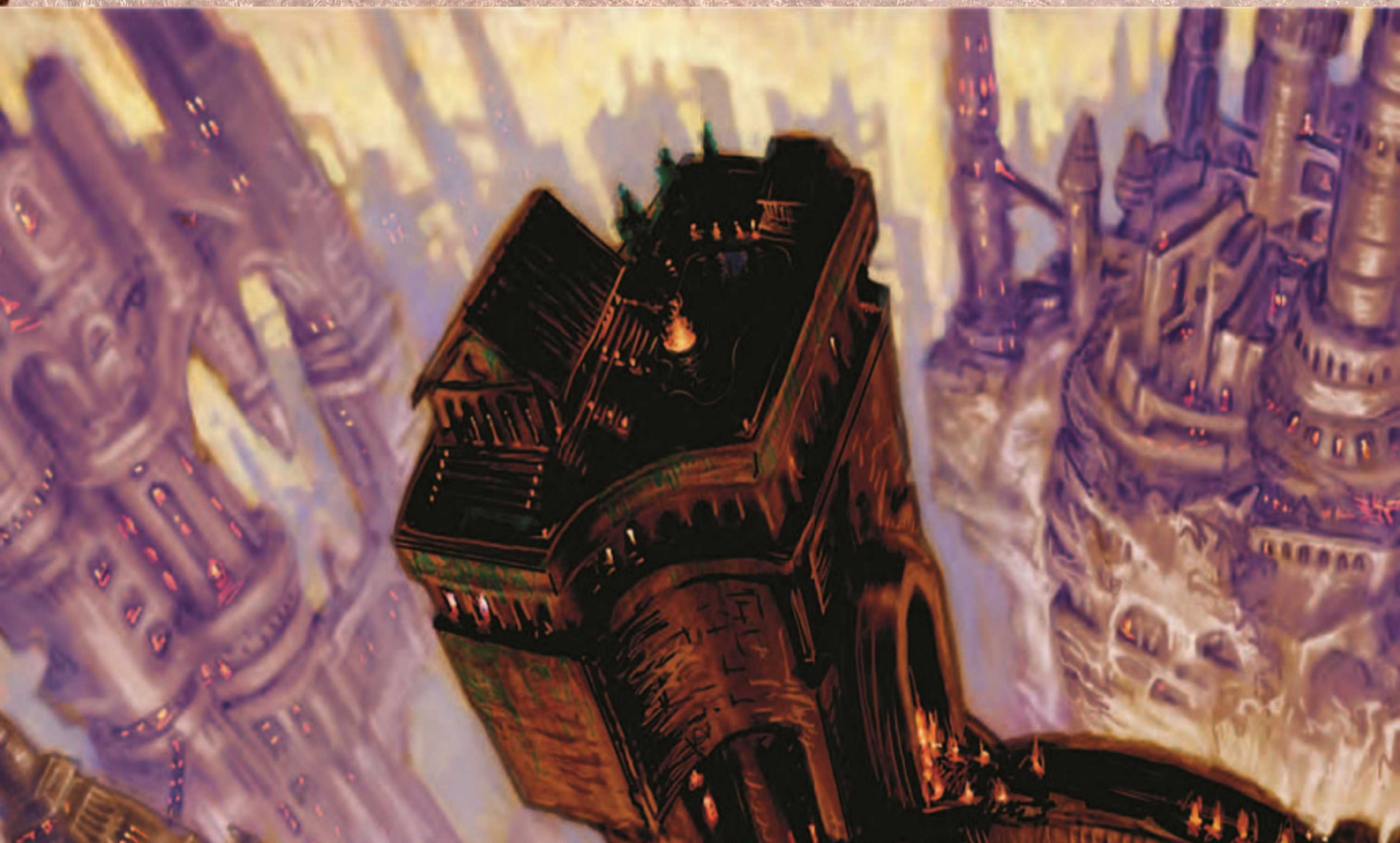


THE MANOR OF HOUSE HIPPOCAMPI

THE HEIR OF A CURSED FAMILY ATTEMPTS TO RECOVER THEIR LOST LEGACY



A SHORT ADVENTURE FOR A PARTY OF 4-5 CHARACTERS OF 5TH TO 7TH LEVEL.

PETE McDONALD



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Introduction: On the outskirts of Sharn lies an abandoned manor that none have dared pillage. The heirs to it's fortune having long fled from the terror that stalked their ancestors. Now, when one of the heirs attempts to reclaim their birthright, they have gone missing...

A SHORT ADVENTURE FOR 5TH-7TH LEVEL CHARACTERS

BY PETE McDONALD



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THE MANOR OF HIPPOCAMPI

ABOUT THIS ADVENTURE

An abandoned manor stands in the outskirts of Sharn, its owning family having fallen from the heights of affluence and prominence due to a horrible curse. The house, oddly, has not been claimed in nigh a century of being abandoned.

The party encounter a woman, sister to the heir to this manor, who is concerned that her brother has gone missing in an attempt to reclaim the lost family home.

The below details the background of this adventure and the story of the ill-fated House Hippocampi, **the DM can read this to their players if they wish, or simply relate some of this** in the form of rumours and gossip overheard around Sharn before the party accept the contract.

The family of Hippocampi were once powerful and successful merchants and traders within Sharn, trading with distant lands and making their fortunes.

As the generations passed by, the family became more concerned with the use of their wealth than its accumulation, acquiring instead countless artworks, statues, jewels, and throwing lavish parties.

All was not well within the family, however, as the head of the household began to have nightmares, waking in the night shrieking and wailing. As time went on, this got worse, they began to be unable to sleep for fear of the terrors brought to them in the night - terrors of which they would, or could, not speak. The master became unwell, quiet and withdrawn, his skin ashen and clammy. Eventually he passed, jumping at shadows and unable to speak in anything but incoherent babbles of terror.

His son took over the household as he had already taken over the family business, but his condition rapidly deteriorated in the same manner as did his father's. When he passed, his young son was thrust into the position of head of the house, and the family business. He was

barely out of his teens and there was great fear that the boy would be haunted by the terrors that had done for his Father and Grandfather. But nothing came to pass. He began to restore the family business, and continued as they had before the nightmares began. The boy became obsessed with his Father's collection of artworks, relics from distant lands in particular.

His collection grew, but beyond this eccentricity, there was nothing of note until his 30th birthday. Then the nightmares began anew. After some years, he, too, passed and his fortune passed on to his young son. So the cycle continued for three more generations - each Hippocampi heir beginning their own nightmares and downward descent on their 30th birthday, still all fascinated with objects from distant lands.

Eventually, the family decided that the house itself was cursed and abandoned the manor to disrepair, leaving the art, jewels, and relics behind as well as the nightmares. None dared venture into the house - even looters are rumoured to have avoided the house for fear of the curse.

That is until the latest heir decided time enough had passed and the superstition of his forebears was simply that. He would reclaim the manor of his ancestors and restore his family's pride.

Gathering his materials, he set out to survey the property in order to draw up his plans for restoration. He entered the house one foggy morning, and once the squeaking hinges of the great entrance closed the doors behind him, he was never heard from again.

It is said that he was cursed as all the other men of his family, dead of fright the moment he set foot within, while others contend that there are occasionally lights in the boarded windows of the old house late at night when the moon is full...

THE CONTRACT

The party have been contacted by a woman calling herself Rosella D'Hippocampi who is concerned for the fate of her elder brother. She has tasked you with discovering his fate, and returning him to her safely if you can.

She has offered a sum of gold at the DM's discretion, claiming money is of little consequence so long as her brother is returned to her - indeed, any of the wretched artefacts that the party recover from the old mansion are theirs for the taking. As far as she's concerned, anything that still remains there must surely be cursed.

It is likely that the party would question this later but at the time her appeal seemed both sincere and reasonable. The party are given, upon their acceptance of the job, a writ detailing their agreement with Rosella and bearing not only her signature, but the seal of House Hippocampi along with a hand-drawn map that she has sketched of the manor's layout.



THE SEEKERS

Unbeknownst to the adventurers, and anyone else around the city, the manor has been infiltrated by Illithids whose hive is on the verge of collapse. Their Elder Brain is dying, and has sent forth **Seekers** to locate one of its fry. This Elder Brain has its fry magically sealed away upon hatching lest they challenge and destroy the Elder Brain, preventing them from influencing the Hive before their time, while ensuring the hive's continuation.

This particular fry's vessel was stolen centuries ago, hidden within an object that made its way into the collection of House Hippocampi.

The item containing the fry's vessel is referred to as the **Sought Item**.

ADVENTURE MECHANICS

This adventure includes a few unusual mechanics to reflect the strange nature of the manor house.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

- Torches and any non-magical light will only provide half of their ordinary brightness. Additionally, all light sources may be blue, purple, green, or pink, but will seldom be of the colour normally expected (depending upon source).
- The Manor house is composed of two floors and a single-room cellar. The only way in or out is through the front doors in the Entrance Foyer and, once the party enters, the front doors disappear until the Dining Hall has been unlocked and the Seeker has been met.
- All windows and other exits have been boarded over, including the glass of the conservatory, peering through the gaps in the boards reveals absolute blackness, regardless of the time of day.

RESTING

- If a long rest is taken, the entire house resets, though the front door is still gone.
- If a short rest is taken, roll percentile. On a roll of 81-100, the house resets.

EXPLORING THE MANOR

- Unusually, the rooms are interconnected rather than being accessed from hallways or corridors as one might expect.
- The individual rooms are magically sealed from one another, and the inhabitants of each area are unable to pass through any doorways separating them from another room. Similarly, magical travel from room to room is impossible (misty step, dimension door, etc.). The exception to this is the *Mindwitness* in the Master Bedroom as noted below.
- The doors themselves are also magical in nature. Firstly, as part of their mundane design, their hinges will cause the doors to gently close by themselves if left unsupported. They will act normally when first opened. After which time, when a door is reopened, roll a percentile dice. If a 51-100 is rolled, roll a further d12 to determine where the door now leads. The room numbers are as follows:
 - Once the puzzle in the Dining Hall has been completed and the Seeker has been met, the doors will cease to magically open into different parts of the manor, and the front door in the Entrance Foyer will return.
 - The rooms each have one or more art items present in them, one of which will be the item that is being sought by the Illithids. Each item is described within the room's description, simply determine which is the **sought item** by rolling a d12 - the result being the room in which the **sought item** is located. You can alter the value of each item if you wish, however, it's recommended that they should be at least 250GP to represent the art collection of the family and to tempt treasure seekers.
 - When the **sought item** is taken, the *Mindwitness* in the Master Bedroom will become hostile, and will also be able to leave the room and follow the players if it has already been encountered. Each time a player enters a randomly determined room, roll another D12, the *Mindwitness* will be present in the rolled room.

LOCATIONS WITHIN THE HOUSE

D12	Room
1	Entrance Foyer
2	Study
3	Sitting Room
4	Kitchen
5	Cellar
6	Conservatory
7	Atrium
8	Dining Hall
9	Mezzanine
10	Library
11	Master Bedroom
12	Chapel

MAPPING

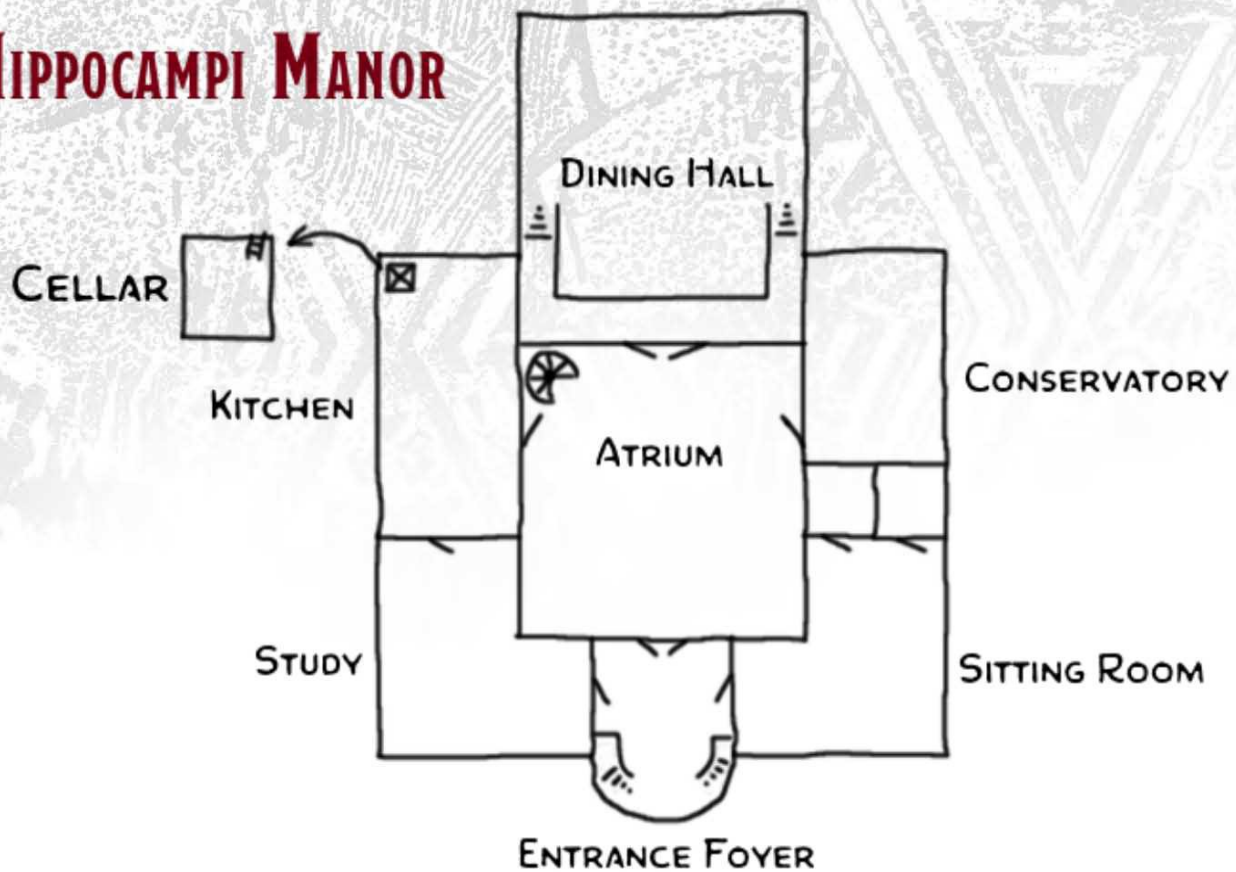
A map is provided with this adventure, representing the hand-drawn map given to the party during their conversation with Rosella.

Due to the nature of the house, once within, it's possible such a map could be of limited use to the party so it is up to you as the DM if you wish to provide this map to the players.

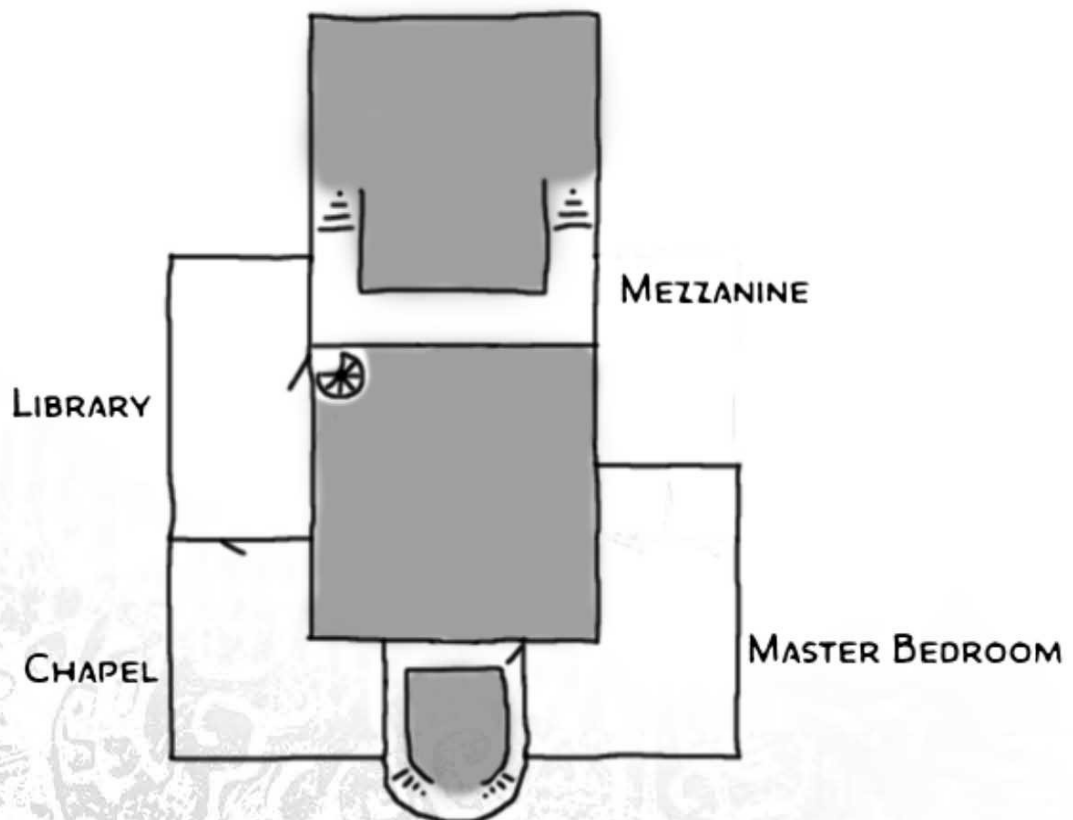
ADDITIONAL MECHANICS

Ending the adventure and character death may work slightly differently within the manor, these are noted as part of the [conclusion of the adventure](#).

HIPPOCAMPI MANOR



GROUND FLOOR



UPPER FLOOR

THE ROOMS

ENTRANCE FOYER: (1)

Wisdom Saving Throw (DC 18)

- **Pass:** Read the following to your players

"Upon setting foot in to the Entrance Foyer, you see momentarily a dusty and dilapidated chamber, sorely neglected for decades, before a haze fills your vision. When it clears, you see a darkly lit, but clean, chamber with lanterns burning with a purple flame and a grandfather clock of Ebony wood and baroque design ticking loudly. A squeal of rusty hinges and the clatter of a door slamming sounds behind you but to your surprise, the front door is no longer visible. The hairs on the back of your neck stand on end and a sinister presence lurks on the edges of your perception."

- **Fail:** Anyone who fails does not first notice the dilapidated view of the chamber, they will see the lit lanterns and grandfather clock.

The main entry doorway behind the PCs shuts and disappears entirely once they all enter the room, becoming a part of the wall. **DC 20**

Wisdom (Perception) (15 for those with darkvision) allows a character to discover the Cranium Rats lurking in the dimly lit shadows of the room and its furniture. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check will alert them to the large inscription upon lintel over the double doors leading to the Atrium (initially): "All guests must meet the Master and break bread."

Atop a dusty display table stands a cracked glass case containing an **Urn**, painted with symbols resembling Elvish, and a parchment label indicating this is a vessel for the bones of a long-dead elf from Aerenal and that the symbols are those of the Undying Court.

Inhabitants/Traps:

Horde of 15 *Cranium Rats* (p133, Volo's Guide) which are lurking in the shadows, their brains unlit. They do not attack unless attacked first, and only reveal themselves once the characters have passed by lighting their brains and creeping from cover.

Treasure:

Urn of the Undying Court, valued at 800 gp

STUDY: (2)

The Study is dimly lit by an unseen light source. Within are a small writing desk and several lounge chairs.

Atop the writing desk rests a dagger with a crystalline blade. An **Intelligence (Arcana)** check **DC 14** reveals that the ornamental dagger is made of a Khyber Dragonshard. It doesn't look to be much use in a fight, but it must have made a great letter opener. Or a tool for the *Lords of Dust*.

All of the surfaces are oddly clean and free of dust or cobwebs, except for the chairs which are mould-ridden, the mould tinged with a yellowy colour. Coming too close to one of the infected chairs results in the mould releasing its spores.

Inhabitants/Traps:

Yellow Mould (105, DMs guide), placed as seen fit by DM.

Treasure:

Dragonshard Dagger, valued at 750 gp

SITTING ROOM: (3)

This room is almost entirely empty and is completely devoid of life. The walls are mostly bare except a tapestry depicting the regal and imposing figure of the founder of Karrnath, Karrn the Conqueror, standing upon a field of victory, hung on gold-leaf covered wooden rails.

There is no sign of recent activity here. Each of the Servant's Rooms, which adjoin this room, is home to a single skeleton, and the doors are not cursed so as to lead to random parts of the Manor.

Treasure:

Tapestry of Karrn the Conqueror, valued at some 750 gp.



. There are many parties who could be interested in these relics...

KITCHEN: (4)

The kitchen is empty, filled with naught but old dusty dishes, rusted utensils, and foul-smelling foods. It looks like whomever was previously inside had left in a hurry. A trapdoor leads to the cellar.

Finally, along with a silver-framed glass mirror hung on the wall, there is a bust of a regal and imposing looking Hobgoblin placed upon a shelf along one wall. Anyone making an **Intelligence (History)** check of **DC 14** will be able to infer that this bust could be a King or Emperor of the **Dhakaani Empire**, or perhaps something more modern from **Darguun**.

The mirror is trapped, as detailed below.

Inhabitants/Traps:

A large mirror is hung on one wall of the kitchen.

If it is examined, or someone catches their reflection in it, they must roll a **DC 15 Constitution** save or be bodily transported into the mirror.

Only one character may be trapped at any time, and any trapped character take **3 (1d6) Psychic damage** each round they are captured and everyone else will see the shadowy figure seemingly attacking the trapped player. During this time, nobody else will be affected by the mirror.

On a successful save, they take **2 (1d4) psychic damage** as they see a lurking shadow over their shoulder – a tall gaunt figure wearing a dark hood.

Dispelling or breaking the mirror will release its hold on the trapped character.

Treasure:

A bust, made of marble, of a regal-looking Hobgoblin, valued at 500 gp.

CELLAR: (5)

The old cellar appears largely empty but for old storage containers filled with rotted food and wine. The floor is coated with some dark stain.

If the room is searched, one of the items can be found here – A locket, fallen down beside a packing crate that is sealed shut. It bears a device of four crossed bones upon its face, and appears to be made of a purplish metal when held up to the light.

An **Intelligence (Arcana)** check of **DC 14** might allow a character to discern that the purple sheen to the metal means it is probably made out of **Byeshk**, and that it possibly came from **Droaam**.

An **Intelligence (Religion)** check of **DC 12** would reveal that the device etched upon its surface is the symbol of **The Traveller**, one of the **Dark Six**.

During the process of the search it is possible that the party will step in the stain – doing so will trigger the encounter with the room's inhabitant, a *Black Pudding*, which is “hidden” as the stain.

Inhabitants/Traps:

Black Pudding (241, MM) coats the floor.

Treasure:

A Byeshk locket bearing the symbol of The Traveller, valued at 500gp

CONSERVATORY: (6)

Warm, moist air is the first thing one notices upon entering this room and the rich smell of loamy earth is refreshing after the faintly musty scent of the rest of the house. It is filled with rows of plants, all of which have grown wilder than they were likely ever intended, roots, branches, and fronds sprawling into the walkways. It is more akin to stepping beneath the canopy of a jungle, than into another room. The inhabitants are hidden, but a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** or **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check will reveal them to be prehensile plant-like creatures with the stats of Adult Myconids.

There is one solitary plant at one end of the room, and a cluster of three at the other, among which can be found a stone, that may once have been part of a larger structure, with the snarling face of a Giant carved upon its weathered surface. An **Intelligence (History)** check of **DC 14** will reveal that the ancient carvings are likely of the **Giant Empire** in **Xen'drik** in origin.

Inhabitants/Traps:

3 *Myconid Adults* (232, MM), which are friendly unless provoked.

1 *Myconid Adult*, also friendly.

Treasure:

A stone carving that appears to be a relic of the **Giant Empire** from **Xen'drik**, valued at 250 gp.

ATRIUM: (7)

The centre of the house, with a great skylight filling much of the ceiling, is the Atrium, a light and airy space once used for entertaining. There is a wrought iron spiral staircase, now somewhat rusted, leading up to the library on the upper floor.

In among the old dressers and cabinets here sits a roughly spherical object made of Platinum and inset with Jade, it appears to be a Docent such as those fitted to many **Warforged**, though the accompanying label marks it as older than the **House Cannith Warforged**.

Treasure:

A Platinum and Jade-inset Docent valued at 400 gp.

DINING HALL: (8)

This large room is lightly lit by a ring of central torches mounted on a round table. There are four large dining tables evenly placed about the hall. The walls are covered with ancient tapestries and paintings, but the upper reaches of the high ceiling of the hall are bathed in a thick, magical shadow. This shadow also obscures the mezzanine on the upper floor and a secret entrance there leading to the Library, but does not inhibit access to it if one chooses to brave the darkness. The southern doors lock from the outside, and shut and seal behind the party when they enter and pass under the mezzanine.

Among the tables and wall hangings stands a lone plinth with a glass case containing an egg-shaped piece of metal, labelled as having been recovered from Sarlona. If picked up, the egg seems to resonate in the bearer's mind somehow.

Puzzle:

The Central Table: On this table are five bowls and an inscription in Undercommon (If none of the party have a means of reading it or otherwise figuring out the puzzle, the words will shift before their eyes, becoming Common), which reads: "Four keys for four friends who were made but not born."

The bowls randomly contain: A chunk of stone, a clay statue, an unlit candle, a severed finger, and an iron key.

The southern doorway (which leads back to the *Atrium*) has 4 small openings carved into it, each large enough to hold but one of the items in the bowls. With the exception of the candle, each item is representative of a different golem, which will be animated and drop from the darkness of the ceiling when its corresponding item is taken from the bowl.

None of the items can be moved by magical means. In order to unlock the door, each object (minus the candle) must be placed within a different slot of the locked door.

Whenever an item is placed, its corresponding golem become lifeless again. When all four are placed, the door unlocks. The candle has no magical properties.

Inhabitants/Traps:

1 *Iron Golem*

1 *Flesh Golem*

1 *Clay Golem*

1 *Stone Golem*

Treasure:

An egg of resonating metallic material from Sarlona valued at roughly 1,000 gp.

All golems (167-170 MM) will only engage the player who drew forth their corresponding key from the bowl. For example: the flesh golem will only chase and attack the player who first took the severed finger from within the central bowl of the hall.

MEZZANINE: (9)

At both corners of the mezzanine banisters are two inanimate statues. If touched, they will animate into gargoyles. The view out from the mezzanine is utterly black, and light cannot pierce it. Small lights can be seen in the corners of this area, as a handful of Cranium Rats will pass through while the area is being searched, these are not hostile.

Searching will reveal a mannequin wearing a regal-looking cloak with a gold-and-ruby clasp that is heavily embroidered with symbols and crests. **Intelligence (History) DC 14** This cloak seems to date back to the Kingdom of Galifar from before the Last War.

A **Wisdom (Perception) DC 16** check will reveal the secret door to the Library, it is not locked, and does not function like the other doors within the house. Nor was it marked on the hand-drawn map from Rosella.

Inhabitants/Traps:

2 Gargoyles (140, MM).

Treasure:

Regal Cloak belonging to an old Galifar noble house. Valued at 500 gp.

LIBRARY: (10)

The library looks to have once been a magnificent feature of the manor. It is well decorated and large, but in disarray. Shelves of books are strewn across the floor, causing difficult terrain. Along the back wall is a false bookshelf containing a concealed doorway in to the chapel. It is trivially difficult to spot the false nature of this door among the disarray of the rest of the room. Note: *The Seeker* can pass through this doorway if he is/has been awoken.

Wisdom (Perception) DC 14 will uncover 2 magical items amongst the trash in the room, to be determined by **Magic Item Table B** within the DM's Guide.

Additionally, among the wreckage, a large scroll on Ivory rollers carved with Draconic runes on their end-caps is half-buried under more ordinary books and scrolls..

The scroll is certainly of Draconic nature, but the dialect is old and difficult to decipher without expert assistance.

Inhabitants/Traps:

2 *Mimics* (220, MM), 1 of which is disguised as a bookshelf and the other which is a sitting chair amidst the fallen shelving.

Treasure:

2x Items from Magic Item Table B, 1x Draconic Scroll valued at 1,000 gp.



MASTER BEDROOM: (11)

Everything is still perfectly intact, but covered in thin sheets to prevent dust, bugs, and mould from inhabiting the large bed and chairs.

There are two writing desks, and a safe with a magical lock which can be circumvented by use of an appropriate spell or through simple lock picking - though the latter should be appropriately challenging.

Opening the safe will release a *Mindwitness* (176 VG), who does not harm the party unless they have collected the **Sought Item** from within the manor or they attack it - instead it will simply hover in the middle of the room, its eye stalks peering into the distance as though looking for something beyond the room's walls.

Also inside the safe is a random magic item selected from **Magic Item Table B**, and a Brooch bearing a crest cast in Gold and Silver.

Intelligence (History) DC 14 will reveal that the crest is one belonging to a possibly-extinct noble house from Cyre from long before the Last War. Perhaps some of the Cyre displaced would know if the family it once belonged to still lives.

Inhabitants/Traps:

1 *Mindwitness* (176 VG).

Treasure:

1x Item from **Magic Item Table B**, 1x Brooch from Cyre valued at 300 gp.

CHAPEL: (12)

Upon entering the Chapel, read the following:

"A creature perches on the lectern, mostly hidden beneath a hooded robe of some dark material that seems to flutter in an unfelt breeze, standing directly on the holy book of whichever god the inhabitants once clung to. Its eyes seem to glow from the hood with malevolent light, and the lower portion of its face is a mass of long, writhing, tentacles covering whatever might pass for a mouth.

Clutched in its bony hand is a gnarled staff which it points towards you: 'Thieves!' a hissing voice echoes within your mind..."

The Chapel is like a miniature church, with four small rows of pews and a raised stage and lectern, upon which is perched *The Seeker* (Ulitharid, 175, VG).

There is also a goblet, of simple pewter, shaped with the symbol of the Blood of Vol and bearing the inscription "Seek the Divinity Within" which rests in a small glass-doored cabinet behind the Altar.

Inhabitants:

The Seeker (Ulitharid 175, VG). He will attack and pursue anyone he sees, but cannot enter the Master Bedroom or cross the Atrium

Treasure:

Goblet of the Blood of Vol valued at 250 gp.



ENDING THE ADVENTURE

There are a number of scenarios in which the adventure could end - the death of the party to the hazards in the house, death to *The Seeker* or his *Mindwitness*, fleeing once *The Seeker* has been encountered, or defeating him entirely! The consequences of these scenarios are detailed below.

DEATH OF A CHARACTER

During the adventure, should any character die, take the player out of the room or pass them the following information in secret:

You awaken in the Foyer, thin cobwebs covering your prone form and those of your party. You are unsure of how long has passed as you lay in this position, but you appear to have fallen the moment you passed through the entrance.

Before you all is a tall, slender, form in tattered robes leaning heavily upon a staff, tentacles twitching on the lower portion of its face, and two abhorrent creatures lurking at its feet.

It is revealed that the adventure thus far has taken place within a mindscape of the mansion created by the Illithids, and the character finds themselves in front of *The Seeker* and a pair of *Intellect Devourers*. They are at full health, but any spell slots expended before death remain lost, and they gain 3 points of exhaustion.

If they touched the **Sought Item** at any time, they will be taken by the Illithids back to the Underdark where they vow to torture the character before consuming their minds as they harvest the knowledge of its whereabouts from them.

If they did not touch the item, however, *The Seeker* will have no use for them and will use his minions to render the character mad (Long or Short term madness is up to the DM) and leave them.

ESCAPE OR VICTORY!

If the players escape or are victorious over *The Seeker* they will awaken in a similar position to above, but with the following exception:

Lying before you is the prone form of a horrible creature, tattered robes covering its thin frame, hood fallen back to reveal a strangely formed head ending not in a jaw but a cluster of tentacles, twitching feebly.

Two quadrupedal forms lie beside it, their brain-like bodies still, in a pool of Ichor.

The loathsome creature gasps its remaining breaths and within your heads you can hear its whispering voice:

"The... Mind! Must have The Mind..."

The Seeker and his *intellect Devourers* will die shortly after the party has broken free of the mindscape that was the mansion they explored, and it will transpire that the *Sought Item* was, in fact, a vessel in which the fry of an *Elder Brain* was sealed in order to prevent it from reaching maturity until after the Elder Brain of its hive had died - and event the brain foresaw and prepared for - but the vessel was stolen by adventurers thinking it a simple trinket.

The item is, indeed, real and present within the house - as were all of the items the players discovered - and slowly driving the previous owners of the mansion insane with its presence. The Illithids used the adventurers to search the mansion with their minds so that they could locate the *Sought Item*, which they were intentionally unable to sense themselves so that they could not be influenced by the slowly maturing fry before the current Elder Brain had expired.

With the knowledge of the items' locations, the players can simply collect their loot and leave, though the heir of Clan Hippocampi is oddly neither seen nor heard of within the mansion, and there is no sign of his ever being there...

THE REWARD

When returning to collect their reward from Rosella D'Hippocampi, it appears that nobody recalls seeing her, though the innkeeper recalls seeing the party sat alone when they accepted the job. The Contract the party have in their possession will appear to be a blank piece of paper, though the hand-drawn map will remain, its annotations now written in Undercommon.

HOOKS FOR FURTHER ADVENTURES.

This adventure is intended to function as a stand-alone adventure to be completed in a single session, however, if you wish to combine it with an ongoing campaign, there are a number of possibilities for this.

Each of the pre-generated items in this adventure have some potential historical significance to a different group around Eberron, they could simply be mundane artefacts, have significance in some ritual, or be magical items of great import to any or all of these groups. It is possible they may pay handsomely for its return – or attempt to steal it back once they learn it has been recovered.

Alternatively, you could replace the items with something you have generated on your own for similar hooks.

Finally, the **Sought Item** will contain a magical hidden compartment in which the Elder Brain Fry's vessel has been hidden – the Illithids will still want to recover this.