

Quests of Doom 4



Pictures at an Exhibition

By Dennis Sustare



FROG GOD
GAMES

Quests of Doom 4

Pictures at an Exhibition

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GENERAL RESOURCES

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 Tome of Horrors 4 ^{PF, S&W}
 Tome of Adventure Design
 Monstrosities ^{S&W}
 Bill Webb’s Book of Dirty Tricks
 Razor Coast: Fire as She Bears ^{PF}
 Book of Lost Spells ^{5e, PF}
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 The Tome of Blighted Horrors ^{5e, PF, S&W}
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 LL1: Stoneheart Valley ^{PF, S&W}

LL2: The Lost City of Barakus ^{PF, S&W}
 LL3: Sword of Air ^{PF, S&W}
 LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms ^{PF, S&W}
 LL5: Borderland Provinces ^{5e, PF, S&W}
 LL6: The Northlands Saga Complete ^{PF, S&W}
 LL7: The Blight ^{5e, PF, S&W}
 LL8: Bard’s Gate ^{5e, PF, S&W}
 LL9: Adventures in the Borderland Provinces ^{5e, PF, S&W}

QUESTS OF DOOM

Quests of Doom (Vol. 1) ^{5e}
 Quests of Doom (Vol. 2) ^{5e}
 Quests of Doom (includes the 5e Vol. 1 and 2, but for PF and S&W only) ^{PF, S&W}
 Quests of Doom 2 ^{5e}
 Quests of Doom 3 ^{5e, S&W}
 Quests of Doom 4 ^{5e, PF, S&W}

PERILOUS VISTAS

Dead Man’s Chest (pdf only) ^{PF}
 Dunes of Desolation ^{PF}
 Fields of Blood ^{PF}
 Mountains of Madness ^{PF}
 Marshes of Malice ^{PF}

* (forthcoming from **Frog God Games**)

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Pictures at an Exhibition

Pictures at an Exhibition is an adventure for 4 to 6 characters of 4th to 6th level. During the adventure, players control characters on an exotic cruise in a parallel reality known as “the Real World”. During a stopover, they find themselves on a museum tour where the vivid paintings draw them into a world of fantasy. These excursions involve fighting and puzzle solving to survive. The adventure originally was written for play at NTRPGCon 2012.

Adventure Notes

During the course of this adventure, characters enter various paintings found in the real world and end up in a fantasy realm. Characters must overcome various puzzles or enemies to complete the mini-adventures. They can return to the real world if they complete the puzzle, or if they make crucial mistakes that end the adventure. You should read through the entire adventure to discover how these paintings function, and to find the connections between them that the characters might exploit.

Various hints are also noted within the text that might offer clues for the characters about various encounters and puzzles. You should give each hint to the players just once, as appropriate, in a casual manner. Don’t say anything as blatant as “This is a hint,” but also don’t elaborate on the clue once you present it.

Starting the Adventure

Your cruise ship is headed for the historic resort of Mount Charles, a favorite destination of jet setters, movie stars, and other celebrities. The town has great shopping opportunities (for the wealthy) and picturesque sightseeing. At dinner, you met several other passengers who are art enthusiasts, and have organized a trip to a local museum for a painting exhibition. The ship will stay berthed overnight, so you have plenty of time for your excursion.

The Cruise Ship

Your cruise ship slowly enters Moonache Bay, the harbor of the Principality of Mount Charles. To port is an ancient lighthouse, and beyond that the ruins of a castle on a rocky prominence. To starboard, you see a cluster of white-plastered villas and bed-and-breakfast inns on a ridgeline with a beautiful view of the sea. A tugboat arrives to help nudge the ship against the commercial pier in the center of the shoreline. Further to starboard, you can see the cargo docks, with large cranes removing containers and arranging them on the shore. In the other direction, you see a marina filled with magnificent (and expensive) yachts.

Charmingly, the old city wall still exists, curving around the historic center of Mount Charles. A crewman nearby informs you that cars are not allowed in the old town, due to the narrow, curving streets, though there are minicabs and bicycles available for use by tourists. Just then, the ship’s PA system announces that a tour is about to leave for the art museum, to be closely followed by an excursion

to the shopping district, famous for fashion clothes and accessories, especially their world-famous leather goods. As you head over to the gangplank, you note that only a small group is assembling for the museum tour, while most of the passengers seem more interested in the shopping.

The party, of course, will all be going on the museum tour. If any character suddenly decides against it, crewmembers politely inform them that the other tour groups already are filled, but that the museum tour still has spots open if they hurry.

Art Museum

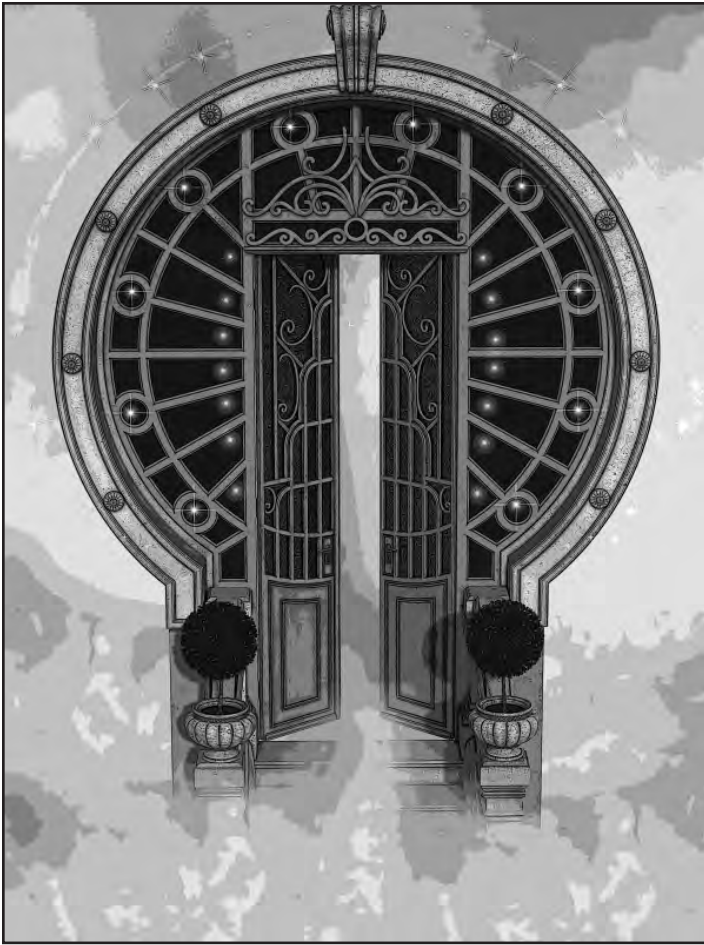
It is a short, pleasant stroll from the ship along the waterfront to the museum. Some of the private yachts nearby look almost large enough to be passenger liners themselves. You wonder how an individual could ever make enough money to buy such a luxury. At the corner, as you are passing the Scorpion restaurant and bar, you see several people sitting at a small table near the street, drinking some fizzy beverage. Their faces seem familiar; could they be politicians, movie stars, perhaps auto racers?

Leaving the waterfront, you pass the Grand Hotel on the left. The doorman bows slightly as your group passes. A little farther on, you pass a high-class restaurant on the left, again with a friendly doorman. The next building on the left is in an old architectural style, with wrought-iron decorative grills on the windows. It is also decorated with curious gargoyles that look something like partly melted angels, if that makes sense. They are quite grotesque, and rather scary. Your guide leads the group to the entrance of this building, which proves to be the art museum.

As you enter the museum, you wonder at the richness evident here. The stained-glass windows, the beautiful tile floors, the elaborate chandeliers, the glowing woodwork, all make it not like any art museum you have been in before. When you ask about that, the guide informs you that it used to be a casino many years ago, but a rich family bought the building and converted it into a museum. Although the permanent holdings are mostly the collection of the family, they also have lively temporary exhibitions, such as the one featured currently.

Your group enters the first of two exhibit halls that hold the special showing consisting of ten works by a previously unknown artist. Each painting is large, done in a realistic manner, with excellent foreshortening and depth. All appear to be of scenes in a medieval town, and some contain fantasy elements, such as humanoid creatures right out of a fairy tale. The museum representative gives each of you a brief guide to the paintings, and states, “You may take as much time as you like touring the exhibition, but we request your party stay together; no individuals wandering off, please. And please stay behind the ropes, with no touching of the art. Enjoy yourselves!” He then goes back to the front desk, leaving your party alone in the first exhibit hall.

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION



Handouts: Give the players **Player Handout 1** detailing the current museum exhibitions.

The Paintings

The party is free to select a painting to examine by looking at the images and reading the brief description found below and on the handout guide to the exhibition. Once they make their choice, proceed to the section on the selected painting in “Closer Examination.” However, if any character pushes past a roped exhibit, immediately proceed to the selected painting under the “Transition” section below. You may need to adjust the text slightly, but the effect is the same as all of the characters are pulled into the painting.

1. Christmas Gnome

An oddly dressed gnome kneels before a Christmas tree, arranging small packages to form some sort of pattern on the floor.

2. Old Castle

A troubadour in clerical robes is singing before a tall tower at one end of an old castle. A poorly defined person can be made out in the shadows of a window high in the tower.

3. Public Gardens

In the gardens of a central plaza, a group of children is running about, clearly very upset and agitated. A large cage is standing open and empty.

4. Cow-Drawn Cart

A starving cow pulls a rundown cart. Two people walking beside the cart and the driver appear in pain and possibly diseased. A series of obscure runes are written along the side of the cart.

5. Chick Ballet

On the stage of a stone amphitheater, several misshapen and distorted fowl are circling about.

6. Rich Orc, Poor Orc

Two orcs stand nearby on a city street, one dressed in fine clothes and the other in rags. Both appear frightened and anxious.

7. Doffin Market

In an open market, several women are arguing about something. Some fruits and vegetables are scattered on the ground in front of the open stalls.

8. Mystery Under the Cathedral

In an underground crypt, several skulls on ledges are glowing weirdly.

9. Hut on Chicken Legs

A stick hut with a thatched roof is running along on giant chicken legs. A witch is leaning out of the door, apparently trying to grab something on the ground.

10. Great Gate

A ferocious battle is being waged at the gate of a walled town.

Closer Examination

So long as nobody in the party passes beyond the museum rope, the party may select any painting for closer examination. Read the appropriate description to the characters from the selection below. As soon as someone passes the rope, however, proceed to the corresponding section under “Transition.”

1. Christmas Gnome

As you look closely, you notice that each of the presents is wrapped in a different type of wrapping paper. The gnome appears to be examining the paper of one present while holding it above the floor, where a pattern of lines has been drawn with chalk. Some presents have been placed on the chalk already, but the painting does not reveal the details of the pattern below. Other presents are still in a stack below the Christmas tree. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving in the branches of the tree. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

2. Old Castle

As you look closely, you notice there are no guards on the walls of the castle, and there appears to be a crow perched on the top of the tower. The troubadour appears to be quite young, and he is not holding a musical instrument, though he is gripping a crumpled piece of paper. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving in the vicinity of the shadowy tower window. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

3. Public Gardens

As you look closely, you notice the central plaza is bordered by a large cathedral and what appears to be a pub. The empty cage is near the pub. A man with a music box is on the ground beside the cage. The frantic children are running in all directions. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving near the fallen man. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

4. Cow-Drawn Cart

As you look closely, you notice the people, like the cow, are probably starving. The cart is stacked with their meager possessions. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving in the vicinity of the runes on the cart. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

5. Chick Ballet

As you look closely, you notice the misshapen chickens are possibly flying rather than running, and it seems as though their beaks are bloody. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving on the stage within the circling chickens. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

6. Rich Orc, Poor Orc

As you look closely, you notice a possible family resemblance between the two orcs, or perhaps all orcs look alike? Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving in the hand of the poor orc. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

7. Doffin Market

As you look closely, you notice the two women are tugging on a large enameled copper plate. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving on the surface of the plate. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

8. Mystery Under the Cathedral

As you look closely, you notice several of the glowing skulls appear to be biting at a long, yellowish object. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving in the mandibles of several of the skulls. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

9. Hut on Chicken Legs

As you look closely, you notice what the witch is grabbing; it seems to be a running child. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that something is moving in several places, including the hut legs, the child's legs, and the witch's arm. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

10. Great Gate

As you look closely, you notice the gate defenders appear to be losing, and the attackers are starting to come through the partly open gate. This scene is exceptionally violent and graphic. Although it is just a painting, you get the occasional sensation that the figures in the canvas are moving. Behind the museum rope, you are just too far away to see the details clearly.

Transition

Read the following whenever anyone crosses beyond one of the ropes protecting an exhibit.

As you pass the rope and lean toward the painting for a better look, you are suddenly pushed forward, as though a strong wind is blowing you into the canvas. At the same time, your body feels a confusing mix of sensations, as though you are assailed by sound, light, pressure, pain, heat, cold, smells and tastes, all at once. You do not strike the museum wall, but rather you land (somewhat shakily) on your feet in a strange place. Your clothes have all been replaced with odd new attire. The items you may have been holding are gone, replaced with medieval weapons that have a familiar quality to you. As you look around, you see several strangers nearby that seem equally confused and off balance. Curiously, the same number of strangers are beside you as were accompanying you on the museum tour.

When anyone passes beyond the museum rope, the entire party is drawn into the scene of the painting. At the same instant, each modern day traveler is converted into the corresponding adventurer (including any who died in a previous painting). The first time this happens, give the players a few moments to digest what has happened. Each character retains a somewhat hazy memory of the life experiences of their tourist character, but also immediately knows how to perform the skills of the character (combat, magic, etc.). You should then start the adventure again, providing the transition description for the selected painting, as given in the adventure sections that follow.

On subsequent adventures into new paintings, any items or modifications the party members acquired in previous paintings are retained, but any equipment that was damaged or lost is still damaged or lost. However, any wounds, diseases, or deaths suffered in previous paintings have been healed. Each character fully remembers any previous painting scenarios. Spellcasters that used a spell slot in one painting do not have that spell slot in the immediately subsequent painting, but have it back by the following one.

Reverse Transition

When a painting adventure is completed, by either success or failure, the party returns to its starting position outside the rope in the museum, back in their personas as cruise tourists. This includes any players whose character might have been killed in the scenario.

With sensations like those when you entered the painting, you find yourself back in the museum, once more outside the museum rope. You are once again a healthy human cruise tourist, not some fantasy creature of medieval times. You have all your original tourist possessions, and nothing you had while within the painting. Looking back, you see the painting is no longer on the wall. It has been replaced with a small tag reading "Painting has been temporarily removed." You remember everything that happened within the painting, as crazy as it may seem to you now.

Give the players a moment to note any changes on their character sheets.

Level One (First Exhibit Hall)

The First Exhibit Hall contains the following paintings.

1. Christmas Gnome

The party appears before a Christmas tree with wrapped presents on the floor around it. A gnome dressed in makeshift and ill-fitting clothes is startled when you appear. He screams, drops the present he is holding, and runs out of the room through the only door. The door slams behind him, and you hear it being locked and bolted. His footsteps recede as he runs away.

If an elf is in the party, that character can make a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice that the gnome was wearing elvish clothes that were clearly far too large for him.

The room is 20 feet by 20 feet, with a small fireplace on one wall and the single door on the opposite wall. There are no windows. Besides the decorated tree, the furnishings include two easy chairs with a small table between them. Warmth comes from the burning logs in the fireplace, and light is also provided by the candle chandelier above. A plate of cookies is on the table. Several presents are placed on a diagram drawn on the floor, while others are under the tree. A piece of chalk has rolled to the side.

The door appears securely blocked, not even budging when characters try it. It is made of oak and banded iron, and seems inappropriate for a holiday family room.

The sugar cookies are tasty, but have no effect.

The tree is decorated with fine ornaments. The ornaments have no relation to the diagram or presents. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check allows characters to catch some motion in the upper branches. These are two small birds in the tree, a swallow and a nightingale. The nightingale trills a pretty song, while the swallow remains silent.

The present the gnome dropped is tightly wrapped in paper decorated with a forest scene. Glancing at the other presents, each one is wrapped in a different paper design (see present table below). None of the presents has been opened.

If characters start to unwrap a present, a nightingale perched near the top of the tree becomes very agitated, and begins screaming little bird

screams. She flies down and tries to peck at a random character's hand before returning to the tree. The second bird, the swallow, also is frantic but makes no sound.

Placing the Presents

The chalk diagram looks like the drawing provided. Some of the presents the gnome placed on the chalk nodes were scattered when he ran out. Optionally, you could leave those presents in place. See the table below for initial placements; positions are numbered left to right, from top to bottom.

Wrapping	Initial Location	Final Location	Reward
Bowls of Cherries	Under Tree	1	Charisma +1
Forest	Dropped by Gnome	2	Constitution +1
Warrior Shields	Under Tree	5	+1 Shield
Clubs with Spiked Balls	Under Tree	7	+1 Mace
Battle Helmets	Under Tree	3	+1 Helm*
Scrolls	under tree	4	Scroll of Cure Wounds
Boots	under tree	9	Boots of Speed
Horseshoes	8	8	Stone of Good Luck
Goblets	11	11	Potion of Hill Giant Strength
Dinner Forks	Under Tree	10	+1 Trident
Barbells	12	12	Strength +1
Owls	Under Tree	6	Wisdom +1 (or Intelligence +1 for a wizard)

*helms normally do not grant a bonus to AC; treat this as +1 only with no base bonus (as a shield)

Objective

It is up to the party to determine proper placement of the presents to complete the scenario. The birds will not help the party place the presents. If the party places the presents correctly on the diagram, the two birds change back into human sisters named Philomela and Procne. They reward the party by allowing each party member to draw one present. Once all of the characters choose a present, this scenario ceases successfully.

If the party does any of the following actions *before* accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Kills one of the birds
- Opens one of the presents
- Manages to leave the room (this proves very difficult)
- Telling you they are giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting. See below for each result:

Success

As you place this last present on the diagram, the nightingale gives a quick trill and you feel a strong magical wave pass through the room. Both birds transform into young

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women dressed in expensive robes, the nightingale changing into Philomela and the swallow into Procne. Philomela bows to you, and says, "Thank you for saving us from this curse. As a small reward, each of you may select just one of these presents, but you must choose before opening any of them. If anyone tries to take two, you will all lose your rewards."

Procne also bows to you, but says nothing. Philomela continues, "Now, if I may pardon one of you to spare a weapon for me, perhaps a dagger? It is time for me to pursue vengeance for my sister."

If characters attempt to speak to Procne, Philomela informs them that her tongue was cut out. After Philomela looks around the room a little, she takes any weapon given to her in one hand and, holding Procne by the other hand, walks to the locked door. She taps on the door with the knuckles of her weapon hand and it swings open, revealing a corridor leading away. The women pass through, and the door closes behind them.

The party may stay in the room as long as they wish to finish selecting their presents. Anyone who opens their present gets their reward immediately. In cases of weapons or armor, the present adjusts as needed to be appropriate for the recipient; for example, a trident will be a useful size, whether selected by a short halfling or a tall elf. There are no other treasures in the room. The formerly barred door now opens easily. When the first party member walks through the door, the entire party goes back through the painting, converting to their cruise persona as explained in Reverse Transition. If someone in the room still has not chosen a present, they just have time to grab one at random before returning to the museum.

2. Old Castle

The party appears a few feet behind a young man in clerical robes. You are between the outer and inner walls of a castle, just below the north tower of the keep. You see no guards on either the outer or the inner walls. The cleric is looking up at the north tower as he sings a love ballad. His voice is nothing to brag about; he is unlikely to win the Medieval Idol competition. There is a narrow, darkened window near the top of the tower, about 80 feet above you. Occasionally a shadowy figure seems to move in the window. A large black bird is perched atop the tower, but it is mostly out of sight from your location, except when it leans forward to peer down. The cleric does not seem to have noticed your arrival.

Note: If the party has previously done the Chick Ballet scenario (**Painting 5**), they recognize the young cleric as the same man.

If the characters interrupt his serenade, the young man spins around, crying, "You've spoiled everything!" He then begins slapping at the characters. Laughter echoes down from the tower. The princess will be **hostile** if this occurs.

If the characters wait for the balladeer to finish, at first the young man remains gazing longingly up at the tower. A pale arm reaches out from the darkness to toss something down. He is startled when he realizes the party is behind him, but then he dashes forward to catch what turns out to be a dried flower. (The princess will be **friendly**.)

Either way, the cleric quickly scans the walls, and says, "Good, the guards have still not returned." He then looks at you, saying, "If you have romantic blood in your veins, you will help us." He points up at the dark window and continues, "The princess has been held there against her will, and

my love has remained unrequited. I cannot reward you, but if you can rescue her and join her with me, we will be eternally grateful to you."

Note: If any of the characters previously earned the assistance of the Raven (see the adventure *Tourist Traps* by Frog God Games), the Raven again assists the party in this scenario.

Going Up the Tower

Here are a few ways the characters can reach the princess:

- Climb the outside of the tower.
- Enter the keep and proceed up the tower's interior.
- Using a *levitate* spell or some other means to fly.
- Obtain an assist from the Raven. The Raven offers to help only if at least one of the characters previously earned his assistance at the Raven Mound. In this case, the Raven flies down to the party once they complete their initial conversation with the cleric.

You should judge the success of any other ideas the characters may devise.

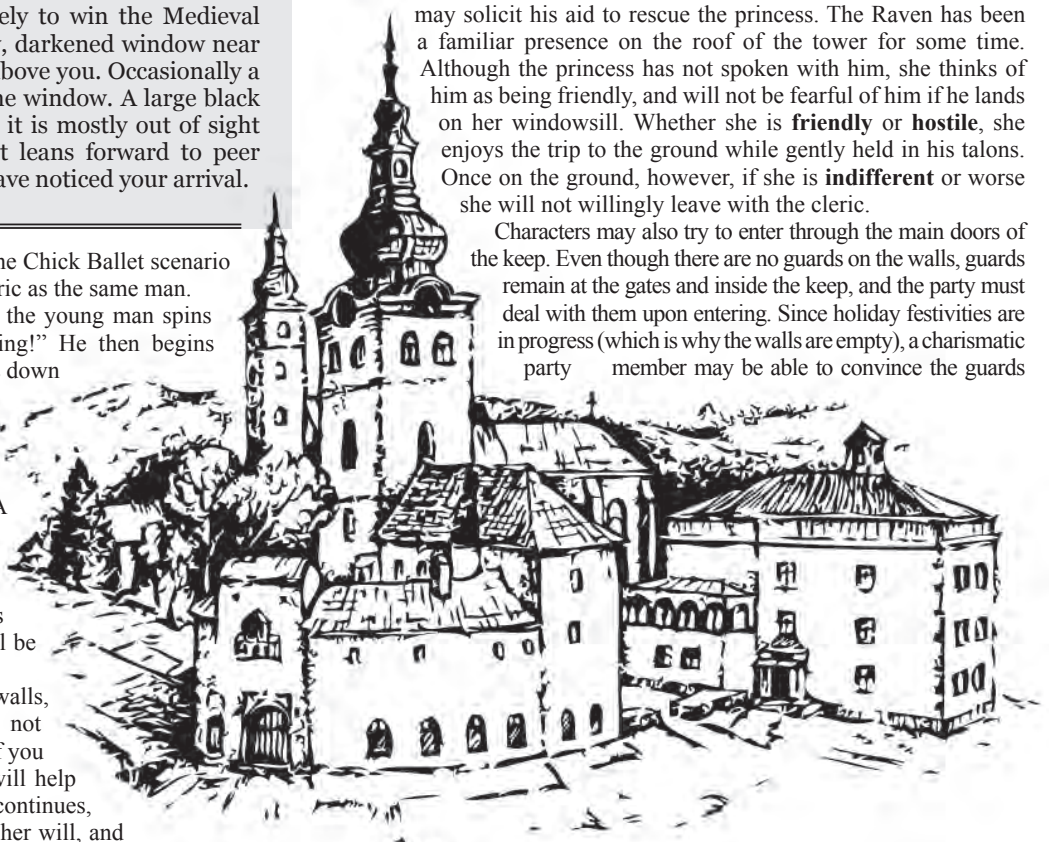
Characters must make successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) checks to scale the outside of the tower. It takes three checks to reach the top, however. Characters who fail a check must make DC 10 Dexterity saving throws in order to grab an outcropping and prevent falling. A failure indicates that the character falls, taking 1d6 points of damage per segment fallen (for example, a character who has succeeded on two Strength (Athletics) checks and then falls will take 2d6 points of damage).

To lower the princess requires a long rope. If they don't have one, the characters will have to leave the tower through the interior (see Leaving the Tower). If the princess is **friendly** or better, she willingly allows the characters to lower her to the ground. If she is **hostile** or worse, she screams, "Help! Intruders!" Two **guards** burst into the room the next turn, rush to the window, and try to defend the princess.

A character could also cast *levitate* or use similar magic (such as *boots of levitation*) to enter the tower window. If the princess is **friendly** or better, she willingly enters the arms of the rescuer to be lowered gently to the ground. If she is **hostile** or worse, she screams, "Help! Intruders!" Her 2 **guards** burst into the room the next turn, rush to the window, and try to defend the princess.

If the characters previously encountered the Raven, they may solicit his aid to rescue the princess. The Raven has been a familiar presence on the roof of the tower for some time. Although the princess has not spoken with him, she thinks of him as being friendly, and will not be fearful of him if he lands on her windowsill. Whether she is **friendly** or **hostile**, she enjoys the trip to the ground while gently held in his talons. Once on the ground, however, if she is **indifferent** or worse she will not willingly leave with the cleric.

Characters may also try to enter through the main doors of the keep. Even though there are no guards on the walls, guards remain at the gates and inside the keep, and the party must deal with them upon entering. Since holiday festivities are in progress (which is why the walls are empty), a charismatic party member may be able to convince the guards



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that they belong inside (for each encounter, roll a saving throw vs. the charisma score of the chosen party member). Otherwise, the party has to fight its way up. In addition to the 2 guards inside Old Tom tower, 2 **guards** and 2 senior guards (**veteran**) are at each gate in a wall, and 4 senior guards (**veteran**) are at the entrance into the keep. If the alarm is raised, reinforcements arrive distributed over 2d6 rounds, with a total of 12 ordinary guards and 6 senior guards.

Characters have a couple of possible routes to enter the castle as follows:

- Climb over the inner curtain wall (just in front of the party) and locate the secret door into the keep.
- Walk around between the two walls and pass through the gate to the outer bailey (4 guards present), and then go through the gate to the inner bailey (4 guards present). They must then enter the front gate to the keep (4 senior guards present)

General Description of the Keep

Feel free to describe the keep's interior details as you see fit.

The outer and inner baileys contain several work buildings and stables where the prince's retinue perform their tasks. This includes open shops for smiths, farriers, carpenters, coopers, glaziers, and others. There are no residences in the baileys, and none of the buildings is placed to diminish the defensive capabilities of the castle. There is a well in the inner bailey. The keep itself has three towers: Cliff (southwest corner), Flag (northwest corner), and Old Tom (northeast end). Old Tom has castellations and two arrow slits; the other two towers do not.

Inside the keep is a double courtyard, with windows facing in that pass sunlight to the interior of the keep. The first courtyard has beds for vegetables, herbs, and flowers. The second courtyard has a small well. There are six doors into the inner separation between the courtyards (called the center wall), that lead into pantries and storage. There are also 2 secret doors in the side walls used by the servants for convenient admission to the keep. The secret doors can be detected with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. The secret doors are not locked. At the rear of the second courtyard is a double door leading to the reception room.

In general, the keep has a ground floor (with high ceilings), second floor, and third floor.

In the side and center walls are quarters for the servants (ground floor), guards (second floor), and guard officers (third floor). A few guest rooms for undistinguished visitors are also on the third floor. Secret doors in the side wall passages lead to circular stairways connecting all three levels.

In the front area, the ground floor contains the keep entry room, guard ready room, dog room, and castellan's quarters. There are also secret doors on either side that lead to circular stairways to the second and third levels. The second floor holds the armory, a few military offices, the priest's quarters, and the hospital. There are also secret doors into the two front towers. The third floor has temporary quarters for couriers, and quarters for the smith, farrier, armorer, and a few other royal craftsmen.

In the rear area, the ground floor contains the reception room, ballroom, dining hall, and kitchen. There is a secret door into the rear tower (Old Tom). A second secret door provides a well-concealed sally port from the keep into the outer bailey. The second floor holds the prince's quarters and the map room. The third floor contains quarters for the royal family and guest rooms. The chamberlain's quarters are also here. Underground beneath the rear area is the reserve pantry and a small wine cellar.

The three towers are somewhat different in design. Cliff Tower has a circular stair leading up from the second floor secret door to the roof trapdoor, and has no rooms or arrow slits. Flag Tower is similar, but the second floor also has a trapdoor that opens down to a small compartment on the first floor. In the past, this was used for prisoner confinement. Old Tom was the first stone fortification built here. It has iron ladders instead of a circular stairway that leads to a room on each of the first, second, third and fourth floors (these do not quite match up with the keep floors, which were constructed later). Trapdoors are in each floor to provide access to the ladders. There was once a ladder from the fourth floor to the tower roof, but it has been removed and the roof trapdoor permanently sealed. Room contents are as follow:

- (First) Crates containing old and musty children's clothing and toys.
- (Second) A table, three chairs, and a cot. There are two **guards** here. There was once an arrow slit in the western side (toward the current keep), but it has been permanently sealed.

- (Third) A small bed, a chamber pot, and a wardrobe containing clothes of the princess. There is one arrow slit, with a view of the town. This is the window that the cleric was singing to.

- (Fourth) A bookshelf crowded with books, a desk and chair, and a padded reclining chair. There is one arrow slit, with a view of the harbor. The princess may be on either the third or fourth level.

Reaching the Room of the Princess

If the party attacks the guards (at any location), there is a 25% chance each round that they sound the alarm. If the alarm sounds, reinforcements arrive after 1d8 rounds. Reinforcements consist of 1d6 **guards** plus 1 senior guard (use the **veteran** stat block). Within the keep, servants may be encountered but never sound the alarm (unless attacked).

If the party reaches the princess without killing guards and the princess is *friendly* or better, she willingly leaves with them, but suggests that, in view of the festival, she wear a party costume and mask. In that case, no guards complain when she leaves. However, if she is *unfriendly* or worse, she calls for help every time the characters encounter guards, and the guards automatically attack (with a 50% chance of sounding the alarm each round). If characters reach the princess after killing guards, presume that she can see the blood on the party. Even though she may have been *friendly* or even *helpful* up to that point, a DC 20 Diplomacy check will be required to prevent her from becoming *unfriendly*. If she was already *unfriendly*, then a failed Diplomacy check means that she has become *hostile* upon receiving the evidence of guard killings.

Leaving the Tower

When leaving the tower with the princess (assuming you are going down inside the keep), if she is *friendly* or better she informs the characters that there is a secret sally port somewhere (she does not know exactly where), so that they can leave without going out the front gate. If *unfriendly* or worse, she will not tell characters of the alternative exit.

Objective

If the party is able to bring the cleric and the princess to a common location outside the castle, it is a success, even if the princess is taken against her will. You may decide whether taking the princess to the cleric in his starting location is adequate, even though it is not outside the outer wall of the castle.

If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Total party kill
- Death of the cleric or the princess
- Refusal to assist the cleric in the rescue of the princess
- Telling you they are giving up

Treasure: There is no treasure in this scenario, but if the party continues to demand something from the cleric, he gives the characters his *amulet of protection* (as *ring of protection*). However, if a party member wears this during the killing of a guard, it burns (3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of the character's turns) until removed and discarded.

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

3. Public Gardens

The party has appeared in an open plaza, with Gray's Cathedral on one side. You are at an adjacent corner, beside Bad Habits Pub. Near a small outside stage, a large empty cage is open. On the ground beside lays a man with a bloody head. Lots of frightened children are running around, screaming, "They took our bear!"

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The man on the ground has been struck in the head, causing a serious wound that is still bleeding. He still lives, but is incoherent. In pieces beside him is a symphonia, a form of musical instrument with a crank on the side. The crank still twitches from time to time, as though a spring inside has not fully unwound. The instrument appears to be damaged beyond repair.

If characters question one of the children, they must first calm them down enough to ask what happened. A girl answers that some bad men hurt Walter and took his bear. She points in the direction of the waterfront and says, “They went that way! You have to save our bear!” Another child comes near, and says, “I’ll show you where they went.” He tugs on a random character’s hand.

The boy goes along one street, then another, finally passing a large warehouse near the seawall. Several ships are tied up here, but hurried activity can be spotted at a small sloop beside the main dock. It looks as if the crew is trying to quickly get underway. You see no bear, but the boy insists to the characters that the sailors are the bad men. It looks as though the sloop will be ready to go to sea in just a minute or two, unless the characters get on board immediately.

A sailor is preparing to pull in the gangplank, and a sailor at the bow is releasing the last line holding the ship to the dock. Characters can try to stop the ship (good luck with that), or leap from the dock onto the deck. Any character that tries leaping must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or hit the side of the ship and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage and fall into the water. A third crewman near the wheel in the stern shouts for help and draws a cutlass if characters board the ship.

Six sailors are actually on the ship: the sailor (**bandit**) at the bow, the sailor (**bandit**) at the gangplank, the mate at the wheel, and one sailor (**bandit**), one mate (**thug**), and the captain (**bandit captain**) below deck.

The captain has a 50% chance each round after characters board the ship of coming topside, accompanied by the sailor and the mate. He immediately attacks the closest character, while the crewmen join in the fighting.

Sailors can be tossed overboard if two characters work together to do so. Two characters must each make a successful grapple check (the character’s Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target’s Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check) on a single sailor to do so. The sailor takes no damage, but is thrown into the water. He will not reboard the ship. If the mate is tossed overboard, he reboards the ship in 1d4 rounds. The captain cannot be tossed overboard.

Searching the ship

Once the sailors are dispatched, it does not take long to search the ship. There is just one deck below the main deck, reaching nearly the length of the ship and containing a small cargo area, a sail locker, storage for water casks and food barrels, and the tiny captain’s cabin. Hammocks for the crew are hung along the sides. The characters find no bear. However, a man is chained to the deck just outside the captain’s cabin.

The man has a burly build, but appears very weak. A silver chain around his neck leads to a bracket in the deck. He looks up at the characters, but does not say anything.

If characters unfasten the chain from the deck, the man stands up, but is wary of the party. If the characters lead him along with the chain, he follows willingly. When taken topside, he smiles at the results of the battle with the ship’s crew. He does not answer if characters speak with him.

If the characters unfasten the chain from the man’s neck, he shimmers then converts into a ferocious-looking bear (use the **werebear** stat block, bear form). If the characters free him below decks, he immediately attacks and tries to escape. Once above deck, he realizes the characters rescued him and does not fight unless they continue attacking him.

Treasure: The ship itself is a sizable treasure, but it does the party no good in this adventure. They may collect the sailors’ weapons, and any of the normal ship’s equipment and supplies they choose to carry. The ship, however, could still prove useful to the characters in other adventures within the paintings (see **Painting 6. Rich Orc, Poor Orc** for details)

The silver chain itself is a chain that controls lycanthropes. If fastened around the neck of a lycanthrope, it keeps the creature in human form and docile, but unable to speak. It can be sold for 200gp.

Objective

If the party rescues the bear, the adventure is a success. They can either remove the chain themselves and allow the bear to leave the ship, or lead the chained man back to Walter, who removes the chain so the man converts into a bear.

If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Total party kill
- Death of the bear (in either form)
- Telling you they are giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

4. Cow-Drawn Cart

The party appears in the Moho district of Mount Charles, against the buildings on one side of a narrow road. A cow is walking before you, hardly more than skin and bones. She is slowly pulling a cart that barely holds together, rattling loudly as it is hauled over the cobblestones. The driver is a woman in rags who winces in pain with each bump of the wagon. Walking beside the cart are a blind old man with one hand on the side of the cart, followed by a young boy who repeatedly spits blood on the pavement. There is barely room for the group to pass through the heavy crowds, and you are forced to squeeze against the building to make room. Along the side of the cart is a series of carved runes, which continually shift in appearance so that it is difficult to discern them with confidence.

If characters grasp the bridle of the cow, it easily stops the forward motion of the cart. The cow does not attempt to pull out of their grasp. The old man says, “Why have we stopped?” The woman on the cart does not reply to the characters, but continues to grimace and moan in pain, holding the reins to the cow in one hand while she grips her abdomen with the other. The young boy responds as if suffering from madness, not answering questions but asking repeatedly for food, money, or a present. The old man finally realizes the characters have halted the cow’s progress. He looks at the characters and pleads for help for himself and his family, but does not seem to understand what is the matter.

Casting any healing spell on the cart’s occupants seems to work properly, but unfortunately has no effect on their condition (the same goes for healing potions). Similarly, *remove curse* begins to fire, but then stops inexplicably (without using a spell slot or a scroll). Nothing seems to change with the sickened villagers.

Characters might try to pull the people away from the wagon, thinking it the cause of their misery. But any attempt to move one of the people away from the cart causes them great agony, and they fight to try to return. If characters manage to get one of them more than 50 feet from the cart, he or she dies. Destroying the cart causes all three to die.

When the characters examine them, they find that the runes on the side of the cart shift between two forms, though it is not easy to see each form distinctly. A dwarven party member can make a DC 11 Intelligence (History) check to correctly identify and write down each pair of runes. Without a dwarf, characters must make a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check to correctly write down the shapes of each pair of runes, though they cannot identify their meaning.

The old man knows nothing about the runes, and doesn’t even seem to realize that they exist. He says, “What runes?” but becomes very interested if they are pointed out. “What do they say?”

The following table shows the pairs of alternating runes, in order along the cart. The party should try to figure out just what is happening here. If they have no dwarf, but can describe the shape of individual runes well enough to the blind old man, he tells them what each rune in isolation means. Feel free to substitute other runes for these if you have

Runes on the Cart

Fire	Water	Earth	Air
Gold/Sun	Silver/Moon	Iron/Red	Copper/Green
Wood/Tree	Bone	Spirit/Life	Crystal
Light/White	Darkness/Black	Salt	Tin/Gray

some alchemical favorites or are already using runes elsewhere in your campaign, or are familiar with runes from some other game.

Wagon Runes

Rune 1	Rune 2	Combination Meaning	Needed to Cancel Runes
Gold	Silver	Wealth	Coin, jewelry, or gold and silver simultaneously
Darkness	Wood	Source	Root, seed, or any naturally black wood such as ebony
Iron	Water	Energy	Blood or rusty water
Fire	Water	Confusion	Alcohol (including ale or wine) or any burning liquid

The secret of the runes is that each pair in combination reveals what is needed to cancel that pair on the cart. For example, the pair that represents

iron and water in combination represents blood (or rusty water in a pinch). Touching blood to those runes cancels them out. If the characters discuss the combinations with the blind old man but do not succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, you might choose to supply a hint from the old man to help them figure it out. The rune table shows which runes are in combination on the cart, and what each combination means.

Cancelling each rune pair (in any order) in turn increasingly heals the cursed people (and the cow), as follows:

One pair: The cow is healed, and unless restrained tries to pull the cart more strongly.

Two pairs: The old man is healed of his blindness. He can now tell the characters the meaning of any individual rune.

Three pairs: The boy stops spitting blood, but still seems mad.

All four pairs: Total healing of the man, woman, boy and cow. All four now seem healthy and normal. The boy apologizes to his grandfather for trying to experiment with the carving of runes.

Objective

If the party can decipher and cancel all the runes and cure the family, the adventure is a success. Optionally, the GM may allow partial success if one or more runes, but not all, are cancelled.

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If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Destroying the cart
- Deaths of the old man, the boy, or the woman
- Telling you they are giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

Treasure: If the characters cancel one rune pairing, the grandfather offers to inscribe one rune on a weapon for the party as a reward. This single rune grants a +1 bonus to hit but not damage to the chosen weapon. Optionally, if the old man regains his sight, he instead offers to inscribe one rune for each rune pair cancelled, up to a total of four; these may all be on the same weapon, if desired by the party. Placing all the runes on one weapon provides an additional +3 damage bonus against a chosen enemy for that single weapon (player's choice of enemy, see table below). The weapon effectively becomes +1 to hit, +3 damage against the chosen enemy.

Weapon Runes

Rune	+3 bonus damage vs. creature*
Spirit	Undead
Bone	Lycanthropes and shape-shifters
Earth	Giants
Fire	Dragons
Copper	Orcs and kin
Crystal	Dwarves and kin
Air	Elves and winged creatures (but not dragons)

* Assumes all 4 runes are inscribed upon a single weapon. A single inscribed rune grants a +1 to hit bonus to a weapon, but does not allow it to inflict more damage on the chosen enemy.

Once the rune or runes are inscribed, this scenario ends and the party returns to the museum.

5. Chick Ballet

The party appears beside the lowest seats of a stone amphitheater. About 30 feet ahead of you is the front of the stone stage. In the center of the stage, a young man is cowering, his face and arms seemingly badly clawed and bleeding. Trying to protect the young man is an elderly gentleman dressed in a dramatic costume, apparently an actor. He is waving a stage sword at six harpies who scream and dive in attempts to reach the young man. None of the harpies appears wounded, as indeed is also the case for the old actor. This is perhaps some play in progress, although you see no spectators in the stands.

Note: If the party has previously completed the Old Castle scenario (**Painting 2**), they recognize the young cleric as the same man.

If the characters simply stand and watch the performance, every so often they see one of the harpies manage to snatch at the flesh of the young man with their talons, injuring him further. Despite the threat, the actor and the harpies are not hurting each other.

The 6 harpies ignore the characters unless they jump onto the stage to attack. They then turn their attacks on the party. When only one harpy remains, she soars high above the party, empties her stomach on them in a disgusting spew, and flies off, screaming loudly.

Once the harpies are dead or driven off, the characters have a brief chance to talk with the targets of their attack. The young man is a cleric who is interested in acting and poetry, while the old man has been an actor



for many years. In fact, the actor is an actual ghost, which is why he was unable to harm the harpies (or be harmed by them). If the characters ask him for advice, the actor tells them how to distinguish ghosts, wights, wraiths and vampires (this could be handy in **Painting 8**). After just a minute or two, a shout sounds from stage left, and the party immediately experiences a Reverse Transition back to the museum.

Treasure: The cleric gives the party a vial of holy water.

Objective

If the party slays or drives off the harpies, the adventure is a success.

If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Total party kill
- Death of the young man
- Telling you they are giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

Level Two (Second Exhibit Hall)

The following paintings are found in the second exhibit hall.

6. Rich Orc, Poor Orc

The party has appeared on a city street, in front of a shop with a smashed window and broken door. There is vile anti-orc graffiti painted on the wall. Two orcs cringe in fear when you appear, but then both rush toward you and beg for you to take them out of the city. One orc is dressed in fine clothes, and the other is dressed in rags. When they rush forward, you see that the orc in rags is holding the hand of a small child who was hiding behind him when you arrived, and still is cowering mostly out of sight.

If the characters talk to the rich orc, he looks them up and down, surprised they are talking to him. Finally, he decides they are actually concerned and nods. "Just look what those terrible people did to my shop," he says, pointing to the broken window. "They said that when they come back tonight, they will burn what remains, and me, too. Smuggle me out of the city and I will reward you richly." If the party asks how richly, the rich orc whispers, "Get me and two chests of mine out and I will pay you 4000 pieces of gold."

If the characters talk to the poor orc, he speaks quietly to the party, his voice choked with emotion. "My family has suffered greatly, and I fear for their lives. Please, O great ones, show your divine nature and smuggle us out of the city." If the party demands some sort of reward for taking the risk of smuggling them out, the poor orc says, "Alas, I have nothing." He thinks for a moment before continuing, "But you may take one of us as a slave in payment."

It's up the characters at this point what they want to do.

Note: Consider allowing the party to make a Wisdom (Insight) check against both of the orc's Charisma checks. If the party beats either of the orc's Charisma checks, provide the party with more details about them. This gives you the opportunity to flesh out the orcs and their motivations and personalities. Be creative, give it a twist, or use the opportunity to draw the characters in and deepen their investment in the decision they must make between the rich orc and his gold, or the poor orc and his entire family.

If they decide to smuggle the rich orc out of the city: The rich orc has two chests of valuables that must also be smuggled out of town. One of these contains a collection of rare books, including some orc religious texts. The other contains some transportable valuables, including fine clothes, gold and silver jewelry and decorative ware, and some small works of art. Smuggling the rich orc is perhaps the easier task, since there should be less problem getting the two chests out (though if a city guard looks inside, there might be problems; normally the guards look more carefully at what comes into the city than what leaves). So there is only a single orc to conceal and get out.

If they decide to smuggle the poor orc out of the city: The poor orc has virtually no possessions, but does have a family that must also be smuggled out. The family includes his wife and her aging mother, as well as five children ranging in age from 1 to 14. It will be tricky for all these orcs to be concealed and carried out without revealing their presence to the gate guards, especially since it must be done in a manner that provides safe transport. For example, the characters can't just seal them all up in ale barrels (though they might be able to move a couple of them in that manner, this would not work for the 1-year-old or the grandmother). Note that it is against the law for the orcs to leave their ghetto in town.

No matter what the characters decide, they must face 2 **guards** and 1 senior guard (**veteran**) at each of the 3 gates leading out of the city (either through the main gate or down to the docks). The guards are diligent about

stopping people entering the city, but less likely to stop characters on their way out. At each gate, the guards have a 4 in 10 chance to randomly step in front of the characters and demand to know their business. The guards are more interested in flaunting their authority on hapless citizens than searching random crates, but you don't have to let the players know this. Play up the tense situation as the guards eye the characters and any items they carry. If the characters succeed on a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Deception) check, the guards will allow them to pass. If they fail, the guards will inquire about their business and search their belongings.

The characters could attack the guards, but this causes a riot as panicked citizens race for cover. This draws 2d6 **guards** and 1d4 senior guards (**veterans**) to the scene within 1d6+2 rounds. The guards fight to subdue the characters, but aim to kill if any of the orcs join the fray (or are discovered during the melee). The family of the poor orc has a 50% chance of emerging if hidden as they try to escape.

Characters could instead try to bribe the guards to ignore any items such as trunks or barrels that might hide the orcs. This requires at least 1 gp per item carried (which could get expensive if they are smuggling the poor orc family out of town in many containers). They could also try to sweet talk their way clear. Either option requires the characters be charismatic. If they try to bribe the guards, a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check will be sufficient for the guards to allow the party to continue. If they attempt to sweet talk the guards, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check means they convinced the guards and are waved on. Failure means the guards turn the characters back, which forces them to cross the city to a different gate (they would have a 1 in 6 chance of encountering a random patrol of 2 **guards**).

You should judge the guards' reactions based on what method the characters use to sneak the orcs out of the city.

Note: If the party successfully captured the ship previously in the Public Gardens painting (**Painting 3**), there is an easy way for them to win this one, if they think of it. The party could lead the orcs to the ship chained as slaves, or have the orcs carry cargo as common laborers. The characters could then hide the orcs on board and sail freely out of the harbor with none of the orcs visible. All of these options would be relatively easy to pull off, but would still require a successful DC 8 Charisma (Deception) group check to make it to the ship unmolested. For the group check, have each party member roll a Charisma (Deception) check. If more than half of the party succeed, the farce is successful, otherwise, it is not and they would encounter 2 **guards**.

Treasure: If the characters smuggle out the rich orc and his two chests, he gives the party 4000gp (1000gp less for each chest that does not get smuggled out). If they smuggle out the poor orc and his entire family, he repeats that he has no treasure to give, but in gratitude he offers one family member as a slave. If the party accepts this deal, any character wearing a protection amulet is immediately burned for 3 (1d6) fire damage per round until it is removed.

Objective

If the party smuggles either of the orcs from the town, it is a minor success. Award the party 500 XP. If the party can smuggle both orcs out (including the poor orc's family), it is a major success. Award the party 1000 XP.

If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Total party kill
- Death or imprisonment of both orcs
- Telling the GM the party is giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

7. Doffin Market

The party has appeared in the Doffin Market, just in front of two women that are pulling on opposite sides of an enameled copper plate. A small crowd has gathered to watch the argument, some of them cheering on one woman and some the other. At this point, they are only yelling and pulling on the plate, but an actual fight may break out at any moment. Already, they have bumped into some of the vegetable stands, knocking produce to the ground.

One of the bystanders approaches the best armored of your party and says, “Thank goodness, Your Honor, please resolve this conflict before they trash the market. They will listen to you.” The women stop shouting temporarily, and look in your direction, though neither one releases her hold on the plate.

If the characters ask what is going on, the women — in unison — claim the plate is theirs, and ask the party spokesman to make the other give it up. They talk over one another, but can be silenced and made to talk one at a time if characters demand it. They give the following accounts.

Florinda, the fruit seller (wearing a red skirt and pink blouse), says “The plate was my mother’s, and she gave it to me, saying it will bring me luck in the market.”

Griselda, the sausage vendor (wearing a brown skirt, white blouse, and white apron), says “No, the plate was my grandfather’s, and he willed it to me upon his death.”

The plate is heavy, about 18in across, and made of copper. The hand-painted enamel work is skillfully done, with a background showing a bamboo lattice on a dark blue ground. Four round insets show small painted scenes, apparently different views of a rustic country village. The four scenes depict the following:

- In the first, several children are flying kites
- In the second, a family sits down for a meal at an outside trestle table with benches beside it
- In the third, a dog is chasing several ducks near a pond
- In the fourth, a woman weeps near a graveyard

When you look at the scenes closely, they are static, but as you glance away, there seems to be motion in the scenes, such as some fluttering of the kites, or wing flapping of the running ducks. In fact, this sense of motion reminds you of some paintings you think you once saw in a museum.

Florinda explains the scenes on the plate as follows: “These all show the influence of luck in your life, and how fate is out of your control. Here, whether the kites fly depends on the vagaries of the wind, which none can know. Here, you never know if food will be there the next day. Here, war may erupt and you must flee for your lives. And here, even if you lead a good life, death can step in and punish you.”

Griselda explains the scenes on the plate as follows: “These are all scenes from my grandfather’s village. He and his brothers played with kites as children, and they always had abundant food to eat. This is actually his pet dog, named Suniukas, and this is his mother, crying at his father’s grave. My grandfather painted this plate, and wanted me to have it.”

Below are some actions the characters might take to decide who should claim the plate. You should be creative if the party asks other questions of the women or the bystanders. Without being too obvious about it, the truth is that the plate belongs to Griselda, but Florinda really believes the plate brings good luck, and she wants it. The party can discern Florinda’s intentions with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) party check (all characters make a Wisdom (Insight) check, if more than half roll 15 or higher the check is a success).

Offer to flip a coin, with the plate going to the winner?: Florinda would accept that, saying “Luck will bring me the plate!” But Griselda would not, saying “No, that is not fair, because the plate truly belongs to me.”

Offer to pay one woman 10 gp, and give the plate to the other?: Florinda says, “Make it 20 gold and it’s a deal!” But Griselda says, “Not

for any amount of money would I give it up, the plate is a family treasure.”

Use Solomon’s approach, and offer to break the plate in two and give half to each woman?: Florinda says, “No, that’s stupid, the plate would be worthless then,” while Griselda falls to her knees and pleads, “No, please don’t break the plate.”

Ask Griselda about her grandfather’s other paintings?: She says, “He painted several large works that he sold to the Baron, in exchange for our land and livestock. He always claimed they showed the future, but we kids knew better, of course.”

Treasure: If the plate is returned to the rightful owner, the party gains 3 points of wisdom that they can distribute as they see fit (1 point each to three people, all 3 to one person, or a division of 2 and 1).

Objective

If the party can obtain the evidence of the proper ownership of the plate, and return it to that owner, it is a success. It is also a success if it goes to the right person even without the party having a clue.

If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- The plate is destroyed
- The party decides to keep the plate themselves
- The plate is given to the wrong person
- Telling you they are giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

8. Mystery Under the Cathedral

The party appears in the crypt under Gray’s Cathedral, in a chamber that held the remains of church notables. Their massive sarcophagi have been pushed from their resting places, and their lids dislodged. A handsome man in a yellow silk robe writhes on the floor as he numerous glowing skulls bite him. Other glowing skulls resting on ledges mounted on the walls seem to be chanting in unison.

The man being bitten is a **vampire**. The bites damage him, but he is regenerating 20 hit points per turn. The 7 biting skulls (use the **skeleton** stat block with 8 hit points each and a 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage slam attack instead of short swords) are those of holy men buried in the sarcophagi. Characters who have completed Chick Ballet (**Painting 5**) can make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to recognize the man as a vampire if they state they are examining him. A cleric or paladin can make a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check to determine that the skulls’ chant is a continual invocation against evil.

Striking a skull with a non-magical weapon prevents it from attacking and casts it aside, but it returns to the fight in 1d3 rounds. Throwing holy water on a skull causes it to stop attacking and move away from the fight, shaking vigorously, but does not destroy the skull. It returns to the fight in 1d6 + 1 rounds. If a skull is destroyed, the broken bits jitter wildly and eventually begin to reform. After 1 hour, the pieces knit together and the skull returns to normal.

Clerics attempting to turn the skulls automatically fail, but the attempt causes the skulls on the ledges to glow more brightly. The cleric must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute.

If the party destroys all the biting skulls, the man stands up, sweeps all the chanting skulls off their ledges, permanently destroying them, and thanks the party for their assistance. He regains some of his normal abilities each round. If he fully recovers (this takes 1 minute), he attacks the party, drawing on all of his normal **vampire** abilities.

If the characters instead aid the skulls and attack the vampire, he fights back, but the chanting skulls have drained his impressive abilities. The skulls continue to deliver 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage per successful attack to the vampire in addition to whatever damage the characters inflict. The weakened vampire has only 75 hit points, and loses its Children of

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Sarcophagus	Plaque Words	Skull Utterance
4	Father Damien, protector of lepers	May you be ever healed
5	Father William, protector of the homeless	May you be ever sheltered
6	Sister Mary Catherine, protector of newborns	May you be ever cared for
7	Father Donatello, protector of sea life	May you be lifted by the moon's swells

Treasure: If all of the skulls are returned to their proper resting places, the high priest's skull begins intoning a blessing that fills the chamber. This blessing turns any water in canteens or waterskins into holy water (although it is still usable as drinking water).

Objective

If the party slays or drives off the vampire, it is a minor success. Award the characters 500 gp. If they also return the skulls to their proper bodies, it is a major success. Award them 1000 gp.

If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Total party kill
- Destruction of all the biting skulls
- Telling you they are giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

9. Hut on Chicken Legs

The party appears near a village of crude shacks. A stick hut with a thatched roof is running along on giant chicken legs. A witch is leaning out of the door, trying to grab a running child on the ground. Other children are fleeing in all directions. It looks as if two children are already in the hut, standing motionless.



the Night ability and only has 2 uses of Legendary Resistance left, and the saving throw against his Charm ability is now DC 15. The vampire wears a yellow diamond ring worth 2000gp.

If the party destroys the vampire, the skulls on the ledges stop chanting, and the others stop biting and stay motionless on the floor of the chamber. A low murmur comes from the skulls on the floor, however, but this sound is not obvious to the party unless someone examines a skull more closely or succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. When someone approaches a sarcophagus, the skulls rattle on the floor, and the murmur grows louder.

If a character picks up one of the skulls from the floor and holds it to his ear, the skull whispers a phrase repeatedly. See the table below for the skulls' utterances. To complete the adventure and return to the museum, the characters must return the skulls to the correct sarcophagi. Each sarcophagus contains a skeleton, disturbed from its resting position and missing its skull. A wooden plaque at the foot of each sarcophagus bears a name and description that should help characters determine the correct placement.

Matching Skulls

Sarcophagus	Plaque Words	Skull Utterance
1	Saint Matilda	You have the blessings of Matilda
2	High Priest Paulus	Please return these holy warriors to their resting places
3	Saint Carlos, Defender of the Faith	You have the blessings of Carlos

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As the characters watch, the **witch** (see **Appendix A**) grabs the girl and pulls her into the hut. She now stands motionless next to the other two children. The witch glances at the characters then begins chasing another child.

If the characters attack the witch or the hut, she stops trying to catch the child, and the hut runs toward the characters, clawing with one of its legs. The witch remains in the hut and receives a three-quarters cover (+5 bonus to AC) as long as the hut is alive. If the party kills the witch, the hut stops moving. The **witch's hut** (see **Appendix A**) can be damaged with weapons or fire. If the party kills the hut, the witch grabs her broom and quickly flies away, leaving the tenderized children behind. "Tenderized" children are paralyzed and reduced to 0 hit points but are stabilized and will recover if the witch flees or is slain.

Treasure: Inside the hut is 2000gp in a silver coffer (25gp).

Objective

If the party slays the witch or drives her off while saving all the tenderized children, the adventure is a success.

If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Total party killed or tenderized
- Telling you they are giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

10. Great Gate

The party appears just inside Ramsgate amid the commotion of a war. One gate is open, one is closed, and the portcullis is up. The defenders are being slowly forced back as the attackers push in through the open gate. There have already been casualties on both sides. Clara, a strawberry blond in a white robe, grabs the leading member of your party and gasps, "You need to drop the portcullis and close the gates, or we are lost! Hurry! Go now!" She then grabs one of the wounded defenders by his feet and begins to drag him back from the battle. Most of the defenders wear a badge of a mountain with a crown floating above it. Most of the attackers are wearing either blue or black ribbons tied around their neck or upper arm. All the combatants you see are human.

The points of the portcullis poke out the top of the gate opening. It is fully retracted, but no obvious mechanisms are nearby for raising or lowering it. However, a guardhouse is against the wall beside the gate.

Getting to the gatehouse requires fighting through a mass of combatants wearing blue or black ribbons. Standing before the characters are 2d4+2 black ribbon fighters (**thugs** with chain shirts and an AC of 13), and 1d3+2 blue ribbon fighters (**veterans**). Some of the blue ribbon warriors hang back and fire heavy crossbows when they have a clear shot.

If characters don't immediately try to get to the gatehouse, another mob of combatants similar to the first wave enters the melee. Characters face a never-ending mass of fighters until they successfully lower the portcullis.

Getting into the gatehouse requires a character (other characters can assist) making a successful DC 20 Strength check to pull open a gate barring entry. Once inside, only one defender still stands, a dwarven warrior in full plate and shield, wielding a magnificent warhammer. Six

men with blue ribbons (**veterans**) and one **captain** (see **Appendix A**) in chainmail with a blue and white ribbon face off against him. The dwarf has been wounded several times but is still fighting strongly. A closed door is set in the wall behind him.

You must be flexible in this encounter. The mechanism for the portcullis is through the closed door, but if the party just tries to get in there at once, **Gharn** (see **Appendix A**) assumes they are part of the attacking force and fights the characters as well. But if the party just tries to fight the attackers with ribbons, more eventually come in through the guardhouse door and join the fight. The characters have to convince Gharn they are friends, but not waste too much time with fighting instead of getting to the portcullis controls. Once they get past the door, a simple release drops the portcullis. Healing Gharn helps sway his opinions of the characters' intentions, but as soon as the attackers see a healer helping the dwarf, they turn to attack him. Once the party drops the portcullis, they can come back out and help the dwarf clear the guardhouse, for no new attackers will be coming through the gate. The defenders of the city gradually defeat the remaining attackers inside the gate, whether the characters get involved or not.

If at any time the characters instead flee the fighting, they must run deeper into the town to escape. After several turns in the narrow streets, their vision clouds, and they find themselves back in the museum.

Objective

If the party clears the guardhouse and drops the portcullis, the adventure is a success.

If any of the following actions occur before accomplishing the objective, this scenario ends in failure:

- Total party kill
- The party attacks the dwarf defender and kills him
- Party leaves the vicinity of the gate and guardhouse (running away)
- Telling you they are giving up

With a success or failure, the party undergoes Reverse Transition and leaves the painting.

Concluding the Adventure

When the characters clear the final painting and return, they find themselves back in the empty museum hall, tourists once again. All of the exhibits now bear signs stating that they have been temporarily removed.

A museum guard rushes up as you wander through the empty exhibit hall. "Folks? You shouldn't be here. The museum is closed for the evening." The guard ushers you out of the building quickly, locking the front door behind you. It is early evening in Mount Charles, and revelers throng the streets, dancing merrily down the lanes. The cruise ship still sits in the harbor, waiting for you at the dock. When you finally make your way back, a porter greets them at the gangplank. "Did you fine passengers have an interesting visit?" he asks. He gives you all a knowing wink and a tip of his hat as you board.

Appendix A: New Creatures and NPCs

Captain

Captain

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment
Armor Class 16 (chain mail)
Hit Points 75 (10d8+20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6
Skills Perception +5, Persuasion +7, Intimidation +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Dwarven
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The captain has advantage on all saving throws against fear.
Leadership (1/day, duration 1 minute). Allies within 30ft who can hear and understand the Captain add 1d4 to their attack rolls and saving throws.

Actions

Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Gharn, Defender of the Gate

Gharn

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful neutral
Armor Class 20 (plate and shield)
Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Dwarven
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Indomitable (2/Day). Gharn rerolls a failed saving throw.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, Gharn can regain 20 hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. Gharn makes three attacks with his warhammer.
Warhammer. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, plus 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage if Gharn has more than half of his total hit points remaining.
Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range

100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if Gharn has more than half of his total hit points remaining.

Witch

Witch

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil
Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor)
Hit Points 49 (11d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +6
Skills Arcana +2, Deception +6, Nature +2, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any two languages
Challenge 4 (1,100)

Innate Spellcasting. The witch's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:
At will: *disguise self*, *mage armor* (self only), *silent image*, *speak with animals*
1/day: *conjure fey*

Spellcasting. The witch is a 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:
Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *eldritch blast*, *friends*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *vicious mockery*
1st-5th level (3 5th-level slots): *blink*, *charm person*, *dimension door*, *dominate beast*, *faerie fire*, *fear*, *hold*

Actions

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Witch's Hut (Hut with Chicken Legs)

Witch's Hut

Huge construct, unaligned
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 178 (17d12 + 68)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	2 (-4)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Con +7
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 5
Languages —
Challenge 7 (2,900)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The witch's hut is incapacitated

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while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by a *dispel magic*, the witch's hut must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

Actions

Multiattack. The witch's hut makes three attacks: one slam attack and two with its talons.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft, one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Talons. *Melee:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage.

Player Handout 1

First Exhibit Hall

The following paintings are found on the first floor of the museum.

1. Christmas Gnome

An oddly dressed gnome kneels before a Christmas tree, arranging small packages to form some sort of pattern on the floor.

2. Old Castle

A troubadour in clerical robes is singing before a tall tower at one end of an old castle. A poorly defined person can be made out in the shadows of a window high in the tower.

3. Public Gardens

In the gardens of a central plaza, a group of children is running about, clearly very upset and agitated. A large cage is standing open and empty.

4. Cow-Drawn Cart

A starving cow pulls a rundown cart. Two people walking beside the cart and the driver appear in pain and possibly diseased. A series of obscure runes are written along the side of the cart.

5. Chick Ballet

On the stage of a stone amphitheater, several misshapen and distorted fowl are circling about.

Second Exhibit Hall

The following paintings are found on the second floor of the museum.

6. Rich Orc, Poor Orc

Two orcs stand nearby on a city street, one dressed in fine clothes and the other in rags. Both appear frightened and anxious.

7. Doffin Market

In an open market, several women are arguing about something. Some fruits and vegetables are scattered on the ground in front of the open stalls.

8. Mystery Under the Cathedral

In an underground crypt, several skulls on ledges are glowing weirdly.

9. Hut on Chicken Legs

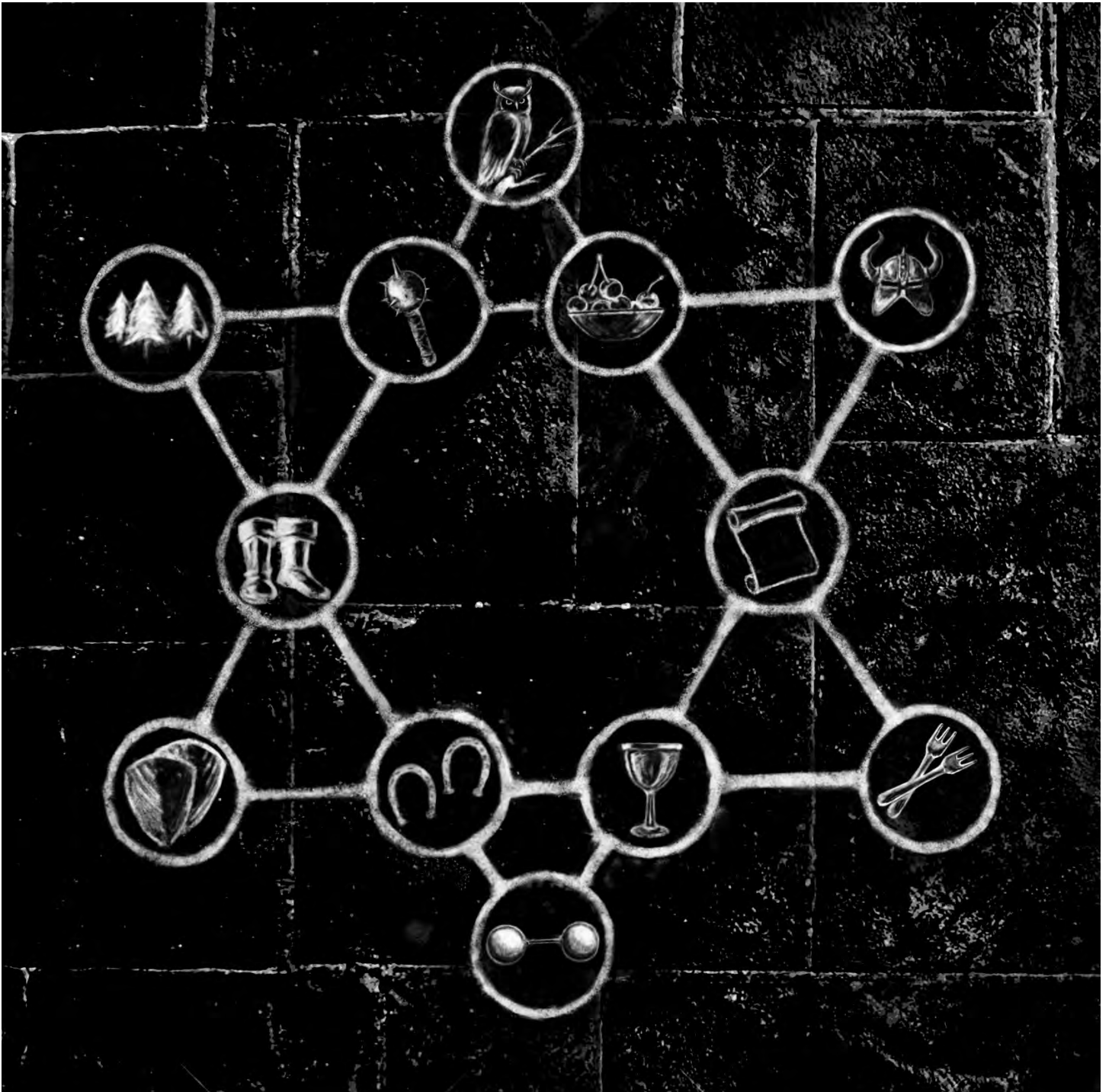
A stick hut with a thatched roof is running along on giant chicken legs. A witch is leaning out of the door, apparently trying to grab something on the ground.

10. Great Gate

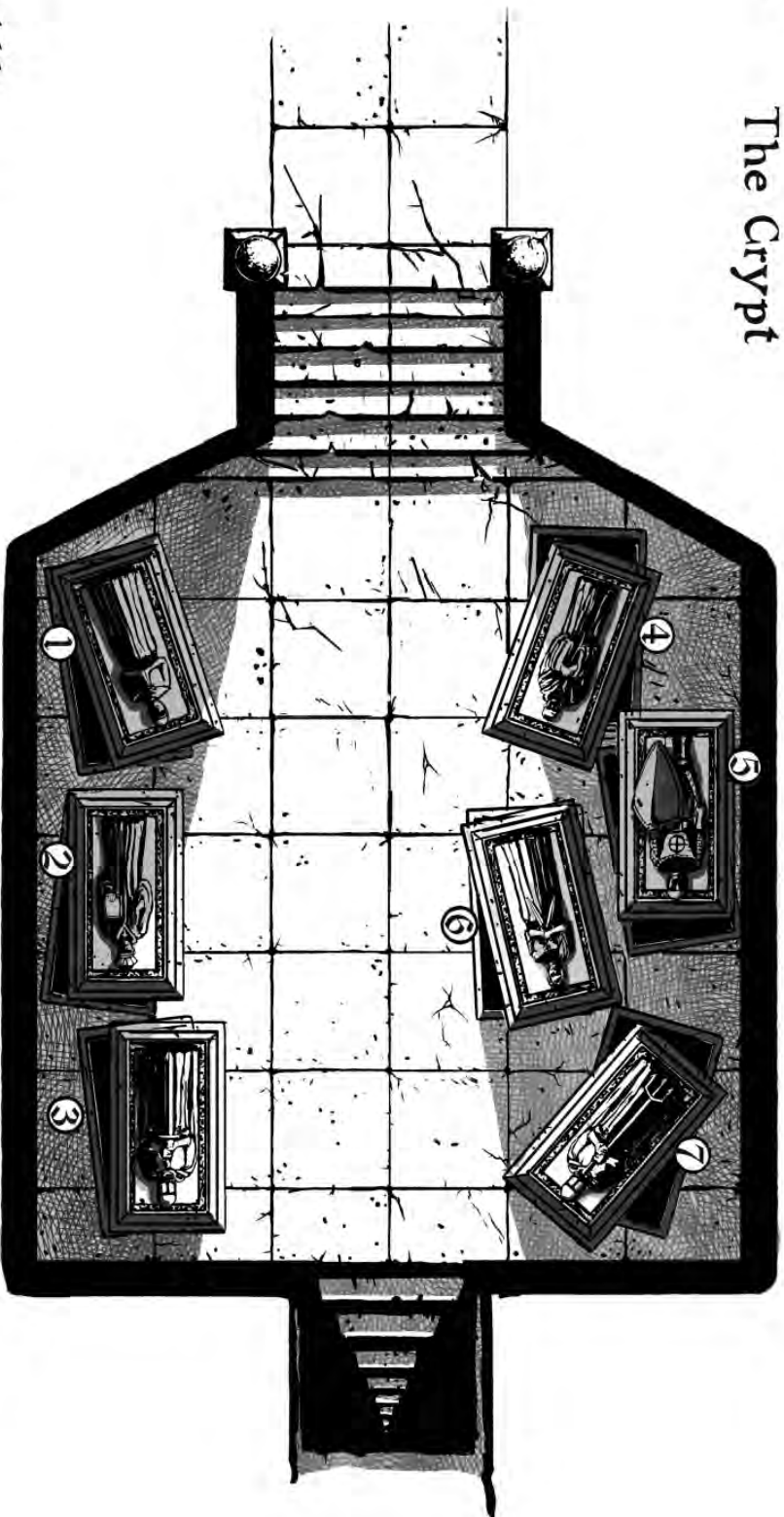
A ferocious battle is being waged at the gate of a walled town.

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

Chalk Diagram



Gray's Cathedral The Crypt



1. St. Matilda
2. High Priest Paulus
3. St. Carlos, Defender of the Faith
4. Father Damien, Protector of Lepers
5. Father William, Protector of the Homeless
6. Sister Mary Catherine, Protector of Newborns
7. Father Donatello, Protector of Sea Life

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

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QoD4p

Quests of Doom 4

Pictures at an Exhibition

Pictures at an Exhibition is an adventure for parties of 4–6 characters of levels 4–6. During the adventure, players control characters on an exotic cruise in a parallel reality known as “the Real World”. During a stopover, they find themselves on a museum tour where the vivid paintings draw them into a world of fantasy. These excursions involve fighting and puzzle solving to survive.

The adventure originally was written for play at NTRPGCon 2012.



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