

# BROADSWORD

ADVENTURES FOR FIFTH EDITION

ISSUE NO. 18 \$25.00 Monthly

**FEATURING**

**13 5E ADVENTURES SET IN SWAMPY ENVIRONS  
NEW PLAYER CHARACTER OPTIONS  
NEW MONSTERS AND NEW MAGIC ITEMS**





# BROADSWORD

ADVENTURES FOR FIFTH EDITION ISSUE NUMBER 18 **Monthly**



**COVER:**  
One minute you're heading out for a pack of smokes and a slim jim, next thing you know you're knee deep in some swamp and two giant skulls are trying to shake you down. Well, that's what you get for dropping out of culinary school.  
Art by Tithi Luadthong.



Roughly two years ago, Scott Craig and I launched the very first issue of BroadSword Monthly. At the time, he and I were the only two working bodies on the book—outside of commissioned artists, of course.

Things were rough then. We had troubles with printers, the books were chock full o' typos, and we ended up parting with the primary artist before we sent out issue 4. But somehow, we accomplished the impossible: we survived!

Not only that, but we're eighteen issues in, and we now have a full writing staff. In fact, this particular issue is the very first one where I did not contribute a single adventure to it. This was something I definitely didn't think was possible back in 2019 when we were still fighting to keep costs low.

Now don't worry super fans. I'm still very much involved with DMDave—my focus these days lies more with project management for some upcoming products and other exciting projects on which the organization is focused. I've left BroadSword in the capable hands of the best creators in the business.

It's hard to believe that in a day where TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram rule the attention spans of consumer minds, we can still make a print book work. But we did and it's awesome.

Thank you to all our readers who helped make BroadSword Monthly for the past two years. And thanks to all of you going forward.

-DMDave

Thanks everybody for sticking with us, or just joining us, or even just glimpsing this page as you toss this book into the street. We intend to keep banging these mothers out as long as the cops don't come and try to snatch our crops ... crops of RPG adventures that is!

-Scott Craig

## VOL. II, NO. 6

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*Men willingly believe what they wish.*  
- Gaius Julius Caesar, *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* (58 BC)

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# OMERIA ONLINE

## YOUR GUIDE TO THE DMDAVE COMMUNITY

Written by **Melissa Presti**  
Art by **William McAusland**

### DMDave Discord Server

Discord is a gaming communication app for your phone and/or computer where you can connect with fellow 5e enthusiasts. There are thousands of DMDave patrons online—gaming, discussing all things 5e, and sharing memes. Join the community and stay for the banter! *To access the server, you must be a DMDave Patreon member at any level.*



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### Roll20 Adventures

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# USING THIS BOOK

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## GETTING THE MOST FROM BROADSWORD

Written 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.




























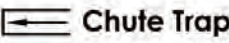

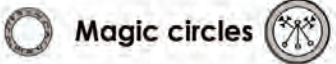


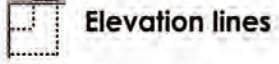



### Abbreviations

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
- APL = Average Party Level

## Dungeon Key

1 square = 10 ft.

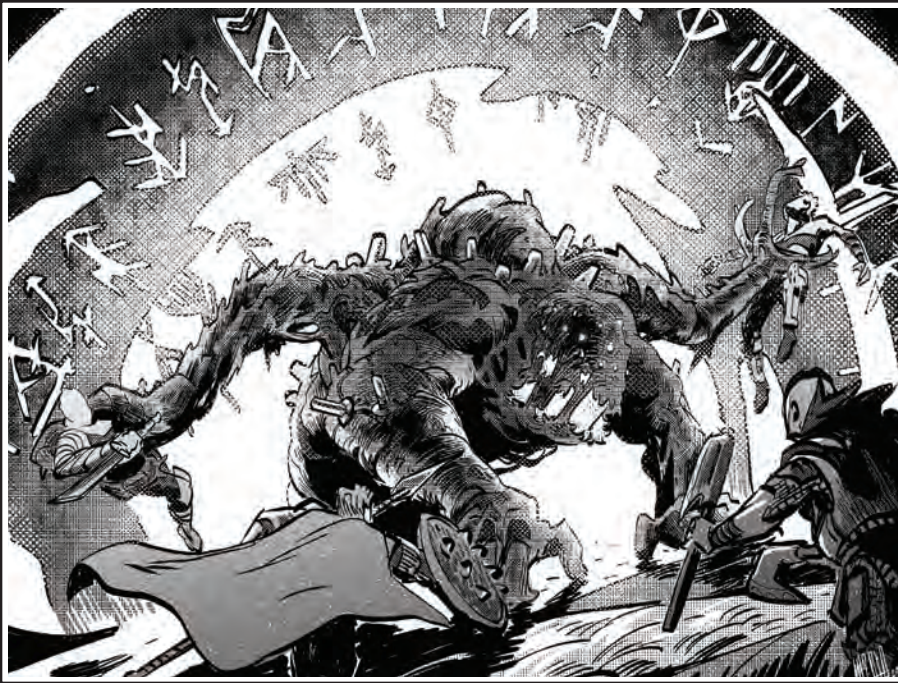
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Door</li> <li> Double door</li> <li> Secret door</li> <li> Secret trap door in floor</li> <li> Concealed door</li> <li> False doors</li> <li> Pillar</li> <li> Statue</li> <li> Altar</li> <li> Covered pit trap</li> <li> Open pits</li> <li> Wells</li> <li> Tapestry/curtain</li> <li> Downward slope arrow</li> <li> Turn-around trap</li> <li> Illusionary wall</li> <li> Rubble</li> <li> Sarcophagus</li> <li> Falling block trap</li> <li> Mirror</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Trap</li> <li> Stairs</li> <li> Bars/gate</li> <li> Wooden planks</li> <li> Dais/raised platform</li> <li> Fountain</li> <li> Pool</li> <li> Chute Trap</li> <li> Throne</li> <li> Magic circles</li> <li> Thaumaturgic circle</li> <li> Pentagram</li> <li> Elevation lines</li> <li> Brazier</li> <li> Teleporter</li> <li> Teleporting pillars</li> </ul>
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- 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





# DEAD GOD SALVAGE

An adventure for level 1 characters

Written by **John Kelly**  
Cartography by **John Kelly**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and Jack Badashski**

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*Dead God Salvage is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1. The party must explore the corpse of an ancient black dragon and foil its minions' efforts to resurrect it. This adventure takes place a few hours away from the town of Blackwater but can easily be placed in any campaign setting with a swamp.*

## Adventure Background

The ancient black dragon Rylboss's corpse lies broken in the battlefield where she fought her brother Vagerand. However, she will not rest there much longer.

Rylboss had bound servants to her flesh and bone as a fail-safe. Upon her death, numerous undead rose, led by an octopus-like amalgamation of lizardfolk corpses. The amalgamation knew two things: how to resurrect its master and the rewards for doing so. It has finished constructing a portal to the afterlife inside Rylboss's corpse that will allow her to return and is about to activate it. When that happens, the region will become tied to the concept of death, making Blackwater uninhabitable within days.

## Adventure Summary

The characters begin in Blackwater, where a local wizard hires them and a crotchety prospector to investigate what is causing a plague to radiate from the corpse of a recently slain ancient black dragon and harvest magical components from inside it. Upon arrival, they find that something has been creating rooms and tunnels in the dragon's corpse and begin to suspect that a gruesome creature is stalking them from within the walls. The characters eventually discover that the dragon's undead servants dug the tunnels to complete a ritual designed to resurrect their master. The adventure climaxes as the characters confront the amalgamation of lizardfolk corpses that has been tailing them while attempting to

destroy a portal to the afterlife before Rylboss returns.

## Adventure Hook

The following plot hook provides a possible way for the characters to get involved in the adventure.

A local researcher named Inakius (N human male **commoner** with History +4 and Investigation +2) approaches the party and communicates the following:

- Much of the plant life around the dragon's corpse died a few days after the battle. Over the last few weeks, the corruption has been spreading towards the town. Inakius would like the characters to investigate the corpse to see what is going on and stop the plague from spreading if possible.
- They have been trying to find people willing to go and scavenge the inside of Rylboss's corpse for weeks now.
- They are willing to pay the party 225 gp once they have stopped the plague's spread and retrieved the components. They will also allow

the characters to keep whatever potions they extract from the dragon.

If the characters accept the offer, Inakius asks them to come to his house in an hour. There he introduces them to Qip (CN human male **commoner**), a crotchety old prospector who was down on his luck but sees the opportunity to salvage the dragon as a lucky break. Qip may be considered expendable if the plot calls for it.

Inakius then provides the party with three flasks with barbed nozzles. He tells the characters and Qip that these will extract potions when attached to Rylboss's stomach, heart, or sorcerous core.

## Rylboss's Corpse

The characters and their companion trudge through the swamp for five hours to reach the battlefield from Blackwater. While Rylboss's hide remains intact, the flesh underneath has begun to rot and collapse, causing her corpse to deflate. The air reeks of death. Rylboss's skull lies broken, making the mouth accessible. Characters that circle the dragon looking for

other entrances see that the sphincter is exposed, and characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or higher notice a massive wound partially obscured by swamp water.

## General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in Rylboss's corpse have the following features.

**Ceilings.** The ceilings throughout the corpse are 15 feet tall. They are carved flesh and supported by crudely carved bone beams.

**Floors and Walls.** The floors are carved flesh and are covered in shallow rancid swamp water. The walls are carved flesh covered in mold and insects. Crudely carved bone columns inscribed with runes support the ceiling. With a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check, a character can determine that the runes are related to conjuration. Characters with proficiency in Arcana who succeed on a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check can determine that the dungeon acts as a gateway to the afterlife. The DC decreases by 2 for each room the





characters have visited.

**Illumination.** While in the corpse, treat each area as having no light unless specified otherwise.

**Atmosphere.** The corpse reeks of death and is oppressively humid. The smell and mold spores are stifling.

**Putrid Ichor.** Any creature that ingests the putrid ichor coating the floors must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until it finishes a short or long rest.

**Flesh Beast.** The **lizardfolk amalgamation** (see Appendix D) is the leader of Rylboss's undead servants. The creature believes that Rylboss will reward it handsomely for resurrecting her and works tirelessly to do so.

If the characters return to a room that contained living creatures when the party first arrived, some of the creatures' limbs can be seen reaching out of the walls. Attempting to remove the limbs reveals that this is all that remains of them.

The lizardfolk amalgamation dragged the creatures into the walls and tore them apart (regardless of whether they were already dead). It takes the rest of their remains to **area 6**.

The amalgamation uses its Flesh Glide ability to collect bodies and stalk the characters safely.

The characters should slowly become aware of the creature's presence throughout the adventure. Initially, only one character who has failed a save against the putrid ichor (see above) or one random character sees the creature. Ideally, this will leave the characters questioning whether a flesh creature is stalking them or if the corpse's hazards are causing them to hallucinate.

Consider having a tentacle made of fingers and toes emerge to drag Qip or an enemy that has dropped to zero hit points through a wall mid-combat to confirm that the creature is real. The amalgamation can always be found in **area 7**.

## Encounter Locations

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

### 1 - Mouth

Rylboss's skull was ripped in half during the battle and the mush that was her brain coats her mouth. This mixture of rotting tissue and swamp water glistens on Rylboss's tongue.

**Hazard: Slippery Tongue.** Any creature who steps on the tongue must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) piercing damage as they slip and skewer themselves on Rylboss's teeth.

### 2 - Lung

This chamber contains many withered branchlike structures. Strings hold pieces of cutlery, carved wood, and other small valuables aloft from the branches like an outlandish Christmas tree. A small gathering of kobolds sits in front of a lizardfolk wearing a scaley headdress. There is a shoddy coffin by the north wall.

**Encounter: Gathering of the Unfaithful.** The male **lizardfolk** named Chauxl addresses the characters and communicates the following:

- Chauxl and the four **kobolds** in this room deserted Rylboss when the situation looked dire, thinking they could live without the dragon's protection. The deserters assume that the swamp's corruption is some form of divine punishment and have attempted to appease their former master's spirit for over a week to no avail.
- The deserters will not allow the party to proceed further due to fear that scavenging the corpse will further anger Rylboss.
- They are running out of ideas and are desperate. The deserters are currently trying to mimic the funerals practiced in Blackwater to lay the spirit to rest forcibly. Corpses are usually just meat in their cultures, so they do not fully understand what to do. If the party

can help them perform the funeral and exercise the spirit, they see no reason that the characters cannot scavenge the corpse as they cannot eat the whole thing.

The characters can help complete the "funeral" in a variety of ways. Three successes of any combination of the below checks are required to satisfy the deserters. If the party fails three checks before satisfying the deserters, the group becomes disgruntled, asks the characters to leave, and continues improvising the ritual. No character may make the same check twice.

- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check to provide direction.
- A successful DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check to give speeches about the dragon.
- If a character proposes another idea, allow them to make the appropriate DC 10 check, but give them disadvantage if it's particularly outlandish.

If they succeed, the deserters allow the party to take the decorations and scavenge the corpse.

If the characters attempt to pass forcibly, the worshipers attack. The lizardfolk takes the front line and will try to block the characters from entering the room. The kobolds use their slings until forced into melee combat. They focus on a single target making sure to fire from a position, so their target has the least cover. If there is only one such position, the kobolds take turns using it.

A kobold or lizardfolk will attempt to flee when reduced to a quarter of its hit points.

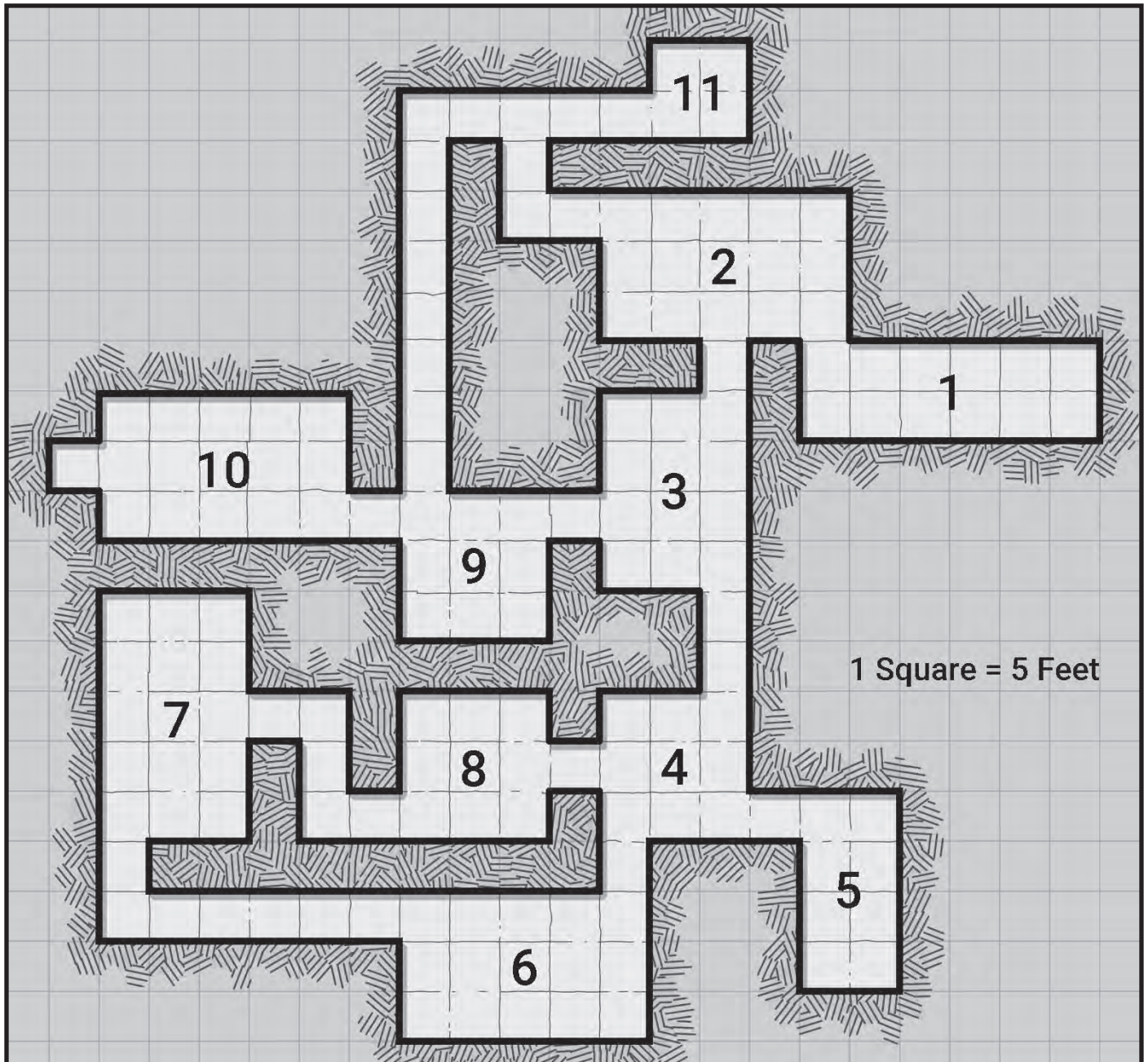
**Treasure: Ceremonial Trash.** The assortment of carvings, cutlery, and other trinkets is worth 21 gp in total.

If the characters return to this room, the flesh beast has cleared it out (see "General Features").

### 3 - Heart Observation

This chamber is 20 feet tall, and the ceiling is an exposed portion of the





dragon's heart. The columns in this room thrust into the heart.

One character who has failed a putrid ichor (see "General Features") save or one random character sees the heart faintly beat once.

**Hazard: Flesh Walls.** As an action, a character can scale the walls and reach the heart by succeeding on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. Failing the check causes them to make it 10 feet up the wall, lose their

grip, and fall prone in the putrid ichor (see "General Features").

**Treasure: Dragon Heart Elixir.** Stabbing a flask into the heart as an action yields one *potion of greater healing*. The flask itself then becomes inert and cannot be used to extract another potion.

#### 4 - Runic Bones

The undead carved this chamber from a single bone. Runes cover every

surface, and skeletal hands coated in blood reach out of the walls holding flesh covered in glowing green mold.

The hands belong to two skeletons that can freely move through the dragon's bones and have 10 feet of tremorsense.

**Encounter: Children of Bone.** The two **skeletons** drop the moldy flesh when a character walks 10 feet into the room. Spores fill the chamber, the lights go out, and all living creatures

inside the room must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for one minute as they wretch uncontrollably. At the end of each of its turns, the creature can make another Constitution saving throw. On a success, the effect ends on the creature. The skeletons then emerge from the walls, each wielding a bone shortsword. They fight to the death.

### 5 - Runic Flesh

When the characters enter this area, read, or paraphrase the following.

Rylboss's servants have been attempting to rebuild their master's hoard by scouring the battlefield. The rats disturbed the mold, were knocked out by the spores, and drowned in the ichor.

**Hazard: Purple Mold.** If a character walks 10 feet into the room, they disturb the mold. The spores disturb more mold causing a chain reaction. The entire room fills with spores, the lights go out, and any creature inside must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be knocked unconscious for 1d4 hours. They then fall to the floor and begin to suffocate in putrid ichor (see "General Features"). Be sure to review the rules for suffocating in the *PHB* before running this hazard.

A blood-curdling cacophony of screams can be heard coming from **area 7** as the lizardfolk amalgamation senses that something is there. The characters have two rounds to leave the room before the amalgamation reaches them. If the characters are no longer there when it arrives, the creature returns to **area 7** to finish its preparations.

**Treasure: A Shadow of What it Was.** The circlet is worth 50 gp, the necklace is worth 55 gp, the bracelets are worth 40 gp in total, and 25 gp worth of coins sticks out from the wall.

### 6 - Corpse Storage

Mutilated animal and humanoid corpses fill the chamber. They all have glyphs inscribed into their flesh.

The undead did this to increase the area's connection to death, making it easier to open the portal.

**Encounter: Children of Flesh.**

Two **zombies** are birthed from the walls when the characters walk 15 feet into the room. They fight to the death.

### 7 - Dead Man Switch

The runes on the bone columns in this room glow with a sickening black light. The north wall is a massive bone completely covered in runes and has a circular depression. An amalgamation of over a dozen lizardfolk impaled with numerous iron rivets hangs from the ceiling in the center of the room. It chants various incantations simultaneously.

**Encounter: Lizardfolk Amalgamation.** The **lizardfolk amalgamation** (see Appendix D) has all the corpses it needs and is not immediately hostile towards the characters unless they stole something from **area 5** or attack.

If left unprovoked, the creature uses one of its mouths to address the characters while chanting various incantations with its other mouths. It compliments them for surviving long enough to get here, relays the information in the adventure's background section, and tells them that Rylboss would offer them positions of importance once resurrected since Vagerand killed most of her servants. The amalgamation does this because it believes that Rylboss will reward it for recruiting competent servants. If asked, the creature shows no remorse regarding the fate of the region.

If the characters accept, the ritual finishes, and Rylboss awakens. See this adventure's aftermath section for details on speaking with Rylboss.

If the characters provoke the amalgamation, it retreats into the walls and flanks the most lightly armored

target. The amalgamation is determined to revive Rylboss and fights to the death.

The amalgamation finished its role in the ritual right before combat started. The depression in the north wall has begun to turn into a portal to the afterlife. Each round on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Rylboss's corpse stirs, and each character must succeed on a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone. If this continues for five rounds, Rylboss returns to her body. Destroying the portal before Rylboss returns ends the effect. The portal has 16 AC, 20 hit points, and immunity to psychic and poison damage.

**Treasure: Ten Man Piercings.**

The amalgamation's corpse contains thirteen large, barbed rivets that function as *gauntlets of ogre power* when they are all jabbed into a creature's body. Inserting each rivet deals 4 (1d8) piercing damage and removing one deals 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

The portal contains the components Inakius asked the characters to retrieve.

### 8 - Sorcerous Core

A 5-foot-wide glowing black sphere held aloft by tendrils of flesh occupies the center of this room. It crackles with power sporadically, causing the room's glyphs to flare up. Any creature within 10 feet of the core feels physically drained.

**Hazard: Sorcerous Core.** Any creature that interacts with the core gains the Undead Fortitude feature until it finishes a long rest and must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) necrotic damage. Inakius didn't warn the characters because the core shouldn't be active.

**Treasure: Potion of Power.** Stabbing a flask into the sorcerous core as an action yields one *potion of hill giant strength*. The flask itself then becomes inert and cannot be used to extract another potion.



### 9 - Collapsed Stomach

The bone pillars in this room appear to be holding up the remains of a much larger stomach. Flesh lies folded up on top of the supports. Water coming from **area 11** has flooded the room. The water is 15 feet deep. A gore-covered crocodile rips away at the southern wall.

**Encounter: Hungry Croc.** The crocodile is distracted by its meal but will turn its attention to the characters unless they succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If multiple party members are attempting the same task, have them make a group check instead. The crocodile tries to flee when reduced to a quarter of its hit points.

**Treasure: Essence of the Dark Queen.** Stabbing a flask into the stomach wall as an action yields one *potion of acid resistance*. The flask itself then becomes inert and cannot be used to extract another potion.

If the characters return to this room, the flesh beast has cleared it out (see “General Features”).

### 10 - Rectum Remains

The opening has become saggy, and it is possible to crawl in without a check.

**Hazard: Brown Slide.** Any creature who enters the dragon by crawling through the sphincter must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or slip in refuse and be knocked prone, falling face-first into the putrid ichor (see “General Features”). The smell of dung almost overpowers the rotting flesh, making this room nearly unbearable. Excretory remains lay on the ground, soaking in swamp water and fleshy ichor.

### 11 - Massive Wound

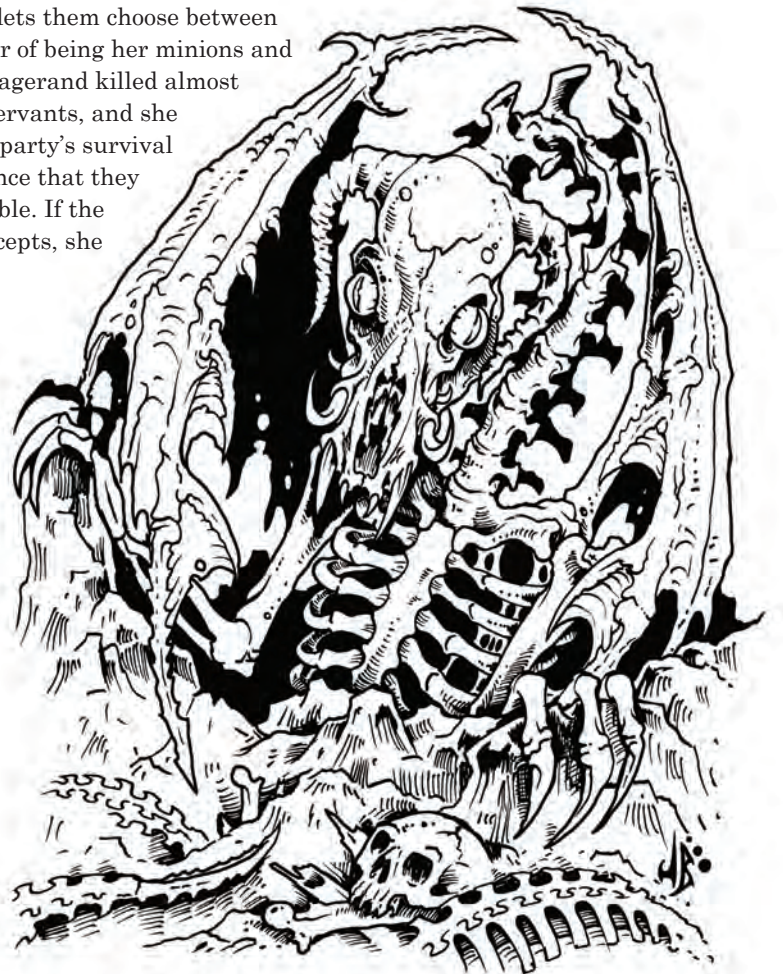
This chamber is empty save for a large nest made from mud and bone fragments. It belongs to the crocodile in **area 9**.

## Concluding the Adventure

- If the party succeeds in destroying the portal and returns to Inakius with the components, they receive 225 gp and can keep whatever potions are left as agreed.
- If the party fails or chooses not to destroy the portal before Rylboss returns (treat her as an **ancient black dragon** except she is undead and doesn't require air food, drink, or sleep), she rises and flies for two hours, arriving at a private sanctum deep within the swamp. If the party is still inside, Rylboss does not notice until she commands her bodily servants to show themselves 24 hours later. The characters must succeed on a DC 16 group Dexterity (Stealth) check to leave the sanctum unnoticed. If they succeed, they escape unimpeded. If they fail or make themselves known, Rylboss lets them choose between the honor of being her minions and death. Vagerand killed almost all her servants, and she sees the party's survival as evidence that they are capable. If the party accepts, she

uses a *spell scroll of geas* on each character to ensure their loyalty. Rylboss spends most of her time scheming against Vagerand and uses a *crystal ball* to gather information. If the characters continue to prove they are competent, she is content to keep a low profile and act exclusively through them. Otherwise, she breaks ties and finds better minions.

- If the characters do not destroy the portal within a few hours of the ritual's completion, Blackwater and the surrounding land becomes tied to the concept of death by the end of the week. The tie initially only affects plant and animal life but will eventually kill any humanoids that do not flee. Also, the region becomes a hotbed of necromancers and other researchers by the end of the month. Ω





# SHRINE OF THE MALUS TREE

An adventure for level 2 characters

Written by **Tim Andrews**  
Cartography by **Tim Andrews**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

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*The Shrine of the Malus Tree is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to seven characters of 2nd level and is optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 2. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach 3rd level.*

This adventure sees the party searching a swamp to rescue an NPC, only to discover that this NPC is working for the villain and that the villain is not all they appear to be.

## Adventure Background

The Tinted Mire is miles upon miles of seemingly endless swampland, but Baron Omiris Rallakis of Polderport plans to drain the Mire and mine the region's rich and untouched resources.

When the baron's son, Fortius, brought him news of an ancient threat beneath the swamp and told him to abandon his plans, Omiris betrayed him and sent men to murder him, hoping to keep this dangerous secret.

The dark magic of the swamp, however, turned Fortius's angry and vengeful soul into a wraith, a powerful undead bent on ruining his father's plans, shaming, and finally murdering him.

The wraith has already attempted to cripple Polderport's windmills but was stopped. He did, however, kidnap his fiancée Svea Moonwhisper. Baron Rallakis, paranoid that the truth will somehow come out, sends the adventurers to track down Svea, ostensibly to rescue her.

However, he has also ordered his seneschal and 'fixer' Marrik Blenk, one of the men who murdered his son, to follow the adventurers to Svea and silence them all.



**Optional: Festival Games**

Baron Rallakis is struggling for money to fund his venture, and he cannot let anyone know this. In hopes of attracting more people to the town and of covering up his problems, the Baron has arranged a celebration.

Read or paraphrase the following:

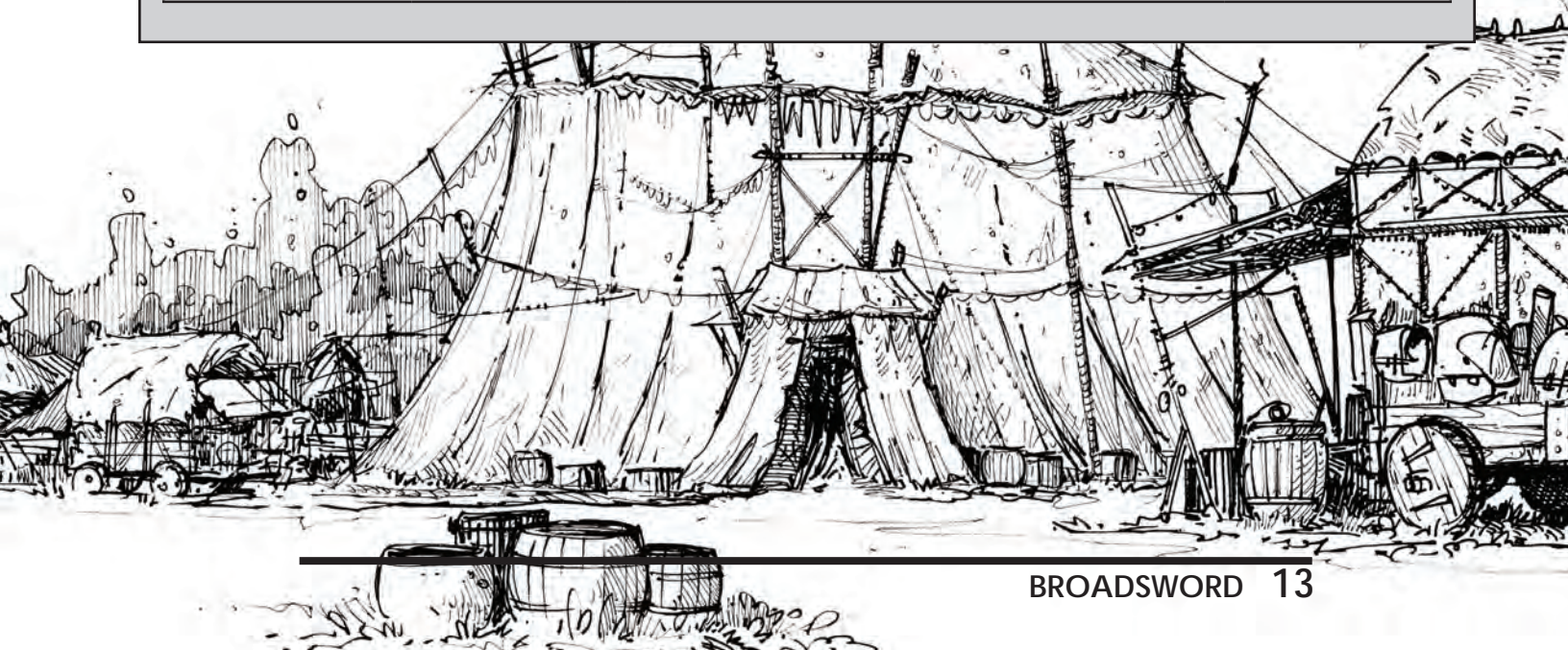
The town of Polderport is alive with a festive spirit. Children dash bare-footed across the square, begging parents for treats from stalls that bow under the weight of so many candied fruits, pastries, sweetmeats, and a rainbow of multi-hued cheeses.

There are also a number of contests taking place. Which will you enter?

These contests will test the characters' skills against those of proficient NPCs. Any number of characters can enter a contest, but they will also be pitted against an NPCs. Each NPC has proficiency in the relevant skill. You can check out my website (<https://ninetoes82.com/>) for more detail on these NPCs or use your own to tie in the characters' backstories.

*Festival Contests.*

Type of Contest	NPC	Skill Check Involved	Prize
Talent Contest - Everyone's got a talent, what's yours?	Toomba (N female half-elf <b>priest</b> )	A character makes three rolls of any skill they like, just so long as they describe how it is a performance. Add up the values of these rolls and compare it to those of the NPC.	A purse of 50 silver pieces.
Contest of Strength - How far can you throw a javelin?	Bract (CN male dwarf <b>veteran</b> ).	A character makes three attack rolls with a javelin. Add up the total value and compare with those of the NPC.	A voucher for 20% off of one purchase at the Sleepy Road general traders.
Eating Contest - Can you out-eat Gnaz?	Gnaz (CG male human <b>gladiator</b> ).	A character makes three Constitution checks. Add up the total value and compare with those of the NPC.	A voucher for a free meal at the Bloody Fiddler tavern.
Contest of Character - Can you outwit the pawky Pazaz?	Pazaz (CN male human <b>noble</b> ).	A character must tell Pazaz three things about themselves; a lie and two truths, making a Charisma (Deception) check opposed by Pazaz' Wisdom (Insight) check for the lie. Then they reverse roles. If they succeed on both checks, they win.	A steel mirror, so that they might consider themselves more closely.
Contest of Skill - How long can you keep the plates spinning?	Duc (CN female goblin <b>spy</b> ).	A character makes three Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks. Add up the total value and compare with those of the NPCs.	A silver statue of a juggler worth 3 gp.



## Polderport

The town of Polderport is small for a barony capital but is nonetheless an impressive display of engineering. The entire town is built atop a polder, a large area of land drained and reclaimed from the swamp. The buildings are, however, of poor quality and there are few family homes or businesses in this burgeoning frontier town.

**Steel Appeal.** The local blacksmith's shop is run by the surly Mival Bersk (LG male human veteran). He sells a variety of tools and will repair any weapons and armor but sells only simple weapons.

**The Bloody Fiddler.** The Fiddler is run by the crafty and energetic Callie Goodbarrel (CG female halfling commoner), who makes her living selling warm, spiced wine to the locals. Bran Helder (CG male human spy with Performance +5) can be coaxed into singing a song for the price of a drink.

**The Sleepy Road.** The general trader, run by Natali Marsk (LG female human commoner), is a drab and slightly smelly shop, but is nonetheless clean and cheap. Natali is also an amateur apothecary and for 5 gp will sell a character a potion that can cure swamprot, a disease contracted from drinking the fetid water of the swamp. Natali has 7 (3d4) vials of this potion at any one time.

**Citadel Rallakis.** This squat and uninspiring stone keep is surrounded by a wooden palisade and patrolled by five guards.

## Adventure Hook

Once you feel your players are ready to start the adventure proper, they should head for the Citadel. If you are running this adventure as part of the *Satisfaction of the Shade* series, read or paraphrase the following:

The town is abuzz with the festivities, but for now they must be left behind as there's work to be done. At the Citadel, your command-

### Damsel in distress?

Lieutenant Svea Moonwhisper (CG female half-elf druid with *animal friendship* prepared instead of *entangle*) is the Baron's pathfinder and woodswoman. In this position, she developed a relationship with the creatures of the swamp, in particular the spiders. Now the spiders work to protect Svea.

Svea was also engaged to be married to Fortius Rallakis. Fortius is Svea's abductor, taking her with him as he retreated into the swamp (these events took place in a previous adventure *The Lifeless Windmills of Polderport* you can find online). When she came to, Svea agreed to help her lost love secure his revenge.

ing officer, the dour and slightly stooped Marrik Blenk, stands beneath the gate, tapping his foot with an impatient air.

"About bloody time!" He barks.

Otherwise, Marrik Blenk will approach the characters during the festival. As they are looking like capable adventurers, he is interested in hiring them for a job that the commander's men are currently stretched too thin to take on. He will invite them to the Citadel or give more information immediately if the party hesitates.

## Marrik Blenk

Marrik Blenk (LN male human **thug**) is an aging, yet sturdy man, more interested in staying alive long enough to retire than he is in his Lord's grand plans.

He will give the characters their orders and can answer any questions the characters might have about the situation.

- Second Lieutenant Svea Moonwhisper has been captured by an unknown assailant.
- She was taken into the Tinted Mire swamp.

- The characters are tasked to head into the swamp to track her down and either return her remains or rescue her.
- Svea grew up in this area and acted as the Baron's scout and woodswoman.
- She scouted the swamp and discovered the remains of a ruined city.
- Due to the nature of the swamp, Marrik thinks it is likely that she has been taken into these ruins.
- As this is not strictly part of their job description, the Baron will pay them each a purse of 20 gp up front, or 50 if they aren't already contracted with the Citadel. If the characters attempt to haggle for more, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check will produce a further 5 gp per character.

## The Tinted Mire Swamp

The air is close and humid, and the ground is squishy, oozing, fetid water that permeates the air with the smell of decay and rot.

### General Features

**Light.** Coupled with the haze of fog, the thick canopy of maple and willow trees blocks out much of the light. The whole region is lightly obscured.

**Fetid water.** The stagnant waters within the swamp are filled with disease and are poisonous. If a creature is foolish enough to drink some of the water, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned with Swamprot. While poisoned in this way, the creature's hit point maximum is reduced by 2 (1d4) every hour. It lasts twenty-four hours or until cured.

**Road.** A road carves a path through the Mire and will offer the characters the only safe means of travel to the ruins.

**Boggy Terrain.** The ground within the swamp is sodden and mushy. Areas off of the main path are considered difficult terrain.



## Encounter Locations

See map below.

### 1 - Swamp Area 1

Svea has left behind some of her spiders as a rearguard. Their orders are simple, “stay hidden” and “ambush.” She also tries to explain that the spiders shouldn’t eat their prey, but they don’t understand.

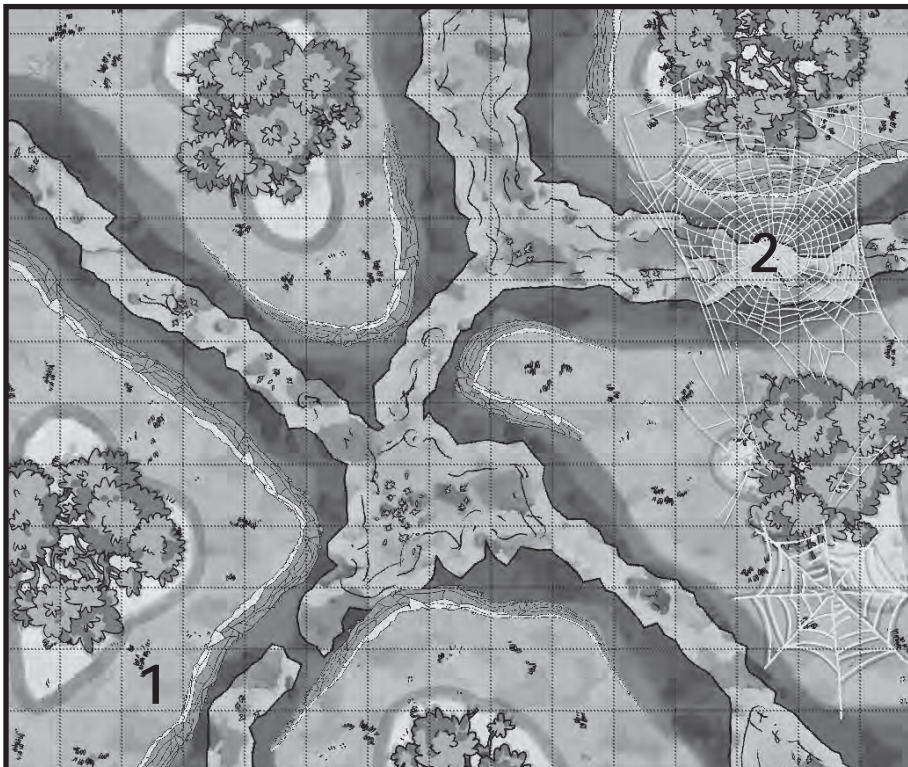
**Encounter: Spiders!** Five **giant wolf spiders** are hidden in the trees around the path. They have not spun any webs and instead cling to branches, ready to pounce.

### 2 - Swamp Area 2

The trees here are covered in freshly spun strands of webbing. Each strand appears as thick as rope and glistens with a sticky, glue-like substance. Two massive spiders are still working on their traps.

Their mandibles clicking, the spiders move to attack!

**Encounter: More spiders!** Two **giant spiders** are caught out in the open while working on their webs.



## Shrine of the Malus Tree

These sinking ruins were once part of a much larger complex of temple buildings and part of an ancient city that dominated the landscape eons ago. Now, all that is left is the sunken ruins of the shrine.

### General Features

**Ceilings.** Ceilings are 10 feet high unless otherwise noted. Each 5-foot section of ceiling has AC 17 and 27 hp (damage threshold 5) and is also immune to poison and psychic damage.

**Doors.** Interior doors are made of wood that is mostly rotten with age. They have no locks nor keyholes. It only takes a successful DC 12 Strength check to break down a door. Each door has AC 13 and 10 hp and is also immune to poison and psychic damage.

**Secret Doors.** Some entrances are hidden behind a false wall. Noticing the seams of such a door requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check and opening it requires a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

**Floors.** Cracks and uneven flagstones conceal a muddy ground underneath.

**Light.** The complex is dark unless stated otherwise. Any boxed text assumes that the characters have their own sources of light or have darkvision.

**Walls.** Walls are made of carved limestone blocks. Mud and fetid water seeps through the cracks.

**Fetid water.** Some areas of the complex have swamp water leaking into them. This water has the same characteristics as that in the rest of the swamp.

### Encounter Locations

The following locations are identified on the map of The Shrine of the Malus Tree on page 16.

### 3 - Entrance Hall

A short and muddy ramp leads down from the outside into this pillared room. Once a large entrance hall into the shrine complex, it is now empty. The northwest corner of the room has three inches of water covering it. Two doors, one to the north and another to the south, exit the room.

**Northern Passage.** The northern passage is blocked by collapsed stone. While not impossible, moving the stone will take 10 (4d4) hours and any character involved will take one level of exhaustion, unless they take regular breaks. Taking breaks adds a further 2 (1d4) hours. The noise will also alert the spiders in **area 4**.

### 4 - Vestibule

This area was once filled with pews and used for worship. When she first discovered the ruins, Svea chose this room to make her camp. Svea has moved on but has left the dying embers of her campfire still burning. The campfire offers a 10-foot radius of light. The western side of the room has three inches of swamp water covering it.

**Encounter: Yet more spiders!** Svea has left the last of her spiders

## SHRINE OF THE MALUS TREE

here. Three **giant wolf spiders** are lurking in the shadows of this room with orders to stop anyone who follows. If one of them dies, or they lose half their hit points, the spiders will attempt to flee through **area 5**.

### 5 - Crypt

This was the shrine's crypt, where bodies were collected on their way to becoming mulch to feed the Malus Tree. When he took control of the complex, Fortius animated some of the bodies into undead servants.

**Encounter: Wight attack!** A single, rotting **wight** occupies this room with orders to kill anything that enters. This includes Svea's spiders.

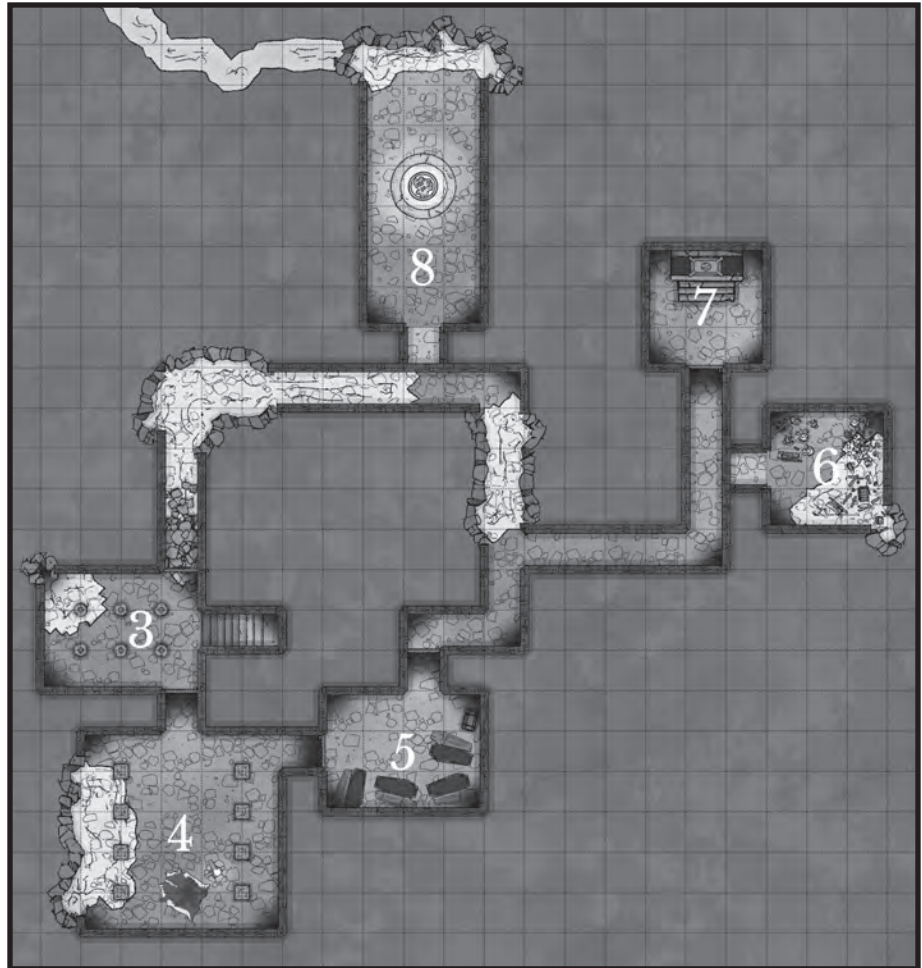
**Treasure.** A small wooden chest, brittle with age and unable to bear the weight of its own contents, holds thirty-five thick and ancient gold coins (each one is worth 2 gp) and three gems worth 10 gp each.

### 6 - Treasury

Entry into this room is hidden behind a secret door. As soon as a character enters, read or paraphrase the following:

This hidden room was evidently once a treasury, filled from wall to wall with coins, gems, and kingly goods. But time and the rotting waters of the swamp have turned most of this wealth into an ugly mass of amber-colored sludge that carpets everything that is not submerged.

**Hazard: Amber Sludge.** The southeastern side of the room is covered in two inches of water. The rest of the room is covered in the yellowish muck. If touched, the sludge ejects a cloud of spores that fills a 10-foot cube originating from the sludge. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the creature takes 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature



can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a successful save.

Sunlight or any amount of fire damage instantly destroys one 5-foot-square patch of the sludge.

**Treasure.** Hidden beneath the sludge are some treasures that time and decay could not destroy. There are two gold statues depicting some sort of feline god, each one worth 25 gp, a silver brooch that holds a small emerald, worth 15 gp, and a *potion of healing*.

### 7 - False Shrine

This small chamber appears to be a shrine or place of worship. A stone altar rests against the northern wall, atop of which stands the statue of a robed woman.

**Trapped Altar.** This shrine is a nasty trap designed to confuse and deter thieves. The statue is an ancient goddess of deceit and trickery, which can be revealed with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Religion) check.

If any Small or larger creatures put pressure onto any part of the dais, the trap is triggered. Noticing this trigger requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Once triggered, a gout of flames shoots from small holes located in the ceiling. Any creature within 5 feet of the dais must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.



## 8 - Arborea

Entry into this room is hidden behind a secret door. Once the characters are within the room, read or paraphrase the following:

This long, thin room is lit with a strange, reddish light that washes the walls with a bloody tinge. The light seems to be coming from a small, sagging tree that sits in the center of the room.

The tree is surrounded by a shallow fountain containing water that gives off the same reddish glow as the rest of the room. Hanging from the tree is a single blood-red apple.

Hunched over the tree is a young woman. She appears to be tending the tree, but becomes aware of you almost immediately and straightens, placing herself between you and the tree.

"Before you try to kill me, please hear what I have to say," she says.

**Encounter: Betrayed!** The woman is Svea, who uses the **druid** stat block. She does not wish to fight the characters. Instead, she will try to negotiate with them. Fortius, no longer himself, has not told Svea everything, but she can fill in any blanks from the background that the characters do not already know.

Svea wishes to stay here at the shrine and tend the Malus Tree, which she tells them holds great power and, she believes, the chance to resurrect Fortius.

While the characters speak with Svea, however, Marrik Blenk, who followed the party here and drank a *potion of invisibility* to remain unseen, stalks into the room and plucks the apple from the tree, before sneaking back out. Noticing the ripples in the water requires a successful DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Once he is safely out of the room, Marrik will throw a *bead of force* at a nearby wall, where he has already

wedged two more beads. The force of the explosion smashes a hole in the wall of the shrine and water begins to flood into the complex.

Read or paraphrase the following:

A loud explosive thump shakes the room, and the thunder of churning water drowns out all other sound. Rocks and earth start crashing around you and the tunnels that lead into the room become impassable in moments.

From beyond the obstruction comes a familiar voice, that of Marrik Blenk, "I'm sorry it had to end this way; you were very useful in finding her for me. But you and that meddling fool simply know too much to be left alive."

As water begins filling the room at an alarming rate the walls and ceiling groan as fractures run up the walls. Roll initiative!

The room will fill with water within three rounds, giving the characters little time to find a means of escape.

As the characters attempt to escape, describe Marrik's screams coming from beyond the collapsed wall. Fortius, having returned to the shrine and able to pass through the walls with ease, came upon Marrik and killed him, seizing and hiding the fruit.

Attempting to dig their way out through the entrance will prove fruitless, as earth and rock will simply take its place.

**Underwater tunnel.** The best means of escape is the underwater tunnel that leads out of the shrine from the northwestern corner. Finding this tunnel requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. During the second round, this check is made with advantage as the water entering the chamber will flow in that direction.

Once discovered, a Medium or smaller creature can swim along the

passage. The passage is 90 feet long, pitch black, and filled with sharp roots and rocky outcroppings. Due to the rapid flow of water, a creature is pulled along the tunnel at a rate of 30 feet per round. For every 30 feet of movement a creature makes, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength save to avoid the obstacles, taking 5 (2d4) piercing or bludgeoning damage (your choice) on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

At the end of the tunnel a creature is spat out into a pool of fetid water that is 15 feet deep. This pool is just outside the shrine complex.

Be sure to add Svea to these checks as she also needs to escape or else Fortius will lose what little mercy he has left.

**The Malus Tree's Fruit.** The Malus Tree's true purpose has been lost to time, but Svea's studies have confirmed that the fruit of the tree does indeed have regenerative properties and, if used in the right manner, could be used to resurrect a person, but it could just as easily be turned into a deadly disease, one that could be used to kill hundreds.

## Concluding the Adventure

Once free of the shrine, the characters watch as the swamp swallows what little is left of the temple complex and must now decide what to do next. Returning to Polderport could mean being arrested or worse, but the swamp is no place for the party.

If Svea survived, she will thank the characters and offer to guide them to a safe place within the swamp, giving them a *potion of healing* in thanks. Nevertheless, Fortius is still hellbent on revenge and may now have the means to place all of Polderport at risk. Ω



# BLOOD BOG RUN

An adventure for level 4 characters

Written by **Matthew Rowland**  
Cartography by **Matthew Rowland**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

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*Blood Bog Run is a Fifth Edition adventure optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. Characters who complete it should earn half the experience needed to reach level 4.*

This adventure takes place in a bog corrupted by the presence of a recently arrived vampire; characters must fight off waves of blood-sucking creatures and a druid-turned-cult-fanatic as they make their way through the bog by flatboat.

Blood Bog Run is designed to test the characters' ability to conserve their resources while facing back-to-back waves of enemies. The first three encounters are timed to make it nearly impossible for characters to complete a short rest in between each. This pacing makes the second and third encounters deadlier than they appear.

## Adventure Background

The vampire Baroness Illyana Illyanova has taken up residence deep in the bog and begun turning the area into her personal domain of death and decay. A few handfuls of her grave soil have corrupted the region's waters and vegetation, and awakened long-dead denizens of the bog. Blood-sucking creatures have increased in number and attack anything living with a rabid frenzy. Zamrin Bek—a druid who once looked over a stilted village in the middle of the bog—has also succumbed to the Baroness' vile influence. Now a cult fanatic obsessed with gaining her favor, Zamrin has been using malignant leeches to extract villagers' blood for use in evil rituals. Traversing this previously tranquil trade and travel route by flatboat was once a scenic treat. Now, only the most capable of adventurers stand a chance of surviving the sinister gauntlet that is the Blood Bog.

## Adventure Hooks

It takes five days to travel around



the bog on foot, but only one to float through it on a flatboat. Consider using one of the following adventure hooks if you are having difficulty prompting the characters to travel through the bog:

**Hired Help.** Before the bog's mysterious corruption, cousins Sonya Smoothsails and Bill Boatman (halfling **commoners**) made a comfortable living running goods and travelers through the bog on their two flatboats. Bill was supposed to return from a round trip through the bog two days ago, but nothing has been heard or seen of him. Sonya—worried that something terrible has befallen her cousin and keen to avoid a similar fate—offers to pay the characters 200 gp to safely escort her and her flatboat full of cargo to the stilted village and through to the far side of the bog. Sonya also offers them 12 doses of Eyebright ointment, which she intends to acquire in the village. Made from the rare Eyebright flower, this ointment cures sight rot (see Chapter 8 of the *DMG*). Unbeknownst to Sonya, Bill was deceived and poisoned by Zamrin and is being held in the stilted village.

**Go Through to Get the Goods.** Something or someone the characters urgently want or need is located on the far side of the bog, and the quickest way to it is straight through. Luckily, a flatboat is about to cast off on a trade run, destined for the far side of the bog.

**Protect the Villagers.** The characters receive a letter from a familiar NPC asking them to hurry to the stilted village in the middle of the bog and investigate strange goings-on. The letter warns that the bog's waters have become fouled, and that a dark presence seems to be creeping into the area and corrupting the local flora, fauna, and perhaps even people. The NPC fears for the safety of the village and implores the adventurers to come investigate and, if necessary, help evacuate the villagers to the far side of the bog.

## The Blood Bog

The Baroness' corrupting presence and spilled grave soil have twisted the bog into an evil and dangerous place. The entire region is lightly obscured by fog, and the air hangs heavy with the stench of death and decay. The bog is eerily quiet; frogs, songbirds, and all other melodious creatures have been chased away or killed by more bloodthirsty monsters.

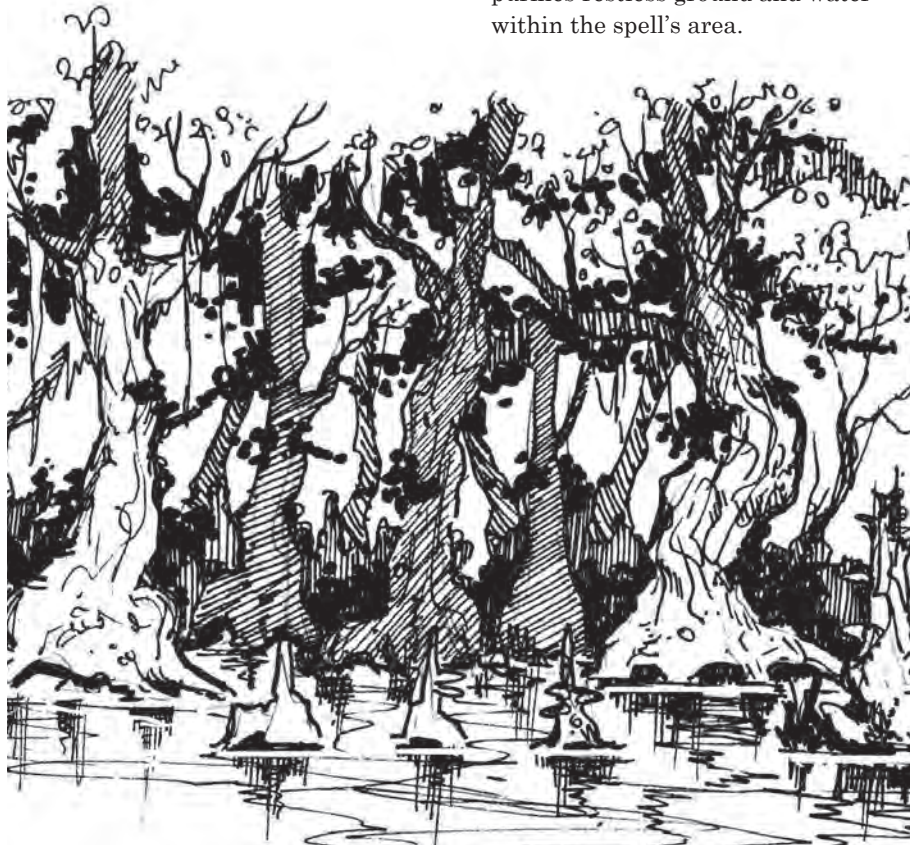
**Travel.** A sluggish river 70 feet wide and 10 feet deep snakes through the bog and is the only navigable route through the area. Traveling through the bog by flatboat along this corridor of open water takes a full day.

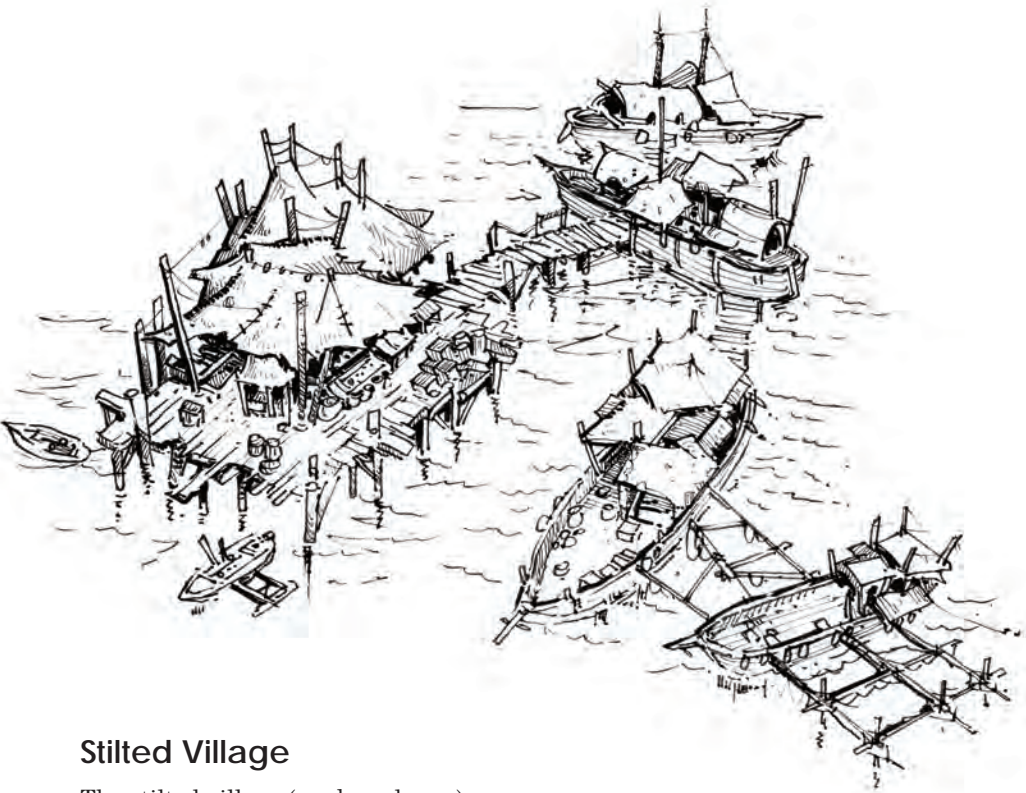
**No escape.** The river is hemmed in on both sides by thick walls of bald cypress trees rising out of the murky waters. The Baroness' grave soil has turned these into **awakened trees**. They cannot move, as their roots are badly tangled together, but these densely-clumped trees form a nearly impenetrable wall of evil vegetation. They attack any creature that comes

within 10 feet of them. Outside of this stretch of open water, the bog is made up of **awakened trees** and **awakened shrubs**, is heavily obscured by this vegetation, and counts as difficult terrain.

**Dangers.** The river and other water sources in the bog are murky, foul, and tainted with sight rot (see Chapter 8 of the *DMG*). They are also teeming with carnivorous leeches; any creature that spends more than 10 minutes in the water is attacked by a **swarm of leeches**. These have a swim speed of 20 feet, but otherwise use the **swarm of insects** stat block.

**Environmental effects.** The entire bog is considered restless ground and water. Undead standing on restless ground or moving through restless water have advantage on saving throws. A *detect good and evil* spell cast within range reveals the presence of restless ground or water. A vial of holy water purifies a 10-foot-square area of restless ground or water when spilled on it. A *hallow* spell purifies restless ground and water within the spell's area.





## Stilted Village

The stilted village (see keyed map) stands in the middle of the bog. The river running through the bog also runs through the village, bisecting the community into an east side and a west side. All of the buildings—most of them little more than glorified shacks—are built on stilts and stand three feet above the water’s surface. A ramshackle wooden boardwalk connects the buildings of the village’s west side to one another and serves as a dock for river traffic.

**Ceilings.** The ceilings of the village’s buildings are vaulted and built out of decaying wooden shingles and rafters. They stand 10 feet high at their peak, have AC 12, 17 hp, and are immune to poison and psychic damage.

**Floors and Walls.** The walls and floors of the buildings are made of weathered wood and have AC 12, 17 hp, and are immune to poison and psychic damage. The eastern and western walls of each building have at least one grimy window set into them, so as to let in as much of the day’s light as possible.

**Doors and Boardwalk.** The doors of the buildings and the boardwalks connecting them are made of weathered wooden planks. Doors and five-foot sections of the boardwalk have AC 12, 13 hp, and are immune to poison and psychic damage. The doors are hung on rusty iron hinges and can only be locked from the inside with a sliding wooden bolt. A character can kick or slam open a locked door by making a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Canoes and Rowboats.** Canoes can hold three people, have a travel speed of 2 mph, have AC 11, 30 hp, and are immune to poison and psychic damage. During combat, a character can use their action to paddle a canoe a distance less than or equal to their movement speed.

Rowboats can hold four people, have a travel speed of 1½ mph, have AC 11, 45 hp, and are immune to poison and psychic damage. During combat, a character can use their action to row a rowboat a distance less than or equal to their movement speed.

## Encounter Locations

The encounter locations described below are keyed to the map on page 22.

### 1 – Flatboat

The wooden flatboat is owned and captained by the wry halfling commoner Sonya Smoothsails. She carries a dagger and a key to an iron chest located inside the flatboat’s cabin. A silver pin in the shape of a laughing otter is fixed to her cloak collar. If you are using the “Hired Help” adventure hook, her missing cousin Bill’s identical pin can be found in Zamrin’s house (see Location 4).

The boat is 30 feet wide and 50 feet long; it has a shallow draft of 1 foot and its sides rise to 3 feet above the waterline. Barrels, crates, and sacks of dry goods to be traded in the stilted village and on the far side of the bog sit in the corners of the deck against the sides of the boat.

A cabin made of wooden boards is built onto the deck. A wooden ladder attached to the outside of the right wall of the cabin leads to its roof, which stands 8 feet above the deck. A window built into the left wall sits 4 feet above the water line. The front and back doors of the cabin are each made of wooden boards, have AC 12, 13 hp, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and are hung on iron hinges. Both doors possess well-maintained iron locks; a character proficient with thieves’ tools can use them to pick a lock by making a successful DC 17 Dexterity check.

The cabin contains a wood-burning stove, a small card table, two stools, 3 days’ worth of dried provisions, and a small, exceptionally crafted iron chest (see **Treasure** below).

Read aloud or paraphrase the following text as the flatboat makes its way into the bog:

An ogre comes splashing out of the mist 60 feet in front of the boat. It flails about wildly, bleeding from dozens of bites and cuts, as a frenzied group of giant bats and stiring



es tears into it. Suddenly, the ogre makes a mad dash for the tree line; the flying monsters, realizing that easier meals are floating their way, break off their assault and speed toward the boat.

**Encounter: Giant Bats and Stirges.** Three **giant bats** and seven **stirges** descend upon the boat and immediately attack the characters. Driven into a blood frenzy by the Baroness' influence, the bats and stirges continue to attack until either they or the characters are dead. The end of the cabin's stovepipe protrudes out of the roof and is large enough for a stirge to fly down.

**Encounter: Rats.** Forty-five minutes after the giant bat and stirge encounter, four **diseased giant rats** and a **wererat** in rat form swim out to the boat and attack the characters. The rats are in the same blood frenzy afflicting the giant bats and stirges, while the wererat seeks to gain the Baroness' approval by ridding the bog of meddlesome adventurers.

If the characters are badly injured following the rat attack, consider giving them enough time to complete a short rest before reading aloud or paraphrasing the following text:

The boat shudders to a halt as the sound of something scraping along its underside fills the air. As the boat begins to move once again, seemingly free of whatever briefly held it in place, first one, then several putrid, gangrenous hands reach atop the sides of the boat.

**Encounter: Zombies.** Eight **zombies**—reanimated by the dark power of the Baroness' grave soil—pull themselves onto the deck and attack the adventurers. They fight until they are destroyed or the characters are dead. The characters have enough time to take a short rest following this encounter before arriving at the stilted village.

**Treasure: Sonya's Lock Box.** The chest in the flatboat cabin has AC 19,

22 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A formidable lock is built into its face; a character proficient with thieves' tools can use them to pick the lock by making a successful DC 22 Dexterity check. The chest contains 375 gp, 150 sp, and 200 cp.

## 2 – Southwest Buildings

Most of the contents of these three buildings have been thrown into the river to make it seem as though the inhabitants packed up and left of their own accord. A few pieces of simple wicker furniture sit against the walls; the buildings are otherwise empty.

A rowboat with two oars is tied to the boardwalk outside of the southernmost building.

**Encounter: Zamrin Bek.** As they dock alongside the village's west-side boardwalk, the characters are hailed by Zamrin Bek, who seems to be a friendly human druid. Once a trusted member of the village community, Zamrin is now a **cult fanatic** zealously devoted to the Baroness. Zamrin has stunned the villagers with poison and thrown them into buildings on the east side of the village (**areas 5 – 9**), where they are now being used to feed his evil leeches. Once the leeches are gorged on the villagers' blood, Zamrin boils them into a revolting stew (see Location 3). Zamrin hopes that the Baroness will take favorable notice of the vile ritual and reward him with dark powers. Sonya knows Zamrin, is unaware of his betrayal, and still trusts him.

Zamrin intends to kill the characters—outsiders are potentially dangerous and more trouble than they are worth—and use Sonya for leech food. He pretends to be a friend and waits for an advantageous opportunity to present itself before attacking the characters. However, Zamrin attacks regardless of the situation if the characters can't be talked out of crossing over to the east side of the village where the villagers are hidden, or when the characters are about

to leave the village. If questioned about the villagers' whereabouts, Zamrin lies and says that they have already fled to the far side of the bog and beyond to safety.

Zamrin offers the characters and Sonya a poisonous brew when they first arrive, lying and telling them that it is a healing tea. Any creature that drinks the brew must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the creature initially feels revitalized, but is poisoned for 1 hour, starting 1d20 minutes after drinking the tea. On a failed save, the creature feels a similar wave of rejuvenation, but is stunned for 1 hour, starting 1d20 minutes after imbibing the brew.

Characters can intuit that Zamrin is lying and means them harm by succeeding on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check. Alternatively, have an inquiring character make a Wisdom (Insight) check, contested by a Charisma (Deception) check made by Zamrin, to determine if the character notices anything deceitful or ominous about Zamrin's demeanor.

## 3 – Zamrin's House

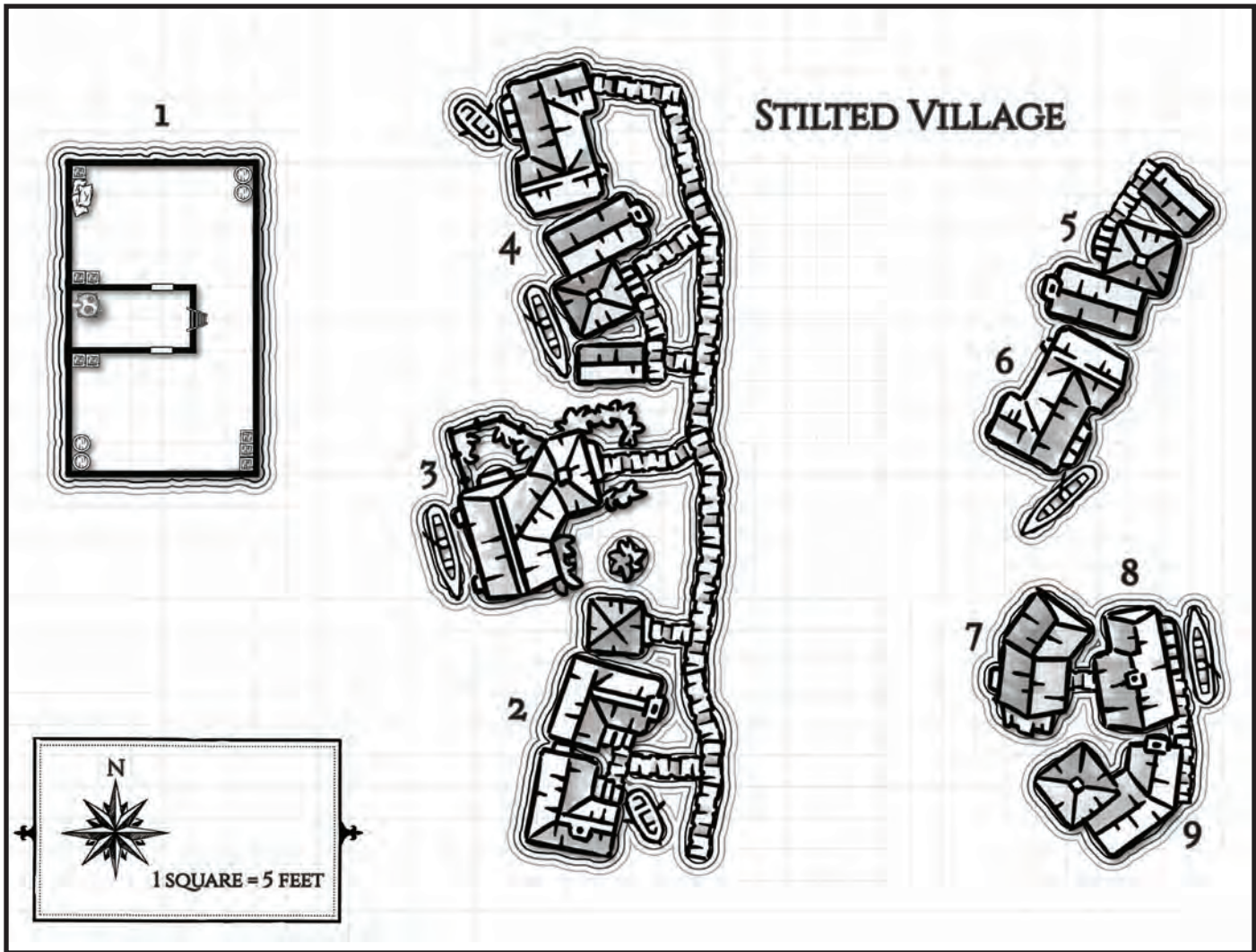
The stench of something awful cooking fills the building.

A simple wooden table with a candle melted into its surface and a single chair stand in the center of the space. Mats made of dried reeds cover the floor, and a threadbare hammock hangs against the southeast wall.

A door in the middle of the west wall opens onto the river; a canoe with one paddle floats directly outside.

A lit stone fireplace is set into the middle of the south wall; a cauldron hanging above the fire contains a rank, bubbling, black stew made from leeches gorged on the blood of the villagers.

Characters that make a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a small object poking out from beneath one of the reed floor mats. If using the "Hired Help" adventure



hook, the object is a pin identical to the one worn by Sonya. It belongs to her cousin Bill and fell off his cloak when he was subdued by Zamrin. If using the “Protect the Villagers” hook, the item belongs to the NPC who wrote to the adventurers.

**Encounter: Swarm of Leeches.** A door in the north wall opens to reveal a wooden pen built into the riverbed. As a druid, Zamrin used to raise fish in this enclosure to feed the village; now, only a **swarm of leeches** (see “The Blood Bog”) lurks in its murky waters. The swarm attacks any creature other than Zamrin that opens the door.

**Treasure: Potions and Ointments.** Shelves full of dried plants

and animal parts, jars, pouches, and various trinkets line the west wall from floor to ceiling on either side of the door. Characters who investigate the shelves find two *potions of healing*, a *potion of poison*, three doses of Eyebright ointment (see Chapter 8 of the *DMG*), and enough Eyebright flowers to make a further nine doses.

#### 4 – Northwest Buildings

Like the buildings in Location 2, Zamrin has staged the interiors of these homes to appear as if they were calmly abandoned by their inhabitants. A few pieces of wicker furniture remain within each, and a child’s doll lies underneath a chair in one of them. The buildings are otherwise empty.

A rowboat with two oars is tied up outside the northernmost building. A canoe tied up behind the two southernmost buildings in this cluster can be accessed through a door in the western wall of either building.

#### 5 – Northeast Buildings

Zamrin has yet to hide the signs of a struggle in these three buildings. Upended wicker furniture is strewn about inside all of them. The owners’ clothing and personal effects still remain unpacked.

**Treasure: Coin.** Adventurers who investigate these buildings find 5 gp, 14 sp, and 25 cp in the first that they inspect, 7 gp, 3 sp, and 40 cp in the second, and 4 gp, 10 sp, and 30 cp in the third.



### 6 – Shrine to The Baroness

Zamrin has begun building a shrine to the Baroness in this building. A **bat** hangs from the rafters inside. When the characters enter the building, it flies screeching past them and out of the village. The windows are covered with pieces of cloth, and a crude, six-foot-tall wicker sculpture in the shape of a headless humanoid stands against the southwest wall. The severed head of a giant bat sits atop its empty shoulders.

A canoe with one paddle is tied to the back deck of the building.

### 7 – Leech Food

Four villagers lie dead on the floor, completely drained of their blood by Zamrin’s leeches. A character can discern that massive blood loss is the cause of death by making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check.

### 8 – Leech Food with Garlic

Another three villagers lie dead in this building, killed in the same way as those in Location 7. One of them is wearing a necklace made out of cloves of garlic. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the method of exsanguination.

A canoe with one paddle is tied to the back deck of the building.

### 9 – Feeding Place

Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or higher and within 10 feet of the building can hear faint groaning coming from within. Six villagers—alive but severely weakened by blood loss—lie on the floor. Bloated leeches are greedily feasting upon them, and all six are considered to be suffering from 4 levels of exhaustion. If using the **Hired Help** adventure hook, one of the six villagers is instead Bill Boatman.

If using the “Protect the Villagers” hook, substitute the NPC who wrote to the characters for one of the villagers.

#### **Encounter: Swarm of Leeches.**

The leeches, as soon as a character comes within 10 feet of them, cease feeding on the villagers, form into a **swarm of leeches** (see “The Blood Bog”), and attack.

### Leaving the Village

**Encounter: Giant Leech.** A **giant leech** (see Appendix D) rears out of the river and attacks the characters just as they are about to float beyond the bog’s baleful borders. The leech is one of the Baroness’ prized pets, and it hungrily patrols the river for anything with blood coursing through its veins.

## Concluding the Adventure

**Hired Help.** If she survives, Sonya pays the characters 200 gp for getting her through to the other side of the bog as promised. If the characters also manage to save her cousin Bill, she pays them an extra 50 gp.

#### **Go Through to Get the Goods.**

Having survived the Blood Bog, the characters can now quickly proceed to their desired objective without further difficulty.

**Protect the Villagers.** If the characters manage to save at least some of the villagers and the NPC who wrote them, the NPC grants them a reward. This could be something unique to the NPC—such as patronage, a favor, or valuable information—or something more generic, like a 200 gp reward, one or two common or uncommon magic items, or a combination of both.

**Keep the Adventure Alive.** The Baroness will continue to strengthen her hold over the bog and violently acquire more territory unless stopped. Killing or driving her out of the region and liberating the stilted village could serve as an overarching storyline connecting multiple follow-on adventures. Ω





# LOST AND FOUND FANE OF THE FROG

An adventure for level 3 characters

Written by **Erich Jacoby-Hawkins**  
Cartography by **Dyson Logos**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

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*Lost and Found Fane of the Frog is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for three to five characters of 2nd to 4th level and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. Characters who complete this adventure should earn half the experience needed to reach the 4th level.*

This adventure is not specific to any setting and can take place in any area of trackless swamp not inhabited by humanoids.

## Adventure Background

A tribe of frogfolk worshipped their loathsome Wug'gi at a temple deep in this swamp. Centuries ago, the frogfolk high priest and king vied for control, until the king died mysteriously. Rather than submit to the priest's rule, the frogman prince forcefully sealed the priest in the temple. He then led his people away, never to return. The imprisoned priest, left in his temple alone, eventually expired. His great hatred and wickedness resulted in his transformation into an undead Bullywight.

A hag named Wicked Jackie Chick-enfoot has recently arrived in the area after her old coven broke up and is trying to establish herself as a new power in the swamp. She scouted the temple invisibly and now covets it. Wicked Jackie left clues luring the explorer Henry Walton to his (un) death at the temple, then paddled his boat back to his house, made up a notice, and created a false persona as his "wife". By luring people there for the Bullywight to add to his undead retinue, she hopes to cultivate his support for her swamp dominance or, at least, secure permission to stash prisoners in an unused room. In the event anyone kills the Bullywight, she will seize the whole temple for her own headquarters.



## Adventure Hook

After finding a poster in the town square reading “REWARD! Find Henry Walton. Come to his house by the swamp for details. URGENT!”, the party checks it out. Locals know Walton as an eccentric academic who occasionally comes to town for supplies but spends most of his time exploring the swamp. At his house, they meet the green hag Wicked Jackie disguised (with Illusory Appearance) as Walton’s attractive 30-year-old wife. (Walton was actually single). She explains he found the lost Fane of the Frog but his boat drifted out of the swamp without him. She offers them 100gp to find him (actually, a box of pebbles & nails disguised with *minor illusion*), mentioning that since he was interested in history, not wealth, they can keep any treasures they might find. The party may wish to heroically locate Walton, be curious to explore a newly-rediscovered mysterious ancient ruin, or seek the cash reward and opportunity to find valuable lost treasure. If the party accepts the mission:

Walton’s wife passes you a worn old journal stuffed with notes, maps, and drawings. They document decades of searching for the temple Walton believes an ancient race of monstrous frogfolk once built in this swamp. Water-damaged and largely illegible, the journal’s final pages describe what he was certain was the entrance to the lost Fane of the Frog. According to the last entry, he found it near dusk, and after examining the inscriptions in the entryway, planned to explore it fully in the morning.

He translated the ancient writings roughly as: “At this temple’s heart is a chest of riches plentiful enough to provide for all who hop.” The journal includes partially-legible maps and notes about landmarks on the way to the temple, which should allow you to follow his trail.

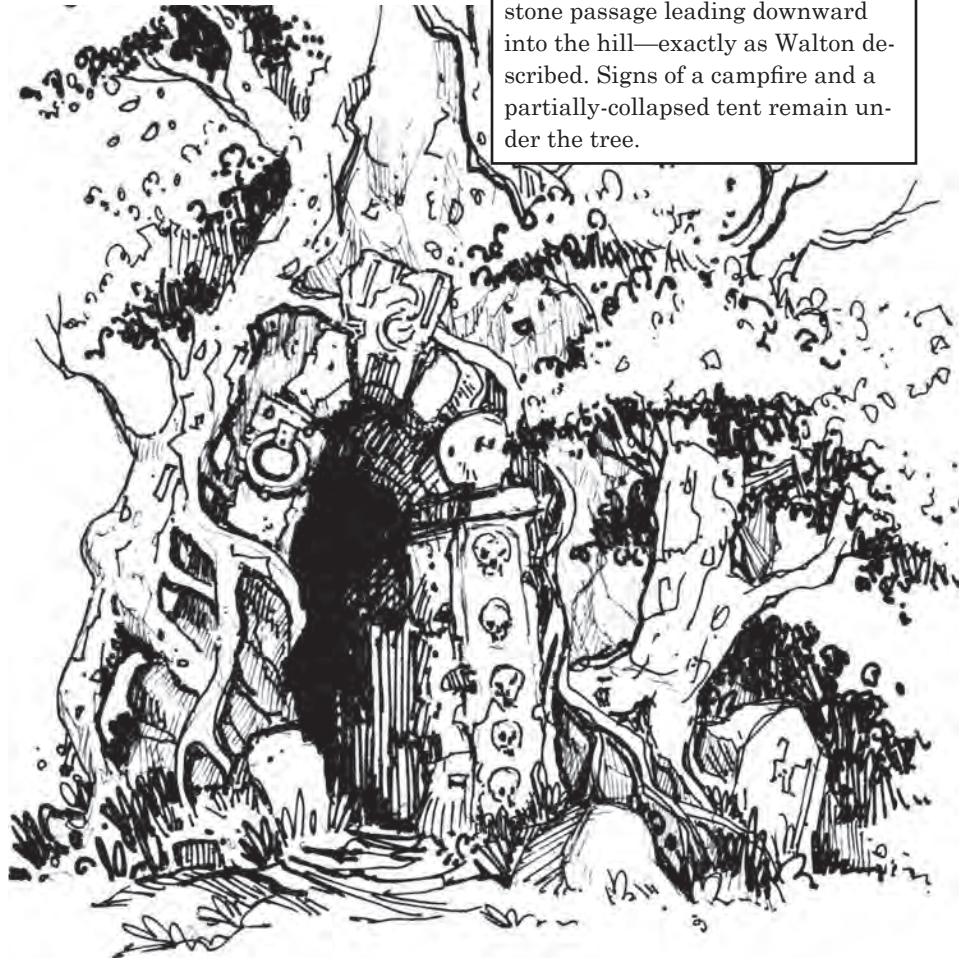
## The Fane of the Frog

The frogfolk dug their temple to Wug’gi into a semi-wooded island in the stream deep within the swamp. The only remaining intelligent inhabitant is the frogfolk’s former high priest, the Bullywight, who eagerly turns any humanoids he catches into zombie minions. However, because he never travels more than half a night’s distance from the temple, and few people venture far into the swamp, he is always short of victims; the few he finds eventually rot away. Currently he only has some lizardfolk (whom he despises as traditional enemies of frogfolk), a disobedient aquatic ogre, and the unfortunate explorer Henry Walton. Using the journal and Walton’s boat (which seats up to 6 medium creatures and a reasonable amount of gear), the party can find their way to the temple after about a day’s travel. The GM should roll as

if for an encounter after each hour or two of travel, but none will actually happen. Instead, describe eerie sounds, such as deafeningly loud insect humming, unexplained splashes, or the creaking and snapping of branches that haunt the party’s journey, with furtive movements seen in the shadows at the edge of their perception range. The players should get the sense that many creatures lurk in the swamp, but for some reason are choosing not to engage. (This is because Wicked Jackie quietly uses Invisible Passage to follow the party at a distance on a log in order to shoo any hostile creatures away.)

Like Walton, the party reaches the temple near dusk.

The stream eventually leads to a hill that matches the one described in Walton’s journal. Near the top, a large tree grows out of a hummock, roots partly obscuring an arched stone passage leading downward into the hill—exactly as Walton described. Signs of a campfire and a partially-collapsed tent remain under the tree.



**Encounter: Mosquitoes.** Once the party alights on the island, eight giant mosquitoes (treat as **stirges**) emerge from the branches and attack. Due to the mosquitoes' very loud whine, the characters will not be surprised.

At some point during combat, the character with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) score hears faint, high-pitched cackling and snorting; this is invisible Wicked Jackie laughing at their struggles. If they ask what direction it came from, tell them it had an echoey sound, as if it came from inside the passage. Searching the surroundings will find no evidence of other creatures. (Wicked Jackie keeps her distance from the island and maintains *Invisible Passage*).

**Treasure: Walton's Gear.** The contents of an explorer's pack can be gathered from in and around the collapsed tent.

### General Features

Unless specified otherwise, areas of the temple have the following features.

**Walls and Ceilings.** The temple walls are faced with natural stones mortared with a surprisingly durable blend of mud and frog-spittle. Passages are 8 feet high arching to 12 feet at the center, chambers are 10 feet high at the walls, arching to 15 feet overhead.

**Illumination:** The temple is completely dark.

**Mucky floors:** All areas in the temple except the Entry Hall (**area 1**) and the Room of Plenty (**area 7**) have floors of thick, sticky muck which is difficult terrain for any creature other than those with webbed feet and a swim speed (frogfolk, lizardfolk, toads) or that doesn't use feet (snakes).

**Doors.** Doors are made of wood and are not locked but are swollen from dampness and require the listed DC Strength check to force open. Doors have AC 15, 18 hp, and immunity to

poison and psychic damage.

**Evil aura:** All areas within the temple radiate a palpable aura of evil, giving undead advantage on all saving throws. This effect is cancelled within the area of a *hallow* spell or any 10-foot-by-10-foot area sprinkled with a vial of holy water.

### Encounter Locations

The following locations correspond to the map on page 27.

#### 1. Entry Hall

The passage descends into the hill and opens into a small dirt-floored chamber with stone walls, parts of which seem to have sagged or collapsed over the centuries. The remaining walls show pebbly mosaics whose contents are difficult to clearly discern due to fading colors and fallen pieces: they might depict swamp life, or the activities of humanoid or frogs or insects, perhaps even gods or demons.

This room and attached hallways are not difficult terrain. To the south, carved stone stairs descend to a closed door while a side passage slopes downward slightly to the east. The south door is partly petrified ancient wood and stuck tight, requiring a successful DC 18 Strength check to open.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check of the floor finds both booted and clawed/webbed footprints; a result of 15 or higher tracks the booted footprints going down the stairs to the door and then coming back up, with the monstrous footprints going both ways along the east passage.

#### 2. Guard Room

The swollen wooden door to this room can be forced open with a successful DC 10 Strength check.

Like the Entry Hall, this room is sagging or collapsed around the edges, the wall mosaics eroded and indistinct. On the mucky floor are

scattered humanoid bones, bits of rotted clothing or gear, rusted armor, and scraps of wooden implements. Beside the door, a winding narrow passage descends further into the earth. Milling around the room are four reptilian humanoids who now shuffle towards you.

#### Encounter: Zombie Lizardfolk.

Four lizardfolk **zombies** (treat them as **zombies** with a 20-foot swim speed, thus not affected by the difficult terrain) shamble about this area. When a creature opens the door or enters the room, the zombies will attack. If the zombies knock any creatures unconscious, they will immediately drag them down the stairs to the Bullywight in **area 8**. Characters who have not encountered Lizardfolk before will not realize these ones are zombies before their Undead Fortitude is triggered, unless their passive Wisdom (Perception or Survival) score is 15 or more.

**Treasure: Lost Gear.** Anyone searching through the floor after combat finds a discarded sack submerged in the mud containing the items in a dungeoneer's pack, although the rations spoiled long ago. It also contains a coin pouch with 5 gp and 20 sp. (Finding the sack during combat requires the Search action and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check).

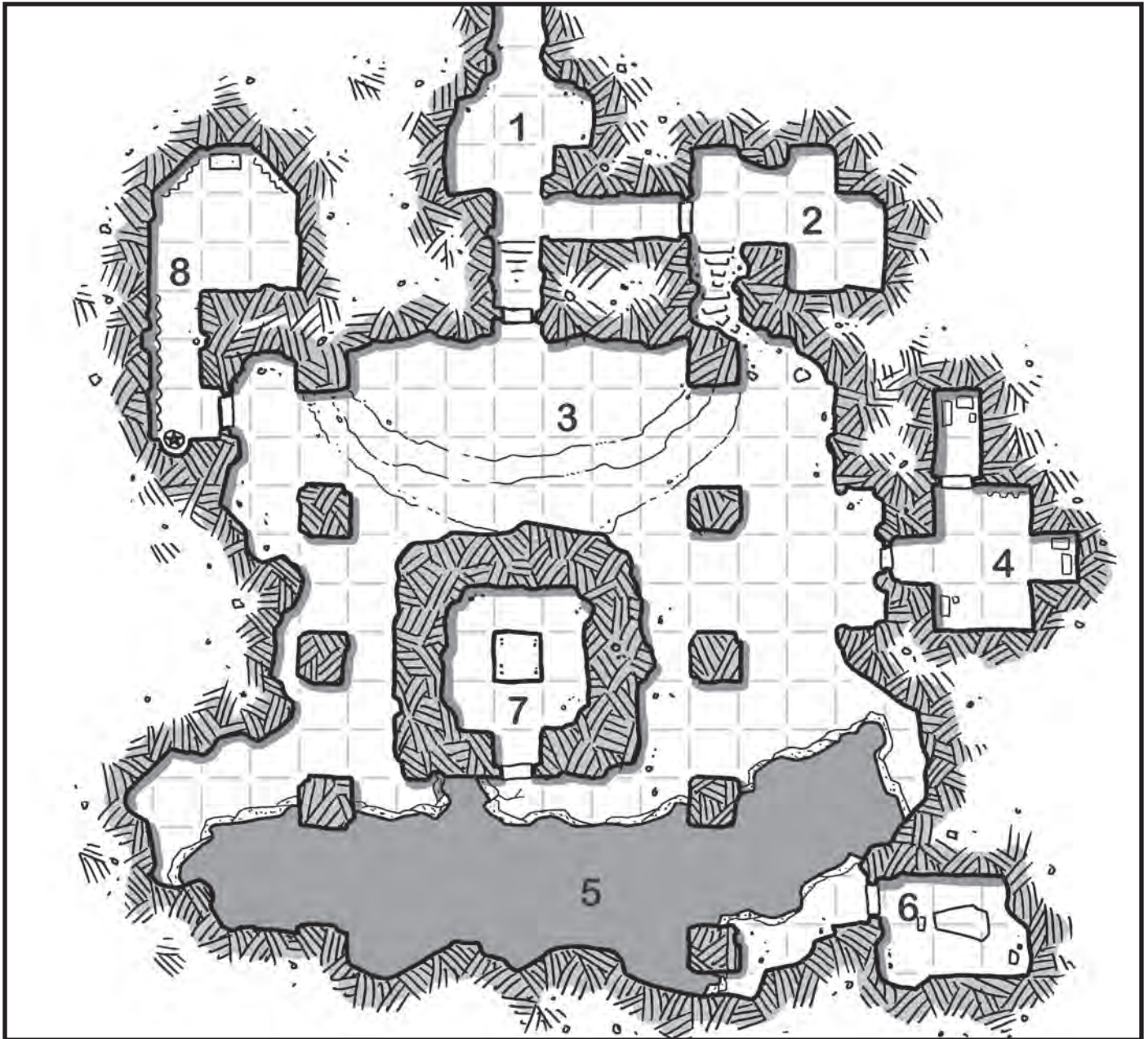
#### 3. Great Chamber

This area features a large open space arching to 20 feet high with columned halls to either side, although almost half of the west hall has collapsed.

#### Encounter: Toad and Snake.

Lurking among the columns are a **giant toad**, which the Bullywight hopes to tame as a mount, and a **giant constrictor snake**, which has been stalking the toad. Both are unaffected by the difficult terrain. The hungry toad immediately leaps to bite (then swallow) the first character to get within 20 feet, while the equally hungry but more patient snake hides in the shadows and tries to move





stealthily around behind the party in order to constrict an unsuspecting character distracted by the toad. Either monster will seek to escape if reduced below half of its hit points.

#### 4. Rectory

The door to this room has swollen and become stuck but can be opened with a successful DC 10 Strength check. This room was the living quarters for the frogfolk clergy. The acolytes slept in the alcove at the back, the high priest in the room behind the north door.

Since rising as undead, the Bullywight has no need to eat or sleep, so it neglects the area, preferring to stay in the Frog Chapel. All that remains here are stone furnishings and scraps of rotted cloth hanging from hooks on the walls.

**Treasure: Forgotten Chest** Behind another swollen door, the north room contains a very rusty locked iron chest (the key long lost, it requires a successful DC 20 Dexterity check to open with thieves' tools). It contains

ten semi-precious stone beads worth 10 gp each and a jar of *restorative ointment*.

#### 5. Murky Lake

This area of the Great Chamber is washed out and flooded with 5-foot-deep murky water, heavily obscuring anything beneath the surface.

Hiding under the water (swimming horizontally) is an aquatic **ogre zombie** (use the stat block of an **ogre zombie**, but with 30 ft. swim speed)

that attempts to surprise and grapple (and drown) anyone entering the water.

If characters open the door to the Room of Plenty (area 7), it reaches out and attempts to grapple a character and pull them into the water. (The zombie is supposed to grab intruders and drag them to the Bullywight but has trouble remembering the second instruction.)

## 6. Spurned Tomb

Before you lies a looted tomb! Tapestries and mosaics are torn down, the lid has been thrown off a stone sarcophagus, bones are scattered within.

The Bullywight jealously trashed the tomb and removed the king's burial goods to the chest in the Room of Plenty (area 7). A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check reveals the penultimate king of the frogfolk was interred here.

## 7. Room of Plenty

This was where the frogfolk's holiest rites took place, the site mentioned in Walton's (more or less) translated inscriptions. The door is swollen tightly shut, requiring a successful DC 15 Strength check to open. The room inside is a little drier and the floor is not difficult terrain.

In the center of this vaulted chamber sits a large stone chest with huge bronze hinges. The walls feature mosaics crudely displaying scenes of frogfolk cruelly dominating other life forms. The back wall illustrates a ceremony, with the chest thrown open and a cloudy aura radiating out, to the delight of ecstatic batrachian worshippers.

**Treasure of the Frogfolk:** A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of conjuration from the chest itself, and auras of transmutation and abjuration from within. Opening or closing the chest's heavy stone lid is an action

requiring a successful DC 15 Strength check (another character can Help). Whenever the chest is open, it casts spells or effects as if it were a *staff of swarming insects* with a spell save DC of 13.

When the chest is first opened, a cloud of harmless flying insects pours forth, filling the room and (if the door is still open) spreading out to a 30-foot radius, making the area heavily obscured for 10 minutes unless dispersed by a strong wind.

If the chest remains open for a second round, or is closed and then opened again, on initiative count 10 it casts *insect plague*, spreading out the door (if open) to a radius of 20 feet with flying, biting locusts dealing 22 (4d10) piercing damage to any creature in the area of effect (or ends its turn there) who fail a Constitution save, half to those who succeed. This effect lasts 10 minutes.

On the third round open, on initiative count 10, it casts *giant insect* creating 10 **giant fire beetles** which spread out and then attack nearby creatures at random for 10 minutes (or until killed).

If the chest is open for a fourth round, the sequence repeats; the cloud or *insect plague* don't stack but restart their duration.

After an hour, the chest will reset and repeat the whole cycle if opened. If the chest is moved or destroyed (AC 17, 18 hp), it loses these powers.

Anyone reaching into the open chest can feel several small objects within it; as an action they can gather up 1d4+1 of them, chosen at random. It contains six pieces of smoky quartz each worth 10 gp, an *ioun stone of protection* in the shape of a scarab, and a *figurine of wondrous power: ebony fly*.

## 8. Frog Chapel

The door opens relatively easily.

A life-size clay statue of a batrachian humanoid stands in an alcove on the left. A 15-foot-tall arched hallway turns to the right; on the





far side, full-length faded tapestries in once-lurid colors depict humanoid frogs in various grotesque ceremonial activities.

**Encounter: Bullywight and Acolyte.** The Bullywight, having sensed an intrusion into the temple, is hiding (Stealth +4) in an alcove behind the tapestry in the hallway.

If discovered, he immediately attacks, followed by his “acolyte” (see below) from the chapel; otherwise, he waits for intruders to enter the chapel and encounter his “acolyte” before attacking them from behind. If the party has not already killed them, he will call his zombie lizardfolk guards to Dash to his aid before revealing himself (it takes them 2 rounds to reach the Chapel from the Guard Room). He will avoid the front line and hop over the party to attack an unarmored spellcaster from the rear, if possible. The Bullywight and his “acolyte” are both unaffected by the difficult terrain.

Down the hallway is a chapel with a granite altar flanked by more tapestries; on the altar is a small but plump statue. Crouching in front of the altar is a frog-like humanoid wearing muddy robes (if it has not yet entered combat). If any characters enter, it slowly turns around and then hops to the attack.

**Bullywight.** Treat this undead frogfolk priest as a **wight** but with Intelligence 8 (-2), Wisdom 14 (+2), Charisma 13 (+1), swim speed 40 ft. and long jump 20 feet and high jump 10 feet with or without a running start. Instead of bow and longsword, he wields a +1 *mace*: +5 to hit for 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage. He still wears priestly vestments and prayer beads but has no clerical powers. He wants to make more zombies, so uses his life drain each round as part of his multiattack if an opponent looks weak or is already wounded.

**“Acolyte”.** This is the **zombie** of Henry Walton. The Bullywight dressed Walton in a frog costume

of scraped hides under his robes so he can pretend Henry is one of his acolytes. Walton still wears his *boots of striding and springing* giving him a move of 30 ft. and the ability to standing jump 18 feet or running jump 39 feet. Due to his costume, hopping movement and gasping croaks, it won’t be obvious that he is a zombie unless his Undead Fortitude is triggered, nor that he was human unless his mask is removed.

**Trapped Treasure: Jade Statue** Picking up the frog statue from the altar triggers a counterweighted pedestal trap that can be spotted with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check and deactivated with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools. Trying to defeat the trap by replacing the approximate missing weight of the statue before the trap triggers will seem to succeed at first but fail. When the trap triggers, it tips over the clay statue in the hallway, which shatters harmlessly. (The poison gas it originally contained has long since lost efficacy). The jade statue weighs 10 pounds and would sell to a collector for 500 gp.

**Treasure: Magic Items** Victorious characters can recover the Bullywight’s +1 *mace* and Walton’s *boots of striding and springing*.

## Leaving the Fane of the Frog

Wicked Jackie the **green hag** waits for the party to leave the temple. She sits in Walton’s boat in the middle of the stream. She wears her “Walton’s wife” disguise at first but drops it once she begins speaking, cackling at the party’s surprise.

As a reward for sending them to the temple and for continued use of the boat, she demands her share of treasure from the temple; if they haggle, what she wants most are the *ebony fly*, the *ioun stone*, and the jade statue, in that order. (She will warn the party that walking out of the swamp would take days.) You may apply contested Persuasion, Deception, or Intimidation checks (from either side)

to this negotiation as seems appropriate. If the party has killed the Bullywight, Wicked Jackie starts in a positive mood and may be persuaded with good rolls or roleplay to settle for a single item in exchange for the boat; if the Bullywight still rules the temple, she will want more to make up for it.

If the party retreats from the tomb without killing the Bullywight or finding much treasure, she “suggests” that they take a rest and then try again in the morning so they can earn the boat back, and even keeps wandering monsters away in the meantime. (This will, of course, increase her sense of entitlement to treasures).

If they refuse to deal, she turns herself invisible as she slowly paddles the boat away (10 ft. per round); anyone chasing her will have to contend with the **swarm of quippers** she has summoned to the stream, and then face her claw attack once they get next to the boat. Given an opportunity, she may try to grab and make off with the fly, stone, or frog. If she takes 21 or more hp damage, she uses Invisible Passage to escape.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the characters pay off Wicked Jackie, she returns the boat and bears them no ill will.

If they lose the boat, it will take two full days to wade out of the swamp, with whatever random encounters you (or Wicked Jackie) want to send their way.

If they wounded or drove her off without any treasure, they have made a powerful enemy with years or decades to plan revenge.

If you wish, you can add a random swamp encounter or two to liven up the day-long boat trip back to civilization. Ω



# THE OBSIDIAN TOWER

An adventure for level 4 characters

Written by **Rikkie Brown**  
Cartography by **Rikkie Brown**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

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*The Obsidian Tower is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for three to five characters of 2nd to 4th level and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach level 4.*

The characters explore a mysterious tower that emerges from a swamp and threatens a nearby village, before being forced to navigate its treacherous interior to escape. This adventure can easily be dropped into any campaign setting.

## Adventure Background

Telir, a deva in service to a god of courage and adventure, believes there are too many adventurers wandering the realms that are selfish and simply unfit to be called 'heroes.' He has devised a means of testing adventurers with the aid of the nearby village. When adventurers visit the village he runs a simulated threat, an ominous black tower that emerges from the swamp and threatens the village. The adventurers are then asked to investigate the threat. Inside, they find themselves trapped and taunted by Telir posing as an evil mage as the tower sinks back into the swamp. They must overcome various obstacles, traps, and enemies to reach the top, confront the villain and escape. It is then revealed to be an elaborate scheme designed to test their skill and their character. Those that fail are deemed unworthy and are many. They are admonished by Telir, who gives them scathing feedback in an attempt to change them for the better. Those that pass his tests though find themselves praised and rewarded for their efforts with a blessing.



## Welcome to Willowdale

Located on the edge of a forested swamp, Willowdale is a small village that exists simply to support several farms that are spread throughout the picturesque dale. The village itself comprises a tavern, a blacksmith, a general store, a well, a shrine, and half a dozen private homes. The characters find themselves arriving during a local festival and are invited to stay and join as they rarely get to include visitors. All buildings have been decorated with garlands of flowers and colorful ribbons. Produce carts are placed by the well with hot food and drinks available. Villagers are already wandering around, laughing, and eating while they take in the various carts. The smell of spiced sweet buns, coffee, and apple cider drifts enticingly through the air. Common supplies can be bought in the village, including anything on the Adventuring Gear table in the *PHB* worth 25 gp or less.

During the festival, the ground begins to tremble and shake. The characters must make a successful DC 15

Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone during the tremors. People run panicked and screaming as carts are overturned and buildings begin to collapse around the village. The tremors grow stronger as an ominous black tower rises, gleaming above the treeline to the north. The tremors finally end once the tower stops rising and looms over the landscape. The villagers survey the damage while several plead with the characters to investigate the tower, offering 100 gp if their initial plea falls on deaf ears.

## Traversing the Swamp

The marshy ground, gnarled sprawling roots and patches of open water, make the swamp difficult terrain. A warm fetid stench assails the characters, as does an incessant heat that soon has them sweating and panting. The distance to the tower is approximately two miles. About halfway there, the characters find themselves crossing a pond-filled clearing during a brief downpour. The driving rain gives disadvantage on any Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Encounter: Hoppin' Mad.** Two **giant toads** leap from the deep water in the pond and attack the characters as they pass the pond. They will target the smallest characters first and attempt to hop off with them if they succeed in swallowing a target.

## The Obsidian Tower

The gleaming obsidian tower juts from the ruptured swamp, the top looming 300 feet above. The exterior walls feel glassy and cold to the touch, even where the sun strikes them. Though coated in muck and slime, the tower shows no signs of age or damage, as if only recently constructed. The only visible entrance is a solid wooden door at ground level. The door is unlocked and opens with a gentle push.

## General Features

Unless noted otherwise, areas of the Obsidian Tower have the following features:

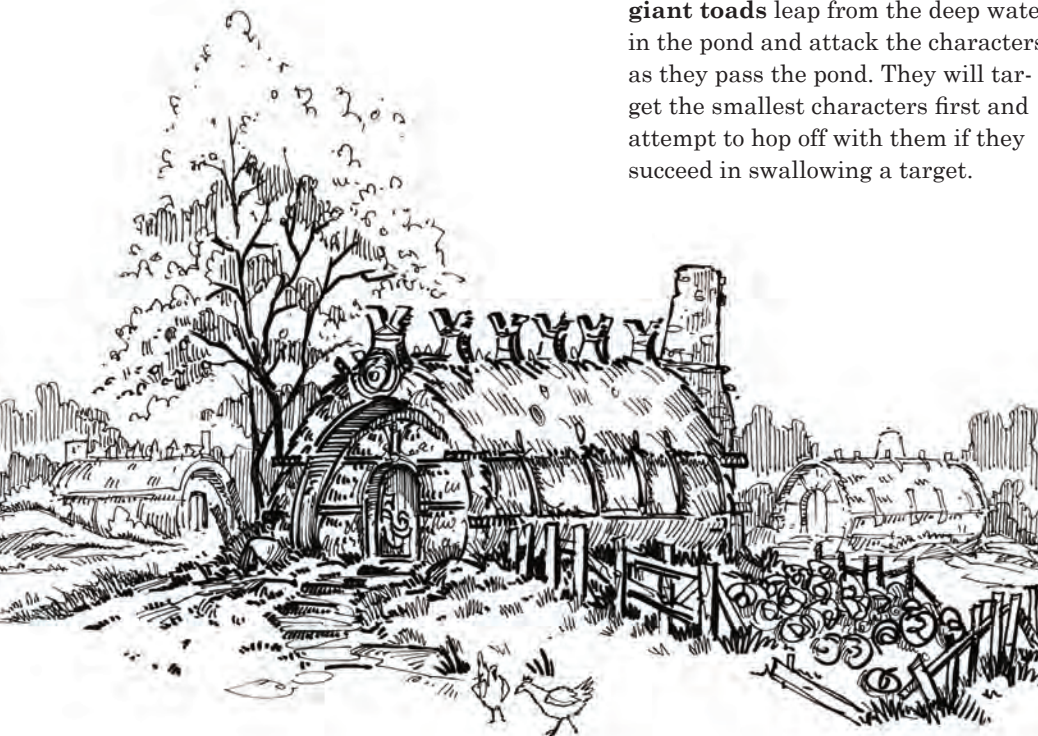
**Walls, Ceilings, and Floors.** The interior walls are rough and distressed, unlike the exterior. They are immune to all forms of damage. Ceilings are 30 feet high and appear to be made of rough stone. The floors are made up of 5-foot-square stone tiles.

**Doors.** All doors are magically locked and immune to damage, unless otherwise stated.

**Illumination.** The tower is lit magically by a gentle rippling glow that seems to emanate from just below the ceiling, like an indoor aurora borealis. Levels 2-4 have dim light. Levels 5-11 have bright light.

**Sinking.** The swamp floods the tower as it sinks at the rate of 1 floor per hour (the ground floor floods in 30 minutes however). This gives the characters approximately 10 hours to complete their escape from the tower.

**Death.** Any character that dies within the tower instead falls into a stasis that mimics death (don't inform the player). If the remaining characters complete the adventure, the fallen will be healed and returned during the conclusion. Should the characters TPK, allow them to believe they've died before having Telir appear with his clipboard and begin to critique them.



## Encounter Locations

See the maps on the following pages.

### 1. Entrance

The door slams shut and vanishes in a puff of smoke and sparks after the characters enter this unlit room. The inside is cool though the smell of the swamp still taints the air. The floor seems to be made of roughly hewn stone placed down loosely without being sealed. The only means of exit is a stone staircase leading up to the next level.

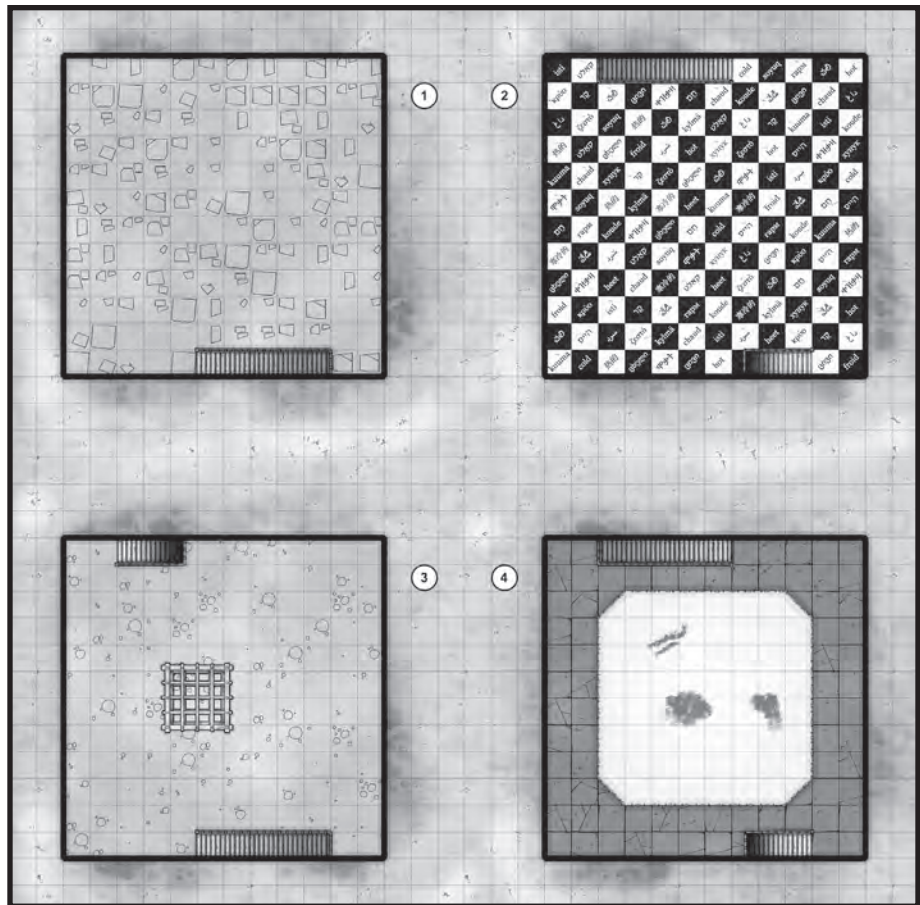
A thin, reedy voice speaks as if from the walls themselves. “Ah, more guests. How nice, I was hoping for some entertainment. Let’s hope you don’t disappoint!” The room shakes and rolls as the loose stone floor cascades like waves. The floor disappears as the swamp begins to ooze between and over the loose stones. In fact, the whole tower is now sinking into the swamp, and your feet are soon covered by the stagnant mud and filth.

“Anyhoo, best foot forward. I’m not a patient man so don’t dawdle,” the voice cackles mirthlessly.

This is Telir (LG **deva**) posing as the villainous Boris (NE human **mage**). In this role, he plays a stereotypical villain with a strong sardonic edge. Boris displays no motivation beyond malice for his own amusement. Characters are playthings to be toyed with and tested, before discarded once he becomes bored. He makes bad jokes and puns believing he is funny. He will taunt the characters throughout, heckling them when they do poorly, or throwing a tantrum if they do well. Boris should interact with the characters on all levels, whether as an omnipresent voice or as an illusory figure—your choice.

### 2. Flambé!

A checkerboard floor covers this room. Each tile bears either “HOT” or “COLD” scored deeply in one of four-



teen languages scattered seemingly at random around the room. Characters can recognize these words for any languages they know. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals some of the tiles marked “HOT” bear scorch marks.

**Trap: Flames/Wind.** All the tiles have a hidden pressure plate beneath them which will activate when 20 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate. The DC to spot the pressure plates is 15. Wedging an iron spike or other object under a pressure plate prevents the plate from activating. Stepping on a “HOT” tile triggers a jet of flame to shoot down from the roof onto the tile. Any creature in the fire must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 5 (1d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Stepping on a “COLD” tile triggers a blast of cold air to shoot down

from the roof. Any creature in the blast must make a successful DC 10 Strength saving throw or be pushed 5 feet in a direction determined by rolling a d8 (1-N, 2-NE, 3-E, 4-SE, etc.).

#### Tile languages.

No.	Language
1	Common
2	Dwarvish
3	Elvish
4	Giant
5	Gnomish
6	Goblin
7	Halfling
8	Orc
9	Abyssal
10	Celestial
11	Draconic
12	Infernal
13	Primordial
14	Sylvan



### 3. Trapped!

This room is empty except for a 12-foot-square iron cell with one injured occupant, Penry (LN male human **commoner**). At first glance he may appear dead, though a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check will reveal he is barely breathing. Several burns are visible on his flesh. Should any character touch Penry or speak, he will stir from his sleep and weakly plead for help. He will tell the party he is a trapper who entered the tower out of curiosity, before being trapped here by Boris. He was crossing a room when he was burned by jets of flames bursting from the roof and he passed out. When he came to, he found himself trapped in this cell and being taunted by Boris. Penry is lying, part of Telir's plan to test the compassion of the characters.

**Obstacle: Cell.** The cell itself seems solid with no visible door on any exposed side. Freeing the prisoner will require a minimum of 10 minutes and a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check by anyone who is helping:

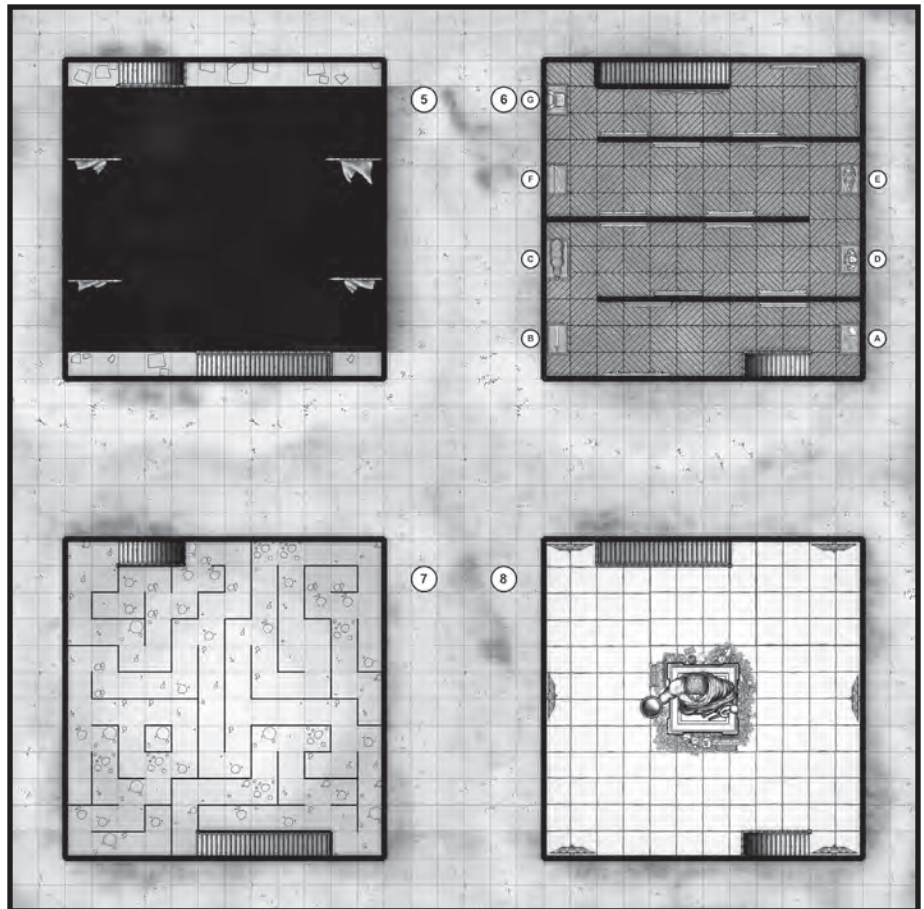
- If three or more succeed, they free Penry after 10 minutes and receive Inspiration each.
- If two succeed, they free Penry after 20 minutes.
- If one succeeds, they free Penry after 30 minutes and incur one level of exhaustion each.
- If none succeed, they do not free Penry and incur one level of exhaustion each.

Alternatively, each wall of the cell has AC 19, 40 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage, and resistant to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

If freed, Penry will follow the party, assisting if he can though he has no weapons.

### 4. Battle Royale!

As you step off the stairs, a man stands before you, looking bored. "You've been dreadfully dull so far.



I expect much more from guests. I want to see some action, so all of you into the ring. If you want to get out of here, I want to see if those weapons are just for show!"

A blood-smeared ring is the only feature of the room besides the metal door blocking the exit stairs. Boris spreads his arms and multiple copies of himself surround the ring like an audience, all cheering the beasts and jeering the characters.

**Encounter: Waves.** When the characters enter the ring, three **giant wolf spiders** magically appear and attack. Two **giant hyenas** appear and attack the characters as soon as the wolf spiders are killed. Finally, two **giant boars** appear and attack after the hyenas are killed.

### 5. Mind Your Step!

Separating the two staircases is a seemingly bottomless chasm stretch-

ing the expanse of the room. The only furniture is four tattered flags hanging from poles, two each on the east and west walls. These flagpoles are 5 feet above floor level and seem firmly affixed to the rough wall.

**Obstacle: Chasm.** The chasm is not an illusion but rather a magical space that characters can pass through. Any creature that falls into the chasm will quickly vanish from sight, lost in the void. They will continue to fall at a constant rate (100 feet per round) and trajectory for approximately 200 feet before reappearing at the roof and continuing to fall. If they land on firm ground without slowing themselves in any way, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Any character that wishes to climb across the walls to reach the other side must make a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, otherwise

## THE OBSIDIAN TOWER

they lose their grip and fall. A creature using climbing gear has advantage on this check.

### 6. Charm Offensive!

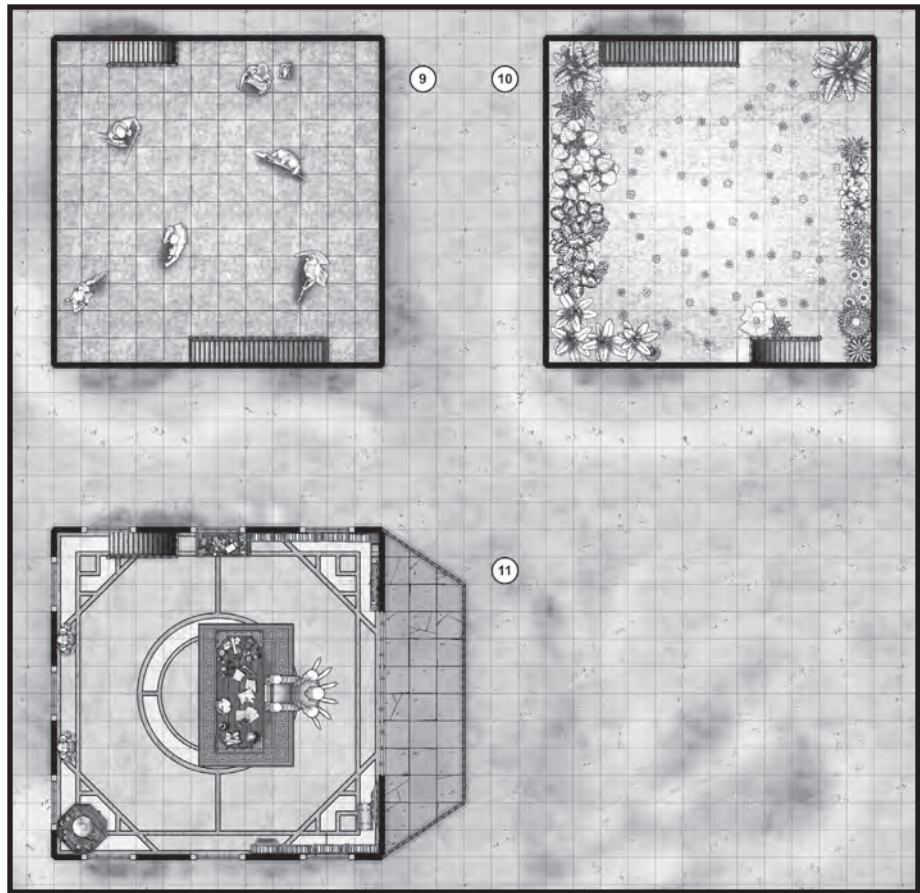
This room is one long snaking corridor lined with paintings and various displays. Examining any of these triggers a deep masculine voice that explains about each one. The gallery is all about one human man depicted with classically handsome features: flowing blonde hair, chiseled jawline, a dazzling smile, blemish-free skin, and a muscular physique. He is shown in a variety of heroic and noble scenes: astride a horse battling a wyvern; standing over a fallen giant; sat on a throne ruling a court, etc. For each painting the voice talks about, it always focuses on how beautiful and powerful the figure looks in the scene. The objects are described in the table below.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that all of these items are tawdry fakes, except the mirror which has obviously been well used in its lifetime.

**Obstacle: Vain Ghost.** Upon reaching the end of the gallery, they find a spectral figure hovering in front of a final large painting depicting its death. As they approach, it will turn, and they will see that Quentin (CN ghost) looks absolutely nothing like his many likenesses. Despite this, he will preen and boast about how beautiful and powerful he is and seek agreement from the characters in order to let them pass. The players can either roleplay their agreement and ego stroking, or they can make

#### Vainglorious objects.

Item	Description
A	Spent hours pretending he was a hero in front of the mirror.
B	A prized sword that he claimed as the fairest in all the land.
C	A bear that he slew as a teen.
D	Priceless armor that dazzled his enemies with its radiance.
E	An enchanted shield gifted from an admiring sorceress.
F	A gift from the elven court in recognition of his beauty.
G	Symbols of the kingdom he ruled with grace and beauty.



a successful group DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check to satisfy his vanity. He will then ask the characters to bring that which he held most dear in his life to him. As a narcissist, of course that is his childhood mirror. Bringing this will unlock the door so the characters can continue, and Quentin will give them each a *potion of greater healing*.

If they fail the initial check, or bring any other object, he will become enraged and use his Horrifying Visage feature to attempt to intimidate them

into cowering. If Quentin takes any damage or any character succeeds on a DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check, he will immediately cower, soil himself, and flee, leaving the characters free to continue as the door unlocks.

### 7. A-Maze-ing Clarity!

This room is seemingly completely empty but there is in fact an invisible maze blocking passage across the room. The maze protrudes from the ceiling down to 1 foot above the floor, allowing liquids and Tiny creatures to pass under the walls. Small creatures can pass under as long as they aren't wearing medium or heavy armor. Reward clever thinking to navigate the maze, examples of which could be marking the walls with chalk, paint, or ink; using smoke, gas, or water to show the paths through. Alternatively, if the players are struggling to come up with a solution, have one of them make a DC 15 Intelligence (In-



vestigation) check to chart the maze:

- If they succeed by 5 or more, they get through in 10 minutes.
- If they succeed, they get through in 20 minutes.
- If they fail by less than 5, they get through in 30 minutes.
- If they fail by more than 5, they only get through once the swamp has flooded half the room and they gain a level of exhaustion for struggling through it.

### 8. Pay Your Respects!

Entering the room, the players recognize the 25-foot statue surrounded in treasure as the local deity worshipped in the nearby village. This room is a simple test of respect and honor. A plaque on the statue reads, “Take no more than ye give, lest you lose sight of yer path.”

**Trap: Poison Gas.** Should the characters take anything without giving something in return, they fail and the door leading to the stairs will be locked. A gas quickly fills the room blasting from hidden vents in the ceiling and all characters in the area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, they are poisoned and blinded for 1 hour. The door will then unlock. Should the characters abide by the local customs, they may leave freely, finding the door unlocked.

### 9. Fowl Temper!

The room is sparsely decorated with what appear to be well-crafted statues of fighting figures. Some have been damaged at some point in the past but the attention to detail is superb. You can even see the fear in the statues’ eyes! The whole room is lit with a gentle purple light, and the silence broken by an excited clucking.

**Encounter: Cockatrices.** Four cockatrices that call this level home attack any characters that enter the room. The statues are in fact previous victims of the monstrous birds. Should the party succeed in killing them, they find the key to the door in

one of the carcasses, or a character proficient with thieves’ tools can pick it with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

### 10. S-Hoe-Down!

The characters stumble into a lush indoor garden that has overgrown the level. Heady scents and smells fill the air. All the plant life seems healthy and vibrant, nourished as it is by the gentle golden light from above. Looking especially vibrant is the shambling mound standing in front of the stairs leading up.

“Welcome to my garden. My pet doesn’t usually like visitors but don’t worry, I’m sure you’ll soon be best friends. It’ll grow on you, you know,” Boris giggles manically before running up the stairs, slamming the door behind him.

**Encounter: Boss Fight.** The shambling mound will fight to the death.

### 11. One Last Chance!

A generally tidy office is filled with natural light. Hundreds of books line half the walls in the room, while a side table is laden with many more piled haphazardly. Two gleaming golden suits of armor stand at attention on the west wall. A large desk sits centrally, an imposing throne looming behind it and currently occupied by the mage.

“I must say I’m surprised to see you all. It’s so rare that visitors reach my humble office. Give yourselves a pat on the back. I’d do it but I only just washed my hands,” he sneers as he slow-claps. He rifles through some of the paperwork on his desk, reads for a moment and looks up smiling as he stands.

“Sorry, forgot my lines. Been so long you see. I’ll give you one last chance. Surrender... or else you get this,” and he lets loose a jagged bolt of lightning that crackles and sparks as it hits the floor in front of you.

This is the final test of the characters and is very simple indeed. Their answer decides their ultimate fate.

## Concluding the Adventure

Whatever their answer, Boris transforms into Telir after they respond. If the characters stand ready to fight, they are successful. Telir congratulates them on their skill, courage, and tenacity, giving them glowing feedback on their ascension through the hazards and challenges (mistakes will still be scrutinized but far more leniently). He rewards them with a chest containing 400 gp, ten turquoise gemstones (worth 10 gp each), and a *potion of climbing*. They also each receive a *blessing of divine fortune* which will allow them to re-roll one ability check or saving throw once per long rest. This must be done before they know if they succeeded, though they can choose whether to keep the first or second roll. The characters are teleported back to the fully restored village and congratulated heartily by the cheering villagers. The celebrations carry on well into the night.

If the characters surrender however, they have failed and are magically transported back to the town where they see the villagers repairing all the damage to the town quite easily, with whole buildings being assembled in minutes as most they can see are nothing more than elaborate sets. They are given their feedback and report card, with their failing grade as they are ushered quickly out of the town. As they leave, they can hear that another set of adventurers are already on their way. As they pass beyond the village sign, the characters forget everything that they just experienced, however the nagging sense of shame and disappointment remains with them, as they continue on their journey... Ω



# GRAVE OF THE LOST COHORT

An adventure for level 5 characters

Written by **Alexander Neumann**  
Cartography by **Alexander Neumann**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

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*Grave of the Lost Cohort is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to five characters of 3rd to 5th level, optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. A party that completes the adventure will earn half the experience necessary to reach 5th level.*

A fort in a nearby swamp has caused the local military to lose not only their veteran company but also their sacred battle standard and they will do anything, or hire anyone, to recover it. This adventure is not specific to any setting and takes place in any swamp on the bordering outskirts of a kingdom.

## Adventure Background

Just outside the demesne of any of the local kingdoms lie the Blackguard Swamps, untamed lands with savage denizens best left avoided. In a brash showing of power to create a strategic point for military logistics, one kingdom sent its veteran First Cohort to establish and station a fort in the swamps in an attempt to claim the unclaimable.

Nicknamed “The Grave” by the soldiers stationed there, the fort was soon attacked by one of the swamp’s tribal clans, wanting to send back these military invaders and claim the fort as their own. The tribal warriors broke through the palisade walls and began slaughtering the entire company in the dead of night. One scout, returning to the camp after getting lost on his own patrol, watched the carnage from the outskirts. Knowing that charging into the fort was futile, he made the choice to retreat back into the swamps. Being the lone survivor of the Cohort, he was now duty-bound to report the loss to the commanders back in the kingdom. Before the clansmen’s revelry for their victory could begin, another inhabitant of the swamp, a medusa, had already set her gaze on the fort.

Once a normal girl, she was marred by a curse years ago that turned her



into a horrible monstrosity and was ostracized from her home. She fled to the swamps, wanting nothing more than to be left in peace from those that fear her visage. When the din of war echoed through the mire, she entered the besieged fort as the Cohort and tribesmen fought, using the confusion of the ending battle to petrify those who were not already slain.

At the heart of the fort, across all the blood and stone of the Cohort and the Tribe, the battle standard, *Vexillum of the First Cohort*, remained standing. The battle standard is the most sacred artifact to each soldier in their respective Cohort. For the army suffering the dire loss of its troops, an even graver defeat would include losing the standard for the reformation of the veteran company. The kingdom is ready to stop at nothing to find a way to recover their lost artifact.

## Adventure Hooks

### *Service Guarantees Citizenship.*

With the army stretched thin due to their losses, reorganization of forces must be completed before they can send an expedition to recover the standard. Contracts have been posted all across the kingdom for adventurers to enter the swamps to recover the banner with the promise of fame and riches to anyone who succeeds. When the party meets one of the military generals after taking the posting, the general comments that “they are the first adventuring group either brave enough or foolhardy enough to accept.” The party is paid 75 gp per party member as an advance for supplies and directed to meet their scout at the edge of the swamps.

*Highwaymen? What has Become of our Homeland?* During the party’s travels, they come across the bodies of four soldiers in a ditch along the road. Checking the bodies shows wounds akin to a common bandit attack. All useful equipment and supplies have already been stripped from the soldiers. One of them carries orders from their command for an

expedition into the swamps to recover the Vexillum. They were to meet with a forward scout at the edge of the swamps. With the troops dead, and having their orders, the military should be willing to provide a decent payout to the characters for finishing the mission in their stead.

## Blackguard Swamp

The Blackguard Swamp has avoided being drawn under any empire’s colors on a map due to its near-inhabitable quagmire, and inhabitants ready to attack any intruders like a body fighting a virus. All roads make a wide berth around the swamp, and any expedition to stake a hold has found a perilous end.

Dense trees with gnarled roots fracture the ground, leaving it impossible for caravans or horses to travel. Thick moss and vines drape the ground and trees, blending with the pools of the mire making it hard to discern solid footing from a sudden dive into the stagnant, murky waters. The air hangs heavy and warm as if trying to drown the lungs with the smell of rot through the moldering lands. The droning of insects and fauna creates an incessant cacophony during the day that is almost disorientating to the senses.

As the party reaches the edge of the swamps, they see a human **scout** in military garb sitting at a campfire who waves them over to him. As they get to the campfire, he says the following:

“I imagine you’re my reinforcements to go recover the Vexillum? You’d have to be, why else anyone would be traveling so close to this blighted land... Hells, I told the commanders they need to send more than this if we want to defeat the mud-scum that took the fort! The Grave is about a day and a half’s journey in the swamp, so we’ll rest here for tonight and begin at first light tomorrow. The name’s Corvo by the way. If any of you are the holy type, you better make peace with your gods now.”

If asked, Corvo knows the following:

- He reveals that he was at the fort when it was besieged and if it wasn’t for his getting lost during patrol, he might have been able to warn them of the impending attack. He regrets what happened but was adamant to be a part of the recovery mission to avenge his fallen comrades and restore the Cohort’s honor by recovering the battle standard.



- He wasn't able to get a good count of the numbers that attacked the fort, but he imagines they outnumber the party two, maybe even three to one, possibly more. However, he knows they're untrained; if it comes to a full-on engagement, disciplined tactics should allow for an easy victory.
- Expect to be attacked during the trek. The swamp wants to keep intruders out as much as anyone should avoid going in it. The senses get overwhelmed in the bog, making it hard to discern what's around you, and harder to remain alert to dangers and enemies.
- The fort was nicknamed "The Grave" because after traveling so long through the swamp, the soldiers joked that they would rather die in the fort than travel back through the swamp again. It was a miracle of the gods that they found a footing of land good enough to establish any defenses in the first place to complete their bleak mission. Unfortunately, the name proved to be a truer omen than they expected.

### Travel in the Swamps

With Corvo leading the party through the swamps, they are guaranteed not to get lost on their way to the fort. However, with the precarious terrain of the swamps, keeping a steady pace may prove difficult without getting stuck, or drawing attention to their mission.

Before each of the following two encounters, the party must make a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check. If the party succeeds at least one check during their travel in the swamp, they manage to make their passage as successfully as one can in the Blackguard. If the party fails both, between delays and complications, their presence has become quite known to the various denizens of the swamp and will be interrupted by the third encounter during their long rest.

#### *Encounter: Swamp Tribesmen.*

At midday, the party comes across a hunting group of humans butchering a carcass of a giant crocodile. The hunting party numbers two **berserkers** and three **tribal warriors**. Aggressive to any outlanders of the swamp, they drop their harvested crocodile meat and attack the party on sight.

*Encounter: Snakes.* Approaching evening, the party has to wade through a shallow portion of the fetid bog. As the party is crossing, snakes begin to slither out from the vegetation looking for a meal. Two **giant poisonous snakes** and one **constrictor snake** per party member emerge from the marsh. The marsh's muddy shallows are considered difficult terrain. The snakes are unimpeded by the terrain.

If Corvo happens to perish during any of the encounters on the way through the swamp, on his body is a rough map the party can use to find the rest of their way to the swamp, though at an impeded rate, and are guaranteed to be interrupted during their long rest.

### The Night

Read the following aloud for the party to prepare for a long rest:

As the day of travel comes to a close, darkness starts to blanket your surroundings. Corvo advises making camp and resting before traveling further, for traveling at night would turn the possibility of death into a certainty. As you begin to set up camp, you notice that the orchestra of swamp wildlife passed its earlier crescendo and has finally dropped to a hush. Where the sounds in the day were maddening, the sudden silence has become deafening. The air that was once struggling to breathe lifts as if a weight were removed from your chests, and the heat that was once baking now cools to a sharp chill. Unfortunately, the putrid smell remains.

#### *Encounter: Wererat Ambush.*

Anyone keeping watch during the middle of the long rest can make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) Check. On a success, faint skittering can be heard in the trees around the camp, and in the distance with a low rumbling thud growing louder and louder, and can warn the rest of the party. If failed, the party is attacked with a surprise round by the following:

A large **wererat ogre**, using **ogre** statistics, crashes through the trees on all fours bellowing in rage as it charges at the party. From the trees leap down two more **wererats** (with the modification that they are unable to Shapechange out of their hybrid form), let off squeaks and hisses, and both charge at the party member with the lowest hp.

As the long rest finishes and night turns to dawn, a mist has rolled through the swamp, obfuscating the party's surroundings. Corvo remarks that in all the time he's spent in the swamp before, he has never seen a mist like this, but he can still make his way back to the fort. For the remainder of the travel to the fort, the party is safe from being attacked thanks to the mist hiding their movements from watchful eyes.

### The Grave

The fort is split into two sections. The "upper" fort area holds the residences of the Cohort's junior officers, supplies, and the main officer's quarters. The "lower" fort has an area filled with tents for the line troops, a workshop, the training ground, and a cistern.

The following locations are keyed to the provided map of the fort.

### General Features

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

**Walls and Grounds.** The lower fort's outer wall is a palisade of wooden stakes around 15 feet tall. At the front entrance of the palisade, wooden





chevaux de frise are set up as defenses with two iron gibbets; three iron prisoner cages all stand rusted and empty. The upper fort has a larger, more fortified wooden rampart 20 feet tall, with an inner walkway along the internal perimeter. Four ballistae are in disrepair at the top of each corner of the walls. The outer perimeter has more wooden chevaux de frise to prevent attackers from scaling the upper fort walls.

The grounds feature a long gravel path down the center from the entrance of the lower fort up to the gate of the upper fort. The areas to the sides of the gravel path are treaded dirt from the once constant movements of the soldiers performing their daily duties. The corners and areas less walked upon still have dry grass and dead moss from being cut off to the surrounding wetland within the defensive walls.

**Lighting.** The only source of light comes from the natural sunlight, or moon and stars depending on the time of day.

**Climate.** The area around the fort is obscured by a thick fog that keeps the temperature to a more temperate level than the rest of the swamps and masks the normally fetid smell in the

air. Within the palisade walls, the fog is immediately lifted, with particles of dirt and ash suspended and unnaturally unmoving, as if frozen in time.

### Approaching the Fort

When the characters approach the fort walls, read the following:

The mist clears, finally freeing your vision to see the aftermath of the battle. The fort is completely empty of any inhabitants; only the bodies of those lost to the battle remain.

Signs of battle and bloodstains are visible throughout the fort. Bodies of both the military soldiers and the few tribesmen that perished are in various states of putrefaction. All of the armor and weapons are rusted and corroded beyond any functional use, as if they're relics from ages past.

Humanoid statues in varying poses are littered all around the fort. Upon closer inspection, they look to be in similar garb to the tribesmen you encountered the prior day. Their faces are twisted, ranging in emotion from rage to fear, their final moments locked in time for eternity.

### Encounter Locations

See the map overleaf.

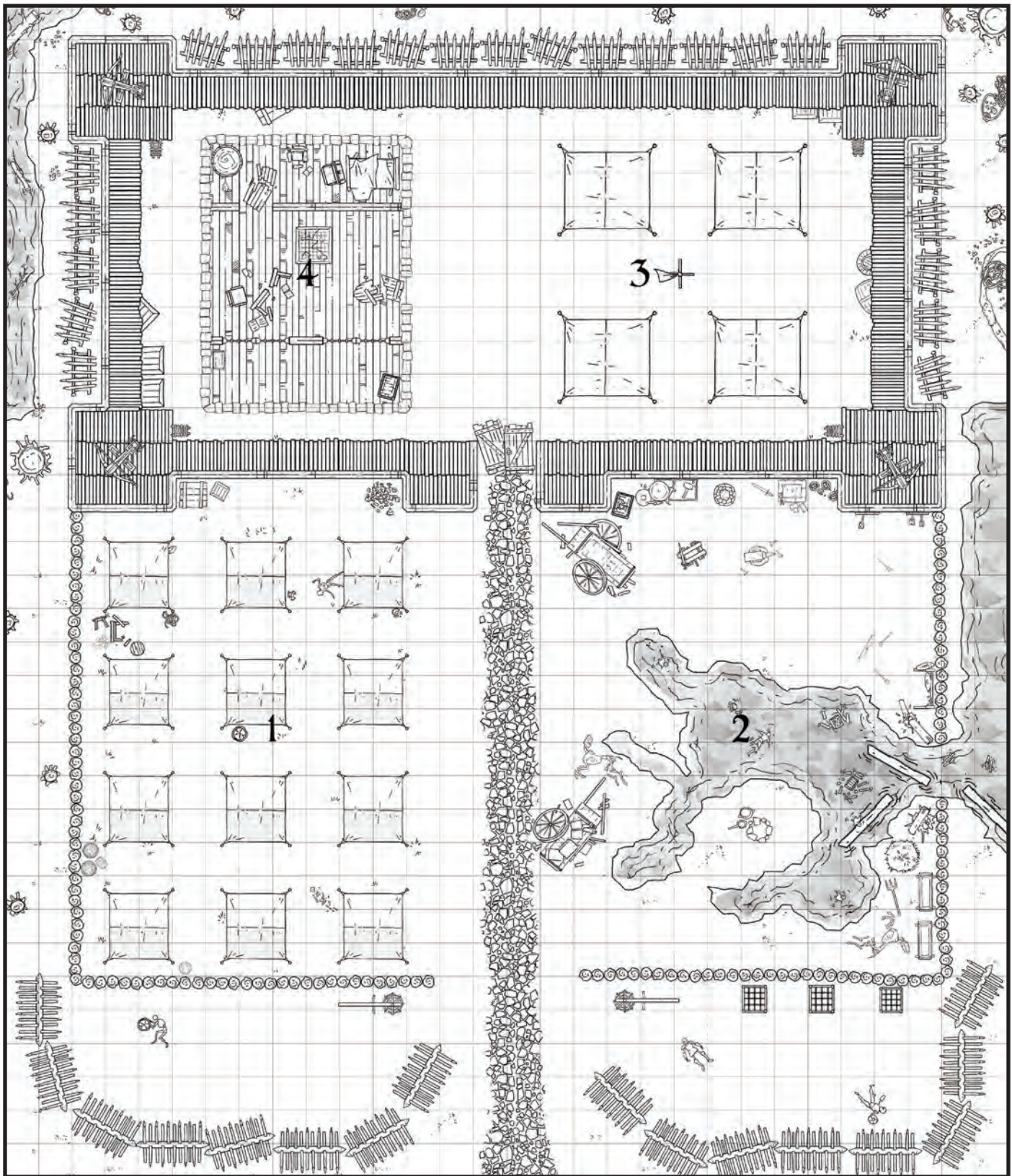
#### 1 - The Cohort

Troop tents laid in neat rows sit to the western side of the gravel path. Each tent contains two cots and two small crates filled with personal effects. Scattered around are supply crates with rotting food, broken stools, and tables where games were once played during the soldiers' off-duty hours. Any equipment is too corroded or rusted over to hold any use or value.

**Encounter: The First Pet.** Moving between the tents is a nest of poisonous snakes that pay no mind to any characters that move throughout the area. Within one of the tents lies a resting **giant constrictor snake**, one of the medusa's two pets. Roll a 1d12 to determine in which tent the constrictor snake is located. If the party opens the tent containing the snake, it immediately attacks. If combat begins on the western side of the gravel path, the poisonous snakes slither towards each other to form a **swarm of poisonous snakes** at an adjacent tent to the one that contained the giant constrictor snake.



# GRAVE OF THE LOST COHORT





**Treasure: Soldier's Wages.** Each tent has 2d4 gold coins from the wages the soldiers have earned during their deployment to the swamp.

## 2 - The Flood

The eastern side of the gravel path shows how the swamp tribals managed to successfully attack the fort. Part of the palisade wall is knocked down, which has caused some of the swamp waters to flood the uneven ground.

Nestled at the bottom of the upper fort's rampart is a makeshift workshop and blacksmith with varying tools and equipment in complete disrepair. Two broken carts are along the side of the gravel path, one empty, the second with moth-eaten linens and canvas.

**Encounter: The Drowned.** If the party steps within 5 feet of the flooded waters in the eastern side of the fort, eight **zombies** begin to emerge from swampy muck and shamble to the closest character.

## 3 - The Gates

**Encounter: The Medusa.** If a character moves towards the *Vexillum of the First Cohort*, the **medusa** with a long serpentine body in lieu of legs reveals herself from the headquarters. Apply the following modifications to the stat block:

- **New Action: Constrict.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the medusa can't constrict another target.
- **New Action: Multiattack.** The medusa makes either three melee attacks—one with its snake hair, one to constrict, and one with its shortsword—or two ranged attacks with its longbow.

If the party has killed the first giant constrictor snake, she will scream out and attack them on sight.

If the party has not killed her pet, she will be neutral and command them to "Leave my home and never return if you wish to keep your lives." The medusa's Petrifying Gaze will still affect any characters that do not actively try to avoid staring at her. Corvo will make sure to not look directly at her during this time.

If the party still tries to take the *Vexillum* or move in any direction other than the exit of the fort, she will immediately attack. The party can try to convince her with a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check to let them take the banner to avoid other soldiers from returning to try and find it if they were to leave without it.

**Treasure: Battle Standard.** The *Vexillum of the First Cohort* (see Appendix C) is held by a statue grasping a flail with a silver head and chain.

## 4 - The Headquarters

The lone building within the Fort is constructed with stone walls and a wooden floor and roof with no windows. The entrance door is kicked down off the hinges leading directly to the main office area with broken desks and tables. Maps, scrolls, and books lie scattered across the floor.

**Encounter: The Second Pet.** If a character enters the headquarters, the second **giant constrictor snake** attempts to use its Constrict action to grapple them before attacking the rest of the party.

The southern part of the room has two unlocked iron gates for what was supposed to be a makeshift armory though it was never properly stocked in time prior to the attack. Within the gates is an empty crate, and a locked wooden chest.

**Treasure: Locked Chest.** Within the locked chest are three *potions of healing*, a *handy haversack*, and 283 gp.

The northern room also has its door knocked down, with a small wooden bath half full with clear water in the corner. A broken armchair and bed with tossed sheets give a sign that

this tousel room was the Cohort's main officers' room before the attack. An open chest at the foot of the bed is empty except for a small brass key that opens the chest behind the iron gates.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the medusa is killed, the mist surrounding the fort lifts. When the party leaves the upper fort, a group of humans have made their way to the palisade wall to recover the fort now that the unnatural mist has dissipated.

**Encounter: Scouting Party.** A chieftain **berserker** and their raiding group, one **tribal warrior** per party member, charge in from the fort entrance with the surrounding fog having cleared. Like the medusa, they just want the fort for themselves, especially after the losses their tribe has suffered trying to claim it. They are willing to let the party leave peacefully if they promise that neither they, nor any more soldiers ever return to the swamp.

Corvo will have qualms about the characters making such an agreement with the same tribe that attacked the fort in the first place but is easily swayed with a DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check due to having recovered the *Vexillum*.

With the *Vexillum* recovered, the party must make their way back to the kingdom to return it to its rightful place, so a new First Cohort can be mustered with Corvo being promoted to officer if he still remains the Cohort's lone survivor. For performing such a feat, and returning the army's most sacred artifact, the party will receive payment of 400 pp.

If the party chooses to not return to the kingdom with the standard and Corvo still lives, he will try to persuade the party to let him take it back. If refused, he will attack the carrier to retrieve it, even if it costs him his life. Ω



# THE CURSE OF SWAMPENSTEIN

An adventure for level 4 characters

Written by **Thomas J. Firestone**  
Cartography by **Thomas J. Firestone**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

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*The Curse of Swampenstein is a Fifth Edition adventure optimized for four characters of 4th level.*

This adventure is setting-agnostic and can be easily placed into any swamp setting. Fight past zombies and cultists through a rotten, sunken chateau and stop the demented Dr. Swampenstein from resurrecting a mindless, rampaging monster!

## Adventure Background

In this part of the swamp, each new moon brings with it inclement weather and terrible lightning storms—tonight brings one such new moon. The village of Dingebottom, nestled deep in the swamp, once again battens down the hatches to weather the storm. Normally, a new moon storm wouldn't bother Dingebottom's dauntless denizens in the slightest; however, the recent undead attacks on the village make this particular storm exponentially more terrifying. The villagers are shaken and on edge, fearing for their lives.

The undead are, in part, the creations of Brother Ouango and his cult followers who left the village over a year ago to practice forbidden necromancy. Dr. Swampenstein, an unhinged researcher banished from the local university for performing grisly, unsanctioned research, sought out, found, and partnered with Brother Ouango and his cult to collaborate on further grim experiments. Dr. Swampenstein's former research, inventions, and contraptions (powered by the lightning storm), combined with Brother Ouango's knowledge of necromancy, ultimately culminate in bringing a flesh golem to life.

The abandoned, dilapidated chateau deeper in the swamp, which belonged to an alchemist years ago, serves as their laboratory and base of operations.



## Adventure Hooks

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

- **Treasures of the Alchemist.**

Rumor has it that somewhere out in the swamp, there is an old, ruined chateau that used to be the dwelling of a famous alchemist long ago. It is said that within the house, there is a hidden room that contains the alchemist's research: potions and treasures that still lie uncovered. Seeking it out, the characters find themselves in Dingebottom, a small village located in the swamp.

- **Undead Attacks.** Dingebottom has recently suffered from undead attacks. With each attack, the undead get tougher and soon the village will be overwhelmed. Mother Valeau, the village priestess, fears it might be her nephew and his cadre resurrecting the undead. She wants you to investigate the sunken chateau, which she thinks is their hideout, and stop them.

- **Capture the Demented Doctor.**

The characters receive a letter from Professor Bogg, a researcher from a local university. In it, he requests the characters meet him in Dingebottom to help search for and apprehend his brilliant but misguided former colleague, Dr. Swampenstein. He fears how the unfettered experimentation has twisted Swampenstein, but believes that with time, the man can be rehabilitated. As a reward, he offers a bounty of 500 gp.

## Dingebottom

The characters find themselves in the swamp village of Dingebottom.

When the characters enter the village, read:

The raised huts in the village are dark and silent; there is no one outside to greet you. Over the rain and occasional thunder cracks, you can hear faint sounds of drumming coming from the modest temple situated at the center of the village, and light flickers from inside.

### Dingebottom's Temple

Huddled inside, the villagers have bivouacked in the relative safety the temple provides. Several of them are playing drums and sing-chanting. A thin cloud of incense hangs in the air and various bones, roots, and dried herbs adorn the temple altar. Plates of food and libations have been offered at the foot of the altar, encircled by a ring of coins.

**Mother Valeau.** Mother Valeau (NG female human **priest**), an elderly human female dressed in priest's robes, feeds a large snake by the altar

and is talking to an erudite, well-dressed human male. She notices the characters and waves them over.

Mother Valeau greets the characters and shares the village's troubles:

- Her charismatic nephew and former acolyte Brother Ouango has twisted their religion and has become obsessed with the undead.
- Some of the villagers developed a cult-like devotion to him.
- There was an altercation in the temple between the nature-loving followers of Mother Valeau and the cultists of Brother Ouango regarding the village's use of magic.
- Not long after the altercation, Brother Ouango and his cult disappeared into the swamp one night, presumably to continue their heretic worship undisturbed. She thinks they're holed up in the abandoned alchemist's chateau deeper in the swamp.
- Recently, and with growing frequency, undead creatures emerge from the deeper swamp and attack the village. They grow stronger with each attack.
- She implores the party to travel to the chateau and stop the cult. The



poor village doesn't have much in the way of compensation, but she can give the characters some holy water and acid to help them and heal them upon their return.

**Professor Bogg.** Professor Bogg (NG male human **commoner**) greets the characters and references the letter if that adventure hook was used.

- He is on the trail of his former colleague, Dr. Swampenstein.
- Swampenstein became increasingly unhinged after the death of his young son. Not long after that, rumors of his grave-robbing and undead experimentation reached the academic leadership. After refusing to submit his work to the scrutiny of the university's bureaucracy, he was publicly disgraced and his research discredited.
- Bogg was never close to Swampenstein, but admires his brilliance, even if he disagrees with his methods. He feels that he could rehabilitate Dr. Swampenstein if he could only sit down with the man.
- He has tracked Swampenstein to this swamp, and after seeing the zombies that attacked Dingebottom, knows it's the work of Swampenstein and that he must be working with the cultists in some fashion.
- He offers a map of the area to the party so they can easily navigate to the chateau.
- He offers a 500 gp reward to the characters for the safe return of Dr. Swampenstein.

**Treasure: Swamp Supplies.**

Mother Valeau wishes the characters success and gives them a sack containing three flasks of holy water and two vials of acid.

## The Sunken Chateau

The party can just barely see the outline of a decaying, two story, ramshackle chateau.

As the characters approach the chateau read the following:

Wrought iron fencing encloses the property and the storm winds cause the front gate to violently swing open and shut with a loud metal clang. The building itself looks completely lifeless, as if its rotten corpse is slowly being consumed by the swamp itself.

### General Features

The air is damp, humid, and stale inside the chateau. Mosquitos incessantly pester the party with their buzzing and biting. The interior is suffused with rot and moss.

Unless otherwise stated, its features are described as follows:

**Ceilings, Floors, and Walls.** The ceilings, floors, and walls are made from wood and most surfaces are covered in moss. The ceilings are 10 feet high except in the Laboratory, Back Area (**area 18**), which has a ceiling that is 20 feet high. The windows have all been boarded up.

**Doors.** The doors are wood and seem sturdy. All doors are unlocked unless otherwise stated. A character must succeed on a DC 20 Strength (Athlet-

ics) check to break a door down. The doors have AC 15, 20 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

**Illumination.** The bioluminescence of hundreds of captured fireflies are the only sources of light in the building. The cultists keep the collected fireflies in large jars that they've placed throughout the chateau. These jars are functionally identical to lamps in that they last 6 hours, shed bright light for 15 feet, and dim light for an additional 30 feet. Area descriptions assume that the characters have their own sources of light or darkvision.

**Swampy Conditions.** The chateau is being slowly reclaimed by the swamp and is sinking into the soft earth as a result. The courtyard (**area 1**) and the surrounding grounds are partially submerged in murky green bog muck and are considered difficult terrain.

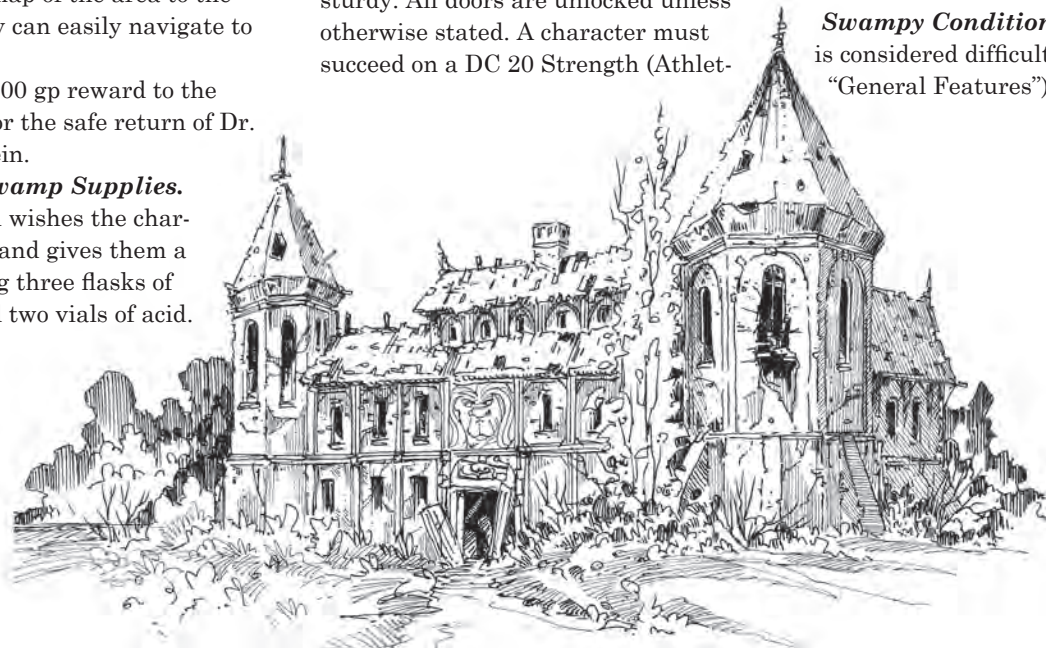
### Encounter Locations

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

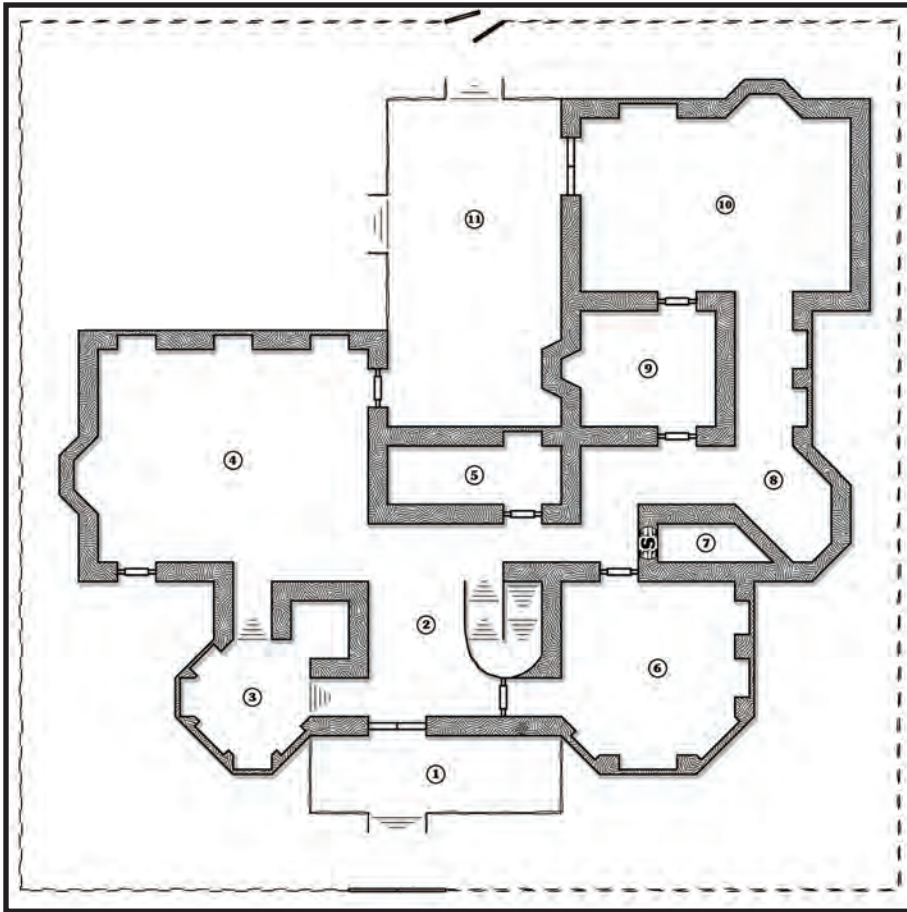
#### 1. Sunken Courtyard

Beyond the wrought iron gates is the chateau's courtyard. The lawn surrounding the building is unkempt, overgrown, and soupy with mud and muck.

**Swampy Conditions.** This area is considered difficult terrain (see "General Features").







There is one obvious entry into the building: the front door that leads into the foyer. The southern door leading to **area 4** is barred from the inside.

**Encounter: Putrid Haunts.** Two **putrid haunts** (see Appendix D) are buried in swamp muck on each side of the entrance and are treated as invisible until they animate. They animate and attack when one of the characters steps onto the porch or tries to explore around the outside of the chateau.

## 2. Foyer and Stairs

The wooden floor of the foyer is rotten and disintegrated revealing the stone foundation of the house beneath.

When the characters first enter this area, read the following:

The words, "NO FIRES" are written in all caps on the northern foyer wall in what appears to be firefly

bio-luminescence. It gives off a faint greenish glow.

The sound of clinking mugs and celebratory revelry can be heard from the ballroom (**area 4**). The cultists located there will investigate any loud sounds if the characters make too much noise.

**Obstacle: Collapsed Stairs.** The wooden stairs have rotted and will loudly collapse if more than one character begins to climb them. If any of the characters want to inspect the stairs, a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check will show that they will collapse under any significant amount of weight (more than one person).

Located on the second floor balcony to the right of the stairwell, there is a rope ladder that the cultists use to bypass the stairwell. It is coiled up and hidden from view at the moment. If the characters make a successful

DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check they will notice two newer looking ring hooks bolted to the floor that the cultists use to secure the rope ladder. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) will clue the characters in that the rope ladder may be coiled up on the second floor.

Alternatively, **Voleur d'Oeufs** (in **area 9**) can reveal the information and provide a halberd that he uses to grab the coiled ladder and pull it down.

## 3. West Turret

This room has moldy furniture, a large damp rug, and a small alcove in the northeast.

**Treasure: Ceremonial Censer & Incense.** In the alcove, atop a small altar sit an ornate, golden ceremonial censer and several blocks of high-quality incense. The censer and incense are worth 50 gp.

## 4. Ballroom

This expansive ballroom is lined with cocktail tables and stools. Large jars of fireflies sit atop tables throughout the ballroom, casting dim, greenish light. The once-elegant dance floor is cracked and rotten. A large, newly-tapped barrel of ale haphazardly sits on the western bar.

**Encounter: Cultists & Ogre Zombie.** There are three **cultists** cheering and drinking ale in the ballroom while an **ogre zombie** dances around. They will attack the characters on sight.

The southern door is barred from the inside, and the northeastern door is trapped from the outside.

## 5. Storeroom

This room is filled with loosely arranged crates and barrels of long expired foodstuffs.

## 6. Parlor

The parlor room has a smashed piano by the south window, and cushioned armchairs and sofas throughout, all covered in mold and mildew. The soft sound of snoring can be heard.

**Encounter: Cultists.** Three cultists are in this room. Two are asleep on cots in the northeast corner, and the third is supposed to be keeping watch seated on a stool by the west wall, but he's also asleep.

### 7. Alchemist's Hidden Study

The door to this room was made to look like part of the wall and can be discovered with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check or a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check.

This room appears to have been the private study of some kind of alchemist. The secret entrance was well sealed, and this is the only room in the entire building that hasn't been at least partially ruined by the elements.

A wooden vial rack with vials of various colored liquids sits atop a desk in the east corner of the room. Papers and journals litter the desktop. Research supplies are on a worktable on the south wall, and a shortsword in its scabbard hangs from a hook on the north wall.

A cursory study of the formulas and notes let the characters know what the potions sitting in the vial rack are and also that the sword hanging on the wall is a magic weapon. The notes are written in some kind of esoteric shorthand though, making it difficult to replicate the recipes contained therein. The alchemist was apparently named: Al.

**Treasure: Alchemist's Trove.** The sword on the wall is a +1 *shortsword*. The vial rack contains one vial of *antitoxin*, one *potion of healing*, one *potion of greater healing*, one *potion of climbing*, and one *potion of fire breath*. Sitting next to the vial rack is a flask of alchemist's fire. The jewelry box contains five malachite gems (50 gp), three moss agate gems (30 gp), and one quartz gem (50 gp). The research supplies on the southern worktable comprise a full complement of alchemist's supplies and an herbalism kit, if all materials are taken.

### 8. Sitting Room & Hallway

If the characters approach quietly, they can hear muffled singing coming from the kitchen (area 9).

There are several filthy chaise lounge chairs surrounding a large, multi-hose hookah in the southeast corner of the sitting room.

### 9. Kitchen

This room has all the accoutrement of an upscale kitchen. Pots, pans, and other cooking utensils hang above preparation tables.

A lone cultist is cooking large snake eggs over a wood-burning stove singing an upbeat tune about finding love in all the wrong places. He has puncture marks, cuts, scrapes, and bruises over his hands, arms, and face. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check shows these wounds to be snake bites.

**Encounter: Cultist.** This cultist will not put up a fight, but instead pleads for his life.

If asked, he will divulge all the information he has:

- His name is Voleur d'Oeufs.
- Swampenstein's flesh golem should awaken any moment now.
- He knows the positions of all of the other cultists, Brother Ouango, and Dr. Swampenstein in areas 4, 6, 17, and 18 respectively.
- He knows about the coiled rope ladder (area 2) the cultists use to get to the second floor and that the stairs will collapse if any significant weight is put on them. He gives the party his halberd, which he uses to grab the rope ladder and pull it down.
- The snakes in the dining room (area 10) will not attack as long as the party stays 20 feet away. He's been stealing the snake's eggs for food.

He implores the characters not to tell Dr. Swampenstein or Brother Ouango that he lit a fire in the oven. He'll then beg the characters to let him escape out the back, through the dining room (area 10).

**Treasure: Voleur's Halberd.** Voleur gives you his halberd as a way to pull the rope ladder in area 2 down.

### 10. Dining Room

The large tables and chairs in the dining room are all knocked over and covered in layers of dust and cobwebs. In the northeast corner of this room are several snakes huddled around their nest.

**Encounter: Snakes.** Three **poisonous snakes** and two **giant poisonous snakes** begin hissing at the characters if they enter the room and attack them if they get closer than 20 feet. They protect their eggs to the death.

**Treasure: Gold Necklace with Tiny Ruby.** Lying at the bottom of the pile of snake eggs is a gold necklace with a tiny ruby pendant (worth 75 gp).

### 11. Back Patio

Heavily rusted tables and chairs sit partially submerged on the back patio.

The double doors to the northeast leading to the dining room (area 10) are barred from the inside.

The door to the southwest leading to the ballroom (area 4) is unlocked but trapped.

**Trap: Poison Gas.** The door handle has been rigged to trigger a cloud of poisonous gas when someone turns the handle. It can be spotted with a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. Once spotted, it can be neutralized with a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A character without thieves' tools can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers. When the trap is triggered, a cloud of poisonous gas releases and each creature within 10 feet of the door must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



## 12. Second-Floor Balcony

The floors of the second-floor balcony are damp, and the few rugs scattered about are saturated with condensation.

## 13. Upper Patio

The upper patio has a few dusty side tables along with several moldy, cobwebbed lounge chairs facing the boarded-up windows to the west.

## 14. Master Bedroom

The master bedroom contains a canopied bed, a large armoire, a vanity, and a dresser.

As the characters enter this room, read the following:

The acrid stench of death fills your nostrils, and you can see two decaying corpses lying on the bed, covered in rats, daggers sticking out of their bodies.

If the party gets within 10 feet of the zombies, they animate and attack.

### **Encounter: Zombies and Rats.**

Two **zombies** and four **swarms of rats** attack if the characters get within 10 feet of them.

## 15. Library

Broken and rotting bookshelves line the south and east walls of this room. A loveseat and armchair, both of which are heavily stained, sit in the southwest corner. All of the books have been destroyed and are strewn about the floor in various stages of disarray and decomposition.

## 16. Waiting Room

There is a lone couch and side table in the waiting room.

A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that one of the couch cushions is askew. If the characters investigate further, they find a small pouch of gold underneath.

**Treasure: Loose Change.** This small pouch contains 10 gp.

## 17. Laboratory, Front Area

The front area of the laboratory contains sinks, ruined medical supplies,

spoiled alchemical reagents, as well as small cages, shackles, manacles, and other restraining devices.

Large and small jars filled with yellowish fluid line the shelves on each side, housing body parts of all shapes, sizes, and stages of decay.

Behind the crates to the east, several fresh corpses are piled on top of one another, their blood pooled beneath them.

Brother Ouango and his pet giant constrictor snake are waiting in this room, and they attack the characters on sight.

**Encounter: Brother Ouango and Giant Constrictor Snake.** As soon as he gets the chance, Brother Ouango (NE male human **cult fanatic**) will cast *hold person* on the closest character along with *spiritual weapon* (in the form of a leg bone). The **giant constrictor snake** will attempt to constrict the second closest character. Both will fight to the death.

Immediately after the characters defeat Brother Ouango and the giant constrictor snake, read the following:

A thunder crack booms so loudly that it rattles the floor. Bright light flashes momentarily from the gaps along the door frames leading to the back laboratory. A few moments later, a voice behind the doors cackles dementedly and cries out, "It's alive, ALIVE!"

## 18. Laboratory, Back Area

As the characters open the doors to the inner lab, they come face-to-face with Dr. Swampenstein's creation, a **flesh golem**.

The lab's back area has been modified with a large surgery table, a lightning rod, and other mechanical devices that loudly whirl, click, and crackle with electricity. There is a catwalk around the perimeter of the room 10 feet above the floor.

**Encounter: Flesh Golem & Dr. Swampenstein.** Dr. Swampenstein (CE male human **commoner**) avoids direct combat if his flesh golem is

alive but will hurl vials of acid at the party from the catwalk above while laughing maniacally (he has five vials of acid).

If the flesh golem is defeated, Dr. Swampenstein will become enraged, cursing at the party for killing his "son." He'll come down from the catwalk and try to hit the characters with any remaining vials of acid he has. If he is out of acid, he will tear off a pipe from one of his machines and use it as a club to attack the party.

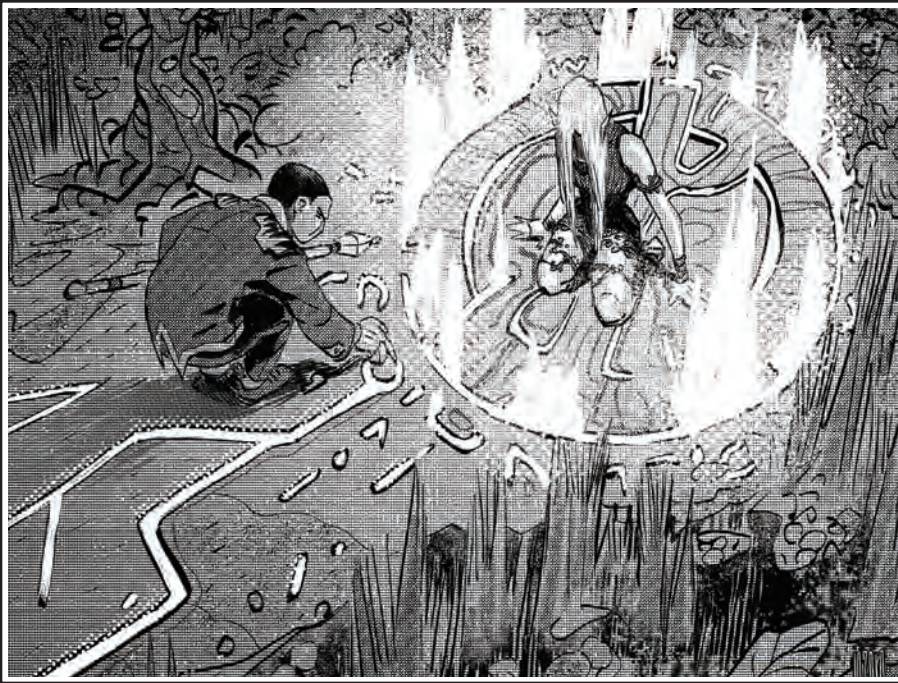
If the characters attempt to subdue Dr. Swampenstein, he struggles angrily. After struggling for a while, he accepts defeat and becomes gloomy and morose, hoarsely mumbling inaudible gibberish to himself. Every so often, he laments "my son, my son."

## Concluding the Adventure

The characters arrive back in Dingenbottom and tell Mother Valeau what happened. She is saddened to hear about her nephew and the other villagers-turned-cultists, but she heals the party's wounds and thanks them profusely. She and some of her acolytes begin praying for the souls of Brother Ouango and the others. The villagers are back in their respective homes, some appear mournful, but all are grateful and it is declared that henceforth, the party shall always be welcome in Dingenbottom.

If Dr. Swampenstein was taken back alive, Professor Bogg gladly pays out the promised 500 gp. As the two scientists head out for their journey back to the university, Swampenstein snaps out of his dour demeanor and giggles excitedly. He shouts at the party, "You haven't seen the last of Dr. Swampenstein!"

Dr. Swampenstein could potentially escape from custody and if he does, it's a sure bet that he'll want to take revenge on the party for killing his flesh golem "son", opening up future adventure possibilities. Ω



# THE MISTS OF DUMAR

An adventure for level 4 characters

Written by **Ellie Hogan**  
Cartography by **Ellie Hogan**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

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*The Mists of Dumar is a Fifth Edition adventure for a party of three to five 3rd- to 5th-level characters. The adventure is optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4.*

The adventure is setting agnostic and can be placed in any world with a town at the edge of a misty swamp. Players who finish this adventure 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

Dumar is a small but orderly city located just outside of a dense and dangerous swamp. Tensions have been high between the city and the creatures that live in the swamp for years as both sides believe they are the rightful owners of the land. A logging operation has been stymied for over a year because any time the citizens of Dumar enter the swamp the fey creatures that live there respond by spooking their animals, stealing their crops, and generally causing mischief. Lumber prices are climbing and the lack of new housing, business places, and transportation is becoming a major problem for the growing city.

The leader of Dumar, Lord Quadraf, is getting married in a week's time, and is hosting a five-day-long festival as a lead-up to the ceremony. He has decided that now is the perfect time to get rid of some of the more problematic swamp denizens: a pair of ogres and a fey enclave. He has a plan for the fey but needs the ogres out of the way first. Once both groups are gone, he'll be able to start draining and logging the swamp.



## Adventure Hooks

**A Quest For a Champion.** One of the main festival attractions is a tournament of the best fighters in the land. If the players compete and win, they are 'rewarded' with a quest to eliminate an ogre who has been terrorizing the local population. After completing the quest, they will be able to collect 500 gp of prize money.

**Green Terrorist.** Lord Quadraf has heard tales of the party's previous kind and good deeds and prevails upon them to save the locals from a bloodthirsty ogre that has been stealing livestock and attacking farmers and merchants.

**Ogre Bounty.** Lord Quadraf is offering 500 gp to anyone willing to brave the swamp and kill the evil ogre residing within by the end of tomorrow.

Regardless of which hook is used, Lord Quadraf explains the quest himself from his viewing box.

As Lord Quadraf finishes explaining the quest, he beckons to a guard with a small girl giggling on her shoulders. As she rushes to come over, Lord Quadraf declares that the guard, Pressida, will be your guide to the ogres. From behind him, a wizard enters the viewing box, chanting monotonously from a scroll. He finishes his spell, casting geas on Pressida: "Lead this group to the ogre residing in the swamp near Dumar and kill it as quickly as you are able."

Pressida uses the **thug** stat block and is terrified of Lord Quadraf but needs the money from being a guard to raise her daughter. She urges the characters to leave as quickly as possible, explaining that going against

the orders will mean her death due to the *geas* spell.

If asked, Lord Quadraf insists that this is simply insurance to ensure the completion of this terribly important mission. While this is partially true, he also wants to keep anyone who might want to stop him out of his way before he launches his attack on the good-aligned fey enclave. If the players continue resisting his orders, he won't hesitate to threaten their reputation or loved ones.

**Encounter: Unwelcomed Compulsion.** If the players try to attack Lord Quadraf (a **noble** with 30 hp), he and his **wizard bodyguard** (see Appendix D) retreat into the castle and send guards (ten **thugs** led by a **bandit captain**) out to arrest them with non-lethal force. The area is packed with commoners, making area of effect spells unwise.



The Mists

After accepting their mission, the players are led to (or left unconscious at) the edge of the swamp. The lush rolling meadows surrounding Dumar abruptly give way to a tangle of dense trees, protruding roots, and pools of stagnant water. The trees of the swamp are so dense that even during the day the swamp has dim lighting. One of the most dangerous features of the swamp are the mists which can trick the mind and separate even the most seasoned group of adventurers. As the players move deeper into the swamp, read:

The mist which once pooled around the bases of the trees has slowly grown denser until it has become a nearly impenetrable fog. Visibility is limited to only 15 feet in any direction and navigation has become virtually impossible. From the corner of your eye, you see shadows moving just at the edge of your field of vision.

The mists are a complex trap. To track the players' progress through the mists, use the Mist Density table below. Players start at a mist density of 3.

**Mist Density.**

Density	Lurking Shadow Damage
1	4 (1d8)
2	9 (2d8)
3	13 (3d8)
4	18 (4d8)
5+	22 (5d8)

Have your players roll initiative. The mist acts on initiative count 20 and initiative count 10 and the mist density starts at 2.

**Swamp Gases (Initiative 20).**

Bubbles of swamp gas burst and fill the air with toxic gases. Each creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or roll a d6 on the Mist Madness table, the effects of which last until the next time swamp gases activate:

**Mist Madness.**

d6	Madness Effect
1	You believe you are one of the shadow creatures and must try to slip away into the mists.
2	You become frightened of the shadow creatures. You are convinced they are real, even if you have previously seen through the illusion.
3	You believe all creatures are shadow creatures and must attack the closest creature to yourself.
4	Your brain becomes muddled. You have disadvantage on all Intelligence and Wisdom saving throws.
5	The gas stings your eyes, and you are blinded.
6	You are convinced that you stand on the only safe patch of ground and refuse to move.

**Lurking Shadows (Initiative 10).** Indistinct, shadowy forms dart through the mist. They reach out to grab any creature in the mist. Each character must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw, taking psychic damage according to the Mist Density table on a failed save. On a success, the character realizes that the shadows are illusions and no longer takes damage from the lurking shadows.

**Deeper Into the Mists.** Each round, the players are drawn deeper into the mist. Mist density increases by 1 at the start of each round.

**Countermeasures.** The lurking shadows are hallucinations. A player who realizes this, either from the fact that they do psychic damage or by succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Survival) check to determine whether they have heard of the mist, can use their action to make a DC 12 Intelligence ability check. On a success, they see through the illusion and no longer take damage from the lurking shadows.

The mists can be dispersed by wind of moderate or greater speed (at least

10 miles per hour), such as the wind created by the *gust of wind* spell. The mist density decreases by 1 each round such an effect is active.

Navigation is difficult in the mists, and all checks made to escape are made with disadvantage. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check is able to lead all characters it can see towards the edge of the mist, reducing the mist density by 1.

A character who goes below a mist density of 1 escapes the trap.

The Ogres

Shortly after the characters escape the mist, they arrive at the ogres' dwelling.

After escaping the mist, you find yourself in a small clearing. A mound of dirt surrounded by the roots of a dead tree seems to have been converted into a dwelling complete with a roughly hewn wooden door. An ogre sits on a log just outside the door.

If any characters were separated and reduced to 0 hp from the mists, the ogres collect and stabilize them. These characters are currently lying unconscious on the ground in front of the ogre. The ogres aren't inherently good, but with Lord Quadraf out to get them, they know that the last thing they need is adventurers dying in their swamp. If Pressida is with the characters and conscious, she will immediately attack the ogres because she can't risk resisting the *geas*.

**Encounter: The Bad Guys?** Two ogres reside here. The second is inside the house when the characters arrive. They have no intention to start a fight but will defend themselves if the characters attack. They attempt to use non-lethal damage. If all characters are reduced to 0 hp, the ogres leave them at the edge of the swamp where they wake up an hour later.

A **sprite** named Sprite has been



hiding invisibly while the players interact with the ogres. He has heard that Lord Quadraf plans to enter the swamp with his strongest men tomorrow morning to attack Lynairra, the de facto fey leader. If the ogres are still alive, Sprite directly asks them for assistance and says that Lynairra can give them treasure and a fey blessing if they help. If the ogres are dead, Sprite will try to determine the alignment of the characters and will appeal to any good-aligned characters in particular.

If at least one ogre is killed, the *geas* spell will be considered complete and Pressida will go back to Dumar. She has no interest in going against Lord Quadraf, although she promises the characters that whatever happens, she will not say anything of their involvement. Otherwise, she will continue attacking the ogres to the best of her ability, despite being reluctant to do so.

### Lynairra's Lair

The following locations are keyed to the provided map of Lynairra's Lair. Sprite knows the general layout of Lynairra's Lair and the quickest path to reach the fey matriarch, but none of the dangers since he flies over them.

### General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in Lynairra's lair have the following features.

**Ceilings, Floors, and Walls.** The water depth between hummocks ranges from one to three feet and counts as difficult terrain. Any time a creature enters the water, there is a 25% chance that a **giant toad** attacks them. Dense swamp gases swirl over the water and reduce visibility to 15 feet, effectively creating walls between hummocks. Any creature that enters the swamp gases' area or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or roll a d6 on the Swamp Madness table:



### Swamp Madness.

d6	Madness Effect
1	You feel compelled to go deeper into the mist. You travel your full movement speed away from land.
2	You become frightened of the mist and begin to scream loudly.
3	You believe all creatures are enemies and must attack the closest creature to yourself.
4	Your brain becomes muddled. You have disadvantage on all Intelligence and Wisdom saving throws.
5	The gas stings your eyes, and you are blinded.
6	You believe you are surrounded by aquatic monsters and refuse to move.

A creature can only be affected by one condition from the table at a time. At the end of each of its turns, a creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

**Lighting.** The dense trees and swirling mists block sunlight. The entire area is dimly lit during the day and dark at night.

### Encounter Locations

See the map overleaf.

#### 1 - Lord Quadraf's Guards

**Encounter: None Shall Pass.** The easiest way to access the connected series of hummocks is patrolled by Lord Quadraf's guards: four **thugs** led by a **bandit captain**. Although the guards are afraid of Lord Quadraf, they value their lives more. When a guard's hit points drop below half, they make a DC 10 Wisdom check. On a failure, the guard surrenders or flees.

If the ogres came with the group, they will stay here to protect the party's back as the party continues into the dungeon.

The bridge to **area 2** does not require any checks to cross.

#### 2 - Boom

A single tree grows on this hummock. A puppet with Lord Quadraf's likeness smiles guilelessly at you from its perch on one of the tree's dead branches.

**Trap: Explosive Puppet.** The puppet has had *glyph of warding*

(save DC 13) set to Explosive Runes (thunder damage) cast on it. It triggers if any creature not wearing Lord Quadraf's insignia moves within 10 feet of it.

The fallen tree leading to **area 3** is rotting and covered in slippery moss. A character crossing it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall into the water.

### 3 - Empty Hummock

Trees grow at the south and west edges of this hummock while the northern edge slopes down until it is level with the water.

A character can use the trees growing at the west of this hummock to cross to **area 4**. The character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to cross without falling into the water.

A muddy bridge connects this hummock to **area 6**. The mud is difficult terrain.

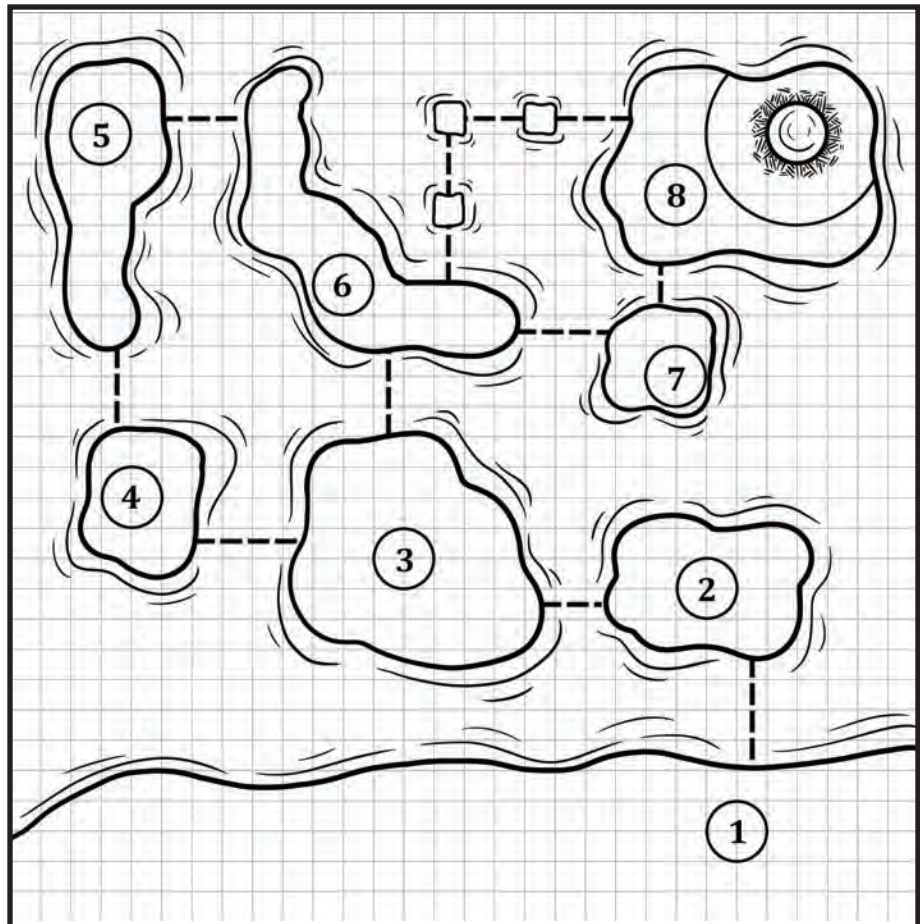
### 4 - Adventurer Raft

Peeking out from the reeds at the edge of this hummock you can just make out the corner of a small raft.

A character that moves the reeds to investigate the raft sees the mangled corpse of the raft's previous owner rotting upon it. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check can determine that the cause of death was a large, festering bite wound, likely caused by a giant toad.

**Treasure: Adventurer Goods.** The dead adventurer is carrying a coin purse with 100 gp and a *potion of water breathing*.

**Obstacle: Webs.** Spider webs strung between dead trees on the north of this hummock and **area 5** create a web bridge that is 5 feet wide and 10 feet tall and has the properties of webs created by the *web* spell (save DC 12).



### 5 - Spider Nest

Large spider webs cover every inch of this hummock, draping over dead trees and trailing into the water.

**Obstacle: Webs.** Treat this location as if it were affected by the *web* spell (save DC 12). A player with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score above 10 notices four gemstones hanging within the webs.

**Encounter: Lurking Spiders.** Three **giant spiders** hide within the webs and can be detected with a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. They wait to ambush any creature that enters their domain.

**Treasure: An Obvious Trap.** The gemstones are carnelian gems worth 50 gp each. The fey placed them in the spider webs to make sure greedy adventurers have a difficult time reaching Lynairra.

Roots and mounds of earth protrude from the water to create a path to **area 6**. A character must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to determine a safe path. On a failure or if no check is made, a character attempting to reach **area 6** falls into the water. Once one character has found a safe path, the rest may follow with no additional check required.

### 6 - Sucking Bog

This patch of land barely rises above the water level. Lush moss covers the perfectly flat expanse.

This part of the swamp has grown over with peat moss and become a sucking bog. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check will recognize the hazard this terrain confers. A creature weighing more than 50 pounds who enters this area sinks 1d4 feet into the moss



and mud beneath it and becomes restrained. At the start of each of its turns, it sinks an additional 1d4 feet. To escape the sucking bog, a character must succeed on a Strength check with a DC of 5 + the number of feet they have sunk in total. A creature that is not sinking may pull a creature out of the sucking bog using an action. If a creature becomes fully submerged, it begins to suffocate and can no longer be pulled out of the sucking bog.

Rocks covered in slippery moss create a path to **area 7**. A character that attempts to traverse the rocks must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the water.

Stone tiles protruding from the swamp at 10-foot intervals create a path to **area 8**.

### 7 - Thorny Loot

A treasure chest sits at the center of this small hummock, partially covered by a mass of moss, weeds, and thorny vines.

**Encounter: Thorny Guard.** The treasure chest is protected by a **shambling mound** which attacks any non-fey creature that enters its hummock. It will not leave its hummock unless it is attacked by a creature from another location. It will not move farther than 60 feet away from the treasure chest to keep it in sight at all times.

**Treasure: Fey Loot.** Lynairra keeps treasure here to reward helpful adventurers. The chest contains 800 gp, 1000 sp, 5000 cp, four moonstones worth 50 gp each, and a *pearl of power*.

Rocks covered in slippery moss create a path to **areas 6** and **8**. A character that attempts to traverse the rocks must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the water.

### 8 - Fey Fountain

A circle of stone tiles with intricate patterns has been laid at the far side of the hummock. A stone fountain bubbling with crystal clear water sits at the center. A fey woman is imprisoned within a 10-foot-radius circle of glowing runes centered on the fountain while Lord Quadraf's wizard bodyguard draws out a ritual around her. Lord Quadraf paces impatiently at one side, protected by a knight in gleaming armor.

If the characters were noisy in **areas 6** or **7** the creatures on this hummock know they are coming.

The fey woman is Lynairra, which Sprite can confirm. The wizard bodyguard has trapped her using the spell *magic circle* while he sets up a ritual to control her and, by extension, the rest of the fey living in the forest who see her as their leader. The spell will last for 30 more minutes. She begs the party to free her, offering them the treasure from **area 7** and her blessing if they stop Lord Quadraf. Lord Quadraf reminds the party that they work for him and offers them 500 gp (if he has not done so already) to ignore the ritual.

**Encounter: Stop the Ritual.** Lord Quadraf (a **noble** with 30 hp) has a *potion of gaseous form* he will attempt to use to flee, while his **wizard bodyguard** (see Appendix D) and **knight** remain behind to fight the party. Lord Quadraf will not fight unless compelled to do so by the mist or other magical means.

**Treasure: Lord Quadraf's Pockets.** Lord Quadraf carries a coin purse with 500 gp. If he did not have a chance to use his potion, the characters may take that as well.

### Concluding the Adventure

If the party returns after killing the ogres and ignores Sprite's plea to save Lynairra, they have to wait a day to receive their reward, as Lord Quadraf is off on important diplomatic business. Without the party's intervention, he successfully binds Lynairra to his will and begins to drain and clear-cut the swamp unimpeded.

If the players stop Lord Quadraf and save Lynairra, she bestows a blessing upon the players as Sprite promised, granting them each inspiration. She also allows them to take the contents of the chest in **area 7** if they have not done so already and orders the shambling mound to stand aside.

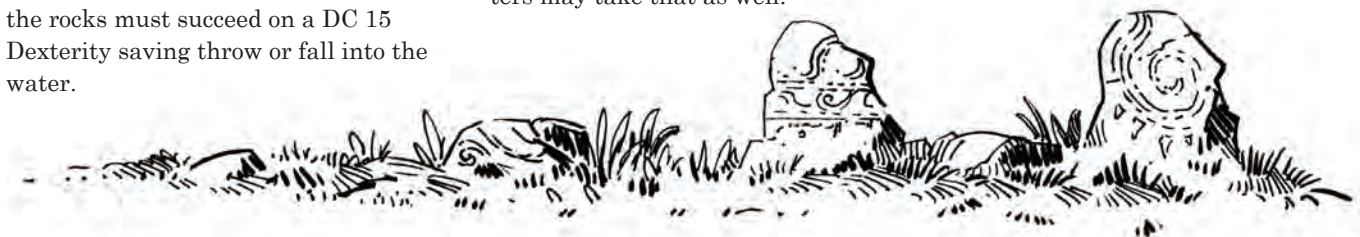
If Lord Quadraf escapes, he will do his best to destroy the party's reputation and inconvenience them in the future. Lord Quadraf isn't well-liked, so the players aren't likely to get into too much trouble if he does not return from his mission.

### Adventure Hook Resolutions

**A Quest For a Champion.** If the players come back with proof of at least one slain ogre, they are lauded as champions and given their 500 gp tournament winnings in a public ceremony.

**Green Terrorist.** If the players come back with proof of at least one slain ogre, they are treated as local heroes. Lord Quadraf gives them large gift baskets filled with food from local farms in a special ceremony. At the GM's discretion, they may get discounted prices from local merchants.

**Ogre Bounty.** If the players come back with proof of at least one slain ogre, they are given the 500 gp reward, as promised. Ω





# PRISON OF THE LAST VAMPIRE

An adventure for level 5 characters

Written by **Alexander LeFort**  
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*Prison of the Last Vampire is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to six characters of 5th to 7th level, optimized for a party of four 5th-level characters.*

After hundreds of years, a powerful illusion has finally faded, revealing a withering stone tower in the midst of a fetid swamp. The tower is the last vestige of an ancient feud between a family of vampires and the faction that hunted them known as the Bright Wardens. At the top of the tower is the last remaining member of the vampire family, imprisoned by powerful magic and suffering under the weight of his own immortality. What secrets await within the tower, and is the vampire inside at risk of escaping now that the magic shrouding the structure has faded? This adventure takes place in the realm of Bastion in the Freelands campaign setting but can easily be placed in any setting with a swamp that contains old ruins.

## Adventure Background

Hundreds of years ago, a network of large settlements occupied the lands now known as Blackmire Swamp. Though they were relatively prosperous, they lived in fear of the Kristoph vampire family that preyed upon their people. After years of offerings and acts of service to the vampires in the hopes of staving off their hunger, some of the people grew tired of the Kristoph's wanton murder and reign of tyranny. They founded the Bright Wardens—a collective of holy warriors dedicated to the defense of their lands and the resistance against the Kristoph vampire family. For years, the Bright Wardens were nothing but a minor nuisance to the vampires, as their numbers were small and their skills lacking. But as time progressed and the Bright Wardens grew stronger, they soon began to threaten the Kristoph's influence over the territory. The vampires went into hiding, taking great pains to conceal their



presence and continue their feeding while avoiding the watch of the Wardens. Gradually, the vampires fell one by one as they were procedurally hunted down and slaughtered. Eventually, the last vampire that remained was Hesel Kristoph, the patriarch of the family and the mastermind behind the vampires' acts. Deciding that death was too charitable a punishment for the monster, the Bright Wardens bound him with an *imprisonment* spell and promised that he would spend an eternity in confinement. Only by the word of the leader of the Bright Wardens, who is designated as such through their wielding of the *Sword of Calhain*, may Hesel ever be released.

The tower where Hesel Kristoph is imprisoned was not the only Bright Warden holding during the conflict, though it was their primary base of operations. Now, it is the last standing vestige of the ancient feud against the vampires. After the Bright Wardens defeated the Kristophs, there was little further need for their organization. As the last remaining members aged, they cloaked the tower where Hesel was imprisoned with powerful illusion magic so that he would remain hidden away in obscurity. The illusion has now finally faded, revealing the tower to

Blackmire Swamp. Since then, an oni named Suto, supported by his flock of gargoyles, has found the tower. Suto has learned of the vampire confined within and has been draining and drinking Hesel's blood, hoping to take the gift of vampirism for himself. Suto has been bleeding Hesel for over a week now, savoring every drop of blood and taunting Hesel throughout the process. Meanwhile, he has ordered his gargoyles to bring him living captives so that he may attempt to create his own vampire spawn. Three people have since gone missing from the small village of Brezet, and the villagers are growing increasingly concerned.

## Adventure Hooks

There are numerous reasons the characters may be drawn to the tower of the Bright Wardens. A few of these reasons are outlined below.

***An Impossible Appearance.*** A mysterious tower now stands where no structure stood before. Perhaps the characters see this tower for themselves or hear second-hand from those who claim to have seen it. Either way, intrigued, they decide to seek it out for themselves to uncover whatever mysteries it may hold.

***Mysterious Disappearances.*** Three villagers of Brezet have gone missing in the surrounding Blackmire Swamp within the last week. A mysterious tower has also appeared not far from the village. Surely, this cannot be a coincidence. The villagers plead for a capable adventuring party to help them, offering a reward of 150 gp for any information that can be provided about the missing persons.

***A Fabled Blade.*** A local scholar has heard of the tower that has appeared in the swamp, and she strongly suspects that it once belonged to the Bright Wardens. If the incomplete historical records she has read are true, a fabled blade known as the *Sword of Calhain* was laid to rest in the tombs beneath the tower. The *Sword of Calhain* can supposedly cleave any undead creature with a single strike. The adventurers may be interested in recovering the blade for their own purposes.



## Bright Warden Tower

The Bright Warden tower is a five-story tower of grey stone with a small cellar below. Hundreds of years of environmental changes and neglect have weakened the structure, causing some of the tower's facade to crack and crumble. However, the strength of the remaining *imprisonment* spell has helped to keep the form of the tower intact. Unless otherwise stated, the features of the tower are described as follows:

**Ceilings, Walls, and Floors.** The tower is constructed of grey sandstone hewn into heavy blocks. Ceilings on each floor are 10 feet high. Exterior walls are 2 feet thick.

**Embrasures.** Embrasures are positioned around the tower on the second, third, and fourth stories. They are large enough to provide entry only for Tiny-sized creatures or smaller.

**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 and are immune to poison and psychic damage.

**Staircase.** A winding stone staircase in the northeast corner connects the floors of the tower. It is now crumbling and uneven but does not require an ability check to climb.

**Light.** During the day, dim light filters through the embrasures in the tower's walls. It is otherwise unlit.

## Approaching the Tower

When the party comes within sight of the tower, read aloud the following:

A weathered stone tower comes into view amidst the sopping foliage of the surrounding swamp. It rests on the top of a small hillock, and a crumbling stone pathway snaking towards its entrance has been mostly reclaimed by the wilderness. Its front door hangs open slightly on its hinges, and the statue of a headless angel, damaged by time, adorns the archway.

## Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the provided map of Bright Warden Tower on the following page.

### T1. Living Quarters

This chamber looks to have served as living quarters, long ago. Rows of rotting bunks line the west wall. Strongboxes lie open nearby. Iron cooking pans and other utensils have been knocked to the floor. A pot hangs over a firepit in the middle of the room. The east wall is engraved with the words "light, hope, resistance" in large block script. A stone staircase ascends to an upper story and a door hangs ajar in the north wall. A trap door is set into the floor in the southwest corner of the room.

Sotu the oni uses this chamber to cook his meals. The firepit is cold, though a character who investigates it and makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds that the coals and ash suggest that it was used recently.

**Treasure: Holy Pendant.** Though most of the strongboxes are completely empty, one holds a small pendant on a silver chain that was forgotten by a Bright Warden long ago. It depicts a longsword laid over a heart and is worth 25 gp.

**Trapdoor.** The trapdoor is locked with an iron padlock that can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. It opens to the tower's cellar (**area T9**).

### T2. Storage

Rotted crates and barrels have been broken open in this room, littering the floor with their debris.

This room was used for regular storage and has since been torn apart by Sotu and his gargoyles in search of valuables. Any remaining food rations have long since rotted away, and the only things to be found in this room now are candles, pitons, rope, wooden stakes, and other miscellaneous mundanities.

### T3. Chapel

Four stone pews are arranged equidistantly from each other in the middle of the room and face the statue of a kneeling man, his face looking upwards in a hopeful expression, one hand gripping the sword at his side. Broken glass of various colors litters the floor. Bare stone altars sit along the east and west walls.

**Statue of the Paladin.** Upon closer inspection, water drips slowly from the statue's eyes, as if it is crying. Neutral or good-aligned characters within 30 feet of the statue feel a sense of calm come over them. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check can confirm that the statue is blessed, and it likely cries while evil creatures occupy the tower. The crying stops if Sotu and his gargoyles no longer occupy the tower.

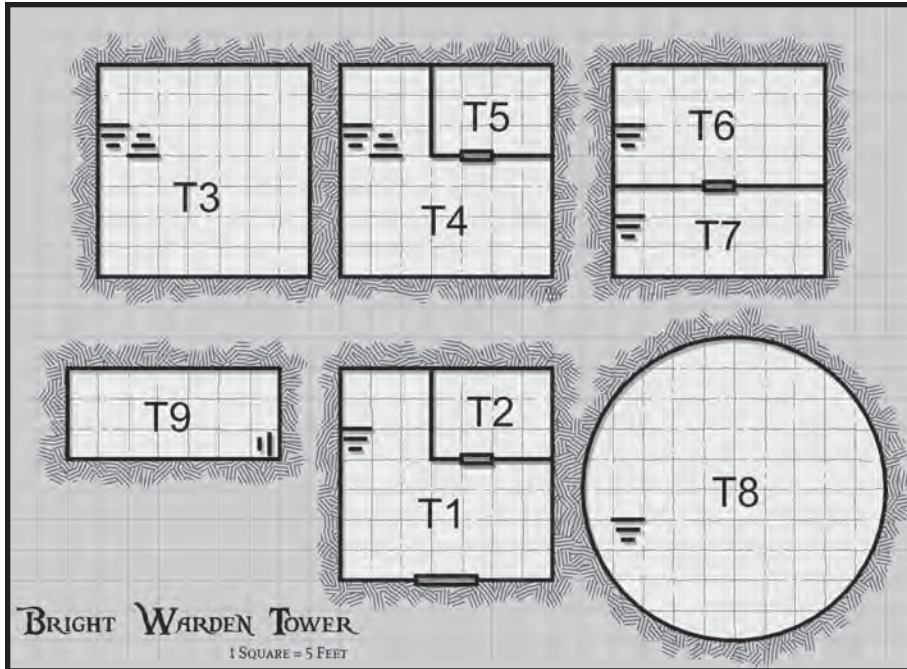
**Treasure: Vampire Teeth.** Characters with a passive Perception of 16 or higher notice a loose flagstone at the base of the statue. Buried under the flagstone is a small, dusty wooden box with a simple latch. It is a *box of vampire teeth* (see Appendix C). The Bright Wardens gathered the teeth as trophies from the vampires that they defeated. A character can make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check to immediately identify the teeth as vampire teeth.

Characters who enter this room with a passive Perception of 12 or higher are likely to hear the muffled sounds of argument coming from the floor above. Sotu's gargoyle minions often squabble with each other over the right to kill a recent prisoner they have taken or who amongst them is the most vile. The gargoyles have already looted the chapel and provided its valuable contents to Sotu.

### T4. Library

Aged wooden shelves laden with books line the walls of this chamber. Many books have been pulled off the shelves and torn apart, scattering their moldy pages over the floor.





Askew and overturned chairs surround an oak table in the middle of the room. A door hangs ajar in the north wall.

The books in this room include topics such as recent and ancient history, practical medicine, and religious doctrine. They are of little value.

**Encounter: Sotu's Gargoyles.**

Four of Sotu's **gargoyles** spend much of their time in this room arguing with each other and entertaining themselves by occasionally destroying books that seem important or valuable. They gleefully attack any intruders and fight until they are destroyed.

**Treasure: Spell Scrolls.** A character who makes a successful DC 15 Perception check while searching the library finds a wooden scroll tube engraved with the words "against vampires" and the initials "K.R." along its length. Inside is a *spell scroll of sunbeam*, a *spell scroll of control water*, and a *spell scroll of scrying*.

**What the Gargoyles Know.** If the characters have managed to incapacitate and interrogate a gargoyle, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check is required to convince the gargoyle to divulge any

potentially valuable information. If convinced, the gargoyles may share any of the following information with the party:

- They serve an oni named Sotu.
- Sotu found the tower a "few days" ago.
- A vampire is imprisoned at the top of the tower. Sotu has been consuming the vampire's blood to increase his own strength.
- "Sotu will slaughter you all like the animals you are."

**T5. Reading Room**

Two upholstered armchairs that rotted long ago surround a smaller tea table in the middle of the room. Against the east wall is a writing desk with its drawers pulled out and a three-legged stool that has been toppled over. More bookshelves line the walls. Coal and ash fill a stone hearth in the north wall.

The drawers of the writing desk are filled with calligraphy and painting supplies, including quills, parchment, and dried paints. The bookshelves hold more books similar to those found in the library.

**Treasure: Illuminated Manuscript.** A character who searches the

desk and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a false drawer that contains an unfinished illuminated manuscript. Its pages illustrate various holy warriors defeating wicked-looking vampires. Though it is incomplete, the artistry and materials used give it a value of 100 gp to the right buyer.

**Burned Journal.** Amidst the ashes and coals of the hearth is a partially-burned leather-bound book with much of its pages intact. The book once belonged to a paladin of the Bright Wardens who used it as a personal journal. The inner pages are marked with the initials "A.R." A character who spends a few minutes reviewing the journal can learn the following information:

- The Bright Wardens fought a faction of vampires known as the Kristophs for decades.
- They were eventually victorious, capturing the last remaining member of the family, named Heskel.
- The leader of the Bright Wardens, referred to as "Uther", was insistent on imprisoning Heskel for eternity, because death was too merciful. The author of the journal considered Uther's decision to be vengeful and reckless.
- The author raised this concern to Uther, but Uther was angered by the suggestion.
- The author considered leaving the order as Uther grew increasingly angry towards those who questioned his decisions.

**T6. Armory**

This chamber features weapon and armor racks, a few of which are still standing against the walls, but most of which are toppled onto the floor. Crates have been opened and torn apart. Mundane weapons and pieces of armor are scattered about. A door in the north wall is ajar.

**Equipment.** The mundane contents of the armory include 3 longswords, 12 daggers, 2 sets of studded leather armor, 3 bucklers, 2 hand crossbows,

a morningstar, 48 crossbow bolts, and 12 sharpened wooden stakes. 12 silver-tipped crossbow bolts as well as a longsword coated in adamantine can also be found amidst the equipment.

### T7. Antechamber

The walls and ceiling of this chamber are painted with colorful frescos depicting valiant holy warriors triumphantly fighting back the forces of evil: werewolves, undead hordes, and vampires. The room is otherwise bare.

The frescos were painted by a skilled painter employed by the Bright Wardens — the same painter who authored the illuminated manuscript in the reading room (**area T5**). This room serves as an antechamber for the prison at the top of the tower.

### T8. Prison

The staircase from the antechamber (**area T7**) ascends to an iron door engraved with the icon of a star. Its thick deadbolt has been pushed aside. The door is closed but unlocked. When the characters enter the room, read aloud:

The walls of this circular chamber are covered entirely with engraved script. A shirtless, bearded man is suspended spread-eagle with thick iron chains that emanate a soft blue light and stretch from floor to ceiling. Beside the man, a large stone tablet rests on a plinth.

The tablet on the plinth bears the following inscription:

“Herein is imprisoned the vampire known as Heskell Kristoph for his crimes against the civilized people of the Blackwood Valley. Heskell pays his price for the commitment of no less than 70 murders and countless smaller acts of atrocity during his reign of terror as patriarch of the Kristoph family. He may be confined for eternity unless otherwise decided by the one designated as Holy Justicar, leader of the Bright Wardens.”

Heskell is contained with the *imprisonment* spell and cannot be freed by any means other than a casting

of *dispel magic* at 9th level or by the command of Holy Justicar of the Bright Wardens. The magical artifact *the Sword of Calhain* is what designates an individual as leader of the Bright Wardens, and whoever wields it carries the title and authority of Holy Justicar.

**Encounter: Sotu the Oni.** Sotu the oni spends almost all of his time in the tower here, drawing and drinking Heskell’s blood and pestering the vampire for information. He is joined by a ferocious **gargoyle** named Sibath who he considers his personal pet. Frustratingly for Sotu, he has learned from Heskell that he cannot become a vampire unless Heskell’s blood is provided willingly. Despite this, he still believes that drinking the blood provides him with increased strength and vitality. Though he would consider freeing Heskell from his confinement in exchange for the gift of vampirism, he lacks the means to remove the *imprisonment* spell that affects the vampire. Sotu and Sibath may exchange a few words with the characters for a short while but will eventually attack. Sibath defends his master to the death, though Sotu will use his *gaseous form* to flee the tower if reduced to one quarter of his hit points or fewer.

**Treasure: Sotu’s Belongings.** On Sotu’s person are four gemstones worth 50 gp each, a set of *pipes of haunting*, a +1 *glaive*, and the key to the padlock on the trapdoor in **area T1**.

### The Ghost of Aurelius

The ghost of a Bright Warden member and the author of the journal in the reading room (**area T5**) remains bound to the tower in death due to his unfinished business — he never believed that Heskell should have been left alive. He has been watching the party’s ascent of the tower and will appear immediately after Sotu has been dealt with. Convinced that Heskell must be slain permanently, he believes that the characters are

### Heskell Kristoph

Heskell appears as a man in his mid-fifties, with a full head of white hair and a close-cropped beard to match. He wears nothing other than simple canvas pants, revealing his bare chest marked with scars. His voice is deep and smooth, and he speaks confidently with strong enunciation.

Despite a few hundred years of imprisonment and the recent abuse at the hands of Sotu the oni, Heskell is not willing to let an opportunity like the characters slip away from him. He does everything he can to convince the characters to free him from his imprisonment, arguing that he never fed on the blood of humans in the first place and that the Bright Wardens are an overzealous religious group hell-bent on the “elimination of evil” at all costs without a fulsome understanding of their actions. A character who makes a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check may realize that Heskell is not telling the truth.

If the party is not open to his initial reasoning, he changes approach and instead offers each of them the gift of vampirism in exchange for his freedom. This time, Heskell is telling the truth, and if freed by the party, he allows them to drink his blood and become vampires themselves. If the characters decide to slay Heskell with the *Sword of Calhain* (see Appendix C), he curses them to a “lifetime of suffering,” though his words are meaningless.

capable of the task. They must travel to the Tomb of the Last Warden and retrieve the *Sword of Calhain*, a silver blade blessed by the God of Light that is capable of permanently destroying a vampire regardless of its location. A vampire not permanently slain may return to its resting place and reform itself. Heskell is familiar with Aurelius, and the two have had many heated conversations over the



years. Heskell will try to interrupt Aurelius occasionally while he speaks, but ultimately lets him say his piece before attempting to appeal to the party on his own.

When Aurelius appears, read:

Suddenly, a chill passes through your bones and a hissing sound fills the air. The apparition of a holy warrior appears before you. His plate armor sags, and his tabard is torn. His eyes reveal a grim determination touched by sadness. "You must help," his voice echoes.

The apparition introduces itself as Aurelius Roulant, a member of the Bright Wardens. He explains that the vampire imprisoned in the tower can be left alive no longer and must be slain, though its permanent destruction requires the use of a sacred holy weapon. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"Our time has ended. The fate of this beast lies in your hands... you must do what is just. Do not repeat the mistake of our Order. Go to the Tomb of the Last Warden — to the south, buried beneath the great sycamore on the hill. Take the Sword of Calhain. The one who wields it is designated Holy Justicar of the Bright Wardens. It strikes true through the heart of the vampire and obliterates it with holy light."

The party will likely have questions for the ghost of Aurelius. He responds accordingly to the following lines of inquiry:

**What about the oni and the gargoyles?** "They are but distractions. There will be more if this evil is not exterminated. The vampire must be permanently destroyed."

**Why didn't your order kill the vampire? Why leave him alive?** "The hubris of our leader demanded that the vampire suffer a fate worse than death. The risk is too great. The time has come for this mistake to be corrected."

**What will we discover in the tomb?** "The tomb is protected, but the time has come for action. Slay the golem that waits within and retrieve the blade."

**How did you die?** "I could not stand for such careless vengeance. I was executed for treason against the order. I accepted my fate."

## T9. Cellar

The trapdoor in the common area opens to reveal a stone staircase that descends into a dark, musty cellar. Characters descending the staircase with a passive Perception of 12 or higher can hear haggard breathing and scratching sounds coming from within. The cellar is mostly empty, save for a few crates and barrels containing a few bottles of wine and harder liquor.

**Encounter: Ghosts.** The three people kidnapped from the nearby village by the gargoyles were locked in this cellar by Sotu. He had originally hoped to become a vampire and turn them into his thralls, but he slaughtered them in his frustration when he discovered that he could not become a vampire without a willing gift of blood. They have since turned into **ghosts**. They retain no memory of their former lives and attack ruthlessly when they smell a living creature, fighting until they are destroyed.

## To the Tomb

If the characters have listened to the ghost of Aurelius and have decided that Heskell Kristoph must be slain for good (or freed from his imprisonment), they must travel to the Tomb of the Last Warden to recover the *Sword of Calhain*, which will designate its wielder as the Holy Justicar of the Bright Wardens. This will allow them to destroy the vampire or use the sword's authority to free him from the spell. Aurelius has instructed the party that the tomb can be found to the south, beneath "the great sycamore on the hill". The sycamore on the hill is roughly a half-day's travel

through the difficult terrain of the Blackmire. To find the location, the party must make a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check. Each failed check results in an additional 2 hours of searching and risks a random encounter with the creatures that lurk within the swamp. When the characters arrive at the sycamore on the hill, read aloud the following:

A towering, ancient sycamore tree stands alone on a small hillock. Its trunk looks to be at least a dozen feet wide, and its dense canopy extends several times that width. Low-lying vegetation grows heavily around and over the hillock.

The entrance to the tomb has been hidden by the vegetation that has consumed it over the years. It requires a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check or 1 hour of continuous searching to locate the entrance amidst the brush: a stone door in a cobbled archway built into the hillside. The door is carved with the holy symbol of the Bright Wardens, a seven-pointed star wreathed in flame. It is unlocked but requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to open.

For a time, the tomb beneath the sycamore continued to be used by the Bright Wardens after their victory over the vampires. As the organization continued to shrink, it too eventually became abandoned. The swamp has now flooded large portions of the tomb with murky water.

## General Features

Unless otherwise stated, the features of the tomb are described as follows:

**Ceilings, Walls, and Floors.** The tomb is constructed of grey sandstone hewn into heavy blocks. Ceilings in rooms and hallways are 8 feet high.

**Doors.** Doors are made of heavy sandstone slabs. They have an AC of 18 and 25 hit points and are immune to poison and psychic damage. They are unlocked.

**Light.** The tomb is shrouded in darkness.

**Flooded Chambers.** Southern chambers in the tomb have been flooded with murky water to a depth no higher than 2 feet.

**Encounter Locations**

See the map on this page.

**S1. Stone Guardian**

The door in the hillock opens to reveal a narrow stone staircase that descends approximately 7 feet into the darkness of the tomb below. When the characters enter this room, read aloud:

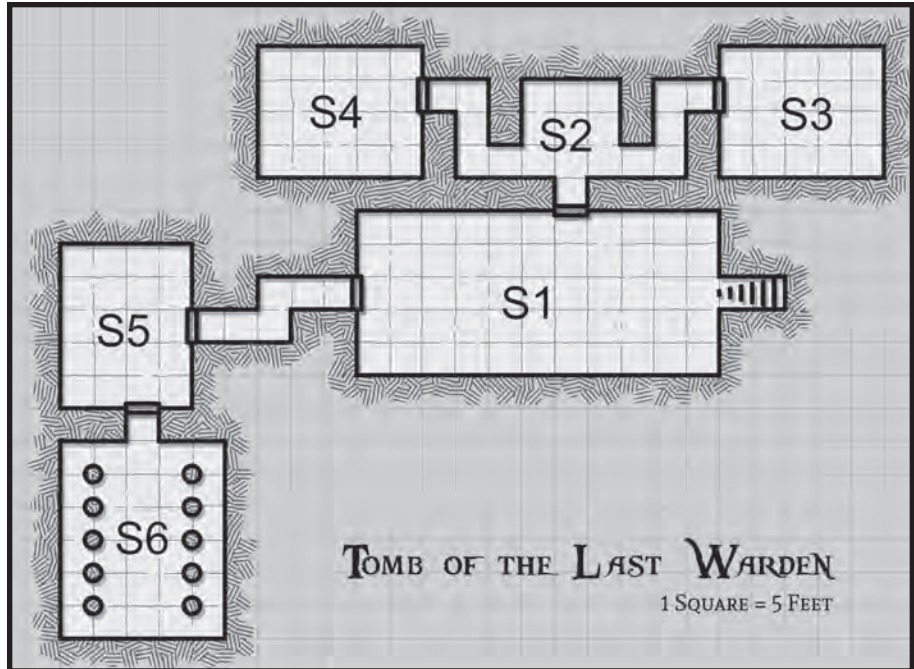
A ten-foot-tall statue of a plated knight armed with a sword and shield stands in the middle of this chamber and faces directly toward you. The air is humid and smells of must. Doors exit to the west and north.

**Encounter: Stone Golem Guardian.** In the years after the last leader of the Bright Wardens died, the remaining members and their descendants organized the creation of this golem that would protect the tomb after they were gone. It attacks any who step more than 10 feet into the tomb and fights until it is destroyed. It uses **stone golem** statistics, though it has 130 hit points.

**S2. Well**

A well filled with dark water lies in the middle of this chamber. Half-melted candles rest on a simple stone altar against the north wall. Hallways extend to the east and west.

The well was used for drinking water and handwashing when the tomb was in operation. A character who stares into the well will see a face that isn't their own before it quickly disappears, and their reflection returns as normal.



**S3. Paladins' Crypt**

Characters approaching this room can see light filtering through the crack below the closed door. When the characters enter, read aloud:

The walls of this chamber are dotted with crypts, each bearing a plaque engraved with the name of a Bright Warden member. At the end of the room are two life-sized statues of paladins, their warhammers raised to meet each other, creating an arch. Both warhammers glow with light that fills the chamber. Beneath the arch is a pedestal bearing an inscription.

The use of *detect magic* reveals an aura of evocation surrounding the warhammers of the statues, which are enchanted with a perpetual *light* spell. The members of the Bright Wardens who swore an oath and called themselves paladins are interred in this chamber. The plaque under the statue archway reads: "here rest the paladins who swore their oath to serve the Bright Wardens in the cleansing of vampirism from our hallowed lands."

**S4. General Crypt**

The eastern wall of this crypt-filled chamber has partially collapsed into rubble. The corpse of a large, grey, armadillo-like creature lies on the ground, its entrails spilling out onto the stone. A burrow has been dug into the stone near the east wall.

**Encounter: Mother Bulette.** The burrow was created by the bulette that temporarily lairs in this chamber. It dug in from the surrounding ground and is using the burrow as a nest for its eggs. The corpse in the chamber was once the male bulette that it mated with before it tore it to shreds. If the characters come within 15 feet of the burrow, the bulette emerges in a rage to protect its eggs. It fights until reduced to one-quarter of its hit points or fewer, at which point it flees back into its burrow. It uses **bulette** statistics, though it can use its Action to make two Bite attacks due to the frenzied defense of its eggs.

**Bulette Burrow.** The burrow is big enough for Large-sized creatures to move through with ease. The char-



acters can follow the burrow into an expanded natural cavern dug out by the bulette. Inside the cavern are the bones of numerous mammals as well as three spine-covered bulette eggs. Each bulette egg weighs approximately 15 pounds. Another tunnel in the north wall of the natural cavern travels for a half-mile before exiting to the surface of the swamp.

### S5. Offering Chamber

A 5-foot-diameter iron brazier stands on clawed feet in the middle of this square chamber, the southern half of which has been flooded with murky water. A single door in the south wall is decorated with an engraving depicting a sword wreathed in flame. Bas reliefs on the walls depict dozens of angels united in dance and song.

Characters who approach the brazier notice that a thin, inconsistent layer of silver coats its bowl. Script is engraved around its rim that reads “may we gratefully give that which dresses our blades.” When the tomb was still in use, any who wished to visit the burial place of the last leader of the Bright Wardens was expected to provide an offering of silver by melting some of the metal in the brazier. Doing so unlocks the magically sealed door to the south. Any amount of silver will do, such as a silver coin. A few seconds after the first drops of molten silver hit the brazier, the door in the south wall slowly swings inwards, accompanied by a heavy grinding sound and sloshing the waters flooding the tomb.

### S6. The Last Warden

The door to this chamber is magically sealed and can only be opened by providing an offering of silver to the brazier in the offering chamber (**area S3**). When the characters enter this room, read aloud:

Nearly two feet of water has flooded this chamber. Ten intricate-

ly carved pillars in two equal rows support a vaulted ceiling painted with the many faces of angels that have discolored with age and weathering. At the far end of the chamber, an elaborate sarcophagus lies half-open and askew on a titled stone dais. A single skeletal hand hangs under the lid.

The tomb’s flooding has disturbed the sarcophagus and dais in this room after the supporting stone beneath was knocked loose by the water. As a result, the lid has opened, and the remains inside have begun to spill out.

#### *Treasure: The Sword of Calhain.*

A character who pushes the lid of the sarcophagus aside to reveal its contents finds the skeletal remains of a human wearing once-spectacular plate armor that is now overcome with rust. The sword laying atop the body, however, remains in pristine condition. It is the *Sword of Calhain* (see Appendix C). The spirit of the last leader of the Bright Wardens is at rest; removing the sword causes no disturbance and can be done without issue.

### Returning to the Tower

The *Sword of Calhain* designates its wielder as Holy Justicar of the Bright Wardens, allowing them to end the *imprisonment* spell on Heskel or, using its power, to destroy the vampire permanently regardless of his resting place. For the sword to work, however, the wielder must be attuned to the weapon. When the characters return to Heskel with the sword, he makes one final argument for his release if he believes the characters are still not convinced.

If the characters wish to release Heskel, simply being attuned to the sword and declaring that Heskel is freed from his chains or has completed his sentence is sufficient — the magical chains will disappear and Heskel will be freed.

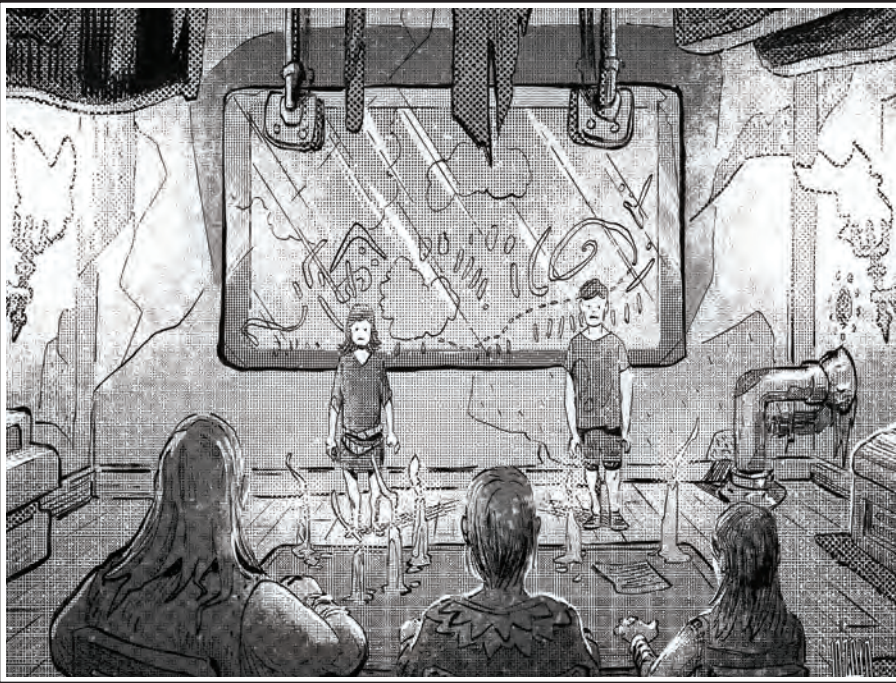
If the characters instead choose to destroy Heskel with the sword, a

single, well-placed strike or stab will slay the vampire. Read aloud the following:

Heskel’s head flies back in agony as the sword breaks his flesh. His skin rapidly begins to tear away as columns of radiant light burst outward from his body; first his chest, then his mouth and eyes, then all over. He lets out a single, blood-curdling scream before disintegrating, leaving nothing but a small pile of ash where he once stood.

### Concluding the Adventure

If the characters destroyed Heskel using the *Sword of Calhain*, the ghost of Aurelius will reappear briefly to give them his thanks and tell them that he can now rest peacefully knowing that the vampire threat in the Blackmire has been dealt with for good. He tells them that the sword is theirs to keep, as the time of the Bright Wardens has passed, and the blade will do more good in the hands of a worthy adventurer. If the characters instead decide to free Heskel, he remains true to his word and allows them to drink some of his blood to become vampires themselves. He then makes plans to leave the Blackmire Swamp and establish himself in another corner of the world to rebuild his reputation. If the characters accept his gift of vampirism, he offers that they travel with him to create a new order of vampires somewhere else, where they all may become fabulously powerful and wealthy. Heskel is not bothered if they refuse his offer, as he is happy enough to set off on his own. If the players have decided to leave Heskel imprisoned in the tower, either to preserve his suffering or because they lack the means to destroy him, what happens next to Heskel is left to GM discretion. Given that the illusion concealing the tower has now faded, it is quite likely that other adventurers will discover the tower and be presented with the same option the party was. Ω



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*Children of the Swamp* is a Fifth Edition adventure for three to seven characters with an average party level (APL) of 7, optimized for a party of four characters of 7th level.

The characters are tasked by a wealthy merchant family to investigate the disappearance of two of their children. The investigation will reveal naive dabbling in the occult and bring the characters face to face with a powerful coven of hags.

### Adventure Background

As with all families, some of the Windrows' children have a tendency to get into trouble. Bella-Rose and Dion Windrow stole a book on the occult from a wizard who traveled through town months ago. In the time since, they studied the book to the best of their abilities and worked out how to locate a hag, which they believe will be able to use magic to help them swap their bodies. The hag they located lives deep in the swamps beyond their home. One night, long after everybody else had gone to sleep, the two snuck out and began making their way toward the hag's lair. The following day, after a long and fruitless search, the Windrow parents set off into town to recruit help finding their missing children.

Unbeknownst to Bella-Rose and Dion, the hag they manage to locate is actually part of a coven that's enchanted the swamp to lure wandering children safely to their lair while obfuscating travel to adults. The hag coven has amassed a veritable village of children that they've been grooming into propagators of their magic.

### The Windrow Family

Orson and Cynthia Windrow (human male and female, respectively) are wealthy human merchants that purchased and settled into a quiet estate in the countryside to raise their seven children, three biological and four adopted of various ages:

- Delia, biological child, human

# CHILDREN OF THE SWAMP

An adventure for level 7 characters

Written by **Torchlight Press**  
Cartography by **Venatus Maps**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Shutterstock**



female, age 5. Found in **area 1** of Waylorn Lodge.

- Aaisha, biological child, human female, age 8. Found in **area 5** of Waylorn Lodge.
- Samora, biological child, human female, age 10. Found in **area 7** of Waylorn Lodge.
- Lucian, adopted child, human male, age 11. Found in **area 8** of Waylorn Lodge.
- Bella-Rose, adopted child, human female, age 14. Found in **area 21** of the Ruins of Neandolen.
- Dion, adopted child, human male, age 15. Found in **area 21** of the Ruins of Neandolen.
- Umair, adopted child, human male, age 18. Found in **area 8** of Waylorn Lodge.

### The Deadtooth Coven

The hags of the Deadtooth coven don't go by traditional names. Instead, they are addressed as the First Mother, Second Mother, and Third Mother, in accordance with their hierarchy in the coven. They live deep in a swamp in the elven ruins of Neandolen. Together, they have been extending their lives by making deals with desperate children, granting their demands in exchange for a few years of their lives. The hags provide shelter for the children that desire to stay and learn from them.

### Beginning the Adventure

After it became apparent that Bella-Rose and Dion went missing, Cynthia Windrow took a carriage to the nearest town or city. This can be any settlement that the characters are traveling through. When you're ready to kick off events, read the following:

A carriage led by two brown horses comes racing down the street, mud splashing as its wheels dig into the wet earth. The carriage stops in front of the sheriff's building and a middle-aged woman clambers out. Her white-and-peach dress is stained with mud and has

sticks stuck in its frayed edges. She enters the sheriff's office and exits a few minutes later, accompanied by the sheriff, a muscular woman in breeches and a plain shirt, and two assistants.

Unless the characters present themselves, Cynthia, the sheriff, and their assistants spend the next few hours traipsing around town putting up hastily-made missing-person's posters with a 5,000 gp reward.

If the party approaches any of these characters, they explain that two of Cynthia's children went missing sometime between the previous night and the morning. Anybody willing to help is instructed to either ride back with Cynthia in her carriage or make their own way to the Windrow lodge.

**Deputies.** The sheriff is a half-elf woman named Isabelle. Her assistants are a human man named Theo and a woman named Franky.

**Posters.** A character that inspects the missing-person posters notices that only the names are freshly inked. The rest of the text on the posters is older and dried, as if already prepared.

A character that uses this information to ask the sheriff or her assistants about missing people learns that at least once a year a child, sometimes two, goes missing. It has occurred with enough consistency over the years that they have the posters pre-written. Unfortunately, they haven't been able to determine the cause of the disappearances.

### Reaching Windrow Lodge

It takes about 2 hours to travel to the lodge by foot or horseback. When the characters set out for Windrow Lodge, read the following:

A simple dirt road leads up to a two-story, 2,500-square-foot lodge built in a grass clearing. A man in muddied breeches and a brown cloak stands next to the double-door entrance to the building, waiting nervously.

The man standing at the door is Orson Windrow. As the characters, and possibly Cynthia, arrive, he asks if they're here to help find the lost



children. After introductions have been exchanged, Orson can provide the following information:

- Bella-Rose and Dion went missing some time between the previous day and the current day.
- Bella-Rose is a girl aged 14. Her room is upstairs, furthest from the stairs.
- Dion is a boy aged 15. His room is upstairs, first door from the west.
- Delia, the youngest child, came forward earlier in the day and revealed that she overheard them talking about a magic book.
- The swamps are dangerous. To protect the other children, they've been home-bound for now.

Orson found anything in the house but suggests that the characters begin by looking in the house for any clues to where they may have gone.

## Windrow Lodge

At the Windrow Lodge, the players are tasked with unraveling the mystery of where the missing children may have run off to. If the players are struggling, you can have one of the children that has a piece of information come forward with what they know.

## Where Did Bella-Rose and Dion Go?

To summarize the key information that can be found:

- Delia in **area 1** overheard Dion and Bella-Rose talking about a magic book.
- Umair in **area 3** was asked for drawing tools by Bella-Rose. She took the supplies to her room, and he never saw what she drew.
- Aaisha in **area 5** caught Dion reading a book in the closet. He said it would help him change bodies.
- A grimoire on magical creatures can be found in the closet (**area 4**).
- One of Bella-Rose's dresses can be found in Dion's room (**area 9**).
- Crumpled, poorly-drawn maps can be found in Bella-Rose's room (**area 13**).

## General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in the Windrow Lodge have the following features.

**Floors and Walls.** Each floor of the lodge is 9 feet tall with wooden floors and walls. The foundation of the building is set in stone.

**Doors.** All of the lodge's wooden doors are 2 inches thick, 4 feet wide, and 6 feet tall. They have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Except where otherwise noted, all of the doors are unlocked.

A locked door can be forced open by succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check. A creature that is proficient with thieves' tools can pick a locked door with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

**Lighting.** The entrance to the lodge is flanked by lanterns. Otherwise, the building relies on natural sunlight during the day and candles at night.

**Climate.** The air around the lodge is humid and occasionally carries a faint smell of rotten eggs when a breeze drifts in from the swamp.

## Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the provided map of the Windrow Lodge on the following page.

### 1 - Garden

Three rows of bushes growing cucumbers and tomatoes are tucked into this corner of the house.

**Encounter: Delia and Basil.** Delia (human female child) is sitting in the dirt holding a small, brown-grey bunny named Basil. Delia is a 5-year-old girl with long, straight, brown hair, and brown eyes. She's wearing a simple yellow dress. She gets bored easily and rarely speaks.

A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check determines that she has a fondness for fluffy animals. To convince her to talk, a character must either ask her about the rabbit, bring her a new critter to hold, or succeed on a DC 18

Charisma (Persuasion) check. Delia can provide the following information:

- The bunny is named Basil because it loves to eat basil leaves.
- She overheard Dion and Bella-Rose talking about a magic book.
- She's heard them sneak downstairs late at night.

A character that can speak to animals and wants to converse with the bunny must make a successful DC 12 Charisma (Animal Handling) check to convince it they're safe to talk to. Offering carrots provides advantage on this check. The bunny can provide the following information:

- "Two giants ran by in the dead of night and woke me up" (the "giants" are the children).
- The "giants" were headed northwest, into the neighboring swamp.

### 2 - Foyer

A large oil painting of the Windrow family greets visitors as they enter the house, which hangs on the wall beneath a set of stairs winding up to the second floor.

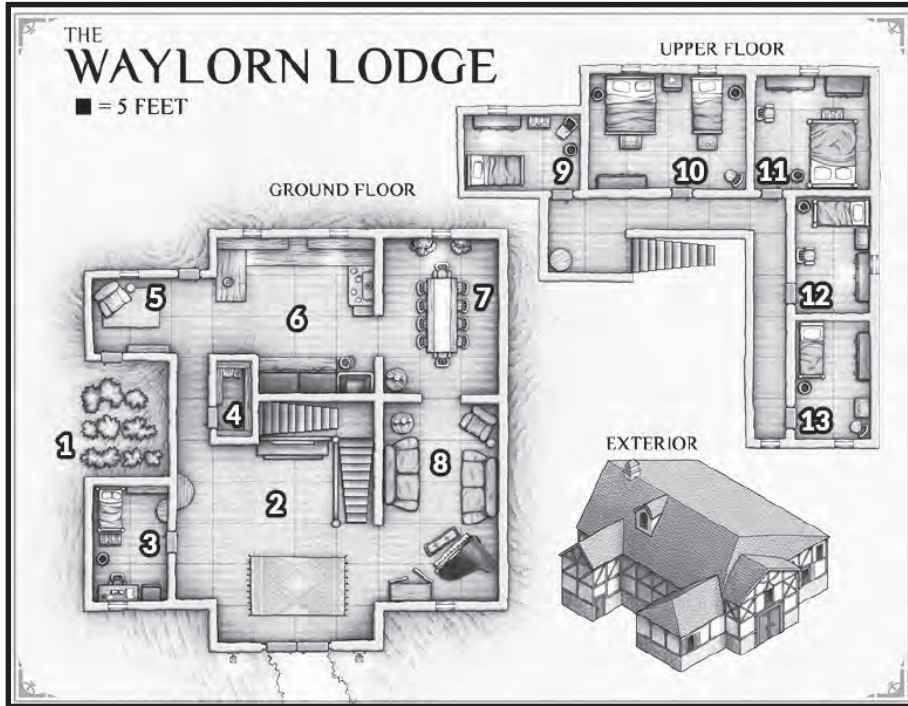
**Family Portrait.** Any of the household members can point out the missing children for the characters. Bella-Rose is one of the taller children and has long brown hair with red ribbons tied in it. Dion is a little shorter than Bella-Rose, with short red hair.

### 3 - Umair's Bedroom

A simple bed, a trunk, a desk, and some shelving decorate this small room. Across from the hastily-made bed, an older boy sits before a desk cluttered with loose papers and a candle that's melted onto the table.

**Encounter: Umair.** Umair is an 18-year-old boy with short black hair and brown eyes. He isn't particularly good at any of the academic subjects the Windrow's encouraged him to study and prefers to draw. If the characters ask if he knows anything about the missing siblings, he shrugs, says he doesn't know anything, and





goes back to drawing. If he is pressed for information a second time, he sits back in his chair, and after a moment of thinking recalls the following:

- Several weeks ago, Bella-Rose asked him for a quill, some ink, and several sheets of paper to draw something. She took the items to her room and later returned the quill and ink, but he never saw what she drew.

**Trunk.** The trunk is not locked. Inside, there are several pairs of pants and shirts.

**Desk.** The papers on the desk are rejection letters from nearby guilds and apprenticeships. Comical illustrations are drawn in the margins of the letters.

#### 4 - Closet

Coats hang from the shelves, and various boots and shoes are set on the ground beneath them.

**Bags.** There are two bags at the back of the closet that contain some dirty laundry.

**Hidden Compartment.** A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers that some of the stone bricks at the

base of the wall are loose and can be pulled out of the wall. Inside, there is a battered hardcover book. A character that skims over the contents of the book concludes the book is a grimoire on magical creatures and how to locate them. A character that succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds fresh food stains across several pages dedicated to hags.

#### 5 - Reading Nook

The northern door exiting the house is locked.

When the characters enter this area, read the following:

A lanky child lies nestled in the cushions of a wide armchair, their legs spilling over the edge. A soft light is shining through the window over their shoulder to the north, illuminating the pages of the book they're reading.

**Encounter: Aaisha.** Aaisha is an 8-year-old child with straight, dyed yellow hair and cyan eyes outfitted in a simple green dress. She's reading a book of poems about creatures of the

forest. If asked what she knows, she recalls the following:

- Some late nights she's heard a door open and footsteps cross outside of her door.

She knows more than she initially lets on. A character with a passive Insight of 15 or that succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check suspects that Aaisha is withholding something. If pressed for more information, she dissembles and reveals the following:

- She caught Dion reading from a weird book in the closet (area 4). Dion wouldn't let her see it, but seemed excited, said he was going to change bodies, and told her not to tell anybody.

#### 6 - Kitchen

This fancy kitchen is equipped with a four-burner stove, a basin for storing water, cupboards, and a wealth of countertop space.

There is nothing of note here.

#### 7 - Dining Room

Read the following:

A girl with cropped, curled, white hair and green eyes sits at a long dining table working away at a puzzle of at least a hundred pieces.

**Encounter: Samora.** Samora is 10 years old and loves working through puzzles. She's been working on the current puzzle laid out on the table for a week. She doesn't have any information about her siblings.

#### 8 - Living Room

Two couches, an armchair, and a piano occupy this comfortable living space. A young boy with short, wavy, black hair shaved on the left side and brown eyes is asleep on the western couch.

**Encounter: Lucian.** Lucian is an 11-year-old boy with straight, auburn hair, and black eyes. Waking him up requires a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check or splashing water

on him. Lucian doesn't have any information to offer the characters on account of always being asleep. He falls back asleep within 10 minutes of the characters leaving him alone.

### 9 - Dion's Bedroom

This simple bedroom contains Dion's belongings.

**Trunk.** Several blankets, stuffed toys, and a journal are inside this chest. A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices a makeshift fake base in the chest. Beneath the fake base is a simple green dress that belongs to Bella-Rose.

### 10 - Delia, Samora, and Lucian's Bedroom

This large bedroom has a queen bed and a twin bed. It contains the combined belongings of Delia, Samora, and Lucian. Wooden horses, carriages, sticks, and other toys are scattered around the floor.

There is nothing of note in this room.

**Hazard: Toys.** Any creature that enters the bedroom 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. A creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the save.

### 11 - Orson and Cynthia's Bedroom

This simple bedroom contains Orson and Cynthia's belongings.

**Trunk.** There are three fine silk blankets (worth 25 gp each) in the trunk.

**Dressers.** There are five gold and silver necklaces (worth 10 gp each).

### 12 - Aaisha's Bedroom

This simple bedroom contains Aaisha's belongings. There are several books neatly organized on the dresser.

### 13 - Bella-Rose's Bedroom

This simple bedroom contains Bella-Rose's belongings.

**Map Scraps.** A character that spends 10 minutes searching through the room discovers several crumpled balls of paper stuffed into the bottom of the vase by the bed. Each of the papers is a smeared and poorly drawn map of the surrounding region.

To decipher the location the maps were attempting to illustrate a path to, the characters must succeed on two checks: a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check to understand the illustrations, and a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check to correlate the illustrations to real-world geography. Allowing Samora to view the map provides a success for the Wisdom (Insight) check and allowing Cynthia to view the map provides a success for the Intelligence (History) check. After the maps have been deciphered, the characters learn that Bella-Rose and Dion were headed to an old elven ruin deep in the swamp known as "Neandolen."

### Reaching the Ruins of Neandolen

Once the characters are satisfied with the information they've uncovered in the Windrow's lodge and deciphered the crumpled maps, they can set out through the swamp to the ruins of Neandolen.

Assuming the characters found the maps left by the children and follow the path laid out by them, they discover a red ribbon tied to a tree about 30 minutes into the swamp. Additional ribbons are placed every 200 feet, winding through the forest.

While traversing the swamp, the characters should have the following two encounters, which provide opportunities to learn more about where they're headed.

### Headless Horned Devils

After the characters follow the ribbons for 2 hours, the characters encounter two headless **horned devils** (they cannot speak and are blind but can detect vibrations within 15 feet to locate hostile creatures) hacking away at a tree in a half-hearted

attempt to remove a red ribbon from it. The headless devils are under the control of the Deadtooth coven. If the headless devils become aware of any other creatures, they are magically compelled to attack.

If a creature casts *dispel magic* or *calm emotions* on a devil, the magical compulsion is suppressed for 1 minute. The headless devils stop attacking and attempt to parley using sign language and hand gestures. They motion in the direction of the ruins of Neandolen, mime placing an invisible head back on their shoulders, and then clasp their hands in a thankful gesture. Unfortunately, without a head, it's difficult to communicate with them. Unless the characters provide haptic feedback or come up with a clever alternative mode of communication, the headless devils simply continue miming repeatedly until the enchantment takes over again. They devils know from experience that it doesn't matter how far their bodies run.

When one of the headless devils is killed, its body does not return to its home plane or begin decaying.

A character that inspects a headless devil's body and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check discovers arcane glyphs sewn into the muscle beneath the skin of its back. The glyphs are complex; simultaneously preventing the body from decaying and allowing the creator to issue commands to the body, turning it into a semi-autonomous marionette.

After the encounter, the characters can continue trekking through the swamp. There are no more ribbons to follow, but the careless destruction left by the headless devils is easy to track.

### Illusory Nightmares

As the characters get closer to the ruins, any non-juvenile humanoids begin experiencing increasingly vivid hallucinations. Over the next three hours, they experience three hallucinations meant to scare them off and



must make saving throws to overcome the horrors. If a character fails two or more of the saving throws while navigating through the swamp, they gain one level of exhaustion.

- A swarm of fifteen ankhegs rise out of the muddy earth, mandibles dripping with acid. Each character must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw.
- The dirt and vines around the characters rise into the form of four shambling mounds. Each character must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw.
- A bloody hydra dragging a dead wyvern by one of its mouths slithers through the murky water, brushing up against the character's feet before rising in front of them. Each character must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw.

After the characters complete these trials, they reach the ruins.

## Finding the Ruins

The ruins of Neandolen are obscured by a permanent *arcane mirage* spell that makes the entire area appear to be a contiguous piece of the surrounding swamp with unnaturally thick foliage to prevent non-juvenile humanoids from entering. A character can force their way through the illusory foliage with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check or the mirage can be suppressed for 10 minutes with a successful casting of *dispel magic*.

## Ruins of Neandolen

When the characters push through the foliage or suppress the mirage, read the following:

An overgrown stone wall fortifies several buildings sitting beneath a forested plateau with a massive stone arch bearing fanciful, elven linework rising from it. A simple arch devoid of portcullises allows entrance through the wall.

## Dealing with the Deadtooth Coven

The Deadtooth coven is composed of three **swamp hags** (see Appendix D) that refer to themselves as the First Mother, Second Mother, and the Third Mother. When the characters either attract the hags' attention or discover them in **area 21**, the hags see the intrusion as an opportunity to strike a deal.

The children Bella-Rose and Dion are adamant that somebody use magic to let them swap bodies, and if the characters are willing to pay for the children's deal themselves, the hags are more than willing to accept payment from one of the characters: the total cost is 4 years of life. Additionally, if the characters want to buy out all of the deals for all of the children at the ruins, they may; the total cost of buying out all the children's deals is 10 years.

Any deals struck must be sealed at the tower's roof (**area 22**).

## General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in the Ruins of Neandolen have the following features.

**Ceilings, Floors, and Walls.** The ceilings, walls, and floors are composed of large stone blocks and are generally 2 feet thick.

**Doors.** All of the ruin's doors are 2 inches thick, 4 feet wide, and 6 feet tall. They are made of stone and have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Except where otherwise noted, all of the doors are unlocked.

A locked door can be forced open by succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check. A creature that is proficient with thieves' tools can pick a locked door with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

**Lighting.** The sun provides bright light through the perpetually-overcast sky.

**Climate and Smell.** The swamp is hot, humid, and gives off a foul-smelling odor like rotten eggs.

## Encounter Locations

See the maps on pages 69 and 71.

### 1 - Entry Arch

This plain arch allows entrance to the ruin's courtyard. A flock of crows is perched atop the arch, staring eerily toward any creatures that approach.

**Crows.** When one or more creatures that are older than 16 years old approaches the arch, the crows begin squawking loudly and repeating the word "begone!"

**Wards.** A *detect magic* spell cast here reveals an aura of abjuration magic. A glyph for the *symbol* (death) spell is hidden on the underside of the archway. A character who searches for traps finds and identifies the glyph with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The glyph triggers when a creature that is older than 16 years old walks beneath the arch and resets in 24 hours.

### 2 - Sunken Pillars

Four earthen pillars are sunken into the ground, flush with the field. Gurgling water is overflowing around them.

**Encounter: Fey-Touched Children.** There are five fey-touched children (use the **satyr** stat block without shortswords or shortbows) laughing and playing on the eastern side of the water. When unfamiliar humanoids enter the open field, they stop and tentatively ask "are you here to play?" The children can be convinced that the humanoids mean no harm with a successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Performance) check. On a failure, the children flee to **area 14**.

The children bear the following names:

- Noggam (male, fey-touched dwarf). They traded for longer legs.
- Porgil (male, fey-touched human). They traded for their night terrors to be taken from them.
- Thalre (female, fey-touched human). They traded for their ghost sibling to be put to rest.
- Halorin (male, fey-touched half-elf).

They traded for the cruel headmaster of the orphanage they originated from to be removed from power.

- Temo (female, fey-touched halfling). They traded for the ability to speak with plants and animals.

**Sunken Pillars.** The earthen pillars are enchanted with transmutation magic. A creature that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) discerns that the pillars are acting as a form of magnet for groundwater, drawing it to the surface.

### 3 - Elven Arch

A massive stone arch with elven line-work rises into the sky. Directly below it are three pools of water in stone circles and set in the ground nearby are two rows of arched stone fences.

**Arch.** Any creature proficient in both Arcana and History recognizes the arch as a dormant unidirectional planar gate. A creature with proficiency in either skill, but not both, recognizes the planar gate with a successful DC 15 check in the trained skill.

To prime the gate for use, two creatures must imbue the arch with magic by standing on either side and channeling their magic into it with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check. After the gate has been primed, the pools of water begin to glow and vibrate. To then use the gate, a creature must step onto a pool of water and clearly imagine where they want to go. Use the “familiarity” table in the *teleport* spell to determine whether the creature is successful at using the gate.

### 4 - Tree Stump

This centuries-old tree stump serves as little more than a large sitting area and reservoir of firewood now.

**Firewood.** The stump of the tree has aged and produced fatwood, a resin-saturated wood that burns longer than typical wood. Torches made from this firewood last twice as long.

### 5 - Sleeping Quarters

There is one king-sized bed used by the hags and six piles of hay that the

fey-touched children sleep on.

**Encounter: Halfling Child.** Buried fast-asleep in the westmost pile of hay is a fey-touched halfling (**satyr**) named Raisin. They’re prone to headaches from bright light and perpetually sleepy. A creature with a passive Perception of 13 or higher notices their foot sticking out of the hay.

### 6 - Archives

An assortment of stone blocks with elvish inscriptions are scattered around this room.

**Stone Blocks.** The inscriptions are records of financial transactions made with a variety of extraplanar entities.

### 7 - Timeout Corner

A metal gate separates this small room with a cold stone bench from the rest of the building. The sylvan word “timeout” is carved above the door.

**Silenced.** This room is under the effects of a permanent *silence* spell.

### 8 - Northern Rotunda

A staircase winds around the floor of this room up to an enclosed crosswalk (**area 14**). On the ground floor, broken tables and chairs cover the floor.

There is nothing of value here.

### 9 - Southern Rotunda Entrance

Four rows of columns, split into two rows flanking either side of this short hall, lead to stone double-doors engraved with iconography depicting a sheep being sacrificed at a barren oak tree.

**Trap: Warded Doors.** A *glyph of warding* spell has been cast on the double-doors. A character can spot the glyph with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The glyph triggers a *polymorph* spell (save DC 17) that turns the target into a sheep (use the **goat** stat block) when any creature other than one of the hags attempts to open the door. The spell’s effect lasts for 1 hour.

### 10 - Devil’s Tree

Four poorly-stuffed sheep sit around a barren oak tree that is adorned with the heads of two barbed devils.

**Stuffed Sheep.** The sheep are stuffed with mud, rocks, and hay. Their marble eyes are enchanted to follow any creatures in the room.

**Encounter: Horned Devil Heads.** The beheaded **horned devils** (cannot take Actions) are named Aldion and Raizel. Their heads were magically severed and preserved by the Deadtooth coven, trapping them on the material plane. The devils are unnecessarily abrasive, hoping to bait a creature into killing them so that they can return to their home plane. The coven uses the heads as part of their ritual to welcome new children to the encampment.

**Secret Door.** A creature that succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers an old, dispelled glyph on the wall separating this room from **area 10**. The Deadtooth coven dispelled the glyph long ago when they took up residence in the ruins. They use their ethereal movement to pass through the wall. When the characters discover the glyph, the devil heads tease the characters by saying “Ha! That door opens for nobody anymore.”

A character that examines the doorway closely can make an Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a 12 or higher, the character concludes that the glyph powered some form of doorway. On a 16 or higher, the character also understands that the glyph would activate based on proximity to a creature.

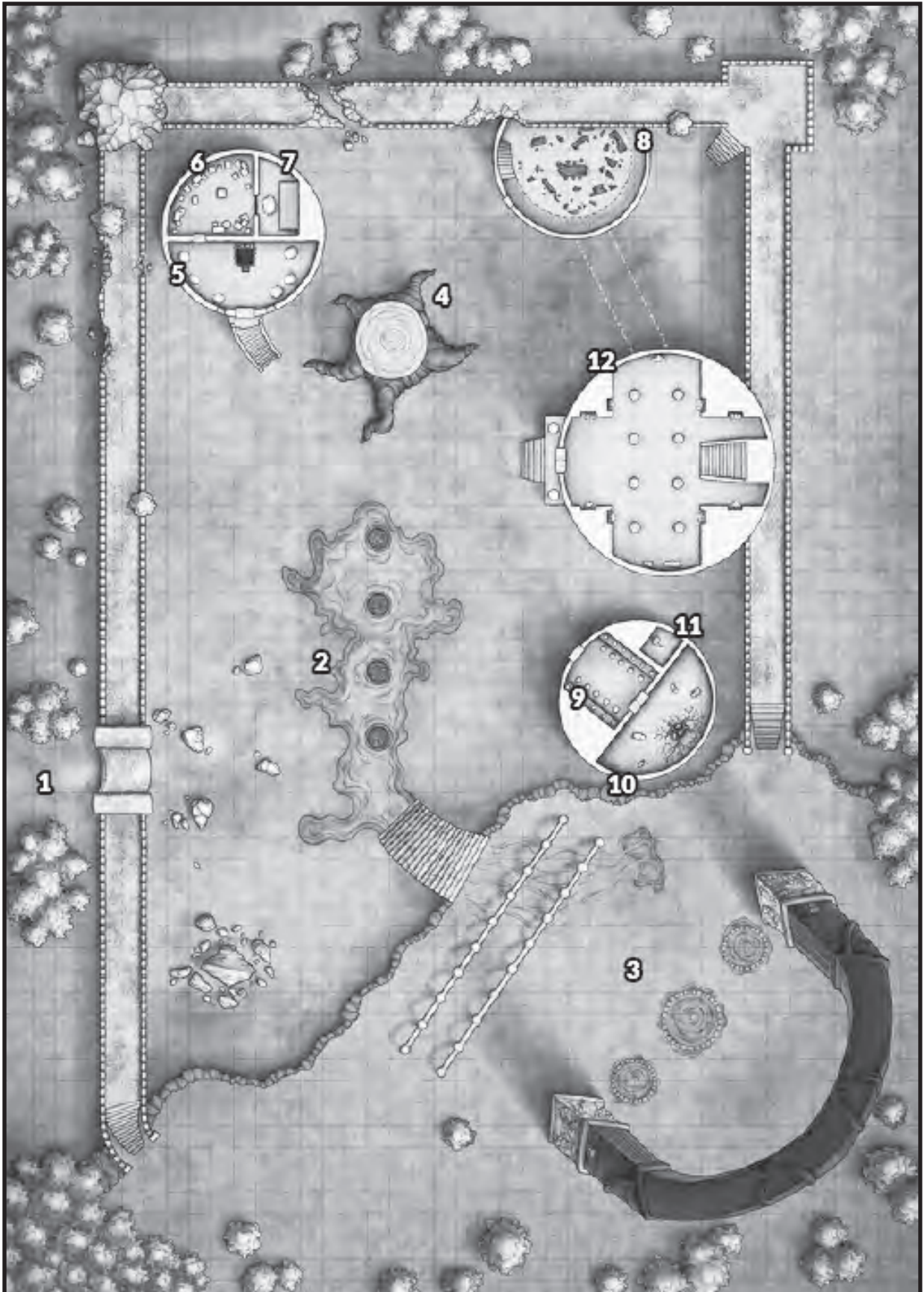
The wall can be broken down in 30 minutes with bludgeoning damage. Unless the characters take precautions, the destruction is loud and attracts the attention of the coven. The coven arrives after 10 minutes and observes the characters from the ethereal plane.

### 11 - Secret Statue

This plain room features a single statue of an elven wizard holding up a wand.

**Statue.** A creature that can *detect magic* notices an aura of conjuration magic. When a creature touches the





statue, they are teleported to the fourth floor of the neighboring tower (area 21).

### 12 - Tower Entrance

This plus-sign-shaped room is split by eight pillars arranged into two horizontal rows. Each wall is decorated with a distorted metal statue tucked into an alcove, except for the north wall, which features a wide staircase that climbs upwards.

#### **Encounter: Animated Statues.**

There are eleven metal statues (**animated armor**) that have been contorted into horrible shapes unbecomingly of the humanoids they once represented. There are scratched-out inscriptions below each statue. When creatures that are not allied with the coven approach the stairs, the statues animate and attempt to prevent the creatures from ascending.

**Stairs.** The stairs lead to the ruined library (area 13).

### 13 - Ruined Library

Light spills through two tall windows, illuminating broken shelves and overturned tables scattered around this ruined library. Iridescent webs hold a door to the south ajar.

**Broken Shelves.** The shelves hold a collection of tattered and torn books. A character that inspects the wreckage notices that upheaval appears to be recent. A character that succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers thin strands of iridescent silk on some of the books.

**Webs.** A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check knows that iridescent silk like this is produced by phase spiders.

### 14 - Skybridge

The skybridge connects area 8 and 13.

### 15 - Stairwell

Thick, iridescent webs crisscross across the spiral stairs and the walls around them.

#### **Encounter: Wild Magic Spider.**

The **wild magic spider** (see Appendix D) loose in the tower used to be a phase spider before it was irreparably changed by the coven's magic during an experiment. Unfortunately, the coven has had difficulty containing the creature. The spider skitters around the tower from the safety of the ethereal realm, only opportunistically striking at prey that enter the stairwell.

**Hazard: Webs.** This room is difficult terrain. A creature that enters the webbed room for the first time on a turn or starting its turn there must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained by the webs. A restrained creature can use its action to try to escape, doing so with a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Each 10-foot cube of giant webs has AC 10, 15 hit points, vulnerability to fire, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage.

### 16 - Waiting Room

This room is empty except for two wooden benches. The air is stagnant and quiet.

### 17 - Ruined Study

This room features a desk with rotten plant detritus covering it, as well as two thin, barren bookshelves.

### 18 - Abandoned Study

A broken chair litters the center of this study, which has a desk, a thin bookshelf, and two large paintings.

**Paintings.** Each painting depicts two old elven men dressed in regal attire. A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (History) check identifies these figures as the oncelords of Neandolen. A character that succeeds by 20 or more recalls their names: Alluin and Folas.

### 19 - Study

This neatly organized room has a desk and three shelves, two of which are stocked with books.

**Books.** The books are on a variety of arcane and historical subjects.

### 20 - Communications Room

This room features a chest, two shelves, and an ornate chair carved in the shape of a large crab.

**Crab Chair.** This unusual chair is carved in the shape of a crab. Six of its legs hold it upright, while the other two legs and its claws are tucked against its body. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of transmutation magic. When a creature sits on the chair, the chair animates. While sitting on the chair, a creature can command it to move.

The chair has a movement speed of 10 feet, AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

### 21 - Meeting Hall

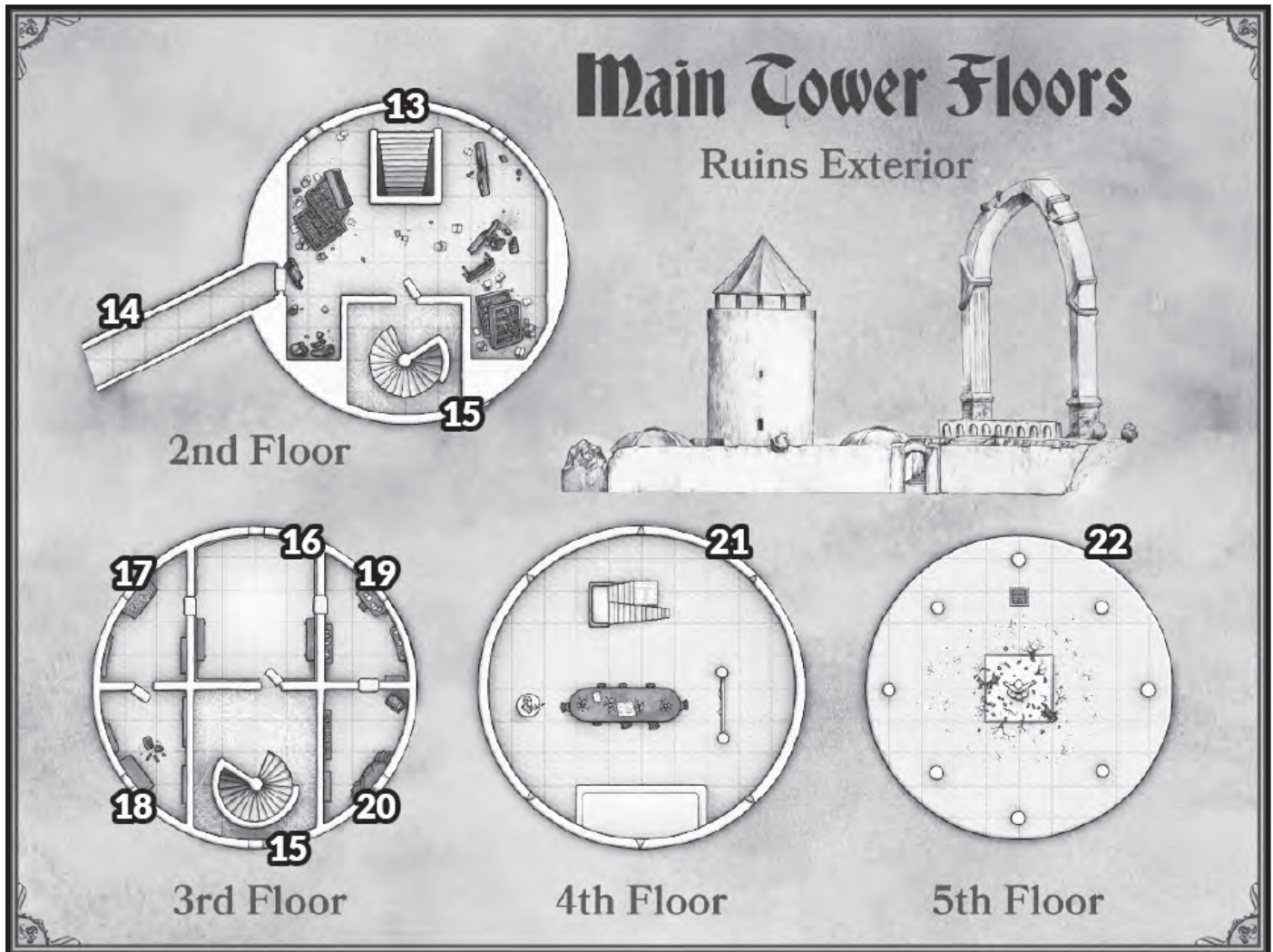
This room fills the entire fourth floor of the tower. It features a long conference table with seats for eight, flanked by a statue of an elven wizard to the west and a glass panel held between stone posts to the east.

**Encounter: Deadtooth Coven.** If the coven (three **swamp hags**, see Appendix D) has not been encountered yet, they are located here, along with Bella-Rose and Dion. Bella-Rose has long brown hair, is short for their age, and speaks with a commanding tone. Dion has short red hair and is standing one shoulder behind Bella-Rose, looking at the hags nervously. The coven is listening to the children plead their case using a combination of stage performance and whiteboarding. Presently, the children are bargaining for the hags to swap their bodies and in exchange they are offering two years of each of their lives.

**Conference Table.** The long table has four miniature dead trees placed evenly across it.

**Statue.** A creature that can *detect magic* notices an aura of conjuration magic. When a creature touches the statue, they are teleported to the area 11 of the southern rotunda.





**Glass Panel.** This glass panel is enchanted with transmutation magic that allows it to function similar to a whiteboard. A creature can swipe a finger across the glass to draw lines and wipe with the flat of their hand to erase lines.

**Stairs.** The stairs ascend to an unlocked hatch in the ceiling that leads to **area 22**.

### 22 - Tower Roof

Eight stone pillars hold a large conical roof above the flat stone roof. In the center, a large statue of an elven woman with outstretched arms raised above her head sits on a square stone platform. Broken branches, sticks, and stones litter the ground around the statue.

**Sticks and Stones.** The Dead-

tooth coven has altered the magical properties of the statue, turning it into a conduit for magically binding pacts they forge with those seeking the coven's gifts. Each of the hags and the participants of a deal must eat ground tooth dust, join hands, and then speak the terms of the deal as one; after which a small magical glyph forms on each participant making the deal. Neither the glyph nor the deal it represents can be removed by any means short of a *wish* spell.

### Concluding the Adventure

Once the characters have resolved the dilemma at the ruins of Neandolen, they return to the Windrow lodge.

There are several possible outcomes for the characters and the children of the swamp:

- If the characters killed the hags, the magic fueling the deals struck with the various children dissipates. Some of the children are more upset about this than others. Bella-Rose and Dion are especially upset.
- If the characters help strike a deal with the hags to allow Bella-Rose and Dion to swap bodies, the two children are ecstatic and happily return with the characters.
- If the characters buy out all of the children's deals, Bella-Rose and Dion are ecstatic, and the characters return with more children than the Windrow's can lodge. To their credit, the Windrow's immediately set out to use their connections to find the children suitable homes or places to stay. Ω



# THE HAUNTING OF MANOR THESSALIA

An adventure for level 8 characters

Written by **John K. Webb**  
Cartography by **Dyson Logos**  
Art by **Matias Lazaro** and **Maciej Zagorski**

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*The Haunting of Manor Thessalia is designed for three to five 7th- to 9th-level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 8.*

The characters are invited to investigate a mysterious haunted mansion in the swamp, where they discover a vampire's private "blood bank."

## Adventure Background

Countess Thessalia was once a young noblewoman who was willingly turned by Count Caedmon, her husband, over a century ago. After the Count was slain by a vampire hunter, Thessalia took over the estate and retreated far from the public eye.

In order to satiate her appetite for blood, Countess Thessalia keeps a personal "blood bank" beneath the manor; those unfortunate enough to be imprisoned are often kept alive for as long as a year. Thessalia chooses her victims carefully, preferring those who've slipped through the cracks of society. Recently, a young human male called Aeson fell into her clutches, and his father has begun asking questions around town.

To dissuade would-be investigators from entering her estate, The Grand Hostess has purposefully transformed her mansion into a haunted site. Those who lay eyes on the mansion often report strange lights, floating orbs, wailing voices, and ghostly figures.

## Adventure Hooks

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

***Cordial Invitations.*** The characters each receive an anonymous letter asking them to investigate the haunting of Manor Thessalia.

***Runaway Teenager.*** The characters are approached by a man named Sontar, who is desperate to find his son Aeson. Aeson ran away from home two weeks ago, and while all signs point to Thessalia's manor, no



one has been able to help him confirm his presence there. He offers the characters 100 pp, his life savings, to retrieve his boy.

**Have a Ball.** The characters happen to come across Thessalia indirectly via another plot point and are invited to attend a ball at her manor, where they discover something is amiss.

## The Manor Thessalia

The estate of The Grand Hostess is a symbol of old-world aristocratic wealth and decay. Though impressive in scope, the intervening centuries between now and Caedmon's reign have not been kind. Massive networks of vines cover the mansion's exterior, the decorative statues are broken, the windows are boarded up, and the surrounding swamp has overtaken the once lush gardens that served as the estate's approach.

## The Haunting

Areas that Thessalia has made haunted will have the *Haunted* description, detailing the phenomenon and the means used to create it. How the characters suss out their true nature is up to them.

## General Features

The following features are common throughout all areas of The Manor Thessalia and are printed here for ease of reference:

**Locked & Boarded Entrances.** All entrances (doors and windows) to the manor have been locked and boarded up from the inside. The locks on the entrances can be picked by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools but will still require a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break open. The door frame to **area 3** is more rotten than the rest of the manor and only requires a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to break open.

**Size & Dimensions** Unless stated otherwise, the ceilings in each area of The Manor Thessalia are 20 feet above the floor.

**Illumination.** Treat every area of The Manor Thessalia as having no light unless stated otherwise.

**Surface Detail.** The interior of the manor was once rich with decoration but has long since been looted of valuables. The whole estate is in a state of disrepair and squalor.

## Encounter Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of The Manor Thessalia and the map of Thessalia's Lair overleaf.

### 1 - Entrance Hall

A long, tattered red carpet greets all who enter the fallen estate. An inoperative chandelier hangs high above.

As the characters enter, a small **swarm of bats**—including the ever-watchful Thessalia—scatter from the chandelier. Thessalia (**vampire**) wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location*, as well as a *ring of mind shielding* containing Lord Caedmon's personality. Both objects are made of bejeweled gold and bear the mark of Caedmon's house: a wolf's head. Thessalia will keep an eye on the characters and will not attack unless they discover the entrance to **area 7**.

**Illumination: Strange Lights.** Several orbs of pale green light are floating around the entrance hall, as if created by the *dancing lights* spell. Any character with spellcasting or proficiency in Arcana immediately recognizes that these lights were artificially created by a spell.



## 2 - Sitting Room

Several large pieces of furniture are covered by white sheets. An uncovered mirror hangs from the west wall, its face shattered. The floor is littered with the remnants of a party long past: bottles, spoiled food, clothing, etc. The window along the east wall has been boarded up from the inside.

Any character that succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices drag marks and dust trails that suggest the furniture was recently disturbed and re-sheeted, and that the mirror was placed back on the wall *after* being broken.

**Haunting: Screams.** Characters standing along the east wall hear Aeson screaming in **area 8** below the manor but can't discern where the sound is coming from among the whining wind.

**Treasure: Locket.** A careful search of the area uncovers a worn platinum locket worth 50 pp. Inside the locket are the mirrored pictures of Thessalia and Lord Caedmon, dated over a century ago.

## 3 - Servant's Kitchen

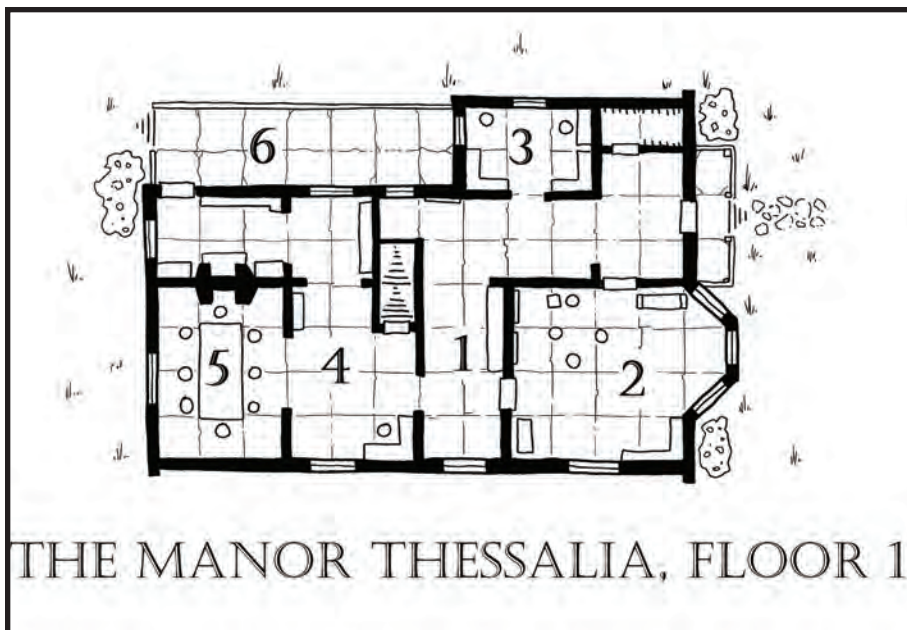
This modest kitchen has been turned over by thieves and ill-fated adventurers: the pantries have been opened, their contents tossed onto the floor, and anything silver has been stripped.

**Haunting: Screams.** Characters standing near the stovetop vent along the east wall hear the sounds of Aeson screaming in **area 8** below the manor but can't discern where the sound is coming from amidst the whining winds.

**Treasure: Silverware.** Any character that succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching this area discovers several pieces of silverware (worth 50 sp) that had fallen behind the stove.

## 4 - Foyer

A false wall on the right side of the entrance to **area 4** hides a locked and barred door leading down to **area 7**, Thessalia's Lair. The north hall leads



outside to **area 6** (once an entrance has been opened), while the west hall leads to **area 5**.

**Haunting: Voices.** Characters in this area can hear the four ghosts in **area 5** talking amongst themselves. Their conversation is nonsensical.

**Haunting: Glyphs of Warding - Vicious Mockery.** Thessalia has inscribed *glyphs of warding* (save DC 16) at the entrance between **areas 1** and **4** and the entrance between **areas 4** and **5**. As soon as a character crosses either threshold, the glyph is triggered. The glyphs contain the *vicious mockery* spell as if cast by a caster of 17th level: a cacophony of voices berate and insult the character over the course of a minute before abruptly stopping.

**False Wall.** Any character that succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the outline of the false wall leading to the basement door. Dwarves or any character with knowledge of architecture recognize the false wall immediately. The door leading down to **area 7** is locked and barred and may be opened in the same manner as other manor entrances.

**Encounter: Thessalia, the Grand Hostess.** If the characters succeed

in discovering and unlocking the basement door, then Thessalia (**vampire**) will assume her true form and ambush the party, prioritizing spellcasters first. If her Misty Escape ability is activated, she will attempt to retreat to one of the coffins in **area 10**, her resting place.

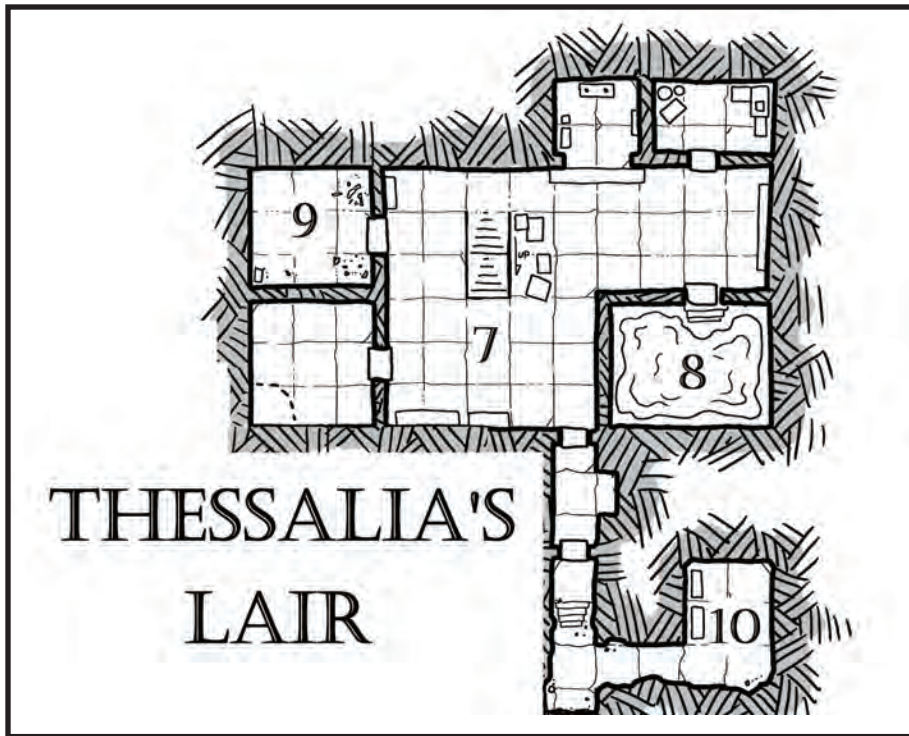
## 5 - Dining Room

A 10-foot-long dining table is situated at the center of the room, with eight seats arranged neatly around it. The area is filled with cobwebs, and the table is covered in rotten and maggot-infested food.

**Encounter: Ghostly Dinner Guests.** Four **ghosts** are situated around the table, acting out their last dinner. They resemble aristocratic noblemen and noblewomen until disturbed, whereupon they become horrific wraiths. Each ghost wears a ring of platinum emblazoned with Caedmon's symbol. Upon entering the area, the four ghosts will stare at the characters and stop talking but will not attack unless disturbed. Characters may ask the ghosts questions, but it is up to the GM to determine what (if any) information they offer.

**Treasure: Wolf Rings.** Each ghost slain will drop their platinum wolf-head ring. Each ring is worth 50 pp.





### 6 - Patio

This area is outside the manor and is beginning to sink into the surrounding swamp.

#### **Encounter: Shambling Mounds.**

Two **shambling mounds** have absorbed parts of the patio, and once disturbed will mindlessly attack the characters and attempt to absorb them.

### 7 - Basement Entrance

The basement is in surprisingly good, clean condition, being Thessalia's true "home."

**Haunting: Screams.** Characters in this area clearly hear the sounds of Aeson screaming for help in **area 8**.

**Rope and Bucket.** A thick rope is suspended from the ceiling, with a bucket underneath it. The bucket and the ground it sits on are covered in dried blood. Drag marks from this area lead east to **area 8** and to the various supply anterooms (see below).

**Treasure: Supply Rooms.** There are four smaller rooms attached to this area: two to the west and two to the north. One of the rooms is a library as detailed in **area 9** (see below). The other three areas are supply

rooms, and a careful search of them turns up the following items:

- Several months of non-perishable food
- Several months of clean water
- Piles of bloodied clothes
- 50 gp of mixed coinage (GM's discretion)
- Small trinkets worth 50 gp

**Locked Door.** The door to **area 9** is locked. Thessalia holds the key. Alternatively, the door can be picked by succeeding on a DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or broken open by succeeding on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

### 8 - The Blood Pool

This area contains Thessalia's victims, hanging by their wrists and suspended via rope from the ceiling. Thessalia's two pet vampire spawn are currently suckling from Aeson's wounds. Two other victims—a female elf and a male dwarf—are unconscious. Buckets, to catch blood, have been left at the victims' feet.

**Encounter: Vampire Spawn.** Thessalia's two **vampire spawn** are busy feeding on Aeson's suspended body and will not attack unless pro-

voked. If they are defeated, the characters can attend to Aeson's wounds and rescue the other two **commoners** in the area.

### 9 - Thessalia's Study

Thessalia's study is a quaint library of rare books and old records. It smells faintly of spices. A recliner sits against the northeast wall.

**Treasure: Rare Books and Gold Material.** A careful search of the area reveals old books weighing 40 pounds and worth 250 gp to collectors (or 250 sp to common merchants). Additionally, there are several platinum-covered candlesticks worth 5 pp each. The gold lining on the recliner can be removed by spending an hour with carpenters' or smiths' tools; it weighs 10 pounds and is worth 50 gp.

**Old Pictures.** Hung around the study are worn pictures of Thessalia and Lord Caedmon in their prime. Wilted flowers have been placed above the mantle.

### 10 - Thessalia's Resting Place

This small area contains two coffins. One of them contains the skeletal remains of Lord Caedmon. The adjacent coffin belongs to Thessalia. If she retreated from **area 4**, she will be found recovering here.

Aside from the coffins, this area contains nothing of note.

## Concluding the Adventure

Once Thessalia has been slain, the characters can retrieve her *amulet of proof against detection and location* and her *ring of mind shielding* containing Lord Caedmon's personality. Caedmon, having lost Thessalia, will beg for death.

If Aeson was rescued from **area 8**, his father will reward the characters what was promised.

If the other commoners were rescued from **area 8** and returned to town for medical treatment, one of them will unfortunately pass away from their wounds, while the other will become a vampire spawn and mysteriously vanish... Ω



# SWAMP THING

An adventure for level 10 characters

Written by Benjamin Palmer  
Cartography by Benjamin Palmer  
Art by Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, Daniel F. Walthall,  
and Stinky Goblin Games

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*Swamp Thing is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 9. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach halfway to 10th level.*

Goblins have been kidnapping passersby and sacrificing them to a hydra in the swamps. This campaign takes place in Arden, although it can be set in your own world. Any party composition should be able to finish the adventure with intelligent play.

## Adventure Background

The evil oni Ogzen discovered a baby hydra while traveling through the swamps. Determined to raise it as a pet and use it for nefarious purposes, he disguised himself as a goblin shaman and enlisted the help of a local goblin tribe to kidnap victims to sacrifice to it to increase its size and strength. Combined with his dark magic, Ogzen was able to grow the baby into a formidable beast. Soon, he'll unleash it on the nearby city of Valhenge as a distraction while he raids the king's treasury in search of a powerful magical item he covets. Unfortunately for Ogzen, his goblin minions kidnapped the daughter of a prominent merchant noble, drawing the ire of her father. The noble has put out a call for adventurers to seek out and save his only child from the evil goblins who have taken her. Unless he can deal with these interlopers, Ogzen's plans will never come to fruition.

## Adventure Hooks

**An Ongoing Evil.** The characters have been tracking Ogzen's moves and believe this latest slew of kidnappings must be related to the oni in some way. When the offer comes to investigate the merchant's missing daughter, they go to take up the job in the hopes of finding the evil mage once and for all.

**A Goblin Menace.** The characters have heard that the local goblin tribe



has been kidnapping passersby for an unknown purpose. Eager to stamp out this threat, they go to accept a job to rescue the goblins' most recent victim.

**A Damsel in Distress.** The characters heard that a local merchant is offering a sizable reward for the return of his missing daughter. Eager to collect, they seek out the parent of the missing child.

## A Celebration Looms

The city is alight with excitement as the Festival of Lights draws closer and closer. Soon the city will be full of festival goers and the revelry will know no bounds. But not all is well in the city. Recently, travelers have been going missing on the road to Valhenge. Tales of goblin raiding parties assailing passing caravans and carrying off innocent folk have been spreading among the common people. Just a few nights ago, one of the city's most prominent merchants lost his daughter in one such goblin raid. Word is, he's offering a handsome sum for her return.

The characters find themselves in the city of Valhenge a week before the annual Festival of Lights. The festival is a time when the entire city comes together to celebrate a series of magical lights that appear in the night sky on the same day each year. There is drinking, eating, games, and shows. Businesses all close down so everyone, regardless of wealth, can enjoy the festivities. One of the main sponsors of the festival is Orlen Van Buren (lawful neutral male human **noble**), a local merchant and member of the Valhenge nobility. Recently, his daughter was kidnapped by goblins on her way back to the city to enjoy the celebrations. Orlen is beside himself with worry and is offering a 5,000 gp reward for her safe return.

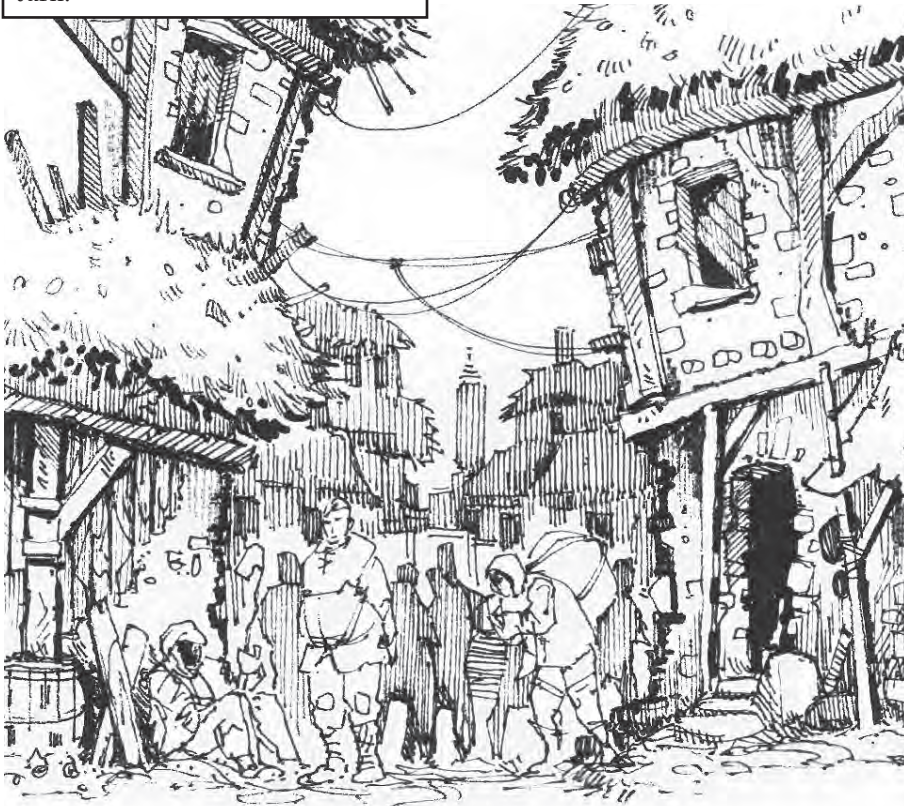
If the characters seek out Orlen, they find him at his estate in the merchant district. The guards outside his home will allow the characters entry if they specify that they're there to accept the job to rescue Orlen's daughter. They're led into the foyer where they're told to wait. After a few minutes, Orlen comes to join them.

He says the following.

"My dear adventurers, thank you for coming. I have been out of my mind with worry since those fiendish little monsters abducted my poor Elisabeth. She was riding in a caravan coming from Denmarsh when they struck. They fired arrows from the tree line striking down the guards before rushing the wagons. The others were able to fend the creatures off, but my dear Elisabeth was never a fighter. They carried her off into the swamps. Please, if you can return her to me, I can offer you 5,000 gp to split amongst yourselves."

If pressed for more information, Orlen knows the following.

- Some of the swamps outside of Valhenge used to be part of the original city. When the area flooded, the city's nobles decided it would be better to abandon those districts and rebuild the city wall further in. A few small groups still call the old, flooded buildings home, unwilling to leave what is theirs.
- Further out, the swampland becomes thick with foliage and the knee-deep water makes traversing the area all but impossible unless you have a boat built for shallow waters.
- There have been sightings of giants in the swamps recently. They usually stick to the mountains, although a small clan did once inhabit the ruins to the southeast of the city. Why they would be moving closer to the city is anyone's guess.
- The swamps are littered with goblin villages, but from what he's been told by the city guard, they've mostly been abandoned in recent months. Wherever the goblins are hiding, it's not their usual haunts. Once the characters accept the mission, Orlen directs them to Urghaz Irontooth, a half-orc **veteran** and member of the city guard. Urghaz can be found at the southern gate to the city. He has been preparing a



small shallow water boat for whoever answered Orlen's call for help. With it, they should be able to navigate the swamps and begin searching for the goblins' hideout.

### The Southern Gate

The southern gate is bustling with pre-festival activity. Merchants, travelers, and the like are swarming into the city and the city guard has deployed extra troops to manage the influx of visitors. Standing on an elevated platform in the midst of the foot traffic is a large imposing half-orc with iron-capped teeth. He seems to be the one in charge.

The half-orc is indeed Urghaz Iron-tooth. He's currently directing the flow of traffic in and out of the southern gate to the city. If the characters want to get his attention, they'll need to make some significant noise as the hustle and bustle of the crowd is almost deafening. Reaching him on his platform will be difficult as well, as wading through the crowd proves as difficult as wading through a raging river. Anyone who tries to approach Urghaz must succeed on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check or be swept along with the crowd and eventually deposited approximately one mile down the road in the city proper.

Once the characters make contact with Urghaz, he gives command of the entrance over to a subordinate and steps off to the side with the characters. He says the following.

"Well now, looks like Orlen found himself some stalwart adventurers to rally to his cause. Good for him. A good man that Orlen. Shame about his daughter. As instructed, I've got a swamp boat ready for you over at the docks. Has all the supplies you'll need for an expedition into the swamps proper. I recommend you start with the old goblin villages to the southeast. Might be some clues there as to where the

little bastards went. Anyway, best of luck."

Urghaz gestures towards a small rickety wooden dock off to the side of the road where the marshland begins. Moored there is a 15-foot-by-10-foot raft with a small tent rigged up between two crates at the rear of it. If the characters are unsure where to go or how to reach the old goblin villages, Urghaz can draw them a rudimentary map of the area that will get them there.

### Village of the Swamp Giants

The village is nothing more than a collection of mud and reed huts on slightly elevated islands. The river the characters are traversing leads directly through it.

The murky water ebbs and flows a bit, the far-off tide exerting its pull even here. Navigating through the reeds and trees is difficult, but eventually the flooded path leads to a clearing upon which a series of large huts stand. These huts are clearly far too large to belong to goblins, although the various smashed smaller structures beside them could have been of goblin make.

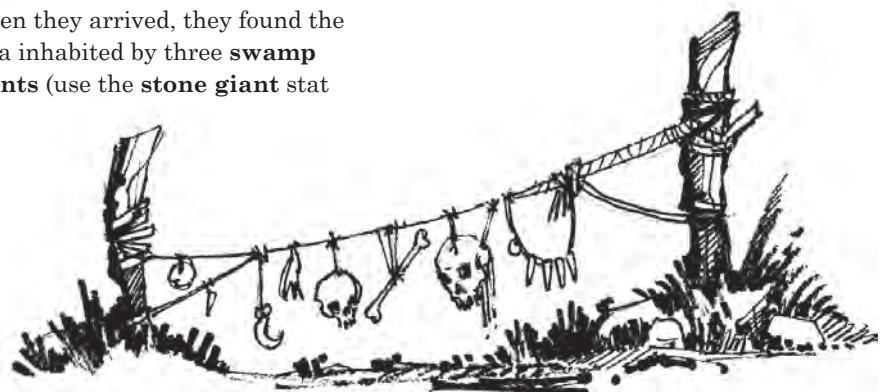
**Encounter: Swamp Giants.** This is the abandoned village of the goblins. When Ogzen arrived in disguise as Urboldt the goblin shaman, he convinced the goblins to leave their swampy home and head further southeast to the old, half-submerged ruins that sit there on the coast. When they arrived, they found the area inhabited by three **swamp giants** (use the **stone giant** stat

block). Ogzen and his goblin army drove the giants away and they have since resettled in the remains of the goblins' old village. The giants have constructed large huts for themselves out of the remains of the old goblin huts and are plotting a way to retake their old home. When the characters reach the village, the giants emerge from their huts.

If the characters are not hostile, the giants won't immediately attack. Instead, they'll shout threats in the giant tongue. If none of the characters speak Giant, they eventually switch to broken Common. If the characters mention they're on their way to kill the goblins, the giants immediately change their tune and invite the characters to join them for supper. They also offer up the following information.

- The goblins showed up with a shaman-y type. Together, they forced the giants from their home in the ruins to the southeast.
- The giants have since scouted out the ruins seeking a way to get their old home back, but now a great monster lives there with the goblins.
- The shaman was very powerful. He could summon darkness and cold and even fly!
- The giants have seen the goblins carrying people off towards the ruins.

If the characters are hostile towards the giants, the giants will attack. They fight until only one remains, at which point it surrenders and offers up the information above.







## A Good Old Goblin Ambush

The swamp-like river that led to the abandoned village continues southeast towards the coast. As it rounds a bend, the river splits in two, divided by a small island.

### **Encounter: Goblin Ambush.**

There is a raiding party on the small island. It consists of eight **goblins** who have taken up positions in the reeds. This gives them advantage on their Dexterity (Stealth) checks. When the characters approach, the goblins initiate their ambush with a hail of arrows from their shortbows. They then move about the roughly 40-foot-by-40-foot island after each shot and attempt to hide once more at the end of each of their turns. The reeds obscure the goblins, so they get the benefit of three-quarters cover while on the island. The goblins are fanatically loyal to Ogzen and will fight to the death.

## Ruins by the Sea

The river begins to branch out into a murky delta. Ahead, the ocean can be seen. Standing half-submerged by the shoreline is a large stone structure. It appears to have once been some kind of military outpost before nature retook it.

The building was in fact once a Valhenge coastal defense outpost before the sea swept in and flooded the area. Now, Ogzen has turned it into an incubation chamber for his hydra and a staging area for his goblin tribe's raids on passing caravans.

### General Features

The structure has the following features unless noted otherwise.

**Ceilings.** The ceilings are made of stone and rise 10 feet above the floor.

**Floors and Walls.** The floors are made of neatly cut stone while the walls are made of a moldy cobbled granite.

**Doors.** The doors are made of solid oak with metal reinforcements. They're all unlocked unless otherwise stated. They have an AC of 10 and 25 hit points.

**Lighting.** Sunlight streams down through cracks in the ceiling overhead, casting the interior in a dim light.

### Encounter Locations

The entrance to the structure is easy to locate and stone steps lead down into **area 1**.

#### 1. Entrance

Moldy stone steps lead down into a damp stone chamber with an oaken door at the far end.

If the characters investigate this room at all, they notice numerous footprints and signs that this room has been recently occupied.

#### 2. Living Quarters

Dirty mats and filth line the walls of this room. Nearly a dozen small shapes lie motionless on the floor.

### **Encounter: Sleeping Goblins.**

There are eight sleeping **goblins** in this room. If awoken, they fight until one of them falls and then they seek reinforcements from the bugbears in the adjacent room.

#### 3. Bosses' Quarters

This room is dominated by two large, oversized sleeping mats covered in shed fur.

**Encounter: Bugbear Bosses.** There are two **bugbears** in this room.

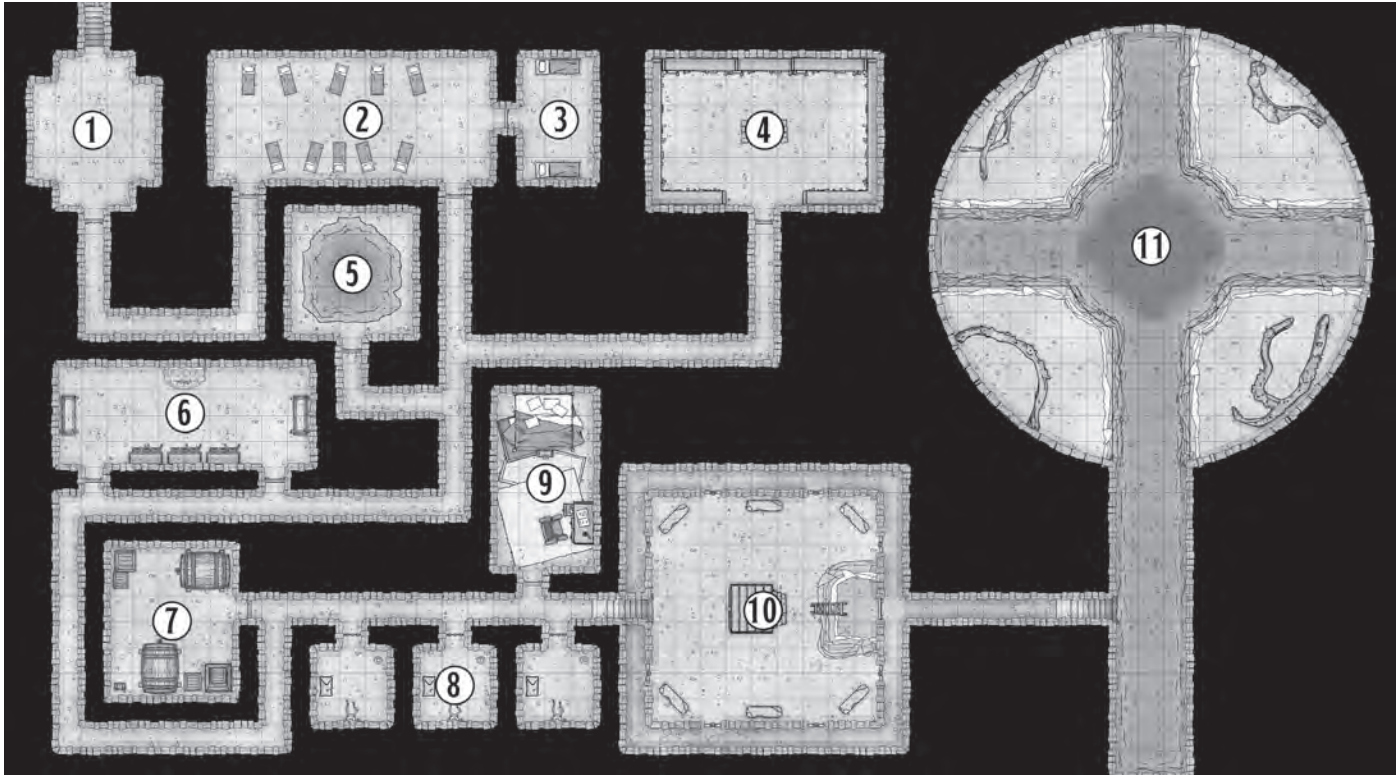
Unless they were awoken by a fight in **area 2**, they are sleeping. If awoken, they will fight intruders until reduced to half their hp or fewer before attempting to flee.

#### 4. Old Library

Old half-rotten bookshelves line the walls of this room. In its center, a table stands with two small figures hunched over it.

**Encounter: Goblin Wizards.** Two **goblin wizards** (use the **mage** stat block, except their size is Small and they have 31 (9d6) hp) are currently pouring over the old texts in this long-lost library. They're occupied with their work, so they have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to notice the characters entering. Once they notice the characters, they immediately cast *cone of cold* as their first spell trying to hit as many characters as possible. They then rely on *magic missile* and *fireball* where appropriate. If reduced to 10 hp or fewer, they cast *greater invisibility* and try to flee. If they manage to escape, they flee into the swamps.

**Treasure: Spellbooks.** The goblin wizards each have a spellbook that contains all the spells on the **mage** stat block.



### 5. Flooded Chamber

This small chamber appears to have been a series of lavatories at some point, although all that remains is a large pool of filthy water.

The water here is positively disgusting. Anyone who enters it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

**Treasure: *Lost Sword*.** Sitting at the bottom of the filthy pool of water is a *frost brand shortsword*. It can be spotted with a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. The water surrounding it is frigid.

### 6. Kitchen

This room once served as a kitchen, although it's long since fallen into disrepair. The cupboards are bare, and the hearth lies cold.

There are 2d10 rations on top of the cupboards (the goblins couldn't reach them), although they're slightly

moldy. Anyone who consumes one must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one hour.

### 7. Moldy Storage

A thick layer of mold and slime covers the partially dissolved crates and barrels that fill this room.

The door to this room has been hastily barricaded shut from the outside. Anyone who investigates it sees that mud has been used to seal the cracks in the door and its frame.

**Encounter: *Slimes*.** Three **black puddings** are lurking in this space. They emerge from the containers when someone opens the door. They seek out the closest creature and try to devour it. They lack any sense of self-preservation and fight to the death.

**Treasure: *Potions*.** There is a small chest in the corner of the room that contains three *potions of greater healing*.

### 8. Prisoner's Cells

These small cells contain rotted bedrolls, buckets of questionable contents, and skeletons chained to the walls, their bones covered in barnacles and mold.

The doors to these cells are locked, the keys long since lost. It looks like someone of immense strength has been bending and unbending the bars to open and close them recently. A DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check is required to open the door.

### 9. Ogzen's Quarters

This large chamber is oddly clean and well-furnished compared to the rest of the ruined structure. Colorful carpets line the floor, and a large comfortable bed sits against the northern wall with a small chest in front of it. A desk and plush armchair can be seen against the eastern wall close to the door.

The door to this room is locked. Ogzen has the key. It can also be opened



with a DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. The inside is incredibly well maintained and illuminated by magical lights on the wall. If the characters investigate the desk, they find plans of some sort. A DC 14 Intelligence (History) check reveals them to be plans for the king's treasury in Valhenge. The characters also find a journal. Reading it reveals the following.

- The chamber belongs to an oni named Ogzen.
- He's been pretending to be a goblin shaman named Urboldt.
- He's manipulated the local goblin tribe into kidnapping victims for him to feed to his pet hydra by claiming it's a god.
- He plans on sending the hydra to attack Valhenge during the Festival of Lights.
- While the city guard is distracted by his monstrous pet, he plans on sneaking into the king's treasury and stealing a magic item known as the *rod of rulership*.

**Treasure: Pearl of Power.** The chest in front of the bed contains a *pearl of power*. The chest itself is locked. Ogzen has the key. It can also be opened with a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

## 10. Sacrificial Chamber

This massive chamber has vaulted 60-foot ceilings. Various windows sit high up on the wall overlooking a central platform. A ladder leads up to higher ground on the eastern wall, and stone benches line the edges of the chamber. A large goblin stands upon the platform holding a limp young woman.

**Encounter: Ogzen the Oni.** The large goblin is actually Ogzen the oni in disguise. When the characters approach, he hurls the woman through the eastern tunnel into the water that flows towards **area 11**. He then calls out in Goblin to the six goblins on the elevated walkways to attack.

The goblins have three-quarters cover while attacking from the windows. Ogzen remains in his shapeshifted goblin form unless hit by an effect that forces him to revert to his normal form. He uses his flying speed to stay out of reach of melee characters while swooping in to attack with his glaive. If he gets the chance, he uses *cone of cold* on as many characters at once as he can. If reduced to 22 hp or less, he uses *gaseous form* to escape through the cracks in the ceiling and into the swamp.

## 11. Hydra Lair

This huge circular chamber has four elevated platforms approximately 15 feet up in the air. Water 3 feet deep floods the remainder of the room. The motionless body of a young woman floats towards the center of it where a monstrous creature with multiple heads awaits.

The woman is Elisabeth Van Buren (chaotic good female human **commoner**). She is currently unconscious. If the characters do nothing, the swamp hydra devours her in three rounds.

**Encounter: Swamp Hydra.** The monstrous, multi-headed creature is a **swamp hydra** (see Appendix D). It has been raised by Ogzen to serve as a distraction to help him gain access to the king's treasury. The creature has been fed magically altered human flesh for so long that it's grown to a massive size. It's also adapted to the filthy water it wades in. It starts off by using its Poison Breath ability and then focuses on whoever gets close to it with its bite attacks and Tail Swipe legendary action. If the characters climb up onto the platforms, the hydra can't use its Tail Swipe legendary action on them; however, it gets a +1 bonus to its bite attack rolls as they're now at head level with it. Ogzen hasn't given it a way out of the chamber yet, so it fights to the death.

## Concluding the Adventure

How things progress from this point onward depends on the actions the characters take.

**If the characters fail to save Elisabeth.** Orlen is heartbroken. He swears revenge against the goblin tribes and begins funding a campaign to exterminate every goblin in the region. Goblinfolk in the city are rounded up and persecuted before ultimately being executed.

**If the characters save Elisabeth.** Orlen is overjoyed to have his daughter back. He gladly pays the reward he promised and makes the characters into public heroes during the Festival of Lights.

**If the characters fail to determine Ogzen's true identity.** The city ramps up efforts to stamp out the goblin tribes surrounding the city in the hopes of making travel safer once more.

**If the characters determine Ogzen's true identity.** The king is eternally grateful for the characters having discovered this plot to steal from his vault. He increases the number of guards present at the entrance to it and gives them a reward of 2,500 gp for slaying the hydra, saving the festival, and protecting his interests.

**If the characters fail to kill Ogzen.** He shows up during the characters' meeting with the king. Furious over his plans being ruined, he attacks alongside two air elementals he has summoned. If the characters deduced his true identity, there are four knights present to help defend the king and characters.

**If the characters kill Ogzen.** The goblin tribes return to their old villages and the giants (if still alive) return to their ruins. Ω





# WRATH OF THE BANSHEE QUEEN

An adventure for level 10 characters

Written by **Thomas Johnson**  
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Art by **Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, William McAusland,**  
and **Jason Glover**

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*Wrath of the Banshee Queen is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for three to five characters of 9th to 11th level and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 10.*

A banshee queen holds a court of trapped spirits prisoner within her cursed castle. This adventure takes place in the Bastion domain of dread setting that easily fits into any existing campaign. You can also easily change the names of the people and locations to place the adventure location into any setting that includes a ruined castle in a swamp.

## Adventure Background

The Nerinora family was once a highly respected noble house in the country of Bastion, known for their magical prowess and business acumen. The merchant wagons bearing their family crest of a white griffon on a blue field were recognized for miles in any direction of Château du Martillon, their ancestral home. Invitations to the galas and balls held at the Château—bursting with displays of magical entertainment and decadent meals—were highly sought after by nobility across the country.

Even more highly sought was the attention of the Marchioness Ashryn Nerinora, who was elevated to head of the noble house after the untimely passing of her husband, Marquis Matthias. A mage and shrewd businesswoman, the Marchioness quickly took the family reins in hand and expertly guided it to further wealth and power. The rise of the Nerinora family seemed to have no apex in sight until the iron inquisitors came with their soldiers and torches.

While the Bastionese nobility enjoyed the privileges of their wealth, a magical plague began to spread through the commoners. The population was decimated as the people were unable to afford the magic needed to combat the disease. A rising tide of anti-magic sentiment rose among



the people, giving power to the Iron Inquisition, a military force with a hatred of magic in all its forms. They burned their way through the country, putting any accused of witchcraft to the torch.

So it came to be that the Château du Martillon was hosting one of its famous galas when the iron inquisitors came bursting through the gates. The noble guests were rounded up and the magic users—the Marchioness included—were beaten and bound to stakes in the Château’s courtyard. As the flames rose to consume her, Ashryn Nerinora raised her voice above the screams to call a curse down upon the inquisitors. Although there are no gods in Bastion, her curses did not fall upon deaf ears. It was at that time the Dark Powers sent the mists to pull the land and its people into the plane of shadow, turning Bastion into a domain of dread.

As the mists and flames rose, the Dark Powers granted Ashryn her desire, cursing the Château and all within it with undeath. The land began to rot, a fetid swamp rose, and the once luxurious manor began to burn and crumble. The spirits of the slain rose in service to Ashryn, who now rules them as their banshee queen. Château du Martillon is now home to a ghostly court, joylessly re-enacting the galas and luxuries they once held so dear for all eternity. All the while, their Queen torments the souls of the inquisitors who put her to the stake. The sounds of merriment mingle with their tortured screams and echo across the swamps.

### About Bastion

The plane of shadow is mercurial, holding countless domains of dread under the control of the Dark Powers. Heavy mists define the domain’s borders, and each is a personal hell for its Darklord. These mists reach across the planes of existence, and many adventurers find themselves engulfed by them and transported into a domain.

#### GM Note: The Iron Inquisition

The Iron Inquisition is built on fanaticism steeped in a burning hatred of magic and seeks to destroy it in all its forms. The inquisitors have a zero-tolerance policy to anyone who displays magic of any kind—arcane or divine—and the swift punishment is to be burned alive at the stake. Those characters new to the realm may need to learn this lesson the hard way (through an encounter with the inquisitors, thereby gaining a new enemy) or be lucky enough for a terrified citizen to warn them (and thereby gaining a new ally). Inquisitors hide their faces behind their *Inquisitor’s Mask* (see Appendix C) that helps protect their identities as well as from magic users.



The characters have somehow found themselves in Bastion, a domain of dread residing in the plane of shadow. Swamps and flooded forests covered the realm, and the people within are drowning in despair and rotting away. The sun never rises or sets

here—the land is forever gripped in twilight, giving free rein to the undead that stalk the wetland.

The Iron Inquisition makes its home here, hunting down magic users and burning alive those accused—regardless of their guilt or innocence—at the stake. Undead horrors and witch covens prowl the marshes, hungrily devouring those foolish enough to leave the false safety the villages provide.

The Bastionese live in constant fear of accusations of witchcraft, but their superstitious natures have led them to seek spiritual guidance through mediums and occultists. Gathering behind closed doors, the locals attend seances to commune with the dead, searching for hope in a hopeless land. Supernatural charms are commonly carried for luck or to ward off the evil eye. Of course, all this must be done in secret because at any moment, a neighbor, sibling, or spouse may report them to the Inquisition. So the citizens wear a veneer of politeness and surround themselves in the trappings of genteel society, their false smiles failing to extinguish the fear in their hearts.

### Marseau

Marseau is a decrepit town on the northwestern edge of Bastion built from the stones of a sunken city in the swamps to the east. Stoic town guards protect the town’s walls, each squad commanded by an ominously hooded and masked inquisitor. They are suspicious of newcomers but leave the characters alone as long as they do not show outward signs of magic. Lamp posts light the cobble streets and cast shadows across the ever-flaking painted facades of the crumbling buildings. The oddly overdressed townsfolk hurry down the streets with purpose, instinctively preferring the perceived safety of indoors. They are quick with a smile and polite greeting, but even quicker to be on their way.

**Adventure Hooks**

These are a few ways to hook the characters into this quest:

**A Message From Beyond.** The characters are invited to a seance held in a secret salon in the basement of the Bienville House, the only inn with vacancy. Led by an occultist named Benjamin Thibeau, the seance calls upon the ethereal realm to deliver a message to the living. The elven spirit that arrives has a cryptic message for the characters before disappearing into the ether: “Seek ye the Queen of Château du Martillon.”

**A Family Affair.** Anitta Nerinora is the great-grandniece and last living member of the once noble Nerinora family. She approaches the characters with her story and a request for their aid. She learned of the destruction the iron inquisitors brought to her family’s door and the curse that traps the spirits within the walls of their ancestral home. As the last living Nerinora, she wishes for nothing more than for the souls of her ancestors to be laid at rest and the curse lifted from Château du Martillon once and for all.

**The Missing inquisitors.** The characters are summoned before Jacob Hellsmoth, the Lord Inquisitor of Marseau. A hulking brute with a razor-sharp military mind, Jacob has been coordinating his soldiers to clear known ruins of the undead infesting them. A detachment was sent to the ruins of Château du Matillon, a cursed ruin that locals have shunned for decades due to its spectral inhabitants. It’s been over a week with no word from the detachment, and he assumes they failed. Not able to afford to send more of his men, Jacob offers to pay the party 5,000 gp to determine the fate of the lost detachment and complete their mission.

**Getting to the Château**

However the characters are hooked into visiting Château du Martillon, the exact location isn’t known to whomever their patron may be. The patron recommends finding a guide through the swamps at Rene’s Lookout, a hunter’s lodge, and waypoint 2 miles east of Marseau. While the travel ways are mostly clear, the creeping swamps and marshes shift the landscape and regularly wash out sections, making the entire domain difficult terrain. At a regular pace, the characters can travel at a normal pace of 1.5 miles per hour. Travelers also run the risk of being attacked by the various creatures and undead hunting the wetlands. For every hour spent traveling, roll a 1d6 and consult the Swamp Encounters table.

**Swamp Encounters Table.**

1d6	Encounter
1	2 <b>shambling mounds</b>
2	2 <b>giant crocodiles</b>
3	1d6+2 <b>giant toads</b>
4	1d4+1 <b>swarms of poisonous snakes</b>
5	1 <b>young black dragon</b>
6	1d4+1 <b>wights</b>

**Rene’s Lookout**

When the characters arrive at Rene’s Lookout, read aloud the following.

The journey through the fetid swamps leads you to the base of a massive cypress tree standing guard over the banks of a large stretch of bayou. As you reach the water’s edge, ripples begin to form on the surface just before rotting figures lurch upwards, heading inland and right towards you. One of the walking corpses suddenly sprouts an arrow in its chest, and a voice calls out from above, “Hey, down there! What’re you doing just standing there?” Looking up to the voice, you spot a cleverly camouflaged structure built high into the treetop, and an annoyed-look-

ing young man standing on a small balcony with an arrow knocked to his bow. He calls out again, kicking down a rope ladder reaching down to the ground. “Are you coming up or what?”

Twelve **zombies** are making their way out of the bayou and towards the shore. The archer is André Chauvert (CN male human **scout**), and he is standing on the balcony to Rene’s Lookout, a structure that is 30 feet off the ground and built around the trunk of the cypress, hidden amongst its branches.

The lookout is built around the 8-foot-wide trunk of a massive cypress tree and is cleverly hidden among the branches, providing a vantage point overlooking the nearby bayou. The circular structure is 25 feet in diameter and consists of a single room with a pair of simple wood-framed beds and a small table with mismatched chairs. Various hunting trophies adorn the walls, and wood carvings of various animals sit on small shelves.

Local hunters use the lookout for shelter during their treks into the swamps. It is currently occupied by the hunter André Chauvert and Jon Rambaut (LN human **knight**), the injured sole survivor of a squad of iron inquisitors sent to cleanse the Château du Martillon.

Once the zombie threat has been dealt with, and the characters enter the lookout with André, read:

The inside of the cleverly hidden lookout is built around the trunk of the cypress tree. A simple circular room holds various hunting paraphernalia and trophies adorning the walls. As you take in your surroundings, a low groan of pain comes from a figure on a bed set against the far wall.

**The Hunter and the Inquisitor**

André Chauvert is a snarky young hunter from Marseau that prefers his solitude in the swamps. He’s not





happy to have to share the lookout with so many strangers, and he chastises the characters for being foolish enough to enter the swamps. In particular, André is not happy at having to play nursemaid to the injured inquisitor he dragged half-dead out of the swamps two nights ago.

Jon Rambaut is a grizzled and stoic warrior in his forties, dedicated to the inquisition and its cause. He was the officer in charge of a deployment of inquisitors sent to the Château over a week ago. Unfortunately, they were ambushed enroute by undead, and Jon barely escaped with his life. He is now unconscious and fighting a fever from a disease he contracted from the wounds he received. A character who is proficient in Medicine and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) check will recognize the symptoms of swamp rot, a highly fatal disease. If Jon does not benefit from a *lesser restoration* or similar spell, he will die within the next 4 hours.

Both André and Jon know the loca-

tion of the Château and can guide the characters there. André is reluctant to leave the dying inquisitor, but a character who succeeds on a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check may convince him. This check can be done with advantage if the characters cure Jon first or offer him a substantial amount of gold. André refuses to guide them if Jon succumbs to his condition, determined to bring the body back to Marseau. If he witnesses the characters use magic, André is shocked but stays silent. If Jon is cured, he eagerly joins the characters if they agree to complete his mission. If he learns he was healed by magic, Jon is wary but pretends to accept it, secretly planning to report the characters when he can.

Either man can give general directions to the Château. It will take 2 hours traveling southeast through the swamps if they travel alone and 1 hour with one of the guides. For every hour spent traveling, roll on the Swamp Encounters table (page 84).

### Château du Martillon

Once the home of the fabulously wealthy and powerful Nerinora family, the Château du Martillon is now a crumbling ruin. The thick stone walls still bear the charred marks of the fire that ruined most of the structure before the swamps began to claim it. Spirits fill the rooms and halls, trapped under the curse of Ashryn Nerinora, the last head of the family who was burned alive. She is now a banshee who rules as queen of the Château, torturing the cursed inquisitors who burned her alive. As a result, the Château, famous for its galas and balls, is now host to tragedy and nightmare.

### Arriving at the Château

When the characters make their way to the Château, read:

The muddy path through the swamp slowly turns into an old stone roadway. Leading through the trees, it ends at the crumbling

front gates of an ancient château, shrouded in mist. Firelight flickers through broken walls, and shouting echoes from the courtyard beyond the gate.

If the characters arrive with André, he leaves the party and quickly disappears back into the swamps. However, if Jon guides the characters here, he insists on joining them. A character who succeeds on a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince him to stay outside.

## General Features

These general features are prominent throughout the Château unless otherwise noted in the area descriptions.

**Ceilings, Floors, and Walls.** The Château is built of crumbling worked granite blocks with rotting wood panels on the interior. The floors are broken stone or marble tiles with the occasional moldy carpeting. Ceilings are 20 feet high throughout.

**Doors.** The doors of the chateau are oak bound in wrought iron. Each door has an AC of 15 and 4 hit points. They are immune to poison and psychic damage. Stuck doors can be opened with a successful DC 15 Strength check, and locked doors can be picked with thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

**Lights.** The Château is well lit by sconces enchanted with *continual flame* spells.

**Cursed Grounds.** The curse laid upon the Château has created desecrated ground, giving the undead in the area advantage on all saving throws (see environment hazards in the *DMG*). It also prevents any spirit from passing on to the next realm, and any undead reduced to 0 hit points will reform again in 24 hours. A character who dies in the Château cannot be resurrected, and their spirit is trapped there unless the curse is broken.

**Ghost Stories.** In certain rooms, there are spirits trapped in a repeating scene from the past. They

are treated as illusions created by a *major image* spell with a spell save DC of 20. In certain scenes, as noted in the adventure text, if the characters attempt to interact, they must succeed on a group DC 20 Charisma saving throw, or the illusions become real—the characters becoming subject to the effects as described in that story. On a successful save, the illusions stay harmless to the characters. Once a scene has played out to its conclusion as described, it will reset and repeat 1 hour later.

**Magical Servants.** The Château was enchanted with *unseen servant* spells by the Nerinora family long ago. They are still active in some areas, still cleaning and waiting to serve. Some pieces of furniture have permanent *animate object* spells on them. Unfortunately, the curse has affected them to behave erratically, as noted in the adventure text below.

## Encounter Locations

The following descriptions correspond to the keyed locations on the provided map of the Château on page 90.

### 1. Courtyard

The crumbling gates open into a large, enclosed courtyard partially flooded with swamp water. Thorny vines cling to the 20-foot-high walls of what was once a majestic structure now fallen into ruin. Scattered throughout the courtyard are a dozen corpses dressed in finery laying in pools of blood. An anguished cry rips through the air as a group of hooded and masked figures burst from the front doors of the manor, carrying a bound elven woman with them. Ignoring your presence, the group heads towards a pile of stacked wood with a post in the center.

**Ghost Story: The Curse.** The figures and corpses are part of the ghost story (see General Features) of Ashryn Nerinora's burning and subsequent cursing of the Château. If the

characters see through the illusion or let the story play out, read aloud the following:

The masked figures work quickly and effectively, binding the struggling woman to the stake. One begins to speak as he lights a torch, his voice muffled behind the iron mask he wears, "For the crime of witchcraft and for bringing the plague upon us, we condemn you to the flame. May the light have mercy on you." Throwing the torch onto the oil-soaked pyre, he backs away as the flames begin to catch and roar to life. Choking on the smoke, the woman stands proud as a queen as she screams defiantly, "You fools! Curse you all! You will never find peace in this life or the next! I swear it on my soul! I curse you!"

The scene ends with mists rising from the ground and the inquisitors choking, their skin melting as Ashryn screams in flames. In an instant, the fog, corpses, stake, and all spirits in the scene vanish, leaving the courtyard silent and empty.

**Encounter: Executioners.** If the characters attempt to rescue Ashryn and are drawn into the ghost story, the illusion of the scene is broken, and the inquisitors turn into six hostile **specters**.

### 2. Guest Rooms

Thick vines have forced their way down through holes in the ceiling of this corridor. Purple flowers growing on the vines give off a sickly-sweet scent.

This hall opens into the rooms where noble guests would stay when visiting the Château. The remains of rotting furniture fill each of them.

**Hazard: Noxious Flowers.** Any creature who can smell the flowers in this corridor must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become ill from the scent. The affected creatures gain disadvantage on Constitu-



tion saving throws for 1 hour. A *lesser restoration* spell or similar magic ends the effect.

### 2a. Noble Lovers

The once fine furniture in this small room is rotting away. A collapsed four-poster bed holds the charred remains of two skeletons locked in an embrace.

**Treasure.** A thick gold necklace has melted into the collarbone of one of the skeletons. A character proficient in Artisan's Tools who succeeds on a DC 18 Dexterity check can spend 10 minutes extracting the gold from the bone. The melted gold is worth 50 gp to a jeweler, and the gold-infused bone is worth 100 gp to an oddities collector.

### 2b. The Weeping One

A character listening at the door to this room hears quiet weeping from inside. The room contains a small bed and the figure of a woman in a delicate ball gown sitting in a chair and crying into her hands. She can be determined to be a spirit by a character who succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. The woman will not react to anything the characters do or say, but if they spend more than one minute in the room, they witness blood begin to pour through the fingers holding her face.

### 2c. Hungry Vines

Vines dangle from holes in the ceiling of this small room. There is a small iron lockbox sitting on a molding bed.

**Trap: Vampire Vines.** The vines in this room are alive, and any creature walking under them must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled by them (Escape DC 18). The characters must roll initiative, and any grappled creature

takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage from the vines on initiative count 20. The thick vines have an AC of 18 and 10 hit points. For each point damage done by the vines, they gain an equal amount of temporary hit points.

### 2d. Empty Room

The southeastern corner of this room has collapsed into rubble, leading to a broad hallway. The wreckage is difficult terrain and climbing over it alerts the **ghasts** in the Collapsed Hallway (**area 3**).

### 2e. Washroom

This washroom has a cabinet sitting against the southern wall with an open toilet next to it. A gurgling sound rumbles up from it, and a whiff of rot wafts out.

The northeastern corner of this washroom has mostly collapsed outwards into the Collapsed Hallway (**area 3**) beyond. The rubble is considered difficult terrain and climbing over it alerts the **ghasts** in **area 3**.

**Encounter: The Toilet Monster.** A **roper** has made its home in the 15-foot-deep toilet pit and will attack any creature that comes within 5 feet of it. The roper prefers to pull its victims in to drown them in the 5 feet of rancid water at the bottom and then eat them.

### 3. Collapsed Hall

Large portions of the ceiling and walls in this hallway have collapsed into rubble.

**Encounter: Beauty Queens.** Four **ghasts** dressed in filthy and torn ball gowns are in this hallway eating a deer carcass near the collapsed wall leading to the Ballroom (**area 5**).

### 3a. Washroom

A small silver mirror worth 25 gp sits on a washstand next to an open toilet.

### 3b. Kitchen

Every surface of this kitchen is immaculately clean, and a claw-footed, pot-belly stove sits against the southern wall crackling with a fire burning inside.

*Unseen servants* have maintained the kitchen.

**Encounter: The Angry Chef.** The **animated stove** (see General Features: Magical Servants, it is a Medium animated object) throws burning logs that deal 8 (2d6+1) bludgeoning damage and 6 (2d4+1) fire damage. The stove chases out any creature that enters the kitchen but will not leave it.

### 4. Servant Quarters

A few inches of swamp water has seeped into this long hallway and serving carts filled with cutlery and the remains of long-rotted food lie scattered around. Simple wooden doors line the eastern and western walls and ornately carved heavy oak doors exit to the north and south.

The doors to the servants' rooms are swollen shut and stuck (see General Features). Inside each room is simple furniture rotting away in the swamp water.

**Treasure.** A character who actively searches the carts and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check will recover a complete dining set of silver and gold chased cutlery worth 200 gp.



4a. Thief's Room

A framed charcoal sketch of a young woman cradling a baby in her arms hangs on the wall over a small bed in this otherwise bare room.

A character actively searching this room who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers a loose stone near the foot of the bed. Underneath is a leather satchel containing 100 gp and a black pearl worth 500 gp.

**Encounter: Protective Mother.**

The **ghost** of Simoné—the servant who lived in this room—is hiding in the dark under the bed. If a character touches the hidden satchel, she lunges out from under the bed. She screams, “Where is my baby?!” as she attacks them. She will attack only that character unless she can successfully possess them, after which she attacks the rest of the party.

4b. Shadow Room

This room contains a tiny bed and a small nightstand with a leather-bound book sitting on top.

**Encounter: Shadow Servants.**

Two **shadows** are hiding in this room and will pounce on the first character that opens the door.

**Journal.** The leatherbound book is the damaged journal of an elven servant named Gordon written in elvish and code. A character who speaks elvish and spends at least 10 minutes reading must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to decipher the code. The journal contains many entries filled with disdain towards the noble guests Gordon had to serve. Two entries stand out, stating, “I swear to the light that if she does not stop that miserable child from crying all night, I will take care of it myself!” in an angry scrawl and “Finally! The incessant crying is no more, and I can sleep in peace at last.”

4c. The Cleaning Ghost

Anyone listening at the door to this room can hear a voice humming a sad-sounding tune. Inside is the spirit of a female servant dressed in black and gold livery standing in the center of the room. She stands with her back to the door and rocks gently back and forth as she hums to herself. The ghost stops humming and rocking the second a character enters the room. She tilts her head and calls out, “Yes, m’lady, I’m on my way!” before turning toward the door, showing that half of her face is a mangled mess of muscle and shattered bone. The spirit steps towards the door once before turning incorporeal and disappearing.

**Library Book.** A character who searches under the bed in this room will find a dull book entitled *A Treatise on Bastionese Nobility*. A character who spends 10 minutes reading the book and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check will recognize the description of the Château and learn more about the Nerinora family’s wealth and famous galas (see Backstory).

5. Ballroom

Anyone listening at the doors or peeking through the broken walls will hear the music and see the scene as described below. When the characters first enter the room, read.

Music from a string quartet set on a small stage in the center of the southern wall fills this majestic ballroom. Crystal chandeliers cast multi-colored light from rainbow-colored flames that dance and spin around them. The polished marble tiles gleam, reflecting the flames to bathe the room in color. Dancing around the room in a complex and synchronous dance are fancifully masked and elegantly dressed nobles. Laughter and conversation mix with the music from a crowd of gleeful onlookers.

The actual decrepit condition of the ballroom is hidden under the illusion

of the ghost story and can be seen by characters who succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The chandeliers enchanted with permanent *dancing lights* spells are the only genuine part of the illusion—the rest of the room is in crumbling disrepair.

**Ghost Story: Let Them Eat Cake.**

If the characters move more than 15 feet through this room, the music, conversation, and dancers stop instantly, with all spirits in the room staring silently at the group. If the characters avoid being drawn into the scene (see General Features: Ghost Stories), they are instantly ignored, and the spirits resume their revelry.

Otherwise, each character is approached by a masked noble that bows or curtsies before offering their hand to dance. If any of the characters refuse, the scene dissolves into the encounter as described below.

If the characters accept, they are each led to the center of the ballroom by their spirit partner and set in place as the music starts and they begin to dance. There are three steps to the dance, each requiring a different group DC 15 check (see group checks in the *DMG*) as noted on the Dance Card table. Use the Dance Check Results table after each check to determine how many points the party earns or loses. If the characters finish the dance with at least 3 dance points, the music ends, and the spirits applaud and bow before the scene dissolves. If the characters fail, the music comes to a screeching halt, and the encounter described below is initiated.

**Dance Card Table.**

Step	Check
1	Intelligence (History) to know the dance.
2	Dexterity (Performance) to perform the dance.
3	Charisma (Deception) to maintain noble bearing.



**Dance Check Results (Table).**

Result	Effect
Total Success	The onlookers cheer, and the party earns 3 dance points.
Success	The onlookers politely applaud, and the party earns 2 dance points.
Failure	The onlookers murmur unhappily, and the party loses 1 dance point.
Total Failure	The onlookers jeer, and the party loses 2 dance points.

**Encounter: Undead Ball.** If the characters initiate the ghost story and fail to complete it successfully, the scene dissolves to show the actual condition of the hall while the remaining spirits turn hostile. The string quartet spirits turn into four **shadows**, and one noble spirit per character becomes a **specter**.

**6. Salon**

A filthy red carpet covers the marble floor of this salon. Ornate plush couches sit rotting against the walls next to fallen and broken furniture. There is a smell of rot and decay in the air.

**7. Horror Hall**

The door to this room is locked, and the key is in the Study (**area 17**).

The coppery tang of fresh blood is the first thing you notice as the door swings inwards. The next is the pair of bloody bodies hanging from their chests by iron hooks chained to the ceiling.

The two bodies are **cursed inquisitors** (they use the **veteran** stat block, and they have 1 hit point remaining) that first attacked the Château decades ago. The curse has kept them alive for Ashryn to torture for eternity. They appear to be corpses unless a character touches them, at which point they groan in pain, show-

ing they are alive. Their minds have broken, and they know only pain and terror, even if healed.

If Jon Rambaut is with the party, he demands the characters do whatever they can to help the inquisitors, but if the Inquisitors leave the Château, their bodies rapidly age and turn to dust.

**7a. Torture Cell**

A **cursed inquisitor** lays shackled to a table in this room with every bone in his arms and legs broken.

**7b. Torture Cell**

Chained manacles holding severed hands dangle from the ceiling of this otherwise empty room.

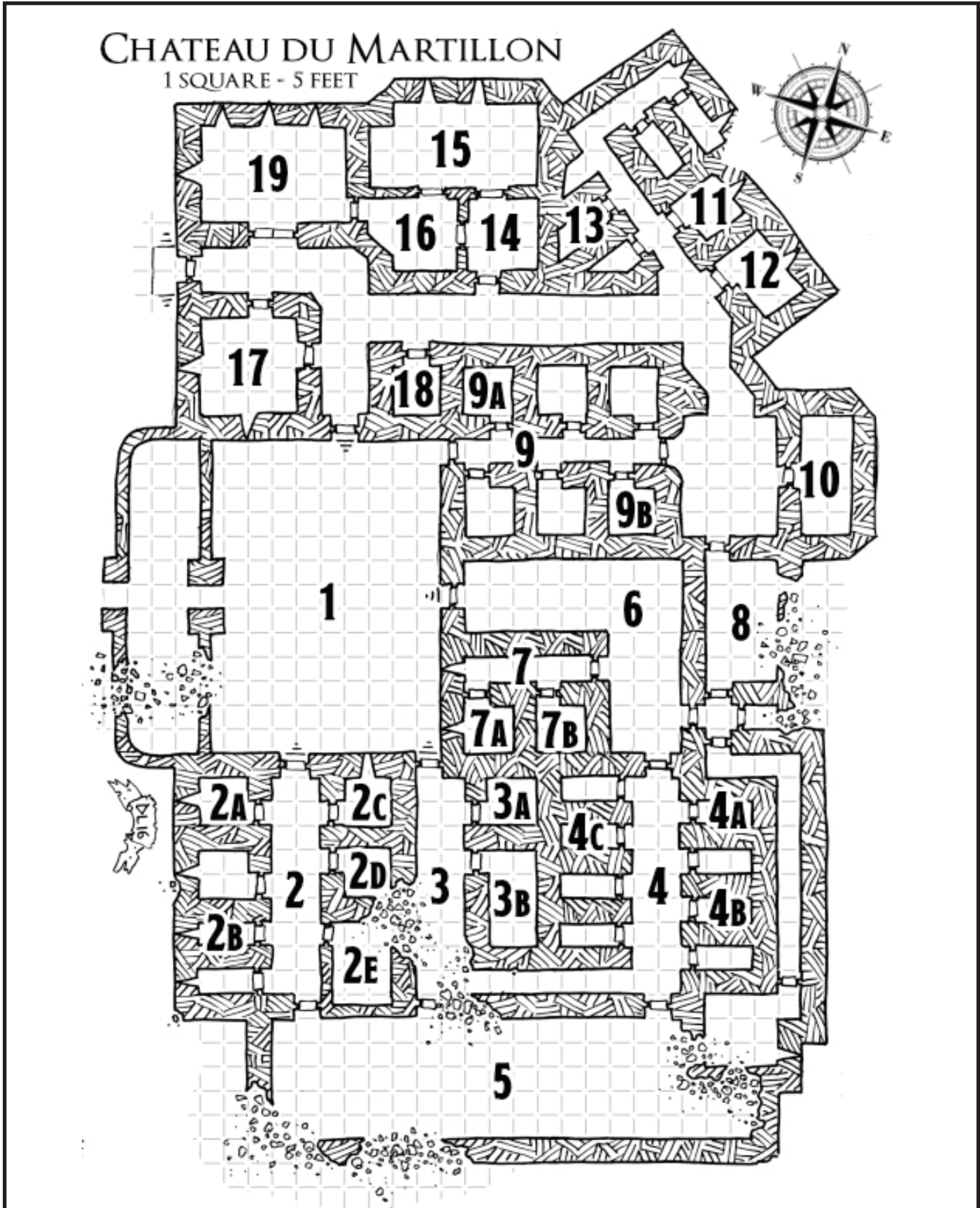
**8. Sunroom**

The ceiling of this sunroom is made of large panes of thick, cracked glass. The eastern wall has crumbled into the swamp below, spilling rocks across the floor.

**Trap: Goldberg Effect.** Anyone walking across the loose rocks in









this room must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to maintain their footing. On a failed save, they trip and fall, taking 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage. In the course of their fall, they knock into a bookcase that slams back into the wall, in turn shattering the glass ceiling above. Anyone in the room when this happens must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) piercing damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful save.

## 9. Storage Rooms

Half a foot of swamp water floods this hallway. Doors leading to storage rooms line the walls to the north and south—rotting crates and barrels of long-perished foodstuffs and ruined supplies inside each of them.

### 9a. Well Room

A rancid smell wafts from an open well sitting in the middle of this room. The sound of a baby crying can be faintly heard coming from the bottom.

If a character goes down into the 30 foot deep well, the crying stops when they are halfway down. At the bottom is 5 feet of rancid swamp water with a bundle of tiny bones scattered in the muck. The sound of the baby crying starts again as soon as the well is empty once more.

### 9b. Kennel

Two **undead mastiffs** (they use the **mastiff** stat block, and their type is undead) are absentmindedly chewing on the arm and leg bones of a human skeleton in this kennel. They growl in warning at anyone who opens the door but do not attack unless someone enters.

## 10. Master Bedroom

The door to this room is locked (see General Features).

This once-lavish bedroom contains a large four-poster bed covered in a dusty crushed velvet duvet. An in-

tricately carved vanity sits opposite the bed.

**Treasure.** A character who searches the vanity finds a silver hairbrush with the word “beauty” in elvish carved into the handle. A creature who speaks the command word while brushing their hair can permanently alter the length and color of their hair.

**Diary.** A leather-bound diary is under the bed with a *glyph of warding* (save DC 15) set to Explosive Runes (lightning damage) if anyone opens it. The book is reduced to ash if the glyph is triggered. Ashryn has written a series of awful poems about the joys of the trade industry in her diary, mixed in with various unrelated business notes. The only helpful entry is a note where she believes a servant may have stolen valuables and hid them somewhere.

## 11. Navarre’s Bedroom

A colorful circus scene adorns the walls of this bedroom. A broken trapeze hangs from a single rope above a small bed, and a rocking horse sits next to a large ragged plush lion in one corner.

The rocking horse begins to gently rock back and forth when any character steps into the room. The spirit of Ashryn’s youngest son Navarre sits quietly on the horse and will not show himself or engage with the characters unless they are with his brother Aeric (see **area 17**). However, if a character can see into the Ethereal realm, he is surprised and hides behind the stuffed lion, refusing to talk to them.

If the characters have brought Aeric with them, Navarre materializes and runs to hug his brother. Navarre is a five-year-old elven boy dressed in a ringmaster’s costume. After the brothers embrace, they will show the characters to the secret door in the Game Room (**area 16**) that leads to their mother. They refuse to follow the characters and the child spirits

rush back to the safety of Navarre’s bedroom.

## 12. Aeric’s Bedroom

The walls of this bedroom are painted to resemble a castle’s ramparts overlooking an idyllic country scene. Colorful dragons fly across the sky on the ceiling, and a unicorn rears on a hill in the distance. A large sackcloth doll with cloth knight’s armor and plush sword sits on a small bed.

The stuffed knight is an **animated doll** (see General Features: Magical Servants, it is a Small animated object and its plush sword deals 1 nonlethal bludgeoning damage, knocking a target unconscious if they reach 0 hit points from its attack), and it has the words “Sir Theodore” stitched onto its chest. The doll activates if its name is spoken and is deactivated by saying, “I yield.”

## 13. Moldy Closet

This large closet is full of old sheets and other linen. The smell of mold and mildew is heavy in the air.

The mold in this room is harmless. **Toy Sword.** A character searching through the rotting sheets will find a silver-painted toy wooden sword tucked under a pile.

## 14. Reading Room

Stuffed couches and chairs sit molding against the walls of this reading room. A thick carpet covers the floor from end to end.

## 15. Library

Rotting leatherbound volumes fill bookshelves that ring around the edges of this library. A set of chairs sit facing a cold fireplace, a small table holding a dusty bottle between them. An older man in servant’s livery stands with his back to you at the far end of the room, plac-

ing books on the shelf from a cart standing next to him. He turns towards you at the sound of the opening door, showing a face blackened as if by fire. Placing a finger to his charred lips, he admonishes, “shhh!” before turning back to shelving books.

**Château Information.** A character that spends 10 minutes browsing the bookshelves who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will find a book containing an old map of the Château. On this map, the Game Room (**area 16**) is a wine room with a trap door leading to a cellar below.

**Encounter: Quiet in the Library.** The **ghost** librarian ignores the characters unless they speak above a whisper. If a character offers the library book found in **area 4c**, he will be highly pleased and exchange it for a *manual of gainful exercise* before ignoring any other noise they make. Otherwise, he shushes a second time angrily in warning before turning hostile if they do not heed him. Then, he activates two **animated bookshelves** (see General Features: Magical Servants, they are Large animated objects with a speed of 0 and throw books with a range of 20 feet dealing 13 (2d10 + 2) bludgeoning damage).

**16. Game Room**

Rotting stuffed animal head trophies adorn the walls of this room, overlooking a leather and felt table with a deck of cards sitting on top.

Any character that touches the table or the deck of cards activates an *unseen servant* spell enchanted onto the gaming table. The servant sweeps the cards up and deals them out to one seat per character. If the characters complete a round of a card game (any game at the GM’s discretion) without cheating, a hidden compartment in the tabletop opens to reveal a pouch containing 1000 gp and a *helm of brilliance*. This compartment can be found with a successful DC

20 Intelligence (Investigation) check and unlocked with thieves’ tools and a successful DC 20 Dexterity check. Any attempt to open it will be considered cheating.

**Encounter: Cheater’s Delight.** If a character attempts to cheat at any time, the **animated gaming table** (see General Features: Magical Servants, it is a Large animated object) activates and attacks the cheater.

**Secret Door.** A character actively searching who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers that pulling on the lower jaw of a stuffed cougar’s head opens a hidden trap door under the gaming table with a ladder leading to the Cellar (**area 20**).

**17. Study**

Stacks of molding books and scrolls sit on top of heavy wooden tables and desks around the outskirts of this study. Searching through one of the desks is a young boy with curly brown hair dressed in a knight’s costume. At the sound of the opening door, he turns around and tilts his head to the side, saying, “Hello. You shouldn’t be here. Mother will be displeased.”

The spirit of Ashryn’s ten-year-old son Aeris is polite and willing to answer the characters’ questions to the best of his knowledge. His spiritual nature can be determined with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. Aeris knows the following helpful information.

- His mother is punishing the “bad men who hurt her.”
- He doesn’t know where Ashryn is, but his brother Navarre (see **area 11**) might know.
- He is looking for his sword to protect Navarre, but he is scared to leave the study.

If the characters bring him the toy sword from **area 13**, Aeris will come with them to Navarre’s Bedroom (**area 11**)

**Treasure.** A character searching the

desks who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check will find a spellbook containing all the prepared spells on the **mage** stat block.

**18. Washroom**

The marble tiling in this washroom is impeccably clean.

An *unseen servant* (see General Features: Magical Servants) keeps this room sparkling clean.

**19. Dining Room**

Tree branches extend through the large empty windows of this dining hall. They provide a canopy over a fifteen-foot-long table that dominates the center of the room. A lavish meal graces the table, with the delicious smells of roasted meats and freshly baked pastries filling the air.

**Ghost Story: Last Meal.** The prepared dinner table is part of a static ghost story (see General Features: Ghost Stories). If the characters are drawn into the story, the illusory food becomes real, and one chair per character is pulled back as if by an invisible servant. If the characters sit, *unseen servants* present plates of food to them, and each must choose an item to eat. The food and their effects are as follows:

- **Succulent Pig.** Any creature that eats the pig must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, becoming poisoned for 1 hour and taking 17 (3d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- **Roasted Duck.** Any creature that eats the duck is targeted by a *levitate* spell (save DC 15) that lasts for 1 hour or until dispelled.
- **Fresh Apple Pie.** Any creature that eats a slice of apple pie gains immunity to the frightened condition for 1 hour.
- **Garden Salad.** Any creature that eats a whole garden salad gains 10 temporary hit points.





- **Liver Pate.** Any creature that eats the liver pate has advantage on all ability checks and saving throws that use Strength for 1 hour.
- **Salmon Mousse.** Any creature that eats the salmon mousse must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or instantly drop to 0 hit points and gain disadvantage on death saving throws for 1 hour.

**Encounter: Dinner Party Crashers.** If any character refuses to sit or eat, the scene dissolves, revealing rotting carcasses on the table where the meal once sat. The **animated dining room table** and **one animated chair** per character (see General Features: Magical Servants, the table is a Huge animated object and each chair is a Medium animated object) attack until destroyed. If the characters are sitting, the arms of the animated chairs will attempt to grapple them (Escape DC 15) with advantage.

## 20. Cellar

A ladder descends fifteen feet down into what appears to be an extensive wine cellar. Racks of dusty bottles line the walls, and broken glass litters the floor. In the center of the room is a regal elven woman dressed in a white, blood-stained gown standing with her arms crossed and chin in her hand and an expression of unadulterated hate on her face. She peers down at a man spread across the floor at her feet with wrists and ankles bound to iron pins. He stares blankly at the ceiling with bloody foam on his lips as a pile of rats eats their way into his stomach. Slowly raising her gaze to meet yours, she addresses you with the regality of a queen, “You have been in my home for some time. Why? What business do you have here?”

**Encounter: The Banshee Queen.** The Marchioness **Ashryn** (see Appendix D) is calm and collected, reserving her rage for the inquisitor. She has little interest in the charac-

ters or their motives for being in the Château and demands they leave at once. If they refuse, or if Jon Rambaut accompanies the characters and Ashryn sees him, she flies into a rage. Ashryn uses her Wail ability first, and the regal illusion of her former self drops to reveal her banshee form. She focuses her attacks on Jon if he is with the party.

If Ashryn is defeated, read aloud the following:

A soul-piercing scream erupts from the banshee as her form begins to tear itself apart in a burst of blinding light. As she begins to disintegrate, the sound intensifies, and the foundation of the Château starts to shake from the vibration. The building is beginning to collapse!

The inquisitor bound to the floor crumbles to dust at Ashryn’s defeat. The characters must escape the Château within the next 2 minutes before it sinks into the swamps and disappears forever.

## Concluding the Adventure

If Ashryn is defeated, the curse of the Château is broken, and the trapped spirits are free to pass on to the other side. If Jon Rambaut survives and returns with the party to Marseau, he quickly informs the Lord Inquisitor of any use of magic on the characters’ part, and they will now have to contend with his wrath. Any promised rewards are paid out, otherwise. The citizens of Marseau breathe a little easier knowing that the spirits of the Château have been freed, giving them a small glimmer of hope in this hopeless land.

If the characters perish in the Château, their spirits are cursed to forever languish within its walls, never allowed to know peace or able to move on to the afterlife. Instead, they become trapped within a ghost story, endlessly repeating a scene for other adventurers to encounter. Ω

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# APPENDIX A

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# CYCLOPÆDIA

Written by **Dave Hamrick**  
Cartography by **Maps By Owen**  
Art by **William McAusland**

## Omeria: The Long Continent

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

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

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

**Black Swamps of Barkor.** These vile, lifeless mires surround Shred, the home of the danaavrakt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Omerian Ocean.** The cruel, impassable ocean to Omeria’s west bears the continent’s name.

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

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

**Sea of Chimes.** The Dinzer tribes built their first villages along this great sea.

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

**Summer Land.** Along with the tribes of Odonburg, The Summer Land is the only early human nation

that remains. It is ruled by the Pressonians of Presson’s Enclave.

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

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

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

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

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

**Xenem Dynasty.** Xenem is a vampire-controlled island known for its extensive humanoids for food trade.

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







# APPENDIX B

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## OPTIONS

Written by Dave Hamrick  
Art by Jason Glover and Fat Goblin Games

### Primal Path: Barbarian Path of Destruction

At 3rd level, a barbarian gains the Primal Path feature, which offers you the choice of a subclass. The following Path of Destruction is available to you when you are making that choice.

#### Path of Destruction

Some barbarians treat their rage as a separate aspect of their personality and try not to define themselves by their anger. But you? You fully embrace it. Anger is your life. Destruction is your purpose. And all obstacles—living or otherwise—must be destroyed.

In Omeria, barbarian worshipper of Yrena, the Goddess of Destruction, often follow this path, destroying anything and anyone that opposes them or their deity. Many such warriors roam Dreadfields and other regions within the Three Great Wastelands,

often leaving a trail of victims in their wake.

#### Rage Monster

*3rd-level Path of Destruction feature*

When you finish a short rest, you may regain one use of your rage. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

#### Siege Warrior

*3rd-level Path of Destruction feature*

While raging, you deal double damage to objects and structures.

#### Fearsome Blow

*6th-level Path of Destruction feature*

While you are raging and you reduce a creature's hit points by 5 or more with a melee weapon attack using Strength, you can use your bonus action to force the creature to make a Wisdom saving throw. The DC is equal to the amount of damage that was taken. Targets immune to the

frightened condition automatically pass their saving throws. On a failed saving throw, the target has disadvantage on attacks made against you until the end of its next turn. A target that succeeds on its saving throw or the effect ends for it is immune to the effects of this feature for 1 hour.

#### Powerful Blow

*10-level Path of Destruction feature*

While you are raging and you reduce a creature's hit points by 5 or more with a melee weapon attack using Strength, you can use your bonus action to force the creature to make a Strength saving throw. The DC is equal to the amount of damage that was taken. Targets immune to the frightened condition automatically pass their saving throws. On a failed saving throw, the target takes an additional 2d6 damage of the same type and suffers one of the following effects (your choice):

- The target is knocked prone.
- The target is pushed back 10 feet.

#### Aura of Destruction

*14th-level Path of Destruction feature*

Your rage is so infectious that it spreads to your allies. When you enter your rage, you can choose a number of other willing creatures you can see within 30 feet of you equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum of one creature). Until the rage ends, the chosen creatures can use the following benefit once before your rage ends: the target can make a melee weapon attack at advantage, and until the target uses this benefit, it has advantage on Strength ability checks and saving throws.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.





## Warlock Otherworldly Patron: The True Emperor

At 1st level, a warlock gains the Otherworldly Patron feature, which offers you the choice of a subclass. The following True Emperor patron is available to you when you making that choice.

### True Emperor

Just a little under a decade ago, a mysterious faction appeared in mighty Tadju city. Calling themselves The Paragons of the True Emperor, this autocratic faction rejected Tadju and Hasastan's leaders, citing that the church of Xardos should have no hand in government. Originally, these protests were peaceful, but they soon grew violent.

Known to few, the organization is guided by a select group of warlocks who draw power directly from their so-called True Emperor, an as of yet unrevealed entity. These manipulative warlocks keep to the shadows, content to use their illegal enchantments to charm and dominate important figures within their organization.

### Expanded Spell List

*1st-level True Emperor feature*

The True Emperor lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

#### *True Emperor Expanded Spells.*

Spell Level	Spells
1st	<i>bane, command</i>
2nd	<i>calm emotions, suggestion</i>
3rd	<i>clairvoyance, nondetection</i>
4th	<i>compulsion, confusion</i>
5th	<i>dominate person, modify memory</i>

### Confident Enchantment

*1st-level True Emperor feature*

When you cast an enchantment spell that requires a saving throw to resist its effects and the target succeeds,

you can use your reaction to force the creature to repeat its saving throw.

The target must keep the new result, even if it's better.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

### Psychic Bond

*6th-level True Emperor feature*

You learn the spell *detect thoughts*. It counts as a warlock spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of spells you know. You can also cast it once without a spell slot, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest.

Whenever you cast this spell, the target of the spell has disadvantage on attack rolls against you and on saving throws made to resist your enchantment spells.

### Mind Fortress

*10th-level True Emperor feature*

Whenever you make a saving throw against a spell or effect that would cause you to become charmed or frightened, you can treat a d20 roll of 12 or lower as a 13. Additionally, if you succeed on a saving throw against an effect that would cause you to become charmed or frightened, you can use your reaction to deal 2d12 psychic damage to the source of the effect.

### Mental Disruption

*15th-level True Emperor feature*

You can force a creature currently under the effects of your *detect thoughts* spell to make an Intelligence saving throw. If the target has 100 hit points or more, it automatically passes its saving throw. If the target fails its saving throw, it becomes stunned and it must repeat its saving throw at the end of its next turn. If it fails its second saving throw it dies. Otherwise, the stunned condition ends for it.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest. Ω



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# APPENDIX C

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## GRIMOIRE

Written by **Alexander LeFort**, **Thomas Johnson**, and **Alexander Neumann**  
Art by **Daniel F. Walthall**

### Box of Vampire Teeth

*Wondrous Item, rare*

This small box is cracked and dirty. It is constructed of oak and fitted with a brass hatch mechanism. A holy symbol is carved into its lid. Inside this box are 2d4 vampire canine teeth. The box weighs 3 pounds. If you remove a tooth from the box and plant it in the ground at a depth of at least 1 foot, the tooth recreates the effect of an unholy hallow spell centered on where it was buried. This cannot be used to bring a daylight effect to the area.

A holy order known as the Bright Wardens was founded to eliminate all members of the Kristoph vampire family. They were ultimately successful, ridding their unholy presence from Blackmire Swamp. One member of the Wardens, against the advice of their leader, kept the canine teeth of the vampires they killed as trophies to remind themselves of all that they endured during their battles. The box was eventually hidden away and then lost for centuries.

### Inquisitor's Mask

*Wondrous item (mask), uncommon (requires attunement)*

This stylized iron mask fits across the wearer's eyes, obscuring the face but providing unobstructed sight. While wearing this mask, you gain darkvision out to 30 feet if you do not have it already. This mask has 3 charges and regains all expended charges at dawn. As a reaction, you can choose to expend a charge to cast *absorb elements* or *shield*, no components required.

### Sword of Calhain

*Weapon (silvered longsword), rare (requires attunement by a good-aligned creature)*

The blade of this silvered longsword is engraved with a short prayer in the Common language. Its pommel is carved into the shape of a griffon's head.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magical weapon. This bonus becomes +2 against undead creatures. When this sword reduces an undead creature to 0 hit points, the creature is instantly and permanently destroyed by the blade's holy energy.

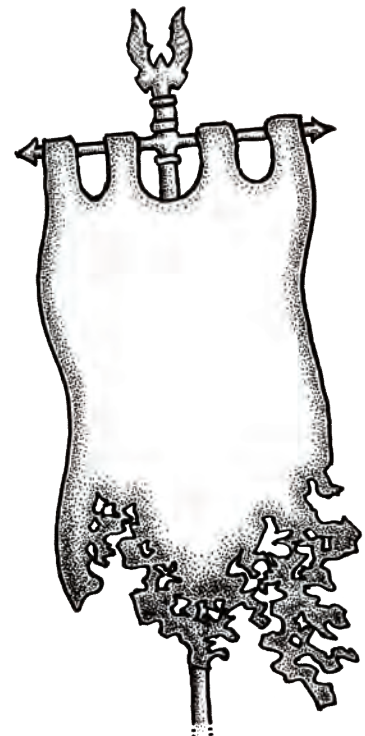
**Turn Undead.** As an action, you raise the sword above your head and speak the prayer engraved on its blade. Each undead that can see or hear you within 60 feet of you must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take Reactions. For its action, it can only use the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

### Vexillum of the First Cohort

*Wondrous Item, very rare (requires attunement)*

A magnificent military standard of the local kingdom. While carried into battle with at least one hand, it gives off an inspiring aura to allied creatures within 15 feet of its presence. All allied creatures gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks as they are inspired to shrug off the wounds they take and fight longer through the pain.

**Note.** If the banner is attuned by a creature not enlisted with the kingdom's military, or with direct orders to transport it, any soldiers of that kingdom that see the Vexillum being held by the creature will turn hostile and try to recover the banner at all costs. Ω





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# APPENDIX D

## BESTIARY

Written by Matthew Rowland, Ellie Hogan, Thomas Johnson, John Kelly, Kobold Press, Benjamin Palmer, and Torchlight Press  
Art by Matias Lazaro, Maciej Zagorski, and Nate Furman



### Ashryn

Once a powerful mage, the Marchioness Ashryn Nerinora became a banshee queen during her final battle against the Iron Inquisition. The Dark Powers corrupted the land around her demesne, and it has now become a haunted realm of undead. Perpetually enraged, Ashryn continues to torment the souls of the inquisitors. Other unsuspecting souls become members of her undead court to become entertainment for her.

### Giant Leech

The leech is one of the Baroness' prized pets, and it hungrily patrols the river for anything with blood coursing through its veins. This oversized leech relies primarily on instinct and has become a hazard for all water-dwelling creatures in the area.

### Lizardfolk Amalgamation

Rylboss bound servants to her flesh and bone as a fail-safe. Upon her death, an octopus-like amalgamation of lizardfolk corpses rose. It knew two things: how to resurrect its master and the rewards for doing so. It has finished constructing a portal to the afterlife inside Rylboss's corpse that will allow her to return and is about to activate it.

ASHRYN					
<i>Medium undead, lawful evil</i>					
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)					
Hit Points 143 (26d8 + 26)					
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)
Saving Throws Wis +6, Cha +9					
Skills Arcana +7, Perception +6					
Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks					
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison					
Condition Immunities frightened, grappled, poisoned, prone					
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16					
Languages Common, Elvish					
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)					
<p><b>Detect Life.</b> Ashryn can magically sense the presence of creatures up to 5 miles away that aren't undead or constructs. She knows the general direction they're in but not their exact locations.</p> <p><b>Incorporeal Movement.</b> Ashryn can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.</p> <p><b>Legendary Resistance (3/Day).</b> If Ashryn fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.</p> <p><b>Innate Spellcasting.</b> Ashryn's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components</p> <p>At Will: <i>chill touch</i></p> <p>3/day each: <i>bestow curse</i>, <i>vampiric touch</i></p> <p>1/day: <i>blight</i></p>					
ACTIONS					
<p><b>Multiattack.</b> Ashryn makes two Corrupting Touch attacks.</p> <p><b>Corrupting Touch.</b> <i>Melee Spell Attack:</i> +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 14 (3d6 + 4) necrotic damage.</p> <p><b>Horridifying Visage.</b> Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of Ashryn that can see her must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Ashryn is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Ashryn's Horridifying Visage for the next 24 hours.</p> <p><b>Wail (1/Day).</b> Ashryn releases a mournful wail, provided that she isn't in sunlight. This wail has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 60 feet of her that can hear her must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature takes 17 (5d6) psychic damage.</p>					
LEGENDARY ACTIONS					
<p>Ashryn can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ashryn regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.</p> <p><b>Detect.</b> Ashryn makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.</p> <p><b>Touch Attack.</b> Ashryn makes a Corrupting Touch Attack.</p> <p><b>Ghost Step (Costs 2 Actions).</b> Ashryn teleports to an unoccupied space she can see within 30 feet of her.</p>					



## Putrid Haunt

These shambling corpses have twigs, branches, and other debris intertwined with their bodies, and their gaping maws often crawl with scurrying vermin.

**Swamp Undead.** Putrid haunts are walking corpses infused with moss, mud, and the detritus of the deep swamp. They are the shambling remains of individuals who, either through mishap or misdeed, died while lost in a vast swampland. Their

desperate need to escape the marshland in life transforms into a hatred of all living beings in death. They often gather in places tainted by evil deeds.

**Mossy Islands.** When no potential victims are nearby, putrid haunts sink into the water and muck, where moss and water plants grow over them and vermin inhabit their rotting flesh. When living creatures draw near, the dormant putrid haunt bursts from its watery hiding spot and attacks its prey, slamming

wildly with its arms and stomping on prone foes to push them deeper into the muck. There's no planning and little cunning in their assault, but they move through the marshes more freely than most intruders and they attack with a single-mindedness that's easily mistaken for purpose.

**Leech Harbors.** Putrid haunts create especially favorable conditions for leeches. They are often hosts or hiding places for large gatherings of leeches.

<b>GIANT LEECH</b> <i>Huge monstrosity, lawful evil</i>			
Armor Class 12 Hit Points 102 (12d12 + 24) Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.			
STR	14 (+2)	INT	1 (-5)
DEX	14 (+2)	WIS	10 (+0)
CON	14 (+2)	CHA	3 (-4)
Skills Perception +2 Condition Immunities blinded Senses bloodsense 500 ft. (blind beyond this radius), tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 12 Languages — Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)			
<i>Amphibious.</i> The leech can breathe air and water. <i>Blind Senses.</i> The leech can't use its bloodsense while unable to smell. It can't use its tremorsense while out of water; the leech can detect a creature using its tremorsense only if the creature is standing or swimming in the same body of water as the leech. <i>Bloodsense.</i> The leech knows the exact location of creatures up to 500 feet away that have blood flowing through their veins.			
<b>ACTIONS</b>			
<i>Bite.</i> <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. <i>Constrict.</i> <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the leech can't constrict another target. <i>Exsanguinate.</i> The leech makes a bite attack against a creature it is grappling. On a hit, the leech regains lost hit points equal to half the damage dealt by the bite.			



<b>LIZARDFOLK AMALGAMATION</b> <i>Large monstrosity, chaotic evil</i>			
Armor Class 11 Hit Points 52 (8d10 + 8) Speed 10 ft., swim 60 ft.			
STR	19 (+4)	INT	4 (-3)
DEX	13 (+1)	WIS	10 (+0)
CON	13 (+1)	CHA	4 (-3)
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5 Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14 Languages Common, Draconic Challenge 1 (200 XP)			
<i>Corpse Collector.</i> When the lizardfolk amalgamation reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the lizardfolk amalgamation can take a bonus action to pull the creature into the dragon's flesh. The creature begins to suffocate, and can move out of the wall as if it were difficult terrain. <i>Flesh Glide.</i> The lizardfolk amalgamation can move through the dragon's flesh as if it were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.			
<b>ACTIONS</b>			
<i>Tentacles.</i> <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the lizardfolk amalgamation can't use its tentacles on another target.			

<b>PUTRID HAUNT</b> <i>Medium undead, neutral evil</i>			
Armor Class 13 (natural armor) Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8) Speed 30 ft.			
STR	17 (+3)	INT	6 (-2)
DEX	8 (-1)	WIS	11 (+0)
CON	13 (+1)	CHA	6 (-2)
Damage Resistances bludgeoning and piercing from nonmagical weapons Damage Immunities poison Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages — Challenge 2 (450 XP)			
<i>Dead Still.</i> Treat a putrid haunt as invisible while it's buried in swamp muck. <i>Swamp Shamble.</i> Putrid haunts suffer no movement penalties in marshy terrain.			
<b>ACTIONS</b>			
<i>Slam.</i> <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. <i>Vomit Leeches (Recharge 6).</i> A putrid haunt can vomit forth the contents of its stomach onto a target within 5 feet. Along with the bile and mud from its stomach, this includes 2d6 undead leeches that attach to the target. A creature takes 1 necrotic damage per leech on it at the start of the creature's turn, and the putrid haunt gains the same number of temporary hit points. As an action, a creature can remove or destroy 1d3 leeches from itself or an adjacent ally.			

## Swamp Hag

Similar to other hags, these hags only exist in swamps. These hags often attract children with the promises of knowledge and power in order to propagate their own magics. When they come together to form covens, they extend their own lives and gather power by convincing humanoid to sign over years of their lives in exchange for magical gifts.

SWAMP HAG					
<i>Medium fey, chaotic evil</i>					
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)					
Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)					
Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)
Skills Arcana +5, Deception +5, Perception +4, Stealth +7					
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14					
Languages Aquan, Common, Sylvan					
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)					
<p><b>Amphibious.</b> The hag can breathe air and water.</p> <p><b>Innate Spellcasting.</b> The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components: At will: <i>druidcraft</i>, <i>create or destroy water</i>, <i>inflict wounds</i></p> <p><b>Magic Resistance.</b> The hag has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.</p> <p><b>Shared Spellcasting (Coven Only)</b> While all three members of a hag coven are within 30 feet of one another, they can each cast the following spells from the wizard's spell list, but must share the spell slots among themselves. For casting these spells, each hag is a 12th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as her spellcasting ability. The spell save DC is 13, and the spell attack bonus is +5.</p> <p>1st Level (4 slots): <i>bane</i>, <i>hellish rebuke</i></p> <p>2nd Level (3 slots): <i>ray of enfeeblement</i>, <i>web</i></p> <p>3rd Level (3 slots): <i>bestow curse</i>, <i>glyph of warding</i>, <i>slow</i></p> <p>4th Level (3 slots): <i>giant insect</i>, <i>polymorph</i></p> <p>5th Level (2 slots): <i>insect plague</i>, <i>contagion</i></p> <p>6th Level (1 slot): <i>harm</i></p>					
ACTIONS					
<p><b>Multiattack.</b> The hag makes two claw attacks.</p> <p><b>Claws.</b> <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.</p> <p><b>Illusory Appearance.</b> The hag covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if the hag takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies. The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, the hag could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the hag is disguised.</p> <p><b>Immaterial.</b> The hag transforms into a putrid fog cloud, along with whatever she is wearing or carrying, and moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks. While in this form, she can't be grappled or restrained. She reverts to her true form at the end of this movement.</p>					

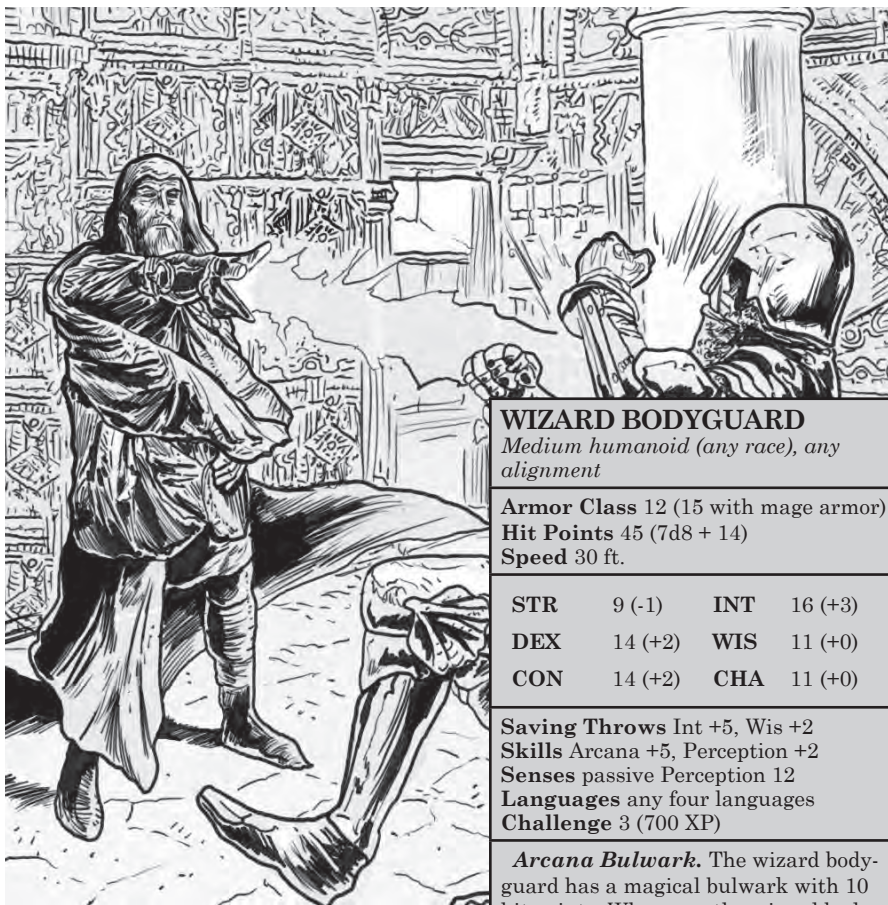
## Swamp Hydra

These hydras developed away from major settlements and further adapted to the toxic settings of some bogs, swamps, and marshlands. Now, they represent one of the greatest challenges adventurers and thrill-seeking merchants can face in their travels. In addition to their multiple heads, these hydras spew toxic gases to suppress their prey before launching an assault.

SWAMP HYDRA			
<i>Huge monstrosity, unaligned</i>			
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)			
Hit Points 218 (19d12 + 95)			
Speed 30 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 30 ft.			
STR	DEX	CON	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)
INT	WIS	CHA	
2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	
Skills Perception +10			
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20			
Languages —			
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)			
<p><b>Legendary Resistance (3/Day).</b> If the hydra fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.</p> <p><b>Multiple Heads.</b> The hydra has five heads. While it has more than one head, the hydra has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious. Whenever the hydra takes 25 damage or more in a single turn, one of its heads dies. If all its heads die, the hydra dies. At the end of its turn, it grows two heads for each of its heads that died since its last turn, unless it has taken fire damage since its last turn. The hydra regains 10 hit points for each head regrown in this way.</p> <p><b>Reactive Heads.</b> For each head the hydra has beyond one, it gets an extra reaction that can be used only for opportunity attacks.</p> <p><b>Wakeful.</b> While the hydra sleeps, at least one of its heads is awake.</p>			
ACTIONS			
<p><b>Multiattack.</b> The hydra makes as many bite attacks as it has heads and uses its Poison Breath if able.</p> <p><b>Bite.</b> <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.</p> <p><b>Poison Breath (Recharge 6).</b> The hydra exhales poison in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.</p>			
LEGENDARY ACTIONS			
<p>The Swamp Hydra can take 3 legendary actions. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Swamp Hydra regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.</p> <p><b>Attack.</b> The hydra makes a bite attack.</p> <p><b>Detect.</b> The hydra makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.</p> <p><b>Tail Swipe (Costs 2 Actions).</b> The hydra thrashes its tail. Each creature within 10 feet of the hydra must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.</p>			



<b>WILD MAGIC SPIDER</b> <i>Large monstrosity, unaligned</i>			
<b>Armor Class</b> 14 (natural armor) <b>Hit Points</b> 76 (8d10 + 32) <b>Speed</b> 30 ft., climb 30 ft.			
<b>STR</b>	15 (+2)	<b>INT</b>	6 (-2)
<b>DEX</b>	17 (+3)	<b>WIS</b>	10 (+0)
<b>CON</b>	18 (+4)	<b>CHA</b>	6 (-2)
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +7 <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10 <b>Languages</b> — <b>Challenge</b> 3 (700 XP)			
<b>Ethereal Jaunt.</b> As a bonus action, the spider can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa.			
<b>Magic Resistance.</b> The spider has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.			
<b>Non-Euclidean Movement.</b> As a bonus action, the spider can teleport 30 feet to a point it can see.			
<b>Shimmer.</b> Creatures have disadvantage targeting the spider with attacks because of illusory duplicates that share the spider's space.			
<b>Spider Climb.</b> The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.			
<b>Web Walker.</b> The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.			
<b>ACTIONS</b>			
<b>Multiattack.</b> The spider makes two bite attacks.			
<b>Bite.</b> <i>Melee Weapon Attack</i> +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way. Additionally, roll a d4 to determine what magical effect the target suffers: 1. The target becomes invisible and cannot produce sound until the end of its next turn. 2. For the next minute, the target becomes frightened of all creatures currently within 5 feet of it. 3. For the next minute, the target shrinks by one size category. For example, a Medium creature becomes Small. 4. Until the end of the target's next turn, the target's eyes become diamonds worth 300 gp and the target is blinded. The diamond eyes can be used to cast <i>Revivify</i> , but the target loses the eye permanently.			



**Wild Magic Spider**

Similar to phase spiders, these wild magic spiders appear from the ethereal plane to strike their targets. However, for unknown reasons their appearance brings wild magic surges with them. Their attacks produce unpredictable additional effects, some of which can actually be beneficial to their prey. Scholars have theorized that they are the result of illegal magical tampering and have urged adventurers to proceed with caution around them.

**Wizard Bodyguard**

These specially-trained abjurers often find employment with high-ranking nobles and other wealthy patrons. Ever-alert, these protectors deploy their magical prowess to avoid dangerous situations before they develop. When a crisis does arise, they prioritize the security of their ward above themselves. ♁

<b>WIZARD BODYGUARD</b> <i>Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment</i>			
<b>Armor Class</b> 12 (15 with mage armor) <b>Hit Points</b> 45 (7d8 + 14) <b>Speed</b> 30 ft.			
<b>STR</b>	9 (-1)	<b>INT</b>	16 (+3)
<b>DEX</b>	14 (+2)	<b>WIS</b>	11 (+0)
<b>CON</b>	14 (+2)	<b>CHA</b>	11 (+0)
<b>Saving Throws</b> Int +5, Wis +2 <b>Skills</b> Arcana +5, Perception +2 <b>Senses</b> passive Perception 12 <b>Languages</b> any four languages <b>Challenge</b> 3 (700 XP)			
<b>Arcana Bulwark.</b> The wizard bodyguard has a magical bulwark with 10 hit points. Whenever the wizard bodyguard takes damage and the bulwark has more than 0 hit points, the bulwark takes the damage instead, with any remaining damage affecting the wizard bodyguard as normal. Whenever the wizard bodyguard casts an abjuration spell of 1st level or higher, the bulwark regains hit points equal to twice the level of the spell.			
<b>Spellcasting.</b> The wizard bodyguard is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The wizard bodyguard has the following wizard spells prepared (abjuration spells of 1st level or higher are marked with a †): Cantrips (at will): <i>acid splash</i> , <i>light</i> , <i>message</i> , <i>prestidigitation</i> 1st Level (4 slots): <i>fog cloud</i> , <i>mage armor</i> †, <i>magic missile</i> , <i>shield</i> † 2nd Level (3 slots): <i>arcane lock</i> †, <i>invisibility</i> , <i>mirror image</i> 3rd Level (3 slots): <i>counterspell</i> †, <i>magic circle</i> † 4th Level (1 slot): <i>fire shield</i>			
<b>ACTIONS</b>			
<b>Dagger.</b> <i>Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 6 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.			

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