



CCC-GHC-BK1-02

ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

THE TITHES THAT BIND



A 4-hour Border Kingdoms adventure
for characters of 5th - 10th level



THE TITHES THAT BIND

The Border Kingdoms are a haven of adventure, warring neighbors, and marauding monsters. But something or someone has set its sights on disrupting that casual chaos. Are you one of the brave adventurers who can help the Gilmann merchant house uncover the mystery?

A Four-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters



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A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT ENCOUNTER SCALING

The Tithes that Bind is optimized for a party of five characters. When running an adventure at a large convention such as Gamehole, it is common to have seven players at a table, which has the potential to affect encounter balance. The “Adjusting the Encounter” sidebars within the adventure are developed for an average party, but just like real life, one size doesn’t necessarily fit all.

Players have a tendency to bring their best and brightest to shows like Gamehole, and a group of seven optimized characters can easily overpower the recommended party strength you determine at the adventure's start. As a DM, you can—and should—adjust each encounter's difficulty to present a challenge for your players.

If the characters are overcoming combats too easily, increase the recommended strength level of the encounters by a step (from **average** to **strong**, for example). If needed, you can also increase the number of monsters or maximize their hit points to make things a little harder. In some cases, you may even need to increase the difficulty by two steps, just be careful not to make things unwinnable.

Remember, adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit!



ADVENTURE PRIMER

WELCOME TO *THE TITHES THAT BIND*, A D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Convention Created Content* program.

The adventure is set in the Border Kingdoms, a tumultuous region of the Forgotten Realms on the southern shore of the Lake of Steam. During this adventure, the adventurers navigate through a tapestry of deceit, finally pulling a thread that may begin to unravel the weave of a plot of an unseen foe long in the making.

BACKGROUND

Six Grand Merchant Dukes rule **TALDUTH VALE** from their lavish estates in the border town of **EMRYS**. When the ducal families came to power long ago, they seized the best properties and homes inside the walls of the large town. With real estate being in high demand in Emrys, the ability to hand out property is a great power the dukes wield. However, a serious understanding has evolved between the dukes and other powerful merchant houses in the town. The Dukes will not move against the holdings of these influential merchant houses, and the houses will continue to back the power of the Grand Merchant Dukes, each paying monetary tribute to the Merchant Dukes in lieu of the dukes taxing the Taldans of the Vale, directly.

One such wealthy merchant house is **HOUSE GILMANN**, led by their matriarch **CHARLOTTE "LOTTIE" GILMANN**, an elderly human woman with a shrewd mind for politics. The Gilmann family's holdings have recently come under attack from an outside source, and Lottie is sure that one ducal family, the **ORGLAST'S**, are responsible. To what end, she is not sure, but she has the means, and the funds, to find it.

The truth is that a mysterious figure known as the **BLACK WYVERN** has been plotting and scheming, trying to draw the vale into war with neighboring kingdoms, for some unknown reason. Whether there is a connection to the Orglast family or not remains to be seen.



EPISODE SEQUENCE

The Tithes That Bind takes place over the course of two episodes of two hours each, and are meant to be played in a linear fashion. Sections 1 & 2 make up the first episode, while sections 3 & 4 make up the second episode.

HOUSE GILMANN

House Gilmann is an extremely wealthy merchant house based in Talduth Vale in the Border Kingdoms. The house was originally founded in the kingdom of Cormyr by Roderick Fellafur Gilmann, a distant relative of the Huntsilvers of Cormyr. House Gilmann owned many profitable peat farms in and around the King's Forest, but due to his drinking habits, quickly squandered any real fortune his family had left him.

During one of his dalliances, he awoke married to a common, and much younger woman, Charlotte Gilmann. In order to save face, and with the strong advice of his Huntsilver cousins, he maintained the marriage, with the expectation that he forgo his philandering ways. Charlotte took this opportunity to try to bring herself up from poverty, and quickly learned the schemes and machinations of the Suzail Court. However, being low born, many of the courtiers in the kingdom's capital were less than impressed. Through shrewd business acumen and plotting, over a few short years, 'Lottie' as she had come to be known, started building up the coffers of House Gilmann. With that came a grudging respect from the wealthier houses in Cormyr.

'Old Rick' (a nickname given to Roderick by his Huntsilver cousins, due to his age) fell off the wagon, and began to squander much of this fortune on gambling and drink. During a lavish masquerade ball in the Royal Court, Roderick became overtly drunk and was found sans clothing, lounging in an ornate fountain. This was the last straw, and the Gilmann's were barred from court.

Having been disgraced by her husband, and now ostracized by the nobles she wished to emulate, Lottie packed up all the family owned, sold all their property, took what pittance remained in the coffers, and moved the family south to Emrys in the Talduth Vale. There the family has remained for the last forty years.

In addition to Lottie Gilmann, two other NPCs that will be encountered from House Gilmann are **MATHIAS GILMANN**, Lottie's son, and **SHAEALRYNNE GILMANN**, Lottie's granddaughter.

EPISODE ONE OVERVIEW

Section 1: Call to Action. The party meets with Lottie Gilmann at her lavish estate, where they receive information about a situation involving her family's granaries.

Section 2: A Thread Laid Bare. The characters travel to the north of Emrys and into Talduth Vale to defend the Gilmann granaries from sellswords.

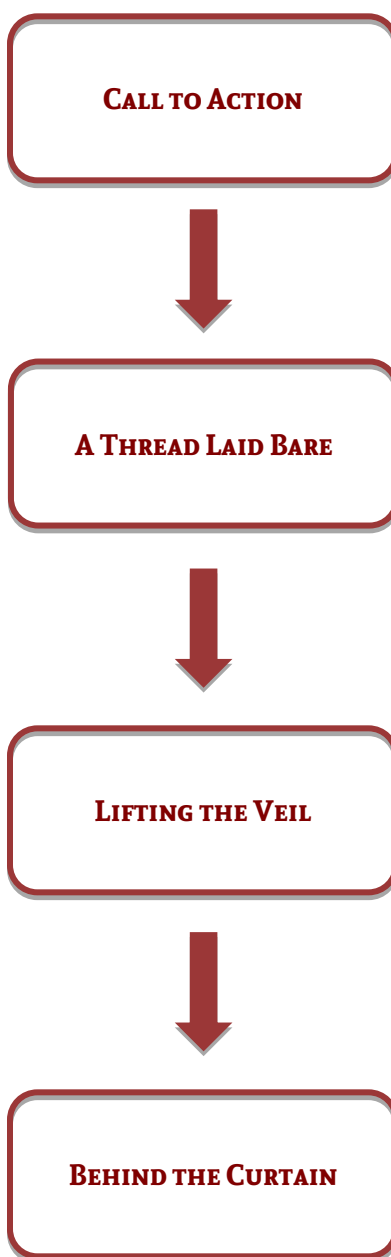
EPISODE TWO OVERVIEW

Section 3: Lifting the Veil. The party takes the remains of the raiders to the Church of All Souls for inspection, where they discover that the black paste on the ruffians points to a boggy area in the Vale. After this discovery, the characters need to defeat the reanimated corpses of the sellswords.

Section 4: Behind the Curtain. The characters head into the bog, and discover an ancient ruin and a barrow, in which they find undead creatures and a former ally turned enemy.

EPISODE FLOWCHART

This section should provide you, the DM, with a basic understanding of not only the flow of the episode, but also the outline of the different paths that your players will take in reaching their stated objective. This module is linear, as all the parts lead to the next.



SECTION 1:

CALL TO ACTION

The party has arrived in Emrys, located on the southern edge of the Border Kingdoms. They have been invited to the country estate of the wealthy merchants of House Gilmann, which lies a couple hours ride to the south east of the town of Emrys.

CALL TO ACTION

As the party travels to the estate, allow the players a chance to introduce their characters, and to get to know one another. The Gilmann Estate is extremely lavish, complete with a hedge maze, fountain, and gardens. The party will arrive at around ten bells in the morning. At the estate, they will receive the following information from Lottie:

- Over the last tenday, on two separate occasions, the granary complex owned by her family has been raided, and some of the guards killed.
- She has asked the Eagles of Emrys to investigate the disruptions, but the granary complex is outside of Emrys, she needs to take care of it herself—and by the Old Lord's Ghost, she will!
- Lottie can't prove it, but she believes one of the Grand Merchant Dukes of Emrys is behind the raids, House Orglast, in particular.
- Lottie pays hefty 'tithings' to the Grand Dukes, as many of the wealthier merchants do, to avoid taxation in the rest of Talduth Vale, but she believes that Grand Duke Pryarr Orglast has his sights set on more than just Emrys or the Vale.
- She believes Pryarr is playing a dangerous game that will bring unnecessary harm to the Taldans, not to mention her family's coffers.
- Lottie has a network of agents throughout the Border Kingdoms, whom she pays for information. Her "pixies," as she calls them, have informed her that another raid will be happening late tonight, and she wants the party to investigate.
- If they encounter any bandits, they need to be killed and their bodies taken, in secret, to the Church of All Souls in Emrys. Lottie's granddaughter Shaelrynnne is a member of the clergy, and she will examine the bodies for clues.
- Lottie suggests the party disguise themselves as traders and make their way to the granary complex, which is less than a day's travel to the north, through the Vale Gate in Emrys. She

provides the party with two carts and a single draft horse for each, as well as peasant clothing for each character. They can visit the Bawling Market in Emrys if they wish to purchase any other materials for their disguises, but that is up to them.

- When arriving at the granaries, they speak with her steward, Argus Argento. He has been informed that an adventuring party is en route.

ROLEPLAYING LOTTIE GILMANN

This human woman is 73 winters old, and is the backbone of the Gilmann merchant house. She is well versed in all things political. She is astute, calculating, and prudent in her dealings, and can be very ruthless when the need arises. Everything she does has a hidden meaning or context.

Lottie has spent the last forty years of her life building House Gilmann's wealth into a vast mercantile empire. When she married into the nobility in Cormyr, Lottie never felt the Suzail courts accepted her, so everything she does is to prove them wrong.

Strikingly beautiful at a young age, her looks have faded, and her body is bent by time, but her mind is at its peak. She values wealth above all, and is a well-respected and feared member of the Lords' Alliance.

Quote: "I know the game of court, dear. I invented it!"

The party also has the opportunity to get the following information from Matthias, Lottie's son:

- Mathias's mother has not been the same since his father, passed some twenty years ago. The Grand Dukes ruled that there was no foul play, but Mother thinks otherwise.
- Mathias is very protective of "Mother" and speaks of her very lovingly, but he offers no insight into her dealings. In truth, he doesn't know.
- If asked about his niece, Shaelrynnne, he informs the party that she is a priestess at the Church of All Souls in Emrys. She has Mother's knack for remembering and figuring things out.
- Mathias is very protective of his niece and innocently asks that the party watches over her when they meet.

ROLEPLAYING MATHIAS GILMANN

Mathias is a human male around forty winters old. He was somewhat athletic in his youth, but not so much anymore. He was born dim-witted, but an incident about ten years ago damaged his head, and he is much more obtuse than before the accident. He is kindhearted, and very open, yet socially awkward. He speaks very simply and with few words. He stands about 6 feet tall, has dark salt & pepper hair, and brown eyes.

Quote: "What Mother wants, Mother gets."

SECTION 2:

A THREAD LAID BARE

THE GILMANN GRANARIES

PREREQUISITES

The characters will have received their Call to Action from Lottie Gilmann, and made their way to the Gilmann's granary complex, which lies about half a day's journey from Emrys, so they will be arriving just as the sun sets.

OBJECTIVES

The characters will meet with the steward of the complex, and his quartermaster. After some exchanges, the party is to wait in ambush for the hooligans to arrive. When they do arrive, they are to defend the granaries to the death. The party will then take the sellswords' remains back to the Church of All Souls in Emrys.

NPCs

Awaiting the adventuring party will be **ARGUS ARGENTO**, the steward of the Gilmann Granaries, and his quartermaster, **MARDIN THANDALLEVE**.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS

Argus is a hulking human male in his mid-thirties. He has a no nonsense, straightforward personality. He has a love for strong drink and large tales. He is a devoted follower of Torm, and is loyal to a fault. He has a deep, gruff, booming voice. He stands over 6 feet tall, has brown hair, and green eyes. DC 12 Wisdom (Religion) checks reveal he is a follower of Torm due to his use of his greeting "Thank the Loyal Fury you have arrived."

In this encounter, Mardin wears a smithing apron, and carries a smithing hammer and a pair of tongs. He speaks little, and is mostly non-descript in his appearance, being covered in soot and sweat. If spoken to often, he shrugs and points the party back to Argus for questions. Nothing here should reveal that he is the villain of this adventure.

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

Through role-play, the characters will receive the following information about the earlier raids, and what should be done to prepare for the raid happening in a few short hours:

- The first raid happened a tenday ago, under the dark of night. It was a surprise and three guards were killed in the skirmish. There was no rhyme or reason to the supplies and stores that were taken. It looked like a smash-and-grab operation. The raiders simply vanished in all the chaos.

- The second raid happened five days ago, again, under the night sky. The compound had added extra guards to their shifts, and yet again, they were surprised. This time, seven more guards were killed. Again, no specific goods were targeted.
- Argus's right hand, Quartermaster Mardin, was able to slay one, but when the raiders retreated, they took the corpse and disappeared in what looked like puffs of smoke.
- If Mardin is questioned about the raiders, he informs the party that he believes arcane magic was involved as a mist rose up, making the raiders hard to see. When he landed the felling blow on the one he was engaged with, it let out a curse in common.
- Neither Argus nor Mardin were able to clearly see the assailants, but they believe they were humans.
- Argus has his men stationed in the guard towers and on top of the roofs. He doesn't want to be responsible for any party members, so he has set up a large set of crates in which the party can hide, perhaps granting them the element of surprise on the bandits.
- According to the information obtained by Madame Gilmann, the incursion should happen in roughly three hours. So the party has about two hours to prepare, as Argus wants them in their hiding places at least an hour ahead of time.

CREATURES

Attacking the complex are four **sellswords**, one **sellsword warlock**, and two **sellsword wizards**, who have used *dimension door* scrolls to enter the compound, arriving in the open area in the middle of the map (see **Appendix 3: Maps - A Thread Laid Bare**).

OBJECTIVES/GOALS

The sellswords were hired by Mardin to cause havoc and steal as much as they can. Unbeknownst to them, the characters lie in wait. Mardin's unseen boss plans for the party to defeat the invaders fairly easily to try to lay blame on the Barony of the Great Oak, which lies to the north of Talduth Vale, in order to try and start a war.

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

The bandits will fight to the death. If they are knocked out, or magically compelled to speak, they only know they were hired by a cloaked figure to steal as much as possible, and cause as much carnage as possible during the raid. They were given a pot of black clay to use as war paint. They do not know they have been sent to their deaths, nor do they know anything about who hired them.

AREA INFORMATION

If the party followed the instructions of Argus, and are hidden in the crates in the middle of the yard, a simple pull string allows them to exit, and the invaders will have the surprised condition for the first round of combat (see "Surprise" on pg 69 of the *D&D Basic Rules*, or "Surprise" on pg 189 of the *Player's Handbook*).

TERRAIN

The ground is well-traveled and made of tightly packed dirt, with small bits of grass clinging to life. It is flat and even. Crates and boxes are stacked in various positions throughout the grounds of the large, lashed-logged compound.

LIGHTING

Lanterns are hanging from posts throughout, filling the central area with bright light, while the areas behind the buildings that face the walls are lit with dim light. Areas that are dark and open to the sky are filled with moonlight.

DM TIPS FOR THIS ENCOUNTER

- Consider having the sellsword wizards begin combat with *fly* spells already cast.
- If characters are flying, have the enemy casters cast *dispel magic* on the flying character(s), if in range (taking damage from falling, as normal). If an item allows the character(s) to fly without casting the *fly* spell (such as *winged boots* or a *broom of flying*), or the character is out of *dispel magic* range, instead, have the casters target the flying party members with ranged attack spells.

Otherwise, focus their attacks on healers first, then roguish types, then melee.

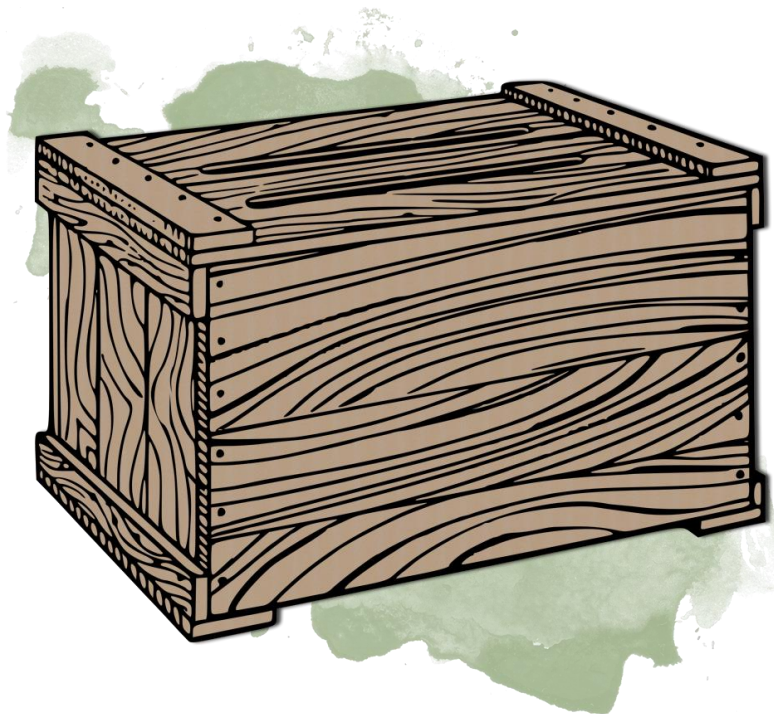
- Have the melee sellswords attack healers first, or focus all their attacks on the strongest melee threat, in the event they cannot get to a healer.
- None of the enemies attack savagely, as they would prefer to drop all of the party before finishing their job, as they expect to escape.

SPELLS AND TACTICS

Some characters might have abilities to allow them to fly, or they may wish to hide or set their own ambush. Argus explains that he cannot be responsible for flying characters. His archers may be firing, and anyone flying might be hit. However, the characters are still free to do so.

The characters may also wish to use *detect thoughts* or other divination or charm magic to acquire more information from either Argus or Mardin. If this is the case, keep in mind that even under a *charm* spell, a creature won't necessarily reveal its secrets to a person that charmed them. Powerful magics from his unknown master protect Mardin's mind, so no further information will be gained by the party as a result of such magic. Neither will they be able perceive that Mardin is being protected.

When the party is finished with the battle, they may wish to cast divination spells or use magic that can speak with the dead, which they are free to do. The corpses are not undead yet, but the black dust from the bog on their bodies (see part 3) prevents such spells from working. Use your judgment and discretion as the DM to determine how such spells interact with the scenario, without taking away player agency to gain clues to something bigger happening within the story. Further guidance can be found in the Tricks of the Trade sections following each encounter.



DEVELOPMENT

Argus, Mardin, and the other guards are assumed to be fighting combatants at other locations inside the complex. In the event the battle turns against the party, have Argus and a few guards show up at an opportune time to finish off the invaders. If the characters fall, the corpses of the intruders are still available after they awake, as the guards and Argus were able to defeat them because of the party's aid. After the battle, read or paraphrase the following:

- Argus, Mardin, and the guards were defending an assault at the main gate. As a fog appeared, Argus heard Mardin scream and saw a thin, green ray streak out of the mist. When he investigated, he found nothing but a fine dust, as well as Mardin's clothing, apron, hammer, and tongs.
- Unfortunately, two other guards were lost in the battle.
- Argus suggests the party loot the remains and claim the rewards from the corpses, as they are the reason House Gilmann was victorious this day.
- If the party investigates the area where Mardin died, they find a fine dust, apron, clothes, tongs, and smith's hammer. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the dust could be the result of a *disintegration* spell. If the check succeeds by 10 or more, the character knows it is not the result of such a spell, but something else. Taking the dust back with the rest of the remains would be advisable.
- Searching the fallen sellswords, the party finds the items listed in the Treasure section. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that each of the invaders wears a badge in the shape of a stout oak tree, its foliage curving to form a circle meeting the roots of the tree.

- A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check also reveals that each of the sellswords has used a black clay-like substance as war paint. Nature or Survival checks reveal no further information, but such checks can still be made.
- If the characters show the emblem to Argus, he immediately recognizes it as the badge of the Barony of Great Oak, to the north of Talduth Vale. He suggests they take the badge with them when they return to Emrys with the corpses.
- Searching outside the compound for any tracks or signs of passage reveals nothing.

At this point, the party can choose to take a short rest and head back to Emrys. Alternatively, they can choose to take a long rest, and leave for Emrys in the morning. However, taking a long rest will have consequences later. Make sure to note what the party decides.

TREASURE & REWARDS

If the party searches the corpses of the raiders, they find a *potion of greater healing*, and a *spell scroll of dimension door*. The sellsword wizards came without their spellbooks, which are not available.

Magic Items. The characters are awarded the *potion of greater healing*, and a *spell scroll of dimension door*.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **sellsword warlock**
- **Weak:** Remove one **sellsword**
- **Strong:** Add one **sellsword warlock**
- **Very Strong:** Add one **sellsword wizard** and one **sellsword warlock**



SECTION 3: LIFTING THE VEIL

THE CHURCH OF ALL SOULS

PREREQUISITES

The party will need to have completed **Section 2. A Thread Laid Bare** to participate in this section of the adventure. If the party took a short rest, or no rest, they will arrive at around 9 bells in the morning. If they took a long rest, the group will arrive around 6 bells in the evening.

OBJECTIVES

The characters are to deliver the bodies of the sellswords to Shaelrynnne at the Church of All Souls in Emrys. Through investigation and observation, they will discover that the black substance on the corpses comes from a particular ruins in the marshlands to the northwest. After the discovery, the corpses of the sellswords will rise and attack. The players must defend the morgue area and the priestess.

NPCs

When the party arrives at the Church of All Souls with the bandit remains, they will be lead downstairs to a morgue. **SHAELRYNNE GILMANN** will be waiting for them.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS

Shaelrynnne is a young, human female of 27 years. She is very logical and always in search of new things to learn and new knowledge to obtain. Her striking looks have always opened doors for her, but she doesn't abuse it for selfish reasons.

Shaelrynnne has a harmonious voice and is very calm in her demeanor. She is about 5'6" tall, with luxurious blonde hair and green eyes. She is a true



believer of Oghma, which requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check to discern. She loves her grandmother and Uncle Mathias unconditionally.

WHAT DOES SHE KNOW?

Through roleplay, the party will receive the following information. **NOTE** - The party will only have time to get **THREE** of the following bits of information before combat ensues. They will have a chance to get the rest after combat is over:

- Though the heraldry worn by the invaders seems to be that of the Barony of Great Oak, none of the sellswords bear a likeness to people of that barony.
- If the party brought the dust that seemed to be the remains of Mardin, Shaelrynnne informs them that it is not actually a remains of a disintegrated person. It seems to be some other type of dust or fine clay.
- The war paint on the bodies seems to be of a similar type. She recalls this black clay can be found in an area northwest of Emrys, in one of the bogs, near a crumbling set of ruins.
- There has been rumors amongst the hunters and trappers of the region of a set of ruins to the northwest that living creatures avoid. She was hoping to find a group to investigate.
- Shaelrynnne also mentions that a friend of hers in the Order of the Gauntlet was looking into rumors about undead sightings around that area, but she has not witnessed of any undead activity herself.

After the party receives three bits of the information above, have each character make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If any players mentioned that they were keeping a watchful eye on the corpses, their characters can roll with advantage. With a success, a character notices that the corpses are moving! Those who fail are surprised when combat begins.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **deathlock**
- **Weak:** Do not add the **deathlock wight** on turn 3
- **Strong:** Each **deathlock wight** has maximum hit points
- **Very Strong:** Add a **deathlock** and all of the undead creatures have maximum hit points

CREATURES

Rising off the examination tables are one **deathlock** and four **deathlock wights**. On the 3rd round of combat, a fifth **deathlock wight** will rise and join the fray. If the party took a long rest at the granaries, an additional **deathlock** joins the combat on round five.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS

The undead have only one goal in mind, and that is to kill the living.

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

The undead have no knowledge that the black substance animated them. (See the Black Clay of Exanimation side bar in Section 4). Like the sellswords they were before undeath, the creatures have no information about who hired them.

AREA INFORMATION

The church's mortuary has the following features (see **Appendix 3: Maps - Lifting the Veil**).

TERRAIN

The ground is flat and smooth, made of worked marble. Twelve slabs for examining the dead are set around the room. There are small tables, cramped stools, and storage chests around the rooms. Five pillars support the ceiling of the chamber.

LIGHTING

Lanterns are hanging from the walls and the pillars, filling the chamber with bright light.

NOTES FOR THIS ENCOUNTER

Shaelrynnne will have cleared the morgue examination room of any other priests or acolytes, so the party and Shaelrynnne are on their own. Roll an initiative for Shaelrynnne, but for all intents and purposes, she is a non-combatant (she has AC 15, HP 35). She can use an action on her turn to use a healing kit to restore hit points to a character, using the healer's feat from page 167 of the *Player's Handbook*. She was not ready for combat and has no healing spells prepared. She does have a *death* ward spell cast on herself, however, and her first action in combat will be to cast sanctuary on herself (DC 15). Additionally, she can use an action to fling a vial of holy water at the undead. She does not carry her holy symbol, so she cannot turn the undead.

DEVELOPMENT

After the battle is over, and Shaelrynnne is capable, the characters can discover the remaining information from the bulleted section above.

Shaelrynnne leads the party upstairs to one of the six sanctuaries. Characters who make a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check notice that this particular sanctuary contains shrines to Helm, Ilmater, Kelemvor, Torm, and Ubtao. The priestess walks over to the shrine to Kelemvor, and pulls out a stout, intricately carved box. She then grabs a quill, and starts sketching a map on some parchment.

Through roleplaying the following information can be exchanged:

- The black clay substance comes from a bog in the area that surrounds an ancient ruins. She instructs the characters to go the area, investigate, and hopefully solve the mystery.
- They may stay the night in the temple if they wish, and be fed, as the clergy feel obliged for their aid.
- Shaelrynnne was able to use holy water to remove the grime from the other corpses, and it destroyed the dust.
- She gives them four vials of holy water to take with them on their journey.
- For their valor in the mortuary, and for saving her life, she wants them to have what is in the box. It is a relic of unknown origin, but Shaelrynnne knows its purpose, and knows it will aid the party.

In the box is the Death's Head Mace. Shaelrynnne tells the party what the item is, as well as its special property.

The party may take a long rest at the temple. Doing so will set a trap in the next section of the adventure. However, they will be rewarded with a long rest at the beginning of the next section to reward their courage.

KEEPING SHAELRYNNNE ALIVE

Keeping Shaelrynnne alive is of utmost importance. If she falls in battle, the party may use their own magic, either during or after the combat, to bring her back from the dead. If no one in the party has the means to do so, then another member of the temple's clergy does so, as she is an important member of the community. If Shaelrynnne survives the encounter, with the aid of the characters, the party will receive the ***Champion of All Souls*** story award. If Shaelrynnne falls, and the church must raise her, you have the option of **deducting one advancement checkpoint** from the Episode 2 rewards at the end of the adventure.

Important. The removal of checkpoints is **optional** and completely at your discretion as the DM. You are not required to deduct checkpoints!

TREASURE & REWARDS

The party receives four vials of holy water.

Story Award. If the characters managed to keep Shaelrynnne alive, they will receive the ***Champion of All Souls*** story award (see **Appendix 4: Player Handout 4** for a description of this award).

Magic Item Unlock. Death's Head Mace, which is a *mace of disruption* with the harmonious minor property (see **Appendix 4: Player Handout 1** for a description of this item).

SECTION 4: BEHIND THE CURTAIN

CALL TO ACTION

The party leaves Emrys, exiting through the Sundown Gate on its west side. They travel into the forest along game trails that head in a northwesterly direction, eventually making it to the bogs. The journey takes a day and a half on foot to reach the area marked on Shaelrynn's map.

On the first day, have the party make a group DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check to maintain their course. Should they fail, the characters spend a few hours trying to get back on track. If this happens, an extra trap is set, as if they took a long rest in section 3 (see the **Trap: Interlopers, Be Gone!** subsection). This trap is not cumulative if the characters get lost. If a character has a background or class feature that would aid in this endeavor, give them advantage on the checks to stay on course. If the party uses spells to stay on course, or if they can't get lost (i.e. a ranger's favored terrain of forests or swamps), ignore the check altogether. During this trek, the party will be allowed to take a long rest without hindrance. THIS long rest DOES NOT set the trap. Only getting lost or taking the long rest at the Church will set the trap.

THE ANCIENT RUINS

The ruined temple complex is just that, ruins. Nothing remains on the surface of this once grand temple. Only overgrown rubble and eroded columns remain.

PREREQUISITES

In order for the party to find the entrance to the barrow, they will have to deal with the ruins outside. Searching for valuables yields only shattered pottery, shards of stained glass, and a few broken relics of a long dead deity, none of which are valuable. Characters who make a DC 17 Intelligence (Religion) check discover that the temple was once known as the Temple of the Third Eye, and was dedicated to Auppenser, a god of mentalists and enlightenment.

If the characters search for signs of the black clay, have them make DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) checks. A success shows deposits of the clay here and there throughout the ruins, and uncovers a set of humanoid tracks. Following the tracks reveals a moss-covered stairwell that leads to a sealed entrance of a barrow.

OBJECTIVES

In order to enter the barrow, the party will need to roll aside the large stone slab that blocks the entrance to the barrow. This can be accomplished by multiple characters, providing their combined Strength scores equal 30 or more. IF the characters got lost during the trek to the ruins, OR the party took a long rest after the encounter at the Church of All Souls, Mardin has set a trap on the barrow's entrance. See the traps section below for details.

TRAPS & PUZZLES

Interlopers, Be Gone!

Hidden on the massive stone slab that is the entrance to the barrow is a 4th-level *glyph of warding* (spell glyph). The trap is triggered when a living creature touches the slab. The spell glyph is a *vitriolic sphere* spell. The spell deals 10d4 acid damage to each creature in a 20-foot radius centered on the glyph when it goes off, and then 5d4 acid damage at the end of the creature's next turn. Each creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, a creature only takes half of the initial damage, and no damage at the end of its next turn. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check does reveal the presence of the glyph. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal that a *dispel magic* for dispelling a 4th level spell will dispel the glyph. Alternatively, a character skilled in the use of thieves' tools may disable the glyph with a successful DC 19 Dexterity check.

THE BARROW OF THE THIRD EYE

A map for the barrow can be found in **Appendix 3: Maps - Behind the Curtain**. The barrow was used centuries ago by the worshipers of Auppenser to bury the clergy and valiant defenders of the Temple of the Third Eye. It remained untouched, until an allip arrived a few decades ago, longing for solace.

When Mardin began searching for a place to sow the seeds of chaos for which his patron yearned, the allip gave him the power to animate the dead, but in doing so, the dreaded knowledge the allip relayed drove the young mage mad.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the part is to find the secret door to area 6. The Chamber of the Honored. Once they have access, they are to defeat Mardin, his undead allies, and the allip that has enslaved his mind.

AREA INFORMATION

The interior of the barrow is as follows:

TERRAIN

The ground is flat and made of carved granite. It was well constructed at its creation, and the walls and ceilings have stood the test of time. Inside the chambers, there is no clutter or objects other than the sarcophagi. The walls are covered in alien mosaics depicting creatures of varying shapes and appearances, floating in oddly shaped vessels among the stars.

LIGHTING

The interior of the barrow is completely dark. The only light is what the characters bring.

TRAPS & PUZZLES

There are two traps, marked with the number 1 on the map. The undead do not set them off, as they seldom leave their chambers without Mardin's consent or under his supervision. The **berbalangs** in area 5 know of the traps and can just fly over them. The pit traps are 10 feet deep and lined with sharpened sticks coated with viscous goo. Stepping on the false floor triggers the trap. The triggering character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the 10-foot-deep pit and take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and 3 (1d6) piercing damage from the spikes on the bottom of the pit. As the spikes are coated in poison, the character also suffers 3 (1d6) poison damage. The 5-foot-wide pit is covered with thin layer of pumice that is carved and painted to resemble the tunnel floor. Detecting it requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If successful, the dimensions of the pit can be discerned from the tunnel floor. As it is made of pumice, it is brittle and cannot be disabled, but it may be jumped over as normal. The characters may use magic or other creative ideas to circumvent the pits. Award extremely creative ideas with inspiration.

A NOTE ON TIMING IN THE BARROW

This portion of the adventure contains several lesser combats. If you are short on time or need to reduce the adventure's length, consider eliminating or combining the encounters in areas 2, 3, and 4.

2. THE CHAMBER OF AWARENESS

Devotees to Auppenser who were proficient in the martial arts were entombed in this chamber.

CREATURES

In this room are three **zombies** and three **wights**. They are undead that have been created with the

knowledge Mardin was given by the allip. They have no special resistances or any other special traits.

Searching the room results in nothing, as Mardin has completely looted the chamber.

3. THE CHAMBER OF AWARENESS

This chamber was the final resting place of the teachers and mentors of the Temple of the Third Eye.

CREATURES

The undead in this chamber are three **zombies** and three **wights**. Like areas 2 and 3, they are normal undead with nothing special about them.

4. THE CHAMBER OF ABILITY

Worshippers of Auppenser who were skilled in the arts of physical battle, as well as combat of the mind, were laid to rest in this chamber.

CREATURES

The undead in this chamber are three **zombies** and three **wights**. Like areas 2 and 3, they are normal undead with nothing special about them.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTERS IN AREAS 2, 3, AND 4

Here are some suggestions for adjusting these encounters, according to your group, per room. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **zombies** and one **wight**
- **Weak:** Remove the **zombies**
- **Strong:** Replace the **zombies** with one **wight**
- **Very Strong:** Replace the **zombies** with two **wights**

5. THE CHAMBER OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Lesser clergy of note were entombed in this chamber.

CREATURES

There are five **berbalangs** in this chamber. They discovered the tomb just after Mardin's arrival and have befriended the allip in area 6. Mardin is unaware of the **berbalang** presence in the barrow.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER IN AREA 5

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **berbalangs**
- **Weak:** Remove one **berbalang**
- **Strong:** Add two **wights** to the initial fight
- **Very Strong:** Add two **wights** to the initial fight; each **wight** has 66 hit points



OBJECTIVES/GOALS

The *berbalangs* are conversing with the dead in the tomb, searching for secret knowledge. If possible, the *berbalangs* use their Spectral Duplicate ability on the first round of combat. When a *berbalang's* duplicate is defeated, its original casts *plane shift* and returns to the Outer Planes. If a real *berbalang* does not have a duplicate, and is reduced to less than half its hit points, it casts *plane shift* and returns to the Outer Planes. A dead *berbalang* cannot gather knowledge, and they know that discretion is the better part of valor.

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

If the party is somehow able to get information from the creatures, they will inform the characters of the specters in the room (see NPCs below). They will not reveal the presence of the allip, nor will they reveal information about Mardin. They will cast *plane shift* at the first opportunity and flee.

NPCs

Two **specters** wait in the darkness. They reveal themselves once the *berbalangs* are defeated.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS

The specters seek to initiate peaceful negotiations, and will not fight unless attacked. If the party attacks them, they ask them to stop in the first round of combat, using only the disengage or dodge actions, and using their incorporeal movement to plead with the party. If the party continues to attack the specters instead parlaying with them, the specters viciously attack the party, gaining advantage on all their attacks. If they party then yields and hears them out, the specters stop attacking. If the party attacks again while the specters recount their story, or after they have finished, the specters fight until destroyed. In addition, they and gain advantage on their attacks, are healed back to full hit points, and the DC 10 Constitution saving throw for their life drain ability increases to DC 15.

THE BLACK CLAY OF EXANIMATION

Dark secrets learned from the tutelage of the allip have allowed Mardin to use the clay found in and around the barrow to animate the undead. The process to refine the clay and put it to use takes many days of careful preparation and intense concentration.

If the characters inspect the undead after defeating the creatures, they find all the corpses have been animated using this wholly evil substance. None of the paste can be collected by the characters in any amount, nor can it be used by anyone without instruction from the allip. The allip will in NO WAY reveal the usage of the black clay to anyone outside of Mardin, and Mardin's madness makes it impossible for him to pass on the secrets.

As the characters make their way through the barrow, Mardin is unaware of their intrusion, as he is completely absorbed in creating a new batch of the foul paste. Due to this, the characters are able to take ONE short rest while in the barrow. If the party tries to take any other rests, the *berbalangs* from area 5 find and attack them. If they continue to try and rest, feel free to have 1d4 normal zombies interrupt their plans.

The party should eventually realize that they will receive no more rest while Mardin still lives! Spells such as *rope trick*, *Leomund's tiny hut*, or abilities like a druid's *Hearth of Moonlight and Shadow* do not work in the barrow, due to the dark magic of Mardin and the allip.

TALKING WITH THE SPECTERS

It is in the party's best interest to treat peaceably with the specters. If the encounter results in combat, and either or both of the specters are killed, you have the option of **deducting one advancement checkpoint** from the Episode 2 rewards at the end of the adventure. If you chose to do so, the deductions only apply to characters who actively participated in the specters' destruction.

Important. The removal of checkpoints is **optional** and completely at your discretion as the DM. You are not required to deduct checkpoints!

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

Through role-play, the party will get information from the specters. Keep in mind, the specters never mention Mardin by name. They only refer to him as "The Necromancer." If the characters hear the specters out, through roleplay, they can learn the following information:

- The specters were not created by the Necromancer, but are good guardians of the barrow, given to undeath to protect the barrow when the mage arrived.
- They see the characters as a chance to rid their sacred site of the evil that the wizard has brought into the peace of the tomb.
- They have no knowledge of the allip, so they can impart no information about it, which should keep it a secret until it is revealed in area 6, after Mardin is defeated.
- The specters share the information about the Black Clay of Exanimation to the characters. Be sure NOT to mention the name Mardin while revealing the information to the party.
- If asked about the necromancer, the specters tell the party that he has a journal in which he keeps notes, and he often seems to talk to himself.
- The mage often mentions that he serves three masters. Who they are, the specters do not know.
- They show the party to the secret door that leads to Mardin's chambers. Some sort of magic prevents them from entering the chamber.
- The specters plead with the party to defeat the necromancer and cleanse his evil from their holy site.

6. THE CHAMBER OF THE HONORED

The most respected of Auppenser's clergy were entombed in this final chamber.

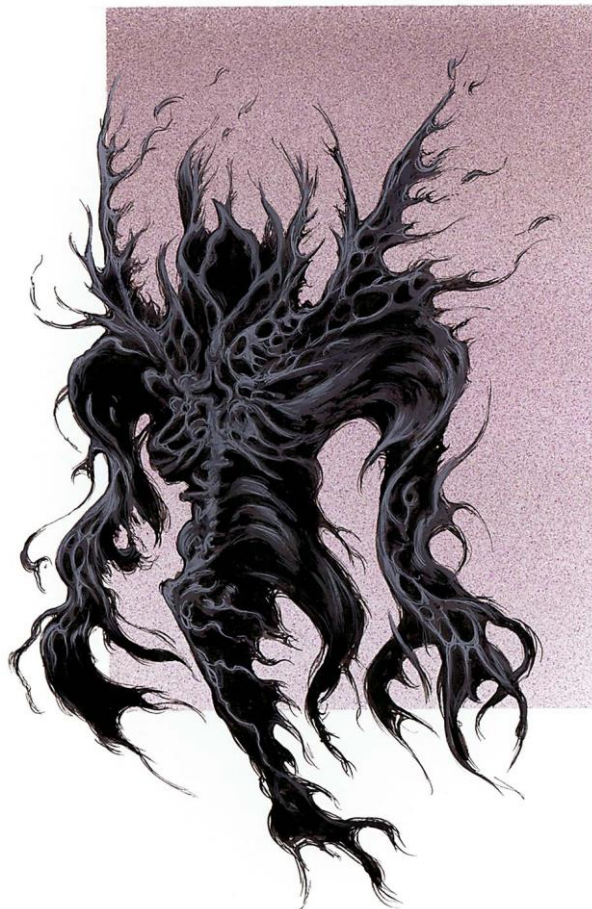
PREREQUISITES

To enter the final chamber, the party needs to locate and open the secret door that leads from the hall. If the characters learned of the door from the specters, they do not have to make checks and can open the door with ease. Otherwise, a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to find the door, and a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check is needed to open it.

Once a latch in the mosaic on the wall is flipped, the door sinks into the ground. Flipping a similar latch inside, or the same latch outside, will close the door. Finding the latch on the inside of the door requires a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

CREATURES/NPCs

The robed form is that of **MARDIN THANDALLEVE**. In the room with him are three **deathlock wights** that he uses as aids in this production of the Black Clay of Exanimation. In the two baskets are two **swarms of rot grubs**. In the southern portion of the chamber, an **allip** hides in the darkness.



OBJECTIVES/GOALS

Mardin will not negotiate and cannot be reasoned with. Because of the madness imparted to him by the allip, he is immune to the charmed condition. Spells such as *suggestion* and the like have no effect on him. Mardin and his undead allies fight to the death. The allip will join the fray on the 3rd round of combat, screaming that the party are interlopers who are ruining its plans. It had been passing on its secrets to Mardin, hoping to free itself from undeath, and curse Mardin in return.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER IN AREA 6

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove both swarms of **rot grubs**; replace the **deathlock wights** with **zombies**
- **Weak:** Remove two **deathlock wights**
- **Strong:** Each **deathlock wight** has 55 hit points and advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead
- **Very Strong:** All of the creatures have maximum hit points; all of the undead creatures have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead; the **allip's** Howling Babble recharges on a 5 or a 6

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

After the battle, Mardin does have a journal that the PCs can find tucked away under the pallet of bedding, along with a small chest containing Mardin's spellbook. Give the players **Appendix 4: Player Handout 3**, which contains three legible entries of Mardin's journal. The spellbook can be found in **Appendix 4: Player Handout 2**.

DM TIPS FOR THIS ENCOUNTER

Feel free to use the following guidance in the encounter for area 6:

- If the characters took a short rest in the barrow, Mardin has his 4th level spell slot. If they did not rest, he has no 4th level spell slot.
- Mardin could cast *fog cloud* to lightly obscure the room and then begin using some of his area of affect spells and cantrips that require saves instead of attack rolls.
- If the party defeats Mardin before dropping the deathlock wights, consider having them turn on one another. With Mardin no longer alive to command them, they consider each other, as well as the characters, their enemies.
- Consider having the allip use his Whispers of Madness on the melee characters of the party to have them attack one another. Then have it use its Maddening Touch on spellcasters, targeting any healers first.
- Should the allip get into trouble and surrounded, it uses its Howling Babble to try and stun creatures so that it can gain a more advantageous position.

DEVELOPMENT

After reading through the journal, the characters learn that someone known as the Black Wyvern is working behind the scenes to cause chaos in Talduth Vale, and perhaps war throughout the Border Kingdoms. It seems that all roads point to a stronghold located somewhere in the wilderness between the town of Emrys and the thorp of Rymdyl.

If the characters seek further adventure, they can continue the story by playing the next part of the series, CCC-GHC-BK1-03 *The Darkest Knight*.



ADVENTURE REWARDS

Upon completing the adventure, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include special rewards, such as story awards or new downtime activities, as follows:

ADVANCEMENT AND TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

The characters receive **2 advancement checkpoints** and **2 treasure checkpoints** for completing the **story** objectives in each episode of this adventure.

- **Episode 1 Story Objective:** Defend the Gilmann granaries from sellswords.
- **Episode 2 Story Objective:** Locate the Temple of the Third Eye and defeat Mardin Thandalleve.

Important. Below is guidance for removing advancement checkpoints if the characters allow certain circumstance to occur during the adventure. **The removal of checkpoints is optional and completely at your discretion as the DM. You are not required to deduct checkpoints.**

If Shaelrynnne fell in battle during Section 3, and the church had to raise her, the characters **LOSE** one advancement checkpoint from Episode 2.

If the characters destroyed one or both of the specters in Section 4, those that participated in their demise **LOSE** one advancement checkpoint from Episode 2.

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters completing this adventure unlock the following magic item. Once unlocked, the item may be purchased once using treasure checkpoints. Once this item has been purchased, it's no longer available unless later unlocked by other means.

Death's Head Mace (Mace of Disruption). This magical mace has a long, stout handle wrapped in black leather. The top is an ornately carved skull, its mouth opened as if screaming. Curved ram-like horns protrude from temples of the skull. When it strikes an undead or fiendish foe, golden sparks, tinged with flame burst forth, and the mace rings forth a single ominous toll, as if from a large bell. This item can be found in **Appendix 4: Player Handout 1**.

SPECIAL REWARDS

The characters earn downtime and renown as outlined in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for completing the adventure and any bonus objectives.

STORY AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Champion of All Souls. For defeating the risen undead in the Church of All Souls, you have garnered favor with the clergy of the temple. You are granted special benefits for spellcasting services at the Church of All Souls. More information can be found in **Appendix 4: Player Handout 4**.

DM REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn advancement and treasure checkpoints and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the other rewards listed above.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information about DM Quests.

APPENDIX 1:

LOCATIONS & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure. Each NPC and location should have an entry with a phonetic pronunciation and information relevant to the adventure.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **Lottie Gilmann (LAH-tee GILL-mun).** The shrewd, intelligent matriarch of House Gilmann, one of the wealthiest families in Talduth Vale, Lottie is a formidable ally, and an even more ruthless foe. She brought herself up from poverty in Cormyr, and does everything she can to protect her house and their holdings in the Border Kingdoms. She believes that one of the Grand Merchant Dukes of Emrys has their sights set on gaining power outside the Vale. She has her suspicions, but wants evidence. She is a high ranking member of the Lord's Alliance in the Border Kingdoms.
Personality: Lottie is brutally honest, and ruthless in her speech. She cares for nothing other than her family and maintaining her houses wealth and position.
Ideal: Wealth and power are a privilege that requires much vigilance to keep.
Bond: My family and its position are all that matters
Flaw: I sometimes overlook propriety in the pursuit of power
- **Mathias Gilmann (ma-TIE-us GILL-mun).** The naive, slow son of Lottie, Mathias is reliant on his mother and their fortunes, since he suffered a head wound in battle years ago. He is innocent and clumsy, and honest to the point of insult. Lottie uses this to her advantage whenever it would gain the family wealth or position.
Personality: Mathias has no sense of personal space, but is very sweet and innocent, although extremely naive.
Ideal: Mother is the center of my world.
Bond: Mother is the center of my world.
Flaw: Mother is the center of my world.
- **Argus Argento (ARE-gus are-JEN-toe).** The seasoned steward of the Gilmann Granaries, Argus is a native of Talduth Vale, and devout follower of Torm. He is straightforward and blunt. He has a love of long nights of drinking, singing, and sharing tall tales of battle and glory. His loyalty to House Gilmann is unmatched.
Personality: He is has a gruff exterior, but has an honest and compassionate soul.
Ideal: I am always calm, no matter what the situation. I never raise my voice or let my emotions control me.
Bond: My word is my bond. My bond is with House Gilmann.
Flaw: I have a love of fine drink that can distract me from the task at hand
- **Shaelrynnne Gilmann (SHALE-rin GILL-mun).** The young priestess of Oghma at the Church of All Souls, Shaelrynnne is the granddaughter of Lottie, and the niece of Mathias. She was urged to join the clergy by her grandmother at a young age, and pledged into the service of Oghma, due to her love of knowledge.
Personality: She is considered by many to be the most fair in the Vale, but she doesn't think much of physical beauty. She prefers intelligence and logic to that of urges and emotion.
Ideal: Nothing can shake my optimistic attitude
Bond: I always try to help those in need, regardless of the personal cost.
Flaw: My faith in my grandmother sometimes comes at a personal price.
- **Mardin Thandalleve (MAR-den THAND-al-eve).** A young mage of Halruaan descent, Mardin was once a student of promising power. Dark powers have corrupted him, twisting his mind to follow the paths of necromancy and evil.
Personality: He is a stalwart minion of the Black Wyvern, but some other entity has forced his devotions to be split. An allip twisted his mind even further, causing him to sink into a madness from which he has no chance to escape.
Ideal: I must possess all the power and forbidden knowledge I can find.
Bond: The Wyvern can show me the true path to power.
Flaw: My mind is twisted and demented. I can't seem to grasp simple concepts at times.

APPENDIX 2: CREATURE STATISTICS

ALLIP

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +5

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The allip can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Maddening Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) psychic damage.

Whispers of Madness. The allip chooses up to three creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, or it takes 7 (1d8 + 3) psychic damage and must use its reaction to make a melee weapon attack against one creature of the allip's choice that the allip can see. Constructs and undead are immune to this effect.

Howling Babble (Recharge 6). Each creature within 30 feet of the allip that can hear it must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 12 (2d8 + 3) psychic damage, and it is stunned until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage and isn't stunned. Constructs and undead are immune to this effect.

BERBALANG

Medium aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 38 (11d8-11)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +5

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Insight +2, Perception +2, Religion +5

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages all, but rarely speaks

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spectral Duplicate (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the berbalang creates one spectral duplicate of itself in an unoccupied space it can see within 60 feet of it. While the duplicate exists, the berbalang is unconscious. A berbalang can have only one duplicate at a time. The duplicate disappears when it or the berbalang drops to 0 hit points or when the berbalang dismisses it (no action required). The duplicate has the same statistics and knowledge as the berbalang, and everything experienced by the duplicate is known by the berbalang. All damage dealt by the duplicate's attacks is psychic damage.

Innate Spellcasting. The berbalang's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). The berbalang can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *speak with dead*

1/day: *plane shift (self only)*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The berbalang makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4+3) slashing damage.

DEATHLOCK

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +4, Cha +5

Skills Arcana +4, History +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The deathlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *disguise self*, *mage armor*

Spellcasting. The deathlock is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *mage hand*
1st-3rd level (2 3rd-level slots): *arms of Hadar*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *hunger of Hadar*, *invisibility*, *spider climb*

Turn Resistance. The deathlock has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

ACTIONS

Deathly Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) necrotic damage.

DEATHLOCK WIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 37 (5d8+15)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +4

Skills Arcana +3, Perception +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The wight's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *disguise self*, *mage armor*

1/day each: *fear*, *hold person*, *misty step*

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wight attacks twice with Grave Bolt
Grave Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) necrotic damage.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

None of the creatures in this module are new monsters. All of the creatures are from the *Monster Manual*, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*, or another published hardcover adventures by Wizards of the Coast.

For monsters with a new name, use the information below to determine from what original source the monster comes.

- **Mardin Thandalleve.** Reskinned **Hobgoblin Devastator** from *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, pg 161, with a change in spell selection.
- **Sellsword.** Reskinned **Black Earth Guard** from *Princes of the Apocalypse*, pg 195.
- **Sellsword Warlock.** Reskinned **Warlock of the Archfey** from *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, pg 219.
- **Sellsword Wizard.** Reskinned **Hobgoblin Devastator** from *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, pg 161.

MARDIN THANDALLEVE (THE NECROMANCER)

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 11 (14 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 45 (7d8+14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Netherese

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Arcane Advantage. Once per turn, Mardin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a damaging spell attack if that target is within 5 feet of an ally of the Mardin's and that ally isn't incapacitated.

Army Arcana. When Mardin casts a spell that causes damage or that forces other creatures to make a saving throw, he can choose himself and any number of allies to be immune to the damage caused by the spell and to succeed on the required saving throw.

Spellcasting. Mardin is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *chill touch*, *fire bolt*, *toll the dead*

1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *see invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *fireball*, *counterspell*

4th level (1 slot): *vitriolic sphere*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

SELLSWORD

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Intimidation +1, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sellsword makes two melee attacks.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Unyielding. When the sellsword is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.



SELLSWORD WARLOCK

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (14 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 49 (11d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +2, Deception +6, Nature +2, Persuasion +6

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Netherese

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The warlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *disguise self*, *mage armor* (self only), *silent image*, *speak with animals*

1 /day: *conjure fey*

Spellcasting. The warlock is a 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *eldritch blast*, *friends*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *vicious mockery*

1st - 5th level (3 5th-level slots): *blink*, *charm person*, *dimension door*, *dominate beast*, *faerie fire*, *hold monster*, *misty step*, *phantasmal force*, *seeming*, *sleep*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Misty Escape (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).

In response to taking damage, the warlock turns invisible and teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. It remains invisible until the start of its next turn or until it attacks, makes a damage roll, or casts a spell.

SELLSWORD WIZARD

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 45 (7d8+14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Netherese

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Arcane Advantage. Once per turn, the wizard can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a damaging spell attack if that target is within 5 feet of an ally of the wizard's and that ally isn't incapacitated.

Army Arcana. When the wizard casts a spell that causes damage or that forces other creatures to make a saving throw, he can choose himself and any number of allies to be immune to the damage caused by the spell and to succeed on the required saving throw.

Spellcasting. The wizard is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *fire bolt*, *ray of frost*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud*, *magic missile*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (1 slot): *ice storm*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

SPECTER

Medium undead, lawful neutral (usually chaotic evil)

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common (normally can't speak, but knows all languages it knew in life)

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

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

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 8
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	2 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny maggot. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* The target is infested by 1d4 rot grubs. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these rot grubs. After this time, these rot grubs are too far under the skin to be burned.

If a target infested by rot grubs ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the rot grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target.



WIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wight makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+1) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8+9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

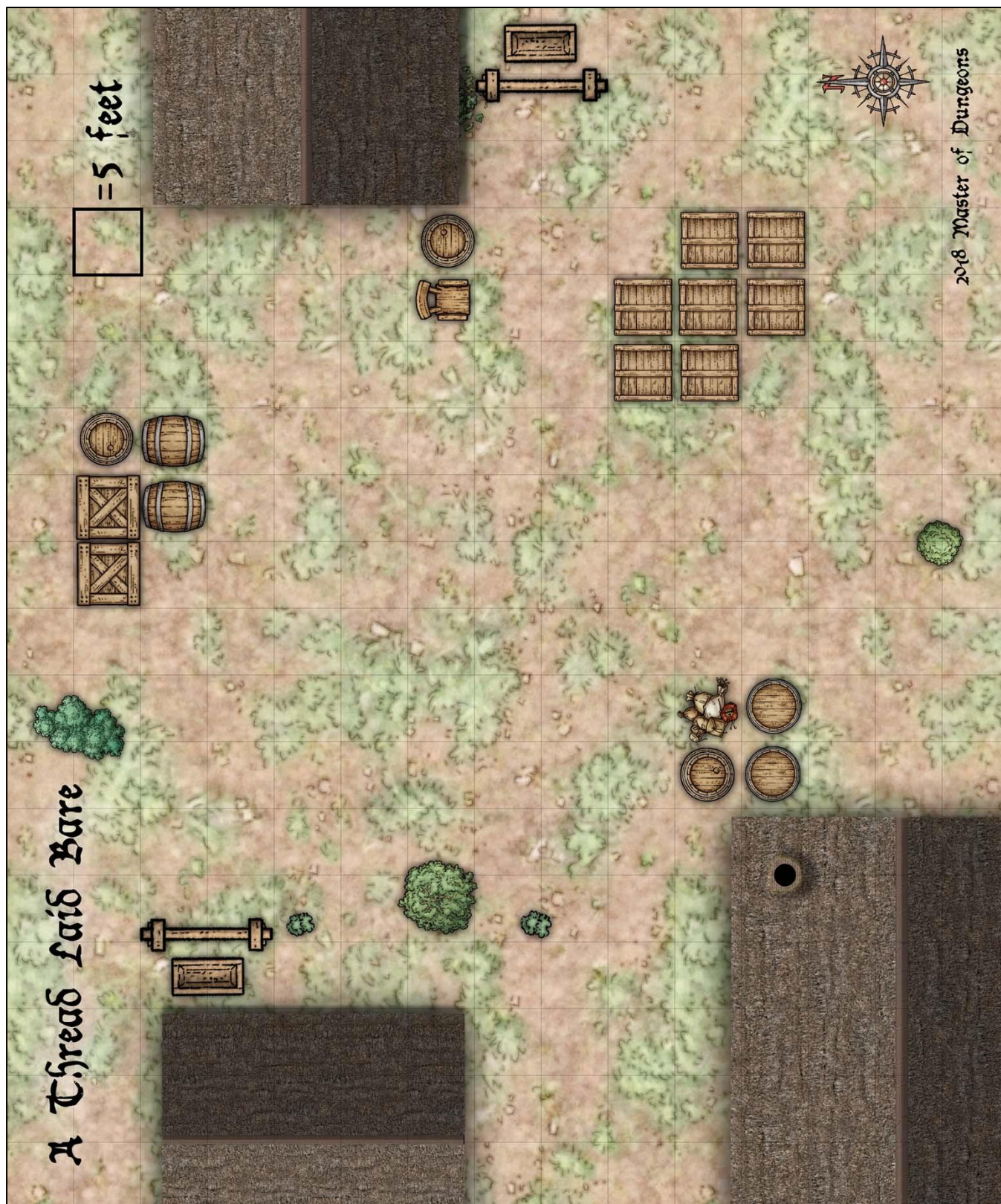
Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 +the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

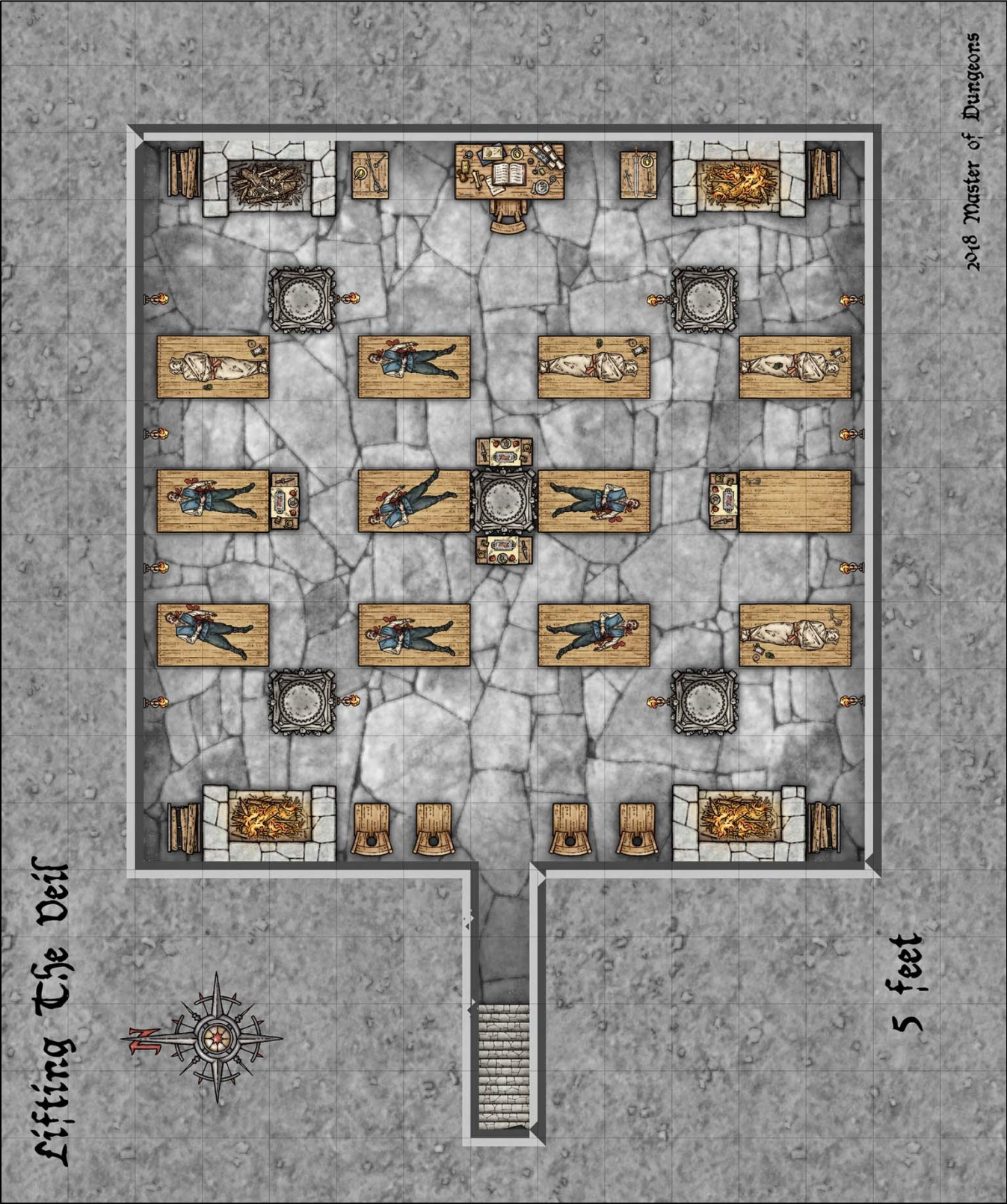
Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.



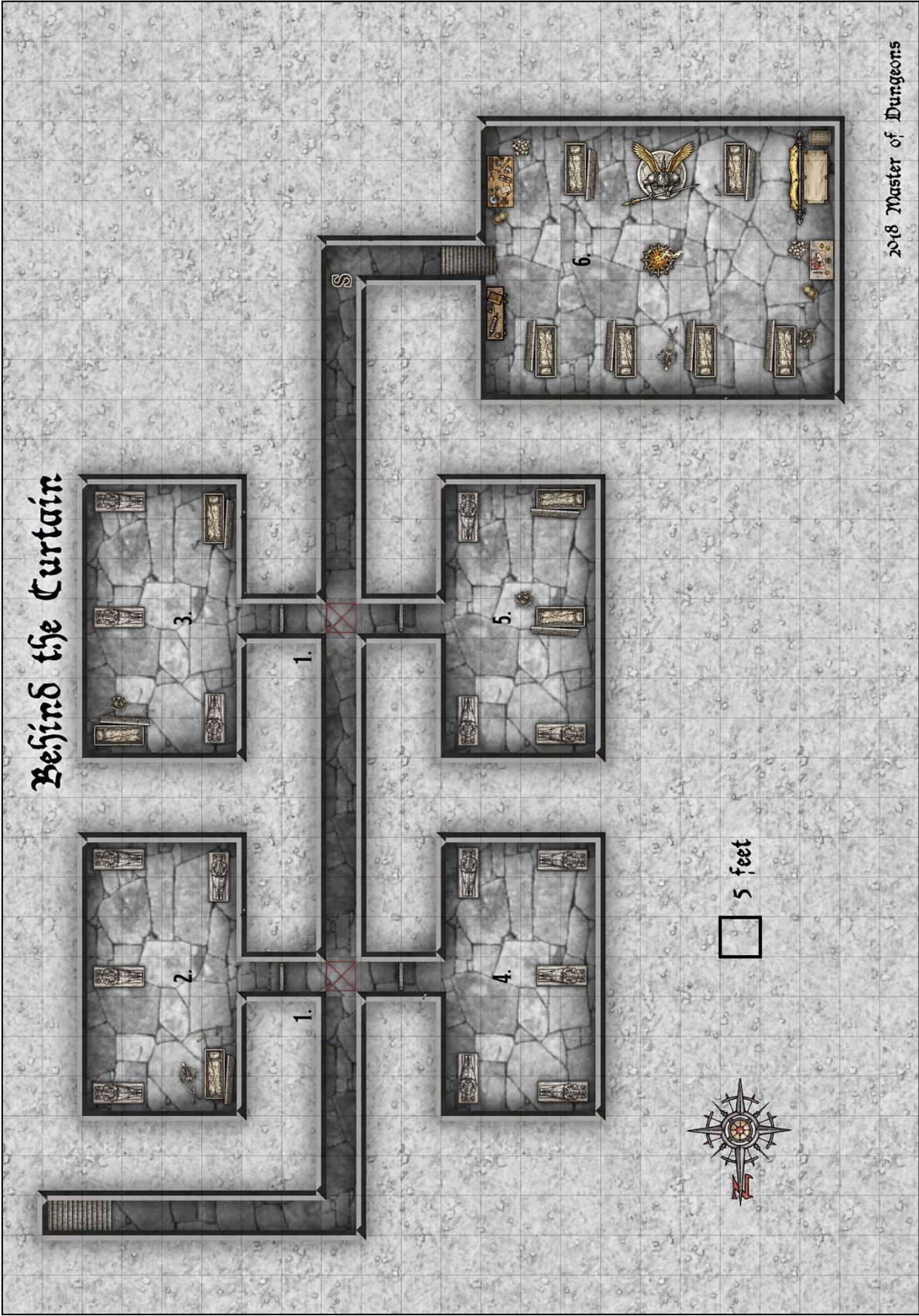
APPENDIX 3: MAPS - A THREAD LAID BARE



APPENDIX 3: MAPS - LIFTING THE VEIL



APPENDIX 3: MAPS - BEHIND THE CURTAIN



APPENDIX 4:

PLAYER HANDOUT 1 - MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters completing this adventure unlock the following magic item. Once unlocked, the item may be purchased once using treasure checkpoints. Once this item has been purchased, it's no longer available unless later unlocked by other means.

DEATH'S HEAD (MACE OF DISRUPTION)

Weapon (mace), rare (requires attunement), Table G

This magical mace has a long, stout handle wrapped in black leather. The top is an ornately carved skull, its mouth opened as if screaming. Curved ram-like horns protrude from temples of the skull. When it strikes an undead or fiendish foe, golden sparks, tinged with flame burst forth, and the mace rings forth a single ominous toll, as if from a large bell.

When you hit a fiend or an undead with this magic weapon, that creature takes an extra 2d6 radiant damage. If the target has 25 hit points or fewer after taking this damage, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be destroyed. On a successful save, the creature becomes frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

While you hold this weapon, it sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet.

Special. This item has the harmonious minor property. Attuning to it takes only 1 minute.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPENDIX 4:

PLAYER HANDOUT 2 - MARDIN'S SPELLBOOK

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following mundane item:

MARDIN'S SPELLBOOK

Mundane Item

The binding of this tome is torn and worn, with scratches and rips on the front and back. It is rather non-descript, but many of the pages without spells are filled with insane sketches of cruel, alien beasts. Pages without sketches or spells are filled with nonsensical scribbles and ravings of a mad man.

Due to Mardin's twisted mind, scribing the spells from this spellbook into your own are more difficult than normal. The Savant class feature from a wizard's particular Arcane Tradition may not be used when copying spells from this book (see the Your Spellbook sidebar in the *Player's Handbook* on pg 114).

Mardin's spellbook contains the following spells:

1st level: *fog cloud, mage armor, magic missile*

2nd level: *blindness/deafness, Melf's acid arrow, see invisibility*

3rd level: *animate dead, fireball, counterspell*

4th level: *vitriolic sphere*

APPENDIX 4:

PLAYER HANDOUT 3 - MARDIN'S JOURNAL EXCERPT

Last entry...

...The black horse with burning hoof I did spot again, its rider in shadow. Does it stalk me? Write it in the stacks, fill it with the words. I can almost see it done. I think I'll make another batch for soon I shall have none!

Middle Entry...

...Today I received the package from the mysterious stranger who says he works for the Wyvern. It was full of alchemical supplies, as well as a few scrolls to aid my research. The message it contained was simple. Go to the Barrow of the Third Eye, and set myself to researching the animation of the dead. Since I arrived, I sense the presence of something sinister in the Barrow...something I nor the stranger know about...it haunts my dreams...

Early Entry...

...In my search to garner the magical knowledge I seek, I have encountered a figure called the Black Wyvern. The figure is always in disguise, so it is hard to tell whether it is man or woman, human or elf. The voice is disguised by magic or a well practiced performance. It took a while to meet the Wyvern, but after performing many odd jobs, and curious assignments, I was brought to what I suspect was a large building of sorts (from the echoes of my footsteps and the closing of doors), outside the boundary of Emrys to meet in secret. I was blindfolded, but once we reached the end of the journey, I found myself in a finely decorated room, before being blindfolded again upon leaving...I am not sure...I will try to retrace my steps, eventually.

APPENDIX 4:

PLAYER HANDOUT 4 - STORY AWARD

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy. Alternatively, have them take a picture with their mobile device:

CHAMPION OF ALL SOULS

You heroically defended the Church of All Souls in the Border Kingdom town of Emrys against an attack from foul undead creatures. The clergy of all the different faiths that worship there are greatly indebted to you.

Whenever you are adventuring in or around the town of Emrys, you may visit the Church of All Souls, and, regardless of your faith, request one spell a day from the Spellcasting Services table for free (as if you had the Acolyte Background). The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any is required. Once you have used this story award five times, remove this feature, but keep the story award. It might be of use in the future.

APPENDIX 5:

DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience and consideration.

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate 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

A NOTE ON OBJECTIVES

This adventure has a standard linear progression. The characters have a primary objective in each section. However, there are two encounters in Episode 2 where the party could potentially **LOSE advancement checkpoints**. If you opt to deduct checkpoints, you should make the players aware of the possibility of this happening, though you do not have to be specific.

Important. The removal of checkpoints is **optional** and completely at your discretion as the DM. You are not required to deduct checkpoints!

A WORD TO THE WISE

This is the first module in a long storyline that may take a couple of years or more to see to fruition. There might be questions the players have that you cannot answer. That is okay. Keep them on track and let them know their questions might well be answered in a future adventure. Have fun!

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NEW TO THE BORDER KINGDOMS STORYLINE?

Gamehole Con has been granted the ability to develop CCC (Convention Created Content) adventures for the Border Kingdoms. No other convention or organization outside of Wizards of the Coast has been granted this ability. Their region guide was written by Ed Greenwood and [you can get your copy on dmsguild.com](#). Border Kingdoms adventures can be run just the same as any other Adventurers League-approved content.

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A plethora of great Dungeon Master advice can be found all across the internet. New DMs are urged to purchase a copy of the Dungeon Master's Guide and join our Facebook ([player group](#) and [DM group](#)) and [Twitter discussions](#).



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