

TEMPLE OF THE DRUID LICH



AN ANCIENT DRUID LICH HAS SEIZED THE TEMPLE OF
HER OLD NEMESIS AND IS PLOTTING HER REVENGE





TEMPLE OF THE DRUID LICH



Temple of the Druid Lich is a Fifth Edition adventure for a group of **three to six characters of 8th to 10th level**, optimized for a party of **four 9th-level characters**. After millennia of abandonment, the ancient temple of a legendary necromancer has been reclaimed by a terrifying force and old enemy that is quickly expanding her territory: Caolfhionn, the Druid Lich. Gnarled, poisonous thorns have begun to spread from the temple, and shambling undead plant creatures roam the nearby sands in increasing numbers. If adventurers do not intervene, Caolfhionn the Druid Lich will soon make the desert her own. This adventure takes place near the city of Duwara in the Muhar Desert of the [FREELANDS CAMPAIGN SETTING](#), but can easily be placed into another campaign that features deserts and tombs.

BACKGROUND

Long ago, the necromantic sorcerer Gahiji the Wicked sought to bring the Kameran empire and its lands within the Muhar desert to heel. He had dominated its people and erected sparkling temples in his own honor to declare himself the God King, conquering his new subjects under his iron fist and bringing about a new dark age to the Muhar. Gahiji came very close to total control—the only one left to oppose him was the powerful arch-druid Caolfhionn, who had watched over the desert for centuries. Caolfhionn, manifesting the wild powers of the land itself, led an uprising against Gahiji and was joined by a small army of insurgents brave enough to oppose the

powerful sorcerer. It was an epic clash, and Caolfhionn and her forces came very close to victory—but ultimately were felled by Gahiji and his minions. Gahiji, enraged at his near-defeat, unleashed the full force of his fury on Caolfhionn, raising her from the dead as a lich and then imprisoning her deep beneath the sands in a magical tomb so that she would suffer an eternity of immortality. Gahiji had won, and would rule over the Muhar desert and the Kameran empire for decades to come.

After many millennia, Caolfhionn's tomb has been unsealed, and the Druid Lich is angry and yearning to take back control of the lands she lost so long ago. Immediately after being freed, Caolfhionn travelled to the Vrunhaja, one of Gahiji's most opulent temples that had been buried under the sands since the fall of Gahiji. The druid raised the temple from the sand and claimed it as her new lair in an act of symbolic defiance against her old enemy. Now, driven to near-lunacy by her imprisonment and clouded by anger, Caolfhionn has begun to expand her influence beyond the Vrunhaja, threatening to consume the Muhar desert with her growths as she reclaims the lands that were taken from her by Gahiji.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are numerous reasons the adventurers may be interested in venturing into the Vrunhaja. A few of these reasons are described below:

The Rod of the Scarab Lord. An ancient temple has revealed itself beneath the sand. Rumors spread locally that it is the fabled Vrunhaja, temple of Gahiji the Wicked and resting place of the powerful *Rod of the Scarab Lord* (see page 8). The person who wields the rod is said to summon and control swarms of insects. After hearing about this powerful artifact, the party heads towards the Vrunhaja to hopefully recover it.

A Spreading Pestilence. The sands of the Muhar desert are becoming overrun with shambling, spore-infested undead and cacti-like brambles that drip a lethal paralytic poison. The source of this presence has been traced back to a mysterious temple deep in the desert that doesn't exist on any current maps. Clerics in the city of Duwara have already sent in investigating parties, but none have returned. They are pleading for more help from any who are brave enough to venture toward the temple.

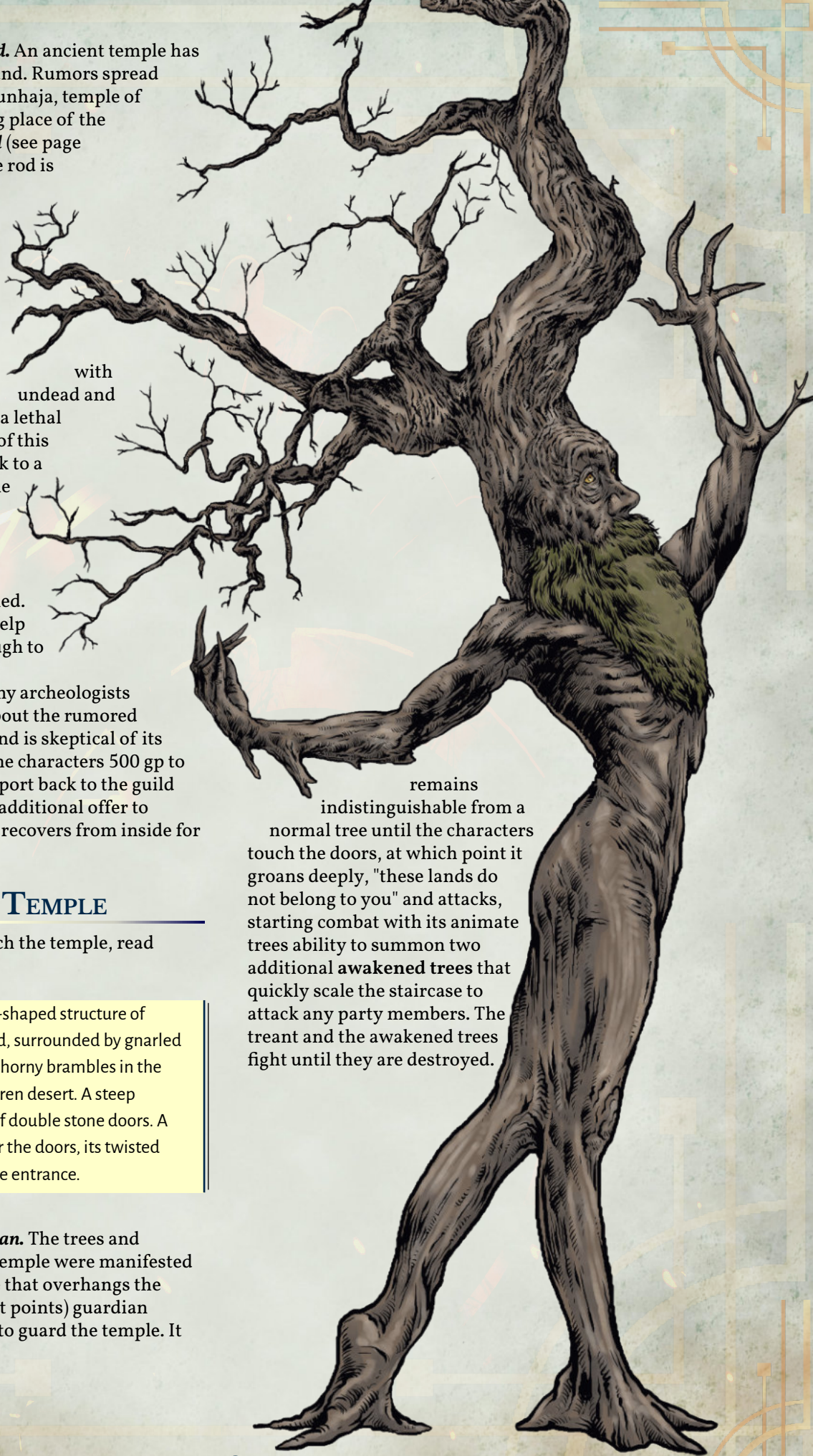
A Wealthy Guild. A wealthy archeologists guild in Duwara has heard about the rumored emergence of the Vrunhaja and is skeptical of its legitimacy. The guild offers the characters 500 gp to investigate the temple and report back to the guild with their findings, with the additional offer to purchase any relics the party recovers from inside for a fair price.

APPROACHING THE TEMPLE

When the characters approach the temple, read aloud the following:

An imposing, three-story cube-shaped structure of brown stone rises from the sand, surrounded by gnarled and withered acacia trees and thorny brambles in the middle of what should be a barren desert. A steep stairway rises 30 feet to a pair of double stone doors. A towering acacia tree looms over the doors, its twisted branches partially obscuring the entrance.

Encounter: Treant Guardian. The trees and brambles that surround the temple were manifested by Caolfhionn. The large tree that overhangs the doors is a **treant** (with 170 hit points) guardian summoned by the druid lich to guard the temple. It



remains indistinguishable from a normal tree until the characters touch the doors, at which point it groans deeply, "these lands do not belong to you" and attacks, starting combat with its animate trees ability to summon two additional **awakened trees** that quickly scale the staircase to attack any party members. The treant and the awakened trees fight until they are destroyed.



GENERAL FEATURES

The Vrunhaja has recently been unearthed by Caolfhionn after having been buried under the sand for thousands of years. It is a 300-foot-high cube-shaped structure of flat limestone that has become brown and cracked with weathering. Unless stated otherwise, its features are described as follows:

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The temple is built from thick slabs of limestone inside of the larger cube structure. Ceilings in the temple are vaulted and 20 feet high. Interior walls are two feet thick. The temple's exterior walls are surrounded by tonnes of stone that compose the façade. Much of the interior of the temple is choked with plants summoned by Caolfhionn.

Doors. Doors are made from heavy stone slabs that swing outward on their hinges. Locked doors can be opened with a successful DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. They have AC 18 and 25 hit points, and are immune to poison and psychic damage.

Light. The temple is dimly-lit by bioluminescent fungi throughout the growth that covers the ceilings, walls, and floors.

Secret Doors. Secret doors are hidden in the walls throughout the temple. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice them.

Toxic Spores. The growth created by Caolfhionn that consumes the temple is infused with toxic spores. Too much disturbance risks releasing the spores into the air. As a result, some spells may have unintended effects. A spell that deals damage in an area like *fireball* or *thunderwave* has a 25 percent chance to release spores within the spell's area, dealing 21 (4d10) poison damage to creatures in the area.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Vrunhaja.

1. VESTIBULE

The entrance doors to the temple open into a narrow staircase that ascends another 15 feet toward another closed door. When the characters enter, read aloud:

The door opens into a spacious vestibule chamber lined with supporting pillars that meet a vaulted ceiling. Four

alcoves in the north and south walls hold bramble-choked, life-sized statues of religious figures, though one of the statues has been smashed and lies mostly in rubble. Set into the west wall is a cistern full of dark, murky water. Doors exit to the north and south.

The statues are difficult to make out due to the brambles that have grown over them and hidden their features from view. A character who makes a successful DC 18 Intelligence (History) or DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check recognizes them as the faceless angels of Rokbus, an ancient god worshipped by Gahiji and the people of the Kamerian empire. One of the statues was shattered by looters who met an unfortunate end in the temple (see area 4).

Encounter: Fouled Cistern. The cistern is filled with fouled water created by Caolfhionn. Two **water elementals** lurk in the cistern and attack any character that comes within 10 feet of it. Their slam attacks deal an additional 1d6 poison damage.

2. CURSED IDOL

A golden idol is mounted on a stone plinth inside of a small alcove in the north wall. Stairs descend to the east and west.

Hazard: Cursed Idol. The idol depicts a robed figure with one foot placed atop the head of a dead deer. A character who makes a successful DC 22 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that it represents Gahiji's conquest over Caolfhionn. The idol has been cursed by Caolfhionn's occupation of the temple—a character who touches it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or immediately age 15 years. This aging can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

Secret Door. A secret door in the wall behind the idol leads to the hidden tombs (area 11) beyond.

3. CLERGY TOMBS

This chamber is separated into six alcoves, five of which hold a stone sarcophagus. A seventh alcove at the west end of the room holds a small stone altar, atop which are sets of colored prayer beads and small animal bones.

Carved into the wall behind each of the sarcophagi is a bas relief depicting a figure in priestly vestments. Each sarcophagus bears a name of the person interred inside. The beads and animal bones on the altar are nonmagical.

Treasure: Sarcophagi. The lids of the sarcophagi are heavy and can be opened with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. If the characters search all of the sarcophagi, they can find the following items of value:

- Three rubies worth 50 gp each.
- An opal medallion worth 100 gp.
- A ring of mind shielding.

4. TRAPPED HALLWAY

The partially clothed skeletal bodies of two humans are crumbled in front of a closed door to the east, which is slotted with a large keyhole.

Hazard: Trapped Door. The door to the east leads to the temple's vault room and is trapped. It is locked, though the keyhole is bait for looters and cannot unlock the door (see area 5). Manipulating the pins inside the keyhole triggers sharp spears to shoot outwards from the north and south walls, immediately retracting back into the wall. Characters in the hallway when the trap is triggered must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 27 (5d10) piercing damage from the spears. A character can notice the subtle slots in the walls with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check and then position themselves in the available space to avoid the trap.

Treasure: Felled Looters. The trap felled the two looters in this hallway that triggered when they tried to pick the false lock on the door. Their flesh has long rotted away, making the identification of a cause of death near impossible unless the party is aware of the trap and can make the inference. Their corpses hold mundane armor and weaponry, as well as a set of thieves' tools, a retractable 10-foot pole, 56 gp, and two *potions of superior healing*.

5. DECOY VAULT

The door to this room is locked, and can only be unlocked by finding the associated pressure plate on the wall in the exterior hallway with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The keyhole is a diversion and cannot be picked to unlock the door. Pressing the pressure plate causes the door to slowly swing outwards. When the characters enter the room, read aloud:

This room is filled with loose coins, art pieces, and artifacts. A bas relief on the north wall depicts a crowned figure in priestly vestments leading a horde of undead creatures into a battle against an unseen foe.

Treasure: Decoy Vault. This room has been prepared as a decoy vault with an amount of real treasure to distract thieves from finding the primary vault where the most valuable artifacts are kept. There

is a total of 550 gp in this room, though it is mostly in silver pieces. Also in the room are twelve sapphires worth 25 gp each, a ceremonial golden sword worth 400 gp, and a +1 dagger.

Secret Door. A secret door in the south wall of this room, partially concealed by large empty urns, leads to the primary vault.

6. PRIMARY VAULT

Gold, gems, and artifacts fill this small chamber, to the point where it would be difficult to walk through without stepping on something.

Treasure: Primary Vault. This room holds the majority of the Vrunhaja's most valuable artifacts. To determine the contents of this room, roll once on the CR 5-10 Treasure Hoard table in the DMG.

7. WALL CARVINGS

The four walls of this small chamber are decorated with floor-to-ceiling bas reliefs depicting hordes of adherents worshipping a strange god. Doors exit to the north, south, and east.

The bas reliefs in this room depict the origin story of Rokbus, who was a mortal who ascended to godhood after slaying 1000 men with his bare hands and was granted divinity by the other gods for his spectacular efforts. Rokbus is depicted as a male human figure wearing a spiked crown, with multiple tentacles for arms. After becoming a god, Rokbus guided his people to conquer their enemies and carve out an empire for themselves in his name. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (History) or DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check can correctly interpret the story of the reliefs.

8. BARRACKS

This room is much longer than it is wide. Four columns decorated with gold fill the length of the room. Racks of ancient armor and weaponry adorn the walls. Sagging cupboards and cabinets are covered with dust. A large red flower with a thorny stem sprouts in the middle of the room amidst the surrounding bramble growth. Doors exit to the south and west.

The weapons and armor in this room are ornate and well-crafted but are otherwise of little value. The gold lining the central pillars can be scraped loose from the

stone, though removing all of the gold would take a period of 2d8 hours. It totals 100 gp in value.

Hazard: Blood Flower. The flower sprouting in the middle of the room has a diameter of over 6 feet. Its pollen is exceedingly toxic. If any of the flower's petals are touched, the flower shakes loose a dusting of its pollen to protect itself. Any creature within 15 feet of the flower must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d10) poison damage and become poisoned for one minute. While poisoned this way, the creature takes 11 (2d10) 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 itself on a successful save.

9. ATHENAEUM

Rows of stone shelves fill this chamber; their contents having been reduced to ash. An altar is nestled inside a small alcove in the west wall. A vaulted archway leads toward a large chamber to the north.

The temple's athenaeum used to hold countless religious texts, illuminated manuscripts, and spell scrolls valuable to the clergy. Caolfhionn burned everything inside to ash soon after her return. The altar in the alcove is a single slab of grey stone with a single crack that runs down its length.



Treasure: Spell Scrolls. Characters who make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a small section of shelves that have managed to escape the flames. Most of the texts here are mundane, though a *spell scroll of legend lore* and a *spell scroll of commune* can be found amongst the other scrolls.

10. WYVERN HATCHERY

A large sundial pattern has been carved into the floor of this spacious chamber. Multiple doors exit to the east and west. The center of the sundial is concealed by a bubbling pool of viscous black liquid. Suspended in the pool are six speckled eggs the size of coconuts. A small circular hole has been carved in the ceiling above the center of the sundial. Perched atop the beams of the vaulted ceiling are two emaciated wyverns that let out a piercing screech.

Encounter: Caolfhionn's Wyverns. The wyverns are loyal to Caolfhionn and exist in a state between life and death having been twisted by the druid's necrotic energy. They are a mated pair and protect their eggs that develop in this chamber. They attack viciously to protect their young and fight until they are destroyed. They both use **wyvern** statistics, with the following modifications:

- **New Ability: Necrotic Breath (Recharge 6).** The wyvern exhales a blast of necrotic energy in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half that amount on a successful one.

The use of *detect magic* reveals an aura of necromantic magic surrounding the pool in the center of the chamber. The eggs that develop here are infused with the magic of the pool and will hatch into mutated wyverns loyal to Caolfhionn. Caolfhionn hopes to produce an entire flock of the wyverns to augment her other forces in the Muhar desert. Each egg has an AC of 8 and 5 hit points. A character takes 2 (1d4) points of necrotic damage for each second they remain in contact with any liquid from the pool. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check can determine the pool's purpose.

Secret Door. A secret door in the north wall of this room leads to the hidden tombs (area 11) beyond.

11. HIDDEN TOMBS

Three separate crypts are connected by a narrow hallway of rough, uneven stone hidden away from the

rest of the Vrunhaja. Each crypt holds the remains of a once-venerated soldier of the ancient Rokbian faith.

West Crypt. The sarcophagus inside this crypt is engraved with the name Riaz Arsaphes. Entombed with the body is a *+1 greataxe of wounding*.

Center Crypt. The sarcophagus inside this crypt is engraved with the name Serz Nephthys. Entombed with the body are two rubies worth 50 gp each as well as a *rod of rulership*.

East Crypt. The sarcophagus inside this crypt is engraved with the name Nefir Tnemei. If opened, the **wight** inside attacks, fighting until it is destroyed. It carries ornate but mundane weaponry as well as two sapphires each worth 50 gp.

12. TROPHY ROOM

Three shrunken heads are mounted on spiked stone pedestals near the south wall of this chamber. A bas relief covers the entirety of the north wall and depicts a robed magic user decapitating a group of men dressed in military regalia with a battle axe.

Each of the stone pedestals is engraved with the name of a prominent military leader who opposed Gahiji during his rise to power. Gahiji had their heads preserved and presented so that he could revel in their defeats as much as he saw fit.

13. WORSHIP CHAMBER

Two small altars are set into alcoves in the east and west walls of this room. The north end of the room is filled with six pews of cracked and weathered stone that face a large altar carved to resemble a grinning skull. The north wall is covered with carvings of strange symbols and runic marks. The room stinks of carrion.

Encounter: Hiva the Spirit Naga. Hiva has made her home in the Vrunhaja and spends most of her time in this room studying the carvings on the wall behind the skull altar. Hiva had preferred the solitude and proximity to ancient culture and magic that the temple provided, but the arrival of Caolfhionn presented a new opportunity for the snake. While she hated to see the texts of the temple's library destroyed by the druid, she agreed to lend her powers to the druid's cause in exchange for the promise of being made a cult leader as Caolfhionn begins to expand her influence. The necrotic wyverns are a combination of magic of both Caolfhionn and Hiva. Hiva is willing to converse with the characters to entertain herself, but will not let them leave without a fight. She fights fearlessly to the

death, knowing that she will revive shortly if killed. She is a **spirit naga** with 145 hit points.

Hazard: Strange Symbols. The strange symbols and runic marks on the wall behind the skull altar serve as components for a powerful ritual spell originally known only by Gahiji. The markings are highly complex and near-impossible to decipher. A character who makes an Intelligence (Arcana) check can learn the following information depending on the results of their roll:

- DC 10: The markings are ritualistic in nature.
- DC 15: The markings involve powerful ritualistic necromancy magic.
- DC 20: The markings involve powerful ritualistic necromancy magic used to turn a living creature into the undead.
- DC 25: The markings facilitate a ritual that expedites the process of becoming a lich.

14. CHAMBER OF THE NECROMANCER

Gnarled brambles and sharp thorns near-completely overrun the floor of this chamber. Intricate carvings of wailing souls and screaming faces adorn the walls, partially obscured by thick crawling vines. An ornate golden throne rests on a raised dais at the south end of the room.

Encounter: Caolfhionn the Druid Lich. Gahiji used this room to hold audiences with the clergy and meditate in service to Rokbus. Now, Caolfhionn lairs here to remind herself of her long-awaited conquest over the necromancer who imprisoned her. She spends much of her time communing with the plants in this room, who report back to her what they have seen and heard in the surrounding Muhar desert. If given the chance, Caolfhionn asks if the characters have slain Hiva, and offers them a single chance to join her cause and become lords of the Muhar if they have, as she respects their capabilities. Otherwise, **Caolfhionn the Druid Lich** (see Appendix) fights to the death. She wields the *rod of the scarab lord* (see sidebar).

Caolfhionn, technically speaking, is a lich in name only. Though she is a powerful undead spellcaster with the gift of immortality, she has no phylactery to restore her to life if she is destroyed. Her condition was created through powerful magic facilitated by Gahiji and his relationship with the ancient god Rokbus.

Treasure: Throne. The throne is built of solid gold, and is encrusted with rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. The throne is worth a cumulative 3000 gp, though it

would take the characters hours to cut it away into pieces provided they don't have a way to transport it whole. Alternatively, removing a gem from the throne takes 1d4 minutes with the appropriate tools. There are 30 gems on the throne in total; each gem if removed carefully is worth 25 gp.

AFTERMATH

After Caolfhionn is slain by the party, the brambles that fill the Vrunhaja and stretch into the surrounding Muhar desert begin to wither and slowly recede. Unless the adventurers have somehow prevented Hiva from reviving using a *wish* spell, she returns to life after 1d6 days with all of her hit points. At GM discretion, Hiva may remain in the temple and plot a revenge campaign against the characters that slayed her. Each egg in the wyvern hatchery that the characters do not destroy eventually spawns a wyvern that will soon leave the temple and roam the Muhar desert.

ROD OF THE SCARAB LORD

Rod, very rare (requires attunement by a bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

This staff has 10 charges and regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, it spawns a large scarab that consumes and destroys the staff, then explodes.

Spells. While holding the staff, you can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *giant insect* (3 charges), *insect plague* (4 charges), or *move earth* (10 charges).

Scarab Armor. While holding the staff, you can use an action and expend 3 charges to summon chitinous, scarab-like plates that appear over your body, raising your AC by 2. The plates last for 1 hour or until you take 30 points of slashing, bludgeoning, or piercing damage.

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5E Dragon Logo: [SPLATTERED INK GAMES](#)

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APPENDIX

CAOLFHIONN, DRUID LICH

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (hide armor, 16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 156 (24d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +9

Skills Medicine +9, Nature +6, Perception +9

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Giant, Sylvan

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Spellcasting. The druid lich is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, mending, poison spray, produce flame*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle, faerie fire, speak with animals*

2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin, flame blade, hold person*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals, meld into stone, protection from energy*

4th level (3 slots): *blight, dominate beast, locate creature, wall of fire*

5th level (3 slots): *commune with nature, contagion, insect plague*

6th level (1 slot): *move earth, sunbeam, wall of thorns*

7th level (1 slot): *fire storm*

8th level (1 slot): *feeblemind*

9th level (1 slot): *foresight*

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the druid lich to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a

critical hit. On a success, the druid lich drops to 1 hit point instead.

Turn Resistance. The druid lich has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage or 6 (1d10 + 1) if wielded with two hands.

Change Shape (2/Day). The druid lich magically polymorphs into a beast with a challenge rating of 6 or less, and can remain in this form for up to 9 hours. This new form shares the druid lich's undead appearance. The druid lich can choose whether its equipment falls to the ground, melds with its new form, or is worn by the new form. The druid lich reverts to its true form if it dies or falls unconscious. The druid lich can revert to its true form using a bonus action on its turn.

While in a new form, the druid lich retains its game statistics and ability to speak, but its AC, movement modes, Strength, and Dexterity are replaced by those of the new form, and it gains any special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that it lacks. It can cast its spells with verbal or somatic components in its new form.

The new form's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunity to nonmagical attacks.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Cantrip. The druid lich casts a cantrip.

Move. The druid lich moves up to half its movement speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The druid lich makes a melee attack.

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