

DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 30

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10 ORIGINAL ADVENTURES
HIGH RESOLUTION MAPS
VTT - ROLL20 MAPS

THE BEST CONTENT FOR THE BEST GMs



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ABOUT RULES

Dungeon Vault Magazine Issue 30 and onward no longer references the 5e ruleset because of the following:

1. The entire SRD 5.1 has been released as Creative Commons CC-BY. This allows us to more openly develop our system while adapting D&D rules.
2. For the longest time, I have wanted to develop and write my own medieval-fantasy system and not necessarily rely on other company's IPs.

Our vision for *Dungeon Vault Magazine* remains the same: To provide quality content, maps, and adventures that easily dropped into Medieval Fantasy games. As you know, rules-stuff is kept at a minimum to focus on lore and area descriptions. Thus, we are making some changes to how rules are presented in our adventures so that they are easily understood and simple to adapt/port to whatever system you use. This may change as we develop our own system which you'll know more of later.

MONSTERS AND ADVENTURE LEVEL

We still reference monster names in bold, like **goblins**, **orcs**, **dragons**, etc. However, we may name monsters of our own creation that may or may not include statblocks.

Adventures shall be marked by tiers. **Tier 1** covering levels 1-5, mercenary stuff. **Tier 2** covering level 6-10, heroic stuff. And **Tier 3** covering levels 10+, epic stuff.

DIFFICULTY RATINGS

We can't know what medieval fantasy system you play. The Difficulty Rating (DC) for all tasks vary from game to game. The Game Master is the sole authority in determining this task. Choose an appropriate DC for tasks.

ATTRIBUTES AND SAVES

Our in-development RPG system fuses attributes and saving throws into a single mechanic. They are **Fortitude**, **Reflexes**, and **Will**. For example:

Nimble characters promptly duck away from the dragon's perilous breath weapon (Reflexes roll).

SKILLS

For our in-development game, we use a different skill list that is more geared toward dungeon-crawling adventures. Skill checks are presented as follows:

A locksmith expert can use fine tools and ingenuity to bypass the sturdy vault's door (Burglary check).

The skill names are generic enough that it should be simple to replace them to the closest parallel in whatever system. This is our work-in-progress skill list:

Arcane Lore	History Lore
Architecture	Languages
Burglary	Nature
Climbing	Open Doors
Divine Lore	Scavenge
Fabricate	Search
Healing	Stealth

There is also **Detect Magic**, which in our game is a skill spellcasters have, instead of a spell.

DAMAGE

Damage expressions are noted in fractions of total hit points to allow for systems' different rates of HP growth.

Stepping into the room triggers the fire jet trap. Creatures in front of the entrance take fire damage equal to 1/4 of their HP total (Fortitude roll).

X-IN-10 ROLLS

Some events described in our creations express their odds of something happening in this format: "1-in-10", "2-in-10" and so on. This mechanic requires a 1d10 roll. Rolling the first number or less means success.

There is a 4-in-10 chance of finding the hidden door.

This means that a player or the GM rolls a 1d10, on a result of 4 or lower, the hidden door is found.

THANKS FOR ACCOMPANYING us along the long road of game development. As we refine our new rule-set and have more to show, we will share it with followers and update the rules on this page as necessary.

600+ Maps

Foundry VTT

100+ Roll20 Products

DUNGEON MAP PACK VOL. 2

WEB OF HATRED
LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

ELVEN TOWER ADVENTURES



A PRAYER
in the Grand
will of the s

THE GOD-EMPEROR'S VAULT

The only chance to steer the future of this empire is to restore the faith in the great emperor. Retrieving the emperor's scepter may be the only chance.

Giada Alicent, Court Mage

SETUP

KINGDOMS AND EMPIRES, despite their apparent strength, are susceptible to destabilization and crumbling when the odds are stacked against them. The idea of a single person being in charge of thousands of individuals and countless territories is not foreign to humans at large. However, the fundamental greed of humankind and its constant doubt and contest against the forces-that-be place those in charge under perpetual scrutiny. It shall make them fall when things go awry.

A FAILING EMPIRE

THE GRAND EMPEROR, Adaggar Goltz, is dead. It has been only a few weeks since his passing. His son, Vallerk Goltz, has inherited the position much to the dismay and critique of the court and military officials. Vallerk is known to be a coward, a simpleton, and a man without a word. Already the masses, the military, and the nobles plan to oppose him, threatening to split the mighty empire into dozens of smaller, non-unified territories. The consequences of such actions may set the region back decades, cause hunger and famine, and ultimately cause the deaths of thousands in the skirmishes and battles for control that shall undoubtedly ensue.

Emperor Vallerk, in a bout of cowardice, ordered the few military officers still loyal to the institution to mobilize their troops and arrest dissidents. Some of them are to be publicly beheaded to set an example and send the message that the empire shall not be threatened. The emperor fears the opinions and political aspirations of his rivals and wishes to silence them soon rather than confront them; either in court or on the battlefield.

Alas, it is unlikely that the emperor's forces can contain or enforce these rules in the territories far from the capital. The large empire is too spread out to be contained in times like these. With military forces divided in their allegiances, rebel cells and dissident territories threaten to rise. Civil unrest rises as tithes and tributes from far-away regions have stopped. The threat of the upcoming winter without enough food to survive hovers above like a hanging blade. If things do not change fast, the coming seasons paint a grim scenario for everyone in the realm.

THE GOD-EMPEROR

THERE WAS ONCE a non-human emperor who ruled over the region for millennia. They called him the God-Emperor; a figure of myths and legends that survive to this day. The God-Emperor wielded a magical scepter that commanded the love and respect of all. Legend has it that whoever wields this scepter is the rightful ruler.

Giada Alicent, the last emperor's court mage, escaped the palace. She is one of the few people who know of the God-Emperor's vault; a dangerous location with protective charms from the old era. According to legend, the *Emperor's Scepter* is hidden therein. If only it could be retrieved in time, the empire could be held in place.

ADVENTURE HOOK

MAGE GIADA ALICENT is looking for a small team of mercenaries to guide them into the God-Emperor's Vault to retrieve the fabled scepter. She offers a reward of seven rubies (500 sp each) and the possibility to keep any valuables from the vault, except for the scepter.

The vault is located three days from the capital but Giada (**mage**) possesses a *spell scroll* of *circle of teleportation* that can be used to reach the dungeon promptly.

FEATURES OF THE VAULT

Tier 2 Adventure

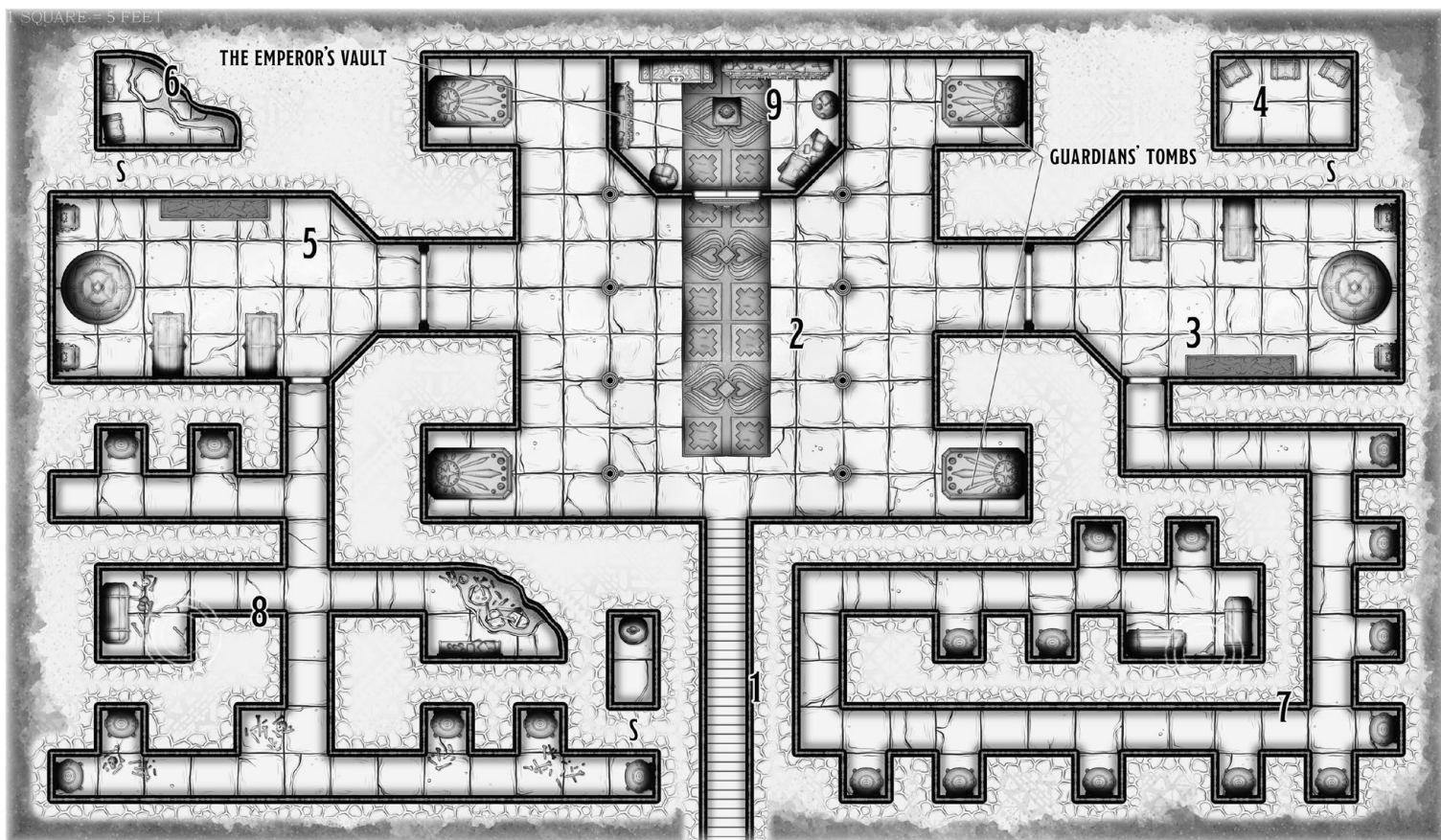
Light. The sconces in the vault feature *continual flame* spells. The magic fades in 2 minutes if removed.

Locks. All doors are made of limestone slabs with high-quality locking devices (**Burglary** check). There's a 2-in-6 chance the lock is corroded and broken.

Chamber Ceilings. All areas have 20-foot-tall, flat ceilings decorated with intricate runes and inscriptions with prayers and adulations for the God-Emperor.

Divination Ward. An anti-magic field in the dungeon negates the casting of divination spells within the compound. Such spells are immediately dispelled when cast.

Immortals Guardians. The undead that protect the vault are loyal to the God-Emperor and impede the vault's plundering. Upon defeat, they respawn at dawn.



1. THE STAIRWAY

The characters are teleported to a secluded graveyard in a dark, damp forest. An opening in between a ruined stone construction leads down into the vault.

The stone stairs descend 200 feet. Eerie imagery of a mighty ruler is engraved on the walls. The God-Emperor a hulking figure in an opulent throne room.

Well-versed historians know that the God-Emperor was a controversial figure that ruled for thousands of years with a tight grip and no tolerance (**History Lore** check).

2. THE MAIN HALL

The steel vault door is flanked by a row of carved pillars and four sarcophagi too large for a human. The God-Emperor's sun sigil decorates the stone lids.

Arcane forces in the room take on quasi-physical shapes as ethereal, iridescent strands of energy that meander about. The magical effect is harmless but a wizard can study it for 4 hours to learn the *prismatic spray* spell.

When the characters arrive, two enclosures open to free two **bodaks**. They are 10 feet tall and inhuman. They were once the God-Emperor's guardians. The undead fight until slain. The vault door cannot be opened except by using the levers in areas 7 and 8. Returning here after operating both levers reveals the open vault but also a new host of blood-thirsty guardians. Two **bodaks** and four **shadows** attack the characters.

3. TOMB OF PRIESTS

For standing sarcophagi and a magic circle glow in the light of a raging magical fire. A mosaic on the wall depicts priests worshipping the God-Emperor.

The God-Emperor's high-priests are buried here. In life, they performed ritualistic ceremonies and sacrifices meant to sway the will of the strange ruler (**History Lore** check). Each of the enclosures features a poison needle trap but the toxin decayed long ago and poses no threat.

4. SECRET CHAMBER

Pulling a fake brick in area 3 causes a section of the wall to slide inward to reveal a narrow path to this secret area.

Treasure. The chests contain the priests' hoard: 1,600 gp, 8,400 sp, two *potions of healing*, an *enchanted mace*, a leather *bag of tricks*, and a magical *deck of illusions*.

5. TOMB OF ARTIFICERS

The chamber is similar to area 3 but the mosaic depicts artificers creating geared contraptions to amuse and bribe the God-Emperor to favor their faction. The emperor thought they were amusing and creative and gave them a place of honor here (**History Lore** check). When the characters arrive, all coffins open. Two **ghasts** and five **shadows** emerge from them and attack until slain.

Treasure. The coffins contain some of the artificers' creations: a broken mechanical gnome (60 sp), a clockwork sundial (35 sp), and a *potion of heroism*.

6. THE BROKEN VAULT

What once was a secure vault is now in shambles. The structure has fallen on valuable porcelain and ceramic pieces, destroying them beyond repair.

Pulling a fake brick in area 5 causes a section of the wall to slide inward to reveal a narrow path here. It contained a collection of porcelain figurines, ceramic vases, and glassware. Nothing survived the passage of time.

7. EASTERN CRYPT

A narrow, circling hallway houses numerous clay, gilded vases in small alcoves. Each container is engraved with the sigil of a devoted follower or warrior.

Those outside of the artificers and priests' circles but who demonstrated their loyalty to the God-Emperor were given a place of honor in this crypt. Inside each vase is a small limestone chest that contains the ashen remains of the person. Some vases contain the ashes of two people when they were joined in marriage.

At the end of the shifting hallway, a metal lever awaits in between two stone enclosures. Pulling the lever is required to open the door to area 9. A fallen paladin loyal to the God-Emperor was interred in one of the stone coffins. The strength of his loyalty is enough to pull his soul from the afterlife to defend the God-Emperor's vault. A **wraith** rises from the enclosure, accompanied by three **shadows**. They take advantage of their incorporeal qualities to assail the characters in the narrow passages.

8. WESTERN CRYPT

This chamber serves the same purpose as area 7. Alas, past tomb-robbers visited this place a long time ago and triggered some of the defenses. There are bones strewn upon the floor from past battles. A chamber is partially collapsed from an explosive device triggered.

By the southeast end, a hidden lever can be pulled to reveal a narrow passage to a quiet alcove. It contains a shining goblet on a stone plinth. The goblet is enchanted with a protective charm. Creatures that touch it trigger an *explosive runes* effect. Upon touching it a fiery explosion burns everything in the room (**Reflexes** roll).

9. THE GOD-EMPEROR'S VAULT

No one has gained access to this vault since it was closed centuries ago. It contains a grandiose treasure hoard. On the back wall, a floor-to-ceiling, intricately-detailed mosaic portraits the God-Emperor at the height of his reign. He wields the fabled scepter in both hands.

Treasure. The vault contains 55 gp, 17,566 sp, four portraits of the God-Emperor (36 sp each), 3 jaspers (40 sp each), an *enchanted lance*, a set of *elven-crafted boots*, and the fabled *Scepter of the God-Emperor*.

CONCLUSION

The characters reach the end of this adventure. They must face the consequences of their deeds.

The *Scepter of the God-Emperor* is a legendary artifact that has the power to sway the opinions and minds of others. It is a sentient magic item that is not beholden to the use of its owner. The scepter chooses who can attune to it and gain the benefits of its usage. The mage, Giada Alicent, attempts to attune to it but is refused. If the characters attempt it, none present is accepted by the scepter as the next emperor. The *Scepter of the God-Emperor* has the power to change the future of the warring region but the characters must find someone of a good and valorous heart to become the new ruler.

It is left to the GM to determine who can fulfill the emperor's role. We recommend that a recurring NPC that is already acquainted with the characters is revealed to be a plausible pair for the scepter. The characters' king-making deeds shall soon change the empire's future.



THE YELLOW LOTUS CULT

Surrender a piece of your soul to the inebriating influence of the yellow lotus' extract. Only then shall you achieve a higher state of mind and ascendance.

High Priest Xarkelt

SETUP

THEOLOGIANS AND SCHOLARS ponder the secrets of divine entities trying to find a way to truly understand their motivations and their power. Others rationalize the eschatological concept of their otherworldly realms and the relationship between mortals and them. It is a boundless search for meaning for some, and a mission to achieve redemption or might for others. Those that truly become linked with the greater minds beyond the fabric of the planes can acquire great power.

THE FALLEN PRIEST

A DECADE AGO, a rising member of the clergy in the Church of the Sun God named Xarkelt, sought a way to tune his mind and soul with the frequency of the Sun God's existence. To achieve this state, Xarkelt would imbibe strange substances and concoctions that produced hallucinatory or numbing effects. His peers believed his efforts were dangerous and nonsensical. But, worst of all, they believed that public knowledge of the Xarkelt's actions would tarnish the clergy's image with the peasantry. He refused to stop despite plenty of warnings. An ultimatum was issued, which he ignored. He was excommunicated and banished from the region in disgrace.

Xarkelt became a vagrant. An aimless wanderer that looked for exotic herbs and roots to consume or smoke. Wherever he went, the locals thought little of the man as he wore tattered clothes, spoke few words, and was often seen rummaging through gardens to steal herbs. Most took him for a substance-shocked, hapless itinerant with no silver to his name and no future.

One day in the forest, Xarkelt came across a rare breed of yellow lotus flowers. He brewed the soft, fragrant petals and drank the thick concoction. It opened his mind to a higher state of conscience and created a way of communication with otherworldly beings. An extraplanar entity spoke to him. It convinced Xarkelt it was the Sun God. The voice from beyond guided Xarkelt to an ancient ruin in the forest dedicated to a strange, obscure deity. Xarkelt, enraptured with the voice's repeated promises of power and sense of belonging, accepted the entity's deal. The Yellow Lotus Cult earned its first member.

A GROWING FAITH

HIGH PRIEST XARKELT, as he names himself now, offers power and a sense of belonging to vagrants, criminals, and misfits in nearby towns. He grows in magical power as new members join his small cult and drink the yellow lotus potion. The cult is ten-strong as of now.

ADVENTURE HOOK

DUKE PERSILLON'S DAUGHTER, Valerie, was convinced to join the cult after she ran away from home ten days ago. The duke's spies have tracked the lass's whereabouts to the forest, where she meets with a band of misfits. The duke offers 600 sp for bringing Valerie back.

FEATURES OF THE VAULT

Tier 1 Adventure

Light. The sconces in the mausoleum feature *continual flame* spells. The magic fades in 1 minute if removed.

Locks. All doors are made of soapstone slabs with medium-quality locking devices (**Burglary** check).

Secret Doors. Pulling well-hidden levers or buttons causes the walls to shift inward and reveal narrow passages to secret chambers (**Search** check).

Chamber Ceilings. All areas have 20-foot-tall, domed ceilings decorated with ancient draconic runes.

1. GRAND ENTRANCE HALL

A half-crumbling, stone construction in the forest features a cave-like entrance that slants down into uncharted depths. Boot prints are visible around it.

There was once a chapel-like structure here but it has been swallowed by nature. The compound underneath is mostly unscathed and serves as the cult's lair.

2. GRAND ENTRANCE HALL

The standing, carved sarcophagi contain the remains of zealous warriors loyal to the entity that Xarkelt follows.

The four floor-tiles in the center are a cleverly hidden pitfall trap. Creatures that step on them trigger it. The floor opens and drops them 40 feet to the acid pit in area 5. They take 3d6 acid damage (DC 16 Constitution).

3. ANTECHAMBER

The chamber contains a stone surface crowded with scattered papers, tomes, and scrolls that the cultists slowly study and categorize. Two **cultists** and a **cult fanatic** named Argan, the second-in-command, work here.

In their blind zealotry, they fight to the death trying to impede the characters' passage into the lower levels. Upon inspection, the documents are written in Draconic and speak of an evil entity that inhabits the abyss. It is revealed that the dungeon is dedicated to this being.

4. THE DEMON'S EFFIGY

An indescribable, root-like, tentacled entity is represented in detail, in stone. It has seven green eyes.

Theologians recognize the eerie effigy as that of Aardhuss, a demon that tempts the minds of mortals and brings about chaos and destruction (**Divine Lore** check).

Treasure. Each of the seven eyes is an emerald worth 50 gp. Removing at least one of them affects the encounter with Xarkelt in area 12 for the carrier(s).

5. THE ACID AND THE STATUES

The 5-foot-deep acid pond is surrounded by three stone representations of Aardhuss. The statues hold a vase marked with the 'acid' rune to their mouths, as if drinking. Theologians recall that the demon is said to douse his victims in acid before eating them. Thus the creature's imagery commonly depicts this foul fact.

6. A TRAP FOR THE GREEDY

The stone chest features a high-quality lock (**Burglary** check) but it is empty. It is meant to distract an intruder to lower their guard. When a creature steps on the central floor tiles, a pitfall trap triggers (see map). The floor opens, and creatures fall into the sharp, rusty spikes in area 10 (**Reflexes** roll). The trap resets at dawn.

7. THE ANCIENT ARCHIVE

Six alcoves with lightning bolt traps line the hallway to the archive. They have been deactivated by the cult to move safely. A spellcaster can reactivate them by focusing their magic energy on any of them (**Will** roll).

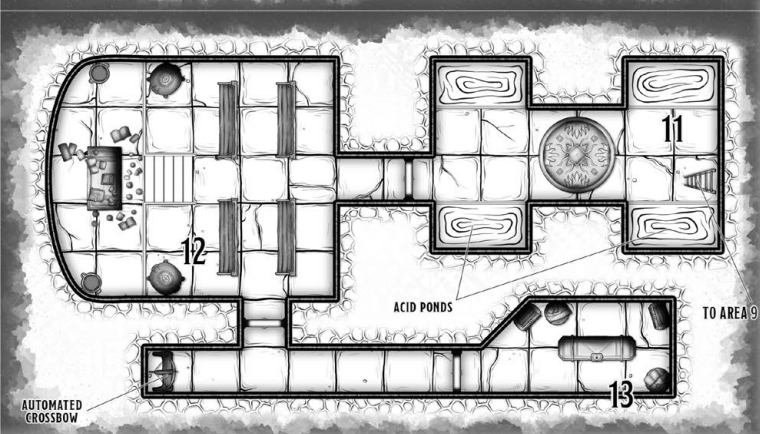
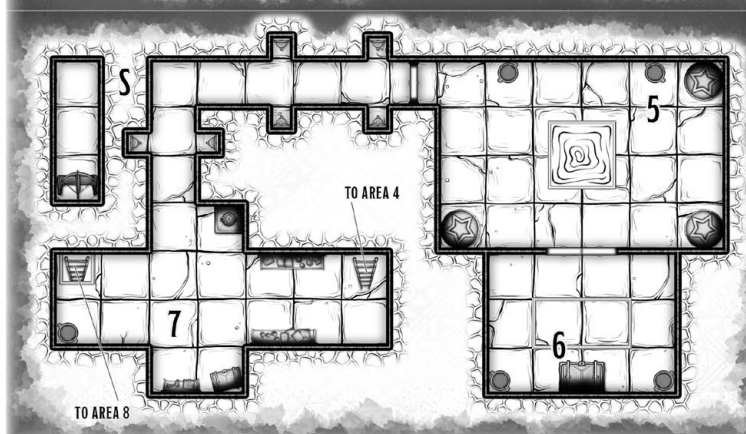
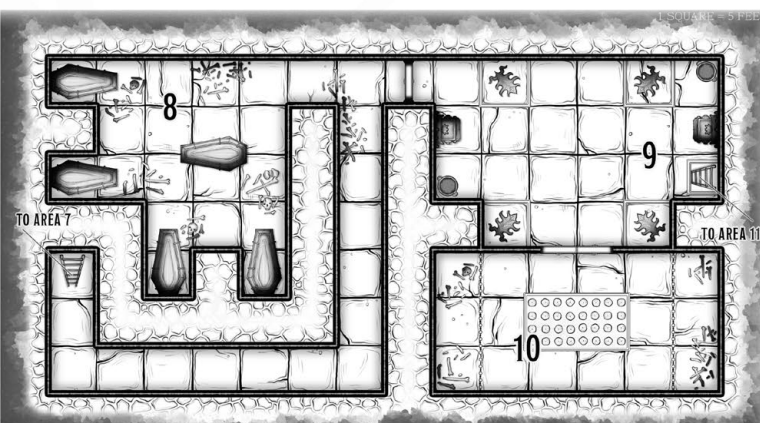
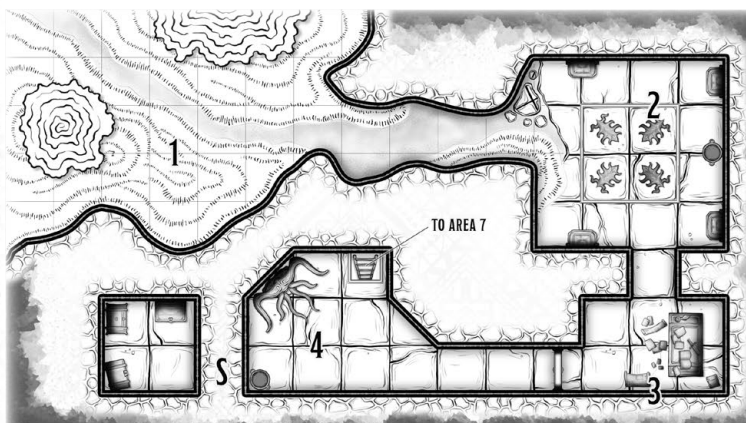
Four **cultists** work in area seven categorizing the documents therein. Three of them fight to the death while the last one attempts to climb down to warn Xarkelt.

Treasure. The cultists carry 30 sp, a *potion of healing*, and a *spell scroll of bless*. The bookcase contains a spellbook with four, random, level-2, wizard spells.

8. IMMORTAL GUARDIANS

Five stone sarcophagi await surrounded by countless human bones scattered across the cracked floor.

Aardhuss has gifted Xarkelt the power to summon and control undead. When trespassers come here, the bones rise and coalesce into six **skeletons** under Xarkelt's command. Each of the skulls is marked with Aardhuss's sigil. The abominate undead fight mercilessly until slain.



9. NORTHERN ELDRITCH FIGURINE

The chamber contains two ornate, standing sarcophagi, two braziers, and four, intricately-detailed floor tiles with a silver and gold-inlaid draconic rune.

The sarcophagi are empty; their contents reanimated and scattered across area 8. The runes read ‘ascend’ in Draconic. However, they are pitfall traps that drop whoever stands on them to the ponds in area 11. The ponds are filled with a strong corrosive liquid (**Fortitude** roll).

10. THE CELLS AND THE PRISONER

An array of sharp spikes in the center of this chamber is flanked by two cells. The grim remains of at least six humanoids lie beyond the cells’ iron bars.

Customarily, victims of the pitfall trap in area 2 would be moved to the cells to agonize and die. The bone remains have been in the cells for centuries (**Healing** check).

A man named Chagg sits in a cell. He drank the yellow lotus potion but turned out to be naturally immune to its effects. Chagg (**guard**) knows too much so he was imprisoned here. Chagg shares his story without reserve. If freed, he joins the characters and tells them that the cult must be stopped as it is an evil abomination.

11. CIRCLE OF SUMMONING

Four acid ponds surround an ancient, stone circle that bears the sigil and runes of the demon Aardhuss. A clever spellcaster infers from the runes that snuffing the lives of twelve individuals in the acid while performing a summoning ritual, the demon can physically come to the Material Plane (**Arcane Lore** check). Given time, Xarkelt attempts this. He doesn’t understand the circle’s runes yet.

12. AARDHUSS’S WORSHIP CHAMBER

A row of wooden pews gives way to a raised dais. A hooded man in dark attire holds a golden goblet that contains a bubbling, vaporous, yellow substance.

Xarkelt (**cult fanatic**), two **cultists**, and two **skeletons** stand in ceremony as the high priest communes with the demon and drinks the strange potion. One of the cultists is Valerie, Duke Persillon’s daughter. She is under the influence of the yellow lotus and cannot be reasoned with.

The characters’ intrusion into this sacred ritual is seen as a terrible insult. Xarkelt orders his forces to attack and uses his demonic-infused spells to paralyze a character (**hold person**) and wield a foul blade (**spiritual weapon**).

Treasure. Xarkelt carries 75 gp, a golden necklace (36 gp), a *potion of healing*, and a *wand of detect magic*.

13. THE VAULT

The unlocked vault contains the valuables all members carried when they joined the Yellow Lotus Cult.

Treasure. The open vault contains 630 gp, 2,850 sp, two *potions of heroism*, and a *mithral dagger*.

CONCLUSION

The characters reach the end of this adventure. They must face the consequences of their deeds.

If Valerie survives the fight, the effects of the yellow lotus wear off after a few hours. After seeing the outcome of her rash actions, she humbly returns to her family’s estate. What the characters decide to do with the yellow lotus concoction, any surviving cultists, and the cryptic deity’s dungeon are adventures for another day..



ORDER OF RUBY MASKS

I have never been fond of politicians. Their minds get corrupted after just a few years in power. They forget about us the commonfolk...

Lythen Citizen

SETUP

EVERY ADVENTURER NEEDS a purpose. Be it a long-term goal or a simple quest, their actions are usually the reflection of their wishes and desires. But not all people are born with an adventurer's heart. It is a hard life to travel the world, fight monsters, and defend the weak. Most would rather keep a quiet life as farmers, or keep their jobs in the city and maintain a regular income.

But what becomes of the outcasts left in between? Too strong to be farmers, but lacking the wits and soul to be heroes... Unfortunately, this combination of traits is one of the most successful formulae for thugs, criminals, or even worse, empty-headed followers or fanatics.

THE BIRTH OF THE ORDER

IT ALL STARTED with a man named Oskar Wilhelm. He is the son of two wealthy politicians and never doubted following his father's steps. However, Oskar's ambition was far greater than that of his predecessors. When he realized the power and influence that he could exert from his privileged position, he decided to use his wealth and everything at his reach to build a criminal faction.

Oskar has held his position in the government for more than twenty-five years. If his parents knew anything about their son's foul activities, they took the secrets to their graves. What is worse, Mr. Wilhelm's detractors claim that he was involved in his parents' passing... All to keep the Order of the Ruby Masks a secret.

THE RUBY MASKS

DESPITE HIS CRIMINAL profile, Oskar is first and foremost the son of rich people. He likes opulent clothes and luxury items. Thus, he decided to pay a craftsman to make porcelain masks, bathed in a fine ruby-colored solution. The result is beautiful to behold. Every member of the order must wear a mask at all times while on duty.

It was not hard to build the order. Anyone Oskar needed could be persuaded with enough gold. And so, he gathered warriors, bouncers, craftsmen, a couple of scientists, historians, thieves, spies, and even delivery boys. The order is strong. It is more than 20 years old after all.

A BOILING PROBLEM

THE GOOD PEOPLE of Lythen City have had to live with Oskar Wilhelm as head of the Chamber of Commerce and Speakers for more than two decades. Even if Oskar thinks otherwise, his brutal felonies do not go unnoticed. The man believes himself untouchable; the city guard is under his payroll. But his growing ambition has made him reckless, and messy. He has many enemies.

ADVENTURE HOOK

THE CHARACTERS ARE hired by an influential character in Lythen City: a constable from the city guard whose beliefs and integrity cannot be bought. Perhaps an important priest or religious figure. Or another politician, with much to win if Oskar is dealt with and things go his way.

FEATURES OF THE HIDEOUT

Tier 2 Adventure

Secret Areas. Pulling well-hidden levers causes the walls to shift and reveal narrow passages (**Search** check).

Disarming Traps. An expert tinkerer can disarm the traps with fine tools and ingenuity (**Burglary** check).

1. TELEPORTATION CIRCLE

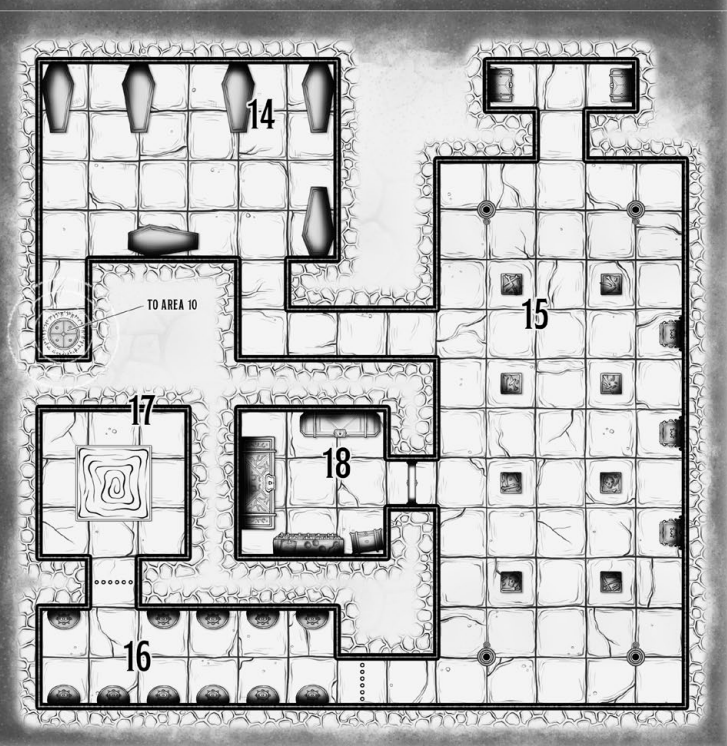
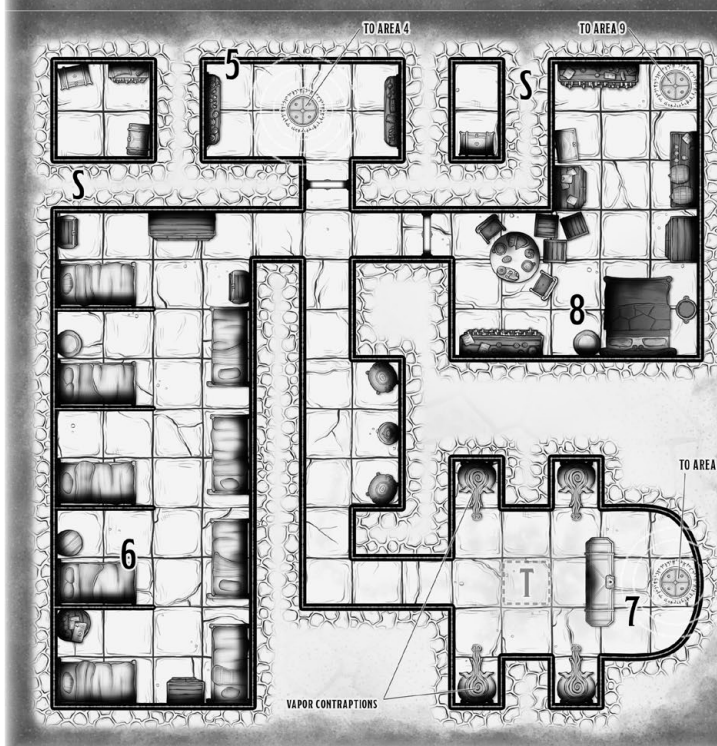
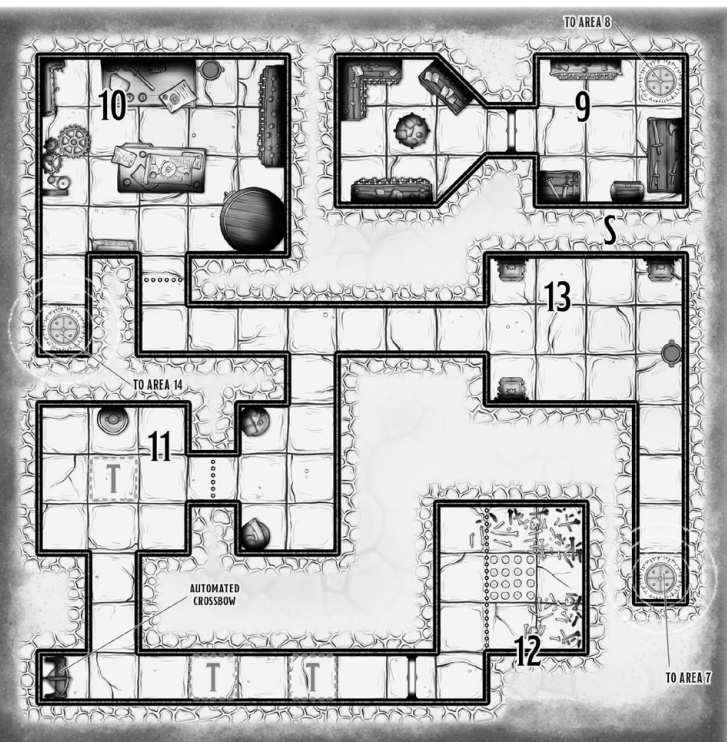
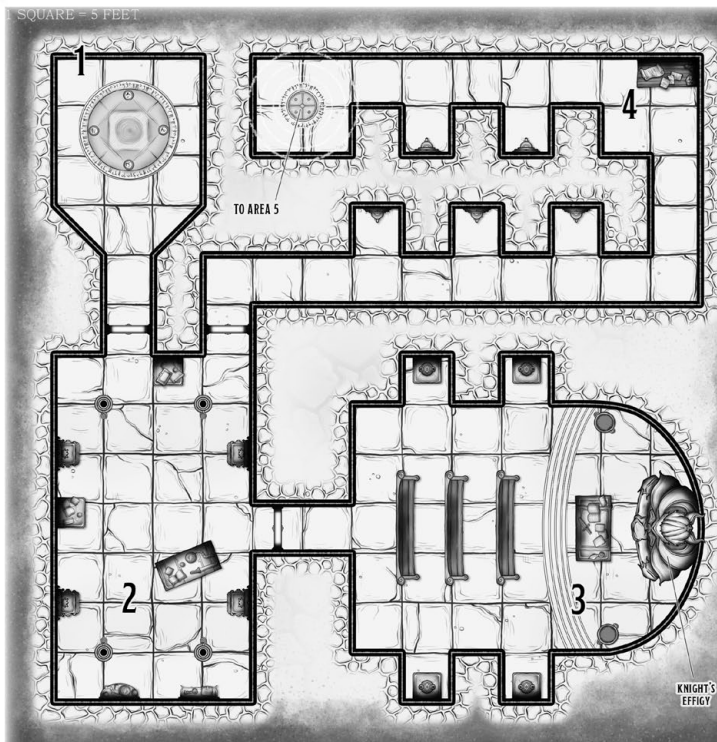
The characters must find a member of the order and obtain information about their hideout. A hidden teleportation circle in the underground sewers leads to area 1.

2. ANTECHAMBER

Three **thugs**, three **bandits**, and one **priest** wearing ruby-red masks guard this chamber. They fight the intruders. However, if things go south, one of the bandits flees to alert their leader, Oskar Wilhelm, in the lower levels.

3. RED MASKS CHAPEL

The Knight's Effigy (**shield guardian**) on the easternmost wall features a large ruby mask. The characters interrupt a ceremony when they come. A **priest** initiates two new people when they enter. The two armored men (**veterans**) show their loyalty by fighting the intruders until slain. The priest and the magic effigy attempt to contain the intruders as well, helped by the four ruby **specters** that emerge from the red vases.



4. TWISTED CORRIDOR AND ALCOVES

The teleporting circle that takes to area 5 only works after the five switches in the alcoves have been activated (see map). There are no traps but a careful or paranoid explorer may want to look for one in each alcove. They are meant to make intruders lose valuable time.

5. SECOND LEVEL LANDING

This small chamber has two wooden shelves with mundane objects on them. A single **bandit** smokes here when the characters arrive. He tries to alert the others by screaming. Lots of voices can be heard outside.

6. THE ORDER QUARTERS

The order is way larger than this hideout. Many of them live double lives in the city but this section is reserved for members that need to lay low for a while. Or that simply want to rest in between projects or jobs.

Treasure. If the characters look in the right places (Search check), they find 578 sp, three sets of robes, two simple weapons, and two *healing potions*.

Vault. The most valuable objects of some of the members of the order are here. There are two enchanted blades and a set of precious cut stones worth 3,000 sp.

7. VAPOR OF CLEANSING

The four alcoves of this chamber contain strange contraptions that produce a green-hued vapor. This special kind of vapor has minor healing properties (see below). The locked chest contents (**Burglary** check) are meant to lure intruders into stepping in. The many silk robes and pieces of silverware are worth 750 silver pieces.

Trap. Any creature that steps on the marked square falls into the spiked pit in area 12 (**Reflexes** roll).

Vapor. The warm gas heals wounds. A creature standing in the vapor for an hour regains 1/4 of their hit points. Members of the order meditate to regain their strength.

8. LEADER QUARTERS

This is Oskar Wilhelm's bedroom. The bed and furniture of this place are of considerably higher quality than the ones in area 6. There is luxury food and wine at the table and the room features a soft, soothing fragrance of roses and lilies. Looting this place turns up 367 sp worth of goblets, high-quality linens, and silverware. The teleportation circle leads to a secret workshop in area 9.

Secret Loot. Oskar's savings are here. There are 2,500 sp free for the taking if the characters find this chest.

9. SECRET WORKSHOP

This area can only be found if the characters spot the pushable brick that reveals it, or by using the teleportation circle in Oskar's chamber. There are simple tools and weapons in the east chamber. Beyond the door, a desk and two bookcases hold countless books, tomes, scrolls, and notebooks with Oskar's notes.

Treasure. Upon closer inspection, the characters may search the workshop's documents and tomes to find three random arcane *spell scrolls* (**Search** check).

10. LABORATORY

This area is blocked by a steel barred door. The door opens with the magic keyword: '*ruby*'. Otherwise, it will only open once the guardians in area 13 are defeated. A successful **Burglary** check forces its lock as well too.

Treasure. A clever engineer understands what Oskar's scientists do here (**Fabricate** check). They develop a large-scale duplicate of the vapor contraptions in area 7 to spread a poisonous gas on the entire city.

11. TREASURE FOR THE FOOLISH

A barred door blocks this area off but a locksmith can bypass it using the right tools (**Burglary** check). The ruby-encrusted golden goblet would be worth thousands of silver pieces. But the shiny treasure is just a clever illusion (**Will** roll). Touching it also reveals its nature. Creatures that step on the marked square (see map) fall into the pool of goo in area 17 (**Reflexes** roll).

12. SPIKED PIT AND CELL

Bones are scattered all around. Any victim of the trap in area 7 falls and gets impaled in the spikes. Those impaled lose 1/2 their hit points (**Reflexes** roll).

Automated Crossbow. A bolt is shot each time a person steps on the marked squares (see map). The bolts are embedded with a pungent poison (**Fortitude** roll).

13. ARTIFICIAL GUARDIANS

Two **ghasts** and one **mummy** come out of their enclosures to fight intruders. The undead were created to defend the place. They ignore any member of the order.

14. SARCOPHAGI

Three **wights** and two **skeletons** attempt to stop the intruders' advances and fight until slain. They chase the characters up to area 15 if they somehow flee.

15. PLINTHS OF THE TEST SUBJECTS

Oskar and his necromancers are here to defend area 18 from being pillaged by the intruders. Oskar is no fighter. But four **thugs**, two **cult fanatics**, one **mage**, and six **skeletons** do their best to defend the foul politician. If things go south, Oskar attempts to sneak away from the battle and escape using the teleportation circles. Unless the characters see him, he succeeds (**Search** check). Oskar carries a keychain for all locked doors in the hideout.

16. THE RUBY MASKS

This corridor features stone pedestals with a single ruby mask on each of them. These are supposed to be used by new members of the order. The barred door to enter this area and the one to access area 17 can be forced open (**Burglary** check).

17. POOL OF VISCOUS GOO

Any creature that falls into the pool gets stuck in the goo. They must succeed on a **Fortitude** roll to climb out of it. Failing to do so causes the goo to suck the victim downward. Creatures covered by the goo cannot breathe.

18. VAULT

The hoard here belongs to the people of Lythen. Stolen goods, valuable objects, relics, deeds to several homes or city buildings, etc. This is the kind of treasure that could turn a person into a folk hero or a vile criminal.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of who hired them, the characters become honor guests and friends of Lythen City for life if they bring Oskar to justice and return what he stole. However, almost half the city worked for him... Many people won't be happy about these changes. How the characters face their newfound enemies is an adventure for another day.

DRUID CIRCLE OF VENGEANCE

A druid archetype PC option by Justin Blasdel



Sometimes, life and its essence are unforgivably defiled; the cutting down of a millennium-old tree, the hunt of a newborn fawn, and the wanton destruction of the elderly. These are horrible events that occur every single day, in different parts of the world. These lost children of nature die without a purpose, and their place in the circle of life is taken away. When this happens, the spirits of nature are tainted by death and cry out for vengeance.

Unlike common ghosts, these dead spirits do not mindlessly haunt the living. They do not hunger for wanton pain and suffering, but rather they actively seek out their murderers. The ones who did them wrong. They feel their stolen life force festering in the bellies of cruel beasts, and their anger is sharpened to a fine point.

Yet, they alone cannot change their fates. Unwilling to allow the power of evil to transform them, they are forever caught between the land of the living and complete annihilation. Only when they meet a kindred spirit. Only when their silent words can be heard. Only when their vengeance is shared with a fellow bleeding heart. Only then, can they finally wreak havoc upon the wicked.

DRUIDS OF THE CIRCLE VENGEANCE

Druids who have shed tears for vile acts against nature eventually take notice of these homeless spirits. The sorrow of mutual loss connects them, and the druids realize that what these entities that were alive still have the power to return balance to the cycle of life. A druid only needs to accept these lost spirits' favor. Then, the two are bound forever in their compassion and vengeance.

Other orders of druids look upon such a union with distrust. Many see it as taking one step closer towards the dark arts of necromancy and sometimes forbid those in the *Circle Vengeance* from entering their places of worship. The followers of vengeance accept this partially justified prejudice as part of the price to pay for their power. They know that when those "sacred shrines" are burned to the ground, their circles will be the ones called upon for righteous retribution. It is only a matter of time, and true vengeance is as patient as it is righteous.

CIRCLE OF VENGEANCE SPELLS

YOU HAVE BOUND yourself to an undead spirit of pure vengeance, known as **Taibhse** (pronounced "TIEb-sha"). Your link with this spirit grants you access to some spells when you reach specific levels in this class, as shown on the Circle of Vengeance Spells table.

Once you gain access to one of these spells, you always have it prepared, and this spell doesn't count against the number of spells you can prepare each day. If you gain access to a spell that doesn't appear on the druid spell list, the spell is nonetheless a druid spell for you.

CIRCLE OF VENGEANCE SPELLS

Druid Level	Spells
2nd	<i>false life, inflict wounds</i>
3rd	<i>gentle repose, ray of enfeeblement</i>
5th	<i>bestow curse, speak with the dead</i>
7th	<i>blight, death ward</i>
9th	<i>commune with nature, raise dead</i>



TAIBHSE

To make things simple, a **Taibhse** uses the stat block for a **specter**, but with these changes: its alignment is **lawful neutral**, its Hit Points are 5 + five times your druid level, and its Proficiency Bonus equals yours.

SUMMON TAIBHSE

At 2nd level, you can use an ability similar to the 2nd-level Circle of Wildfire (see TCoE book) feature, except that **Taibhse** takes the form of a beastly specter that carries its mortal wounds beyond the grave. Or, sometimes it looks like a damaged elemental wreathed in ghostly gossamer. In addition, replace the fire damage with necrotic when appearing from a summon action.

SPREADING THE HORROR

At 6th level, you can use the **wraith** monster ability Horrifying Visage with the following changes; remove the aging effect, and the DC is equal to your spellcasting DC.

RAISING THE WOUNDED

At 10th level, you can use the **wraith** monster ability Create Specter with the following changes; the **specters** are under your control, you can only have a number of specters equal to your Wisdom modifier, and the created specters no longer exist once the **Taibhse** is unsummoned or is reduced to 0 hit points.

POSSESS THE WICKED

At 14th level, you can use the **ghost** monster ability Possession with the following changes; the DC is equal to your spellcasting DC. The **Taibhse** is only able to successfully use this ability once per summon (it may try again if it fails to possess a target), and it must end when the **Taibhse** reaches the end of its one-hour summoning.

EDITOR'S NOTES

We are delighted to feature Justin Blasdel's PC options for 5th edition in this issue of *Dungeon Vault Magazine*. Alas, this is our last supplement strictly compatible with D&D 5e.

As of this month, January 2023, we have decided to not use the Open Game License anymore as it has been released as Creative Commons. Our creations now veer away from 5th edition but we will continue to release material that is entirely compatible with medieval-fantasy TTRPGs at large.

We recently announced to our patrons the beginning of development of an in-house TTRPG as it frees us from depending on others' IPs. We support open gaming and shall release this RPG creation under a CC-BY 4.0 license soon.



ODE TO GREED

No, no, no. I won't allow any further intrusions. I can see through you. You're not here for me. You're here to rob me of my well-earned riches. Begone thieves!

Sir Daneel Vark

SETUP

GREED CARRIES SUCH force in the life of mortals that it defines their lives and their achievements. With such short lifespans, greed is a quality necessary for success. Individuals require it to push through adversity and see their goals accomplished. In moderate people, greed shall help them fulfill their lives. But when it is uncontrolled, it becomes an evil force that hinders those who harbor it and others around them as an overly greedy person cannot see another one succeed in their stead. Either they win, or no one should win and thrive.

Alas, a branch of arcane focuses on taking advantage of mortals' traits and abusing them for evil. These incantations cause the red flower of greed to flourish. Those affected become prey to their greedy instincts.

THE LOST PROSPECTORS

TWO WEEKS AGO, a team of human prospectors visited an abandoned cavern near the city to assess its profitability for mining operations. There are other copper and silver mines in the region; the possibility of this cavern being profitable was worthwhile. The miners ventured into the caves and found it promising. What appeared to be a copper vein in the northern caves ended up in a cave-in obstruction. They dug for days to clear it and were dumbfounded when they found a strange man-made construction on the other side. It was a place of worship with a 7-foot-wide runic circle in its center. A strange, haunting melody came from the runic circle, and with it, a powerful charm spell that caused the prospectors to become greedy guardians for the vault's treasure.

A week later, a renowned knight named Sir Daneel Vark, was sent to look for the missing prospectors. The knight ventured into the caverns and found the miners living like animals. The wild prospectors attacked Sir Daneel. The knight promptly disposed of them with his blade, he tried to spare them but they were savage. Later, the knight heard the eerie melody and approached the vault. He could sense it affecting his senses. Strong as Sir Daneel is, he endured the incantation for a few minutes. But in the end, he could not overcome its power. The knight too was assailed by feelings of greed. Against his better judgment, he became the vault's protector.

ADVENTURE HOOK

IT IS KNOWN that the knight now guards the caverns and threatens any who come close. Sir Daneel Vark's daughter, Ana Vark, offers a bounty to a team of mercenaries brave enough to confront her father in the caverns. She offers 400 sp for bringing her father back alive. In addition, she asks the characters to find out what caused the prospectors and her father to behave like that.

Ana offers the characters a map from the prospectors' company that shows the location of the cave, half day from the city, by a sparsely forested region.

FEATURES OF THE DUNGEON

Tier 1 Adventure

Light. The braziers in area 5 feature *continual flame* spells. The magic fades in 1 minute if removed.

Locks. Doors are made of cracked limestone slabs with mid-quality locks devices (**Burglary** check).

Secret Areas. Clearing cave-in obstructions with shovels and tools reveals narrow passages (**Search** check).

Cavern Ceilings. All areas have 20-foot-tall, vaulted ceilings with moist stalactites and deep cracks.

1. CAVERN ENTRANCE

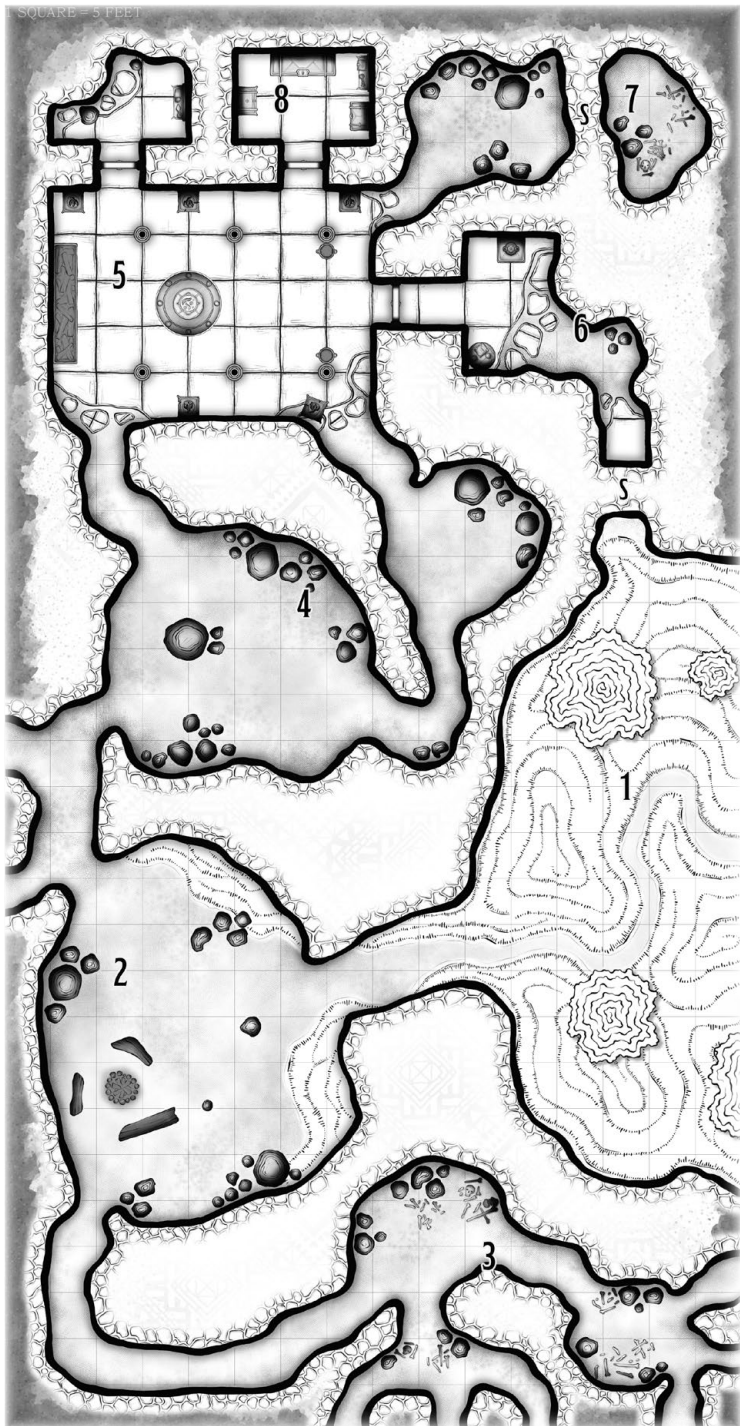
A narrow path circles around grassy hills and leads to what appears to be an abandoned mining site.

A careful ranger notices the evidence of bootprints in the soft soil (**Search** check). Six different sets of prints enter the cavern but none have returned in days.

2. SIR DANEEL'S CAMP

A robed, armor-clad, greatsword-wielding man sits by a raging bonfire in the cavern. His eyes glow scarlet!

Sir Daneel Vark (**knight**) is under the effects of the *Ode to Greed*. He remembers everything but is consumed by an unexplainable desire to protect the cavern and the treasure hidden in area 8. Unless the characters obey his orders to leave at once, the knight moves to vanquish them in deadly combat. As he charges, two **shadows** emerge from the cracked walls and attack the characters. Upon defeat, if possible, the knight flees to area 5.



3. ABANDONED CAVERNS

A sprawling network of interconnected caverns lies beyond. The stone bears the marks of corrosive solutions; the floor is littered with recent bones.

A student of biology identifies that the marks on the walls were caused by burrowing, insect creatures that use their acidic saliva to dig tunnels. Exploring these tunnels incurs a 2-in-6 chance of encountering 1d6 **carri- on worms**. The bones belonged to the five prospectors. A healer determines that the bones are recent, less than a week old, but the remains have been cleaned by cave vermin such as beetles and rodents (**Healing** check).

4. VERMIN LAIRS

The characters first come into contact with the *Ode to Greed* in this area. The haunting melody can be discerned as a dissonant combination of flute and piano. It produces a wanting effect that pulls the characters toward area 5 but can easily be ignored here.

The cavern walls are dotted with dark holes; a network of lairs, home to countless rodents. A **swarm of rodents** emerges at the scent of the characters' trespassing. The rats and deaf creatures are immune to the music.

5. THE ODE'S ORIGIN

A glowing, runic circle pulses rhythmically as it produces disconcerting melodies. The atonal vibrations of the song take on a quasi-physical, vaporous form.

If Sir Daneel Vark escaped the encounter in area 2, he is found here, next to the magic circle. He engages in combat once again, trusting that the *Ode to Greed* may turn the battle in his favor. Otherwise, he fights to the death.

Ode to Greed. Unless the characters impede their hearing somehow, the strange song attempts to enchant them (**Will** roll). Those affected consider protecting the treasure vault in area 8 their ultimate goal. An affected person may repeat this save once per round.

The Magic Circle. Damaging the rune circle with shovels or pikes disables its magic (**Fortitude** roll).

6. BROKEN HALL

Little remains of this once-grandiose hall. There are broken, incomplete, elvish runes carved on the walls. A historian identifies the language as that of a splinter faction of elves that saw humans as a curse on the world; they sought to destroy humankind (**History Lore** check).

7. TOMB OF THE ANCIENTS

The bones of two human explorers have been here for decades. The bones reveal teeth and crushing wounds; they were attacked by cavern beasts (**Healing** check).

8. THE GRAND VAULT

The vault contains three stone coffers and a shelf. None has visited this vault since the compound was built.

Treasure. The chests contain 3,400 sp, 6,400 cp, a gilded mirror (50 sp), and a *potion of healing*.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

IF THE CHARACTERS return Sir Daneel to the city alive. Ana, his daughter, happily pays the bounty and thanks the characters. Alas, if the characters have slain Sir Daneel, Ana refuses to pay. In her grief, she contacts the city bailiff and accuses them of Sir Daneel's murder. If the characters escape justice, she hires assassins to track them down. Alas, that is an adventure for another day...

SORROW OF THE MANGLED PRINCE

By Elven Tower and Smitchellmaps



OSR

TIER 1 ADVENTURE



A LOW-TIER ADVENTURE COMPATIBLE WITH MEDIEVAL-FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAMES

ADVENTURE PRIMER

Three centuries pass, and then the poor mangled prince shall return. Beware, little ones, naughty kids are his target. Behave, lest the prince comes for you!

Old children's tale



vengeance is a relentless force that overcomes all barriers and finds a way to deliver. A sentient being the target of a terrible slight, always yearns for the promised moment of retribution that shall come, often after a long time. Those who abused their positions of power soon forget the insults they spew and their foul actions. But the victims on the other end, they may forgive but never forget.

THE MANGLED PRINCE

A LITTLE MORE than three hundred years ago, there was a young prince named Carlus Garenndi. Prince Carlus was the heir to the throne and was raised to become a great king. The royal family used to live in the Forbidden City, a closed-off compound where the royal family and countless servants remained isolated from the kingdom.

They were not prisoners but any sorties required a grand host of bodyguards and camp-followers, by tradition. They took the safety of the king and the royal family seriously because the kingdom was currently at war with a neighboring power. The capital was well away from the front lines but they couldn't be too careful.

Alas, Prince Carlus met a terrible fate during a hunting trip. The poor lad was attacked by too wild boars. It took the bodyguards less than a minute to reach him but the damage was done. They rushed back to the Forbidden City and tried to nurture the prince's wounds. Sadly, the young boy was disfigured and lost the ability to walk.

The king then took a nefarious decision that shook everyone. He disinherited Carlus and named a younger sibling heir to the throne. The king claimed that in this time of turmoil, the next in line should give the kingdom security. Carlus's state would only bring uncertainty.

Then, the king ordered the servants to move Carlus to the dungeon and chain him to the wall. The king was heavily criticized for his cruelty for decades. The mangled prince died of dehydration in the dungeon. Alone and devoured by intense feelings of hatred and injustice. The mangled prince vowed to return one day and exact his revenge. Over the past three centuries, Carlus's spirit has grown stronger. Transformed by hatred and desires for revenge, it has become an avatar of destruction that doesn't resemble the young prince it once was.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

In *Sorrow of the Mangled Prince*, the characters may begin with one or both of the following adventure hooks:

MISSING CHILDREN

The characters are in Idralmas, the settlement near the Forbidden City, at the Squirring Medusa. Dozens of children went missing over the last 2 weeks. The characters hear people that claim that they ran away and into the ruins of the now-abandoned royal compound. The authorities offer 1,000 sp to save the children because the place is shunned and no one dares approach it.

THE LOST RELATIVE

The characters meet Anna Garenndi, who claims to be a descendant of the bygone royal family. She claims she saw her ancestor Carlus in a dark chamber in a dream, and heard the wails of children. Anna has a hunch that the missing children must be in the Forbidden City's dungeon; in her dreams, the children are trapped there.

RUMORS

By asking around in Idramas and the Squirring Medusa, the characters may hear the following:

1d10 rumors about the current events

- 1 At night, a strange halo or purple light can be seen above the Forbidden City. No one knows what it could mean.
- 2 Some say the mangled prince, a folklore legend, has finally come to take all the naughty kids in town.
- 3 Aleen, Duke Baerald's teenage daughter, was seen running into the Forbidden City with another kid.
The Forbidden City has been abandoned for over a hundred years, shunned by the locals. An expedition a decade ago ended in disaster; the explorers died in the dungeon.
- 4 Aman, the innkeeper's son, told his father 'We are drawn toward the darkness in the Forbidden City' before disappearing. The man thought the child was joking.
- 5 A minority thinks this is all an elaborate, practical joke organized by the children that eludes explanation.
- 7 All folks interested in helping find the children are sent to the Squirring Medusa, a popular inn/tavern.
- 8 A distant Garenndi relative was murdered because of his alleged connection to the Forbidden City.

THE SQUIRMING MEDUSA

I thought my son was joking. No one comes near the Forbidden City anymore. Why would he risk it? He would never disobey us and venture into that ruin...

Valoru, Innkeeper

BACKGROUND LORE

The Squirring Medusa is a medium-sized two-story tavern located near the center of Idralmas, a coastal town built on top of sheer cliffs connected by wooden bridges. It is not the only establishment of its kind but it is, by far, the most welcoming location for travelers. The tavern-owner is a middle-aged man named Valoru. Valoru inherited the tavern from his father, as he did from his father before him. The Squirring Medusa has been in the family for three generations. Valoru knows the business well; he started working in it when he was a little boy.

For the past fifty years, the secret for the Squirring Medusa's success is a special drink they call "medusae blood". The exact recipe is a concoction only Valoru knows. Medusae blood is a spiced wine drink that is served hot. The spice-rich fragrance of the beverage is famous regionally and the common hall smells of it from all the constant servings throughout the day.

The tavern's second story features a large balcony that overlooks some of the tables and the library. There are a few couches and side tables on the balcony but this area is reserved room-paying for clients.

CURRENT EVENTS

THE CHARACTERS BEGIN this adventure at the Squirring Medusa. Valoru and Captain Harken, a representative of the city, gather here to consider their options. Both men have a missing child in the current debacle.

The characters are offered the 1,000 sp reward here and may ask around as the inn is packed with people worried about the disappearances. Consult the rumors table to determine what the characters find out about the recent events at Idralmas. The captain reveals that the doors into the Forbidden City magically close at dawn. The place must be explored during the night.

Anna Garenndi (see **Adventure Hooks**) is in the tavern but she hides her face and identity out of fear of the commonfolk's reprisal. Anna (**scout**) offers to accompany the characters into the Forbidden City as she also feels a strange calling to visit her family's ancestral place. She'd be the first Garenndi to return in centuries.

FEATURES OF THE TOWN

Doors. The pinewood doors in the tavern have medium-quality locks (**Burglary** check) and a medusa-head engraving on them. Ruby-like, painted stones pretend to be the medusa's perilous eyes in each of the doors.

Light. Most areas of the inn/tavern have torches on sconces. There is a large fireplace in the common hall (see map). These sources provide bright light.

Smells and Sounds. The sound of chatter, laughter, minstrels, and the smell of the "medusae blood", a hot spiced wine, is prevalent since they serve it every day.

Atmosphere. The inn is packed with concerned parents and people fed up with the disappearances. Sadly, the taboo of the Forbidden City is strong. No one dares come close to the shunned royal location. Hence the monetary reward to outsiders to do it for them.

EVENTS

Once per hour, while in town and the Squirring Medusa, roll on this table for a random event:

1d8 Events

- 1 During negotiations, a grieving mother barges into the Squirring Medusa to announce that her son is missing.
- 2 A local hunter (**scout**) offers to visit the Forbidden City with the characters. His nephew went missing.
- 3 Panic in the streets, abominations emerged from the Forbidden City and walked into Idralmas. 1d6 **zombies** walk through the streets attacking bystanders.
- 4 Parents bellow in despair after three children ran away toward the Forbidden City. It is still soon to catch up to them before they cross the last Idralmas bridge.
- 5 An angry crowd forms outside the Squirring Medusa claiming that Captain Harken is guilty of the city's lackluster response. They threaten to break in to seize him.
- 6 The sky becomes clouded and dark enough that it seems nighttime. The only light that remains is the purple-hued, arcane halo above the shunned Forbidden City.
- 7 An alchemist wants to help. He summons the characters to his shop and offers two *potions of healing*.
- 8 Darkness gathers and all light sources in the Squirring Medusa dim down. A voice from beyond utters '*I shall now have my revenge, all shall fear me and despair*'.

1. COMMON HALL

A large portion of the Squirring Medusa's first story is the common hall. A grand salon with a bar, dining tables, a small library, a game table, and an ornate fireplace crowned with a golden knight statue.

When the characters arrive, a crowd gathers next to the ornate fireplace. There, Valoru and Captain Harken speak with the locals and try to motivate them to raid the Forbidden City but not even they dare do it.

A server boy offers the characters a mug of medusae blood when they approach. Captain Harkens takes notice of them as foreigners and offers the bounty reward in a desperate tone. He explains that no one approaches the Forbidden City because it is dangerous, as other explorers have failed to return, several times in the past.

2. KITCHEN

The kitchen works throughout the day. The cook, Sandra, is often overwhelmed with the volume of work when the tavern is packed with patrons. She has three cooks to help her but the real limitation is the room size.

3. BASEMENT ACCESS

A double-door trapdoor with a heavy-looking padlock leads to the basement (**Burglary** check). The entrance is located next to the kitchen entrance, in the back alley.

4. BALCONY

The balcony overlooks a few tables and the library. Two couches flank two side tables next to the room's doors. The characters can hear people talking below from here.

5. GUESTS' ROOM

This is the only room available to rent. If the adventurers stay at the Squirring Medusa, Valoru gives them a key to this room and warns them not to use it in the other rooms since all keys are the same. The room contains two double bunk beds and a small wardrobe.

6. EMPTY ROOM

This room is available and contains the same furnishing as area 5. If explored, the characters find a lost leather pouch with 10 sp on the wardrobe (**Search** check).

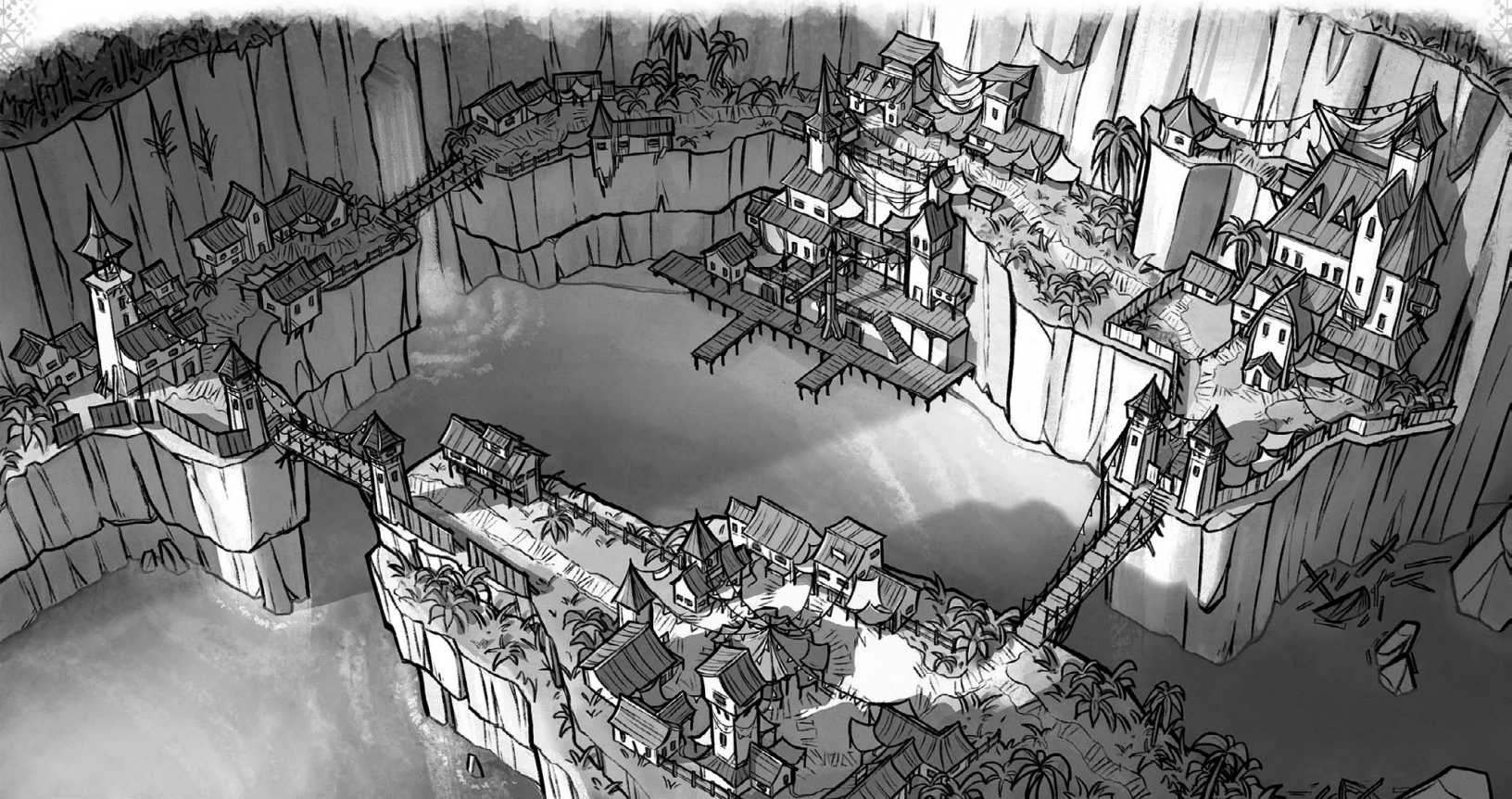
7. VALORU'S ROOM

Valoru and his son, Adan, sleep here. The wooden chest contains their few clothes and accessories. The portrait of a comely lady in a yellow gown hangs by the window. There is nothing of value here as Valoru keeps the tavern's profits in the basement's secret room (area 10).

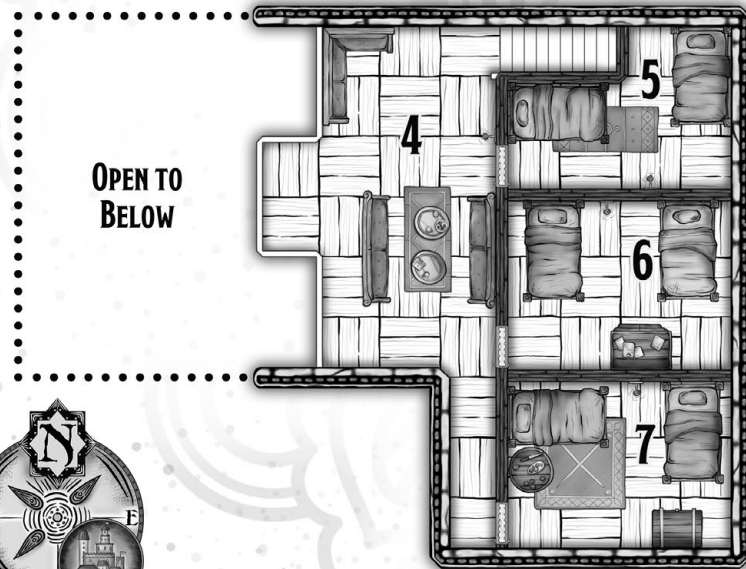
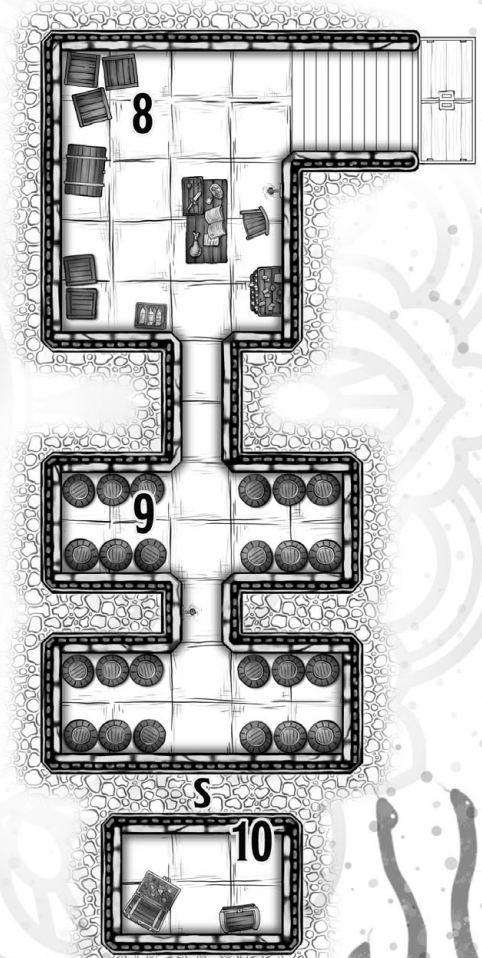
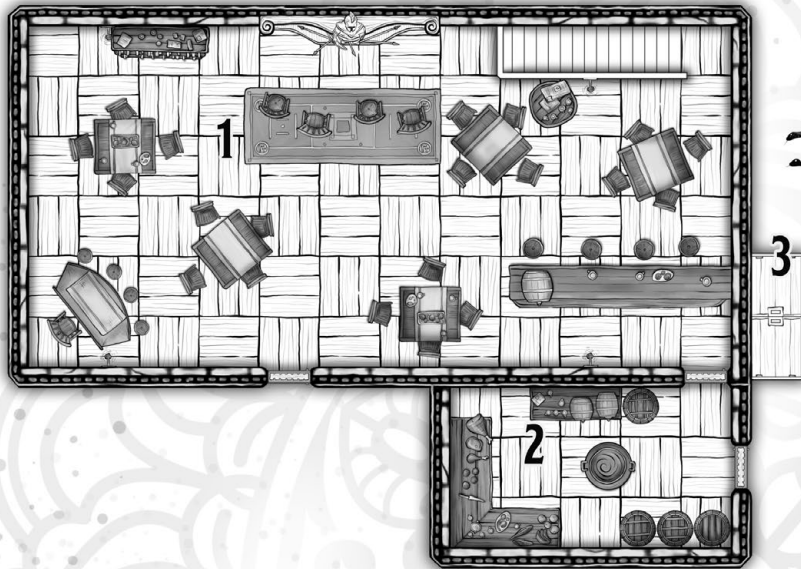
8. BASEMENT LANDING

The room is a mixture of storage space and an office. The wooden crates contain stored food and some maintenance goods for the tavern. The desk is littered with papers, receipts, invoices, and other business paperwork in disarray. Upon closer inspection, the books' accuracy leaves much to be desired. Valoru has no idea how to keep the books updated (**History Lore** check).

Treasure. There are three bank notes worth 30 sp each when exchanged. A character would have to visit the Idralmas Bank, pretend to be Valoru, and deceive the bank clerk to cash the notes (**Reaction** roll).



THE SQUIRMING MEDUSA



OPEN TO BELOW



1 SQUARE = 5 FT.

9. WINE CELLAR

Valoru brews the wine here. The secret ingredient for the medusae blood is added down here when they open a cask for the first time. Each of the barrels is aged for at least three years before opening for consumption.

Secret Door. Pulling the torch causes a section of the wall to move and reveal a path to area 10 (**Search** check).

10. SECRET ROOM

The secret room contains two wooden chests. One of the chests is locked (**Burglary** check).

Treasure. The unlocked chest contains a leather bag with 250 sp. The locked chest contains 40 leather pouches with a spice mix in them: medusae blood's secret ingredient. No merchant gives credibility to the claim that this is the special ingredient of the popular drink.

DEVELOPMENT

AFTER THE CHARACTERS take on this quest and gather the necessary information from the locals. They are ready to visit the ancestral Forbidden City.

The ancient royal settlement is located less than a mile from Idralmas, to the east. If the characters accept Anna's help (see **Adventure Hooks**), she joins them by the road to the Forbidden City and warns them that she has a terrible premonition about the night.

Traversing the lonely road to the Forbidden City takes about an hour on foot. It gets darker as the characters approach. The magical aurora above the dilapidated compound grows in brightness too. On the way, the characters are intercepted by four **skeletons** and two **zombies**. The undead are merciless and fight until slain.

THE MANGLED PRINCE MAUSOLEUM

They stole my future and my legacy. Now I shall take everyone's legacy. Their firstborns shall suffer the same fate I was forced to endure in this dungeon.

Carlus, the Mangled Prince

The Forbidden City is the ancestral home of the Garenndi family. It was abandoned roughly a hundred years after Carlus Garenndi's death, when the family was dethroned and a new government was instantiated. The Forbidden City suffered important damage during the takeover and over 200-years-worth of erosion and exposure to the elements. Now, it is barely a suggestion of the once glorious days when the palace-like compound was a marvel to behold. After the Forbidden City was abandoned, there were rumors that the place was haunted by the tormented spirits of the Garenndi family.

Since that time, every now and then, a group of valiant tomb-robbers comes up with the idea of plundering the Forbidden City. Stories and historical recounts speak of a lavish mausoleum under the compound. It is said that the true wealth of the bygone royal family remains hidden there. Alas, each expedition into the Forbidden City has ended in tragedy. Some did not return at all, others had a traumatized survivor or two. They told tales of deadly traps and ruthless guardians that tore their companions to pieces. The dungeon is a dangerous place.

THE FORBIDDEN CITY

WHEN THE CHARACTERS arrive, they find a barren wasteland of what once was a rich settlement and the farmlands that surround the royal palace. They are dilapidated ruins, mounds of shapeless rocks, and overgrown fields. Only the Forbidden City itself, because of its size and scope, remains a recognizable feature in the area.

The arcane threads of quasi-palpable light extend from the maelstrom over the compound, almost touching the ground. They float around as if alive. A spellcaster can make a **Detect Magic** check to identify an aura of necromancy. Within the compound, little of worth remains. The erosion and petty robbers have stripped the once glorious palace of its former glory. If Anna is present, she has a map that marks an entrance to the mausoleum. The characters may find it in 1 hour by inspecting the place too (**Search** check). On a fail, it takes 2 hours to find one of the long descending stairways. And a group of four **skeletons** ambushes the party near the entrance. The characters arrive at area 1, 14, or 15 at random.

FEATURES OF THE MAUSOLEUM

Terrain. The stone tiles in the dungeon are worn and cracked. Spider webbing covers ceilings and corners. A thick layer of dust covers most surfaces.

Doors. The wooden doors are old and rotten, and their locks rusted and useless. They don't work anymore. A character can open any door with little effort.

Light. The sconces contain ornate metal torches with the Garenndi sigil and *continual flame* spells. Removing them causes the magic to fizzle out after 1d6 minutes.

Smells and Sounds. The ruins are silent but for a humming sound coming from area 7. The sound becomes stronger as the characters approach the area. Areas with undead creatures bear a piercing, putrid smell and the grunts and groans of the walking dead in there.

EVENTS

Once per Dungeon Turn (10 minutes), while exploring the Forbidden City and the mausoleum, roll on the table below for a random encounter or event:

Random Events - Forbidden City and Mausoleum

- 1d8 **ghouls** emerge from a nearby door or hallway and charge into battle. Their mouths stained with fresh blood.
- The characters find a mummified corpse holding a clay vase with a clear liquid. Drinking it heals an ailment. Drinking twice from it is poisonous (**Fortitude** roll).
- A sentient, non-hostile zombie approaches. It claims to be Sargan Garenndi. The undead man appears to not understand his current situation. He is lost and disoriented.
- 2d4 **giant spiders** drop from the ceiling and attack!
- A gush of wind blows from afar and snuffs out any uncovered light sources. A **Detect Magic** check reveals that a spell-like effect produced the strange, underground wind.
- A young kid, age seven, approaches running and screaming. Adam escaped a few minutes ago from his imprisonment in area 7. He can lead the characters to the northwest entrance to the mangled prince's location.
- 2d3 **shadows** detach from the walls and coalesce into a quasi-physical shape. They attack any living being nearby.
- A piercing scream is heard nearby, in the dark. When the characters arrive, they find bones scattered. A healer knows that the bones are centuries old (**Healing** check).

1. ENTRANCE

The mausoleum once had a magnificent wooden door, now only remnants of the varnished wood lay on the floor. The 30-foot-long corridor opens to a small foyer. There is a worn and moldy door to the west.

2. FOYER

Poisoned darts fly from holes in the east and west walls when a creature stands by the torch (**Search** check). Creatures in the area take piercing damage equal to 1/3 of their HP total and become poisoned for one hour (**Fortitude** roll). A tinkerer can disarm the trap with fine tools (**Burglary** check). Even after disarmed, the darts magically regenerate in an hour and the trap resets.

Secret Door. Pulling a fake brick causes the wall to move and reveal a passage to area 5 (**Search** check).

3. TRAPPED ROOM

Fire jets erupt from the north wall and burn those who cross the room's threshold. Creatures in the area and directly outside take fire damage equal to 1/3 of their HP total (**Reflexes** roll/half). The fire jets magically replenish their oil and reset after an hour. A careful inspection reveals the trap but it can't be disarmed (**Search** check).

4. LONG HALLWAY

This is a long corridor that connects several sections of the dungeon and a semi-natural cavern in the south.

Secret Doors. Pulling hidden brick-switches causes some walls to move inward and reveal narrow passages to areas 7, 8, and 10 (**Search** check).

5. SECRET PASSAGE

The ceiling in this room shows unusual erosion marks. A scientist knows it is corrosive damage (**Arcane Lore** check). Two **gray oozes** pour from cracks in the ceiling and fall on any living creature that enters the room.

Secret Doors. The switches in this secret room are exposed. Operating them causes some walls to move and reveal passages to areas 2, 6, and 7 (**Search** check).

6. SECRET VAULT

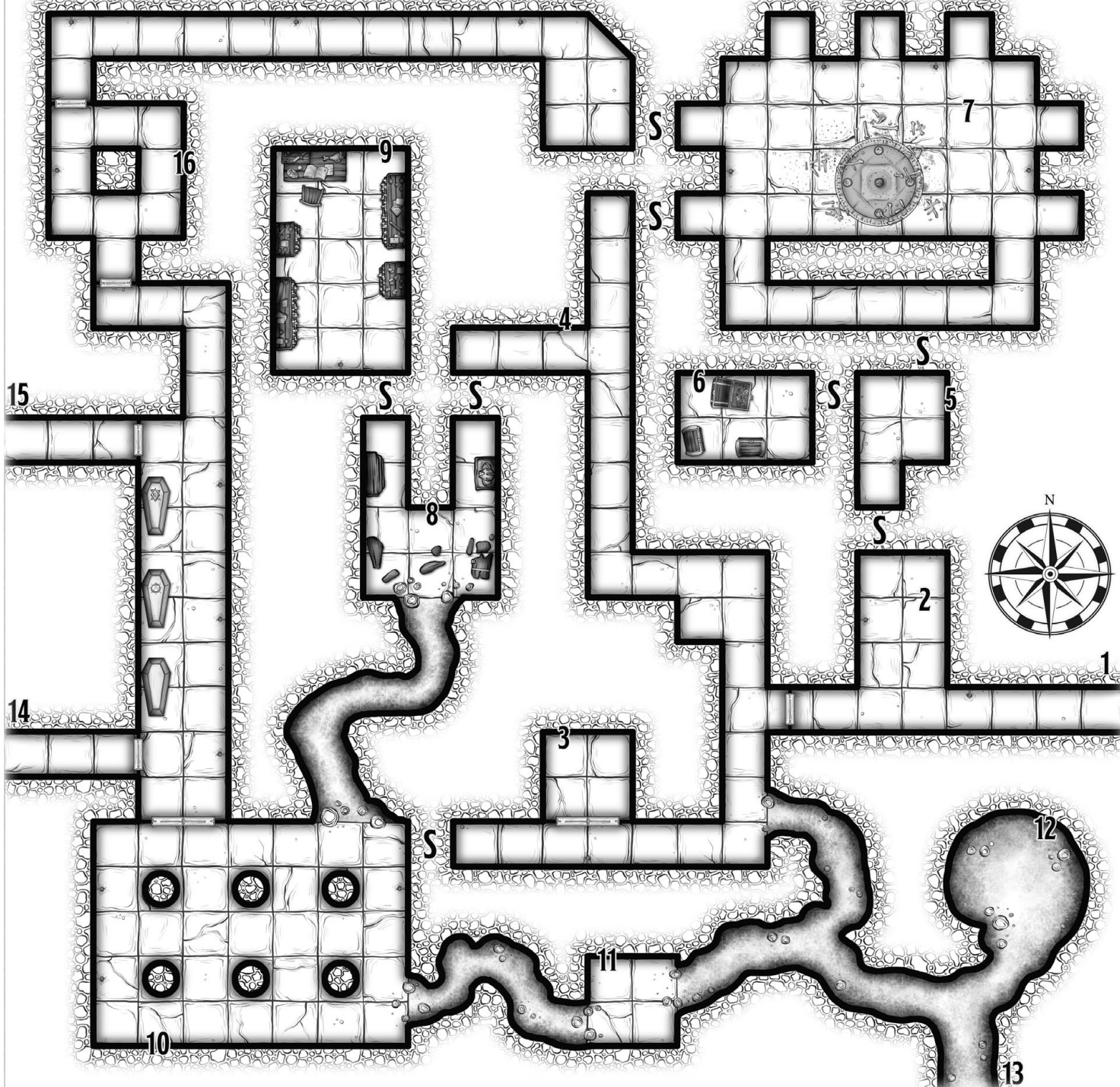
There are three unlocked wooden chests in this room. The chests and their contents are magically preserved.

Treasure. Three sets of noble clothes, 1,342 sp, two *potions of healing*, and a sentient dagger.

7. THE MANGLED PRINCE

The humming sound emanates a hovering orb in this room. Dozens of children, ages 4 - 15 are chained in the alcoves around the room. They whimper and despair. A magic circle dominates the center of the room. The runes glow faintly. Above them, the ominous orb hovers motionless 3 feet above the ground. A healer knows the bones around the orb belong to different time periods (**Healing** check). The orb is an artifact of evil. A physical manifestation of Carlus Garenndi's hatred. Darkness gathers and the mangled prince (**wraith**) takes manifests. Its shape is that of a teenage boy with crippling wounds and disfigured visage. It knows no mercy and cannot negotiate in this state. Six **skeletons** rise from the remains and help the prince confront the characters.





8. HIDDEN ROOM

This chamber was once a secret room. Alas, little remains of this chamber's once valuable contents.

There is a broken, silver-lined mirror in this room and a bust of an ancient member of the Garenndi family. Wooden furniture was destroyed during seismic activity. Only chunks of wood and splintered planks remain. The earthquake caused the south wall of this room to collapse, forming a tunnel that leads to area 10.

Secret Doors. The switches in this secret room are exposed. Operating them causes some walls to move and reveal passages to areas 4, and 9 (Search check).

9. SECRET LIBRARY

This room looks neat and clean; an incredible contrast to the rest of the mausoleum. An aura protects the library from the passage of time (**Detect Magic** check). One of the documents reveals that Garenndi descendants were aware of the growing darkness in the mausoleum. One of them, an alchemist, created a magic necklace that had the power to trap and contain the dark spirit once it showed itself. The *prison necklace* is tucked in a drawer.

The documents reveal that only a descendant of the Garenndi family can use it. Anna Garenndi is the only one capable of this deed (see **Adventure Conclusion**).

This adventure belongs to a series of collaborative projects that involve other Patreon creators. This one-shot adventure features work by [Elven Tower](#) and cartographer [Smitchellmaps](#). Check out her [Patreon page](#) for great cartography and inspiration!



10. GREAT HALL

Six large columns form two lines of three in the center of this area. The columns are surrounded by a thick and goopy ebony paste. The semi-fluid substance is corrosive. Creatures that touch the columns take acid damage equal to 1/8 of their HP total. Nature experts know this is a dangerous ooze creature (**Nature** check). Interacting with it triggers its defense mechanism. The black goo moves and coalesces into a mound of corrosion.

The **black goo** is a perilous, mindless being that acts on instinct. The black goo doesn't feel pain and splits in two when attacked with bladed weapons.

Defeating the black goo causes its substance to vaporize over 10 minutes. The foul gases that are released during this time cause intense choking and a burning sensation in the lungs (**Fortitude** roll). After the black substance is gone, intricate carvings on the pillars and walls are revealed. After a Dungeon Turn of examining them, it is revealed that the last Garenndi generation understood that the crime against Carlus Garenndi cursed the royal family. The eventual doom of the royal line was considered the result of that ancient betrayal.

11. SECRET WARDROBE

Any valuables once stored here were destroyed by earthquakes. The floor tiles and walls bear strange claw marks. A knowledgeable explorer identifies these marks as those of a rare stingray-like monster (**Nature** check).

12. CAVERN

This is a natural cavern that was revealed due to recent earthquakes. What appears to be a dark leather cloak hangs on the east wall of the cave. When two or more creatures approach, an **underground stingray** drops its disguise and attacks. It utters a terrifying moan that frightens its foes (**Fortitude** roll) and then attempts to attach itself to the nearest creature to choke it. If the battle turns against it, the stingray flees. It flies through the tunnel toward area 13 to find a spot to lick its wounds.

13. TUNNEL

The dark tunnel slants downward toward uncharted grounds where dark beasts roam. Six tribes of savage **troglydtes** inhabit the caverns thirty miles down this tunnel. They are wary of surfacers and easy to provoke.

14 AND 15. ALTERNATE ENTRANCES

The characters may arrive at the mausoleum through these tunnels. The hall within contains three ornate sarcophagi. Bronze plaques display the names of the last three Garenndi kings. The three rulers of yore (**ghouls**) emerge from their enclosures and attack.

Treasure. Some items of value are hidden under a false bottom in the center sarcophagus (**Search** check). It contains 635 sp, 14,600 cp, a *potion of heroism*, and a magical satchel that produces infinite blankets.

16. TRAPPED HALLWAY

This corridor splits and circles around itself, forming a small loop. The floor in the loop features pressure-sensitive tiles (**Search** check). When two or more creatures stand in this area, poisonous gas pours from the walls. Creature exposed to the gas poisoned for 1 hour (**Fortitude** roll). Tinkering with a hidden control panel on the south wall disables the trap for 1 hour (**Burglary** check).

Secret Door. Pulling a fake brick causes the wall to move and reveal a passage to area 5 (**Search** check).

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

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

THE PRINCE DEFEATED

The characters rise to the challenge and defeat the mangled prince in deadly combat. Its energy is drained and the floating orb of darkness disappears. The translucent apparition of the mangled prince, as he looked in life after his untimely accident, appears where the orb was. The poor, adolescent lad cries bitterly for a minute before vanishing. Upon inspection, it is revealed that all of the missing children are alive and unharmed. They are, sadly, traumatized by the events of the past few days. But time shall heal their minds. Upon returning to Idralmas, the children and parents are reunited and all celebrate the valiant deeds the characters have done. Captain Harken pays the 1,000 sp and prepares a celebration feast!

THE PRINCE IMPRISONED

Anna Garenndi wears the *prison necklace* and helps the characters fight the mingled prince. Upon reducing the prince to 1/3 of his total HP, the necklace activates and imprisons the prince's soul within. Any remaining skeletons turn to dust after the prince is captured. The necklace burns bright and permanently fuses with Anna's skin in searing pain. The mangled prince is gone and the children are saved. Anna, however, is now tied to the cursed necklace. No magic ritual can remove it. Years later, the mangled prince's soul shall reappear and possess Anna Garenndi. Alas, that is an adventure for another day...

MAGIC MATERIALS

A GM supplement to include fantastic components by P.J. England

“It is the dust of theonomium that contains the most perplexing properties. When added to water, and then boiled down, it liquefies. There is no known way to reconstitute it to a solid.”

Habbish Halstrom, Grand Dwarf of the White Smelters, from *The Ore of Fire*

Magical materials have existed since the beginning of fantasy literature. Reading about mithral in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* gives that world depth and a fantastic quality, which sets the world apart from our own. The same can be true about our homebrew worlds. Magical materials can inspire wonder and give players an opportunity to find new and unexpected uses for the material itself. This is a great way to incorporate the exploration element into the world, giving your players a chance to experiment and discover. It also serves as a way to explain some of your world-specific magic or even as a plot-device for your campaign. This article contains the important questions you need to ask yourself when making your own magical materials, along with random tables to help you get inspired and some sample materials near the end.

Description. First, determine the physical characteristics of the material, and how the characters may interact with it from a descriptive standpoint. For instance, does the material glow with a vibrant red hue? Or does it soak up the light around it? Is the material strangely cold to the touch? Or does it crystallize when breathed upon? Does it foam? Is it heavy to hold or light as a feather? Think about how the material reacts to certain interactions (such as foaming in water), its state (gas, liquid, solid), its weight, its feel, its smell, and its appearance.

Cultural Significance. Some materials bear special significance to certain cultures. Your material could be the gift of a god or devil. Maybe it was only ever used by nobility or warriors. Perhaps it is used in specific religious ceremonies. Or given as a gift to newly wedded couples or a youngster coming of age. Having a material tied into a specific culture makes the world more believable and vibrant. It gives the material more depth, lore tied to it, as to where and why it exists in the world.

Determine the Availability. The quantity affects how a material can be used. A stone that levitates can be used to carry items or carry a whole city if enough of this resource can be attained. Availability also sets its cost, and therefore balances the benefit that come with it.

Think about where the material can be found. It could be mined in the depths of the earth. Or grow as a rare tree in the center of a specific forest. The material could be part of a monster, such as dragon fangs. Maybe the material can only be created by a magical ritual.

Perhaps a material is so exceedingly rare that it simply cannot be bought. Or so plentiful that even a farmer has lots of it. Think about what the implications of the availability of the materials would be in your world. What impact would having a floating ore readily available have on a culture? What would their cities look like? What weapons/other technologies would they use this material for?

Adding magical effects. This is one of the most important questions to ask about your material. There are many potential benefits to materials, such as granting a specific aura, boosting certain spell types, or it could be used to be fashioned into a specific magical item. It could repel or weaken specific creatures within the world. Adding open-ended effects (such as ‘it expands significantly when even slightly heated’) allows your players to use their creativity when inventing uses for the material.

The material can have many types of drawbacks, such as being poisonous, draining the wearer's will force, or binding the user to a cause or alignment. Perhaps it dampens certain kinds of magical effects or the substance makes the wearer susceptible to certain kinds of forces or energies. Perhaps the material turns those who died wearing it into undead abominations.

Rapid Material Tables. The following tables can be used to generate a random material quickly, or used as an inspiration for you to modify new materials as you see fit. You may roll multiple times on any of these tables to combine effects and descriptors. Once the material is generated, think about the above questions to see where it can be added to your campaign world.

1d12	Type
1	Crystal
2	Glass
3	Metal
4	Wood
5	Ceramic / Clay
6	Cloth
7	Gas
8	Liquid
9	Gel
10	Sponge-like
11	Stone
12	Powder

1d20	Descriptor
1	Glowing
2	Shimmering
3	Smoldering / smoking
4	Pulsating
5	Foaming / bubbling
6	Slippery
7	Unusually heavy/dense or light
8	Partially Transparent
9	Soft / malleable
10	Changes color (roll on Color table 2d3 times)
11	Cold to touch
12	Static / charged
13	Smells like cinnamon
14	Smells like smoke
15	Smells like mushrooms
16	Tastes salty
17	Tastes sweet
18	Unusually warm
19	Absorbs water and fire
20	Rough / sharp

1d12	Color
1	Yellow
2	Red
3	Blue
4	Black
5	White
6	Purple
7	Green
8	Gold
9	Silver
10	Orange
11	Pink
12	Maroon

1d10	Where is it found?
1	Underground
2	Within a tree or fungus
3	In the blood of a fae creature
4	Inside a volcano
5	On the peaks of mountains
6	Underwater
7	On another plane of existence
8	Created through a magic ritual
9	Growing as a plant or mold
10	Within a magical creature's bones



1d20	Effect
1	Enhanced healing spells
2	Hardens when exposed to water
3	Temporarily incapacitate consumer
4	Consumer can see into the future
5	Resistance to cold damage
6	Makes wearer/consumer stronger
7	Is able to fix in space (as an <i>immovable rod</i>) requires ice to touch it to fix/unfix it
8	Boosts consumers speed
9	Expands the range on spells
10	Glowes when exposed to water
11	Burns when exposed to sunlight
12	Levitates when exposed to fire
13	Boosts fire damaging spells
14	Can be consumed to gain a temporary breath weapon
15	Repels / weakens beasts
16	The wearer is incredibly alert and can ignore sleep for days. When removed, the effect of the lost sleep is applied at once
17	Magnetic, weapons made with this material have the advantage to disarm foes
18	If worn for a long time it changes the color of your skin
19	Consumers are compelled to tell the truth
20	Consumers hallucinate, though some claim it connects them to the gods



SAMPLE MATERIALS

BELOW ARE SOME sample materials to help you draw some inspiration. Start casting the dice and see what the tables above come up with. However, feel free to add these examples to your game, modifying them as desired:

Theonomium. Commonly called skoed, this white metal is typically found only under the volcano, Drenithia. The volcano itself is fabled to be the throne for the avatar of Melvor, the god of fire and forge. The powdered metal can be liquefied and drunk, granting the drinker fire-breath for one hour. It was commonly used in dwarvish rituals whereby warriors were burned with the fire-breath in the shape of runes. Though rare, sufficient quantities of skoed can be made into armor, granting the wearer a magical resistance to fire damage.

Sinteroak. This wood grows in the core of the oldest sinter trees. Only trees exceeding seven hundred years of age contain small quantities of sinteroak. It is heavy as metal and is purple in color. When sinteroak is bent it begins to glow. Bows made from sinteroak are exceedingly rare but have powerful magical benefits. The bow grants additional damage, which increases as the user trains with it over time. Master bowmen can also use it to deliver touch-ranged spells through their arrows.

Lungar. This gas is contained in glass orbs or vials, after being distilled from hag blood. The gas itself is light, incredibly cold, and has a golden hue; A layer of frost covers containers of lungar. When inhaled, this material grants a haste effect but also causes cold damage to lungs. If consumed in large quantities, the creature's ability to breathe can be impaired permanently.

Black Thack. This black crystal often forms into the rudimentary shape of a skull. The material is malleable like clay but reforms into its default crystalline shape when left alone. This crystal grows in expansive caves deep underground, it is said to form from dead jellies. If black thack is consumed, it incapacitates weaker creatures but grants them the ability to see into the immediate future. This effect grants minor answers to how present actions could affect the future (like an augury) and simple information such as '*what is in the next room?*'. Creatures who frequently use this material fall incapacitated for increasingly longer periods, making black thack difficult to be used consistently as it develops addiction.

Black thack was often harvested by oracles and soothsayers for its future reading qualities. Some underground races are known to use it in combat, via blowguns or darts, to briefly incapacitate their enemies.

Blin. This bright green gem, which gives off a lavender scent, is found within an exceedingly rare mushroom called mossic. Mossic has very specific growing conditions, such that no farmer has ever identified what is needed to consistently cultivate it, though it can be found in the woods usually growing near tree roots.

When worn on a necklace or bracelet, it inhibits the fertility of the wearer. If worn for several years, it turns the eyes of the wearer green. Blin is commonly worn by nobility and prominent courtesans, given its rare nature and useful properties. Alas, it has caused a stigma for green-eyed people in specific cultures. They are either seen as nobility, as overly promiscuous, or both.

YOUR TURN

MAGICAL MATERIALS GIVE your world depth and a unique feel. Players enjoy learning about them and potentially inventing new uses for them. So give them a try!

CHURCH OF LOST DESIRES

All seek the ouroboros' wisdom. The infinite serpent that bore the world and shall one day consume it again. Few ever attain it unless they pay the price.
Old Snakefolk Adage

SETUP

KNOWING THE FUTURE is an ability that keeps civilizations and cultures enraptured with the possibility to understand what has not yet come to pass. Were it true, it would become a mighty weapon that the powerful would wield to always be one step ahead of their rivals.

The ancestral priests of the infinite serpent, the ouroboros, knew that this dangerous secret lay hidden in the boundless knowledge of their obscure deity. According to their cultural myth, the serpent is the beginning of the world, as it gave birth to everything. As well as the end of it, as the serpent shall one day consume it all again; in the same manner that it consumes itself. The priests believe the serpent is all-cognizant and that this information can be philtered out by cabalistic rituals and prayers.

THE CHURCH OF LOST DESIRES

THE SNAKEFOLK PRIESTS created a special place of worship for the ouroboros hidden deep beneath the crust of the surface. A place that can only be found by following a near-infinite network of caverns underneath their grand ziggurat. There lies a strange church-like compound with a grand, opulent altar paying homage to the infinite serpent. The magical effigy of the ouroboros offers arcane insight into the future. A dreamlike vision that portrays upcoming events but it is shrouded in mystery as all visions are. Interpreting these glimpses of what is to come is the lifelong work of the snakefolk priests. They have come to realize that the visions that the ouroboros gives them often cause the subjects to act in ways that bring havoc and despair upon their lives.

The majority believe that the fault is in the interpretation. A few think that even trying to glimpse the future is an insult to the ouroboros, and thus, it castigates them with images that lead them to failure and death.

ADVENTURE HOOK

THE CHARACTERS LEARN of this place researching a way to get accurate information about their campaign-arch's future. The promise of information is so important that they are willing to risk angering the snakefolk priesthood in exchange for learning about the tragedies to come.

FEATURES OF THE CHURCH

Tier 2 Adventure

Light. The stone braziers in the church feature *continual flame* spells. The magic fades in 1 minute if removed.

Secret Areas. Pushing hidden bricks causes walls to move and reveal narrow passages (**Search** check).

Chamber Ceilings. The church has 40-foot-tall, domed ceilings decorated with detailed landscape frescoes.

RANDOM EVENTS

Once per Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) while in the church and the caverns nearby, roll in this table.

1d6 Random Encounters

- 1 A patrol of 2d4 **snakefolk archers** barges in. They drank a strong spirit and, thus, are unaware of the characters.
- 2 A **swarm of snakes** catches the characters' scent and promptly approaches looking for an easy meal.
- 3 An errand **knight** named Rallo approaches carefully. He too looks for the ouroboros' wisdom and joins the party.
- 4 Two **snakefolk priests** arrive carrying a large serpent they plan to sacrifice to the ouroboros. When the characters are seen the priests release the dangerous **snake**.
- 5 A strange voice speaks to the characters in the language of snakes. Alas, only the snakefolk can understand it.
- 6 A **snakefolk priest** approaches the characters and warns them that this path shall only bring their untimely demise.

1. CAVERN ENTRANCE

The characters must circumvent the snakefolk security in the ziggurat or be ambushed by a **swarm of snakes** (**Stealth** check). The characters then traverse the underground tunnels for hours before reaching this cavern.

2. CAVE ANTECHAMBER

An ever-burning brazier with carved serpents stands by a long stairway that descends into the church.

Two **snakefolk warriors** stand by the stairs and are alerted by the characters' presence. Ordinarily, no surfacers are allowed here but they may be swayed to ask the high-priest for an audience (**Reaction** roll). On a success, one of the warriors descends to ask the high-priest whether the characters are allowed. The priest refuses...

3. PIT OF BONES

The soil in this dead-end cavern is softer and produces a cracking sound when creatures walk on it. After 1 Dungeon Turn of inspection, it is revealed that a bed of countless bones lies a few inches under the surface. Some bones are old and others are as recent as only weeks old. Most of them belong to humanoids (**Healing** check).

4. CHURCH BALCONY

The long stairway opens into a 10-foot-tall balcony that overlooks the opulent ouroboros' church. The high ceilings are decorated with detailed frescoes.

The golden vase by the curved balcony collects all visitors' offerings as they arrive. It contains 452 sp. A **snakefolk warrior** stands by it and expects the characters to make an offering. Due to the church's construction, the warrior remains unaware even if a fight starts in area 3.

5. BELIEVERS AND SUPPLICANTS

Twenty-eight snakefolk sit on the wooden pews before the grand altar. They await their chance of making a petition to their sacred ouroboros. To be awarded this privilege, the snakefolk follow a convoluted registration process that often has them wait here for weeks.

6. THE GRAND OUROBOROS EFFIGY

The altar is protected by three **snakefolk warriors**, and two **snakefolk priests**, one of them being the high-priest. They immediately refuse the characters and let them know that their presence is an insult to the infinite serpent. If the characters insist on petitioning the snake, the snakefolk attack. They don't, however, fight to the death.

If the battle goes south, the high-priest orders a stand-down and declares that such prominent warriors would not have come without the ouroboros' approval. The characters may then consult the ouroboros.

7. HIGH-PRIEST'S VAULT

This secret room contains the personal hoard of the snakefolk high-priest. He protects it with his life.

Treasure. The chests contain 2,400 sp, 8,400 cp, and a tome that reveals that the high-priests do not really what entity answers people's questions at the altar.

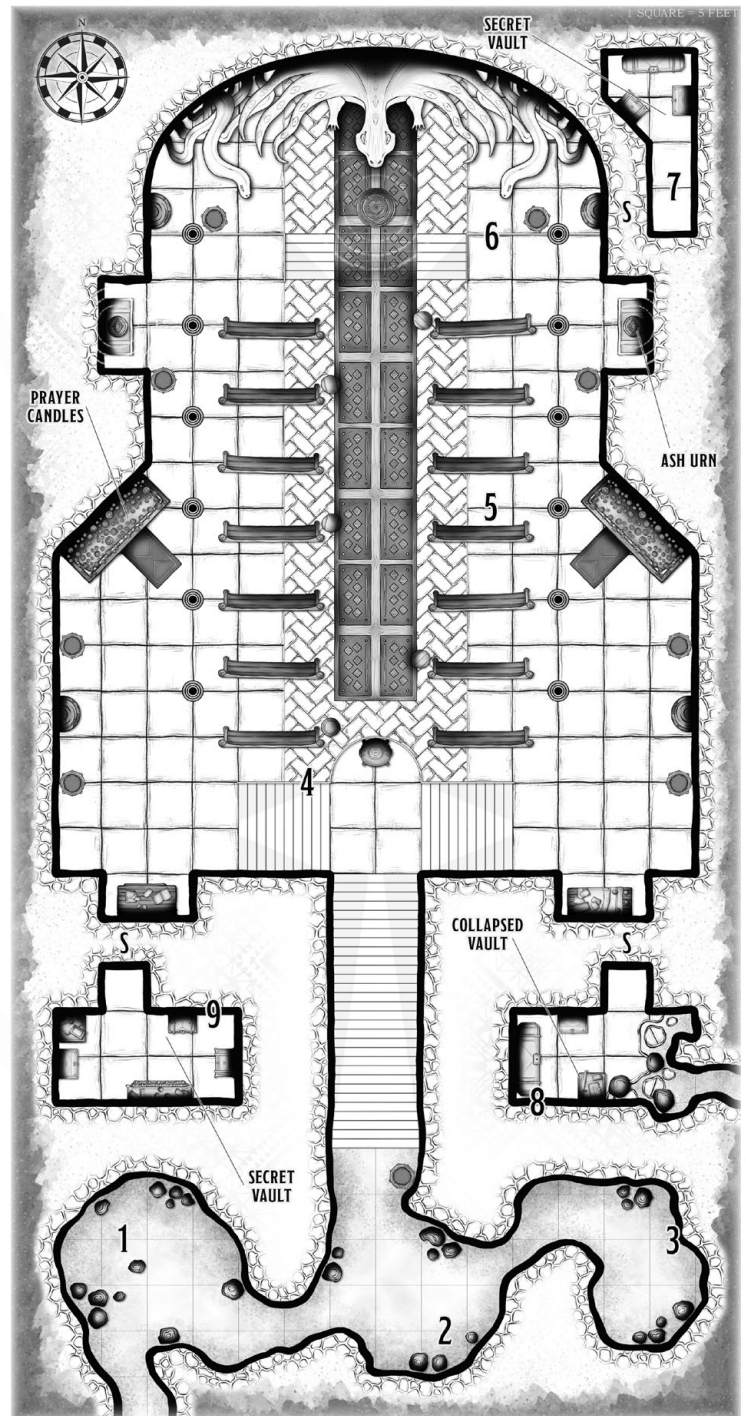
8. BROKEN VAULT

This vault collapsed decades ago and was never repaired. The coffer is empty. The east tunnel connects the dilapidated chamber with the surrounding caverns.

9. SUPPLICANTS' VAULT

Wealthy snakefolk visitors can ask for their belongings to be stored in this publicly-managed vault.

Treasure. The chests contain 3,400 sp, 9,200 cp, a *portion of healing*, and a crate of spices (400 sp).



ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS MAKE a personal petition to the ouroboros altar with the priests' help and receive a series of cryptic visions about their future. The GM decides what each character beholds in this magical vision. The visions should point the character in the right direction but they should never forget that whatever answered their questions may have a hidden agenda.

If the characters threaten to slay the snakefolk priests, they won't be able to consult the ouroboros. Against such odds, even the high-priest would rather give his life than to aid such bloodthirsty combatants consult the effigy.

Crescent Moon Dagger



Fool's errand, some say. An aimless goal to pursue, others say. That is what most scholars think about the subject of a planar key. Theoretically, a planar key is an arcane device capable of ripping the fabric of reality and opening a gap between places of existence. All this is done in a controlled and repeatable manner. There are advanced spells that allow passage from one plane to another but they require the expertise and magical acumen of a powerful wizard. The key would allow non-mages to move around the multiverse unimpeded. But people claim it is impossible...

Thousands of years ago, despite the huge benefits that such a magical item would bring, few spellcasters even attempted the feat because it was widely understood that it just was not possible to hold enough power in a small object to achieve such a deed. Many elvish and draconic mages already spent lifetimes-worth of effort and research trying to build the key to no success. It became the philosopher's stone of planar studies. Arcana's unattainable goal.

However, one day, an elvish wizard created the fabled key. He searched far and wide across the planes for exotic materials to store arcane power. He sailed the Astral Sea into uncharted waters where a bygone deity's decaying body floated abandoned. The mage removed one of the late deity's teeth and sanded it down to form the key's core. Its divine origin not only powered the device, it made it also indestructible. The elf mage worked for a decade and managed to craft with the god's tooth a curved blade. He named it the *Crescent Moon Dagger*.

By slashing into the air and uttering the magic word, the *Crescent Moon Dagger* cuts a hole in between planes and allows up to ten individuals to travel from one plane to the next. The dagger is limited in that it only allows passage to nearby or adjacent planes. Once a traveler reaches the Astral Sea, travelers must sail its infinite waters as the *Crescent Moon Dagger* reaches no further.

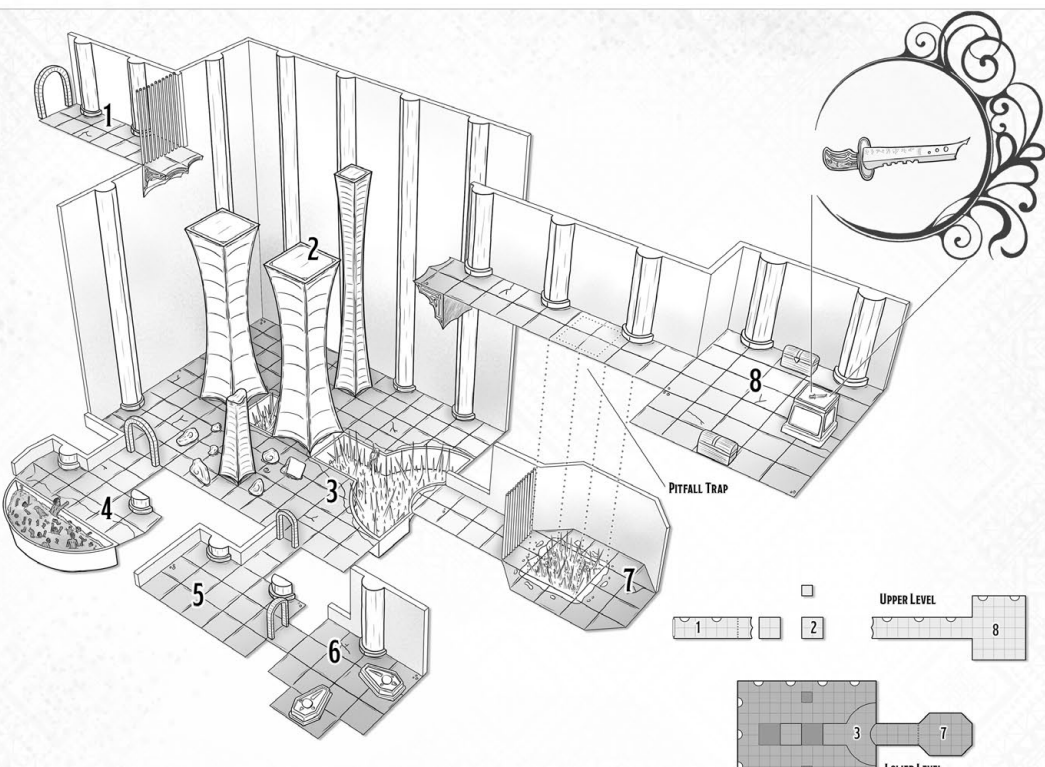
The elf mage used the planar key for centuries before growing bored with it and moving on to other areas of research. He sailed into the Astral Sea and was never heard from again. As for the *Crescent Moon Dagger*, few ever knew of its existence. Even fewer know the elf left it in a vault, which was meant to keep the artifact safe until his return, millennia later. A party of valiant adventurers eager to begin the exploration of the inner and outer planes would find this relic most valuable. Alas, even after learning of the dagger's whereabouts, the characters must deal with the ancient mage's protective measures...

1. A secret door in an elvish sepulcher marked with the elf mage's sigil leads down a dark stairway. The mind-numbing, miles-long descent reaches a short hall blocked by an iron bar gate. It can be bypassed with a one-day worth with blacksmith tools to remove the iron bars, or by an experienced locksmith with fine tools at hand.
2. The hall ends. The tops of three tall pillars mark the way to a faraway ledge on the other side of the large chamber. The floor 50 feet below is barely visible, along with what appears to be the debris of a fourth pillar that is no longer there. The pillar-tops are close enough that jumping from one to the next is not difficult, but the distance from the last pillar to the faraway ledge is such that only the bravest would ever attempt it. The *Crescent Moon Dagger* lies beyond that ledge but creatures that don't make the distance shall fall into the pointy, iron spikes 50 feet below.
3. The chamber's bottom is littered with stone chunks from the fallen pillar. There are two spike pits positioned in such a way that creatures that fail their jumps across the pillar-tops become impaled here. The bone remains of at least ten creatures lie impaled on the spikes. An experienced healer notices that the most recent bones are hundreds of years old.
4. The chamber's semi-circular end features a 10-foot-deep pond of sludge. The strange substance moves and pulses like a heartbeat. The elf mage created this complex pool of necromancy-infused matter. When creatures descend to area 3, the pool activates and starts producing a nearly unlimited amount of zombies. Two **zombies** emerge from the pond every minute. When trespassers are dealt with, the zombies return and liquefy.
5. The chamber contains several portraits of the elf mage and columns of elvish runes about life in the forest and elvish art. Upon inspection, it is revealed that the runes are an innuendo that reveals important facts if understood. It is revealed that the figure in the portraits created the *Crescent Moon Dagger*, that it can allow people to travel across the planes, and that there is a pitfall trap on the long hallway before area 8. Additionally, an inspection of these runes reveals the magic word required to activate the *Crescent Moon Dagger*. Even if the planar key is retrieved, it is a highly-magical, but inert trinket without this information.

6. The chamber contains two stone, ornate sarcophagi. The lids bear a sigil in the shape of a cross with the sun in its center. Each enclosure is marked with a bronze plaque bearing the regal name of the one interred within. It is all a trap, however. Two ravenous **ghouls** emerge and attack!

7. An iron bar gate blocks the way. Beyond it, dozens of iron spikes point upward into the darkness. The remains of countless individuals of varied ancestries found their untimely demise on those spikes. The iron bar gate can be bypassed in the same manner as the one found in area 1. Upon closer inspection, one of the impaled skeletons wears a **magical ring**. It allows the wearer to ask a corpse one question per day, at the risk of going insane from the experience.

8. A dark hallway extends for 50 feet beyond the ledge. Near its end, a deadly trap awaits. Creatures that step on the marked tiles (see map) fall 50 feet and become impaled on the rusty spikes in area 7 unless they react fast enough to jump away. Beyond the trap, a chamber contains two stone coffers and an ornate plinth. The coffers contain 600 sp, 4,560 cp, two *potions of healing*, and an **enchanted necklace** that allows the user to adopt the likeness of a different person. The fabled *Crescent Moon Dagger* glints in the darkness, atop the plinth. No hand has touched it since the elf mage left it here centuries ago. And now, the brave characters have it!



HIERARCH'S SEPULCHER

No! Don't you dare explore the graveyard tonight. You are bound to find your untimely demise if you explore the sepulcher. The Hierarch is awake until dawn.

Silas, the Grave-keeper

LORE

THERE WAS ONCE a mighty warrior who lived by the sword. Lord Heldast, wielding a magical blade, single-handedly defended his realm from evil and outside threats. He was a fair lord but he would not suffer fools or disrespect. While he governed with an iron fist, people were thankful for his efforts and respected his judgment. Lord Heldast was colloquially known as '*The Hierarch*'.

The Hierarch sustained grave wounds in a battle that saved his realm from invasion. The Hierarch's funerary rites were of legendary scale. So much so that a nightly dance festival is thrown to honor him, even to this day. Decades after his death, the townsfolk noticed that during the *Hierarch's Festival*, the graveyard where Lord Heldast rests in peace awakens. The incorporeal dead roam the grounds dressed in their finest clothes.

Alas, the living are not allowed into the Hierarch's sepulcher, nor has the Hierarch ever shown himself outside the tomb. Foolhardy folks have attempted to barge into the undead party with deathly results. The undead within are aggressive and do not allow living creatures in.

ADVENTURE HOOK

THE CHARACTERS LEARN of *Avacinna*, the legendary sword that Lord Heldast wielded in life. It is said that this blade can vanquish the forces of darkness. However, the hierarch's sepulcher is only accessible one night a year. The characters must delve into the sepulcher then to have a chance to retrieve the fabled blade.

FEATURES OF THE SEPULCHER

Tier 2 Adventure

Light. Braziers and sconces feature *continual flame* spells. The magic fades after 1 minute if tampered with.

Secret Areas. Pushing hidden bricks causes walls to move and reveal narrow passages (**Search** check).

Chamber Ceilings. The church has 20-foot-tall, arched ceilings decorated with carved geometrical patterns.

Enhanced Necromancy. All necromancy spells within 100 feet of the sepulcher deal double damage during the night the hierarch awakens for the dance gathering.

RANDOM EVENTS

Once per Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) while in the sepulcher and the graveyard grounds, roll in this table.

1d6 Random Encounters

- 1 Silas, the grave-keeper, has been possessed by a lady's **specter**. They attempt to stop the characters' intrusion.
- 2 2d4 foolish teenagers have come this far trying to see what the fuzz is all about in the graveyard dance party.
- 3 A group of well-dressed, noblemen shadows chatters as they float toward the sepulcher's nave (**Reaction** roll).
- 4 A man's **specter** talks to himself about chores. The man ignores his current undead state (**Reaction** roll).
- 5 Barlo, a **veteran**, has come to steal the Hierarch's legendary blade. He is willing to split other treasures.
- 6 1d4 bodyguard **ghosts** approach. They are tasked with removing uninvited guests and living beings.

1. GRAVEYARD GROUNDS

During the hierarch's death anniversary, ethereal apparitions of friends, relatives, and nobles materialize and float toward area 2. The spirits glow faintly in the night.

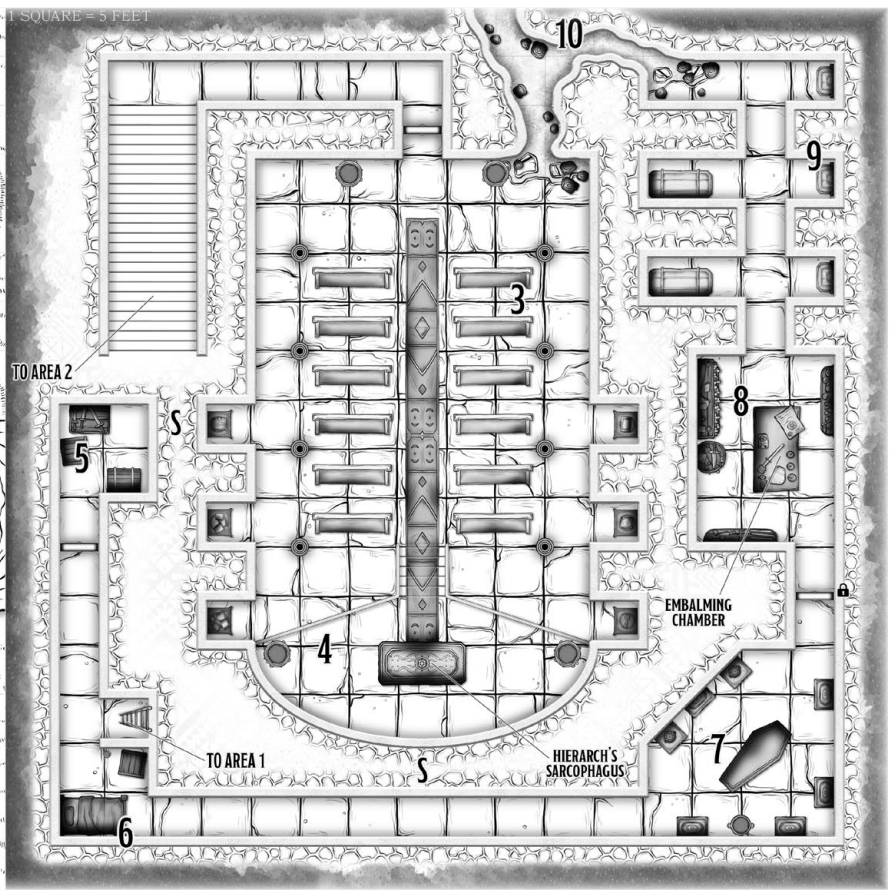
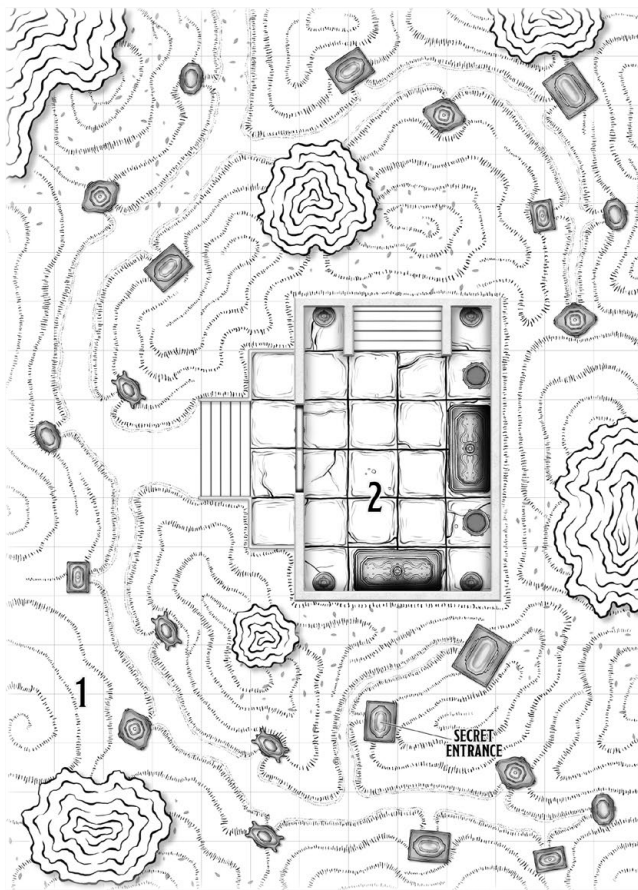
2. SEPULCHER'S ENTRANCE

The mausoleum edifice contains two stone coffins, four clay urns on plinths, and two ever-burning braziers. The faint sound of chamber music comes from the stairs.

3. SEPULCHER'S NAVE

Two rows of stone pews mark the way toward a raised dais. An ornate sarcophagus lies at the end. The ghost of an armor-clad knight stands beside it while other ghosts chatter, dance, and have fun.

The characters' trespassing into the Hierarch's death-anniversary ruins the mood and the music stops. The Hierarch orders four of his bodyguard **ghosts** to remove the intruders. If the characters defeat them, the Hierarch is inclined to grant them an audience. After all, Lord Heldast enjoys the company of valiant warriors such as himself, even if he repudiates the living. Alas, the Hierarch is unwilling to part with *Avacinna*, his sword. He refuses their request to appropriate it. If pressed, the Hierarch (**wraith**) and four **specters** draw ephemeral blades and fight until they are destroyed (see **Development**).



4. THE HIERARCH'S SARCOPHAGUS

The enclosure's lid is engraved with fine silver and mithral inlays; truly a work of art. Within lie the withered, bodily remains of the Hierarch. There is a hidden compartment under a false bottom (**Search** check).

Treasure. A leather pouch with 20 gp, 400 sp, and Lord Heldast's legendary, sentient weapon, *Avacinna*.

5. SECRET CHAMBER

The room contains a table with several blades, a crate of ash, and a reinforced wooden chest, recently opened.

Treasure. The chest contains 5 sp, 100 cp, a *potion of healing*, and a rusty set of breastplate armor.

6. SILAS'S ROOM

This chamber appears lived in and recently used. Silas, the grave-keeper, lives here but no one is aware of this. He moved in here after finding the secret passage to area 1. His journal is tucked under the straw pillow. It reveals that he plundered the vault in area 5 and that he soon plans to move away with the ill-gotten treasure.

Treasure. The crate contains 250 sp, 900 cp, traveling clothes, new leather boots, and a bottle of wine (5 sp).

7. THE FAMILY CRYPT

The chamber contains five columbarium columns, clay urns, and an empty sarcophagus. Closer inspection reveals that the Hierarch's close relatives are interred here (**History Lore** check). It is a place of great honor.

8. EMBALMING CHAMBER

An experienced locksmith can bypass the locked door with fine tools (**Burglary** check). The chamber contains literature, tools, and substances for embalming corpses. These items are only useful to undertakers.

9. TOMB OF KNIGHTS

Knights in service to the Hierarch were later buried here. There were six of them but a cave-in destroyed one of the enclosures, revealing a path to the caves in area 10.

Treasure. The stone coffins contain 140 sp, 700 cp, a *potion of heroism*, and a silver bracelet (25 sp).

10. UNCHARTED CAVERNS

These are natural caves, created by seismic activity (**Architecture** check). The caves beyond are perilous; **giant centipede** droppings litter the soil (**Nature** check).

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

IF THE HIERARCH is defeated in deadly combat, all other spirits flee in a panic, and the undead celebration ends once and for all. Strangely enough, the blade *Avacinna*, telepathically declares it was bored of being kept away; it yearned for adventures and battles. The characters now have a powerful tool for the adventures to come. If confronted, Silas denies it all and pretends to be innocent. Alas, the town's bailiff won't prosecute Silas because he is well-loved and no one dares enter the sepulcher to verify the characters' slandering accusations.

THE WIDOWS OF NECH

A GM supplement about an intricate enemy faction by DM Nineto82

The Widows of Nech are thought of by both common folk and influential people as simply a cautionary tale, told to scare children into behaving well. But the truth is that the Widows are very real, but their creation is so clouded in myth and legend that their origins elude comprehension.

The Widows believe themselves to be the necessary evil; the check to the eternal balance of the world. They consider themselves to be the servants of Nech, the god of death. They believe that the world can only thrive and reach its fullest potential if its people suffer. That only by surviving a crucible of strife and pain can people truly *'ascend and become their true selves'*.

Thus, it is the Widows work to perform acts of incredible destruction, to create discordance between the peoples of the world, and ultimately to become the architects of the apocalypse. All this is within their nature.

In truth, the deity Nech is a prisoner in his realm. Betrayed by his brother Marrighaz, the god of pain, destruction, and strife, who now wears his mantle as Lord of Death and who seeks only to propagate suffering. It is this patron whom the Widows truly serve, but only the Dowager, their powerful leader, knows this truth.

CORE PRINCIPLES

TO LIVE AS a member of the Widows is to be forever alone, with only the promise of finding eternal peace in the next world. Thus, they must hold themselves apart from common society and follow a thorough code:

INDIFFERENCE

The first lesson a Widow learns is to not care. Only through giving up one's mercy, can a Widow perform the necessary evil that other Widows expect of her.

DISCORDANCE

The Widows have learned that the people of the world shall rail against the apocalypse and that, as powerful as they are, the Widows are no match for a united front. Thus, their second lesson is that of disunity.

DOMINANCE

The Widows have a gynocentric outlook of the world similar to that of Drow cultures. They regard men are weak, flighty creatures who do not have the will strength to complete even the simplest of tasks. While the Widows will utilize the influence and expertise of men when the occasion calls, they strive to dominate the weak.

LEADERSHIP

The Widows of Nech are led by the Dowager. The Dowager is the first Widow and has ruled her faction for more than a millennium. During that time, she has forgotten her given name and anyone who might have once known it is centuries dead. She is simply the Dowager, the First Bride, or the Death's Mistress. The Dowager is both a powerful archmage and a priestess. She is a master of necromancy. This allows her to outlive others.

MADAMS

The Dowager rewards acts of destruction and catastrophe with power, rank, and respect. Beneath the Dowager are the Seven Madams. Each Madam is the master of a school of magic and is a powerful **archmage** herself. They earned this position and are also the rulers of a region and are responsible for a number of Chambers.

MATRONS AND CHAMBERS

A Chamber is controlled by a Matron. Most often the Matrons are **mag**es, who also focus on a particular school of magic. A Chamber is made up of around 50 to 100 Widows, but these numbers change sporadically over time and geography, depending on the Widows' affairs.

WIDOWS

All Widows are trained to be astute in many different disciplines and are likely to be adept in magic, martial prowess, and subterfuge. They are **cult fanatics**, **priestesses**, or even **veterans**, depending on the needs of the mission they are sent on. However, the world is full of Widows-to-be. Women ready to become themselves.

INITIATES

As mentioned before, many women around the world wish to become Widows. They must be Initiates first and have yet to prove themselves to become Widows. To complete their initiation, a “Bride” must perform an act of extreme destruction, pain, or strife upon themselves.

Examples include murdering a member of one's family; destroying the settlements or town from whence they came, or mutilating themselves in gruesome ways.



COVENS OF THREE

WHILE WIDOWS CAN work alone, when the occasion calls they form Covens of Three. Like the covens formed by hags, the Widows discovered the great power of their dark sisterhood. When a group of three Widows performs the *ritual of three*, which requires the sacrifice of three innocents, they gain access to powerful magic.

This power varies in terms of the Widows performing the ritual. As a rule of thumb, the Widows gain access to the next tier of spells available to them from a particular spell list. For example, a **cult fanatic**, who commonly has access to spells of 1st and 2nd level, gains access to spells of 3rd level from one of the following tables.

See examples of the spells the coven gains below.

ABJURATION

1st level (4 slots): *mage armor, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *aid, warding bond*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, glyph of warding*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, death ward*

5th level (3 slots): *antilife shell, circle of power*

6th level (1 slot): *forbiddance*

7th level (1 slot): *symbol*

8th level (1 slot): *mind blank*

9th level (1 slot): *prismatic wall*

DIVINATION

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, hunter's mark*

2nd level (3 slots): *augury, see invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance, tongues*

4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye, locate creature*

5th level (3 slots): *commune, rary's telepathic bond*

6th level (1 slot): *true seeing*

9th level (1 slot): *foresight*

NECROMANCY

1st level (4 slots): *false life, ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, gentle repose*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, revivify*

4th level (3 slots): *blight*

5th level (3 slots): *contagion, raise dead*

6th level (1 slot): *create undead*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

8th level (1 slot): *clone*

9th level (1 slot): *astral projection*



HEADQUARTERS

The Widows control the necropolis of Khud Zedros. This was once a marvelous elvish city, but the Dowager's first act of destruction was to unleash a vicious and unrelenting plague upon it, her birth city, killing every man therein. After the slaughter, all women who refused to join the Widows were slaughtered. The Dowager took control of the city and all that remained became the foundations for the first generation of the Widows of Nech.

The city was also home to a temple of Nech and, uniquely, the site of a portal to the Plane of Death, and the source of the Dowager's seemingly unlimited power. This temple in Dower Manor is the home and stronghold of the Dowager. An impenetrable fortress of magic.

GUILD PERKS

Being a member of the Widows comes with access to great power, but it also means keeping your purpose a secret. Widows are executed on sight by those who understand their power and their purpose in life.

Special Assignments. A member of the Widows could be sent to infiltrate a group of adventurers to gain their trust and collect information. Or to sow discord.

Ancient Knowledge. The Widows have access to stores of ancient knowledge and powerful magic. They also provide magical items, armor, and weapons to help other Widows complete their tasks.

Undead Companions. For Widows, undead are used by all their members to perform complex or mundane tasks. However, a Widow might also have a **wight** bodyguard or be granted control of a hoard of **zombies** to unleash upon an unsuspecting village.

These creatures are useful for carrying messages, spying on the unsuspecting, or even fighting alongside a worthy party. The undead are a resource for Widows.

GUILD CONTACT

Only women are permitted to become Widows and only undead males are accepted into their employ. Furthermore, the Widows do not seek out members, rather women find them and choose to join their ranks and seek out a Chamber, or even Khud Zedross itself.

Once accepted into a Chamber, a Bride undergoes years of training under the tutelage of a Matron. But it is only once they have performed their act of initiation, that are they truly a member of the Widows.



FOR THE ROUND TABLE!

By Elven Tower and Chibbin Grove



OSR



TIER 2 ADVENTURE

A MID-TIER ADVENTURE MOSTLY COMPATIBLE WITH DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

ADVENTURE PRIMER

... never to commit outrage or murder, always to flee treason, and to give mercy to those who ask for it. Aid ladies, damsels, gentlewomen, and widows...

Fragment of the Pentecostal Oath

Ayths and ancient stories always hold some truth in them, sages say. Similarly, wise people often say that history tends to repeat itself. What once ruled the world may well rule it again someday, for destiny is a curious thing.

This supplement brings the characters to the fantasy location of Camelot, in the lands of King Arthur. However, they meet a jaded king, ruler of a trembling kingdom. The king's worrying state is mainly because Mordred, the son he never accepted as his, is responsible for the destruction and disbanding of the Order of the Round Table. The king drowns in grudges and distrust after a decade without his trusted knights and advisors.

KING ARTHUR AND MORDRED

IT WAS ALMOST thirty years ago when the king, under the effects of strong spirits and alcohol, overcome by lust, gets involved with a woman from the court. To his misfortune, it is revealed weeks later that the woman was his majesty's cousin. An incestuous child...

Knowing the advantages of having a bastard heir, the woman kept the child, born in May, and named him Mordred. In a fit of rage, the king sends all noble babies born in May to death on a purposely-sinking boat. The ship capsizes but Mordred miraculously survives and is returned to his parents. Nevertheless, no one dares stand before the king or shove Mordred's existence in his face. In the end, the parents of all the murdered May-babies had their revenge when Mordred turned into a powerful mage and warrior, returned to Camelot, and slayed all knights of the round table. Alone, Mordred walked into Camelot's Castle and looked his father in the eyes. With a swift, yet wild, incantation, he divided the Round Table into 12 pieces and scattered them in a dark dungeon.

A DECADE OF UNCERTAINTY

FOR TEN YEARS, Camelot has lived on without the faithful knights that once defended its colors. The City Guard does its job vehemently but it cannot compare. There was magic in the Round Table. An energy that was transferred to the anointed knights. But all that is gone now. King Arthur is a shadow of the powerful king he once was. Alas, history has a way of repeating itself.

HOPE

SINCE THE DESTRUCTION of the table, the faithful court wizard, Merlin, has developed a way to bring it back. It took him a decade but he finally found the Round Table pieces' locations. The table fragments kept their power. After they resisted his attempts to destroy them, Mordred abandoned them in one of his many dungeons. This one in particular is deep within Camelot's Dead Woods. Only a fool would enter that wretched combination of darkness, cursed trees, and monsters on his own accord.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

In *For the Round Table!*, the characters already stay in Camelot's Ale and Spirits, one of the best and most popular city taverns. Their adventure begins with one or a combination of the following adventure hooks:

FOLLOWING MERLIN'S ORDERS

A hooded man enters the tavern and approaches the characters. This is Merlin, the court wizard, disguised as a peasant. The GM may determine that one of the characters has met Merlin before, in a previous quest or mission. The court wizard explains his discovery and asks the characters to retrieve the 12 pieces of the Round Table. He tells them this is a personal job for the king but it is imperative that the mission remains secret. They must leave at once and tell no one of their destination.

THE REBIRTH OF THE ORDER

One of the characters wishes to become a knight. They know about King Arthur and the loyal Knights of the Round Table. They came to Camelot looking for clues on how to help restore the prestigious order which has been lost for more than ten years. They end up staying in Camelot's Ale and Spirits. There, Bombalin the owner may have valuable information regarding their quest.

TREASURES OF AN ANCIENT ORDER

The characters come to Camelot looking for one thing only: treasure and riches. Their presence in the city does not go unnoticed, though. A wealthy man claims to be the son of a former Knight of the Round Table. He offers the heroes 2,500 sp if they can retrieve his father's magic weapon, a masterwork silver axe (see **Getting Involved**).

CAMELOT'S ALE AND SPIRITS

Camelot was bathed in darkness when Mordred destroyed the order. Ten years later, the pain still feels fresh, like a wound that refuses to heal...

Bombalin, Dwarf Innkeeper

BACKGROUND LORE



Camelot is a prosperous city with a large population and a plethora of smaller towns and villages around it. The metropolis is a quasi-living organism where each area co-dependes on the others to continue thriving and surviving. For decades, King Arthur found a way to expand his territories and help smaller communities grow or become part of the city. But this growth has considerably slowed down during the last ten years. Some say the king lost his spark, his will to rule and see his kingdom thrive.

However, even if Camelot's growth has become stagnant for a decade, its famous establishments and landmarks remain. Camelot's Ale and Spirits is one of the oldest and most popular taverns in the entire realm.

GETTING INVOLVED

THE CHARACTERS FIND themselves having a drink at the tavern when the reason for their involvement in this adventure shows up (see **Adventure Hooks**).

Hook 1. Merlin (disguised as a peasant) approaches the characters to explain the job. He asks them to maintain this mission in secret. He hands them a *bag of holding* to store the Round Table pieces. He fears that Mordred's goons could be spying on the king and his most trusted men. Were His Majesty aware of the situation, he might stop Merlin's attempts in his depression. The wizard promises a kingly reward if the characters succeed.

Hook 2. Bombalin, the tavern owner, informs the characters that Talishka, another brave hero, drank a couple of mugs at the tavern one night ago. Talking between drinks, she claimed that her wildest dream is to become a knight. Looking for ways to achieve this, she was granted a vision by an orc shaman from her tribe. After drinking a gooey concoction, Talishka saw what the king's son, Mordred, did to the Round Table with her own eyes. Bombalin says Talishka leaves for the table, at dawn.

Hook 3. Owen Galahad, a descendant of the former Knights of the Round Table, approaches the characters. He is aware of Merlin's discovery thanks to his contacts but he cares not for the table pieces or the lost order. He offers 2,500 sp for his father's axe to be retrieved.

FEATURES OF THE TAVERN

Style. Camelot's Ale and Spirits is a beautiful tavern. Bombalin makes renewals every year so the establishment always looks as good as new. Walls, beams and most of the furniture are made from Darkwood and oak.

Atmosphere. The tavern is often crowded. People mind their own business, each group dedicated to their table and peers. Servers make a decent job going to and fro with drinks, food platters, or empty dishes.

Smells and Sounds. A team of gardeners on the tavern's staff and payroll keeps Bombalin's flowers and bushes well cared for. Daisies take over most of the available space. The central garden (area 6) features lilies and lavender as well. The clay pots around the tavern display beautiful night-blooming jasmines and spearmint.

EVENTS

Once per hour in the city or within Camelot's Ale and Spirits, roll 1d8 on this table for a random event:

1d8 Events

- 1 A nobleman approaches Bombalin and buys a round of ale for the characters. He says the realm needs people like them. Brave souls, ready to stand against evil.
- 2 "Because one day the Knights of the Order shall return!" yells a drunkard before emptying his cup and passing out.
- 3 Regardless of their reason to be here, Bombalin asks the characters if they also dream of restoring the lost order; he might know something (see **Getting Involved**).
- 4 Three orc **veterans** burst through the door and demand the people within the establishment to tell them where the traitor, Talishka, is. They won't leave without answers.
- 5 A man claims he has valuable information in exchange for some silver. If the characters pay up, he says a man named Owen Galahad has a good job for brave heroes.
- 6 The characters overhear some people talking and learn that the former knights all wielded holy magic weapons.
- 7 A pair of deer hunters describe their last trip to Camelot's Dead Woods. They claim a strange horned beast ambushed them and they had to flee the scene swiftly.
- 8 Two drunkards (**commoners**) start a fight. One said the realm is better without the old knights and caused the other's anger. Bombalin's staff breaks the fight at once.

1. ENTRANCE AND LOBBY

The vivid street thrives with the chatter of people and music from the many taverns and establishments around. Camelot's Ale and Spirits wooden sign is visible from afar, on the busy Glastonbury Street.

The characters may spend their time in the tavern wherever they wish. It is recommended that they take a tour of each area to prompt the use of the **Events** table (see above). Likewise, do not hesitate to use one of these events to cause a shift of things inside the establishment.

2. BAR AND SERVICE AREA

The tavern's reputation comes not without a reason. Bombalin's staff is composed of the best waiters, barkeeps, entertainers, bouncers, and maintenance crew.

When Bombalin, the dwarf innkeeper, notices the characters' gear, he begs them to accept better accommodation and guides them to a clothed table in area 4. Likewise, he puts at their disposal one of the private rooms in area 3. Nonetheless, he says in an amicable tone:

"But hey, that's just me doing my job. Do whatever the hell you want, welcome to Camelot's Ale and Spirits".

3. PRIVATE ROOMS

A magical aura suppresses outside sounds and give comfort of these private areas. Cards, chess, and other games are available for clients here.

The characters are seated in the south private room, the one with a blue rug, if they accept Bombalin's suggestion. The other booth is occupied by five men playing cards. The group's head is Tristan Goyle, one of the leaders of a criminal faction. If the characters interrupt or mess with Tristan in any way, the **bandit leader** and his four **thugs** attempt to teach the brave heroes a lesson. Bombalin lets things occur as he does not wish for more trouble. He is not mad, but kindly suggests the characters should leave before Tristan's friends come looking for him.

4. VIP SERVICE AREA

Clothed tables and the smell of lavender bathe this area of the tavern in a more sophisticated ambiance. The heavy smoke of some cigars breaks the harmony.

The characters may choose to sit at these tables. A bard plays the lute for the guests here. Twelve people are seated in other tables when the characters arrive here.



5. KITCHEN AND LARDER

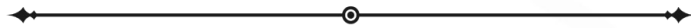
The heat of the ovens fills this place with a heavier atmosphere.

Four people work in the kitchen. The main cook is a slim individual in white clothes.

The smell of spices, broth, and dried meat is a permanent feature of this area. The characters are, kindly but swiftly, asked to return to their table if they enter the kitchen.

6. CENTRAL GARDEN

The characters may step into the garden to have a smoke away from the noise and music. If this happens, Bombalin takes a break from the bar to join them and chat. He might have something to say (see **Adventure Hooks**).



BOMBALIN

Dwarf. Age: 142

BOMBALIN WAS BORN in the northern territories, in the magnificent dwarven city of Snowpeak. When Bombalin came of age, he left his home to become a merchant and sell dwarvish crafts and goods to other people. He dreamed of bringing his race's craftsmanship to other cultures and helping their art become the most popular.

He realized that he expected too much from himself. He wasn't a craftsman. He just sold the trinkets after all... After some time, Bombalin lost interest in making money from being a merchant, even if he made good silver. He gathered his savings and sold the things he had and used the money to buy a small tavern in Camelot.

He made incredible use of his dwarvish traits and saved all the silver he earned for years. He led a simple life and spent as less as possible until he had enough silver to have not a larger or better tavern, but the best tavern in the entire realm. His hard work paid off and today he is the proud owner of Camelot's Ale and Spirits.

Manner. Bombalin smokes a thick, expensive cigar at all times. When asked about it, he defends himself by saying that he has the right to do it after decades of work.

Ambition. The dwarf cares little for the lost order but he wishes business would go back to its thriving era.

SETTING OUT

THE CHARACTERS MAY stay at the tavern as long as they want, to learn what they need for the mission. Apart from the **Events** presented before, the GM may come up with more incidents during the characters' stay.

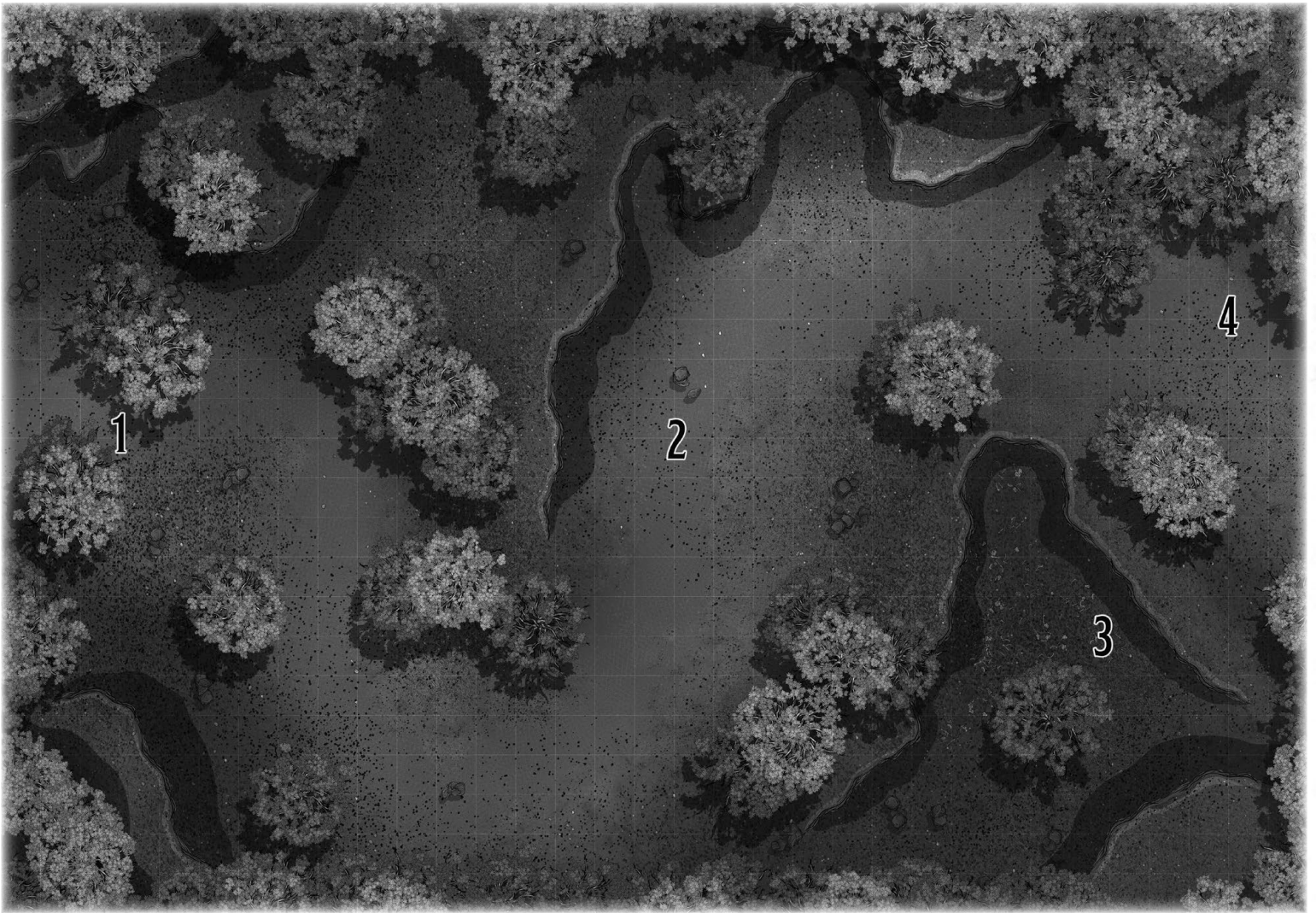
When the characters are ready, they are instructed to leave the city from the East Gate, toward the Dead Woods. The characters follow Merlin's instructions or track Talishka's footprints, depending on the **Adventure Hooks** used. After a three-day ride, the characters witness the edge of the gloomy, eerie forest.

1. WEST ROAD

The dense dark woods hinder travel speed. The mist and low visibility forces cautious travelers to slow down and analyze their surroundings better.

The characters may travel at normal speed if they wish. However, doing so upsets the creatures of the forest. A group of six **wolves** led by a **dire wolf** attacks them. The canines flee if reduced to half their Hit Points or if the pack leader is defeated first.





2. AMBUSH

It does not matter if the characters do not encounter any trouble getting here (see **1. West Road** above). The dangers of the forest make themselves present here. Taking advantage of fighting in their terrain of preference, there is a 4-in-10 chance that three **trolls** ambush the characters. The monsters approach from three different directions in an attempt to divide the characters.

In the third round of combat, Talishka (**berserker**) makes a heroic apparition. She bursts from the thickets with her massive axe lifted above her head, charging like a bull. Her battle cry echoes through the forest as the steel hits its target. She yells: “Come on, scoundrels! Let’s show these ugly bastards who’s the boss!”

3. GORY REMAINS

The characters may inspect this area after combat. A deep look at the bones reveals most remains belong to beasts and animals, but there are human bones too (**Medicine** check). The trolls are responsible for this mess. However, the largest bones bear large, piercing injuries, made by speared weapons. It is unlikely for trolls to have caused them. A ring (250 sp) hides in the mud.

4. EAST ROAD

The journey continues through the woods as per both Merlin’s instructions and Talishka’s vision. Mordred’s dungeon lies yet a little deeper within the Dark Woods.

TALISHKA

Orc. Age: 19

TALISHKA IS A loyal, faithful, kindhearted warrior. She believes in good and the mercy of the gods, both divine and from nature. She is considered an outcast in her tribe, because of her foolish beliefs and tendencies to “behave like a human” as they would often say. But the only thing she yearns for is the honor to become a knight.

Manner. Talishka aims to portray a good-mannered knight and behave like one. Her barbarian training and orcish ways get the best of her most of the time, though.

Ambition. She wishes to fulfill her dream of becoming a knight by discovering the truth behind her vision.

Allies. If asked, Talishka agrees to join the characters if they seek the restoration of the order, like her. She states that dishonorable behavior will not be tolerated.

THE HEART OF THE WOODS

My people turned their backs on me because of what I believe. Trust me, nothing shall challenge my resolve. I will see the Round Table restored!

Talishka

The journey continues for two days throughout the Dark Woods. The seemingly endless forest is home to dozens of nocturnal predators. If the brave travelers are careful by day, a new kind of danger certainly lurks by night. Consider the following encounters for the nights of rest:

1d4 Night Encounters

- 1 A horde of twenty **zombies** passes by. They stop to feast on the living while they rest in the middle of the forest.
- 2 A **dire bear** spots the characters' camp and attacks.
- 3 Five elf **drow archers** and a **giant spider** attempt to poison and kidnap one of the characters for a sacrifice.
- 4 The forest corruption breathes life into it. Thorns move and leaves come alive as two **shambling mounds** attack.

Note. There is a 4-in-10 chance of ambush for any of these battles if the characters have their guards down.

THE HILL OF DOOM

THE CHARACTERS REACH the heart of the Dark Woods. The hill earned its name hundreds of years ago when the first men lost a ten-year war against orcs (**History** check). The territory fell into an era of darkness. The Dark Woods never recovered from that time of evil.

If Talishka is present, she confirms this is the place she saw in her vision. She quickly starts removing rocks from the entrance and stares at the others with piercing eyes to prompt them to start doing the same.

FEATURES OF THE ENTRANCE

Terrain. The blocked entrance arch is made of fine sanded soapstone and cement. A beautiful, symmetrical structure of a royal castle's gate; but stained, fissured, ancient. The dungeon built under the squat, lonely hill must be hundreds of years old (**Architecture** check).

Aura. If the characters take a few minutes to look for arcane sources in the area (**Detect Magic** check), they perceive strong magic auras coming from the dungeon.

Mordred's Guardians. The characters are observed from the dark of the trees by four **Mordred beasts** (see below). There is a 4-in-10 chance of ambush while the characters remove the rocks or search the area.

1. DUNGEON'S ENTRANCE

The characters must remove the rocks to enter the dungeon. This takes 1 Dungeon Turn even if two or more people get involved. During this time, the beings created by the king's son attack (see **Features of the Entrance**).

2. CRITTERS TUNNELS

Darkness engulfs the interior of the dungeon. The corridor's east side features two dug tunnels.

The two irregular tunnels were not dug with common tools. This is the work of an acidic substance combined with the crushing of the stone (**Architecture** check). Creatures that venture into the tunnel are attacked by a **swarm of acid beetles**. Their bites dig through solid rock. Only rocks and bones are found in either of them.

Noise. If the characters start a fight with the insects, the noise draws the attention of the undead in area 4. The undead attack the characters in round 3.





3. THE FIRST PIECE

Lightning bolts block the way. Silver and gold coins and treasure are visible at the end of the corridor.

This place is hidden (**Search** check). Creatures that cross the corridor are struck by lightning and lose 1/4 of their HP total. A *dispel magic* spell nullifies the magic for 10 minutes. The first piece of the Round Table is here.

The first piece corresponds to the central part of the princess of cups, the fragment of the table that belongs to the constellation of Scorpio, as per the zodiac.

Treasure. The characters find 289 gp, 1,853 sp, and five *magic crossbow bolts*. They are retrievable, their glow is electric blue, and they deal lightning damage.

4. ONLY BONES REMAIN

The bones scattered all around move and form human bodies when the characters approach. Ten **skeletons** with rusty swords and armor scraps attack the intruders. If the characters are not silent enough, they may encounter these enemies earlier (see area 2). Furthermore, the secret room (**Search** check) contains ten more **skeletons** and a **ghoul**. There is nothing of value.

5. MAIN DUNGEON ENTRANCE

The characters must delve deeper into the Hill of Doom to find the rest of the Round Table pieces. If Talishka is present, she claims her vision showed her what's beyond this dungeon entrance. A **Detect Magic** check confirms the presence of more pieces inside. The 10-foot-wide corridor is a long descent into the darkness...

MOVING THE PIECES

IF MERLIN GAVE the characters the job, he hands them a *bag of holding* for the transportation of the pieces. Otherwise, the characters must make clever use of spells like *enlarge/reduce*, *floating disk*, or find the *wand of levitation* in the treasure in area 5 (see next page).

MORDRED BEAST

Large monstrosity. Chaotic Evil

THE SON OF the king, in a fit of rage, combined his knowledge of the arcane and necromancy to breed these mind-bending abominations. The strength of a bear, the cunning of a wolf, the stamina of a boar, a massive beak, and Mordred's addition, a poisonous frontal horn.

MORDRED'S DUNGEON

You won't be able to stop me and restore the order. My father shall pay for what he did to me! That damned order won't see the light of day again!

Mordred's Avatar

A mordred took over this place a couple of decades ago and used it for his evil purposes; the first Mordred beast was created here. Mordred hid the 12 pieces of the Round Table here ten years ago. Each of them is linked with an *alarm* spell. The moment the characters remove one from its place, Mordred is informed. He has the means to retaliate, even if he is not physically present. There are traps and guardians ready to accomplish this task.

FEATURES OF THE DUNGEON

Traps. If the characters travel carefully, they may spot the traps hidden in the dungeon (**Search** check). If the control panel, pushable brick, or pressure-sensitive plate are found, a disarm attempt can be made (**Burglary** check). Otherwise, the trap functions as normal, and those who triggered it suffer the consequences.

Blocked Passages. Several parts of the dungeon are blocked by debris, a stuck door, or an old mechanism that does not work anymore. They are marked with a padlock icon (see map). The characters must spend 1 Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) each time they wish to cross one.

Secret Doors. There are three secret doors in this entire dungeon's level (**Search** check). Each secret chamber hides a piece of the Round Table. A **Detect Magic** check points toward their direction, if required.

Light. All the torches feature *continual flame* spells. The light fades out in one minute if removed.

1. MAIN LANDING

The dungeon's underground section maintains its delicate architecture despite the passage of time.

The air feels colder and an aura of uneasiness bathes newcomers. Three **wights** stand in the middle of the room as the first defense measure, they fight until slain.

2. THE SECOND PIECE

The second piece corresponds to the central part of the princess of pentacles, the fragment of the table that belongs to the constellation of Taurus. There are 2,013 sp, a box with three *potions of healing*, and two magic items beyond the blocked passages (see **Unique Treasure**). A **ghast** and six **skeletons** protect this area.

DUNGEON EVENTS

Once per Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) within the compound, roll 1d10 on this table for a random event:

1d6 Events

- 1 A poison trap in a wall or corridor activates. The victim loses 1/5 of their HP total and is poisoned for 1 hour (**Fortitude** roll). Any of these traps can be spotted and disarmed too (see **Features of the Dungeon**).
- 2 For 1 minute, the characters hear voices all around until four **shadows** trespass the walls and attack.
- 3 A swinging blade rushes forward as a trap is triggered. The victim loses 1/4 of their HP total unless they evade it (**Reflexes** roll). Any of these traps can be spotted and disarmed too (see **Features of the Dungeon**).
- 4 One of the characters is filled with the strong feeling that they have already been where they are at this moment.
- 5 The characters stumble upon one of Mordred's eternal guardians. A **mummy**, a **wraith**, or a **revenant** (1d3).
- 6 One of Mordred's dirty tricks. The characters meet a **ghost** or a **banshee**. There is no way to reason with the corrupted apparition of a former knight of the order.

3. HALLWAY OF DEATH

The two statues at the center break and release two **shield guardians** when the characters enter. The constructs fight until slain trying to impede their advances.

4. THE THIRD PIECE

This piece corresponds to the left part of the princess of cups, the fragment that belongs to the constellation of Libra. This room also has 1,657 sp and two magical *thunder daggers*. They become lightning when thrown.

5. THE FOURTH PIECE

The fourth piece draws the left part of the princess of swords, this one belongs to the Capricorn constellation. This room also has 375 gp, and a *wand of levitation*. This item may be useful (see **Transporting the Pieces**). However, two **wight** guardians awaken and attack.

6. ETERNAL GUARDIANS

A statue of the Great Father, an ancient divine figure, stands before three sarcophagi. A **mummy**, a **wraith**, and a **revenant** emerge to replace destroyed guardians (see **Events**). The squad of the three fights in this area.



TALISHKA'S DETERMINATION

If the characters travel with the honorable warrior Talishka, there is no doubt that her combat abilities are great. But her values and views of life are even greater. Talishka won't accept any foolish behavior, unworthy of a knight, in the presence of the heroes, or anyone for that matter. Hence, she won't allow the characters to steal any of the magic weapons that belonged to the former knights of the order. She will stand between the pillagers and their loot and fight them if it comes to it.

7. THE FIFTH PIECE

This dungeon area is hidden behind a secret door. If the characters find it, they must confront the **wraith** within. This piece is the left part of the princess of pentacles, the constellation of Aries. After the battle, 345 gp and a *necklace of protection* (fire) can be retrieved.

8. A HOLE TO THE ABYSS

The statues in here shine and summon three **Mordred beasts**. The monsters fight until slain but attempt to push the characters through the hole (creatures falling lose 1/3 of their HP total. **Reflexes** roll for half).

Hole. The characters must descend through here to retrieve the missing table pieces. A **Detect Magic** check confirms this is the right direction to go.

9. THE SIXTH PIECE

The sixth piece corresponds to the central part of the princess of swords, this fragment of the table features the constellation of Aquarius. There are 641 sp on the ground and a hidden *periapt of health* (**Search** check).

10. THE SEVENTH PIECE

The seventh piece corresponds to the right part of the princess of swords, the fragment of the table that belongs to the constellation of Pisces. There are 493 sp and a rune-marked hammer (see **Unique Treasure**).

11. THE EIGHTH PIECE

Three **wights** protect this area and fight until slain. They scream "*For Mordred!*" before charging into battle. A magic sword rests on a pedestal (see **Unique Treasure**). The characters find the eighth piece behind the chamber's secret passage. It bears the right part of the princess of cups and the representation of the constellation of Sagittarius. 94 gp can be recovered from the floor.

DEVELOPMENT

The characters must descend through the hole in area 8 to get the rest of the Round Table pieces. They land in area 1 of the Underground Caverns (see below).

This adventure belongs to a series of collaborative projects that involve other Patreon creators. This one-shot adventure features work by [Elven Tower](#) and illustrator/ cartographer [Chibbin Grove](#). Check out his [Patreon page](#) for great art and cartography!



UNIQUE TREASURE

THE FOLLOWING IS a list of the magic items that can be found in the many areas of Mordred's Dungeon (1d4):

- The idol of an ancient god is hidden in a secluded room. Meditating for 1 Dungeon Turn allows a divine spellcaster to recover one spell slot (area 2).
- Also near area 2, Owen Gallahad's axe glows in the dark and has magical properties that enhance combat abilities (see **Adventure Hooks**).
- A throwing hammer with a "boomerang" property. The weapon returns to the wielder after making its flight, regardless of if it hits or not (area 10).
- A beautiful magic sword that holds divine power to smite evil enemies. It works best against demons, creatures, or the dark and undead (area 11).

UNDERGROUND CAVERNS

THE DUNGEON IS left behind. It is replaced by a giant network of humid, dark tunnels and caverns below the Hill of Doom. The magical presence of the rest of the pieces can be perceived as coming from here.

1. UNDERGROUND LANDING

The characters fall or descend to this area (see area 8). Darkness gathers near the corners of the caves. A group of six **skeletons** attacks the characters from the south.

2. LARGE CAVERN

Piles of bones litter the area. The water current from the south can be heard (area 5). The characters' presence causes the bones to shift. A new **skeleton** rises at an alarming rate: every 2 combat rounds. The characters must press on and find the rest of the pieces or be overwhelmed by the endless supply of skeletons.

The Ninth Piece. The characters spend 1 Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) to remove rocks and debris from the secret paths of these caverns to find the last four of the pieces (see map). The ninth piece corresponds to the central part of the princess of wands, the constellation of Leo is imprinted on it. The skeletons from area 2 do not stop appearing while the characters work. It is an endless struggle to fend them off while searching the place.

3. FUMES OF DEATH

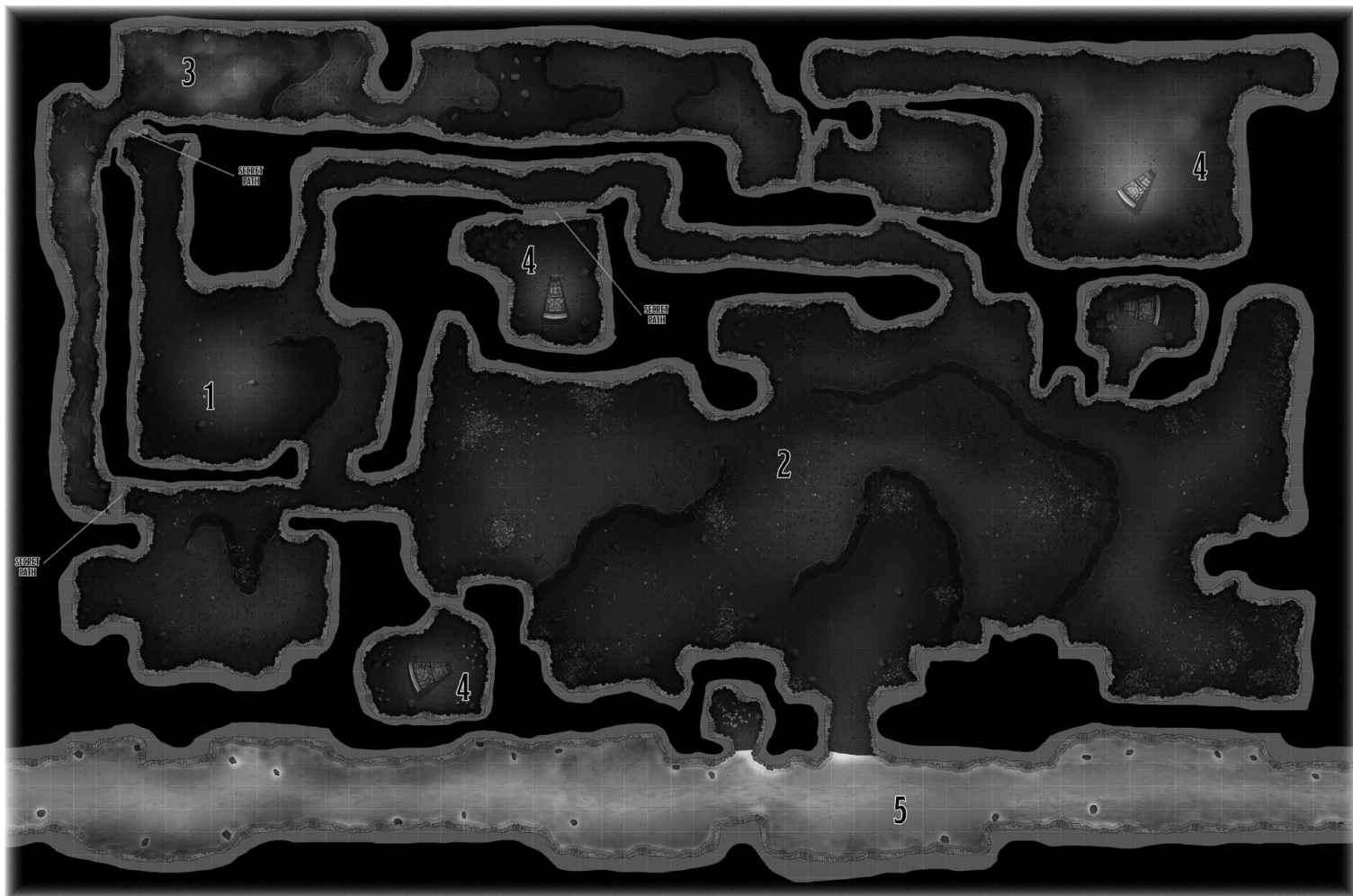
None of the table pieces are located here. The characters may realize this with a **Detect Magic** check. Otherwise, they may come to this area of the dungeon looking for more clues. Unfortunately, toxic fumes from the Underworld found their way into these tunnels. The characters lose 1/4 of their HP total and become poisoned when they enter this area (**Fortitude** roll). A successful stat roll grants immunity to the fumes for 1 hour.

Treasure. A brave (or foolish) character may stay for a few minutes to search the place. A *ring of invisibility* is buried on the ground, and a hand of bones still wears it.

THE LAST THREE PIECES

The characters must move fast and fight the endless skeletons forming while they look for the remaining pieces of the Round Table. As described in area 2, it takes 1 Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) to haul the rocks covering the hidden paths to make a way through (see map).





4. HIDDEN CAVERNS

The last three pieces of the Round Table are hidden in initially inaccessible caverns. Reveal this lore as the characters find each: the tenth piece, the left part of the princess of wands, and Cancer's constellation. The eleventh is the right part of the princess of wands, showing Virgo. The twelfth and last piece of the legendary Round Table bears the right part of the princess of pentacles, and the last star arrangement, Gemini.

When the characters get a hold of the last of the Round Table pieces, Mordred's Avatar appears to make a last-ditch effort to stop them (see **Final Confrontation**).

5. UNDERGROUND RIVER

The stream is strong enough to wash away weak creatures (**Fortitude** roll). The stream flows east in a long descent toward the Underworld. The stream pours into a dark lake filled with territorial, blind monsters. No piece of the round table is found toward this direction.

Treasure. A curious or perceptive character notices the small alcove with trinkets (**Search** check). It all looks like garbage, but a cautious individual digs up a couple of silverware pieces, a tiny precious stone, and a set of fancy divination cards (**Scavenge** check). The treasure may have belonged to a pirate. The trinkets are worth 879 sp.

FINAL CONFRONTATION

AN ARMORED MAN on horseback appears before the characters. The spectral apparition of Mordred's horse has shadowy legs that float above the ground. The king's son gives one final warning before striking true:

"Your lives are forfeit! Leave the pieces of the Round Table here and I swear your deaths shall be quick and painless. That blasted order shall not see the light of day again or my name is not Mordred!"

Unless the characters wish to have a swift death, a battle breaks when they refuse to comply. Consider the notes and attacks below to handle this encounter.

MORDRED'S AVATAR

Large incorporeal knight

MORDRED'S MAGIC ALLOWS him to control the avatar from a distance. In the same manner, he summons four **Mordred beasts** to aid it. The incorporeal **veteran** has a fly-by-attack. Its necrotic weapon drains the life force of its victims, creating zombies from the mangled corpses. The avatar is resistant to non-magical attacks. However, *A dispel magic* spell targeting the spectral knight weakens the link with Mordred, paralyzing it for 1 round.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

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

RESTORING THE ORDER OF THE ROUND TABLE

The characters get a hold of the 12 pieces of the Round Table and bring them back to Camelot one way or another. Merlin informs King Arthur of the good news and a massive celebration is had after a little preparation. Owen Gallahad joins the heroes here (see **Adventure Hooks**). Noble men and knights from the realm wish to be considered for the new Knights of the Order of the Round Table. The characters are guests of honor and may witness the anointment of these knights. The characters shall be remembered as friends of the Order forever, and the knights shall be forever in their debt.

BECOMING A KNIGHT

The characters' exploits do not go unnoticed even if they never talked to Merlin about the job. A messenger from the king delivers a formal invitation for supper after the great celebration in Camelot. After dining with the king, he makes the characters the proposal to become knights of the order. A new chapter in their lives may well begin.

TREASURE OF THE FORMER KNIGHTS

Except for the idol, the three magic weapons in the dungeon (see **Unique Treasure**) are free for the taking. However, the characters must not be traveling with Talishka, or otherwise, find a way to fool her or even strike her down to put their hands on them. The stubborn, yet honorable, orc shall give her life before letting some filthy grave robbers stain the memories of the knights she admires.

However, Talishka is wanted by her clan. If the characters vanquish her, the clan feels robbed of their right. The orc tribe shall look for the nosy characters and ask for hefty compensation soon...

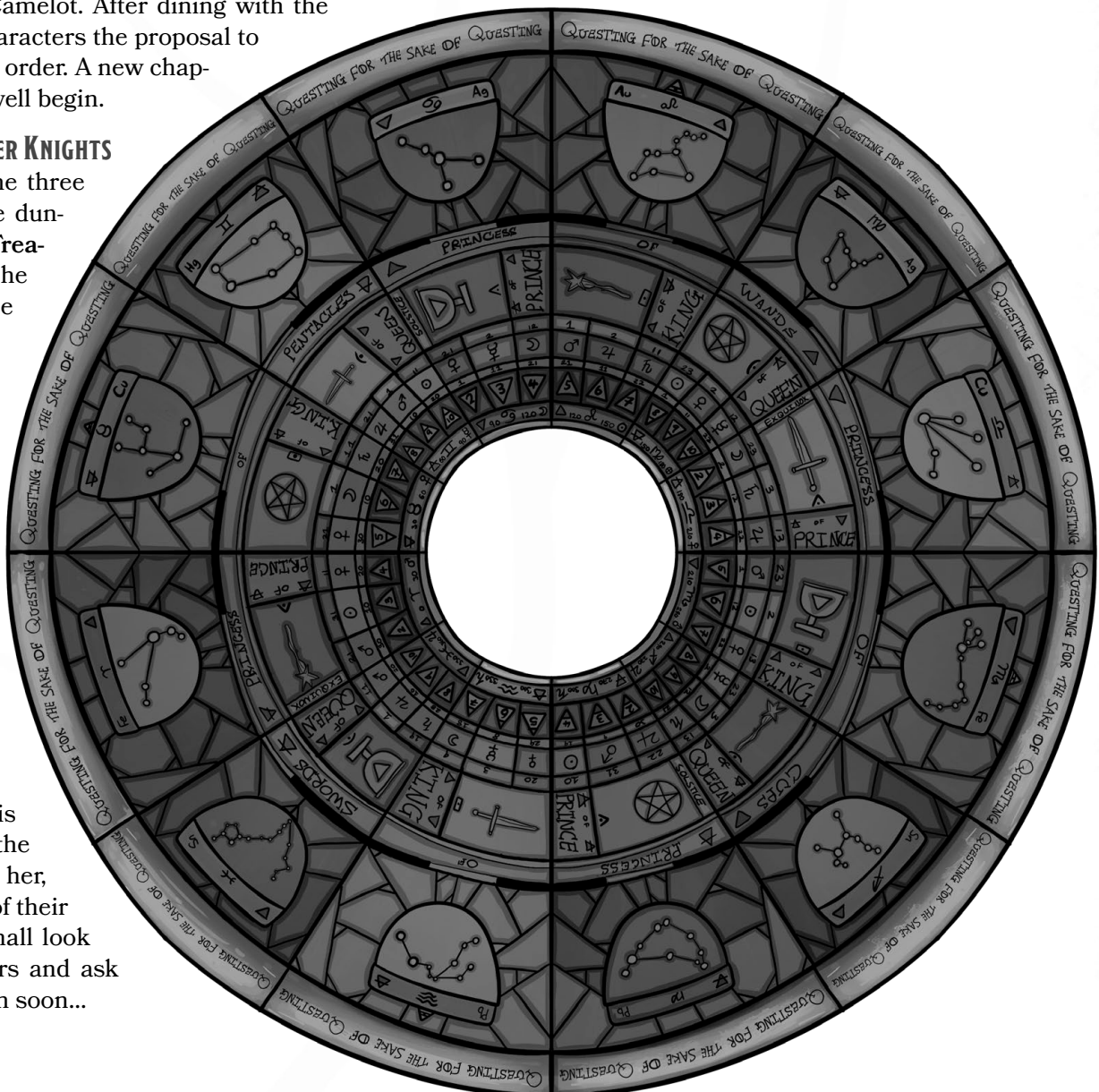
MORDRED'S WHEREABOUTS

The characters do not fight the real Mordred, just a magical representation of him. The king's son lives, in hiding, plotting a way to exact his revenge against his father.

The Truth. As per the legend, the day shall come when King Arthur and Mordred meet in deadly combat. In a swift blow, the king runs a spear through his son. Drunk by anger and revenge, Mordred impales himself even further to be within striking distance. He gives the fatal blow to the king's head with the last of his strength and both, mortally wounded, die. But today is a time of celebration, for the Order of the Round Table, is once more.

REWARDS

The characters shall be the heroes of Camelot forever. The king wishes to personally reward them even if they did not take the job from his court wizard. Besides the offer of being anointed Knights of the Round Table, the GM must select an adequate gift, boon, or perhaps a parcel of land, a keep, or a castle for the characters.



THE ABYSS OF THE SNAKEFOLK

Do you like history? Because these guys are zealots for the past. The snakefolk are ready to give their lives for their cause. Be careful out there...

Constable Cliffweather

SETUP

THE WORLD IS home to cultures, peoples, and different societies. Just by looking at them, analyzing the data, and making some calculations, many things can be said and predicted about the future of these civilizations. For historians though, knowing the future is not important and some experts of the past even consider it boring. “*Why bother with the affairs of the future and things we will not experience, nor see? When we can relive hundreds, even thousands of years by studying the past*”, the fanatics of history would say. However, the gods and time bury things for a reason. And in a world of monsters and magic, some things should never come to light again.

THE SNAKEFOLK CIVILIZATION

IT WAS CENTURIES ago when the powerful snakefolk ruled over most of the Eastern Territories of the continent. Their cities, towns, and walled ziggurats displayed might, wealth, and prosperity. Their religious beliefs and traditions had them wear gold and silver in the shape of rings, bracelets, and long chains circling their bodies. The construction of ornamented warrior and priest, snakefolk statues was a popular trend. It was almost an innate goal burning within each snakefolk individual; to build an idol to honor their race and their people.

CENTURIES OF DEDICATION

THE SNAKEFOLK PEOPLE of this time followed extreme views of life and heretic beliefs about their race and purpose in the universe. Their society grew around these currents of thought. Time only made them stronger. Ultimately, when humankind arrived, the snakefolk differed from other cultures so much that their clash ended up in war and chaos. Decades of violence followed...

Humans are determined, and pragmatic, and due to their short lifespans, they are some of the most reckless, savage, and cruel combatants. The end justified the means; they did not have second thoughts about removing the snakefolk from these lands to fulfill their expansionist dreams. Centuries of snakefolk lore and history were destroyed in half a century. But the scaled descendants of some of them live today. And they remember...

THE SNAKEFOLK OF YORE

SNAKEFOLK ARE AWARE of their long history and how their kind populated most of the Eastern Territories millennia ago. Alas, few of them are direct descendants of the royal bloodline that lost everything back then. Since history is written by winners, countless atrocities and crimes of humankind were hidden, buried, and forgotten. But the royal bloodline descendants remember.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A CULT COMPOSED of purely snakefolk people obeys the orders of Otis Gyl'shak, a descendant of the snakefolk rulers. Not so long ago, they moved from their former lair in the desert and found a spot in the mountains near Harrinton, a thriving human town. The snakefolk that follow Otis are fanatics. Their minds live in the past, driven by their strong hatred of humankind.

For about two months, the snakefolk cult has attacked the good people of Harrinton. Some of them have been kidnapped for their foul rituals or medieval practices. Constable Cliffweather offers 2,500 sp to brave heroes for eradicating the threat and save any survivors.

RANDOM EVENTS

Once per Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) while in the caverns of the snakefolk lair, roll 1d6 in this table.

- 1 Two **swarms of poisonous snakes** attack! The reptiles have a 4-in-10 chance of taking the intruders by surprise. They flee when reduced to half their Hit Points.
- 2 The characters stumble upon a group of three **snakefolk warriors** and one **snakefolk shaman**. They are on patrol.
- 3 A character fails to notice a pressure-sensitive plate hidden by mud (**Search** check). Poisoned darts are shot! **Fortitude** save or the characters are poisoned for 1 hour.
- 4 The spot where the characters are standing is magically turned into quicksand. The characters sink 1 foot and are unable to move for a few minutes (**Fortitude** roll).
- 5 A **snakefolk shaman** attempts to control a character from afar with the *dominate* spell (**Will** roll).
- 6 The snakefolk leader, Otis, uses magic to be heard within his lair and says: “*The era of serpents has come...*”

FEATURES OF THE SNAKEFOLK LAIR

Tier 2 Adventure

Light. The entire lair is in complete darkness since snakefolk have an incredible vision in the darkness.

Smells and Sounds. A pungent smell of humidity, combined with sulfur, and blood prevails in the entire dungeon. The screams of innocents often echo through the caverns and tunnel network, like a plea from nowhere.

1. ENTRANCE CHASM

The characters must make a small journey to the mountains from Harrinton. The GM is free to decide whether the characters have an uneventful or a dangerous trip. Either way, two **snakefolk warriors** and one **snakefolk scout** are outside the chasm entrance when they arrive.

If the battle turns against them, one of the snakefolk attempts to disengage to alert everyone inside the lair. Ancient magic allows snakefolk to descend and land slowly and safely through the 40-foot-deep, dark chasm.

2. UNDERGROUND LANDING

If an enemy from area 1 fled and warned his allies, a **snakefolk champion**, two **snakefolk warriors**, and a **snakefolk priest** are ready to hold intruders off. Otherwise, the champion is the only one patrolling the area.

A **Detect Magic** check reveals the statues' magic aura; it causes the selective hovering spell in the chasm.

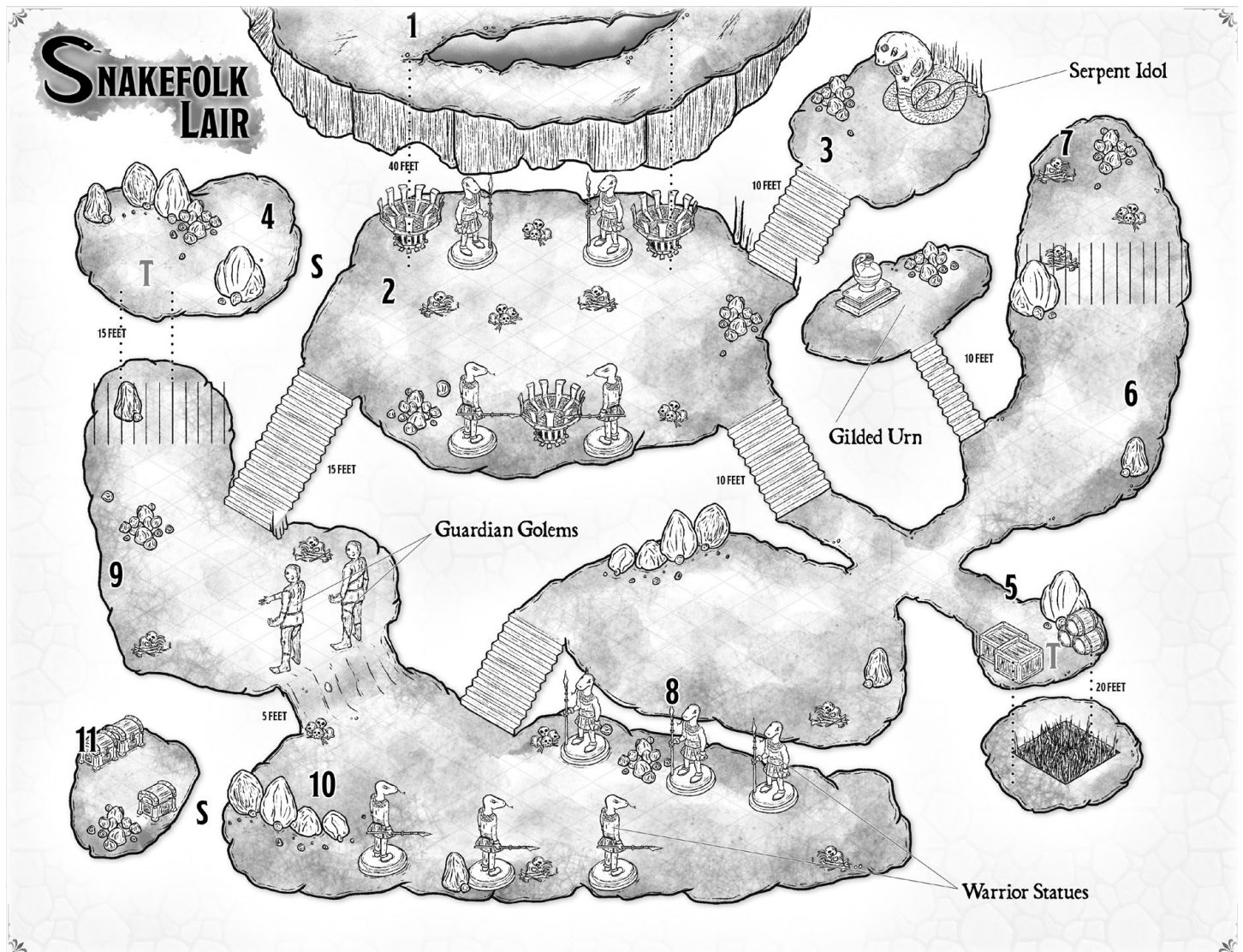
3. MEDITATION CHAMBER

A large stone idol in the shape of a snake rests at the end of this chamber. The snakefolk meditate and pray before it to be blessed by their scaled god (**Divine Lore** check).

4. HIDDEN CAVERN

It takes 1 Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) to remove the rocks and debris blocking the way to this area. Two **swarms of poisonous snakes** slither from cracks in the rocky walls and attack non-snakefolk creatures.

Trap. If the characters fail to notice the weak spot on the ground (**Search** check), they fall 15 feet into area 9.



5. DEADLY TRAP

Crates and barrels lean against the walls of this cave. They contain dried food, meat, and spices. An ingenious character may retrieve things of value (**Scavenge** check). A box of spices and flasks of salt can be sold for 550 sp.

Creatures that walk into the marked area (**Search** check) fall 20 feet and become impaled in the pit. Victim lose 1/2 their Hit Points (**Reflexes** roll / half damage).

6. SNAKEFOLK GUARDIANS

Three **snakefolk warriors** and two **snakefolk scouts** risk their lives to keep intruders away from the prisoners. A 10-foot stairway leads to a gilded, blood-filled urn with a magic aura (**Detect Magic** check, 250 sp).

7. IMMORTAL PRISONERS

Nine people are held behind an iron barred cell. The gilded urn's magic (see above) makes the prisoners immortal. They don't need to breathe, eat, or drink. Their minds remain awake. They still feel fear, uncertainty, or pain.

Urn. The urn works for people inside the cell. Once outside they are immune to it. The gilded urn can be destroyed with weapons or a *dispel magic* spell. Perhaps, the characters wish to keep it (see **Conclusion**).

8. LOWER LEVEL

A squad of two **snakefolk warriors**, a **snakefolk priest**, and a **giant boa constrictor** attempts to stop the characters. This is one of Otis's boas. It flees back to its master and sister if reduced to half its Hit Points.

9. ANTECHAMBER

The urn described in area 7 affects the six people imprisoned in this cell. Two **flesh golems** block the way east and attempt to stop the characters. They fight until slain.

10. LOWEST LEVEL

Otis Gyl'shak and the rest of his goons wait here. They did not expect the intruders to overcome all their defenses. If allowed, Otis, the snakefolk leader (**mage**) speaks. With a strong snakefolk accent, he says in Common:

"So you've come to write history again, haven't you? Destroy, kill, conquer... Not this time! Humans obliterated my people centuries ago, now it shall be you who leave these lands! Kill them or seize them!"

That last sentence is directed to his allies. Two **snakefolk champions**, a **giant boa constrictor**, a **snakefolk priest**, and three **snakefolk scouts** air their leader. The fanatics fight to the death. Otis asks for no mercy and also gives his life for the cause. He is a true believer.

11. SECRET VAULT

Large rocks and boulders cover the entrance to this area (**Search** check). Here lies the snakefolk's valuable treasure hoard. There are 2,784 sp in assorted coinage and small pieces of silverware. A set of fancy silks from the snakefolk country (5,000 sp), two golden vases with precious stones (350 gp), and a magical *spear of poison*. The artifact has the extraordinary property. It can turn into a venomous serpent once a day.

CONCLUSION

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

The characters defeat Otis and save the prisoners. The survivors are famished, hurt, and traumatized. Even the journey back home is a nightmare for these poor people. Constable Cliffweather is happy to pay the agreed-upon reward when he sees the characters return. The survivors' families bathe them in flowers, bread, and other gifts as tokens of their unending appreciation.

The Urn. The characters may keep the gilded urn. It is an artifact of evil, but its power could be of interest to a powerful school of magic or a scientist. Or perhaps, within their possession, the characters are tempted to do evil. The GM may spin up new quests from this finding. Those are, however, adventures for another day...





JUSTIN BLASDEL

Justin Blasdel has contributed multiple written works to the TTRPG community. Currently on [DM's Guild](#), he has over twenty mini-campaigns available for free download (two of which were reviewed favorably by [Dungeon Reviews](#)). His writing career is deeply rooted in his origins as a playwright, and he plans to continue writing for more Open-Source systems in the future. Justin currently manages his own Discord group called 'Random Roll', where multiple DMs host one-shots with randomly rolled character sheets for players.



P.J ENGLAND

P.J. England has fun designing adventures and writing for [Dungeon Vault Magazine](#). He will soon be opening a website "[Arcane Ink](#)" to blog about D&D and publish his adventures. He began publishing in 2019 on the [DM's Guild](#) and never looked back. When he isn't thinking about D&D, he walks in the woods, writes guitar music, and bakes fresh bread.

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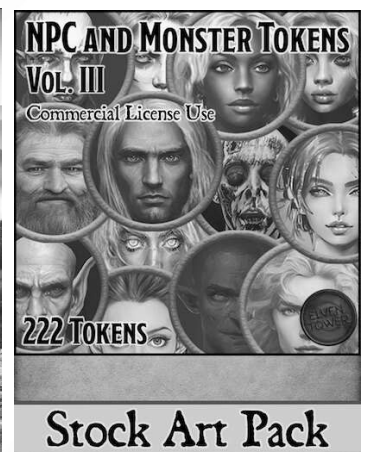
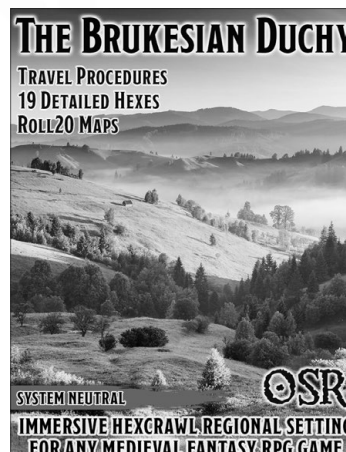
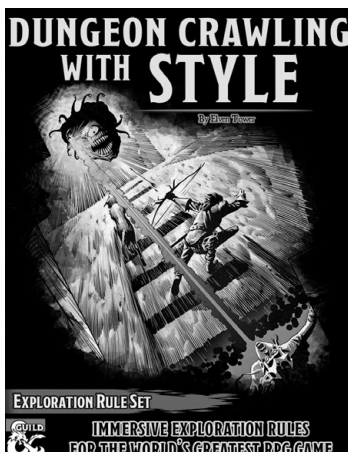
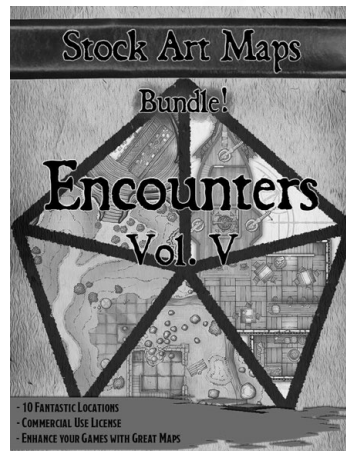
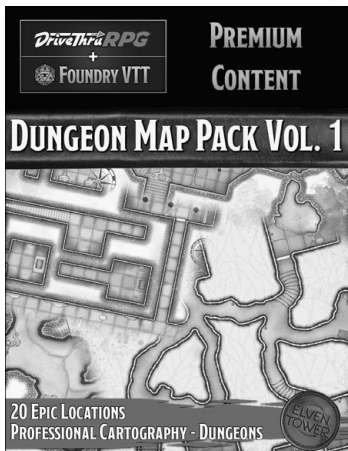
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You can find more information about my work at my [Instagram](#), [Patreon](#), and personal [Website](#).

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