

PRISON OF THE LAST VAMPIRE



THE TOWER OF AN ANCIENT ORDER HAS SUDDENLY APPEARED WITH ITS VAMPIRE PRISONER STILL INSIDE



PRISON OF THE LAST VAMPIRE

P *rison 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 withered 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.

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 Kristophs' 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 Kristophs' 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 as they were procedurally hunted down and slaughtered one by one. Eventually, the last vampire that remained was Heskel Kristoph, the patriarch of the family and the mastermind behind their murders. Deciding that death was too charitable a punishment for the monster, they bound him with an *imprisonment* spell and promised that he would spend an eternity in confinement. Only by word of the leader of the Bright Wardens, who is designated as such through their wielding of the *sword of calhain*, may Heskel ever be released.

The tower where 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 Heskel 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 Heskel's blood, hoping to take the gift of vampirism for himself. Suto has been bleeding Heskel for over a week

now, savoring every drop of blood and taunting Heskel 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.

GETTING THE QUEST

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 about it 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 gray 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.

GENERAL FEATURES

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

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The tower is constructed of gray 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 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.

KEYED LOCATIONS

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

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 into 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 line the east and west walls.

Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher who enter this room are likely to hear the muffled sounds of an 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 vilest. The gargoyles have already looted the chapel and provided its valuable contents to Sotu.

Statue of the Paladin. Closer inspection shows that 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 the Appendix). The Bright Wardens gathered the teeth as trophies from the vampires that they defeated. A character can make a



SOTU'S GARGOYLE

successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check to immediately identify the teeth as vampire teeth.

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 cover 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 started rotting 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. Coals and ashes fill a stone hearth in the north wall.

The drawers of the writing desk are filled with calligraphy and painting utensils, 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 many 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

Weapon and armor racks line the walls of this chamber while others have been toppled over. 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 three longswords, twelve daggers, two sets of studded leather armor, three bucklers, two hand crossbows, a morningstar, forty-eight crossbow bolts, twelve sharpened wooden stakes. Twelve 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 frescoes depicting valiant holy warriors triumphantly fighting back the forces of evil: werewolves, undead hordes, and vampires. The room is otherwise bare.

The frescoes 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:

"Here lies 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 seventy 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

person 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 *sword of calhain*, a magical artifact, 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 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 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 aloud the following:

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. They who wield it are 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."

HESKEL KRISTOPH

Heskel 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, Heskel 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 Heskel 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, Heskel 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 Heskel with the *sword of calhain*, he curses them to a "lifetime of suffering," though his words are meaningless.

T9. CELLAR

The trapdoor in the common area opens to reveal a stone staircase that descends into a dark, musty cellar. Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher descending the staircase 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: Ghasts. 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 **ghasts**. 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 Hesel 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 calbain*, 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 brush grows heavily around and over the hillock.

The entrance to the tomb has been hidden by the vegetation that 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.

TOMB OF THE LAST WARDEN

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 gray 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. The southern chambers in the tomb have been flooded with murky water to a depth no higher than 2 feet. These areas are treated as difficult terrain.

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 the illusion of 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 lined 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, filling it with rubble. The corpse of a large, gray, 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 its frenzied defense of its eggs.

Bulette Burrow. The burrow is big enough for Large-sized creatures to move through with ease. The characters 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 have completely flooded this chamber. Ten intricately 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 out from 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 lying atop the body, however, remains in pristine condition. It is the *sword of calhain* (see the *Appendix*). 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 Hesel 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 Hesel 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 Hesel, simply being attuned to the sword and declaring that Hesel is freed from his chains or has completed his sentence is sufficient—the magical chains will disappear and Hesel will be freed.

If the characters instead choose to destroy Hesel with the sword, a single, well-placed strike or stab will slay the vampire. Read aloud the following:

Hesel'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.

AFTERMATH

If the characters destroyed Hesel 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 Hesel, 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. Hesel 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 Hesel imprisoned in the tower, either to preserve his suffering or because they lack the means to destroy him, what happens to Hesel next 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.

APPENDIX

This appendix describes the magic items used in this adventure.



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.



SWORD OF CALHAIN

Weapon (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. Once you've used this effect, you cannot use it again until you've completed a short rest.

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