The creature must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful saving throw, the creature grabs onto one of the bridge's ropes and is dangling above the abyss. Otherwise, the creature falls into the abyss (see **area 6**).

6 - The Abyss

A massive abyss divides **areas 5** and **7**.

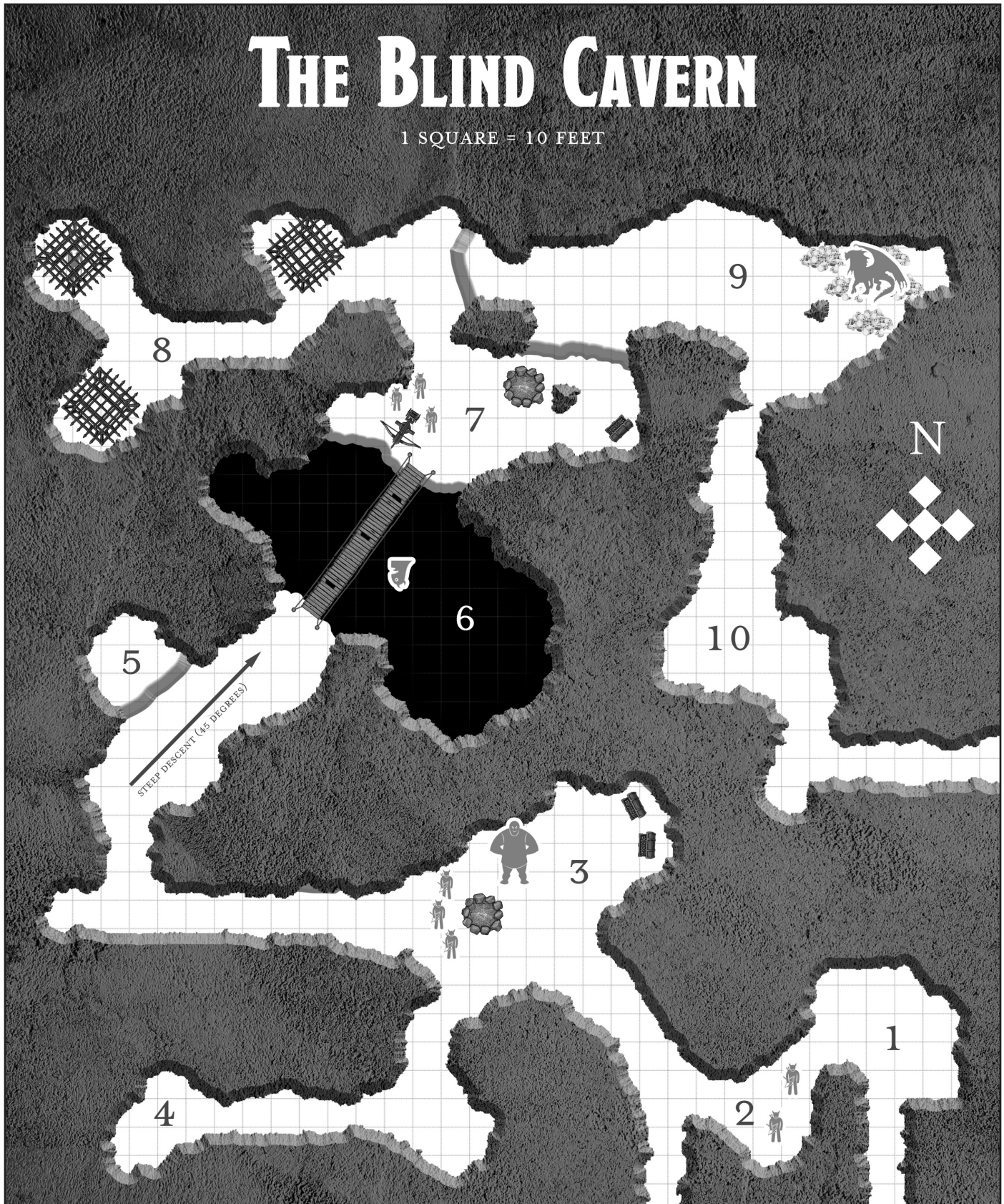
Area Description. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ceilings above the abyss are 30 feet high and covered in icy stalactites.

Abyss. The abyss itself is 200 feet deep. A creature that falls into the abyss takes 20d6 bludgeoning damage. The only way out of the abyss is

THE BLIND CAVERN

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



by climbing. Thanks to the icy walls, climbing without a rope or magical assistance requires a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check at the start of each turn a creature climbs.

Suspension Bridge. The ice has worn down the bridge over the years. On initiative count 10, if there are 500 pounds of weight or more on the bridge roll a d20 and refer to the breaking bridge table below. Any creatures who fall into the abyss take damage from the fall as described above.

Breaking Bridge Table.

d20	Result
0-9	Nothing happens.
10-17	The suspension ropes start to splinter. The next time a Break Bridge check is made, add a cumulative +2 to the d20 roll.
18-19	One of the ropes snaps and the bridge tilts to one side. Each creature on the bridge must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to grab onto something or fall into the abyss. If this result comes up a second time, treat it as a roll of 20. While the bridge is tilted, the bridge counts as difficult terrain.
20	Both ropes snap and the bridge splits in half. The north side swings into the north cliff and the south side swings into the south cliff. Each creature on the bridge must succeed on DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to grab onto something or fall into the abyss. The halves of the bridge effectively become ladders on the side of their respective cliff faces.

Creature Information. Three **hobgoblins** manning a **ballista** are at the far side of the abyss. And to make matters worse, a **roper** is hidden among the stalactites on the ceiling. The hobgoblins are aware of the roper. They use the ballista as cover until the roper reveals itself and grabs one or more of the characters.

Each round, the hobgoblins can load,

aim, and fire the ballista so long as all three are standing. The ballista has AC 15, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. It fires a bolt.

Bolt. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (3d10) piercing damage.

If one or more of the hobgoblins is taken out, the remaining hobgoblins take cover and switch to their long-bows.

7 - Hobgoblin Post

Three **hobgoblins** keep watch for intruders crossing the suspension bridge. Their tactics are described in **area 6**.

Area Description. The area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Similar to **area 6**, the ceilings here are 30-feet high and covered in stalactites. The cliffside leading up to **area 8** is 6 feet high. There's no ladder in place (the hobgoblins avoid messing with Skullcollector as much as they can).

Light. The light from the fire pit casts the area in bright light and keeps ice from forming on the floors. Creatures can take the Dash action with no penalty in this area.

Treasure. The hobgoblins keep their share of the treasure in a heavy iron chest. The chest contains 12,100 cp, 950 sp, and 70 gp. There are also 30 gems worth 50 gp each and *four potions of healing*.

8 - Cages

Three cages fashioned from wood, bone, and rope are jammed into the pockets of this cavern.

Creature Information. The hermit is here, cold, hungry, and dying. Regardless of the hermit's stat block (recommended **commoner** or **druid**), the old man is down to only 2 hit points and has suffered two levels of exhaustion. If you need quick details for the hermit, refer to Chapter 4 of the *DMG*.

The cage's door is kept shut with a knotted rope which can be easily cut.

9 - Skullcollector

This is where the **adult white dragon** Skullcollector rests. A huge mountain of humanoid skulls fills most of the eastern half of the room. There are enough skulls here for Skullcollector to dive into and hide.

Creature Information. If Skullcollector suspects that he's under attack, the dragon burrows under his massive pile of humanoid skulls and hides (+5 on his Stealth check). Skullcollector is no more intelligent than any other white dragon and relies primarily on brute strength to defeat intruders.

The dragon opens with his cold breath then uses his tail legendary action when it's able. He'll use his lair action to create an ice wall with the intent to split the party, trying to get as many ranged attackers as he's able on the other side of the ice wall. From there, he goes for the easiest targets, first attacking with his claws and bite and tail, then moving on to the next. Skullcollector is too proud to flee or beg and will fight until the death.

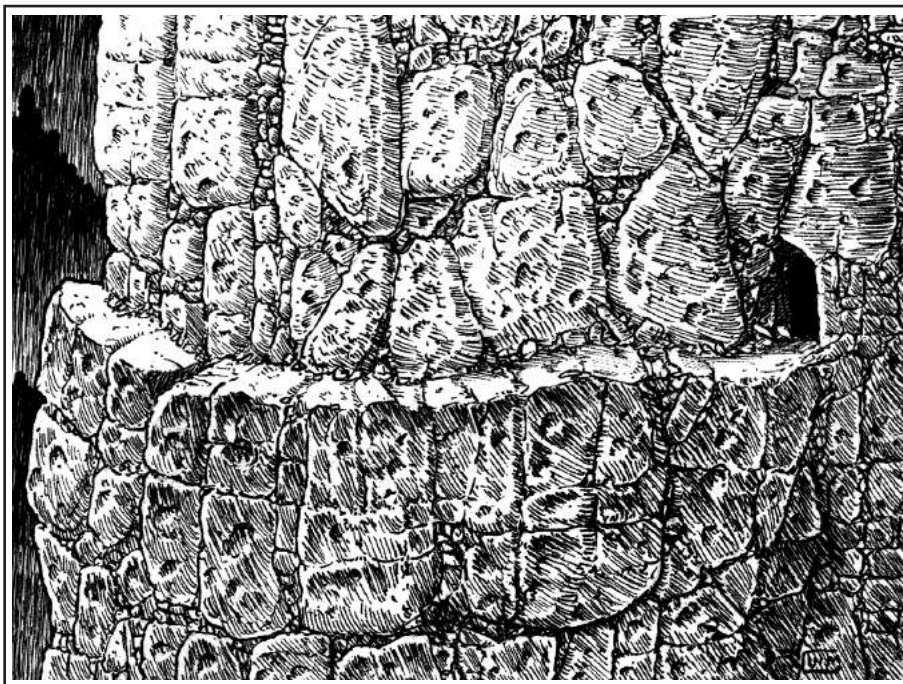
10 - Rear Entrance

The rear of the cave exits back out onto the side of the mountain. What lies beyond The Blind Cavern? That's an adventure for another day.

Wrap-Up: I Want Your Skulls

With Skullcollector defeated, the trip up the mountain should be easier. Furthermore, if rescuing the hermit was a story objective, the party likely has a clue to the next story objective.

As far as Graam and his gang go, it's up to you what happens next to the downtrodden, one-eyed fire giant and his crew of hobgoblins. They could become allies of the party or they could take over the pass, continuing its purpose as a popular ambush point to collect treasures from those who wish to climb The Knife. Ω



TALES OF OMERIA: RAIN, LIGHTNING, THUNDER

BY DAVE HAMRICK

20th-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Art by Matias Lazaro

This side trek is designed for three to seven 17th- to 20th-level characters and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 20.

This encounter can be added at an important turning point in an ongoing game or even as the climax of an important story arc. The characters must find or protect a special item or person. Meanwhile, the storm giants will do everything in their power to ensure that the item or person doesn't fall into the wrong hands—even if it means destroying the characters to accomplish this. As good creatures, the giants offer plenty of warnings. As chaotic and wise creatures, however, they will not take “no” for an answer.

Against the Storm Giants

Storm giants are the wisest of all the giants but also the most superstitious. Thanks to their connection to the wide world and the elemental might of rain, lightning, and thunder, they can see beyond the range of mortal men and can predict events that have yet to occur.

While storm giants are innately good, their portents sometimes lead to conflicts of interest. After all, those who are unable to envision what the giants can only focus on the here and now and less on the “greater picture.”

The Conflict

Before the encounter occurs, determine the reason for the potential conflict between the giants and the characters.

Storm Top

The battle happens on Storm Top, an earth mote nearly four miles off the ground that was once part of a cloud or storm giant's hold or whatever else is appropriate to your storyline. The item or person of value to the characters and giants waits within a canyon upon an altar. Thanks to the storm giants' presence, a mighty storm rages on all around Storm Top.

Area Description

Storm Top has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. Storm Top is an earth mote that measures 1 mile in diameter. The actual battle between the characters and the giants begins within a

canyon that is approximately 75-foot wide and 150-foot long.

Falling. Because Storm Top is so high off the ground, falling is a serious hazard. Any creature that falls off of Storm Top's edge that is unable to halt the fall takes 20d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Weather. The storm giants have created dangerous weather conditions for the fight using their *control weather* innate spell-casting ability. The following conditions apply during the battle:

- **Extreme cold.** At the start of combat, each creature except for the giant must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold-weather gear and creatures naturally adapted to cold climates.
- **Strong wind.** Ranged weapon attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing are made with disadvantage. Open flames are extinguished, fogs are dispersed, and flying by nonmagical means is impossible. A flying creature in the wind must land at the end of its turn or fall.
- **Heavy precipitation.** Everything in the area is lightly obscured, and creatures in the area other than the giants have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
- **Lightning.** On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), each storm giant present that isn't incapacitated can choose a point that it can see within 120 feet of it. A bolt of lightning flashes down from the cloud to that point. Each creature within 5 feet of the point must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d10 lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Creature Information. There is one storm giant for each character present. This makes this encounter particularly deadly, therefore, it is recommended that you only use this combat if the characters are completed rested going into it (and potentially directly after it).

What Do The Giants Want? The giants do not wish to have a conflict with the characters, nor can they allow the characters to succeed in their task (as detailed above). The giants will avoid killing the characters unless absolutely necessary

Storm Giant Conflicts.

d6	Loot
1	The characters must rescue an important NPC from the storm giants who plan on sacrificing the NPC to the storm gods upon Storm Top's altar.
2	An important magic item is in the possession of the storm giants and being kept on Storm Top. The giants cannot allow the magic item to leave Storm Top.
3	The storm giants arrive at Storm Top the same time that the characters do; they both seek the same magic item that is being kept there.
4	The giants wish to kill a villain that the characters are protecting at Storm Top. After a failed parley with the giants, the characters must battle them.
5	The characters were given a different prophecy that conflicts with the storm giant's. By protecting the person/resource on Storm Top from the giants they will fulfill that prophecy.
6	The storm giants have prophesized that the characters themselves must be destroyed and have no other choice but to face them in combat.

unless the characters prove themselves to be villains worthy of eradication.

Tactics. Storm giants are excellent combatants and will use their terrain to their advantage. They will do all they can to keep their distances from the characters, recognizing that many of the characters will likely have powers that can stop them if they come too close (such as the monk's pesky stunning strike or paladin's smite).

One of the giants will need to maintain its control of the weather, so it will stay in the rear. Meanwhile, the other giants will use *levitate* to stay above the combat, hap-

py to lob rocks (even with a disadvantage from the rain) and Lightning Strikes when available. If knocked out of the sky, they have *feather fall* to slow their descent.

As an action, the giant can attempt to grab and throw a Small or Medium creature within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or be hurled up to 60 feet horizontally in a direction of the giant's choice and land prone, taking 1d8 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the creature is thrown off the edge of Storm Top, it takes falling damage instead. The giants will use this against slower creatures who lack flying and teleporting abilities (such as the aforementioned pesky melee combatants).

As a last-ditch effort, the giant may even opt to grapple a particularly dangerous character then leap off Storm Top with the character in its hands. The giant will take the damage from the fall, but will likely have a better chance at survival the character. Furthermore, if the giant lands in water below (your discretion), the giant can take the fight into the water where it continues to have advantages.

Wrap Up: Weathering the Storm

If the characters win the battle, they take control of the asset they fought to protect. And if the giants win, they reclaim the asset, likely moving it to a safer location. Where the adventure happens from here is ultimately up to you. Of course, if the characters demonstrate that they are particularly nasty and/or evil opponents, they may invoke the wrath of the local storm giants for years to come. Ω

Giants in Omeria

Giants are rare. Since the Hand of the Third, when the danaavrakts killed nearly 90% of all living giants, most giants have gone into hiding. Slow to reproduce, they've yet to regain their numbers prior to 625 AT.

Giants no longer trust humanoids. Overall, the majority of the surviving giants blame the humanoids for their near extinction at the hands of the Obsidian Plain fiends (the exception being hill giants, as explained below). When conflicts arise between giants and humanoids, rarely do the giants offer the benefit of the doubt.

Hill giants are the most common of giant kin. Because of their smaller size compared to the other giant subspecies, hill giants frequently work and mingle with humanoids, particularly the Vaskilish Anorian elves.

Stone giants are thought to be extinct. After 650 AT, the stone giants vanished into the Low and haven't been seen since. However, the Von Dorals claim that they are locked in perpetual war with the inak.



TALES OF OMERIA: THOSE WHO WRITHE BELOW

BY DAVE HAMRICK

12th-Level Adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dave Hamrick
Art by Matias Lazaro and William McAusland

This side trek is designed for three to seven 11th to 16th level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 12.

The aboleth's lair is an underwater cavern filled with various traps as well as the deranged, fanatical servants of the aboleth. The lair could be attached to a cave system connected by a pool or well. Or it could be found at the bottom of a lake that's recently been turned foul by the aboleth's presence.

The Aboleth's Lair

Aboleths are horrible, ancient aberrations rarely seen anywhere in Omeria. Only the most learned Dinzer mages know of their presence on the long continent, and even then, they keep silent about these unspeakable creatures. One of the ancient passages in *Librex Malmütaronn* suggests there may have been an aboleth in the Gar Warbrizz region seven-hundred years before the goblins claimed the territory. However, there has not yet been any evidence to support the claim.

The Aboleth's Goals

Aboleths are always scheming. As nigh immortal creatures, they can plan for years, waiting quietly in the dark for the right moment to act. On the Aboleth Goals table on the next page, choose an appropriate goal for the eponymous aboleth or roll randomly to decide.

Area Description

Unless otherwise stated, the aboleth's lair has the following features. A map of the aboleth's lair is on page 116.

Dimensions & Terrain. The aboleth's network of underwater caves are filled with murky, grayish water, not unlike mucous. The walls are slimy to the touch and everything is lightly obscured.

Light. There is no light within the aboleth's caverns. The characters will

need to use their own source of light or have darkvision to see their way.

Sounds. Unless the characters can hear underwater, everything is muffled by the thick, oozy water.

Telepathic Connections. The aboleth can establish a telepathic connection with any creature within 1 mile of its lair. Once connected, it can probe a creature's mind for its deepest desires. It will then use these desires to turn creatures—possibly even the characters—against each other.

Underwater. The entirety of the lair is underwater. Be sure to review the rules for swimming and underwater combat in the *PHB* before running this encounter.

1 - Lair Entrance

The entrance to the aboleth's lair is the first hint that danger lies ahead.

Area Information. The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. A vertical shaft descends into the lair, separating the caverns from the rest of the body of water in which the characters discovered it.

The Drowned. Five, bloated, water-logged humanoid bodies drift lifelessly in this area. The drowned were deceived by the aboleth and drowned trying to reach treasures that they would never find. The aboleth left them as a warning to the dangers within its cave.

Aboleth's Illusion. The aboleth uses its regional effect to appear in this area. It hopes to goad spellcasters with quick trigger fingers to attack it.

2 - Low Passage

Two **water elementals** and two **swarms of quippers** attack any creatures who enter this area.

Area Information. The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The ceilings in the passage are only 3-feet-high. Large or larger creatures cannot pass through the passage and

Aboleth Goals.

d8	Goal
1	The aboleth hopes to ascend to godhood and believes that there is a magic item in the area that will allow it to do just that.
2	The local ruler is actually a thrall under the aboleth's command.
3	The aboleth seeks to find a gate to a forbidden region of the Depth.
4	The aboleth is slowly enslaving all of the humanoids in a local settlement.
5	The aboleth seeks vengeance against a creature that once disrupted its plans
6	The aboleth is searching for ancient ruins.
7	An ancient artifact that the aboleth discovered in the cave has captured the aboleth's interest for hundreds of years and now it's close to deciphering its true purpose.
8	The aboleth recently woke from a centuries long slumber and is slowly reestablishing itself.

Medium creatures must spend 1 extra foot of movement per foot moved to swim through the passage

3 - Chuul Pit

Three **chuul** wait at the bottom of a seaweed-filled pit.

Area Information. The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This chamber descends 20-feet into a dark pit filled with seaweed. The seaweed is difficult terrain. The bones of dead spellcasters fill the bottom of the pit.

Creature Information. The three chuuls are loyal servants of the aboleth.

What Do They Want? The chuul are obsessed with magic items and spellcasters. Using their Sense Magic feature, they wait until spellcasters or characters laden with magic items to pass overhead. Once a creature comes within range, the chuul use its pincers and tentacles to attack then drag their prey back into the pit to finish them off.

What Do They Know? The chuul know where the aboleth is located. If magically convinced, the chuul will lead the characters to the real aboleth in **area 11**. They also know that the aboleth is guarded by a dragon. Otherwise, the chuul are fanatically

devoted to the aboleth and will die to protect it.

Treasure. Among the bones at the bottom of the pit, there is a discarded *ring of earth elemental command* the chuul took from a dead wizard.

4 - Dead End

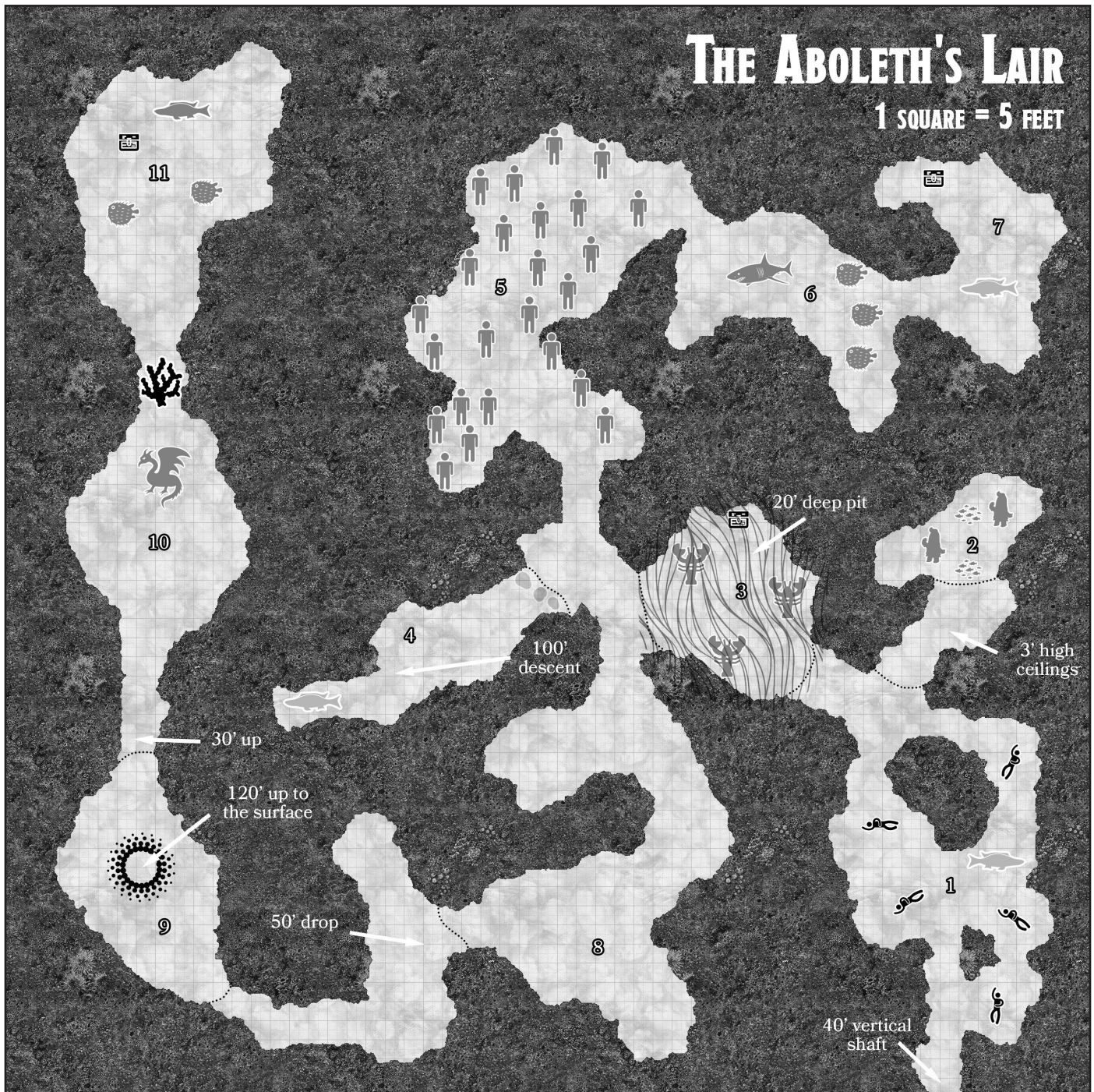
The aboleth uses its illusion to trick and trap the characters.

Area Information. The area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This tunnel overgrown with coral gradually descends 100 feet down.

Aboleth Illusion. The aboleth creates another illusory duplicate to drive characters into the dead end.

Collapsing Tunnel. Once the characters follow the aboleth duplicate into the tunnel, a chuul (potentially one from the pit in **area 3**) brings down the ceiling at the head of the tunnel. Once the ceiling comes down, the characters will need to dig themselves out. Treat the cave-in as a Huge object that has AC 17, 100 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. In addition to attacking the cave-in, a character can use its action to make a Strength (Athletics) check; reduce the cave-in's hit points by the result of the check. A creature that rolls a 1 on an attack



roll or ability check against the cave-in makes matters worse: the cave-in's hit points increase by an amount equal to $1d10 \times 10$.

5 - Cave of Thralls

Dozens of aboleth thralls drift in this cave, their mutated mouths locked in silent screams.

Creature Information. This cave holds twenty-four of the aboleth's thralls. Each thrall is a **commoner**, except that they can breathe underwater and take damage if they are ever out of the water (as described under the aboleth's stat block).

What Do They Want? More than

anything, the thralls want to free themselves from their horrible existence; even if that means death. The moment they see the characters, they crowd them, pawing at them, begging silently to be cured. Unfortunately, four of them are enslaved by the aboleth. While the characters are

distracted, they attack, targeting any spellcasters the aboleth has identified (especially if the spellcaster is concentrating on a spell).

What Do They Know? The thralls have no idea where the aboleth actually resides. But they do know that it uses illusions to spy on trespassers.

6 - False Guards

The aboleth's illusion reappears, quickly escaping behind a group of three **fuguhito** warriors. A **reanimated giant shark** protects the fuguhito, drawing the attacks of the characters while the fuguhito attack from a distance with their needles.

The giant shark has the following changes: its type is undead, it has vulnerability to bludgeoning damage, immunity to poison damage, and is immune to the exhaustion and poisoned conditions.

Creature Information. The three fuguhito warriors were enthralled by the aboleth. They believe that the illusion of the aboleth is real.

What Do They Want? The fuguhito warriors are enthralled by the aboleth. If damaged, they will snap out of their trance.

What Do They Know? The fuguhito warriors were exploring the cave when they discovered the aboleth. They know that the aboleth uses illusions to trick creatures deeper into its lair where it seeks to trap and enthrall them.

7 - Cursed Treasure

The aboleth's illusion lures the characters into this cavern.

Treasure. An iron chest covered in barnacles is tucked into the far corner of this cavern. The lock is rusted and easy to break (AC 10, 3 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage). Inside the chest is 5,000 gp and 1,000 gp. Resting on top of the coins is an *amulet of water breathing* (as the potion, but the effects are permanent, the item is rare and it

The Overthrown Dragon

The underwater lair detailed in this adventure wasn't always under the ownership of the aboleth. An adult green dragon named Kenno used it to hide his treasure hoard. Hundreds of years ago, the aboleth tricked Kenno by promising the dragon more wealth, then, when Kenno wasn't prepared, used its enslave ability to turn Kenno into its thrall.

requires attunement). The amulet is cursed. Any creature who attunes to the amulet suffers the same effects as if they had failed a Constitution saving throw against the aboleth's tentacle attack. To cure the character, a *remove curse* spell must be cast on the amulet. Then, the disease must be cured by *heal* or another disease-curing spell of 6th level or higher.

8 - Passageway

The west end of the passage drops 50 feet into the darkness. No fish swim here.

9 - Whirlpool

A large whirlpool pushes creatures who try to swim through this lair to the surface.

Area Description. This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. A vertical shaft leads up 120-feet to the surface. The currents in the area force creatures up through the shaft and away from the cave, making movement through the area cost 1 extra foot per foot moved. In addition, a creature that enters this area or starts their turn in the room must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failed check, the creature is pushed 50 feet up the shaft and away from the cavern. If the creature is pushed up the full length of the shaft they break the surface of the water. The passage that leads into **area 10** is 30-feet off the ground. Swimming back down requires similar checks.

10 - Kenno's Lair

The **adult green dragon** Kenno rests in this chamber, hiding among the coral.

Area Description. The area has the following features.

Concealed Passage. Thick coral conceals the passage into **area 11**. Noticing the passage requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The coral has AC 11 and 25 hit points per a 5-foot cube.

Coral. Thick, barb-like coral grows over every inch of this cavern. Any creature that touches the walls, floor, or ceiling of this area takes 1 piercing damage from the coral and must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is poisoned for 1 hour.

Creature Information. Kenno is an adult green dragon. He's been underwater so long that coral has attached itself to his scales. Kenno has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in coral. Kenno is enslaved by the aboleth. While enslaved, Kenno cannot use his regional or lair actions.

What Does He Want? Kenno, like many of the creatures who live in the aboleth's lair, wants to be free of the aboleth's mind control so he can take back his domain. Once Kenno is free, his innate magic overpowers the aboleth's and his regional actions take effect once more. Plus, he can also use lair actions again. Kenno feels no obligation to the characters and will destroy them as soon as he is free of the aboleth's reign. Unlike the aboleth, Kenno values his life. If his hit points are reduced to half or less and he is free of the aboleth's enslavement, he will flee through the whirlpool in **area 9**.

What Does He Know? Kenno knows that the aboleth is hiding behind the concealed passage that leads to **area 11**. He also knows the details of the aboleth's goals, although he may not share this information if he doesn't

feel it will further his agenda.

11 - The Aboleth

The **aboleth** waits in this chamber sitting among Kenno's treasure hoard. He is protected by two enslaved **fuguhitos**.

Creature Information. The aboleth is a deadly opponent. At this point, it has already probed the minds of the characters and knows their darkest desires. Before the characters can attack, it pinpoints the character with the weakest will and offers it whatever the character desires.

What Does It Want? The aboleth does not fear death. However, it wishes to remain within its lair so it can continue to further its goals. The

aboleth is a master strategist. Should it see a weakness within the group, it will attack, targeting characters with its Enslave attack who are likely to have poor Wisdom saving throws.

If it is destroyed, its body reforms within the Depths. Frustrated by the disruption in its machinations a temporary demise will cause, it's likely the aboleth will target the characters for revenge at a later date.

The fuguhitos do not wish to be slaves of the aboleth and will turn on it the first chance they get.

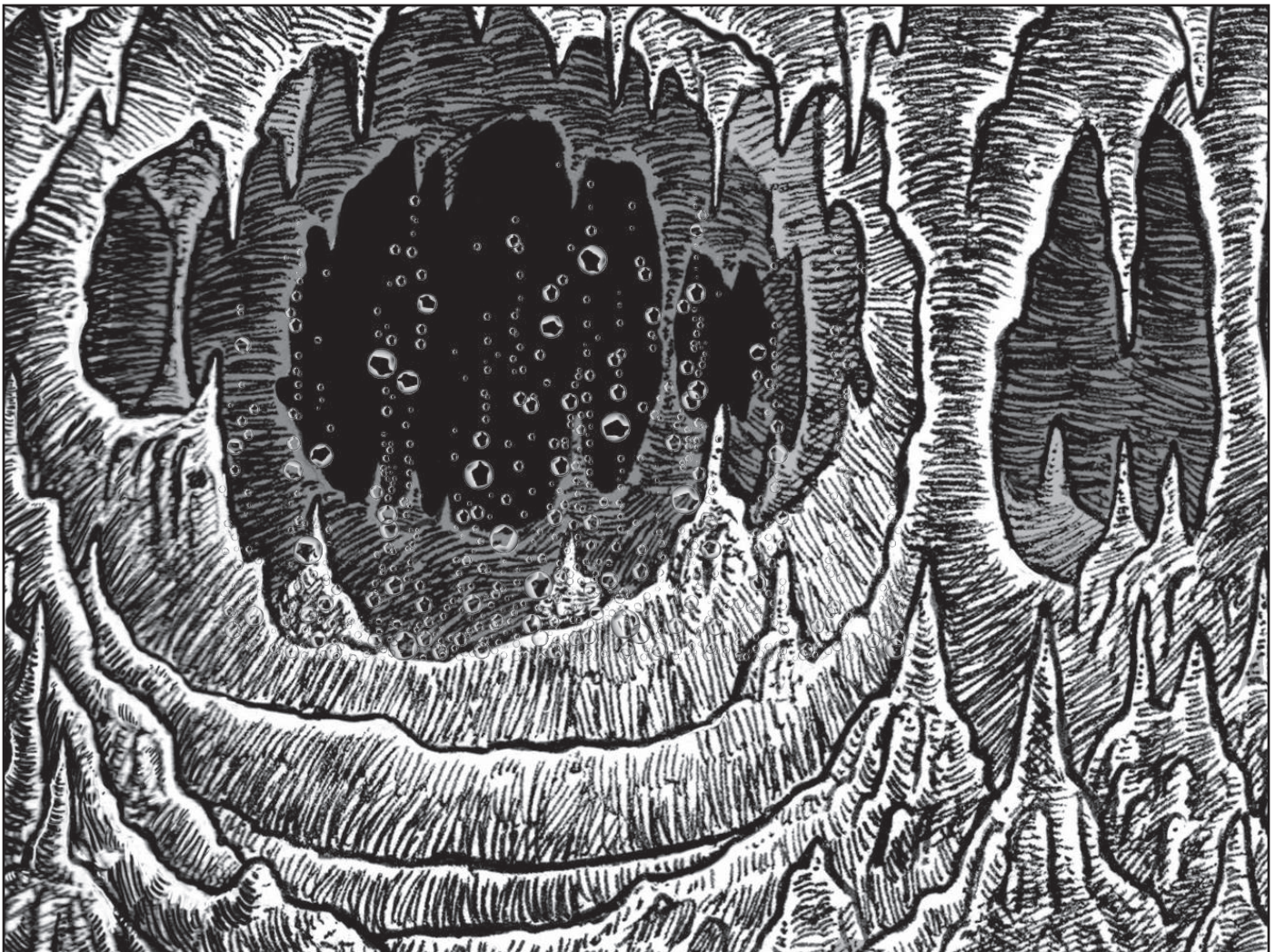
What Does It Know? Aboleths are ancient creatures whose knowledge extends back before the time of man, elves, and even the mysterious durlans. Intelligent characters, especially

those with the sage background, might be enticed by promises of forbidden lore and dark secrets.

Treasure. The aboleth rests on Kenno's hoard. The hoard contains 750 pp and 10,000 gp. It also contains 7 art objects worth 750 gp. Refer to chapter 7 of the *DMG* to determine the nature of the art objects.

Wrap-Up: Results

The characters defeat the aboleth, stopping the aberration from achieving its twisted goals. However, it's likely that the aboleth—or even Kenno for that matter—aren't thrilled by its new disposition. It's likely that one or the other (or both) may even seek vengeance against the characters. Ω



APPENDIX A

CYCLOPÆDIA OMERIA

BY DAVE HAMRICK

ART BY WILLIAM MCAUSLAND

CARTOGRAPHY BY WHATABOU.ITCH.IO

The Shores of Shadow Dramatis Personæ

The following NPCs, locations, and events feature prominently in this adventure.

The Aerie of Judgment. The Aerie of Judgment is home to Usteus' celestial host which consists of his punishers and liberators.

Arnitiko/a (AR nee tee ko/ka). Creatures from The Real who spend too much time in The Other eventually become arnitikos. An arnitiko looks as it did in life, except a mirror image of itself and completely devoid of color. They are invisible to undead.

The Black Cauldron. Believed to be infinite in depth and expanse, The Black Cauldron is the sea of liquid shadow that covers nearly all of The Other.

Collectors. Servants of the Goddess in Light, the collectors row The Black Cauldron searching for traveler orbs.

Dahk Wabrizz (DOCK WA briss). Home of the vile shadow goblins, the village of Dahk Wabrizz was built onto a five-legged platform overlooking The Black Cauldron.

Dario de Luca. Now a leader of the collectors, Dario de Luca was once a scientist who worked in the town of Qola.

Danaavrakt (da nahv ROKT). Sometimes called a "rakshasa" in the Common tongue, the danaavrakt are an evil ancient race of conjurers who are thought to be nearly extinct.

Desperon (DAY spar on). Chaotic evil by nature, the umbra are ruled by the most powerful of their kind, the war chief Desperon. Desperon lives in the Growing Spire, a dangerous fortress hidden within the black peaks of The Shores of Despair.

Dinzer. The dinzers are a tribe of magic-wielding humans who live in

the expansive country of Odonburg in Southern Omeria.

Dulon (DOO lon). The alien race known as the dulons were responsible for the creation of the first major life-forms on Casar including the titans, danaavrakti, elves, and humans.

Eqqaros (AY care ohs). Also known as The City of Light, Eqqaros is the one place in all of The Other where good creatures can thrive without fear of being attacked by the shadowy denizens of the plane.

Erathaol (air ath AY ol). The solar, Erathaol, is Naeyer's greatest champion and the leader of the angelic host who tried to capture Ninety-three in Greatwell.

Failabra (FIE la bra). Sometimes referred to as space whales, failabras are gargantuan psionic creatures who protect Eqqaros. The three remaining failabras have the power to open a gate back to The Real.

The Four Generals. Asnas, Ilwyn, Thinir, and Tuteus, collectively known as The Four Generals, are the seasonal gods of Presson's Enclave.

The Goddess in Light. The goddess in light is the angelic leader of the Lost Ones and Queen of Eqqaros, the City of Light.

The Loyk. A particularly strange danaavrakt, The Loyk lives within its lair in the black peaks of The Shores of Despair.

Naeyer (NAY ar). The Omerian God of the Sun, Naeyer sent the angels to capture the Boy in Greatwell. For many, Naeyer is seen as an evil god.

Ninety-three. Ninety-three is among the most powerful spellcasters who's ever lived. With a single command, he banished the characters and Erathaol to The Other.

Omnawaehl (OHM na whale). Once a mage serving the Dinzer nation of Odonburg, Omnawaehl sacri-

ficed herself to destroy The Tower of Burshai, revealing The Fantastic Lie to the world.

The Other. Created from shadow-stuff, a type of antimatter that comes in solid, liquid, or gas form, The Other is an infinite plane of shadow and necrotic energy.

Oxon (OAK sawn). One of the original founders of Odonburg, Oxon was placed in a hibernation chamber in the Tower of Burshai. When the Tower was destroyed, Oxon was pulled into The Other.

The Shores of Despair. The continent on which the umbra rule is known as The Shores of Despair.

The Shores of Shadow. Solid locations within The Other such as islands and the rare continent are sometimes referred to as The Shores of Shadow.

Traveler Orbs. Traveler orbs are glowing spheres of light from which creatures who are pulled into The Other emerge.

The Tunnel. One of the few permanent gates connecting The Other to The Real, The Tunnel is guarded by the Servants of Usteus.

Umbra. Shadows who possess a greater sense of self-awareness are reborn as umbra in The Other. The umbra are led by a great war chief named Desperon who resides in the Growing Spire in The Shores of Despair.

Usteus (OO stay us). Usteus is the God of Judgment. He is primarily worshipped by the wanderer halfings of Casar. His celestial host, the Servants of Usteus, live within the Aerie of Judgment.

Vadriken the Three-Timer (VAD ri ken). Vadriken is one of the most powerful spellcasters in all of Omeria, borrowing his spellcasting abilities from three patrons. He is presumed dead.

Gazetteer: Greatwell

Greatwell stands at the edge of The Wharf Of Berthiergus on the Wound. Boasting a population just over 2,000, Greatwell is one of the few major Pressonian towns in the Summer Land to survive the War of the Burning Plains in 965 AT. Like most Pressonian settlements in the Summer Land, Greatwell is managed by a Mydon Prince—Prince Orsilochus “Lochi” Castellanos Tomydon. However, Prince Castellanos is rarely seen in Greatwell, preferring to live a lavish lifestyle in Presson’s Enclave proper. Enes Castellanos Tomydon, the town’s steward, presides in Prince Castellanos’ absence. Enes is Lochi’s cousin.

As a major settlement along the north shores of the Wound, connecting Central Omerian towns and cities to the Summer Land and ultimately northern Omeria, Greatwell’s greatest strength is trade. Nearly half of the buildings in the city are dedicated to imports and exports. Warehouses clutter the bustling docks district. Merchant houses from all over Omeria stake their claim in the Commerce Ward.

Naturally, Greatwell is rife with corruption. But as the old saying goes, “the only incorruptible Pressonian is a dead Pressonian.” And with corruption comes crime. Despite the stern Epochal laws that govern the settlements of the Summer Land, major criminal organizations such as the Black Rose Clan have turned Greatwell into a formidable profit center fed by black market trade.

Currently, Greatwell employs 20 full-time **guards** led by four **veteran** commanders. It can call forth a militia of 100 able-bodied **commoners** if need be. The trade houses have their own mercenary groups to protect their interests, but will lend a hand to Greatwell’s defense should the need arise. Nearly all of the guards are on the payroll of one or more of the

criminal organizations in town.

Overall, Greatwell is a peaceful community. Of course, that’s not to say it isn’t without its troubles. Greatwell suffers from “the dreg effect” that plagues all of the Summer Land. Strange creatures, leftovers of the countless wars that have wracked the Enclave since its inception, stalk the forests and foothills on all fronts. And with the monster-filled ruins of great charred cities pocking the landscape, there are dangers abound.

Greatwell makes a great starting point for many Omerian-based campaigns as it’s surrounded by mystery, intrigue, danger, and adventure on all sides.

Locations in Town

Oddly, Greatwell does not possess an outer wall. Its greatest defenses are the harbor at its western edge and the Slope, the massive depression upon which the town was built. At the top of the hill sits Castellanos Palace, the unoccupied fortress of the absent Prince. By law, only the Prince, the Prince’s family, and his chosen servants can live within the Palace walls. Therefore, the Steward-Prince Enes Castellanos lives just west of the fortress in his own manor home.

Excluding Castellanos Palace, Greatwell is divided into five distinct districts, none of which have terribly original names. The districts are the Docks, Market Ward, Commerce Ward, Noble Ward, and the Common District. At the southwestern edge of the Common District is a large park named Mydon Greens. Crop and livestock fields surround the town to the north, east, and south.

The Docks

The largest ward in Greatwell is its bustling docks that overlook the wine-colored waters of the Wound. There’s a popular Omerian idiom: “I couldn’t even find him/her/it in Greatwell docks.” Basically, if it’s not in Greatwell Docks, it’s probably lost

as it can feel, at times, that half of Central Omeria’s population can be found in the Docks.

1 - The Worthless Lady. Dirty, loud, and always crowded, the Worthless Lady is Greatwell’s most popular drinking establishment. It sits at the edge of the water, its front stained by salt. The Lady has no rear entrance as the eastern end of the tavern has its back against the Slope. Amas Lasakakos (N female Pressonian human **commoner**) owns the Lady and has since her father died six years ago. She’s often as drunk as her patrons, so don’t expect great service from her. Fortunately, her six daughters do a good job of keeping everyone drunk and fed.

Commerce Ward

The three great mercantile houses of Presson’s Enclave have trade fortresses in Greatwell’s Commerce Ward. House Barbakis is the largest trade house, as it is headquartered in Greatwell. Representing the interests of the Summer Land with Barbakis are Houses Lorrider and Manelli. Alongside the three local mercantile houses, four more important foreign mercantile guilds own trade houses in Greatwell: House Shaw of Knotside, Ugash-so-Loqari of Ugash, House Ziga of Arruqueta, and the Secrets of the Righteous from Odonburg. Currently, relations are peaceful among the seven trade houses—just as Barbakis likes it.

2 - House Barbarkis. The Barbarkis clan predates even Greatwell, although, it didn’t hit its stride until most of the larger Pressonian mercantile houses were destroyed during the War of the Burning Plains. Fleeing Presson’s Enclave proper, Barbarkis reestablished itself in Greatwell during the Ashen Summer of 966 AT. With what little funds they had, they built the Temple of Ilwyn and fought to encourage trade back to the Summer Land. Their efforts paid off, and



now they are the largest trade house in all of the Summer Land, rivaling even Old Manelli, the only other house that survived the dragons.

House Barbarkis is led by Keti Barbarkis (N female Pressonian human veteran), a square-faced woman known for wielding a huge mace she's named Anna. A veteran of the Attack of Regrets and the bloody Battle of

the Labyrinth, Keti prefers peace to war now. Regardless, she makes it clear that any assault on Barbarkis will be met with a swift and violent response.

Market Ward

Stuck between the Docks and the roads leading out of town, Market Ward is likely the second most populated district in Greatwell. Vendors

from all over Omeria set up shop and live in Greatwell Market Ward, giving the oh-so-human town some much-needed diversity. Any mundane items locals and travelers seek can be found at a stall in Market Ward. Likewise, Market Ward has its fair share of magic dealers. Dinzer entrepreneurs from the Secrets of the Righteous mercantile house offer

common magic items. Some say they will even sell emerald Odonburgite if the price is right.

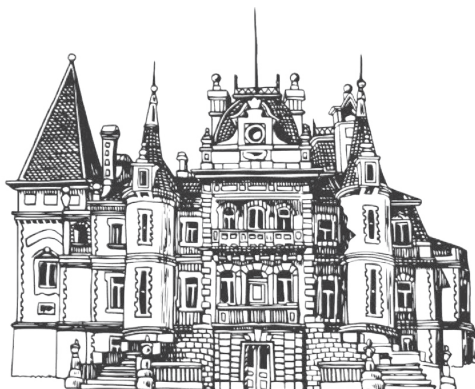
3 - Temple of General Ilwyn. At the easternmost end of the Noble Ward is the Temple of Ilwyn, the God of Summer. Filip Philsen (NG male Pressonian human **priest**) maintains the temple.

Although the temple is “open to all”, most Greatwell Pressonians believe it is “owned” by the Barbarkises. Something of a sweet relief from the times before the Burning, church service is no longer required by Epochal law. However, most Pressonians attend sunset prayer within the temple (the rich) or in the courtyard in front of the temple (the poor). Many of the Greatwell Pressonian young refuse service, having adopted the atheist attitudes common throughout Central Omeria.

Nobles Ward

The wealthy of Greatwell live in the neighborhood to the west of Palace Castellanos in Nobles Ward. Noble Ward sits atop a flat, wide cairn of white rock overgrown with lily-vine. Although no wall surrounds the ward, the steep climb of the cairn makes entry difficult.

4 - Pressonian Museum of History. The huge museum at the front of the noble’s ward is heavily featured in *Hand of the Eight Chapter 7: The Summer Land* in this issue. See page 10 for further details.



Common District

The southern half of Greatwell holds the middle and lower class homes of the Greatwell Pressonians. Roughly half of Greatwell’s population lives within this district. Generally, the closer to the docks the home, the poorer the conditions. Unlike the Noble Ward, the Common Ward is somewhat self-sufficient. It has its own shops, a couple of inns, and even a small volunteer militia force (**commoners**). Sargeant Gao-shi (LG male dragonborn **knight**) oversees the Common District militia. Often light on resources—and respect from his peers within the town guard—Gao-shi relies on the help of adventurers when there’s trouble.

Town Denizens

Nearly 85% of Greatwell’s population are human, with two-thirds of those being of Pressonian descent and the remainder a mix of Ditimayan and Knotsider. A fair number of Qolan refugees call Greatwell their home; they are the ones who brought the Black Rose Clan to Greatwell. The remainder of the population is divided among the other humanoid races of Omeria. Forest gnomes are particularly prevalent, as are Anorian elves.

Steward-Prince Esen Castellanos Mydon

Cousin to Prince Orsilochus Castellanos Tomydon, Enes Mydon (LE male Pressonian human **noble**) watches over the town for the majority of the year. Whereas Lochi Castellanos sees Greatwell as a cesspit and beneath his talents, Esen desires nothing more to rule as its governor—and does just that, tyrannically, one might add. Epochal law prevents anyone other than the Mydon Princes from passing judgment on scofflaws. As such, Esen interprets the law however he sees fit, using the corrupt guards to do his bidding. Often, criminals never see a jail cell, beaten to a pulp or riddled with arrows before they

arrive. Dangerously intelligent and an avid scholar of the Testaments of Otar, Esen is able to twist obscure laws to his purpose. Greatwell Pressonians who lack the power to stand against the tyrant turn towards the Merchant Houses for protection. Enes, wise enough to steer clear of the whims of the Merchant Lords and Ladies, will step away from those who claim association with the merchant houses, especially Barbakis, Lorrider, and Manelli. “Enes insurance”—really, a form of extortion when you get down to it—usually costs a percentage of one’s monthly earnings. Even the most straight-laced houses enjoy reminding “uninsured” Greatwell Pressonians the value of such an arrangement.



Zoe of the White Pillar

The Otarian Monk Zoe (NE male Pressonian human **cult fanatic**) is supposed to be the moral center of Greatwell. Of course, Zoe is anything but. Not only does the man ooze with wickedness outwardly, he maintains a secret, depraved lifestyle as well. “Only a General may judge a man of the White Pillar” states the infamous, oft-contested, and frequently misinterpreted Epochal law. And while the majority of the Monks of the White Pillar guide themselves with their own moral compass, Zoe uses the law

to insulate his evil. While Esen Castellanos may be a tyrant, he is nothing compared to Zoe. And at times, Esen has had to protect Greatwell from Zoe's darkest desires. Fortunately, Zoe lives within the Palace and rarely exits.

Sargeant Gao-shi

Gao-shi, the leader of the Common District militia, is disliked by most Greatwell Pressonians for two reasons. First, he is a dragonborn. And although Epochal law dictates that "no man is his father", suspicions pervade regardless. Second, Gao-shi is incorruptible. His bond is to the people of Greatwell, no matter how much they despise him. For this, he struggles with resources and assistance when needed. Fortunately, Gao-shi is scrappy and recognizes the value in hiring adventurers.

Factions and Their Representatives

Greatwell is the commerce center of the Summer Land. And while it doesn't boast the population that Presson's Enclave proper does, it's growing fast. As such, many factions from all over Omeria hope to exert influence over the port-town.

House Barbarkis

The century-old House Barbakis maintains a tight grip over the financial stability of Greatwell. It's believed that for every silver that flows through the city, two copper pieces fall into Barbakis hands. Barbakis wants nothing more than to increase the overall influence and power of Greatwell. Keti Barbakis has aspirations of separating Greatwell from the Summer Land and Presson's Enclave, crowning herself the first queen of a new nation. Of course, she keeps these desires to herself.

Secrets of the Righteous

Odonburg is the largest and most powerful nation in all of Omeria. The Secrets of the Righteous—something

White Bloom

The white bloom is a flower that grows along the south-facing foothills of the Basilisk's Spine Mountains, just north of The Wound. When crushed and smoked, the pedals act as a potent depressant. A creature that smokes whitebloom must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is poisoned for 1 hour. At the end of the hour, the creature must make another Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 10 + 1 for the number of times it has smoked the substance within the last 24 hours. On a failed saving throw, the creature contracts the disease, white bloom addiction.

A creature infected by white bloom addiction must smoke white bloom once every 24 hours. If the creature fails to smoke white bloom in a 24 hour period, it contracts a random form of long-term madness (see the *DMG*) which manifests itself immediately and lasts for the duration (1d10 x 10 hours). If the madness is allowed to run its full course, the creature suffers another bout of long-term madness (roll again on the table) that lasts for the normal duration. The madness symptoms continue until the disease ends or the creature smokes white bloom.

of an ironic name—represent the interests of Odonburg and its wizards. In Greatwell, Superior Ulune (LG female Dinzer human **mage**) reports on the ebb-and-flow of commerce, power, and other happenings, especially those of a magical nature. The secondary function of the Righteous is to introduce Dinzer technology to the Greatwell Pressonians. Pressonians overall are a stubborn and conservative bunch, so the going has been slow.

The White Pillar

The religious center of Presson's Enclave and the majority of the Summer Land, the Otari Monks of the White Pillar teach the ways of the Four

Generals, the oldest religion in all of Omeria. The primary function of the White Pillar is to ensure the practice of the Epochal religion and the teachings within the Testaments of Otari. White Pillar monks also act as arbiters, although, final judgments are always passed by Mydon Princes.

Although Zoe is the official head of the White Pillar in Greatwell, his subordinate, Sister Lydia (N female Pressonian human **cultist**) acts as surrogate. Like the Steward-Prince, she keeps Zoe's darkest proclivities out of the public eye.

Black Rose Clan

Originally from the ruined town of Qola, Black Rose Clan rose to prominence in Greatwell shortly after the War of the Burning Plains. An impressive criminal organization, Black Rose is careful to never extend itself beyond its means. The clan deals extensively in black market goods, particularly white bloom. White bloom, a powerful depressant when smoked, is banned in the Tadju Confederacy across the Wound. Using Ugash-do-Loqari freighters, the Black Rose smuggles the goods to the south where they sell them to their contacts within the Crystal Toad, a Pressonian criminal organization headquartered in Castlegrasp.

The current head of the Black Rose clan is the town's tanner, Hamood al-Omar (NE male Ditimayan human **bandit captain**), the eponymous Black Rose.

The Tip of the Spear

Arruqueta, the second-largest city in Central Omeria, invests heavily in adventuring and tomb-plundering. In fact, it has its own government-sponsored adventuring guild titled the Tip of the Spear. In many ways, the Tip is less a guild than it is a criminal organization. Those who join the Tip are rarely allowed to leave. And any who try to run off with a discovered stash are usually found dead within a year, often at the hands of the guild's

trusted assassin, the X.

Euklides Olabarri (LN male Diti-mayan human **knight**) manages the Tip in Greatwell, a job he now he regrets taking. Because so many of the Tip's members are difficult to control, Olabarri spends most of his time padding the hands of the town guards and others to look the other way. Still, Olabarri's branch is by far the most profitable of all of the Tip's many branches.

Greatwell's Curse

Unknown to nearly all of the citizens of Greatwell, the evil that affects the region is caused by an ancient artifact, the *throne of greed*. Located in the basement of the Pressonian History Museum, the throne creates the following regional effects.

- Within 5 miles, all coins seem to have a soft glow to them, regardless of how old, scratched, or dirty.
- If a humanoid spends at least 1 hour within 1 mile of the Pressonian History Museum, that creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or descend into madness. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw can't be affected by this regional effect again for 24 hours. If a creature goes mad from the lingering evil of the *throne of greed* it gains the following character flaw that lasts until cured: "The only thing that matters in life is the accumulation of material objects and I will do whatever I can do ensure I get all that is owed to me."

Giants in Omeria

If you are playing in Omeria, then you may want to learn a little more about giants and their place in the world of Casar.

Giants are rare. Since the Hand of the Third, when the danaavrakts killed nearly 90% of all living giants, most giants have gone into hiding. Slow to reproduce, they've yet to regain their numbers prior to 625 AT.

Time in Omeria

Most Omerians use the Pressonian Common Calendar to track the passage of time. A year on Casar is 336 days which is divided into twelve months of twenty-eight days each. The months are further divided into four weeks of seven days each.

The current year in which this adventure takes place is 1045 AT. AT denotes the Age of Triumphs, the period of time following the siege of Imfe Mythse Anore (since renamed to Knotside) and the fall of the demon god Vapul at the hands of the Paladins Three.

The Months of the Year

The months of the years are grouped by the seasons. A new year begins on Asnas, the first day of spring.

Season	Month	Name	Pronunciation
Spring	1	Asnas	OZ noz
Spring	2	Suen	SOO en
Spring	3	Grimera	GRY meer eh
Summer	4	Ilwyn	ILL win
Summer	5	Egyn	EE gin
Summer	6	Naeyer	NAY yair
Fall	7	Thinir	THE neer
Fall	8	Dektrix	DEK trix
Fall	9	Nehrur	NEH roor
Winter	10	Tuteus	TOO tay us
Winter	11	Bosva	BOZ va
Winter	12	Tholona	THO lo na

Giants no longer trust humanoids. Overall, the majority of the surviving giants blame the humanoids for their near extinction at the hands of the Obsidian Plain fiends (the exception being hill giants, as explained below). When conflicts arise between giants and humanoids, rarely do the giants offer the benefit of the doubt.

Hill giants are the most common of giant kin. Because of their small-

The Days of the Week

The days of the week are as follows:

Day	Name	Nickname
1	Fant	Work Day*
2	Child	Reflection Day
3	Yung	Determination Day
4	Mahn	Celebration Day
5	Eldur	Remembrance Day
6	Murn	Discovery Day
7	Suruk	Rest Day

- Most Omerians work Fant through Murn and rest on Suruk.

er size compared to the other giant subspecies, hill giants frequently work and mingle with humanoids, particularly the Vaskilish Anorian elves.

Stone giants are thought to be extinct. After 650 AT, the stone giants vanished into the Low and haven't been seen since. However, the Von Dorals claim that they are locked in perpetual war with the inak. Ω

APPENDIX B

NEW PLAYER OPTIONS

BY DAVE HAMRICK

New Dwarven Subrace: Ong-Ong

Ong-ons are short, furry humanoid with large, flat heads that live in the Wallingmiotta. Their skin is dense and coarse like tree bark. Once thought to be an offshoot of the forest gnomes that inhabit the wood, anthropologists later discovered that the ong-ons actually have more in common with dwarves than the other humanoid races of Omeria. Ongongs may even be related to the griffon-riding dwarves of Khuzuk.

Forestfolk. A common name for ong-ons is forestfolk. The dwarves seem to have a natural affinity with nature and tend towards the druidic arts. In fact, ong-ons make up some of the most powerful druid circles in all Omeria.

Tree Conversion. When an ong-ong reaches a certain age, it stops moving altogether. Roots grow from its feet and branches start to sprout from its head and body. In time, the ong-ong becomes a tree. Still sentient (although slow).

Ong-ong Gatherings. Ong-ons rarely live together. Even young ong-ons have to fend for themselves, using their innate spellcasting abilities to defend themselves from an early age. However, ong-ons come together twice a year—during the summer and winter solstices—to share news and stories. For many ong-ons, it is when they meet their mates.

Ong-ons as Player Characters

When creating a dwarf character, you can choose ong-ong as your subrace. Ong-ons are tough, wise dwarves that inhabit the forests of Northern Omeria. They are slow and exceptionally stubborn examples of their race.

Ong-ons who adventure do so out of an interest in the greater world.

Ong-ong Traits

Your ong-ong dwarf has the following racial traits in common with all ong-ong dwarves.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Natural Armor. You have thick, bark-like skin. When you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 13 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use your natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.

Ong-ong Magic. You know the *druidcraft* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *entangle* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. When you reach 5th level, you can cast the *locate animals and plants* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

New Human Subrace: Rasgax

From the highlands of Northern Omeria come the Rasgax tribes. A nomadic people, the Rasgax focus their efforts on combating the belligerent races of the north, including orcs,



frost giants, and c'nuim iteah. Rasgax have fair to reddish skin and blonde or red hair. Their eyes are often deep scarlet or sometimes even bright red. Rare among humans, they have the ability to see in the dark.

Most Rasgax cover their bodies and faces in ritualistic tattoos. They often wear animal hides with cloth kilts or flowing capes. Some fight nude and smear their body in mud and animal feces as a deterrent, lending further credence to the legend that they are part animal.

Rasgax Traits

Your Rasgax character has a variety of natural abilities that all Rasgax share.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 2.

Age. Rasgax have the same lifespans as humans.

Alignment. As nomads, raiders, and outcasts, the Rasgax are typically chaotic.

Size. Rasgax are the same size as humans, although, tend to be a little stockier on average.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 20 feet.

Darkvision. Rasgax have developed the ability to see in the dark. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Rasgax Vision. You have advantage on saving throws against being blinded.

Hunter's Lore. You gain proficiency in Perception. Additionally, you gain proficiency with one of the following skills of your choice: Animal Handling, Nature, Stealth, and Survival.

Rasgax Combat Training. You have proficiency with the battleaxe, maul, spear, and shortbow.

Long Range Runner. You have advantage on Constitution saving

Dhadrok of Ulfar

The first Howler, Dhadrok of Ulfar, was feared by the brutal folk of Northern Omeria, in particular those of the stretch. Dhadrok's deeds were immortalized by the song, North Father, a proud and popular melody sung at drum circles across the Stretch.

throws made to perform a forced march for each hour past 8 hours.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common plus one other language of your choice. The Rasgax are accustomed to working with other tribes of creatures, especially orcs, and often learn their languages in the process.

Path of the Rasgax Howler

Perhaps the greatest warriors in all of Northern Omeria (if not all of Omeria), the Howlers are dangerous barbarians whose mortifying howls can be heard across the plains on which they ride.

In addition to their howls, Rasgax Howlers are known for their exceptional riding skills. Whether mounted on warhorses, go krorols, or even giant vultures, a mounted Rasgax Howler is a force unto itself.

At 3rd level, a barbarian gains the Primal Path feature. The following Path of the Rasgax Howler option is available to a barbarian, in addition to those normally offered.

Restricted. Only Rasgax can choose this Barbarian Primal Path.

Rasgax Howler Features.

Barbarian Level	Feature
3rd	Howl, Saddleborn
6th	Seasoned Explorer
10th	Rasgax Pack Lord
14th	Dhadrok's Howl

Howl

Starting when you choose this path at 3rd level, you can emit ear-split-

ting howls capable of stopping your enemies in their tracks. While raging, any creature who targets you with an attack or a harmful spell that can hear you must first make a Wisdom saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier. Creatures immune to being frightened automatically succeed on their saving throw. On a failed save, the creature has disadvantage on its attack rolls against you until your rage ends. If the creature succeeds on its initial saving throw, it is immune to this trait until your rage ends. This effect doesn't protect you from area effects, such as the explosion of a fireball.

Saddleborn

You gain proficiency in Animal Handling. In addition, mounting and dismounting a creature costs you only 5 feet of movement, rather than half your speed.

Seasoned Explorer

At 6th level, while traveling for an hour or more outdoors, difficult terrain doesn't slow your group's travel and you can't become lost except by magical means.

Rasgax Pack Lord

Beginning at 10th level, your howl protects your comrades from harm, as well. Any number of creatures of your choice within 10 feet of you gain the benefits of your Howl while you are raging.

Dhadrok's Howl

At 14th level, while you are howling and a creature makes a melee weapon attack against you and misses, you can use your reaction to force that creature to make another Wisdom saving throw against your Howl DC. On a failed save, the creature takes psychic damage equal to half your Barbarian level and is frightened of you until your rage ends or it can no longer hear you. Ω

APPENDIX C

OMERIAN GRIMOIRE

BY DAVE HAMRICK AND GRIFFONS SADDLEBAG

ART BY GRIFFONS SADDLEBAG

Tether Magical Items

Tether Tearer

Weapon (any axe), uncommon

This silver axe can temporarily bind a creature to its corporeal form. This axe deals an extra 1d6 force damage to any creature it hits that has the “incorporeal movement” trait. When it does, that creature can’t benefit from its “incorporeal movement” trait again until the end of its next turn.



Tome of Dreams

Wondrous item, uncommon

This beautifully embossed book is full of gripping short stories. You can read a story from the book over the course of 10 minutes. The underlying nature of each story is unclear, leaving your subconscious mind to slowly process and unpack its deeper meanings over the course of your next long rest. The next time you finish a long rest after reading a story from the book, roll a d20. On a roll of 10 or lower, you take 2d4 psychic damage as your mind is plagued with intense terrors from the story you read. On a roll of 11 or higher, you gain 2d4 temporary hit points as your mind is filled with joy and courage instead. If you start a story but don’t finish reading it, nothing happens the next time you finish a long rest.



Tote of Tricky Treat Sugar-bombs

Wondrous item, common

This canvas bag holds 5d8 + 10 clove and pumpkin candies inside. A small illusory face appears over the sewn-on pumpkin at night. Each candy has a minor magical effect that lasts for 1 minute unless otherwise specified.

d20	Effect
1	The candy seemed to have spoiled, forcing you to succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or spend your action on your next turn retching and reeling.
2	Your face appears to melt: revealing the skull beneath it. The effect is harmless and illusory.
3	Any food you eat or water you drink taste like ash and blood, respectively.
4	Other creatures’ eyes appear to be hollowed out and blackened.
5	Your ears turn a different, vibrant color at that start of each of your turns.
6	Your hair falls out and regrows over the next minute
7	Your laughter becomes maniacal, and you have trouble stopping once you’ve started.
8	Your pupils resemble a snake’s.
9	You hear a fly near your ear, but you can neither see it nor swat it away.
10	Your skin turns orange, and light spills forth from your eyes and mouth, casting bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for another 10 feet.
11	Confetti bursts from the top of your head, and small children can be heard laughing.
12	You sprout tiny, flightless bat wings
13	You know the location of the nearest pumpkin within 1 mile.
14	Nearby crows and ravens land on your shoulders or outstretched arm.
15	A friendly, floppy wizard hat appears on your head. After 1 minute, it disappears in a cloud of stars.
16	Any alcohol in your stomach or that you drink becomes nonalcoholic.
17	Your voice becomes smooth and golden, allowing you to add your proficiency bonus to Charisma (performance) checks to sing. If you are already proficient with this skill, you add double your proficiency bonus instead.
18	Any food you eat or water you drink tastes delicious and reminds you of your favorite past times.
19	You gain darkvision out to a range of 30 feet. If you already have darkvision, its range is increased by 30 feet.
20	You can magically sense if someone is possessed, and you can see creatures that are invisible.

Some effects are pleasant, whereas some are mischievous. You can eat a candy as an action. When you do, roll on the table on the previous page to determine the candy's effect.



The Magic of Omeria

Like many Fifth Edition worlds, magic is a vital and important part of the world of Casar and Omeria. This article explains the different types of spellcasters and magic in Casar and how they relate to your Omerian Throne campaign. For more information on Omeria, its people, and the adventures set within, be sure to check out DMDave's Patreon.

Magic and Omerian Society

Overall, magic is an accepted part of Omerian society. In nations such as Odonburg, nearly every citizen knows magic of one sort or another as it is very much a part of their every day lives. Central Omeria and large parts of northern Omeria accept magic, although only the most wealthy and learned citizens have access to it. Even then, it may be heavily restricted by laws and customs. Other parts of Omeria such as Gar Wabrizz and Rasgax see magic as dangerous and uncontrollable, and outright ban the use of it.

Even though magic is in popular use, spellcasters capable of spells beyond the 5th level are exceptional rare to almost non-existent.

The Eight Paths of Magic

The majority of magic used in Omeria is divided into eight distinct groups or "schools" of magic. Those paths are:

- Abjuration: The Summer Techniques
- Conjunction: The Fiendish Art
- Divination: The Difficult Discipline
- Enchantment: The Mind Thief
- Evocation: The Way of the Dinzers
- Illusion: The Magic of Immortals
- Necromancy: The Balance
- Transmutation: The Change

Wizards who specialize in these schools are able to create powerful, dangerous spells that maximize the potential of each path. As such, wizardry along with sorcery and some borrower pursuits is often seen as "unnatural magic" as they leave irreversible effects on the world of Casar.

Abjuration: The Summer Techniques

Abjuration is the oldest form of magic in Omeria and ultimately the art of the Pressonian Abjurers, their Summer Knights, and the Monks of the White Pillar. The elves of the Fairknot region taught the first humans the ways of abjuration.

Many Abjurers have sworn off the "higher arts", ceasing study beyond the 5th level. Only the most select abjurers access these powers and even then the use of those spells are limited.

Magical Demographics by Casting Capability (per 1000 Citizens).

Spell Level	Odonburg	Fairknot Region	Summer Land	Weysevain Coast	Contested Lands	Ditimaya /Tadju
Can-trips	963	578	532	371	303	214
1st	804	169	160	109	64	46
2nd	155	30	25	10	7	3
3rd	72	11	9	2	1	1
4th	3	1	1	—	—	—
5th	1	—	—	—	—	—

Throughout all of Omeria, spellcasters capable of 6th level spells are approximately only 1 in 100,000; 7th level are only 1 in 250,000; 8th level are 1 in 1,000,000; and 9th level is only 1 in 5,000,000.

Epochal Law and Magic

A large part of Epochal Law, the religious tenets of the Monks of the White Pillar and ultimately The Summer Land, is the limitations the Pressonians place on magic. Although there are literally thousands of laws, these are the basics:

- All spellcasters must register with the White Pillar with the exception of low-level Elementalists and members of the Secrets of the Righteous.
- Conjunction, Enchantment, and Transmutation spells are strictly forbidden. Illusions and Necromancy are illegal except in a few cases.
- Warlocks are strictly forbidden regardless of the spells they use.
- A spellcaster may not cast a spell beyond the 5th level.
- It is illegal to use harmful spells against humanoids. Note that the use of harmful spells used against Pressonian citizens is a crime punishable by death.
- Curses of any type are illegal.
- Spells that animate or raise the dead in unnatural ways are forbidden.
- Spells that detect thoughts are forbidden.
- All major magic items are forbidden, and magic items listed in the Tome of Artifacts must be turned into the White Pillar (all rare or higher artifacts).
- Two drakebloods of 1/4th draconic blood or greater may not procreate.
- All magipriests may only follow the tenets of the Four Generals, as a whole or individually.

Divination: The Difficult Discipline

Of the eight paths, divination is the most difficult mostly thanks to the wear and tear it places on the casters' minds and bodies. While the lower level spells such as *detect magic* and *identify* are not incredibly taxing, higher-level abilities such as *divination* and *foresight* often drive their users insane. Only spellcasters with powerful minds should ever use the path of divination and even then it can pose a threat to even the greatest diviners.

Evocation: The Way of the Dinzers

While all eight paths are in use within Omeria, evocation is by far the most common

The Dinzers. Evocation is the magic of the Dinzers, the mighty spell-casting tribe of the colossal nation of Odonburg. Through the use of the prevalent emerald Odonburgite found in their lands, they have used evocation to rapidly expand their reach and technology.

The Invokers. Arruquetta also utilizes evocation, but in a different manner. Whereas evocation typically involves outward projection and blunt force, the Arruquettans have developed fighting styles that use internal evocation (or invocation, as it were). This discipline gives Arruquettan warriors super-humanoid-like abilities. A single Arruquettan Spearwielder is capable of cutting down an entire unit of warriors by themselves.

Rumor has it that the Von Doral dwarves also have similar invocation qualities. If they do, they keep it a well-guarded secret from their fellow humanoids on the Weysevain Coast.

Evocation and Necromancy. Ultimately, evocation is the magic of creation and life. Meanwhile, necromancy is the magic of destruction and death (although, Xenemese necromancers would argue to the contrary). The two paths frequently clash.

Illusion: The Magic of Immortals

Illusion magic, while common in Omeria, often falls into gray areas as far as anti-magic laws are concerned. Overall, spells that disguise one's appearance or makes divination magic difficult are illegal throughout most of Omeria. However, illusions are sometimes thought of as non-harmful forms of abjuration magic and should be a right guaranteed to most common folks.

Some of the most powerful spellcasters in Omeria are illusionists and are dreadfully difficult to catch. Many of Omeria's illusionists build layers upon layers of permanent illusions that keep themselves safe from harm. And thanks to (what Pexian scholars consider) the greatest illusion spell ever, *simulacrum*, many great illusionists live seemingly forever. Supposedly, Omeria's greatest illusionist, Uncle Skeleton, was once a simulacrum illusion himself created sometime during the Age of the Elves. Uncle Skeleton is the progenitor of The Great Contingency of the Simulacrums and has used the discipline to make itself effectively immortal.

The canids of Smoen Brana are also particularly clever illusionists, using their magic to defend their island from the effects of the Contest Land's endless civil disputes.

Conjuration, Enchantment, and Transmutation: The Three Forbidden Paths

There are three universally forbidden paths of magic: Conjuration, Enchantment, and Transmutation. Because of the near continent-wide ban on these paths, they are also the rarest.

Ironically, two of the schools—conjuration and transmutation—are responsible for the majority of the humanoid races of Omeria as well as many of the interesting and unique creatures that inhabit the world.

Bards of Omeria. Bards are a special case, as their magic tends to be used for enchantment. As such,

Rules Variant:

The Strain of Divination

Any time a spell caster casts a divination spell of 1st level or higher, it must make an Intelligence saving throw with a DC of 10 + the spell level. On a failed saving throw, the spell caster takes 1 psychic damage per level of the spell cast and gains one random form of long-term madness (as described in chapter 8 of the *DMG*).

Rules Variant:

Divination Discipline

At 3rd level, a diviner can choose two divination spells that they have learned. Whenever they cast this spell, they automatically succeed on the saving throw against divination strain. The diviner can choose one additional divination spell to protect themselves from at 5th, 7th, and 9th level. When the diviner chooses a new divination spell using this optional trait, it can also replace one divination spell that it already knows with another divination spell. The diviner cannot choose spells of 6th level or higher using this feature.

The Great Contingency of the Simulacrums

All simulacrums know that their power is fleeting. As such, they always reserve a single spell in their arsenal which cannot be used until it is absolutely necessary: their own casting of *simulacrum*. With this spell, they prolong their "lives" creating more and more of themselves or others who would serve them. If they are unable to duplicate their originator because it is dead or unavailable, they instead work together to capture new casters capable of great power, making simulacrums of those creatures instead through the use of their own *simulacrum* spells or *simulacrum* spell scrolls. In turn, the new simulacrums follow the orders of the old simulacrums.

Rules Variant: Evocation and Necromancy Counterspelling

Starting at 3rd level, a necromancer can use its reaction to spend one spell slot of 1st level or higher in order to deflect spells when they are hit by a spell that deals acid, cold, fire, thunder, or lightning damage. When they do so, the damage that the necromancer takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + its Intelligence modifier (to a minimum of 0). The damage this feature reduces increases by 1d10 for each spell slot higher than 1st to a maximum of 5d10.

Similarly, an evoker of 3rd-level or higher can use its reaction to spend one spell slot in order to deflect spells when they are hit by a spell that deals necrotic damage. When they do so, the damage that the evoker takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + its Intelligence modifier (to a minimum of 0). The damage this feature reduces increases by 1d10 for each spell slot higher than 1st to a maximum of 5d10.

Rules Variant: Forbidden Arcane Traditions

Because the Conjuration, Enchantment, and Transmutation schools are so rare and powerful in Omeria, they should not be readily available in your Omeria campaign without a good explanation of why. Even then, it's rare that good creatures every specialize in these disciplines, and those that use such magics will likely find themselves at odds with the laws of the land, particularly in strict locations like The Summer Land.

bards that exhibit magic are often seen as criminals and outcasts. For many bards, a large part of their job is about "keeping the balance" wherein they must use their ability, but only ever for good, and only far away from the prying eyes of those who see Enchantment magic as deadly.

The Hand of the Eight Prophecy

The Eight Paths, regardless of their function, are considered "unnatural magics" by the Elementalists of Omeria. Diviners from all walks predict that it is the use of these magics that will eventually lead to the destruction of Omeria and Casar.

Bloodline Magic

Those rare few who are born with innate magic ability are known as sorcerers. The most common types of sorcerers in Omeria are the Aegreyan drakebloods whose draconic heritage offers them potent spellcasting ability. Many of the creatures conjured by the danaavrakt are also known to have innate spellcasting abilities. There are also many powerful sorcerers who are able to tap directly into the energy of Omerian power stones. Finally, creatures from the other planes of existence such as The Other and The Cruel have demonstrated natural magic ability.

Borrowers

Considered "impure" magic by those who follow one or more of the Eight Paths, borrowers are those who draw magic from legendary creatures such as aberrations, celestials, fiends, and fey. There are two primary types of borrowers: clerics and warlocks.

Clerics

Clerics (also called magipriests) are only common in certain parts of Omeria, usually within cults or older religions. The most well-known magipriests are the Pressonian Abjurers who draw on the power of the infamous Four Generals. The Monks of the White Pillar also derive their innate power (sometimes referred to as "ki") from The Four Generals. Pexian scholars would argue that clerics are "just warlocks with more rules."

Warlocks

Warlocks are a little laxer in their practice of "borrowing" than clerics,

Variant Rule: The Call of Casar

As a druid's power expands, the weight of its responsibilities and the Call of Casar starts to affect its mind. When a druid reaches the 5th level, it gains a form of indefinite madness (as described in Chapter 8 of the *DMG*). The madness is mostly incurable so long as the druid continues to draw its power from nature. At the end of a long rest, the druid can make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC of 5 + their level in the class to suppress the madness for 1d10 hours. A *greater restoration* spell suppresses the effects of the madness for 1d10 x 10 hours. Only a wish spell permanently removes the indefinite madness, but once the druid reaches the next level in the druid class, the indefinite madness returns until another wish spell is cast upon the druid.

instead of seeing themselves as direct servants to higher powers. Unlike the clerics who rarely see their chosen deities, warlocks have close relationships with their patrons. As such, warlocks tend to be a little sociopathic than most Omerians. Omerian warlocks, on average, usually have the shortest lifespans of all magic users as they are often the target of vengeful victims, paranoid conservatives, and sometimes, even their own patrons and fellow warlocks.

Druidism

A new, unusual form of magic has appeared in Omeria called druidism. Druids, like the elementalists, pull their power straight from Casar itself, typically from nature and the fey creatures that inhabit the land. Unfortunately, the strain of druidism is incredible as any who open their minds to the land are overpowered by the pain of Casar itself. Some druids, sometimes called "rangers" only pull a small portion of the power granted by

Casar to perform magic. Rangers are protected from the strain of druidism. What few druids that have appeared in Omeria are often beings hellbent on the destruction of humanoidkind and those who walk the Eight Paths in particular.

Elemental Magic

In the beginning, Casar was created by elemental energies from the four Elemental Plains colliding in the pocket-dimension that would eventually be referred to as the Real or the Material. Much of Casar is still being shaped by those energies. As such, Elemental Magic is a potent and common form of spell casting, popularized by those who turn from the Eight Paths or refuse to borrow. Although it never reaches the heights of evocation which over channels elemental energy, it does not harm the world.

Anti-Magic

Some regions of Omeria are aggressively anti-magic. Gar Wabrizz, the goblinoid nation, not only bans all magic but frequently kills magic users on sight thanks to their terrifying insect-like beasts, the dokh nuzeghs (“no magic dogs”). Because magic is rare in Gar Wabrizz, the goblins are free to explore the surface and live aboveground. In the few centuries they’ve been free of the Below, they have remained mostly peaceful towards the other humanoid races, the only exceptions being the elves of Olyothy, the centaurs of the Wallingmiotta, and the dwarves of Von Doral. The latter they pushed from their homes with the help of the dokh nuzegh.

The Rasgax of the Northern Stretch in northern Omeria are also not fond of magic, particularly the Eight Paths, but have been known to dabble in Elementalism as well as Druidism.

Cyclopes from the island of Yazur possess highly sought-after anti-magic properties. The Pressonians and

Dinzers work together to protect the cyclopes, however, hundreds are killed every year by black market poachers.

Jaduee-Patr: The Eight Elements of Creation

When Casar was formed, the rogue elemental energies of the Cosmos crashed together and became trapped in a pocket dimension known as the Void. From the void, the unstable energies erupted forming Casar, mortal life, and the Loop.

In time, the energies destroyed each other until only eight forces remained: the foundations of the paths of magic and the elements of creation. These elements became the Jaduee-Patr (Danaavi for “Magic Stones.”)

The Jaduee-Patr are detailed below.

Emerald Odonburgite. *Wondrous item, uncommon*

The most plentiful of the Jaduee-Patr, emerald odonburgite is the element of evocation. It appears as a glowing-green stone.

A 2-inch diameter piece of emerald odonburgite has 50 charges. While you are holding the emerald odonburgite next to a magic item that has charges, you can use an action to speak a command word to transfer any number of remaining charges from the emerald odonburgite up to the maximum number of charges the magic item can hold.

The emerald odonburgite regains 5d10 charges at dawn.

Ruby Blutvekzelnite. *Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

Of all the Jaduee-Patr, ruby blutvekzelnite is the most unstable and therefore the rarest. It is the Jaduee-Patr element of transmutation.

While you are attuned to a 2-inch diameter piece of ruby blutvekzelnite you gain the following benefits:

- Darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- An increase to speed of 10 feet while unencumbered.

- Proficiency in Constitution saving throws.
- Resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage.

The first time you attune to the ruby blutvekzelnite and every day at dawn, roll a d100 and refer to the Ruby Blutvekzelnite Changes table on the next page to determine what happens. The changes continue even after you become unattuned to the ruby blutvekzelnite. Only a *greater restoration* spell or similar magic will end the change.

Before rolling on the change table, you can attempt to suppress the changes. Make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a success, you do not change.

Aura of Radiance. The blutvekzelnite emits an aura of radiant energy in a 10-foot radius. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature becomes poisoned. A creature attuned to the object automatically fails its saving throw. While poisoned, the creature can not regain hit points except through magical means until the poison is cured. A creature attuned to the blutvekzelnite cannot be cured of its poison until it unattunes itself from the gem.

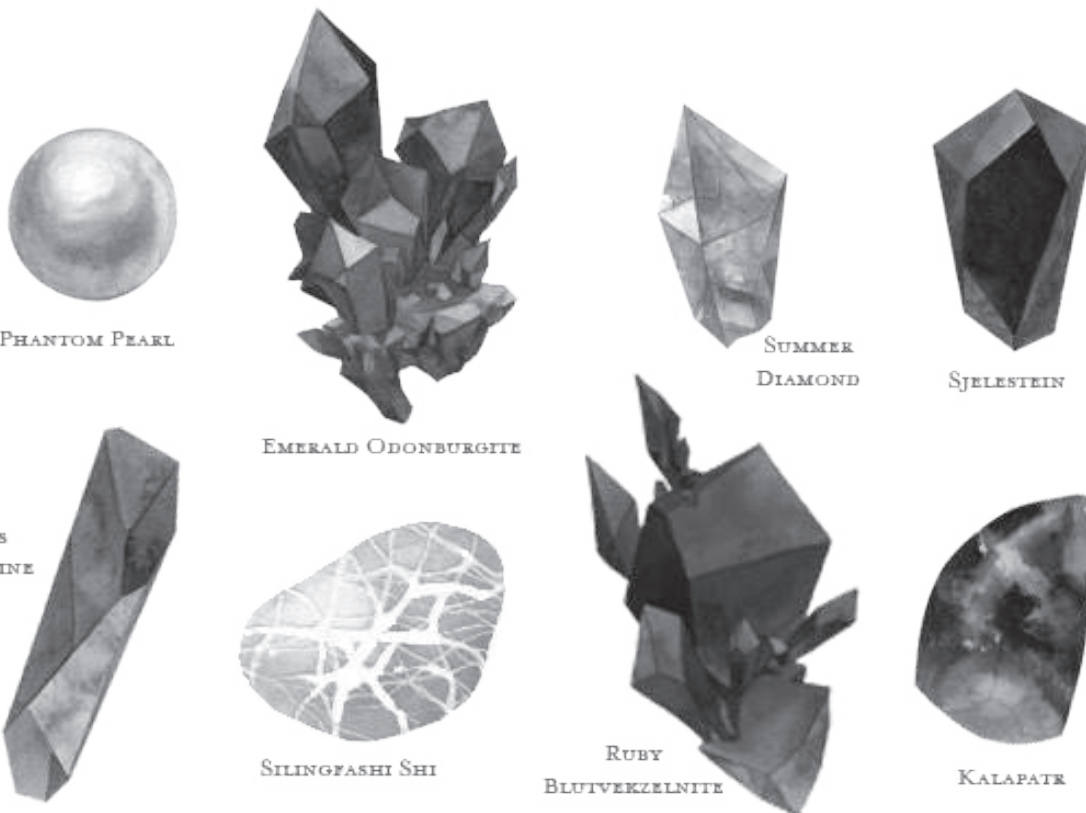
Silingfashi Shi. *Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

The white gem known as silingfashi shi, or “necromancer stone” is predominantly found on the ashen covered slopes of the volcanic Xenom Dynasty. They are the Jaduee-Patr gems of necromancy.

While attuned to a 2-inch diameter piece of silingfashi shi you gain immunity to necrotic damage and you no longer require food, drink, or sleep. In addition, you become invisible to all undead creatures of CR 2 or lower. You can choose to reveal yourself to any number of undead of your choice without using an action.

Ruby Blutzvekkite Changes.

d100	Change
01-04	You can see invisible creatures.
05-08	You gain the Fire Form trait. Your type becomes elemental and you no longer require air, food, water or drink. You gain immunity to fire damage and vulnerability to cold damage, which replace any other resistances or immunities you already have including those offered by attunement to the ruby blutzvekkite. You can move through spaces as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature that touches or hits you with a melee attack while within 5 of you takes 4 (1d8) fire damage. In addition, you can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. The first time you enter a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 4 (1d8) fire damage and catches fire; until someone takes an action to douse the fire, the creature takes 4 (1d8) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. You also shed bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light in an additional 20 feet. For every 5 feet of water you move into, or for every gallon of water splashed on you, you take 1 cold damage.
09-10	You can cast <i>magic missile</i> as a 1st-level spell at will.
11-16	Roll a d10. Your height changes by a number of inches equal to the roll. If the roll is odd, you shrink. If the roll is even, you grow.
17-26	You gain a form of indefinite madness (as described in chapter 8 of the <i>DMG</i>).
27-29	You regain 1d6 hit points every 10 minutes, provided that you have at least 1 hit point. If you lose a body part, the body part regrows and returns to full functionality after 1d6+1 days if you have at least 1 hit point the whole time.
30-31	You grow feathers which cover your entire body and you gain vulnerability to bludgeoning damage which replaces any other resistances or immunities to bludgeoning damage you may already possess.
32-35	Your body constantly oozes a greasy puss. Your Charisma score is reduced by 1. You have advantage on Dexterity (Athletics) checks made to escape grapples.
36-39	Roll a d6. Your shade turns a vibrant shade of the rolled color: 1—red, 2—green, 3—blue, 4—orange, 5—yellow, 6—purple.
40-44	You grow an extra eye. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
45-48	Roll a d6. On a result of 1-3, your size increases by one size category and on a result of 4-6 your size decreases by one size category (as the <i>enlarge/reduce</i> spell).
49-50	Your hit point maximum increases by 2d10 hit points.
51-55	You turn into a tree. You are incapacitated, can't move or speak, but you are aware of your surroundings; you gain a blindsight out to 10 ft. (blind beyond this radius). Your statistics remain the same, but you gain vulnerability to fire damage and resistance to piercing and bludgeoning damage. These vulnerabilities and resistances replace any similar vulnerabilities, immunities, or resistances you may currently have.
56-60	You can cast <i>misty step</i> at will.
61-67	You can cast <i>levitate</i> at will, targeting only yourself.
68-72	You grow horns from your head which you can use to make unarmed attacks against creatures within 5 feet of you. On a hit, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier.
73-74	You lose your mouth and can no longer speak.
75-81	Your skin becomes tough and scaly. When you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 13 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use this natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.
82-85	Your voice pains those that hear it. Each creature within 30 feet of you that hears you speak must succeed on a DC Constitution saving throw or take 1 thunder damage. The DC is equal to 10 + your Constitution modifier. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw is immune to this effect for 24 hours
86	All humanoids frighten you.
87-88	You become permanently ethereal, as the <i>etherealness</i> spell, and cannot return to the Material Plane until a <i>greater restoration</i> or similar magic is cast upon you.
89-92	You gain resistance to all damage.
93-98	You glow bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. Any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of you is blinded until the end of its next turn.
99	Your form destabilizes and you collapse into a puddle of lifeless goo. You are dead.
100	You explode; you die instantly and leave no remains behind. Each creature within 30 feet of you when you explode must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 4d8 radiant damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Summer Diamond. *Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

Summer diamonds are found in the Summer Land and used by the Abjurers and Eldritch Knights of Presson's Enclave. They are tied to the element of abjuration.

While attuned to a 2-inch diameter summer diamond, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and immunity to *magic missile*.

Sjelestein. *Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

The extremely rare purple crystal sjelestein is found mostly in the northern reaches in Rasgax Highlands. However, the Rasgax are always reluctant to use the material, and instead, choose to guard it within their holds. Sjelestein is the Jaduee-Patr of enchantments.

While attuned to a 2-inch diameter piece of sjelestein, you gain a +2 bonus to your Charisma score and all creatures have disadvantage on saving throws made against your enchantment spells.

Kalapatr. *Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

The black summoner's stone of the danaavrakt is what helped the fearsome fiends build their early empire. It is the Jaduee-Patr of conjuration.

While attuned to a 2-inch diameter piece of kalapatr, whenever you cast a *conjuration* spell that summons creatures, you cast the spell as if it was cast by a slot two levels higher than the one you used (up to 9th level).

For example, if you cast *conjure animals* using a 3rd-level spell slot, you would cast the spell as a 5th-level spell, creating twice the number of creatures you normally would with a 3rd-level spell slot.

Vizier's Tourmaline. *Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

Believed by many to not exist at all, vizier's tourmaline is the Jaduee-Patr of divination.

While attuned to a 2-inch diameter piece of vizier's tourmaline, when you cast a divination spell of 2nd level or

higher using a spell slot, you regain one expended spell slot. The slot you regain must be of a level lower than the spell you cast and can't be higher than 5th level. A wizard diviner of 6th level or higher attuned to the stone regains two slots instead of one.

In addition, the vizier has advantage on Intelligence saving throws to avoid the effects of the Strain of Divination (detailed above).

Phantom Pearl. *Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

Phantom pearls are the pale yellow stones of the illusionists. Like vizier's tourmaline and ruby blutvekzelnite, phantom pearls are exceedingly rare and believed to no longer exist in Omeria.

While attuned to a phantom pearl, the duration for any illusion spell that you cast increases from 1 minute to 10 minutes, from 10 minutes to 1 hour, from 1 hour to 8 hours, from 8 hours to 24 hours, and from 24 hours to until dispelled. Ω

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APPENDIX D

THE BESTIARY

BY DAVE HAMRICK, ITSADNDMONSTERNOW, AND GRIFFONS SADDLEBAG

ART BY WILLIAM MCAUSLAND, JASON GLOVER, GRIFFONS SADDLEBAG, PAPERFORGE, AND BODIE HARTLEY

Arnitiko/Arnitika

Also known as “the Elves of the Other” the arnitikos are a rare humanoid species that live in Omeria. Typically, Arnitikos are outsiders and wanderers who have no community to call their own. However, they are highly

sought out for their martial skills as well as their ability to go unnoticed by undead creatures.

Arnitikos were brought into existence during the Hand of the Four when a door to the Other opened in Ayas Olyothy and consumed the elven city of Ise Serin. Most of Serin’s populace were killed during the event, but a small portion—known as the Pale Few—survived. These were the first arnitikos. The Pale Few resembled their former selves, except they lacked color in their skin and clothing, and their features were reversed, like a mirror image.

In addition to their undead invisibility and color draining features, Arnitikos do not require food or water to survive. Unlike elves, however, they do require sleep and must do so in total darkness. Without total dark-

ness, they cannot gain the full benefits of a long rest.

ARNITIKO/ARNITIKA <i>Medium humanoid (arnitiko), any alignment (usually chaotic)</i>
Armor Class 15 (chain shirt) Hit Points 13 (3d8) Speed 30 ft.
STR 14 (+2) INT 11 (+0) DEX 14 (+2) WIS 12 (+1) CON 11 (+0) CHA 10 (+0)
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4 Damage Vulnerabilities radiant Damage Immunities necrotic Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13 Languages Beste, Common Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)
Other Resilience. The arnitiko has advantage on saving throws made against necromancy spells, and is immune to spells that use color or prisms (such as <i>color spray</i> or <i>prismatic wall</i>). Color Drain. Whenever the arnitiko touches a creature or object with its exposed flesh, the color momentarily drains from the target, leaving only blacks, whites, and shades of gray until the arnitiko stops touching the target. The effect is harmless. Undead Invisibility. The arnitiko is invisible to all undead creatures. On its turn, an undead creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the creature can see the arnitiko for as long as it maintains its concentration (as if concentrating on a spell).
ACTIONS
Longsword. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage when wielded with two hands. Shortbow. <i>Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

COLLECTOR <i>Medium humanoid, lawful good</i>
Armor Class 14 Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3) Speed 30 ft.
STR 12 (+1) INT 11 (+0) DEX 14 (+2) WIS 15 (+2) CON 13 (+1) CHA 13 (+1)
Saving Throws Wis +4 Skills Perception +4 Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14 Languages Beste, Common Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)
Other Resilience. The collector has advantage on saving throws made against necromancy spells, and is immune to spells that use color or prisms (such as <i>color spray</i> or <i>prismatic wall</i>).
ACTIONS
Multiattack. The collector makes two attacks with its light dagger. Light Dagger. <i>Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 4 (1d4 + 2) radiant damage.

CORPSE TREE <i>Huge plant, neutral evil</i>
Armor Class 16 (natural armor) Hit Points 84 (8d12 + 32) Speed 0 ft.
STR 19 (+4) INT 4 (-3) DEX 4 (-3) WIS 9 (-1) CON 18 (+4) CHA 5 (-3)
Skills Perception +2 Damage Vulnerabilities fire Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing Senses tremorsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13 Languages Abyssal, Sylvan Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)
False Appearance. While it remains motionless, the corpse tree is indistinguishable from an ordinary tree. Roots. The corpse tree normally remains rooted in the ground for years at a time. If attacked or provoked by a creature outside its reach, the corpse tree can uproot itself as an action, to begin walking on its many sprawling roots. While uprooted, the corpse tree loses its tremorsense, but gains a walking speed of 30 feet. It can re-root itself in an unoccupied space of soft earth as a subsequent action.
ACTIONS
Multiattack. The corpse tree makes four attacks with its branches. Branch. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage. Hurl Remains (3/Day). <i>Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +7 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 4 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage. Hit or miss, the humanoid corpse or body parts land with a sickening thud, forcing all humanoids within 10 feet of the target (including the target itself) to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, becoming frightened of the tree for 10 minutes on a failure. A frightened creature can repeat its save at the end of each of its turns that ends with the creature not within line of sight of the tree, ending the effect on a success.

Collector

The collectors are Servants of Light. They journey into The Black Cauldron to find and retrieve traveler orbs. Often, collectors are accompanied by ourobras.

Corpse Tree

Whether by malevolent design or simply by prolonged exposure to unholy presences, many of the plants around Skirvin manor have become dangerous, violent, and even bloodthirsty.

When a particularly old tree's soil is the site of too many demonic sacrifices, it may become what is known simply as a corpse tree.

Aside from their particularly sharp, spear-like branches and grisly decorum, corpse trees otherwise look like ordinary trees. But when one wanders too close, it lurches to life and savagely attacks the intruder, impaling those who aren't able to escape. If the corpses of the tree's victims aren't removed, it will display them from its branches almost like trophies until they gradually rot away.



Fadrax

Sometimes referred to as “Lesser Wraiths” by Lost Ones, fadraxes are the life-drained remains of celestials who have been pulled into the Other, particularly devas and planetars. They appear as hollow, formless creatures made of white smoke. Their faces give little to no hint at the creature they once were. Where their wings once emerged from their backs only burning white fire remains.

Fadraxes possess an ability that allows them to absorb the weaker members of their kind. Once a fadrax consumes another fadrax, it temporarily gains a second head and second set of arms.

Undead Nature. The fadrax does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

FADRAX

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR 5 (-3) **INT** 9 (-1)

DEX 17 (+3) **WIS** 12 (+1)

CON 15 (+2) **CHA** 13 (+1)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Beste
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

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

Whispers in the Dark. The fadrax constantly whispers to itself. Each creature that starts its turn within 20 feet of the fadrax and can hear the fadrax must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions and its movement is reduced by half until the start of its next turn..

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Consume Fadrax (1/Day). The fadrax targets another fadrax within 10 feet of it that has half of its hit points remaining or less. The target is destroyed and the fadrax gains temporary hit points equal to half of the target's remaining hit points. Until the fadrax loses these temporary hit points, it gains the following benefits: it gains advantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks and it gains the Multiattack action, which it can use to make two Life Drain attacks.

Failabra

Failbras (FIE la bra) are gargantuan, 100-foot-long, hyperintelligent whales that can fly as well as swim. They live in the Other and are the acting guardians of Eqqaros and the Goddess in Light's subjects. Maaso, Onet, and Imidio are the last three of their kind.

Beings of Celestial Energy.

During the genesis of the Other, rogue celestial energy traveled across the infinite nothingness at light speeds. Too powerful for consumption by the shadowstuff, the energy settled, collapsed in on itself, and became the first failabras. Once the failabras came into being, other celestial creatures reborn within the

Other turned to them for protection. The Goddess in Light herself was one of the first such creatures protected by these great psychic whales.

Friends of the Narbos. The narbos of the Glow Motes are close allies of the failabras. In fact, the narbos cherish their relationship with the failabras more than they do the Goddess in Light. It's not uncommon to find a bevvy of narbos in the gullet of a failabra.

Immortal Nature. The failabra does not require food, water, or drink.

FAILABRA <i>Gargantuan celestial, lawful good</i>					
Armor Class 15 (natural armor) Hit Points 391 (27d20 + 108) Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover), swim 60 ft. (hover)					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	30 (10)	25 (+7)
Saving Throws Con +10 Skills Insight +24, Perception +16 Senses blindsight 300 ft., passive Perception 26 Languages the failabra understands all languages but doesn't speak, telepathy 300 ft. Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)					
Echolocation. The failabra can't use its blindsight while deafened. Hold Breath. The failabra can hold its breath for 30 minutes. Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The failabra's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 24). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components: At will: <i>animal friendship, calm emotions, detect magic, detect thoughts, telekinesis</i> 3/day: <i>gust of wind, locate person</i> 1/day: <i>control water, control weather, water breathing</i> Keen hearing. The failabra has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. Limited Spell Absorption. Whenever the failabra is subjected to damage from spells of 3rd level or lower, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the damage the spell dealt. It has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects. Siege Monster. The failabra deals double damage to objects and structures.					
ACTIONS					
Multiattack. The failabra can use its Psionic Blast. It then makes one attack with its bite and one attack with its tail. It can't make its bite attack and tail attack against the same target. Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 32 (4d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, the failabra can choose to swallow the creature instead of dealing damage. While swallowed the creature has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the failabra. If the failabra takes 60 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the failabra must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the end of its turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the failabra. If the failabra dies, a swallowed creature can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone. Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. Hit: 41 (10d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. Psionic Blast (Recharge 5-6). The failabra emits a wave of psychic energy in a 120-foot cone. Each creature of the failabra's choice in the area must succeed on a DC 24 Intelligence saving throw or take 45 (10d8) psychic damage and become stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the stunned effect on itself with a success.					

Gatekeepers to the Real

While all three surviving failabras are within 100 feet of another, they can open a Door to the Real. The door is a *gate* spell that opens into a random location on the Material plane. All three must maintain concentration in order to keep the gate open for up to 1 minute. In addition, each whale takes 70 (20d6) psychic damage when they cast the spell, and an additional 35 (10d6) psychic damage at the start of each of their turns for the duration. The psychic damage caused by this trait does not require the failabras to make Constitution saving throws in order to maintain concentration on the spell.

Once the three successfully use this trait, they cannot use it again for 1 year.



Fuguhito

From the Depths rise the fuguhito. Land lovers call these spine-covered water breathers “pufferfolk”, and as one might expect, the fuguhito looks like a humanoid pufferfish. Their needles are not just sharp but carry a powerful toxin capable of paralyzing foes.

Servants of Qhek. The marids of Qhek use the fuguhito as their front-line. And since fuguhito can exist out of water and are closer to human size than the sahuagin or merfolk, they make excellent spies.

FUGUHITO	
<i>Med humanoid (fuguhito), lawful evil</i>	
Armor Class 13 (natural armor) Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4) Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.	
STR 11 (+0)	INT 8 (-1)
DEX 14 (+2)	WIS 11 (+0)
CON 15 (+2)	CHA 9 (-1)
Damage Immunities poison Condition Immunities poisoned Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages Aquan Challenge 1 (200 XP)	
<p>Barbed Hide. At the start of each of its turns, the fuguhito deals 4 (1d8) piercing damage to any creature grappling it. A creature who takes damage from the fuguhito's barbed hide must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for 1 minute. Creatures immune to poison automatically succeed on their saving throw. A paralyzed creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.</p> <p>Limited Amphibiousness. The fuguhito can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.</p>	
ACTIONS	
<p>Scimitar. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.</p> <p>Needles. <i>Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for 1 minute. Creatures immune to poison automatically succeed on their saving throw. A paralyzed creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.</p>	

GHOST MATRON					
<i>Medium undead, chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 13 Hit Points 34 (4d10 + 12) Speed 0 ft., climb 40 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)
Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages understands Common but can't speak Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)					
<p>Incorporeal Movement. The matron can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.</p> <p>Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the matron has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.</p>					
ACTIONS					
<p>Multiattack. The matron uses ghostly force and telekinetic thrust, either or both of which can be replaced by an icy touch attack.</p> <p>Icy Touch. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 11 (2d10) cold damage.</p> <p>Ghostly Force. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.</p> <p>Telekinetic Thrust. The matron targets a creature or unattended object within 30 feet of her. A creature must be Medium or smaller to be affected by this magic, and an object can weigh up to 240 pounds.</p> <p>If the target is a creature, the matron makes a Charisma check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) check. If the matron wins the contest, she hurls the target up to 30 feet in any direction, including upward. If the target then comes into contact with a hard surface or heavy object, the target takes 3 (1d6) damage per 10 feet moved.</p> <p>If the target is an object that isn't being worn or carried, the matron hurls it up to 30 feet in any direction. The matron can use the object as a ranged weapon, attacking one creature along the object's path (+6 to hit) and dealing 10 (4d4) bludgeoning damage on a hit.</p> <p>Etherealness. The matron enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.</p> <p>Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the matron can see within 5 feet of her must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the matron; the matron then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The matron now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The matron can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.</p> <p>The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the matron ends it as a bonus action, or the matron is turned or forced out by an effect like the <i>dispel evil and good</i> spell. When the possession ends, the matron reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this matron's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.</p> <p>Ghostly Influence (4/Day). The matron uses one of the effects below on a target she can see within 60 feet. Only one effect of each type can be active at a time.</p> <p>Malevolent Chill. The matron causes the air to become supernaturally cold in a 10-foot radius sphere centered on a point she can see in range. Each creature that enters the area for the first time on a turn, or that starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) cold damage and have its speed halved until the end of its next turn. The area of cold lasts for 1 minute, or until the matron chooses to end it (no action).</p> <p>Haunting Curse. One creature the matron can see must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be cursed by [something...]</p> <p>Freeze Water. The matron causes water to freeze in a 30-foot radius sphere centered on a point she can see within range. The surface of any open body of water in the area freezes over, forming a 6-inch thick layer of ice on its surface for 10 minutes (or for an appropriate amount of time, as determined by the GM). Any creature or object floating in the frozen water is restrained until the ice melts or breaks. A 5-foot square section of ice has an AC of 13, 20 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.</p>					

Ghost Matron

A tragic and tortured soul, the ghost matron is forever doomed to an existence of scared, lonely desperation, trying in vain to save her children.

Ghostly Hounds

The hounds of Skirvin Manor were always the groundskeeper's greatest pride. Now, like their master, they too remain loyal even in the afterlife.

GHOSTLY HOUNDS	
<i>Medium undead, chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 11 Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4) Speed 40 ft.	
STR 14 (+2)	INT 3 (-4)
DEX 13 (+1)	WIS 11 (+0)
CON 15 (+2)	CHA 6 (-2)
Skills Perception +2 Damage Immunities poison Condition Immunities poisoned Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12 Languages — Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)	
Ethereal Sight. The hound can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa. Incorporeal Movement. The hound can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object. Keen Hearing and Smell. The hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell. Pack Tactics. The hound has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the hound's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.	
ACTIONS	
Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. Etherealness. The hound enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.	

Glossy

Glossies are horrible, fiendish oozes that lurk in the Black Swamps of Bar-kor. Another wicked invention of the danaavrakt, glossies were designed to destroy any who hope to cross through the swamps.

In many ways, a glossy is the danaavrakt's answer to succubi. Glossies scan the thoughts of their prey looking for its deepest desires. Then, the glossies use their shapechanging ability to take the form of those desires. However, the form is never perfect. Features like the eyes, curves, and expressions are grossly exaggerated. Its surface gives off a sheen like porcelain (hence the name) And a glossy in its humanoid form always comes off as aloof and naive. Still, the glossy uses its innate charm ability to ingratiate itself with its prey. Once its prey's defenses have dropped, the glossy "crushes itself" and reveals its true form: a bleeding quivering ooze made of sinew, teeth, and dull, yellow eyes.

Originally, the danaavrakts did not intend for the glossies to reproduce. However, they soon discovered that a glossy that completely devours a humanoid soon becomes "pregnant", doubling in dimensions. After one week, the glossy ejects its excess cells which in turn becomes a new glossy. Pexian aberrationists who've studied these "offspring" discovered, much to their horror, that the new glossies possess the memories of the previously digested creature.



GLOSSY	
<i>Med fiend (shapechanger), chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 14 (natural armor) Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6) Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.	
STR 16 (+3)	INT 7 (-2)
DEX 14 (+2)	WIS 12 (+1)
CON 13 (+1)	CHA 12 (+1)
Skills Deception +3, Insight +3 Damage Vulnerabilities slashing from magic weapons wielded by good creatures Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks Condition Immunities prone Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages Common, Infernal Challenge 1 (200 XP)	
Amorphous (True Form Only). The glossy can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. Shapechanger. The glossy can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid it has seen in person or within the thoughts of another creature, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Innate Spellcasting. The glossy's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). The glossy can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components. At will: <i>charm person, detect thoughts</i>	
ACTIONS	
Pseudopod. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and if the target is a creature it is grappled (escape DC 13). While the target is grappled it is restrained and the glossy cannot use its pseudopod against another creature. Digest. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature or one creature the glossy is grappling. <i>Hit:</i> 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the glossy regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. Frightful Presence. Each creature of the glossy's choice that is within 60 feet of the glossy and aware of it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the glossy's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.	



Inak

The inak (EE nok) are an intelligent undead species that haunt the tunnels below the northern portion of the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. Superficially, they appear to be skeletons bound together by thick, boiled leather. However, their skeletal structures consist of more than just humanoid bones. Inaks build themselves out of any parts they have available. One inak may have the head of a ram with six long appendages while another may crawl like a scorpion and have a six-foot-long neck terminating in an infant human's skull.

No one knows how long the inak have been in the Low. The elves of Vaskil believe that they've been around at least as long as the Anorian empire and perhaps even predate the elves themselves. "So long as there have been bones there have been inak," the Vaskilish saying goes.

Dragon Trainers. Inak have a close relationship with the subterranean drakes of the Low, dubbing them zogo-ba-inak, or "our dragons". For whatever reason, it's considered sacrilege for the inak to utilize zogo-ba-inak bones to create new inak. Instead, the inaks use the reckless zogo-ba-inak as guard dogs and weap-

INAK

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) **INT** 16 (+3)

DEX 10 (+0) **WIS** 13 (+1)

CON 16 (+3) **CHA** 9 (-1)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Inak

Challenge 1/2 (200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The inak's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *chill touch*

1/day: *gentle repose*

Spider Climb. The inak can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The inak can use its whistle. Then, the inak makes two attacks with its dagger.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon*

Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage. And if the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute.

Whistle. The inak emits a high-pitch warble. Each creature within 60 feet of the inak that can hear it must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures immune or resistant to thunder damage automatically pass their saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is incapacitated until the start of the inak's next turn. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw or the effect ends for it is immune to the whistle of all inak for 24 hours.

ons of war. In many ways, zogo-ba-inak are the inak's first line of defense. There's no question that the drakes are the reason the aboveground humanoid races have yet to discover Kwa-ba-inak.

Kwa-ba-inak. The inak live in a massive vertical shaft pocked with thousands of labyrinthine tunnels and alcoves named Kwa-ba-inak ("our

city"). Creatures who lack sufficient means to climb quickly find themselves at an disadvantage within the inak city. Not that it matters, of course. No humanoid who has ever set eyes on the city has lived to tell the tale.

Undead Nature. The inak does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Kraldos

Infesting the liquid shadow of The Other's Black Cauldron are the menacing kraldoses. They are also referred to as "shadow sharks", although, their resemblance to actual sharks is tenuous at best. A kraldos is a 12-foot long amphibious creature whose front is nothing more than a large, gaping hole filled with seven rows of gnashing black teeth. A pair of tentacles grow from the sides of its body which it uses to pull its prey into the liquid shadow.

Perhaps the most terrifying aspect of the kraldoses are their ability to mimic other creatures. This includes humanoid voices. A kraldos does not understand the words or languages it speaks, but knows enough to repeat certain phrases that have proven effective. Phrases such as "help me" and "save me" are particularly useful, as is the frequent favorite "don't be afraid." Not only does this ability lure in the kraldoses' victims, it acts as a form of echolocation, too, allowing it to navigate the endless dark of The Other.

Kraldoses prefer the taste of realstuffed flesh. However, if there is a sufficient lack of flesh, the kraldoses turn instead to their own fries and other shadow creatures for sustenance. When truly desperate, kraldoses will even eat the undead that swim the liquid shadows of The Black Cauldron.

Although kraldoses prefer hunting alone, they have been known to establish kraldos communities on islands of hard shadow. There, the kraldoses

vomit up their young, formed from the remains of realstuff creatures they've consumed. For this reason, newborn kraldos fries have a fleshy quality to their scales which fades with time as their Shadowstuff flesh darkens. Additionally, kraldos fries adopt the same commonly mimicked phrases of the parent kraldos, however, the fries' mimicries often come out as gruesome exaggerations of the original phrase.

KRALDOS <i>Large aberration, unaligned</i>	
Armor Class 15 (natural armor) Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24) Speed 0 ft., swim 50 ft.	
STR 20 (+5)	INT 4 (-3)
DEX 14 (+2)	WIS 13 (+1)
CON 16 (+3)	CHA 6 (-2)
Skills Deception +2, Perception +3, Stealth +6 Damage Resistances necrotic Condition Immunities blinded Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 13 Languages does not understand languages but can speak through its Mimicry trait Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)	
Amphibious. The kraldos can breathe air and water. Echolocation. The kraldos can't use its blindsight while deafened. Keen Hearing. The kraldos has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. Mimicry. The kraldos can mimic any sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check.	
ACTIONS	
Multiattack. The kraldos makes two attacks: one with its tentacles and one with its bite. Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage. Tentacles. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15). While grappled the creature is restrained. The kraldos has two tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.	

LIGHT GOLEM <i>Large construct, unaligned</i>	
Armor Class 16 Hit Points 184 (16d10 + 96) Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)	
STR 14 (+2)	INT 3 (-4)
DEX 22 (+6)	WIS 13 (+1)
CON 22 (+6)	CHA 13 (+1)
Damage Resistances necrotic Damage Immunities lightning, poison, psychic, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)	
Ephemeral. The golem can't wear or carry anything. Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form. Incorporeal Movement. The golem can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object. Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical. Radiant Absorption. Whenever the golem is subjected to radiant damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the radiant damage dealt. Variable Illumination. The golem sheds bright light in a 10- to 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius. The golem can alter the radius as a bonus action.	
ACTIONS	
Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks. Slam. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 24 (4d8 + 6) radiant damage. Destroy Undead. The golem makes a slam attack against an undead creature within reach. If the attack hits, instead of taking damage, the creature must a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is destroyed if it has 50 hit points or less. If the creature has more than 50 hit points or it succeeds on its initial saving throw, it takes 24 (4d8 + 6) radiant damage instead.	

Light Golem

Constructs of pure light, light golems were once fire elementals. They look like large will-o'-wisps.

Construct Nature. The light golem does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.



Nightmare Orb

Taking its name from the malicious duke who created the first of them, nightmare orbs more than live up to their devilish monikers.

Although they only measure six inches in diameter, the orbs are fast, deadly, and frightfully intelligent. At the Battle of Aspaeth, a single orb nicknamed Hell cut down an entire army of witchslayers.

Nightmare orbs are employed by dark wizards to hunt and persecute their mortal enemies. And although the orbs have the ability to capture and bring back living quarry, they rarely—if ever—do.

The constructs are created through the grim ritual known as Penance, one of the Eight Majikmütarr outlined in the Librex Malmütarronn. Penance is an eight-hour ritual that requires the vessel orb to be dipped in the blood of three sylvans. Then, an invisible stalker is imprisoned within the vessel. In eighty-eight days, the orb gains sentience.

Construct Nature. The orb does not require food, air, drink, or water.

NIGHTMARE ORB					
<i>Tiny construct, chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)					
Hit Points 130 (20d4 + 80)					
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)
Saving Throws Dex +9, Int +7, Wis +7					
Skills Perception +11, Stealth +13					
Damage Resistances necrotic					
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons					
Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, prone, unconscious					
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 21					
Languages understands the languages of its creator but cannot speak					
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)					
Faultless Tracker. The orb is given a quarry by its creator. The orb knows the direction and distance to its quarry as long as the two of them are on the same plane of existence. The orb also knows the location of its creator.					
Innate Spellcasting. The orb's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells requiring no components. At will: <i>blur, invisibility, shield</i> 3/day each: <i>darkness, hypnotic pattern, teleportation</i> 1/day each: <i>cloudkill, etherealness, forcecage</i>					
Magic Resistance. The orb has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.					
ACTIONS					
Rays. The orb shoots two of the following magical rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one to two targets it can see within 60 feet of it: 1. Paralyzing Ray. The target creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. 2. Fear Ray. The target creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. 3. Fire Ray. The target creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) fire damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. 4. Lightning Ray. The target creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) lightning damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. 5. Teleportation Ray. The target creature must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is teleported to a location that the orb can see within 60 feet of the orb. 6. Death Ray. The target creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target's hit points fall to 0. A creature with 50 or more hit points remaining automatically passes its saving throw.					
REACTIONS					
Retune. When the orb is targeted by an attack or spell that deals acid, cold, fire, lightning, psychic or thunder damage it gains immunity to that damage type (including against the triggering attack) for 1 minute or until it uses this trait again,					

Ourobra

Ourobras are giant celestial creatures formed from both darkness and light. They serve the Goddess in Light as the leaders of the Collectors in the

Endless Ocean of Shadow within the Other. Ourobras ensure that the traveler orbs are safely delivered to Eqqaros.

Former Behemoths. The ourobras are created from the remains of shad-

ow behemoths destroyed by radiant energy and light. As such, they are the mortal enemies of those creatures, specifically designed to combat the horrors of the endless shadow that drenches the Other.

The Ourobra's Sacrifice. Should the life of a living creature come under mortal threat, the ourobra will not hesitate to risk its existence to save the endangered creature. And as creatures who owe this existence to the Goddess in Light, this sacrifice is the ourobra's final repayment.

Immortal Nature. The Ourobra does not require food, drink, or sleep.

OUROBRA			
<i>Huge celestial, lawful good</i>			
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)			
Hit Points 145 (10d12 + 80)			
Speed 40 ft., swim 60 ft.			
STR	DEX	CON	CHA
26 (+8)	12 (+1)	27 (+8)	18 (+4)
INT	WIS	CHA	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	
Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +7, Cha +8			
Skills Perception +7			
Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks			
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison			
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned			
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17			
Languages all			
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)			
Innate Spellcasting. The ourobra's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components. At will: <i>detect evil and good, detect magic, dispel magic, light</i> 3/day: <i>control water, hold monster, telekinesis</i> 1/day: <i>commune, sunburst</i>			
Magic Resistance. The ourobra has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.			
Magic Weapons. The ourobra's weapon attacks are magical.			
ACTIONS			
Multiattack. The ourobra makes two oar attacks.			
Oar. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 18 (3d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage, or 21 (3d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage when wielded with two hands.			

Overcrow

The overcrow looks like a mundane crow wearing a small, red hat. Of course, it is much more than just an ordinary black bird. The overcrow possesses such a strong sense of self-awareness that any creature that comes within 100 feet of it begins to believe that it, too, is a crow.

One may wonder, “Where did overcrows come from?” The last scholar who asked this brave question returned from a 10-year quest gibbering like a loon. All he could say was “CHAR-LO-MAIN!” Once his madness

OVERCROW <i>Tiny monstrosity, neutral</i>	
Armor Class 12 Hit Points 12 (5d4) Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.	
STR 2 (-4)	INT 5 (-3)
DEX 14 (+2)	WIS 15 (+2)
CON 10 (+0)	CHA 18 (+4)
Skills Perception 14 Condition Immunities charmed Senses passive Perception 14 Languages understands Common but doesn't speak Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)	
Aura of Caw. Each creature that starts its turn within 100 feet of the overcrow must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a creature is charmed by the overcrow. A creature charmed in this way is incapacitated and can only flap its wings; if the creature lacks wings, it flaps its arms instead. The charmed creature is unable to speak and can only make “caw!” sounds. The creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. Additionally, the charmed effect ends if the creature moves more than 100 feet away from the overcrow or if the creature takes damage. Once the effect ends, or if the creature succeeds on its initial saving throw against this effect, the creature is immune to all overcrows' Auras of Caw for the next 24 hours.	
ACTIONS	
Beak. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 1 piercing damage.	

was cured, the scholar had no memory of the “char-lo-main” or the origins of overcrows. Some knowledge is best left unsought.

Clever mages employ overcrows as traps in dungeons. As adventurers are distracted by their need to “caw!” and flap their wings, the dungeon’s inhabitants rob the adventurers and leave them defenseless against the other dangers of the dungeon.

POSSESSED BOOKS <i>Med swarm of Tiny undead, chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 14 (natural armor) Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8) Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)	
STR 4 (-3)	INT 4 (-3)
DEX 15 (+2)	WIS 8 (-1)
CON 12 (+1)	CHA 11 (+0)
Damage Vulnerabilities fire Damage Resistances bludgeoning, cold, piercing, slashing, thunder Damage Immunities necrotic, poison Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 9 Languages — Challenge 2 (450 XP)	
False Appearance. While the books remain motionless, they are indistinguishable from normal books. Flammable. If the book takes fire damage from a spell or magical effect that ignites flammable objects, the book ignites. While the book is alight, it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. The book remains alight unless another creature uses its action to completely smother or quench the flames. Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature’s space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny book. The swarm can’t regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.	
ACTIONS	
Buffet. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the books’ space. <i>Hit:</i> 12 (4d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage, or 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage if the books have half of their hit points or fewer. If the books are alight, the target also takes 7 (2d6) fire damage, or 3 (1d6) fire damage if the books have half their hit points or fewer.	

Possessed Writings

Most would agree that the dark tomes found in an evil mage’s library are dangerous. These writings however, are dangerous not for the knowledge they contain, but the spirits which they embody.

Possessed Books

Analagous to a lesser poltergeist, swarms of possessed books sometimes

POSSESSED SPELLBOOK <i>Tiny undead, chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 14 (natural armor) Hit Points 7 (2d4 + 2) Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)	
STR 2 (-4)	INT 15 (+2)
DEX 15 (+2)	WIS 8 (-1)
CON 12 (+1)	CHA 11 (+0)
Saving Throws Dex +4 Damage Vulnerabilities fire Damage Resistances cold, thunder Damage Immunities necrotic, poison Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 11 Languages — Challenge 1 (200 XP)	
False Appearance. While the book remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal book. Flammable. If the book takes fire damage from a spell or magical effect that ignites flammable objects, the book ignites. While the book is alight, it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. The book remains alight unless another creature uses its action to completely smother or quench the flames. Innate Spellcasting. The book’s innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components: At-will: <i>mage hand, minor illusion, ray of frost</i> 2/day each: <i>magic missile, shield</i> 1/day each: <i>counterspell</i>	
ACTIONS	
Buffet. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the book is alight, the target also takes 3 (1d6) fire damage.	

manifest from a spirit who is bound to the confines of a library. Reasons that this might occur range anywhere from an unfinished search for knowledge, to a violent death within the library's walls.

Possessed Spellbook

Like other restless spirits unable to move on, deceased mages will cling to the things they held dear in life. And what is more dear to a mage than their spellbook?



Qiu Xiang

Qiu Xiang, a dragonborn, is a retired adventurer and former paladin of the Four Generals. He is also the owner/curator of the Pressonian History Museum. Although he believes he is one of the wisest creatures alive, Qiu constantly fears that someone or something is out to deceive him.

During the War of the Burning Plains, Qiu was a celebrated hero. One of the so-called Children of Tostrasz, Qiu turned against his brethren to aid the Pressonians. Sadly, Qiu has since fallen from grace.

A victim of the negative effects radiating from the throne of greed kept in the basement of the Pressonian History Museum, Qiu Xiang continues to slide into madness and corruption. When the characters first meet Qiu, already his avarice knows no bounds.

QIU XIANG

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (half plate, shield)
Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +9
Skills History +4, Perception +5, Religion +4
Damage Resistances fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Aura of Protection. Whenever Qiu or a friendly creature within 10 feet of him must make a saving throw, the creature gains a +4 bonus to the saving throw. Qiu must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Unholy Smite. As a bonus action, Qiu can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attack to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If Qiu expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. Qiu Xiang is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Qiu Xiang has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, false life, ray of sickness*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, locate object, ray of enfeeblement*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, dispel magic, vampiric touch*
- 4th level (2 slots): *blight, death ward*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Qiu makes two attacks with his longsword.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage when wielded with two hands.

Breathe Fire (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest). Qiu exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Dreadful Aspect (1/day). Each creature of Qiu's choice within 30 feet of Qiu must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw if it can see Qiu. On a failed save, the target is frightened of Qiu for 1 minute. If a creature frightened by this effect ends its turn more than 30 feet away from Qiu, it can attempt another saving throw to end the effect on it.

He will stop at nothing to achieve wealth and power and will destroy all who get in his way.

Qiu discovered the boy, Ninety-three, in the Ocean of Warna on a hidden island named The Skeleton Key. He first witnessed the boy's power during a scuffle with the island's inhabitants and the boy's former keeper's, a tribe of warrior women.

Ultimately, Qiu wishes to know more about the mysterious boy and how he can contain or steal the boy's power.



Reanimated Groundskeeper & Ghostly Hounds

A faithful servant to the Lord of Skirvin Manor for decades, the groundskeeper has been reanimated so that he may continue his duties, even in death.

Ghostly Hounds

The hounds of Skirvin Manor were always the groundskeeper's greatest pride. Now, like their master, they too remain loyal even in the afterlife.

GHOSTLY HOUND	
<i>Medium undead, chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 11 Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4) Speed 40 ft.	
STR 14 (+2)	INT 3 (-4)
DEX 13 (+1)	WIS 11 (+0)
CON 15 (+2)	CHA 6 (-2)
Skills Perception +2 Damage Immunities poison Condition Immunities poisoned Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12 Languages — Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)	
<p>Ethereal Sight. The hound can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.</p> <p>Incorporeal Movement. The hound can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.</p> <p>Keen Hearing and Smell. The hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.</p> <p>Pack Tactics. The hound has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the hound's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.</p>	
ACTIONS	
<p>Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.</p> <p>Etherealness. The hound enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.</p>	

REANIMATED GROUNDSKEEPER					
<i>Large undead, lawful evil</i>					
Armor Class 13 Hit Points 76 (9d10 + 27) Speed 30 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)
Skills Animal Handling +2, Nature +0, Perception +2 Damage Resistances cold, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite Damage Immunities poison Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12 Languages Common Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)					
<p>Cruelty. The groundskeeper scores a critical hit with its weapon attacks if the result on the d20 is a 19 or 20.</p> <p>Houndmaster. The groundskeeper keeps ghostly hounds, which are completely loyal to him, obeying his verbal commands to the best of their ability. On each of the groundskeeper's turns, he can use a bonus action to issue a command to one of his hounds within 60 feet of him that can hear him, allowing the hound to either move up to half its speed, or to make a single melee attack against a creature within its reach.</p>					
ACTIONS					
<p>Multiattack. The groundskeeper makes one attack with his spectral chain and one with his lantern.</p> <p>Spectral Chain. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage. On a critical hit, if the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and the groundskeeper can't use its chain against another target.</p> <p>Lantern. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage. The first time the groundskeeper scores a critical hit with this attack, or rolls a 4 on the damage die, the lantern breaks. When this occurs, the target of the attack takes an additional 5 (2d4) fire damage and is splashed with burning oil. The burning creature takes 2 (1d4) fire damage at the end of each of its turns until it or another creature within 5 feet of it spends an action to smother the flames.</p>					



Shadow Behemoth

In the Endless Ocean of Shadow of the Other, the colossal shadow behemoths are creatures woven from the darkness itself. A shadow behemoth is a composite of shadowy tendrils, mouths filled with dark teeth, and hateful, black eyes that rise to the surface of its umbral "flesh" like bubbles on foamy water.

Pure evil, shadow behemoths cannot be controlled, not even by the umbras who share a similar origin.

More than anything, shadow behemoths despise living creatures. These beasts hunt the edges of the Black Cauldron, hoping to grab a newborn Lost One before it is able to protect itself with the help of a Voice in the

Dark or other benevolent creature.

Undead Nature. The shadow behemoth does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

SHADOW BEHEMOTH <i>Gargantuan undead, chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 17 (natural armor) Hit Points 174 (12d20 + 48) Speed 40 ft., swim 60 ft.	
STR 24 (+7)	INT 3 (-4)
DEX 15 (+2)	WIS 11 (+0)
CON 19 (+4)	CHA 6 (-2)
Skills Stealth +7 (+12 in dim light or darkness) Damage Vulnerabilities radiant Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder Damage Immunities poison, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages — Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)	
Light Hypersensitivity. The shadow behemoth takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in bright light. While in bright light it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.	
Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow behemoth can take the Hide action as a bonus action.	
ACTIONS	
Multiattack. The shadow behemoth can make up to three attacks with its tendrils. It can replace one of its tendrill attacks with its Strength Drain attack.	
Tendrils. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +12 to hit, reach 30 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> 21 (4d6 + 7) necrotic damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. The shadow behemoth has ten tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.	
Strength Drain. The shadow drains the Strength of one creature it is grappling; the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse in 1d4 hours.	



Shadow Goblin

Shadow goblins are goblins who were exposed to the same aberrant energy that consumed the Olyothyrian city of Ise Serin and created the arnitikos. As such, shadow goblins are mortal enemies of the arnitikos, blaming the colorless elves for their curse.

Shadow goblins who procreate always produce twins. A shadow goblin's twin is its closest companion. Should one shadow goblin twin die, the surviving twin goes through a process that necromancers have dubbed "the unwinding." Over the

SHADOW GOBLIN <i>Small humanoid (goblin), neutral evil</i>	
Armor Class 14 (studded leather) Hit Points 17 (5d6) Speed 30 ft.	
STR 8 (-1)	INT 10 (+0)
DEX 14 (+2)	WIS 11 (+0)
CON 10 (+0)	CHA 9 (-1)
Skills Stealth +6 Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages Common, Goblin Challenge 1 (200 XP)	
Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.	
Shadow Step. While the goblin is in dim light or darkness, as a bonus action, it can teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space that it can see that is also in dim light or darkness. The goblin then has advantage on the first melee attack it makes before the end of the turn.	
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the goblin deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the goblin that isn't incapacitated and the goblin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.	
Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the goblin has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.	
ACTIONS	
Shortsword. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.	
Shortbow. <i>Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.	

next few months, the surviving shadow goblin's strength fades away until there is nothing left by a shadow.

Like the arnitikos, shadow goblins do not require food or drink to survive and they cannot rest unless they are within total darkness.

Shadow Goblin Ripper

While most shadow goblins are a loose conglomerate of murderers and thieves, sometimes, they are led by rippers. Rippers get their name from

the long, dextrous, warscythelike weapons they carry which allow them to channel and fire unstable shadow-stuff at their foes.

SHADOW GOBLIN RIPPER <i>Small humanoid (goblin), neutral evil</i>	
Armor Class 15 (studded leather) Hit Points 45 (10d6 + 10) Speed 30 ft.	
STR 10 (+0)	INT 10 (+0)
DEX 16 (+3)	WIS 13 (+1)
CON 12 (+1)	CHA 13 (+1)
Skills Stealth +9 Damage Resistances necrotic Condition Immunities condition_Immunities Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages Beste, Common, Goblin Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)	
<i>Nimble Escape.</i> The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns. <i>Shadow Step.</i> While the goblin is in dim light or darkness, as a bonus action, it can teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space that it can see that is also in dim light or darkness. The goblin then has advantage on the first melee attack it makes before the end of the turn. <i>Sunlight Sensitivity.</i> While in sunlight, the goblin has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.	
ACTIONS	
<i>Multiattack.</i> The goblin makes two attacks with its shadow ripper. <i>Shadow Ripper. Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) necrotic damage. <i>Shadow Blast (Recharge 5-6).</i> <i>Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, range 100 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 22 (4d10) necrotic damage and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target's maximum hit points are reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken.	

Thorny Strangler Vine

Whether by malevolent design or simply by prolonged exposure to unholy presences, many of the plants around Skirvin manor have become dangerous, violent, and even bloodthirsty.

Thicker and tougher than the ordinary bramble vine it resembles, the thorny strangler vine lies motionless among other vines or shrubs until it senses a creature moving nearby. Once its prey is within reach, it lashes out with lightning quickness, strangling its victim with thorn-covered tendrils.

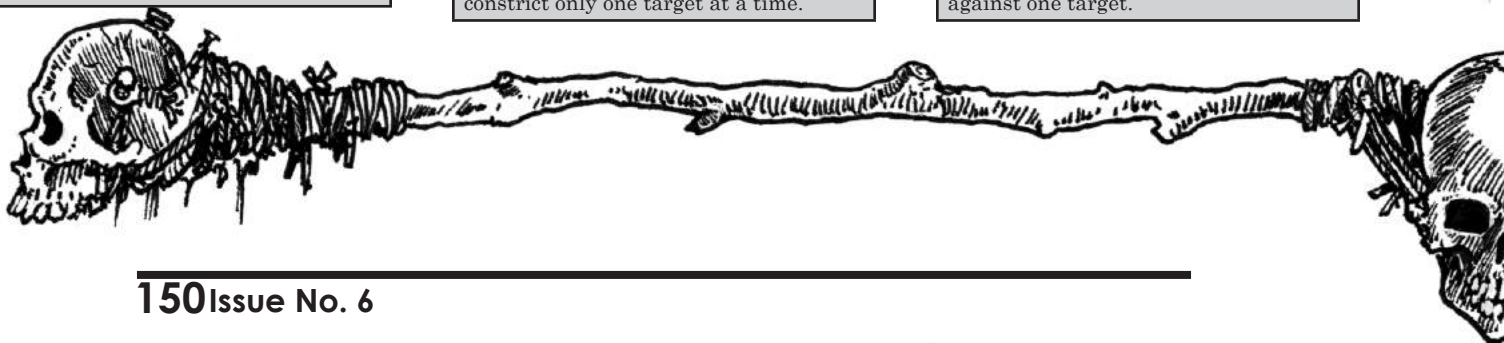
THORNY STRANGLER VINE <i>Medium plant, chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 10 Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4) Speed 0 ft.	
STR 14 (+2)	INT 1 (-5)
DEX 10 (+0)	WIS 11 (+0)
CON 15 (+2)	CHA 1 (-5)
Skills Stealth +3 Damage Vulnerabilities fire, slashing Damage Resistances bludgeoning, cold, psychic Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone, stunned, unconscious Senses tremorsense 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10 Languages — Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)	
<i>Ambusher.</i> The vine has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised. <i>Greenery Camouflage.</i> The vine has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide among foliage or thick grass..	
ACTIONS	
<i>Constrict. Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, 2 (1d4) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. The vine can constrict only one target at a time.	

Umbra

The umbra inhabit the Shores of Despair in the Other. Visitors to the Other, whom the umbra have dubbed “Those Who Encroach”, who have met the umbra recount tales of a vile, cruel species of elf-like creatures with pitch-black skin. Hence, the erroneous nickname “shadow elf.”

Shadows Reborn. Umbra do not procreate. Instead, they are made from destroyed shadows that have been reborn within the Black Cauldron. From there, these new umbra drift through the Other’s great empty

UMBRA <i>Medium fey, chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 14 (leather armor) Hit Points 36 (8d8) Speed 30 ft.	
STR 11 (+0)	INT 11 (+0)
DEX 16 (+3)	WIS 12 (+1)
CON 10 (+0)	CHA 14 (+2)
Skills Stealth +7 Damage Vulnerabilities radiant Damage Immunities necrotic Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages Beste Challenge 2 (450 XP)	
<i>Other Resilience.</i> The umbra has advantage on saving throws made against necromancy spells. <i>Shadow Stealth.</i> While in dim light or darkness, the umbra can take the Hide action as a bonus action. <i>Sunlight Weakness.</i> While in sunlight, the umbra has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.	
ACTIONS	
<i>Multiattack.</i> The umbra makes two attacks with its fu taos. <i>Fu Tao. Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage. <i>Tornado Spin (Recharge 6).</i> The umbra makes five attacks with its fu taos against one target.	



UMBRA NIGHT CHIEF <i>Medium fey, chaotic evil</i>	
Armor Class 18 (studded leather, shield) Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12) Speed 30 ft.	
STR 12 (+1)	INT 10 (+0)
DEX 18 (+4)	WIS 14 (+2)
CON 12 (+1)	CHA 17 (+3)
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +10 Damage Vulnerabilities radiant Damage Immunities necrotic Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15 Languages Beste Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)	
Dark Aura. The umbra emits an antimatter aura that extends 5 feet from it in all directions. Whenever a creature enters or starts its turn within the antimatter aura, the creature takes 5 necrotic damage. Undead and constructs are immune to this trait. Other Resilience. The umbra has advantage on saving throws made against necromancy spells. Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the umbra can take the Hide action as a bonus action. Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the umbra has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.	
ACTIONS	
Multiattack. The umbra makes three melee weapon attacks. Scimitar. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage. Whisper of Shadows (1/Day). The umbra targets one living creature it can see within 30 feet of it that can hear it. The target must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature gains vulnerability to necrotic damage for 1 minute. The target can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.	
REACTIONS	
Fade. The umbra gains immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage against one weapon attack that would hit it. To do so, the umbra must see the attacker.	

oceans and are eventually found by others of their ilk. New umbra are given their roles quickly, often as shadow-warriors in the front lines. Umbra have no memories of their past lives and unives before or during their time as a shadow.

The Shores of Despair. While the arnitikos of Omeria rarely regale the curious with stories of their time in the Other, they sometimes speak of the Shores of Despair, the chaotic home of the umbra. The Shores are not an actual coast line, rather a collection of floating islands assimilated from the Material. At the center of the Shores stands the Growing Spire, the palace of Desperon, the light-hating clan master of the umbra.

Hunters of the Arnitikos. In the black eyes of the umbra, arnitikos are seen as a malfeasance to be eradicated. Although the two share much in common—Those Who Encroach from the Material often confuse the two as close relatives—their methods of creation are quite different. Umbras spend much of their time hunting arnitikos, including those who've returned to the Other.

Masters of the Fu Tao. The umbra wield pairs of deadly finesse weapons called fu tao. Also known as tiger hook swords, these weapons resemble long steel hooks with daggers in their hilts and blades over the loop guard.

Other Nature. The umbra does not require food or drink.

Umbra Night Chief

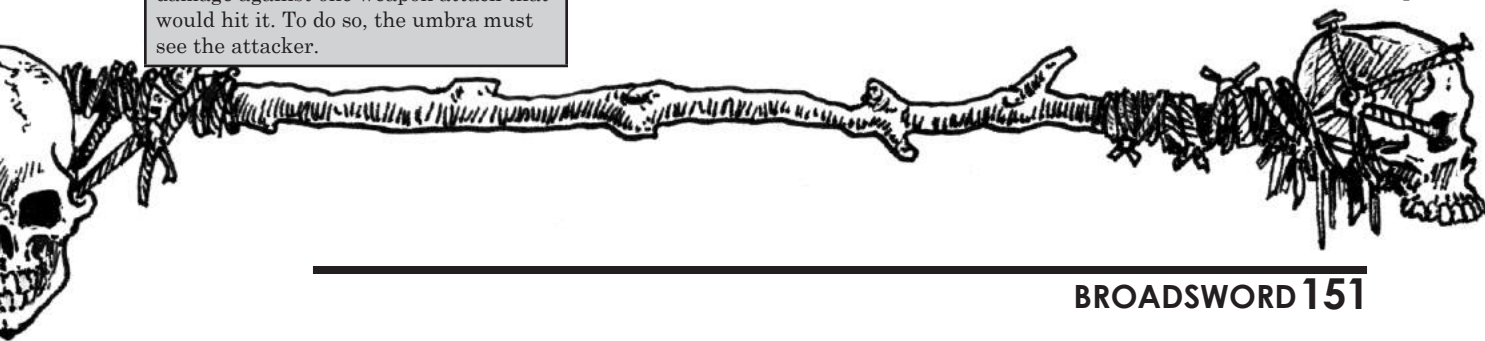
The umbra of The Shores of Despair are lead by night chiefs, the most dangerous of their kind. Night chiefs exude necrotic energy that is harmful to living creatures.

Usteusian Liberator

Although the appearance of Usteus' liberators can still be somewhat off-putting to those unfamiliar with the celestials, their basic humanoid shape and wings are a little more familiar and angel-like than those of their companions, the punishers. Although the majority of liberators have a feminine form, they have no preference for one one gender over the other. Regardless, their bizarre personalities invoke feelings of fear more than calm. Hence, they frequently repeat the phrase, "Don't be afraid." Unfortunately, the kraldoses that infest the liquid shadow below the Aerie of Judgment have adopted this phrase to lure in unsuspecting Lost Ones.

Protectors. Inherently good creatures, liberators are sent forth by direct command of Usteus to protect those who are experiencing injustice. The first appearance of Usteus' servants came during the Hand of the One/Transmuter Wars. An entire swarm of liberators descended on the Basgoth during the Battle of Aspaeth, granting the Fongoli witchhunters the access they needed to take down Loikiel and his minions.

Aerie of Judgment. Both the punishers and liberators of Usteus make their home within The Other in the Aerie of Judgment. The Aerie itself resembles a colossal, spherical hornets' nest that hovers above the liquid shadow of The Black Cauldron. There, the two sects of Usteus' celestials buzz about waiting for directions from their god (who, strangely, is not present). The creatures then retreat to The Tunnel which gives them access to a myriad of planes within the Cosmos, including the Real. The Aerie itself does not include the punishers'



APPENDIX D

mummy servants. Instead, those servants remain in the Real, hidden in the dark recesses of Usteusian temples.

Immortal Nature. The punisher does not require food, drink, or sleep.

Usteusian Punisher

Usteusian punishers are hardly what one imagines when one hears the term “angel” or “celestial.” Nonetheless, these servants of the two-faced god of judgement Usteus act as the the accusers and punishers of the damned. Punishers are ten feet tall from foot to shoulder with four-foot-long extendable necks terminating in an eyeless skull. The punishers wield gargantuan hammers, the Mauls of the Guilty, which they use to crush those who oppose justice.

Bandages of Usteus. Not only do the punishers destroy the guilty as part of Usteus’ accuser personality, but those who toe the line between law and chaos are mummified and bound by the Bandages of Usteus. Once the life of a living creature is sapped by the punisher’s bandages, it must serve the punisher as its assistant. Usteusian mummies are required to serve for a period of 999 years. Once its time is served, the mummy’s soul is free to ascend to its final destination.

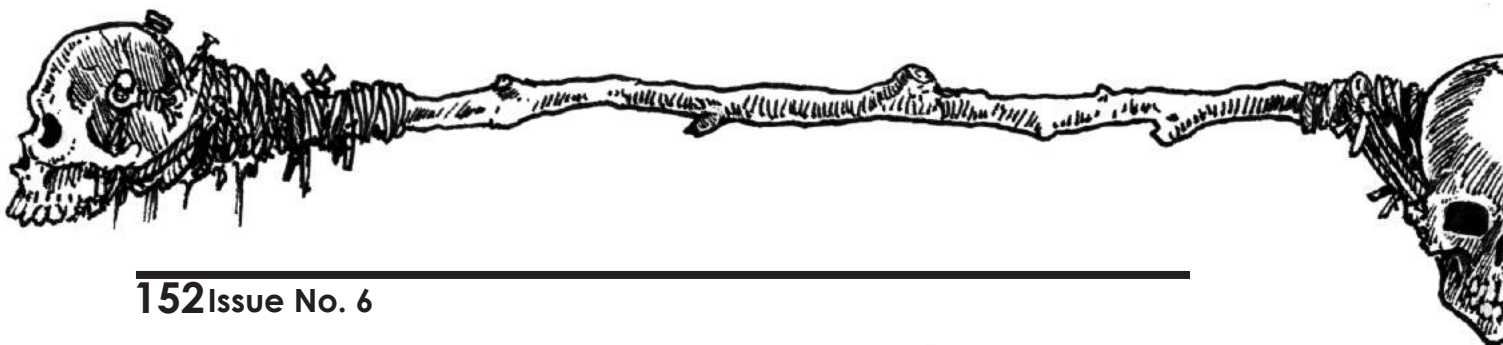
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USTEUSIAN LIBERATOR					
<i>Medium celestial, neutral good</i>					
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)					
Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)					
Speed 40 ft., fly 120 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)	25 (+7)
Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +11, Cha +11					
Skills Perception +15					
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks					
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, restrained					
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 25					
Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.					
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)					
Angelic Weapons. The liberator’s weapon attacks are magical. When the liberator hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 3d8 radiant damage (included in the attack).					
Divine Awareness. The liberator knows if it hears a lie.					
Foe of Evil. The liberator has advantage on attack rolls made against creatures of evil alignment.					
Innate Spellcasting. The liberator’s spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19). The liberator can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:					
At will: <i>bless, cure wounds, detect evil and good, freedom of movement</i>					
3/day each: <i>command, sanctuary</i>					
1/day each: <i>commune, protection from evil and good, revivify</i>					
Magic Resistance. The punisher has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.					
ACTIONS					
Multiattack. The liberator makes three melee attacks.					
Claws. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) radiant damage.					
REACTIONS					
Sphere of Safety (1/day). When the liberator or any friendly creature that it can see within 10 feet of it is hit by an attack, the liberator can create a 10-foot radius sphere of shimmering energy, enclosing all creatures and objects within the area. An unwilling creature must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is enclosed for the duration. The sphere functions similarly to the spell <i>resilient sphere</i> , but it can contain multiple creatures and objects (including the liberator itself) and it cannot be moved. The sphere remains as long as the liberator concentrates (as if concentrating on a spell), up to 1 minute.					

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mummy servants. Instead, those servants remain in the Real, hidden in the dark recesses of Usteusian temples.

Immortal Nature. The punisher does not require food, drink, or sleep.



USTEUSIAN PUNISHER					
<i>Large celestial, lawful neutral</i>					
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)					
Hit Points 175 (13d10 + 104)					
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	13 (+1)	26 (+8)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)
Saving Throws Con +13, Wis +10, Cha +10					
Skills Perception +15					
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks					
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison					
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned					
Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 25					
Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.					
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)					
<p>Angelic Weapons. The punisher's weapon attacks are magical. When the punisher hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 4d8 radiant damage (included in the attack).</p> <p>Divine Awareness. The punisher knows if it hears a lie.</p> <p>Foe of Chaos. The punisher has advantage on attack rolls made against creatures of chaotic alignment.</p> <p>Innate Spellcasting. The punisher's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). The punisher can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:</p> <p>At will: <i>detect evil and good</i></p> <p>3/day each: <i>command</i>, <i>hold monster</i></p> <p>1/day each: <i>commune</i>, <i>locate creature</i>, <i>telekinesis</i></p> <p>Keen Smell. The punisher has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.</p> <p>Magic Resistance. The punisher has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.</p>					
ACTIONS					
Multiattack. The punisher makes two melee attacks.					
Maul. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 21 (4d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) radiant damage. After the punisher hits a creature with this attack, it can use its bonus action to force the creature to make a DC 20 Strength saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is knocked back 10 feet and falls prone.					
Bandages of Usteus (1/Day). The punisher conjures magical bandages that appear out of thin air then wrap themselves around a creature that the punisher can sense within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target is restrained by the bandages. While restrained, the creature can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) at the start of each of the punisher's turns. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. If the bandages reduce the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies and a mummy rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later. The bandages can be cut away (AC 10; 5 hit points; immunity to poison and psychic damage; resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons). The bandages can also be broken if a creature takes an action and succeeds on a DC 18 Strength check against them.					

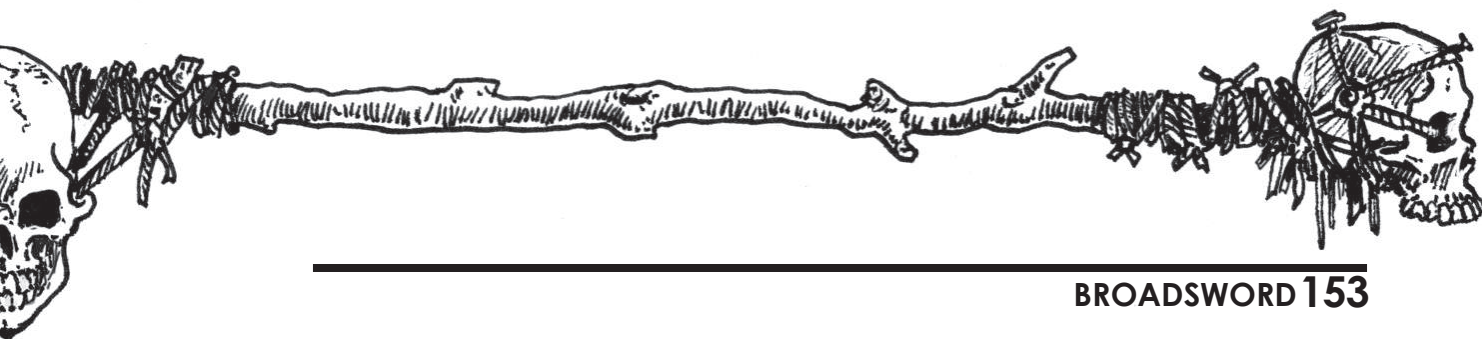
Vapul, Demon of Frost

Even lesser-known demons can make deals with mortals. Vapul, a powerful demon of frost, particularly enjoys making warlock pacts with individuals who seek revenge at any cost. Vapul relishes in feeding its warlocks' hatred, pushing the misguided souls to carry out their vengeance, then reveling in the inevitable chaos and tragedy that ensues. And as it so happens, Vapul has made at least one such deal with an individual within Skirvin Manor...



Warlock of Vapul

Warlocks of Vapul are offered their pacts when they seek ruthless vengeance against those they perceive as having wronged them. Those with an especially intense hatred for their persecutors are the most attractive to Vapul, and the demon is more than happy to enable their plans for revenge.

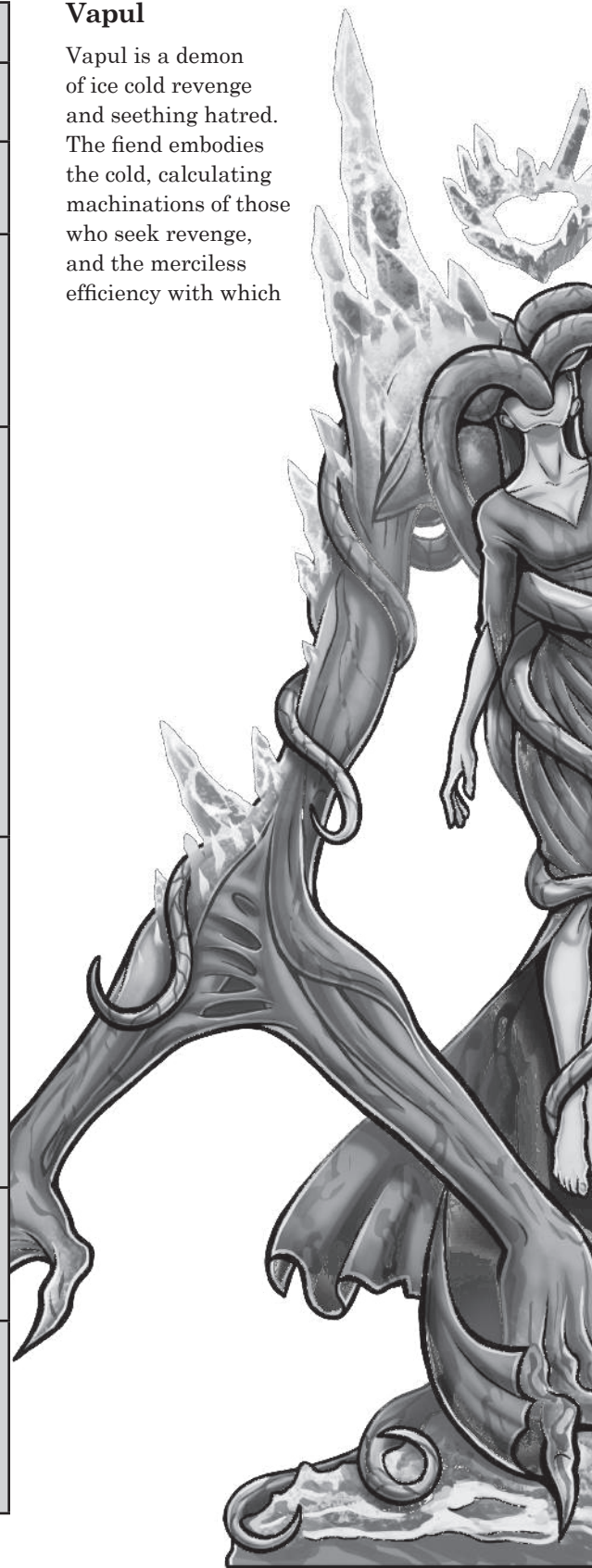


APPENDIX D

VAPUL					
<i>Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 18 Hit Points 212 (17d10 + 119) Speed 40 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)
Saving Throws Str +12, Dex +9, Con +13, Int +8, Cha +12 Skills Arcana +8, Deception +11, Insight +10, Perception +10 Damage Resistances lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks Damage Immunities cold, poison Condition Immunities poisoned Senses truesight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20 Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, telepathy 120 ft. Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)					
<p>Abyssal Chill. Vapul exudes an aura of bone-chilling cold in a 10-foot radius. When a living creature enters this area for the first time on a turn, or starts its turn there, it is forced to make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.</p> <p>Fiendish Blessing. Vapul's AC includes its Charisma modifier.</p> <p>Magic Resistance. Vapul has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.</p> <p>Skinwalker. Vapul can spend 1 minute magically hollowing out the corpse of a Medium or larger humanoid who has died in the past 24 hours, then crawl inside and inhabit the remains. When it does, Vapul magically absorbs the host's memories from the past year, and assumes the humanoid's appearance (albeit pale and sickly), voice, and mannerisms.</p> <p>Innate Spellcasting. Vapul's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21, +11 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:</p> <p>At-will: <i>gust of wind</i>, <i>misty step</i>, <i>prestidigitation</i>, <i>ray of frost</i> 2/day each: <i>fog cloud</i>, <i>sleet storm</i>, <i>wall of ice</i> 1/day each: <i>cone of cold</i>, <i>ice storm</i>, <i>freezing sphere</i></p>					
ACTIONS					
<p>Multiattack. Vapul makes two attacks with its claws.</p> <p>Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 16 (3d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) cold damage.</p> <p>Freeze. Vapul emits rays of freezing magic from the eyes in its monstrous palms. Up to two creatures within 60 feet of Vapul that are within 15 feet of each other must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) cold damage and become restrained by ice. A restrained creature can use its action on each of its turns to make a DC 19 Strength (Athletics) check, ending the effect on a success. If the restrained creature takes fire damage, it gains advantage on the next check it makes to escape the effect before the end of its next turn.</p> <p>The restraining ice has an AC of 12, 10 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The effect ends immediately for a creature if the restraining ice's hit points are reduced to 0, and the freed creature takes any excess damage.</p>					
REACTIONS					
<p>Cold Front (3/Day). When a creature moves to within 10 feet of Vapul, Vapul can, with a flick of its hand, send a wave of biting cold in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area is pushed 5 feet away from Vapul, and is forced to make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.</p>					
LEGENDARY ACTIONS					
<p>Vapul 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. Vapul regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.</p> <p>Swipe. Vapul makes an attack with its claws.</p> <p>Quick Cast. Vapul casts one of its at-will spells.</p> <p>Freezing Gale (Costs 2 Actions). Vapul moves up to 30 feet in a straight line, not provoking attacks of opportunity. Each creature that is within 5 feet of Vapul at any point during this movement must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) cold damage and be knocked prone.</p>					

Vapul

Vapul is a demon of ice cold revenge and seething hatred. The fiend embodies the cold, calculating machinations of those who seek revenge, and the merciless efficiency with which



the deepest of vengeance is fulfilled. Favoring a long route to revenge, Vapul believes that vengeance is in fact, a dish best served cold—that there's nothing better than shattering the illusion of one who has wronged you, once they feel secure.



WARLOCK OF VAPUL

Med humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (14 w/ mage armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 8 (-1) **INT** 13 (+1)

DEX 12 (+1) **WIS** 14 (+2)

CON 16 (+3) **CHA** 17 (+3)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +5, Insight +5, Perception +5

Damage Resistances cold

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge ~ (~ XP)

Frost Demon's Blessing. While under the effects of her own mage armor spell, the warlock gains the following benefits:

- The warlock ignores difficult terrain caused by ice or snow.
- The warlock can tolerate temperatures from -150 to 150 degrees Fahrenheit without any additional protection.
- Any cold damage the warlock takes is reduced by 10 (after resistances, to a minimum of 0).
- Any time the warlock casts a spell that deals cold damage, she can add her Charisma bonus to the damage dealt against a single target of that spell.

Ice Heart. The warlock has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

In addition, whenever a creature makes a melee attack against the warlock while standing within 5 of her, the creature is forced to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. The creature takes 7 (2d6) cold damage and has disadvantage on attack rolls ability checks until the end of its next turn on a failed save, or takes half as much damage and suffers no further effects on a successful one.

Spellcasting. The warlock is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She regains her expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. she knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

1st–5th level (2 5th-level slots): *darkness*, *dominate person*, *expeditious retreat*, *fog cloud*, *gust of wind*, *hold monster*, *ice storm*, *mage armor*†, *misty step*, *sleet storm*

†The warlock casts this spell on herself before combat.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Wispsborn

As innocent and oblivious as any newborn, it could be seen as a mercy that the wispsborn remain blissfully unaware of the horrible fate that befell them. Ω

WISPBORN

Small humanoid (goblin), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 3 (1d4 + 1)

Speed 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR 1 (-5) **INT** 2 (-4)

DEX 12 (+1) **WIS** 13 (+1)

CON 12 (+1) **CHA** 17 (+3)

Skills Perception +3

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

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Ephemeral. The wispsborn can't wear or carry anything.

Innocence. Whenever a living creature targets the wispsborn with an attack or a harmful spell, or if the creature casts a harmful spell that targets an area that includes a wispsborn the creature can see, the creature must first make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature loses the attack or spell. A creature makes this saving throw only once per attack or spell.

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

ACTIONS

Cry. Each living humanoid within 30 feet of the wispsborn must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or take 3 (1d6) psychic damage and be deafened until the end of its next turn.

Baleful Presence. Each living humanoid of the wispsborn's choice that is within 15 feet of the wispsborn and aware of it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed for 1 minute.

A charmed creature must repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. On a failed save, a creature takes 2 (1d4) psychic damage and makes all attack rolls and ability checks with disadvantage until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to this wispsborn's Baleful Presence for the next 24 hours.





APPENDIX E

PLAYER MAPS & HANDOUTS

BY DAVE HAMRICK

Tether Handout 1

Everyone here is lying. Follow the creek a half a mile north of the village and meet me at my wagon in one hour. I'll tell you everything.

A friend

Tether Handout 2

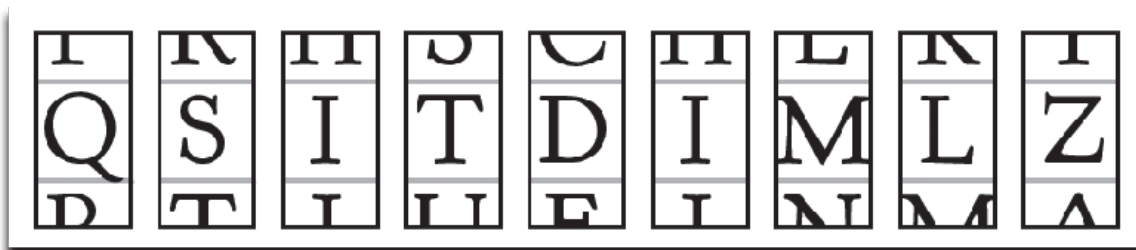
I've started this memoir to recount the important events of my life. While I have not accomplished much in my 60 years, I can at least share with the world the terrible things I saw when I worked at Skirvin Manor forty years ago in hopes that it can help set right the evils that occurred within those walls.

I worked at Skirvin Manor for two years. In my time there I witnessed much. Lord Skirvin, while a kind man to the servants, was unfaithful to his wife, Marren. He had an affair with a young woman there by the name of

Ludra, one of the other servants. I would often catch them leaving the tomb of Skirvin's deceased daughter, Priscilla fixing their clothes and agreeing not to speak of what happened between them.

Then one day Priscilla disappeared. I know not what happened to her. What I do know is that one night she returned to the manor, flustered, some seven months after leaving. She was visibly pregnant and demanded to see Skirvin. Oaken, the master of the servant

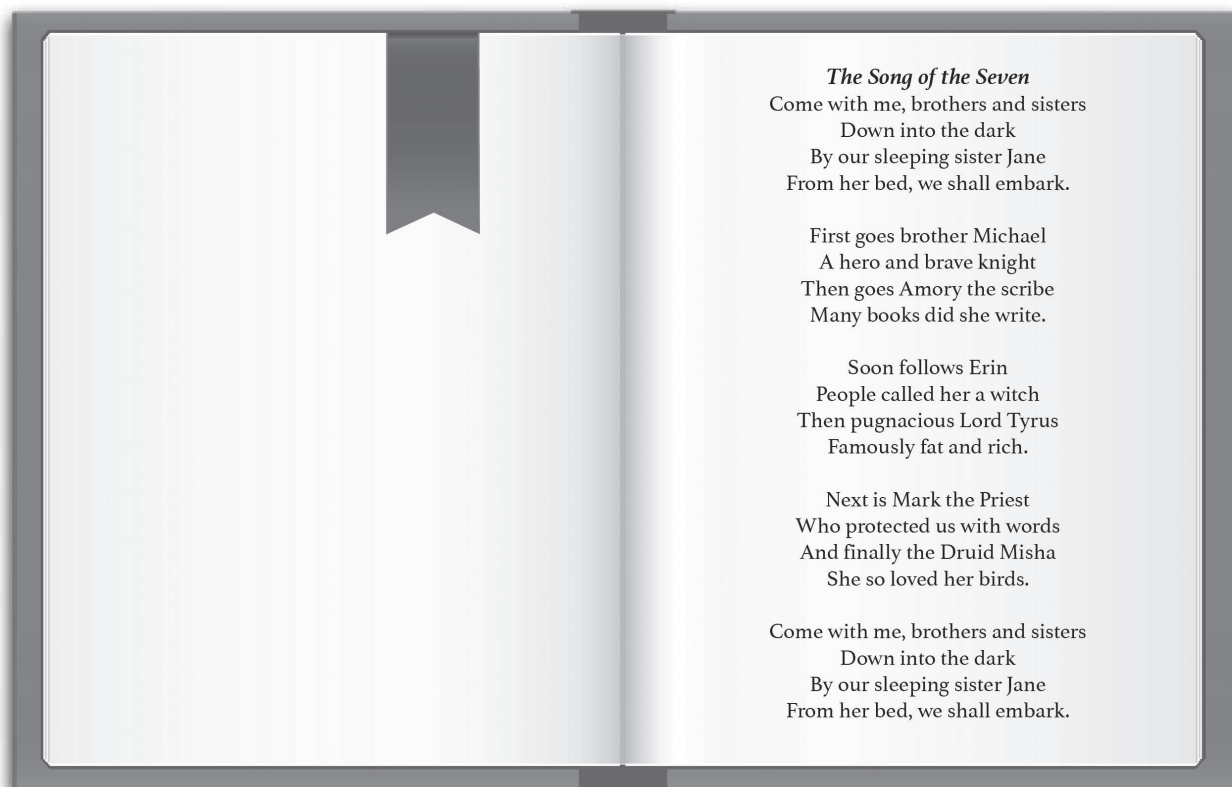
Tether Handout 3



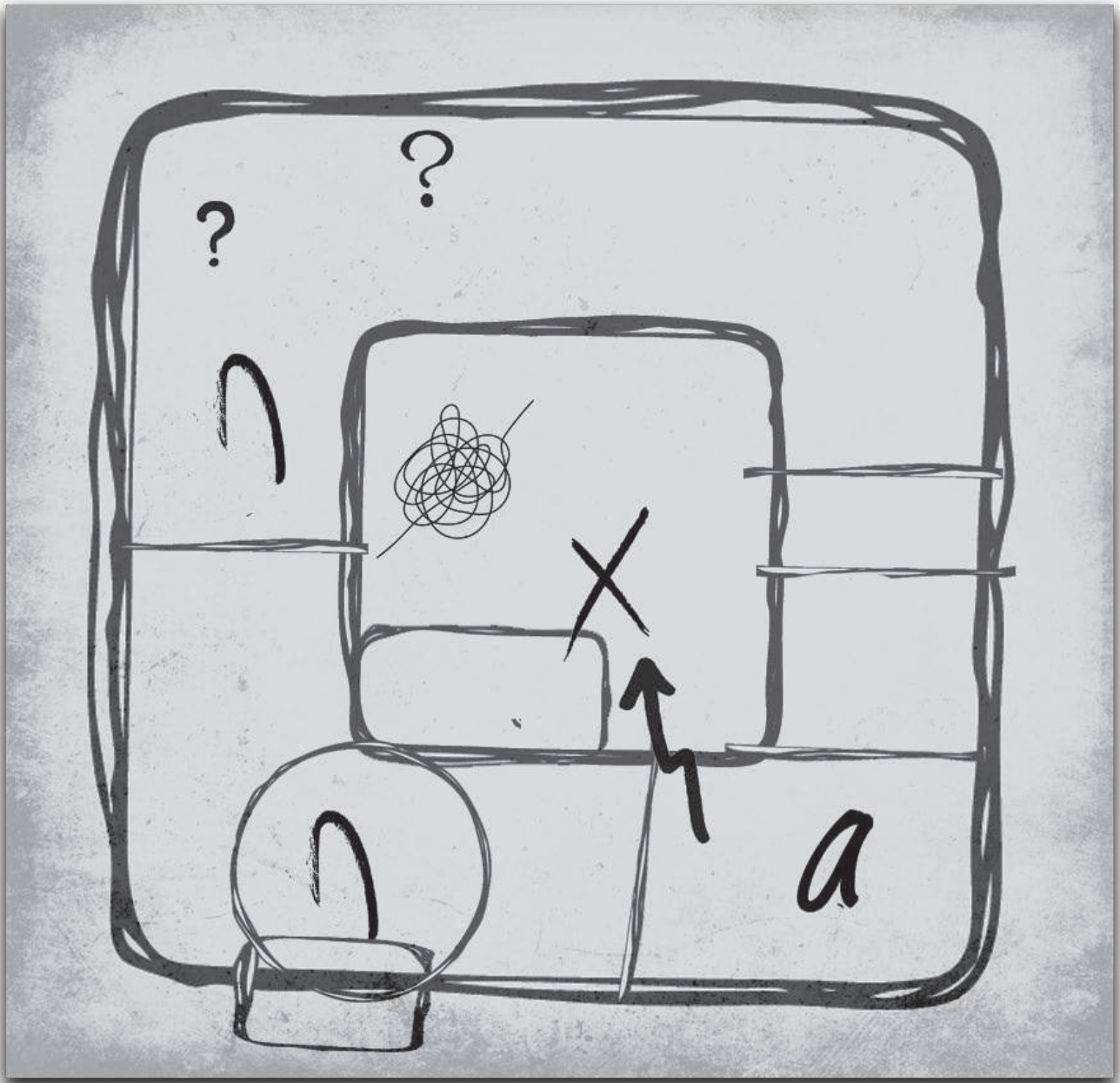
Tether Handout 4

BEG A DEAD FACADE

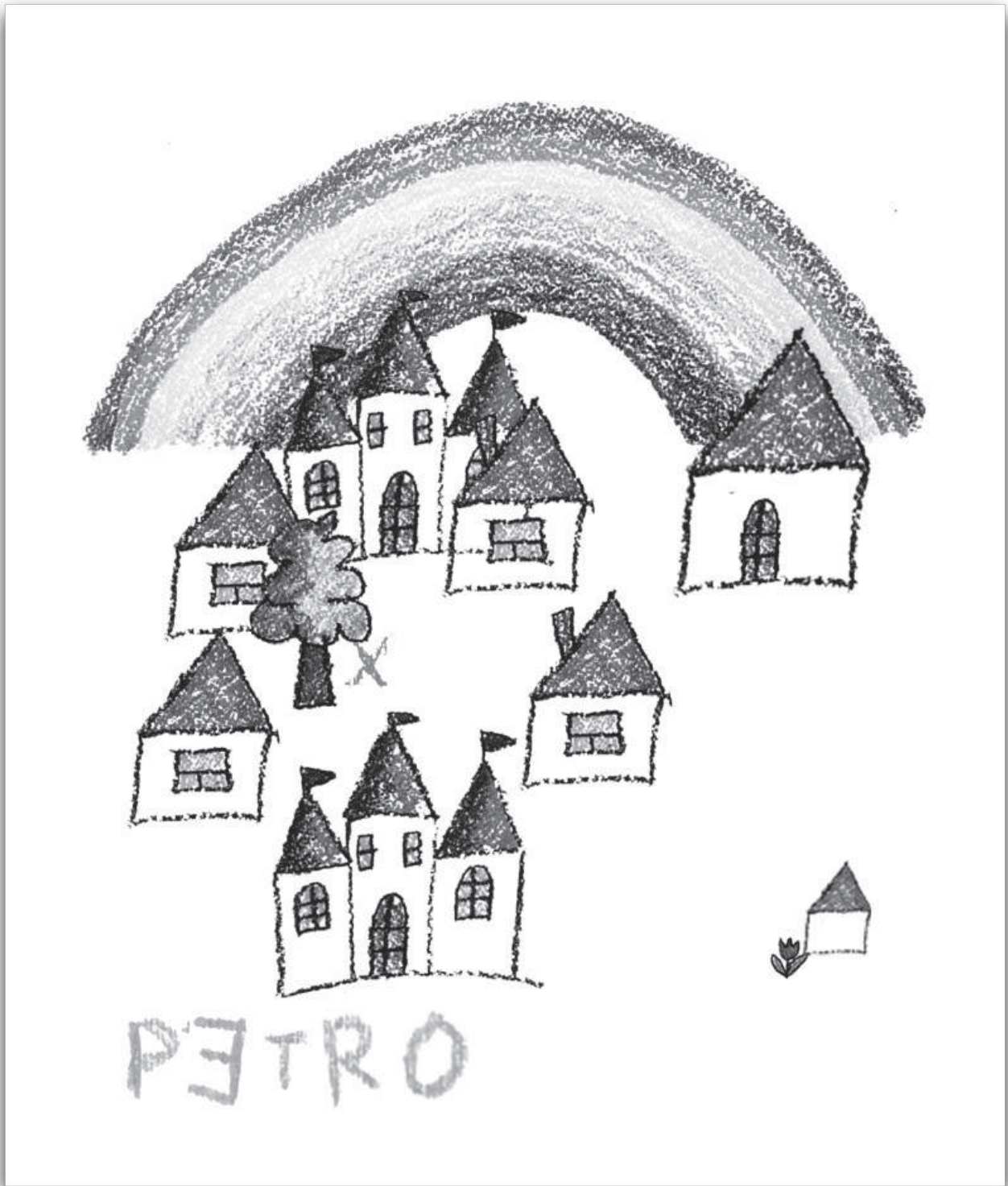
Tether Handout 5



Tether Handout 6



Tether Handout 7



Tether Handout 8

A fat man wearing a crown dressed in luxurious garments.

A woman in the forest surrounded by many birds.

A woman holding a quill in one hand and a bottle of ink in the other.

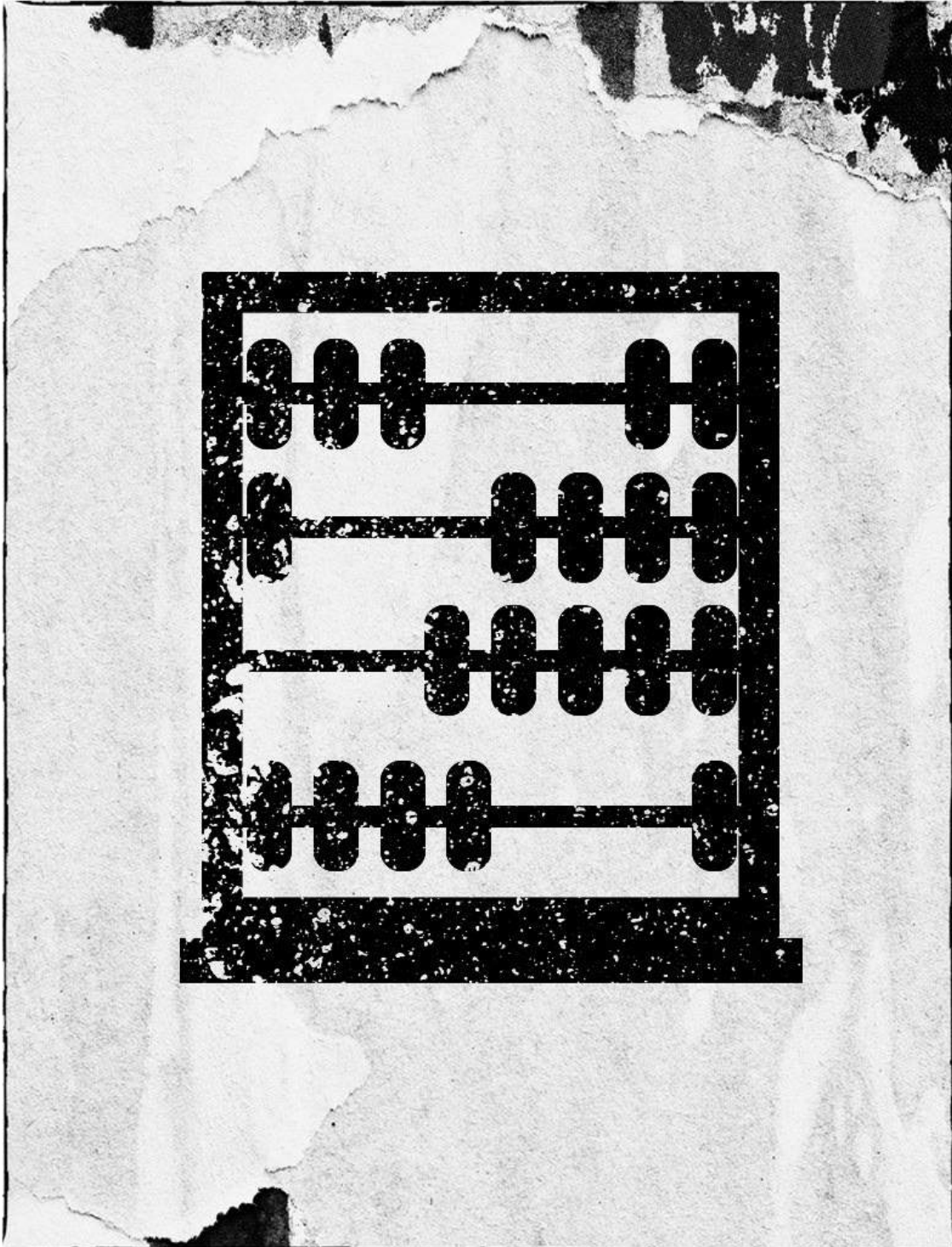
A man holding a sword and shield dressed in full plate armor.

A woman sleeping, her eyes closed and hands behind her head.

A woman wearing a pointed hat with a cat at her feet.

A man wearing clerical vestments and holding a religious tome.

Tether Handout 9



THE SUMMER LAND PRELUDE

BY DAVE HAMRICK

ART BY JASON GLOVER AND WILLIAM MCAUSLAND

Five Years Later...

The Summer Land takes place five years after the events of *The Fantastic Lie*. If you've been running the entire Hand of the Eight campaign, naturally, the players will have some questions regarding what happened to their characters during the time jump. The following rules options offer solutions to handling the characters' lives during that time.

"What Happened to My Character?"

After the destruction of The Tower of Burshai, what happened to your character? Did they go into hiding? Or did they turn themselves in? Maybe they continued investigating the Dinzers and their reasons for hiding so much from the rest of Omeria.

First, choose one of the Time Jump Activities below. Each activity requires that your character make a series of checks, with a DC determined at random based on the obstacles and opposition you face. The checks you make depends on the activity taken, identified in activity's description. The DC for each of the checks is 5 + 2d10; generate a separate DC for each one. Consult the respective table to see how the character did during that time. All characters make their own series of checks even if one or more characters choose the same activity.

Some of the activities' modifiers depend on whether or not the other members of your party participate in the same or different actions. Have the players write their path choices down on a slip of paper. After everyone has chosen their path, have the players reveal their paths at the same time.

Time Jump Activities

The following list of activities are suitable for any character to follow. Of course, as the GM, you are the final arbiter in what the characters can and can't do. The activities that you allow might depend on the nature of the character and their past. For example, a famous noble might have trouble going into hiding.

"I go underground..."

You remain on the continent but stay in the 'shadier' parts of the land, far from the prying eyes of law enforcement. This could mean spending time

in Aspaeth, Gar Wabrizz, or event certain parts of The Desolation of Ditimaya.

Checks: Dexterity (Stealth), Wisdom (Perception), Charisma (Deception); if desired, the character can replace one of these skill checks with an attack roll using one of the character's weapons, a melee spell attack, or a ranged spell attack.

Modifiers: You gain a +5 bonus to your checks if you have the Criminal or Urchin background. You receive a -1 penalty to each of your checks for every other member of your party that chooses this path (maximum of -5).

Going Underground Outcomes.

Results	Outcome
0 successes	You are caught by authorities and turned over to the Dinzers. Make a "I turn myself in..." check with disadvantage on each check.
1 success	You are nearly caught by the Dinzers. Choose another activity to perform; you may also take this activity again. For any activity that you take other than "I turn myself in..." you make your checks with disadvantage.
2 successes	I successfully stay underground for the next five years.
3 successes	I successfully stay underground for the next five years and I gain one advantage from my time spent there. Roll on the Going Underground Advantages table.

Going Underground Advantages.

d6	Advantage
1	You gain a criminal contact. This advantage is similar to the Criminal Contact feature described under the Criminal background in Chapter 4 of the <i>PHB</i> .
2	You learn one language and one tool proficiency.
3	You gain access to a hideaway. The hideaway is no larger than 15 x 15 feet. It can be a shack in the wilderness, or a permanent room at an inn in a major city. The hideaway is stocked with enough supplies to allow you to lay low for a month if the need arises.
4	You became the leader of a gang. You gain the service of three gang members. Your gang members are commoners who can perform mundane tasks for you, but they do not fight for you, will not follow you into obviously dangerous areas (such as dungeons), and will leave if they are frequently endangered or abused.
5	You came into some wealth. You gain 2d6 x 100 gp.
6	You came across an uncommon magic item (of the GM's choice).

“I change my identity...”

You change everything about yourself to hide from those who would benefit from your apprehension. Your name, clothing, even background change to fit this new identity.

Checks: Charisma (Deception), Charisma (Disguise Kit), Charisma (Performance)

Modifiers: You gain a +5 to your checks if you have the Charlatan background. You suffer a -5 penalty to your checks if you have the Folk Hero or Noble background.

New Identity Outcomes.

Results	Outcome
0 successes	You are caught by authorities and turned over to the Dinzers. Make a “I turn myself in...” check with disadvantage on each check.
1 success	You are nearly caught by the Dinzers. Choose another activity to perform; however, you may not take this activity again. For any activity that you take other than “I turn myself in...” you make your checks with disadvantage.
2 successes	I maintain my false identity for the next five years without anyone noticing.
3 successes	I maintain my false identity for the next five years without anyone noticing and I gain an advantage. Roll on the New Identity Advantages table.

New Identity Advantages.

d6	Advantage
1	You gain an allied contact. Your GM can determine the nature of the NPC, or you can make a suggestion that’s relevant to the character’s background. An allied contact is one that will render aid to you, but not at the risk of their own life. The contact may stop assisting you if the contact learns your true identity (GM’s discretion).
2	Under your new identity, you gain a romantic interest. You decide whether or not you wed and if you have children (1d4 - 1). And you gain a new bond: “My family must never know my true identity.”
3	Whether it’s a business or an investment account, you create a successful lifestyle for yourself. Your income source pays you 1d4 x 10 gold per month.
4	You built a small home for yourself away from prying eyes. Your home is no larger than 15 x 15 feet. You have enough supplies there to allow you to lay low for a month if the need arises.
5	You leveraged your new identity to learn more about what happened on Trenrock Mountain. You learn one piece of lore. The lore is equivalent to one true statement about a person, place, or thing related to the events of the Tower of Burshai, the Dinzers, or anything else the GM deems appropriate.
6	You came across an uncommon magic item (of the GM’s choice).

“I turn myself in.”

Afraid of the consequences of going on the run, you turn yourself into the nearest authority. Depending on how well you do, this could mean that you act as an informant for one or more governments. Or you could end up in a dungeon... or worse.

Checks: Charisma (Persuasion), Intelligence (History), Wisdom (Insight)

Modifiers: You gain a +1 bonus to your checks for each member of your party that doesn’t turn themselves in (maximum +5). You gain a +5 bonus to each of your checks if you have the Folk Hero background. The maximum modifier you can add to your checks is +10.



Surrender Outcomes.

Results	Outcome
0 successes	You are imprisoned and spend the next five years in a Dinzer dungeon.
1 success	You are imprisoned, but manage to escape. Choose another Time Jump activity. The new activity’s checks are made with disadvantage.
2 successes	You become a secret informant for the Dinzers. You have a contact with whom you must speak to regularly.
3 successes	You are found innocent of your crimes. However, the Dinzers keep a close eye on you. How you spend the remainder of your time is up to you.

“I hide in the wilderness.”

You take to the mountains, forests, tundra or deserts of Omeria, completely taking yourself off the grid.

Checks: Intelligence (Nature), Wisdom (Survival), and a special Constitution check that has a bonus equal to a roll of your character’s largest Hit Dice (this roll doesn’t spend that die).

Modifiers: You gain a +5 bonus to each of your checks if you have the Hermit or Outlander backgrounds.

Wilderness Advantages.

d6	Advantage
1	You gain an animal companion. Your companion must be a beast of CR 1/8 or less. The animal can act as a lookout and a friend, but it does not fight for you and will not follow you into dangerous areas unless it remains in your pocket or on your shoulder. The companion will leave if it is frequently endangered or abused.
2	You gain access to a hideaway. The hideaway is no larger than 15 x 15 feet. It can be a small cave or even a shack in the wilderness. The hideaway is stocked with enough supplies to allow you to lay low for a month if the need arises.
3	You went on a spiritual journey. You gain insight into a future event that has not happened yet. The GM describes what this event is. This event might or might not come true.
4	You discovered an area of interest. This area may or may not be connected to the greater mystery (GM’s discretion).
5	You learn one language and one tool proficiency.
6	You came across an uncommon magic item (of the GM’s choice).

Wilderness Outcomes.

Results	Outcome
0 successes	You are caught by authorities and turned over to the Dinzers. Make a “I turn myself in...” check with disadvantage on each check.
1 success	You are nearly caught by the Dinzers. Choose another activity to perform; you may take this activity again. For any activity that you take other than “I turn myself in...” you make your checks with disadvantage.
2 successes	You successfully disappear into the wilderness for the next five years.
3 successes	You successfully disappear into the wilderness for the next five years and you gain an advantage. Roll on the Wilderness Outcomes table on page 3.

“I search for the truth...”

You spend your time looking for answers. Why were you set up, and who set you up? Why did the Dinzers cast an illusion over Omeria? You must know.

When you learn lore, each piece of lore is one true statement about a person, place, or thing. The GM is the final arbiter concerning exactly what your character learns.

Checks: Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Insight), Charisma (Intimidation); if desired, the character can replace one of these skill checks with an attack roll using one of the character’s weapons, a melee spell attack, or a ranged spell attack.

Modifier: You gain a +1 bonus to each of your checks for each character in your party that also tries to uncover the truth (maximum +5).



Truth-Seeking Outcomes.

Results	Outcome
0 successes	You are caught by authorities and turned over to the Dinzers. Make a “I turn myself in...” check with disadvantage on each check.
1 success	You are nearly caught by the Dinzers. Choose another activity to perform; you may take this activity again. For any activity that you take other than “I turn myself in...” you make your checks with disadvantage.
2 successes	You learn one piece of lore.
3 successes	You learn two pieces of lore.

“I seek diplomatic immunity.”

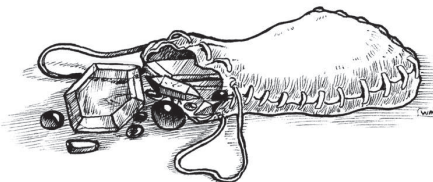
Thanks to your connections or high position, you seek amnesty for the challenges made against you (and possibly your comrades).

Checks: Intelligence (History), Wisdom (Insight), Charisma (Persuasion).

Modifier: You gain a +5 bonus to each of your checks if you have the Acolyte or Noble background. You can try to get your fellow party members off all charges; if you do, you receive a -1 penalty for each party member you try to grant diplomatic immunity (maximum penalty of -5). Although you are trying to help your allies, only you make the requisite checks.

Amnesty Outcomes.

Results	Outcome
0 successes	Your attempt at gaining immunity fails and you are apprehended. Make a “I turn myself in check...” to determine what happens to you.
1 success	You (and only you) are granted immunity, but only on the condition that your allies turn themselves in. If your allies agree, each one must make a “I turn myself in...” check.
2 successes	You successfully gain diplomatic immunity for yourself, but not your allies. Your allies may choose any Time Jump Activity that they like.
3 successes	You and all the allies whom you sought to protect gain diplomatic immunity.



“I try to bribe my way out...”

Money talks and everything else walks. With coin-heavy palms, you try to buy your way out of your predicament.

Checks: Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), Wisdom (Insight), Charisma (Persuasion or Deception); you must spend a minimum of 100 gp to bribe your way out.

Modifier: You gain a +1 bonus to each of your checks for every 100 gp that you spend, and you gain a +5 bonus if you have the Charlatan, Noble, or Guild Artisan background. The maximum modifier you can add to your checks is +10.

Bribe Outcomes.

Results	Outcome
0 successes	Your attempt at gaining immunity fails and you are apprehended. Make a “I turn myself in check...” to determine what happens to you. Your checks are made at disadvantage.
1 success	Your attempt at a bribe fails and you are apprehended. Make a “I turn myself in check...” to determine what happens to you.
2 successes	You successfully bribe your way out of trouble.
3 successes	You successfully bribe your way out using only half the gold that you spent.

The Emerald War

The Emerald War started in early 1041 AT when the Arruquettans accused the Dinzer-nation of Odonburg of conspiracy. So far, there have been close to 6,000 battles between the Dinzers and the Arruquettans, mostly in the Desolçion

of Ditimaya and along the Scorched Coast.

Currently, the Dinzers hold the upper hand, but the Arruquettans are working hard to regain lost ground. Recently, the Arruquettans took hold of the western Ditimayan village of

Dubufi, famous for being the home of Uduzmoth the Obese, the colossal tarrasque of legend. There, a unit of Arruquettan Spear-Wielders, evocation-powered superhumans, have single-handedly fought off all comers. .



APPENDIX F

Life Events

Of course, life is much more complicated than the actions you choose. During the five years of downtime, other amazing happenings and tragedies occurred, as well as conflicts and successes, or even encounters with the unusual. These events may affect how your character sees the world now; they might even be a totally different person!

Roll once on the Life Events table below. Many of the results on that table direct you to one of the secondary tables that follow.

Secondary Tables

These tables add detail to many of the results on the Life Events table. The tables are in alphabetical order. Ω

Adventures.

d4	Outcome
1	You nearly died. You have horrible scars on your body.
2	You lost something of sentimental value to you during your adventure. Remove one trinket from your possessions.
3	You were terribly frightened by something you encountered and ran away, abandoning your companions to their fate.
4	You learned a great deal during your adventure. The next time you make an ability check or a saving throw, you have advantage on the roll.

Supernatural Events.

d4	Outcome
1	You were ensorcelled by a supernatural being and enslaved for a year before you escaped.
2	A fiend tempted you. Make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, your alignment shifts one step toward evil (if it's not evil already), and you start the game with an additional 1d20 + 50 gp.
3	You dreamt of a large, two-headed mantis that whispered the word "Ninety-Three" to you.
4	You had a vision of a world made of shadow from which there was no escape.

Tragedies.

d4	Outcome
1	A family member or a close friend died. Work with your GM to determine the nature of the deceased character, your relationship to them, and how they died.
2	War ravaged your home community. Everything was reduced to rubble.
3	A lover disappeared without a trace. You have been looking for that person ever since.
4	A current or prospective romantic partner of yours died. Work with your GM to determine the nature of the character's death.

War.

d4	Outcome
1	You were badly injured in the fight, and you still bear the awful scars of those wounds.
2	You survived the battle, but you suffer from terrible nightmares in which you relive the experience.
3	You escaped the battle unscathed, though many of your friends were injured or lost.
4	You were remembered as a hero in the battle, and might have even received a medal for your bravery.

Life Events.

d10	Event
1-2	You suffered a tragedy. Roll on the Tragedies table.
3-4	You made an enemy. Roll a d6. An odd number indicates you are to blame for the rift, and an even number indicates you are blameless. Work with your GM to determine this hostile character's identity and the danger this enemy poses to you.
5-6	You made a friend. Work with your GM to determine this friendly character's identity and how this friendship began.
7	You met someone important. Work with your GM to determine this character's identity and establish how they feel about you.
8	You went on an adventure. Roll on the Adventures table to see what happened to you. Work with your GM to determine the nature of the adventure and the creatures you encountered.
9	You fought in a battle. Roll on the War table to learn what happened to you. Work with your GM to come up with the reason for the battle and the factions involved.
10	You had a supernatural experience. Roll on the Supernatural Events table to find out what it was.



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With no memory of how they arrived, you find yourself within ...

The Black Cauldron.

The Sea of Shadow.

The Other.

An infinite sea of liquid black, it is an opaque not-liquid formed from the remains of dead shadows, lost souls, those that have slipped through the Real and into The Other. The Black Cauldron not only stretches on for infinity, but it is infinitely deep as well.

The Black Cauldron is a hopeless, empty nothing ... and you are trapped.

- Hand of the Eight Chapter 8: The Shores of Shadow

