

DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 8

8 ORIGINAL ADVENTURES
HIGH RESOLUTION MAPS
ROLL20 MAPS



THE BEST ADVENTURES FOR THE BEST GMS

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About this Magazine

Dungeon Vault Magazine is all about providing interesting ideas and lore to DMs and storytellers. Within this issue, you will find varied adventure ideas.

These short modules do not stick to a unified template of sections. Instead, they are organically created and follow their own pace. The types of modules you can expect are city/town settings, regional settings, dungeons, outdoor locations, encounter maps, and one-page adventures.

The modules are written with 5th ed. OGL in mind but rules are often left to a minimum. Most adventures are appropriate for low to mid-level (Levels 1 to 10) adventuring parties. We include a note at the beginning of each adventure with a ballpark estimation of party level and playing time.

As the DM, you are free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first you should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew-world lore. All material in this release is intended personal use.

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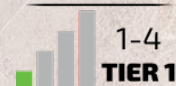
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Feed him!? Are you mental? No amount of food will satisfy his hunger!

Bengee, nomad merchant

A HUNGRY GIANT



BACKGROUND LORE

Large towns that prosper become cities, which then evolve into metropolises. For this to be possible, a city's government and the ruler must know how to handle politics, economy, and military affairs. The latter consists of assembling a decent army, training soldiers accordingly, and making use of vantage points such as outposts in important rivers, at crossroads, and other advantageous locations.

In Avalon, a large and prosperous city, there is a military outpost around its outskirts. Half a dozen men occupy the tower at all times. Each team covers their shift and then leaves through an underground tunnel that reaches the city barracks. This was all possible because one day, one of the guards noticed a weak spot on the east wall of the basement. When he approached the wall and touched it, it collapsed, revealing a natural cave under the hill. They decided to build a tunnel from the outpost to the barracks. (The artificial tunnel is not shown in the map). This makes it look like the six soldiers live there, and never leave their post. This is a calm and quiet spot. The soldiers kill time playing cards and telling stories. They also enjoy cooking and frying meat.

One day, a real threat knocked on their doorstep and they couldn't do anything to stop it. A hill giant named Troz approached the tower in the middle of the day. The soldiers attempted to scare it, or make it flee but in vain. The giant was hungry and the smell of jerky and fried fish that the soldiers were cooking attracted the giant. The giant reached for it but its thick chubby fingers didn't fit through the window slits. This angered it. The irate giant

spent about a minute groaning and moaning. Then, in a fit of rage, the giant grabbed an immense boulder and lifted it over its head, ready to launch.

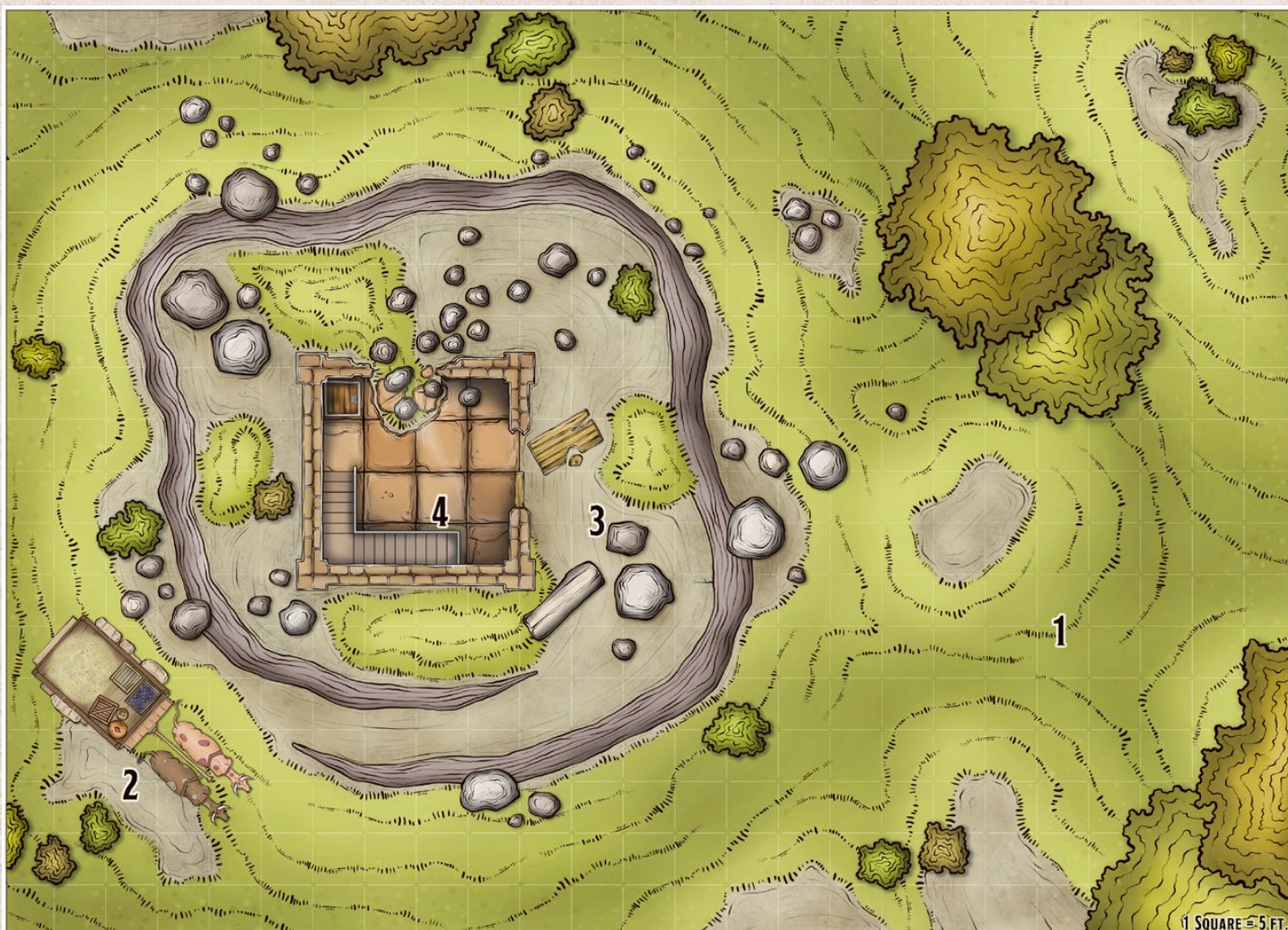
The soldiers, predicting what was about to happen, ran down the stairs and through the trapdoor. They went into the basement and fled through the underground tunnel. They shall inform their boss about what happened and make a report. With the soldiers gone, the giant was free to sack the whole place. It ate everything there was to eat, including some furniture. It drank all the water, wine, and ale they had stored in the tower. After the feast, the giant moved toward a couple of tall trees with thick shrubbery and bushes under them. It cuddled in their shadow and close its eyes for a well-deserved nap.

Half-an-hour after that, Bengee, a nomad merchant, arrived at the place. He has taken this road countless times before and he knows it well. He was surprised to see the tower destroyed. At first, he thought about leaving the place and forget what he saw. It is sometimes better to not meddle in others' affairs. But then he wondered about the possibility of finding someone wounded and getting a reward for helping. Or maybe the place was sacked, but there could still be some valuables left behind. Either way, he stopped his cart right beside the hill where the tower is and went up the slope.

MEETING TROZ, THE GIANT

This section explains how the adventurers meet Troz, the hill giant, and the possibilities they have to deal with it.

While the adventurers approach Avalon city, they come across one of the various military outposts around it. This one looks as if an artillery weapon like a trebuchet just



SECOND LEVEL



BASEMENT

hit it. A friendly gnome waves at them from the second floor of the semi-collapsed tower. From there, the gnome shouts the stuff and other wares he sells. He expects to make a sale before reaching the city. The gnome's voice is amplified by the hollow structure of the tower. All this noise, plus the smell of oxen and the possible horses that the adventurers have is enough to wake the giant, who stretches its arms and yawns loudly as it stands up. The giant turns its eyes to the two oxen pulling Bengée's cart.

Strike the giant down, negotiate with him, or perhaps feed him. Whichever road the adventurers take to handle this, Bengée begs them to protect his oxen and his cart. He promises to make it worth their while.

The giant is hungry and wants to eat, no matter what. The hill giant immediately turns to the oxen, since they are easy, chubby prey. The adventurers may attempt to parley with it, provided one of them speaks and understands Giant. A spell of *tongues* can also do the trick.

If the adventurers wish to negotiate with the giant, they must offer food, otherwise, the giant shall settle with the oxen. The adventurers can try to persuade the giant from eating the oxen with a successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check, as long as another source of food is offered. A *create food and water* spell materializes enough food to satisfy the giant's hunger as well, although the giant still needs to be convinced.

If the negotiation fails, the giant replies there is no way he won't eat both oxen. It claims it is 'very very hungry'. It promises to not harm them and leave if they surrender the oxen and the box of blueberries from the cart (the giant calls the berries 'blue bubbles'). The giant becomes hostile unless these conditions are met.

The adventurers can refuse to give any food to the giant and strike it down. The giant doesn't fight to the death. If the giant loses more than half its hit points, it cries out and says it was only hungry before fleeing in a random direction.

NPCs

BENGEE

Chaotic neutral gnome (age 184)

This gnome has a colorful look. Bengée wears a red vest and green pants, and he tops it all with a light blue hat. He enjoys traveling the roads and meeting new people everywhere. He is a nomad merchant. He goes from town to town selling his wares and earning enough gold to take the road once more.

Personality Trait. "Everybody is my friend. Friends buy things."

Ideal. "I must do my best to sell my wares to anyone."

Bond. "I'll settle down once I've traveled all around the world."

Flaw. "It is too easy for me to trust people."

TROZ

Chaotic evil hill giant (age 23)

Troz is basically naked like the rest of its kin. It only wears some thick animal pelts over a part of his torso and its waist. It stinks, it releases a putrid smell just by swinging its massive arms. Its toes are full of fungi and other disgusting flora.

Personality Trait. "If I see, I eat."

Ideal. "I wish I could create food."

Bond. "I must eat until I'm full, always."

Flaw. "I like food that moves."

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions of areas 1 through 8 correspond to the partially destroyed military outpost near the city.

Terrain. Green healthy fields surround a rocky hill. The ground is not even. Trees with abundant bushes and shrubs dance with the cool wind currents. There are a couple of dry spots on the land. The tower has stone-tile flooring.

Light. The inside of the tower doesn't have any sconces or sources of light. The basement and the underground tunnel have torches on sconces that light all the way back to the city barracks. (Complete tunnel not shown in the map).

Smells and Sounds. The tower still has some faint smell of fried fish but the giant's sweat and filth under its fingernails have stained the place as well.

1. FIELDS

The green fields surrounding the hill feature high grass. Rocks and boulders are scattered all over the place. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals one of the large boulders hit the tower on the side and partially destroyed it. Additionally, a passive Perception score of 14 or higher reveals the presence of the dormant **hill giant** under a couple of trees to the east of the hill.

2. BENGEE'S CART

Two oxen pull Bengée's cart. Their names are Bertha and Bobby. The cart contains a few crates with spices and other dried foods. The back of the cart is full of hay. Bengée sometimes takes naps in it. A box of blueberries is his most precious product right now. Berries season is still months away, so he is certain to make a fortune with these.

3. HILL

The rocky hill has a natural slope that can be climbed to reach the summit. The tower was built right in the middle of the hill. The hill has some areas with high grass. Large rocks and boulders lay motionless on the ground. What once was the tower's door, only pieces of wood remain.



4. TOWER'S BASE FLOOR

Daylight enters the tower from where the door was and from the new huge 'window' the giant made. Boulders litter the area where the wall was. There are remnants of cards and chess pieces scattered all over the room. Some of the walls have scratch marks. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the marks were made by the giant's chubby fingers. The soldiers must have struggled for a bit before escaping through the trapdoor. There is a set of stairs that leads to the second level of the tower (area 5), and a trapdoor that leads to the basement (area 6).

5. TOWER'S SECOND FLOOR

The room is now empty since the giant took everything from here. The damage on the north wall is less than on the first floor, but there is a huge hole anyway. Bengée waves the adventurers from here (see Dealing with the Giant). When he notices the giant and its intentions to eat his oxen, he begs the adventurers to do something. He hides in the tower, thinking it is safer to stay inside.

6. BASEMENT

The trapdoor leads to a wooden ladder that descends 15 feet. The basement is empty, but there is a collapsed wall to the east that leads to a natural cave under the hill. Since the guards seldom had anything to do, they organized a local wrestling tournament among them. From the six men working at the time, two stay upstairs. Two men wrestle, and the other two are referees and spectators at the same time. They keep tabs on who beat who and make bets on future fights. The walls of the basement are scribbled with tallies and annotations of recent combats. It seems like all three teams of soldiers that work here participate in this.

7. NATURAL CAVE

This natural cave is a bit humid and dark. There are torches in the basement and the tunnel but not here. There are a few rocks on the ground. The cave is about 60 feet long and then continues southward. If the adventurers come through here, three **spider swarms** attack the party.

8. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

This is a 10-foot-wide tunnel that leads to the city barracks. It is a thirty-minute walk. Torches are lighting the way. Soldiers use this tunnel to go home when their shift ends. And they go through it once more when duty calls. If the adventurers travel to the city using this tunnel, roll 1d10 to determine what threat they may encounter. The location of the encounter is not shown on the map:

- **1 – 3.** Four **chokers** managed to enter the tunnel, they try to ambush the adventurers.
- **4 – 6.** One of the city pipes that goes through here just broke, there is a foot-deep puddle of black waters mid-way through the tunnel. This makes it difficult terrain to cross. Six **giant rats** swarm through the broken pipe and bite the adventurers.
- **7 – 9.** A team of guards is returning to the tower with reinforcements. When they see the adventurers in the tunnel, they brand them as thieves and attack. There are 4 **guards**, 2 **veterans**, 1 **knight**, and 6 **commoners** in the squad. They can be reasoned with, provided the adventurers drop their weapons immediately and attempt to parley. Killing any of the guards is a serious crime.
- **10.** The tunnel collapses. Countless rocks and boulders rain on the adventurers' heads. They must make a run for it. Any creature trying to escape from the collapsing tunnel must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, being buried under 10 feet of dirt and taking 20 (6d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

DEVELOPMENT

If the adventurers fed the giant through magic or by any other means that Bengée's food and oxen, he thanks the party and pays them 15 gold pieces each for their trouble. He knows it is not a fortune, but he cannot afford to pay them anymore.

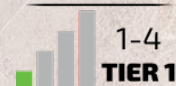
If the negotiation required the oxen and the blueberries to be surrendered, he appreciates the fact that they helped, since he wouldn't have been able to sort this out himself but Bengée confesses he cannot pay them any gold since he needs to make up for his losses.

If the conflict is solved by force, Bengée pays the adventurers 15 gold pieces each, as long as his wares and oxen are safe and sound.

Just let me talk to Tiny Hands, he'll understand. They're my friends!

Ernest Mole

THE THINKING RATS



BACKGROUND LORE

The world is full of wonders, fantastic places, and great things to do. The many domains and fields of mastery that a person can choose from make it very flexible for people to decide what they shall do for the rest of their lives. From common farming and harvesting to horse dressing or sword fencing, there are countless professions. One might even have to change professions once or twice in their lifetime since some jobs require skills that are not always easy to acquire. Others, however, are born with gifts. Myth has it that all people are born with a gift, but they often go unnoticed. If one is lucky enough to figure what it is, that person is sure to find glory and riches, make a groundbreaking discovery, or become famous in some way.

Ernest Mole is a person with a gift but he hasn't found about it yet. He lives in Mi-Jen, a blossoming town. Ernest is a simple young man with very little ambitions. He is shy, quiet, and calm. He doesn't like too much action in his life. He doesn't have many friends either. He enjoys the routine and the quiet life of Mi-Jen. A great deal of the villagers are farmers, harvesters, or tend to their businesses. He is a worker. He knows a bit about masonry, brickwork, and other similar arts. He is stronger than the average man and he doesn't mind back-breaking labor. When the project to build a sewage system occurred to the community leaders, strength and stamina were the two most important characteristics for the job. Mr. Mole and many strong villagers enlisted right away.

Ernest loved the project. He enjoys working hard and physical labor keeps his mind busy throughout the day. Plus, the pay was good and this was a long-term project; his income would be secured for a while. The excavations started. The plans were followed and scores of men dug and picked the earth from dawn to sunset. Morning and afternoon shifts were implemented every day of the week. Ernest was in the afternoon shift. Some fortnights after that, a decent-sized tunnel was already dug. However, that was only the tip of the iceberg of the massive task.

One day, while Ernest worked, he found himself alone in one of the digging sites. The rest of his team were eating their lunch but, as usual, he lost track of time and kept hammering the hard rock. Then, when he gave a step backward to find some ground and launch a heavy blow, he heard a squeaky voice say: "*Ouch!*". At first, Ernest was taken aback because he knew he was alone. He turned to see if someone was hidden in the dark trying to play a joke but no one was there. The little voice helped: "*Look down*". Ernest couldn't believe his eyes when he noticed the words came from a tiny rat at his feet. He was never afraid of rodents. If anything, he likes them. Even though he felt ridiculous for doing so, he replied: "*Sorry, I didn't see you there*". He reached for a piece of bread to give to the rat. Appreciating the gesture, it took the bread with its tiny hands and swiftly vanished through a crack where the floor meets the wall.

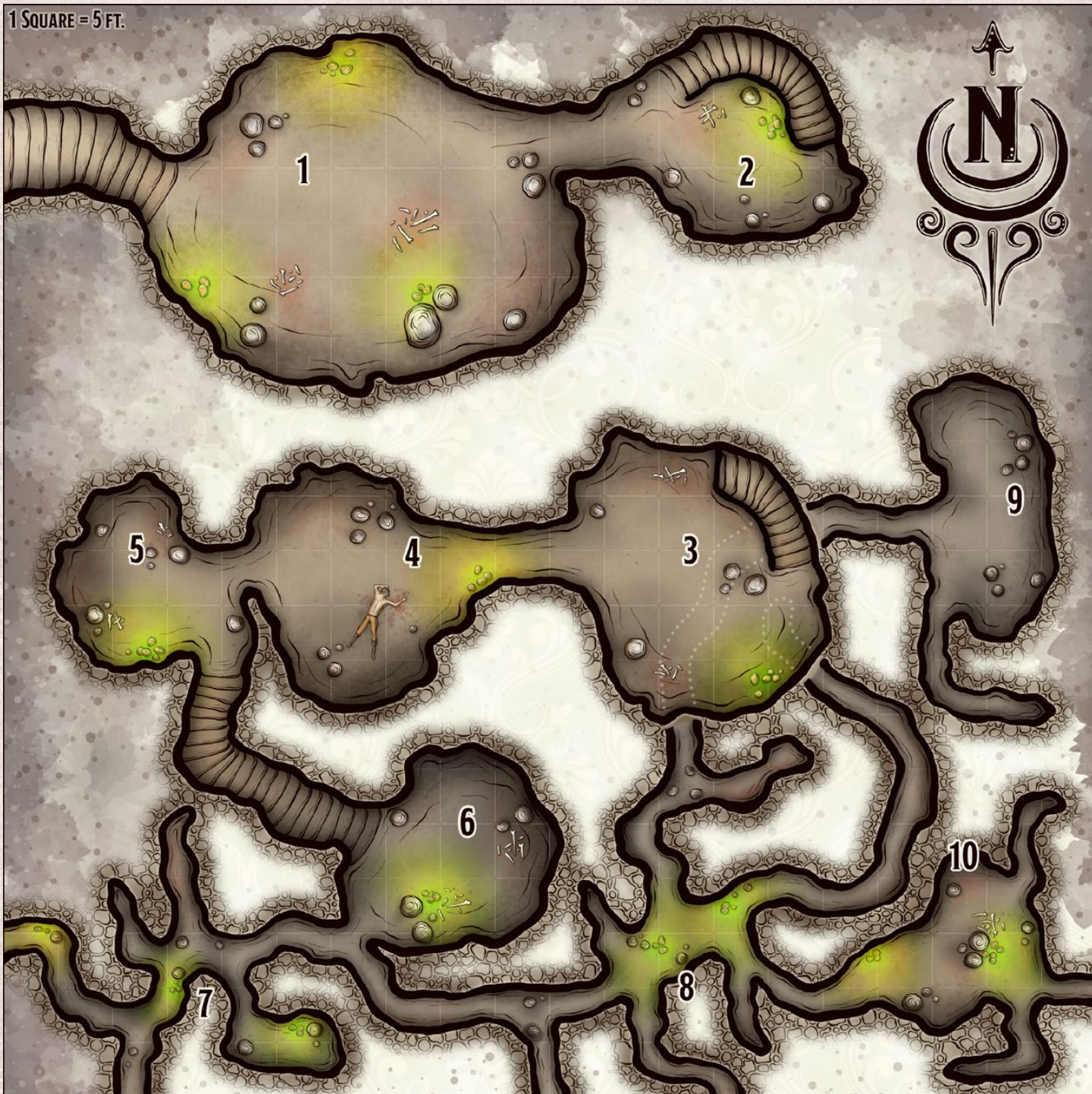
Assuming he imagined all of it because he went on too long without taking a break, Ernest stopped to have some food. He went home thinking about what happened. For some reason, despite its awkwardness, he liked the little

conversation with 'Tiny Hands', as he named it. And he hoped he would find his new friend again the next day. Ernest stayed alone while the rest of the workers left for lunch, this time on purpose. From a pocket, he produced a piece of cheese he brought from home and called his friend. Tiny Hands appeared, followed by three more of his kin. Tiny Hands, whose real name was Big Foot, introduced Chunks, Cat Slayer, and Ratchel. He realized then that the rats were not speaking the common tongue. It was he who could understand their squeaks and squeals. It was even more surprising for him to see that he replied in the same fashion. The rats couldn't maintain a difficult conversation. They could only express simple desires like

hunger. But Ernest knew the rats liked him. They would flee otherwise.

After sharing the food and learning their names, the rats prompted Ernest to follow them. The rodents instructed the man to use his hammer on a particular part of the tunnel's wall. Ernest noticed the wall was weak and that a few hammer blows would bring it down. It took him a minute to comply. Hammering the wall revealed a large natural cave that had been under the town for ages. The rats ran through the opening and met with dozens of more rats. The cave was dark but Ernest could distinguish the rats' furry bodies thanks to an eerie green light that emanated

1 SQUARE = 5 FT.



from patches of luminescent fungi. Scores of rats welcomed him. Everybody knew already about the human that could talk to them. All rats wanted to squeak at him and be squeaked at by a human. He gave them all the food he was carrying at the time and promised to come back with more.

The rest of the working teams found the tunnel. It was said that the newfound caves were a blessing since the already dug cave formations would serve as tunnels for the sewers in the future, or possible maintenance rooms. Either way, the cave was found beneficial for the project. Ernest was happy to hear this since nobody minded the rats. The rodents almost always hid unless there was only him around so this made it possible for him to spend time with them every day. He never had so many friends in his life.

One night, Ernest dreamed that his rodent friends learned how to speak the common tongue. All town became friends with them and fed them. Everybody smiled at Ernest and thanked him for teaching the rats to talk. The dream ended with him being named Human-Rat Ambassador. In his dream, he acknowledged it and appreciated everyone's comments and compliments. But when he woke up, as much as he wanted the dream to be true, he knew he didn't have the means to teach the rats how to talk the common tongue.

As if his prayers were heard, a nomad merchant in a covered cart arrived in town some days after his dream. His name was Arnelius. The trinket seller claimed his items were lucky charms and voodoo magic whatnot. Ernest thought the merchant was his best possibility to make his dream come true. He approached Arnelius and explained his situation. Talking to the merchant, Ernest realized this was the first time that he told anybody about his gift. He panicked for a second and thought this wasn't such a good idea but he regained his resolve when he remembered his title as Human-Rat Ambassador. He described what he wanted to Arnelius and asked if he could make it possible. The merchant was very interested in his story. With an intrigued look, he invited Ernest to step into his cart.

Inside the merchant's ambulant home, Ernest watched Arnelius perform a sort of ritual. He prepared a concoction using herbs, some silver dust, animal skin, lizard claws, and in the end he added Ernest's blood by cutting the palm of his hand. Ernest was so hypnotized by the whole procedure that he didn't even notice when his hand was cut. Arnelius gave Ernest a bowl with a gooey mix. He instructed him to prepare food with it and feed it to the rats. The human's blood would react with the rest of the magical ingredients, and cause the rats to present the desired result the day after. Or so Arnelius claimed.

Ernest was so excited to have witnessed such a ritual that he was certain it would work. He opted to bake something for the rats. He thought that they would like a large apple pie. The next day, when he was done baking, it was almost time for his shift. He didn't show up to work so no one would see the pie and ask for a piece. He waited until lunchtime and rushed straight to the tunnel while saying sorry out loud for being late. Everybody was busy eating and no one stopped him. Ernest felt an enormous satisfaction when he saw the rats devour the whole pie. The rats told him the pie was delicious and Ernest spent the day trying to make them talk in common even though he knew he had to wait for the magic to work.

The morning after, the usually calm town of Mi-Jen received some dire news. Five men of the morning shift are presumed dead. Giant, vicious, monstrous rats attacked them. The ritual worked in a wicked way. Those who fled the tunnel in time say Darren, Warrick, Lorenzo, Ballack, and Dylan are still inside. The word traveled fast, and soon, the whole town was aware of the situation and a crowd gathered outside the excavation site. No one dares enter after seeing the scratches and blood marks on those who managed to escape on time. When Ernest heard the news, he rushed to the site.

A trio of city guards holds their ground at the entrance of the tunnel. They placed large planks and improvised a blockade. Sir Vollan, the man in charge, doesn't want to risk his men and would rather pay some coin to mercenary strangers. He ordered his scouts to look for sell-swords in taverns and inns. He offers 15 gold coins each if they can get rid of the presumed infestation in the tunnels. The pay goes up by one piece of gold for each living survivor rescued. So if the five missing people make it out alive, they earn 20 gold pieces each.

When the group of adventurers gets to the scene, the crowd moves aside to let them pass. The injured survivors tell the adventurers the rats are huge and aggressive. And one of them claims he heard one of the rats talk and demand apple pie. Ernest, frustrated and hopeless because they won't let him pass, begs the adventurers to let him go with them. He tells them he can negotiate with the rats. He claims he knows them and that he talks to them. His desperation makes him look like a mad man.

If the heroes let him come along, he thanks them deeply and promises they won't regret it. If the adventurers decide to enter without Ernest's help, he falls to his knees in front of the tunnel's entrance as the heroes go in. He cries and sobs and then yells at the sky: "Nooo! Tiny Hands!"

NPCs

ERNEST MOLE

Neutral good human (age 34)

Mr. Mole wears simple working-class clothes. He is usually covered in dirt and sweat due to his work. He has a serious face. He is not himself lately. He has spent too much time with his rodent friends and he has formed a bond with them. Ernest can communicate with Tiny Hands and the rest of the rats. He could be a crucial piece to solve this puzzle.

Personality Trait. “Nothing is more satisfying than a well-earned paycheck.”

Ideal. “I’ll make my dream come true. Tiny Hands and the rest of the gang will talk like me.”

Bond. “I must protect Tiny Hands and the gang. They’re my only friends.”

Flaw. “I’m too shy and I have low self-esteem.”

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions of areas 1 through 10 correspond to the underground cave in Mi-Jen.

Terrain. The ground of the cave is somewhat uneven. There are rocks and human bones scattered around the floor of some chambers.

Stretch Tunnels. Some of the tunnels in the cave are narrower than 5 feet wide. Medium creatures moving in such areas must follow the rules for squeezing and move at half speed.

Light. Luminescent fungi are present in some areas of the cave. They produce 5 feet of bright light and 10 feet of dim light. Removing the fungi from the ground causes them to stop shining after 1d6 minutes.

Smells and Sounds. The entire cave smells of filth. The blood and human bones are fresh. They emanate an iron scent. Squeaks and squeals echo through the narrow tunnels and sections of the caves.

Mutated Rats. The ritual failed but it managed to give some of the rats a certain amount of consciousness. The small rats are ordinary and didn’t suffer any change. The giant rats in this module use the stats of the giant rat in the *Monster Manual* with the following modifications:

- Increase the Intelligence score to 6.
- They speak and understand Common.



PARLEY WITH THE RATS

Ernest. Although Ernest can communicate with the rodents, the rats are deranged and mutated. The only rat that recognizes him is Tiny Hands. The rest of the rats attack people on sight, including Ernest. He tries to parley with all the rats they encounter but fails to do so until they meet Tiny Hands. See area 4 for more details about this encounter.

Direct Contact. It is still possible to attempt to communicate with the rats without Ernest's help. Though only Tiny Hands can handle a normal conversation. The rest of the rats in the cave yell random words in common and attack. Social interaction doesn't work with them. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check allows a character to parley with Tiny Hands, provided none of the adventurers attack or harm other rats present.

1. ENTRANCE

Two different mounds of human bones lay on the ground. The dirt is stained in a dark crimson tint due to the blood that dried there. A faint squeaking sound comes from behind a couple of large rocks to the southeast of the cave. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals an oversized rat gnawing at some bones. Any attempt of interaction causes the rat to pounce and attack. At the same time, hundreds of rats come out of cracks on the walls and climb on the invaders to stop their advance. One **giant rat** and two **swarms of rats** attack the adventurers.

When the swarms drop to half their hit points, the rats disperse and flee. And when the giant rat drops to half its hit points, it retreats yelling: "No, I don't want to die!"

2. STAIRS

A passive Perception score of 14 or higher reveals some words being spoken from the floor below (area 3). The sound echoes through the cave's tunnels. Coarse and harsh voices pronounce words in the common tongue. The words "Ernest", "apple pie", "cheese", "humans", and "trap" can be discerned.

3. CAVE

Half of this section of the cavern is in complete darkness but the exit leading to area 4 can be distinguished due to more luminescent fungi in the middle of the tunnel. Two large rats gnaw at the bones on the floor when the adventurers arrive. The rats look at the invaders, then at each other. One of them says: "Oh no, let's go!" and the other replies, "Yes, inform the boss!"

4. AMBUSH

The natural luminescence faintly outlines the shape of a corpse. It is Lorenzo's. There are claw marks all over his body and a pool of semi-dried blood has formed un-

der him. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals Lorenzo is still breathing. When one of the adventurers kneels to check on the corpse, a low-pitched guttural voice yells: "apple pie!". Three **giant rats** come from area 5 and two **swarms of rats** emerge through cracks on the walls and ceilings. A passive Perception score of 13 or higher reveals the presence of the hidden rats in area 5. The adventurers can try to communicate with the rats then if they wish to do so. (See Parley with the Rats).

If Ernest is present, Tiny Hands recognizes him and orders the rats to stop the attack outright. This allows for a chance to parley. Tiny Hands, who clarifies its name is, in reality, Big Foot, says the rats have become vicious because of Ernest. Big Foot cannot explain it but it knows Mr. Mole had something to do with it. His blood in the weird concoction with which he baked the pie is in the rats' veins now, Big Foot can feel it. It says the rats are now twenty times larger and therefore need to eat twenty times more. Big Foot is afraid there's nothing it can do about it. As long as men keep coming to the cave where they live, the rats shall eat them. With that, Big Foot orders the rats to proceed and kill the intruders while it flees the scene.

The giant rats stop fighting and flee if they drop to half their hit points or if they see one of their oversized kin die. The swarms of rats disperse when they drop to half their hit points.

5. STAIRS

This section of the cave has a set of stairs that go a further 15 feet underground. The temperature below feels warmer and the air more humid.

6. CAVE

This section of the cave is darker and deeper underground. To the south of this cave, there are narrow networks of tunnels. There are two **swarms of rats** in this area. They disperse when they drop to half their hit points.

7. AND 8. TUNNELS

How large this underground tunnel network and where it leads is not within the scope of this module. It is left to the DM's discretion. If Ernest is still with the party, he comes up with an idea. He believes he can convince Tiny Hands and the rats to leave through these tunnels and find somewhere else to hunt and find food. Ernest begs the adventurers to let him speak with Tiny Hands if the opportunity arises again (If the rat leader is still alive).

9. TINY HANDS LAIR

Tiny Hands waits here unless it died in area 4. There aren't any fungi in this cavern so it is completely dark. Five **giant rats** protect Tiny Hands (**giant rat**). If Ernest is allowed to speak with Tiny Hands, he shares his idea. He tries to convince the rat leader to leave and find some-

where else to find food, otherwise, the people in town will do anything in their hands to kill them all. Surprisingly, the rat accepts. It rallies all the rats, large and small, and approaches area 10. Any attempt to harm Tiny Hands or the rats breaks the truce. Ernest (**commoner**) defends Tiny Hands if the adventurers try to harm it. He cannot be reasoned with unless Tiny Hands' safety is assured.

If the characters don't have Ernest's help, they can still try to negotiate with Tiny Hands (See Parley with the Rats). This allows for the characters and the rats to talk in peace. Convincing Tiny Hands of leaving the town requires a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

10. CAVE

Any rat survivors from previous confrontations are here. They accompany Tiny Hands and the rest of the rats if convinced to leave. If Tiny Hands is not around, they beg for mercy or try to flee.

DEVELOPMENT

Sir Vollan pays the adventurers the agreed-upon amount. Saving Lorenzo grants the party one extra gold each, as agreed. The leader of the guards organizes his squads to enter and verify everything is safe. He proceeds to do the necessary cleaning before resuming labors in the tunnel.

If Ernest never entered the tunnel, he is outside sobbing. He cries for the loss of his friends if the adventurers report that they killed them. Sir Vollan orders his men to take him to the infirmary and verify his mental health. If Ernest entered the cave and died in it, a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check allows a character to convince Sir Vollan that the rats killed Ernest and that they couldn't do anything about it.

However, if Ernest entered the cave and Tiny Hands left through the tunnels unharmed, he begs the adventurers to accept a gift. He gives them a leather bag with 56 gold pieces in it. They're his life savings. He feels so grateful to them for allowing their mutated friends to live that giving them this gold is the only way he can think of to repay them.

Ernest can know the rats are safe or not thanks to the blood link between them. If the rats were spared without his intervention, he thanks the adventurers when they come out. He appreciates their kindness and respect for living things.

Either way, Ernest leaves town the day after. Be it depression from losing his rodent friends or a departure to seek them out again, Ernest's days in Mi-Jen come to an end.

It all happened so fast! I remember two evil visages watching me as they dragged my friend away...

Ruji, Upset Witness

DEATH IN THE WELL



3-5
PLAYERS



4-6
HOURS



5-10
TIER 2

BACKGROUND LORE

Vermillion Town grieves two people. The first one, a young woman named Anna, went missing a week ago in strange circumstances. According to her father, Anna went out to water the fields next to the house. She must have visited the well a few hundred feet away from their house to draw some water for the vegetables they grow. But she never came back from the well. People searched for Anna that night and the two following days in the immediate area around town with no success. A hunter who joined the search claims that he could track her to the well, but her tracks disappeared then. He doesn't know how she could have achieved this feat.

The second victim, a man named George, disappeared in the area around the well too. Fortunately, he had company at the time and there is a witness. A young lad named Ruji was with him when it happened. The witness is not in a stable state of mind at the moment, which is inconvenient for the veracity of his story. Ruji told the Townspeaker that he and George were around the well that evening. They often go there to drink ale and watch the people in nearby farms, he claimed. After two pints, they felt a sudden change in temperature. It went cold in an instant but there wasn't any wind. They looked around and saw a faint black mist emerging from the well. It came out in a fluid-like manner and surrounded the well. It grew dark and coalesced into the shape of a woman in a black tattered dress. The two friends found themselves frozen in place unable to comprehend the apparition before them. The very nature of the ghost produced a mental paralysis in the two slightly drunk men. The women looked at them

as with a gesture of insignificance. Ruji claims he could discern what the ghost thought of them at the moment, as if the spectral woman spoke, but Ruji assures she never broke the sepulchral silence.

The ghost saw them as nothing more than nourishment, like a wolf waiting to pounce on a lonely calf from the shadows. Still, they were unable to react in any way whatsoever. The ethereal figure moved like thunder and with a dead hand, grabbed George by the ankle and pulled him toward the well. George reacted and screamed for help. He turned to Roji and begged his friend to help him free his leg from the ghastly grasp of the ghost but Roji was frozen in place. George went down the well with a muffled scream and the silence took over once more.

Mr. Hanzo, the Townspeaker, doesn't know what to make of Roji's story. The poor man is so upset and unstable that the local apothecary has him sedated with a heavy dose of puppy extract. Mr. Hanzo knows that whatever it was, it came from the water well. He knows that the local guards and hunters can't handle threats greater than a rogue bear or a pair of brigands. If the well is cursed, as many say now, sending men down there would serve no one.

THE TRUTH

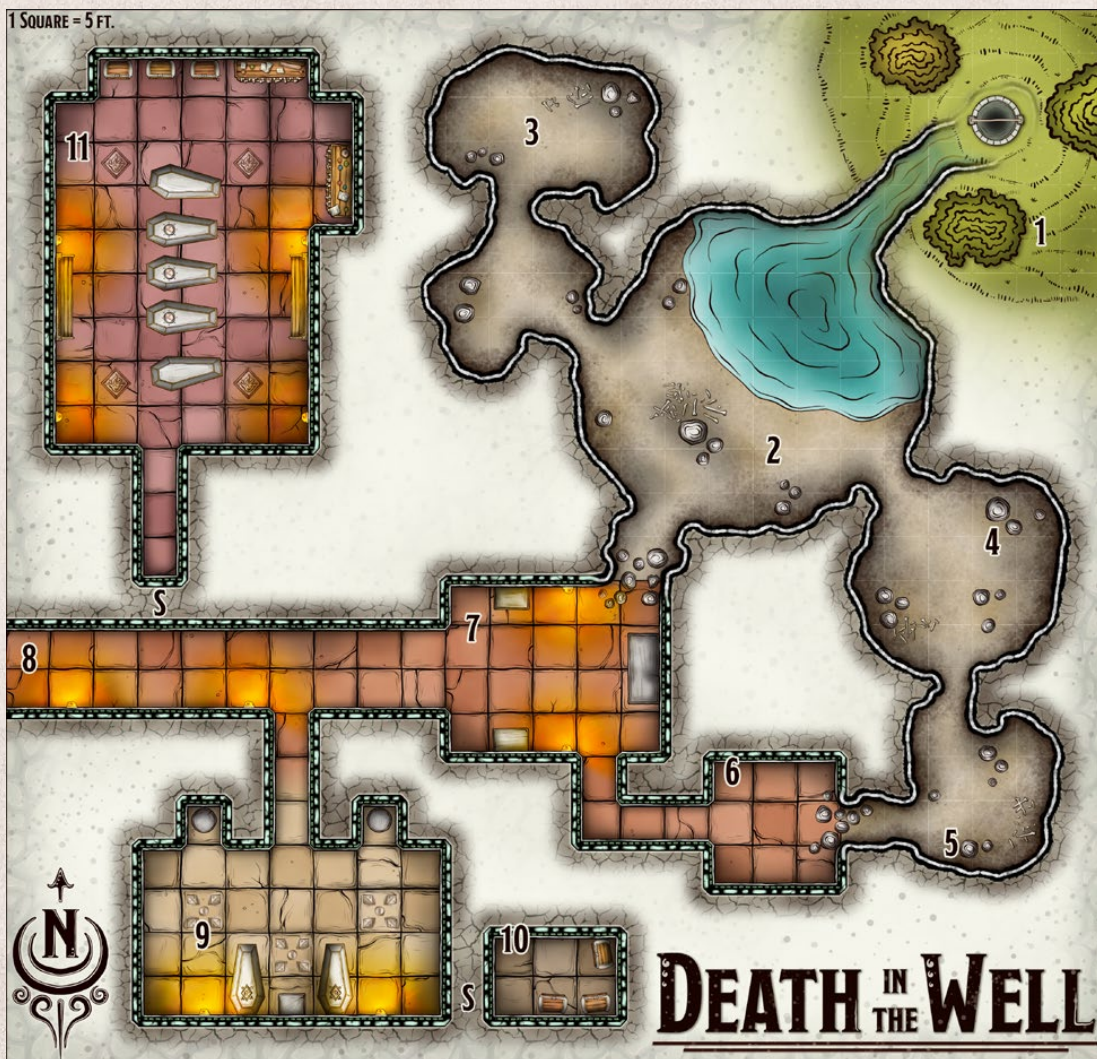
The current calamity was caused by an earthquake that struck Vermillion Town two weeks ago. The earthquake was mild and didn't cause structural damage to the town buildings. For the populace, it was nothing more than a sudden scare that was forgotten in a few days. However, the seismic activity caused a cave-in in a grotto under the well. It turns out that an ancient crypt from an earlier civilization was adjacent to the natural cave system under the well. The earthquake connected both locations in two

points underground (areas 7 and 6).

The ancient crypt is a prison of sorts for angry spirits that would never cross the thin fabric of the planes to find eternal rest. These irate ghosts are drowned in darkness and wish for nothing except to end life. They can sense living creatures and their nature drives them to extinguish life by all means necessary. While the arcane spirits are intelligent, they are bound to their desires and are impossible to reason with. They speak an old form of the Common tongue that any speaker can understand with a successful DC 14 Intelligence check. Dialogue with the ghosts is possible but no sort of deal or truce is of their interest. Since the passage to the crypt opened, the two undead spirits from area 9 have taken turns to explore further each time. They are responsible for the deaths of Anna and George.

THE BOUNTY

Mr. Hanzo knows that mercenaries and adventurers come through Vermillion Town often. The settlement is located in a convenient location in the center of the kingdom and most travelers pass through and rest a few days before continuing their journeys. Hanzo's men have posted several bounty posters around town to attract adventurers. The poster promises a fair reward for a group of strong adventurers willing to put their skins on the line for the future and prosperity of Vermillion Town. It instructs people to visit the Town Hall where Mr. Hanzo promises a reward of 200 gold pieces in exchange for exploring the well and getting rid of whatever looms down there. Recovering the remains of both Anna and George is appreciated by their grieving families.



THE WELL AND THE CRYPT

The following descriptions of areas 1 through 11 correspond to the ancient crypts map.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Terrain. The underground cave features moist soil floor. The bones scattered around the place belong to small herbivores and other large vermin. The stone flooring in the crypt is cracked and eroded. Squares occupied partially by a rock or a piece of furniture are considered difficult terrain.

Light. The caves are in complete darkness. Some areas in the crypt are brightly lit by magical sconce lights. A *continual flame* spell in them produces warm light. Removing the sconce causes the flame to die permanently.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of moist soil from the caves combines with a dry smell of granite and death from the crypts. The sepulchral silence in the crypts is ominous.

1. THE WELL

The water well is located close to four townhouses, each with its small plantation. The stone well has two wooden

posts and a horizontal beam with a rope and a bucket to draw water. A successful Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that a person was dragged from a point 10 feet away and into the well.

The well goes down 50 feet. The stone walls in the shaft have plenty of handholds. A character can climb down with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. Failure by 5 or more means the character falls to the waterway below and takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

2. UNDERGROUND POND

The water is still and has a depth of 15 feet in most places. This appears to be an underground water source that refills with rainwater. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that water pours from some cracks in the north wall. This suggests that the water body is also fed by a natural spring.

There is a mound of bones in the middle of the chamber. The bones are not human. They appear to be the remains of small herbivores like calves or goats. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals hundreds of tiny bite marks in the bones. Whatever killed these creatures, it ate its way until nothing but dry bones were left. Success by 5 or more reveals that this is the work of centipedes or similar insects.

Treasure. There is a leather satchel with 15 gp and a *potion of healing* at the bottom of the pond.

3. NORTH CAVE

There is nothing in this cave except a small number of bones similar to those in area 2. The walls in this chamber bear many 4-inches-wide cracks that appear to go deep into the earth. When the adventurers explore this cave, six **giant centipedes** crawl out of the cracks and attack them. The simple-minded creature fight until slain.

4. MIDDLE CAVE

The dark cave sustained significant damage from the earthquake. Deep cracks on the walls climb to the ceiling of the chamber where chunks of rock have fallen to the moist floor below. A mound of bones near the south of the chamber looks different than other remains in the caves. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals these are human bones that belonged to a young male. The boy was perhaps 12 or 14 years old. These remains are inconsistent with George's description. These are the remains of Hurden, a kid who fell down the well eight years ago and found his way into the caves. The centipedes in the area killed the kid. The townsfolk looked for Hurden for weeks but he was never heard of again. A silver ring worth 6 gp is still in a phalanx bone. The boy's father or Townspeaker Hanzo can identify the piece of jewelry.

5. SOUTH CAVE

There is nothing in this cave except a small number of bones similar to those in area 2. The walls in this chamber bear many 4-inches-wide cracks that appear to go deep into the earth. When the adventurers explore this cave, four **giant centipedes** crawl out of the cracks and attack them. The simple-minded creature fight until slain.

6. CAVED-IN CHAMBER

This chamber sustained significant damage recently. There are rocks, pieces of ceiling, and destroyed stone furnishings in this room. Upon closer inspection, it appears that the chamber was a type of place of worship. Like a chapel or an altar but little remains of it to reveal more information.

7. OLD ALTAR

This chamber sustained significant damage recently. The earthquake caused the northeastern corner of the room to collapse and reveal a passage to area 2. The walls are covered with eroded frescoes that depict poor souls behind bars sentenced to suffer eternal damnation. The old paintings are interrupted by wide cracks that reach the ceiling of the chamber. Another case of seismic activity might cause the place to collapse completely.

There is a broken altar by the east wall. An effigy sculpted in the wall depicts an obscure figure of a hooded man with a cross and a whip in his hands. A successful DC 19



Intelligence (Religion) check reveals this is Saint Addorune, patron of jails and eternal guard for those damned to eternal suffering. Effigies and chapels to this celestial entity are rare. Saint Addorune is only present where evil is trapped and should remain so for eternity. This reveals the purpose of the underground complex as a repository of evil.

The twin spirits from area 9 have spawned slave spirits to attack any trespassers. Six **shadows** emerge from the walls and attempt to kill or weaken the adventurers. They are joined by three **giant centipedes** that crawl out from the wall cracks.

Treasure. There is an old silver holy symbol with Saint Addorune under the rubble, it is worth 30 gp. Saint Addorune's effigy on the east wall is worth 1,000 gp if removed. This is a work for a master carver and a team of assistants.

8. CRYPT ENTRANCE

The hallway continues east for thirty feet before it ends in a cave in. The ceiling in this section of the complex collapsed hundreds of years ago. Digging through the debris to find where it leads is beyond the scope of this module and left to the DM's discretion.

Secret Door. A passive Perception score of 14 or higher reveals the outline of a movable section of the north wall. Pushing the wall causes it to slide inward on rails. This movement reveals a hidden passage to area 11.

9. DOUBLE TOMB

The eternal spirits of two twin wizards from a long-forgotten civilization were buried in the two sarcophagi in the room. The twin wizards (**wraiths**) know nothing but hate and thirst for murder. They wait in the shadows for the best moment to attack. Four **shadows** join them on the second round of combat.

The bodies of both Anna and George are crammed into the east sarcophagus, along with the old dusty remains of one of the twin wizards.

Trap. Removing the lid of the east sarcophagus triggers a salt acid trap. Any creature within 5 feet of the sarcophagus when the lid is moved must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (5d6) acid damage.

Secret Door. A passive Perception score of 16 or higher reveals the outline of a movable section of the east wall. Pulling the nearby sconce causes the wall to slide inward on rails. This movement reveals a hidden passage to area 10.

10. SECRET VAULT

This small chamber contains three wooden chests with the valuable possessions of the twin wizards at the time of their death. The items are considered to be cursed. It is inscribed in an old form of Common on the chests that whoever takes the treasure shall be damned for the rest of their living days. The exact nature of this curse or if it is even true at all is left to the DM's discretion.

Treasure. There is a large assortment of gold and silver pieces worth 400 gp collectively. A set of four *immovable rods*, a *wand of magic missile* (level 1), and a +2 *chain-shirt* with the twin wizards' family seal embroidered in the chest.

11. COMMUNAL TOMB

Visiting this section of the underground complex is optional. There are five unmarked caskets in the middle of the room. The bodily remains of lesser followers of the twin wizards are buried here. Besides, there are two bookcases and three wooden chests lining the walls opposite to the entrance. Out of the five people buried here, three spirits have decayed into nothingness. The remaining two manifest in the form of **specters** and attempt to drain the life of anyone who enters this chamber.

The bookcases contain documentation and historic records of the time when the twin wizards performed their evil deeds. Most of the documents, books, and scrolls here have decayed beyond usefulness. A few stone tablets remain legible. They reveal the identity of the twin wizards and the fact that they were expected to remain in this location for eternity. Information about the cursed treasure in area 10 is here too as a cursory warning against greedy types.

One of the tablets reveals that destroying their undead manifestations does not end their imprisonment. The twin wizards will eventually reform and continue their existence in the crypt after 10 years. How the adventurers can purge the twin wizards' spirits for good is not within their reach. This situation may well branch out into an expanded arch. The adventurers need to consult with a high-level priest to know more.

Treasure. The middle chest contains 100 gp in a leather pouch. The other two chests have poison dart traps (see below).

Trap. The east and west chests have poison dart traps. Opening the unlocked lid triggers the trap. A single creature standing directly in front of the chest within 30 feet must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Ha! Yer' goin'? Braid'd beards and mustaches! Yer' nuts... Or maybe not. Perhaps you'll be the one.

Rorrik Clayheart

THE OMINOUS ORB



3-5
PLAYERS



4-6
HOURS



5-10
TIER 2

BACKGROUND LORE

Deep in the mountains, far away from sunlight and close to magma rivers, there are talks of myths and wonders among Silverstone dwellers. Some of these stories are mere exaggerations of not-so-wondrous facts. Others have a pinch of truth and tint of fantasy. But there is one tale that all dwarves in Silverstone respect and fear and that is *The Ominous Orb*.

Wise dwarven sages say the orb is the very opposite of the philosopher's stone. While the stone represents life, immortality, and wealth, the orb creates a dire contrast fomenting death, corruption, and evil. The existence of the orb is something all dwarves in the city know about. The most venerable dwarves with the longest beards say they heard the story from their great-great-great-grandparents. Ancient individuals who passed away centuries ago. To this day, no one can track orb's origin.

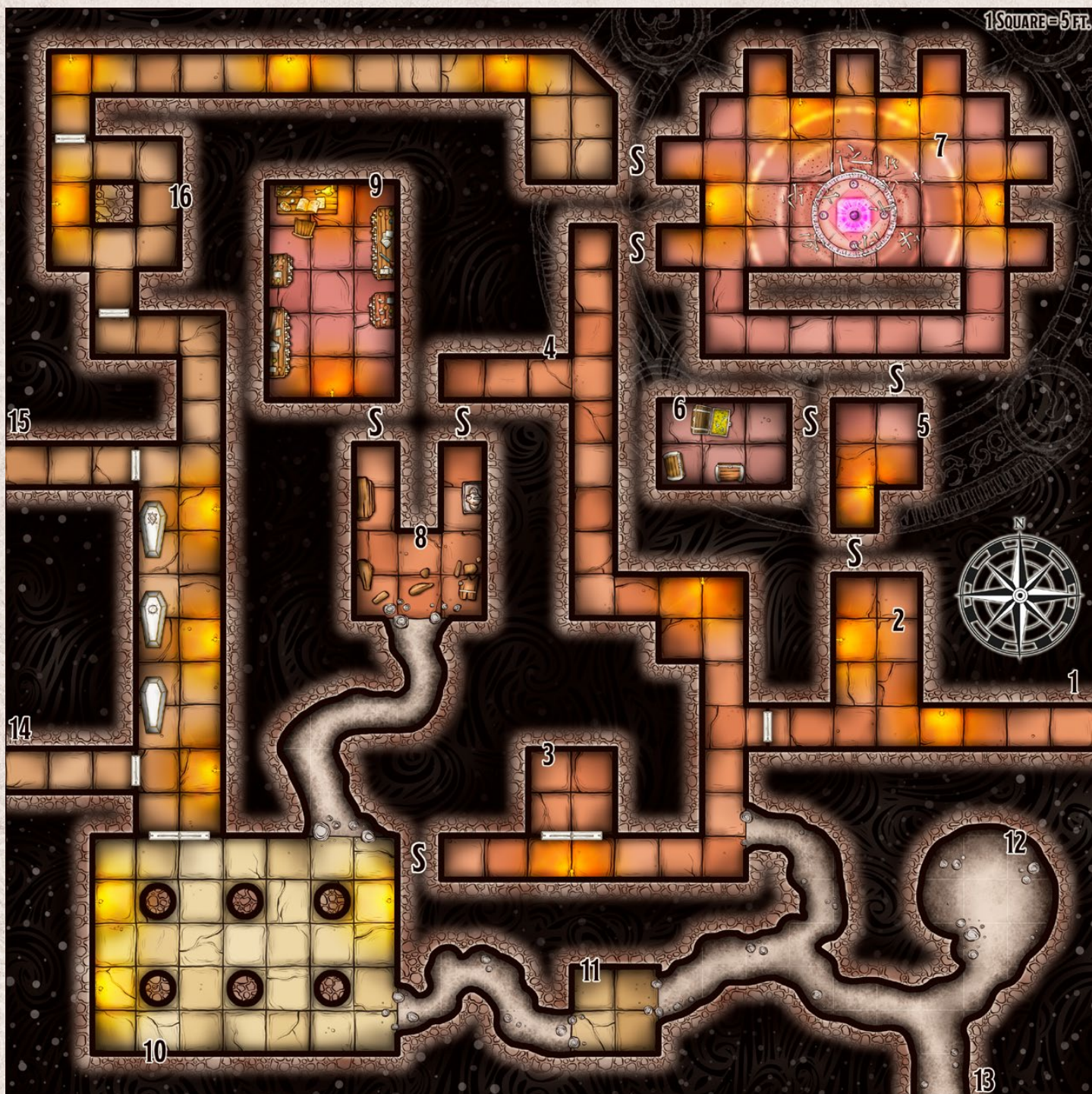
However, one thing is certain. No one doubts the power of the orb. Many valiant hearts have tried to belie the warnings and claims that the orb cannot be controlled. Adventurers and explorers come to Silverstone and ask for directions to the orb. Rorrik Clayheart, a cunning and mischievous dwarf, is one of the few people, if not the only one in the city that has gone to the ruins where the orb is and returned.

There was a researcher in the city who had been investigating the orb and its origin for decades, his name was Derkun. Rorrik knew about this curious dwarf. They talked once, and Rorrik asked him what he knew about the ruins. Derkun loved talking about the subject. He claimed

the place belonged to a drow sorcerer ages ago and he was almost certain that there was a way to bypass the lethality of the orb. Rorrik didn't understand much of what he said, but the day Darkun left for the ruins, he followed him. After a few hours of zigzagging through dark tunnels and hidden paths between cracks in the stone, the researcher disappeared through a tunnel that looked like an entrance, but Rorrik didn't dare go after him.

Derkun, like many others before him, never came back. Rorrik, on the other hand, made use of what he learned. He started going to taverns and inns to look for mercenaries, adventurers, and explorers seeking fame, glory, and power. He convinces groups of heroes about the power of the orb. He claims its magic can grant wishes, infinite wealth, and fame. He then charges a fee for his services as a guide. Once he takes them to the entrance where he saw Derkun for the last time, he returns to the city and forgets about the subject.

Rorrik doesn't feel guilty. He provides a service to curious adventurers. Plus, since he lurks in taverns looking for people to convince, those who hear him but don't hire him have spread the word as well. More people from nearby dwarven cities and even other races started to come asking for directions to the orb. Sooner or later, inquiring about the orb leads to Rorrik, who then proceeds to exaggerate everything the adventurers have heard about the orb and more. He charges 250 gold pieces for his services as a guide, but he assures that it is nothing compared to the infinite wealth the orb can provide. He also claims that the ruins belonged to a powerful sorcerer, ages ago. This suggests there could be valuable treasures, although he is just repeating what he heard from Derkun a few years back.



If a group of adventurers accepts his deal, he charges upfront and asks them to follow him. Once he takes them to the entrance, he bids them good luck and farewell after offering one last piece of advice, for a price. He says he can share precious information about the ruins for an additional 100 gold pieces. He says it is optional, although this clue could make the difference between life and death. He closes his case saying:

"...the last group I brought here didn't pay for this crucial hint and they never returned. And I gotta admit, they did look more capable and stronger than you lot. They could've been the ones".

If the adventurers accept to pay for the information, Rorr-ik tells them that he learned something from a researcher some years ago. He tells them the ruins are dangerous, and that the orb is probably protected by lethal traps. He also adds that the researcher claimed there had to be a way to deactivate these security measures. And with that, he leaves.

There is a dire fact that nobody knows. Only Darkun was ever close to discovering it, but now no one knows. The previous inhabitant of these ruins was Vasaaris, a powerful drow sorcerer. Before his death, he used all the power left in him to create the ominous orb. An artifact capable

to pursue his evil dreams and continue killing, even after his death. There is no treasure to be found in the orb. It is only a means to kill and protect the little belongings the drow had left. Besides its pure desire to do evil, Vasaaris felt disgusted at the idea of sharing his accouterments. Thus, he filled his former home with traps and developed a way to keep the ominous orb glowing its fatal pink light forever (see area 9).

NPCs

RORRIK CLAYHEART

Chaotic neutral dwarf (age 189)

Rorrik is stouter than the rest of the dwarves. But what he lacks in height, he makes up in toughness. He looks like a miniature fortress. Massive forearms give way to even larger arms. He has a long braided orange beard. His eyes look tiny beside his huge round nose. He wears comfortable light blue clothes.

Personality Trait. “Life is made of opportunities, grasp ‘em.”

Ideal. “A service paid with gold is honest gold.”

Bond. “One day I’ll buy a house in Silverstone.”

Flaw. “I don’t care about others’ wellbeing. Only I matter.”

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions of areas 1 through 16 correspond to the hidden ruins near Silverstone.

Terrain. The stone tiles in the ruins are worn and cracked. There are small spider webs in ceilings and corners. A thick sheet of dust covers almost every surface.

Doors. The wooden doors are so old and moldy and their locks so rusty that they don’t work anymore. A character can open any door with little effort.

Light. Sconces contain torches with continual flame spells. Removing the torches causes the spell to stop after 1d6 rounds.

Smells and Sounds. The ruins are silent but for a humming sound coming from area 7. The sound becomes stronger near the area. The areas with undead creatures bear a putrid smell and the grunts and groans of the undead in there.

1. ENTRANCE

These ruins are hidden in the depths of underground caverns. They would be almost impossible to find without the help of Rorrik or another guide. The ruins once had a magnificent wooden door, now only remnants of the varnished wood lay on the floor. The 30-foot-long corridor opens to a small foyer. There is a worn and moldy door to the west.

2. FOYER

The tiles of this area hide a trap. Poisoned darts fly from holes in the east and west walls. The trap is triggered when two or more medium characters stand here. Any creature standing in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 1 (1d3-1) piercing damage and be poisoned for one hour. A passive Perception score of 14 or higher reveals the small holes on the walls and the pressure-sensitive tiles on the floor. A character using thieves’ tools can disarm the trap with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Even after disarmed, the darts regenerate in an hour and the trap resets.

Secret Door. A passive Perception score of 16 or higher reveals the sconce on the wall is a switch. Pulling the sconce activates a sliding mechanism that causes a section of the wall to move sideways and reveal a secret path to area 5.

3. TRAPPED ROOM

This room is trapped. Fire jets erupt from the north wall and burn all those who cross the threshold of the room. Pulling a thin trigger string line activates the trap. Any creature standing 15 feet from the north wall of area 3 must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. The fire bursts to the exterior



of the room and burns what remains of the doors. The fire jets replenish their oil magically in an hour. A passive Perception score of 14 or higher reveals the trigger string line under the threshold. A character using thieves' tools can disarm the trap with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

4. LONG HALLWAY

This is a long corridor that connects several sections of the dungeon. The north half of this hallway doesn't have a light source and is dark. The passage of time and recent seismic activity have caused some of the walls in the ruins to collapse. There is a collapsed wall south of this long corridor. The dark tunnel leads to areas 11 and 12.

Secret Doors. A passive Perception score of 13 or higher reveals loose bricks on the northwest and north walls at the end of two corridors. Pushing the bricks activates sliding mechanisms that cause sections of the walls to move sideways and reveal secret paths to areas 8 and 7 respectively. A passive Perception score of 13 or higher reveals a loose brick on the southwest wall at the end of a corridor. Pushing the brick activates a sliding mechanism that reveals a secret path to area 10.

5. SECRET PASSAGE

The ceiling in this room shows erosion marks that seem unusual. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals they are acid marks. Two **grey oozes** pour from cracks in the ceiling and fall on any living creature that enters the room.

Secret Doors. A passive Perception score of 16 or higher reveals the scone on the wall is a switch. Pressing the switch activates a sliding mechanism that causes a section of the wall to move sideways and reveal a secret path to area 6. There are two levers in the room. Pulling them activates a sliding mechanism that causes sections of the wall to move sideways and reveal secret paths to area 2 and 7.

6. TREASURE ROOM

There are three unlocked wooden chests in this room. There are sophisticated fabrics and clothes. Golden jewelry and silverware. Magical potions and the ancient sorcerer's belongings.

Treasure. One chest contains three sets of noble clothes, two fine cloaks, and a set of bedsheets. All with golden embroidery. It all has a collective value of 137 gold pieces. It all remained in good conditions thanks to preservation magic in the chest. The second chest has two golden bracelets, a necklace, two pairs of earrings, and an anklet. It has a collective value of 242 gold pieces. The third chest has a *potion of clairvoyance*, two *potions of greater healing*, two *potions of poison*, and a *potion of acid resistance*. The third chest has a *ring of jumping*, two

detect magic spellscrolls, a *spell scroll of detect traps*, and a *rope of climbing*.

7. THE OMINOUS ORB

The humming sound emanates from the orb in this room. The shape of the room is symmetrical and it has several alcoves to the north, east, and west. A magic circle dominates the center of the room. The runes glow faintly, in harmony with the four corners of the inner square. Above them, the ominous orb hovers motionless three feet above the ground. There are countless of bones and ashes around the orb. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the bones belong to different time periods.

The orb is an artifact of death and evil. It only exists to kill, and its only purpose is to attract living creatures and obliterate them. A *detect magic* spell reveals a strong aura of necromancy surrounding the orb. Any creature staring at the orb within 30 feet of it must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed. Charmed creatures feel an immediate urge to take the orb in their hands and take the most direct route to the orb as soon as possible. Any creature that interacts with the orb must make a successful DC 18 Constitution saving throw or die. Creatures killed by the orb react as if hit by a *disintegration* spell. Only a fraction of the creature's bones falls to the ground. The rest is ashes. Creatures killed by the ominous orb cannot be resurrected by a *revivify* or *raise dead* spells since most of the target's body is not present.

Secret Doors. A passive Perception score of 13 or higher reveals loose bricks on the walls of the west alcoves. Pushing the bricks activates sliding mechanisms that cause sections of the walls to move sideways and reveal secret paths to areas 4 and 16 respectively.

8. HIDDEN ROOM

Vasaaris was proud and vain. He used to have a silver-lined huge mirror in this room. He would admire himself and stare at his greatness for hours. He also kept a statue of himself. The stone has not received any clemency from the passing of time though. Former wooden furniture was destroyed with the recent seismic activity. Only chunks of wood and splintered planks remain. The earthquake caused the south wall of this room to collapse, forming a tunnel that leads to area 10.

Secret Doors. A passive Perception score of 16 or higher reveals a switch behind a loose brick on the west wall. Pressing the switch activates a sliding mechanism that causes a section of the wall to move sideways and reveal a secret path to area 9. Pulling a lever on the wall activates a sliding mechanism that causes a section of the wall to move sideways and reveal a secret path to area 4.

9. SECRET STUDIO

This room looks neat and clean. It is an incredible contrast to the rest of the place. A *detect magic* spells reveal an aura of transmutation magic. A magic aura prevents the studio from accumulating dust or spiders from forming webs. The bookshelves and their contents are well preserved. There is a desk with an open book on it. This is Vasaaris's journal, and it contains the last words he wrote. The journal describes how he created the ominous orb and the steps he took to make the orb's magic permanent.

A successful DC 16 Intelligence check reveals there can be a way to reverse-engineer what Vasaaris did and stop the orb's deathly aura. A character must spend an hour reading and researching inside Vasaaris's studio to come up with the solution. To disable the orb, the adventurers must go the area 10 and destroy the power cores inside each of the columns. The diary suggests the cores must be protected by some kind of magic.

10. GREAT HALL

Six large columns are forming two lines of three in the center of this area. The columns are surrounded by a thick and gooey ebony paste. The semi-liquid substance is corrosive. Any creature that touches the columns takes 7 (2d6) acid damage. Attempting to remove the column's black acidic coating or attacking it in any way triggers the defensive mechanism of the cores.

The black goo of the six columns moves as if alive and coalesces into three mounds of corrosion. Three **black puddings** defend the cores and fight until slain. A successful DC 15 Strength check allows a character to remove the stone block covering the core in each pillar. Each core has 10 AC and 5 HP. When a core is destroyed, it explodes. Every creature standing 5 feet away from the core when it bursts must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 12 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once all cores have been destroyed, the lethal aura surrounding the ominous orb disappears and the orb falls to the ground. It is a clay sphere with no economic value.

The east wall of this room collapsed after an earthquake. There was a secret passage leading to area 11 but it caved in and became a tunnel.

11. SECRET WARDROBE

Any valuables stored here were destroyed by earthquakes. The tunnel that destroyed the passage between areas 10 and 11 also destroyed the east wall in this area. The dark tunnel leads to area 12.

12. CAVERN

This is a natural cavern that was revealed due to recent earthquakes. There is what appears to be a dark leather cloak hung on the east wall of the cave. When two or more creatures are at reach, a **cloak** comes out of its disguise and attacks. It uses its Moan ability to frighten its foes and then attaches itself to the nearest creature. If the battle turns against it, it flees. It flies through the tunnel (area 13) to find a spot where to hide again.

13. TUNNEL

The dark tunnel leads to unknown areas in the underground caverns. Any areas beyond this tunnel are not within the scope of this module.

14. AND 15. ALTERNATE EXITS

Both these corridors are alternate entrances to the ruins that Rorrik didn't know about. They lead to unknown areas in the underground caverns. These areas are not considered within the scope of this module.

16. TRAPPED HALLWAY

The midsection of the corridor forms a square. The floor forming the square features pressure-sensitive tiles. When three or more creatures stand in this area, poisonous gas starts pouring from the walls. Any creature exposed to the gas must make a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for one hour. A passive Perception score of 15 or higher reveals the pressure-sensitive tiles on the floor. A character using thieves' tools can disarm the trap with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

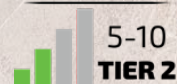
South of the poison gas trap, there are three sarcophagi. Vasaaris kept some corpses here at all times. They had two purposes. The dead bodies meant instant guards if the need arose, and they also helped with his necromancy research. He decided they would be the former after he died. Three **ghasts** interrupt their eternal sleep when they hear living creatures nearby.

Secret Door: The right sconce on the north wall is a switch. Pulling the switch activates a sliding mechanism that causes a section of the east wall to move sideways and reveal a secret path to area 7.

You must stop them before they leave.
Be ready for anything.

Sir Wellington

A MAGE ON THE RUN



BACKGROUND LORE

A magic is a powerful thing. And arcane energies can represent a devastating force in the wrong hands. Hence, an archmage's staff or a lich spellbook are sometimes better off destroyed. However, such mighty beings never bother with the trivial dilemmas of mortals. Their goals are long-term projects and they seldom threaten small communities or towns. A lich has no interest in stealing livestock from a farming settlement.

Town guards and soldiers don't have to face the horrors of necromancy to make a living most of the time. They arrest burglars and thieves. Occasionally, a guard becomes a local hero after drawing swords with a thug and coming out victorious but the euphoria doesn't last more than a few days. This is the kind of routine job that Sir Wellington has to deal with day by day. He loves what he does though, and he is satisfied to bring good to the world. Greenfields, his hometown, is safe. And that makes his life a success.

But what happens when the ability to do magic gets mixed with a thug's lack of class, and a thief's will to steal? A rogue mage, a dangerous criminal. Edifaris Lisawi is a changeling that has spent their whole life on the run. They have benefited from their ability to change their appearance to get away with mischief over and over. Edifaris travels from town to town transporting their pocket universe, a wagon pulled by two mules. The wagon multiplies its size and transforms into a whole structure. Edifaris's Laboratory is a dreamlike building. It looks like a regular two-story wooden house from the outside, but, upon entering, the place grows even larger and stone hall-

ways and tiles extend way further than the dimensions of the wooden home.

Edifaris finds a good spot to place their temporary home, assumes an appearance that is certain to mislead the locals, and proceeds to do some research in town to determine potential targets to steal. They stay no more than a fortnight and then leave. Edifaris steals from wealthy individuals. They target jewels, fancy clothing, but most of all, they are interested in magical components that tend to be rare and very expensive. Sophisticated fabrics such as cashmere, silk, wool, and furs. Crystal balls, human-size mirrors, gold and silver bars, liquid mercury, griffon feathers, manticore quills, etc. They steal everything that has a use.

The time came when Edifaris arrived in Greenfields. At first, Sir Wellington didn't suspect anything from the newcomer. An old lady with a fat white cat following her could not represent a threat what so ever. But he was more confused than surprised when he saw the old lady's house the next day. Sir Wellington is not the sharpest tool of the shed, but he is certain that the house wasn't there before. He felt more uneasy the day after when a couple of his men informed him of a robbery.

The victims were the Lirio family. They are the one of wealthiest individuals in town. They own almost half of it. They lost thousands of gold worth in family jewels. A day after the incident, a horse went missing from Willby's farm. After some hours looking into that as well, "Amenities and Goods", a local store, got robbed. Half of their goods disappeared. Sir Wellington noticed the robberies had something in common. First, it was gold, then the horse, and now food. He suspected someone was gathering supplies to leave town. He had a hunch about where

the criminal would hit next. The only missing ingredient for a long trip away from Greenfields was alcohol.

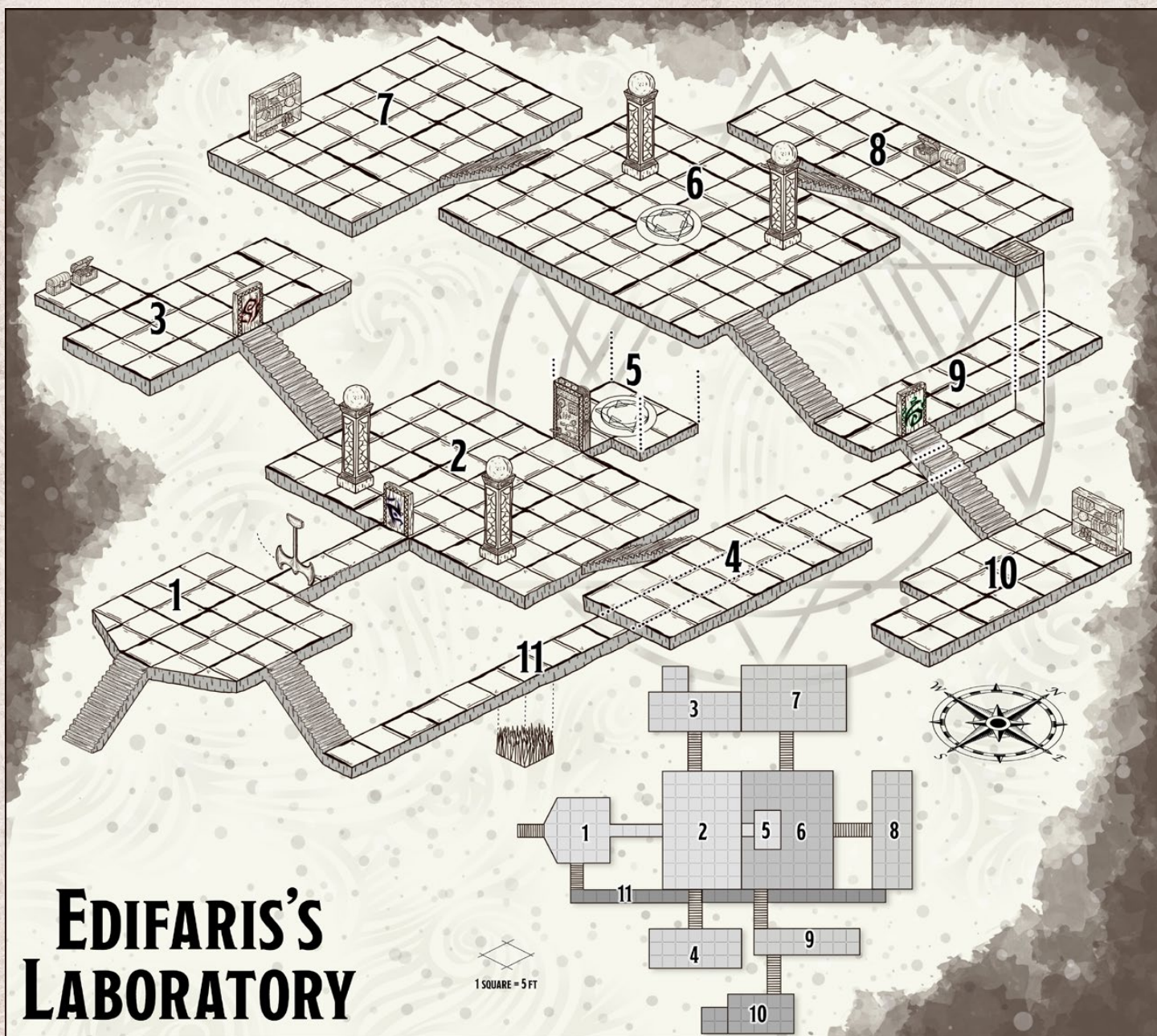
He gathered some men and organized them in rounds. They stood guard outside the winemaker. Edifaris arrived, but this time they didn't take the shape of the old lady. A swift and nimble elf was a better choice for this occasion. The mage entered the store while the guards were watching. But no one suspected anything at first. It was after the sound of an explosion that the guards saw the elf coming out of the store with a bag under an arm. However, three more identical elves followed suite. Edifaris cast an illusion spell that made copies of themselves. This made it harder to track them. Besides, little after, they changed their shape to the frail old lady again.

Sir Wellington couldn't help but think about the odd old lady and her appeared-out-of-nowhere home. All these ca-

lamities started the day after he saw that house. Trusting his gut, he decided to hire some external party to investigate the house. He doesn't want his guards thinking he has something against a poor old woman. He offers 350 gold pieces to a group of adventurers who can stop the rogue mage and recover the missing belongings.

DEALING WITH EDIFARIS

The clever wizard doesn't mind the presence of the intruders. They find it amusing. It is not often that they get to see their traps and defensive mechanisms in action. Edifaris doesn't stop the adventurers from entering their home, nor when they find the stolen gold and goods. They take it personally if the adventurers loot their cache. Their magic items are not to be stolen, and they don't take it lightly if it happens.



Edifaris (**mage**) confronts the adventurers followed by two **helmed horrors** in area 1 of the Laboratory just before they leave. If their life is threatened, Edifaris tries to flee to area 5 using *gaseous form*. Once they are safe, they cast *teleportation circle* and leave Greenfields.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions of areas 1 through 11 correspond to Edifaris's Laboratory.

Magical House. This home looks like a regular house from the outside. In reality, it is Edifaris's plane.

Terrain. Edifaris's Laboratory has stone walls and floors. Magic keeps the place neat and clean. The air is fresh and every room is magically warm.

Doors. There are three doors with magical glyphs on them. The doors are otherwise unlocked.

Light. All of the laboratory is magically lit. The rooms look as if sunlight hits them from above but the light doesn't dazzle or have an apparent source.

Smells and Sounds. The whole place smells of sulfur, ashes, a bit of acid, and coal. The laboratories bear stronger versions of those same stench.

The two-story building has a small porch with three steps on each side. The building has a stone foundation and the wooden walls look firm and strong. The main door of Edifaris's home is unlocked. Upon crossing the threshold, a spectral voice says "*Welcome, if you must. But beware! For intruders, I don't trust.*" A pitch black tunnel engulfs visitors as the voice vanishes, and the entry door disappears behind them. Some seconds after, any creature who enters appears at the steps before the foyer (area 1).

1. FOYER

There are a couple of wooden tables here. They have fresh fruit and water that regenerates magically every 24 hours. A *detect magic* spell reveals a conjuration aura coming from the silverware on the tables. They have permanent *create food and water* spells in them.

There is a pressure-sensitive tile at the beginning of the corridor to area 2 that activates a trap. A massive double-edged axe swings from east to west and then swings back. It slashes anything in its path. Any creature that crosses the hallway threshold must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 20 (3d12) slashing damage and be knocked prone on a failed save or half as much in a successful one. A passive Perception score of 14 or higher reveals the pressure-sensitive tile on the floor. A character using thieves' tools can disarm the trap with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Failing by 5 or more causes the trap to swing the axe as if the trap were activated. Even after disarmed, the axe returns to its initial position magically in 10 minutes.

There is an illusory wall covering access to the stairs to area 11. The wall looks identical to the rest of the room unless targeted by a *detect magic* spell, in which case the wall becomes transparent.

2. MAIN HALL

The entry door to this area has a *glyph of warding* spell on it. Opening the door triggers the glyph. The glyph casts a *lightning bolt* spell when triggered. Any creature in a 30-foot-long straight line from the door must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 20 (6d6) lightning damage on a failed save or half as much in a successful one. The glyph is invisible to the eye. It can be perceived with a *detect magic* or *detect traps* spell. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check allows a character to dispel the magic of the glyph with a *dispel magic* spell. The glyph reappears in 10 minutes regardless if it was either spent or dispelled.

There are two pillars to each side of the entrance. Two identical sets of stairs lead to the second level of Edifaris's Laboratory (areas 3 and 4). North of the main hall, one of Edifaris's inventions takes the place of the door. This mechanical contraption has levers, buttons, switches, and a knob. There is a small note engraved on the door that reads: "*Intelligence shall always be stronger than strength*". The door serves as a defensive mechanism. It prevents anyone from entering the teleporting circle (area 5).

Edifaris knows the magic word to bypass the security, "Sirafide", which is their name backwards. But the door can be deactivated with three successful Intelligence checks as well. Failing at any of the attempts causes the spells imbued in the door to summon Edifaris's defenders. Any creature who manipulates the door must make a successful DC 18 Intelligence check. On a failure, the door's gears turn and a **flesh golem** materializes in the center of the room in a matter of seconds. Creatures who manipulate the door after that must make a successful DC 16 Intelligence check. On a failure, the door summons a **shield guardian**. Creatures who manipulate the door after that must make a successful DC 14 Intelligence check. On a failure, the door summons 4 **helmed horrors**.

If the door is targeted by a melee attack, a ranged attack, a spell, or any other means that can cause damage, the door summons all six Edifaris's defenders at the same time and a glyph on it explodes. Any creature standing in a 15-foot-cone in front of the door must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 19 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save or half as much in a successful one. The exploding glyph reappears on the door after ten minutes.

3. FAKE LABORATORY

The entry door to this area has a *glyph of warding* spell on it. Opening the door triggers the glyph. The glyph ex-

plodes when triggered. It erupts with magical energy in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on it, but the explosion doesn't affect the interior of the room. The inner side of the door has a special coating that prevents the fire from going in. The sphere spreads around corners. Each creature in the area must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 5d8 fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. The glyph is invisible to the eye. It can be perceived with a *detect magic* or *detect traps* spell. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check allows a character to dispel the magic of the glyph with a *dispel magic* spell. The glyph reappears in 10 minutes regardless if it was either spent or dispelled.

Edifaris's intention with this laboratory is to mislead possible intruders. The lab has a couple of working tables. On their surfaces, unknown contraptions to alchemy-ignorant individuals contain several substances. Crystal containers with weird shapes transport bubbling goo from one point to another. The lab looks well equipped and full. Looking to make his deception stronger, he even added a small treasure room to dissuade intruders from entering further, assuming they had the brain or the muscle to bypass all his security measures in the main hall (area 2). A passive Investigation score of 14 or higher reveals it is possible to extract a valuable concoction from the lab's equipment. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to dilute the different solutions into one powerful concoction. The process takes about 10 minutes and the result is one *potion of heroism*. The substances are spoiled if the check is failed. However, failing by 5 or more results in a *potion of poison*.

Treasure. The chests contain 213 gold pieces divided into gold and silver coins, two silver rings, and one golden circlet. There are two sets of high-quality robes and several meters of soft purple silk. The fabrics are worth 116 gold pieces. There are two *potions of greater healing*, one *spell scroll of revivify*, one *spell scroll of clairvoyance*, and one *spell scroll of arcane eye*.

4. EDIFARIS'S HOARDER ROOM

This room is full of everything and nothing. Countless bookshelves are packed with more stuff than they can carry. Piles and piles of rubble impede normal movement. The room is cramped with stuff a mage might like. Old staves, fancy parchment scrolls, small wooden and stone sculptures, paintings, vases with eyes and ears, animal claws, feathers, quartz, and crystals, etc.

Treasure. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to draw a couple of gold and silver trinkets that are worth 117 gold pieces.

5. TELEPORTING CIRCLE

There is no magical word to make the circle work. Any creature that steps on the circle teleports to the antechamber (area 6) after one round. The circle can teleport four medium creatures at a time.

6. ANTECHAMBER

There are two identical pillars northeast and northwest of the teleporting circle in this room. This area is empty except for a few paintings on the walls, a couple of small wooden tables, and a chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

7. STUDIO

This area has several bookshelves. There are countless books, treatises, scrolls, documents, journals, and the like. A large desk with a fancy comfortable red velvet chair is where Edifaris does most of his studies. A passive Perception score of 16 or higher reveals there is a small book with a dark leather cover and gold bindings. It is Edifaris's journal. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to identify the glyphs and traps that Edifaris installed inside their home. The check also reveals the magic words to bypass the glyphs.

8. CACHE

This is where Edifaris stored most of the stolen goods from Greenfield. The Lirio's family jewels are all here, as well as the food and alcohol stolen. A section of the room has a large closet. Its doors are made of iron and they are cold to the touch. Inside it, several pieces of meat and food are stored. The temperature inside the storage is considerably lower than the outside because of a permanent *ray of frost* spell. This allows for food to be stored for long periods.

There is a trapdoor east of this area. Opening it leads to a 30-foot-deep shaft to area 11. Climbing down the shaft requires a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. Edifaris uses levitation magic or a *fly* spell whenever they take this passageway.

Treasure. Besides everything that belongs to the Lirios and the stolen goods from "Amenities and Goods", there are two chests with treasure. They contain a spell book with all the spells known by a **mage**, plus 10 other spells (DM's choice). There is a flask of *sovereign glue*, a *rod of alertness*, and a *robe of useful items*. Plus, there is a *bag of holding* with leather bags in it. They are packed with copper, silver, and gold pieces. The collective value of it all is 1,500 gold pieces.

9. EDIFARIS'S WARDROBE

This hallway is empty except for some decorations on the walls and a large tall magical mirror attached to the north wall. Edifaris speaks the programmed commands to change their outfit at-will. Attempting to remove the mirror from the wall is impossible without Edifaris's intervention. Insisting and using force to remove it from the

wall breaks it. If the mirror breaks, two **invisible stalkers** attack whoever broke it.

10. HIDDEN LABORATORY

The entry door to this area has a *glyph of warding* spell on it. Opening the door triggers the glyph. The glyph casts a *phantasmal killer* spell when triggered. Any creature that opens the door must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom or be triggered by the spell. The glyph is invisible to the eye. It can be perceived with a *detect magic* or *detect traps* spell. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check allows a character to dispel the magic of the glyph with a *dispel magic* spell. The glyph reappears in 10 minutes regardless if it was either spent or dispelled.

This is Edifaris's real laboratory. It is better equipped than the one in area 3. There are a couple of bookshelves with ancient tomes and books. There are a crystal ball and a couple of vials on one of the shelves. A passive Investigation score of 15 or higher reveals it is possible to extract a valuable concoction from the lab's equipment. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to dilute the different solutions into one powerful concoction. The process takes about 10 minutes and the result is one *potion of invulnerability*. The substances are spoiled if the check is failed. However, failing by 5 or more results in two *potions of poison*.

11. HIDDEN PASSAGEWAY

This long corridor traverses the whole structure underneath it. There is a trap 30 feet away from the entry stairs. A pressure-sensitive tile opens into a spiked pit. Any creature standing in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) piercing damage and be poisoned for one hour. A passive Perception score of 14 or higher reveals the pressure-sensitive tile on the floor. A character using thieves' tools can disarm the trap with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Even after disarmed, the pressure-sensitive tile retakes its place after one hour.

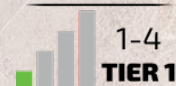
DEVELOPMENT

Sir Wellington pays the adventurers the agreed-upon amount whether they made Edifaris flee or murdered them. The Lirio family rewards the adventurers with 200 gold pieces if they were able to return their belongings. "Amenities and Goods" rewards the heroes 100 gold pieces and pays for their stay in town for a week, all-inclusive. The winemaker pitches in 50 gold pieces for their service. Unfortunately, the horse that disappeared from Willby's farm is nowhere to be found. Perhaps Greenfields holds yet more mysteries that need to be unfolded.

Foolish! Those who defaced Saint Joseph's Chapel are foolish beyond description. Who's gonna fix things now?

Concerned City Guard

SAINT JOSEPH'S CRYPT



BACKGROUND LORE



Saint Joseph is a divisive figure in recent world history. Many worship him, but others still carry the wounds in their family tree from that man's deeds. He was once a hateful conqueror who commanded a large army of barbarians and pikemen. Saint Joseph ravaged the land and took many kingdoms by force, leaving destruction and death in his path. That is why his becoming a saint took many by surprise later on.

It all goes back to the time when two large kingdoms, the Thranic Kingdom and the Ferzes Realm were at war. The Ferzes had a superior position and army. They would soon win the war and overtake their opponents. It was only a matter of time. The Thranics fought valiantly and well, but their forces, inferior in number, were meant to eventually drown under the implacable Ferzes force. The Ferzes were not only stronger, they were cruel beyond belief. The Ferzes forces committed the worst war crimes. People would not believe the tales until they saw the true extension of the Ferzes cruelty. The Ferzes were spiteful butchers who would not leave anyone alive.

It was then that Joseph, the Conqueror, arrived with his large army and attacked the Thranic Kingdom from the south. The Thranics saw their defeat around the corner and chose to surrender. Joseph, the Conqueror was a renowned warlord and they knew they could never survive against two enemies. Joseph rode through the Thranic kingdom to explore his new lands and came upon the destruction brought by the Ferzes, near the two kingdom's borders. The cruelty by which the Ferzes had massacred

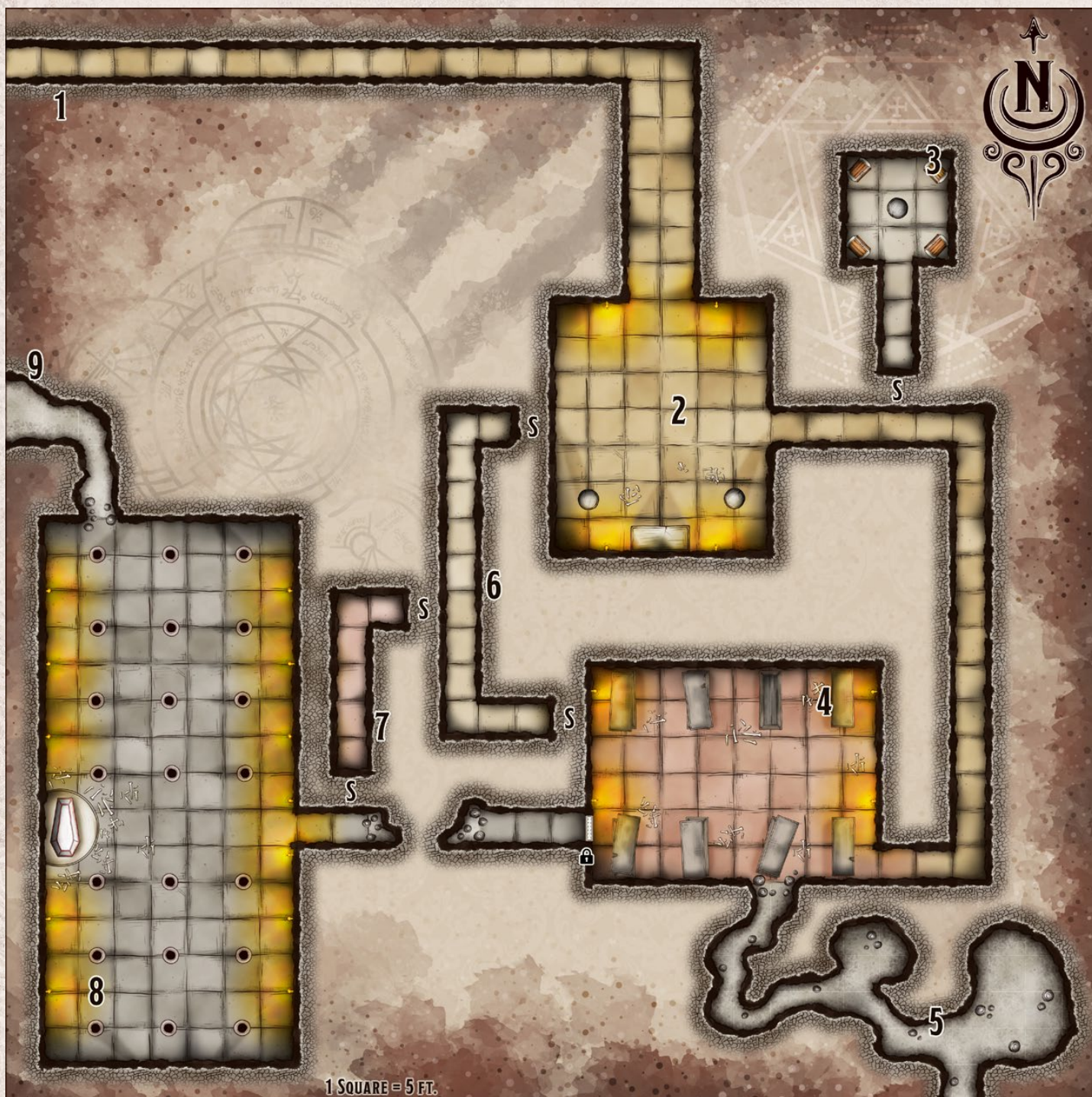
townsfolk, women, and even children impressed a man such as Joseph. The warlord was a pragmatic man with no fear for tough decisions but his crimes of war were humbled by the atrocity before him. No one knows for sure why he did it, but Joseph turned around and ordered his army to join the remaining Thranic forces and march over to Ferzes to end them once and for all. The war lasted one year and not a single Ferzes man remained after it all ended. Unfortunately for Joseph, he sustained a serious wound while storming the Ferzes capital and died from it.

Joseph was declared a saint years later and chapels dedicated to his figure arose all around the kingdom. His remains and those of his followers were placed in a crypt under a large mountain range.

CURRENT EVENTS

A group of separatists in the kingdom deny Joseph's claim to sainthood. They claim that a bloodlust conqueror such as him shall never be revered as a figure of good, despite his good deeds before he died. These people don't believe that saving the Thranic Kingdom redempts Joseph from what he did. The separatists have defile and destroyed several chapels in the last few weeks. This has caused Saint Joseph's spirit to grow hateful and revert to his former self: the evil, bloodthirsty conqueror of old.

Dark ethereal figures emerge from the defaced chapels and attack passers-by, come into houses and smother people in their sleep, and possess weak-minded individuals to wreak havoc in the areas around the chapels. Local law-enforcement have tried to content with the spirits to no avail. The local priest has determined that the problem can only be solved at the root. Someone must visit Saint Joseph's crypt and deal with the angry spirit directly. The



church and the state offer a bounty of 300 gp to a group of valiant warriors strong enough to deal with Saint Joseph's immortal ghost.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions of areas 1 through 9 correspond to the crypt map.

Terrain. The flooring in Saint Joseph's Crypt is made of large stone tiles. The stone floor bears the damage of decades of erosion and occasional humidity. Some sections of the underground complex caved in years ago. The damages blocked some hallways and revealed hidden paths through natural caves out of the crypt.

Light. Important chambers in the crypt feature torches on sconces on the walls. The torches are imbued with permanent continual flame spells that light the areas since the crypt's construction. Removing any of the torches causes it to go out in 1d6 minutes. The rest of the areas are in complete darkness.

Smells and Sounds. The dry, dusty, and sterile smell of the crypt combines with a rather unusual smell of roses. The alluring perfume originates in Saint Joseph's crypt in area 8.

1. ENTRANCE HALLWAY

The only entrance to the crypt is located in the outskirts of a large mountain. Two statues flank the entrance. The

statues have withstood the onslaught of the elements for decades. Few details of the statues remain visible but an inscription in one of the statues is still legible. It reads:

Saint Joseph, warmonger turned savior, rests here for eternity. May humanity never spit on his grave, lest he remembers the hatred he felt for them in the first place.

The entrance hallway continues down into the mountain for a quarter of a mile. The path is slightly slanted upward. The slant is barely enough to keep rain water from pouring into the underground complex. The walls of the hallway used to feature fresco paintings of Saint Joseph and his deeds. The ones in the first half of the hallway have peeled enough of the wall for them to be appreciated. But later on, the frescoes still retain a fraction of their original beauty. They depict Saint Joseph in his warring days as an evil overlord; and later as he became a savior of the land. The frescoes show him as a tall white-haired man in heavy armor. Saint Joseph wields a large warhammer in most images.

2. BURIAL ALTAR

The large chamber contains two stone pedestals, a stone tabernacle, and a few mounds of eroded bones. The deep darkness of the entrance hallway is interrupted by the light of the four magical torches on the walls. The wall behind the tabernacle is engraved with runes from an ancient form of the Common tongue. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check or a *comprehend languages* spell reveals that this altar was meant as a place of worship to the late Saint Joseph. The remains of his most loyal followers in the years after his death were brought here to sanctify their remains and then bury them in the crypt.

The mounds of bones animate in 1d4 rounds after the adventurers enter this chamber. They fly in the air for a moment and coalesce into humanoid shape. Three **skeletons** with Saint Joseph's name-rune engraved on their foreheads fight to protect the crypt. The skeletons may pursue the characters through the entrance hallway but can't go further than the two statues by the mountain outskirts.

Secret Doors. A passive Perception score of 16 or higher reveals the outlines of two secret paths. The first one, to area

6, opens by pushing a brick. The second one, to area 3, opens by pulling a fake rock nearby. These methods activate a sliding mechanism that causes a section of the wall to move sideways and reveal the secret path to each area respectively.

3. SECRET VAULT

The room contains a single stone pedestal in the center and four wooden chests by each corner. The wood of the chests is in remarkable good condition. Upon closer inspection, it appears that the wood is coated with an oil-like substances that preserves the wood. A runic engraving on the pedestal defies translation. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check or a *comprehend languages* spell reveals the message:

Greed shall be the end of you. Let Saint Joseph's riches be and be on your way. Else, your hand shall meet a fiery end.

The northwest and the southeast chests are trapped with a *glyph of warding* spell (explosive runes). The runes are almost invisible. Only a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals their presence. The glyph triggers when the chest lid opens. If either chest is opened, each creature within 20 feet of it must make a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (5d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The oil coating on the chests protects them and their contents from the fire damage. Activating one glyph does not neutralize the explosive runes glyph on the other chest.

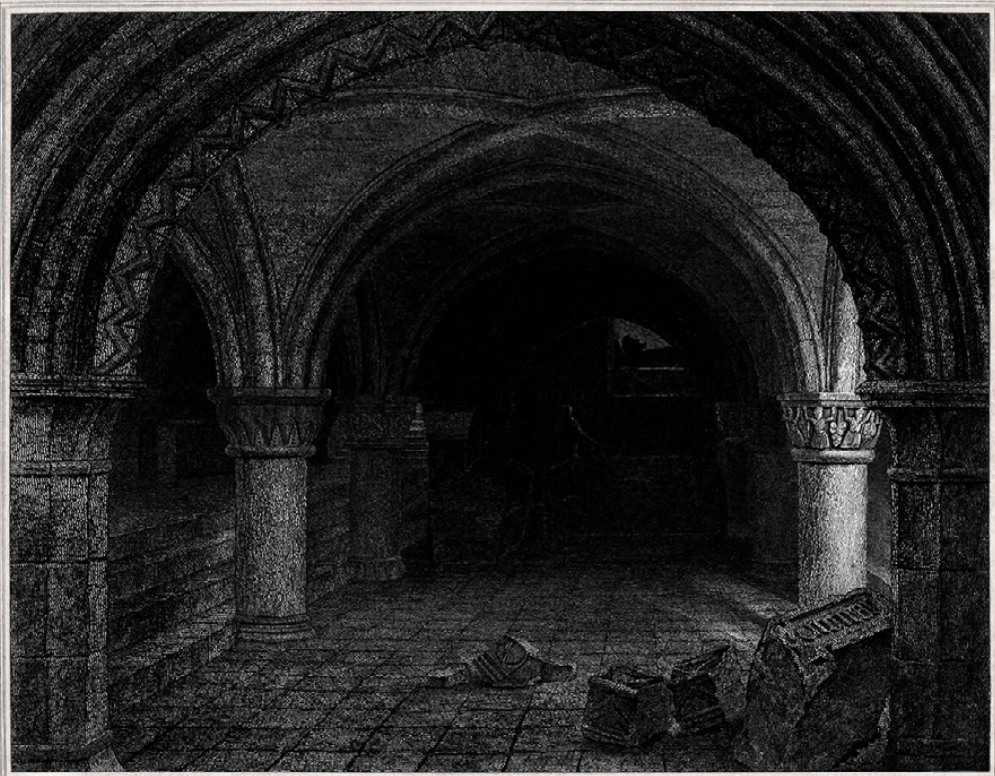


Illustration by J. Scott from a drawing by J. MacDonald for *Dragon Magazine* 300 (1997) with additions.

Treasure. The two actual wooden treasure chests contain 100 gp and 533 gp. The coinage shows the face of a human ruler from three hundred years ago. Most coins are in excellent condition and could be sold for an extra fee to the right collector. A wooden box with a strange sigil contains a pack of twenty potions but most of them are spoiled. The ones still in good condition are two *potions of superior healing*. A leather case contains a *spell scroll of remove curse*.

4. FOLLOWERS' CRYPT

The large chamber contains eight stone caskets in varied states of conservation. Some of the caskets are open or damaged by the recent undead activity after the Saint Joseph's Chapels' attacks. The south wall has sustained serious damage and a portion of it has caved in and revealed a natural cavern beyond. This damage appears to be natural and not the work of the undead in the area.

The mounds of bones animate in 1d4 rounds after the adventurers enter this chamber. They fly in the air for a moment and coalesce into humanoid shape. Six **skeletons** with Saint Joseph's name-rune engraved on their foreheads fight to protect the crypt. Two **shadows** emerge from the caskets and join the fight on round two.

Secret Door. A passive Perception score of 16 or higher reveals that moving the lid of the northwest casket triggers a clockwork mechanism. The device moves a section of the wall sideways and reveals a secret path to area 6.

Treasure. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that two of the empty caskets have double bottoms. The lower chambers contain 30 gp, one *potion of healing*, and one *+1 shortsword*.

5. NATURAL CAVE

The natural cavern continues for miles, slanting down towards the depths under the mountain range. Five **piercers** attached to the ceiling of the cave drop down onto the adventurers if given a chance. If any of the piercers dies in combat, a half broken stalagmite wakes of from its slumber and is revealed to be a **roper**. Continuing down this path may prove fatal for unprepared adventurers. The contents of the caverns beyond this point is not within the scope of this adventure and up to the DM's discretion.

6. SECRET HALLWAY

This is a dark, damp hallway that connects several areas of the underground complex. Two **swarms of insects** emerge from cracks on the walls and attack any living creature that walks through here.

Secret Door. A passive Perception score of 17 or higher reveals that some of the stone bricks on the west wall have a different coloration. Pulling two of those bricks at the same time activates a sliding mechanism that causes

a section of the wall to move sideways and reveal a secret path to area 7.

7. SECRET REPOSITORY

This is a dark, damp hallway that features countless niches on its walls. Each of the niches is sealed shut with clay. If broken into, the remains of a single person's ashes appear to be stored in each of the niche boxes. A section of the west wall was engraved and it appears to spell the reason why these people were kept in this secret repository but water filtration on the engraved wall has eroded the marks beyond legibility.

8. SAINT JOSEPH'S CRYPT

Three rows of thick stone pillars run from north to south but leave a space unoccupied in the middle, overlooking a stone dais with a large marble sarcophagus. Each pillar holds nine niche boxes in them. Each of the niche lids is engraved with the name and the date of death of the person whose remains it holds. Most of them are from around fifty years ago. Mounds of eroded bones lie scattered around the stone dais.

A section of the wall behind the last northwest pillar has sustained structural damage. A portion of the wall has caved in and revealed a natural cavern behind (area 9).

When an adventurer comes within 10 feet of the sarcophagus, the bones fly in the air in a similar fashion as those in area 2 and form six **skeletons**. The sarcophagus is closed but a dark, misty, shapeless, figure emerges through the rock and joins the skeletons. Saint Joseph's **wraith** is consumed by rage and cannot be reasoned with. Only by destroying this representation of his hateful past self can he and his followers rest once more.

Treasure. Saint Joseph's collarbone lies inside the sarcophagus. The bone was carved with ancient runes that translate to prayers. The bone is a priceless relic that would be appreciated by church followers and the clergy. A carved clay mask with rudimentary paintings is worth 100 gp if sold to an antiquarian versed in the subject.

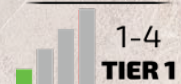
9. UNDERDARK CAVERN

This cavern turns west and soon takes on a steep slant down into the depths of the world. This cavern is an uncharted access point to the Underdark, a worldwide network of tunnels, caverns, and unknown perils. The adventurers may use this entrance to reach the underworld and continue their adventures there. These adventures are not within the scope of this adventure and up to the DM's discretion.

I swear, I'm being tailed, threatened. Protect me and my guests please, I'll pay you well.

Alwin Leothana, Owner

THE HOLLOW SEQUOIA



BACKGROUND LORE

Deep in the forests of Elanala, where huge, immense trees caress the lowest clouds, an elven settlement of wood elves adapts to their new town's dimensions. Perdove has seen rapid growth in the past two decades. The moon witnessed the births of many babies and various nomad elves opted to settle down and join the community. This growth has caused a rise in the number of travelers and passers-by, and hence, the need for a place to stay arose.

Perdove is within a thick forest with small ridges and valleys. Giant sequoia trees shelter the elves from the elements. The treetops are so high and so branchy that the elves build on and between them. Their homes are all connected to the tree trunks and there are wooden bridges to get across with ease. The sequoia trees are as ancient as the most venerable of elves. The wood elves of Perdove consider these trees sacred. After all, the trees are their home.

One of the oldest trees in Perdove died about five years ago. The elder says it was its time. It is the only dead tree in a sea of green. Its leafless branches are a remarkable contrast to all the life around it. Its trunk is so massive and wide that even though it is dead, it might take years before the trunk finally withers. Alwin Leothana, businessman and entrepreneur, decided it was a great idea to take advantage of this business opportunity. He is one of the newest arrivals in Perdove and thought the tree would make a fantastic inn.

And so, The Hollow Sequoia came to be. It has been there for a couple of years now and it has accommodat-

ed many visitors since its inauguration. Right now, however, two wood elves are staying at The Hollow Sequoia although they hold different views about the existence of the inn. One of them, Shalendra Zylfir, is a traditionalist. She believes the tree should've never been desecrated like this. As one of the oldest trees in the forest, its peace should've been the priority. She reproaches herself for renting a room but it was the best way to be able to persuade the owner to leave the tree alone. The other guest, is Omilia Adzana, an elf from a younger generation than Shalendra's, with fresh ideas and the will to evolve and adapt. Omilia thinks it is absurd to think dead trees are supposed to be left alone. She venerates nature and would never do anything to harm a living thing. But she believes that making use of the hollow trunk of the tree is a way to respect nature's cycle of life. To provide a service and make a business out of the dead roots of a tree is a way to create more life, she says.

Shalendra and Omilia have been staying at the inn for some days now. Almost everybody in Perdove has heard them scream at each other and Alwin at least once. Their heated arguments are loud. Both pester Alwin day and night about their own opinions about the tree. While Shalendra tries to convince Alwin to leave the tree and make his business using huts on the treetops, like the rest of the elves do with their homes, Omilia attempts to persuade him to expand the inn to another tree and have more rooms.

Alwin doesn't know what to do. He has two employees, Elen and Elisen, and he knows they would not like to lose their job. He values tradition but he would rather lose an eye than leave the tree and his investment with it. Plus, he is sick and tired of Shalendra's and Omilia's presence. He

is certain the rooms would be rented even if they were gone. The demand is high and it is ever-growing. Omilia's expansion idea is not despicable at all, but her constant ranting and her little scenes with Shalendra in the middle of the day are.

Elanala is the home of several small elven tribes. They are known for their swift bow skills and uncanny stealth. They make for fantastic assassins, and they know it. Many a man have been killed by their hands. In a fit of rage and drunkenness, Alwin left Perdove and ventured deep into the forest, looking for one of these tribes. He asked them to get rid of the two annoying elves in his inn. It should look like a robbery or an attack come out of the blue. He signed a contract with them and left. The morning after, Alwin felt a huge sense of guilt and he regretted what he had done. The contract could not be undone now, the tribe would maim him for dishonoring them and making them waste their time. He hopes a group of adventurers arrives into town so they can undo his mischief. He plans to hire them as bodyguards but he believes they don't need to know the whole truth to accomplish the job.

NPCs

ALWIN LEOTHANA

Chaotic neutral elf (age 217)

Alwin is thinner than most elves. His limbs look like single hay straws. His voice is a little high-pitched and his pointy ears end in unusual bent tips. He wears a stained apron since he works in the kitchen a great deal of his time. He has a welcoming smile and gentle eyes.

Personality Trait. "Respect me and I'll respect you."

Ideal. "I hope my inn grows as fast as Perdove. One day I'll be a very important individual here"

Bond. "My inn is my life's effort; I'll never abandon it."

Flaw. "I tend to regret the things I do when I'm drunk or angry."

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions of areas 1 through 10 correspond to The Hollow Sequoia.

Terrain. The dead tree trunk remains solid and hard to the touch. The floor of the inn is a bit uneven in some moldy parts of the wood but it is strong enough to hold.

Light. Every level in The Hollow Sequoia has sconces on the walls. Alwin or his employees replace the torches when they go out.

Available Rooms. The Hollow Sequoia has four bedrooms. One is Alwin's. Shalendra and Omilia rent two rooms respectively. That leaves only one available bedroom. If the party wishes to stay at the inn, they can do so, provided they accept the conditions.

Smells and Sounds. The first two levels of The Hollow Sequoia have a permanent smell of food. The pleasant aromas are accompanied by the sound of music.

THE CONFRONTATION

Alwin tells the adventurers he has been receiving threats via written messages. He assures them that it might be any day from now. He regrets what he did but he doesn't want to be harmed either. He won't charge their stay, plus he offers them 100 gold pieces each for the job. They must protect him and any client of The Hollow Sequoia present at the moment of any possible threat. Shalendra and Omilia are to be prioritized since they are direct guests of the inn. They must assure their safety.

Alwin hopes for things to go his way. In an ideal scenario, the adventurers deal with the assassins and become the heroes of the day, Shalendra and Omilia get so scared by the whole thing and leave, and no one ever knows that he hired professional assassins to overcome a fit.

The elven assassins plan their attack for a week after the contract was signed. The adventurers that Alwin hires arrive three days before the confrontation. The attack happens at night, while the music is loud and the people are cheering and making much noise. The assassins break through the main entrance and attempt to finish the mission as soon as possible.

1. GREEN FIELDS / ENTRANCE

The dead tree where Alwin built his inn is surrounded by smaller bushy trees. The elves marked a road and improvised a small garden beside the entrance. Two clay pots flank the first step. Since there is no door, the sound of music and the smell of food can be perceived before entering.

2. MAIN HALL

Two long wooden tables dominate the center of the room. They can sit up to thirty people. Food and drinks travel the stairs at all times. Alwin and his two employees make good exercise going up and down the stairs several times a day. A green carpet to the northwest signals the space for the stage. There is a small table beside the entrance for adventurers to rest their weapons if they wish to do so. The stairs go around the inside of the trunk. They're 5 feet wide.

On the day of the attack, there is a crowd in the main hall. A score of elves eats and party in the first level of the dead tree. All of a sudden, 4 **scouts**, 3 **tribal warriors**, and 1 **assassin** enter The Hollow Sequoia. When they enter, they give a look of acknowledgment to Alwin and nod. A passive Insight score of 15 or higher reveals there is an understanding between them. The assassins swiftly find the targets amongst the clients and guests.



SECOND LEVEL



THIRD LEVEL



1 SQUARE = 5 FT.



If the adventurers say anything during the confrontation that might imply that Alwin has something to do with their defending the targets, the assassins turn their attention to him instead. If more than four assassins or their leader (assassin) die in combat, they attempt to flee.

3. STAGE

A grand piano, some string instruments, a trumpet, and some percussion drums suggest excellent entertainment later at night. The musicians play every day from sunset to midnight. Their group is called Swords and Roses and their best hit is Sweet Elf O' Mine. A passive Investigation score of 15 or higher reveals the violin is of rare quality; it is worth 75 gold pieces.

4. KITCHENS

There are several wooden tables here. An "L" shaped working table is in the center of the room. Alwin helps Elen and Elisen with the heavy stuff in the kitchen. And he is the one who carries large plates downstairs. There is another table reserved for the dishes and their cleaning.

5. STORAGE

The dead tree has never been a building and Alwin adapted to its dimensions. He thought this space would be ideal for storing goods. Alwin keeps crates of food and a couple of ale kegs in here. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to find 42 gold pieces hidden in one of the crates.

6. HALLWAY

This small hallway has access to each of the four rooms in the inn. A couple of wooden barrels were placed to serve as chairs. Under them, the dead eyes of a brown bear pelt stare blankly into the void.

7. OMILIA'S ROOM

Omilia spends most of the day resting in her room. She likes to smoke her pipe. Smoke can be seen coming out of her room at almost all times of the day. She also enjoys singing. And she is not afraid to show so. She goes to the main hall in the evenings to enjoy the music and argue with Shelandra if possible. She tries to persuade the adventurers to join her side and convince Alwin to not listen to Shelandra.

8. AVAILABLE ROOM

This is the only room Alwin can rent. The party must make do with what the room has. There is only one bed, a large wooden table, and a wardrobe. Alwin allows them to place their bedrolls or furs on the floor if they wish to.

9. SHELANDRA'S ROOM

Shelandra enjoys drawing attention to her. She complains about Omilia's smoke every time she crosses the hallway and says something like "Ew, I love my lungs more than that...". She tries to talk with Alwin at every opportunity she has. She tries to persuade the adventurers to join her side and convince Alwin to not listen to Omilia.

10. ALWIN'S ROOM

Alwin is not happy to sleep next to Shelandra's room. But at least he doesn't have to tolerate them when they yell stuff at each other from their rooms. He worries that the adventurers might grow tired of the women's constant yapping and leave, or even worse, not accept the job to protect them.

DEVELOPMENT

There are many possible outcomes for Alwin's dilemma but one thing is certain. Either way, Shelandra, and Omilia leave and despise Alwin for life. If no one ever figures out Alwin hired the assassins from the beginning, they leave because they had a horrible experience and he would never listen to either of them anyway. Otherwise, they leave because Alwin put a price on their heads.

If Alwin's sin is found, they send him with the town's leader unless the assassins got him first. Alwin is forced to leave his business and put into prison. The adventurers might also have a plan of their own for being lied to. If the assassins murder any of the elves or a customer, it is blamed on Alwin if he is still alive and his sentence becomes longer.


You trust that good-for-nothing snake liar?
Come on... Please tell me you're better than that!

— Oniro

THE LIPSTICK OF CHAOS

 3-5
PLAYERS

 4-6
HOURS

 1-4
TIER 1

BACKGROUND LORE

The world is full of wonders and magical artifacts. Master forgers create legendary weapons and armor, and powerful mages devise impressive objects with extraordinary magical properties. However, a coin always has two sides. A healing potion can become deadly if it is brewed with dark magic. And the forces of necromancy are capable of designing cursed trinkets as well.

This story is about two young elven mages, Oniro and Lenna. A curse took the best of them and now they spend their time fighting and building schemes to recover the precious lipstick they both want to wear. It all started when Oniro, the oldest of the two, met a nomad merchant near her home, a three-story stone tower that she bought with the money her parents left her as an inheritance. The tower used to be a military outpost of a realm that no longer exists and the owner of the structure lived in a town a few days away on the road. The nomad merchant sold all kinds of trinkets and baubles, but Oniro felt a rush when she saw a violet pretty lipstick. When the man was gone, she realized she had the lipstick in her hand and a few of her coins were gone. She didn't mind though, she looked ravishing with it.

Lenna is Oniro's best friend. They grew up in Asylerion, the majestic elven town in the forests of Vallen. They both studied the arts of magic together and became two of the most remarkable magic users in the forest. Oniro's strength is water or ice-based spells, while Lenna prefers fire and lightning destruction power. Oniro uses the water coming from the mountain next to her tower; it is perfect

for her. Lenna wants to follow her mother's steps and be part of the town's magic council so she lives in Asylerion.

One day, Oniro visited her best friend in town. They planned to spend the day together. When Lenna saw Oniro's lips, she inquired about them. Oniro felt happy to share her new lipstick with her best friend. Lenna felt the same rush as Oniro when she saw the lipstick for the first time, and she couldn't help trying it immediately. They went to eat and take a walk in the forest after that. When Oniro took a minute to release her needs, Lenna snatched the lipstick from her bag. When the day ended and they parted, Oniro had no idea that her friend kept the cherished violet lipstick.

In the morrow, Oniro noticed the object was missing. She knew immediately who had it. At first, she thought it was all a misunderstanding. But when Lenna didn't reply when she sent her a message with a communication spell, she started to feel suspicious. She decided to transform into air and go to Asylerion unnoticed. She turned invisible with a spell scroll and then cast a spell to spy on Lenna while she talked to someone in a store. An invisible magical eye inside the building allowed Oniro to see or hear what happened inside. Lenna was telling the clerk how she loved the new lipstick that she had just bought. Right then, Oniro knew she had to recover the lipstick the bad way.

Making use of cleverer magic tricks, Oniro managed to recover the lipstick. She remained invisible and used an illusion to make Lenna believe she had just step on a nasty bug. The disgusting sound of the bug's shell bursting under her boot unsettled her as she stopped to see. Sickened by the gooey remains, she belched and held a growing

need to regurgitate. Oniro knew that Lenna hated bugs more than anything, so she was certain this diversion would suffice. She used an invisible hand and levitation magic to snatch the lipstick out of Lenna's bag while she was distracted.

She decided to store it in the underground section of her tower. No one knows about it, and Lenna would have to go through her to get it. When Lenna realized the lipstick was gone, she suspected Oniro was behind it all, otherwise, she would have noticed a simple thief trying to sneak into her things. Lenna is good with destructive magic, but she knows Oniro would outsmart her if she confronts her. That's why she decides to use her wealth against her.

The Hook

Asylerion is an important elven town, and its doors are open to visitors and travelers. Lenna trusts she can hire a group of adventurers to recover what is hers, or so she claims. She offers 100 gold pieces each. She states that she doesn't want Oniro harmed, even less dead. She specifies that her only priority is to recover the lipstick and scaring Oniro enough so she doesn't think about stealing it back.

NPCs

ONIRO

Chaotic good elf (age 211)

Oniro is heavier than most elves. She has strong, thick arms and thighs. Her face is round, and her cheeks have a pinkish pretty tone. She looks neat and clean, she loves that. She wears silk robes with golden threads. She carries a leather bag with a thick spellbook in it.

Personality Trait. "Water purifies the soul. To be clean is to be pure with yourself"

Ideal. "When I share my views with someone, I make the world better than it was."

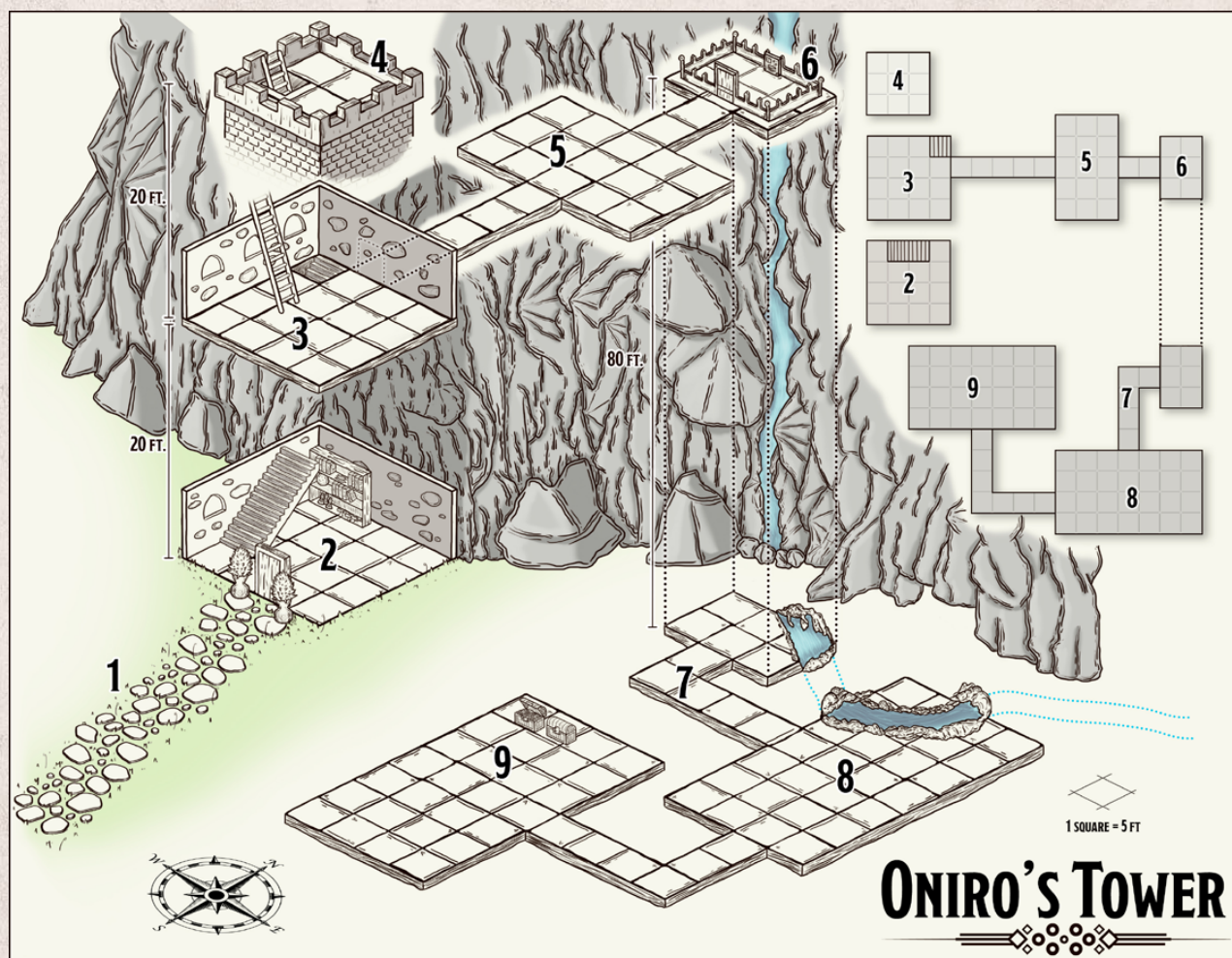
Bond. "My mastery of the elements must be unequalled."

Flaw. "I have trouble keeping my true feelings hidden. My sharp tongue lands me in trouble."

LENNA

Chaotic neutral elf (age 189)

Lenna's skin is tanned and it shines like copper under the sun. Her long braided hair falls on her shoulders and her back and it waves when she moves. She has piercing green eyes, and her voice is low-pitched and soft. She wears fine soft robes with silk embroidery.



Personality Trait. “No one could doubt by looking at my regal bearing that I am a cut above the unwashed masses.”

Ideal. “If I become strong, I can take what I want—what I deserve.”

Bond. “I must become part of the council in Asylerion and guide my people to splendor.”

Flaw. “Not even my friends can prevent me from getting what I want.”

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions of areas 1 through 9 correspond to Oniro's Tower.

Terrain. The tower is in good shape despite its age. The stone tiles and stone bricks are strong and resilient. The only place that shows erosion damage is area 8, due to the constant flow of water.

Light. There are sconces with continual flame spells in every area.

Smells and Sounds. The singing of birds and the whistling of the wind are common background noises. The sound of the water falling on the rocks and going further underground can also be perceived. The water flow is louder in areas 5 and 6. It is the loudest in areas 7 and 8.

CONFRONTATION TIME

When the adventurers confront Oniro in area 8, she tries to parley. She claims the lipstick is hers, to begin with. She offers to show the adventurers where it is, and even share it with them. A character can discern Oniro's intentions with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check. They can tell Oniro is being honest and telling the truth. In case they do not believe her and decide to fight her, follow the encounter written in area 8.

If the adventurers believe Oniro, she approaches the chests in area 9 and shows them the lipstick. She then asks them to try it on while they make their way back through the elevator shaft (area 6). Oniro thanks them for believing her, but she warns them about Lenna. She kindly asks the adventurers to return her money and let her deal with Lenna.

When they cross the hallway in area 5 to enter the tower again, the group runs into Lenna and newly hired goons waiting for them in area 3. She looks upset and impatient. She accuses the adventurers of betraying her and

THE LIPSTICK OF CHAOS

Wondrous item, rare

This small tube of lip gloss has a golden coating. The lipstick itself has a violet tone. This magical gloss does not spoil and it never goes dry. Its magical properties allow it to regenerate any used lip gloss at dawn.

Curse. Once its user puts the lipstick on, it feels compelled to have the lipstick in their possession at all times. The curse also gives the user an overwhelming desire to share the lipstick and invite other people to wear it. This, in turn, spreads the curse and creates more chaos. The curse can be lifted with a *remove curse* spell cast on the victim. That character is immune to the lipstick's curse for the next 24 hours. The lipstick's magic cannot be dispelled but with a *wish* spell.

swears they shall regret it. Oniro is not able to reason with her friend and decides not to fight her. She intervenes if Lenna's life is in danger though. Follow the encounter written in area 3 in case this happened.

1. STONE PATH

The green fields give way to a merry stone path. There are dandelions along the path. Two spiky bushes flank the main door of the tower. The entry door has an *alarm* spell on it. Opening the door triggers the alarm. Oniro programmed it to be a silent alarm so she is the only one that hears it. Oniro descends to area 8 when she hears the alarm. The alarm can be perceived with a *detect magic* spell. A character can dispel the alarm with *dispel magic*.

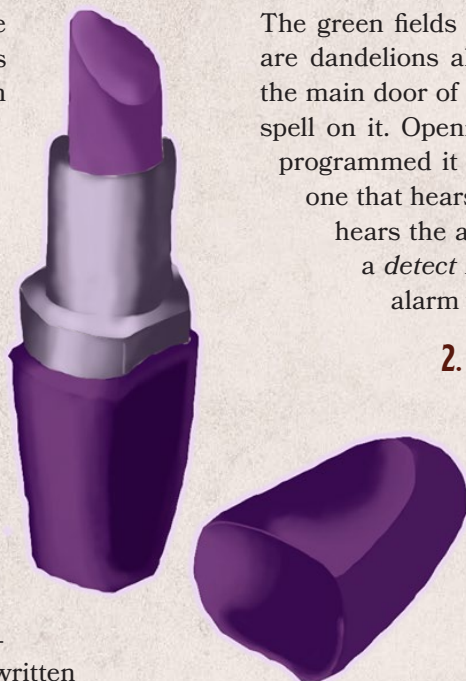
2. BASE LEVEL

There are a large bookshelf and a small reading sofa. She has a small table and a pot that she heats with magic to cook stuff when she feels like cooking, otherwise she creates her food as well. There is a set of stairs leading to the second level of the tower, 20 feet above.

3. SECOND LEVEL

There is an illusory wall covering access to area 5. The wall looks identical to the rest of the room unless targeted by a *detect magic* spell, in which case the wall becomes transparent. Oniro's bed and the rest of her belongings are in this room. There is a ladder that goes up a further 20 feet and reaches the tower top.

Lenna's encounter. If the adventurers trust Oniro and returned to this area through the elevator shaft, Lenna waits for them, prepared to fight. Lenna (**mage**), a **fire elemental**, two **thugs**, and four **bandits** try to stop the adventurers and recover the lipstick. Lenna doesn't fight to the



death and attempts to flee using *gaseous form* if things turn against her.

4. TOWER TOP

There is nothing of value or relevance in this area. Oniro often comes here to have a bath of stars or contemplate nature around her. She also enjoys throwing herself from here and then stop her fall with a *feather fall* spell, levitating, or flying.

5. SECRET PASSAGEWAY

This area inside the mountain feels more humid and the sound echoes all around. Oniro placed a defensive mechanism in this area in case she was ever invaded or attacked. Two sets of armor in this area come alive. Two **helmed horrors** prevent intruders from entering the elevator shaft (area 6).

6. ELEVATOR SHAFT

This metallic platform has a control panel. Only Oniro knows the right combination of buttons and knobs to make it work right. Characters who wish to lower the elevator shaft can, with a successful DC 16 Intelligence check, press the right combination on the controllers. A character using thieves' tools can bypass the security measure with a successful DC 17 Dexterity check. Failing either check by 5 or more causes the elevator platform to free fall. Any creature standing on the elevator when it hits the ground must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 19 (6d6) bludgeoning damage. This is another of Oniro's defensive mechanisms. If the elevator falls, it rebuilds itself in 10 minutes.

7. UNDERGROUND CORRIDOR

The flow of the river is the strongest here. A section of the elevator landing is drenched in water while it is here. The elevator can be used again normally to go up unless it is momentarily destroyed.

8. UNDERGROUND PRACTICE ROOM

Oniro loves to spend time in here. She uses the flow of water and its kinetic force as an implement to make her spells stronger. She spends a good deal of the day in here practicing her magic every day. There are a few posters on the walls and targets. Oniro practices her ranged spells in here as well. She also keeps a wooden table with bottles and stuff to topple with water jets shot from her fingers.

Oniro's encounter. If the adventurers do not believe what Oniro claims, she (**mage**), a **water elemental**, and three **ice mephits** attempt to halt any intruders' advance. Oniro doesn't fight to the death and attempts to flee if things turn against her. She jumps into the river and lets the current drag her away.

9. SECRET STUDIO

Oniro likes to write and read in calm in here. She keeps her most important documents, books, and scrolls in here. There are a couple of bookshelves and a large wooden desk. Two chests lay still near the north wall of the room.

Treasure. Oniro keeps 350 gold pieces in various leather pouches. There are two *healing potions*, a *periapt of health*, and six *spell scrolls* (DMs choice). In case the adventurers didn't believe Oniro's side, the lipstick is still stored in here.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

- If the adventurers kept their word and recover the lipstick for Lenna, she pays them the agreed-upon amount of gold and bids them farewell. Lenna is prepared to retaliate in case the adventurers plan to betray her and keep the lipstick when she pays them. She is accompanied by two thugs and four bandits. If things get too difficult, she summons a fire elemental.
- If the adventurers believe Oniro and confront Lenna on her behalf, Oniro thanks them for their trust and their service and pays them 350 gold pieces (the ones stored in area 9). If the adventurers harm Lenna severely or murder her during the confrontation, Oniro fights them and tries to avenge her friend. Oniro summons a water elemental and three ice mephits.
- If the adventurers are with Oniro and show any sign of wanting to keep the lipstick while confronting Lenna, the clever mages go as far as to join forces to get rid of the unreliable and unfaithful adventurers. Lenna and her goons, Oniro, and the elemental creatures all fight together.

DEVELOPMENT

Asylerion has elven scouts throughout the forests. The town doesn't take long to learn of the outcome of the confrontations. If either Oniro or Lenna were severely harmed or murdered by the adventurers, they become Asylerion's enemies for life, and a squad of elven assassins is tasked with their annihilation.

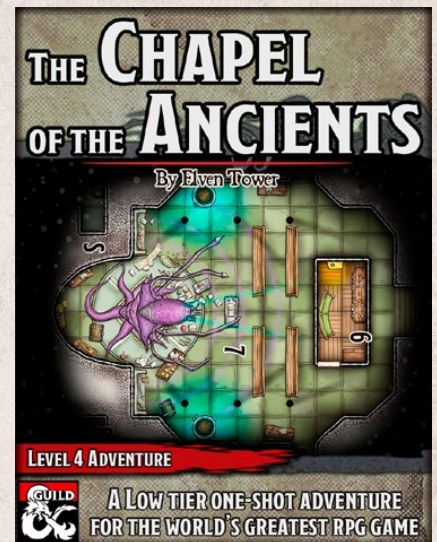
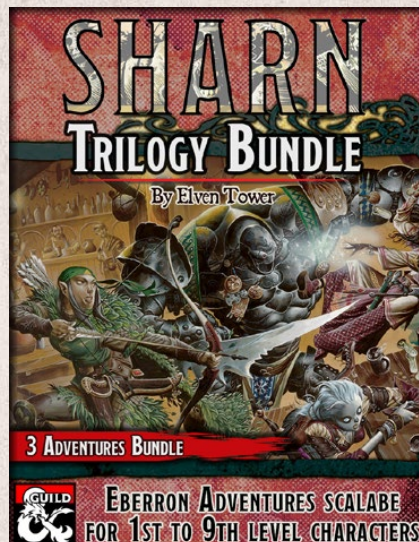
If the lipstick stays in the elves' possession, the two mage friends continue their eternal fight for it. When the council of mages realizes Lenna is the victim of a ridiculous curse, they confiscate the object and the high mage of Asylerion destroys it.

If the Onira and Lenna didn't suffer any serious wounds but the adventurers keep the lipstick, the high mage of Asylerion and its council don't hold any grudge against them but they remove the curse from their own people. If the adventurers were kind to them, Oniro speaks on their behalf and asks the high priest to help them get rid of the curse as well. The high priest does so, somewhat reluctantly, in case the adventurers do wish to be helped.

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