



SECRETS OF THE BLIND PALACE

WRITTEN BY TAL AVIEZER

MAPS BY CAROLYN FOY



An adventure for 3-7 characters of levels 1-4

Secrets of the Blind Palace

An adventure for 1st-4th level characters

The wealthy Von Crofts hire a party of adventurers to find the body of their dead son in a haunted pleasure palace – and to bring him back to life. To aid in their quest, the resurrectionists are provided with a guide: the only survivor of the previous expedition, a bard who has been unable to speak a word or sing a note since she escaped from the Blind Palace.

Written by Tal Aviezer



CREDITS

Writer/Designer: Tal Aviezer

Maps, Art, Title Design, Layout: Carolyn Fox

Editor: R.P. Davis

Cover Illustration: 'FANTASY LANDSCAPES.1' – Published by DUNGEON SECRETS, for: DRIVETHRURPG

Playtesters: Thomas Anawalt, Andy Cannistra, Eileen Cruz, Jason Cocovinis, Carolyn Fox, Amy Frey, Melissa Frey, Rebecca Heck, Luke McCormick, Kyle Thomas, Jon Silberberger

Template Created by William Tian

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2019 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Credits	3
Introduction	5
Part One: The Resurrectionists	7
Part Two: The Courtyard.....	11
Part Three: The Blind Palace	14
Part Four: Beneath the Palace	29
Part Five: Aftermath	36
Appendix A: NPC Stats	40
Appendix B: Handouts	41

SECRETS OF THE BLIND PALACE

“And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh—but smile no more.”

—Edgar Allen Poe,
The Haunted Palace

INTRODUCTION

Secrets of the Blind Palace is a Dungeons & Dragons adventure of 5-7 hours in length, designed for one or two sessions of play. It is set in a haunted palace that you can locate in any appropriate region of your campaign. It takes place in early winter, in a climate where there is snowfall.

You should read the whole adventure before running it.

Stats for a new NPCs are provided in the Appendix. Creatures from the *Monster Manual* (MM) appear in **bold** with the appropriate page number listed. Page numbers are also listed for magic items that appear in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG).

If you prefer, feel free to paraphrase the boxed read-aloud text.

This is your adventure. You can change anything to fit your needs and preferences. And your players may try something unexpected, so be prepared for a little improvisation.

Adjusting Combat Encounters

The combat encounters in this adventure are optimized for a party of **4 characters with an Average Party Level (APL) of 3**.

Recommendations are included for adjusting encounters to be suitable for parties of various sizes and levels within the range of levels 1-4. This adventure as written is not

intended for characters who are level 5 or higher, or for parties of more than seven or fewer than three adventurers.

To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters.
- Divide the total by the number of characters.
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down.

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table:

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL <3	Very weak
3 characters, APL 3	Weak
3 characters, APL >3	Average
4 characters, APL 3	Average
5 characters, APL <3	Weak
5-7 characters, APL 3	Strong
5-7 characters, APL >3	Very strong
6-7 characters, APL <3	Average

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

THE FALL OF BRIGHTBLOSSOM

Decades ago, **The Blind Palace** was an opulent pleasure retreat called **Brightblossom**. It was renowned for its lavish balls, luxuriant baths, aviary of exotic birds, and patronage of musicians and artists. A **night hag, Grey Maggie**, insinuated herself into this aristocratic society, and slowly cursed and corrupted Brightblossom's residents and visitors. A series of murders and other unspeakable acts followed.

While the exact nature of the threat was never uncovered, it eventually became clear to the inhabitants of the local countryside that a great evil had befallen Brightblossom. The palace was abandoned, and every window and door was bricked over and sealed shut in order to contain the evils that plagued it. This was how The Blind Palace acquired its current name. These precautions, and the legend that the ruin is cursed, have been enough to dissuade explorers from entering the palace...until recently.

THE VON CROFT EXPEDITION

The night hag Grey Maggie, who still inhabits the palace, visited young local nobleman **Wilhelm Von Croft** repeatedly in her ethereal form, filling his dreams with visions of forgotten treasures still hidden in Brightblossom. Weeks ago, a group of fortune-hunters led by Wilhelm broke into the palace.

One by one, these adventurers began to fall victim to the palace's many hazards. Soon, only Wilhelm and the party's bard, **Katherine Chamber**, remained alive. A last chance to retreat safely was lost when Wilhelm, obsessed with proving himself to his family, threatened to kill Katherine if she tried to leave before they recovered a prize that

would enable Wilhelm to prove himself in the eyes of his parents.

When Wilhelm's back was turned, Katherine attacked him with a *dissonant whispers* spell, hoping to drive him away long enough to make her escape. The spell drove the frightened Wilhelm right into the arms of **Grey Maggie**, who killed him and snared his soul.

The hag captured Katherine, but agreed to let her go in exchange for the young bard giving Grey Maggie her voice. The terrified Katherine agreed and was immediately stricken mute. The hag offered to return Katherine's stolen voice only if she will lead more victims into the palace – more prospective souls for Maggie to corrupt and claim.

A RESURRECTION IS PLANNED

Katherine went into hiding after leaving the Blind Palace. She was tracked down and retrieved by agents of **Valentin and Helena Von Croft**, Wilhelm's wealthy and influential parents. Katherine, still mute, has not revealed any details of what transpired in the palace beyond the fact that Wilhelm and her other companions are all dead. The Von Crofts have threatened to have her tried and executed for murdering all of them if she does not guide a second expedition into the palace in order to find Wilhelm's body and resurrect him.

The Von Crofts have advertised far and wide for a party of resurrectionists to enter the palace and bring back their son.

OFFICIAL SETTING OPTIONS

If the adventure takes place in **Barovia**, the Von Crofts might be an affluent Vallaki family allied with Lady Wachter. The Blind Palace could be located in the foothills near Mount Baratok.

If the adventure takes place in **Eberron**, the Von Crofts could be minor nobles from Aundair, Breland, or Thrane. The Blind Palace could be located a few days' travel from a major city in one of those nations.

If the adventure takes place in the **Forgotten Realms**, the Von Crofts could be Waterdhavian nobles. The Blind Palace could be located north of the city, in the foothills of the Sword Mountains.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

You could use any and all of the following hooks to draw the adventurers into The Blind Palace:

- **Resurrectionists Wanted.** The Von Crofts have advertised throughout the region for adventurers willing to recover the body of their son from The Blind Palace. This call for aid has reached parties from all walks of life: official authorities, mercenary companies, innkeepers, thieves' guilds. The Von Crofts wield considerable wealth and influence, and many people of high and low station would be interested in gaining favor with them. Any of these contacts could pass the job along to the adventurers – in some cases, they might ask for a finder's fee.
- **Patrons of the Church.** The Von Crofts have been generous patrons of local churches for many years. Clergy members may reach out to clerics, paladins, or other spiritually-inclined adventurers in an effort to reward the family's generosity by helping them with their present crisis.

- **Absent Friends.** Characters might be friends, relatives, or acquaintances of a member of Wilhelm's ill-fated treasure-hunting party (either Cade Cabbager, a halfling cleric, or Catastrophe, a tiefling sorcerer). The only way to find out what really happened to the missing person is to follow their trail into the Blind Palace.

Regardless of which hooks are used, the adventure begins with the party meeting the Von Crofts at an abandoned windmill, one mile from the Blind Palace.

PART ONE: THE RESURRECTIONISTS

Your boots crunch on hard, cold ground as you make your way up the hill to the old stone windmill. You can see the breath of your companions in little puffs of steam. Light snow is falling. You hear a crow call from the top of the old mill. Well-bred horses with expensive saddles are tied to a post near the front door.

You find Valentin and Helena Von Croft waiting inside. He is standing and looking at you; she is sitting at a wooden table, looking at nothing. They are both wearing heavy fur cloaks. Their bodyguards, in and around the building, are wearing polished mail and longswords. One of them closes the door behind you.

"So you have come," says Valentin Von Croft. "And now you must bring back our son."

The Von Crofts are LE human **Nobles** (MM 348). Their bodyguards are three LN male and female human **Guards** (MM 347) led by one LN male human **Veteran** (MM 350).

DEVELOPMENTS

- The Von Crofts are offering 200gp for the return of their son, Wilhelm, who was killed in the Blind Palace under mysterious circumstances. They can be persuaded to increase the reward to 250gp with a successful **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check**.
- The window of time for Wilhelm to be raised from the dead is rapidly closing. It took more than a week for his parents to track him to the Blind Palace. He must be raised within the next 24 hours. Should that time elapse, the reward for recovering Wilhelm's lifeless body will be reduced to 50gp.
- The Von Crofts provide a *spell scroll of raise dead*, in an ebony case with a wax seal depicting a black tower on a red field. They make it clear that this scroll can be used *only* to raise Wilhelm Von Croft from the dead. The scroll's magic is personalized to Wilhelm (it is in fact written in his blood as part of a secret Von Croft family ritual) and will only work on him.
- The Von Crofts know nothing whatsoever about Grey Maggie, and their knowledge of the Blind Palace is limited to the fact that years ago the place was a pleasure dome for the wealthy, but has long been abandoned. They assume that Wilhelm's erstwhile companions pressured him into entering the palace seeking wealth and renown. It is inconceivable to them that Wilhelm was the architect of the expedition; they believe one of his companions must have tempted him to pursue this folly.
- If asked why they do not dispatch their bodyguards into the Blind Palace, the Von Crofts state (truthfully) that

their retainers are best suited to guarding manors and collecting taxes, and lack the imagination and flexibility required for this mission.

ROLEPLAYING THE VON CROFTS

The Von Crofts do their best to conceal their desperation beneath a haughty patrician veneer. They regard this entire affair as sordid and dishonorable, and are eager to bring it to a close quickly and discreetly. But they are in genuine anguish over the loss of their son. The strain of this ordeal has frayed their nerves to the breaking point.

Valentin does most of the talking. He is a tall, pale, middle-aged man with sharp features and dark hair. He disdains interacting with social inferiors and is reserved and icy. If dealing with characters whom he perceives to be of social standing equal to himself (for example, characters who have the Noble background), he appeals to what he feels is their duty to uphold their class, blood, or heritage. He prefers to speak mostly to human adventurers, if there are any in the party.

Helena is even more reserved than her husband, barely looking at the adventurers throughout the interview. But she has a sharp ear for duplicity and equivocation, and is quick to interject if she feels characters are dissembling or wasting time. She has piercing blue eyes, and is fair-haired and graceful. She has a somewhat ethereal manner that evaporates into concentrated, dangerous intensity when provoked.

The Silent Bard

If the adventures agree to accept the mission, you can read the following:

Valentin turns to a bodyguard and says, "Very well. Bring her up."

One of the guards rolls up a fur rug to reveal a trap door leading to an old cellar. He descends with a lit oil lantern and returns moments later leading a pale, slightly-built human woman. Long black hair hangs over her face; there are dark crescents below her eyes. Manacles on her hands and feet clank as she shuffles up the stairs.

The woman is **Katherine Chamber** (see **Appendix A**), whom the Von Crofts have been keeping as a prisoner.

Valentin explains the following:

- Katherine is the only surviving member of Wilhelm's expedition.
- Since she left the Blind Palace, she has been unable or unwilling to speak, but will serve as a guide for the adventurers.
- Valentin warns the adventurers that he believes Katherine is not to be trusted – but she is the only person who returned from the Blind Palace, and may have vital information.
- Valentin recommends that the party take Katherine with them, but leaves the decision up to the adventurers. He offers no reward for her safe return, and exacts no penalty if she dies.

Katherine has no weapons or musical instruments, and her hands and feet are in manacles. Valentin orders a guard to unlock her feet, but will not unlock her hands or allow her to be given any weapons. He gives the key to her manacles to whichever adventurer has made the best impression on him. Once the party is away from the Von Crofts, they are free to release and arm her if they wish.

If searched, Katherine has nothing of value. But a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals that she has bruises which indicate that she has been recently beaten (the Von Crofts ordered her tortured for more information about Wilhelm, with no success).

It is not essential that Katherine accompany the party, but notes are included throughout

the adventure to suggest what she might do if she is present in certain locations or under certain conditions.

ROLEPLAYING KATHERINE CHAMBER

Katherine Chamber has no voice, as a result of the curse placed on her by Grey Maggie. This deprives her of the ability to use most of her magic, though if her hands are free she can communicate using her *minor illusion* cantrip, which requires no vocal component. She uses the cantrip to create dramatic still pictures, images, sound effects, and occasionally to write words or phrases in the air.

Katherine is wary of the Von Crofts, and terrified of Grey Maggie. She fears that if Wilhelm is resurrected, he will reveal her role in his death. She wants her voice back but does not want to turn good people over to Grey Maggie.

If they bring her along, Katherine watches the adventurers and their actions carefully. Her attitude and loyalty towards them will depend on the kind of people they show themselves to be. If she believes they are noble and compassionate, she will do her best to aid them in the Blind Palace and gradually share more of the truth as her trust is earned. If she decides they are heartless mercenaries, or if she is mistreated, she will ultimately try to lead them to Grey Maggie in order to reclaim her voice.

If asked what equipment she can use, Katherine uses *minor illusion* to create images of a rapier, dagger, shortsword, light crossbow, lute, flute, and drum. In combat, she uses what weapons the party gives her. If given an instrument she can play, she can use her Bardic Inspiration and Song of Rest abilities to help the adventurers. The extent to which she will stick her neck out to help the party in combat depends on their treatment of her.

If the adventurers are kind to her and offer to release her rather than exploit her as the Von Crofts would prefer, she becomes concerned about their fate and asks to accompany them.

If asked general questions about what the party will find inside the palace, she uses *minor illusion* and/or writing to communicate the presence of cadaverous and spectral undead creatures, a beautiful ballroom, dark stone halls, ethereal music, and birdsong.

If asked what happened to her voice, Katherine refuses to answer at this time – even if she is threatened.

Once the interview is concluded, Valentin orders his guards to light a fire and tells the adventurers that he and his wife will wait for 24 hours for the return of their son or of his body. He places an hourglass on the windowsill in front of him, and the sand starts running.

The Blind Palace is located in the nearby foothills, and the party should reach it without incident. Snow continues to fall during the short journey.

You follow a disused road up a gentle slope through a light wood of pine and spruce. Occasionally, bright red cardinals or gray squirrels dart between the gently falling snowflakes.

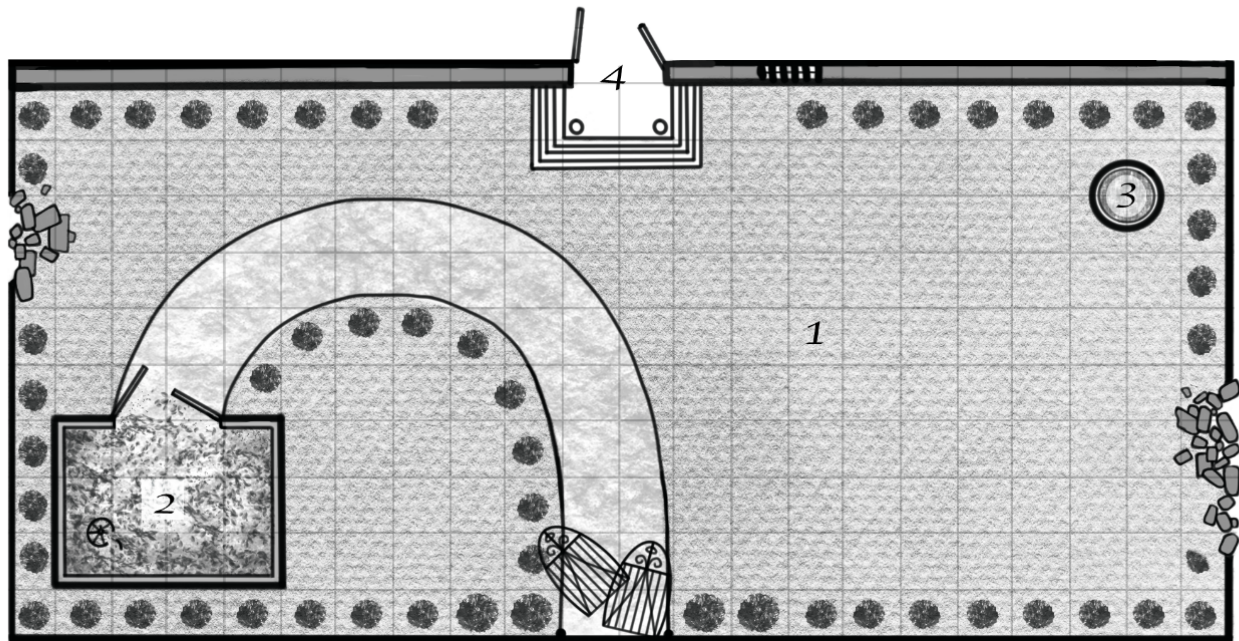
After about an hour's walk from the old windmill, the marble walls of the Blind Palace loom before you, its back flush against a rocky hillside. The old road you've been following leads into a courtyard. Two towers, their windows bricked up, rise over the crumbling outer walls.

CLOCK IS TICKING

It takes the party **one hour** to reach the Blind Palace. There are now only **23 hours left** to recover the body of Wilhelm Von Croft. If she is present, Katherine Chamber can remind the adventurers that the clock is ticking. As DM, you should keep track as well, making sure that you account for any long (8 hour) or short (1 hour) rests that the party may wish to have. Keep in mind that the party may only take one long rest in a 24-hour period.

PART TWO:
THE COURTYARD

The Blind Palace



Courtyard

1 square=5 ft

AREA 1 - COURTYARD

The courtyard's wrought iron gates have collapsed and now lie flat on the ground. When a character enters the courtyard, read or paraphrase:

The old road terminates in a ruined wooden carriage house just west of the gates. The ground inside the courtyard was once covered in colorful gravel and decorative slate tiles. Now most of the tiles are cracked and broken, and the gravel is overgrown with scrubby grass. Hedgerows of dead boxwoods rise like claws from the earth.

In the northeastern corner of the courtyard is a large stone well with a crumbling rim. Directly north of the old gates, the doors of the Blind Palace hang open.

Characters who search the courtyard automatically detect the remains of a recent campsite in the southeast corner of the courtyard. A campfire has burned here within the past two weeks, and there is an empty wine bottle. If Katherine is present, she can confirm that Wilhelm's party made camp here overnight before entering the Blind Palace. With a successful **Wisdom (survival) check of 12 or higher**, the character finds the discarded chitin of an insectoid creature. With a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check**, the chitin can be identified as belonging to a carrion crawler.

AREA 2 - CARRIAGE HOUSE

This old oak structure is rotting where it stands. Double doors hang open, old hinges squeaking in the wind. Deep pools of shadow fill the interior.

Characters who enter the carriage house discover that the floor is strewn with dead leaves, rotting wood, and the bones of dead animals. A broken wagon wheel rests against the west wall, and an old but serviceable lantern hangs from a peg next to the door.

Wilhelm's party did not enter this area, and Katherine knows nothing about it.



Creatures. A **carrion crawler** (MM 37) is hiding among the dead leaves and moldering refuse. During the day, it attacks any creature it senses entering the carriage house. At night, it leaves the carriage house to hunt prey in the courtyard and the area immediately surrounding the palace.

ORGAN HARVESTERS?

If you have the sort of players who are always trying to loot bits off dead monsters, a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) check** is required to locate and safely remove the carrion crawler's poison glands. A character who is proficient with alchemist's supplies can, with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (alchemist supplies) check**, use them to create one application of Carrion Crawler Mucus (DMG 258).

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Instead of a carrion crawler, three **giant centipedes** (MM 323) den here.
- **Strong:** The **carrion crawler** has 78 hp.
- **Very strong:** The **carrion crawler** is accompanied by two carrion crawler grubs (use **giant centipede** stats for the grubs).

AREA 3 — ANCIENT WELL

The rim of this ancient well is decorated with crumbling stone seahorses. There is no windlass or bucket. Perhaps they rotted away.

The well is 5 feet in diameter and descends for 30 feet before opening into the roof of a large, damp natural cavern (the roof of the cavern is 10 feet from the floor). There is no light in the well or cavern.

The walls of the well are slick with moisture. Climbing down requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check. Use of a rope or other climbing equipment grants advantage on this check. Any climbing attempts made without a light source or darkvision are made with disadvantage.

At the bottom of the well is a lightless cave. A warm, shallow stream, 6 inches deep, runs from the north before draining into a small, impassible hole in the southern wall. A rusted iron bucket and some rotten wood and rope lie on the ground. Characters can follow the cavern north from the bottom of the well for about 70 feet before the tunnel dead-ends in a small natural cavern with a 10-foot ceiling. Set in the ceiling is a rusted iron grate which can be forced open with a successful **DC 12 Strength check** (grant advantage if a pry bar or similar tool is used). Characters who open this grate and climb up through it arrive in **Area 12**.

Wilhelm's party did not investigate the ancient well; Katherine knows nothing about this hidden entrance to the palace.

AREA 4 — BROKEN DOORS

Flagstone steps climb to a landing in front of tall wooden doors. The door handles are carved to resemble blooming roses.

Iron bars once held these doors shut, but these have been pried loose. The doors hang open. Both doors are covered by faint arcane sigils. Carved in flowing script on the stone lintel above the doors in Common is the word "Brightblossom."

Characters who make a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana)** check can determine that the faint sigils were protective runes whose magic has faded or been dispelled.

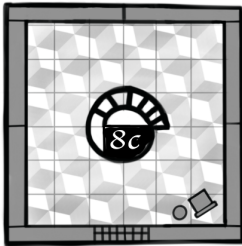
If Katherine Chamber is present, she can confirm that her party's tiefling sorcerer, Catastrophe, dispelled the arcane wards on these doors, and Wilhelm Von Croft pried loose the iron bars.

PART THREE: THE BLIND PALACE

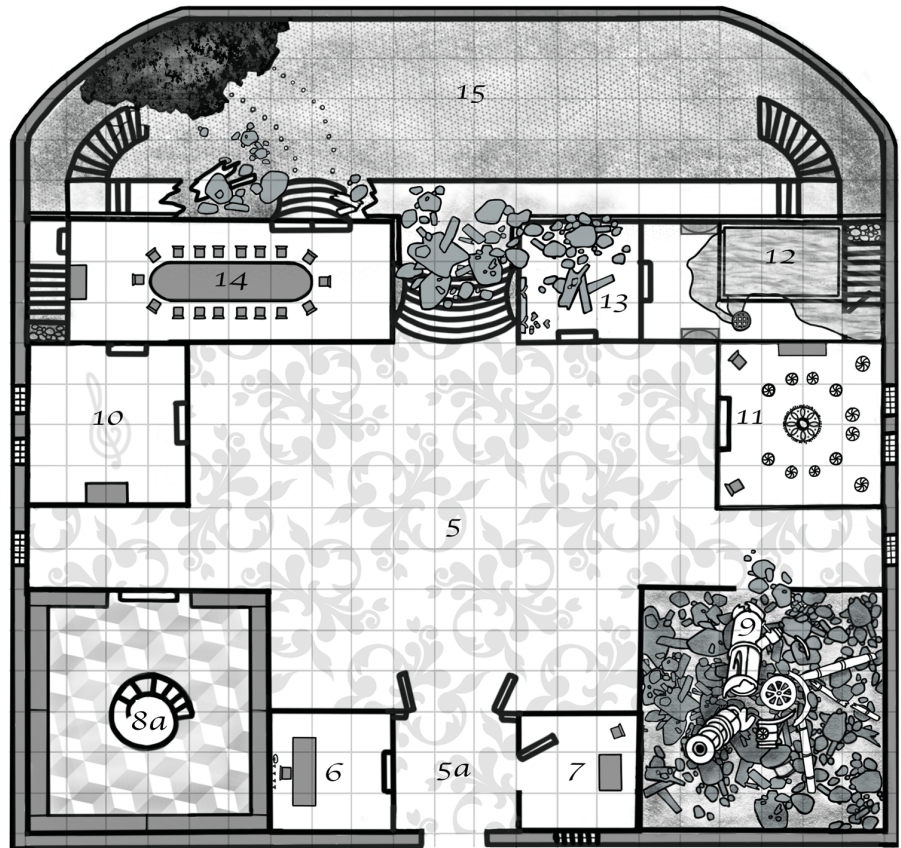
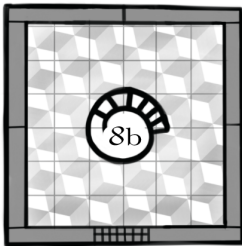


The Blind Palace

Library,
3rd level



Library,
2nd level



1 sq = 5 ft

GENERAL FEATURES

Mixed Progression. The encounter areas in the Blind Palace can generally be explored in any order, although due to layout some areas must obviously be entered before others. It's possible to avoid some encounters and still complete the mission objective.

Light. Unless otherwise noted, the interior of the palace is completely dark and characters will need to provide their own light sources. Room descriptions assume the characters have a light source or darkvision.

Ventilation. Fresh air enters the palace only through the old well (Area 3/Area 12) or the broken front doors (Area 4). In rooms far from those locations, the air is stale and musty but still breathable.

Doors. Unless otherwise indicated, doors are solid, heavy wood and are not locked.

Ground. Unless otherwise noted, the ground on level one is worked marble. The ground on level two is worked or natural stone.

Faded opulence. Brightblossom was once a lavish, decadent pleasure palace. It is now in a state of advanced decay and neglect. Cushioned furniture is rotting, damask curtains are moldering, and some passages are hopelessly blocked by fallen rubble.

Sounds. Sounds originating from outside the palace are largely inaudible. Inside, in quiet areas, players might hear creaking doors, dragging, distant footsteps, and the occasionally burst of disembodied laughter or snatches of old tunes played on a harpsicord.

Smells. The whole place smells of decay and rot.

AREA 5A — FOYER

Chill air from the courtyard flows into a foyer decorated with sculpted marble birds and snapdragons. To the north, double doors hang open into a vast, dark hall. Side doors lead off the foyer to the east and west.

AREA 5 — MAIN HALL

The vaulted ceiling of this grand hall soars twenty or more feet above you. In the center of the hall, a large, tarnished chandelier hangs over the cracked and dusty pink marble floor.

On the north side of the room, a grand staircase rises to meet a collapsed archway that is choked with rubble.

Ornate wooden doorways lead off this hall in several directions.

Hanging fetishes. Characters with a **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or higher** notice droplets of blood dripping from one of several small objects hanging down from the chandelier, tied to it by threads and dangling 10 feet above the ground:

- The severed ear of a tiefling, wearing a silver hoop earring worth 3gp.
- A blood-soaked leather pouch containing two halfling-sized eyes and a bracelet of tiny turquoise prayer beads worth 4gp. While this is hanging from the chandelier, droplets of blood periodically fall from it to the floor below.
- A rolled-up page of sheet music from an unfinished song.
- A steel signet ring bearing the crest of the Von Croft family (a black tower on a red field) worth 2gp.

These objects are trophies claimed by Grey Maggie from the members of the Von Croft expedition. The ear belonged to Catastrophe, a tiefling sorcerer. The eyes and prayer beads are from Cade Cabbager, a halfling cleric. The signet ring belonged to Wilhelm Von Croft. The unfinished song is one of Katherine's own compositions. Katherine refuses to carry or touch any of these items.

Grey Maggie automatically knows the location of any creature carrying a fetish. A creature carrying a fetish cannot Hide from her by normal or magical means, and she cannot be Surprised by any creature who carries one or more of them. They radiate a faint aura of Divination magic if subjected to a *detect magic* spell; an *identify* spell reveals that they are fetishes created to spy on the carrier. A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana)** check also reveals this information.

If Katherine Chamber sees the fetishes, she recoils from them in horror. If she is well-disposed towards the characters (or if they otherwise pry the information from her) she reveals that they are objects belonging to herself and her former companions.

The grand staircase. It would take days or even weeks to clear the rubble at the top of the stairs, making it impossible to directly reach **Area 15** from here.

The dancer. When a character moves west of the chandelier (roughly the position of the number 5 on the DM's map), the spectral form of a young, beautiful human woman, wearing a sparkling tiara and a shoulderless, trailing ballgown, passes right through the closed door leading to **Area 10**. This apparition smiles at the character of your choice, giggles, and beckons for that character to follow her. She then runs gracefully back through the closed door to **Area 10**. This figure only appears once.

THE VON CROFT EXPEDITION — SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

It isn't necessary for the adventurers to understand the exact sequence of events that befell the ill-fated Von Croft expedition. But in case the information becomes important either during conversations with Katherine or if the party attempts to piece together the fate of their predecessors:

- Wilhelm Von Croft, Katherine Chamber, Catastrophe, and Cade Cabbager reached

the palace at sunset. They camped overnight in the courtyard. They were lucky to miss the carrion crawler, who was out hunting in the nearby forest.

- The following morning, they broke into the palace's main doors.
- From there, they proceeded directly to the library (**Area 8**). Cade picked the lock on the door. Wilhelm was not interested in books, and they only gave the first floor of the tower a cursory examination.
- They next proceeded to the Aviary (**Area 11**). Cade picked the lock on the door, and then triggered the trap in the aviary. His party could find no way to reach him, and he could not find a safe way to leave the room. They left the halfling there, telling him they'd return with help. They failed to do so, and he eventually died of dehydration, trapped in the aviary.
- Wilhelm, Katherine, and Catastrophe proceeded to the music room (**Area 10**). Grey Maggie magically unlocked the door for them. In the music room, Catastrophe was forced to dance with a ghost until he died of exhaustion.
- Maggie unlocked the doors to **Areas 14** and **15**, drawing Wilhelm and Katherine deeper into the palace and to a fatal confrontation (see **Area 15** for details).
- Maggie harvested the fetishes and hung them from the chandelier in **Area 5**.

AREA 6 — PORTER'S OFFICE

This small, dusty room is shrouded in cobwebs. A rotting cadaver wearing moldering purple livery sits behind a splintered mahogany desk.

On the wall behind the desk is a row of pegs – an old gray cloak hangs from one of them. Also on that wall is a placard with several keys attached to it. Above each key is a small label.

There are three keys on the wall. Dust must be wiped from the labels in order to read them. The labels are written in Elvish (Brightblossom's denizens were mostly humans, but some of them thought Elvish was

a very elegant language to use): “Library”, “Aviary”, and “Music Room”. There is a label for a fourth key, “Ballroom”, but that key is missing.

Creature. The figure behind the desk is Jacoby, an undead porter; use the **ghast** (MM 148) stat block, but Jacoby is lawful evil and lacks the *Stench* ability. If Jacoby detects the presence of any living creature entering this room, he says in a dignified voice, “Welcome to Brightblossom. May I see your invitation?”

Jacoby is still performing the job he had in life: to greet guests, and also to prevent the entry of party-crashers into the pleasure palace. If they think to do so, characters have an opportunity to convince Jacoby that they are invited guests, staff, or entertainers. In general, this requires a successful **Charisma check contested by Jacoby’s Wisdom (Insight) check**. This could be a Deception, Persuasion, Intimidation, or even Performance check, depending on the tactics the characters use. You can choose to give adventurers Advantage or Disadvantage on this check if you feel they make a particularly compelling or unconvincing case. Alternately, the adventurers can present Jacoby with the genuine invitation from **Area 13** (he automatically accepts it).

Jacoby allows a few minutes for the adventurers to explain themselves. If he is satisfied with them, he asks if he can take their coats. Anyone who gives him a garment is offered a crumbling, brittle coat check card in exchange. He can provide directions to any location on the ground floor of Brightblossom, and enthusiastically extolls its lavish amenities, which include a music room, an observatory, an aviary, a library, revitalizing baths, and a grand ballroom. However, he does not perceive that Brightblossom is now haunted and decayed or that the grand staircase is impassible, so his directions do not take into account the palace’s current structural issues. He knows nothing about Grey Maggie or the Von Croft expedition (which never entered this room). If asked, he

provides keys to the music room, aviary, and library. If asked for the ballroom key, he is mortified to discover it is missing and apologizes.

With a successful **Charisma (Deception) check contested by Jacoby’s Wisdom (Insight) check**, an adventurer can convince Jacoby that the grey cloak on the peg is theirs, in which case he hands it over (see **Treasure**, below). He also hands it over if given the coat check card found in **Area 11**. He then extends his hand for a tip. If he is given less than a silver piece he sighs disdainfully.

If characters fail a Deception check, or if Jacoby sees them attempt to take a key or the cloak without permission (a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (sleight of hand) check** is required to take an item without attracting his notice), he remains impassive but produces a small silver bell from his robes and rings it. “Please wait here. Someone will be with you in a moment.” In a few moments, the four **skeletons** (MM 272) from **Area 7** arrive and Jacoby then assists them in attacking the party. All fight to the death. If the skeletons have already been destroyed, they fail to arrive and Jacoby observes that it is “impossible to get good help these days”, and attacks the party by himself.



Treasure . Close inspection of the grey cloak reveals that it is actually a sky blue velvet cloak covered in a thick coat of dust. It is adorned with a platinum clasp in the shape of an owl, worth 35gp.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** Jacoby uses the **ghoul** (MM 148) stat block. The skeletons fail to respond to his summons. Annoyed, he attacks alone.
- **Weak:** Jacoby uses the **ghoul** (MM 148) stat block, remove one **skeleton**.
- **Strong:** Jacoby has 64 hit points.
- **Very strong:** Jacoby uses the **wight** (MM 300) statblock. He has a longsword and longbow under the desk. Skeletons have 20 hit points.

AREA 7 — GUARD ROOM

A rack with a few rusting pikes and shields stands against the east wall of this small, dusty room. A window in the south wall has been bricked shut. On a side table rest playing cards and a few small stacks of coins.



If Jacoby has not summoned the skeletons to **Area 6**, you can also add the following:

Two skeletons in rotting livery lie sprawled on the floor, their hands locked around each other's throats. A third skeleton sits in a chair against the south wall, a wine bottle in its lap.

A fourth skeleton is pinned to the inside of the door by a broken pike through its ribcage; characters do not immediately notice it's there unless they have a **Passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher**.

The shields bear the emblem of Brightblossom (a blooming rose) and, along with the pikes, are rusted to the point of worthlessness.

Creatures. The four **skeletons** (MM 272) are the remains of Brightblossom's guards. Decades ago, Grey Maggie manipulated them into murdering each other over gambling debts.

All four skeletons animate and attack if they or their treasure (see below) are touched, or if summoned by Jacoby (**Area 6**). The skeleton pinned to the door must use an action to detach itself from the door; until it does so, it is Restrained.



Treasure. On the table are 3gp, 11sp, 35cp and a playing card set.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** No skeleton pinned to the door
- **Weak, Strong:** no adjustment
- **Very strong:** The skeletons have 20hp and resistance to Slashing and Piercing damage

AREA 8 — LIBRARY TOWER

The door to this area is locked; the word "Library" is engraved on the lintel in Common. The lock can be picked with a **successful DC 15 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check**. The key to this door is in **Area 6**. If a character enters, read the following:

An iron staircase spirals up the middle of this three-story tower. The walls are lined with bookshelves. The books are old but neatly arranged, and the tower is cleaner and in better condition than the other areas of the palace that you have seen.

Lanterns, functional but empty of oil, are affixed to the walls on each level of this three-

story tower. The top two floors each have large oculus windows in the south wall, but these are bricked up.

If Katherine Chamber is present, she informs the adventurers that her party entered the ground floor of this tower but Wilhelm Von Croft sneered at the books and ordered the group to search elsewhere for treasure. She is confused by the locked door; Catastrophe picked this lock and the party did not re-lock it.

8a. Ground floor: Arts & Cooking

The bookshelves here are filled with cookbooks that describe the preparation and presentation of gourmet cuisine. There is also a selection of plays, often lyrical or salacious or both, and several collections of musical scores.



Treasure. A character who examines the books on this level and makes a **successful DC 12**

Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a beautiful illuminated tome filled with reproductions of ancient elven frescoes, worth 40gp.

8b. Second Floor: History, Philosophy, & Religion

The shelves on this level are crowded with religious and philosophical tomes; the bulk of them devoted to deities and belief systems focusing on the arts as well as hearth and home. There are some that advocate hedonism and describe trickster gods. A small section on the histories of various countries and cultures fills one shelf.



Treasure. A character who inspects the books on this level and makes a **successful DC 12**

Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a thin book whose cover is embossed with faintly glowing golden fruit and leaves. This book is written entirely in Sylvan, and is entitled “Dances of the Feywilde”. A character

who can read Sylvan can easily finish this brief volume during a short rest, and after doing so receives a one-time Advantage on their next **Charisma (Performance) check**. The next time the character looks for the book, it has gone missing, never to be seen again.

BIBLIOPHILIC PLAYERS?

If players ask you what other books they can find on the first two levels of the library, make it clear that there are none that seem to have any real monetary value, but beyond that ask them what titles they would like their characters to find, and feel free to place them here if it's appropriate. If you are so inclined, you can award Inspiration for particularly creative or amusing book suggestions. If you wish, this library could also be a place where the party finds an ancient map or journal of your own creation that leads to a future adventure.

8c. Magic

Creature. Characters who climb to the top level of the tower find a **ghost** (MM 147) sitting quietly in an old arm chair, watching the adventurers with a look of calm sorrow. This is the ghost of Victor Turnclaw, a middle-aged male human who was Brightblossom's librarian. He appears as a pale, thin-faced man with sunken cheeks and a fringe of greying hair, wearing expensive but tasteful robes. He is slightly transparent.

Victor cannot speak until he is spoken to. He watches the characters and makes no move to attack unless he is attacked or books are touched on the third floor. If characters move as if to touch a book or search the shelves on the third floor, Victor shakes his head slowly from side to side in an unmistakable signal of warning. If this warning is not heeded, he attacks, but does not press his attack if characters leave the top floor. He uses his *Possession* ability to simply make possessed characters walk down to the bottom level of the tower, then releases them. He is unable to leave the library tower.

If characters speak to Victor, he answers in a soft, raspy voice. Unlike some of Brightblossom's other undead denizens, Victor is quite aware that he is dead.

"Darkness has come to live in this house. Our revels are all ended." If characters ask for details about the evils that have befallen Brightblossom, he directs them to a treatise on the second floor (give **Handout A: Concerning the Weird Sisters** to a player).

Victor sees it as his duty to defend the library, which he views as the last remaining place in Brightblossom that is unpoisoned by the encroaching darkness. He also sees himself as a guardian of its knowledge. Three books are missing from the collection; he knows they are somewhere within the palace but he cannot leave the library himself to seek them out. The titles are: "The Constellation of Blades," "Sea-Songs of the Boiling Isle," and "The Care and Feeding of Blue Owls." If the characters can return all three books, he offers to reward them with a magical secret from the arcane tomes of the third floor (see **Treasure**, below). The missing books are located in **Areas 9, 10, and 11**, although Victor doesn't know this.



Treasure. If the adventurers successfully return the three missing library books to Victor, he offers a choice of one of the following rewards:

- Spellbook of Reeven Redsong. A wizard's spellbook, bound in red leather and decorated with two painted avian eyes. It contains the following spells: *comprehend languages*, *disguise self*, *magic mouth*, and *silent image*.
- Victor's silver spectacles. These are *eyes of minute seeing* (DMG 168).
- The Last Prayers of Father Consadine. A bound collection of spell scrolls: *cure wounds*, *bless*, *protection from evil*

and good, sanctuary, shield of faith, and zone of truth.

Victor's ghost prevents characters from searching the top floor. If he is destroyed, his spectacles vanish, but characters can recover the other treasures.

If present, Katherine Chamber is favorably impressed by characters who deal with Victor diplomatically and return the missing books to the library.

AREA 9 — OBSERVATORY TOWER

The ground floor of this tower is covered in rubble and debris. The upper floors have long since collapsed. Among the shattered masonry and floorboards lie the remains of a massive metal telescope with brass fittings.

The rubble in this area makes the entire space Difficult Terrain. The top two floors of this tower collapsed years ago, as the rotted floorboards could no longer sustain the weight of the telescope. The tower is 40 feet tall; the uppermost level once featured a beautiful glass dome but a layer of brick now seals the top of the tower.



Creature. A hungry **darkmantle** (MM 46) has made its home at the top of the tower. It

waits, motionless in the darkness, until one or more characters enter the base of the tower or start to search the rubble, then drops down and attacks. If reduced to less than half its hit points, it Disengages and attempts to flee into another area. If it manages to escape, at your option it finds another perch elsewhere in the palace and attempts another ambush later.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** The darkmantle has only 11 hit points
- **Weak:** No change
- **Strong or Very Strong:** The darkmantle has 35 hit points



Treasure. Characters who search the rubble at the base of this tower find an intact copper-plated book entitled “The Constellation of Blades”. This is one of the volumes sought by Victor Turnclaw (see **Area 8**).

AREA 10 – MUSIC ROOM

The doors to this area are locked; the word “Music Room” is engraved on the lintel of both doors in Common. The lock can be picked with a **successful DC 15 Dexterity (thieves’ tools) check**. The music room key in **Area 6** opens both doors to this room.

Music. With a **successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check**, characters who listen at the closed door to **Area 10** hear beautiful music coming from within.

Katherine Chamber is very wary of this room. If asked about it, she creates *minor illusions* of beautiful, spectral dancers – and then a skull. Her party passed through the music room during their exploration. The music room’s ghosts possessed her party’s tiefling sorcerer, Catastrophe, and trapped him in the room. Wilhelm Von Croft forced Katherine to

abandon the sorcerer, and the two of them escaped into the dining room (**Area 14**).

When characters enter the room, read the following:

The walls of this room are paneled, with seaside scenes painted on faded canvas and surrounded with gilded seashells, coral, and blown glass flowers. A harp, spinet and zither float in the air in front of a fireplace on the south wall. Two large picture windows, both bricked up, dominate the west wall.

The musical instruments are playing a beautiful, haunting melody of their own accord. In the center of the room, the spectral young lady first seen in **Area 5** is dancing with the lifeless corpse of a male tiefling. She holds the body up – his boots are torn and his feet are mangled; trails of blood are visible along the floor. One of his ears is missing.

The north and east doors both close and lock as soon as one or more characters fully enter the room (the locks can be picked with a **successful DC 15 Dexterity (thieves’ tools) check**, or opened with the key from **Area 6**). A male **ghost** (MM 147) in an elegant three-quarter coat with his hair tied back in a ribbon materializes and bows. “Will you dance?” he asks. The female **ghost** spins the tiefling’s corpse into a chair and moves towards the party, smiling, with her arms open. “He was a poor dancer,” she says of the tiefling. “If you perform better, perhaps you won’t require lessons.”

The ghosts insist that one character dances with one of them. If characters refuse, or attempt to leave via either door before anyone has danced, the ghosts attack (during each round, they will again ask, “Will you dance?” and break off combat if a character agrees to dance). During combat, both ghosts attempt to *possess* characters, forcing them to dance (see below).

Dancing. Characters may choose to dance with either ghost. The animated instruments begin playing a waltz. The character should make a **Charisma (Performance)** check. Refer to the table below for results:

20+: The character performs a flawless, bewitching dance with their ethereal partner – in fact, the character is able to show the ghost some surprising moves. The ghost who danced with the character steps back when the song ends, tears glistening in its eyes. It simply says, “Thank you” and vanishes forever. The other dancer says, “You may be the greatest dancer who has ever lived. I need see no more. Take this, and live to seek happier places.” It causes an *instrument of illusions* (XGtE 137) to appear (a viol) which hangs in the air until the character claims it. The ghost then vanishes forever. Both doors unlock and open.

15-19: The character dances skillfully and gracefully, to the delight of both ghosts. At the conclusion of the song, both ghosts bow deeply and the ghost who danced with the character kisses their hand (an icy, tingling sensation). “Now *that* was a dance,” one says. Both doors unlock and open. “Do come again. We always have room on our dance cards, and we’re *always* here.” The ghosts linger in the room, dancing with each other, and do not antagonize the party further.

10-14: The character dances adequately; the performance is neither embarrassing nor dazzling. When the song ends, the ghostly dance partner steps away and regards the character critically. “Not bad. But you could use a little...practice.” Both ghosts attempt to *possess* the character. If either succeeds, they compel the character to dance with the other ghost continuously and energetically for a full hour, including breathtaking leaps and lifts, whereupon they release the character. A character who is not freed from possession before the full hour of dancing is complete suffers a level of *exhaustion*. Once the hour is

complete, the doors unlock and the ghosts invite the characters to return anytime for another lesson. If both ghosts fail to *possess* the character, they stare icily and one says, “Wallflower.” The doors open and unlock.

5-9. The character makes a few missteps and clumsy moves during the dance. The ghost who isn’t dancing winces. At the conclusion, the ghost who danced announces, “That was tragic. Obviously, you just haven’t found the right partner until now. But we’ll keep practicing until you’re perfect.” Both ghosts attempt to *possess* the character. If either succeeds, they compel the character to dance with the other ghost continuously and energetically, including breathtaking leaps and lifts, for six hours. The possessed character incurs a level of *exhaustion* at the end of every hour, dying at the end of the sixth hour if no one intervenes. If both ghosts fail to *possess* the character, they stare icily and one says, “Wallflower.” The doors open and unlock.

1-4. The character dances abysmally. There are more wrong moves than right moves. The non-dancing ghost places its ethereal thumb and forefinger on its ghostly sinuses and its head droops. The dancing ghost breaks off the dance before the song is over. “You’re hopeless,” it pronounces. “Please just go away.” The doors open and unlock.

Enchanted Instruments. Characters can stop or prevent any dancing in the room at any time by destroying all three enchanted instruments (harp, spinet, and zither). Use the *flying sword* stat block for each instrument, except that they have no attacks. The instruments fly around the room to avoid being destroyed, but cannot leave the room. Any non-dancing ghosts attack any creatures who try to interfere with the instruments. If all three instruments are destroyed, any *possessed* characters are released and the ghosts become Incapacitated, hanging silently and motionlessly in the air.



Treasure. There is a flute lying on the floor near the south wall of this room (Katherine Chamber can play this instrument and use it to perform her Song of Rest and Bardic Inspiration abilities).

Characters who search the body of Catastrophe, the tiefling sorcerer, recover a dagger, a pouch containing 5gp, and a *potion of healing*.

Characters who search the painted wall panels and make a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check discover that one panel slides away to reveal a secret compartment. Inside is a book bound in exotic wooden boards entitled “Sea-Songs of the Boiling Islands.” It is one of the volumes sought by Victor Turnclaw (see **Area 8**).

AREA 11 — AVIARY

The door to this area is locked; the word “Aviary” is engraved on the lintel in Common. The lock can be picked with a **successful DC 15 Dexterity (thieves’ tools) check** or opened with the aviary key from **Area 6**.

Birdsong. Characters who listen at the closed door of **Area 11** can, with a **successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check, hear exotic birds singing from the other side of the door. However, no birdsong is heard once the door opens.

This room is filled with a dozen birdcages of various sizes and designs. Some hang from the ceiling, others rest on small tables or pedestals. All are filled with the skeletons of doves, owls, nightingales, and other birds. One large cage holds the remains of what must have been a peacock. A heavy cabinet of drawers stands against the north wall. Two large windows on the east wall have been bricked up.

In the center of the room, in the middle of a circular red rug embroidered with green and gold leaves, is a marble pedestal. At the top of the pedestal is a beautiful moonstone roughly the size and shape of a hen’s egg.

Slumped against the base of the pedestal is the dead body of a male halfling in colorful traveler’s clothes. His eyes are missing. An empty waterskin lies nearby. One hand, resting on his chest, holds a note. The note is facing you, and written on it in large, unsteady characters: “THEY WON’T LET ME LEAVE”.

Katherine Chamber entered this room previously with her party. The halfling cleric Cade Cabbager was determined to get the egg. He triggered a magical trap, and the rest of the party was forced to leave him behind. Katherine knows that the trap was triggered when Cade attempted to take the moonstone egg in the center of the room.

Trap. If a creature touches the moonstone egg, the door to the aviary closes and locks. The room fills with birdsong, and the spirits of the dead birds fly from their cages and magically attack any creatures inside the aviary who are not standing on the round rug around the pedestal. The effect is equivalent to the *spirit guardians* spell (PHB 278), requiring a **DC 15 Wisdom save**, dealing 3d8 necrotic damage on a failed save, half damage on a successful one. The birds will not attack a creature on the rug, but will perch in their cages and watch the creature, waiting for them to leave the rug. Once triggered, the birds become dormant only when no living creatures remain in the aviary. The *spirit guardians* effect does not follow characters outside the room. Cade Cabbager died of dehydration, trapped on the rug and unable to exit the room. Grey Maggie later harvested his eyes.

Here are a few possible ways characters might defeat the trap and escape with the treasure:

- With a **successful DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check**, an object of roughly similar size and shape can be substituted for the egg as it is removed (*a la* Indiana Jones) without the spirits noticing.

- A search of the large cabinet reveals a dozen multi-colored silk hoods that fit over the bird cages. If all the cages are covered with these hoods, the bird spirits go to “sleep” and remain dormant until the hoods are removed. If at least half the cages are covered, damage from the *spirit guardians* spell is reduced by half.
- The egg and the pedestal are visible to characters standing outside the aviary as long as the door is open. Characters may devise a magical or mechanical way of removing the egg from the pedestal without placing themselves in the area affected by the *spirit guardians*. The egg is held in place by steel prongs; the force required to free it just slightly stronger than the *mage hand* cantrip can exert.



Treasure. The moonstone egg is worth 100gp. Characters who search the halfling’s corpse find a pouch containing 7gp and a set of thieves’ tools. In the cabinet with the hoods is a leather-bound book entitled “The Care and Feeding of Blue Owls.” This is one of the volumes sought by Victor Turnclaw in **Area 8**. Sticking out of the pages, like a bookmark, is a coat check card, of interest to Jacoby in **Area 6**.

AREA 12 — THE BATHS

The floor of this chamber is covered with ceramic tiles, and slopes gradually downward toward the east wall. Painted water nymphs and tritons caper on the ceiling. The northeastern section of the floor is submerged beneath steamy, murky water. A small but steady stream drains into a large grate.

Visitors to Brightblossom enjoyed bathing in this natural hot spring. Unfortunately, some of them never left. The water is warm but not hot. The steam in this room is quite thick; creatures have Disadvantage when making

Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight while in this room.

The water is only a few inches deep at its western edge, but the floor slopes down so that it reaches a depth of four feet near the eastern wall of the room. Fresh, warm water bubbles up periodically from natural fissures at the bottom of the pool.

A servant’s stairwell on the east side of the room once led to the lower level of the palace. It has completely collapsed and is flooded, rendering it impassible.

The grate in the floor is rusted and can be pried loose with a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check**. Characters who inspect the grate notice fresh air entering through it. It is a 10-foot drop through the grate into a natural tunnel connecting this room to the old well in the courtyard (**Area 3**).



Creatures. Six bloated, water-logged **zombies** (MM 316) lie beneath the surface of the water. If they detect creatures in the room, they rise from the pool and attack. They fight until destroyed, and pursue creatures who leave this room.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak** or **Weak**: Remove two zombies
- **Strong**: The zombies each have 33 hit points.
- **Very Strong**: The zombies each have 33 hit points. Add two zombies.



Treasure. Characters with a **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 10 or higher** notice that one zombie is wearing a key around its neck on a silver chain (worth 1gp). This key is found automatically by anyone who searches the zombies if they are killed. This key is unmarked; it opens the door to **Area 15** (the ballroom).

AREA 13 — THE DRESSING ROOM

The ceiling of this small antechamber has partially collapsed into a pile of stone rubble and debris. Ancient gowns, robes, and towels, all stained with mold, hang on pegs against the west wall. A neat row of decaying boots and shoes lines the floor beneath them.

Characters who enter this room from **Area 5** notice small wisps of steam curling from under the door in the eastern wall. This warm steam is harmless – a result of the water of the natural hot spring in **Area 12** meeting the generally chilly air inside the palace.

Characters proficient in History notice that the clothing and footwear represented the height of fashion several decades ago. The satins, silks, leathers, and furs are all now hopelessly mold-damaged and worthless; there is more moisture in the air here than in other areas of the palace (due to the bath in **Area 12**.)

Characters who search through the ruined clothes find an invitation to Brightblossom's Mid-Winter Ball (give a player **Handout B**:

Invitation). Characters who present this invitation to Jacoby in **Area 6** are instantly accepted by him as legitimate guests.

AREA 14 — THE DINING ROOM

The door connecting the dining room to the music room is locked and can be unlocked with the music room key (found in **Area 6**) or a **successful DC 15 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check**.

This dining room is spacious, and must have once been handsome, but every discernable thing in it is covered in dust and mold. The most prominent object is a long table with a tablecloth spread on it, as if a feast had been prepared but never enjoyed. A centerpiece of some kind is in the middle of the table; it is so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form is undistinguishable; it's covered in black fungus, and speckled-legged spiders with blotchy bodies are running in and out of it.

Eight skeletons in rotting finery, some wearing elaborate wigs, are seated around the table in front of silver plates and crystal goblets.

A fire suddenly springs to life in a dark fireplace in the northwestern corner of the room, and wintery candles on the chimneypiece ignite with a sickly yellow light.

The skeletons do not animate, but characters in the room hear the disembodied chatter of the long-dead dinner-party:

"A toast, ladies and gentlemen, to Lord and Lady Brightblossom!"

"Hear, hear! To winter flowers, and warm hearts, and life eternal!"

"And wine!"

"And cakes!"

"Who is that strange new lady – she seems to be everywhere in this house lately?"

"My dears, I thought that last year's Mid-Winter Ball was something special. But tonight you have *really* outdone yourselves."

"Shhh! Her name is Maggie, I believe. She is Brightblossom's new favorite. Can't imagine why – she's perfectly ghastly if you ask me."

"If you'll excuse the vulgarity, I can't help but observe that it is one *hell* of a party."

If Katherine Chamber is present, one voice addresses her directly: "So nice to see you again, Katherine! We didn't expect you back so soon – did you leave something behind?" This remark is followed by a peal of laughter from all the spirits.

Inspection of the hideous mass in the center of the table reveals that it is what happens to an elaborate, multi-layered cake if abandoned for several decades *sans* refrigeration. The spiders living in it are harmless.

A door on the west side of the room leads to a servant's stairway, but it has long since collapsed and is impassible.

As the characters leave the room, one of the disembodied voices behind them protests: "But you haven't even tried the cake!"



Treasure: There is about 12gp worth of fine plates and cutlery in here; some of it needs to be lifted from the bony fingers of the skeletons, but they don't react.

AREA 15 – THE BALLROOM

The door connecting the dining room (**Area 14**) to this room has an elaborate brass lock, more cunning in design than the palace's other locks. It can be opened with the ballroom key (found in **Area 12**) or with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity (thieves' tools)** check.

The marble walls of this ballroom rise to a half-domed roof. The walls are lined with crystal recesses that emit a pale blue light. A crumbling balcony hangs over the south side of the room. At the east end of the room, the floor has collapsed into a dark, gaping pit. Two rows of lit candles line the floor, seeming to invite you towards the pit.

Enchanted panels. The glowing recesses radiate Illusion magic if subjected to a *detect magic* spell. They once functioned as decorative magical "windows" that could display a variety of beautiful vistas as desired by Brightblossom's inhabitants. If a creature touches any panel, all of the panels shift to display a beautiful tropical garden. The vista changes repeatedly each time a panel is touched, displaying various illusory environments (wintery forest, undersea view of a coral reef, etc.) The illusions are harmless.

Phantoms of the Recent Past. When one or more characters enter this room, a semi-transparent illusion of a young, dark-haired, sharp-featured male human warrior in chainmail armor appears near the edge of the pit. The resemblance between Wilhelm Von Croft and his parents leaves no doubt as to this apparition's identity.

If Katherine Chamber is present, the Wilhelm apparition addresses her directly. If Katherine Chamber is not present, an illusion of her also appears near Wilhelm, but further from the edge of the pit, and Wilhelm speaks to this illusory Katherine. The illusions cannot be harmed or disrupted, and the illusions do not perceive the characters. Read or paraphrase the following:

The phantasmal young man lifts his head to look at Katherine. Sweat drips from his black hair and runs down his pale face. "Well, what are you waiting for? We can secure the grapple here." He stoops and secures a transparent rope and grappling hook to a block of fallen masonry at the

edge of a pit. As he ties it into place, you notice that indeed a real grappling hook and rope are already affixed to that spot. "There. What's wrong? I told you, Katherine, there is no turning back. Wait – what are you doing?"

Katherine's gaze is fixed on the man. The air surrounding her suddenly fills with a rush of faint, sinister whispers, as if many voices are speaking all at once, just at the edge of hearing. You cannot understand what the whispering voices are saying, but the words fill you with dread. The whispers seem to flow through the air, moving from Katherine to settle on the armored man. His eyes grow wide with terror.

"No, no! Keep back! Keep away from me!" The man reels backward like a drunkard, blind with fear, loses his footing, and topples into the pit. There is a sick crunch of muscle and bone as he lands somewhere below.

"Katherine?" his voice rises weakly from the dark. "Katherine, I think something is down here..."

Then there is an agonized scream from below, and a huge gout of blood spurts up from the pit, splattering the ceiling and the floor around the pit.

If the illusion of Katherine is present, it fades at that point.

This vision, created by Grey Maggie, is an accurate, albeit decontextualized, re-enactment of the death of Wilhelm Von Croft. If Katherine is present, characters can question her about the scene they have just witnessed. Her responses depend on her opinion of the characters.

If she believes the adventurers are fundamentally good people who have treated her compassionately, Katherine confesses that the vision depicted true events, but explains that she did not intend for Wilhelm

to die. His obsessive determination to continue the expedition at all costs had already resulted in the deaths of Cade Cabbager and Catastrophe. All Katherine wanted to do was leave the palace, but Wilhelm had threatened to kill her if she tried to do so. She cast a *dissonant whispers* spell on him, but only intended to frighten him long enough for her to break away. She is afraid that Wilhelm's parents will blame her for his death.

It's up to you how much more of her story Katherine tells. Convincing her to explain what happened to her voice requires a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, but you can grant Advantage if characters have made an effort to befriend Katherine. If this check succeeds, Katherine confesses that Grey Maggie offered to return her voice if she brought more victims to the palace, and that she can signal the hag to come for her prey when the party reaches Wilhelm's body.

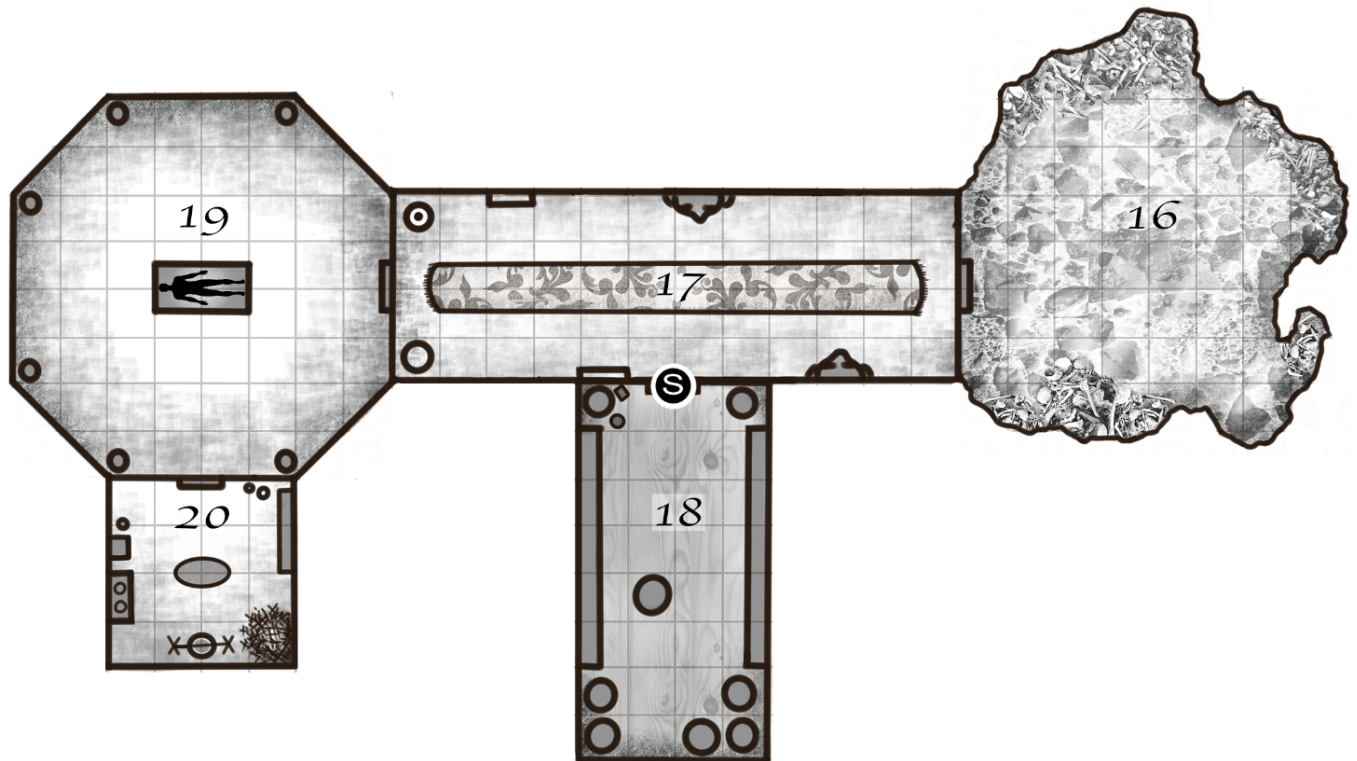
If Katherine does not trust the adventurers, she lies and claims the illusion is false – a trick played by the evil spirits of the Blind Palace to create suspicion and divide the party against itself. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that she's lying.

Dried bloodstains are visible at the edges of the pit.

Characters can use the grappling hook and rope at the edge of the pit to descend 30 feet into the lower level of the palace, arriving in **Area 16**.

PART FOUR:
BENEATH THE PALACE

*Beneath
The Blind Palace*



A TWISTED PLACE

While the upper level of the Blind Palace reflects Brightblossom as it once was, Grey Maggie has very much made the lower level her own, magically altering its layout and features to reflect her own sensibilities and whims. Currently, she has designed it to funnel the adventurers towards the location of Wilhelm Von Croft's body.

Katherine can recall little of her experiences on the lower level of the palace. She only remembers the terrible bargain she made with the hag. In any case, Grey Maggie has magically altered the layout since Katherine's last visit.

AREA 16 – GOLGOTHA

The stone floor of this pit is covered with human bones. Small recesses in the walls are filled with skulls; all are turned to face you. An elegant blue and gold painted door hangs in the west wall, ten feet above the ground.



The door is not locked; characters can reach it by climbing the rough stone wall with a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check, or by piling objects (including the bones) to create a rough platform, or by other means they devise.

When a character opens the door, a voice seems to whisper from one of the hundreds of skulls: "Welcome home." It is impossible to determine which skull spoke, and there is no further communication.

AREA 17 – SCULPTURE GALLERY

Two large, sculpted stone faces flank the near end of this long hall. The face mounted on the south wall is slightly closer to you. Blank stone panels line the north and south walls at intervals beyond the two faces. There is a door at the west end of the hallway, flanked by two low stone pedestals. On the north pedestal crouches the statue of a cowering man. The south pedestal is empty.

Death masks. The stone face on the south wall depicts an eyeless male halfling; characters who have seen the body of Cade Cabbager recognize him. The stone face on the north wall is a male tiefling missing one ear – Catastrophe, also recognizable. If any other characters have died in the Blind Palace during the adventure, one of the other panels is not blank and instead bears that character's face. All of these sculpted faces are about five feet in height and have bronze name-plates identifying the subjects. There are enough blank panels in the hall to represent one for every living member of the adventuring party, and the name-plates on those panels bear the names of the adventurers.

The name "Wilhelm Von Croft" is carved on the pedestal supporting the statue of the cowering man. The name "Katherine Chamber" is carved on the pedestal with no statue.

Trap. When a character approaches within ten feet of the face of Cade Cabbager, the sculpture glows and the face animates and speaks in the voice of the dead halfling: "The beautiful birds – they wouldn't let me leave. And so I died like a bird in a cage – thirsty, frightened, alone. Show me the prize I died for." If characters display the jade egg from **Area 11**, the statue says, "Yes. So pretty...." And then stops glowing and falls silent. Note that an illusion, image, or drawing of the egg will suffice (although Katherine, if present,

doesn't think of this solution unless prompted). If characters attempt to pass west of the face without having displayed the egg, the face screams "Show me the prize!" and tendrils of sickly purple energy slither out from the eye sockets. Each creature within fifteen feet of the face must make a **DC 16 Constitution saving throw**, taking 3d6 necrotic damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one.

When a character approaches within ten feet of the face of Catastrophe, the face glows and animates and recites the following poem. If there are any other faces on the walls, they join in:

"In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute's well-tuned law,

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing,
flowing
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow

Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh—but smile no more."

When it finishes its recitation, the face stops glowing and falls silent.

Secret door. Characters with a **passive Perception score of 15 or higher** spot the secret door in the south wall if they pass within ten feet of it. Otherwise, finding the irregularities in the wall that reveal the door requires a search of the wall and a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Creature. If characters pass within ten feet of the statue of Wilhelm Von Croft, it animates and looks up at them with red glowing eyes. "You will become like us," it intones, and attacks; use the **helmed horror** (MM 140) stat block, but the statue cannot fly. It fights to the death.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** Use **animated armor** (MM 19) stat block instead of helmed horror
- **Weak:** Use the **gargoyle** (MM 140) stat block instead of helmed horror, but the creature still cannot fly
- **Strong or Very Strong:** The helmed horror has 88 hit points.

AREA 18 – WINE CELLAR

This small, cool room is packed with kegs, casks and racks of wine bottles.



Treasure. Most of the kegs and casks are empty, but there is a keg filled with fine dwarven ale, and another with sinn vallik, an elven healing wine. The sinn vallik keg contains the equivalent of four *potions of healing*, but anyone who drinks a potion must succeed on a **DC 9 Constitution saving throw** or be Poisoned for one hour. The characters can empty out other wine bottles from the cellar in order to transport it.

There are too many bottles of wine here for the adventurers to realistically carry away all of them. If they search for valuable bottles, on a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (History) check** they find and recognize a rare bottle of gnome-brewed Coppercoil Mushroom Whiskey, a worth 50gp. On a failed check, they find a bottle of Little Toes, a halfling-brewed wine. They think it's worth 50gp, but if they attempt to sell it the merchant will know its real value: 5 silver pieces.

One of the wine racks contains a collection of four magical drinks, labelled in Abyssal. Tasting them reveals only their positive effects, but casting *identify* on them reveals all:

Ships in the Night. A clear octagonal bottle filled with small blue crystals suspended in a thick, sugary red liquid. Functions identically to a *philter of love* (DMG 184), except that when the effect ends after one hour, it immediately reverses and the subject of the drinker's affections is now themselves charmed by the drinker for one hour.

All My Friends are Animals. A clay jug of thick yellow milk. Functions identically to a *potion of animal friendship* (DMG 187), but while the effect is active the drinker becomes

strangely repellent and unlikeable to non-animals and suffers Disadvantage on all Charisma-based ability checks when dealing with non-Beasts.

Devil's Beer. A glass beer bottle, corked and sealed with wax, filled with a dark, rich beer. Functions identically to a *potion of heroism* (DMG 188), but for the duration of the effect the drinker's eyes turn blood red, horns sprout from their forehead, and a forked tail grows from their lower back. In addition, they suffer Vulnerability to radiant damage.

No More Secrets. A small glass vial filed with a thin, clear liquid. Functions identically to a *potion of mind reading* (DMG 188), but any creature against whom the user employs *detect thoughts* also immediately gains the equivalent of a *detect thoughts* spell, enabling them to detect the thoughts of the drinker.

AREA 19 – CHAPEL

The walls and vaulted ceiling of this chapel were once decorated with pastoral murals in purples, pinks, and blues. The paint has mostly flaked off, revealing black and grey stone beneath.

In the center of the room is a large, slab-like stone altar. The body of a young, dark-haired man in chain mail lies upon it. A small, folded paper card lies at his feet.

The body is Wilhelm von Croft's. The folded paper card has a few words written on it in an elegant, flowing hand: "Compliments of the House." Inspection of the corpse reveals fresh stitches around its neck and around both wrists.

Development. Grey Maggie, a **night hag** (MM 178), is in **Area 20**, gleefully watching this area through a peephole in the secret door to see what the adventurers will do. A

successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check spots this peephole and reveals the secret door. Maggie's ultimate goal is the corruption of mortals. She hopes that either Katherine will betray the party by signaling her, or that the party will betray Katherine by raising Wilhelm and condemning the bard to execution. Either way, she will claim at least one soul for the Abyss.

If Katherine Chamber is present and has no loyalty to the adventurers, she signals Grey Maggie, using her *minor illusion* cantrip to create the sound of a dinner bell. Katherine's voice is instantly restored. Grey Maggie opens the secret door connecting Areas 19 and 20 and attacks the party. Katherine attempts to flee, fighting any creatures that try to stop her.

If Katherine Chamber is present and the party has earned her loyalty, she begs them not to raise Wilhelm from the dead, knowing he will seek revenge on her.

If Wilhelm is raised from the dead, he uses the stats of a lawful evil **thug** (MM 350) but has an armor class of 16 due to his chain mail. He rises from the slab with a gasp. If Katherine is present, he immediately recognizes her and orders the party to "seize that murderer." He demands her summary execution. If the adventurers do not acquiesce, he sneers that his family will hear of it.

If the party does not raise Wilhelm but attempts to take his dead body, the corpse's hands and head animate and pull free from the body and attack the party. The hands are **crawling claws** (MM 44) and the head is a **flameskull** (MM 134) (lacking the *rejuvenation* ability). They fight to the death.

If the characters are victorious, Maggie allows them to take what remains of the corpse. She begins singing a taunting song in a beautiful voice from her hiding place. Katherine, if present, recognizes this as her own voice. Maggie sings the same song sung by the sculpted face in **Area 17**. If characters do not try to reach her, she allows them to leave.

Clever adventurers who have learned the truth about Katherine's curse may be able to trick Grey Maggie into restoring her voice. If they ask her to do so, Katherine signals Grey Maggie, who instantly restores Katherine's voice and then attacks the party, as above. However, Katherine then uses her restored abilities to help the party fight the hag.

See "**Part 5: Aftermath**" for some of the fallout that may ensue from the choices the adventurers make here.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak** or **Weak:** The flameskull lacks the *fireball* spell and has only 27 hit points.
- **Strong:** No change
- **Very Strong:** The flameskull has 54 hit points.

AREA 20 — KITCHEN

This cluttered space must once have been the palace's kitchen. The room smells of death and decay. Rusting pots and pans dangle from hooks on the ceiling together with the rotting bodies of small animals. A nest-like bed of twigs and moss and scraps of clothing fills one corner. A cauldron of bubbling blue liquid dominates another.

- Grey Maggie has claimed this room as her lair. She installed herself here decades ago as a servant, then slowly expanded her influence throughout the palace, corrupting its visitors and claiming their souls. She hopes to add Katherine

Chamber and/or the adventurers to her collection.

- **Creature.** Grey Maggie, a **night hag** (MM 178), is here unless she reveals herself to the adventurers in Area 19. If characters confront her here in her lair rather than being attacked by her in **Area 19**, she uses her Change Shape ability to appear as a rotund, elderly human woman in a servant's apron. She prefers to parlay rather than fight, offering rewards from her collection of treasures (see below) in exchange for evil deeds (see "What if Maggie Wins?" sidebar for ideas). If these offers are refused, Maggie sighs, "Then it's time you left. I'm afraid I'm terribly, horribly, repulsively busy. But if you need a friend, you know where to find me, lovelies." She fights only if attacked.

- If reduced to fewer than half her hit points, Maggie uses her heartstone (on a chain around her neck) to escape into the ethereal plane on her next action, leaving a behind a burst of smoke and the smell of brimstone. She screams in agony as she does so, in an attempt to make the adventurers believe they have killed her. She does not return to the Material Plane until after they have left the palace, but at your discretion she may one day seek revenge.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** Use the stats of a **green hag** (MM 177) rather than a night hag for Grey Maggie
- **Weak:** No change
- **Strong, Very Strong:** Maggie is accompanied by Clarence, her **imp** (MM 76) servant.

WHAT IF MAGGIE WINS?

If Maggie defeats the adventurers, they awaken alive, sitting at the table in the palace's dining room (**Area 14**), unable to move. One or more of them may have surgical scars over their hearts. Maggie is seated at the head of the table, eating something red and bloody. She offers the adventurers their lives in exchange for performing some terrible service of your own devising (burning down a church, stealing a baby, killing a unicorn, preventing a wedding, etc.). She lifts the dome from a silver serving tray in the middle of table to reveal the hearts of the adventurers piled there, still beating. She offers to return the hearts to the bodies if the evil service is performed within a certain timeframe (nine times nine hours, days, or weeks) – if not, she will eat the hearts and the characters will die. If the characters accept, they are free to go. They can attempt to fulfill the evil bargain, or seek help from some powerful being to break this curse (that being may demand a service in exchange, or may require a special item in order to perform at ritual to help the characters).



Treasure. A spice rack over an old oven contains distillations of qualities that Maggie has extracted from past victims:

- A silver wind-up music box with "Voice of Katherine Chamber" engraved on one side. If the box is played, a beautiful voice emanates from it and sings a verse of the song from **Area 17**. If Katherine Chamber is present, she absorbs the voice and completes the song, her voice restored.
- A small, savory meat pie in wrapped in brown paper with a tag reading "Muscles of Hugh Gisborne". If the pie is consumed (an action taking one round), it acts as a *potion of hill giant strength* (DMG 187).

- A platinum mirror with a sheet of cloth tied around the glass to cover it. Engraved on the handle: "Beauty of Lil Brightblossom". A character who removes the cloth and gazes into the mirror briefly sees the horrified face of a beautiful lady, which quickly fades to black. The gazer receives the benefits of a one-time-only use of the spell *alter self*, which can be saved for a future occasion.
- A glass beaker sealed with a cork, filled with glowing green liquid and labelled "Health of Malcolm Brightblossom". It is a *potion of vitality* (DMG 188).
- A pair of gaily-decorated multi-colored harlequin's boots. Inside the left boot is a tag inscribed "Reginald Pomfrey's Hope for the Future". The boots are *boots of striding and springing* (DMG 156).

PART FIVE: AFTERMATH



When the adventurers emerge from the palace, they find the impatient Von Crofts waiting in the courtyard.

A small encampment has been set up in the courtyard. The snow has begun to pile up and is still falling. Rabbits are roasting over a blazing campfire near the old well. Armored Von Croft guards are spread throughout the courtyard, some bearing torches, one stomping the ground to warm his feet. Valentin and Helena Von Croft, both wrapped in heavy fur cloaks, turn and face you as you appear.

If **Katherine Chamber** did not accompany the adventurers into the palace, she is present here as a prisoner of the Von Crofts, either because the party never released her from the Von Crofts' custody, or because the Von Crofts re-captured her after the party let her go.

Valentin and Helena Von Croft are human **nobles** (MM 348). With them are three human **guards** (MM 347) and a human **veteran** (MM 350).

What ensues depends heavily on the choices the adventurers have made up to this point. There are a few scenarios:

- If the party brings out the remains of Wilhelm's dead body, Helena Von Croft turns away and begins walking towards the fallen gates, into the snow. Valentin, ashen-faced, gives the party the reduced 50gp award as agreed upon. The Von Crofts are indifferent to the fate of Katherine Chamber.
- If Katherine died in the palace and the party brings Wilhelm out alive, the Von Crofts are overjoyed and give the players the full reward of 200gp (250gp if the party successfully negotiated earlier). However, as soon as the coins change hands, a ghastly figure drags itself out of the old well. This is Katherine Chamber –

her voice is restored and she is now a **revenant** (MM 259). "I'll drag every last one of you to Hades!" she snarls. She attacks and fights to the death, targeting Wilhelm Von Croft first, then the adventurers. The Von Crofts and their retinue Disengage and flee if half or more of them are killed. The revenant Katherine can be killed, but rises again in a different dead body twenty-four hours later, and continues to try to track down and kill all three Von Crofts and their bodyguards, and all the adventurers, rising again and again after twenty four hours if killed unless a means can be found to set her to rest or one year passes from the time of her death, whereupon she crumbles into dust.

- If the party emerges with Wilhelm alive and Katherine is also living – either with the party or present in the courtyard as a prisoner – then the Von Crofts pay the full reward but Wilhelm demands the immediate execution of Katherine. If the party refuses, the Von Crofts (including Wilhelm) and their guards attack. Katherine helps the party fight them off to the best of her ability (obviously, if her voice has been restored she is more effective). The Von Croft group Disengages and flees if half or more them are killed. If the party allows Katherine to be executed, she immediately rises again as a **revenant** (see above).

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak** or **Weak**: remove the **veteran**. The revenant lacks the *vengeful glare* ability and has only 80 hit points.
- **Strong**: No change
- **Very Strong**: Add two **guards**. The **revenant** has all of Katherine Chamber's spell abilities (see **Appendix B**).



Treasure. The Von Crofts carry 275gp between them (this includes the reward money), and wear jeweled signet rings (black tower on a red field) worth 15gp each.

Further Adventures. If you wish, there are several hooks you could use to continue the story:

- The party might investigate a book or map they found in the Library (**Area 8**) leading to a new adventure.
- If Grey Maggie was defeated by the adventurers but survives, she plots revenge. She is patient and prefers to act in secret and from a distance. If she is ever permanently destroyed, any remaining undead in the palace pass on to the afterlife. The *Monster Manual* and especially *Volo's Guide to Monsters* have lots of great ideas and details on hags if you wish to further develop this character for future adventures.
- If party members were defeated and captured by Grey Maggie, they'll need to fulfill her evil bargain or find a way to escape from it.
- If Katherine Chamber rose from the dead as a revenant, the party needs to find a way to set her to rest – or else she periodically reappears at your convenience over the next twelve months, seeking revenge in different bodies.
- If Katherine Chamber survives, she may become an ally of the adventurers, a new player character, or a replacement character for a player whose character has died (she could be rolled up as a level 3 half-elf bard). She may or may not still need help restoring her voice (or

magically acquiring a new voice) or taking up a profession which does not require a voice.

- If the party made enemies of the Von Croft family, they may be pursued by bounty hunters, or approached for a quest by a rival family seeking to thwart their mutual enemy.

Thank you for playing “Secrets of the Blind Palace”!

This adventure was inspired in part by the poem *The Haunted Palace* by Edgar Allen Poe, and by the novels *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens and *The Shining* by Stephen King, and by the *Evil Dead* movies.

If you enjoyed the adventure, please leave a review on DMsGuild and check out my other offerings, including “[Attack on Coppercoil](#)”, an adventure for 3-7 characters of levels 1-4.

APPENDIX A: NPC STATS

KATHERINE CHAMBER

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 44

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3

Senses Passive perception 11

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Minor Illusion. While she is cursed, Katherine cannot use any spells that require verbal components. She can cast the minor illusion cantrip as an action, since it requires no verbal components. She often uses this cantrip to communicate in pictures and images.

Song of Rest. If she has a musical instrument, Katherine can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. Katherine can confer this benefit on herself as well.

Bardic Inspiration (2/Long Rest). As a bonus action, Katherine can use a musical instrument to inspire others through stirring music. She must choose one creature other than herself within 60 feet of her who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic inspiration die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Bardic Inspiration is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Bardic Inspiration die at a time.

The Voiceless Curse. Katherine has been cursed and has no voice. Until and unless the curse is broken, she cannot speak, sing, or cast any spells that require verbal components. If the curse is lifted, Katherine gains the following abilities:

Taunt (2/long rest). Katherine can use a bonus action on her turn to target one creature within 30 feet of her. If the target can hear Katherine, the target must succeed on a DC12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of Katherine's next turn.

Spellcasting. Katherine is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Katherine has the following bard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *friends*, *minor illusion*, *viscious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *dissonant whispers*, *healing word*, *heroism*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *shatter*
cont'd...

Actions

Note. Katherine begins the adventure with no weapons. The following reflects some of the more effective weapons the adventurers might choose to give her. She is proficient with all simple weapons plus hand crossbows, longswords, rapiers, and shortswords.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5', or range 20/40 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4(1d4+2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6(1d8+2) piercing damage.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5', one creature. *Hit:* 6(1d8+2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5(1d6+2) piercing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5', one creature. *Hit:* 5(1d6+2) piercing damage.

APPENDIX B: HANDOUTS

Handout A: Concerning the Weird Sisters

*From the writings of Doctor Rudolph Von Richten
Demonologist, Vampire Hunter, Loremaster, and Vaudevillian*

CONCERNING THE WEIRD SISTERS

Do not mistake them for women. Do not mistake them for humans. Hags are a blight on the mortal world. They wield powerful magic and can weave baroque and grotesque Curses.

They live many lives and take many forms. Even a young hag is likely to have forgotten more arcane lore than I will ever master in my lifetime.

Black Morwen. Penny Pigknuckle. Nana Shug, Rotten Edith. They live to bargain and corrupt. They enjoy watching us engineer our own damnation. To bargain with a hag is always dangerous. Their terms often ask us to compromise our most sacred principles and risk the loss of what is most precious to us. They stoke our anger, our envy, and above all our fear.

Their reasons are their own. They follow threads of fate that are longer than mortal lifetimes.

They believe themselves to be the most clever of all creatures. But legends tell of mortals who have beaten hags at their own games. Yet there are far more stories of households, towns, even kingdoms that have fallen into corruption due to the insinuation of hags.

Such places become twisted – they reflect the noxious spirit of the hags who have claimed them.

They visit us in dreams. They tempt us to hazard our souls. Love becomes obsession. Bravery becomes tyranny. Delight becomes gluttony. Beauty becomes torment. But they know they always have what we want. They wait for us to come to them.

*You are cordially invited to Brightblossom
On the occasion of the Mid-Winter Ball*

“While we live, let us LIVE.”

*Music ~ Laughter ~ Stargazing ~
Reinvigorating Tonic Baths ~
Chocolate-Covered Lobster*

