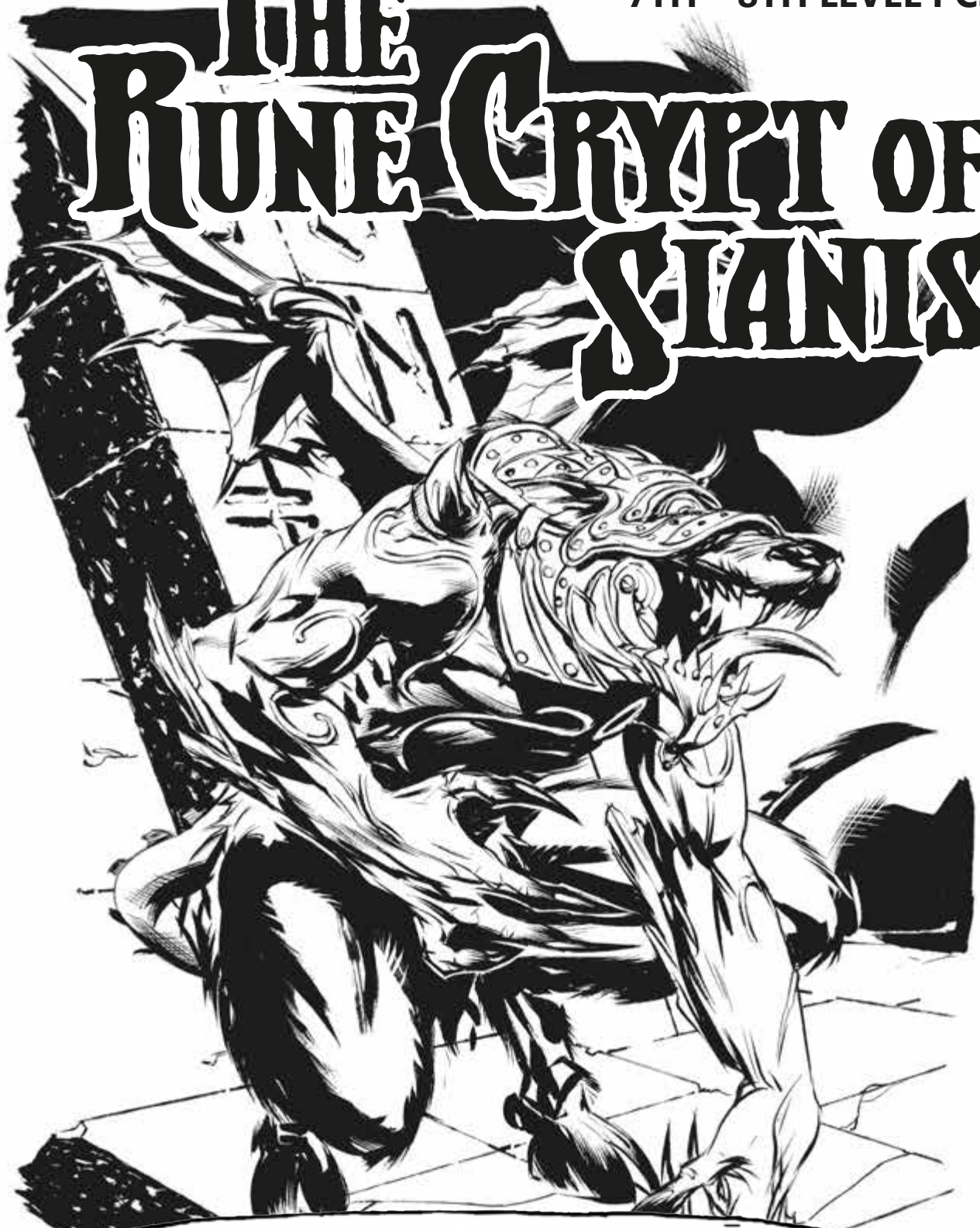


FOR FOUR
7TH – 8TH LEVEL PCS

THE RUNE CRYPT OF SIANIS



A SE WARLOCK MIDGARD ADVENTURE
BY JON SAWATSKY

THE RUNE CRYPT OF SIANIS

GM Note: When a creature's name appears in **bold**, that's a cue that its stat block appears in the *Monster Manual*. If the stat block appears in the *Tome of Beasts*, it is noted as such.

Background

For years, the Helari family of Vidim were among the most reputable and rich folk in the kingdom. The family matriarch, Sianis Helari, was a powerful rune caster, and she used her magic for betterment of all the civilized places in the North. But she changed when her youngest son, Thurich, died (he was torn to pieces by the Jotun, giants inhabiting the mountainous regions of Jotunheim, and his remains were partly devoured by wolves). With her son's death, Sianis retreated from the world and fell into shadow and obscurity. The family in turn grew reclusive and secretive. Their benevolence turned to indifference and then malice. The family played host to odd travellers, and it funded expeditions into remote areas. Rumors circulated that Sianis looked for a way to restore her son.

Eventually the Helari family withdrew from Vidim entirely, and they established themselves in the family crypt some miles to the east of the city. There, they faded from memory, though not before a frightening tale emerged from the region near the tomb. The story told of a massive black cloud that arrived from nowhere and sat unmoving in the wind for seven days. In the snowy mountainous region of the Duchy of Domovogrod, hunters reported dark songs echoing from the Helari crypt until, on the eve of the seventh day, a great rune appeared in the cloud. Recoiling from the bare evil of the magical symbol, the hunters fled from their trap lines and refused to return.

Today, the crypt has sat undisturbed for nearly a century. Even the crows that perch on the spire-like roofs of Vidim refuse to fly near the place.

The Fate of the Helari Family

When her son was slain, Sianis suffered terribly. Inconsolable, her grief consumed her. Her other children, husband, and extended relatives gathered to comfort her,

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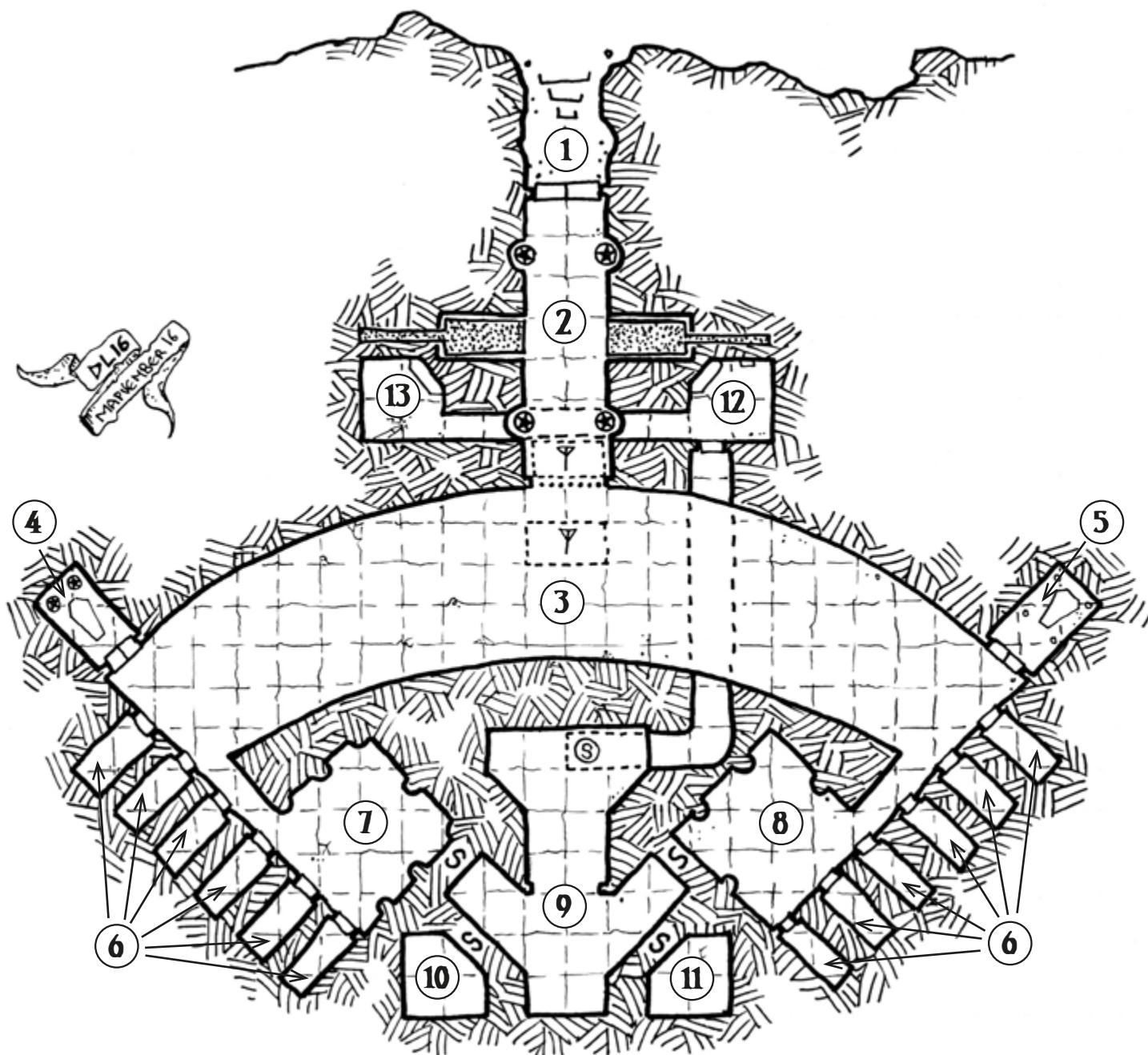
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but alas, their efforts were in vain. Sianis became obsessed with using her rune magic to bring her son back to life; his remains were scattered and almost destroyed, preventing most resurrection magic. Eventually, Sianis turned to dark powers and made a bargain with most malevolent Chernobog, the Lord of the Night. In the shadows of the family crypt and aided by her fallen family, Sianis twisted

the *Hagalaz* rune (*Deep Magic: Rune Magic*, p. 5) into what she thought would restore her son. Of course, Chernobog betrayed the wizard—the rune actually summoned storms of necrotizing snow and ice. When Sianis attempted to use the rune power, the storm was summoned; Chernobog learned the rune's shape and abandoned the Helari family, who were consumed by shadow and madness.



MAP: [CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THIS MAP FOR YOUR VIRTUAL TABLE TOP.](#)



The Crypt Today

Since the family was betrayed, the crypt has laid untouched. Recently, a band of ravenfolk led by a doom croaker broke into the crypt in hopes of finding the rune Sianis had shaped. They suffered terribly at the hands of the crypt's inhabitants (mostly undead members of the Helari family), and they are holed up deep inside the crypt and desperate to escape.

A demon is tasked with guarding the entrance to burial chamber of Sianis herself. On her coffin is inscribed the terrible rune that doomed her family. The demon is bound to the crypt, and it attacks anything that attempts to enter the secret lower levels of the place.

Sharp Hooks and Enticing Stories

- A long-lost member of the Helari family has returned to Vidim with the intention of reclaiming the crypt and the family fortunes buried within in. She is unconvinced by the stories about the place, and she offers 1000 gp to any adventurers who explore and map the place fully.
- One of the spellcasters in the party is haunted by nightmares of a twisting rune on a field of flowing shadow and blood. They know the rune is located somewhere near Vidim, and the party discovers the story of the Helari family while visiting the city.

Area Descriptions

The crypt has no natural lighting and looks recently disturbed though not in a respectful fashion. The following descriptions present the setting, possible encounters, and items located in each area.

1. FRONT DOORS

The doors to the crypt have been forced open. A search and a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a long black raven feather wedged into some rocks by the door.

2. ENTRY HALL

This short hallway contains four leering gargoyles on stone pedestals. Below each gargoyle is an inscription demanding that those who enter do so with reverence and respect. One of pedestals contains a secret compartment (DC 16 Wisdom [Perception] check to notice) that holds a brass key that unlocks the door into area 12. A blade trap at the end of the hall has been sprung recently. A great deal of blood and feathers are found on and near the blade, which must be climbed over to reach area 3.

3. HALL OF REMEMBRANCE

This wide hall is filled with tapestries and portraits that depict the Helari family and their exploits. Most are tattered and ruined, though a few still portray a stern looking human or tell the tale of an accomplishment. Unlit torches line the wall. A pit trap has been recently triggered by the ravenfolk. Twenty feet below the floor, impaled on wooden spikes, are two dead **ravenfolk scouts** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 322). They carry their normal equipment plus each wears an explorer's pack. Having been awakened by the ravenfolk, a pair of former Helari family members buried in areas 4 and 5 stalk the hall.

4. GAMRIN'S REST

This tomb contains the remains of Gamrin Helari (**dread mummy**, see below, use max hit points). The undead creature was recently disturbed by the ravenfolk, and it has awakened angry and mad. Gamrin is the only creature in the crypt whose mind is intact enough to recall what happened. Use Gamrin to reveal history of the Helari family and its fate as you see fit. Gamrin invariably attacks the PCs, likely joining his sister Sinil in the effort.

5. SINIL'S REST

Sinil Helari's (**dread mummy**, see below, use max hit points) remains were buried in this tomb. She now wanders area 3 after awakening to the ravenfolk's presence. She is too mad to speak with.

6 THE FOURTEEN TOMBS

The fourteen small tombs are filled with the remains of the Helari family. In addition to the following encounters, fill the tombs with traps and horrors as you like:

- A cloud of poisonous gas expands out from the opened tomb. PCs caught in the cloud must succeed a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one hour. The poison ruins water and food carried by anyone caught in the cloud.
- The tomb roils with fifteen shadows. Opening the tomb unleashes the undead, who flee towards the exit. PCs standing within 10 feet of the door must succeed a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be carried away by the mass of undead spirits. PCs who are carried away suffer 1d6 bludgeoning damage for each 5 feet the shadows move. A PC may repeat the save at the beginning of each of their turns to escape the churning ball. The shadows flee as best they can.

7. UNDISTURBED MOURNING CHAMBER

This large room contains a number of decrepit sofas and chairs, and it bears evidence of having once been lived in by a number of humanoids. The secret door, spotted by a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check, that opens into area 9 is closed.

8. DISTURBED MOURNING CHAMBER

This chamber is similar to area 7, but it has been tossed by the ravenfolk. The secret door to area 9 is open. The demon in area 9 may investigate if the PCs rummage loudly through the chamber.

9. INNER SANCTUM

This chamber served as the private quarters of Sianis Helari. It is now occupied by a **psoglav demon** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 79) that has driven the ravenfolk into area 10. On an initiative 20, the demon uses its action during the second round of combat to summon a **corrupting ooze** (*Tome of Beasts*, p.311) that defends the demon until death. There is a lot of evidence of demonic magic being performed in this chamber. Infernal sigils mark the floors, and skulls lie on the floor, scattered from their placement in evil ritual circles. Dozens of Hagalaz runes have been inscribed on the walls; each with some minor variation in form. A secret door, DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) to spot, leads to the catacomb below.

10. THE RAVENFOLK BARRICADE

The door to this secret chamber is partly open, but access to the room is barred by stone slabs pushed in place by the panicked ravenfolk hiding inside—it can be forced open by a Strength (Athletics) check of 20. Trapped by the demon, a **ravenfolk doom croaker**, three **ravenfolk scouts**, and a **ravenfolk warrior** (*Tome of Beasts*, pp.322-324) are desperate to escape. The leader (the doom croaker) likely lies to the party in an attempt to get them to climb into the catacomb under the crypt and retrieve the rune for him. He offers a platinum feather (700 gp value) as a reward for obtaining the rune. The ravenfolk feign greater injuries than they have sustained, but they helpfully point out the secret door in area 9. They will make pretenses to leave, but ultimately, they try to ambush the party in area 3 as the party attempts to leave. The ravenfolk defend themselves if attacked, but they prefer to bargain and set lay their ambush.



11. RITUAL SUPPLIES

Sianis kept a variety of unholy magic components in this chamber.

Treasure: Most components have turned to dust over time, but a pouch of powered ruby (500 gp value) is found with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check.

12, 13. HELARI VAULTS

The door into area 12 is locked. The lock requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check to pick or DC 20 Strength check to force open. The chambers beyond contain the wealth of the Helari family, and the coffin of Sianis. The coffin is empty, the satin interior shows deep blackened claw marks. The coffin radiates evil, and any creature who touches it is cursed with nightmares during their next long rest. The dreams feature a laughing demon etching runes onto an ash colored mountain.

Treasure: A total of 1100 gp sits in boxes and chests throughout the vaults. A +2 *shield* with the Helari Crest is mounted on the wall in area 13. Inscribed on the coffin on Sianis is the **Variant Hagalaz Rune** (See below). The rune can be copied or etched.

DREAD MUMMY

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d12 + 18)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+4)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +2

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mummy can use its Dreadful Glare and makes one attack with its rotting fist.

Rotting Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with mummy rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the remove curse spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare. The mummy targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the mummy, it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw

against this magic or become frightened until the end of the mummy's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of all mummies (but not mummy lords) for the next 24 hours.

Magical Item

Rune casters are rare even in Midgard, those who exist today have access to rare artifacts created by powerful mages of the past (See *Deep Magic: Rune Magic* for more details).

VARIANT HAGALAZ RUNE

Wondrous item (rune stone), rare

When studied for one uninterrupted hour, the rune allows the rune master to learn the following 9th level rune mastery power instead of the normal one:

Rune Mastery Power (9th level): When sketched on the ground under an open sky, Hagalaz sends out a *gust of wind* in all four cardinal directions centered on the rune. You may choose any number of creatures to be unaffected by this effect. Sketching the rune takes 4 rounds, and it is triggered at a time of your choosing. The wind lasts while you concentrate, for up to 2 minutes.

The rune loses its magic and crumbles into small pieces once it has been studied.



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