

DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 24



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9 ORIGINAL ADVENTURES
HIGH RESOLUTION MAPS
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THE BEST CONTENT FOR THE BEST GMs



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SEEDS OF LIFE

A single bite from the sacred fruit shall remove any illness and make you live longer. But a cost hides in its scent. And vengeful fey spirits are drawn to it.

Old Druid Wisdom

Delve Level 5 (5,500 XP)

6 ghastr
4 ghouls
4 skeletons
1 wraith

SETUP

LEGEND HAS IT that a dilapidated druidic circle in the Grand Forest leads the brave and the cunning to a strange vault where the last *Seeds of Life* are guarded. These seeds are rumored to have all kinds of healing properties and life-lengthening qualities. Depending on the culture, the alleged powers of these seeds and the gourd trees that they give birth to vary from the common to the extraordinary. The old druid ruins in the forest used to be an observatory but little of it remains. The stone circles and the deep stone carvings shall endure the passage of millennia before they stop functioning.

The characters come across the strange druid ruins by accident when they explore the Grand Forest. The locals know of their existence but there is nothing remarkable except for those curious about the elusive druids. Characters attuned to nature can read the runes on the magic circle. They infer that the teleportation circle becomes active during the new moon, once a month. The runes say that the *Seeds of Life* are to be planted once more.

History Check

DC 14: *The druids in the Grand Forest moved to the south decades ago after failing negotiations with human rulers in the area that cared not for the destruction of the forests at the behest of their holdings' expansions.*

DC 17: *The Gourds of Life are not from this world. They are originally from the Woodlands Realm. The otherworldly fine treats have life-lengthening qualities and are said to be a crucial ingredient in antidotes and medicine.*

DC 20: *The Seeds of Life take decades to bear fruit and are dangerous to have because the seeds and young trees produce a strong perfume that attracts all manner of forest predators and fey spirits. Even removing them from their enclosure could spell peril for those unfortunate enough to carry them across the Material Plane.*

1. ENTRANCE HALL

The magic circle glows during the naturally dark new moon night. A deep haze takes over the environment and all creatures on the circle are sent somewhere else. Thick stone walls surround the circle now.

The characters are teleported to the demiplane where the dungeon is located. The magic circle is inactive for 1 hour. After that, the characters are free to return to the Grand Forest in the same manner they arrived.

2. TOMB OF GUARDIANS (SOUTH)

Three standing sarcophagi and three stone coffins hug the stone walls. They are engraved with fine imagery of twisting vines, flowers, and druidic runes. If translated, the runes spell the name of each individual interred here. They were druids who pledged their lives to eternally caring for the *Seeds of Life*. Their sacrifice, the runes claim, allows them to become immortal guardians. Two **ghasts**, two **ghouls**, and two **skeletons** emerge from the enclosures and attack trespassers without mercy.

3. TOMB OF GUARDIANS (NORTH)

This chamber is identical to area 2 but the incantations that were supposed to infuse the dead druids with necromantic energy have failed. The dead remain dead here.

4. TOMB OF PENITENTS

The bones of past visitors who attempted to plunder this dungeon litter the eroded floor. Four **ghasts** emerge from the standing sarcophagi and attack. The fifth ghastr was destroyed thirty years ago by another adventurer.

5. THE DRUIDS' ARCHIVE

The tomes and scrolls in this chamber contain an accurate account of the druids' history in the region. The records go back thousands of years. The last instance of a planted *Gourd of Life* occurred two thousand years ago. Since then, the remaining seeds are guarded here.

6. HALL OF PAINTINGS

The walls and ceiling of this chamber are decorated with fresco paintings of beautiful gourd trees and people collecting the sacred fruits. In the largest one, the druids cut down the last *Gourd of Life* to keep it from greedy people and guard the last seeds in clay goblets.

7. A VOICE FROM THE PAST

A ghostly apparition emerges from the clay goblet in a cloud of mist. A bearded druid from a bygone world stands proud despite his ephemeral nature.

The druid ghost explains that the *Seeds of Life* are a dangerous treasure, coveted by other fey creatures and spirits. They must not be removed from the goblets unless they intend to care for the tree sprouts and do good with their rare fruit. Then, the ghost disappears...

8. GUARDIANS FROM A LOST WORLD

A tree-like, limestone sculpture of a gourd tree stands ominously by the far end of the grandiose chamber. The motionless, standing figures lift their heads as an incorporeal entity emerges from the statue.

The undead creatures in the chamber are corrupted mockeries of the druids they once were. They care not for fair uses of the *Seeds of Life*. They attack trespassers without mercy or comprehension. One **wraith**, two **ghouls**, and two **skeletons** fight until slain.

TACTICS

The ravenous **ghouls** prioritize enemies who are physically weak like wizards or rogues. They make use of their Claw attacks to paralyze their targets and make them vulnerable. After a creature is paralyzed, the **wraith** moves immediately to use its Life Drain ability on the affected creature, thus enhancing its offensive power. Few adventurers can survive such a powerful attack. The mindless **skeletons** are to the wraith's mental commands.

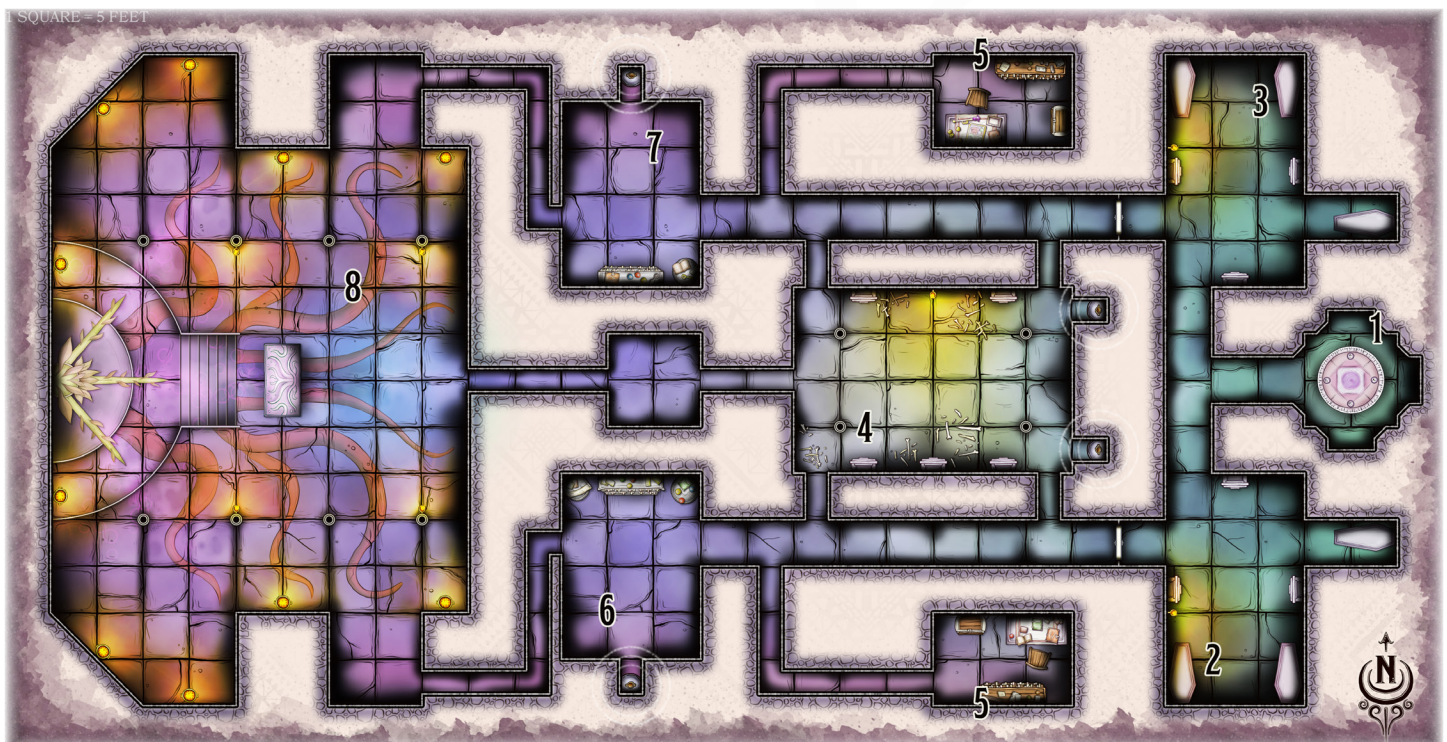
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Terrain. The old crypt features well-conserved limestone flooring with little signs of erosion or use. Squares partially covered by furniture or pillars are considered difficult terrain. The root-like floor patterns in area 8 are made from half-inch pieces or embedded ceramic.

Lights. Magical torches on iron wall-sconces and floor braziers provide bright light throughout the dungeon. They function with *continual flame* spells that stop working if the implement is removed from its location.

Seed Goblets. These are clay goblets with gold inlays and a cork-like top. A carving of an inverted tree is etched on its widest section. The goblets are located in areas 4, 6, and 7, in 5-foot-deep alcoves. Touching the goblets triggers a deadly poison dart trap (DC 16 Dexterity / 6d6 poison damage). The traps deactivate by defeating the guardians in area 8. Each goblet contains a magically-conserved gourd seed. Removing the cork lid spoils the conserving magic. An expert in botany can care for the seed, plant it, and care for the tree sprout (DC 19 Nature). With good care, the gourd trees grow and bear fruit in two weeks. During this time, fey spirits and forest predators roam the area to steal the valuable bounty. Only the strongest can stop these ravenous creatures.

Treasure. Each of the gourd seeds can be sold for 1,000 gp. The unlocked stone chests in both areas 5 contain 350 gp, 11,260 sp, a granite figurine of a snake (20 gp), a sturdy alabaster ring (15 gp), and two *potions of healing*. The mithral inlays on the tabernacle in area 8 can be pried out with fine tools and be sold for 400 gp.



TOMB OF CLOVERS

No, don't go there! She was mad! That place is a death sentence for reasonable people. Why are adventurers so eager to die for a few coins?

Halivert Villager

Delve Level 7 (7,650 XP)

1 fire elemental
1 shield guardian
6 ghastrs
6 zombies
4 shadows

SETUP

LUCK IS A subjective term. Brave knights would rarely say their title and knighthood were earned by luck. A wizard would refuse to say that luck has anything to do with their understanding of the arcane. Some call it the favor of the gods. Others say one's destiny is already written; that no event can be labeled as a coincidence or a consequence of luck. And yet, people still say 'good luck'.

This adventure brings the characters to the Tomb of Clovers. The resting place of the Cloverfoots from Halivert Town, a thriving halfling community. The most popular member of their family was Milda, a treasure-seeker. She traveled with strong adventurers. Her party called her "Lucky Milda". She earned the moniker after surviving deadly traps, injuries, and cheating death once or twice during their adventures. They used to stay in Halivert for a couple of days before hitting the road once more. Milda's place was their base of operations.

But the day came for Milda and her friends to settle and stop adventuring, or at least for her. And from that day until her death, Milda worked on the Tomb of Clovers. A trial of sorts for all brave heroes who want to cheat death like her. Those worthy shall receive her blessing.

History Check

DC 14: *Halivert Town is home to many renowned halfling families. The Cloverfoots lost some of their influence after Milda's passing, 20 years ago. She was the face of their family. Today, none of them are prominent or worthy of recognition in any area of importance.*

DC 17: *Milda Cloverfoot built the Tomb of Clovers for her and her family. It is said that the eccentric woman's spirit enjoys playing cunning games even after death. Alas, her magical reward is reserved for those who overcome the tests. The stories speak about a 'gift of luck'.*

The characters hear the following instructions in many ways if they ask the people in Halivert about the tomb:

"In the outskirts of Halivert Town, where the road forks into two, draw a straight line between them and go forward until you find the tomb. You cannot miss it."

1. TOMB'S SURROUNDINGS

The natural view of the mountain skirts is broken by two green limestone sculptures. Two four-leaf clovers flank the entrance to the Tomb of Clovers.

The characters reach the entrance flanked by the two clover statues. Passing between the clovers triggers a magical vision. Creatures see how they would die, were they to enter the tomb with no luck. This vision has made many adventurers think twice and turn back. In the end, the effect is just an illusion with no divining power.

Trap. A stone tile 40 feet from the tomb's entrance features a clover-shaped mosaic. If the characters do not notice the hidden pressure-sensitive plate (DC 17 Perception) and step on it, they trigger a pitfall trap. Creatures fall 30 feet and land in an oil pond (area 3).

2. POOL OF OIL

This chamber is dominated by a rectangular pool of a thick, greasy, substance. The wrinkles on it move slowly. Standing stone sarcophagi hug each corner.

The characters must jump 10 feet to avoid the pool (DC 20 Athletics). Failing this check causes the character to fall into the oil (see below). When one of them either manages to cross or fall, the four **ghasts** waiting in the sarcophagi emerge and attack the newcomers.

Oil. Creatures submerged in the 10-foot-deep pool must make great efforts to move (DC 13 Athletics). In addition, they move at one-quarter of their speed.

3. THE OIL POND

Falling creatures may avoid getting dipped in the oil (DC 15 Dexterity). Two **ghasts** attack any creature that comes or falls. Living creatures that step on the clover mosaics trigger an explosion. Creatures within a 10-foot radius take 3d6 fire damage. The flames engulf any oil-doused creature (see area 5). The pond bursts into flames including anyone in it, if the explosion traps are triggered.

4. SECRET VAULT

Dust and webs cover everything but all locks appear to be in optimal condition. Conversely, the tomes and scrolls on the north wall shelf remain impeccable.

The characters can find access to this secret vault in areas 2 or 3 if they notice any of the two pushable bricks hidden there (DC 16 Investigation). However, all the enemies in area 5 hunt the characters in an uncontrollable rampage if the Cloverfoots family treasure is stolen.

5. TRAIL OF CLOVERS

This large chamber is illuminated by its many braziers. Six stone sarcophagi hug the walls while four gold-plated goblets rest on the north alcoves.

When the characters cross the threshold of this chamber, the ghost of Milda Cloverfoot speaks to them:

“Having fun? How’s the oil darlings? Know that all the stories about me are true. I once survived a red dragon’s breath. I cheated death more than once. And I shall grant you my blessing, but only if you prove to me that you can beat the odds. Show me that luck is within you!”

The statue that oversees the area moves. The **shield guardian** fights along with six **zombies** that emerge from the stone enclosures. In the second round of combat, Milda’s laugh echoes in the chamber; the golden goblets release one **fire elemental** and four **shadows**.

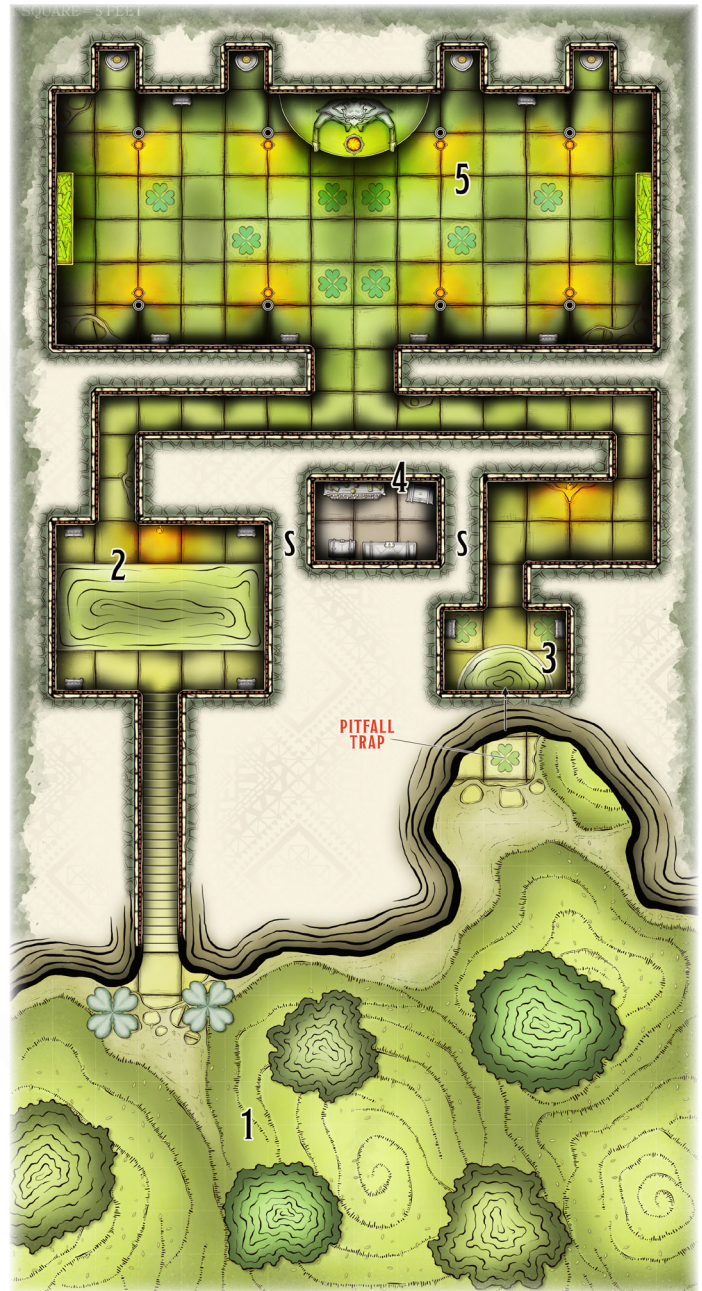
Clovers (center). The four clovers before the statue trigger explosions like the one described in area 3. Any oil-doused creature is engulfed in the flames.

Clovers (sides). The four remaining clover tiles are oil traps. The ceiling opens and drops enough oil to soak a Medium creature when someone steps on the plates.

Burning to Death. Creatures covered in oil are engulfed in flames when they get in touch with fire. This causes 3d6 fire damage each round until the flames are extinguished. Two creatures besides the one affected can take an Action to smother the flames, provided they have the materials to do so. Resistance to fire damage does not prevent a creature from being burned to death.

TACTICS

The **ghasts** in areas 2 and 3 take advantage of paralyzed creatures to push them into the oil. The **zombies** in area 5 are simple foot soldiers. Their task is to corner the heroes and make them step into the traps. The **shadows** target low-Strength creatures to incapacitate them if possible. The **fire elemental** is the most dangerous creature here. Any attack from it engulfs creatures in flames if they were dipped in oil (see above). The **shield guardian** is the tank of this encounter. It uses its body and strength to push enemies toward the many traps.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Lights. Sconces with *continual flame* spells illuminate the tomb. They fade after one minute if removed.

Magic. Milda’s trials are a result of many spells and rituals in the tomb. All enemies described reform every 30 days. This allows for more people to be blessed here.

Treasure. There are 12,000 gp worth of coins, silverware, and exotic fabrics. The undead Cloverfoot, even after being defeated, shall hunt whoever steals from them.

The Gift of Luck. Milda grants a gift to those who overcome her test. The characters obtain the Lucky halfling trait but it can only be used once a day. For halflings, their Lucky trait improves. They can re-roll a die if they roll a 1 or a 2. They must use the new roll.

THE PECULIAR LIBRARY OF HENRIETTA D'OR

A magical library of interesting magical tomes by Dana Floberg

Eccentric, esteemed, noblewoman Henrietta d'Or has passed away, leaving behind her lakeside manse, seven cats, and no living heir to inherit the family fortune. Her extensive library, curated through years of traveling, antiquing, and hyper-fixated research, is now being sold off in an estate sale. This unconventional literary collection includes dusty textbooks, pulp novels, and ancient tomes, all thrown together in a disorganized morass. The careful adventurer, however, may find one of these enchanted books hiding in the cluttered stacks. The following items are tomes that the characters may find if they were to purchase a library lot or break in before the sale.

ON GRASS: A STUDY OF GROWTH PATTERNS, BY JOANA OAKENHEEL

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This book is a discreet and unremarkable volume, as its small size and muted coloring render it beneath the notice of most passersby. Its benign subject matter is so dull that many fail to notice that the text only occupies half the book's pages, leaving the others blank.

While attuned to this book, the user can take an action to cast *detect thoughts* (save DC 14) without expending a spell slot. The targets' thoughts are magically transcribed on the book's blank pages for the duration of the spell. When the reader changes targets or the spell ends, the written transcription vanishes. This property cannot be used again until the user finishes a long rest.

TWILIGHT CROSSING, BY WALTON BASHA

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

A heartfelt coming-of-age story about a young changeling boy and his faithful, loyal blink dog. Simply holding this book offers a strong sense of nostalgic comfort.

While attuned to the book, the reader can dog-ear any page to cause the book to magically transform itself into a paper canine companion. The dog uses the **mastiff** stat block and is friendly to you and your allies. It understands your language and obeys your spoken commands. If you issue no commands, the dog defends itself but takes no other actions. The paper dog reverts to a book if it drops to 0 hit points or if you speak the magic word while touching it. If the dog is reduced to 0 hit points by taking fire damage, the book is utterly destroyed and can no longer transform.

RUEFLE'S ODYSSEY, BY ANONYMOUS

Wondrous item, very rare

Covered in dark blue leather with shiny gold accents, this book exudes a mysterious air. The inside cover has a long list of names; they are former borrowers. The reader finds a strange tale inside: the story of their own life.

Each reader sees a different text detailing the events of their lives, even if they attempt to read the book at the same time. The story contains scenes from their memories, including things only they could know, as well as details they may *not* know, and secrets kept from them.

Curse. Every hour a person spends reading this book, they must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they grow increasingly attached to the book and the answers its pages offer to them. After three failures, the creature's body disappears, and their name is magically added to the list of borrowers. They are now bound to the book and their soul and body can only be restored to existence by powerful magic. If the book is destroyed, the lives of all those bound to it are lost forever with it.



A SWORD OF SILVER SORROW, AVALON #2, BY MAELLAN FEY

Wondrous item, legendary

This is the second novel in a sweepingly epic trilogy. This one in particular ends with a devastating cliffhanger.

The book is in reality a legendary hero from ancient times, afflicted (along with the rest of their three-person party) by a *true polymorph* spell. His friends and he have been trapped for centuries, courtesy of a villainous archfey with an evil sense of humor. If returned to their true form by a successful *dispel magic* (DC 19) or another anti-magic effect, the hero immediately enlists the reader's help in tracking down the rest of the series and restoring their similarly-polymorphed companions to life so they may exact their revenge and slay the archfey.

PACT OF THE HEART, BY AUDACITY AIMES

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

The blood-red leather of this book is hard to miss. A contemporary romance novel following the enemies-to-lovers journey of a devout cleric and her warlock girlfriend, this volume's spine is cracked from numerous re-reads.

While attuned to the book, you gain proficiency in the Persuasion, Deception, and Insight skills, or a +1 bonus to all checks with those skills if already proficient.

Additionally, romantic tropes begin to pervade your life, at inconvenient times more often than not. Each dawn, the attuned person rolls 1d4. On a 1, the GM may choose an effect from the list below or invent their own.

- No matter how many inns you visit, there is only one bed or one room available.
- An NPC reveals they are secretly royalty.
- An enemy or rival begins to see you in a new light.
- You are trapped in close proximity to someone.
- An NPC asks you to pretend to be their date to an event. A love quarrel occurs at during this time.
- You get a surprise makeover opportunity.
- An NPC challenges you to a duel for the affections of another important, known NPC.
- No matter where you go, you keep bumping into someone, as if you are bound by fate.

GM Note: Ensure all players are enthusiastic about including romance or romance tropes in your game. Be mindful that some characters and players may not experience romantic attraction or may experience it differently. It might be wise to mention this book and its effects before including it in the game with no warning.

-----, BY -----

Wondrous item, legendary

Very little is known about this book. It is written in no language ever recorded, and can only be vaguely understood via magical means, such as a *comprehend languages* spell. It seems to be a sort of handbook for extraplanar entities to shape reality, molding it for their own amusement using a complex set of rules and the casting of polyhedral dice, and following the rules of a single arbiter called "the Master". Most arcane academics believe this ancient tome to be an elaborate prank.



HALL OF GNAWED BONES

You thought I was gone for good but nothing can stop my magic. The various crimes of your disrespectful ancestors... You shall pay dearly for them!

Artorius's Wraith

Delve Level 4 (5,150 XP)

5 ghosts
8 shadows
6 skeletons
1 wraith

SETUP

BLISSFUL ARE THE ignorant who spend their lives without knowing the sorrow that the truth comes with. The truth that perilous threats surround them and may awake from their slumber from one moment to the next. The arcane past heritage is so vast that there is no way to anticipate the dangers that bygone spells and incantations may bring into the world. Scholars know that numerous time-bombs exist in the Material Plane; ancient, dormant spells that await the right time to spring, or for the position of an astral body to occur. And some are more dangerous than others. Such is the case of the evil mage Artorius and his fabled Hall of Gnawed Bones.

Artorius, the psychopathic necromancer, was guilty of the deaths of hundreds of hapless individuals. His crimes date back centuries. He lured innocent townsfolk to his underground lair with spells and charms. Once inside, he set his undead abominations on the poor peasants. Artorius enjoyed the grim spectacle. In time, a coalition of towns sent a large enough force to put a stop to the necromancer and his creations. The mage was dead, but his last spell would cause the undead to reanimate centuries later, endangering the region again. Local authorities offer a reward to valorous adventurers willing to risk their lives to make a name for themselves.

History Check

DC 14: *After getting directions to the crypt where the dangerous undead come from, the character knows that it belonged to Artorius, a necromancer who killed hundreds of people five centuries ago. He was defeated in battle. His lair was left untouched and is shunned by all.*

DC 17: *A group of archaeologists went into the Hall of Gnawed Bones four months ago to learn more about Artorius's evil deeds. Only one of them returned. The survivor claimed it was still protected by undead guardians.*

1. ENTRANCE HALL

A walk across rolling hills and through a sparsely forested region leads to a descending staircase. Dozens of recent footprints come in and out of the dungeon.

The characters reach the entrance and notice signs of struggle (DC 14 Survival). The undead emerge from the dungeon, capture unfortunate travelers, and drag them back into their lair. The entrance hall has seen better times. Nothing within survived the seismic activity in the last centuries. The northern rooms collapsed on themselves, only a narrow, irregular tunnel remains (area 2).

2. NATURAL CAVERNS

The caves are narrow and the ceiling is 8 feet tall. Eroded, broken sections of the dungeon flooring are visible after cleaning the thick layer of dust and debris (DC 12 Investigation). This cavern connects areas 3, 4, and 7.

Six **shadows** and two **skeletons** emerge from the darkness while the characters traverse this area. The shadows are semi-sentient and mumble stuff they knew in life. Alas, they cannot escape their sorrowful existence.

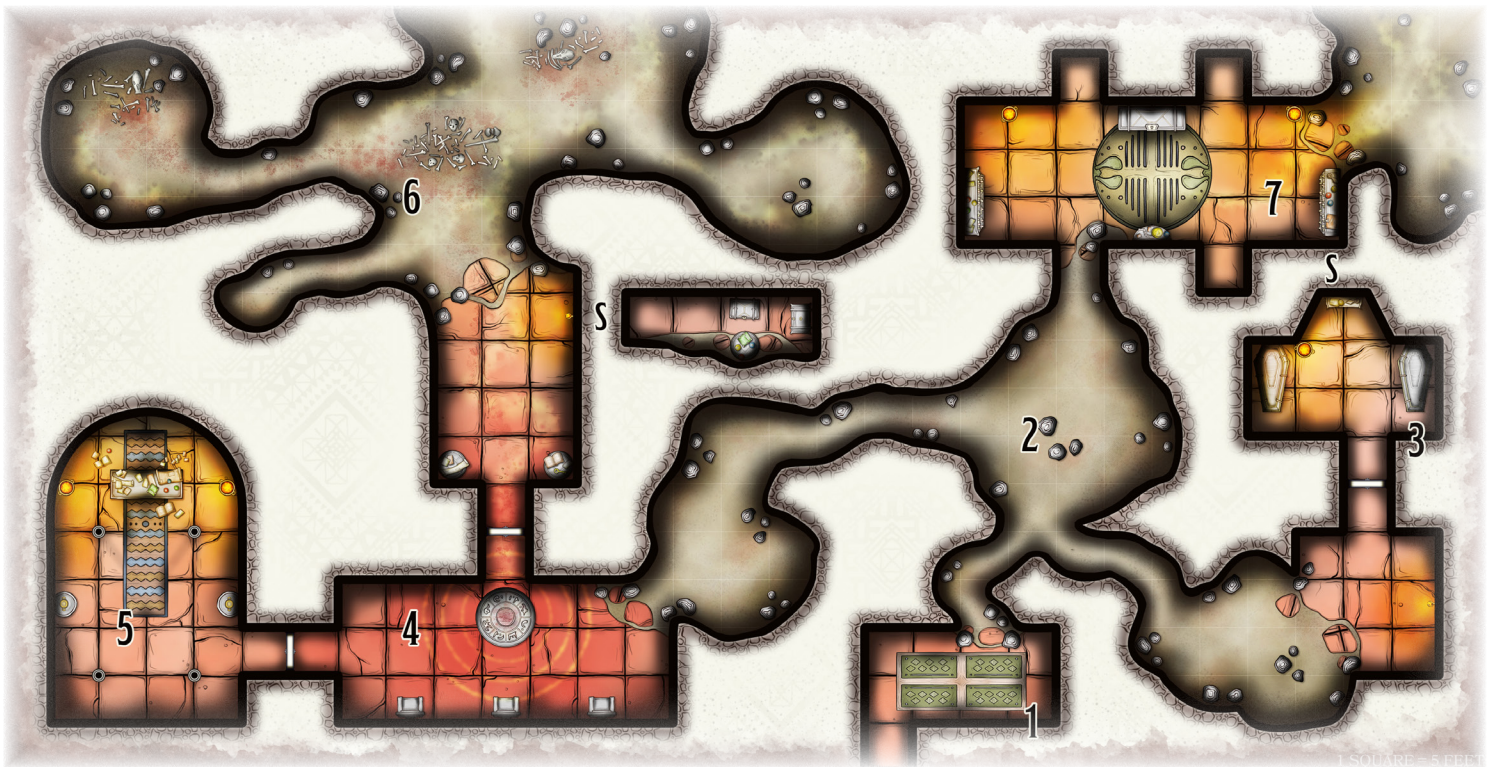
3. THE NECROMANCER'S REMAINS

The chamber contains two ornate sarcophagi. One belongs to Artorius and the other to his brother Emelius. The bodily remains of the evil necromancer are in the box but his brother's are missing. Emelius sarcophagus shows no signs of ever being used (DC 14 Investigation).

Destroying Artorius's body or bathing it in Holy Water causes the wraith in area 6 to lose a third of its hit points.

4. THRONES OF SIGHT

Three limestone thrones stand by the south wall. Each of them is engraved with runes of the sun, the moon, and the stars respectively. Artorius had three apprentices who would sit on the thrones and waste their lives away so that the necromancer could gain more insight into the multiverse. Three individuals can sit on the thrones and concentrate on a question. A vision with the answer hovers over the magic circle. It functions like a *contact other plane* spell but instead of its mental cost, those who sit on the thrones age five years. After the device is used and the aging effect takes place, two **shadows** and two **skeletons** appear on the magic circle and attack.



5. THE ADAMANT SCHOLARS

Artorius three apprentices roam this room looking for an answer to their current predicament: they have been revived as ravenous **ghasts**. The poor apprentices have, unfortunately, also lost their magic-casting abilities. Still, they look for ways to return to their previous state. The apprentices cannot overcome the otherworldly hunger that their undead form confers them, so they attack.

6. MOUNDS OF BONES

Piles of bones of humanoids and other beasts litter these caves. Most of the remains are old but a few were added recently. A strange, eerie mist gathers as the bones tremble and vibrate on their own.

The raging spirit of Astorius, the necromancer, roams these caves. He is drawn to the surviving evidence of the massacres and crimes he committed while in life. Astorius's mind is fragmented and fleeting. The only thing clear in his mind is the desire for revenge against the towns that teamed up to defeat him. Astorius (**wraith**), two **ghasts**, and two **skeletons** attack the characters and show no mercy. Every two rounds, two more skeletons rise from the piles of gnawed bones and join the fight.

Defeating Astorius stops the reanimation of skeletons and puts all the souls trapped in the dungeon to rest.

7. THE NECROMANCER'S VAULT

Once a secret chamber, the vault wall collapsed decades ago and became connected to the southern caves. The documents, books, and scrolls here have wasted away. Artorius's spellbook (archmage) remains unscathed.

TACTICS

The **shadows** in the dungeon are averse to bright light and favor attacking single individuals when they are away from light sources. They come together in a whirlwind of darkness and engulf the loneliest character. The **skeletons** are foot soldiers with no mind of their own. They fight until slain. The **ghasts** are intelligent but reckless. They prioritize targets with little to no armor like spellcasters and rogues. If a creature becomes paralyzed by their Claw ability, they attempt to drag them away into the darkness to eat. Artorius, despite his thirst for revenge, does not risk his existence out of pride. If allowed, he flees to plot his future revenge against the characters.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Lights. Magical torches on iron wall-sconces and floor braziers provide bright light throughout the dungeon. They function with *continual flame* spells that stop working if the implement is removed from its location.

Secret Doors. Pushing cleverly-hidden buttons on the walls causes sections of it to slide inward and reveal narrow passages to other areas (DC 15 Perception).

Treasure. The regional authorities pay a reward of 1,000 gp. There are assorted coinage, silverware, and exotic fabrics (4,000 gp), a *+1 longsword*, a *mithral helmet*, and two *potions of healing* in the vault (area 6).

Necromancy Aura. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of necromancy that permeates the dungeon. Healing spells cast in the dungeon have a 30% chance of reverting their effect, causing damage instead of healing it.

HALL OF MOLTEN DREAMS

Courage is what separates individuals who lead a single, meaningless life from those who find pleasure in the oneiric landscapes of the mind and the soul...

Excerpt of the Tome of Molten Dreams

Delve Level 5 (6,460 XP)

6 commoners	1 knight
8 cultists	1 mage
4 cult fanatics	1 priest
6 guards	4 specters

SETUP

BEWARE OF THE undisputed influence of popular leaders for their followers' deeds may wreak havoc upon the world. The leaders of powerful organizations like religions, sects, or even political parties wield the weight of their influence like a murderous weapon. A charismatic, evil person who commands the respect of dozens or even hundreds of individuals has a tremendous impact on their surroundings. Furthermore, their personal qualities often attract the weak-minded or the outcasts. People without a purpose such as these, become zealous believers. They are capable of unthinkable atrocities.

A man with a mighty vision came to the great city and offered the poor citizens a way to overcome their bounds and become free from the kingdom's oppressive system. They call him Onno Matis, which means 'The Great Liberator' in a forgotten language. Onno Matis is an accomplished spellcaster. He unearthed an ancient temple dedicated to separating the mind from the body so that it can forever exist in the Realm of Dreams. A cult following has formed around Onno Matis, dozens of people now attend his speeches and prove themselves to be worthy of reaching the Realm of Dreams. The authorities worry about the mage's increasing power and influence, Constable Dallaghir offers a reward for arresting the mage.

History Check

DC 14: *'Onno Matis' read backward is Sitam Onno. Sitam was a controversial mage who got expelled from the kingdom's covenant of mages. He served for seven months as the king's court mage but his actions were deemed immoral, evil, and treacherous.*

DC 17: *Sitam Onno was removed from his position in the king's court for using his enchanting magic on members of the court for selfish political purposes. After that, the mage disappeared for several years.*

Constable Dallaghir gives the characters clear directions to the temple's entrance. His scouts located Onno Matis's lair by tailing several of the cult followers. The entrance is located near the docks in the city, next to a rocky formation on the shore. A 100-foot-long, dark, descending staircase leads to the temple's entrance hall.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

Archaic, draconic inscriptions decorate the humid, limestone walls of this chamber. The arched ceiling features a carving of two battling dragons.

Two **cult fanatics** and four **cultists** await in this chamber. They are not initially hostile unless the characters brandish weapons or attack. The cultists expect prospective members to come from time to time. If the characters pretend to be interested in the cult, they are sent to area 3 to wait for Onno Matis (DC 14 Deception).

2. TEMPLE ARCHIVE

This is an old archive cared for by the long-gone temple builders. Most documents here are written in old forms of Draconic. A **cult fanatic** sits on the desk trying to decipher runes from a scroll. He commands the characters to leave immediately and claims their presence here is forbidden. If attacked, the cultist tries to flee.

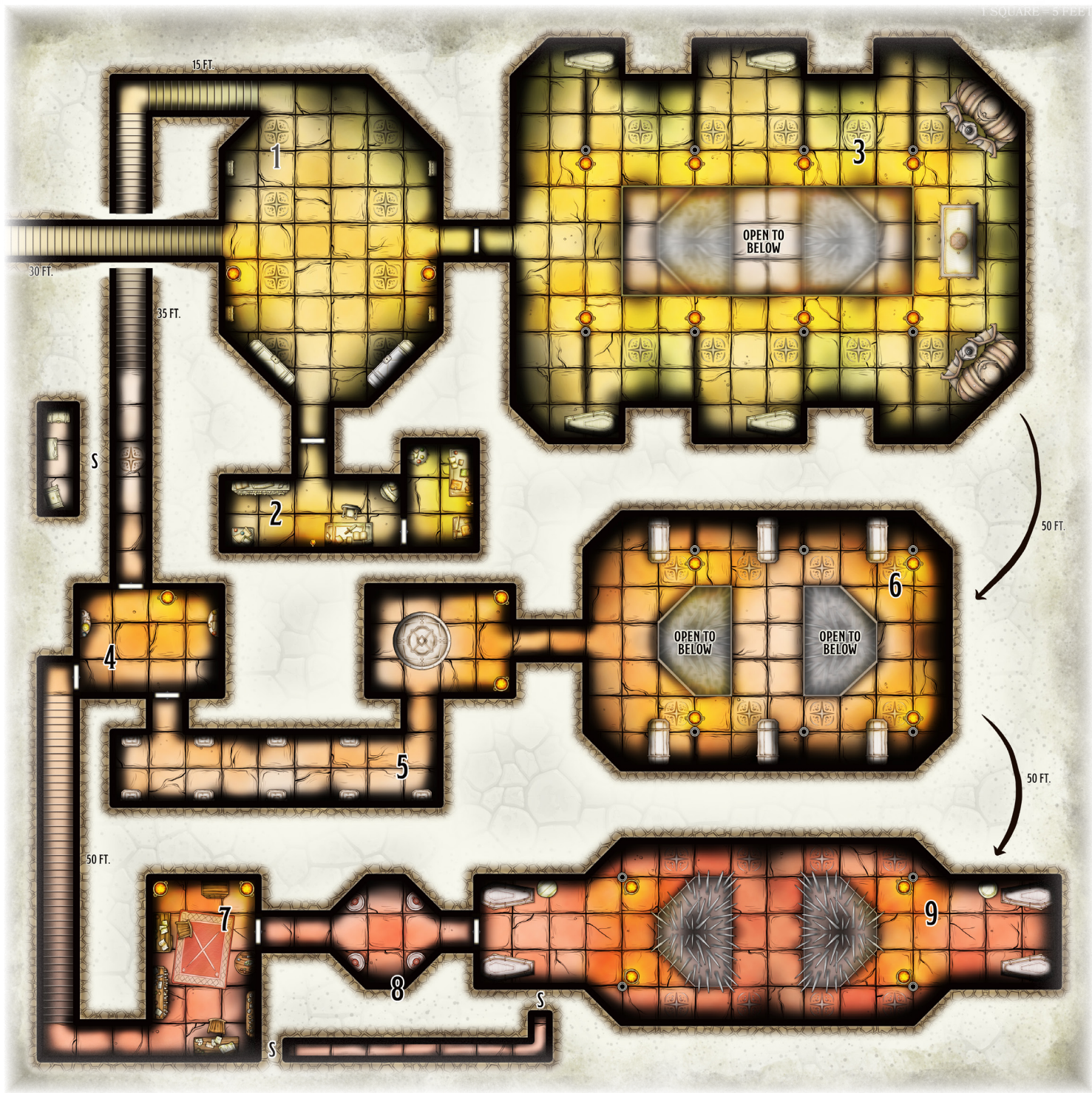
Lore. Reading the archive reveals that a cult of kobold mages built the temple eons ago. From the imagery, jumping down the main chamber's opening splits the body from the mind. The body also becomes liquid.

3. CHAMBER OF DREAMING

A large opening pierces the chamber's center and leads down into areas 6 (50 ft. below) and 9 (100 ft. below). Two 30-foot-tall statues of dragon knights oversee the hall. Since the cult began, Onno Matis has performed five successful *Rituals of Molten Dreams*. The participants jump down into area 9, their bodies turn to liquid when touching the spikes, and their minds are free. Six **guards**, one **knight**, and one **priest** pray by the dragon knight statues as they wait for Onno Matis's arrival.

4. DUNGEON LANDING

The second-level landing is empty except for two shelves with useless trinkets. The arched ceiling features a carving of a council of kobolds dressed in long robes.



5. CONTAINERS OF LIQUID DREAMS

Two rows of stone plinths hug the walls of this hallway. A sound like sea waves comes from each plinth.

Each of the plinths contains a glowing substance that moves on its own. Those who overcome the *Ritual of Molten Dreams* abandon the physical world; their minds now live in the Realm of Dreams. Their bodies melt and become an iridescent substance that is later retrieved and put into the plinths and enclosures. Four **specters** emerge from the eerie plinths and attack any trespassing creatures. They consider Onno Matis their leader because he performs the mind-splitting ritual.

6. IMAGES FROM THE PAST

Spectral apparitions coalesce next to the stone enclosures in this chamber. Images of kobolds and humans performing impossible dream-like feats.

The six coffins contain such a high amount of the dream-like substance that the dreams transpire ephemally into the Material Realm. The characters cannot interact in any way with the dream subjects as they are too far removed from reality. The arcane qualities of this room are living proof that the *Ritual of Molten Dreams* works as intended. The dream subjects here have been dreaming for countless years and shall continue to do so forever.



7. ARCANES STUDY

One **cult fanatic** and six **commoners** study tomes in this chamber. They are new members and are expected to learn about the temple. The fanatic attacks trespassers at once but the commoners crouch in fear by a corner. Studying the contents of this room for 10 minutes allows a spellcaster to perform the *Ritual of Molten Dreams*.

8. ROOM OF GOBLETS

Touching the door to area 9 causes the clay goblets to explode and deal 6d6 fire damage to all creatures within the room. The cultists use the hidden passage south of the room to bypass this chamber and reach area 9.

9. ROOM OF SPEARS

Onno Matis (**mage**) and four **cultists** meditate by the east end of the room. Onno offers the characters one last chance to stand back and become part of the cult. If they act on behalf of the cult for a time, they may earn the privilege of jumping down the shaft and live forever in the Realm of Dreams. Should the characters refuse, the unmerciful mage orders the cultists to attack.

TACTICS

If the characters refuse to join the cult, Otto Matis attempts to use a *suggestion* spell to target two characters (see **Features**) and leads them to try out the cult experience. The **mage** and the **cultists** may still take advantage of the confusion to attack when the characters least expect it. In battle, Otto Matis has the *dominate person* spell prepared. He uses it on the two characters with the weakest minds to divide the party and overwhelm the rest of the characters. If things turn sour, Otto Matis attempts to cast *dimension door* to escape safely.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Lights. Magical wall-sconces and floor braziers provide bright light throughout the dungeon. They feature *continual flame* spells that stop working after 1 minute if the implements are removed from their locations.

Secret Doors. Pushing cleverly-hidden buttons on the walls causes sections of it to slide inward and reveal narrow passages to other areas (DC 16 Perception).

Treasure. Constable Dallagher pays a 1,350 gp reward for the characters' services. There are 500 gp in the coffers in area 1. The statues in area 3 have ruby eyes (200 gp each). There are seven random wizard *spell scrolls* in area 7. There is assorted coinage, silverware, and exotic fabrics (4,000 gp), a *+1 dagger*, three *arrows of slaying*, and four *potions of healing* in the vault of area 4.

Glamour Aura. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of enchantment that permeates the dungeon. Spells of the enchantment school can affect an additional target.

THREE INCONVENIENT TRUTHS ABOUT CHARACTER BACKSTORIES

...AND HOW TO COPE WITH THEM AS A GM

A worldbuilding and roleplay aid supplement by Lefteris Stefanis



The king thanks you in front of everyone for your bravery and anoints you as knights of the Kingdom of Ardor. The bards will sing for...

[Barbarian] I also want to marry the princess I had a crush on!

Ermm yes... OK, so, the king blesses your union that...

[Wizard] Who were my parents anyway?

I don't know! You never bothered to look for them...

[Cleric] Now that everyone is gathered, I point to the marmot-shaped mark on my left buttock. Does anyone know anything about it?

Have you ever been here? Did your players go to all the trouble of writing extensive backstories for their characters that were never used in-game? No matter how beautiful, epic, or thrilling a D&D story is, it will always hold the players' interest more when they feel that their characters are an organic part of it and not just a random jumble of adventurers who slew the right dragon at the right time.

The question I ask most GMs that come to me with complaints is "*Why do you think this is happening?*".

Below are the three most common responses which I will try to address with specific suggestions.

THE BACKGROUND AND STORYLINE ARE INCOMPATIBLE

D&D players usually have a great imagination. It is not uncommon to receive a beautiful multi-page text in your mailbox with detailed descriptions of the young hero who was betrayed and forced to escape the mysterious Cult of the Misty Palm who holds the secret to eternal life, only to be haunted by her ex-lover who appears every time someone says the word "invariably". At the same time, you are holding a copy of the Mines of Phandelver and scratching your head. How can we combine these?

There are three simple ways to overcome this difficulty.

Number one: The lengthier a background story is, the more likely it has *something* you can use. Heresy? Immortality? Scorned love? Pick and choose. Avoid seeing the background as a single story that you must at all costs integrate into the campaign in its entirety and include every detail. You just need one link, strong enough to shake off that "random jumble" feeling.

Number two: Backstories are there to help you, not to burden you. Talk to your players and suggest any convenient changes that do not modify the core of their story. The magic word in such discussions is "why":

- *Why* did the heroine get involved with the cult in the first place? Was she chosen by her leader because she is going to play an important role in the events to come?

- *Why* has the cult's secret not been revealed? Perhaps it is not about immortality but some ritual that another organization is frantically searching for.

- *Why* does her ex think she betrayed him? Was he bewitched by a demon; the campaign's main villain?

When the background includes a clear, specific motive the puzzle pieces fit together with much less effort.

Number three: Make sure you have communicated the general theme of the campaign to all your players beforehand. Is it about survival in the Underdark? Political intrigue? Planar exploration? This way they will have a clearer direction when creating their backgrounds.

THE BACKSTORY IS TRIVIAL

“The orphan who grew up on the streets and had to become <insert class here> to survive”. I can guarantee you that even a player with a ten-word background wants their character to be more involved in the overall story. Either they didn't have the time to write down two pages, or they just couldn't think of anything more profound.

Not a problem! Take this as a “work-in-progress” background. This character will be an easy target for:

- NPCs who take a special interest in one of the heroes.
- Ancient prophecies about a chosen one.
- Intelligent magical items who select their wielder.

These “clean slate” characters are great to introduce some of the above into the campaign and serve the plot line. Thus, making the character an organic part of it.

I CAN'T DEAL WITH EVERY CHARACTER'S BACKGROUND; I HAVE A CAMPAIGN TO RUN!

Some GMs believe that making too many changes in the overarching plot will affect the quality of their campaign. My advice here is: Do not compromise! If you feel that making adjustments to accommodate a character's background story may “spoil the cake”, just don't do it. There are other opportunities for integration, without having to force it. Let things flow and adapt.

Ideally, you want to avoid adding quests, characters, or locations just to support a background story. It is much better to use already existing plot devices. For example, the vampire that is terrorizing the village becomes a much “spicier” NPC if he turns out to be the long-dead father of one of the characters. The options are endless.

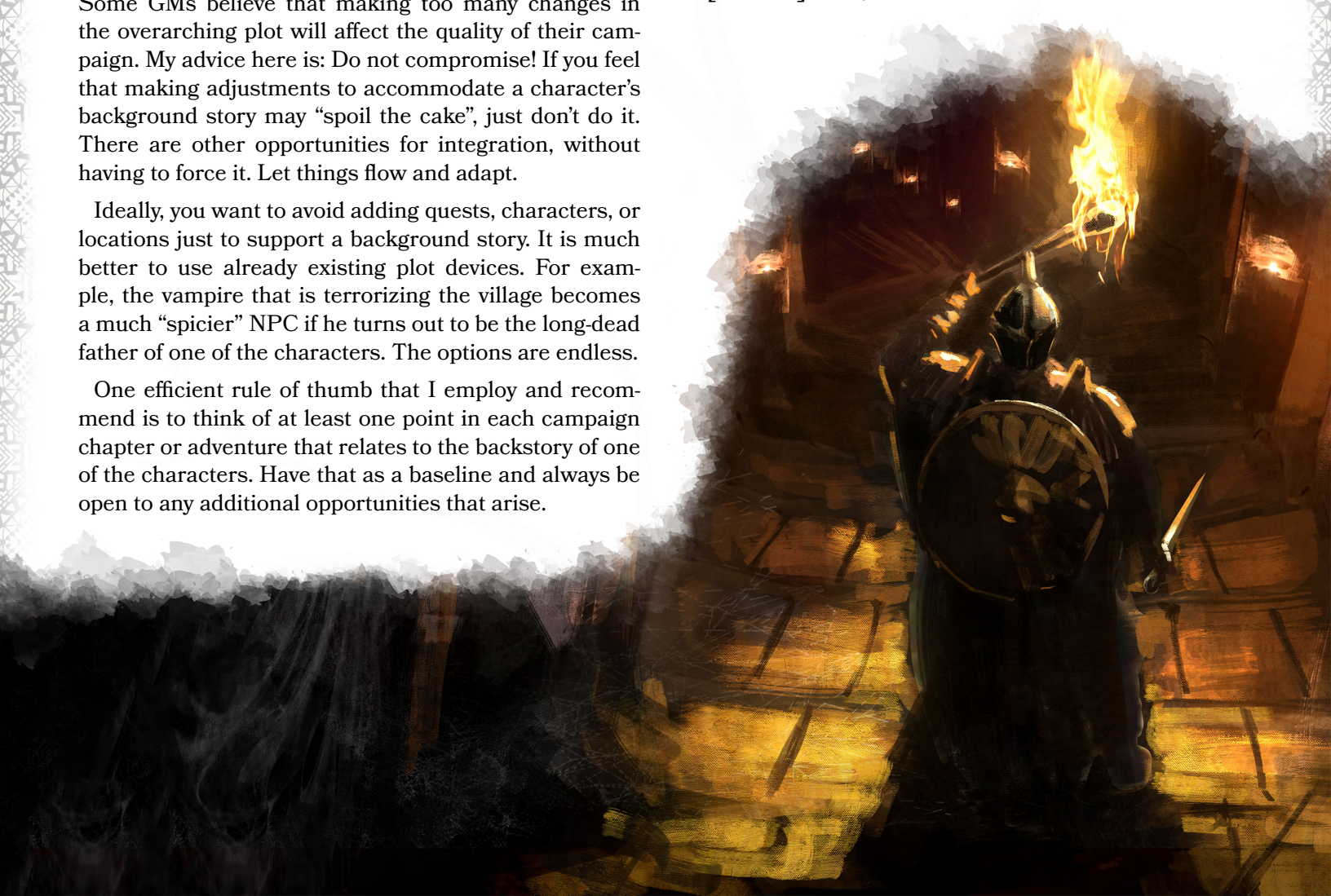
One efficient rule of thumb that I employ and recommend is to think of at least one point in each campaign chapter or adventure that relates to the backstory of one of the characters. Have that as a baseline and always be open to any additional opportunities that arise.

The king thanks you in front of everyone for your bravery. His Majesty addresses each of you individually: “[Barbarian] you have proven yourself worthy of my daughter's hand, I give you my blessing and an entire county to rule.

[Wizard], my long-lost son, I promise I shall make up for all these lost years now that our kingdom is safe.

I would now like everyone to observe a minute of silence for the heroic [Cleric] who, as prophesied by his birthmark, gave his life so that the threat of the Crimson Puma could be destroyed once and for all. Long live Ardor!”

[Cleric] Pfff, I liked the marmot better..



BANDS OF POWER

Bands or Power? Nah... They're just bedtime stories to scare off children. We need that mine. Clear the place for us, brave heroes. For Terranton!

Terranton Authorities

Delve Level 7 (11,600 XP)

8 wights
2 ghastrs
2 flesh golems
4 shadows
1 gibbering moulder

SETUP

SOME ARTIFACTS OF great power should have never been crafted. They often fall into the wrong hands and end up guarded, hidden, lost, or destroyed. This is a fact that saddens many a good-willed researcher or historian. If things were different, the world could benefit from their magic. The danger they bring is enough deterrent for many adventurers, though. They fear not the artifacts' power, but the great threats they come with.

Such is the case of the *Bands of Power*, crafted eons ago by the Master Forger Ragar. The story claims that he was a resident of the Silver-Rock Mountains. However, a demonic entity from the Underworld commanded him to create the *Bands of Power*. The artifacts were a means to communicate and grant him dark powers. But he did not have time to unleash chaos for long. The oldest of Terranton dwarves say that Ragar was consumed by his creation. His soul was absorbed into the bracelets' rubies. The dwarves' attempts to destroy the cursed bands failed. Thus, the dwarves hid them in an ancient dwarven temple. Hoping they would never resurface.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A GROUP OF prospectors went missing two weeks ago. Only one of them came back alive. They looked for rich iron and mithral veins. The survivor claims they stumbled upon an opening in the Silver-Rock Mountains. It took them to an underground hall where, he claims, hordes of undead dwarven warriors attacked them. The city leaders offer a hefty bounty. They want to know what happened in that hall and who is the culprit.

The characters travel to Terranton, the dwarven city within the Silver-Rock Mountains after they hear about the group of missing dwarves. If they accept to take the job, a payment of 3,500 gp awaits upon their return.

History Check

DC 14: *The Silver-Rock Mountain region is known for its many, rich silver mines. Many other ores are extracted from these territories too. Terranton is hundreds of years old. The city's economy thrives thanks to the mines. This region is also the birthplace of the world's best forgers.*

DC 18: *It is only a myth. But the story talks about Ragar, a Master Forger. He created the Bands of Power and brought death and sorrow to the dwarves of the Silver-Rock Mountains. Fortunately, the threat ended as quickly as it started. The dwarves blamed everything on the cursed bracelets and decided to hide them forever.*

1. MAIN HALL

The great hall features four tall columns. A massive, steel dwarven rune dominates the entire chamber.

The characters descend 60 feet after they cross the opening in the mountains. The bones scattered all around the area crack under their footsteps. Pieces of armor and rusty weapons litter the floor as well. Before any of the characters can interact with the altar or any of the doors, the bones tremble and coalesce into six **wights** that attack the intruders. The guardians wear dwarven armors.

Trapdoor. Interacting with the altar triggers the trap. Creatures standing on the square fall to area 5 and take 3d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 14 Dexterity / half).

2. ARCHIVES

The shelf, the equipment on the table, the containers, and the rest of the things here are in great condition.

The steel door to this area is locked (DC 17 Thieves' Tools). If the heroes spend 10 minutes reading the documents here, they learn the truth about Ragar and the *Bands of Power*. The books clearly state that these artifacts must not be tampered with, or retrieved.

3. DWARVEN SHRINE

Two fonts flank a massive, rune-inscribed steel anvil. This anvil represents one of the most important dwarven deities, the God of the Forge. The anvil is a source of divine power. Clerics or dwarves that spend 10 minutes in communion with it regain a spell slot. This blessing works once every 24 hours. The water in the ponds was once holy. It has lost all its magical properties.

BANDS OF POWER



4. SECRET CORRIDOR

The walls of this corridor feature images of a strong, dwarf forger hitting crimson red steel on an anvil.

If the characters fail to see the pressure-sensitive plates in the corridor (DC17 Perception), they trigger the trap when they walk on them. Creatures that fall get impaled 15 feet below and take 6d6 piercing damage.

5. DEADLY LANDING

A great dwarvish door stands to the south. Four mounted crossbows point to the chamber's center. The bones of several people litter the floor.

The characters find the stairs that lead here if they find the trapdoor in area 3. Otherwise, falling through the trap in area 1 triggers the crossbow trap.

Trap. The crossbows shoot three bolts each to creatures that walk on the marked tiles (see map) or those who fall from area 1. They take 3d8 piercing damage (DC 16 Dex / half) and become poisoned for 1 hour. The crossbows reset magically every two hours.

Encounter. Once the bolts are shot, the bones coalesce into two **wights** and two **ghasts** that attack.

6. FAKE VAULT

Promising and inviting, two ornate, stone chests rest beyond the reinforced dwarvish doors.

The dwarvish doors are locked (DC 19 Thieves' Tools). However, they remain unlocked while the crossbow trap reloads (see above). The two ornate stone chests within are a powerful illusion (DC 20 Wisdom).

Trapdoor Pitfall. Interacting with the chests triggers the trap. Creatures fall 35 feet, land in area 9, and take 3d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 14 Dexterity / half).

7. REAL VAULT GUARDIANS

Pieces of animal and human skin glued together cover the massive, tall bodies of two hulking figures. Their horrible faces show grimaces of pain and fear.

The strongest guardians of the *Bands of Power* stand here. Their immortal task is to defend this place from intruders. The two **flesh golems** fight until slain.

8. CAVERN ACCESS

The documents on the shelf contain lore, information, and warnings about the *Bands of Power* and how they were created. The cavern floor shows clear marks where the shelf was slid inward (DC 16 Perception).

9. BANDS OF POWER

The sounds of an oozy, gelatinous monstrosity creeping forward cause heavy feelings of uneasiness. For those in the dark pit, there is nowhere to go...

The characters reach this area from above (area 6) or through the secret passage in area 8. The last guardian of Ragar's bracelets is a **gibbering moulder**. The **shadows** of four dwarves emerge from the walls too. The characters find the *Bands of Power* within the monster's oozy substance but only after it is defeated.

Encounter. Modify the gibbering moulder's statblock as follows to meet the difficulty rating:

- AC 12 (natural armor) and 135 hit points
- Aberrant Ground and Gibbering DC of 13
- +4 to attacks. DC of 13 to be knocked prone

TACTICS

The **wights** are skilled warriors. They split and use ranged weapons if necessary. **Ghasts** attempt to paralyze weak-looking targets but attack recklessly. **Flesh golems** are tanks that fight with no mercy until slain. The **gibbering moulder** attacks any creature that falls through the trap (area 6) as soon as possible. It fights until slain while the **shadows** drain the strongest foes first.

FEATURES OF THE DUNGEON

Lights. Sconces with *continual flame* spells illuminate the place. The magic fades after one minute if removed.

Secret Passages. Marked with an "S" (see map). If the characters search the right places, they find bricks that need to be pushed, cleverly hidden compartments, or concealed trapdoors (DC 17 Perception).

Treasure. If the characters find the secret passages that lead to the secret vaults (see above), the treasure they retrieve includes the following: two *potions of greater healing*, and 1,500 gp worth of coins and silverware in area 2. Leather bags with 2,000 gp in assorted coinage and three random arcane *spell scrolls* in area 3. And 2,800 gp worth of expensive fabrics, a ruby (300 gp), and a *nine-lives stealer* blade (longsword).

Bands of Power. All the warnings were true. The bracelets are cursed. Whoever wears them obtains the power of a 7th-level necromancer. But it becomes the puppet of a demon from the Underworld...



THE WISDOM OF THE STONE

“When the heart feels cold and your mind feels numb, fear not. What you need is to seek the Wisdom of the Stone. Pray, know, learn, and share.”

Old Local Saying

Delve Level 2 (900 XP)

4 dwarf warrior (thug)

5 dwarf archer (scout)

SETUP

ALL SOCIETIES REQUIRE something to believe in. It becomes a necessity, almost like eating and breathing. Faith does not necessarily mean good or peacefulness. A strong faith may motivate someone to give their life for their cause. Or it could reshape their lives completely, turning them into servants of a certain god. As long as the individual mind truly believes, it does not matter what it believes in. And in a world of magic and fantasy, the things that people believe in often become true.

Such is the case of a famous place called *The Wisdom of the Stone*. It is a statue, carved from one of the faces of a massive large boulder that looks like a small hill. *The Wisdom of the Stone* is located a few miles north of The Brukesian Duchy, close to the Dwarven Realms. The statue has the shape of a monk sitting in a lotus flower position. A ceremonial, threaded hat covers his head while two steel bracers run the length of his arms. His palms hold a fist-sized ruby. However, the ruby is a recent addition. It was not always there.

THE BIRTH OF A FAITH

FIFTY YEARS AGO, a person deposited all faith and devotion on his most precious possession, a large ruby. He placed the ruby on the statue's hands and prayed for one entire day. Satisfied with his act, he left forever. Researchers have tried to trace back the construction of the statue. But there is little to no information about it.

But the statue's history is of no importance to the commonfolk: farmers, peasants, travelers, miners, itinerant merchants, and the like. The simple people ask less of life. They were all happy to wave and pray at the figure they soon considered a guardian. With time, the Brukesians made up their own myths, assumptions, and stories about the statue. The same thing happened with the northern dwarves. Some people admired it as a piece of great art. Others prayed and started to call it an idol of purity. And then the man with the ruby came...

The monk's statue had been the target of many prayers, thoughts, and admiration. But this man's act was the one that ignited the flame or power it holds today. After the foreigner left, the ruby on the monk's hands started to glow and hover a few inches over the statue's palms.

This “divine intervention”, as the locals call it, became the ultimate proof that the statue was more than ordinary. It caused a sea of pilgrims to come here to pray, meditate, and send energy to their loved ones. Surprisingly, the foul thought of stealing the ruby did not occur to a single person. The gem was considered holy. People claim that the statue brings them peace. Brukesians make pilgrimages and monthly organized visits.

Five decades have passed and *The Wisdom of the Stone* is a landmark that has helped unite humans and dwarves. Their cities are a few miles south or north of the statue. But all people find the peace of mind they seek. It has become a shrine to know others and share.

ADVENTURE HOOK

EVERYTHING IN THE world has its detractors, defenders, and radical believers. *The Wisdom of the Stone* is not the exception. The Ramblers are a group of dwarven brigands who believe that Brukesians had nothing to do with the creation of *The Wisdom of the Stone* and decided to prohibit the approach of all non-dwarves. Their road blockade has lasted three days so far.

Brukesians tried to negotiate with the dwarves with no success. They now offer a reward of 1,000 gp for removing the brigands or 2,000 gp for their arrest. Dwarven authorities care not for this. They also believe the statue is strictly theirs but never saw it beneficial to fight the humans over it. For them, having the Brukesians deal with the dwarven outlaws is a double win.

History Check

DC 15: *A statue located between the Brukesian Duchy and the Dwarven Realms is said to have magical properties. People go to meditate and cleanse their souls.*

DC 18: *No one knows about the statue's origins. Five decades ago, a selfless individual placed the ruby that floats on it. It has been considered divine ever since.*

1. SOUTH ROAD

The Brukesian Duchy roads are well-traversed. Clear evidence of merchant caravans makes it easier to discern the road. The statue is found to the left of a small fork, 10 miles north of the duchy's capital.

The characters come from the south, from the duchy's capital. The Ramblers have two **scouts** on lookout duty. They lie down at the top of the hill, over the statue (area 3). Both of them are aware of the newcomers. With a bit of luck, one of the characters sees the tip of an arrow shine from there (DC 16 Perception).

2. THE WISDOM OF THE STONE

The statue is a real work of art. The intricate details are evidence of an expert's work. In addition, the statue's surface does not show any signs of erosion. The bright red ruby floats over its palms.

The Ramblers expect the heroes to inspect the place. They wait for the best moment to strike (see **Tactics**). An observant character notices the tracks that lead to area 4 when they approach (DC 15 Investigation).

Ruby. A *detect magic* spell reveals a faint magical aura coming from the floating rock. Further inspection gives away the use of the *prestidigitation* and *minor illusion* cantrips. A permanent version of both cantrips causes the gray, ordinary, worthless rock to float and shine.

3. TOP OF THE HILL

The shallow hill is 35 feet tall. A strong character can make the climb to the summit (DC 15 Athletics).

4. HIDING BEHIND THE TREES

The rest of the Ramblers hide here. Four axe-wielding dwarves (**thugs**) and three more dwarven marksmen (**scouts**) wait for their leader's instruction to act.

TACTICS

ONE OF THE four warriors is Harrokan, the Ramblers' leader. They expect the heroes to lower their guard by the idol and pray. This strategy has worked before. The characters are taken by surprise if they fail to notice the dwarves (DC 16 Perception). The **thugs** target strong-looking foes with high armor. The two **scouts** posted in area 3 wait for the battle below to start but will act in self-defense if needed. Once combat starts, all five archers coordinate their shots against the same target.

Development. The enemies flee if they lose half their troops. If captured, they ask for forgiveness and offer little money for their release. However, if the Ramblers defeat the heroes, they spare their lives under the condition that they tell the Brukesians that they can no longer visit the statue without an official Ramblers' permission.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Signs of an Ambush. The dwarves are hidden but they are not very skilled. The characters have a couple of chances to notice them before falling into their trap.

Treasure. The Ramblers possess 250 gp including their weapons and armor. If the heroes defeat them or arrest them, they get paid (see **Adventure Hooks**).

The Statue. As stated in area 2, the statue's "magical" properties are the result of two simple spells. It seems that people from both realms have given the statue imaginary powers. The reason why the man from the story did this is vague. It can be inferred he intended to play a bad-taste joke on the commonfolk. Or perhaps, he did intend to unite others with the power of belief and faith.

DIVINE INTERVENTION OPTIONS

GM options to empower cleric gods and spice up play by Tristan Fishel

The Divine Intervention feature of the Cleric offers near limitless options. The power of the Cleric's god manifesting upon the Material Plane is a truly incredible storytelling moment, but the description suggests only using a Cleric spell to represent this power. These flashes of divinity represent temporary miracles that give the Cleric a chance at victory, not solving the problem altogether.

To better reflect the power of a god in a world of mortals, a GM may instead use one of the following options, organized by the god's various portfolios. These effects aren't for the players to choose—they are the effects of the god. Part of the appeal of Divine Intervention is the player never knows precisely how the aid will come, though it is likely related to the current situation in some way. The following is a list of suggested effects for GMs to choose from. Depending on the deity, its tenets, and the core values of the belief system, the GM chooses a theme from the list below. Each theme gives access to three different effects of Divine Intervention. Depending on the situation, the GM may choose to change or increase the power of any of the following options:

AFTERLIFE

- All enemies within 120 feet of the Cleric with hit points equal to twice the Cleric's level or less are immediately reduced to 0 hit points.
- The spirits of the Cleric and their allies are strengthened. For 1 minute, they each have advantage on Death Saving Throws, natural 1s do not result in two Death Save failures, and rolling a 16-20 on a Death Save results in regaining 1 hit point.
- The souls of the damned are brought forth to protect the Cleric, manifesting as 4 friendly **wraiths**. They act on the Cleric's initiative and obey the cleric's commands for 1 minute before disappearing.

BATTLE

- For the next three rounds, the Cleric and all of their allies' attacks automatically succeed, regardless of the attack roll result or the enemy's AC. Attack rolls must still be made in case of a critical hit.
- A massive bolt of power lurches down from the sky, dealing 20d6 of any damage type to a single creature posing a threat to the Cleric.
- The Cleric and their allies become immune to all types of damage for one round. And for the two following rounds, the Cleric and their allies obtain resistance to all types of damage.

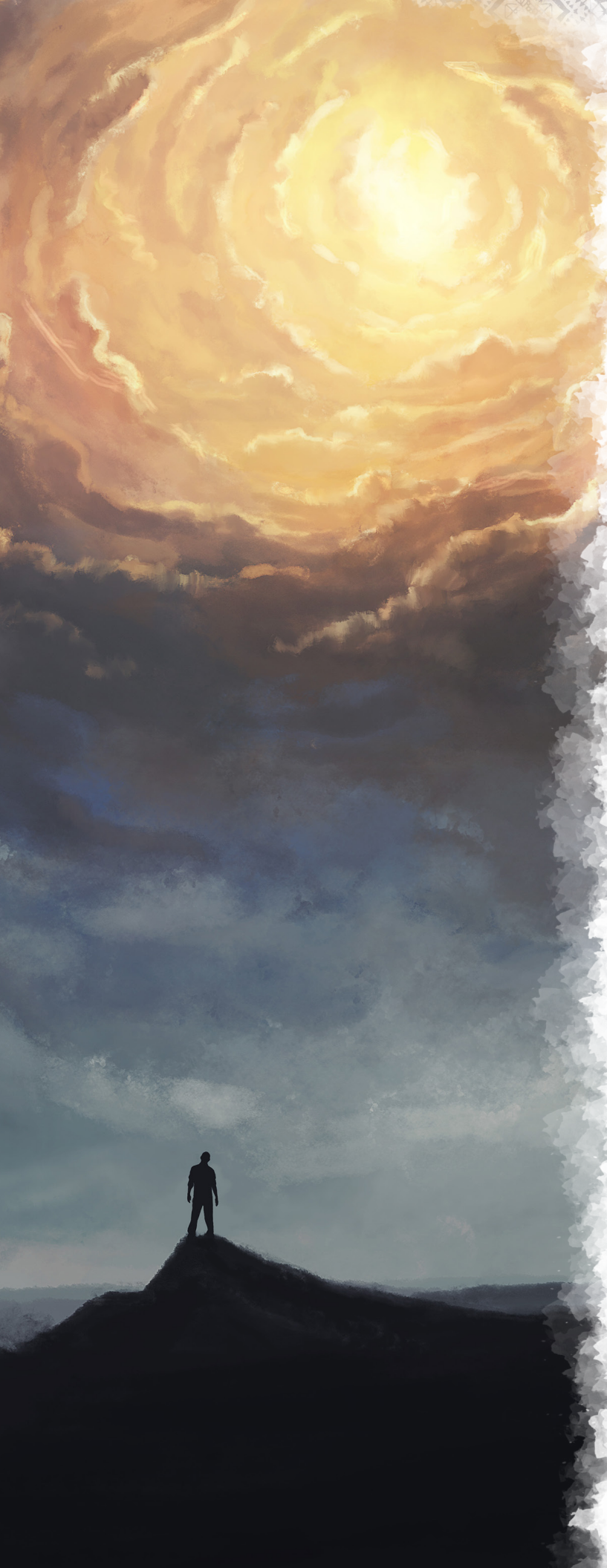
GUILE

- The Cleric and all their allies immediately turn invisible for 1 minute. While invisible in this way, magic such as *scrying* does not work on them, though senses such as blindsight do.
- A simple deceptive idea is placed in an enemy's mind. For 1 minute, it perceives all creatures it sees as the Cleric, and is unable to tell them apart. This includes allies and even animals.
- The Cleric and all their allies are immediately moved to the Ethereal Plane for 1 minute.

HEALING

- The Cleric and their allies in a 30-foot-radius circle centered on the Cleric regain all of their hit points.
- The Cleric cannot die for three rounds, no matter how many failed Death Saves. However, if at the end of the three rounds they have three failed Death Saves accumulated, they die.
- The Cleric regains all expended spell slots.





ILLUMINATION

- Brilliant light illuminates the area. All enemies are blinded for 1 minute, even if they have blindsight, truesight, or immunity to the blinded condition.
- Cleansing fire moves across the Cleric and all their allies. This removes all negative effects or magical conditions. Unconscious allies regain 1 hit point.
- The Cleric is transformed into pure light, gaining immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage for 1 minute. Additionally, the Cleric can move through solid objects and creatures during this time, but cannot end their turn within them.

INTELLECT

- The Cleric obtains insight into an enemy's weaknesses. It becomes Vulnerable to all types of damage dealt to it by the Cleric and their allies.
- The Cleric gains important knowledge about an essential fact that can save them. It may include a secret passage to escape, a way to destroy a powerful artifact or a fatal weakness of an enemy.
- The Cleric's knowledge increases vastly. Their proficiency bonus is tripled for one minute.

STORM

- Massive winds kick up. The Cleric may choose whether enemies can move within 30 feet of it or not, and ranged attacks that enter this area are made with disadvantage if the Cleric chooses.
- Lighting and thunder erupt from the area. Enemies are deafened and blinded for 1 minute.
- The Cleric and their allies gain the swiftness of the storm. They each gain a flying speed of 60 feet and do not provoke opportunity attacks.

WILDS

- The Cleric and their companions fly into a wild frenzy for three rounds. They each gain temporary hit points equal to twice their level. Whenever they take the Attack action, they may make an additional attack as part of the same action.
- 3 **giant crocodiles** or other similar dangerous beasts appear, acting on the Cleric's initiative and fighting on their behalf until the battle is won.
- Massive vines and overgrowth sprout throughout the area. All hostile creatures have their speeds reduced to 5 feet, regardless of the modes of movement they possess. Stealth checks made by the Cleric and allies have advantage in this terrain.

TOMB OF THE OPAL KING

The Opal King's Tomb is sacred for us. Angering His Majesty's spirit is the last thing we want. Promise you'll stay true to your word and protect the tomb.

Haverton Authorities

Delve Level 4 (4,525 XP)

1 bandit captain 2 ghouls
2 veteran 11 bandits
2 ankhegs 4 zombies
2 cult fanatic

SETUP

HEROES ARE OFTEN hired to take care of a monster, save the life of a missing person, or retrieve an item of great importance to their employer. In all of these cases, the heroes are permitted to keep the valuable objects they find or the treasure they stumble upon. But sometimes, on some rare occasions, the heroes' mission is to protect that treasure from being plundered.

This adventure brings the heroes to the Tomb of the Opal King. Located on the outskirts of Haverton, a farming region. The Opal King was the former ruler of these territories about three centuries before the Great War. Today, no one remains of the people of the Opal Realms but historians and researchers in Haverton are fond of their rich past. They have taken great care not to defile the tombs or temples of ancient civilizations. Lest they anger the spirits that seek peaceful rest for eternity.

ADVENTURE HOOK

THE TOMB OF the Opal King is a landmark protected by the authorities of Haverton. In shifts, four guards protect the place at all times, but a group of grave-robbers ambushed them a few hours ago. One of the guards managed to escape and warn Haverton's higher-ups.

The characters are hired on sight when they arrive in the city and ordered to act immediately. A reward of 2,500 gp awaits if they protect the tomb and its contents.

REACHING THE TOMB

THE HEROES ARE given instructions on how to get to the tomb. Near the entrance, however, they notice strange burrowing marks and eventually a hole on the ground; a tunnel. The heroes may choose to enter the tomb from the caves (area 6) or to walk straight through to area 1. In this case, they access the tomb from area 2.

History Check

DC 14: *It was three hundred years ago when the Opal King reigned over these lands. The Great War brought an end to his reign. The Tomb of the Opal King, however, has been conserved and kept in good condition since.*

DC 17: *This is not the first time that someone tries to rob the tomb. The stories say that one time, some robbers killed the guards. Their bodies were found outside days later. The authorities thought the worse when they entered to see if the tomb had been sacked. To their surprise, the robbers' corpses and their blood were scattered all over. And the treasure remained intact. Some say this is just a story to protect the tomb, though.*

1. ENTRANCE FROM THE FOREST

After a few hours' walk, the woods grow denser and darker. Just like the instructions said, a mountain with an opening divides the forest in two.

The characters find a group of one **veteran** and three **bandits** just outside the cave. The four men-at-arms eat and chat. They notice the incoming intruders if they do not conceal their presence (DC 12 Perception).

2. VESTIBULE

The walls of this chamber show old vanished frescoes of the Opal King and his loyal subjects.

Three **bandits** protect this area. Regardless of how the characters decide to deal with them in combat, at least one of them attempts to surrender (see below).

Mercy! One of the enemies claims that Vexan, their leader, has gone mad. He says that he forced the entire gang to stay put while he figures out a way to take the tomb's treasure without angering the dead. The man cries and says they already lost two guys to the zombies!

3. ANTECHAMBER

Three sarcophagi contain some of the Opal King's most loyal subjects. A button behind one of them triggers a sliding wall and reveals a vault (DC 15 Investigation).

4. TWIN CHAMBERS

The north chamber was destroyed by cave-ins. The south counterpart features two standing sarcophagi. They flank the corridor that takes to the king's burial place.

5. THE KING'S ARCHIVE

The documents in this area contain information about the Opal King and his reign. They tell the story of his life and describe his exploits as ruler.

The characters hear two voices beyond the door (area 7). A magic user identifies their words. The men are performing a necromancy ritual (DC 14 Arcana).

6. CAVERNS

The floor of the caverns is littered with gnawed bones and partially burned, dirty pieces of clothing.

These caverns harbor the nest of two ferocious **ankhegs**. Both protect their territory fiercely. However, they do not chase their prey into the cursed tomb.

Alternative Exit. The characters can use the caverns to escape but they must first deal with the ankhegs.

7. THE OPAL KING'S RESTING PLACE

Eight columns flank the central corridor in this large chamber. Two cloaked figures stand by the end of the room. The bodies of two men lie motionless over a pool of blood. A feeling of uneasiness fills the area...

The characters may interrupt Vexan's plans by entering the king's resting place from area 5 or the caverns (area 6). Either way, they must fight one **bandit leader** (Vexan), two **cult fanatics**, one **veteran**, and five **bandits**.

The Ritual. If both cult fanatics have at least 1 hit point each when the third round of combat begins, they successfully reanimate and take control of some undead in the tomb. Two **ghouls** and four **zombies** fight for them. They planned to use the undead to take the treasure.

TACTICS

THE ENEMIES in area 1 do their best to stop the characters from entering the tomb. They retreat to area 2 to fight with the rest of their allies if necessary.

Vexan and the rest of his followers do all they can to protect the two cult fanatics performing the ritual (see area 7). However, the undead go rampant 1 round after and attack all living creatures within reach at random.

THE KING'S TREASURE

The characters deal with Vexan and his goons. A spectral voice speaks into their minds: *Well done, my subjects. The Opal King's treasure must be protected.*

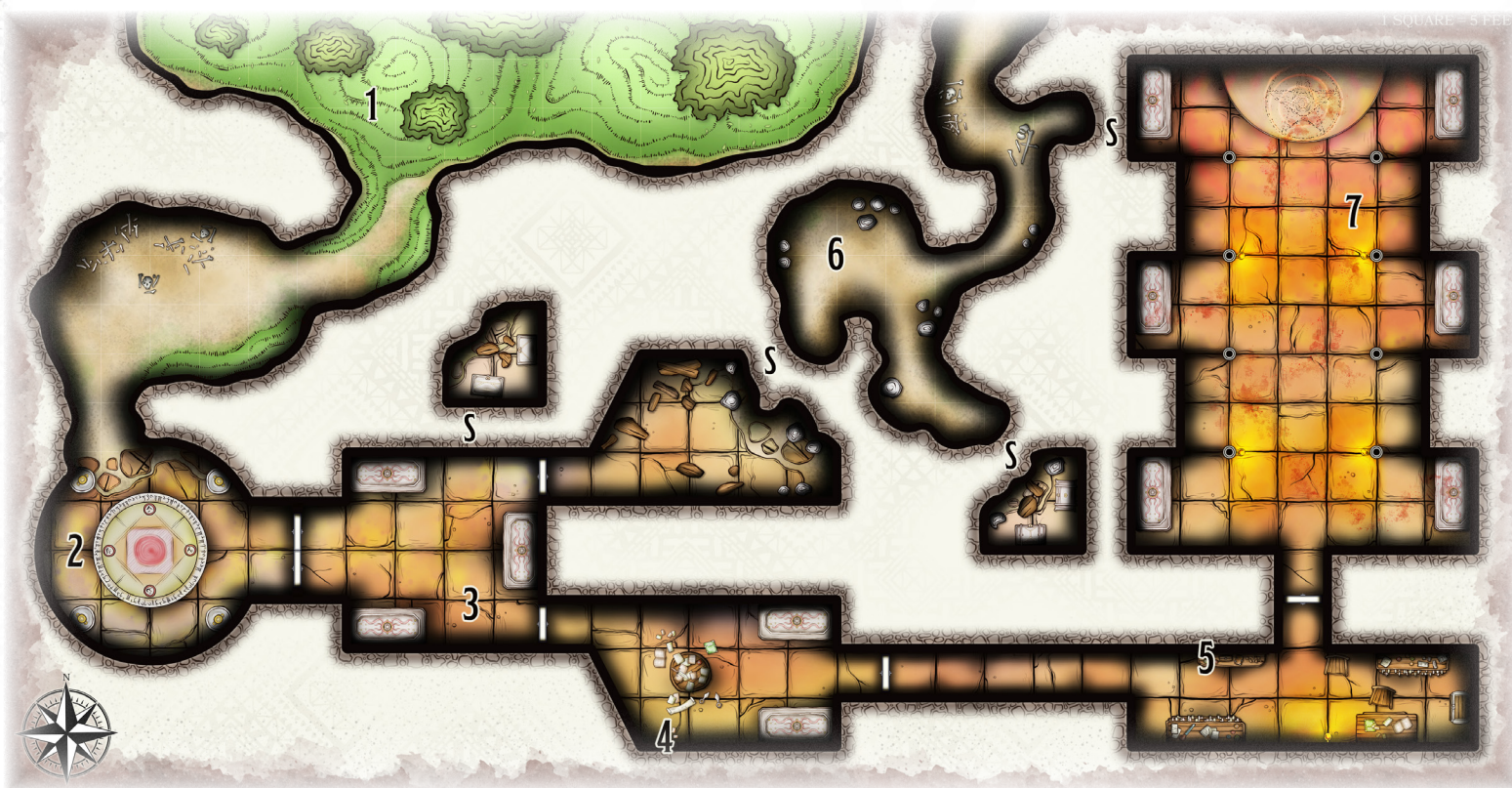
If the heroes do anything to threaten the king's treasure, three **ghouls** (area 3), two **ghasts** (area 4), those raised by the ritual (if they were not summoned), and the one **wraith** (the king) hunt the characters until slain.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Lights. Magical torches on iron wall sconces and floor braziers provide bright light throughout the tomb. Their *continual flame* spells fade in 1 minute if removed.

Caverns Passageways. The characters can access the secret vault here, area 3, and area 7 by taking 1 minute to remove rocks and debris in the caves. If they enter the dungeon from area 1, the weak wall sections are more difficult to spot or discern (DC 14 Perception).

Treasure. There are 600 gp worth of fancy fabrics, cloaks, and wine in one vault (area 3). And 300 gp of diamond dust and a *+1 dagger* in the other (area 6).



THE PATH OF PAIN

Everything we have was rightfully earned; paid in blood. We'll keep it with us forever. And anyone who wants it shall pay the blood price like we did!

Dylan Faythe's Diary

Delve Level 6 (8,700 XP)

2 wights 6 veterans
4 shadows 1 wraith
4 ghastr

SETUP

THERE IS AN old, popular saying that goes like this: “*Some people are so very poor, that the only thing they have is money*”. And it is true. Some filthy-rich individuals ignore what to do or where to spend their ridiculous amount of wealth. It often ends badly; mortal men easily fall into temptation and the power money bestows on them turns them into the worst versions of themselves.

On the other hand, we have the commonfolk, who know how it feels to earn food or a daily wage. But there is another kind in between. Those who work hard to become what they are, but must keep working for the rest of their lives or they might lose it all. These people tend to be careful, over-thinkers, but mostly selfish.

ADVENTURE HOOK

THE HEROES LEARN about *The Path of Pain*. This is the name that the people of Goldenspear gave to the Faythes' tomb. The story says that many of the Faythe family were adventurers. During their journeys, they acquired great fortune and came in possession of a plethora of magic items, scrolls, and other valuable artifacts.

The Faythes do not worry about their heirlooms and treasure being lost; they transformed the place into a dungeon with deadly traps and immortal guardians. Their objective is to make would-be robbers experience the same hardships as them when they acquired the items. They believe that if someone can bypass their magical defense mechanisms or defeat the guardians, they most certainly deserve to keep what was stored there.

History Check

DC 17: *The many Faythes buried in the crypt achieved great things in life. Their resting place is known as The Path of Pain. The treasure is there for the taking, but it is so dangerous that no one has retrieved it, yet...*

REACHING THE CRYPT

THE CHARACTERS MUST go to Goldenspear to enter the crypt. The members of the Faythe family there always prompt adventurers and mercenaries who wish to test their luck at their crypt. The settlement has a magic circle that leads to area 1, and the Faythe are happy to help. However, the heroes are free to find another way to teleport here. Alternatives are up to the GM's discretion.

1. ENTRANCE PORTAL

The walls display vanished images of wealthy-looking individuals wearing fancy robes and jewels.

When the characters appear in this area, they hear a voice echoing through the entire place. It says: “*Welcome, and good luck. Go on, achieve what no one could*”.

This is Dylan Faythe's voice, magically programmed to welcome newcomers. A small table with papers rests on an alcove before a set of stairs (to area 3). The papers show the names of the 20 people buried in the crypt.

2. THE FAYTHE TWINS

A beautiful symmetrical rug dominates the chamber. Two identical sarcophagi rest in shallow alcoves on each side. The heavy lids start to slowly shift...

The two enemies here are **wights** with maxed hit points. The Faythe twins emerge from their enclosures when the heroes enter the chamber. They fight until slain trying to corner their opponents against the walls.

3. LOCKED GATE

This gate is magically locked and will only open after the enemies in area 2 are defeated. Dylan's voice says: “*The twins have been bested before. This is but one of many dangerous obstacles between you and our treasure*.”

4. STANDING SARCOPHAGI

A strange pink mist hovers in this area. It finds its way through the sarcophagi's cracks and lids.

A swift current of cold air shuts the gate to area 3 when the characters reach this place. The sarcophagi contain four **shadows**. They wait until the characters confront the undead in area 5. The gate to area 6 is locked; it opens after all enemies in areas 4 and 5 are defeated.

5. DYLAN'S FAYTHE

The thick, pink mist originates from an ornate, rune-carved sarcophagus on a dais, close to the west wall. Dylan's voice says: "There is no shame in failure. We did not always succeed on our adventures. But we did know when to flee... Live to fight another day. We, the Faythes, never believed in having a hero's death. What for?"

Dylan's spirit (**wraith**), two **ghasts**, and the four **shadows** from area 4 attack the characters mercilessly.

6. A DOLOROUS PATH

"It's not over...", the voice says when the characters arrive here. If they fail to notice the pressure-sensitive plate (DC 17 Perception), the device at the end shoots a *lightning bolt* spell. Creatures in the corridor take 6d6 lightning damage (DC 15 Dex / half). The two **ghasts** in the sarcophagi attack when the trap is triggered.

7. TWIN CHAMBERS

The chests in both chambers feature a poison dart trap. Creatures that touch either take 4d6 poison damage and become poisoned for one hour (DC 14 Con).

Secret Vault. Pushing a brick on the east wall causes a section of the wall to slide inward (DC 16 Investigation).

8. SMALL ARCHIVE

The documents contain information about the crypt's construction and a map. The door has a regular lock that even common hands can bypass (DC 14 Thieves' Tools).

9. A TEST OF WILL

The pink mist in this chamber flies and finds its way between the joints of the six full sets of armor.

The characters witness the sets of armor come to life thanks to the magic mist. Six construct **veterans** fight until slain. If the heroes destroy the mist-producing urn, the armors stop moving and become inert.

10. AN ACT OF FAYTHE

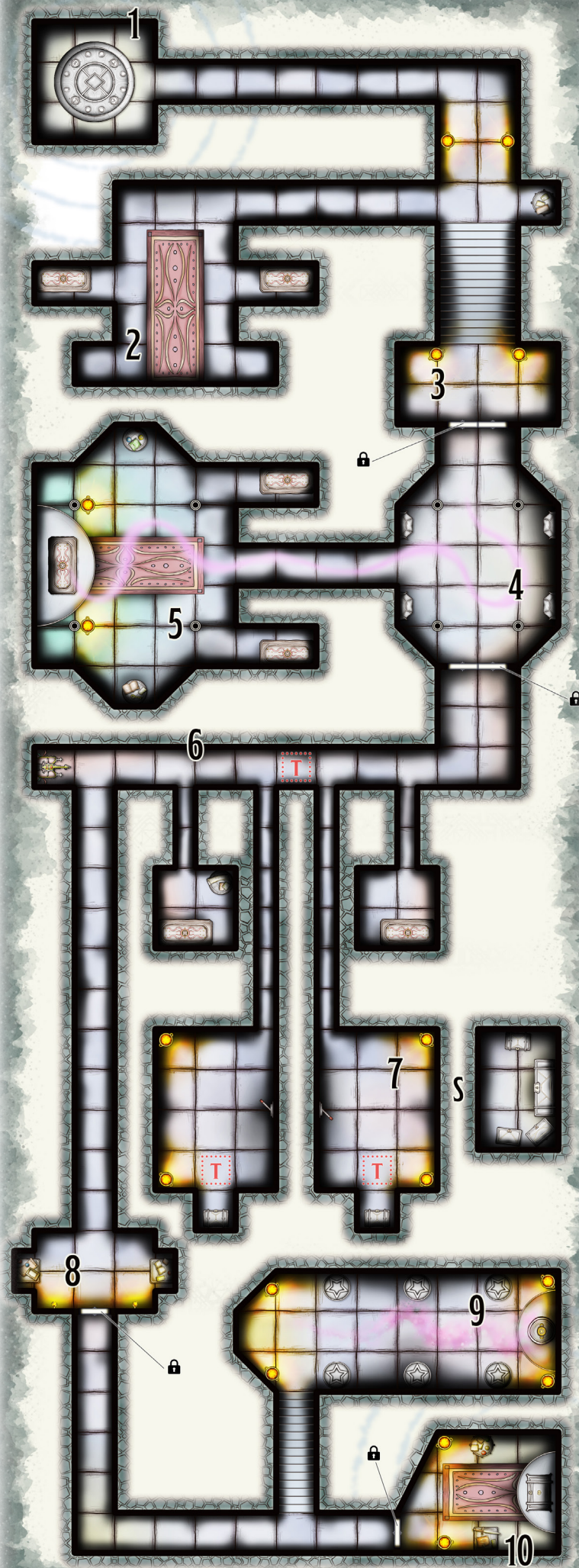
The locked door only opens after the enemies in area 9 are defeated. "I can't believe it. A worthy group, at last. Take the treasure. You've earned it". Dylan's voice says.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Lights. Magical torches on iron sconces and floor braziers provide bright light throughout the tomb. Their *continual flame* spells fade in 1 minute if removed.

Magic. The spells in the crypt allow all enemies to reform every 12 hours. The treasure does not reappear.

Treasure. Area 7 contains a +1 *longsword*, and 2,000 gp worth of coins and silks. Area 10 contains two magic weapons, 10 *spell scrolls*, and two magical artifacts. The GM must choose items that fit the current campaign.



SUPERHERO MAGIC ITEMS

A collection of heroic magic items by Victor Escalante, "The Monstrous"

ABSORBING FLAIL

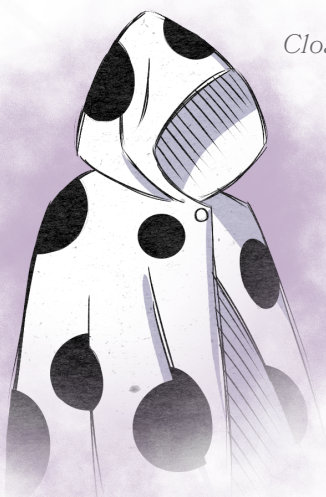
Weapon (flail), uncommon (requires attunement)

THIS WEAPON BELONGED to a berserker that made a deal with a wizard: He would become his bodyguard if the wizard gifted him with a weapon. Knowing that the berserker was already capable of taking several hits without a sweat, the wizard attached a smooth stone ball to an iron chain and gave it absorbing properties. The berserker was so delighted with the new weapon that he decided to ignore the wizard's deal, killing him in a single blow. With his dying breath, the wizard bestowed a curse upon the flail, twisting its absorbing properties so that the berserker would think twice before using them.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. This weapon has the Reach property and it has three times the weight of a regular flail.

This magical flail contains 3 charges. It regains all expended charges daily, at dawn. As a reaction, when you take acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage, you can expend one or more of the charges to cast *absorb elements* through the flail. The number of expended charges equal the level at which the spell can be cast.

Curse. This flail is cursed. Becoming attuned to it extends the curse to you. When you cast the *absorb elements* spell, you become vulnerable to all other damage types, except for the one chosen by the spell to resist.



Cloak of Spots

CLOAK OF SPOTS

Wondrous item, rarity varies (requires attunement)

THESE CLOAKS ARE typically made to protect the squishier spellcasters although it is not unheard of that a rogue may make use of them for more illicit purposes, especially when it comes to the rarest variant of this magic cloak.

The black spots on this cloak function as small portals that can redirect enemy attacks. The rarity of the cloak determines the number of spots it has:

- Uncommon: 1 charge (regains 1 at night).
- Rare: 3 charges (regains 1d3 at night).
- Very Rare: 6 charges (regains 1d4+2 at night).

As a reaction, when a creature makes an attack roll against you, you can spend one of the charges and cause one of the black spots to swallow the incoming attack and redirect it toward a target within 5 feet of you (if it is a melee attack), including the creature that attacked you, or towards a target within the remaining attack range (if it's a ranged attack, taking in consideration its normal range). One of the black spots disappears from the cloak after using this reaction.

For example, if a shortbow has a range of 80 feet and a creature attacks you from 30 feet, use your reaction to redirect the attack toward another target within 50 feet.

Furthermore, in case you are in possession of the *very rare* version of the *cloak of spots*, you can use an action to cast *arcane gate* once per long rest.

EDITOR'S NOTES

WE HAD LOTS of fun reading this article. It is always great to draw inspiration from movies and series. These adaptations to game mechanics often end well.

We draw maps and write lots of adventures but we have created a few magic items. A good thing to consider when creating or coming up with original artifacts and items is the current campaign you run. For example, the Infinity Gauntlet and Batarangs would be amazing. But an item that matches your story would be even better.

FIENDISH MASK

Wondrous item, very rare, [requires attunement by a creature of lawful alignment (but not lawful good) or evil alignment (but not chaotic evil)]

SOME DIABOLIC CULTS carve these wooden masks from the blood-stained tables used during their black masses and ritual sacrifices, often for the use of their highest-ranking priest or cult member.

As an action, while wearing this wooden mask, you can transform your body into a devilish new form for 1 minute. During this time, you gain the following benefits:

- **Devil's Sight.** You can see normally in darkness, including magical, up to a distance of 30 feet.
- **Infernal Fire Breath.** As a bonus action in each of your turns, you can exhale a 60-foot-cone of fiery breath. Each creature in that area takes 6d8 fire damage (DC 17 Dexterity / half).
- **Devil Wings.** Leathery wings emerge from your back, giving you a flying speed of 60 feet.

Once you have used this property you must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw (which can't benefit from any source of advantage) to be able to use this property again the next dusk. On a failed save, the ability cannot be used again for the following 7 days. No one else can attune to the mask during this time either.

Curse. This mask is cursed. Becoming attuned to the mask extends its curse to you. While cursed in this way, demons have advantage on attack rolls made against you but you have disadvantage on saving throws against effects caused by demons' abilities, traits, or spells.



Fiendish Mask

HELM OF SWARMS

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

THE GNOME TINKERERS have always found the little bugs very interesting, akin to tiny and very organized machines. One day, a gnome said, "*what if we could attract a swarm of the little critters whenever we wanted?*".

As an action, while wearing this helm, you can summon 1d3 + 1 **swarms of insects**. This property can't be used again until three days have passed.

While the swarms are within 100 feet of you, you can communicate telepathically with any of them. Furthermore, as an action, you can see and hear through the senses of one of the swarms until the start of your next turn. During this time, you're considered incapacitated, blinded, and deaf in regards to your senses. The swarms remain active for one hour or until they are reduced to 0 hit points, after which they disappear.

HELM OF THUNDEROUS VOICE

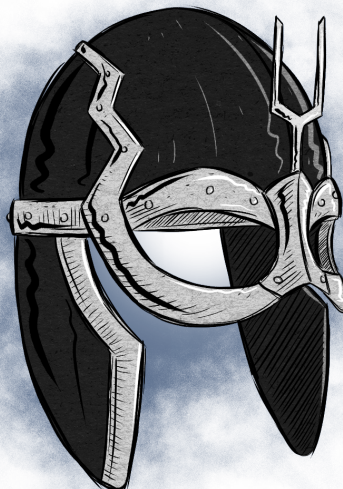
Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

THIS HELM ONCE belonged to a great, ancient king, famous for his leadership skills despite being mute. The helm was crafted by the king's brother, in an effort to make the king feared by his own people and take the throne for himself. However, the plan backfired and the king used the properties of the new helm to be heard all around his kingdom at once, unifying his people in a way that he could never have achieved before.

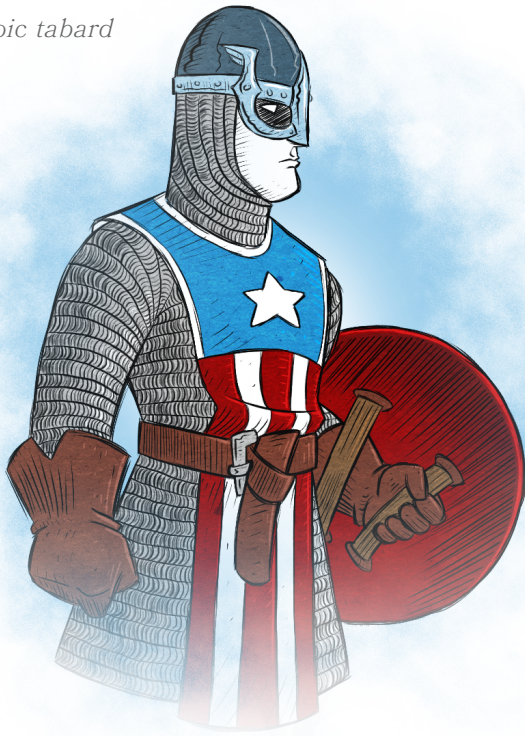
As an action, while wearing this helm, you say the command word, emitting a thunderous blast in a 60-foot-cone, audible up to 600 feet away. Each creature in the area takes 10d6 thunder damage and is deafened for 1 minute (DC 14 Constitution / half). saving throw. Creatures and objects made of glass or crystal have disadvantage on the saving throw and take 15d6 thunder damage instead of 10d6.

Furthermore, you can also manipulate the particles around you to cast the *disintegrate* spell (save DC 17) from the fork in the helm's forehead. Either of these properties can only be used once per week. After using this property, you must succeed in a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be unable to use this ability again for the following fourteen days.

Finally, while wearing the helm, you may replicate the effects of the *thaumaturgy* cantrip involving sound within the range of the spell.



Helm of Thunderous Voice



HEROIC TABARD

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement by a Fighter, a Ranger, or a Paladin)

THIS RED, WHITE, and blue tabard is often worn by the bravest adventurers who seek to reach their peak physical condition. While wearing this tabard, you gain proficiency in Athletics and Acrobatics. If you are already proficient in these skills, you can double your proficiency bonus each time you make a check using said skills.

To keep these benefits, you must always volunteer to either be the first in your group's marching order or to make the first watch when taking a long rest in the wilderness. Otherwise the benefits stop for 30 days.

STAR BRACELETS

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

These bracelets were forged from iron and other minerals found in meteorites and worn by a deserter captain who used them against his people in defense of the human race. While wearing the bracelets, you gain a flying speed equal to twice your walking speed. When you fly using the bracelets you leave a starry trail behind you.

The bracelets have a number of charges equal to your proficiency bonus. It regains all charges the next dawn. As an action, you can expend one charge to give yourself a +5 bonus to your passive Perception score.

Alternatively, you can expend all charges to cast the *guiding bolt* spell as if you were using a spell slot of the same level as the number of expended charges.

RING OF STARFLAMES

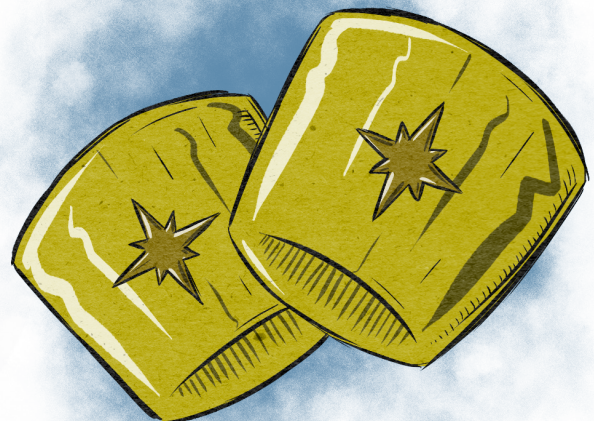
Wondrous item (ring), legendary (requires attunement by a creature with a Wisdom score of 18+)

THE MIGHTY WARRIOR that first found this emerald green ring said the magical artifact fell from the sky. After talking to various sages, they all concluded that the magical properties of the ring would only manifest by a bearer with great willpower. Since then, the ring has passed from hand to hand, sometimes in bloody circumstances. The ring of starflames has 12 charges and it regains 1d6+6 expended charges daily at dawn.

While wearing the ring, you have advantage on saving throws against being frightened as well as to end the frightened condition on yourself. You can also use your action to expend a number of charges to cast one of the following spells (DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks):

- *Scorching ray*, deals radiant damage instead of fire damage and the rays are green (2 charges).
- *Magic missile*, 3rd level version and the missiles look like green fists (3 charges).
- *Major Image*, the image's colors are all shades of green (3 charges).
- *Arcane hand*, the hand is green (5 charges).
- *Wall of light*, the wall is green (5 charges).
- *Prismatic spray* (7 charges).
- *Prismatic wall* (9 charges)

When the last charge is spent, you must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or lose the ability to cast one of the listed spells (chosen by you). Once the last spell is lost, the ring loses its magic and turns to dust.



Star Bracelets

A KNIGHT'S BLOOD

"...and those who wish to repent and atone for their sins shall find solace and peace in the holy knight's blood. The crimson liquid's holy properties shall..."
Old Divine Tale's Fragment

Delve Level 4 (3,600 XP)

12 sahuagin 2 swarms of insects
2 swarms of quippers 1 umber hulk

SETUP

WARRIORS OF LIGHT and heralds of god never have it easy. It does not matter the alignment of the deity. Kind-hearted deities often chastise their followers when they deviate from the righteous path. And evil gods force their devotees to perform inhumane tasks to obtain their power in return. It is not uncommon to hear people say that the term fanatic often fits some religious folk.

This adventure may be used as a quest for a paladin, a cleric, a warlock, or a similar character to redeem themselves before their god or patron (see **Adventure Hook**). The heroes hear about the myth of the knight's blood and come here seeking guidance, answers, or certainty.

A PATH OF REDEMPTION

A **MEMBER OF** the adventuring party has deviated from the righteous path and has partially lost their divine or arcane connection. This has severed their abilities and forced them to make this journey. They must try.

The character in question has a vivid vision of this place during their sleep. They see the ruins and the dungeon with the knight's blood. The hero feels compelled to go.

THE RUINED TEMPLE

THE KNIGHT'S STATUE is located in underground caverns. Centuries ago, this network of caves was a temple dedicated to an order of valiant holy knights. Little remains of it. The broken tiles, partially hidden by dirt and rocks, and the lonely, massive statue are what is left.

History Check

DC 14: *A not-so-popular religious fable tells the story of a holy knight who had a life of great deeds. The story claims that a 30-foot-tall statue was built in his honor.*

DC 17: *The story of the knight does not end there. It is said that the blood of that knight was preserved and kept within the statue. Could this blood have holy powers?*

ADVENTURE HOOK

THIS ADVENTURE FITS best with the background of a religious character. But it does not have to be this way. In case none of the members of the party has a religious reason to come here, use the following adventure hook:

The sahuagin that live by the waterfall and the flooded cave have become a nuisance to the people of Goldcrest. The fierce fishfolk attack travelers and merchants. They killed a squad of guards two days ago. Goldcrest authorities offer 1,000 gp to anyone who gets rid of them.

1. SAHUAGIN LAKE

It is a few-hours journey from Goldcrest to the sahuagin territory. The sounds of the river and the singing of birds accompany travelers.

The people of Goldcrest point the heroes in this direction if they inquire about the job. Six **sahuagin** hide in the depths and ambush trespassers (DC 16 Perception). The heroes cannot negotiate with them, and a fight ensues. The sahuagin flee to area 2 if reduced to half their hit points. The characters must dive to follow them.

2. UNDERGROUND POND

This flooded cavern is covered by 3 feet of water. Wrinkles in the water follow every movement.

Small-sized characters must swim to stand afloat. The remaining fishfolk from area 1 fight here along with two more sahuagin and two **swarms of quippers**. They do their best to stop the intruders' advances into their lair.

3. SAHUAGIN LAIR

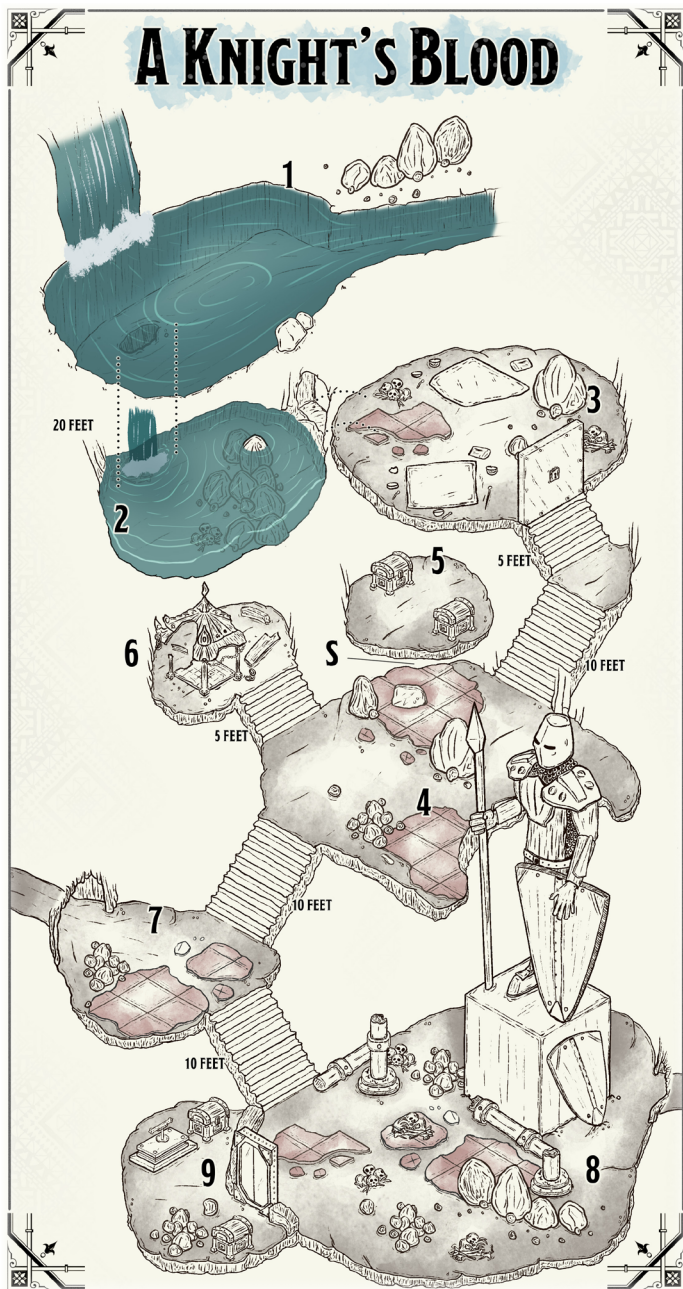
Four **sahuagin** give their lives protecting eight non-combatant younglings and a nest with several eggs. Countless gnawed, human bones lie scattered all around.

Locked Gate. The sahuagin could never find the means to open the steel gate (DC 18 Thieves' Tools).

4. THE STATUE

This cavern used to be the main temple hall but almost nothing remains of it. A *detect magic* spell reveals a protective aura coming from the great knight's statue. This magical ward protected it from erosion or being destroyed by cave-ins like the rest of the temple.

A KNIGHT'S BLOOD



FEATURES OF THE DUNGEON

Smells and Sounds. The stench of fish and rotten meat permeates areas 2 and 3. The rest of the caverns are odorless. The dark caves feel empty and lonely.

The Statue. The knight was built with sandstone, alabaster, and some copper and bronze foundations. Non-divine characters cannot interact with the statue in the way clerics and paladins can (see **The Knight's Blood**).

Blood. The characters may sell the blood vial for 15,000 gp to a religious organization. If they keep it though, assassins attempting to retrieve the blood hunt them.

Treasure. Area 5 contains 1,200 gp worth of fancy fabrics, cloaks, and silverware. Area 9 contains 500 gp, a +1 rapier, a +1 shield, and a spell scroll of *arcane gate*.

5. SECRET CAVERN

The characters notice a section of the cavern wall is weak (DC 16 Investigation). A strong enough blow (DC 20 Athletics) or 10 minutes of hard work remove the rocks and debris that block this cave's entrance. Three **swarms of insects** live here, they attack the intruders. The insect swarms flee when reduced to half their hit points.

6. LONG LOST LORE

Stone fragments and splintered pieces of wood are all that remain from the furniture that was once here.

There seems to be nothing of value here. However, searching the place reveals a few vanished pages of an ancient book (DC 18 Investigation). They talk about the existence of the holy knight's blood and how the sacred crimson liquid was kept within a grand statue.

7. ANTECHAMBER

The cavern walls display great claw marks. A dark path continues west into uncharted territories. A character identifies the umber hulk tunnels (DC 17 Nature).

8. THE KNIGHT'S BLOOD

The characters reach their destination (in case they were looking for the blood). However, their arrival disturbs the meal of an **umber hulk**. The massive insect does not take this interruption lightly and attacks. It tries to confuse its enemies first. It flees through a tunnel or digs a new one when reduced to half its hit points.

9. VAULT

The characters can open the reinforced steel vault's door with the right tools (DC 19 Thieves' Tools). If they fail and try to destroy the door or the cave, they draw the attention of two **umber hulks** after one minute.

THE KNIGHT'S BLOOD

A **CLERIC OR** paladin that interacts with the statue has a vision. They see themselves delivering the blood to one of their god's temples or churches. The holy knight provides a single vial of blood to the heroes.

Regardless of what the characters believe, the vial of blood must not be tampered with. A *detect magic* reveals a strong aura coming from the crimson liquid. An *augury* spell warns against any idea regarding the consumption or destruction of the blood. A creature who drinks the blood dies (no save). Creatures that attempt to attack the vial must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma save. On a fail, they become charmed by the blood vial. For 24 hours, their only objective in life is to protect the vial.

If a hero delivers this artifact to a temple of their god (good or evil), they atone for their sins. Misuse or continued appropriation of the blood worsens their situation.



DANA FLOBERG

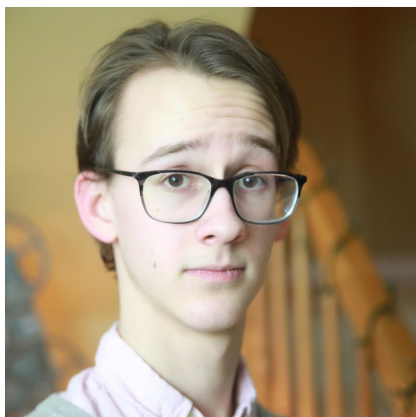
Dana Floberg (they/she) is a creative writer, TTRPG designer and editor. They previously worked as an editor on the ENNIE-nominated [Uncaged: Goddesses](#) and as lead designer of their one-shot adventure, [Off the Books](#), both available on the DM's Guild. You can find them gushing about books as a co-host of [\[Working Title\]](#), a podcast for aspiring writers and voracious readers.

Find them on [Twitter](#) or check out their [Website](#) for more storytelling shenanigans.



LETERIS STEFANIS

Leteris has been a steady GM since 1994. His favorite part of the game is finding innovative ideas for adventures and connecting player story arcs on long running campaigns. He contributes to his local D&D community by co-organizing massive gaming events and introducing new players to the hobby. Two of his original adventures: “Dusk Tower” and “Honey and Cinnamon” were awarded 2nd and 1st place in the 2014 and 2015 Greek Adventure contests. You can find the English version of [Dusk Tower here](#).



TRISTAN FISHEL

Tristan Fishel began playing D&D at the ripe old age of 7, before he could even begin to fully understand the rules, to help his older brother test dungeons for his friends. Since then, he's become an avid GM, a co-author with the same brother on an upcoming GM Tools Book, and a variety of projects with more to come on the Dungeon Master's Guild. Tristan's most recent module is [Whispers From Below](#).



VICTOR ESCALANTE “THE MONSTROUS”

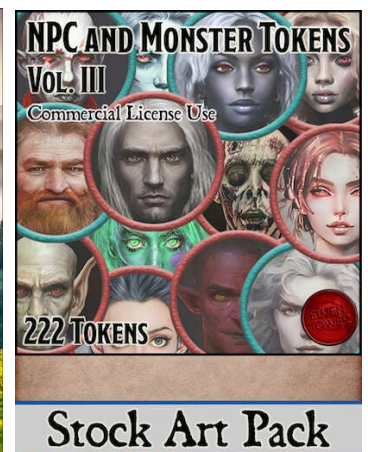
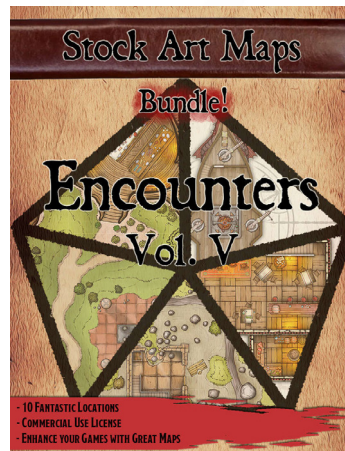
Known as “Vic” to his friends, players and minions, he started playing D&D before the dark times began (aka covid) and is under a powerful curse that forces him to be a forever GM. Vic loves some of the old-school aesthetics and feel of the game and always tries to bring them back, to the horror of his friends. Vic has a passion for comic books and enjoys bringing comic book elements (specially those of the great Jack Kirby) into his campaigns.

When nobody is looking or he has some free time, Vic manages a Patreon where he uploads “monstrous” paper tokens to be used in, you guessed it, D&D adventures. You can follow him on [Patreon](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).

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