

BROADSWORD

ADVENTURES FOR FIFTH EDITION

JANUARY 2021 ISSUE NO. 12 \$25.00

FEATURING
THE DOOMED CITY OF BLUTSTROM
15 LINKED ADVENTURES FOR 5E
27 NEW MONSTERS & TREASURES



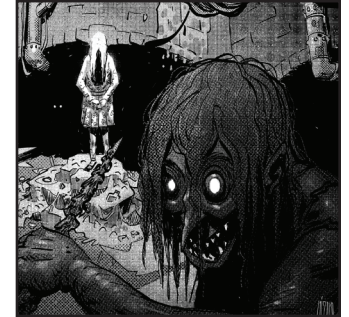
BROADSWORD

ADVENTURES FOR FIFTH EDITION

JANUARY 2021 ISSUE 12 Monthly



COVER:
A lone hero contemplates entry into one of the ruined wards of the doomed city of Blutstrom. Art by Tithi Luadthong.



Cities on Flame with Rock and Roll

This issue is a bit of an experiment. In a departure from our normal adventure format, each adventure is comparatively short and should be playable in an evening. This new format has allowed our contributors to explore more situations and themes than would be normal for a single issue of *BroadSword*.

These scenarios are loosely set in the final days of Blutstrom, a doomed city rife with intrigue and strange goings-on. The adventures are versatile enough that you can easily take your pick and drop them into your own campaign with no problem. We have none the less provided a handy outline if you wish to combine them all into a full campaign “adventure path” that can provide for months of adventuring.

-Scott Craig

VOL. I, NO. 12

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CONTROVERSY, *n.* A battle in which spittle or ink replaces the injurious cannon-ball and the inconsiderate bayonet.

- Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary* (1911)

OMERIA ONLINE

YOUR GUIDE TO THE DMDAVE COMMUNITY

BY MELISSA PRESTI

ART BY WILLIAM MCAUSLAND

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USING THIS BOOK

GETTING THE MOST FROM BROADSWORD MONTHLY

BY DAVE HAMRICK
ART BY TIM HARTIN

Must-have Tomes

To run these adventures, you will need access to the Fifth Edition rules and associated core rulebooks, abbreviated as *PHB*, *DMG*, and *MM*.

Understanding the Format

In addition to the monsters included in the *MM* core rulebook, 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 *MM*. If a stat block appears as part of this book, the adventure's text tells you where to find it.

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 is described in this book.

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.





































Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout these adventures:

hp = hit points
AC = Armor Class
DC = Difficulty 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

Dungeon Key

1 square = 10 ft.

 Door	 Trap
 Double door	 Stairs
 Secret door	 Bars/gate
 Secret trap door in floor	 Wooden planks
 Concealed door	 Dais/raised platform
 False doors	 Fountain
 Pillar	 Pool
 Statue	 Chute Trap
 Altar	 Throne
 Covered pit trap	 Magic circles
 Open pits	 Thaumaturgic circle
 Wells	 Pentagram
 Tapestry/curtain	 Elevation lines
 Downward slope arrow	 Brazier
 Turn-around trap	 Teleporter
 Illusionary wall	 Teleporting pillars
 Rubble	
 Sarcophagus	
 Falling block trap	
 Mirror	

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APL = Average Party Level
LG = Lawful Good
NG = Neutral Good
CG = Chaotic Good
LN = Lawful Neutral

N = Neutral
CN = Chaotic Neutral
LE = Lawful Evil
NE = Neutral Evil
CE = Chaotic Evil

OMERIA GAZETTEER

THE CITY OF BLUTSTROM

BY BENJAMIN "SARGE" GILYOT
ART BY MACIEJ ZAGORSKI

Welcome to Blutstrom

Founded almost a century ago along the Red River, it initially served as the holy site of dwarven merchants to honor a fallen champion. Over time it grew into a major trading post, and now boasts a population of over 20,000 denizens of all heritages. Scholars established an academy here to study the strange arcane effects of the Red River, and the fertile lands allowed for the cultivation of cotton and silk for a growing textiles industry. However, it has known nothing but tragedy in recent decades.

Two decades ago, relations between various Dwarven clans broke down and erupted into a civil war. Despite its overall neutrality and diverse population, Blutstrom became the site of two major battles that decimated the populations outside of the walls. In recent years, the decline in favor of local priests has led to an upsurge in criminal activity. Crime syndicates now control most of the city, with the merchants only able to maintain control of the docks.

Now, with demons appearing on the streets every night, no one is sure what the future holds for Blutstrom.

For information on specific locations in Blutstrom, see Appendix A.

Factions in Blutstrom

The following groups operate within Blutstrom.

The Church of St. Tormal

This church was founded by Tormal, a dwarven cleric of great renown five centuries ago. She led her people in battle against ancient extraplanar threats and successfully managed the transition from war to nation-building after the fighting ended. The faithful of St. Tormal strive to build successful communities built on the strength

of contracts and mutual aid. However, the ongoing crises in the region have diminished support for the church.

The Arcane Academy of Blutstrom

Founded by an older elf named Filverel the Wise, he sought to understand the arcane functionings of the red waters of Blutstrom. Over time, he determined that the red clays carried by the river carry trace amounts of powerful magical stones washed down from the dangerous lands still controlled by the primordials. Filverel's students continue to manage the academy, but he hasn't been seen in Blutstrom in over a decade after leaving to help with the civil war.

Scarlet Guerrilla Band

This local gang transports most of the illicit goods within Blutstrom. The local guard has been unable to end their protection scheme. Rumors say their leader is a primordial of some sort. Despite their brutal reputation, locals in the slums have come to rely on them against criminals in the region.

Demon Night Campaign

Before the adventure begins, an abandoned temple to St. Tormal was burned to the ground and demons began appearing on the streets at night. The local guard, depleted by years of strife and conscription, have been unable to stop the crisis. It is up to the characters to assist the people of Blutstrom in this time of need.

Who destroyed the temple and what their machinations may be are up to you.

Starting Quests. When the characters first assemble in a tavern/inn/location of your choice, the party sees three quests posted. Each one

has its details posted on a wall. Give the players the information for these quests so they can choose which to pursue.

- **Dretches in the Garden.** "Smelly dretches have taken over the local botanical garden. Local druid Clover is offering spell scrolls as a reward for their removal. See her out near the gardens." If the characters go here, proceed with ***Dretches in the Garden***.
- **Noise Complaints.** "Dretches have been tearing apart trash and breaking into homes on Cobblestone Street. The neighbors have posted a 50 gp reward for anyone who can remove the nuisances. Speak to the local baker when you're done." If the characters go here, proceed with ***Trash Gremlins***.
- **Bloody Hand Activity.** "The Church of St. Tormal seeks adventurers to investigate the activities of the Bloody Hand in the warehouses near the docks. Speak with Acolyte Kessia for a reward of 100 gp." If the characters undertake this quest, proceed with ***Blood Baptism***.
- **Follow-Up Quests.** After the characters complete two starting quests, Goldarm offers three more quests for them to pursue.
- **Nekrola.** The characters are approached directly by a dwarf shaman. "I've got a problem, and you folks seem useful. Looks like the cult of Jenuraath is trying to set up shop here, but the local authorities are too swamped. I'll pay you to take care of 'em." If the characters undertake this quest, proceed with ***Children of Demons***.
- **Sewer Trouble.** "Strange sounds have been coming from the sewers. Investigate the reports in the area for a reward of 50 gp." If the char-

acters go here, proceed with *Lair of the Sea Hag*.

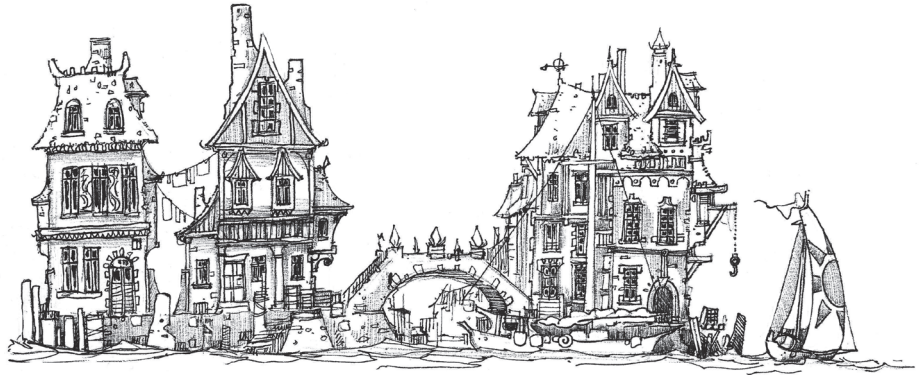
- **Gnolls Spotted in Blackroot Tower.** “Gnolls have gathered outside the city in the abandoned Blackroot Tower. The city guard is offering 20 gp per gnoll removed from the tower.” If the characters undertake this quest, proceed with *Tower of Gnolls*.

After the characters complete two follow-up quests, another three follow-up quests are added to the job board:

- **Alita has Vanished.** The daughter rescued in “Lair of the Sea Hag” has vanished again. The wizard Fumblemore reaches out to the party to locate her again. If the characters undertake this quest, proceed with *Mausoleum of the Mirage Mage*.
- **Golden Opportunity.** The characters catch wind that a local crime lord is leaving town for a bit and Aldorf Manor will be relatively undefended for a single night after his other guards’ riverboat stalled on the way back to Blutstrom. They can break in and recover important information or find valuables. If the characters pursue this opportunity, proceed with *Kobold Alone*.
- **Missing Persons.** “The city guard has received reports of over 200 missing people in the vicinity of the Frightened Flower bar. Investigate the disappearances in the area and we will pay 200 gp.” If the characters undertake this quest, proceed with *Snakes in a Bar*.

After the characters reach the 5th level, the city guard approaches them to tackle high-value demon contracts.

- **The Snake Queen’s Lair.** Following up on the information gleaned in “Snakes in a Bar,” the local authorities have found an underground passage in the temple district and want the players to confront the marilith and her demons before they open a larger portal. The guard offers 200 gp for



the quest and offers to let the party keep any valuables they find. If the characters take this quest, proceed with *Lair of the Snake Queen*.

- **Descent Into Hell.** A portal to hell appears sporadically in the city. Sigeric is offering 1000 gp to any party willing to venture into the portal and close it permanently. If the characters take the quest, proceed to *Descent Into Hell*.
- **Regal Problems.** Princess Alwina contacts the party secretly for help locating her missing brother, and believes he was last seen in the royal tombs. She offers them 500 gp and whatever they find in the tombs if they can locate and rescue her brother. If the characters take this quest, proceed to *Innocent Blood*.

After the characters complete two demon contracts, the local clergy contacts them about worrisome demonic activity.

- **Dangerous Demons.** Powerful demons have somehow made it back into the city. The authorities are offering 2400 gp to eliminate the threat. If the characters accept, proceed to *Wrath of the Demon Lord*.

Leveling Up in the Campaign

Characters advance in level by completing quests, using the guidelines detailed on each of their pre-generated character sheets. Regardless of the number of characters in the party, the rate of advancement is as follows:

- Characters gain a level each time they complete a starting quest, until they reach 3rd level. Once they are 3rd level or higher, completing a starting quest has no effect on their level.
 - Characters reach the 4th level once they complete two follow-up quests. They reach the 5th level after completing three more follow-up quests. Once they are 5th level or higher, completing a follow-up quest has no effect on their level.
 - Characters gain a level after completing two of the demon contracts.
- Rumors.** The characters can learn of the following additional quest opportunities for loot.
- **A Lost Memento.** A local noble has lost an important item in an abandoned mine and would like the characters to recover it. If the characters follow this rumor, proceed to *Into the Blood Mine*.
 - **Secrets of the Past.** Rumors say a powerful demon is trapped in a hidden location outside of town. If the characters search for this location, proceed to *Lost Dungeon of the Demon Cultists*.

Player-Driven Content

The goal of the quest layout here is for players to determine why and when they approach the problems they want to solve. These adventures are intentionally loosely-connected to provide room for the players to derive meaning from the quests they choose to pursue and the allies they make along the way. Ω

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BroadSword Monthly has been fortunate to have at its disposal some very talented writers and artists. Some pieces were specially commissioned, some purchased in collections for commercial use, while other works are readily available for free use thanks to generous patrons and artists.

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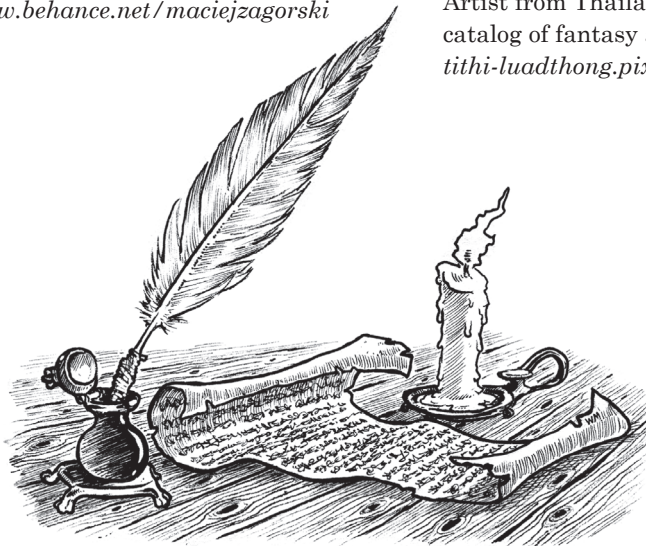
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VENOM OF THE SNAKE QUEEN



TRASH GREMLINS

BY CORVID'S EMPORIUM

A 1st-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Corvid's Emporium

Art by Matias Lazaro, Jason Glover, Rick Hershey, and William McAusland

Trash Gremlins is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to seven characters of 1st to 2nd level and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1. Characters who survive this adventure should earn half of the XP required to reach the 2nd level.

This adventure takes place around a rundown city alleyway. This adventure assumes placement in the Blutstrom campaign setting. However, it can just as easily be placed in any campaign setting that has a city with winding side streets and demons.

Adventure Background

A pack of **dretches** slipped into the material plane and nested in a vacant apartment floor. Relieved of their duties in the eternal war by a stroke of luck, they've been picking through garbage in a nearby alley for food and getting into fights amongst themselves, inciting noise complaints from the nearby city folk.

Adventure Hooks

You can use the following adventure hooks to key your players up for this adventure.

Exotic Pet. A noble woman with a taste for exotic animals heard a rumor that there are squat, gorilla-shaped creatures with pale, rubbery skin and bristly hairs lurking in the city streets. The noble woman has offered 100 gp for the capture of such a creature so that she may domesticate it.

Noise Complaints. A small group of neighbors have put up a bounty of 50 gp for anybody that can deal with whatever creatures have been trashing the alleyway and fighting in the dead of night.

Questionable Meat. Local food connoisseur Brandar Starglade III offers to pay 50 gp for the characters to investigate the butcher's shop and the adjacent alley. He believes they're sourcing meat from the trash.

Cobblestone Street

Wet cobblestone streets twist and turn through the city of Blutstrom.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations along the cobblestone street have the following features.

Ceilings. Indoors, the ceilings are typically eight feet high and composed of wood.

Floors and Walls. The streets are made of cobblestone and thick clay. Indoors, most buildings have wooden floors and walls.

Doors. All of the buildings' doors are made of wood and have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Opening or closing a door requires a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

Light. Outdoors, there are no sources of light in this alleyway at night. Indoors, buildings have enough lanterns to provide dim light throughout each room.

Climate. The city streets are cool and damp. Indoors, the temperature is kept comfortable by fireplaces.

Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map Cobblestone Streets.

1 - Alleyway

Characters may approach from the north or south. If the characters arrive during the day they can investigate the alleyway for clues. At night there is an encounter with a spry noble and dretches.

Day. If the characters arrive during daylight hours, read the following:

The clatter of footsteps and horse hooves echoes through the narrow cobblestone street. People dressed in tattered clothes pass through the side street, mostly minding their own business with the occasional heckling.



Investigating the Alleyway. Waste is strewn across the alley in heaps. Characters must make an Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (Nature) check to learn more about the alley. See the table below for results of this check.

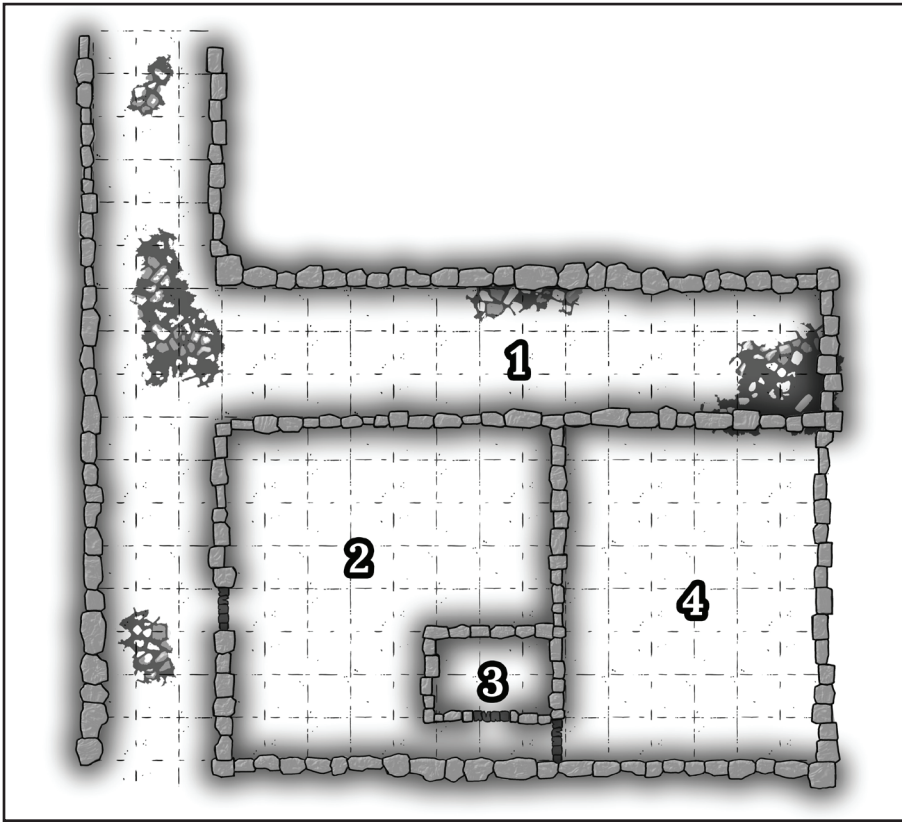
Check	Result
5 or lower	The character learns nothing and contracts the <i>sewer plague</i> disease.
6 to 11	The character learns that a pack of small creatures tore through the trash looking for food.
12 to 15	The character learns that a pack of small creatures were looking for food. They also find a claw shedding and a patch of rubbery, pale skin.
16 or higher	The character learns that a pack of small creatures were looking for food. They also find a claw shedding and patch of rubbery, pale skin that they correctly identify as belonging to a dretch , a gorilla-like demon grunt.

Night. If the characters arrive during the night, read the following:

The narrow cobblestone street is quiet, nary a soul walking through it. A faint rummaging can be heard from down the alleyway veering east and the silhouette of a man bracing the corner is visible in the moonlight.

Man at the corner. The man leering at the corner is a noble named Esmond Graye (LN male human **spy**). He shushes the characters as they approach. He is waiting for the creatures in the alley to find a *paralyzing gem* he left in the garbage so that he can capture one of them and sell it to a noblewoman that wants an exotic pet.

Encounter: Drunk Dretches. There are three overstuffed **dretches** that have eaten too much and have disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls. They are rifling through the garbage in the alleyway. If they are not interrupted, after 10 minutes one of them accidentally eats a *paralyzing gem* (see below) and becomes paralyzed. At this point Esmond attempts to capture one of them. The



dretches are Surprised and attempt to flee through some loose stone in the wall of the butcher shop.

Loose Stone. If the dretches fail to escape, the characters discover loose stone in the wall of the butcher shop and patches of fur around it.

Paralyzing Gem. This amber gemstone is an uncommon wondrous item. While a creature is touching the gem, the creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for 1 minute. On a success, the creature is immune to the effects of the stone for 1 minute.

2 - Butcher Shop

The butcher shop is a three-room facility with a stairwell leading to apartments above. When the characters enter the shop, read the following:

Fresh meat dangles from hooks on the ceiling behind a large counter-top.

Butcher. The butcher is named Maria. She is in the shop during the day. She has a room full of butchered humanoid bodies in the apartments upstairs and is therefore reluctant to allow characters to scour the premises, dissembling about how she has customers to attend to. If pressed, she can inform the characters that every morning when she arrives to open the shop, the alleyway is littered with trash thrown everywhere.

3 - Closet

Read the following:

The closet contains coats, boots, and an assortment of kitchen implements.

Encounter: Giant Rat. At night, there is one **giant rat** lurking in this room. Its movement speed is halved due to a half-dozen rat traps that cling to its feet and fur. It lashes out at any creature that gets within 5 feet of it.

4 - Kitchen

Read the following:

Several tables and counters fill this room. Equipment for cutting, preparing, and preserving meat with salts is scattered throughout.

Mud Trail. Skirting the eastern edge of the room is a trail of mud leading from the wall adjacent to the alleyway to the stairwell. A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals several loose stones in the alley wall that could be pushed aside for a small creature to squeeze through.



Vacant Apartments

These old, worn down apartments are occupied by questionable tenants.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations along the cobblestone street have the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings are typically 8 feet high and composed of wood.

Floors and Walls. The apartments have worn wooden floors and walls that are clearly decaying.

Doors. The doors are made of wood and have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Opening or closing a door requires a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check or a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools.

Climate. The city streets are cool and damp. Indoors, the temperature is kept comfortable by fireplaces.

Light. Dim moonlight diffuses through the windows of the outer rooms.

Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the Apartments map.

1 - Stairwell

Read the following:

A broken lantern hangs over this dark, 15-foot-long, 10-foot-wide stone stairwell.

Encounter: Spiders. There is one **swarm of spiders** at the top of the stairwell. They attack any creature that walks through their space but do not chase creatures outside of the stairwell.

2 - Hallway

Read the following:

The wooden walls of this poorly lit 5-foot-wide hallway bend and crack under the weight of neglect. The musty smell of mold and burnt oil saturates the air.

Hazard: Mold. Mold grows in dark recesses of the wooden walls, and one patch covers a five-foot square. If touched, the mold ejects a cloud of spores that fill a 10-foot cube originating from the mold. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or spend its action on its turn retching and reeling. Creatures that don't need to breathe or are immune to poison automatically succeed on this saving throw.

3 - Large Apartment

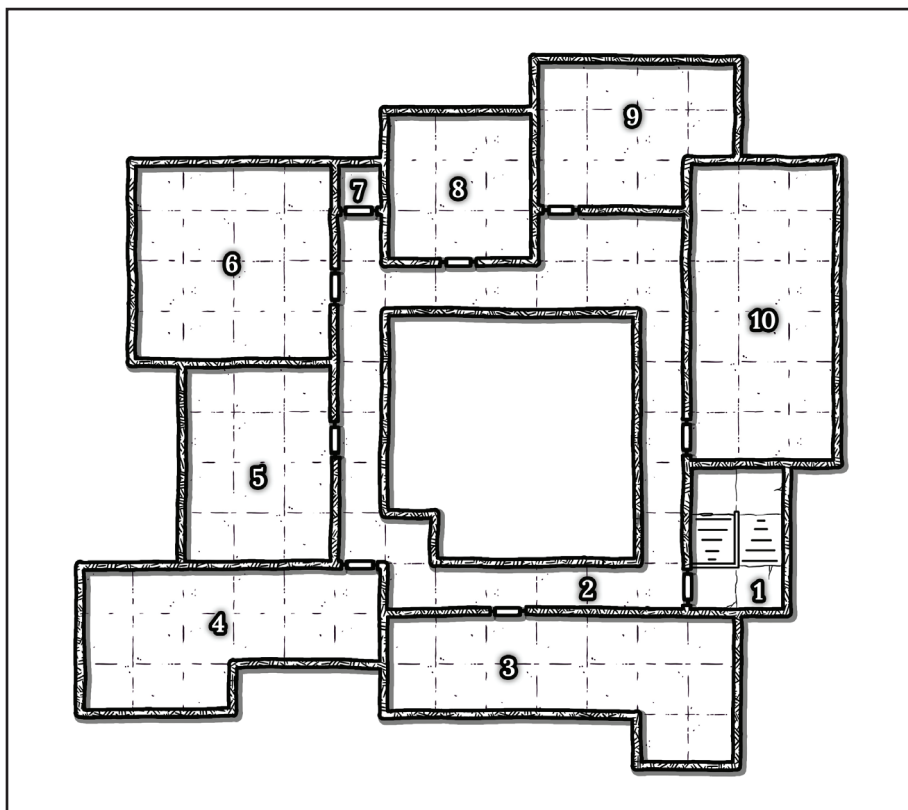
Read the following:

This 35-foot-wide by 10-foot long room has two half-open windows on the south wall and three rotting beds.

Treasure: Rotting Beds. Characters that investigate the beds and succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check find a silver cloth choker (25 gp), a leather sash (25 gp), and 100 cp.

4 - Large Apartment

Read the following:



This 30-foot wide, 10-foot-long room is strewn with the smashed remains of rotting furniture. It looks like the room once held a bed, desk, chest, and a chair. Two large bat-like shapes dangle from the ceiling.

Encounter: Stirges. There are two **stirges** hanging from the ceiling. They do not attack unless a character walks into the room.

5 - Small Apartment

Read the following:

The strong, sour-sweet scent of vinegar assaults the senses. Sundered casks and broken bottle glass line the walls of this room. A drunk gnoll waffles around the center of the room while a small, green gorilla-like creature snacks nearby.

Encounter: Gnoll and Dretch. There is one **dretch** and one over-stuffed **gnoll** that has disadvantage

on ability checks and attack rolls. When the characters enter the room the gnoll rolls around and demands more food while the dretch attempts to pat the characters down in search of snacks, attacking if it finds none.

6 - Square Apartment

This room is used by the butcher as a discrete meat locker for more controversial meats.

Read the following:

Corpses and pieces of flesh hang from hooks that dangle from chains attached to thick iron rings. Several heavy leather sacks hang from hooks in the walls. They are suspiciously wet and the leather looks extremely taut—as if it's under great strain. The butcher Maria is hurriedly taking down the meats and throwing them into a bin.

Encounter: Maria the Butcher. Maria is a chaotic evil human **thug** with the following changes:

- She has resistance to cold, fire, and lightning damage.
- She can read and speak Abyssal.
- She has darkvision out to 60 ft.

Maria attempts to pretend, poorly, that she doesn't know who hung the bodies in this room up.

Bodies. If the characters look closer at the bodies, read the following:

Most appear humanoid, but a few of the body parts appear more monstrous. You don't see any heads, hands, or feet—all seem to have been chopped or torn off. Neither do you see any guts in the horrible array.

Leather Sacks. A character that opens the leather sacks discovers that they are filled with guts.

7 - Cleaning Closet

Characters can see and hear the door handle rattling meekly.

Encounter: Dretch. A dretch is trapped inside of this closet. Through the door they attempt to bribe the characters with an origami flower to be let out.

If the characters let the dretch out peacefully, read the following:

A small, greasy looking creature steps out of the dark closet and extends its hands outward, holding a flacid rose made out of human flesh. The dretch gives a toothy smile.

8 - Communal Bathroom

Read the following:

This small room is lined with benchlike seats on all the walls. The seats all have holes in their tops, like a privy. Facing stones on the front of the benches disguise the depths of the hole. It looks like a communal bathroom. A single paper bag sits in the center of the room.



Trap: Paper Bag. When a creature picks up the paper bag it triggers a *glyph of warding* that casts *stinking cloud* (DC 12).

9 - Disheveled Apartment

Read the following:

The scent of earthy decay fills the room. Smashed bookcases and their sundered contents litter the floor. A collapsed bunk bed rests in a nook on the western wall. Two dretches are holding a cat and exchanging aggressive expressions.

Encounter: Dretches. There are two dretches holding a cat. They ask the characters which one of them should get to eat the cat. If the characters choose a dretch, the chosen dretch yanks the cat and begins eating it alive, scarfing it down in one round. The other dretch attacks the characters.

10 - Large Apartment

Read the following:

A cluster of low crates surrounds a barrel in the center of this chamber. Atop the barrel lies a stack of copper coins and two stacks of cards, one face up. A thin layer of dust covers everything. Clearly someone meant to return to their game of cards.

Barrel. When a creature moves within 10 feet of the barrel, a sharp hiss emits from within it. A DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that it's from a snake.

Encounter: Poisonous Snakes. When a creature moves within five feet of the barrel, a **poisonous snake** exits the barrel and attacks. Another **poisonous snake** exits from one of the crates and attacks.

Concluding the Adventure

At the end of the adventure the characters have dealt with an infestation of dretches, a gnoll, and a butcher with questionable relationships.

Adventure Hook Resolutions

There were three adventure hooks mentioned in the introduction. Here is the resolution for each adventure hook:

Exotic Pet. If the characters provide a living, breathing dretch to the noblewoman she pays them the 100 gp offered. She will pay 50 gp for each additional dretch.

Noise Complaints. The group of neighbors are horrified to learn what the source of the disruption was and eagerly pay the characters for their trouble.

Questionable Meat. Brandar Starglade III is horrified, but also deeply vindicated by the news that the butcher was using humanoid meat. He pays the characters for their trouble. ♪

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DRETCHES IN THE GARDEN

BY CORVID'S EMPORIUM

A 1st-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Corvid's Emporium
Art by Matias Lazaro and Maciej Zagorski

Dretches in the Garden is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to seven characters of 1st to 2nd level, and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1. Characters who survive this adventure should earn half of the XP required to reach the 2nd level.

This adventure takes place in a recently abandoned botanical garden. This adventure assumes placement in the Blutstrom campaign setting. However, it can just as easily be placed in any campaign setting that has a moderately wealthy city or the ruins of one.

Adventure Background

This adventure takes place in a botanical garden named “Blackwood Gardens” after the Blackwood noble family. In recent years, the old garden has fallen into disrepair from neglect. A local druid named Clover has been quietly tending to its plants.

Now, a pack of dretches have holed up in the old botanical garden, cultivating demonic plants and animals at the behest of a lamia named Castys. The demons proved too difficult for Clover to deal with on her own.

You can learn more about Castys in the follow-up adventure *Snakes in a Bar* where she is featured.

Adventure Hooks

Concerned Gardener. An energetic druid named Clover approaches the characters disguised as a humble gardener. She warns the players of demons lurking in the botanical gardens and offers them a *spell scroll* of *Speak with Animals* in exchange for clearing out the botanical garden.

Distraught Milkman. Rumors have been circulating that a milkman went to deliver to the botanical garden, not realizing they had closed, and found unspeakable horrors inside. The man has been openly begging for somebody to investigate, offering his paltry savings of 5 gp, so that he may

sleep easy again.

Demons? Again? Kessia, a member of the local clergy, has received word that there are demons coming and going from the botanical garden. She is offering 100 gp to anybody that can clear out the demons.

Blackwood Gardens

The botanical garden is a small, single-story structure nestled in the heart of the city. It has a collection of unique plants and critters. Its crowning exhibit is a corpse flower.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in the botanical garden have the following features.

Ceilings. The arched stone ceilings of this illustrious garden are 12 feet high.

Floors and Walls. Cold, stone floors and walls run the length of this building.

Doors. All of the garden's doors are made of wood and have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. None of the doors in this building are locked.

Light. The abandoned structure is dark inside. There are old, broken lanterns scattered around.

Climate. The air is thick with humidity, which solidifies in blood-red dew on the walls.

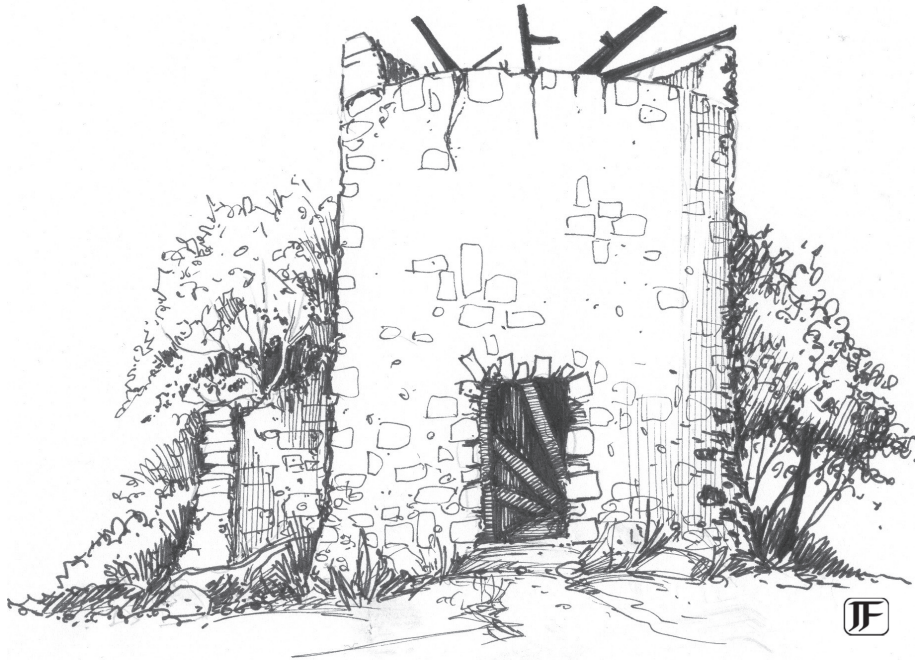
Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of the botanical garden.

1 - Entrance

When the characters enter, read the following:

This dark, 20-foot-square room is quiet. There is a wooden desk against the north wall and a door behind it. Around the corner to the east is a countertop and doorway, perhaps once used as a security checkpoint.



Welcome desk. Characters that investigate the desk discover enchanted pamphlets. Read the following:

An animated sketch of a blooming corpse flower covers the front of the pamphlets. On the back there are several sketches of smaller plants and information on how to locate the botanical garden.

Northern door. Characters that succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check hear gnawing and chewing sounds through the door.

Security desk. Characters that investigate this desk find a burglar's pack without rations; two pairs of manacles; and one rotten, half-eaten orange. Additionally, if they succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, they notice small, humanoid-like footprints in the dust moving across the top of the desk.

2 - Staff Lounge

Read the following:

A few boxes are stacked on the floor around a small table in this

15-foot-wide, 10-foot-long room. A pale, green, and leathery creature sits at the table gnawing on some plant roots.

Encounter: Dretch. There is one **dretch** in this room. It attacks on sight, but retreats to **area 5** if it is clearly outnumbered.

3 - Storage Closet

Read the following:

The floor of this small room is covered with boxes, barrels, buckets, and watering spouts. Bare hooks line the walls where coats once hung. Sitting in the center of the floor is a crate with a black, grainy substance leaking through its slats.

Trap: Leaky Crate. A *glyph of warding* spell has been cast on the leaky crate. The glyph triggers a *stinking cloud* spell (save DC 12) when any creature moves the crate. The spell's cloud lasts for 1 minute or until dispelled.

DRETCHES IN THE GARDEN

4 - Painted Hall

Read the following:

This winding, 10-foot-wide hall is decorated with informational plaques and murals depicting a variety of plants and animals.

Encounter: Snakes. Two **poisonous snakes** are slithering around in the dark hallway. They hiss when a creature gets within 10 feet of them and lash out if any creature moves closer.

Murals. Characters who look at the murals more closely identify the following fauna:

- Ravens, owls, and bats are scattered throughout the mural.
- A tiny pseudodragon with garnet scales and a sharp stinger on a low-hanging branch is poised to strike a rat hiding in the undergrowth.
- A small, red-yellow-black banded snake is resting in a tree.
- Purple, porous fungus stalks with thin tendrils are scattered throughout the mural. Some of them are depicted lashing out at mice, bats, and other tiny creatures.

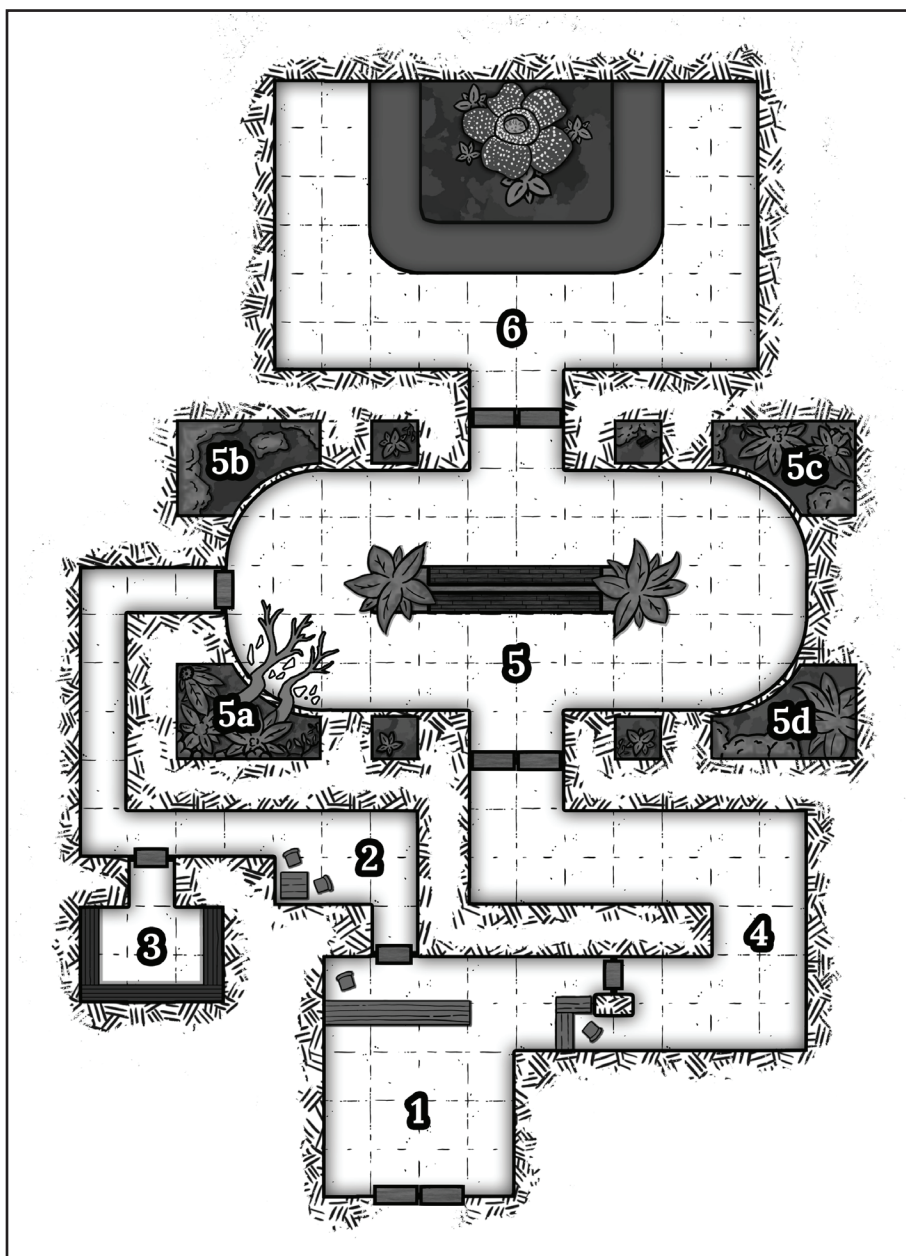
5 - Garden

Read the following:

This large, oblong room is 60 feet wide and 25 feet long. Two large plants accent a bench in the center of the room, and an assortment of exhibits line the perimeter of the garden. A small, pale creature is shoving four dead shrubs around the room, which seem to inexplicably shuffle away.

Encounter: Herding Shrubs.

There are two **dretches** and four **awakened shrubs** in this room. One of the dretches is attempting to line up the awakened shrubs in a row so that it can count them, albeit with little success. When the characters enter the room the awakened shrubs panic and begin lashing out at



any creature that moves, but do not advance on any creatures. The dretch uses its telepathy to reprimand the characters for disrupting the headcount and yells at them to leave.

It is possible to calm down the awakened shrubs with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Once calmed, an awakened shrub settles down in place. Otherwise, the awakened shrubs calm down after 1 minute and retreat into the nearest exhibit (see below).

5a. Exhibit A

Read the following:

This exhibit is dominated by two purple fungi and several large roots that have broken through the glass.

Encounter: Violet Fungi. There are two **violet fungi** in this exhibit. They attack if a creature gets within five feet of the exhibit, but do not exit the exhibit.

5b. Exhibit B

Read the following:

Several overgrown bushes dominate this exhibit. A plaque in front of it reads "Flying Snakes."

Encounter: Flying Snakes. There are three **flying snakes** inside of this exhibit. One of them snaps at the glass if a creature approaches.

5c. Exhibit C

Read the following:

The plants in this exhibit are chewed to bits with holes. A plaque on the display reads "Dragon Earwigs."

Encounter: Dragon Earwigs. There is a swarm of dragon earwigs (treat them as a **swarm of centipedes**). They are on the verge of starvation, so if any creature opens the exhibit, they flood out and attack.

5d. Exhibit D

Read the following:

The plants in this exhibit are obscured by a thick purple fungus with long tendrils. The plaque that should be in front of this exhibit has been torn away.

Encounter: Violet Fungus. There is one **violet fungus** sealed behind glass. If a creature is within ten feet of the exhibit, it smashes into the glass, breaking the glass after two rounds, and attacks, chasing after its targets.

6 - Corpse Flower

Read the following:

A bright red, blooming corpse flower and the repugnant smell of rotting flesh dominate this 50-foot-wide, 30-foot-long room. A 5-foot-wide pool of dark red liquid surrounds the corpse flower, the still-forming bodies of dozens of pale, leathery creatures emerging from it. Two large constrictor snakes occupy either side of the room; one of them is gorging on a pale, green creature.

Encounter: Constrictor Snakes. There are two **constrictor snakes** in this room gorging on newly-forming dretches. They hiss at creatures that open the door to this chamber and attack any creatures that enter.

Hazard: Dretch River. Dretches are being spawned from this pool of water. Each patch of half-formed dretches occupies a five-foot space. A creature that moves within five feet of a patch must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled. A patch of dretches has AC 11, 9 hit points, and immunity to poison damage.

Hazard: Corpse Flower. The corpse flower has AC 8, 10 hit points, and vulnerability to fire damage. While the corpse flower is alive, every 10 minutes a patch of dretches slides out of the flower's center and into the dretch river (see above), replenishing one five-foot patch.

Concluding the Adventure

By the end of this adventure the characters will have explored what remains of the botanical garden and have likely destroyed the dretch-spawning corpse flower. Hopefully they have destroyed the corpse flower, otherwise it may begin spawning more dretches.

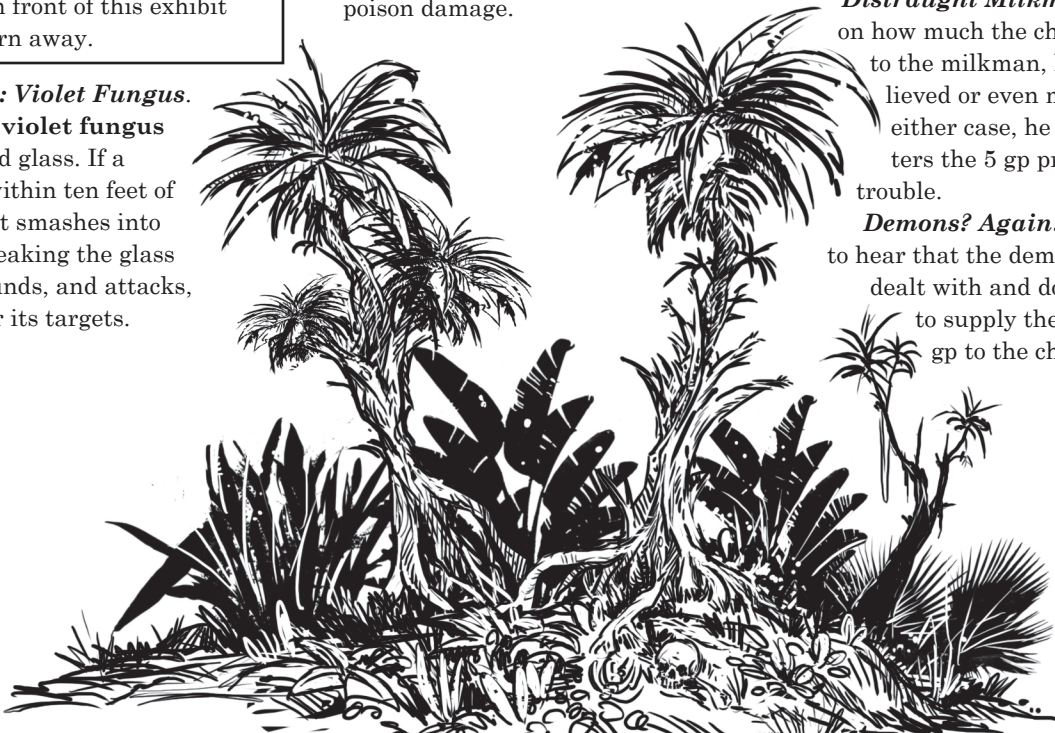
Adventure Hook Resolutions

There were three adventure hooks mentioned in the introduction. Here is the resolution for each adventure hook:

Concerned Gardener. The disguised druid reconvenes with the characters only after they have successfully cleared the botanical garden. They give the characters a *spell scroll of speak with animals*, as promised.

Distraught Milkman. Depending on how much the characters divulge to the milkman, he may be relieved or even more anxious. In either case, he pays the characters the 5 gp promised for their trouble.

Demons? Again? Kessia is glad to hear that the demons have been dealt with and does not hesitate to supply the reward of 100 gp to the characters. Ω





SNAKES IN A BAR

BY CORVID'S EMPORIUM

A 3rd-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Corvid's Emporium

Art by Matias Lazaro, Rick Hershey, and Luigi Castellani

Snakes in a Bar is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to seven characters of 3rd to 4th level and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. Characters who survive this adventure should earn half of the XP required to reach the 4th level.

This adventure takes place in a bar. This adventure assumes placement in DM Dave's Blutstrom campaign setting. However, it can just as easily be placed in any campaign setting that has a city and demons.

Adventure Background

The Frightened Flower was built decades ago by a peculiar wizard whose name has been lost to history. All that anybody remembers is that she had a black thumb when it came to plants and was extremely protective of the only plant she ever successfully kept alive: the tree at the center of the tower. After the wizard passed, the tower changed hands several times before eventually falling into Minetta's possession.

Minetta, a stout human woman with short black hair and a stern gaze, is the bar's current owner. She and her staff got along well before the demons showed up and displaced everybody. Minetta managed to escape, but some of the staff ended up trapped under the effects of *geas*, performing the demons' bidding.

Now, the lamia Castys, disguised as Minetta, and her minions have taken over the bar. The information they gather from loose-lipped patrons is sent to a marilith named Ar'al to aid in further corrupting the city. Ar'al is a powerful marilith demon; the characters can face off against her in *Lair of the Snake Queen*.

Adventure Hooks

You can use the following adventure hooks to key your players up for this adventure.

Cleansing. An exhausted acolyte named Kessia suspects that there are demons lurking in The Frightened Flower abducting clients. They offer 100 gp for successfully clearing out any demons in the area.

Ain't Dead Yet. Minetta, the bar's owner, managed to escape the demons when they took over her establishment. Minetta is angry and frustrated by her displacement and offers the characters 500 gp to reclaim her tower.

Missing Persons. The city guard have received an influx of missing persons reports and the bar is one of the suspected abduction locations. The guards don't have a huge budget and are only able to offer 200 gp for information leading to the recovery of the missing people.

The Frightened Flower

The Frightened Flower is a four-story stone tower built around a hulking tree.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in The Frightened Flower have the following features.

Ceilings. The oak wood ceilings are 10-feet high.

Floors and Walls. The exterior walls are made of stone. The interior walls and floors are made of oak wood.

Doors. Doors are seven feet high and made of thick, sturdy wood with metal hinges and locks. All of the doors on the mezzanine are kept locked during most hours.

A locked door requires a character with proficiency in thieves' tools to succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity check to unlock. Alternatively, a door can be broken down with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. The doors have AC 15, 18 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Light. The entire building is well-lit by oil lanterns hung on the walls.



Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the Tree Tower map.

1 - Entrance

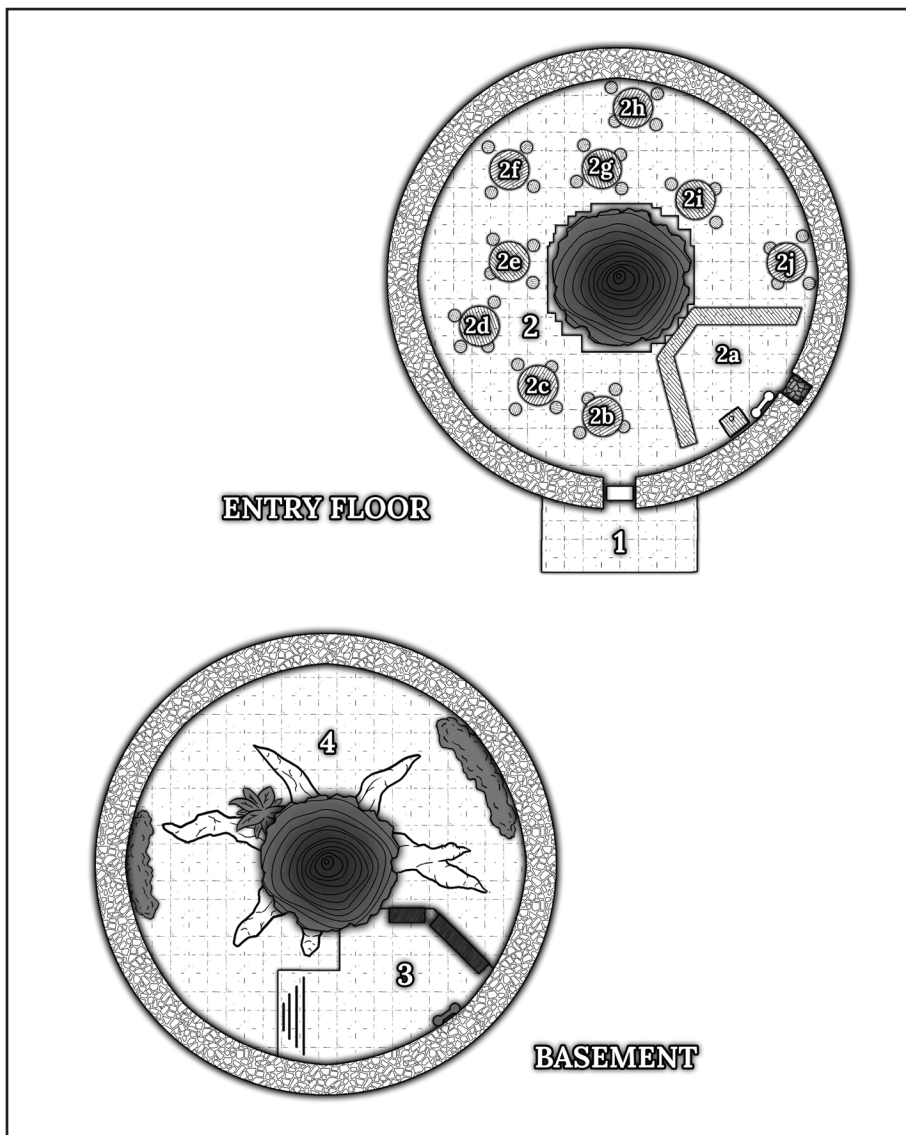
When the characters arrive, read the following:

A burly woman in a chain shirt sits in a chair next to the entrance, two muscular dogs beside her.

Encounter: Guard. There is one lawful evil human female **guard** and a **death dog** magically disguised as two dogs. They are bored and don't pay attention to anybody passing through.

2 - Tavern Floor

When the characters enter, read the following:



A massive, 20-foot-wide tree trunk fills the center of the room. A bar with a dumbwaiter is immediately off to the east, and a smattering of tables wind around the tree to the west, eventually meeting the bar again. The sounds of idle chatter, eating, and drinking fill the room.

A waiter/waitress (LE human **commoner**) invites the characters to take a seat at tables 2e and 2f.

Menu. The bar offers a basic meal for 5 sp, delectable meat chunks for 3 sp, and wine for 2 sp.

- 2a. Bar.** There is one **cult fanatic** at the bar.
- 2b. Table by the door.** There are two **dretches** disguised as gnomes sitting at this table.
- 2c. Southwest table.** There is one **thug** (N human female) eating a chunk of meat with her bare hands. She sizes up the characters when they enter.
- 2d. Westmost table.** There is nobody sitting at this table.
- 2e. West table.** There are two human **nobles** sitting at this table drinking wine with a cheese platter.

2f. Northwest table. There are four halfling **commoners** laughing over stew and wine.

2g. North table. There are two **dretches** disguised as gnomes greedily eating meat.

2h. Northmost table. There is one human **noble** and two dwarf **commoners** chatting over beers.

2i. Northeast table. There are two **dretches** disguised as gnomes sitting on top of the table.

2j. East table. There is a neutral good human **priest** and a tiefling **commoner** chatting quietly over wine.

Flickering Illusion. An illusion disguises several dretches as gnomes and obscures the tree's fiendish taint. As a result of imprecise spellweaving, the illusion flickers every 10 minutes. Any creature with a passive Perception of 13 or higher notices immediately. Otherwise a creature can spot the illusion with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

When the characters succeed in noticing the illusion or after the third flicker, the illusion collapses. Read the following:

The illusion draped over the tavern fades away, revealing six dretches seated around the tavern and dark, bloody sap leaking through the tree's bark. One of the demons spits and the bartender proclaims exasperatedly "The magic has failed again. Somebody deal with the patrons."

Encounter: Tavern Brawl. When the illusion (see above) is revealed, the tavern erupts with activity.

The fight begins with two **dretches** from table 2g attacking the characters. The **cult fanatic** at 2a kills one **commoner** each round.

In round one, the following occurs:

- The entrance door is slammed shut by the **guard** in **area 1** from outside. They assume the demons

and cultists inside will take care of the problem.

- The **acolyte**, **nobles**, and **commoners** hide under their tables.
- The **dretches** at table 2b attack the **thug** at table 2c.
- The **dretches** at table 2i drag the **acolyte** at table 2j out from under the table.

In round two, the following occurs:

- The thug from table 2c kills one of the dretches from table 2b but is killed by the other dretch.
- The dretches from table 2i kill the priest and turn their attention to the characters.

When the cult fanatic is the last hostile creature remaining, they stop killing commoners and begin attacking the characters. If outmatched, they yell to the guard in **area 1** to help them and retreat up the ladder to **area 5**.

Trap: Warded Ladder. When a creature that does not bear an abyssal brand reaches the top of the ladder, they trigger a *glyph of warding* set with a *sleep* spell cast at 2nd level. A creature at the top of the ladder that succumbs to *sleep* falls unconscious, and takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from falling, and lands prone.

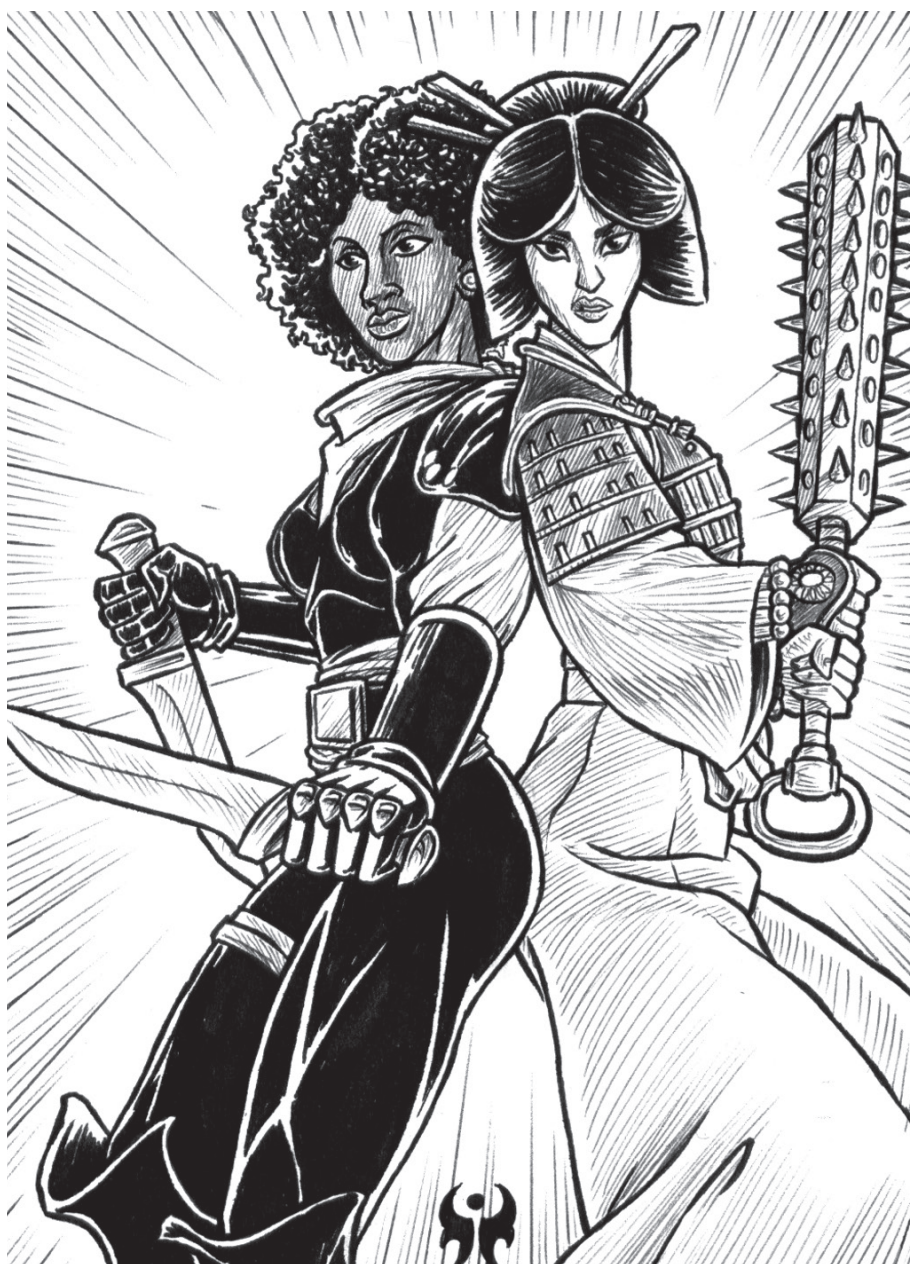
3 - Cellar Storage

Read the following:

A moderately sized wooden platform in the southeast section of the tower holds a variety of crates, boxes, and barrels used to store food. Two shelves to the east are lined with kitchenware. A ladder on the southeastern wall leads upwards.

Crates, boxes, and barrels. Most of the containers hold salted foods and vegetables. One of the barrels is labeled “for dretches only,” which contains chopped up humanoid bodies.

Treasure: Shelves. There is 40 gp worth of kitchenware stocked here weighing a total of 200 lbs.



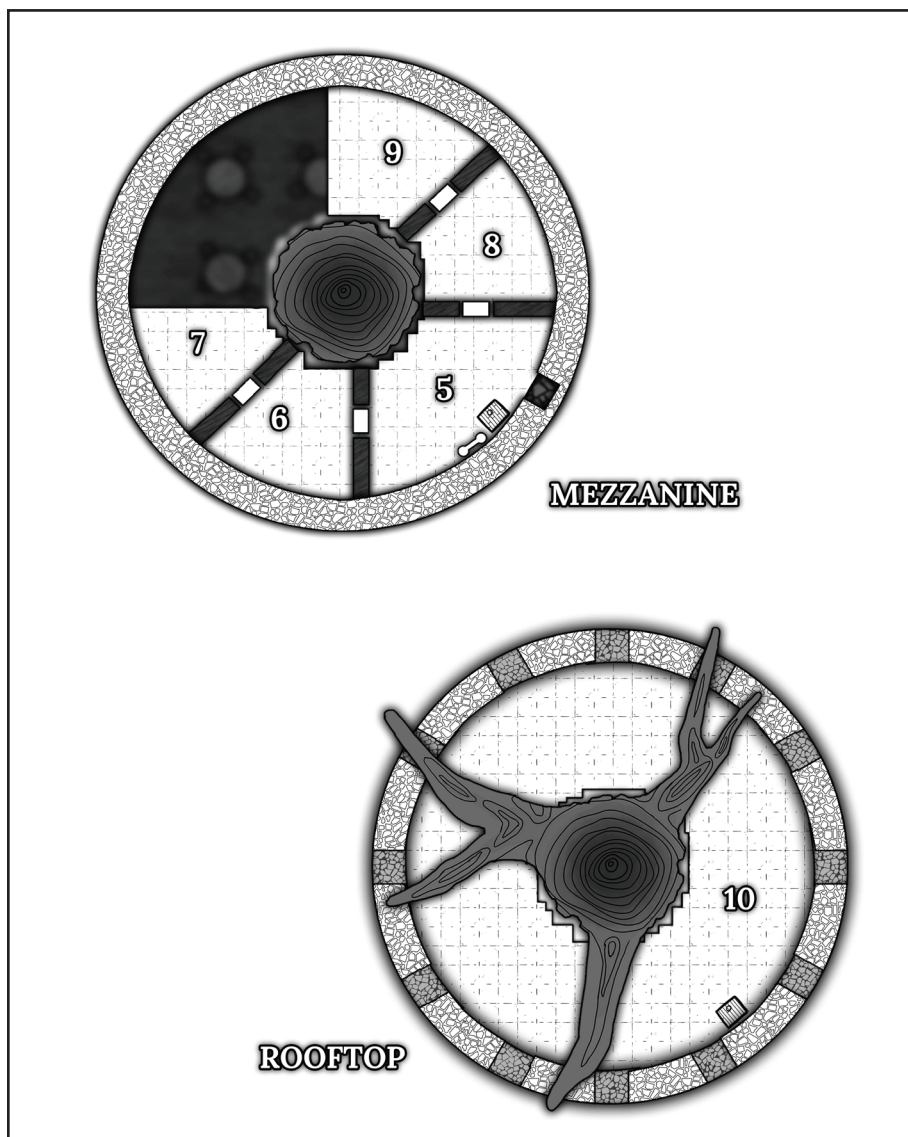
4 - Cellar Floor

Read the following:

A handful of plants accent the massive tree at the center of the room. A dozen humans, elves, and gnomes are standing completely still in their own excrement throughout the area. There is one dead man on the ground.

Dead man. The man died attempting to ignore the *geas* that was cast on him by Castys.

Captives. The humans, elves, and gnomes (all **commoners**) standing in this area are restrained from moving or speaking to anybody except for Castys by the effects of *geas*. The *geas* will expire in two days. Once freed from the effects of *geas*, they can explain to the characters that the lamia



Encounter: Snakes. There is one **giant constrictor snake** and two **poisonous snakes** hiding in the hay. They hiss whenever a creature enters the room and attack if a creature gets within five feet of them.

Hazard: Barking. Characters that stir up a commotion in this room wake up the death dog sleeping in the adjoining room, **area 7**, which begins barking. One round later, a dretch from **area 8** arrives to investigate the disturbance.

7 - West Balcony

Read the following:

This 20-foot-wide balcony overlooks the entry floor below. There is one hell hound sleeping against the eastern door.

Encounter: Hell hound. There is one **hell hound** which attacks characters on-sight.

8 - Northeast Room

Read the following:

This 20-foot-wide room is filled with vile, stinking garbage.

Encounter: Dretches. Unless they were summoned to **area 6**, there are five **dretches** in this room.

9 - North Balcony

Read the following:

This 20-foot-wide balcony overlooks the entry floor below. The room is otherwise bare.

There is nothing of value in this room.

10 - Roof

Read the following:

The top of the massive tree rises through the center of the roof. A human woman is looking out over the rampart at the city beyond. She muses out loud, "There is so much livestock beyond these walls, just

Castys was breaking their spirits as a precautionary step before using them as operatives throughout the city.

To move a captive, characters must succeed on a contested Strength (Athletics) check each round to grapple or shove the captive.

5 - Foyer

Read the following:

A sink, a table, and a couple crates of food occupy this 30-foot-wide room. There's a dumbwaiter on the southeast wall next to a ladder and

a trapdoor, and doors to the north and west.

There is nothing of value in this room.

6 - Southwest Room

Read the following:

There is a large pile of dirt and hay against the southwest wall and a door to the west of this small room. The bones of several dead rats litter the floor.

waiting to be harvested. Why must you intercede?"

Encounter: Castys the Lamia. The lamia Castys stands on the roof looking over the city. She uses *disguise self* to obscure her demonic nature, instead presenting herself as a human woman dressed in fine robes. She has used *scrying* to be aware of the characters' exploits throughout her tower.

When the characters arrive, she begins casting *geas* by asking rhetorically why the characters have wrought destruction throughout her tower and offering forgiveness if they surrender and vow allegiance to her. If asked about the captives in the basement, she simply shrugs and says "every organization needs its rank and file." She attempts to speak for at least 1 minute, after which *geas* is cast on the browniest character. A character can determine that her speech is laced with enchantment magic with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If her attempt to enchant one of the characters is disrupted, she ends her *disguise self*—revealing her half-human, half-snake form—and uses *mirror image* before attacking.

Treasure: Castys. Castys is holding 20 pp in a pouch and wearing an *amulet of proof against detection and location*.

Concluding the Adventure

At the end of the adventure the characters have killed the demons in the building, dealt with the lamia Castys, and discovered the enchanted people in the basement.

Adventure Hook Resolutions

There were three adventure hooks mentioned in the introduction. Here is the resolution for each adventure hook:

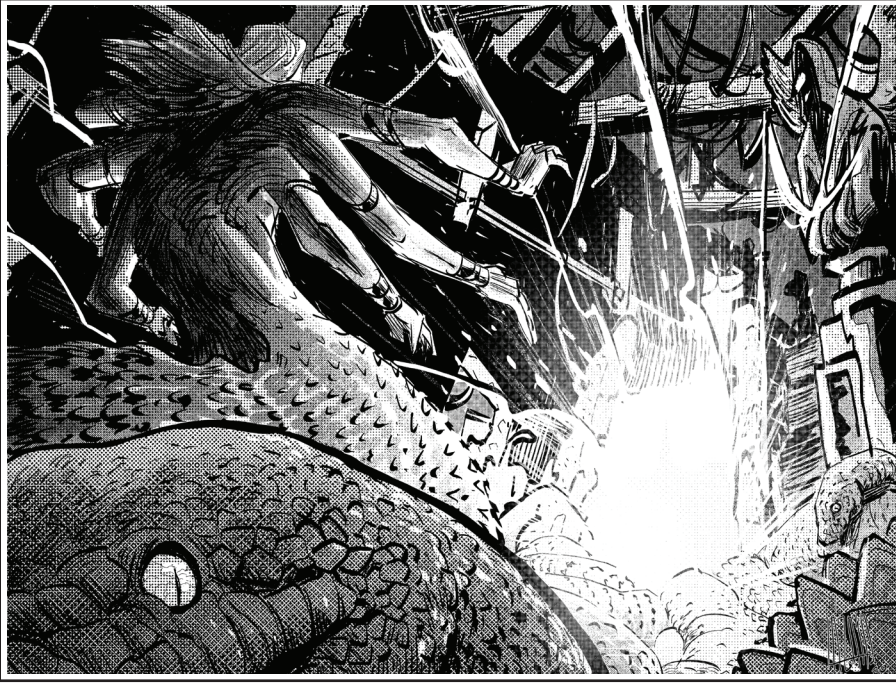
Cleansing. Kessia, the exhausted acolyte, is relieved to hear that the characters were able to successfully deal with the demons and gives them the 100 gp reward as promised.



Ain't Dead Yet. Minetta invites the characters to sit down for a drink and demands to know what the demons were doing in her bar. At the end of the conversation she hands over the 500 gp reward to the characters.

Missing Persons. If the characters discover the people in the basement and report the discovery to the guard,

the guard immediately sets to taking care of the people and coordinating with the local clergy to remove the magic affecting them. The characters are compensated with the promised 200 gp for finding the missing people. Ω



LAIR OF THE SNAKE QUEEN

BY CORVID'S EMPORIUM

A 4/10/16th-level encounter for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson's Logos
Art by Matias Lazaro and Matt Morrow

Lair of the Snake Queen is a Fifth Edition encounter for four characters of 4th, 10th, or 16th level.

Running the Encounter

This encounter is setting and adventure independent. It can easily be inserted into any story that you like, or even run as a one-shot.

Fighting in Waves

The encounters presented here can be run either as a single encounter with each marilith, or a multi-wave encounter with the marilith as the boss. Waves represent single encounters with one or more creatures. After the characters defeat one wave, the next wave appears in 1d4 rounds.

A Legendary Creature

To run the marilith as a legendary creature, use the following legendary actions, lair actions, and regional effects.

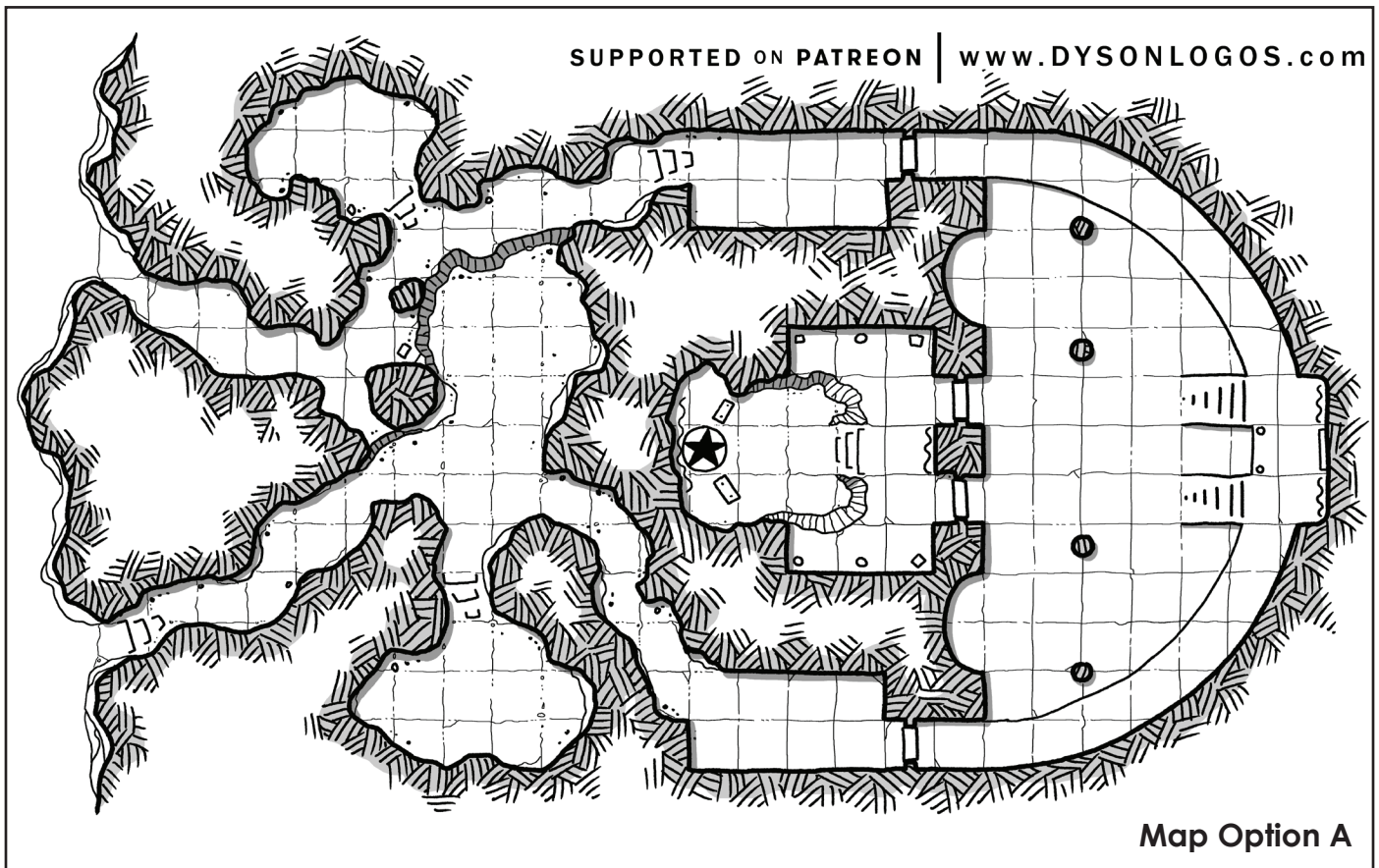
Legendary Actions

The marilith can take three legendary actions, choosing from the options below. She can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The marilith regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Move. The marilith moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Tail Attack. The marilith makes a tail attack.

Sweeping Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The marilith makes a sweeping attack with her tail. Each creature within 10 feet of the marilith that is not being grappled by it must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the marilith is grappling a creature with her tail, the grappled creature takes 7 (1d6 + 4) damage for each creature that failed the saving throw.



Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the marilith can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. She can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A writhing mass of snakes appears at a point the marilith can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature within 20 feet of that point must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (2d4) piercing damage and become poisoned until the end of its next turn.
- Grasping weeds and vines sprout from the ground in a 40-foot-radius centered on a point that the marilith can see. That area becomes difficult terrain, and each creature there must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be restrained by the roots and

vines. A creature can be freed if it or another creature takes an action to make a DC 15 Strength check and succeeds. The roots and vines wilt away when the marilith uses this lair action again or when the marilith dies.

- Magical darkness spreads from a point the marilith chooses within 60 feet of it, filling a 15-foot-radius sphere until the marilith dismisses it as an action, uses this lair action again, or dies. The darkness spreads around corners. A creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and nonmagical light can't illuminate it. If any of the effect's area overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled.

Regional Effects

The Snake Queen's Lair is set in the heart of a corrupted church. Regardless of level, it has the following features:

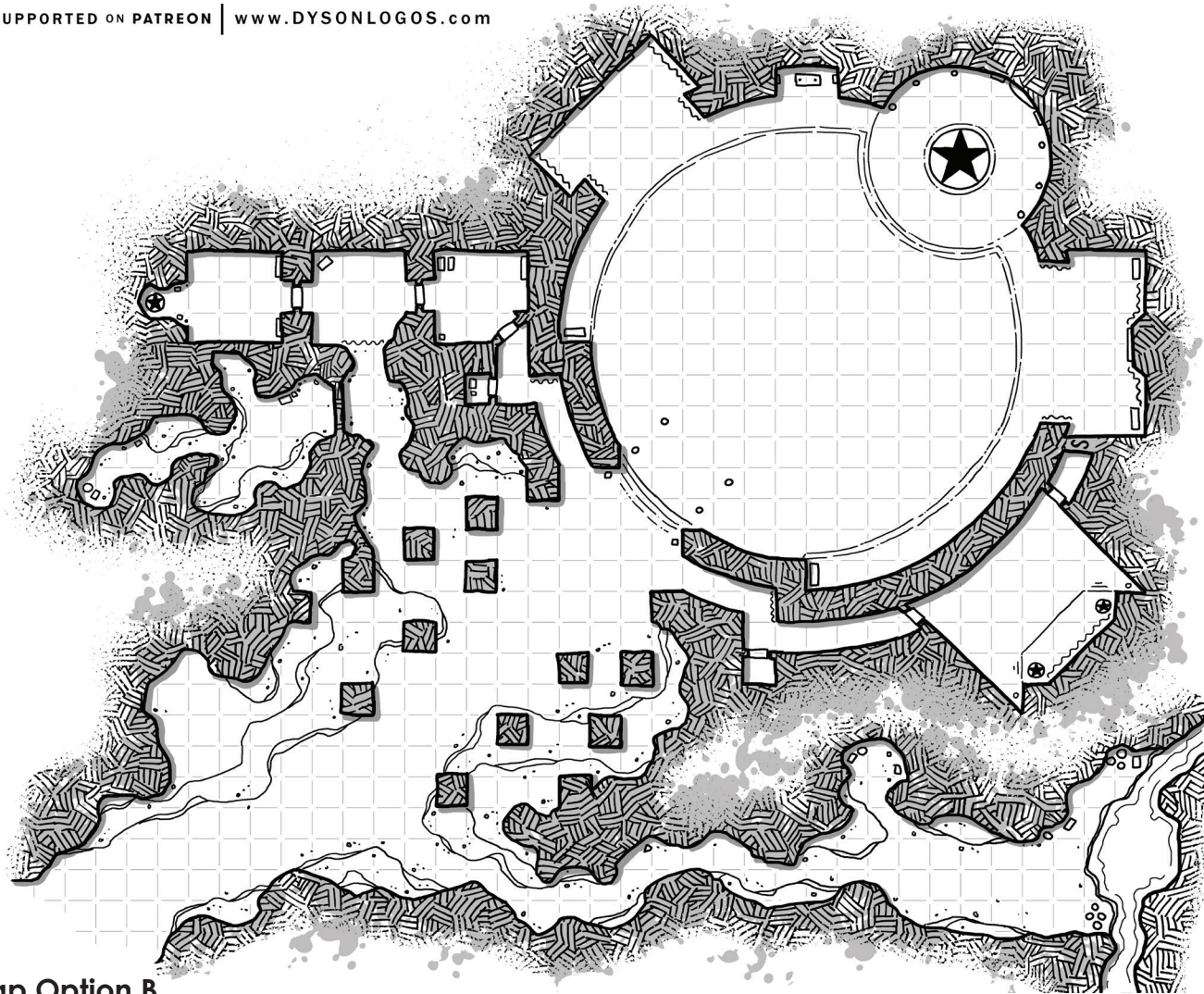
Desecrated. While the marilith is alive, the spells *protection from evil and good*, *banishment*, and *dispel evil and good* cannot be successfully cast inside the lair.

Portal to the Abyss. A permanent portal to the Abyss dominates the lair. Once per day, a number of demons up to a total CR of 8 can enter the Material Plane through the portal, appearing anywhere within 1 mile of the lair.

Snakes. Snakes within 1 mile of the lair serve as the marilith's eyes and ears, alerting her to the presence of intruders and making it all but impossible to surprise the marilith.

If the marilith dies, these effects fade immediately.

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Map Option B

Tethered Marilith (4th-Level)

An encounter with a marilith would normally be far beyond the capabilities of a party of 4th-level characters. However, the marilith has just crossed from the Abyss into the Material Plane and is weakened from crossing the threshold. Note that the marilith herself will only pose a moderate threat to the party if it is fully rested. A party of four 3rd-level characters might be able to take on the marilith fully-rested, but the probability of casualties is much higher. Inversely, a higher level party will see a *slowed*, reduced-hp marilith as

only a hard encounter, and if they are fully rested, they will have no trouble at all battling the creature.

If you wish to use the *slowed*, half-hp marilith as the final encounter for a 4th-level multi-wave battle, use the following creatures for the first three waves. At the end of each wave, roll 1d4. This is the number of rounds the characters have to prepare for the next wave.

First Wave: Cultists and Dretches

Eight **dretches** and two **cultists** meet the characters first. Use the dretches as cannon fodder. The cult-

ists wait for the dretches to use their Fetid Cloud feature before striking. Remember that cultists have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Second Wave: Cultists & Snakes

After the cultists and dretches, four **constrictor snakes**, two **cultists**, and one **cult fanatic** arrive. Rely on the snakes to restrain the characters so that the cultists can hit them with advantage. The cult fanatic should hang back, using *command* or *hold person* to make characters vulnerable and *spiritual weapon* to get more attacks in.

Third Wave: Medusa

The penultimate wave consists of a **lamia** and two **flying snakes**. Ideally, the characters have been softened up by the previous waves, because it's unlikely that the lamia will have the time required to take advantage of *geas*. Have the lamia enter the encounter with *mirror image* activated. The flying snakes should harry the characters while she uses her Intoxicating Touch to prime targets for *charm person* or *suggestion*.

The Boss: Tethered Marilith

The tethered marilith is a **marilith** with the following changes:

- Its hp is reduced by half.
- It is under the effects of *slow*.
- It does not have legendary actions or the benefits of a lair.

The tethered marilith has just crossed from the Abyss into the Material Plane and is suffering from the transition. It should bait the party into spreading out and then use Teleport to close on the weakest characters when they're isolated. If she finds herself cornered, she may also use her Teleport to put distance between herself and the characters to reorient herself.

Marilith (10th-Level)

An encounter with a marilith is considered a deadly encounter for a party of four 10th-level or 11th-level characters. Note that the marilith will only pose a moderate threat to the party if it is fully rested. Characters with an average party level (APL) of 9 or less might have difficulty fighting a marilith unless they are fully rested. Parties with APLs of 12 or higher should have no problem fighting a marilith.

If you wish to use the marilith as the final encounter for a 10th-level multi-wave battle, use the following creatures for the first three waves.

First Wave: Mage, Veteran, and Dretches

Start the encounter with four **dretches**, one **veteran**, and one **mage**. The dretches draw the party's attention while the veteran protects the mage as they snipe at the party from afar.

Second Wave: Cackling Night Hag Riding a Vrock

Next up, one **night hag** flies in astride a **vrock**. The night hag pops the characters with *magic missile* and uses *ray of enfeeblement* to weaken the vrock's targets. For the purposes of this encounter, the hag is immune to the vrock's Spores and Stunning Screech features. If the hag is knocked off of the vrock she may use *plane shift* to go to her lair in the abyss and *plane shift* back atop a **giant vulture**.

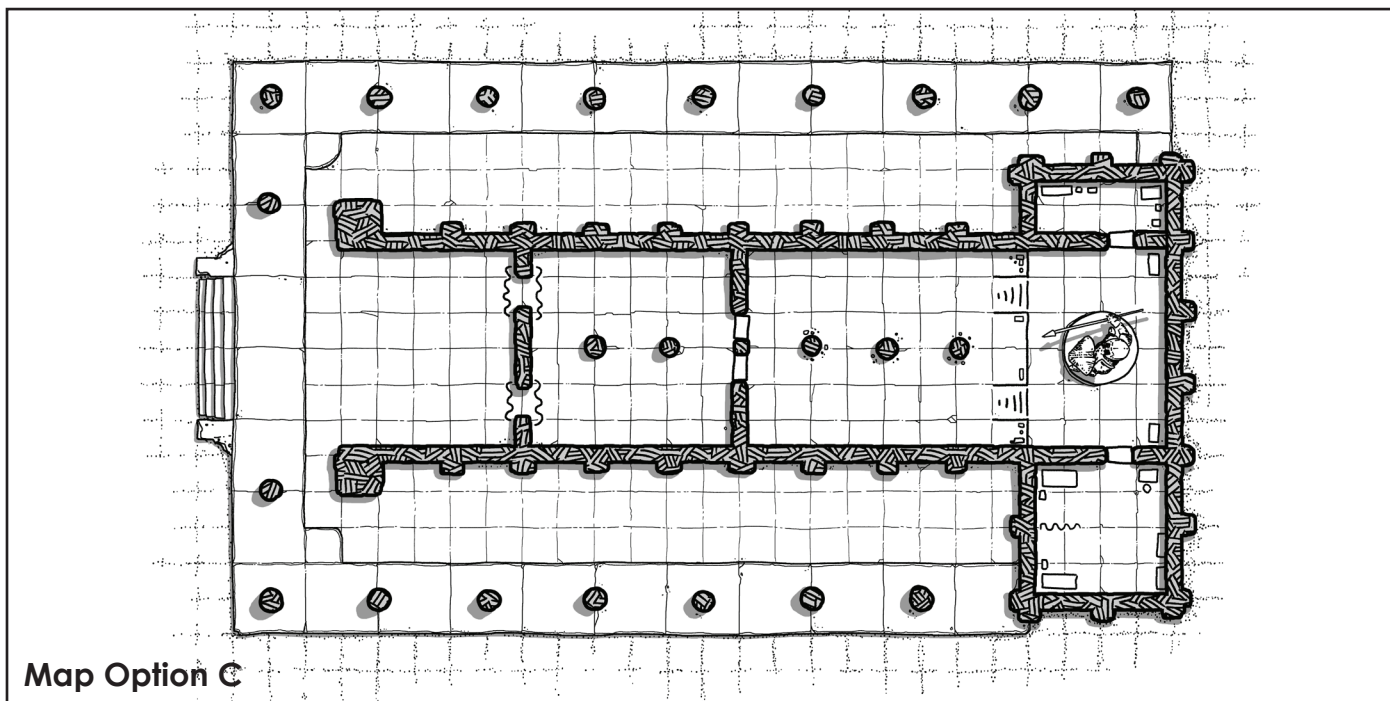
Third Wave: Medusa and Her Pets

Just before the big fight comes one **medusa** and four **giant constrictor snakes**. The medusa stays 30 feet or less away and uses her longbow. The characters will be averting their eyes to avoid the medusa's gaze, giving the snakes advantage on their constrict attacks to restrain the characters.

The Boss: Marilith

The **marilith** can use her Teleport to kite the characters, forcing them to spread out, and then zero in on one character at a time. If she can successfully restrain a character with her Tail attack, she can then make six longsword attacks against that creature with advantage. Remember that the marilith can use her Parry reaction every turn of the combat.





Ancient Marilith (16th-Level)

An encounter with an ancient marilith is considered a deadly encounter for a party of four 16th-level or 17th-level characters. Note that the ancient marilith will only pose a moderate threat to the party if it is fully rested. Characters with an average party level (APL) of 15 or less might have difficulty fighting an ancient marilith unless they are fully rested. Parties with APLs of 18 or higher should have no problem fighting an ancient marilith.

If you wish to use the ancient marilith as the final encounter for a 16th-level multi-wave battle, use the following creatures for the first three waves.

First Wave: Nightmare-Mounted Gladiators

Greeting the characters are three **gladiators**, each riding a **nightmare**. While mounted, the nightmares extend resistance to fire damage to the gladiators. Together, the nightmares and gladiators can

move in and out of the Ethereal Plane to avoid damage while they're repositioning.

Second Wave: Archmage Riding a Vrock

Next up, there is one **archmage** wearing a *ring of feather falling* riding a **vrock**. The archmage has *mage armor*, *stoneskin*, and *mind blank* cast on itself before combat. The archmage may cast *mirror image* as an opening defensive choice while maintaining concentration on important spells. Astride the vrock, the archmage relies on *fire bolt* and *cone of cold* or *lightning bolt* for the bulk of its damage. In a pinch, the archmage may cast *time stop* followed by *globe of invulnerability*, *teleport*, *invisibility* or *wall of force* to allow it and the vrock to reposition anywhere on the field.

Third Wave: Hydra and Hezrous

The final wave consists of one **hydra** and two **hezrous**. The hydra is immune to the hezrous' stench, allowing all three of these creatures to brawl

head-to-head against the characters. These brawlers are aggressive, charging straight into melee.

The Boss: Ancient Marilith

The ancient marilith is a **marilith** with the following changes:

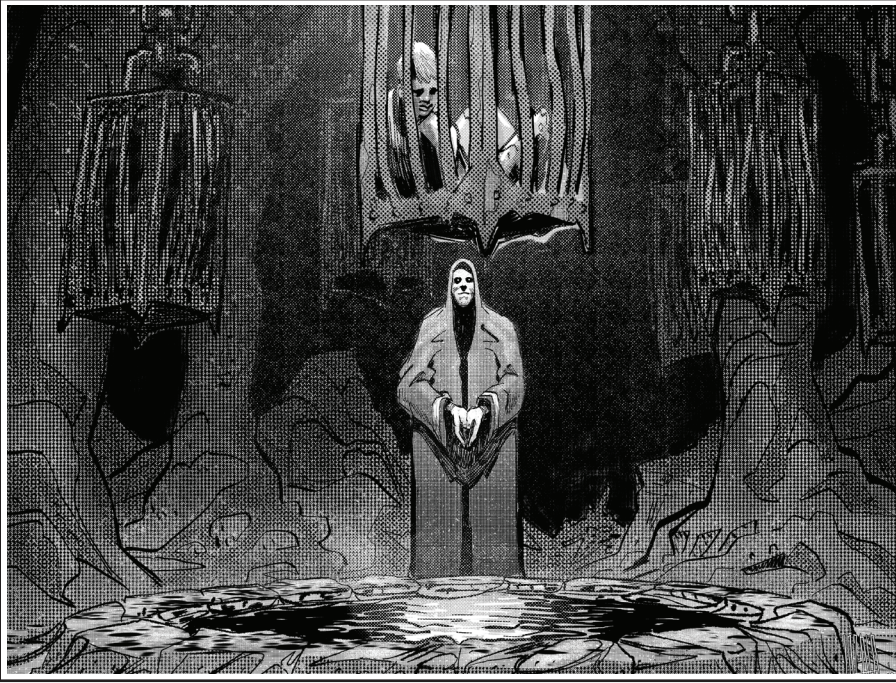
- It has 378 (36d10 + 180) hit points.

Before the characters have a chance to recover, the **ancient marilith** appears on the field. Like the lower-difficulty mariliths, she uses *Teleport* to kite the characters and spread them thin before honing in on a weak target to crush them.

Concluding the Encounter

Once the dust settles and the characters defeat the marilith, they can claim its hoard as their own. Use the treasure tables found in Chapter 7 of the *DMG* to determine what the characters find. The 4th-level marilith has a 0-4 Treasure Hoard, the 10th-level marilith has a 5-10 Treasure Hoard, and the 16th-level marilith keeps an 11-16 Treasure Hoard. For multi-wave combats, double the value of each treasure hoard. Ω

DEATH IN BLUTSTROM



BLOOD BAPTISM

BY TAVERNTALES ALEX

A 1st-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson Logos

Art by Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, Daniel F. Walthall, and William McAusland

Blood Baptism is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for three to six 1st to 3rd level characters and is optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1.

This adventure takes place in the dark gothic city of Blutstrom but can easily be placed in any setting or city that might have an abandoned warehouse above an old, underground hideout. This adventure can be played as a one-shot adventure or placed into a longer-running campaign.

Adventure Background

Fifty years ago, a faction of witch hunters in the city of Blutstrom hoped to build an underground safehouse from which they could organize their operations on the surface. Construction initially proceeded quickly but was soon halted by the strange discovery of underground pools of thick, red viscous liquid thought to be blood. Fearing demonic influence, the witch hunters organized a ritualistic cleansing and exorcism of the site. Their fears were correct, and the ritual went horribly wrong—demons bubbled up from the blood pools and attacked the witch hunters, eviscerating their number and forcing the few who remained to flee, leaving the unfinished safehouse abandoned beneath the streets of the city.

Recently, the priest Vekhar has heard the whispering of the Abyss in his ear. It has told him that the blood pools below the city have begun to stir once more, and that the time is right to baptize the worthy in their depths. Having gathered a cult following known as the Bloody Hand, Vekhar has established himself at the pools and has begun to baptize cultists and kidnapping victims alike in the blood, turning them into dretches. At the command of his demon master, Vekhar keeps the dretches contained in the underground lair, waiting for the perfect moment to unleash them onto the unsuspecting citizens of Blutstrom.

Adventure Hooks

There are many reasons the characters may be interested in thwarting the activities of a demonic cult. A few of these are outlined below:

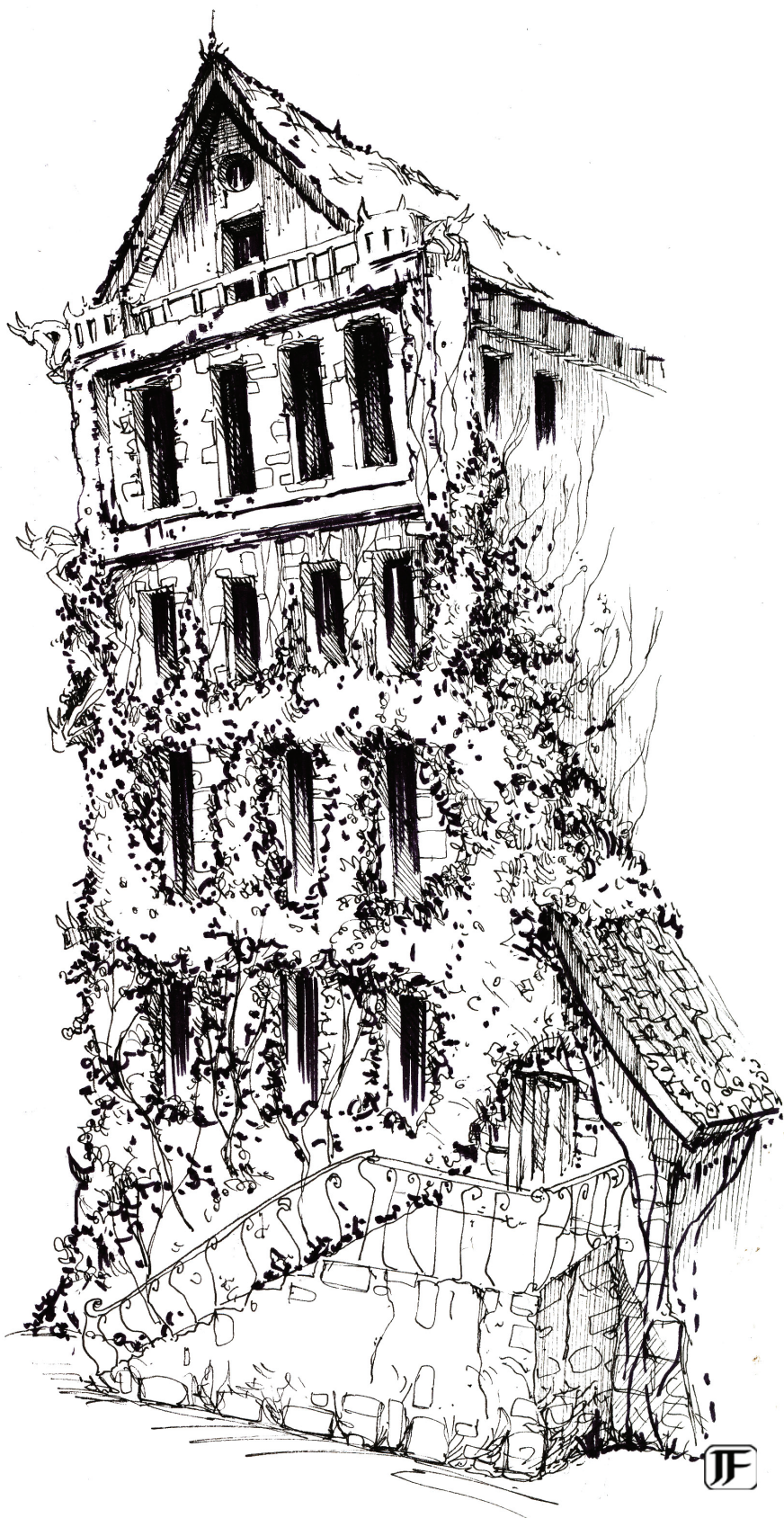
A Daughter Abducted. Mary Willstead's daughter was abducted in the streets of Blutstrom last night by a group of men in red robes, assumed to be members of the Bloody Hand. Panicked and horrified, she requests the adventurers infiltrate their hideout and rescue her daughter, if it is not already too late.

Bitter Rivals. The Scarlet Guerilla Band, a local gang in Blutstrom, is wary of the rise of the Bloody Hand cult that infringes on their turf and would like to see them exterminated. Unfamiliar with the Hand's resources and eager to contract out some potentially dangerous work, they hire the adventurers to kill as many members of the Bloody Hand as they can, offering 5 gp for each dead member and an additional 50 gp if their leader, Vekhar, is slain.

Concerned Cleric. A local cleric familiar with Blutstrom's historical records knows of the blood pools underneath the streets of the city. Having heard that the Bloody Hand occupies the suspected location, he fears their use for nefarious ends. He offers to pay the characters 100 gp to investigate the Bloody Hand hideout, determine its relation to the blood pools, and eliminate the cult entirely if possible.

Finding the Hideout

The Bloody Hand have not made much effort to conceal their presence in Blutstrom. Though the exact location of their hideout is not well-known by common folk, many know that the cult's members can be easily found in Eisenkreis, the smithing and warehouse district within the city. No matter the hook used to entice the characters to adventure, they will have been told to find the warehouse



marked with a bloody handprint on its door; the all-but-confirmed hideout of the cult.

The exact location of the hideout can be determined in a number of ways:

- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the Eisenkreis neighborhood to locate the warehouse that bears the cult's mark.
- A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check to find and convince a local to share what they know of the cult's location, despite their fears of retaliation.
- A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the red-robed cultists during an overnight stakeout of the neighborhood, and a subsequently successful DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check to follow them back to the hideout.



The Warehouse

One way or another, the adventurers will eventually locate the hideout of the Bloody Hand: an abandoned warehouse in the Eisenkreis neighborhood. The two-story warehouse fronts onto the cobbled main street of the district and is flanked by two narrow dirt alleys on its east and west sides. Its windows are boarded up, and a heavy padlock hangs from thick chains that keep the front doors closed. The warehouse can be entered three different ways:

- The padlock on the front door can be picked with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.
- A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check of the warehouse wall along the east alley reveals a secret door built into the wood. This door is unlocked, and acts as the primary entrance for cult members.
- A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check of the warehouse wall along the west alley reveals some loose panels in the façade some 12 feet above ground level. By stacking some nearby crates, climbing to the panels and successfully prying them free with a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, a hole can be created large enough for Medium or smaller creatures to climb through into the warehouse's second-story loft.

The warehouse itself has not been in formal use for years and is empty of any Bloody Hand members. Its interior is 60 feet by 60 feet, consisting of a single-room first floor and a second-story loft accessible via ladders near the west wall of the room. It is mostly empty, save for a dozen crates filled with rotting lumber. A seven-foot-by-seven-foot trapdoor in the floor near the south wall leads to the underground hideout of the Bloody Hand.

Trap Door. A staircase of rotting wood leads downwards from the trapdoor into the expansive, mostly empty

cellar of the warehouse. At the cellar's east end, the wooden foundation of the walls gives away to an expanded cavern in the rock.

Bloody Hand Hideout

The Bloody Hand have made their hideout in the abandoned construction of a former witch hunter safehouse, where natural caverns underneath the warehouse connect to an unfinished stone complex consisting of a few rooms and hallways adjacent to the blood pools. Unless otherwise stated, the hideout's features are described as follows:

Ceilings. Ceilings in the hideout's rooms and hallways are built from grey limestone and are eight feet high.

Floors and Walls. Like the ceilings, floors and walls are built from the same grey limestone. The walls are three feet thick.

Doors. Doors are made of oak, with a double layer of timber forming outer and inner boards. They have an AC of 15 and 18 hit points. Unless noted otherwise, they are unlocked.

Light. The hideout is well-lit by torches mounted in sconces on the walls.

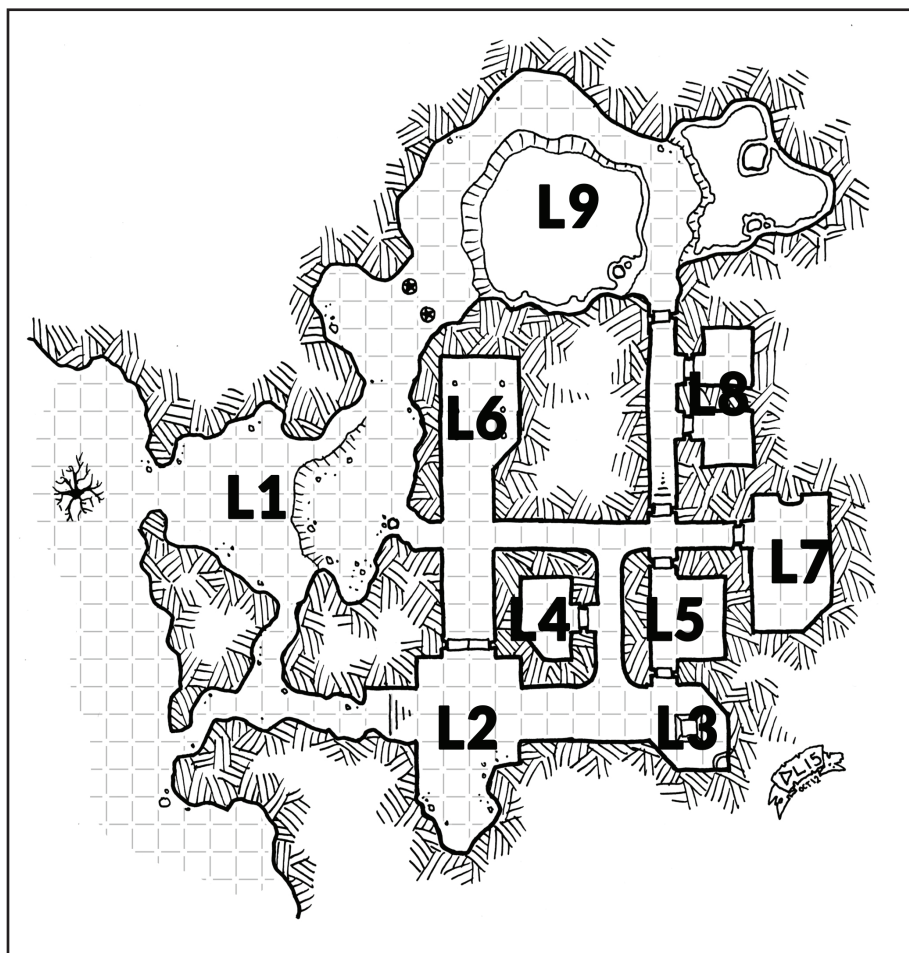
The following locations are keyed to the map of the Bloody Hand Hideout.

1 - Sticky's Den

A character approaching this cavern who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check can hear a deep voice appearing to have a conversation with itself.

When a character enters the room for the first time, read the following:

The rocky opening in the west end of the warehouse cellar continues into a spacious cavern of rock that branches to the north, east, and south. In the middle of the cavern, the rock floor dips a few feet in elevation to create a ledge of rock running north-south.



Encounter: Sticky the Ogre. Unless he has been alerted to a disturbance elsewhere in the hideout, Sticky the Ogre is here. The voice heard from outside is Sticky’s, as he sits against the rock ledge in this cavern playing “dolls” with skeletal remains discovered in the hideout by the Bloody Hand.

Sticky is a domesticated ogre who originally was used to haul cargo in the city of Blutstrom. After being “adopted” by the Bloody Hand, Vekhar attempted to baptize Sticky in the blood of the blood pools. The baptism had unforeseen effects, and Sticky was infused with demonic energy and hideously deformed by the pools. The left side of his face looks to have melted into this shoulder, and the flesh of his left arm is shrivelled and blackened. Characters can sneak past him

with a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check due to his distraction, otherwise, Sticky has been instructed to immediately attack any intruders (those not wearing the robes of the Bloody Hand). He fights until he has half of his hit points or fewer, at which point he attempts to flee back up through the warehouse and into the streets above.

Sticky is an **ogre**, with the following statistics modifications:

- He has 40 hit points.
- Due to the disfiguration of his face and the obstruction of his vision, all of his attacks are made at disadvantage.

2 - Meeting Room

Read:

A rectangular wooden meeting table is surrounded by six stools in the middle of this chamber. Atop the table, a dagger has been thrust into the wood through a scrap of parchment. To the south, the room expands slightly into an unfinished alcove in the rock, where old digging tools have been left on the ground. Double doors exit to the north and east.

The dagger is functional and well-crafted but of little other value. The parchment bears a list of names—potential kidnapping and murder targets for the Bloody Hand.

3 - Prayer Alcove

Read:

A four-foot-tall stone obelisk stands in the center of this alcove, its surface carved with runes and Abyssal script. A hallway exits to the west, and a doorway exits to the north.

Encounter: Cultists. Unless alerted to disturbance elsewhere in the hideout, four **cultists** are here, surrounding the obelisk in silent prayer. They fight until three of their number are slain, at which point the remaining cultist attempts to flee and warns Vekhar in **area 7** of the intrusion.

Hazard: Demonic Obelisk. This obelisk was built by the Bloody Hand and has been blessed by the Blood God. Any good-aligned creature who touches the obelisk must make a DC 12 Charisma saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



4 - Storage

Read:

This small chamber holds a half-dozen crates and a few barrels.

The containers hold dry foodstuffs, spare robes, rope, and small amounts of excess weaponry.

5 - Cultist's Quarters

Read:

Three bunk beds are pushed up against the walls of this room. At the foot of each bunk is an iron strongbox. A wooden rack holds clothing and Bloody Hand robes along the west wall. Doors exit to the north and south.

Treasure: Strongboxes. The strongboxes are unlocked. They hold a cumulative value of 14 gp and 63 sp and two *potions of healing*. Inside one of the strongboxes, folded within an old shirt, is a *ring of mind shielding*.

6 - Witch Hunter Statue

Read:

This room is lined with six narrow pillars that support the ceiling. A 10-foot-tall statue of a bearded man wielding two swords and wearing a wide-brimmed hat stands in front of the north wall.

The statue has been defaced; it is covered in graffiti and the nose on its face has been broken off. At its base, a plaque reads: "Callum Mockingbird - Founder of the Blutstrom witch hunters, 1143".

7 - Vekhar's Quarters

Read:

A bed, wardrobe, and small, blood-stained stone altar fill most of this room. Two torn-up rabbit carcasses lie on the floor near the north wall. A chest sits at the foot of the bed. Atop the altar, a scroll of parchment bears Abyssal script.

Encounter: Vekhar. Unless they have been alerted to disturbance elsewhere, Vekhar (a CE human **priest**) is here scribing an Abyssal scroll atop the altar while his two pet blood mastiffs feast upon the rabbit carcasses. Vekhar's forearms drip with his own blood, which he has been using to scribe. Vekhar and his dogs fight to the death.

His blood mastiffs use **mastiff** statistics, with the following modifications:

- Its type is fiend and it has the demon tag.
- Its alignment is chaotic evil.
- **Bonus Action: Venomous Fangs.** If the mastiff hits a target with its Bite attack, it can use its bonus action to deal an extra 3 (1d6) necrotic damage with its venomous fangs.

Treasure: Vekhar's Possessions.

On Vekhar's person is the key to the chest in the room as well as his spell-casting focus—a human heart forged of solid gold, worth 250 gp.



Treasure: Chest. The chest at the foot of the bed is locked, requiring a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, or the key found on Vekhar's person to open. Inside the chest is a *spell scroll of alter self* and a *potion of greater healing*.

8 - Cells

These 10-by-10 dark, damp and bare cells are fitted with iron bar doors.

The doors are locked, requiring a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open or the key held by one of the enforcers.

Encounter: Guards. Two cultist enforcers (NE human **thugs**) stand guard in the hallway outside the cells.

A Daughter Abducted. The south cell is empty, but locked in the north cell is Anna Willstead (CG human **commoner**), daughter of Mary Willstead. She was abducted by the Bloody Hand while walking home from the tavern a few nights ago. Though tired and weak, Anna is eager in wanting to help the adventurers deal with the cult and asks if she may be given a weapon to help fight if necessary. A DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required to convince her that it may be best for her own safety to keep away from combat; she is otherwise pestering in her enthusiasm.



9 - Blood Pools

Much of this spacious cavern is filled with two pools of softly bubbling, thick red liquid; one in the cavern's center and one at its east end. A pulley system connected to an iron lever built into the southeast wall holds an iron cage aloft above the center pool. Near the cavern's north wall, a larger 10-foot-by-10-foot iron cage is packed densely with ten **dretches**, who gnash fruitlessly at the bars.

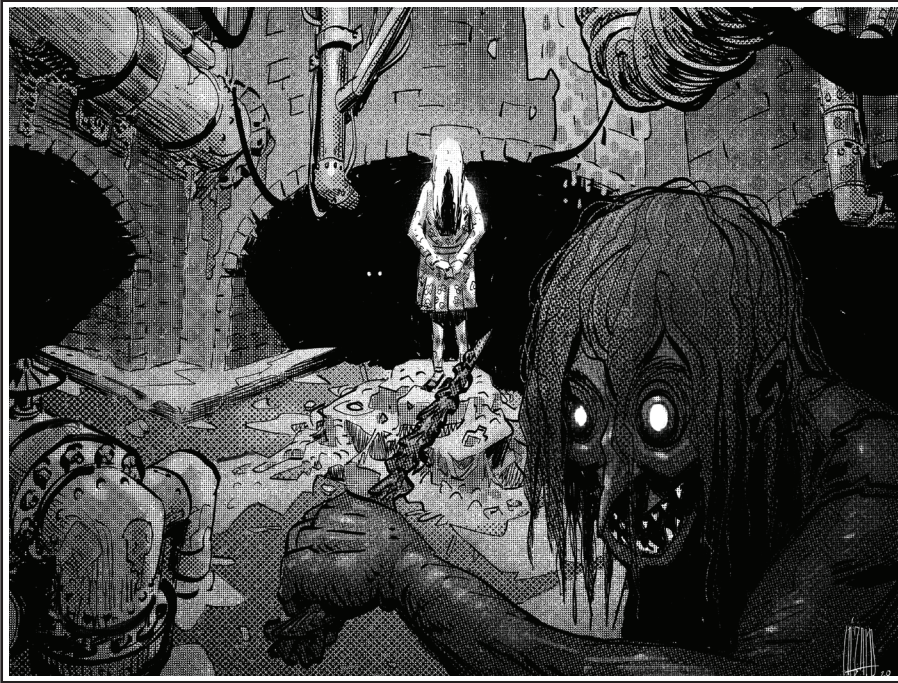
The suspended iron cage is what the Bloody Hand uses to baptize people in the blood pools. When their baptism is complete, the new dretch is herded into the larger iron cage for storage, the key to which hangs on a loop in the wall nearby.

Hazard: Blood Pools. A creature who touches the blood pools immediately takes 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. This damage doubles for each round a creature remains in contact with the blood pool. A character submerged in the blood pools for three rounds or longer has a 50% chance of becoming a **dretch**. A character who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check can determine that to eliminate the Abyssal influence from the pools, a *hallow* or *remove curse* spell may be cast over the area.

Encounter: Dretches. If the ten **dretches** remain in the cage, they pose little threat to adventurers attempting to slay them. Any character thrusting a sword or similar weapon through the bars of the cage can systematically kill all of the dretches within a matter of minutes, without requiring an initiative roll. If the dretches are released from the cage, they immediately attack the nearest creatures in the area.

Concluding the Adventure

Assuming the characters successfully eliminate the Bloody Hand, a few loose ends still remain. If they rescued Anna Willstead, she insists that she can return to her mother safely on her own, though does not protest if they wish to accompany her. The characters may or may not decide to slay all the dretches in the hideout. If the dretches are left unsupervised and not dealt with, they manage to chew through the iron bars and escape after 1d8 weeks. If the characters do not have access to the spells required to cleanse the pools and wish to rid them of Abyssal influence, they may consult a local cleric, who would likely be interested in ridding the evil presence free of charge. Ω



SEA HAG'S LAIR

BY MAX WARTELLE

A 2nd-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson Logos

Art by Matias Lazaro and Maciej Zagorski

Lair of the Sea Hag is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to five characters of 1st- to 2nd- level and is optimised for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 2. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to get to the third level.

The adventurers must find and rescue a young girl, gifted with powerful illusion magic, before she is sacrificed by her captor, a hag. This adventure is set in this issue's Blutstrom setting but can occur in any town with a sewer system.

Adventure Background

Blutstrom, an estuary city, has been suffering a chaotic influx of demonic "visitors" of late. So far, these have been limited to lesser demons, a circumstance Greasy Bernice Slop-dabble, a sea hag in cahoots with an abyssal lord, hopes to change. Bernice is intent on opening up a portal large enough to funnel the demon hordes through to the material plane. She just needs to sacrifice a concentrated source of raw magic during the next full moon. Luckily for her, Alita Britesun, the seven-year-old daughter of local tavern owners, is a font of illusion magic, and Bernice has kidnapped her. Can the party find the sea hag's lair and rescue the child before the full moon two nights hence? Or will Bernice succeed in her quest to establish a demonic foothold in Blutstrom?

Creature Information

This adventure introduces some new creatures. They use established creature stats with a few changes.

Demons

If a creature is 'demonified', then apply the following changes to it:

- Its type becomes fiend and it gains the demon tag.
- It gains resistance to cold, fire, and lightning damage.

- It gains immunity to poison damage.
- It can't be charmed, frightened, or poisoned.
- It gains darkvision to 60 feet (if not already greater).
- It can understand Abyssal but does not speak or understand any other language.

Deepspawn. These trident-wielding monsters have bulbous rubbery skin, a mouth wriggling with tentacles, and spined webbing between their legs. They have the stats of demonified **merfolk**, wield tridents, and have a tremorsense of 15 ft. when in water.

Razormaw. With a lamprey-like mouth full of jagged teeth, these demons send themselves into blood frenzies when they tear chunks off their quarry. They have the stats of a demonified **sahuagin**, with a tremorsense of 30 ft. when in water.

Sirenshriek. The histories are filled with tales of sweet songs luring sailors to their dooms. The cause? **Sirenshrieks.** Sirenshrieks have a similar appearance to harpies, with fins and scales in place of wings and feathers. They have the stats of a demonified **harpy**, but replace the fly speed with a swim speed.

Sewer Creatures

Sentient Sludge. With enough chemicals, magic, and demonic influence, even the sewer sludge can become sentient. Young **sentient sludglings** have the stats of an **awakened shrub** with the following changes:

- Their type is ooze instead of plant.
- They have blindsight out to 30 ft.
- They are immune to the blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, and prone conditions.
- Their False Appearance looks like a sludge instead of a shrub.

The parent **sentient sludge** has the stats of a **gelatinous cube**, except it loses the Transparent feature, it is vulnerable to fire damage, and resistant to piercing damage.

Orvil, the Deformed Cleric of Zuton. Cursed and disfigured by Bernice herself, **Orvil** has the stats of a **priest**, but has *bles* and *prayer of healing* prepared instead of *cure wounds* and *spiritual weapon*.

He is a cleric-cum-bard, serving his god by entertaining others. He loves being the centre of attention, likes those who laugh at his jokes, and hates those who are funnier or more talented than him. He is a cowardly man in the face of danger, and will run rather than fight.

Adventure Hooks

What could encourage the party to rescue a child in the midst of a demonic mischief and mayhem? Here's a few ways to get them into the story:

Distraught Parents. Wide-eyed and dishevelled, Grace and/or Argon—Alita's parents—directly approach the party as they travel in the street. They offer room, board, and gold (100 gp) for their daughter's safe return.

Singing Sewers. The stench from the sewers has become unbearable of late. Furthermore, boatmen keep going missing, drawn into the sewers by beautiful singing. Town criers and notice boards promise a 100 gp reward for cessation of both song and stench.

Magical Mishaps. Fumblemore—a local wizard—has been suffering from unpredictable magical fluctuations. He's traced these disturbances to the Britesun Inn. Not being a people-person himself, he'd like the party to organise a meeting with whomever is responsible.

Sea Hag's Lair

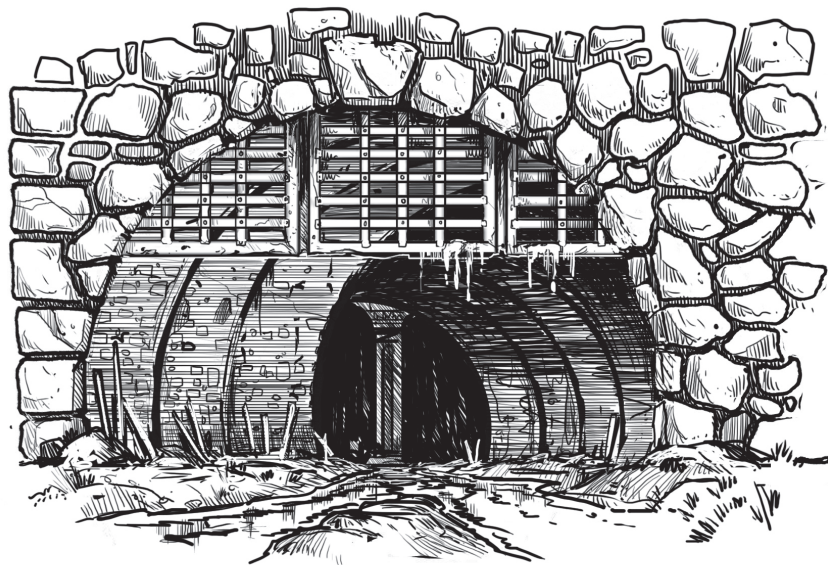
Greasy Bernice Slopdabble, hoping to profit from the misery incited by the demonic outpourings in Blutstrom, has set up shop in a sewer complex. It stinks.

Locating the Lair

There are several ways the adventurers can locate the lair.

Alita. Rotten strands of stinking kelp can be found in Alita's room and running up the side of the inn to her small bedroom on the second floor. Puddles of water are revealed to be putrid saltwater on a successful DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) check. These clues all point to the sewers. With some probing, the parents—neither of whom are magical—will admit that "Alita can do things. Magical things."

Finding the Sewers. As any local can tell the party, the sewers below Blutstrom's streets are a maze. Although Bernice has made no effort to hide her location, finding the right



sewers to explore takes some trial and error. The following are examples of checks that can lead the party to the Rosewood sewer outfall:

- A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals a trail of rotting seaweed leading to an outfall near the river.
- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that, in place of the usual eerie singing, shrill screams were heard at a sewer outfall last night.
- A successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check against a smuggler can reveal a certain sewer outfall hasn't been used of late because of the 'singing lady'.

General Features

The sewer is a damp, reeking cess-pit. All rooms with water have small pipes dripping water from various orifices in the walls.

Ceilings and Walls. Both ceiling and walls are made of the same damp, mossy stonework. The ceiling arches upward and is about 20 feet above the water's surface.

Floors. Most of the water is about three feet deep and is difficult terrain for anyone moving through it. Occasionally, the floor drops away into silt traps. In these traps, the water is 10 feet deep and has two feet of thick silt at the bottom. Anything more than a foot below the water's surface is heavily obscured.

Doors. Any doors mentioned are wooden, have AC 12, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If the door is locked, a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools is required to pick the lock.

Light. Except for occasional grates in the ceiling, the sewer complex is totally dark. During the day, sewer grates let shafts of light illuminate a five-foot radius below them, with a further five feet of dim light.

Hazards: Infection. Sustaining

wounds down here is not a good idea. Whenever a creature takes slashing or piercing damage that leaves it with fewer than half its hit points, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned until cured. If it is not cured within 24 hours, it develops one of the diseases from the *contagion* spell at random.

Encounter Locations

The following encounter locations are keyed to the included map.

1a - Entrance

The cloying odor of rotting seaweed and excrement is almost asphyxiating. The room and passageway ahead are dark. There is a ledge three feet below the water's surface around the edge of the room, but the area in the centre of this room falls away to a 10-foot-deep pool.

Encounter: Deepspawn. Four **deepspawn** (see Creature Information) hide waiting for intruders. One is on the silty bed of **room 1a**, the other three guard the end of each of the crossroad's corridors. The deepspawn can't be seen below the murky water.

As soon as one creature passes beyond the centre of the crossroads, the deepspawn attack. They have no sense of self-preservation.

Treasure: Deepspawn. The deepspawn carry tridents as well as captured trinkets and jewelry worth 15 gp.

Direction: Singing. After the combat concludes, delicate, crystal-clear singing can be heard coming from **room 4** to the east. Each character must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by a sirenscriek in **room 4**.

A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a slight buzzing sound coming from the south passage. A quiet murmur, like a voice in conversation (Orvil talking to himself), comes from the north.

After Bernice's Demise. Encounter: Sentient Sludge. After Bernice is defeated, the parent **sentient sludge** (see Creature Information) returns from its hunting. It is on the ceiling of **room 1a** and drops onto the first character to pass underneath it.

2 - Mosquitoes

This octagonal room sports a submerged walkway around its perimeter, and a silt trap in its centre. A sturdy wooden door lies to the west, slightly ajar, while a short corridor leads to the east. Two grates in the ceiling shed light on the cause of the room's slightly sweeter stench; two floating corpses.

Encounter: Stirges. Six **stirges** cling to the ceiling. If more than half the party fails a DC 9 Dexterity (Stealth) check, they attack.

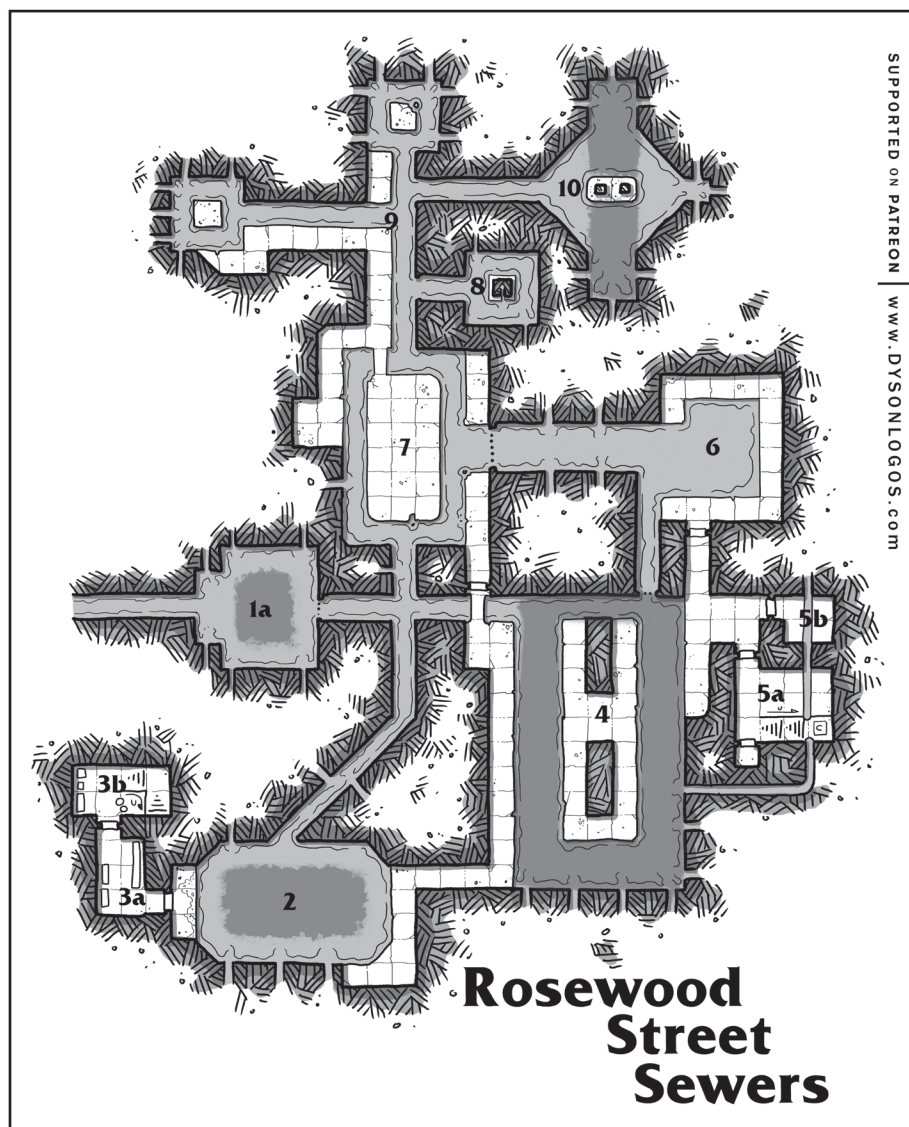
Corpses. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the corpses died from blood loss. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices two things: the six bat-like creatures (**stirges**) that cling to the ceiling, and the sounds of scuffling coming from behind the door to the east.

3a - The Pantry

The door to this room has been broken open, and four dretches have ransacked the baker's basement, stuffing themselves. The room is a mess; cheese rinds, stale bread, and bones litter the floor. The shelves that line the two walls are mostly empty.

Encounter: Dretches. Unless there is fighting in an adjacent room, or a character falls in the pool in **room 2**, the four **dretches** are surprised by the party. If alerted, the dretches all hide and prepare attacks against the first creature that enters the room.

Treasure: Hidden Art. Hidden behind a false panel in the west wall are four art pieces each worth 25 gp.



Rosewood Street Sewers

3b - Baker's Storage

The door to this room is locked and lined with felt, presumably to stop the smell. The room is full of sacks of flour, seeds, and drying herbs. Once opened, the door can be barricaded from the inside and is a good place to rest. Stairs lead up to another locked door, which leads to the Blokvist Bakery.

4 - Sirens shriek Sisters

A central island about 45 feet long stands in the middle of the seaweed-clogged water. Two grates in the ceiling to the south shed small spotlights into the otherwise dark,

stinking room. Two doors are visible; one in the northwest corner of the room, and one to the east. Two more doors lead from the room in the northeast but are not visible from **rooms 1 or 2**. A submerged passage leads to **room 6** to the north but is blocked with iron bars (AC 18, 15 hit points).

Siren Song. Two sirens shriek sing to a fist-sized glowing blue stone behind one of the pillars on the island.

As the party enters the room, a second voice joins the first in harmony. Each character that can hear the sound must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the second sirens shriek.

Hazard: Acid Kelp. Each creature that enters the water in this room for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in the water takes 2 (1d4) acid damage. A creature that ends its turn in the water must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be grappled by the acid kelp. A creature can use its action to make a DC 12 Strength check, freeing a grappled creature on a success.

Encounter: Sirens shriek. The two sirens shrieks (see Creature Information) try to lure the characters into the acidic waters with their song. The sirens shriek in possession of the *runestone of ocean currents* (see Appendix C) will use it to attack with a recharge of (5-6).

Treasure: Runestone of Ocean Currents. If the sirens shriek in possession of the *runestone* dies within 5 feet of the water, roll a d4. On a 1-2 it falls into the water.

5a - Brewer's Basement

The wooden door to this basement is locked. Once opened, the door can be barred from the inside and is a good place to rest. Stairs lead up to a locked door into the Owlbarley Brewery.

5b - Maintenance

A locked wooden door keeps the clutter in this oversized cupboard in place. Inside are various tools; shovels, sacks, three 50-foot lengths of hempen rope, two lanterns, and four pints of oil.

When the door is opened, all the contents fall out with a loud clatter. This causes Orvil in **room 6** to tentatively call out to the party.

Treasure. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a false bottom in a tool case containing a *potion of healing*.

6 - Deformed Priest

A barred wooden door prevents access to this room. It can be forced open with a successful DC 18 Strength check. The water and air in this room

has been largely purified by **Orvil** (see Creature Information), who is its sole occupant. A single grate in the ceiling sheds a wan light into the room.

Persuading Orvil. Knocking on the door will cause Orvil to begin a dialogue with the party. He is scared of Bernice, who has disfigured him, and also of the sirens shrieks, who've kept him locked in this room for the past three days. Half his face looks as if it has melted, and he bears a huge, hunched left shoulder.

A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check will convince him that the sirens shrieks have been killed. On a failure, bringing one of their heads to the grating in **room 7** will persuade him.

Respite. Once convinced of the sirens shrieks' demise, he will open the door and offer to aid the party. He has three 2nd-level spell slots available to cast *prayer of healing* or *lesser restoration*, and will offer to use a 3rd-level slot to cast *bless* on five of the party members as they pass the iron fencing in **room 7**.

Request for Help! If the party passes the iron fencing between rooms 6 and 7 without talking to Orvil first, he will approach them and request help.

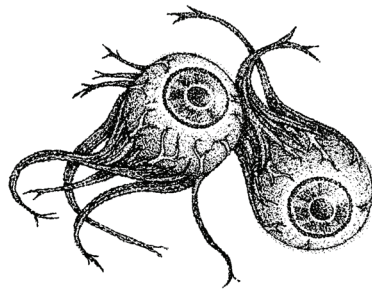
7 - Sentient Sludge

The locked door from **room 4** to this room can be circumvented via the crossroads in **room 1**. Thick iron bars to the east prevent passage into **room 6**, which is remarkably free of the seaweed. A corridor leads onward to the north. A 30-foot-by-15-foot island in the centre of this room is covered in small piles of green, bubbling sludge. A cluster of tiny green glowing lights (sludgling larvae) pulses gently in an alcove to the west.

Encounter: Sentient Sludglings. The alcove to the west is filled with sludgling larvae, as revealed by a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check. The 10 **sentient sludglings**

(see Creature Information), which coat the ceiling and floor, will attack if any party member moves within five feet of the larvae.

After Bernice's Demise. Encounter: Mumma's Minions. One **razormaw** and four **deepspawn** (see Creature Information), fresh from scavenging, have hurried back after hearing their mistress's death shriek. They attack and fight to the death.



8 - Hag's Eye Trap

Using illusion magic, a hag's eye, and a magic wand, Bernice has set a trap! A pedestal rises from the centre of this dark, 15-foot-square room.

Trick: Babe. A permanent *major image* of a human babe is projected into this room. It begins crying as the players near the entrance to **room 8**. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the babe's movements don't quite match up with the sounds.

Hag's Eye. Bernice's sisters—who are elsewhere—have left their hag's eye to watch over this trap. It hangs from the ceiling directly above the pedestal. The eye is attached to a *coral wand* (see Appendix C), both of which are spotted if anyone looks up. Destroying the eye deals 16 (3d10) psychic damage to Bernice, who screams hideously, and becomes blinded for 24 hours.

Complex Trap: Sinking Mire. This room contains a mechanism to allow the drains to accommodate a storm surge. Bernice's coven has adapted it to kill any passing interlopers.

Trigger. Bernice watches through the hag's eye and will trigger the trap when she thinks she can trap the most folks. When triggered, the room drops by 20 feet (although this is not done quickly enough to deal falling damage), and the slick passageway into it becomes impossibly steep. Each creature in the passageway falls into the room below. A DC 25 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to climb out after the trap is triggered.

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative count 20 and 10.

Active Elements. The Sinking Mire fills with water each turn, and casts *poison spray* at those within the room.

Sinking (Initiative 20). Rancid water begins pouring in. After three turns, the room is completely submerged.

Poison Spray (Initiative 10). The wand in the ceiling randomly targets two adjacent creatures. They must each succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 6 (1d12) poison damage.

Countermeasures. Each of the trap's active elements can be thwarted by a particular countermeasure.

Sinking. A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check using the Search action finds one lever. When all three levers are pulled, the room raises and drains.

Poison Spray. The ceiling is around seven feet above the pedestal. Destroying the hag's eye ends the poison spray. Three successful DC 11 Strength checks are required to pull the *coral wand* (see Appendix C) free, which also ends the *poison spray*. Destroying the eye deals 16 (3d10) psychic damage to Bernice and blinds her for 24 hours.

Treasure: Coral Wand. The eye is linked to the *coral wand* (see Appendix C), also wedged in the ceiling, that can cast *poison spray* on those beneath it. The wand can be pulled free as described above.

9 - The Offerings

Two corridors lead to small platforms just above the water's surface. Each is covered with an array of offerings, from food to weapons and gold. The western pile looks a little old and weathered. A corridor leads off to the east.

Treasure: Offerings. The western pile of offerings contains four art pieces, each worth 25 gp. The eastern pile has coins totalling 36 gp in various denominations.

Encounter: Gray Ooze. Any creature who touches the western pile is surprised as an unseen **gray ooze** drops onto it.

10 - Greasy Bernice

The focus of the pungent miasma that fills this complex stems from this 30-foot-square room. The submerged floor suddenly falls away to a 10-foot-deep silt trap in the centre. Two grates, one at either side, shed narrow shafts of light onto the murky waters. Manacled between two wooden stakes on a small island in the centre is a young, dark-haired girl, her clothes ragged and soiled.

Encounter: Bernice & Allies. Bernice (CE **sea hag**) and a **razormaw** (see Creature Information) use the murky water to keep out of sight. At the first sign of aggression the razormaw emerges from the deep water, joining the fray.

From the shadows at the far end of the room, Bernice begins talking to the party. Despite wanting the girl to live until the full moon, Bernice will not hesitate to threaten her life if she thinks it will perturb the party. This is a bluff; she will not, under any circumstances, allow the child to be harmed (...yet). Start a timer. If the real-life conversation lasts for more than 10 minutes, two **deepspawn** (see Creature Information) try to sneak up behind the party.

Alita. Alita is bound with *leaden manacles* (see Appendix C) which prevent her from casting spells. A DC



12 Wisdom (Perception) check spots burns on her wrists. She is limp, seemingly unconscious, but is roused by Bernice's death shriek (see below).

Death shriek. When Bernice dies, she lets out a deafening wail. Each creature within 30 feet of her must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become deafened for the next 10 minutes.

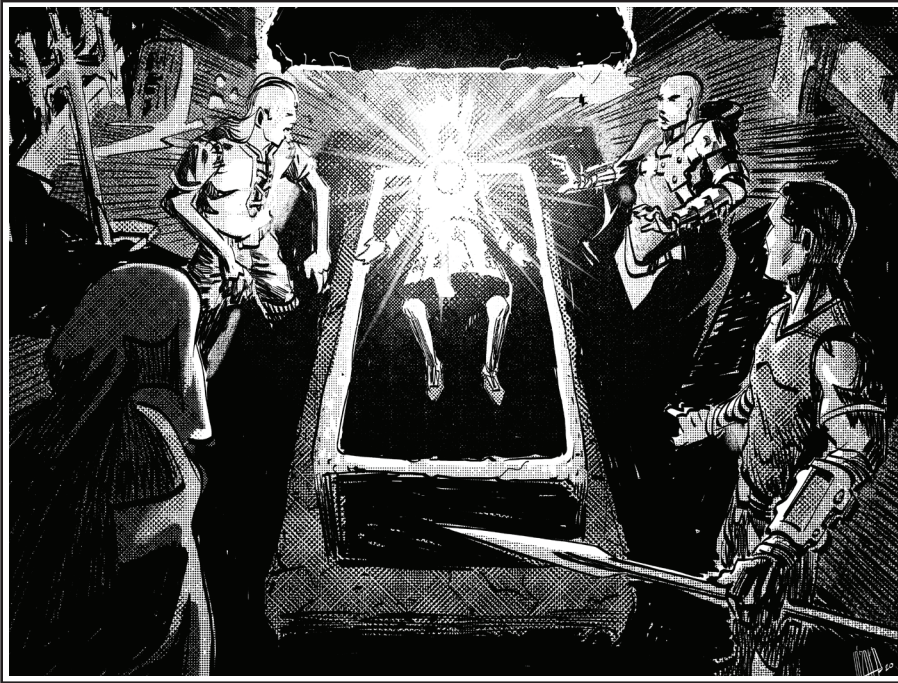
Escape. Drawn by Bernice's death shriek, monsters have returned to the lair. **rooms 7** and **1** have new inhabitants.

Concluding the Adventure

After the party returns Alita to her parents, reward them a bonus 450 xp. Here are some ideas of where you can take the story next:

- Argon and Grace are very grateful, offering the party free accommodation whenever they're in town, and promising to get Alita magical training.

- Fumblemore meets Alita and agrees to start teaching her. Before that, he needs a haunted classroom cleared out so Alita can study with him.
- Captain Hexenbrecher of the town guard gives the party the promised reward. As a consequence, smuggling has resumed in the area and he needs help stopping it.
- Alternatively, the smugglers need help sneaking past the town militia!
- Bernice's coven becomes an antagonist of the party.
- Orvil seeks help curing his disfigurement. He needs a toenail of one of the other hag coven members!
- Alternatively, Orvil finds peace in his new career as a circus freak.
- Spellbreakers chase Alita, who escapes to the Mausoleum of Misdirection (see *Mausoleum of the Mirage Mage*, the next installment in *The Cursed Child* trilogy). Ω



MAUSOLEUM OF THE MIRAGE MAGE

BY MAX WARTELE

A 3rd-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson Logos

Art by Matias Lazaro and William McAusland

Mausoleum of the Mirage Mage is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to five characters of 3rd to 4th level and is optimized for four character with an average party level (APL) of 3. Characters that complete the adventure should earn enough experience to progress halfway to 4th level.

The adventurers must find a possessed child in an illusion-filled mausoleum, before finding a way to end her possession. This adventure can be run as a one-shot in any city, or as the following chapter to *Sea Hag's Lair* in the adventure trilogy, *The Cursed Child*. A character with access to *detect magic* and players who enjoy being tricked will prove great boons in this adventure!

Adventure Background

Blutstrom's trickle of demonic mischief has become a surge. During this chaos, Alita, a seven-year-old prodigy of illusion magic, has disappeared. It's not the first time this has happened. Less than a week ago she was kidnapped by a sea hag who hoped to sacrifice her and open a portal to the abyss. Luckily, a party of wandering adventurers rescued the girl and put the hag to the sword.

However, it appears word of her power has gotten out. A zealous, anti-magic faction known as spellbreakers has come to Blutstrom with the intent of capturing or assassinating her. A ghost friendly to Alita, the spirit of a great mage, possessed Alita in order to help her escape into the Mausoleum of Misdirection. There's no sign of her having left her parents' inn; the only clues are a broken door and a large, gilded mirror.

Creature Information

This adventure introduces some new demons. They use established creature stats with a few changes. If a creature is demonified, then apply the following changes to it:

- Its type is fiend and it gains the demon tag.

- It gains resistance to cold, fire, and lightning damage.
- It gains immunity to poison damage.
- It can't be charmed, frightened, or poisoned.
- It gains darkvision out to 60 feet (if not already greater).
- It can understand Abyssal, but does not speak or understand any other language.

Lorgoz. Like a tentacled slug, this blubbery, slimy demon grabs prey in its long, suckered tentacles before sneezing a torrent of paralyzing phlegm from the many orifices on its head. It has the stats of a demonified **chuul**. For flavour, rename the chuul's Pincer attack to Tentacles, and the Tentacles to Phlegm.

Simulochlol. Specialised humanoid hunters, simulochlols were borne of doppelgangers experimented on by the lords and ladies of the abyss. They have the stats of a demonified **doppelganger**, and can speak Abyssal.

Alita. This font of illusion magic has the stats of a **commoner** with the following changes:

- She is sized Small.
- She has 14 (4d6) hit points.
- She has a walking speed of 25 feet.
- She has a Charisma of 14 (+2).
- She has the Innate Spellcasting trait (her spellcasting ability is Charisma, her spell save DC 12) and can cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
- At will: *minor illusion*, *invisibility*, *silent image*
- 1/day each: *major image*, *mislead*

Mirrmic. A **mirrmic** has, through exposure to illusion magic, become a master of reflection. It has the stats of a **mimic** with the following additional actions:

- **Multiattack.** The mirrmic makes a bite attack. When its Distort is available, it can use Distort before making a bite attack.
- **Distort (Recharge 4-6).** Each creature that can see the mimic

must succeed on DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or lose balance and fall prone. A creature that fails by 5 or more is incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

Spellbreakers. Zealous warriors of the war on magic, spellbreakers are a policing arm tasked with hunting down the illegal witches and sorcerers that 'plague' the realm. Though any race may become a spellbreaker, they are easily distinguished by the black scars that mar their visage.

Adventure Hooks

What could encourage a party to rescue a child in the midst of demonic mischief and mayhem? Here's a few ways to get them in the story:

Distraught Parents. Wide-eyed and dishevelled, Grace and Argon—Alita's parents—directly approach the party as they travel in the street. They can offer room, board, and gold (200 gp) for her safe return.

Unsavory Characters. Locals of the area have been threatened and coerced by black-scarred ruffians. Captain Hexenbrecher of the local militia wants them found and ejected, offering a 200 gp reward. They were last seen paying for accommodation at the Britesun Inn.

Absent Academic. Fumblemore—a local wizard—has recently taken on the tuition of a young girl, Alita Britesun. She didn't show up to her last lesson and he's worried. As a reward for her rescue, he'll enchant a weapon to become a +1 version.

Through the Looking Glass

Asking around the inn reveals that four unsavory characters came enquiring about a young magician. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check reveals that their description matches that of spellbreakers, a zealous, antimagic faction. Alita's parents show the party to her room. The door is broken and there is a large gilded mirror that the parents say they've never seen before.

A DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the door was broken down from the outside.

The Mirror. A character that stands directly before the mirror sees a reflection of themselves. The reflection moves, beckoning them forwards, and the character must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or fall forwards into the mirror. They enter **room 1** of the Mausoleum of Misdirection. Willingly touching the mirror pulls a creature into the Mausoleum.

Mausoleum of Misdirection

The mausoleum is warm and comfortable, fashioned by a once-powerful mage in its own pocket dimension. It was obviously once a grand place, with frescoes on the walls and faded carpets on the floors, but has fallen into disrepair and ruin. Moving through this place leaves one with an uneasy feeling, like the physics are... wrong.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, areas of the mausoleum have the following features.

Ceilings and Walls. The ceilings are 10 feet high and covered in faded, peeling artwork. The walls are plastered stone and also show crumbling depictions of once-colourful scenes.

Floors. The floors are made of flagstones. They are often covered in thick, worn out carpets.

Doors. All the doors in the mausoleum are wooden and unlocked. The secret door in **room 6** has AC 17, 20 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Light. **Rooms 1** to **4** are brightly lit by magical sconces in each corner. Otherwise, the rooms are dark.

Hazards: Distorted Reality. Reality is slightly distorted here. Over time, it takes a toll. Whenever you decide it's appropriate (for example, after the party concludes an encounter with a trick or trap), have each

MIRAGE MAGE

character roll a DC 11 Wisdom or Intelligence saving throw (GM's choice). On a failure, a creature develops one effect from the following table. Roll a d10 to determine the effect, which lasts for 1d10 hours.

Distorted Reality.

d10	Effect
1	You believe one of your party is a deity in disguise.
2	You gain a sudden interest in poetry and talk only in rhyme. Failing to make a rhyme causes you 1 point of psychic damage.
3	You can't help but admire yourself, and will flex in front of every mirror you pass, giving yourself quiet compliments.
4	You suddenly think you're a different race, and are surprised when you discover you're not.
5	You become temporarily confused, speaking of the past as if it were the future, and the future as if it were the past.
6	You become honest to a fault. Lying, even partially, causes you to take 1 point of psychic damage.
7	You can't help but lie about everything. Telling the truth causes you to take 1 point of psychic damage.
8	You believe you are one of the other party members.
9	You become a loot hoarder, just like a dragon.
10	You believe you are in a game, and everything that makes you the person you are is just a collection of numbers and a few sentences on a sheet of paper.

Hazards: Heightened Magic.

Magic is enhanced in the mausoleum. All levelled spells are cast one level higher than the spell slot expended.

Encounter Locations

Please reference the map on the following page.

1 - Entrance

The characters emerge from a large mirror in the north-west corner of the room. A hat stand, ripe with tattered headwear, stands to the south east. Carpeted stairs run up to the west. A flickering light, as if of flames, can be seen to the south. There is a closed door to the east.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check perceives shouts of "Help me, help me!" from beyond the eastern door.

Trick: Looper. Walking up the stairs leads to an unlocked door, behind which is another large, gilded mirror. Stepping through the mirror causes a creature to emerge back through the entrance mirror in **room 1**. Trying to walk back through the entrance mirror results in a bumped nose.

2 - Looper

The wall ahead is blank, but stairs lead down to left and right (north and south). At the northern end, in a small alcove, is another gilded mirror. At the bottom of each flight of stairs are doors leading east. Cries of "Help me!" are easily heard.

Encounter: Mirrormic. The mirror in the northern alcove is a **mirrormic** (see Creature Information). The mirrormic will use its Distort action on the first creature that stands within five feet of it. On a failed save, an affected creature falls towards the mirrormic, which adheres to it.

Trick: Looping Doors. The two doors are linked, and both lead back to this same room. Opening a door reveals a dark portal. If both doors are open, stepping into one of the portals causes a creature to emerge from the other one. If one door is shut, then a creature that attempts to step into the portal takes 1 force damage and is shunted back into an empty space.

Exit. The east wall at the top of the stairs is an illusion, as revealed on a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Physical interaction with the wall also reveals it to be an illusion. Behind this wall are stairs leading down to **room 3**.

3 - Treasure Hoard

This room is an oddly-shaped corridor, or viewing gallery, with chairs and stools lining the walls. To the east are two five-foot-wide entrance ways, barred by iron fences, leading to **room 10**. Anguished cries from a writhing figure on top of the altar in the room can be heard. To the north, the sounds of combat can be heard. At the south end of the corridor is a pile of gold coins.

Trick: Gold Coins. There must be over ten thousand coins in the pile. The coins are, in fact, made of stone and glamoured to appear gold. Attempting to bite or melt the coins reveals that they are not made of gold. Otherwise, their true form is only revealed upon leaving the mausoleum.

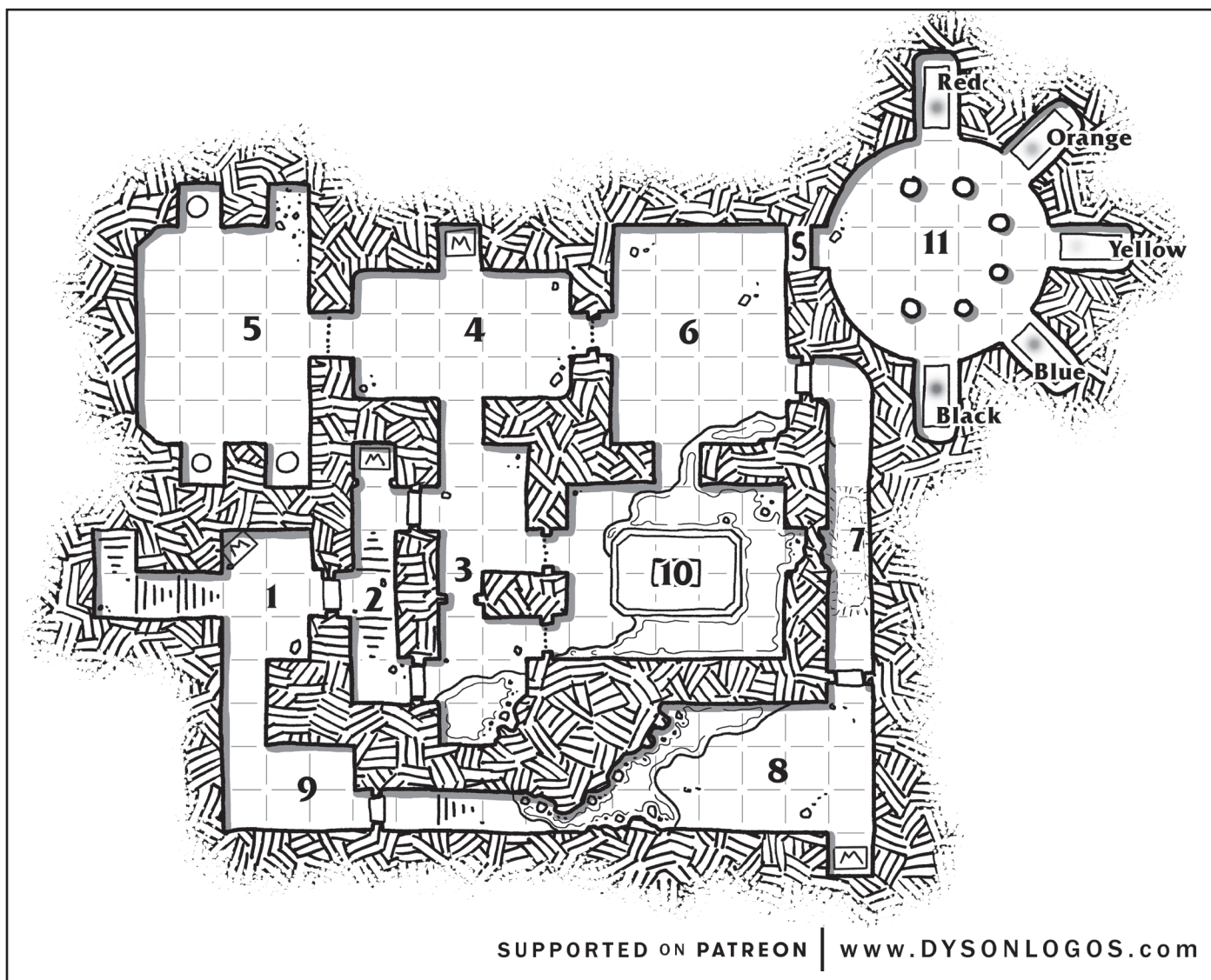
4 - Room of Reflection

The walls of this room are covered in mirrors. To the east and west are 10-foot-wide iron fences. One large, gilded mirror lies in an alcove to the north. There is a lever on the west wall.

Sounds. A fight can be seen and heard to the west, in **room 5**. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a wet sucking sound coming from **room 6**.

Trick: Translocation. Pulling the lever causes all creatures in room 4 to be teleported to **room 5**, and vice-versa. If this occurs, the remaining spellbreakers run away, and the black pudding squeezes through the bars to attack the party (see **room 5**).

Trick: Mirror. Stepping through the mirror causes the creature to appear in the nearest unoccupied space to the centre of **room 5**.



5 - Spellbreakers

The eastern wall of this room is a huge, double-storied clothing rack from which hang hundreds of tattered garments. In each corner of the room is a recessed alcove, three of which contain lit braziers. Within the fourth alcove lies the ruins of another brazier. Two humanoids battle with a large black ooze.

Light. The lit braziers shed bright light for 20 feet, and dim light for an additional 20 feet.

Encounter: Spellbreakers & Black Pudding. When the party first arrives, a **spellbreaker wurm**

and a **spellbreaker novice** (both unharmed; see Appendix D) are fighting a **black pudding** (45 hit points remaining). Two corpses of spellbreaker novitiates, partially dissolved, lie on the floor. The spellbreakers ask for help. If none is given, the wurm is the sole survivor of the fight. If help is given, the black pudding focuses on the novice.

Spellbreakers. If the wurm believes it can enlist the party's help, it will lie, saying it's here to rescue Alita.

Riddle: Escape. Inscribed above the door is a riddle that appears in whatever language each character finds most easy to read. It reads:

For the blooming last time;
my dearest Geroff.
If you want to leave this room;
turn the lights off!

Extinguishing the flames in the braziers causes the iron fence to sink into the floor.

Treasure: Spellbreakers. The dead novitiates' gear is too dissolved to be usable. The remaining novice carries *leaden manacles* and *widow's tear*. The wurm carries a *lockshiv*, hand crossbow, 18 bolts, and a *stunbolt* (see Appendix C for all magical items).

6 - Black Dragon's Lair

The hulking figure of a Large black dragon lies in the north-east corner of this dark room.

Trick: Illusory Dragon. The dragon is actually a **lorgoz** (see Creature Information) glamourised to look like a dragon. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the creature's appearance is not its own. Physical interaction, such as a claw attack leaving a target covered in wet slime, makes the discrepancy obvious. The illusion drops if the lorgoz dies.

Encounter: Lorgoz. The **lorgoz** attacks any creature that enters the room, targeting those that are magically enhanced or that carry magic items.

Secret: Riddle Door. In the north corner of the east wall is a carving of a door. Inscribed into the door, in whatever language each character finds easiest to read, is the following riddle:

In darkness, you can't see me; Yet in bright light, I hide. The dim ones can perceive me; And pass to the other side.
--

When this door is subjected to dim light, a handle grows from it over the course of a minute. This can be used to open the door. If the handle is subjected to bright light or darkness, it instantly retracts.

7 - Pitted Corridor

The middle 15 feet of this corridor appears to be a spiked pit, 15 feet deep.

Trap: Spiked Pit. What appears as a spiked pit is an illusion—it's actually a solid floor. The real spiked pit is the 5-foot-square area to the north of the illusory floor. This area has an illusion causing it to appear as a normal floor.

Physically interacting with each illusion reveals its true nature. A creature that steps on the spiked pit's

area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall to the bottom and take 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

Secret: Thin Wall. A portion of the west wall is crumbling. The muffled cries of the creature in **room 10** yelling "Help me!" can be heard. Dealing 10 bludgeoning damage to this wall (AC 14), causes it to give way.

8 - The Simulochlol

Except for the northern wall, which is partially collapsed, this room is lined with mouldy bookshelves. In an alcove to the south-east sits a large gilded mirror. There are two doorways, one down a short, flaming corridor to the west, the other in the north-east corner.

Encounter: Simulochlol & Quasit. The **simulochlol** (see Creature Information) has been watching the party through its magic mirror. It polymorphs into the first party member to pass into the room. With help from its invisible **quasit** ally, it tries to push the player through the mirror to the south-east and take its place within the party.

Trick: Mirror. Walking through the mirror causes a creature to emerge from the mirror in **room 4**.

Treasure: Simulochlol. The **simulochlol** carries a *mirror of the arcane eye* (see Appendix C).

9 - The Flaming Door

The door to the east of this room is aflame. The frame and surroundings are unaffected. The flames extend 20 feet beyond the doorway into **room 8**, obscuring vision of whatever is on the other side, even when the door is open.

Trick: Illusory Heat. Illusion magic masks the heat of the flames, causing them to feel warm instead of hot. The fire is contained by magic, and the surrounding structure is enchanted to be immune to fire damage. The flames themselves are completely real and can be doused with an appropriate quantity of water. Each creature

that touches or enters the flames for the first time on a turn takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

10 - Sacrifice

This room is covered in ankle-deep water, causing the stinking carpet to squelch noisily. Part of the wall to the east is crumbling away (see Thin Wall in **room 7**). A large, stone altar, three feet high, stands in the centre of the room. Chained to this altar is Alita's father, Argon, screaming in pain. He has multiple lacerations, some of which appear green and infected. His shouts have been reduced to the occasional mumble of "...help me..." and "...poisoned..."; he says no other words. A gold-banded black chest, about a foot wide, lies at the west end of the altar, a golden key by its side.

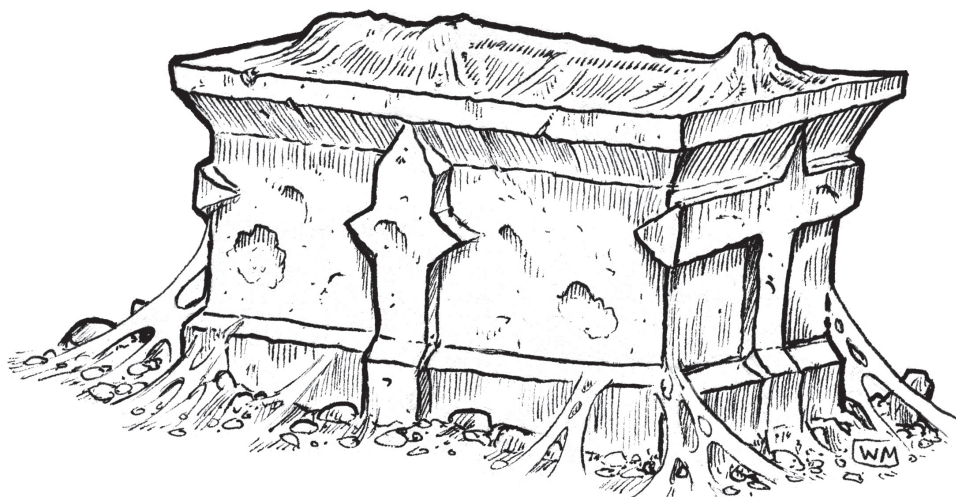
Trick: Injured Father. This is not Alita's father, but rather a complex physical illusion. Physical interaction doesn't reveal the illusion, but a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the sounds are slightly out of sync with the mouth movements. Once the man has been helped, either with magic or a potion, the illusion fades, leaving behind a simple mechanical doll.

Treasure: Weave Stripper. The gold and black box is a *weave stripper* (uncommon version) and the golden key unlocks it. See Appendix C for the item's effects if it is opened.

11 - The Child's Crypt

The back wall of this semi-circular crypt contains five recesses, each of which houses a stone coffin with a fist-sized, glowing orb atop it. In front of the coffins are six one-foot-wide pillars that stand about four feet high, each of which has a fist-sized bevel in its centre.

Encounter: Alita and the Ghost. **Alita** (see Creature Information), hidden in the middle coffin, is possessed by a **ghost**. The spectre is trying to keep Alita alive. If Alita is hurt, it will immediately emerge and try and



possess one of the party members. Alita can make death saving throws and be revived.

Development: Orbs & Coffins. If an orb is removed from a coffin, the coffin opens on initiative 0 of that round. If the coffin has an inhabitant, it rolls initiative and joins the combat the following round. The coffin's contents are as follows, from north to south:

- **1 - Red Orb.** One **skeleton**, gagged with *speaking no evil* (see Appendix C).
- **2 - Orange Orb.** An unstrung long-bow and two *void shot* arrows (see Appendix C).
- **3 - Yellow Orb.** Alita, possessed by a **ghost**, hovering above a gilded mirror.
- **4 - Blue Orb.** One **skeleton**, surrounded by 46 pp and 3700 sp.
- **5 - Black Orb.** One **shadow** and a gilded breastplate.

Complication: Spellbreaker. If any spellbreaker is still alive, it will choose an opportune moment to try and kill Alita.

Pillars of Protection. *Complex trap (level 1-4, moderate threat)*

These six pillars guard the coffins of the mausoleum, releasing destructive energy on those who would enter the crypt unbidden.

Trigger. The trap activates as soon as the party opens the door.

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative count 20.

Active Elements. The Pillars of Protection consist of six pillars, each of which can zap a creature with a different kind of energy.

Elemental Pillars. On initiative 20 of each round, a pillar charges up, glowing a colour associated with its damage type (see table). The first pillar to charge is the northernmost one. The next pillar is the next one to the south and so on. When a pillar charges, any other charged pillars lose their charge.

Pillar Type.

Pillar	Damage	Colour
1	Lightning	Yellow
2	Fire	Red
3	Radiant	White
4	Thunder	Orange
5	Cold	Blue
6	Necrotic	Black

A charged pillar fires a bolt of energy at the first creature to move into a space within 10 feet of it. Make a ranged spell attack against the creature (+5 to hit), dealing 3 (1d6) damage of the associated type on a hit. The pillar then loses its charge.

Countermeasures. The pillars can be halted in two ways; with the glowing orbs or with brute force.

Orb. There are five glowing orbs, one on each of the coffins. From north to south they are coloured: red, orange, yellow, blue, and black. Placing an orb onto the pillar of the matching colour causes that pillar to stop charging. The pillar is skipped in the trap's cyclical rotation.

Attack. The pillars have AC 17, 10 hit points, vulnerability to thunder damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Treasure: Coffins. Looting the coffins yields 830 gp, a *speaking no evil* spell scroll, two *voidshot* arrows (see Appendix C for the magic items), and a gilded breastplate.

Exit: Mirror. Stepping through the mirror in the third coffin returns a character to Alita's bedroom.

Aftermath

Here are some ideas of where you can take the story next:

- Argon and Grace are very grateful, offering the party free accommodation whenever they're in town.
- Spellbreakers become recurring antagonists of the party; there's a price on the characters' heads (see *Humperdink's Wares* for more spellbreaker stat blocks).
- Fumblemore continues teaching Alita and agrees to place protective wards around her home. He enchants one player's weapon to become a +1 version.
- The militia reward the players, who gain reputation in the city. They ask for help dealing with spellbreakers who're threatening Captain Hexenbrecher's life as punishment for interfering; the party must help fake his death.
- A horde of enemies attacks the Britesun Inn in a final attempt to kidnap Alita (see the next adventure in this series, **Assault at the Demon Inn**, available at *Humperdink's Wares*). Ω



TOWER OF GNOLLS

BY TAVERNTALES ALEX

A 3rd-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson Logos

Art by Matias Lazaro, Rick Hershey, and Maciej Zagorski

Tower of Gnolls is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for three to six 2nd to 4th level characters and is optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3.

This adventure takes place in and on the outskirts of the dark gothic city of Blutstrom featured in this issue of *BroadSword* but can easily be placed in any setting that might have an abandoned tower near a city. This adventure can be played as a one-shot adventure or placed into a longer-running campaign.

Adventure Background

Gnoll warbands have been attacking Blutstrom and its outskirts in increasing numbers over the past weeks. Many expected that the gnolls would soon move on to new targets, as they often do, but that has not been the case. The raids continue, and the people of Blutstrom have grown terrified to venture beyond its walls. An expedition party was sent out into the wetlands east of the city to try to determine where the gnolls were coming from, and though they succeeded in their mission, it cost them heavily. Only one surviving member of the expedition returned to Blutstrom to report that they traced the gnolls to Blackroot Tower before most of their group was chased down and slaughtered in the mud by the feral horrors.

Blackroot Tower has been crumbling and abandoned for decades after the angry citizens of Blutstrom, with the help of witch hunters, assaulted it and executed its inhabitant, the wizard Ferrous Blackroot, on charges of witchcraft. Since then, rumors of its haunting and the dangers that lurk within have persisted. Now, it serves the Abyss.

Lagan the Exiled, a weregnoll, has heard the call of the Demon King of Gnolls and has arrived at Blackroot Tower to use its magics in service to his master. He protects a portal to the Abyss within the tower from which

the gnolls stream forth, threatening to overtake the city if left undisturbed.

Adventure Hooks

There are a number of reasons the adventurers may be interested in stopping the spread of the gnolls or investigating the remnants of Blackroot Tower. A few of these are outlined below:

Hidden Treasure. Though Ferrous Blackroot was captured and killed by the citizens and witch hunters of Blutstrom, his spellbook was never found. Rumored to still wait within the tower, the city guard announces that adventurers willing to clear the tower of the gnoll threat may keep any of its treasures they find for themselves, no questions asked.

Desperate Guard. Attacks at the city's walls and within its outskirts have increased in frequency, and the city guard knows it is only a matter of time before more lives are lost. Stretched thin and desperate for help, they offer to pay each adventurer 20 gp to eliminate the gnoll threat at Blackroot Tower.

Gnoll Ambush. While travelling near or around the city of Blutstrom, the party is attacked by a gnoll warband. After defeating the warband, the gnolls can be successfully tracked back to Blackroot Tower.

Blackroot Tower

Blackroot Tower is a crumbling four-story building which stands half as tall now as it did when it was built. Its highest story is open to the elements, as its façade has fallen away in pieces over the years, revealing wooden support timbers behind black stone. Built into the side of a hill, a winding, overgrown pathway climbs around the building and leads to doored entrances at three different stories.



General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the tower's features are described as follows:

Ceilings. Ceilings in the tower are eight feet high.

Floors and Walls. The floors and walls are built of black obsidian. Walls are two feet thick.

Doors. Doors are made of oak, with a double layer of timber forming outer and inner boards. They have an AC of 15 and 18 hit points. Locked doors can be opened with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Light. During the day, the tower's first and upper stories are dimly lit by sunlight that filters through sections of the crumbling façade. The tower's basement is well lit by torches mounted in wall sconces.

Unsafe Stonework. After the raid

by Blutstrom's citizens and witch hunters and the tower's subsequent abandonment, the structural integrity of the foundation walls and ceilings have been compromised in some areas. As a result, some spells or activities may have consequential effects. A spell such as *fireball* or *thunderwave* has a 10 percent chance to cause a ceiling collapse twice the size of the spell's area, dealing 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage to all creatures in the area. This collapse might block or bury objects or exits.

Guarded Entrances. There are three doors that lead into the tower's interior; one each on the first, third, and fourth stories. Two **gnoll** guards are posted outside the doors on the second and fourth stories. The guards can be surprised with a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If alerted, one immediately attempts to flee into the tower to warn the occupants.

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map on the following page.

1. Vestibule

The walls and floor of this narrow vestibule are smeared with blood and littered with detritus. Bones picked clean and half-eaten carcasses of human and animal alike are piled into the middle of the room. There is an open door in the west wall.

Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher can hear slurping and crunching sounds coming from the room beyond, courtesy of the two death dog hyenas in **area 2**.

Trap: Tripwire. The south door to this room is rigged with a tripwire just inside the door frame. The first creature to step through the doorway must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw as they trigger the tripwire causing a minor debris collapse, taking 13 (3d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Noticing the trap requires a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, and a creature can disable the trap with a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Failing this check by 5 or more triggers the trap.

2. Living Room

Once-ornate furniture is now rotting and overturned in this room, including a splintered mahogany table and chairs of stained velvet. A hearth in the north wall is filled with feces instead of coal, creating a vile, heavy stench that fills the room. Above the hearth, a bronze rack that likely once held a sword is now empty. A staircase in the southeast end of the room leads upward. There is a closed trap door in the floor near the south wall.

Stench. The stench from the hearth in this room is overpowering. Any character entering this room must immediately succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or they vomit.

Encounter: Death Dogs. Two

death dog hyenas are here, tearing into the corpse of an unfortunate traveler, which keeps them occupied. The hyenas immediately notice any intruders and begin to snarl at any character that enters the room. If not calmed with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, they attack after two rounds, fighting until they have a 10 hit points or fewer, at which point they attempt to flee.

Trap Door. The trap door is unlocked. Beneath it is a set of stone steps set into the wall that lead downwards into **area 8**.

3. Kitchen and Pantry

Rotting and splintered wooden cabinetry, old shelves, and forgotten pans and kitchen utensils fill this room. An empty fire pit and an overturned cauldron lie near the northwest wall. A staircase in the south end of the room leads downwards. To the north, behind a door, another staircase leads upwards.

4. Library

This room is full of overturned furniture, broken glass, and damaged books. Bookshelves, many of them half empty now that their contents have been dumped on the floor, line all of the walls. Staircases in the north and south ends of the room lead downwards and upwards, respectively. Doors exit to the north and west.

Encounter: Gnolls. This room is used as a gathering and resting area for many of the gnolls affiliated with Lagan the Exiled. There are four **gnolls** here that immediately attack any intruders and fight to the death. If the guards outside the north door have not already been dealt with, they enter the room and join the combat after two rounds.

5. Bedroom

A bed, desk, and wardrobe occupy most of this room. The bed's mattress has been torn to shreds by both blade and claw. The desk is splintered and bent, its drawers having been pulled

out and dumped on the floor. The wardrobe's doors are open, its interior empty. On the wall, a painted portrait of a bald, clean-shaven man in a decorated robe has been slashed horizontally, so that the bottom half of the canvas droops downward. A small plaque at the bottom of the painting reads: "Ferrous Blackroot".

6. Roc Skeleton

This area has been open to the elements for decades; whatever function it served previously is now unrecognizable. The walls still stand at a height of roughly seven feet, but the ceiling has collapsed into rubble. The skeleton of a large, winged creature is curled up, mostly intact, over the floorboards. A doorway exits to the west. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check of the skeleton can determine it belonged to a roc, which likely came to the tower to die many years ago, perhaps of old age or an internal injury.

Guards. If the guards outside the west door have not already been dealt with, there is a chance the characters attract their attention if they make too much noise, at which point the guards will immediately pursue and attack.

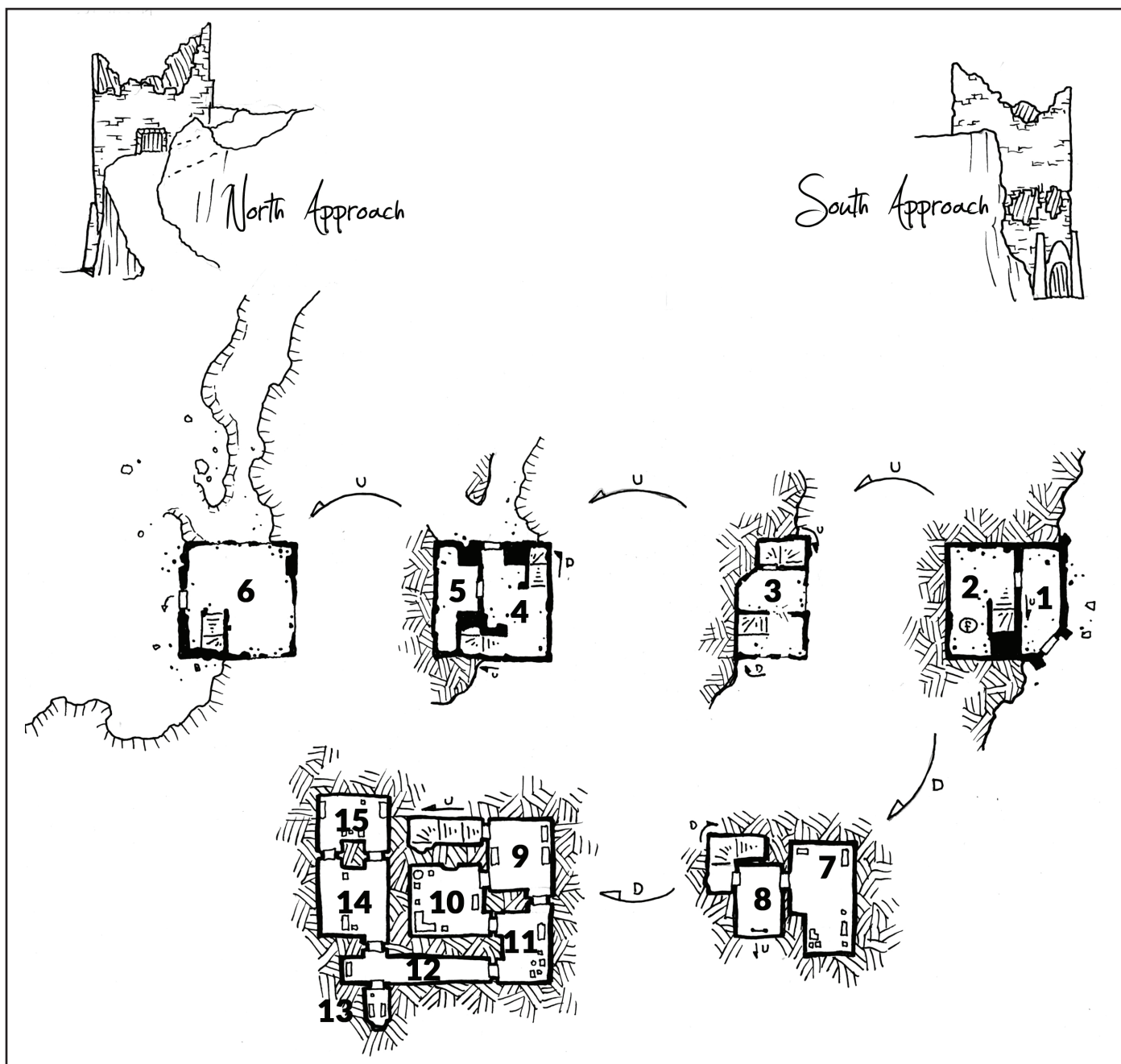
7. Wine Cellar

This room is filled with casks and mostly empty wine racks. Broken glass covers the floor, which is stained a reddish-brown. A door exits to the west.

Treasure: Rare Vintage. A character who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check can notice a hidden compartment behind one of the casks. Inside are two bottles of "Trezin Rosato", an incredibly rare vintage. A character can identify this rarity and determine that each bottle is worth 50 gp with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check.

8. General Storage

Broken crates and other detritus



litter the floor of this room, which looks to have previously been used for general storage. Doors exit to the east and west.

9. Alchemy Lab

Alchemical tools are strewn about this room over the floor and across two stone tables that are chipped and covered in graffiti. Storage crates that might once have contained valuable

components have been picked clean. Doors exit to the northwest, southwest, and south.

Treasure: Health Potion. A character who makes a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check can find a lone *potion of healing* that has rolled under one of the tables.

Encounter: Blackroot's Ghost. Shortly after a character enters this room, they notice a hissing sound

followed by the appearance of a spirit with a bald head, a clean-shaven face, and a decorated robe. "Must these incursions continue?!" it asks, desperately. The spirit is the **ghost** of Ferrous Blackroot, who returned to haunt the tower after his execution in Blutstrom. The ghost will attack if it is not eventually calmed with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If calmed, it can relay the

following information to the party:

- A hideous half-man, half-gnoll warlock has desecrated his tower by building a portal to the Abyss with the help of his dark patron.
- The warlock keeps a vile, many-mouthed creature of flesh and viscera by his side, which he speaks to as if he were good friends with it.
- Blackroot has tried to drive the warlock away, but the warlock seems entirely undisturbed by his presence.

If the characters explain that they seek to remove the gnoll presence from the tower, Blackroot can be convinced to help them defeat Lagan the Exiled with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check. He then vanishes, promising to return “when the moment strikes.”

10. Morgue

Three wooden tables fill this room, one of which is overturned. A selection of metal surgical instruments can be found on the tables and the floor. Two iron tubs near the south wall hold skeletal human remains in an advanced state of decay. Doors exit to the north, northwest, and southwest.

11. Underground Garden

Wooden planters line the walls of this room, and dirt covers much of the floor. The dry, aged roots of a few subterranean plant species can be seen amidst the mess. Two doors exit to the west, and one to the north.

12. Hallway

This long hallway is streaked with old blood. There are two doors near its western end, one facing north and the other south. A character with a passive Perception of 12 or higher can hear incoherent babbling interspersed with a low, gruff voice speaking in a tender manner coming from beyond the north door.

13. Cell

The skeletal remains of two humans are manacled to the south wall of this otherwise bare cell with iron shackles.

Hazard: Skeletons. A creature that comes within five feet of the two skeletons awakens them, and they thrash about furiously in an attempt to attack, but they remain restrained and immobile. A creature within five feet of the skeletons when they awaken must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d6 + 2)

piercing damage from the skeleton’s gnashing teeth and thrashing arms.

14. Portal

A stone well, five feet in diameter, is surrounded by runes painted in blood in the middle of this room. Near the west wall, a standing mirror has been toppled over, its shattered glass littering the floor. An oak desk against the east wall is covered in loose scraps of parchment and bent, broken quills. Two doors exit to the north.

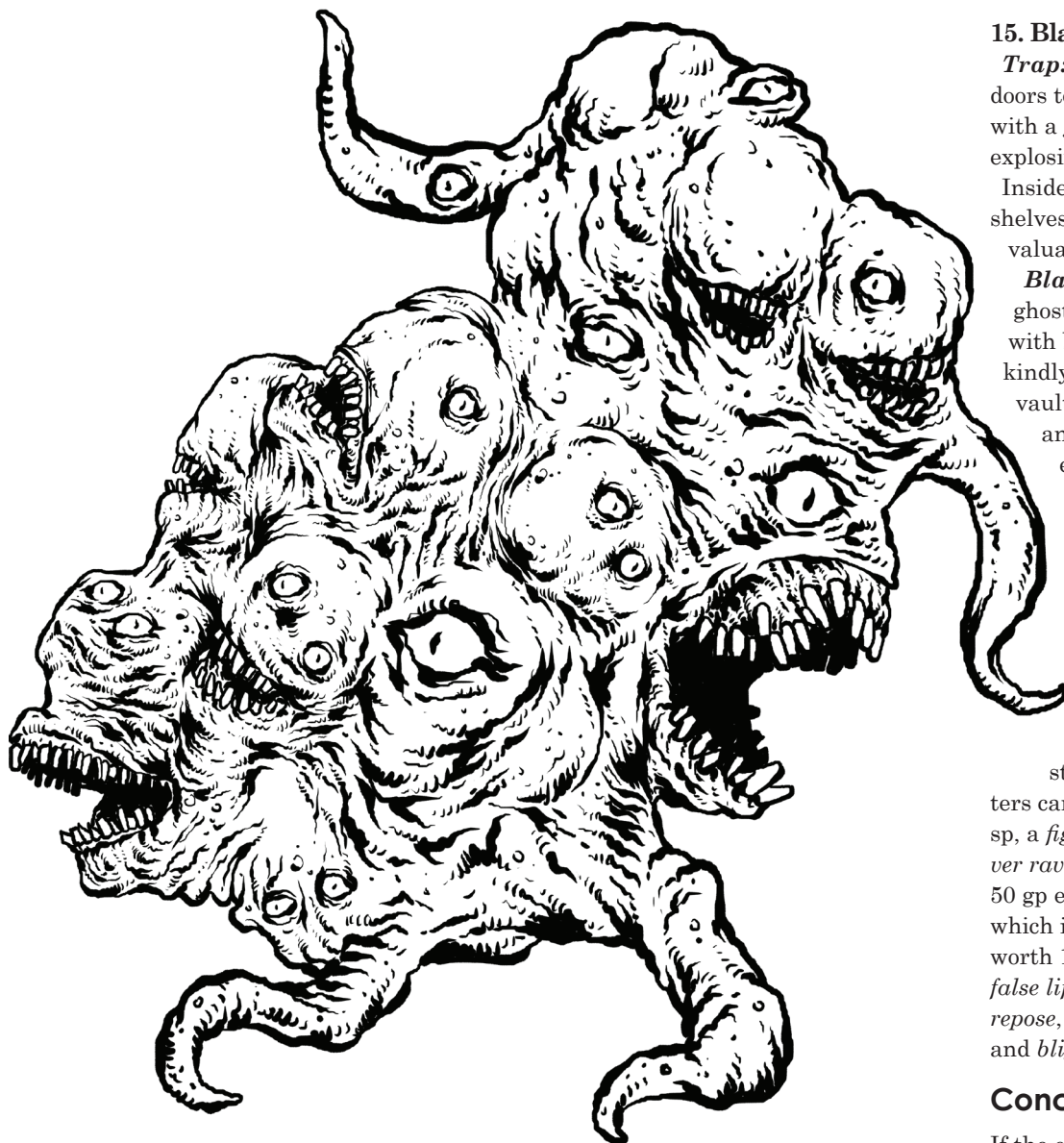
Encounter: Lagan and the Moulder. Lagan the Exiled and his **gibbering moulder** pet are in this room. Lagan spends most of his time managing the blood runes that maintain the portal’s connection to the Abyss, as well as scrawling his scrambled thoughts down onto the scraps of parchment on the desk. When confronted, Lagan may communicate briefly, screaming that the Demon King of Gnolls was the first one to accept him, but otherwise, he refuses to be placated and soon attacks the characters. If the **ghost** of Ferrous Blackroot agreed to help the characters, he appears when combat starts and joins the initiative order, focusing his attacks on Lagan.

Lagan is a **weregnoll warlock** (use **werewolf** statistics) with the following modifications:

- He speaks Abyssal and Gnoll in addition to Common.
- His Charisma score is 15 (+2).
- **New Trait: Innate Spellcasting.** Lagan’s Spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks), requiring no components: At will: *eldritch blast*, *mage hand* 3/day; *hellish rebuke*, *charm person* 1/day; *invisibility*, *hold person*, *misty step*

Characters who examine the desk and the writings in the room soon find that they are covered in the writings of Lagan in a mixture of Common and Abyssal, a man driven to madness by the influence of the Abyss. Characters





who take the time to read through the writings (many of which are written as letters to various family members) learn the following information:

- Lagan was driven to murder his family to serve his patron, and their remains were formed into a gibbering moulder.
- Lagan was slowly turned into a weregnoll by his patron.
- Lagan used his patron's magic to enable the portal, which lets in more gnolls from the abyss during every new moon.

Well Portal. The well in this room, previously used for *scrying* by Black-

root, now serves as the portal to the Abyss from which the gnolls stream forth. It is filled with a thick, inky liquid. The portal is only one-way. Any good-aligned creature touching the portal immediately takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. The damage increases by 4 (1d8) for every round a creature remains in contact with the portal. A character who makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check can discern that the portal can be dispelled by a casting of *dispel magic* or similar magic, or by removing or defacing the abyssal runes that surround it.

15. Blackroot's Vault

Trap: Glyphs of Warding. The doors to this room are each protected with a *glyph of warding* (DC 13) set to explosive fire runes.

Inside the room are wall-mounted shelves stacked with trinkets and valuables.

Blackroot's Ghost. If Blackroot's ghost has not already been dealt with by the party, he does not take kindly to adventurers raiding his vault. He will appear and attack any character who attempts to enter his vault unless convinced otherwise with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Treasure. Half of Blackroot's vault is valuable, while the other half is composed of unique items that hold little monetary worth, such as body parts in jars or strange-looking rocks. Characters can find a cumulative 102 gp, 230 sp, a *figurine of wondrous power (silver raven)*, two onyx gemstones worth 50 gp each, and Blackroot's spellbook, which is embossed with gold and worth 100 gp, and contains the spells *false life*, *blindness/deafness*, *gentle repose*, *animate dead*, *vampiric touch*, and *blight*.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters successfully disable the portal, the gnoll threat is mostly vanquished. Though the existing gnolls do not immediately disappear, they will either be slain by other adventurers or roam to other lands in the near future. If the portal is not disabled, 2d4 **gnolls** enter the Material Plane through it during every new moon. Though Blackroot's ghost can be temporarily defeated and made to disappear, it reappears within the tower after 1d4 hours. Blackroot's ghost will only ever truly rest if the tower is destroyed. ♪



LOST DUNGEON OF THE DEMON CULTISTS

BY DAVE HAMRICK

A 3rd-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson Logos

Art by Matias Lazaro, David L. Johnson, Maciej Zagorski, J.M. Woiak/Heather Shinn, and William McAusland

Lost Dungeon of the Demon Cultists is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to six 2nd-to-4th-level characters. The adventure is optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3.

This adventure is designed setting independent and can fit easily into any campaign setting of your choice. Characters who complete this adventure should earn one third of the experience necessary to reach 4th level.

Adventure Background

This section details the dungeon and its reason for existence. However, many of the details are intentionally left somewhat vague.

What is the Lost Dungeon?

The Lost Dungeon lies below the ruins of an ancient keep in the middle of a primordial forest. Its existence and Abyssal taint poison the land and vegetation around it. Rumor has it that a chunk of the Abyss itself exists somewhere at the heart of the dungeon.

Where is the Lost Dungeon?

Deep in the heart of a primordial forest, the Lost Dungeon and the keep above it isn't easy to find, despite its appearance on many old maps. If you wish to make discovering its location more difficult for the players, have one of the characters make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check when they enter the region near the old keep. On a success, they find the keep and its dungeon. On a failure, they spend the day searching with no success and must try again after a long rest. In the meantime, this may trigger more random encounters.

What happened in the Lost Dungeon?

This fortress was once used as a staging ground for an army of demon conjurers. Their enemy, a powerful spellcasting nation in its own right,

leveled the fortress with an ancient epic spell, leaving it a pile of rubble. Years after its fall, demons began to crawl forth from the dungeon below the fortress. The forest around the keep grew sick. Eventually, archdruids decided to enter the remains of the old keep and rid it of its evils once and for all. With the help of a powerful sorceress and her allies, the archdruids cleared the dungeon of all but one of the demons that lived within. During their battle, they combated a powerful sect of demon-worshippers, who nearly brought the entire complex down on their heads. Since that time, the archdruids who keep watch over the forest have employed their fey allies to guard the keep and its dungeon.

Who is in the Lost Dungeon?

Druids and good fey cleared the dungeon of most of its Abyssal denizens long ago. Only a lone **hezrou** still lurks within its stone halls, eternally bound to the Abyssal Shard at its heart. In addition to a pair of **satyrs** that watch over the dungeon to ensure tomb raiders and adventurers don't disturb the Shard, the dungeon is infested by **wolves**, **spiders**, and other beasts native to the surrounding forest. Like the vegetation and land around the fortress, however, these creatures are more aggressive than normal.

What is the Abyssal Shard?

The Abyssal Shard is a dark-red gem stone claimed from the Abyss itself. It is lodged in the wall of the summoning chamber in **area 6**. The shard cannot be removed, and no amount of mortal magic can destroy it. The **hezrou** in **area 6** is eternally bound to the stone. So long as it remains, the hezrou cannot leave the chamber, nor can it be destroyed.

Abyssal Shard Regional Effects. The region containing the Abyssal Shard is warped by the element's unnatural presence, which creates the



following effects:

- Nonmagical plants within 1 mile of the lair become dark and twisted. Some gain sentience and take on evil alignments.
- Water sources within 1 mile of the lair are supernaturally fouled. Good-aligned creatures that drink such water vomit it up within minutes.
- Beasts and monstrosities within 6 miles of the lair become unusually aggressive, attacking without

provocation.

- Within the dungeon itself, fiends have advantage on saving throws.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure is designed to easily be placed into any long-running campaign as a side-quest or even as a one shot. If you need an idea for a hook, choose one of the options on the Adventure Hook table below or roll for a random result.

Adventure Hook.

d8 Adventure Hook	
1	Find a Specific Item. The characters could be tasked to locate the missing mask (area 12) or even the Abyssal Shard itself (area 6).
2	Retrieve a Stolen Item. The giant spider in area 9 recently climbed out of the dungeon and stole something of value. The characters need to collect it.
3	Receive Information from an NPC. The characters must speak with the satyrs in area 3 regarding important information. However, the satyrs won't speak to the characters until they help them clear the dungeon from its dangerous creatures (excluding the hezrou, of course).
4	Rescue a Captive. The characters are tasked by a dangerous ally to free something hidden in area 6 —little to they know its a hezrou.
5	Discover the Fate of a Missing NPC. The characters must find out what happened to an adventuring party that vanished in the dungeon. Their corpses are in areas 7 and 10.
6	Discover the Nature of a Strange Phenomenon. A group of woodcutters want to know why animals have been acting so strange near the keep.
7	Slay a Specific Monster. The characters must enter the dungeon and find a way to destroy the hezrou in area 6 . Whether or not they can is up to you.
8	Secure the Aid of a Character. The hezrou in area 6 is the only one that can help the characters learn more about a missing companion.

The Lost Dungeon

Regardless of how they end up here, the party eventually arrives.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the dungeon has the following features.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The dungeon below the old keep was expertly carved from the stone below the forest. Mortared bricks reinforced the hewn stone, many of which still stand. However, in the decades since its fall, aggressive roots have pushed away some of these bricks, and now clutch the walls like tendrils. The ceilings rise 20 feet above the cracked tile floors.

Doors. The keep's doors were made of heavy wood planks bound by iron. The passing of years has not been kind to the doors. Most are rotting, rusted, and barely functional.

Illumination. It is dark throughout the entire complex.

Encounter Locations

The locations shown on the map of the Lost Dungeon are detailed below.

1 - The Keep

When the characters finally find the old keep and its dungeon, they discover a clearing of yellow grass, dying trees, and dry, cracked earth. It's eerily silent here, as most animals dare not approach the befouled area. Hunks of stone—the remains of the keep's once formidable defenses—rise from the desecrated land like jagged gray teeth. A 10 foot by 10 foot hole with a stone staircase offers the only entrance to the dungeon below the grounds. From within this maw-like portal rises the smell of murk and death. This staircase leads down to **area 2**.

There is nothing else of interest in this area.

2 - The Grand Hall (North)

The staircase from **area 1** leads to this flooded hallway. This long hallway once stretched the entire north-to-south length of the keep. During the battle that ultimately cleared the keep of its defenders, a section of the earth collapsed dividing the northern and southern halves (the southern half is **area 12**).

Cave In. At the south end of the hall, a massive pile of rubble blocks passage to the south end of the hallway. It would take weeks to clear the rubble.

Lantern Light. The light from the satyrs' lantern in **area 3** shines into the southern part of this area.

Stone Columns. Large columns made of sturdy granite continue to hold the ceilings.

Flood Waters. Thanks to the exposure of elements by the stairway that leads back up to the forest, four inches of rainwater drenches the entire area. The water is by no means potable, but it is otherwise relatively safe to move through.

Creatures. Unless the characters are stealthy, they may alert the pair of satyrs in **area 3** to their presence. See **area 3** for the satyrs' tactics.

Discoveries. If the characters examine the walls and columns, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that there were battles fought in this chamber. Claw marks mar the stone work and the smell of sulfur is strong throughout.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check also reveals that there were spellcasters present during the battle—likely powerful druids.

Treasure. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check while looking through the water at the far north side of the room notice the remains of a long-dead explorer. The explorer wears a gold ring worth 250 gp.

3 - The Satyrs

A short flight of steps connects this area to **area 2**. Once used as a barracks for the soldiers who worked in the ancient keep, this room is now used by the two satyrs who keep watch on the keep and its dungeon.

Lantern. The satyrs lack darkvision, therefore, they must use a lantern which they keep on a large stone block on the western wall.

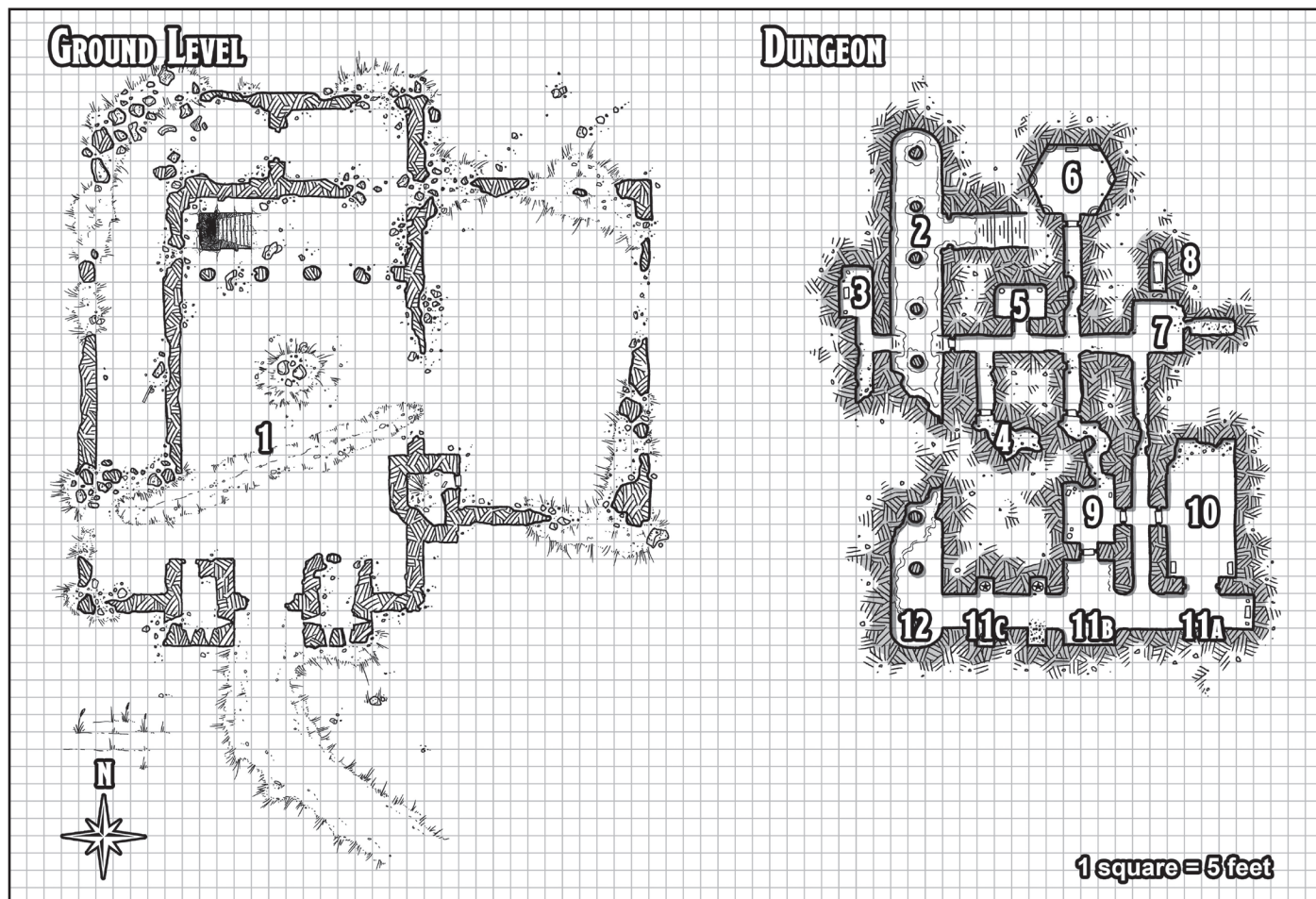
Ruined Furniture. The remains of the old bunks lie in ruins at the north end of the room.

Creatures. Two **satyrs** tasked to guard the ruins stay here until they hear intruders enter the dungeon. The satyrs' names are Dit and Jyg.

Creature motivation. Dit and Jyg do not enjoy their station, but they understand its importance. Unless the characters are particularly persuasive, the pair will first try to intimidate the characters. Failing that, they attack using nonlethal means unless the characters appear to be particularly violent or evil. As extraplanar creatures, they will fight until destroyed.

Discoveries. Dit and Jyg have explored the entire complex, however, they are reluctant to share information. If pressed (or persuaded), they will share the following information:

- Most of the valuables the dungeon once held are now long gone, carried off by looters and adventurers.
- There is a powerful fiend in **area 6** that cannot leave, nor can it be destroyed. Its purpose is to guard an ancient artifact (the Abyssal Shard), and it will kill anyone who enters the room. Not only will they tell the characters to avoid the room, but will fight to ensure no one tries to open the door.
- A pack of wolves lives in the eastern corner. The presence of the Abyssal shard makes them aggressive. As nature-lovers, the satyrs refuse to kill the creatures.
- There was a battle within the



dungeon in the late 14th century. A sorceress and her companions teamed up with the arch druids of the forest to clear these ruins of most of its demons. Only the demon in **area 6** remains.

4 - The Dead Wizards

This room once served as a meditation chamber.

Dead Wizards. The skeletal remains of three wizards lie on the floor of the room. All of their magic items and spellbooks were stripped from them a long time ago, and now their bodies lie here to remind others what happens to those who cross an archdruid.

Statues. Two black statues carved to look like screaming quasits stand in the northwest and northeast corners of the room. The statues are old

and cracked and have no value.

Creatures. If the characters search the skeletal remains, they disturb a nest of **centipedes** that lives in the wizard's tattered red robes. The centipedes coalesce into two swarms of centipedes. Like the other beasts of the forest, the presence of the Abyssal Shard makes them extraordinarily aggressive.

Discoveries. If the characters succeed on a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check, they recognize that the red robes belong to a prolific caste of wizards from a nearby country. However, the wizards' skulls and bones have strange spurs. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the spurs grew due to prolonged exposure to a fiend, likely a powerful demon.

5 - The Angry Dead

The door that leads to this area is stuck in place. Pushing it open requires a successful DC 20 Strength check. If a character fails the roll, they can attempt the roll again, but if they fail a second time, they cause the ceiling above to collapse. Any creature standing within 10 feet of the door when this happens must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from falling rocks on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one.

It's impossible to tell what this room once was, as the ceiling collapsed, crushing much of its contents.

Remains. Once the characters get past the stuck door, they discover the remains of two more dead wizards similar to the ones found in **area 4**.

DEMON CULTISTS

However, their spirits still linger.

Creatures. Two **specters** attack the moment the characters open the door. The specters look as they did in life: wizards with red robes and shaven heads. Their features are distorted by a combination of miserable undeath and whatever fiendish taint affected them in life. These creatures fight until destroyed.

Discoveries. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that these wizards were trapped

in the room and died of starvation. Humanoid claw marks cover the doors, evidence that they died in fear.

The characters can learn the same information from these dead wizards' bones as the bones from **area 4**.

6 - The Demon

So long as they are still alive, the satyrs from **area 3** will not permit the characters to enter. The door leading into this room is relatively new, made from solid stone. Not only is it locked, but it's *arcane locked*. The door is im-

pervious to all damage, and only a DC 25 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools or a DC 30 Strength check will open the door. If the *knock* spell is cast on the door, the DCs for both these checks are reduced by 10 for the duration. Likewise, the door's imperviousness fades: it has AC 18, 25 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

This chamber was once a summoning chamber. Surprisingly, it's still in excellent condition compared to the rest of the dungeon.



This room exudes pure evil. The Abyssal Shard that taints the region surrounding the old keep is here, jammed into the northernmost wall of this hexagonal chamber.

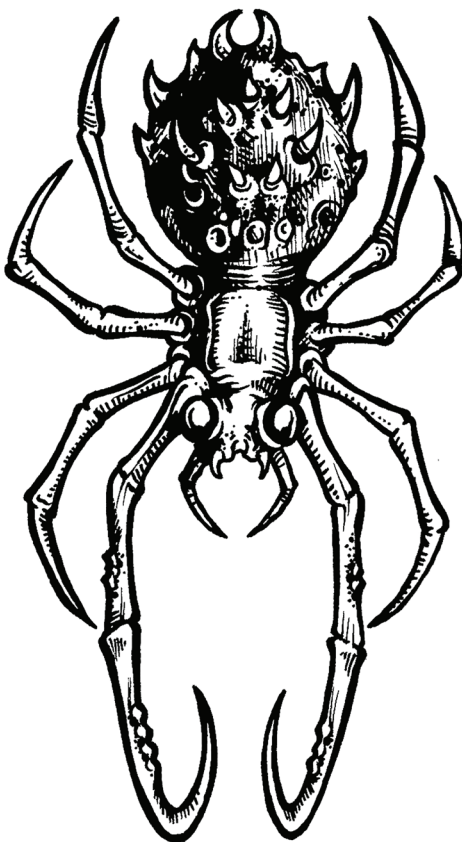
Abyssal Shard. The Abyssal Shard is a dangerous artifact. Any non-fiend creature that ends its turn within 10 feet of the shard must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. If a non-fiend creature touches the Shard itself, the creature takes 28 (8d6) necrotic damage. If this damage reduces the creature's hit points to 0, it dies and its soul is immediately transported to the Abyss. The shard cannot be moved, nor can it be destroyed by anything less than the might of a greater deity.

Religious Implements. An altar and multiple statues carved to look like demons litter the room. Frescoes depicting demons committing acts of depravity cover the walls, ceilings, and floors. Basins stained with blood rest at all six corners of the room. Stone pipes that once rose to the keep above were once used to feed these basins.

Creatures. A lone **hezrou** named Driggenos sits cross-legged in this chamber. Driggenos cannot escape this chamber. If Driggenos is destroyed, he regains all his hit points in 1 hour unless the Abyssal Shard is removed from this chamber. Driggenos is not a clever creature, but will remain quiet long enough for one or more characters to enter this chamber so he can attack and devour them. Any creature Driggenos kills has its soul transported to the Abyss.

Discoveries. Driggenos will not share information, but the nature of the Abyssal Shard itself may intrigue the characters enough to explore its purpose and existence outside of the dungeon. If the characters spend time researching the Abyssal Shard, they learn that it is a binding stone.

Such stones were used by the demon summoners who once lived in the keep to permanently tether demons to the Prime Material Plane, to prevent their return to the Abyss following their destruction. Thus, the demons could never leave the service of the demon summoners. This gave the summoners incredible power, but eventually led to their downfall—demons don't like being told what to do.



7 - The Wolves

This intersection once hid a pair of secret tombs. Both tombs were discovered and looted by adventurers long ago. Now, a pack of wolves uses it as their den.

Creatures. Four aggressive **wolves** use this intersection as their den. These creatures attack without provocation and fight to the death.

Dead Rogue. A rogue who slipped past the satyrs in **area 3** a few

months ago met her untimely demise when she came face to face with the wolf pack here. The wolves dragged her corpse into the crumbling alcove in the eastern wall. She wore an explorer's pack which is still in relatively good shape, minus its water and rations. She also carried a coin purse with 7 gp, 10 sp, and a hematite gem worth 10 gp.

Secret Door. There is a hidden tomb in the wall to the north of this intersection. A character who searches the area and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices it. The door opens easily, revealing **area 8**.

8 - The Empty Tomb

A stone sarcophagus fills most of this small chamber. Its lid has been lifted and its contents—including the body that once laid within—have been removed.

There is nothing of value here.

9 - The Spider

Dense webs cover the entirety of this area, which was once a kitchen. The furniture and tools that weren't destroyed when the dungeon collapsed were eventually carted off by dungeon delvers.

Creatures. A **giant spider** hides among the webs. As soon as a character opens one of the three doors that lead into this area or touches its webbing, the spider attacks.

Discoveries. Cocooned in the spider's webs are another pair of explorers who managed to slip past the satyrs unnoticed. The spider made quick work of both of them; only their dried husks remain. One of them carries a backpack with a small, locked chest. The key is long gone and the locking mechanism is rusted, thus, the only way to open it is to smash it open—throwing it at the ground or a wall will suffice. Inside, the characters will find 90 gp, and 7 moss agate gems, each one worth 10 gp.

10 - The Temple

This room was once a temple of worship. The north part of the room collapsed, burying the statue and altar that once stood there.

Demon Caps. A thick forest of tiny, pink mushrooms covers the floors at the center of the room. These mushrooms are demon caps, a rare fungus that sprouts in places where demon blood falls. Any creature who moves through a square with this fungus must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease Demon Guts. It takes 1d4 days for the disease to manifest. Symptoms include fatigue, cramps, and nausea. The infected creature suffers one level of exhaustion, and if it fails a Strength or Dexterity ability check while diseased, a 10-foot radius of disgusting green gas extends out from it. The gas spreads around corners, and the area is lightly obscured. It lasts for 1 minute or until a strong wind disperses it. Any creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or contract Demon Guts.

At the end of each long rest, an infected creature must make DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the character gains one level of exhaustion. On a successful save, the creature's exhaustion level decreases by one level. If a successful saving throw reduces the infected creature's level of exhaustion below 1, the creature recovers from the disease. When a creature dies from exhaustion caused by this disease, pink and purple mushrooms push their way out of their orifices and overtake their corpse.

Bright light caused by sunlight or a spell of 2nd-level or higher destroys the mushrooms.

Discoveries. If the characters inspect the patch of mushroom and succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, they notice a lump under the mushrooms. The lump is the remains



of another red-robed wizard who succumbed to the aforementioned Demon Guts disease. The wizard wore a ring of mind shielding at the time of its death, into which its soul fled. If the characters successfully recover the ring, the wizard inside the ring can communicate telepathically with its wearer.

What the wizard knows. The wizard whose soul is stored inside the ring is named Prathik. Prathik was a member of a demon-worshipping cult who posed as wizards from a nearby magocratic nation. They swore allegiance to an ancient demon prince and fought in his name. The cultists entered the fortress to learn more about the Abyssal Shard (see **area 6**), but were confronted by the archdruids of the forest and a band of adventurers led by a powerful sorceress. Prathik escaped the archdruids by hiding in a secret crypt (see **area 8**), but contracted a disease from the presence of demon blood, which ended up killing him.

What the wizard wants. Knowing that he cannot free himself from the ring easily, Prathik will offer whatever helpful information he can, hoping that his cooperation will convince the characters to find a way to return him to life. If the characters refuse or make threats, he will not assist.

11 - The Corridor

This long corridor stretches the east-to-west length of the keep.

11a - Altar

At the far eastern side of the corridor, an old altar dedicated to demons stands. Half-melted candles decorate its top. When a character comes within 10 feet of the altar, the candles immediately light. The candles themselves aren't magical, but are attuned to the location. If removed, they cease to burn unless lit by conventional means.

11b - Lounge

Old, moldy couches and chairs are spread around this cobweb-stricken room. A pile of rotten curtains lies across the floor at the north end of this area.

Concealed Pit Trap. The rotten curtains conceal a 20-foot-deep pit trap used as entertainment for the dungeon's inhabitants. If a character moves through the area (marked with a white box with an "X" through it on the map), they tumble into the pit and take 7 (2d6) damage from the fall. The bones of dead prisoners lie at the bottom of the trap.



11c - Statues

Three statues depicting scowling demons stand in old, webbed alcoves on either side of this stretch of the hallway. There was a fourth statue, but something destroyed it.

Magic Mouth Spell. When a creature comes within 20 feet of the archway that leads to area, an ancient magic mouth spell is triggered. It was set long ago by the sorceress who helped the archdruids clear the dun-

geon of its demons. The message the mouth delivers is somewhat cryptic:

“Arguin, if you get this message, you must know this: Don’t underestimate new traps. Have a righteous outlook. Stop.”

There is a code within the message that hints at the sorceress who left the message’s whereabouts over a century ago. Likely, this will lack significance to the characters (or their players), but certain parties might find this information useful.

12 - The Grand Hall South

The other half of the grand hall continues here. The rubble dividing the two sections blocks the north side.

Flooded Chamber. Like the northern hall, water pools on the floor of this chamber. Instead of coming from another entrance, this water seeps in from one of the columns where a tiny pinpoint of light illuminates its base.

Hidden Mask. Characters who look around the room notice something blue and white in the far northwestern corner of this chamber. A closer look reveals that it’s a white mask dressed with blue and green feathers. The mask belonged to the same sorceress who helped the archdruids rid the dungeon of its demonic denizens. When the ceiling collapsed during their battle, she was cut off from her allies and lost her mask in the fray. It’s been here ever since. This is the *Mask of the Sorceress* (see Appendix C).

Concluding the Adventure

Hopefully, the characters found what they are looking for in the Lost Dungeon. There are a number of clues that might lead them to their next location, or leave them interested in learning more about the events that took place one hundred years prior. Ω



INTO THE BLOOD MINE

BY DAVE HAMRICK

A 3rd-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dave Hamrick
Art by Matias Lazaro

Into the Blood Mine is a Fifth Edition adventure for four to six characters of 3rd-to-5th-level. Characters of 3rd or 4th level may have difficulty navigating some of the adventure's challenges which requires stealth and smart thinking on the part of the heroes versus force.

A party that successfully finishes the quest and retrieves the noble's lover's corpse should earn enough experience to earn half the experience needed to reach 4th or 5th level, or one-third of the experience needed to reach 6th level.

Adventure Background

A few years ago, a human jeweler from the south named Karst Fultane supplied a worthy sum of capital to a group of dwarves to tap into the Khol Tharum lode. Fultane correctly predicted the Khol Tharum lode would yield healthy deposits of the rare gem bloodstone. The first two years were a huge success for Karst as he saw his investment paid off in triplicate. Unfortunately, the dwarves dug too deep and tapped into something dangerous. While digging an expansion to the mine, they released a swarm of strange, multi-colored insects. Although the insects weren't aggressive, their thick, gem-like hides made them impossible to kill. When provoked, their innate poison was enough to kill a fully grown reindeer. To make matters worse, the insects fed on gems. Within a matter of weeks, the buzz-jewels—as the miners dubbed them—made mining bloodstone impossible. The dwarves abandoned the mine.

Unfortunately, not everyone in the mine made it out alive. Fultane's business partner, Anaya, was swarmed by the insects and poisoned to death. Because Fultane refused to send troops into the mine to reclaim it, Anaya's body was never recovered. A year later, Anaya's former lover, Raphail Manolou of Presson's Enclave, wants the characters to enter the mine and recover whatever they

can of Anaya so they can properly lay her to rest.

Adventure Hooks

While the characters are traveling through a northern settlement (the village of Borgstrand from the adventure path *They Came From Beyond!* works perfectly) they're approached by a lawful good human **noble** named Raphail Manolou. Likely the noble heard about the characters' deeds and recognizes them by their reputation.

Raphail introduces himself and explains the details mentioned above. He hopes the characters can enter the mine at Khol Tharum and find the remains of his ex-lover Anaya who perished a year ago. He realizes that her corpse will probably be in a poor state and mostly unrecognizable, but mentions that she often wore a pearl necklace he gave her. Each pearl in the necklace had a gold "A" set onto it. If the characters find the necklace, they will likely find Anaya. Raphail offers to pay the characters 300 gp to recover Anaya's remains.

If the characters agree, Raphail gives them directions to the Khol Tharum lode and provides transportation if necessary.

Journey to the Mine

The mine is 10 miles from the village where they met Raphail Manolou. Mid-way to the mine, the character with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) score or one proficient in Survival notices large tracks in the snow heading the same way that they are going. As they get closer to the mine, the tracks are more frequent.

A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check recognizes the tracks as those made by trolls.

Soon the characters will discover that a band of three trolls and their pet polar bear have claimed the ground level of the mine. They will have to get past the trolls and their pet if they hope to descend to the lode.

The Khol Tharum Mine

Once past the trolls, the party may enter the mines.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the dungeon has the following features.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The majority of the mine's floors, tunnels, and ceilings are made from rough hewn stone. The top level is exposed to the elements and relatively cold compared to the warmer lower level.

Illumination. Excluding the first few areas that allow in natural light, the mine lacks illumination.

Buzz Jewel Remains. If the characters kill a swarm of buzzjewels, they can collect 3d20 gems from their remains. Each gem is valued at 5 gp. Additionally, there is a 5% chance that one of the buzz jewels yields a gem worth 100 gp.

Thar be Trolls

The three trolls and their pet polar bear recently nabbed a pair of grazing reindeer. Because these trolls aren't acclimated to the weather like their ice troll cousins, the large meal and lack of warmth encourages them to sleep for long hours throughout the day. If the characters are quiet and don't make too much noise entering the ground level of the mine, they can bypass the trolls without combat. Even if they wake the trolls, the trolls would rather sleep than chase after some obnoxious adventurers, only going far enough to scare them away from the mine.

Encounter Locations

1 - Mine Exterior

A twenty-foot-high wooden palisade encompasses the entrance to the abandoned mine. Despite years of neglect, the fortifications look to be in excellent condition. It appears that the only way into the ac-

tual mine is through a large, wooden gate.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check detects that the trolls have been entering the fortress by climbing over the southern side of the palisade right near where it connects to the rockface.

The gate's hinges have rusted shut making it almost impossible to enter the fortress that way. Not even the trolls could pry the gate open. They've since taken to using it as an obstacle for would-be trespassers. The characters can pull the gate open with a successful DC 23 Strength check.

Climbing the palisade is simple with a rope and grappling hook. Otherwise, a character needs to succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to get over the wall. Unless the character is careful, though, they might run into the trap set by the trolls (see "Fortifications" below).

2 - Fortifications

The palisade's interior wall walk is trapped with sharpened metal spikes, broken glass, and other hazards. Characters who climb onto the palisade's wall walk from any area other than the 10-foot section closest to the southern rock face must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) piercing damage from the hazards. Characters who are aware of the hazards make their saving throws with advantage.

Once the characters enter, read the following:

Large snow drifts blanket tipped-over mine carts, discarded tools, and other signs that this was once a working mine. Fresh, giant-sized tracks lead into the mine's dark entrance. With the icicles that cling to its ceiling, the entrance looks not unlike the gaping maw of some malicious creature.

The tracks are the trolls'.

Snoring. The troll lying on the platform in **area 4** is sound asleep. Its snores so loud, it almost sounds like a gargantuan creature's growl.

3 - The Mine

A mine cart track leads deeper into the mine where it meets a junction. When the mine was still operational, two levers allowed the miners to change the direction of the minecarts. The gears used to operate the system no longer function.

Treasure. One of the mine carts on the track is filled with large, gray rocks. A character with a passive Perception score of 10 or better notices a gem glistening in the cart—bloodstone. However, a character with a passive Perception score of 15 or better notices that the cart's wheels are rusted nearly to the point of ruin. Each time a character touches the cart, roll a d6. On a result of 5 or higher, one of the cart's wheels breaks, spilling the rocks onto the wooden platform. This alerts the trolls in **areas 4, 6, and 7**, as well as the polar bear in **area 5**. It takes 1 round for the trolls to wake. They then go to investigate the disturbance. Cold, tired, and lazy, the trolls won't chase the characters beyond the palisade unless the characters do something to anger them.

The bloodstone gem is worth 50 gp.

4 - Sleeping Troll

One of the three trolls that inhabit the upper level of the mine uses the platform to sleep. Having just eaten a meal of reindeer and buried under thick furs, the **troll** is quite comfortable where it is and won't appreciate the characters waking it.

Treasure. The troll keeps a stash of "goodies" it found in the cave in an old, leather satchel. It holds the satchel like a teddy bear when it sleeps. The satchel holds 60 gp, 8 uncut bloodstones (each worth 50 gp), and a jeweled dagger worth 100 gp.

5 - Sleeping Polar Bear

The trolls' nameless pet **polar bear** sleeps between a pair of picnic tables the miners once used for meals. Like the trolls, it recently had a large meal of reindeer and is fast asleep. So long as the characters don't make a lot of noise moving through the area, the polar bear won't wake from its slumber.

6 - Barracks

There are four bunks in this small room. A **troll** has pushed together two of the bunks and now lies across two of the lower beds, fast asleep. The trolls did a good job of looting the common areas. There is nothing else of value here.

7 - Foreman's Quarters

This room was once Anaya's. Now a **troll** has claimed it as her own.

Empty Treasure Chest. The chest at the foot of the bed is empty.

8 - Rickety Platform

This old platform holds nothing of value. However, the last twelve months haven't been kind to it. Its supports are completely dry-rotted. If 100 or more pounds are placed onto the platform, it collapses. Any creature standing on or under the platform when it crashes must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a successful one. Naturally, the sound alerts the trolls and their polar bear.

9 - Broken Elevator

Once a marvel of dwarven ingenuity, this old elevator's gears and cables have turned to rust. No amount of tinkering will get the device operational. The platform is currently on this level, however, the 100-foot-deep shaft into which it once descended is easily accessible at the elevator's rear.

Climbing the Shaft. If the characters don't use their own gear to de-

scend down the shaft, they can climb up or down the elevator's old cables with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. A character who fails the check falls down the shaft. To determine how far the character falls, subtract the check result from 10 and multiply the difference by 10. The character takes 3 (1d6) damage for every 10 feet they fall this way. For example, a character who gets an 8 on their check will fall 20 feet, taking 7 (2d6) damage as a result.

Droning. The first time the characters descend the elevator shaft, they can hear the sound of the buzzjewels' droning.

10 - Common Area

Anaya and the other principals once worked from this common area as the dwarves toiled in the western tunnels. Thick dust covers everything.

Encounter: Buzzjewels. A **swarm of buzzjewels** (see Appendix D) buzzes about this area. The swarm won't attack unless provoked. If the characters are carrying any valuable gems on them, the buzzjewels might inspect and try to snatch the jewels, but still won't bite unless the characters attack first.

11 - Anaya's Corpse

A desiccated humanoid corpse lies on this old, wooden platform. All around the body lie the remains of dead buzzjewel insects, each a blackened, hollow corpse.

The corpse is Anaya's. If the characters inspect the body, they will find her old pearl necklace. Although the pearls are gone, eaten by the buzzjewels, the gold remains.

Bad Pearls. If a character makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the buzzjewel remains, they will discover that each of the insects has a pearl lodged in its abdomen. Pearls are toxic for buzzjewels, killing them instantly. The eight pearls are worth 100 gp each.

Returning the corpse to Manalou and its necklace is enough to prove Anaya's fate.

12 - Pool

The miners used to use this pool to draw water, which they then boiled to sterilize. Buzzjewels won't enter the water, therefore, it might act as a safe place to hide should the creatures swarm.

13 - Deadly Path

This narrow, winding path is beset by 50-foot deep pits. A creature who falls into a pit takes 22 (5d6) damage from the fall. Climbing out requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Encounter: Buzzjewels. Two swarms of buzzjewels (see Appendix D) gnaw on bloodstone still stuck in the rock. The swarms won't attack unless a character comes within 5 feet of them. Once aggravated, the swarms will chase the characters until they jump into a pool of water (see area 12) or leave the level.

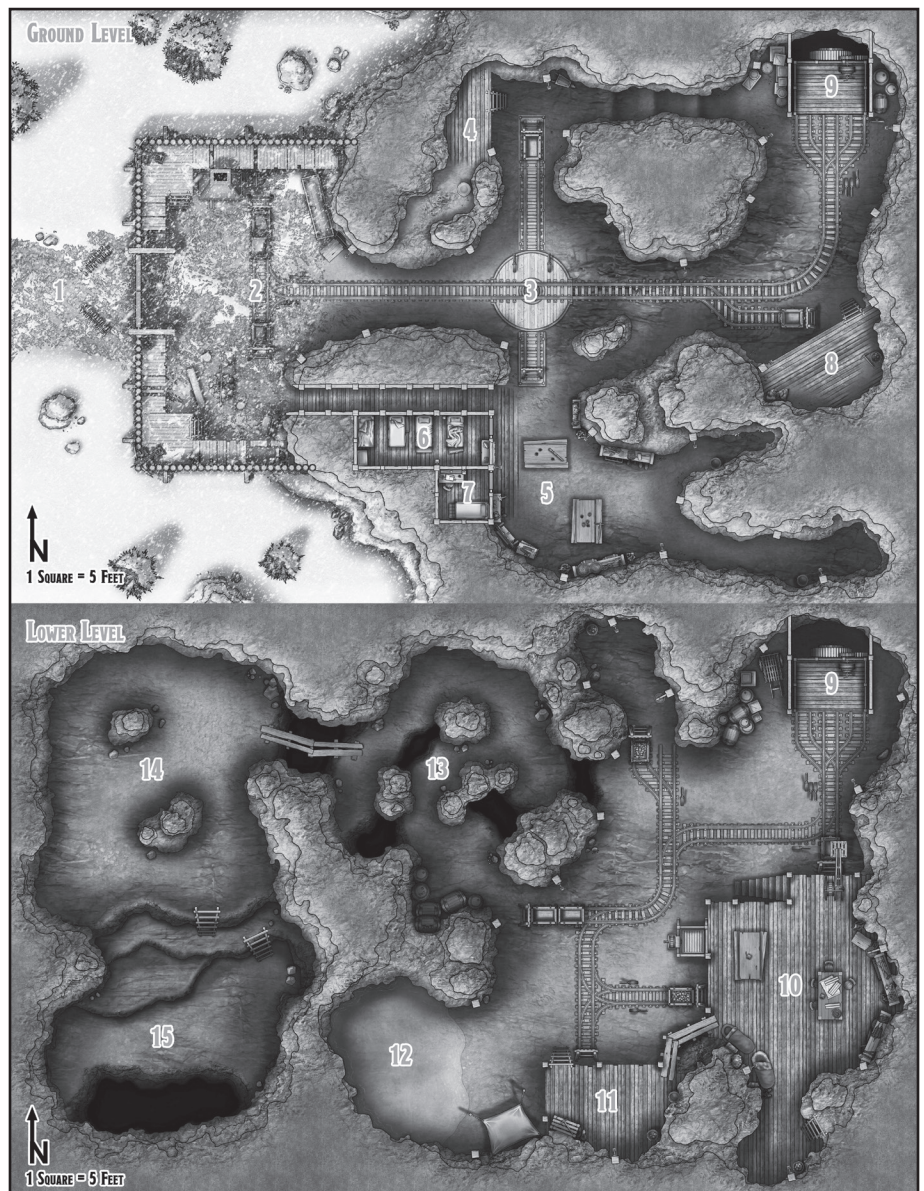
14 - Droning

So long as the buzzjewels in area 15 are still alive, the buzzjewel's droning reaches a cacophony in this part of the cavern. A creature that enters this area for the first time must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or become deafened for 1 minute. A character can repeat their saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success.

The walls of this chamber are heavily pocked, signs that the buzzjewels picked the entire area clean.

15 - The Hive

When the dwarves were digging in this part of the cavern, part of the floor collapsed revealing the buzzjewels' tunnels below. Immediately, the buzzjewels filled the mine, attracted to the mine's bountiful supply of bloodstone.



Encounter: Buzzjewels Hive. The buzzjewels now make their hive here. There are six swarms of buzzjewels (see Appendix D) here. If the characters come within 10 feet of the buzzjewels, they instinctively defend their territory and attack. The buzzjewels won't follow the characters into water or back up to the ground level.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the characters return with Anaya's remains, Raphail Manolou pays the 300 gp promised. Naturally,

the noble is devastated at the loss of Anaya. He blames Karst Fultane for her death and wishes there was some way he could get back at the tyrannical jeweler.

Unless the characters cleared the tunnels of the buzzjewels, the mines are worthless. However, they might have noticed that pearls are toxic to the buzzjewels. With a healthy supply of pearls, they could potentially clear the mine of the vermin.

And it just so happens that Karst Fultane's jewelry store specializes in pearls. Ω



CHILDREN OF DEMONS

BY JOHN K. WEBB

A 3rd-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson Logos

Art by Matias Lazaro and Jason Glover

Children of Demons is designed for three to five 2nd- to 4th-level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3.

This adventure takes place in the Blutstrom setting featured in this issue but can easily be placed in any campaign setting that incorporates churches, cults, and demons. The characters investigate a magically shielded church and eliminate the demon-worshipping cult therein.

Adventure Background

The demon goddess Jenuraath has come, and soon her spawn shall burst forth from their unholy wombs to turn the city of Blutstrom red with the blood of the innocent.

The Chapel of Eucomis was once dedicated to the eponymous Saint of Sacrifices. The church was built atop a different holy site that burned down over a century ago; it is rumored the ruins of the old church are still accessible from somewhere inside.

Two months ago, the cult of Jenuraath forcibly took over the Chapel of Eucomis, slaughtering those inside and installing deadly wards to prevent Blutstrom's military from pursuing them. Jenuraath now weaves her unholy children into the bellies of her followers, deep within the ruins of the underground sanctum.

A dwarf shaman by the name of Nekrola has begun working closely with the Blutstrom militia to invent a way to destroy the Annihilation Wards within the church. She has created an item of great power to aid any adventurers willing to remove the cult and their demoness from the church. The city is willing to pay 200gp for this task.

Adventure Hooks

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

Spawn Attack. The characters come across a strange crime scene: a man lies dead in the street, his chest torn open. Next to him is a half-human, half-demon creature with two infant-like heads. They learn that a few of Jenuraath's cursed offspring escaped the Chapel of Eucomis the previous night.

Nekrola. The characters are contacted directly by Nekrola, the dwarf shaman. She asks that they take on the onerous task of entering the church and destroying Jenuraath. Nekrola reveals also that she has an ulterior motive: one of the crypts contains a gold locket with the portrait of a woman inside. She offers to pay the characters 100 additional gold for its return.

Demon Hunters. The characters enter a competition between Blustrom's knightly orders to see who can slay the most powerful demon. The royal family will decide the winner of this competition, and award 300 gold.

The Church of Jenuraath

The church is surrounded by a blockade of carts, wooden spikes, and other improvised obstacles (barrels, haystacks, etc.). The Annihilation Wards covering the church are bright blue, visible even during the day. This blockade is guarded by 15 Blutstrom Watchers (LN human **guards**). Nekrola (LN dwarf **priest**) also guards the blockade, commanding the Watchers from a small tent. Morale is low. The line is stretched too thin, and the soldiers are beginning to reach their breaking point.

Three shriveled corpses are sprawled across the church steps: knights of Blustrom who foolishly thought their faith would protect them from Jenuraath's warding.

As the characters enter Nekrola's tent, read or paraphrase the following:



The dwarf woman looks up from her workbench, her eyes dark rings of exhaustion. She grunts in acknowledgement, then turns her attention back to the obsidian metal staff laid out before her. She holds a hand over the object and mutters a string of unintelligible words: colors begin to dance on the metal's surface, all the colors of a sunset, and continue to dance even after the woman ceases her ritual. She observes her work, smiling, then speaks at last.

Nekrola will introduce herself, explain the situation, and offer the characters the job. If they accept, she will explain how the *dispellation rod* (see Appendix C) interacts with the Annihilation Warding and hands the staff over, warning them that the rod only has five charges.

General Features

Unless noted otherwise, areas of the church have the following details.

Architecture. The building itself resembles classic Gothic architecture, with two transepts flanking the central narthex and sanctuary space. Its stone work has fallen into disrepair: capillaries of vines and mold cover the surface, while the statues lining the roof are largely broken.

Illumination. While on the first floor of the church, treat the building

as having dim light during the day.

Trap: Annihilation Warding. Jenuraath has blessed her cult with powerful Annihilation Wards. Any non-undead creature that touches a surface with an Annihilation Ward takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The only way to destroy an Annihilation Ward is to spend a charge of Nekrola's *dispellation rod* (see the Appendix), or cast *dispel magic* at 7th-level or higher. Whenever an Annihilation Ward is destroyed in this manner, a small, spider-shaped onyx jewel will manifest in the physical plane and drop at the wielder's feet.

Creature Information

Spawn of Jenuraath. Treat all references to Spawn of Jenuraath as **death dogs**, except they have human-like features and the faces of infants.

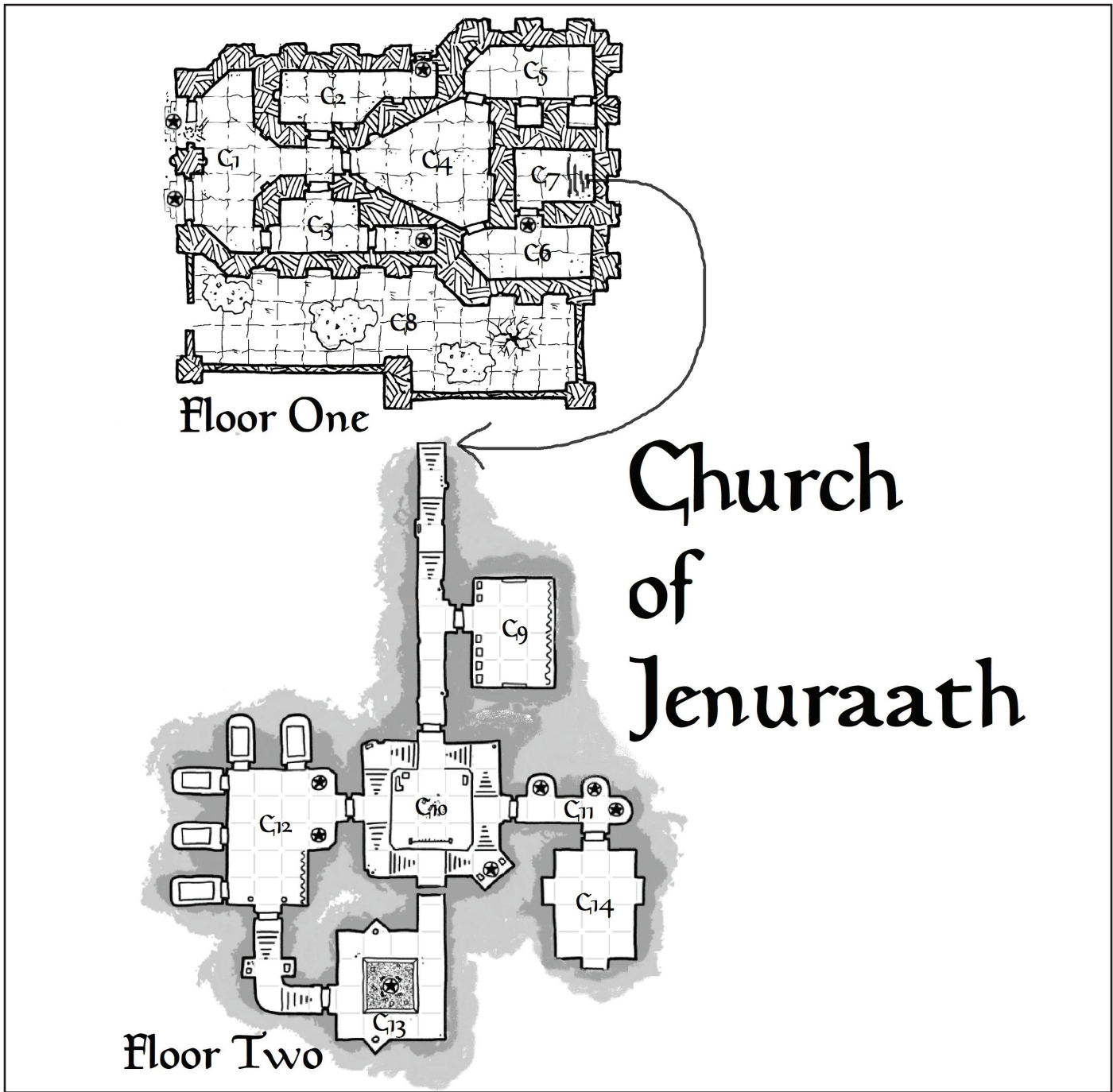
Destroying the Annihilation Wards

If the characters decide to end Jenuraath's reign, Nekrola will warn them of the Annihilation Wards and the dire consequences of touching them. The *dispellation rod* (see the Appendix) is made of incredibly rare materials; it would take months to create another. The rod has only five charges, so the characters must take care to use them wisely.

Onyx Spider Key. Area 14 (Jenuraath's Womb) is isolated from the rest of the church by a large stone slab. At the center of this stone slab is a keyhole in the shape of a large spider. The three spider-shaped onyx jewels that drop over the course of the adventure (via the *dispellation rod*) form the key to this slab.

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of The Church of Jenuraath overleaf.



1 - The Narthex

Several bodies, burnt beyond recognition, litter the steps to the church. The grand double doors lie closed, barred with Jenuraath's foul magic.

Trap: Annihilation Warding. The stone double doors of the church are covered in Annihilation Wards (see General Features).

2 - Transept Left

Encounter: Spawn of Jenuraath.

Two **cultists** lie prone on the floor. Their bellies have each swollen to an impossibly large mass. After one round of combat, a **Spawn of Jenuraath** (see Creature Information) bursts from each of their stomachs—killing the cultists outright—and attacks the party.

3 - Transept Right

Trap: Malevolent Statue. The cult has installed a great stone statue of Jenuraath in this room. Her four eyes are small rubies (50 gp each). The trap activates when a creature makes eye contact with the statue or attempts to remove the inset gems. The creature must succeed on a DC

20 Charisma saving throw or become charmed for 1 minute. The charmed creature must use all of its movement on its turn to move toward the Annihilation Ward (see below) and touch it. A creature that touches the Ward is no longer charmed. Destroying the statue (AC 17, 25 Hit Points, threshold 5) will immediately end this effect. Characters who succeed on their saving throw become immune to the statue's effect for 24 hours.

Trap: Annihilation Ward. An Annihilation Ward (see General Features) covers the back wall of this room.

4 - Sanctuary

There are 15 rows of unoccupied pews on both sides of the central aisle, which lead to a stone stage. On the stage is an altar of silver and copper. Stained glass windows, depicting various scenes from Blustrom's religious history, loom over the space. The bones and severed limbs of 20 people—the last congregation—are spread over the area; blood is so thick in the air that one can taste iron.

Encounter: Birthing Ritual. Two cultists tend to their leader, a cult fanatic, as he prepares to birth a Spawn of Jenuraath. He lies supine by the altar, his moans a mixture of ecstasy and agony. Upon seeing the characters enter the inner sanctuary, he will inform them that they're too late, that Jenuraath lies below and will soon flood the world with her offspring. The cult fanatic then dies, and a Spawn of Jenuraath (see Creature Information) bursts forth from his stomach and attacks.

Treasure: The Altar. The silver and copper altar is lined with 300 sp worth of mixed metal linings and small inset gems. A box of perfumed candles (25 gp) lies behind the altar. A character with carpenter's or smith's tools can spend one hour and use them to strip the valuable materials from the altar. The materials weigh 20 pounds total.



5 - Sacristy

The sacristy is where priests of the church would store ceremonial items (such as vestments) and prepare for service. The area has clearly been ransacked by the cultists—except for one item: a pewter crown that lies conspicuously atop an undisturbed dresser.

Encounter: Ghost. If a creature attempts to remove the pewter crown from its mantle, an angry **ghost** will emerge and attack the party. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check will recognize the ghost as the former bishop. Characters that recognize the bishop may attempt a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to calm the ghost down. If calmed down, the ghost dissipates. Award experience points to the characters as if they'd defeated the creature in combat.

Treasure: Pewter Crown. Once the ghost is defeated, the characters may claim the pewter crown (25 gp). Additionally, a close search of the room will turn up a small basket filled with 25 sp.

6 - Vestry

The vestry once served as the bishop's office and changing room. A locked wooden desk sits at the center, though the rest of the furniture has been tipped over and broken. Torn vellum pages of the bishop's library lie scattered around the room.

Treasure: Locked Desk. The wooden desk is locked. The lock can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or broken by performing a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. The desk contains a *spell scroll of sleep*, a *potion of climbing*, and two *potions of healing*. If a Strength check was used to break the lock, then the potions break and spill their contents all over the scroll, ruining the text. A character with proficiency with calligrapher's supplies can spend an hour to repair the damaged scroll by performing a DC 15 Dexterity (Arcana) check. On a success, the scroll becomes usable again. On a failure, nothing happens.

Trap: Annihilation Ward. The wooden door separating areas 6 and 7 is magically locked and protected by an Annihilation Ward (see General Features).

7 - Entrance to the Church Below

This area is empty. Set into the stone floor is a three-foot by four-foot spider statue. The edges around the statue are cracked as if disturbed by tools.

Trap: Annihilation Ward. The spider statue separating areas 7 and 8 is protected by an Annihilation Ward (see General Features).

Secret: Hidden Staircase. A creature with a passive Perception of 11 notices that the statue can be moved out of the way. Removing the statue reveals a narrow staircase that winds down into darkness. The catacombs of the original church lie below, and within them, the children of Jenuraath stir.

8 - Graveyard

The graveyard outside the church was once a garden, but has since become lifeless and barren from the corrupting influence of Jenuraath's presence.

Encounter: Skeletons. If anyone lingers in the graveyard for longer than five minutes, six **skeletons** will

emerge from the earth and attack the intruders. Two of them are armed with shortbows, and the other four are armed with shortswords.

Cracked Earth. A large patch of cracked earth lies at the end of the graveyard. Creatures within five feet of the crack can hear wailing and screaming emanating from it, though there is nothing but dirt below. If the cracks are filled in, or if Jenuraath is destroyed, the screaming stops.

9 - Old Vestry

A thick layer of dust covers the room. There are cobwebs in every crevice, it seems, and the air is heavy with the smell of mold. Ancient wooden furniture lies abandoned to rot.

Paw prints on the floor lead to the southern end of the room, behind the bishop's desk. The sounds of slurping and bones breaking can be heard to anyone within ten feet of the southern wall.

Encounter: Spawn. Two **Spawn of Jenuraath** (see Creature Information) are happily munching on a dead cultist behind the bishop's desk. They attack the party on sight.

Treasure: Bishop's Desk. The bishop's desk is not locked and contains twenty pages of blank vellum, 15 cp, and an ancient iron hairpin (25 gp).

10 - Crumbling Sanctuary

At the center of this room is a small worship space containing a non-functional stone fountain and a dozen wooden benches in various states of decay. Standing at the top of the fountain is a figure of stone, her hands outstretched in supplication to some forgotten god. The staircase wraps around this central space so that the western side is elevated over it; the bottom of the staircase is on the eastern side.

Any character may attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check to recognize the figure as Eucomis, the Saint of Sacrifices.



Treasure: Wishing Coins. Searching the stone fountain yields 100 cp, 20 sp, and 1 gp.

Make a Wish. Any good-aligned character that throws a coin into the fountain becomes blessed for 12 hours. A character blessed in this way has advantage on all saving throws until the effect ends. Any evil-aligned character that takes a coin from the fountain becomes cursed for 12 hours. A character cursed in this way has disadvantage on all saving throws until the effect ends.

Locked Door. A great stone slab separates areas 10 and 11. At the center of this stone slab is a keyhole in the shape of a large spider. The three spider-shaped onyx jewels that drop over the course of the adventure via the *dispellation rod* (see the Appendix) form the key to this slab.

11 - Apse

This curved hallway is empty save three elevated alcoves, each containing a pile of urns. One can hear chanting emanating from Jenuraath's Womb (**area 14**) within five feet of the door.

Treasure: Urns. There are 12 urns spread amongst the alcoves, each made of various precious metals. They are collectively worth 250 sp, and together weigh 80 pounds.

12 - Decaying Crypt

The stone flooring is cracked and uneven, broken up by intruding vines and large patches of mold. Swarms of insects buzz noisily over putrid smelling puddles of water, fed by leaks in the ceiling.

Encounter: Wight. A single **wight** is resting in its sarcophagus in the top left alcove. If a creature gets within 10 feet of the sarcophagus, the **wight** will burst forth and attack.

Treasure: Gold Locket & Silver. A careful search of the sarcophagi in the room will turn up a gold locket with a portrait of a woman inside (250 gp) and 150 sp (30 sp per sarcophagus). The portrait is of Nekrola herself, which should be impossible, as the locket must be over two centuries old.

13 - The Pool of Blood

The ceiling of this area is 15 feet; it is noticeably smaller than the rest of the catacombs, and once served as a "corpse runoff" space. The pool of blood is at the room's center, surrounded by mounds of humanoid bones.

Hazard: Rising Pool. As soon as someone erases the Annihilation Ward at the pool's center, a *wall of force* will appear and seal the exit. The pool of blood will begin to bubble and expand, filling up the room over the course of 10 rounds. The only way to destroy the *wall of force* is to flip two levers hidden in alcoves along the north and south walls. The alcoves themselves, however, are buried beneath piles of bones. Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check or a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds one of the alcoves and the lever inside. The southern lever is stuck and requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to dislodge.

Once these levers have been pulled, the blood in this area will recede and the fountain in **area 10** (Crumbling Sanctuary) will begin to run with blood, creating a shallow pool at the

room's center; the statue adorning the fountain will begin to cry blood as well.

14 - Jenuraath's Womb

The area is covered in sticky embryonic material, gore, and blood. The demon Jenuraath sits at the room's center, in a state of constant, agonized labor; her insect-like children gnaw at anything they contact, die, and are reborn again within the eternal mother. Whatever cultists that were foolish enough to remain have been emulsified into an infernal sacrament for these, her offspring.

Illumination. Jenuraath herself radiates dim red light in a five foot radius.

Encounter: Jenuraath, the Eternal Mother. The demon lord Jenuraath, the Eternal Mother (see the Appendix) hungrily awaits those foolish enough to enter her lair. She has made the remaining cultists a final sacrament for her voracious children. Their remains have become the womb itself. During this encounter, all non-fiend creatures who attempt to move more than 10 feet during a single round must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Treasure: Cloak of Displacement. A careful search of the embryonic material around the room turns up a cloak of displacement draped around a mostly-intact pair of shoulders.

Concluding the Adventure: Return to Nekrola

Nekrola will breathe easy knowing that the demon lord's threat has been ended. Additionally, she will reward the characters for returning her gold locket but will refuse to answer questions about how she came to be buried in the crypt. She also retrieves her rod.

Rewards

Nekrola will pay the characters what she promised, and allow them to keep anything they found in the church catacombs. She will request that the characters help "clean up" the catacombs...if they can stomach another return. Ω



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INNOCENT BLOOD

BY JOHN K. WEBB

A 5th-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson Logos

Art by Matias Lazaro, David L. Johnson, Rick Hershey, and Maciej Zagorski

Innocent Blood is designed for three to five 4th- to 6th-level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 5.

This adventure takes place in the Blutstrom setting featured in this issue but can easily be placed in any campaign setting that has castles, cults, and demons. A member of the royal family has disappeared into the castle's catacombs, and the characters are requested to venture into its depths, retrieve the wayward prince, and eliminate any threats therein.

Adventure Background

The cult of the demon lord Azroros, led by an elven woman called Yiselm, has worked tirelessly over the past century to infiltrate the royal family of Blutstrom.

The summoning ritual used to bring Azroros into the waking world requires the spilling of royal blood on consecrated ground. However, the blood must flow willingly from the subject. It would not suffice to simply slit a noble's throat.

Yiselm has, at last, seized control of the day-to-day affairs of the keep following the king and queen's untimely demise. She has poisoned the mind of young prince Ebermund against the royal council and even his own sister, princess Alwina.

Two weeks ago, Yiselm convinced Ebermund to follow her and her strange hooded consort down into the royal catacombs in order to begin a ritual that would supposedly bring his mother and father back to life. As required by the summoning, Ebermund spilled his royal blood willingly, believing that he was saving the souls of his beloved parents. Of course, this was a lie.

What Yiselm didn't know, however, was that Ebermund was merely a half-son of Blutstrom. Thus the summoning of Azroros was only partly successful. Yiselm remains in the royal crypts even now, trying to com-

plete her unformed master's corporeal form. She has forbidden anyone from entering the crypts.

Princess Alwina has become concerned for her brother's well being and is attempting to find help in secret, believing Yiselm's spies to be everywhere. She is pledging 500gp to any adventurers who agree to delve into the tombs, find her brother, and remove any threats therein (if present).

Adventure Hooks

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

Clandestine Meeting. Princess Alwina, in disguise and accompanied by two of her royal guard, approaches the characters at night and asks for their help in retrieving Ebermund from the royal catacombs. She promises to pay them 500 gp. Additionally, the characters can keep whatever they happen to find in the tombs.

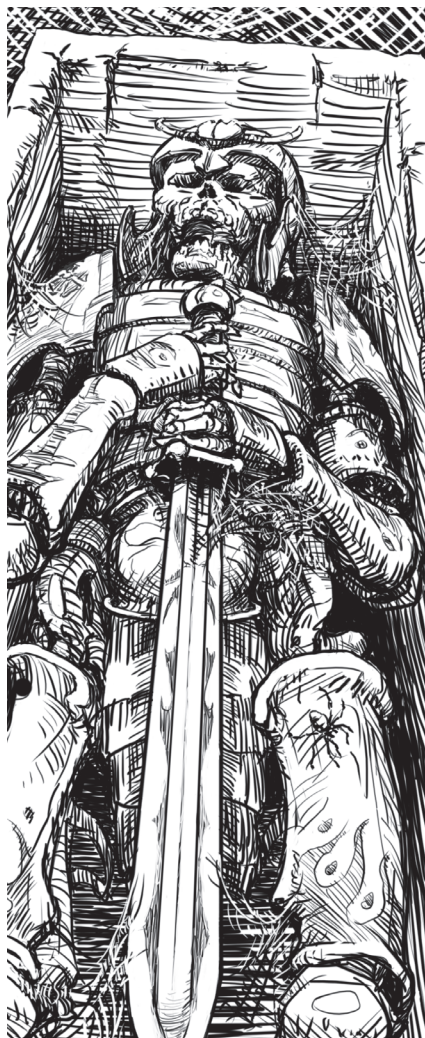
Tomb Raiders. The characters are asked by a criminal organization to retrieve a precious artifact from the royal tombs: a dragonscale talisman inlaid with brass. Whoever hires the characters doesn't know exactly where the talisman lies, but it was buried with the dead king (**area 10**).

Demon Hunters. The characters enter a competition between Blutstrom's knightly orders to see who can slay the most powerful demon. The royal family will decide the winner of this competition, and award 300 gold.

Blutstrom Royal Tombs

The treacherous Yiselm has turned the Blutstrom Royal Tombs into a waking nightmare. Her summoning rituals have caused other creatures to rise in the catacombs, prompting the Cult of Azroros to install arcane wards and other defensive measures. Those who survive these hazards may find powerful artifacts buried alongside their former masters. Yiselm's cult resides in the grand chamber,

where the unfinished form of Azroros writhes in his cradle of blood and sinew.



General Features

The tombs exhibit the following features.

Illumination. Treat every area in the royal tombs as having no light unless specified otherwise.

Materials. The royal catacombs are made of stone, and the workmanship is second to none. Everything is in almost pristine condition, except where noted otherwise.

Glyphs of Warding. Those venturing into the tombs should be made aware that powerful *glyphs of warding* have been installed by persons unknown.

Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map overleaf.

1 - Entry Hall

A stone staircase leads down into the entrance hall. Scorch marks line the walls, and several bodies burnt beyond recognition lie broken at the foot of the staircase. The northern path leads to **area 8**, while the southern path leads to **area 3**.

Illumination. A large circular glyph in the entry hall radiates a dim blue light.

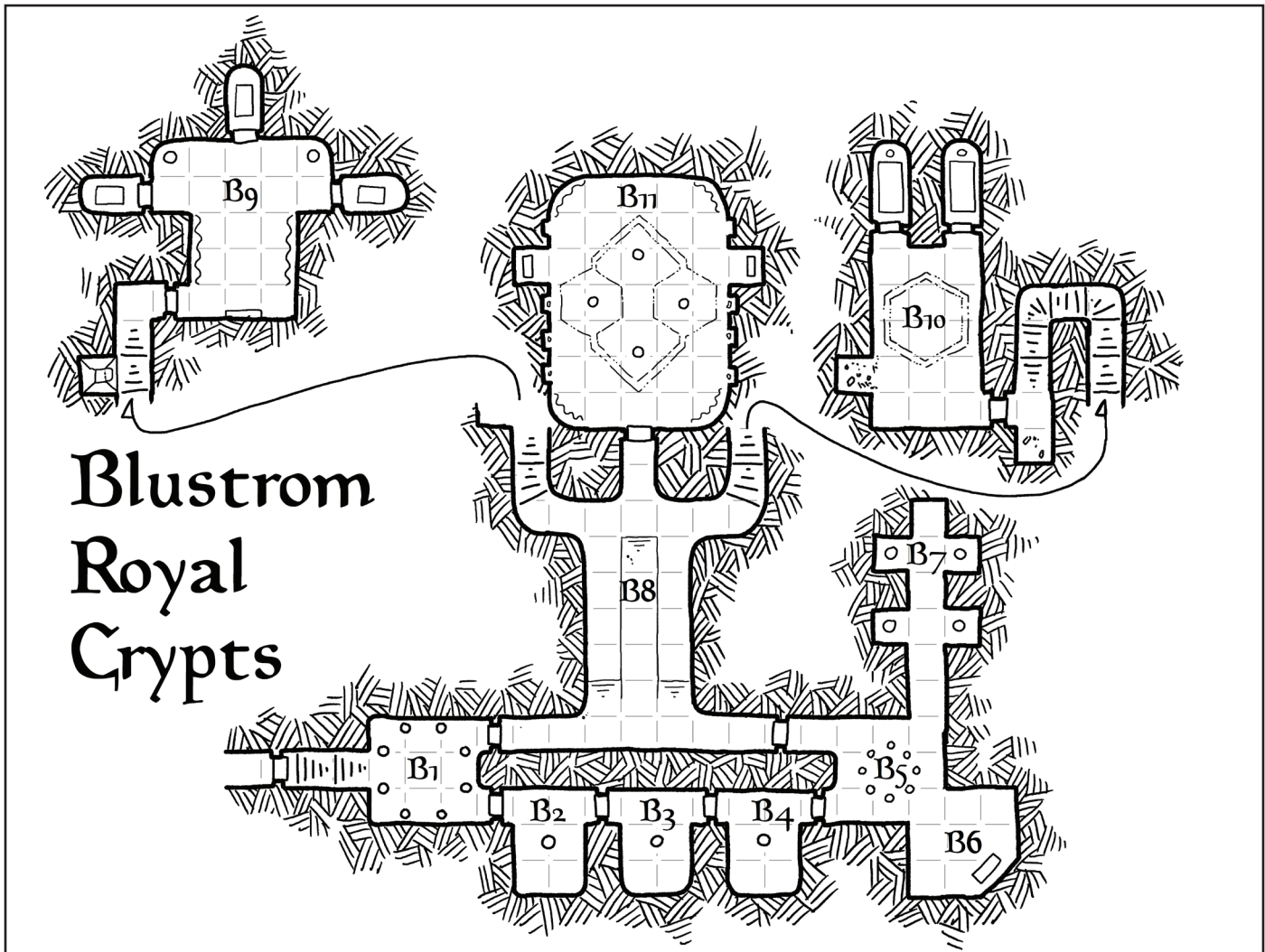
Trap: Glyph of Warding. One circular *glyph of warding* (DC 15) set to Explosive Runes dealing fire damage is in the entry hall (the edges of the glyph circle are indicated by small icons on the map). A creature who makes a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check can identify the spell. Because it is illuminated, any character can spot it without the need for an Intelligence check. Touching the glyph, walking across the glyph, or jumping over the glyph will cause the trap to activate.

2 - Lesser Tomb

Three small interconnected tombs house the bodies of faithful servants to the Blutstrom aristocracy. Though not royalty themselves, these individuals were granted all the funeral honors reserved only for the royal family. The three rooms are separated by wooden doors.

This room has but a single stone sarcophagus. Someone—or something—has removed the lid, and whatever body was interred here is now gone.

Treasure: Royal Sarcophagus. The stone sarcophagus is lined with precious metals and small inset gems collectively worth 500 gp. A character with carpenter's or smith's tools can spend three hours and use them to strip the valuable materials from the sarcophagus. The materials weigh 60 pounds total. Additionally, an electrum cloth sash (250 gp) lies at



Blustrom Royal Crypts

the bottom of the sarcophagus; it is slightly torn and bloodied.

Locked Door. A locked wooden door on the east side of the room separates areas 2 and 3. The lock can be picked by performing a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or broken down by performing a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

3 - Lesser Tomb

This room has two stone sarcophagi laid side-by-side. The skeleton missing from **area 2** has been hoisted onto one of the sarcophagi and arranged neatly on the stone slab.

Treasure: Royal Sarcophagi. The two stone sarcophagi are lined with precious metals and small inset gems

collectively worth 750 gp. A character with carpenter's or smith's tools can spend six hours and use them to strip the valuable materials from the sarcophagi. The materials weigh 120 pounds total. Additionally, a fine steel holy symbol (250 gp) weighing 40 pounds is engraved onto one of the stone slabs.

Encounter: Wraith & Specter. A single **wraith** occupies the room and is attempting to raise a **specter** from the skeleton it's pulled out. It will spend its first turn raising the specter, then attack any intruders present in the room.

Locked Doors. The wooden doors separating **area 3** from **areas 2** and **4** are both locked. Both locks can be

picked by performing a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or broken down by performing a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

4 - Lesser Tomb

This room is empty except for a single stone sarcophagus; unlike the others, it is bare stone, without metal or jewelry, and the commemorative plaque is blank. Various smithing tools are stacked neatly in the top right corner of the room, alongside a half-full flask containing ale. There is a fine layer of gray dust around the sarcophagus.

Locked Door. A locked wooden door on the west side of the room separates **areas 3** and **4**. The lock can be picked by performing a DC 15 Dexterity

check using thieves' tools, or broken down by performing a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Note: the wooden door on the east side of the room separates **areas 4 and 6** and is unlocked.

5 - Prayer Hall

This small worship space has four rows of pews and a statue of Blutstrom's founder.

Illumination. The statue is surrounded by scented candles that emit dim firelight. Additionally, a circular *glyph of warding* around the statue radiates a dim blue light.

The Statue. Any character with a passive Perception of 15 or more spots the three will-o-wisps fluttering in the apse behind the statue (**area 6**) and the *sword of wounding* (*greatsword*) held in the statue's hands.

Trap: Glyph of Warding. One circular *glyph of warding* (DC 15) set to Explosive Runes dealing fire damage is drawn around the statue. A creature who makes a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check can identify the spell. Because it is illuminated, any character can spot it without the need for an Intelligence check. Touching the glyph, walking across the glyph, or jumping over the glyph will cause the trap to activate.

Treasure: Offerings & Sword of Wounding (Greatsword). Scattered at the foot of the statue are various offerings left to Blutstrom's founder. A dozen bunches of flowers have wilted, their petals brown and flaking. Several straw baskets have been left here as well; searching the baskets yields 200 cp, 30 sp, and 1 gp. Additionally, the statue is holding the sword that once belonged to Blutstrom's founder: a *sword of wounding* (*greatsword*). A character with carpenter's or smith's tools can spend one hour

using the tools to remove the sword from the stone hands.

6 - Apse

The apse is a curved room that sits behind the prayer space (**area 5**). A single stone bench has been carved out of the back wall.

Note: this area is protected by the *glyph of warding* in **area 5**.

Illumination. The apse is backlit with dim firelight from the scented candles in **area 5**. Additionally, three will-o-wisps reside here, emitting dim green light.

Encounter: Will-o'-Wisps. Three will-o-wisps are floating around the apse. They seem to be dancing with one another, and will not attack unless provoked.

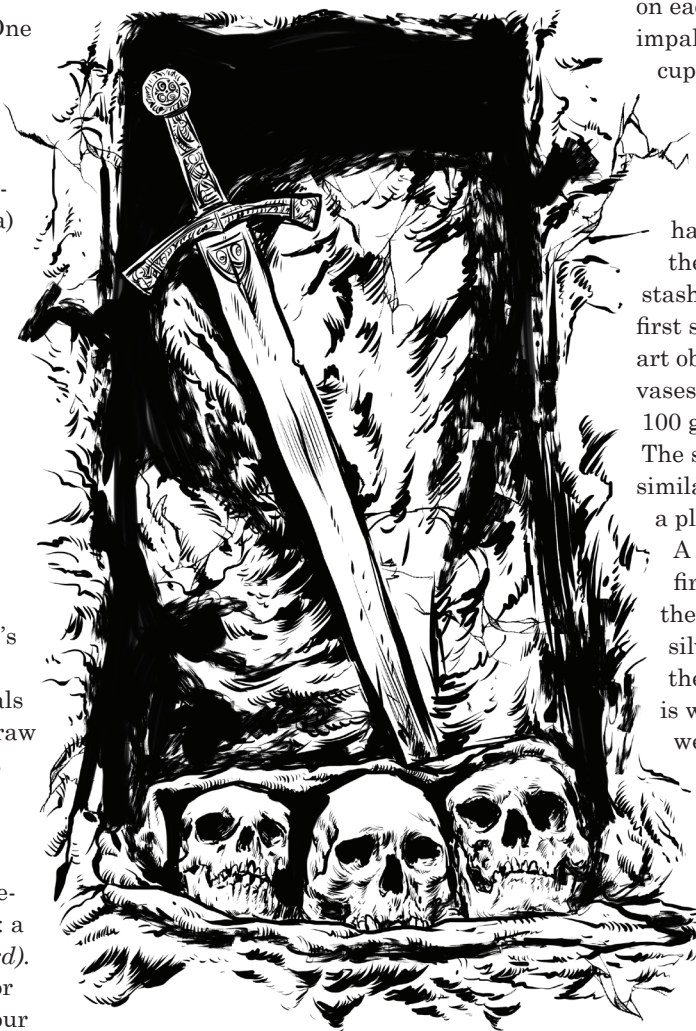
7 - Royal Vault

The stone doors separating **areas 6 and 7** have been thrown open. Five feet into the room is the bloody body of a robed cultist. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that the wound was caused by a large-sized piercing weapon, one with enough force to cut clean through a person's body.

Trap: Steel Spikes. There are three pressure plates in the vault; they are spread 10 feet apart from one another and must be individually spotted with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The trap activates when at least 30 pounds enter a space containing a pressure plate. When activated, six sets of steel spikes—three on each side—shoot out of the walls to impale the intruder. Any creature occupying the space must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) damage.

Treasure: The Royal Vault. Though most of the valuables have been removed from the vault, there are still items of worth stashed away in the side alcoves. The first set of alcoves contain 20 small art objects—painted straw figurines, vases, plates, etc.—collectively worth 100 gp and weighing 50 pounds total. The second set of alcoves contain a similar collection, with the addition of a platinum cloth pennant (250 gp). A large painting of Blutstrom's first family hangs at the back of the vault, its frame laced with gold, silver, and platinum. As a whole, the painting weighs 50 pounds and is worth 300 gp. The frame alone weighs 40 pounds and is worth 200 gp. The painting itself weighs 10 pounds (weighted vellum) and is worth 100 gp.

8 - The Antechamber



The antechamber is a large room that encompasses the hallway leading from **area 1** to **area 5**, the space before **area 11**, and two separate corridors that lead to **areas 9** and **10**. It is empty. Belobored chanting and moaning can be heard from within five feet of the door to **area 11**.

Locked Door. The gilded stone doors to **area 11** are magically locked. The key is Blutstrom's Royal Signet, one of which has been split in half and buried alongside the king and queen. A character can pick the *arcane lock* by succeeding on a DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Any character with a passive Intelligence or Wisdom of 12 or more recalls that the shape of the keyhole resembles that of Blutstrom's Royal Signet, and that their kings and queens are often each buried with one half of these signets.

9 - Queen's Rest

The left corridor in **area 8** leads to the Queen's Rest, where the royal women of Blutstrom's history are interred. The late queen resides in a great stone sarcophagus at the center of the room. There are signs of looting and pillaging: some of the other sarcophagi have been overturned, their bones scattered amidst the broken bits of pottery, glassware, strips of precious metals, etc. However, the central sarcophagus—where the late Queen was put to rest—is totally undisturbed.

Encounter: The Queen & Servants. One half of Blutstrom's Royal Signet was buried with the Queen. Any creature that disturbs the sarcophagus

awakens The Queen (treat her as a **wraith**) and her two spectral servants (treat them as **specters**).

Treasure: The Royal Signet. Within the central sarcophagus, around the late Queen's neck, is one half of Blutstrom's Royal Signet. One half is worth 300 gp. When combined, however, the full signet is worth 900 gp.

10 - King's Rest

The layout and purpose of this room is identical to that of **area 9**, except that it serves as the resting place for Blutstrom's royal men.

A foul stench emanates from the room. As each character enters the area, have them perform a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to resist the urge to vomit. Any character that fails has disadvantage on all ability checks and saving throws until they spend time outside the room.

There are signs of looting here, too. The central sarcophagus has had its

top ripped off, as if by some massive creature.

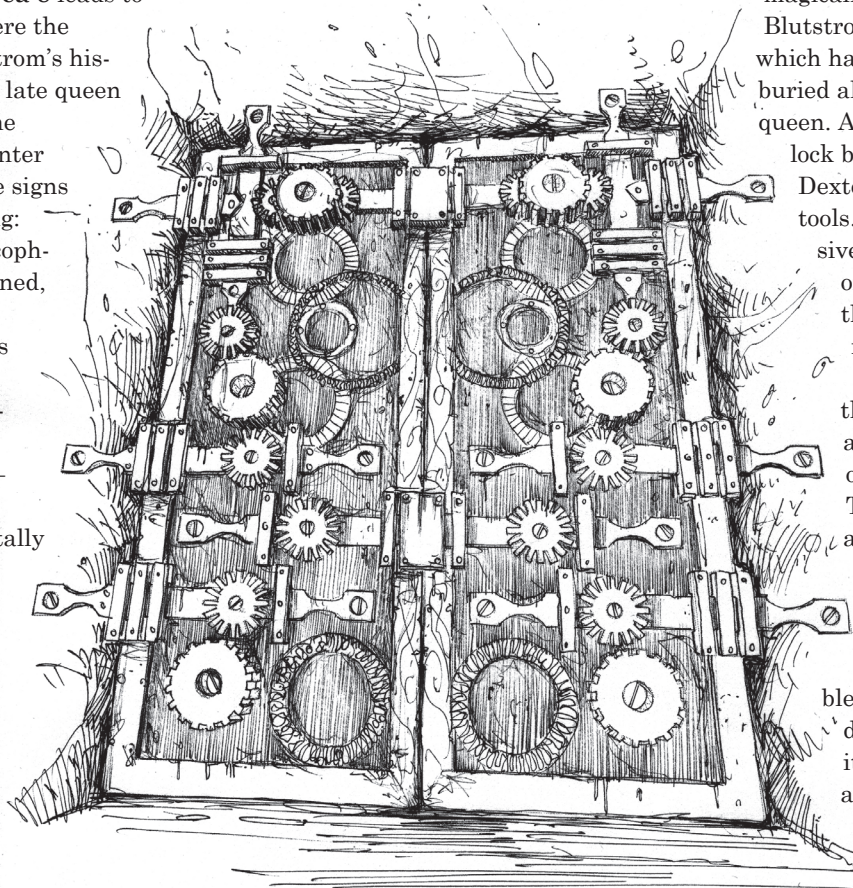
Encounter: The King. One half of Blutstrom's Royal Signet was buried with the King. Yiselm's magic has transformed the deceased lord into a hideous **hezrou**. The fiend is conscious of its previous life and is stuck in a state of agony; it stays at the back of the room, banging its head bloody against the wall, until some other creature disturbs it.

Treasure: The Royal Signet & Dragonscale Talisman. A careful search of the room will turn up one half of Blutstrom's Royal Signet. This half is worth 300 gp. When combined, however, the full signet is worth 900 gp. Additionally, the area contains a dragonscale talisman inlaid with brass (250 gp).

11 - The Grand Chamber

Locked Door. The gilded stone doors to the Grand Chamber are magically locked. The key is Blutstrom's Royal Signet, one of which has been split in half and buried alongside the king and queen. A character can pick the lock by succeeding on a DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Any character with a passive Intelligence or Wisdom of 12 or more recalls that the shape of the keyhole resembles that of Blutstrom's Royal Signet, and that their kings and queens are often each buried with one half of these signets. The two halves are hidden away in **areas 9** and **10**, respectively.

Inside the room, at the center of the chamber, is something that resembles a massive embryo. A dark shape writhes within, its face and limbs pressing against the demonic womb in a futile effort to break free. The entire





room is slick with embryonic gore and fluid. Around the unborn creature are several cultists and acolytes, chanting and moaning. The only thing remaining of prince Ebermund is a pool of blood magically suspended over the embryo: tendrils like veins run from the pool down into the demon, providing nourishment.

Illumination. Several orbs of red light float around the area, providing dim light.

Encounter: Azroros, Unformed & Yiselm. Yiselm (CE elf cult fanatic) and two human acolytes are gathered around the womb of Azroros, Unformed (see Appendix D). Four other cultists are kneeling in supplication to the demon. Yiselm will not

engage any intruders unless she is the last one standing; the cult leader is too busy trying to usher her dark master into the world.

Treasure: Blutstrom's Royal Signet. Yiselm carries around her neck a copy of Blutstrom's Royal Signet. This too is worth 900 gp.

Concluding the Adventure: Return to Alwina

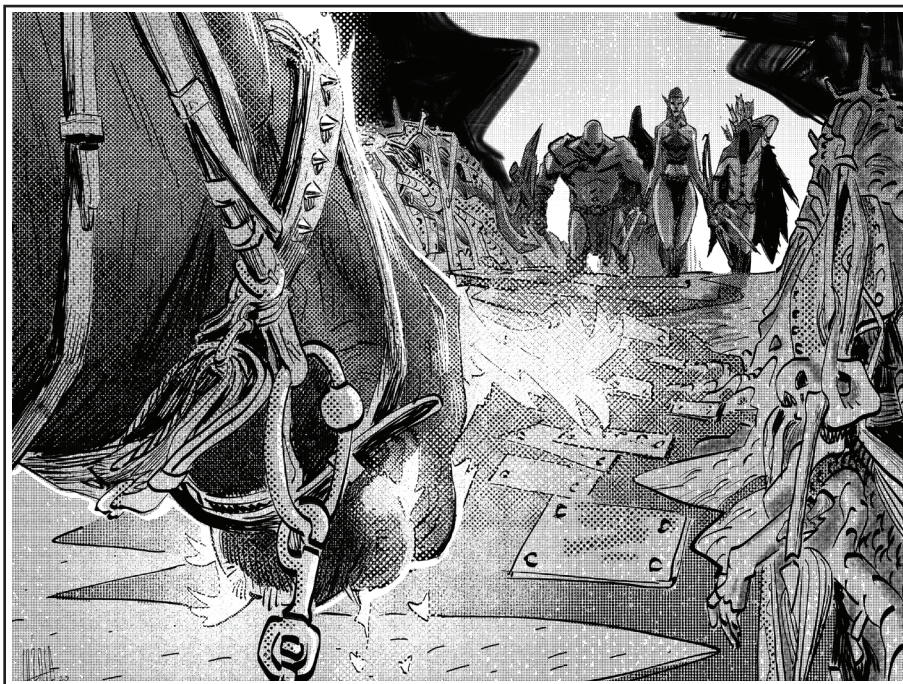
Once the unborn form of Azroros is defeated, the red lights in the area are extinguished. Alwina will be saddened to hear of her brother's death, but grateful to the characters for eliminating the cult and their demon lord.

Alwina reveals that Ebermund was,

in truth, only a half-son of Blutstrom. She surmises that his illegitimacy is what caused Yiselm's ritual to fail.

Rewards

Alwina will pay the characters what she promised and allow them to keep whatever they found down in the royal crypts—with the exception of Blutstrom's Royal Signet. She doesn't know that Yiselm had a copy of the signet made, so the characters are free to keep it. Though Alwina won't allow any more plundering of her family's crypts, she promises that if the characters ever need a favor, they can always count her—the new Queen of Blutstrom—as an ally. ♫



DESCENT INTO HELL

BY JOHN K. WEBB

A 5th-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Limithron

Art by Matias Lazaro and William McAusland

Descent Into Hell is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for three to five 4th- to 6th-level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 5.

This adventure takes place in the Blutstrom setting detailed in this issue but can easily be placed in any campaign setting that has fiends and portals to other dimensions. The characters enter a portal to the very home of devils in order to put a permanent end to Orgorus, One Who Devours.

Adventure Background

Fifty years ago, the devil Orgorus walked among the people of Blutstrom, leaving in his wake a river of blood, bone, and shattered lives. One such life belonged to a man called Sigeric; Orgorus possessed his body, took up a kitchen knife, and ripped into his wife and daughter. The devil made sure to keep Sigeric's spirit conscious as his family cried for mercy; Sigeric's mouth was filled with the devil's laughter, even as his eyes wept. Finished with this small amusement, Orgorus left the man alone amongst the bloody ruin of his family.

Sigeric has spent his entire life searching for a way to avenge his family's death. It would not be enough to slay Orgorus in the land of the living. For the devil to taste true defeat, he would have to be beaten in the very home of devils. Sigeric is no fool, however, his aging body and mind are no match for such power. Instead he seeks a champion—or champions—to dive into the depths of hell itself and bring him the head of Orgorus, so that he may look upon his foul face and know that the devil's life has truly ended.

Sigeric has finally found a way to enter the plane of hell; a profane ritual that, when completed, will open an arcane portal straight to Orgorus' lair. By possessing Sigeric, Orgorus inadvertently left an imprint of his spirit

on the man's soul. This imprint is a map—a beacon. It will allow Sigeric to narrow the location in the plane down to a sliver of probability.

Who will become Sigeric's avatar of retribution? Who will dare to enter hell itself?

Adventure Hooks

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

Sigeric's Plea. The characters catch wind of a rumor involving an old man and a portal to hell. Though the story sounds outlandish, the man is reportedly willing to pay upwards of 1000 gp to whoever helps him.

Sudden Portal. Sigeric decides to go at the task alone, overestimating his own strength. Luckily for him, the portal ritual malfunctions, and it ends up appearing on a busy city street—right in front of the characters! He rushes forth to explain himself and to offer his reward.

Monster Hunters. The characters enter a competition between Blutstrom's knightly orders to see who can slay the most powerful devil. The royal family will decide the winner of this competition and award 300gp.

The Stygian Ramparts

Orgorus (**chain devil**) resides in a small, fortified slice of hell called The Stygian Ramparts. A lone tower watches over a river of lava and a wall of wrought iron. The only way to reach the tower is through a cave network and the rampart itself; as one might expect, Orgorus' realm is heavily guarded by a variety of lesser devils.

General Features

Oppressive Heat. At the beginning of every hour, each character must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. If a character figures out a way to cool off and rest for at least an

hour, they may clear all levels of exhaustion. Characters with immunity and maybe resistance to fire damage are immune to this effect.

Cursed Realm. The fiendish plane corrupts all, even inanimate objects. Whenever a character finds a magic item, roll a d20. On a 19-20, that item gains the following additional trait:

Curse: Tear the Veil. Once daily at sunrise, roll a d20. On a 19-20, a devil or fiend of the GM's choice tears through a hole in reality within 300 ft. of the cursed item.

Illumination. Treat every area as having no light unless specified otherwise.

Underground. The majority of the Stygian Ramparts is an underground cavern, the exception being the rampart itself, which provides a neat (and horrifying) view of the larger fiendish plane.



Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of The Stygian Ramparts overleaf.

1 - Portal Landing

This room is empty except for the shimmering portal that connects the plane of hell to the land of the living.

Hazard: River of Lava. The river of lava emits dim light within a five-foot radius and can only be crossed by hopping from one small island to another by performing three DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks. If a

character fails a check, have them perform a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, they regain their balance. On a failure, they partially slip into the lava and take 22 (4d10) fire damage.

2 - Lair of the Damned

The southern cavern is divided into three discrete corridors: to the west is the Lair of the Damned, where a succubus and her pet have made a home of wrought iron. Corpses are fused into the rock and metal, their faces frozen in the agony of their final moments.

Encounter: Succubus & Hell

Hound. At the back of this corridor is something like a bedroom—almost. Soft furs are piled in a corner, and various furnishings from the land of the living have been transported here for the succubus' comfort. The **succubus** will shapeshift into a person the characters are familiar with and attempt to lull them into complacency; her primary motive is to survive. If she is attacked, the **hell hound** will emerge from the shadows and defend her to the death.

Treasure. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check turns up a copper necklace set with sardonyx (250 gp), a *sentinel shield* (see Appendix C), and 50 gp.

3 - The Bone Pit

The southern cavern is divided into three discrete corridors: to the east is The Bone Pit, where the devils occupying The Stygian Ramparts have piled their earthly conquests. At the end of this corridor is a room with a pile of rotting corpses and bones stacked eight feet high.

Encounter: Shadows. The restless spirits of the damned have been twisted into cruel **shadows**. Six of these shadows will follow intruders along the cavern walls and attack anyone who disturbs the bodies.

Treasure. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check turns up a +1

shortbow, a periapt of wound closure, and 100 gp.

4 - Grasping Hallway

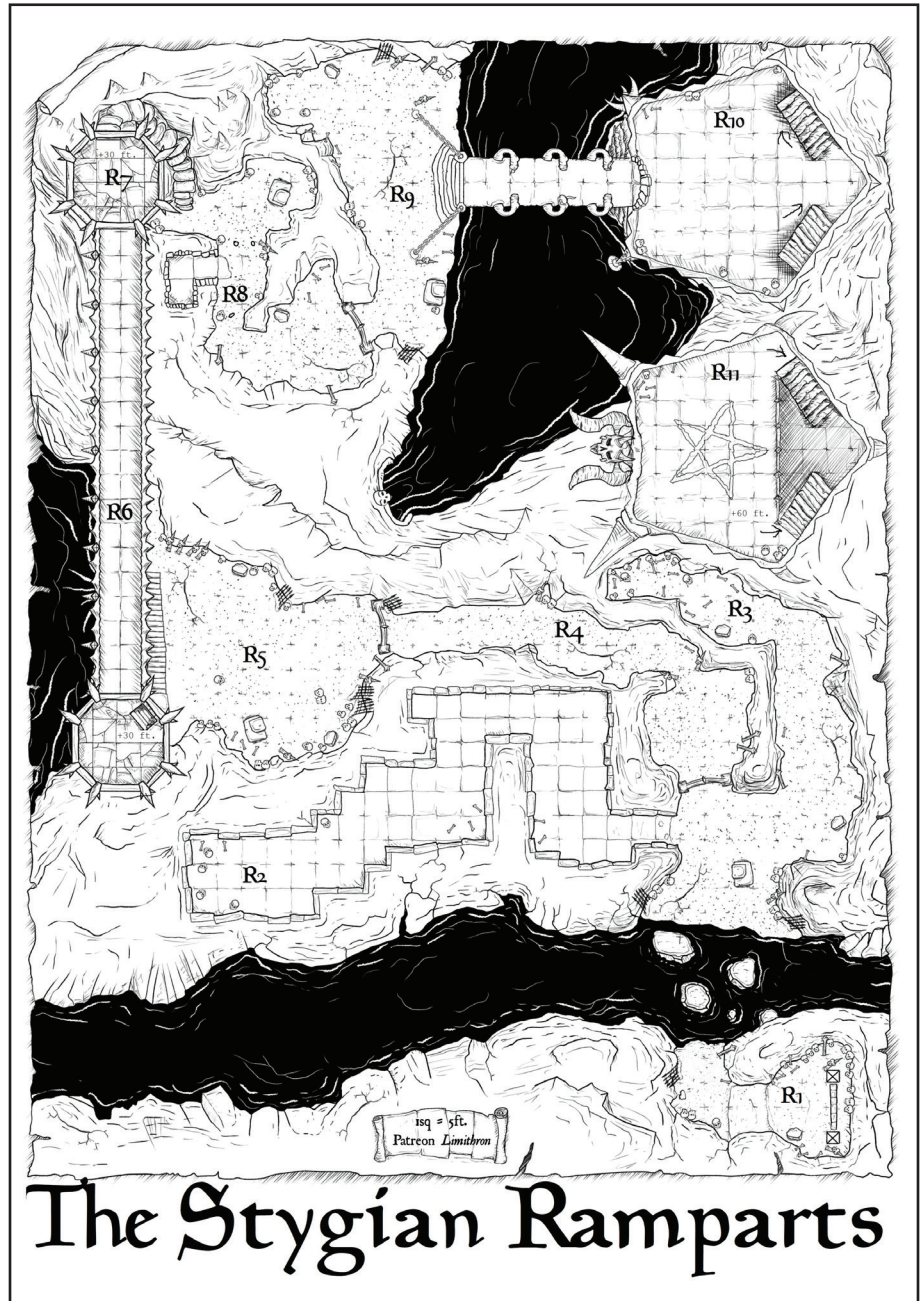
The southern cavern is divided into three discrete corridors: to the north is the Grasping Hallway, which is filled with the damned souls of the departed. Their spirits are trapped in undeath as their bodies are trapped in stone. The corridor is quite literally made out of bodies. Upon sensing intruders, those with mouths will begin to moan hungrily, eager for their next hapless meal.

Hazard: Grasping Hallway. For every 10 feet that a character moves, have them perform a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, they are able to navigate the maze of groping hands without getting pulled down. On a failure, they become overwhelmed by the hands of the undead and are knocked prone and become grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the character is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and receives 7 (2d6) piercing damage at the beginning of their turn from the gnashing teeth of the trapped undead.

5 - Clearing

The corridor of moaning, hungry undead ends in an empty room. Stalagmites and stalactites abound, and one can hear the river of lava rumbling beneath the earth. A wrought iron staircase at the western edge of the area leads to The Rampart itself. The corpses of various humanoids are set naked on spikes here, their skin flayed to reveal rotting musculature and bloodied bone. Whatever earthly possessions these unfortunate souls carried into hell lie scattered around the room.

Treasure. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check turns up a marble goblet set with moonstone (250 gp), a fox fur shortsword scabbard (250 gp), and a chest containing 1,000 cp, 200 sp, and 70 gp.



The Stygian Ramparts

6 - The Rampart

The iron staircase in area 5 leads outside onto The Rampart. It is constructed of iron, bone, humanoid skin, and fibrous knots of muscle. While standing in this area, one can look out onto the greater plane of hell; complex patterns of lava flows carve up the landscape, while bursts of flame illuminate briefly the devil's black citadels.

Hazard: Overwhelming Splendor. Any character with darkvision or currently under the effect of a spell, ability, or item that grants darkvision must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw while looking over the plane of hell. On a success, they are able to comprehend the landscape. On a failure, their mind begins to wheel violently at the sheer scope and horror of the plane, they take 7 (2d6)

psychic damage and have disadvantage on all ability checks and saving throws until they take a long rest outside of hell.

Encounter: Imp Flyover. Once halfway across the rampart, a patrol of five **imps** will divebomb the party. Any character with a passive Perception of 15 or less is surprised. As with the succubus, these imps understand that death in this plane is a permanent end; if three of them are cut down, the other two will flee.

7 - Corner Tower

A rounded tower platform lies on the northern end of The Rampart. It, too, is constructed of iron, bone, humanoid skin, and fibrous knots of muscle, with the added adornment of a large iron spike at its center. Stacked onto the spike, like a fiendish shish kebab, are flayed humanoids.

Encounter: Knight of Orgorus. As soon as a character steps onto the corner tower, a Knight of Orgorus (a **wight** riding a **nightmare**) materializes from the Ethereal Plane. It is bound to the devil's service and both knight and horse will fight to the death.

8 - Cave Entrance II

A spiral staircase of humanoid bone leads from the Corner Tower back underground, into the caverns. The lava's rumbling is audible here; methane and sulfur hiss through cracks in the broken earth, making the oppressive heat more unbearable still.

Trap: Bone Spikes. The DC is 15 Wisdom (perception) to spot several runic carvings on the ground. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals an aura of conjuration magic around the runes. The trap activates when a character steps into a space containing a magic rune (indicated by the small circles on the map). When activated, a five-foot-long spike of bone shoots out of the adja-

cent wall. Any creature occupying the space must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) piercing damage. Once triggered, the trap resets in 1 minute.

A creature can attempt to disrupt the runes with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Arcana) check. Alternatively, *dispel magic* removes the trap.

Treasure: Hidden Stash. There is a pile of rocks acting as a false door on the western side of the cavern wall that leads to a four-foot-high tunnel. At the back of the tunnel, buried in a shallow hole, is a pile of coins: 200 sp, 10 gp, and 1 pp. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the unnatural configuration of rocks acting as the false door.

9 - Bridge of Bone

Still underground, Orgorus' tower—with the skull of some primordial devil perched atop it like a crown—looms over the lava flows. Before one can enter the tower, however, one must cross the lava via the Bridge of Bone.

Illumination. The lava flows emit 10 feet of dim firelight.

Encounter: Knight of Orgorus. As soon as a character steps onto the bridge, a Knight of Orgorus (a **wight** riding a **nightmare**) materializes from the Ethereal Plane. It is bound to the devil's service, and both knight and horse will fight to the death. The intruders shall not pass.

10 - Orgorus' Tower, F1

The first floor of the tower is a pentagonal room made of stone. Yet more corpses are stacked like firewood around the room, stripped of clothing, skin, and valuables. It is otherwise empty, providing a brief respite from the horrors outside. Two staircases wrap around the back of the room and disappear into darkness: they are wide enough for one medium sized creature and continue upwards for about one hundred feet. The stone stairs are slick with blood and gore.

11 - Orgorus' Tower, F2

The top of Orgorus' Tower provides an excellent view of The Bridge of Bone and the river of lava roiling beneath its arch. It is identical in shape and dimension to the first floor. The horns of the devil skull are visible from the staircase, looming 30 feet high to scrape the top of the cavern itself. A pentagram of blood has been drawn on the landing. Flayed corpses are arranged on spikes around the parapet like rubies in a crown. There is but one creature occupying the area, and he sits on a throne of wrought iron: Orgorus, One Who Devours.

Chains. Four rusted iron chains hang from the devil horns above: they each weigh 100 pounds and are 60 feet long. Their ends are spooled around Orgorus' throne, awaiting his command.

Encounter: Orgorus, One Who Devours. Treat Orgorus as a **chain devil**, except he is wielding *Orgorus' bloody chain* (see Appendix C).

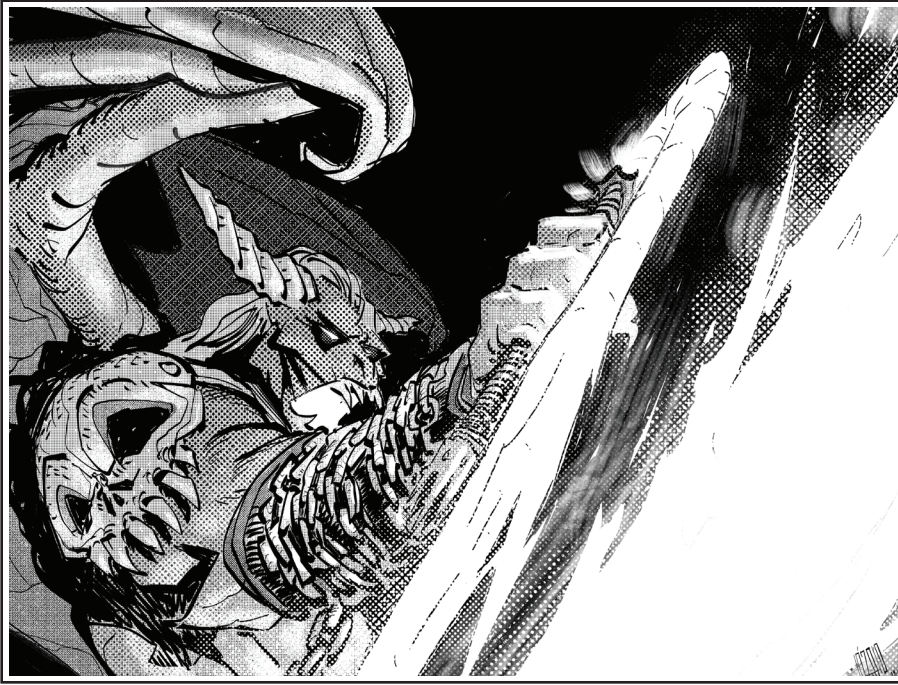
Treasure: Orgorus' Bloody Chain. Defeating Orgorus allows the characters to collect his enchanted chain weapon.

Concluding the Adventure: Return to Sigeric

If the characters successfully escape the plane of hell, they'll find Sigeric waiting for them anxiously—as well as several city guards with a lot of questions on their minds. If you set this adventure in a city setting or some other populated space, consider adding some punitive consequences for helping Sigeric expose the world to hell.

Rewards

Sigeric will reward the characters what he promised only if they present Orgorus' head upon their return. Otherwise, he'll be quite disappointed and won't pay a single copper. Ω



WRATH OF THE DEMON LORD

BY BENJAMIN PALMER

An 8th-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Dyson Logos

Art by Matias Lazaro, Rick Hershey, and Maciej Zagorski

Wrath of the Demon Lord is intended for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 8. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach approximately halfway to 9th-level.

A portal to hell has opened and the adventurers must defeat the demons coming out and seal it before it's too late. This campaign takes place in Arden, although it can be set in your own world. This adventure favors clerics and paladins, though any party composition should be able to finish the adventure with intelligent play.

Adventure Background

The town of Ravenshead has fallen to dark forces. During the last new moon, demons poured forth from the cathedral's crypts and slaughtered the townsfolk. Now, the few surviving villagers have fled to a nearby town in search of help. Fearing that the demonic invasion might flow out into nearby settlements, the local constabulary have offered a reward to whoever can close the portal allowing them into our world.

Unbeknownst to most, a portal was opened by the local clergy when they read from a forbidden book found deep beneath the cathedral. This has allowed a Pit Lord to take up residence in the crypts and summon forth more demonic henchmen. Unless he is slain, the forces of Hell will continue to pour forth and invade the material plane.

Adventure Hooks

A Dark Artifact. The characters have heard of a book of great power buried beneath a nearby cathedral. If they go in search of it, they find that the town has been overrun by demons.

A Pious Purpose. The characters heard from the locals that the village has been overrun by demons pouring in from a portal to hell. The clergy of the old cathedral beg them for help.

A Righteous Reward. The characters have been offered 2,400 gp in exchange for defeating the source of the demonic invasion and bringing peace to the town.

Demons on the Road

The road here narrows at the entrance to town. Ahead, a pack of jet black dogs with fiery eyes patrols the road, wisps of smoke coming from their nostrils.

Encounter: The Hounds of Hell.

There are five **hell hounds** here patrolling the road. They utilize their Pack Tactics to try to take down anyone who separates from the group.

The Cathedral

When the characters approach the cathedral, read the following:

This ruined structure is charred from the eruption of demonic energy that came from the crypts beneath. Rocks and debris lie scattered about. Inside, a group of armored bipedal demons mills about in front of what appears to be a stairwell leading down.

The stairwell here leads down into the crypts. The ceiling of the cathedral has collapsed, and the rubble has caused the floor here to be difficult terrain.

Encounter: Fiendish Troops.

There is a **gladiator** and six **hobgoblins** here. They use their normal stat blocks except their type is fiend, they gain the demon tag and they speak Abyssal and Common. They fight intelligently and focus on the most dangerous character.

The Crypts of Ravenshead

The Crypts of Ravenshead are currently infested with demons. They extend deep beneath the town's cathedral. The demonic energy has animated some of the corpses within, and numerous demons roam the halls.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the crypts have the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings are made of stone and rise 15 feet above the floor.

Floors and Walls. The floors are made of tiled stone, and the walls contain numerous small alcoves where the dead have been laid to rest.

Doors. The doors are made of rotten wood. Light will leak through from one side to the other. Unless specified otherwise, the doors are all unlocked.

Lighting. There are no sources of light in most of the rooms.

Unusual Features. The smell of sulphur permeates the crypts. There are many collapsed tunnels that lead to nowhere.

Encounter Locations

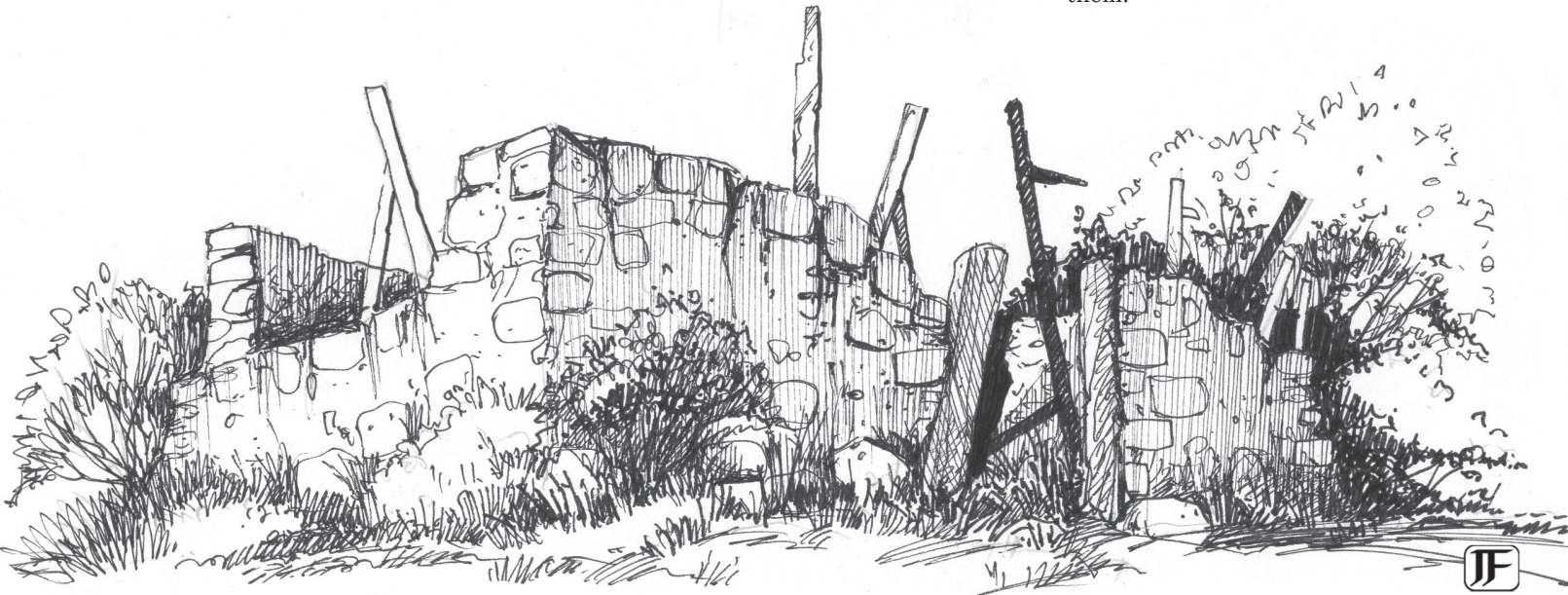
The following rooms are keyed to the included map and numbered for ease of use.

1 - The Crypt Entrance

The floor here is slick with blood, and the air reeks of rotten flesh. Numerous corpses shamble through the knee-deep crimson liquid.

The floor here is slippery. Any creature that moves at more than half its speed must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or else they fall prone.

Encounter: Zombies. There are 12 **zombies** wandering around in the bloody pool. They attempt to grapple and drown anyone who gets close to them.



2 - Side Tomb A

This small chamber contains a small stone chest surrounded by rubble.

Encounter: Quasits. There are six quasits here. They're all invisible when the characters enter and wait for someone to open the chest before they attack.

Treasure: Stone Chest. The chest here is locked. It can be opened with a DC 15 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check. It contains 250 gp, a ruby worth 50 gp, and a *spell scroll of lesser restoration*.

3 - Side Tomb B

This room contains a broken stone chest and two small stone statues.

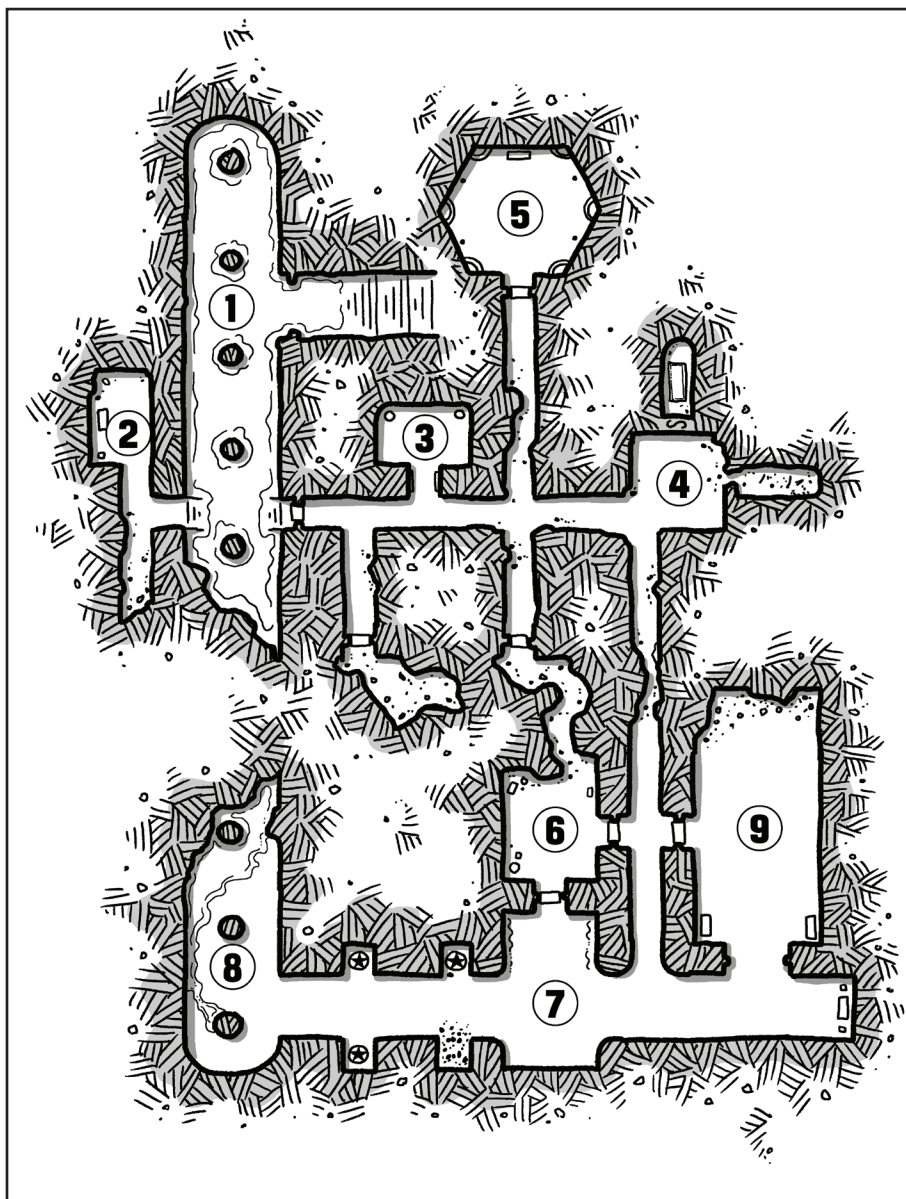
This room is empty. Nothing of note is here.

4 - Collapsed Tomb

This room contains a faded mural on the north wall. A collapsed tunnel leads off to the east. The room is less trafficked than others in the tomb, almost as if someone was avoiding it.

This room is empty. To the east is a collapsed tunnel. To the north, there is a mural depicting a great battle.

Treasure: Hidden Tomb. There is a secret door on the north wall. It can be found with a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Behind it, there is a sarcophagus of a knight of a holy order. Inside, there's a +1 *longsword* and a +1 *shield*. To retrieve them, someone must pry them from the hands of the dusty corpse holding them. These particular items belonged to a long-dead hero. If someone takes them, there may be consequences for the theft.



5 - Main Crypt

A large creature standing nearly 12 feet tall dominates the center of this octagonal room. Behind it, a large sarcophagus rests against the wall.

Encounter: Glabrezu. The glabrezu was let through the portal by the pit lord to serve as a commander for its forces on this side. It plots from its chamber and uses **quasits** to ferry its

commands out to the troops. It targets any spellcasters or major threats with the *confusion* or *power word stun* spells and uses the *darkness* spell to blind any melee characters. It knows if it is defeated on this plane it will simply return to the hells, so it fights to the death. If the characters flee, it pursues them mocking them for their cowardice.

Treasure: Sarcophagus. The sarcophagus contains 2,000 gp and a silvered spear.

6 - Collapsed Foyer

This room contains the remainder of an ancient temple's foyer. The walls have dark sigils carved into them, and blood is smeared across the rubble on the floor. It appears as though this was a meeting place at some point in the distant past.

This room contains the remains of what appear to be some local clergy. It seems as though they were literally torn in half.

7 - Temple Hallway

This long hallway contains four alcoves, three of which house statues of demonic entities. The alcoves are each five feet wide and deep. To the west, a flooded room can be seen. To the east, a shattered small stone chest can be seen against the wall.

Encounter: Possessed Statues.

The three statues here are all possessed by dark forces. They use the stat blocks for **barbed devils** except their alignment is chaotic evil, their type is construct and they lose all tags. They animate when anyone walks down the western half of the hallway past them. They focus their attacks on that one person unless a more dangerous threat makes itself known.

8 - Flooded Hallway

This partially collapsed hall contains filthy brackish water pooled along the north and western walls. The smell of filth is overwhelming.

The floor here is slippery. Any creature that moves at more than half its speed must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

Encounter: Otyughs. Two otyughs have made their home in the water. They remain hidden until someone disturbs the water. They fight defensively and will not pursue anyone who flees.



Treasure: Pristine Satchel. Beneath the water is a *bag of holding* that contains three *potions of greater healing* along with 500 gp.

9 - Portal Hall

This large room has vaulted 30-foot ceilings and ornate carvings on the walls. At the far end of the room, a swirling red portal crackles with energy. Standing before it, a massive 15-foot-tall demon can be seen wielding a flaming whip.

The portal leads to a hellish realm. The demons have been pouring through it since it was opened. Currently, the giant demon is sustaining it. Once he is slain, the portal closes within 1d4 rounds.

Encounter: Demon Lord. The giant demon is a **demon lord** (see Appendix D), a minor demon lord from the upper layer of the hells. He uses his whip to draw in spellcasters before slashing them with his claws.

If a major melee threat presents itself, he'll switch his focus to them.

Treasure: Flaming Whip. When the pit lord dies, he drops his magical *flame tongue whip*.

Concluding the Adventure

With the pit lord slain, the portal to the hells becomes unstable and within moments closes as abruptly as it opened. The remaining demons in the area flee off into the night, potentially setting up another adventure down the road. The remaining clergy return to the cathedral and promise to rebuild it and consecrate the ground once more. If the characters stole the sword and shield from the tomb, they have a chance to return them. If they do, they are forgiven as the heroic knight would have wanted them used in such a manner. If they do not return them, the theft is discovered and the local constabulary put up wanted signs for the characters for theft of church property. Ω



KOBOLD ALONE

BY DAVE HAMRICK

A 4th-level adventure for Fifth Edition

Cartography by Tom Cartos

Art by Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, Luigi Castellani, Daniel F. Walthall, Rick Hershey, and William McAusland

Kobold Alone is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for three to six characters of 1st to 4th level.

The adventure is set in a large, nameless estate or mansion that can easily be placed into any setting. It also works perfectly as a one-shot or as a side quest in a larger campaign. The adventure intentionally keeps many of the details vague so you can place your own named NPCs and hooks into the setting without too much effort.

Adventure Background

The characters hear a rumor that a local villain in the area recently set out to travel for a week to a distant city. Supposedly, their home is totally empty while they're gone. And beyond a few locks on the doors and windows, there aren't a whole lot of safety precautions. No matter what their reasons are for doing so, this is the perfect opportunity for the characters to break into the mansion.

What the characters don't know, however, is that the villain left behind a band of kobolds to protect their estate—the villain promised each of them a wheel of cheese as a reward. For a kobold, that's a far greater reward than gold or gems.

These crafty Draconian buggers are more-than-prepared to face burglars, trespassers, and anyone else who dares to enter the estate. They've set deadly traps and armed themselves with all manner of mundane weapons.

After all, everyone knows that one kobold is a menace, two kobolds are a threat, and three or more kobolds are downright deadly.

Adventure Hooks

As an open-ended one-shot/side quest, there are plenty of reasons the characters might need to break into the estate. Here are a few suggestions based on the most popular Fifth Edition backgrounds:

Acolyte. The villain is a known fiend or undead creature who's been

plaguing the area. You wish to break into the house to find proof of their evil ways.

Criminal. You're a criminal. Breaking into places and stealing things that aren't yours is kinda what you do.

Charlatan. As a charlatan, you can see beyond petty theft. You have your eyes on the bigger prize—*black-mail*. There's gotta be something in that manor you can use to exploit the villain for even greater reward.

Entertainer. Although the heist sounds dangerous and illegal, it's sure to make a great story to share with others—the others can count you in!

Folk Hero. Many locals have approached you sharing their common fears of the lady/lord of the manor. They won't be able to rest easy until you enter the home, find proof that the villain is, in fact, a villain, and ultimately rid the area of the foe.

Guild Artisan. Members of your guild recently performed work for the villain but weren't fairly compensated for their work. They turn to you to make matters right. Break into the house and take back what's rightfully theirs. This should also leave a clear message to the villain that the local artisans' guild is not one to be trifled with.

Hermit. Maybe if you'll help your friends break into the villain's manor, they'll finally leave you alone? Then you can go back to peace and quiet. Won't that be nice?

Outlander. You heard around the campfire—literally—that there's a big, rich, civilized jerk who recently left for a trip and left their big, fancy house unguarded. Inside, you will likely find plenty to steal and—as a bonus—smash.

Noble. An opportunity to check out how another wealthy citizen lives? You wouldn't miss it for the world. After all, they can't *possibly* be living better than you and your family does!

Sailor. While in port, you overheard that there was a villain in the area



whose impressive mansion might hold great wealth. Whether or not you agree with stealing from a villain, the job sounds exciting and, frankly, you don't have much else to do until your ship sets sail.

Sage. Supposedly, an ancient book of immense value is hidden somewhere in the villain's home. That book was stolen long ago from a group of sages whom you admire. You hope to break into the villain's home and reclaim the book.

Soldier. The villain wronged an old war friend or colleague of yours in the past. You now wish to get vengeance. The first step is to break into their home and find something that you can use against them.

Urchin. For too long, this villain has put their wealth on display to the community while offering very little back. You hope to break into their home to take from them so you can give to those who need it more.

The House

The villain's house is an impressive, two-story manor house with dozens of bedrooms, plenty of bathrooms, multiple fireplaces, and luxuries and comforts of all sorts. The nameless villain in this adventure prefers to keep his security system relatively mundane. After all, they know that a few kobolds can put far more fear into the heart of adventurers than a *glyph of warding* ever could. Besides, he's insured, and if burglars *do* manage to break into his home, it's unlikely they'll ever find the secret basement and treasure vault.

General Features

Instead of exhaustively detailing every room in the house and all of its features, below is a list of the common features found throughout the home.

Architecture. The outside walls and a vast majority of the interior walls,

especially on the ground floor, are made of thick stone bricks mortared into place. Wooden walls are also common throughout the house. Most of the floors throughout the house are made out of hardwood, although certain rooms, such as the kitchen and bathrooms have stone tiles instead, and the great hall's floors are made from polished marble.

Ceilings. Overall, the ceilings on the second and first floor are 12 feet high. Exceptions to this include the great hall and libraries, which have mezzanines.

Doors. There are three types of doors in the home.

Exterior Doors. The exterior doors are heavy oak-plank doors hung on iron hinges and dressed with iron hardware. These doors have AC 15, 18 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. All of these doors have locking mechanisms and can also be barred. A locked door requires a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick or a DC 15 Strength check to break open. A barred door can't be picked, and only a DC 20 Strength check will break the door down. The bar also adds 10 hp to the door's total hp. Assume that all of the exterior doors at the start of this adventure are both locked and barred.

Interior Doors. The interior doors are wooden, but a little lighter than the exterior doors. These doors have AC 15, 12 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Most of these doors have locking mechanisms. A locked door requires a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick or a DC 15 Strength check to break open. Creatures who run through such doors can shut the door as part of their move, then lock it with an action or bonus action (creature's choice). Most of the interior doors are unlocked at the start of this adventure.

Secret Doors. The absent villain has hidden their vault behind two secret doors. The first door is in the



study (**area 20b**). The second door is just before the vault itself (**area 43**). Finding these doors requires successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) checks for each. The two doors have their own conditions to open, but consider both doors to be magically locked by the arcane lock spell. With the spell in place, they are impervious to all forms of damage. A DC 25 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools is required to pick the locks and a DC 25 Strength check is necessary to force the doors open.

Illumination. During the day, the house is well lit thanks to a bevy of large windows. Only rooms lacking windows and the basement lair are dark. At night, the house has plenty of lamps, lanterns, and other lights to keep the place lit. It's worth noting that kobolds do not require light to see, and may put out all of the lights. In areas of dim light, creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) and Intelligence (Investigation) checks that rely on sight.

The secret basement downstairs is almost completely dark save for **area 43**.

Windows. Nearly every exterior wall of the estate has one or more windows. A window has AC 12 and 5 hp. They are vulnerable to bludgeoning damage and immune to poison and psychic damage. The windows can be locked using latches inside. A locked window requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open or a successful DC 10 Strength check to break. Assume that all of the windows are locked at the start of the adventure.

Searching for Valuables

Instead of detailing each and every little item contained in the 44+ rooms of the house, assume that the characters have a reasonable chance of finding valuable objects in each room. Below are special rules you can use to randomly determine the contents of a room based on how thoroughly a character searches a room.

Resources. A character can search a room by spending 1 minute looking through drawers, wardrobes, and under beds. Alternatively, the character may also choose to search at a slow pace or a fast pace. A character who searches at a slow pace takes 10 times as long to search the area (10 minutes), but has advantage on their check to do so. And a character who searches at a fast pace only takes 1 round (6 seconds) to search the room, but has disadvantage on the check. At the end of the duration, the character must make an Intelligence (Investigation) check. The character may add +1 to the check for each minute they spend searching beyond the original duration up to a maximum of +5.

Resolution. Use the Valuables tables on the following pages to determine what the character finds in a given room. First, use the Treasure by room table to determine the type of treasure that might be present. Then compare the check total on the appropriate Treasure Table. **Area 44** does not have a treasure table, and instead has its own specific treasure detailed below. For a result of coins, roll the given number of coins. For a result of art objects, roll to determine

the number of art objects of the given value are found. For results of magic items or intrigues, roll on the respective table to determine what the characters find.

Subsequent Searches. Once a room has been searched by a character and looted of its valuables, all subsequent search check results of 20 or better find an additional 3d6gp worth of sundries.

Complications. Burglary is a messy thing. Sometimes, something gets knocked over and causes a huge mess. Other times, the characters leave evidence that may incriminate them. When a roll of a natural 1 comes up during a search—even if the check was a success—a complication occurs. Roll on the Search Complications table below to determine what happens.

Search Complications.

d6	Complication
1	The characters accidentally damage the valuables they found.
2	The characters leave evidence that may lead the villain or the local authorities to them.
3	One of the valuables that the characters discover is cursed.
4	The characters accidentally knock an item over, causing a loud crash, alerting creatures in the house to their presence.
5	The characters set off a trap—even if the room they were searching through wasn't trapped.
6	The characters discover that the house they're raiding is related to any ally of theirs, and might hurt them as well as the villain.



Treasure by room.

Area	Room Name	Treasure Type
1	Front steps	A
2	Servants' entrance	A
3	Back door	A
4	Wood shed	A
5	Northeast patio entrance	A
6	Side door	A
7	Great hall	C
8	Kitchen	B
9	Pantry	B
10	Servants' dining	B
11	Servants' quarters (each room)	B
12	Servants' bathroom	B
13	Workshop	A
14	Storage	A
15	Rear hall	B
16	Private dining room	C
17	Withdrawing room	C
18	Main dining hall	C
19	Library (lower)	D
20	Study	D
21	Parlor	C
22	Mezzanine	C
23	Master suite	D
24	Master bathroom	C
25	Laundry	B
26	Servants' stairs/storage	B
27	Guest room	C
28	Guest room	C
29	Guest room	C
30	Family room	C
31	Bedroom	C
32	Balcony	A
33	Bedroom	C
34	Balcony	A
35	Library (upper)	D
36	Master suite	D
37	Master bathroom	C
38	Balcony	A

KOBOLD ALONE

Treasure Table A.

Check Total	Coins	Art Objects	Magic Items	Items of Intrigue
1-5	—	—	—	—
6-10	—	—	—	—
11-20	—	1 art object worth 25 gp	—	—
21+	—	1d4 (2) art objects worth 25 gp each	—	Roll once on the intrigue table

Treasure Table B.

Check Total	Coins	Art Objects	Magic Items	Items of Intrigue
1-5	—	—	—	—
6-10	5d6 (17) cp	—	—	—
11-20	4d6 (14) sp	1 art object worth 25 gp	—	—
21+	3d6 (10) gp	1d4 (2) art objects worth 25 gp each	—	Roll once on the intrigue table

Treasure Table C.

Check Total	Coins	Art Objects	Magic Items	Items of Intrigue
1-5	—	—	—	—
6-10	4d6 (14) sp	1d4 (2) art objects worth 25 gp	—	—
11-20	4d6 (14) sp	2d4 (5) art objects worth 25 gp	—	—
21+	1d6 x 100 (350) gp	1d4 (2) art objects worth 250 gp each	Roll once on the magic items table	Roll once on the intrigue table

Treasure Table D.

Check Total	Coins	Art Objects	Magic Items	Items of Intrigue
1-5	3d6 (10) gp	1d4 (2) art objects worth 25 gp each	—	—
6-10	2d6 x 10 (70) gp	2d4 (5) art objects worth 25 gp each	—	—
11-20	4d6 x 10 (140) gp	1d4 (2) art objects worth 250 gp each	Roll once on the magic item table	Roll once on the intrigues table
21+	8d6 x 10 (280) gp	1d4 (2) art objects worth 750 gp each	Roll 1d4 times on the magic items table	Roll 1d4 times on the intrigue table

Magic Items.

d20	Magic Item
1-10	<i>Potion of healing</i>
11-12	<i>Spell scroll (cantrip)</i>
13-14	<i>Potion of climbing</i>
15-16	<i>Spell scroll (1st level)</i>
17	<i>Spell scroll (2nd level)</i>
18	<i>Potion of greater healing</i>
19	<i>Bag of holding</i>
20	<i>Weapon, +1</i>

Items of Intrigue.

d20	Item of Intrigue
1-10	A journal or papers with details that may incriminate the villain.
11-15	A key or password that grants access to a special area in the home.
16-17	A map of the manor that details all secrets (including the basement).
18	A bit of information that ties another important person (such as a politician or celebrated hero) to the villain.
19	A map detailing important treasures hidden somewhere off-site.
20	Compromising documents used to blackmail an important noble.





The Kobolds

Like a lot of the details of this adventure, the actual location of the eponymous kobolds varies from play to play. Use the How Many Kobolds? table below to determine the quantity of the kobolds the characters find in the house. Assume that half of the kobolds are upstairs and the other half are downstairs.

How Many Kobolds?

APL	Number of Kobolds
1	1d6 + 4 (7) kobolds
2	2d6 + 4 (11) kobolds
3-4	4d6 + 4 (18) kobolds

Kobold Tactics

Before you run this adventure, it's important to understand that kobolds are not natural born fighters. They possess poor Strength and poor Constitution. They don't have much of a mind for tactics and discipline either, as they have low Intelligence scores and Wisdom scores. And they rarely, if ever, parley, since they also have low Charisma scores.

Instead, kobolds take advantage of the three things they're best at:

Kobolds Are Nimble. With a Dexterity score of 15, they're pros when it comes to ranged weapons, finesse weapons, and even ability checks and saving throws using their Dexterity. Therefore, it's likely they will always try to keep space between themselves and their foes, ideally 30+ feet. Even though their dagger and sling attacks will have disadvantage at these ranges, they would rather suffer a poor shot than risk a close hit by a strong combatant.

Kobolds Fight in Large Numbers. A kobold will never enter a fight (especially a melee fight) unless it feels it has advantage in numbers, at least two kobolds per every foe, and three or more if they can get it. Not only does this create multiple targets for their foes, but it also allows the kobolds to use their Pack Tactics feature, granting them advantage on their attacks. Keep in mind that a kobold can also use its Pack Tactics

with its ranged weapons—the only requirement is that it has an ally within 5 feet of its target.

Kobolds Love Traps. Ultimately, a kobold is not so much a foe in a fight as it is a button-pusher for the closest trap it can find. Kobold traps aren't expertly designed like a gnome's or goblin's trap would be. They're simple. Therefore, many of these traps will need an actual kobold present to trigger its effects.

As the characters move through the household, remember to always keep kobolds 35 feet or more from the characters. Remember that they can close doors behind them and use their action or bonus action to quickly lock a door behind themselves. Kobolds can see in the dark up to 60 ft., so they will prefer the cover of darkness, especially since it masks the location of their traps. They know all the best hiding spots in the manor, too. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the map so you can plot the best escape routes for the kobolds. This adventure includes maps with escape routes, too.

Kobold Traps

Finally, what would a "Home Alone" inspired adventure be without a vast assortment of traps with which you can torment your players? Like the kobolds, the number of traps you place within the manor largely depends on the strength of the party that enters the manor. Use the How Many Traps? Table below to determine the number of recommended traps to place in the manor.

How Many Traps?

APL	Number of Traps
1	1d4 + 1 (3) traps
2	2d6 (7) traps
3	3d6 (10) traps
4	4d6 (14) traps

Next, choose the traps you wish to place in the manor from the Kobold Traps list overleaf, or if you can't decide, roll a d100 to choose.

d00	Trap	d00	Trap
01-02	Air gun	51-52	Scroll surprise
03-04	Bag o' bugs	53-54	Trapped boots
05-06	Dumped bucket	55-56	Upside down poison vial
07-08	Feathers to the face	57-58	Zipline trap
09-10	Insult rock	59-60	Animal waste pit
11-12	Murder holes	61-62	Drop into an aquarium
13-14	Paint can on a string	63-64	Faulty steps
15-16	Rust monster antenna	65-66	Fake teleporter
17-18	Smoke trap	67-68	Fart gag
19-20	Snow shovel	69-70	Hidden cricket bat
21-22	Stinky fish	71-72	Glass wall
23-24	Stuffed kobolds	73-74	Greased log
25-26	Tarantula toss	75-76	Incline hallway
27-28	Air horn	77-78	Rakes
29-30	Blowtorch	79-80	Snare-a-pult
31-32	Collapsible furniture	81-82	Sharp floor objects
33-34	Flour drop	83-84	Slippery floor objects
35-36	Ice water bucket over door	85-86	Slippery ice
37-38	Hidden ooze	87-88	Sticky tar
39-40	Honey and bugs	89-90	Stop hitting yourself
41-42	Hot doorknob/metal object	91-92	Tripwire
43-44	Hunter's trap with prize	93-94	Tripwire/weight combo
45-46	Iron on a string	95-96	Chickens and cockatrices
47-48	Nested chests	97-98	Hot slime in a tea kettle
49-50	Purple potion	99-00	Skunk swarm

The following Kobold traps and weapons can be added to the Kobold Alone game using the rules provided. The traps are organized by trigger.

Held Weapons

Held weapons are traps wielded by the kobolds themselves. Unless noted otherwise, the weapons presented below replace the weapons normal for the kobold stat block.

Air Gun. An air gun is a simple ranged weapon with a range of 30/60 ft. that fires non-lethal pellets. A target hit by the gun's pellet must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or it can't take reactions until the start of its next turn. The air gun has only 5 shots before it must be reloaded.

The gun's wielder can use its action or bonus action to reload the weapon.

Bag o' Bugs. The kobold throws a bag, box, or even a nest of insects at a point that it can see within 20 feet of it. When the object hits, it breaks open, and a **swarm of insects** spills out and attacks the nearest creature.

Dumped Bucket. The kobolds dump the contents of a bucket from a great height, targeting a creature that they can see within 5 feet of the square directly below them. The target must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, or have the object land on them.

- **Blood.** The kobolds drop blood on the target. On a failed saving throw, the target is completely

drenched. This has no effect, but it might awaken the character's powerful telekinetic abilities (but probably not).

- **Gray ooze.** The kobolds drop a **gray ooze** on the target. On a failed saving throw, the target takes 7 (2d6) acid damage. The gray ooze then attacks.
- **Spiders.** The kobolds drop a **swarm of spiders** on the target. The spiders attack, gaining surprise against the target.

Feathers to the Face. This weapon blasts sticky feathers in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area becomes covered in the sticky feathers. Until the creature spends 1 hour washing the feathers away or cleans themselves with a spell like *prestidigitation*, they have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to see as well as all Charisma ability checks made to interact with other creatures.

Insult Rock. A kobold writes an insult on a rock and throws it at a creature that it can see within 20 feet of it (+0 to hit). On a hit, the rock deals 1 bludgeoning damage.

So long as the target has a passive Perception score of 10 or better, they notice something written on the underside of the rock. The target must use its action or bonus action to pick up the rock (creature's choice). There is an insult on the bottom, probably written in bad Common. The insult has no effect other than to temporarily distract the creature.

Murder Holes. The kobolds drilled small holes in a wall, ceiling, or floor. Whenever a character moves through an area opposite murder holes, the kobolds jam sharpened sticks, javelins, or spears through the holes. The character must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2 (1d4) piercing damage for each kobold present (maximum of 3) on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful saving throw. Spotting the murder holes in advance requires

a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Paint Can on a String. This weapon involves attaching an object such as a metal can of paint, rock, or weight to a string or length of rope. A creature can then target another creature within 10 feet of it that is also on a surface at least 5 feet lower than itself. The attacker makes a melee weapon attack (the object counts as a finesse weapon). Kobolds have a +4 to the attack. On a hit, the target takes bludgeoning damage equal to 2 (1d4) plus the creature's Strength/Dexterity modifier and must make a DC 10 Strength check or fall prone.

Rust Monster Antenna. The kobolds tie severed rust monster antennae at the end of 10-foot-long poles. The kobold corrodes a nonmagical ferrous metal object it can see within 10 feet of it. If the object isn't being worn or carried, the touch destroys a 1-foot cube of it. If the object is being worn or carried by a creature, the creature can make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the kobold's antennae weapon. If the object touched is either metal armor or a metal shield being worn or carried, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed. If the object touched is a held metal weapon, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Non-magical ammunition made of metal that the kobold touches is destroyed.

Smoke Trap. The kobolds create a smokey fire by filling a fireplace or brazier with wet leaves or other accelerants that produce thick smoke. The smoke heavily obscures a 20-foot-cube area from the point in which the fireplace burns. Small creatures (like kobolds) and Medium or larger creatures that drop prone do not have their vision obscured by the smoke. The smoke lasts for 10 minutes, until

the fire is extinguished, or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it.

Snow Shovel. A creature arms itself with a wide-bladed shovel. A Medium snow shovel has the same statistics as a greatclub. A Small snow shovel has the same statistics as a mace.

Stinky Fish. The kobold throws a rotting fish at the characters, with a +0 to hit. On a hit, the fish doesn't deal damage, but it does require the target to make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw from the stench. On a failed saving throw, the target is poisoned until the end of its next turn.

Stuffed Kobolds. The kobolds fill a room with 11 (2d10) stuffed kobold toys. The toys look so realistic that it's hard to notice the real kobold among them. Spotting the real kobold requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Tarantula Toss. A creature throws a tarantula (**spider**) at a target that it can see within 10 feet of it (kobolds make this check with a +4 to hit). If the tarantula hits, the target must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened until the end of its next turn. While the target is frightened, it can't move.

Interaction Traps

The traps presented below are triggered when a character opens a door or window, touches or lifts a particular object, or otherwise interacts with something on its own volition.

Air Horn. The kobolds attach a device that creates loud noise to a door, chest, or something else that the characters might open. When triggered, it creates a thunderous sound audible for 150 feet. Each creature within 30 feet of the sound that can hear it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or become deafened by the blast for 1 minute. A target can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. Spotting the trap requires a DC 10

Intelligence (Investigation) check. It takes a DC 10 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to remove the trap.

Blowtorch. A creature who enters the same space as this trap must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2 (1d4) fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. Spotting the trap requires a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. It takes a DC 10 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to remove the trap.

Collapsible Furniture. The kobolds disable one or more legs of a large piece of furniture. If a creature searches the unstable piece of furniture, it topples. The target must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 2 (1d4) bludgeoning and become pinned under the furniture. As long as the creature is pinned, it is restrained and prone. The creature can escape the object by using its action to make a DC 12 Strength check, escaping with a success. Noticing the faulty furniture requires a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Flour Drop. The kobolds place a bag of flour over a doorway. When a creature opens the door, the flour tumbles down on them. The creature must make a DC 8 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature's skin is irritated by the flour in their clothing, fur, etc. Until the creature cleans the flour away, they have disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity ability checks. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Hidden Ooze. While making a search through cabinets, drawers, chests, etc. the characters stumble upon a **gray ooze**. The ooze gains surprise unless one of the party members noticed it with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the ooze was hidden in an area made of stone, it can't be detected due to its false appearance feature.

Honey and Bugs. The kobolds place a bucket of honey over a door. When a creature opens the door, the honey tumbles down on them. The kobolds then release a **swarm of insects** in the area (see Bag o' Bugs above). Until the creature cleans the honey from their clothing, the insects have advantage on attack rolls against that creature. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Hot Doorknob/Metal Object. A creature who touches the doorknob (or similar metallic object) takes 1 fire damage. Until the damage heals, they have disadvantage on attacks made with two-handed weapons. Spotting the trap requires a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. It takes a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to remove the trap.

Hunter's Trap with a Prize. The kobolds place a single coin, gem, or some other valuable (maybe cheese?) in the middle of an obvious hunter's trap. A character can try to grab the coin with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. On a failure, the character triggers the trap and takes the damage normal for a hunter's trap. A character may also try to disarm the trap with a successful DC 10 Strength check.

Ice Water Bucket Over Door. The kobolds place a bucket of chilly water over a door. When a creature opens the door, the cold water splashes down on them. Until the creature dries themselves and their clothing, they have disadvantage on Constitution saving throws made to avoid spells and effects that deal cold damage, including the effects of extreme cold. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Iron on a String. This trap involves attaching a heavy object such as a hot iron, rock, or weight to a string or rope. When a creature pulls the string or rope, the object falls. The target must make a DC 10 Dexterity

saving throw, or take 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage from the falling object. If the object is also hot, it deals an additional 1 fire damage. Spotting the trap requires a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. It takes a DC 10 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to remove the trap.

Nested Chests. The characters discover a chest measuring 5 feet on all sides. The chest is locked, requiring a DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. Inside the chest is a smaller chest, also locked (same DC). And in that chest, there's another chest. And so on for four more chests until they reach the 6th chest which fits in the palm of their hand. Of course, that chest is locked, too (same DC). Inside that chest is a single copper piece.

Purple Potion. The kobolds place a bucket filled with purple potion above a door. When a creature opens the door, the purple potion spills down on them and dyes their skin, hair, clothing, and anything else they are wearing or carrying purple. The purple potion's effects last for 1d6 days. Until the effects end, the character has disadvantage Charisma checks made to interact with other creatures. It can only be removed with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

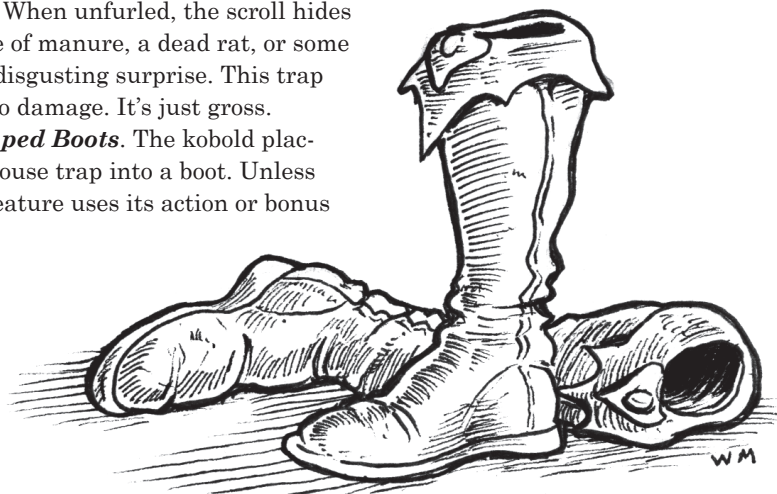
Scroll Surprise. The kobolds stuff a scroll into a collection of valuable items. When unfurled, the scroll hides a piece of manure, a dead rat, or some other disgusting surprise. This trap does no damage. It's just gross.

Trapped Boots. The kobold places a mouse trap into a boot. Unless the creature uses its action or bonus

action to inspect the boot before they put it on, the creature triggers the trap. The trap doesn't deal any permanent damage, but until the creature breaks free of the trap, their movement speed is reduced by 10 feet. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success.

Upside Down Poison Vial. The kobolds place a vial of stoppered poison upside down on a spot of glue on a countertop. The vial is clearly marked "POIZUN." When the character lifts the vial, they accidentally remove the stopper and spill the poison. The poison is oil of taggit, which requires the character to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 24 hours. The poisoned creature is unconscious. It wakes up if it takes damage. Noticing the tricky stopper requires a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Zipline Trap. This trap requires one or more creatures to be climbing along a length of rope or zipline over a great height (10 feet or higher). The trapsetter cuts the rope, causing the creatures to fall. A falling creature can make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes the damage normal for a fall on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. The zipline has AC 13, 3 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.



Falling Traps

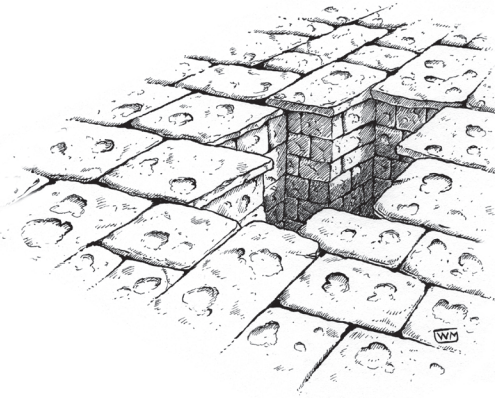
The traps below are placed into the floor or ground and usually concealed.

Animal Waste Pit. The kobold digs a 5-foot-cubed hole and fills it with animal waste (or its own). It then conceals the pit. Any creature that moves through the area falls into the waste. A character can find the edge of the pit with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Until the target washes itself and cleans its clothing, it emits a horrible odor; the target suffers disadvantage on all Charisma (Deception and Persuasion) checks, and it leaves a trail of filth behind, granting all creatures advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks made to track the target.

Drop Into an Aquarium. The kobolds position a large tank filled with water directly below a concealed pit trap or a few faulty floor boards. A character can spot the trap with a passive Perception of 15 or better. Otherwise, the character falls into the water tank and the lid shuts and locks. Unless the character can breathe underwater, they start to drown. The aquarium has AC 12, 10 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If the aquarium is destroyed, its contents spill into the area. Any creature within 5 feet of the aquarium when this happens (including the creature inside the aquarium) must make a DC 10 Strength check, or fall prone. A character can use its action to make a DC 20 Strength check to break the aquarium lid open from within. A character outside of the aquarium can make a DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to unlock the aquarium's lid.

Faulty Steps. The kobold damages the structure of a set of steps. If 50 pounds of weight or more are placed on the steps, they collapse. The creature who triggered the steps must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall, taking the normal damage for a fall. Noticing the faulty steps

requires a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. Kobolds are lightweight and can easily run past these steps without triggering the trap.



Watch-Your-Step Traps

The following traps involve the characters stepping on, or moving through a spot with a trap.

Fake Teleporter. The kobolds paint a square on the floor and write the word “TELAPORTUR” within it. If a character steps on the square, they trigger a fart gag (see Fart Gag below).

Fart Gag. The kobolds place a device under a seat cushion, floor board, or some other area a character is likely to put their weight. The device emits a loud farting noise and a horrible stench. Each creature within 5 feet of the trap must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a creature is poisoned until the end of its next turn. Also, its peers may think that it's the one responsible for the passing-of-gas.

Hidden Cricket Bat. The kobolds place a cricket bat in a strategic location and attach it to a tripwire. When a character hits the tripwire, the bat swings out and paddles the character on the bum. The character must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or have its movement reduced by 10 feet for 1 minute. Noticing the tripwire requires a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or better.

Glass Wall. The kobolds place a glass wall in a high-traffic area. The glass is so clean, it's impossible to spot without a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character who fails to spot the glass before walking into the area shatters the glass and takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage as a result.

Greased Log. The kobolds paint a log with grease, then use the log as a bridge between two high points. Any creature that moves across the log must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, or slip and take falling damage. Noticing the greasy surface requires a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Incline Hallway. The kobolds cover the floors of a hallway with a subtle incline in grease or slippery ice. Any creature that moves through the hallway must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Athletics) check or fall prone. A creature that falls prone slides 10 feet back toward the bottom of the incline. Noticing the incline and trap requires a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Rakes. The kobolds fill a room with rakes. A character that moves through the room must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Small or smaller creatures have advantage on this check, and a creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the check. On a failed check, the character steps on a rake's teeth which causes the handle of the rake to swing upward and hit the character in the face; the character takes 1 bludgeoning damage. If this damage reduces the character to 0 hit points, they fall unconscious, but are stable.

Snare-a-pult. The kobolds pull a flexible tree such as a young pine or palm tree to the ground; then, they attach a snare to the end of it. When a creature steps into the snare, the snare grabs their leg and the bonds holding the tree in place let loose, flinging the creature away. The target

lands in a spot 20 feet away from the snare and takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. Spotting the snare requires a passive Perception score of 14 or better. Removing the trap requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools.

Sharp Floor Objects. Glass ornaments, metal spikes, and similar objects function the same way caltrops do. Any creature that enters an area with these objects must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or stop moving this turn and take 1 piercing damage. Taking this damage reduces the creature's walking speed by 10 feet until the creature regains at least 1 hit point. Noticing the sharp objects requires a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or better. A creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the save.

Slippery Floor Objects. Small wheeled toys, marbles, or other objects function the same way as ball bearings do. A creature moving through the area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. A creature notices the small objects with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. Once discovered, a creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the save.

Slippery Ice. A creature that moves through an area with slippery ice must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. If the slippery ice is on a staircase or other height, the target also takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall. Spotting slippery ice requires a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. A creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the save.

Sticky Tar. The kobolds paint sticky tar on the floor. A space covered in sticky tar is considered difficult terrain. A creature notices the sticky tar with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Stop Hitting Yourself. The kobolds place a thin wire in a corridor, door-

way, or some other high-traffic point in the manor. The wire is attached to a pressure plate and a pulley. When the pressure plate is stepped on, the wire lifts up and hits the character's elbow, forcing them to punch themselves in the face. The character takes 1 bludgeoning damage from the attack. Spotting any of the components that make up the trap requires a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or better. The trap can be removed with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Tripwire. A creature who moves through an area with a tripwire must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. A creature notices the tripwire with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. A tripwire has AC 12, 1 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Tripwire/Weight Combination. This trap works the same as the tripwire mentioned above. However, the tripwire holds a weight overhead in place. If the wire is cut, the weight falls and lands on the creature who cut the wire. The target must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. Noticing the secondary trap requires the character to make a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Creepy Critters

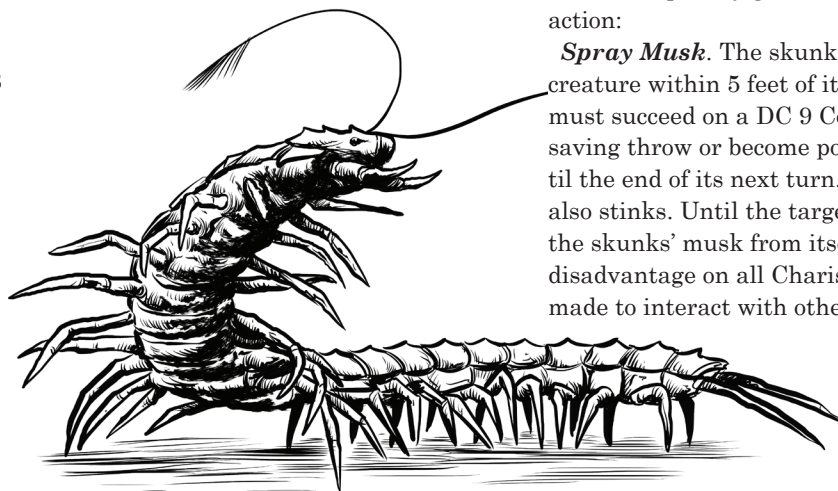
The following animals are used by kobolds to act as obstacles, guardians, or just pests.

Chickens and Cockatrices. The kobolds spread bird seed all over the floor of a room and then fill it with chickens. The chickens use the **swarm of rats** stat block. The chickens create difficult terrain for the characters and might even act aggressive if provoked. In addition to the chickens, there is a **cockatrice** hidden among them. Spotting the cockatrice among the chickens requires a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check. As an added bonus, the kobolds may place ball bearings throughout the room. The chickens are too small to slip on the ball bearings, but the characters aren't.

Hot Slime in a Tea Kettle. The kobolds stuffed a small **ochre jelly** into a tea kettle, then turned on the burner. After 1d4 rounds, the ooze explodes out of the tea kettle, landing on a random creature within 10 feet of it. The target must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target takes 3 (1d6) acid damage and falls prone. The small ochre jelly then attacks the nearest creature it can sense. The ooze only has 9 hit points and it is Small.

Skunk Swarm. The kobolds release a surfeit of skunks into the area. The skunks use the **swarm of rats** stat block, except they gain the following action:

Spray Musk. The skunks spray a creature within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 9 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned until the end of its next turn. The target also stinks. Until the target cleans the skunks' musk from itself, it has disadvantage on all Charisma checks made to interact with other creatures.





The Secret Basement

The secret basement is the manor owner’s best kept secret. However, it is just as well guarded as the upper levels of the house. And the traps and puzzles here are a little more clever than a few kobold traps. Of course, characters who successfully navigate the maze of traps will discover an incredible hoard of treasure in its secret vault.

39 - Entering the Vault

The only way into the vault is through the secret passage in **area 20b**. Characters who descend the stairs find themselves in this area. Not even the kobolds know about this location. The door that leads to **area 40a** is locked, requiring a DC

20 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves’ tools to unlock, or a DC 20 Strength check to break down. Otherwise, the door has AC 20, 25 hp (damage threshold 10), and immunity to fire, poison, and psychic damage. The key might also be found on one of the treasure tables (see the section on “Treasure” above) as a item of intrigue. If the characters exhaustively search the house and fail to find the key, assume the manor’s owner has it on their person.

40 - The Maze

Probably the most intimidating part of the secret basement is its labyrinthine maze. Characters will need to use plenty of smarts to navigate this section, lest they find themselves per-

manently trapped within this dangerous section of the basement.

Drowning Switches. To open the doors to the vault’s antechamber (**area 43**), the characters must trigger two switches and their respective pressure plates. One of the switches is located on the wall next to the doors to **area 43** (marked **area 40m** on the map) The other switch is hidden at one of twelve dead ends within the maze. Those dead ends are at: **40a, 40b, 40d, 40f, 40g, 40h, 40i, 40j, 40k, 40l, and 40n**. There is also a switch in **area 41**. To determine which of the other twelve switches is the real switch, roll a d12 and consult the switch table below.

Switches.

d12	Switch Location
1	40a
2	40b
3	40d
4	40f
5	40g
6	40h
7	40i
8	40j
9	40k
10	40l
11	40n
12	41

The characters might learn the location of the real switch by finding an item of intrigue on one of the treasure tables (see the section on “Treasure” for details). Otherwise, the characters will have to figure out which switch is the true switch through trial and error.

Each switch is made from solid stone and weighs 12 lbs. Therefore, spells such as *mage hand* aren’t strong enough to shift them upward. In addition, each switch has a subtle pressure plate directly in front of it. Unless a creature searches the floor below a switch and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they won’t notice the pressure



plate. It takes a minimum of 75 lbs to depress a pressure plate. Once the weight is lifted off the plate, the plate returns to its default position.

Not all of the switch/pressure plates open the door, but all of them are trapped. When a switch and its respective pressure plate is triggered, a door slides up from the floor and seals the person who triggered the trap in a cell measuring 5-feet on a side and 10-feet high. Water then starts to pour from small holes piped in through the walls at a rate of 6 inches per round. In 2 minutes (20 rounds), the cell completely fills with water, potentially suffocating the character trapped inside. **Area 41's** trap has a similar but different function (see below).

Stepping off the pressure plate or returning the switch to its “off” position stops the flow of water and opens its door, spilling the water out into the hallway. Drains placed at regular intervals in the hallway allow the water to escape without dealing long term damage. Additionally, triggering the correct switches opens the doors and stops the flow of water so long as the doors to **area 43** remain open.

Spotting the holes in the walls requires a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character can find a sliding door in the floor with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Although there are too many holes to plug to stop the flow of water once it occurs, jamming a piton or similar object into the door's slot and succeeding on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics)

check will prevent it from rising when it is triggered.

Once the correct switches are placed into the up position and their respective pressure plates are depressed, the door to **area 43** opens for 1 hour. Additionally, all of the trap doors open and the water stops pouring out.

Locked Doors. The doors at areas 40c and 40e are both locked, as are the doors that lead to areas 41, 42, and 43. With the exception of the door to **area 43**, the doors are made from solid steel, each with AC 20, 25 hp (damage threshold 10), and immunity to fire, poison, and psychic damage. Picking a door's lock requires a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools or a successful DC 20 Strength to break open.



The double doors that lead to **area 43** are magically warded. Only by triggering the correct pair of switches (see Drowning Switches above) will the doors open. No amount of damage or skill will open these doors otherwise.

41 - The Shrine

This room appears to be a shrine covered in cobwebs and dust. A character who searches the altar against the eastern wall and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a switch in the area. This switch functions similar to the switches described in **area 40**, except instead of a water trap like the one previously described, the door to the room shuts and the room starts to fill with toxic

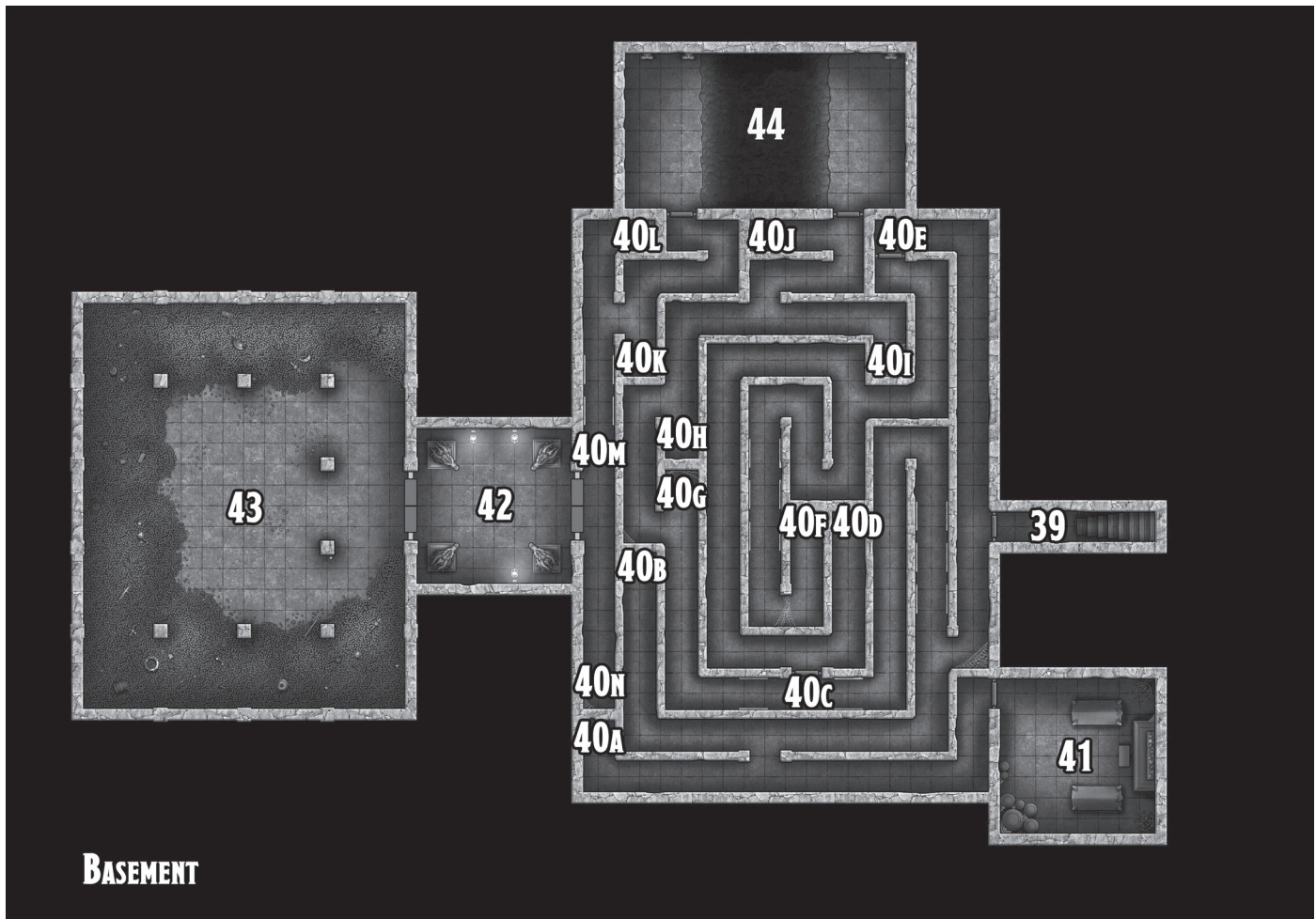
gas. Each round a creature starts their turn in the room, they must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target takes 1 poison damage. If this damage reduces the character's hit points to 0, the character is stable but unconscious for 1d4 hours. Like the water traps, the gas stops and the door opens as soon as a character steps off the pressure plate or returns the switch to its "off" position.

Spotting the nozzles that deploy the gas requires a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Once discovered, a character can disable the nozzles by spending 10 minutes and succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools.

42 - Antechamber

At all four corners of this room, large stone dragon heads face the center of the room. All of their mouths are open. Two torches hang on the north wall. A lone torch hangs on the south wall next to a gouge in the wall that looks like another torch may have once hung there.

If a character places their hand into the mouths of the northwestern, northeastern, or southwestern dragon, the dragon's mouth bites down. The character must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, or they take 2 (1d4) piercing damage and become restrained by the dragon's mouth. A character who uses their action can make a DC 15 Strength check, freeing the trapped character with a success.



On a failure, the character takes 1 piercing damage. On initiative count 10, the other dragon heads—with the exception of the southwestern dragon—rotate to face the trapped character. Each dragon then breathes a 15-foot cone of fire targeting the trapped character. Each creature in that area must succeed on two DC 10 Dexterity saving throws, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage for each failed saving throw, or half as much damage for each successful saving throw.

If a character places their hand into the mouth of the southwestern dragon, they feel a switch inside. If they pull on the switch, it opens a secret door in the western wall that leads to the true vault.

43 - Vault

This vault holds wealth beyond the characters’ wildest dreams as detailed on the Vault Treasure table below. If these figures seem extreme, feel free to change them to better suit your players.

Vault Treasure.

Type	Quantity
Art objects; 7,500 gp each	1d4
Gems; 5,000 gp each	1d8
Gold pieces	12d6 x 1,000
Magic items, rare	1d4
Magic items, very rare	1d6
Magic items, legendary	1
Platinum pieces	8d6 x 1,000

44 - The Pit

A 15-foot-wide pit stretches from the north and south ends of this area. There is nowhere to walk along the sides of the pit, thus, the characters will need to find a way over the pit to reach the far end of it. The pit is 50-feet deep.

Concluding the Adventure

Kobolds, traps, deadly mazes, dragon heads, and immeasurable treasure. This will likely be an adventure the characters—and their players—won’t soon forget. Ω

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CYCLOPÆDIA OMERIA

BY BENJAMIN GILYOT

CARTOGRAPHY BY WATABOU.ITCH.IO AND BENJAMIN GILYOT

The following locations are keyed to the map of Blutstrom on the following page.

Aldorf Manor

Home of local crime lord Benson Aldorf, leader of the Gnarled Fist.

Blackroot Tower - Outskirts of Town

Blackroot Tower is a crumbling four-story building, which stands half as tall now as it did when it was built. Its highest story is open to the elements, as its façade has fallen away in pieces over the years, revealing wooden support timbers behind black stone. Built into the side of a hill, a winding, overgrown pathway climbs around the building and leads

to doored entrances at three different stories.

Blood Hand Hideout - Eisenkreis Neighborhood Warehouse

The Bloody Hand have made their hideout in the abandoned construction of a former witch hunter safehouse, where natural caverns underneath the warehouse connect to an unfinished stone complex consisting of a few rooms and hallways adjacent to the blood pools.

Blutstrom Royal Tombs

Royals, nobles, and other high-ranking citizens are interred in the Blutstrom Royal Tombs.

Botanical Gardens - City Center

The botanical garden is a small, single-story structure nestled in the heart of the city. It has a collection of unique plants and critters. Its crowning exhibit is a corpse flower.

Chapel of Eucomis

The Chapel of Eucomis was once dedicated to the eponymous Saint of Sacrifices. The church was built atop a different holy site that burned down over a century ago; it is rumored the ruins of the old church are still accessible from somewhere inside.

Cobblestone Streets

Wet cobblestone streets twist and turn through the city of Blutstrom.

Eisenkreis Neighborhood

The oldest neighborhood in the city, it is now mostly warehouses for riverboats.

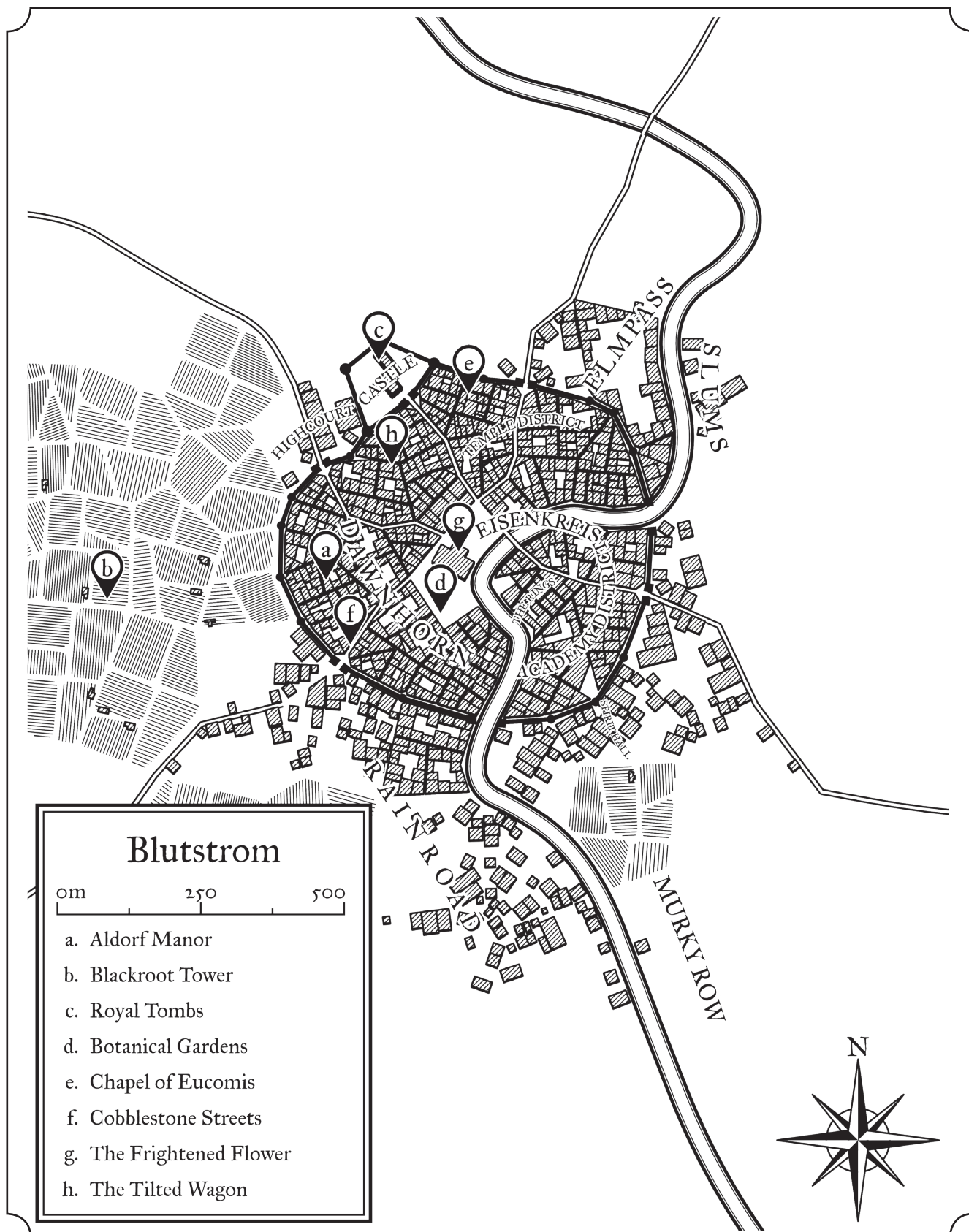
The Frightened Flower

The Frightened Flower is a four-story stone tower built around a hulking tree. Built decades ago by a peculiar wizard whose name has been lost to history, all that anybody remembers is that she had a black thumb when it came to plants and was extremely protective of the only plant she ever successfully kept alive: the tree at the center of the tower.

The Tilted Wagon

A popular local inn for travelers. It is one of the oldest structures in the city, and features local bands most nights of the week. Ω





NEW PLAYER OPTIONS

BY DAVE HAMRICK

ART BY DANIEL F. WALTHALL, LUIGI CASTELLANI, AND RICK HERSHEY

Playable Flesh Golem

A flesh golem is a grisly assortment of humanoid body parts stitched and bolted together into a muscled brute imbued with formidable strength. Most flesh golems are little more than mindless creations crafted to protect malicious arcane practitioners and their lairs. There are a few golems, however, that liberate themselves from their creators to pursue lives of their own. You are one such creature.

Flesh Golem Traits

While your origins may vary, you and all flesh golems have the following characteristics in common.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 2.

Age. Flesh golems are usually crafted from the healthiest parts available, therefore, you begin your “second life” as a mature adult. And so long as you have new parts to replenish damaged parts, you are effectively immortal.

Alignment. Most flesh golems are created to serve. As such, they tend towards neutrality or lawful alignments. Those who break free of their creator’s whims, however, are free to make their own choices.

Size. Although flesh golems can be built from any type of humanoid—or any type of creature, really—they tend to be made of human stock. Because of the jigsaw-puzzle-like manner in which they are assembled, they are usually slightly taller and heavier than the creatures from whom they were made. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. It’s dealer’s choice when it comes to creating flesh golems. And even if most of your body parts come from human stock, eyes

that have the ability to see in the dark are preferred. 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.

Construct Type. You are a construct instead of a humanoid. This grants you the following benefits and drawbacks:

- You are immune to lightning and poison damage.
- You are immune to the following condition types: exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, and poisoned.
- You are immune to effects that would alter or change your form.
- Similar, you are unaffected by game effects that affect only humanoids, such as the *charm person* spell and healing magic.
- You don’t need to eat, drink, or breathe.
- You don’t need to sleep and don’t suffer the effects of exhaustion due to lack of rest, and magic can’t put you to sleep.
- When you take a long rest, you must spend at least six hours of it in an inactive, motionless state, rather than sleeping. In this state, you appear inert, but it doesn’t render you unconscious, and you can see and hear as normal.

Lightning Absorption. Whenever you are subjected to 5 or more lightning damage from a single source, you can use your reaction to gain one of the following benefits:

- You immediately regain a number of hit points equal to the damage dealt.
- The next melee attack roll you make is made at advantage so long as you make the attack before the end of your next turn. If the attack hits, you deal the damage normal for the attack plus an extra 1d4 lightning damage.

- Your gain a +2 bonus to your AC and Dexterity saving throws and your movement speed increases by 10 feet until the end of your next turn.

Once you use this feature, you can’t use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Horrific Appearance. You have disadvantage on Charisma (Deception, Performance, and Persuasion) checks made to interact with creatures that can see you.

Berserk. Whenever you start your turn with half your total hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, you go berserk. On each of your turns while berserk, you attack the nearest creature you can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, you attack an object, with preference for an object smaller than yourself. Once you go berserk, you continue to do so until you are destroyed or regain all your hit points. Your creator or allies, if within 60 feet of you while you are going berserk, can try to calm you by speaking firmly and persuasively. You must be able to hear the speaker, who must take an action to make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, you cease being berserk. If you take damage while still at half your hit point total or fewer, you might go berserk again.

Aversion to Fire. If you take fire damage, you have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of your next turn.

Brutal Slams. Your unarmed strikes do more damage than normal. When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you deal bludgeoning damage equal to 1d8 plus your Strength modifier instead of the damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Languages. Flesh golems know the languages they knew in life. You

can speak, read, and write Common, plus one additional language of your choice.

Flesh Golem Feats

As a flesh golem gets used to its new body, it gains new abilities. If your GM allows the use of feats to customize your character, you may take one or more of the following flesh golem racial feats detailed below. If a feat requires a level, you must have that character level to learn the feat.

Golem Mind

Prerequisites: Flesh golem, Wisdom 13 or higher, 7th level

You learn how to guard your mind against your destructive nature. You gain the following benefits:

- You lose your Berserk trait.
- You gain immunity to the charmed and frightened conditions.

Golem Toughness

Prerequisites: Flesh golem, 11th level
You gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons.

Improved Slam

Prerequisites: Flesh golem, 11th level
You place extra focus on attacks made with your fists. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Your slam attacks deal an additional 1d8 bludgeoning damage on a hit (2d8).
- Your unarmed strikes count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Magic Resistance

Prerequisites: Flesh golem, 14th level
You tap into your magical reserve to further protect yourself from spells and magic. You have advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Modifications

Prerequisites: Flesh golem, 5th level
You decide to make the most of your constructed nature, and add upgrades to your body. You can take this feat multiple times. Each time you do, you must select a different modification. Whenever you gain a level in any class, you can opt to replace a preexisting modification with another modification of your choice.

Attractive Appearance. You upgrade your face and visible body parts with more attractive features. You lose the horrific appearance trait.

Additionally, you gain a +2 bonus to Charisma (Deception, Performance, and Persuasion) ability checks made to interact with creatures. You cannot take both this modification and the Terrifying Features modification.

Electrified. You gain an additional option which you may select for your Lightning Absorption trait.

- You can cast *lightning bolt*. Constitution is your spellcasting ability for this spell (spell save DC is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier). You must cast the spell before the end of your next turn, or you lose your ability to do so using this trait.

Extra Arm. You add an extra arm. Although the extra arm is not as strong as your normal arms, you can grasp things with this arm, and it has a reach of 5 feet. You can use the arm to lift a number of pounds equal to five times your Strength score. You can use it to do the following simple tasks: lift, drop, hold, push, or pull an object or a creature; open or close a door or a container; or grapple someone. If you take the Attack action on your turn, you can use your bonus action to make an extra attack with your extra arm. If the arm hits, the arm deals bludgeoning damage equal to 1d4. This damage does not include your Strength modifier and cannot be improved by taking the Improved Slam feat.

Improved Vision. The range of your darkvision increases by 60 feet. Also, you can see invisible creatures and objects as if they were visible, and you can see into the Ethereal Plane. Ethereal creatures and objects appear ghostly and translucent.

Long Limbs. You increase the length of your arms. When you make a melee attack on your turn, your reach for it is 5 feet greater than normal.

Fire Proofing. You gain resistance to fire damage and lose your Aversion to Fire trait.

Steel Skull. You encase your vulnerable brain in a steel shell. You gain immunity to being stunned. Additionally, when you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you make all of your death saving throws with advantage.

Terrifying Features. You double down on your horrific appearance so you can invoke terror in the hearts of your foes. As an action, you can make a Charisma (Intimidation) check contested by a Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can see you within 30 feet of you. A creature that is immune to being frightened automatically succeeds on this contest. If you succeed on the contest, the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw or the effect ends for it has immunity to your Terrifying Features for 24 hours. You cannot take both this modification and the Attractive Appearance modification.

Thick Hide. You graft thick scales, armor plates, or some other dense material to your flesh. When you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 16. You do not add your Dexterity modifier to this total. 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.

Playable Gnoll

Bestial and bloodthirsty, gnolls are a savage race of hyena folk considered a blight upon the face of Omeria by other races. Great numbers of gnolls inhabit the Desolation of Ditimaya and the Wither, spreading terror to all who enter these lands.

Fiend Touched

Gnolls owe their existence to the disease known as “the fang.” Large packs of gnolls carry the disease among them. When they strike a humanoid civilization, there is a chance that the pack is carrying the disease. The disease is almost always fatal to those who contract it. Once a humanoid dies from the fang, their body bloats into a gruesome incubator. After two hours, a new gnoll “hatches” from the corpse, fully grown.

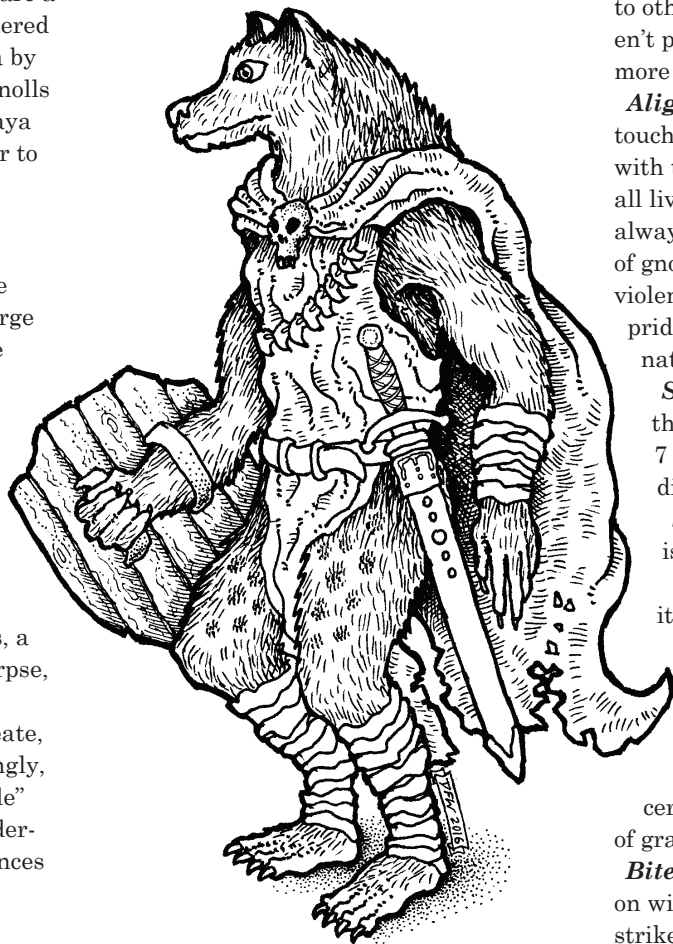
Because of the way they procreate, all gnolls are asexual. Interestingly, there are still “male” and “female” gnolls, however, they do not understand nor care about the differences in their respective anatomies.

Gnoll Adventurers

Occasionally, there are gnolls who break free from their desire to maim and kill, and gain a form of self-awareness. These gnolls—referred to as “dull minds” by their brethren—will usually ply their skills with the sword and bow to those who see value in the gnoll’s naturally aggressive nature. Naturally, such creatures are often met with fear and disdain as nearly all gnolls are ruthless killers. It’s hard for them to shake the stereotype.

Gnoll Names

To gnolls, it seems pointless to name something that lives such a short life. Most gnolls won’t receive a name until they’ve lived for at least one year. Even then, the name is usually



a descriptor of the gnoll, something used to differentiate it from the other members of the pack. Although the names are given in the Gnoll tongue, the literal translations for such names are “skunk stink”, “rotten tooth”, “bloody fur”, and so on.

Gnoll Names. Gheikork, Guzze-kx, Khikeih, Meikx, Varg, Trucekk, Thecc, Thergar, Varg, Zeih

Gnoll Traits

You share the following traits in common with all other gnolls.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Age. Due to the supernatural method in which gnolls are created, gnolls are born fully grown, needing only

a few hours to get their bearings. Gnolls live short life spans relative to other humanoids. Those that aren’t put to the sword typically live no more than thirty years.

Alignment. Gnolls are fiend-touched creatures whose minds quake with the desire to kill and devour all living creatures. They are almost always chaotic evil. A small number of gnolls rise above the craven and violent nature of their fellows, taking pride in their skill at arms and their natural ferocity.

Size. Gnolls stand slightly taller than humans, ranging from 6 to 7 feet in height. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Your fiendish heritage grants you better-than-normal vision 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.

Bite. Your jaws are a natural weapon with which you can make unarmed strikes. On a hit, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Plaguebearer. You are immune to disease.

Rampage. When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on your turn, you can take a bonus action to move up to half your speed and make a bite attack. Once you use this feature, you can’t use it again until you complete a short rest.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, and you can speak Gnoll. The gnoll language is a whiny-sounding language characterized by yips, yelps, and barks, as well as regular high-pitched giggling often mistaken for laughter or joy. Gnolls do not share a written language.

Playable Mummy

Created through dark magic and forbidden funerary rites, mummies are undead creatures who rise from their tombs to protect long lost treasures, avenge past wrongs, and follow the will of dark gods. The rules presented in this document offer players a chance to play a mummy in Fifth Edition. Since the mummy has certain advantages and disadvantages that might change the dynamic of the game, be sure to ask your GM if it's okay to play one before creating your character.

Mummy Traits

All mummies have the following features in common with each other.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, your Constitution score increases by 2, and your Intelligence score is reduced by 2.

Age. So long as a mummy isn't destroyed, it is effectively immortal. Most mummies are revived within the first 200 years of being interred.

Alignment. Undeath often leads to an evil bent in creatures. However, there are mummies who retain their memories and morals, pushing past their supernatural compulsion to do good.

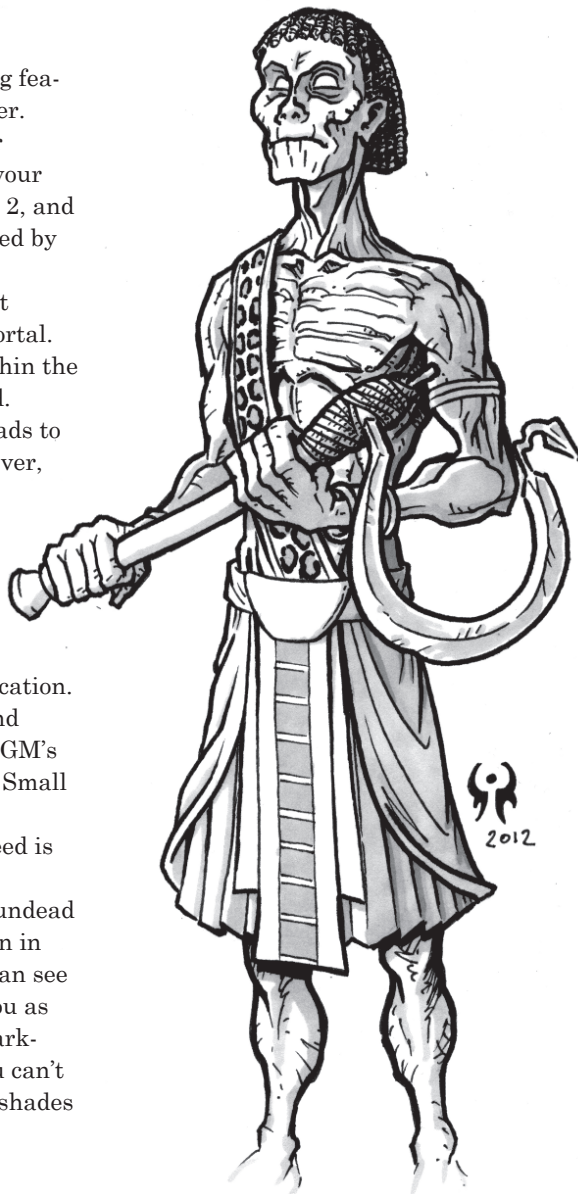
Size. Mummies are the same size and build as the race they were before mummification. Most mummies are humans, and are Medium. However, at your GM's discretion, you may also play a Small sized mummy.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 20 feet.

Darkvision. Thanks to your undead nature, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. 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.

Mummy Resilience. Supernatural creatures, mummies are imbued with special defenses which protect them from those who'd see them destroyed. You gain the following benefits:

- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.
- You are immune to poison and necrotic damage.
- You are immune to the poisoned condition, and you have advantage on saving throws against becoming charmed, exhaustion, frightened, or paralyzed.



- While you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 11. 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.

Improved Unarmed Strike. You can roll a d6 in place of the normal damage of your unarmed strike. When you reach 5th level, this damage increases by 1d6 (2d6).

Natural Armor. Your undead form is tougher than your mortal form.

Undead Nature. You are no longer a living creature—your creature type is undead, instead of humanoid. You do not require air, food, water, or sleep. You are affected by game effects that affect undead such as a cleric's Turn Undead feature and the *chill touch* spell. Similarly, you are not affected by game effects that only affect humanoids such as the *charm person* and *hold person* spells.

Mummy Racial Feats

Mummies who gain experience and survive beyond the initial shock of reanimation might grow to become powerful mummy lords, represented by the feats detailed below. If your GM allows the use of feats to customize your character, you may take one or more of the following mummy racial feats detailed below. If a feat requires a level, you must have that character level to learn the feat.

Lord of the Dead

Prerequisites: Mummy, 9th level
As an action, you can summon up to eight **zombies** or **skeletons** or any combination thereof that appear in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of you. The summoned creatures are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which has its own turns. They obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't

issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures, but otherwise take no actions. The GM has the creatures' statistics. The creatures remain as long as you concentrate (as if concentrating on a spell), up to 1 hour, or until destroyed.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

Mummy's Curse

Prerequisites: Mummy, 5th level

The evil that binds your bones can be passed on to living creatures. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Your unarmed attacks deal an additional 1d6 necrotic damage on a hit, in addition to the bludgeoning normal for your unarmed strikes. The necrotic damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 11th level (2d6, and again at 17th level (3d6).
- When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you can force it to make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. On a failed saving throw, you bestow a magical curse on the creature, as the spell *bestow curse*. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum of once), and regain all expended uses after you finish a long rest.

Mummy's Presence

Prerequisites: Mummy, 5th level

You are fear incarnate. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain the Dreadful Glare feature. As an action, you can target one creature that you can see within 60 feet of you. If the target can see you, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against this magic with a DC of 8 + your proficiency

Variant: Mummy Clerics of Death

Mummies who become clerics of the Death Domain gain advantages specific to their race. *When you gain the Inescapable Destruction feature at 6th level, all necrotic damage dealt by you—and not just those from Channel Divinity and your cleric spells—ignore resistance to necrotic damage.* The bonus damage granted by your Divine Strike feature can also be applied to attacks you make using your unarmed strikes.

bonus + your Wisdom modifier. On a failed saving throw, the target is frightened until the end of your next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to this benefit as well as the Dreadful Glare of all mummies (but not mummy lords) for the next 24 hours. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once), and regain all expended uses after you complete a long rest.

Rejuvenation

Prerequisites: Mummy, 17th Level

After you take this boon, you must perform an 8-hour long ritual to store your heart in viscera in panoptic jars. These jars are usually carved from limestone or made of pottery, etched or painted with religious hieroglyphs. Following the ritual, as long as your shriveled heart remains intact, you can't be permanently destroyed. If you are destroyed, you gain a new body in 24 hours if your heart is intact. The new body appears within 5 feet of your heart, and you regain all your hit points. Your heart has AC 5, 25 hit points, and immunity to all damage except fire.

Mummy Boons

Epic boons are special powers only available to characters at 20th level. If your GM uses the epic boons rules option detailed in the Fifth Edition guide for game masters, the following boons are available in addition to those normally offered.

Blasphemous Word

Prerequisites: Mummy, 20th level

As an action, you utter a blasphemous word. Each non-undead creature within 10 feet of you that can hear this magical utterance must succeed on a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier or be stunned until the end of your next turn. Once you use this boon, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

Blinding Dust

Prerequisites: Mummy, 20th level

As a bonus action, you can magically create blinding dust and sand which swirls around you. Any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of you must succeed on a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier or be blinded until the end of the creature's next turn. The sand and dust remains as long as you concentrate (as if concentrating on a spell), up to 1 minute or until you use a bonus action to stop it.

Channel Negative Energy

Prerequisites: Mummy, 20th level

As an action, you magically unleash negative energy. Until the end of your next turn, all creatures within 60 feet of you, including ones behind barriers and around corners, can't regain hit points.

Greater Lair of the Mummy

Prerequisites: Mummy, Lair of the Mummy boon, 20th level

Your lair exudes evil, affecting most objects and creatures that enter the area. Your lair gains the following regional effects:

- Food instantly molds and water instantly evaporates when it is brought into your lair. Other non-magical drinks are spoiled.
- Divination spells cast within the lair by creatures other than you have a 25 percent chance to provide misleading results, as determined by the GM. If a divination spell already has a chance to fail or become unreliable when cast multiple times, that chance increases by 25 percent.
- A creature that removes an object from your lair is cursed until the object is returned. The cursed target has disadvantage on all saving throws. The curse lasts until removed by a *remove curse* spell or other magic.

If you are destroyed, these regional effects end immediately.

Lair of the Mummy

Prerequisites: Mummy, 20th level
You can imbue a location with some of your negative energy, turning it into your lair. To do so, you must choose a location such as a pyramid, tomb, or other unhallowed site that is

no larger than 5,000 cubic feet in size. You conduct an eight-hour-long ritual that transforms the location into your lair. The transformation is complete at the end of the 8 hours. While you are in your lair, you gain lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), you can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. You cannot use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Each undead creature in the lair can pinpoint the location of each living creature within 120 feet of you until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Each undead creature in the lair has advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Until initiative count 20 on the next round, any non-undead creature that tries to cast a spell of 4th level or lower in your lair is wracked with pain. The creature can choose another action, but if it tries to cast the spell, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wis-

dom modifier. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d6 necrotic damage per level of the spell, and the spell has no effect and is wasted.

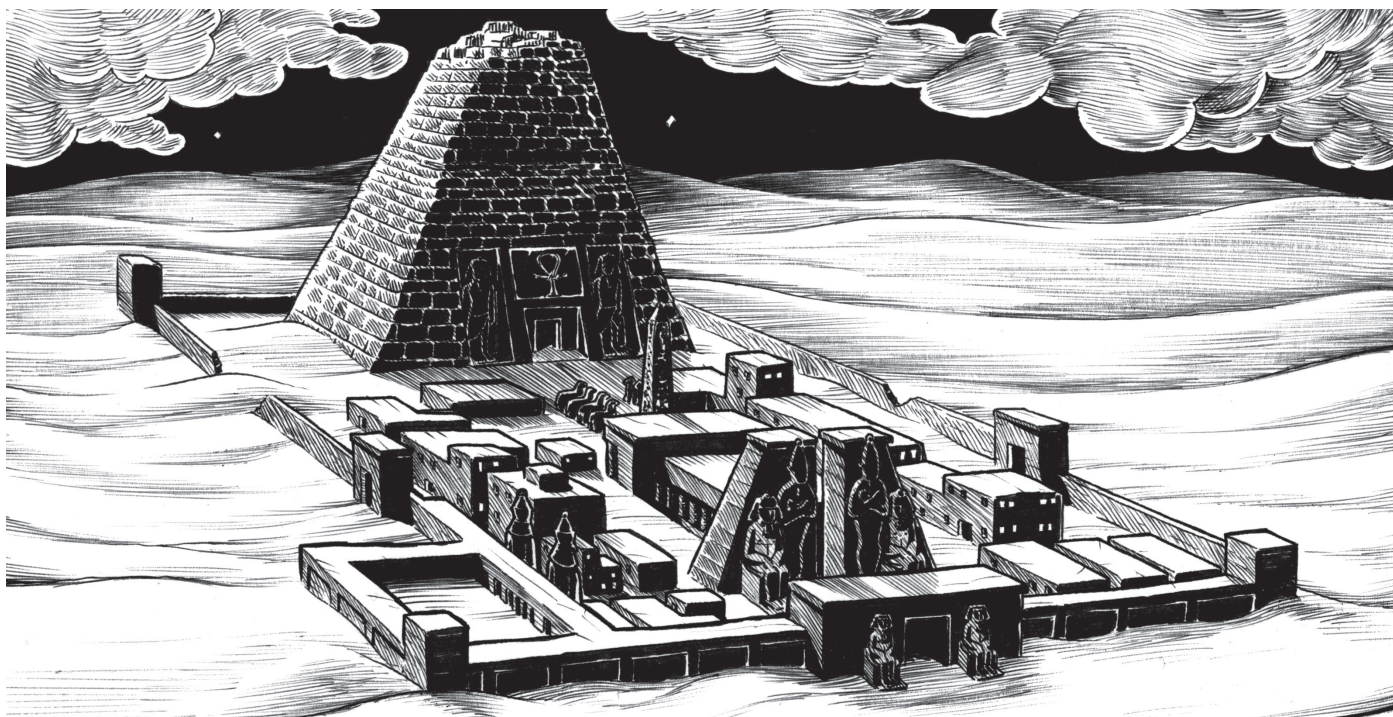
The location remains your lair until you are destroyed or you use this boon to transform another location into your lair.

Touch of Anubis

Prerequisites: Mummy, 20th level
You become a paragon of undeath's power. You gain immunity to the charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, and poisoned conditions. Additionally, you have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Whirlwind of Sand

Prerequisites: Mummy, 20th level
As a bonus action, you magically transform into a whirlwind of sand, move up to 60 feet, and revert to your normal form. While in whirlwind form, you are immune to all damage, and you can't be grappled, petrified, knocked prone, restrained, or stunned. Equipment worn or carried by you remains in your possession.



Playable Vampire

Vampires are the undead creatures of legend. Vulnerable to sunlight, these blood drinkers haunt the night searching for prey, sometimes turning other humanoids into vampires. Most vampires come from human stock and are often haunted by the emotional ties to their living life.

Vampire Traits

Your vampire character has certain characteristics in common with all other vampires.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1, your Dexterity score increases by 1, your Constitution score increases by 1, and your Charisma score increases by 1.

Age. Vampires are effectively immortal and do not age. However, your vampire character will still appear as they did when they were turned. Therefore, if you were young when you became a vampire, you will always appear young, and if you were old when you became a vampire, you will always look old.

Alignment. A vampire's unnatural existence owes itself to ancient curses and negative energy. As such, vampires are almost always evil. However, there are some who "break the mold" and fight their dark urges.

Size. Vampires are the same height and build as they were in life.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Your undead nature grants you the ability to 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.

Claws. Your fingers end in razor sharp claws. These claws grant you a climbing speed of 20 feet. In addition, your claws are natural weapons, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with them, you deal slashing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier, instead of the



bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike. When you reach 5th level, this damage increases by 1d4 (2d4).

Bite. Your longer-than-normal fangs are a natural weapon, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with it, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Blood Drinker. As a bonus action, you can make a special attack with your bite against a willing creature, a creature that is grappled by you, incapacitated, or restrained. If the attack hits, it deals its normal damage plus an additional 1d6 necrotic damage. The creature's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and you regain hit points equal to that amount. Once you use this trait, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest. The necrotic damage this attack deals increases by 1d6 (2d6) at 5th level.

Regeneration. So long as you are not in sunlight or running water, you can use your action to regain a number of hit points equal to your Constitution modifier. If you take radiant damage, you can't use this trait again until you complete a short or long rest.

Natural Armor. While you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 12 + 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.

Vampire Resilience. You have resistance to necrotic damage as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Vampire Weaknesses. You have the following flaws.

Chained to the Grave. Every vampire remains bound to its coffin, crypt, or grave site. Here, the vampire must rest during the day. If the vampire didn't receive a formal burial, it must lie beneath a foot of earth at the place of its transition. If you cannot rest in your coffin, crypt, or grave site, you do not gain the benefits of a long rest (but you may still take a short rest as normal). You can move your place of burial by transporting your coffin or a significant amount of grave dirt to another location. You may create multiple resting places this way.

Forbiddance. You can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. You take 20 acid damage when you end your turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. You are destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into your heart while you are incapacitated in your resting place.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. You take 20 radiant damage when you start your turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, you have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Nature. Your creature type is undead, rather than humanoid. You do not need to breathe.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and one other language of your choice. Typically, these are the languages you knew in life.

Vampire Racial Feats

Freshly turned vampires do not have full access to the range of powers granted by their undead nature. As a vampire ages and matures further, it gains new abilities. If your GM allows the use of feats to customize your character, you may take one or more of the following vampire racial feats detailed below. If a feat requires a level, you must have that character level to learn the feat.

Children of the Night

Prerequisite: Vampire, 5th level

You have a supernatural connection to the creatures that lurk in the dark. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You can cast the *conjure animals* spell, provided that the sun isn't up. When you cast *conjure animals* using this benefit, you may only conjure up to five **swarms of rats**, five **swarms of bats**, or eight **wolves**. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you complete a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Improved Vampire Resilience

Prerequisite: Vampire, 9th level

You are very difficult to kill. If you fail a saving throw, you can choose to succeed instead. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

You can take this feat up to three times, gaining an additional use each time you do. You regain all expended uses after completing a long rest.

Mist Form

Prerequisite: Vampire, 9th level

You can transform into a mist which protects you from harm. If you aren't in sunlight or running water, you can use your action to polymorph into a Medium cloud of mist, or back into your true form. While in mist form, you can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. You are weightless, have a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, you can do so without squeezing, and you can't pass through water. You have advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and you are immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage you take from sunlight.

When you drop to 0 hit points outside of your resting place, you instantly transform into your mist form instead of falling unconscious, provided that you aren't in sunlight or running water. If you can't transform, you are destroyed.

While you have 0 hit points in mist form, you can't revert to your vampire form, and you must reach your resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once you are in your resting place, you revert to vampire form. You are then paralyzed until you regain at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in your resting place with 0 hit points, you regain 1 hit point.

Vampire's Charm

Prerequisite: Vampire, 5th level

You exude intrigue, which grants you sway over humanoids. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency in one of the following skills of your choice: Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion.
- You can cast *charm person*. Once you use this benefit to cast the spell, you can't do so again until

you complete a short or long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Vampiric Savagery

Prerequisite: Vampire, 5th level

You've embraced the animalistic side of your undead nature. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain the shapechanger tag, which means you can be affected by game mechanics that affect shapechangers.
- When you hit a creature with a claw attack, you can use your bonus action to attempt to grapple the target.
- If you aren't in sunlight or running water, you can use your action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium wolf, or back into your true form. You revert to your true form if you die. While in bat form, you can't speak, your walking speed is 5 feet, and you have a flying speed of 30 feet. Your statistics, other than your size and speed, are unchanged. Anything you are wearing transforms with you, but nothing you are carrying does. While in wolf form, you can't speak, and your base walking speed is 40 feet. Your statistics, other than your speed, are unchanged. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Vampiric Stalker

Prerequisite: Vampire, 5th level

You are a creature of the shadows. You gain the following benefits:

- The range of your darkvision increases by 60 feet.
- You gain proficiency in the Stealth skill. If you already have proficiency in this skill, you double your proficiency bonus when you make checks using this skill.
- Your climb speed is the same as your base walking speed.
- You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

APPENDIX C

OMERIAN GRIMOIRE

BY DAVE HAMRICK, JOHN K. WEBB, AND MAX WARTELE

ART BY WILLIAM MCAUSLAND AND DANIEL F. WALTHALL

New Magic Items

Coral Wand

Wand, spellcasting focus, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Such focuses often take months to fashion, requiring as they do the formation of an entire coral ecosystem. From molluscs to cnidarians and seaweeds, the inhabitants of such an item share one common theme—they all carry a deadly toxicity. While holding this wand, you can use it to cast the poison spray cantrip (save DC 13) at will.

Toxic Discharge. When you cast poison spray using this item, you can incite one of the organisms to give it an extra boost before the target's saving throw is rolled. Roll a d6 and consult the follow list, on a failed save the creature is affected by this additional effect:

1-3 Linger Toxicity.

The creature is poisoned until the end of its next turn.

4 Ocular Irritant. The creature is blinded until the end of its next turn.

5 Neurotoxin. The creature is paralysed until the end of its next turn.

6 Total Discharge. The damage dealt by the poison spray cantrip is doubled. The wand wilts and the Toxic Discharge feature can't be used again until the following dawn.



Lockshiv

Weapon (dagger), uncommon

This mundane bladed syringe holds a lead-heavy concoction that inhibits a creature's ability to interact with the Weave. With intricate mechanics, the injection mechanism can be pre-loaded, allowing the weapon to release its magic-inhibiting effects when thrown.

When you hit a creature with this weapon, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be unable to concentrate on spells until the end of its next turn. In addition, if it tries to cast a spell before the end of its next turn, it must make a DC 13 check using its spellcasting ability modifier. On a failure, it expends the spellcasting action but does not expend the spell slot. On a success, it casts the spell as normal.



Leaden Manacles

Wondrous item, uncommon

Leaden manacles behave the same as normal manacles with the following addition: A creature that attempts to cast a spell whilst wearing the manacles must make a DC 12 spellcasting ability check. On a failed check, the spell's magic is totally absorbed; the spell slot is expended, the action is wasted, and the manacled creature takes 1d6 fire damage per level of the spell slot expended. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and the spell is cast successfully.

Optional Rule: Applying Manacles. As an action you can attempt to apply manacles to the wrists or ankles of a creature you are grappling. Make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics).

A creature with manacled wrists has disadvantage on attack rolls and can't cast spells with somatic components. A creature with manacled ankles has its movement halved, has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, and attacks against them have advantage.

Mask of the Sorceress

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a sorcerer)

This white mask is dressed with blue and green feathers. While attuned to this mask, you have darkvision out to 60 feet and you can cast detect magic at will.

Mirror of the Arcane Eye

Wondrous item, rare

This silver filigree mirror is set with a round, red ruby that magically floats within a space in its handle. While holding the mirror, you can speak its command phrase “mirror mirror, in my hand, who’s the fairest in the land?” causing an arcane eye to appear above it. The eye lasts for 10 minutes. The images received by the eye, which has darkvision out to 30 feet, are transferred to the surface of the mirror. The eye looks in the same direction as you point the mirror; to look west, face the mirror west.

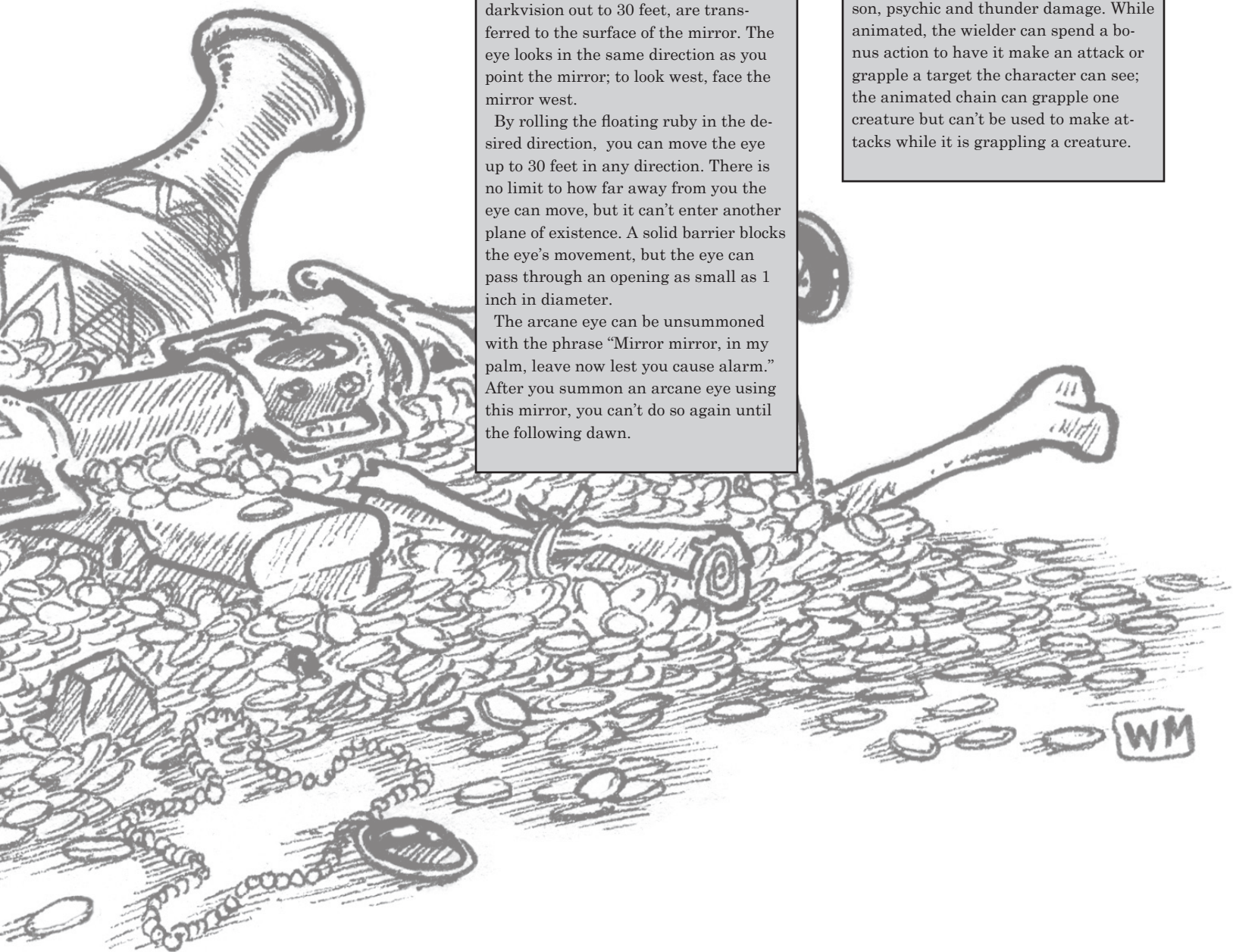
By rolling the floating ruby in the desired direction, you can move the eye up to 30 feet in any direction. There is no limit to how far away from you the eye can move, but it can’t enter another plane of existence. A solid barrier blocks the eye’s movement, but the eye can pass through an opening as small as 1 inch in diameter.

The arcane eye can be unsummoned with the phrase “Mirror mirror, in my palm, leave now lest you cause alarm.” After you summon an arcane eye using this mirror, you can’t do so again until the following dawn.

Orgorus’ Bloody Chain

Weapon (whip), rare (requires attunement by a creature with a Strength score of at least 16)

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. A character attuned to this weapon may speak its command word to animate the chain. The animated chain is an object with AC 20, 20 hit points, resistance to piercing damage, and immunity to poison, psychic and thunder damage. While animated, the wielder can spend a bonus action to have it make an attack or grapple a target the character can see; the animated chain can grapple one creature but can’t be used to make attacks while it is grappling a creature.



Stunbolt

Ammunition (crossbow bolt), rare
 Tipped with a charged arcanocrystal, this ammunition releases a shock on impact capable of temporarily disrupting a creature's nervous system. When you hit a target using this piece of ammunition, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become stunned until the end of its next turn. Success or failure, the bolt's charge is spent and it becomes a normal piece of ammunition.

If you miss with this ammunition, roll a d4. On a 1 or 2 the stunbolt discharges and becomes an ordinary piece of ammunition. On a 3 or 4, the stunbolt retains its magic powers.



Rod of Dispellation

Staff, very rare (requires attunement by a druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)
 You have resistance to necrotic damage while you hold this staff. The staff has 5 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 charge to cast dispel magic at 7th-level.



Runestone of Ocean Currents

Wondrous item, uncommon
 An ancient, malachite runestone from the depths of the sunken city. This stone thrums with energy and leaves whichever pocket or pouch it is stored in wet with frothy saltwater. This item has 3 charges and is recharged when a spellcaster performs an hour-long ritual, during which it expends a spell slot of 1st level or higher. **Saltbolt.** As an action, you can speak the stone's command word, expending a charge and causing a frothy, turquoise bolt of force to strike any target within 120 feet. This bolt deals 1d6 force damage and 1d6 cold damage. A creature under the influence of the shield spell, or similar magic, takes no damage from this effect.

Speak No Evil*Wondrous item, uncommon*

This headgear – a gag consisting of two leaden ‘hands’ connected by thick leather straps – is designed to make speech impossible.

Applying the Gag. As an action, you can attempt to gag a creature you are grappling. Make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target’s Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics). On a success, you get the gag in place and the leather straps magically fasten. On a failure, you do not gag the target.

Removing the Gag. A creature can use its action to make a DC 17 Strength check, removing the gag on a success. The knock spell can also unfasten the leather straps, causing the gag to fall off.

The Gagged. A creature who is gagged using Speak No Evil can’t speak or cast spells that require a verbal component. In addition, should they attempt to cast a spell, the gag heats up, dealing 1d4 fire damage, plus 1d4 additional fire damage per level of the spell (cantrips deal 1d4 fire damage total). This damage occurs directly after the spell is cast.

Void Shot*Ammunition (arrow or bolt), very rare*

This jagged black, glass arrowhead drinks in the light and seems lit as if with an unholy nimbus. After the arrow is fired, roll a d4. On a 1 it shatters and can’t be used again.

Spelldrain. When you fire this ammunition and hit a target or surface, it generates a 20-foot sphere of dim antimagic for 1 minute. Each creature within the sphere has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects. Each creature that tries to cast a spell whilst in the sphere must make a DC 15 check using its spellcasting ability. On a failure, it fails to cast the spell, and the spell slot is absorbed by the black hole. On a success, it casts the spell as normal.

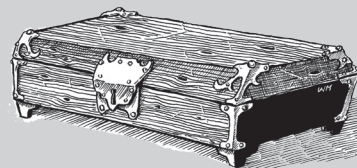
**Weave Stripper***Wondrous item, rare*

Part trap, part torture device, part magic removal mechanism. The weave stripper is a gold-banded, lead-lined box that houses a portal to a remote, antimagical corner of the abyss. The denizens of this void feed on the Weave, forcibly removing it from the creatures around which it is woven.

As an action, you can place and unlock the box, which slowly and eerily creeps open. At the start of the following turn, black smoke spews forth, soon followed by writhing, ethereal purple tentacles that flail and thrash towards all sources of magic within 20 feet of the box.

Each creature that starts its turn in the area must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature is concentrating on a spell or under the influence of a spell, it has disadvantage on the saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 3d10 psychic damage, loses concentration if it is concentrating on a spell, and/or has any spell of 5th-level or lower that is affecting dispelled. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage, does not have any spells dispelled, and makes checks to maintain its concentration as normal.

As an action, a creature within reach of the box can attempt a DC 15 Strength check, closing it on a success. Otherwise, after one minute, these abyssal creatures satiate themselves, retreat back into the box, the effect ends, and the box can be closed (no action required). If the box is opened again before the following dawn, there is no effect. Ω



APPENDIX D

THE BESTIARY

BY DAVE HAMRICK, JOHN K. WEBB, CORVID'S EMPORIUM, TAVERN TALES ALEX, AND MAX WARTELLE

ART BY EARL GEIER, SHUTTERSTOCK, AND WILLIAM MCAUSLAND

AZROROS, UNFORMED

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (5d10 + 25)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +2

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Embryonic Sac. Azroros is in an embryonic sac, which is an object with AC 16, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The sac also has magic resistance (see below). While in the sac, Azroros is blinded (but can still use his blindsight), restrained, and has total cover against attacks and other effects. He can cast spells through the sac as if it isn't there. When the sac is destroyed, Azroros is no longer restrained.

Innate Spellcasting. Azroros' innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Azroros can cast the following spells, requiring no material or verbal components: At will: fire bolt, poison spray, mage hand 3/day each: hold person, silence 1/day each: entangle, fireball

Magic Resistance. Azroros has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Azroros makes two claws attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. Until the poisoned condition ends, the target takes 2 (1d4) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poisoned condition on itself with a success.

Fire Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) fire damage. A flammable object hit by the spell ignites if it isn't being worn or carried.

DEMON LORD

Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 150 (12d12 + 72)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	20 (+5)	INT	20 (+5)
DEX	15 (22)	WIS	16 (+3)
CON	22 (+6)	CHA	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +10, Wis +7, Cha +10

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Fire Aura. At the start of each of the demon lord's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) fire damage, and flammable objects in the aura that aren't being worn or carried ignite. A creature that touches the demon lord or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Magic Resistance. The demon lord has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The demon lord's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The demon lord makes two attacks: one with its claws and one with its whip.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 25 feet toward the demon lord.

DREAM GOLEM			
<i>Large construct (shapechanger), neut evil</i>			
Armor Class 12			
Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)			
Speed 40 ft.			
STR	10 (+0)	INT	11 (+0)
DEX	14 (+2)	WIS	13 (+1)
CON	16 (+3)	CHA	20 (+5)
<p>Damage Immunities lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons</p> <p>Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned</p> <p>Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11</p> <p>Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak</p> <p>Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)</p> <p>Fear Absorption. The dream golem regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the dream golem does not start its turn within 30 feet of a creature that is frightened, this trait doesn't function on the current turn. The dream golem dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.</p> <p>Magic Resistance. The dream golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.</p> <p>Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attack are magical.</p>			
ACTIONS			
<p>Multiattack. The dream golem can use its Fearsome Form. It then makes two claw attacks.</p> <p>Claws. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.</p> <p>Fearsome Form. The golem taps into the nightmares of an unconscious creature that it can see within 30 feet of it and magically polymorphs into a manifestation of that creature's deepest fears. All creatures within 30 feet of the golem that can see it must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target becomes frightened for 1 minute. At the end of each of the target's turns before the effect ends, the target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage. On a successful save, the frightened effect ends.</p> <p>Sleep Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dream golem emits a breath of sleep dust in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or fall unconscious for 1 hour, until the sleeper takes damage, or someone uses an action to shake or slap the sleeper awake.</p>			

DREAM KID			
<i>Small humanoid (human), neutral</i>			
Armor Class 10			
Hit Points 2 (1d6 - 1)			
Speed 25 ft.			
STR	5 (-3)	INT	20 (+5)
DEX	10 (+0)	WIS	10 (+0)
CON	9 (-1)	CHA	10 (+0)
<p>Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +2, Cha +2</p> <p>Damage Immunities psychic</p> <p>Senses blindsight 60 ft. (while unconscious), passive Perception 10</p> <p>Languages Common, telepathy 300 ft.</p> <p>Challenge 2 (450 XP)</p> <p>Awakened Mind. While the dream kid is unconscious, it can use its actions, bonus action, or reactions to cast its innate spells or use its Psychic Blast. The dream kid also gains blindsight out to 60 feet (blind beyond this radius), which it can use while it is unconscious. It can also communicate telepathically with any creature it can detect.</p> <p>Detect Sentience. The dream kid can sense the presence and location of any creature within 300 feet of it that has an Intelligence score of 2 or higher, regardless of interposing barriers, unless the creature is protected by a <i>mind blank</i> spell.</p> <p>Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The dream kid cannot use its innate spells while it is conscious. The dream kid's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The dream kid can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components when it does:</p> <p>At will: <i>hold person, mage hand, shield</i></p> <p>3/day: <i>arcane hand, banishment, plane shift(self only), project image</i></p> <p>1/day: <i>astral projection, feblemind, globe of invulnerability, hallucinatory terrain, modify memory, telekinesis, time stop</i></p>			
ACTIONS			
<p>Club. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 1 bludgeoning damage.</p> <p>Psychic Blast (Only While Unconscious). Ranged Spell Attack: +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> 15 (3d6 + 5) psychic damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw, or become stunned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the stunned effect on itself with a success.</p>			

FROST SKULL			
<i>Tiny fiend (demon), chaotic evil</i>			
Armor Class 14			
Hit Points 117 (18d4 + 72)			
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)			
STR	1 (-5)	INT	16 (+3)
DEX	18 (+4)	WIS	14 (+2)
CON	18 (+4)	CHA	20 (+5)
<p>Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +8, Wis +6</p> <p>Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks</p> <p>Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison</p> <p>Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned</p> <p>Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12</p> <p>Languages Abyssal</p> <p>Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)</p> <p>Spellcasting. The frost skull is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no somatic or material components to cast its spells, and it regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:</p> <p>At Will: <i>chill touch (2d8), mage hand</i></p> <p>1st—5th (2 5th-level slots): <i>banishment, cone of cold, control water, counterspell, dimension door, dispel magic, dominate person, expeditious retreat, fear, fog cloud, gust of wind, hellish rebuke, hex, hold monster, ice storm, invisibility, mirror image, sleet storm</i></p>			
ACTIONS			
<p>Chill Touch. Ranged Spell Attack: +9 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> 9 (2d8) necrotic damage, and the target can't regain hit points until the start of the frost skull's next turn.</p> <p>Rings of Vapour (1/Day). The frost skull targets up to three Large or smaller creatures that it can see within 30 feet of it. A target must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a target is restrained by a magical ring of ice. While restrained, the creature takes 13 (3d8) cold damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can use its action to break free of the restraints with a successful DC 17 Strength check. Also, the restraints can be attacked; each band of ice has AC 17, 50 hp, immunity to cold, poison, and psychic damage, and vulnerability to fire damage. The bands last as long as the frost skull maintains its concentration (as if concentrating on a spell), up to 1 minute.</p>			

Four Gnolls of the Apocalypse

DEATH <i>Medium fiend (gnoll), chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 16 (chainmail) Hit Points 85 (10d8 + 40) Speed 30 ft.					
STR	16 (+3)	INT	12 (+1)		
DEX	15 (+2)	WIS	17 (+3)		
CON	18 (+4)	CHA	18 (+4)		
Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +6, Cha +7 Damage Immunities necrotic Condition Immunities charmed, frightened Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 13 Languages Abyssal, Gnoll Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)					
Aura of Death. Death emits an aura that extends 30 feet from itself in all directions. All nonmagical plant life within the aura withers and dies. Additionally, each living creature of Death's choice that starts its turn within death's aura that has half its hit points remaining or less must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. If this reduces the target's hit points to 0, the target dies and collapses into a pile of ash. Also, creatures within Death's aura have disadvantage on death saving throws.					
Rampage. When Death reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, Death can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.					
ACTIONS					
Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.					
Scythe. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 10 (3d4 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature that still has more than half of its hit points remaining, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature's hit points are reduced to half its hit point maximum; on a successful saving throw, the creature takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage instead. And if the target is a creature that has half of its hit points or less remaining, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, the creature takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage instead.					

FAMINE <i>Medium fiend (gnoll), chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 12 Hit Points 52 (15d8 - 15) Speed 30 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)
Saving Throws Con +1 Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages Abyssal, Gnoll Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)					
Aura of Famine. Famine emits an aura that extends 30 feet from itself. Any creature that starts its turn within the aura must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. Undead, constructs, and creatures that do not need to eat automatically pass their saving throws. On a failed saving throw, the creature takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and contracts famine's curse. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its Strength score decreases by 1d4 for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's Strength score to 0, the target dies, and it shrivels into a lifeless husk. The curse lasts until removed by the *remove curse* spell or other magic or Famine is destroyed.					
Innate Spellcasting. Famine's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Famine can cast the following spells, requiring no material components: At will: <i>ray of enfeeblement</i> 1/day: <i>blight</i>					
Rampage. When Famine reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn or successfully devours a creature's soul, it can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.					
ACTIONS					
Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> 1 (1d6-2) piercing damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken, and Famine 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.					
Devour Soul (Recharge 6). Famine targets one creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target's soul leaves its body and famine devours it, gaining 20 temporary hit points as it does. Until its soul is returned, the target's alignment becomes neutral and it has disadvantage on all Charisma checks and saving throws. If Famine is destroyed within 24 hours of devouring the soul, the soul returns to the target's body. Otherwise, Famine digests the soul and only a *wish* spell or other magic can return the creature's soul.					

PESTILENCE					
<i>Medium fiend (gnoll), chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 14 (hide armor)					
Hit Points 76 (9d8 + 36)					
Speed 30 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)
Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +4					
Damage Resistances poison					
Condition Immunities poisoned					
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12					
Languages Abyssal, Gnoll					
Challenge 2 (450 XP)					
<p>Aura of Pestilence. Pestilence emits an aura that extends 30 feet from itself. Any creature that starts its turn within the aura must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract a disease. Until the disease is cured, the target can't regain hit points except by magical means and the target's hit point maximum decreases by 3 (1d6) every 24 hours. Whenever the target's hit points are reduced by 4 or more from this disease on a single roll, a swarm of insects erupts from a pustule on the target's body, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target. A creature that takes damage from the insect swarm must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, or become similarly diseased. If Pestilence is destroyed, all creatures that contracted a disease from Pestilence or one of its swarms automatically recover within 24 hours.</p> <p>Disease Lord. A creature that is currently suffering from a disease has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws against Pestilence's innate spells.</p> <p>Innate Spellcasting. Pestilence's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells requiring no material components:</p> <p>At will: <i>command</i>, <i>ray of sickness</i></p> <p>3/day: <i>insect plague</i> (the insects created by this spell carry the same disease detailed under the <i>Aura of Pestilence</i> trait)</p> <p>Rampage. When Pestilence reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, Pestilence can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.</p>					
ACTIONS					
<p>Multiattack. Pestilence makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.</p> <p>Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 3 (1d4 – 1) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract a disease as detailed under its <i>Aura of Pestilence</i> trait.</p> <p>Claws. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.</p>					

WAR					
<i>Large fiend (gnoll), chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)					
Hit Points 115 (11d10 + 55)					
Speed 40 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)
Saving Throws Str +9, Con +8					
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9					
Languages understands Abyssal and Gnoll but cannot speak					
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)					
<p>Aura of War. War emits an aura that extends 20 feet from itself in all directions. Any creature that starts its turn within the aura must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature becomes charmed by War. While charmed, the creature has advantage on attack rolls against targets other than War, and all other creatures have advantage on attack rolls against the target. The creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.</p> <p>Dangerous. War scores a critical hit on a d20 roll of 18-20.</p> <p>Rampage. When War reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, War can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.</p>					
ACTIONS					
<p>Multiattack. War makes one attack with its greatsword and one attack with its bite.</p> <p>Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 13 (2d6 + 6) piercing damage.</p> <p>Greatsword. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 20 (4d6 + 6) slashing damage.</p>					

JENURAATH, ETERNAL MOTHER
Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 77 (9d10 + 27)
Speed 20 ft.

STR 19 (+4) **INT** 9 (-1)
DEX 7 (-2) **WIS** 13 (+1)
CON 17 (+3) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Regeneration. At the start of her turn, the eternal mother regains 5 hit points for each Spawn of Jenuraath within 30 feet of her. The mother dies only if she starts her turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature the mother is grappling. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) piercing damage. If this attack reduces a non-fiend creature to 0 hit points, the eternal mother can use its Produce Spawn action as a bonus action until the end of its next turn. Spawn of Jenuraath produced in this way do not count toward the total number of spawn the mother can have.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained.

Produce Spawn. The eternal mother gives birth to a Spawn of Jenuraath (use the death dog stat block), which appears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the eternal mother. The spawn rolls initiative and acts in the next available turn. The mother can have up to five spawn summoned by this ability at a time.

NUCKELAVEE
Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)
Speed 60 ft.

STR 20 (+5) **INT** 15 (+2)
DEX 13 (+1) **WIS** 19 (+4)
CON 20 (+5) **CHA** 16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +9, Wis +8, Cha +7
Skills Perception +8
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Harmed by Running Water. The nuckelavee takes 20 acid damage if it enters or ends its turn in running water.

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

Magic Weapons. The nuckelavee's weapon attacks are magical.

Trampling Charge. If the nuckelavee moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the nuckelavee can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The nuckelavee makes two attacks: one with its hooves and one with its glaive.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Blight Breath (1/Day). The nuckelavee exhales a 30-foot cone of disgusting, gray gas. Each creature in the area must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. A target takes 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs. Plant creatures and magical plants make the saving throw with disadvantage, and the breath deals maximum damage to them. Nonmagical plants that aren't creatures in the area don't make saving throws; they simply wither and die.

SHADOW SYMBIOTE
Medium fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR 7 (-2) **INT** 12 (+1)
DEX 13 (+1) **WIS** 9 (-1)
CON 10 (+0) **CHA** 18 (+4)

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Beste
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hazardous Aura. Whenever a creature within 30 feet of the shadow symbiote makes an ability check or saving throw with which it is not proficient, it makes the check at disadvantage. Fiends are immune to this effect.

Incorporeal Movement. The shadow symbiote 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

Charisma Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) necrotic damage, and the target's Charisma score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Charisma to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

Latch (Recharge 6). One humanoid whose shadow the shadow symbiote can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or the shadow symbiote attaches itself to the creature's shadow. While attached to the target's shadow, the creature's alignment changes to neutral, and it gains a form of madness, which is a character flaw that lasts until cured: "I am completely apathetic to my surroundings." While the shadow symbiote is attached, it is incapacitated and it can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect. However, its Hazardous Aura still functions. The latch lasts until the host drops to 0 hit points, the shadow symbiote moves more than 5 feet away from its host's shadow, or the shadow symbiote is forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the latch ends, the symbiote reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the target. The target is immune to this symbiote's Latch for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the latch ends.

SPELLBREAKER NOVITIATE <i>Medium humanoid (any race), lawful neutral</i>			
Armor Class 14 (studded leather) Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4) Speed 30 ft.			
STR	13 (+1)	INT	10 (+0)
DEX	14 (+2)	WIS	11 (+0)
CON	12 (+1)	CHA	10 (+0)
Skills Arcana +2, Athletics +3, Stealth +4 Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages Common plus any one language Challenge ½ (100 XP)			
Dark Devotion. The spellbreaker has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.			
ACTIONS			
Multiattack. The spellbreaker makes two attacks.			
Shortbow. <i>Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.			
Shortsword. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.			
Lockarrow (3/Day). The spellbreaker replaces one of its shortbow ranged attacks with a lockarrow. On a hit, in addition to the attack's normal damage, the target has disadvantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain its concentration until the end of its next turn.			

SPELLBREAKER WYRM <i>Medium humanoid (any race), lawful evil</i>			
Armor Class 15 (studded leather) Hit Points 27 (6d8) Speed 30 ft.			
STR	11 (+0)	INT	12 (+1)
DEX	16 (+3)	WIS	14 (+2)
CON	11 (+0)	CHA	10 (+0)
Skills Acrobatics +5, Arcana +3, Insight +4, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5 Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14 Languages Common plus any one language Challenge 2 (450 XP)			
Crossbow Expert. Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on the spellbreaker's ranged attack rolls.			
Cunning Action. The spellbreaker can take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.			
Dark Devotion. The spellbreaker has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.			
ACTIONS			
Multiattack. The spellbreaker makes two attacks.			
Hand Crossbow. <i>Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. On a hit, the target suffers an additional effect depending on the chosen bolt: **Palebolt.** The target takes 3 (1d6) poison damage. **Stunbolt (1/Day).** The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become stunned until the end of the target's next turn.			
Lockshiv. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be unable to concentrate on spells until the end of its next turn and, if it tries to cast a spell before the end of its next turn, it must make a DC 13 check using its spellcasting ability modifier. On a failure, it expends the spellcasting action but does not expend the spell slot. On a success, it casts the spell as normal.			

SWARM OF BUZZJEWELS <i>Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned</i>			
Armor Class 19 (natural armor) Hit Points 42 (5d8 + 20) Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.			
STR	3 (-4)	INT	1 (-5)
DEX	13 (+1)	WIS	7 (-2)
CON	18 (+4)	CHA	1 (-5)
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8 Languages — Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)			
Spell Reflection. The swarm has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. If the swarm succeeds on its saving throw against a spell, the effect is reflected back at the caster as though it originated from the swarm, turning the caster into the target.			
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 insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.			
ACTIONS			
Bites. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. <i>Hit:</i> 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.			

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Dungeons & Dragons 5E SRD v5.1

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Once a mighty city astride the Red River, Blutstrom has suffered many an indignity in its storied history. Founded in ancient days by a hardy clan of Dwarves, the long centuries have been most unkind to the now-decrepit human-dominated metropolis.

The ruling council's power is broken, and the streets are controlled by nefarious crime syndicates. The majority of the population scattered and slaughtered by pointless wars, only the fabulously wealthy and the wretched masses of the poor walk the narrow alleys and sullen marketplaces.

In the waning days of this dying burg, a new evil has begun to manifest. The dead are stirring, and reports of infernal beings and worse are on the rise.

Can the heroes make any difference at all in this hollow shell of a city? Or will they merely add their corpses to the overflowing potter's field surrounding this forlorn place, this doomed city of Blutstrom?

