

DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 3

7 ORIGINAL ADVENTURES
1 BROCHURE ADVENTURES
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THE BEST ADVENTURES FOR THE BEST GMS

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About this Magazine

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

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

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

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

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Lady Medaria shall pay eternally for her mistake. Let this be a cautionary tale...

-Common Fey Saying...

FOUNTAIN OF SORROW



3-5
PLAYERS



4-6
HOURS



5-10
TIER 2

BACKGROUND LORE

There is a place of obscure meaning in the western forest. Deep inside, near the heart of nature, in the thickest section of the forest, there is a stone slab that covers the entrance to a forlorn temple. The strange underground complex traces its origin to a different world, a different place. It was not built in the Material Plane but in the Feywild. Its existence is reflected into other planes as it often happens with locations of such significance. A creature who enters the complex is neither in the Material Plane nor in the Fey Realms. Instead, they are in both places at the same time.

Many know of the existence of this location but few scholars and librarians know of the available material about it. Some of it, the oldest, was written by wood elves in a different era and most of those records have been lost or misplaced. The elves claimed that the place was a temple of sorts, though the word for “temple” can also be translated to “remembrance” or “memento”. So, they said the place was not a place of worship but a way to remember that which cannot be repeated. A historic reminder meant to prevent a tragedy. All this is lost to most beings in the Material Plane, even the elves. And even more so to non-Fey.

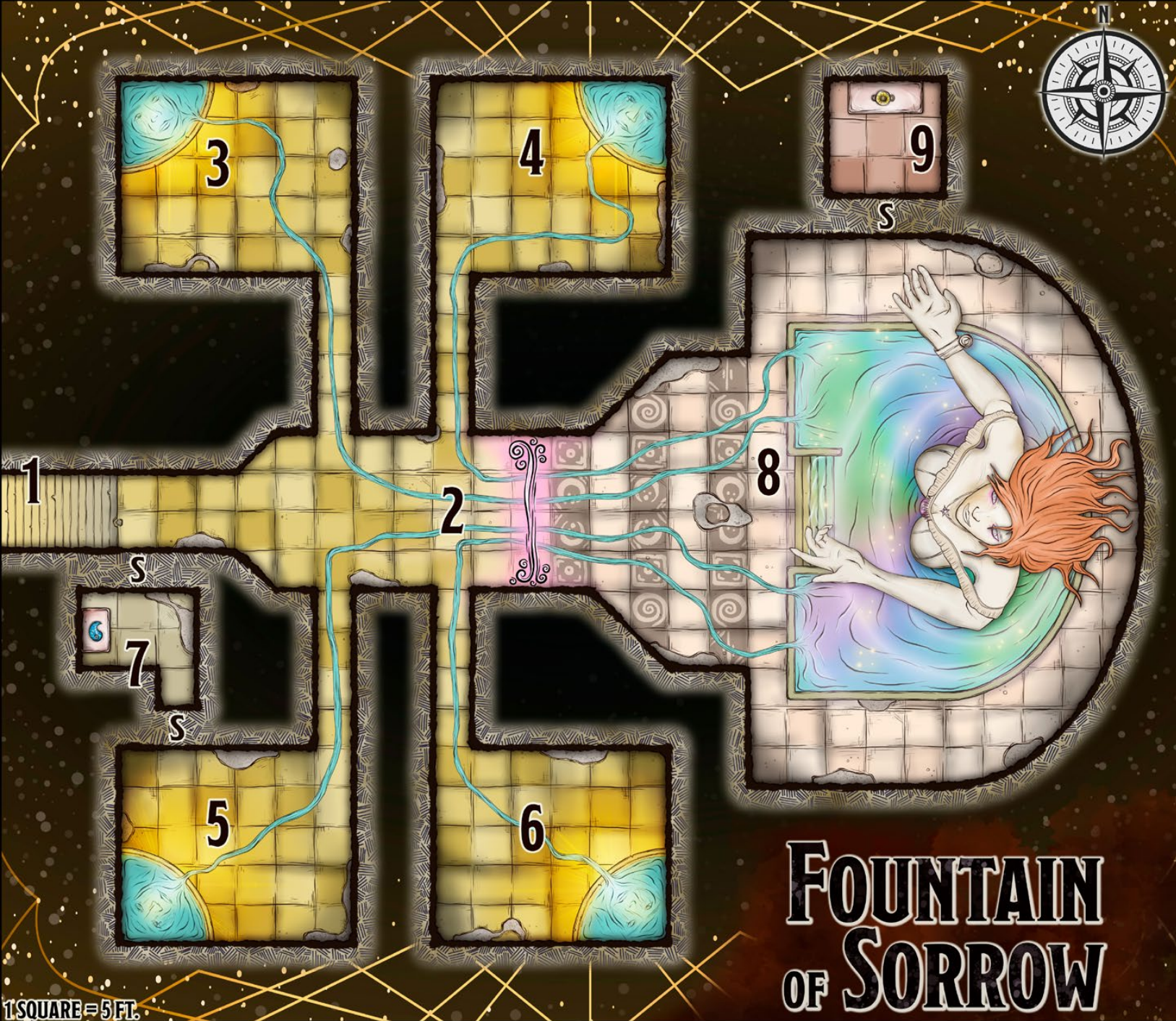
The real significance of the temple is not a secret to sentient Fey creatures in the Feywild. Especially for those who partake in the nobility circles and the Fey Courts, the story of Lady Medaria is a

cautionary tale still relevant to this day. It is a sad story about a Fey noblewoman and her deranged husband and how their mistakes caused the untimely deaths of their four daughters. The legend has evolved and changed after eons but the basic facts remain the same. It explains the following.

THE TALE OF LADY MEDARIA

One of the fairest Fey ladies in court was Lady Medaria. She was a beautiful woman with many talents and attribute. One of them was singing. When she sang, the legend said, her voice became the voice of the forest, attuned with the vibrations of nature and animals. It became the wind and the sun, the streams and the drought, the verdant vegetation and the lustful hunger of predators. Many became enraptured with her voice and could listen to her songs for hours at a time without notice. Such was her talent.

Medaria's husband was Lord Daeros. He was a strange man with even stranger aspirations. Medaria never had a choice in her marriage as people of their noble stature are often caught in arranged unions for political gain. Her parents agreed on their wedding the day she was born. Despite such differences, their union worked. She did not love her husband but respected him. Lord Daeros was a scholar of the skies. An analyst and prophet who talked to the stars and came back with insight from the future. His predictions on many subjects came to be true most of the time and he was a respected figure in the community. Many members of the Fey Court came to him for private audiences to know their future.



FOUNTAIN OF SORROW

Lady Medaria eventually became pregnant and gave birth to quadruplets. Four beautiful girls, all of them with eyes dark as the night skies, full with stars and constellations. After they were born, Lord Daeros became a reclusive man. For weeks and then months he remained in his study, examining the stars and refusing to see anyone, even his wife. He then came out one day and declared that he saw a dangerous omen in the birth of his four daughters. The stars were wrong and three constellations aligned in the incorrect way the very hour they were born. It was a terrible fabled sign that had not occurred for thousands of years. Lord Daeros claimed it meant the four daughters would become the four enchantresses of fate, figures from a different myth that would bring the Fey world to its feet in a realm of terror that would last for centuries.

The backlash from this prophecy was terrible. They all believed in the prediction and urged Lady Medaria to end her daughters' lives before it was too late. She refused for months and did her best to take good care of the four babies. Her estranged husband continued rambling about the end of the world as they knew it at the hands of the four babies in Medaria's house. Medaria's family turned on her and she became a traitor in her own country. The court could do nothing against her as no law is based on prophecy but the social exclusion and opinion brought the worst part of her. One night, drenched in tears, Lady Medaria drowned her four daughters in the bath to appease the city and the court. Dressed in black, she declared that the prophesized grim future was no more, she had stopped it with her own hands.

Things did not improve between her and her husband, however. He was beyond himself and slaved himself to his work with the stars. After months, Lord Daeros lost the favor of the nobility when his predictions started to fail. He could no longer predict the future but this also revealed the underlying insanity that propelled his deranged ramblings of the future. He became a madman and his lips spat nothing but lies and hallucinations.

Lady Medaria had no way to know now whether the death of her children had been justified or not. Perhaps it would have been better if Daeros' predictions had been wrong all along, she would have someone to blame in that case. But there was no way to know when the failed prophet had lost the gift of foresight. The very real possibility that Lady Medaria had killed her infants in vain destroyed her. She cried until her throat was sore from the effort and she lost her singing voice. And then she kept on crying until the room was flooded with her tears and she drowned in her own guilt and sorrow.

Fountain of Sorrow

The temple in the forest is a reminder to all Fey in court to consider the severity of a prophet's prediction lest they have lost the gift of foresight. Inside the temple, a large statue of Lady Medaria rises from a pool of tears. In different chambers, four smaller ponds represent each of her dead daughters. The souls of the infants are tied to the pools for eternity. They cry for their mother's mistakes and their own untimely deaths. Their tears form streams that feed the large pool. The daughters' tears feed the pool with sorrow, guilt, and blame.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Entrance

A long stretch of stairs under a stone slab leads down to the temple. It descends 60-feet into the earth and leads to a large hallway with four exits. The end opposite to the entrance features a strange misty barrier. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check at the base of the stairs reveals the presence of a hidden passage on the south wall. Pushing two stone bricks simultaneously causes a portion of the wall to slide sideways and reveal a passage to **Area 7**.

2. The Barrier

A magical barrier of gaseous nature prevents any creature from reaching **Area 8**. Four narrow streams of water come from each of the rooms and cross the barrier. Upon closer inspection, the liquid is salty and sour.

Most attempts to bypass it fail (see sidebar). A single creature in possession of the tear of Medaria can cross the barrier and face Medaria's anger alone. Answering the requests of the four smaller ponds or destroying the ghosts gives any creature present the ability to see through and cross the barrier.

3. Pond of Sadness

A round pond by the northwest corner of the chamber is the only thing of notice in the room. Water overflows from the pond's edge and becomes one of the streams that cross the barrier. The water in the pond is in constant erratic movement. An infantile androgynous face is visible on the surface.



The face on the water explains that these are tears of sadness. It will not stop crying until each creature present shares their deepest secret, the one that causes the most sadness in them. The face cannot read minds but it knows when the secret revealed is not the deepest one. If a creature tries to lie or hide this secret, the ghost of the first daughter emerges from the pond in a wild display of madness and attacks. If all secrets are accepted or the ghost is destroyed, the pond becomes calm and the stream of tears stops.

General Features

The Fountain of Sorrow is located underground in the thickest section of a large forest.

Terrain. Aged stone tiles cover the floor of the temple. They are old and some have cracked from erosion and time. Squares where any of the tear streams pass are considered difficult terrain for the purposes of tactical movement.

The Barrier. Arcane magic materializes on the eastern end of **Area 2** and forms a barrier. It appears to be gaseous in nature but it is impassable by most physical and magical means. A wish spell dispels the barrier for one hour. Holding the tear of Medaria (**Area 7**) allows one person to cross the barrier unimpeded. Answering the requests of the four daughters or destroying her ghosts allows any creature present to cross the barrier and reach the Fountain of Sorrow.

The Ghosts. The ghosts of the four daughters inhabit each pond. If appeased or destroyed, they reform in 1d6 days and continue feeding the barrier and the Fountain of Sorrow. There is no way to remove them from their suffering.

Light. The ponds and streams of tears radiate light. Rooms with a pond are in bright light. Areas with only streams present are in dim-light. **Area 9** and **Area 7** are in complete darkness.

Smells and Sounds. The streams of tears have a sour and salty smell that propagates throughout the dungeon. The dungeon is in complete silence but a strange magical effect causes visitors to experience slight auditory hallucinations. Laments, cries of help, whispers, and sobbing are audible intermittently and with no apparent source.

4. Pond of Guilt

The pond is identical to the one in **Area 3** but it is located in the northeast corner of the room. The face on the water explains that these are tears of guilt. It will not stop crying until all creatures present offer a moment of remembrance and in full humility, accept the most horrible action they have performed, accept its consequences, and embrace the guilt that arises from it. The face knows if a creature lies or if it displays false humility. If this happens or if someone refuses to participate, the ghost of the second daughter emerges from the water and attacks. If all creatures accept their guilt or the ghost is destroyed, the pond becomes calm and the stream of tears stops.

5. Pond of Regret

The pond is identical to the one in **Area 3** but it is located in the northeast corner of the room. The face on the water explains that these are tears of regret. It will not stop crying until all creatures present truly regret any wrongdoing in their past. This is an irrational request that no one can ever hope to achieve. The ghost suffers from eternal damnation and wants all mortals to regret their lives to appease its suffering. The ghost is angry that no one can fulfill its request and attacks. If it is destroyed, the pond becomes calm and the stream of tears stops.

6. Pond of Eternal Remembrance

The pond is identical to the one in **Area 3** but it is located in the northeast corner of the room. The face on the water explains that these are tears of remembrance. It will not stop crying until all creatures present agree to drink a sip of tears from the pond. It explains that this will make them sleep to relive the last week of the existence of Lady Medaria. If a creature drinks from the pond, it falls into a deep slumber that lasts for an entire week. During this time, the person experiences the anxiety, guilt, and fear that lead Lady Medaria to drown her children. They experience this as if they were Medaria herself. During this period, they do not suffer the consequences of thirst or hunger. The only way to wake up a person from this sleep is with a break curse spell.

If anyone refuses to drink, the ghost of the fourth daughter attacks. If all creatures experience the long dream or if the ghost is destroyed, the pond becomes calm and the stream of tears stops.

7. The Tear of Medaria

Lady Medaria's first tear after she drowned her children crystallized and became a token of her sorrow. A creature that holds this object can cross the barrier without first appeasing the four ghosts. It cannot be thrown across the barrier so a group cannot abuse this ability to cross the barrier collectively. Only one person can cross.

8. Fountain of Sorrow

A gargantuan statue of a fair woman emerges from the waters in a large pond. The four tear streams empty their remaining tears into the pond. Five stone steps descend into the pool. Upon closer inspection, the tears in the pool are ethereal and there is no way to interact with them. The spirit of Lady Medaria is a prisoner within the statue. For eternity she suffers as her sorrow is fed with the tears of the four ghosts. When any visitors access the chamber, her spirit emerges and is unable to withhold her anger at herself for her own actions.

Medaria's anger manifests in the form of ethereal replicas of herself made from crystallized tears in the pond. These abominations behave like hungry monsters that only wish to destroy and kill. Eight crystal manifestations (ghouls) exit the water and attack. When the crystal manifestations are destroyed, Medaria is restored to a temporary state of normal sentence. She is grateful to whoever freed her from her eternal anger but warns them that her state will revert after only a few hours. She points them to the hidden door to **Area 9** where an ancient artifact will allow them to drink from the pond.

9. The Chalice of Restitution

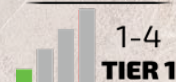
An oversized golden chalice rests atop a stone pedestal. The chalice was used in the Feywild during the naming ceremony of the four daughters. This magical chalice is the only object which can hold the tears from the Fountain of Sorrow.

The tears in the fountain have magical properties. It is possible to drink the tears from this chalice only. When a creature drinks the tears, they are cured of any magical disease or effect that affects them. Otherwise, the spirit of Lady Medaria may bestow a charm or a curse upon the drinker depending on their actions with the four ghosts.

I hope you're ready to pay because she's going to take that which you treasure the most.

-Fearful Villager.

TAMMY'S SKULL HUT



BACKGROUND LORE

The inhabitants of Grenyi Town are worried and scared of the strange woman in the forest. Some of them say she is the devil. Others come up with names for her and call her a hag, a witch, a demon, or a monster. But a few brave ones think she is an angel of sorts, a receptacle of power from beyond the veil. The woman in the forest is Tammy. She is as real as the trees surrounding her strange house. The stories about her are also grounded in truth. She is an accomplished spellcaster with a strong command of the weave but, for all intents and purposes, she is an evil force in the region. She is Tammy, the hag.

The ones who hate her or fear her base their feelings on Tammy's crimes and atrocities during the past fifty years. Tammy has kidnapped many children, stolen livestock, and killed creatures in the forest to harvest their body parts. She has also killed the few brave ones who have dared oppose her from time to time. She is not a person to reason with. One must either agree to her dangerous behavior or confront her and face death as the consequence. None of the outcomes suits the fearful villagers but they have had no other choice for generations.

A few people feel a strange affinity toward Tammy and even worship her in secret. It is known that Tammy is a powerful healer as well as a force of evil. Contrary to common belief, a few people have

dared visit her skull hut unarmed and asked for her aid. Tammy is less aggressive toward visitors, she is tolerant of them. When a person comes and asks for help she always offers a cup of tea and listens to their problem. Often Tammy can come up with a miraculous cure with her magic or an improvised concoction.

But all favors have a cost, she always says. As the man who lost his sight in an accident and came for help. She healed his eyes but took away his voice as payment. The man agreed. A little girl fell sick to a summer disease and nearly died but her mother brought her to the hag, her last option. The hag offered to heal the girl in exchange for ten years of the mother's lifespan. She agreed and the girl recovered.

But the strangest case is that of Gilderoy, the vagrant. He roams the streets in the company of his twelve-year-old son. He tells the story of how he used to be the Town Major two years ago. He claims his son got lost in the forest and a pack of wolves killed him before the rescue party could help. Major Gilderoy, struck with grief, came to Tammy and asked for her help. "Could she revive his son?" he wondered. And Tammy said that she could, but the cost was high. Gilderoy said he would pay anything. The hag had only to set the price. And so she explained that he would have to step down from his position of privilege and live the rest of his life among the peasantry. The man agreed and the young boy opened his eyes once more. When he came back to town and tried to enter his manor, the



TAMMY'S SKULL HUT



1 SQUARE = 5 FT.

guards claimed they did not know him and threatened to call the major. It did not take long for Gilderoy to understand what had happened. Somehow, as difficult to believe as it sounds, the evil hag had erased him and his son from existence. No person in town had any recollection of who Gilderoy was. He lost everything. Even documents and papers that proved his identity and place in the nobility have disappeared. Town Major Gilderoy is nothing but a shadow. That is what the vagrant in town argues. No one believes there could be a sliver of truth in that story. But certainly, if someone were capable of doing that, it would be Tammy.

People shun the idea of asking the hag for help. They know a few individuals have done it and paid a terrible price. Most people can point the general direction to Tammy's hut, though very few of them approach it.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Tammy's hut is based inside a colossal skull. The large skull is large enough for two small stories inside. The skull appears to be humanoid but its shape defies all kinds of creatures known to men. It is too large even for giants. Upon closer inspection, the eroded bone walls reveal that the skull must be millennia old. Whatever it was, it died long, long ago. There is a wooden door on the right side of the skull. Two horizontal fungal pot farms flank the door.

1. The Great Skull

In a clearing, a colossal humanoid skull stands half-buried in the soil. The exposed part is fifteen-feet tall. A medium-sized wooden door on the side of the skull defies the ancient nature of the

General Features

Tammy's skull hut is located three hours into the forest in an empty clearing.

Terrain. The area around Tammy's hut features few trees and a knee-tall pond. Inside, stone tiles cover the floor. Any 5-feet square with an object or a piece of furniture is considered difficult terrain for the purposes of tactical movement.

Doors. The door is unlocked. A short section of rope tied to the inner handle is the only means of security. The trapdoor to the basement is closed with a standard lock. A character can bypass the lock with a **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check**.

Light. Inside the hut, the light that filters through the orifices in the giant skull provide dim-light. The basement is in complete darkness.

Smells and Sounds. A smell of salted meat, fresh greenery, murky water, and fungal essences surrounds the hut. The natural sounds of the forest are muted in the clearing.

scene. Two pots with fungal growths flank the door. A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that no living giant is large enough for such a skull. Perhaps an ancient ancestor is the only possibility. There is a shallow pond of knee-high murky water next to the skull. A few small fish swim around and hide under the floating lily pads.

There is a small pet house next to the skull and the pond. Several large gnawed bones lie scattered around it. Lino lives here. It is a half-sentient wolf and Tammy's pet. Lino used to be a farm stable boy. Tammy kidnapped him years ago and turned him into a loyal servant.

If an adventurer knocks on the door, there is a 50% chance that Tammy is in the main chamber. Otherwise, she is downstairs in the cells' room. Tammy answers the door and asks for their business with her. She is not aggressive, only a little bad-mouthed and ill-tempered. If the adventurers have a favor to ask or need healing, Tammy listens carefully and names a punishing price to pay. If the adventurers choose to attack Tammy (**night hag**), she becomes violent and calls Lino (medium-sized **dire wolf**) to

her side to fight. If Tammy succeeds, she traps any remaining survivors in the cells (**Area 5**).

Tammy's sense of self-preservation is strong. If the odds turn against her, she casts *dimension door* to retreat. Tracking her through the forest should be difficult enough to deter any attempts to follow her, or so she thinks.

2. Main Chamber

The inside of the skull is cramped and eerie. The low ceiling causes a feeling of claustrophobia in most creatures. There is a sizable but disorganized personal library by the east corner that takes up almost half the room, a few crates here and there, a table with half-finished plates on it, a coal stove, and a table with several chunks of meat on it. The library is composed of literary classics from the past, treatises on how to cook different forest animals, and some of Tammy's self-authored books. Her books are mostly about skinning and eating humanoid creatures and spells to bind them and turn them into faithful servants. Most of the arcane secrets depicted in these books are not available to humanoid spellcasters, they make use of the magical abilities reserved to creatures such as hags.



The meat on the table is cut in irregular chunk-sizes. A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check** reveals that some of the meat comes from a large mammal creature, like a bear. But some of the other meat belongs to a humanoid.

The yellow rug by the library hides a trapdoor to the basement. The trapdoor is locked (see sidebar).

3. Tammy's Room

Following the irregular stretch of stairs leads to Tammy's room. Tammy does not allow visitors to come up here. If she is present when a person decides to go up the stairs, she attacks immediately. There is a bed with a wooden bed-frame, a night table, a chest, and an alchemy laboratory. The chest contains 120 gold coins and strange charms, amulets, and necklaces. Most of them fashioned from bone pieces. A few of them reveal magical auras but their uses remain in shadows.

The alchemy laboratory spawns two wooden tables and has all of the important utensils and tools to prepare potions and alchemical substances. Tammy does not keep an inventory of prepared substances. Instead, the only things of value are the different ingredients and components.

4. Winding Passage

A hand-ladder descends twenty-feet to a dark tunnel that winds in no fixed direction for about seventy-feet before opening up to a larger chamber (**Area 5**).

5. The Cells

This is a large chamber of an irregular shape with two improvised cages. The cage bars appear to be trunks of a bamboo-like plant. The bamboo-sticks are buried into the ground and tied together with rope. A successful **DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check** allows a character to crack the bars in a section of the cage to open a way out. Dealing 15 points of damage to the cage (**AC 12**) destroys it. The daughter of a hunter is in the west cage. She is in a state of shock but unharmed.

If Tammy is in the area and the adventurers arrive, she takes offense that they trespassed her home but still chooses to hear them if they came for help. She is cautious here because of the kidnapped girl. A fight is sure to break out.

LINO AND CONSEQUENCES

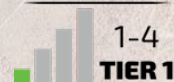
If Tammy dies and Lino is still around, the magic that turned him into a wolf recedes. Lino was five-years-old when Tammy took him. When the magic spell stops, Lino returns to human form but he has aged considerably, he is now a twelve-year-old boy.

Lino's mind is crippled. He lacks any social skills and has no language. Anything he learned before his transformation is gone. The boy continues to behave like a canine beast. It is up to the DM to determine whether the boy can fully recover, perhaps a *Greater Restoration* spell is all that is needed to return the boy to normal. But even this option would return him to his former 5-year-old self.

Just today! Only today! You can get twice as many patties for the same price! Incredible, uh?

-Chema.

STRASTER CITY



BACKGROUND LORE

Straster is a city surrounded by hills and mountain. The Bay of the Thousand Winds holds an unusual amount of grassland standing in the middle of desertic, arid shores. Hundreds of boats visit Straster every month. Its rainy seasons are long, allowing for many crops to grow. The size of the bay is such that Straster features a considerable number of farmlands.

Straster has an archaic, yet effective justice system. Jeldysa is the ruler of the city. She is a gnome, and she is the most powerful citizen. She is a master of deals and has amassed a great fortune over time. She runs the city with titanic precision. She knows what businesses run what, and where they run it. Her guards follow her everywhere, and her informants keep her up to date with every city gossip.

Her meticulousness has brought a period of greatness and peace. But at a cost. Since she is aware of everything that happens, she implemented a city guard called "The Drowning Patrol". Her patrol caught a great number of people doing suspicious deals and many peace breakers. Then, they drowned the culprits in public. Such a demonstration of power and coldness was enough to prevent other troublemakers from breaking the law. And those who dare challenge her face elimination. Her spies identify threats and Jeldysa applies immediate action.

Even though many see her as a tyrant, she has done great things for the city. There are jobs and opportunities to open shops and businesses, they have a growing economy, their exported goods sell very well, and the city has a good administration. Straster has an aqueduct that brings water from the mountains. The network of pipes traverses the city in its entirety. The gates at the river help control who enters and leaves the city. Jeldysa and her councilors are developing a plan to cover the canals east of the city to add more land for farming. Straster people are welcoming and kind. It is a place full of people to meet and friends to make.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Docks

There are always barges, ships, and boats going to and fro. There are many fishermen at every hour. The fish market is crowded in the day when people shop. The smell is strong and overwhelming.

A fisherman is asking for help. His name is Darren. He tells the adventurers he lost his ring while fishing. He fought hard with a fish and the friction with the fishing rod took the ring off his finger. He begs them to recover it for him. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the location of the ring, the water is crystal clear and it reflects the sunlight from under the water. A successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check** allows a character to swim deep enough to recover the ring.

General Features

Citizens. People in Straster are kind and welcoming to tourists. Jeldysa's law has made it very difficult for criminals to subsist. This has kept "the little people" satisfied and happy. But freedom thinkers and other detractors still exist.

Weather. The rivers almost surround Straster in its entirety. It has a considerable fish fauna and industry. It is a city that has a warm, humid, tropical wind and sun.

Smells. The various locations in the city flood it with a vast contrast of smells. From raw fish and sand to manure and farm animals.

Empty Canals. Jeldysa has the project to fill these canals with dirt. She means to enlarge the territory for farming. Marlon, the builder, is part of the organizing committee, along with Garret. This is why the canals are empty. Dams redirected the water and for now, they are testing the resistance of the dams, letting the ground dry, and getting rid of the vermin below.

Darren is grateful is they deliver his ring. He gives the adventurers the big fish he had caught earlier and hopes they enjoy eating it.

2. West Gate

Ed works at the west gate. He is one of the watchmen. When he sees the adventurers, he approaches and asks them a favor. She explains that Lina, the love of his life, has the same job as him but at the east gate (**Area 8**). He has a flower bouquet. He pays the adventurers 200 gold pieces if they can persuade Lina to come here and accept a gift from him.

3. "Chema" the patty vendor

A young teenager of no more than 14 interrupts the way of the adventurers on the street. He has a tray with patties. He says there are the most delicious patties in the world. He speaks fast and is very persuasive. Any creature who "Chema" tries to convince must make a **DC 12 wisdom saving throw**. On a failed save, they buy patties from the young teen. A **failure of 5 or more** causes the buyer to get patties for him and their companions because this discount was only available today, only today.

4. Fammy's Tavern

Fammy is a large old woman. She is corpulent and tough. She only employs halflings as staff. She says

she feels more comfortable intimidating them. She is conducting an ale drinking contest right now. There are five competitors scheduled already. Fammy has the contest tonight at the happy hour of her bar. Any creature participating in the contest must make three consecutive successful **DC 12, 14 and 16 Constitution saving throws** or lose on the first, second, or third round of the competition. Fammy writes the name of the winner of the week on the wall.

5. Straster Theater

Upon arriving at this street, a woman in distress runs to the adventurers and urges them to help her. She says an ogre is attacking her family. At the turn of an alley, a large, ugly ogre is about to smash his massive club on an innocent man and a boy. He crushes the two defenseless citizens while the woman cries in terror.

A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals it is all an illusion. The man and the boy stand up and the ogre disappears. The boy is, in fact, a gnome. His name is Alvin. He explains he has an improv group and they perform in the city theater. They ask the adventurers to donate a few gold pieces if they enjoyed what they saw.

6. Grandma Betty's House

Betty is standing outside her house asking for help. She claims rats have invaded her house. She describes a large rat who has built a nest in her garden and bred a bunch of baby rats. She does not offer any money unless the adventurers demand any. She hopes they can help her just because she is an old lady. She offers 3 silver pieces if asked for pay.

Entering the house reveals there are no rats. There is a black dog that gave birth to six puppies not long ago. They are cuddled in a corner in the garden. The dog is friendly, but protective of its puppies. A successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** allows a character to approach without upsetting the dog. The dog is wearing a collar. The dog's name is Lily and it responds to its name by wagging its tail.

It takes a successful **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to convince Betty that there are no rats but only her dogs. She thanks the adventurers with a grandmotherly grin. On the street, a neighbor tells the adventurers it has been like this for weeks now, someone convinces her of the same thing every day. A *remove curse* spell cures Betty from her affliction.

STRASTER



7. Straster Park

There are a few recreational areas in Straster. People gather in the day to relax in these small clearings. There is an old cat lady in this one. If the characters interact with her, a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** allows a character to bond with the cats that accompany her. The lady gifts a kitten to the adventurers if her cats feel comfortable with them.

8. East Gate

Lina works in the east gate. She is fond of Ed (**Area 2**) but has not still grown a love for him. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Persuasion) check** allows a character to convince Lina to follow them to the east gate and accept a gift from Ed.

Failing to convince Lina results in her throwing the bouquet at one of the adventurers in a fit of rage and caprices.

9. Marlon's House

Marlon the builder is a huge dwarf. He is as wide as a bull. He is taller than most dwarves and his disproportionately large biceps and triceps make it seem as if there were more muscles in the arms as normal. He has helped with most of the architectural developing in the city. The gates at the river and all the piping network are his life projects. A hundred years and the job of a thousand men made what Straster has today possible. He has a mural full of drawings. A line on the mural says "Those I have beaten". He pays a friend of his to make a drawing of the losers. There are a little more than fifty drawings.

He offers 500 gold pieces to the man that can beat him at arm-wrestling. He does not accept gold for winning, as long as the contender accepts adding his face to the wall. He has been the unbeaten champion in Straster for years. To beat Marlon, a

contender must succeed in three out of five versus **Strength (Athletics) checks**. Marlon has a +7 to his roll.

10. The Statue of the God of Pirates

This big statue represents the god of pirates and sailors. It is 30-feet-tall and it is bathed in gold. A kid was playing with a ball and hit it so hard it got stuck almost at the top of the statue. He is crying. If the adventurers decide to help him, a successful **DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check** allows a character to climb the statue and recover the toy to give it back to him.

At that moment, the father of the boy is passing by. He notices what the adventurers do for his kid and rewards them with 100 gold pieces. He tells them his name is Garret, and that he is the owner of most of the farms in the city, and a good friend of Jeldysa, the ruler of Straster. He invites the adventurers to dine with him.

11. Garret's House

If the adventurers helped the boy in **Area 10**, Garret receives the adventurers in his private mansion away from the city noise. He serves a magnificent dinner. He thanks them for their company and then explains he also wants to ask something from them. He tells them about the project to fill the canals between the farms. It requires enormous amounts of gold and time. And, in addition to that, monsters.

He asks the adventurers to get rid of the foul beasts that dwell in the depths of the empty rivers. He offers 2,500 gp for the job. The canals are infested with wormlike monstrosities with tentacles and beaks. 6 **gricks** attack the adventurers at the bottom of the openings.

He tells the adventurers to let him know whenever they plan to visit Jeldysa. He says it is advised to be in the company of a close friend of hers when meeting her.

12. Drowning Site

The Drowning Patrol is conducting a drowning ceremony at this very moment. A speaker on a dais is speaking in a loud voice. Four tall masked men hold a gnome on the improvised stage. After the speaker reads the gnome's crimes and sentence out loud, the four men approach the river and drown the gnome in plain sight. They do it with precise and learned movements. A choreography they must

have performed a thousand times already. The ceremony ends. The executioners carry the body away in a cart.

Jeldysa knows the adventurers are in Straster and she is aware of what they have done so far. Her informants keep her updated. She asks one of his personal assistants to deliver a message to the heroes. When the speaker sees the adventurers, he approaches. He delivers a formal invitation by a letter from Jeldysa. She summons the travelers to her manor.

13. Gabrielle's Street Stand

Gabrielle has a small cart with items to sell. She claims to have the best sort of trinkets in the city. She approaches the adventurers to make a deal. She proposes to make an exchange of goods. She tells them to show her a magic item they are willing to part of. Then she shows the adventurers a large bull's horn.

She tells them the horn belonged to a minotaur and that it has magical properties. She claims the blow of the horn can paralyze enemies but it only works when some creature is trying to kill you. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check** allows a character to know she is lying. If the adventurers accept trading an item with her, she changes her location so they cannot find her again.

14. Administration Office

When Keith sees the adventurers, he explains his situation. He is an employee of the city. He must ensure the water from the aqueduct flows well. It has been a few days that the flow of the water is too weak. He went up the aqueduct to find the problem and ran into a giant gelatinous monster. He found it on the top, blocking the hole in the mountainside. He offers 1,000 gold pieces to those who can get rid of it.

The adventurers must climb on the aqueduct and fight the **gelatinous cube** on the 10-foot wide surface.

15. Strastavern

The owner of the bar, a halfling named Norbert, is desperate. His star for the show tonight is sick and cannot make it. He requires a back-up as soon as possible. He asks the adventurers if any of them would be willing to earn some gold and make a halfling very happy and ease his anxiety.

A successful **DC 14 Charisma (Performance) check** allows a character to meet the clients and Norbert's expectations. He pays 200 gold pieces for the night. Failing the check causes Norbert to pay 100 gold pieces and a forced thank you. A **failure of 5 or more** causes Norbert to stop the music on the spot and kick out the performer in public.

16. Jeldysa's Manor

The sophisticated gnome lives in a gigantic manor. Her entourage consists of councilors, treasurers, masters of whispers, and bodyguards surrounding her at all times. She throws back orders to the things they whisper to her ear. Her voice is the law.

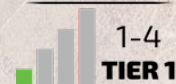
Jeldysa needs to get rid of some of her "Drowning Patrol" members. They went corrupt and have been abusing their power. She says she knows this because she knows everything that happens in Straster. She shares their location. Jeldysa wants these traitors alive. He offers 3,000 gold pieces for the job. The pay is halved if the patrol members die.

If the adventurers bring Garret to the meeting, Jeldysa praises their good taste for friends. She pays 4,000 for the same job just for Garret being present. If the patrol members die, the pay is halved as well.

The eight corrupt patrol members are hiding in a warehouse. 7 **bandits** and a **bandit captain** face the adventurers.

Mr. Green made that doll, sure. But the story that the doll is evil is preposterous.
- Surprised Baker.

TOYMAKER SHOP



BACKGROUND LORE

Deople believe that farmers, smiths, and soldiers are what keep a society running. But some unpopular professions have a great influence on the development of a city. Toymakers are a great example of this.

Good old Howard Green, the town's toymaker, spends his days in his workshop. He is very apt at handcrafting. He has a steady hand and the necessary tools in his shop to do what he desires. Dolls, wooden horses, puppets, Mr. Green can do anything.

Howard has acquired many skills in his life as a toymaker. He knows how to work wood and clay. He has made toys all his life. His house is a working shrine. He can make progress or continue an ongoing project at any time of the day because both levels in his house offer the possibility to work. Despite his craftsmanship, Mr. Green is a disorganized person who cannot find the time or the resolve to finish a project before starting the next one. The shop and his home are littered with incomplete toys he abandoned.

Most children in town are fond of him. Howard makes sure to remember every child's name to show his interest in their preferences and tastes. He is very meticulous and keeps a record of every transaction he has ever done in his shop; therefore, it is not hard for him to keep track of who bought what, or when.

Howard tries to lead a peaceful life in his shop. But being a toymaker is not as calm and quiet as it seems. Even a pacific toymaker can be a partaker in an adventure.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

Goblins Just Wanna Have Fun

A group of goblins raids the toy maker's shop. The steal many of his toys and come back for more. The adventurers can negotiate with the goblins, but most attempts of negotiation go south. The goblins might accept a bribe once but they are back for more toys the day after. They cannot be reasoned with. The adventurers must face them off sooner or later.

The Voodoo Job

Howard wants to create a doll with specific pieces he does not have. He needs someone to retrieve these items for him. The doll requires algae from the river, a piece of clothing from a woman that leaves nearby, and a chunk of hair of this woman as well. This is a voodoo doll Howard is creating for someone else. This person threatened the toymaker and forced him to make the doll. He means to use it to charm the woman and make her love him. Only under duress does Green reveal who the buyer is. The adventurers can catch him when he comes to the shop to retrieve the doll.

FIRST LEVEL



SECOND LEVEL



TOYMAKER'S SHOP

The Magic Paint

It has been a couple of moons since several toys in town have shown magical properties. Some fly, others get hot to the touch, some talk or move. People are scared and they start drawing precipitated conclusions. They brand Howard a dark sorcerer and return his toys. Howard's shop is full of magical toys and he does not know what happened or what to do with them. All this magic is the result of the paint he used. Last time he mixed some colored mushrooms to his homemade paint, he did not notice the plants had magical properties. 3d6 toys are aggressive and behave like **tiny animated objects**. Other than destroying them, the only way to stop them is with a *dispel magic* spell.

Toy Making

Howard is sick and the town begs the adventurers to help him make toys. The children's festival is near and it would be a catastrophe if the toys are not ready by then. Howard can give instructions and provide the materials needed for the toys.

The adventurers face this skill challenge five ability checks. Once the player describes their actions, they must make a **Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence ability check** depending on the nature of their action. After 3 successes out of five checks, the adventurers' toys bring joy to the children and

the town rewards them how they can. If the checks fail, the town experiences a very grim day and the adventurers leave with frowning children looking at their backs.

Toy Sabotage

Another toymaker in town arrived. Howard has nothing against this individual but the people in town feel his presence like an intrusion. The apparent usurper is, in reality, a demon in disguise. It creates toys and trinkets and gives them for free or for very low prices. Such toys are charmed and brainwash the buyers so they let the demon eat them afterward. Howard can assist the adventurers in identifying which toys are his and which come from the other toymaker.

Stolen Merchandise

Howard reports a crime to the City Watch. Last night, a group of masked halflings entered his store with knives and took some of his merchandise. They stole more than thirty different toy pieces; Howard has a list of all the things missing. Upon investigating, the adventurers realize the group of halflings are human children. They organized the coup themselves and got their weapons from their mothers' kitchens. The hoard of toys is in a barn close to the village wall. Three spoiled children attempt to defend their newfound treasures with kitchen implements.

General Features

Doors. The entrance and the back doors have simple locks, unlike the doors inside the house.

Flooring. All the toy shop and the second floor have wood floor tiles. This helps keep the building warm during the winter.

Smells. Strong smells of varnish and paint fill the atmosphere. When Howard does not work on the decoration of one of his dolls or toys for a few days, the shop has a pleasant wood smell.

Howard's Toys. The chest in the main room contains a series of personal toys. These are the ones Howard had when he was a young child. The only one of these toys that he keeps outside the chest is Howy.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Courtyard

The cobbled stones from the town streets give way to rough packed soil in the alleys between buildings. Howard's wagon is stationed outside his shop. He uses this wagon to help him transport his wares whenever he has deliveries to make or to bring supplies home. Green grass patches flank the porch of his shop.

The two-story building is more than enough for the solitary toymaker. His personal chamber is the only actual room in his house. The rest of the alcoves are ateliers, studios, or part of the shop.

2. Porch

A set of stairs with wooden railing at the porch goes up five-feet. Howard likes to stand on his porch and see the people pass by whenever he is not working on a project.

3. Main Shop

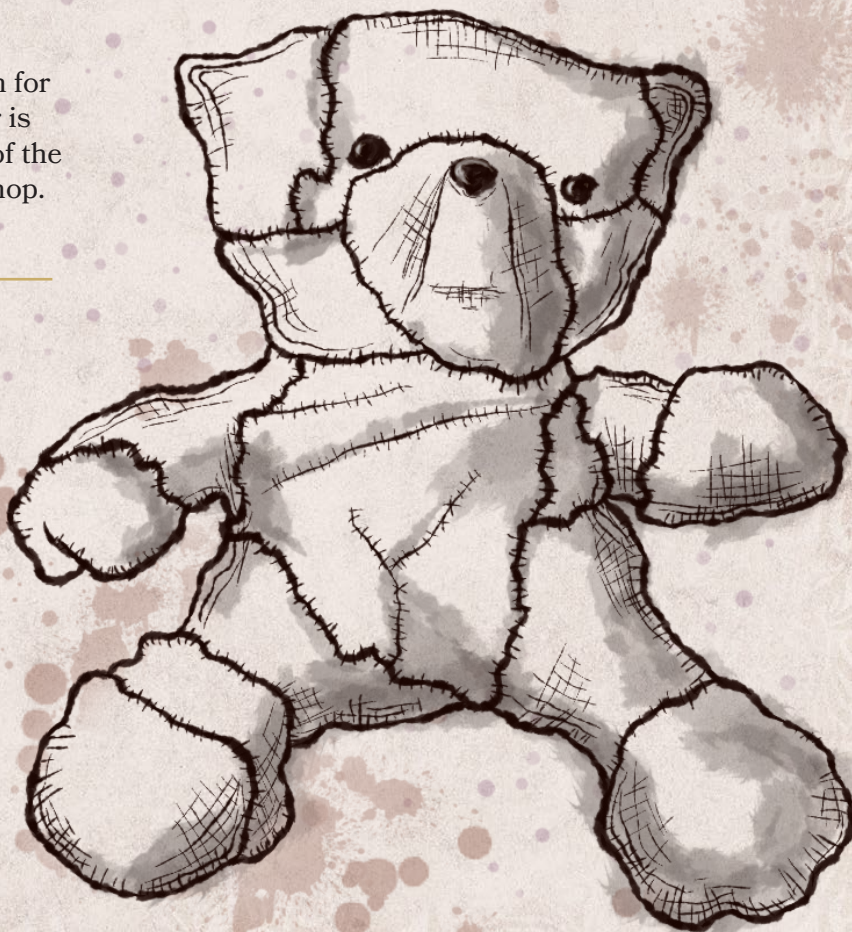
Howard has two square wooden tables that display finished examples of his toys and trinkets. Glass tops on golden frames cover the tables. One of the glass panels is broken on the north side. A table by the east corner shows a couple of dolls and a notebook. A circular table to the west holds a small stringed instrument.

4. Dolls Exhibit

Two long wooden tables hug the walls of this room. By the north wall, the table has a few wands and a mirror. The larger table shows fabric dolls and puppets of varied quality, some of them appear similar to sock puppets while others have porcelain heads. Many pages with notes, drawings, and descriptions lie scattered around. This room emanates a cold, unsettling atmosphere.

5. Counter

Howard is often at the front shop. He put a small collection of precious stones on his counter for display. A cash register helps Howard administer his shop along with his journal, his notes, and stock control. Howard designed the cash register apparatus, it is a marvel of mechanical engineering that makes him proud. He keeps track of the things he buys and sells. Materials, fabrics, or any other supply he purchases are recorded on his books. By the northwest corner, there is a table with a chessboard and some dolls.



6. Back Shop

Howard likes to work in different parts of his shop. Almost every part of his house has a work table. He uses the back shop for the assembling of dolls and puppets. He then proceeds with detailing and decoration. Balls of yarn and needles rest near the edge of the table. Cloth limbs and torsos lay separated on the table, as if someone dismembered them, only Howard has not yet sewn them.

7. Stairs

A few barrels and boxes fill the scenery before the stairs. A large wooden shelf is beside the backdoor of the shop. It contains several wooden sticks, cloths, and other toy pieces Howard needs for his daily projects.

8. Second Floor Landing

Howard is not much of a cleaning person. All his shop is littered with the remains of threads, sawdust, wood, porcelain pieces, and paint. He sometimes sweeps the first floor since his customers shop there, but he allows his real messy self to reign on the second story of his house, where only his feet walk.

9. Studio

This is where Howard creates his designs. A large drawing table shows scrolls of sketches and plans for new toys. A mallet and chisel share the table with a couple of brushes. Paint of various colors complements the view. Long planks on the floor hint at the toymaker's wood carving or carpentry skills as well.

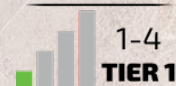
10. Howard's Chamber

A large double bed dominates the room. Its blue linens match the pillowcases. Two small tables at each side of the bed hold notes and papers. Howard's predilect doll rests on the bed, its name is Howy. There is a desk in his room. The open book and notes hint that Howard often sits at this desk. Two identical wardrobes contain Howard's personal belongings. A large wooden chest at the foot of the bed contains Howard's most precious toys which he could never muster the courage to sell.

They say it is the scourge of the skies. No other vessel has bested it in combat.

- Common gossip.

DUSKBRINGER



AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Rudder

The Duskbringer's rudder mechanism steers the vessel left or right by opening some orifices on the side of the floating balloon and propelling air in the opposite direction of the turn. This process does not allow the ship to make steep turns.

A bidirectional lever next to the rudder causes the elemental engine to erupt more fire and gain altitude when moved forward. Moving the lever backward opens two flaps at the top of the balloon to release hot air and lose altitude.

Next to the rudder is the engine order telegraph (E.O.T.) It is a round dial about twenty-inches in diameter with a knob at the center attached to one handle with an indicator pointer on the dial. The face of the dials describes several operation orders for the crew engineer in the air elemental containment unit. When the captain operates the EOT, it sends a signal to a display in the engine room (**Area 6**). The engineer then makes any necessary adjustments to the air elemental engine such as increasing or reducing the propeller speed.

2. Harpoon Gun

There are three identical harpoon guns on the deck of the Duskbringer. They shoot a large harpoon with an iron chain attached to the bottom part of the shaft. The chain and the potency of the harpoon

guns are strong and long enough to shoot at targets up to 480-feet away from Duskbringer. The harpoon guns can rotate 90 degrees on their base. None of the harpoon guns can shoot at a target directly behind or below Duskbringer. Three crew members must operate each of the guns to achieve full efficiency. (See statblock)

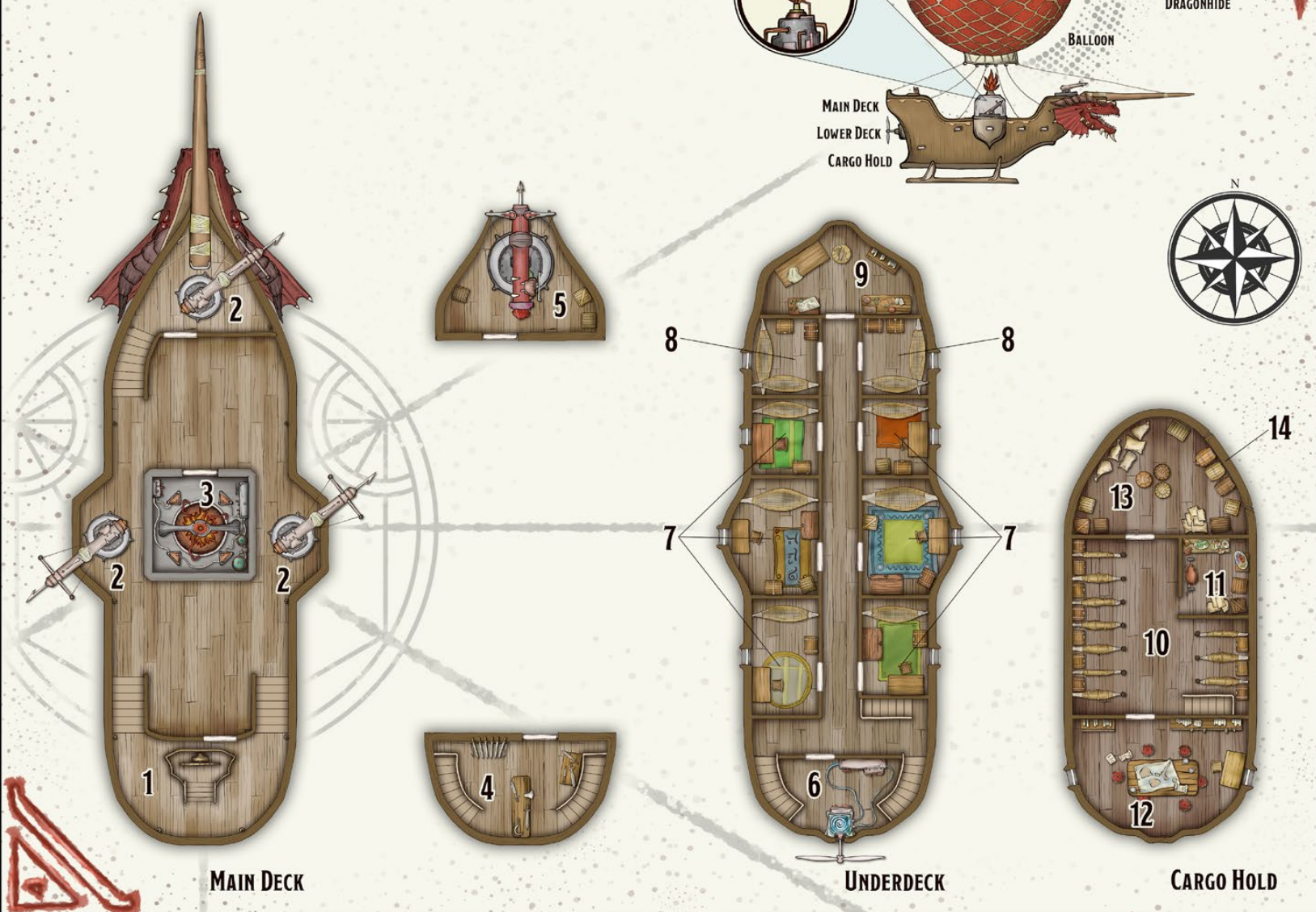
3. Fire Elemental Containment Unit

A complicated arcane device fills most of the room and leaves just enough space for an engineer to maneuver around. The device consists of several control panels, arcane batteries, a fire elemental containment unit, and a device that draws power from the fire elemental and shoots it upward and outside of the room and into the floating balloon.

The fire elemental inside the engine is there against its will. The engineers and creators of ships such as Duskbringer insist that elementals lack the necessary self-awareness to hold a grudge against their captors. In their opinion, the elemental is not even aware of its captivity. Other people disagree with this notion.

The walls and floors of this room are covered with metal plates to reflect the heat and occasional bursts of fire from the containment unit. If the ship loses 75% of its Hit Points, it causes a malfunction. There is a 40% chance one of the containment units breaks and frees the elemental.

DUSKBRINGER



4. Armory

This chamber is directly under the rudder and is the only entrance to the underdeck. Two sets of curved stairs descend to the underdeck on each side of the room. The room is an armory. It contains five crossbows and enough melee weapons for twenty.

5. Firebolt Cannon

The firebolt cannon is a magical weapon that shoots an iron bolt that melts in the air and vaporizes anything it strikes like a ball of fire. It requires no ammo; a new bolt materializes inside the cannon after 1d3 rounds. Three crew members are required to operate this weapon.

The cannon can rotate up to 45 degrees horizontally on its fixed base. The cannon is mostly aimed by pointing the ship towards its target.

6. Air Elemental Containment Unit

The air elemental containment unit is similar to the one in the Fire Elemental Containment Unit (Area 3) but the device is less complicated. The room lacks any kind of protective measure since air elementals are tamer than their fire homologs. A crew member is always in this location to receive operation orders from the captain and input such commands into the containment unit that powers the propeller.

General Features

Duskbringer is a flying vessel that employs two elemental engines and one dragonhide balloon. The front end of the hull depicts a dragon head with a cannon inside the mouth.

Terrain. Well-waxed wooden tiles pave the floors of most areas in the ship. The only exception is the fire elemental containment unit which has metal plates on the floor. Any area partially occupied with an object or piece of furniture is considered difficult terrain.

Doors. All the doors are wooden. The doors to the cabins (**Area 7**) have simple locks. The rest of them only have a simple locking hatch. A successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to pick any of the locks in the cabin doors.

Chests. All chests in the cabins and crew area have simple locks. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to open any chest.

Light. The underdeck and the cargo hold are in complete darkness.

Smells and Sounds. The sound of both elemental engines is audible in any part of the ship. The fire elemental containment unit produces a sound similar to that of a bonfire. The air elemental containment unit powers the propeller and produces a droning vibrating sound.

7. Officer Cabins

A long hallway that crosses a large portion of the underdeck leads to six individual cabins. The two middle cabins are larger. The captain and the first mate sleep each in one of those cabins. The other four cabins are reserved for other ship officers and, sometimes, important passengers. Despite the difference in size, the cabins share some features. Each of them has a good-quality hammock, a desk with a chair, a carpet, and a chest. The larger cabins also have a wardrobe.

8. Passenger Cabins

The two northernmost cabins are the same size as the individual cabins but they are more spartan in nature. Each cabin has two sets of double hammocks (4 in total) and a pair of chests. These cabins are reserved for paying passengers who cannot afford a private cabin.

9. Infirmary

The room has a smell of sterile compounds and herbal medicines. There is one wooden pad, several tables with healing components and implements, and a bookcase by the north wall with a sizable collection of medical treatises and potion recipes.

10. Crew Room

This area takes up most of the space in the cargo hold. Double sets of hammocks line the walls. There are twenty hammocks in total, each with a chest next to the wall.

11. Pantry

This small chamber is the main storage of food in the ship and an improvised kitchen for the crew. The crew rotates kitchen duties every week. There are usually two or three crew members here preparing meals most of the time. One of the crates in the pantry is magical. It is larger inside and carries ten times more things than its size would suggest.

12. War Room

Only officers are allowed in this location. It is a large chamber with a wooden table in the middle. Maps, navigation implements, and other useful trinkets for planning voyages are available on the table and in one of the bookcases. The bookcases have a decent collection of maps, nautical maps, books on the functioning and maintenance of the elemental engines and the elemental containment units, and books about ship buildings and how to knit and maintain the floating balloon.

13. Cargo Hold

This area is used for transporting bulk cargo. Crates, barrels, boxes, chests, and sacks usually fill the room. On a few occasions, people with no gold to pay their fare have begged the captain to let them ride the ship, offering to work for him as a crew member during the trip. Whenever this happens, the captain allows it as long as they agree to sleep in the cargo hold.

14. Cargo Bay

The right side of Duskbringer's hull opens to become a cargo ramp. Objects up to ten-feet-wide fit through the opening. The door section of the cargo bay is locked in place with twenty different pressure latches on the inside of the cargo hold. It can only be opened from the inside.

DUSKBRINGER

Gragantuan Vehicle (80 ft. x 20 ft.)

Creature Capacity 20 Crew, 10 passengers

Cargo Capacity 1 ton

Travel Pace 10 miles per hour (240 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	0	0	0

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

Hull

Armor Class 15

HP 200

Balloon

Armor Class 12

HP 75

If the balloon is destroyed, Duskbringer cannot maintain altitude and falls 50 feet per round.

Actions

On its turn, Duskbringer can move up to 80 ft. Additionally, each of the weapons can either fire or reload once per turn if at least 3 crew members are available to operate it.

Firebolt Cannon

Armor Class 17

HP 75

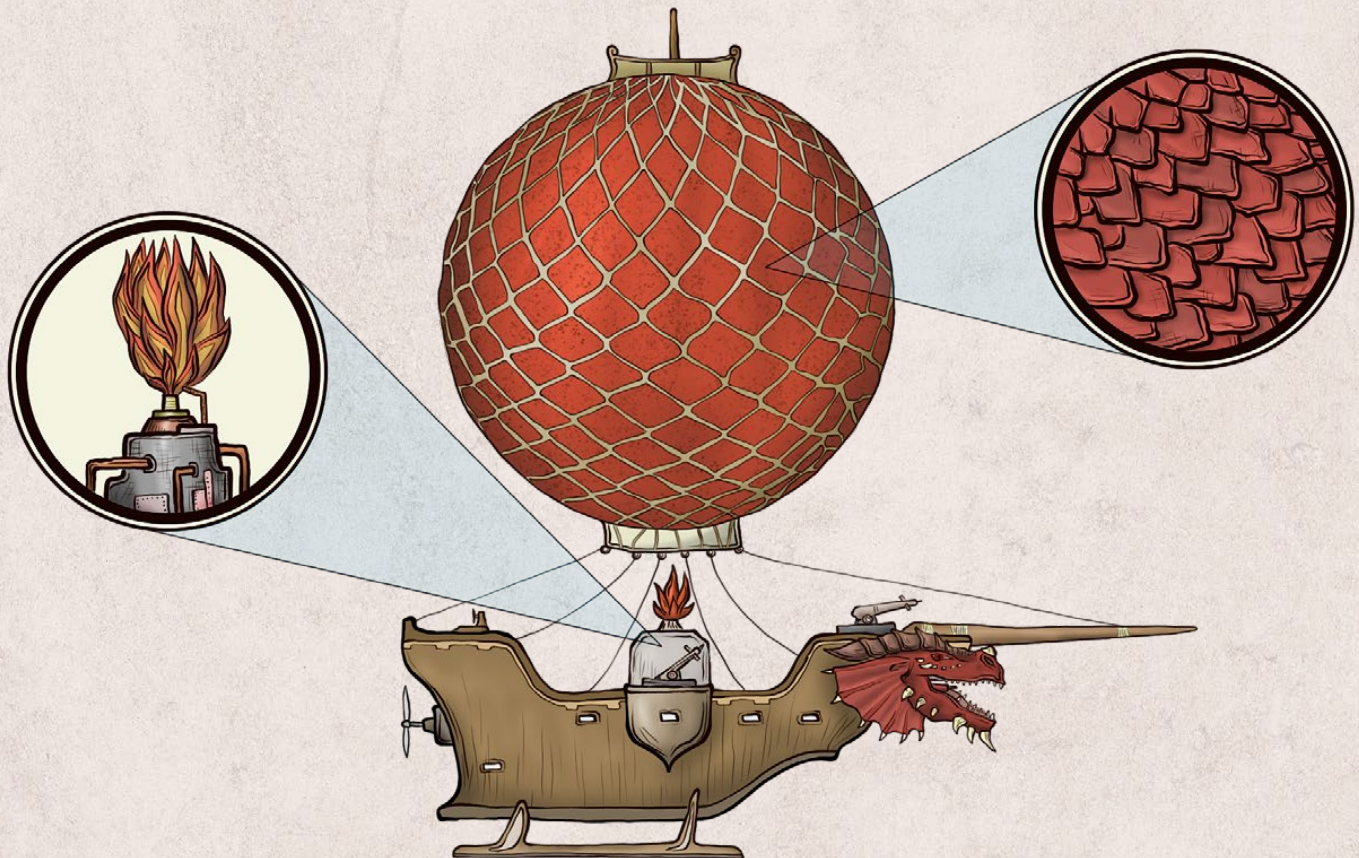
Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 200/800 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 ft. of it), one target. Hit: 16 (3d10) piercing damage and 22 (4d10) fire damage.

Harpoon Gun

Armor Class 15

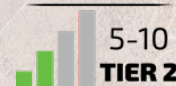
HP 50

Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d10) piercing damage and the target vessel is grappled (escape DC 16). Until the grapple ends, the target's speed is halved and it can't move farther away from Duskbringer.



*You should find Shiades to cure your son.
He helped me with my leg a few years back...*
- Local Farmer.

THE UNBOUND GARDEN



BACKGROUND LORE

This is the story of Shiades, the exotic gardener. The mysterious individual known as Shiades traces back his origin to the Feywild. As a being from the realm of natural forces and the rule of the Fey Court, Shiades is bound to the spirits of nature by his Fey blood. Shiades is a satyr, sometimes also known as a faun. He has the upper body of a horned man. His lower body appears to be similar to that of goats or horses but the legs are shaped in a way that allows him to stand upright. Satyrs seldom leave the Feywild, and it was not Shiades' intention to stay in the Material Plane for a prolonged period, but there was an unfortunate development. Two decades ago, Shiades pranced through a large forest in the Feywild when he heard the melody of a flute. It is part of satyr culture to play wind instruments made from the parts of ancient trees, that is why the faun felt curious. The melody was unknown to Shiades and the timbre of the flute was unlike any he had ever heard. He ran through the deep forest to find the talented flute player.

After a few minutes of tracking the echoing sound, Shiades found himself in the presence of a human lumberjack. The man played the flute before returning to work but was interrupted by the strange Fey creature. Shiades retreated and got away from the man.

The forest before him was different, the colors appears washed out, the animals and vermin more silent than usual, the sky a different hue of blue. But the worst offender, by far, was the smell. It was as if the forest had lost half its scents but at the same time, all was now blended with the repugnant signature of a new odor. It was that of humanoids, non-Fey. Something terrible had happened. Somehow, Shiades had crossed the thin veil in between the Feywild and the Material Plane. Eons ago, the transference zones were well documented and portals in between the two worlds were common. Now, many of those areas of convergence are unknown. They are numerous but so far away from one another that when a denizen of the Feywild disappears they are seldom noticed. Shiades knew that many of these portals were two-way passageways so he tried to retrace his steps to find the place where he crossed.

He spent days tracking his faint hoof tracks back to a point where they simply vanished as if he had appeared from nowhere. That was the location of the portal. Unfortunately, it was a one-way connection to the Material Plane. Shiades was trapped. His only way to return to his homeland was to find a convergence zone to cross back or find a way to use magic to force open the one-way portal he came from to cross back. Shiades spent a few years trying to accomplish this with no success. He gave up and decided to adopt the forest and the nearby communities as his new home. The terrible smell of the plane vanished after a few weeks and became his new default state. With some considerations,



THE UNBOUND GARDEN

the Material Plane did not appear to be as bad as it seemed at first. Back in the Feywild, Shiades was just another satyr among many. Here, he was a unique creature of mysterious origins. People from nearby towns gave esoteric significance to his presence. The general opinion of him, born from ignorance but still honest, was that Shiades was a mysterious creature who possessed special information about plants and animals.

In some ways it was true. What was common botany knowledge and insights for Shiades turned out to be out of the scope of herbalists of the humanoid species. And thus, Shiades became a gardener of interesting herbs and flowers. It was only natural for him to choose herbs and ingredients and prepare a potion or beverage to alleviate a symptom or straight out cure a disease. He became a popular source of medicines and help. Despite the apparent popularity he could muster, Shiades would never stop to be what he was. He found happiness in the absurd loneliness of the forests and the natural

sounds of the wind and animals.

Shiades found a cozy cave in a large rocky hill and claimed it as his home. Inside, it was perfect. Small water streams fed large patches of a particular strain of grass that grew without direct sunlight. It was humid yet not cold. And it was far enough from the nearest settlements so that Shiades would not have to deal with humans often. Only when a person was ill or needed help would they venture to his cave. Shiades would still visit some of the settlements from time to time to sell his potions. The stranded satyr had no use for money or gold coins. Instead, he tried to barter his wares for whatever

caught his interest. He had a particular habit to exchange his medicines for alcoholic drinks.

A month ago, Shiades tripped on an overgrown weed and dropped a powerful growth concoction by accident and the substance caused some plants to grow fast and merge into a more complex plant life form. The new plant appears like a large shrub with several whip-like vine tentacles. The strange plant is aggressive and territorial. Shiades still cares for some areas within the cave but the plant monster grows and claims more territory as days go on. Last week, it somehow split and now there are two of those aggressive plant life forms. Shiades has tried everything to either control or kill the two giant plants but they are too resilient. The helpless satyr is now in one of the nearby towns trying to get some help from either the locals or strong looking travelers.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Entrance

The cave opens up and becomes a hole on the side of the cliff face. Shiades marked three rocks by the entrance with Fey runes that spell “Shiades Master Gardener”. The smell of greenery and humid plant life grows stronger as one approaches the main chamber.

2. Main Chamber

This cavernous chamber is located roughly in the middle of the garden. Faint lights from the various bioluminescent sources point the walls of the caverns. Some patches of the floor by the entrance are covered by a particular kind of obscure grass that requires no direct sunlight.

3. North Garden

One of the large aggressive life forms is lodged in the middle of the garden. Some of Shiades’ pots and plants lie scattered across the room in disarray. The large shrub has 15-foot-long whip-like tentacles with thorns. The shrub produces a strange purple-tinted gas that surrounds it. Any creature who approaches and breathes the gas must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or take 10 (3d6) poison damage and become poisoned for 1d4 hours. On a success, the creature is immune to the effects of the gas for 24 hours. If any creature approaches within ten feet of the plant creature (**shambling mound**), it attacks immediately.

A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a mound of stones near the north-east end of the wall that covers a small passage that leads to **Area 6**.

4. South Garden

Many exotic plants and herbs grow in this section of the cave. The plants look fresh and watered and it appears that Shiades has been able to keep up with this section of the cave. The small water stream filters through a crack on the east wall. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a mound of stones by the east end of the wall that covers a small passage that leads to **Area 7**.

5. East Garden

Shiades explains that the original plant monster he created by accident is here. It is larger than the one

General Features

The unbound garden is located in a small cavernous complex inside a large rocky hill. The rain-fall-fed streams inside the caves make farming and growing plants and fungi a simpler task.

Terrain. The floor of the caves consists of uneven packed soil. There are patches of a variety of grass that does not require sunlight in areas where the little streams pass. Squares around the water streams or with a large plant in it are considered difficult terrain.

Light. Some plants and fungi in the cave produce bioluminescence. The area is considered to be in dim light.

Smells and Sounds. The sound of flowing water and the occasional water drop falling from the stalactites above give the caves an ethereal feel to them. Every few minutes, the poisonous mounds make a whistling sound as they eject more gas.

in **Area 3** and it moves as if breathing. It produces a cloud of poisonous gas like the other one too. If any creature approaches within ten feet of the plant creature (**shambling mound**), it attacks immediately. In addition, 3 **twig blights** emerge from the greenery and attack the adventurers.

6. Secret Garden

Shiades grows the most exotic flowers and herbs in this hidden garden. The room is covered in strange and interesting smells that mix and merge to fool the senses.

7. Scented Flowers and Herbs

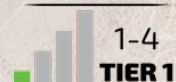
Shiades keeps flowers, spices, and scented herbs in this part of the cave. The plants in this room are the most useful for making medicine and herbal concoctions.

DEVELOPMENT

After the adventurers help Shiades get rid of the dangerous plant monsters, he is willing to assist them in whatever the adventurers need. He is a master apothecary and potion maker. Shiades can help the adventurers produce the cure for an illness or a debilitating condition.

Don't mess with the City Watch. I heard they sold a guy to the lanistas last week...
- *Worried Citizen.*

ARENA LUDUS



BACKGROUND LORE

Bread for the populace! That's what the high members of the political class and the clergy call the gladiatorial games. The arena is the place where the poor, the wretched, the slave-driven, and the mediocre find solace and forget their plights for an afternoon.

The games consist of several rounds of battles in the arena. By design, each round should be more exciting, more dangerous, or more interesting. The struggle to raise the odds as the event reaches its climax has forced organizers to rely on unthinkable things. It is common to have fights of armor-clad warriors. Sometimes there are melees of 10 or more participants. All fights are to the death. As the event continues, the carnage increases. The more creative engagements occur when they bring monsters from the cells below as the arena has had all kinds of strange creatures. Other times, they have poor fools fight a single gladiator. Not even ten men stand a chance when the gladiator is the only one with weapons and armor.

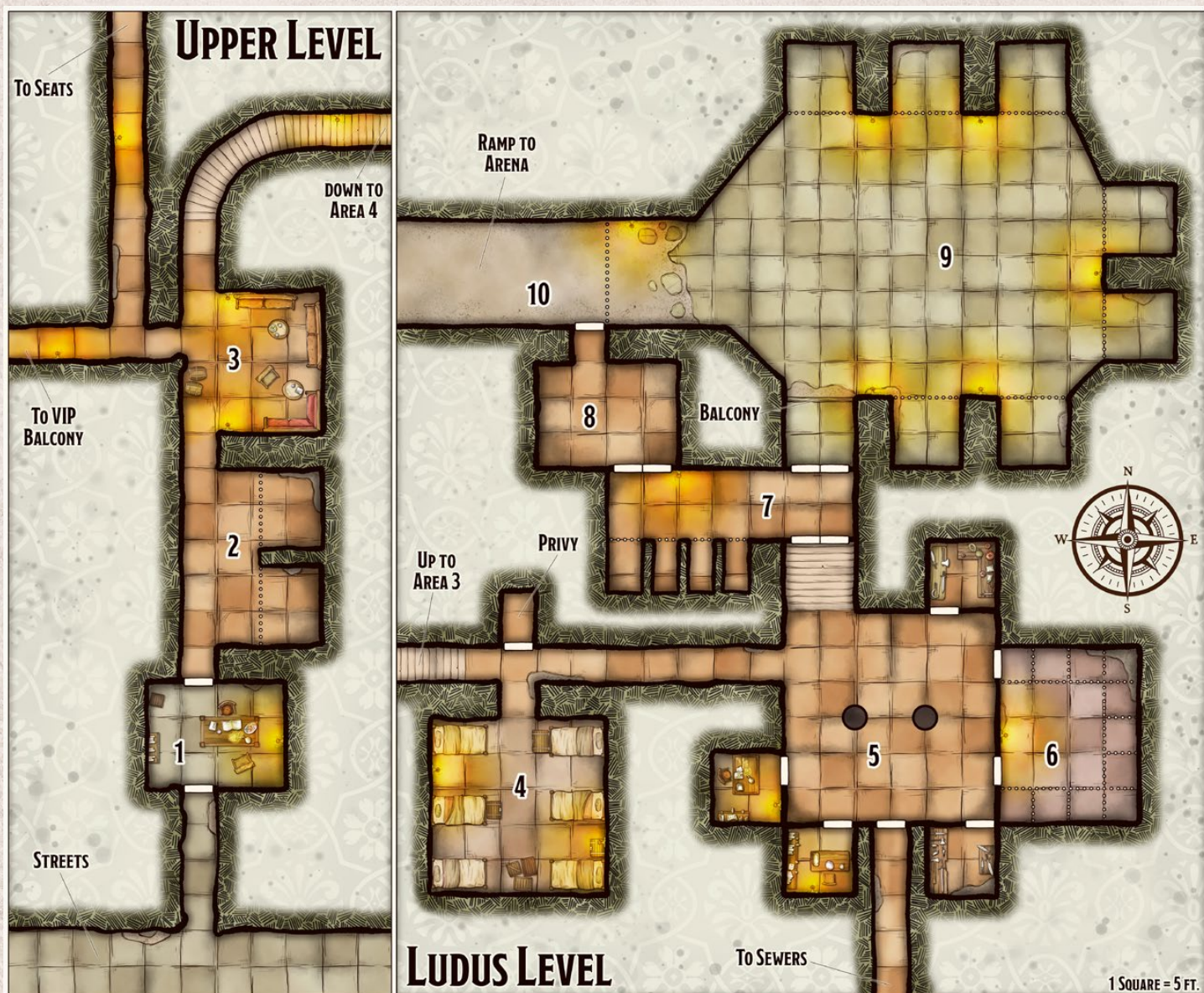
Scholars have wondered for years what is it that attracts such a following in the gladiatorial events. Given the fact that it is nothing but a spectacle of bloodshed, they cannot claim for certain what the appeal is. Some have ventured to say that the underlying nature of humans is to suffer and enjoy suffering. Considering that assumption true, one can see that the arena events are the pinnacle of human entertainment.

Gladiators who survive for a long time become local heroes to the populace. The average arena-life of a gladiator in the events is a few weeks. But some gladiators have managed to stay alive and relevant for a few years.

There is a second layer of understanding for gladiatorial fans too. The ludi and the lanistas (see sidebar). There are three different ludi in the city. One of the gladiator training schools is housed in the arena complex, underground. The other two are located in the city. The person in charge of each of the ludi is the lanista. A trainer, dealer, and salesman of gladiators. Everything that the gladiators achieve is a marker of success for the lanistas. The arena audience is divided amongst the three ludi in their following and support. Each lanista is presented at the beginning of each event and they make a display of their best fighters to boast of their achievements. This is not just for the show, though. The lanistas compete for power, position, and influence. The lanista whose gladiators perform the best gains total control of the ludus under the arena. They also receive 1% of the profits from the arena tickets. Lanista Xenos has kept this position for over a year and a half.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

The adventurers see themselves caught up in a complex situation. The City Watch arrested them for a crime they did not commit and they have resolved to sell them off to the ludus since they appear to be strong individuals. Lanista Xenos sees



potential in them and welcomes them to his training grounds.

Lanista Xenos needs trainers in varied disciplines to ensure his current batch of gladiators succeeds in the upcoming games. He offers the party a percentage of the wins if they can prepare them for a glorious battle. The current prisoners come from different backgrounds. The party has no problem finding a suitable apprentice.

A mysterious political group hires the adventurers to free the current batch of prisoners at the arena ludus. They say one of the prisoners is a person of interest but they will not disclose who. The person is a powerful politician who found their way into the ludus training area as part of a political vengeance move. Their enemies expected the person to die promptly in the merciless life inside the ludus.

A dear friend or relative of the adventurers is now a prisoner in the ludus. They hear that the person barely made it through the games last night. Their friend is injured and cannot fight in the next games tomorrow. But Lanista Xenos declared earlier today that even the injured would take a part in tomorrow's games. "If they cannot fight, then they'll serve wonderfully as lion fodder" he declared.

The adventurers require a monster body part for medicinal purposes. The monster is rare enough that finding such a specimen would take too long for their needs. But they hear that the arena features such a monster tonight. Lanista Xenos rejects any offers to buy the creature or a part of it. It is a big attraction in the games. The adventurers have two options: break into the ludus before the games to gain access to the creature, or jumping down the arena walls during the games to gain access to the creature during the main event.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Entrance Office

The entrance is in a back alley behind the arena. An unmarked door is the entrance to the ludus. A middle-aged woman, Adria, is behind the desk. She logs the entry of all guards and makes a report on new prisoners for Lanista Xenos to review before inspecting them. After the report is ready, any suitable individuals are moved to the temporary cells (**Area 2**).

2. Temporary Cells

Good candidates for the gladiatorial games wait here until Lanista Xenos has the time to come and inspect them. The Lanista, in the company of many guards, inspects the candidates' bodies and may ask them to perform an action or two. Lanista Xenos sends down the prospects he accepts and assigns them a cell in **Area 6**. The City Watch accepts any rejected individuals to do as they please. Otherwise, rejects find their way to **Area 7** to wait for the next event. They are to be used as fodder for creatures or other gladiators.

3. Guards' Lounge

Guards, and sometimes servants, pass the time in this room when they do not have any immediate task. There are usually pints of ale and snacks. Servants often carry crates of food and fine beverages for their patrons in the VIP balcony.

4. Barracks

There are six double bunk beds in this chamber, three chests, and a few crates. At any given time, 1d4 guards are here sleeping or resting. The rest are on duty in different parts of the ludus. Guards are all male and well trained with the short sword and the spear. They perform their duties to the best of their abilities. The fear of failure is a terrible

Ludus. In ancient Roman culture, the Latin word **ludus** (plural **ludi**) refers to a training school for gladiators. Participants were often slaves or prisoners held against their will.

Lanista. A lanista was a man who purchased and looked after gladiators. They could gain considerable wealth by renting or selling gladiators to small, local games but their social status was considered low. New gladiator arrivals were formed into troupes called 'familia gladiatorum'.

General Features

The ludus is located under some of the main areas of the arena. The main entrance is on a backstreet behind an unremarkable passageway. There are alternate entrances to the VIP balcony and seat areas for servants and butlers.

Terrain. The majority of the floor in the underground ludus has square stone tiles. Some areas have erosion damage and cracks but do not pose an obstacle to movement.

Doors. Every door in the underground complex is made of iron. All doors feature simple locks except the door to the privy. Guards, officers, and Lanista Xenos have keys to most doors. A character can open a simple lock with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check**.

Light. Torches on the walls provide bright light in most of the underground areas. Servants replace consumed torches throughout the day. At night, the torches in the cell areas are left to die and replaced until the morning.

Smells and Sounds. The whole complex has a musty smell of sweat, decay, and sometimes burnt meat. It takes a few days to get used to the smell and ignore it. During the day, the sound of wooden weapons clashing, grunts, and weights being dropped on the stone floor reverberate around the hallways.

burden for the guards. Any guard who falls from Lanista Xenos' grace often becomes a new prisoner, therefore, a new gladiator.

5. Ludus Training Area

Two large pillars support the domed ceiling. There are chains and latches on the pillars. Lanista Xenos often has the guards tie a prisoner to the pillar to lash or torture him. This chamber is the main training area for gladiators. Lanista Xenos has them train their battle skills at least 8 hours every day. They train with wooden swords and leather armors to avoid serious injuries or escape attempts. Six guards surround the area when training sessions occur. The training is arduous, hard, unforgiving, and inhumane. Those who withstand it participate in the games. Those who succumb either perish or become game fodder.

Seven iron doors and a wide staircase branch from this location. The only door on the west side leads to Lanista Xenos' office. Next to it is the office of the

Master Trainer. The position changes hands often as the Lanista blames any losses on him and fires him. The center door to the south opens to a secret passage into the sewers. It is seldom used. The two doors on the east wall lead to the prisoners' cells. The remaining doors are labeled "Armory".

6. Ludus Cells

There are eleven cells. Two people fit in them (max. 22 prisoners). On average, there are fifteen inmates at any given time. When they return to their cells, they only have access to their clothes. They eat in their cells too.

7. Timeout Cells

Four narrow cells follow the south wall in this chamber. Problematic prisoners spend a few days in here. Unsuitable candidates, failed gladiators, and lousy guards often find their way into these cells. This is often a death sentence as Lanista Xenos sends them to the arena unarmed, and with no armor, to face a monster or a gladiator. These unfair events are comedy-relief entertainment in between more important fights.

8. Gladiators Room

Gladiators gear up and get ready for the games in this chamber. It is empty most of the time as warriors must bring whatever they plan to use when

the time comes. When their turn comes up, a guard opens the north door that allows them into the ramp to the arena. The sound of the crowd comes through the open door.

9. Beasts' Training Area

The games often feature large creatures, monsters, or monstrous humanoid races as special events. There are seven large cells in this room. Lanista Xenos tries to have at least three of these monster-events each time the arena opens. Creatures are dangerous and guards try to get out of monster duties when possible. There is a 20-foot-tall balcony on the south side of the chamber that connects to **Area 7**. Seven levers on the wall, located next to the doors, open each of the cells. This way, the creature can make its way to the arena on its own. When necessary, three or four guards jump down the balcony and use their spears to push the monster up the ramp.

10. Arena Ramp

The ramp goes fifty feet to the west and opens up on the west side of the arena. When opponents from a different ludus are part of the games, they enter the arena from a different ramp on the east side.



THE LAST CEREMONY



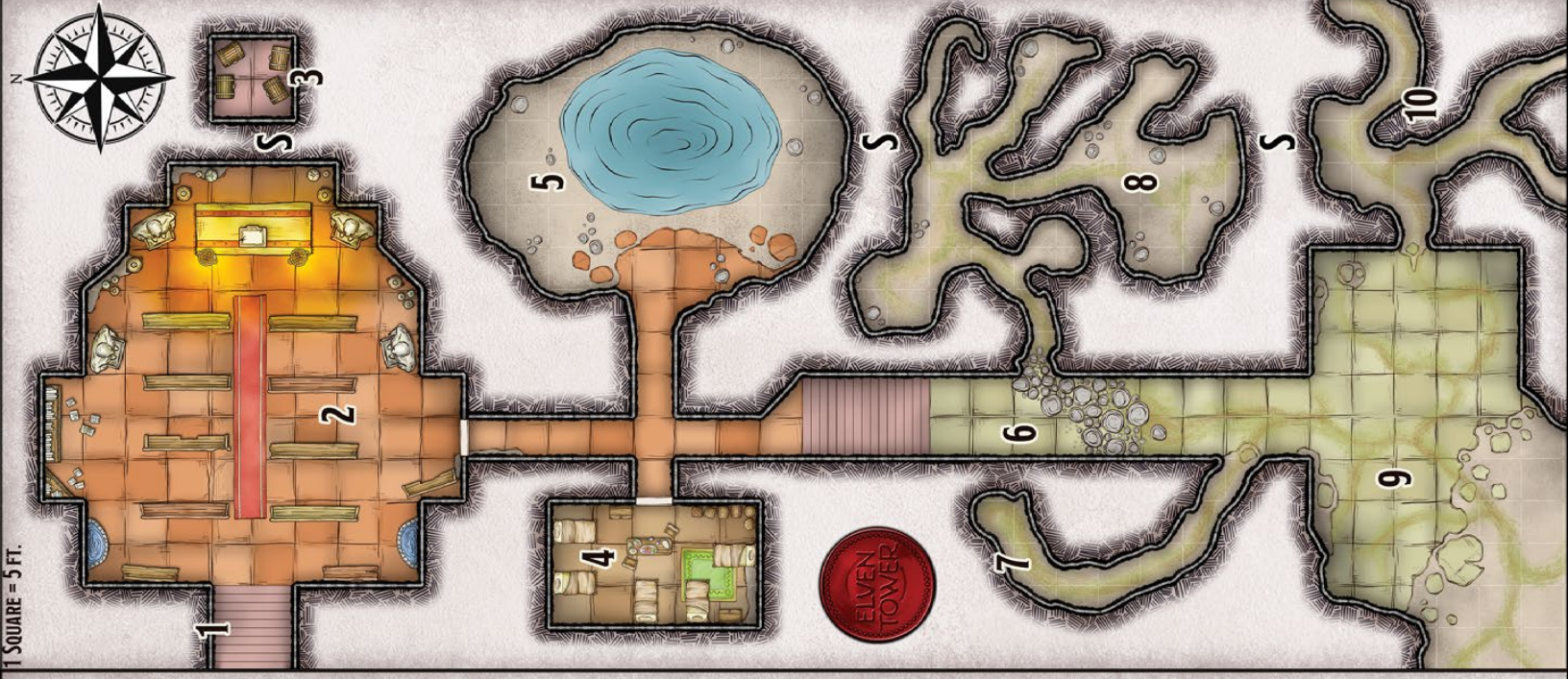
terrible situation looms on the minds of thousands of people in Farsheen City. The cosmopolitan metropolis does not lack for problems and contingencies but the strange affair of the Congregation of the Crawling Slime is so alien that no one knows how to handle it.

It all started a few months ago when a man named Darley found a strange underground complex by accident. The location appears to have been a temple of sorts. To what deity it was dedicated is, so far, unknown. No one cares about the origin of the construction.

The south wing of the place was inaccessible. A barricade of rocks and debris blocks the way. Darley dug his way to the other side and found an impossible large network of tunnels that had no end. There, he found a strange kind of crawling critters. Wormlike abominations with scores of insectile legs and a multi-faceted mouth with four sticky tentacles. The creatures were aggressive by nature. Their small size was no threat to Darley but the poison on their tentacles affected him. The substance caused an unexplainable reaction in his mind. It changed his thoughts. It made him see and hear things. New motivations and ideas found their way inside his mind. They appeared to be his ideas but, were they?

Darley spent days recovering from the nauseating feeling caused by the toxins. When he came back to his senses, he felt normal. But he was changed. The ultimate effect of the poison was to make him feel as if it all were normal again.

Darley killed a person that night in the darkness of a narrow alley. He dragged the body to the underground complex and brought it



for the crawling insects to feed on. The crawling abominations gorged on the corpse and retreated. Darley did this many times. The insects and their hunger grew larger day by day.

One day, Darley collected some of the poison from a crawler and watered it down with wine to give out to people. The reduced effect of the poison caused an instant desire to follow Darley in whatever schemes he had.

He renamed himself as "Abbot Darley" and founded the Congregation of the Crawling Slime. It was an organization surrounded in secrecy. Members were forbidden to talk about it. Only Abbot Darley could welcome new members.

They followed the precepts of strange teachings that Abbot Darley invented on the fly that did not make much sense. But the fanatic followers were under the hypnotic effects of the poison and accepted everything as holy scripture.

Darley convinced them that their souls were impure. That their souls had to be cleansed in the Pond of Forgiving (**Area 5**) and, only then, could they surrender themselves to the corrosive slime that would bring them to the afterlife. They all believed in his words.

Abbot Darley goes out in the night and offers the poisoned wine to new people every night. At least three new members join their ranks daily. Darley needs to keep this rhythm because the crawling abominations are larger every day and need more and more food.

At this point, Abbot Darley chooses one or two volunteers every night for the cleansing ceremony. Those who agree, step into the Pond of Forgiving and bathe for a few minutes as Abbot Darley mutters an unintelligible chant. After this, the person must access the underground network naked and await their final destination. Abbot Darley claims that two messengers from beyond the veil will use their acidic substance on the chose ones and

Surrender to the Cause!

The Congregation of the Crawling Slime awaits your sacrifice. Your soul is the fuel for repentance.

Strange notice at the message board.

forever erase their sins from existence. The believers are unable to see that this course of action is only a poor way to die.

It is impossible to know if Abbot Darley is aware of the nonsense he claims. He is, after all, another victim of the abominations' poison.

A strange notice in the city's message board is the only clue as to the recent disappearances and killings. The City Watch does not know how to proceed but a few wealthy individuals are willing to pay a handsome amount of money to whoever rescues their conscripted loved ones. One particular Duke lost his young boy and offers one thousand coins to rescue him.

If the Abbot is rescued, the poison in his blood thins out and disappears after two weeks. He recovers true consciousness after that. He recalls nothing from his period as the Abbot but he experiences a desire to return to the underground to consume more poison.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. TEMPLE ENTRANCE

The Congregation of the Crawling Slime meets in this underground temple. No one knows the original purpose of this structure. The entrance is hidden in a dark alley in the great city. Its location prevents people from stumbling into it by accident.

2. TEMPLE NAVE

Two braziers shed dim light in this large chamber. Rows of benches flank an old red carpet that leads to the stone tabernacle. The room features two basins and four strange statues that predate the temple. 3d6 fanatics are in the nave at any given time. There is a 30% chance that Abbot Darley is in the room.

Pushing a hidden button under the tabernacle causes a section of the east wall to slide and reveal a hidden passageway to **Area 3**.

3. SECRET VAULT

Abbot Darley keeps tithes and contributions here. There are four wooden chests with masterwork locks. All jewelry items and gold coins are in the same chest. It is rigged with a fire jet trap that triggers when it is opened without the Abbot's key.

4. DORMITORY

The room contains five double bunk beds, a dining table, and a few crates and barrels. Only the most fervent fanatics are allowed to sleep here, so close to the barricade. There are 2d6 fanatics at any given time. This area is sacred to them. When a stranger comes knocking, they do not take it lightly.

5. POND OF FORGIVING

Abbot Darley claims that this pond is sacred. The water is supposed to prepare the volunteers for the ultimate cleansing of the soul. The Abbot is here unless he was found before.

He explains that the whole congregation must be devoured. The monsters shall soon break through. If defied, the Abbot and 4 fanatics do their best to stop the adventurers. They die with tears in their eyes, acknowledging that their death was impure. A priest or cleric can determine that the pond is not magical or sacred in nature.

A mound of small rocks by the south walls can be removed to reveal a hidden passageway to **Area 8**.

6. PROTECTIVE BARRICADE

Rocks and debris cover the entirety of the hallway and a hole on the eastern wall. Some rocks sustain acidic damage.

7. NEW TUNNEL

The crawling abominations are trying to dig a new tunnel that bypasses the rock barricade. The marks of acid on the floor reveal that the monsters visit this area often.

8. AMBUSH IN THE DARK

A sprawling network of twisting, dark caves, and passages. Three young crawling abominations hide in the tunnels and wait for the best opportunity to ambush their prey. Their tracks on the floor betray their presence.

9. OLD TEMPLE NAVE

The structure is similar in shape to the one in **Area 2** but all signs of furnishings and decoration are long gone. Fresh slime tracks on the floor and a pungent smell signal to the abominations in the dark. 2 large crawling abominations emerge from the darkness and attack. They are mindless critters who cannot be reasoned with.

10. CRAWLER TUNNELS

A network of tunnels sprawls from this area. A day of exploration reveals that the network goes deep underground to uncharted depths. A true entrance to the Underworld.

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