



From The Ashes

Adventure 3: What Lies Beyond Reason

Adventure Path

An adventure for 5th level characters

by Micah Watt

From the Ashes

Adventure 3 for the What Lies Beyond Reason Adventure Path

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Scaring Players in an Age of Apathy

This seed of this adventure began life (a long time ago) as a stand-alone 'haunted house' scenario. I was much younger, much newer to the game. I threw in the usual haunted house clichés and thought "Everybody's going to get a kick out of this!"

It never got played. While running other horror/thriller scenarios I quickly realized that players don't react to scary adventures the way they do scary movies. Why? Well, there's probably a lot of reasons, but I personally noted three of significance.

Firstly, no matter how evocative you think you've made your scenario, you need to bear in mind that it is a shared experience. Movies and books are a singular experience. Even if you see a scary movie with others, your experience of it is personal. Gaming is interactive and collective, and players draw from that. No matter how immersive your game is players look around the table and see the people they were making off colour jokes with 15 minutes ago. A key component in creating fear is making people feel alone and isolated. It's an environment that's hard - though not impossible - to replicate in a gaming group.

Secondly, creating fear requires a sense of loss or consequence. Books and movies draw you in by generating concern for the protagonists. They play on our compassion. Will they main characters make it? The issue with RPGs is that players are exposed to a veritable clown car of disposable NPCs, and in many cases PCs. While some PCs and NPCs become player favourites, RPGs allow an almost instantaneous 'replacement' of lost characters. A favoured character may be missed, but ultimately there's always a new character to be explored. It's hard to create a sense of consequence when the game system is designed (and rightly so) to be a continuing experience.

Thirdly, nothing is 'new' anymore. We all remember the thrill of our first few adventures. Goblins were strange and unsettling, and we stared wide eyed as the GM (or DM in those days) described the 8 foot hulking form of an Ogre that made us draw a deep breath and question how we would take on such a behemoth. These days I think we've become very complacent. With the sheer history of the RPGs, and the availability of material from books to movies to video games, there's definitely a strong 'been there, seen that' vibe from veteran gamers. Long gone are the heady days of wonder.

So what does this mean for scaring players? Is it still possible? Yes. We've become more sophisticated as players, so the scenarios for creating fear need to be more sophisticated. *From the Ashes* is designed to tap into this. Gone are the 'cheap thrills' scares that dotted the original adventure. Such things no longer have impact. Instead they are replaced with a complex unfolding history generated through supernatural means. The player characters are somewhat isolated, but this is emphasized by concurrently exploring Damien's isolation. Some of the challenges within are 'typical' horror fare (shadows, ghosts) but the main fear element is generated by the Spirit Mist, a monster that breaks the rules in ways that should genuinely make the players question how they would take on such a behemoth. Consequence is represented not only by immediate character peril, but an unfolding threat to the setting itself. By this stage of the campaign your players should be starting to question if this campaign is *meant* to end well or not (which, by the way, is entirely up to you as GM - more on that later). By the conclusion of next few adventures they will be genuinely convinced that it will not.

From the Ashes attempts to present something new that *feels* old, as a way of recapturing that excitement and thrill we once had. I had a lot of fun writing it, and even more fun putting a little bit of fear back into a very jaded gaming group. I hope it works as well for you.

Micah Watt

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Adventure Background

Early History

The Anthilas family is steeped in tragedy and misfortune. Once the rising star of the city's merchant class, to the point of establishing patents of nobility and breaking into the notoriously closed Aristocracy, Barrus Anthilas (Damien's father) seemed blessed. That was until he built the manor. Tavern talk and hallway gossip attribute this fall to a curse or even to a Faustian deal gone wrong, but the truth is far simpler, though just as sinister.

The land the manor is built on resides over a section of the machine infused with chaos and evil. This influence has slowly poisoned the lives of anyone in proximity, sowing discord and ill-luck. His merchant business beginning to fail, Barrus left his young wife (Hellena) and son (Damien) to sail overseas, taking a personal hand to correct it. Left to her own devices, the young, wealthy and bored lady fell in with a bad element, shallow nobles seeking only personal gratification. When Barrus died, Hellena spiralled downward into drugs and depression, and into the controlling influence of Ramius Vellenhall, a cruel and manipulative rake.

The family, the business, the servants, and most of all young Damien suffered under his spiteful attentions, and the once proud house fell further from prominence. Damien withdrew into himself and the darkness, becoming obsessed with the strange occurrences and mysterious feelings and visions he experienced. Deep below the manor he discovered the Keystone, and began his journey into the occult.

After many years of mismanagement and abuse, Ramius died unexpectedly in an accident, and the broken Hellena not long after. The care of the house fell to the young scion, Damien. But Damien's eyes had been opened to true evil, and the future threat the city might face. Mercantile pursuits and noble's politics seemed petty things by comparison, and he gave these over to a number of representatives and factors to manage. This ultimately proved the final straw for the embattled house, with the unscrupulous merchants embezzling what they could before fleeing, leaving the house penniless and deep in debt.

When the final confrontation with the debtors came, words turned to violence and a young girl, Alluria, was slain by accident. This triggered a psychotic break in Damien, who spontaneously manifested his latent sorcerous abilities and let forth a hellish conflagration that slew not only the debtors, but many of the servants and set the house itself ablaze (see the Courtyard, Area G2, for further explanation). Damien was arrested, and charged with dark sorcery and murder, though ultimately he was acquitted of the charges. The manor was abandoned and Damien relocated to the city proper to continue his work. Amid rumour and speculation the House of Anthilas virtually disappeared.

Ramius' Death, Damien's Crusade & the Loss of Alluria

Damien's hardships were manifold. Abandoned and abused as a child, the discovery of the Keystone, and the self-imposed burden to discover the truth of it, have all left their mark on his psyche. But there were three catalyzing moments that have brought Damien to the point of madness.

The first was the death of Ramius. Damien had been raised to believe in the ideal that men are on the whole good, if a little selfish, and that compassion and empathy were human traits everyone shared. Ramius disabused him of that ideal. After years of physical and emotional abuse, not just to him, but everyone around him, Damien realized that Ramius truly lacked empathy, and fed his own psychological shortcomings on the pain and domination of others. Powerless, Damien endured and avoided this as best he could, but in his late teens he discovered that Ramius had escalated from hurting people to killing people, collecting grizzly skin trophies from those he hunted like animals. Fearful for his own life and the lives of those he cared about, he followed Ramius on a hunt, and pushed the unsuspecting man from a cliff,

ending the threat. It was presumed Ramius died in an accident, and Damien said nothing. From this moment he learned one powerful lesson. Evil will not abate until opposed. It cannot be waited out or ignored, it must be stopped, and in stopping it if a small evil is committed (such as murder) but it is for the greater good, it is justified.

After Ramius' death Damien was free to pursue his research openly, and with the resources of the house. He discovered the threat the Keystone and the Machine pieces represented, and he tried to approach the City Council, and other powerful figures, to warn them and gain assistance. Of course, he was a boy, scion of a disgraced house, and spouting fanciful dire predictions with little to no proof. He was dismissed as mad, and the Echo used her position to secretly discredit him at every turn. Despite what he knew none of the council were willing to look past their own interests to give the threat credence. Frustrated at their unwillingness to give up their petty politics and narrow concerns for the greater good of the city, he gave up, resigning himself to going it alone. From this he learned that people cannot always be shown and accept what is in their best interests, even if it seems self-evident, and that sometimes people must be forced to see for themselves. Damien resolved to save the city in spite of itself.

Damien became isolated in his obsession. With no support from outside, his world became the manor and the people in it. The servants loved him dearly, having watched him grow, and free the house from the tyranny of Ramius (while no one saw Damien's actions that day, all suspected, and were grateful for them). They knew he obsessed and did their best to help him where they could. From one such friendship Alluria was born. She was Damien's illegitimate daughter to the gardener, Violet. For a time this lightened his burden, but Violet was as stubborn as he was, and they could not overcome the gulf of birth rank. Despite Damien's best attempts, Violet would not marry him or formalise their relationship for fear of further damaging the house. The identity of Alluria's father was kept to just the household. Not even Alluria was told, at the agreement of Damien and Violet. Damien buried himself once again in his work, but kept Alluria as close as he could. By her late childhood years they had developed a friendship of sorts, though she still thought of him as the 'Master' rather than a father.

The night of the fire, the PTC representatives came to evict the household by show of force. When Alluria was accidentally slain, Damien finally lost his tenuous grip on reality. A lifetime in the shadow of the Keystone and a decade delving into forbidden lore had pushed his sanity to breaking point, and the loss of a daughter he never had the chance to fully know stripped him back to animalistic drives in an instant. Drawing upon his suppressed sorcerous bloodline he lashed out destroying not only his enemies but everything else he held dear. Even though he eventually came to his senses, that event changed him forever. Already withdrawn from the wider population, the act of destroying the only place and people he ever cared about tore away the little empathy he had remaining to him. All he had left now was his crusade. He would save the city no matter the cost, sacrifice or opposition. He would save the city in spite of its resistance, because it was the right thing to do. And he would do it alone, because no one else could be trusted to stay the course or make the sacrifices necessary.

Current Events

The manor has become a place of dark activity. Damien has visited the manor only once after the night of the fire, to collect his most prized study materials. He is aware that the Spirt Mist arose in the wake of the fire, and that there are 'creatures' in the caves. He sees this as a useful deterrent to anyone that might come seeking the Keystone (Seekers particularly, or the shadowy figure of the Echo). He is content to leave them as they are. He is **not** aware of the revenant of Ramius, or the ghosts of Hellena and Alluria. If he were he would bend his efforts to set them all to rest (for different reasons). He is also not aware that the Echo has been to the Keystone chamber, or the alliance she has created with the creatures that reside there (see below).

The Echo is aware of all the undead, the Keystone and the Lonely One that inhabits the Keystone chamber (and its servants). She believes she can break the runes on the Keystone if required, but is not willing to expend the energy at

this time (or risk the ire of the Lonely One), but is content in the knowledge that it is here when she has need of it. Since encountering the Lonely One, and its natural symbiosis mechanism, she has discovered a way to rapidly increase her servants by addicting them to the Lonely One's drug. Prior to this she was forced to carefully screen and groom true believer servitors of those touched by madness. With the drug she has made a new class of slave, more useful than the insane and more tightly controlled than the believers, but less loyal. She has made a deal with the Lonely One, a supply of the drug for continued stewardship of the Keystone. She eventually plans to betray this deal, but only once everything else is in place, and she no longer needs her drugged minions.

Adventure Summary

Following up on a cryptic clue from the last adventure, or following the activities of the Seekers or the Watch, the PCs discover Damien's abandoned family manor, a place that has become a focal point for dark activity.

Traversing the grounds the PCs can unravel much of Damien's past, and gain insight to his motivations and his ultimate goal, however they must contend with spectres of his past and an unstoppable, insatiable monster that hungers for the souls of the living.

Deep under the building the PCs discover a strange cult that worships an enigmatic aberration, and a connection to the Echo of Faith. Within this cavern complex resides another of the fell Machine pieces plaguing the city with chaos and madness.

Advancement Track

From the Ashes is an adventure for **5th level** characters. The module uses the Medium advancement track. Actual XP gained might vary based on the number of encounters the GM uses and/or players choose to investigate or complete, but on average the player characters should receive enough experience to advance into **6th level** during, or by the end, of the adventure.

If the GM has chosen **not** to run a campaign side-trek or other adventure in the interim, the adventure can be run with 4th level characters with only a little effort to adjust (or not). The challenges represented in this adventure are for 5th level characters, at a moderate to hard difficulty. It would be an extremely difficult adventure for 4th level characters, bordering on impossible toward the cavern encounter. If the players are **very** experienced, with highly optimized characters, this may be a way to challenge them.

If the adventure is being run for a **4th level** party, and the GM would like to adjust the difficulty, make the following adjustments;

- All skill challenges should have their DCs lowered by 1
- All creatures and adversaries should have their Hit Points reduced from average to 1/3
- The treasure found in the adventure should be left as is. It might represent a greater than expected Wealth By Level total, but the PCs would have really *earned* it.

Of course, the adventure can be adjusted upward as well. If the adventure is being run for a **6th level** party simply make the following adjustments;

- All skill challenges should have their DCs raised by 1

- All creatures and adversaries should have their Hit Points raised from average to maximum
- The treasure should remain the same, but the two well hidden items now become much easier to obtain. The *stone horse* in the stables (Area M14) is much closer to the surface and can be found with a Perception DC 20 in a quick search, or a Perception DC 15 after only 1 hour of digging. The *coin of good luck* in the well (Area G3) now reacts normally to magical detection, making it visible from the well by *detect magic* or similar spells or abilities. Finally, the GM is encouraged to add a gp value to the items in the trophy room (Area M33) of around 200-300gp each.

A Note on Running the Adventure

Being such an open adventure with numerous elements, this section is more extensive than previous modules, offering advice on managing the various in-game and out-of-game aspects;

Running a Sandbox

The adventure is set up as a true sandbox, limited only by the boundaries of the location itself. While the PCs should arrive with a purpose or goal in mind, they can choose any method they desire to attempt to achieve it.

There are effectively two major elements to the adventure that the PCs can explore;

Firstly, Damien's history is bound into this place. With a detailed exploration of the manor (and to a smaller extent the caves) the party can learn a significant amount about him through the Haunts, and from items and clues left behind. This gives the PCs greater insight into Damien himself. Parties that clear the entire location are likely to have the best insight into Damien's character, motivation and the threats he has alluded to in the previous adventure.

The second major element is more current - the Keystone, the Lonely One and the use of the secretions from the creature as a means of control by the Echo. The PCs have an opportunity here to discover the Keystone itself, some information about wards that help dampen or protect from its effects (and an item that does exactly that) and possibly deal a setback to the Echo by slaying its source of control over many of its followers.

The measure of success of the adventure is fairly open ended. Ultimately, if the PCs miss one or more of these opportunities it will make elements of the campaign more difficult as they progress, but it will not preclude them from advancing.

Note that while this adventure helps to bring the overall picture into focus, there is not a single element presented here that is required to be successfully completed to advance to the next adventure. The players - and by extension, the characters - have complete autonomy on how and when to 'finish' this adventure. It is suspected most will try to complete everything - its the nature of players to be thorough, whether for story, experience or treasure reasons - but it is not required.

Some players love the sense of self determination with sandbox style adventures. They will thrive here. However, some players like direction and a hard conclusion point, where the story wraps up and ends logically. These players may find the open-ended feel of the module frustrating.

As GM you may need to gently nudge the narrative to keep the players 'on point' at times, remind them why they are here and deal with any potential 'anticlimactic' feelings that arise from completing the 'boss fight' early, and then searching out a series of rooms without a greater purpose.

The adventure has a few built in tricks for this. The Spirit Mist adds a random element to spice things up if the fires begin to burn low. Several NPCs and locations are triggered or altered by actions and the haunts are a way of driving exploration.

The Spirit Mist

On the night of the fire, several servants died in the conflagration, and Damien fled the manor. The remaining servants gathered up the remains of Alluria and buried her, then aimlessly went about their duties awaiting Damien's return. However, the manner of death caused one servant's disquiet spirit to rise as a ravenous incorporeal undead. It began stalking the remaining staff, picking them off one by one, and incorporating their spirits into its own, growing in size. Some staff fled, but the most loyal stayed behind to try to salvage the situation. Quickly they were all consumed.

The Spirit Mist goes into protracted periods of dormancy, only to emerge periodically to mindlessly pursue and slay anything or anyone encroaching on the manor. The presence of the watch and seekers have agitated it at the beginning of this adventure, and it is currently silently roaming the grounds, prowling for intruders to devour.

The Spirit Mist has a deadly defence. Though it can be driven away by holy energy, it cannot be harmed by anything other than the possessions of its component spirits. A magical sword is useless against it, but a mere table knife a deadly weapon if it was owned in life by one of the spirits that makes up the gestalt creature.

Initially the servants of the household that died in the fire formed the Mist. Their devotion to Damien, the manor and their former lives caused this. Any creature the Mist slays becomes part of it. Creatures killed in the manor by other means do not join the entity.

Using the Mist

The Spirit Mist is the device that makes this haunted house actually scary. The creature is genuinely unkillable until the PCs figure out its weakness, and then actually gather enough weapons (improvised or otherwise) to offset its ability to heal. While it doesn't move quickly or do a great deal of damage (at least initially) it should fill even veteran players with uncertainty.

The Spirit Mist haunts the ruins. The GM can either choose when the PCs encounter it, or every room the party enters roll 1d6. On a roll of 1 they encounter the creature.

From this point on it will doggedly pursue the party into all areas of the manor and grounds except the chapel (Area M16), the meditation chamber (Area M29) or watchtower top (Area M38). The former is protected by divine presence, while the latter two is simply unable to access. If the party leaves the grounds, pursuit stops. The Mist, once locating the party, will pursue until it can no longer detect them, then it will return to roaming randomly.

It is fairly stupid and can be tricked into falling from broken areas as it is heavier than air. This will not harm the Mist, but will buy the party some time.

Instead or as well as random appearances, it is suggested that GMs spring the Mist on the party at inconvenient times, such as when they are resting or in locations that make escape awkward. The curtain wall (Area M15), the upper levels of the keep (Damien's rooms and above) and the basement are all great locations to make the players sweat, particularly if they have evaded the Mist previously and are confident they can outrun it.

The Haunts

Around the ground, basement and upper levels of the manor, haunts have formed where staff have died. Regardless of their manner of death (most to the fire or the Spirit Mist), each haunt now replays a scene from the past, something pivotal in the life of the servant, in the location of their death. In all cases, the scenes revolve around Damien, as the servants were devoted to him.

In addition to really boosting the 'haunted house' feel to the environment, the haunts provide a 'window' into critical information that the PCs could not normally obtain. The haunts are a device to give the PCs insight into past events to develop the character of Damien.

Haunts are often disliked by players due to their 'automatic' nature, in that they happen regardless of player actions and are hard (though not impossible) to avoid altogether. The haunts are not intended to be a major challenge for this adventure, hence their relatively low save DCs and relatively limited potential for harm. The haunts have been generated 'rules light' specifically to keep them as part of the narrative rather than representing 'traps'. If the GM wishes to use the full rules then all the haunts as equivalent to CR 1 challenges.

In any case the GM should be aware of player frustrations and manage them accordingly.

If there is a sense that the haunts will reduce enjoyment, they can either be modified so that they become easier to resist as the players advance (reduce the save DC by one for each previously successful save) or the GM could reduce or remove the effects, making them interesting by otherwise not harmful scenes.

The GM **cannot** remove the haunts without serious impact to the story, as the information contained within not only informs the characters about Damien, but it is the vehicle by which they might be able to redeem him in the future adventures. Without access to that information the characters will find it extremely difficult to make a connection to Damien in the later adventures, and the players will struggle to justify trying.

The Gloves Come Off

As discussed in the *Campaign Guide*, *What Lies Beyond Reason* is not an adventure path that can be conquered blindly at the end of a sword. Otherworldly powers of frightening potency are descending to crush the city of Anduria - powers that have brought gods undone.

Players are going to need to be creative and clever in order to succeed, and while several encounters in previous adventures have hinted at this, *From the Ashes* is the first real test.

There are several encounters which could very well result in deaths or even a TPK for foolish or brash play. The *Campaign Guide* discusses this holistically, but for this adventure the three areas that are likely to cause problems are addressed specifically.

The Courtyard

Of the three this is the most obvious, and the easiest to manage. Ten flaming skeletons should give most players pause. They are a clearly visible threat (or should be), ensuring the players are not caught unaware. There is the added fail safe that they can attack at range, hopefully not allowing the PCs to become entangled in melee before they realize their plight. Their mode of attack - fire - is common, obvious, and easily countered by magic most parties should have access to at this level. Finally it is an encounter which is completely avoidable, though the players will miss vital history and the chance to 'free' Alluria from her destructive state as well as gain valuable information about the Dark Folk. Only

the most reckless parties will die here.

The Spirit Mist

A unique challenge, this threat roams the halls (albeit slowly) and cannot be harmed until the players discover its weakness through the clue in the chamberlain's room or by clever deduction. However, it can be driven off in a logical fashion (Channeling affecting undead is not a massive leap for most experienced players), it can be outrun, and even tricked into falling from the upper levels (which does it no harm, but gives the characters some 'breathing space'). The GM has control of the random movement elements to the creature, and can pick and choose to make encounters with it easy or hard based on the terrain. Only parties that are complacent enough to allow themselves to get cornered are likely to die here.

The Cathedral

This is the real danger. There are subtle clues and a number of useful items in the adventure to ease the difficulty of this encounter, but the adversaries are unusual, and have the advantage of being able to quickly and repeatedly counter light, creating difficult conditions for the PCs. With the advantage of numbers and darkness, the Dark Folk could overwhelm a PC party in the caverns. The PC's best options here are either surprise attack with area of effect attacks (supplied in the alchemy lab, Area M36), hit and run tactics, or a combination of both strategies. Even careful parties may suffer losses here.

The adventure offers an option for a single *raise dead* (Area M16) if the GM wishes to use it, but otherwise leaves the players to their own devices. As always the GM is free to adjust as they see fit, but the intent of this adventure is to jolt jaded players into feeling that old thrill of fear, so anything that makes the adventure easier is likely to detract from this.



Chapter 1 - Getting There

The previous adventure ended with the escape of Damien, leaving the PCs with the parting words;

"This is why I can't afford to be arrested. Things like this will continue to get worse. I wish I could make you see. I wish there was time. If you truly want to understand, go to where I was forged in fire. There are answers there for those with the wit to see them"

Getting there depends largely on how much of Damien's backstory the GM has revealed to the players at this point, and how desperate the players are to get there quickly.

The modules were written with the expectation that the players/characters know very little about Damien

at this point, and that there will be at least a little down time between adventures (perhaps even a side trek or two). Of course this is easily adjustable if the situation is otherwise.

At the end of the last adventure, Triast is aware of the nature of the cryptic message, but will not share it with the PCs. He also knows that the Watch will visit the manor in short order, either because they heard and understood the cryptic clue, or simply because its standard protocol to check previous known abodes while searching for a fugitive. Despite having Watch-like powers concerning the Machine parts, the Seekers aren't the Watch, and cannot interfere with their investigations (although they do collaborate on 'shared' investigations). Triast will report back to his superiors, who send another team to investigate the manor. If they fail (and they do) Triast and a second team will be dispatched later.

Inspector Sharpes (if he survived the previous adventure) makes his report to the Watch. If no watchmen survived there is another inspector assigned and the investigation continues, including the facts surrounding the loss of the watchmen at the tower. In either case, the Watch send an inspector and a patrol to investigate the manor

Within 24 hours of the conclusion of the last adventure the following activity takes place at the manor;

1) The Watch patrol arrives. They push the gates ajar and enter the grounds. They approach the front of the manor, and are surprised by the Flaming Skeletons lying dormant in the courtyard. All the watchmen are slain in the opening exchange, and the inspector is gravely wounded, crawling back to the gate before collapsing. The Flaming Skeletons remain animated.

2) The Seeker group arrives a few hours later, consisting of 8 enforcers. Discovering the injured inspector, two men are assigned to carry him back to the city, while the remaining 6 enter the grounds. Observing the flaming skeletons, they skirt the western side of the manor, entering through the vegetable garden (G7), into the storage room (M6 – where they crush a fallen painting), through the gallery (M3) and into the Ballroom (M2 – where they meet their end at the hands of an irate Hellena).

This is the assumed state of affairs when the PCs arrive for the adventure. The Watch and Seekers are in negotiations about the risks of the manor, and how best to proceed with investigation.

If the PCs arrive within 24 hours the adventure will have to be amended to remove the Watch and Seeker bodies, and the courtyard will have the skeletons concealed rather than visible.

If the PCs take more than 1 week to arrive, there should be further evidence of activity. This might include Watch patrols of the area and presence at the gate. There might be evidence of several repulsed attempts to get inside the manor, with watchmen discussing openly the 'invulnerable killer mist' roaming the halls. All Watch and Seeker efforts to explore the manor are repulsed at this time. The PCs have no authority to be here, so they may have the added complication of dodging patrols and investigation teams inside the grounds.

By the 3 week mark the Seekers lose patience and send in Triast and a large contingent to clear the place out. They systematically go through the place, using men to lure the Spirit Mist away from the main group. Most of the Seekers die but Triast eventually wins through to the caves below, slaughtering the Lonely One and its dark folk worshippers and discovering the Keystone. The Seekers can't remove it, but set up a permanent contingent to guard it.

If the PCs haven't acted at this point some of the adventure content is lost to them, though they can still explore the manor, with the GM replacing the slain monsters in the caverns with a Seeker group. The ghosts, the Spirit Mist and the haunts are all still active. The manor shows signs of heavy traffic, but is otherwise much the same.

If the PCs fail to complete any of the adventure objectives it will not stop them progressing to the next adventure, but they will do so with a poorer overall understanding of campaign events.

Making the Connection

Assuming the players do not have direct knowledge of Damien's past, there are a number of ways to gain the necessary connection to the location. A Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nobility) check as DC 18 will provide the PCs with the commonly available information surrounding the events of the night. Chiefly the following;

- Around 10 years ago, there was a huge fire at the manor of the disgraced Anthilas family.
- There were a number of deaths including some of the staff and some merchant representatives from the Trade Guild.
- Damien Anthilas was arrested and charged with Practicing Dark Magic and Murder, among a number of other lesser charges (magical misadventure causing death, destruction of property etc).
- Damien was acquitted of the charges.
- Damien relocated to the city proper, going on to become one of the most prominent alchemists and arcane specialists in the city. The manor has been uninhabited since that time.

The PCs can ask around in the city, in taverns or other such places where gossip and tales are told. With a successful Diplomacy check DC 18 the above information

can be gleaned through the more fanciful tales. A failed check still nets some information however much of it is exaggerated or outright false. A **failed** check imparts the following "information";

- 13 years ago, on the 13th hour of the 13th day, there was a demonic fire at the 'old Anthilas place'. The boy Damien summoned forth a demon to command. He sacrificed 13 virgins to his demonic lord but could not control it as he wished. The hellish creature lashed out, destroying the manor in retribution for the upstart's arrogance.
- Damien was arrested for the crimes of Dark Magic and Virgin Sacrifice (not a real charge - it would actually be Murder), and was brought before the city council. However as they were all ensorcelled or bribed (or had their own dark pacts) the council let him go free.
- Damien has continued his dark works to this day. Demons roam the streets at night and snatch goodly folk from their beds. All the evils in the city can be traced back to him and his cursed family.

The best source of information is Lysenesse at the Celestial Scriptorium. History and Folklore are her specialties, and this was a huge scandal at the time. For her standard fee (possibly discounted depending on PC actions in *A Simple Job*) she can impart all of the information above, indicating which is factual and which is fantasy, as well as the following;

- Damien was acquitted on lack of evidence. Apparently several of the surviving servants spoke on his behalf, indicating he was not responsible for the blaze.
- The Trade Guild representatives present at the time were also exclusively PTC members as well. The distinction is significant only because the Trade Guild has strong internal politics and often the sub sects are not working on behalf of the greater guild.
- Damien is reputed to be a different man now than he was before the fire. According to some reports he was always driven however before the fire he was far less grim. He used to attend aristocratic social gatherings and at least maintained both noble and mercantile connections. After the fire the Anthilas house essentially ceased to exist, with almost no mercantile activity outside the trade of the products of his alchemy research.

The above should be enough to direct the PCs toward the manor as a location of interest.

Another option for the PCs is to follow the activities of either the Seekers or the Watch. At the end of the last adventure both groups were clearly intending on pursuing this information so the PCs can use them as a stepping stone to reach the adventure location.

The PCs may have methods or resources to track activities within either or both groups, or they may rely on street informants (Saravel for example), rumourmongers or information brokers (Lysenesse).

Once both Seeker and Watch groups are destroyed on the first foray, rumours hit street sources that both have suffered losses and the location it occurred (Anthilas Manor). The rumours also indicate the injury to Inspector Sharpes and the possible co-operation of the two groups concerning the investigation.

Location, Location, Location

Once the PCs know where they want to go, finding it is relatively easy. Any of the above sources can tell the PCs where the manor is. Similarly, city records held with the Scholar's Guild, mercantile writs held by the Trade Guild and lineage records held by the Guild of Aristocracy all indicate the location of the manor.

The manor is located at the north western edge of The Retreat which is as far as one can get and still be considered inside city limits. It sits on the north bank of the River Glory, where the river forks and transitions from its natural course into the crafted waterway that supplies The Retreat with its picturesque lakes.

Despite its relative distance the roads of The Retreat are wide and well maintained so travel times are rapid and unhindered by the press of the city. A trip from the Noble's Gate to the manor takes about 2 ½ hours by horse or carriage.

The manor grounds are small and enclosed on three sides by a fence, the fourth being bounded by the river itself. The lands on the east and west are technically owned by other families but have lain unused for decades (long before Anthilas manor was constructed). The manor is isolated by at least a mile to the next closest estate.

Chapter 2 - The Grounds (G)

G1) The Gates

Wrought iron gates span the entrance to the manor grounds, set into a huge stone arch more than 30 feet across. In the centre of the arch is a rusted and weathered crest – some sort of bird in flight. Beyond the gates a crushed gravel roadway leads up to a massive three story manor house where the frontage of the building appears to be burned out. The road continues to the west, around an ancient keep wall that has been built into the mansion. A strange series of fires can be seen in the courtyard ahead, though you can't make out any details from here. One of the iron gates stands slightly ajar, just enough to squeeze through.

The manor is surrounded by a high stone wall (8 feet) on all sides except that of the lake, though in truth it is easily climbable (Climb DC 8) at any point. The wrought iron gates are heavy, and the hinges that once allowed easy access are heavily warped. There is enough room for a medium creature to squeeze through (the Watch accomplished this) or the gates can be moved by a combined Strength of 45, though they will make an incredibly loud metallic squeal that resounds throughout the entire grounds.

A close inspection of the crest, or an inspection by someone knowledgeable in heraldry (Perception DC 15 or Knowledge (nobility) DC 12) will reveal it to be a raven clutching a scepter, which was the heraldic crest of House Anthilas.

G2) The Courtyard (CR 7)

Between the burned out remnants of two front wings of the house is the courtyard leading up to the main doors of the manor. While soot and ash covers everything it is possible to make out the foundations of a low wall and the remnants of a garden in the mess.

A series of bodies lie toward the estate gate end of the courtyard. This haphazard collection of charred remains are still identifiable as armoured men although their allegiance is hard to determine.

Beyond them and toward the main doors are around a dozen flaming humanoid skeletons. Each stands motionless in the

ankle deep ash like macabre candles on a drearily frosted cake. Flames crackle and spit from their cadaverous forms, but you fear you see a glimmer of intelligence in their flaming eye sockets.

The flaming skeletons are a unique form of undead created in the conflagration that slew them (variant of the burning skeleton). They are the remains of the merchants and guards that came to repossess the manor from Damien. A vestige of their living personalities remain, but it is tainted by pain and cruelty. Anyone approaching from any direction is attacked once they get within 30 feet (or at any range if they initiate combat).

Flaming Skeletons (10) – Hp 13 each. Their statistics are found in the Bestiary on page 58.

The skeletons will not move from the courtyard. Given enough time (days) they will sink to the ground and their flames will gutter out, seemingly nothing more than ancient corpses. However, proximity triggers their animation and they rise up again. Anyone unaware of their nature (such as the armoured men were) are likely to be surprised and slaughtered.

The armoured men are all watchmen (six in total) and are the remains of a unit sent to investigate the manor after Damien's escape in the last adventure. They were either here as a direct result of overhearing Damien's cryptic clues to the party or as a routine follow up of his last known address.

In any case, the only survivor was a tenacious inspector (Inspector James Sharpes if he survived the last adventure) who is recovering in a local hospice from severe wounds. The watchmen wear chain shirts and are armed with longswords and light crossbows (with a dozen bolts). All equipment is stamped with the Watch armoury seal, so selling them may be difficult as no reputable armourer will take them and attempting to do so will likely to draw attention from the Watch.

Defeating the skeletons will trigger the courtyard **haunt** and give the PCs the best understanding of what occurred on the night of the fire. If they trigger the **haunt** read the following;

As the last skeleton falls the area seems to shimmer and blur. Suddenly you find yourself standing in a fully intact



courtyard on a stormy night. The soot and ash are gone and the walls are restored. The manor is beautiful and meticulously kept - dark wood polished to a shine and crushed white gravel paths leading through a manicured garden. Lightning cracks and a thick mist of rain falls all around you.

Ring the courtyard are a number of people in matching livery, looking onto a scene unfolding in the centre. Damien stands alone, facing a dozen men across a twenty-foot garden bed. These men are mounted with the majority armoured and armed with crossbows. The leader is finely dressed, and sneers at Damien across the gap.

"Your debts are called in young master. The Peregrine Trading Consortium is foreclosing on your assets and reclaiming what little it can out of this debacle. You have one day to leave our property".

Damien stares across at them, raindrops streaking down his face. He's younger than when last you saw him, maybe mid 20's, but still carries the same tired look. As the man speaks Damien's visage slowly changes from resignation to anger, and fire seems to smoulder in his eyes, smoke rising from his clenched fists.

"This is my land, and my legacy. Be gone, you'll get no more from me!" he hisses through gritted teeth.

The sneering man seems momentarily taken aback but then makes a curt gesture. One of the soldiers looses a bolt from his crossbow, striking Damien in the abdomen, and driving him to his knees. A young girl screams Damien's name, breaking free of her mother's grasp and runs out into the garden. There is a twang of another crossbow and the bolt takes her in the throat, flinging her small frame backward. You see that she is dead before she hits the ground - her eyes wide and blood seeping into the earth, mixing with the gathering water.

Time seems to slow. You see the shocked soldiers look to one of their own, barely more than a boy, holding his crossbow at arm's length and staring at it with horror. The sneering dandy turns from his men to look at Damien - his hands lifted in supplication, or to ward of what inevitably must be coming.

A woman's scream can be heard from somewhere, but it is drowned out by the inhuman roar that escapes Damien.

He literally catches fire, wearing it like a hellish cloak. His arms fling wide and hungry flames rush outwards to devour everything in sight. Men scream as they are reduced to blistered

and melting masses. The heat washes over you and against all logic you feel it, as if it reaches out from the past to cleanse not only the courtyard then, but now as well.

All characters in the courtyard must make Reflex saves at DC 15 or suffer 10 points of fire damage. A successful saving throw reduces it to 1 point.

The fire washes over you, leaving its mark, then disappears. The courtyard has returned to its current state - an old burned out ruin, covered in ash, the fires cold for years. Strangely enough the skeletons you just destroyed seem burned anew, reduced further by the ethereal fires you just bore witness to.

Damien is aged 27 at the time of the haunt, and Alluria is aged 7. If the party has already seen her, they can identify the girl as Alluria.

This is the opportunity to understand the events of that night. Pushed past the brink of insanity by the slaying of Alluria, Damien flew into a rage and destroyed everything in sight. While not intended, several servants (including Alluria's mother Violet) were slain in the conflagration. Damien was arrested and charged, but the remaining servants (those that fled and escaped the Spirit Mist) refused to testify against him. They did, however, all testify that the PTC debt collector ordered Alluria slain. The PTC, wishing to avoid a PR disaster, had the charges dropped, cleared the debt, and threw enough money at the situation to 'make it go away'.

Damien was (of course) shattered, becoming more or less the man he is today - driven, obsessed, wracked with guilt and irrationally determined to single-handedly save the city. He eventually returned to the manor but by then the staff were dead or gone. He took a few treasured personal possessions and left the manor (with its undead guardian) as it is today, feeling that a dangerously haunted ruin was a good a deterrent as any to would be machine-part seekers.

Once this Haunt is played out, the ghost of Alluria on the island no longer has a flaming, charred aspect - nor is she hostile. All of her unearthly anger has subsided in this scene. She now appears as a beautiful young girl, willing to converse.

G3) The Well

A crushed gravel path leads up to this lonely well. Surrounded by once manicured trees left to grow wild, this small stone well is covered in moss. An ornamental roof covers the bucket and crank with several of the wooden shingles are missing.

This well supplied the manor with water. The crank is rusty and emits a high pitched metallic squeal if used, but is otherwise serviceable, as is the bucket. The well is 40 feet to the water level then another 10 feet or so deep to the bedrock. It is barely 5 feet wide. In the bottom of the well (covered in silt) are 20 silver coins. These were thrown in by Damien, one a year, from the age of seven onwards. Originally as a child's fancy for luck (to keep his father safe on his journeys) it became a superstition he continued until the manor was abandoned. These are all standard Andurian silver coins except a rather distinctive D has been scratched into one face on each.

Unbeknownst to Damien, the very first coin thrown is actually a holy symbol of Rhion Barakar, Patron of Lost Causes. If retrieved it acts like a *stone of good luck*. It does not radiate magic, and cannot be detected by spells or abilities such as *detect magic*, but once touched the holder automatically understands its significance and powers.

The well has a climb DC of 15 to climb safely into, but retrieving the coins means bobbing underwater in the dark.

It's a seemingly small thing, but these coins are a tangible connection to Damien's childhood, and a less complicated (if not happier) life. If any one of the coins is used later on as part of the effort to return Damien to the moral path, add a +1 to the roll (See the *Campaign Guide* for more information).

G4) The Crypt (CR 6)

The PCs might get the idea that Hellena can be permanently laid to rest by accessing the crypt, or they might just want explore the crypt.

Surrounded by numerous plain headstones at one end of the garden is a gothic style stone crypt with intricately carved patterns adorning its walls and columns. The wooden doors are bound by rusted metal and once may have been intended to look like the gates to a heavenly place. However, time and age

has transformed them ominously to their opposite. It looks very much like a set of gates to hell now.

The headstones outside the crypt are all blank as no one buried here. As the first generation living in the house, there have been no family deaths (until the events of the adventure background). The headstones were an affectation of Barrus'.

The gates to the crypt are are locked, but the lock has weathered the time poorly (DC 20 to unlock, or DC 20 to break. Hardness 5, 2hp). Once the doors are opened;

A thick stench of rot wafts from inside the crypt. You peer into the darkness beyond and see half a dozen raised biers upon which stone sarcophagi sit. Three look closed and undisturbed but the other three are open, with stone lids lying on the floor. There is a shrouded statue at the back of the crypt, although you cannot make out who or what it is intended to depict. As you stare its shrouded head raises up and two glowing eyes gaze back at you. "Still No Respect?" it asks in a cavernous voice. "I'll teach you Respect if it kills you!"



It is not as statue but a monster. This creature is the undead remains of Ramius, risen as a Revenant only recently. The crypt has not been opened since, and he/it was content to stay here to come to terms with its new state - until now. Being disturbed has incurred its wrath, its one drive that kept it clinging to existence was its need for the one thing it never received in life - respect. Revenants are animated by their desire to avenge their murder, and Ramius seeks to avenge himself upon Damien. Of course, the sadistic creature is happy to vent his anger on the closest targets. He will not fight to the death however. This disturbance has spurred him to fulfil his purpose of revenge. If reduced to 1/3 Hp he flees south and hurls himself into the river to escape and begins his last hunt (see below).

If the PCs flee, Ramius does not pursue them beyond the garden. Instead, he leaves the manor grounds, and begins to hunt for Damien, going to the location of the Alchemy Tower, and other places Damien has frequented. Ramius is cunning, if the PCs let him escape the GM is encouraged to have Ramius show up at a later time in the campaign, being sighted periodically, or perhaps even when the PCs are in Damien's presence.

Ramius the Revenant - Hp 76.

Ramius wears a gem encrusted signet ring (200gp) of the Vellenhall family (a current noble family in the city), and several other pieces of jewelry (150gp total), as well as ruined noble clothes.

There are 6 sarcophagi here, though only 4 bear inscriptions (the 2 closest to the door are blank).

The furthest on the left reads "Barrus, Patron of House Anthilas, Husband to Hellena, Father to Damien" below which is a set of dates (correspondent to the campaign calendar) indicating a birth and death date 47 years apart. The sarcophagus is closed, and has an ornate wooden coffin in it, but it is empty (never used).

The sarcophagus at the far right reads "Hellena Anthilas, Wife of Barrus, Mother of Damien", though the names Anthilas and Barrus have been deeply scratched as if by claws on stone. The stone lid is off and the coffin open. Inside is a well-dressed corpse of a woman in advanced decay. Her neck is crushed so badly that she is essentially decapitated, though otherwise the corpse is undamaged. She wears around 300gp in fine jewelry.

The sarcophagus in the middle on the left (near Barrus) is inscribed "Damien Anthilas, Son of Barrus and Hellena". Its lid is off, and the whole thing has been scratched and smeared with rotting flesh, blood and excrement. There is no coffin.

The sarcophagus in the middle on the right (near Hellena) reads "Ramius Vellenhall" though the last name has been scratched out and 'The Bastard' has been written in ink or the like under it. The coffin within has been torn apart.

Though it's likely to remain a mystery to the PCs, the sarcophagi for the original three family members were commissioned and carved in Barrus' time, while the other three were for future occupants. Barrus' was never used because his body was never recovered. Ramius died (in mysterious circumstances) in Damien's late teens, and was interred here at Helena's insistence. Damien simply never got around to removing him afterward as he was distracted by the research of the caves below. A disgruntled servant defaced Ramius' tomb. The rest of the damage was done by Ramius as he 'arose' recently.

When Helena died (as a consequence of her illicit substance habits) the servants had her interred here. The damage to her neck was caused by Ramius recently, though he was careful to not damage her body otherwise.

Damien's tomb has never been used, hence no wooden coffin, but was defiled by the risen Ramius out of spite.

Helena's ghost is linked to this defiled place, but laying her to rest is not a simple thing. The crypt would have to be cleansed, and she and Ramius placed at the head of the biers (ie occupying top right and left), while Barrus' would have to be removed altogether. It is unlikely the PCs will know to - or care to - do so, so it's likely her tortured ghost will be bound to this place for eternity.

G5) Formal Gardens (CR 1)

This heavily overgrown area was once a carefully manicured garden. Through the rampant weeds and bushes you can make out the remains of paths and garden bed dividers. The choking plant life looks sickly, with not a flower to be seen. A wider central area is dominated by a stone fountain, its basin dry and cracked.

Very little remains of this once carefully tended area. The plants have taken over in the last decade, with hardy weeds and creepers choking out the more delicate flora that once graced this garden.

The fountain actually resembles the main Council building of Anduria, and water once sprayed from the minarets and towers. Barrus was a proud Andurian, as the city gave him the opportunity to rise from obscurity to prominence. He has always been a patriot, and strong defender of the city and its people (he even served on the council for a time). Barrus' civic pride was the origin for Damien's loyalty to the city.

The representation of the Council Chambers is detailed and elaborate, and accurate to a fault. Though nothing of the internals is depicted, the maze of courtyards between the various wings and towers is, along with minute details such as gates and doors. Anyone studying this model for more than a few hours gains +1 circumstance bonus on rolls to avoid becoming lost, or to find a specific place when visiting the Council Chambers as they can recall some of the details (useful in Adventure 7 - *Doors Best Left Closed*) and if attempting to teleport to the Council Chambers (outdoors only) it is treated as 'Studied Carefully' (unless the individual has better personal knowledge of the location).

Searching the reproduction (Perception DC 17) may turn up something of interest - a small gem has been jammed deep into a space between two 'walls' (A lost toy of Damien's as a child). The gem is a topaz, worth 50gp, but also rests just above an aggressive snake that has taken up residence in the model (it has *Total Cover*). Anyone reaching for the gem is subject to a single bite attack.

Viper - Hp 3.

G6) Gardener's Tower

This tower ruin is clearly one of the original keep towers. The upper level has collapsed into the lower, leaving it a mess of rubble.

In life, this is where Alluria and her mother Violet lived, the lower level being given over to living quarters, and the upper a bedroom where the pair slept. This was as close as Violet was willing to come to living in the manor.

She was the gardener for the grounds.

A thorough search will turn up the remnants of furniture and a few odd items (a candlestick, a picture frame and a hairbrush). There is also an exquisite doll dressed in a plain gown, oddly preserved if a little dirty. The doll is worth 20gp if cleaned up. Unlike several other objects around the grounds, this is not helpful in negotiating with Damien. It reminds him painfully of not only his loss, but his personal rejection, incurring a -1 to any rolls and driving him deeper into his obsession with saving the city at all costs (See *Campaign Guide* for more information). The doll was given to Alluria by Damien, but she did not favour it, preferring a more tomboyish upbringing in the gardens.

Anyone who understands stability and structure - Knowledge (engineering) DC 18 will observe that there is no structural or other reason the tower should have collapsed, and is in fact in much better repair than the rest of the original keep that still stands. Its collapse is not only inexplicable, it defies logic.

G7) Vegetable Garden

Bedraggled vines and creepers hang over wooden supports here, and have begun to advance into the surrounding areas. A broken wheelbarrow and a number of rusted gardening tools lie nearby, apparently discarded mid use. In the centre of this patch is an upright framework, below which is a scarecrow half buried in soil and reaching plant-life. One arm outstretched, it almost looks like it's trying in vain to crawl away.

Violet and Alluria were tending to this vegetable patch when the PTC collectors came and confronted Damien. They dropped everything and rushed out to the front courtyard where they ultimately died.

Violet's spirit was one of the first to form the Spirit Mist. The tools belonged to her, and as such can be used to damage it. There is a sickle, a knife (dagger) and a rake here (improvised) that could all be of use. They are rusty, however, and incur a -1 to hit and damage, and have the *fragile* property.

G8) The Boathouse (CR 6)

Down the bottom of the garden trail, on the edge of the river, is a weathered boathouse set on stilts. The wooden boards of the roof sag, giving it a drooping look, and lichen clings to the walls. The one window is shut, and the glass covered in dust and grime to the point where nothing can be seen beyond. Both the small access door and the large barn style doors are closed and bound with heavy chains and padlocks. From within you can hear a semi rhythmic thumping, in time with the lapping of the river waters on the bank.

The boathouse is sturdy despite the visible look of it, though the roof is weaker, and sagging under the weight of the occupants (see below). The walls/doors have a hardness of 5, and Hp 20. The locks are old and in poor condition, requiring a disable device DC 20 to open. The hinges are rusted and will not open quietly (-20 to Stealth).

Inside, the boathouse has a small rowboat tied up at the dock, just barely 'seaworthy', but will make it to the island and back. It can fit up to 4 medium characters comfortably or 6 if squeezed in (small characters count as ½, large count as 2). There is also a small wagon parked behind the barn doors. A workbench sits under the window, complete with old and rusted woodworking tools.

The boathouse is home to a colony of Chokers, the small aberrations drawn to the emanations of the Keystone, but unwilling (and unwelcome) to venture into the caves below. They have also managed to avoid detection by the Spirit Mist so far, as it tends to stay in the manor. Instead they remain here, feeding on the fish that swim up under the docks. When the PCs arrive there are 3 in the rafters, 1 under the wagon, and 1 clinging to the underside of the boathouse. They will attack intruders mercilessly from ambush, waiting until their prey is in the perfect position to be flanked if possible. The chokers are hard to see, gaining a +5 to stealth from the dark corners, dust and spider webs they conceal themselves in.

5 Chokers - Hp 16 (each).

G9) The Island (CR 5 or 0)

This tiny islet is a mere stone's throw across, having room for only a Gazebo and a loveseat. The islet is heavily overgrown, but the old crushed gravel paths leading to the only two

features on the place are still discernible.

In the wake of the fire, the few remaining manor staff buried Alluria here, as it was her favourite place on the grounds. Unfortunately, her unquiet soul still remains due to the circumstances of her death. Until the Characters have viewed the scene/haunt in the courtyard, Alluria is hostile and appears as a ghostly, hideously burned girl wreathed in flames. Once the courtyard haunt has been viewed, she is still ghostly, but appears as she did in life, is not hostile, and will talk to the PCs.

Her grave is on the west side, overgrown but with a small tombstone reading "Alluria" "Beloved by all, lost to greed". Her blackened bones rest in an expensive but decaying coffin. Disturbing them in any way does not put her to rest, but does cause her to reform immediately (even if just slain). This might be particularly dangerous if she remains hostile.

Alluria can be found 50% of the time in the Gazebo, and 50% of the time on the loveseat, though given the size of the islet, both are within sight of each other. In either case she sits singing to herself, apparently unaware of the PCs (but in reality fully aware of them). Any approach causes her to face and react to the encroaching presence based on her current status

'Burning' Alluria

You see a small girl sitting nearby, singing quietly to herself. She is both ghostly and wreathed in blue-white flames, belying her seemingly passive nature. She turns as you stare, and you realize she is horribly burned, the flesh of her face melted and charred, skull and bone showing through scorched clothing and skin. She smiles a slow, ghastly smile, and her tiny, melodic voice chilling you as she speaks. "Aren't you cold...?" she asks, all innocence and light. "I used to be cold, but not anymore. I will warm you..."

Alluria has several very unpleasant special abilities to bring to bear on the PCs, but if any PC is wearing her pendant (found in Damien's wardrobe in the last adventure) they find themselves unaffected by any of them. This is just the abilities granted to her as a ghost (Corrupting Touch, Frightful Moan, Hungry Flame Aura) but not her sorcerer spells and abilities (which affect the PC normally). This is unlikely to be much comfort to the rest of the party however.



Alluria (Unique Ghost) Hp – 45. Stats are found in the Bestiary on page 57.

‘Restored’ Alluria

You see a small girl sitting nearby, singing quietly to herself. She is ghostly in form, but appears otherwise as a well-dressed child. She turns as you look on, and you see a pretty face with a winsome smile. Her tiny, melodic voice is comforting, if a little sad. “Why have you come?” she asks.

Once ‘restored’ by having the Haunt banished in the courtyard, Alluria is not hostile, and will willingly talk to the PCs, though she will not leave the island, saying she feels that the islet is where she is supposed to be. She is not aware of her ghostly state, and ignores any indications or evidence that she is. For example, if shown her gravestone or remains she simply does not see them and changes the subject.

Alluria cannot directly interact with the real world, though she acts like she can, ‘sitting’ on the bench or

gazebo. She will unconsciously avoid contact or taking items from the PCs, and she will flee crying if the PC's force the issue, such as deliberately passing things ‘through’ her. She will return after a time, acting as though nothing occurred. The exception to this is if the PCs bring her objects from the house that may have significance - such as her doll or hairbrush from G6 or gardening implements from G7. She will ‘take’ these items, the physical objects falling discarded to the ground while phantom versions of them appear in her hands. These phantom objects will remain with her, disappearing if she places them, but reappearing when she ‘picks them up’ (from where only she can see).

Alluria can tell the PCs of the events of the house in the last few years before the fire (she was about 7 years of age at the time of her death) from a child-like perspective, but importantly she speaks of Damien as a friend and as being loving and attentive, though he was reclusive and only saw the staff infrequently. When he was with them, he looked tired, but smiled and played with her. She loved him very much. She does not remember her death, and now complains of being cold.

Alluria can tell the PCs about the layout of the manor, but not much about the current state or occupants. She knows there’s a ‘mean lady’ in the manor somewhere. **She can say is that there’s something evil in the basement, and it feels like it’s both pushing her and holding her at the same time** (this is the Keystone, and Alluria cannot be permanently laid to rest while it remains on the grounds). She has hazy memories of visiting it once, but all she can recall is that there are ragged creatures that create darkness down there (the Dark Folk).

The party do not have the resources to remove the Keystone at this time, so Alluria may become a figure they see in the future. In any case, she will be laid to rest (after a brief appearance) once the Keystone is removed in Adventure 7 – *Doors Best Left Closed*.

Chapter 3 - The Manor (M)

Manor Detail

The manor has high ceilings, each is 15 feet high unless otherwise stated. It is stone construction outer walls (and some supporting inner walls – the areas with ceilings higher than a single story) with wooden internal walls (plastered or painted), wooden floors (carpeting throughout the ‘living’ spaces). The doors are all wood construction with tarnished brass fittings. There are no light sources present, and most of the windows are covered in soot or dust (unless indicated as broken).

Lighting conditions are generally ‘dim light’ during the day or total darkness at night.

The manor has some extensive fire damage in the front section (where Damien’s primal fireball exploded), and around the side where burning embers were blown onto the wooden stables (and effectively into the curtain wall). The damage is less severe toward the rear of the building, but the ash and soot is throughout almost all of the structure. Individual areas will indicate the level of damage or effect.

The entire building not only suffers from a decade of neglect, but the sheer concentration of negative energy from the Spirit Mist and two Ghosts is having a supernatural degradation effect on much of the building. Where not explicitly stated otherwise, the GM should indicate that the manor is in a general state of decay and disrepair, with crumbling plaster and paint, rotting and mouldering fabrics, worn and cracked leather, and heavy dust and grime where there isn’t a thick coating of ash and soot.

Despite the abandoned state of the building, there are absolutely no signs of life. No rats, spiders or insects to be found, though occasional skeletons or desiccated husks can be discovered in out of the way corners. The regular sweeping of the Spirit Mist ensures nothing living lasts here for long.

M1) Grand Entry

If approached from the front;

A pair of bronze doors stand before you, slightly ajar, somehow intact despite the clear scorch marks and ash on its surface.

Each door has a bas-relief of a Raven holding a scepter in its claws.

The doors are heavy and squeal loudly as they are opened.

A Knowledge (nobility) check DC 10 will identify this as the Crest of House Anthilas in its prime. Damien no longer uses the crest.

The entire front wall of this Gothic style entry hall is in ruins, with huge windows reduced to twisted and blackened iron frames, the glass and curtains long gone. A slight breeze causes ash to dance in the air. The room is two stories in height with a pair of marble staircases curling up to a balcony level above, their ornate wooden handrails blackened and crumbling. Between the staircases stand life sized statues of armoured knights, as if guarding the way beyond. Several tattered banners hang from the walls. Everything shows signs of heavy fire damage, and a thick layer of soot covers all surfaces. Several sets of doors lead off in all directions.

The lighting conditions here are based on time of day and state of the burning skeletons in the courtyard beyond. If they remain, they are clearly visible from this room.

The room is structurally intact as it is mostly sheathed in stone or marble, though details are hard to determine beneath the layer of soot. Highly perceptive characters, or those with knowledge of engineering (Perception or Knowledge (engineering) DC 18) may notice that the balcony supports for the level above are partially wooden, and structurally compromised (see M22).

The banners are too damaged to determine heraldry, and the statues are generic knights. While they were once fine quality, the fire was so intense here it actually caused the stone to crack and has rendered them worthless.

The doors in this room have all suffered heavily from fire damage. The wood is twisted and blackened. None of the doors can be opened (they are too warped to function), but basically collapse under any applied pressure (no damage required). Only the front doors, being made of bronze, still function.

M2) Ballroom

This immense ballroom must have been a fine sight, but the once polished wood floors are cracked and strewn with ash

and rubble, and scattered shards of crystal chandelier. Broken instruments lie forlornly on the raised stage to the south. Ash and grime coats the walls and the once resplendent tapestries that cling grimly to them. Some of the north wall suffers from burn scarring, as does the balcony level above, but this tapers off within 20 feet or so.

In the centre of the chamber is a disturbing sight. Huddled together are six desiccated corpses dressed in Asmodean Seeker armour. Their equipment appears new, but the corpses are wizened, looking ancient and mummified.

This Seeker squad made a brave but futile stand here. They had the misfortune of raising the ire of Hellena by inadvertently destroying one of her paintings (M6). Without any real means of hurting her, they all succumbed to her aging touch. The Seekers have chainmail, heavy maces and heavy crossbows with bluntbolts (~12-15 each), but they are clearly of Asmodean design and markings, and attempting to sell these is likely to draw Seeker attention.

Given the ash and soot, a skilled tracker (Survival DC 15 check) can back trace their trail, which leads out into the Gallery (M3), through the Ballroom Storage (M6) and out

into the garden. The Seekers – having seen the fate of the Watch patrol at the front – thought (incorrectly) a side entry the safer course.

3) Lower Gallery (CR 3)

This long hall has paintings set onto its walls at intervals, though several have fallen or hang crookedly. Empty lantern hooks indicate this was once a well-lit area. The faded carpet crunches underfoot as you traverse it, caked with soot and grime.

This gallery once held some of the finest paintings of the day, an expensive collection designed to impress visitors. Of the original 24 paintings, 7 are missing (stolen), 6 are badly damaged (cut, ripped or soiled by ash) and the remaining 11 are mildly worn, weathered or soiled. An Appraise DC 18 check can determine that even in their state of disrepair, the 11 decent paintings could fetch 10-40gp each (1d4x10gp) to discerning buyers or art restorers. However, for each sold there is a 5% chance it is recognized, and the PCs are reported to the authorities as thieves.



Lurking in this hall is a Shadow, who will seek to harass the PCs, draining and retreating if possible. It hides in the paintings, making it seem if the painting itself is attacking PCs as they pass, and moves to another if it's cover art is damaged or destroyed.

Shadow - Hp - 19

M4) Greenhouse

This area was once a greenhouse, but now every single pane of glass is smashed, leaving an iron framework resembling a cage. The plants in the area are sparse and scrubby, barely clinging to life. A small bench sits forlornly in the middle of the plant pot racks. Near the bench is the skeletal remains of a person, its clothing rotted to rags. A small pink flower seems to grow out of the empty skull.

As the PCs enter this area they trigger a haunt.

One moment you are standing amid the shattered glass of the ruined greenhouse, and the next you see it in all its glory, sun shining brightly though it's intact panes, the garden alive with greenery and flowers of all kinds and colours. A bench has been placed centrally, with several crushed gravel paths leading to it. You see Damien sitting there with a small girl. He looks similar to what you know of him, his face lined by unseen cares, though less grey at his temples. You estimate he might be in his mid twenties. The girl is no more than five, a bright, blonde talkative thing in a simple dress. A young female servant waits a respectful distance away, and another woman can be seen tending the gardens outside.

The little girl chats away in a light voice, though she is currently directing a scowl at Damien. "You look tired. You should sleep more" she states matter-of-factly, and a genuine smile spreads across Damien's face. "I'd love to Princess, but I'm very busy"

She rolls her eyes and says "You are always busy" with an exaggerated elongation of the words. "We haven't seen you in ages. You are always stuck in that tower. You look pale and you don't eat the meals left for you" she scolds.

Damien looks genuinely surprised "And how do you know that Princess?", casually plucking a flower and handing it to her. She sighs theatrically while tucking it behind her ear. "Servants talk to each other, don't you know anything?" she

says exasperatedly, "And why do you keep calling me Princess anyway? My mother is a servant so I'm a servant".

Damien smiles and looks at her knowingly "All little girls are princesses, don't you know anything?"

She smiles up at him with a dazzling look, and hugs him tightly. "That's stupid" she says with an impish grin, then slips off the bench, "I have to go back to work now", she runs off toward the garden, waving as she goes. He waves back.

Once she has gone Damien lets out a long sigh, gesturing for the female servant to follow the girl. He turns to look up at the keep tower. "I have to go back to work too" he whispers.

The PCs must make Will saves DC 15, or be overcome with bittersweet regret, and a sense of loss. For the next hour all affected PCs take a -1 morale penalty to all attack rolls, saves and skill checks. This can be countered by anything that positively affects emotions.

Damien is 25 at the time of this haunt, and Alluria is 5

The body is that of the serving maid assigned as Alluria's minder. After the girl's death, the maid killed herself by cutting wrists here. The serving maid's spirit has joined the Spirit Mist. Next to the skeleton is a small dagger, slightly rust specked but serviceable. It can harm the Spirit Mist.

M5) Ablutions

This small hall has a set of double doors leading out to the gardens to the south, and doors leading to washrooms to the north. The north doors have brass signs fitted to them, one reading Ladies, and the other Gentlemen.

Each of the rooms contains a fitted porcelain basin and a wooden stall with a bench that a chamber pot can be placed under. Most of the fittings are worn or broken. The small room to the east is a linen closet with faded, but surprisingly serviceable linens.

M6) Storage (Ballroom)

This room is heaped with stacked chairs and folded trestle tables. One of the chair stacks has fallen and broken sections

of chair lie scattered on the floor. A painting lies on the floor, its frame smashed and a heavy boot print marring its surface.

The painting is a view of the grounds from Area M33, painted by a talented amateur. The PCs could match this to the works in Area M23.

This reasonably uninteresting room was last used to temporarily (as it turns out permanently) store items for the ballroom to be set out for a party. The chairs and tables are aged and precariously stacked. Anything other than careful movement through this room (ie combat or running) causes the stacks to fall, resulting in the area becoming *difficult terrain*, and anyone in the area at the time to make a DC 15 Reflex save or become *prone*. The Spirit Mist passes through the objects, neither affected by terrain, nor disturbing them in any way.

The stack that has fallen was the result of the Seekers passing through on the way to the Ballroom (Area M2), as is the damaged painting, which happened to be on the floor and was callously trod on by one of the enforcers. Hellena was displeased, the results of which can be seen in M2.



GMs should make note of the suggestions raised at M15 while the PCs explore this room.

M7) Dining Room

This blasted room is significantly damaged by fire. Most of the east wall is gone, leaving blackened and burned stones that end in jagged tooth-like points. The front windows are gone, and the iron frame is a twisted mess. Most of the north portion of the room is open to the elements and a layer of thick ash blankets the remnants of a massive dining table and chairs. Solidified pools of metal indicate the table was set at the time of the fire. A breeze stirs the tattered tapestries that remain in the southern half of the room. Curled up in one corner is a charred body.

As the PCs enter this room, they trigger a haunt.

The room shimmers and is replaced by a scene of a family sitting around a well-lit dining table, being served by a portly waiter in house livery. The man at the head of the table is well dressed and neatly groomed, an impressive figure. To his left is a young and attractive woman in her mid 20's, with a sad look on her face. To his right is a young boy, maybe 7 years old, face tear streaked.

"Must you go again husband?" the woman asks in a pitiful voice. "It's so lonely here without you". The man turns to her, his face set, though his words are meant to be comforting. "The house needs to grow, else our competitors will take our markets from us while we remain indolent. The Prince of Calimtar is offering great opportunity to expand our business influence. I must oversee it personally. Do not worry wife, I will not be gone long. Besides, our son will keep you company in my absence. Isn't that right Damien?", he turns his attention to the boy, who mumbles something to the affirmative. Neither see the young woman's expression shift from sadness to resentment.

Each of the PCs must make Will saves vs DC 14 or be consumed with the desire to strike out at the nearest creature with an open handed slap. If the PC does not have Improved Unarmed Strike or proficiency with natural weapons this provokes an attack of opportunity, but only in the form of a similar unarmed attack (and only if the target has the above proficiency). The slap, if it lands, deals 1d2 points of non-lethal damage.

The people depicted are Damien (aged 7), his mother Hellena (aged 25) and his father Barras (aged 40). This is the only haunt that has Barras in it.

The body is that of a servant who was gravely wounded in the blast that started the fire. He didn't die instantly, but managed to crawl away in agony, only to expire in

here. His Spirit has joined the Spirit Mist. His body has nothing of value or use.

The solidified metal is a steel-silver alloy, and more or less worthless.

M8) Ladies Parlour / Sewing Room

Almost the entire front half of this room is blackened, the internal walls burned away leaving just the stone supports to hold up the roof above. Gaping holes in the walls and ceiling emit light from outside, and a chilling breeze whips through, plucking at your clothes. The southern half of the room is more intact, though still heavily scorched and damaged. A few twisted frames and shards of furniture remain, and you can make out the remnants of once plush chairs, several tables of varying sizes and a strange rack of sorts.

This room took the brunt of the fire damage, along with the stables. It was once a ladies parlour, arranged by the somewhat outdated Barrus with 'women's activities' such as tapestry weaving (the rack remains), painting, sewing and the like. Though he meant well, Barrus' rather conservative views on women were in part a factor in the unhappy marriage. Hellena (and her friends) used some of the stations while Barrus was present, but almost never while he was gone. Only the painting was of any interest to Hellena, the results of which are displayed in some of the upper areas of the manor.

Searching through the ash here, there are a number of warped knitting needles to be found, but almost everything else in here was combustible, adding fuel to the fire on the fateful night.

If the Flaming Skeletons are still active in the courtyard, they are clearly visible from here. Anyone approaching within 10 feet of the front or west walls (facing the courtyard) will be attacked. The holes are not big enough to get through easily (the largest being 2 feet across) but are big enough to admit projectiles. The intervening walls offer *cover* for both sides.

M9) Smoking Lounge

This room has heavy curtains that block out the bay windows, and a number of low couches that have begun to fray and split. Ash and soot have slowly crept into this room from the front

of the manor, and a heavy scent of tobacco smoke still lingers. A number of small unidentifiable lumps lie in the detritus on the floor.

Entering this room triggers a haunt.

A smoke haze seems to obscure the room, which then resolves into a well-appointed parlour, candle lit and furnished with plush divans. A number of young men and women lie strewn about, inhaling smoke from an ornate hookah that dominates the centre of the room. The people are thin and sallow, but have dreamy expressions on their faces. Several servants in house livery stand against the walls with untouched refreshments on trays. A pre-teen boy sits in the corner, trying to look inconspicuous. He breathes shallowly, then his face contorts and he lets out a small cough.

Suddenly one woman's head snaps up, and she looks bleakly around until she fixes on the boy. "Damien" she hisses in a husky voice, "I told you to clean the stables! Why are you still here?!" The boy looks apprehensive, but defiant. "Mother, it was yesterday you told me that, and I did it as you instructed. Around two hours ago you told me to sit here and be quiet, and so I have". The woman sneers at the response, and a man looks up. Once powerfully built, he now seems wasted and pale. His face contorts in a cruel smile. "Still no respect boy? You dare to speak to your mother like that?". It seems momentarily like he will rise, then he settles back down. "You were told to be quiet. Not to cough. You have disobeyed and will be punished!". "You there" he says, pointing to a random servant, a middle aged man, "take the boy out back and beat him till he bleeds! Bring me his bloody shirt as proof. That'll teach you some manners whelp".

The servant waits until the man closes his eyes before replying in a mild tone that belies his look of disgust. "Certainly sir, it shall be done". He takes the boy by the arm gently and throws him a sly wink, "Come boy and face your punishment" he says harshly, leading the boy from the room.

Each of the PCs must make a Fortitude save DC 15 or become intoxicated by the substance burning in the hookah. Failure indicates the PC gains the sickened condition for the next hour. The condition can be removed by neutralise poison or similar effects.

The people depicted are Damien (aged 12), his mother Hellena (aged 30) and her then paramour Ramius (aged 32). Ramius is the man depicted in most of the haunts.

Behind one of the couches is a curled up skeleton, with scraps of flesh and cloth still attached. This is the remains of the servant called on in the haunt to punish young Damien. He survived the night of the fire only to be cornered and slain in here by the emerging Spirit Mist before the servants were aware of its presence. His spirit has joined the Spirit Mist.

The lumps in the ash include the broken remnants of the hookah, as well as several pipes and other smoking paraphernalia. One of the pipes is an ancient relic of a long extinct civilization that Barrus discovered on his travels. Carved from Ivory, it is an unbelievably intricate piece depicting seasonal ceremonies, and is worth 100gp to the right buyer.

M10) Kitchen

This area takes up almost half of the lowest floor of the original keep tower. It seems fairly obvious that this room was once a kitchen. A huge stone fire place dominates the west wall and stone shelves line the north and south curves of the wall. The centre of the room is occupied by a huge, slate topped table. On the floor amidst shattered clay jars and rusted iron pots is a skeleton garbed in scraps of cloth. A surprisingly preserved butcher's knife is grasped in its left hand

The skeleton is that of the cook, Rich. He was slain on the first night the mist arose while preparing the evening meal. It was witnessed by the chamberlain Charles (see M24). His spirit has joined the Mist. The knife is actually the equivalent of a +1 dagger, and since it was owned by the cook, it is able to strike the Mist.

If the room is searched the party can also find a battered rolling pin under some low shelves. It seems somewhat out of place because the rest of the room (save the obvious struggle in the centre) is in meticulous order. In a pinch it could be used as an improvised club, and as it belonged to the cook it can harm the mist.

There is no haunt associated with Rich. He was the only servant to have almost no contact with Damien, and no real love for the house and its people. He loved only the culinary arts.

M11) 'Cold' Storage

This walls, floor and ceiling of this room are completely covered in pale tiles, giving it a cold and sterile feel. Chains hang from the ceiling, from which dangle the skeletal remains of animals, the flesh long since rotted away. There are a number of benches against the walls, with several clay jars and jugs on them.

This was once the 'cold' storage for the kitchen, holding meat, milk, cheese and other perishables. Enough time has passed that these have all rotted away, leaving just residue and a slight dry surface mould on the inside of the containers here.

There is one cheese that remains intact, though it is shot with a strange blue mould. It detects as magical. The cheese itself was a gift to Barrus from a gastronomically minded Arcanist. It is magically preserved, and anyone eating a portion (there is enough cheese for 4 portions) temporarily gains the benefit of a *bull's strength* enchantment (CL 10th - similar to a potion). However, the mould is not part of the cheese, it is in fact a rather nasty mould growing on the dairy product. Anyone eating the cheese must make a Fortitude save DC 16 or contract an illness;

Dysentery - Type disease (parasite), contact or injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 16, **Onset** 1d3 days; **Frequency** 1/day, **Effect** 1d6 nonlethal damage and target is fatigued and staggered; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves.

M12) Pantry

This room is stacked with crates and sacks, and shelves line the walls filled with small jars and boxes. A staircase curls away down the south western wall, leading into darkness below.

This used to be the dry pantry for the kitchen. The crates and sacks hold ancient roots, grains, flour and the like. The jars hold dried herbs, sugar, salt, honey and so forth. Most of the foodstuffs are desiccated and aged beyond use, but a careful search (Perception DC 15) can turn up a number of sealed jars that have not been exposed to air. Most contain fairly common spices, but a knowledgeable individual (Appraise DC 25 or Profession (Cook) DC 15) can find a series of incredibly rare spices from distant, exotic shores. These are worth 200gp in total.

M13) Herb Garden

This heavily overgrown area was once a carefully manicured garden. Poking through a blanket of ash are a few remaining shrubs or weeds. The choking plant life looks sickly, save for one large, vibrant orange flower in the middle of the area.

Once a herb garden for the kitchen, this area was heavily blanketed by the ash from the stables. One plant, a Phoenix Lily has thrived in these conditions, though it is hazardous to any that approach within 30 feet. This particular plant has 5 blossoms.

Phoenix Lily - Hp 42

This large flowering plant has numerous brilliant orange-red, trumpet shaped blossoms. The faint smell of smoke hangs in the air.

Phoenix Lily

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Medium plant

Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +6 natural)

Hp 42 (5d8+20)

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

Defensive Abilities fire thrower; **Immune** plant traits;

Resist fire 10;

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.

Melee 2 slams +6 (1d6+4)

Ranged fiery blossom +4 touch (4d6 fire)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 19, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17 (can't be tripped)

SQ volatile

ECOLOGY

Environment tropical or temperate forest, jungle or swamp

Organization single, or patches (2-4)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fiery Blossom (Su) Each phoenix lily bears 1d4+4 blossoms that it can use as a standard action to produce a single scorching ray. After producing this attack the blossom wilts and dies. The plant must wait 1d2 rounds before it can produce another scorching ray and may only do so as long as it has living blossoms.

Fire Thrower (Ex) When a phoenix lily uses its fiery

blossom ability it does not provoke attacks of opportunity for making ranged attacks when threatened.

Volatile (Su) If the fire resistance of a phoenix lily is exceeded, there is a chance the plant will erupt in a fireball. The plant must succeed at a Fortitude save where the DC is equal to the amount of fire damage taken, after applying fire resistance. Otherwise the plant erupts in a fireball centred on one corner of its occupied square. The fireball deals 1d6 damage for each living blossom on the plant and the Reflex save is DC 16. This save is Constitution based. The phoenix lily is included as a target of the fireball and afterwards all remaining blossoms wilt and die.

Created by Russ Brown (used with permission).

Harvesting Flowers

At the GM's discretion, once the plant is defeated the PCs can harvest any remaining blossoms using a Knowledge (nature) DC 14 check.

Success indicates a blossom is viable for 1d3 days. Failure destroys the blossom

PHOENIX BLOSSOM

Source Phoenix Lily; **Harvest** Knowledge (nature) DC 14

Yield All live blossoms **Price** 75 gp;

Weight 0 lbs.

This orange-red trumpet shaped flower is harvested from a phoenix lily plant and preserved alchemically.

When holding a phoenix blossom, character can make a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check as a standard action to cause the blossom to produce a single scorching ray.

This causes the blossom to wilt and die. The blossom does not wilt after an unsuccessful check.

Created by Russ Brown

M14) Stables (burned out)

Wooden beams stick out like broken teeth from a massive dune of ash here. Only foundations remain of what once must have been a sizable structure. Huge blackened scorch marks reach up the Curtain wall of the old fortress, and the stones are fractured and crumbling with gaping holes showing in the once impressive battlement. The fire must have been incredibly intense here to have affected the stones in this fashion.

The initial fire in the courtyard produced cinders that were carried on the breeze, landing on the roof of the stables. Between the dry thatching, hay and straw and the wooden construction, the stables were doomed, and the fire was the most intense here. The flames were so hot they cracked the stones of the wall, and the transferred heat actually ignited the wooden supports inside the wall, which lead to its collapse (see areas M15, M28 and M37). The fact that this area is surrounded on all sides by tall stone is the only reason the fire did not spread.

If the PCs are willing to dig (for hours, which will certainly result in at least one encounter with the Spirit Mist, if not several), they will find the cracked bones of half a dozen horses, and solidified iron and brass that is all that is left of the metal fittings of tack and the carriage stored here. If they are very fortunate (Perception 25) or extremely thorough (Perception DC 15 after **20 hours** of clearing) they may unearth the one item of value that withstood the fire – a stone horse (*destrier*) that was being 'stored' here. It is deep within the ash, and on its side. The statue has the name **Windstrider** engraved on it (which is its command word). In addition to its regular item powers, Windstrider has an Intelligence of 12, an alignment of Chaotic Neutral and a desire to travel. It can understand, though not speak, common. It has a difficult and willful disposition, though it will obey the person that animated it (begrudgingly).

M15) Curtain Wall (ground level)

This long passage is cluttered with stone and wood debris from the collapsed ceiling and level above. The walls are blackened in many places, particularly around the arrow slits that face the inner yard. The floor is slick with brackish puddles.

As part of the original defences for the keep, this curtain wall has arrow slits facing both outward and inward

– about every 10 feet and offset from each side. There are metal brackets periodically that once held torches or lanterns, but most of these melted in the fire or rusted away over time.

As both levels above have suffered heavy damage, open sky can be seen in several places along the corridor. This entire corridor is considered *difficult terrain* due to the debris and slick puddles.

Evil GM Moment!

If the GM has not used the Spirit Mist yet, this is a perfect place to introduce it, using the terrain to induce genuine fear of being caught by the slow moving nightmare.

The Chapel at the end provides succour, but this will not be immediately apparent to the PCs. The looks on the player's faces when they enter essentially a dead end will be worth it I assure you!

Micah

M16) Chapel

This small tower room has been converted into a shrine – a rarity in the agnostic city of Anduria. The room has a couple of wooden benches that face a small altar. The altar is topped with an icon that looks like a coin balanced on its edge. Several tattered hangings adorn the walls, though whatever was depicted on them has long faded into obscurity. A small trap door is set into the ceiling on the east side.

The trap door leads up to area M29. While there is no immediately obvious way up, a series of offset depressions in the east wall acts as a ladder. These are hidden behind a faded hanging, but can be found with a Perception DC 10 at a glance (or automatically if a player

states they are searching or looking behind the hanging). The trap door is under the rug in area M29, but any exerted force will tear through the degraded carpet.

The Icon is made of stone, and at this time cannot be moved or damaged in any way (see below).

This is a shrine to Rhion Barrakar – Patron of Lost Causes. This long forgotten demi-deity is an aspect of fortune, but one that presides over fool's errands and long-shots. It normally requires a Knowledge (religion) check DC 25 to recognise, however, the PCs recently met a devotee of the god in Adventure 1 - *A Simple Job* (the merchant Thaddeus) and so gain a +10 circumstance bonus to recall any basic facts discussed with Thaddeus.

Barrus attributed his meteoric rise to wealth partly to his own abilities, but partly to good fortune as well. When he discovered the existence of Rhion Barrakar on his first voyage abroad, he immediately identified with the religion, and took the Patron as his own. When he returned and built the manor, he took pains to ensure the faith had a place here, though common sense dictated that it be concealed in an isolated part of the place where guests wouldn't stumble onto it.

In truth this is the one remaining holy site to Rhion Barrakar on this continent. In addition to this being the last effective focus for his power, Rhion Barrakar has taken a special interest in the city, current events and the PCs in general (see the *Campaign Guide* for more details). Once, and only once, if a recently deceased body (within 1 week) is placed onto the altar and a prayer plea is made Rhion, that person will receive the benefit of a *raise dead* spell. Once used, the Chapel will noticeably dim, and the icon will crumble. Knowing the use of the Icon does not require a check in any way, the Party are simply 'aware' of it.

Note that if the GM is going for a grittier experience, or wants to completely remove already rare resurrection magic (see sidebar on page 33) the shrine can produce a lesser healing magic such as *cure critical wounds*, or *mass cure light wounds* instead.

Due to the radiant holy nature of this chapel, the Spirit Mist will not enter it. However, once the power of the shrine is expended, it can enter as it chooses.



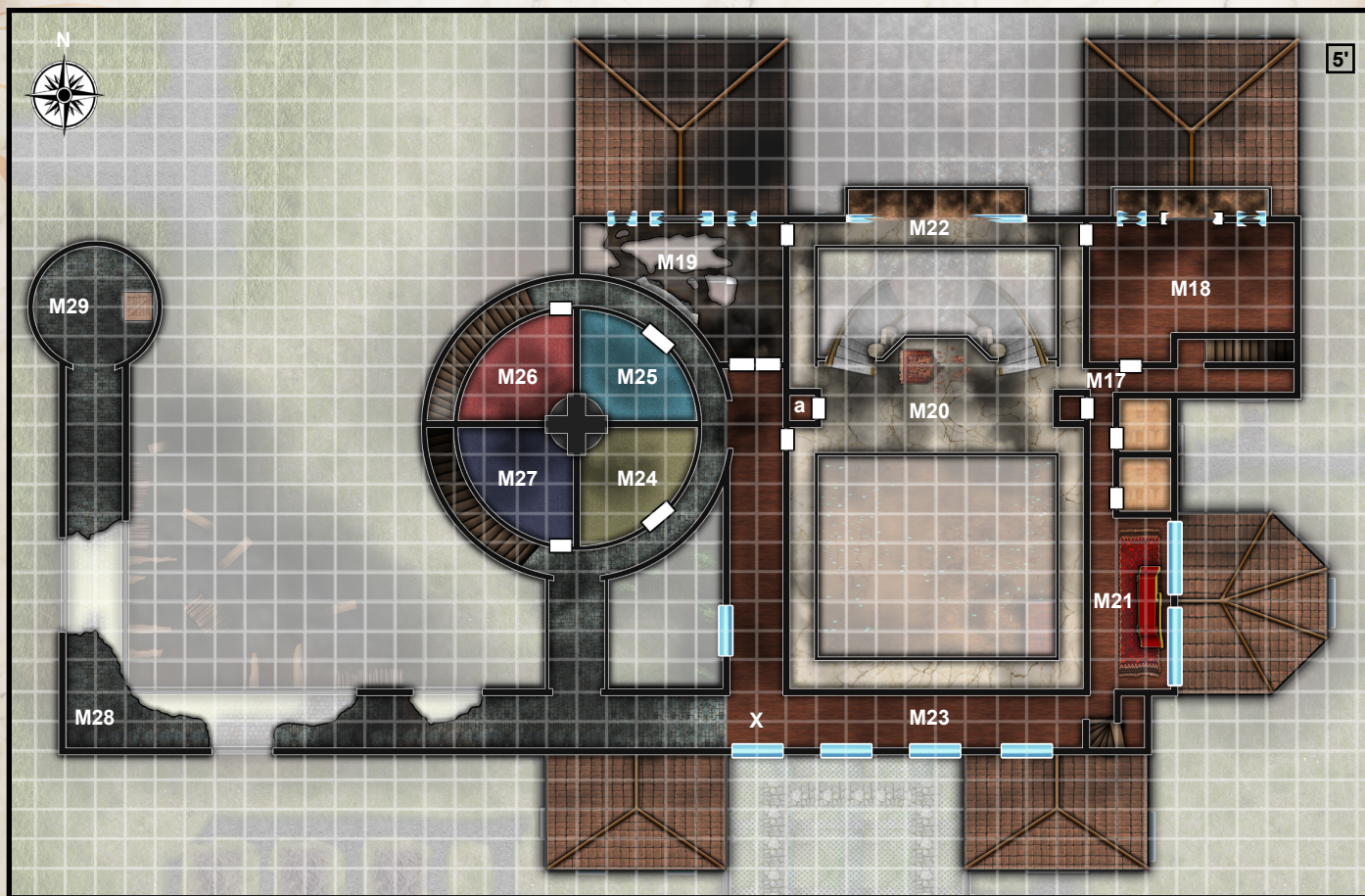
M17) Ablutions

Two scorched wooden doors can be found along the east wall here. Each has a brass plaque that is just barely legible, one reading Ladies, and the other Gentlemen.

Each of the rooms contains a fitted porcelain basin and a wooden stall with a bench that a chamber pot can be placed under. Most of the fittings are worn or broken. The small room across from them is a linen closet with faded, smoky-smelling linens and towels.

M18) Entertaining Room

Soot stained tapestries and the broken remnants of furniture suggest that this might once have been a parlour or sitting room. The floor sags alarmingly in places. The frames of bay doors lead out onto a small balcony, and you can see the charred remains of a body slumped over the railing, a blackened hunting bow clutched in its arms.



Entering this room triggers a haunt.

A cacophony of laughter erupts all around you as the room transforms to a scene of merriment. A well-dressed young woman entertains a group of equally well dressed men and women, lying languidly on divans and couches, drinking heavily from goblets of wine served by several servants in house livery. The room is lit by braziers and a smoke haze permeates the air. Off to one side, a small dark haired boy stands quietly in the shadows, staring silently into the flames.

"My dear you throw such wonderful occasions for us" one woman giggles, her words slurring "it must cost you a fortune to live like this". The young woman smiles a drunken smile "I love entertaining, and money is no object" she gushes, draining her goblet and gesturing for a refill. "Besides, my husband is over the seas making yet another fortune I suspect", she says, a bitter hint creeping into her tone.

An awkward pause settles over the conversation, and the

young woman looks around, spying the boy in the shadows. "Damien! What are you doing here? I told you to go to your room and bother us no longer!". She turns to one of the young men, a handsome and powerfully built specimen of nobility. "Ramius, could you?" she purrs, her tone seductive, and the man rises from his couch and approaches the boy. Shadows hide the cruel look on his face from the other guests, though his voice sounds almost congenial "You should mind your mother boy, lest you be punished". The boy looks up in abject fear, then flees the room as fast as he can.

Each of the PCs must make Will saves vs DC 14 or be subject to *fear*, fleeing in a random direction for one round (Roll 1d3 - 1 indicates out onto the balcony, 2 indicates onto the main balcony above the entrance (area M22) and 3 indicates down the hall toward the hideaway (area M21). If they encounter and hazards in the surrounding rooms as a result of this movement, they suffer a -2 to any checks relating to avoiding these effects.

Raising the Dead

In a campaign where religions are close to outlawed and cleric magic is rare, *raise dead* and similar magic are next to impossible to obtain.

In the entire city there are only 2 or 3 individuals even capable of such magic and they will not use it lightly, or without a direct furtherance of their cause.

This 'gift' in the shrine will only work for the PCs, not anyone else who may stumble onto it, and it will only work once. It can be 'saved' beyond the end of this adventure, remaining until used.

In many ways this is a boon to resurrect a favoured character or 'reset' a run of poor luck that results in death.

Eventually the PCs are likely to have access to such magic themselves, but this is just another reason why they alone in the city are capable of resisting the growing threat.

The people depicted are Damien (aged 8), his mother Hellena (aged 26) and her new lover Ramius (aged 28). Ramius is the man depicted in most of the haunts

The body is that of a servant killed by the initial explosion of fire. Having seen the approach of the PTC collectors, he grabbed the hunting bow and a quiver from the trophy room (area M33), and took position here to assist Master Damien if needed. The bow is fire damaged beyond use, as are most of the arrows, but three arrows remain intact, all of which are +1 *human bane* arrows (these were secretly added to the hunting gear by Ramius when he was still alive, to pursue a very sick pastime). The servant is part of the Spirit Mist, but the arrows *did not belong to him*, and thus cannot affect it.

The balcony was badly damaged in the fire, and is on the verge of collapse. The first time anyone stands on it, it falls through the weakened roof below it into area M8 – the Ladies' Parlour. The triggering person must make a Reflex save DC 13, or fall 15 feet to the floor below, suffering 1d6 falling damage, and 1d6 piercing damage from the wood debris.

M19) 'Cold' Room

Whatever intended purpose this room had has been lost to time and fire. Large sections of the floor have fallen through to the level below. The windows are long gone and the walls are blackened and cracked. A large stone fireplace has been built into the Keep wall. Huddled deep in its recesses is a skeleton frozen in a pose of supplication with one hand gripping what appears to be a hammer.

Entering this room triggers a haunt.

Suddenly the fireplace bursts into flame, a roaring fire where it was cold only moments before. The room has changed too. Gone are the blank walls, replaced by warm wood panelling draped with tapestries and paintings. A boy sits before the fireplace, too close, staring deeply into the flames. An elderly servant stands nearby, sweating silently in his house livery. A door bursts open, and a burly man storms in, followed by a weary looking young woman. "What the hell is this boy? Wasting wood on a warm night. It's as hot as hell in here!" the man rages, his expression set with disdain.

The boy looks past him to the woman. "I'm cold mother. I need the fire" he says in a small voice. The woman cringes as if she's been slapped, and the man's face twists in hatred.

"Don't you ignore me boy. I'm the man of this house!" he strides over and grabs the boy by the collar, hoisting him off his feet and shaking him. "You've no respect boy. I've seen your like before. I'll teach you respect. You like fire do you?!" The man slowly extends the dangling boy toward the flames, ignoring his protests and flailing. The servant's eyes lock with the man's, almost pleading, but looks away as the man scowls. "Mother! Help me!" the boy exclaims, fighting desperately as he is inched closer to the blaze. The woman begins to weep and turns away as the boy is pushed closer, flames licking at his clothes. He begins to scream as cloth and hair catch fire".

All PCs must make Will saves at DC 14 or suffer 1d4 points of 'burning' damage, localized to their back of their

shoulders and neck. While the damage feels hot, this is not a fire effect, it is untyped. Fire resistance or immunity will not protect against it. It appears as a burn, but is actually psychic in nature. Once the save is resolved the haunt disappears and the room returns to normal.

The people depicted are Damien (aged 10), his mother Hellena (aged 28) and her then paramour Ramius (aged 30). Ramius is the man depicted in most of the haunts.

The body is that of the elderly servant in the haunt. He survived the fire with many others, and the first night of Spirit Mist attacks. He, along with the remaining few, armed themselves against this unknown attacker while they sought to find the missing servants. The old man was chased into this room and cornered by the mist, dying as he took cover. His spirit joined the Spirit Mist. The hammer is a standard household carpentry hammer, but can be used to harm the mist, treating it as a light hammer.

The floor of this room is very unstable, except where it attaches to the keep wall. While traversing any 5 foot section that is not adjacent to the 'keep wall' there is a 25% chance of causing a collapse. Any collapse affects the triggering square, and every adjacent square, all characters on these squares must make a Reflex DC 14 or fall to area M7 on the level below (1d6 falling damage).

M20) Grand Balcony

This grand balcony overlooks both the main entry on one side and the ballroom on the other. The marble flooring and banisters are intact, though scorched and scarred with fire damage. Scraps of carpet and tapestry remain, giving the impression that this was once a very opulent viewing area. Several heraldic shields still cling tenaciously to the walls, though they are warped and obscured by soot. Narrow walkways extend to the front of the building where a set of shattered doors leads to a platform overlooking the front courtyard.

Most of this walkway is safe, though the section leading to the external balcony has wooden supports that have been weakened by the fire. There is a 50% chance that anyone crossing here causes a section to crumble and fall, which occupants requiring a Reflex DC 13 to avoid falling into the entry 15 feet below, and suffering 1d6 damage.

If cleaned and searched, among the shields the PCs can

find a masterwork mithril buckler than withstood the heat. In addition to its value as a shield (and its metal value) it has a spring mechanism that projects a mithril blade from the leading edge. This acts as a spiked shield when revealed, and grants a +5 circumstance bonus to Sleight of Hand to hide its nature. The spike can be activated as a free action, and hidden as a standard action.

M20a) Cloak Room

Just off to the west side of the inner balcony is a small closet. This is actually a cloak room where servants took guests coats and cloaks. The outside of the door is scorched, and the inside smells heavily of smoke, but the contents weathered the fire intact. There are several cloaks and coats of value (total of 40gp once laundered, and a single *cloak of protection* +1 hidden in the back.

M21) Hideaway

Hidden at the end of two hallways is a little nook with a loveseat set under a large set of curtained windows.

A discrete hideaway for guests on social occasions, this was favoured for a little privacy or stolen moments of romance. The first time the PCs enter here there is a chance (20%) that the ghost of Hellena can be found here, staring at the curtained windows as if looking through them to the sky beyond. She will seem surprised, and a little guilty if found here, before retreating quickly into the ethereal.

If the loveseat is thoroughly searched, a small gold earring set with a ruby can be found down the back of one of the cushions, lost by the last couple to avail themselves of this romantic spot. The earring is worth only 20gp without its counterpart.

M22) Balcony

This marble balcony is circled by an ornate rail, and overlooks the blasted courtyard below. Ash lies thick here, and swirls in the breeze.

If the Flaming Skeletons are still intact in the courtyard below, they attack anyone who ventures out onto this balcony. Being constructed entirely of stone this balcony

has remained structurally intact.

M23) Upper Gallery

This long hallway stretches from one side of the manor to the other, blending from the newer stonework of the house into the older stonework of the curtain wall preserved from the original keep. Occasional paintings dot the walls, and these look to be portraits or pastoral scenes by a gifted amateur. The bulk of the south wall is given over to massive floor to ceiling windows overlooking the grounds. Though dusty, these are mostly intact, with only a few panes broken.

The first time the PCs enter this hall they will see what appears to be a little girl looking out the windows at the point marked X. She seems to be staring out over the grounds. She wavers briefly, then disappears. If the PCs look out the windows at the exact point the apparition was viewing from they see a blue fire flicker on the island in the river (see Grounds area G9) for a few brief moments, then go out. This is the capricious spirit of Alluria attempting to lure them to the island. Her intent is determined by whether or not the PCs have viewed the courtyard Haunt (see Courtyard and Island descriptions).

The paintings are of scenes and locations in and around the Retreat (the ward the manor is in), and portraits of various people and staff of the manor. Even without the Appraise skill it is clear these are amateur works (painted by Hellena) and are not valuable. If the PCs disturb, damage or steal the paintings, Hellena (unless temporarily destroyed or permanently set to rest) appears in a rage and attacks the culprit for 1d4 rounds, before retreating through the floor. If reduced to 1/2 Hp she also retreats.

Hellena (Unique Ghost) Hp - 32. Stats are found in the Bestiary on page 59.

The last painting on the south wall, east end (nearest the stairs) depicts a couple on a stroll through a garden. It has a key hung on a hook behind it. This is the 'spare' to the door above (Area M33 - locked stairwell). While not particularly hidden, PCs would have to actively state they are searching to discover it (ie they can't find it 'at a glance' as they move through the hall).

M24) Chamberlain's Room

The door to this room is locked, but it's old and weathered, with a hardness 5 and 3 hp, and a break DC of 10. The lock has a disable device DC 20.

The interior of this room is reasonably well appointed, and has withstood the ravages of time well. The walls are hung with banners and tapestries, depicting battles and heraldic crests. There is a comfortable looking bed, with a locker at its foot. Against one wall is a writing desk, heavy with parchments and dotted with candle wax. Hung on one wall is the scabbard for a large sword but the sword itself is missing.

This is the personal room of Charles the chamberlain, one of the few servants that permanently resided in the manor. Charles was Burrus' personal retainer in his early years, and a warrior of no small experience. When Burrus became wealthy, Charles was appointed as head of the household staff and stayed on to serve the family faithfully.

Charles was the last servant to remain in the house. He survived the first night attacks by the Spirit Mist, and even caught a glimpse of it slaying another servant (and noted the potential weakness in it). He sent the remaining servants away, hastily made some notes, and then sought his master's study. He knew that Damien researched the occult and hoped he might find answers there. Unfortunately that is where he died (see Area M39). His spirit has joined the Mist.

The furniture in the room has a layer of dust on it, but is in otherwise good condition. The locked door and lack of external windows has helped preserve this area. The tapestries and banners depict battles on another continent and the heraldry is that of the forces involved. These were battles Charles was personally involved in in his youth. Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility) DC 20 will impart information about the locales, participants and outcomes of the battles (the GM is free to create a history for these if desired, but they have no impact on the campaign). The banners and tapestries are worth 100gp as a set, but if identified and a suitable historian or collector is located could be worth up to 150gp.

The papers on the desk are mostly household administration related, such as pantry inventory, requests, invoices and delivery docketts, as well as a few

party invitations (for Damien) and a basic day planner.

However, on top there is an open journal and a hastily scrawled letter.

The journal is 30 years of sporadic entries, as Charles chronicled the major events (and only those) in his life. The early entries commence with the purchase of the land and building of the house and span the time to the night after the fire (see below). This gives the PCs access to any and all information in the Adventure Background (in observational narrative form from Charles' perspective) and it recounts major events such as those depicted in all the haunts. Once the PCs have read the journal, they gain +2 circumstance bonus against the effects of any haunts they encounter, since they have foreknowledge of the scenes. In addition if the journal is used in any efforts to return Damien to the moral path, add a +1 to the roll (See the *Campaign Guide* for more information). While the journal has both positive and painful associations, the narrative speaks well of Damien, reminding him he was once loved and respected by those around him.

The last journal entry is the night after the fire, and reads;

"The fire is finally out. The storm helped, but not before wind borne embers took to the stables. They are completely gone. Many of the servants have left. I do not blame them. The Master has been arrested, and the light of our lives was extinguished by the greed of shallow men."

We buried Alluria on the island today. We're all still in shock and it's hard to know what to do. Tomorrow those of us that remain will see to the others. That ornamental graveyard will finally get some occupants, may heaven rest their souls."

The hastily scrawled note is possibly of most interest it reads.

"Not all those that disappeared left. Some were taken by the nightmare spirit. I saw it take Rich. It engulfed and sucked the life from him. I swear I saw his face added to the unquiet souls trapped within. Our weapons are useless. It fears and feels nothing, although I thought I saw it recoil when I threw Rich's rolling pin at it in my haste to flee. Maybe it still clings to the vestiges of its life. I do not know."

If you are reading this flee for your life. This place is cursed, of that I do not doubt"

M25) Cook's Room

This room has only very plain furnishings, making it seem both large and empty. A narrow bed rests up against one wall, while a desk and bookshelf are pressed up against another.

This was Rich the cook's room. He was one of the few servants to have permanent residence in the manor. Rich was also the only servant that really didn't socialize or feel connected to the household or its staff, being a cold and aloof but brilliant gastronomist. His attitude was tolerated by Barrus, Ramius and Damien in turn because of his skill, and he himself stayed because of a generous wage and complete autonomy in his kitchen, and the chance to cook for the wealthy and elite of Anduria (at least in the early years).

Rich's room appears plain and sparse (at least on the surface) with a basic bed and writing desk/bookshelf. There is a footlocker under the bed – not immediately apparent, but easily discoverable with a cursory glance. It contains plain clothing and a number of chef's outfits. The room has two significant points of interest.

The bookshelf contains numerous recipe and cooking technique volumes, including some penned by Rich himself. Access to the full set of these books would offer a +2 circumstance bonus to Profession (cook) checks. Rich was a culinary genius, and some of his recipes were unique masterpieces. If the right buyer was found, Rich's recipe book would sell for upward of 200gp, though the book set would no longer grant the skill bonus without it.

Rich commanded a massive wage for his services, but lived an ascetic lifestyle. Everything he needed or desired could be found in the Kitchen below, so he did not spend his wage. Instead, he requested, and received, his wage in yearly allotments in gold bar form, and hid them in the base of his mattress. There are 25 gold bars hidden here worth 100gp each. They can be found only by extremely perceptive or lucky characters if the room is searched (Perception DC 20) or by those specifically stating they cut open and search the mattress (automatic).

M26) Serving / Chambermaid's Room

This cramped room contains 6 bunk beds, a set of matching footlockers, a large wardrobe and a dusty full length mirror fixed to the wall.

Most of the staff that worked at the manor were brought in each day by carriage (long destroyed in the stable fire) from the city proper and returned each night. However there was a roster of 'late shift' staff that stayed temporarily at times, or when the manor hosted parties or events. This room served as a communal sleeping room for the female staff that were unable to return home on any given night.

The wardrobe contains a number of serving maid outfits in the house colours (in various sizes) and a couple of nice (though inexpensive) dresses. The footlockers contain a few plain garments and a scattering of personal items belonging to either staff that died here or fled and did not return to collect them. There are a few hairbrushes, a hand mirror, several buttons and a spool of thread, a couple of shells, a dried flower, a small crudely carved wooden cat and a necklace of brightly coloured beads.

The full length mirror is 5 feet high by 2 feet wide low quality silvered glass (slight warping), and if it was carefully removed and transported (25lbs, 0 hardness, 1 hp) it might be sold for 50gp.

M27) Serving Men's Room

This cramped room contains 6 bunk beds, a set of matching footlockers, a large wardrobe and a full length mirror fixed to the wall. Everything is covered in a layer of dust.

This room is essentially a mirror of area M26 except that it has a number of male uniforms in the wardrobe.

The footlockers contain some old clothes, several combs, pins and laces, three quartz chess pieces (knight, rook and pawn), a steel coin (plain faced), a worn deck of playing cards, a carved wooden coaster from the Drunken Pixie and half a bag of dried fruit (harder than leather now).

M28) Collapsed Hall

Much of this hall is exposed to the outside now, with large sections of the inner wall, and a portion of the outer wall collapsed into the level below. Much of the floor is gone, and the ceiling above. The entire hall is blackened stone, a clear indication the fire was at its fiercest here.

This hall is open to the elements, and pools of water congeal in the sooty stone. Large sections of the floor are missing and need to be jumped or bridged (or another method found) to be crossed. The stones grate a little when any weight is applied, but what remains is stable enough. The largest gap is just over 10 feet. Either the trestle tables from Area 6 or ladders from area 45 could be used as temporary bridges. Attempting to jump the gaps (10 feet and 12 feet respectively) requires an Acrobatics (jump) check at DC 10 (for the 10 foot gap and DC 12 for the (12 foot gap). There is room for a 10 foot run-up on both jumps from either direction.

M29) Meditation Chamber

This chamber is oddly plain, with just a simple faded red carpet and several mouldering cushions on the floor. There is a trap door in the ceiling on the east side, but no obvious means to reach it.

This room was set out as a meditation chamber by Barrus, who was a devotee of this spiritual practice, learned on one of his trips abroad. This chamber was isolated enough from the rest of the house to create the conditions he desired. It hasn't been used since his time.

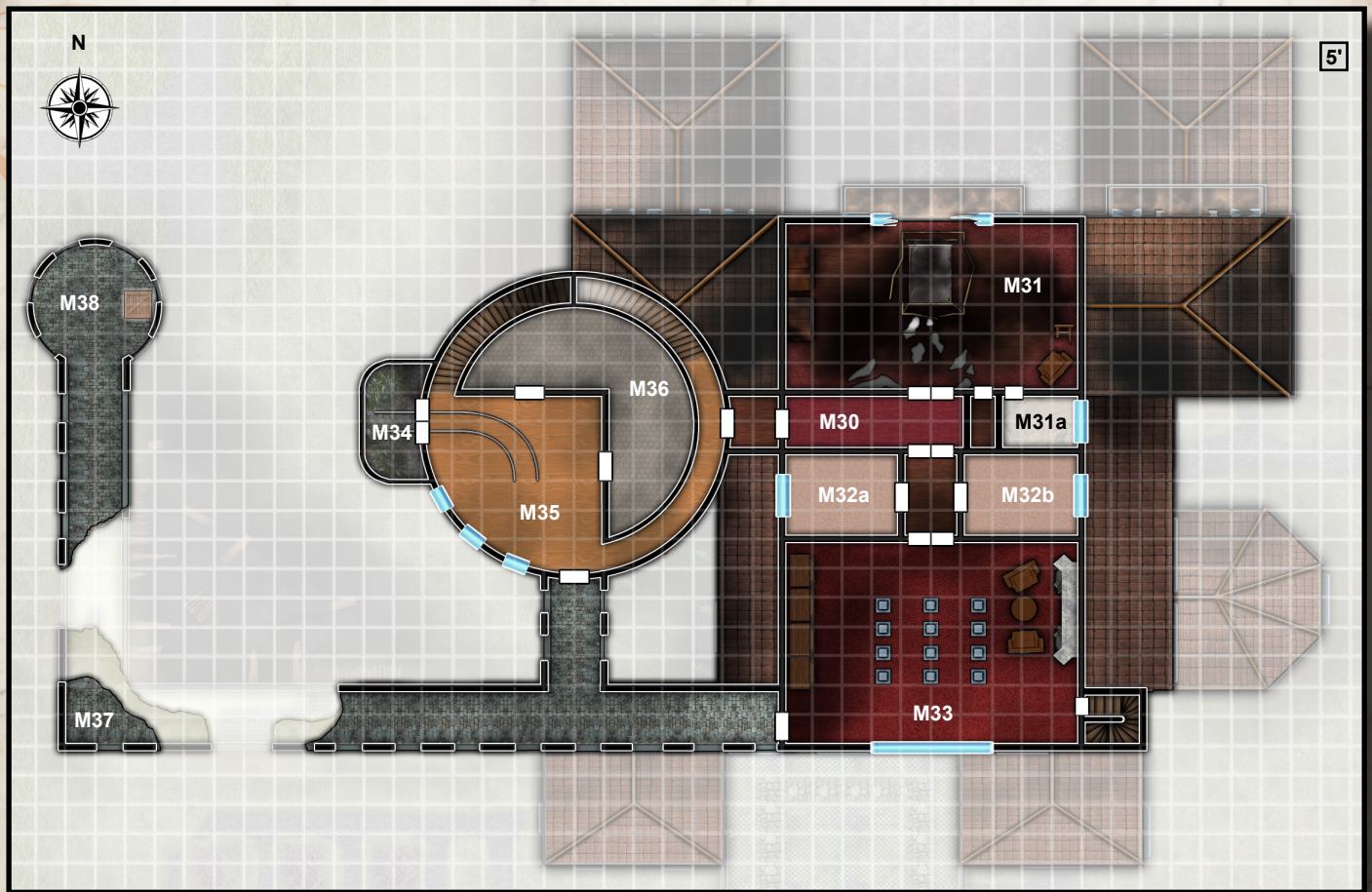
Unless the PCs have been to M16 below, the trap door is completely concealed, and requires a Perception DC 25 to find unless they possess extraordinary means to do so.

There are no ladders or wall depressions here to access the ceiling trap door. A ladder from area M46 would be ideal, or the wall can be climbed, though it has a base Climb DC of 25. The trap door leads up to the tower top (area M38).

M30) Hall

This dark hall is carpeted in burgundy, with mouldering fabric hangings clinging to the walls. Set every 5 feet is an ornate brass lantern fitting, though several are broken or missing. At the end of the hall is a massive floor to ceiling mirror, covered in grime and spider webbed with cracks.

This was once intended to be an impressive promenade to the bedroom, though age and mistreatment have robbed it of its splendour. The mirror was cracked by



Ramius in one of his frequent rages, and Damien never saw a reason to replace it.

M31) Master Bedroom

The once magnificent wooden double doors open on to a decadent bedchamber of ridiculous proportion. Before the fire this chamber must have been a monument to lavish excess, with indications that it was once filled with the finest furnishings money could buy. Unfortunately its clear the fire caused considerable damage here.

The huge floor to ceiling windows are mere empty and blackened metal frames. Most of the carpeting, wall hangings and furniture are little more than charred remains. In the centre of the room is a twisted brass framework with scorched remnants of a canopied bed clinging to it. The path to the bed is treacherous, with several holes dropping away into the vast entry hall below.

To the east are several burnt stumps of wood, which could have been anything but are completely unrecognizable now. On the west side there are several partially burned wardrobes, the remains sagging and leaning precariously.

In the south east corner, a singed but otherwise intact high backed reading chair sits alone, a matching side table on its side, legs broken away.

The first time the PCs enter the room read the following;

In the chair sits a ghostly figure of a woman. She is young and beautiful, though her expression is cold and aloof. She wears a finely tailored dress, several decades out of fashion. She reads from a ghostly book, studiously ignoring your presence.

If the PCs have seen any of the haunts, the figure is clearly the woman depicted in most (Hellena) though she appears in better health (as a ghost) than she does in any of the scenes.

Death has not been kind to Hellenia, as life was not. Troubled, she cannot accept that her life has ended or that the house is past its heyday. She exists emotionally in a period where she was full of hope, not long after marrying Barrus and before Damien's birth. She has repressed everything else as it is too painful to confront.

Selfish, vain and very proud, she does her best to ignore the party, though if they begin to 'bother her' she calls for the servants to have them ejected. Bewildered that her orders are met with silence, she demands the party leaves, or her husband Barrus will see them "whipped for their insolence". If left alone she will remain here unless the party's actions elsewhere stir her (such as interfering with her art in area M23 or her remains in the crypt).

If she is confronted with events after the time period she has limited herself to (anything including Ramius or Damien) or evidence that her existence isn't as she sees it (the damaged house, lack of servants etc.) she becomes enraged, transforming into an older, thinner, more sickly version of herself (as she was before her death) and attacks the PCs, retreating if hard pressed to fight in a series of hit-and-run actions, harassing the party and leading them into traps (or the Spirit Mist) until they leave the grounds or she is destroyed. If only temporally destroyed, when she rises she appears as her younger self again until she is reminded of reality.

Hellenia (Unique Ghost) Hp – 32. Stats are found in the Bestiary on page 59.

The room is also dangerously unstable, given the damage it has sustained. In addition to the current holes in the floor, any movement here is likely to cause a collapse, similar to Area M19. While traversing any 5 foot section

that is not adjacent to any of the walls there is a 25% chance of causing a collapse. Any collapse affects the triggering square, and every adjacent square, all characters on these squares must make a Reflex DC 14 or fall to area M1 below. Unlike area M7, this fall is 30 feet, and the damage is 3d6 falling damage on impact.

There is almost nothing of value remaining as the fire ripped through the entire chamber, which was particularly susceptible given the amount of cloth, carpet, linens and wood within. A thorough search will turn up the charred remnants of antique furniture, exotic cloth, expensive outfits, rare books and the like, enough



to identify a massive fortune was destroyed here. On the east side (in and around the charred wood), the party finds molten and resolidified glass, silver and brass, with a few drops of gold and platinum. This was Hellenia's dressing table, and contained a large mirror and her jewelry box. It is all hopelessly mixed and cannot be extracted, however close examination (Perception DC 20 reveals several gems imbedded in the mass that survive. These can be chipped free. There are half a dozen very small diamonds (6 in total, 50gp each), three small rubies (40gp each) three emeralds, one of which is larger (2x 30gp and 75gp) and three sapphires, one of which is larger (2x 35gp and 90gp).

31a) Master Bathroom

A blackened door crumbles at your touch, giving way to a marble sheathed bathroom, complete with a massive free standing porcelain bathtub the entire party could fit in. Opposite the door there is a basin and mirror set above a vanity

stocked with a veritable cornucopia of small glass bottles of every colour and shape.

The bathroom was not directly damaged by the fire, but it did spread to the ballroom below and the floor is structurally undermined, particularly under the weight of the bath. If the PCs leave the bath alone the room will remain intact, however if they shift its weight even a little (for example by 'testing' its weight to lift or getting in it) the entire floor of the room collapses into the Ballroom below. Anyone within 10 feet of the door can make a Reflex save vs DC 14 to dive to safety, but anyone further in falls automatically. The floor below is 30 feet down, incurring 3d6 points of falling damage. If the floor collapses all the perfumes are lost.

The vanity has 46 bottles on it, various perfumes, lotions, unguents and cosmetics from Anduria and all over the world. These used to belong to Hellena. In the intervening years most of them have 'gone bad', though in a few cases that might be hard to discern. There are a handful that have worth, as anyone making a DC 20 Appraise or Craft (Alchemy) check can determine (or any other appropriate skill, GM's discretion). These 'good' fragrances are extremely pleasant to the senses, and any female character wearing those gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Charisma based skill checks vs individuals that might find them attractive or delicious (GM's Discretion). Alternately the GM might rule that males wearing the fragrances gain the same bonuses, but these are distinctly feminine fragrances. There are enough exotic fragrances for 5 applications lasting 1 hour each. If the PCs would rather try to sell them, they might be worth a total of 250gp to the right buyer. Any attempts to 'reverse engineer' them fail as the vast majority of the ingredients are unknown even here in Anduria (they were rare and ruinously expensive in their native counties when Barrus bought them for Hellena over twenty years ago).

The mirror, if carefully removed, weighs 20lbs and could be sold for 30gp.

M32) Bedrooms (a&b)

This room is a well-appointed, carpeted bedroom with a large soft looking bed, a wardrobe, a desk and chair, with a curtained window overlooking the grounds.

These rooms were originally Damien's childhood room

(a) and a guest room (b). In Ramius' time Damien was moved out to the tower room (much to his relief) and the rooms were both for guests (often Ramius' and Hellena's favoured friends). After Hellena's death, Damien had the old servant Jasper take one (he was far too frail to make the city trip every day), and hoped Violet and Alluria would eventually take the other.

Room (a) has a few of Jasper's personal belongings, including his serving outfits and some well-worn personal clothes, a straw hat and some fishing gear, as well as a number of wood, stone and shell carvings, and an old carving knife (which can harm the Spirit Mist - treat as a dagger).

Room (b) has almost no personal items, except two dresses, one for a woman and one for a girl, both very fine quality (10gp each). It is clear they have never been worn.

M33) Library & Trophy Room

This massive chamber is something of a cross between a library and a museum. The floor is covered in a deep maroon carpet so brittle with age that it cracks as you step upon it. The South wall is dominated by massive 15 foot high windows that look out over the grounds. They are intact, though grime clings to them and several cracks are apparent.

The west wall is given over to floor to ceiling bookshelves, most of which are full, and a rolling ladder to access them. To the east side is a huge fireplace before which are two high backed chairs and side table between them. Above the fireplace and along the east wall are a number of mounted heads and other trophies.

The centre of this room is dominated by a dozen marble display podiums, each with an exotic item and a brass descriptor plaque.

This room has stood the test of time and fire better than most. The door to the south east leads to a stairwell down to level 2 and is locked (DC 20 to unlock, or DC 20 to break. Hardness 4, 5hp). The key can be found in area M23.

The bookshelves have over 600 tomes and scrolls, though most are badly degraded and will need transcribing to be preserved. Handling the books more than once will

see the pages literally disintegrate under the touch. The books are from all over the world, some in different languages (though most are in common), and topics range from political treatises, historical tomes and factual lore on a range of subjects to biographies, fictional tales and children's stories. The mixture is incredibly diverse and there seems to be no specific theme or continuity to the collection.

The entire collection is worth about 10,000gp in total, but is effectively worthless if not restored. Restoration means hiring scribes or scribing the books personally with the Profession (Scribe) Skill. Scribe costs vary, but on average the cost will run about 1sp per page plus the cost of the medium (parchment, book etc) and ink. A good scribe can transcribe 20-50 pages in a day depending on quality, or 1/10 of that for illustration work. Conservatively, transcribing the entire collection will take about 1000 'scribe days', at a cost of around 4000 gp total.

Anyone with that successfully makes an Appraise DC 20 check, that very carefully searches the book case with minimal touching (several hours), can find the most valuable tomes (1d6 tomes worth 1d4x50gp each) that can be sold to judicious collectors.

On the east side of the room, the high backed chairs are leather, but they are cracked with age, and uncomfortable to sit in. The side table has a crystal decanter and 2 glasses (50gp). The decanter has an inch of sludge in the bottom that is unidentifiable and completely unpalatable.

The huge fireplace has an empty hanger above it, with a plaque below that reads "the Bow of Strunus, first hunter of the Vhengels". The bow is actually that found on the body of the servant in area M18. It was gifted to Barrus on his travels. He used it to hunt the creatures mounted nearby. Ramius also used it to hunt, and his trophies have been added to the wall as well.

The trophies mounted on the wall include a selection of creatures, and the value represents what they could be sold for; A buck head (10gp), a wolf head (15gp), a bear's head (25gp), the pelt of a wolverine (25gp), an owlbear head (50gp), a scaled hide (forest drake, but the head was too badly damaged to mount, 75gp), and a mantichore pelt (the head was 'too humanlike' to mount for Barrus' tastes, 75gp).

Nearby is a more disturbing collection of trophies. Each is a patch of flayed skin in a frame, 9 in all, with no plaque or reference. A Heal Check (DC 15) will determine they are human skin. Ramius used to secretly hunt people in the woods, either those he came across by chance, or those he kidnapped and set loose. It was this discovery by Damien that finally led to Ramius' 'accident'. Hellena was unaware of the macabre nature of these trophies, believing them to be rabbit skins (as told to her by Ramius). After tracking down the victims remains, returning them to their families and making reparations, Damien left the gruesome trophies there as a reminder that evil can come in any form, not just the supernatural.

The display items in the centre of the room rest lightly atop 3 foot tall marble plinths. They are;

- An axe made of an intricately carved bone (handle – human femur) and a wedge of obsidian (blade), bound with gut and adorned with feathers. It appears to be stained with old blood. It can be used as an obsidian battleaxe. The plaque reads: *Vhengel Ceremonial Axe used for ritual sacrifice.*
- A leathery breastplate made from a strange grey hide (Elephant skin). Can be worn as hide armour. The plaque reads: *Earthshaker Armour from Astherium*
- A delicate blown glass bottle, streaked with rainbow colours and fitted with a wax sealed stopper (the colours are deep enough the bottle is opaque). Filled with ash. The plaque reads: *Whelumian Soul Bottle*
- A mounted spider-like creature that is 2 feet across, has a green, spiked chitin exoskeleton, 8 legs that are serrated (and very sharp) on the inner edge, and horns above its mandibles. It has only a single green compound eye between its horns. The plaque reads: *Devil Spider from the Rhelden Wilds*
- A set of pan pipes made from lengths of coral and bound by a fibrous string. The plaque reads: *Coral Pipes, unknown origin.*
- A ceramic bowl with a series of 23 smooth red river stones, each carved with a different, intricate rune. The plaque reads: *Sardelvian Seer's Fate Stones.*
- A squat statuette of a horrific creature sitting on a

stone block. The creature has a squid-like head, vaguely manlike body and dragon like wings folded against its back. Its knees are drawn up. It is both fascinating and horrifying to look upon. The plaque reads: *Idol found in abandoned Kerresai temple.*

- A delicate glass curio that vaguely resembles a tree root system or a web. The plaque reads: *Lightning Strike Glass from the Endless Desert*
- An empty plinth. The plaque reads: *The Limits of Man* (This is of course intended to be empty. Something of a personal motto to Barrus, who believed there were no limits on a man but those he set himself).
- A copper skull, discoloured with green verdigris, human looking, missing the lower jaw and with two inch long fangs instead of canines (It is an actually skull dipped in bronze). The plaque reads: *Skull of a Delantren Vampire*
- A fragile vellum scroll, unrolled and displaying a strange script, with a heavy wax seal affixed to the bottom of the page. The wax is white, and bears a stylized stag. (It's a rare language, but if deciphered with Linguistics DC 25, or comprehend languages, it is a letter of commendation to Barrus for valour in bringing supplies to a besieged city named Vhalantar, signed by 'Patriarch Thespis'. The plaque reads: *The Gratitude of a Nation* (a little self-aggrandizing, and not wholly accurate).
- An empty plinth. This used to hold the bejewelled family crest that now sits in Damien's study (area M39). The plaque reads: *The Birth of an Empire.*

M34) Balcony

This balcony is slick with pooled water and ash, and has a small track fixed to the floor that leads in through a set of double doors. Looking out, it does offer a good view of the west side of the grounds.

The balcony is at the same height as the parapet wall, and quite close to the guard tower top. From here the characters can possibly see (Perception DC 15) what looks like a fallen wooden frame and shapeless lump on the tower top. It is also possible to spot the lonely blue fire of Alluria's ghost on the Island (area G9), though

The Display Trophies

The trophies have been designed with flexibility in mind, depending on what the GM wants from them.

The trophies listed are interest items that have no particular purpose for the adventure or the AP. They also have no value listed. It is here the GM can choose to add special campaign items of their choice by simply substituting, or give value (or not) to each based on the wealth they wish to allocate in their campaign.

The adventure sits pretty close to the Wealth by Level guidelines, so if GM's wish to stick to this they could indicate the items are badly decayed or damaged. If they would like to add more gold value into the campaign the items could have rare and historical value in the hundreds of GP range.

Similarly, the origins listed for each item are insignificant to this AP, and could be changed to official or homebrew world locations to tie the campaign to a setting.

impossible to make out what it is (Perception DC 15 during the day, automatic at night).

M35) Observatory

This conspicuously empty room has a number of odd features. The first is a track fixed to the floor that curves from the centre of the room out through a set of double doors, which have been purposefully crafted to allow for it. There is nothing on the track, and ends abruptly in the middle of the room.

The walls have a few scraps of parchment and paper stuck to them in odd places, as if adornments had been hastily ripped from the walls.

Looking up you see that the ceiling is painted in a fresco depicting a starry sky.

It is pretty obvious a number of items have been removed from here. Damien once had a telescope and star charts here, but relocated them to his tower in the city when he abandoned the manor (see the last adventure – *Ignorance is Bliss*).

M36) Alchemy Lab

Spread across the semi-circle of the outer wall of this chamber is an elaborate alchemical apparatus made of glass and tubes and metal, in a twisting web of confusing lengths, flasks and pots. Most of the glassware is tinted with residue from unknown solutions, and there are several large scorch marks in various locations suggesting some rather unexpected results in the past.

The inner walls have an array of shelves and workbenches, though there are significant gaps and overturned jars, like it was ransacked at some point.

This was Damien's alchemy lab before he relocated it to the tower in the city. He took anything of significant use or value, but a lot was left behind because it was too bulky or fragile, or easily replaceable.

An inspection of the alchemy lab shows that it is actually several independent configurations that can be linked to form a single unit. It is also obvious that the units are inoperable as several key components have been removed at various places. Anyone with Craft (alchemy) skill can use the remaining components to cobble together a portable alchemist's lab (75gp), but most of the rest is either worthless or too fragile to transport safely.

If the shelves are searched a number of common alchemy ingredients can be found, but they are effectively worthless, with the total of all the jars (numbering in the hundreds) contents being around 50gp. Anyone with Craft (alchemy) can easily deduce that all of the valuable or rare components you would expect to find in the lab have been removed.

There are 2 items of value here. Firstly, in a cup filled with mixing sticks and spoons, there is a slightly discoloured *wand of fireball* (Cl 5th, 2 charges). Damien purchased this early in his studies, and expended most of it during

experimentation. Once he developed past its usefulness it became a mixing stick like the rest.

The second item is a jar filled with black worms suspended in a green jelly. These are *void worms* (detailed in the sidebar on the next page) and there are 6 in total. These were the result of early experimentation by Damien on aberrations, but that line of research was ultimately scrapped.

M37) Damaged Parapets

Huge gaps have formed on the parapets where the wall has collapsed, leaving two gaping holes into the floors below. They appear far too wide to jump across. Looking down you can see into the two levels below.

The gap nearest the manor is 30 feet (Acrobatics DC 30 to jump), and that nearest the guard tower is 25 feet (Acrobatics DC 30 to jump). While not impossible (and there is running room) it is highly unlikely that the PCs would make it. Anyone falling from here lands in the grounds or area M15, incurring 3d6 falling damage.

There is nothing easily portable on the grounds that could bridge the gaps (not even the ladders from area 45), though clever PCs might use the ladders to go up from below, and the walls can be climbed (Climb DC 20)

M38) Tower Top

The top of this tower feels isolated. It is blackened and wet, with a fallen flagpole and the sodden, ash covered remains of a banner bundled up against the battlements on the west side.

Despite the long years of exposure, the banner has withstood the test of time due to its magical nature. It doesn't look like much covered in ash and dirt, but is actually an enchanted banner that Barrus acquired on his travels. The banner is 4 foot long and 1 ½ foot wide, made of white fabric, but changes colour and displayed device based on its present owner (anyone who attunes themselves to it by possessing it more than 24 hours). The banner does not change at will, but takes on the single appearance of a crest or device the owner identifies with (ie house, family or allegiance crest). If the owner does not maintain the connection with physical contact at least once per day, the banner reverts to its blank state. It has

Void Worms

These creatures are both magical and alive, a strange blend of creature and item.

They are generally kept in a preservation jelly that keeps them in a suspended state until used. Once removed from the jelly they need to be implanted within *1 minute* or they expire.

If swallowed by a living creature, they attach themselves to the stomach in a leech like fashion, causing 2 points of Con drain that cannot be cured until the worm is removed.

Whilst attached, the worm emits an enzyme that aids in cellular healing, granting the creature Fast Healing 2 for the lifespan of the worm.

Additionally, if the host ever fails a saving throw vs poison, the worm emits a massive dose of the enzyme at once, neutralizing the poison, but expiring in the process.

An implanted worm lives 1d6+4 days, and then expires. A worm that expires causes the host to be *sickened* for 24 hours afterward as the worm breaks down.

A *remove disease* will remove a worm before death, but not cure the sickness afterward. A *neutralise poison*, or greater magic such as *heal*, will remove the sickness.

Aura moderate necromancy; **CL** 7th Slot slotless; **Price** 1200gp

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, *infernal healing*, *neutralise poison*; **Cost** 600gp

no other properties, and could be sold as a curiosity for 100gp.

M39) Damien's Study

This chamber is a well-appointed study, with rich blue carpet and a massive, ornate wooden desk prominent in the centre of the room. The east wall is lined with mostly empty bookshelves, while the west wall displays art and banners between the arrow slit windows of the keep. The south wall has a massive stone fireplace, heaped with ash and long gone cold. On the mantle of the fireplace sits a gold and gem encrusted crest, displaying the raven and scepter emblem.

In the centre of the room, between the entry and the desk, is a desiccated corpse of a well-dressed man, a bastard sword clutched in his hands.

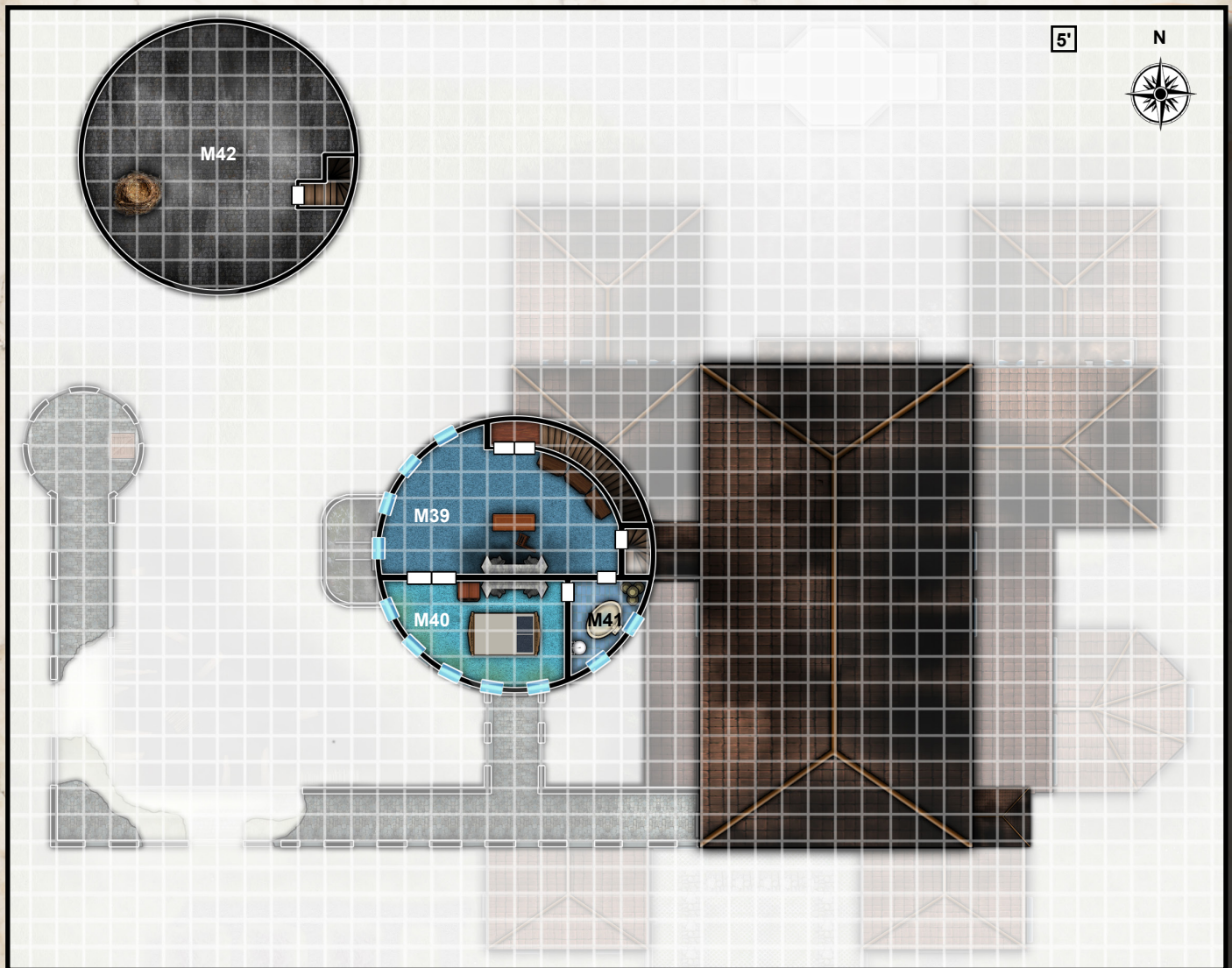
As they enter the room, the party triggers a haunt.

The room shimmers in a now all-too-familiar way and you find yourselves in a well-appointed study. Damien, now in his late teens, sits at a desk piled high with tomes and scrolls, staring deeply at their content. A group of men stand a respectful distance away, while a finely dressed servant approaches and clears his throat. "The service has finished Master Damien. Your mother has been placed in the family crypt". Damien does not even look up, waving the servant away.

"Apologies young master, but the business advisers are here to discuss the family holdings. It is important" the servant asserts, an aloof and dignified mask in place. Damien rubs his eyes and looks up, frustration clearly evident on his face. "This again, Charles? Always bringing up money when you can clearly see I have actual important work" he gestures to the mass of papers on his desk. "You are the chamberlain, deal with it!"

The servant looks pained "Sir, I have not the authority nor the expertise. Money is important sir. You should speak to the advisers" he insists.

"To the Nine Hells with it!" exclaims Damien, throwing down his quill dramatically, "The fate of the world is at stake and you want me to balance the books!" Damien scans the group of men, then points to the closest. "Umm... Theris right?", and the man nods to the affirmative. "Great! Theris, you are now appointed Chief Factor for House Anthilas. Go forth and



make me money. Go now", he declares, turning away from the astonished men and back to his studies.

The men hesitate a moment then shuffle out, Damien so engrossed in his work that he sees neither the look of worry on the chamberlain's face nor the open avarice on the faces of the men leaving.

The PCs must make a Will save DC 15, or be overcome with greed. This lasts only a 1d4 rounds (roll per character), but runs the risk of the party falling to infighting. The most obvious object of value in the room is the gem studded family crest, and anyone failing their save will desire it with an unbearable longing. If more than one character is affected, or if the unaffected PCs

seek to stop them, affected characters will use lethal force to obtain it.

Damien is aged 18 at the time of this haunt.

The body is that of Charles the Chamberlain (see area M24). Searching his body, the PCs can find a few small personal trinkets of value, including a key to his room (area 24), a pocket watch (30gp) and an ornate Anthilas family signet ring studded with gem chips (30gp). He also has a masterwork bastard sword in good condition, and this can be used to harm the mist. It's the only true weapon in the house that can.

The room shows signs of a hasty search and removal of

items.

The bookshelves have been ransacked, the remaining books including some household ledgers and reports, a few interest books (gardening, fishing & boating) and a few fiction and poetry books. In total they would fetch maybe 30gp.

The desk is similarly searched, with scattered parchments on the top and several open draws an indication that the searcher was hurried or just uncaring (in truth, both). Aside from a few dated correspondence items addressed to Damien from a decade ago (business enquiries, polite invitations to social events from various ladies or gentleman and the like), and some uninteresting housekeeping notes (an intent to build a servants building on the grounds, requisitions for quarry stone, a list of builders etc) there is little of worth here except in the top draw a large envelope has been left, almost as if it is meant to be found. Opening the envelope, there is a pendant of bone carved with a stylized runic symbol on a simple leather strap, a small notebook and a letter. The necklace is a magical *runestone necklace* (see sidebar) while the notebook contains precise instructions on creating them. The letter reads;

If you are reading this it's likely you've the wit or just the stubborn fortitude to stand against the coming darkness.

The city and its people are in peril unlike anything this world has seen in centuries. Madness and destruction are approaching from behind the stars.

In the basement of this place you will find the keystone, a major playing piece in this cataclysmic game. Experience it and survive, and know what I know. We are doomed if we do not find a way to protect ourselves.

Wear the necklace. It will aid you, but no more than that. Make more if you can, or evolve past it as I have.

Time is short. If I fail you must finish what I started

Damien Anthilas

The letter was written 10 years ago, and is clearly aged. It was not written with anyone specific in mind, but in the hopes that anyone who could get this far was willing and able to stand against the imminent

The Runestone Necklace

The runestone necklace is crafted from a slice of human bone, engraved with an ancient version of the Elder Sign (a 5 branched rune), and enchanted to ward against the chaotic emanations of R'lyeh and its inhabitants.

The wearer gains a *sacred* bonus of +2 to all saves vs the spells, spell-like abilities and supernatural abilities of aberrations, natives of R'lyeh and effects from the Machine parts or the realm of R'lyeh itself.

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 6th **Slot** neck; **Price** 3000gp

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, *bless*, *protection from evil*; **Cost** 1500gp

cataclysm. This represents a last ditch effort to recruit to his cause (see Adventure Background).

The Crest on the mantelpiece is exactly what it appears, a remnant left over from the glory days of House Anthilas. Barrus had this commissioned at the height of his power and influence. Damien kept this here to remind himself that all empires fall eventually. Its second purpose was to remind him to be humble and not be blinded by pride. Unfortunately this lesson was not as well learned. The crest is about 12 inches high, made from pure gold and inset with rubies and sapphires, worth 500gp as raw materials or up to 750gp to a collector of historical artefacts.

The art was a number of rare and beautiful paintings. Unfortunately they sit very near the arrow slits and have been exposed to the weather over the last decade, which has caused rot and flaking. They are now practically worthless. The banners are similarly rotten, with the once fine fabric now ruined.

M40) Damien's Bedroom

This large bedroom is tastefully understated despite having once high quality furnishings. The sky blue carpet shows early signs of mould and decay, particularly under the tower's arrow slit windows, and the few wall hangings are thin and torn.

A bed with beautifully carved dark wood foot and headboards rests in the centre of the chamber, though cracks show through its grain in several places. The bed linens are immaculately pressed, as if never used.

Against the north wall is a massive empty fireplace, and a mahogany wardrobe, its doors open to reveal a collection of men's clothing.

This was Damien's bedroom in his early teens to adulthood. Moved here originally as a form of 'banishment' by Ramius, Damien was more than happy to be out from under the cruel boot heel and to be left to his own devices.

When Damien returned briefly after the night of the fire, he took only what he needed, including a few personal items and a couple of garments from the wardrobe.

The furniture is of very fine craftsmanship, but the constant damp from the rains through the arrow slits has ensured that it has expanded and cracked, and the carpet, hangings and linens are all mouldering. There is nothing of worth to be salvaged.

The wardrobe (also suffering rot) holds more than 2 dozen outfits ranging from stylish evening attire to simple gardening clothes, but all are mildewed and moth eaten.

M41) Damien's Bathroom

This room is tiled in sky blue, and a large free standing porcelain tub dominates the centre, brackish water collecting in the bottom. A wooden vanity, with a porcelain basin and a cracked mirror rest against the west wall. A collection of wooden buckets is stacked to the east.

This was Damien's bathroom. It still has the remains of a bath he was intending to take the night of the fire, untouched for all these years. The bath is in reasonable condition, but the vanity and mirror have cracked and

weathered in the cold and wet environment.

Searching the vanity the PCs can find a small silver comb (10gp) and a straight razor, with a few empty glass bottles that once held aftershave and similar toiletries.

M42) Keep Top

The top of the keep is a forlorn expanse of grime streaked grey stone, raked with cold winds. On the west side a thick bird's nest has been woven against the battlements. A large avian skeleton lies curled within, along with a number of seemingly calcified eggs. As you watch the skeletal wings twitch, then the desiccated creature rises up, weaving menacingly toward you.

The creature is an Advanced Giant Vulture Skeleton (hp 32). The avian made a nest here a few years ago, but was slain when the Spirit Mist discovered it one night. The life draining properties of the mist caused it to rise as an undead creature. As an animal, it did not become part of the Mist, and can be harmed normally.

The Mist's touch turned the bird's living eggs into strange calcified curiosities, almost like fossils. There are 4 eggs in all, and can be sold to collectors for 20gp each if kept intact.

Giant Vulture Skeleton, Advanced XP 600

CR 3

NE Large Undead

Init +9; Senses Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+5 Dex, +4 Natural, -1 size)

Hp 32 (5d8+10)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities DR 5/bludgeoning **Immune** Cold, Undead Immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 10ft (no fly)

Melee +10 bite (2d6+11 plus Disease)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 21, **Con** -, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +10 **CMD** 22

Feats - Improved Initiative

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization any

Treasure none

The keep top allows a full 360 degree view of the manor and grounds. With only slight interference from the roof to the east. From here the characters can possibly see (Perception DC 12) what looks like a fallen wooden frame and shapeless lump on the Tower Top (area M38). It is also possible to spot the lonely blue fire of Alluria's ghost on the Island (area G9), though impossible to make out what it is (Perception DC 10 during the day, automatic at night).

M43) General Storage

This dark room has a rich, earthy smell, and plain brickwork walls. Numerous barrels and crates are stacked in here in neat arrangements, with narrow walkways between them. Shelves line the walls, filled with dusty household objects. A wide path has been cleared to the east and north, allowing access deeper into the complex.

This area contained the general stores for the manor that were accessed on a regular basis. A search of the barrels and crates reveals brackish water, stale flour and grain, and the residue of fruit and root vegetables long rotted away. There are also lanterns (4), torches (12), rope (100 feet total), oil (2 flasks), and a few hand tools (hammer, nails, brooms), curtain rods, spare handles, hooks and fittings in brass, and a myriad of other household knickknacks (GMs discretion on other objects).

M44) Wine Cellar

This dark room is fitted floor to ceiling with wine racks. Most are empty, but several dozen bottles remain.

The wine collection Barrus amassed was one of the finest in all the world at one time, with rare vintages from dozens of nations across the globe featured here. Sadly, Ramius and Hellena ignorantly consumed most of the priceless collection in their festivities, replacing them with cheaper local wines when stocks ran low. Most of the remaining bottles are cheap local plonk, worth barely a silver each. However, one bottle remains of the original collection, a sharp vintage that Barrus once had two of. Ramius did not care for the first they opened, so left the second untouched. A successful Appraise DC 25 or Profession (vintner/winemaker) DC 10 will allow it to be recognised for what it is, a 700 year old red worth 100gp.

M45) Long Term Storage

This series of rooms holds innumerable crates, boxes and items of furniture, all covered in dusty white linens, like miniature snow covered mountains.

These areas hold long term storage items, things that were rarely used, or placed here and forgotten about. The vast majority of what is in here is furniture, including plain wood tables and chairs, a low couch, a plain wardrobe, three single bed frames, summer sun lounges and outdoor furniture, a number of children's furniture items (crib, high chair, rocking horse etc.), side tables, an old grandfather clock with seized mechanisms and so forth. The various crates hold crockery, children's toys, various luggage and travel chests, moth eaten quilts and linens, two unmarked headstones, spare oars for the row boat and other such items.

Of potential interest are two wooden ladders, 20 feet long, lying down against the south wall of the first room (up against area M43). They are in serviceable condition.

M46) Fissure

Past the jumble of stored items, the rear half of this room has been cleared around a collapsed section of wall and floor. It appears to drop away into the darkness. Strange silvery runes have been carved into the surfaces surrounding the fissure, which seem to give off a faint pale glow.

As the PCs enter the area and see the Runes, they trigger a haunt.

There is a shimmer in the air and the basement shifts. It appears similar in all ways save there is now a young teenaged boy and a fearful looking servant starting at the fissure in the rock, which does not currently have runes carved into it. The boy has a lantern and is peering intently into the darkness. The servant is a thin old man that plucks at his sleeve. "Come away young master", he pleads, "your mother will miss you soon".

The boy snorts, and shakes his head "My mother lives in her drug induced dream world now Jasper, she wouldn't notice if I caught on fire", as he finishes his quip you see the boy shiver, as if shaking off an unpleasant memory.

The servant scowls briefly, then returns to looking nervous "And what about Master Ramius? Will he not miss you?".

The boy looks up at that, genuine fear in his eyes. He stares at the servant in silence for a long time, then his eyes are drawn back to the fissure. "How many times have we been here Jasper? How many times have we stopped and turned back? I must know. It feels like I'm being called. There's something down here. It tugs at my mind, always there. I must know, even if it means the wrath of Ramius. Tell him if you must. Ha! I'd like to see the bastard follow me down here!". The boy grows bolder as he speaks, then shrugs off the old man and crawls into the darkness...

Each of the PCs must make a Will save DC 15 or become compelled to proceed into the fissure. This obsession lasts for only a few moments, but they are so focussed they will not receive Perception checks to notice the Piercers in the next area, falling automatically into

their ambush. Characters who do successfully save are allowed Perception (vs DC 20) to recognise the danger.

The people depicted are Damien (aged 14), and an elderly servant.

There is a body here, hidden behind an old crate. It has decayed to a skeleton in rotted house livery, and has no possessions. This is the body of the elderly servant

Jasper. He encountered the Spirit Mist and fed from it, seeking the basement to hide in. The fright and physical exertion proved too much for the old man, expiring of heart failure as he hid.





Chapter 4 - The Caverns (C)

The caverns below the manor are almost another world. The Keystone is the source of all the ills to befall the Anthilas family, and this location. The Keystone has been here for 300 years – since the time of Aether. When the cataclysm rent the city, the keystone of the Doorway was torn free, and was hurled clear of the city in the blast. It landed above a natural cave system, its momentum breaking through the surface and causing it to fall deeply before coming to a rest. Free of the city (if only barely) it became dormant for a time.

As time passed a watchtower was built here to give the city early warning. One day it was found abandoned by a relief patrol. Those sent into the caves to investigate never returned, and the tower was abandoned.

Generations later the city nobles expanded out into the retreat, but no family wanted this land, partly due to its remote location, but partly due to persistent rumours of curses and hauntings. Thirty five years ago, an incredibly successful merchant, Barrus, bought himself noble patents, and, boldly undeterred by superstition, the land surrounding the old watchtower, where he built a manor on and around the ruins for his new bride. The caverns were buried in new foundations and the keystone (and the creature that guards it) went undiscovered. But the slowly emerging presence of the stone went to work, corrupting the lives of those nearby.

Fifteen years later, after Barrus' death, a small seismic event collapsed part of the basement, and created the fissure that Damien discovered. He explored the caves, learning about the Artefact, the creature and its twisted cult of degenerate followers. Thus began his research and obsession with the occult, and ultimately the discovery that the city and its people were in grave danger from otherworldly influences. At one point he discovered abjurations that managed to seal the keystone in, much to the chagrin of the horrors below, and placed those same wards at the fissure to halt any potential incursions into the manor itself.

Unfortunately events had already been set in motion, and before he could complete his research, debt collectors came and changed his life forever (as seen in the Courtyard event above). He left the manor, believing he could continue his crusade with the keystone and its keepers anchored in place for now. It was only after he

was gone (and in fact because of the night of Fire) that the Echo of Faith not only became aware of the keystone, but the creature that guarded it, and the potential for exploiting its natural secretions as a means of control. The strength of Damien's wards are the only reason that the keystone remains, and that as the machine becomes more active that the keystone has remained relatively dormant. It has still had 300 years to affect the caverns, however, and even partially blocked as it is, that influence can be felt heavily here.

Note – anyone who is wearing the runestone necklace from Damien's study will feel a much reduced effect. In addition to the bonus to saving throws, when describing the general feel of the place indicate to this player that the effects are muted, as if they were far away. If no one is wearing the item, kind GMs might hint at its value by allowing the person carrying it to 'feel it react' to the other wards (ie those on the fissure and those on the stone itself) by vibration, glow or the like.

C1) The Fissure

The crack in the wall and floor appears to angle downwards steeply, but not impassibly. It is dark and slick looking, only a few feet wide, but becoming quite tall as it descends. You won't have to crouch, but you will have to mind your step. Around the edge of the crack there are strange runes carved into the walls and floor, inlaid with what looks like silver. They appear to have a pale glow about them.

Traversing the fissure requires a Climb DC 5 check, with failure indicating a slide into the cavern below (resulting in 1d6 points of damage from scrapes and abrasions).

The Runes detect as magical (abjuration) and cannot be damaged or erased by any means the PCs possess. Even a successful *dispel magic* (caster level 8) only renders them inert for 1 round. A Spellcraft check can offer the following information;

DC 15 – This is some form of permanent protective ward to prevent passage (ie whatever is warded against cannot cross the line of wards).

DC 20 – The wards repel both Chaos and Evil.

DC 25 – Aberrations (creature type) cannot cross the wards.

DC 30 – The wards can be erased by using the blood of the creator to obscure them.

Any character that has an alignment that is either (or both) Chaotic or Evil finds passing the wards exerts an unpleasant momentary pressure on them. Any character with aberrant affiliation or blood (sorcerer with the Aberrant bloodline for example) finds it physically difficult to cross the wards, as if they were moving through water.

Once on the other side, read the following:

Crossing through the wards into the fissure you feel an immediate difference in the environment. Physically the stone feels both oddly slick and slightly spongy. More concerning is that the air feels psychically charged, almost alive, and baleful, as if your presence is unwelcome.

Any character wearing the runestone necklace feels this only faintly, while everyone else feels it strongly. This 'effect' has no game statistical relevance, but the GM is encouraged to continue to describe a sense of foreboding and discomfort to the players. This effect persists while the characters remain in the caves.

C2) Entry Cave (CR 5)

This cavern is slick with moisture and the strange oily nature of the stone itself. The rock formations seem almost melted, and a riot of colours runs through the walls like demented rainbows. The effect is dizzying to look at.

The rainbow patterning is an effect of the influence of Chaos on the natural mineral deposits in the rock. A character with Knowledge (dungeoneering) can tell its origin is a natural effect with a DC 25 check, but its current state is not natural in occurrence. Aside from being vaguely interesting, it also serves as a distraction from the ambush waiting to happen from the colony of Piercers on the roof above. These are large specimens (4 foot in length, 2d6 damage on hit) and there are 5 of them (as marked on the map). The Piercers require a Perception DC 20 to identify, and anyone crossing through the space below is subject to being struck, with a Reflex DC 15 to avoid.

From this area dim light can be seen from area C4

C3) The Pool

This cavern must be a natural low point in the system, as it is almost completely immersed in a strange brackish looking pool of water. Looking into the murk you think you can make out a vague glow from within it.

The water in this pool is vaguely acidic due to the accumulation of mineral runoff. Anyone not resistant or immune to acid contacting the pool will develop a painful skin irritation, reducing their Dex by 2 points until cured (any magical healing or form of non-magical treatment that cures at least 1 hp will suffice). Anyone being completely immersed will suffer -2 to Perception due to similar damage to eyes and ears (cured the same way) and must make a Fortitude Save DC 15, or develop a disease from the acidic, fouled waters (see below) which must be cured by *remove disease* or more powerful magic.

The Dark Folk avoid the pool for the most part, though they know of its acidic properties and use it as a disposal for things they wish to destroy. The glow is emanating from a crystal icon that is resistant to the acidic effects. Locating it is not hard, but as it is under 10 feet of water, retrieving it without immersion could be tricky.

A thorough search of the bottom of the pool reveals several pitted humanoid skeletons, some severely damaged leather scraps, highly pitted and broken metal fragments (perhaps once weapons and armour) and some smashed glass.

The crystal idol is a 6 inch exquisite depiction of an angel with wings outstretched. It is magic item that acts as a *pearl of power* (2nd level spell) and also permanently gives off light as a *continual flame* spell. While the dark folk could temporarily counteract its light giving properties, they could not dim it permanently, which is why they sought to dispose of it.

Pool Plague

Type Disease, immersion; **Save** Fortitude DC 15

Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect 1d2 Dex and Con damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves or *remove disease*

The disease causes lesions on internal organs and joints to swell. While there is no external signs, the victim will cough and excrete blood. As the disease progresses their joints will begin to lock and bleeding with worsen until the victim dies.



From this area dim light can be seen from area C4

C4) Cathedral (CR 11, Varies)

You find yourself looking out over a massive cathedral-like cavern dimly lit by patches of luminescent moss. At around 100 feet in length and 50 feet high, the smooth walls have the same warped rainbow effect as seen in the previous cave. The walls are pierced in a score of places by passages or alcoves at all heights, and numerous stone pillars reach from floor to ceiling down its length, painstakingly carved with crudely formed script of some kind. Toward the far end is a raised area, perhaps a natural rock shelf, which has steps carved into it and a stone throne atop it. Like the pillars, every inch of this dais is carved with crude script, and a pair of stone braziers give off illumination in the form of low red flames. Some kind of

ceremony is taking place, with a dozen dark huddled figures prostrating themselves before a large grey creature seated on the throne. Several of the dark figures are tending to the grey creature, which appears to be a nightmarish humanoid manta ray.

The entire cavern is in dim light conditions.

The creatures are an exiled colony of dark folk that have come to see the Lonely One as a deity of sorts. The Lonely One was drawn to the Keystone (area C5) and is content to its existence, its alien desires a mystery to even its followers. The Dark Folk have shaped the cavern over many years (with the benefit of the softened stone) into a temple worthy of their enigmatic god.

The dozen dark folk on the floor are Dark Creepers, and

the Lonely one is attended by a single Dark Dancer and Dark Caller. The colony has a further half dozen Dark Creepers, 2 Dark Stalkers and a Dark Slayer, but these are currently out on errands for the colony.

In addition there is a surface dweller here – a human servant of the Echo – to collect a volume of the Lonely One's drug to keep the Echo's servants manageable. This ceremonial collection is part of the agreement made by the Echo and the followers of the Lonely One.

Unless the party is being particularly loud, or openly carrying a light source equivalent to *daylight* or brighter, they are not immediately observed by the Dark Folk. A pitched battle here may very well be more than the PCs can handle, and (given the abilities of the Dark Folk) unless they come prepared with numerous light sources or effects, such a battle is likely to be conducted in pitch darkness. The Dark Folk will not pursue the PCs into the manor (though they are capable, they are not willing to leave their 'god' undefended) unless they are subjected to repeated hit and run attacks that result in 50% or more of the Dark Folk being slain – in which case they go all out to slay the intruders or die in the attempt. In any event the Lonely One cannot pursue into the manor because of the wards.

If the PCs wait and watch, they will see the ceremony in its fullest, which takes about an hour as the Dark Dancer leads the Dark Creepers in prayer and hymns, while the Dark caller slowly extracts the Lonely One's secretions into ceremonial jars to give to the Echo's servant. The servant will leave via the surface tunnel and the ceremony will break up, the Dark Folk going about their business or returning to their homes (the alcoves in the walls). The Lonely One remains on the throne (as it does at most times).

The PCs actions are up to them, but even at 'low activity' periods the Cathedral has a few Dark Folk wandering around, and the Lonely One almost never leaves the throne, making accessing the Keystone Chamber by stealth a difficult (though not impossible - at the GM's discretion) prospect.

The remainder of the Dark Folk will return in 12-24 hours, and groups of various sizes (almost always lead by a Stalker or Slayer) come and go from the underdark entrance every few days for raid expeditions, and can

be gone up to a week at a time. It is up to the GM to determine such a schedule. If the Dark Folk come under attack parties will not leave for at least a week.

Echo servant (stats as Commoner) – Hp - 4
Dark Creepers (12) Hp - 19
Dark Dancer (1) – Hp - 13
Dark Caller (1) – Hp - 52
Lonely One (1) – Hp - 49

Each of the alcoves (marked A) holds filthy rags and a few personal possessions of little worth – odd rocks, trinkets, bones or the like with a few daggers and knives of outlandish design.

The den of the Dark Dancer (marked B) has a number of marionettes and strange musical instruments, none of which are in good condition.

The den of the Dark Caller (marked C) has several holy symbols of various religions, as well as an incense burner and numerous types of incense (used for important ceremonies).

Though the Lonely One is completely ambivalent, the clan's wealth is scattered around the base of its throne as offerings. There is 347cp and 421gp, as well as gems and gold jewelry worth a total of 1000gp (there are no silver coins or silver jewelry – silver is traded away as it is seen as a bane item in their 'religion' given the wards are made from it and it can breach the Lonely One's DR).

There are two tunnel exits that lead from the cavern complex. One (marked D) descends into the wild underdark and beyond the scope of this adventure. The other (marked E) ascends into an unclaimed overgrown location of The Retreat between the grounds owned by noble families. This is how the Echo's servants and the Dark Folk can access the surface.

Following the Echo's servant

While difficult to cross the Cathedral unnoticed, resourceful players might find a way to follow the Echo's servant undetected. If they do, it's up to the GM to determine the result of this action. Under no circumstances does this lead directly to the Echo. This servant (one of the more coherent) will meet up with others in a dark alley

in the city and distribute the jars. In turn, these servants will return to their 'cells' and distribute the substance for consumption. It is up to the GM as to the 'activities' of these groups, but examples could be unearthing ruins buried deep within the foundations in the Lower Ward or in the city sewers, or conducting 'repairs' on the conduit tunnels similar to those featured in the side trek *Under Eternity* (see *Campaign Guide*). The GM could even add a few servants to that side trek and run it if not already complete. Otherwise (again if not already completed, and the GM determines it is appropriate) this could lead onto the Side Trek *Centre of Eternity* (see *Campaign Guide*).

C5) The Keystone Chamber

Behind the throne is a cave entrance adorned with carvings similar to the Cathedral, but these are more intricate and crafted with more care. The oppressive feeling that emanates from the caves is strongest here, an invisible pressure on your mind. Each step forward takes an act of supreme will.

The cave interior is small, barely 10 feet across, and dominated by a huge green stone block about 5 foot on each side, shot with black veins. The stone block is inside a ring of silver wards akin those in the basement above, and the air seems to shimmer here, like looking through distortions created by heated air. There are deep gouges in the cave floor around the wards, but the silver runes seem completely intact.

The pressure is almost unbearable, and you struggle to remain standing. Feelings of avarice and ambition rise to the surface, and against your better nature, you begin to feel like you are destined for great things to be achieved at the expense of others. After all, no one is more deserving than you, no one is as worthy as you. All are insects before your might...

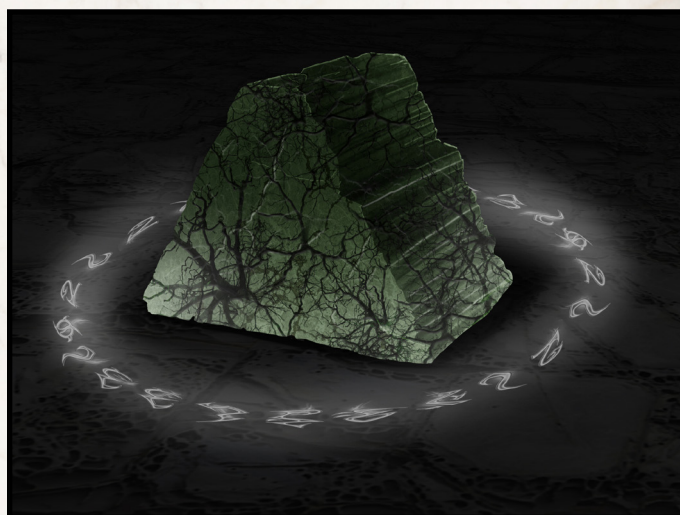
...you draw a ragged breath and stagger out of the cave, the pressure and yearnings subsiding to a controllable level. You glance guiltily at your companions, acutely aware of just how close you came to losing yourself to your dark desires. There is evil and madness here, crushingly powerful and limitless in its scope, kept barely in check by these tiny silver wards.

While not removing player agency, it is important to impress upon the PCs just how devastatingly dangerous this object is, and how vast the damage would be if it was released.

If the characters re-enter the chamber, begin requiring Will saves at DC 15 for each round they remain. A failure means they fall into a fugue state for 1d6 minutes where they dream of conquests and elevation to an emperor-like position and power. At the end of that period they are *confused* (as per the spell) for 1d10 rounds before becoming aware once more. If they remain within the chamber at the end of this time, continue to roll Will saves. Each re-entry to the chamber after leaving imposes a +1 DC penalty, and doubles the duration of the dream and confusion states. It is possible with enough exposures to starve or die from thirst in extended fugue states.

Note that if a character is wearing the *runestone necklace* he or she feels distanced to the above effects (but not immune) receiving not only the necklace bonus to the saves, but not incurring any cumulative penalties (either to DC or effect) with additional exposures.

It's clear the Wards have been clawed or worked at from the gouges, but just as clear there's no damage or degradation to them. A successful Spellcraft check reveals the same information as area C1 - **The Fissure** (above) and indicates the runes are of a similar kind, but more powerful. The PCs do not have any means to affect or damage the wards, and these ones cannot be rendered inert by a *dispel magic* (more information on the runic magic will be forthcoming in later adventures). Even if the PCs could somehow bypass the runes, direct contact with the Keystone would destroy them utterly.



Conclusion

The adventure concludes when the PCs determine they have achieved all they wish to and exit the manor grounds for the time being. Concluding this adventure draws to a close *What Lies Beyond Reason Part 1: Into Fear*.

Depending on PC actions there are a number of outstanding or ongoing consequences from their actions. The ghosts Hellenia and Alluria are likely to remain in the manor (the former unlikely to get the conditions needed for permanent rest and the latter impossible until the Keystone is removed). Alluria may be hostile or not, based on PC actions, but both ghosts may interact with the PCs on any return visits. They cannot leave the grounds.

The Spirit Mist, if not destroyed, will also continue to roam the grounds, preying on anyone foolish enough to trespass. If the PCs are having difficulty with it at a later time, kind GMs could have them discover the well-stocked bodies of recently dead adventurers to add more useful weapons.

Ramius, if he escaped, should surface as an occasional encounter throughout the Adventure Path in his hunt for Damien until either destroyed by the PCs or Damien himself. If the PCs do not open the Crypt, the GM is still free to use Ramius, but his appearance is likely to have less of an impact, to the point where after the adventure the players may simply not recognise who he is, or his purpose. Optionally, even if destroyed by the PCs, the DM may wish to allow his vengeful spirit to rise again, ruling that he can only be permanently slain by Damien, or once Damien is dead.

If the Lonely One is slain, but any of the Dark Folk survive they become a constant plague on the PCs, vowing undying revenge for the loss of their 'god'. The GM should craft encounters such as stealing items or animals, burning down inns or buildings the PCs stay at and/or trying to assassinate the PCs, or their NPC allies. These attacks should continue until the PCs seek out and destroy the remnants of the cult.

The Watch have learned their lesson, and send no further patrols into the manor grounds. If the Watch (or surviving Inspector) learn that the PCs infiltrated the grounds they are arrested and questioned. The PCs will be charged

with 'trespass' and 'interfering with an investigation', but if they are co-operative and forthcoming with at least some useful information the charges may be dropped or the PCs may incur only a fine (GM's discretion). If the PCs are stubborn or difficult they may face a few weeks (or months) of incarceration.

Conversely the Seekers are persistent, sending another team onto the premises, this time with their rising star Triast in charge. They suffer losses commensurate to whatever challenges and creatures remain (largely up to PC actions), but ultimately Triast wins through, discovering the Keystone. He leaves with close to as much information as the PCs have, but similarly cannot (and would not) remove the wards around the stone. If the PCs have defeated many of the challenges on the grounds, they secretly earn Triast's respect, who - being no fool - can surmise that it was the PCs that came through after the Watch and Seekers were rebuffed the first time. This should be taken into consideration in future interactions.

How much (or how little) the PCs complete may have an effect on experience awards and advancement (depending on the method used), but completion of this adventure should see the PCs advance at least 1 level (and possibly 2) before moving onto the challenges presented in *What Lies Beyond Reason Part 2: Into Fire*

Bestiary

Alluria (Unique Ghost)

CR 6

XP 2,400

Chaotic Evil (Chaotic Good), Medium Undead (Human Ghost), Sorcerer 5

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60ft.; Perception +14

Aura – Hungry Flame (1d6)

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 deflection, +1 dodge)

Hp 45 (5d8+20)

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities Incorporeal, Channel Resistance +4

Resist Fire 10 **Immune** Undead Immunities

Weaknesses Vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft (perfect)

Melee +2 corrupting touch (6d6 damage, Fort DC 15 for ½)

Special attacks – Elemental Ray, Frightful Moan (Will DC 16)

Elemental Ray (7/day) – 30' +4 touch (1d6+2 fire)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th, Concentration +9, Casting defensively +13)

2nd (4) - *scorching ray*^{BL}, *frigid touch*, *ice slick* (DC 16),

1st (6) - *burning hands*^{BL} (DC 15), *burning disarm* (DC 15), *grease*^{*}(DC 15), *obscuring mist*, *touch of combustion* (DC 15)

0th (At will) - *breeze*, *dancing lights*, *flare*, *light*, *spark*, *ray of frost*

* Manifests as a slick coating of ice

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** –, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2 **CMD** 13

Feats – Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Skills – Bluff +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +14, Profession (Gardener) +7, Stealth +15 ; Racial bonuses +8 Perception, +8 Stealth.

SQ Rejuvenation

ECOLOGY

Environment Anthilas Manor

Organization unique

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of her incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, Alluria inflicts 6d6 damage. This damage is not negative energy - it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical

aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude Save DC 15 halves the damage inflicted.

Frightful Moan (Su) Alluria can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

Hungry Flame Aura (Su) Alluria is surrounded by an aura of intense flame. Any creature adjacent to her takes 1d6 fire damage at the start of its turn. Anyone striking her with a non reach weapon takes 1d6 points of Fire damage, and must succeed on a Reflex DC 16 save or catch on fire.

Rejuvenation Alluria rejuvenates in 2d4 days if destroyed. She can only be permanently destroyed by removing the Keystone from the manor grounds. She can also immediately regenerate if her grave is disturbed, but if destroyed a second time must wait the 2d4 days.

Alluria's scorcereous abilities had not manifested at the time of her death, but did so after she became a ghost. She shares the same bloodline as Damien (unsurprisingly) but her spells are all linked to her psychological connection to fire and her constantly feeling cold. Similarly, her vulnerability to cold is psychological in nature.

Alluria's alignment is Chaotic Evil until such time as the Haunt in the courtyard is triggered, and then she becomes Chaotic Good.

Anyone in possession of Alluria's pendant (previous adventure - *Ignorance is Bliss*) is immune to her 'Special Abilities' (Corrupting Touch, Frightful Moan, Hungry Flame Aura) but not her sorcerer spells and abilities.



Flaming Skeleton

This blackened skeletal creature burns brightly with flames that cover its entire form, though it seems to take no damage from them.

Flaming Skeleton (Burning Skeleton, Advanced Variant) CR 1

XP 400

NE Medium Undead

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

Aura – Fiery Aura (1d6)

DEFENSE

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

Hp 13 (2d8+4)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities DR 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** Fire, Undead Immunities

Weaknesses Vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +5 (1d4+3 +1d6 fire)

Range Flame ball +5 (2d6 fire)

Special attacks – Hurl flame

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4 **CMD** 16

Feats – Improved Initiative

SQ Fiery Death (DC 12)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization any

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fiery Aura (Ex) A flaming skeleton is surrounded by an aura of intense flame. Any creature adjacent to a flaming skeleton takes 1d6 fire damage at the start of its turn. Anyone striking (or grappling) a flaming skeleton with an unarmed strike or natural weapon takes 1d6 points of Fire damage.

Hurl Flame (Ex) A flaming skeleton can generate a small ball of flame each round to throw at opponents. The Flame ball has a range increment of 20 feet, is resolved as a touch attack dealing 2d6 flame damage.

Fiery Death (Su) A flaming skeleton explodes into a burst of flame when it dies. Anyone adjacent to the skeleton when it is destroyed takes 1d6 points of fire damage. A Reflex save (DC 12) halves this damage.

Flaming skeletons are similar to, but considerably more powerful than, burning skeletons. Flaming skeletons arise from creatures that have died a fiery death at the hands of arcane flame.



Hellena (Unique Ghost)

CR4

XP 1,200

Chaotic Evil, Medium Undead (Human Ghost), Aristocrat 4

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60ft.; Perception +16

DEFENSE

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

Hp 32 (4d8+12)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities Incorporeal, Channel Resistance +4

Immune Undead Immunities

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft (perfect)

Melee +3 corrupting touch (4d6 damage, Fort DC 15 for ½)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3 **CMD** 15

Feats – Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills – Appraise +5, Craft (Painting) +8, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (Nobility) +8, Perception +16, Perform (Sing) +8, Profession (Merchant) +5, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +14; Racial bonuses +8 Perception, +8 Stealth.

SQ Rejuvenation

ECOLOGY

Environment Anthilas Manor

Organization unique

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of her incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, Hellena inflicts 4d6 damage. This damage is not negative energy - it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude Save DC 15 halves the damage inflicted.

Rejuvenation Hellena rejuvenates in 2d4 days if destroyed. She can only be permanently destroyed by rearranging the crypt - as described under G4 The Crypt



Lonely One

Bones and alien organs are clearly visible through the bluish-grey skin of this tall, hairless and emaciated bipedal creature. Membranous wings stretch from the wrists of its elongated arms down to the creature's knees. Black pupil-less eyes stare out of an otherwise featureless face.

Lonely One

XP 1,600

NE Medium aberration

Init +4; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

Hp 49 (7d8+21)

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

Defensive Abilities psychic shield; **DR** 5/silver; **SR** 16

Weaknesses light blindness, vulnerability to bleed

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d4+4), tail slap +4 (1d6+2)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (tail 10 ft.)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 9, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

Feats Deepsight, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +13, Fly +14, Perception +10, Stealth

+11; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Fly, +2 Stealth

Languages aklo, common (can't speak, tactile telepathy)

SQ alien nectar, tactile telepathy

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alien Nectar (Ex) A lonely one secretes a viscous fluid from two glands on its back. Consuming a small amount of this nectar provides a medium creature with enough nourishment for an entire day. The nectar is also highly addictive, treat it as a drug with the following statistics.

Lonely One Nectar: type ingested; **addiction** severe, Fortitude DC 15; **effects** 1 hour, +1d8 temporary hit points, fatigue; damage 1d2 Wis damage.

CR 5

Psychic Sanctuary (Su) All lonely ones radiate a feeling of peace and tranquillity. Treat this ability as a constant sanctuary effect that requires a successful DC 15 Will save to overcome. Creatures that make the will save can ignore the sanctuary effect for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Psychic Shield (Su) A lonely one has a +4 deflection bonus to its armour class. It loses this bonus when it is unconscious.

Tactile Telepathy (Su) Lonely ones can communicate via telepathy, but only with a creature they are currently touching.

Vulnerability to Bleed (Ex) Lonely ones are especially vulnerable to hit point bleed damage. They take a -4 penalty on saves against spells or effects that cause hit point bleed damage. Additionally they take one extra damage every round they bleed.

The strange, alien beings known as lonely ones always appear as solitary figures, usually in out of the way, forgotten places. They do seem to crave the attention and companionship of others, often seeking out those who have been isolated or outcast from normal society.

Their calming psychic aura and need to touch in order to communicate tends to lead to the formation of small, intimately connected groups of companions. Once a connection is made, the lonely one will begin to feed its nectar to its new companions. The narcotic effect of the nectar lowers the companion's resistance to the lonely one's psychic influence and its addictive nature binds them to the creature. Viewed from the outside, this strange symbiotic relationship is often viewed as a cult or secret society.



Created by Russ Brown

Spirit Mist

This pale grey mist cloud seems to move of its own volition, swirling with the translucent images of skulls and faces contorted in agony.

Spirit Mist

XP 2400

CE Large Undead (Incorporeal)

Init +3; Senses lifesense 120 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex, -1 size)

Hp 70 (10d8+30)

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +5

Defensive Abilities External Invulnerability; **Immune** Undead Immunities, External Invulnerability;

Weaknesses Internal Vulnerability

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Melee Lifedrain (2d6 hit points)

Special – Souldrain (1d4 Con)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 6, Cha 16

Base Atk +7; CMB +9 CMD 22 (Immune to combat manoeuvres)

ECOLOGY

Environment Anthilas Manor

Organization unique

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Life drain (Su) The Spirit Mist does not strike out at targets, it simply glides over and engulfs them. While the Mist occupies the same space as a living creature it leaches the life from them at a rate of 2d6 hit points per contact or round of contact, regaining a number of hit points equal to the drain. This is a negative energy effect, and only affects living creatures. Any self-aware creature (Intelligence 3 or higher) slain by this ability and becomes part of the Spirit Mist, and cannot be raised until the mist is destroyed.

External Invulnerability (Su) The Mist's component spirits are so fixated on their former existences, they are essentially inured to anything other than items from their former lives. Weapons, spells and anything else passes right through them harmlessly (complete immunity). Being subjected to positive energy (such as channeling) causes the Mist no harm, but forces it to flee for a number of rounds equal to the caster level of the ability or source.

CR 6

Internal Vulnerability (Su) In direct opposition to its External Invulnerability ability (see above) the Mist's fixation on its former existence makes it vulnerable to objects from its past. Any attacks with objects from the component spirit's former possessions are doubled in damage or effect.

Soul drain (Su) Much more damaging than its ability to drain the life from creatures it touches is its ability to drain the soul with prolonged contact. For every *full round* (start to finish) a creature remains within the Mist, it must make a Fortitude save DC 15 or take 1d4 Constitution damage. This is a negative energy effect, and only affects living creatures. Any self-aware creature (Intelligence 3 or higher) slain by this ability and becomes part of the spirit mist, and cannot be raised until the mist is destroyed.

Tactics The Spirit Mist has no fear of damage or destruction. It mindlessly roams the manor grounds looking for living creatures to destroy. It is unintelligent, so it can be lured to fall through holes or off heights (though it will be undamaged), and it cannot climb anything greater than a 45 degree angle (stairs, ramps). It is slow, but inexhaustible, and will pursue any viable, perceived targets until they are slain or it can no longer 'see' them. If it loses contact with targets, it will return to roaming randomly.

In many ways the Spirit Mist is less a creature and more a mobile hazard. It is slow and easily outpaced by most aware creatures. It is particularly dangerous to sleeping or trapped creatures that are forced to spend multiple rounds within the mist.



Pregenerated Player Character Statblocks

Alizsah, Tiefling (kyton spawn) Female Bard 5

CG medium humanoid (Tiefling)

Init +2; Perception +4; Darkvision 60 feet.

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+2 natural, +3 armor, +2 Dex);

Hp 29 (5d8+5)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4; +4 vs bardic performance and sonic

Resist cold/electricity/fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +5 Sickle 1d6+1 (20/x2)

Ranged +6 Longbow 1d8+2 (20/x3) - (+1 hit/damage within 30ft)

Special bardic performance 16 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +2, inspire competence +2)

Spell-like Ability (CL 5th, Concentration +9)

2nd (1) - *web* (DC 16)

Bard Spells Known (CL 5th, Concentration +9)

2nd (2) - *blur*, *eagles splendor*, *sound burst* (DC 16).

1st (3) - *comprehend languages*, *delusional pride* (DC 15), *ear-piercing scream* (DC 15), *innocence*

0th (at will) - *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *presdigation*, *read magic*.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 17 (19)

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Armor of the Pit, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longbow), Point Blank Shot (+1 hit/damage within 30ft)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Climb +5, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +6, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +8, Heal +3, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perception +4, Perform (dance) +11, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +7, Use Magic Device +10.

Languages Common, Abyssal, Infernal

SQ Tiefling racial (cold/electricity/fire resist 5, +2 Escape Artist/Intimidate, prehensile tail), Favoured class bonus (+1 skill point/level), bardic knowledge +1, versatile performance (Acrobatics, Fly).

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (1d8+1), *potion of shield of faith* (Cl 1st),

Other Gear +1 composite longbow (12 str), 24 arrows, cold iron masterwork sickle, +1 leather armour, cloak of resistance +1, daredevil boots, headband of alluring charisma +2, mysterious engraved circlet, 300gp

TACTICS

Alizsah tends to use charm, guile and, if needs be, intimidation to achieve her goals. She prefers subterfuge to open action, though she's not afraid to get her hands dirty when the time comes. In a party she will support any action with spells, performance and her bow, closing to melee only as a last resort. She specializes in confounding her opponents.

Description

Lithe and agile, Alizsah has short black hair, violet skin and wickedly demonic eyes. When working, she wears dark, form fitting leathers, and carries a bow over her shoulders and sickle at her side. When 'performing' she wears little more than a smile.

Background

Alizsah grew up in the darker parts of the city, her blood and upbringing making the transition to the seamy side of society. She moves through the criminal element like a master, using her burlesque performances to get close to the right people. She takes jobs where she can get them, but excels in spying, information gathering and 'recovery'. Despite a truly devilish streak, Alizsah has limits to how far she will delve into the darkness, and she is particularly cagey about her past or the mysterious circlet she carries.



Character Concept - Vernon Swain-Nisbet

Elzix, Human Female Oracle 5

CG medium humanoid (Human)

Init+0; Roll Twice; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +3 shield);

Hp 27 (5d8)

Fort +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +7 longsword 1d8+3 (19-20/x2)

Ranged +3 throwing axe 1d6+2 (20/x2)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 5th, Concentration +9, +13 casting defensively)

2nd (4) – *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *fog cloud*, *silence* (DC 16).

1st (5) – *cause fear*, *cure light wounds*, *enlarge person*, *forbid action* (DC 15), *murderous command* (DC 15), *spiked armor*.

0th (at will) – *create water*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*, *spark*, *stabilize*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17 (19)

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat Casting, Extra Revelation, Improved Shield Bash, Scribe Scroll

Skills Craft (alchemy) +8, Diplomacy +11, Heal +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +8

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ Favoured class bonus (+1 skill point/level), Skilled (+1 skill point/level), Mystery (Battle), Revelations (War Sight, Skill at Arms, Weapon Mastery - longsword), Oracle Curse (Lame)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (1d8+1), *potion of shield of faith* (Cl 1st), *scroll of fog cloud* (Cl 4th)

Other Gear +1 longsword, +1 scalemail, +1 heavy steel shield, cloak of resistance +1, headband of alluring charisma +2, throwing axe (4), 200gp

TACTICS

Elzix revels in a brawl, but she's got a deep vindictive streak. She opens combat with spells that hamper or confuse her opponents, then wades in with her sword and shield, ruthlessly crushing her opposition while they are weakened.

Description

Thin and waifish, with slightly tangled long brown hair, Elzix looks like exactly what she is – a hardened street kid. She has a noticeable limp, and a masterful 'innocent' expression only a 15 year old girl can produce. Garbed in slightly oversized armour and wielding a longsword and shield, she cuts a slightly comical figure until observers realise the deadly precision of her movements and the almost maniacal gleam in her eye.

Background

An orphan in an unforgiving city, Elzix grew up rough and poor, falling into street gangs at an early age. She found she had the fire for a fight, and never took a backward step. Her awakening to mystical power occurred at puberty, and she rose even further, her gang and their "Battle Witch" carving out a nice little territory in the Lower Ward. Until recently, she was content with this, but she's begun to sense true darkness on the horizon...and she's always up for a scrap.



Character Concept - Zorba "The Dwarf Smasher"

Lenalee Shieldheart, Halfling Female Paladin 5 (Hospitaler)

LG small humanoid (halfling)

Init +1; **Perception** +5

Aura - Courage (10' all allies gain +4 saves vs fear)

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex, +1 size);

Hp 45 (5d10+10)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10; **Immune** Fear, Disease

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. (15ft in armor)

Melee +8 longsword 1d6+2 (19-20/x2)

Ranged +7 light crossbow 1d6 (19-20/x2)

Special Smite Evil (one target, +4 to hit, +5 damage, Bypass DR, +4 AC vs target, damage bonus doubled on 1st attack vs evil outsider, dragon or undead)

Spells Prepared (CL 2nd, Concentration +5)

1st (1) – *cure light wounds* (x2)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17 (19)

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Greater Mercy (+1d6 healing on Lay on Hands when no conditions exist), Toughness, Word of Healing (use Lay on Hands at 30' range)

Skills Diplomacy +12, Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +5

Languages Halfling, Common.

SQ Halfling Racial (+1 AC and hit, -1 CMB/CMD, +2 saves vs fear, +1 all Saves, +2 Acrobatics/Climb/Perception, +4 Stealth), Favoured class bonus (+1 skill point/level), Aura of Good, Detect Evil (move action, single target, 60' range), Smite Evil 1/day, Lay on Hands (30', 2d6 healing and removes *sickened* condition 5/day, can damage undead), Mercy (sickened), Channel Energy (positive, 30' burst, 1d6, Will DC 15) 6/day, Divine Bond (Weapon +1 enhancement bonus or ability, sheds *light*, 1/day, 5 minutes).

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (1d8+1), *potion of shield of faith* (Cl 1st)

Other Gear +1 longsword (small), +1 chainmail, +1 light steel shield, masterwork light crossbow (small), 24 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, 600gp

TACTICS

Lenalee will always attempt a diplomatic solution before combat, and will seek to incapacitate rather than kill opponents if possible, always offering quarter if asked. If her comrades are in genuine danger she will switch, however reluctantly, to lethal combat.

Lenalee uses her spells and abilities to shield and heal her allies, and will always interpose herself between them and harm.

Description

Lenalee always tries to keep a comely appearance (her only true vice) despite wearing her father's weathered suit of armour. Her auburn hair is usually in a ponytail with some sort of flower decoration. Both her shield and her armour display her family crest, a pair of swords crossing in front of a heart. Her eyes (one blue, the other green) seem to have a welcoming twinkle about them. Unlike most halflings, her feet are covered mainly for protection. Her father's long sword rests in a sheath on her right hip (she's left handed).

Background

Lenalee was born to a forgotten hero and took up his mantle when he passed. She seeks to do his memory justice and protect the weak from aggressors. To her everyone is deserving of mercy and bloodshed to her means failure.

Character Concept - Adam Matherly



Luther "Sarge" Flint, Human Male Gunslinger 5

LN medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge);

Hp 45 (5d10+10)

Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +6 longsword 1d8 (19-20/x2)

Ranged +10 pistol 1d8+5 (20/x4, Misfire 1)

Deeds Deadeye, Gunslinger's dodge, Quick clear, Gunslinger initiative, Pistol whip, Utility shot

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 17 (19), **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Gunsmithing, Extra Grit, Point Blank Shot (+1 hit/damage within 30'), Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (pistol), Weapon Focus (pistol).

Skills Acrobatics +12, Craft (weaponsmith) +9, Knowledge (engineering) +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +10, Profession (soldier) +9.

Languages Common, Dwarven.

SQ Favoured class bonus (1hp/level), Skilled (+1 skill point/level), Grit (4 points/day), Deeds, Nimble (+1), Gun Training 1 (pistol)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (Cl 3rd 2d8+3), *potion of shield of faith* (Cl 1st)

Other Gear masterwork longsword, dagger (2), +1 pistol, shot & powder for 60 shots, +1 studded leather armour, cloak of resistance +1, endless bandolier, belt of incredible dexterity +2, gunsmith's kit, 1030gp

TACTICS

Luther is soft spoken and is equally at home talking things through or 'taking them outside'. If combat occurs he prefers to think his way through a situation, calm and considered before taking action - which is inevitably through the sights of his pistol.

Description

Luther is a man in his forties, short cut hair and heavily scarred face. He wears leather armour and a heavy coat, and carries a longsword and a pistol holstered at his side. He has the bearing and calm assured purpose of an ex-military man.

Background

Luther served as a sergeant in the Andurian Guard, stationed in one of the few external outposts in the region. Career military, he was content to serve out his days, but a sudden, unprovoked attack on the outpost by a small horde of shambling undead wiped the Guard contingent there out to a man - only Luther survived. The attack ceased as suddenly as it started, with no apparent reason or trigger. Deeply troubled by this he resigned his commission to seek out the cause of the incursion.

Character Concept - Brian Dunnett



Tarathiel Crystalthorn, Elf Male Wizard 5

NG medium humanoid (Elf)

Init +6; Perception +7; Low Light Vision.

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 deflection);

Hp 27 (5d6+5)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4; +2 vs Enchantment; **Immune** Sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +3 Longsword 1d8 (19-20/x2)

Ranged +5 Longbow 1d8 (20/x2)

Special *force missile* (1d4+2) 6/day

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 5th, Concentration +8, +12 casting defensively)

3rd (2) - *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 16)

2nd (3) - *mirror image*, *scorching ray* (x2).

1st (4) - *burning hands* (DC 14), *grease* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic missile*

0th (4) - *detect magic*, *light*, *ray of frost* (DC 13), *resistance*

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll

Skills Appraise +8, Craft (alchemy) +10, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +8, Spellcraft +11 (+13 for identification).

Languages Common, Elven, Celestial, Draconic, Sylvan.

SQ Elven Racial (Immune to magic sleep, +2 saves vs enchantment, +2 Perception/Spellcraft (identification only), +2 CL to overcome SR, proficiency with 'elven' weapons), Favoured class bonus (1 skill point/level), Arcane Bond (amulet, cast any spell known 1/day), Arcane school (Evocation, opposition schools Necromancy and Enchantment), Intense Spells (add +1/2 level to damage of evocation spells)

Combat Gear *wand of magic missile* (CL 3rd, 50 charges), *wand of invisibility* (CL 3rd, 50 charges).

Other Gear masterwork longsword, masterwork longbow, 24 arrows, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, spellbook (all 0th, memorised plus *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *protection from evil*, *shield* and *fox's cunning*), 50gp

TACTICS

Tarathiel is happy for others to go hand to hand, remaining toward the back where he can rain down destruction on his foes with magic or arrows.

Description

Tarathiel is a young elf, with pale blonde hair blue eyes. He wears finely tailored clothing, and carries a longbow and longsword, the traditional weapons of his people.

Background

Tarathiel is young by the standards of his race, young enough to be impassioned and wish to embark on grand endeavours. 'Foolish' other elves deem it. Tarathiel was raised in a distant enclave, to a life of study and privilege. When he uncovered an ancient text predicting a great evil rising in the Eternal City, Tarathiel impulsively journeyed there to uncover and face this menace.

Character Concept - T. Minards & Micah Watt



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