

CCC-PRETZ-PLA01



THE MYSTERY AT COPPERTOP MANOR PLAGUESTONE TRILOGY, PART 1

A mysterious plague has struck the town of Glister and now bodies have gone missing from the local cemetery! The grave keeper has noticed strange lights at the abandoned manor on the hill.

Can the adventurers stop the plague and solve The Mystery at Coppertop Manor?

A Two to Four Hour Adventure for Tier 1 Characters. Optimized for APL 3



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

"I lost some time once. It's always in the last place you look for it."

-Neil Gaiman

BACKGROUND

Rol the Mad created the Plaguestone an aeon ago at the Necroforge to destroy the kingdom of Thar. The stone did its job and soon the kingdom was nothing more than a memory. Rol the Mad reigned over the region of darkness and death until a hero in gilded armor came forth and deposed him. Alas, the hero could not destroy the artifact. So, he covered it in lead and buried it deep under a mountain of copper. Soon the lands flourished, and people settled the region again. As the long ages have passed, Rol the Mad has been forgotten along with the knowledge of the Plaguestone.

Standing alone on the hill is Mr. Wendell Bentriss' stately Coppertop Manor, a symbol to Glisters' prosperous beginnings. The Bentriss Copper Mine was a major source of opportunity and income for Glisters, until about 50 years ago when the mine went bust. Shortly after he discovered a strange green stone in his mine it went dry, and he and his family disappeared. The manor has since fallen into disrepair. His daughter Ginna has recently returned and rediscovered the Plaguestone artifact and has put it to nefarious use.

EPISODES

The adventure is spread over three episodes that takes approximately two hours to play.

Episode 1: Hostel Hospice. The players arrive at Glisters and speak with the guards, the warrior priests of Tempus, or Ginna, and her orderlies. They then will see Hobb. This will lead episode 2.

Episode 2: Mansion Manners. The players investigate the cemetery, talk to the groundskeepers and find clues here that lead to Coppertop Manor and the mysteries of episode 3.

Episode 3: Thang'ard You Made It. The party must expose the cult and stop the Plaguestone ritual.

BONUS OBJECTIVES

This adventure includes two bonus objectives that the characters can pursue if they have additional time to do so—earning additional **advancement and treasure checkpoints** in the process. These

bonus objectives are found in this adventure's appendices, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: Pyre Liar.** The players can further investigate the burning of the bodies outside of Glisters to determine if there is a truth to be found there? See **Appendix 5**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Tinder Moment.** Renny Tinderhobb is a small halfling ghost who has lost his kobold doll and cannot rest until it is found. Will the players be able to put this young spirit to rest? See **Appendix 6**.

EPISODE SEQUENCE

Depending on your time constraints, play style and environment, this adventure will take approximately two to four hours to play.

HOW WILL YOU PLAY?

The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately two hours. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by pursuing the bonus objectives.

Main Objective Only. To complete the adventure's main objective, the characters participate in Episodes 1 through 3 in order. However, you may include the opportunity to pursue bonus objectives.

Bonus Objectives. You can extend this adventure by one or two hours by including opportunities for the characters to pursue the bonus objectives.

These objectives branch off from Episodes 1, 2, or 3 but their order is fluid—they set the scene for the final episode and may even have an impact on the events that transpire.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- **Dying for Love.** The characters have loved ones in the town that have come under the effects of the plague. It is imperative that they solve the mystery quickly before they lose their loved ones.
- **Hobb in Need.** Constable Hobb has put out a call for adventurers to help his beleaguered deputies in securing the cemetery and ending the theft of the dead.
- **Sequestered.** The warrior priests of Tempus have locked themselves away in the House of Swords and refuse to leave. The leaders of Hulburg have asked that you discover why. Give the players **Player Handout 1**.

The Plague

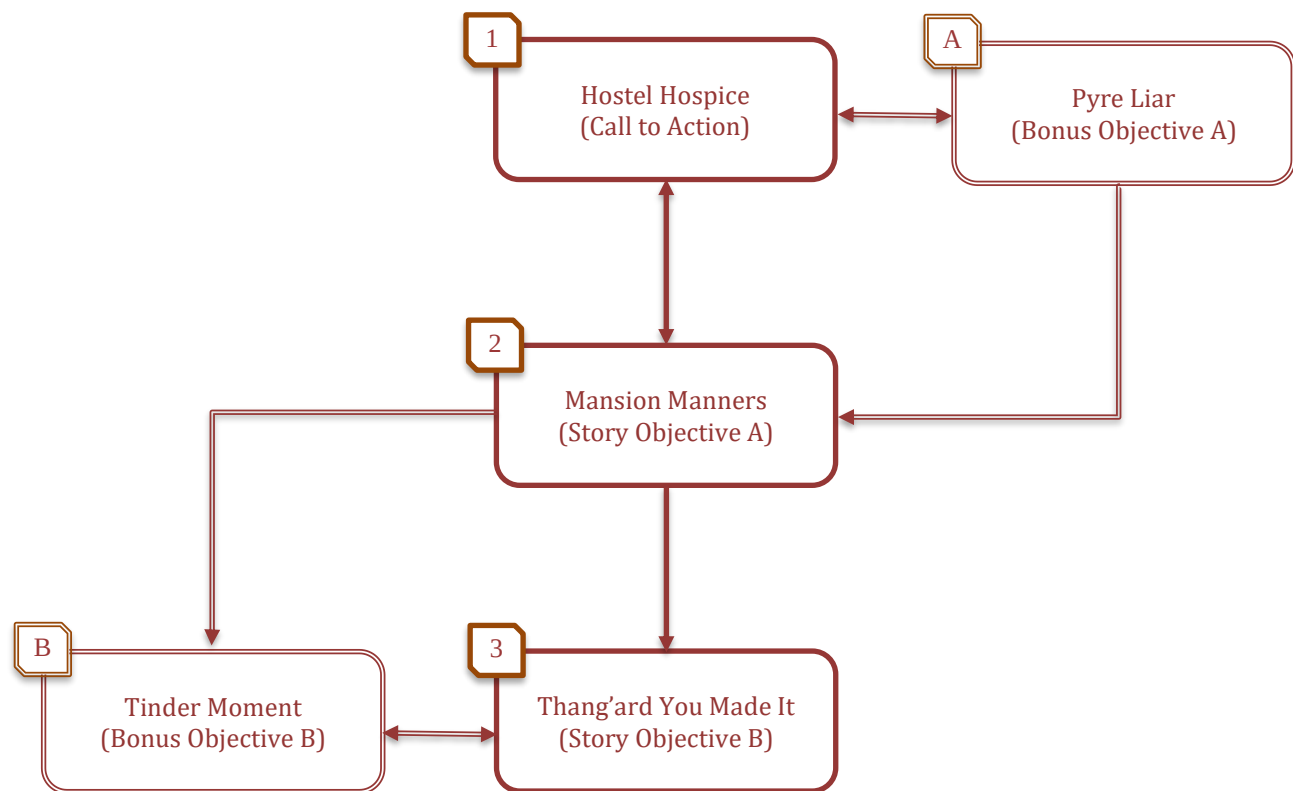
The plague that has struck the town of Glistar is not a normal disease, but instead it is a curse brought about by an evil ritual being performed on an artifact known as the Plaguestone.

- Everyone in Glistar and within 300 yards of the town gates will have been exposed to the curse.
- At every rest a character must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion.
- After three successful saves a character gains immunity from the cursed disease and its progress stops, all current exhaustion levels remain.
- While the ritual on the Plaguestone is in effect the levels of exhaustion cannot be reduced through a long rest.
- Once the ritual is stopped the curse will be lifted and the standard rules for exhaustion will resume.



Episode Flowchart

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the episode, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



Episode 1: Hostel Hospice (Call to Action)

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

CALL TO ACTION

The characters have found their way to the small mining town of Glistar at the base of the Galena Mountains. Once here they will have the following goals.

- The first objective of the adventure is to discover evidence of who is stealing bodies from the cemetery.
- The second objective of the adventure is to infiltrate the cultist lair and stop the ritual that is causing the plague on Glistar.

SCENE A. HOSTILE HOSPICE

The adventurers arrive to the small mining town of Glistar to find that it is in a terrible state. The gates are closed, and a series of medical tents are set up outside near the northern wall.

This part of the adventure allows players to visit any of the locations in any order that they wish. When the players get past the city gates, they are to arrive at the Constable's office, unless they are going straight to the cemetery in which case move them on to **Episode 2**. At any time if the players suspect Ginna and return to the tent hospital she will be gone; her orderlies do not know her location.

Rounding a corner, noonday sun beating down over head, the road up the Galena foothills gives way to a fork towards the north where you can see a mighty fortress carved into the hillside with the markings of Tempus upon its shuttered doors.

The main road continues to the west another 400 yards to the walled town of Glistar. Its gates are closed, two weary guardsmen standing before them.

Beyond the walls rises a mist covered hill upon which looms a lonely manor with a patinaed copper roof.

Directly to the right of the north end of the gate there is a great deal of activity around the medical tents set up outside the wall.

You hear the wail of children and the cries of those afflicted. Something terrible has taken hold.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. This area is comprised of six large white medical tents in a muddy field, the House of Swords north of town, the gates of Glistar

and the funerary pyre behind a hill (**Bonus Objective A**). The ground is stirred up and muddy due to the large amount of traffic. What isn't mud being rocky makes it all *difficult terrain*.

Sounds & Smells. Moans and cries echo down the valley. The sounds of suffering pervade the chilly air. The smell of mud, death, human waste mix with the distant scent of smoke.

CREATURES/NPCs

Ginna (female half-elf **Priest**) is a middle aged half-elven woman who looks exhausted. She has tawny, brown hair and a sallow complexion. She seems to be working endlessly to help those afflicted. Ginna has a pleasant disposition but is short with anyone who asks too many questions, she is tired, busy and would rather not be bothered.

Objectives/Goals. Ginna is the one behind all the pain and sorrow. Her father Wendell Bentriss destroyed her comfortable life when he uncovered the Plaguestone over 50 years ago. After Ginna's mother died, Wendell went mad, so she lost everything. She has since taken up with the necromancer Thang'ard and his cult. Having rediscovered the Plaguestone she is now using its power to kill off the populace of Glistar and send the deceased to Thang'ard for his necromantic ambitions.

What Does She Know? Ginna has about a dozen orderlies (**cultists**) to handle the load and at least 4 times that number of patients. Ginna or her orderlies will briefly talk with the party:

- The plague started two tendays ago.
- It seems to spread randomly.
- It kills those afflicted within 7 days.
- Victims of the plague get weaker and weaker before they perish.
- Some people have survived the plague.
- Those that survive stay in their weakened state.
- Just over two dozen people have died so far.
- Up until three days ago the dead were sent to the grave keeper Daeomer for interment.
- Three days ago, it was revealed that the graves of the recently deceased had been disturbed and their bodies had gone missing.
- Constable Hobb has decided to burn the bodies of the dead instead of interring them.
- If using **Bonus Objective A: Pyre Liar**. Mention that pyres have been set up just south of the road out of sight of the town behind a hillock.

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SCENE B. OH, TEMPUS WHERE ART THOU?

The House of Swords is carved out of the hillside down the road from Glistar with its gates closed and shuttered. When the door is knocked upon or if the priests are called out, a peephole slot will open and a dwarf in a chainmail coif and Tempus tabard will look out.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The gates are 40 ft. high with shuttered and locked doors.

CREATURES/NPCs

Stalwart Galia (female dwarf **Priest**) throws open the shuttered peephole

“Er, what do ye want? ‘eve ben expectin’ na business wit’ anyone. Move along if ye know whats gud fer ya!”

Objectives/Goals. Galia is interested in protecting the House of Swords from being overrun with the plague. She is not fearful but stubborn in her goal. An affliction like this cannot be bested with strength of arms, so until the plague dissipates, the warrior priests will remain sequestered.

What Does She Know? Stalwart Galia will answer a few brief questions before closing the peephole for good:

- They lost brother Hsu to the plague after he spent 5 days in town.
- Warlyon Sorrep Korial, the high priest of Tempus will not reopen the House of Swords until the plague has passed.
- They are few in numbers and cannot risk losing any more members.
- Talk to Constable Hobb, he is looking for adventurers to end this plague.

SCENE C. GATED LOGIC

The mining town of Glistar is nestled between two mountains with a short length of 40 ft. high wall running between them separating the town from the valley below. The muddy/rocky road ends at a gate house with a pair of **guards** posted in front.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The 30 ft. wide gates are closed. The 40 ft. walls are not manned.

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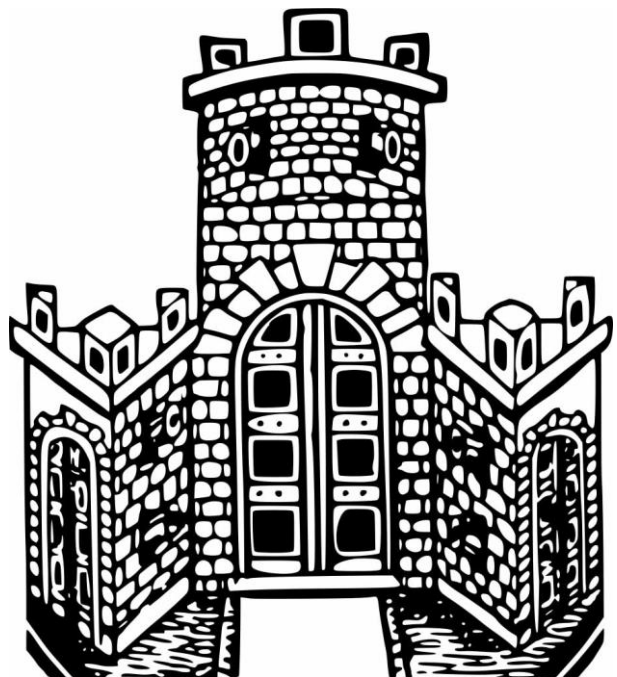
CREATURES/NPCs

A pair of **guards** stand on either side of the gate to Glistar. They look both tired and bored. Each of them has recovered from contact with the plague and both suffer from one level of *exhaustion*.

Objectives/Goals. The guards are to keep the gates closed unless letting trade caravans through. No visitors are allowed for their own safety. Unless someone has official business, they will not let anyone pass.

What Do They Know? They will not let anyone pass unless it is for official business, or if Constable Hobb is mentioned by name. They could also easily be persuaded with a bribe of 5gp to let the party pass. Speaking with them reveals:

- They have both recovered from the plague, but most have not been so lucky.
- They are still weak from the disease, but it is no longer progressing for them.
- Their bout with the plague was a tenday ago.



SCENE D. Hobb's BET

Once the players make it past the gates and into Glister, they may wish to visit the head of law enforcement, Constable Denny Tinderhobb. In later episodes the players will most likely return to talk to Hobb again.

As you stroll through Glister, every building seems to be shut tight. The small wooden building that houses the constabulary, the only one that even looks to have a soul in it, can be described as rustic at best.

As you enter, the spotlessly unadorned walls are in stark contrast to the cluttered and overflowing desk of the constable.

Wearing a large plumed hat, pipe hanging from his mouth, his unshod feet resting upon a pile of papers on his desk, the two ft. nine Hobb is hardly imposing. Yet when he finally stands, and straightens himself to face you, it is understood that he means business.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The 30ft. x 30ft. wooden building that houses the constabulary also has six 5ft. x 5ft. cells to detain prisoners. They are seldom used and currently empty.

CREATURES/NPCs

Constable Denny Tinderhobb (male stout halfling **veteran**) and his 4 healthy deputies (**scouts**) manage the law in the town. There are 4 other deputies who are not at their posts, as they have fallen ill. When the need arises Hobb will supplement his deputies with ranks from the town guard (**guards**) but only with permission from the town council.

Objectives/Goals. Denny Tinderhobb, hates being called Hobb, though everyone calls him Hobb. He is gruff and down to earth, wears a hat and smokes a pipe. He may grumble a lot, but he just wants to do right by everyone.

He has deemed Coppertop Manor off-limits because it's decrepit and dangerous, his young son

died there two years ago. He will arrest anyone entering it without permission if they are caught.

Hobb is looking for help to investigate the cemetery and find out where the bodies have gone from the disturbed graves.

What Does He Know? Hobb will take time to answer any questions the players might have:

- The plague started about two tendays ago, with no obvious patient zero.
- Reports of plague victims being exhumed and then stolen came to him only three days ago from his deputies.
- He doesn't trust the grave keeper Daeomer as he obviously has covered up the theft of the bodies.
- Hobb ordered the bodies to be burned rather than interred to prevent the thefts and protect the populace.
- Coppertop Manor, the manor overlooking the town, is off limits in the investigations.
- Hobb wants you to immediately bring him any evidence that is found.
- If asked about Coppertop Manor he lets the party know that it was once the Bentris family home. Mr. Wendell Bentris owned a copper mine and was very influential in early days of Glister. Wendell, his wife and daughter disappeared, and the mine was abandoned 50 years ago.
- A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince Hobb to temporarily deputize the party and allow them access to Coppertop Manor. This check is made with advantage if they have brought him any evidence that leads there. i.e. the cultist medallion and Taak's testimony.
- Hobb will not recognize the symbol on the medallion when it is brought to him, but suspects that Daeomer is involved.
- With a DC 20 Charisma check, he will reveal that the death of his son at Coppertop Manor is the reason for restriction on entering the manor.
- Once the secret of his son's death is revealed, he will add that Daeomer had a chance to stop Renny from entering the manor but didn't.

Episode 2: Mansion Manners (Story Objective A)

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

SETTING DESCRIPTION

The adventurers arrive at the graveyard to investigate. They meet the unique grave keeper, Daeomer, and his helpers, Gremin and Taak. What they find there will lead them to explore the house up on the hill, to delve into its secrets.

As the late afternoon sun edges towards the peaks to the West, long shadows gather among the grass between the tombstones. You climb a steep bank to the flattened area of the hillock that is the graveyard of Glistar. Across the yard to the East is a small windowless shack.

Further up the hill to the north is a lone manor house with boarded up windows and a patinaed roof, mist clinging to the hilltop around it.

Traversing the stones and tombs you come upon two young men playfully arguing beneath a lone tree, shovels lay at their feet. They stop and turn to look at you as you approach.

PREREQUISITES

The players will arrive from **Episode 1 scene A.** or after talking to Constable Hobb in **Episode 1 scene D.** in addition **Bonus Objective A.** also leads directly to here.

AREA INFORMATION

The graveyard rests on the side of a hill topped by the titular Coppertop Manor.

Dimensions & Terrain. The graveyard is flat and covered in soft grass. The hillside itself is difficult terrain due to its pitch.

Lighting. There is cool mist that hangs around the top of the hill making the area lightly obscured.

Smell. The smell of freshly turned dirt hangs in the air with a hint of decay.

OBJECTIVES

The characters need to investigate the disturbed graves and discover evidence of who or what might have caused the disturbances.

SCENE A. FRATERNAL TRUTHS

When the party approaches, the half-orc Gremin, will step forward and ask what they are doing.

CREATURES/NPCs

The two young men, Gremin and Taak, (male half orc and male half elf **commoners**) are the greens keepers and assistants to Daeomer (male human **Champion**), the grave keeper of Glistar.

Objectives/Goals. Gremin and Taak are the best of friends, they love a hardy tussle, a crude joke and good drink. At night, when the mood strikes them, they sneak up to Coppertop Manor to a secret hollow beneath the willow tree to enjoy libations. Gremin, the half-orc, is mostly quiet and reserved, with a steel will that won't crack under pressure. This is in stark contrast to Taak, who generally feels guilty most of the time, and will fold like a greeting card with the slightest confrontation.

What Do They Know? Gremin and Taak have a special relationship, but not a great work ethic. Lately they have been given the task of filling in empty graves, which leave them lots of time on their hands. If questioned about Daeomer, Taak will immediately point to the shack. Further questioning will only result in grunts from Gremin, but Taak will spill any of the following:

- The most recently dug graves started being disturbed two tedndays ago, as soon as the plague started.
- Daeomer didn't want Hobb to find out the graves have been disturbed and had Gremin and Taak fill the graves back in.
- One grave was disturbed just last night. Taak will show them which one it is.
- DC 15 Wis(Perception) check to find the medallion next to the open grave. See **Player Handout 2.**
- Some nights they sneak up to Coppertop Manor, there is a secret spot they spend time at.

The Symbol.

If asked about the symbol on the medallion, Daeomer has never seen the symbol, but Taak shows some recognition. On a successful DC 8 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check Taak tells the party that he saw that symbol at Coppertop Manor. See **Episode 2 scene C.** A separate DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check can convince him to accompany the party and show them where it is. A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check will sway Gremin to go as well.

SCENE B. A FRIEND OF DEATH

The off-kilter door to this small grey shack wobbles as you rap upon it. The echo of each knock gives you the sense that a much larger space is contained within.

After several minutes you hear an elderly man cursing. Minutes pass before you hear the locks and chains being released. The door opens just a crack.

Shocks of stark white hair match the pale skin of the wrinkled and dour looking grave keeper. He shields his eyes as he looks you up and down.

Peering past him you see that the dirt floor is dug up in the center of this spartan shack. A ladder leads into the darkness below.

Giving a little hiss the man croaks "The sun, it hurts. What do you want with old Daeomer? Come back when it isn't so bright?"

CREATURES/NPCs

Daeomer (male human **Champion**) will not invite the players inside his abode. Pushing the players back with surprising strength and locking the door until time has passed. He is only willing to talk to the players once the sun has gone past the mountains, about 15 minutes from when they arrive.

Objectives/Goals. Daeomer is a slow, yet feisty gentleman that has seen at least 8 decades. He lives in the shack at the end of the cemetery, which looks more like a tomb than a home. His bedchambers are beneath the shack, six-foot underground. His eyes are very sensitive to the sunlight, so he stays inside when the sun is high overhead. He will not speak of his past, but he is a retired adventurer and is unnaturally strong. All of this should make him seem at least ambiguously human. Even though he looks frail and walks slowly, he is tough as nails and won't take any gruff off anyone.

What Does He Know? Once dusk has taken hold, Daeomer will be more willing to speak to the party:

- He has worked there for 50 years.
- He doesn't trust Hobb, since that accident involving his boy. Hobb let his young son wander up into that abandoned manor, where he got himself killed.
- He once travelled quite a bit but will not elaborate.
- His shack is where he lives now, yes underground, it's cool in the summer and warm in the winter, no it's not weird.

- About two months ago he noticed strange lights up at the abandoned manor.
- When asked about the manor, he will say that it was once the Bentriss family home. Mr. Wendell Bentriss was a human who owned a copper mine and was very influential in early days of Glister.
- Wendell, his elven wife, and his daughter disappeared 50 years ago after the mine dried up.
- The Bentriss Manor was once a beautiful place sporting a shining copper roof edged in elvish filigree of Mrs. Bentriss' homeland.

Covering Up

Daeomer will not admit to covering up the missing bodies without a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Once that is discovered he will reveal.

- He was hiding the fact that graves had been disturbed because he is responsible for the cemetery yard and takes his job seriously. It's all he has left and doesn't want to be seen in a poor light.
- Graves started being disturbed two tendays ago as soon as the plague started, but before any deaths from it.
- The latest grave to be disturbed was last night. Taak and Gremin were supposed to fill it in today, but they haven't.
- Daeomer will take them to the disturbed grave, then spouts curses about how lazy and useless Gremin and Taak are when he finds it has yet to be filled in,

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will discover a copper medallion with a strange symbol on it, in the dirt next to the open and empty grave. See **Player Handout 2**. If the players don't find it Daeomer picks it up and shows it to the players.

Daeomer will insist that the players fill the open grave back in and keep it secret from Hobb. "*it ain't none of his business*" If the players refuse, or hesitate in the least, Daeomer will start doing it himself.

Evidence.

The players may wish to go back to Constable Hobb at this juncture. They can present Taak as a witness and/or the medallion as evidence that more is going on at Coppertop Manor.

TREASURE & REWARDS

The **medallion** displayed in **Player Handout 2** is six inches in diameter made of bronze and copper.

- **Monetary Treasure.** The cultist **medallion** is an art object that can be purchased for 10gp if a player wishes to keep it.

SCENE C. WILLOW FIND A WAY

The abandoned manor rises from the perpetual mist that clings to the hilltop. A small path splits off towards a dead willow tree, which sorrowfully stands watch over the front door. As you approach, you notice that the doors and windows are boarded up.

A search of the grounds around the willow tree may reveal the hidden entrance bearing the marking from the medallion found with the cultist.

AREA INFORMATION

The grounds of the abandoned Bentris manor, known as Coppertop, are as follows:

Dimensions & Terrain. The hill is *difficult terrain* and the mist will partially obscure the ground. Make any search below waist level at disadvantage. The manor is boarded up tight.

Lighting. There is cool mist that hangs around the top of the hill making the area lightly obscured. Such that whether by the full moon or midday sun, the area will only ever be considered dimly lit.

What Do They Know? Neither of the young men know anything about the cult or what the symbol means, they only recognize it from the secret door in the hollow under the tree. If the players are searching the grounds without the help of Taak or Gremin, they will need to succeed on a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check, at disadvantage due to the mist in order to find a secret entrance into the cultist lair. Once inside see **Episode 3. Scene A. Storage Wards.**

Breaking and Entering

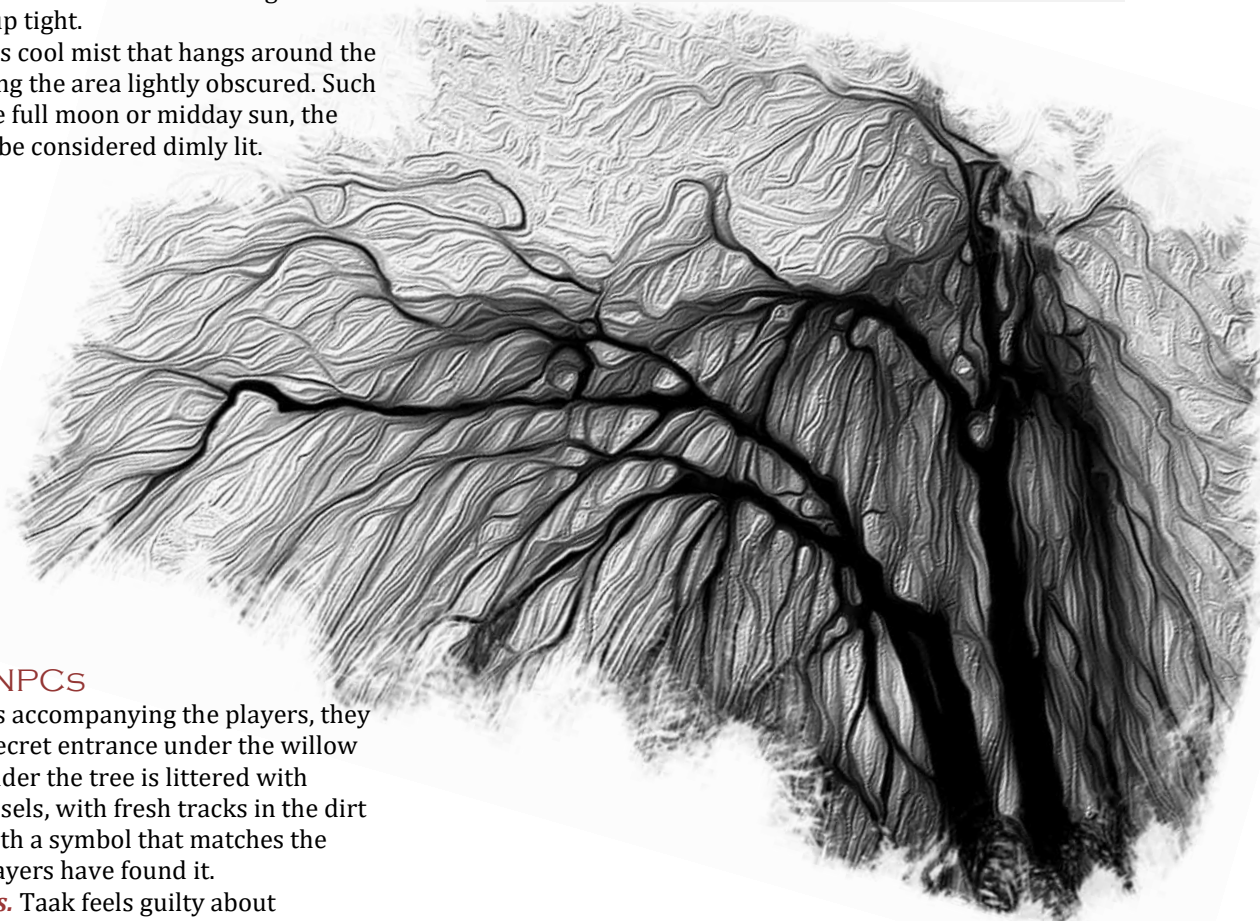
The party will need to have attained permission from Constable Hobb to explore the manor and its grounds or they will be breaking and entering. **See Story award: B&E**

CREATURES/NPCs

If Gremin or Taak is accompanying the players, they will point out the secret entrance under the willow tree. The hollow under the tree is littered with empty drinking vessels, with fresh tracks in the dirt leading to a wall with a symbol that matches the medallion, if the players have found it.

Objectives/Goals. Taak feels guilty about sneaking up here when it was not allowed. He is afraid of getting in trouble with Hobb. Gremin doesn't want to give up his nice secluded spot, but if he has been convinced already to show the party, then he understands the greater threat is from those who have been using the secret entrance.

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SCENE D. PRY THE DOOR

Once the party reaches the main entrance of the manor, they can remove the boards from the front door or try to find another way in.

- Passive Perception of 10 or higher notice that the boards on the doors and windows are very recently done.
- Passive Perception of 15 or higher notice that the boards on the second floor are a couple years older and skip many locations.
- A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check is needed to remove the boarding, at advantage if a crowbar is used. Once inside see **Scene E. Secret Symbol** below.
- If doing **Bonus Objective B**, then a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check is required to climb to the second floor window. Once inside see **Bonus Objective B. Scene A. Tinder Moment**.

SCENE E. SECRET SYMBOL

While searching in the basement, the party will discover a trap door with the same marking as the medallion from **Player Handout 2**.

As you turn the corner, you see a 3ft diameter copper plate set into the floor. It bears an odd symbol on its face that matches the medallion you found earlier. A slot is notched into the floor in front of the plate.

Sliding the medallion into the slot will cause the copper plate to drop down and slide over revealing a passage with ladder leading down into darkness. See **Episode 3. Scene A. Storage Wards**.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

This episode is primarily social, but if you have time and the players are anxious for a fight introduce **Scene B. Rise**, from **Bonus Objective A**, once it has gotten dark at the cemetery.

The rest of episode is primarily exploration but if you have time and you are planning on doing **Bonus Objective B. Scene B. Piles of Excitement**. The combat with the rat swarms follows once they party enters the front door.

EXPLORATION

If the players are more interested in Daeomer's windowless shack it is locked (DC 25). If they manage to sneak inside they will find that is bare bones with a hole dug into the earth and a ladder descending into the darkness to his bed chambers. He sleeps in a crypt type of room with an open sarcophagus lined with furs. The entire place is dimly lit with candles.

SOCIAL

If pressed, Gremin will get defensive, but Taak will act nervous and be willing to tell the players anything with the slightest provocation DC 8 for Taak and DC 20 for Gremin.

It is possible to have captured a cultist during one of the bonus objective encounters. If brought to the house, they show the party the secret entrance with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check. If the check is not successful, the cultist sends the players upstairs to deal with Renny, see **Bonus Objective B. Scene A. Tinder Moment**.

Episode 3: Thang'ard You Made It (Story Objective B)

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

SETTING DESCRIPTION

The party has reached the lair of the cult of Thang'ard which are performing the ritual on the Plaguestone that is causing the sickness in Glistar.

PREREQUISITES

The players will be arriving from either **Episode 2. Scene C. or E.** or from **Bonus Objective B Scene A.**

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The hallways are 10 ft. wide, worked stone 12 ft. in height. The doors are solid oak, bound in iron, and locked, requiring a DC 12 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) or a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to open.

Lighting. The area is brightly lit with torches ensconced every 20 ft.

OBJECTIVES

The party must infiltrate the cultist lair and stop the ritual being performed on the Plaguestone.

SCENE A. STORAGE WARDS

The players find a storage area with stacks of bodies all tagged for shipment.

Stepping into this chamber your senses are assailed by the stench of death. Bodies in various stages of decay are stacked high like cord wood along the walls. At least two dozen in number all tagged and labeled as if for shipment. There is a door on the other side of the room and a cabinet along the eastern wall.

Preserved

Most of the bodies have been preserved with a *gentle repose* spell. *Detect magic* will show an aura of necromancy. The animated zombies and will show a strong aura of necromancy.

CREATURES/NPCs

While investigating, the party is surprised when **four zombies** and a **ghoul** animate and attack!

Objectives/Goals. The Zombies have been animated by the cult to protect the inner sanctum and their merchandise (bodies)

What Do They Know? Brains....

Anyone inspecting the tags will find that these bodies are to be shipped to Thang'ard, somewhere in Thar. **See Player Handout 3.**

- A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check will recall that Thar was once ruled by an evil necromancer.
- DC 18 Intelligence (History) check will further recall that the necromancer was named Rol the Mad.
- Passing with a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check will also recall that Roll the Mad destroyed the previous kingdom with a plague from an artifact.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Remove one **ghoul** and two **zombies**.
- **Weak:** Remove two **zombies**.
- **Strong:** Remove three **zombies** add one **cult fanatic**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **cult fanatics**.

TREASURE & REWARDS

A hobgoblin zombie is wearing a pair of red gloves constructed of articulated boiled leather, **The Gloves of Chakalakhan**.

The locked cabinet contains 7 **cultist robes** and 2 **bone skull masks**.

- **Monetary Treasure.** **Bone skull masks** are art objects that can be purchased for 5gp each if a player wishes to keep one.
- **Magic Item.** **Gloves of Swimming and Climbing**

The War Gear of Chakalakhan

The war gear of Chakalakhan, gloves, boots and mask, are fabled items that once belonged to the great Hobgoblin Warchief Chakalakhan. Goblinoids will tend to recognize the authority of the wielder of these items.

SCENE B. CULT CUTTERS

The players move deeper into the cult sanctum and encounter some cultist that are distracted with a game of cards.

Entering this chamber, you see robed figures sitting around table, cards scattered about it. They startle and jump when they see you, drawing wicked curved blades.

CREATURES/NPCs

The players encounter **two** skull masked **cult fanatics** and **two** cowed **cultists**.

Objectives/Goals. Two of them will try to cut and run to warn their leader at the inner sanctum.

What Do They Know? The cultists want to warn their leader of the intruders.

- If captured they can be coerced, DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check, to tell the players about the Plaguestone ritual.
- A DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation) check will reveal that they have been collecting the dead in order to ship them to Thang'ard in the wastes of Thar.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **cult fanatics** add three **cultists**.
- **Weak:** Remove one **cult fanatic** and one **cultist**.
- **Strong:** Add two **cultists**.
- **Very Strong:** Remove two **cultists** add two **cult fanatics**.

TREASURE & REWARDS

The cult fanatics wear **bone skull masks**

- **Monetary Treasure.** **Bone skull masks** are art objects that can be purchased for 5gp each if a player wishes to keep one.



PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The zombie wearing the magic gloves can climb the walls, make that weird and fun!

The cultists are not as into all of this as the cult fanatics. The cultists will surrender or run away if dropped to half their hit points. Cult fanatics will fight to the death.

EXPLORATION

The cabinet containing the cultist robes and masks is locked DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) or a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to open.

SOCIAL

It is possible to infiltrate the cult itself by convincing one of the cult fanatics that you are there to join. DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check to trick them

SCENE C. INNER SANCTUM

The players come upon the ritual being performed upon the Plaguestone.

A greenish mist spills out into the hall as you open the door to this cold stone chamber. A group of cultists chant around a bloody plinth. Upon the plinth is chained a tablet of greenish-blue stone, flecked in red; its left corner broken away at an unnatural angle.

At the back of the room a set of stone steps rise up from the mist to a dais where a masked and robed figure sways chanting in unison with the cultists.

Thang'ard, issuk kossuk, Thang'ard issuk kossuk, thangard issuk kossuk, THANG'ARD ISSUK KOSSUK!

The Plaguestone

Created by Rol the Mad an aeon ago, it is an evil artifact that cannot be easily destroyed. Encasing it in lead kept it dormant for ages, but when Wendel Bentris found it in his copper mine 50 years ago he scraped the lead from the front half and its power quickly took the life of his wife. Driven mad, he abandoned his position in town and left his young daughter to fend for herself. After the stone had taken its toll on his family, he re-encased it in lead and buried it back in the copper mine where he found it. In his ensuing madness he took his own life, leaving Ginna an orphaned half-elf no one would take in. At the age of ten Ginna wandered off into Thar alone, returning to Glisten as a disciple of Thang'ard to rediscover the stone and bring about her revenge on the town that abandoned her.

The stone is a tablet of greenish-blue stone flecked in red. Its surface is as smooth as soapstone, glistening as if it is wet, but dry and cool to the touch. The Plaguestone is about 2 ft. by 3 ft. weighing 26 lbs.

Although the stone is indestructible, it appears that the lower left corner is broken off and missing. The back portion that is lying on the plinth is still covered in lead.

- While at least one cultist is chanting, the Plaguestone puts out waves of exhaustion.
- On initiative count 20 anyone within 60 ft. of the Plaguestone must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion.
- After three successful saves a person gains immunity from the curse and its plague progress stops.
- All current levels of exhaustion remain until the ritual is ended. At which time they can be recovered as normal.
- Silencing the chanting stops the waves of exhaustion from being emanated.
- Removing the stone from the bloody plinth **will end the ritual** and release Glisten from this plague.
- The Plaguestone is chained to the plinth. DC 15 Dexterity check with Thieves' tools to unlock or DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break the chains.

CREATURES/NPCs

The leader, a **Priest**, is flanked by four masked **cult fanatics**, plus the others that came to warn the leader from the previous room.

Objectives/Goals. The leader, who appears to be female, is wearing an ivory skull mask, and is protected by the *sanctuary* spell (DC 16) which is being projected from the Plaguestone. When her guards are taken out she will try to escape through a secret passage behind her that leads up to the first floor behind the stairs.

What Do They Know? The cult leader is Ginna, the nurse from the tent hospital at the start of the adventure. She leads the Thang'ard Cult in performing this ritual each night to spread the plague throughout the town of Glisten. The cultists then collect any dead from the infirmary or from the fake pyre to ship out to Thang'ard in Thar.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Replace the four **cult fanatics** with four **cultists**.
- **Weak:** Replace two **cult fanatics** with two **cultists**.
- **Strong:** Add one **acolyte**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **acolytes**.

Once the ritual is ended, the green mist will dissipate and those that had been afflicted by the plague can recover from any levels of exhaustion normally.

If the party defeated the entire cult in the sanctum, unmasking the leader reveals that it is the nurse Ginna!

TREASURE & REWARDS

The Plaguestone can be hauled out and handed over to the local authorities, Hobb and his deputies. The leader Ginna wears an **Ivory Skull Mask**. The cult fanatics wear **bone skull masks**.

- **Monetary Treasure.** **Bone skull masks** are art objects that can be purchased for 5gp each and the **Ivory Skull Mask** in an art object that can be purchased for 100gp if a player wishes to keep them.
- **Special Rewards.** The **Plaguestone** is a story object that persists while in the Plaguestone trilogy. For this part of the trilogy, it will be turned over to the authorities i.e. Hobb.

SCENE D. CONSTERNATIONS OF THE CONSTABLE

If the cult leader escapes up the secret staircase, she will encounter Constable Hobb and his deputies, who will arrest her along with anyone else who is on premises illegally by not gaining prior authorization to be there. **See story award B&E**

CREATURES/NPCs

Constable Hobb, a **veteran** and his **four** healthy deputies, **scouts** arrive with **four guards**.

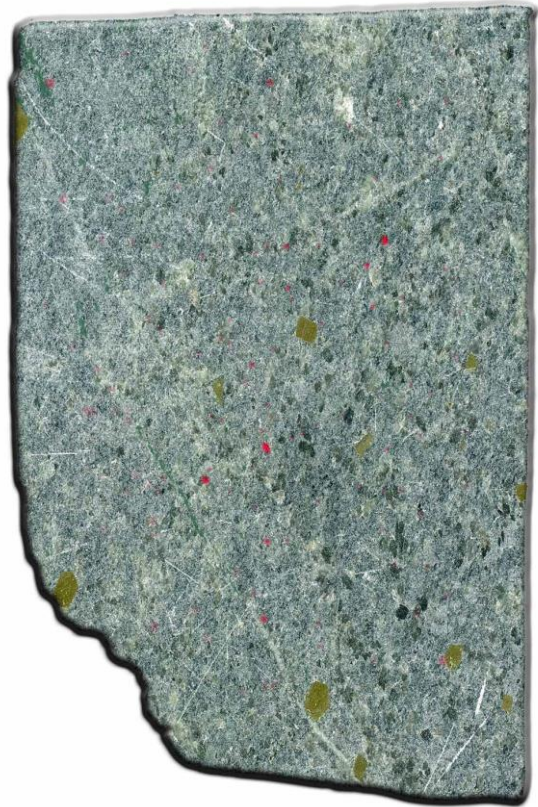
Objectives/Goals. They have been called to the manor by the sounds of combat and will arrest anyone who is on the premises without prior permission. The players included. All will be manacled.

What Do They Know? Unmasking the cult leader reveals that it was the nurse Ginna all along!

If the party never followed Ginna up the stairs or defeated her before she could escape, then Hobb and his deputies will be waiting for them outside of the manor and arrest them for breaking and entering if they had not already gained prior authorization to be on the premises. **See story award B&E**

TREASURE & REWARDS

Denny Tinderhobb will either confiscate the Plaguestone or accept it from the players. He may wish to reward them for their service if they have not broken any laws.



PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The cultists are not as into all of this as the cult fanatics. The cultists will surrender or run away if dropped to half their hit points. Cult fanatics will fight to the death. Hobb and his deputies will use force if necessary.

EXPLORATION

It is possible to sneak into the inner sanctum with the party disguising themselves as cultists, once they gather enough garments. There is also a secret entrance to the inner sanctum from the first floor. It requires a DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discover from upstairs. From the inner sanctum the door can be noticed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

SOCIAL

It is possible to infiltrate the cult itself by convincing one of the cult fanatics that you are there to join. DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check to trick them

WRAP-UP: CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Hobb and his deputies have confiscated the Plaguestone for further study by the elders and seers.

The plague has ended, and Glistar will again see the light. It will take time for the people and commerce to recover. A recent influx of unlikely refugees from Thar is supplying the town with a needed boost in eager workers, be they goblin or not.

Players who spoke with the warrior priests at the House of Swords may wish to return there to ensure them that it is safe to leave their secluded fortress.

From the information gathered by the players it has been discovered that the exhumed bodies were being sent to a location deep in Thar for some nefarious reason. The authorities will need to investigate further. Their only clue is the name Thang'ard.

The story will continue in part two...

Adventure Rewards

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

ADVANCEMENT AND TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint and **1** treasure checkpoint for each **story** objective **that** they complete, as follows:

- **Story Objective A:** Obtain evidence of who is responsible for disturbing the graves.
- **Story Objective B:** Stop the ritual on the Plaguestone

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint and **1** treasure checkpoint for each **bonus objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A:** Discover what is happening at the Pyre and witness the cultists at the cemetery.
- **Bonus Objective B:** Help Renny Tinderhobb pass on.

PLAYER REWARDS

The characters earn the following player rewards for **completing the adventure**:

CONSUMABLE MAGIC ITEMS

While doing **Bonus Objective B**, the characters may find the following consumable item:

Spell Scroll of Ceremony. This item can be found in **Appendix 13**.

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters completing the adventure unlock:

Gloves of Climbing and Swimming. The rust colored Gloves of Chakalakhian are constructed of articulated boiled leather. While wearing these when you strike an enemy you hear faint fragments of the ancient battle song of the great hobgoblin war chief Chakalakhian.

This item can be found in **Appendix 13**.

STORY AWARDS

Characters playing the adventure may earn:

B&E. You entered the Manor without securing permission from Constable Hobb and have been arrested for breaking and entering. More information can be found in **Appendix 11**.

Tinder Hearts. You have put the ghost of Renny Tinderhobb to rest by reuniting him and his kobold doll. More information can be found in **Appendix 12**.

DUNGEON MASTER 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 adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*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.

- **Glister (GLI-ster).** A small mining town settled by humans between Thar and the Galena mountains. It currently the in the grips of a terrible plague.
Personality: Steadfast and determined to make it despite its many recent setbacks.
Ideal: Fair trade and honest work for all races
Bond: The hills and mines beneath them are ours to protect and profit from.
Flaw: Goblins and miners are at about the same regard in the eyes of the town's elites.
- **Constable Hobb (tin-der-HOB).** A halfling named Denny Tinderhobb is the law in the town of Glister. He has made the haunted manor off limits due to a personal tragedy that took place there.
Personality: Determined to do the best that he can with what he has.
Ideal: To do his very best for everyone and to treat them fairly by the law.
Bond: His dead son Renny Tinderhobb. He wishes only that his boy's spirit could pass on.
Flaw: He remembers every slight against him and when he takes a dislike to you it sticks.
- **Daeomer (DAY-ohm-er).** An 80-year-old "human" who is the tough as nails grave keeper. Former adventurer but won't speak of it.
Personality: Stubborn as a mule and tougher than two.
Ideal: To be left the heck alone, a little respect wouldn't hurt neither.
Bond: Dedicated to keeping the graveyard in tip top shape.
Flaw: Doesn't like to be seen as weak or feeble or unable to perform his duties.
- **Ginna (JEEN-ah).** Half-elf female of middle age, she is a nurse with a sweet disposition. She has a deeper connection to the old ruins of Coppertop, as the daughter of the former head of the house before it fell into ruins. She is secretly the cult leader and has been collecting bodies to sell to the necromancer Thang'ard.
Personality: Vengeful and conniving, a master deceiver with kind eyes and a warm smile.
Ideal: To destroy the town of Glister and gain the favor of her new master Thang'ard.
Bond: She is completely loyal to Thang'ard's goals.

Flaw: Willing to destroy her family home and namesake for her new master.

- **Gremin and Taak (grem-IN; TALK).** A couple of sturdy young lads. Gremin is a quiet and stoic half-orc. The half-elf Taak on the other hand has a conscience and can't keep a secret.
Personality: Gremin is tight lipped and only really interested in having a good time. Taak is much more conscientious and can't keep a secret.
Ideal: Gremin's ideal is to make enough money so that he can leave Glister and see the wider world. Taak wishes for more time in the sun and under the willow tree.
Bond: The young men are fiercely loyal to each other even though Taak tends to spill the beans and get them into trouble.
Flaw: Gremin always has his eyes on the future and Taak is stuck in the moment and reliving the past.

Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Acolyte

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Medicine +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. The acolyte is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The acolyte has following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (3 slots): *bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Champion

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8+44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Indomitable (2/Day). The champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).

As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The champion makes three attacks with its greatsword or its shortbow.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Cult Fanatic

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dark Devotion. The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spell casting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

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

Cultist

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) slashing damage.

Ghoul

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Ghost

Medium undead (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

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 11

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost 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

Withering Touch. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6+3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 ft. of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed

with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 ft. of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Guard

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Priest

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

ACTIONS

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Scout

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

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CCC-PRETZ-PLA01 The Mystery at Coppertop Manor

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

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

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

Swarm of Insects (Beetles)

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 20ft., burrow 5ft., climb 20ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8
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 rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer

Swarm of Rats

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 24 (7d8 – 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	11 (+0)	9 (–1)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	3 (–4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Smell. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

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 rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Veteran

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Zombie

Medium undead, lawful 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 all languages it spoke in life but can't speak

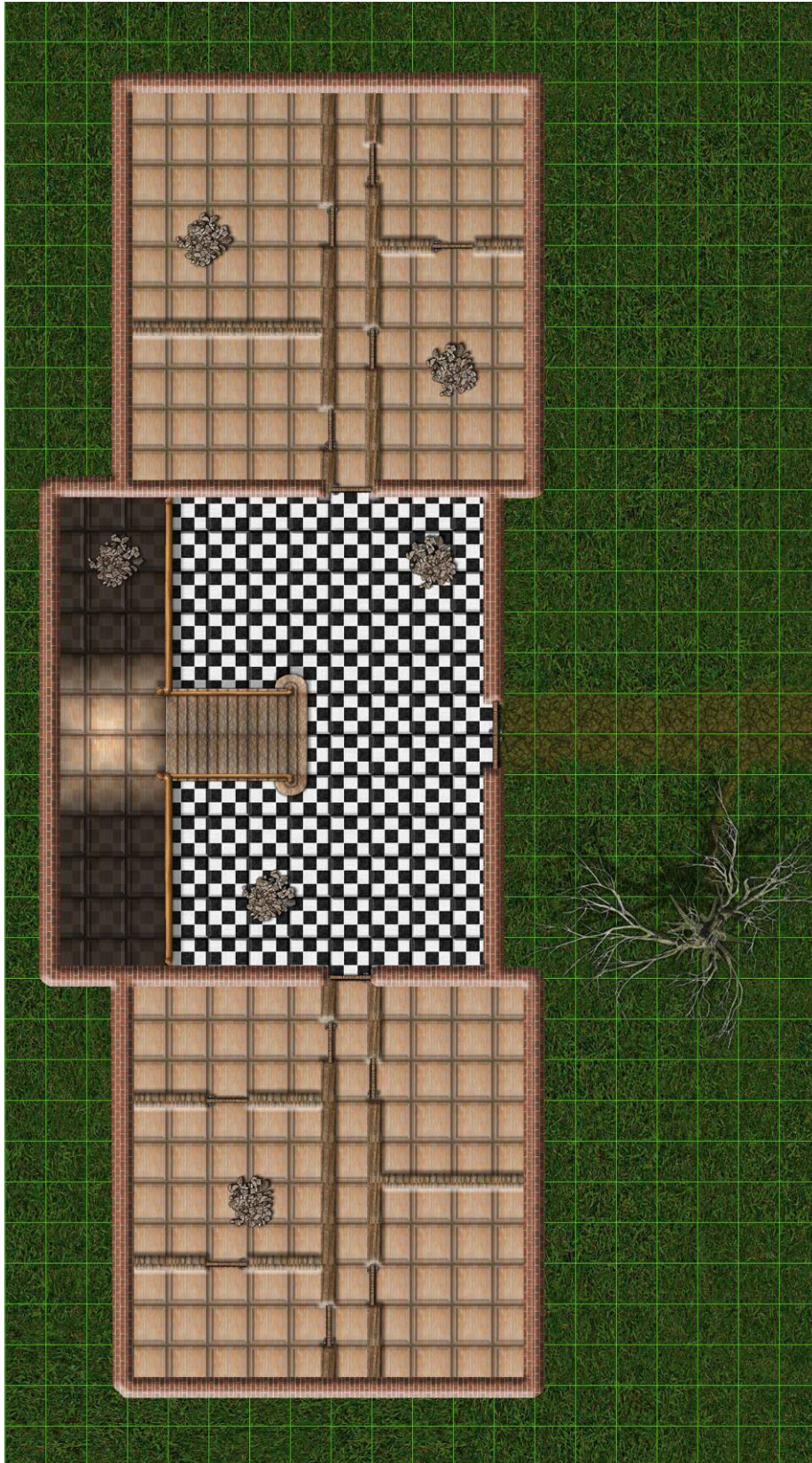
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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.

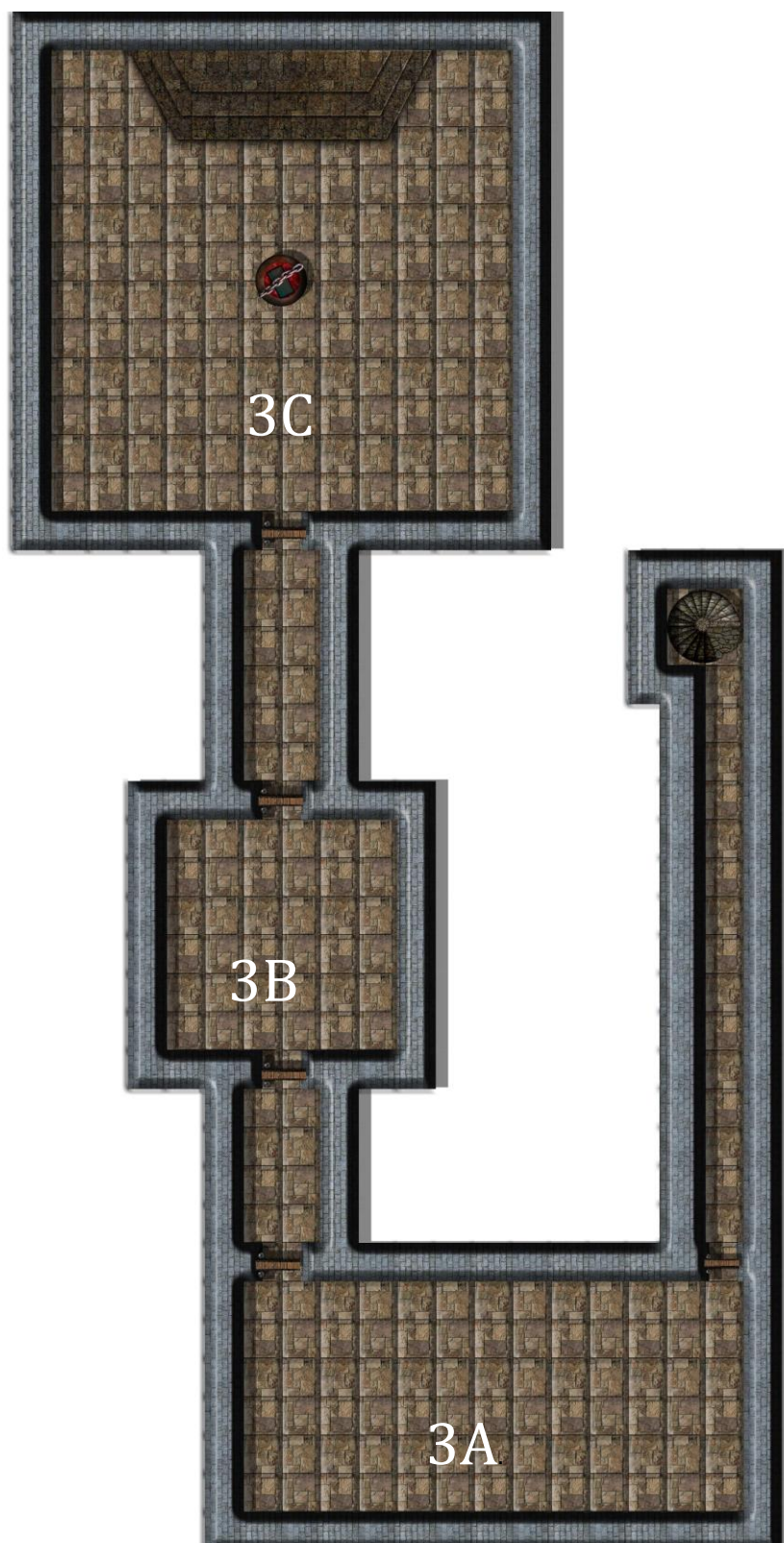
ACTIONS

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

Appendix 3: Coppertop Manor Map



Appendix 4: Cult Lair Map



Appendix 5: Pyre Liar (Bonus Objective A.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

SETTING DESCRIPTION

South of the road into Glister behind a hillock constable Hobb has set aside an area to burn the bodies of the deceased from the plague.

PREREQUISITES

The players can arrive from **Episode 1 scene A., B., or C.** It is also possible to arrive here at a later stage in the investigation, time permitting.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The small hillock conceals the burning pyres from the town gate and main road into Glister. A muddy cart track leads around the hill to an area filled with thick smoke.

Lighting. The smoke keeps the area *lightly obscured*.

Smell. The smell of burning thatch and cord wood fill the air.

OBJECTIVES

The players need to determine that the bodies are not being burned at the pyres and witness the cult's activities at midnight in the graveyard.

SCENE A. SMOKE AND MIRES

Following the path around a small hill you see the source of the smoke, a large pyre of almost bonfire proportions burns with two attendants feeding the flames with an occasional log. Your eyes sting from the smoke as it wafts around the area. A lone mule munches greedily on a pile of hay that sits next to stacks of cord wood besides a tarp covered cart.

CREATURES/NPCs

A **cultist** and a **cult fanatic** are tending to a large bier upon which a great smoking fire is burning. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) Check, made at disadvantage due to the smoke, will reveal that there are no bodies in pyre, but plenty of hay and wood.

Objectives/Goals. They have been smuggling bodies from the tent hospital in the cart when they go through the town gate during shift change. Carting them up to their lair under Coppertop Manor in the dead of night. None of them have been burned. Only wood and hay are being burned to create the smoke.

To avoid suspicion the cultist try to steer the party towards Daeomer or Hobb, suggesting that they have something to hide.

What Do They Know? If questioned the attendants will reveal:

- The lack of bodies is because they are waiting for the next delivery of deceased from the tent hospital. (False)
- They kept the pyres burning for the last three days, it's easier than restarting it each time. (Partially true)
- They work in 8-hour shifts. (True)
- Constable Hobb ordered the pyres after he discovered that bodies had been going missing at the cemetery. (True)
- Daeomer runs the cemetery, he didn't want anyone to know graves had been disturbed. (Mostly True)
- They are orderlies working for Ginna. (Truer than you know)
- If convinced by the players with a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check the cult fanatic will reveal that they have a ritual planned for midnight at the cemetery. (True)

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Replace the **cult fanatic** with a **cultist**.
- **Weak:** Remove the **cultist**.
- **Strong:** Remove the **cultist** add one **cult fanatic**.
- **Very Strong:** Add one **cult fanatic** and one **cultist**.

TREASURE & REWARDS

Each cult fanatic carries a **bone skull mask**. The players will also find a piece of parchment with a note scratched into it **See Player Handout 4**.

- **Monetary Treasure.** **Bone skull masks** are art objects that can be purchased for 5gp each if a player wishes to keep one.

SCENE B. RISE

Following the lead given by the cult fanatic in **Scene A** or if the players wish to stake out the graveyard overnight they will encounter visitors at midnight.

As an eerie fog descends from the hilltop, glowing headstones peak above the sea of mist in the moonlight like a flotilla of the lost. The mists and dim shadows seem to converge on a set of graves...

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The ground is soft and grassy keeping sounds muffled.

Lighting. The mist and moonlight keep the area *lightly obscured*.

CREATURES/NPCs

An **acolyte** and 4 **cultists** sneak into the graveyard. Roll a group stealth check for them with advantage due to the dim light and the mist to see if they go unnoticed by the party.

Objectives/Goals. The cultists are here to raise some zombies as practice and tribute to Thang'ard their cultist obsession. The zombies will be useful to the cult and can later be shipped to Thang'ard's lair in Thar.

If the cultists are not immediately discovered and confronted they manage to raise 4 **zombies** before combat starts, otherwise the zombies will rise in the second round of combat and join the fray.

What Do They Know? If captured or confronted the **Acolyte** will enlighten the party:

- They must get back to the inner sanctum or "she" will be angry.
- Thang'ard is bringing death to the living and life to the dead with a relic of great suffering.
- Glister is just a test of the true power of Thang'ard.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **acolyte**, two **cultists** and three **zombies**.
- **Weak:** Remove the **acolyte** and one **cultist**.
- **Strong:** Replace the **acolyte** with a **cult fanatic** remove one **zombie**.
- **Very Strong:** Add one **cult fanatic** and one **acolyte**.

TREASURE & REWARDS

One of the cultists will be carrying the **medallion** displayed in **Player Handout 2**. It is six inches in diameter made of bronze and copper. Also, each cult fanatic, if present, carries a **bone skull mask**.

Monetary Treasure. The cultist **medallion** is an art object that can be purchased for 10gp if a player wishes to keep it.

Bone skull masks are art objects that can be purchased for 5gp each if a player wishes to keep one.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The cultists are not as into all of this as the cult fanatics. The cultists will surrender or run away if dropped to half their hit points. Cult fanatics will fight to the death.

EXPLORATION

At the cemetery if the party approaches the misty graves without trying to be stealthy they may end up being surprised.

SOCIAL

It is possible to infiltrate the cult itself by convincing one of the cult fanatics or an acolyte that you are there to join. DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check to trick them. The players may also try persuading them or intimidating them depending on the situation.

Appendix 6: Tinder Moment (Bonus Objective B.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

SETTING DESCRIPTION

On the second floor in a room towards the front of the house is the ghost of Renny Tinderhobb. The halfling child of Constable Hobb who died there two years ago.

PREREQUISITES

The players can arrive here from **Episode 2 scene D.** or they may do it after completing Story Objective B in **Episode 3 scene C.**

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The second floor of Coppertop Manor is made up of broken wooden floorboards which are *difficult terrain*.

Lighting. The manor is dimly lit from the moonlight outside. When observing from the outside a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check will notice a flash of light from a window on the second floor.

Traps and hazards. The main stairs and floors upstairs are treacherous. Periodically have the players attempt to succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to avoid rotted boards that break causing them to fall through for 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Smells and sounds. The musty smell of moldy wall paper and rotted wood permeate the entire house. The sounds of creaking boards, and skittering feet can be heard throughout the manor. While inside the manor the crying of a child can be heard. DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check can determine that it is coming from the second floor.

OBJECTIVES

The players need to help the ghost of Renny Tinderhobb pass on.

SCENE A. HOLE LOT OF SCARY

The players will need to get to the second floor to find the room where Renny Tinderhobb perished.

Stepping into this room the sky glooms overhead through a gaping hole in the roof, its remnants collapsed into a pile on the floor in the center of the room. Glancing about you see partially boarded windows looking out over a dead willow tree. Along the eastern wall sits a broken desk opposed by the remains of a bed on the western wall. The only door in the room is the one on the northern wall.

A character with a Passive Perception of 12 or higher will notice the remains of tiny jacket under the rubble from the roof.

CREATURES/NPCs

As the players begin to search the room they hear a mournful wail of the **Ghost** (Alignment: NG) of Renny Tinderhobb. He manifests himself using his horrifying visage against all in the area who will need to succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become *frightened*.

Objectives/Goals. Renny will attempt frighten the players until they can prove they are not a threat. He will then ask for the return of his favorite wooden kobold doll that went missing. It will be in a random debris pile somewhere in the house. **See scene B Piles of Excitement.** The doll will need to be returned to his grave to allow his ghost to pass on.

What Does He Know? Renny will use his horrifying visage until the characters prove they are not the bad people. Once he is sure the player characters have good intentions he will appear as he was in life, a tiny halfling boy of 8 years and speak:

- Renny used to sneak up here often and explore.
- He liked to play with his favorite wooden kobold doll but lost it somewhere in the house.
- He was looking for it in this room when the roof collapsed.
- He can't leave this room, but still wants to find his kobold doll.
- The bad people came about two months ago.
- Their leader is a woman, who sounds sweet but is really mean.
- Renny scared them away so they don't bother him anymore.
- The bad people didn't want to help find his doll, they only wanted to gather as many bodies as possible for "that guard [sic]".
- If the players have found the kobold doll, Renny will hover around the person with it and anxiously ask what they have in their pocket.
- Renny will flit about excitedly once the doll is produced but he will not be able to rest and pass on until the doll is returned to his grave.
- Constable Hobb buried his son in the graveyard tended by Daeomer and either one can point out the location of the grave and give permission to enter the doll with Renny.
- A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check at the graveyard will discover Renny's grave marker location without help.

TREASURE & REWARDS

Putting Renny to rest will earn the players the **Tinder Hearts story award**.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The players can put Renny Tinderhobb to rest by destroying his ghost. If the players take this option, the rat swarms from **Scene B**. come out of the walls and join the fight.

EXPLORATION

While exploring the manor the players may encounter hazards as described in the DMG pg. 105. Feel free to add additional pit falls as necessary to keep the tension up.

SOCIAL

Talking with Renny Tinderhobb will reveal that he was a curious and rambunctious boy. The cultists have had one run-in with him and decided it was best to leave him alone. His presence keeps lookie-loos away and Ginna has more important things to worry about.

SCENE B. PILES OF EXCITEMENT

Once inside the manor the players find dusty floors and piles of debris. Exploring the debris piles the players will find *trinkets*, **mundane items**, **consumable magic items**, and swarms of critters.

The once polished marble checkered floor of the great foyer ends at a now rotted grand stair that rises the dusty floor to a broken balcony. To the left and right are a series of hallways and rooms. Piles of refuse and debris litter the rooms.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The main foyer is 60 ft. wide by 55 ft. deep with a balcony hanging over the back 15 ft. of the hall. Other rooms on this floor are generally 20 ft. by 25 ft.

CREATURES/NPCs

There are 6 piles of debris lying about the manor with 4 **swarm of rats** nestled throughout them.

Objectives/Goals. Let the players explore as many or as few as they wish but be sure they find the **wooden kobold doll** in at least one pile.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak:** Remove three **swarms of rats**.
- **Weak:** Remove one **swarm of rats**.
- **Strong:** Add four **swarms of rats**.
- **Very Strong:** Add four **swarms of insects (beetles)**.

TREASURE & REWARDS

Roll on the debris pile chart for each pile.

- **Consumable Magic Item.** A **Spell Scroll of Ceremony** may be found in one of the piles.

Debris Piles. Roll 1d4 times on this chart when searching a debris pile. One of each item per pile may be found, ignore duplicates and reroll. Roll a D4 to determine which pile list and a D20 for line item.

Roll	Pile 1	Pile 2
1	Trinket (PHB 160)	2lb bag of salt
2	Bottle of Wine	Wooden teeth
3	Mouse	Pile of feathers
4	Studded Leather	7-1" glass spheres
5	Wooden hairbrush	Live chicken
6	Small pouch	Broken spyglass
7	Iron pot	Mousetrap
8	Painting**	Axe head
9	Glass bottle	Wood Kobold Doll*
10	Broken lute	Miner's Pick
11	Fishing tackle	Set of keys
12	Bucket	Ink pot (full)
13	Dagger	Backpack
14	Wood Kobold Doll*	Glass orb (focus)
15	4 torches	Wooden pipe
16	10 bolts	Trinket (PHB 160)
17	Torn page	Large rodent skull
18	Pouch (8 stones)	Weathered Tapestry
19	Jar of Pretzels	Bag of Caltrops
20	Roll Twice	Roll Twice

Roll	Pile 3	Pile 4
1	10 arrows	Wooden toy rattle
2	Hunk of cheese	Dusty Turban
3	Signed contract***	Merchant Scales
4	Leather strap	Mummified cat
5	Scroll of Ceremony	10' pole
6	3 rations	Fishing net
7	Rubber ball	Bag of clam shells
8	Helm (broken horn)	Wooden Shield
9	Beaver skin cap	Trinket (PHB 160)
10	Trinket (PHB 160)	Block and tackle
11	Rusty manacles	Orcus plushie
12	Wood Kobold Doll*	Potion of climbing
13	Zinc Rod	Leather slippers
14	Tombstone	Flask of oil
15	Book of poems	Pack of cards
16	Dented tin crown	Spiked dog collar
17	Velvet purse	Wood Kobold Doll*
18	Abacus	Warped staff
19	Candle	Urn of ashes
20	Roll Twice	Roll Twice

* The wooden doll belonged to Denny Tinderhobb
See **Tinder Moment**

** The painting is of a young half elven girl, the plaque says *Ginna Bentriss*

***The contract is for delivery of bodies to Thang'ard signed *Ginna*.

Appendix 7: Hulburg Letter (Player Handout 1)

Over a tēnday ago wē lost contact with the House of Swords in the Galena foothills outside of the mining town of Glistēr. Word has since come to us that the warrior priest of Tempus have lost their nerve, refusing to leave the sanctuary of their fortified temple.

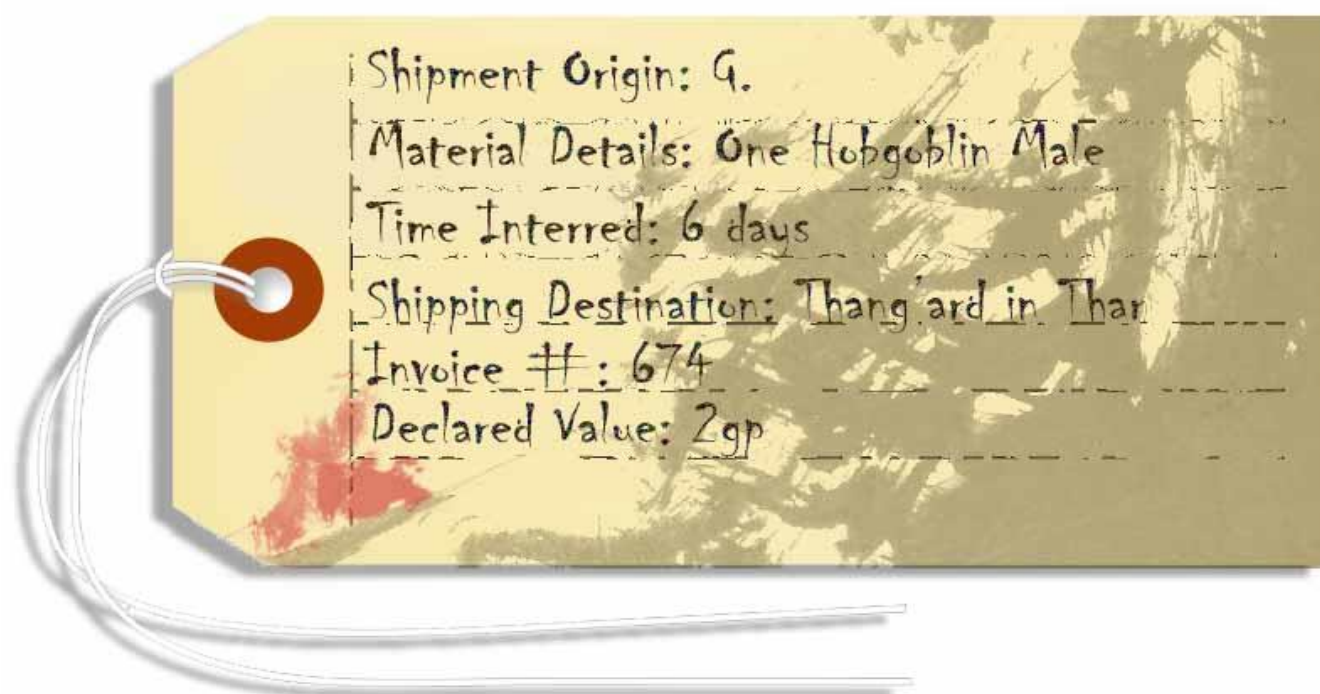
Go to Glistēr, visit the House of Swords, find out why they remain sequestered, and help to secure the area. We wish to be prepared in the case of another invasion of hostile humanoids from Thar.

Harmach Hulmaster

Appendix 8: The Medallion (Player Handout 2)



Appendix 9: Shipment Tag (Player Handout 3)



Appendix 10: Scratched Note (Player Handout 4)



THANG'ARD RISE!
MIDNIGHT AT THE CEMETERY

Appendix 11: Story Rewards (Player Handout 5)

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:

B&E

You have entered the Manor without securing permission from Constable Hobb and have been arrested for breaking and entering. You spend a day in lockup and do some minor community service before being released from the constable's charge. Glister law enforcement will be wary of your activities in town until you can prove yourself. Hobb will require some additional task in the future to clear your name completely.

Removed this story award upon completion of Part 2 of the Plaguestone trilogy: A Mine of Their Own.

Appendix 12: Story Rewards (Player Handout 6)

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:

TINDER HEARTS

You have put the ghost of Renny Tinderhobb to rest by reuniting him and his kobold doll. For doing this kindness Constable Hobb has named you an honorary deputy. Constable Hobb presents you with a deputy star and will welcome your assistance in future endeavors.

Appendix 13: Magic Item

Characters completing this adventure's main objectives unlock this magic item.

GLOVES OF CLIMBING AND SWIMMING (TABLE F)

Wondrous Item, *uncommon* (requires attunement)

While wearing these gloves, climbing and swimming don't cost you extra movement, and you gain a +5 bonus to Strength (Athletics) checks made to climb or swim. This item is found on **Magic Item Table F** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The rust colored **Gloves of Chakalakhan** are constructed of articulated boiled leather. While wearing these when you strike an enemy you hear faint fragments of the ancient battle song of the great hobgoblin war chief Chakalakhan.

*GRAY! The steel we hold
As the tides of battle rise
BLACK! The rage we feel
For our enemies must die
RED! CHAKALAKHAN
Our Warchief forever fights*

Consumable Magic Item.

Characters completing **Bonus Objective B.** may find the following consumable magic item.

SPELL SCROLL OF CEREMONY (TABLE A)

Wondrous Item, *uncommon*

This scroll contains a single *ceremony* spell detailed in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* on page 151. Spell



Appendix 14: Dungeon Master Tips

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of 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. Familiar yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated 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 Players 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, or 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 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 table below.

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