

DONUM VITAE



A faded and tattered journal recovered from the tomb of the Tempest Mage alluded to The Donum Vitae, a tome containing a ritual capable of reversing the curse of undeath. A powerful and influential family in Mulmaster has a strong interest in magic of this type. This adventure follows the events of CCC-CIC-04 Best Friends Forever. This is an Adventurers League Approved adventure provided through the Con Created Content Program and sponsored by Cold Iron Conventions and Draxstar Games.

A 4-hour adventure for 5th-10th level characters

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Version 4



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.

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Introduction

Welcome to *CCC-CIC-05 Donum Vitae*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and Con Created Content Program.

This adventure is designed for 5th through 10th-level characters and is optimized for five 8th-level characters.

Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

The adventure takes place in the Earthspur Mountains southeast of Mulmaster and then travels abroad, in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting.

The D&D Adventurers League

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that continue their story.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a DCI number. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the

storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

www.dndadventurersleague.org

Preparing the Adventure

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

Before Play at the Table

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check

- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters.**

Players with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now. Alternatively, they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting the Adventure

Throughout this adventure, sidebars provide information to assist you in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups and characters of higher or lower levels than the adventure is optimized for. This is typically used exclusively for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 8th-level characters.** 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 less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

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.

Running the Adventure

As the Dungeon Master of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. Doing so is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating one. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.
- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum

when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly

- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. Doing so helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide™* has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

Downtime and Lifestyle

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the D&D basic rules or the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends

the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

Spellcasting Services

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

Acolyte Background

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Spellcasting Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds (1st level)</i>	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing (2nd level)</i>	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

Character Disease, Death, and Recovery

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or are killed. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the *D&D Basic Rules*).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

Death

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other

characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all experience and rewards from that session (both those earned prior to and after death during that session) and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

Background

"There are no facts, only interpretations."

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Nearly a half a millennia ago, when Mulmaster was a growing fortress at the end of the North Road overlooking the River Lis, a follower of the Sorcerer-King Nesker retired into the Earthspur Mountains to build a tower and further his studies. His name is lost to time, he is now known only as the Tempest Mage after the extreme weather surrounding the peak that he made his home. His servants constructed a small village below, which would come to be known as Windy Valley and remains today.

The Tempest Mage studied a wide variety of magic from conjuration, constructs, to domain over life and death, but would eventually succumb to age and passed from memory. While Windy Valley remains due to the presence of a small mine operated by the Von Finklestein family, the Tower and surrounding buildings are no longer regularly inhabited. Occasional bandits or goblin tribes might lair there, but the story of the Tempest Mage also attracts young adventurers from

Mulmaster who seek to test their mettle in the extensive out buildings, crypts, and tunnels of the complex.

In the recent past, interest and activity in the long-forgotten tower has increased. While rescuing Jalie, the baker of Windy Valley, adventurers discovered the Clockwork Laboratory and Desolate Undercroft. A faded and tattered journal recovered from the tomb of the Tempest Mage alluded to what he called The Donum Vitae, a collection of knowledge dating back to the Age of Thunder, containing a number of magic rituals that could create, alter or destroy life itself.

The Donum Vitae is a collection of ten platinum disks, written in the forgotten hieroglyphs of the Sarrukh, the reptilian race of humanoids believed to be one of the progenitors of Faerun.

The Von Finklesteins have a strong interest in magic of this type. Their daughter, Avigeja (Abby), a girl of nine summers, was recently turned by a vampire (CCC-CIC-04 *Best Friends Forever*). Her fathers, Milben and Perless, have, at great expense, put out feelers for anything that could possibly remove this affliction from their little girl.

When news of the Donum Vitae reached them they immediately sought any and all lore surrounding it. Once they found a solid lead they reached out to a trusted friend who recommended adventurers with the skills needed to recover the disks.

The Donum Vitae's is rumored to be guarded by a creature of immense power, Khamseen. Clues and bits of lore cobbled together from dust tomes and bard's tales alluded that Khamseen was tasked by Mystra, as the gatekeeper to the celestial stairway located at Castle Kilgrave in Cormyr which was obliterated in Mystra's ill-fated attack on Helm during the Time of Troubles.

The ruins of Castle Kilgrave are in northern Cormyr, in the foothills of the Storm Horn Mountains at the south end of Gnoll Pass. It's on the west side of the pass, opposite Castle Crag, near the intersection of the Moonsea

Ride and the Dragon Trail, some 700 miles southwest of Mulmaster.

The Major Players

Khamseen

Khamseen is a planetar who has lost its faith in mortals. Repeatedly disappointed by their decisions and acts of depravity, Khamseen no longer feels the need to protect them, for they are their own worst enemy.

Some 300 years ago, Khamseen decided to give mortals one last chance. He agreed to assist a human, Taa Naelor, in his pursuit of knowledge. The goal, supposedly, was the betterment of all mortals, ushering them to a higher understanding; moving past the petty squabbles and conflicts that plagued them.

Like all mortals, Taa Naelor succumbed to the corruption of power and betrayed his honorable goal and Khamseen's trust. Twisting the gift graciously bestowed upon him by Khamseen, this ungrateful mortal dared tried to deceive him in an attempt to pervert the power of the Donum Vitae.

For Khamseen this was the last straw. It became clear to him that mortals are not capable of moving beyond their insignificance and becoming a substantial part of the grand tapestry. Disappointed, angry, and frustrated, Khamseen retreated from the mortal plane to ponder and seethe.

Taa Naelor

Taa Naelor is a devote follower of Azuth, the Lord of Spells. Taa believed that the key to uniting all beings of Toril was hidden in magic. To this end, he feverishly collected and studied the arcane.

Some 300 years ago he learned of the Donum Vitae and sought the secrets within. His search led him to Khamseen, a powerful angel entrusted with the disks. Taa struck a deal with Khamseen, he would be granted access to the Donum Vitae for a period of fifty years. In return he would share what he

learned with anyone and everyone willing to learn and use the ancient magic for good.

As the years past Taa came to the terrifying realization that he did not have enough time to complete his mastery of the Donum Vitae. Dread overcame him; he needed more time but Khamseen would not amend the contract. What was a wizard to do?

Taa became desperate; in his panic he hatched a plan to secret the disks away in the Halls of Dust, a repository for arcane knowledge and temple to Azuth. He had every intention to uphold his end of the bargain when he had mastered it; he just needed more time.

The Von Finklestein Family

The Von Finklestein family holds sway over all of the iron mined in and around Windy Valley, and a significant portion of Mulmaster's total iron. The recent rebuilding efforts have greatly increased the family's coffers and influence.

A few months ago, the heiress to the family fortune, Abby, was turned into a vampire. Her fathers, Milben and Perless, have taken measures to keep this fact hidden from those who would use this tragedy to displace the Von Finklesteins.

The family has quietly put out feelers looking for anything that remove the curse of undeath from their little girl. When news of the Donum Vitae reaches them, they sent for the same adventurers who spared Abby to retrieve it.

The Conflict: Khamseen vs. Taa Naelor

When Khamseen learned of Taa's plans, it pushed him over the edge. It was all the proof he needed to convince himself that he was right to distrust mortals. Khamseen launched a preemptive strike into the Halls of Dust. While he was able to recover three disks of the Donum Vitae, the temple wards were strong enough to protect the temple, Taa, and the remaining seven disks from the angel's wrath.

While Khamseen is unable to penetrate the Halls of Dust's defenses completely, he is ever vigilant and has been able to keep Taa from ever stepping foot outside the temple turned prison.

Taa has continued to study and gain a rudimentary understanding of some of the Donum Vitae's magic but without the missing disks his translation and understanding is flawed. He has been able to extend his life by the use of a more powerful version of the *clone* spell. He needs the other disks to fully master the Donum Vitae.

Each new generation of clones has a reduced lifespan. At this point, a new batch is barely incubated before the previous one expires. Once again desperation grips him. He is running out of time.

Recent Events

A few months ago, a vampire "gifted" Abby, a girl of nine summers, with undeath. Her fathers, Milben and Perless Von Finklestein have spent a large sum of coin and called in many favors seeking hints, rumors and/or fantastical bard stories related to finding a cure for their little girls "condition." They have investigated any and all leads, no matter how vague and remote.

The recent discovery of the Tempest Mage's hidden laboratory and the knowledge within has provided the most exciting lead: the Donum Vitae, a series of ten disks rumored to contain magic capable of restoring their little princess back to life.

Skilled at navigating the dangerous world of politics and nobility in Mulmaster, the Von Finklesteins know that they must act quickly or risk losing this prize. To this end, they issued summons to the individuals who not only spared Abby's life but also exhibited the discretion to keep what they saw in the family crypt to themselves. While awaiting the arrival of the adventurers the family has arranged for a Harper agent to teleport the party to Cormyr as soon as they are ready.

Overview

This adventure takes place in six parts:

Part One. The characters are recruited by the Von Finklesteins in Mulmaster, with the goal of recovering the Donum Vitae to save their daughter.

Part Two. The party leaves Mulmaster and makes their way to the ruins of Castle Kilgrave at the south end of Gnoll Pass. The party may use the information provided by the Von Finklesteins to find the entrance to the celestial stairway and once there, convince the planetar to assist them in their quest to recover the ancient item.

Part Three. Following the instructions given to them by Khamseen the party must navigate their way past the security of the Halls of Dust.

Part Four. Having triumphed over the hazardous traps and puzzles the party now faces Taa Naelor.

Part Five. The adventurers make their way back to Khamseen and must either accept a partial victory or face the might of the fallen angel.

Part Six. With the Donum Vitae in hand the party must now decide what to do with it.

Do You Want to Know More?

This adventure is the fifth adventure in Windy Valley and the second to chronicle the Von Finklestein family. The events here follow those of *CCC-CIC-04 Best Friends Forever*, also by Rob Silva which premiered at Milwaukee Summer Revel 2017. You can learn about this and other Cold Iron Conventions shows in Milwaukee & Chicago by going to <http://www.coldironconventions.com/>. All of these adventurers can be purchased at <http://www.dmsguild.com/>.

The art in this series has been drawn by artists Joe Abboreno and Ben Siekert and has been sponsored by the generous support of Draxtar Games. You can learn more about Draxstar by visiting <http://draxtargames.com/>.

Adventure Hook

The adventure begins with the adventurers in Mulmaster. Their reason for being there may vary:

Friend of the Family. Any character that has played CCC-CIC-04 *Best Friends Forever* and earned the **Gratitude of the Von Finklestein Family** reward, receives a sealed scroll bearing the Von Finklestein crest, a pick crossed with a shovel over a stack of ingots. The missive requests their assistance once again. (Player Handout 1)

Enemy of the Family. Any character that has played CCC-CIC-04 *Best Friends Forever* but did NOT earn the **Gratitude of the Von Finklestein Family** reward is approached by an acolyte of Kelemvor in Mulmaster sponsored by the Obyamva family, a business rival of the Von Finklesteins. They are hired to infiltrate the Von Finklestein's expedition and report back any information that can be used against them. The church of Kelemvor cannot tolerate those who might be harboring undead.

Unknown to the Family. Any character that has not played CCC-CIC-04 *Best Friends Forever* has been referred to the family by a high-ranking member of their faction or other contact. They also receive (Player Handout 1).

PART ONE: THE HOOK

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

Story Beats: The characters find out what their mission is and have a motivation to complete it, whether they support the Von Finklestein family or the Church of Kelemvor.

As this adventure begins, ask the characters their current location in the Moonsea and adjust the description of the follow to fit the setting.

Wherever the character is, no matter the difficulty, a messenger approaches them and hands them a scroll bearing the seal of the Von Finklestein family or the Church of Kelemvor (as appropriate).

If the character played *CCC-CIC-04 Best Friends Forever* and earned the **Gratitude of the Von Finklestein Family** give them (Player Handout 1).

If they did not earn the **Gratitude of the Von Finklestein Family** give them (Player Handout 2). These characters play through the Enemies of the Von Kinklesteins section first before moving on to The Job.

If the character has not played *CCC-CIC-04 Best Friends Forever* give them (Player Handout 1).

Enemies of the Von Finklesteins

Characters that have played *CCC-CIC-04 Best Friends Forever* but did not receive **The Gratitude of the Von Finklestein Family** reward are assumed to be in Mulmaster for whatever reason of their own when they are approached by an acolyte of Kelemvor.

As you sit at an inn pondering your next adventure a human woman wearing armor adorned with a skeletal arm holding balanced scales, sits at your table.

“Good citizen, The Judge of the Damned is in need of your assistance.”

She looks around to make sure no uninvited ears are listening.

“I understand that you have had dealings with a certain family in Mulmaster who are protecting an abomination, perverting the natural order of life.”

The acolyte of Kelemvor, Zoea Espiga, has heard reports that the Von Finklestein family is harboring some sort of undead creature and that the character in question is opposed to such an action. The church wishes to hire the character to obtain proof that this is true.

To this end, the church has acquired a missive summoning an adventurer to the Von Finklestein estate for some mysterious job. The church believes this job is related to the undead creature in question. The church of Kelemvor, while strong in Phlan, doesn't have the same kind of authority in Mulmaster and so the character will need to acquire significant proof of the Von Finklestein's wrong doing.

The church will offer 500 gp to each character and will provide a cover story (along with the mundane gear to sell it).

Unfortunately, the cover identity provided isn't perfect. While the race and sex match, the character will have to pretend to be a class opposite of their own (see chart below).

Character's Actual Class	Cover Class
Barbarian	Wizard
Bard	Monk
Cleric	Ranger
Druid	Warlock
Fighter	Sorcerer
Monk	Bard
Paladin	Rogue
Ranger	Cleric
Rogue	Paladin
Sorcerer	Fighter
Warlock	Druid
Wizard	Barbarian

Once the character accepts, they can follow the same instructions as the other characters to meet with the Von Finklesteins. Neither Milben, nor Perless will suspect the disguised characters as long as the character makes an effort to maintain their cover.

Friends of the Von Finklesteins

The scroll (Player Handout 1) is a missive from Milben and Perless, requesting the character's immediate assistance. The note is purposely vague, only hinting at the nature of the help needed.

When the character is ready they must bleed on the scroll then burn it. This will teleport them to the Von Finklestein family manor outside of Mulmaster. A successful DC 15 check Intelligence (Arcana) intuits that the scroll is arcane in nature and is the focus of a teleportation ritual that anyone can use, regardless of their class.

The greeting the character receives depends on their previous actions.

Read or paraphrase the following for characters that have previously played CCC-CIC-04 *Best Friends Forever* and received Player Handout 1.

As the flames consume the parchment, the world around you bends and swirls in the familiar effects of a teleportation spell. Reality is snapped back into focus by a shriek and a bone crushing hug.

"Abby, is that how a lady greets a guest?" With a frown Abby puts you down, smooths her hair, and politely curtsies "It's a pleasure to see you again <character name>. May I provide you with some refreshments?" Milben smiles at this dismissing his daughter with an explanation that the grown-ups have business to discuss.

Read or paraphrase the following for characters who only received Player Handout 1 but have not played CCC-CIC-04.

As the flames consume the parchment, the world around you bends and swirls in the familiar effects of a teleportation spell. Reality is snapped back into focus.

"Greetings, I am Lord Milben Von Finklestein and this is my husband, Perless. We have need of people of your skills and have heard very good things about both your skill and discretion. "

The Job

The Von Finklesteins have been searching for something that can cure Abby of her vampirism.

"Recently a journal recovered from the Tempest Mage's Tower has been deciphered. It alluded to something called Donum Vitae, a collection of magical rituals that hold sway over life and death."

Milben is obviously nervous but seems to compose himself when Perless places a hand on his shoulder.

"The journal has quite the past. It seems many groups have been interested in its secrets throughout time. The best we can tell, the Donum Vitae ended up in the celestial nexus guarded by an agent of Mystra. The nexus is located at the entrance to the celestial stairway located at Castle Kilgrave in Cormyr, which was destroyed when The Mother of All Magic battled Helm during the Time of Troubles. Unfortunately, the way into the Stairway has been lost to time or it was until a week ago." A smile spreads across his face.

"We have discovered a way to make the celestial stairway visible to mortals." He hands the characters a small jar containing a blue-ish paste.

"When in the ruins of Castle Kilgrave, apply this ointment to your eyes. Find the celestial stairway, climb to the nexus and recover the Donum Vitae from its guardian by whatever means necessary. We know this will not be easy but we have faith in your abilities."

The Von Finklesteins will offer to pay the characters 300gp each. With a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check they will agree to pay up to 750gp each. Characters with the **Gratitude of the Von Finklestein Family** have advantage on this check.

Q & A

Milben and Perless will answer any questions the character may have to the best of their ability. They are being perfectly honest and truly only want the Donum Vitae to reverse the horrible affliction suffered by their daughter.

Q: What is the Donum Vitae?

A: It is a collection of spells and rituals dating back to the Age of Thunder. A time before the races that we know walked Toril.

Q: So, it's a book?

A: That is unclear, the journal referred to a collection of knowledge. We don't know what form it is in.

Q: Why the rush?

A: Besides wanting our little girl back to normal as soon as we can, if we heard the discovery of such powerful magic undoubtedly other have too. We need to get to it before they do.

Q: Who else would be interested in the Donum Vitae?

A: Who wouldn't be interested in the power to control life and death?

Q: What do you plan to do with the Donum Vitae after you cure Abby?

A: We will protect the knowledge within.

Inside Information

Players that played CCC-CIC-04 *Best Friends Forever* know that the family secretly worships Mystra, the goddess of magic and have a hidden library/temple in their family crypt. The worship of Mystra is illegal in Mulmaster and there would be severe consequences for the Von Finklesteins if they were exposed.

Q: What is a celestial Stairway?

A: A Celestial Stairway is a type of pathway linking the realms with the planes. A stairway led to a nexus, which led to the homes of all the gods. They were used by gods to traverse from the Realms to their home planes. The stairways, invisible to ordinary people, could only be seen properly by gods.

Development

When the adventures who agreed to undertake this task are ready, the Von Finklesteins have them teleported to the intersection of the Moonsea Ride and the Dragon Trail, in Cormyr, some 700 miles southwest of Mulmaster by Harper Agent. The unnamed Harper wishes them well and immediately teleports away.

PART TWO: STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

Story Beats: The characters travel briefly to Cormyr, and then to the celestial nexus where they meet with Khamseen, only to learn that he no longer has what they seek. At this point, the characters should not suspect the angel of duplicity.

The encounter begins with the party having been teleported a few miles south of the ruins of Castle Kilgrave.

Once in the ruins of Castle Kilgrave, at least one character must apply the ointment to their eyes. When applied a character must succeed in a DC 8 Constitution saving throw or be struck blind. There is enough ointment for six applications. Even if blinded, a character can still see the entrance to the Celestial stairway, but they can see nothing else. This effect is permanent short of healing magic which Khamseen will provide if the negotiation is successful.

Once successfully applied, the entry way to the stairway is revealed: a glowing ethereal archway above which is written in words that all can read as if it were their native language. *“Unburden you soul by speaking the truth. Only then may you enter.”*

The characters are required to admit aloud a regret, secret or flaw that is very personal, such that everyone can hear it. As long as the character is truthful the gate to the stairway appears and opens for them and them alone.

If a character is having trouble coming up with something recommend they use their character Flaw picked at character creation as inspiration.

The celestial stairway appears to constantly change shape: a long wooden spiral staircase, a marble ladder, a pathway of amber and pearl, or stranger forms that lead to a set of double doors of white radiating a pure light.

Once through the doors the characters enter the nexus.

“The nexus appears to be a platform made of cloud floating in an endless void. Vertigo assaults you. You lose all sense of direction and orientation. At the far end of the platform is another set of stairs leading up into the nothingness.”

As they enter a muscular and hairless humanoid creature with opalescent green skin and white-feathered wings lands between the party and the far stairway. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) skill check reveals this to be a planetar. Planetars are creatures of good that legends say serve as the weapons of the gods they serve; a tangible representation of the deities’ holy might.

The creature speaks with a voice that booms in the vast emptiness of the nexus.

“Who dares enter the nexus of the gods? Turn and leave before thy suffer their divine wrath!”

As long as the characters do not do anything violent or aggressive, Khamseen will allow the party to address him and state their case.

Khamseen has lost his way and his alignment has drifted closer to Chaotic. He no longer feels that mortals deserve consideration or protection. As such, he is happy to use mortals as tools against evil, not caring what happens to them as long as greater evil is defeated.

If the party mentions that they seek the Donum Vitae, a character making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check to notices Khamseen scowls and the character gets the feeling that the mention of the Donum Vitae has struck a nerve.

As the party attempts to persuade Khamseen to give them the Donum Vitae a plan solidifies, a plan to use the party to exact his revenge on Taa.



Khamseen will "reluctantly" admit that a mortal took advantage of his kindness and stole the Donum Vitae. He has been unable to pursue the thief due to the magical wards in place around the thief's lair and his reluctance to leave the celestial stairway unguarded.

Everything he says is the truth. He is not being deceitful if checked. He is very careful to not venture into the murky water of lies and untruths, even if his motivation for telling his story has a selfish motivation.

"Mortals do not change. Once again you come seeking knowledge; claiming that this desire is not for power but for philanthropic reasons. Tell me, why should I help you? What makes you different than the last mortal who came asking and betrayed my trust?"

Allow the characters to plead their case asking for Charisma (Persuasion) or (Deception) checks as necessary. Note that as

a planetar, Khamseen automatically knows if someone is lying to him.

Regardless of their success or failure, Khamseen will feign thoughtful reflection while the characters speak and allow himself to be "swayed" by their conviction and altruistic motives.

"I wish I could grant you this request but the knowledge you seek was stolen by a follower of Azuth, Taa Naelor. The disks are incomplete."

Khamseen will coax the characters along, trying to get them to offer to recover the Donum Vitae. He will initially try to talk them out of it, citing the danger but eventually be "swayed" by their arguments, offering to teleport the party to the entrance of the Hall of Dust.

"Long ago I buried the entrance to the Halls of Dust to protect this realm from its evil." He will produce a fist sized yellow gem, handing it to the party. "Once there, break this and an ally will open the path to you.

I cannot enter with you for this place of evil is warded against me. You must seek out this necromancer and return the disks he has stolen. I await you back in the nexus and will decipher the texts and the grant you the knowledge you seek when you return.

I leave you with one final warning, beware of this Taa Naelor, for he is a crafty and wily foe."

When the characters are ready, Khamseen teleports the characters to the Halls of Dust and then returns to the nexus.

PART THREE: GET OFF MY LAWN

Estimated Duration: 60-75 minutes

Story Beats: The characters work their way past a number of puzzles meant to frustrate and repel invaders.

A Note on Puzzles

The puzzles presented here are designed for the party (and the players) to work together. Some will require the DM to have a stopwatch as the puzzles are timed.

Khamseen has teleported the party to the entrance of the Halls of Dust in the Plain of Standing Stones in the Anauroch desert and provided the party with a gem of earth elemental control to summon an earth elemental. This elemental will only dig a passage to the Halls of Dust entryway and once done it returns to its home plane.

When the elemental has finished there is a 50-ft tunnel sloping sharply downward that ends at a set of double doors decorated with faded images of a left hand, wreathed in flame pointing skyward. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies this as a symbol of the Lord of Spells, Azuth. Azuth is an exarch in the service of Mystra. Followers of Azuth automatically know this without rolling.

The doors open easily despite their age. Just past the doors is a 20 ft. by 20ft. room. An inscription on the left wall glows with a gentle yellow light, reading *"The High One is not without mercy. Accept this welcome gift to the Halls of Dust. May logic and wit be your guide."* Below the inscription is a shelf holding one potion of lesser restoration per character. In addition to the effects of a normal potion of lesser restoration these potions will also **remove one level of exhaustion**, the potions do not persist beyond this adventure. When taken the character is teleported to the starting platform of puzzle one.

Treasure

The *potions of lesser restoration* lose their power if taken from the Halls of Dust.

The Halls of Dust

General Features

The Hall of Dust has the following general features:

Terrain. The rooms are made of dust covered stone. Unlike the heat in the desert above, the rooms below are cool.

Light. Generally, no light unless otherwise noted.

Smells and Sounds. The rooms are quiet and smell of centuries of dust.

Wards. The Hall of Dust is warded against magic and extraplanar creatures. Divination spells that gather information and conjuration spells that magically transport or summon creatures require a successful ability check using your spellcasting ability. The DC equals 10 + the spell's level. On a success, the spell works normally, if the check fails the spell is wasted and has no affect.

Puzzle One: Follow the Leader

The party is teleported onto a 15x15 ft. platform floating above lava. There are two statues made of dark obsidian also on platforms facing the party. The northern one wields a greatsword (A), the one to the south wields a bow (B).

There are also 2 ghostly outlines on platforms, the west one has a bow and the eastern statue has a greatsword.

The objective of the puzzle is to get the statues to stand on the platforms with their matching images at the same time. The northern statue moves opposite the party, i.e. if the party moves north the statue moves south. The southern statue will follow the movement of the party.

Craved into the northern wall is the phrase "If logic fails, speak the word uncle." if the word is uttered by any of the characters the puzzle is reset. Resetting does come with a cost, every time the puzzle is reset the heat in to room increases forcing everyone to make a DC 10 Constitution save to avoid taking one

level of exhaustion. The DC of the saving throw increases by 1 every time the puzzle is reset.

If either both statues or the party and a statue end up on the same platform with one another, there is a **fiery explosion** that deals 28 (8d6) points of fire damage to everyone in the room (Wiggly and the statues are immune). Characters that succeed in a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw reduce the damage by half. The damage happens every turn that the statues or the party share a platform.

The 1st time the party moves to a new platform a **magma mephit** named Wiggly rises from the lava and verbally harasses the party. He jeers and mocks the moves the characters make, laughing hysterically if they have to reset the puzzle. The puzzle can be solved in 13 moves (Wiggly will gleefully tease the party with that fact). Characters can kill Wiggly if they wish, but they lose a valuable source of information.

Trouble shooting

If the characters are stumped, as the DM you have two options available. Wiggly will offer to sell the party correct moves. His price starts at 75gp (in gems) and increases by 50gp per additional clue they need. Allow the characters to negotiate for a better price. If they succeed on a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check reduce the price of the clue by the total amount of the check. If they fail Wiggly will not budge. If successful provide them with a correct move or other helpful hint.

The second option available is to allow characters to attempt a DC 12 Intelligence ability check. If they ask, each character may attempt one (and only one) Intelligence check. If successful provide them with a correct move.

Once solved, a door opens leading to puzzle two. When a character steps through the doorway they are teleported to the next puzzle.

Puzzle Two: Teamwork

DM Note

A timer is needed for this puzzle. Players should not be allowed to show their handouts to others.

This puzzle is meant to be fun and fast paced, modeled after a party game. The correct scroll solutions are purposely not provided. This puzzle is meant to be stressful and provide the illusion of rapidly approaching death. Taa does not wish to kill anyone, his security is meant to dissuade would be visitors from pressing on. If they players are struggling allow them more time and/or do not reset the doors.

All but the character in the control room (chosen randomly) find themselves alone in a small room facing a stone door with four depressible tiles, in a 2x2 configuration, each with a rune etched into it. The room is rapidly filling with water.

In the control room is a collection of scrolls; the scrolls are etched with a column of 8 runes. In order to solve the puzzles, the character in the booth must describe the runes to the person in the control room. Only one column has all four of the runes from any character's door. The four tiles must be pressed in the order their runes appear from top to bottom within the column on one of the scrolls.

The player in the control room can talk to and hear (but not see) one player at a time. The runes on the door only appear when the character in the room can speak with the control room. Hand the character the door runes when you start the timer.

The players have 45 seconds to communicate with the control room before it switches to a different player. If they fail to solve their puzzle in time or enter the incorrect code, the doors reset and they receive a new combination. Hand the player in the room a new set of runes when their turn comes back around. If a character fails three times the room is completely filled with water and they must hold their breath or use magic to avoid drowning. This will no doubt make describing the runes much harder.

When the code is entered correctly, all communication with that room stops and the character is teleported to Puzzle Three. The magic of the Halls of Dust delays the teleportation so that all characters, (including the dead) arrive at the same moment.

Tricks of the Trade

If your table is having trouble, consider extending the time, or characters that successfully enter their code to teleport to the control room to assist.

Suffocating

A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). When a creature runs out of breath, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying.

Puzzle Three: Eight Queens

The party enters a room which contains an 8x8 checkered floor. Standing against the walls are 8 statues of women of nobility and wealth. Upon investigation the party notices that all 8 of the statues can be moved. They are surprising light and easy to maneuver. All four walls are carved with a coded message. The message is written in some unknown language.

Give the party the letter translation for all the known languages in the party.

Once translated the message reads *“Eight queens ruled eight kingdoms only in peace can we move forward.”*

The eight queens puzzle is based on the classic strategy games problem which is in this case putting eight chess queens on an 8x8 chessboard such that none of them is able to capture any other using the standard chess queen's moves. Thus, a solution requires that no two queens share the same row, column, or diagonal.

Q							
				Q			
							Q
					Q		
		Q					
						Q	
	Q						
			Q				

Once solved the party has earned to right to face Taa Naelor. Proceed to part four.

PART FOUR: TAA NAEOR

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

Story Beats: The characters meet Taa Naelor who explains that he was forced to steal the Donum Vitae and offers the characters an alternative choice. This should not devolve into a fight, yet.

Once a radiant temple of Azuth, The Halls of Dust were a repository for arcane knowledge and a place of worship for anyone who sought knowledge of magic. Its head librarian, Taa Naelor, struck a deal with the planetar Khamseen, to study the most ancient of magic, the Donum Vitae.

The fear of failure pushed Taa to desperation and towards an ill-conceived plan to deceive Khamseen in order to master the ritual contained in the Donum Vitae. His plan only partially succeeded. The wards he prepared did keep the planetar out of The Halls of Dust but he was unable to secure all of the disks, losing three to Khamseen.

While the protections he placed keep the planetar out of the Halls of Dust, they also served to imprison Taa. Khamseen buried the temple and erased all record of it before retreating to the nexus. Over the next three centuries Khamseen has attempted to breach the wards to no avail.

Taa on the other hand has been busy. Knowing that he could not leave, he focused exclusively on two things: protecting The Halls of Dust and extending his life so that he could master the magic on the seven disks he retained.

The study of the Donum Vitae is problematic at best, not only are they written in a long-forgotten language of one of the progenitor races, the disks are not sequenced. Without all ten disks, large portions of the text are missing. Once again time has become the enemy of Taa. He focused his studies on a portion of the Donum Vitae dealing with a superior version of the clone

spell, allowing multiple clones at once but without all the disks he had to improvise. While he was able to learn how to cast the spell a key portion was on a disk stolen back by Khamseen. As such, the spell is flawed.

Each clone's lifespan is shorter than the last. At this point, one is barely matured before the current clone is near death.

When the party enters Taa's study, read or paraphrase the following:

"This 40-ft by 50-ft chamber is filled with books, scrolls, stone tables and every other kind of medium used for recording imaginable. Several tables have what look like magic items in various states of construction. The room smells of musk and old parchment. Between the bookshelves and piles of books, are metal banded glass tubes filled with a thick blue liquid. "

Any character with a passive Perception of 16 or higher can make out a humanoid figure floating in the tubes. A quick count reveals that there are about a dozen tubes throughout the room.

An older man, of 60 years or so, turns from the large tome he was studying.

"Well Alexander (addressing a stuffed alligator hanging on a nearby wall) isn't this special. It has been quite some time since visitors have graced the Halls of Dust. Your adeptness at overcoming my security marks you as exceptional. As such, what can I, a lowly servant of the Lord of Spells, do for you?"

When the party explains their mission to Taa, he sees an opportunity to complete his life's work. Taa is confident that the knowledge they seek is contained on the disks but all ten disks are needed to decipher the ritual. Taa is also confident that he is the only one alive

that has the knowledge necessary for the translation.

Taa offers a bargain; brings him the disks and he will share the knowledge within with the party.

Taa can explain the following with the party.

- He only has seven of the ten disks.
- Khamseen has the other three.
- He was working with Khamseen, but Khamseen's mistrust of mortals broke the alliance. Taa honestly explains the fifty-year deal, his request to extend it, Khamseen's refusal, and that in his desperation he attempted to steal the disks. He is at least partially to blame for the situation, but Khamseen is unwilling to speak to him anymore.
- He will also tell the PCs that he is certain that Khamseen will never allow them the

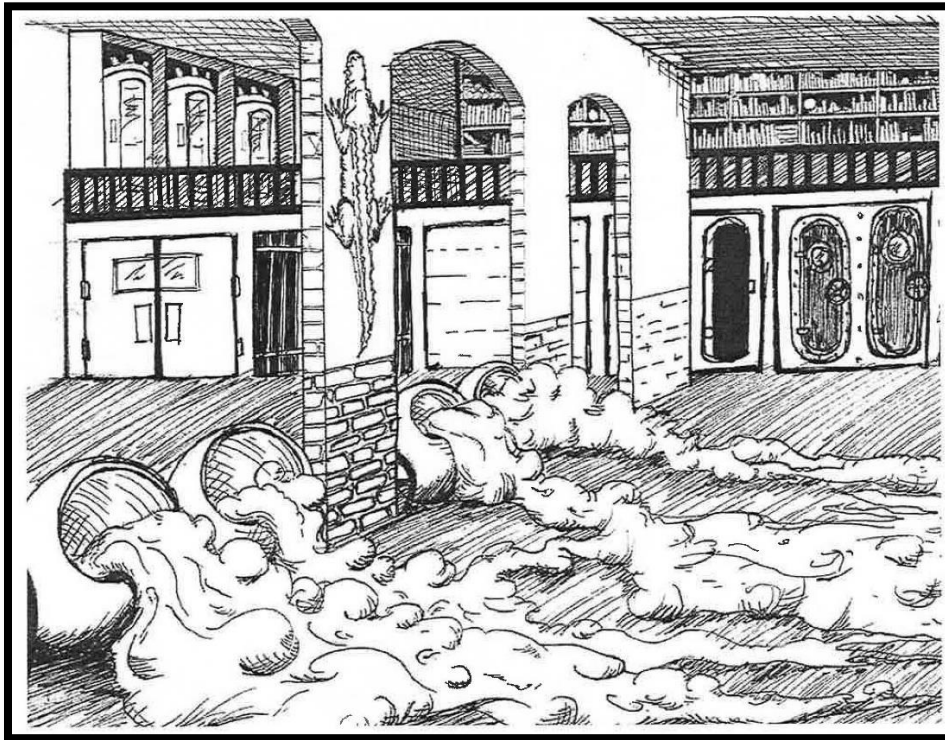
Donum Vitae. The angel has become too filled with suspicion and anger.

- Taa's only desire is to be left alone to pursue his understanding of magic. He is willing share all his knowledge with anyone willing to learn, as dictated by his religion. If the characters bring him the missing three disks, he will translate the Donum Vitae for them and share all of its secrets.

Decision Time

At this point the characters have a choice to make. Do they believe Taa and take him up on his offer? To do so would mean somehow convincing Khamseen to give up the disks in his possession or taking them by force. If the party takes this route proceed to **Part Six**.

If the party decides to recover the disks in Taa's possession, they must do so by force or guile. After all he has been through, he will not willingly give them up. Proceed to **Part Five**.



PART FIVE: ATTACKING TAA

Estimated Duration: 15-45 minutes

Story Beats: The characters attempt to destroy Taa and take the disks by force.

Taa (**archmage**) will not instigate combat but will defend himself to the best of his ability. He is in his sanctum and is well ready. He is also defended by a **shield guardian** that he has built into a taxidermy alligator.

Taa is an archmage with the following changes:

- His spell list is:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *chill touch*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *sleep*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*, *thunder wave*

2nd level (3 slots): *flaming sphere*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *sleet storm*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *stoneskin**, *black tentacles*

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *wall of force*, *antilife shell*

6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*

7th level (1 slot): *forcecage*

8th level (1 slot): *mind blank**

9th level (1 slot): *foresight**

*precast spells

- While in his lair, Taa gains the following trait:

Omnipresent. Taa's connection to the halls of Dust allows him to pick any point in the room as the origin point when casting spells.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Remove Alexander and 3 Runes
- **Weak Party:** Remove Alexander
- **Strong Party:** Increase Taa's hit points by 30
- **Very Strong Party:** Increase Taa's hit points by 50

Specific Features

The following features are found in this room.

Illumination. The room is well lit by a permanent enchantment.

Focus Runes. Around the room, carved into the stone walls are five arcane runes. Any

character that speaks Primordial or succeeds a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) skill check knows that the runes are written in an ancient language that roughly translates into "*focus*."

Taa can transfer control of a concentration spell to one of the runes allowing him to have multiple concentration spells up at the same time. Doing so causes the rune to glow brightly.

The runes have an AC17, 27 hit points, damage immunity to fire, cold, electricity, thunder, radiant, necrotic, psychic and poison damage. The runes are vulnerable to acid, bludgeoning, and slashing damage.

Magic Items. Scattered around the room are various magic items that Taa has crafted for the defense of his lair and has attuned to. The original Taa is not willing to leave his globe of invulnerability and therefore doesn't have access to the items while its active. Subsequent clone are free to move around the room, pick up items, and use them accordingly. The item's power is tied to the Halls of Dust. Removing the items causes them to crumble into dust. Taa has access to: a *wand of magic missiles*, a *staff of fire*, a *scroll of fireball*, and a *scroll of cone of cold*. A character can use an action to search a table for one of the above items (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) to find a completed item). Of course, if the item requires attunement, the character will not be able to use it in this combat.

Tubes. Taa has a total of ten clones in the tubes but only seven are mature enough to enter combat. When Taa is killed, his soul is immediately transferred to a clone in one of the tubes. The new Taa enters combat the next round on the same initiative count as the original. If the second clone dies, another emerges until he is out of clones or the party destroys all the tubes. The clones emerge with the same number of spell slots that the pervious Taa had at the time of his death. The

clone is attuned to all items that the original was attuned to but doesn't have them on his person so the clone will have to pick them up to use them.

Each tube is AC19, 40 hit points, is resistant to acid, fire, thunder cold and piercing damage, is immune to lightning, poison, psychic, radiant and necrotic damage and is vulnerable to sonic and bludgeoning damage. A tube automatically fails all Strength and Dexterity saving throws.

Combatant	Apparent Age
Original Taa	60
Clone 1	50
Clone 2	40
Clone 3	30
Clone 4	20
Clone 5	10
Clone 6	5
Clone 7	3

Tricks of the Trade

Taa is a challenging NPC to run. To make him especially effective, Taa will use his first 3 rounds casting defensive spells or items while imploring the characters to stop and consider their actions. He will not attack the characters until he is dealt 25 points of damage. He will repeatedly state that he doesn't wish to harm them but they are giving him no choice.

Lets Talk About this...

If the characters attack Taa, but then try to negotiate, he pauses. He is leery about leaving the Halls of Dust, suspecting that Khamseen will attack him the moment he steps foot outside of his wards. The characters can try to reason with Taa to compromise.

If the characters offer to return to Khamseen and negotiate on his behalf, Taa

will allow them one disk as a sign of good faith. In order to convince Taa of their good intentions the characters must succeed on a DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Deception) check. Followers of Azuth have advantage on this check. The DM may consider lowering the DC if a character makes an especially good argument for now trusting them.

Development

The fight ends if seven clones are destroyed. This can be accomplished in one of two ways. The party can fight all 7 clones or the characters destroy the ten tubes containing the clones while holding off the current combatant. Proceed to Conclusion.

Treasure

If defeated the disks can be found inside Alexander with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (investigation) check.

In addition, if he didn't use them, Taa carries a *potion of invulnerability* and a *scroll of greater invisibility*. He also has a *wand of wonder* and 2000 gp that the characters can take. If the characters received these items from encountering Khamseen, he has nothing.

PART SIX: THE MISCHIEVOUS ANGEL

Estimated Duration: 15-45 minutes

Story Beats: The characters attempt to destroy Khamseen and take the discs by force.

The party may return to Khamseen the **planetar** after meeting with Taa. How the planetar receives them depends on if they do or do not have the missing Disks.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These ARE cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Remove Khamseen's spellcasting
- **Weak Party:** Reduce Khamseen's AC by 2
- **Strong Party:** Increase Khamseen's hit points by 50
- **Very Strong Party:** Do not remove Khamseen's Angelic weapons feature.

We Have the Disks

If the party returns with the disks Khamseen is surprised and overjoyed. He will ask to examine the disks to verify their legitimacy. If the party hands the disks over he will magic them away and thank the party.

"Thank you for returning that which was stolen so many years ago. Unfortunately, I cannot allow them to once again tempt your weak mortal minds with their power. Therefore, they will stay under my protection for eternity.

You did however prove to be surprisingly useful so I shall award you." He snaps his fingers and golden wand decorated with a multitude of brightly covered spheres appears floating with the characters reach. "You may take this bobble, which is as random and unpredictable as you mortals." Bowing gracefully, he adds, "Good day. "

At this point Khamseen fully expect the party to leave. He feels that they have been sufficiently compensated.

He does not take being questioned well, but if pushed he will angrily explain his distrust of mortals due to their repeated failures. As his rant continues he white feathered wings slowly begin to blacken and his rage visible grows. It should be clear to the party that he is on the verge of attacking and he is not the paragon of Lawful Goodness that he first appeared to be.

The characters may provoke him into attacking, leave or try to reason with him.

Using Your Words

To convince Khamseen that some mortals are deserving of the gods attention and that they are trustworthy, a character they must succeed on a DC 30 Charisma (Persuasion) skill check. The DC can modified the following ways:

- -2 for every character that receives divine spells from a LG deity.
- -2 if the party promises not to share the Donum vitae with Taa.
- -5 if the party killed Taa.
- -5 if the party points out that Khamseen is being a hypocrite. His distrust of mortals is based on their dishonesty while he was dishonest with them.
- As Khamseen retains his ability to instantly detect a lie, the Deception skill is not useful in this situation. Trying to lie to him increases by the DC by +2.

Khamseen will attack the party if the check fails by 10 or more. The party is free to continue to attempt imploring Khamseen to reconsider and make an argument to persuade him during combat as an action.

No Disk for You!

If the party did not recovery the disks from Taa, Khamseen is cold and aloof when they return to him.

"I should have known that you mortals would once again disappoint and fail to uphold a bargain made. You are frail, weak and prone to flights of fancy. Not worthy of a place in the grand tapestry of the gods. Leave now before I become angry and squash you like the insects you are."

With that Khamseen opens the door and expects the party to leave. His once pure white wings blackening and some feathers turning to ash as he glares at the character with simmering contempt. It should be clear to the party that he is on the verge of attacking and he is not the paragon of Lawful Goodness that he first appeared to be.

At this point the party has another decision to make. They have three options:

- Option 1: Leave without their prize.
- Option 2: Attempt to talk Khamseen into letting them have the disks.
- Option 3: Fight Khamseen in order to recover the disks.

Option 1

This is the easiest, the party leaves without the Donum Vitae and they must return to the Von Finklestein family empty handed.

Option 2

This requires the party to convince Khamseen that some mortals are deserving of the gods attention and that they are trustworthy. See **Using Your Words** above.

Option 3

This means a tough fight with Khamseen. Khamseen is a **planetar** but due to his fall from lawfulness, see the nearby sidebar for changes to his stat block.

Khamseen

Make the following changes to Khamseen:

- **Alignment:** Chaotic Good
- **Skills:** Deception +15
- He also loses his extra damage from angelic strike and his ability to use healing touch.
- He can use these three legendary actions: 1) Move up to his speed without provoking; 2) Take a single melee attack; or 3) Cast a spell.

Treasure

If defeated the disks fall to the ground as his body disappears.

In addition, he carried 2000 gp in jewelry, a *potion of invulnerability*, a *scroll of greater invisibility* and a *wand of wonder*. If the characters received these items from encountering Taa, he has nothing.

Conclusion: Decision Time, Again

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

Story Beats: The characters choose who will get the discs in the end.

With their prize in hand the adventurers must decide what to do with it. They can turn the Donum Vitae over to the Von Finklestein family, the Church of Kelemvor or some other organization.

If they return to Donum Vitae to the Von Finklestein Family award each character the **Greater Gratitude of the Von Finklestein Family**.

If they return the Donum vitae to the Church of Kelemvor award each character the **Gratitude of the Church of Kelemvor**

If the party decides to return the Donum Vitae to another faction award each character **Betrayer**.

Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (is applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Experience

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Archmage (w/clone)	10,000
Planetar (weakened)	11,500
Magma Mephit	100
Shield Guardian	2,900

Non-Combat Awards

Accomplishment	XP per Character
Solve Puzzle (each)	1000
Recover the Donum Vitae	500

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **4,500 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating is **6,000 experience points**.

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide the treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific

consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Kelemvorite Payment	500 per PC
Or	
Von Finklestein Payment	300-750 per PC
Taa's Gold	2000
Or	
Khamseen's Jewelry	2000

Wand of Wonder

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This golden wand decorated with a multitude of brightly covered spheres.

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges and choose a target within 120 feet of you. The target can be a creature, an object, or a point in space. Roll d100 and consult the table to discover what happens.

If the effect causes you to cast a spell from the wand, the spell's save DC is 15. If the spell normally has a range expressed in feet, its range becomes 120 feet if it isn't already.

If an effect covers an area, you must center the spell on and include the target. If an effect has multiple possible subjects, the DM randomly determines which ones are affected.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended Charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into dust and is destroyed.

Potion of Invulnerability

Potion, rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Spell Scroll of Greater Invisibility

Scroll, rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Story Awards

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn ONE of the following story awards:

Gratitude of the Von Finklestein Family.

You have made an ally with the Von Finklestein Family. You may use this favor one of two ways. You may either cash in this favor once to gain the casting of a spell of a Player's Handbook wizard spell of 3rd-level or lower at no cost (you must still pay for expensive material components) while you are in Mulmaster or you may gain access to a new downtime activity. At the end of any adventure, you may spend 10 downtime to visit the family and their secret arcane library. While at the library you may scribe a Player's Handbook wizard spell of 3rd-level or lower into your spell book or book of shadows. You are still responsible for the cost to scribe this spell. Once you have used this favor, you may not use it again.

If this is the 2nd time you have earned this reward the spell level is raised to 5th.

Gratitude of the Church of Kelemvor.

You have performed a great service for the Church of Kelemvor. As a reward the church has agreed to defray the cost of a *raise dead* spell. If your body is returned to Mulmaster or Phlan the clergy will cast it for free (you must still pay for the material component).

Betrayer. You have Betrayed the Von Finklestein Family. All favors with the family are voided.

Player Rewards

For completing this adventure, players earn downtime and renown as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG)*.

DM Reward

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG)*.

Appendix: NPC/Monster Statistics

Archmage

Medium humanoid (drow), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +13, History +13

Damage Resistance damage from spells; nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from *stoneskin*)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Undercommon, Elvish, Dwarvish, Thayan, Gnomish, Netherese

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

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

Spellcasting. The archmage is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The archmage can cast *disguise self* and *invisibility* at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *identify*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt* or *Melf's minute meteors*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *fire shield*, *stoneskin**

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *planar binding*, *wall of force*

6th level (1 slots): *globe of invulnerability*, *true seeing*

7th level (1 slots): *teleport* or *finger of death*

8th level (1 slots): *mind blank** or *antimagic field*

9th level (1 slots): *time stop* or *prismatic wall*

*: The archmage casts these spells on itself before combat

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Magma Mephit

Small elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Stealth +3

Damage Vulnerabilities cold

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Ignan, Terran

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Death Burst. When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of lava. Each creature within 5 feet of it must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

False Appearance. While the mephit remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary mound of magma.

Innate Spellcasting (1/Day). The mephit can innately cast *heat metal* (spell save DC 10), requiring no material components. Its innate spellcasting ability is Charisma.

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) fire damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 6). The mephit exhales a 15-foot cone of fire. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Planetar

Large celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 19 (natural leather)

Hit Points 200 (16d10 + 112)

Speed 40 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +12, Wis +11, Cha +12

Skills Perception +11

Damage Resistance radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Senses passive truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages all, telepathy 120ft.

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Angelic Weapons. The planetar's weapon attacks are magical. When the planetar hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 5d8 radiant damage (included in the attack).

Divine Awareness. The planetar knows if it hears a lie.

Innate Spellcasting. The planetar's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). The planetar can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect evil and good*, *invisibility* (self only)

3/day each: *blade barrier*, *dispel evil and good*, *flame strike*, *raise dead*

1/day each: *commune*, *control weather*, *insect plague*

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

Actions

Multiattack. The planetar makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (4d6 + 7) slashing damage plus 22 (5d8) radiant damage.

Healing Touch (4/Day). The planetar touches another creature. The target magically regains 30 (6d8 + 3) hit points and is freed from any curse, disease, poison, blindness, or deafness.

Shield Guardian

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 142 (15d10 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Languages understands commands given in any language but can't speak

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Bound. The shield guardian is magically bound to an amulet. As long as the guardian and its amulet are on the same plane of existence, the amulet's wearer can telepathically call the guardian to travel to it, and the guardian knows the distance and direction to the amulet. If the guardian is within 60 feet of the amulet's wearer, half of any damage the wearer takes (rounded up) is transferred to the guardian.

Regeneration. The shield guardian regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Spell Storing. A spellcaster who wears the shield guardian's amulet can cause the guardian to store one spell of 4th level or lower. To do so, the wearer must cast the spell on the guardian. The spell has no effect but is stored within the guardian. When commanded to do so by the wearer or when a situation arises that was predefined by the spellcaster, the guardian casts the stored spell with any parameters set by the original caster, requiring no components. When the spell is cast or a new spell is stored, any previously stored spell is lost.

Actions

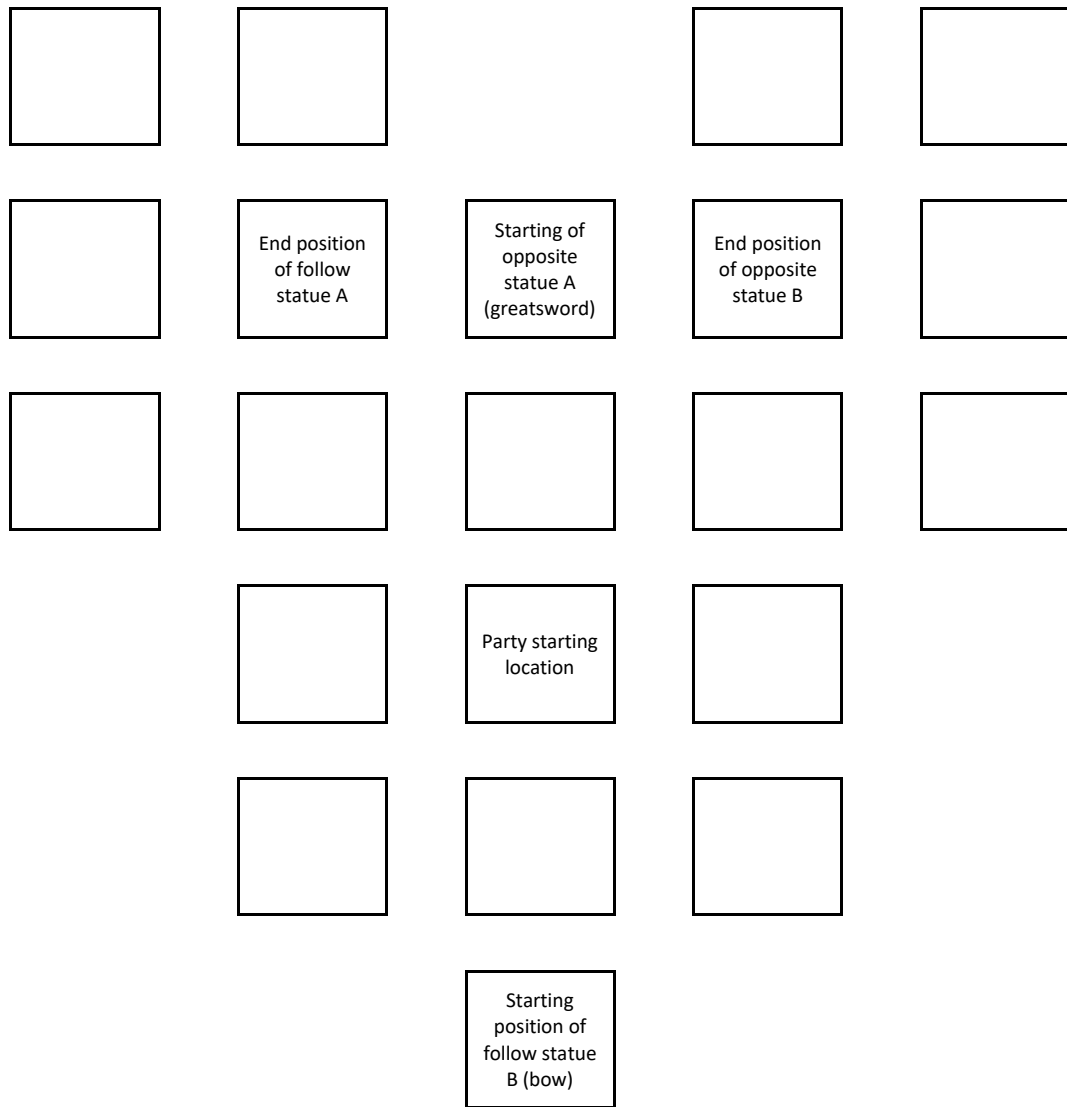
Multiattack. The guardian makes two fist attacks.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Shield. When a creature makes an attack against the wearer of the guardian's amulet, the guardian grants a +2 bonus to the wearer's AC if the guardian is within 5 feet of the wearer.

PUZZLE ONE: DM COPY

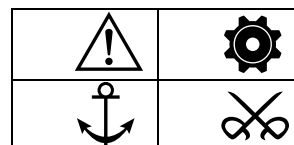
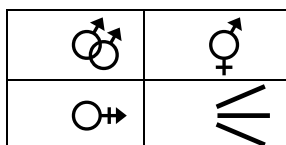
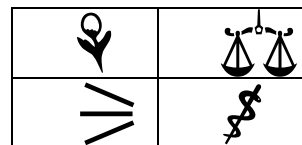
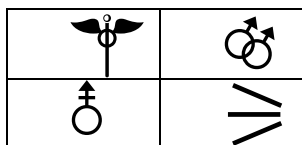
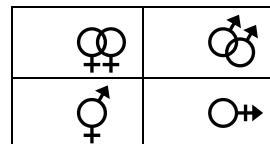
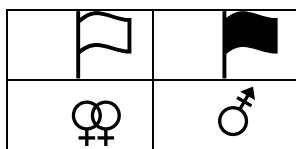
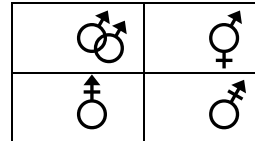
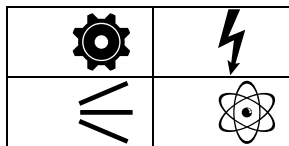
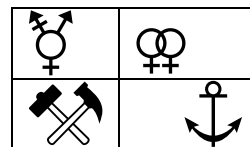
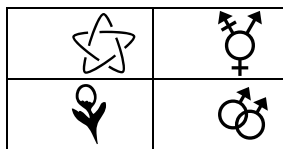
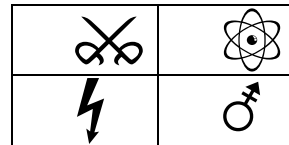
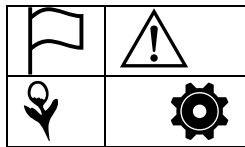
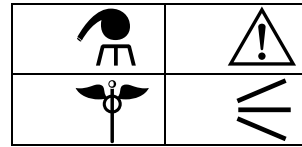
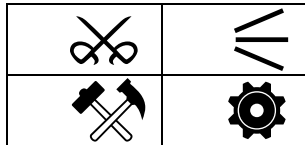


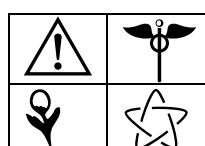
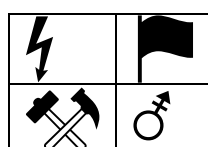
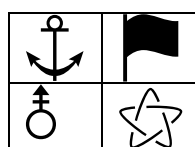
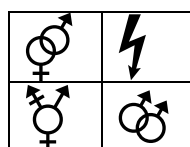
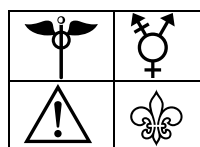
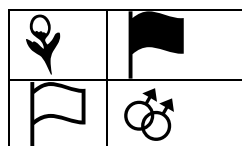
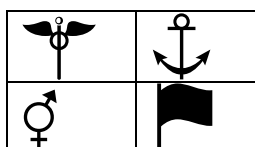
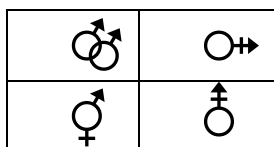
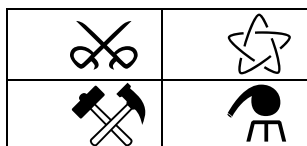
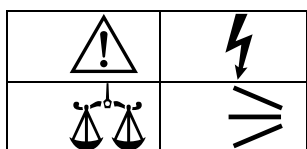
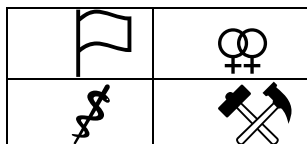
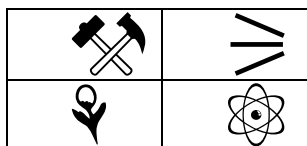
Puzzle Solution:

1. Right
2. Down
3. Left
4. Left
5. Up
6. Right
7. Up
8. Up
9. Right
10. Down
11. Down
12. Left
13. Up

Puzzle Two: Door Runes

Note: Please cut each set of runes and hand one to each player in the lock rooms. They must communicate the runes to the player in the control room.





Note: Three copies of the message for distribution. You also should cut up the translation letters on the next page into each symbol and its translated letter and give the party the letters they can decipher based on the languages they know.

[illegible]

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
Ḃ	Ḅ	Ḇ	Ḉ	Ḋ	Ḍ	Ḧ	Ḩ	Ḭ	Ḱ	Ḳ	Ḵ	Ḷ
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
Ṁ	Ṃ	Ṅ	Ṇ	Ṑ	Ṓ	Ṕ	Ṗ	Ṙ	Ṛ	Ṕ	Ṗ	Ṛ

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
Ḃ	Ḅ	Ḇ	Ḉ	Ḋ	Ḍ	Ḧ	Ḩ	Ḭ	Ḱ	Ḳ	Ḵ	Ḷ
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
Ṁ	Ṃ	Ṅ	Ṇ	Ṑ	Ṓ	Ṕ	Ṗ	Ṙ	Ṛ	Ṕ	Ṗ	Ṛ

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
Ḃ	Ḅ	Ḇ	Ḉ	Ḋ	Ḍ	Ḧ	Ḩ	Ḭ	Ḱ	Ḳ	Ḵ	Ḷ
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
Ṁ	Ṃ	Ṅ	Ṇ	Ṑ	Ṓ	Ṕ	Ṗ	Ṙ	Ṛ	Ṕ	Ṗ	Ṛ

PLAYER HANDOUT 1

Esteemed colleague,
I pray that this missive finds you well. Once again, our organization finds itself in need of your skills. The business is related to our previous interaction and requires an immediate response. I hope you can answer our call.

When you are ready, a drop of you blood and fire will transport you to us.

VF

PLAYER HANDOUT 2

Dear Guardian of the Living,
I am told in the past you have made the difficult choice to put an end to those who have succumbed to the curse of undeath. I pray you will answer the call again. Meet me at the shrine to Kelemvor.

Zoea Espiga,
Sister of the Silent Shroud

PLAYER HANDOUT 3: TREASURE

Wand of Wonder

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This golden wand decorated with a multitude of brightly covered spheres.

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges and choose a target within 120 feet of you. The target can be a creature, an object, or a point in space. Roll d100 and consult the table to discover what happens.

If the effect causes you to cast a spell from the wand, the spell's save DC is 15. If the spell normally has a range expressed in feet, its range becomes 120 feet if it isn't already.

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The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended Charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into dust and is destroyed.

Potion of Invulnerability

Potion, rare

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Scroll, rare

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If this is the 2nd time you have earned this reward the spell level is raised to 5th.

Gratitude of the Church of Kelemvor.

You have preformed a great service for the Church of Kelemvor. As a reward the church has agreed to defray the cost of a *raise dead* spell. If your body is returned to Mulmaster or Phlan the clergy will cast it for free (you must still pay for the material component).

Betrayer. You have Betrayed the Von Finklestein Family. All favors with the family are voided.



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