

# ABANDONED NECROMANCY LAB

Level 3

Imbibing the Nectar of Life is required to bring lucidity once more. A delightful process...

Inscription in the Room of Life

## BACKGROUND LORE

**AMBITION IS THE** doom of men. The desire to acquire more resources, increase one's influence, and learn the deep secrets of the world is what drives men and women to desperate actions that put their lives at risk.

An accomplished mage and researcher of the arcane arts named Vlad once fell victim to his own curiosity and desire to learn the secret of the flow of life and death. His research in necromancy led him to believe that he could master the art of recreating a dead person's body and retrieve their soul from the afterlife. Vlad investigated old elven texts and reverse-engineered a formula for a fluid that holds the essence of life and death. By imbibing inert matter with the Nectar of Life, he meant to recreate the bodies and minds of deceased individuals.

In his underground laboratory, the necromancer Vlad built a stone replica of the Tree of Life that produces an endless supply of nectar. The Nectar of Life flows from a shallow pond into a series of canals that reach the bases of six sarcophagi. Vlad led countless experiments in his laboratory. He could reanimate mindless bodies in a fashion common to lowly necromancers. He could also magically retrieve a person's soul and place it in a glass receptacle. However, as much as he tried, Vlad could not manage to combine both processes and animate the newly created body with a soul. The soul rejected the false body every time, to Vlad's dismay.

Vlad's insistence and perseverance proved to be his demise. The necromancer grew confident and careless in his laboratory. He mistimed the start of his experiment and ended up trapping himself with the reanimated undead abominations. Something worked wrong that time and the undead were not under his control. He fought but was ultimately defeated by his own creations.

## POISONED WATER

**VLAD'S ABANDONED LABORATORY** has remained hidden for almost twenty years. The necromancer's device features a filtration system that turns it back to its base ingredients. Magical components are filtered out and the excess water is dumped into the river. Two weeks ago, the filtration system failed from lack of maintenance.

## ADVENTURE HOOK

**THE TOWN OF** Argonnen has been affected. The foul river kills crops and poisons people. The authorities offer 1,000 gp for solving this urgent predicament.

Exploring the river-lands reveals the laboratory's entrance in area 1. Following the river to the contaminant to the source leads the characters to area 6 instead.

## FEATURES OF THE LABORATORY

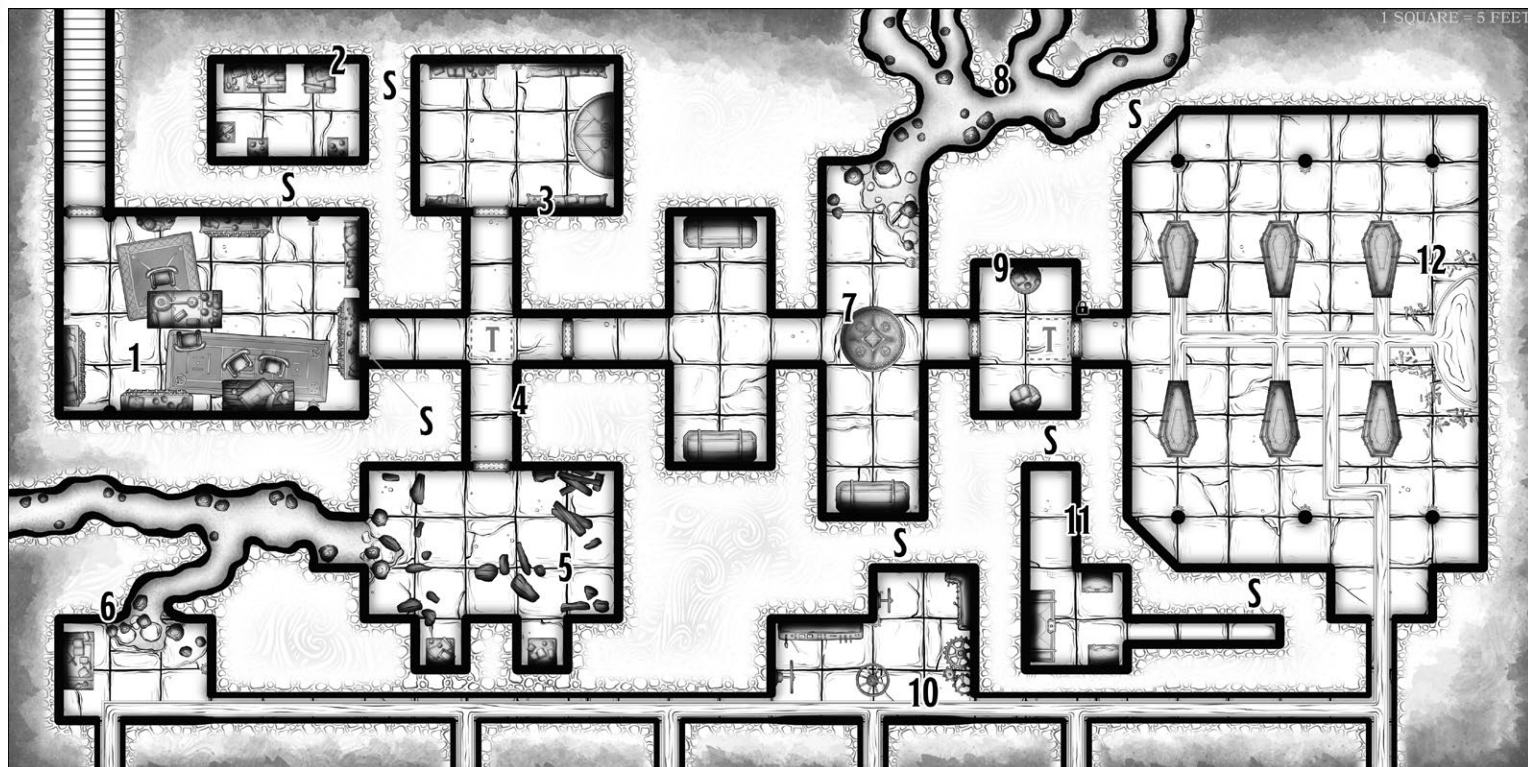
The following features correspond to the abandoned necromancy laboratory map; areas 1 through 12.

**Smell.** The strange fluid from the pond and canals has a repugnant stench of decay and phosphorous. It can be perceived from area 1 and grows stronger in area 12.

**Light.** Magical sconces on the walls produce bright light in some areas. The sconces feature *continual flame* spells. Removing a sconce causes it to fail after 1 minute.

**Necromancy Aura.** The pond in area 12 radiates a 50-foot-radius necromancy aura. Within it, necromancy spells are cast one level higher. A *detect magic* spell reveals this effect as far away as area 7.

**Secret Doors.** Pulling small levers causes sections of the walls to move aside and reveal narrow passages (DC 14 Perception). They reset after 10 minutes.



## 1. ARCANES STUDY

The stairs lead to a well-stocked library/study with several desks, bookcases, and implements. The study looks lived-in, as if recently abandoned.

A *detect magic* spell reveals a faint aura of abjuration magic that protects the items in this chamber and areas 2 and 3 from exposure and erosion.

**Treasure.** A 1-hour search turns up 255 sp, a spellbook with 3 level-1 spells and two *potions of healing*. The secret to opening the door in area 4 is revealed here too.

## 2. SECRET DOCUMENTATION

Vlad the necromancer kept his research documents guarded in this chamber. The papers describe complex arcane formulae and theories that would take a long time to decipher. A competent spellcaster notices errors and large assumptions in the documents (DC 18 Arcana).

**Obscure Lore.** The papers describe Vlad's research. A spellcaster can spend 1d6 weeks of study to understand his incomplete process well enough to replicate it.

## 3. ALCHEMY LABORATORY

Four-story shelves line the walls of this chamber. They contain countless philters, containers, rare substances, and minerals useful in the field of alchemy. A dried-up stone pond by the east wall shows signs of corrosive erosion from the foul recipes that Vlad devised years ago.

**Treasure.** A spellcaster can replenish his material components from this chamber. The rare alchemical reagents and ingredients here are worth 400 gp.

## 4. THE TREE DOOR

The stone door east of the four-way intersection is engraved with the image of a large leaf-less tree.

The door is designed to only let a magic-user through. The characters may bypass it altogether by crossing through the sewage lines to reach area 10 or area 12.

**The Magic Door.** A spellcaster must spend a level 1 slot to draw the image of a tree in the air to open the door and bypass the trap. Otherwise, stepping on the marked square (see map) causes the floor to open to a 30-foot-deep spiked pit. Creatures that fall take 4d6 piercing damage (DC 16 Dexterity save for half). A proficient locksmith can bypass the door (DC 14 Thieves' Tools check).

## 5. RUINED CHAMBER

The chamber's roof has partially caved in. Debris and splintered wooden furniture litter the room.

There is nothing of value in this chamber. Rust monsters came weeks ago and dissolved all metal objects. The tunnels to the west lead to their hunting grounds.

**Monster Tracks.** A good tracker identifies tracks and evidence of metal-eating insects (DC 16 Survival). The tracks of four creatures are at least three-weeks old.

## 6. SECRET EXIT

Vlad's secret exit through the sewage line was never used. The table contains traveling gear and spoiled rations. The canals lead to the river. The characters may gain access to the laboratory through here too.

## 7. UNDEAD GUARDIANS

Three stone sarcophagi near a rune-carved magic circle that glows deep scarlet await in the darkness.

The undead protectors of the laboratory carry their duty for eternity, unaware that their master left this world long ago. A *dispel magic* spell cast on the magic circle paralyzes the guardians for 24 hours.

**Undead Guardians.** Three **ghouls** emerge from their enclosures and attack any living trespasser. The fourth sarcophagus was destroyed by rust monsters.

## 8. RUST MONSTER TUNNELS

A sprawling network of tunnels leads down into uncharted depths. The narrow tunnels are the hunting grounds of three **rust monsters**. They are attracted by the presence of metal in the armors and weapons of travelers.

## 9. DOOR OF LIFE

The door features a carved circle with interconnected lines and 2-inch holes with different shapes.

The magic door features a complex riddle for students of the arcane. It can be bypassed through area 11. Dozens of trinkets of different sizes and shapes litter two stone shelves. Some of them appear to fit the holes in the door.

A faint, elvish inscription on the door reads the following: “*Careful study of the stars and the celestial movements are the key to the flow of life and death*”.

**Poison Darts.** A spellcaster identifies the pattern on the door as a map of the planes (DC 15 Arcana). The trinkets represent each of the missing planes on the chart. Placing the trinkets in the correct positions on the holes opens the floor. A failed attempt triggers dozens of darts to fly at the marked square (see map) and deal 6d8 poison damage (DC 14 Dexterity save for half).

## 10. FILTRATION SYSTEM

The chamber features a complex arrangement of apparatus designed to filter the Nectar of Life and dump clean water into the river. Rust, erosion, and abandonment have caused the system to fail.

**Repairing the Device.** A spellcaster can fix the filtration system to stop the contamination of the river with 4 hours of work (DC 19 Arcana). The spellcaster has advantage if he has access to the documentation in area 2.

## 11. SECRET VAULT

The vault contains three locked stone chests (DC 15 Thieves’ Tools). A narrow tunnel leads to area 12.

**Treasure.** The stone chests contain 460 gp, 4,200 sp, a +1 *spear*, a spellbook with 8 random spells, a *wand of burning hands* with 7 charges, and 1 *potion of healing*.

## 12. CHAMBER OF LIFE

A wall-mounted relief of the Tree of Life pours green fluid into a pond. The green flow reaches six stone sarcophagi before leaving the chamber.

The wall fountain in Vlad’s experiment room is the source of the river’s foul poison. It is shaped after a legendary tree that alchemists believe is in the outer planes.

**Vlad’s Demise.** The necromancer’s remains lie scattered by the foul pond; his life’s work. An observant person notices his sigil in the tattered remains of his clothing beside the Nectar of Life’s pond (DC 16 Perception).

**The Last Experiment.** Vlad’s last creations hide in their stone enclosures. Five **ghouls** and one **ghast** remove the lids and emerge to fight. They fight until slain.

**The Fountain.** The fountain over the pond can be destroyed with spades or mauls and an hour of work. It stops the contaminant from spreading into the river.

## DEVELOPMENT

**THE CHARACTERS REACH** the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

### THE FOUNTAIN DESTROYED

**THE CHARACTERS DESTROY** the Tree of Life fountain in area 12 and stop the poison from spreading further. It is necessary to defeat Vlad’s last creations first. In a matter of hours, the river is rid of the foul contaminant that damaged the crops and poisoned dozens of people. The recovery is fast; further damage is prevented. All in Argonnen town are satisfied with the characters’ actions.

## FIXING THE FILTRATION SYSTEM

**THE CHARACTERS MANAGE** to fix the machinery in area 10 to preserve Vlad’s work and profit from his creations later on. Unfortunately, the filtration system takes a few days to ramp up and filter the Nectar of Life completely. The harvests are lost. Countless people become sick and perish from ingesting the foul nectar. Argonnen town pays half the promised reward (500 gp). The characters have access to Vlad’s laboratory and inventions. They may refine his lifework of mastering the use of the Nectar of Life. An adventure for another time.