

DC-PoA-DCAF04

A Macabre Nighttal



A 2 or 4 Hour Adventure
For 1st through 4th level
Characters



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A Macabre Nightal



A Dungeoncraft - Plague of Ancients Adventure

A young elf woman returns to Lonelywood, the scene of her family's murder. But necromancy is in the air as the undead walk the roads. Can the adventurers rescue her and help her find closure?

A 2 or 4 Hour Adventure For 1st through 4th level Characters

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Adventure Primer

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

This adventure occurs in Lonelywood, one of the Ten-Towns in Icewind Dale, and is based on the *Do You Know the Way To Lonelywood?* hook from the Dungeoncraft program. Only Season 10 Characters may earn rewards from this adventure if following Adventurers League rules.

Background

Politics is a treacherous game in Faerun; one false move means death. After a crucial vote to quell the growth of necromancy in Waterdeep, the name of Masked Lord Zarev Niklaus was revealed to the public. In the wake of this news, he took his family to his estate in Icewind Dale to escape the madness. But violence followed North, killing him and nearly wiping out his family. Somehow, his daughter Natalia escaped.

Now an adult, Natalia returns to Icewind Dale seeking closure to her family's death and calm from her nightmares. But hatred lasts eternal; the deathlock Calibri who brought both curse and death upon her family has taken over their safehouse and their crypt. Calibri has figured out how to harness Zarev's ectoplasmic energy to power his undead minions, and he has sent them to chase Natalia down and finish his work.

Not all hope is lost. The Lonelywood speaker was expecting her, and comes to worry when Natalia's merchant convoy is delayed. Hastily, she calls for adventurers to look into the matter.

Overview

The adventure is spread over two parts and takes approximately four hours to play. Parties adhering to a two-hour session may skip Part 2.

- **Call To Action: *Stirring Over Tea*.** The speaker of Lonelywood enlists a group of adventurers to look into a missing caravan.
- **Part 1: *Following The Trail*.** The adventurers follow the road south towards Termalaine, eventually finding the merchants' crash site.
- **Part 2: *The Abandoned Home*. (4-Hour Session only)** The adventurers seek out Natalia's childhood home for the source of the undead seeking her death. After finding the keys in the home, the adventurers unlock the crypt and find the deathlock behind the undead.

Adventure Hooks

In For A Cup of Tea. The adventurer is a friend of speaker Nimsy Huddle and was in town for a cup of tea.

Budding Entrepreneur. The Ramshackle Inn has been closed for quite some time, but could be restored to its former glory by someone with initiative.

Everyone Has a Price. Work is scarce in Icewind Dale, and adventurers go town to town looking for any opportunity they can find.

Call to Action: Stirring Over Tea

Impatiently waiting for a convoy of merchants with her old friend in tow, Lonelywood speaker Nimsy Huddle turns to the closest adventurers available in town.

Here's The Tea

Estimated Duration: 15 Minutes

The adventure begins with the adventurers waiting around for the next adventure to avail itself. The player characters should know each other before the adventure begins; allow the players to introduce themselves before reading the box text.

The town of Lonelywood is not unkind, yet can be quite isolated. One of the northernmost towns in the desolate Icewind Dale, few people make the trek here save for loggers and the occasional desperate adventurer. For those here looking for a hire, it is almost fortuitous that the speaker, Nimsy Huddle, leaves her home with her tea in hand and her brows furrowed as she looks for assistance from whomever she can find.

Area Information

This area has the following features:

Light. Ever present clouds obscure the sun, and only dim light shines down from above; a consequence of the Rime of the Frostmaiden.

Sights and sounds. The winter air is quiet, very few walk about the streets. A small series of homes dot the sides of the few roads that make up Lonelywood.

Town of distrust. Suspicious eyes leer out of cottage windows. The town has a history of

attracting thieves and criminals. For more information about Lonelywood, see Chapter 1 of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

Creature Information

Lonelywood's speaker, a halfling **commoner** named Nimsy Huddle (she/her) exits out of her home into the street. Her furrowed brows show signs of both impatience and concern.

What does she want? Nimsy is concerned that a convoy of elvish merchants have not arrived in Lonelywood; they are already truant by two hours. Her correspondence with other towns led her to believe they would be here momentarily, but there is no sign of their arrival on the horizon. Nimsy worries about Natalia, who is the daughter of her friend Zarev, a masked lord from Waterdeep who was killed at his home nearby years ago.

What does she know? Nimsy knows that the merchants left Termalaine four hours ago; an owl with a letter flew to Lonelywood when they embarked on their journey. She shares **Appendix 4** with the characters. She divulges that Zarev Niklaus, Natalia's father, was a Masked Lord of Waterdeep, and was killed by dissidents opposing legislation that he passed in his role. The Niklaus family resided in an estate not far from Lonelywood; Natalia's trip back to the North was preempted by unsettling dreams of the past. Nimsy believes Natalia is looking for closure.

Call to Action

After explaining the circumstances, Nimsy calls upon the adventurers to find Natalia and bring her to Lonelywood safely. If the party is playing a four-hour session, she also asks them to investigate Natalia's childhood home. She agrees to pay them the typical rates for adventurers.

Part 1: Following the Trail

This segment of the adventure takes place in Caer-Dineval, a town on Lac Dinneshere. With a lack of ferry service from Easthaven, the town appears desolate, and the people seem desperate for the end of their isolation.

The Uphill Climb

Estimated duration: 15 minutes

After an hour of walking south from Lonelywood, the adventurers find wagon tracks that lead off the road. Not far from there, three hulking figures stand over a body lying in the snow.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Light. The landscape is lit with diffused sunlight. This is the default weather of Icewind Dale under the Rime of the Frostmaiden.

Sights and sounds. Tracks lead both ways on the trail between Lonelywood and Termalaine; the tracks leading off the beaten path appear fresh.

Dead body. The dead body's skin is green, their clothes are tattered, and much of their hair has fallen out.

Creature Information

Two **orcs** named Gaz (he/him) and Baz (he/him) and an **orc eye of Gruumsh** named Wazza (she/her) loom over the body of a dead **zombie** that they have just subdued.

Playing The Pillars

Social. The orcs are not looking for a battle. They are forthcoming to adventurers who show genuine concern for them and not for the zombie.

Exploration. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Investigation or Survival) check reveals that the tracks were made in the past two hours. The tracks belong to wagons, a mammoth, an ogre, and several humanoid creatures.

Combat. Characters with a vendetta against orcs may engage them in combat. While a valid option, violence may block the party from gaining any information the orcs have.

What do they want? The orcs want nothing from the adventurers but are dismayed to have faced a zombie along their path.

What do they know? As they were walking towards Termalaine, they saw a mammoth run off the road, taking a train of wagons with it. A large hulking figure chased it off the road, followed by several medium sized creatures; they could not recognize what it was from where they stood. As they approached the tracks, a zombie jumped on them and they killed it together.

Adjusting the scene:

- **Very weak:** Remove an **orc eye of Gruumsh**
- **Weak:** Remove an **orc**
- **Strong:** Add an **orc**
- **Very strong:** Add an **orc eye of Gruumsh**

The Crash Site

Estimated duration: 60 Minutes

Following the tracks further lead to trails of blood, droplets appearing heavier and wider as the party goes further off the road. Eventually, the party reaches a clearing, where a mammoth lies dead, still attached to a train of wagons. Use **Appendix 2** as the map of this area.

Playing The Pillars

Social. The undead make no negotiations. Zombies will attempt to eat the adventurers.

Exploration. A successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check allows adventurers to sneak around the skeletons. If seen by the zombie it will scream alerting the others.

Combat. Combat is the default option when dealing with the undead.

A1. Skeleton Crew

A group of five **skeletons** patrol the area between the party and the mammoth. They are not very perceptive and can be snuck around with a successful DC 13 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. If combat begins, the two **zombies** in the cargo wagon join the fight.

Adjusting the scene:

- **Very weak:** Remove two **skeletons**
- **Weak:** Remove a **skeleton**
- **Strong:** Add a **skeleton**
- **Very strong:** Add a **warhorse skeleton**

A2. Dead Mammoth

A **mammoth** lies dead, blood still dripping from his wounds. 10 feet away, his elf **commoner** driver lies dead, facedown in the snow. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) or Wisdom (Survival)

reveals that the mammoth suffered bludgeoning damage on its skull, and skin and fat were ripped from its side by hand, while the commoner died from the fall, breaking his neck while landing.

A3. Caravan Leadership

An overturned wagon lies directly behind the mammoth holds 4 dead elf commoner bodies. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Medicine) check reveals they died from the fall.

A4. Cargo Wagon

The second wagon is upright, but an elf **commoner** lies dead on the floor, his entrails being devoured by two **zombies**. Initially facing away from the party, the zombie turns around slowly, blood dripping from its hands and its maw, before attacking.

Adjusting the scene:

- **Very weak/weak:** Remove a **zombie**
- **Strong/Very strong:** Add a **zombie**

A5. Cargo Wagon

This wagon is filled to the brim with provisions. The undead did not go through this wagon. A small creature can squeeze between barrels and find some travel snacks; they offer no boosts but they're salty and delicious.

A6. The Caboose

The last wagon is full of various supplies, such as whale oil and rope. One unlocked chest appears here, and a character with a passive Perception of 13 or more would notice that it is shaking slightly. Opening the chest reveals an elf commoner named Natalia (she/her), the person Nimsy asked the adventurers to retrieve. Natalia has suffered 2 points of exhaustion.

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NATALIA, hiding from the ZOMBIES

What does she want? Having been left alone in the cold for hours as zombies attacked her convoy, she seeks shelter and warmth as soon as possible. Her larger goal is to return to her family home to exorcise the demons that have been haunting her.

What does she know? Natalia has been haunted by the death of her family for her entire life, but has been bothered more so in recent times by dreams. She grows tired and passes out if questioned extensively; she can answer more questions in Part 2.

Treasure. Natalia is holding a *potion of healing*, which she gives to the adventurers for finding her.

She also has a *moon-touched shortsword* in her possession; the adventurers without darkvision may find the sword useful.

Exit Ogre

Once the party has found Natalia, an **ogre zombie** and **two zombies** emerges from the north, ready to finish the job it started. Every two rounds on initiative 20 an additional **zombie** emerges from the north; players should not dawdle here.

Adjusting the scene:

- **Very weak:** Replace the **ogre zombie** with **two zombies**
- **Weak:** Replace the **ogre zombie** with **three zombies**
- **Strong:** Add a **zombie**
- **Very strong:** Add an **ogre zombie**

Progressing Forward

Once the adventurers have found Natalia and escaped the zombies, they can proceed to Lonelywood where Natalia can recover in Nimsy's care. For two-hour sessions, Nimsy will gladly compensate the adventurers here and the session concludes; otherwise, Nimsy will allow them to take a long rest in her cabin before they proceed to Part 2.

Part 2: The Abandoned Home

With Natalia in Lonelywood safe, the adventurers can proceed to the task of exploring her home; however the increased presence of the undead has made the situation dire.

Tea Break

Estimated duration: 15 Minutes

The next morning, the adventurers wake up to Nimsy preparing a meal and sharing old stories with Natalia. Natalia is feeling better, though still has one point of exhaustion; she can accompany them to her childhood home, but Nimsy worries for her health. If the adventurers have additional questions about Natalia's backstory, they can ask questions now.

What do they want? They want the adventurers to continue to Zarev's home and investigate the area.

What do they know? Natalia knows the following:

- Natalia is the youngest of five siblings, all daughters of Zarev and his wife, Yvonne. Her sisters' names are Annika, Katina, Petra, and Victoria. Nimsy will pipe in about Victoria's love of art and the other children's love of bedtime stories.
- If asked about her family's death, she remembers masked assailants sneaking up on her parents. She doesn't remember much before she escaped, only that they said, "Calibri will reward us handsomely for this!"
- Natalia, with Nimsy's help, escaped south to the Sword Coast after their deaths. She has returned because of vivid dreams of her father's spirit being tortured by a cackling man with a skull-like face, in a dark place with sarcophagi and stone walls.

Nimsy can enlighten to more political tones:

- Natalia's father Zarev was a Masked Lord of Waterdeep. Before his death, he voted on

legislation limiting the magic of necromancy within the city. His name was leaked; he fled here with his family to avoid danger brought onto him by the voting.

- Nimsy is aware of one of Zarev's nemeses, a deathlock named Calibri, though she has never met him before. Nimsy suspects the increased rise of the undead may be his doing.
- Upon discovering their bodies, the townsfolk of Lonelywood buried the family in a crypt near the house. It is locked by a mechanism requiring five pieces of their family crest. Nimsy scattered them through the home years ago but has not been back since. The scenery seems to match Natalia's dreams.

Whenever the adventurers feel ready, they may leave Nimsy's dwelling to go to the Zarev house.

Zombie-wood

Estimated duration: 15 minutes

As the adventurers leave Nimsy's home, they find fog shrouding the ground and zombies roaming the streets. The zombies wander aimlessly and can be passed with three successful DC 8 group Dexterity (Stealth) checks or Charisma (Performance) checks. Upon the first failed group check, the players incur an encounter with six **zombies**. Players may offer different alternative means to ensure their safe passage through town; the dungeon master has discretion to allow creative solutions.

Adjusting the scene:

- **Very weak:** Remove two **zombies**
- **Weak:** Remove a **zombie**
- **Strong:** Add a **zombie**
- **Very strong:** Add two **zombies**

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The Zarev House

Estimated duration: 45 minutes

Once the adventurers escape the town, they find that the Zarev House is haunted by the spirits of Natalia's family, who do not immediately resort to violence. However, Calibri has a surprise in store if they make it through the entire house.

Playing The Pillars

Social. Everything is undead here. Most have difficulty communicating verbally but can offer the party crests for playing their mini-games.

Exploration. The family crests can be found in varying spots throughout the house. No room has more than one crest; there are five in total.

Combat. Combat is always an option in each room with the family spirits, but is likely unavoidable when the assassins are found.

B1. Entryway

This area is unlit, though light comes through from the ballroom. The stairway to the second floor has collapsed and debris blocks the path to the drawing room and the kitchen; the debris can be moved with 10 minutes of work.

B2. Ballroom

The room is brightly lit with magical candles. The adventurers walk in to find four **skeletons** waltzing in pairs. In the corner, three **skeletons** are playing instruments; two play violin while the third plays cello. A fourth seat and music stand remain open.

Viol. Next to the entrance is a viol resting on a stand. A character succeeding on a DC 10 Dexterity or Charisma (Performance) check plays the melody in-time; players with proficiency with the viol make this check with advantage. Use **Nightal Waltz.mp3** to represent the waltz being performed. On a failure,

the skeleton musicians give the character a begrudging stare before continuing to play.

Music box. A music box lays open on a side table along the western wall; in it, a piece of the family crest is visible. A character succeeding on either a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or a DC 12 Dexterity (Performance) check may take the piece without bothering the skeletons; if a character is playing the viol, the Performance check is made at advantage. On a failed check, the skeletons become hostile and combat begins.

If the adventurers leave with the crest piece and walk out without instigating combat, the lights flicker out and the skeletons turn to dust. A voice in the back of the adventurers' minds says, "Oh, I did enjoy dancing with her once upon a time."

Adjusting the scene:

If combat occurs:

- **Very weak:** Remove two **skeletons**
- **Weak:** Remove one **skeleton**
- **Strong:** add one **skeleton**
- **Very strong:** Add two **skeletons**



The Music Box, with a piece of the crest

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B3. Kitchen

From the kitchen the adventures can see the backyard, which leads to a stairway into the family crypt. The stove in the corner is covered in cobwebs.

Collapsed cabinet. Along the southern wall there is a collapsed cabinet; in one of its doors is a carving of the family crest with one piece missing. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check; underneath the cabinet is a crest piece. If someone uses the stove to cook, the crest piece glows.

B4. Drawing Room

In a candlelit room, the **specter** of Victoria (she/her) alternates glances between an easel and another **specter** lying in repose on the opposite couch, a disappointed look across her face. The crest lies in a drawer in the coffee table until found or awarded. A metal spiralling stairway leads up to the second floor hallway.

What does she want? The artist specter wants the easel to convey the other specter the best it can, but cannot notice the differences between what's on the canvas and what she is seeing in front of her. A DC 13 Perception check reveals that the artist failed to paint pinky fingers on the canvas. If informed, the artist waves her hand to correct the painting, and awards the characters a crest piece. If combat occurs, the piece can still be found in the coffee table drawer.

If the adventures leave after pointing out the discrepancy, the lights flicker, the specters fade, and a voice says, *"I hope she survives this ordeal. She must look very lovely now."*

B5. Hallway

This hallway leads to both the children's room and the master bedroom, though the door to the master bedroom is locked; a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) or DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check opens the door.

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B6. Children's Bedroom

As the door opens, candles on nightstands flicker on as three **ghosts** of children Annika (she/her), Katina (she/her), and Petra (she/her) argue among one another; they each want a different bedtime story read to them.

The stories are:

- *Dancing With Skeletons*, a comedy
- *The Ice King*, a romance
- *The Large Construct Seven*, a tragedy

The characters may remember their genres with a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check; otherwise, they may spend 10 minutes reading the stories to themselves. **Give Appendices 5, 6, and 7** to the players if they thumb through the stories.

If asked their favorite genres, the ghosts do not answer directly. However, Annika says she dreams of falling in love. Katina loves parties and music. Petra loves stories where nobody is happy.

Combat can break out in this room with aggressive parties or if the ghosts are read the wrong book; if so, the crest piece can be found in one of the side tables.

Treasure. Once pleased, the ghosts bestow upon the last reader a crest piece, in addition to a *figurine of wondrous power: silver raven*.

B7 and B8. Master Bedroom and Bathroom

This room is lit by torches in sconces. As the adventurers enter, if they have solved any of the other rooms without violence, voices cry out in their minds, *"No, something isn't right here."* The bed appears to have someone under the covers; this is a **thug** named Antony (he/him). Behind a pile of rubble is another **thug** named Bruno (he/him). A passive Perception of 10 reveals that Bruno has the last crest piece.

What do they want? Antony and Bruno work for Calibri, and are here to kill the party and Natalia. Calibri promised that he would resurrect their sister Cornelia for carrying out the assassinations.

What do they know? They know that Calibri is working in the crypt, and is drawing power from one of the ghosts to bring his undead minions to life.

Adjusting the scene:

If combat occurs:

- **Very weak:** Replace both **thugs** with **bandits**
- **Weak:** Replace the **thugs** with three **bandits**, two in the bed. The third bandit's name is Augie
- **Strong:** add a **bandit** in the bathtub
- **Very strong:** Add an **assassin** in the bathtub

Once the adventurers get all five pieces of the crest, they can proceed to open the crypt and begin Part 3.

The Crypt

Estimated duration: 45 minutes

After finding all the pieces of the family crest, the party may proceed to the crypt. Once all five pieces are placed into slots in the door, it opens up, and a short 20-foot hallway appears in front of the adventurers, opening up into a large crypt, 60 feet long, 30 feet wide. In the center of a room, a ghastly humanoid with a skeletal face watches a machine drain power from a ghost trapped in a glass case. Hanging 15 feet in the air above the glass case is a metal chandelier. Behind them, a large table holds an unmoving ogre corpse.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Light. Torches in sconces cast bright light across the room, though shadowy areas near the sarcophagi are visible.

Sights and sounds. The air is musty, and the smell of decaying flesh fills the air. The sound of electric sparks come from a glass cage surrounding a ghost.

Sarcophagi. Three stone sarcophagi line each side of the crypt; they can be used as cover.

Glass case. A ghost is trapped in the glass case; it has an AC 20 with 10 hit points, and can be unlocked with a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) check. If freed, the ghost immediately disappears until the end of combat.

Chandelier. A metal chandelier hangs above the glass case, 15 feet in the air. The chains suspending it can be hit (AC 15) above the glass case, causing the chandelier to fall down and break open the case.

Creature Information

A **deathlock** named Calibri (he/him) uses a machine to harness power from the **ghost** of Zarev (he/him). 4 **skeletons** stand between them, while an **ogre zombie** takes three turns to charge up and awaken.

Adjusting the scene:

If combat occurs:

- **Very weak:** Remove two **skeletons**
- **Weak:** Remove one **skeleton**
- **Strong:** Add one **ogre zombie**
- **Very strong:** Replace the **ogre zombie** with a **frost giant skeleton**

What do they want? Calibri wants to continue extracting energy from Zarev's ghost until he has an undead army; if Zarev is depleted he will torture the rest of the family.

What do they know? Concerning the circumstances leading up to these events, both Calibri and Zarev know the following:

- Before killing Zarev's family, Calibri put a curse on their family forbidding them from leaving for the afterlife until Calibri was killed.
 - Calibri has learned to harness the ectoplasmic energy of ghosts to raise undead to do his bidding.
 - If Calibri is not defeated now, an undead army may eventually rise in Icewind Dale.
- Calibri may monologue all the details in overconfidence.

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Playing The Pillars

Social. Calibri has deep seated hatred for Zarev and loves torturing his soul for necromantic activities; he would rather die than negotiate a surrender. With a successful DC 13 Charisma (Deception) check, he may begin monologuing, allowing characters to get in advantageous positions.

Exploration. A stealthy character may sneak around in the shadows of the sarcophagi to get closer to the glass case and unlock it.

Combat. Combat is the default option when dealing with the undead. If Zarev is freed before the start of round three, the ogre zombie will not awaken.

Wrap-Up

Once Calibri and all his minions are defeated, the ghosts of Zarev's family appear before the adventurers. If Natalia did not accompany them at the beginning of part 2, she walks into the crypt now. Without speaking, Zarev and Yvonne bow to their surviving daughter and the sisters catch her in a loving embrace before they fade to the afterlife.

Happy to see Natalia reach some closure, Nimsy pays the adventurers as agreed. She allows them a long rest before they may disembark on their travels through Icewind Dale.

The day has been bittersweet; while she was reunited with her family's spirits, the moment passed and they moved on to the afterlife. The bad memories of losing them will always be with Natalia, but being able to see them find peace eases her own soul a bit as well. Natalia is unsure where the road will take her from here, but she is instilled with courage, having completed this adventure exploring her past.

Rewards

At the end of the session, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. Aside from advancement, these rewards are earned during the session.

Character Rewards

Advancement

Upon completing this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind those that express an interest in this that they have a limit to how much gold they can earn per level; declining advancement means that they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

Gold

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold that you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

Magic Item(s)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items:

- *Potion of healing*
- *figurine of wondrous power: silver raven*
- *Moon-touched shortsword*

Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

Annika, Katina, and Petra. Natalia's siblings, they were close to her age when they died.

- **What they want:** They present a simple challenge to the adventurers to tell them the correct bedtime stories.
- **Apparently Petty:** They present themselves as selfish and unwilling to heed each others' requests. But they've been dead for ten years.

Antony and Bruno. A pair of thugs hiding in the Zarev house to kill the adventurers.

- **What they want:** They want Calibri to raise their dead sister.
- **Here to Finish the Job:** They both were involved in the initial deaths of the Zarev family. Natalia kneed Bruno in the groin in her escape.

Calibri. The deathlock who cursed and killed the Zarev family before using their ghosts to power his undead.

- **What he wants:** Calibri wants to raise the undead and bring forth an army to take over Icewind Dale.
- **Blinded by vengeance:** It brings him joy to use the ghosts of his adversaries as a source of power.

Natalia. The elf commoner visiting from the south.

- **What she wants:** Natalia wants to revisit the family home.
- **Haunted Past:** She is the last survivor of Zarev, a Masked Lord of Waterdeep killed for his anti-necromancy policies.

Nimsy Huddle. The halfling speaker of Lonelywood.

- **What she wants:** Nimsy was a friend of Zarev before he died. She wants to do her best to help Natalia.
- **Tea Time:** Known for her hospitality, she often offers visitors, friends and strangers alike, tea and sandwiches.

Victoria. Natalia's oldest sister, she appears as a specter.

- **What she wants:** At the time of her death she was working on a painting of her beau, Christoph; she wants to complete the painting.
- **Not very perceptive, or is she?** Somehow she has not noticed the missing pinky fingers over these last ten years.

Zarev Niklaus. A former Masked Lord of Waterdeep, he appears as a ghost.

- **What he wants:** He wants to be freed from the glass case powering Calibri's undead.
- **A Man of Principle:** Though he knew he would be persecuted for his actions, he still passed the legislation that limited necromantic materials in Waterdeep.

Creature Statistics

(*) denotes concentration

Assassin

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

Armor Class 15 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 78 (12d8+24)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +4

Skills **Acrobatics** +6, **Deception** +3, **Perception** +3, **Stealth** +9

Damage Resistance Poison

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Thieves' Cant Plus Any Two Languages

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Assassinate. During its first turn, the assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the assassin scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Evasion. If the assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The assassin deals an extra 13 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of the assassin that isn't incapacitated and the assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The assassin makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus (7d6) poison damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus (7d6) poison damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

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)	11 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Actions

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

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Bandit

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

Armor Class 12 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing 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.

Frost Giant Skeleton

Huge undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (Armor Scraps)

Hit Points 102 (12d12 + 24)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Bludgeoning

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Understands Giant but can't speak

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The skeleton makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 25 (3d12 + 6) slashing damage.

Freezing Stare. The skeleton targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 35 (10d6) cold damage and be paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

Ghost

Medium undead, any alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

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 feet 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 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.

Horrorifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet 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 Horrorifying 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 feet 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 feet 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.

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Mammoth

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 126 (11d12 + 55)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (-1)	21 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the mammoth moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the mammoth can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 25 (4d8 + 7) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. Hit: 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Orc

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (Hide Armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Actions

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Orc Eye of Gruumsh

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (Ring Mail, Shield)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +3, Religion +1

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Gruumsh's Fury. The orc deals an extra 4 (1d8) damage when it hits with a weapon attack (included in the attack).

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

Cantrips (at-will): *guidance, resistance, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bless, command*

2nd level (2 slots): *augury, spiritual weapon (spear)*

Actions

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Ogre Zombie

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 85 (9d10 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	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 Common and Giant but can't speak

Challenge 2 (250 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

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Skeleton

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Bludgeoning

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

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

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Specter

Medium undead, 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 Attacks

Damage Immunities Necrotic, Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

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 creature. 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.

Thug

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

Armor Class 11 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) 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.

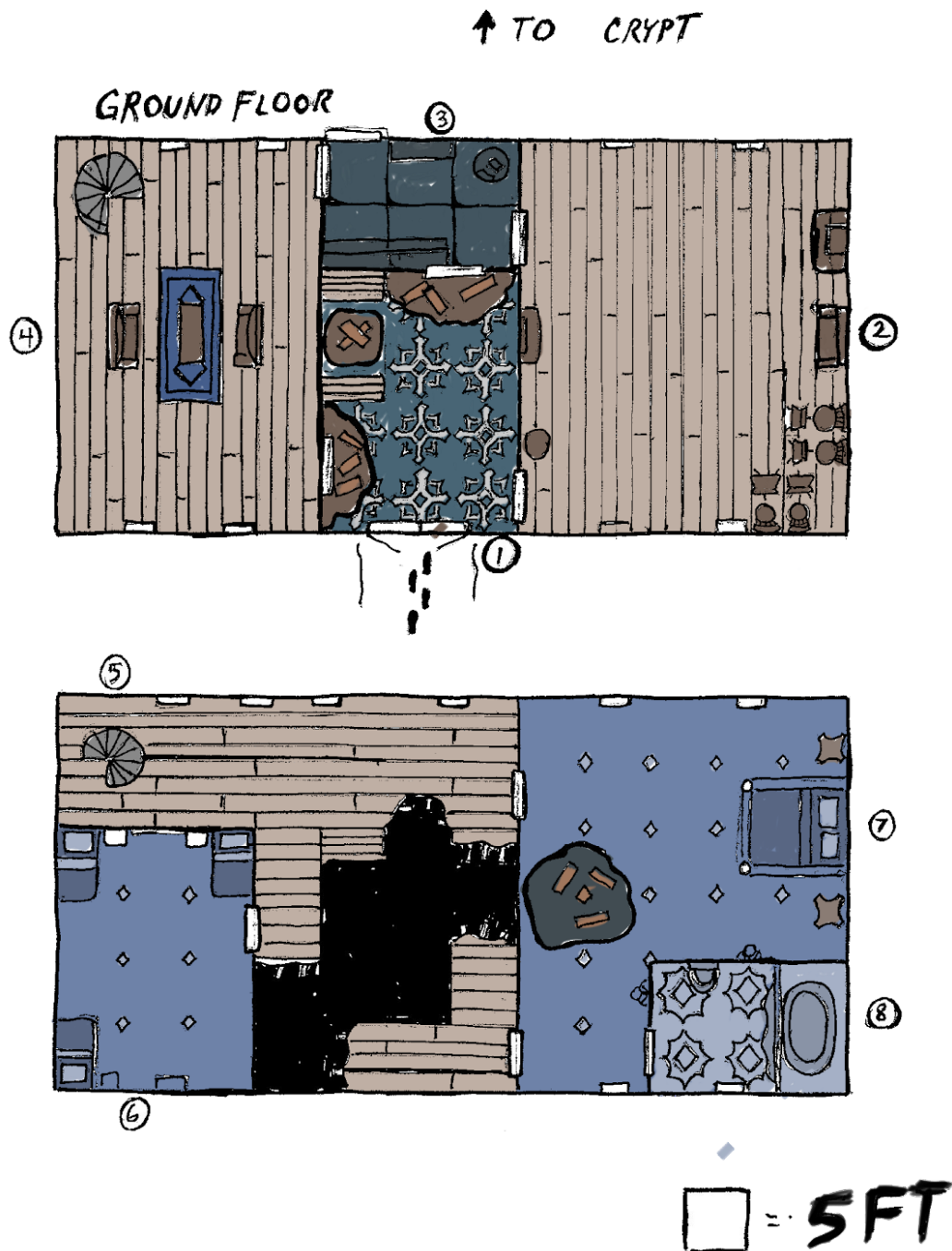
Actions

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

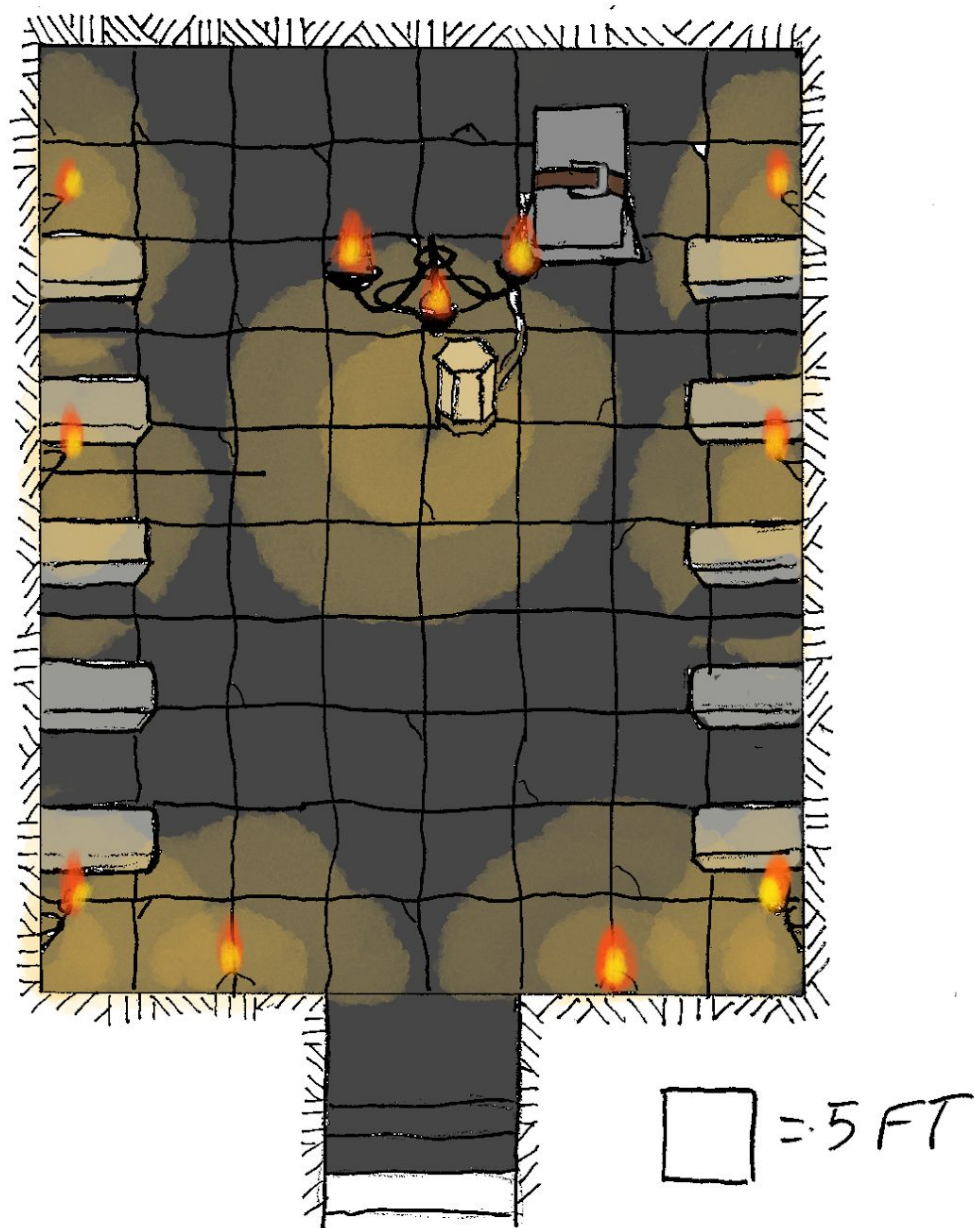
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Appendix 2. The Zarev House



Appendix 3. The Crypt



Appendix 4. Natalia's Letter

Dear Nimsy,

I hope this letter finds you well. This caravan picked up mead from Good Mead and dropped it off in Easthaven. The journey has been uneventful otherwise. We will be leaving Termalaine for Lonelywood momentarily. I'm grateful to these elven merchants for allowing me to join their caravan.

Writing these messages each time we leave a town is odd, but I understand and agree with your concern. Better for you to know my whereabouts bit by bit, as I know all too well that my father had enemies in these mountains. We are so close now, it would be a shame for something to happen on this final segment of the trip.

I hope this journey up North will put my nightmares to rest. They've been getting worse and worse by the day - simply imagining my father in pain hurts my heart greatly, especially after everything that happened all those years ago. Maybe this trip will help me find some closure.

See you soon, my old friend.

Natalia Niklaus

Appendix 5. Dancing With Skeletons Excerpt

*The beat was bumpin all around filling me with fright
I could hear the howl of hounds ringing the the night
Mr. Key looked back at me with with an undead stare
Then he jumped up from the ground, dancing in the air
I too leapt up into the sky to everyone's delight
We the cackling skeletons on that boogie night*

Appendix 6. The Ice King Excerpt

Imelda with her frozen slippers walked into the ballroom, and as her eyes looked upstairs, they met the stare of Mr. Frost. His cold eyes seemed to look right through her, like the breath of a white dragon through unprepared adventurers. Everyone knew him to be cruel and distant, but Imelda longed for those eyes to see her with warmth - a warmth no one else had ever known.

Appendix 7. Large Construct Seven Excerpt

And thus tears were shed through the land. The construct they loved for their entire lives laid lifeless after fighting for all its might to protect the people. The village would live, but nobody would rejoice. For on the seventh day of the seventh month, the village lost their dear Large Construct Seven, their guardian and friend.

Appendix 8: Dungeon Master Tips

To DM an adventure, there is no minimum or maximum player count, but each player must have their own character within the adventure's level range (see Adventure Primer). Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can't return** to the first if outside its level range.

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

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 combat. Familiarize 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 Perception score, and anything the adventure specifies as notable (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) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether they completed the adventure or not.

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

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

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