

FOR 4 PCS OF 3RD LEVEL

SPELLDRINKERS CAVERN



A 5E WARLOCK MIDGARD ADVENTURE
BY JAMES J. HAECK

SPELLDRINKER'S CAVERN

"I can't believe that Segismonde would do such a thing. He had a haunted look about him, yes, but he was such a kind man. Even a hero in the wars against Morgau's bloodsuckers, I hear. I was happy when he started teaching magic to our little ones. Even happier when he took the apprentices to his hermitage in the hills, 'cause it kept their spells from dashing all the cupboards and dishes. Now I don't know what to think. Please save them... please save my Dahlia."

Background and Adventure Hook

In the hills north of Varshava in the Electoral Kingdom of Krakova, once lived a hero named Segismonde. He was a wizard and a vampire hunter of great renown in olden days, but, by the time he retired to his hermitage in the Krakovan hills, he was just Old Segismonde. Some still remembered his heroics and begged the old wizard to teach their children in the arcane arts.

Segismonde took eight apprentices, all between the ages of 13 and 20, and trained them well for two years—until one evening when none of his pupils returned home to their parents in Varshava. They fear the worst and have hired a group of adventurers to seek out Segismonde's cave and save their children.

Though all the parents suspect that Segismonde has abducted their children, the truth is that one apprentice, an ambitious boy of sixteen years named Anastoz, attacked his teacher. He stole one of Segismonde's forbidden artifacts, and its evil magic transformed him into a **spelldrinker**.

The Spelldrinker

Spelldrinkers are lesser vampires that feed on arcane energy. Anastoz, the one living in this cave, was an apprentice wizard overpowered by the magic within a cursed Morgau *ring of spell storing*. If the ring is taken from him and cleansed by a *remove curse* spell, it can once again be used as a *ring of spell storing*. Otherwise, any creature that attunes to the ring is subjected to the magic draining effect of the spelldrinker's bite attack each round it wears the ring.

A spelldrinker's skin takes on the pallor of death and fits tightly to its bones, even when gorged on arcane energy. A well-fed spelldrinker's veins glow blue, as if its body were covered in tiny ley lines, while a starved spelldrinker's eyes take on a hungry, crimson hue.

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MIDGARD

WARLOCK

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SPELLDRINKER

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Skills Perception +1, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Magic Resistance. The spelldrinker has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the spelldrinker has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Spider Climb. The spelldrinker can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spelldrinker makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, the spelldrinker can choose to grapple it (escape DC 13) instead of dealing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature or one creature that has been grappled by the spelldrinker, is incapacitated, or is restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a spellcaster, it loses one spell slot

of its highest level. The spelldrinker regains hit points equal to $5 \times$ the level of the spell slot consumed. If the target has no spell slots or has no spell slots remaining, it takes an additional 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, it dies.

If a creature killed in this way can cast spells, its corpse transforms into a spelldrinker in 1d4 days unless cured by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. If the creature cannot cast spells, it instead becomes a ghoul in 1d4 days.



Areas of the Cave

Except for the mouth of the cave, all areas are pitch black.

1A. CAVERN'S MOUTH

Chill mist billows out of the mouth of the cave, as if the earth itself is breathing silver steam. Inside is a tall cavern—so tall that its ceiling is enveloped in darkness. The cave continues into darkness to the northeast, and a stone door sits in an alcove just north of the entrance.

Two **ghouls** hang like bats on the ceiling of this chamber. To the northeast is a 30-foot precipice that leads to area 1b. It is rough and can be climbed with a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

1B. CAVERN'S DEPTHS

A stepladder leans against a rocky ledge in the east. At the top of the ledge is a wooden door, which is slightly ajar. At the foot of the ladder is a motionless body. Beyond it, the cave winds even farther northward.

The corpse is the body of Segismonde, the retired wizard. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals two puncture wounds in his skull. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that these puncture wounds are remarkably similar to vampire bites.

If the PCs leave this area and return to it, they find that Segismonde's corpse is gone. He has risen as a **spelldrinker** and hangs on the ceiling of this chamber, waiting to ambush a victim.

1C. MAGE'S RETREAT

A bedroll stained with blood, potions spilled on the floor, spellbooks ripped to shreds—all signs that a fight took place in this wizard's quarters. A tapestry of a wizard battling a vampire hangs on the wall.

This is where Segismonde was attacked by the spelldrinker Anastoz. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to search the room reveals an *oil of slipperiness*.

Secret. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a small bulge in the tapestry where a golden bolt pierces the shoulder of the vampire. This bulge is the small knob on a hidden door behind the tapestry. It opens into Area 5c and automatically closes after 6 seconds.

2. GROTTO

The quiet dripping of water is punctuated by the faint sound of ragged breathing from somewhere in this room.

Two of the surviving apprentices, Kline and Rowan, both young boys, are huddled behind a stalagmite here. They are both **commoners** that know 1 cantrip each. They know that Segismonde is dead, and that he was killed by "a pale shadow that ate his head."

3A. HALLWAY

The door between Area 1a and 3a is locked and can be picked with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools. Beyond it is a stone hallway leading into the stronghold. A hidden arrow slit in the east wall can be spotted with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

3B. STRONGHOLD

An ancient hall, its stones decorated with looping elvish script, stretches deep into the hill. Stone pillars decorated with fanged serpents line the hall. Each pillar is inlaid with a large emerald.

This hall is forbidden to the apprentices. Any creature that touches a pillar awakens the snakes on the pillar, creating a **swarm of snakes** that attacks the nearest creature on each turn. This swarm is made of constructs instead of beasts and is immune to poison and psychic damage. The emerald in each pillar is worth 50 gp.

3C. ARCHER'S REDOUBT

This hall has three arrow slits that look into areas 1a and 3a. The young apprentice Dahlia is cowering here. She was with Anastoz when he put on the ring and transformed into a spelldrinker, but she managed to run away and hide. She is a **commoner** that knows 1 cantrip.

3D. STORAGE

This storage closet contains 3d6 days' preserved rations.

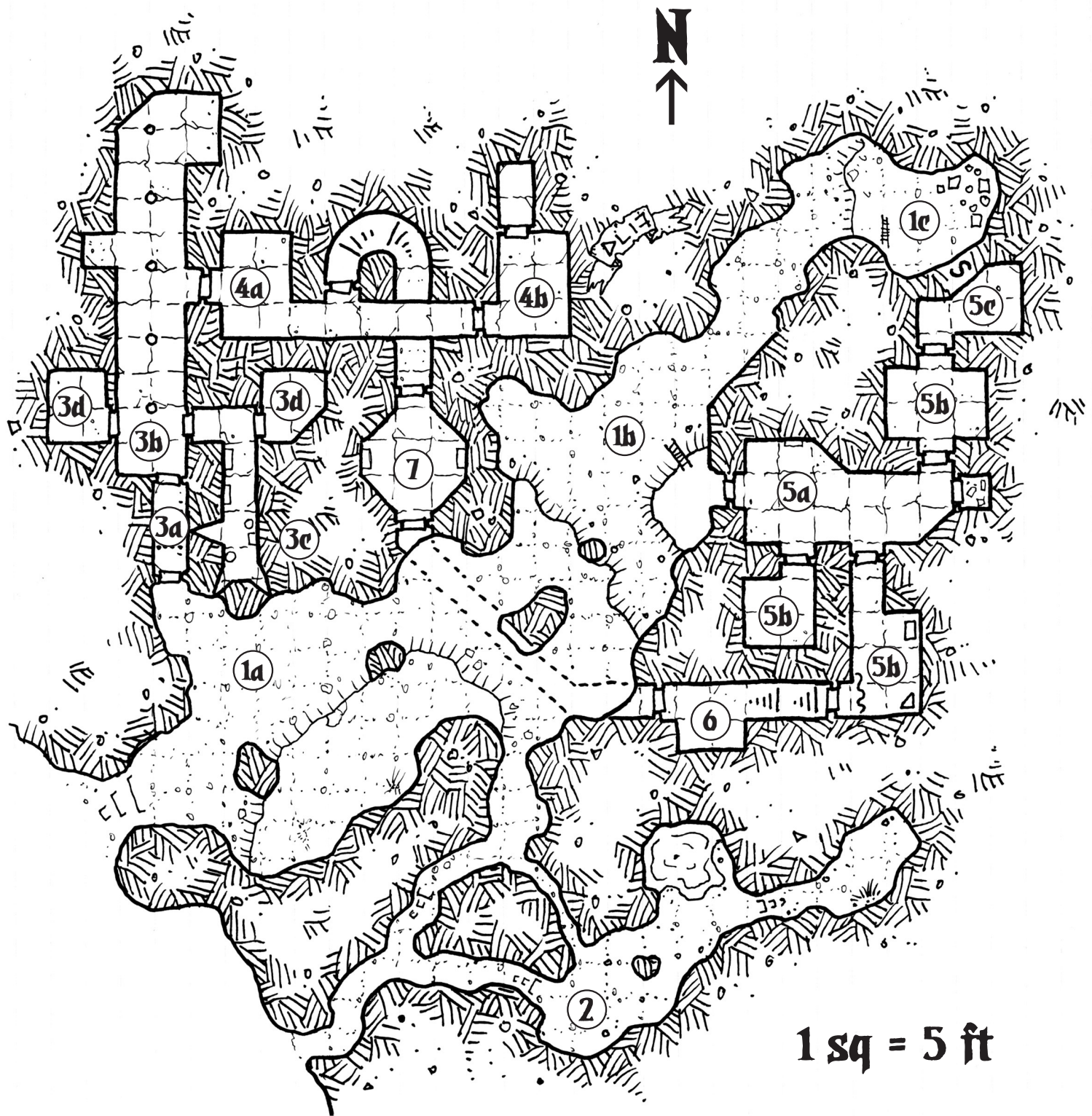
4A. ARMORY CORRIDOR

Four suits of elven armor line the wall in the west of this chamber. They are **animated armor** that attack any living creature not of elven descent within this room. If defeated, these suits become *mithral breastplates*.

4B. ARMORY

The armory is filled with longswords and magic wands. Most of these wands are mere arcane foci, but one is a *+1 wand of the war mage*.

An elfmarked named Vylar, one of Segismonde's older and more promising apprentices, cowers in a closet north of this room. He saw Anastoz kill Segismonde and knows that Segismonde will rise as an undead soon. He hasn't had the courage to venture out.



5A. LECTURE HALL

Wooden desks lie smashed and strewn about this otherwise well-kept hall. Snapped staves and crushed inkwells litter the floor.

The corpse of a half-orc apprentice named Goru is stuffed into the closet in the east. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that if his corpse is not destroyed, he will rise as a **ghoul** in 1 hour.

5B. STUDY CHAMBERS

These chambers were used for spellcasting duels, alchemy, and private study. Each contains the tortured **specter** of an apprentice murdered by a satiated Anastoz.

5C. SEGISMONDE'S QUARTERS

Segismonde's private quarters are sparse with only a bed and a warm blanket. A tapestry of a wizard fighting a vampire hangs on the northwest wall.

Secret. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a small bulge in the tapestry where a golden bolt pierces the shoulder of the vampire. This bulge is the small knob on a hidden door behind the tapestry. It opens into area 5c and automatically closes after 6 seconds.

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6. UNDERPASS

This long hall passes beneath the cave system. Permanent *dancing lights* illuminate the passage.

7. SANCTUM

A faintly glowing arcane circle is drawn in the middle of this chamber. In its center, a pale, emaciated humanoid sits in meditation.

Anastoz remains here most of the day, saving his strength until he needs to feed, unless he hears a loud noise in the cavern above. He is waiting for Segismonde to transform into a spelldrinker, so they can hunt together.

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