

C-SERIES



C7

The Sussurus Tomb

by Stephen Yeardley

4-6 PCs | Levels 5-7



The Sussurus Tomb

C7 The Sussurus Tomb is a collaborative adventure between AdventureAWeek.com and Lord Zsezse Works using their fantastic interactive battlemaps. This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of 5th-7th level

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“The Sussurus Tomb” is a Pathfinder Compatible Adventure designed for 4–6 PCs of level 5–7.

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Adventure Background

In a silent section of the forest, in the center of a circle of runestones, lies the Sussurus Tomb. As night falls, flickering light streams upwards from a staircase that is carved into the surrounding stone. Every night that the moon passes into view overhead, the dissonance of whispering voices can be felt, but never fully heard. The tomb lies open but undisturbed, as those who answer the call of the sibilant calls and descend the stairs rarely return. And those that do return endure the sleep of the damned for the rest of their short, miserable lives...

Sometimes a place has somehow remained nameless; the reasons this may be are many and varied, but ultimately it will come down to one of two things. Either the place is so unimportant it just has no name, or it contains something secret of such great significance that it has to hide it away, and a greater anonymity is essential. The village close by the hunter's hut on the edge of the Dark Forest is just such a place: quiet, unassuming, nameless. Everyone calls it Koto - Home - and nothing more is required. The Sussurus Tomb is located in the center of a stone circle, close to a cobbled road that passes by the east of the village. Beneath the tomb is the entrance to a huge set of catacombs. New adventures await you in its depths - choking roots, ravenous spiders, and the Sphere of Forgotten Eldritch Power. The tomb itself is designed as a final resting place and "capstone" to the grave-chambers beneath it; powerful magics, both arcane and divine, have been called upon to ensure the necromantic lure of undeath does not extend its malicious grip to the departed of this region. Why they should have any greater protection from undeath isn't clear, but someone has gone to a lot of trouble to ensure the dead don't rise again from this interment center.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs are on a journey to find a hidden item, although its whereabouts isn't entirely clear, as clues and hints have been contradictory. As they approach a non-descript and seemingly nameless village, which may or may not be their destination, they notice a decorated tomb in the middle of a stone circle. Somehow this place is important, although no-one can quite say why. Despite some strange occurrences as they try to approach it, they eventually find a way into the resting place of several powerful undead beneath the ring of menhirs.

As they explore, the PCs find that this is just the entrance to a deeper catacomb, and that the undead they encounter are more like gateway guardians than mindlessly aggressive creatures of the night. So much so, that a powerful group of adventures such as the PCs is enough to scare some of the undead away, as

discretion becomes the better part of valor. However, there seems to be more going on than meets the eye, and the combination of unnatural tree growth and sinister incorporeal undead suggest a wider plan at work.

The deeper they delve, the greater the challenges become to make further progress, and the real task in hand becomes finding a way to unlock an elaborate seal and discovering what it is being hidden and protected. Is the party up to the challenge, or will its members find themselves press-ganged into the ranks of eternal guardians?

Adventure Hooks

After being sent on a hunt for a powerful undead creature, the party finds that all clues lead to a small, sleepy village seemingly unaffected by dark forces. Can this be the place it is looking for?

Atonement for a misdemeanor leads the cleric or paladin of a party on a quest to help a nameless distant hamlet deal with an unseen menace. But on arrival, no-one in the village knows what the party is talking about; surely the PCs can't mean the tomb in the ring?

An alchemist is after a selection of strange gases, many of which are found at suitable potencies in tombs and graves. The woman sends the party off to bottle some of these miasmas from a benign grave she has found out about. Indications are that the undead within will "all be sleeping"

As they journey in a remote area at the outskirts of the Empire, one at peace and with little call for adventurers, the PCs spot an out-of-place tomb on a mound, guarded and sealed despite there appearing to be no reason for such protection. Is there more to this than meets the eye?

After a long, hard, and dull journey over a couple of dozen miles of unbroken countryside, the party is suddenly faced with an elaborate grave and a stone ring. No one can recall either its name, or who built it, but after miles of nothing it's something that is worth a halt, surely?

Tales tell of a powerful sword's current resting place, an out-of-the-way hamlet that no one in the party is familiar with. In fact, it has taken more research to find the possible whereabouts of the hamlet than of the sword itself! All things being equal, the settlement ahead is the place you are searching for, but it hardly looks like it holds a powerful weapon somewhere in its bounds.

Koto - "Home" - is just that to everyone who lives there. Very few people leave the place, and new, long-term residents are rarer than hens' teeth. It has taken over 100 years for the population to increase by 5, to about 80 souls. Why should somewhere so peaceful not attract others to it? It's as if Nature only allows a certain number of humanoids into the region.

First view: The Surface

The curved road sweeps sharply from west to north, its close-fitting, well-maintained cobbles encouraging you to set a good pace. Few distractions have caught your eye in the last few hours, and it would've been easier to miss the worn steps leading up to a stone circle than not. The ring consists of 5 menhirs, each rock carved with a severe-looking humanoid, one each of a dwarf, an elf, a headless ogrekin, a human, and an orc. The human has an aerial servant standing just behind it. A rectangular tomb sits in the center of the circle, the feet end towards the steps, a carved book on a slab-wide pedestal at the head end, and an angel etched into the slab itself. The tomb points from the north west to the south east. Trees with white blossom stand either side of the steps, with shrubs and bushes surrounding the tomb mound itself.

The area around is a series of traps designed to keep people away rather than outright harm them, although they can cause damage.

1. The Cobbled Way

Anything that walks on the cobblestone path within 10 feet of the steps finds the first defense:

Path - reverse *find the path* trap - CR 7

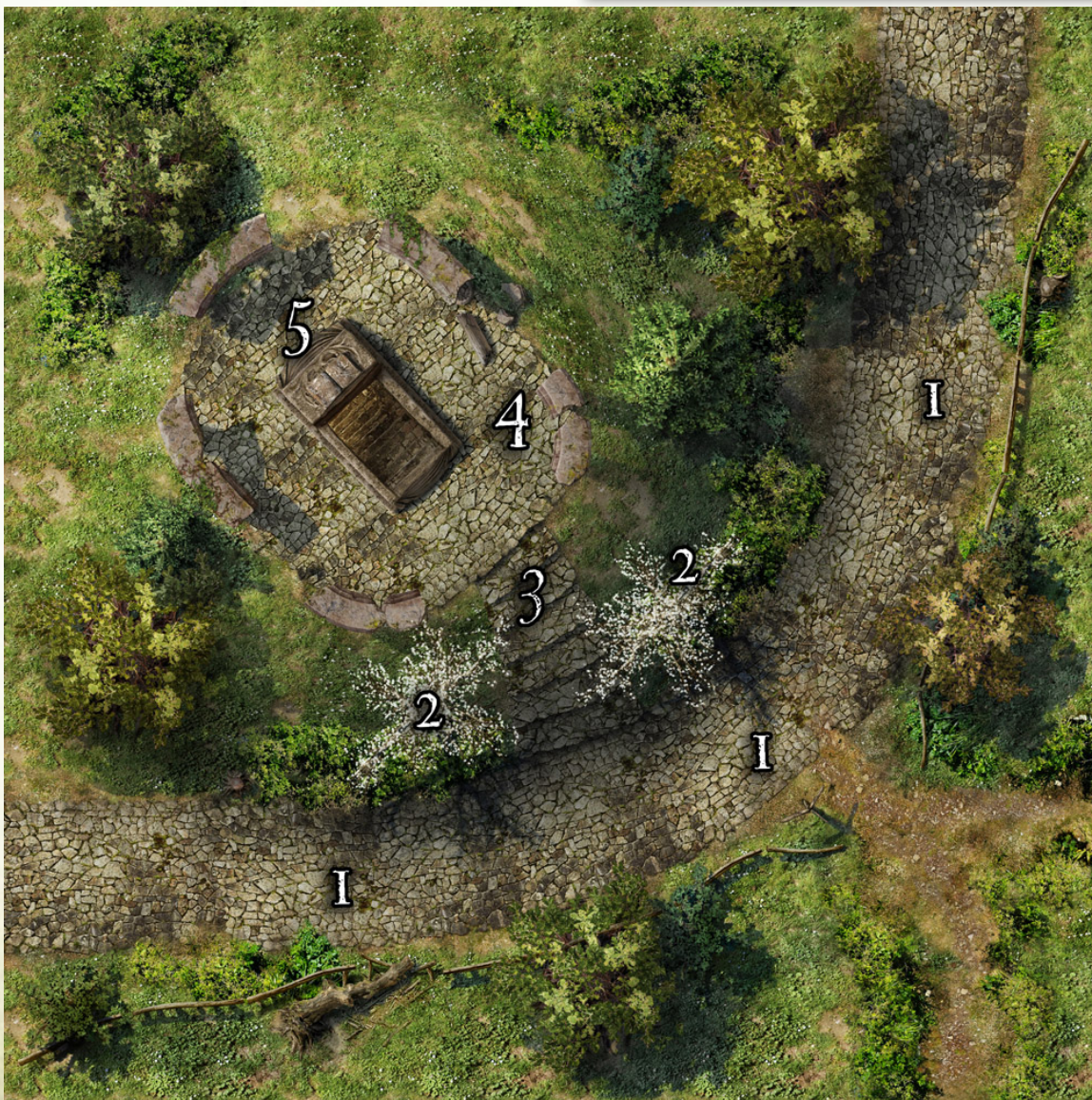


XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 110 minutes; **Reset** automatic
Effect spell effect (reverse of *find the path*, DC 19 Will save negates); multiple targets (all creatures in 60-ft.-radius burst, up to 150 total hp)



GM's note

An alternative to considering this as a reverse of *find the path* is to introduce a "mirror image" called *hide the path*.



Hide the Path

School divination; **Level** bard 6, cleric/oracle 6, druid 6, witch 6; **Domain** alternative forknowledge 6, travel 6



CASTING

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S, F (a set of divination counters)

EFFECT

Range touch

Target one creature touched per two caster levels

Duration 10 min./level

Saving Throw none or Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** no or yes (harmless)

DESCRIPTION

The recipient of this spell finds himself taking the longest, least direct physical route to a prominent specified destination, such as a city, keep, lake, or dungeon. The locale can be outdoors or underground, as long as it is prominent. For example, a hunter's cabin is not prominent enough, but a logging camp is. *Hide the path* works with respect to locations, not objects or creatures at a locale. The location must be on the same plane as the subject at the time of casting.

The spell means the subject completely fails to sense the correct direction that will eventually lead it to its destination, gaining no indication for the duration of the spell as to the exact path to follow or physical actions to take. For example, the spell stops the subject from being able to sense what cavern corridor to take when a choice presents itself. The spell ends if the destination happens to be reached or the duration expires, whichever comes first.

This divination is keyed to the recipients, not any unaffected companions, and its effect does not predict or allow for the actions of creatures (including guardians) who might take action to oppose the person/s affected by the spell as they follow any path but the one hidden by this spell.

Hide the path can be used to act as a much-enhanced *hide campsite*. The caster is able to mask an area equal to one 20-ft. cube per caster level. All other aspects of the spell are the same as *hide campsite*.

2. The Forever-Blossoming Trees

Bypassing the base of the steps by moving under either of the trees sets off the second defense as the blossom is disturbed and falls onto the PCs. A Knowledge (nature) DC 25 check identifies them as forever-blossoming trees, a rare type of non-fruiting cherry.

Blossom - confusion trap - CR 5



XP 1,600

Type magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28 (clear sufficient blossom out of the way)

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*confusion*, DC 16 Will save negates); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft.-radius burst)

3. The Steps to the Circle

The steps themselves respond to anything treading on them with a third defense, as the stone stairway becomes spiky and treacherous to walk on.

Steps - spike stones trap - CR 5



XP 1,600

Type magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*spike stones*, DC 16 Reflex partially negates); multiple targets (all targets in an area up to a 20-ft. square per level)



4. The Circle of Animated Life

A creature attempting to enter the stone circle between any of the menhirs finds that one of the stones springs to life. This energy can be transferred to any of the monuments, but only one is active at any time. The animated statue is designed to deal subdual damage.

Menhir - Moving Executioner Statue trap - CR 5



XP 1,600

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25 (hidden switch bypass - the gloved left hand of the dwarf, holding a greathammer, needs to be touched to deactivate the trap); **Disable Device** DC 18

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect attack +16 melee (1d12+8/x3, arms act as greathammers); multiple targets (both arms attack one target). The statue attacks until either it defeats its target or its left hand is touched and it stops attacking or 5 rounds have passed when it resets (but can be reactivated).

5. The Book of Help

At the appropriate time, tell the players the book is engraved with the following:

To pass this place, initially we seven would tell what to do. But our hearts suggest all is not what it seems. Three words reveal all.

If the first letter of the dwarf, elf, human, aerial servant, orc and angel, plus the second letter of the "headless ogrekin" - D, E, H, A, O, A and G - are rearranged to make "GO AHEAD", and this is spoken aloud, a gentle sound of stone moving against stone can be heard. This is the base of the sarcophagus becoming a flight of stairs into the tomb.



If the middle letter of each of the creature - A, L, M, S, R, G and E - are rearranged to make "GLAMERS" and this is spoken aloud, the lid of the sarcophagus melts away. The entryway steps are clear if "GO AHEAD" has also been spoken aloud.

If the players have difficulty with this, allow checks or magic that focus on language in some way to give hints. The "head or heart" idea is a standard way of guiding people when completing cryptic crosswords, and those PCs with a way to have a good grasp on words, phrases, and local uses of language could roll-play their way to deciphering this. Reward genuine effort.



However, reading the inscription on the book sets off another defense.

Carved book - *sepia snake sigil* trap - CR 4



XP 1,200

Type magic; **Perception** DC 34; **Disable Device** DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger spell (*sepia snake sigil*); **Duration** permanent until triggered; **Reset** next midnight if triggered

Effect spell effect (*sepia snake sigil*); single target (anyone reading the script of glyphs and runes, DC 25 Reflex save negates)

Attempting to move the lid of the tomb without saying the three words also sets off a trap.

Tomb lid - *bestow curse* trap - CR 4



XP 1,200

Type magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** permanent until triggered; **Reset** next midnight if triggered

Effect spell effect (*bestow curse*); single target (first person moving the lid without saying the release words to fail the save, DC 20 Will save negates)

Second view: The Open Tomb

6. The Light at the Start of the Tunnel

With the slab covering the tomb removed, a stairway descending from the feet end of the grave is visible. There is a light source coming from the other end of the tomb, illuminating the way forward. As anyone living approaches the entrance, there is a skittering noise, then a hasty, sibilant curse or two, and finally sharp silence. After a few seconds, a soft voice starts singing.

7. The Unlucky for Some Stairway

There are 13 steps down to the gallery hallway. The first, second, third, fifth, seventh, eleventh and thirteenth steps have lullaby traps. The trap on the first step is set off 3 rounds after the tomb lid is removed due to the change in pressure from the weight of the stone.



Stairs - lullaby trap - CR 1 (x 7)

XP 600

Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset automatic

Effect spell effect (lullaby, DC 11 Will save negates); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. radius burst)



The fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth and twelfth steps have spider swarms attached to them. Once one attacks, the others join in on the following round for an EL5 event. They are naturally there, rather than the result of traps.

SPIDER SWARMS - CR 1 (x 5)

XP 400

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.;
Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 size)

hp 9 (2d8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; Immune mind-affecting effects, weapon damage

Weaknesses swarm traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee swarm (1d6 plus poison and distraction)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 11)

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +1; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Climb +11, **Perception** +4; **Racial Modifiers** +4
Perception; uses Dexterity for Climb checks

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex)

Swarm—injury; *save* Fort DC 11; *frequency* 1/round for 2 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Once the spiders have been dealt with, if the party checks the eighth stair it finds that there is a large cavity behind it with the body of a gnome, entirely wrapped in web, stored inside. The corpse is brittle, just a husk in reality, but it does still have a +2 dagger, 3 silver +1 bolts, and a metal tube that holds a *potion of nondetection* CL 7.



Third view: The Gallery Hallway

All ceilings in the tomb are about 8 feet high, slightly curved to give greater support. There is a light source at the base of the stairs, burning a dull orange as a result of the **gases** within the tomb. Throughout the tomb there is a cumulative 5% chance per round of walking into a 5-foot square gas pocket in any area, the result of which is below.

8. The Gallery of Destinations

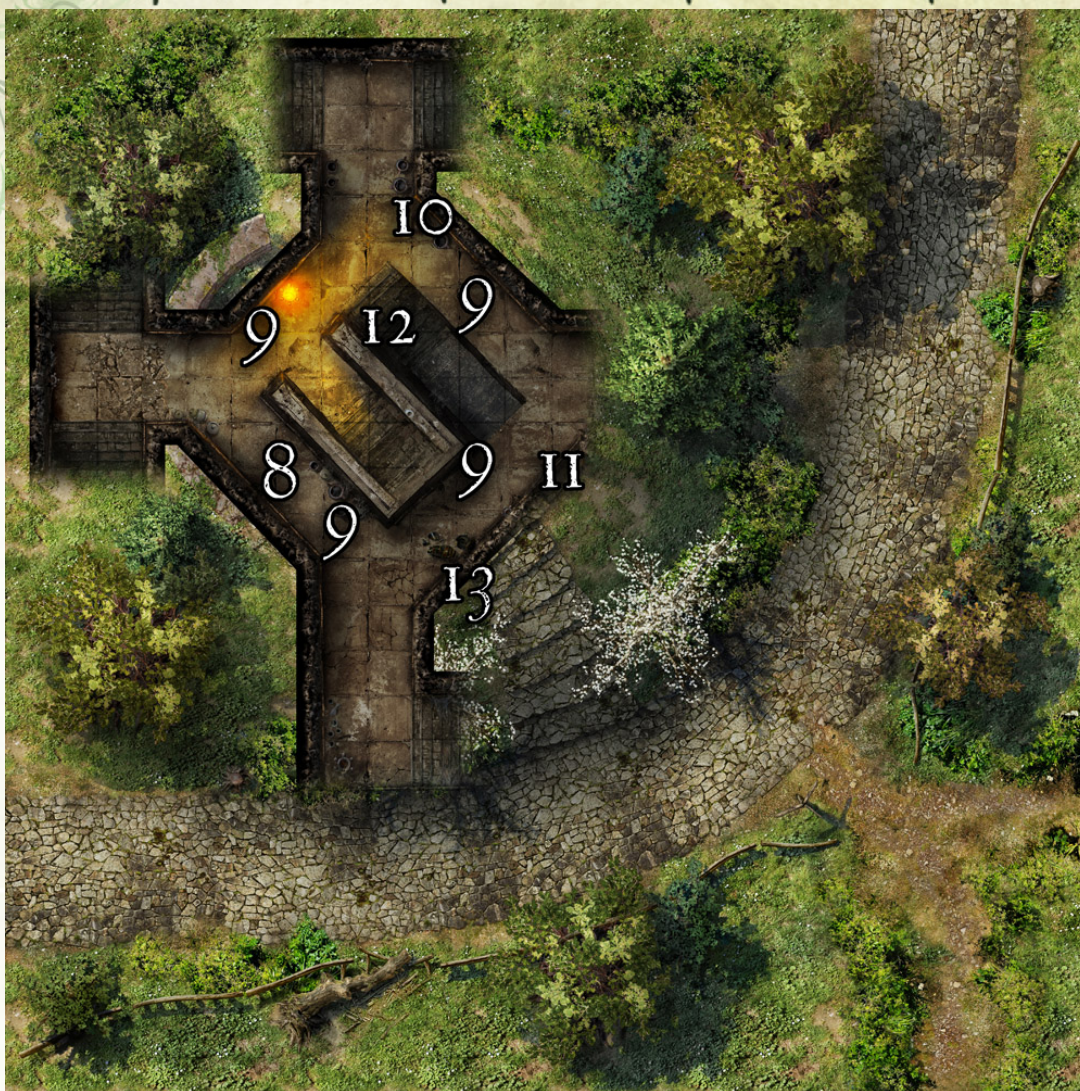
The stairway ends on the left-hand side of a square gallery hallway that has a pathway leading off each corner, north, west, east and south. Ahead of the party, the north and west short corridors end in blank walls; each has two sets of stairs leading downwards from it.

The stairs from the northern corridor head east (area 14) and west (15), whilst those on the western path go north (16) and south (17). The corridor behind the party and on the left, going southwards, is longer than the others. Just one set of stairs descends eastwards from it (20).

The globe around the light source is magical and called a sussurus lamp. It is made from the tail casing of a giant wasp. Besides shedding the orange light, it produces a barely-perceptible hum.

Table 1-1: Gallery Gases

Gases	%	Smell	Fort DC	Damage	Effect; where	Additional results
Ammonia	01-40	Pungent	12	1d4	Irritation; bowels, bladder	Pass urine every 5 mins for 1 hour per point the save was missed
Formaldehyde	41-70	Strong, irritating	15	1d6	Stinging; eyes, nose	Unconscious for 5 mins per point the save was missed by
Hydrogen Sulfide	71-90	Rotten eggs	18	1d8	Tissue damage; nose, throat	Fatigued for 1 hour per point the save was missed by
Radon	91-00	None	20	1d12 + special	Tissue damage; lungs	1 additional point of healing required per point the save was missed by



Sussurus Lamp

Aura strong enchantment and necromancy; **CL** 15th

Slot —; **Price** 200,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

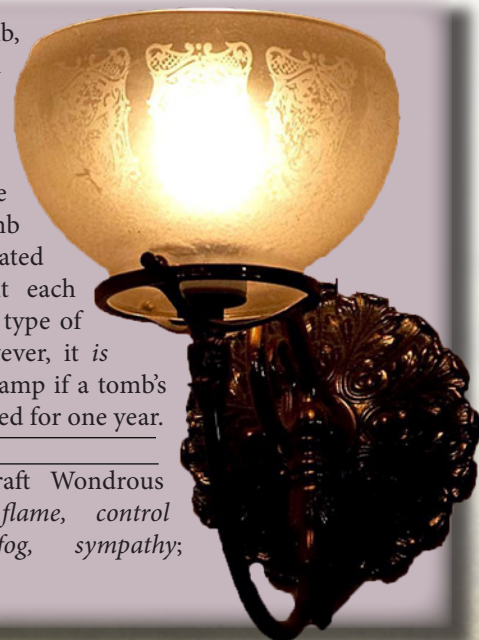
This lamp appears to operate as a normal wall lamp, giving off an orange glow. Besides shedding this light, it produces a barely-perceptible soporific hum. The light itself is a *continuous flame*, but the illumination acts similarly to a combination of *control undead*, *mind fog*, and *sympathy*.

A *sussurus lamp* effects Wisdom checks and Will saves, although only to those creatures with an Intelligence score greater than 3 (any creature with a score lower than this is immune to the effect.) All undead are rendered powerless while in a specific tomb and within 40 feet of a source of vibration that resonates the effects of the *sussurus lamp*, regardless of Intelligence score. This works in any direction and through any material short of 6 inches of lead or adamantine. The casings have to be shaped and perforated in a particular way

for the specific tomb, as they work in response to the drift of air around the structure. No casing works anywhere other than the tomb it was originally created for and as a result each can be considered a type of minor artifact. However, it is possible to create a lamp if a tomb's air currents are studied for one year.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *continuous flame*, *control undead*, *mind fog*, *sympathy*;
Cost 100,000 gp



9. The Combative Corridors

A number of the slabs that make up the floor around the stairway from the surface are a form of medium animated object that slams upward to catch an unwary person under the chin, before falling back to land on two people's feet. They move much more slowly than usual (5 ft. per round) but have a form of Multiattack as an offensive capability, as described. There is one such slab in each of the corridors around the stairway, and one in the corridor heading southwards, for a total of 5; as GM, feel free to place them wherever you wish on each walkway, perhaps rolling randomly for each 5-foot square.

10. The Roots of Consternation

Choking roots from the trees above hang down from all the ceilings on this level, reaching extensively into the passageways. Other areas also have some roots exposed, but not as thickly as here. Wherever roots are exposed and the PCs come into contact with them, they have a cumulative 20% chance per round of triggering some type of spore, bacteria, or worse. A single round of non-interaction resets the cumulative total back to zero. If the onset time is a minus number of rounds for a PC, it is treated as "immediate".

ANIMATED SLABS - CR 3

XP 800

N Medium construct

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)

hp 36 (3d10+20)

Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4

Defensive Abilities hardness 5; Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee under-chin upwards slam +5 (1d6+3), 2 onto-feet drops +3 (1d6+1)

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15

SQ 2 construction points

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Construction Points

Medium animated objects have 2 construction points.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or group (3-12)

Treasure Value none



Table 1-2: Biological Events

Hazard	%	Type	Fort DC	Initial Damage	Onset	Result
Staphylo-coccus	01-25	aureuspositive	12	1d4	Con bonus +1 round	Blood clots too quickly; reduces Dex by 1 per point the save was missed by, for 1 hour
Staphylo-coccus	26-50	aureusnegative	12	1d4	Con bonus +1 round	Blood clots too slowly; reduces Str by 1 per point the save was missed by, for 1 hour
Pseudo-monas	51-70	aerugin-osa	15	1d6	Con bonus	Clogs respiratory tract; reduces Con by 1 per point the save was missed by, for 1 day
Aspergill-us	71-85	niger	18	1d8	Con bonus	Affects ear canal and membrane; Acrobatics, Perception (hearing) reduced by 10, for 1 day
Aspergill-us	86-95	flavus	20	1d10	Con bonus -1 round	Brain tissue damage; reduces Wis by 1 per point the save was missed by, for 1 hour
Histoplas-mosis	96-00	capsul- atum	22	1d12	Con bonus -1 round	External lesions on face; reduces Cha by 2 per point the save was missed by, for 1 hour

These twisted roots, as thick as a man's arm, more numerous than his fingers and toes, and bearing aromatic truffles, writhe in the air as you approach.



GRAPPLING TREE ROOT BALL - CR 3

XP 800

N Large plant

Init +0; Senses blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+6 natural, -1 size)

hp 30 (4d8+12)

Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2

Immune electricity, plant traits; Resist cold 10 and fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.

Melee slam +7 (1d8+7 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d8+7), entangle

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 10, Con 16, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 9



Base Atk +3; CMB +9 (+13 grapple); CMD 19 (can't be tripped)

SQ camouflage

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex)

Since a grappling tree root ball looks like a normal tree when at rest, a DC 20 Perception check is required to notice it before it attacks for the first time. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use either of those skills instead of Perception to notice the plant.

Entangle (Su)

A grappling tree root ball can, as a free action, cause tree roots within 30 feet of it to animate and grasp at foes. This ability is otherwise similar to *entangle* (CL 4th, DC 13). The save DC is Wisdom-based.

ECOLOGY

Environment any forests

Organization solitary, pair, or patch (3–6)

Treasure incidental

11. The Unseen Way

The corridor behind the party and to the right leads eastwards into a thick, inky darkness that seems to stop light escaping from it. If they walk along it, it looks like a wall has been demolished a short way down, although it is unclear if this is the case at this stage.

A permanent *deeper darkness* spell has been cast along this corridor, but only has a 20 ft. radius rather than the usual 60 feet. **Area 19 below** has more details of this area.



12. Deeper Downwards

Immediately to the right of the stairway from the surface is another flight, but this one heads south-eastwards and is only half as long as the one into the tomb. It ends in a blank floor and wall, as if the builders decided enough was enough at the last moment, and capped off the way down.

This wall has a *black tentacles* trap built into it, with 9 tentacles appearing. Tokens need to be collected from the eight sarcophagi and one other room placed around the tomb in order to open this blank wall. These items represent each of the 9 alignments and can only be picked up by someone who has at least one of the alignment components, e.g. the LG token can only be grasped and used by some one Lawful (Anything) or (Anything) Good. Temporarily changing your alignment allows someone to pick up a block that isn't tuned to their usual philosophy. If you change back to your original alignment, the token drops to the floor. An individual finds they can only carry as many tokens as they have arms. There are three in **area 14**, one in **area 15**, three in **area 28**, and two in **area 22**.

At the blank wall, each tentacle has to have one token pressed against. This can be achieved by succeeding in an opposed grapple check or a touch attack at AC 15 for an individual tentacle (Dex 18, single tentacle treated as Small sized). The token instantly melds into the tentacle, which shrinks back into the door, leaving part of an intricate lock on show. When all nine tentacles have retreated into the door, the full lock is displayed. Once this lock is open, another 10-foot long flight of stairs descends to a 45-degree turn and a path heading eastwards. See **area 26** for details.

Wall - black tentacles trap CR 5

XP 1,600

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28
EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** automatic. If the alignment tokens are used to disable it, none

Effect spell effect (*black tentacles*, 9 tentacles, CMB 15, CMD 25, 1d6+4 damage); multiple targets (up to 9 targets in a 10-ft.-radius burst, up to 20-ft. from the wall)

Lock in wall - Open Locks/Disable Device DC 25 to open when tentacles have been dealt with, otherwise DC 40



13. Anti-Undead Armoire

The wall immediately behind the stairway down from the surface, in the south-eastern corner, has a secret door in its upper portion. Two empty barrels are immediately below this door. At this stage, it cannot be opened. The key-blocks are in **area 25** below.

A DC 22 **Perception** roll discovers the secret door. This also reveals a bas relief image depicting the four elements - earth, air, fire, and water - and their links - dust, electricity, steam, and ooze. Each is depicted by a humanoid coming under the influence of the element once they are dead. If "read" in an anti-clockwise direction, a corpse rots as it hangs in the air, gradually being turned to dust by the process; this dust slowly becomes

compacted as earth on another body; the pressure of earth on the body forces some of it to decay to ooze, then water; this becomes steam once it is subject to fire from the burning of other bones; finally electricity causes the components to reform to an animated but dead body that dances as it hangs in the air.

In the center of this is an octagonal hole about eight inches across and a little over three inches deep (actually eight centimetres). With either a **Craft (locks)**, **Disable Device**, or **Profession (locksmith)** DC 20 check, a PC will discover that each segment of the octagon is an isosceles triangle, and that keys from the final sarcophagus are needed to open this secret door. See area 25 for full details.

Fourth view: The Crypts Off the Lower Stairways

14. The First Crypt

If the party uses the northern path and descends eastwards, it finds itself in a crypt with three sealed sarcophagi in it. The room is bathed in a cold blue light that seems to softly hum, producing a soporific drone. The drone is the result of an effect that is a cross

between *gentle repose* and *halt undead*. It has no effect on living creatures, but keeps the undead in a form of deep slumber. This was originally cast by a high level necromancer, one much more experienced than required to set the restraint up at its minimum level, hence the Will DC. The mechanism to disarm the trap is in the doorway. If the PCs do this, the spectres will leap out of their sarcophagi.

Entire room - *gentle repose* and *halt undead* trap CR 6



XP 2,400

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*gentle repose*, *halt undead*); multiple targets (up to 3 targets in a 15-ft.-radius circle, DC 25 Will saves overcomes at restraining)

The three sarcophagi lids are each set with a *freezing sphere* trap.

Sarcophagus lid - *freezing sphere* trap CR 7



XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Duration instantaneous; Reset automatic

Effect spell effect (*freezing sphere*, 11d6 cold damage, DC 24 Reflex for half damage); multiple targets (all creatures in 40-ft.-radius burst)



When the covers are opened, each lead-lined tomb has a spectre in it that rises up and may swiftly approach the PCs. Depending on the strength of the party not all attack; 1 ALWAYS will, while 1 or 2 of the others will flee into the catacombs if they can/if the party isn't strong enough to deal with them, giving a hook for possible further exploration. As GM, decide what is right for you.

SPECTRE - CR 3

XP 3,200

LE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +17

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 15, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 12 (+2 deflection, +3 Dex)

hp 52 (8d8+16)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, channel resistance +2

Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability, sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 80 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +10 (1d8 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks create spawn, energy drain (2 levels, DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21

Feats Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus

Skills Fly +11, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +17, Stealth +14, Survival +11

Languages Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su)

Any humanoids slain by a spectre become spectres themselves in 1d4 rounds. Spawn so created are less powerful than typical spectres, and suffer a –2 penalty on all d20 rolls and checks, receive –2 hp per HD, and only drain one level on a touch. Spawn are under the command of the spectre that created them and remain enslaved until its death, at which point they lose their spawn penalties and become full-fledged and free-willed spectres. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Resurrection Vulnerability (Su)

A *raise dead* or similar spell cast on a spectre destroys it (Will negates). Using the spell in this way does not require a material component.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)

Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.

Unnatural Aura (Su)

Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so unless a master succeeds at a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check. A panicked animal remains so as long as it is within 30 feet of the spectre.

At the bottom of each sarcophagus is one of the alignment tokens - LG, NE and CN. They look like jigsaw pieces, with odd angles and awkward curves cut into the sides. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana, local, nobility and royalty, religion, the planes) or Bardic Knowledge check reveals which token is which alignment. A trial-and-error process establishing who can pick what up will also reveal this.

15. The Grate and the Goo

If the party descends westwards from the northern path, it finds itself in a room with a large grating in the floor. A blue-burning light is on the floor in the north west corner, caught in the thick roots of a tree that has penetrated deep into the tomb.

The shining objects are not standard lights. They are two patches of phosphorescent blue slime.

Blue Slime CR 4

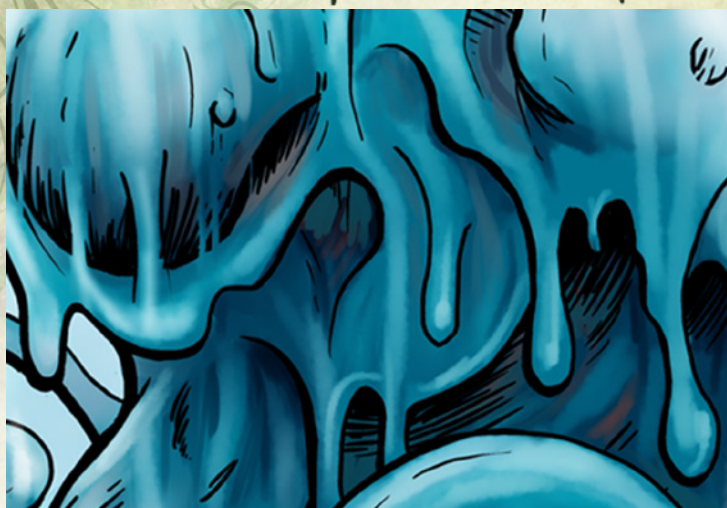
XP 1,200

This is a variation of normal slime that senses and feeds on thoughts of any creature with an Intelligence score, reproducing as it absorbs them. Like many slimes, it drops from walls and ceilings, or climbs from floors, when it detects thoughts and movement close by.

Blue slime feeds on thoughts, ideas, plans and other mental processes, drawing them from anyone around it. It normally comes in patches 5 feet in diameter, and the 15-foot radius around it always leads to a sense of confusion unless a DC 19 Will save is made. Intelligent creatures in contact with it take 1d6 points of Intelligence damage. Any spell that boosts Intelligence cast within 5 feet of blue slime causes it to instantly double in size. Spells that cause Intelligence damage, such as *feeblemind* or *bestow curse*, instantly destroy it.

Blue slime is often used as a protective barrier for unintelligent but valuable undead against marauding tomb robbers, but is also placed strategically in crypts to lower the Intelligence of the slier, mindful creatures such as ghouls and ghosts.





Within the remains of the blue slime is one of the alignment tokens - N. It looks like a jigsaw piece, with odd angles and awkward curves cut into the sides. A **Knowledge (arcana, local, nobility and royalty, religion, the planes)** or **Bardic Knowledge DC 15** check reveals its alignment. A trial-and-error process establishing who can pick it up will also reveal this.

Against the south eastern wall is a *small shrine to Rauha Yskin, a long-forgotten goddess of peace and solitude*. Offerings of indeterminate age, wrapped in dessicated silk, rest on it.

If the offerings are carefully studied, they do have a purpose. A **DC 20 Knowledge (arcana or religion)** or **DC 20 Spellcraft** check identify them as the components of a variation of *soul bind*. They appear to be made of black sapphire, and are shaped as if they are the index finger, thumb and some wrist bones from the right hand of a humanoid (which is what they are), and weigh about 4 ounces. They are from the skeleton of Pyha Ritari, a paladin who sacrificed himself to provide defence against undead. This is the form the goddess chose to turn that sacrifice into.

Ritari's Fractured Frame of Eternal Rest - "Luuranko" (Major Artifact)



Slot none; **Aura** overwhelming necromancy; **CL** 25th; **Weight** total skeleton 25 lbs

DESCRIPTION

When, after a lifetime of dedicated loyalty, Pyha Ritari offered his mind, body, and soul to his goddess Rauha Yskin, she accepted his generosity and drew him to her. His mind was transferred to the greatsword "Isokalpa", his soul into the suit of plate armor "Panssari", and his body, once stripped of flesh, turned into "Luuranko", the protective frame. This was then split apart and sent around the world to wherever protection against undead was most required.

Ritari's skeleton weighed in at 25 lbs, or 400 ounces. With about 200 bones of useful size and weight at her disposal, Rauha Yskin imbued the bony frame with a powerful version

of *soul bind*; the bones themselves, coated in black sapphire, are able to project the effect of the spell around them, up to a radius of 25 feet per ounce of weight of the bone (not its sapphire coating). Each ounce of weight is also able to affect up to 25 HD of undead. The bones work most effectively if they are properly connected, but of course, over time the skeleton has become more and more fractured, and now it is rare to find more than four or five bones linked together in any one place.

When positioned on a shrine to Rauha Yskin and the phrase, "May Luuranko hold them in place," spoken aloud, a pulse of necromantic energy can be felt moving away from the bones to their limit. This then holds undead up to the allowable total in place, preventing them from moving out of the range of the sphere and forcing them to remain in place for as long as the bones aren't moved. This effect is broken as soon as the bones are shifted, but can be reactivated by placing them and repeating the phrase.

On activation, any undead present that would exceed the allowable HD total are expelled from area of effect and may not move back into it. This may mean they have to leave items behind, and on occasions can be found lurking at the edge of the sphere, hoping for a chance to return to their previous resting place and reclaim their belongings.

The distribution of weight for a 25 lbs skeleton can be considered according to **Table 1-3: The Power of Body Components**, but this is **ROUGH** guide only. Details will change from species to species if it ever turns out that other Fractured Frames of Eternal Rest have been created.

DESTRUCTION

The only known way to destroy Ritari's Fractured Frame of Eternal Rest is to reconnect all the bones, then sink the entirety into the greatest of carnivorous crystal oozes until the black sapphire coating cracks and shatters. When the bones have been exposed, each one needs to be individually removed by a charnel colossus (e.g. for a human skeleton, it is generally accepted that there are 206 adult bones, so 206 charnel colossuses would be required). This will render the bones useless for construction of a Fractured Frame.

RAMIFICATIONS

Owners of these incredibly rare bones will find themselves pursued by many religions, cults, and necromantically-focused individuals. Because of the value of the Frame to hold undead in place, whether to protect them from harm or prevent them from harming others, a PC will be subjected to regular and increasingly frequent attempts of theft, offers of purchase, and assaults to forcibly take the bones. How tiresome this becomes is up to the PC, but the most straightforward way to hide the bones is to hunt out a shrine to Rauha Yskin and complete a binding ritual to secure undead in place. The tomb will then become difficult to trace (DC 40-50 for an appropriate check, depending on the environment), and the bones hidden for years.

Table 1-3: The Power of Body Components

Part	Skull	Ribs	Spine	Arm	Hand	Pelvis	Leg	Foot	Total
%	9	17	12	8 (x2)	2 (x2)	8	14 (x2)	3 (x2)	100%
Weight (oz)	36	68	48	32 (x2)	8 (x2)	32	56 (x2)	12 (x2)	400 oz
Distance (ft)	900	1700	1200	800 (x2)	200 (x2)	800	1400 (x2)	300 (x2)	

The open tomb is coated with thick ice that has been magically altered so it grants the cold subtype to any creature that exists for more than 24 consecutive hours within 20 feet of it. This effect disappears if the creature moves away from the ice for more than 24 consecutive hours.

16. Another Path to the Grate and the Goo

If the party uses the western path and goes northwards, it finds itself in the room with the drainage grate. Details are listed in area 15 above.

17. The Second Crypt

If the party uses the western path and heads southwards down the stairs, it finds itself in a crypt with three sarcophagi in it, two sealed and one open. The room is lit with a cold blue light that seems to softly hum, producing a soporific drone that is the result of an effect that is a cross between *gentle repose* and *halt undead*.

Entire room - *gentle repose* and *halt undead* trap CR 6 (see area 14 above)



COLD MUTATED OGRE SPIDER CR 7



XP 1,600

N Huge vermin (cold)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, -2 size)

hp 52 (7d8+21)

Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +3

Immune cold, mind-affecting effects Vulnerable fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee bite +8 (2d8+7 plus cold and poison)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks web (+5 ranged, DC 16, hp 7, subdual cold damage), cold bite (lethal and subdual cold damage)

STATISTICS

Str 21, Dex 15, Con 16, Int —, Wis 12, Cha 2

Base Atk +5; CMB +12; CMD 24 (36 vs. trip)

Skills Climb +29, Perception +5, Stealth -2; Racial Modifiers +16 Climb, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth

SQ compression

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cold Bite (Su)

Bite-injury; no save. A cold mutated ogre spider's bite replicates the effects of extreme cold (below -20° F) deals 1d6 points of lethal damage per bite (no save). In addition, a character must make a

Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage for a number of rounds equal to the spider's Con bonus.

Cold Web (Su)

A cold mutated ogre spider's web replicates the conditions of severe cold or exposure (below 0° F). A character must make a Fortitude save once every round (DC 15, +1 per previous check) for a number of rounds equal to the spider's Con bonus, taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage on each failed save. A character who has the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and might be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. Characters wearing a cold weather outfit need not make this check.

A character who takes any nonlethal damage from cold or exposure is beset by frostbite or hypothermia (treat her as fatigued). These penalties end when the character recovers the nonlethal damage she took from the cold and exposure.

Poison (Ex)

Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 18 (includes +2 racial bonus); *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str and 1d4 Dex; *cure* 1 save.

The two sealed sarcophagi are each set with freezing sphere traps.

Sarcophagus lid - freezing sphere trap CR 7 (see area 14 above)



Each sealed sarcophagus holds an enhanced imperial ghou that has adapted over the long period of its interment to gain the cold subtype AND a supernatural breath weapon that deals cold damage.

ENHANCED IMPERIAL GHOUL CR 5



XP 1,600

LE Medium undead (cold)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; **Immune** cold, undead traits; **Vulnerability** fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d6+1 plus ghou fever and paralysis), 2 claws +4 (1d4 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks paralysis (1d4 rounds, DC 15, elves are immune to this effect), breath weapon (15-ft. cone, DC 14 Reflex for half, 1d6 cold)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** +17

Feats Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +9, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Perception +10, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +11

Languages Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su)

This enhance imperial ghou'sbreath weapon (15-ft. cone, 1d6 cold damage, Reflex half) useable every 1d3 rounds. The save DC is 10 + 1/2 the imperial ghou's HD + the imperial ghou's Cha modifier.

Disease (Su)

Ghou Fever: *Bite*—injury; *save* Fort DC 15 (Cha-based); *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1 day; *effect* 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

A humanoid who dies of ghou fever rises as a ghou at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghou in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghou in all respects.



18. The Southern Shrine and its Heavy Heart

Against the southern wall is a *shrine to Aksy Puuhalata, a more recent druidic god of total dominion over meddling humanoids*, but who has been almost completely written out of history over the last 150 years by most cultures for obvious reasons.

A copper casket with wafer-thin sides sits on the shrine. The box contains a fresh, still-beating heart of indeterminate age and species. If the casket, and by default the heart, are picked up by a humanoid, the organ immediately flows through the copper sides, enters the hand and then arm of the creature holding it, and can be seen moving towards the chest area. Once it reaches the creature's current heart, this cursed item wraps itself around it and smothers the original organ. The new heart works perfectly with the exception that it acts like a *stone of weight*. A **DC 30 Fortitude** save resists this effect, forcing the heart back into the casket.

Puuhalata's Casket of the Heavy Heart



Aura strong abjuration; **CL** 20th
Slot none; **Weight** 2lbs (casket, 1lb; heart, 1lb)

DESCRIPTION

The box contains a fresh, still-beating heart of indeterminate age and species. If this casket is held for even 1 round, the *heavy heart* inside flows through the walls and enters the holder's hand. The organ eases through any leather or cloth, burrows into flesh, and reaches the victim's heart in 2 rounds; during this time it can easily be seen as it moves around the bones and muscles of the arm, shoulder, and chest. Once it reaches the creature's current heart, this cursed item wraps itself around it and envelops the original organ. The new heart works effectively, but affects the humanoid in a number of other ways, including:

reducing movement by 5 ft. per round, as the weight of a wasteful world plays on your mind

- a -2 morale modifier to initiative, as the futility of fighting hits home
- a -2 luck modifier to Disable Device, Perception (when searching for something), Perform, and Use Magic Device checks, as a realization that possessions aren't important comes into being
- the humanoid's alignment will become true neutral over a period of 1 year
- a +2 insight bonus to handle animal and knowledge (nature) checks, as the humanoid becomes aware of its insignificance when compared to the majesty of nature
- a +2 competence bonus to knowledge (geography) and survival as a sense of being one with the land grows.

A **DC 30 Fortitude** save allows the holder to resist this effect, forcing the heart back into the casket, but she takes 1 point of Constitution damage in the process. The heavy heart then returns to its original beat, and the holder has 1 round to

return the box to its original spot. The container can be made of any material, such as wood, ceramic, bone, ivory, or metal but the walls always have to wafer-thin, and its weight less than the heart it contains.

The *heavy heart* can only be expelled after the character is targeted by a *remove curse* or similar magic. A **DC 30 caster level** check to undo the curse is required. If the spell is successful, the heart is forced to unwrap itself and is expelled through the ribcage on the following round, causing 2 points of Constitution damage in the process. The *heavy heart* is rendered useless as a result of this ejection.

CREATION

Magic Items none. A small box has to be created specifically for the purpose of holding the heart. Then *bestow curse*, *dominate person*, and *gentle repose* are cast on it. A suitable phylactery of a lich that has been killed within the last year can also be used.

At the bottom of each sarcophagus is one of the alignment tokens - NG, CE and LN. They look like jigsaw pieces, with odd angles and awkward curves cut into the sides. A **DC 15 Knowledge (arcana, local, nobility and royalty, religion, the planes)** or **Bardic Knowledge** check reveals which token is which alignment. A trial-and-error process establishing who can pick what up will also reveal this.

19. The Eastern Excavation

If the party uses the eastern path, and crosses over the remains of the root-demolished wall, it finds the corridor is partially blocked by thick tree growth that has almost entirely engulfed the body of a human. There is a broken spade beneath the corpse (a *lesser shovel of shifting*).

Most of the debris is actually just dried soil clumps from the tree roots, although there was once a built-to-collapse wall trap here. There are now 3 natural traps that drop large clods of earth from the ceiling if the roots are disturbed.

Tree roots - falling clods of earth trap - CR 3 (x3)



XP 800

Type touch (tree roots); **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger manual; **Reset** automatic after 10 minutes

Effect falling clods of earth (all in a 10-ft.-square area); 4d6 damage (DC 20 Reflex save for half damage)

Additionally, the body is not all it seems - it has been set with a *phantasmal killer* trap when it is first touched, then its skeleton animates, literally jumping out of its skin. It has a space of about 5 feet between the two *sussurus lamps* in which to operate if the party hasn't deactivated them.

Human body - *phantasmal killer* trap CR 5

XP 1,600

Type magic; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 2

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (alarm); Reset manual

Effect spell effect (*phantasmal killer*, 7th-level wizard, DC 16 Will save for disbelief and DC 16 Fort save for partial effect)

HUMAN SKELETAL MAGE - CR5

XP 1,600

Human skeletal mage necromancer 3

NE Medium undead

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 38 (5 HD; 2d8+3d6+18)

Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +8

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20), claw –1 (1d4) or 2 claws +4 (1d4+1) or spectral hand +6 touch (by touch spell)

Ranged ray +4 ranged touch (by spell)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 13, 6/day, command undead only)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

6/day—grave touch (1 round)

Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

2nd—ghoul touch (DC 17), scorching ray, spectral hand

1st—chill touch (DC 16), mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement (DC 16)

0th (At Will)—detect magic, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue (DC 15)

Opposition Schools Enchantment, Illusion

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 15, Con --, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15

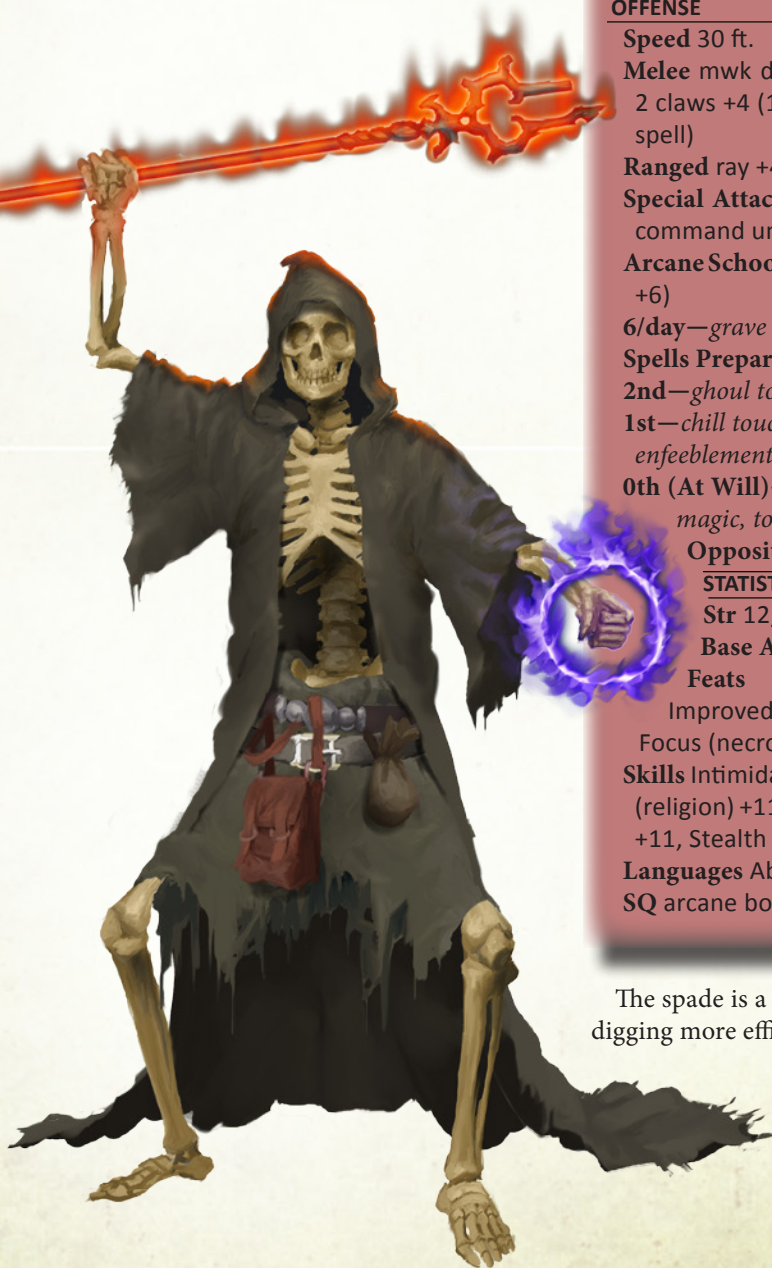
Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 15

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Improved InitiativeB, Scribe Scroll, Silent SpellB, Spell

Focus (necromancy), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +8, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Undercommon
SQ arcane bond (skull)



The spade is a magical, a standard shovel of shifting, an aid for digging more efficiently and effectively.

Shovel of Shifting



Lesser

Aura faint conjuration; CL 5th

Slot -; Price 16,200 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster III* (small earth elemental); Cost 8,100 gp.

Standard

Aura moderate conjuration; CL 9th

Slot -; Price 48,600 gp; Weight 41/4 lbs.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster V* (medium earth elemental); Cost 24,300 gp.

Greater

Aura moderate conjuration; CL 11th

Slot -; Price 71,280 gp; Weight 81/2 lbs.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster VI* (large earth elemental); Cost 35,640 gp.

DESCRIPTION

When studied closely, parts of these plain iron shovels have thin veins of types of dirt, stones, precious metals, and gems. Three times per day, any character using one of these shovels may move the following amount of stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal in one round:

- lesser shovel, 8 lbs
- standard shovel, 75 lbs
- greater shovel, 600 lbs

The pathway ends in an elaborately carved cap stone that tells the story of the digging, dressing and religious preparation of the tomb. Just a little way back from this capstone, and set in the northern wall of the corridor, a narrow gap can be found behind a screen of tendrils that slowly move despite there being no breeze. These are Rotting Roots, and there are two patches. The roots are carnivorous, wrapping a victim entirely in their strands prior to digesting it. Along with their own attacks, the Rotting Roots stand a chance of giving off natural spores, bacteria or worse. See area 10 above for details.

ROTTING ROOTS CR 4



XP 1,200

N Large plant

Init +0; Senses blindsight 30 ft; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (+4 natural, -1 size)

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2

Defensive Abilities camouflage; Immune plant traits

OFFENSE

Speed 0 ft.

Melee 5 fronds +5 (1d4+3 plus 1d4 Dex)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks enervating enzymes

TACTICS

Rotting roots attack any living creature that comes within 10 feet of it, slashing with the tips of the roots and bludgeoning with the thicker strands. Slain creatures are wrapped in the roots and devoured as the creature release enzymes to break down its food and absorbs the nutrients.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int --, Wis 13, Cha 9

Base Atk +3; CMB +7; CMD 17 (can't be tripped)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex)

Rotting roots look like normal tree roots when at rest; it takes a DC 20 Perception check to notice them before they attack. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use one of those skills instead of Perception to notice the plant. Dwarves can use stonecunning to notice the subterranean version.

Enervating Enzymes (Ex)

Rotting roots that take at least 1 point of damage from a fire effect release a haze of deadly enzymes that billows forth and quickly fills a 20-foot radius surrounding it. Creatures within the area must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution damage. One minute later, another Fortitude save (same DC) must be made to avoid another 2d6 points of Constitution damage. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

The haze remains for 1 round per HD of the rotting roots but a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the cloud in 1 round.

ECOLOGY

Environment usually under any forests

Organization solitary, pair, copse (3-10), wood (11-40), forest (40+)

Treasure none

Rotting roots resemble large patches of sickly tree roots and are most often found in areas where their natural makeup allows them to blend in with their surroundings, looking as if the effects of breaking through a ceiling has damaged them. An above-ground version of this creature exists and makes its lair in the gnarled roots and trunks of thick, isolated forests.

Hidden among the creature's body are many long, sinewy strands that it uses to trap its foes. Average rotting roots covers a 10-foot square area, although specimens as large as 60-foot square have been encountered by a few dungeon delvers. However, rotting roots usually stay at around 10-foot square and split into two creatures when they get any larger.

Rotting roots have one strand for each HD it possesses (thus, the typical 5 HD rotting roots have 5 strands while 10 HD rotting roots have 10 strands). These are split as equally as possible between slashing and bludgeoning strands, so average 5HD rotting roots will have either 3 slashing and 2 bludgeoning strands, or 2 slashing and 3 bludgeoning.

Beyond the rotting roots is a room, the details of which are in area 21 below. Immediately inside it is another *sussurus lamp* that influences any undead activity in the surrounding area (see area 8 above).

20. The Switchback Stairway

If the party uses the southern path, after 15 feet it turns eastwards and descends a short flight of stairs to a landing. The stairs then turn 180 degrees back westwards to another landing, before turning 180 degrees again and carrying on eastwards to a smaller flat section. After this, there appears to be another short set of stairs that end in an iron door..

On each of the three main flights of stairs, every 5-foot square releases a **toxic stair spikes** trap, whilst every 10-foot square landing (after the first one at the very top of these sets of stairs) will drop the PC into a pit that is effectively spiked (the depth of the fall will vary, as the pit area is built at the same level as the catacombs below this tomb).

Stairways (12 squares in total) - toxic stair spikes trap CR 2



XP 600

Type mechanical; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 15

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic reload after 20 rounds

Effect caltrop spikes (Atk +8 melee, 1 point of damage [as caltrops] plus poison); poison (Huge scorpion venom, DC 20 Fort; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d4 Str damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.)

A successful DC 15 **Disable Device** check leaves the spikes sticking out of the stairs, making them difficult to walk on. It takes a DC 25 check to keep the spikes within the stairs.

If a PC decides to jump down the stairs onto a landing, the damage from any drop into the pit increases by 1d6 and the Reflex save increases to DC 25.

Landings (10-foot square, 5 in total) - pit trap, splintered bones CR variable (see below)



First and second 10-foot square areas CR 4

XP 1,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 25-ft.-deep pit (4d4-1 falling damage); splintered bones (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 bones per target for 1d4+4 damage each); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

Third and fourth 10-foot square areas CR 3

XP 800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 17-ft.-deep pit (2d4+1 falling damage); splintered bones (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 bones per target for 1d4+3 damage each); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area).

Fifth 10-foot square area CR 2

XP 800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 10-ft.-deep pit (1d6 falling damage); splintered bones (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 bones per target for 1d4+2 damage each); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

Within the pit area, which is 30 feet by 30 feet square, the enormous quantity of bones that exist most of the time as a mass of splintered spikes will rise up and form themselves into an active skeleton in one round. When either the PC(s) or skeleton is defeated, the bones fall back into a heap and won't activate again until a new person enters the chamber.

HUGE PIT SKELETON - CR 7



XP 3,200

NE Huge undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +0

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 96 (16d8)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10

DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee 2 claws +22 (1d8+12)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 35, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 38

Feats Improved Initiative

The Iron Door is protected by a defensive trap and an intricate good lock. As the PCs get to the top of the final short flight of stairs, they set off the trap, although they may notice the bypass switch situated in the western wall facing down the stairs. Setting the trap off makes dealing with the trap and the lock extremely difficult.

Antilife Shell trap - CR 7

XP 3,200

Type magic; Bypass hidden switch (Perception DC 30); Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Duration 11 minutes; Reset automatic at end of duration

Effect spell effect (*antilife shell*); multiple targets (all living creatures)



The intricate good lock requires a DC 30 Disable Device check to open it. Once the party have dealt with both the trap and the lock, the iron door sinks into the floor and the final chamber is revealed. See **area 23** below for details.

Fifth view: The Concealed Chambers

21. The Waiting Chamber

If the party goes through the gap in the wall near the capstone, it finds itself in a lozenge-shaped chamber with a glowing torch attached to the eastern wall. See **area 8 above** for details of the *sussurus lamp*.



Against the western wall are piles of rubble. The ceiling has recently partially collapsed, while the floor has been severely damaged by an average xorn. This creature is still around, and will rise up if the PCs disturb the rubble. Any violent or explosive activity in this area will trigger another fall from the ceiling, which acts like a CR 5 falling block trap, completely filling that end of the chamber. The xorn takes no damage from the earth due to its earth glide ability, but must stop attacking for the round that it falls in order to protect itself. If the xorn is killed, the party finds that it had been sleeping just below the surface of the rubble digesting a meal.

XORN - CR 6

XP 2,400

N Medium outsider (earth, extraplanar)

Init +0; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+11 natural)

hp 66 (7d10+28)

Fort +8, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

DR 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, fire, flanking; **Resist** electricity 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; earth glide

Melee bite +10 (4d6+3), 3 claws +10 (1d4+3)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 10, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 20 (22 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Appraise +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Perception +14, Stealth +10, Survival +10; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception

Languages Common, Terran

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision (Ex)

A xorn sees in all directions at the same time, giving it a +4 racial bonus on Perception checks. A xorn cannot be flanked.

Earth Glide (Ex)

A xorn can glide through any sort of natural earth or stone as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves no sign of its passage nor hint at its presence to creatures that don't possess tremorsense. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a xorn moves the xorn back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Collapsing ceiling - CR 5

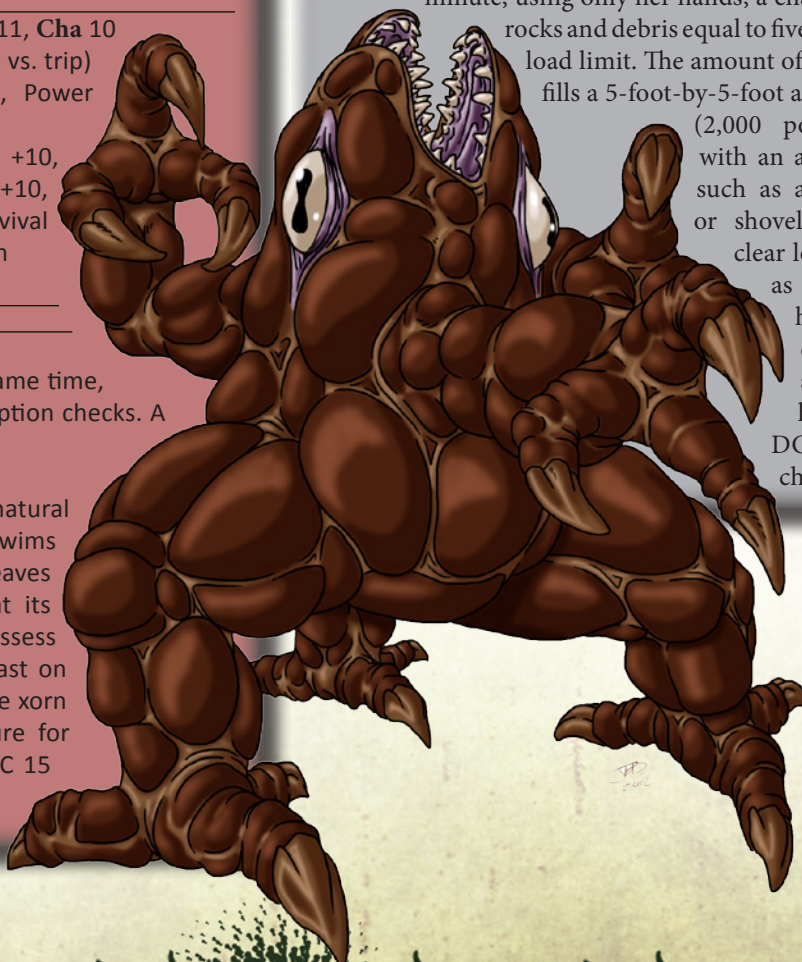
This buries anyone in the middle of the collapsing area, and then sliding debris damages anyone in the periphery of the collapse. It has a bury zone with a 10-foot radius and a 5-foot-wide slide zone extending beyond the bury zone.

A weakened ceiling can be spotted with a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) or DC 20 Craft (stonemasonry) check. Remember that Craft checks can be made untrained as Intelligence checks. A dwarf can make such a check if he simply passes within 10 feet of a weakened ceiling. A weakened ceiling might collapse when subjected to a major impact or concussion. A character can cause a cave-in by destroying half the pillars holding up the ceiling.

Characters in the bury zone of a cave-in take 5d6 points of damage, or half that amount if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. They are subsequently buried. Characters in the slide zone take 2d6 points of damage, or no damage at all if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. Characters in the slide zone who fail their saves are buried.

Characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute while buried. If such a character falls unconscious, he must make a DC 15 Constitution check each minute. If it fails, he takes 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute until freed or dead.

Characters who aren't buried can dig out their friends. In 1 minute, using only her hands, a character can clear rocks and debris equal to five times her heavy load limit. The amount of loose stone that fills a 5-foot-by-5-foot area weighs 1 ton (2,000 pounds). Armed with an appropriate tool, such as a pick, crowbar, or shovel, a digger can clear loose stone twice as quickly as by hand. A buried character can attempt to free himself with a DC 25 Strength check.



22. The Enemy Apparent

Opposite the entrance gap is another breach in the wall that leads to a blue-lit room. There is a soft drone similar to that found in other parts of the tomb. This drone is the result of an effect that is a cross between *gentle repose* and *halt undead*.

Entire room - gentle repose and halt undead trap CR 6 (see area 14 above)



The room is longest along the northern and southern walls. At either end is a 10 feet by 5 feet stone coffin with a strange, alien carving on it, one that has a skull, torso, wings, and exaggerated spine, but only spindly arms and no legs. Within each stone coffin is an **incorporeal undead that is unrecognizable yet at the same time all too familiar from the PCs' nightmares**. Each one is an apparition. They rest in place as if they are corporeal creatures, yet are grey shadow and mist held here by the *sussurus lamp*. Even if each is left in its sarcophagus, the required alignment token is underneath it, and even simply passing an arm through the creature subjects a PC to the *suggestion* effect.



APPARITION - CR 7



XP 3,200

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense; **Perception** +14

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 deflection)

hp 52 (7d8+21)

Fort +5; **Ref** +4; **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, channel resistance +2;

Immune undead traits

Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability, sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Special Attacks create spawn, spectral strangulation

TACTICS

During Combat An apparition has no physical attacks and attacks by fear alone. By implanting a *suggestion* in a victim's mind, it attempts to actually scare the life out of its opponent. Once the apparition selects a target, it uses its spectral strangulation ability. If overpowered or if it fails in its attempt to slay a living creature, the apparition flees back to the Ethereal Plane.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Fly +10, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +14, Stealth +12

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su)

A humanoid slain by an apparition becomes an apparition itself in 1d4 rounds. Spawn so created are less powerful than typical apparitions, and suffer a –2 penalty on all d20 rolls and checks. They also receive –2 hp per HD, and a –2 penalty to the Will save DC of their spectral strangulation ability. Spawn are under the command of the apparition that created them and remain enslaved until its death, at which point they lose their spawn penalties and become full-fledged and free-willed apparitions. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Resurrection Vulnerability (Su)

A *raise dead* or similar spell cast on an apparition destroys it (Will negates). Using the spell in this way does not require a material component.

Spectral Strangulation (Su)

An apparition attacks an opponent by implanting a *suggestion* in the victim's mind, convincing it that it is being strangled by the apparition's bony claws. The apparition must be on the same plane as the target creature to use this ability. The target of the spectral strangulation feels the bony, claw-like fingers of the apparition at its throat—even through armor. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Will save to disbelieve the *suggestion*. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same apparition's *suggestion* for one day.

On a failed save, the victim must immediately succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or die from fright due to heart failure. If the Fortitude save succeeds, the victim acts as if affected by a fear spell for 1d4 rounds. A creature protected by *magic circle against evil* or *protection from evil* cannot be affected by an apparition's spectral strangulation. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)

Apparitions on the Material Plane are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. An apparition caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.

At the bottom of each sarcophagus is one of the alignment tokens - LE on the left and CN on the right. They look like jigsaw pieces, with odd angles and awkward curves cut into the sides. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana, local, nobility and royalty, religion, the planes) or Bardic Knowledge check reveals which token is which alignment. A trial-and-error process establishing who can pick what up will also reveal this.

Against the northern wall is a sphere of unknown origin and previously unseen power, an item that crackles with unbridled energy and bathes the room in its glow. This is a *brumal* key with an additional ability to cast *plane shift* to a specific "key in" plane a number of times per day equal to your Charisma bonus. However, it is designed to keep temperatures at or around "cold" rather than moderate, in order to maintain the optimum environment for the apparitions. It originated on their home world, the Shadow Plane, and is, in effect, their transport. They can use this orb to get to the plane without the inaccuracy factor usually associated with *plane shift*. As a balancing effect, traveling to any other plane always results in finding yourself the maximum distance from your intended destination in the least convenient situation possible.

Shadow Plane Brumal Key

Aura strong transmutation; CL 20th Slot none;

Weight 0.1 lbs.



DESCRIPTION

The Brumal Key consists of three orbs of shadow, one inside the other, each getting darker as you look into it and producing an antumbra, penumbra and umbra effect. The key was created to provide a bridge between the material and shadow planes, but as a side effect it also protects the area around it from the ravages of light, especially sunlight. In order to control and move the key, you need to be incorporeal or have the *ghost touch* ability.

Within a 60-foot radius of the Brumal Key, otherwise bright light (daylight and light) becomes darkness, while very bright and searing light (sunlight and brighter than daylight) becomes shadow. A distinct shimmering of the air demarcates the edge of this effect. The key must remain stationary (unattended) to produce this effect; it takes 24 hours for the artifact to attune itself to its locale. The key not only influences natural light, it affects magically created effects or extraplanar environments.

DESTRUCTION

The power of the Brumal Key is intrinsically tied to the Shadow Plane, where it was created. It can only be destroyed by returning it to that plane and then using a sphere of annihilation on it.

23. No Fire Without Smoke

Once the iron door is open, the path along the zig-zagging stairways opens up into a sizeable chamber containing another stone coffin at its eastern end. The stairway ends on a landing over a roaring fire pit; there is a bridge leading from this landing to the sarcophagus across the room, but it is fragile-looking, pitted with holes, and would need care to cross.

The fire is an illusion, the result of a permanent *shades* spell that appears to be *incendiary cloud*. Anyone not ON the bridge - e.g. flying, climbing walls, or any other method of traveling through the chamber that avoids standing on the bridge - feels as if they are taking damage from the shades spell unless they make a DC 22 Will save. In fact, despite the "obvious" heat from the flames, the ambient temperature on the bridge is pleasant.

However, while the *shades* spell is active, no section of the bridge appears to be wider than 10 inches, despite looking like it is 10 feet wide overall when first approached. It also feels as if it is moving slightly each time a wave of heat comes from the roaring fire beneath it. This means a DC 12 Acrobatics check is required to cross it. Failure on this check means that that character feels the bridge swaying more than before and is unable to move for that round.

The sarcophagus is on a much more stable platform, similar in nature to the landing at the base of the stairs. It has a floating sword being grappled by writhing roots carved onto the lid. See **area 24 below** for full details. As soon as someone touches this platform, the *shades* is dispelled and the real defense revealed.

Similarly, anyone who successfully disbelieves the *shades* spell instantly becomes affected by the real defense, as well as seeing the bridge as intact and 10 feet wide. See **area 24 below** for details.

Sixth view: The Final Event

24. At the Cold, Cruel Heart of the Tomb

“Elaavilu”, an *unique unholy heartseeker frost brand scimitar*, is stored in the coffin. This weapon holds the soul of a druid follower of **Aksy Puuhalata** (see **area 18** above for details) whose body is held in stasis on the god’s demi-plane. The druid was sent

to perform one task, to cast a *maximized control weather* spell specifically attuned to release the effects of winter. However, the druid’s plans were halted and the scimitar buried in the Sussurus Tomb. The players are now what stands between the spirit achieving its plans and the safety of Koto.

Lurking within the sarcophagus and the platform is a former partner of the druid, an incorporeal undead treant. When living, this creature wielded the “Elaavilu” and protected the spirit. Now it is undead, it can only perform the second of these tasks, which it does to the best of its abilities

When someone touches the platform with the sarcophagus on, or successfully disbelieves the *shades* spell, they are instantly affected by the real defense within this area. The fire changes to ice and the frozen block beneath the bridge begins to rise. It starts 30 feet below it, and moves upwards at 4 feet per round. The ceiling of this final chamber is 10 feet high, meaning the ice block will reach it in 10 rounds, where it stays in place for 5 more rounds dealing crushing and cold damage. The ice block is a mechanical trap that can be stopped by locating the trigger inside the sarcophagus (DC 25 **Perception** to find).



Rising Floor trap - CR 9

XP 6,400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 15 rounds (10 rounds moving, 5 rounds causing damage); **Reset** automatic as the block returns to its rest position

Effect crushing and cold damage (4d6 crushing damage and 1d6 cold damage per round, DC 20 Reflex save for half crushing damage, DC 18 Fortitude save for half cold damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. by 30-ft. chamber)

After 3 rounds, the block passes over a trap trigger and sets off an ice box trap that coats every wall, the ceiling, the bridge, and the sarcophagus. The ice on the bridge increases the Acrobatics check to cross it becomes DC 10 as it is now uneven and icy. The trigger is 18 feet directly under the bridge on the western wall. This means it is covered by the ice block as it continues to rise. When the ice block retreats, it flips the trigger again and resets the trap.

Ice Box trap - CR 10

XP 9,600

Source: Pathfinder Adventure Path #34.

This trap forms a 1-foot-thick *wall of ice* along every wall (blocking doorways) and reduces the temperature in the room to -30° F for 12 minutes. Once the trap runs its course, both doors unlock, but the walls of ice blocks remain for 12 minutes.

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 7 rounds; **Reset** automatic as the block retreats

Effect spell effect (*wall of ice* covers every wall of entire room; CL 12th); extreme cold (1d6 cold damage/minute; creatures in contact with exposed metal take an additional 1d6 points of cold damage per round); multiple targets

When the ice block reaches the bridge in another 4 and a half rounds, it triggers two *frost fang* traps, one at each end of the bridge where it meets the entry platform and sarcophagus platform. The ice block lifts the bridge clear of the platforms, and this action is the trigger.

Frost Fangs trap - CR 7 (x 2)

XP 3,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 3 rounds; **Reset** automatic as the block retreats

Effect jets of freezing water (3d6 cold damage, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 40-ft.-square chamber)

If the mechanism hasn't been stopped, the block then continues to rise to the ceiling in another two and a half rounds, causing damage as detailed above.

If the party reaches the coffin with the engraved entangled sword and opens the lid, whether to stop the rising ice block OR just see what is in there, the ghostly treant within it instantly attacks. Because it is incorporeal, it is able to fit within the area of the platform despite being huge.

GHOSTLY TREANT - CR 10

XP 4,800

NE Huge undead (incorporeal)

Init -1; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (-1 Dex, +3 deflection, -2 size)

hp 90 (12d8+36)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities Channel resistance +4, darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal; Immune undead traits; DR10/slashing

OFFENSE

Speed Fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee Corrupting touch +7 (12d6, DC 19 Fortitude for half)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks Corrupting gaze (DC 19 Fortitude), Malevolence (DC 19 Will), Telekinesis

STATISTICS

Str -, **Dex** 8, **Con** -, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 20

Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (corrupting touch), Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes x 2, Weapon Focus (corrupting touch)

Skills Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +20, Sense Motive +9, Stealth -1 (+15 in forests); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth (+24 Stealth in forests)

Languages Common, Sylvan, Treant

SQ animate trees, double damage against objects, incorporeal, treespeech

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Animate Trees (Sp)

A treant can animate any trees within 180 feet at will, controlling up to two trees at a time. It takes 1 full round for a tree to uproot itself, after which it moves at a speed of 10 feet and fights as a treant (although it has only one slam attack and lacks the treant's animation and rock-throwing abilities), gaining the treant's vulnerability to fire. If the treant that animated it terminates the animation, moves out of range, or is incapacitated, the tree immediately takes root wherever it is and returns to its normal state.

Corrupting Gaze (Su)

The ghost is disfigured through age or violence, and has a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet that causes 2d10 damage and 1d4 Charisma damage (Fortitude save negates Charisma damage but not physical damage).

Double Damage Against Objects (Ex)

A treant or animated tree that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

Incorporeal (Ex)

An incorporeal creature has no physical body. An incorporeal creature is immune to critical hits and precision-based damage (such as sneak attack damage) unless the attacks are made using a weapon with the *ghost touch* special weapon quality. In addition, creatures with the incorporeal subtype gain the incorporeal special quality.

Rejuvenation (Su)

In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: the "destroyed" spirit restores itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. The only way to permanently destroy a ghost is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research, and should be created specifically for each different ghost by the GM.

Malevolence (Su)

The ghost's jealousy of the living is particularly potent. Once per round, the ghost can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 10th or the ghost's Hit Dice, whichever is higher), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the ghost must be adjacent to the target. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours.

Telekinesis (Su)

The ghost's death involved great physical trauma. The ghost can use *telekinesis* as a standard action once every 1d4 rounds (caster level 12th or equal to the ghost's HD, whichever is higher).

Treespeech (Ex)

A treant has the ability to converse with plants as if subject to a continual speak with plants spell, and most plants greet them with an attitude of friendly or helpful.

Anyone touching "Elaavilu" instantly triggers the *maximised control weather*. If no one touches it, this happens naturally in 6d4 rounds. The winter-like frigid cold it generates spreads 30 feet per round until its 3-mile range is reached in just under 53 minutes. This has the effect of allowing undead to roam freely in an environment that barely registers with them, whilst living creatures are severely hindered. This pulse is repeated every 48 hours if "Elaavilu" isn't dealt with.

"Elaavilu" - unique unholy heartseeker frost brand scimitar



Aura strong abjuration, evocation and necromancy; **CL** 20th; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Elaavilu will only work to full effect when in the hands of a Neutral Evil druid who follows **Aksy Puuhalata**. However, the *maximised control weather* will always be triggered by the spirit of the druid no matter who holds the scimitar. Destroying *Elaavilu* will also send the spirit back to **Aksy Puuhalata's** demi-plane.

This blade of finely worked, strengthened platinum sheds light as a torch when the temperature drops below 0° F. At such times it cannot be concealed when drawn, nor can its light be shut off. Its wielder is protected from fire; the sword absorbs the first 10 points of fire damage each round that the wielder would otherwise take.

Elaavilu, as a *frost* weapon, extinguishes all non-magical fires in a 20-foot radius. As a standard action, it can also dispel lasting fire spells, but not instantaneous effects. You must succeed at a dispel check (1d20 +20) against each spell to dispel it. The DC to dispel such spells is 11 + the caster level of the fire spell.

As a blade that exists to protect and champion undead, as well as being a chosen weapon of a god that despises living humanoids, it is no surprise that *Elaavilu* is a *heartseeker* weapon. It is drawn unerringly toward beating hearts, and ignores the miss chance for concealment against most living targets, though the attack must still target the proper square. This special ability does not apply against aberrations, oozes, plants, outsiders with the elemental subtype, or any creature specifically noted to lack a heart.

As an *unholy* weapon, *Elaavilu* is imbued with unholy power. This power makes the weapon evil-aligned and thus bypasses the corresponding damage reduction. It deals an extra 2d6 points of damage against all creatures of good alignment. It bestows one permanent negative level on any good creature attempting to wield it. The negative level remains as long as the weapon is in hand and disappears when the weapon is no longer wielded. This negative level cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the weapon is wielded.

DESTRUCTION

Of course, the sword can always be destroyed, but how that is achieved is up to the GM. Perhaps the catacombs below the tomb will provide the solution. If any attempts are made to break the sword, the ghostly treant instantly re-appears and attacks the relevant PC until they fall unconscious and are dying, at which point it retreats back into the sword and recovers.

Back to the Secret Puzzle Door

25. Concealed Equipment Cupboard

When the eight blocks have been gathered from the final sarcophagus, the party finds it can now open the secret door behind the entrance stairs in **area 13 above**. Each block is an isosceles triangle, with two sides roughly 4 inches long and one just about 3 inches. When the acute angles are placed together, the pieces form an octagon and fit perfectly into the central hole.

Each block has a symbol and a letter on it. The symbols represent the elements - Earth, Air, Fire, Water- and "linking elements" - Dust, Electricity, Steam, Ooze - while the letter is the first one of each symbol - E, A, F, W, D, E, S, O.



At first, the eight blocks need to be placed in their correct elemental position in the door. When this is done, a message appears inscribed around the elemental symbols. It reads:

Death comes for all; Undeath for a few. Most of us rest in peace. Why must this be so?

The answer to this question is, "So we fade", made from the initial letters of the elements. When the blocks are removed from their elemental position and fitted into the hole so they spell these three words, the secret door unlocks and swings silently open. The PCs are washed over by chill air, thickly aromatic with preserving herbs and spices. The space that is revealed beyond the door isn't very big, as it fits underneath the stone steps on the surface, and the angled ceiling soon reaches the floor. Within the space is rack holding 6 silver, multi-pointed star-shaped brooches, each one glowing with a soft blue-gray light. They are *brooches of concealment from corpses*

Brooch of Concealment from Corpses



Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 1st

Slot neck; **Price** 1,500 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This appears to be a piece of silver jewelry that might be used to fasten an outer garment.

In addition to this standard task, it allows the wearer to *hide from undead* in a similar manner to the spell. When triggered, it grants the ability to hide for 10 minutes from each undead creature it conceals the wearer from. If the brooch contains enough protective levels, the same undead can be affected more than once. A brooch can hide the wearer from a total of up to 101 levels/HD of undead of any type before it crumbles to a material identical to ashes from a grave and becomes useless.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *hide from undead*; **Cost** 750 gp

The players may well place the blocks into the octagon in a number of ways. However, only "So we fade" opens the door, while a limited number of other combinations have any other effect.

Table 1-4: Possible Puzzle Options

Phrase	Effect	Phrase	Effect
Foes Awed	The PCs each gain a +20 luck bonus to their next initiative roll	Oaf Weeds	The PC that enters this finds herself subject to a wall of thorns spell
Foe Sawed	The next blow in combat each PC takes incurs an additional 1d6 cutting damage	Oafs Weed	The PC that enters this subjects the whole party to a wall of thorns spell
Sawed Foe	The next blow in combat each PC delivers deals an additional 1d6 cutting damage	Oaf Sewed	The next Dex-based action each PC takes incurs a -20 luck penalty; fingers are sewn together for that round
Foe Wades	The PC that enters this finds herself subject to a transmute rock to mud spell	Sewed Oaf	The next Dex-based action each of 5 foes take incurs a -20 luck penalty; fingers are sewn together for that round
Foes Wade	The PC that enters this subjects the whole party to a transmute rock to mud spell	Woes Fade	Each PC receives a +10 circumstance bonus to the next morale check they make

This Way Madness Lies

Once the *black tentacles* described in **area 12** have been dealt with, some steep, cracked steps take the party down to a dark, dank pathway that continues to descend as a gentle slope. The stairs are trapped with an insanity mist vapor trap. The corridor itself is home to an undead giant wasp swarm.

Stairs - Insanity mist trap CR 8



XP 4,800

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** repair

Effect poison gas (Insanity mist); never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room)

ZOMBIE GIANT WASPS CR 1 (x 12 = EL 8)



XP 400

Giant wasp zombie

NE Large undead

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12; (+0 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

hp 33 (6d8+6)

Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5

DR 5/slashing Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (clumsy)

Melee slam +4 (1d8+2), sting +9 (1d8+5 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +4; CMB +10; CMD 20

Skills Fly -10, Perception +8; Racial Modifiers +8 Perception

Feats ToughnessB

Special Qualities staggered

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex)

Sting—injury; save Fort DC 18; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Dexterity damage; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based, and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Staggered (Ex)

Zombies have poor reflexes and can only perform a single move action or standard action each round (it has the staggered condition.) A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round as a charge action.



The earthen walls seem to absorb light as if it is food; this may be the case from the activity of the roots that reach into this path, roots that are blackened, withered, and yet still slowly move against one another to produce a crackling, rasping sound. The corridor ends abruptly, with the neatly finished off dark earth a seemingly impenetrable barrier, but if digging equipment was available, who knows what might be found further on. As on every level of the Sussurus Tomb, if the PCs disturb the roots, they may release mould, bacteria, or worse (see **area 10** for details).

Once the PCs begin to investigate the blank end to the corridor, they run the risk of setting off the horrid wilting trap that has been placed on it. One through this barrier, they enter the catacombs, a place for another adventure!

Corridor's End - horrid wilting trap CR 9



XP 9,600

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset automatic (10 minutes)

Effect spell effect (*horrid wilting*; 15d6 moisture evaporation, DC 22 Fortitude for half damage); multiple targets (living creatures, no two of which can be more than 60 ft. apart)

Here ends the journey through the Sussurus Tomb, at least for now...

Additional Rewards

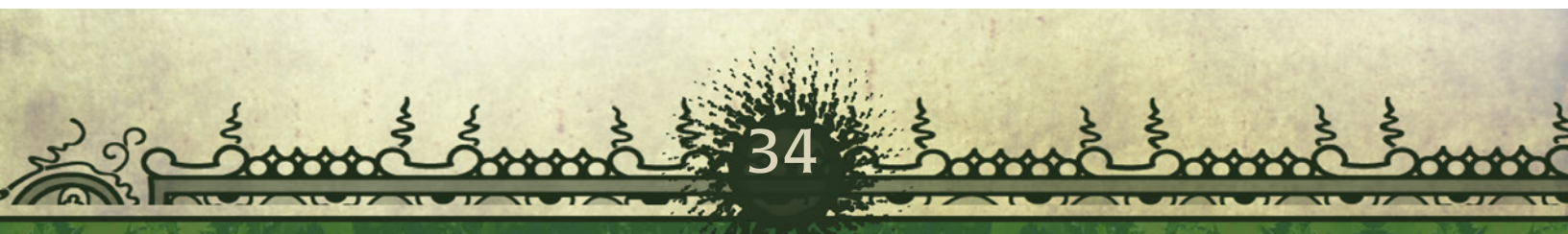
When the party deals with the puzzles in areas 5 and 25, as well as working out the connection between the *black tentacles* and the alignment tokens, and using them to make progress, reward each PC with 100 xp. In addition, feel free to add another 50 xp for each innovative use of skills and their accompanying rolls, creative role-playing, and dogged determination as a player.

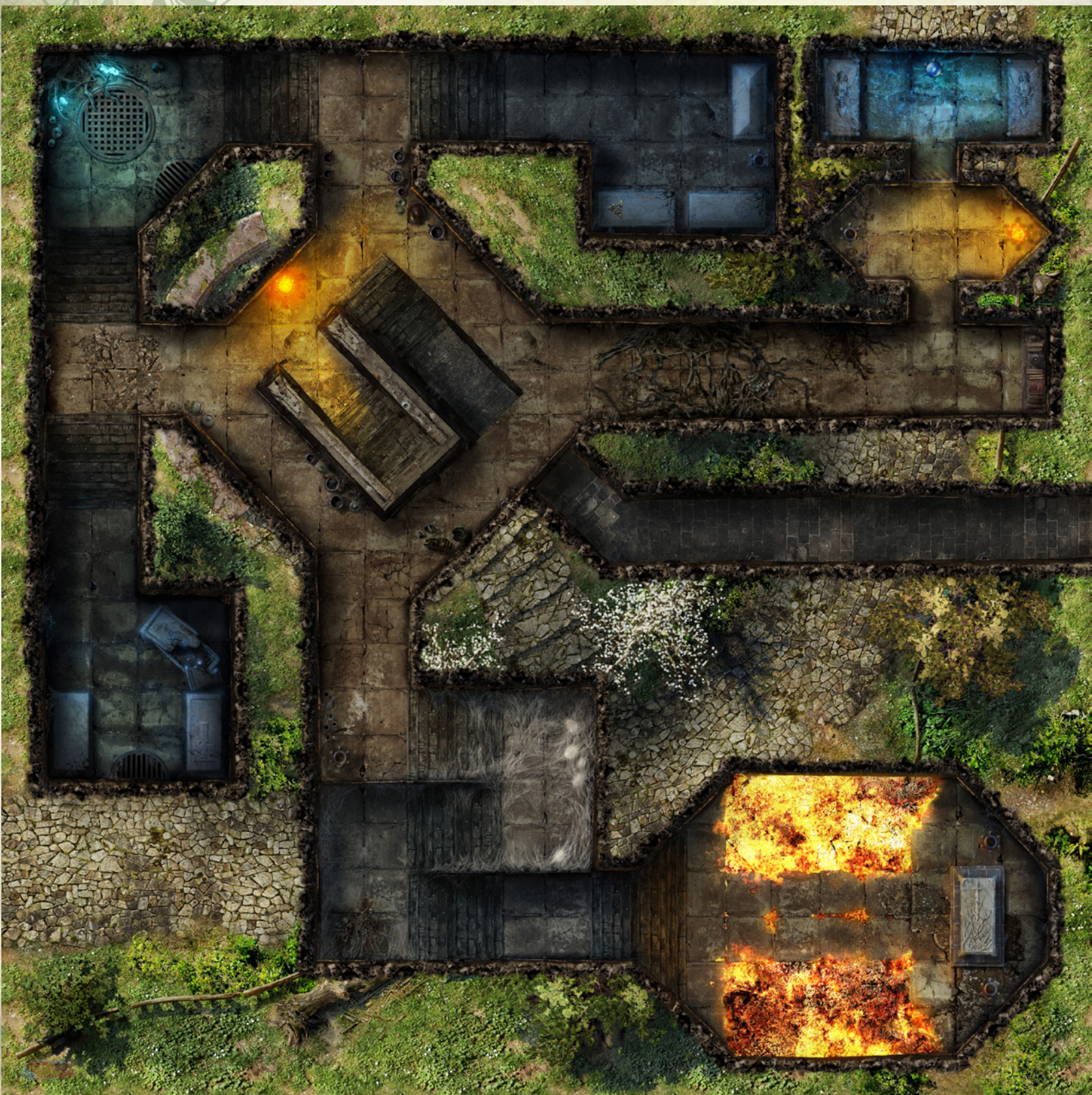
This ends the party's initial foray into the crypts beneath the mysterious mound. Whether the PCs decide to venture further into the crypts or return to the surface with the items and information that they have discovered is up to them, and are dealt with in other adventures. For now, they have unlocked a tomb that is the gateway to events beyond their imagination and control. What does the future hold for them, now they have braved the Sussurus Tomb?

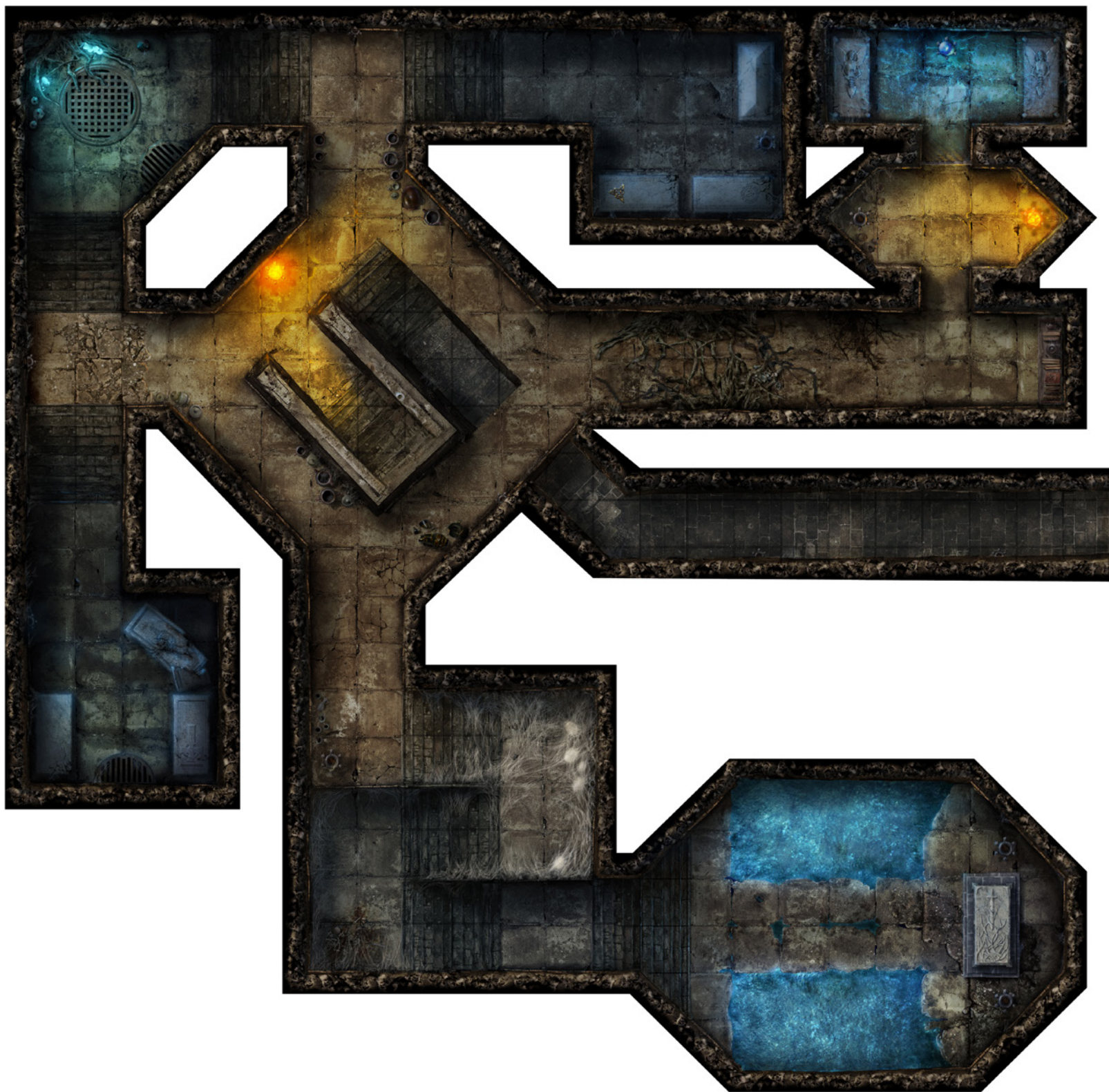
If you want to delve deeper below the Sussurus Tomb, you will need to visit Lord Zsezse Works and see where the path into the bowels of the mountain takes you. Or maybe you will delve deeper still...















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A Pathfinder compatible adventure designed for four to six PCs of levels 5-7

In a silent section of the forest, in the center of a circle of massive runestones, lies the Sussurus Tomb. As night falls, flickering light streams upwards from a staircase that is carved into the surrounding stone. Every night that the moon passes into view overhead, the dissonance of whispering voices can be felt, but never fully heard. The tomb partially lies open but undisturbed, as those who answer the call of the sibilant sounds and descend the stairs rarely return. And those that do return endure the sleep of the damned for rest of their short, miserable lives...

Also included in “The Sussurus Tomb”:

- Interactive maps and illustrations by Antal Kéninger and Zoltán Bárány at Lord ZseZse Works
- The “Sussurus Lamp”, a new item for calming undead over a wide area
- New sinister druidic items, the “Casket of the heavy Heart” and “Ellavilu”, an artifact scimitar with its own agenda
- Guidance on possible debilitating gases and foul biological events within an ancient tomb
- Suggestions on how to use body parts as powerful magical relics
- Multiple puzzles to keep the PCs and players alike on their toes

