THE GAME MASTER'S BOOK OF RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Illustrations by Jasmine Kalle

Foreword by Michael Shea

500+ customizable maps, tables and story hooks to create 5th edition RPG adventures on demand

Jeff Ashworth

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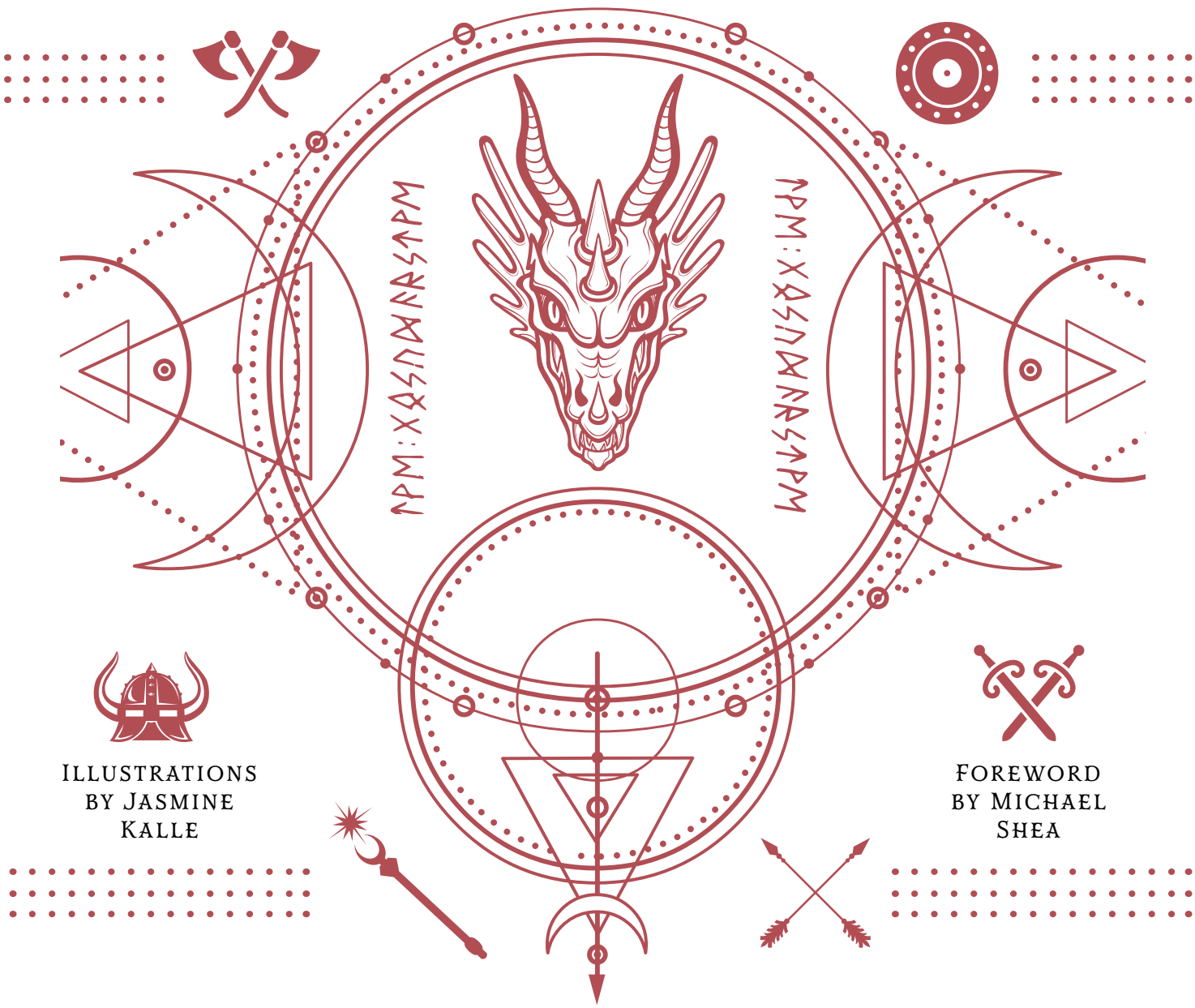

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JASMINE KALLE

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Random Location Generator

Is your party heading through a door but they (and you) don't have a clue where it leads? Are your adventurers diving through a portal to the unknown? Did they teleport without a sense of their destination? This book is here to help. Start by rolling 1d4 to select a section as outlined on the table below, then roll the requisite dice for that section to determine your random location.

1d4	Where Should You Begin?
1	Taverns, Inns, Shops & Guild Halls
2	Temples, Tombs & Crypts
3	The Great Outdoors
4	Homes, Hideouts, Labs & Lairs

"*The Game Master's Book of Random Encounters* is a toolbox packed with ready-to-use ideas, covering a wide variety of situations. You'll find something useful on every page. No matter what your game-mastering style is, this book will help add depth to your game."

—***The Kind GM*, thekindgm.wordpress.com**

"This book is so useful! I'm definitely giving a copy to my DM."

—***Madeline Hale*, author of Arcane Artifacts and Curious Curios**

Foreword

There's a reason most tabletop RPGs always have more players wanting to play than game masters able to run games for them. Game-mastering is hard work. It takes time to prepare. It takes time to organize and schedule. It takes time to come up with all of these crazy stories that our players can fall into.

We GMs need help. We need tools to help us run these games. We need to fill in the infinite gaps in worlds that didn't exist until we thought them up while taking a shower.

This book is one such tool to help you run great roleplaying games. Within it you'll find a host of adventures you can run as-is or harvest for your own stories. Don't like the plot? Tear it out and keep the locations. Don't like the NPCs? Fill them in with the ones your players already love. Every book like this is a ship out on the sea filled with precious booty just waiting for you to come aboard and take it.

And then there are the locations. This book is full of location descriptions, and every one of them includes a map you don't have to draw. Need an inn? There's one right here. Need a laboratory? This book has you covered. Each location includes seeds for your own adventures. Many of these locations and adventures include tables you can use to generate your own stories and seed your own ideas. Such tables are powerful; they shake our minds out of the ruts we often fall into and push us into new realms of creativity that couldn't exist without a random shock to the system.

This book is a wonderful tool to help you run games. Within it is the magic to help you bring entire worlds to life.

Michael Shea
Author of *Return of the Lazy Dungeon Master*

Introduction

Welcome to *The Game Master's Book of Random Encounters...*

It's happened to the best of us: You're running an adventure with your party—an adventure for which you've spent countless hours prepping and planning and painting models. Maybe you spent the better part of three days perfecting the accent for a primary NPC you're absolutely certain your party will be desperate to follow into the unexplored abyss of a nearby cave system. You've run several mental simulations to game out the permutations of how each encounter will unfold—the spells they might cast, the strategy they'll employ and supplies they'll utilize to win (or lose) the day. "This session will be perfect," you think aloud as you reorder your note cards and exhale one last time before welcoming players into your world. And then they say those magic words for which there is no saving throw:

"Can we go shopping?"

Or, "Is there a tavern nearby?"

Or, "Should we not have killed that guy? He was just asking us to help him explore a cave, but his accent seemed evil, so...."

And just like that, all your plans go to ruin. These storytelling-by-the-seat-of-your-pants moments are often what make tabletop RPGs such an incredible communal experience. They are also the fastest way for the whole thing to fall apart. Now, maybe this hasn't happened to you because you are some kind of genius (or an actual wizard) and your players never force you to improvise entire adventures as a direct result of their endless supply of creativity. But you are likely the exception rather than the rule. For everyone else, this book is here to help. While it won't stop your players from being creative, or meta-gaming, or stabbing the only person who could have helped them solve that mysterious murder from two weeks ago, it will focus your efforts to put them on a new and exciting path—even if that path simply leads to more mayhem.*

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*It will. It always does.

What This Book Is

The Game Master's Book of Random Encounters is primarily a collection of locations for your players to explore, complete with unique NPCs, randomly generated problems for them to tackle (or avoid) and optional environmental hazards and triggers to keep your sessions exciting even when you don't exactly know where you plan to go next. Each location is presented on a 5-ft. scale grid and includes detailed descriptions so you'll know exactly where you are, even when you're totally lost. There is typical fantasy fare: taverns and inns, underground crypts and houses big and small. There are also less common locations that could serve as a jumping off point for a new adventure: the Dream Archive, the Magnacoil Laboratory or the Temple of the Fall, just to name a few. There's even an entire section of rooftops, alleys and tunnels for those times when your party is trying to sneak into a location unseen and the cleric fails their stealth roll. The Table of Contents also doubles as a table that will help you choose a completely random location if you want a more chaotic experience.

This book also features eight one-shot adventures that are perfectly suited for a pickup game with new players or as a sidequest during a larger campaign. Each of these adventures are modular, suitable for a range of levels, feature their own built-in variations and could take anywhere from 3-7 hours** depending on how you run your game. These adventures center around specific locations detailed in the book, though you are within your rights to augment any and all elements of these stories to suit your needs. You know—like you do with pretty much any resource you turn to as a GM.

There are also tables. So many tables: curses, dreams, killer-for-hire contracts, magical items and names for bars, just to name a few (finally, a reason to use all those d100s you've been hoarding that doesn't involve wild magic). Nearly every location in this book also features a Variant Encounter table, allowing you to bring a challenge to your players without forcing them to leave the comforts of their recently rented bedrooms. And, because you never know who your party is going to want to carouse, cajole or collude with at any given moment, the book features a Random NPC Generator, designed to create a character's personality, memorable features and driving motivations with a few simple dice rolls. There's even something called the Party Makeup Maker, designed specifically to help add some inter-player flavor as well as some stakes to those pickup sessions when you've got a handful of players ready to roll but absolutely no context for why their specific characters are gathered for this particular adventure.

This book was created using the System Resource Document for the Fifth Edition of the world's most popular TTRPG but is compatible with as many tabletop RPG systems as you're willing to translate it into. The license for the SRD is printed for your convenience on pg. 252.

What This Book Is Not

The Game Master's Book of Random Encounters strives to be a lot of things, but it isn't the only book you'll need to run games at your table. This is not a handbook for players or a dungeon guide for those with a master's degree. The locations in this book do not all fit together to create a fully-formed campaign setting dripping with lore, nor does the book offer clear answers to every question your players might have about the people, places and things they'll uncover while poking about in desks, chests or cellar stores***. It is, instead, meant to inspire creativity and curiosity in both you and your players, while adding structure when you want it, and adventure when you need it. Which is to say, although system rules were utilized to create these locations and populate them with danger and doom, you'll still want to be able to reference a rulebook for whatever system you're planning to incorporate these spaces into, as well as think on the fly when things go awry.

This book is also not perfectly balanced. I don't know what homebrew you've been cooking up or the level you're running or the magical items your players bring to the table or if your world is one where the sudden death of an NPC is a cataclysmic event that must be immediately investigated by 30d6 griffon riders with flaming longswords. Because every party is different, I leave these locations and the encounters associated with them in your capable hands. If it seems like your party is about to be torn to shreds because of a random dice roll on a Variant Encounter table, adjust the necessary stats or motivations for the creatures in question in order to keep your players alive and carry on. Or kill them. The choice is yours. Just don't blame this book. It wouldn't be able to live with itself****.

This book is not a manual full of monsters, nor does it feature a list of spells and their various effects. There are creatures mentioned throughout this title that you'll find correspond with various ghouls, goblins, orcs and oozes that you likely know on a first name basis, and you'll find their stats in whatever standard resource you use for encounter building. They'll be marked bold. Spells and magical items will be italicized for easy reference. NPCs that feature in specific adventures will have detailed stat blocks, but otherwise you should use your discretion for things like hit points, attack stats, magical abilities and a will to live.

**time varies based on party size, play style and whether or not you TPK everyone during the adventure's opening scene.
***though that shouldn't stop you from acting as though every map presented here is part of the same region or realm.
****this book is not alive.

This book is not all things to all people. For example, the adventures presented follow a fairly straightforward narrative design, with fairly obvious plot hooks and (hopefully!) some twists and turns along a relatively clear track. Could they be more complicated? Sure. But then they'd be harder to follow and that'd defeat the purpose of an easy-to-use, pick-up-and-go tome of random side quests. Plus, the scenarios are simple because your party will no doubt find a way to complicate them. There aren't enough pages in this title to account for every single approach to any given problem each scenario presents, which is why the adventures and encounters detailed offer a few situational notes but should be considered up to your discretion based on how things are shaking out at your table. In other words, if you're frantically looking for notes on what to do when one of your players uses *create/destroy water* to fill an NPC's lungs during an interrogation scene or if you're trying to track down a description of the comings and goings of every listed NPC to appease members of your party who would prefer to spend 48 hours surveilling a bar before stepping inside it, well, you're sort of on your own. But hopefully the information that has been provided will make these adjustments come together in a way that feels organic and true to the story you're telling.

This book is not as good as the one you could have written. That's not to say it isn't packed with engaging locations and unique tables (it definitely is). What I mean is, no one knows your party as well as you do, and therefore no one can create adventure modules or random encounters that challenge and surprise them like you. It's why you're their GM, not me. This book's aim is to inspire you to tell better stories at your table. Part of that process is recognizing that if you think you can improve on what's written here, you absolutely should. That means changing not just the details of the encounters in this book, but the spirit in which you present them—if you choose to use them at all. If your campaign is tonally dark, with death at every turn and no levity in sight, it's entirely possible the Steamy Smithy Blacksmith and Day Spa is going to feel out of place. Likewise, if your party is made up of wisecracking weirdos who never met a monster they didn't try to persuade to be their mascot, the Bone Fields might seem a bit melodramatic. Use your judgement. Follow your players. Or drag them somewhere unexpected. Let me know how it goes.

This book is not trapped.

How To Use This Book

FLAVOR TEXT: When you see text styled like this, it means you should read it out loud to your party to describe specific actions, relay important quotes or share pertinent details of the location or situation they find themselves in.

QUOTE TEXT: WHEN TEXT IS STYLED LIKE THIS, IT'S SUPPLEMENTARY AND SHOULD BE USED TO INFORM YOUR PRESENTATION OF A LOCATION OR NPC.

GM Note

A block of text styled like this is meant to draw your attention to a specific element of a story or location and will typically inform character motivations or plot twists for the one-shot adventures. Ignore them at your own peril.

MAPS. The maps detailed on these pages are presented on a grid, and each square represents a 5 ft. x 5 ft. space unless otherwise noted. If you'd prefer to use theater of the mind, feel free to adjust the sizes of different spaces to suit your needs as necessary (which you are also within your rights to do if you are planning to draw these locations out for your players). The maps also feature elements meant to help set a mood or establish general features for interiors that aren't all outlined in the descriptive copy associated with each illustration. A key explaining what these illustrations are meant to represent is presented to the right. These details are meant to inspire rather than hinder you, so take what you like and ignore the rest as necessary.

Variant Encounters

At GM discretion, when a party enters one of the locations detailed in this book, roll on the Variant Encounters table associated with the location to determine which encounter to trigger, or select one for yourself. These encounters add flavor, urgency and variety to a given location and are one of the main features of this book—so put them to use! Or don't. It's your game.

Encounter Variants

Similar to the Variant Encounters, these optional adjustments typically refer to a location's atmosphere, climate or clientele. If you choose to use them, it's a good

idea to roll on the tables before describing the layout and features of a location to your party, as these options can have a drastic impact on the way players might approach an encounter here. For example, a random pond could be "overgrown" or "frozen" or "teeming with undead." These are the types of things you'd want to know before your party's impulsive paladin shouts "CANNONBALL" and plunges into the shallow end. Of course, whether you share this information is entirely up to you.

Tables

Each table in this book features an associated dice value. If a table calls for you to roll 1d8, roll an eight-sided die and follow the corresponding number to determine what happens next—you know, just like every roll table in every RPG book that has ever existed.

This book also features references to random tavern (or shop or lodgings or location) tables. These tables, which are generally on the Table of Contents (pgs. 2-3) but also appear elsewhere (pg. 245, mostly), are mentioned in various adventures detailed in this book and are meant to provide a structure for chaos as the adventures unfold. For example, if a primary NPC says "Meet me at the tavern tonight," you can roll on the Random Taverns table (pg. 245) to determine which tavern the NPC has chosen for drinks. If the tavern you roll in this scenario is a tavern you've established as being a big part of a small town the party encountered earlier, roll again, or present the tavern as part of an expanding franchise, or use the Random Tavern Generator (pg. 246) to present a new name for the location while sticking with the same map. When playing through the one-shot adventures, it's helpful to determine each random location ahead of time as detailed in the "Setting Up" portion of each adventure. Or just wing it.

WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, please enjoy *The Game Master's Book of Random Encounters*. Hopefully it'll help make your games easier to run so you can concentrate on the stuff that matters to you and your party. When in doubt, just have everyone roll initiative but don't say why. They'll make their own adventures.

Doors, Windows and Hidden Loot

The maps in this book feature several recurring features. Here's a key:

DOOR. This is an entrance into the space. If it's locked, a DC associated with picking the lock will be listed.

WINDOW. This is a window. It works like a door, only smaller, and lets light in.

BED. This is a bed—a great place for a character to lay their head after a long day in order to benefit from a long rest.

FURNITURE. Your party will find tables and chairs and bars and plenty of desks on their adventures. The locations of these items are marked clearly on the map, but you should describe what the party might find in a desk drawer or under a table at your discretion should they start poking around.

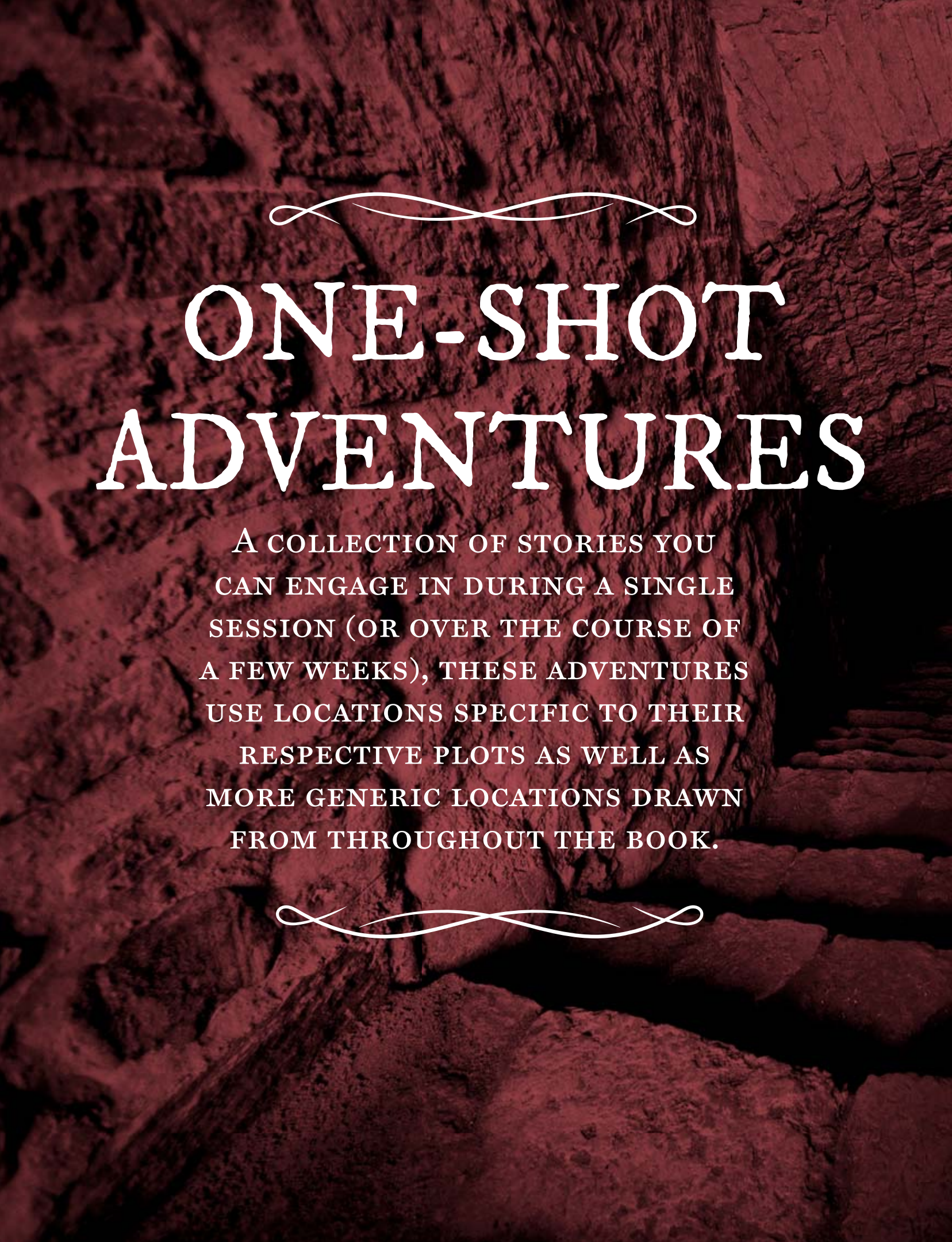
TREASURE CHEST. This is meant to represent a trunk or chest or hiding space for valuables. Because a treasure cache can have a significant impact on your game's economy, these chests should be considered empty unless you fill them with loot, or the text describes something specific.

WATER. Squares styled like this indicate a body of water (or some other liquid at GM discretion).

LADDER. This is a ladder, which can be used to climb up or down, depending on your intentions for a space.

TRAP DOOR. This is a door in a floor or the ground that leads to another location (at GM discretion) unless otherwise noted.

UNDERGROUND. Most of the maps are of locations that exist above ground, but some that feature this treatment around the walls are beneath it. This fact is also detailed in the copy.



ONE-SHOT ADVENTURES

A collection of stories you can engage in during a single session (or over the course of a few weeks), these adventures use locations specific to their respective plots as well as more generic locations drawn from throughout the book.

12
PRESTO CHANGE-O
A budding businessman gets in over his head.

24
MOTHER KNOWS BEST
It's a family affair in this battle with evil cultists.

32
SPECIAL DELIVERY
The party has one job. Then it becomes several.

42
AN ACTOR'S LIFE
A birthday party gets dangerously theatrical.

58
TOMB OF THE FORGOTTEN PALADIN
A talking sword leads the party on a deadly quest.

68
NATURE VS. NURTURE
A powerful druid pulls the party into politics.

78
ONE LAST JOB
A senile thief holds the key to a vast fortune.

92
THE PORTAL PRISON
The party must ally themselves with a murderous mage.

Presto Change-o

When an aspiring alchemist's wares are revealed to have some particularly nasty side effects, it's a race against time to keep the town from being destroyed.

An Adventure Suitable For Levels 1-5

At the town's Feats of Valor Festival, a silver-tongued salesman convinces several attendees to sample his collection of potions, promising to enhance their speed, strength, smarts and sex appeal. When the potions take effect, they do exactly as promised, but it's soon revealed these benefits come with a cost, as those who've chosen to consume them start to change for the worse. The party must work together to prevent festival-goers from destroying themselves and the town, while trying to find the root cause of all this unrest in order to put a stop to it.

Setting Up

The first sunny day in what seems like ages sets the stage for the area's Feats of Valor Festival, or "FeatFest," held near the center of town (pg. 21). The adventure will also move beyond the grounds of the festival to a handful of random locations, which should be determined beforehand: Roll once on the Random Shops & Guilds table (pg. 245), once on the Random Residences table (pg. 245) and determine whether or not you want to use random alleys and tunnels for Parts 4 and 6 of this adventure. If so, roll three times each on the Random Rooftops & Alleys table (pg. 221) and Random Tunnel table (pg. 229) to set those maps in your mind. The final showdown, if it occurs, will take place in Hold's Stronghold (pg. 23). If the party has previously carried out quests together, the Feats of Valor Festival could be held in their honor as a tribute from the town. If this is the party's first adventure together, FeatFest is the talk of the region and is not to be missed—in fact, most shops are closed, as merchants set up small booths at the festival in order to take advantage of the crowds. The loudest voice near the festival entrance has already gathered an impressive group of onlookers. His name is **Preston Glimbow—the Amazing Presto**, to his friends—and he's got some potions to sell.

Part 1: Welcome to FeatFest

The entrance to FeatFest is a colorful affair and a feast for the senses. The smell of spit-roasted meat permeates the air, and tests of skill seem to present themselves at every turn. It is, for many in the region, the happiest day of the year and smiles adorn every face.

Notable details include:

- A small fighting ring where a grappler named **Tater Von Spud** is taking on challengers.
- An archery range where a female half-elf compels players to try their luck at hitting a moving target.
- A meat pie-eating contest led by a heavy-set human male.
- A covered wagon that's been turned into a traveling storefront, described below.

> A voice suddenly rises over the entire crowd, hawking potions and other wares that promise to amaze and astound. In fact, he's so compelling that the skill challenges in the area have come to a standstill and his booth, a horsedrawn wagon that says "The Amazing Presto, Alchemist Extraordinaire," appears to be the only one currently in operation. "Come one, come all, make big from small! Want speed? Drink these! Need brawn, try one! If you fancy a kiss just put this to your lips and you'll soon be smooching your prize! Presto Change-o! Potions and lotions and tinctures that thrill—improve your skills, cure your ills, pay your bills with these pills! Grow gills with these vials! Your denials and trials are no match for my batch of notable potables! Presto Change-o! Don't ask me—try for free!"

Whether or not anyone in the party chooses to try one of Presto's potions (see table at right), he will direct his assistant **Hold Hammerhearth** to offer one to Tater Von Spud, a strongman in his own right but who, after consuming, attests he feels much stronger. As if to prove the point, Tater lifts two other festivalgoers directly over his head without breaking a sweat. As soon as it appears Presto's potions are effective, there is a run on the small little shop from the attendant crowd, who begin clamoring for a chance at greatness. The crowd gets louder and more animated as the potions take effect and begin granting them everything Presto promised.

If the party wishes, Presto has numerous potions to sample, free of charge. Note: Potion effects do not stack, and Presto only has one sample per person.

Once the run on Presto's sample supply has come to a close, he encourages all who have sampled his wares to try their hand at some of FeatFest's games of skill. Players should feel free to explore FeatFest for opportunities to test the potions' efficacy. Exploring FeatFest under the influence of Presto's potions could feel like an adventure unto itself, as players test their newfound abilities at the festival's various booths along the midway.

This stage of the adventure should last as long as your players' attention requires.

Presto's Potions

JOLLY GIANT STRENGTH POTION
"You'll feel as strong as 10 of you!"
+5 to Strength modifier and advantage on Athletics checks for one hour.

POTION OF ELVISH AIMING
"Hit any target you can see—and see them all!"
+5 to Dexterity modifier and advantage on ranged weapon attacks for one hour.

ROCK AND A HARD PLACE POTION
"If you take a hit, you'll barely notice!"
+1 to AC and 40 temporary hit points for one hour.

BRAIN-BOOSTER SERUM
"You'll feel smarter. But you knew that already!"
+5 to Intelligence modifier and advantage on Investigation checks for one hour.

SAGE WISDOM POTION
"Like having lived 100 years in 10 minutes!"
+5 to Wisdom modifier and advantage on Insight checks for one hour.

POTION OF FIERY CHARISMA
"The gift of gab in a delightfully spicy syrup!"
+5 to Charisma modifier and advantage on Persuasion checks for one hour.

Part 2: The High Price of Free Stuff

As Presto marvels at the success of his first foray into self-promotion, a loud groan and sudden shriek can be heard emanating from the fighting pit, as Tater Von Spud suddenly starts to double in size, his skin stretching, bones creaking, eyes wide with fear and confusion. He leaps out of the fighting pit in a blind rage and charges out the entrance of FeatFest, across the street and headlong into the nearest storefront (roll on the Random Shops & Guilds table, pg. 245), crashing through its outer wall.

Recognizing a group who can handle themselves, Presto quickly encourages the party to subdue but not kill the grappler, and offers them gold for their trouble. He is as bewildered by this event as anyone else and has no answer for why it's taken place—but he does fear for Tater's safety and is insistent that the party help him keep the peace. He'll pay whatever it takes.

Encounter Variant (optional): Potions Have Consequences

At the end of Part 2 of this adventure, each member of the party who sampled a potion from Presto's cart must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the following additional potion effects are triggered:

JOLLY GIANT STRENGTH POTION
The creature finds everything hilarious and at the start of each turn must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10) or fall prone in a giggle fit.

POTION OF ELVISH AIMING
The creature has disadvantage on all saving throws, as their vision is so keen they are overwhelmed.

ROCK AND A HARD PLACE POTION
The creature feels their flesh start to burn from underneath, suffering 20 points of acid damage and 2 points of exhaustion.

BRAIN-BOOSTER SERUM
The creature's synapses are firing so fast they can't focus. They have -5 to Charisma and disadvantage on Concentration saves.

SAGE WISDOM POTION
The creature ages 100 years. Their movement is reduced by half and their Intelligence is reduced by 2 as senility sets in.

POTION OF FIERY CHARISMA
The creature's tongue moves so rapidly that each time they speak small flames shoot out, dealing 1d6 fire damage to anyone directly in front of them.

If the party gives chase, they encounter the raging Tater within the shop. The grappler is now a **berserker** with 24 (+7) Strength, whose preferred attack method is to grapple and throw members of the party at one another.

If the party manages to subdue Tater, they hear more screams emanating from FeatFest.

Part 3: Pitchforks are Out

Investigating the source of the commotion at FeatFest reveals dozens of attendees in the throes of dramatic transformations. Giant, hulking mothers awkwardly chase after their unruly, fire-breathing children. A few attendees hoping to increase their speed now teeter on monstrous, stilt-like legs that are at least 20 ft. long. A lovely couple who were wrapped in an amorous embrace after the effects of Presto's patent-pending "Sealed with a Kiss" love potion took hold are now attempting to eat one another. It is, in short, an absolute horror show—and Presto is right in the middle, sweating, swearing and screaming for aid.

Presto begs the party to protect him and escort him to his shop, claiming he must have been sabotaged. He's certain he has a way to reverse this mess: it's all in his notebook back in his study. He is both genuine in his desire to solve the problem and genuinely terrified, as angry customers surround him hoping to secure some retribution.

A DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check would reveal that most, if not all, of these afflictions could likely be removed with the power of a *greater restoration* spell, but with so many afflicted, Presto is certain he has a faster solution within his study and encourages the party to help him get to it.

Variant Encounter (optional) FeatFest Gone Wild

Roll 1d8 per party member to determine what variety of festivalgoers are menacing Presto. Because Presto dispensed multiple samples of similar potions, a repeated number indicates more than one person was affected by the same type of potion in a similar way.

1d8	Presto is under attack from...
1	...a human whose anti-aging cream transformed them into an Ageless Hag (pg. 18).
2	...a Flame-Spitting Toddler (pg. 18) who shoots gouts of fire each time they open their mouth.
3	...a formerly shy half-elf who is now a Shy Banshee (pg. 18) with self control issues.
4	...a balding human whose hair tonic turned him into a Balding Werewolf (pg. 19).
5	...an ax-wielding Towering Halfling (pg. 19) whose wish to be taller blew up in his face.
6	...a dwarven man who wanted clear skin is now an Acid Dwarf (pg. 19) with a melting face.
7	...a Stone-Fisted Brawler (pg. 19) who is looking for someone to punch.
8	...GM's choice OR roll 2d8 and add 2 more FeatFest-goers.

Part 4: To the Alchemist's!

After escaping from FeatFest, Presto leads the party through the narrow stone streets of the town as quickly as he can. The town is in chaos, as those who attended the festival but didn't partake in any of Presto's wares are hurriedly fleeing in fear from those who did.

At GM discretion, use the maps on pgs. 221–225, rolling three times on the Random Rooftops & Alleys table on pg. 221 to determine which street leads where. If an alleyway suggests an encounter, replace the antagonist(s) with entries from the FeatFest Gone Wild table.

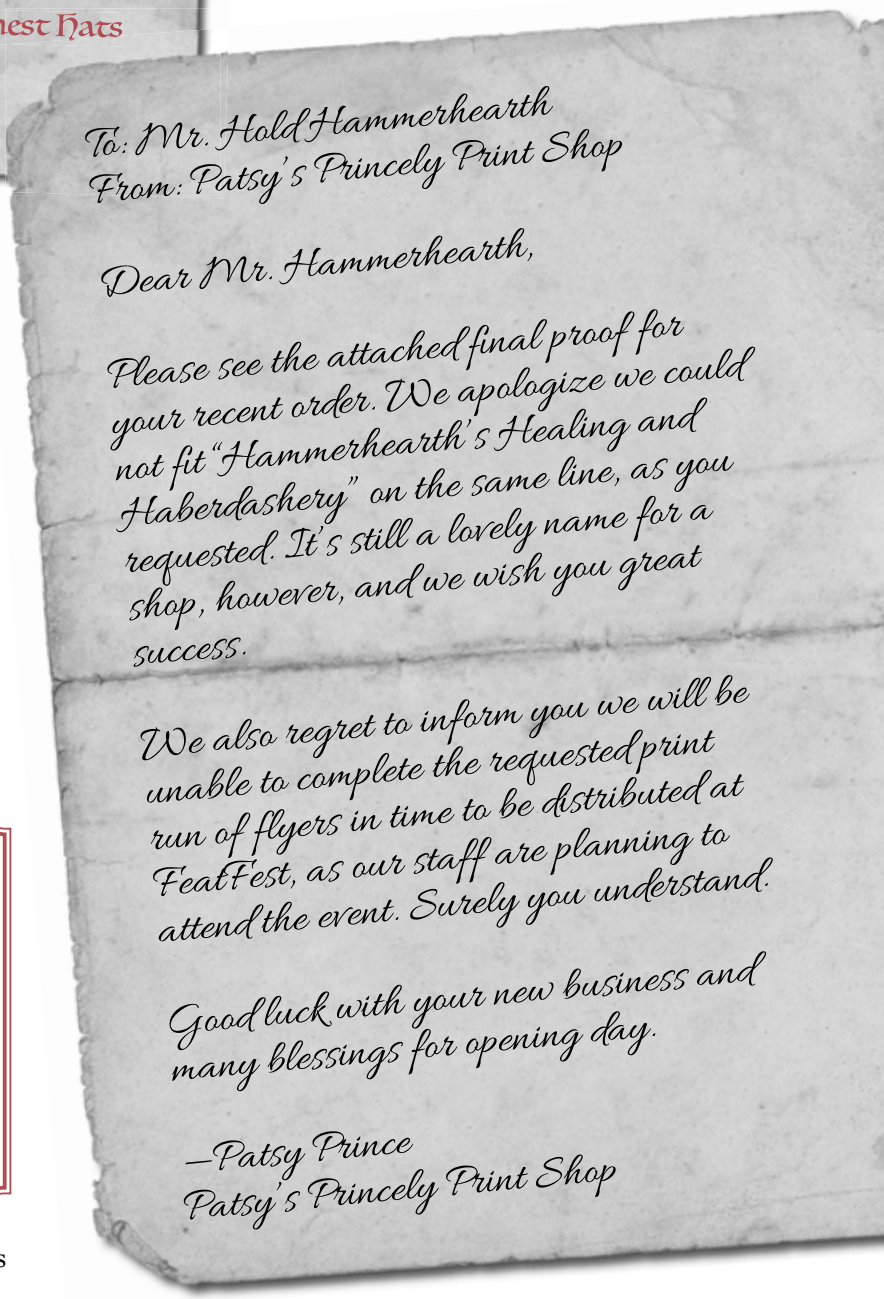
Alternatively, allow your players to shuttle Presto to his shop as efficiently, quickly and/or stealthily as possible.

As you journey to Presto's shop, he starts lamenting his circumstances. "I swear on my life, I don't know why this is happening. Hold and I tested these potions with exacting standards—the best! The top! Presto Change-Ohhhh my Gods there's more of them!"

Part 5: Searching for Clues

Upon arrival at Presto's shop (which is less a shop and more of a lodging), even the least perceptive member of the party can tell the place has been ransacked. Scattered papers and smashed vials line the floor, a number of drawers have been pulled out of a small wooden desk and emptied whole hog on the floor, and even Presto's wardrobe has been tipped over, his prize collection of topcoats and fancy hats in a heap underneath the smashed piece of furniture.

Upon examining the wreckage of his home and place of business, determined by rolling on the Random Residences table (pg. 245), Presto's heart sinks. "My journal...it's gone," he explains, pointing to a small hidden panel cracked along the wardrobe's back. "Who would do this?"



Any player choosing to investigate the scene of this crime will find a big mess and a lot of spilled potions, as well as green chemical burns along the floor in certain areas where some of the more volatile ingredients in Presto's potions have seeped into the woodwork. A player succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will notice two pieces of folded parchment (pictured here) among the mess.

If no player succeeds on this check, Presto can offer a potion that promises to "help them see more clearly," boosting their Perception and Investigation skills by +5 for one hour. Under the influence of this potion, they can look again. Presto can also take the potion himself and discover the parchment.

Upon reviewing the contents of the discovered parchment, it all clicks into place for Presto:

> "Hold. I can't believe it. We worked together for years, perfecting our methods—he never asked for more pay, he always showed up on time. He mixed all the potions for FeatFest while I finalized my sales pitch.... And now I find out he's been planning to stab me in the back! You think you know someone, then, Prest—Presto Change— [*sobs*] Ohhhh you have to find him. If he has my notebook, then he has my formulas. You have to find him!"

Looking around Presto's shop, the party sees numerous unlabeled vials that are still intact. Presto offers them to the group if they promise to bring Hold to justice.

Presto's Personal Potion Stash

- 1d4 *potion(s) of haste*
- 1d4 *potion(s) of perception* (pg. 17)
- 1d4 *potion(s) of long rest* (pg. 17)
- 1d4 *potion(s) of greater healing*
- 1 *potion of enlarge*
- 1 *potion of spider climb*

Taking the *potion of perception* reveals just enough of the scent of Hold's cologne in the air to track his path through the streets toward the print shop. If none in the party choose to avail themselves of Presto's *potion of perception*, Presto can lead them outside, suggesting they check in with the print shop to see if he's gone to pick up his fliers.

Part 6: The Chase is On

As the party travels toward the print shop, either with or without Presto, they see a figure who looks an awful lot like Hold Hammerhearth slipping into a sewer grate at the end of a nearby alleyway.

If they choose to give chase, roll three times on the Random Tunnel table on pg. 229 to determine the environment into which the party is following Hold, who always seems to be just out of reach of their spells and weapons.

Hold evades the party through a series of three tunnels—they're following his shadow more than the man—and is attempting to slow them down any way he can. He's on his way to the underground lab where he's been developing potions behind Presto's back.

If the party loses sight of Hold, they'll eventually run into a tunnel with a large wooden door at the end, with sounds echoing from within what appears to be Hold's Stronghold (pg. 23).

Variant Encounter (Optional) Hold's Helpers

Upon being pursued by the party, Hold panics and starts throwing random vials at them or at nearby creatures. Roll 1d6 on the table below for each tunnel entered.

1d6	In an effort to escape, Hold...
1	...throws an *enlarge* potion at 1d4 **rats**, who become large and aggressive.
2	...pitches a potion at a spider's web, which immediately creates a **giant spider**.
3	...hurls a potion at the party, which creates a *fireball* 10 ft. ahead of them.
4	...quickly consumes a potion and suddenly disappears.
5	...slams a vial against a wall, which collapses, revealing the lair of an angry sewer **crocodile**.
6	...has set a trap in this portion of the tunnel using glass jars of acid. The tripwire is easy enough to notice (DC 15). If it's tripped, 1d4 members of the party take 2d4 acid damage on a failed DC 12 Dexterity saving throw.

Part 7: Hold's Stronghold

An acrid, chemical smell hits your nostrils as you suddenly find yourself in a dark, warehouse-like space, a long forgotten storeroom that has been transformed into a mad alchemist's laboratory. A row of barrels lines the back wall of the space and you hear harried clattering coming from behind them. Along the opposite wall is a pristine collection of hats in various shapes and sizes. A few more vials smash and an awful growl carries over the barrel wall. A giant dwarven head rises just over the wall as Hold triples in size.

Hold will fight until subdued or killed. The effects of his potions will last for one hour. The party can choose to handle the encounter however they see fit.

Players attempting to converse with Hold in an effort to reason with, persuade or intimidate him will find him too enraged and potion-powered to make much headway, and are more likely to be met with a thrown barrel to the face than a handshake or acknowledgement of his own wrongdoing.

The barrels in Hold's shop are full of various liquids and chemicals and can produce their own hazards when thrown (see pg. 23).

Part 8: Change-o Presto

If he isn't already in the warehouse, Presto arrives just in time to see Hold defeated (or, less optimistically, the last member of the party fall). Presto is shocked and unnerved by the entire circumstance and equally miffed Hold would go to all this trouble to build a business right under his nose. Grateful, he declares the party can have anything they find in the room as spoils for their efforts (with the exception of his notebook, and any potions of *greater restoration*, which he needs to solve the city's poisoned potion problem).

If the party is successful in subduing or defeating Hold, on his person they will find...

- Presto's notebook, containing his formula for a *greater restoration* potion
- 800gp-worth of coin, stolen from Presto's shop
- 1d4 *potion(s) of enlarge*
- 1d4 *potion(s) of the stone giant*
- 1d4 *potion(s) of constitution (pg. 17)*

If the party presses Presto for more of a reward, he will offer each member one *potion of greater restoration* once he completes the mixing process. He asks if they'll be willing to help him carry a barrel back up to his shop, from whence he can distribute it to those in need.

Hold's collection of hats, assuming they are still intact, are also available for the party to pilfer.

Hold's personal hat is a magic item.

Hold Hammerhearth's Hat

Wondrous Item, RARE, 475gp
requires attunement

A fancy wool top hat with a golden eagle feather, this hat was handmade by Hold Hammerhearth as a means of helping him deceive his former employer, Preston Glimbow.

Offers +2 and advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks; makes the wearer appear slightly taller; is particularly fancy.

Potion of Perception

WONDROUS ITEM (POTION)
Uncommon, 120gp

Drinking this potion adds +5 to your Wisdom (Perception) and Intelligence (Investigation) checks for one hour.

Potion of Long Rest

WONDROUS ITEM (POTION)
Very rare, 650gp

Drinking this potion grants you all the benefits of a long rest without having to bed down for the night.

Potion of Constitution

WONDROUS ITEM (POTION)
Rare, 300gp

Drinking this potion adds +5 to your Constitution modifier for one hour.

Important NPCs

Useful information about the key characters in this adventure. All NPCs listed speak Common. They can speak any other languages at GM discretion.

Preston Glimbow aka "The Amazing Presto"

Medium half-elf, chaotic good
An uptempo salesman with big dreams and a flair for the dramatic, Preston Glimbow believes he makes the best potions money can buy.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 40
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws INT +6, WIS +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Alchemist's Kit +9
Senses Passive Perception 11

Actions
Alchemist's Fire. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 20/60ft. On a hit, the target takes 1d4 fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.
Acid vial. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d8 + 3) acid damage.

Hold Hammerhearth

Medium dwarf, chaotic neutral
A dwarf with an axe to grind, Hold has been working with Preston Glimbow as an assistant for years and is now ready to open his own store. He sabotages Presto's potions in an effort to ruin his employer's reputation. He is reserved and a bit gruff but enjoys talking about hats.

Armor Class 12 (studded leather)
Hit Points 40
Speed 25 ft.

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

Saving Throws INT +6, WIS +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Alchemist's Kit +9, Deception +9 with advantage
Senses Passive Perception 11

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

The FeatFesters

These individuals become transformed by Presto's corrupted potions.

Tater Von Spud

This roving grappler is known for his goading taunts and skills in the fighter's pit. After taking one of Presto's strength potions, he gains more strength, as well as some unwelcome side effects.

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)
Hit Points 45
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Senses Passive Perception 10

Grappler. Has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he is grappling. Can use his action to try to pin a creature grappled by him. To do so, Tater makes another grapple check. On a success, he and the creature are both restrained until the grapple ends.
Reckless. At the start of his turn, Tater can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

Actions
Multiattack. Tater Von Spud makes two attacks.
Grapple. Tater Von Spud makes a grapple attack (contested Strength) against a target.
Throw. Tater Von Spud will throw a grappled creature up to 20 ft. The creature takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage upon impact. If thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 strength saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone.

Ageless Hag

An anti-aging cream turned this woman into a horrible hag.

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Actions
Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Flame-Spitting Toddler

This youngster breathes fire every time it opens its mouth.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 4
Speed 30 ft.

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

Actions
Burning Babble. The toddler opens its mouth to speak and a gout of flames erupts in a 15-ft. cone. Each creature in the cone must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one.

Shy Banshee

This shy half-elf is now screaming like a banshee.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 16
Speed 30 ft.

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

Actions
Courageous Wail (Recharge 5-6). The half-elf screams like a person who's just discovered their true voice for the first time, in a piercing, ear-splitting screech. This sound has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 30 ft. of her that can hear her must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature takes 6 (2d6) psychic damage.

The Balding Werewolf

This individual was hoping for a cureall to fix male-patterned baldness but got more fur than he was hoping for.

Armor Class 12 (hybrid form)
Hit Points 34
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Actions

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

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werewolf lycanthropy.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Towering Halfling

This vertically challenged individual is much lankier than he'd hoped to be and is teetering on stilt-like, 15-ft.-tall legs.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 8
Speed 50 ft.

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

Too Tall. Each time this halfling makes an attack with his greataxe he must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone and suffer 1d6 bludgeoning damage as he loses his balance and topples over.

Actions

Greataxe. Melee Attack: +4 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. Hit: 8 (1d12 + 2) slashing damage.

Acid Dwarf

This poor soul was hoping for an alluring tonic to attract a love interest but is now covered in skin-melting acid.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 12
Speed 25 ft.

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

Acidic Aura. Any creature that ends their turn within 5 ft. of this creature takes 1d6 acid damage.

Actions

Touch flesh. The dwarf makes a melee attack against a creature, its acidic fingers clinging to any bare flesh it can find. On a hit, the target takes 4 (1d8) acid damage

Stone-fisted Brawler

This individual was only trying to gain an edge for their next fight. Now both their hands are made of stone. How are they supposed to raise a glass after they win a bout?

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)
Hit Points 13
Speed 30 ft.

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

Attack

Stone punch. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Hulking Hold Hammerhearth

Large monstrosity

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 80
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws INT +6, WIS +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Alchemist's Kit +9, Deception +9 with advantage
Senses Passive Perception 11

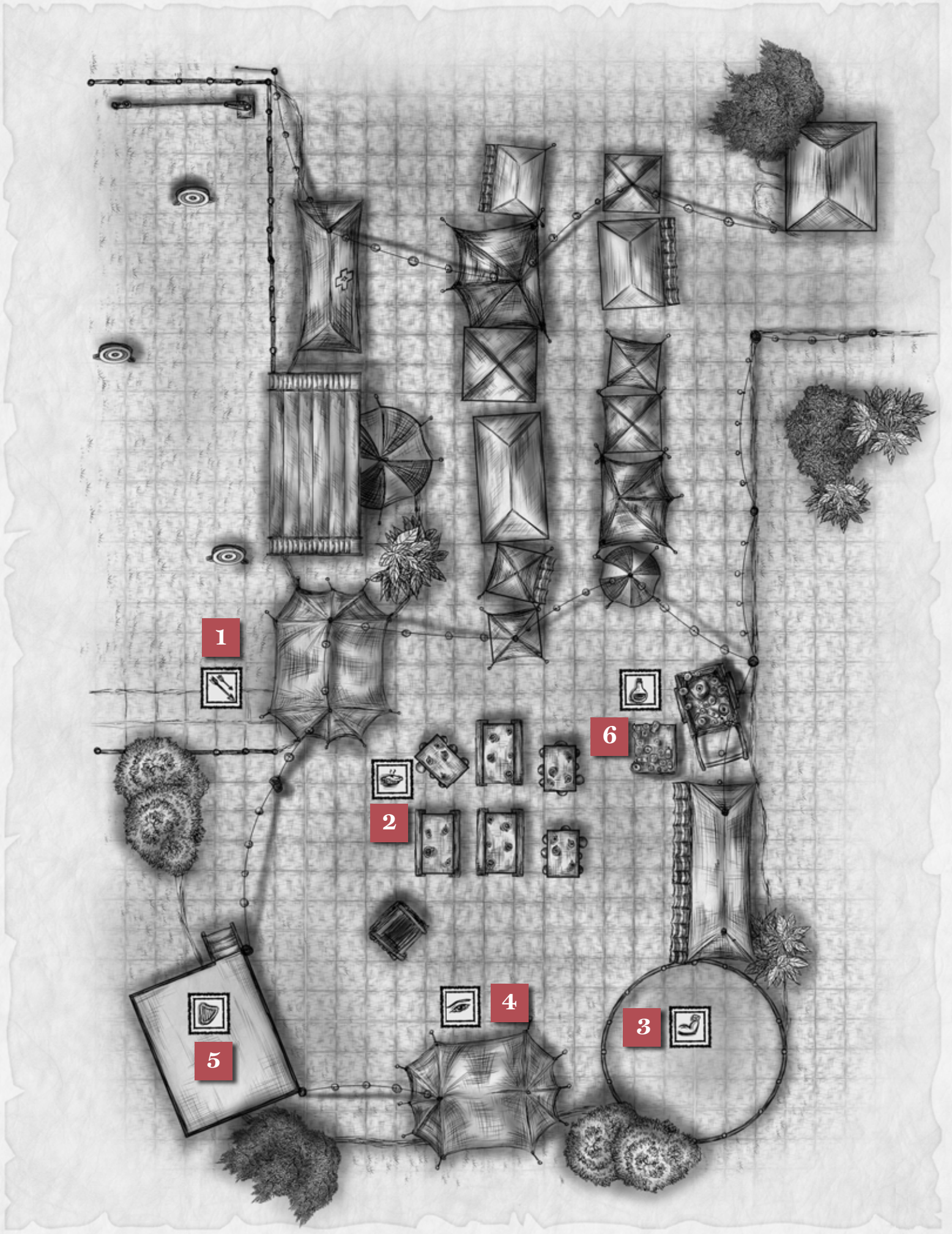
Actions

Multiattack. Hold can make 2 attacks.

Grapple. Hold can attempt to grapple a creature, with advantage.

Barrel Throw. Hold can throw a barrel as a melee or ranged (30/60) attack for (2d6)+6 bludgeoning damage.

Hammer Toss. (costs 2 attacks) Hold can attempt to grapple a creature and throw it up to 60 ft. as one action, for (2d4)+6 bludgeoning damage. If he aims at another creature, have them make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to jump out of the way or take the same bludgeoning damage.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The Feats of Valor Festival

The site of the region's annual "FeatFest," this open-air fairground is centrally located within the town proper and serves as a showcase for area athletes, adventurers and anyone looking to enjoy a turkey leg or impressive displays of skill. Townsfolk from miles around come to compete against their peers to determine who among them is the most gifted at a particular task. There are proving grounds for smithies, knife-jugglers, cooks, bards, the arcanely attuned and more.

Atmosphere

The entire town practically shuts down as its denizens descend on FeatFest en masse. Attendees are a bit more gleeful than you'd typically find in town.

Events

FeatFest is a celebration of skill. The below events are examples of the types of competitions your party might encounter at FeatFest, with entry fees of 1sp per. Prizes for outright winners are at GM discretion.

ARCHER ALLEY (1). Each target has a ring worth different point totals. Arrows hitting within the ring count toward the point total. Competitors have 3 shots each to secure the highest score possible. A competitor must declare their shot on a target, but not the ring they're aiming for. A competitor can call a specific ring for a +1 bonus, but if they miss they are awarded no points. Competitors can also choose to use other ranged attacks for this challenge at GM discretion.

Close Range		
Outer	AC 12	2 Points
Inner	AC 13	4 Points
Bullseye	AC 14	6 Points
Mid Range		
Outer	AC 16	8 Points
Inner	AC 17	10 Points
Bullseye	AC 18	12 Points
Far Range		
Outer	AC 20	14 Points
Inner	AC 22	16 Points
Bullseye	AC 24	18 Points
Bonus Bell	AC 26 (D)	25 Points

GM Note

The tiny Bonus Bell is attached to a gear and pulley system so it rotates and moves around the back of the alleyway. Because of its size and rapid movement, shots fired at the Bonus Bell are made with disadvantage.

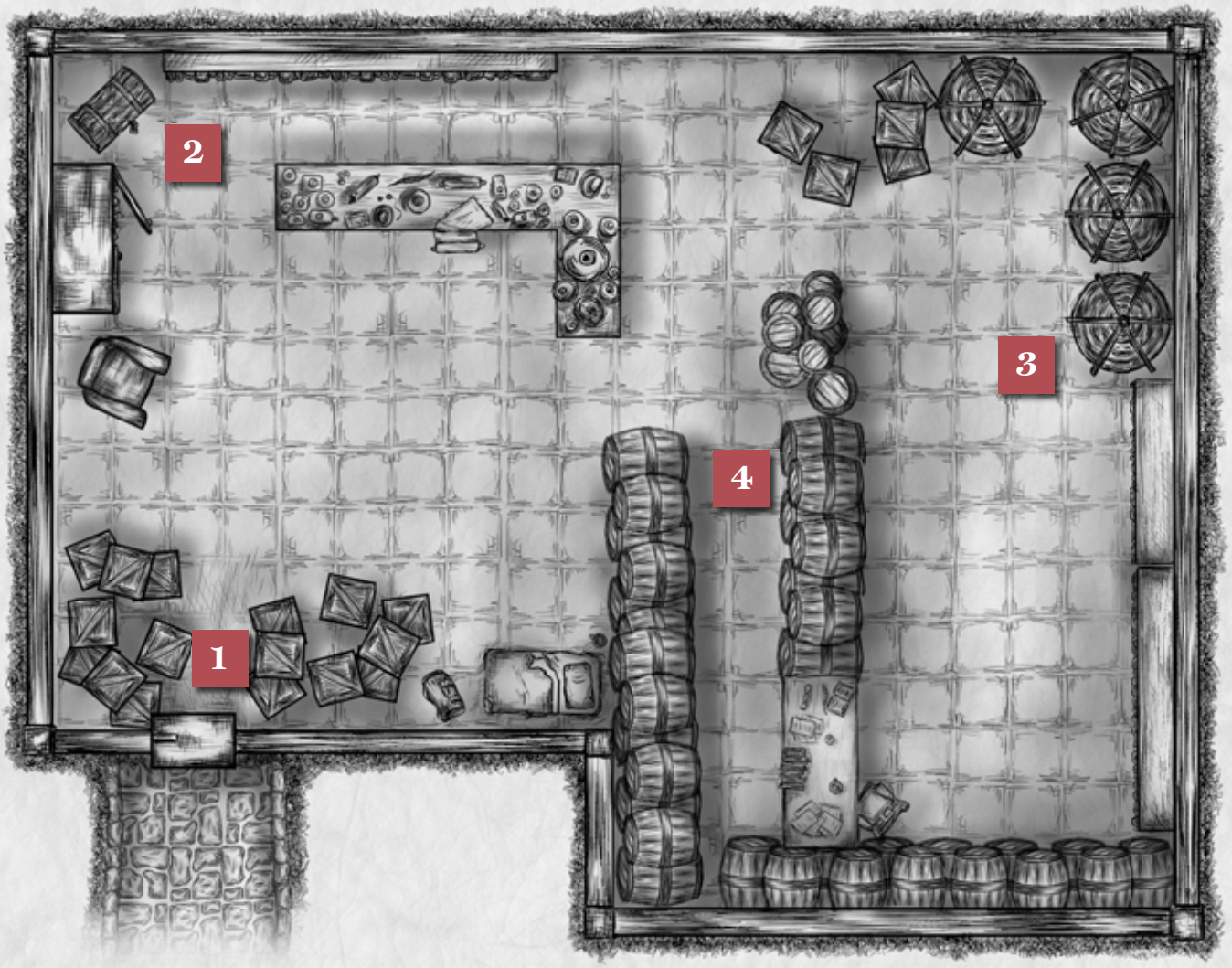
MEAT PIE EATING CONTEST (2). Each competitor must consume five meat pies, with the first to eat all five without losing their meal declared the winner. To run the contest, have each player roll 1d20 at a time, adding their Constitution modifier. Consuming one pie requires a cumulative roll of 30. Once a player has accumulated 30 points, they must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, spitting up the pie on a failed save. If they succeed on the save, they can begin eating their next pie. Continue this process, raising the DC on the Constitution save by +1 for each subsequent pie. If a competitor finishes the final pie, they must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw to call themselves the pie eating champion.

GRAPPLING PIT (3). Two opponents face off in the center of this ring to see who can toss the other out first. In the spirit of FeatFest, no magic is allowed. To win, a competitor must succeed on three contested Strength rolls in a row: One to grapple, one to lift and one to toss.

LIARS AND TRUTHSEEKERS (4). Alowen Tanash, a wizened half-elf with a cunning glint in his eye, runs this one-on-one competition, where those with a talent for reading people (and those who think they have a knack for deception) can showcase their skills. Choose a liar and/or a truthseeker. The liar makes three statements, one of them a falsehood. The truthseeker can roll a Wisdom (Insight) check against the liar's Charisma (Deception) to determine which of their statements is false. Alowen can act as either the liar or the truthseeker in the event that only one challenger approaches, with a DC of 20 for both his Insight and Charisma checks. Anyone who fools Alowen or sniffs out his falsehoods three times in a row is granted his blessing: +3 to your next Insight or Deception check.

DANCES OF LORE (5). The Dances of Lore are a highlight of FeatFest, a chance for sages and minstrels to work together to keep a meaningful memory alive. Archivists and historians pair off with performers of all stripes to present a short interpretive song, dance or other storytelling medium that details a meaningful moment from the past. The most moving story is named the year's Tale of the Festival and will be performed throughout the realm until the following year's FeatFest. Players can serve as historians or performers and pair up or partner with an NPC to create a combined Intelligence (History) and Charisma (Performance) score, describing the story they want to have interpreted onstage. The highest score of the day (top NPC score is 31 with "The Terrible Tale of Red the Blue") wins the honor of Tale of the Festival.

THE AMAZING PRESTO'S WAGON (6). A potionmaker named Preston Glimbow is hawking his wares from a flashy-looking wagon.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Hold's Stronghold

This subterranean space is the staging ground for potion-making apprentice (and lover of fine hats) **Hold Hammerhearth**'s rise to power.

Accessible through the city's system of underground tunnels, this long-abandoned storage space was claimed by Hold Hammerhearth and serves as his base of operations. The space features a large workstation for the creation of custom hats and a secondary space, separated from the first by a large wall of barrels, where potions are conceived, batched and bottled. Amid the meticulously staged mess is a bed fit for a dwarf, a modest wardrobe and scattered boxes of fabrics, felt and dyeing agents.

ENTRYWAY. There are crates blocking the path into the room ***(1)***, making the first 15 ft. into the space difficult terrain for anyone trying to walk through.

HAT STATION. This large workstation ***(2)*** is covered in sketches for soon-to-be crafted hats of all shapes and sizes, as well as bits of felt, sheers, a rounding jack, flange stand, brim trimmer and other tools of the hatter's trade. Hanging from artfully spaced hooks on the wall beyond the workstation are rows of immaculate hats of all sizes, colors and designs.

POTION LAB. A space for conceiving, mixing and batching custom potions ***(3)***. The large, unlabeled vats in the corner contain the following, in any designation you choose. If a vat breaks against a creature or they are tossed inside, they will be immediately influenced by the liquid inside due to the sheer volume covering their body.

1d4	Large potion vats
1	**Potion of Levitation.** A creature who consumes this potion will fall under the effect of the *levitation* spell.
2	**Potion of Enlarging.** A creature who consumes this potion will fall under the effect of the *enlarge* spell.
3	**Potion of Slow.** A creature who consumes this potion will fall under the effect of the *slow* spell.
4	**Potion of Lycanthropy.** Roll 1d4. A creature who consumes this potion will turn into a **werewolf** (1), **werebear** (2), **wererat** (3) or **weretiger** (4) for 1d6 hours.

BARREL WALL. These barrels ***(4)*** are all full of potions created by Hold Hammerhearth, either to further his own business or subvert his employer's. The barrels are unlabeled, though it's more than likely Hold has a sense of what's what. If a barrel bursts or its contents are investigated by someone proficient in potion-making (DC 15 Alchemist's or Herbalist's kit), roll on the table below to determine its contents. If a barrel breaks against a creature, they will be immediately influenced by the liquid inside due to the sheer volume covering their body. All saves related to the potions are set at DC 15.

1d10	This barrel contains...
1	...a powerful solvent (2d6 acid) used in hat-making, which causes 2d6 acid damage.
2	...a powerful glue used in hat-making. If hit with glue, a creature is considered grappled and must succeed on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check in order to escape.
3	...*potion of levitation*. A creature who comes into contact with this potion is under the effect of the *levitation* spell.
4	...*potion of confusion*. A creature who consumes this potion is under the effect of the *confusion* spell.
5	...*potion of minor healing*. A creature who comes into contact with this potion will heal 1d4 + 5 HP.
6	...*potion of fear*. A creature who comes into contact with this potion is under the effect of the *fear* spell, and is frightened of the creature that forced the contact.
7	...*magical grease*. A creature who comes into contact with this liquid is under the effect of the *grease* spell.
8	...*potion of blindness*. A creature who comes into contact with this potion is under the effect of the *blindness* spell.
9	...*potion of haste*. A creature who comes into contact with this potion is under the effect of the *haste* spell.
10	...*potion of enfeeblement*. A creature who comes into contact with this potion is under the effect of the *enfeeblement* spell.

Mother Knows Best

When the party is asked to do a favor for a member of their own family, it's a race against time (and a group of cultists set on stopping them).

An Adventure Suitable For Levels 4-6

The party encounters an NPC that's close to one of their own—a player character's mother (GM's choice). The PC's mother insists they help her gather three objects, the Twinned Triad, by the following night. A sort of scavenger hunt ensues, with the players running around town to acquire the objects. But once these items begin to find their way into the party's possession, a number of cultists attempt to gather them as well—leading to a confrontation with a cult of demon worshippers hoping to summon their master from another plane.

Setting Up

First, choose one member of the party to serve as the adventure's narrative hook. They will be on the receiving end of an important *sending* spell from their mother (referred to as "Mother" hereafter, but you should use whatever name is appropriate based on your player's backstory). Secondly, if it's your first session, determine how your party knows one another by using the Party Makeup Maker (pg. 250). Next, roll on the Cultist Clash table (opposite page) to determine the primary foes your party will be facing off against in this adventure. Finally, the flow of events in this adventure is determined as much by your party's choices as by chance. Start by rolling twice on the Random Taverns & Inns table (pg. 245). The first location is where Mother will meet the party and share her concerns. The second location will be home to the Mug of Retention, an object the party seeks. Roll on the Random Shops & Guilds table (pg. 245) to find the location of the Scarf of Resolve, and roll on the Random Temples table (pg. 245) to determine the location of the Ashes of the Near Undying—a location that should not be revealed until Part 4 of this adventure. Finally, roll on the Random Residences table (pg. 245) to determine the home beneath which the cultists meet.

Part 1: Blast From the Past

To kick things off for this adventure, allow the party to settle in and then explain that a member of the party is hearing a voice in the back of their head—a soft yet familiar voice, which speaks with a specific and recognizable tone: fear.

> Suddenly, you hear a voice in the back of your head. A familiar voice, even if it's one you haven't heard in a while: Your mother's voice. "Hello, my child. Apologies for not meeting in person. I need your help. Meet me at [Random Tavern] before nightfall and I'll explain."

If the party member decides not to follow up on this voice, Mother will eventually come to them face-to-face in any setting you choose.

Once the players meet up with Mother, she quietly ushers them to a dark corner of the bar. After the necessary pleasantries, Mother explains the reason for their meeting: she's a trained arcane spy (which might be news to her child), concerned with the rise of a local cult and the lengths to which they'll go to summon their master (see: Cultist Clash table) to the Prime Material Plane.

> "For months I've been tracking the rise of an underground cult, an ill-informed band of zealots many in my circle felt were too small-time to worry about. They were wrong. The cultists have discovered a ritual called the Twinned Triad, which exploits the transitive properties of enchanted magic to create a physical link to their master. It's a shortcut—planar magic for those who lack a true spark for the arcane—but it's nonetheless effective."

Encounter Variant: The Cultist Clash

The cultists pursuing the Twinned Triad have been imbued with power through their devotion and meticulous study. Roll 1d6 to determine who they serve and how it affects them.

1d6	Whom do the cultists serve?
1	**Undarosh the Unclean.** Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 acid damage.
2	**Mishtath the Flame Kissed.** Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 fire damage.
3	**Argosh the Storm Bringer.** Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 force damage.
4	**Candorath the Chill Touched.** Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 cold damage.
5	**Gambon the Dream Stalker.** Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 psychic damage.
6	**Malcore the Flesh Corruptor.** Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage.

Mother goes on to explain the Twinned Triad can be performed with three unique items, all of which can be found within the city limits:

THE MUG OF RETENTION. A large stein that, once filled, never needs refilling, the mug becomes a powerful vessel when used in blood magic—capable of producing the ichor of a thousand creatures from just a few pints of the real stuff.

THE SCARF OF RESOLVE. This luxurious artifact allows the wearer to stand firm in the face of fearsome or intimidating foes, a useful tool when trying to beckon a demon into existence.

ASHES OF THE NEAR UNDYING. These ashes are all that remains of a would-be lich—but through a singular blood rite, they can be transmuted into the corporeal form of a demigod. The location of the ashes is unknown. Mother is certain she'll hear back from one of her contacts before dawn and will contact the party as soon as she hears something.

Mother shares the location of the first two items, then explains she needs help acquiring them and doesn't want to be seen anywhere near them or else her cover will be blown. The party can choose whatever order they'd like to acquire the items—assuming they want to help at all.

GM Note

The order in which players attempt to collect the listed artifacts is entirely up to them, but the events detailed in Parts 2 and 3 should transpire as they are en route to the locations where the items are being held. Both items have their own associated challenges, with details starting on pg. 27.

Part 2: Obtaining Item 1

As the players travel along the streets and back alleys to get to their determined location, a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a pair of shadowy figures (two **cultists**) observing them from the rooftops, who vanish almost as quickly as they appeared (via *misty step*).

Once the party arrives at their destination, follow the encounter associated with the respective item being pursued, as detailed at the end of this chapter under the listed item.

Part 3: Obtaining Item 2

As the party travels to the location where the second item was last seen, a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals there are four figures—three **cultists** and one **assassin**—observing the party from the rooftops. These shadowy figures will not attack unless provoked. Their chief aim is to steal Item 1 from whomever is carrying it, and in lieu of an attack they may instead choose an Intelligence (Investigation) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to locate and acquire the item. Of course, it's fairly easy to steal something off a dead body. If the cultists acquire Item 1 or feel the fight is no longer in their favor, they will flee in different directions using their dash action and *misty step* unless they are captured or killed. In the event of an interrogation, they will scoff and sneer as they reveal the truth: They wish to bring about the rise of their patron. Everything else is secondary, including coin, laws and lives.

Once the party arrives at their destination, follow the encounter associated with the respective item being pursued, as detailed at the end of this chapter under the listed item.

Part 4: A Timely Message

After obtaining Item 2, Mother sends another *sending* spell message to her child.

> "I've found it, but they've found me. The ashes are located at [insert Random Temple]. Hurry."

The temple named is approximately five minutes away by foot, or two minutes in a dead sprint. But as soon as the party decides to make their way to the stated location, they find themselves under attack from the rooftops above by one **mage**, one **cult fanatic**, one **assassin** and three **cultists**. These attacks count as a surprise round at GM discretion.

On their turn, the mage will stay hidden, casting *major image* to conjure a horrifying beast in the mold of their patron in the alley below. Its main function is to slow the party down and distract them from pursuing the final item. It should snarl and growl and make

attacks that miss. It can be discovered as a ruse via a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If the image is discovered, or after five rounds, the mage will use a *dimension door* scroll to flee from the fray, ending the illusion.

The assassin should immediately race to the location of the ashes, using her movement, action and bonus action, unless unable to do so. She can also use *misty step*.

The cultists and cult fanatic should attack from the rooftops, unless it's deemed advantageous for them to move to street level. If the fight looks like it's no longer in their favor, they will retreat.

GM Note

If players choose not to engage with the cultists and the illusory creature and instead run to the location where Item 3 is being held, they'll find it without much trouble, but they'll be attacked on their way out of the location by the same group of people. The cultists' goal will be to steal the ashes and retreat.

Part 5: Race For the Ashes

If the players engaged with the cultists before running to this temple, when they arrive they'll find it ransacked with no sign of the ashes. An attendant acolyte will explain how they were threatened by a menacing figure (the assassin) and they gave up the ashes to save their hide.

At this point, the party receives another *sending* spell from Mother, who informs them she is being held against her will. She shares the location—a cult meeting room in the basement of a nearby building. The cultists are willing to make an exchange: her life for the item(s) the party possesses. This meeting is to take place in nine hours or under cover of darkness (whichever offers more time).

If the party is not in possession of any of the items, the *sending* spell can arrive as a call for help from Mother, who explains she doesn't have a lot of time but knows where she's being held captive and is desperate for the party's help. She indicates the ritual will begin soon.

Part 6: Cult of Personality

The Cultist Meeting Room can be accessed from above or below (see pg. 29). Within the inner chamber, the cultists await (less the number the party may have detained or killed). In total, the cult has six cultists, one cult fanatic, one assassin and one cult mage. Their goal is to exchange Mother for the ritual elements in the party's possession. If the cultists possess the ritual elements as well as Mother, the party is here for a rescue, not to parlay. In either circumstance, the following is true:

The Ritual of the Twinned Triad involves wearing the Scarf of Resolve and mixing the Ashes of the Near Undying with the warm blood of a freshly gutted human within the Mug of Retention. The mug is then tipped over, and the ashes and ichor flow freely, filling the floor of the cultists' inner sanctum. Within moments, as the cultists chant, the blood begins to flow and form into a demon of immense power. At least, that's what it said in the manual. If summoned, the demon is as likely to turn on the cultists as it is to attack the party.

GM Note

The cultists will stop at nothing to complete this ritual. It is their chief aim. If the party interferes, the cultists will do all they can to defeat them, but would sooner kill a member of their own side if it meant the ritual could start a little sooner. Assuming chaos breaks out in this meeting room (and it undoubtedly will), default to a cult member killing another to start the ritual in earnest.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Your Mother Should Know

Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine the truth about Mother's involvement in this ritual.

1d6	Mother...
1	...is actually the head cultist and has been using the party to run low-level errands while training up her own team. She just needs to sacrifice her child for the ritual to be complete.
2	...will be transformed into a demon as part of the ritual but still maintains her own consciousness—turning on the cultists.
3	...is an entry-level cultist who uses *suggestion* (DC 14) to convince her child to join them.
4	...will be killed by the ritual and is beyond resurrection magic because the ritual was so ill-conceived.
5	...will fight alongside the party as a level 10 mage.
6	...is not "Mother" at all and never has been. Instead she's a **doppleganger** impersonating her.

Part 7: The Aftermath

If the party survives the meeting in the cult's inner sanctum, the following can be found among the cultists, in addition to the Mug of Retention and the Scarf of Resolve:

- Correspondence explaining the cult's aim as well as step-by-step instructions for performing the Twinned Triad
- A broken locket
- A list of the party's names, with a circle around

Mother's child's name
- A +1 magical dagger adorned with ritualistic runes
- Three *misty step* spell scrolls

Item Encounters

Each item associated with the Twinned Triad is being held in a random location. When your party chooses which item to pursue, use the text outlined below.

Retrieving the Mug of Retention

The mug is being held at a random bar as determined by your second roll on the Random Taverns & Inns table (pg. 245). Once the party arrives, read the text below:

> As you arrive, the patrons in this establishment are going at it. The bartender is cowering in the corner. As one customer lands a knock-out blow, a grey, non-corporeal form rises out of the battered body...

The bar is being menaced by two **ghosts**—one of which will try to possess a member of the party immediately upon arrival. On a success, the newly possessed creature begins to pursue the customer that landed the knockout blow, while the rest of the customers flee the bar in fear. If the possessed form lands an attack on the patron it's attacking, another ghost will rise out of that body and attempt to possess another creature within range. If no target is in range, the ghost disappears, but will endeavor to possess another physical form—including party members—at GM discretion. If the party asks the bartender about the Mug of Retention they've been sent to receive, he says he'll happily give it to them if they can get these ghosts to leave his bar.

If the party is successful in ridding the bar of at least one of the ghosts, the bartender produces the Mug of Retention. If the party destroys both ghosts, the bartender will also offer them coin, to the tune of 10gp each.

NPC Profile

Mate and Mutt Matters, ghostly twins

The ghosts are identical twin brothers, Mate and Mutt Matters, who killed each other during a bar fight 100 years ago on this very day and have arrived at the scene of their death to settle the score. Neither will stop menacing this space until the other is gone for good. The ghosts can speak, and may communicate as much or as little of their own backstory as you desire. If the party kills one of the ghosts, they can attempt to convince the other to join them on their quest with a Charisma (Persuasion) check (DC 20).

Encounter Variant (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine why these ghosts are so angry.

1d6	Mutt and Mate...
1	...both loved the same lass, named Marsha.
2	...insisted it was the other's turn to pay the tab.
3	...disagree about who is more mighty.
4	...both believe the other cheated at a drinking competition.
5	...both believe the other got a larger inheritance.
6	...simply love fighting for fun, but their last battle obviously got out of hand.

Retrieving the Scarf of Resolve

The Scarf of Resolve is being held at a location determined by a roll on the Random Shops & Guilds table (pg. 245). Once the party arrives at the determined location, the party encounters the shopkeeper, who is wearing the Scarf of Retention and is absolutely obstinate in their unwillingness to part with it. In fact, the scarf itself is part of the reason they are so steadfast.

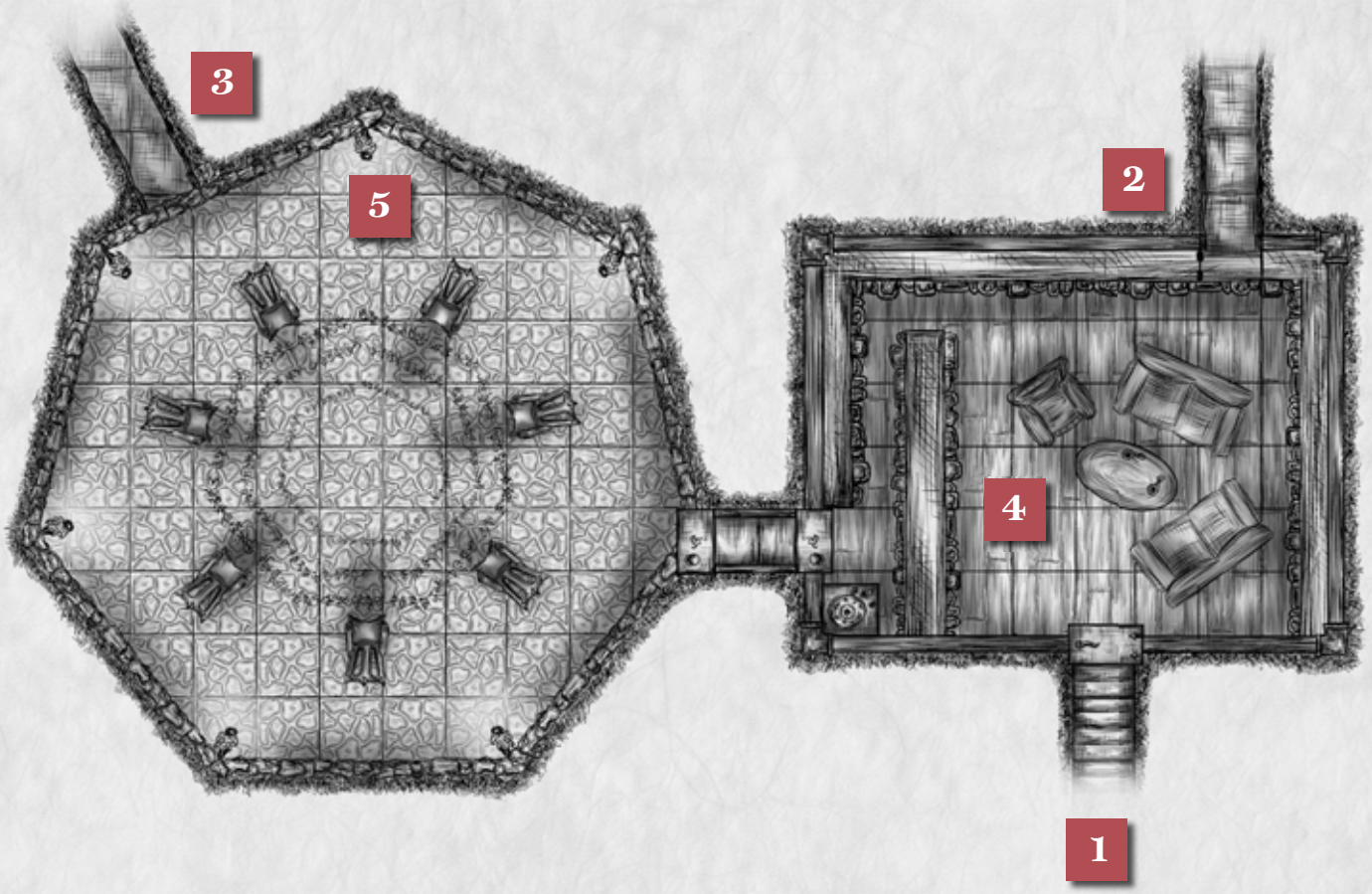
No amount of gold will convince the shopkeeper to part with the item, an item they continue to explain is a family heirloom of priceless value. If the party persists, roll on the Random Demands table below to determine what the shopkeeper desires in exchange, or offer another demand at GM discretion.

Variant Encounter (Optional) Random Demands

Roll 1d6 to determine what the shopkeeper hopes to receive from the party in exchange for the Scarf of Resolve.

1d6	The shopkeeper asks for...
1	...a humanoid foot.
2	...a comparable magical item.
3	...a brand-new song in their name and performed on the spot.
4	...a beloved weapon.
5	...a level 4 or higher spell scroll.
6	...a dragon's tooth.

If the party is unable to convince the shopkeeper to hand over the item and refuses to give in to their demands, a magical darkness descends on the space and when it lifts, the scarf is gone.



Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what mishaps and mayhem await the party in this space.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a group of 2d4 **cultists** and one **cult fanatic** assembled in the Welcome Area while they await entry into the Ritual Chamber.
2	...1d6 **cultists** arguing with another 1d6 **cultists**, a splinter group of the original cult. Both groups claim rightful ownership of the space.
3	...one **cult fanatic** sitting in the Welcome Area, two and a half hours early for his cult meeting.
4	...2d4 **cultists** and one **cult fanatic** fleeing the Ritual Chamber in horror at what they've summoned. (Roll on the Sad Summoning Table at right to determine what plagues them.)
5	...the Ritual Chamber filled with the dead bodies of 2d4 **cultists**, with large claw marks leading away from the Summoning Circle.
6	...2d4 **cultists** and one **cult fanatic** working to summon something within the Ritual Chamber. They can be heard through the large door, but it's barred (AC 10, 30 HP).

Cultist Meeting Room

Hidden away beneath a forgotten basement in a nondescript building in a quiet part of town is a space where those who wish to better themselves through the application of dark rites and forbidden incantations can meet to discuss the matters of the day, share a bite to eat and take a crack at summoning a force that might spell the end of the world. What this discrete gathering space lacks in decor, it makes up for in hospitality and appeals to denizens of the nine hells. Part rec room, part ritual circle, all evil.

Entrances and Exits

A set of stairs ***(1)*** from the building above leads into a sort of foyer, adorned with sensible, slightly mismatched sofas and chairs. Opposite the stairs is a somewhat obscured stone door, observed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, which leads to the tunnels beneath the town ***(2)***. A panel within the summoning chamber ***(3)*** is illusory (DC 20) and can be walked directly through—leading to a separate tunnel exit for a quick escape.

Welcome Area

A small but homey receiving room ***(4)*** is the first sight most who enter this space encounter. Styled for quiet socializing beyond the main chamber, the Welcome Area was envisioned as a place to engage in the nearly universal rituals of chitchat and small talk before focusing on the task at hand—in this case usually summoning some sort of awakened evil. Lumpy but comfortable pieces of furniture are the main fixtures of the room, and the stone wall features several hooks for hanging covenant robes in a way that prevents stubborn wrinkles. The walls are lined with bookshelves and feature a few tomes on summoning, demon worship and gardening, all missing a few key pages.

Ritual Chamber

Torches and numerous candle pillars warmly light this heptagonal space ***(5)***, which feels about 10 degrees cooler than the Welcome Area. A circle of ancient sigils somewhat amateurishly carved into the stone floor glows dim in the center of the room and is surrounded by a ring of chairs. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the sigils are specific to summoning magic, with a DC 20 revealing that two of the sigils are out of order, meaning no matter what the cultists seek to summon here they'll never be fully successful—the object of their ritual will always appear somewhat strange, not quite formed or with a temperament that seems anathema to their subjects' aims. If a summoning ritual is performed in this space, roll on the Sad Summoning table to determine the end result of the attempt.

Sad Summoning Table

Choose a demon suitable for your party's level, then roll 1d8 and, if necessary, on the Cult Caveat table below to determine the result of the summoning ritual.

1d8	The attempt to summon a dark entity...
1	...fails.
2–4	...succeeds, with three caveats.
5–7	...succeeds, with two caveats.
8	...succeeds, with one caveat.

Cult Caveat Table

Roll 1d20 for every caveat as determined by the Sad Summoning table.

1d20	The entity...
1	...appears in the physical form of a baby goat.
2	...is a complete pacifist.
3	...is easily distracted.
4	...has 12 total hit points.
5	...must communicate through song.
6	...has 1 intelligence.
7	...is missing all its limbs.
8	...lacks the ability to hear.
9	...is unable to see.
10	...only wants to go to the pub.
11	...is afraid of humanoids.
12	...is inside out and vulnerable to all damage.
13	...is incredibly groggy, as in the *slow* spell.
14	...refuses to move.
15	...thinks the summoners are its foes.
16	...takes half the damage it inflicts.
17	...has arms for teeth and mouths for hands.
18	...floats like a balloon, as in the *levitate* spell.
19	...is laughing hysterically and can't stop.
20	...has 0 Charisma.

Important NPCs

Useful information about the key characters in this adventure. All NPCs listed speak Common. They can speak any other languages at GM discretion.

Mutt and Mate Matters

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Mutt and Mate Matters are proud, violent dwarven warriors and brothers who killed each other during a bar fight 100 years ago. They are now haunting the site of their death in an effort to finish the fight.

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 45
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (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

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 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.

Dark Mage

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful evil

This individual is seeking to raise a dark entity, and will use any arcane means at their disposal in order to make its transportation to this plane a reality.

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 40
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses Passive Perception 11

Spellcasting. The mage is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:
• Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
• 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*
• 2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*
• 3rd level (2 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *major image*

Actions

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (1d4 + 2) piercing damage + 1d6 variant damage as established on the table on pg. 25.
Dagger. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: (1d4 + 2) piercing damage + 1d6 variant damage as established on the table on pg. 25.

"Mother"

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic good

A loving if possibly absent parent, Mother is also a member of a circle of mages who help maintain the safety of the realm through subterfuge and subtle influence. In short, she's an arcane spy. Or at least that's who she claims to be.

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 40
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +6
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses Passive Perception 13

Spellcasting. Mother is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:
• Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, blade ward*
• 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
• 2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*
• 3rd level (2 slots): *counterspell, hypnotic pattern, sending*

Actions

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

Summoned Demon

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

The creature summoned by the cultists should be determined based on who they worship, as per the table on pg. 25. Additional effects to this summoned creature should be applied using the Sad Summoning table on pg. 29.

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +8, Wis +4
Damage Resistance Cold, Fire, Lightning; Bludgeoning, Piercing and Slashing From Nonmagical Attacks
Damage Immunities Poison
Condition Immunities Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 11

Magic Resistance The demon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Variant Dangers Based on the identity of the demon being summoned, as determined by the table on pg. 25, the demon gains the additional property:

UNDAROSH THE UNCLEAN
Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 acid damage, and creatures ending their turn within 5 ft. of Undarosh take an additional 1d6 acid damage.

MISHTATH THE FLAME KISSED
Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 fire damage and creatures ending their turn within 5 ft. of Mishtath take an additional 1d6 fire damage.

ARGOSH THE STORM BRINGER
Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 force damage and creatures ending their turn within 5 ft. of Argosh take an additional 1d6 force damage.

CANDORATH THE CHILL TOUCHED
Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 cold damage and creatures ending their turn within 5 ft. of Candorath take an additional 1d6 cold damage.

GAMBON THE DREAM STALKER
Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 psychic damage. Additionally, once per short rest, one creature of Gambon's choice must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of Gambon for one minute.

MALCORE THE FLESH CORRUPTOR
Melee and ranged weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage and attacks with Malcore's claws permanently reduce the target's maximum hit points by the amount of necrotic damage suffered. This reduction to a creature's hit point maximum lasts until the creature finishes a long rest or until it is affected by a spell like *greater restoration*.

Actions

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

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (2d6 + 4) slashing damage

The Mug of Retention

Wondrous Item, RARE, 900gp

When filled with a non-magical liquid, this oversized, lidded stein seems to contain an endless supply of it. In reality, it will produce up to 20 gallons of liquid in a single day. Stating its command phrase, "Fill 'er up," resets the liquid it can create.

The Scarf of Resolve

Wondrous Item, RARE, 750gp
requires attunement

This luxurious knit scarf allows the wearer to stand firm in the face of fearsome or intimidating foes whether in battle or in bargain-making. It is also very cozy. When attuned to the scarf, you are immune to the frightened condition and also gain advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks related to haggling.

Ashes of the Near Undying

Wondrous Item, VERY RARE, 2,400gp

These ashes are all that remains of a would-be lich, felled by adventurers in another age. They seem to possess a dark, corrupting energy—one that can be transferred to larger objects one time as outlined below.

When used to hone a weapon, the ashes grant one extra damage die (necrotic) per successful attack with the weapon.

If rubbed into your armor or clothing, the ashes shroud you in dark energy, granting advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks as well as an aura of negativity that endangers any creature within 5 ft of you. As a bonus action on your turn you can force a creature within 5 ft. to make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. They take 1d8 necrotic damage on a failed save.

Other applications of the Ashes of the Near Undying are at GM discretion, as are the odds that these ashes corrupt anyone who chooses to utilize them in the manners listed above—the soul of the near undying aching to control and corrupt their corporeal form.

Special Delivery

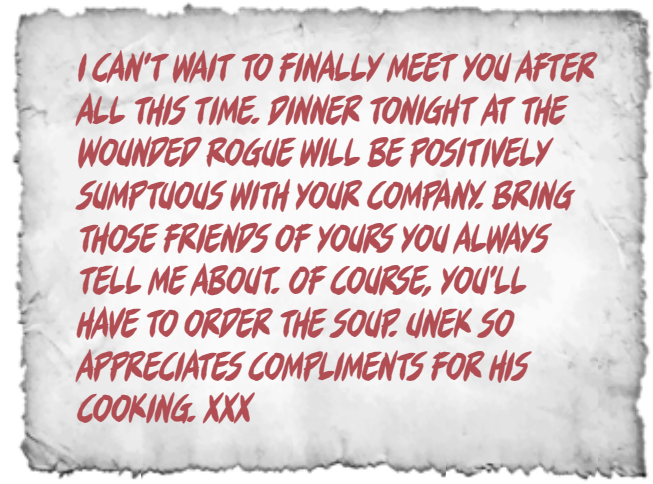
When the party is hired for a routine courier job, they find themselves caught on two sides of a battle between the local thieves' guild and a risen evil seeking immortality.

An Adventure Suitable For Levels 5-8

A shady individual hires the party to steal a valuable package from an inbound ship that evening and is willing to pay big for its delivery, no questions asked. Of course, things begin to get a little tricky when the "package" is revealed to be several possibly magical and potentially dangerous cats. The party will have to decide whose allegiance they want to gain, who they want to double cross and whether they can get away with the money or a new pet. Things get even more complicated when the intended recipient of the package is notified it has gone missing and shows up to rain down fire and death on any who would dare defy her.

GM Note

For clarity, here's a little backstory on what some of the NPCs involved in this adventure were up to before the party gets involved. A thief named **Falique Chasez** was tasked with stealing some items from a well-known mage's mansion. What he didn't account for was that one of the items he was asked to steal, a necklace, was a piece of the mage's phylactery, and that it was cursed. Touching the necklace transformed him into a cat. The mage, now a sort of demilich named **Lady Izael**, sent her minions in search of the creature that had stolen this artifact from her. But Falique, now a cat, was able to evade these brutes for a short time. Though he evaded capture by Izael's minions (led by **Maristo Maroo**) Falique was rounded up with some other stray cats by a group of traders looking to sell some pets at their next port. Once trapped, Maroo was easily able to track Falique's whereabouts and he led a crew of undead pirates on the Wave's Bane to board the traders and steal the crateful of cats, planning to deliver them to his mistress. Master thief **Karolin Threesilver** heard of this bit of piracy, and determined something of great value must be aboard the Wave's Bane. What she doesn't know is that it belongs to a creature of dark power.



Setting Up

This adventure takes place in a few different locations: The Wounded Rogue (pg. 109), Dockside (pg. 37) and the Old Ruins (pg. 38), as well as a few streets and alleyways (pg. 221). Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with these maps and their particular mechanics. Secondly, if this is your party's first adventure, determine how they might know each other ahead of time, by using the Party Makeup Maker (pg. 250), and select one to receive a letter (above) from Elerin the urchin. If the party has been adventuring together for a while, have Elerin approach the party member most connected to the criminal underworld. Elerin will brightly greet the party at GM discretion and deliver a note saying it's from their "secret admirer." Of course, Elerin will require a tip before he hands over the note. As soon as his business is completed, the child scampers off into the shadows, quick as a fox.

Part 1: A Thief's Proposition

The party can make a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check to ask passersby where the Wounded Rogue is and, after figuring out how to get downstairs to the actual bar, are met by a middle-aged

female half-orc dressed in a fine cloak that seems to cling to the shadows. She introduces herself as Karolin Threesilver and moves through the bar with a certain aplomb that hints at nobility in the blood. Every eye in the bar follows her path to a table in the corner. Should the party choose to hear what she has to say, she'll explain she's been admiring their collective adventuring from afar and thinks they're the perfect fit for a small bit of work with which she'd prefer not to be directly involved. And she'll make the work worth their while:

> "Tonight, The Wave's Bane, a pirate ship masquerading as a merchant vessel, is due to dock . On board is a crate of great value—you'll know it when you see it. I don't know what its final destination will be—all I know is you're going to interfere. I don't care how you acquire the package, just bring it to me at the Wounded Rogue, undamaged, before dawn. I will pay 2,000 gold on delivery. Be discrete. Don't die. And remember, it's not stealing—it's forceful repossession for monetary gain at the behest of a licensed third party."

If the party is still unsure, Threesilver can ply them with an extra "favor." She is very well-connected with the upper echelons of noble society and, should they require it, can vouch for their skills or provide leverage with a local lord or lady. She will also share the dock's location.

Part 2: A Simple Plan

The party still has a couple of hours to plan and set up their heist positions.

The "package" is located in the tiny room at the bow of the Wave's Bane on the lower level—a small crate guarded by two **wights** and two **skeletons** disguised as guards. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the crate has air holes drilled into it and also reveals the undead nature of the guards. The rest of the ship's crew are also revealed to be 2d6 **skeletons** that will defend the package with their unlives.

If the party chooses to hold steady and see how things develop, they will watch for an hour before the two wights and a handful of skeleton guards begin carrying the crate through the streets of town. The skeleton guards march 30 ft. ahead and behind on lookout duty. They head up to the Old Ruins, a 15-minute walk from the docks, where they have been told to rendezvous with their masters, the near demilich Lady Izail and Maristo Maroo.

At any time during this phase of the adventure, roll 1d20. On an even roll, any character with a Passive Perception higher than 14 will hear the sound of cats meowing from within the box.

Part 3: What's In the Box?

As it happens, Threesilver wasn't entirely forthcoming about the contents of the package. The wooden crate has an AC of 10 and 2 hit points. Inside the crate are three similar-looking tabby cats.

If the crate is opened, all three cats will make a break for it in different directions. Any attempt to stop the cats from escaping carries a DC of 15 for each cat the party attempts to corral.

On a fail, the cats dart away into the night. In order to fulfill their contract with Threesilver, the party will need to find and secure all three cats. One runs out and under the nearest sewer grate, another climbs onto the roofs and the last makes a break for it down an alley. Roll on the Random Rooftops & Alleys table (pg. 221) to determine a gridded location and layout for these escapes at GM discretion.

Each cat can be discovered with a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, but on a failure the DC for that cat rises by +1. Convincing the cat to come once discovered is another matter entirely, requiring a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check (with a +1 increase to the DC on each subsequent failed check), or other creative means at GM discretion.

One of these cats is not like the others. A *detect magic* spell will reveal one of these cats is particularly magical and outlined in powerful transmutation magic. It is also cursed. A *speak with animals* spell would reveal this cat is actually a male half-elf named Falique Chasez, who has maintained his mental statistics.

In cat form, but only after his initial escape, Falique will approach the party with caution if he sees/hears any of the following:

- A member of the party killing any undead
- A member of the party turning into a cat
- A member of the party eating fish

Falique the cat will make all efforts to flee the party, and the checks associated with tracking and luring him to them will increase to DC 18 if he sees/hears the following:

- A member of the party suggesting they turn him over to Threesilver
- A member of the party suggesting he will be easier to turn over to Threesilver if he is dead
- A member of the party turning into a dog

Whether captured or approaching of his own accord, Falique will pay special mind to any party member who looks like they might be capable of removing his curse, either through a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell,

nuzzling their wand or arcane focus until he's made his point clear. If the party doesn't pick up on these clues (after all, who ever really knows what a cat wants?), Falique will meow repeatedly and then lead them 10 ft. at a time toward the nearest temple, where he will bother a cleric until they do the deed on his behalf. The cleric in question will ask for a modest donation (10gp) to their temple for this service.

GM Note

If the cats escape at the Old Ruins as opposed to on the docks or in the streets on the way there, they will hide among the rubble. The DCs on the Survival and Animal Handling checks still apply.

Variant Encounter (Optional) Release the Hounds (or Horrors)

These reinforcements should arrive approximately five minutes after the cats escape, at GM discretion.

1d6	Tracking the cats are...
1	...1d4 summoned **hellhounds** baying for blood through the streets.
2	...a **spined devil** and two **imps**.
3	...an **invisible stalker** and 1d4 **bandits**.
4	...a **Barlgura** in the guise of a blacksmith asking for directions.
5	...1d6 hired **thugs** led by a **berserker**.
6	...1d4 hired **assassins** from the guild who don't know they are potentially messing with guild business.

Part 4: Live on Two Legs

Once his curse has been dispelled, Falique spills onto the ground and immediately coughs up a furball. He is a young-looking, dark-skinned high elf who wears a ragged set of black clothes and a hood pulled over his head. He will introduce himself as Falique Chasez, then urge the party to follow him quickly to the nearest alley or other spot out of sight from potentially prying eyes. Once there, he immediately coughs up an even larger hairball. On closer inspection, the hairball is actually a fur-covered gold amulet inlaid with rubies and diamonds.

> "Don't touch the amulet! Or at least use gloves. I'm a thief. I steal stuff for wizards. I got hired to steal all I could from the Izail estate. But when I nicked this necklace 'pfffffft,' I was a little tabby. Then he showed up. Maristo Maroo. He serves Lady Izail. Started screaming about the missing necklace—I put two and two together pretty fast and swallowed it as quick as I could and leapt out the window. Hid with some strays for a bit but we got boxed up by a crew of traders, probably to sell us as pets. And then she found me. This amulet calls to her. She knows, always knows, where it is. We have to destroy it. Now."

The amulet that now lies on the ground—and that he now refuses to touch—is cursed with a powerful version of the *polymorph* spell, and is vital to the rebirth of Lady Izail, a would-be demilich known to at least one member of the party.

Falique managed to get away from this creature's lair as a cat, forcing her minions on a merry chase across a continent and half an ocean before they managed to catch up with him, keeping the amulet with him by re-swallowing it after passing it every two to three days. Yes, that's gross. He's certain Izail's minions aren't far behind. It's fortunate he's managed to end up in this city because he has a plan to destroy the phylactery piece and get away scot-free with a small fortune, but he needs the party's help. Polymorphed with him is a *bag of holding* full of artifacts and items from Lady Izail (pg. 40).

FALIQUE'S OBJECTIVE: Get to the Old Ruins where he believes an ancient magical device—an Arcane Enchantment Inverter—may be able to be used to suck the power out of the amulet, destroying it, and Lady Izail, in the process. He is willing to give the party some of the items he stole from her lair if they protect him while he activates the device and destroys the amulet. He would also really appreciate not being handed in to Threesilver (if the party mentions her). Falique is manipulative and knows the only way out of this situation is to destroy the amulet. He will do and say whatever is necessary to get the party on his side, whether that is playing to their sense of righteousness or personal greed.

> "See, I've heard tales of the battle fought among those ruins. The magical fallout alone is dangerous enough, but it was a discharge from the Arcane Enchantment Inverter that blew up the tower and keeps causing all these pesky storms up there. I know it sounds dangerous, but since you're involved in all this now, Lady Izail is not going to let you go. It's either help me destroy the amulet or pray she doesn't destroy you."

If the party still wishes to turn Falique over to Threesilver, he'll make it clear that even a single one of the items he can share with them is worth far more than her contract and he's willing to give them up now as a sign of good faith. Plus, they'll surely get adventuring clout for destroying a sort-of lich. If they insist, he'll go willingly but tells them they better be ready to die when Lady Izail shows up asking about her favorite amulet.

Falique will describe what each item does if they ask. Use the Falique's Uniques table (pg. 40) to determine which items will be revealed.

If the players instead decide to take him to

Threesilver at the Wounded Rogue, she will pay them for their role in this job. In the event of this scenario, Lady Izail will assail the Wounded Rogue, at which point Falique will suggest they retreat to the Old Ruins, as their only hope for survival is to destroy this amulet. Should the party choose to battle at the Wounded Rogue, the odds will not be in their favor.

Part 5: Package, Please.

If the party agrees to help Falique, he will lead them as quickly as he can to the Old Ruins (a 15-minute journey by foot). The moment they arrive, however, a series of crossbow bolts will spark at their feet. And then another round and another, all indicators the party shouldn't proceed a step farther. Coming out of the shadows is Threesilver, who signals that her snipers are trained on the party and she'd like to have a conversation.

> "I asked you for something simple," says Threesilver. "And yet here you are, covered in cat hair. I'm disappointed."

Threesilver wants to know where her package is, and she's not interested in Falique's story about having once been a cat. She wants something of value or else her colleagues in the guild are prepared to open fire at her signal. She will yield to the party and Falique in the event of the following:

- A successful DC 17 Persuasion check
- A successful DC 17 Deception check
- A successful DC 17 Intimidation check
- A trigger at GM discretion

Optional: If the party chooses to give the amulet to Threesilver, she turns into a grey tabby cat and the amulet drops in front of her.

If the party chooses to fight her instead, she has the backing of three **assassins** who are firing from full cover 400 ft. away. If Threesilver is slain, they will flee—but may look to seek revenge later on. Alternatively, you can interrupt the fight with the arrival of Lady Izail's minions and the start of a chaotic battle. The party may try and enlist Threesilver's assistance in the battle with a DC 17 Persuasion check, otherwise she and her assassins will flee to fight another day.

Part 6: To the Ruins!

Falique hurriedly leads the party to the Old Ruins as it begins to rain. At this point the rest of Lady Izail's minions are on their way. Maristo Maroo, a dark mage with a fanatical devotion to Lady Izail, is already there—flanked by loyal creatures from the table at right. They all stand on the opposite side of the Arcane Enchantment Inverter in the ruins of the tower. Maristo raises his arms, and the box at his feet opens.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to see what else Lady Izail has on her side.

1d6	Lady Izail's minions are...
1	...2d6 **skeletons** rising from the earth of the ruins.
2	...one **wight** leading 1d4 **skeletons**.
3	...one **cult fanatic** and 1d4 **cultists**.
4	...4d6 hired **goblins**.
5	...6d4 **kobolds**.
6	...one **zombie giant** and two **skeletons**.

> From within a bejeweled box at the feet of a man wearing pitch black robes, a jewel-encrusted skull atop a floating spinal cord rises, casting an unnaturally long shadow over the rain-soaked ruins. A horrible voice pierces each of your minds: "This is what all the trouble is about? Such impudent worms are hardly worth my time. Secure my phylactery piece, then destroy them. Make it hurt."

Lady Izail, a weakened yet still formidable demilich, lets loose a menacing howl (pg. 41). The missing amulet will complete her phylactery and make her immortal. If it's destroyed, so too will she be.

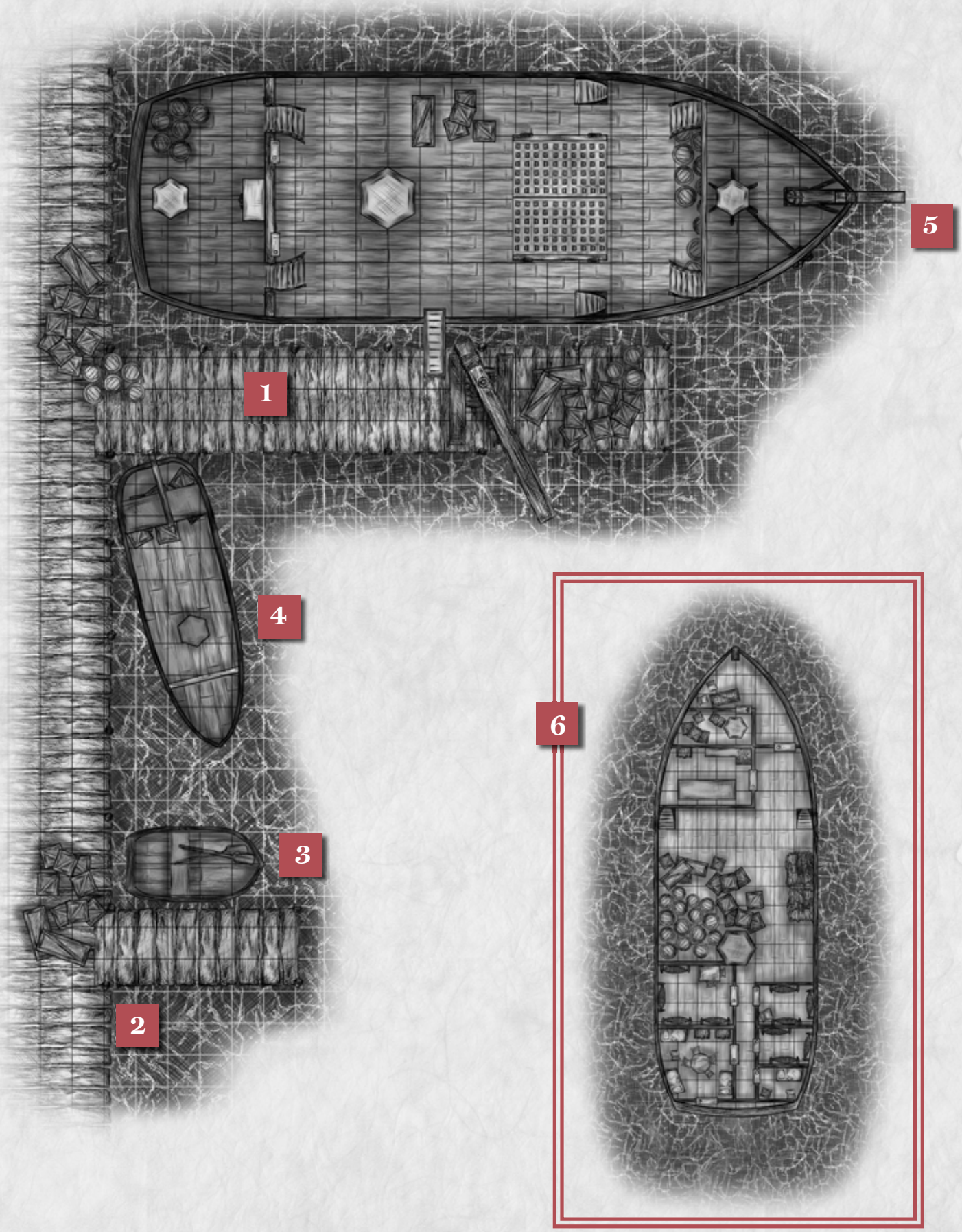
As soon as the Arcane Enchantment Inverter (see pg. 39) is activated or the moment someone casts a spell in the vicinity of the Old Ruins, roll on the Wild Magic Storm table (pg. 39) to determine the environmental effects on the battlefield at initiative count 20. These effects stack.

Falique will do whatever he can to get to the machine and begin the process of destroying the amulet (which will take four rounds after activation). The party must survive long enough for him to successfully complete his mission.

If Falique is successful, Lady Izail will burst into green flames and shatter into dust. Her minions will fall or flee, the source of their motivating power no longer sustaining them. Maristo Maroo will teleport away if it appears Lady Izail has disintegrated. If Falique falls, any party member can take control of the machine and destroy the amulet in his stead.

Part 7: Aftermath

If the party survives this ordeal, Falique will thank them for their service and allow them to keep the magic items he shared with them. He will then pull another item out of his bag, rub it between his fingers and disappear—teleporting back to his homebase.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Dockside

The sound of water lapping beneath the undersides of the sturdy wooden docks is audible as the masts of the ships in the dock start to come into view. Salty sea air mixed with a dull scent of water rot permeates the area, and the slatted boards that make up the dock are often a bit slick with spillover—especially true in foul weather. These docks are but one of many servicing this region of the world, and the ships that drop anchor here rarely stay for long.

The Docks

SLICK CONDITIONS. Stacks of crates and barrels pepper the docks ***(1)*** as various shipments await transport into town or on board a departing vessel. The sloshing water along the extended docks creates a bit of a hazard, and it's wise to step steadily and with purpose or risk a watery plunge over the side. The docks are difficult terrain, but full movement can be used at player discretion: Anyone moving along the docks at full speed must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity save or slip and fall into the drink.

A HIDDEN TUNNEL. To the right of the shorter dock is an inlet beneath the dock itself, an obscured opening ***(2)*** that leads to the city's underground tunnels and sewer system. The opening can be discovered with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or, if one knows what they're looking for, a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The tunnel leads to a location determined at GM discretion, or by rolling on the Random Tunnel table (pg. 231).

The Ships

A small rowboat ***(3)*** is moored at the dock, with space for up to six travelers. A modest vessel ***(4)*** is also dockside and appears to be abandoned. The largest ship in the harbor ***(5)*** is a two-masted bilander, a pirate vessel called the Wave's Bane, outfitted for swift, secure travel across the high seas. Below deck ***(6)*** there is ample space for cargo, as well as a few holds for the crew. A basic table offers a place to play cards or enjoy a simple meal during voyages across the sea or on nights when the ship is anchored at port. At GM discretion, one of the crates below deck is the "package" the party is searching for as part of the Special Delivery adventure.

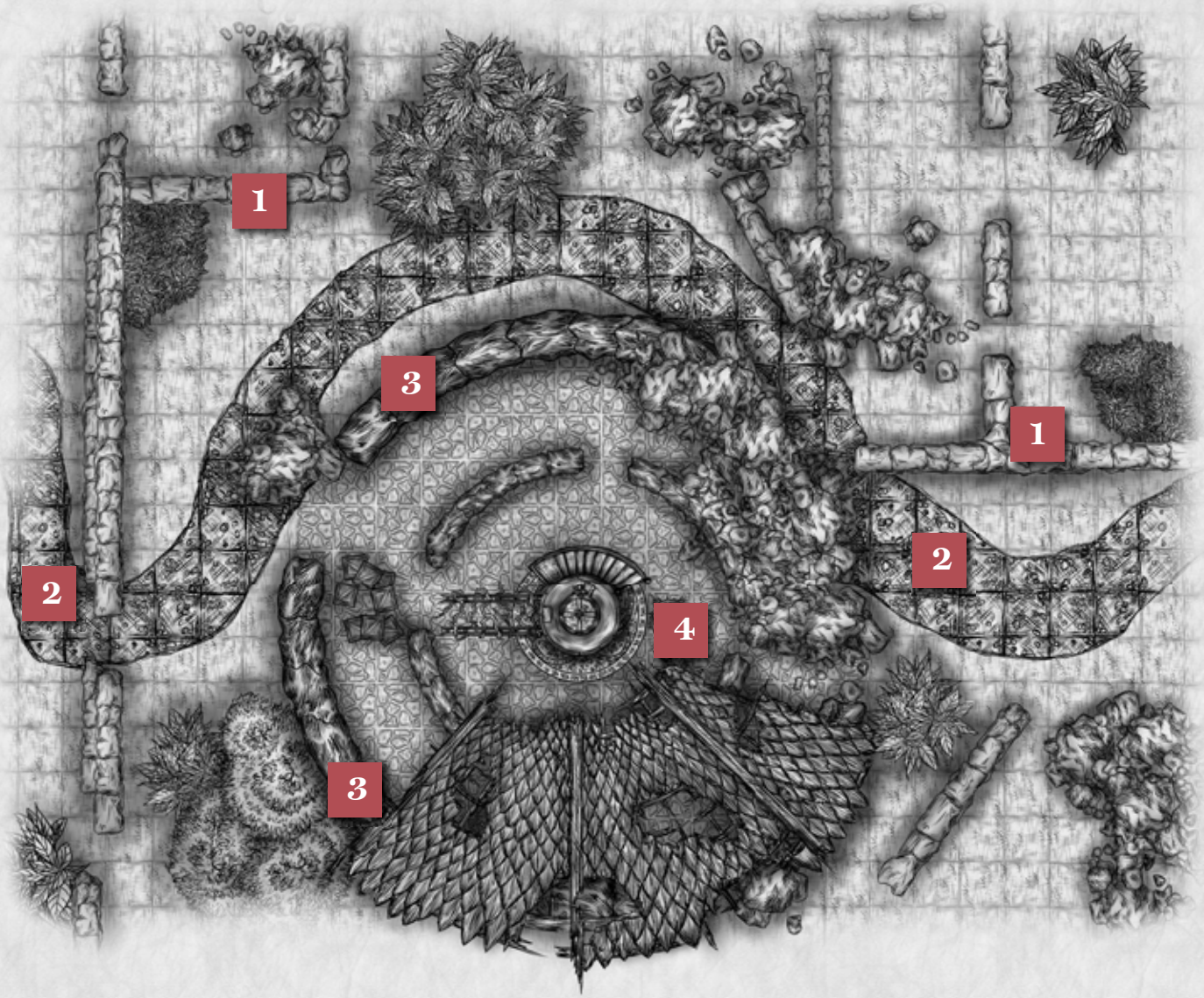
Swift Current

Though the water along the dock appears relatively still at the surface, beneath it flows a powerful surge toward the sea and many a self-professed strong swimmer has been forced to put their skills to the test here. Any creature who ends up in the water moves at half speed (unless they have a swim speed). At the end of their turn they must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check or be swept 15 ft. in the direction of the sea (at GM discretion). Creatures wearing medium or heavy armor make this check at disadvantage.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to reveal what adventures await the party as they journey along the docks.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...two screaming, fleeing sailors who report a raiding party of 2d4 **merrows** attacking the dock.
2	...a beautiful woman beckoning solitary passers-by from the shadows along the docks, and who is, in reality, a **sea hag** in disguise.
3	...a group of 1d6 **bandits** struggling with a bound figure, attempting to toss him into a small row-boat moored at the dock.
4	...a panicked man yelling from the water 50 ft. off the docks, "It's got tentacles and it's trying to take me under!" His prophecy proves correct as two **giant octopuses** begin to battle for the chance to devour him.
5	...a storm brewing just beyond the horizon suddenly arriving in force, reducing visibility and movement by half. Anyone wielding or wearing metal objects is in danger of lightning strikes, the strike determined randomly per round (1d4, with an even number dictating a strike as defined by the *call lightning* spell in storm conditions).
6	...an angry **water elemental** is wreaking havoc on the docks and dozens of onlookers seem powerless to stop it.



The Old Ruins

Atop the cliffs overlooking the city is a shattered tower and a broken battlefield. The site of a full-scale arcane assault fought long ago, the Old Ruins is a place to tread lightly and cast spells even more carefully, lest the magical fallout flare into a full blown wild magic storm.

The Tower and Grounds

What was once a bastion of magical knowledge, the remains of a huge tower dominate the old battlefield like a crumbling obelisk. Stone walls about 5 ft. high dot the otherwise muddy landscape ***(1)***, and snaking through them is a broken path littered with cracked cobblestones ***(2)***. The path itself is difficult terrain. Moving within the tower's remaining 20-ft. walls ***(3)*** is fraught with danger from falling masonry and the few roof tiles still clinging to the rotting frame. In the center of the tower's floor is a pillar 20 ft. tall and topped with a strange arcane device, the Arcane Enchantment Inverter ***(4)***.

The Arcane Enchantment Inverter

This ancient device was used to destroy magical items and create new ones. The wild magic storms that plague this area have been a good deterrent for those who sought to utilize this device's power in the past, and it would be better for everyone if it remained lost forever under the tower's rubble.

The Arcane Enchantment Inverter has a central chamber where an item or creature up to medium size can be placed. Activating the machine requires a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check, and a second-level spell slot or higher must be sacrificed upon activation. This activity will also initiate a wild magic storm.

To destroy a magical item, the machine drains the magical enchantment from the item and discharges it in a beam of incredible power which can be directed by a creature (requiring an action).

Arcane Enchantment Inverter

This device removes portions of an enchantment or curse on a magical item, refocusing them into an exhaust port with two settings: imbue or expel. To imbue, another item is placed within a chamber near the port, transferring properties from the old item. To expel, the chamber is flipped upward over the port, transferring the arcane energy into a focused beam.

The Inverter requires a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check to begin the imbue or expel process. After the initial activation, it requires a Strength (Athletics) check (DC 13) to aim as a weapon. On a successful check to aim the Inverter, it will release a blast of energy (60 ft. range) that lands in a 15-ft. cube.

Arcana check to prime; Strength check to aim; Action to fire

1d4	When destroying the amulet, this inverter will create...
1	**Destruction Detonation.** 6d8 force damage on a failed DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or half as much on a success. This blast also damages structures and objects, at GM discretion
2-3	**Polymorph Ray.** Turns the target into a cat on a failed DC 16 Wisdom saving throw.
4	**Radiant Energy Bomb.** 4d8 radiant damage on a failed DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, or half as much damage on a success. The damage is doubled for any undead or fiends targeted with this attack.

It takes four rounds to destroy an item.

The Storm

The magical fallout from the ancient battle that was fought within the Old Ruins is volatile and unpredictable. The first and each subsequent time a creature casts a spell at first level or higher, a wild magic storm will manifest at initiative 20. These effects stack.

1d20	The magical surge creates...
1	**...lightning bolts.** All creatures in the open must make a DC 13 Dexterity save or take 2d8 lightning damage.
2	**...1d6 fated meteorites,** forcing a DC 13 Dexterity save to avoid 3d6 bludgeoning damage for creatures you choose at random.
3	**...magical daggers in the sky.** Any creatures caught without cover must make a DC 13 Dexterity save or take 3d4 piercing damage.
4	**...1d4 healing beams.** Choose spots for these beams at random. Any creature that begins their turn in a beam or moves into the beam during their turn gains 2d4 +5 hit points.
5	**...a magic blizzard.** Visibility is reduced to a 10-ft. radius and all creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be blinded.
6	**...a magic drain.** All creatures must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or lose the ability to cast spells for one round.
7	**...magical vines.** Any creature within 10 ft. of a tree or bush must make a Dexterity or Strength saving throw (DC 13) or be grappled.
8	**...a necrotic burst.** 1d6 **skeletons** begin to push their way up through the earth and will attack the closest target at GM discretion.
9	**...a unicorn gliding on a rainbow.** It will attack the nearest evil creature at GM discretion.
10	**...a fire flurry.** Any creatures caught in the open must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity save or take 2d8 fire damage and be set aflame.
11	**...a flower fall.** Any character allergic to pollen must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or suffer from allergies for the next round.
12	**...the wind of the damned.** Any creature who hears the wind must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all of their attacks for one round.
13	**...a rare magical item not requiring attunement.** Choose a spot and item at random.
14	**...a glittering, shimmering portal.** It leads to a random location in this book or a plane of existence at GM discretion.
15	**...a force pulse.** All weapons on the battlefield now deal an additional 1d6 force damage and are considered magical.
16	**...a blink dog.** It bonds to the closest good player character, defending them with its life.
17	**...a thunderclap.** Any creature who hears this sound must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 2d8 thunder damage.
18	**...the rain of riches.** Any creature caught in the open must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d8 bludgeoning damage as gold and silver rain from the sky. The total amount that appears on the battlefield is 10d10 x 20gp and 4d10sp. It disappears in 1d4 hours.
19	**...a blood mist.** Any creature caught in the open must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or a rage takes hold of them during their next turn causing all melee attacks to be made recklessly (advantage on the roll but any attacks made against you are also at advantage).
20	**...a body shift.** The crackling energy of the storm takes hold of the soul of each player character, bearing them aloft and into the body of one of their allies. All players at the table should rotate their character sheets to the player next to them in a clockwise direction for one round as the souls of their characters swap bodies. If this is not possible, reroll on this table.

Important NPCs

Useful information about the key characters in this adventure. All NPCs listed speak Common. They can speak any other languages at GM discretion.

Karolin Threesilver

Medium half-orc, neutral evil

A master level guild assassin and puckish rogue, Karolin Threesilver holds her cards close to her chest. Threesilver is looking for interested parties who would be willing to make a bit of money in exchange for some casual mail tampering and the party fits that MO well enough.

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 88
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +4
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +10 (at advantage)
Damage Resistance Poison
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Relentless Endurance. When reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, Threesilver can drop to 1 hit point instead. She can't use this feature again until she finishes a long rest.
Savage Attacks. When Threesilver scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, she can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.
Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Threesilver can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.
Assassinate. During her first turn, Threesilver has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit Threesilver scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.
Evasion. If Threesilver is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Threesilver deals an extra 13 (4d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when Threesilver doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll and the target is within 5 ft. of an ally that isn't incapacitated.

Actions
Multiattack. Threesilver makes two bloody dagger attacks.
Bloody Daggers. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (1d6 + 4) 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. On a critical hit, if the target is still standing, they take half as much piercing damage on their next turn.
Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: (1d8 + 4) 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.
Reactions
Uncanny Dodge. Threesilver halves the damage she takes from an attack that hits her. She must be able to see the attacker.

Falique Chasez

Medium elf, chaotic good

A quick-thinking second-story man with a spark for the arcane, Falique has spent quite a bit of time under a curse that turned him into a tabby cat. His plucky attitude in the face of even the gravest of dangers stems from the fact that even when terrible things happen to him, things work out.

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 46
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +6
Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +9
Senses Passive Perception 14

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Falique can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.
Evasion. If Falique is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Falique deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when Falique doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll and the target is within 5 ft. of an ally that isn't incapacitated.
Spellcasting. Falique is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:
• Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*
• 1st-level (4 slots): *charm person*, *hideous laughter*, *sleep*
• 2nd-level (2 slots): *invisibility*, *scorching ray*

Actions
Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.
Reactions
Uncanny Dodge. Falique halves the damage he takes from an attack that hits him. He must be able to see the attacker.

Falique's Uniques

If they help Falique, have each player reach into his *bag of holding* and roll 1d2 (rolling again on repeats) to determine which item they pull from the bag, as detailed on pg. 130, or choose an item for each at GM discretion.

1d12	The player pulls out...
1	...Traveling Hole Punch
2	...Hairshirt of Healing
3	...Marble of Slipping
4	...Vest of Solar Power
5	...Chef's Knife
6	...Immediate Anchor
7	...Shades of Night
8	...Ocarina of Inspiration
9	...Nimble Hand Wraps
10	...Earth Rumble Boots
11	...Stampede in a Bottle
12	...Pocketwatch Wizard

Maristo Maroo

Medium elf, lawful evil

A sneering member of the upper crust, Maroo pledged himself to Lady Izail ages ago and has worked in service of her ultimate aims for as long as he can remember. He will happily lay down his life in her service, certain that a creature of her power could resurrect him at any time.

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 40
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses Passive Perception 11

Spellcasting. Maroo is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Maroo has the following wizard spells prepared:
• Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
• 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*
• 2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*
• 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*
• 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*
• 5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

Actions

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

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

Lady Izail

Small undead, neutral evil

An ethereal would-be demilich with the power to raise the dead, this hideous skull atop a floating spine is only here to ensure the missing element of her phylactery is returned.

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 120
Speed 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +8
Skills Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Perception +8, Persuasion +8
Damage Immunities necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, exhaustion, poisoned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., truesight 60 ft., Passive Perception 18

Turn Resistance. Lady Izail has advantage on Saving Throws against any effect that turns Undead
Spellcasting. Lady Izail is a limited ability spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks)

Actions

Lady Izail can choose one of the following actions on her turn:
Raise Dead. Lady Izail lets out a cackling laugh and 1d6 skeletons rise from the earth to join the fight

Howl (Recharge 6). Lady Izail emits a bloodcurdling howl. Each hostile creature within 30 ft. that can hear the howl must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 4d8 necrotic damage and be frightened of Lady Izail. The creature may repeat its saving throw at the end of its turn. On a successful save, the creature is immune to being frightened of Lady Izail for the next 24 hours.

Frostbolt (cantrip). Lady Izail can cast the *frostbolt* cantrip at will, rolling 3d10 for the damage.

Blight (1 only). A shadowy beam of energy strikes out from Lady Izail's open mouth as she casts the *blight* spell at 4th level.

Cloudkill (1 only). Lady Izail casts the *cloudkill* spell at 5th level.

Eyebite (1 only). Lady Izail casts the *eyebite* spell at 6th level.

Loot. Lady Izail's skeleton crumbles to dust but the jewels and gold that once adorned her skull are worth 850gp.

An Actor's Life

When the party is framed for a crime they didn't commit, they must fight to clear their name while also trying to crack the case.

An Adventure Suitable For Levels 1-5

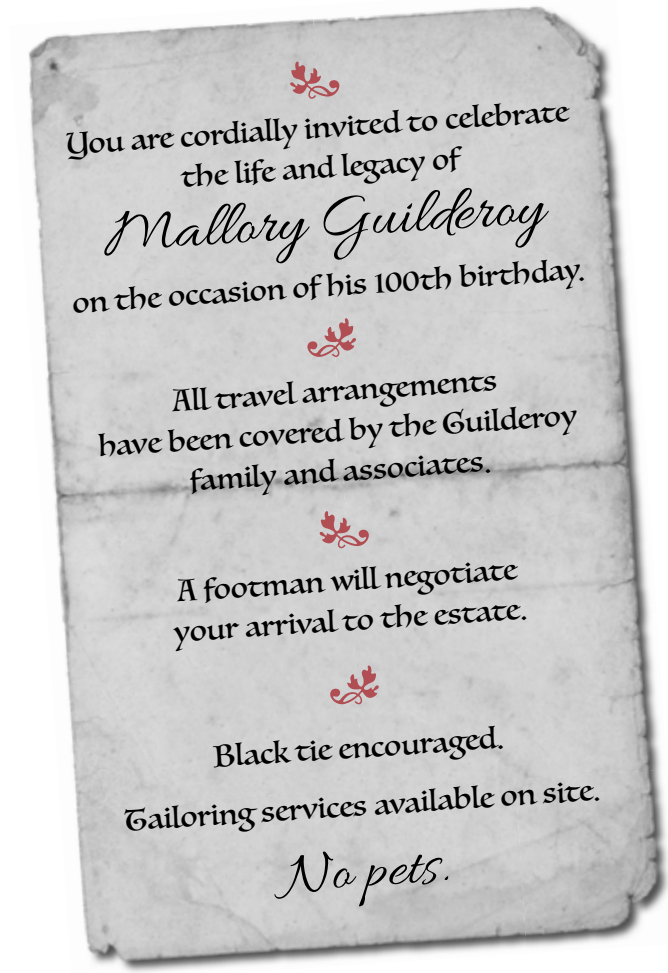
The party is invited to a weekend away at a noble's secluded estate where they are introduced to a troupe of traveling performers who are staging a play the following evening. After a night's entertainment and a fancy meal, the party beds down for the night. The next morning, a full garrison of guards arrives to arrest the party for crimes they're alleged to have committed the night before. The party must work together, and form tenuous alliances, in order to clear their names once it becomes clear they've been framed by a group of shapeshifting doppelgangers.

Setting Up

Mallory Guilderoy, half-elven scion of a well-established family of merchants, is celebrating his 100th birthday at his secluded estate on an island in the middle of a massive sea. He's invited most of the region's notable influencers, including each of the party's adventurers. The locations for this adventure include a theater (pg. 57), as well as a few maps from the Variant Castles section of this book: the Great Hall (pg. 209), Main Bedroom (pg. 213), Private Prison (pg. 215) and other spaces at GM discretion. There is also an overview of the island upon which this adventure takes place (pg. 54), with variant options you can add at your discretion.

For an established party, tales of their exploits have reached Guilderoy's ear and he's always loved the company of brave travelers with stories of derring-do to share. They are invited to spend the weekend at his estate as part of the celebration. If you are running this adventure for a new party, encourage your adventurers to think of a reason they might have been invited to the Guilderoy estate for this party relevant to their backstories, and have them roll on the Party Makeup Maker (pg. 250) to establish connections between them. Examples include: hired muscle or private security; they or their family have business with the Guilderoys; they are planning to race in the 100 Furlong Steeplechase; they were hired as part of the evening's entertainment (though not as part of the theatre troupe); they are part of the catering or service staff. No matter their reasoning for attending Guilderoy's 100th, they are encouraged to enjoy themselves at what most townsfolk are insisting will be the invite-only event of the year.

If incorporating this adventure into an ongoing campaign, the invitation to the Guilderoy estate can arrive days or weeks in advance, and the buzz around town is this will be the party of the season, if not the decade. On the day you choose to begin this adventure, have Guilderoy's footman, **Garth Tort** (who is, in reality, an actor in the troupe), arrange for their pickup in a stately carriage from wherever they've chosen to sleep the night before on the morning of the party.



If this is your first adventure with this campaign, choose one character to be picked up by Guilderoy's footman, Garth Tort, at their home or current lodging. The other characters in your party can be within the carriage awaiting transport to the party, or waiting at the estate depending on their chosen backstories and/or backgrounds, at GM discretion. The carriage is equipped with one spell scroll per passenger, which will allow them to alter the appearance of their clothing—armor included—for a more formal, polished look.

Part 1: A Warm Welcome

> The carriage pulls up in front of a nondescript but stately building. Garth politely opens the door and escorts the party inside. Within these walls is a small group of well-dressed guests, escorted by a footman dressed like Garth, talking in semi-hushed tones about how excited they are to attend a party at Guilderoy's. The footman grips a stone in his hand, mutters a few words, and the lot of them disappear.

Garth escorts the group to the teleportation circle.

> As Garth holds the stone in his hands and reads the phrase "Rerrits Nagrom Sallets," a rush of air seems to envelop you as white light flashes in a blinding pulse. Violins can be heard, somewhat out of tune, flat then sharp then flat again before correcting into beautiful harmonies that ring out all around you. The bright light fades into a myriad of blurred colors and shapes and, as your eyes focus, you see you're no longer in the travel station but are instead in a beautiful ballroom, with a large crowd of revelers and titans of industry enjoying hors d'oeuvres and one another's company.

The party is now in the Great Hall. "Welcome to the Guilderoy Estate," says Garth.

Encounter Variant (Optional) No Blades, No Bows

The moment the players arrive at the Guilderoy estate they notice they are missing their weapons, which have all been apprehended as part of traveling through the teleportation circle. Says Garth of this inconvenience, "You'll find they'll appear on your person the moment you flash back to the mainland. And they'll be sharper! But yes—no weapons at the party. You understand."

Garth takes a moment to point out a few of the notable elements of the celebration to the party:

> "Master Guilderoy hired a group of bards and performers from across the far seas—the Nine Lives Traveling Theatre Collective—apparently the best in the land. They also take requests, but between you and I, they've been asked to ignore them. They're performing a play based on Master Guilderoy's life tomorrow night, following the 100 Furlong Steeplechase. Should be exciting. Especially if one of the horses decides to join them on stage. Ha."
>
> "There is, of course, a wide selection of ales and wines, and if you're feeling particularly emboldened by the jovial atmosphere feel free to mix them together for a special treat. The treat is you'll be asked to leave."
>
> "Over there you can see Master Guilderoy speaking with his son Fletcher, who I'm sure you're aware is one of the most skilled archers in the realm. His prowess on the archery range is as legendary as his ineptitude in the bedroom. But you didn't hear that from me."
>
> "That's the recently married Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo speaking with her grandfather, I believe, Chief Indigo something. He's some sort of religious figure. Highly respected. I don't care for his shoes. He's meant to travel with the happy couple for the full year following their ceremony to ensure everything is...I don't know. Blessed?"
>
> "And that rotund dwarf over there is her husband, Hess Arturo, speaking with...hmm. A young lady who is not his wife. Can't say I'm surprised. I think their marriage is more of a merger, if you catch my meaning. Master Guilderoy wanted to buy both their companies at different points over the course of the last year but now that they've joined forces it's...well. It's a party. We're celebrating. Let's not talk about anything that might make Master Guilderoy upset."

Garth straightens up when approached by Mallory Guilderoy, a lithe, spry-looking man with graying hair, a sturdy mustache and well-groomed sideburns, who is quick to introduce himself to the party.

GM Note

This man is not Mallory Guilderoy. He is one of the members of the acting troupe, Sir Archibald Calico, disguised as Guilderoy as part of the evening's entertainment. The "real" Guilderoy is himself wearing a disguise, to look like Calico. The entire troupe is about to create a flashy performance to entertain their audience, but that might cause the party to react as if they are under attack. This is fine. However, once this performance gets underway, the man who looks like Guilderoy (but is in fact Calico) will find he has been poisoned. While most of the guests and the party should assume Guilderoy was the target of foul play, the reality is someone in the room wants Calico dead: Harissa Tanner, another member of the acting troupe.

"Guilderoy, Mallory Guilderoy—though I suspect you may have known that already. Pleasure to make your acquaintance. Word is you're all adventurers. Is that so? I'm a sucker for a yarn well-told. Got any good monster stories? A gold piece for an epic tale...."

Mallory Guilderoy will press the party for tales of their most electrifying adventure, explaining that while his work as a merchant has been particularly profitable, it's fairly dry. He will engage each member of the party at least once, trying to get them to share a story and studying their faces with the eyes of a man who is well-traveled yet easily amazed.

If the party chooses to share one of their stories with Guilderoy, he will pay them 1-5gp depending on his opinion of the tale, at GM discretion. Alternatively, have each player telling a story make a Charisma (Performance) check, with each story earning a minimum of 1gp, plus an additional gold piece for every number above a DC 15. Example: a roll of 23 would earn the player 9gp.

A guard (who is actually an actor in disguise) comes and whispers something to Garth ("We're ready to begin...we're gonna kill 'em.") A chime rings out in the ballroom and the servants quickly begin preparing the room for dinner service.

Garth escorts the party to their table, where they are seated across from Lady Dasher-Arturo, her grandfather Chief Indigo Dasher and her new husband Hess Arturo, who has already stuffed himself with quite a few passed canapes and is ready for this event to be over.

Part 2A: The Play's The Thing

Dinner is served—a delicious roast with some artfully plated root vegetables—and of course, more wine.

As the room settles, **Sir Archibald Calico**—a regal-looking man with a dense beard and a gruff voice stands and begins a short speech.

"Good evening madams and monsieurs. I am, of course, Sir Archibald Calico, Cat of the Footlights, and it is my honor to lead the Nine Lives Traveling Theatre Collective and present to you tomorrow night's production of Mallory Guilderoy: Man of the People, Maker of Men. It's a ribald tale with no shortage of intrigue, interlopers, ingenues and ingenuity—and of course, whatever demon Mr. Guilderoy pledged his soul to in order to look so well-preserved. I'm 50 years his junior yet I won't need a lick of aging makeup to transform into such a stunning example of masculine grace. You sure you're not a full elf, sir? Haha...I digress. We, of course, don't want to spoil tomorrow's show, but we do want to bring you a small taste of what we can do, so we thought we'd treat you to a little preview. This story comes courtesy of some of this gathering's distinguished guests!"

There's a brief flash of light, followed by screams from the audience, as a series of creatures (use those described to Guilderoy by your party in Part 1, at GM discretion) start to manifest in the room one by one.

Guards surround Guilderoy and position themselves between him and the creatures, all of which are illusions created by two *major image* spells. Calico is a bit thrown off by the arrival of these creatures and runs to hide behind a nearby table.

If the party decides to get involved, their attacks will miss, the illusions careful to dodge any incoming attacks. The illusions can be revealed as fakes with a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

During this commotion, two of Guilderoy's men post up on either side of him, and without warning one of them grabs him and holds a blade to his throat.

"Master, watch out!" yells Garth, who runs toward Guilderoy, knocking out the guard holding Guilderoy but catching two daggers in the back and falling to the floor. A figure in a dark cloak drops from the shadows and flings two more daggers in Guilderoy's direction.

Guilderoy takes one in his side, but manages to snag the other from mid air. Note: all of these daggers are illusory.

He throws the dagger back at the assassin, who drops and is down.

Healing spells have no effect on Garth, who is bleeding in the arms of Guilderoy.

> Guilderoy cries out in anguish at the death of his footman, as a single bout of applause begins to rise from the corner as Calico stands. "Bravo," he keeps clapping, before peeling his beard off and revealing a man who looks exactly like Guilderoy. In fact, it appears Calico has been Guilderoy all along. "Well done, sirs, well done. Aren't these actors marvelous? Though I suspect some of you were on to the ruse the moment my doppelganger here started crying over...Garth is it?"

Garth stands, no longer bloodied, and obviously not at death's door. "I was playing Garth, your footman, sir."

Garth peels off his mustache and removes his cap, his hair falling down into a long, curly mane, revealing himself to be a her—**Tabitha Feng**, another member of the Nine Lives troupe.

The real Calico stands, adjusting himself and waving his hands a bit as the illusions he's created disappear, including the dagger in his side and those appearing in Garth's back, and begins to deliver a rousing speech as the group takes a sweeping bow.

> "We are the Nine Lives Traveling Theatre Collective—this is Tabitha 'Tabby' Feng, (motioning to the two guards), Devon 'Rex' McCoy, 'Gas Can Dan' Popper and, our newest member" as he points to the figure who fell from the rafters, "Harissa Tanner. Well done, Harissa. We'll come up with a zippy stage name for you soon. And I, of course, am Sir Archibald Calico, Cat of the Footlights, and we'll see you all at the theatre for tomorrow night's prem---for--the--prem <cough>... it's...<cough cough>..." Calico continues coughing, his body convulsing, his face growing slack and somewhat gray. He begins to sway, unable to stand. He vomits a gout of blood and starts to convulse, his skin bubbling as cries of agony ring out from his violently shaking form. He motions toward the goblet on his banquet table. There's a panic in the ballroom as the actors scramble to try and save their director. Mallory Guilderoy signals for his guards. "He's been poisoned," shouts Guilderoy. "Lock the doors."

Calico has been poisoned. If no members of the party seem able to help him, Chief Indigo will move to the actor's side with a steady stride and cast *lesser restoration* on him. The spell will speed through Calico's body, stabilizing him and reducing his tremors. The actor looks exhausted and unwell, but is in surprisingly good spirits considering he was nearly killed. Guilderoy is less pleased, apologizing for what was obviously an attempt on his life.

> Guilderoy stands tall and shouts, "Someone on this island wants me dead. Not a very welcome party gift, I'm afraid. I hope you were all planning to stay for the weekend's festivities because at this point I'm afraid I can't allow anyone to leave."

One of Guilderoy's footmen will approach the party and inform them rooms have been prepared for them in one of the estate's guest chambers. He recommends they avoid any appearance of impropriety and simply retire to their respective rooms for the evening.

Should the party choose to question unnamed guests in the ballroom after the assassination attempt, they will learn the following:

- Everyone can think of at least 2-3 reasons why Guilderoy might have been poisoned, as he's a ruthless businessman who has made a number of enemies over the course of his life.

- There have been numerous attempts on his life throughout his career.

- Some suspect his son, Fletcher, but only because he would stand to inherit much of the business if his father died. Most agree he's not really bright enough to do the deed, and he's got all he could want in terms of money and power right now anyway, so the facts don't follow the motivation.

Should the party choose to interrogate named NPCs, this is what they might learn from each:

THE NINE LIVES COLLECTIVE

- ***CALICO*** was sipping from the goblet on the table when he was posing as Guilderoy and cannot think of any time when anyone might have had access to it without his knowledge but admits he was focused on accurately portraying Guilderoy and wasn't watching closely.

- ***TABBY, GAS CAN DAN, REX AND HARISSA*** are all incredulous but also a bit excited—there's something about "real" drama that has them flustered and buzzing, but as far as who might have tried to kill Guilderoy they

have no idea. They came here to get paid to do a gig. Only Harissa seems unnerved by the whole affair, which she plays off as "first day jitters."

GM Note

All five of these NPCs are dopplegangers and accomplished actors. Harissa is upset her attempt to poison Calico was ineffective.

LADY FARR DASHER-ARTURO AND CHIEF INDIGO DASHER

- Neither Lady Dasher-Arturo nor Chief Indigo wish ill will on Guilderoy but admit his death would have significant ramifications for the realm, as he holds a monopoly on numerous trade routes and supply chains.

- The Dasher-Arturo Shipping Company is a new endeavor, combining the might of the Arturo Mercenaries with the ships and sailors that have long served as the backbone of the Dasher family. They believe they can hold off threats to their own trade routes and break some of Guilderoy's hold on the shipping industry on both land and sea.

- They do not see themselves as a threat to Guilderoy's life. They understand if they are viewed as a threat to his empire.

- If pressured, Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo will reveal she and her husband are still getting to know each other but she doesn't think he's the type to kill a man with poison—he'd much prefer a blade to the gut, so he can watch the life leave the eyes of his quarry up close.

HESS ARTURO

- If the party can tear him away from his mug of ale, and his wandering eyes scanning for any sign of a lass or lady impressed by his general swagger, Hess Arturo will state the truth plainly. He doesn't like Guilderoy. Never has. Would love to see him dead, but poison is a weapon of the weak or desperate and he is neither.

- He wouldn't be surprised if the poisoning was staged, a way to keep the gathered crowd stuck on the island and forcing them to "Watch a stupid play performed by stupid actors about a stupid man and his stupid life. It's stupid."

FLETCHER GUILDEROY

- Fletcher is angry there was an attempt on his father's life, and is equally peeved anyone would assume he's a suspect.

- Fletcher suspects Hess Arturo and isn't shy about tossing the blame his way. "I don't know why my father invited him, or his sea wench-wife."

Part 2B: Overnight

GM Note

The intention at the end of Part 2A is for the party to take a long rest, and when they do feel free to jump immediately to Part 3. Their rooms are in a small building off the main house and are each styled after the Main Bedroom (pg. 213). That said, some party members may feel inclined to perform a bit of surveillance on the island.

Because of the attempt on Guilderoy's life, numerous guards are prowling the entire estate and will pursue anyone caught wandering around after hours. They will attack with an attempt to subdue, and return any offending sorts to their assigned rooms: "Master Guilderoy's orders."

Following any of the previously named NPCs will result in learning the following:

HESS ARTURO is seeking a night of passion with the young lady he was seen cavorting with in the ballroom. He can be found flirting with her in one of the less well-lit hallways on the estate as four members of his mercenary company guard either end of the hall.

LADY FARR DASHER-ARTURO AND CHIEF INDIGO can be seen walking with four mercenaries as escorts. They will walk the grounds and then pray by the water's edge, part of the ritual required to seal her marriage in the eyes of her people.

FLETCHER GUILDEROY is practicing his archery skills in a range beyond the estate. He is very, very good. He is accompanied by four members of his guard.

MALLORY GUILDEROY will retire to his well-guarded study, and after spending a few hours there going over the day's ledgers, will retire to bed.

THE NINE LIVES COLLECTIVE have made their way across the estate grounds to the theater built for their performance. They are running lines and rehearsing fight scenes for the play. Sir Archibald Calico will alert any guards in the area to clear the theater and the surrounding area of observers if the party is seen.

Part 3: A Murder Most Foul

You all awake to the sound of songbirds chirping in the trees on this side of the estate and the jangling of armor as Guilderoy's guards stand over each of your beds, weapons at the ready, blades inches from your throats. "Master Guilderoy seeks the pleasure of your company. You should come quietly. Wouldn't want there to be any more murders on the grounds."

Whether or not the party tries to resist, Guilderoy will appear himself, calling for a halt in the action and explaining there's no need for violence. He simply needs to speak with the party to ascertain their whereabouts the night before, as there's been a murder and a witness has suggested the party might be involved. He does not want there to be any more violence, but if they don't come along he'll have to assume the worst and so will everyone else.

"Lady Dasher-Arturo is...quite irate. It's Hess Arturo. He's been slain. Frankly, if you did do it, I'd be inclined to reward you but...that's off the record. I'm not sure what she's upset about to be honest, he was a brute. But. You've been implicated in the crime, so, kindly come with me and let's clear this all up."

Guilderoy will lead the party to the Great Hall where the celebration took place the night before and will hear their side of the story, as well as Lady Dasher-Arturos. Guilderoy does all he can to keep things civil. He will then hold a mock trial of sorts over breakfast.

You're escorted back to the ballroom, where there is a large spread of fruit and meats and pastries. Within the ballroom is Mallory's son Fletcher Guilderoy, flanked by several guards. On the opposite side of the room, with her grandfather Chief Indigo as well as a full garrison of cutlass-wielding Arturo Mercenaries, is Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo, her palms and clothes covered in dried blood. She eyes you all with disdain and a severe anger—as do each of the mercenaries at her command.

Lady Dasher-Arturo is convinced she saw two members of the party (chosen at GM discretion) murdering her husband and his mistress. Allow these two members to defend themselves against these charges. The rest of the party can also come to their defense.

"Last night," says Lady Dasher-Arturo, "I returned to our quarters and discovered both my husband and a strange woman covered in blood—their bodies mutilated beyond recognition—and these two standing over their corpses. They ran, diving out the window and into the night. I tried to save my husband but he...it was...too late. His "friend" was dead too. I don't...blame her. He was a rotten man. But he was taken from me. And we will get to the bottom of why. So. Why did you kill my husband?"

GM Note

Hess Arturo was killed by Gas Can Dan and Rex McCoy, two members of the Nine Lives Theatre Collective who at the time were posing as members of the party. This murder is part of a larger plot to replace Hess and Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo and profit off their new empire.

Guilderoy will ask the party if they left their chambers over the course of the evening. They'll need to pass a DC 17 Charisma (Deception) check to lie about this fact.

At the end of each of their defenses, have each accused party member attempt to succeed on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check at disadvantage. On a failure, Guilderoy will insist each member of the party be held under surveillance in his barracks until he can get to the bottom of things. For each success, Guilderoy will allow one unaccused member of the party to forgo being placed in the barracks, but they will still need to remain under guard while they explore the grounds and try to help suss out the truth.

The party will not be allowed to leave the estate via the teleportation circle under his control until such time as the guilty parties have been named and proof of their guilt has been corroborated by evidence.

Should the party refuse, there will be a battle in the ballroom that will only end when every member of the guard at the estate (at GM discretion), as well as Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo's miltia, are dead or incapacitated.

Part 4A: The Hunt for Clues

If one or two members of the party have been allowed to search the estate for any clues about what might have happened, the guard watching them will permit them to investigate the room where the murder took place.

The room is a bit of a horror show, with blood everywhere—but particularly in the bed, where formerly white sheets are now stained crimson. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal the bodies were dragged toward the closets in the

room. The faces have been mutilated with particularly dull knives—though Arturo's rotund body shape is enough to give him away. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a small blood trail leading out the window, which can be followed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check—the trail leads through the estate grounds but goes cold once it reaches the theater. The theater is currently abandoned, with no sign of the actors from the Nine Lives Traveling Theatre Collective. If a more thorough search of the theatre takes place, a simple observation of the space backstage would reveal three disguise kits and several prop weapons, including a few dull daggers. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals two of these prop daggers are pristine, much cleaner than the rest, as if they've recently been polished.

A sound from the rigging above announces the presence of Harissa Tanner, a member of the acting troupe, who is working on securing a curtain to the theatre's proscenium. She is nervous, and a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal she's uncomfortable with the guard. When he's not paying attention she will mouth to the PC(s), "I need your help. Take me to your friends." Harissa will share the information below once in the presence of the rest of the party, but not before.

Her boss (and father), Sir Archibald Calico, is actually a doppelganger. He's gone mad with power. He's a murderer, a charlatan and an overactor. The troupe planned to kidnap and replace Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo and Hess Arturo, but when they went to grab Hess Arturo he ended up being in bed with a woman who was not his wife. The other actors panicked and improvised, pretending to be the adventurers they'd seen in the ballroom. But since Arturo is dead and Guilderoy's position is even more fortified they're planning to overthrow Guilderoy and take control of everything. They have a *feeblemind* spell scroll and are going to make him disappear.

Part 4B: The Game's Afoot

Assuming the rest of the party was brought willingly, they are being held in the Private Prison (pg. 215) of the Guilderoy estate and are heavily guarded by 3d6 **guards** on high alert. They are professional, courteous and willing to engage in light conversation—particularly because none of them cared for Arturo and are glad he's dead. But they've been asked to watch the party on behalf of their boss and they all want to do a good job.

After about two hours (or if the party begins planning an escape, at GM discretion), two guards along with Fletcher Guilderoy arrive with another prisoner—a disheveled and derelict-looking man with a ratty beard who smells of sour ale and animal dung. Fletcher kicks the old man into the barracks with the rest of the party.

The guards explain this man was found wandering around the stables, trying to "steal a horse he could ride across the water." The guards insist he's clearly a bit off, and throw him in with the rest of the party.

GM Note

This man is Mallory Guilderoy, under the effects of a *feeblemind* spell. The two guards are Rex and "Gas Can" Dan, actors from the Nine Lives Traveling Theatre Collective, working to carry out their leader's new plan.

> "Horses! Look alike! All horses look alike!" screams the old man, as the guards laugh. "He's crazy!" Fletcher giggles, before all three of them turn and leave.

The old man is afraid of everyone and everything and does not want to be touched, and is raving about horses.

A close inspection of the man would reveal a somewhat familiar pair of eyes, even if they are wild and unsettled. A DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the man's beard is false, and can be pulled away. If a member of the party tugs at it, the beard will peel off his face, revealing the splendid mustache of Mallory Guilderoy, who will spit and shout "WHORES! LOOK ALIKES!! ALL WHORES!"

If the party tries to restore Guilderoy to his full faculties (via a spell such as *greater restoration*), he will reveal he was jumped in his study by actors from the troupe—the last thing he remembers is them pulling out a scroll and reading from it as they held him down. He implores the party to help him regain control of his estate.

The real Guilderoy will then insist the guards set him and the party free and join him in confronting the interlopers now taking up residence in his estate.

GM Note

If no one in the party has access to the *greater restoration* spell, Chief Indigo will arrive asking to visit the party to deliver a message from his granddaughter. "She means you all no ill will, but does hold you responsible for her husband's death and in our culture blood requires blood. She won't kill you all. Just those who held the blade. This is her final offer." Suggestions on how to handle Indigo's presence follow.

The party can try to convince Indigo of their innocence, and if they've uncovered the truth about the old man in their midst, Indigo will cast *greater restoration* on him. If they have not uncovered the truth about the old man, Indigo will cast the spell before he leaves, his wizened gaze recognizing the effects of the *feeblemind* spell.

It is at this point Indigo will reveal he was permitted to visit the prisoners by a man he presumed to be Mallory Guilderoy, who is now presiding over the start of the 100 Furlong Steeplechase.

GM Note

If Chief Indigo is in the barracks, he will tell everyone to go ahead because he'd only slow them down. He will meet them when he can. He will then sit to catch his breath before another walk. Guilderoy will agree that the old man would only prevent them from reaching their destination in a timely manner and insists that time is of the essence so they should all be on their way. If any member of the party wants to stay behind with Indigo they will witness him packing a pipe for a relaxing smoke, after which he will walk with a movement speed of about 15 ft., shuffling toward the Steeplechase in the direction Guilderoy is leading the party.

Part 5: A Face/Off

Guilderoy will immediately lead the party to the observation deck for the 100 Furlong Steeplechase, a horse race across various points on the estate's grounds.

> Mallory Guilderoy marches with the speed of a man who can feel his empire slipping out of his grasp as his attendant guards follow close behind. You hear the sound of cheering and galloping horses as you approach the observation deck for the 100 Furlong Steeplechase. A continual line of 100 riders, their horses kicking up dust and muck from the track, separates you from the tiered seating of the observation deck packed with roughly 200 finely-dressed guests. In the center of this box you can see a man surrounded by guards. A man who looks an awful lot like Mallory Guilderoy. He is seated in the same box as his son, Fletcher Guilderoy, as well as Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo, who is accompanied by several Arturo Mercenaries.

Calico (as Guilderoy) sees the party approaching and immediately instructs his guards to protect him. When the party is within 100 ft., he will call out "There's an imposter in our midst! That man is an imposter, traveling in the company of murderers and thieves sent to usurp my power. Stop them!"

Fletcher Guilderoy will loose two arrows directly at the man who is actually his father. He will continue to attack anyone he perceives as a threat to the person he believes to be the real Guilderoy.

Upon seeing the individuals she believes murdered her husband, Lady Dasher-Arturo, also in attendance, will instruct 3d4 Arturo Mercenaries to apprehend them. She will draw a cutlass from her side and attempt to do the same.

For his part, the real Guilderoy will attempt to dissuade his own guards from attacking him and the party, as will the guards that were watching over the party at the prison. All guards attacking the party can be convinced to stand down with a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

During the commotion, Calico and three other individuals who appear to be his personal guard, but who are in fact Tabby, "Gas Can" Dan and Rex, will attempt to flee by leaping onto horses participating in the race. They will ride directly for the theater. If for some reason they are unable to commandeer a horse, they will *polymorph* to look like members of the gathered crowd in order to disappear in plain sight. Their motivation will still be to get to the theater. They can be discovered in the crowd with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Lady Dasher-Arturo's motivation, and that of her mercenaries, is to prevent the party from escaping this area of the estate and will instruct her mercenaries to give chase, either on horse or on foot, if the party attempts to flee (even if they are chasing the doppelgangers). She can be convinced to stand down with a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check made at disadvantage.

If necessary, the real Guilderoy will instruct his guard to help commandeer a few horses from the ongoing race to offer the players a chance to catch the fleeing doppelgangers, and prevent his son from doing anymore damage.

If the doppelgangers are unable to get away, they will defend themselves to the death.

Part 6: And They're Off....

If the party pursues the dopplegangers, either on

horseback or on foot, they will be forced to contend with the obstacles put in place for the steeplechase.

But first, they must also make a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to properly track the doppelgangers, who have changed their appearance to match those of other riders competing. On a success the players are able to recall the appearance of the horses the dopplegangers jumped on. On a failure, have the players roll a d10. On an odd number they are following one of the dopplegangers (who will be riding toward the theater), and on an even number they are following a participant in the race, which will lead them back around to where they started in a big loop.

The players will be pursued by 2d4 members of Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo's militia, as well as Fletcher Guilderoy (assuming he still believes he is protecting his father), who will fire on the party at range.

If on a horse, players can attempt to spur their horse to pick up speed and dash as an action. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check will allow the player to keep pace with the doppelgangers, who are all accomplished riders. If the players aren't dashing they will notice that the horses they are pursuing are moving faster than their own.

As the players pursue the riders they will encounter the following obstacles on the track, each requiring a separate Wisdom (Animal Handling) check:

A HURDLE. DC 16, on a failure the horse doesn't make the jump and must go around the hurdle, losing ground.

A STRAIGHTAWAY. DC 12 to dash, gaining ground.

A RIDER TRYING TO CUT THEM OFF TO GAIN AN ADVANTAGE. DC 15, on a failure the player has disadvantage on their next Animal Handling check.

A STRAIGHTAWAY WHERE A SMALL CHILD HAS WANDERED ONTO THE TRACK. DC 10, on a failure the horse rears and throws the rider.

A HURDLE. DC 13, on a failure the horse collapses in the mud trench on the other side of the hurdle.

A STRAIGHTAWAY. DC 12 to dash, gaining ground.

A MASSIVE STONE WALL. DC 16, on a failure the horse takes the long way around, losing ground.

If a player succeeds on all of these checks and has been pursuing the doppelgangers, they will arrive at the theater mere moments after the doppelgangers and will see them moving inside.

If a player fails any of the checks, they will arrive at the theater one round later than the doppelgangers for each failure.

Part 7: Break a Leg

The dopplegangers retreat to the theater, where the curtain is slated to rise later tonight. They will fight dirty and engage in subterfuge to protect themselves, using the Play's the Thing table on pg. 57.

If they break line of sight while fighting a member of the party, all of the dopplegangers will use the strategy of transforming themselves to look like that party member, so as to confuse the party and their allies as a means of protection.

- **If able, Rex** will take up a strategic position in the box seat level of the theatre and attack from range.
- **If able, "Gas Can" Dan** will attempt to hide beneath the stage and attack from the trap door, lobbing burning bottles at perceived threats.
- **If able, Tabby** will hide backstage with Calico and attempt to play herself off as a hostage.
- **If able, Calico** will hide backstage and pretend to use Tabby as a hostage. Though both are acting, Calico will kill any member of his group if it will help him get away or convincingly portray an ally of the party.

As the party arrives, the doppelgangers are either taking their positions or have already gotten to them.

Once the party arrives, the mercenaries fighting for Lady Dasher-Arturo, as well as Fletcher Guilderoy, will arrive two rounds later, still convinced the party is responsible for Hess Arturo's murder. They will fight for blood until called off by Lady Dasher-Arturo, or if they witness one of the dopplegangers either transforming into a different person or dead, in doppleganger form.

Once the militia appears, assuming she is not already traveling with the party (see Part 4), Harissa Tanner will appear from her hiding place in the rigging of the theater's proscenium, opening the curtain and pitching sandbags (2d6 bludgeoning damage) at the doppelgangers below her.

Six rounds after the arrival of the mercenaries, Lady Dasher-Arturo and Mallory Guilderoy will arrive with Chief Indigo and a group of 2d4 guards. They will work to convince the militia to stand down and fight alongside the party against the doppelgangers—if they can.

Part 8: Epilogue

If she survives the fight, Harissa Tanner will explain she joined the troupe because she'd recently learned

Sir Archibald Calico was her father. She didn't know anything about the troupe's plans, but once she learned of their plot to replace Lady Dasher-Arturo and Hess Arturo she knew she had to put a stop to it. She attempted to poison Calico at the dinner, but her plan was foiled. Later that night she overheard the other doppelgangers explain how their plan to replace Hess Arturo and Lady Dasher-Arturo went pear-shaped because he was in bed with a woman who wasn't his wife, and his wife walked in on them in the middle of the replacement job. In a moment of improvisation they took on the forms of two of the party members and escaped. Calico then convinced the group an easier and more attractive candidate for replacement would be Mallory Guilderoy. They used a *feeblemind* spell scroll on him and Calico took his place—this time without the need for stage makeup. Harissa tried to flee, but because of the nature of their arrival here, she had nowhere to go, so she hid and attempted to lobby the party for aid.

If she survives the fight, Lady Dasher-Arturo will apologize to the party and ask their forgiveness. She will offer an intricately carved wooden ship (see item) that fits in the palm of her hand as a symbol of her contrition.

If he survives the fight, Chief Indigo will offer a member of the party he deems worthy his necklace (see item).

If he survives the fight, Mallory Guilderoy will apologize for the confusion and offer the players 700gp and use of his teleportation stones and circle.

Fletcher Guilderoy will not apologize for anything, as he believes he did nothing wrong.

Encounter Variant: Something's Not Right

If your players choose to dig deeper they may uncover a different version of events at play: Mallory Guilderoy hired the Nine Lives Theatre Collective to murder Lady Dasher-Arturo and Hess Arturo and replace them, hoping to have more pliable allies in place now that the Dasher-Arturo Shipping Company is threatening his growing monopoly. This truth can be revealed either by a dying or captured Calico, or through letters found on his person or in a hidden compartment among his things in the theater—DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation).

If confronted with this information, particularly if there is proof, Mallory Guilderoy will deny it and inform the party they've outstayed their welcome. He will offer them one opportunity to leave his island—by boat.

If they refuse, his son Fletcher will continue to fight on his behalf, as will the gathered guards. Harissa, Lady Dasher-Arturo, Chief Indigo and the remaining militia will fight alongside the party.

Should the party prevail, Harissa will offer to stand in as Mallory Guilderoy for as long as is necessary in order to help the party make their way back home. Lady Dasher-Arturo will suggest she remain as Guilderoy on a permanent basis, and maintains that they would have a convivial and mutually beneficial business partnership moving forward.

Model Ship

Wondrous Item, *RARE*, 1200gp

After placing it in water, when you utter its command word, this small, beautifully crafted model ship will transform into a full-sized seafaring vessel suitable for up to 12 passengers. It will remain full size until its command word is spoken again.

Indigo's Charm

Wondrous Item, *RARE*, 675gp

This beaded necklace features a circular charm and an inset shell that seems to radiate positive energy. Once per long rest, this necklace can be used to cast *prayer of healing* at 3rd level, with a casting time of one action. Additionally, the charm imparts its wearer with the ability to read people more easily, giving them advantage on all Wisdom (Insight) checks.

Important NPCs

Useful information about the key characters in this adventure. All NPCs listed speak Common. They can speak any other languages at GM discretion.

Mallory Guilderoy

Medium half-elf, lawful neutral

The aging scion of the Guilderoy family, Mallory Guilderoy has had his hands in several different industries over the course of his 100 years, and—though he's in generally good spirits for the occasion of his birthday—is also working several angles at once in order to maximize his trade empire's profits.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 30
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Senses Passive Perception 12

Fletcher Guilderoy

Medium half-elf, lawful neutral

This future head of the Guilderoy empire spends much of his free time honing his considerable archery skills or aching for just a hint of his father's affection. He will defend his father—or creatures posing as his father—with his life.

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)
Hit Points 46
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +4, Stealth +8, Survival +4
Senses Passive Perception 14

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

Actions

Multiattack. Fletcher makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks, which he makes at advantage.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Hess Arturo

Medium dwarf, lawful neutral

Short, stout and typically intoxicated, Hess is the head of the Dasher-Arturo shipping empire, created when he wed Farr Dasher and merged two of the most prominent families in the region.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 30
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+2)	14 (+2)

Senses Passive Perception 12

Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo

Medium human, lawful good

Wife to Hess Arturo, she was born to a powerful mercantile family, but has earned their place among them.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 30
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+2)	14 (+2)

Senses Passive Perception 12

Chief Indigo Dasher

Medium human, lawful good

The grandfather of Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo, Chief Indigo is also the lead religious elder of his people. A quiet but powerful presence, he is here to accompany his granddaughter as part of the customs associated with her recent marriage. He talks slower than he walks, which is very slow.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 30
Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Senses Passive Perception 15

Spellcasting. Chief Indigo is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *sanctuary*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*
- 4th level (3 slots): *death ward*, *guardian of faith*
- 5th level (1 slot): *greater restoration*

Dasher-Arturo Mercenaries

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment
These scimitar-wielding strongmen serve at the pleasure of Hess Dasher and Lady Farr Dasher-Arturo. Fearless fighters, they often get the job done through sheer intimidation.

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 33
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2
Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4
Senses Passive Perception 10

Actions
Multiattack. The mercenary makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the mercenary makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.
Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.
Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.
Dagger. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

The Nine Lives Traveling Theatre Collective

A group of skilled performers, these actors and bards all hide a dark secret: They are doppelgangers hiding in plain sight. Led by Sir Archibald Calico, they've been hired to perform at the Guilderoy estate—but are also executing plans of their own.

Skills Deception +6, Insight +3
Damage Immunities Charmed
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Shapechanger. The doppelganger can use its action to *polymorph* into a Small or Medium humanoid it has seen, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.
Ambusher. In the first round of a combat, the doppelganger has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.
Surprise Attack. If the doppelganger surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage from the attack.

Actions
Multiattack. The doppelganger makes two melee attacks.
Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.
Read Thoughts. The doppelganger magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 ft. of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 ft. of wood or dirt, 2 ft. of stone, 2 inches of metal or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, the doppelganger can continue reading its thoughts, as long as the doppelganger's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, the doppelganger has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation and Persuasion) checks against the target.

Sir Archibald Calico

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), unaligned
"The Cat of the Footlights" they call him. Some call him Archie. Others call him a lout. His foppish, somewhat avuncular attitude is a front. Calico is a cutthroat climber who will do whatever it takes to improve his own station. He knows how to manipulate people, is needlessly cruel and will do anything it takes to save his own skin. He is a doppelganger.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 52
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Tabitha "Tabby" Feng

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), unaligned
Calico's right hand, she assists him in all his endeavors and typically plays the ingénue in the group's productions. She is the oldest doppelganger in the group, but typically chooses the form of a human woman in her late 20s.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 52
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Devon "Rex" McCoy

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), unaligned
A dirty trickster and certainly the most willing of Calico's troupe to do whatever it takes to get the gig, Rex is also a beautiful singer. And a doppelganger.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 52
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

"Gas Can Dan" Popper

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), unaligned
A pleasant exterior, upbeat attitude and overall sense of confidence make this elderly fellow one of the troupe's most touching performers. He is also somewhat of a firebug and has been known to accidentally set full stages ablaze. Like the rest of the troupe, he is a doppelganger.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 52
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Harissa Tanner

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), unaligned

The newest member of the group, Harissa joined the troupe a few weeks before this gig. Raised by a single mother, Harissa's abilities started to manifest themselves shortly after her 17th birthday. Her mother, who is not a doppelganger, revealed Harissa was the result of a one-night stand with a charming actor from a traveling theatre company. Harissa ran away from home, then sought him out and joined the troupe, desperate for a sense of belonging in a world that shuns the shapeshifting sort. Having seen Calico for who he really is, however, Harissa feels more alone than ever.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 52
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Guilderoy's Island

A large, private paradise owned outright by powerful noble mogul Mallory Guilderoy, this island serves as the backdrop for one of his favorite homes, and is also the setting for his 100th birthday party. This map is meant to help offer a sense of place for each of the other locations detailed within this adventure as well as inspire you to populate it with more encounters should your party choose to extend their stay here.

The Estate and Guest Lodgings

The larger L-shaped building ***(1)*** is the manor in which the Guilderoy family lives and entertains and is home to the Great Hall where the birthday celebration begins. The smaller buildings nearby are guest lodgings where the party is invited to stay (under the watchful eyes of Guilderoy's guard), and are appointed with details aligning with the island's overall "spare no expense" aesthetic.

The Theater

High on a gorgeous plateau overlooking the water, this theater—built specifically for Guilderoy's party—is abutted by forests and cliffs that sheer off toward the coastline ***(2)***. The main road runs around the theater, running up a fairly gradual incline, but a more direct, if challenging, route can be explored on foot by taking the stairs that start not far from the observation area.

The Private Prison

When Guilderoy asks (read: demands) the party to stay with his guard, they are housed in this building ***(3)***.

Observation Area

These risers and benches ***(4)*** were built specifically for the 100 Furlong Steeplechase and face the horse track. From here, guests can observe much of the track, including the starting line by the estate as well as the finish, which happens directly in front of these seats once a full lap has been completed.

Horse Track

The main road on the island has been transformed into a track for the 100 Furlong Steeplechase. The white path ***(5)*** represents the primary means of traversal around the estate, though there are certainly smaller pathways and trails scattered across this island at GM discretion. The track is not to scale in terms of its width, but is roughly 30 ft. wide in most parts of the island. It narrows to 5-10 ft. across through the hills and mountains at the north end of the estate as well as the overgrown forest that populates the smaller island off this one's coast. A well-built bridge connects the two.

Teleportation Circle

This permanent teleportation circle ***(6)*** can shift an entire wagon full of passengers to the grounds of this estate. Few know the sigil sequence required to use it, however.

Docks

These docks ***(7)*** are home to numerous ships in Guilderoy's personal fleet, but are also where guests—including the Dasher-Arturos—would dock their ships.

Lighthouse

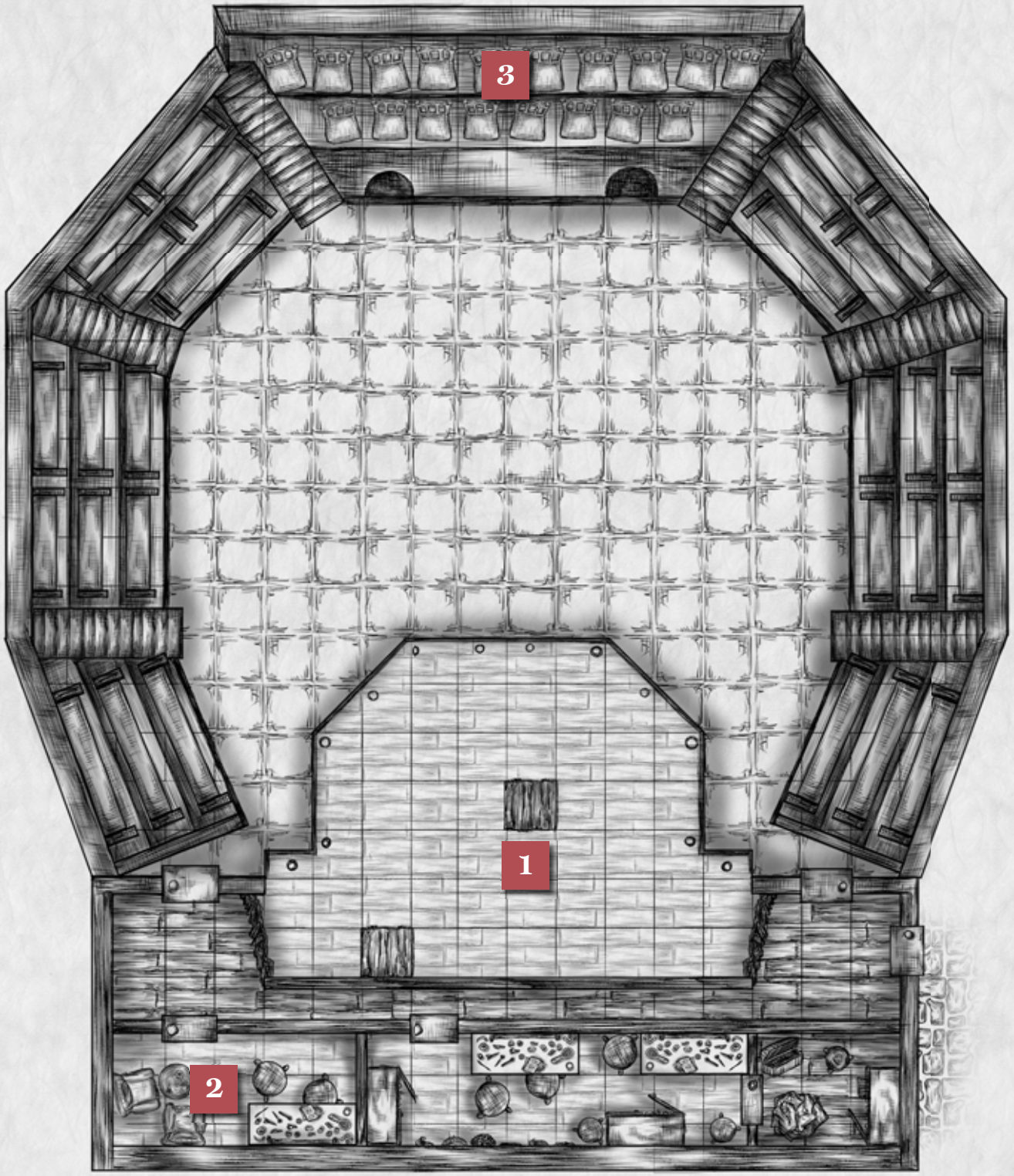
This lighthouse ***(8)*** protects approaching ships from the craggy rocks and reefs that mark the waters along this side of the island.

Encounter Variant (Optional)
A Surprising Paradise

To add a bit more flavor to this island, roll three times on the table below to populate the area with the trappings of the uber wealthy, rerolling any duplicates. Place these events and locations wherever it suits you.

1d20	The island also features...
1	**...a menagerie** featuring 1d4 **lions**, 1d4 **tigers**, 1d4 **bears** and other exotic beasts at GM discretion.
2	**...an observatory** with a magic telescope that can show the exterior of any of Guilderoy's holdings.
3	**...a druid** named Sandy, who has been hired to conjure sick waves for surfing along the coastline.
4	**...a pulley-system gondola** from the top of the mountains down to the manor.

5	**...a massive tree** that grows fruit of pure gold.
6	**...an *invisible* boat.**
7	**...a beautiful grotto**, featuring temperate, jetted water, a few slides and a diving plank.
8	**...a laboratory** utilized for the study of transmutation magic, where several of Guilderoy's former rivals have been transformed into tasteful furniture.
9	**...a large reflecting pool** that runs between the lighthouse and the manor. A **water weird** dwells within.
10	**...a statuary garden** featuring representations of several generations of the Guilderoy family in their primes, 1d4 of which are haunted by their **ghosts** which will attack if they are touched.
11	**...a lush garden** protected by 2d4 **scarecrows**.
12	**...a pristine gaming field**, suitable for simple sport such as lawn bowling or more complex events like jousting or dueling.
13	**...a single staircase** that ascends into the clouds, where a private airship dock awaits.
14	**...a private mining operation**, where a team of dwarves works day and night to access and assess the gemstones within the heart of the island's mountain.
15	**...the caldera of an inert volcano**. At the start of each day, roll 1d20, with a sudden eruption taking place on a 1.
16	**...a field of malevolent wildflowers.** Each creature walking through the field must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or fall under the flowers' control, at GM discretion.
17	**...a team of 2d4 treants** keeping the other trees on the island from causing any trouble.
18	**...a large silver dragon** that was turned to stone and brought here as a gift from another wealthy merchant. It is very much alive, and would reward any creature that set it free quite handsomely for their service.
19	**...a banshee** that stalks the coastline near the cliffs, a long-dead member of the Guilderoy family who took her own life after she was told she'd be forced to marry her cousin.
20	**...an apiary and a mead distillery**, featuring six different varieties of mead. The 2d4 bee swarms are relatively aggressive, and will attack any creature in the area who fails a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check.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Outdoor Theater

An important cultural space, this large complex is host to several performances a year, put on by resident troupes as well as traveling actors. If using this map as part of the Actor's Life adventure, this theater has been built specifically for the Nine Lives Theatre Collective, and smells like fresh-cut timber.

Within These Walls...

This mostly wooden theater is open-air, its ringed rows of elevated seating looking down on the central thrust stage below. Performances typically begin just before dusk, and simple, luminatory cantrips keep performers lit long after the sun has set. The stage, which sits roughly 4 ft. above the ground, juts into a large, standing room-only space, where tickets are cheaper and the audience is therefore a bit less refined. Stairs built into the structure of the arena-style wall lead to the balcony level as well as the more private box seats, reserved for royalty, nobility and honored guests. The main entrance to the theater is beneath the boxed seats at ground level. A secondary entrance in the back is for actors only and leads to the backstage area.

TRAP DOORS (1). The thrust stage has two trap doors used for surprise entrances or exits during performances. The area beneath the stage is roughly 3.5 ft. from floor to ceiling, and is therefore difficult terrain for medium creatures. Creatures larger than medium cannot use the trap doors.

GREEN ROOMS (2). Behind the stage are dressing rooms for actors, where quick changes and costume fittings take place before, during and after the show. The walls are lined with props, wigs and wardrobe pieces used in the current production.

BALCONY AND BOXES (3). The theater's upper level features bench seating for those willing to pay a bit more for the privilege of an unobstructed view of the stage as well as a respite from the rabble often found crowding it. There is a separate entrance to the box seats that can be accessed from beneath them. Walls cordon off this area but could be scaled by a relatively driven individual, or by someone who's given a boost.

Let's Improvise!

The consequences for choosing to carry a blade or bow into a given evening's performance tend to be limited to a polite, "Would you mind not stabbing any of the patrons?" request from an actor, a box office attendant or both. Most patrons don't carry weapons into the theater (or at all), but that doesn't mean the space is devoid of ways to protect oneself from harm (or inflict a bit as necessary). A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the following possible improvised weapons available for use should the need arise.

PROP SWORDS. These dull steel blades are mostly for show, but do deal 1d6 bludgeoning damage if swung with the intent to wound.

SAND BAGS. Several bags of sand used as part of the pully system that raises and lowers the stage's curtains are hanging at various intervals along the stage's proscenium and in the backstage area. A falling bag deals 2d6 bludgeoning damage against a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. A sand bag can be swung toward a foe by hand for 1d6 bludgeoning damage, or emptied and tossed handfuls at a time into an opponent's eyes to impose disadvantage on that creature's next attack roll.

Variant Encounter (Optional)
The Play's the Thing

Roll on the table below to determine the name of the play being performed at the theater.

1d6	Tonight's Performance
1	*The Drowning of Mert the Merman: A Mystery Beneath the Sea* The entire stage is a large tank of water, and contains a generally docile **water weird**.
2	*A Drow and a Dalmation: An Underdog Tale from the Dark Underworld* A spotted and trained **mastiff** named Jacobi roams the theater and stars in the production, and will attack interlopers, thieves or threats.
3	*Less Talk, More Ale: A Barbarian's Song* A massive greatsword is included in the props, and can deal 2d6 damage when wielded with two hands.
4	*Four Kings of Fallorun: The Untold History of a Cursed Romance* A magical light, activated by pulling a lever backstage, casts *hypnotic pattern* centered on the front of the stage.
5	*Brown Bear, Black Bear, Bugbear: A Comedy, A Tragedy, A Goblinoid* A large bugbear costume can be donned, and includes a set of claws that deal 2d4 damage.
6	*Flames on the Breeze: A Dragon's Musical Rise* A massive suspended wooden dragon can shoot a gout of flame (as in a dragonborn's breath weapon) by operating a lever backstage.

The Tomb of the Forgotten Paladin

A classic dungeon crawl featuring a talking sword, a damsel in distress and a path toward redemption.

An Adventure Suitable For Levels 1–3

The party finds a distraught talking sword that enlists them to help it return to its master, one of the greatest warriors who ever lived. The only problem is **the sword** can't remember its master's name or what it was doing stuck in a rock in the middle of the woods, surrounded by dying plants and trees. Its master is surely waiting for it in the crypt below, though. And it needs the party's help to get there.

Setting Up

First off, review the mechanics of the locations featured in this adventure, starting on pg. 63. Next, use the roll table on the opposite page to determine a personality for the sword your players will encounter during Part 2 of this adventure. The adventure begins at a washout on a main road where dozens of well-armed guards are enforcing a detour through the woods as the only option for moving ahead. The woods are dangerous, however, even for adventuring types, so a small group of able-bodied individuals—including a braggadocious cannonball of a man who calls himself **Thump**—have gathered at the washout to help escort anyone interested in proceeding through the forest along a natural path for 1sp per head. If this is your party's first session, members can assume the roles of travelers or sellswords for the sake of kicking off the narrative, or have them roll on the Party Makeup Maker (pg. 250) to establish connections that can unfold at this break in the road. For an established party, this adventure can begin at any point along a well-traveled road between cities and towns within your current campaign. Either way, Thump will insist he's the most capable among the gathered crowd and will lead the party through the woods whether or not they choose to follow him.

Part 1: Into the Woods

Once the necessary introductions have been made, the gathered party should make their way along the forest path with Thump leading the charge, hacking away at branches, underbrush and cobwebs while describing his own actions in third person:

> "Thump's gonna clear this path. Thump's blade sings like sirens of the Foggy Sea. 'Course, Thump prefers his hammer. 'It's hammerin' time,' Thump says, as he crushes interlopers' skulls. But trees don't have skulls. So the shortsword it is. You all have any food? Thump is working up an appetite and Mama Thump didn't pack any grub. Who are you all, anyway? Thump doesn't like stabbing trees with people Thump doesn't know."

The party now has an opportunity to introduce themselves (as necessary), and Thump will listen as best he can while he continues to carve a path through the brush.

> The space between trees grows thinner and thinner as you weave your way along a path cut by beasts as opposed to man. As you stray farther from the main road, the immense canopy of trees overhead begins to block out the sunlight, bathing these woods in a mossy, green-gray hue.
>
> Trees twist into menacing shapes and the thorny vines and bushes are near impenetrable should one stray from the path. In fact, looking around now, the path itself seems to have disappeared.

Players must succeed on a DC 14 collective Wisdom (Survival) check in order to keep from getting lost and separated, with a failure leading to hours of lost time. Travel continues for what feels like miles, and the journey through the tangled forest is getting more and

more monotonous. Shadows are already closing in, and the warm midday sun is but a distant memory now.

An unprompted DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a break in the thick undergrowth, a narrow path that leads farther into the forest, marked by a small stack of rocks—a common trail sign indicating something of note. As members of the party begin to notice it, Thump will knock this stack over on purpose, playing it off as an accident. His deception can be uncovered with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check, which reveals he is nervous about the hidden path. He will deny this truth until he is out of breath or until his point is moot.

Further investigation (DC 10) will reveal a twisting trail through the bristling undergrowth, illuminated in spurts by streaming sunbeams. The path twists and turns, weaving through the forest but never quite meeting up with itself, despite the feeling it should. As the party travels they start to notice a dead tree here and there, and the dense forest begins to look as though a sickness has taken hold. Some of the undergrowth has speckled leaves, slowly curling and dying, and a DC 15 Wisdom (Nature) check reveals the causes of this rot are unnatural—possibly indicating necrotic magic. The path widens as the forest slowly dies around them, until they come to a clearing—a completely barren, rocky space (pg. 63).

Part 2: Bald Rock Clearing

A wall of thorny vines surrounds this expansive, barren space, save for the small pathway that led you here. A few errant shrubs dot the landscape, but all appear to be black and shriveled, as if sapped of their life force. From the center of this clearing, emanating from a lump of suddenly shifting vines, a ragged voice cries out, "Help me!"

"You hear that lads! Only one thing to do. RUN!" Thump races away, charging three steps before tripping and face-planting into one of the shriveled bushes, which starts to shift and move—revealing a **twig blight**.

Two more **twig blights** and two **needle blights** begin shambling out of the thorny underbrush from all sides of the surrounding vine wall, shuffling steadily toward the party as the cluster of vines in the center of the clearing, a **vine blight**, continues to constrict its quarry. The blights will pursue anyone in their line of sight and initiate combat if it has not already begun. For his part, Thump will cower in fear then run away at the first opportunity: "Thump didn't think the trees would fight back!!"

The first creature within 10 ft. of the writhing vine blight in the center of the clearing will notice the jewel-covered hilt of an ornate, silver sword sticking out of a vine-covered rock. "Quick! Grab me!" says the voice from within the vines. The moment a hand makes contact with the sword's hilt, it shines with radiant light, and with a flash the vine blight erupts in holy flame and is immediately burned away to ash. The sword gleams in the hand of its current owner, then laughs. The sword will help the adventurers beat back any other blights as long as someone is willing to wield it, dealing 2d8 radiant damage on a successful hit. Once the battlefield is clear, the sword exhales: "That was fun! Whew! It's been awhile. You're welcome, by the way."

NPC Profile
The Sword

This beautiful, ornate longsword was embedded partway into a rocky outcropping in the center of the clearing until a vine blight attempted to consume it. The sword is undamaged despite the weathering of the rock around its base. A *detect magic* spell or a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal the sword is magical and gives off an aura of abjuration magic—though the fact it's talking is also a pretty good indicator of its arcane nature.

Encounter Variant: The Talking Sword

Roll 1d6 to determine this weapon's personality.

1d6	The sword is...
1	...upbeat, optimistic and ready to attack the day.
2	...wise-cracking and a little blunt, but well-meaning.
3	...genuinely unpleasant and all business.
4	...timid and shy, hiding a furious temper.
5	...a total know-it-all with a professor's drone.
6	...absolutely fabulous and ready to slay.

Part 3: A Sword in Need

Once the party settles after the battle with the blights, the sword is emphatic:

"Please. I've been stuck in that rock for so long and... my master. I don't know where she is, but she needs me. I can hear her calling to me. Please. Cade's justice demands it. I can show you the way."

If the party presses for more information, the sword does not remember any more than it has revealed—it cannot recall its master's name, nor how it came to this spot. It knows it once served a valiant paladin, who had sworn an oath to Cade. Any attempt to unearth more information about Cade will be fruitless, as Cade is a forgotten god whose power

and influence have both ceased to exist—save for the divine magic imbued into this sword. The sword stresses its master will be defenseless without it and is sure she needs its help.

With that, the sword whips around within the hand of its wielder (or spins on the ground) and points directly to the boulders in the center of the clearing. This outcropping of rocks features a large slit, which also appears to have several cracks in it. A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) reveals one of the rocks can be pulled away with a bit of force. If more than one creature attempts to push it, a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check removes a piece of this stone, unveiling a narrow entryway to an underground crypt. "Let's go!" says the sword.

Part 4: The Antechamber

One by one, you filter into this pitch-black corridor. The path narrows as you walk farther, and you can feel yourself moving deeper underground, the smooth stone walls slick with groundwater. Suddenly the slender passage opens, revealing a large, open chamber, illuminated with a dim blue hue. Each wall features a pictogram depicting what appear to be the exploits of a valiant knight. The sword recognizes its master and begins to narrate the scenes as best it can remember, from left to right:

- An image of a female knight in armor holding the head of a demon aloft.

"That's...that's her—she was fearless. She saved her people from a corrupted duke by slaying a demon in the town square. I can still taste his blood."

- The same knight kneels before a hooded figure, her heart in her hands as she offers it up. In the next panel, she's leading a battle charge against an overwhelming force, her armor shining as she holds her sword aloft.

- The next image features the knight facedown in the muck of the battlefield. She looks older. Defeated. Looming above her and offering a scroll dripping with blood is a shadowy figure with broken feathered wings.

"I don't remember this," says the sword.

The remaining pictograms showcase the knight pulling out her heart and placing it on a large rock, then stabbing it with the sword. The knight then signs the bloody document, her body more powerful, a pair of shackles and chains wrapped around her arms and the sword left behind in the stone. A final pictogram has her returning to the battlefield, stopping an onslaught of evil to save her town once more. "I don't remember any of this either...."

The pictograms lead to a single door out of the room flanked by statues of two heavily armored guards whose outstretched hands are holding long rods that cross over the threshold to block the door. These are *immovable rods*, carved with ancient sigils, and can be removed from the carvings' hands by finding the release button with a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Carved in stone above these statues are the words: "Dismisser of Cade, Champion of Rebdak, Jocelyn's Sacrifice Healed Our Lands. Savior of the Sheltered Wood, None but Death Can Stop Her. And We'd Like to See Death Try."

The sword begins to put this story together, exhaling in disbelief even as it urges the party to continue into the tomb: "She wouldn't have turned her back on Cade—she was sworn to him. Gave him her heart. She could never have lived with herself. We have to find her."

Part 5: The Hall of Light

Descending into the tomb, the air grows cold and thick, wisps of white trailing wherever there is movement. At the end of a long hallway lies a gateway to another chamber, marked with the phrase: "Empty your heart of all desires, fill it with a need to serve."

Through the gate is an open platform that ends with a drop out to a large hall filled with thick mist that completely obscures vision past 10 ft., illuminated by the dim yellow light of six globules that drift randomly through the mist.

By standing on the edge of the platform, a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal that on each side of the room are platforms that each hold a unique stone casket surrounded by treasure, bones and various other offerings that draw the eye and shine dimly through the mist as the yellow light of the globes pass them by.

One of the globules of light drifts down to the party. It moves back and forth in front of them

before drifting through the fog and revealing the first stepping stone across the room. Wherever the globe of light goes, the fog is held at bay in a 15-ft. radius.

The globules of light seem friendly and light the way across the stepping stones to the other side of the room. The stepping stones, each 8 to 10 ft. apart, require DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) rolls to jump from one to another, though other means of traversal should be allowed at GM discretion. Should a party member be tempted by the treasure surrounding the caskets or their curiosity, these sentient balls of light, which are actually **will-o'-wisps**, will turn red and attack. It is possible to blow the fog away from the path, revealing it for a single round at a time, but the fog will quickly return.

Part 6: Statued Stair Chamber

The tunnel leads to a great stone cavern held aloft by a single pillar at its center and opens into a spiral staircase that leads down further into the dark. Flanking each side of the entrance to the stairs are two huge stone statues of armored warriors carrying halberds and bearing an uncanny resemblance to the warrior statues in the antechamber. A DC 13 Perception check will reveal each of the statues has a small round hole through their body where their heart should be. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the holes are about the same diameter as the immovable rods they found earlier.

Should any adventurer try to sneak past the stone warriors without placing the rods in their hearts, they must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, as each statue springs to life long enough to slice its blade toward the offender, dealing 1d10 + 5 damage on a failed save. Placing the rods within the statues releases a rejuvenating energy, restoring everyone within 30 ft. of the statues to full health. Beyond these statues is the Crypt of Stars (pg. 67).

Part 7: The Crypt of Stars

The players enter the Crypt of Stars and must solve its puzzle to pass to the other side. The sword encourages them to keep trying, and can offer helpful hints as necessary if they're getting bogged down. Once on the other side, the sword will lead them to Jocelyn's final resting place. "I can feel her energy—shes through here. She needs me."

Part 8: Her Resting Place

As they cross the final bridge, the party is met by a howling storm. Each creature must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to avoid being swept over the side. Once they are safely over the crumbling bridge, the party stumbles out of the wind and into the silent eye of the storm.

A broken hexagonal platform is home to an open casket surrounded by gold, jewels and various weapons. All is quiet for a moment until the dust and bones begin to shift, swirling upward to form the spectral, ghostly form of Jocelyn, Breaker of the Oath, Champion of Rebdak, rising from her tomb. She raises her arms, shackles rattling, as 3d6 **skeletons** rise from the bones surrounding the casket. Jocelyn and her minions will attack the party as she howls for them to leave her to suffer for her betrayal alone.

The sword will shout she does not need to be alone any longer, she can repent and bond with it once more. But Jocelyn will inform the party the chains of Rebdak are strong and she cannot be free and will continue to attack. If the party does not take the hint, the sword can suggest to attack the chains. If the chains or Jocelyn herself take 25 points of radiant damage, the shackles and skeletons will explode, radiant light shining from within the ghost to light the crypt. Jocelyn will take the sword, speaking an oath in a language the party cannot comprehend. The platform begins to shake and rumble as Jocelyn swears a new oath to Cade, forsaking the god of the tomb in which she is now enshrined.

> "She's—she's repenting. She's recommiting to Cade. And she's bringing this temple down with her in the process," cries the sword. The walls around you begin to shake. "Leave—quickly. Thank you. And hurry!"

Part 9: Escape the Crypt

The crypt begins to collapse around the party and they have less than one minute to escape. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a crack with light streaming through on the far end of the dark tomb. If players choose to take this route, they must succeed on two DC 10 Strength and two DC 10 Dexterity saving throws as they dodge rubble and leap across collapsing chasms in order to make it to daylight. If a player fails any of these saves, the party must succeed on a collective DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) and Intelligence (Investigation) check to rally the stragglers and find a new way out. A collective DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check with the surviving players is required to choose the path that leads to daylight. Crawling out of a crack in the earth, the party finds themselves back in Bald Rock Clearing, the ground around them collapsing into a sinkhole of unsettled rock nearly 20 ft. deep.

> As the earth settles, the uprooted trees suddenly begin to reestablish themselves, roots stretching out and digging in. The dirt and splintered stone give way to growing moss and grass, and the sun bears down with a radiant energy. The large boulder in the center of this space starts to rock gently as massive vines creep and curl around it. They twist and gnarl until they evoke the shape of a triumphant warrior in full plate armor, wielding a blade that—despite being formed out of growing vines—seems to gleam in the sun.

Important NPCs

Useful information about important characters in this adventure. All NPCs listed speak Common. They can speak any other languages at GM discretion.

Thump

Medium dwarf, chaotic good

This strong willed, if self-interested, dwarf is looking to make some coin by leading the party through the woods. He's also hoping to make a name for himself—part of the reason he continually refers to himself in the third person.

Armor Class 16 (scale mail, shield)
Hit Points 26
Speed 25 ft.

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

Damage Resistances Poison
Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Actions

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

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

The Sword

Wondrous longsword, legendary

This sword has both a personality and a conscience, and can speak telepathically to any creature in a 30 ft. radius. It longs to be reunited with its former master, a paladin named Jocelyn.

If wielding it, you gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magical weapon. When you hit a fiend or an undead with it, that creature takes an extra 2d10 radiant damage.

While you hold the drawn sword, it creates an aura in a 10-ft. radius around you. You and all creatures friendly to you in the aura have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. If you have 17 or more levels in the paladin class, the radius of the aura increases to 30 ft.

Jocelyn, Breaker of the Oath

Medium undead, lawful evil

A valiant warrior who forsake her oath to a god named Cade, this paladin swore to serve a god named Rebdak in order to defeat a mighty foe—a decision she regretted for the rest of her life. After her death, a temple was built in her name. But she never forgot her betrayal to her own values, and now her soul lies restless in the crypt created to honor her.

Armor Class 19 (splint, shield)
Hit Points 52
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4, Cha +5
Skills Athletics +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5, Religion +4
Senses Passive Perception 12

Command Undead. As a bonus action, Jocelyn can target one undead creature she can see within 30 ft. and command it to use its reaction to attack.
Aura of Hate. Any fiends and undead within 10 ft. of Jocelyn gains a bonus to melee weapon damage rolls equal to her Charisma modifier (+3).
Ethereal Sight. Jocelyn can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when she is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.
Incorporeal Movement. Jocelyn can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

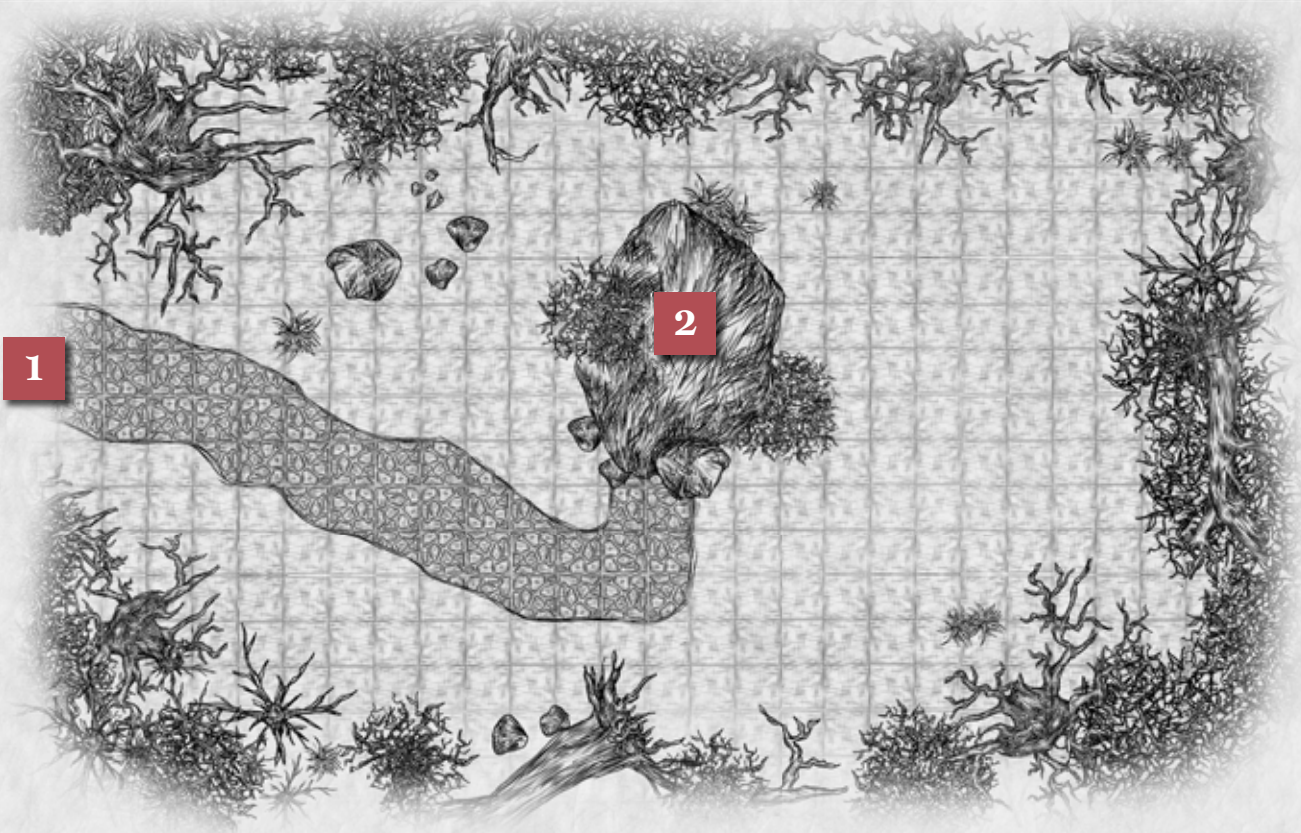
Actions

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

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 ft. of Jocelyn that can see her must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of her for one minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 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 Jocelyn'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.

Reactions

Parry. Jocelyn adds +2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Jocelyn must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.



Bald Rock Clearing

> *"I've only been there once. Tree nearly took me leg off, then I fell and broke me arm. They oughta burn that whole forest down."* —Argo the Unlucky, former adventurer

A narrow forest path leads to a seeming dead end, as dirt and grass gives way to solid rock where roots can't find purchase. Ringed with trees and low bushes, this clearing also features a large, flat-topped boulder in its center.

Open Space, Closed Circle

The narrow pathway that leads to Bald Rock Clearing ***(1)*** creates an almost tunnel-like atmosphere, with branches and towering trees blocking out much of the direct sunlight. It's a bit of a shock then to emerge into this clearing, a massive, weather-beaten rock surface encircled by thick-trunked, centuries-old trees. There's an eerie calm about the place, and the dull creak and crack of limbs scraping each other as the wind rustles the trees is the only other sound here.

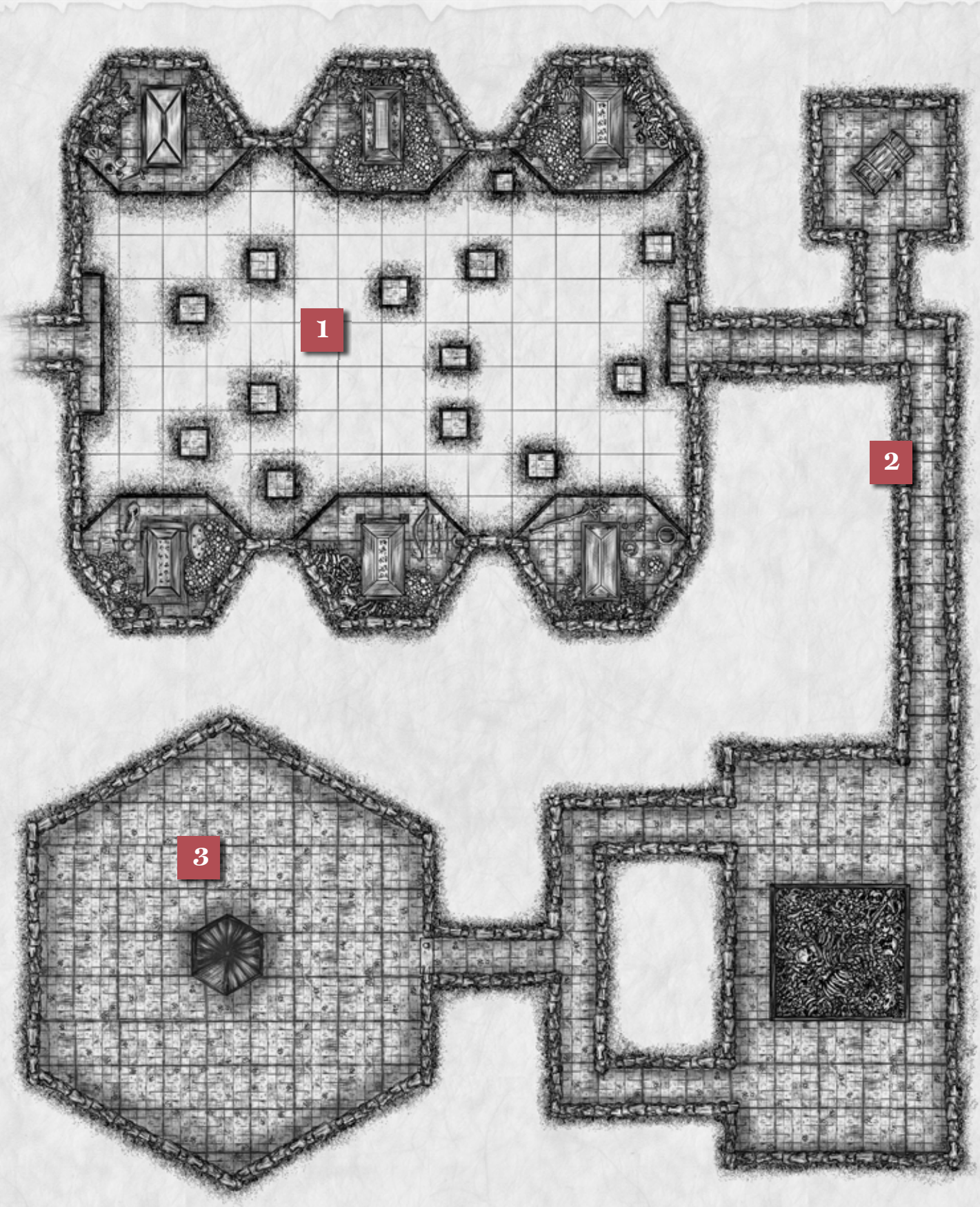
Stone Altar

A large, rounded black stone with a flat top sits in the center of the clearing ***(2)***. While it gives off no magical aura, there is something otherworldly about it. Attempting to move the stone on one's own will prove fruitless, but if more than one in a gathered party attempt to push it, succeeding on a group DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check, it will shift and reveal the entrance to a hidden cave or crypt at GM discretion—or the Tomb of the Forgotten Paladin, if running that adventure.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what peril the party might encounter in this clearing.

1d6	The party uncovers...
1	...2d6 **skeletons** and one **minotaur skeleton** emerge from the dense forest and attack the party.
2	...a **dryad** who defends this space from intruders summons 1d4 **owlbears**, 1d4 **giant boars** and 1d4 **giant badgers** to attack the party.
3	...screams emanating from the center of the clearing as a group of 2d4 **cultists** and one **cult fanatic** attempt a ritual sacrifice on a peasant boy tied to the stone altar.
4	...a small army of 4d4 **twig blights**, 1d4 **vine blights** and 1d4 **needle blights** attempting to drag the party into the woods surrounding the clearing.
5	...a raging **cyclops** marching in a continuous circle around the stone altar. He has not yet noticed the party.
6	...a **manticore** that appears to be building a nest in this clearing—and is displeased the party has found it.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The Tomb of the Forgotten Paladin, Level 1

This map is meant to help you conceptualize the size and scale of the chambers described in Parts 5 and 6 of this adventure. Feel free to expand or contract these spaces to fit your needs.

The Hall of Light (Part 5)

Directly following the antechamber with the pictogram walls, this massive hall ***(1)*** is illuminated by floating **will-o'-wisps** and features six large sarcophagi, each decorated with piles of treasure. A hazy mist obscures the view of the pillars most would utilize to travel from one side of this chamber to the other, but as a creature progresses from pillar to pillar, more begin to come into view. Should a creature attempt to abscond with any of the treasure left to honor those buried here, the will-o'-wisps will attack with lethal force, and will continue to harm the entire party until the treasures are returned.

Dark Hallways

These halls and alcoves ***(2)*** may contain any or all of the below dangers and treasures at GM discretion.

Variant Encounter: Traps!

Each trap has an Intelligence (Investigation) check of DC 13 to spot, and a DC of 13 to disarm.

1d6	The party activates...
1	**...a hidden doorway** in the wall that slides back to reveal 1d4 swarms of **undead rats**.
2	**...a hidden glyph** that requires each creature in a 10-ft. cube to make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 fire damage.
3	**...a tripwire** that requires each creature to make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 acid damage as a green liquid pours from the vents above.
4	**...a pressure plate** that releases poisonous gas into the hallway. Any creature that doesn't succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw takes 1d6 poison damage and is poisoned.
5	**...a loose stone** that begins an ominous ticking sound that echoes down the hallway (GM Note: that's it, just the ticking noise).
6	**...a translucent barrier forms**, barring the way. Any creature who steps through must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 1 point of exhaustion. This barrier can be dispelled with *dispel magic* or other similar spells.

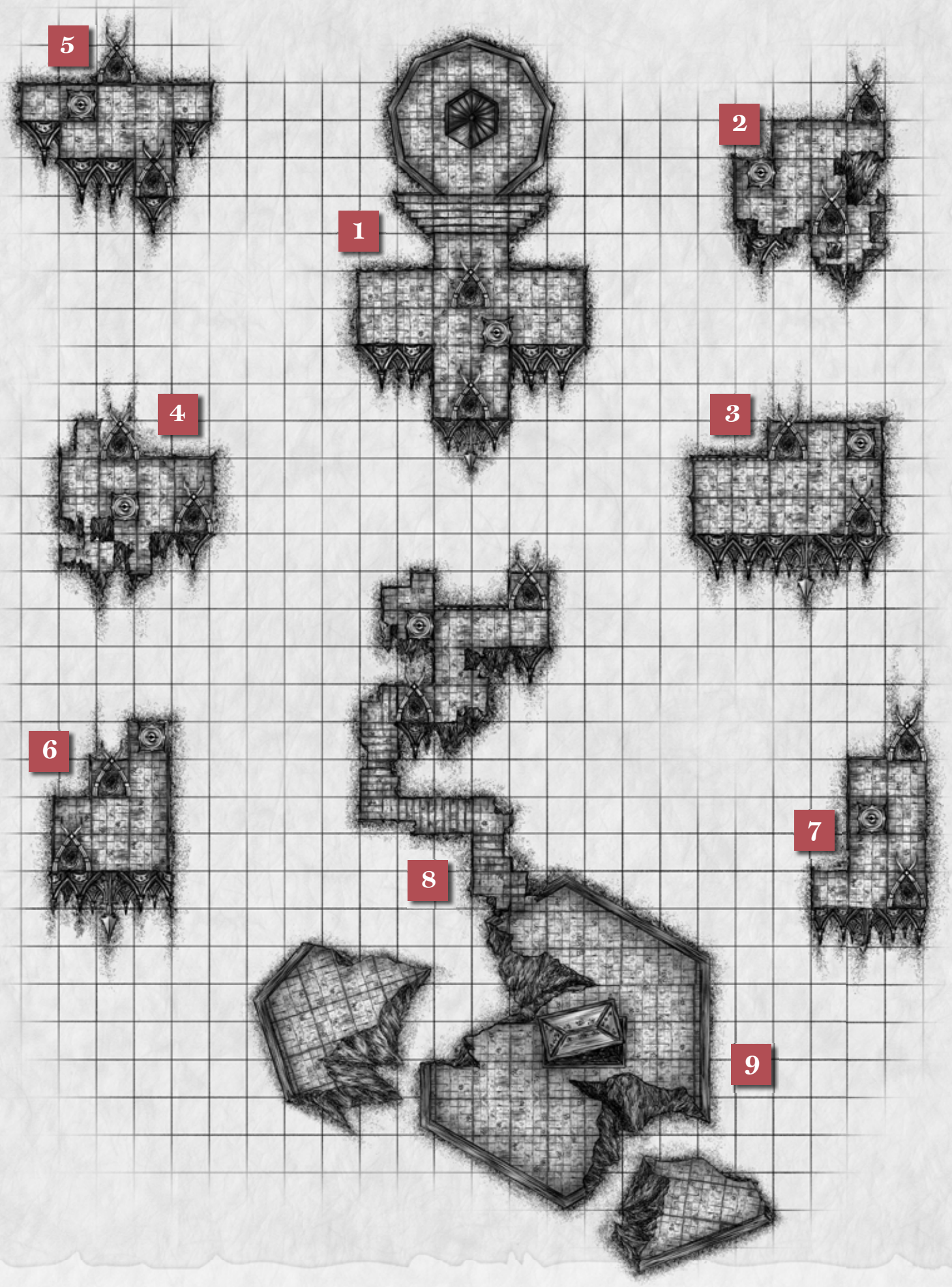
Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine what lies in wait for the party within these hallways.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a room full of five identical treasure chests, each with a DC 12 lock, containing 25gp-worth of assorted coins. 1d6 of these chests are also **mimics** that will attack the moment their locks are picked and lids are opened.
2	...a pit of skeletal remains that 1d4 **skeletons** crawl up and out of.
3	...the remains of a long-dead party of adventurers, which reanimate to become 1d6 **zombies**.
4	...a series of 1d6 pressure traps lining the narrow hallway. Each trap has a DC of 15 and, if triggered, the creature that triggered the trap must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 piercing damage as a spear shoots upward from the stone floor.
5	...a **gelatinous cube** that slides slowly toward the adventurers the moment they enter the narrow hallway.
6	...a **ghast** that shuffles among the bones in the pile in the center of the secondary antechamber.

Statued Stair Chamber (Part 6)

This space ***(3)*** is guarded by massive armored warriors made of stone. They hold giant halberds and block the entrance to the spiral staircase descending farther down from within the center of this space. They each have a hole in their chests which are meant to be filled with the **immovable rods** from the antechamber visited by the party. They will attack if a creature tries to move past them without inserting these rods in their proper space. Should any adventurer try to sneak past the stone warriors without placing the rods in their hearts, they must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, as each statue springs to life long enough to slice its blade toward the offender, dealing 1d10+5 slashing damage on a failed save. Placing the rods within the statues releases a rejuvenating energy, restoring everyone within 30 ft. of the statues to full health.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9

The Crypt of Stars

Millions of motes of light float in the inky blackness of this chamber, which also holds hovering stone platforms accessible through a series of portals. Reaching the other side requires patience, cunning and a little luck.

> Exiting the stairs and onto a large platform, you're met by an eerie calm, as hanging in the darkness are millions of tiny motes of light. They drift slowly, and moving through them is akin to walking underwater. A wide staircase leads to a large platform with a small pedestal, atop which floats a bar of silver, hovering like the letter I. Behind it are two large empty archways.

Interior

The Crypt of Stars features a main platform ***(1)***, where the players enter, that has two dormant portal arches on it as well as a low pedestal featuring a hovering silver bar that floats vertically: the portal control switch for this platform. The platform on the opposite side of the abyss ***(8)*** has stairs leading to a bridge and the final resting place of the Oathbreaker Paladin: a large, broken hexagonal platform ***(9)*** hidden by a tornado of howling wind and motes of light. Hovering over the black abyss, but impossible for the players to see, are six other smaller platforms, all featuring two archways and a portal control switch. Visibility in the Crypt of Stars is obstructed by magical darkness and even those with darkvision cannot see beyond the platform they are standing on, though the platform space itself is dimly illuminated by the motes. Though the other floating platforms are not visible through the darkness, sound is unimpeded.

GM Note

Should a creature attempt to fly in this space they will be met with resistance from the flying motes of light, which will start to swarm the flying creature. Should a flying creature not find a platform upon which to land by succeeding on a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check at disadvantage within 3 turns, they will begin to sink steadily into the chasm below as the motes drag them down. The motes will carry them back up to platform 8 if the portal on that platform is activated and stepped through.

The Portal Puzzle

Each of the platforms is numbered for convenience as you describe the action to your players. Each platform in the Crypt of Stars features a portal control switch, an entry portal (that a creature walks through) and an exit portal (that will deposit them on a new platform after they've stepped through an entry portal). Every portal in the Crypt of Stars leads to another platform within the crypt, as outlined on the Portal Table. An exit portal only appears once a player walks through an entry portal and is deposited at their destination. Both portals then dissipate. Each platform's respective entry portal can be reactivated by touching its portal control switch.

- If a player touches the silver bar floating on its pedestal a portal will crackle and swirl in its archway for 30 seconds, or until a creature walks through it.

- The silver bar of each portal control switch can be rotated to a horizontal or vertical position with the slightest touch. The bar can be spun clockwise or counterclockwise and will hum slightly before locking itself into position. This movement can be repeated with another push as many times as a player desires.

- The destination for each entry portal is determined by the positioning of the silver bar of each portal control switch. Every entry portal has two possible destinations, with two exceptions, as outlined below.

- If the portal control switch's bar is floating vertically, the entry portal leads to its A destination, as defined by the Portal Table. If it is floating horizontally, the portal leads to its B destination, as defined by the Portal Table.

- The entry portal on Platform 1 has three destinations: Its A and B destinations, as well as a third—Platform 8—which can be reached if the portal control switch bar is spun a full 360 degrees.

- The entry portal on Platform 8 always leads to Platform 1, regardless of the position of its portal control switch.

The Portal Table

Each of the platforms is numbered for convenience as you describe the action to your players. The platforms are not labeled in game. The portals for each platform lead to destinations as defined by the position of the switch. A is vertical. B is horizontal.

		Platform							
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Switch	**A**	5	5	7	3	2	3	1	1
	B	4	6	6	2	6	1	8	1

Possible solutions include:

1B, 4A, 3A, 7B, leads to 8
1A, 5B, 6A, 3A, 7B leads to 8
1A, 5A, 2B, 6A, 3A, 7B leads to 8
1B, 4B, 2B, 6A, 3A, 7B leads to 8

Nature vs. Nurture

When the residents of a nearby town ignore her calls to care for the land their homes are built upon, a formerly peaceful druid prophesies their violent end— then sets events in motion to ensure her vision comes to pass.

An Adventure Suitable For Levels 2-6

An exciting first anniversary celebration for the opening of a large scale mining operation in town is interrupted by an assault from below ground. A local druid comes to the town's aid, but warns the townsfolk that encroachments from the natural world might continue if changes aren't made. They must stop devastating their lands or else. When her warnings aren't heeded her prediction proves correct and soon the town is overrun by more creatures. Agreeing something must be done, one of the town's elders solicits the party's canvassing and cajoling skills to convince the rest of the town's leadership that a change needs to occur, or to do their best to convince the mine's owner to shut things down for the good of the people. When it appears the townsfolk have not heeded her warnings, the druid returns on the night of a community meeting with plans of her own.

Setting Up

This adventure takes place in a small mining town. It features a handful of specific locations (Too Deep Mine, pg. 75; The Community Meeting Hall, pg. 139), as well as a few random locations as determined by the Taverns, Inns, Shops & Guild Halls table (pg. 2), or at GM discretion. It also could potentially feature a fair number of unique NPCs depending on how your party chooses to resolve the conflicts the adventure presents, so it might be helpful to roll a few residents on the Random NPC Generator (pg. 237) in order to prepare yourself for this development. You should also read the Backstory Information portion of this adventure for motivations and context of the townsfolks' current situation.

If this is your party's first adventure, the easiest starting point is the anniversary celebration taking place at the Mutterall Mine just on the outskirts of the town. This is the most significant event to have taken place here in many months, and regardless of their race or class, anyone who's anyone will be there to witness it. Roll on the Party Makeup Maker (pg. 250) to build connections between your party before the adventure begins.

If you are incorporating this adventure into part of a larger campaign, the party can encounter the celebration at the mine as they travel from one seat of civilization to another. An outpost in the truest sense of the word, this town has very little for which to celebrate, so a gathered and excited crowd would be a surprising sight.

Backstory Information

The town (Shinbone, or another name at GM discretion) was built as a trade stop between larger cities, but when ore was discovered within its hills it quickly became a boom town built on the backs of a steady influx of would-be miners. Over time, as the dig went progressively deeper, creatures from the surrounding wood began to descend on the town, and horrible monstrosities kept finding their way to the surface—driven upward by the constant invasion and destruction of their subterranean habitats. The town's elders opted to shutter the mine for the public good, an act that generated a significant backlash as well as a steep economic downturn. As jobs dried up so did trade and soon the town was a hollow version of itself, with boarded up buildings and empty homes in disrepair still dotting much of its main street. Those who stayed were a heartier sort, living off the land and doing their best to establish an economy built on a barter system. It wasn't ideal, but it was safe, and the townsfolk have lived in this way for decades since.

A year ago, things changed. Carlsbad Mutterall, owner of Mutterall Mining Works, a company that specializes in revitalizing older or less profitable operations, came in and reopened the mine. Mutterall offered good, if somewhat low-paying, jobs. Jobs brought back the populace and now the town is on its way to thriving once again.

But as soon as the mine was opened things began to revert to the way they'd been when the old mine was still in business. Attacks from creatures that rarely come above ground have become exceedingly common, and there's a constant stench in the air—sulfur and slate, with thick layers of dust covering nearly every surface. This year's crop return has been disappointing, some say worthless, making the townsfolk here even more dependent on the revenue generated from the mine so they can buy food as opposed to growing it themselves.

The mine is, to many, worth celebrating. But there are those in the town who remember the dangers of digging too deep into the hills, and their voices may be vital to the town's longevity.

Part 1: Attack From Below

The entire town is gathered around the entrance to Mutterall Mine, which rests in the foothills a short hike from the town's main road, to celebrate the first anniversary of the Mutterall Mining Works operation. Families gather together to watch the most exciting event to have taken place here since before the old mine shut down decades ago.

Head of the elder council, **Percy Weaver**, welcomes the party as well as other attending guests to join him in cheering on the day's honored guest, **Carlsbad Mutterall**, head of Mutterall Mining Works and owner of this pillar of commerce within the community. A light applause arises from the crowd, followed by a cheer as the mine's foreman **Griff Readywell**, skowls a bit toward some of the men under his charge.

> A well-dressed man with an extraordinary mustache steps forward to address the crowd. "As many of you know, I am Carlsbad Mutterall. This mine was abandoned when I purchased it, and in just one year we've seen unparalleled growth, all due to the hard work of this community. I thank Mr. Percy Weaver, and the rest of the elder council, for your leadership. The deeper we dig the darker it gets, but I'm not afraid of the dark...and neither are these men. The darker it gets, the more ore to plunder, and the more ore we dig the brighter this town's future seems to be! I'd trade darkness for light any day of the week. Darkness for light!" There is a cheer in the crowd. "Darkness for light!" they echo. "Darkness for light!" cheers Mutterall once more. The crowd follows suit. As Mutterall cheers a third time the crowd screams, as roaring forth from beneath the earth come several pairs of claws.

The claws belong to 2d4 **ankhegs**, which surprise the townsfolk and attempt to pull any prey they can back underground. Most of the crowd will immediately flee in the ensuing chaos, but 1d6 townspeople are caught or injured by the ankhegs and are in need of saving.

The ankhegs will attack the crowd and the party at random, wreaking havoc and taking lives without any plan or pattern.

After the first round of combat per initiative, a small robin will descend into the middle of the fray and immediately transform itself into the guise of a weather-beaten woman in somewhat ragged, handspun clothing. Some in the crowd recognize her as **Kerrigan T'Kay**, a druid whose family has long looked after the forests in this part of the realm. She will fight alongside the party in an attempt to keep the people gathered here safe, but will not attack the creatures unless her life is directly threatened by one.

At the close of this first encounter, Kerrigan will work to heal any who need aid while also decrying the very nature of this mine, which she believes encroaches on the natural habitat of the creatures who dwell within the mountain and could lead to more attacks from the forests, hills or the earth below.

> The druid approaches and says with a commanding voice, "I speak for the forest and all creatures, both mortals and monsters, who dwell within these lands and call them home. There are many monstrosities within this realm, and this mine should be counted among them. It has ripped open the natural world and in its suffering, the creatures within have lashed out with no sense of right or wrong—much like those who approved of this mine's construction. The land is in pain. It will not be safe here as long as this mine remains."

Carslbad Mutterall will protest this framing of his life's work, with statements such as "Look at all the good that's come to this town—the jobs, the renown." His sentiments will be echoed by others, especially the workers of the mine who unite under the heavy hand of Griff Readywell, who seems to be bristling at the druid's seemingly ignorant words.

Tug Tannerhide, one of the town's elders, will step in to offer any of the surlier members of the crowd a chance to cool down at one of the town's few bars for a round on him. He invites the party to join him as a way of smoothing things over and welcoming them into his personal inner circle. Carlsbad Mutterall and Percy Weaver announce a second try at the mine's anniversary celebration will be held at dusk the following day.

Any attempts to explore the mine at this stage will be halted by Griff Readywell, who will encourage the party to enjoy a drink with Tug and has posted security at the mine's entrance to stop any curious trespassers from intruding on private property.

Part 2: Prophecy Fulfilled

Whether they choose to join him for drinks at the bar (roll on the Random Taverns & Inns table, pg. 245) or instead choose to spend their evening wandering around the town, Tug will inform the party that the Mutterall Mine has been good for business interests—anybody who wants one can find a job as a digger—but not necessarily for the people who work and live off the land.

> Tug leans in and says with a shrug, "Crops came up pretty slim this year, and those that did have a decent harvest claim they can't sell what they grew—tastes like slate and shale. I'm not saying it's the mine. But I'm not saying it ain't either."

A DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals the grass around the town seems less vibrant than it ought to be. The beer tastes flat, the food stale, the smiles of the people in the bar are gray and sometimes toothless. If pressed, Tug would reveal that this town was never the biggest or the best, but the mine was shuttered long ago by the founders of the town because those who lived here were experiencing similar maladies.

> "Children were dying. Horrific creatures wandered the woods, and even the streets of town. Once the mine was closed down, the jobs here dried up, people moved away and instead of creatures roaming the streets bandits and looters did instead. When Mutterall Mining Works agreed to buy the mine and began operations here in earnest, things started to turn around pretty quickly."

But Tug is uneasy. He's concerned but doesn't have the power to do anything about it at this stage. He will listen to any suggestions the party might have about how to deal with this particular problem: "The mine is the only thing really keeping this town alive, and it might be the thing that's killing us too."

Some townspeople within the area will report similar feelings if pressed, but most would prefer to talk about how great the mine is doing, how much of a positive impact it's had on the town, how great it's been to be able to take pride in the town's industrial rise. If a player has a chance to discuss it with them alone, some of the townsfolk will reveal that the attacks from the creatures in the area have gotten more frequent. The ankheg attack earlier was the seventh such assault in the past month.

If the players decide to explore the town without going to the bar, or if they decide to bed down for a long rest within the town limits, the sound of howls, snarls and screams from the other side of town will keep them from resting. If they are within the bar and have gleaned all you think they can from conversations with Tug, the sound of howls will reach their ears with a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

A pack of 4d6 **wolves** has descended on the town, and will run through the streets snarling at any passersby they encounter. They will attack any of the 5d6 commoners on the street, but their tactics seem to be hit and run, as opposed to trying to kill for food. A DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check will reveal these wolves are seemingly only trying to scare the townsfolk—not kill them. The wolves will fight to the death if engaged with violence, but should half their number be slain, the rest will flee and disperse into different directions throughout the town's streets until they reach the treeline (300 ft.) and disappear into the forest.

GM Note

One of the wolves is Kerrigan T'Kay in wild shape. Upon breaking line of sight with the party, she will transform into humanoid form and work to round up the wolves and shoo them off into the woods, as if she's been assisting the townsfolk all along.

Kerrigan T'Kay will approach the party after helping them rid the town of its wolf problem. A DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal she knows more about the wolf attack than she's letting on. If pressed, she will reveal she has no love for the mine and would do anything to rid this land of it. It is, to her, "a curse."

> Kerrigan pulls a rough, black, dried-out ear of corn from her component pouch. "All of it is like this. All of it tastes of corruption. A foul stench. This isn't natural. Show them this—who could doubt the mine is responsible? The beasts of this land will revolt until the usurpers here recognize the stain they've left on the landscape will only be removed with blood. There is nothing I can do to stop them. You must convince the sheep who dwell here to combat the wolves who wear their wool or else a more violent revolt will take place. I'm sorry for the heavy-handed metaphor, but what I speak is plain truth: the natural world was here long before this town. And it will reclaim what it has lost."

Kerrigan will reveal she has no proof the mine is responsible for the rotten corn, but that it shouldn't matter—something is making the groundwater toxic. The corn is proof.

Part 3: Hearts and Minds

Following the aftermath of the wolf attack, Tug will thank the party for their assistance and suggest a few options for what can be done:

TOWN MEETING. "We can hold a town meeting—tomorrow—just need to convince Mutterall to come and hear what we have to say. Spend tomorrow convincing people to come argue for closing the mine and speak for themselves when the time comes." (Follow path 3A)

ELDER CONFERENCE. "We can have a closed door meeting with the elders, more private, and alert them to what we know...and decide if we need to send Mutterall on his way." (Follow path 3B)

RUN HIM OUT OF TOWN. "We could...ask Mutterall to leave. Without a meeting. Well, you could. I'm not that intimidating, but you all seem like you might be. You could confront him at the mine tomorrow. Run him out of here." (Follow path 3C)

Depending on what your party decides, take them to the appropriate stage in the story.

3A: Town Meeting

To gather the Town Meeting, you can choose to engage in several improvised scenes, or have your party make a collective roll to spend the day convincing people to come to the meeting and argue to close down the mine. The party can speak to as many people as they can find milling about at night and/or the following morning, but because this is a relatively sheltered space and due to the nature of the recent attacks, most folks aren't just walking around in the open. Have the party roll a collective Intelligence (Investigation) check as outlined below to determine how many townspeople they find, then roll on the Random NPC Generator (pg. 237) to reveal the identities of any characters you'd like them to further interact with, and use the Random Taverns & Inns table (pg. 245) to determine locations for these conversations. The party must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check to get a townsperson to attend the meeting. A DC 18 or higher will net them a powerful voice in opposition of the mine, who agrees to speak at the meeting if necessary.

Intelligence (Investigation)

DC 1-5	1d4 townspeople
DC 6-10	1d6 townspeople
DC 11-15	2d6 townspeople
DC 16-20	3d6 townspeople
DC 20+	4d6 townspeople

Encounter Variant: Roll on Through

You can bypass the roleplaying aspect of this part of the adventure by having the group roll a collective Charisma (Persuasion) check and then use the table below to determine how many of the townsfolk they found are willing to attend the meeting and speak out against the mine.

Charisma (Persuasion)

DC 1-5	None of the townspeople will attend.
DC 6-10	25 percent of the townspeople will attend.
DC 11-15	50 percent of the townspeople will attend.
DC 16-20	75 percent of the townspeople will attend.
DC 20+	100 percent of the townspeople will attend.

Once the party has spent the day gathering evidence and a crowd for their town meeting, move on to Part 4.

3B: Elder Conference

If the party elects to speak privately with the elders—Tug Tannerhide, Percy Weaver and **Agatha Aftershaft**—they will meet in the Town Hall. Tug will encourage the party to spend the day gathering evidence to present to the council, whether it's personal examples from residents, more rotten crops, or—if they're feeling particularly bold—signs of trouble from within the mine.

- A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the surrounding crops and fields would reveal enough black, rotting corn to make a convincing case that something isn't right.

- A conversation with the townsfolk will be met with quite a bit of stonewalling, as most are happy with the mine and the jobs it provides. Use the Investigation table from section 3A to reveal the number of townspeople players are able to find in the surrounding area over the course of the day. A DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check for each townsperson—with advantage if a player is speaking with them in private—will reveal there is unrest in the town, and many felt things were better before the mine was back in operation but are too scared of Mutterall and those who work for the mining company to make much of a fuss.

- Any attempt to explore the mine will bring players face to face with a united front from employees of Mutterall Mining Works. 10d6 Mutterall miners, led by Griff Readywell, stand in the entryway and refuse access on Mr. Mutterall's orders. In the event that the players are able to get past this line of defenses, they will find the mine is mostly safe,

if a bit unregulated, incredibly hot, and full of **ankhegs** killed by the miners. 1d4 of the creatures will burrow from beneath the darkest corner of the mine and attack the party. If the party wishes to explore the mine, go to pg. 75, but bypass all variant encounters.

Alternatively, move to part 3C, as any attempt to enter the Mutterall Mining Company will be viewed as an intimidation tactic and will be met with a similar response from the workers there.

Once the party has gathered sufficient evidence and engaged with the townspeople, move to Part 4.

3C: Run Him Out of Town

If the party elects to try and run the Mutterall Mining Company out of town they will be met with a powerful show of force from those who make their living there. The miners are not willing to back down, are making more money than they ever have and, though their jobs are dangerous, they also feel a bit of pride knowing they're helping rebuild their town one piece of ore at a time.

Carlsbad Mutterall will wrap himself in the loyalty of these workers, as well as the might of his foreman Griff Readywell, who seems to be immune to fear. Even if these workers are scared of the party, there's no one who terrifies them more than Griff.

> "If you choose to fight us here where we stand, you should do so knowing these workers have families at home. Surely we can find a compromise without any bloodshed?" says Mutterall, his eyes darting around.

Mutterall will suggest the entire gathered crowd sojourn to the Community Meeting Hall, a building the proceeds from his mine paid for, and he'll talk through all of the aired grievances in a constructive, less combative manner.

Part 4: The Meeting

The Community Meeting Hall (pg. 139) is a medium-sized wooden structure built to house most of the town should the need arise. Tug will invite the party to kick off the proceedings in this space, regardless of whether or not the meeting is a small gathering of the town elders Percy Weaver, Agatha Aftershaft and Tug Tannerhide (as in 3B), or features numerous denizens of the town recruited by the party (as in 3A) or the multitude of remaining miners (as in 3C). In the event of a private meeting, the residents of the town, including several dozen mine workers, will crowd around the Community Meeting Hall as rumors swirl that something important is happening inside.

If the party is here alone with the elders they should present their evidence, after which the elders will consider it and then each make their own cases, as detailed below. If the party recruited other members of the town to speak up (as in 3A), those members should speak before the elders at GM discretion.

The elders can be convinced to vote to close the mine, or else will vote to keep it open. What the elders say, for or against the mine, will largely depend on how persuasive the party's efforts to argue for the mine's closure have been, using the following adjustments to their score:

1d20 Charisma (Persuasion)

- +1 for each townsperson who spoke on behalf of closing the mine.
- -5 if Carlsbad Mutterall and Griff Readywell are in the room.

Tug Tannerhide (Convince to close: DC 12)

- Close Mine Speech: "Ever since Mutterall came into town we've been richer—but I think our lives are poorer as a result. The crops are bad. The woods aren't safe. We were happy before. I think we can be happier again. I vote we close it down."

- Keep Mine Speech: "I know you outsiders have tried to help, but it seems the majority of the room has spoken—the mine's been good for this town. We can deal with other trouble as it comes."

Agatha Aftershaft (Convince to close: DC 16)

- Close Mine Speech: "My family settled here not long after the first mine closed down. It wasn't easy, but they made it work. My husband is in those tunnels every day—and every day I wonder if he'll come back. It's not worth the risk. I think we should close."

- Keep Mine Speech: "My family settled here not long after the first mine closed down. And I was raised to leave things better than you found them. The Mutterall Mine isn't perfect but damn near nothing is. We've got work. We've got a community. We've got access to people who will look after us. We've not had that for as long as the Aftershafts have been here, and I'll be damned if I'm going to let you all come here and take it away. I vote no."

Percy Weaver (Convince to close: DC 20)

- Close Mine Speech: "I had no idea. And I'm stunned. Absolutely stunned. In light of this evidence I think we have no choice but to shutter the Mutterall Mine."

• Keep Mine Speech: "Carlsbad Mutterall cares more for the people of this town than anyone in this room—he didn't have to buy that ol' rundown mine but he made it profitable. Made this town profitable. And now you're spitting in his face. No. The answer's no. I don't care if the crops are bad—you know how much corn you can buy with a pile of gold?"

IF THE COUNCIL IS DIVIDED, or votes unanimously to keep the mine, the gathered miners will celebrate, rushing inside the community center and shouting with vigor until a crack of lightning and shaking thunder silence them all. Jump to the flavor text below.

IF THE COUNCIL IS UNANIMOUS in its decision to close the mine and send Mutterall on his way, there will be a rising anger within the community center as the mine workers demand to know what they'll do for money if the mine is closed. Mutterall will do nothing to quell this rising anger. But a crack of thunder that shakes the foundation of the Community Meeting Hall will stall out any true unrest, as described below.

A crack of thunder rips open the sky, shaking the wooden walls of the Community Meeting Hall and sending shivers along the spines of anyone with ears to hear it. As the sound echoes off the nearby mountains and back toward the gathered crowd, Kerrigan T'Kay enters from the back of the community center, the door slamming behind her as if shuttered by the wind. Shaking her fist in righteous fury at the entire town, and flanked by two snarling bears, she stalks down the center aisle of the community center, slowly advancing on the council and Carlsbad Mutterall as she speaks: "I have tried reason, and I have tried to beg. I offered you peace but it seems you have chosen to continue your war on this land. You've gathered here to celebrate your continued desecration. And you squabble as the earth screams. You just can't hear it. But you will."

If no one intercedes in a meaningful way, as Mutterall begins to make his sputtering, somewhat defeated case, Kerrigan will attempt to cast *wall of fire* at 5th level, bringing a massive prison of flame around herself, the council and Carlsbad Mutterall. Her goal is to self-immolate, taking the entire council and anyone who might try to stop her along the way. Kerrigan then will transform herself into a giant bear and attempt to make Mutterall suffer as much as she can.

The townspeople will panic and run from this building as quickly as they can. The door is barred (AC 10, HP 30). 2d6 Mutterall miners, along with Griff Readywell, will attempt to save Mutterall as best they can, but will not risk leaping through fire.

If Kerrigan's *wall of fire* spell is successful, the Community Meeting Hall will completely burst into flames after 2d4 rounds of combat, dealing an extra 3d6 fire damage to anyone still within its walls.

The party can choose to respond to this crisis however they see fit.

Part 5: The Aftermath

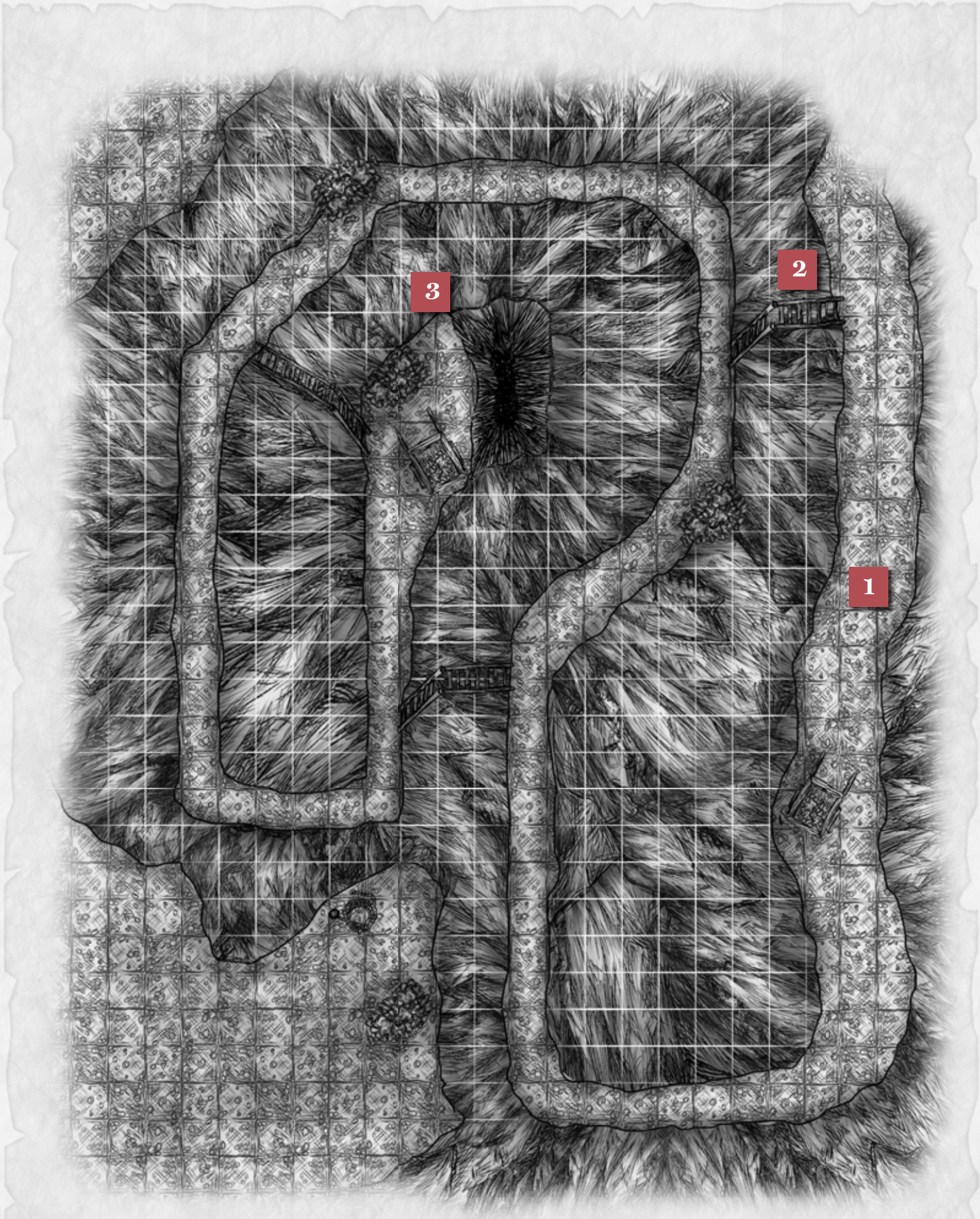
If Kerrigan T'Kay survives this altercation she will do what she can to atone—her actions were the result of a lapse in judgement fueled by anger. If the town will allow, she will offer to teach the surviving townsfolk how to live off the land in a more communal way, which may not provide the same profit-based economy as Mutterall Mining Works did, but would still put food on their tables each day. She can also be convinced to spend the rest of her days within the mine, urging the creatures there to spare the town as penance for what she's done.

If Griff Readywell survives he will not rest until he has killed Kerrigan T'Kay or died trying.

If Carlsbad Mutterall survives he will agree to work harder to ensure the mine is less dangerous to both the people who work here and the creatures who dwell among these lands—but he requires Kerrigan's death in return.

Any remaining members of the council of elders will argue that keeping Kerrigan alive is vital to the town's survival as it is through her guidance that the forests here don't completely consume the town.

The gathered masses, surrounding the cinders of the community center, beg the party to help them decide what to do.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Too Deep Mine

The greed of those who dwell on the surface led to the continual plunder of the riches buried beneath. But when the seam they opened in the earth revealed more gore than ore, the workers panicked, leaving behind a hazard that could threaten the entire region. The mine's foreman, a hardened human named **Griff Readywell**, refuses to stop production here despite what he's seen—no matter the cost.

NPC Profile

Griff Readywell, human foreman

A battle-ready veteran who retired from mercenary work when offered a chance to manage a major mining operation, Griff Readywell is short on words, shorter on charity and gives no harbor to excuses or the weak-willed. He's as deadly with a pickax as he is with a whip, and debate rages among the surviving members of his crew about which would be a crueler fate: facing down what waits at the bottom of the mine or refusing to dig deeper and incurring the foreman's wrath.

Going Down

The levels of the mine form a spiraling ramp ***(1)*** that can be traversed a few steps at a time, though the fastest means of conveyance from one level to the next is by ladder ***(2)***. Each level features a 60-foot drop-off from one tier to the next, and the grade at which the pathway spirals down is incredibly steep (and therefore difficult terrain) for anyone walking upward. The edges of each tier are also loose earth, and any medium or larger creature approaching the side must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity check or tumble over the side to the next level as the ground gives way beneath them.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Trouble Below

The bowels of the earth erupt from within the crevasse ***(3)*** ruptured by the continual mining in this area, and hideous creatures aren't the only things being unleashed through the breach. Roll 1d6 to determine which hazard the players will encounter, then roll 1d6 at the start of each round of combat. An odd roll triggers the effect.

1d6	The effect is...
1	**Poison Gas.** An eruption of sulfurous poison gas is expelled into the area and remains suspended in a 30-foot radius for one round. Any player entering this cloud for the first time or ending their turn in its space must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 14), suffering 2d6 poison damage on a failed save and half as much on a success
2	**Magma.** An eruption of molten rock is expelled into the area, splashing fire upon anyone within a 30-foot radius. Any player within this space must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 14), suffering 2d6 fire damage on a failed save or half as much on a success.
3	**Acid Spray.** A gout of acidic liquid sprays out from the crevasse in a 30-foot radius. Any player within this space must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 14), suffering 2d6 acid damage on a failed save or half as much on a success.
4	**Lightning Blasts.** A burst of electricity crackles from within the crevasse in a 30-foot radius. Any creature within a 30-foot radius of the blast must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 14), suffering 2d6 force damage on a failed save or half as much on a success.
5	**Magical Darkness.** A thick, impenetrable darkness consumes everything within a 30-foot radius of the crevasse. A creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and non-magical light can't illuminate it. This darkness fades after two rounds of combat.
6	**A Terrifying Scream.** An ear-splitting, bravery-withering battle cry pierces through all other sounds in the mine. Any creature within 30 ft. of the crevasse must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 14) or suffer 2d6 psychic damage on a failed save and is considered frightened of the crevasse for the round. On a success, the creature takes half the damage and is not frightened.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what dangers await the party as they venture closer to the depths of the Too Deep Mine.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...1d4 angry **salamanders** emerging from within the dig site.
2	...a **stone giant** rising from the gap in the earth.
3	...2d4 **phase spiders** crawling from the mine's crevasse.
4	...2d4 **hook horrors** shuffling around the dig side.
5	...a **chimera** chomping on the bones of its prey.
6	...1d4 **ropers** previously disguised as stalagmites, revealing themselves in a surprise attack.

Important NPCs

Useful information about the key characters in this adventure. All NPCs listed speak Common. They can speak any other languages at GM discretion.

Kerrigan T'Kay

Half-elven Druid of the Foothills
A striking, wild-haired woman of the woods, Kerrigan T'Kay is a druid whose family has watched over this region with interest for centuries. She believes all life has value and meaning, and that the strong must protect the weak from the ruthless and wasteful. She speaks for the natural world around this industrial site and though her voice is breezy, her fury can be more powerful than the wind.

Armor Class 16 (hide armor, shield)
Hit Points 81
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	11 (0)

Skills Medicine +9, Nature +5, Perception +9
Senses Passive Perception 19

Spellcasting Kerrigan T'Kay is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *mending*, *poison spray*, *produce flame*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *entangle*, *faerie fire*, *speak with animals*
2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger*, *beast sense*, *hold person*
3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals*, *meld into stone*, *conjure elements*
4th level (3 slots): *dominate beast*, *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*
5th level (1 slot): *commune with nature*, *mass cure wounds*

Actions
Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.
Change Shape (2/Day). Kerrigan magically *polymorphs* into a beast or elemental with a challenge rating of 6 or less, and can remain in this form for up to 9 hours. She can choose whether her equipment falls to the ground, melds with her new form, or is worn by the new form. Kerrigan reverts to her true form if she dies or falls unconscious. She can revert to her true form using a bonus action on her turn.
While in a new form, Kerrigan retains her game statistics and ability to speak, but her AC, movement modes, Strength, and Dexterity are replaced by those of the new form and she gains any special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions and lair actions) that the new form has but that she lacks. She can cast her spells with verbal or somatic components in her new form. The new form's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunity to nonmagical attacks.

Griff Readywell

Medium human, lawful evil
Griff works at the behest of Carlsbad Mutterall and cares very little for the impact his work may be having on the world around him. He is a hard man with bad eyes and a long whip. He has no tolerance for weakness.

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 130
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +5
Senses Passive Perception 15

Indomitable (2/Day). Griff rerolls a failed saving throw.
Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, Griff can regain 20 hit points.

Actions
Multiattack. Griff makes three attacks with his greatsword or his whip.
Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if Griff has more than half of his total hit points remaining.
Griff's Whip. Melee Weapon Attack: + 9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage. On a hit, as a bonus action, Griff can use this whip to attempt to grapple the target and pull them 5 ft. closer.

Mutterall Miners

Medium humanoid (any race), Any alignment
These hearty, grime-covered go-getters are all proud of the back-breaking work they do to mine ore for Carlsbad Mutterall. They are underpaid based on the danger and rigor of their work, but still make a better living than most in town, and they will fight for their jobs out of self-preservation and, at times, fear of Griff Readywell.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 11
Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses Passive Perception 10

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

Carslbad Mutterall

Medium human, lawful neutral

A would-be titan of industry, Carlsbad Mutterall founded Mutterall Mining Works by acquiring several in-progress mining operations, slashing their labor force, extending work hours and canning anyone who dared speak against him. His focus is expansion at any cost, and that drive takes precedence over other concerns, including employee safety, the environment, long-term success or short-term discomfort. His clothes are always clean, as he pays others to do the dirty work.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 10
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

Town Elders

Percy Weaver

Small halfling, lawful neutral

A halfling with a wide grin and penchant for glad-handing, Percy is quick to defend any action by Mutterall Mining Works as being "good for business" which is "good for the town" which is "good for the gods."

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 10
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

Agatha Aftershaft

Medium human, lawful good

As concerned with the town's longevity as Percy, while still taking into account that a town repeatedly menaced by danger isn't a town that can last too long, Agatha is married to a mine worker and knows firsthand the cruelty and carelessness of Mutterall Mining Works.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 8
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

Tug Tannerhide

Medium human, chaotic good

A worker of the field as opposed to the mountain, Tug is respected in town and has an ear for the common folks' concerns. He's just not particularly good at public speaking.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 12
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

One Last Job

The party is tasked with helping a very old former criminal remember where he's hidden the key to his vault. While pressing his crew for information that might help them find the key, the party uncovers grudges old and new.

An Adventure Suitable For Levels 4-8

A wealthy benefactor enlists the party's help to get the Octagon Gang, a group of retired criminals, to reveal any information they might have about the lost key to the Octagon Gang's fortune. As the party works to find the different members, they become privy to old grudges and sleights within the group that might run too deep to be forgiven. As the scattered clues about the vault key's whereabouts begin to come together, the party learns the secret to unlocking the vault might require a little ritualistic murder—and they're not the only ones trying to open it.

Setting Up

The party has caught the eye of a wealthy benefactor who is trying to unlock a large vault and has the coin to make helping him worth their time. Because this adventure features a large cast of characters, it might help to make notes about each of them for yourself to help your party follow the action as it unfolds. The adventure takes place across a variety of locations in an urban setting, each of which can be determined ahead of time by rolling on the Random Locations Generator (pg. 3). You'll need one temple, one lodging, one "prison" and two bars. Other locations in this adventure are the Variant Storage Space (pg. 117), the Safehouse (pg. 91) and Wretchtown (pg. 194).

If your party has been adventuring together for some time, Bartholomew Angler will reach out using one of his numerous contacts in the area's underworld and ask them to meet him face-to-face at a warehouse (Variant Warehouse) on the outskirts of town. Choose one party member at GM discretion to serve as the narrative hook for this story (example: their criminal contact informs them a wealthy benefactor would like to speak with them about a lucrative opportunity). If this is your party's first session, explain that each player has been contacted by Bartholomew Angler about a job—and all they know about the job is they're to meet at a warehouse on the edge of town and that they won't be working alone, and use the Party Makeup Maker (pg. 250) to build dynamics between them. While they wait, have each member of the party introduce themselves and their skill sets as they will soon learn the reason why each of them have been recruited here.

At GM discretion, you can also incorporate a personal connection to members of the gang for each member of your party. For example, the drunken mage Alton Otson could have worked at a school where he taught your party's Wizard. Or Griffin, the Octagon Gang's heavy hitter, could have defeated the Fighter in your party in hand-to-hand combat when the Fighter was still getting his bearings in the world. The choice is yours.

The Octagon Gang: Backstory for GM Reference

Ash Angler was the leader of the Octagon Gang. After spending much of his life working with his crew to pull off heists and thumb their noses at authority, he'd built up a significant amount of wealth and was ready to retire with his lover (Hattie) and child (Bartholomew). Other members of the gang (namely Eloise and Alton, though also Griffin and Marco to an extent) wanted to continue a life of crime. Ash said no. Alton attempted to blackmail Ash, so Ash pursued a means of locking away all of the group's wealth in a way that would ensure no one would get access if he or his lover were harmed. He found a perfect solution in a dark ritual known as the Two-Hearted Vault. Using a ritual ceremony, he stabbed his lover in the heart, opening a small portal into a demiplane where he stashed the key to the Octagon Gang's impenetrable vault.

This ritual, discovered through communion with a demon, turned out to be more of a curse. It left Ash stupefied and practically incoherent. When members of Ash's gang came to him demanding access to the money, all they received were the ramblings of a crazed old man. Without Ash's leadership the group splintered and infighting and distrust caused even more problems.

Ash thought the ritual was something he could replicate over and over, and use to access his vault any time he needed. He was wrong. He is now a muttering fool. He couldn't explain to Hattie why he'd stabbed her in the chest, or how he'd stored the key. As one might expect, she ran off scared and he was left without any way of explaining himself, what he'd done or why. The key and his love were both lost to him in a moment of horrific hubris. Hattie went into hiding, leaving behind a child (Bartholomew), living on the street in order to keep herself safe. Alton tracked her down and tried to get her to admit what she knew about the vault key by burning her face. She revealed nothing, and has harbored resentment for him ever since.

Part 1: The Meeting

A warehouse with a few crates, boxes and barrels is the setting for this arranged meeting. The party is seated in a small ring of chairs. Roughly 10 minutes after they were meant to meet their benefactor, there's a knock echoing from within one of the crates. The knock gets a little more persistent, and upon investigation it becomes clear there is a person banging on its interior. "There ought to be a crowbar near the crates. Crack us out of here, would you?"

The voice emanating from within the crate is that of **Bartholomew Angler**. There is a second voice within the crate, but it is very muffled, soft and hard to hear. If pressed, Bartholomew will explain he shipped this crate to this address and that within it is a teleportation circle. He did so to avoid detection and the tracking of his whereabouts. "You can never be too careful, you know."

> When you open the crate, standing before you is a sharply-dressed human man with an air of nobility but perhaps not the titles to match. Standing behind him as though having just woken up from an afternoon nap that stretched well into the evening and then on to the next day is a hunched over old man, who smiles politely but clearly has no idea what's going on.

This is Bartholomew Angler and his father **Ash Angler**. Bartholomew will go on to explain why he's brought everyone here.

> "My name is Bartholomew Angler. I hope you'll excuse the cloak and dagger dealings, but, well—I haven't stayed alive this long by being careless. And neither have you. Each of you, in your own way, approach what you do with a sense of...professionalism. And that's all that's needed here. Your courtesy. This man, Ash Angler, is my father. He is very old. And very senile. And very prone to wandering. He loves hard candies, is one of the greatest thieves of his generation and the founder of the Octagon Gang."

If appropriate, Bartholomew will then explain how the party is connected to the Octagon Gang, either through one member's background or each of their respective backgrounds, at GM discretion.

> As Bartholomew Angler continues to speak, his father picks a little lint of his sweater and puts it in his mouth. "The Octagon Gang was the most feared—and beloved—group of criminals this realm has ever known. They made their mark by pulling off outlandish, high stakes heists that were so audacious even their marks had to applaud. They retired from crime 30 years ago. No one knows who they are or what they've been up to since they went underground. Except for me. I've spent most of my adult life trying to find them, because I believe each of them holds a small piece to an enormous fortune. My father's fortune. I will pay you 500gp for each member of the Octagon Gang you can convince to share what they know about where my father hid the key to the Octagon vault. Could be the easiest 3,500gp you've ever made."

If pressed on why Ash Angler can't remember where he left the key, Bartholomew sighs, "He's cursed. We think. It could just be old age. Or both. But—he can barely remember his own name, much less where he secreted away the key to the equivalent of a small nation's GDP." If it appears people are talking about him, Ash will smile wide, then attempt to wander off.

If the party insists on knowing more details about the Octagon Gang, Ash, Bartholomew himself or all three, Bartholomew can share the following:

- There are 8 members of the Octagon Gang, including Ash.
- He has a list of their names and last known locations.
- He wants you to take his father with you, in case it helps jog their memories—and Ash's.

• He doesn't think it wise to tell certain members of the gang you've been meeting with other members. Bad blood, etc. Bartholomew is light on details here and if pressed can only share, "I only know what I've heard, and what I've heard is some of them hate each other. Large sums of money going missing tends to do that to people."
• He barely knows his father because he was very young when Ash lost his mind. His mother disappeared shortly after, but he suspects she is currently living as a vagrant.

Bartholomew leans in to speak, while holding his father's shirt collar. "The members of the Octagon Gang are all currently living within the city limits. I'd like you to convince each of them to tell you what they remember about Ash Angler and where he might have hidden the key to the vault. Please don't let any of them kill my father, or let him walk off a cliff or something. He's prone to wandering, so do keep an eye out. As I said, I'll pay you 500gp for each person you contact and bring information from, provided it leads to the key to the Octagon Vault. Time is of the essence, however: I need this information by tomorrow at sundown. Here's the list, as well as their last known whereabouts. Good luck."

After players have a moment to review this list (at right), Bartholomew Angler will offer specific guidance on where these individuals might be found, stating: "That's the list. Are there any questions? I only have a few minutes." He will also add, "The less people who know, the less can go wrong. And I'd very much like for this all to go right. There is a lot of money on the line, and if word gets out that we've found the key to the Octagon Gang's fortune we'll...well, it's a lot of money. And money makes villains of even the best of us."

If the party refuses to help without more information he will agree to double his original fee. If they are still hesitant, he will walk back into his crate with his father and begin to activate the teleportation circle once more, disappointed that a legacy of this magnitude will be lost to the world.

OCTOGENARIAN

THE ~~OCTAGON~~ GANG

GRIFFIN, HALF-ORC BRAWLER/ENFORCER

NOTES *He's been seen pit fighting for gold behind a local temple and loves winner-take-all bouts. Primarily because he nearly always wins.*
OBJECTIVE *Consider facing him one-on-one. If he loses, he agrees to tell you what he knows.*

MARCO PARAGOTO, HALF-ELVEN ROGUE

NOTES *Believe it or not, this steely, one-eyed scoundrel has taken a vow of silence at a local temple—probably to avoid having to testify someday.*
OBJECTIVE *He's not really the devoted type. And his temple's elders would certainly be shocked to learn about his past. Unless they approve of larceny, adultery, battery, forgery, perjury, bigamy...he's done most of the 'y' crimes.*

JEMMA "LOCKPICK" WHISK, GNOMISH SORCERESS

NOTES *She's one of the best safe-crackers in the realm. But for some reason she's having a tough time breaking out of captivity. Sister to Eloise Whisk.*
OBJECTIVE *Find a way to get in and talk to her face-to-face.*

ALTON OTSON AND ELOISE WHISK, HUMAN WIZARD AND GNOMISH CON ARTIST

NOTES *These two lovebirds finally got hitched. They also have a few grandkids. They all live in a small house outside of town.*
OBJECTIVE *They love those children and would do anything for them. Not suggesting threatening the grandkids, but that might work. Simply asking might work too. They need money. Might be glad to hear Jemma is out of trouble if you're able to pull that off.*

RODRICK "THE TOOT" MERRIMAN, DRAGONBORN BARD

NOTES *A well-regarded musician as well as a complete lout, he's likely to be found at one of any number of bars in town tripping over his own tail.*
OBJECTIVE *Buy him a drink. or offer to pay his tab.*

HATTIE WALTERS, HUMAN PICKPOCKET

NOTES *Difficult to track down—is effectively homeless. You'll likely find her in Wretchtown.*
OBJECTIVE *Surely any reasonable person living in Wretchtown can be plied with the promise of enormous wealth, though I suspect living there has done a number on her ability to reason. Please don't hurt her, I have reason to believe she's my mother.*

Part 2: The Octagon Gang

GM Note

Bartholomew will share the location of each gang member. The specific locations for each gang member are those determined by rolling on the tables mentioned on pg. 78, as outlined below, or at GM discretion:

MARCO PARAGOTO AND GRIFFIN
Griffin can be found fighting behind the same temple at which Marco has taken a vow of silence. To determine which temple, roll on the Random Temples table (pg. 245).

JEMMA "LOCKPICK" WHISK
Jemma is being held against her will in a jail, hideout or house. Roll on the Homes, Hideouts, Labs & Lairs table (pg. 3).

ALTON OTSON AND ELOISE WHISK
Alton and Eloise live together, with their three grandchildren Ally, Rex and Dagger, at their home. To find out which home, roll on the Random Residences table (pg. 245).

RODRICK "THE TOOT" MERRIMAN
Rodrick can be found at one of two bars. Roll twice on the Random Taverns table (pg. 245), rerolling on a repeated number. Rodrick can be found at whichever bar the party goes to second.

HATTIE WALTERS
Hattie can be found within the walls of Wretchtown (pg. 194), or along any alleyway at GM discretion.

After answering 2-3 questions about each individual, or at GM discretion, Bartholomew will announce he has vital business elsewhere, and wishes the party luck.

> "Remember—tomorrow night. At sundown. This warehouse. I'll see you then. And don't let my father die, please. Or at least, don't let him get killed. Would you mind closing this crate up behind me?" With that, he will step back inside the crate from which he appeared and use its teleportation circle to disappear.

Part 3: Gathering Intel

The party now has roughly 24 hours to find and question as many members of the Octagon Gang as possible.

GM Note

This phase of your adventure can take as much or as little time as you like, depending on how much pushback each member of the gang gives to providing information, as well as which (if any) Variant Encounters for the locations they're associated with you choose to trigger. Because the approach to recruiting a character is so dependent upon party construction, strategy, the fortunes of fate and more, each situation outlined below is meant to showcase the way the party will find each member of the gang, as well as the resistance and obstacles your party might encounter as they attempt to question each member. These presentations are at GM discretion.

Marco Paragoto and Griffin

As the party arrives at the temple where **Griffin** and **Marco** were last seen, the sound of a brawl can be heard.

> As you approach the back of the temple, you hear the sound of flesh meeting stone as well as a bit of quiet cheering as a small group cheers on a brawl in the alley. A squat, muscle-bound creature—perhaps the most battered half-orc any of you have ever seen—is smashing the face of a formerly beautiful half-elf. "Do ye yield? Do ye yield? DO. YE. YIELD!?" the half-orc grunts, before slamming the skull of his opponent into the cobblestone street with a dull thud. The body lies motionless, completely blacked out. "Guess he yields," says the half-orc. The gathered crowd begins to exchange taken bets and cheers, "Griffin! Griffin the great!" The only person who appears silent is an elderly but handsome half-elven man in temple robes, his one grey eye watching with a sly smile on his face.

Griffin, still sweating from the fight, will take on any creature that chooses to fight him in this alleyway. Due to the earlier bout, he has half his normal HP. He won't fight for less than 50gp in the pot.

- If the party is successful in convincing Griffin to share what he knows, he claims he remembers Ash told him "'I'm gonna hide it somewhere darker than my soul.' So like... underground maybe. We spent a few years in the caves on the outskirts of town but never were able to find anything. And we'd have found it."

- Whether or not the party is successful in convincing Griffin to share what he knows, he will take a moment to teach the strongest-looking among them one of his signature brawling moves—at GM Discretion. He always liked Ash, and will do this as a courtesy for colleagues of his former mentor.

Griffin's Arm Drag

Offers advantage and proficiency on Strength (Athletics) checks when grappling. If the character Griffin shares this move with is already proficient, their proficiency bonus for Strength (Athletics) checks is doubled when attempting to grapple.

Marco Paragoto, who has a habit of observing Griffin's bouts from a spot along the wall of the temple, will listen to whatever the party might have to say about his presence here. He will listen, eye wide, should they mention the Octagon Gang or his past history in any way, making it clear he's willing to cooperate if the party is successful in a DC 15 Charisma check.

- If the party is successful in convincing Marco to share what he knows about the key's location, he will write on a slip of parchment that he recalls Ash muttering the phrase "Inside her cage," when he was asked about the whereabouts of the vault key. If Ash hears this phrase said aloud, he will echo this statement, in a befuddled, sing-song way.
- If the party is unsuccessful in convincing Marco to share what he knows, Marco will write on a note that they should watch their backs, because Ash is cursed.

Jemma "Lockpick" Whisk

Jemma is being held against her will. The goal is to get to her. Options include (but should not be limited to): bribing and/or threatening the captors to set her free; offering to pay her bail/ransom, set at GM discretion; sneaking in then sneaking out; getting arrested/captured in order to help her escape; blowing up the prison and everyone inside, save Jemma.

- If the party finds a way to speak with Jemma directly she will tell them she'll happily share all she knows if they can find a way to get her out of her current situation.
- If the party is able to rescue Jemma she will thank them profusely, offer to join them on their hunt for clues and tell them one night before the whole gang broke apart, she remembers Ash, "Doing a lot of research on portal magic and dark rites that could bind an object to another person. He said it was something for the next heist, but, if that were the case, why was he being so secretive about it—and if he were planning another heist, why would he announce his retirement?"
- If the party is unwilling or unable to rescue Jemma she won't tell them anything of use, but will reveal Ash is the reason she's locked up—"He's cursed. Everything he touches is ruined. Just look at the Octagon Gang."

Alton Otson and Eloise Whisk

Alton and Eloise reside in the lodging chosen at the start of this adventure, but when the party arrives, they'll only find Eloise and her grandkids.

> As you approach the home of Alton Otson and Eloise Whisk, you can hear the laughter of small children playing just outside its front door. The house is somewhat rundown, but sturdy. A small, elderly gnomish woman is hunched over, shuffling slowly and sweeping outside, her eyes trained on the kids, then on Ash, whom she does not appear happy to see.

- Eloise will share what she knows regardless of the party's ability to convince her, stating Ash told her, "He planned to keep the vault key, 'Close to the chest.' Or maybe he said 'vest.' I can't really remember."
- If the party asks about the whereabouts of Alton Otson, her husband, she will reply she hasn't seen him in weeks. This statement is true. The two had a fight over money.
- If the party asks about her sister, Eloise will share only what she knows—her sister isn't the woman she used to be, and that makes her sad.
- She will ask the party to send Alton home if they see him.
- Eloise will offer a member of the party a +1 AC *amulet of protection* to "keep you safe." If asked why she will reply: "If you're traveling with that cursed bag of bones Ash Angler, you need it more than I."

GM Note

Eloise's amulet also carries a secondary enchantment for unlimited scrying, like a *hag's eye*, that is hidden from the *identify* spell through arcane means—a clever application of *nystul's magical aura*.

Rodrick "The Toot" Merriman

Rodrick is rumored to have been drinking at one of the bars in town. When the party arrives looking for him the

bartender will explain an "old friend of his" dropped by and the two decided to go to a different bar because "I decided to stop serving them. I prefer when customers pay." If the party asks for a description of this "old friend," they'll say he went by "Alton or Austin or Otson...Otsomebody."

Upon arriving at the second bar, they will find a drunk dragonborn arguing with an even drunker old man.

> As you approach the bar, a stool flies through one of its windows with a crash, quickly followed by an elderly human man who is also defenestrated into the alleyway alongside the bar. He tries to stand but it appears his leg is badly injured, with blood pooling in a visible bite pattern along his thigh. He musters up enough energy to create an arcane spark at his fingertips, sending a firebolt back through the window—provoking a few howls from within.

This is Alton Otson. If approached by the party he will tell them he's been attacked by a foul beast inside the bar. This beast is merely a drunk **Rodrick "The Toot" Merriman**.

The two former colleagues have gotten into a violent bar fight. Neither will reveal over what, and will cover for their refusal by slurring their words unintelligibly or saying they don't remember—a not unbelievable admission given how intoxicated both appear to be.

The Toot refuses to help anyone who appears to be aiding Alton. Alton refuses to share information with anyone friendly to Toot. If the party cannot convince them both to calm down, they will have to decide which of these men they want information from.

Charisma checks related to changing their minds are set at DC 17.

- If the party is able to convince Alton to share what he knows he will tell them Ash swore to him: "'You won't see a copper 'til I die.' And I might kill him right now just to see if something magical happens..."
- If the party is unable to convince Alton to tell them anything he will make glaring eyes at Ash and tell them, "You'd be better off throwing him in a river."

If the party is able to convince The Toot to share what he knows, he says he would remember more if he were sober—and would love them to help get the love of his life (Jemma) out of the clink if they haven't already. If the party is able to sober him up and rescue Jemma, at GM discretion, he will tell the group what he thinks happened to the Octagon Gang:

> "Ash was an incredible planner—always thought of everything, planned every job to the last detail. Always reading books in the Safehouse, stacks of them. But we nearly got nabbed on our last job—in large part because of that fellow you just encountered—so Ash said 'that's it, we're through.' Well I was fine with that. We'd been at it for 30 years. Why not enjoy the spoils? Jemma agreed. But Alton wanted more. Needed more. Never good with money to be honest, but a real wizard with spells. He tried to blackmail Ash for a larger share, or to do another job. Ash told him he'd never see a cent if he went public or threatened any of us—Ash was always four or five steps ahead. So we assumed he had a plan. Then we found him a day after he said he was going to hide all our loot shivering and wandering around like an idiot. Not much has changed, I suppose. Hattie was nowhere to be found. I took care of their boy, Bartholomew, as best I could. I told him what I knew, gave him some of his father's things—a journal, his rapier, a little dagger he kept on him. Jemma and I raised him up as best we could but once he was old enough to call his own shots he started following in his father's footsteps. He was 10. He's quite the mastermind, actually. And shares his father's panache. Or so we hear. We haven't seen him in ages. Still miss the little bugger."

- If the party has helped get Jemma out of captivity, Rodrick will agree to help the party in any capacity they require and will join them on other aspects of this quest if they desire. He will also help the party get Jemma out of captivity if they ask and haven't already broken her out. If he's drunk, he'll still help—he'll just do so a bit clumsily.
- If the party is unable to convince Rodrick to help, he will tell them Alton is not to be trusted.

Hattie Walters

If the party pursues **Hattie** first, she can be found in the center of Wretchtown. If they pursue her later, to streamline the action at GM discretion, Hattie has been following the party since they left the bar where Alton and Rodrick were found, or immediately after their time in the alleyway with Griffin and Marco. She can be noticed with a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check, and will try to pick their pockets if she is unnoticed for a significant period of time. She will recognize Ash and have a bit of a breakdown.

If the party goes to Wretchtown to look for her, they'll have to ask around the local populace, who will offer intel for coin or food. It should take interacting with

2-3 denizens of Wretchtown to find her, sitting alone knitting in a small corner of one of the area's hovels.

> The first thing you notice about this woman is she's missing a large portion of her face, a flap of scarred and melted flesh peeking out from beneath a nest of long, shock white hair. Scars on her neck, arms and legs as well as a thick, jagged wound above her breast speak to the hardscrabble life of a woman who's lived in the darker corners of the civilized world for many, many years. The second thing you notice is she's holding a knitting needle like a dagger—and has it pointed at you, though her eyes look down. As she opens her mouth, a rattled voice ekes out: "What do you want with an ugly old woman?"

Whether encountering them at Wretchtown or finding them on an alleyway as a pickpocket, Hattie will listen to the party's pitch, but will tell them she fears she's too old and broken down to be of much use. She absolutely has no love for the Octagon Gang. She has no info to share. If a member of the party offers to heal her face, clean her up or both, she will reveal some of what she knows:

- Ash was her lover, the one she trusted more than anyone. One night, "he told me he loved me. Then he stabbed me in the heart. So I ran. And I kept running. For years. Alton tried to get answers out of me once...I told him everything I knew. Which is nothing. He didn't like that. So he kept pressing. You know he can make flames with his fingertips?"
- If the party is kind to Hattie she will offer to join them and come to their aid. If they refuse her help she will ask for enough money to stay off the streets for an evening or two.

Part 4: The Pitch

By sunset the day after initially meeting with Bartholomew Angler, the party should be driven to meet him back at the warehouse to share their collected information.

> One of the crates in the warehouse opens, revealing a life-sized stone statue of a Bartholomew Angler. "Please be so kind as to join me on the roof, would you?" says the statue, its lips turning back to stone, its outstretched fingers leading your eyes to a ladder built into the wall.

A much smaller statue resembling Ash is on the roof, pointing to a hidden trap door. This door leads down a narrow tube, which some members of the Octagon Gang, if they are traveling with the group, will have difficulty navigating, at GM discretion.

At the base of the ladder is a small door that, once opened, leads to the Safehouse (pg. 91).

> Within the first room of the Safehouse is another small statue of Bartholomew pointing to a trapdoor in the floor, which leads to a hidden inner conference room with a central table and several chairs. Seated at the head of this table is Bartholomew Angler. "Welcome to the Octagon Gang's former Safehouse. Kind of nice, really. I used to come here when I was little. Still use it as a place to plan adventures of my own. But...I digress. Beneath this table is the Octagon vault. It's impenetrable. My father was a master lockpick and knows all the tricks—so it's well protected from any sort of chicanery. Magical wards and reinforced lead prevent access through spells and portal travel. It is—the bane of my existence. We need the key. And I hope by now you've learned where it is."

Bartholomew will then ask the party to reveal what they've found.

At GM discretion:

- If Bartholomew is led to believe Ash has hidden the key within his own heart, he will tell them the only way to get the treasure is to "unlock his heart" by stabbing Ash in the chest with the ritual dagger he is currently wielding (see flavor text at right).
- If Bartholomew is led to believe Ash hid the key within Hattie's heart, he will tell them the only way to get the money they're owed is to bring Hattie to him to perform the ritual and unlock her heart with the ritual dagger he is now holding (see flavor text at right).
- If the party suggests some other interpretation of the clues they've been given, (i.e. "it's being guarded by a female dragon"; "it's buried underground somewhere"; "it's got to be in another dimension"; etc.) he will explain none of those ideas sound like something his father would do, and will quietly work with them through the clues they have gathered. As they speak them all out loud, Ash, in his doddering way, will click in to the conversation and speak the following clues in a row:

"Ritual...darker than my soul...close to my heart... inside her cage...won't see a copper 'til I die."

If the party is still unable to put together that the key is inside either Ash or Hattie's hearts, Bartholomew will make this suggestion himself and see if the party bites, by presenting the curved ritual blade he's been carrying with him since his father went mad.

Bartholomew reveals a dark, blue-black dagger with a multi-curved, jagged-looking blade. "This dagger... might be the key. It was among my father's possessions when they found him wandering around. I confess I tried it in the vault more than once thinking it might... unlock something. But now I realize perhaps the only way to open the vault is...to open [him/her/them] up with it. I don't know if I've got the stomach for that."

Part 5: Plans Interrupted

As the party shares the information they know about the key to the vault, a group of mercenaries and bandits arrive at the warehouse—led by Alton and Eloise, who are here to collect on a long-standing debt. Griffin and Marco are right along with them, also hoping to receive their share of the loot. At GM discretion, these individuals—having in theory followed all the action via Eloise's *amulet of scrying*—have been planning to strike the moment the truth about where the vault key is hidden is revealed.

If Hattie is not currently with the party she will reluctantly be in the custody of the group led by Alton and Eloise.

They will hold inside the warehouse until the key is revealed, or—if it appears the group is deliberating for a while—they will attempt to sneak into the Safehouse, possibly triggering its security features.

You hear the drunken shouting of Alton Otson echoing off the warehouse walls. "We know you're in there—and we know you've got the vault key. Or at least have an idea of how to get it. Come out now and no one has to die—we just want our share."

At this point the party has several choices, and several objectives:

- Though he is loathe to do it, Bartholomew has the ritual dagger and could use it to kill his mother, father or both (killing both is the only way to open the portal and release the vault key). Whether he attempts this is entirely at GM discretion.

- The group of hired mercs includes 1d4 **thugs**, 2d4 **bandits**, 1 **bandit captain**, Eloise, Griffin, Marco and Alton. They will not yield until the party agrees to share 75 percent of the vault's contents with them. They will negotiate down to half, but are just as likely to kill the party if they can in order to take the whole pie if the situation to do so presents itself. If the party refuses to hand over the key to the vault or to share the spoils, this group is prepared to kill them.

- If The Toot and/or Jemma are present they will fight alongside the party. If the party is successful in opening the vault and The Toot and/or Jemma are still alive, they will politely ask for an equal share in the vault's contents after the fighting is through and/or the situation is resolved.

- If Ash is killed, the ritual dagger will begin to glow, as will the scar on Hattie's chest. If Hattie is then stabbed in the chest with the glowing dagger, a large platinum key with eight notches and an octagon-shaped end will appear in the hand of the person who was wielding the dagger. This is the key to the Octagon vault.

- If Hattie is killed, the scar on her chest will glow dark blue and will be matched by a scar on Ash's chest. The ritual dagger will also begin to glow. If Ash is then stabbed in the chest with the glowing dagger, a large platinum key with eight notches and an octagon-shaped end will appear in the hand of the person who was wielding the dagger. This is the key to the Octagon vault.

- Hattie will offer her body up to be stabbed, but only in exchange for half the vault's contents. She demands to be resurrected in the event of her death and says if the party can't make this happen she will "Haunt them all forever."

- Within the Octagon vault is a vast treasure amassed over 30 years of criminal enterprise, resembling a dragon's hoard. Roll on a treasure table commensurate with the level at which you've run this adventure.

The Ritual of the Two-Hearted Vault

The ritual that Bartholomew read about binds a couple through mutual desire to keep something safe and shared between them. It hides away an item in one of the pair's chest that can only be accessed by the other party—ensuring one individual cannot steal from the other. Once placed inside the demi-plane of the Two-Hearted Vault, an item can only be accessed if both parties are alive and willing to share it. If one of the two bound bodies is dead, the vault can only be opened by stabbing the remaining party in the heart with the ritual dagger, revealing the stored item once they are completely drained of life.

CURSED This ritual is cursed. An item locked away using this ritual will be kept locked away until both parties are dead—thus ensuring neither can steal from the other. Secondly, if an individual undertakes this ritual without the consent of the secondary party, that individual will lose the capacity to recall anything useful about the ritual or its efficacy—or even the face of the partner involved in it.

Important NPCs

Useful information about the key characters in this adventure. All NPCs listed speak Common. They can speak any other languages at GM discretion.

Bartholomew Angler

Medium human, neutral

A suave mastermind with a flair for the dramatic, Bartholomew Angler seeks the party's assistance in helping break in to the Octagon Gang's storied vault. As swift with his rapier as he is with a cutting phrase, Angler takes after his father in a number of ways: He's cunning, cutthroat and as charming as they come.

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 70
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (-1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Persuasion +6
Senses Passive Perception 10

Cunning action. On each of his turns, Bartholomew can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.

Actions

Multiattack. Bartholomew makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with his rapier.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Ash Angler

Medium human, chaotic neutral

A once formidable thief who is now cursed by a ritual of his own making and in his twilight years, Ash Angler enjoys puttering about and wandering off. He carries a small sack of candies that he likes to unwrap and suck on—a habit that seems to keep him occupied, if audible, at all times.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 12
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7
Skills Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses Passive Perception 8

CURSED
Ash Angler has been cursed to lose his memory and mental capacity by the Ritual of the Two-Hearted Vault. This curse can only be removed by a *wish* spell.

Marco Paragoto

Medium half-elf, neutral evil

This silent, one-eyed acolyte is also one of the sharpest crackshots in the business. A skilled thief and ranged assassin, Marco has committed himself to the cloth in the years following his time with the Octagon Gang, though he still enjoys watching Griffin beat people into a pulp in the back alley behind his temple. He will go along with whatever Griffin suggests, and has no qualms with killing if there's money to be made.

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 84
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +3
Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8
Senses Passive Perception 13

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Marco can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.
Evasion. If Marco is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Marco deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he 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 and isn't incapacitated he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions
Multiattack. Marco makes three attacks with his shortsword or two attacks with his crossbow.
Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.
Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 100/400ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Reactions
Uncanny Dodge. Marco halves the damage he takes from an attack that hits. He must be able to see the attacker.

Griffin

Medium half-orc, chaotic evil

This pug-faced, nearly toothless and scar-covered heavy-hitter still packs a wallop despite his old age. He is sturdy, strong as an ox and not shy about showing off his skills as a breaker of faces, fingers and feet. He is also not a half-orc, but is rather an oversized goblin masquerading as one.

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 103
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +3, Perception +6
Senses Passive Perception 16

Indomitable (2/Day). Griffin rerolls a failed saving throw.
Second Wind (Recharges after a short or long rest). As a bonus action, Griffin can regain 20 hit points.
Griffin's Arm Drag When attempting a grapple, Griffin makes Strength (Athletics) checks with advantage.

Actions

Multiattack. Griffin makes three attacks with his greatsword.

Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Jemma "Lockpick" Whisk

Small gnome, chaotic neutral

This wild-eyed, raven-haired gnome never met a lock she couldn't find a way around, whether through picking it or blowing the bloody doors off. Lately, however, her arcane power seems to have faded and she has little interest in revisiting the past, at least on the surface. Sister to Eloise.

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 78
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +4, Deception +7, Sleight of Hand +9, Religion +4
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Spellcasting. Jemma is a 8th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She regains expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. She knows the following warlock spells:
Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
1st-4th level (2 4th-level slots): *banishment*, *blight*, *burning hands*, *charm person*, *fly*, *mirror image*

Actions

Eldritch Blast. Jemma fires 2 beams of Eldritch energy at her foes. Ranged spell attack (+7 to hit 1d10 + 5 force damage).

Alton Otson

Medium human, chaotic evil

This once-great wizard was a key part of the Octagon Gang's successes, but he fell into drinking and womanizing and has lost quite a bit of his skill since his time with the group. An utter lout, his spells have a decent chance of backfiring or fizzling out harmlessly. When he learns the party is after the key to the Octagon vault, his greed gets the better of him and he begins putting plans in motion to turn the situation to his favor. Married to Eloise.

Armor Class 11 (13 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 84
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +8, History +8
Senses Passive Perception 11

Spellcasting. Alton is an 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks).
Casting Mishap. Any time Alton casts a spell, roll 1d6. On a 1, the spell fizzles harmlessly, consuming the spell slot. On a 6, the spell backfires and targets Alton if he intended for it to target someone or something else, or targets another creature if he intended for it to target him—at GM discretion.
Sloppy Spells. Saving throws against Alton's spells are always made with advantage due to his somewhat sloppy spellcasting.

He has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *dancing lights*, *mending*, *message*, *ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *alarm*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *arcane lock*, *invisibility*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *stoneskin*
5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*, *wall of force*
6th level (1 slot): *flesh to stone*

Actions

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d6 - 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 - 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Eloise Whisk

Medium gnome, neutral

Wife of drunken wizard Alton Otson and sister to Jemma, Eloise is an elderly gnome who hides a significant secret: she still moves with the grace and speed of a trained martial artist. A true charlatan, she was often the Octagon Gang's "insider," and worked to subvert a chosen mark by allowing them to think she was on their side (a skill that hasn't faded with age). She won't give up the charade unless absolutely necessary, and typically presents herself as a humble old woman who can barely walk. She will fight to keep her husband alive, and is genuinely interested in getting her share of the money from the Octagon vault, but will not kill if she can avoid it.

Armor Class 17
Hit Points 83
Speed 40 ft. (20 ft. if acting elderly)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +7
Skills Acrobatics +8, Insight +7, Stealth +8
Senses Passive Perception 13

Unarmored Defense. While Eloise is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, her AC includes her Wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. Eloise makes three unarmed strikes or two broomstick attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, Eloise can choose one of the following additional effects:

- The target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding (Eloise's choice).
- The target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of Eloise's next turn.

Broomstick. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Deflect Missile. In response to being hit by a ranged weapon attack, Eloise deflects the missile. The damage she takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10 +3. If the damage is reduced to 0, Eloise catches the missile if it's small enough to hold in one hand and she has a hand free.

Rodrick "The Toot" Merriman

Medium blue dragonborn, chaotic good

This gregarious dragonborn can be found in his cups at numerous taverns around town, often tripping over his own tail. He hasn't performed much since his time with the Octagon Gang but the creative spark still surges within him and his debilitating wit is still as sharp as his shortsword. He plays a small horn, called Wanda, and is madly in love with Jemma Whisk despite the fact that the two haven't seen one another in quite some time.

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 54
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +3, Performance +5
Senses Passive Perception 13

Spellcasting. The Toot is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks).
He has the following bard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *friends*, *mage hand*, *vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *healing word*, *heroism*, *sleep*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *shatter*

Actions

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.
Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Hattie Walters

Medium human, chaotic good

Hattie was at one point in her life regarded as one of the most skilled—and sought after—close-quarters thieves in the entire continent. Her stunning beauty was often all the distraction she'd need to put her nimble fingers and deft touch to use, and she could famously nick nearly anything a creature chose to carry on their person. Though much of her legendary beauty has faded, her deft touch remains. Her face is now horrifically scarred and she carries herself with the shaken apprehension of someone who has seen and endured a lot of pain. She will assist the party if they gain her trust. Former lover to Ash, and mother to Bartholomew.

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 34
Speed 30 ft.

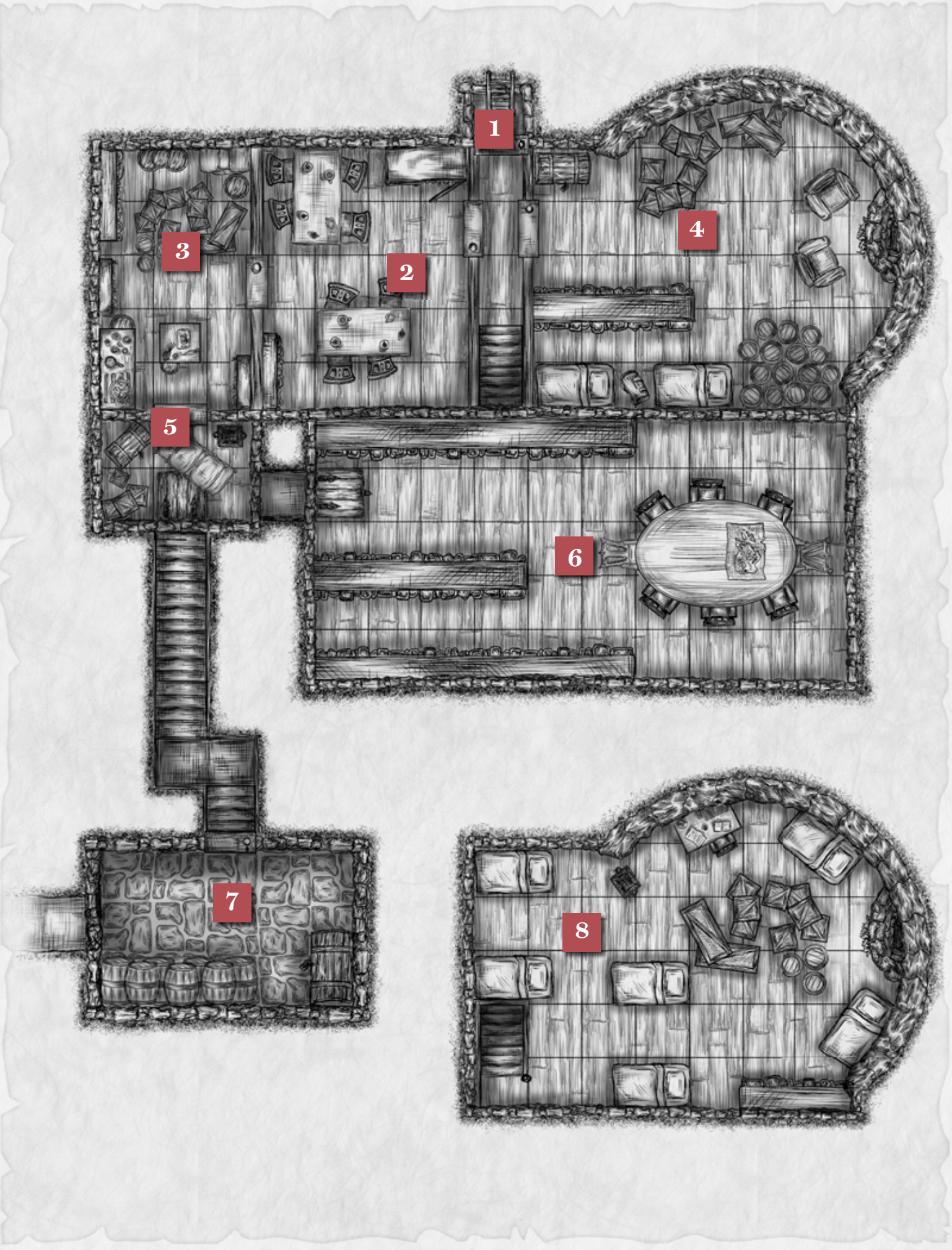
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +4
Skills Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +11
Senses Passive Perception 13

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Hattie can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.
Evasion. If Hattie is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Hattie deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when she 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 and isn't incapacitated and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions
Multiattack. Hattie makes two attacks with her dagger.
Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.
Dagger. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, 20/60ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d4 +5) piercing damage.

Reactions
Uncanny Dodge. Hattie halves the damage she takes from an attack that hits. She must be able to see the attacker.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The Safehouse

On the outside, this nondescript building has a warehouse-meets-factory feel, but its interior is quite the opposite. The elegant tapestries and master-level artwork adorning the walls, along with its finely crafted wood furnishings suggest a space curated by a well-funded designer who spared no expense. Its reinforced walls and *arcane locks* ensure any would-be infiltrators are going to have a difficult time, making this the perfect spot to plan a criminal enterprise or lay low after engaging in one.

Exterior and Security

The Safehouse appears as an out-of-use (but not derelict) warehouse space, with boarded up windows and bolted doors. The locks on the doors are all arcane in nature (DC 27). Through the warehouse and up a ladder to its second level allows access to the roof, where a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a hidden door masked to look like the rest of the rooftop. The only way to enter the "real" Safehouse is through its underground entrance ***(7)*** well beneath the surface or its rooftop tube entrance through the warehouse—the doors of which are both locked via arcane means (DC 30).

Entry Level

The entrance hall ***(1)*** of the Safehouse's first floor is an elegant departure from the narrow rooftop tube and features opulent paintings and a beautiful polished floor. The rest of the small home features a dining room ***(2)***, large kitchen ***(3)***, and sitting room that doubles as storage and overflow lodging ***(4)***, as well as numerous amenities designed to help one wile away the hours while under lockdown. The small storeroom ***(5)*** off from the kitchen has enough supplies to last a number of weeks and a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a small trapdoor with a DC 22 lock. The tunnel below splits off two ways, one to the hidden underground long-term planning room and library ***(6)***, and one down to the secondary storeroom and escape passage ***(7)*** that leads to the tunnels beneath the city. Beneath the large table in the study is an access panel that leads to a vault that cannot be opened without a key. Its lock cannot be picked, and it cannot be entered through arcane means, having been warded by some of the cleverest and most skilled wizards in the realm.

Upper Level

The bunk space on the upper level ***(8)*** of the Safehouse has enough beds to accommodate several co-conspirators when it's time for some shuteye, and also features an emergency exit in the unlikely event of a raid. This heavy, heavily reinforced trapdoor on the ceiling can only be opened from within the Safehouse, and requires a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to push it upward and open. It can be accessed by climbing on the crates and barrels within the room, or through other means at GM discretion. The exit leads to a narrow tunnel shaft that stops 5 ft. short of the surface. A creature must burrow through the dirt or work to remove the earth through other means in order to make their way to safety.

Leave No Trace...

The Safehouse is outfitted with a series of countermeasures to ensure that, in the unlikely event of a plan gone wrong, interested parties can destroy any trace of incriminating evidence within it. Each wall is outfitted with a rune which, when fed the command phrase ("Off we go,") will erupt with flame, similar to the *wall of fire* spell. The heated sides of these walls of flame all face inward, and their fire consumes anything flammable within the space. Additionally, should a complete bugout be required, a similar rune from the top of the access tunnel at the warehouse's roof can be triggered, dropping a level 5 *fireball* that will impact the bottom of the tunnel. The flames from this fireball will burn directly upward, and eventually consume the entire warehouse if left uncontained. In the event that all the flame runes are activated, the area within the Safehouse will almost immediately become uninhabitable for most creatures.

The Portal Prison

When the party is tasked with escorting a prisoner from a maximum security facility for murderous mages, they are forced to ally themselves with one of the realm's most dangerous criminals in order to survive.

An Adventure Suitable For Levels 8-20

An incredibly lucrative contract is offered by a ruler from another realm. In exchange for escorting **Parker VanHorn**, a psychotic and incredibly dangerous arcane criminal, from the realm's Portal Prison so he can stand trial for his actions, the party will be granted one item apiece from the kingdom's archive of magical artifacts, as well as 20,000gp. After agreeing to the contract, the party will be teleported to the Portal Prison, which floats in the clouds high above the kingdom. After meeting with the prison's Guardian Legion, the party is sent into the cell to pick up the prisoner—but soon discover they are unable to leave. The party will have to decide whether they want to spend the rest of their lives inside a prison or work with Parker, who knows the complex intimately, in order to escape.

Setting Up

This adventure is effectively a randomized but linear dungeon crawl featuring five locations and creatures unique to each. First, roll on the Random Location Generator (pg. 3) five times, labeling each location as Room A-E (in the event of a repeat, reroll). These locations will represent the settings for several of the Portal Prison's Reflecting Rooms, which act as holding cells within the prison. When things start to fall apart, these cells will link together so that leaving one location immediately leads to another. The adventure begins and ends in the Great Hall (pg. 209).

Secondly, roll on the Variant Encounters table for each location to determine the type and number of creatures that will materialize there once the party arrives. The creatures will look like those listed on the Variant Encounter table (ex: goblin, ogre, bandit) and will maintain all of their statistics and abilities with one addition: each of their attacks deals an additional 3d6 psychic damage, as outlined on pg. 99. If the randomly selected location does not feature a Variant Encounter table, assume there are 2d4 **echowraiths** in the space and use the stat blocks presented on pg. 99.

There are also atmospheric effects associated with each of the randomly generated locations presented within the Portal Prison, and their descriptions start on pg. 101. Understanding how they work will help when your party finds themselves walking into one of these locations and are upside down or unable to speak. You may also find it useful to give lower level parties access to a few healing potions for this adventure.

Finally, the narrative hook for this adventure is fairly simple: a powerful and wealthy ruler wants to enlist the party's help for an incredibly dangerous job: delivering her brother from prison so he can stand trial for a long list of horrific crimes. The action will kick off in earnest in the throne room of her palace, where she delivers the details of the assignment. If this is your party's first time adventuring together, consider their backstories and how one (or all) of them might have been affected by the actions of the realm's most notorious mass murderer, with the understanding that the amount of gold being offered for the job would be enough to bring any ragtag group together in order to make sure it gets done right. Roll on the Party Makeup Maker (pg. 250) to further connect members to one another. If you are running this adventure with an established party, you are also welcome to connect their backstories to tales of the crimes committed by Parker VanHorn, however, the party's other exploits have been enough to establish them as the right individuals for the job, and they'll receive an urgent letter from **Archduchess Philomena VanHorn**, stating their presence is requested on a dangerous matter of state business that should prove incredibly lucrative.

The action begins after the party arrives at the Archduchess's palace, or—for a party on their first adventure together—with the flavor text in Part 1.

Part 1: The Job

You all stand before the gaze of a mighty ruler, the Archduchess Philomena VanHorn, her eyes peering down from above you as she sits atop the raised dais on the throne in the receiving hall of a massive palace. "I'm glad you've agreed to fulfill my request. Parker VanHorn is an enemy of the realm and, if I'm being honest, all of humanity. The fact that he's my brother makes exacting the vengeance he deserves a difficult proposition for me. He has killed hundreds, and his reign of terror must be brought to a close. But the people must see him stand trial. They must hear what he's done. Otherwise they will call me a usurper and my title will never be seen as legitimate. All you have to do is move him 100 ft."

Philomena will explain Parker is being held in the realm's Portal Prison, a structure floating far above the city. He went willingly after he was apprehended by the Guardian Legion. She is offering a massive sum of gold as well as access to the realm's archive of rare and very rare wondrous objects. The party members will each be allowed to select and keep one item of very rare or lesser classification, assuming she has it in her archive (at GM discretion).

The prison's teleportation circle is 100 ft. from the Reflection Room—a type of cell—where Parker is being held. The party must escort Parker out of his cell and down a glass corridor to the teleportation circle. Once there, they can teleport Parker to this hall, where he will be tried and judged in a secure court; the party will then be hailed as heroes.

When the party is ready, Philomena will escort them to the teleportation circle within the castle, give them a *stone of sending* and then send them to the prison.

You all step into a ring of arcane energy that crackles and vibrates and a rush of radiant light erupts around you and suddenly you're on a solid platform, its frosted windows overlooking an empty sky. You're floating nearly five miles above the surface. A grim-looking dwarven man wearing a glowing amulet greets you with an elaborate salute, flanked on either side by massive constructs—shield guardians—that stand roughly 7 ft. tall. "I'm Kensey Ottenbaum. Head of the Guardian Legion in this sector. This is my prison. These are a few of my guards. Let's get moving."

The Crimes of Parker VanHorn

The "arcane architect" and "designer of destruction," Parker VanHorn was to be his father's successor to the throne. But after a psychic break he terrorized the realm, slaughtering its citizens through random acts of spell-infused violence. Below are some examples of his cruelty which you can use to color your narrative as this story unfolds at your table, at GM discretion.

THE STONE TEMPLE
At a meeting with a religious order critical of his father's leadership, Parker remarked "This entire temple is made of stone, and it's less rigid than you are," before using *wall of stone* to permanently entomb all 24 members of the order's council within the temple.

DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES
Parker is believed to have utilized the *dream* spell to infiltrate the slumber of several mothers and fathers in town, appearing in various forms to impress upon them the import of murdering their own children. In a span of six weeks, 63 children were drowned, poisoned or otherwise beaten to death by their parents—all of whom claimed to have been convinced to do so by the gods.

A BIT OF BUTCHERY
When a server at one of the region's finer restaurants dropped Parker's steak knife and didn't apologize, every piece of silverware in the establishment sprang to life—the effects of the *animate objects* spell—and attacked the server, staff and clientele. There were no survivors.

THE BLIGHTSTORM
Parker determined no one in the realm deserved food, so he strolled through nearby farms in the region casting *blight* and sullying an entire season's worth of crops. The subsequent lack of return bankrupted families and many of the lesser classes starved to death.

EXPULSION AND EXPLOSIONS
The mages of the realm gathered to expel Parker from their ranks, the first step to having him arrested and tried. Having anticipated this, he used *delayed fireball* to immolate all of them at the same time.

Part 2: The Portal Prison

Kensey leads you down a long hallway lined with cell doors, behind which, Kensey explains, are swirling portals. The floor and ceiling are glass, affording an incredible (if vertigo-inducing) view of the world below and a panoramic view of the sky above. "This is the march you'll have to make with VanHorn. I suggest you take a minute to consider the architecture and your plan, as you've only got one shot at this. The Guardian Legion will be on hand to assist as we can. Many of these soldiers lost friends... family...to Parker's abject cruelty, and will be glad to see him meet his end. Some would be happy to watch you kill him right here. But the Archduchess has given the word and her word is our command."

Kensey points out the control room for the portal prison, the top floor of the tall tower that looks down on the various portals on either side of the hallway. Kensey explains that each portal leads to a different pocket dimension, called Reflecting Rooms, each of which is a materially sound illusion modeled after a location specific to the creature being held there. A woman who sacrificed her mother to a fertility god within a temple might be forced to spend the rest of her sentence watching her mother's eyes go wide when the blade plunges in her stomach. A man who set a bar ablaze with all its patrons inside must watch the entire tavern go up in flames over and over again, its patrons consumed by fire repeatedly.

As Kensey escorts you past the portal doors, he starts to reveal a bit more detail. "The creatures inside the Reflecting Rooms—the beings, not the prisoners—they're called echowraiths. In some cases they're epic psychic projections created by the prison and in others they're manifestations of memories from within the prisoner's own mind. However they're formed, they're very real and serve a specific purpose within the prison. They guard the prisoners so we don't have to. They attack with deadly force if the prisoners try to escape. And if a prisoner somehow manages to get past the echowraiths, well, these portal doors do a number on them as well. Should someone come out on the other side of one of these portals, ol' Bunty up in the control room can blast them without much fanfare—or just collapse this glass panel here and let them fall 5 miles down to their doom."

Kensey will then take the party up to the control room so they can get a topdown view of the glass catwalk.

Overseeing this control room is **Nigel "Bunty" Buntrose**. Kensey introduces Bunty to the party. Bunty explains he doesn't think the prison is affecting Parker in a meaningful way, almost as though he enjoys watching his crimes play out again and again. If the party asks, he can manifest a vision of the interior of Parker's cell. "The only solution for someone like him is death. And if we don't kill him, he'll escape and do far worse. He's not fit to live. How do we know he and the Archduchess aren't in league together?"

Kensey will interject, explaining that the Guardian Legion serves at the pleasure of the Archduchess and if she wanted Parker to be thrown a parade they'd help build the floats. This is their charge, and they are honorbound to uphold it.

Bunty will outline the prison's particular mechanisms:

- Each member of the party will be given an amulet which will allow them to enter and exit a portal. There is an extra amulet for them to give to Parker and escort him through the same portal. The echowraiths will not attack anyone with an amulet.

- Typically, **shield guardians** help with prisoner transport, but because Parker created the ones being used here, the Guardian Legion has determined it is unsafe for these shield guardians to escort him to the teleportation circle, which is why the party has been contracted for this job.

- The echowraiths will attack anyone attempting to escape through a portal if they are not wearing an amulet. Additionally, walking through a portal without wearing an amulet could have life-altering, if not life-ending, side effects.

- Once through the portal door the party will have to escort Parker the 100 ft. to the teleportation circle, at which point they'll be magically transported to the chamber for the trial.

Bunty distributes an amulet to each of you, looking you in the eye. "If he tries to sweet talk you, kill him," he says with a shaking hand. Kensey sighs and says, "Don't kill him. We'll see you back on this side in no time." Kensey then escorts you away from the control tower and back to the Hall of Holding. He turns a key, which opens a heavy door, revealing a crackling, swirling portal. "Alright...off you go. And remember...it's only 100 ft. We'll be here to help." He watches with a solemn stare as you each step into the portal.

Part 3: The Reflecting Room

As soon as the party enters the swirling portal, they will arrive in Room A, as established during the set

up stage of this adventure. Describe the space where Parker is being held in terms of the location, then add the following:

> At the center of this space, seated cross-legged on the floor with his hands on his knees, is a handsome if jagged-faced human man, his steady breathing the only sound you hear. There are other figures here, somewhat ethereal in nature, which also pay you no regard. They seem disconnected from time and purpose, but the moment you take a step toward the figure in the center, their heads all shift to watch you with an unerring stare.

- Parker is unresponsive to the party's questions but will move willingly if directed, a deadened look in his eyes.

- If the players attempt to move Parker without affixing the amulet to him they will find themselves under attack by the echowraiths.

- Once the players attempt to escort Parker back through the portal, they will find it fades and shimmers, as though inoperable.

> As you attempt to use the portal, it becomes clear something isn't right. The amulets on your chest start to glow somewhat and a slow smile begins to creep over Parker's face. A voice within the cell is audible to each of you. A soft voice, but one you recognize as Bunty Buntrose's. "I'm truly sorry for this," he says. "But I can't let you take him. And so I can't let you leave. He's a villain and must be destroyed. And since his sister doesn't have the will to do it, I'm afraid it's come to me. I've shut down the prison. In a few hours the entire system will collapse. I'm not certain what will happen then, but I suspect it will be mind-splittingly painful. And for that I'm sorry. But it's what he deserves. I'm sorry you're caught up in this now, but...you understand. Collateral damage."

With this information, Parker begins to laugh uncontrollably.

The party can try to reason with Bunty, but they'll find him unwilling to respond. If they keep pleading their case eventually they'll hear the phrase "What's done is done," followed by a rumbling whoosh that shakes the room in which they stand.

> The ground beneath you vibrates, a rumble that reverberates through the entire chamber. Parker keeps laughing, his body trembling with an incredulous chortle, and then he speaks. "Very interesting. Guess I'll have company when the debt is to be collected. Very exciting. Unless of course you're not ready to die."

GM Note

At this point in the adventure, Bunty has used the panel in the control room to overload the system, causing a violent explosion that killed many of the Guardian Legion, and swept any who survived into a five-mile free fall. He has also changed the orientation of the portals that connect the Reflecting Rooms to the Hall of Holding, rerouting them into other Reflecting Rooms. If the party is to attempt an escape, they will be routed through several Receiving Rooms, each affected by Bunty's sabotage of the system that sustains them, as outlined on pg. 96.

Parker will then state the situation very clearly: "Would you like to help me escape this prison or would you prefer your lives to end?"

Part 4: A Complication

The party must now decide if they want to leave Parker behind in this prison, kill him or take him with them as they attempt to escape. Parker will attempt to explain his value in this situation:

> "My sister didn't tell you, did she...I built this prison. You know. Before I went insane. It was my design. I know every inch of this place, the gears that spin to keep it running. The shaking you felt earlier was itself an echo of the world that contains the various Reflecting Rooms of the prison. There must have been an explosion out there. Wonder how many died? Look—we can leave any time. We just have to destroy those creatures and then walk through that portal over there. Which might kill us. Some of us, anyway."

Because of the explosion at the Portal Prison, there is a ripple effect within the Reflecting Room that currently holds the party. The room is violently shaking and is therefore difficult terrain. Parker explains: "It's the shaking from above—it's echoing for us in this Reflecting Room. We'll make it, it'll just be tough to walk."

Parker will explain to the party that the key to escaping the prison is to move through the portals, accept the consequences (see the Portal Effects table) and do what

Portal Effects

Roll on the table below to determine the effects of each Reflecting Room portal the players pass through. Reroll any duplicated effects. The save DC for each is 17. Each effect lasts for three rounds or until every creature who entered the portal exits into the next Reflecting Room.

1d10	The portal causes 3d6 psychic damage and...
1	**...blindness.** The crippling bright light of this portal sears the eyes of each creature passing through, and each must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be blinded for the duration.
2	**...madness.** Babbling voices invade the mind of every creature passing through the portal. Each must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of the *confusion* spell for the duration.
3	**...deafness.** A cacophonous eruption of sound assaults the ears of every creature passing through the portal. Each creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become deaf for the duration.
4	**...pain**. A horrible, skin-rotting ray of energy appears and saps life from each creature passing through the portal. Each creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, suffering 4d8 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.
5	**...stupidity.** A hypnotic swirl of radiant energy befuddles the brain of every creature passing through the portal. Each creature must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or have their Intelligence and Charisma scores reduced to 1, as in the *feeblemind* spell.
6	**...lethargy.** An energy draining aura clings to every creature passing through the portal. Each creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or fall under the effects of the *slow* spell for the duration.
7	**...a curse.** A mind-scattering energy seeps from the portal's swirl. Each creature must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or suffer the effects of the *bane* spell for the duration.
8	**...rage.** A mood-altering madness impacts every creature passing through the portal. Each creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become violently enraged, as in the *crown of madness* spell, with their movements and attacks controlled at GM discretion.
9	**...a change in form.** An eerie glow paints the form of each creature passing through the portal. Each creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be turned into a CR 1 or lower creature (at GM discretion), as in the *polymorph* spell.
10	**...reduction.** A surging heat penetrates the bones of each creature passing through the portal. Each creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or will find themselves reduced in size by one classification, as in the *reduce/enlarge* spell, for the duration.

you can to endure the echowraiths. There is no other way. Magical means of escape (as in spells such as *dimension door* or *plane shift*) are ineffective in this space.

Should the party choose to leave Parker behind in the prison they will discover the effects of the portal gates as outlined on the Portal Effects table do not dissipate, but will remain as long as they are within the prison's cells unless they reverse course and bring Parker along with them (something he can illuminate for them should they try to leave him behind).

The moment one of the players tries to move through a portal the echowraiths will begin to attack Parker.

If the party is able to destroy each of the echowraiths, they are then free to move through the portal, which shimmers with a blue black aura next to one of the doors to this room (at GM discretion).

Once all of the echowraiths within Room A are destroyed its portal will open, at which point the party will be transported to another Reflecting Room—and another, and then another, and then another (as opposed to the Hall of Holding, because of Bunty's actions)—the dimensions and descriptions of which you established as part of the set up stage of this adventure.

In addition to the visuals associated with each room, there are atmospheric effects that Parker (assuming he is still alive) can help attribute to events and mechanics being toyed with in the control room, as outlined below:

ROOM B: Describe the basic visuals associated with the randomly determined space, and then explain that it is also upside down. The portal door is below them, but they're suspended on the ceiling and must find a way down: "We should be in the Hall of Holding. Instead we're inverted, and in another Reflecting Room. Perhaps he's rotated the entire mechanism to throw us off course. No matter. This should be fun."

ROOM C: Describe the basic visuals associated with the randomly determined space, and then explain that it is also completely filled with water: If Parker can communicate with anyone in the party telepathically, this is what he would say: "He's flooded the entire system. Might be overloaded. This is magical water—but, you can still drown in it." If he cannot speak telepathically, he will motion for the party to kill the remaining echowraiths as quickly as they can, or else they will all drown.

ROOM D: Describe the basic visuals associated with the randomly determined space, and then allow your players to attempt to move within it. The room is "in reverse," meaning that an attempt to move forward results in a move backward, an attack on an enemy

heals them instead of doing damage and more at GM discretion: "This is a fail safe mechanism. It disrupts those with the urge to leave by inverting their thought patterns...effectively leaving them with a desire to...stay."

> As you slay the final echowraith, you hear the same, steady voice of Bunty Buntrose echoing off the walls in this reflecting room. "Kill him now. There might still be time. Otherwise you're all doomed."

If players attempt to negotiate with Bunty they will find his terms are absolute: Kill Parker or die in the prison.

ROOM E: Describe the basic visuals associated with the randomly determined space, then note that every character is now floating, as there is no gravity. Parker is visibly concerned: "This is bad. This isn't my design. It's possible this is a side effect, in which case young Bunty has found a way to alter my creation, or the entire complex is falling from its place in the sky. Either way, we should hurry if we want to get out of here alive. The pain of a portal is one thing. The disruption we'd feel if the prison made impact with the ground would...well. Ha. That's a lot of dead bodies. A necromancer's dream, really."

GM Note

The prison is now falling, though not tumbling, out of the sky, with Bunty having disengaged or destroyed all the mechanisms that keep it aloft. The players will learn of this fact if they are able to leave this final cell.

If the players are able to defeat all of the echowraiths in this portion of the adventure, they will find the portal leads them directly to the Hall of Holding they walked down in order to reach Parker's cell.

Part 5: A Final Solution

> As you pass through the portal and brace yourselves for another round of pain, you arrive without incident in the long glass corridor that marked your initial journey into Parker's cell. It appears you have escaped—you are now back where your journey began, and the scene is chaos. Flames rip around the walls and ceiling, and a massive hole has been blasted through the floor in front of you—the other side of the corridor now 40 ft. of open air from where you stand. You feel a rushing sensation as it becomes clear the entire prison is in free-fall, hurtling toward the surface.

To the left is a small room that appears to have been blown open by the blast, full of uniforms for the Guardian Legion as well as several shield guardians in power down mode. Above, from within the control room overlooking this corridor, is Bunty, who speaks into the system's intercom with a resigned calm:

> "The Guardian Legion tried to stop me...the shield guardians too, so I did what I had to do. And now I have no choice but to follow through on what's right. This is my final warning. You must kill him. Now. Or hundreds will die when we crash into the ground. Maybe thousands. Still fewer than the lives he's ruined. Do the right thing. End it. Kill him and I'll try to stabilize us. Why should more innocents be lost so that he can receive a version of justice?"

The prison is falling from the sky, and will make impact in roughly two minutes (or 20 rounds, at GM discretion). Moving on the falling prison requires a successful DC 12 Dexterity or Strength check or the creature moving is tossed off the surface and must spend the rest of their turn attempting not to fall off the prison as it drops.

IF THE PRISON makes impact with the ground it will kill 5d20 x 100 people.

PARKER WILL ATTEMPT to escape if given the opportunity. On his turn per initiative, he will activate his amulet (if he's still wearing it) with the words "Command Overdrive: Engage at Will." The remaining 2d4 shield guardians in the Control Room will awaken and come to Parker's aid, acting on their own initiative. Parker will command them to protect him from harm as well as assist in his escape. The shield guardians can cast *fireball* or *polymorph* at 4th level, and should alternate between dealing damage to the party and polymorphing Parker into a creature that can fly so that he can make his way off the falling prison in order to escape. At GM discretion, as an added challenge for a higher tier party, one of these shield guardians could be concealing a copy of Parker's spellbook.

THE DOOR to the Control Room has 100 HP and is reinforced steel.

IF THE PARTY breaks into the room, Bunty will attempt to kill himself to prevent them from forcing him to turn the turbines in the control room back on.

THE TURBINES can be reactivated by pulling specific levers in the proper order, but the control board has been damaged and the levers appear stuck. This information can be ascertained with 2 successful

DC 15 Intelligence checks, and the levers can be moved with two successful DC 20 Strength checks.

IF BOTH LEVERS are engaged the turbines will kick in and the prison will jolt and begin to float.

IF THE PARTY is able to keep the prison from crashing into the ground, they'll receive a message through their *sending stone* from the Archduchess: "Are you all right? Please. We can see the prison falling, please—are you all right?" She will then ask the party if the teleportation circle is still active (it is), and insist they use it immediately to save themselves.

Part 6: The Aftermath

If the party survives this far they will be met in the teleportation circle within the receiving room by the Archduchess, who will hug the first member of the party she sees. She will then look to see if Parker is with them. If he is, she will slap him in the face. He will then be taken by members of the Guardian Legion, who will stun him and leave him paralyzed. If he isn't, she will ask the party to explain what happened.

If the Archduchess believes the party acted in the interest of the realm (either by killing Parker to spare the innocent from the falling prison, or by bringing both Bunty and Parker to her for questioning, or some other solution at GM discretion), she will offer them each one rare magical item from her archive, as well as a total of 20,000pp as payment, with the following statement:

> "You overcame an impossible situation and did so while ensuring what was best for our citizens as opposed to yourselves. My offer stands, and is yours. We are in your debt, and I hereby name you as protectors of the realm."

If the Archduchess believes the party acted out of self-interest (either by letting Parker escape or by letting the prison fall to the earth in an effort to keep him alive to protect their reward), she will refuse to pay them for their services with the following statement:

> "I chose you for this task because I knew it would be challenging—that it might test your resolve as well as your ego. I had thought perhaps to name you as protectors of the realm but I now see you only care about yourselves. Leave this place and never return. We have no room for sellswords without honor."

Important NPCs

Useful information about the key characters in this adventure. All NPCs listed speak Common. They can speak any other languages at GM discretion.

Archduchess Philomena VanHorn

Medium human, lawful good

Leader of this portion of the realm, Archduchess Philomena seeks justice against her brother Parker VanHorn for the murder of her people and is also commander of the Guardian Legion.

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)
Hit Points 25
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Deception +6, Insight +4, Persuasion +6
Senses Passive Perception 12

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

Parker VanHorn

Medium human, chaotic evil

One of the most brilliant mages in the realm's history, Parker VanHorn is also among its most murderous. Currently held for several crimes against the kingdom in a prison of his own design, VanHorn is a coldly calculating mad genius, and if given any opportunity will try for an escape.

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 50
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	22 (+6)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +10, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +14, History +14
Senses Passive Perception 11

Spellcasting. Parker is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19, +10 to hit with spell attacks). He would have the following wizard spells prepared if he had his spellbook.

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*
- 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *blight*, *polymorph*
- 5th level (3 slot): *cone of cold*
- 6th level (1 slot): *circle of death*
- 7th level (1 slot): *teleport*, *delayed blast fireball*
- 8th level (1 slot): *mind blank*
- 9th level (1 slot): *time stop*

Kensey Ottenbaum

Medium half-elf, lawful good

Highest ranking member of the Guardian Legion at the Portal Prison, Kensey Ottenbaum is a gruff man with a strong sense of honor, particularly when it comes to the chain of command.

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 58
Speed 30 ft.

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

Actions

Multiattack. Kensey makes two longsword attacks. If he has a shortsword drawn, he 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: (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Nigel "Bunty" Buntrose

Medium Human, chaotic good

Lead guard in the control tower of the Portal Prison, Nigel "Bunty" Buntrose is furious that Parker VanHorn has been allowed to live given the gravity of his crimes, and out of fear that he may escape on his way to trial decides to take matters into his own hands—even if it means killing innocent people in the process.

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)
Hit Points 89
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +2
Senses Passive Perception 12

Actions

Multiattack. Bunty makes two rapier attacks.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Echowraiths

Medium elemental, lawful neutral

Creatures that exist on the divide between the ethereal and elemental plane, echowraiths serve one function: to maintain order within the demiplanes of the Portal Prison. When their charge is unruly they will relentlessly attack with speed and terror, inflicting additional psychic damage on top of their physical strikes through their mind teeth feature.
They assume the forms and abilities of creatures that inhabited the spaces being projected within the portals in which they manifest, echoing these creatures in a new dimension. They also have a "true" form, as outlined below.

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 68
Speed 30 ft., fly speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistance Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Thunder; Bludgeoning, Piercing and Slashing From Nonmagical Attacks That Aren't Silvered
Damage Immunities Necrotic, Poison
Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Incorporeal Movement. The echowraith 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.
Mind Teeth. When an echowraith hits a creature, that creature suffers an additional 3d6 psychic damage.

Action

Multiattack. The echowraith makes two melee attacks.

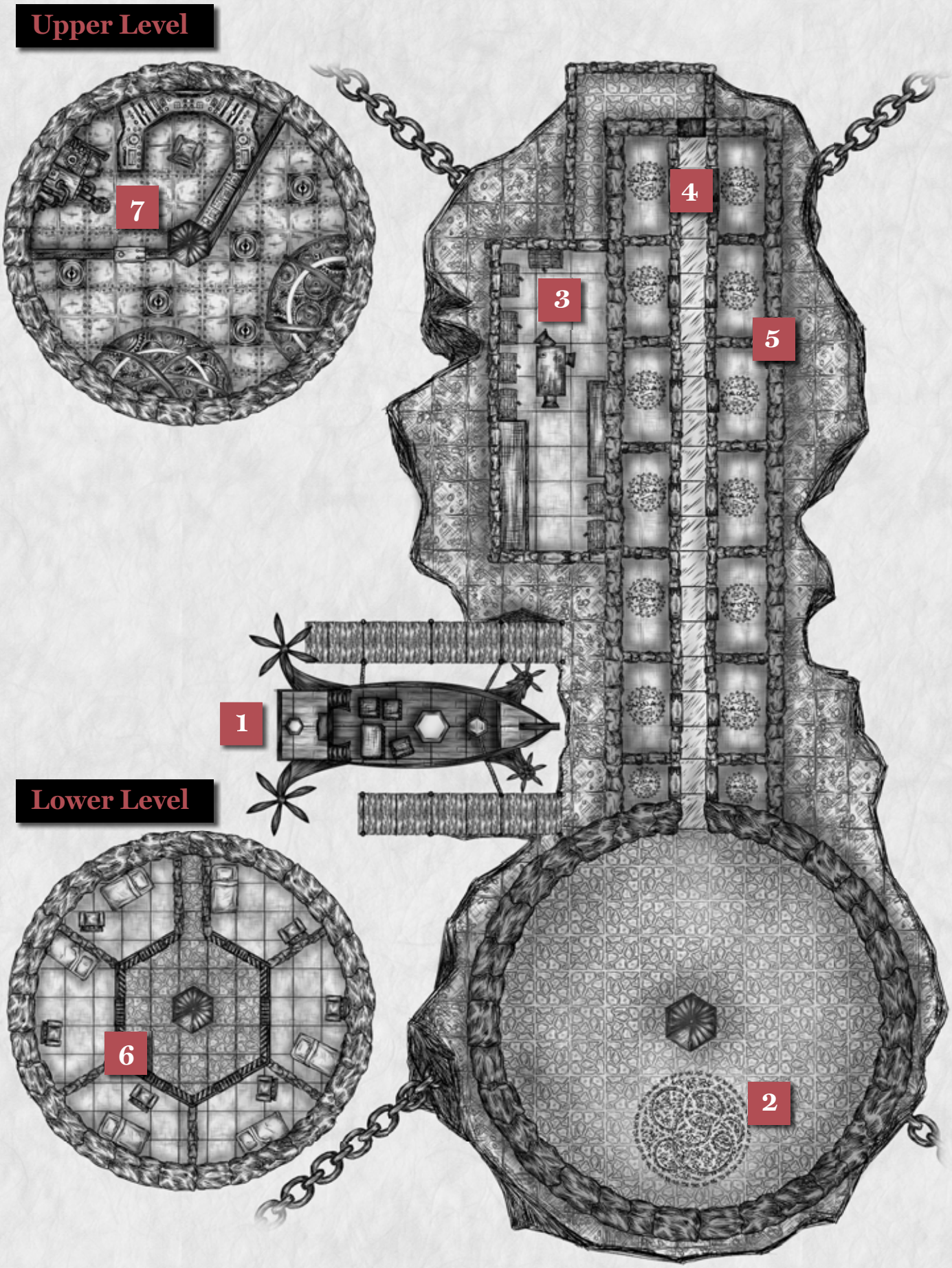
Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning + 3d6 psychic damage.

Reaction

Mental Mirror. When an echowraith is hit by an attack, it can use its reaction to force the attacking creature to make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the attacking creature takes half the damage of their own attack as it is reflected back onto them.

GM Note

When running this adventure, use the statistics and abilities of the creatures chosen using the Variant Encounter roll table for each randomly determined location. If the location does not feature a Variant Encounter table, there are 2d4 echowraiths within the room that use the statistics above.


Upper Level
7
4
3
5
1
Lower Level
6
2

The Portal Prison

This unique penitentiary for arcane outlaws, a floating island unto itself, is the most secure prison in the realm. Featuring a series of portals that mimic environments from the material plane, the prison is equipped with several enchantments as well as anti-magic fields that make it one of the most impregnable structures ever created. As such, the prisoners being held here are those for whom a standard cell would be a minor inconvenience rather than a deterrent to escape. They should all be considered both highly skilled and incredibly dangerous.

A Floating Fortress

The Portal Prison hovers approximately 25,000 ft. in the air, just above the cloud cover. The air here is cold and thin, and anyone who spends time without acclimating must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer one point of exhaustion. Four massive stones, attached by huge chains to four points of the rocky surface the prison was constructed upon are each under the effect of separate *telekinesis* spells, each controlled by levers in the prison's control room. The levers feature a failsafe and require two creatures to disengage.

Arrivals and Departures

Because of its location in the sky, the Portal Prison is accessible primarily by airship ***(1)*** or via a teleportation circle ***(2)***, for which very few individuals know the sigil combination. Any individual arriving by teleportation circle will come face to face with members of the Guardian Legion, who patrol this space. Those arriving by airship or, in rare cases, the independent ability to fly, are shuttled through the prison's lone door to the outside world and directly into the Receiving Room ***(3)***. Antimagic systems prevent teleportation from any area within 200 ft. of the teleportation circle.

Receiving Room

The main entrance to the Portal Prison is through its Receiving Room (which is truly more of a corridor) lined with barred windows that look out onto the horizon. The Guardian Legion also use the Receiving Room as a meeting hall as necessary. A small passageway leads from the Receiving Room into the Hall of Holding ***(4)***.

Hall of Holding

The view in the hall through its glass floor is breathtaking, particularly when the clouds part long enough to see the ground some 5 miles below. Along either side of this narrow, glass-floored hallway are several doors, each of which contains a large, swirling portal that leads to a pocket dimension. One can only enter (or exit) the portal if they're wearing one of the amulets given to the Guardian Legion at this station. If the amulet is in place, anyone stepping through a portal within the Hall of Holding will be transported to one of the Portal Prison's legendary Reflecting Rooms ***(5)***.

Reflecting Rooms

Each cell in the Portal Prison exists in its own pocket dimension, inaccessible through any means other than via the portal transport magic upon which the prison is premised. The cells themselves are modeled after locations from the material plane, with small yet significant differences—any exits (doors, windows and secret tunnels) lead directly to another entrance into the space: in sum, any attempt to leave gets you right back where you started. If the location is outdoors, leaving one side of the map will "pacman" the creature to the opposite side of the map. To determine the appearance of each Reflecting Room, roll on the Random Location Generator (pg. 3). In addition to the prisoners kept in each Reflecting Room, these cells are also home to echowraiths—creatures who add to the psychic torment that comes alongside being a prisoner here, and should be created using the Variant Encounter tables for the respective location. They will attack any creature who attempts to leave their cell and render them unconscious or worse. If the map randomly generated lacks a Variant Encounter table, the echowraiths appear in their true form.

Barracks

The small barracks ***(6)*** on the basement level of the Portal Prison's lone tower are accessible via the central staircase in the center of the tower and offer lodging for six individuals at a time. Members of the Guardian Legion work in two-week shifts, keeping a watchful eye over the prisoners in each Reflecting Room via the Control Tower. In the event that extra staff is necessary for prisoner transport, the legion's shield guardians prove useful in this regard, though reinforcements can always be called in via the teleportation circle if necessary.

Control Room

The prison's Reflecting Rooms are observed at all times from the Control Room ***(7)***, which also houses levers that keep the prison aloft. From this room, which looks out over both the skyline and down onto the Hall of Holding, a member of the Guardian Legion can change a Reflecting Room's interior to match any space in existence; direct a beam of force energy directly through the Hall of Holding (12d6 damage, recharging on a 5-6) or drop the glass hallway as trapdoors, sending anyone standing upon them plummeting to their deaths. It is an enormous responsibility, which is why those who are granted access to the Control Room are among the Guardian Legion's most respected and honorable members.

TAVERNS, INNS, SHOPS & GUILD HALLS

A COLLECTION OF STOREFRONTS, BARS, HOTELS AND MORE, SUITABLE FOR ANY TOWN OR CITY.

The Not Hostel

For cheap lodging you could do worse than this rundown spot. But you'd have to try extremely hard.

Reception

The front desk ***(1)*** at the Not Hostel is run by a stout dwarven woman named Millie Hunk. The foyer of the reception area is exquisitely appointed, and Millie works diligently to ensure her humble hostel looks presentable at all hours of the day or night. Rates are 2cp for a bunk, which is a pittance compared to other places to stay but still feels a bit overpriced once guests are escorted to the sleeping quarters. Millie and the Not Hostel have a strict "no refunds" policy.

Sleeping Quarters

Bunk beds stacked three high are the most prolific visual in this space ***(2)***, and depending on the time of year, each might be home to more than one resident. The room, once divided into two parts by a now-busted wall, features a mix of stale breath, wet shoes and a patina of body odors from across the realm hanging in the air. Upon entering the room, each creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution save or suffer a bout of nausea, vomiting on a failed save.

Residents

Roll 1d4 to determine how many guests other than those in the party are staying at the Not Hostel.

1d4	The Not Hostel is...
1	**...nearly empty** but only because there's a dead half-orc rotting in one of the bunks.
2	**...full** with one body for each bed.
3	**...packed** with one body per bed plus a group of musicians sleeping beneath a few bunks.
4	**...overflowing** with an extra 3d10 gnomes and halflings buddying up with other bunkmates.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to see what hostilities ensue at the Not Hostel.

1d6	The party...
1	...must contend with 3d4 drunk **goblins**.
2	...must endure the sounds of an angry half-orc dictating a letter for his ex to a terrified halfling.
3	...sees a trio of gnomes playing dice with a **berserker** who keeps losing, and isn't pleased.
4	...is confronted by a surly dwarf who says they are in his bunk.
5	...finds a hole in the floor, from which scampers 3d4 **swarms of rats**.
6	...walks in on an all out brawl between two gangs of 2d4 **bugbears** over who has to bunk with whom.

The Two Doors Tavern

A lively ale house where every evening promises only unpredictability, the main features of the Two Doors Tavern are its titular doors. They serve to separate the clientele into teams across a variety of random categories, and each night the tavern's bars are lowered several times for games of skill, chance and athletic prowess. The tavern's owner, a half-elf named **Noon Fantasia,** conceived of the idea to foster stronger relationships between strangers, and many patrons regularly return to the tavern to see if they'll be "Right-siders" or "Left-siders" the next time through the doors.

DIVIDING SIGN. Upon approaching the Two Doors Tavern, would-be patrons are met by a two-arrowed sign ***(1)*** directing them toward the proper entrance based on that day's stipulated manner of separation. The sign is updated at random (see Dividing Sign Table), though occasionally the division works so well it'll be repeated.

Dividing Sign Table

Roll a 1d6 to determine the sign's message.

1d6	Left-siders	Right-siders
1	The Pointy-Eared	All Others
2	5 ft. or fewer	More than 5 ft.
3	Locals	Out-of-towners
4	Wizards, Mages, Magicky-types	Blades, Bows, Brawlers
5	Devout	Depraved
6	What do they call you? A–M	What do they call you? N–Z

THE TAVERN. The Two Doors Tavern's defining physical features, apart from its entrance, are its two bars, which run parallel to one another, separating what would otherwise be the largest tavern in town into two smaller portions ***(2)***. Barkeeps sling ale to both sides of the room, scuttling around one another as necessary to cater to thirsty (and often a bit unruly) patrons. Left-siders and Right-siders are not permitted to switch sides, and a strict expulsion policy is enforced for those who don't abide by the Dividing Sign—typically by the patrons themselves. The space lacks much in the way of furnishings, but the few tables and chairs on either side are built to take a beating. Sawdust from a nearby mill lines the floor and is brought in fresh each morning. Several times per night, upon a signal from the Middle Man, the dividing bars sink into the floor and the tavern's two spaces merge into one—a sign that the games are about to begin.

THE MIDDLE MAN. Throughout the night, the Middle Man—effectively a master of ceremonies—rings a bell and announces the nature of the face-off (see Random Revels table). For years, Noon Fantasia served as the Middle Man every night of the week but has since relinquished the duties to his son Porter and his daughter Miriam. Noon occasionally will step back into his old role, especially if the tavern is particularly packed or has distinguished guests.

NPC Profile

Noon Fantasia, the Original Middle Man

A half-elf who grew tired of the way citizens in the city were treating those who could be categorized as "different" from them, Noon is a showman who plans to leave the Two Doors Tavern to his children, Porter and Miriam. He is creative, charismatic and competitive.

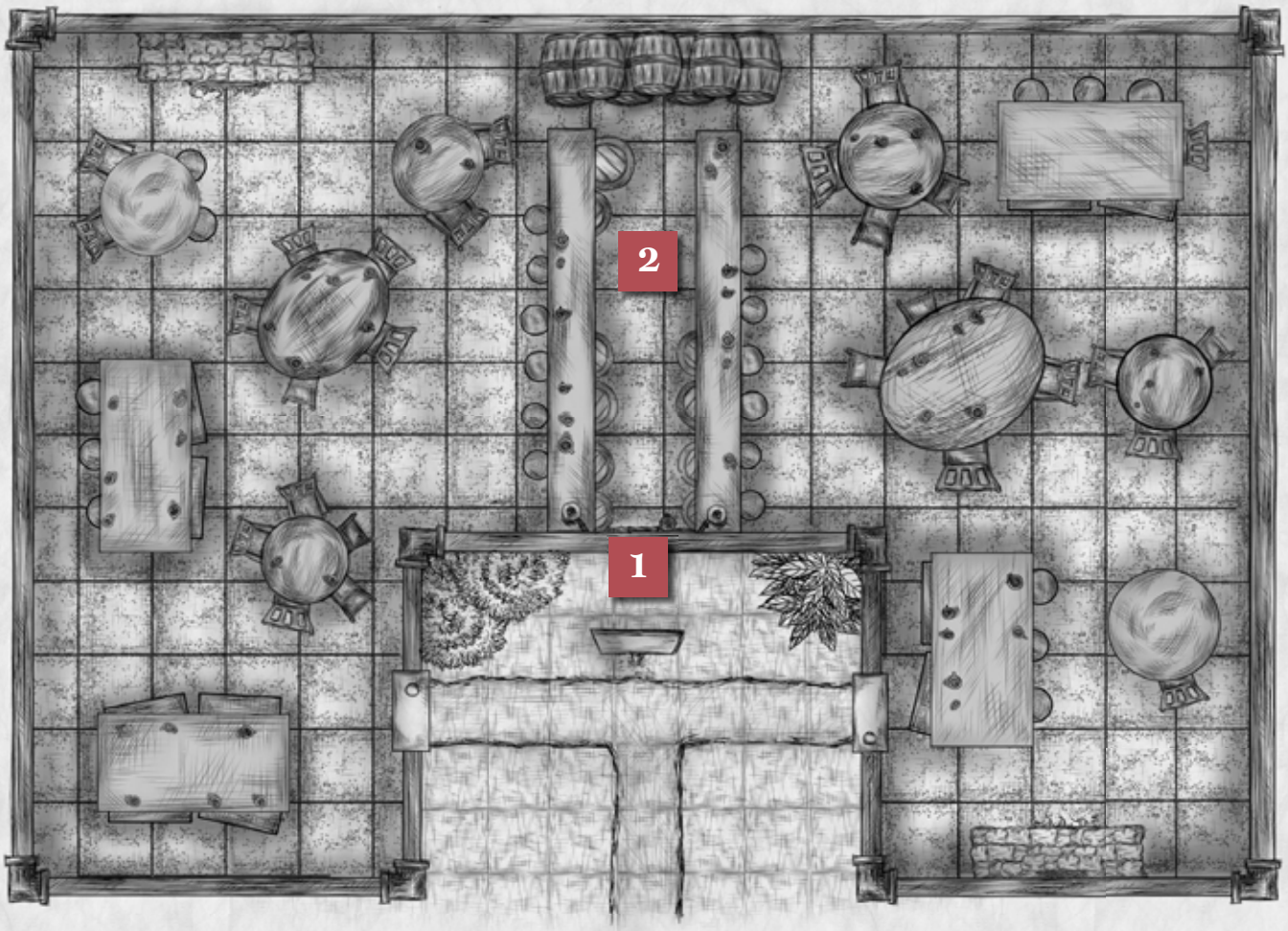
Variant: Battle Royale

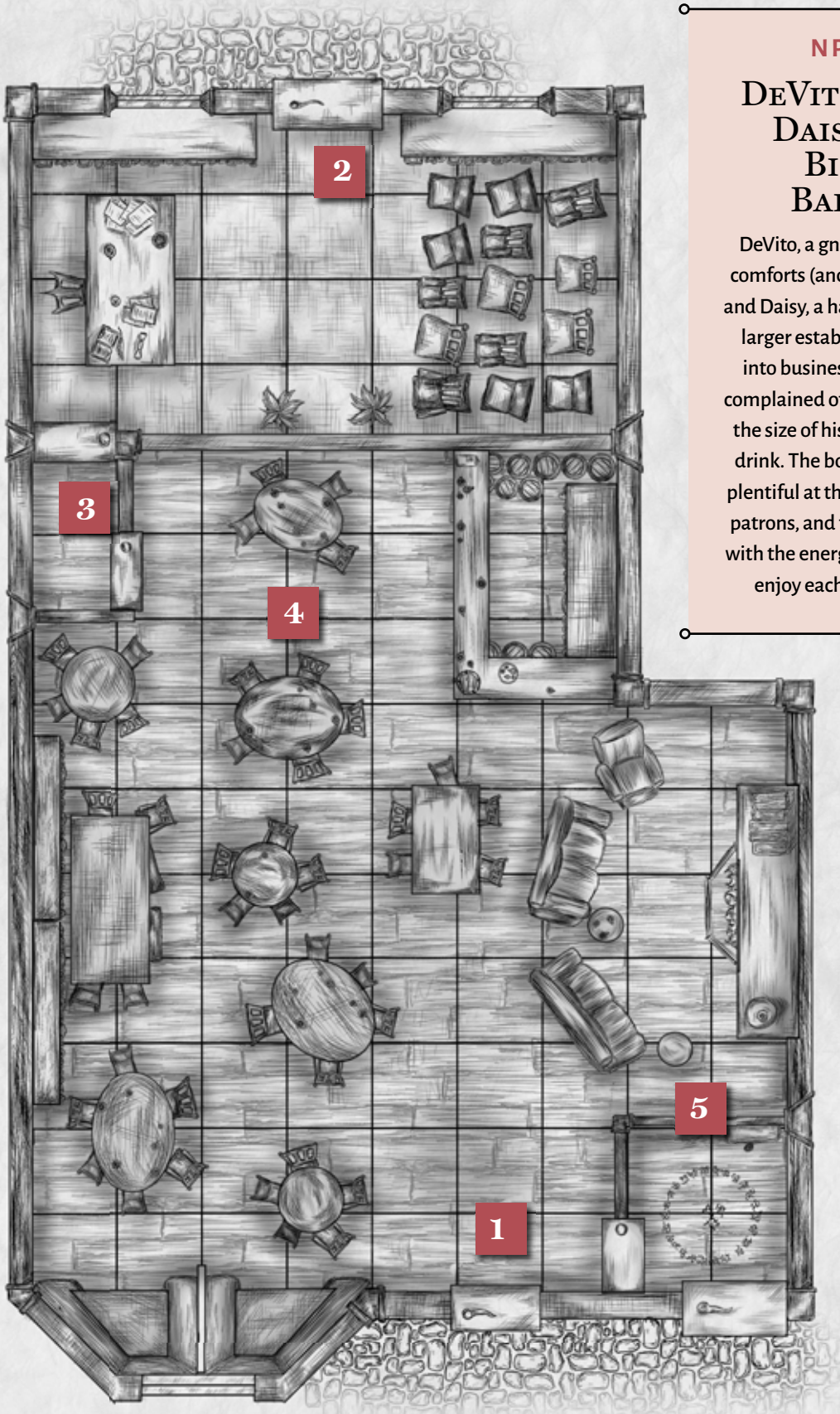
In the event of a double dice roll on the Random Revels table (or at GM discretion), the Middle Man announces the final Revel will be a Battle Royale—a no-holds-barred face-off between patrons. Last side standing wins. The Middle Man should also make it clear that it's frowned upon to intentionally maim or kill a member of the other side in combat. Still, the bar's relationship with a nearby temple ensures a cleric or two can step in to quickly revive or regenerate anyone who loses an arm, leg or life. The recently deceased drink for free for the rest of the night.

Random Revels

Roll 3d6 for three consecutive contests, which can play out in any order you choose. Each side of the bar should select competitors for each event, as necessary.

1d6	"Tonight's revels will be..."
1	**"...arm wrestling!"** Two challengers face off using consecutive contested Strength (Athletics) checks. A winner is determined after three high rolls in a row.
2	**"...dodging this ball!"** Three challengers from each side alternate throwing a stuffed sheep's bladder at one another (contested ranged attack vs. Dexterity save). A failed save is a hit, which eliminates that player. Last team standing wins.
3	**"...an ale guzzling contest!"** Each side chooses one challenger to consume five ales in a row, making five Constitution checks—highest total wins. At the end of the contest, both participants must make a DC 15 Constitution save to determine their level of inebriation for the rest of the night.
4	**"...trivia of the obscure!"** Three random questions are presented to both sides one at a time—and the side that determines the answer first (contested Intelligence (History) check) is declared the winner.
5	**"...giant boar taming!"** One representative from each side must face off against a **giant boar**—which magically appears in the center of the tavern room—and attempt to ride it. Longest time (consecutive Dexterity or Strength checks against DC 15) wins. A DC 17 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check offers advantage on the checks.
6	**"...a battle of instruments!"** Three representatives from each side must perform their favorite tune (contested group Charisma [Performance] check) using the lute, flute and a shawm hanging on the wall.





NPC Profiles

DeVito Fenwick & Daisy Flyfoot Big Little Bar owners

DeVito, a gnome who longed for the comforts (and scale) of his hometown, and Daisy, a halfling barmaid at a much larger establishment, decided to go into business together after DeVito complained of having to lift mugs of ale the size of his torso in order to enjoy a drink. The booze and banter is just as plentiful at their cozy bar for pint-sized patrons, and the duo carry themselves with the energy of platonic friends who enjoy each other and their work.

The Big Little Bar

The Big Little Bar is a destination for many of the city's more diminutive dwellers to revel and relax in a space built with their size in mind. With a ceiling just under 5 ft. high, any guest who can't easily walk through the 4-ft. Big Small Door is immediately directed around the back to the Small Big Entrance, where a powerful *reduce* spell will temporarily transform them into pint-sized patrons.

Getting In

There are two entrances to the Big Little Bar, with those under 4 ft. tall using the Big Small Door. All others must report to **DeVito Fenwick** through the Small Big Entrance.

THE BIG SMALL DOOR (1). A rather wide but still squat doorway leads in and out of the bar for those who can fit through the frame, which cuts off at 4 ft. This door serves as the main entrance for the Big Little Bar's target clientele, and woe to anyone who chooses to enter by ducking beneath it—a powerful glyph of warding is triggered by anyone who ignores the clear warning that states: "*4 Foot or Below Entrance Only—All Others Go Around. No Exceptions.*" Those ignoring the sign are immediately hit with two doses of the *reduce* spell (Wisdom save, DC 20) which, if successful, doubly reduces their size—an effect which lasts until their next long rest.

THE SMALL BIG ENTRANCE (2). Upon entering the Big Little Bar's Small Big Entrance, adventurers find themselves in a compact but well-appointed space, not unlike a waiting room, with fine leather chairs facing a relatively small desk, where they're greeted by one of the bar's owners—DeVito Fenwick**,** a powerful gnomish wizard who explains the bar's concept to anyone who isn't on board. He minimizes any willing creatures who don't meet the bar's size ordinance (4 ft. or less) with the *reduce* spell by sending them through the Be Small Hall.

BE SMALL HALL (3). This narrow corridor connects the Small Big Entrance holding area to the bar proper, its walls adorned with artful silhouettes of taller figures that get progressively smaller as they get closer to the opposite end of the hallway. The ceiling shifts diagonally from roughly 9 ft. down to 5. Most nights, music carries through the 4.5-ft. tall door at the end of the hall, leading to the Big Little Bar Room.

Inside The Big Little Bar

Upon entering the Big Little Bar Room ***(4)***, guests find themselves among a calm but high-spirited clientele, the majority of whom are halflings and gnomes seeking a cozy space to relax, share stories and drink ale out of mugs that don't require a two-handed grip to lift. The bar's other proprietor, a charming if occasionally foul-mouthed halfling named **Daisy Flyfoot,** manages the flow of half-pints and gossip from her post behind the bar. On any given night, the Big Little Bar hosts miniaturized humanoid creatures of various races, with its no-nonsense hospitality and particular aesthetic having helped build a constant stream of regulars over the years. Occasionally dwarves or smaller humans who barely pass the height requirement forgo the *reduce* spell and fill out the space like a goliath might a more traditional establishment, their arms easily extending to the 5-ft. ceiling.

Getting Out

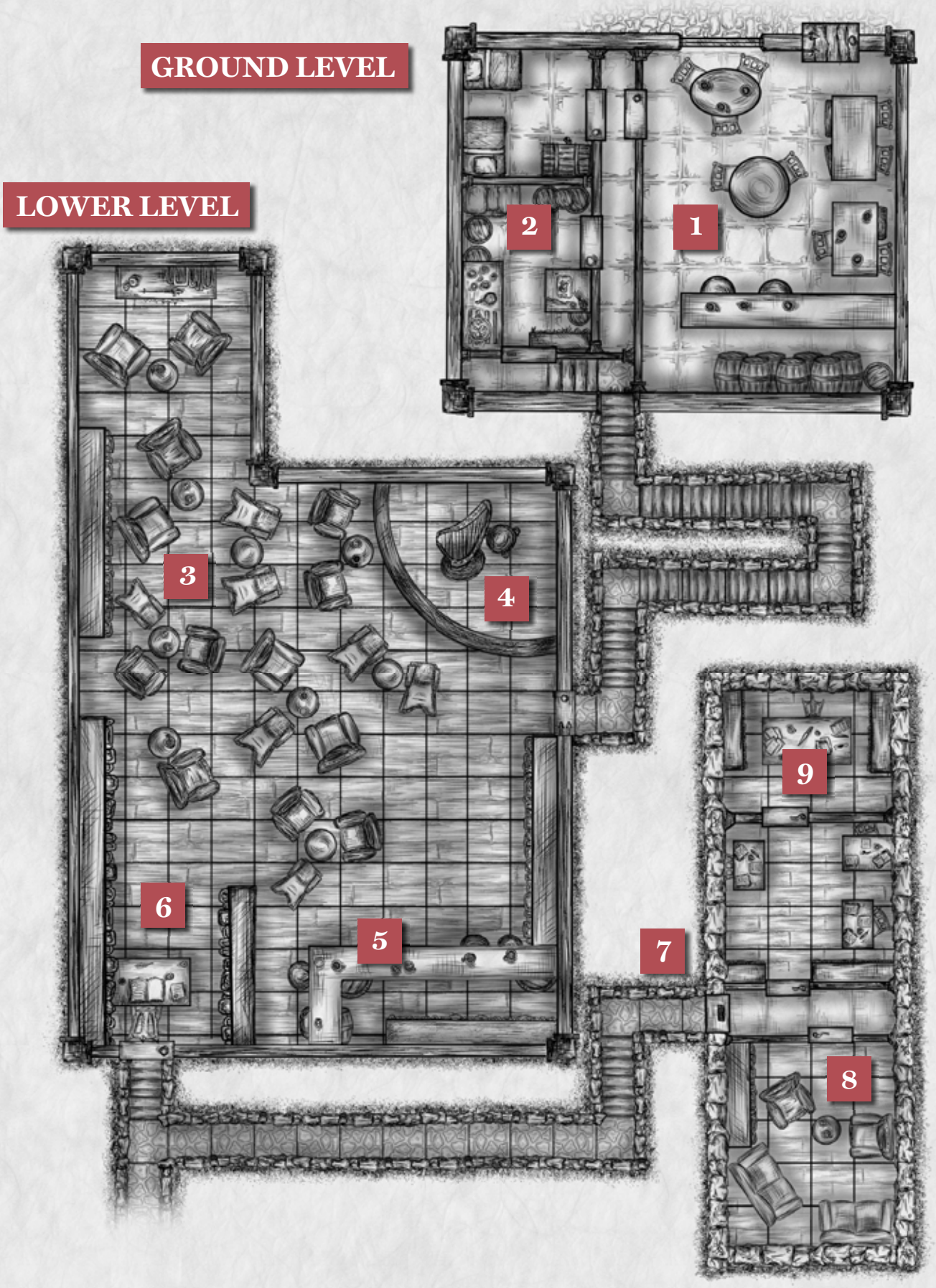
There are two exits to the Big Little Bar, both clearly marked. Anyone under 4 ft. or those wishing to remain reduced for the remainder of the day are free to leave through the Big Small Door. All others are directed to leave through the Big Again Byway, an exit that leads to a small chamber where one by one, guests can return to their normal size.

BIG AGAIN BYWAY (5). Upon entering the Big Again Byway, reduced guests will notice a glowing ring on the wooden floor, a clear marker for a magical enchantment. A sign in Common and Elvish just above the circle reads "Stand here, pull this, be big," and also indicates a lever which stands at 4.5 ft. on the wall, nearly out of reach for smaller guests, a subtle reminder for each patron not to take their full size forms for granted. The lever also features a small coin slot labeled "5sp." Should guests choose to insert 5sp into the slot and pull the lever, they'll find themselves quickly restored to their normal size. Guests who forgo payment and choose to leave the bar will discover the *reduce* spell wears off after a long rest. Dropping a coin in the slot produces a satisfying 'clink,' but upon further investigation doesn't appear to lead to an accessible bank. The lever only works once per patron per day, a further testament to the proprietor's magical prowess.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to see what small wonders and big trouble await the party at the Big Little Bar.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a half-orc **berserker**, concerned by his suddenly small size, who goes into a rage and riots.
2	...a group of 2d4 rotund dwarves picking a fight with 1d4 newly small half-elves.
3	...a halfling wild magic sorcerer surges, causing everyone in the room to double in size before screaming like a woman possessed (note: she is).
4	...a miniature suit of armor adorning the wall springs to life as a small **helmed horror**.
5	...a trio of figures at the bar remove their hoods, revealing themselves to be miniaturized **scarecrows**.
6	...a tap behind the bar starts to seep a mysterious yellowish substance, the start of an **ochre jelly** assault.


GROUND LEVEL
LOWER LEVEL
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The Wounded Rogue

"I don't know how they keep their lights on. The food, the service, everything's terrible. Zero stars. Still, I see plenty of people wandering in off the street. They must make a killing."

—Donna Yelp, amateur food critic

Approaching from the muddy street in the wrong part of town, The Wounded Rogue is certainly not the first place on anyone's list of Top 10 Bars. In fact, it would probably merit inclusion on Fantasy Trip Advisor's Places Sensible People Should Avoid at All Costs list. That suits The Wounded Rogue just fine, as it's not the appeal of the grimy windows or the smell of burnt socks permeating the tiny taproom that has hooded ne'er-do-wells coming back again and again. This relative hole-in-the-wall hides a secret only the shadiest charlatans manage to seek out, and it's well worth the effort.

The Front

GROUND FLOOR. From the outside, this tiny dive bar has grimy windows and a crooked door that looks as if it has been knocked off its hinges more than a few times. A scraggly human barmaid named Karlga welcomes would-be guests with a toothless smile and a quiet, beady-eyed stare. The taproom ***(1)*** is tiny and serves two types of ale: dark and darker. Two other customers in the bar sit slumped over their table, too inebriated to react to any newcomers. The smells of burnt hair and something that may once have resembled food waft through the ajar door to the left which, on further inspection, leads to a narrow hallway where a grumpy half-orc named Unek is sweating in the kitchen ***(2)***.

COMPLIMENTS TO THE CHEF. The only choices on the menu are soup or ale, each for the low, low price of two copper. Both taste overpriced. If the adventurers order the soup, it is delivered quickly by Unek and immediately revealed to be the source of the bar's horrific smell. If a party member is willing to try it, have them make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for the next hour.

A DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a filthy scrap of parchment pinned to the wall behind Karlga which states "Please let the chef know if you enjoy the soup!" and also features markings in Thieves' Cant stating that a respite for all ne'er-do-wells exists below. Should the party choose to give their compliments to the chef, they are directed down the small hallway to the kitchen. Upon receiving compliments for his cooking, Unek will open an almost-seamless hidden door behind a shelf of slowly rotting vegetables, which leads to a bar beneath this one.

If the party fails to figure out the secret of the soup, a cloaked figure can enter the bar, order the soup and have a quiet word with Karlga before disappearing down the hallway. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals their conversation ("Compliments to the chef"/"Tell him yourself."). If the party follows, the figure is gone.

The kitchen's hidden door can also be discovered with a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check.

The Actual Wounded Rogue

There's a refined elegance to this room that is immediately apparent upon entering. Polished wooden floors and stylish leather chairs accompany this beautiful cocktail bar. Hushed conversation permeates the room and is intertwined with the dulcet tones of a harp that makes it extremely difficult to eavesdrop.

The people reclining on the chairs in this well-appointed lounge ***(3)*** all have a certain hard edge to them, and it takes skilled eyes to see beyond the shadows of many hoods in the dim, lantern light. A skilled harp-player ***(4)*** obscures most low-level conversations, and those wishing to listen in must make a Wisdom (Perception) check with disadvantage (DC 20). Lip-reading is equally difficult, as most patrons obscure their mouths with hands or mugs of ale to keep their conversations discreet.

In the corner next to the bar ***(5)*** and surrounded by shelves of leather-bound ledgers is a beautiful mahogany desk ***(6)***. Behind the desk sits the Contractor, Mariosa McGee, a middle-aged, turquoise-skinned tiefling with graying, curly hair tied in a neat bun behind her head and framed by a pair of twisting, black kudu horns. Her flat, white eyes seemingly look at everything and nothing at once as she constantly writes in the open ledger book in front of her. Two attendants, a surly orc named Grit, and Samata, a lithe-looking female half-elf with no tongue, flank Mariosa and see to her every need.

THE GUILD OFFICES. Behind Mariosa's desk is a short tunnel ***(7)*** that leads to a cushy office ***(8)*** that can be hired out for private and sensitive conversations and is warded against eavesdroppers and scrying. A separate door leads to the Assassin's Guild office ***(9)***, through which all Guild business flows. This office is similarly warded and also alarmed against would-be attackers.

Variant Encounter (Optional) Killers for Hire

Should the party wish to enquire about possible contracts available, they can approach and offer to buy Mariosa a drink from the bar, which costs 20gp.

Depending on the party's standing with the Assassin's Guild, roll on the tables on the next page to determine what kind of contracts are available.

Wounded Rogue: Guild Contracts

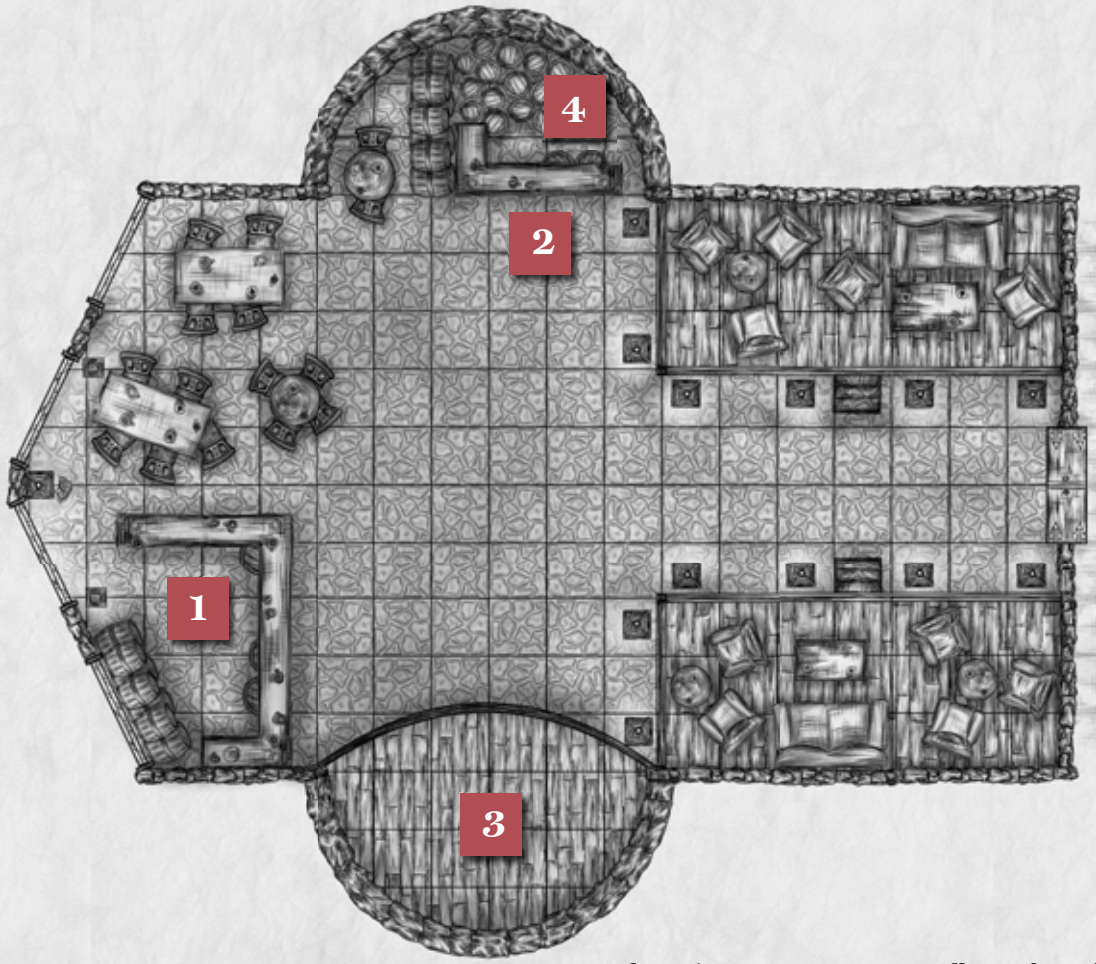
Take a look at this menu and see if any of these dishes suit your appetite. At GM discretion, roll 1d10 on the appropriate table to assign these contracts at random.

Appetizers (a good way to begin)

1	A noblewoman wants to help her husband's mistress find a new home, possibly 6 ft. underground. Maybe with room for him as well. —100gp for one, 300gp for both
2	A local farmer is convinced his neighbor has cursed his field and wants revenge. —45gp
3	The town cheesemonger wants his thieving brother-in-law turned into Swiss. —90gp
4	The proprietor of the Righteous Ale House wants to rough up her business rival at the Golden Apple, whom she believes is using underhanded methods to steal customers. —50gp
5	A mysterious benefactor is paying to have a vial of an unknown substance tipped into the drinking water barrels of the Eastern Guard Barracks. No questions asked, no traces left. —250gp
6	Two brothers have put a hit out on one another in order to lay full claim to their father's inheritance. The current bid is 85gp, though you may be able to play them off each other to the tune of 200gp.
7	A large group of young pickpockets have pooled their resources to ensure the street thief they work for finds himself penniless or worse. —22gp
8	An anonymous donor will pay a divine sum to the soul brave enough to hide three sacks of bones in a nearby temple of life. —186gp
9	One of the region's most prominent philanthropists has been bilking his own charity for years. Do some good by bringing the truth to light, or dispense your own brand of justice. —241gp
10	In the town square is a statue of a woman named Philomena Morgen. People think she's great, but she was actually the worst. Her granddaughter wishes for it to be defaced or destroyed. Bonus points (and pay) for style. —45gp, triple if the job causes a major fuss. She would have hated that.

Mains (for the more experienced palate)

1	The serfs of an iron-handed liege lord have unionized and pooled their resources, wanting to claim what's owed to them in both blood and lands. Death to the bourgeoisie! —1,245gp
2	The Crown Prince of a rival kingdom wants his fiancé, the Crown Prince of this kingdom, to have a horrific and fatal accident immediately following their wedding day next week. Must be no trace of foul play. —3,000gp
3	A noble is looking for assistance in "removing" a village of **druids**, **pixies** and **giants** that have taken up residence in his forest. —850gp
4	An acolyte wants an entire temple's worth of clerics and paladins put down for what she believes are heretical practices occurring among her order's leadership. —1,000gp in rare artifacts and artwork
5	A soldier who spent 15 years in prison for desertion is ready to exercise revenge on the corrupt general who forced him out. —785gp and access to rare and powerful military weaponry
6	Several wealthy benefactors are interested in the complete destruction of the seat of power in this city. It should seem as though this event has been perpetrated by a supernatural or extraplanar force. —3,400gp (double if it results in a war)
7	There's a hermit in a cave nearby. Some think he's a druid. We think he's a **brass dragon**. Whatever he is, the merchants want him gone. —645gp, plus whatever's in the cave
8	One of our special clients will pay you 100gp for every innocent life you take from the time you agree to this contract until the following sunrise.
9	From the client: "Please kill my dad. Please make it public. Please make him squeal. P.S.: My dad is a god." —6,800gp
10	A suspected **rakshasa** is masquerading as a minister. Take him out. Not once: forever. —4,745gp



Temple Bar

"Come worship with us! Two drink minimum, no singles" —sign outside Temple Bar

Praise a Glass

A group of enterprising hedonists bought this space when it was a run-down shrine to a mostly forgotten god, Fairguun. It now serves as a de facto dancehall dedicated to Dionysus. A space defined by its past as much as its present, Temple Bar's slab floors and open archways give it a monolithic feel—a once hallowed ground now serving as a gateway to the sometimes divine act of eating, drinking and dancing. Fairguun, a divine being long associated with fertility and a good harvest, fell out of favor many centuries ago following a decades-long drought and, as such, her temple here languished and eventually sat empty for years. Recently purchased and now refurbished, Temple Bar serves all manner of spirits, snacks and other sinful delights at its two bars ***(1)*** ***(2)***. The transgressive concept of the bar is both a subject of controversy and part of its appeal. The servers and bartenders wear matching, slightly skimpy vestments and ask for tithes as opposed to tips, while a choir of bards play ribald, rhythmic tunes that equally mock gods of all pantheons from the main stage ***(3)***.

Temple Bar's customers are generally cut from the same cloth—outsiders and trendsetters who have no issue thumbing their nose at the holy or sanctified. A trap door beyond the smaller bar ***(4)*** leads to the crypts, the sewers or another location at GM discretion.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to reveal what sacrilege occurs at Temple Bar.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...a **priest** of Fairguun from another part of the realm who has arrived at Temple Bar following a months-long pilgrimage and is viewing the space with a pained look in his eye.
2	...a group of 2d4 city **guards** arriving to address an indecency complaint, which the bar owners refuse to pay.
3	...a drunk patron knocking over a statue of Fairguun, which smashes into the floor, unveiling a crypt with 2d4 rising **skeletons**.
4	...three "high priestesses" of Temple Bar who challenge select members of the party to a dance contest.
5	...an **assassin** hired by one of the city's more devout nobles who will attempt to poison the drinks at Temple Bar in order to put them out of business.
6	...a lecherous dwarf who calls himself "Cleric of the New Fairguun" overtly offering to help anyone within earshot with all their fertility needs.

NPC Profile

Ruby Sunbeam, druid barista

A 30-something half-elven female with braided black hair shaved close along one side, Ruby Sunbeam is as committed to harmony with nature as she is to making a profit off it. Having trained in the druidic arts for much of her adolescence, Ruby couldn't quite commit herself fully to nature and instead decided to use her talents to start her own small business. After encountering two pixies in the Feywild who were both looking for a unique enterprise of their own, the three crafted a remarkable recipe for a potent potion that brings an instant rush of energy and a jolt to the senses. It's also incredibly addicting. Sardonic and steady, she is committed to her business's success and will protect her interests at any cost.

The Wide-Eyed Willow

A pleasant place for a chat, a warming mug of tea or a cup of the proprietor's signature "Cold Brew," this café-style establishment is equal parts calming and innervating. And its customers keep coming back.

> As you enter the Wide-Eyed Willow, you feel as if you're in a sunlit forest in the Feywild. Colorful beads of light float around the interior, illuminating the shade from a central willow tree that's thriving indoors. The smell of moss, mocha and freshly tilled earth fill your nostrils as a short queue of customers wait patiently for their orders to be filled by a busy half-elven woman with braided hair and a wry smile. A small sign by the counter declares: "Tea 1sp, Cold Brew 2sp. Ask about our new customer policy."

Interior

The Wide-Eyed Willow is an open space, but its various nooks and woodsy interior create an immediate sense of intimacy ***(1)***. Well-fashioned tables and chairs as well as cozier furniture offer a chance to catch up with old friends or make new ones. The serving counter ***(2)*** features a few barstools, though the line of customers around it makes sitting there a choice of last resort. A large willow tree ***(3)*** growing inside this space creates ambiance as well as a small abode for two **pixies**, Mink and Wink, and its trunk and branches extend from within this cafe out to the patio ***(4)***.

SERVICE COUNTER. The service counter of the Wide-Eyed Willow is piled high with pastries and other baked goods, and beyond it is a small alchemy station ***(5)*** where the Willow's proprietor, **Ruby Sunbeam**, mixes her brews, which she serves chilled through a combination of on-hand ice and arcane techniques.

COLD BREW. This proprietary blend of herbs, spices and a bean harvested from the outdoor garden ***(6)*** that's been roasted and ground gives a boost of energy along with its somewhat bitter taste. The kick keeps customers coming back for a daily dose. A new customer can enjoy their first cold brew on the house.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

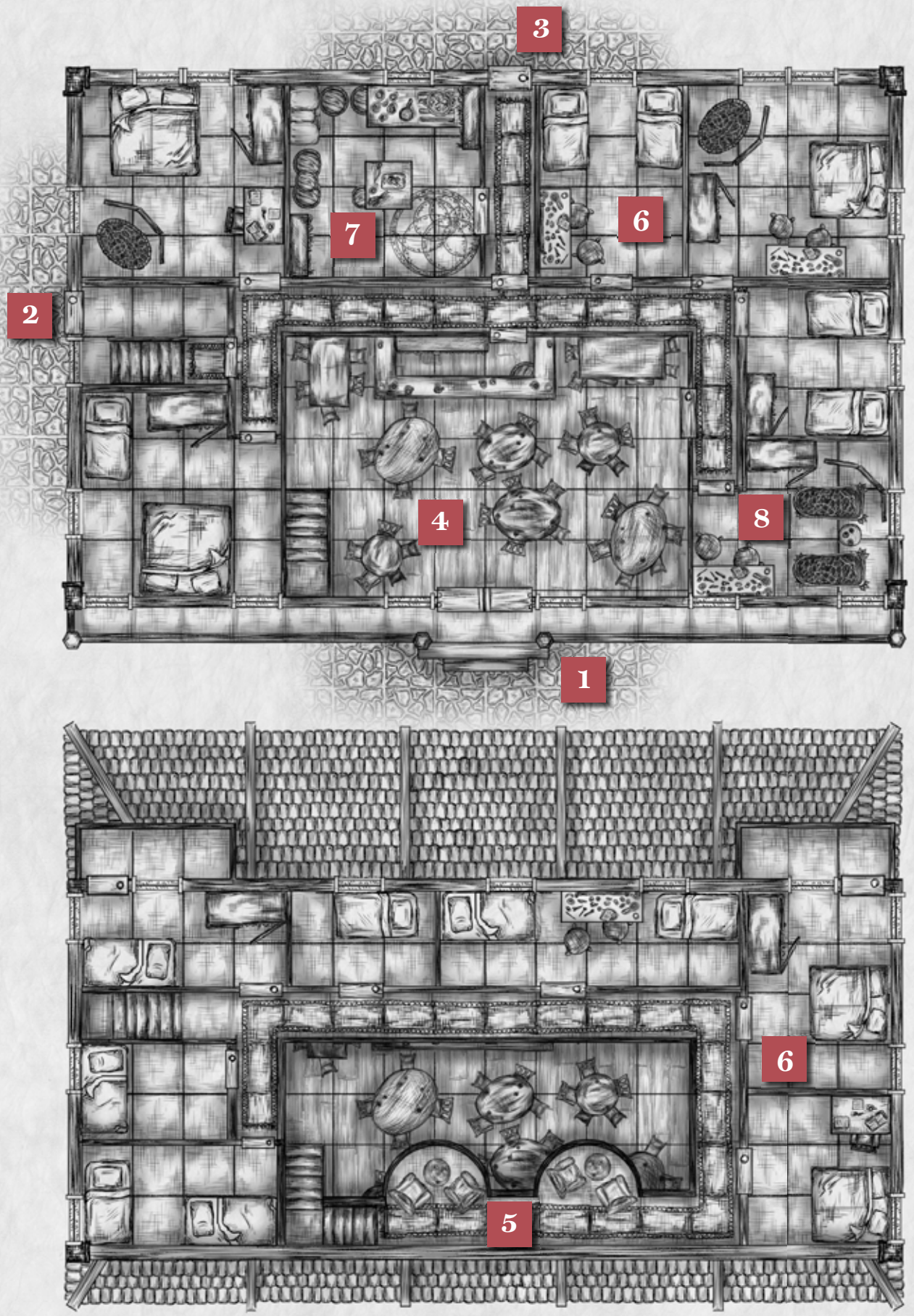
1d6	What's happening at the Wide-Eyed Willow?
1	A surly-looking half-orc has been taking up an entire table on his own for nearly three hours but has yet to place an order. He refuses to budge.
2	Mink and Wink, two **pixies** who work with Ruby, emerge from their home within the willow tree and begin teasing customers in line.
3	An elven female asks the party if they wouldn't mind watching her bag for a moment while she deals with something outside. The bag contains a **green faerie dragon** that takes the opportunity to escape.
4	Two **druids**, their faces obscured by masks, stride through the willow tree and into the café, demanding Ruby hand over her recipe for Cold Brew or deal with the consequences.
5	A group of four young, tragically hip humans notice the adventurers and can be overheard making fun of their attire.
6	A budding author working on his manuscript while finishing his fourth Cold Brew of the day excitedly solicits true stories of derring-do from the adventurers, offering 10gp for each provable story (max 100gp).

Cold Brew

Wondrous Item (potion), COMMON, 2sp

For up to an hour after consuming this concoction, you feel more alert and have +2 to both initiative rolls and passive perception.

When the potion wears off, make a DC 17 Constitution save or suffer -4 to initiative rolls and passive perception, as what the locals refer to as the "Cold Brew crash" washes over you. This effect lasts 24 hours but can be removed via the *greater restoration* spell or by consuming another Cold Brew.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The Red Herring

For travelers seeking the softest beds and finest linens, this opulent boutique hotel offers a level of service and comfort unparalleled in most parts of the realm. The Red Herring's proprietor, a telepathic half-elven woman named **Calley O'Toole**, sees to customers' every need.

Entrances and Exits

The Red Herring features a main entrance ***(1)*** that leads directly to the parlor, plus an entrance for guests who wish to avoid the parlor's typical crowds ***(2)***. An entrance for employees can be found along the inn's backside ***(3)***.

Parlor and Private Lounge

The Red Herring's parlor ***(4)*** is an immaculately appointed lounge space featuring dark, polished wood surfaces, gold inlays and a scuff-free marble floor. The bar's prices—more than double those of any establishment nearby—do much to keep the riffraff from spoiling the evening, but for clientele who require even more of a remove from those they deem below their station, the Red Herring does have private seating for preferred guests on the second-floor balcony ***(5)***. From this perch, those willing to pay for the privilege can enjoy their libations while looking down on the rest of the guests—a metaphor they knowingly embrace.

Lodgings

Bedrooms at the Red Herring ***(6)*** are available on an hourly, nightly or weekly basis for those who have the coin, and in the past, arrangements have been made for guests who wished to extend their stay for a month or more.

Kitchens

While this space features the requisite mechanisms of any quality kitchen, the cooking space within the Red Herring ***(7)*** is more conduit than creative arena, and it is one of the secrets to the inn's success. A teleportation circle within the kitchen ensures if the Red Herring's cooks can't prepare a particular dish, they can bring in someone who can. Guests from far-off lands can request the cuisine of their homeland and find that, remarkably, it will be available within the hour, regardless of how obscure its ingredients might be due to this feature. Much like everything else at the Red Herring, these services come with a hefty price tag.

Baths

A long journey can sully the appearance of even the most noble of travelers, and for this reason the Red Herring offers a wide array of spa services—including washings, massages, manicures and more—in its large bathhouse ***(8)***.

NPC Profile

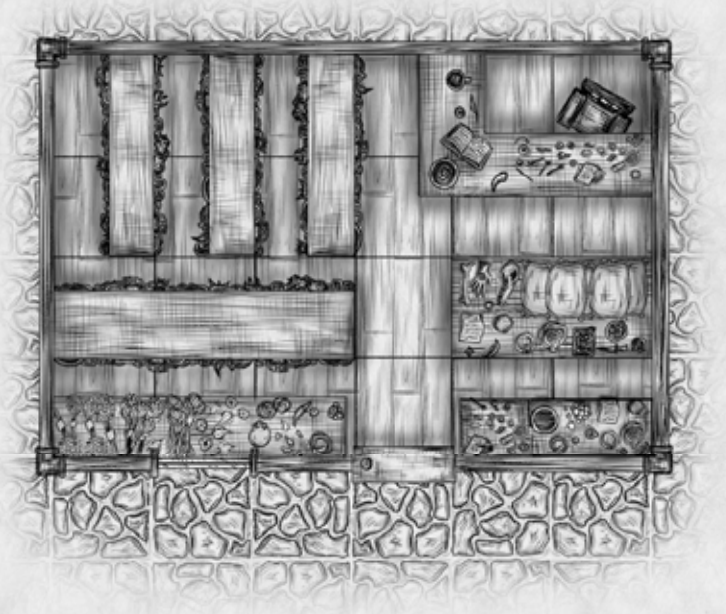
Calley O'Toole, half-elf hotelier

To hear her tell it, when Calley O'Toole inherited the Red Herring from her father 14 years ago, it was in complete disrepair. Today it is considered one of the most successful inns of its size, thanks in no small part to Miss O'Toole's singular vision, attention to detail and ability to cut through the pleasantries to determine precisely what her clientele desires. She will openly discuss nearly any topic at length, but follows any formal booking with a discrete "Need anything else?" asked wordlessly within the client's mind. Though the service at the Red Herring is second to none, some attribute the inn's success to Miss O'Toole's lack of scruples when it comes to fulfilling these silent requests, no matter how strange, shocking or vile. It should also be noted that Miss O'Toole is, in reality, a **succubus** who replaced the innkeeper not long after his death and uses the Red Herring as a home base for her life's work: the slow corruption of the human soul.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine whether riches or ruin awaits the party within the walls of the Red Herring.

1d6	The party...
1	...learns the teleportation circle in the kitchen has been commandeered by a band of 2d6 **lizardfolk** intent on looting the inn.
2	...hears screams echoing from the bathhouse as a **water weird** begins to overwhelm a wealthy patron.
3	...overhears a conversation between two merchants in the private lounge getting heated, as one challenges the other to a duel.
4	...is oblivious to a highly skilled charlatan slinking through the parlor, picking the pockets of every man she encounters (DC 17).
5	...sees an unctuous guest at the bar bragging about his last visit to the Red Herring, where his request to dine on unicorn tartare was fulfilled.
6	...meets a traveling **gladiator** who arrived with his entourage and demands to sit at the table (or stay in the room) where the party has positioned themselves.



Mini Market

A small shop amid the bustle of the busiest street in town, this humble space sells a little bit of everything but all of nothing and is managed by **Amadeus Thudd**, a big man who is ready to expand.

Shop Interior

The inside of the Mini Market is a mixed bag of shelves filled with a wide array of merchandise, including nonperishable foodstuffs, potions, waterskins, weaponry, hats, blankets, packs, uncured leather, alchemical supplies, tinkering wares, a wheel for a cart, a key to a chest no one's been able to find, a few pieces of farming equipment, a copper kettle, a wad of string, a bolt, a rag doll with some pins in it and a jug sealed with a large plug among other less-useful odds and ends. It is, in sum, akin to an adventurer's flea market, and there's no telling what one might find, though they'll at least find the gazing attention of Spat, a small, one-eyed rat who hangs around the shop and keeps Amadeus company.

A Little Bit of Everything

If an adventurer is seeking something specific, they can ask Amadeus, the Mini Market's sole proprietor, if he has it in stock. Amadeus will think long and hard, then suggest the adventurer look in a specific corner of the shop (at GM discretion). The character should then roll an Intelligence (Investigation) check (DC 15) to determine if they can find the item requested. Despite the fact that most of the goods sold at the Mini Market are common in nature, approximately 5 percent of the items in the shop are magical, with properties and rarities determined at GM discretion.

NPC Profile

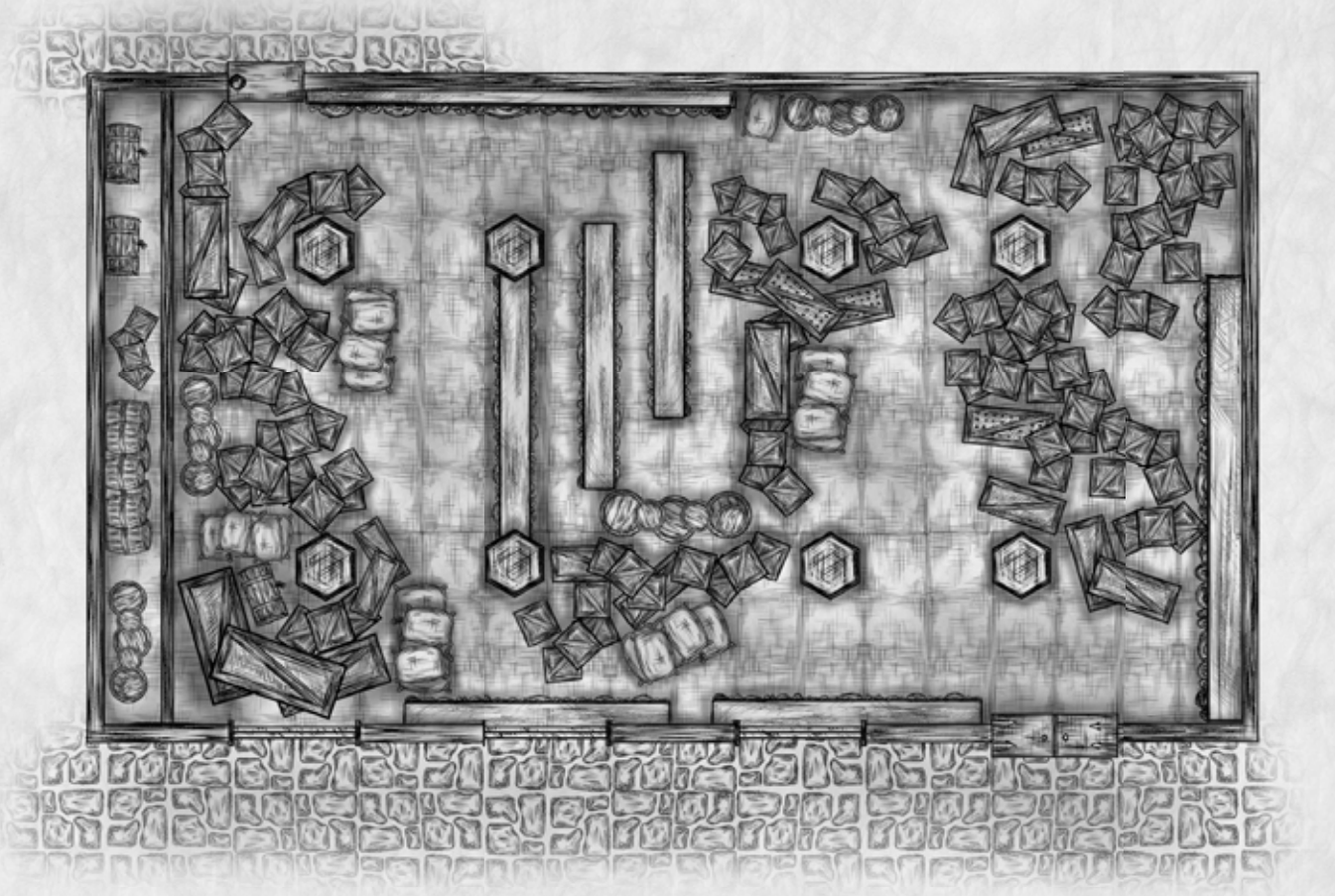
Amadeus Thudd, half-giant shopkeeper

A half-giant of colossal size who makes his small shop feel even more diminutive, Amadeus Thudd ("Mad" to his friends) left the adventuring life behind after a close companion was disintegrated before his eyes by an evil sorcerer. Amadeus removed the sorcerer's arms as well as his tongue, but a hole in his heart still remained. He walked away from fighting dragons and pillaging dungeons and now spends his time outfitting others to do the same. He sells just about anything an adventurer could need, but due to the size of his shop he rarely has more than one of anything in stock—though he's hoping to get enough capital together to build a larger location. He is eager to offer advice from his years of adventuring experience, and though his greatsword is a bit rusty, his mind is sharp.

Variant Encounter (optional)

Roll 1d6 to see what else might be in the Mini Market.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a baby **orc** who wandered from its family.
2	...1d4 **bullywugs** who want to trade mud for gold.
3	...a pig that takes a liking to the party.
4	...a **yochlol** disguised as a female drow, browsing for jars.
5	...a tiny jug filled with blue liquid—and a **marid**.
6	...an angry bull that despises fine china.



Variant Storage Space

This large, nondescript warehouse is the perfect place to stow goods and materials for commercial or personal use, and by using the tables below, it can be modified to suit numerous purposes. Magical means are assumed if, for example, the goods being stored require refrigeration or other temperature control.

Warehouse Height

1d4	The ceiling of this warehouse is...
1	20 ft. high
2	40 ft. high
3	60 ft. high
4	80 ft. high

Warehouse Contents

1d20	The majority of the crates, sacks and/or barrels here contain...
1	Beer and wine
2	Fine fabrics
3	Beans
4	Grain
5	Unprocessed ore
6	Luggage
7	A necromancer's clones
8	Frozen meats
9	Wax figures of nobles throughout history
10	Parchment
11	Glass containers of various sizes
12	Flour
13	Pickled vegetables
14	Medicinal herbs
15	Spices from a far-off land
16	Oil-based paint
17	Organs and pelts from creatures of all types
18	Cheese
19	Sporting goods
20	GM's choice

Warehouse Security

1d6	The warehouse is guarded by...
1	...2d4 **mastiffs** and doors with the *alarm* spell.
2	...2d4 **veterans** and doors with *glyphs of hold person*.
3	...2d4 **gladiators** and 1d4 **death dogs**.
4	...2d4 **guards** and 1d4 **blink dogs**.
5	...2d4 **scouts** and an anti-magic field.
6	...2d4 conscripted **azers** and 1d4 **direwolves**.

The Dream Archive

"There's a place where you can peer into the very dreams of your lovin' wife. Or the king. Or his horse. 'Course I've always felt what a man sees in his mind's eye under his own blankets is his business. Then again, I don't dream much. And definitely not about horses." —Bort Fellows, town drunk

Hidden in the darker recesses of the urban landscape, this rarely visited sanctum serves as a repository for centuries of slumbering thought. Rows of shelves create a labyrinthine interior and are lined with unmarked leather-bound tomes, each hundreds of pages thick, filled with varied script in every language one can imagine and containing detailed descriptions of thousands of dreams. Atop a pillar beyond the shelves sits a marble owl, elegantly carved, peering toward an enclosed tower. Beyond the tower's enchanted door lies a small reflecting pool offering access to the visions of kings and paupers alike—for a price.

Reception

The Dream Archive is staffed by an archivist, a mute high elf named **Amaro**. He spends much of his time arranging and rearranging the books on the shelves, reorganizing based on a categorizational system known only to him. Visitors must check in with him in this space ***(1)***, from whence he'll escort the curious through the archive if they state a specific purpose for their inquiry, requiring success on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

The Stacks

The rows of shelves ***(2)*** within the Dream Archive are so uniform and numerous that it's easy for one to get lost exploring them, and that's before the archive's magical effects kick in. Anyone exploring the Stacks without the guidance of Amaro must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check or suffer the effects of the *confusion* spell, which lasts until they leave the Dream Archive. A single archived dream from a specific person would be difficult if not impossible to locate, if it even exists, but Amaro may be able to point the curious in the right direction at GM discretion—or if they succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (History) check. Roll on the Vision Table on pg. 120, or reveal your own results at GM discretion.

NPC Profile

Amaro, high elf archivist

Slender, stoic and seemingly engaged in several trains of thought at the same time, Amaro has been the lead curator at the Dream Archive since its inception several hundred years ago. He lacks the ability to speak but does possess the ability to communicate telepathically with one creature at a time if he so chooses. He moves slowly but with deliberate purpose, and takes as sacred his duty to catalogue the dreams and nightmares presented as part of the ritual in the dream pool.

The Owl's Perch

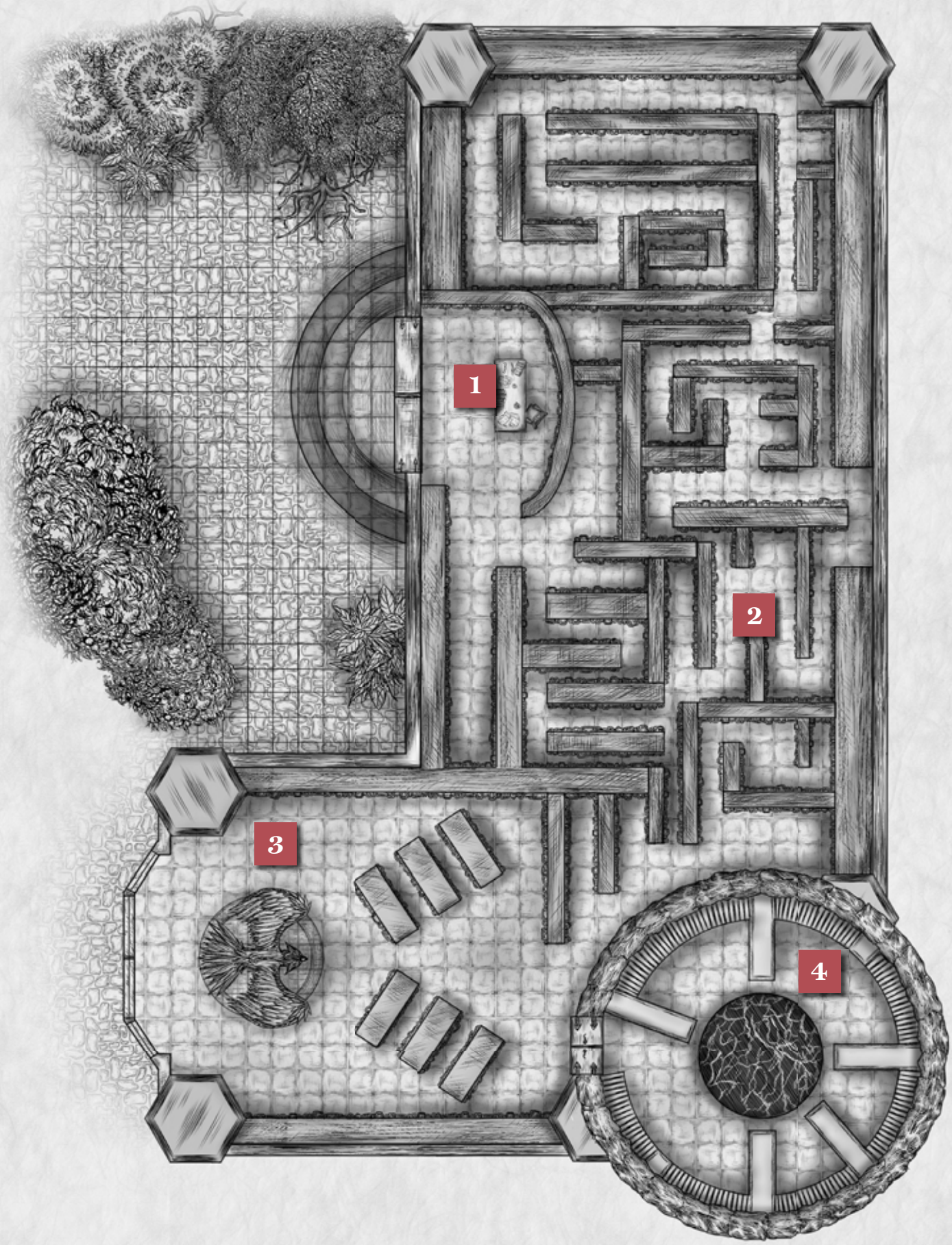
Beyond the cramped and towering maze of shelves in the Stacks is an open atrium where six shelves of far less dusty tomes face a centralized pillar supporting a statue of a large owl carved from marble ***(3)***. The owl's eyes peer directly at a set of ornate doors on the opposite side of the atrium that lead into a large stone tower. Beneath the pillar, carved in elvish, is the phrase: "*Seek what thou won't find. Give what thou would take.*" Upon reading this phrase aloud, the doors along the curved tower wall slowly open, and anyone within 5 ft. of the statue hears a soft voice within their mind, directing them to "peer into the pool."

The Dream Pool

Beyond the doors of the tower sits a magnificent pool of deep, clear water reflecting the image of whatever sky shines down from a clear glass dome that crowns the tower ***(4)***. A staircase winds up the stone walls, with five viewing platforms interspersed at different levels. Peering into the Dream Pool reveals visions from within the minds of the world. Once invited, a viewer can speak one name aloud—the soft voice in their heads leading them through the ritual. If the viewer's intentions are pure, they may see the most recent dream of their named subject. If the viewer's intentions are nefarious, the dream is harder to divine—in fact, a viewer may encounter a nightmare of their own. When a viewer peers into the pool, consult the Dream Table on pgs. 120–121.

Anyone looking directly into the pool before being invited to do so must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 15). On a failed save, the target is subject to 10d6 psychic damage, or half as much on a successful save, and is paralyzed, as the haunting visions they see there corrupt their mental state.

KEEPING A RECORD. A dream must be recorded and preserved and this fact is nonnegotiable. If a viewer sees a dream, they will be approached by Amaro, his gnarled hands presenting an archive book open to a blank page, quill at the ready, his wishes clarified by the same soft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voice in the viewer's mind. Any viewer wishing to exit the archive without recording their vision will find their actions impossible, as upon waking each day they will discover they are back in the Dream Archive, standing over the pool, Amaro by their side, quill in hand, awaiting their entry.

The Dream Table

When a character looks into the Dream Pool, they must name a target, then make a roll based on their alignment (Good, d10; Neutral, d8; or Evil, d6). A character led here by a deity or vision may add 1d4 to this roll.

2 or lower	**Personal nightmare** A character viewing a personal nightmare sees a vision evoking their darkest fear. They must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 20). On a failed save, the viewer is subject to 6d6 psychic damage, or half as much on a success, and is also frightened of the Dream Pool, for fear of what they may see there. Additionally, the viewer does not gain the regular benefits of a long rest for 1d4 days—the torment and terror of what they've seen following them far beyond the walls of the archive.
3–4	**No vision** The viewer peers into the pool but sees only their reflection. The voice in their mind suggests they "look again, without looking so hard." If they choose to roll again, they will see no vision. If they choose instead to walk away, a dream will be revealed as if they'd seen it in the pool.
5 or higher	**A dream is revealed** The player sees a vision of the most recent dream of the person they named as part of this ritual. This vision is subject to GM discretion, or can be determined randomly by rolling on the Vision Table.

The Vision Table

1d100	The target is...
1	...bathing in a pool of blood, surrounded by corpses—a smile on their face.
2	...running as fast as they can, pursued by an unseen force, their eyes wide with panic.
3	...leading a crowded tavern in a rousing rendition of "The Followers of Flume" and cementing themselves as one of the greatest bards of all time.
4	...enjoying a meal as the only guest at the head of a long table, which never seems to end, the food piled high and slowly beginning to rot.
5	...staring up at a burning pyre, watching the flames lick at a charred body until it falls to ash.
6	...opening a beautifully wrapped gift. Their face holds a child's innocence and wonder.
7	...floating on their back down a wide river. The distant thundering of a waterfall drawing nearer and nearer.
8	...playing with several puppies, laughing as they jump around and nibble on their fingers.
9	...scraping their bloody fingers across the walls of a prison cell, scribbling in a forgotten language.
10	...fishing by a tranquil lake. A large, **green dragon** sits with them and watches.
11	...continuously filling out stacks of neverending paperwork piled high upon their desk.
12	...riding a horse through a dark forest, whipping it faster and faster as they chase their quarry.
13	...walking through a darkened crypt, weaving in and out of the massive caskets until they stop in front of one with an open lid.
14	...kneeling atop a sheer, obsidian tower while a storm rages around them.
15	...gazing up blankly at a dead tree. Hanging from its gnarled branches are several bodies.
16	...praying in an empty temple until their god comes forth and gives them guidance on their path.
17	...sitting on a throne and staring into a dark abyss. Tears of joy run down their face as shadows spring forth from the pit to drag them in.
18	...holding a plucked chicken, offering it feebly to a group of starved, knife-wielding children.
19	...small—smaller than a grain of sand—and trapped inside the eye of a celestial.
20	...aware that you are watching their dreams. The player may choose to have a conversation with the dreamer.
21	...covered in a thick goo, struggling to breathe, as their loved ones look on laughing.
22	...holding an ebony dagger, repeating the name "Ella" and stabbing the air as their voice grows hoarse.
23	...standing behind you, looking over your shoulder into the dream pool, and is not amused.
24	...attending a holy ceremony, where they are suddenly crippled by the need to vomit.
25	...calmly looking out a window as screams emanate from a nearby dwelling.
26	...carousing among the stars with ethereal fey creatures, their voice a thunderclap.
27	...staring into a portal to another realm, as a creature of immense power stares back.
28	...desperately trying to peel off their own face, a tome in Abyssal open at their feet.
29	...arguing with a goat about the deeper meaning of life as the goat stoicly gazes back.
30	...enjoying a ticklish warmth between their thighs until they look down into a sea of glowing eyes.
31	...clutching the necklace they always wear, as shadows swirl in and out of view.
32	...gambling all they possess, despite the cards in their hand all being blank.
33	...casually discussing the events of the day while slowly roasting on a spit.
34	...planning the execution of their betrothed.
35	...careening down the side of a rainbow.
36	...kissing the **succubus** that dwells in their closet.

37	...emerging from a dark forest, dragging the head of a dead lycanthrope. Their own head is missing.
38	...all alone, all alone, all alone, forever alone.
39	...drenched in sweat, trembling atop the highest building around, holding a small raven's feather.
40	...on the back of a tiny horse, leading a vast army.
41	...hammering away at a blacksmith's forge, crafting an ornate mace.
42	...pouring over the entrails of a slaughtered calf, and pulling out a beautifully cut emerald.
43	...carving a name you don't recognize into the floorboards of a house you've seen before.
44	...wrapped in furs, controlling a deadly blizzard.
45	...glowing with radiant light, enveloped by love.
46	...starving within the stomach of a giant beast.
47	...skipping across an open ocean, leaping over the waves, racing for the horizon.
48	...moaning and swaying in time to a drum beating on a distant continent.
49	...hurling fireballs into a rockstrewn canyon as they scream your name in anguish.
50	...following a spectral voice down a dark corridor, their breathing growing ever more ragged.
51	...savoring the last drop of wine from the last bottle aboard a ship at the edge of the world.
52	...wearing a crown made of teeth and sharpened bone, climbing out of a hole filled with devils.
53	...giving birth to a beautiful baby eel.
54	...being dragged through town beneath the floating body of a dragon set on destruction.
55	...picking their teeth with a giant's greatsword.
56	...opening an elegantly carved trunk, admiring the village of pixies trapped inside.
57	...convinced a **bugbear** is truly a cursed prince.
58	...invisible, and loving every minute of it.
59	...incapable of dreaming.
60	...staring into a well, aging one year each second.
61	...bargaining with an **empyrean**, and winning.
62	...suffering through their third day in a harpy's nest.
63	...commanding a legion of **kobolds**, who cackle in glee at the word "SOON."
64	...putting away their armor, their padding, their topshirt, their skin, their organs, their bones.
65	...cursed to teach a **troglodyte** to dance.
66	...haunted by visions of the night they were forced to kill someone innocent.
67	...infatuated with their reflection.
68	...the guest of honor at a vampire wedding.
69	...entertaining a **sphinx**, who asks them a favor.
70	...one of a **hydra**'s seven snarling heads.
71	...a ghost haunting their own home, terrorizing their own family for want of a warm embrace.
72	...mocking a vision of themselves from the past, teasing, "You gave the seeds away for a song."
73	...poring over scrolls that speak of an ancient treasure beneath their doorstep.
74	...being carried like a martyr through the town market by an army of **giant spiders**.
75	...chained in a damp dungeon, screaming without making a sound.
76	...gliding with their limbs completely stiff and still, across an incredibly long drawbridge toward a crumbling black castle.
77	...sitting in a leafless tree, laughing maniacally as they pick a buzzard's carcass clean.
78	...falling from the sky with no sign yet of the ground below, shouting "Fly! Fly! C'mon, fly!"
79	...keeping watch over a flock of sheep, who suddenly bare fangs and attack.
80	...peering into a pool in a library almost exactly like this one, your name on their lips.
81	...laughing uproariously while drinking ale in a tavern full of rotting corpses.
82	...trapped within a portrait of themselves, watching as admirers stare in silent reverence.
83	...escorted in a sedan chair held aloft by cats on their hind legs, as a kitten feeds them sardines.
84	...raining over the continent as a violent storm.
85	...hiding behind the curtains in a wealthy merchant's bedroom as his wife explains why she's still in bed at noon.
86	...struggling to keep their head above water as ocean waves crash around them, a ship's lamp receding into the distance.
87	...on horseback charging toward an **orc** horde, who scatter into dust upon first contact.
88	...dead, and always has been.
89	...strolling through an open battlefield, as arrows and battleaxes fly past without consequence.
90	...begging in the street for a crust of bread, before cursing your name and swearing vengeance.
91	...buried in the scabbard of a great warrior **mage**, quietly aching to be unsheathed, hungry for the taste of an enemy's blood.
92	...soaring over the forest and deep into the nearest mountain range, a pulsing gold light spurring them on as a voice whispers "Find me."
93	...overlooking a gathered populace from a balcony, their speech suddenly inscrutable.
94	...looking back at you, shouting "PLEASE—I'm trapped here. Please kill me!"
95	...counting their gold piece by piece, before swallowing each one.
96	...dilligently gardening in a desert, each sprout and flower withering in the oppressive sunlight.
97	...hurriedly carving themselves out of stone, as their shadow begins to shift and slip away.
98	...celebrating their newfound immortality by raising a poisoned glass, as the demon they unleashed devours what's left of their family.
99	...butchering a hog into ever smaller pieces.
100	...carving the names of each member of your party inside a simple wooden bowl.

Caravan Bazaar

Trade routes across the region convene in this outdoor market, with dozens of small shops of all types popping up for a tenday or two. The impermanent nature of the bazaar ensures it's rarely the same experience twice, as transient merchants sell what they can then take their carts to the next town. The market is full of people at all hours of the day and nearly as busy at night, making it a prime spot for pickpockets, charlatans and other ne'er-do-wells.

Shops

To determine which merchants are present at the bazaar during this visit, roll on the table below for every tent visited by a potential customer to determine what might be for sale. For each of the merchants, use the races suggested or, for even more variance, use the Random NPC Generator (pg. 237).

1d20	This tent is operated by...
1	...a human blacksmith.
2	...a human bookseller.
3	...a gnomish jeweler.
4	...an elven antiquities dealer.
5	...a halfling locksmith.
6	...a half-elf fletcher/bowmaster.
7	...a human butcher.
8	...a human baker.
9	...a gnomish candlestick maker.
10	...a halfling mapmaker.
11	...a half-orc tattoo artist.
12	...a human fruit merchant.
13	...a human sketch artist.
14	...a dwarven cheesemonger.
15	...a human healer for hire.
16	...a tiefling arcane artifact merchant.
17	...an elven woodworker.
18	...a half-elf beastmaster.
19	...a human vegetable farmer.
20	...a human furniture dealer.

Crowds

The Caravan Bazaar is often a sea of people, and moving from one end to the other takes time, patience and the occasional shove. Because of the crush of the gathered groups here, as well as the precarious nature of the cords and ties pinning the market's tents to the ground, the entire area is considered difficult terrain.

In the event of an attack, assault or other frightening encounter, roll 1d20. A roll of 10 or lower triggers a crowd surge, with an entire market's worth of people fleeing in haste. Any creature in the crowd must move away from the inciting incident or succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 12). On a failed save, they suffer 2d8 bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone as they are trampled by the crowd.

Encounter Variant (Optional)
Unsteady Setup

The tents at the Caravan Bazaar are meant to be portable and somewhat disposable, and most merchants choose to bring their own. Because so many tents rise and fall throughout the week, the cords that keep them tacked to the ground are often a tangled mess, so when the wind shifts and collapses one tent, odds are several more will follow, a chain reaction that is unwelcome but not uncommon. Anytime a creature walks along a space directly touching a tent, have them make a Dexterity check (DC 10). On a failed save, the player trips over one of the tent's cords and causes a partial collapse. Roll 1d6 to determine how many other tents are affected.

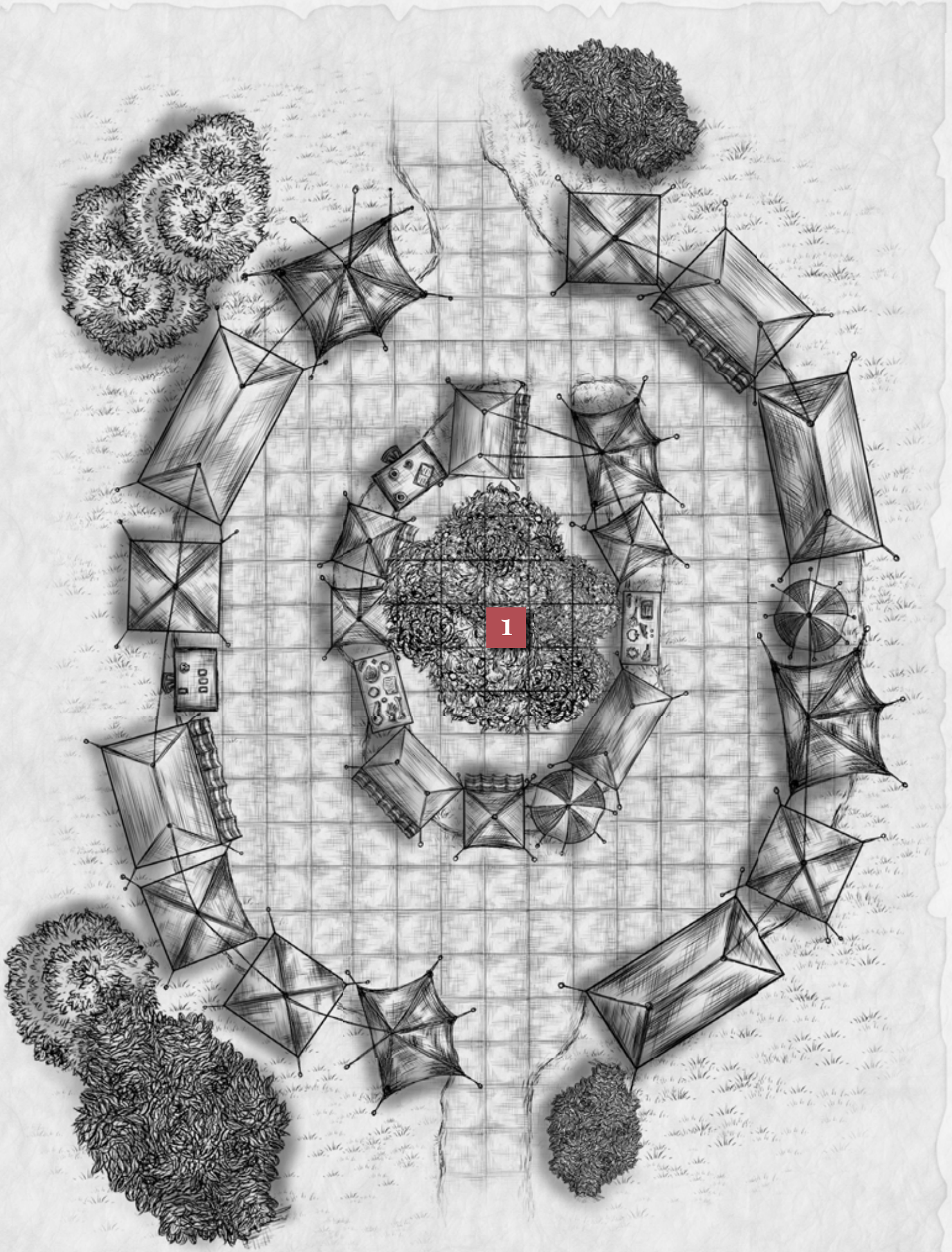
The Communal Oak

A large tree *(1)* shades much of the Caravan Bazaar, with many of its branches older than the town that rose up around it. Its lowest branches are 10 ft. off the ground, but beyond that they are numerous and easy to climb among.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what other adventures might await the party at the Caravan Bazaar.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a group of 2d4 hired **thugs** attacking from the trees, killing a merchant before trying to escape.
2	...a **dire wolf** break loose from its cage at a beastmaster's tent and begin growling near the Communal Oak.
3	...nothing, as an expert pickpocket (+15 to sleight of hand) takes advantage of the party at GM discretion.
4	...a starving **xorn** erupt from the earth beneath the Bazaar, menacing a gem merchant and pleading for "delicious stones."
5	...a band of 2d4 **goblin** raiders gallop in on hungry wolves looking to menace the entire market.
6	...a **djinni** released from a small box among the relics of an antiquities dealer who is displeased with its captor. Roll 1d20. On a roll of 18 or higher, the djinni has the power to grant 1 (18), 2 (19) or 3 (20) wishes.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Peerless Potions

Derisively nicknamed "Perilous Potions" by the locals, this overstocked shop is practically overflowing with vials and beakers and flasks of all sizes. The proprietor, a rather gaunt halfling mage named **Damian Cleese,** rarely leaves the shop, as much a shrine to his own alchemical artistry as a place for adventurers to stock up on all manner of potions—assuming they can be found among the myriad bottles that line every wall, shelf and free tile on the floor. A clear message greets any who would enter the shop: "*All sales final. You break it, you buy it. Potions may be poison—steal at your own risk.*"

ENTRYWAY. The foyer of the shop ***(1)*** is a harbinger of things to come. Tall shelves precariously packed with potions are placed quite close together, forming narrow aisles with clinking glass bottles through which patrons must pass if they're inclined to shop here. Any creature wishing to walk down an aisle must do so with care, as any errant movement is likely to knock over a potion or three (see "Mind the Bottles" table).

BASEMENT. This trapdoor ***(2)*** is locked and requires a DC 20 to pick. It leads to a tunnel connected to the city's cavernous sewer system, and evidence suggests it might be used by Damian to sell goods to customers who don't want to be seen entering the shop, a fact revealed with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

GOODS. Damian's renown for potion-making is well-earned, but his lack of a meaningful organizational system is equally legendary. Pretty much any potion imaginable can be purchased at his shop, provided you possess the coin and the ability to find it. An Intelligence (Investigation) check based on the potion's rarity is required for a shopper to locate the potion they seek (see "Did You Find It?" table).

For his part, Damian is generally too consumed with his work to bother in assisting the search, though he can be utilized to procure specific goods via a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check (or at GM discretion).

Pricing is also at GM discretion, and market price is fair, however, Damian can be convinced to reduce prices through meaningful haggling if adventurers are so inclined.

SHELF TOWER. Along one side of the shop, the shelves stretch higher ***(3)***, haphazardly stacked atop one another, filling the silo-like space and reaching heights of almost 80 ft.—rising up through the entirety of what was once a former guard tower. Reaching potions located on the uppermost shelves in this area requires success on 5 consecutive Dexterity checks (DC 15). A fail constitutes a fall, which also forces a roll on the "Mind the Bottles" table as the shelves shake and sway with the sudden weight change. Additionally, should an adventurer attempt to climb the shelves after a fall, the DC increases by 1 for each fall (up to a max of 20) as the shelves become less stable with each attempt.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Mind the Bottles

Each time an adventurer passes down an aisle, either to enter, exit or otherwise explore the shop, they must make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid knocking bottles off the shelves or to avoid knocking over full cases of goods. Due to their less cumbersome frames, small creatures may roll with advantage.

DC	
1–5	1d4 bottles fall off the shelf and break.
6–14	One bottle slips, but the player in question can make a Dexterity save (DC 15) to prevent it from breaking.
15+	No bottles fall.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Did You Find It?

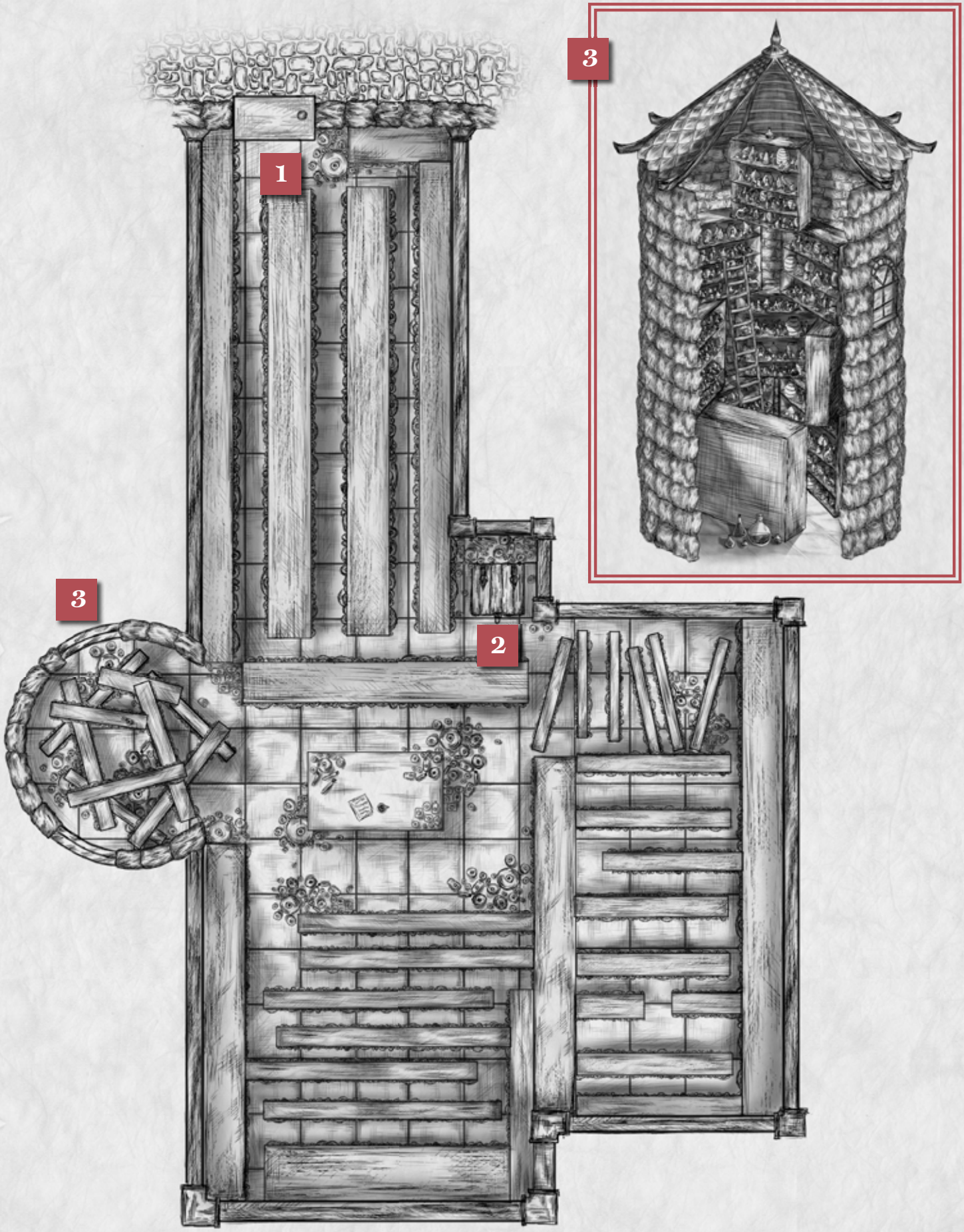
An adventurer may seek a specific potion by making an Intelligence (Investigation) check in a specific aisle of the shop and meeting the DCs outlined below. Each subsequent search of an aisle requires a Dexterity save as outlined in the "Mind the Bottles" table.

DC	
10	Common Potion
15	Uncommon Potion
20	Rare Potion
25	Very Rare Potion
30	Legendary Potion

NPC Profile

Damian Cleese, Halfling Mage

The shop's owner and sole manager, Damian is obsessed with the meticulous magic art required to brew alchemical wonders. His slim build and shabby exterior suggest a man who would rather work than eat, sleep or bathe. In fact, it's rumored he doesn't need to do much of all three, his potions keeping him alert, sated and, when necessary, smelling of fresh dew and summer pine. He gets surly when kept from his work for too long and will just as soon usher individuals out of his shop than wait for them to buy something.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Gant's Alchemy Emporium

A well-stocked alchemist's shop, if small for a self-styled "emporium." Highly appointed with various potions and necessary sundries for any willful adventurer, it features a small side room where its owner, **Gant Guntergunt**, has a bed and a workstation, as well as a hidden door to an underground cellar.

The Storefront

The proprietor of this establishment, a spry gnome named Gant Guntergunt, spends most of his time standing on the shop counter to get a better look at his customers and retail space ***(1)***. A secretive sort, a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) reveals he appears to be hiding something—namely that he's been conducting magical experiments on creatures in his basement, accessible via a secret door under the rug in his shop's side room.

GOODS. Gant refuses to haggle. Any attempt to achieve a price lower than market value could lead to a swift shutdown of his store, at GM discretion. He is susceptible to charm and flirtation, however, as well as intelligent discussions about the arcane. A DC 19 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Arcana) check will net a discount on goods—buy three, get one free.

SIDE ROOM. Gant's side room ***(2)*** is private but accessible, particularly if he is distracted or in deep conversation—DC 19 Charisma (Deception; Performance; Persuasion) or Intelligence (Arcana). He sleeps in the side room from late evening to early morning. If he is not in the shop, there's a chance he's in the cellar. His desk and trunk are locked (DC 15), and he carries the key. An individual succeeding on a thorough search of the desks, drawers will find a diary with notes on **water elementals**, taming **mimics**, **basilisks**, general necromancy and an incomplete recipe for **black pudding**. Within the room, a DC 15 (Perception/Investigation) check reveals a few ridges in the rug in the outline of a 4-by-4 square. Pulling the rug away reveals a hatch-style door to the cellar.

The Cellar

A balmy, almost sauna-like cellar accessible through a hidden door in Gant's side room features an old, roaring furnace, a few barrels and visibly crumbling support arches (10hp each), that upon further inspection—DC 15 (Perception/Investigation)—could be brought down with a few strong kicks. A dark, waterlogged tunnel (3 ft. of water), blocked by metal bars, appears to lead elsewhere.

THE FURNACE. This large, cast-iron furnace ***(3)*** is continually lit, keeping the cellar nice and toasty.

THE BARRELS. These barrels ***(4)*** hold alchemy supplies. Two barrels are full of "in process" potions of healing, and upon inspection (DC 15) could be used by an individual proficient with an Herbalist's Kit to create up to 4 *potions of healing*, or 1 *potion of greater healing* (DC 15). Players lacking proficiency who attempt to make their own healing potions suffer 2d6 acid damage.

SUPPORT ARCHES. If two or more of these support arches ***(5)*** are damaged, the ceiling will collapse. Anyone under the ceiling must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success. Once the ceiling collapses, the floor of the area is filled with rubble, potions and possibly the shop owner (at GM discretion) and becomes difficult terrain.

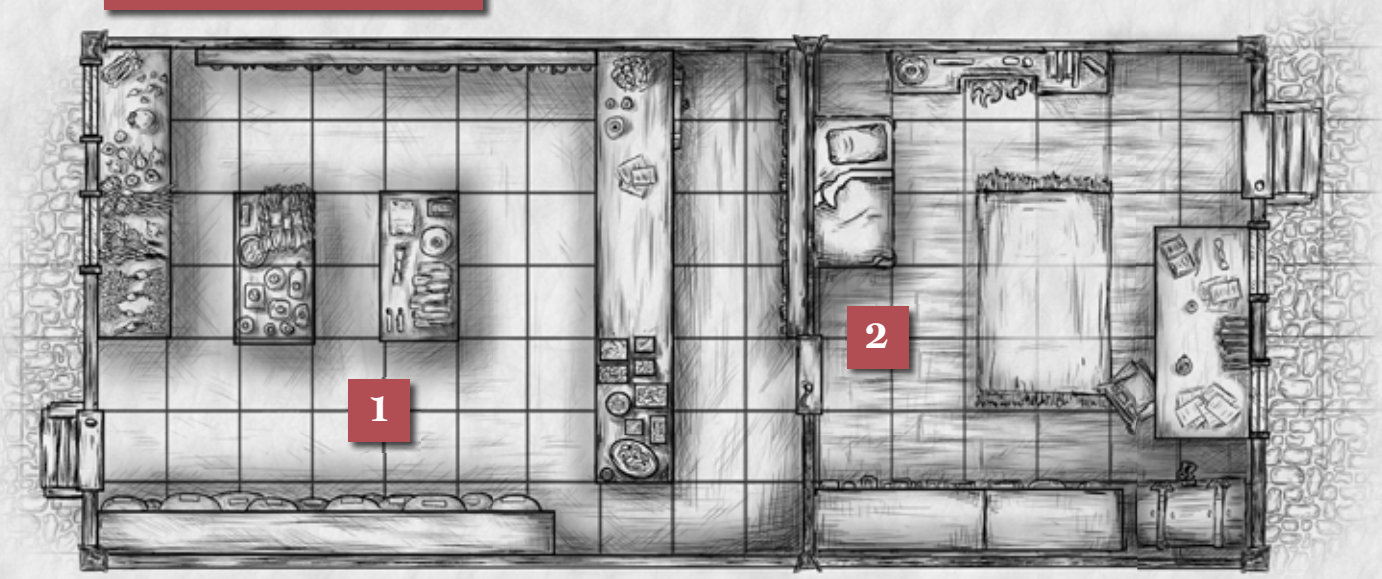
THE TUNNEL. Blocked by a steel gate ***(6)***, further inspection (DC 16) reveals a lock at the base of the gate, beneath the water's surface. The lock can be picked (DC 17), but must be done so at disadvantage due to its placement underwater. The tunnel either leads to another location in this book determined by rolling on the Random Location Generator (pg. 3), to the outside world through a series of tunnels created by rolling on the Random Tunnel table (pg. 229) or another location at GM discretion.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

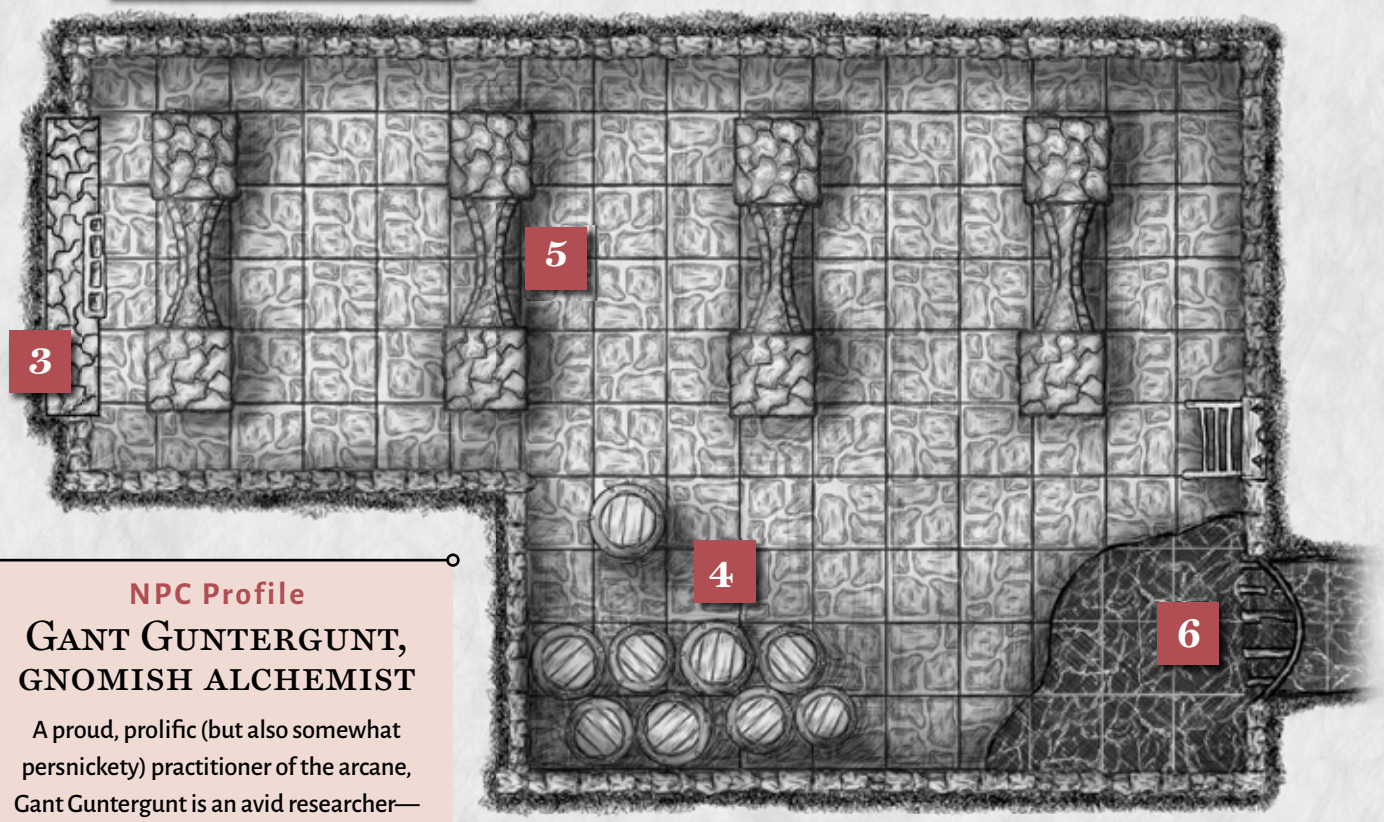
Roll 1d6 to reveal the wonders that might be unleashed on the party in the cellar of Gant's Alchemy Emporium.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a glob of **black pudding** that reveals itself if the barrels are inspected.
2	...a **basilisk**, lurking in the water near the tunnel. Gant sells an oil which can cure petrified adventurers for 50gp.
3	...a **water elemental** guarding the tunnel gate, non-hostile unless provoked.
4	...2d4 **skeletons**, which rise from the floor of the cellar if a creature interacts with the furnace.
5	...a **minotaur skeleton**, which rises from the floor if a creature interacts with the furnace.
6	...a **mimic**, which is indistinguishable from the the other barrels in the basement.

GROUND LEVEL



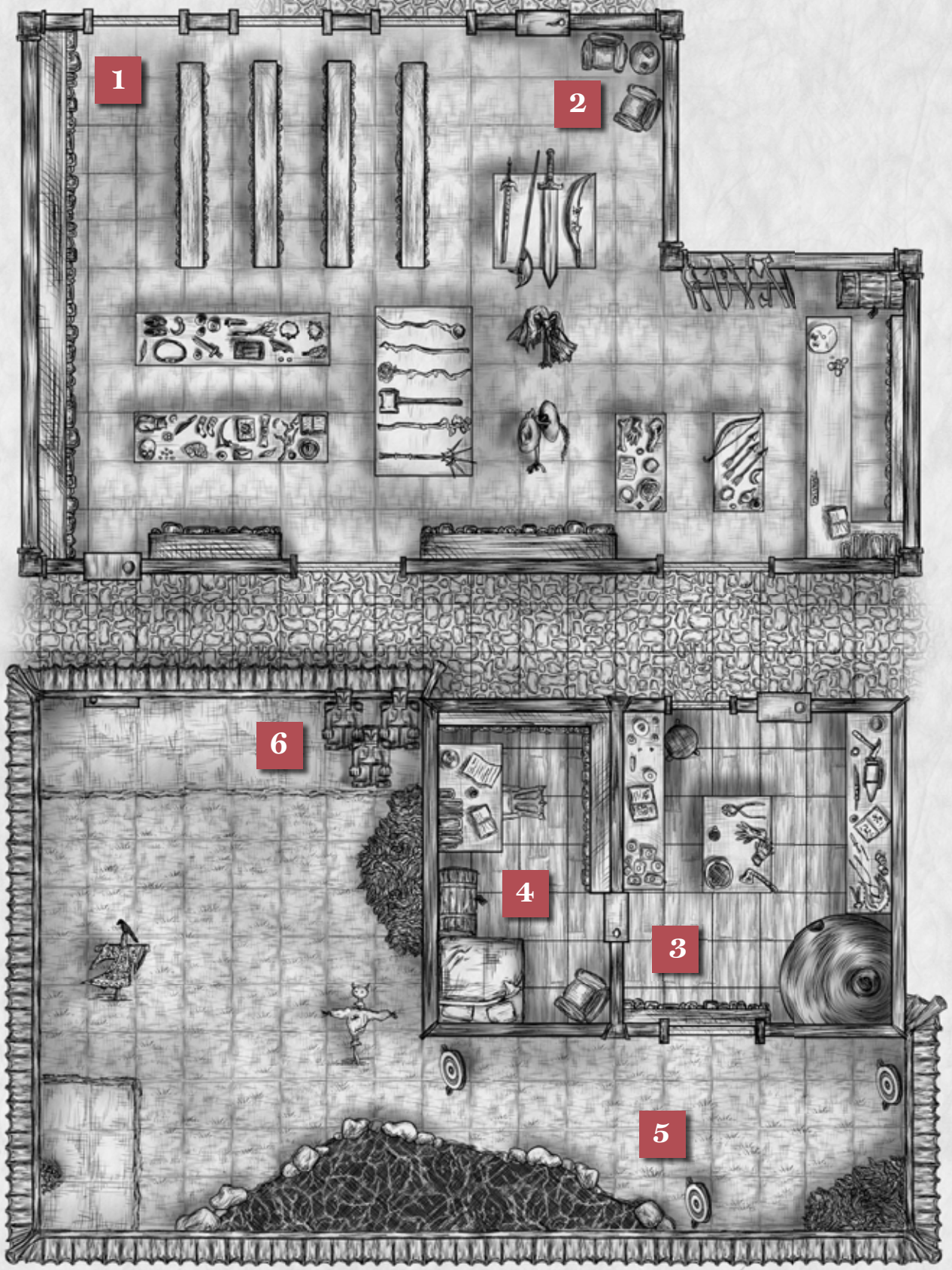
CELLAR LEVEL



NPC Profile

Gant Guntergunt, gnomish alchemist

A proud, prolific (but also somewhat persnickety) practitioner of the arcane, Gant Guntergunt is an avid researcher—one who wouldn't let small details such as morals, ethics or laws get in the way of big discoveries. He has twice been fined for conducting experiments that got out of hand, and he's been forbidden from continuing his research within the city limits. It hasn't stopped him.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Mage You Look

A storefront renowned for its unique magical artifacts, it's a popular location among would-be wizards, war mages and other spellcasters looking to increase their efficacy. The shop's owner and operator, a powerful artificer named **Gal Powers**, spends most of her time conceiving, creating and testing magical objects. A backdoor leads to a slim alleyway, beyond which is Gal's workshop and residence, as well as an outdoor area for experimenting with magical equipment. Gal takes custom orders and, if the supplies are as plentiful as your coin, can typically engineer nearly anything you can imagine—and many things you can't.

Magic Items Shop

INTERIOR. Mage You Look's retail space ***(1)*** seems unassuming compared to other high-profile locations that sell valuable merchandise. There are no guards, no golems and no locks on the doors. These appearances are, in short, deceiving. Every item in the shop is a fake—a stand-in for its match, which exists in a pocket dimension only Gal can access. The items in the shop are warded to prevent theft, and the well-disguised runes covering each object are triggered at the slightest touch. Anyone attempting the *identify* spell on these facsimiles will find the spell unnecessary, as the wards will fire off the moment they touch the item to cast the spell. When the wards are triggered, everyone within 20 ft. of the item must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, or suffer 8d8 thunder damage (half as much on a success). When a customer is interested in purchasing an item, Gal gleefully asks for payment upfront, no exceptions. She will then generate the item from within a pocket dimension and share it with its new owner.

NPC Profile

Gal Powers, the Artificer

A passionate tinkerer with an eye for small details, Gal is among the most celebrated enchanters in the realm. Her knowledge of legendary magical items is immense, as is the grin on her face when she's given the opportunity to converse about them. A middle-aged human with auburn hair and freckled skin, her life's work is the shop, but once a season she'll close down for weeks at a time to explore the world and put some of her more outrageous enchantments to the test to sate her cravings for adventure.

A Familiar Spot

A small post in the corner of the shop ***(2)*** is also home to Gal's familiar, Glenn. Roll on the tables below to determine Glenn's form.

1d4	Glenn is a...
1	celestial
2	fey
3	fiend
4	roll again

1d6	Glenn is a...
1	crab
2	frog
3	hawk
4	spider
5	weasel
6	bat

Workshop

INTERIOR. Gal's workshop ***(3)*** is well-organized, with numerous solvents and materials labeled in her flowery script. An enchanter's table shows signs of well-worn use, and a magical kiln offers enough heat to forge or fire even the most difficult material components.

BEDROOM. A modest bedroom by any standard, Gal's living quarters ***(4)*** reveal a rather spartan private space and speak to her preference for late nights in the workshop as opposed to the bedroom.

Courtyard

EXTERIOR. The back alleys behind Mage You Look ***(5)*** have been outfitted with various elements to allow Gal to test and make adjustments to some of her more outlandish inventions. A makeshift targeting range allows for the perfection of ranged weaponry, and a defensive shield of Gal's own design keeps an errant blast, rogue spell or unpredictable curse from destroying half the town.

GOLEMS. Three **stone golems** ***(6)*** which can be activated upon hearing the command word "ANIMATE," are chipped in places and battered in others. Flame scarring mars one golem, while another shows signs of acid damage. The statuesque figures will roam around the courtyard but cannot leave it, and they are primarily used by Gal or prospective customers to determine the power and usefulness of a magical artifact.

Mage You Look: Arcane Items for Purchase

All the goods you can imagine, and many you can't! All sales final, all curses are the responsibility of the new owner.

Traveling Hole Punch

Wondrous Item, RARE, 500gp

Once per long rest, as an action, you can use this handheld mechanical device to create a 5-ft. hole in any structure or surface. It has a 10 percent chance of opening a portal to another plane (at GM's discretion).

Hairshirt of Healing

Wondrous Item, RARE, 500gp

Requires attunement

This article of clothing, used in some religious orders, can be used to facilitate healing through the act of self-harm. As a bonus action, make an attack against yourself. A creature that you can see within 60 ft. heals three times the amount of damage you inflict on yourself.

Marble of Slipping

Wondrous Item, COMMON, 80gp

Once per long rest, this tiny, unassuming glass ball becomes one thousand marbles for just a moment. As an action, you can toss the marble up to 30 ft. and shout its activation phrase ("slippity boppity boom"). Upon impact with the ground the marble creates difficult terrain in a 15-ft. radius for one turn. Any creature entering the area of effect or starting its turn there must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone, taking 1d8 bludgeoning damage on a failed save. After one turn, the marble returns to its bag and the effect dissipates.

Vest of Solar Power

Wondrous Item, UNCOMMON, 300gp

Requires attunement

This tasseled buckskin vest features a large yellow beadwork sun on its back and has the ability to transfer the sun's warming rays into invigorating energy. While wearing this vest in direct sunlight you will rarely tire, and can remove the effects of up to three points of exhaustion.

Chef's Knife

Wondrous Item, UNCOMMON, 250gp

Requires attunement

This finely balanced dagger is as sharp as it is deadly and offers +1 to attack and damage rolls. Its damage die is 1d8.

Additionally, once per short rest, when the blade hits its target you can speak its command phrase, "Order up," causing the blade to deal an additional 3d6 slashing + 1d6 fire damage as it sears the flesh of its target and creates a delicious-smelling maillard reaction.

Immediate Anchor

Wondrous Item, RARE, 700gp

Prerequisite: Strength 17

A small, black cast iron anchor on a heavy chain. As an action, you can throw the anchor at a target (living or not). On a successful hit the target takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw as the chain wraps around them, becoming restrained on a failed save. At the end of the creature's turn it can attempt to escape by rerolling the save.

As an action, you can speak the Anchor's command phrase "Anchor's away," and it will exert 4,000 pounds of force toward the earth (or correct gravitational orientation). A creature caught under the anchor's weight and/or grappled by its chain can make a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check to push the anchor off themselves for every 100 ft. they fall. When calculating fall damage with the anchor's crushing weight multiply the number of damage dice by three.

Shades of Night

Wondrous Item, UNCOMMON, 120gp

A pair of shades that can morph into the shape of any glasses their wearer desires. You gain darkvision up to 60 ft. and +2 to Perception. Once per long rest—but only at night—use a bonus action to activate the shades to gain *truesight* up to 60 ft. for one minute.

Ocarina of Inspiration

Wondrous Item, VERY RARE, 2,000gp

An intricately carved instrument made of cedar and bone. Once per day, as an action, make a Charisma (Performance) check with the Ocarina (DC 15*). As the soothing tones of your playing spread out, up to 6 allies that can hear you within a 30-ft. radius gain 1d6 bardic

inspiration die. This ability recharges at dawn.

***If you roll a natural 1**, any creatures (including allies) within a 30-ft. radius of you take 1d6 psychic damage instead of inspiration.

***If you roll a natural 20,** any creatures (of your choice) within a 30-ft. radius centered on you heal 1d4 hit points in addition to gaining inspiration.

Nimble Hand Wraps

Wondrous Item, RARE, 800gp
Requires attunement
These hand wraps resemble strong, reinforced bandages that strengthen the wrists of the bearer. Once per day (per hand wrap worn) you can manipulate the bandages causing them to whip out to a range of 20 ft. to snag a creature or object and pull yourself toward it. To do so, make a ranged attack. On a successful hit, the bandage wraps around the target before beginning to wind up again, pulling you toward it at high speed. If making an attack against a creature as part of this action, add 1d4 to your unarmed attack against the creature per 5 ft. travelled in this manner (max 4d4). This ability does not trigger if you are within melee range of the creature or if the object/creature is one or more size(s) smaller than you are.

Earth Rumble Boots

Wondrous Item, VERY RARE, 3,000gp
Requires attunement
Leather and slate boots molded to look like boulders and clay. Once a day, as an action, you can stomp the earth (must be dirt or stone) to trigger one of the following effects:

Sandstorm. Dust and dirt fly up and form a raging 30-ft. tall sandstorm in a 20-ft. radius centered on you for one minute. The storm creates difficult terrain and limits visibility to 2 ft. Any creature starting their turn or entering the sandstorm for the first time must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be blinded. They can repeat the saving throw at the start of their turn.

Earthquake. You cause a small seismic earthquake in a 20-ft. radius centered on you. Any creature caught within the blast radius must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 4d6 bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a successful save.

Rock Stomp. You cause a boulder in the shape of a 5 ft. cube to rise from the earth, before kicking it at a target of your choice. Make a ranged Strength attack. On a hit the target takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Stampede in a Bottle

Wondrous Item (potion), VERY RARE, 500gp
Within this bottle swirls a dark smoke that forms into a roiling mass of swiftly moving creatures. As an action, you can uncork this potion and release a stampede of epic proportions, the type of which can be determined by rolling 1d6 on the table below. The stampede moves out of the bottle in a 30-ft. cone on the first turn and on subsequent rounds becomes a 30-ft.-wide line with a movement speed of 40 ft. The stampede lasts for three rounds before disappearing. Any creature caught in the path of the stampede must make a Dexterity or Strength saving throw (target's choice, DC 17), taking full damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

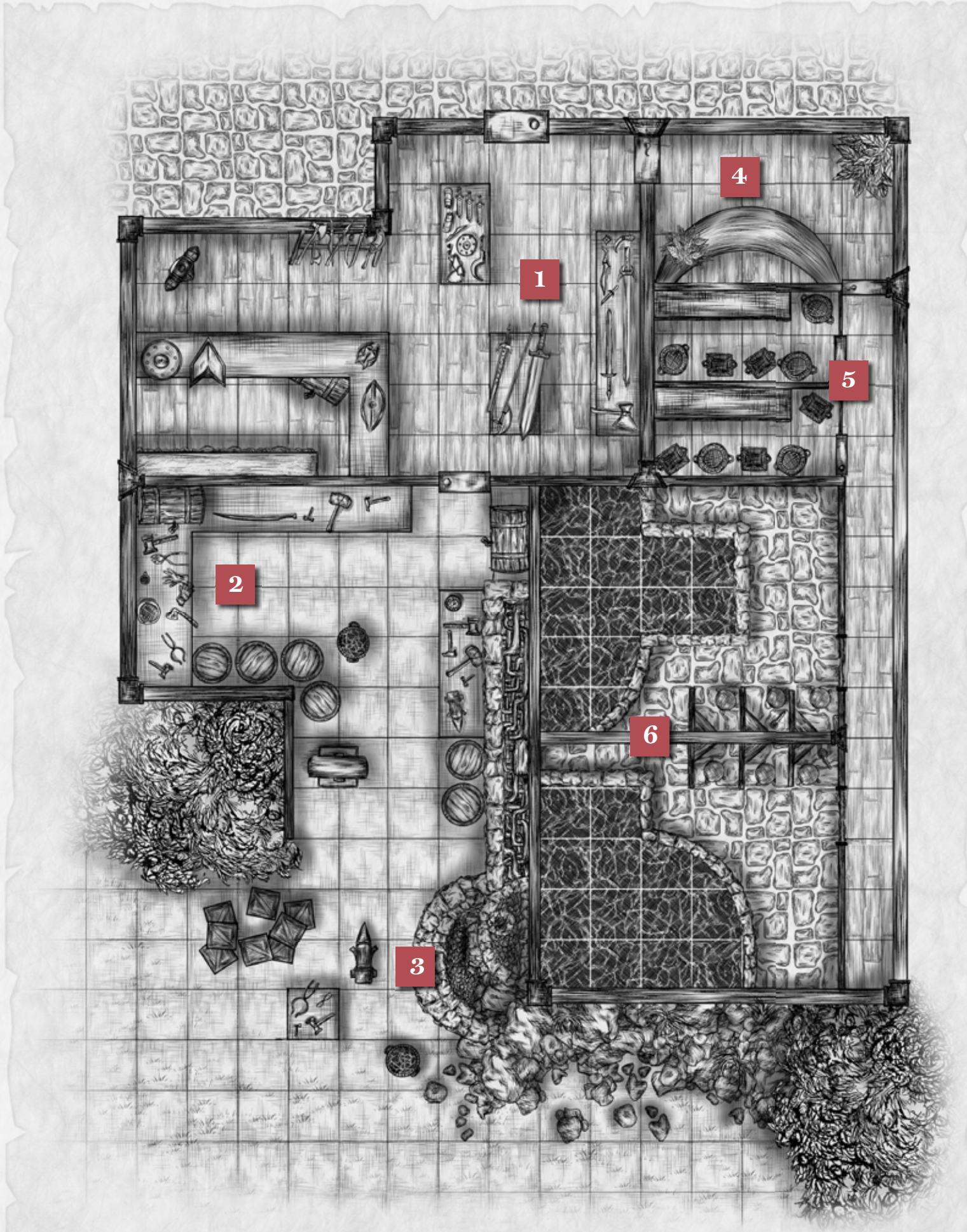
1d6	The stampede is...
1	**...a herd of cats** dealing 6d6 slashing damage.
2	**...a battery of elk** dealing 8d10 bludgeoning damage and on a failed save targets are knocked prone.
3	**...a fleet of bats** dealing 8d4 slashing damage and blinded for one turn on a failed save.
4	**...30-50 feral hogs** dealing 8d8 bludgeoning damage and on a failed save affected creatures are carried 15ft. in the direction of the stampede.
5	**...a cavalcade of giant spiders** dealing 4d6 piercing damage. A creature who fails the first saving throw must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 13). On a failed save, the creature takes an additional 2d6 poison damage and is poisoned.
6	**...a tornado of sharks** dealing 10d6 slashing damage. On a failed save, the affected creature takes an additional 2d6 damage as a shark latches onto a limb.

Pocketwatch Wizard

Wondrous Item, VERY RARE, 2,800gp
As an action, you can activate this stopwatch and for 60 seconds (10 rounds) a drowsy wizard named Steve appears and can begrudgingly cast one spell during your bonus action (+5, DC 14). The wizard has an AC of 12, 22 hit points and a movement speed of 30 ft. He has the following spells prepared:
Cantrip: *firebolt*
Level 1 (4 slots): *magic missile*, *disguise self*, *feather fall*
Level 2 (2 slots): *scorching ray*, *darkness*
Level 3 (1 slot): *fireball*
Once this property has been used, it can't be used again until the following dawn. If your Pocketwatch Wizard is reduced to 0 hit points before their time is up, they will disappear and not return for 1d6 days.

Cloak of Daggers

Armor (cloak), RARE, 315gp
A shimmering cloak built entirely out of woven blades, this dangerous cape can be a lifesaver, or a potential stab in the back. This cloak gives you a bonus +2 to AC, but disadvantage to any Acrobatics or Athletics skill checks due to the danger of moving while wearing a cloak made of daggers. While wearing the cloak, you can whisper the cloak's command word, "daggerfall," as an action and cause all the daggers in the cloak to shoot outward at once. Every creature in a 30-ft. radius sphere centered on you must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 4d4 piercing damage, or half as much damage on a success. This property can be used once per long rest.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The Steamy Smithy Blacksmith & Day Spa

Envisioned, built and operated by husband-and-wife duo **Eager and Esme Everlong**, the Steamy Smithy is a tribute to ingenuity and economy of space. Half the shop is dedicated to Esme's blacksmith trade and the other is a stonework bathhouse run by Eager, featuring deep pools heated from pipes that circulate water through the blacksmith forge. Whether coming for a quick steam or new steel, the shop is a welcome respite for adventurers looking to sharpen their minds or their blades.

NPC Profiles

Esme & Eager Everlong, human small business owners

Esme and Eager Everlong are human trade workers in their mid-40s, both with shock-blonde hair (as well as a beard, in Eager's case) and the can-do positivity with which many Northerners carry themselves. Esme's steelwork is highly regarded throughout the region and there's very little she can't craft out of even the most difficult of materials. Eager's commitment to customer comfort is as hospitable as it is unrelenting. Their marriage is built on a foundation of trust, mutual respect and cheerful jokes at one another's expense.

The Blacksmith

THE SHOP. Esme's arms and armor are available for sale in the shop ***(1)***. Some of her finer works adorn the walls, but she also takes custom orders.

THE WORKSHOP. If Esme isn't asleep or at the forge, there's a solid chance she's here ***(2)*** working on her next piece.

THE FORGE. The Steamy Smithy's forge ***(3)*** runs hot both day and night and can be leased for use by other metalworkers whose equipment isn't available (or reliable). Water pipes running through the forge help maintain its temperature and also heat the large baths within the spa.

The Spa

RECEPTION. The bathhouse area is open as long as customers are willing to pay its 1gp entry fee—a steep price that acts as a bit of a gate along class lines. When the bathhouse is packed, it's typically with merchants or other tradespeople with coin to spare. If Eager isn't at the desk ***(4)***, he'll have left a sign directing potential customers to check next door at the blacksmith shop.

CHANGING ROOMS. Small lockers ***(5)*** are available to stow personal belongings for customers as they soak in the tubs. The locks have a DC of 18.

BATHHOUSES. There are two separate bathhouses of equal size ***(6)***, and the water in the large, inset soaking tubs is kept hot throughout the year. Steam released from within the piping system every hour or so keeps the bathhouses from cooling off no matter the size of the clientele.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

To determine what's in store for the party when they stop in to visit the Steamy Smithy, roll 1d6 on the tables below depending on which half of the shop they're visiting.

The Blacksmith Shop

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a belligerent customer and his 1d4 friends trying to return a sword Esme didn't make.
2	...the forge flaring up as a **fire elemental** bursts forth from its coals.
3	...1d4 **flying swords** on the wall springing to life, the work of a saboteur bent on destroying Esme's business.
4	...Esme feeling generous and offering half off labor for all custom merchandise, provided the materials are paid for or supplied.
5	...a panicked guard demanding enough pikes to battle a rampaging **hill giant** lumbering toward the shop.
6	...a flock of 1d4 **cockatrices** menacing the forge looking for something to eat.

The Bathhouses

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a crafty pickpocket has pilfered the gear locked in the changing rooms.
2	...signs of violence emanate from within one of the bathhouses, as a group of 2d4 hot-tempered **thugs** battle one another.
3	...the heat in the bathhouse rising and feel the door is barred from without—the work of a **crawling claw**.
4	...1d4 **Kuo-toa** and 1 **Kuo-toa whip**, part of an exploratory party, bursting through the stone floor of one of the bathhouses.
5	...three of the bathhouse's fine cotton towels are actually **rugs of smothering**, planted at the Steamy Smithy by a rival business owner.
6	...two hooded figures in the bathhouse who are **jackalweres** in disguise, hoping to sneak off with a lone traveler.

1

The Nightmare Market

On moonless nights, the dead take over one of the city's forgotten catacombs. Their purpose is not to instill fear or devour flesh, but rather to buy, sell and trade in one of the most unique open bazaars in the realm. The living are welcome, but must abide by The Nightmare Market's strict laws of commerce, with gibbets awaiting those who choose to ignore the rules.

The temperature plunges as you descend the broad stairway, your breath misting before you. You can hear the echo of softly spoken words ahead, blending together into a murmuring tide. You reach the base of the stairs and see the vaulted ceiling of the chambers ahead rise above your head. Caged will-o'-wisps hang from the ceiling illuminating the market with their steady blue light. The market's centrally suspended gibbets, which cast a darker mood as the live and dead bodies within them moan and decay and also hang in the space.

The dead have dominion. Animated corpses shuffle between the market stalls, eyes lit by a dull balefire. Ghosts and specters glide among and through the other customers, filling the air with their quiet aching. The merchants are as dead as their clientele, from the translucent bookseller to the pair of ghouls standing protectively over their butcher's stall and its overtly humanoid wares.

As you go to enter, a skeleton garbed in the armor of the City Watch steps forward. You note with some bemusement that, though the skeleton itself is yellowed with age, its armor and tabard are new and clean. It grins at you, for it cannot do otherwise, and hands each of you a slip of paper. At the top of the page, stamped in an ancient Gothic print, are the words: "Conditions of Entry: Living."

The Laws of The Nightmare Market

There are many obscure bylaws and conditions for entry to The Nightmare Market, many that are easily broken and involving little serious punishment. They range from a ban on silver within the Market's premises to the requirement that all cats wear a muzzle. Some of the laws apply to the living alone. There are three inviolable laws of the market that apply to all—living or dead—and breaking them leads to being eternally bound to the gibbets at the market's center ***(1)***.

1. Unlife, like life, is sacrosanct.
2. Do not steal.
3. The living cannot be touched.

A New Tradition

The Nightmare Market is only a few years old. It began when the city had the upper levels of the old catacombs cleared out in order to allow workers to reinforce the city's foundations. But the newly opened space attracted a great deal of interest among those bereft of life, and within weeks a thriving market was in operation. Scholars and sages have not yet been able to determine why the undead gather for The Nightmare Market. All that is certain is that on moonless nights, the living know to cede the ground. By and large, the people of the city have come to accept the market's operation. The dead do not harm anyone who abides by the market's laws. Some even view The Nightmare Market as an attraction or novelty, though their enthusiasm is often met with equal fervor by opponents of the gathering, who view any attempt to normalize the undead as anathema to the natural order.

Commerce of the Dead

Most undead are driven by an overwhelming compulsion that dictates their behavior, whether it be to drain life from the living, feed on mortal flesh or haunt the site of their tragic death. Whatever rules bind them, The Nightmare Market liberates all undead within the city limits until dawn. In return, however, it hands down a new set of iron dictates: the laws of The Nightmare Market.

Without the same needs and wants as the living, and with many of their number unable to even touch corporeal objects, the dead deal mostly in fragments of identity and glimmers of life. Ghosts and specters often feel incomplete—trapped within the confines of their state when they died—and the market offers them tastes of emotions they have been unable to feel since their

Slivers of Emotion, Jars of Memory, All For a Price

For the more spectral dead (and a few of those with bodies), emotion and memory define their entire existence. Through the magic of the market, the undead and the living alike may decant their memories into containers found at the market stalls. These containers range in size and can be filled merely by recalling the intended memory and exhaling into the jar. A "full" container appears to hold a dark, inert mist. The creature giving up the memory loses all recollection of the event permanently, which can only be restored through a *wish* spell or by drinking the memory itself.

Emotions can be decanted through the same process, in which case the memory is retained but loses all emotional resonance for the creature. Some use this magic as a form of therapy, creating emotional detachment from traumatic events.

passing. One stall might feature a revenant selling cups brimming with her love for the man who betrayed her, while beside her a wraith offers bottled memories of the companionship among the bandits he once led.

Many of the dead do have some need for physical items, of which the most popular are bodies. Ghouls are traditionally the primary purveyors and consumers, in every sense, of humanoid bodies that flow through the market, but they aren't the only ones. Ghosts in need of a body to possess, revenants in need of a replacement arm after a bloody scuffle, or even living magic-users looking for components for a flesh golem can all be found bidding on whole corpses and body parts at the butcher stalls.

The Touch of Life

Practitioners of necromancy aren't the only ones who like to shop at The Nightmare Market, and they are welcome so long as they obey the rules. Scholars come to learn secrets only the dead still know, while jaded dilettantes come to revel in sensations only permissible here.

The problem facing the market is that the living all have something the dead want dearly: life. The energies within their mortal frames have enormous value and must be regulated. Any deal involving the trade of essence or life force must be witnessed and signed for by one of the market authorities, typically one of the more powerful undead. A cap is placed on such transactions each night and prices are fixed so as to prevent a bidding war from leading to an unholy one.

Of course, in the corners of the market exist less scrupulous traders who see no need to bother the authorities with these transactions. They are willing to risk the wrath of the market for another taste of life, but without oversight allow their greed to get the better of them. Virtually anything in the market can be purchased by offering to give up 3d4+2 maximum hit points, which can only be restored with a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell. If the deal is not witnessed by an adjudicator, however, the merchant may roll d8s instead.

Because it makes them feel alive again, the dead devour this life force voraciously, giving them Inspiration a number of times equal to the amount of health drained.

Variant Encounter (Optional)
Deals With the Dead

The dead have little need for coin, so deals in The Nightmare Market almost exclusively use the barter system. Each merchant has their own price and idea of what might be valuable. For an idea of what you might encounter in the market, roll on the table at right.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...a **banshee** beneath the gibbets at the market's heart, crooning a gentle melody. She is a soothsayer among the dead and is willing to trade a vision of a character's next moment of mortal peril in return for the memory of their greatest loss. This vision will allow the character to twist out of the way and survive on 1 HP the next time an attack reduces them to 0 HP.
2	...a silent **wraith** watching them approach, remaining motionless until they reach its stall. It gestures with one arm toward the collection of bottled memories on the table before it, each carefully labelled with a title and previous owner. "*The Day I Died*, Merineous Ghorsk," "*A Knight's Shame*, Sir Dmitri Pellirian" and "*Buried Treasure*, Captain Murk" leap out. The wraith then wordlessly draws attention to a sign attached to the side of the stall. "These memories are carefully curated. One may be purchased for the price of two."
3	...a **ghoul** with a predilection for fingers who keeps a large bucket of rings beside his stall. While disappointed they aren't interested in his famous "Finger Food," he is happy to trade the entire bucket (about 100 gp worth of regular rings and one magical *ring of protection*) in exchange for just a little bite—one of their fingers should do.
4	...an enticing smell that leads to a short queue in front of a hulking, hooded figure stirring a large pot filled with a thick, red liquid. As they wait, they realize they recognize the man in front of them. He is a local nobleman, and he looks very hungry indeed.
5	...the ghost of their most recently slain humanoid foe is working behind a stall. The spirit appears to have no recollection of them, but is willing to part with memories identifying their allies still within the city so long as they take a special memory to give to their young daughter.
6	...the sound of a quarrel leading toward one of the market's entrances. A corpse lies at the feet of a solidly built **revenant** who is protesting that the dead human had "too little life to give." Nevertheless, the price was paid, and the adjudicating specter states the revenant must honor its side of the deal and give the dead man one of its eyes. The eye, containing a single use of the revenant's Vengeful Glare, will belong to the corpse if it animates via any means before the end of the night, otherwise it will revert to the revenant. The eye could be stolen if the party can make the corpse stir long enough to claim it.

Variant Guild Hall

This space can stand in as the headquarters or regional office for any guild you choose. Just roll a few dice.

Guild

Roll 1d20 to determine the nature of this guild.

1d20	This is the hall for the Esteemed Guild of...
1	Alchemists and apothecaries
2	Armorers, locksmiths and finesmiths
3	Brewers, distillers and vintners
4	Calligraphers, scribes and scriveners
5	Carpenters, roofers and plasterers
6	Cartographers, surveyors and chart-makers
7	Cobblers and shoemakers
8	Cooks and bakers
9	Glassblowers and glaziers
10	Jewelers and gem-cutters
11	Leatherworkers, skinners and tanners
12	Masons and stonecutters
13	Painters, limners and sign-makers
14	Potters and tile-makers
15	Shipwrights and sailmakers
16	Smiths and metal-forgers
17	Tinkers, pewterers and casters
18	Wagon-makers and wheelwrights
19	Weavers and dyers
20	Woodcarvers, coopers and bowyers

Upkeep

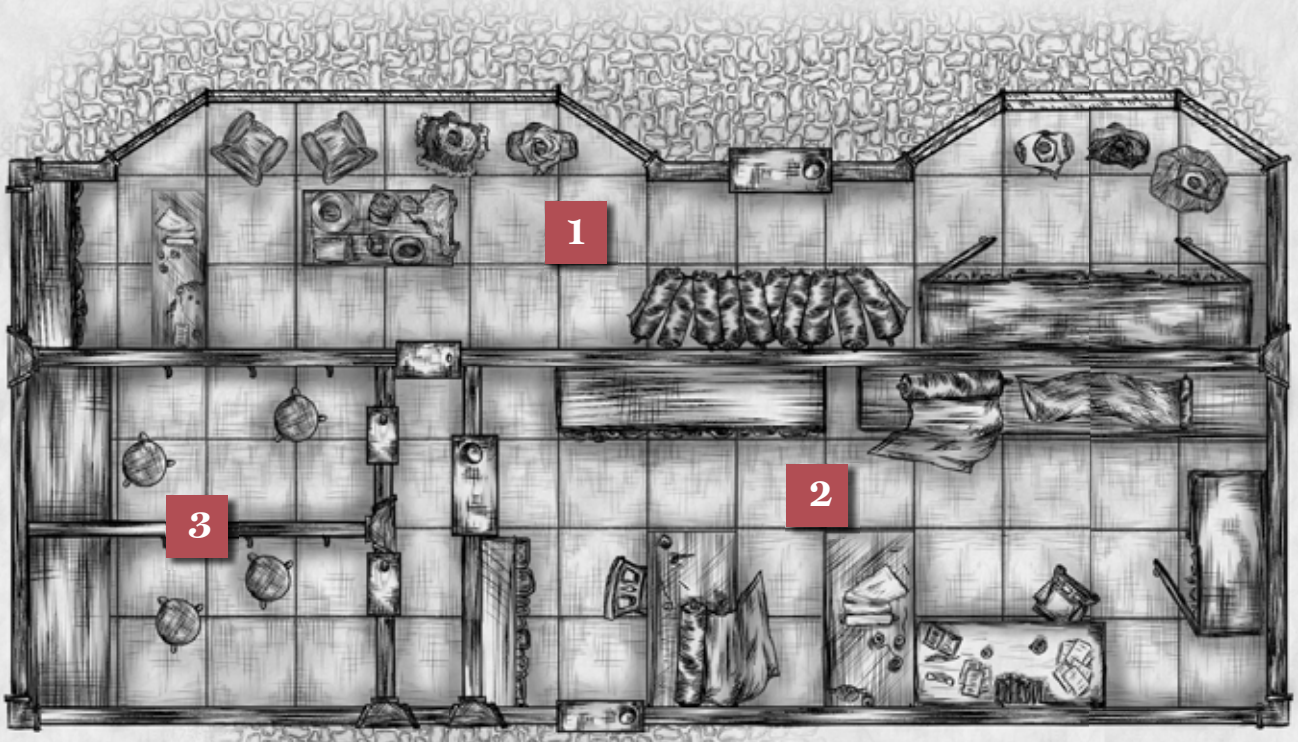
Roll 1d4 to reveal the state of things within the hall.

1d4	The space appears to be...
1	**Thrifty.** The guild spends very little on furnishings or decorations within its hall.
2	**Vandalized.** The hall has been set upon by someone(s) intending to send a message.
3	**Well-appointed.** The fixtures and trappings suggest a fair amount of bartering and trade led to its upstanding appearance.
4	**Over-the-top.** An opulent atmosphere where craftsmanship meets a bottomless budget.

Guild Leader

Roll 1d4 to learn a bit about your host in this establishment.

1d4	The head of this guild is...
1	**Corrupt.** More interested in the coin than the craft, this leader has let power go to their head.
2	**Humble.** This individual would prefer to be left to their craft rather than bureaucracy.
3	**Charismatic.** Unafraid to boast about the benefits of the guild or the quality of its work.
4	**Drunk.** No matter the time of day, you're likely to find this leader deep into their cups, even as they handle guild business.



The Town Tailor

A tiny shop along a crowded street in the merchant district, the Town Tailor's glass storefront showcases the latest fashions and classic cuts, as well as simpler wares for the less style-obsessed. The shop's owner, **Hugh Followell**, is sharp and agile for his age and his shop is clean, if a bit musty.

NPC Profile

Hugh Followell, human tailor

The sole proprietor of the Town Tailor since it opened its doors more than 50 years ago, Hugh Followell is a living legend in his industry, though few in town would know it. At 83 years of age, he's got twice the energy of most half his age, and his wrinkled visage spreads wide with a smile anytime a would-be customer arrives. Though he has outfitted kings and queens and nobles of all stripes, his true passion lies in helping any who walk into his shop look their best. Hugh's work is especially popular among traveling bards and acting troupes, who will often veer days off course for a chance to be sized up by his measuring tape.

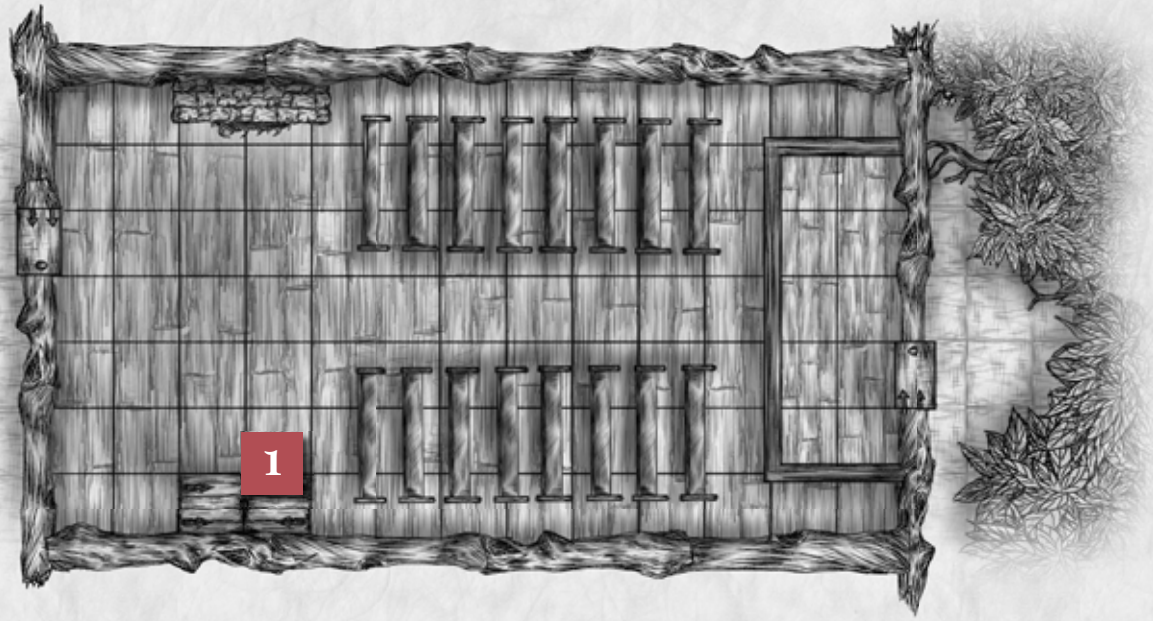
Interior

The shop features a large display area with styles for every occasion, with floor-to-ceiling windows facing the street ***(1)***. A small side room packed with reams of fabric, as well as a loom and Hugh's workstation ***(2)***, is also the entrypoint for two small changing rooms ***(3)***.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what events might unfold at the Town Tailor.

1d6	The party...
1	...sees a disgruntled **noble** and his 1d4 attendants refusing to pay Hugh for a recent order.
2	...discovers 1d4 **giant badgers** have burrowed into one of the changing rooms.
3	...hears screaming as an **invisible stalker** arrives to attack Hugh at the behest of a demented **mage** for whom Hugh refused to create a robe.
4	...eventually learns Hugh inadvertently wove a long-dormant family curse (roll on the Curse Table on pg. 248) into the next garment he sells.
5	...sees 1d4 **kenku** storm the shop and begin stripping most of the display garments of their finery, pocketing the riches.
6	...sees 1d6 of the display garments in the shop window springing to life (adjusted **animated armor** stats, AC 14, HP 22), attempting to force themselves on the party out of a magical desire to be worn.



The Community Meeting Hall

This large, somewhat imposing wooden hall was built using massive logs when this area was first settled. It stands as the central meeting place to discuss important issues relevant to the community, including marriages, deaths, births and declarations of war, as well as less consequential gossip such as "What's the deal with Marge's cabbage patch?"

Entrances and Exits

The hall is built out of ancient heavy timber, and its thatched roof, made of dried long grass and heather, could stand to be replaced. There are two doors at opposite ends of the hall. There are no windows, as they were deemed impractical at the time of the building's initial construction.

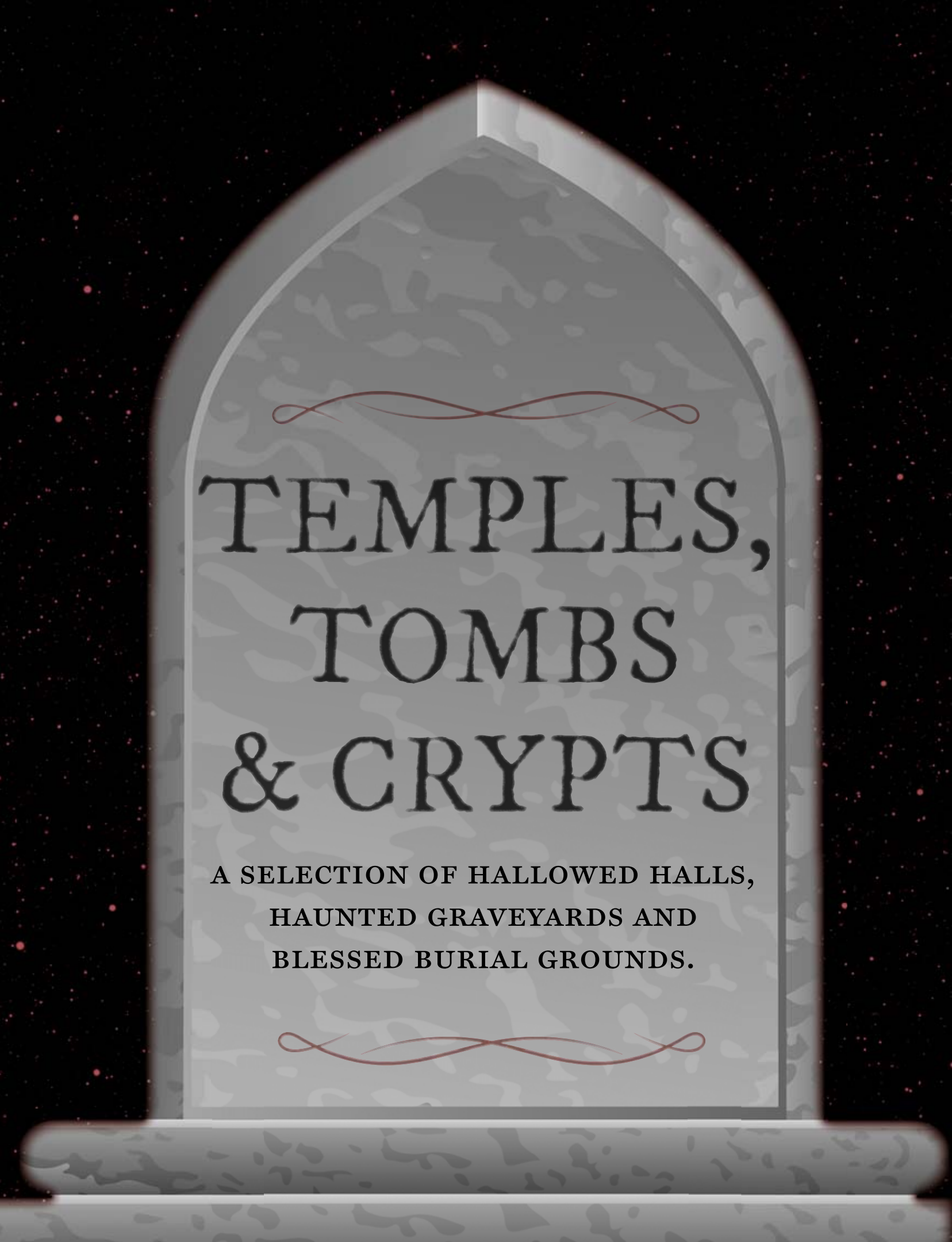
Dry Stores

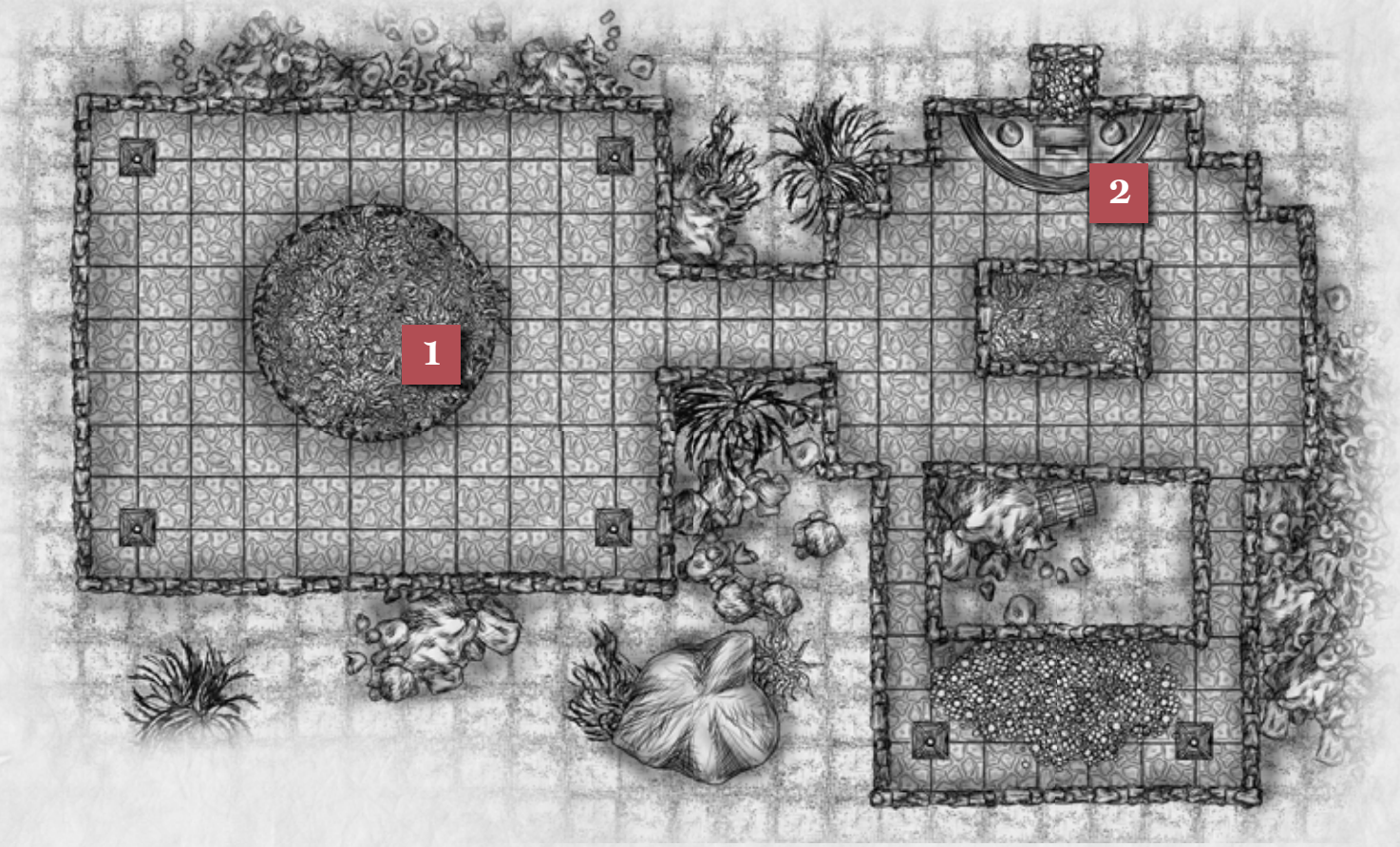
With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, the party would notice a large trapdoor ***(1)*** in the floor of the Community Meeting Hall that leads to a basement storage area equal in size to the center itself, with walls made of carved out clay and earth, reinforced with wooden beams. This area serves as storage for the town during the harvest so that there is ample food during less bountiful seasons. Sacks of grain and milled flour are the primary feature, though there is also enough solid food to keep the townsfolk satisfied in case of an emergency. The corn collected here is rotten and has a sulfurous smell, but is as safe to eat as brown water is safe to drink. Due to its size and composition, this door requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to open.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d10 on the table below to determine what conversations are ongoing in this meeting hall.

1d10	The gathered villagers are discussing...
1	**...how the town youths** have been using the *message* cantrip for illicit purposes and it has to stop.
2	**...Old Nellie's daughter** who has eloped with the local lord to become his mistress.
3	**...that the Reddick family's bull** and the Urif family's cow are having a calf and neither can agree over who will own it.
4	**...the travelling tinker** in the town who has been accused of stealing 3 chickens, but he claims his inventions did it.
5	**...a local supposed witch** who is stealing the stray cats in town to use in her "dark rituals." She is, in fact, just feeding them.
6	**...one of the largest apothecary chains** in the land coming to the village, which some fear will put the local hedgewitch out of business.
7	**...Young Ygritte**, who goes missing for a couple of days each month. The town elders have determined her absences coincide with the full moon.
8	**...the soothsayer** who has predicted the village will fall to cropblight unless they pay him 100gp to get rid of the "bad spirits" plaguing their fields.
9	**...that Perrin boy** who has developed magical powers, giving anyone he touches bad dreams.
10	**...nothing at all.** Silence reigns in the old hall as the entire village gathers in a circle to stare at a frightened young man in the center. Each of the villagers holds a heavy rock in their hand.


TEMPLES,
TOMBS
& CRYPTS
A SELECTION OF HALLOWED HALLS,
HAUNTED GRAVEYARDS AND
BLESSED BURIAL GROUNDS.



Sunken Temple

A flooded sanctuary that hasn't yet lost its divine spark, this holy place stands in honor of its god by enduring despite its circumstances.

Watery Entryway

This temple is completely immersed in water and can only be accessed by swimming through a large opening at the top of its ceiling ***(1)***. The holy power within this space creates an aura of water-breathing within its walls, and anyone who chooses to stay inside the temple cannot drown.

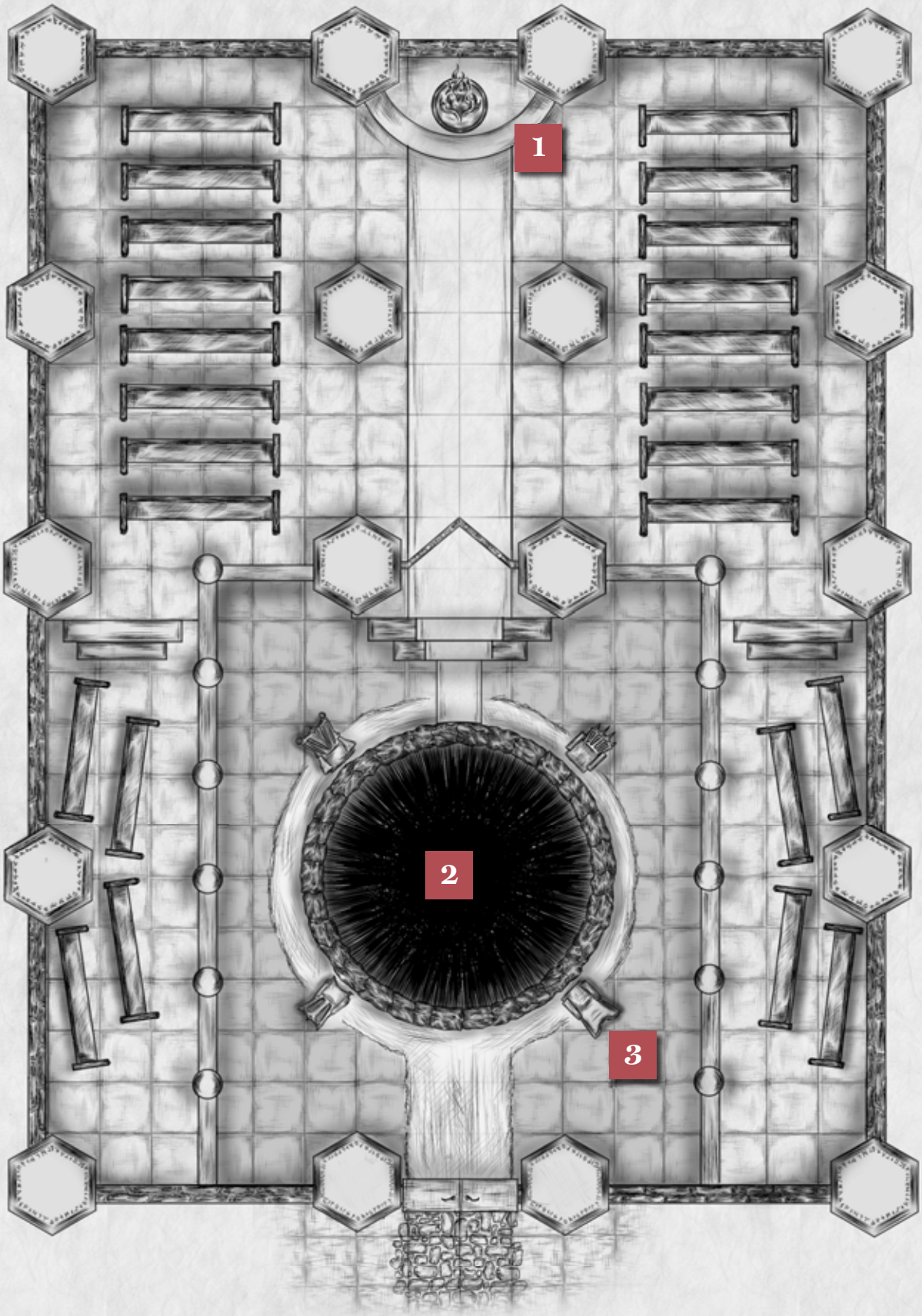
A Damp Interior

Reef-like walls and swaying seaweed are as prominent in this space as its large altar ***(2)*** and holy symbols. The temple's large support columns have also been co-opted by the underwater creatures that reside here, and an entire ecosystem seems to thrive inside and around each of them. Anyone curious about what it's like to sleep under the sea will find the opportunity to do so within the antechamber of the temple, which features a few sturdy ropes with which to secure a creature for rest so that they don't float or take a somnambulatory swim outside the confines of the breath-giving temple walls.

Variant Encounter (optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what underwater adventures await the party in the Sunken Temple.

1d6	The party...
1	...feels a rush of panic wash over all within the temple as 3d4 **quipper swarms** rush through the rooftop searching for a meal.
2	...watches as 2d4 **sahuagin** and 1 **sahuagin priestess** dive into the temple and attempt to destroy the altar.
3	...a tactical group of 3d4 **merrow** surround the temple, menacing anyone who attempts to leave.
4	...feels a horrible wave of fear surging through the temple as the shadow of an ancient **aboleth** blocks much of the light from above.
5	...sees a cleric within these walls accidentally summon 1d4 **water elementals** they cannot control.
6	...hears a horrible, gurgled cry erupting from one of the acolytes here, as she holds up the pieces of a broken holy artifact. It becomes very clear very quickly that the magic that allowed residents to breathe within this underwater space has been removed.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The Temple of the Fall

> "...I saw it all at once, this magnificent open temple lined with wooden pews, a bright flame flickering at the back of the hall opposite me, and before me, the pit. The Endless. Its call is silent, but has yet to leave my mind. I need to look closer. This will be my last letter. Tell Tabitha her father was a fool."
>
> —The Endless Call, Volume V.ii

When one follows the path through the column-framed doorway and into the open-air courtyard of the Temple of the Fall, more often than not they'll encounter a small group of worshippers encircling the 30-ft.-wide chasm that predates the building by centuries. It is, in layman's terms, a bottomless pit. But to the faithful who maintain this space, it is nothing less than a gateway into the depths of the soul. It may also be something more. They call it The Endless.

A Diverse History

The origins of The Endless have been lost to time, lending credence to the theory that it is as old as the earth itself. One thing that is certain is that since its discovery, curious minds have made the pilgrimage to see it for themselves. Peering over the edge of The Endless and into the breezy black void is a meaningful experience for most, but for a select few it is revelatory. The temple was built centuries ago, a lasting structure meant to endure for as long as the source of its existence. Those who worship at the Temple of the Fall are transfixed by The Endless, but few agree on why.

Expeditions to plumb the depths of The Endless have delved beyond 1,000 ft., but no one seeking the "True End" has ever returned. These expeditions evolved into annual rituals that still continue, with brave explorers volunteering to divine the full scope of The Endless. Clarity on this matter remains elusive, and is part of the Temple of the Fall's hold on those who choose to worship here.

Inside the Temple

Beyond the courtyard and elevated roughly 5 ft. higher is a covered space with rows of pews abutted by enormous columns supporting the temple's high ceiling.

THE ALTAR. Along the back wall is a dais featuring an altar with a continual flame ***(1)***, which emits enough light to illuminate the space regardless of the time of day. The rows of wooden pews affixed to the stone floor face away from the altar, allowing those in attendance to keep their focus on the temple's central feature: The Endless.

THE ENDLESS. This gaping chasm ***(2)*** is surrounded by a well-trod tile border, as well as four wooden thrones ***(3)***. No one on hand can remember how long they've been part of the temple, nor does anyone recall their specific purpose—all those who worship here agree that sitting in these thrones is a bad idea, as the last person to try was dead within the week. Peering over the edge of The Endless is an almost irresistible experience and devotees choose to do so in many different ways. Some walk close to the edge and look in, while others sit on the edge and let their feet dangle over the abyss. A handful of attendants choose to prostrate themselves by the edge and crawl toward it on their bellies, their heads peering beyond the rim, eyes into the void. As the allure of leaving the known world behind calls to everyone in one way or another, anyone who looks into The Endless is subject to a DC 8 Wisdom saving throw, with a failure pulling them perilously closer to the edge. Those failing this save can make a DC 10 Dexterity save to steady themselves or else plummet over the side and into the unknown.

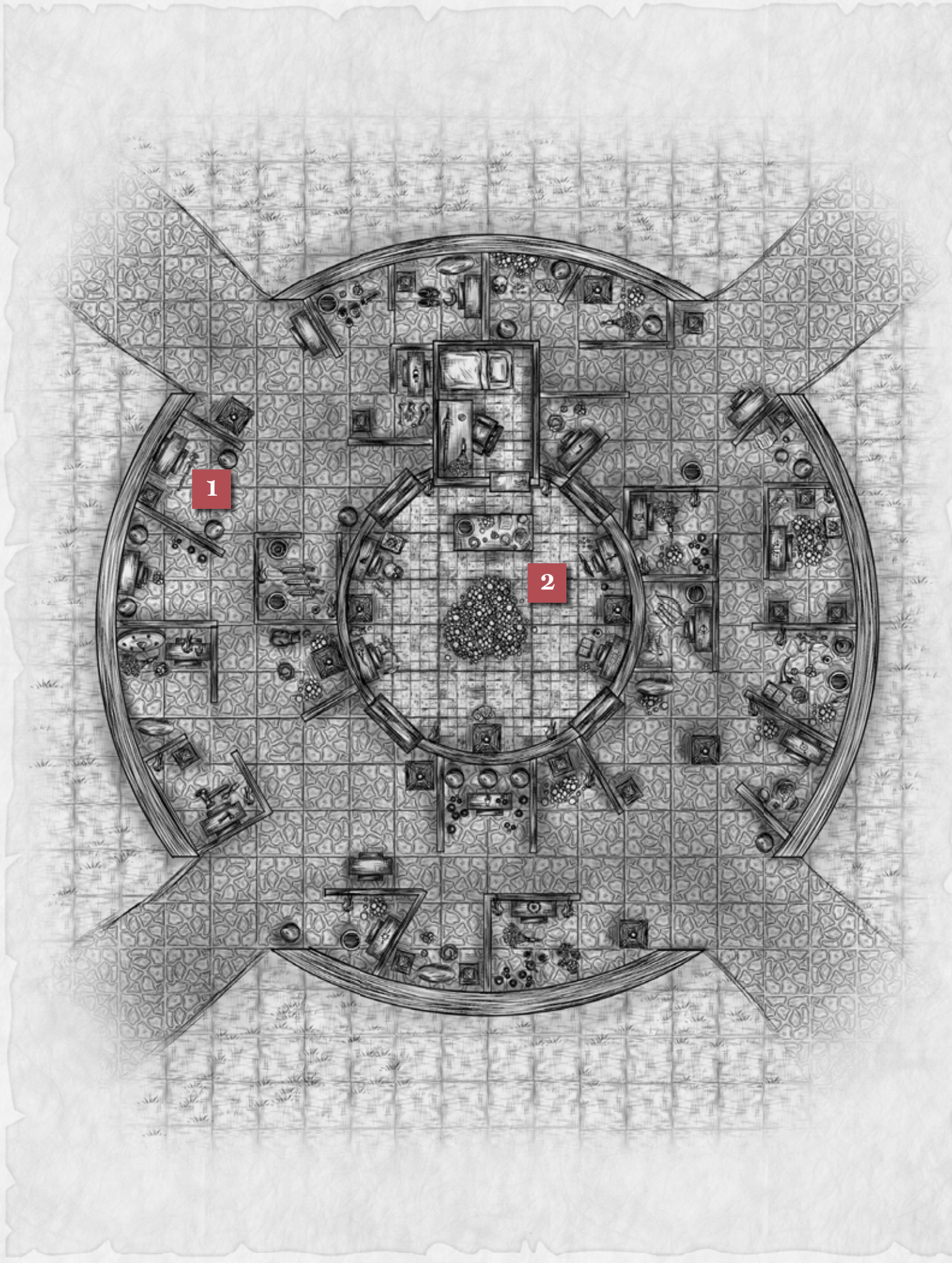
Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what might befall the party in the Temple of the Fall.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...worshipers, in accordance with their traditions, preparing to cut the rope of a "True End" explorer who has decided he's gone far enough and is screaming to be pulled back up.
2	...a man desperately seeking his daughter, who was last seen wandering into the temple doors.
3	...the massive beast that lurks beneath the temple beginning to crawl out of its burrow, after centuries of slumber.
4	...a woman begging her betrothed not to attempt to leap across the chasm in an effort to impress her father.
5	...worshipers transfixed by the hole, who begin slowly walking off the edge one by one.
6	...authorities actively searching for a master **assassin** who is hiding among the temple's faithful.

Encounter Variant (Optional)
The End of the Endless

While jumping into the Endless is ill-advised, at some point someone in your party may decide that curiosity has gotten the better of them or might fail the check to avoid slipping over the edge. What awaits at the bottom of this seemingly bottomless pit is entirely at GM discretion, but ideas include: instant death following a 4,000-ft. fall; the entrance to a cave that welcomes adventurers with a *feather fall* enchantment at its entry; a titan's ear canal; an entire city shrouded in darkness.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The Hall of Many Gods

> "Lots of folk claim they've seen devils at the crossroads. But I've seen gods there too. 'Course, I'd been drinking."
>
> —Benjen Tarrymaster, Acolyte of Ale

At a crossroads between four of the realm's larger cities is an open-air monument to the very idea of worship: a circular collection of private temples, called altarooms, where those whose steps are guided by a deity's blessing can seek further direction, pay homage or pray for forgiveness in communion with their god and other like-minded travelers. A modest shelter—the post of a single, stoic paladin—doubles as a supply store selling all the necessary elements for rituals of all stripes. The paladin, **Catherine the Godless**, also acts as a conduit for messages from the gods, making the Hall a popular destination for those seeking an audience with the divine.

NPC Profile

Catherine the Godless, human paladin

Most days, and well into the evening, Catherine the Godless can be found sitting in silence in the shade of her post at the Hall of Many Gods. When she speaks, it is to offer assistance to those who require it—either by providing sacramental elements for rites and ceremonies or by pointing them in the direction of an available altaroom. But on occasion, Catherine opens her mouth and the voice released is not her own; deities across the pantheon utilize Catherine as a herald of sorts. As such, her mind is typically elsewhere even when she is going about the business of her charge at the crossroads, as the wills of dozens of celestials weave their way in and out of her consciousness on any given afternoon.

The Altarooms

Within the circular structure at varied intervals, these enclosed spaces ***(1)*** offer privacy and proper sanctuary for travelers in need of a place to practice their faith. Within each is an altar, a proper place for cleansing, shelving for small votives and enough room to lie fully prostrate if necessary. There are a handful of larger altarooms suitable for small groups, but most only fit a few worshippers at a time. Despite their architectural similarities, the major deific domains are reflected within individual altarooms. For example, those hoping to commune with a god of war can do so within an altaroom that features a grindstone wheel for sharpening steel, while those who look to guidance from a deity associated with knowledge will be pleased to find available altarooms featuring walls lined with books on numerous subjects.

Part Hermitage, Part Reliquary

The sheltered space at the center of the Hall of Many Gods ***(2)*** is both a lodging for Catherine the Godless, the caretaker here, as well as a makeshift storefront for holy items. Incense, holy water and other sacramental necessities are on offer for prices that would seem absurd within the borders of a major city.

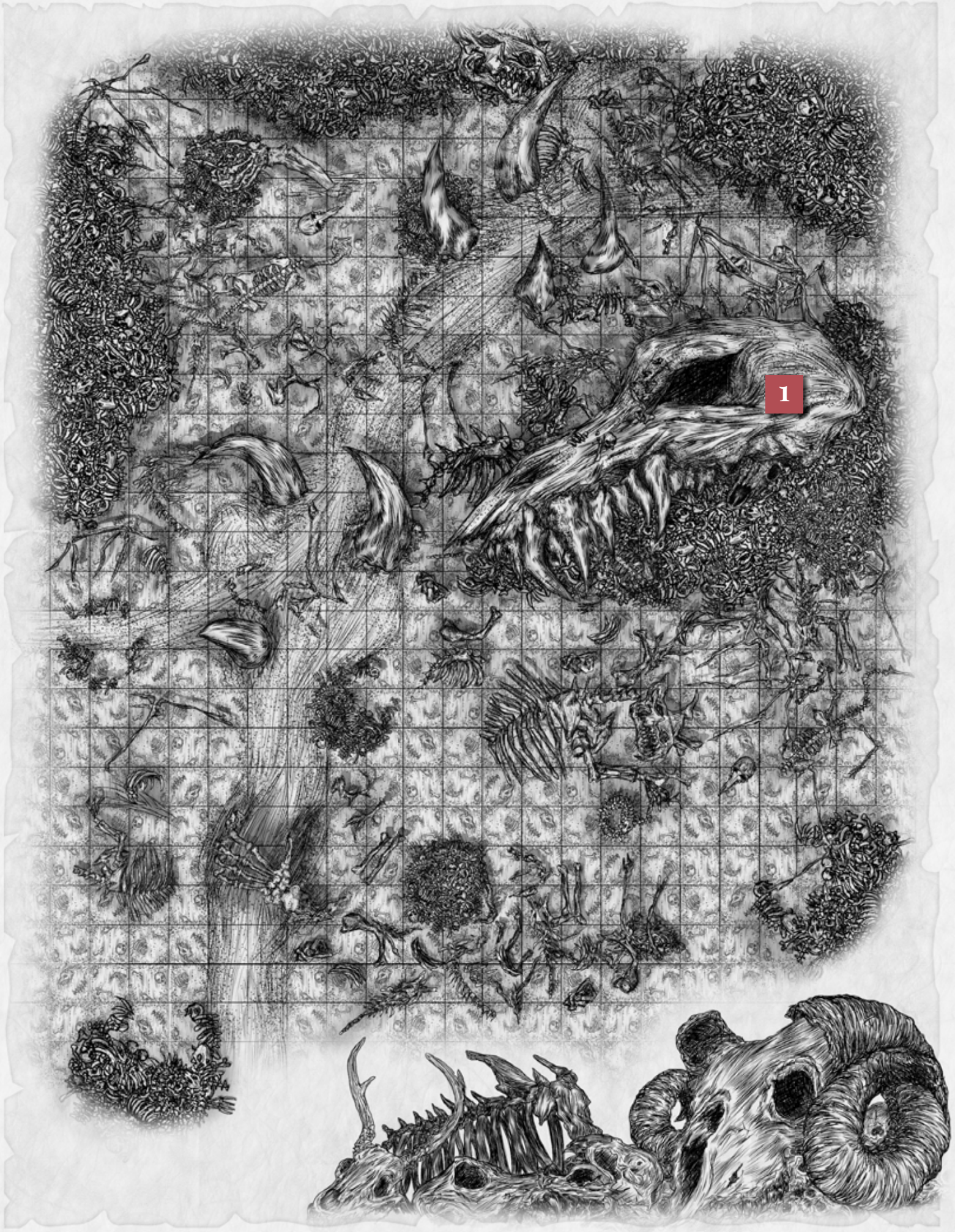
Protection From On High

Catherine the Godless is inherently nonviolent, and her vow is to protect this space and be a vessel for its purpose. Though she can readily handle herself in the event of conflict, if any of the travelers who journey through the Hall of Many Gods choose to endanger her or her mission here, they'll be met with consequences they may not be able to overcome. If she deems it necessary, Catherine can call on the aid of 3d4 **planetars**, each representing a different god from within the pantheon, to help her in defense of the Hall.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to discover what circumstances the party may find themselves in at the Hall of Many Gods.

1d6	The party...
1	...hears a heated exchange between followers of disparate gods that has come to blows.
2	...is nearby when a group of 3d4 **bandits** posing as holy men are making their way into the Hall, with plans to steal all they can.
3	...sees a **deva** perched atop the shelter at the center of the crossroads in the guise of a falcon, asking the party if they require aid.
4	...sees a swirling black cloud pouring out of an altaroom, announcing the presence of a raging **glabrezu**.
5	...is caught off guard when a flaming wagon packed with barrels of pitch speeds toward the crossroads, its horses fleeing the 3d4 **worg-riding goblins** on their heels.
6	...sees a wounded cleric dragging himself along the crossroads, angrily refusing aid from all passersby.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The Bone Fields

Massive piles of bleach-white skeletal remains create a desert of crumbling skulls and broken bones in this uninhabitable space. The air is thick with a haze of particulate matter, and towering dunes of bone dust create natural pathways through this unforgiving valley. Any adventurers who speak of the Bone Fields do so with humble reverence, and are all keenly aware each minute they spent there could have been their last. If you're lucky, the subtle tones of remains as they shift and crunch is all you'll hear. There are few good reasons to come to the Bone Fields, and far fewer to linger.

Creatures Great and Small

The Bone Fields are littered with the skeletal remains of all manner of monstrosities and beasts, as well as ancient dragons and beings that were once humanoid. Large claws extend up from beneath the rubble, cradling the skull of a gargantuan creature, its large eye sockets a black void in a sea of white.

A Hanging Sense of Dread

The moment a creature enters this space they are overcome with the sense that they shouldn't stay and must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 15) or be poisoned as they breathe in the foul air of this corrupt landscape. Additionally, for every 10 minutes a creature spends in this space they must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 10), taking 4d6 necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much on a success, as a malevolent presence within the Bone Fields drains their life.

A Skeletal Companion

Players approaching the Bone Fields may sense they're being followed, and a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals their feelings to be justified. A small quadrupedal skeleton patiently follows the party from 30 ft. back with the energy of a loyal sheepdog. A successful Animal Handling check (DC 15) will earn the creature's trust, and it will follow the party more closely and even come to their aid here in times of need. If any member of the party attempts to attack the creature, they will suffer 3d6 psychic damage, after which the skeletal creature crumbles into dust.

The Mind of a Titan

Within the skull of the gargantuan creature that rests at the center of the Bone Fields ***(1)*** is a portal to the mind of a reigning king or queen (at GM discretion). Moving within the portal allows access to the mind of the monarch, and a creature can manipulate that ruler's thoughts and memories from within this portal by rolling on the Mind Portal Manipulation table.

Mind Portal Manipulation

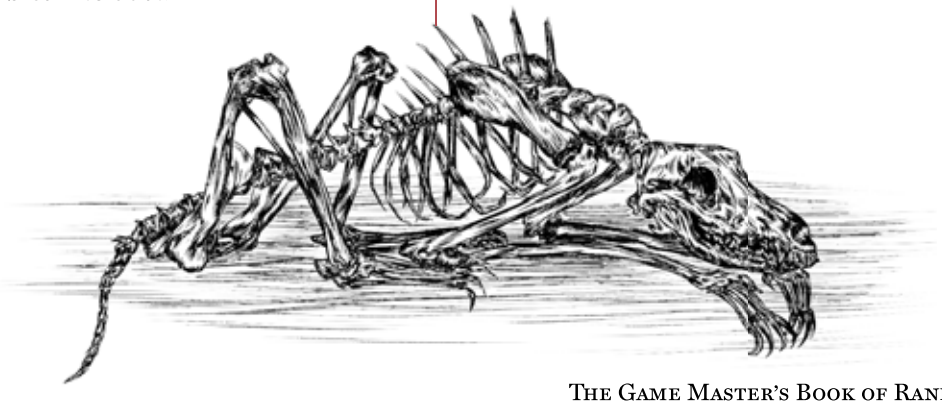
Roll 1d20 and add the modifier of your choice (Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma).

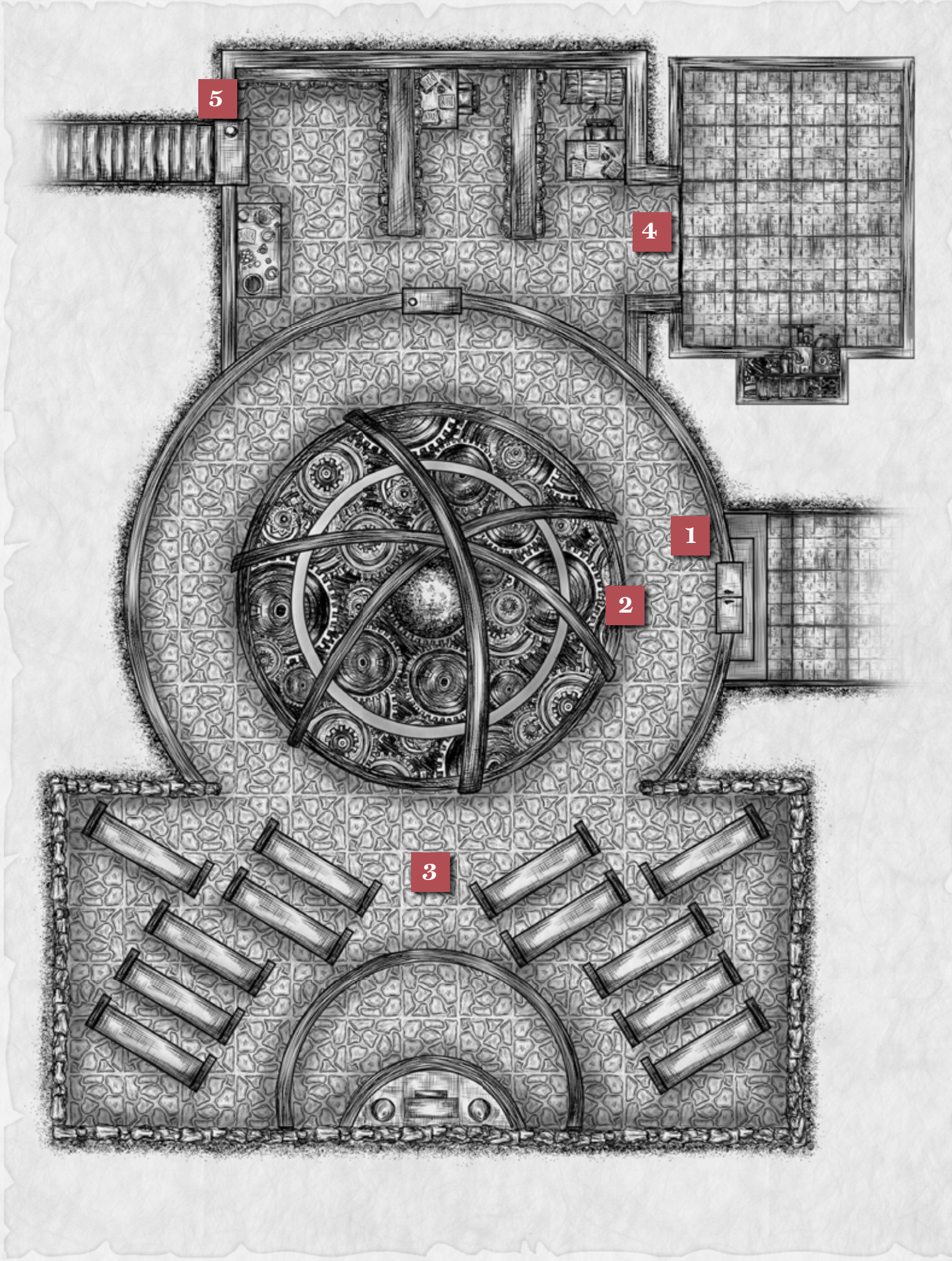
1–5	You see nothing within the portal, but the moment you exit you are blinded for 3d6 days.
6–10	You see the current thoughts of the monarch but are unable to influence them in any way.
11–15	You can access all of the monarch's memories but are unable to influence them in any way.
16–20	You can access all of the monarch's memories and can modify one sequence of events, as in the *modify memory* spell.
20+	You can access all of the monarch's memories and can author as many as three new ones, which will be incorporated into their thoughts as though they were their own.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what dangers await the party within the Bone Fields.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...1d4 **shadow demons** emerging from within the piles of bones and encircling the party.
2	...one **nalfeshnee** and 1d4 **quasits** attempting to move the gargantuan skull at the center of the field.
3	...a gust of wind carrying stacks of bone, which begin to form into 5d6 **skeletons**.
4	...a **bone devil** emerging from the rubble, seemingly hungry for flesh.
5	...2d4 **drow** and one **drow priestess of Lolth** searching the Bone Fields for an artifact of great cultural significance.
6	...a skeletal **stone giant** emerging from behind a dune, charging the party with an oversized jawbone in his hand.

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The Sun Temple

Though many deities are worshiped as sun gods (Lathander, Pelor and Re-Horakhty among them), no single temple or path of faith can claim ownership over the sun's life-giving radiance. The Sun Temple was built as a central space of worship for any individual who wishes to commune with the light, regardless of their deific affiliation. The Sun Temple's most striking features are its solarium, which maximizes the amount of sunlight emitted into the space, as well as its shifting clockwork gyrolens, which rotates just enough each day to ensure a direct beam of light strikes the Solaraltar as long as the sun is in the sky.

Light Underground

After climbing several steep steps, one can find the half-buried Temple of the Sun built into the side of a hill, its surface a large, open space with worshippers milling about above, soaking in the sunlight. Descending a few steps down to the temple's open foyer ***(1)*** reveals the gyrolens ***(2)***, a series of interlocking circles and lenses housed within them that collect the sun's rays and redirect them into a single, powerful beam of light focused into the worship hall to the left. The foyer's ceiling is a massive solarium, ensuring that light can be captured and directed toward the Solaraltar ***(3)*** while serving the dual purpose of illuminating the space at all hours of the day. The temple's location within the hilltop ensures maximum exposure to the light with minimal shadows, and the glass top solarium's surface is aligned with the rest of the hilltop, which also helps maximize the interior's exposure to the light.

The Gyrolens

Part arcane construct, part engineering marvel, the gyrolens rotates, shifts and swirls in time with the movement of the planet, aligning itself to collect and bounce sunlight into a solid beam that's always directed at the Solaraltar until the light diminishes once the sun sets. The mechanisms by which the gyrolens adjusts itself are magically warded, and watching it operate is akin to observing the complex systems powering a living creature. The gyrolens is so powerful—and central to the act of worship here—that some who commune with the sun in this place think of it as a demigod. The beam of light created by the gyrolens can also be focused and aimed using a lever along its base. When focused, the beam can generate a staggering amount of radiant energy—a creature hit by this beam must make a DC 15 Constitution save, suffering 12d8 radiant damage and blindness on a failed save or half as much on a success.

The Solaraltar

The worship hall directly to the left of the gyrolens is home to the Solaraltar, a point of reference and reverence for those wishing to worship the light. The gyrolens ensures that a beam of light is always directed at the Solaraltar, a gilded, crystal-covered surface that can occasionally shine as blindingly as the sun itself.

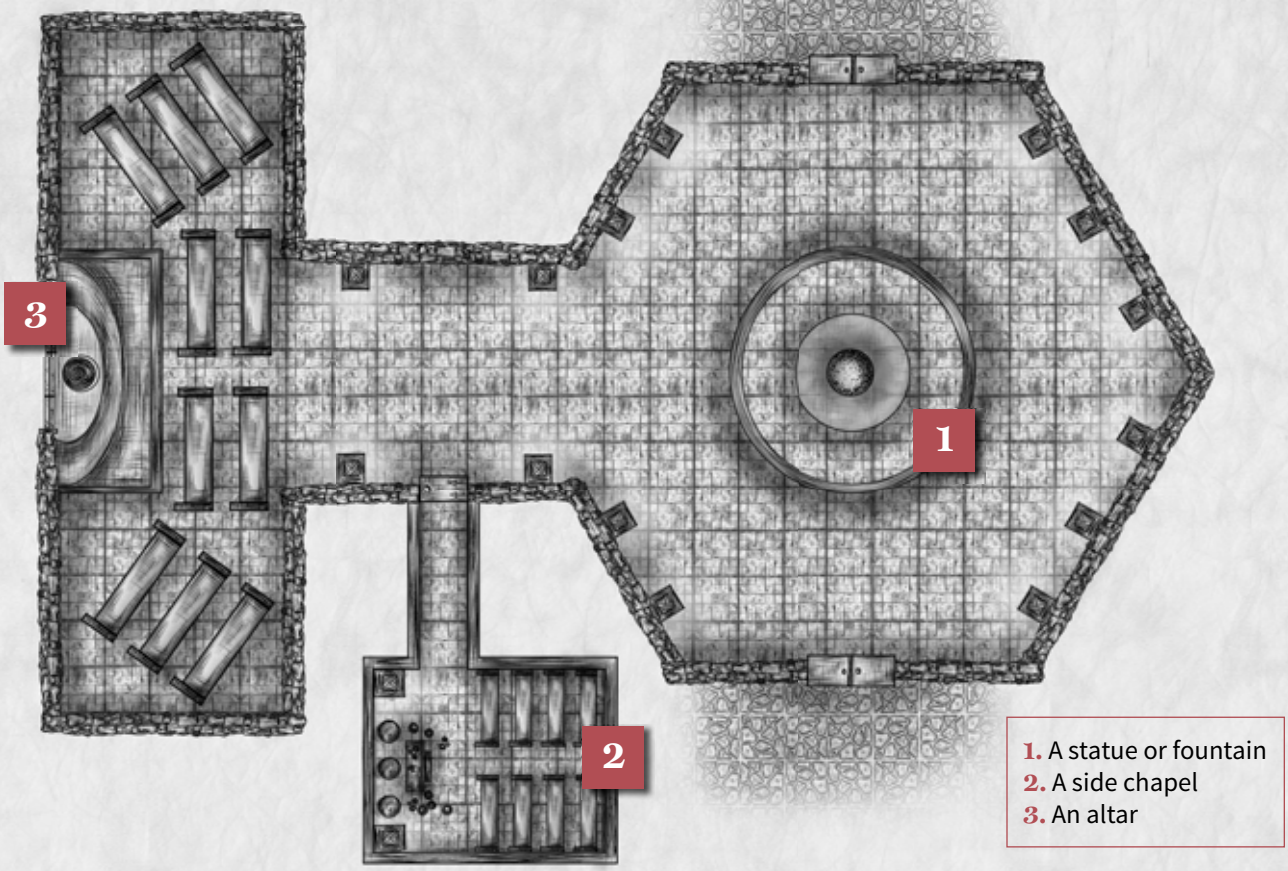
The Rising Room

To the right of the gyrolens is the Rising Room ***(4)***, an observatory space with windows and balconies built into the hillside and offering year-round views of the sunrise over the town below. Many pilgrims to this temple choose to sleep on the open floor in this space overnight in order to observe the coming of the sun once dawn arrives. With its sweeping views of a large portion of the realm, it's also a popular spot for small, dusklight social functions. A small library with a door ***(5)*** leads to a series of steps to the hilltop and is also a feature of this space.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what trouble may be on the rise at the Sun Temple.

1d6	The party discovers...
1	...a war of words between an acolyte of Pelor and a knight of Lathander getting out of hand, with one holding the other over the side of one of the balconies in the Rising Room until he recants his disrespectful tone.
2	...a flock of 2d4 **harpies** descending on the solarium, their collective weight threatening to crack one of its glass panels.
3	...a band of 2d4 **cultists** who support a dark demonic force storming the temple and attempting to dismantle the gyrolens.
4	...a group of 2d4 **bandits** and their **bandit captain** disguised as worshippers attempting to raid the Rising Room while the 3d4 pilgrims there are settling in for an evening's rest.
5	...the gyrolens malfunctioning, seemingly taking on a mind of its own, swirling around, firing focused sunlight at random. The gyrolens is resistant to all damage, has 150 total HP (its six lenses have 25 each, with each one damaged removing 1d8 from the sunbeam's power), and makes one attack with its sunbeam lens for 12d8 radiant damage on a failed DC 16 Constitution save. A DC 20 Intelligence check will shut it down, as will relentlessly pummeling it.
6	...a griffon rider losing control of its mount, crash-landing through the solarium. The **griffon**—understandably upset—begins to wreak havoc within the temple.



1. A statue or fountain
2. A side chapel
3. An altar

Variant Temple

This space is suitable for the worship of any god in the pantheon—all it takes is a couple of dice rolls.

Dominion

Roll 1d6 to determine the domain of the deity worshipped within this space, or choose one for yourself.

1	Life
2	Death
3	War
4	Nature
5	Trickery
6	Light

General Atmosphere

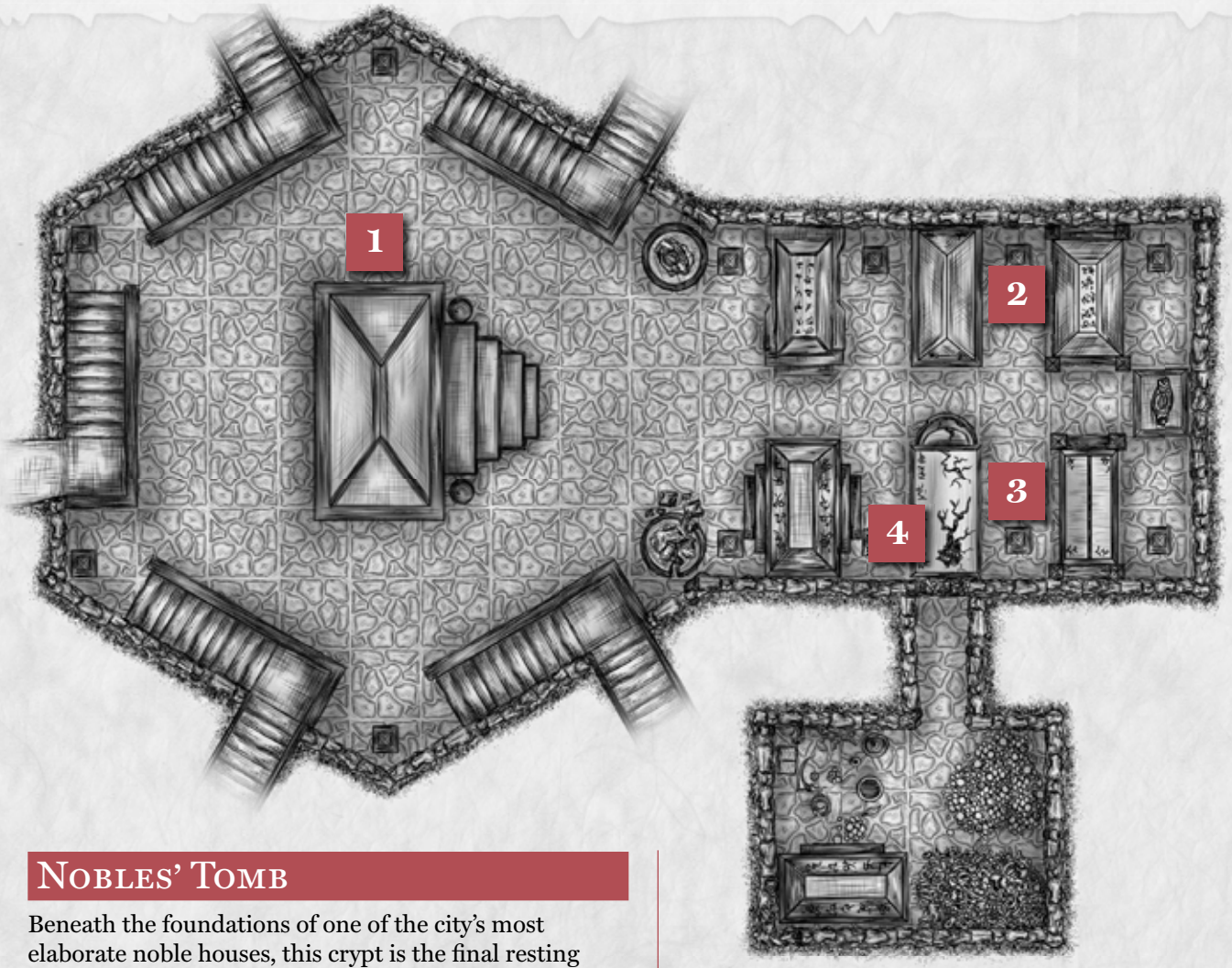
Roll 1d4 to determine the overall feel of the space and those worshipping within it.

1d4	This space appears to be...
1	**...Reverent.** This is a hallowed and sacred temple. Quiet and serene if a bit stuffy, stepping into the temple feels like standing in the presence of something divine.
2	**...Welcoming.** A convivial atmosphere, replete with smiling faces and warm salutations, walking through this temple's halls is akin to visiting a friendly bar as opposed to a stuffy commune.
3	**...Cloistered.** Siloed off from the rest of civilization, either by choice or as a result of unique geography, those who worship here are devoted to their god and blissfully unaware of much else.
4	**...Jaded.** A bitterness hangs in the air, as doubt and frustration permeate every aspect of temple life. Though there are plenty here who worship their god, many do so out of habit or fear rather than true devotion.

Upkeep

Roll 1d4 to reveal the overall state of things within the temple.

1d4	The temple is...
1	**...Spartan.** This temple is practically bare, its occupants wearing simple robes in an effort to focus their attention where it belongs.
2	**...Desecrated.** Crumbling and battered, the worshippers here are working to rebuild as an act of devotion.
3	**...Well-appointed.** Comfortable though not extravagant, the temple features fixtures and surfaces that wouldn't be out of place in the home of a noble.
4	**...Opulent.** A space suitable for royalty as much as divinity, from the tapestries to the statuary to the spotless floors, nearly everything in the temple looks outrageously expensive.



Nobles' Tomb

Beneath the foundations of one of the city's most elaborate noble houses, this crypt is the final resting place for a great family's former scions and kin.

Reverent Remains

This dusty, dimly torchlit tomb is as old as the city itself and was dug into the dirt when the foundation of the home above was laid. The bodies of generations of the family who built this crypt as well as its most revered member ***(1)*** are buried here, some in elaborate stone tombs ***(2)***, others in more modest miniature mausoleums ***(3)***. Statuary of the more significant members of the family can be found standing watch over various locations within the crypt, and there are a handful of plots that have been organized and cleared out in preparation for the coming inevitability of another noble death. Candles and torches illuminate different corners of the space, and the gold, jewels and other trinkets left in memory of the family members buried here glitter and scatter the flickering flames.

Cursed Goods

On a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check, the party uncovers a cache of 1,000gp's worth of coin and jewels as well as an uncommon magic item hidden away behind a busted casket ***(4)***. These baubles are not meant for the living, however, and any who choose to remove these items from the crypt will fall under a baleful curse. Roll 1d4 to determine which curse takes effect.

1d4	The player(s)...
1	...lose 1d6 hit points from their total HP each day until the curse is removed.
2	...are menaced by the spirits of the fallen family, causing disadvantage on all attack rolls until the curse is removed.
3	...are under the effects of the *bane* spell until the curse is removed.
4	...fall under a curse as outlined on the Curses table on pg. 248.

Variant Encounter (optional)

Roll 1d6 to see what dangers rise from the grave.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...2d6 noble **zombies** shuffling around inside the tomb. They seem hungry.
2	...1d4 **ghosts** encouraging the party to avenge their family—but can't recall what happened to them.
3	...a **bearded devil** waiting to make a deal with a noble. He is growing impatient.
4	...a group of 1d6 grave robbers currently battling a hungry **troll**.
5	...the slick walls of the tomb are actually 2d4 **grey oozes** lying in wait.
6	...a **psuedodragon** sitting quietly by the grave of its former master, and can be convinced to join the party with a DC 17 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

The Ice Tomb

Among the highest peaks in the realm, this rarely visited, crystal blue cavern serves as a gallery showcasing the frozen bodies of the ancestors of those who currently dwell in this mountain range. A serene if somewhat eerie space, corpses left alongside the ice wall eventually freeze into it, kept from decay within a surface as smooth as glass.

A Mountain Mausoleum

Because of the sacred nature of the Ice Tomb, its location is known only to those whose family members are buried here. The secret of its location is revealed when it comes time to entomb another member of the community in a ceremony known as the Cold Goodbye. Rumors of the Ice Tomb's existence have floated down from the mountaintops, but none who have journeyed to look for it have returned to share its location. If the party is journeying among frost-capped peaks, they might spy a nigh indiscernible pathway leading up along a craggy cliff, which can be found with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. The pathway then cuts into the heart of the mountain, revealing chunks of pure blue ice, as if within a glacier. These glacial walls are illusory, and can be passed through by succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Once on the other side, the Ice Tomb is revealed as row after row of frozen corpses come into view.

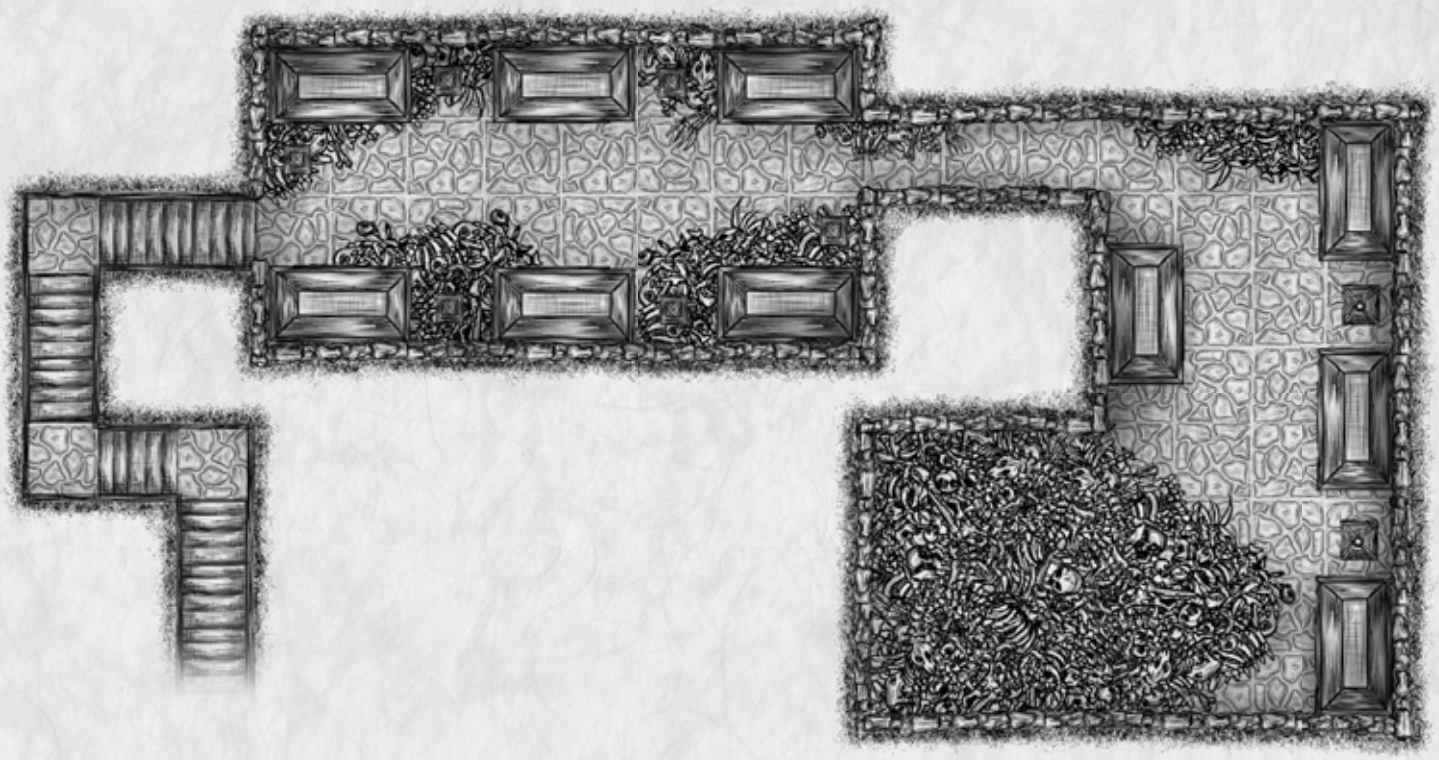
Corpse Walls

The walls in the center of the Ice Tomb are frozen solid, and within each are generations of corpses standing shoulder to shoulder, their faces in serene repose. Some walls are thicker than others and contain more bodies—in some instances six deep. All of the corpses face the center of the chamber. The surface of the floor is slick ice and difficult terrain for anyone not wearing proper gear.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what chilling terrors await the party in the Ice Tomb.

1d6	The party discovers...
1	...evidence that a **young remorhaz** has been feasting on the corpses here.
2	...a sleeping **yeti**.
3	...2d6 **ice mephits** emerging from the walls.
4	...1d4 **poltergeists** that swirl around the chamber.
5	...a **wight** clawing at a body in the wall.
6	...a pack of 1d4 **winter wolves**.



Commoner Crypt

> "There must be a place to bury the bodies of the common people. I tire of smelling burnt flesh."
>
> —Ommander Levianto, Archduke of Antiamo

An underground area gifted to the town's poorest citizens as a final resting place for their dead, this once beautiful tomb is now largely a pile of bones and rotting flesh.

The Smell of Death

The first thing one encounters in this space is its stench, the slow decomposition of dead bodies rotting on top of one another permeating the air. Any creature moving within 20 ft. of the Commoner Crypt must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or spend an action losing their lunch. To enter the crypt they must reattempt the save, with a +1 to the DC for each failure. Three successive fails of this save prevent a creature from entering the Commoner Crypt for 24 hours.

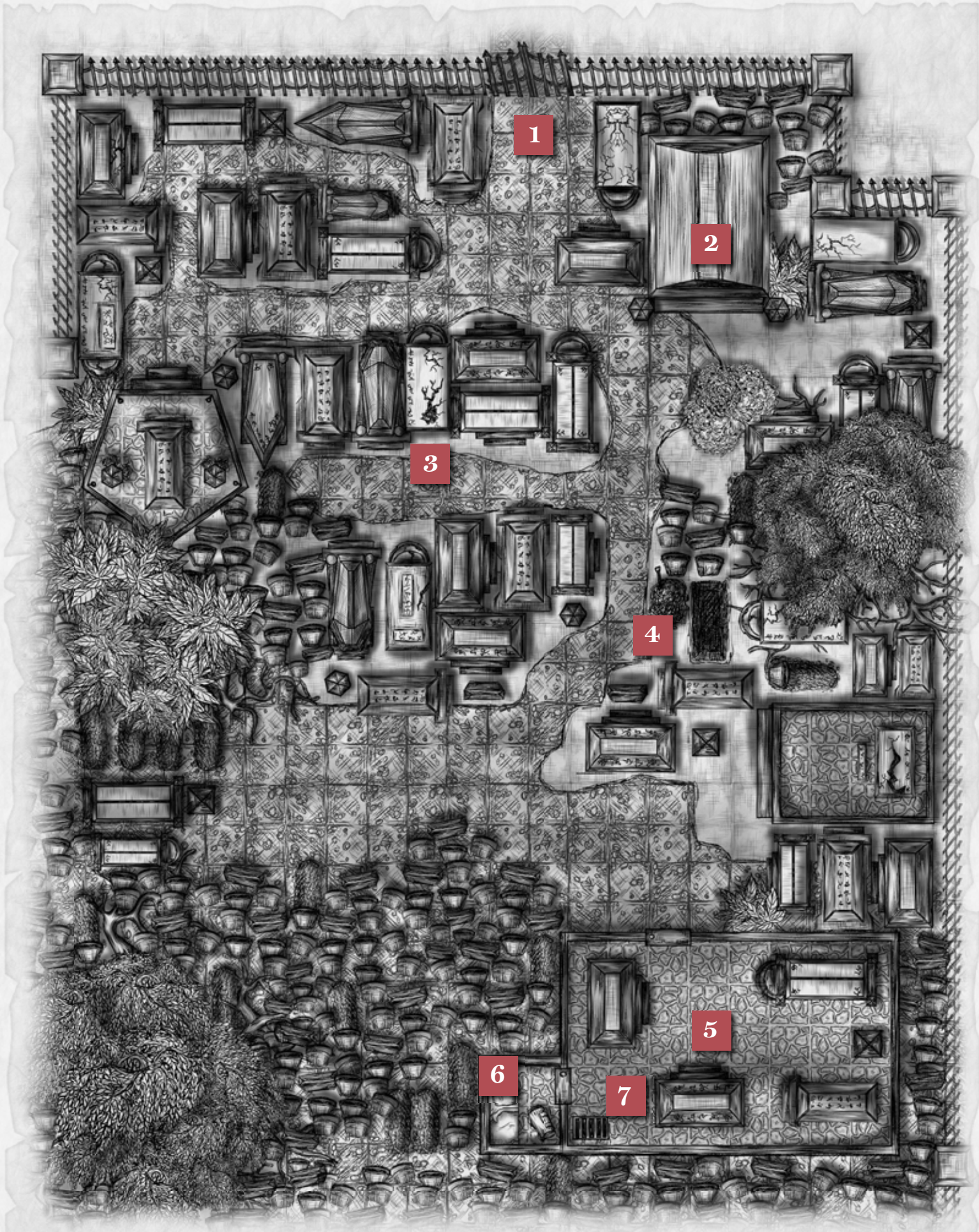
Within the Crypt

Artfully crafted mosaics on the walls of this tomb, the final visible vestiges of its former glory as a nobleman's resting place, are smeared with dried gore and rot, as bodies stacked 12 high in some corners of the crypt buzz with a thick cloud of flies. The piles are considered difficult terrain as they shift and collapse beneath the slightest weight.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what horrors await the party within the walls of the Commoner Crypt.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...a stirring among the pile of bones is a mix of 1d4 **rat swarms** and 1d4 **zombies**.
2	...a group of 2d6 **skeletons** rise and begin menacing the party.
3	...a pair of **shadows** stalk the party from the darker corners of the crypt.
4	...a **mud mephit** wallowing in a pile of dirt near the bone pile is a harbinger of the arrival of 3d4 more of them.
5	...a scream from within the crypt echoes off its walls as a woman is being buried alive under the bones by 3d4 **bandits**.
6	...a horrible buzzing heralds the arrival of a **chasme**, a demon trapped within the walls of this crypt.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Town Graveyard

Though some races are more long-lived than others, eventually all must succumb to the limits of mortality. Those who achieve fame, fortune or a measure of both might find themselves enshrined in a tomb, while the lowest of classes are lucky to have a marker designating their final resting place. For all those in between, there are graveyards like this one. A collection of centuries-old plots, freshly dug graves and well-manicured greenery, mausoleums and monuments rise alongside simple headstones in a space suitable for quiet reflection or, from time to time, battles against the undead.

Graveyard Gates

The main thoroughfare ***(1)*** into the graveyard is marked by large wrought iron gates, which are unlocked each day at dawn then closed and locked again approximately one hour after sundown (DC 17). The iron fence surrounding the graveyard is approximately 15 ft. high.

Reflection Temple

A roofed but unwalled space for meditation or communing with the spirits of the dead ***(2)***, this temple disallows altars dedicated to one specific deity and is free of any of the markers typically present at a place of worship. Instead, it hosts an array of offerings to various gods—particularly those most associated with notions of life and death—a custom that throws off far-flung travelers but that locals agree is for the best given the size of their community.

Stone Casket

This large stone casket ***(3)*** has a crumbling top and a false bottom, which upon further investigation (DC 17) appears to lead to an underground tomb (pg. 151). The large heavy lid of the casket can be removed with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

Open Grave

A pile of earth sits alongside a hole about 7 ft. deep ***(4)***, the site of a recently departed citizen's soon-to-be final resting place. Anyone tumbling into this hole is subject to a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 1d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed save. A DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check is required for anyone wishing to climb out without the aid of rope or a hand from above.

Family Plot

A larger mausoleum within the graveyard ***(5)***, this plot belongs to a long-forgotten family who buried their dead here for decades. Its maintenance is now handled by a single heir, who makes his home within the modest surroundings of the mausoleum ***(6)***.

A grate within this space ***(7)*** leads directly to the underground tunnels that permeate the town, and while the party may find evidence that someone lives here, whether they meet the man who keeps this grave—as well as the pertinent details related to his family—is entirely up to GM discretion.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what adventures await the party within the graveyard.

1d6	If the sun has set...
1	...a group of 2d4 **bandits** are attempting to rob a grave.
2	...a **necromancer** and her 2d4 undead minions are systematically ripping up gravestones.
3	...1d6 **will-o'-wisps** hover among the gravestones.
4	...a pile of grave dirt is actually a **shambling mound**.
5	...2d4 **mummies** emerge from one of the mausoleums and start chasing anyone nearby.
6	...four **ghosts** float among the gravestones and mausoleums. One is hostile. One will aid the adventurers. Two will only attack if provoked.

NPC Profile

Calloway Reachrun, Hermit of the Graves

Long before the noble families in this region made names for themselves, the Reachruns owned or profited from much of the land and businesses here. Their name was synonymous with success, forthrightness and honor—but that was long ago. Today their name is largely forgotten, their wealth and standing evaporating almost overnight following a series of bad deals, worse luck and —or so it was rumored—a horrible, irreversible curse. Today, the only man who knows the truth about the Reachruns is the family's sole heir, an elderly but spry hermit named Calloway. His inheritence amounts to little more than a *bag of magic beans* he keeps close to his bony chest and this family plot, where he spends most of his time maintaining the Reachrun mausoleum.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

FOREST FORTRESSES, BEACHFRONT BATTLEFIELDS AND PLACID PARKS FOR WHEN YOUR PARTY NEEDS SOME FRESH AIR.

Campfire Cove

A coastal clearing that's a perfect spot to bed down for the night, this serene space is also an attractive watering hole for beasts of the nearby forest, as well as bandits looking to lie low.

Forest Cover, Open Shore

The surrounding woods give Campfire Cove enough cover so that a small campfire doesn't alert the entire realm to one's campsite. Any light source can be seen from the sea, however. In fact, rumors of the creatures who dwell beneath the waves being tempted to come to ground by the glow of a warming fire have persisted almost as long as those that tell of this site's location. In other words, it's a great spot to stay the night, though it's only as safe as any other in this land.

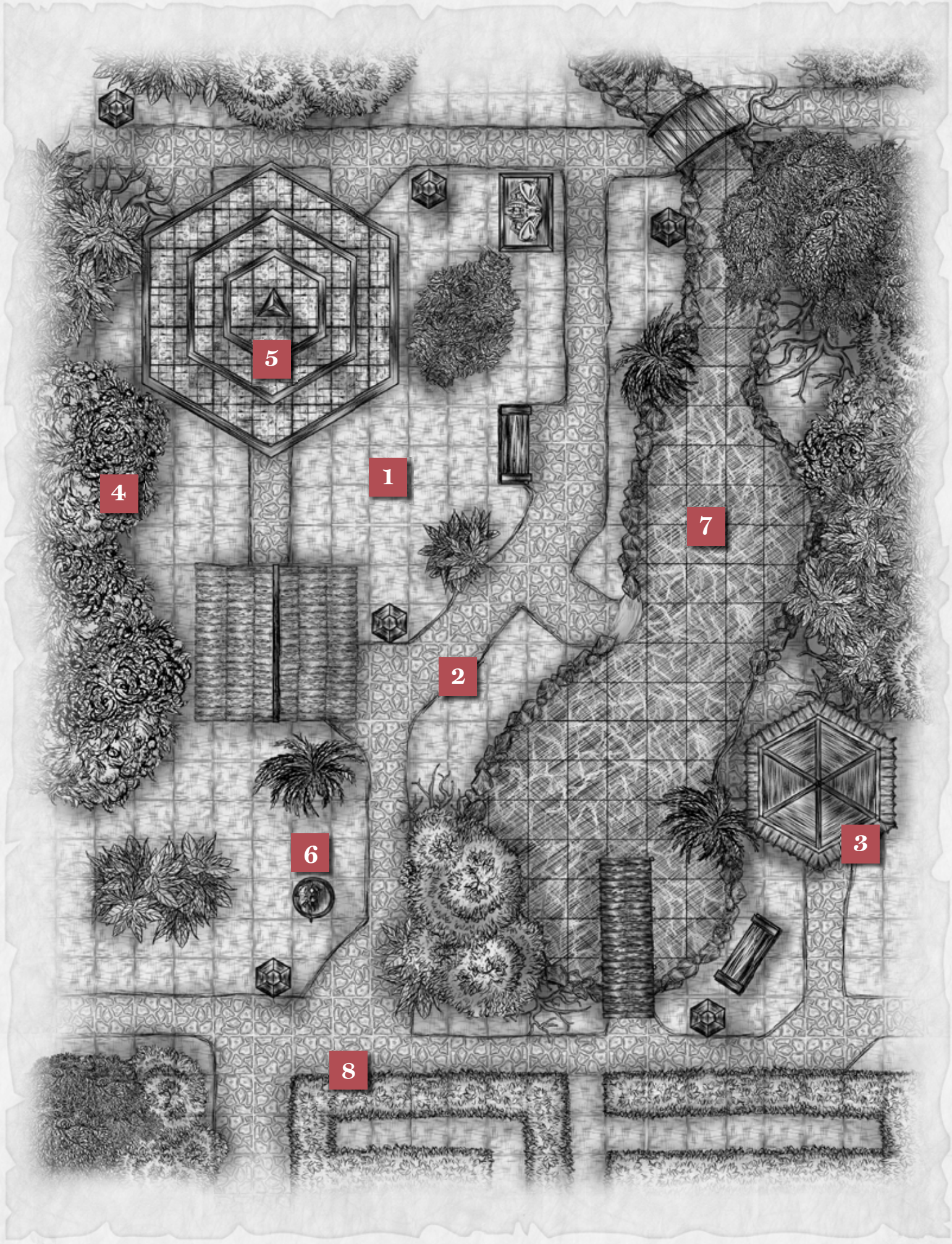
A Space to Rest, or Stash

Members of the merchant's guild, who travel along the path that passes this space more often than any other organization, sponsored the erection and continued upkeep of semi-permanent structures ***(1)*** on the shoreline, which offer modest shelter from the elements, as well as cover from incoming attacks should things turn south. A large boulder at the beach's edge ***(2)*** is partially illusory, with a dug-out hole for treasure or dead drops hidden within the rock itself. The illusion can be discovered with a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check, or if someone leans against the base of the rock while facing the shore. The contents of this hidden space are at GM discretion.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what dangers lie in wait for adventurers who stop off at this cove.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a small trio of **owlbear** cubs wandering to the shoreline. Their mother isn't far behind.
2	...3d4 **bandits** posing as merchants willing to trade with the party before stealing all their stuff.
3	...2d4 **ettercaps** silently investigate the creatures disturbing their carefully hidden (DC 18 Investigation) webs.
4	...an **ettin** lumbers into the cove for water. One of its heads appears to be asleep.
5	...a scouting party of 2d4 **merrow** creep onto the shore to investigate the noises emanating from camp.
6	...a massive tidal wave washes onto the cove, pulling any in the party who don't succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw into the sea.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Possibility Park

"What if, instead of destroying this forest we, I don't know, built a wall around it. For our children's children. Or is that a daft idea?"

—Sir Halifax Megalomo, Corporal of the Great Expansion

Within the borders of an urban landscape lies an open, curated space to commune with nature. Featuring quiet corners for casual conversation, trees for shade and man-made structures that accentuate the natural landscape, Possibility Park is a place brimming with the opportunities implied by its name.

Green Spaces

Much of Possibility Park is open lawn *(**1**)*, with well-trod paths *(**2**)* connecting points of interest among the rolling hills within its borders. Small benches are positioned strategically throughout the park, offering lovely views of the natural environment or of the cityscape beyond its formal confines. Small pagoda-like structures *(**3**)* offer shade, though not nearly as much as the dense forests *(**4**)* on either side of the park—left to grow wild to enhance the atmosphere of the space, as well as to protect the plant and wildlife within. Visibility within the forest areas is diminished by half, and any Wisdom (Perception) checks made in the park's packed forests are made with disadvantage. The forest also counts as difficult terrain for the purposes of determining a character's movement speed. Torch boxes illuminate most of the park and are lit after sundown.

Possibility Point

A large stone obelisk sits on a white marble platform *(**5**)*, casting a long shadow as the sun makes its way across the sky. Constructed as part of the park's initial design, the obelisk has become a bit of a tourist attraction, and lore suggests it has magical properties—at least anecdotally: Those who choose to touch the obelisk may find other possibilities open for them. If a character touches the obelisk, have them roll 1d20. On a 12 or higher, they are granted one extra d20 on any attack roll, skill check or saving throw. On a roll of 5 or less, they have disadvantage on a roll of your choice. This property can only be used once and fades after 24 hours.

Significant Statuary

Physical likenesses of several of the area's most prominent figures dot the landscape here *(**6**)*, equally spaced along the numerous paths within the park. Each is carved from a similar type of gray stone.

Fishing Pond

A small creek feeds a modest body of water within the park *(**7**)*, a popular spot for fishing, skipping stones and contemplating the day's dealings. A small dock juts into the pond and is a lovely spot to sit and try to reel in small fish.

Hedge Maze

The park offers visitors an opportunity to enter a large hedge maze *(**8**)* and explore its 10-ft.-tall hedge walls and elegant topiary.

Encounter Variant (Optional)
Exploring the Maze

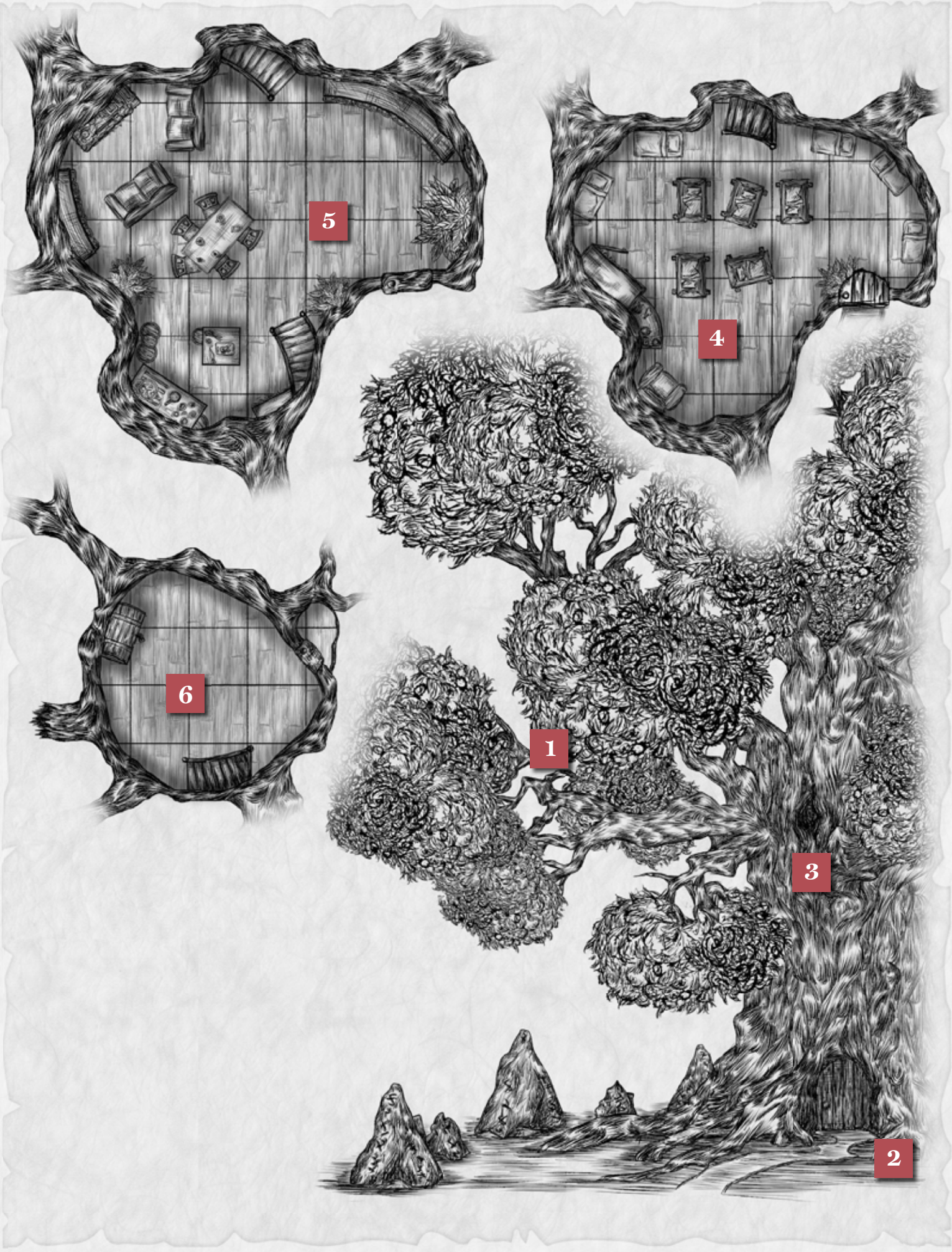
If the party is so inclined they may enter the maze built within Possibility Park. Roll 1d4 to determine what, if anything, the party encounters within it.

1	The walls of this maze are teeming with life, and are themselves alive. Any time a creature turns a corner in the maze, roll 1d6. On a 1, the creature must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) saving throw or be grappled by vines attempting to pull them into the shrubbery.
2	At the center of this maze is a blind man who offers to read the palms of each member of the party for 1sp. He will tell them each one truth about their future, at GM discretion.
3	The center of the maze features a portal to another realm (at GM discretion) and can be activated with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check.
4	Anyone who walks in this maze but does not reach its center is cursed, and will find themselves at the entrance to the maze each dawn, their body inexplicably drawn to complete it.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what possibilities await your adventurers in Possibility Park.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a group of 1d4 **phase spiders** menacing the pagoda near the fishing pond.
2	...a small boy drowning in the pond, where's he's being circled by a hungry **crocodile**.
3	...a **bulette** bursting from the ground and wreaking havoc throughout the park.
4	...2d4 **insect swarms** swirling outward from the park's two forest areas, announcing an angry **dryad**'s presence.
5	...a park visitor tossing an apple core into the pond, offending the **water weird** that dwells there. It attacks.
6	...1d4 **ghouls** emerging from within the hedge maze and terrorizing the park.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Oakville Harbor House

In a large clearing within the forest stands a massive oak, its branches thick as the average poplar. Within the tree's enormous trunk is a bustling village of pixies who have transformed the inside of the tree into a residence in order to care for abandoned or neglected babies before shepherding them to the Feywild to live a life away from the Prime Material Plane. The leader of this group of would-be do-gooders is **Nanny Flit**, a well-meaning, if misguided, minister of a specific brand of hope. If adventurers encounter Flit or her other pixie companions, they are likely to discover a somewhat unsettling plot to spirit children away into another realm, regardless of their parents' wishes on the matter. As such, the party should determine how to address this issue, if at all.

NPC Profile

Nanny Flit, pixie caregiver

This humble **pixie** just wants to make life a little better for the babies of the Prime Material Plane and, as such, took it upon herself years ago to care for abandoned infants and find homes for them within the Feywild. As the dangers of the realm became more apparent, her view of "protection" became a bit broader. Now, instead of caring for lost or neglected babes, she meticulously plots, in her words, to "shepherd" children away from potentially loving parents. She is peaceful and pleasant but will defend her cause from any interlopers who would deign to interfere.

Exterior

The Oakville Harbor House appears as an enormous oak tree ***(1)***, with large, sprawling branches in a woodland clearing. It has weathered storms, droughts and lightning strikes, as well as a small assault from within. At its base, perceptive observers might notice what appears to be the tiny, circular entrance to a rabbit warren where the large roots begin to penetrate the earth (DC 15 Wisdom [Perception]). A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a tiny wooden door ***(2)*** roughly 1.5 ft. tall, which leads to the lowest level of the residence within the tree's trunk. A continued investigation (DC 18) reveals a knothole ***(3)*** approximately 15 ft. off the ground, which features a door hidden inside of it and leads to the second level of the oak's interior. Both doors are locked, with a DC of 18, and are also under the effects of the *arcane lock* spell, making their total DC 28.

Variant Encounter (Optional) Awakened Home

At GM discretion, the Oakville Harbor House can be presented as more than just a large oak—it can be a slumbering **treant** that will defend its denizens from any and all threats.

Interior

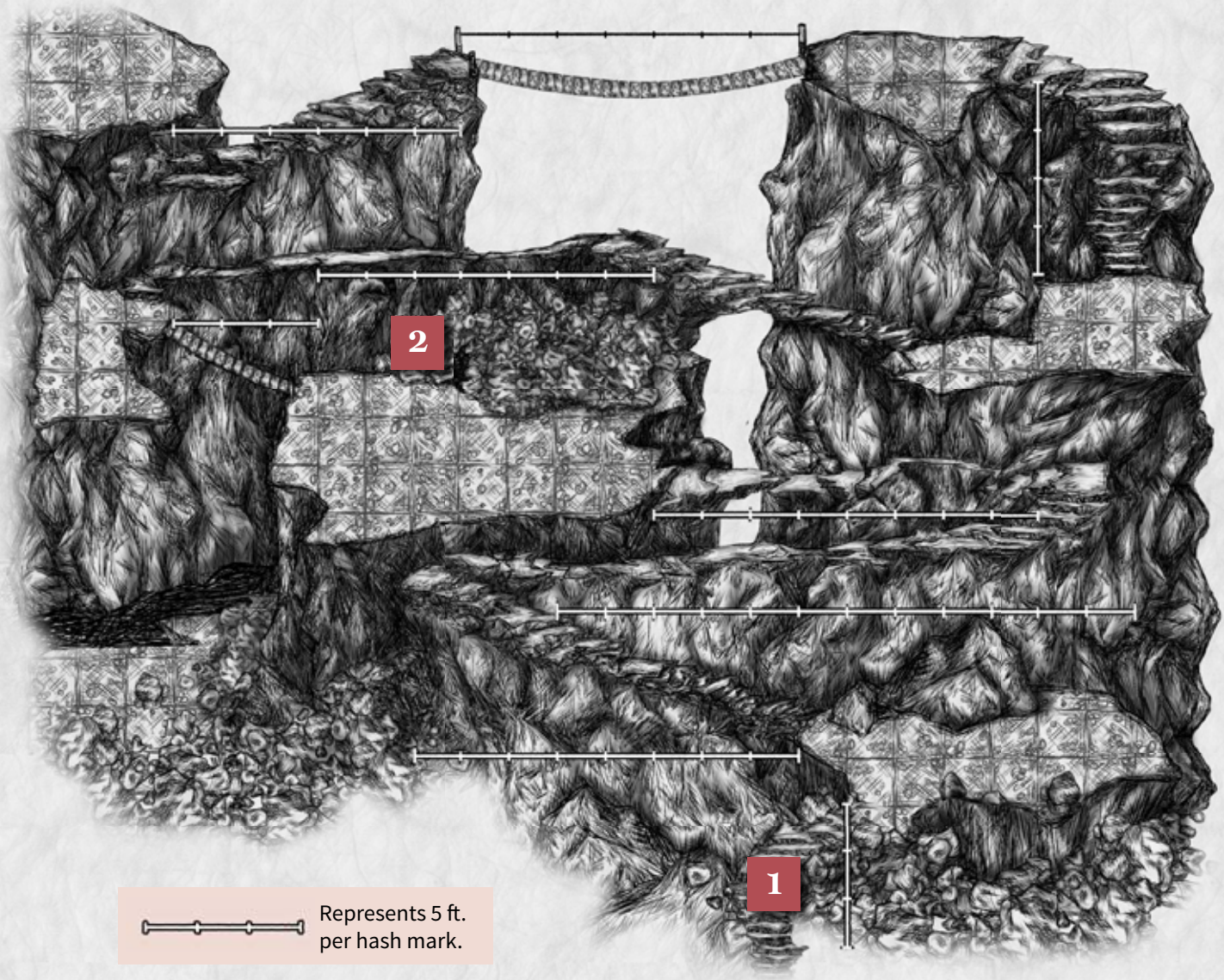
The inside of Oakville Harbor House evokes a busy nursery, with fluttering, flying attendants buzzing busily about. The lowest level ***(4)*** features a few small cribs and a relatively airy ceiling considering it exists inside a tree trunk. The second level ***(5)***, accessible via the knothole door, hosts a hidden entrance to the lower level, as well as a porthole to the tiers above, and it's here that meals are prepared and served for the residents of the space. The tiers above ***(6)*** are home to Nanny Flit and her numerous attendants.

The babies who are being held within the tree are, as babies are wont to be, occasionally fussy—particularly if there are loud noises in or around the Oakville Harbor House. Murmurs and coos can be perceived within 15 ft. of the tree with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. At GM discretion, if the infant(s) within begins to cry, the sound carries much farther (60 ft.) and is easier to hear (DC 12).

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Including Nanny Flit, there are three other **pixies** within the Oakville Harbor House at all times. Additionally, the base level of the interior of the tree is currently home to 1d4 infant children. Roll 1d6 to determine what other excitement may be nearby.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...1d4 **shambling mounds** beneath the ground around the tree waiting for anyone who gets too close.
2	...2d6 villagers with torches menacing the tree with claims that it "ate our babies."
3	...a **coven of three green hags** yelling at the tree, demanding the babies they are certain are hidden within.
4	...a **troll** shambling along in the woods near the tree looking for food.
5	...a single **pixie** struggling to push the back end of a particularly chunky baby through the lower door of the tree.
6	...a hunting party of 2d4 **centaurs** pursuing a **giant elk**, driving it directly toward the party.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Represents 5 ft.
per hash mark.

Cliffside Crawl

A narrow, switchback-laden trail is the only navigable route to the top of an imposing cliff. The path itself is treacherous, to say nothing of the dangers that lurk in the caves, ridges and inset seams along the cliff wall, and very few who travel the Cliffside Crawl alone reach their destination without scars to explain or limbs to repair—if they reach it at all.

Narrow Path

The trail up the cliff ***(1)*** doubles back on itself several times and is typically no more than 5 ft. in width. As a result, most traveling parties must navigate the terrain in a single file line, climbing over the remnants of rock slides and the occasional abandoned cart.

One Wrong Step

The earth beneath the feet of those who traverse this path has a tendency to shift under pressure, causing slips for the lucky and tumbles over the edge for the less fortunate. Anyone passing close to the edge of the path, either to look over the side or to step around a creature occupying the path's space, must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or slip down the cliff to the next highest level of the path where they must succeed on another DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or tumble farther down the cliffside, suffering 2d6 bludgeoning damage for each level they plummet. If the slip occurs alongside the ravine, the creature falls 200 ft., suffering 20d6 bludgeoning damage on impact with the ground below.

A Swift But Dangerous Passage

The bandits who occasionally strike along this trail have hidden handholds and natural ladders at a few spots along the path. These allow them to more easily ambush a traveling group by dropping down behind them unnoticed or climbing ahead to a higher point on the trail as less athletic groups take the long way around. These shortcuts can be seen with a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check but are also marked in thieves' cant. Anyone wishing to take one of these shortcuts up the cliffside must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or be subject to 1d6 bludgeoning damage per 10 ft. fallen and the Dexterity save as outlined in One Wrong Step as they attempt to steady themselves after an initial fall.

Cave Entrance

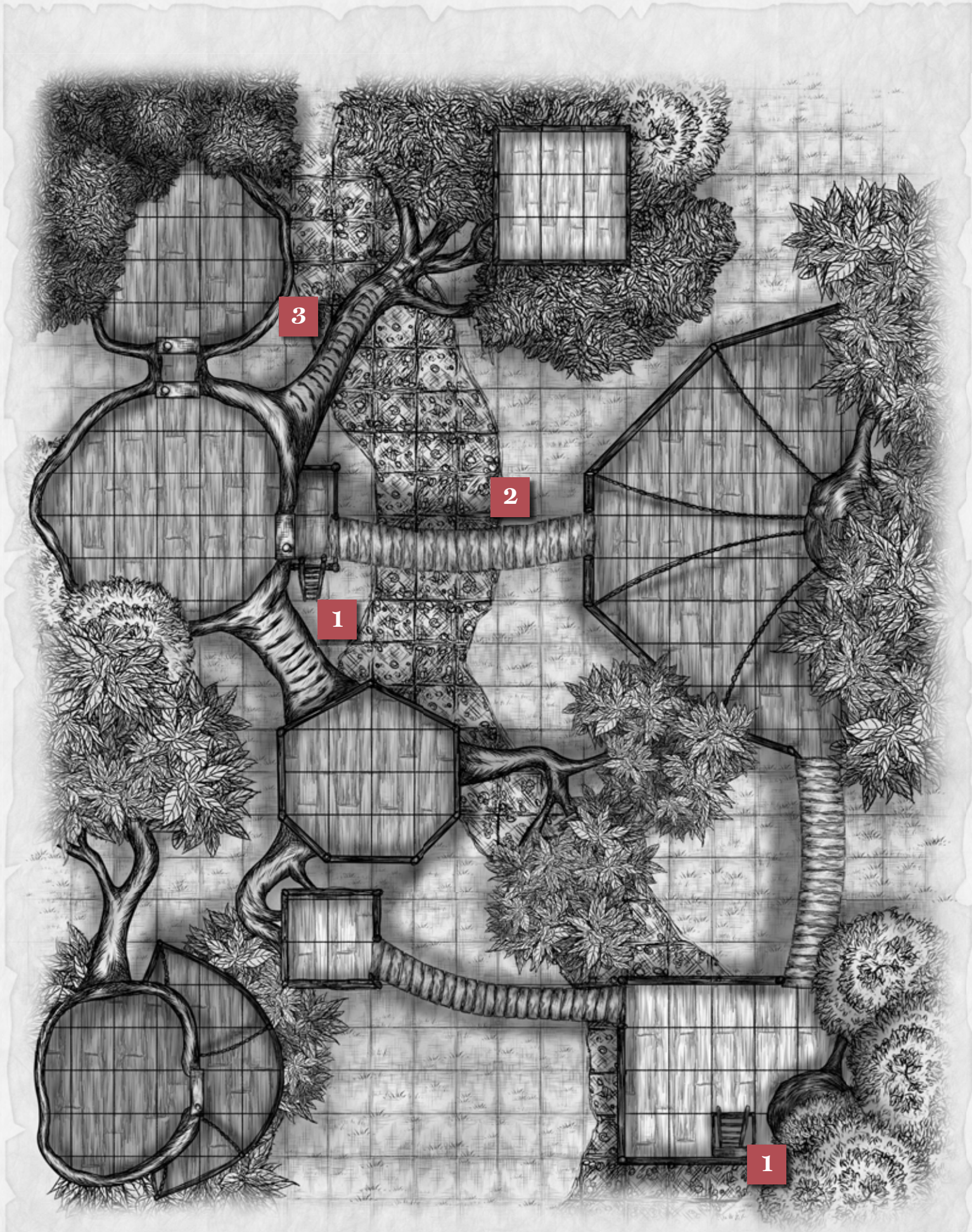
Halfway up the cliff's path is the entrance to a long-forgotten cave ***(2)***, visible on a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. This cave leads to one of the following locations (or another at GM discretion):

1d4	The cave leads to...
1	...a treasure cache.
2	...a bandit hideout with 2d4 **bandits** and one **bandit captain.**
3	...a creature's lair.
4	...a portal to another plane of existence.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what adventures await the party as they journey along this path.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...a group of 2d4 **bandits** assaulting a merchant and his pull-cart.
2	...a large **bulette** erupting between party members, surprising them as they walk along the path.
3	...a hidden **manticore** leaping from the rocks above to attack the party.
4	...two **hill giants** who throw rocks at the party from a superior vantage point at the top of the cliff.
5	...a lone hermit carrying a glaive and shambling along the path and is an **oni** in disguise.
6	...1d4 **perytons**, which assault the party from their cliffside nests.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Treetop Village

Among the trees of a dense forest and just below the canopy is a series of structures connected by rope bridges and sturdy branch walkways—a small community in an otherwise uncivilized locale.

A Versatile Location

This place can function as a home for those seeking refuge from violence or as a home base for those who might intend harm on others. Roll on the table below to determine its residents (at GM discretion).

1d6	Who dwells in this village?
1	A group of 1d4 **druids** who have vowed to protect the creatures in the forest.
2	2d4 would-be **scouts** who use the village as an outpost during training.
3	A group of 4d4 halflings who've taken to the trees to avoid the beasts that dwell below.
4	A tribe of 3d4 **orcs** who use the elevated position to prey on any creatures that pass below.
5	A group of 3d4 human children, orphans from a far-off village that was razed by **bandits**.
6	A group of 3d4 **bandits** who impose a tax of 10gp for anyone wishing to travel in "their woods."

Village Access

For those unaware of its location, the Treetop Village is difficult to find and even harder to access. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check in the surrounding forest reveals two sets of elevated ladder rungs that start 8 ft. off the ground. A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the lowest rung is trapped (DC 15), and if used to support more than 20 pounds of weight will trigger a rockfall from a net above. If triggered, everyone within 5 ft. of the ladder must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much on a success. The ladders ***(1)*** lead to the locked access doors (DC 18) to the main platforms.

Treetop Towers

Wooden platforms of varying elevation serve as the base for this village's structures ***(2)***. The underside of each is camouflaged with the canopy above, obscuring the entire village from the forest floor. A keen eye can detect its presence with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. The platforms are of varying heights (30, 40 and 60 ft.) and are connected by a series of rope bridges and sturdy branches ***(3)***. Each platform is walled off to ensure protection from the elements and assailants, but there are windows on all sides of each platform that offer a comprehensive view of the area, and archery slits that allow for attacks from full cover.

Bridges and Branches

Passing over a rope bridge or running along a connective branch is not without its difficulties, and those who don't normally reside here aren't able to maneuver from platform to platform as easily as those who do. Moving slowly and methodically across these elevated paths is the safest way to avoid a fall. If a creature chooses to use their full movement speed to cross these pathways, they must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw with disadvantage, falling off the bridge or branch on a failed save and tumbling over the side. A creature that falls suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage on impact with the forest floor for every 10 ft. they fall.

Village Protections

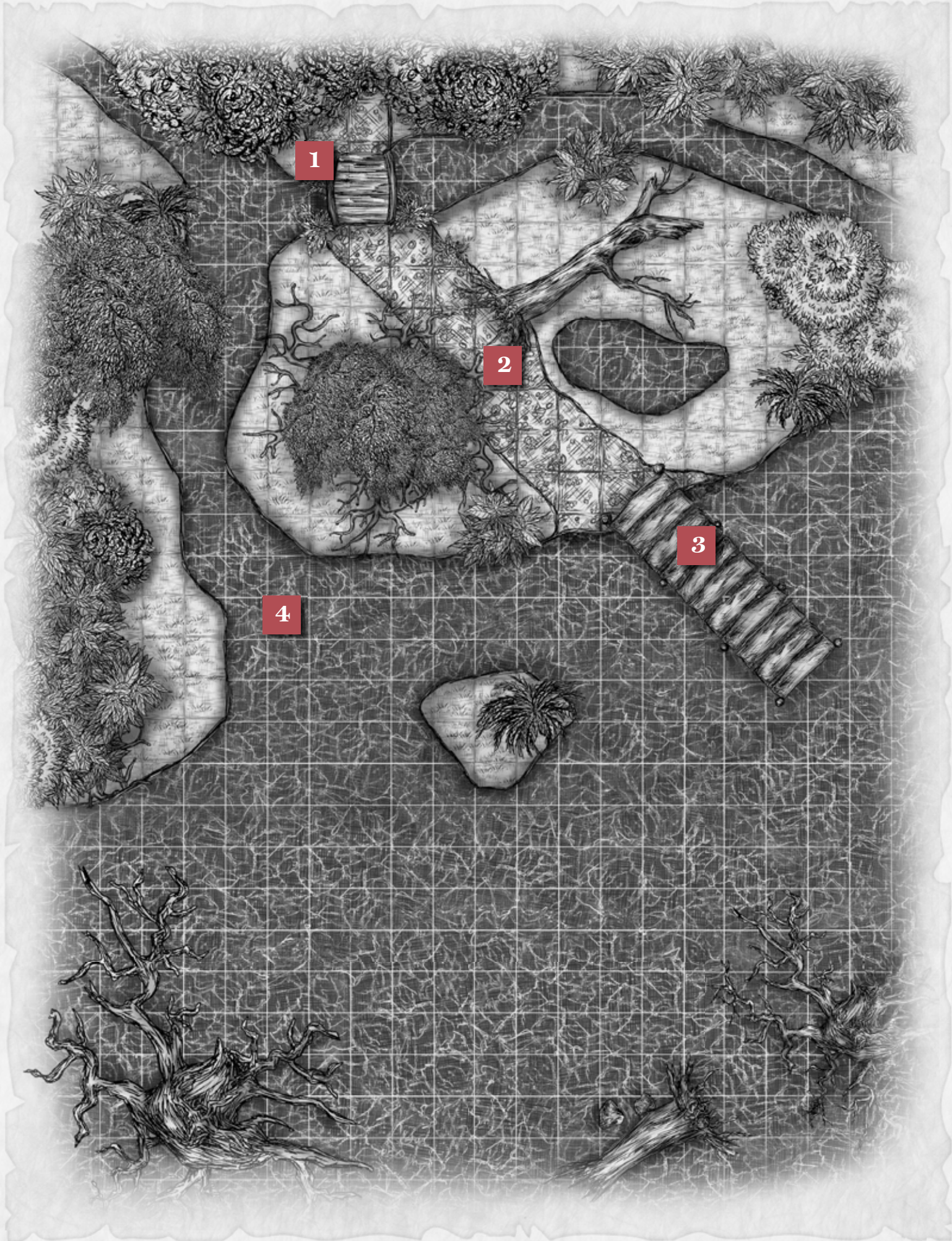
The Treetop Village is relatively secure but not impregnable. Because the entire community is built from wood and sits just below the canopy of a dense forest, threats from fire are of particular concern. As such, fire buckets filled with sand are posted on every platform, as are glyphs that activate the *create food and water* spell if flames reach the platforms, expelling several hundred gallons of water in times of emergency. Once these glyphs are expended they must be recast.

Encounter Variant (Optional)
Friends or Foes?

When the party discovers the Treetop Village, you can elect for its residents to be hostile, friendly or cautious. You can also choose to roll 1d6 and confront them with one of the below encounters, either while they are attempting to access the Treetop Village or once they are inside. Secondly, at GM discretion, the residents of the Treetop Village could work with the party, stand against them or attempt to stay neutral during this encounter.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

1d6	At Treetop Village...
1	...a group of 2d4 **gnoll riders** on **giant hyenas** charge over a hill, hungry for fresh meat.
2	...the party has been standing near 1d4 **shambling mound(s)**.
3	...1d4 **werewolves** leap into the clearing beneath the platforms.
4	...1d4 **goblins**, led by a **hobgoblin captain**, sneak through the forest on patrol.
5	...the party finds itself between a mother **owlbear** and her two cubs.
6	...a hungry **giant constrictor snake** stalks the party from among the foliage.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Fishing Pier

A respite from the bustle of town, this secluded spot in the forest is the perfect place to cast a line and reel in a big one (a fish, not a merrow).

Fresh Air, Fresh Water

The fishing pier is a known, if rarely visited, location. This is partly because of its proximity to the town (it's not close) and in part because there's not much to do here other than sit and enjoy the quiet—a pastime some are too busy to fully enjoy. Those who do choose to walk through the nearby woods and across the bridge ***(1)*** that leads to a pathway through the bog ***(2)*** will find a lovely view and an even lovelier place to sit ***(3)***. The larger pond ***(4)*** feeds a stream, which flows away from town and down toward the sea. The stream itself is freshwater, but the pond the pier juts into features a bit of a mix, as well as a few creatures who've erroneously swum upstream.

Encounter Variant (Optional)

Appearance

Roll 1d4 to determine the current state of the pier and its surrounding forest.

1d4	The pier is...
1	**Foggy.** Visibility is hard to come by as a thick fog hangs over the water and the surrounding marsh, heavily obscuring the entire area.
2	**Flooded.** A heavy rain (which, at GM discretion, can be ongoing) has caused much of the marshland to flood. All the land in the area is difficult terrain as mud and knee-high water make each step a slog.
3	**Sunny and Still.** It's bright here, as beams of sunlight stream through the trees. It's also quiet—perhaps too quiet.
4	**Frozen.** The water in the pond as well as the creek has frozen through and is dense enough for most medium creatures to stand on. At GM discretion, roll 1d6 each time a creature is on the ice, with the creature plunging through the ice on a roll of 6, suffering 1d6 cold damage for each turn they remain in the icy water.

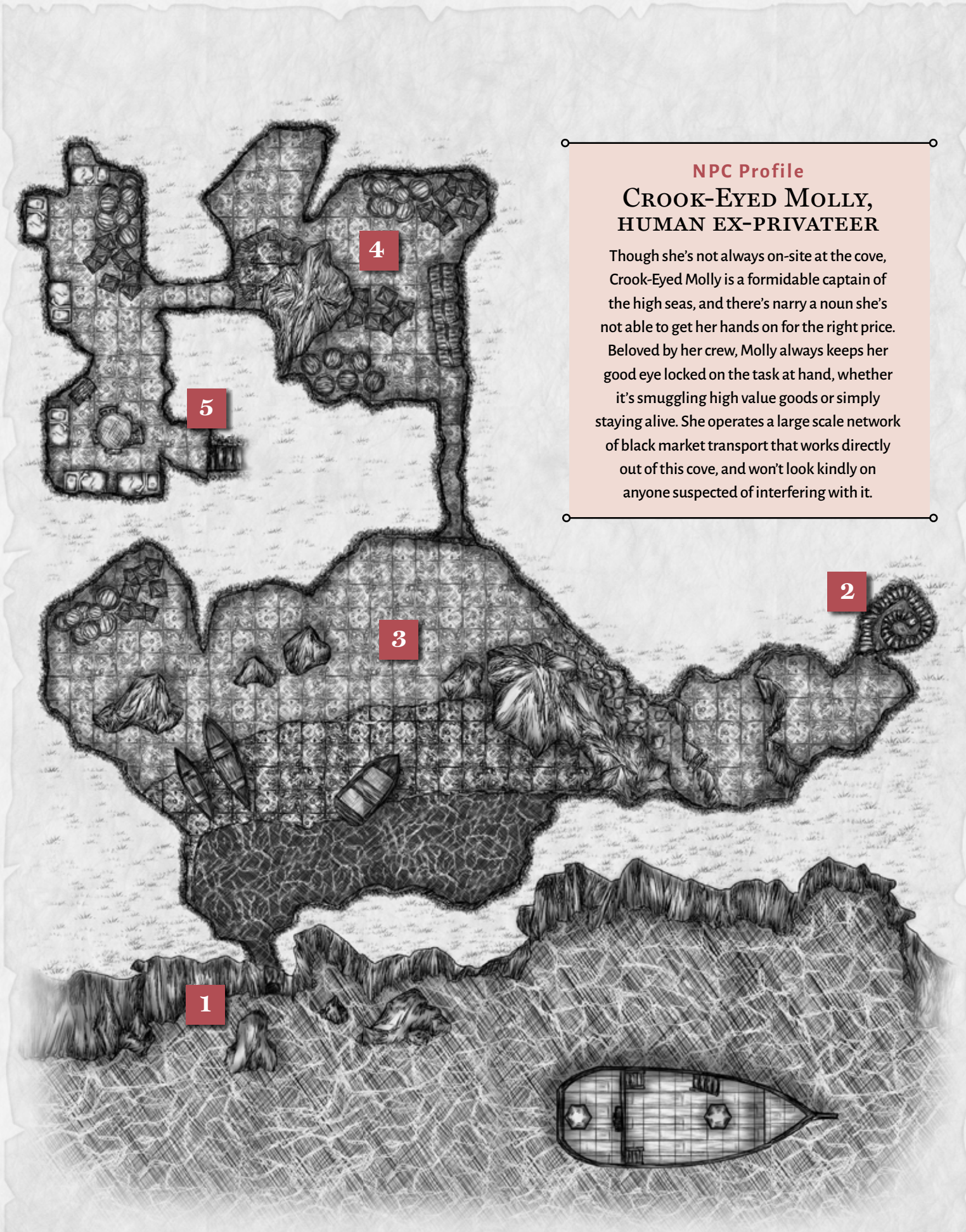
Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what the party might catch, or prefer to throw back into the pond at the Fishing Pier.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a man teaching his son how to fish. The boy catches something—something big (a **hunter shark**)—which promptly tugs him into the water.
2	...a small island offshore that appears to be moving slowly toward the dock. It is, in reality, a **plesiosaurus** making its way to shore to investigate the creatures now in its territory.
3	...a small jug tied to the dock with a bit of twine. Opening the jug releases a **merid**.
4	...a troop of 2d4 **lizardfolk** on patrol through the low grass by the river. They are hungry.
5	...a nest of 2d4 **harpies** observe the party from the tree by the pier, attacking if they look weak.
6	...a small boat by the dock is actually an oversized **mimic** with 102 hit points, awaiting its next victim.

Death Below

Beneath the surface of this placid pond is a nest of felled trees and broken limbs, some of them human. A creature investigating this collection of debris does so at disadvantage because of the murky nature of the water here, and will find more than just rotting logs on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The skeletal remains of 2d4 humanoid creatures are trapped beneath the natural clutter, and may become undead creatures who want nothing more than to drown any in their reach, at GM discretion.



NPC Profile

Crook-Eyed Molly, human ex-privateer

Though she's not always on-site at the cove, Crook-Eyed Molly is a formidable captain of the high seas, and there's narry a noun she's not able to get her hands on for the right price. Beloved by her crew, Molly always keeps her good eye locked on the task at hand, whether it's smuggling high value goods or simply staying alive. She operates a large scale network of black market transport that works directly out of this cove, and won't look kindly on anyone suspected of interfering with it.

Smuggler's Cove

Within a natural inlet masked by wave-battered rocks and the ocean itself lies the entrance to a cave that hosts all manner of stolen goods. Works of art sit wrapped among sacks of grain and crates of contraband within the confines of this well-protected space. Those who venture here without an invitation or a clear idea of where they're headed might never have a chance to leave.

Entering the Grotto

There are two points of entry to the natural foyer abutting the hidden corridor leading to the cove's main storage facilities. From the sea ***(1)***, an inlet along the sheer, 400-ft. cliff wall leads to a tunnel that's only visible (and accessible) by boat during low tide. This cave leads to an open, cathedral-like grotto with a soaring, stalactite-pocked ceiling and a short span of sand-covered shore. A secondary entrance can be found atop the cliffs ***(2)***, where a hidden door covered in earth and visible with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check lifts to reveal a spiral staircase that descends to a series of interior cliffs, ladders and landings.

Inside the Cove

GROTTO. Jagged rock outcroppings worn by the tides are the dominating feature in this dark cave ***(3)***. When the tide is low, roughly half the interior space is navigable by foot, but once the water begins to creep in, the dry shoreline begins to disappear fairly quickly. Smugglers use this quirk to their advantage, loading or unloading their goods as the tide recedes, as the boats can still float but the goods can rest on solid, relatively dry ground. Signs of this activity are visible during low tide, revealed by a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Astute observers (DC 18) will notice some foot traffic leads toward an inset spot about the size of a half-orc along the cave wall. Stepping fully into this space reveals nothing, but examining the cave wall within the inlet by touch gives away its mask—an effect of the *hallucinatory terrain* spell. The illusion can also be perceived with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. Through this narrow corridor is the cove's storage facility—and the spoils of weeks' worth of illegal activity.

Encounter Variant (Optional)
Shifting Tides

To determine whether it's high, low or mid tide, roll on the table below.

1d6	The water level is currently...
1	Low tide
2–3	Mid tide, rising
4	High tide
5–6	Mid tide, receding

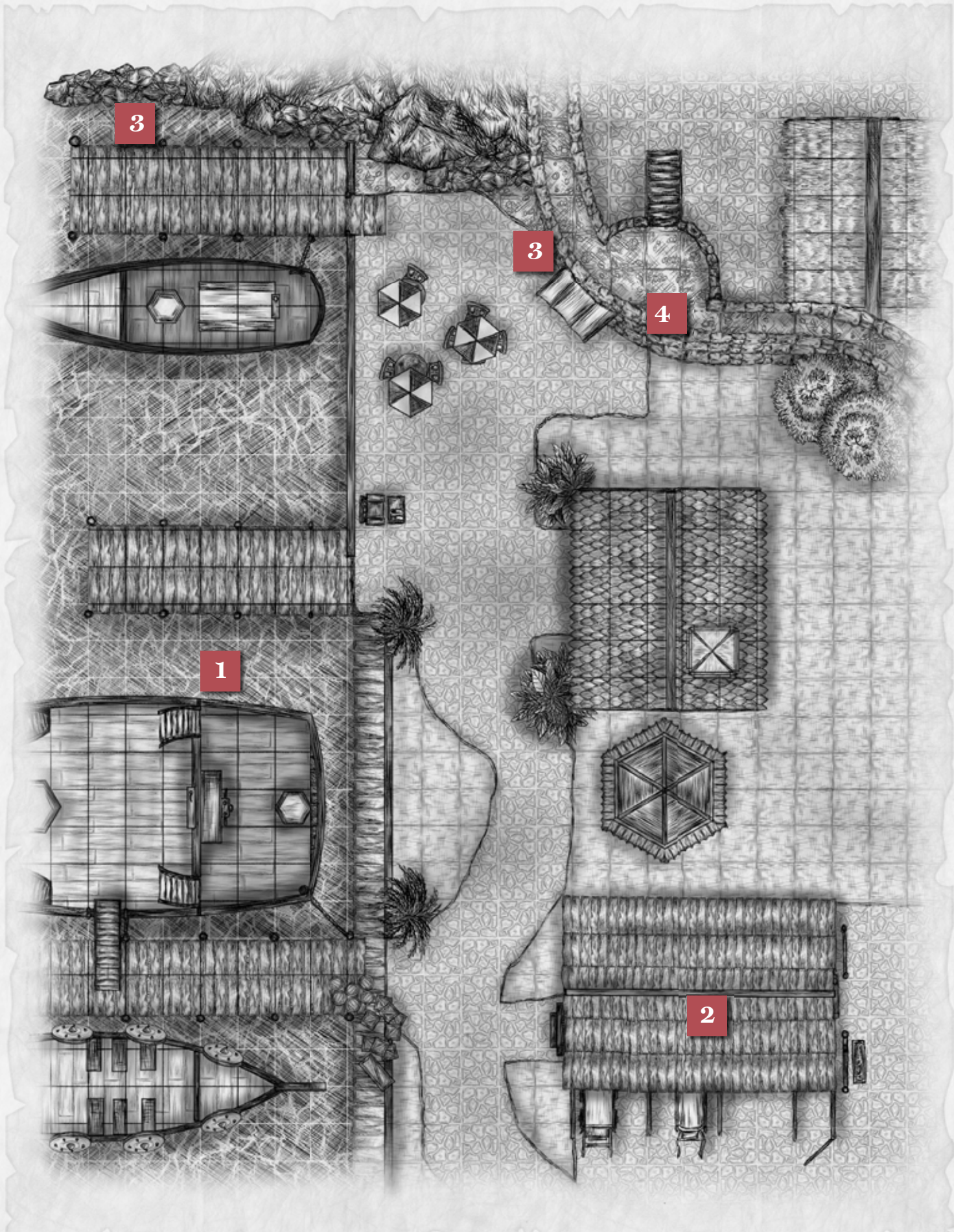
STORAGE AREA. Dim torchlight from the walls offers a view of boxes, crates and sacks of goods ***(4)***—so many that it might take someone quite a bit of time to separate run-of-the-mill goods from the truly spectacular, and as such, goods should be revealed at GM discretion. There is a pit trap along the walkway to the second chamber that can be discerned with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The first creature that triggers the trap and any creature within 5 ft. of them at the time the trap is triggered plummets 60 ft. and is subject to 3d6 bludgeoning damage, as well as 2d6 piercing damage on the spikes below if they hit the bottom of the pit. Goods in the second chamber should be revealed at GM discretion.

HIDDEN ENTRANCE. Behind a stack of boxes, revealed as fakes with a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check, is a bolthole and a long, narrow ladder ***(5)*** that leads nearly 400 ft. down to the sea-soaked caverns below. At GM discretion, roll on the Random Tunnel table (pg. 229) to reveal where this cavern leads.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine what adventures await your party within the Smuggler's Cove.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a group of 1d6 **bandits** and their captain, Crook-Eyed Molly, arriving to pick up some loot.
2	...a **banshee** behind one of the grotto's rocky cliffs about to release a terrifying scream.
3	...1d4 **basilisks** slink out from behind a collection of humanoid statues within the grotto.
4	...1d6 **sahuagin** and their **priestess** emerge from the depths, approaching the shoreline.
5	...1d4 **merrow** menacing the exit through the tidal cave.
6	...two **water elementals** swirl in the sea within the grotto.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The High Docks

Nestled in a private cove abutting the city wall, this well-appointed aquatic access point is exclusively for nobility or those who can pay to appear as such. With a carriage house and stables, as well as a levitating landing that ushers the upper crust to their own entrance atop the city wall, the High Docks ensure those who can afford its services need never mingle with those who cannot. A full garrison is typically on patrol to keep things orderly, leaving **Sheeva Starcaster, the High Dockmaster** to handle more pressing matters—namely who will open her next cask of wine.

Floating Palaces

The vessels that typically drop anchor at the High Docks rarely carry cargo ***(1)***. Instead, they're oceanbound residences, in many cases featuring full-time crews who cater to the whims and desires of their wealthy owners. It's not uncommon for the moneyed elite to host invite-only soirées aboard their boats in the summer months, during which most ships never leave the docks. Because space to dock here long-term is at such a premium, arrangements to do so must be made well in advance, and plenty of ships have been directed to the city's other docks—or worse, the Low Docks—due to a cap on available space (much to their owners' chagrin).

NPC Profile

Sheeva Starcaster, elven high dockmaster

A glamorous arch-mage who found her true calling as the city's High Dockmaster, Sheeva whiles away most of her days swirling a glass of claret, twirling her fingers to cast the odd spell and hurling the rabble who might dare to make their way to the High Docks out on their respective duffs. Her attendant work at the docks has helped her cultivate connections with some of the realm's most powerful nobles, most of whom would willingly offer just about anything she asked for the promise of a permanent spot on her anchor list.

Blind Carriage House

Sometimes the city connected to the High Docks isn't a passenger's final destination on the continent and they require further transportation. Because the clientele who frequent the High Docks generally have an aversion to mingling with commoners, the carriage house ***(2)*** is positioned to allow for would-be passengers to be escorted into their hired carriage from within an enclosed structure while the horses and driver wait outside. Only rarely has this practice led to a passenger being taken to a far-flung city they had no intention of visiting.

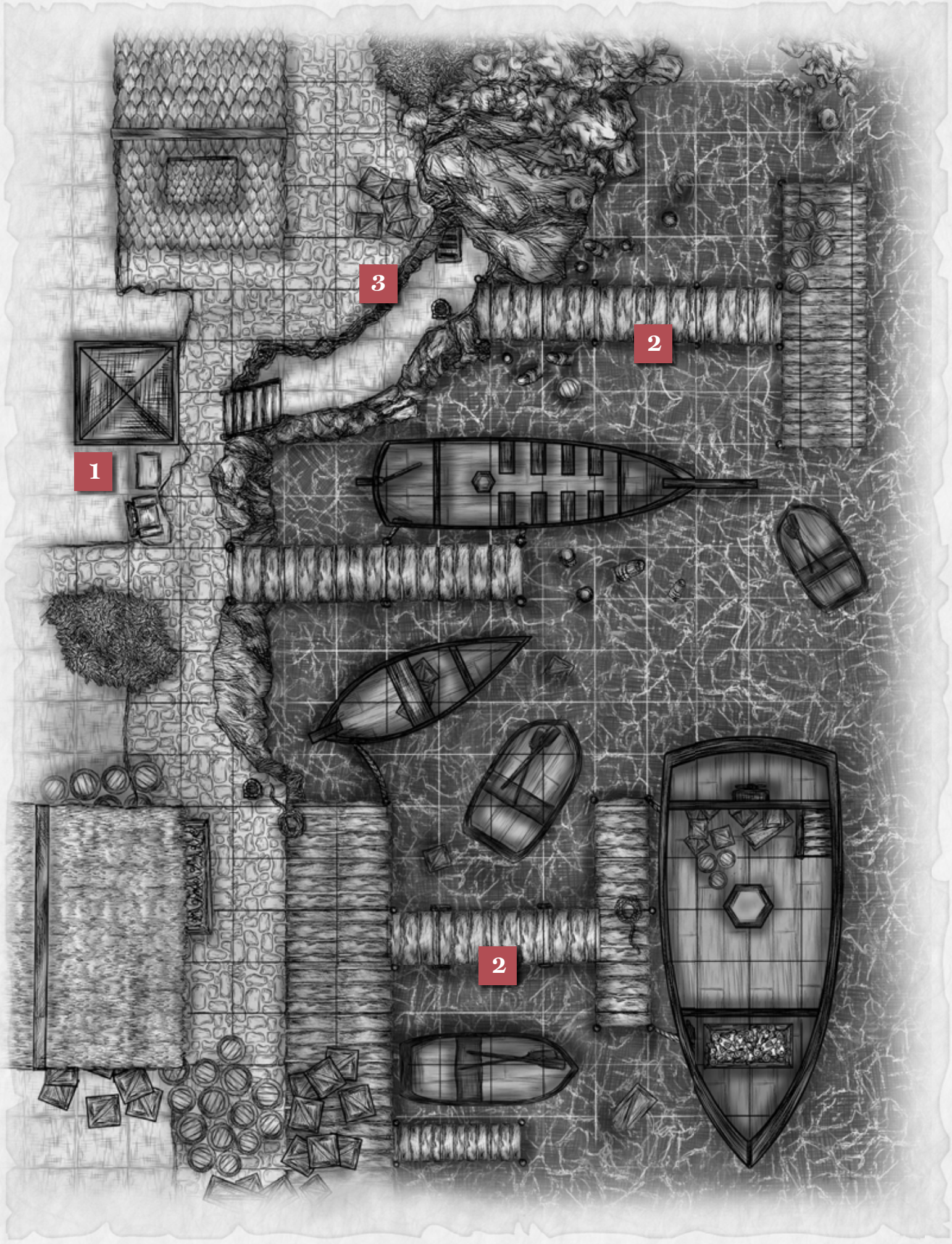
The Docks

Unlike their counterparts at most coastal ports of call, the High Docks are enchanted with a simple spell that displaces errant drops of water, ensuring they remain dry and easily navigable at all times. Additionally, each dock features a secondary platform ***(3)*** that, through magical means, can be raised to the level of the city wall (20 ft.), granting access to the High Docks' private entrance ***(4)***.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what high crimes or low blows might envelop the party at the High Docks.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a small tribe of 3d4 **troglodytes** emerging from beneath the carriage house. They make quick work of one of the horses before turning their filthy claws on the filthy rich.
2	... a **blue and a red slaad** under the control of a shadowy figure leap off the city wall and into the crowded dock below for a surprise attack
3	...an **assassin** leap off a docked boat as screams from its 4d6 passengers carry across the water. It seems an overturned bowl of poisoned punch is also a powerful acid that's eating a hole straight through the vessel's floor.
4	...two angry **air elementals** descending on the High Docks, unsettling a lifted dock carrying 2d6 passengers on their way to the city wall.
5	...a powerful surge of dark energy erupting from the deck of one of the docked ships as a summoned **barlgura** crashes onto the dock. The 1d4 **cultists** aboard the ship gasp in glee.
6	...1d4 **helmed horrors** drop from above and immediately begin a strategic assault against Sheeva, seeking revenge on behalf of a snubbed noble.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The Low Docks

Small boats, ferries and skiffs jockey for a place to moor themselves to these docks in order to transfer all manner of cargo into the city at this crowded landing—the only space common folk are permitted to dock their vessels. Like many places where barrels, boxes and boatloads are in abundance and guards are not, the Low Docks are a target for cons, extortionists, pickpockets and other criminals.

The Dockmaster's Charge

A surly sea dwarf named **Aegis Mackforth** keeps a watchful eye on the arriving and departing vessels as well as their crews, and several times an hour, representatives from various ships will approach to shake his hand and attempt not to raise the ire of his large **blink dog** companion. His role is to keep the peace, ensure cargo is handled safely and to citywide standards and see that the boats and crowds keep moving.

DOCKMASTER'S SEAT. Aegis Mackforth can usually be found within or near this small office ***(1)***. From this elevated spot he can observe most of the goings on at the Low Docks and intervene whenever necessary—though his presence is usually enough to keep things in line. Above his perch on the dock are markings that those who understand Thieves' Cant can easily decipher: "Pay now or pay later."

THE DOCKS. Because of their wet surface and the crowd of people commonly clamoring for goods or to board hastily moored vessels, the docks ***(2)*** are considered difficult terrain, but full movement can be used at player discretion: Anyone moving along the docks at full speed must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity save or slip and fall into the drink.

ACCESS TO THE SEWERS. A water drainage grate ***(3)*** leads to the city's underground tunnels and sewer system; a tunnel determined at GM discretion, or by rolling on the Random Tunnel table (pg. 229). Opening the grate requires a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check. Though the water along the dock appears relatively still at the surface, beneath it flows a strong surge toward the sea. Any creature who ends up in the water moves at half speed (unless they have a swim speed). At the end of their turn they must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check or be swept 15 ft. in the direction of the sea (at GM discretion). Creatures wearing medium or heavy armor are at disadvantage for the check.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

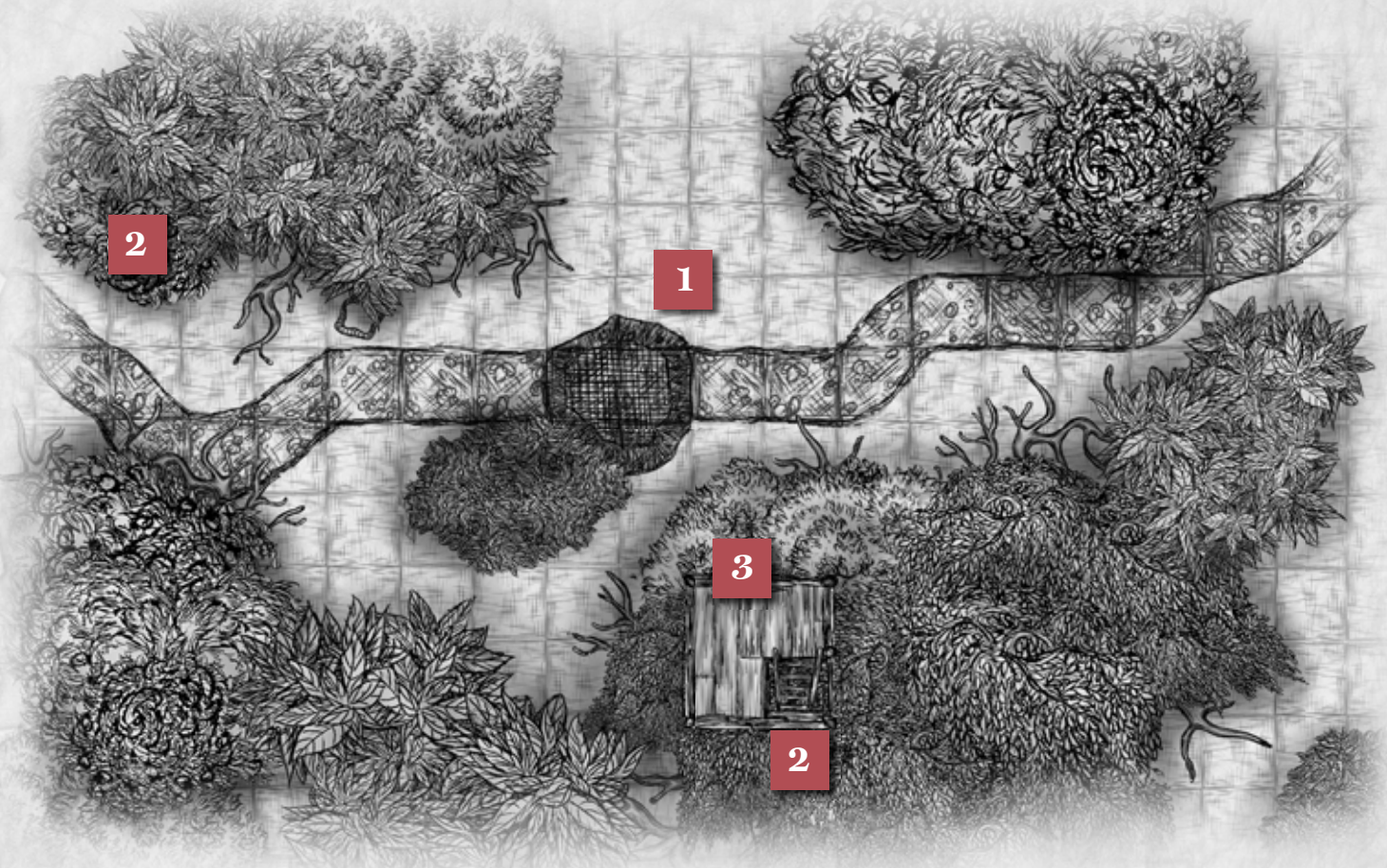
Roll 1d6 to determine what's troubling the waters around the Low Docks.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a fight breaking out between two crews of 2d4 sailors, both trying to land their boat at the same time.
2	...a boat carrying a once-caged **chimera** slamming into the dock, its crew dead, the beast very much alive.
3	...the illusory image of an **aboleth** laired nearby sullying the water at the Low Docks, causing a panic-induced stampede of 6d6 **commoners**.
4	...a boat full of **commoners** that turns out to be a band of 2d6 **kobolds** hoping to steal some cargo onshore.
5	...a war party of 2d4 **sahuagin** and their **sahuagin baron** attacking from the depths.
6	...two mischievous peasant children arguing about who gets to open the *iron flask* they lifted off a traveling stranger. When they uncork it, a **mezzoloth** appears, willing to do their bidding for one hour.

NPC Profile

Aegis Mackforth, dwarven dockmaster

Aegis is often found smoking his pipe while overseeing the comings and goings of the boats at this landing alongside his faithful blink dog Max. Very little happens at the dock without Aegis's knowledge or oversight—unless he's been paid to look the other way, which in many instances he has. Most of these bribes ultimately make their way into the city coffers, as Aegis pays a premium to keep the docks and the cargo that ships in and out of them off the books. At any given time, Aegis is carrying somewhere close to 200gp—and wearing it openly. No pickpocket in the realm would be bold enough to steal from the dockmaster lest they risk the wrath of dozens of individual guilds who rely on his willingness to keep this port open to their style of business.



Pit Trapped Trail

> "They took my wagon and everything on it. Would've taken my horses too if they weren't dead at the bottom of that pit in the road." —Ernest Macall, sullen merchant

Well-traveled roads and even those that receive less traffic are often targeted by roving bandit parties, tribal warriors or groups of trained soldiers or thieves, who set deadly traps along the thoroughfares from town to town.

Well-Hidden Dangers

Those who aren't actively watching the road for signs of foul play are likely to miss evidence of the trap ahead *(**1**)*. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a false surface on the road covering a 15-ft. drop, as well as a number of buried spears. Any creature falling through the trap, which triggers when a creature moves into its center, suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage and 2d6 piercing damage. The trap is approximately 15 ft. in diameter. Two smaller 5-ft. traps are hidden in the woods *(**2**)*, designed to disrupt mercenary forces that might be able to mount a counterattack during an assault.

A View From Above

An elevated platform roughly 40 ft. off the ground and obscured by the trees *(**3**)* offers a clear vantage point from which to signal a raiding party or pick off escorts one by one. The platform is camouflaged but can be discovered with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine the number, nature and motives of the assailants who built the trap.

1d6	The party must face...
1	...1d6 **lizardfolk** and 1 **lizardfolk shaman** who seem mostly interested in stealing weapons (to defend their village against an invasive species).
2	...1d6 **orcs** and 1 **orc war chief** who are seeking revenge on any elves traveling the road as part of a decades-old feud.
3	...1d6 **bandits** and 1 **bandit captain** who are just in it for the money and will flee if the tide turns against them.
4	...1d6 **hobgoblins** and 1 **hobgoblin captain** who want hostages for a parlay with a nearby town.
5	...1d6 **gnolls** and 1 **gnoll pack lord** who are interested in meat. Any meat. Your meat.
6	...1d6 **goblins** who happened upon the trap and did their best to set it but are now unsure of how to carry on.

The Boundless Ravine

A curving path leads to a shaded ravine among sloping foothills and features a derelict rope bridge that leads to the entrance to one of the region's complex cave systems.

Cave Entrance

A massive 20-ft. gap with sheer sides ***(1)*** separates the cave entrance ***(2)*** from the trail's end, with a long-neglected rope bridge ***(3)*** spanning the Boundless Ravine. The bottom of this ravine is not visible, though it does end roughly 400 ft. down. Those wishing to cross the bridge must do so at half speed or succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity check to stay balanced on the swaying bridge. Any creature weighing more than 300 pounds (including gear and armor) makes this check at disadvantage. On a failed check, the creature falls through the bridge and must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity or Strength saving throw to grab onto the bridge, or fall into the chasm of the Boundless Ravine.

Nooks & Crannies

The path up the mountain toward the cave's entrance is marked by a rough-rock landscape among the trees as well as a flat top mountain ledge roughly 30 ft. above the path that overlooks the bridge ***(4)***. These spaces are ideal spots from which to stage an ambush or to take cover in the event of one.

Entrance To the Underground

A massive seam ***(2)*** in the wall of the mountain is an entrance to the cave system that runs through this region, and stepping more than 20 ft. within it is enough to require darkvision or a light source in order to see.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what dangers await the party as they venture along the Boundless Ravine to the cave.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...nothing, if they don't pass a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Otherwise they notice the group of 2d4 **bugbears** and one **hobgoblin** waiting to ambush them on the cave side of the cliff.
2	...a **hill giant** emerging from the cave. It asks in broken Common if they "knows the wordpass."
3	...a motley crew of 3d4 **bandits** who just want to tell the adventurers that they're big fans.
4	...the shape of a massive beast soaring closer to the bridge as a **manticore** swoops in to attack.
5	...a trio of **magmin** leaping from a crack in the mountain, before chasing them across the rope bridge.
6	...a pile of armor moving near the cave entrance, as if being dragged deeper inside, and there's the sound of a man screaming "Help...help me, please," all the illusory work of a hungry **otyugh**.

Panning Creek

"Gold! Gold! I got some gold over here!"—Abel Nudge, murdered prospector

Gold is the most universal form of grease across the realm, and while some can create it through arcane or alchemical means, most folks work for it the old-fashioned way: through hard labor. And there's no labor that offers such an immediate intimacy with gold and other valuable minerals than prospecting. Large-scale enterprise took hold in this land long ago, and numerous mines with a host of laborers dot the landscape, but so do simple, gold-flecked creeks such as this, which beckon would-be wealthmongers hoping to hit it big one pan at a time.

A Gentle Stream

This portion ***(1)*** of the underground river that carved much of this cavernous space eons ago is flat and meandering, offering the perfect spot to pan for gold and valuable minerals cast off from within the heart of the mountain. Most of the water is less than 2 ft. deep, however, there are some spots within this span of water where the flow seems to still itself.

Dangerous Sinkholes

There are four spots within this creek (at GM discretion) where the water's surface is somewhat still, masking the presence of sinkholes as deep as 10 ft. The suction within these flows is powerful, and any creature engulfed by one is considered grappled with their head underwater. They, or a creature attempting to pull them out, must succeed on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check in order to escape.

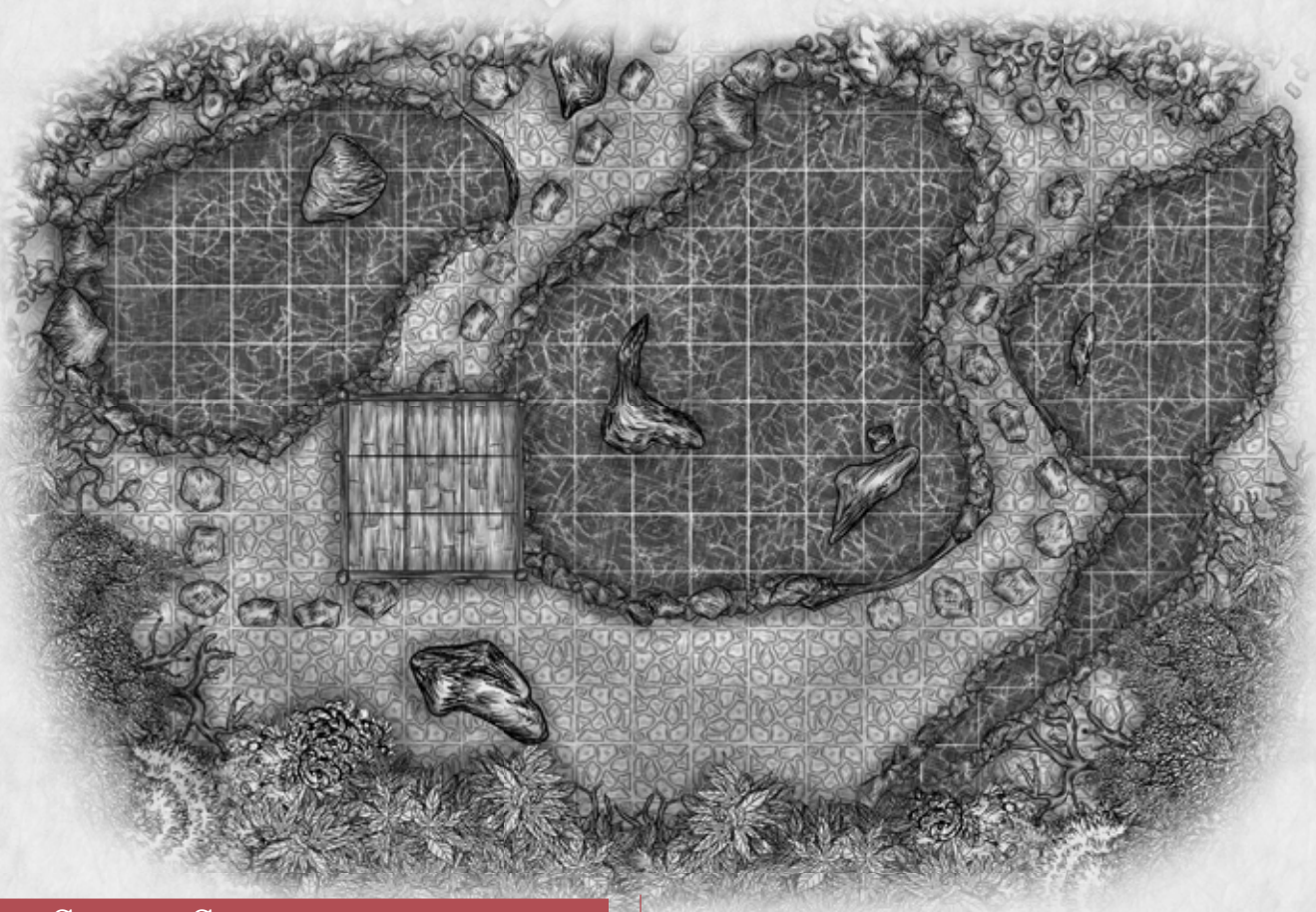
A Glittering Curse

The creek's flow of gold is long-rumored, but so is the hunger that consumes many a would-be prospector—the drive for even small flecks of the stuff consuming their every waking moment. Any time a creature attempts to search for gold in this creek, which they can do as many times as you'll allow, roll 1d10. On an odd number, nothing happens. On an even number, they've found 1gp-worth of gold ore. On a 10, they fall victim to the Prospector's Curse and are consumed with a never-ending desire for gold: no amount will ever be enough. Their bond changes to "I will do anything for gold—anything at all," and their alignment changes to chaotic evil. This change can only be reversed by magical means, through spells such as *greater restoration*, *wish* or *remove curse*.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine if the party will uncover riches or ruin in the Panning Creek.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a dead prospector and a sack of ore worth 68gp.
2	...the stalactites hanging above them are 2d4 **piercers** ready to ambush them.
3	...a **roper** disguised as a stalactite.
4	...2d4 **deep gnomes** who will try to scare the party into thinking the area is haunted.
5	...4d4 **goblins** who try to catch the party off guard.
6	...an **earth elemental** tired of being pickaxed.



The Sister Springs

Hidden away, deep in the forests of an isolated mountain range are three ancient thermal hot spring pools. Their golden waters bubble up from deep below, bringing minerals and the acrid smell of sulfur to the surface. The name of the springs comes from an old tale of three sisters, all gold dragons, who lost their ability to breathe fire and sought the help of the springs' healing waters. When they bathed, the water stripped the gold from their scales and the heat from their bodies, but in turn gave them the ability to breathe frost. To this day, the waters of the Sister Springs bubble with the remaining heat from the three dragons and grant blessings to those who bathe there.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Overall Ambiance

Roll 1d4 to determine the current state of the Sister Springs, as well as their context within the landscape.

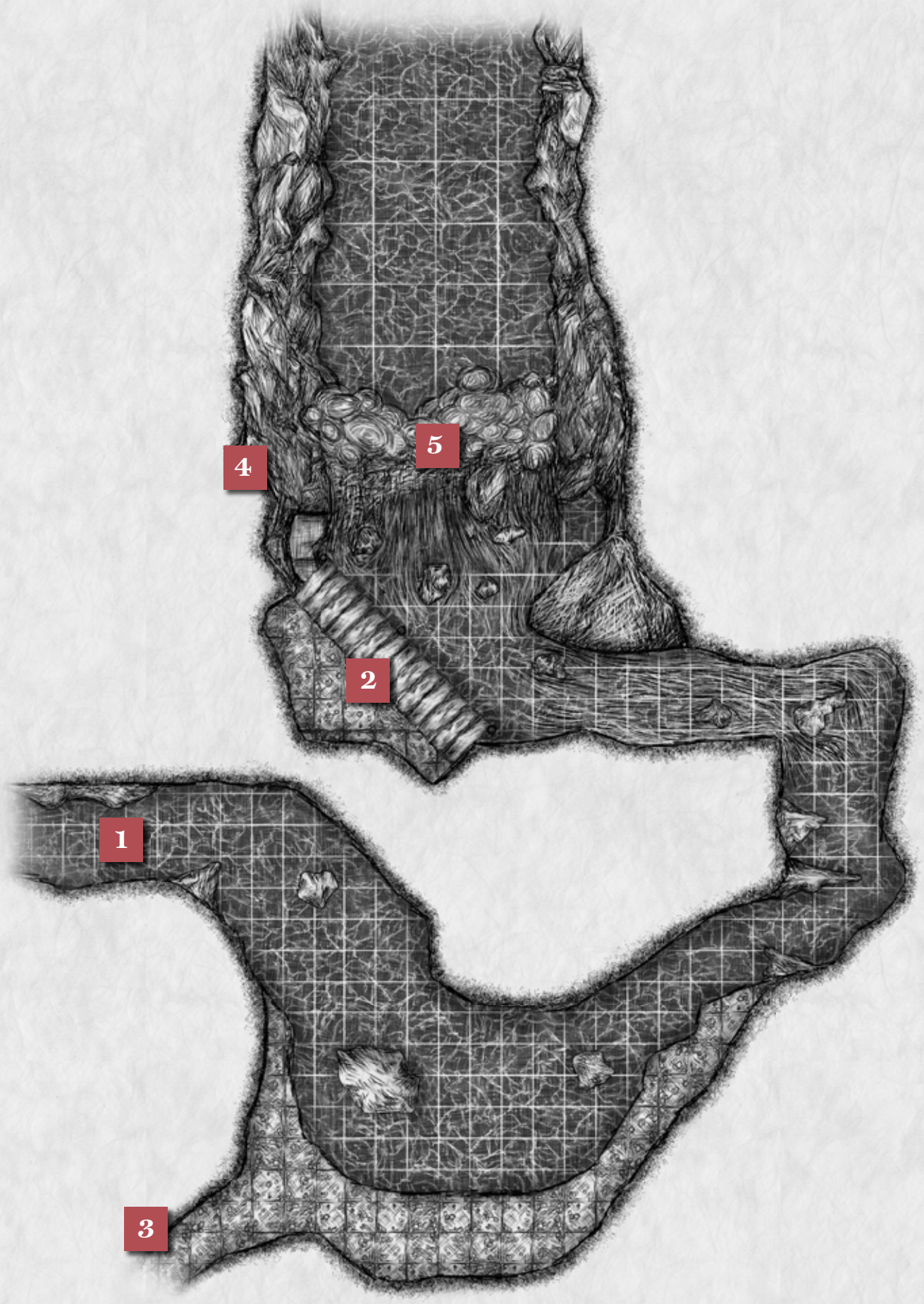
1d4	The Sister Springs are...
1	**...commercialized.** There's a massive hot springs resort built around the springs. The food is nice enough but the décor is tacky. It costs 4gp per night for a room and 3sp to enter the hot springs.
2	**...holy.** The Sister Springs is the site of a temple built in tribute to the three dragon sisters (or any deity at GM discretion).
3	**...untouched.** The Sister Springs remain free from development and are difficult to locate.
4	**...occupied.** The Sister Springs is home to an **ancient gold dragon** named Mercuriel who has sought the peace and solitude of the old mountains and healing waters of the springs in her final years.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Blessings of the Springs

Roll 1d8 to see what blessings the waters will give.

1d8	The waters grant...
1	...resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.
2	...an increased speed of 10 ft.
3	...a hardened skin (+1 to AC).
4	...an increase to maximum HP (4d4).
5	...1d4 added to all attack rolls and saving throws.
6	...resistance to fire.
7	...the ability to reroll any skill check once per day.
8	...the ability to breathe dragon's fire in a 15-ft. cone once per short rest (3d6 fire damage).

The golden waters of the Sister Springs are rumored to have healing properties. Along with a blessing, the waters of the springs grant the effect of the *greater restoration* spell. Each blessing lasts three days and each creature benefitting from the pools can only do so once every 21 days.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Waterrise Cavern

> "We heard the rush of the river as we rounded the bend and knew we were in for a bit of a drop, so we bailed and made for the banks. Imagine our surprise when our boat soared 200 ft. up as if carried by the wind."
>
> —Oliver Batson, journeyman explorer

This subterranean spectacle is one of the realm's most unique natural attractions: a waterfall that flows upward. The river feeding the waterfall, which locals call "the Rise," features a patch of hazardous rapids before defying gravity on its way to Waterrise Lake. The cavern is a popular destination for adventurous tourists, as well as creatures that prey on unsuspecting visitors.

The Cavern

The rushing river ***(1)*** that carved open this cavern in another age still flows, its wide curves wheeling around large rocks and splashing white over smaller ones. Stalactites hang overhead and stalagmites dot the otherwise open stretch of riverbank ***(2)*** that offers a full view of the Rise. A tunnel ***(3)*** utilized by smugglers is well hidden along one of the river's winding curves noticeable with a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. A narrow pathway of inset stairs ascends 200 ft. to the top of the cliff and falls ***(4)***. Climbing the stairs is incredibly difficult and requires both strength and patience as well as a knot (DC 10 Intelligence if not traveling with a guide) in the guide rope—with new connections required every 25 ft.—a precaution against dangerous falls. Those not climbing at half speed must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw each time they advance, slipping on the soaked stone steps and tumbling nearly 50 ft. before the guide rope snaps in to secure them on a failed save, causing them to take 2d6 bludgeoning damage as they crash into the stairs. Torches inset along the cliff wall and burning through the aid of the *continual flame* spell are the only light source in the otherwise dim cavern.

Riding the River

Navigating this rushing current takes both strength and finesse, and anyone attempting to do so should be comfortable getting a little damp. A group of four or more must succeed on a series of checks to navigate the river, its obstacles and the shifting current. Groups featuring less than 4 people make these checks at disadvantage:

1 group DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to paddle. On a failure, the boat drifts sideways and capsizes, dumping everyone over the side.
1 group DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to maneuver the boat through a series of switchback currents, swirling backward on a failed check—which imposes disadvantage on subsequent checks.
1 group DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice a rock ahead. On a failure, the boat slams into a rock and starts taking on water.
1 group DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to get the boat to shore before hitting the Rise. On a failed save, the boat travels up the Rise, dumping passengers overboard as it soars to the lake above.

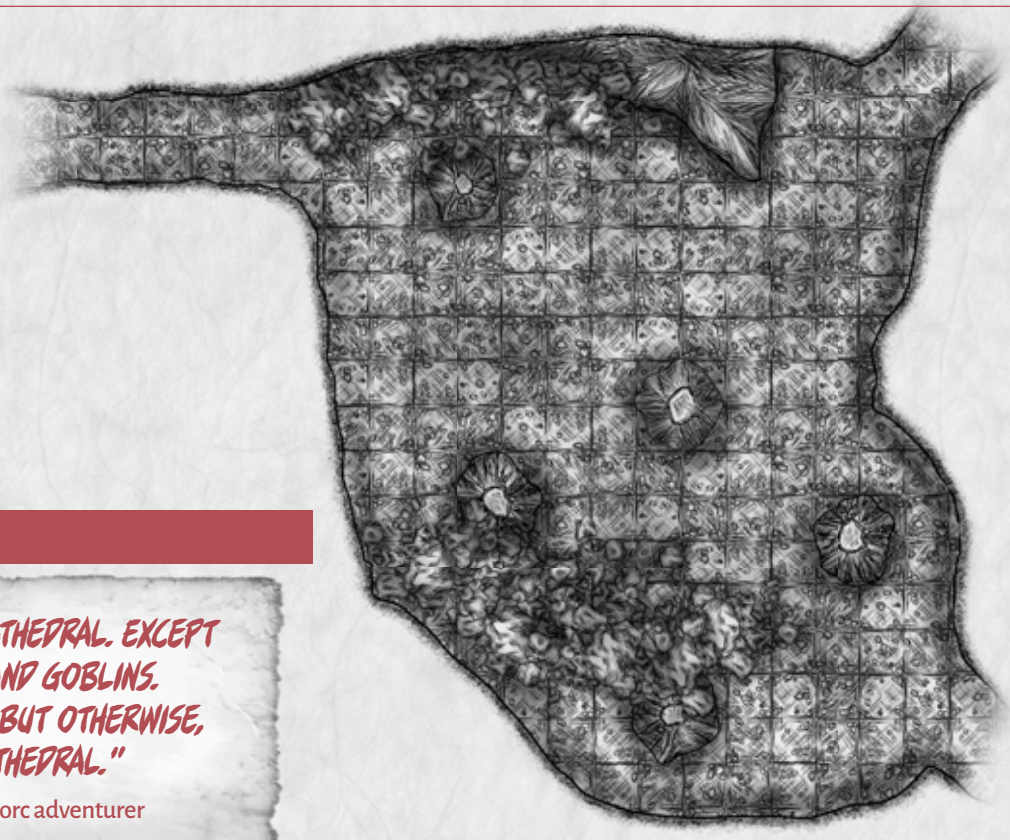
The Rise

This inverted waterfall ***(5)*** flows upward, defying gravity as well as experts in the arcane. In fact, the most powerful wizards in the realm were once consulted to determine the true origins of the Rise, and while it was revealed to be magical in nature, it also proved to be undispellable. There is an inset cave behind the watery curtain of the Rise, which can be accessed by succeeding on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check that must begin below the water's surface. Any attempts to access the cave without first going underwater all end the same way: a straight, almost violent flow upward to Waterrise Lake that ends with 4d8 bludgeoning damage as they are dashed against the rocks at the top of the Rise. The cave contains a chest secured with an *arcane lock* (DC 25).

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what adventures await the party within the Waterrise Cavern.

1d6	The party shares the cavern with...
1	...a group of 2d4 tourists and their guide, a strapping **veteran**, fending off an attack by a **cloaker**.
2	...1d4 **giant centipedes** fleeing an assault by 2d4 hungry **goblins**.
3	...2d4 **darkmantles**, which descend on the party in a surprise attack.
4	...a clan of 2d4 **hook horrors** roosting along the cliff wall next to the Rise.
5	...a large puddle of water that is actually a pool of **black pudding**.
6	...1d4 **ropers** hidden among various stalagmites, surprising the party.



Column Cave

"It's like being in a cathedral. Except there are cloakers. And goblins. And also some oozes. But otherwise, pretty much like a cathedral."

—O'thal the Unbothered, half-orc adventurer

This massive underground cavern features an airy, vaulted ceiling seemingly supported by massive natural columns carved out by the elemental forces of another age.

An airy space filled with darkness, the Column Cave is a large subterranean cavern with a high, 50-ft. ceiling and several columns that rise from the cave floor to the heights above. The columns are nearly 10 ft. in diameter and cause sightline issues, making them difficult to see around if one is standing too close—assuming you can see in a cave.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

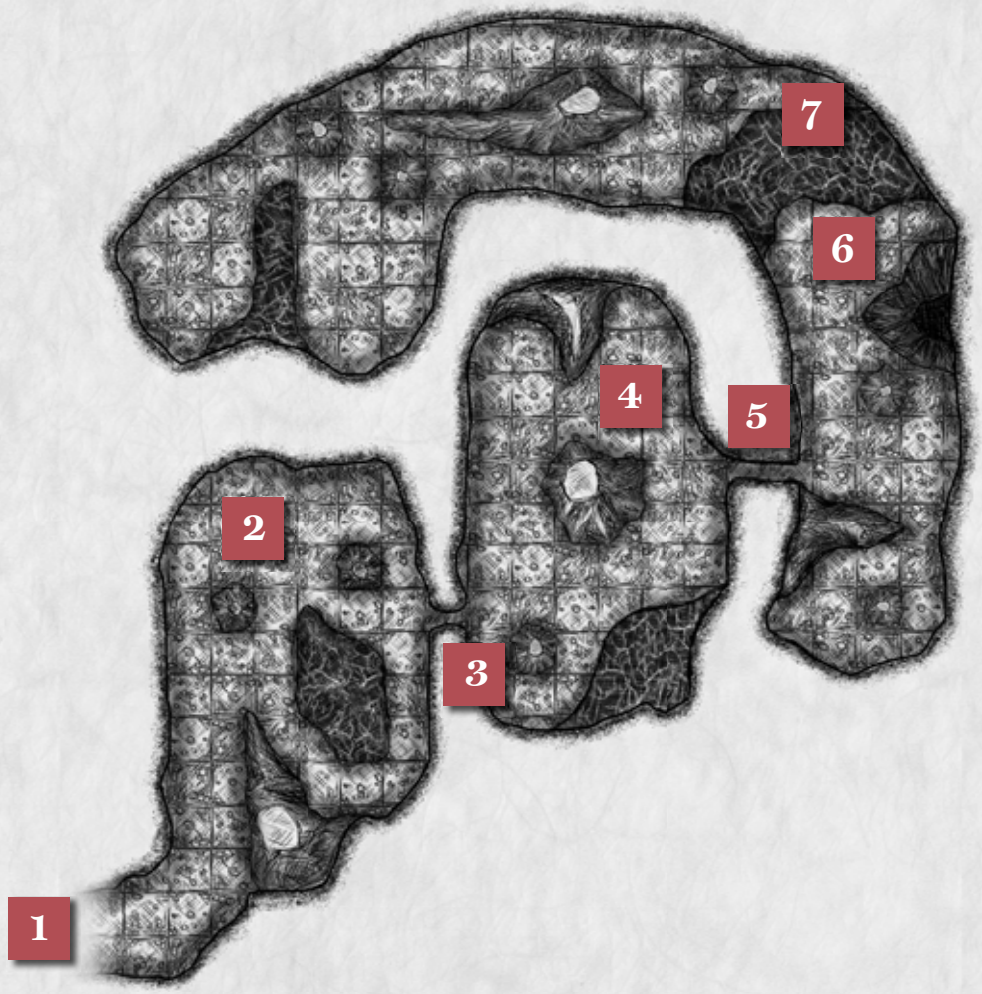
Roll 1d6 to determine what wonders and horrors await the adventurers in the Column Cave.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...3d4 **giant spiders** fighting over a dead halfling.
2	...1d4 **ropers** observing would-be prey.
3	...2d4 **spined devils** flying from column to column, on the hunt for signs of their master's enemies.
4	...a **barbed devil** who is desperate to find the way back to the portal that led it here.
5	...a **cloaker** swooping down from the shadows.
6	...1d4 **black pudding** slowly dripping from the columns within the cave.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Environment

Roll 1d4 to determine the interior of this, or any other cave system contained in this book.

1d4	The cave system is...
1	**Slick and humid.** The surfaces within this space are all covered with moisture and require patience to navigate without slipping. Each creature must move at half speed or succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, falling prone on a failed save.
2	**Dry and dusty.** The air is thick with dust in this arid cavern, and torchlight fails to illuminate as much as an explorer might hope. As such, the range of vision in this space is halved and all Wisdom (Perception) checks are made with disadvantage.
3	**Dangerously luminescent.** The walls of this cave system are covered with a unique blue-green algae, its bioluminescence providing enough light to illuminate the entire area with a dim aqua glow. The algae is poisonous, however, and disrupting it causes a puff of toxin to be released in a 10-ft. radius. Any creature within the cloud must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer 2d6 poison damage.
4	**Oppressively hot.** The interior of this space feels more like an oven than a cave. The walls are hot to the touch and a creature in contact with the walls for more than 6 seconds suffers 1d6 fire damage. Additionally, after spending more than 10 minutes in this cave, each creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1 point of exhaustion.



The Railroad Apartment

An aptly named series of interconnected subterranean spaces, this trio of cave rooms is tough to navigate, making it a popular hideout for ne'er-do-wells and creatures who hate the sun but love the taste of human flesh.

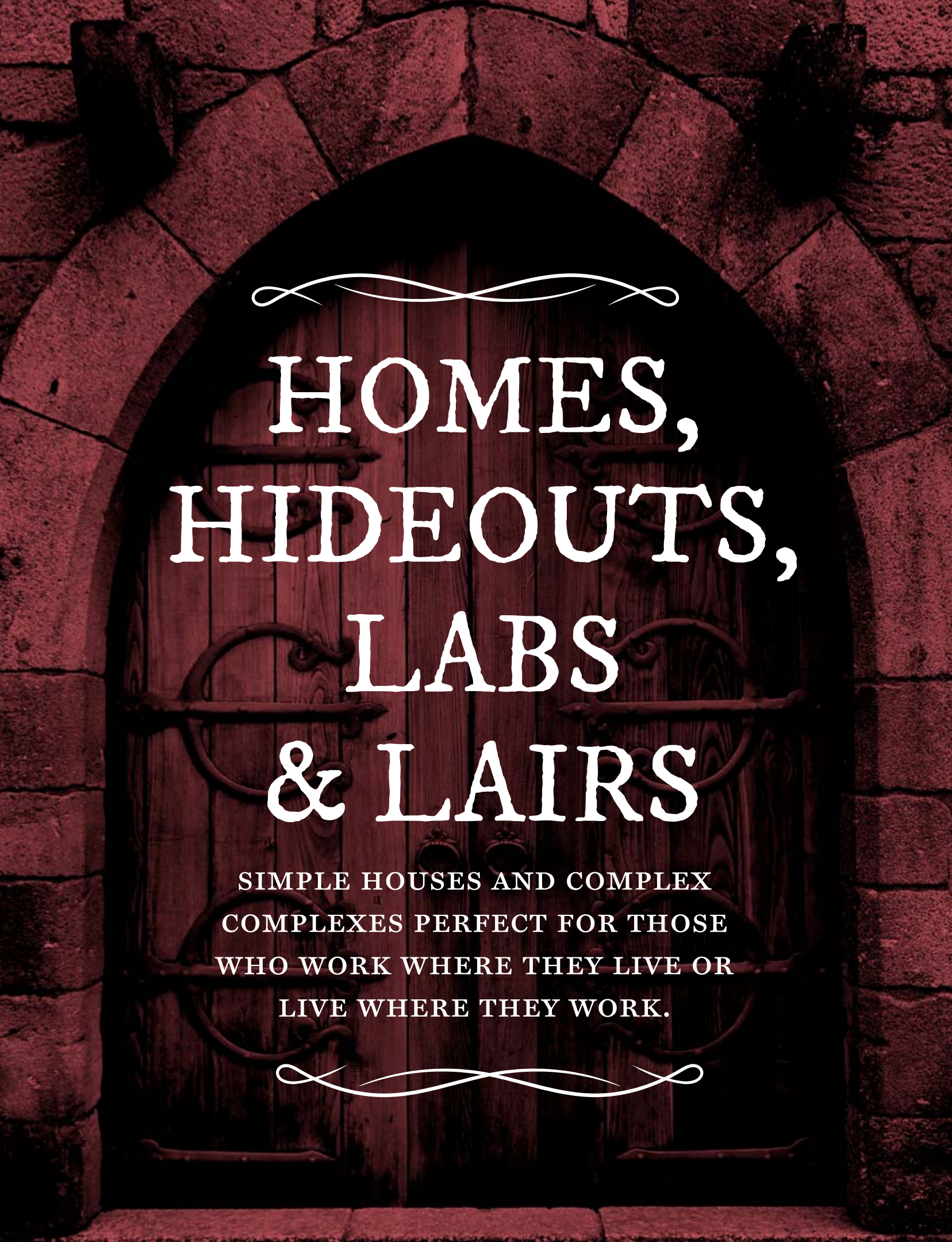
Entrance and Openings

The Railroad Apartment can be accessed through a single subterranean tunnel or through a cave entrance (at GM discretion) *(1)*. The first room *(2)* is relatively open with a high ceiling, and most would be forgiven for assuming it's also a dead end. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a small seam in the opposite cavern wall *(3)*—a seam that leads to a second, larger open space *(4)*. That is, if you can fit. The narrow slit is navigable for tiny or small creatures, but medium creatures must use their full movement to pass through the crevice and must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or find themselves stuck in the space for 1 turn. A similar opening *(5)* can be spotted in the secondary chamber (DC 15) and is equally difficult to navigate. The third chamber *(6)* is larger than the other two, but feels more crowded as its ceiling is only 5 ft. off the ground. As such, most medium creatures may find it preferable to hunch or crawl through the third chamber. The pools of water *(7)* in each cave are connected via an underwater tunnel that can be discovered with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what dangers and treasures may await the party within the Railroad Apartment.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a trove of treasures in room three, (roll on the treasure table at GM discretion) guarded by a surly **troll** and 2d4 **goblins**.
2	...a group of 2d4 angry **quaggoths** in room two.
3	...a half-elf stuck in the gap between room two and three. He is the son of a local noble. If pulled free without the use of some form of lubricant, his body will rip in half at the torso.
4	...an angry **ogre** stomping about in room two is enough to shake the cave walls in rooms one and three.
5	...a **cambion** in room three is pursuing a group of 1d4 fleeing **bullywugs** in room one.
6	...2d4 **imps** disguised as spiders are crawling around in rooms two and three, looking for a magical item of great value to their master.



HOMES, HIDEOUTS, LABS & LAIRS

SIMPLE HOUSES AND COMPLEX COMPLEXES PERFECT FOR THOSE WHO WORK WHERE THEY LIVE OR LIVE WHERE THEY WORK.

The Panic Room

Being conscious of one's own security is considered noble in many circles, but there are those who dwell in the city and amble within its seedier underbelly who take this notion to the extreme, installing within their private quarters a retreat of last resort in the unlikely event of an attempted abduction, interrogation or murder. This space, a room within a room, was conceived for just such a purpose—and woe unto those who would follow a resident within its cramped, heavily trapped hallways.

Entrance Hallway

The exterior hallway leading into the panic room ***(1)*** has a pneumatically sealed iron door that can be locked or unlocked using a switch along the outer wall as well as from within the interior room. The hallway entrance is narrow and leads to confines that are even more cramped. The door opens directly to one of the interior room's outer walls with a heavily trapped corridor that circles around it.

Interior Room

The interior of the panic room can be accessed through a small door ***(2)*** that features an *arcane lock* (DC 25). Within this space is an observation portal that can be used to view the goings on within the outer hallways, a teleportation circle, some comfortable furniture, two spell scrolls of *create food and water* and dry rations for four weeks. A small panel along the wall ***(3)*** features levers that trigger every trap in the hallway, as well as a remote lock for the outer door. There is also a secret, double-panelled door that can only be opened from the inside and leads directly to the exterior hallway ***(4)***. These doors swing outward, blocking off the hallway on either side, giving those who might try to pursue another obstacle in the way of their goal. These doors can be repositioned by pulling a lever within the interior room or by succeeding on a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. Mounted crossbows which can deal 2d10 piercing damage are also situated within the interior room and can be used to fire through a bolthole that only raises when the trigger for the crossbow is engaged.

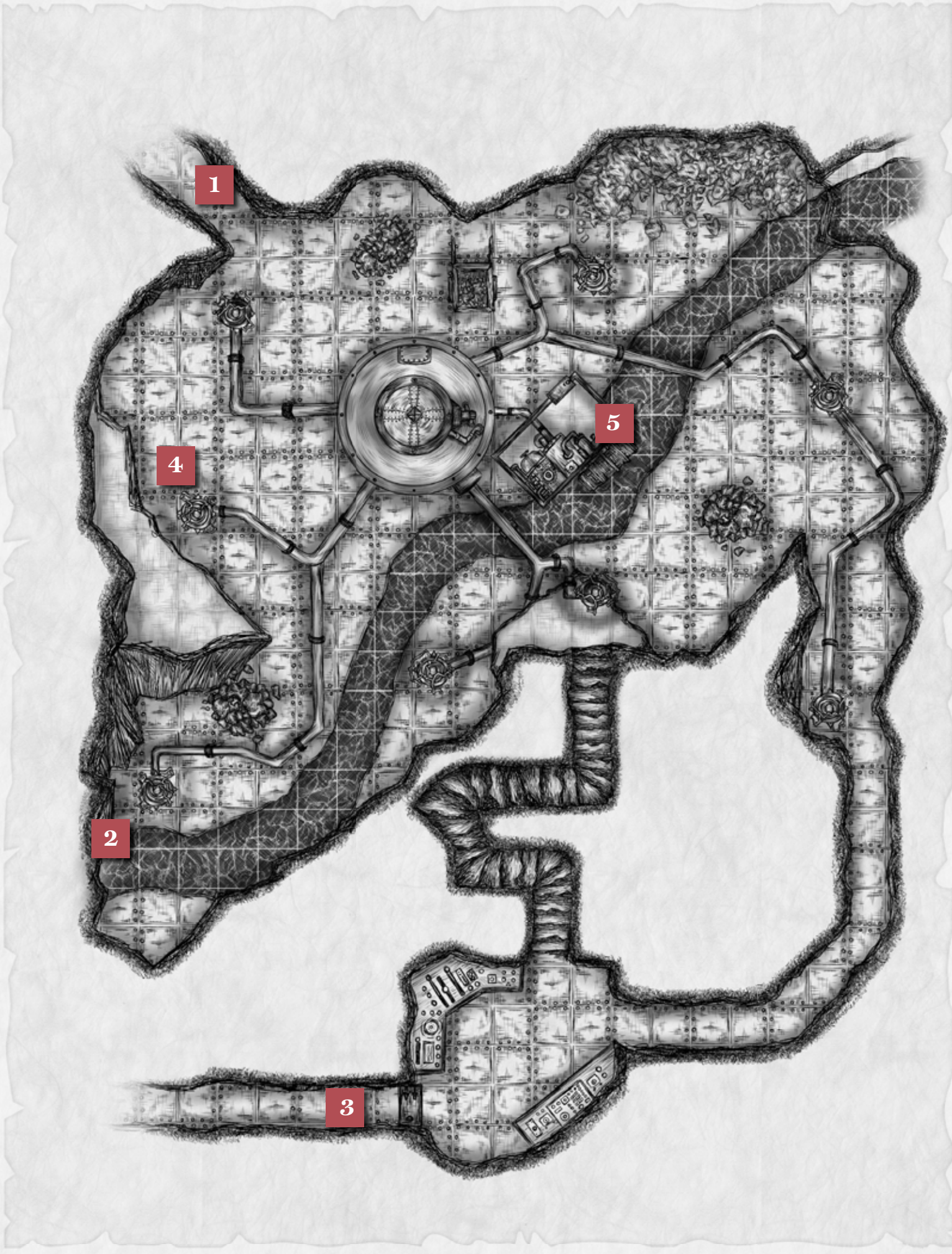
Traps and Triggers

The traps within the halls are numerous and can be triggered by throwing a manual switch from within the interior room, or by stepping on one of the secondary hallway's floor tiles once the traps have been activated from within the room. This gives the individual within the interior room an advantage during negotiations by both buying time and inflicting a not-insignificant amount of pain. Each trap (placed at GM discretion) has a DC of 20, and an attempt to disarm one is an attempt to disarm three—a failure springs all three traps. To determine which traps the party must deal with, roll twice on the table below to create three versions each of two trap archetypes.

Trap Table

Roll 1d4 to determine which trap the party encounters. Each trap requires a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw from anyone within 5 ft. of the triggering action, and deals full damage on a failure, or half on a success.

1	A stream of acid sprays from within the wall, dealing 3d6 acid damage.
2	A box of maces drops from the ceiling, dealing 3d6 bludgeoning damage.
3	A fire jet deals 3d6 fire damage from above.
4	A crate drops and deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage. The crate, now shattered, contained a now angry swarm of wasps.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Magnacoil Laboratory

The clanging of pipes and vibration of heavy machinery can be heard and felt on the streets far above this research station. Most are content to assume the effects associated with these sounds are the result of some enchantment gone awry, but the truth is far more scientific—and possibly much more sinister.

Entering the Lab

A tube-like tunnel ***(1)*** lined with metal panels leads to a vast industrial space dedicated to discovery at any cost. Anyone wearing medium or heavy armor will find their movement reduced by half while they walk through the tube, as their armor is being pulled toward the tube's sides from all directions. A swiftly rushing river ***(2)*** feeds into the lab, fueling the experimental magnacoil equipment. A back entrance to the lab ***(3)*** that leads through its main control room is accessible through the nearby cavern system, but its heavy metal door is locked with a magnetic seal that cannot be opened while the machine is running.

Inside the Lab

Tall spires wrapped with copper coils ***(4)*** and an imposing pump mechanism powered by a large water wheel ***(5)*** are the main fixtures of this mostly metal-panelled space. Piles of ore and wooden carts used to move them dot various corners of the lab, and a narrow staircase leads to the control room where **Greta Fondeaux**, a driven human inventor with an eye toward the future, runs tests on her equipment with the help of her four deep gnome assistants, Klack, Pick, Scamper and Ziggy.

Controlled Movement

The towering coils positioned around the Magnacoil Laboratory can be activated individually or as a unit to affect the areas around, above or beneath them. From the control room, as an action, a creature can activate a coil to create one of the following effects. Selecting one effect cancels a previously chosen effect, as the coils are only powerful enough to enact one charge at a time.

CEILING PULL. Anything metal, including armor and weapons, is drawn upward through powerful magnetic force. Attacks with metallic weapons are made at disadvantage, and anyone in metal armor is immediately lifted off the ground toward the lab's steel ceiling. Anyone wearing medium or heavy armor takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage as they slam into the ceiling, where they remain until the ceiling pull is interrupted, or their armor is removed. Creatures pinned to the ceiling and then falling to the floor are also subject to 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

NPC Profile

Greta Fondeaux, magnacoil maven

Lacking the divine spark of some of her peers, Greta Fondeaux combined a tinkerer's eye with grand vision and worked tirelessly to create the magnacoil, a contraption that imbues metal with the power to attract other metallic objects. Together with her loyal assistants, she continues her research and will not stop until she's discovered not only the source of the magnacoil's power, but also how to wield it.

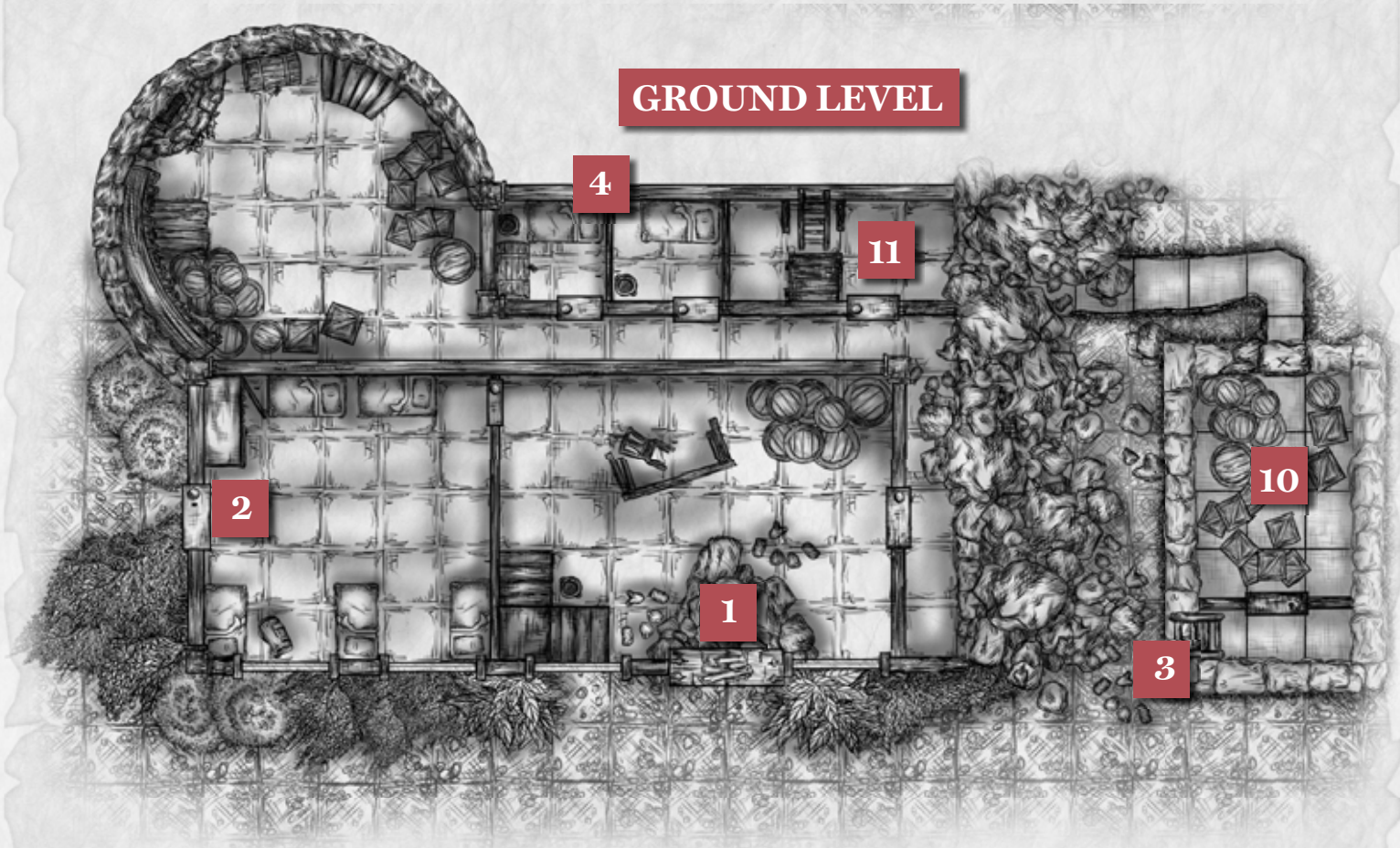
POWER PULL. Choose one coil. Any metal object within 20 ft. is pulled directly toward the chosen coil. Anyone within the path of a weapon or other object pulled toward the coil must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take damage from the weapon equal to its damage type (or 2d6 bludgeoning damage for an object or pulled creature) on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.

FLOOR PULL. The metallic floor is activated and anything metal, including armor and weapons, is pulled downward with exceptional force. Anyone wearing metal armor finds their movement reduced by half. Attacks made with metal weapons are made at disadvantage.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what wonders await the party in the confines of this hazardous laboratory.

1d6	Once inside, the party...
1	...discovers Greta has been aware of the party's infiltration of her lab when she unleashes a surprise attack the moment they arrive.
2	...notices one of the magnacoils failing as it begins spewing sparks. Anything within 15 ft. of the coil takes 3d6 force damage.
3	...sees the lab is under attack from a group of 2d4 **drow** and their **elite warrior** leader.
4	...finds a rival **mage** is being held and tortured by Greta and her minions while his **shield guardian** is trapped on the ceiling unable to help.
5	...ascertains that the magnacoil system has overloaded and could possibly explode in less than 10 minutes, undoubtedly causing a ceiling collapse.
6	...hears an argument between Greta and her lab technicians has turned violent—they've trapped her in the control room until they decide what to do next.


GROUND LEVEL
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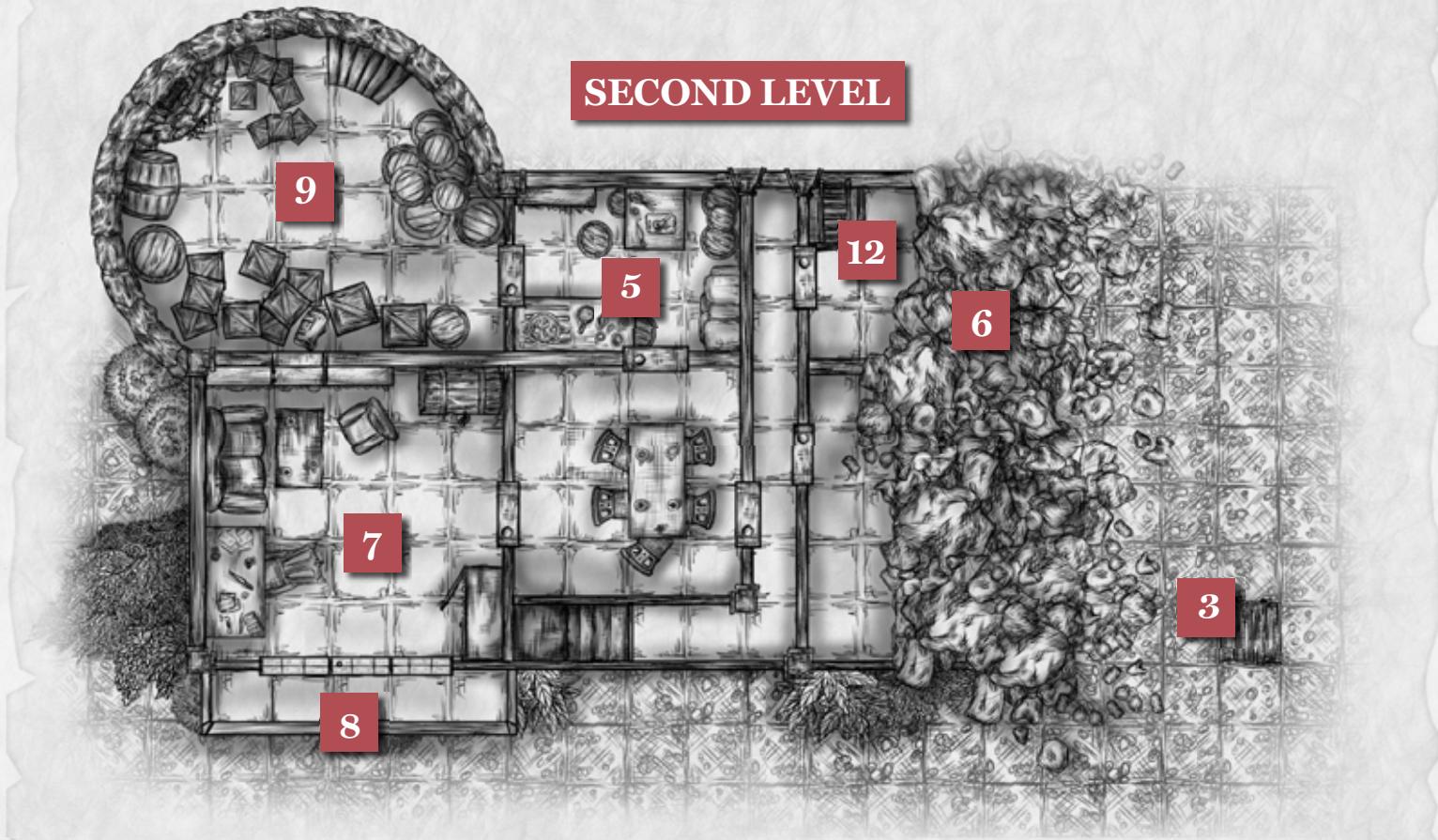
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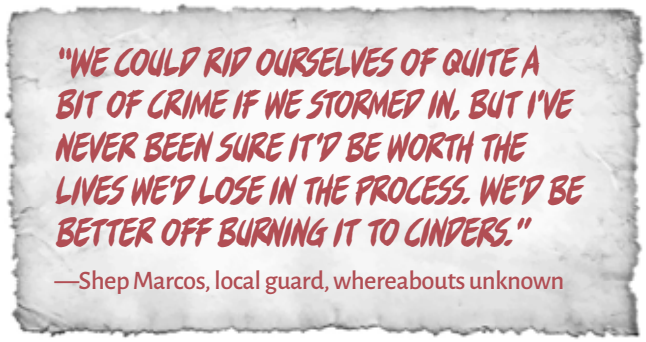
Bad Manor



The former residence of a well-to-do merchant with noble ties, Bad Manor is a haven for low-level thugs and mid-tier criminals, as well as the permanent home of **Cracker LeBloom**, the self-styled Baron of Bad Manor.

Exterior

Bad Manor appears as a two-story building with crumbling walls, darkened windows and a visible lack of care for its landscaping. The front door of the home ***(1)*** has been barricaded and barred from within but could be shoved open with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. A DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the side door ***(2)*** leading to the barracks is locked and trapped, but each can be bypassed with Thieves' Tools (DC 20). If the door is opened without the trap being disengaged, a series of rigged crossbows deal 3d6 piercing damage to the first creature through the door.

A hidden entrance ***(3)*** behind a bramble bush among the rubble along the side of Bad Manor, revealed with a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check, is the preferred method of entrance for its residents, and its lock has a DC of 15. This entrance leads to what's left of the manor's basement, as well as a tunnel that leads to the ground level of the interior.

Ground Level

Bad Manor's barracks hold all manner of weaponry, much of it cobbled together from available supplies. A series of holding cells ***(4)*** that double as bedrooms when the space is packed with residents is just off the main corridor. The locks on the cell doors have a DC of 17. Bolthole blinds are placed strategically on this level to protect Bad Manor from unwelcome guests.

Second Level

Up the stairs is the Bad Manor's kitchen ***(5)***, as well as a surprisingly well-to-do dining area, perhaps the only holdover from the home's former glory.

Beyond the kitchen on one side of the home is a caved-in roof ***(6)***, and the scent of water damage and mildew often mingles with that of the day's fare as a result.

Through the kitchen's other door is the makeshift office and sleeping quarters of Cracker LeBloom, the Baron of Bad Manor ***(7)***. His desk is locked (DC 15) and contains a disguise kit and several documents supporting numerous identities. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals LeBloom has at least three aliases—a merchant, a barkeep and a city guard—as well as the clothing necessary to pass himself off as each. Two shuttered windows lead to the home's balcony ***(8)***. Beyond LeBloom's office is the storage area, where a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a hidden passage ***(9)*** that leads to an opening in the ceiling of the floor below.

Basement Level

This musty basement ***(10)*** is full of boxes, crates and a few sacks of grain, most of it pilfered from local shops and traveling merchants. A well-traveled tunnel through some of the rubble below leads directly up to the first level ***(11)*** and a ladder to the second ***(12)***.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

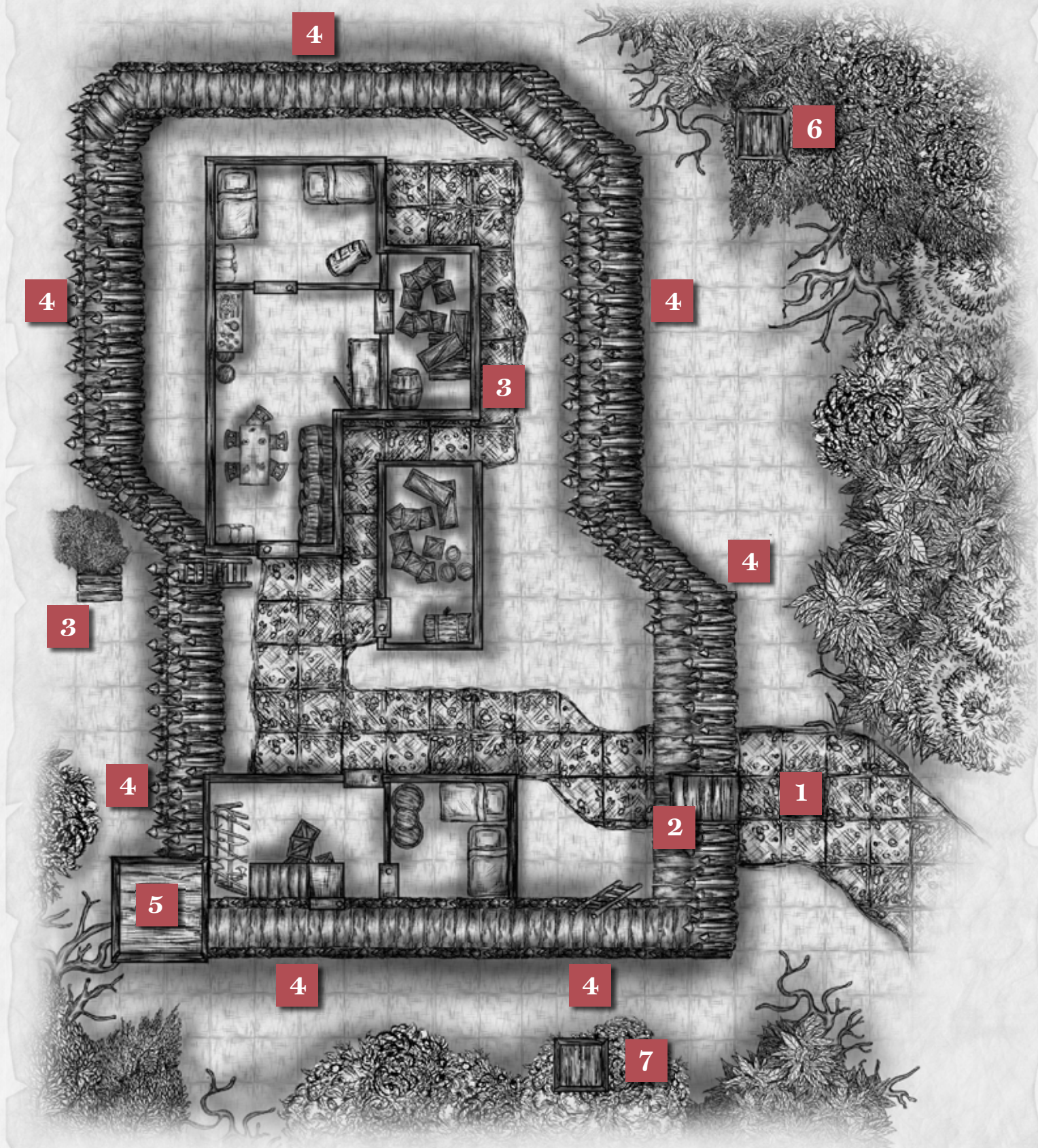
Roll 1d6 to determine what adventures await within Bad Manor.

1d6	The party will find...
1	...2d6 **bandits**, half on each floor, guarding Cracker LeBloom as he meets with an **assassin**.
2	...1d6 **bandits** battling 1d6 **bandits** from a rival force as a deal turns sour before the party's eyes.
3	...1d6 **bandits** enjoying a meal on the second floor while Cracker LeBloom snoozes in bed.
4	...1d6 **bandits** patrolling both floors of Bad Manor, with a soot-covered **bugbear** in one of the cells.
5	...the bodies of 2d6 **bandits** laid out all over Bad Manor, victims of a deal gone wrong. Written in blood, the phrase "The debt's still open" drips off the walls. Cracker LeBloom is hiding in the storage area on the second floor.
6	...the entire manor is deserted—but Cracker LeBloom and 1d6 **bandits** arrive five minutes after the party.

NPC Profile

Cracker LeBloom, the Baron of Bad Manor

A smooth-talking swindler with a dangerous mean streak, Cracker LeBloom was nothing more than a street urchin when he took up residence in Bad Manor four years ago. Since then, he's systematically, and at times ruthlessly, built a sizable band of loyal thugs and bandits who come and go, paying him a premium for a place to lie low. A consummate con artist, LeBloom is arrogant, agile and always angling for a better deal, offing (or paying off) any who might do him harm.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Woodpike Outpost

Surrounded by dark forest, this heavily fortified structure is a prime spot from which to launch an attack on nearby settlements, or to retreat to if that attack didn't go as planned. It is typically manned by **Gurdak-Dur**, King of the Wood.

> The stench of smoke and rotten meat hits your nostrils as you approach a fort with imposing wood-spike barricades and what look to be sun-baked skulls impaled on pikes near the main entrance. If its walls could talk, they'd tell you to run.

Points of Entry

The entranceway ***(1)*** built into the 15-ft. high wooden wall is the only inviting element of this otherwise imposing space, but looks, in this case, are deceiving. A pit trap on the path just beyond the entrance ***(2)*** serves as an unwelcome mat and requires a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. Anyone falling into the pit trap suffers 2d6 piercing damage and is grappled by the bear traps at the bottom (DC 15). There is a hidden tunnel used by those who inhabit the outpost ***(3)***, and the footworn path through the brush that conceals its trapdoor can be perceived by the particularly observant (DC 20).

Traps Abound

In addition to the pit trap at the main gate, there are several traps along the walls ***(4)***, each with a DC 17 to uncover and DC 20 to safely disarm. Anyone triggering these trip-wire traps and those within 10 ft. of them must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d6 piercing damage on a failed save or half as much on a success, as numerous crossbow bolts fire in their direction.

Prime Scouting

In addition to the 40-ft. watchtower within the outpost ***(5)***, there are two elevated platforms (30 ft.) obscured by the trees ***(6, 7)***, which both offer full cover and prime vantage points for a clear view of incoming threats, as well as tactical positioning for ranged assault. Ranged attacks from these platforms and the watchtower are made with advantage. Additionally, boltholes are placed strategically along the walls of the outpost, offering full cover to sharpshooters stationed on the ground.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

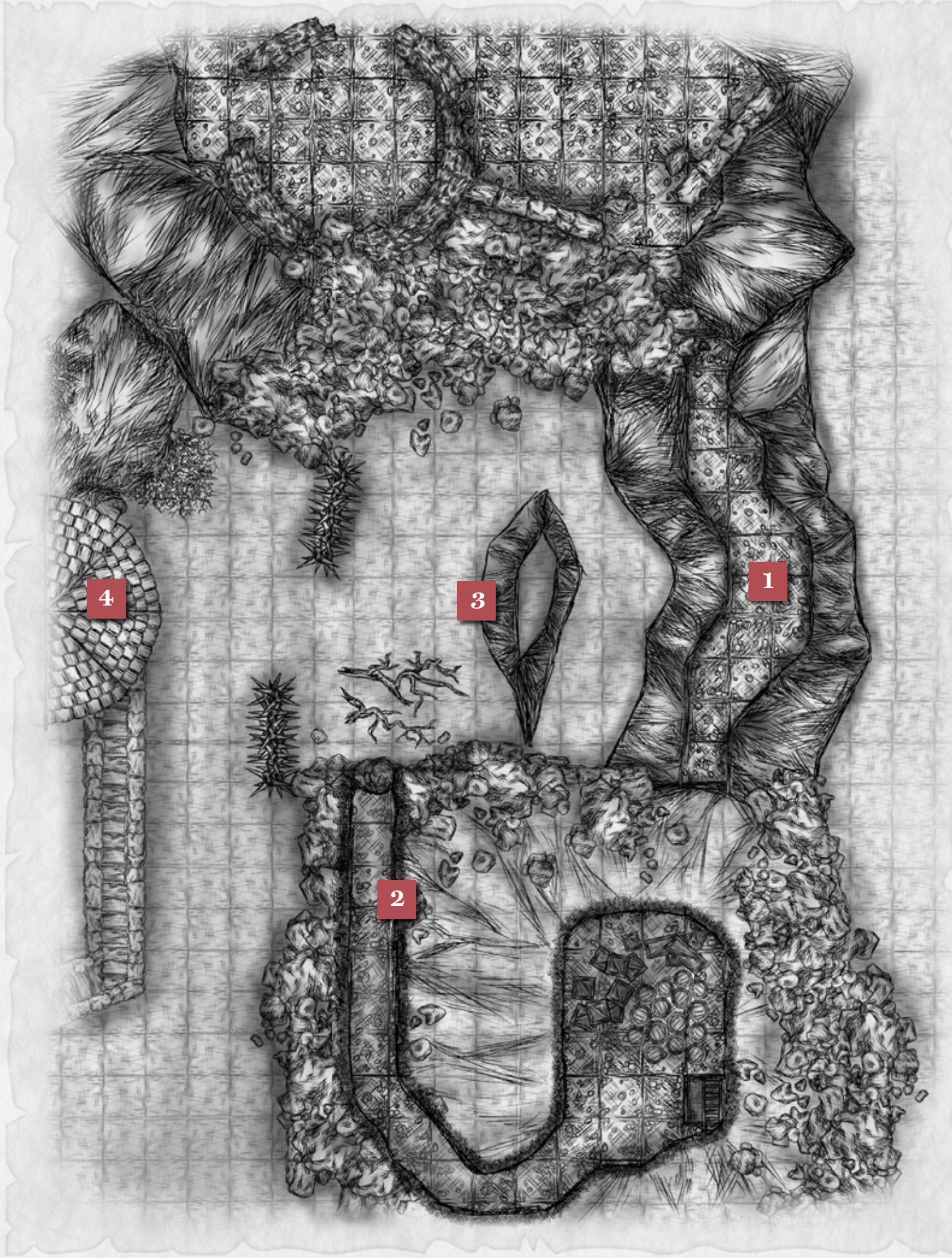
Roll 1d6 to determine what awaits any adventurers who might plan a siege on this outpost.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...2d4 **hobgoblins**, one **hobgoblin warlord** and two **bugbears** hiding among the bushes are ready to settle in after a week's worth of raiding.
2	...an **owlbear** chained near the outpost's entrance being baited and abused by 2d4 **orcs**, one **orc war chief** and one **orc eye of Gruumsh**.
3	...2d4 **thugs**, one **berserker** and one **veteran** divvying up their spoils after an attack on a nearby town as 1d4 **mastiffs** roam the grounds nearby.
4	...a group of 1d4 lycanthropes (**werebear**, **wereboar**, **weretiger** and/or **werewolf**), currently in human form, bickering about the plans for their next hunt.
5	...2d4 **gnolls**, one **gnoll pack lord** and one **gnoll fang of Yeenoghu**, who have begun a ritual sacrifice on a peasant girl.
6	...4d4 **goblins** and one **goblin boss**, who are being sternly upbraided by one **hobgoblin captain**.

NPC Profile

Gurdak-Dur, King of the Wood

A rampaging half-orc with a soft spot for the trappings of royalty, Gurdak-Dur is a hulking mass of muscle with the blood-soaked blade of a warrior and the will to impose tyranny on any who stand in his way. He is, in sum, a pretty bad guy—but his weakness is vanity, as well as a clumsiness that befalls anyone who wears a cape as long as his. Trailing behind him by a length of 10 ft., Gurdak-Dur's cape, sewn from the tanned flesh of his foes, could easily trip him up on a crowded battlefield.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The Last Redoubt

A point of retreat in a battle lost before it began, this fortified ruin is occupied by a ragtag group of soldiers who likely won't last the night.

> Crude embankments lie between two hills, a wall of packed earth and wooden stakes stand just behind a series of ditches. Men and women, some of them visibly wounded, wield shovels or sharpened stakes to expand the defenses, but many seem resigned to their coming fate. Sweat-soaked brows lift just long enough to shoot you a look of hopelessness. The battle is lost, and these are the losers.

A Rally Point With None to Rally

After a rout in battle, these soldiers fled here, a fallback position fortified ahead of time. But no one anticipated the situation would be this insurmountable. The enemy is coming, maybe in the next few hours, and this collection of demoralized and wounded soldiers can't hope to hold them off. There is little cover here, and not enough soldiers to properly fortify more than one position. **Captain Jane Sally**, a human **veteran**, does her best to organize what's left of her outfit, but many are too weak to obey commands, and those well enough to stand have begun whispering plans to desert and save their hides. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check reveals a growing sentiment among the living that they'd be better off killing Captain Sally and making a run for it than holding this position against their battle-ready foes.

Makeshift Protections

A hastily dug trench ***(1)*** protects much of the redoubt's northern front, while natural hills offer a solid defensible position from all sides. The higher of the two hills can be accessed via an underground tunnel ***(2)*** with an entrance on the northeast side of the trench. Ditches ***(3)*** and spiked barricades along the landscape make a mounted assault problematic but not impossible. The 50-ft. bell tower ***(4)***, all that remains of the ruined castle once built here, offers prime position for scouts and snipers.

Growing Unrest

Despite all her efforts, the soldiers know well that their commander is ordering them to stand and wait for their deaths. Some of them accept this with a calm stoicism, but others are not so willing to give up their lives. 2d4 conspirators meet in the shadows or talk quietly as they toil in the ditches, plotting ways to escape their fates.

NPC Profile

Captain Jane Sally, human veteran

A stout, middle-aged woman with cropped black hair, sun-baked skin and the battered, bloody armor of a frontline brawler, Captain Sally tries to put on a brave face but knows her position here is hopeless. Run down by a superior force just a few miles away, she and her unit have retreated to a position she must defend—even if there's no one left to stand by her side. Valiant and headstrong, her gallows humor is starting to wear thin on all under her command.

Encounter Variant: Naming the Enemy

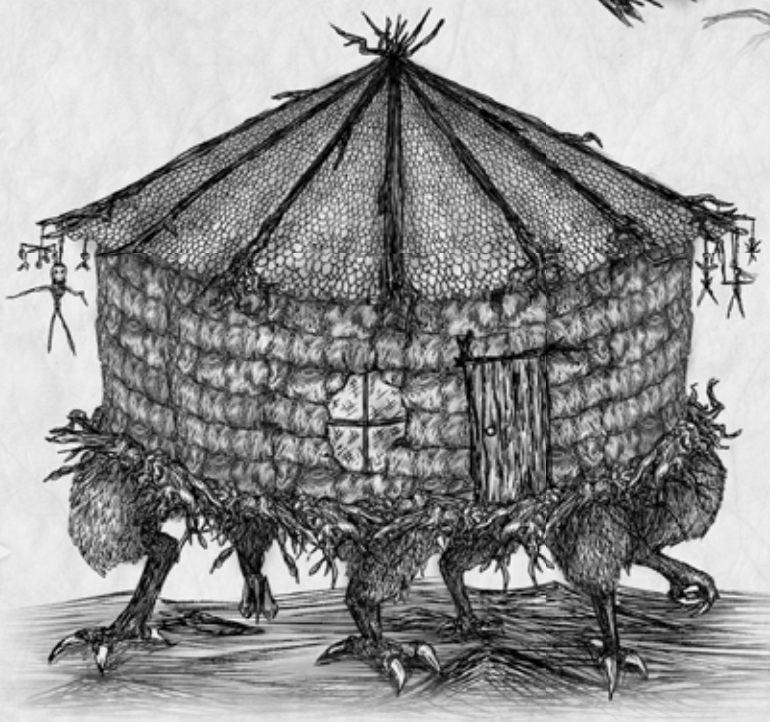
Who are these soldiers fighting? Roll 1d6 or choose a foe that best aligns with your current adventure.

1d6	These soldiers are fighting...
1	...Hobgoblins
2	...Orcs
3	...Rebels
4	...Soldiers of the Crown
5	...A necromancer and his undead army
6	...Gnolls

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine the fate of the soldiers at the Last Redoubt and to see what the party comes across.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a group of conspirators planning to kill Captain Sally at dusk before making their escape.
2	...a company of 3d8 enemy combatants preparing to attack the Redoubt from the rear with aid from the conspirators.
3	...Captain Sally, who asks them to escort the wounded to town for 3d10 x 10gp. En route, the party is ambushed by 2d4 enemy combatants.
4	...3d8 enemy combatants attacking in force from all sides. Captain Sally begs the party to flee with a package that she says "must be kept safe."
5	...2d8 enemy combatants using a large catapult with a range of 200/400 dealing 3d6 bludgeoning damage in a 10-ft. radius on a failed DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, or half as much on a success.
6	...2d4 **trolls** attacking what remains of the stronghold, with the conspirators using the distraction to try to slip away.



Encounter Variant (Optional) Control Room

A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the kitchen ***(2)*** is light on the necessary implements for making food, and upon further inspection appears to be an elaborately disguised control panel for a magical locomotive device: the house itself. When activated, the house's stilt-like avian legs raise and shift. The house has a movement speed of 80 ft., and when used as a vehicle has 88HP.

The Horrible Hut

Judging by its exterior, folks would be forgiven for assuming something truly evil lurks within the walls of this small, elevated hut. They might be right.

Encounter Variant
Who Dwells Within This House?

Roll 1d6 to determine the nature and motives of this home's owner. The home's interior reflects the personality of the one who dwells within. Roll 1d8 to determine whether they are good (odds) or evil (evens).

1d6	Inside the house dwells...
1	**...Abigail Firth**, a human witch who enjoys sculpting tiny cherubic children out of clay and then bringing them to life during major holidays.
2	**...Marjorie Baker**, a half-elven sorcerer who sleeps during the day but carouses at night, as she is convinced she's part vampire.
3	**...a coven of three hags**—Bertha, Burka and Bartab—working to subvert the government of a nearby town.
4	**...Gwyneth Torso**, a human mage hard at work on her 12th book of lore and, under a nom de plume, her 28th book of lycanthropic erotica.
5	**...Reese Anteroth**, an elven wizard who designed the house's exterior in an effort to be left alone to focus on creating her own jigsaw puzzles.
6	**...Hira Lowenlight**, a dragonborn high priestess who uses this house as a means to prosthelytize around the countryside in service to her god.

The Seasonal Garden

Surrounding the Horrible Hut are four distinct gardens ***(1)*** that grow seasonal produce at all times of year. In addition to summer squash and tasty turnips, the hut's garden features a small mushroom patch. If players choose to eat any of these mushrooms, roll on the Mushroom Table to determine the effects.

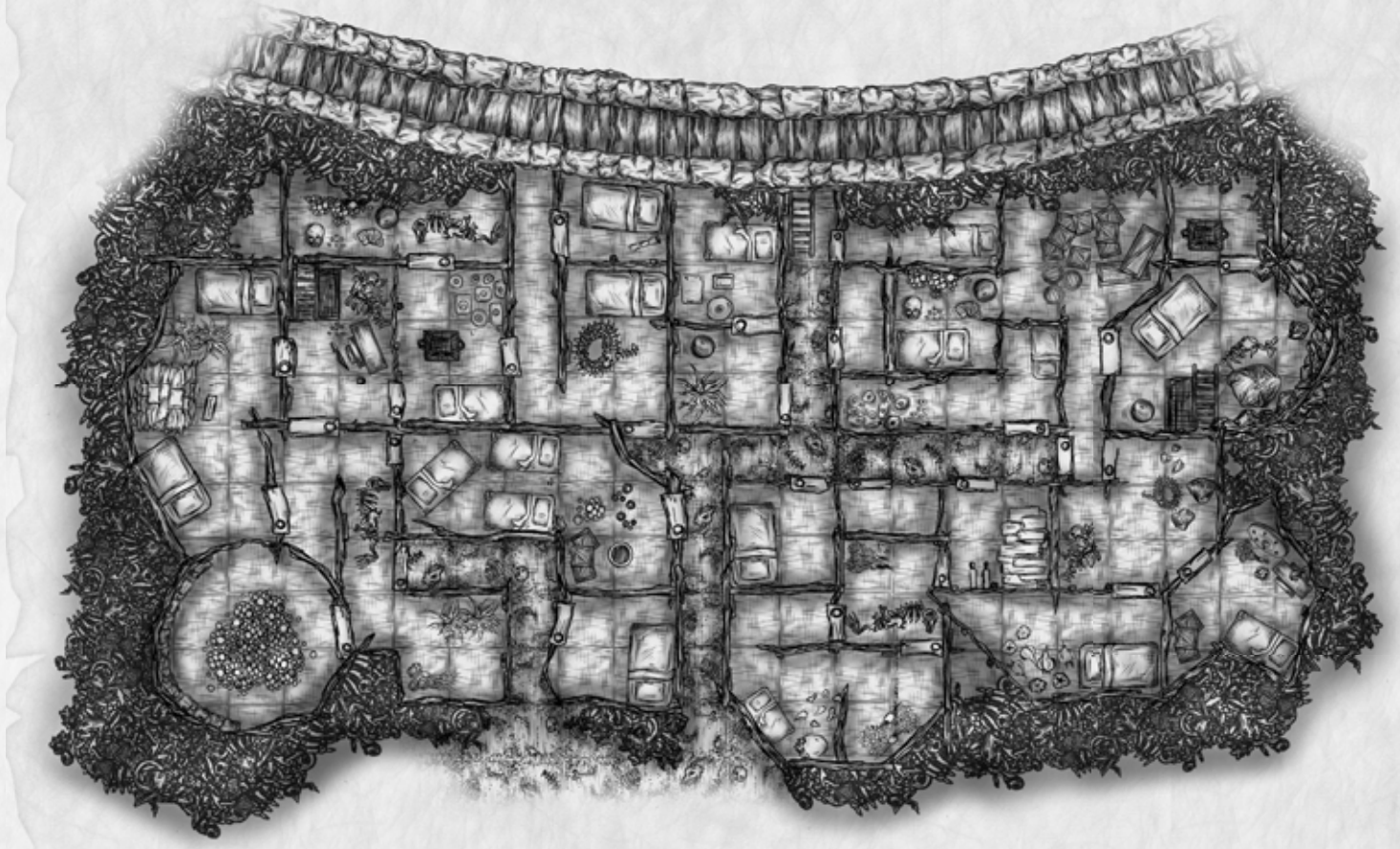
Mushroom Table

1d6	The mushrooms...
1	**...deal 2d6 psychic damage** on a failed DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can see into the ethereal plane.
2	**...deal 2d6 piercing damage** on a failed DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the creature is resistant to fire damage until their next long rest.
3	**...deal 2d6 poison damage** on a failed DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can fly until their next long rest.
4	**...deal 2d6 acid damage** on a failed DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the creature gains advantage on all attack rolls until their next long rest.
5	**...deal 2d6 psychic damage** on a failed DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the creature gains the ability to speak and understand all languages until their next long rest.
6	**...deal 2d6 psychic damage** on a failed DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the creature knows and can cast one sixth-level spell (at GM discretion) once before the memory of how to cast it fades away.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what the witching hour might reveal to any adventurers passing by this abode.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...a group of 3d6 pitchfork- and torch-wielding citizens ready to burn the house to the ground.
2	...dark clouds which portend the coming of a violent storm—caused by the owner's ex, a rather tempestuous storm sorcerer.
3	...a seemingly endless line of children parading their way out of the home, the result of a conjuration spell gone awry.
4	...war drums sounding as a battalion of 4d6 **orcs** stampede toward the Horrible Hut.
5	...an unruly **hill giant** stomping her way toward the Horrible Hut, before knocking politely to ask how things are going, how's the family, etc.
6	...a trio of **will-o'-wisps** whipping around the house's exterior as a gang of 2d4 **scarecrows** dance in the eerie extraplanar light.



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Wretchtown

A home for those with nothing, rising from the cast-off refuse of the city. Most others steer well clear of Wretchtown's rotten stench, but those in need of urchin-supplied information or the services of its most reclusive denizen, the Hag of Wretchtown, will find cause to slip through one of the warren's many doors.

> You can't help but feel dubious about the safety of such a tall, rickety structure, clearly sagging against the city wall at its back. A putrid stench cloaks the hovel from the outside, but it slowly gives way when you pass beneath the hanging cloth covering the entrance and make your way inside. The hovel is cleaner within than expected, though its low-hanging ceiling causes problems for the tallest among you. You are obliged to pick your way past the slumped forms of the locals as you wind your way deeper, feeling their eyes on your back until the twisted maze carries you from sight.

The Warren

Built from the cast-offs of the city, a collection of scrap and rubbish piled two stories high, there are no wide spaces in Wretchtown. Every wall bears a load and the seemingly random planks of timber lying across the corridors are often all that keeps those walls from collapsing. The floors are unstable, liable to send those on higher levels crashing through the ceilings of those below if they put too much weight in one spot. In some places these holes have been patched and reinforced with whatever material was on hand, in others makeshift ladders have been propped up to allow passage between floors. The entire building is a fire hazard, built mostly from flammable material and with corridors too tight to negotiate quickly. When players are navigating Wretchtown, have them roll 1d20 for every 30 ft. of movement. On a roll of 3 or lower, the wall they are leaning on or floor below them collapses, at GM discretion.

Additionally, if any such character moves more than half their speed in a round, they move too quickly to plant their feet with the care required, and must make a Dexterity saving throw with a DC of 14 to leap clear as the floor gives way beneath them.

Similarly, Area of Effect damage of any kind risks causing the walls and supports to give way. Characters will need to make Dexterity saving throws (DC 12) to avoid falling debris. Any kind of fire damage being used, meanwhile, runs the risk of starting a larger conflagration within the structure as it consumes the walls here at twice its normal rate.

The Wretches

An assortment of halflings, gnomes, elves, humans and a handful of others, Wretchtown's denizens all share one thing in common: They are scarred by a rotting, disfiguring sickness that deadens the nerves and steals away their flesh. The disease doesn't appear to be infectious, but the results are grotesque enough that the city would rather victims stay holed up in one place. They are a close-knit community by necessity, only safe from local criminals by virtue of owning nothing worth stealing, and have embraced the derogatory "Wretchtown" name for their home with pride. The more ambulant members of the community can be found begging in other parts of the city, but many are largely confined to Wretchtown, lacking the means to travel farther than the ability to crawl will carry them.

The denizens of Wretchtown rally to defend their homes. They will demonstrate a remarkable bravery in attacking anyone who seeks to hurt a member of their enclave or the structure itself. Use the statistics of **commoners** for the Wretches, with the suggestion that 4d6 Wretches are home at any given time. They have AC 8 and are unarmed, but make three attacks per round.

Such a Sweet Old Dear

At the heart of the second floor of Wretchtown *(**1**)* sits a cluster of rooms, home to the most beloved inhabitant of Wretchtown—a hag named **Sweet Lil' Annie**. She can be found hunched over a large, black pot, billowing smoke shunted out of the room by a length of brass piping sticking out through the roof of the hovel at a jaunty angle. She is every bit as deformed and scarred as the others in Wretchtown, but she moves with an energy and liveliness at odds with her appearance. The broth brewing in her pot lends a similar energy to those who drink it, and Annie is as generous as she can be with its contents. She also accepts visitors from outside Wretchtown, trading favors and charms for secrets and ingredients.

NPC Profile

Sweet Lil' Annie, the Hag of Wretchtown

Rescued from the clutches of an evil Hag as an infant by a band of adventurers, none realized the babe had already been affected by the ritual through which new hags are born. When the change took her, Annie was deposited in Wretchtown, where the suffering of the inhabitants kept her busy and allowed her to pass without too much notice. She brews salves and potions to alleviate the suffering of those around her, and to reward those who go the extra mile to please her. She is protective of the other inhabitants of Wretchtown, viewing them as her pets and possessions, and they in turn will rally to her defense should she ever be attacked.

Encounter Variant
The Witch's Brews

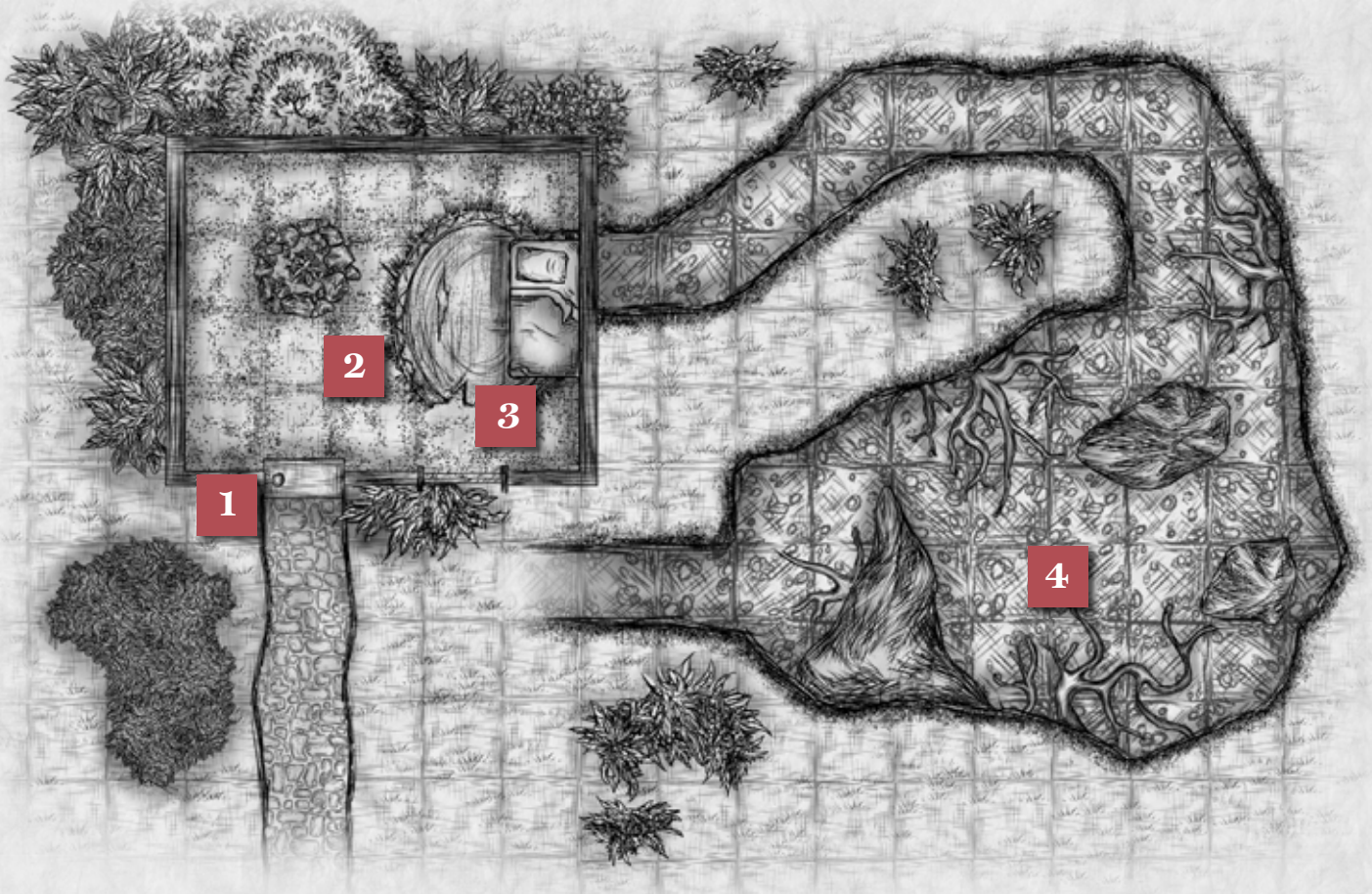
Sweet Lil' Annie is already surrounded by so much abject mortal misery that she sees little need to delve too far into twisted, evil magics. Annie may use any of the following if attacked, or she may grant them as rewards or offer them in trade.

1d6	The Black Pot's Contents
1	**Essence of Health.** This steaming, milky broth grants the drinker immunity to disease and poison for the next eight hours and allows the drinker to ignore any penalties from disease or poison that they currently suffer, though the user inevitably finds strands of wiry, black hair caught in their teeth after drinking.
2	**Rot Flower Extract.** This spotted, stained vial holds a bubbling yellow liquid. If thrown or opened, the liquid boils out into a miasma that blankets the area. Treat this as a *stinking cloud* spell centered on the vial's location.
3	**Little Poppet.** A withered doll inside a jar of sickly green fluid. A creature may use its Reaction after being hit by an attack to reduce all damage to 0. The Poppet is destroyed by the attack instead.
4	**Delicious Porridge.** The grains may be blackened or still shedding their husks, and the milk may have clearly curdled days ago, but when it hits the tongue this porridge tastes creamy and filling. The porridge also places a *geas* on the eater, compelling them to follow the next command Annie gives them.
5	**Eyeblind Powder.** A creature with this container may take an action to blow powder into the face of another creature within 5 ft. That creature must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC 16 or be blinded for one minute. The user of the Powder must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 12 or be poisoned for one minute. Both creatures may repeat their saves at the end of each round.
6	**"A Friend."** Sweet Lil' Annie hands you a circular silver container. She tells you that "he" will be happy to be out in the world. Within the container is the subject of a *magic jar* spell, and the soul inside is unable to project itself or possess anyone until it leaves Wretchtown. The identity of the soul contained is at GM discretion.

Variant Encounters (Optional)

Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine what riff raff and rabble the party might run up against among the muck in Wretchtown.

1d6	What encounters fester beneath Wretchtown's skin?
1	A nest of 1d4 **rat swarms** gnaws on the dull limbs of this level's 1d6 Wretches, who lack the strength to fight them off.
2	A charitable priest from the local temple would like to bring his god's light and healing to the poor sufferers of Wretchtown, but they angrily refuse to allow him entry. He asks for the party's aid.
3	A sickly but savvy pickpocket swipes at the purse of the most oblivious-seeming party member, with a +7 on the attempt, claiming half its contents on a success.
4	The local noble's 1d4 guard(s) have been ordered by their master to covertly clear out this eyesore, and they attempt to start a fire just inside its main entrance.
5	A badly misshapen elf approaches the party before they can fully enter the Warren's confines: "Sweet Lil' Annie knows about the Bad Thing." The messenger explains that all can be forgiven, for a price (at GM discretion).
6	A grizzled mercenary is on the hunt for a notorious thief rumored to reside here. He offers 100gp to anyone who can aid in her capture.



The Shack

A seemingly abandoned, single-room structure on a hillside hides an entrance to a system of underground passages.

The Building

The front door ***(1)*** to this rundown shelter is its primary point of entry. This shack has no windows to speak of, though there are cracks between the boards that keep it upright and are wide enough to let in a little sunlight or rainfall, depending on the day. Its overall aesthetic is "empty"—though there is a bed and a small area rug ***(2)*** that's tattered and a little threadbare. Beneath the rug, which at GM discretion can be presented as a **rug of smothering**, are a few arcane runes that are revealed to be part of a teleportation circle with a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. The bedroll ***(3)***, which covers the floor, is the only part of the room not covered in a layer of thin gray dust, and a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals an entrance to a subterranean tunnel beneath the bedroll.

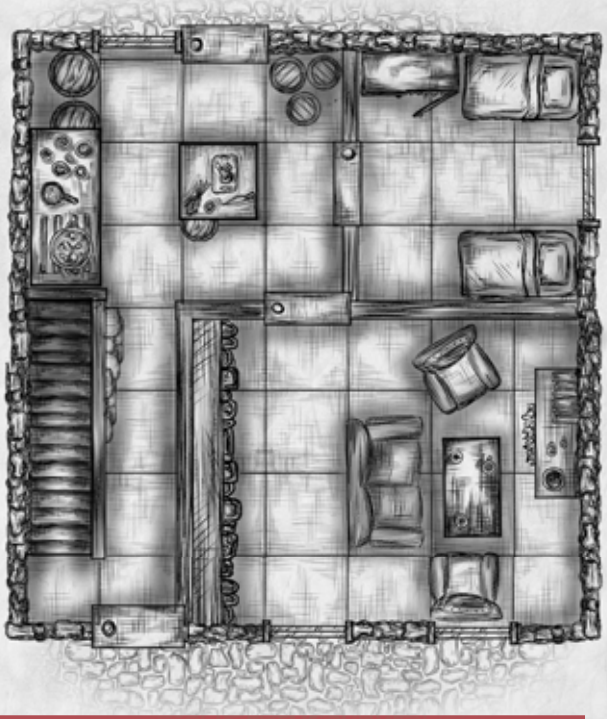
The Caverns

A narrow, steep-sloping tunnel about 5 ft. in all directions leads down to an open cavern ***(4)***, itself connected to a deeper series of tunnels and cave systems. The cave is cool, damp and devoid of light.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what the party might uncover if they go poking around in this seemingly abandoned outpost.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...a **galeb duhr**, left to guard this entrance to the caves by a paranoid **mage**.
2	...a cluster of 2d4 **shriekers** and 2d4 **gas spores** have taken root in this damp, subterranean cavern—the shriekers scream a warning that echoes down the halls of the cave.
3	...1d4 **ghasts**, whose stench is a good indicator of their presence, wandering in the cavern.
4	...a **gibbering mouther**, having wandered here from the darker corners of this cave system, is now whispering to itself in the darkness of the cavern.
5	...a small waif, clinging to life on the bedroll, claims his father was dragged under the shack by a nest of 3d4 **giant spiders**.
6	...a **bandit spore servant** wanders inside the shack, bumping into the walls repeatedly as it tries to heed the call of the **myconid sovereign** and 2d4 **myconid adults** in the cavern beneath the shack.



Variant Home 1

Who lives in this home? A few dice rolls hold the answer.

Residents

If you're unsure of who lives in this home (meaning you aren't using it as the residence of an established NPC), roll on the Random NPC Generator (pg. 237) to create a homeowner. Then roll on the tables below to determine the status of the house itself.

Interior

A kitchen, a large living space and three bedrooms represent the bulk of the interior space of this domicile. A back door leads to an alleyway/open landscape behind the house.

Appearance

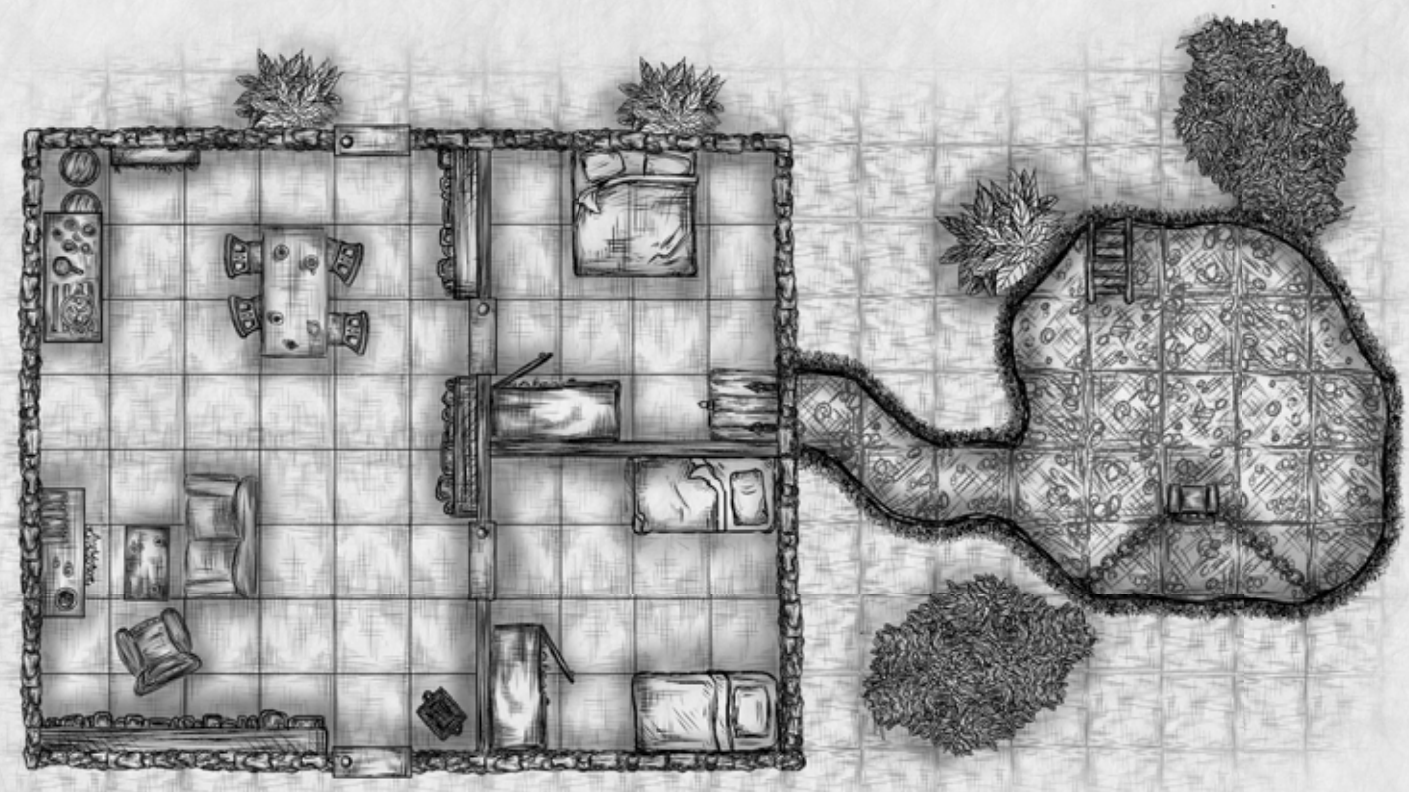
Roll 1d4 to determine the overall appearance of the house.

1	**Quaint.** This home is tidy if a bit cramped, and feels as though it's been lived in for years if not generations.
2	**Minimalist.** This home is free of the trappings most accrue over a lifetime and is instead adorned only with necessary elements—a modest wardrobe, a table, a few chairs, some beds and little else.
3	**Cluttered.** A hoarder dwells here and each room is stuffed with the items they've collected over the course of their entire life. Each room is difficult terrain, as creatures must negotiate the piles of accrued items to get anywhere.
4	**Abandoned.** This home is empty, and the location of its owner is unknown (except to the GM).

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to reveal what dangers dwell within this otherwise pedestrian abode.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...2d4 **goblins** doing their best to impersonate the halfling family they buried in the yard.
2	...a cow on the second floor that can't seem to make its way down the stairs.
3	...a man and wife who live in fear of their child, a young telepath with psionic abilities.
4	...a pair of **ghosts** who keep pestering the family within to go solve their murders.
5	...an **arcanaloth** in the guise of a friendly old woman who loves to garden, but also really, really wants some spell scrolls.
6	...a family of **doppelgangers**, doing their best to ingratiate themselves to the local nobility.



Variant Home 2

Who lives in this home? A few dice rolls hold the answer.

Residents

If you're unsure of who lives in this home (meaning you aren't using it as the residence of an established NPC), roll on the Random NPC Generator (pg. 237) to create a homeowner. Then roll on the table below to determine the status of the house itself.

Interior

This home is small but efficiently appointed, with two bedrooms, an all-purpose living/dining room, kitchen area and entryway. One of the bedrooms also features a well-disguised trapdoor beneath the floorboards, revealed with a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check that leads to an underground room.

Underground

What's being hidden within this covert space? Roll 1d6 to find out.

1	**Smuggling operation.** The individual(s) residing here use(s) this space as a stopover location while shuttling illicit goods into or out of foreign territories.
2	**Shrine to a forbidden deity.** The individual(s) residing here use(s) this space to worship and commune with their god/patron, an act prohibited by law.
3	**Interrogation room.** The individual(s) residing here use(s) this space to question and/or torture political or personal enemies, and the tools and instruments positioned throughout (as well as the blood-stained walls) suggest they know exactly what they're doing.
4	**Panic room.** A place to hunker down in the event of a robbery or overwhelming attack of existential proportions.
5	**Entrance to a dark cave system.** The space leads to a secondary staircase, which in turn leads to a ladder that leads to a vast series of caves and tunnels.
6	**Portal to another dimension.** The perfect way to travel between planes, this room features a portal to a plane of your choosing beyond the prime material.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to reveal what the party will face down in this otherwise drab domicile.

1d6	The party finds...
1	...the ringleader of a secret plot to kill a local lord.
2	...four dead bodies and 1d4 **shadows**.
3	...a nonviolent **orc** just trying to make it work.
4	...a **chasme** buzzing within the empty house.
5	...a family of recently destitute nobles.
6	...a room full of 3d4 **zombies**.

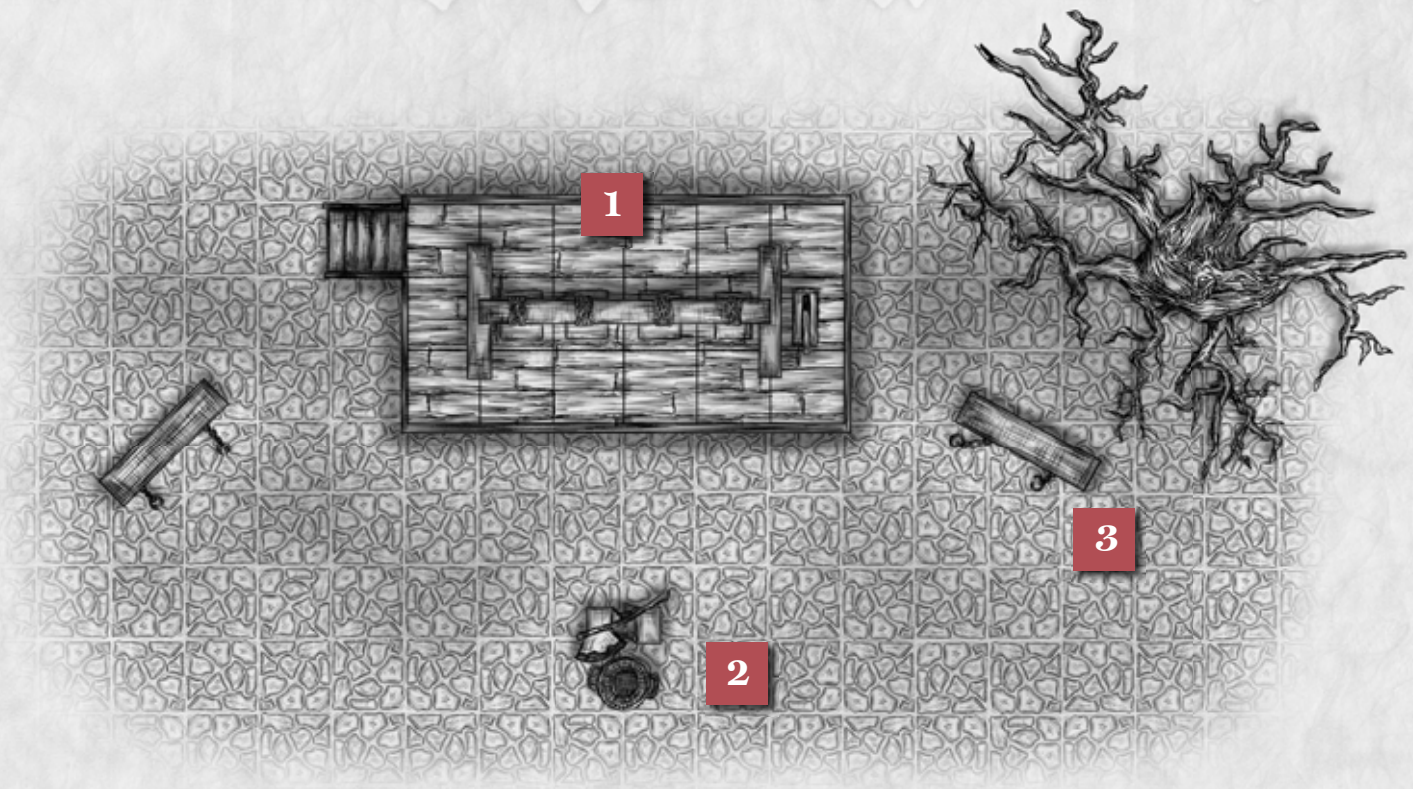
The Secret Room

Some houses have hidden corridors and cleverly covert cubby holes for storage or study or simply for secrets. This home is an example of the form, and the secret room *(1)* contained within it—or any other location within this title—can be located with a DC 22 Intelligence (Investigation) check while your party is exploring the space.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d20 to determine what's been locked away within the secret room.

1d20	In the secret room the party finds...
1	**...grasping hands** frozen in place, each reaching, clawing and crawling their way toward the door.
2	**...bodies.** They rock gently in the draft from the window as they hang suspended from giant meat hooks.
3	**...shelves and shelves of dolls.** Porcelain, wooden, glass and fabric, they face outward with beautiful faces and unseeing eyes.
4	**...a big dog with red eyes** chained to the center of the room amidst a circle of dried blood.
5	**...stinking piles of trash and junk** that have begun to rot.
6	**...a small, thin child** who lets you know you'd best be off before "mother" returns.
7	**...20 years' worth of stolen correspondence**, all still unopened.
8	**...a rare mushroom garden,** the contents of which is worth 3,500gp.
9	**...a taxidermy workshop** with the creations on display. All of the creatures are missing their eyes.
10	**...shelves of ancient, dusty leather-bound books**. All of the pages are blank.
11	**...an ancient woman** sitting in a rocking chair and singing the same lullaby over and over as she rocks back and forth.
12	**...a collection of stunning oil paintings** of various famous battles from one of the last great artists from the previous generation.
13	**...three pedestals arranged in a triangle.** Atop each is a chalice. One is full, one is empty and the last in a state of both half-full and half-empty.
14	**...stolen socks.** Thousands of them. All of them are missing the pair.
15	**...teeth.** They line the shelves, are in jars and bowls and are scattered across every surface.
16	**...a flying, talking sword** named Zanith.
17	**...a perfectly carved marble statue** of the party, looks of terror twisting their faces.
18	**...a very comfortable, albeit small-looking bed.** This bed grants the benefits of a long rest after just one hour of sleep within it.
19	**...a cursed breastplate** made from twisting shadows. Anyone who touches it, or the wearer, for the first time takes 4d8 necrotic damage. Anyone who attunes to the armor is cursed to make death saving throws at disadvantage.
20	**...a vast array of hoarded gold coins** worth 13,000gp piled high in the small space.



Stocks & Gallows

Whether or not the punishment fits the crime, sometimes citizens of the realm are sentenced to suffer the sword or the noose or the humiliation of their peers. Though it's not quite home, this will be the last place many lay their head.

Gallows

The nooses on this block ***(1)*** are thick, corded rope (AC 12, 2 hp) and can withstand a weight of up to 650 pounds. The platform is about 10 ft. off the ground and features a trapdoor system under each noose, triggered by a lever guarded by the executioner. When the lever is pulled, all the trapdoors drop simultaneously, regardless of whether each noose is occupied. A projectile aimed at the noose from a distance farther than 30 ft. adds +1 to the rope's AC per 10 ft. If a noose is bearing a body that starts to sway, this attack is made at a disadvantage.

Beheading Block

It's hard to overestimate the feeling of dread that befalls someone whose neck is placed on this indented and gore-flecked surface ***(2)***—or how that feeling will influence their will to survive. A creature about to be executed must make a Constitution saving throw, the ramifications of which are detailed below.

1–5	The creature is paralyzed.
6–10	The creature is frightened.
11-15	The creature is resigned to their fate, but not otherwise hindered.
16-20	The creature is emboldened, as if under the effect of a barbarian's rage.
20+	The creature is emboldened, as if under the effect of a barbarian's rage, and has advantage on all attacks for 1 minute.

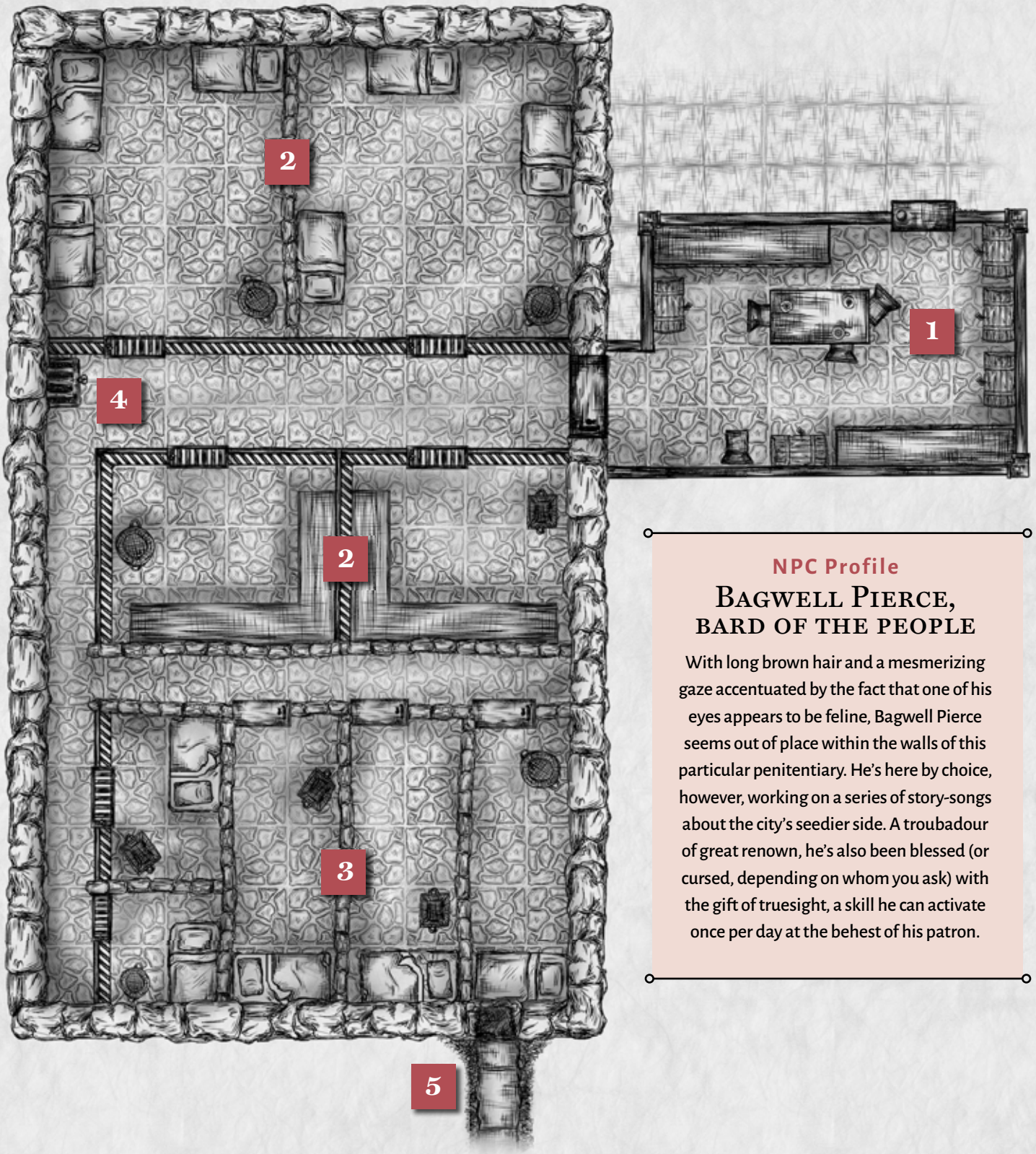
Stocks

Not every crime deserves an execution, but some who are set in the stocks ***(3)*** wish for death, particularly when their peers start lobbing rotten produce or animal feces at them as they serve their time. The stocks secure the head around the neck and the arms at the wrists, locking the convict in an uncomfortable, hunched standing position. The locks used on the stocks have a DC of 15.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what fate holds in store for the party at the stocks and gallows.

1d6	The party sees...
1	...a (guilty) **thief** pleading his innocence from the gallows. The gathered crowd believes he is not guilty. The executioner disagrees.
2	...a coordinated group of 3d4 **bandits** working to free their **bandit captain** and his two lieutenants.
3	...a fire breaks out at the gallows as a concerned citizen tries to stop a public execution.
4	...a nine-year-old boy in the stocks for sending a love letter to the realm's princess is being tormented by the entire town.
5	...a man about to be beheaded is *polymorphed* into a weasel by his spell-scroll-wielding wife.
6	...an old man stands at the gallows and begs for his right to be hanged for a murder he committed 63 years earlier.



NPC Profile

Bagwell Pierce, bard of the people

With long brown hair and a mesmerizing gaze accentuated by the fact that one of his eyes appears to be feline, Bagwell Pierce seems out of place within the walls of this particular penitentiary. He's here by choice, however, working on a series of story-songs about the city's seedier side. A troubadour of great renown, he's also been blessed (or cursed, depending on whom you ask) with the gift of truesight, a skill he can activate once per day at the behest of his patron.

Town Jail

Though many may insist laws were made to be broken (or at least bent a little), those who choose to disobey area ordinances can easily find themselves contemplating their behavior from the wrong side of wrought iron bars. This facility is fairly standard—secure enough to contain the typical rabble and low-level offenders—but is far from completely secure. With a little time, ingenuity, cunning or a combination of all three, most adventurers should be able to find a way to escape should they choose not to serve their full sentence. In addition to the guards wandering the halls of this jail is a troubadour named **Bagwell Pierce** seeking inspiration for his next big hit.

Entrance

A large oak door leads to a small receiving room ***(1)*** where 2d4 guards somewhat casually man their posts.

Shared Cells

To the left and the right of the door leading out of the receiving room are two cells for group holding ***(2)***. Drunkards, louts and other nonviolent offenders are typically cordoned off together in these spaces until they dry up or cool off. Locks on these doors have a DC of 16. Roll on the Random Rabble Table to determine who may already be locked up in these cells.

Individual Cells

For those who can't be trusted in a group environment, and for particularly violent individuals who require extra security, a row of private cells ***(3)*** create separation and confinement. Locks on these doors have a DC of 18, and the cells themselves are typically under the watchful eye of a patrolling guard who walks along the far hallway connecting the holding cell corridor to the main throughway to the receiving room. Roll on the Random Rabble Table to determine who may already be locked up in these cells.

Means of Escape

Outside of picking the locks to the cells and sneaking past, subduing or otherwise defeating the guards that attend the jail's main entrance, there are a handful of other ways to escape this space unscathed:

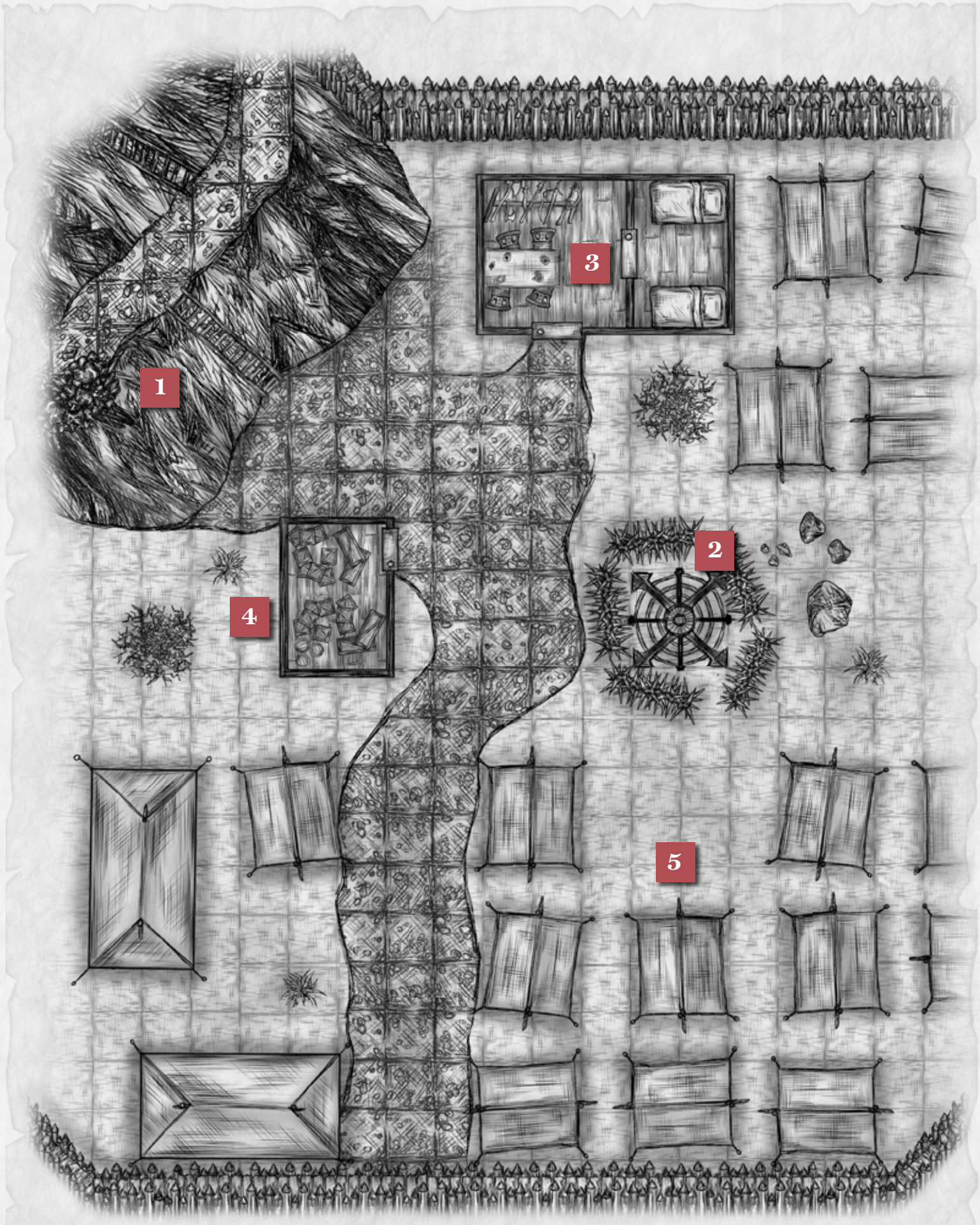
GRATE. A grate along the back wall ***(4)*** can be observed with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. A DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check will remove the grate from its fixed position, allowing for access to the tunnels below.

HIDDEN TUNNEL. A small hole in the wall of one of the holding cells ***(5)*** smells of mold and water rot, and a few rats scurry in and out of this slit between stones. Though rarely asked, the rats would reveal that the wall isn't particularly sound and could be knocked over with a few solid blows (AC 10, hp 18). A DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check would reveal the same intel. If the wall is destroyed, a gap between buildings leading to a narrow alley behind the jail is revealed.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Random Rabble Table

Roll 2d4 to determine how many individuals are being held in the jail, then roll 1d20 on the table below for each individual to determine their identity and offense. You can choose which cells they're being held in based on your party makeup or campaign. A repeated roll indicates accomplices.

1d20	Within this cell is...
1	**...a goblin** caught masquerading as a halfling.
2	**...a half-elven petty thief** with claims of ties to organized crime.
3	**...a human woman** who sold poisoned pies to some nobles in town.
4	**...a one-armed dwarf** covered in black soot accused of blowing up a local mine.
5	**...a human painter** who claims he's been framed.
6	**...a human farmer** whose horse kicked a man to death. The horse is also awaiting trial.
7	**...the daughter of a wealthy merchant**, caught donating his money to her boyfriend.
8	**...a burly half-orc** arrested for public intoxication.
9	**...a tiefling** who mouthed off to the city watch.
10	**...the mastermind** behind a series of sheep-related thefts, a muttering gnome named Reg.
11	**...a life-size wax figurine** styled in the visage of notorious criminal Cracker LeBloom, still at large.
12	**...a human female** who refuses to stop screaming, "I'm from the future and you're all tasty soup!"
13	**...three halflings** accused of impersonating a human noble by wearing a long coat.
14	**...a half-elf** who pummeled his elven father on behalf of his human mother.
15	**...a male drow** who stands accused of flouting his dark-elven heritage in public.
16	**...a would-be bard** who pinched a priceless instrument, then accidentally smashed it.
17	**...a quick-witted woman** whose only crime appears to be her penchant for peeing in the town square.
18	**...a sweaty half-orc** covered in gore and missing his teeth, unaware of what he did in a rage.
19	**...the biggest man in town**, held without bail for trying to stomp on one of the smallest.
20	**...a buxom bartender** with a lockpick and a pair of daggers laced into her corset.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3
4
5

The Labor Camp

Because most prisons are in some way subsidized by the rulers of the realm, it's not uncommon for those who are held within one to be asked (read: told) to pay back their debt to society through sweat and hard work. Some—including many prisoners forced to engage in it—oppose this practice, decrying it as a form of slavery. Others disagree. And others are typically the ones in charge.

All Work, No Escape

The main function of those stationed at this camp is to empty the nearby mountain ***(1)*** of all its valuables. To determine what's being mined here, roll on the Random Mine Table. The fencing around the mine is reinforced with barbs that do 1d6 piercing damage as well as 1d10 force damage to any creature that comes into contact with them. The entire labor camp is also affected by a large anti-magic field, which emanates from a tower positioned within the center of the camp ***(2)***.

Random Mine Table

The mine within this mountain is full of a valuable substance. Roll 1d8 to determine what it is.

1d8	The mine is full of...
1	Gold
2	Silver
3	Emeralds
4	Rubies
5	Diamonds
6	Red clay
7	Coal
8	Adamantine

Guard Office

The labor camp is overseen by a foreman, a headstrong, thick-necked brute named **Alistar Flogsweat**. He handles most of the necessary organization of work within this guard office ***(3)***, and when his men aren't on duty they can be found carousing within this space.

NPC Profile

Alistar Flogsweat, human foreman

A grim demeanor and lack of patience are the most memorable elements of this labor camp leader's persona, and he carries himself with the air of a sadist who's lucked into being in control of a large group of people. He rules this camp with a firm hand and a pair of whips, both of which are barbed with bits of glass and metal.

Supply Shed

All the necessary implements for mining ore can be found within this shed ***(4)***, including pickaxes, shovels, lanterns, tinder boxes, torches and a bit of black powder. It is typically guarded by two to three **veterans** working in shifts.

Minimum Shelter

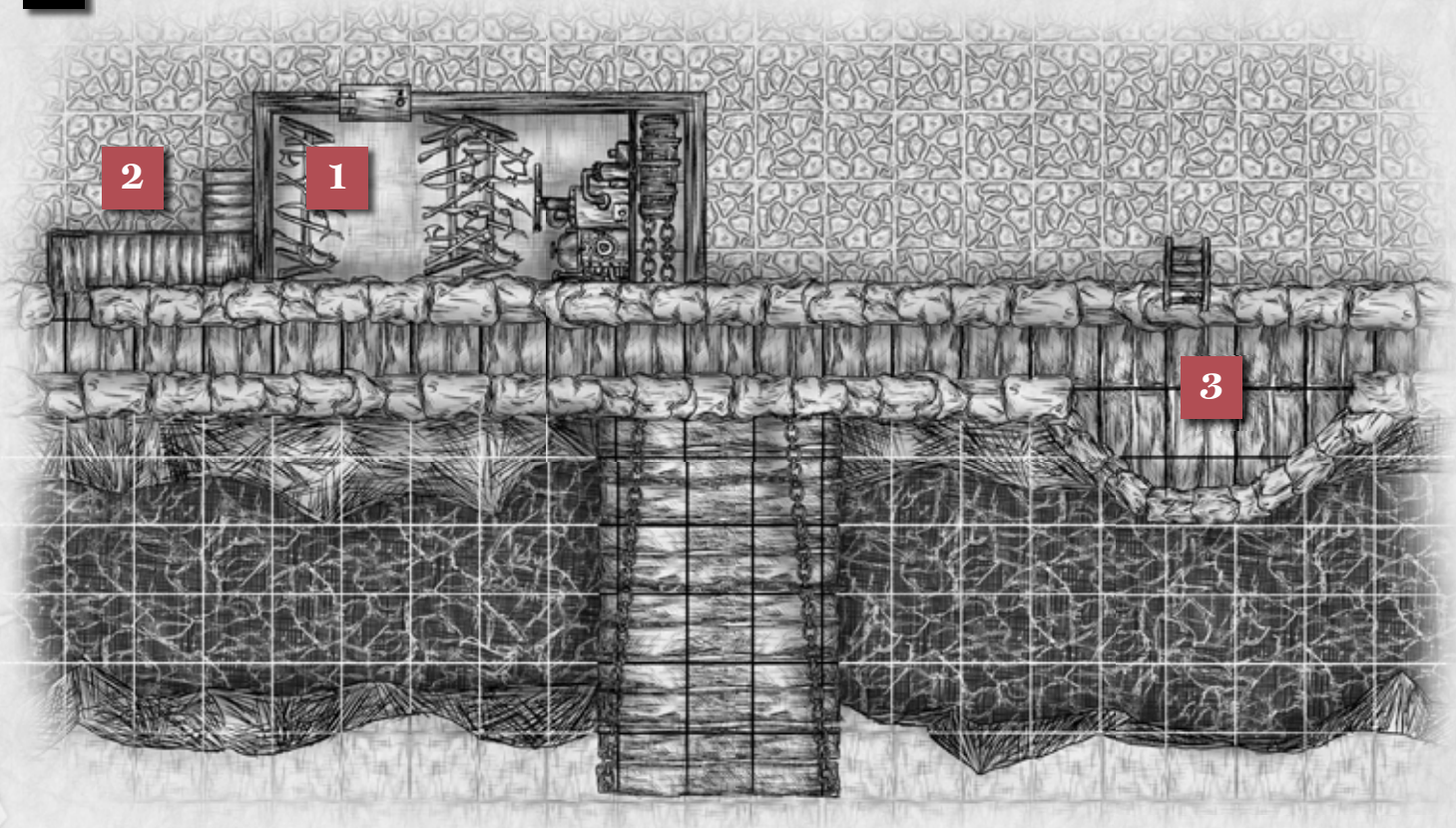
The tents within the camp ***(5)*** lack the comforts of home, and the ones that aren't pocked with holes and tears still barely block the sun or rain most of the time. They can be useful in shielding activity within them from the guard posts, however, and provide three-quarters cover for any trying to protect themselves within.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what awaits the party within this prison camp.

1d6	The party...
1	...sees a group of 2d4 half-orcs repeatedly slamming themselves against the fencing trying in earnest to bust it down and escape.
2	...hears a rumble beneath the earth in the center of the camp heralding the arrival of two **goblins** inside an **apparatus of the crab**, digging their way up into the labor camp to bust out their 2d4 goblin pals.
3	...notices a flaming wagon loaded with 6d6 barrels of acid rumbling over a hill and toward the front gate of the labor camp, the start of an all out gnomish assault on the security system at the behest of a single gnome stuck inside.
4	...hears word that a collapse within the entrance to the mine has trapped 2d4 workers inside, and the foreman would like them rescued. The collapse was initiated by a group of 3d4 angry **duargar**.
5	...overhears that 2d4 **gnolls** are planning to assault the foreman and hold him hostage in exchange for their freedom.
6	...watches as a man dressed as a guard begins killing other guards as a group of 1d4 **bandits** cheer him on from the hills nearby.

A



Random Castle Table

When the party is exploring a large castle or sprawling estate, roll 1d6. On an odd number, roll 1d8 on Table 1. On an even number, roll 1d8 on Table 2. The end result for either roll is the room they'll have found themselves walking into (at GM discretion).

table 1

1d8		
1	Estate Defenses	pg. 207
2	The Grand Entrance	pg. 209
3	Council Chamber/War Room/ Map Room	pg. 211
4	Kitchen	pg. 211
5	Main Bedroom	pg. 213
6	Secondary Bedroom	pg. 213
7	Guard Barracks	pg. 213
8	Bathhouse and Privy	pg. 213

table 2

1d8		
1	Private Prison	pg. 215
2	Library	pg. 217
3	Dining Hall	pg. 217
4	A Guest Bedroom and Study	pg. 219
5	A Supply Room	pg. 219
6	Tower Armory	pg. 219
7	Roll on Extra Rooms Table	pg. 219
8	Roll again	

Variant Castles

Whether surrounded by impenetrable walls, remarkable moats or the sweeping vistas of a large estate, at the end of the day a castle is still a home, and the rooms within are as primary to its function as the people who dwell there. The navigable spaces within a castle could fill an entire book, to say nothing of a single section within this one. Because of this fact, the next few pages outline spaces one would reasonably expect to find within the walls of a seat of noble power, whether a castle, keep or summer home. The rooms are presented without a planned connection to one another, leaving you free to determine where one exit might lead to another room's entrance at GM discretion. Each room described is exemplative of the visuals and themes associated with a space for nobility and royalty, though you can certainly skin them however you like as is appropriate for your game.

Estate Defenses (A)

Ensuring the safety of those who dwell within, many large homes and castles are equipped with a perimeter wall, or are fortresses unto themselves.

Gatehouse and Armory

Walls are well and good but on occasion it's necessary to step beyond them, or welcome guests within. The gatehouse ***(1)*** is designed for just such a purpose, giving a set of guards a space from which to view the front door to this property and determine whether or not to open it. A massive mechanism within the gatehouse raises or lowers the drawbridge and is a two person operation: One to rotate a gear to engage the device and another to pull a lever unlocking it and allowing it to fall. Raising or lowering the drawbridge requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. And because a wall without anyone to defend it can fall fairly quickly, it's important for those manning their post to feel prepared for any contingency. The armory is lined with longbows, pikes, crossbows and glaives to allow for those defending this wall to do so from range and with reach. A nearby set of stairs ***(2)*** leads directly to the top of the wall, making this room easily accessible in times of need.

The Wall

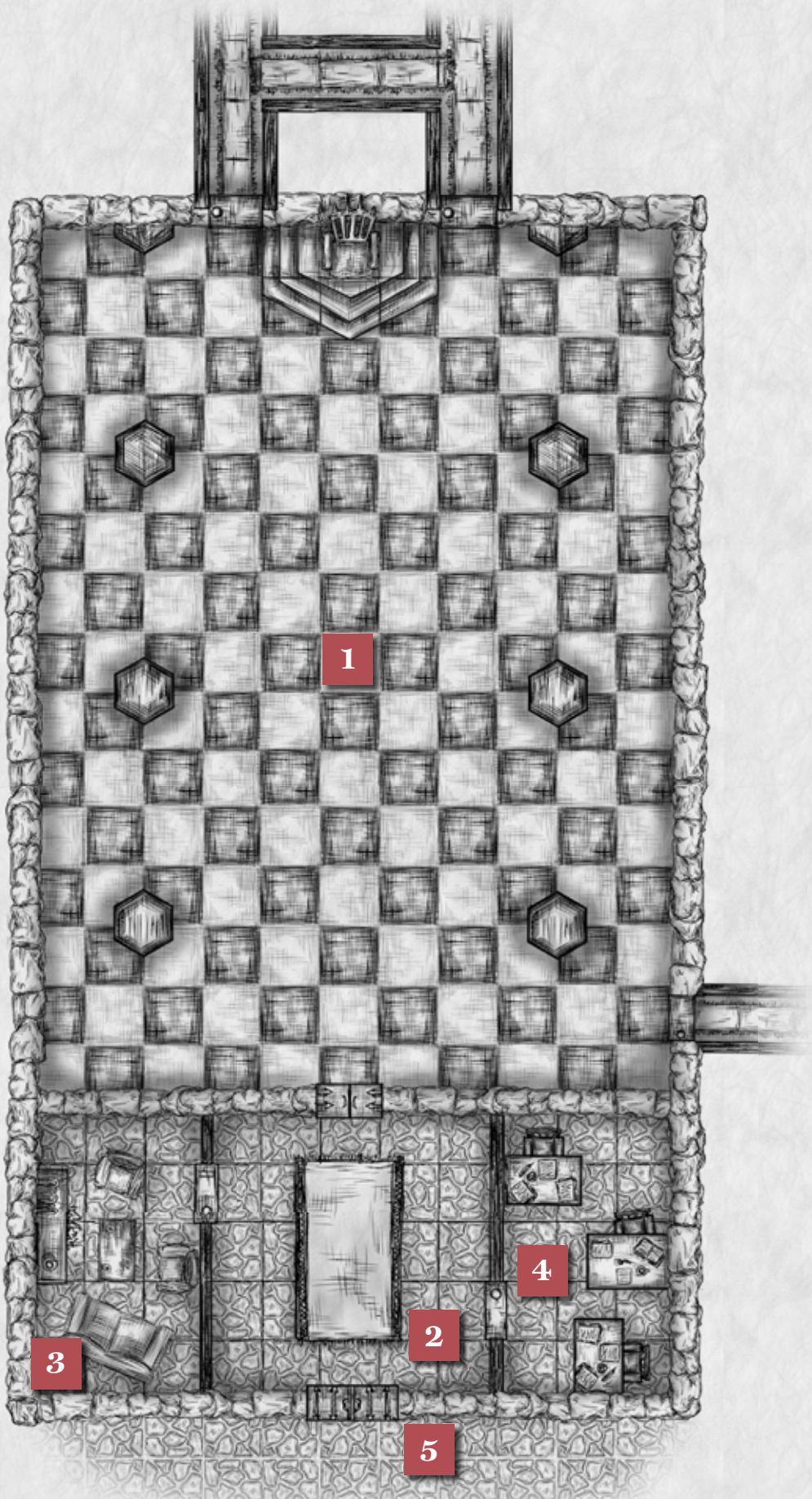
The wall that surrounds this space ***(3)*** can be as imposing or welcoming as your story demands. Some walls are meant to slow an attack, or divert opposing forces toward a specific area that may be easier to defend, while others are aesthetically if not strategically pleasing. Determine a height as well as length for your wall and consider whether or not it was shoddily made or built by the finest craftsmen in the realm, a fact that could bolster or hinder its efficacy. The drawbridge door has an AC of 10 and 100 hp.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Other Defenses

Bows and broadswords aren't the only way to defend an advantageous position atop a well fortified wall. Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine the nature of the secondary defenses available for this fortress.

1d6	The wall has...
1	**...buckets filled with large stones every 10 ft.** An attack with falling rocks deals 6d6 bludgeoning damage to each creature in a 10-ft. radius on a failed DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.
2	**...buckets filled with hot tar every 10 ft.** A creature splashed with hot tar must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity save or take 4d6 fire damage on a failed save and half as much damage on the target's next turn as the tar sticks to their flesh. A target covered in hot tar is at disadvantage on all attacks, saves and skill checks, moves at half speed and is vulnerable to fire damage.
3	**...2d4 mounted ballistas.** They have a range of 200/600 ft. and deal 4d10 piercing damage. They have +8 to hit, and require two actions to fire: one to aim and one to trigger.
4	**...a series of hidden spikes halfway up the wall.** They can be activated as a reaction if a creature is in their area of effect, which sits halfway up the wall. If a creature is near the wall when these spikes are triggered they must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 3d6 piercing damage and fall back to the ground, suffering an additional 3d6 bludgeoning damage.
5	**...buckets of slop.** These pails of rotten meat and human filth are spaced every 10 ft., covered in flies and unpleasant to stand near. Any creature that starts or ends its turn within 5 ft. of a bucket (thrown or stationary) must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or spend their action and reaction retching at the stench.
6	**...glass jars full of acid every 10 ft.** An attack with a jar of acid deals 3d6 acid damage to any creature in a 15-ft. radius that fails a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.

B



The Grand Entrance (B)

Most castles and opulant estates feature a greeting hall or great room, either for receiving guests, hosting galas or holding court. This space is designed to stand in as such a hall should the need arise.

Great Hall/Throne Room

This open area *(**1**)* with a sprawling, arched roof features the throne of its top resident, and serves as a space from which they can listen to the populace deliver decrees to gathered yes-men or hold an upscale soiree with various members of court. If this space is not the seat of power for the realm and is instead a massive great hall in a noble's mansion, the throne should be omitted from your description of its trappings.

Entrance Hall

A relatively bare space save for portraits of nobility or statues of particular cultural significance, this area of the castle *(**2**)* is effectively a foyer, an area in which to prepare yourself for an audience with the queen, a dance with the prince, an upbraiding from the scion of a major family or a summary execution in view of the rest of the court for crimes against the realm. You know, like the foyer of your own home.

Waiting Room

This area *(**3**)* is effectively a holding room for those who seek an audience with the head of the house, and would usually feature a few attendant guards as well as council members or footmen flitting in and out to check in on arriving guests to see if they need anything before their moment with the seated ruler here, or keep an eye on them to ensure they aren't looking to cause trouble.

Offices for Clerks/Council Chambers

Behind every great family is an individual who sets their meeting schedule, and this space *(**4**)* houses the individual(s) responsible for those duties. After all, a quality secretary can be as meaningful a deterrent to access as the highest castle wall.

Main Courtyard/Carriage Entrance

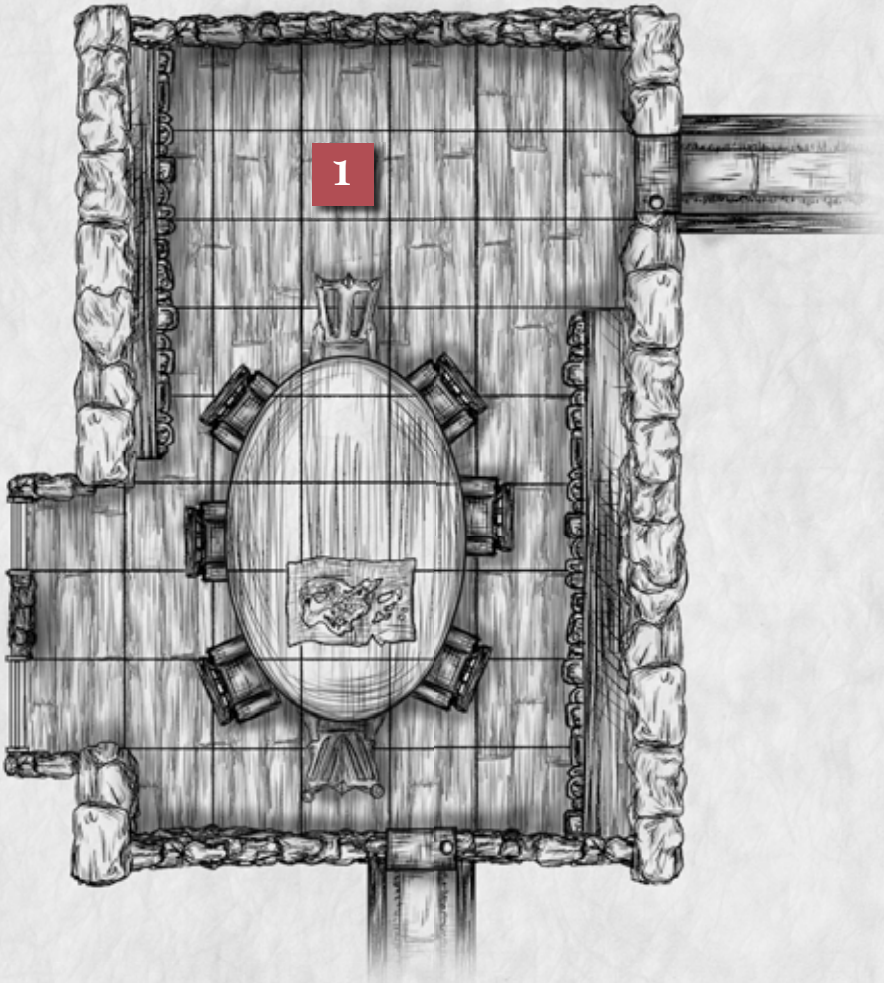
The formal gateway to the Entrance Hall is through the courtyard abutting this massive residence *(**5**)*. Some castles and noble homes feature a covered space to ensure those arriving by carriage need not fret about the weather—an option you can add here at your own discretion.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Party Time

There is no shortage of reasons for the upper crust of any civilization to hold a soirée, ball or other social function to which a large number of guests can be invited—and the Great Hall is where those events would take place most often. Roll 1d6 on the table below to reveal the sort of celebration taking place within this space.

1d6	The guests are…
1	…celebrating the death of a rival lord with a masquerade ball.
2	…enjoying the intoxicating glow of a wedding reception.
3	…preparing for an evening of convivial conversation and various types of dancing to honor a fertility god.
4	…at a naming ceremony for a new leader.
5	…all female, as this fancy gala is for women only.
6	…here under false pretenses.

C



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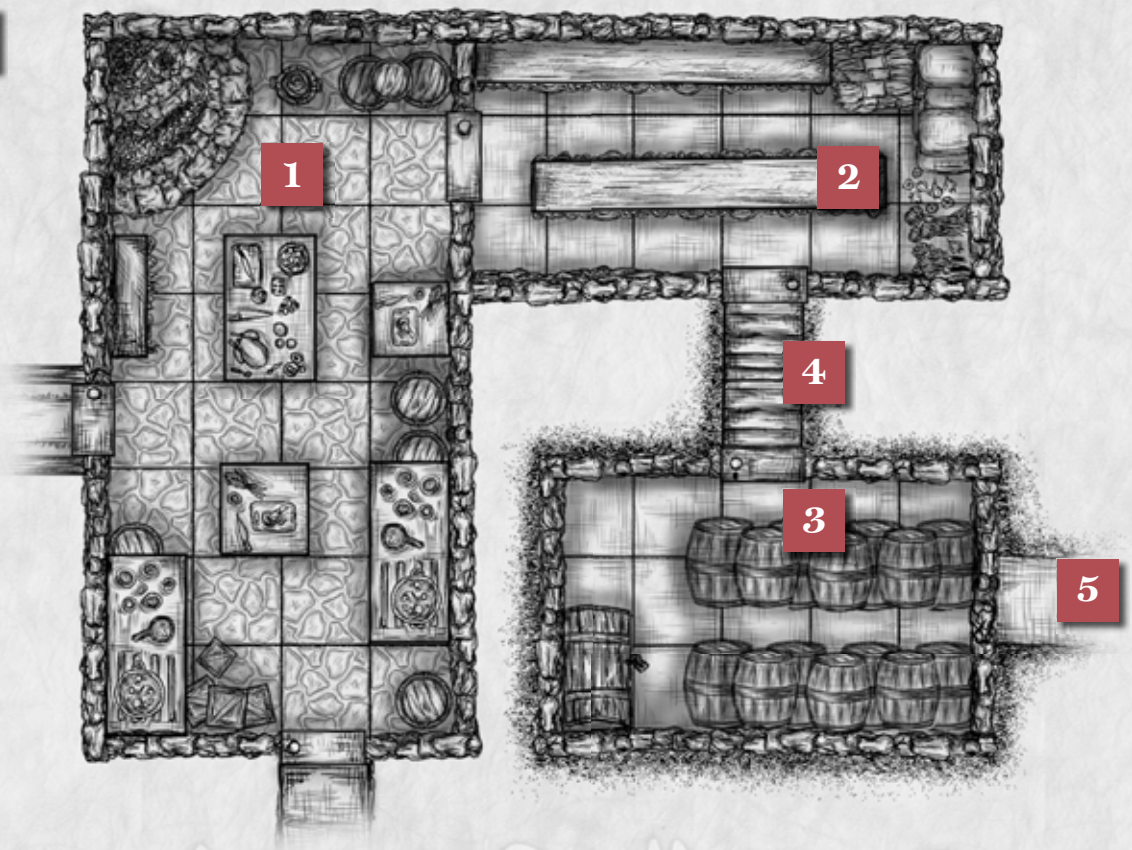


Vital Interiors

Every highborn home is unique, though they have numerous rooms in common. These spaces might feature as part of a castle exploration, or can serve as the site of specific scenes within your ongoing adventures.

Council Chamber/War Room/ Map Room (C)

Whether king or queen, lord or duke or simply a rich person with a desire to use their wealth in a way that can directly impact the world, this room ***(1)*** is a space to get a broader view of the realm and plan strategically in times of war or peace. Its walls are adorned with maps of the surrounding regions and there are several rolls of maps from far off lands stacked among the shelves on either side of the room's council table. The room is also perfect for gatherings featuring a king's trusted council or advisors, each of whom may be here to advance their own aims.

Kitchen (D)

A lodging with this many rooms requires a kitchen capable of preparing enough food to fill the mouths of those that dwell within them. This kitchen ***(1)*** features a large stone oven, a cast iron stove as well as several prep stations for breaking down sides of beef, chopping produce and plating dishes.

Pantry

A large area for short-term food storage ***(2)***, the pantry features stacks of sacks of staples (such as flour, rice, beans, lentils, potatoes and more), as well as any fruits or vegetables from nearby farms or far flung locations that have been collected as part of a forthcoming food menu.

Barrel Cellar

A staple of any large estate, this space ***(3)***, accessible through a passageway from the pantry ***(4)***, features rows of stored wine, mead, ale or distilled spirits ready to be cracked open for a special occassion or simple request.

Secret Tunnel

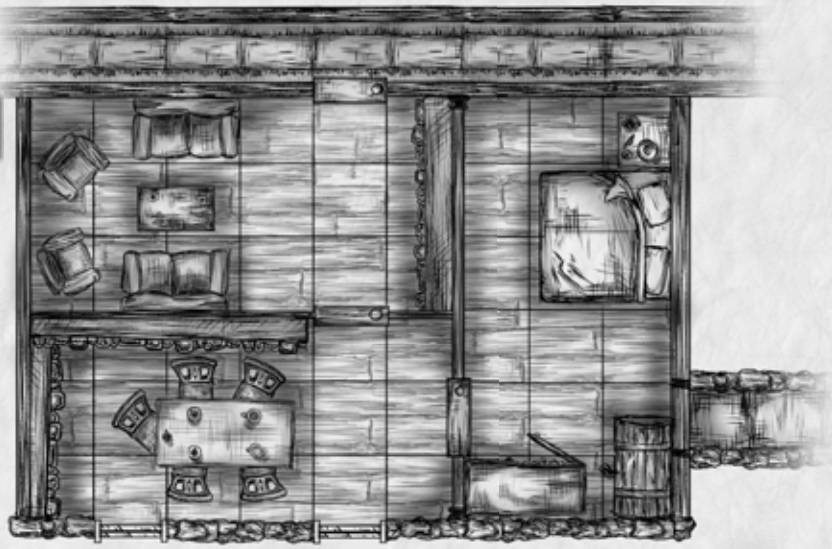
Covert passageways are not uncommon in manors such as this, and can lead below ground, up to a rooftop or simply to a different wing of the estate. This entrance to one such passageway ***(5)*** can be discovered with a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Ales Well

Every host is different, and the stores in any highborn home reflect the taste of the master of the house. Roll 1d6 to determine the drink of choice within this estate.

1d6	These barrels contain…
1	**…a rare spirit from another realm.** Upon tasting this spirit for the first time, a creature must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw to avoid temporary blindness, which lasts an hour.
2	**…a wine of the estate's own make.** This wine isn't the best, but the host is proud of it. A creature tasting this wine must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw to drink without making a sour face. A Charisma (Deception) check could also be utilized to avoid insulting the host.
3	**…a mead made from local honey.** Though it's not been made public, 1 in 6 individuals are allergic to this honey and break out in hives upon consuming it. For every creature who partakes of this mead, roll 1d6. On a 1, they break out in hives and are visibly sweaty, and their throat closes up slightly making it difficult to speak. This effect dissipates after a long rest or at GM discretion.
4	**…a dark spirit reminiscent of rum.** The drink is somewhat addictive, and any creature who partakes must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or will immediately ask for another glass—forcing another saving throw. After three failed saves a creature becomes extremely inebriated, is incapable of lying and makes all skill checks and attack rolls at disadvantage.
5	**…a warming dark ale.** With hints of clove and allspice, this rich ale is similar to porter but with an added bonus: Any creature who consumes this ale is resistant to cold damage for one hour.
6	**…a highly flammable spirit.** With a smell like kerosene, a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check would reveal this distilled spirit would immediately ignite if exposed to a spark or extreme heat.

E



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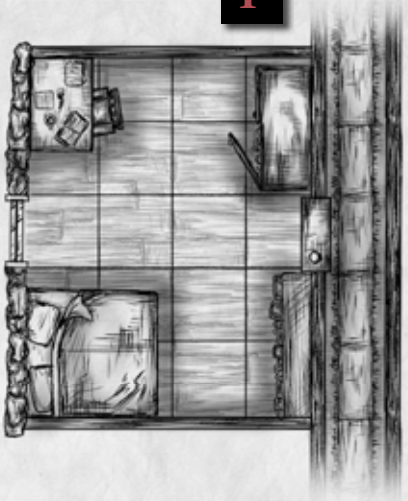

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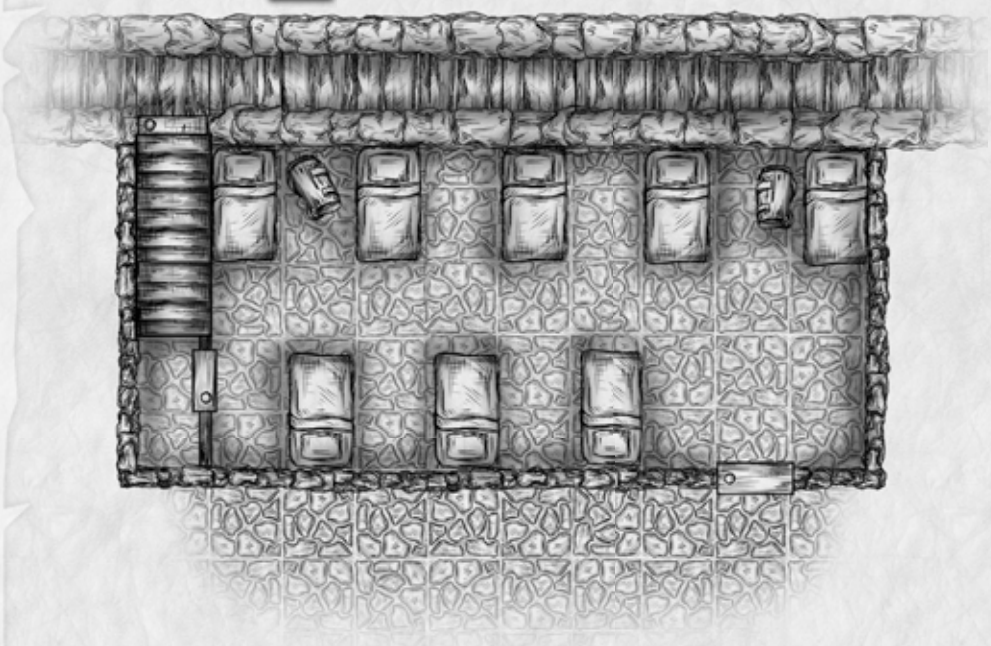

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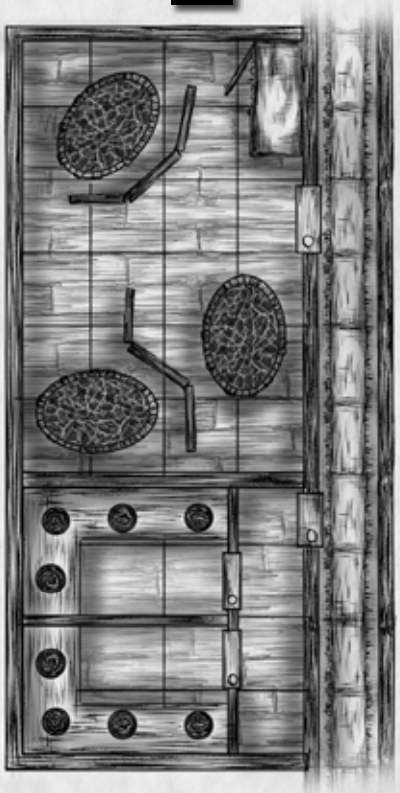


Beds, Baths and Beyond

It is true that the very, very rich are just like the rest of us in that they usually put their pants on one leg at a time and also, eventually, will need a place to lay their heads after a long day (unless they are sleepless warlocks, but that's another matter). Though most adventures may not lead directly to the bedroom of a king or archduchess, those spaces still exist, which is why they are included here. The rooms outlined below are typical of what one might find within the confines of a particularly opulent home.

Main Bedroom (E)

This space features a large bed, a fully appointed reading room as well as a table and chairs for those days when its resident is hungry but would prefer not to put on pants. A wardrobe and storage chest round out the furniture in the room.

Secondary Bedroom (F)

Smaller than the master bedroom but no less opulent, this room features a large bed, wardrobe, a shelf for books as well as a desk suitable for late night letter writing or for reviewing plans for the day as the sun comes up.

Guard Barracks (G)

The collective home of a castle or estate's attendant guard, what these barracks lack in privacy they make up for in soft linens and stellar pay. These beds can also be shared with visiting guests of a certain class, if the host determines they are nice enough for free shelter but perhaps a bit too unruly to trust within the home's inner sanctum.

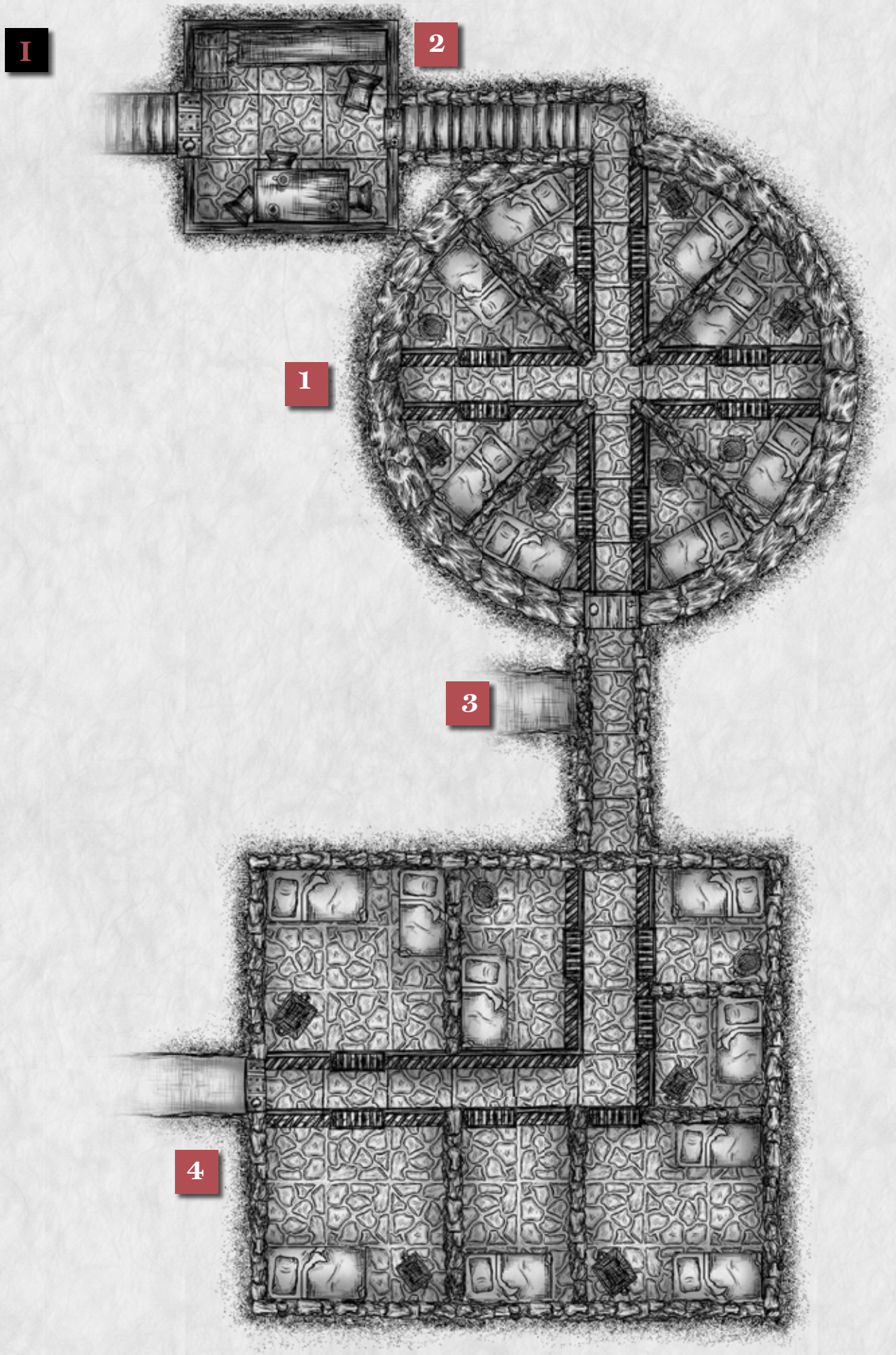
Bathhouse and Privy (H)

A good soak can cure the ails of even the most well-to-do resident of this abode, and such a remedy can be found in this steamy escape. Personal tubs of piping hot water are separated by dividers within the room, and a large closet features some of the softest towels and robes in the realm. Beyond the bathhouse door is a spot to expel one's waste into a chamber pot without having to view it after the fact.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what dangers might wait within the walls of these bedrooms.

1d6	The party learns...
1	...a **night hag** is implanting dark visions inside the mind of the host as they sleep.
2	...1d4 suit(s) of **animated armor** refuse to let anyone into or out of the master suite.
3	...the host's paramour is hiding inside one of the room's wardrobes, explaining they cannot be found by the host's spouse and pleads for the party's aid.
4	...or at least suspects, that these beds are all cursed as the following morning no one who slept in one benefits from a long rest.
5	...a trap door beneath the bed in the master suite leads directly to a tavern within this book (at GM discretion), a fact currently being exploited by 6 local **thugs**.
6	...1d4 **ghosts** frequent these rooms and refuse to leave, sharing lengthy diatribes about how much they hate the current decor.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Private Prison (I)

Many large estates and castles feature cells utilized to punish those who might wish to do harm to the head of the house, and are set up in a way that prevents troublemakers from wreaking havoc despite not having a large force in place to stand guard.

Main Jail Cells

The pie-slice construction of this block of cells built into one of the castle's spires ***(1)*** allows for a single guard or two to keep a watchful eye on the entire roomful of cells. The cells here each feature DC 18 locks, and each cell is equipped with a single bedroll and a chamberpot. The 2d4 **guards** who work in this space usually carry a set of keys on them, but there's a 1 in 6 chance they've left them with their superior, who is elsewhere.

Guardroom

When not on duty, the 2d4 guard(s) who keep this space under lock and key can be found commiserating or taking a load off in this small room ***(2)*** that acts as both a check point for incoming rabble and a check-in area for those interested in the status of prisoners who continue to defy those in charge. The door off this room leads to the floors above, by rolling on the Random Castle table on pg. 206 or at GM discretion.

Secret Tunnel

Though criminals and ne'er-do-wells occasionally find themselves locked up here, they still receive visitors from time to time—occasionally from palace insiders who would prefer not to have their movements tracked. This tunnel entrance ***(3)*** can be perceived with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) if one knows what they're looking for: tiny slits along the brickwork allow for it to swing forward just enough to allow a medium or smaller creature to slip through. These tunnels lead underground, to a location on the Random Tunnel table (pg. 229), to the crypts or to other rooms within the estate at GM Discretion.

Secondary Jail Cells

A room utilized for overflow in the event of an uprising or disease outbreak, this secondary prison ***(4)*** is slightly less secure than the main cells, with its doors each featuring a DC 16 lock.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Palace Intrigue

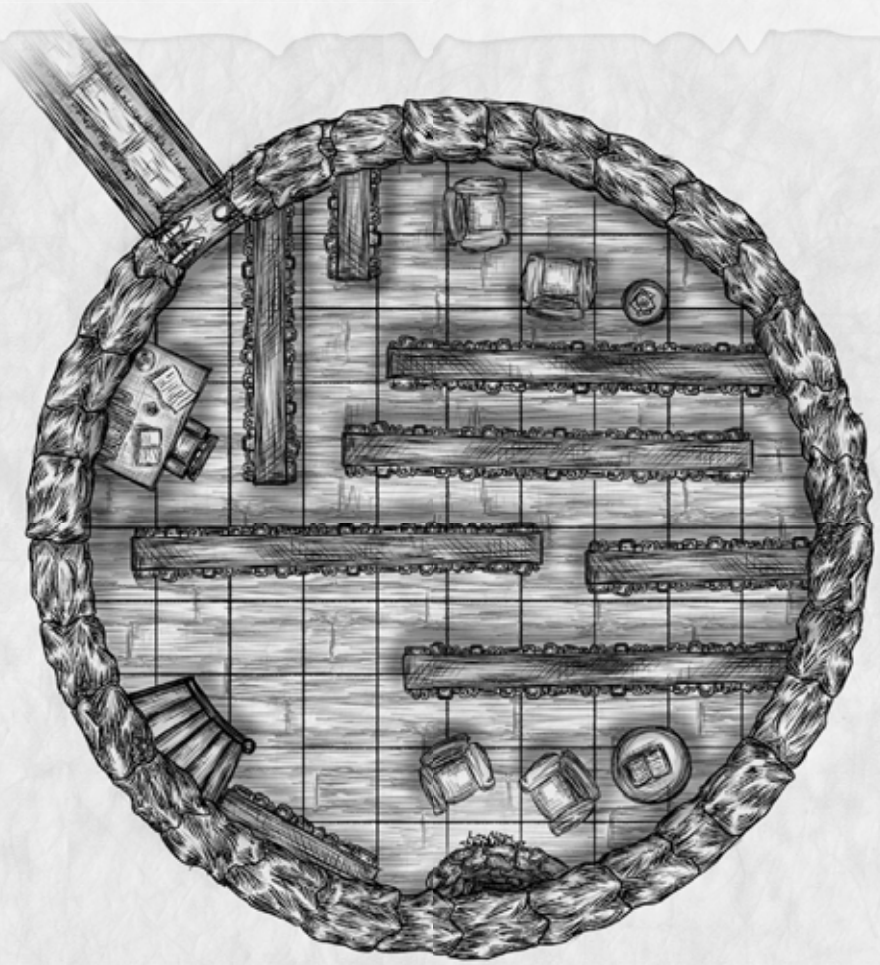
Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine what plots may be afoot on these grounds, then have your party choose how to respond.

1d6	It appears...
1	...the host has been brainwashed by a powerful demon disguised as a court jester.
2	...the host's books are being kept by a particularly skilled and sticky-fingered accountant.
3	...the host's daughter has fallen in love with a member of the kitchen staff—a forbidden, and therefore secret, affair.
4	...a member of the council here is secretly allied with a rival house or kingdom, and is urging his master to war—and slaughter.
5	...an **assassin** from a far off kingdom has been sent to take out the host—as well as the rest of the family.
6	...a series of cries are emanating from various rooms within the estate. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check near one of the walls in this space reveals 14 hidden children, scummy and malnourished—all of them claiming they've been kept here by a member of the host's staff.

GM Note

For more variety, use the Variant Encounter table on pg. 203 to populate these cells with random rabble.

J



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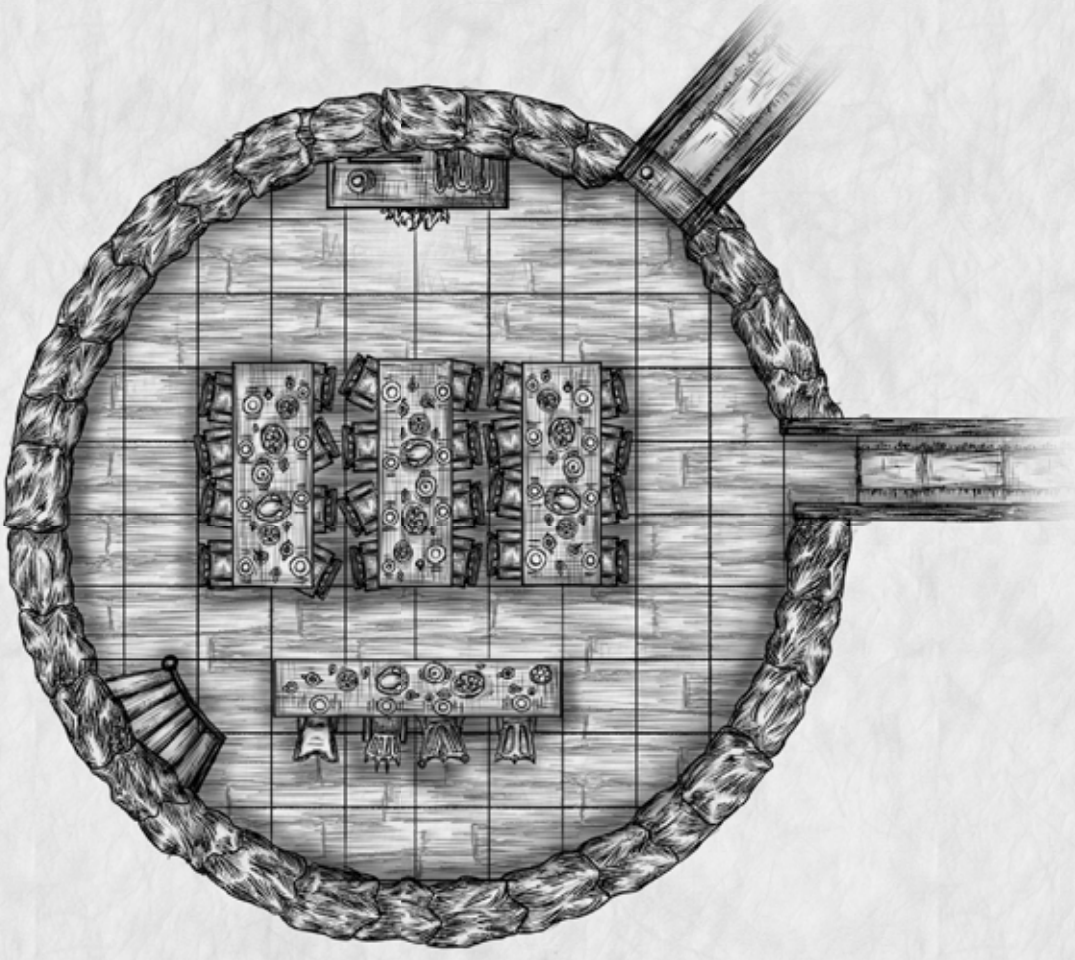


Tower Options

The spire of a large castle or mansion can be utilized for any number of meaningful purposes—a potions laboratory or makeshift library, for instance. These two maps represent the possibilities for a space such as this, but can be modified as necessary at GM discretion.

Library (J)

Shelves stacked nearly 20 ft. high and stretching to the ceiling are stocked with books on nearly any subject, and this room features cozy spots in which to research and record one's findings. The doors within this space lead deeper into the castle and the stairs in the corner can lead up or down, at GM discretion.

Dining Hall (K)

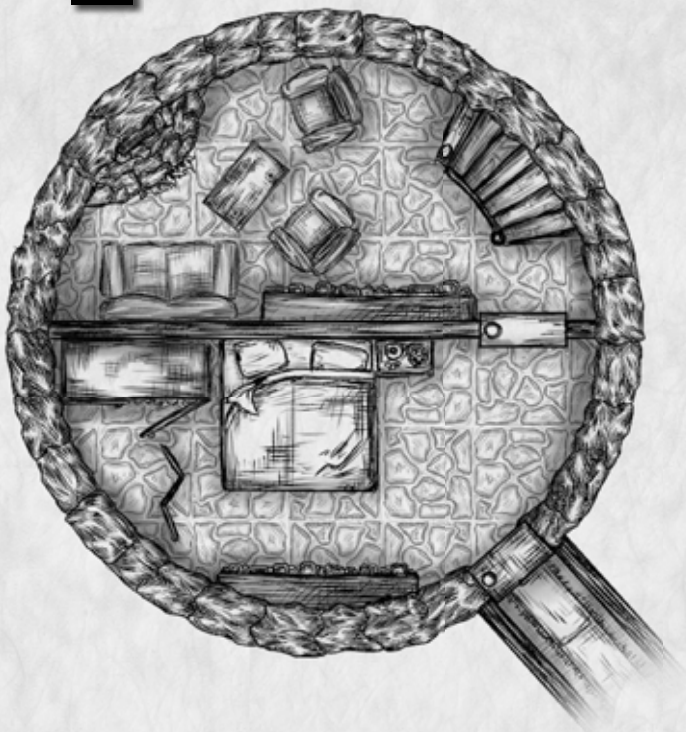
Though meals can be arranged in the Great Hall or for a smaller group within the kitchen, this room is utilized for day-to-day meals and features enough seating for several members of court or castle staff, as well as a dais from which the master of the house can look out upon their guests while dining. The doors within this space lead deeper into the castle and the stairs in the corner can lead up or down, at GM discretion.

Encounter Variant (Optional) Castle Furnishings

Though many noble estates shine with wealth from every corner, circumstances can change for any highborn family. Roll on the table below to determine the visual aesthetics associated with this castle once the party arrives.

1d6	The castle is...
1	**...falling apart.** The slow decay of time paired with a lack of upkeep on the part of the residents here has left a once imposing and impressive castle full of rubble with collapsing walls, damaged tapestries and rotting floors. At GM discretion, roll 1d6 each time a member of the party enters a new room in this castle. On a 1, have them make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall through the floorboards to a room below as the beams supporting them snap under stress.
2	**...haunted**. Every room in this castle has a chance of being inhabited by a **ghost or ghoul**. Each time the party enters a new room, roll 1d6. On a 1, 1d4 ghosts or ghouls appear in this space, and are friendly or nefarious at GM discretion.
3	**...frozen.** Whether through some curse or overexposure to the elements in a particularly chilly climate, every room in this castle is covered in ice. The floor is difficult terrain, and anyone attempting to dash must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity check to avoid falling prone as they slip and fall. Heat (from a flame or other magical effect) can melt the ice here but after 2d6 minutes it begins to refreeze.
4	**...opulent**. This castle might be the fanciest any in the party have ever had the pleasure of walking within. Even the servants' quarters are gilded and feature subtle, artistic flourishes. Tapestries and mosaics and other fine artwork hang on every wall. The guard and other staff in this castle are similarly appointed.
5	**...dark.** There seems to be a purposeful effort to keep out the light in this entire castle, perhaps because its leader does not want to be seen, is frustrated by the sun or simply feels more at home when shrouded in darkness. Those without darkvision will need a torch to navigate this castle, as entering it is similar to walking within the tunnels of a pitch black cave.
6	**...under construction.** Whether there's been a recent change in ownership, a strong desire for a remodel or a significant amount of damage that must be repaired, the signs of a concerted effort to update or rebuild the rooms, hallways or even foundations of this castle are apparent throughout—and 10d4 members of a guild responsible for this sort of work are an ever present sight.

L



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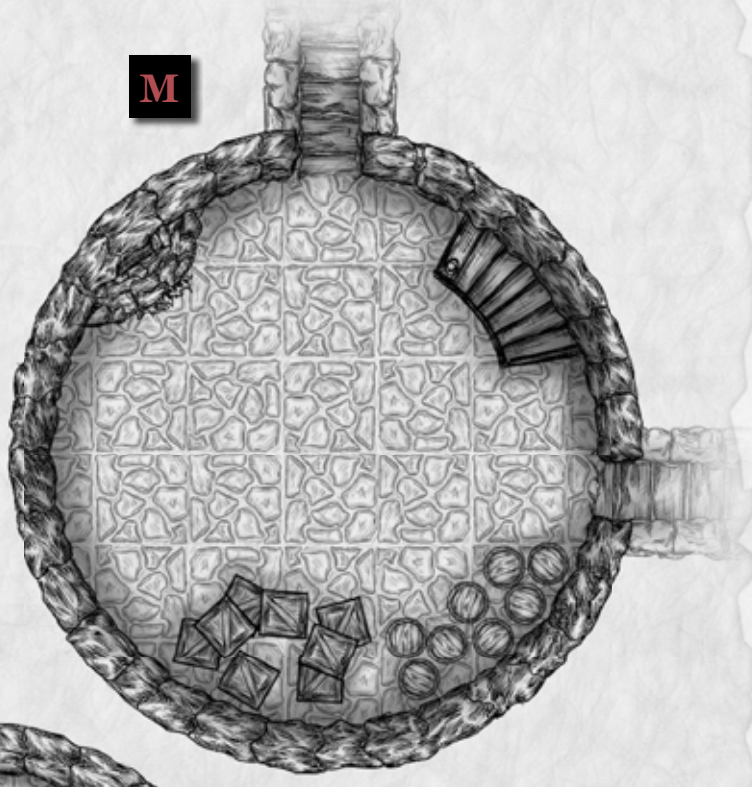

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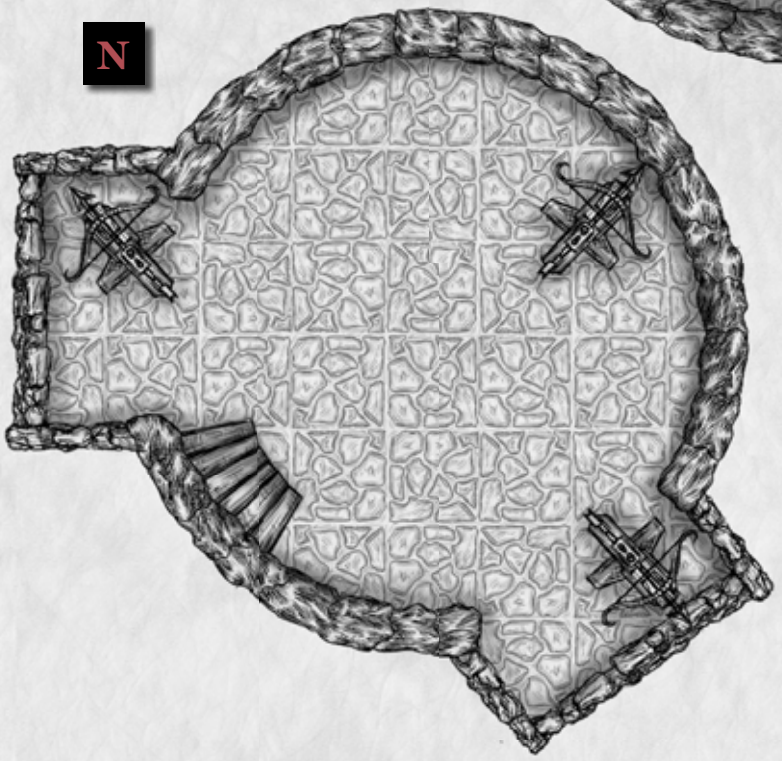


Space to Explore

Most homes of this size have rooms that are rarely seen, to say nothing of whether or not they get any use. When visitors arrive, however, there is often an urge to show them around the grounds and show off the comforts and luxuries that wealth or status allows.

A Guest Bedroom and Study (L)

A space intended to host visitors for longer stays, this room features a small sitting room as well as a large bedroom with access to other halls and rooms in the castle, plus one of the lumpier beds anyone has ever had the displeasure to sleep on. The stairs in the sitting room can lead up or down at GM discretion.

A Supply Room (M)

With so many comings and goings on the property it's natural to accrue more than you need and to prepare for those times when less is available. This storage space features ample room for amassing supplies to ride out a long winter, a hate-fueled uprising, a celebration or other event requiring large portions of necessary staples. The boxes and barrels within this space feature items relevant to the ongoing adventure, at GM discretion.

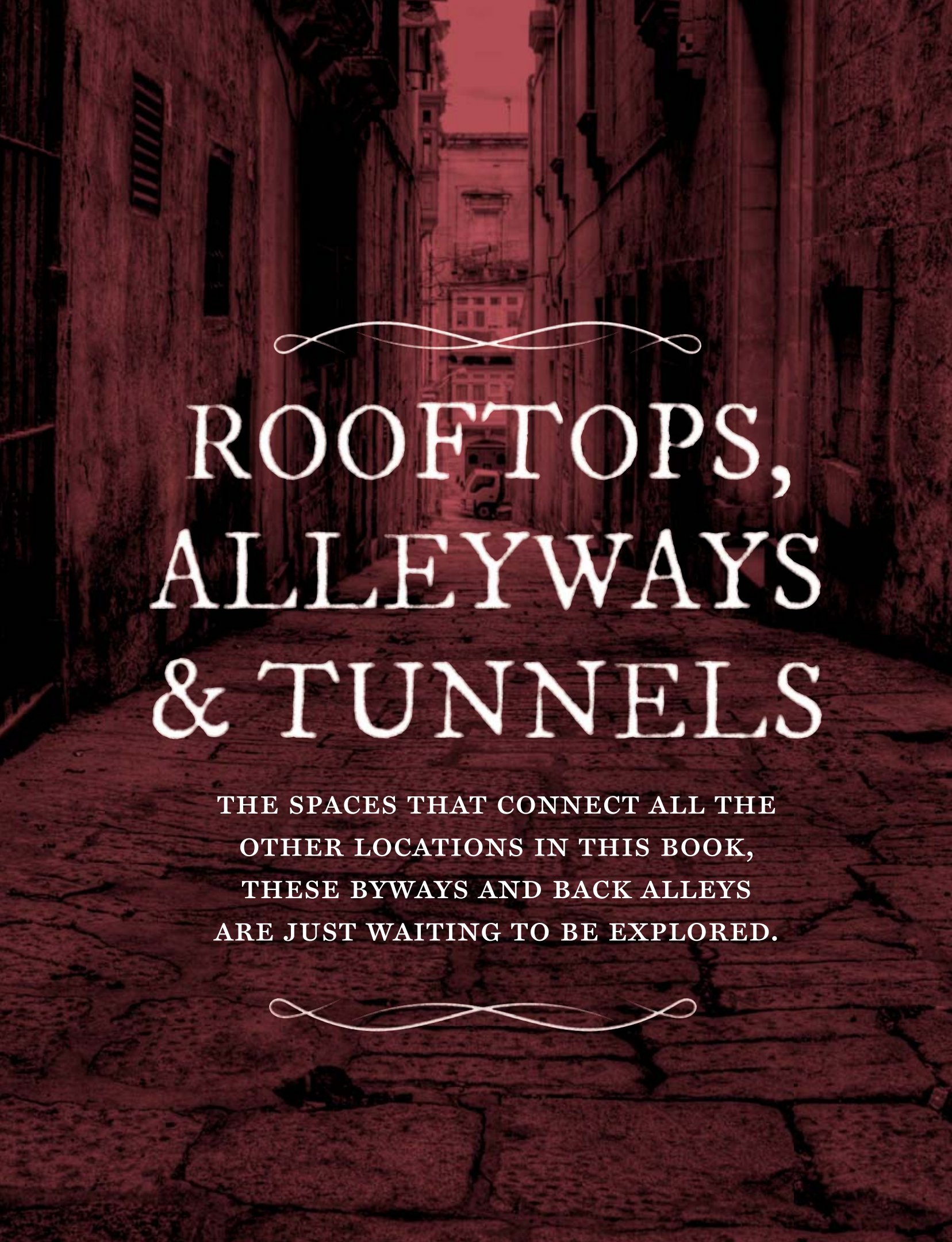
Tower Armory (N)

While security of the keep is in many ways the responsibility of those keeping watch along the walls, this armory offers a strong strategic position from within one of the spires, with long range ballistas that can deal a significant amount of damage should an army begin a march on the walls or a dragon swoop in to bring death and ruin from above. The ballistas have a range of 200/600 ft. and deal 4d10 piercing damage. They have +8 to hit, and require two actions to fire: one to aim and one to trigger.

Encounter Variant (Optional)
Extra Rooms

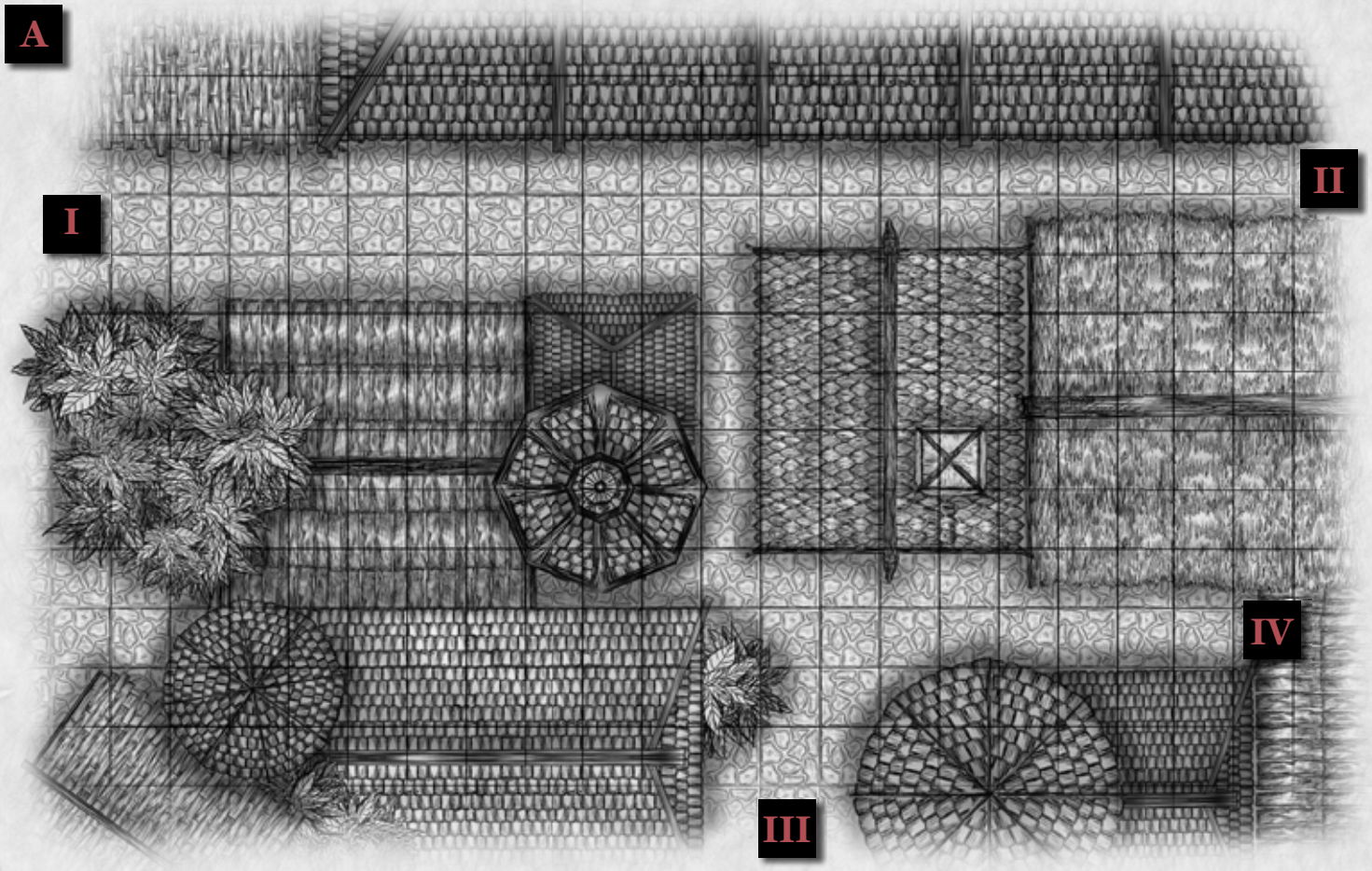
Roll 1d20 on the table below to determine the nature of another room in this space as your party begins to explore it. If a room is repeated, roll again on the table or let it stand—many homes of this size feature multiple kitchens, bedrooms, studies and more. Because who wants to walk?

1d20	This room is...
1	...a gymnasium with a fencing circle.
2	...a greenhouse with a massive tree inside.
3	...an observatory with a large telescope.
4	...an indoor lap pool.
5	...an archery range.
6	...an alchemist's laboratory.
7	...a doctor's quarters for observing ill patients.
8	...a launch pad for a small dirigible airship.
9	...a torture chamber.
10	...a ballroom with a stage for an orchestra.
11	...a hall with statuary lining both sides.
12	...a small chapel.
13	...a smith's forge.
14	...filled with portals, each leading to another realm at DM discretion.
15	...a teleportation circle.
16	...a bedroom with a very strong necrotic scent coming from beneath one of the floorboards.
17	...a walk-in closet, but the size of a great room.
18	...an aviary, featuring messenger birds and several hooded falcons.
19	...a distillery for making spirits.
20	...a nursery, complete with 2d4 babbling babies.



ROOFTOPS, ALLEYWAYS & TUNNELS

THE SPACES THAT CONNECT ALL THE OTHER LOCATIONS IN THIS BOOK, THESE BYWAYS AND BACK ALLEYS ARE JUST WAITING TO BE EXPLORED.



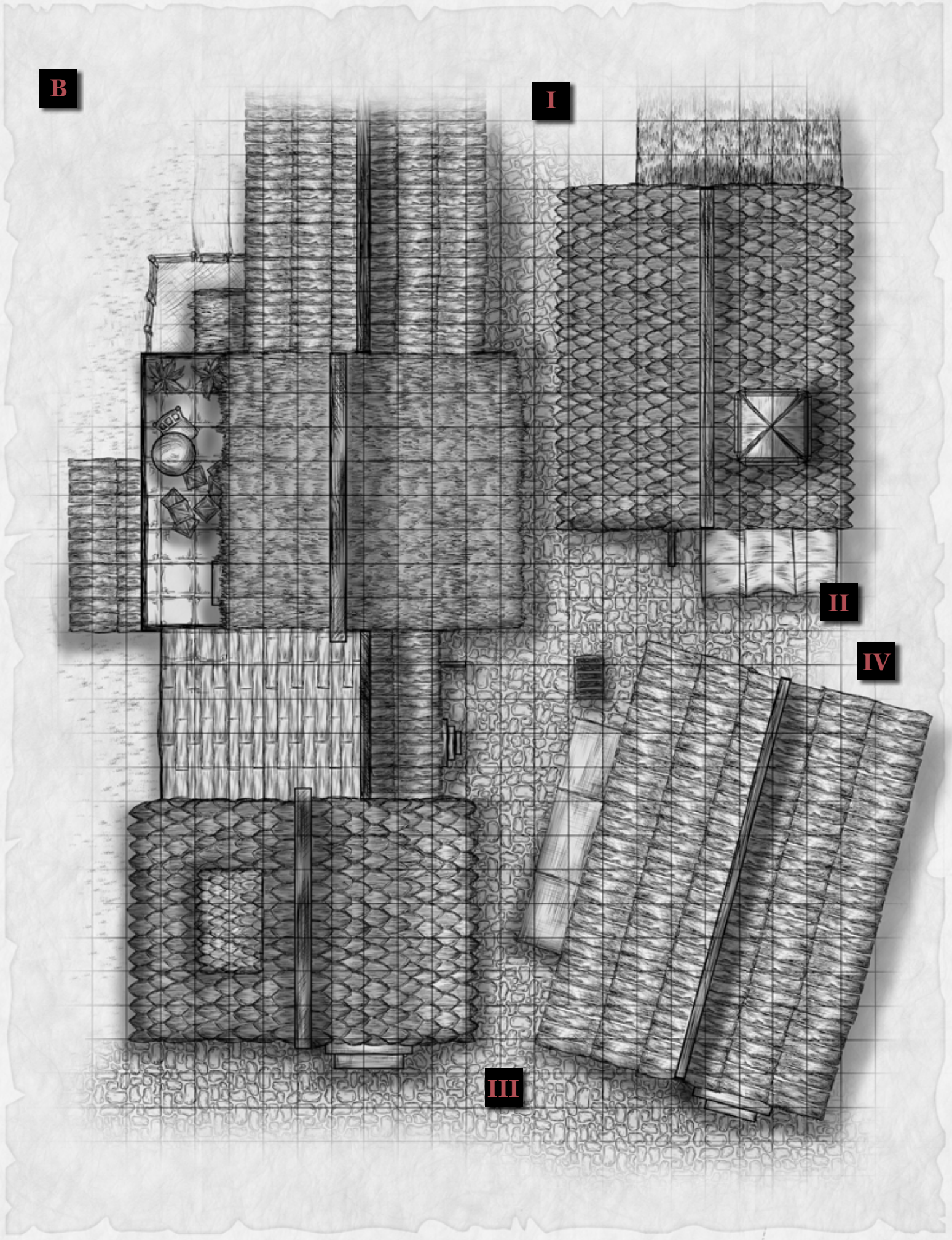
Whether spying on a target from above, slipping out a second-story window as a means of escape or bounding from building to balcony to the streets below, rooftops and alleyways can be unique spaces for adventurers to explore and feature hazards specific to their elevation and placement within a town or city's landscape.

Without getting too philosophical, every road ever paved leads somewhere, even the dead ends. The alleyways and side streets presented as part of these cityscapes are no different. If you're seeking a completely randomized experience for players exploring a new town, roll on the Random Roofs & Alleys table to select a cityscape, then roll 1d4 to determine their point of entry into it. If they exit the area and you need to track their progress, continue rolling on the Random Roofs & Alleys table and repeat the 1d4 roll to determine where they've strolled. The rooftops presented here are unmarked and their architectural embellishments do not connect specifically to spaces within the rest of this book but can be stated to do so at GM discretion. Should a character exit out an elevated door or window and elect to traverse along the tops of the buildings within the town or city they're exploring, choose one of these maps, a relevant window and pick things up there. Alternatively, should they choose to enter a building through a balcony, skylight, window or some other point of ingress, you can roll on the Random Location Generator (pg. 3) to determine where they will end up.

Random Rooftops & Alleys Table

Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine the rooftops and alleys map you'll be using, then roll 1d4 to reveal which part of the map they'll enter from and find the corresponding Roman numeral on the map.

1d6	Map	Page
1	A	pg. 221
2	B	pg. 222
3	C	pg. 223
4	D	pg. 224
5	E	pg. 224
6	Roll again	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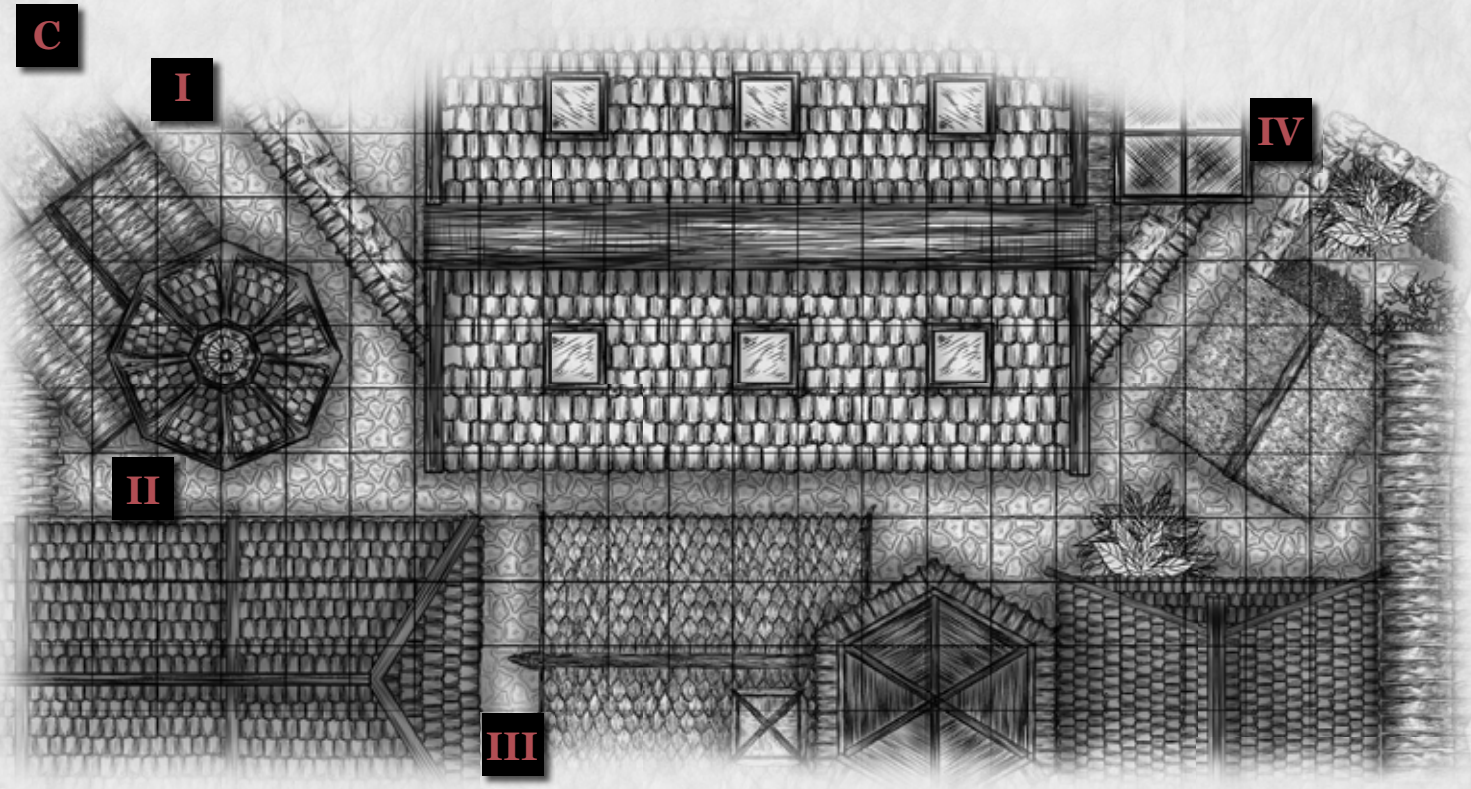
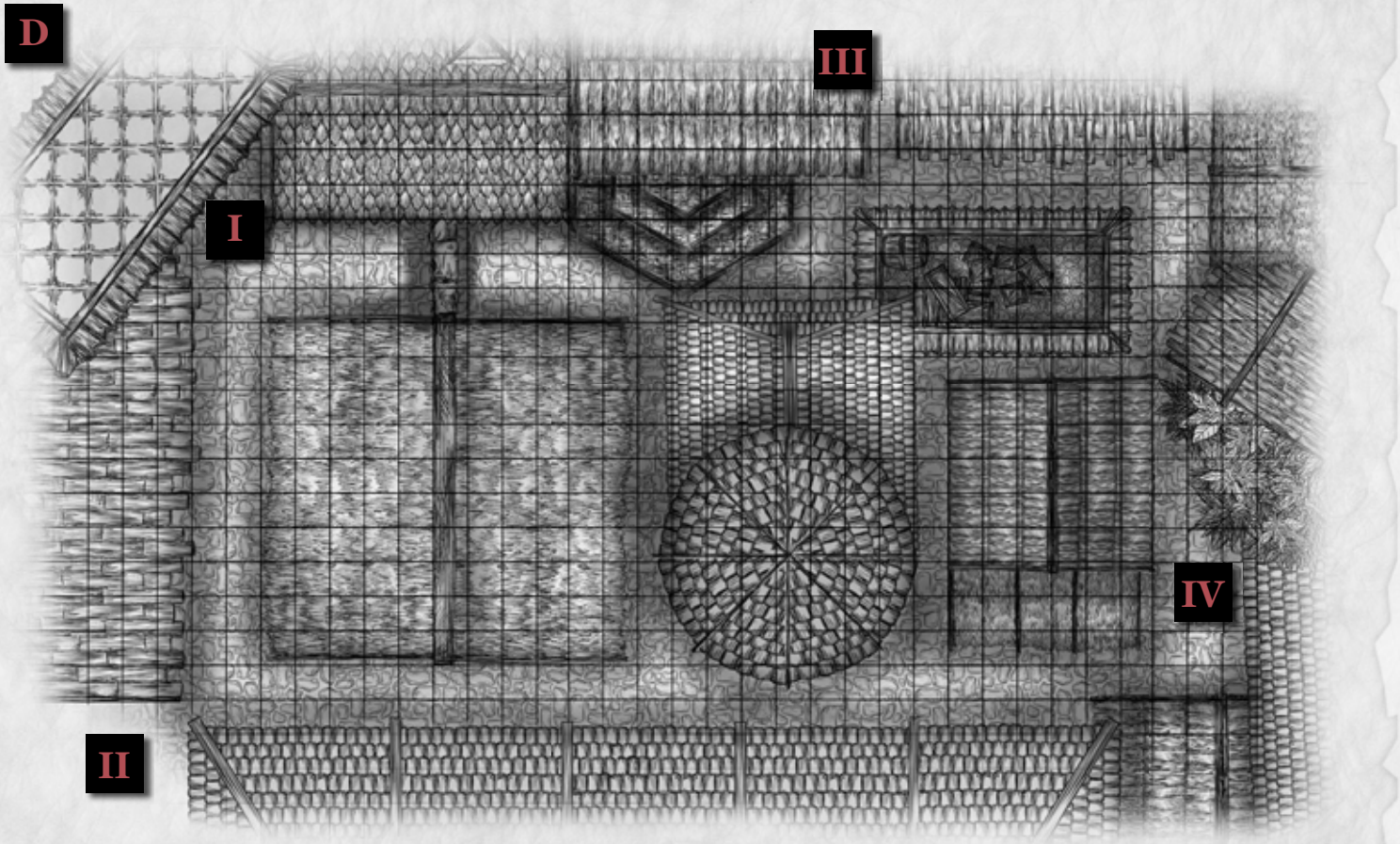


Urban Adventures

Variant Encounters (Optional)

Roll 1d12 to determine what the party might find themselves bumping into as they wander the alleys in this urban landscape.

1d12	The party ...
1	...sees a large draft horse named Buggeroff has escaped from his wagon and is having the best day of his life running from the 2d4 townsfolk attempting to capture him.
2	...feels like they're being watched. They aren't.
3	...comes across an elderly half-elven woman who asks politely for them to strangle her husband—the man standing right behind her nodding. A **hag** left him mute 173 years ago and they have recently discovered only the tight grip of two steady hands around his throat will end the curse.
4	...sees a group of 2d4 **acolytes** from the nearby temple collecting money for their god—but a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Religion) check reveals they're just talented charlatans in halfway decent costumes.
5	...notices a small, precocious and relentless boy named Angus following them wherever they go. Everywhere.
6	...sees 2d4 **rat swarms** spill out of a nearby sewer grate and wreak havoc, an omen suggesting something far more sinister may be lurking beneath the streets.
7	...meets an enterprising local artist (and powerful **mage**) who offers to sketch each member of the party for free. Each portrait locks a piece of the party member's soul within it—and they lose 20 percent of their maximum hit points—a fact they will not be aware of until the next dawn. This effect can be counteracted with the *remove curse* spell, or by destroying the portraits—which the artist will happily sell for 100gp each.
8	...meets a local baker who's realized his lifelong dream: to bake a bread loaf as big as a giant. Unfortunately it has been brought to life by dormant magic and is now trying to eat him.
9	...is approached by a man who fears his beloved, Abigail, has fallen down a well in the center of town. Abigail is a pig.
10	...hears a loud blast from the other end of the alley, as a group of 2d4 **goblin** thieves disguised as farmers have set off their "cow bomb" too early.
11	...is led by 3d4 dirty children toward a dark alleyway where a dead body features several stab wounds in its back. The children then produce blades and attack.
12	…finds a knight whose recent encounter with a black dragon has left his plate armor fused to his body and his helmet sealed shut pleading with a blacksmith for aid.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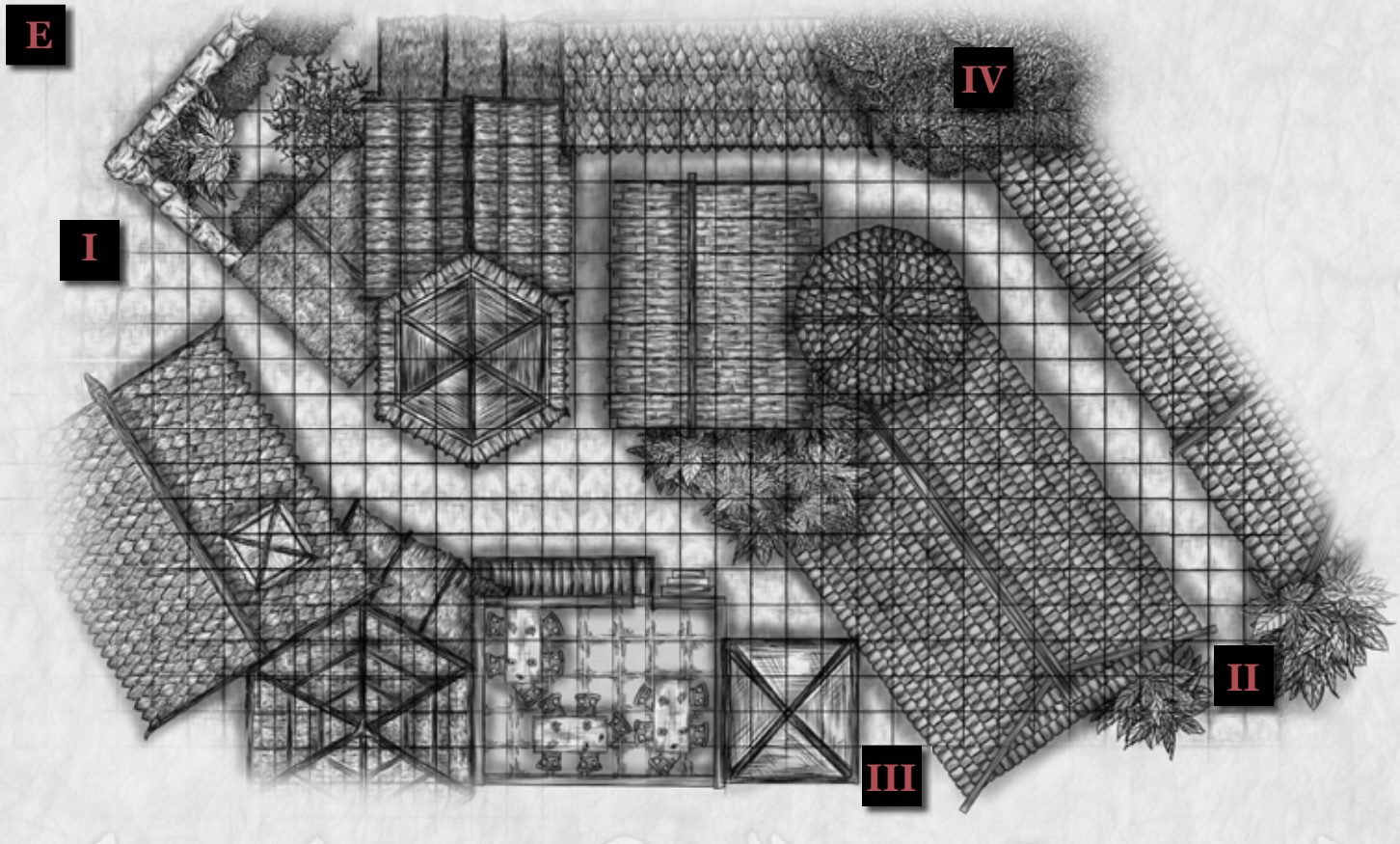
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Big City Problems

While some settlements in the realm are made up of only a few bold pioneers and their kin, larger towns and cities typically feature a populace to match. As any city-dweller can tell you, the more people you have the more personalities and problems your party will need to contend with. Additionally, the larger a population, the harder it is to rely on the kindness of others as a peacekeeping mechanism. Laws are put in place based on a community's particular circumstances and can vary drastically from one country (or township) to the next. The following tables can be useful for randomly establishing situations for larger populations your party may encounter as they carry on through their varied adventures.

Encounter Variant (Optional)
Laws and Customs

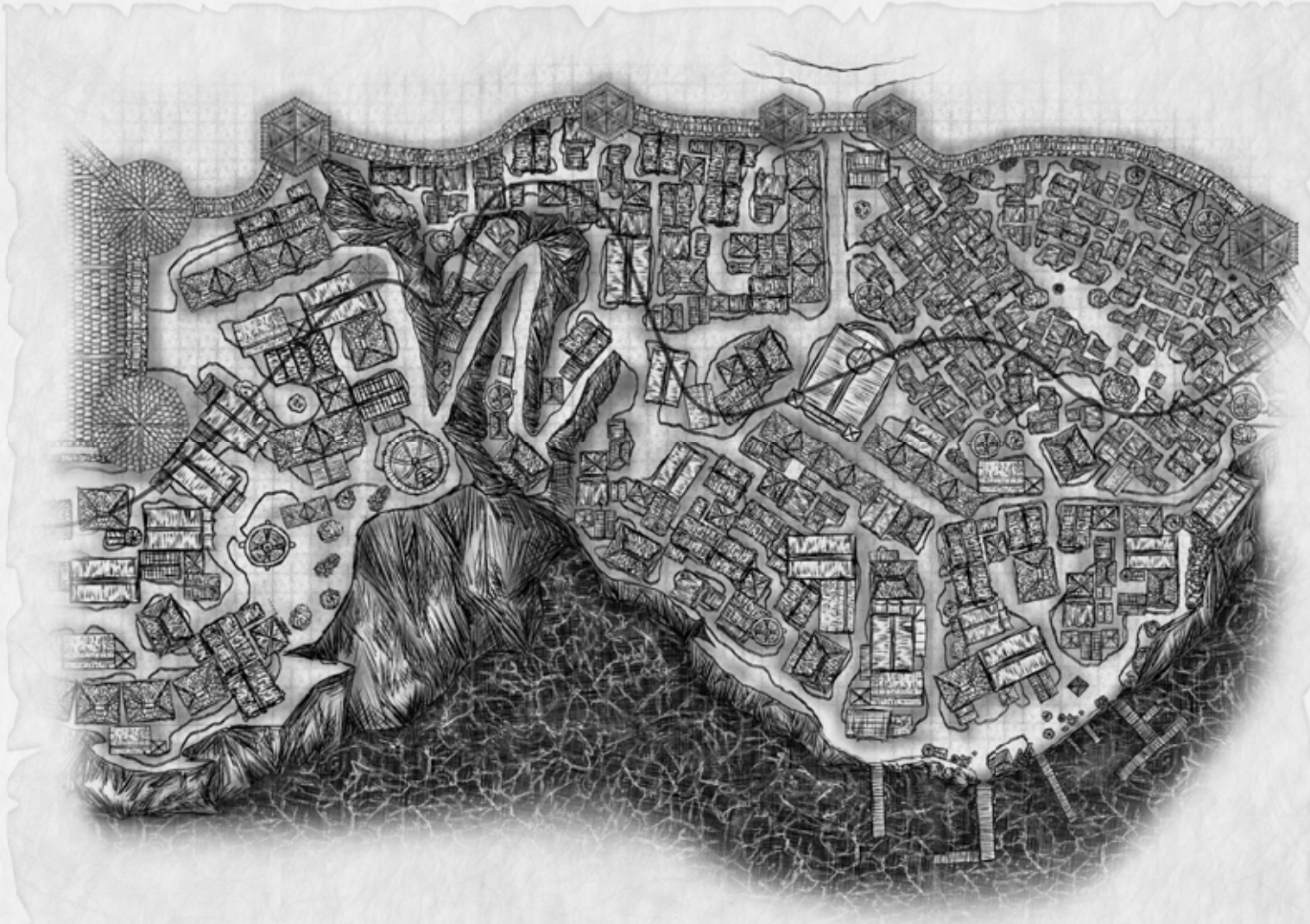
Local governments—whether monarchies, democracies, oligarchies, theocracies or military dictatorships—utilize laws as a means of protecting and/or controlling the populace, and various cultures develop entirely unspoken regulations for proper conduct as they evolve. When encountering a new town, roll 1d10 on the table below to determine which laws and customs are in place there.

1d10	Within the city limits...
1	...the use of gold has been replaced with the barter system. Gold coin is worthless here.
2	...all overt religious practices have been outlawed. Preaching, prosthelytizing or engaging with a deity in any way in public is punishable by up to 100 days imprisonment.
3	...the use of magic is strictly forbidden and carries the penalty of death.
4	...making eye contact with those above your social station is an egregious offense, and those who are caught "eyes up" will be flogged in the town square. Repeat offenders will have one eye removed.
5	...only the city guard may openly carry weaponry, and the populace is routinely searched to ensure citizens' safety.
6	...any conversation must begin with an acknowledgement of the benevolence and/or strength of the area's reigning authority (example: "May King Odion's grace shine upon you this morning—can I have 2 ales?"; "The Duchess, long may she reign, allows me to ask, 'How you would like your eggs?'").
7	...books of all kinds have been banned. Anyone caught with a book, including spell books of all types, will be forced to watch as it is set ablaze.
8	...all of the buildings' walls are made of a transparent material, and privacy is effectively non-existent.
9	...it is illegal to walk the streets after sundown, and anyone caught out of doors after curfew will be apprehended and thrown in the stocks for a tenday.
10	...numerous laws are in effect. Roll 1d4 times on this table, rerolling all 10s. If the same law is rolled more than once, the punishment associated with it is extremely severe (death or worse) and strictly enforced.

Variant Encounter (Optional)
Large Crowds

Whether to protest, celebrate or properly panic, a big city can occasionally be overrun with its own populace. Moving through a crowd is rarely easy, and doing so is always slow-going. An area filled with a crowd is difficult terrain, and can also be dangerous depending on the crowd's particular mood. Roll 1d10 on the table below to see what has the city dwellers' gathering en masse.

1d10	The crowd...
1	...is celebrating the birth of a future king/queen with a city-wide dance party.
2	...has organized a peaceful march to protest a recent economic downturn.
3	...is participating in a solemn religious ceremony following the death of a beloved town elder.
4	...is violently rioting in the streets following an act of villainy perpetrated by a noble on one of the city's lower-class citizens.
5	...is engaged in a full-blown uprising against the ruling class.
6	...is panicked over news that a dragon is on its way to raze the town to cinders.
7	...is in the midst of a weeks-long festival building toward the upcoming solstice.
8	...is steeling itself for battle as warning horns indicating that the city has been infiltrated continue to blow.
9	...is trying to raise awareness about the disease that's been ravaging their town—and likely making things worse by being so close to one another.
10	...is clamoring to greet the adventurers, as news of their exploits has traveled fast.



Encounter Variant (Optional)

The Invisible Stalker

Using the Harpy's Passage is always a risk. Savvy runners always travel with a partner on the Passage, and conventional wisdom among those in the know is to get back down to ground level as soon as you can. People fall from the Harpy's Passage on their own, but that doesn't explain the long, bloody wounds carved into some of the bodies that have fallen. Waiting at the highest point in the city, watching for signs of movement, an **invisible stalker** floats at the ready should any dare to tread this path. A local thief must have truly wronged a wizard to have this punishment inflicted upon the entire guild, but the invisible stalker doesn't care why it was originally set to this duty. It only knows it must kill anyone running the Passage, and it pursues its prey with abandon. If you elect to place the invisible stalker in play, roll 1d6 to determine how many turns your players have before they're spotted by the stalker, which will pursue them aggressively and use its actions to shove them off course in a contested grapple check.

The Harpy's Passage

> "It's not the fall that kills you—it's the thing that pushes you when you're not paying attention."
>
> —Grace "The Mouse" Gallow, pickpocket extraordinaire

A makeshift highway across the city's rooftops used by thieves and vagabonds, in many cases at their peril. If incorporating it into your cityscape, pick two points on opposite sides of the city. The Passage links those points (example at left), though it can be used for smaller jaunts between them.

A High-Altitude Highway

A makeshift course of rope swings, plank bridges and carefully selected rooftops that allows a nimble body to make swift progress across the city, the Harpy's Passage is known to most thieves, burglars and second-story operators in the city, though most avoid it. It can be used to get from one end of the city to the other in a fraction of the time, if you're willing to take the risk. Successful travel along the route is at twice the speed of running through the crowds and twisted streets of the city. Each character running the Passage must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to run the Passage for every 100 ft. of travel. An unsuccessful roll sees the character fumble and slow their pace, moving slower than they would on foot. If they fail the roll by more than 5 then the character falls, with the height they fall from being dependent on DM discretion.

Common Rooftop Hazards

Mind the gap

Jumping from one building to another requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to make the distance, as well as a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stick the landing. Failures on either check lead to a fall and 2d8 bludgeoning damage at GM discretion.

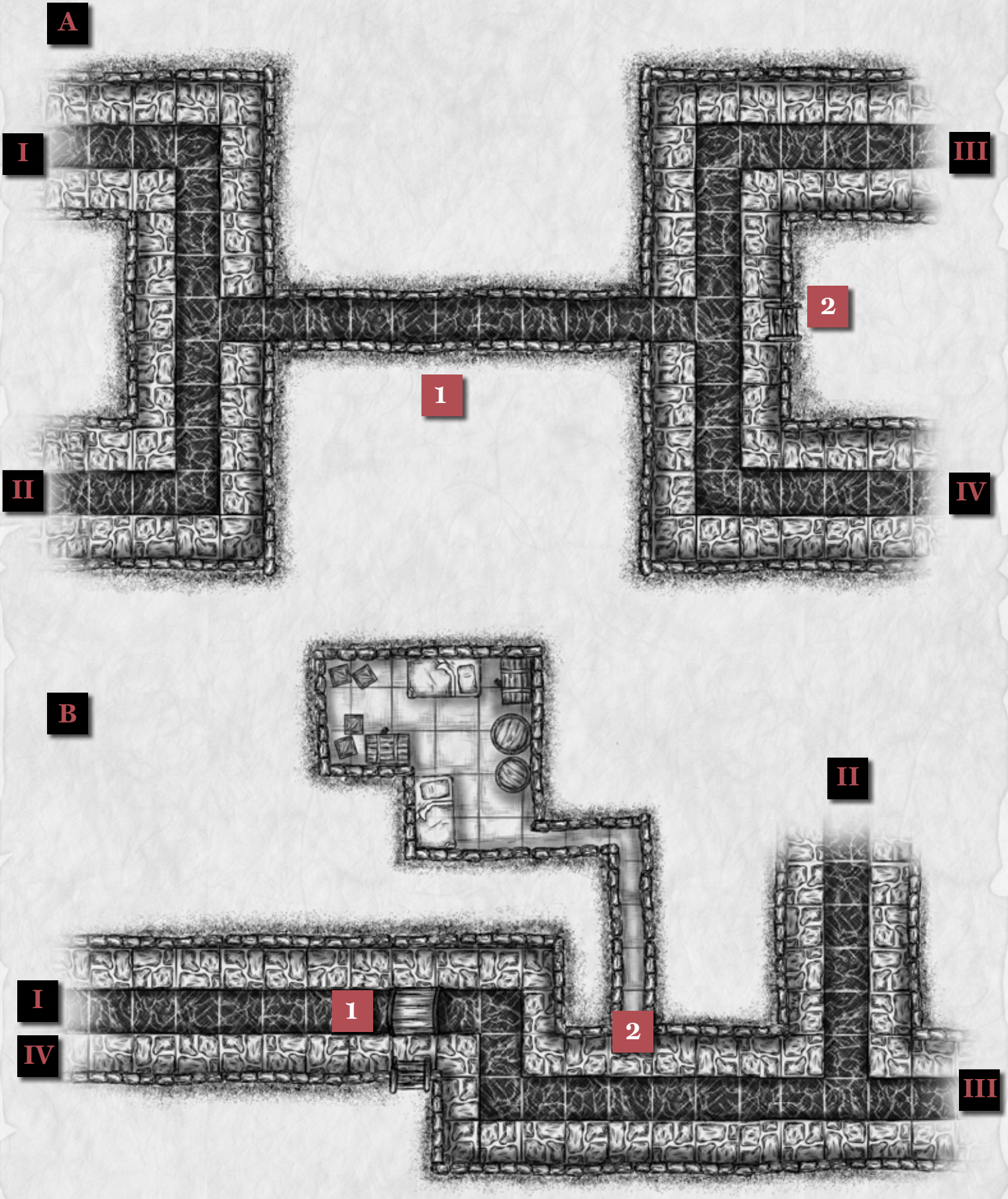
Tread lightly

Running along a rooftop is precarious at best and deadly more often than not. For each character traversing the rooftop, roll on the Obstacles Along the Way table to determine what they'll need to avoid. Because roof-walking requires a light and dexterous step, characters in heavy armor roll at disadvantage on any save related to these hazards.

Variant Encounter (Optional)
Obstacles Along the Way

Roll 1d6 to determine what obstacles might stand in the way of a successful run along the Harpy's Passage.

1d6	The party encounters...
1	...a couple of halfling teenagers lurking on the street below, who hurl pebbles, coins and other small items at runners as they pass. Make 1d4 attack rolls (with a +1 to hit). For each attack that misses, the DC of the roll to stay on the path increases by 1. For each attack that hits, the DC increases by 2.
2	...the smell of incense hanging like a cloud around a temple's rooftops. The runners race forward, feeling like they can sense the priests' prayers and hymns lifting them up, urging them onward. It takes a few moments to realize something in the smoke is affecting their judgement. Characters must pass a DC 12 Constitution check or suffer Disadvantage on their next roll to maintain their balance.
3	...the route marked on passing chimneys with red-painted wings. But soon it's clear the chimneys are marked with more red than normal. Crimson handprints lead the way to a badly mangled body, blood bubbling at their lips as they draw their final breath. Of the killer, there is no sign.
4	...the city's great bell tower strikes the hour, just as the runners race along a rickety walkway installed between the flying buttresses. An irritated snarl is the only warning they get before the **gargoyle** at the top of the buttress lunges down toward them.
5	...a portion of the passage that's collapsed due to a small fire from the kitchens below. A 15-ft. jump across to the next roof is required, unless players have other means of crossing the chasm.
6	...a murder of crows rises from alongside the pathway and flutters swiftly in front of the characters in transit. Each character must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) saving throw or lose their balance and fall to the ground below.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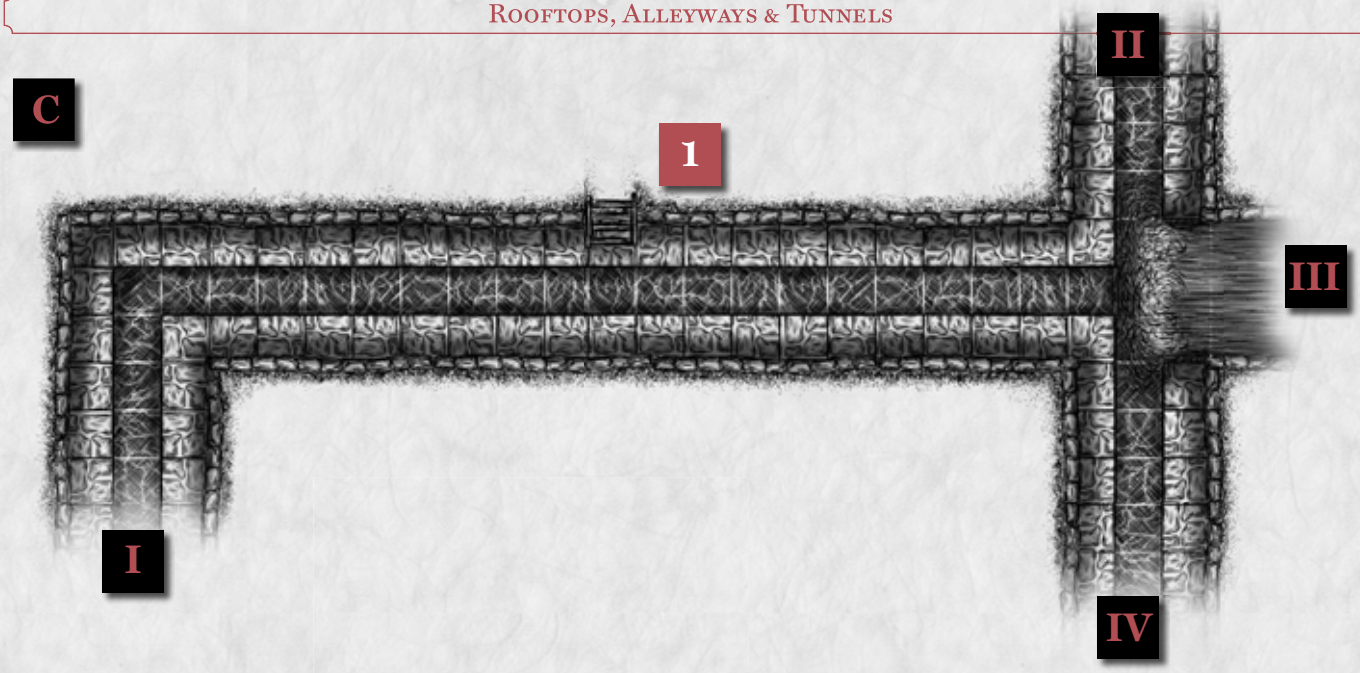


Tunnels and Cave Systems

A labyrinthine network of subterranean passageways is common in urban environments and can offer plenty of opportunities for your party to get their hands dirty—and not just because they'll likely be slogging through a sewer. While some tunnels lead to the sea, others lead to complex caverns and the pitch-black caves of this realm. Whether trying to sneak into a city or covertly make an escape, underground tunnels offer the benefit of inconspicuous travel, though they are just as likely to be overrun by any number of horrors far worse than those lurking on the surface and should therefore be used with caution. The tunnels on these pages are meant to interconnect at random by rolling on the Random Tunnel table, and feature ladders, hidden doors, narrow passageways and other elements allowing for access to areas above ground. Roll on the Random Location Generator (pg. 3) to determine where your party ends up, or choose a location at GM discretion. For extra shenanigans, roll 1d6. On an odd number the party emerges on a street outside the selected location. On an even number, they crawl up through the floor wtihin it.

Tunnel A

As liquid flows on either side of the landings here, a narrow, 5-ft. passageway becomes a bit of a chokepoint ***(1)***, forcing creatures to slog through a hazard that's waist-deep in a single file line in order to get from one side to the other. There is a somewhat obscured ladder that can be seen with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check that allows for access to the world above ***(2)***.

Tunnel B

This tunnel features a small bridge that allows for easier passage from one platform to the other ***(1)***. An entrance obscured by darkness and rot leads to a small alcove which serves as a living quarters or stopover space for at least one humanoid creature—at GM discretion ***(2)***.

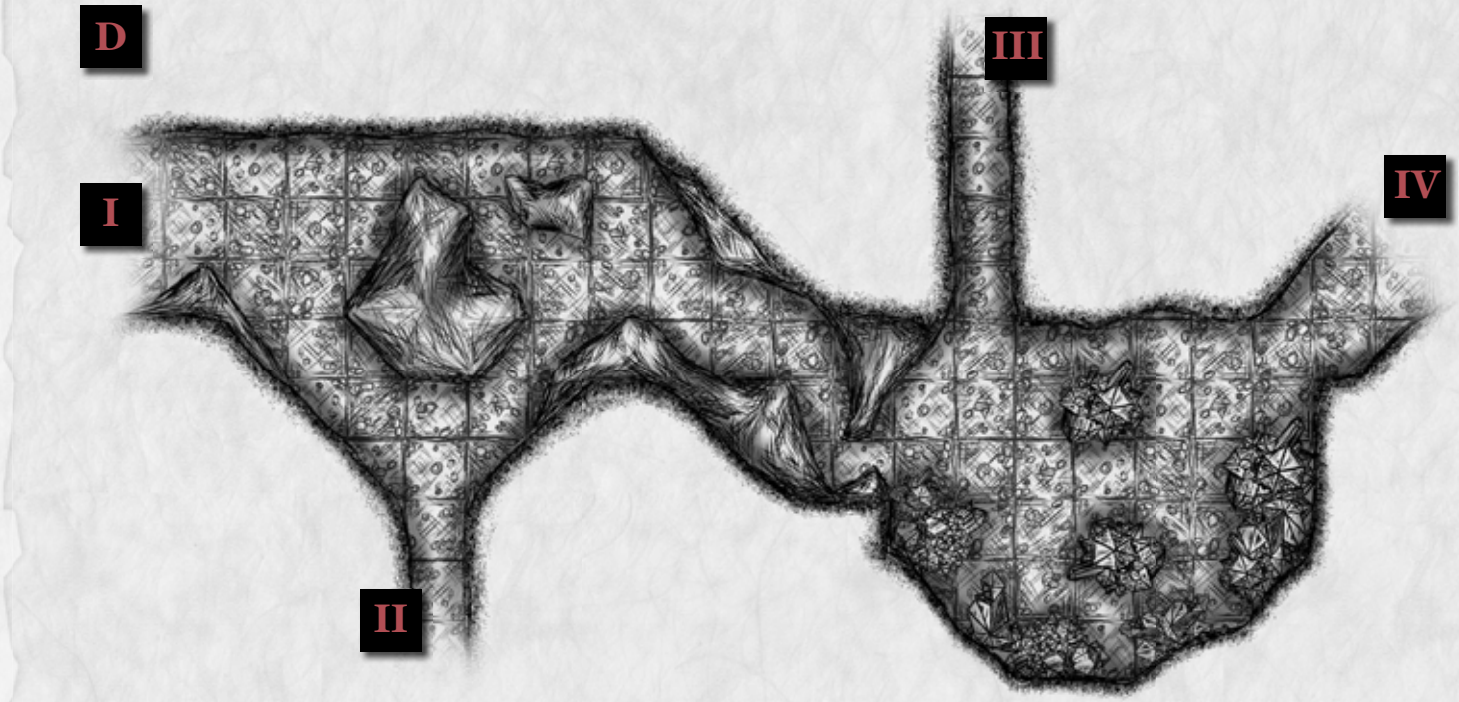
Tunnel C

This tunnel features a small ladder that leads to the surface ***(1)***, as well as a roaring outflow that causes the liquid filling this tunnel to rush at a far more rapid pace than it does elsewhere, requiring a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to wade forward through.

Random Tunnel Table

Roll 1d10 on the table below to determine the tunnel your players are traversing through, then roll 1d4 to reveal which point of entry they'll start from by matching the number rolled to its corresponding Roman numeral.

1d10	Map	Page
1	A	pg. 228
2	B	pg. 228
3	C	pg. 229
4	D	pg. 230
5	E	pg. 230
6	F	pg. 231
7	G	pg. 232
8	H	pg. 232
9	I	pg. 234
10	Roll again	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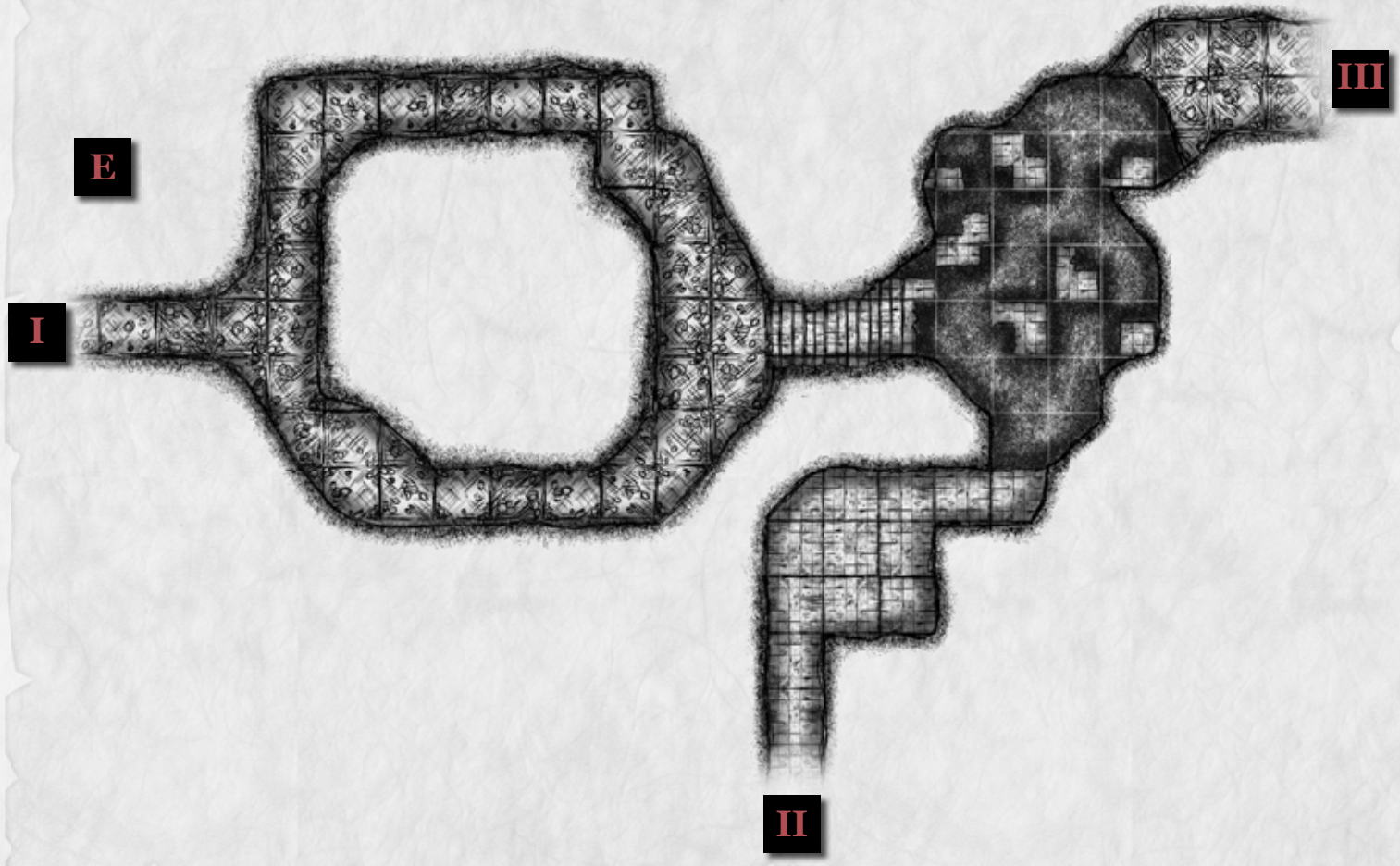
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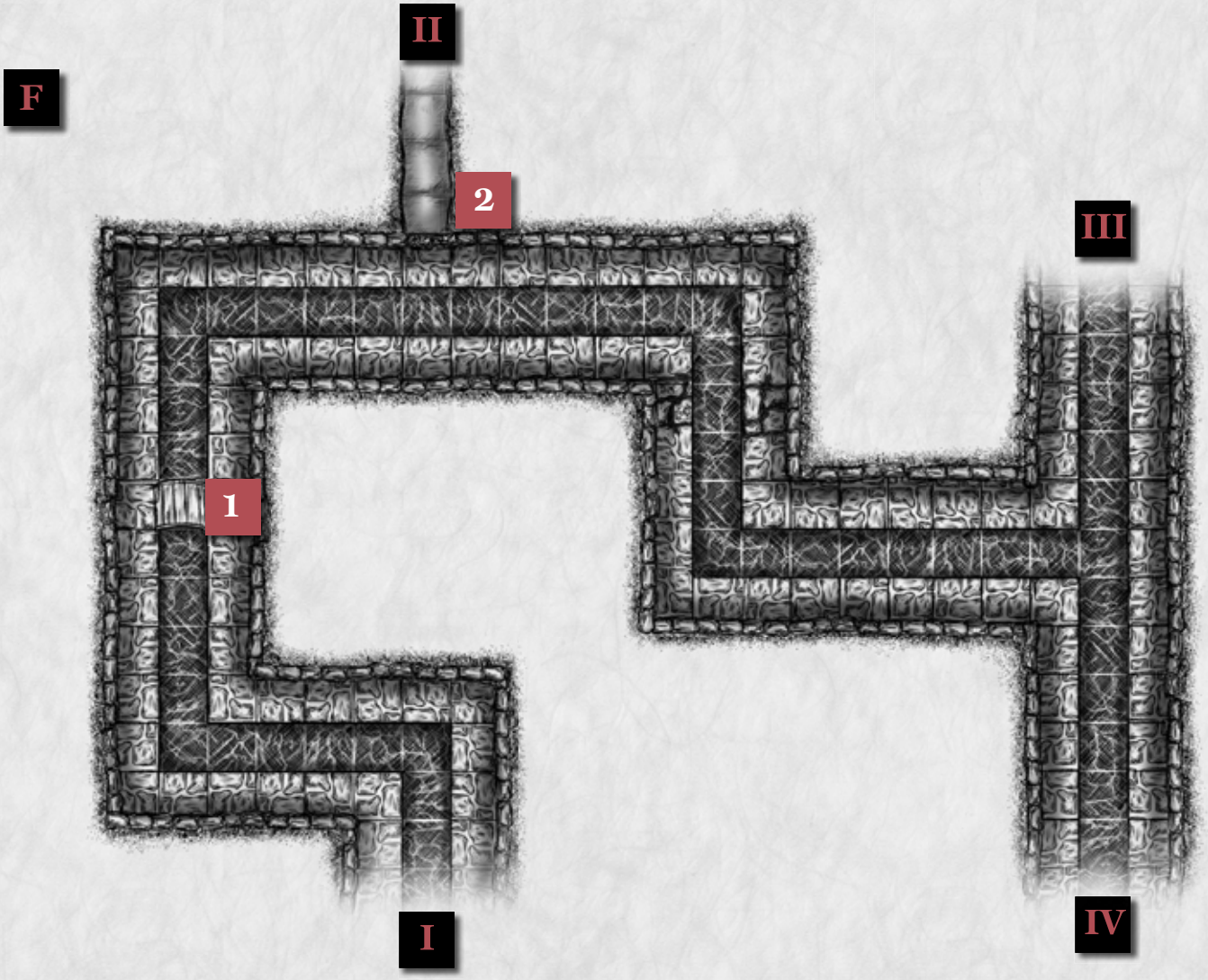

Tunnel D

This tunnel is more like an underground slot canyon, with craggy rocks and crystalline forms jutting into the path at numerous points from one end to the other.

Tunnel E

A split tunnel with a massive drop off into a deep ravine at its confluence, this tunnel will require feats of strength or other creative solutions to navigate with the entire party intact.

Tunnel F

This tunnel features a small bridge ***(1)*** as well as a hidden pipe exit ***(2)*** that leads to higher or lower ground at GM discretion and can be discovered with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Variant Encounter (Optional)

Roll 1d6 to determine what dangers lurk within the cramped quarters of these tunnels and caves.

1d6	The party runs into…
1	…1d4 **goblins** on a scouting mission.
2	…1d4 **drow warriors** planning an above-ground assault.
3	…1d4 **crocodiles**, one that attacks with surprise.
4	…2d4 **insect swarms**.
5	…1d4 **will-o'-wisps** glowing along the farthest walls.
6	…a territorial **mage** who's taken up residence underground.

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Encounter Variant (Optional) Environmental Factors

There are several mitigating factors that help determine the look and feel of an underground area, and the tunnels and cave systems presented here are no exception. Whether they are dusty and dry, muggy and humid or frozen on all sides, a tunnel or cave system's climate can have long-lasting effects on a band of intrepid explorers. Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine the environment of the area your party is planning to explore.

1d6	This tunnel/cave system is...
1	**...extremely hot.** Whether due to proximity to an active volcano or because there's no ventilation, these tunnels are stifling and incredibly warm. Players traveling in this system must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1 point of exhaustion. This save must be made after every long rest while in the system.
2	**...frozen solid.** Ice covers every surface in this system and makes movement in the area difficult terrain. Any creature attempting to dash must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, slipping and falling on a failed save.
3	**...clouded with dust.** Within the entire system hangs a dense, swirling cloud of particulate matter that makes it difficult to see and breathe. Visibility is reduced to 15 ft. and each creature attempting a skill check in these tunnels must first succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save they make the check at disadvantage as they suffer a sudden coughing fit from the dust entering their lungs.
4	**...slick with acid.** Every surface in this space is covered in a thin layer of corrosive liquid that will damage most anything that comes into contact with it. Boots and any other material in contact with the ground will begin to dissolve in 1d4 hours. Any humanoid creatures that come into contact with the walls are subject to 1d6 acid damage, and any objects—including weapons, armor and magical items—will corrode into useless bits of junk if they make contact with the walls more than 1d6 times.
5	**...dense with muck.** The walls and ground in this system are caked with a thick, paste-like mud that makes movement an absolute slog. The ground is difficult terrain and standing up from prone takes a full action and a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. A similar check, with a DC 15, is required if a player comes into forceful contact with one of the walls (as in a shove) or at GM discretion.
6	**...flooded.** The entire tunnel is filled with 3d6 ft. of water, a number that can change at GM discretion for every new tunnel the party explores. The ceilings in these chambers are rarely higher than 10 ft.

Encounter Variant (optional) What Flows Below

These tunnels don't need to be filled with the flow of groundwater. They could contain a steady stream of raw sewage, molten rock or a particularly large and sentient ooze. For more variety as you play, roll on the table below to determine what's flowing underground.

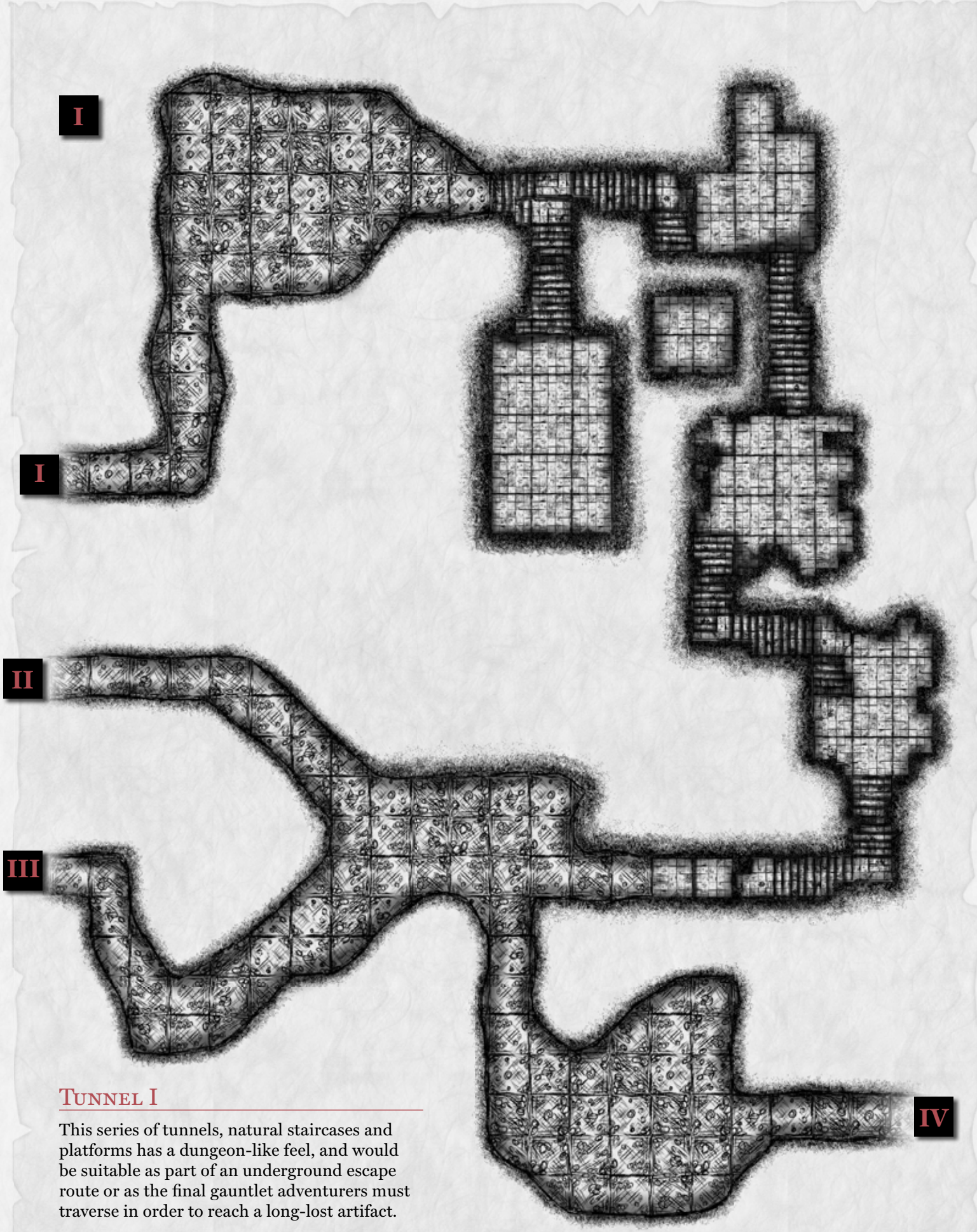
1d10	The liquid is...
1-5	**...mostly ground water.** Drinking it is ill-advised, and anyone who chooses to consume water from this source suffers 1d6 poison damage on a failed DC 10 Constitution saving throw.
6-7	**...raw sewage.** Creatures must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all attack rolls and skill checks as long as they remain in the tunnels, overwhelmed by stench.
8	**...molten rock.** Lava flows in these tunnels and caves and will scorch any flesh that comes near.
9	**...acidic.** There's something corrosive in this liquid, causing skin to burn and metallic armor and weaponry to rust. Creatures are subject to 1d6 acid damage if they end their turn in this liquid. Any material made of metal exposed to the acid loses 1 point of its efficacy for every 6 seconds it spends in the acid.
10	**...alive.** The liquid flowing through this space is a sentient ooze that can choose to attack at any time, attempting to grapple (+7) and devour anything it can get its goo onto.

Tunnel G

This cave system features an open chamber ***(1)*** with a deep pool in the center ***(2)***, connected to a smaller area through which a mighty channel of water (or other liquid, as specified using the What Flows Below table above) flows ***(3)***. The pool is connected underneath the ground to the river in the second chamber.

Tunnel H

This system features a wide plateau ***(1)*** overlooking a flowing river ***(2)***. The sheer drop off to a smaller natural platform below ***(3)*** is 40 ft. The drop off from that platform to the river is another 40 ft. A small trail from the middle of this lower platform leads to a narrow slit in the rocks by the river—the perfect spot for a creature that despises the daylight to build a nest or burrow ***(4)***.



Tunnel I

This series of tunnels, natural staircases and platforms has a dungeon-like feel, and would be suitable as part of an underground escape route or as the final gauntlet adventurers must traverse in order to reach a long-lost artifact.

Unnatural Hazards

The dangers of traveling through tunnels and cave systems are not limited to environmental hazards. Intelligent creatures will often leverage the close confines and choke points created by their subterranean circumstances as part of a larger hunting or defense strategy. Traps abound underground, and a keen eye and nimble fingers are often the only things that can save a party from grave injury or an early grave. The traps on the table below are exemplative of the sort that one could reasonably expect to find underground and can be placed in any of the maps within this section, or as part of a larger campaign at GM discretion.

Variant Encounter (Optional) Dangerous Traps

Roll 1d12 to determine what peril might have been placed in the adventurers' path.

1d12	The trap set is...
1	**...a small trip wire connected to a series of rudimentary crossbows.** Each creature within 5 ft. of the trigger must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or suffer 4d6 piercing damage, taking half as much damage on a success.
2	**...a well-disguised 15-ft. pit that collapses under weighted contact.** Each creature within 5 ft. of the center of the trap's trigger must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 2d6 bludgeoning damage and 4d6 piercing damage on a failed save as they fall 20 ft. onto the spikes below.
3	**...a twig that, once snapped, unleashes a rockslide along the side of the tunnel.** Each creature within 15 ft. of the trigger must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 bludgeoning damage and are blinded and restrained as rocks and earth shift on top of them.
4	**...a thin bit of ivy is actually a rope trigger connected to a spiked log that swings toward the party.** Each creature within 5 ft. of the trigger must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 2d6 bludgeoning and 3d6 piercing damage as the log swings into them.
5	**...a series of pressure plates covered in mud release an airborne poison.** Each creature within 15 ft. of the trigger must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save they are poisoned and take 4d6 poison damage as the toxin enters their lungs.
6	**...a tiny bell.** Once triggered, it alerts the trained 1d4 **basilisks** beneath this path to claw upward and attack.
7	**...a few rays of light.** When passed through by any creature, they release a gout of radiant flame, dealing 2d6 radiant damage. There is no save.
8	**...a log blocking the path.** When unsettled, it triggers a rockfall from above. Each creature within 10 ft. of the log must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 5d6 bludgeoning damage, taking half as much damage on a success, as boulders drop down on them from above.
9	**...plants dangling overhead for the length of this tunnel.** All are poisonous, and when making contact with them, each creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or lose 2d4 off their max hit points as the plants suckle off bits of their life force. This effect is considered a disease, and can be reversed through a spell such as *lesser restoration*.
10	**...a series of 5d6 spears.** They point in all directions from one side of the path to the other, blocking the way forward. Moving one spear causes another to stab outward, and the creature touching the spear must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid 1d6 + 5 piercing damage.
11	**...a few medium-sized eggs.** They are hidden under rocks and leaves along the path. Once crushed, these eggs emit dangerous spores, as outlined in the death burst of a **gas spore**.
12	**...a massive boulder blocking the path.** It is covering a tinker trap that releases hundreds of stunning darts. If the boulder is moved without holding down the trap's trigger plate, every creature within 20 ft. of the boulder must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution save or be paralyzed for 1 minute as a neurotoxin in the darts takes hold.

Hidden Traps

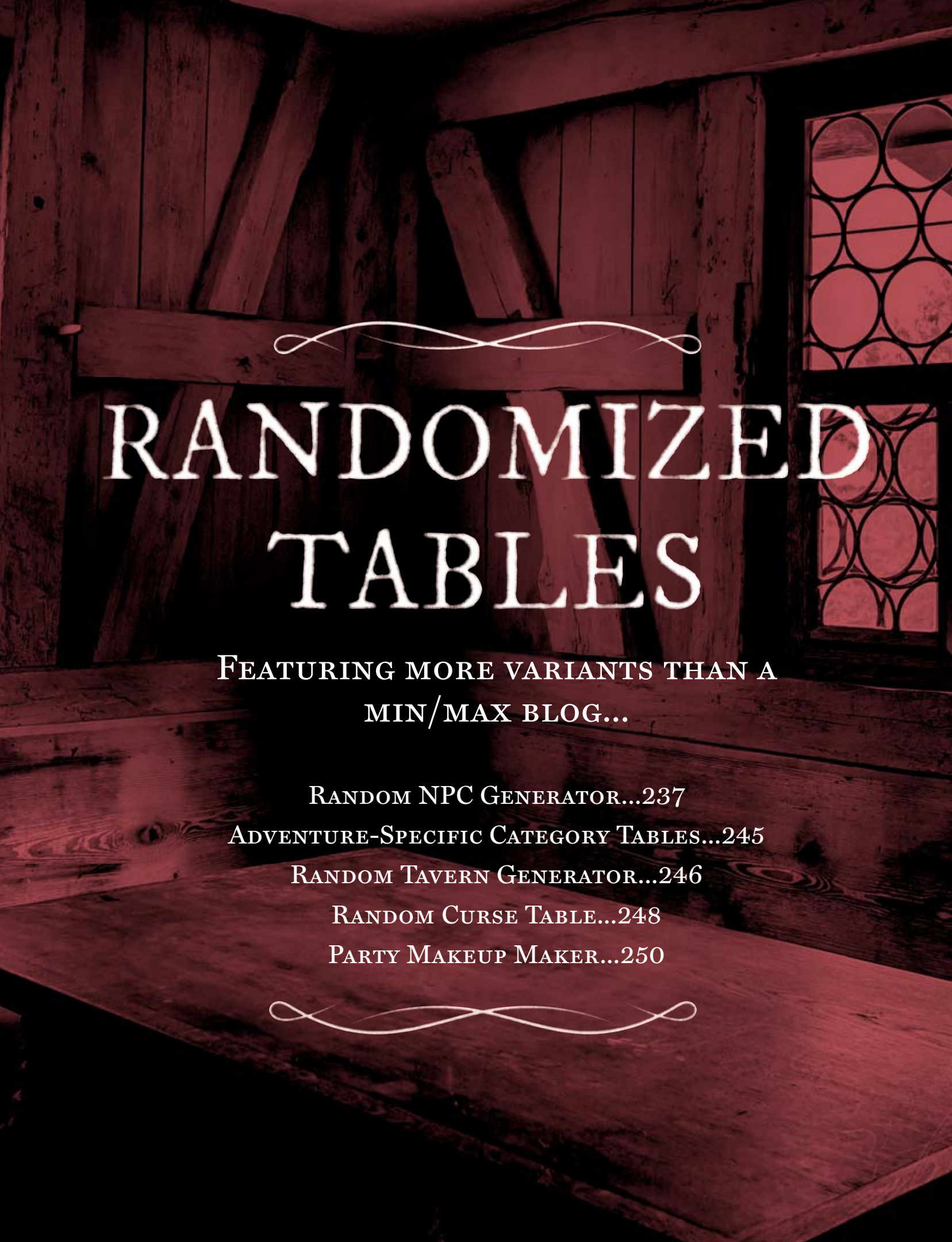
Roll 1d4 on the table below to determine how tough these traps are to see, or establish Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) DCs at GM discretion.

1d4	These traps are...
1	...DC 14
2	...DC 17
3	...DC 20
4	...DC 23

Disarming Traps

Finding a trap is one thing. Disarming it is another. Roll 1d4 on the table below to establish the DC for disabling the traps encountered by the party.

1d4	These traps are...
1	...DC 14
2	...DC 17
3	...DC 20
4	...DC 23



RANDOMIZED TABLES

Featuring more variants than a min/max blog...

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Party Makeup Maker...250

Random NPC Generator

For when your party needs a person, pronto.

These roll tables are meant to serve as a guide for creating intriguing and memorable characters on the fly. You can use them to flesh out an NPC you've already developed, or to breathe life and some stakes into a standardized shopkeeper or tavern owner. These characters should use commoner stats at GM discretion. Once you've combined the elements from each table you'll have a name, a basic description as well as motivations and possible secrets or pitfalls they might bring to the table as they interact with your players. Most of the entries are somewhat vague, but have a specificity that will start to clarify itself once paired up with other table entries. As an example, the description below was created using some of the tables provided.

A male half-elf with flowing blond hair, a tall and thin build, a wide smile and a fashionable mole who hasn't slept in eight days and is in too deep with a local crime boss.

This character (let's call him Mandalf) is likely losing sleep because he is having trouble with the local crime boss. But that doesn't mean you couldn't be inspired by other details in the context of the description. Perhaps that large mole on Mandalf's face is keeping him up at night, whispering dark words and corrupting his thoughts. It's possible the reason Mandalf is growing out his hair is to sell it to the local crime boss. Or maybe Mandalf is super slim because he isn't getting any sleep—maybe he's just really stressed? Is he stressed about the crime boss? Or his mole? These aren't questions these tables will answer. But hopefully they are worth exploring at your table as you bring each new creation to life.

If you roll a different character and find through the magic of dice rolls that they are eerily similar to another NPC your party has encountered, try rolling one or two details again to break things up. Things would change quite a bit for Mandalf if instead of having a tall and thin build and crime boss troubles he was instead described as follows:

A male half-elf with flowing blond hair, a tall and ripped build, a wide smile and fashionable mole, who hasn't slept in eight days and is also a lycanthrope.

In this scenario it's likely the reason Mandalf hasn't been sleeping is because he's been howling at the moon. Though it could still be the evil mole. The choice is yours.

Finally, there are trillions of possible permutations using the following tables in tandem with one another, so if any of the characters generated using these tables resemble real-life individuals take it as a testament to the fact that there are billions of people in the real world (as opposed to a signal that I have been following you around taking notes on your family and friends).

Race

Depending on your campaign setting you may determine that non-human or non-dwarven or non-dragonborn races are incredibly rare. If something like the above situation is true for your world, feel free to augment the roll generated by the table below to bring it in line with your adventure setting.

1d10	This character is...
1	...a dwarf.
2	...a halfling.
3	...a dragonborn.
4	...a human.
5	...a half-elf.
6	...a tiefling.
7	...a half-orc.
8	...an elf.
9	...a monstrous race.
10	Roll again

Preferred Pronouns (Optional)

Most people in your world are likely to ascribe to a common gender binary, but that shouldn't stop you from mixing it up and bringing diversity to your lands by rolling on the table below. After all, gender is a social construct. It can inform and be a vital part of a person's identity or be non-consequential relative to how they conduct themselves. This statement is also applicable to a character's sexuality, for which there is no roll table (maybe it comes up, maybe it doesn't). The Preferred Pronouns table is meant to guide you in creating realistic and unique NPCs. As always, your world is as diverse as you wish to make it.

1d6	This character uses...
1	she/her/hers
2	he/him/his
3	they/them/theirs
4	she/her/hers (transgender)
5	he/him/his (transgender)
6	no pronouns, only a name

Age and Intelligence (Optional)

In general, most of the characters your party is likely to encounter will be middle-aged and of average intelligence. But that shouldn't stop you from rolling 2d6s to fill the realm with whip-smart 9-year-old barkeeps.

1d6	Age
1	A child
2	A teen
3	A young adult
4	An adult
5	Elderly
6	Extremely old

1d6	Intelligence
1	Dumb as dirt
2	Average, which ain't great
3	Street smart, not book smart
4	Book smart, not street smart
5	Book and street smart
6	Smarter than everyone

Hair and Build

Roll a couple dice to determine this NPCs hairstyle and build, relative to the character's overall appearance. NOTE: If the race you've randomly rolled would lack hair, feel free to skip this table or push ahead and consider it a compelling part of their backstory by asking questions such as "why is this dragonborn a towhead?"

1d12	Hair
1	Short dark/black hair
2	Short blond(e)/white hair
3	Short red hair
4	Shoulder-length dark/black hair
5	Shoulder-length blond(e) hair
6	Shoulder-length red hair
7	Flowing blond(e)/white hair
8	Flowing dark/black hair
9	Flowing red hair
10	Colorful hair (green/purple/blue/etc), with length at GM discretion
11	Bald
12	Wigged (roll again for description)

1d10	Build
1	Tall and lean
2	Tall and ripped
3	Tall and rotund
4	Medium height and build
5	Medium height and slim
6	Medium height and out of shape
7	Short and thin
8	Short and sturdy
9	Short and stout
10	Sickly (roll again for build)

Who is this person, really?

At the end of the day, as complex as all of us are, most of the things that define who we are to other people are pretty straightforward: "He's my boss and he needs me to raise money for his charity."; "She's my ex-landlord and she's invited me to come to her open mic."; "He's my sister's best friend and I'm pretty sure he wants to harvest my organs." NPCs in your fantasy world are no different. Yes, they have lives of their own, but most of the time all your party really cares about is what they're selling or if they have directions to the nearby abandoned temple. But just because they're effectively extras in your party's ongoing saga doesn't mean they don't have wants, needs and secrets of their own.

The next few pages of tables are meant to help you establish a few defining characteristics for random NPCs your party might encounter. For those times when you're in a pinch and need a name and description in a flash you can go the fast route and roll 1d100 to establish one line of information across all the columns on this table. Alternatively, for a more unpredictable experience, roll 6d100 for a completely randomized character, using the appropriate line per column based on your rolls. As always, feel free to augment elements of the result so they feel more organic to the world you've created, or lean into the chaos and see where it leads your party.

After all, that's why you roll the dice...

Names, Descriptions and Deeper Desires

Roll 1d100 or 6d100 at GM discretion to define a character's first and last name, a brief description, their wants and needs, a secret they carry or obstacle in the way of their success as well as the items on their person.

1d100	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants and Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Aer	Merigu	...with shaggy hair and a slight overbite...	...who could really use a hug...	...and has sticky fingers.	2gp, 5sp, 14cp. Beltknife, scyth, bundle of wheat.
2	Ali	Mishala	...with deep-set eyes and an upturned nose...	...who could use a bath...	...and is an utter coward.	Empty moneypouch. A silver broach in the shape of a rabbit.
3	Archer	Mogumir	...with a wide smile and a fashionable mole...	...who literally and figuratively has no sense of direction...	...and doesn't speak Common.	1sp, 8cp. Small bag of butterfly wings. Pouch of herbs and a pipe.
4	Azar	Neriyra	...with a steady gaze and pursed lips...	...who is begging for help to find their **gnoll**-nabbed dad...	...and is tracking the party's movements for the spy's guild.	1gp, 15cp. A novel titled *Through the Weave*. One packet of beans.
5	Brook	Nialinva	...with a deep facial scar and a gruff exterior...	...who is compelled to smell everyone they meet...	...and cannot walk on their own.	Nothing, and proud of it.
6	Briar	Neeves	...with a pug nose and lots of freckles...	...who just needs a ride into/out of town...	...and is plagued by a Curse (on pg. 248).	2sp, 17cp. A wooden cup they carved themselves.
7	Balin	Noosecatcher	...with a round face and rosy cheeks...	...who thinks they're possessed by a vengeful warrior...	...and has lost the will to live.	73cp painted to look like 73pp. A small jar of platinum paint.
8	Berieve	Oakfury	...with a few hairs springing out of a wart on their face...	...who needs a cure for their incessant hiccups...	...and can't control the volume of their voice.	32cp, 13sp. A hoop and stick.
9	Carmen	Ootati	...with a heavy limp and a can-do attitude...	...who has developed a taste for human flesh...	...and is in deep with a local crime boss.	15sp. A necklace that contains a ball of yak hair.
10	Chidi	Oldfur	...with a kind face and a slow drawl...	...who is just trying to get through the day, man...	...and is never wrong. Just ask them.	21cp, 2sp, 3gp. An incredibly smooth rock they enjoy thumbing.
11	Chardane	Orgulas	...with shifting eyes and a hushed voice...	...who knows of a nearby cave filled with treasure...	...and is always in a hurry.	3sp, 8gp. A jar full of beef tallow. A crude map of the region.
12	Cyrille	Polaan	...with a few missing teeth and a hungry gaze...	...who hasn't slept in eight days...	...and gets distracted easily.	5cp, 9sp, 1gp. A vial of wyvern poison.
13	Dane	Plackard	...with a massive nose and a tight mouth...	...who hasn't been sober in two weeks...	...and is addicted to a local drug.	4cp, 16sp. An oversized lollipop. A deck of cards.
14	Desta	Puddleswish	...with hooded eyes and a casual tone...	...who will do pretty much anything for a silver piece...	...and doesn't believe in violence.	6cp, 8sp, 12gp. Loaded dice. A directory of local gambling halls.
15	Devon	Poutine	...with wild hair and a sweating brow...	...who repeats the full names of every-one they meet...	...and distrusts at least one party member.	9cp, 2sp. Knitting needles and half-finished scarf.

1d100	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants and Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
16	Dian	Questar	...with oily skin and whistling nostrils...	...who can't stop talking about the end of the world...	...and is also a **lycanthrope**.	7cp. A large leather hat. A set of thieves' tools.
17	Eidar	Q'tharas	...with large ears and an oval face...	...who is constantly on the lookout for grooming tips...	...and is allergic to something nearby.	6sp, 1gp. A cup and ball game. A trout in butcher paper.
18	Eli	Quid	...with a strong jaw and a hearty laugh...	...who compulsively says what they are thinking...	...and is comically hot-tempered.	4cp, 3sp, 1gp. A book about blacksmithing.
19	Erin	Reebsa	...with a slack jaw and a tendency to mouthbreathe...	...who wants to do right by their god, no matter the cost...	...and is plagued with a small bladder.	85cp. A note that says, "Be careful, I love you. -Mum"
20	Evrim	Reyhana	...with a gap-toothed grin and grey eyes...	...who is attracted to a member of the party...	...and has terrible judgement.	64sp. 12gp in loose gems. A rockhammer.
21	Fabian	Rivershale	...with a pot belly and an infectious giggle...	...whose brother was wrongfully accused...	...and is a **satyr** in disguise.	14cp, 17sp, 4gp. A magnifying glass.
22	Farah	Rosenmer	...with a blank expression and wild ear hair...	...who thinks they have a rat infestation...	...and seeks the perfect whiskey recipe.	10sp. Brewer's kit and waterskin of whiskey.
23	Flynn	Sarberos	...with a face full of piercings...	...who keeps hearing voices in their head...	...and is afraid of the dark.	32cp. A collection of dolls that look like the party.
24	Fatima	Shatterblade	...with more tattoos than uninked skin...	...who can't find their horse...	...and is a stranded planar traveler.	A whistle only a badger named Jenny can hear.
25	Gabi	Sindasalt	...with buns of steel and armor to match...	...who needs a set of blacksmith's tools...	...and is self-obsessed.	5cp, 30sp, 9gp. A very small hat.
26	Grey	Srob	...with scabby knuckles they won't stop cracking...	...who lost their mother's wedding band...	...and struggles with their dad's expectations.	19cp, 2sp. A spyglass that can suck out an eyeball on command.
27	"Gums"	Thanar	...with a sick pompadour haircut...	...who needs to be the center of attention...	...and doesn't have teeth.	14cp, 92sp. An error-filled map of the realm.
28	Goose	Thermobolt	...wearing the corset of a slimmer person...	...who needs help with a dance-off...	...and insults those in charge.	A cursed pen knife (roll on the Curse table on pg. 248).
29	Hadley	Therundlin	...with a slack face on one side impeding their speech...	...who had a dream where they saw the party die...	...and a mind that's beginning to unravel.	32cp. 7sp. 3gp. A pair of shoes in need of resoling.
30	Helle	Tighfield	...with a tongue seemingly too big for their mouth...	...who needs a rare coin to complete their collection...	...and is hopeless at negotiation.	8cp. An IOU that reads "Owe you three sacks of wool. Hamm."
31	Hisoka	Underbough	...with a posh attitude and clothes to match...	...who loves to talk about food...	...and is afraid of bats.	94cp, 1gp. A mask that hides their face and a hit list of local thugs.

1d100	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants and Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
32	Hunter	Ugdough	...with a dour expression...	...who owns the town paper...	...and is a part-time cult leader.	7cp, 8sp, 2gp. A dark artifact.
33	Imani	Us	...with the biggest head of all time...	...who wants to be left alone...	...and gets nervous near new people.	34cp, 10sp. A broken lute. A crumpled love letter.
34	Indiana	Valarnith	...with broad shoulders and a lowcut tunic...	...who is worried they might have unleashed a curse...	...and needs locks of hair from everyone.	3cp, 5sp, 7gp. A sack of dates. A pound of dried apricots. A fishing pole.
35	Irati	Venderform	...with a hunched back and sores...	...who needs human contact...	...and despises being touched.	4cp, 6sp. A set of wooden teeth.
36	Ike	Volto	...with friendly eyes and the grace of a dancer...	...who says their family has been possessed...	...and runs a multi-level-marketing scam.	7cp, 92sp. A bottle of baby tears they want to sell.
37	Jaden	Vainweather	...devoid of eyebrows and a sense of humor...	...who just wants to own their own pastry shop...	...is definitely a fiend, but is making it work.	9cp, 53sp, 900gp. A dark leather tome titled *How to Act Human*.
38	Jamal	Wapronk	...with a soot-covered face...	...who needs a place to hide...	...and can't read.	5cp, 5sp, 5gp. Five rings worth 55gp.
39	Joprani	Wolfsbane	...with a dent in their skull that's healed over...	...who is looking for the witch of the woods...	...and is bad luck to everyone within 30 ft.	3cp, 81sp. Joiner's tools. A blood-soaked rag.
40	Jack	Woolyboon	...in a purple tunic, ascot and patent leather boots...	...who is trapped in the friend zone...	...and is possessed by a low level devil.	32cp, 5sp, 1pp. A crust of moldy bread. Some salt pork.
41	Kaari	Wheelmaiden	...covered in black tar and white feathers...	...who is saving to start a restaurant...	...and has a gambling problem.	45cp, 2sp. An undead hand that is very important to them.
42	Kyra	Xas	...with a broken arrow stuck in the side of their head...	...who wants this uptight town to legalize dancing...	...and has a problem with somnambulism.	61cp, 3sp. A forger's kit. A list of noble's names.
43	Kagiso	Xeran	...with black eyes that lack irises...	...who suspects their house is haunted...	...and can't remember their name.	92cp, 3gp. Cufflinks that conceal two doses of *Drow poison*.
44	Kalin	Xencord	...face buried in a book about geese...	...who wants to clean up a pond....	...and is a goose that was *true polymorphed*.	52sp. A sack of fingernails, each more precious than the next.
45	Lin	Yesvyre	...holding a tiny dog and fighting back tears...	...who says their sister has been turned into a dog...	...and lies for fun.	89cp, 3sp. A belt buckle with a hidden lock-pick.
46	Lucian	Yahsquin	...humming to themselves and scratching flaky skin...	...who wants to know if you've seen a man named Reb...	...and is a member of the Assassins' Guild.	62cp, 32sp. A diamond that appears to be worth 500gp. It's not.
47	Lumi	Yeoman	...with a narrow face and fine, almost too perfect features...	...who has a standup performance tonight...	...and hasn't paid their tab in six months.	25cp, 6sp, 24gp. A spork, the first of its kind.
48	Lloyal	Yearender	...with a bruised eye and a busted lip...	...who needs some help dealing with local bullies...	...and has never made a true friend.	6cp, 2gp. A sandwich made of nut butter and smashed jam.

1d100	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants and Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
49	Maayan	Zeagan	...with a lumpy nose that looks a bit infected...	...who wants the party to protect them...	...and is on the run for tax evasion.	21cp, 5sp. An exquisite dagger carved from the bones of a dragonborn.
50	Makota	Zimet	...with a beehive hairdo that makes them seem taller...	...who needs an invitation to tonight's ball...	...and is a long lost member of the royal family.	4cp, 74sp. A wineskin filled with a *potion of haste*.
51	Miska	Zytal	...has a neck twice as wide as their face...	...who is looking to cure a contagious disease...	...and is struggling to get over the flu.	8cp, 53sp. A fake beard. A tome filled with gift ideas for hundreds of children.
52	Moriah	Aberrich	...has a face that appears stitched together...	...who is searching for the power of a *wish* spell...	...and is a runaway **zombie**.	91sp. A recipe for pot pie. A small sack of peas. Spices.
53	Nesim	Aefrim	...looks like they're about to vomit...	...who has been challenged to a rap battle...	...and owns a treasure map to a secret island.	3cp, 14sp. A jar of honey. A box containing a large queen bee.
54	Nico	Altas	...is dripping in sweat...	...who just inherited an orphanage...	...and hates children.	7cp, 13sp. A *gate* spell scroll.
55	Nyx	Avilseer	...is expertly juggling a trio of daggers...	...who is raising money for wizard school...	...and is the very definition of chaotic evil.	A pocket-sized copy of the realm's founding documents.
56	Noose	Baelmai	...has a drippy nose and red cheeks...	...who can't find their glasses...	...and is afraid of spellcasters.	A frog. Roll 1d6. On a 1, it was once a prince.
57	Ori	Bingletrite	...is wearing clothes that are three sizes too big...	...who is on the hunt for a **red dragon** egg in the area...	...and is working against the party's interests.	31cp. A rudimentary coloring book. Some colored wax pieces.
58	Olley	Blackreed	...looks twice their age...	...needs to catch six fish...	...and lacks common sense.	4cp, 3sp, 2gp. A set of woodworker's tools.
59	Ophilia	Bronzestein	...with a pretty face and big ideas...	...who needs everyone to wise up...	...and is being blackmailed.	8sp. A minor gem worth 1gp.
60	Oban	Carter	...wearing goggles and chomping a smoldering cigar...	...who needs to accquire a rare **ochre jelly**...	...and feels like an extra in someone else's story.	5gp. A +1 scimitar engraved with the name "Trevor."
61	Piper	Claymore	...with the energy of an overstimulated child...	...who believes their friend might be a **hag**...	...and is wearing a *hag's eye* from a nearby coven.	42sp. A tub of grease. A *wand of webs*.
62	Poe	Cogturner	...with bangs that everyone agrees do not suit their face...	...who is looking for models for a fashion show...	...and is five months behind on all their bills.	55gp. A vial of de-aging serum that takes 20 years off a creature's life.
63	Pal	Crysalis	...nervously chewing their upper lip...	...who wants to join the circus...	...and can only tell the truth.	8sp, 4gp. A tophat concealing a dozen squirrels.
64	Perrin	Datesi	...blind, but making it work...	...who needs enough incense to bring back their familiar...	...and is immortal.	3sp. A bottle of milk. An ornate quarterstaff.
65	Quinn	Darksteele	...still sporting the scars from a rogue **owlbear** attack...	...who is looking for some drinking buddies...	...and won't take no for an answer.	An unopened letter challenging them to a duel with a merchant.

1d100	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants and Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
66	Quora	Deepstone	...has one of those faces...	...who can't unlock their basement...	...and uses a puppet to talk.	15cp. A jar capable of storing memories.
67	Quinene	Dwandra	...with a chin that could block out the sun...	...who refuses to bathe and talks to any stray dogs...	...and has a habit of losing their false teeth.	8cp. A vial labelled "DO NOT OPEN" that contains the expelled gas of a king.
68	Rayyan	Eeaves	...with a whisper-quiet voice...	...looking for the Dream Archive (pg. 118)...	...and can read minds via touch.	90sp. A liniment that helps with insomnia.
69	Ren	Excellente	...with a cute smile and belt of knives...	...who seeks to kill the town guard who killed their dad...	...and may have made a pact with a demon.	13cp. Directions to a guard's house. A box of juice.
70	Roux	Emo	...wearing far too many belts and silver jewelry...	...who would rather be listening to heavy lute tunes...	...and is way more apathetic than you.	Sheet music from a bard you've never heard of. A -1 Charisma pinky ring.
71	Rowan	E'tellor	...with the biggest, bushiest beard...	...who wants to learn to fight...	...and is missing their tongue.	13pp. A jar of beard oil that is also flammable.
72	Samar	Faemoira	...is blessed with lavish curves...	...who enjoys harmless flirting...	...and fears commitment.	29sp. A small painting of an elven girl.
73	Siya	Firsel	...is a scythe-wielding farmer...	...who spreads propaganda against shapechangers...	...and assumes everyone they meet is a shifter.	35cp. A colorful piece of chewing taffy that never loses its flavor.
74	Skye	Flintheart	...with armor that shines like the sun...	...en route to the Hall of Many Gods (pg. 144)...	...and is devoid of confidence.	A list of several gods, with at least nine crossed out.
75	Slaine	Frostarm	...with an almost hypnotic voice and air of importance ...	...who needs investors for their pyramid scheme...	...and is a compulsive liar.	14 vials of a potion that smells great but does nothing.
76	Tal	Geasfoot	...who looks like they just woke up...	...who can't find their watch...	...and is never on time.	A watchchain. A pair of fancy hair combs.
77	Tierney	Gigak	...in a tight-fitting, red-scaled jacket...	...who is trying to sell a dragon heart...	...and is particularly awkward.	A note with the location of a dragon's lair.
78	Toiv	Gnazbright	...wearing temple robes and a surprised expression...	...who wants to spread the word about their god...	...and is afraid of heights. And depths.	30sp. A pair of bi-lensed readers. A sack of candies.
79	Tumelo	Goldcask	...with greasy hair and hands to match...	...who is trying to write a love ballad...	...and speaks with wild gestures.	A mourning ring featuring the eye of their mother.
80	Umber	Huneldth	...with a hard, weathered face...	...searching for redemption...	...and once ruled this land.	1cp, 1sp, 1gp, 1pp. A **deck of many things**.
81	Umut	Hutchrice	...walks with the grace of a dancer...	...who wants to see the next sunrise...	...and is a newly made **vampire**.	390gp. A sack of grave dirt. A spade. A beret.
82	Urg	Hoover	...wearing a crop top to show off their impressive abs...	...who longs to be the strongest person alive...	...and has crippling arthritis.	42cp, 71sp. 3 vials of a tonic that adds +2 to Strength for 1 hour.
83	Val	Honeyeater	...in black leather and a pair of sharp, heeled boots...	...hired to kill a party member...	...and now has cold feet.	62cp, 21sp, 92gp. A gag and hood. 2 vials of *purple worm poison*.

1d100	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants and Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
84	Vanja	Iasbex	...has a permanent squint and a stiff upper lip...	...who compulsively judges others' fashion sense...	...and won't listen to human opinions.	3cp, 9sp, 21gp. An opal carved in the shape of a jawbone.
85	Vivian	Igrild	...who appears as if they were struck by lightning...	...who is trying to build a time machine...	...and is absolutely from the future.	5cp. A sport's almanac.
86	Varek	Illynmah	...with a smile that's all teeth and no joy...	...who is on a quest to kill monsters...	...and serves a talking cow.	92sp. **Manticore** bait. A **griffon** call. Sacks of meat.
87	Wanda	Importan	...with flashy pink hair...	...who is trying to do good...	...and was, until today, a shut-in.	A 20% off coupon for Mage You Look (pg. 128).
88	West	Jarvalsa	...with a smell that is off-putting...	...who is trying to sell some fruit...	...and thinks humans are useless.	18cp, 4sp. A stuffed tiger. A tuna sandwich.
89	Weezy	Jaytai	...has bloody, nail-free fingertips...	...who is on the run from a prison...	...and is also a **deva**.	3cp. A speckled egg. A broken music box.
90	Wooster	Jeffries	...in a droopy robe...	...who needs the blood of 30 crows...	...and is a magic school dropout.	92gp. A small heart in a smaller cage.
91	Xen	Justice	...in a hat that's as tall as they are...	...who wants to learn Common...	...and is a warlock of The Great Old One.	3gp. A bag of salt. A bag of pepper. A bag of octopus tentacles.
92	Xuan	Kavius	...with no arms, but two mage hands...	...who wants to go on an adventure...	...and is a total yes-man.	A lyre that's missing all but one string.
93	X'ian	Keystina	...with bare feet and freckled cheeks...	...who is peddling bags of a medicinal root...	...and is a happy-go-lucky necromancer.	A glass orb. A raven's beak. A vial of tiger blood.
94	Yael	Khilltahrn	...dressed in a patchwork coat of dozens of fabrics...	...who needs to spread their father's ashes...	...and is a budding songwriter.	5cp. A lump of coal. A small box filled with ashes.
95	Yagmur	Koahath	...with one leg, and a hangman's scar on their neck...	...who is hoping to run for public office...	...and was an escaped convict in their youth.	52sp. An herbalist's kit. A neatly folded poster with their face on it.
96	Yannik	Leagallow	...is deaf and uses gestures to communicate...	...who seeks a new owner for their pet owl...	...and is possessed by the spirit of a god.	5,256gp. A notebook listing all the things they've done this year.
97	Yuck	Lillyfitz	...has shaggy hair, baggy clothes and a chill attitude...	...who is looking for their dog. Have you seen their dog?...	...and owns a dog that can speak Common.	13sp, 2gp. A few gnarled balls of thick cord and cloth.
98	Zein	Lukewill	...has cheekbones that could cut glass and eyes to match...	...who doesn't let anyone get in their way...	...and runs an illegal fighting ring nearby.	81cp, 3sp. A list of rules for something called "Brawl Joint."
99	Zeke	Luckdodger	...wearing a hood that covers their gaunt face...	...who is hunting for ancient relics in old forgotten tombs...	...and is an absolute killjoy.	Ink that disappears but can be revealed with a little heat.
100	Zaya	Mavcius	...with a handsome face and sure, kind smile...	...who is looking for inspiration for their new novel...	...and once looked completely different.	A 32-page booklet of so-called "haters"—a few names are crossed out.

Adventure-Specific Category Tables

Random Shops & Guilds Table

Roll 1d10 on the table below to determine which shop or guild hall your party is due to visit.

1d10		
1	Mini Market	pg. 116
2	Caravan Bazaar	pg. 122
3	Peerless Potions	pg. 124
4	Gant's Alchemy Emporium	pg. 126
5	Mage You Look	pg. 128
6	Steamy Smithy Blacksmith & Day Spa	pg. 132
7	The Nightmare Market	pg. 134
8	Variant Guild Hall	pg. 137
9	The Town Tailor	pg. 138
10	Roll again	

Random Residences Table

Roll 1d6 on the table below to reveal the details of the house the party is about to visit.

1d6		
1	The Horrible Hut	pg. 192
2	Wretchtown	pg. 194
3	The Shack	pg. 197
4	Variant Home 1	pg. 198
5	Variant Home 2	pg. 199
6	Roll on Random Castle table	pg. 206

Random Taverns & Inns Table

Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine which tavern or inn your party is about to patronize.

1d6		
1	The Not Hostel	pg. 103
2	The Two Doors Tavern	pg. 104
3	The Big Little Bar	pg. 106
4	The Wounded Rogue	pg. 108
5	Temple Bar	pg. 111
6	The Red Herring	pg. 114

Random Temples Table

Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine which holy house the party is about to genuflect within.

1d6		
1	Sunken Temple	pg. 141
2	The Temple of the Fall	pg. 142
3	The Hall of Many Gods	pg. 144
4	The Sun Temple	pg. 148
5	Variant Temple	pg. 150
6	Roll again	

Random Tavern Generator

Because your party likes to party, roll 2d100—once for each column of the table below—and combine the two results together for a singular name suitable for a pub, parlor room or pint palace. Then roll on the Vibe Variants tables for a look and feel.

1d100	Name 1	Name 2
1	Lively	Flagon
2	Scratchy	Rogue
3	Knobby	Dragon
4	Ruddy	Hag
5	Merry	Pony
6	Sticky	Troll
7	Abandoned	Drunk
8	Courageous	Pint
9	Itchy	Basin
10	Aching	Traveler
11	Handsome	Giant
12	Ornery	Boar
13	Bountiful	Flask
14	Filthy	Drow
15	Quaint	Fairy
16	Drafty	Sow
17	Lanky	Dretch
18	Nasty	Boot
19	Shiny	Serpent
20	Crowded	Lion
21	Reckless	Balor
22	Gleaming	King
23	Winged	Tiefling
24	Jagged	Cauldron
25	Cozy	Goat
26	Harmless	Bard
27	Nifty	Bottle
28	Eager	Pub
29	Pitiful	Shot
30	Deserted	Knight
31	Frosty	Miner
32	Soggy	Inn
33	Magnificent	Earl
34	Regal	Duck
35	Rough	Mug
36	Meager	Crevice
37	Embellished	Dagger
38	Proud	Horse
39	Intrepid	Sailor
40	Shoddy	Elf
41	Fair	Chameleon
42	Loud	Nymph
43	Bare	Hall
44	Mysterious	Wench
45	Jaunty	Dump
46	Muddy	Castle
47	Hospitable	Helm
48	Livid	Fox
49	Golden	Throne
50	Salty	Dwarf
51	Knowing	Wyvern
52	Lavish	Haven
53	Silver	Talon
54	Charming	Bar
55	Hairy	Wand
56	Bleak	Den
57	Feisty	House
58	Smoggy	Bear
59	Opulent	Lantern
60	Peaceful	Demon
61	Immaculate	Blade

Tavern Vibe Variants

Every ale house or wine wasteland has its own energy—whether it's a divey haunt with a few grizzled regulars or a familiar franchise that's somehow the same in every town—and that energy is part of what keeps customers coming back for another round or backing out of the doorway slowly the moment they arrive. Because pubs and lounges are commonly populated with a wide range of patrons from across different walks of life, they are often defined as much by their clientele as their aesthetics.

1d100	Name 1	Name 2
62	Sleepy	Eunuch
63	Limping	Axe
64	Everlasting	Wagon
65	Wild	Palace
66	Ironclad	Brewery
67	Growling	Minotaur
68	Stale	Wanderer
69	Jovial	Lord
70	Wise	Hideaway
71	Gullible	Cudgel
72	Ample	Tower
73	Rich	Minstrel
74	Cautious	Barrel
75	Wonderful	Tankard
76	Hungry	Bow
77	Wooden	Hearth
78	Yawning	Toad
79	Heavenly	Lodge
80	Rosy	Room
81	Bewitched	Bucket
82	Spirited	Damsel
83	Buzzing	Willow
84	Tasty	Unicorn
85	Snarling	Head
86	Enchanted	Crow
87	Clever	Mead House
88	Pleasant	Cat
89	Deadly	Arrow
90	Tricky	Parlor
91	Treasured	Swamp
92	Antique	Boil
93	Poor	Fool
94	Glorious	Louse
95	Blushing	Hat
96	Ultimate	Cavern
97	Vacant	Winery
98	Dull	Place
99	Weary	Griffin
100	Fickle	Sword

Roll 1d4 and 1d20 on the tables below to determine the general feel for a bar, beer hall or back alley brew shed.

1d4	This place is...
1	...deserted, save for a bartender and one regular...
2	...packed with friendly locals and a few drunk travelers...
3	...oddly quiet, given the number of customers inside...
4	...full of angry, rowdy guests who have all been overserved...

1d20	
1	...with sawdust on the floor and dust in the rafters.
2	...with a wait time of 20 minutes per drink, given their complexity.
3	...and hosting a sing-a-long night with one of the region's least popular bards.
4	...and featuring a brand ambassador for an experimental mead.
5	...and hiding an illegal gambling hall under the floorboards.
6	...with velvet-lined walls, a dress code and an undeserved air of importance.
7	...with ornamental trophies from beasts and monsters hanging on the walls.
8	...and devoid of tables and chairs, its floor stocked with dozens of pillows.
9	...and is less of a bar and more of a dance hall, with music so loud it's tough to hear anything else.
10	...with a back patio that's never open.
11	...with an epic collection of classic board games from the party's childhood, though most sets are missing a piece or two.
12	...with a large, crater-like hole in the center of the floor that has gone unremarked upon for months.
13	...and is utterly pleasing to the eye, but to those trained in the arcane, is clearly dripping with illusory magic.
14	...and, to those familiar with this sort of thing, clearly has an arrangement with a nearby brothel.
15	...with a tropical theme, with drinks and uniforms to match, and feels like walking through a humid rainforest.
16	...with walls lined with sketches depicting famed adventurers and leaders from across the realm enjoying a pint here.
17	...and featuring servers who are enthusiastically invested in their job, wearing several kitchy buttons, and pushily advertising the bar's other locations throughout the realm.
18	...and only serves pitchers.
19	...and has been named best pub in town several times in a row by nobles in the region, a fact its proprietor is quick to remind anyone who enters at least twice.
20	...and features great food at incredible prices, but discriminates against a specific type of customer at GM discretion.

Random Curse Creator

Whether brought on by a treacherous item, a nefarious spell or a bad deal your great, great grandmother made to win the lotto, curses can be crippling. Roll 1d100 below to find out what ails....

1d100	The creature...
1	...must speak in rhymed couplets or take 1d4 +1 psychic damage each time they talk.
2	...believes they are immortal and acts accordingly.
3	...is vulnerable to all damage but feels no pain.
4	...cannot benefit from a long rest if they sleep alone.
5	...is always thirsty.
6	…has carrots where they once had fingers.
7	...can't stop crying.
8	...coughs up 1d4 dragonflies each time they speak.
9	...is allergic to metal and breaks out in leaky sores on contact.
10	...lacks bones and moves as an ooze would.
11	...must use jazz hands when they speak or take 1d6 + 3 psychic damage.
12	...trips and falls flat on their face with every 15 steps they take.
13	...suddenly has rubber-like arms that become twisted and tangled whenever they try to use them.
14	...refuses to be seen without their hat, and won't let anyone forget it.
15	...becomes catatonic at the sound of thunder.
16	...finds themselves followed by a hungry stray dog. Another stray will join this growing pack every time the cursed creature takes a long rest.
17	...gets incredibly winded during physical activity and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to avoid passing out.
18	...takes the shape of the world's most notorious criminal.
19	...thinks they are the King on a giant chessboard about to be trapped.
20	...can only eat grass.
21	...can't move their arms or legs.
22	...has an increasingly unignorable hunger for human flesh.
23	...hears cats screaming whenever music is played.
24	...suffers from the delusion they are a time traveler from 300 years in the future.
25	...gains 3d6 pounds per day, rerolling at the end of every long rest.
26	...is compelled to challenge every creature they encounter to a duel.
27	...is suddenly followed by every mouse and rat in the village.
28	...has breath so bad it knocks out anyone who comes within a yard.
29	...weeps blood at the slightest insult.
30	...keeps attracting flies.
31	...can only see the Ethereal Plane.
32	...has their Strength score reduced by half.
33	...has their Dexterity score reduced by half.
34	...has their Constitution score reduced by half.
35	...has their Intelligence score reduced by half.
36	...has their Wisdom score reduced by half.
37	...has their Charisma score reduced by half.
38	...is terrified of water.
39	...has their movement speed reduced by half.
40	...loses 1d4 + 2 HP anytime a creature casts a spell within 60 ft. of them.
41	...immediately loses half their max HP.
42	...spreads death wherever they walk, as all plants within a 20-ft. radius wither and die in their presence.
43	...smells like last month's fish.
44	...reverts to a childhood state.
45	...loses the ability to learn or make new memories.
46	...must kill a creature with their bare hands every 1d4 days, or suffer 50 points of necrotic damage.
47	...has double vision (and disadvantage on all attack rolls and ability checks).
48	...is disgusted by gold.
49	...loses the ability to lie or even omit elements of the truth.
50	...cannot sleep, and cannot benefit from a long rest.

51	...loses hit points equal to any damage they deal to another creature.
52	...ages 1d10 years each time they take a long rest.
53	...loses 3d6 pounds each time they eat.
54	...glows in the dark, with their light spreading for 120 ft.
55	...can only use a total of 20 words per day.
56	...transforms into an overripe watermelon with blindsense. The creature maintains its mental statistics and can communicate telepathically with creatures within 30 ft. of it.
57	...has an overwhelming desire to eat (but an aversion to the taste of) sand.
58	...has incredibly flaky skin, that starts painfully sloughing off in strips at the slightest touch.
59	...wakes each morning to find they are half as tall as they were the night before.
60	...can only communicate in song titles.
61	...has one of those head colds that just won't quit.
62	...feels their teeth triple in size, and their mouth curve into a giant (and agonizing) grin.
63	...turns purple any time they tell a lie.
64	...must walk/run backward or they'll drop to 0 HP.
65	...always looks sopping wet.
66	...completely loses their sense of direction and has disadvantage on all Wisdom (Survival) checks related to travel.
67	...has a permanent mullet that grows back after every long rest.
68	...is vulnerable to cold damage and cannot stop their teeth from chattering at the slightest drop in temperature.
69	...has an 80 percent chance of being struck by lightning in a storm.
70	...forgets how to do basic math. Numbers are meaningless now.
71	...will be pooped on by a bird at least once a day (regardless of location).
72	...is now horribly allergic to pollen and dust.
73	...gets incredibly seasick to the point of collapse when floating on any type of body of water.
74	...no longer has a reflection.
75	...is effectively blind in dim light or darkness.
76	...must ask for permission to enter any dwelling and is barred from entry by un-dispellable magic if they do not receive it from the dwelling's owner.
77	...is anchored to the Material Plane. They cannot travel to other planes, nor can their soul move on after death.
78	...is compelled to give any stranger they meet a high five. If the stranger leaves them hanging, the creature will high five their own hand.
79	...must fend off their own shadow as it tries to strangle them for one minute each night at midnight. The shadow has the same statistics as the creature but the only action it can take is to attempt to strangle its creator.
80	...is terribly frightened of the outdoors. They have disadvantage on Wisdom (Nature) skill checks and any rolls made when outside any urban environment.
81	...is called to the endless expanse of the sky. They must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 12) any time they are near a large drop and will swan dive off the highest ledge available if they fail.
82	...is vulnerable to fire damage and must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 12) any time they are near an open flame, becoming frightened on a failed save.
83	...is terrified of gnomes and must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw any time they see one, becoming paralyzed on a failed save.
84	...cannot stop yawning in an egregious (and fairly disrespectful) way.
85	...becomes incredibly accident prone.
86	...forgets what they were doing and why once per short rest at GM discretion.
87	...loses the ability to modulate the sound and tone of their voice, and must speak in a droning, wall-shaking monotone.
88	...passes a curse to every humanoid they touch. Two days after contact, the humanoid will give birth to a fully formed **quasit**.
89	...starts to sink into the ground or floors beneath them if they don't keep moving.
90	...causes all children under the age of 5 in a 30-ft. radius (self) to cry uncontrollably.
91	...hears a loud voice in their head which will offer unwarranted criticism of all their combat and social choices.
92	...can communicate with cats but only cats. All other language is lost to them.
93	...grows a cumbersome beard twice as long as they are tall.
94	...is hoarse and all but inaudible.
95	...feels all their skin and hair shedding off their face, exposing their skull.
96	...believes they are friendless, penniless and aimless.
97	...is under the impression every single person they encounter knows their darkest secrets.
98	...dies painfully but is immediately resurrected, with half as much max HP, at the start of each new day.
99	...refuses to wear clothing no matter what decorum might require.
100	...gains a combination of five curses from this table. Roll again five times.

Party Makeup Maker

With a few dice rolls, you'll think you've been campaigning together for ages.

Roleplaying isn't just about understanding your own backstory—it's about the connections you make with the other players at your table. This table is meant to help players develop an immediate connection with other members of the party, as well as a motivating factor or shared detail that will inform how your characters interact. To use it, roll 1d100 with the person to your left and right at the table (skipping this step if that person is the GM), then find the corresponding entry on the table. For extra variance, roll 2d100 and use a different entry for the second column. Once you're done, every player will have at least one direct connection to another party member, and some will have two.

GM Note

These relationships are often intentionally vague, so as to give players more room to expand on them as your game unfolds. That said, those that are specific could directly conflict with characters' backstories—and if that's the case, feel free to roll again. And again and again and again until you find something the duo partnering up can agree on.

1d100	Relationship	Detail
1	Parent and child...	...who are not on speaking terms.
2	Stepparent and stepchild...	...who don't trust each other.
3	Members of the same guild...	...who are enablers.
4	Childhood sweethearts...	...who keep distracting one another.
5	Co-workers...	...who secretly think the other is useless.
6	Coach and trainee...	...who have a not-so-secret handshake.
7	Sponsor and acolyte on a vision quest...	...who have no sense of direction.
8	Beloved comedy duo...	...who can't stand the sight of each other.
9	Old flames...	...who get into shouting matches.
10	Partners in crime...	...who are hiding a dark secret.
11	Study buddies...	...who like to cut corners.
12	Former prison cellmates...	...who created their own language.
13	Siblings...	...in love with the same person.
14	Stepsiblings...	...who are relentlessly competitive.
15	Half-siblings...	...who never met their dad.
16	Magician and assistant...	...who refuse to be separated.
17	Benefactor and ward...	...on the lam.
18	Knight and squire...	...on a months-long bender.
19	Mogul and hypeman/woman...	...trying to launch a new product.
20	Twins...	...who are literally attached at the hip.
21	Landlord and tenant...	...who are trying to outlast one another.
22	Cousins...	...who created a controversial new religion.
23	Bartender and patron...	...who have the same exact conversation every day for eternity due to a hex.
24	Roommates...	...who can never remember each other's name.
25	Amateur athletes...	...who have a bone-deteriorating curse.
26	Actor and director...	...who have publicly stated their hatred for the arts.
27	Neighbors who've lost their homes...	...and can't find their insurance agent anywhere.
28	Teacher and star pupil...	...who are overconfident and underprepared.
29	Subjects of an arranged marriage...	...who speak to each other through other people.
30	Bounty hunter and quarry...	...who pissed off the wrong people.
31	Performer and stunt double...	...who get mobbed by fans wherever they go.
32	Inventor and test subject...	...who just lost their funding.
33	Victims of the same criminal...	...and one is a fraud.
34	Explorer and local guide...	...who are carriers of a deadly virus.
35	Traveling fans of the same bard...	...who are fresh out of narcotics.
36	Amatuer sleuths...	...with insomnia.

37	Honey ambassadors...	...who are deathly allergic to bees.
38	Captain and former first mate...	...who suffer from seasickness.
39	Ghost hunter and client...	...with a healthy fear of bears.
40	Personal trainer and new charge...	...who love a good high five.
41	Estranged aunt and nephew/niece...	...who constantly argue about money.
42	Poet and muse...	...who gossip about each other incessently.
43	Addict and sponsor...	...who won't ride wagons for fear of falling off.
44	Historian and part-time assistant...	...who've stolen a prominant author's book idea.
45	Summer camp counselors...	...who despise children.
46	Members of the same temple...	..who have lost their faith.
47	Co-conspirators in a would-be coup...	...who are losing their nerve.
48	Longtime family friends...	...who have made a death pact.
49	An alchemist's assistants...	...who always have snacks on hand.
50	Veteran cop and a rookie...	...who are becoming what they hate.
51	Strangers mistaken for one another...	...who simply love a good showtune.
52	Traveling tome sellers...	...who are both behind on rent.
53	Reluctant acolytes on a mission trip...	...who would rather be carousing and carrying on.
54	Roving restaurant reviewers...	...who have been banned from several establishments throughout the realm.
55	Government inspectors...	...who have misplaced their identification.
56	Merchant and hired security...	...with little respect for authority.
57	The brains and the brawn...	...who love a good prank.
58	Fellow orphans...	...looking for a mysterious benefactor.
59	Concerned parents...	...trying to stop a dangerous outbreak.
60	Astronomer and astrologer...	...worried about the same comet.
61	Co-authors of a self-help book...	...who are shameless self-promoters.
62	Forbidden lovers...	...who must prove themselves to a noble lord.
63	Strangers linked by a cursed item...	...who lose control of their faculties once every 1d6 days.
64	Town council members...	...who take pleasure in undercutting each other.
65	Robber barons...	...who are strangely anti-capitalism.
66	Archeologists after the same artifact...	...who don't know they're being followed.
67	Spy and handler...	...who are in deeper than they know.
68	Alumni of the same school...	...who know each others' dark secret.
69	Co-chairs of a planning committee for a major carnival...	...who need 1,000 signatures by next month.
70	Prize winners of the same sweepstakes...	...who harbor resentment over a misunderstanding.
71	Legendary adventurer impersonators...	...who don't believe the rules apply to them.
72	Club owner and bouncer...	...who lack scruples.
73	Gambling buddies...	...who refuse to bathe out of superstition.
74	Reporters on the same beat...	...who have uncovered a vast conspiracy.
75	Freelance gravediggers...	...who've lost a skull of great import.
76	Volunteer firefighters...	...who never met a pun they didn't oversell.
77	Subjects of the same demon...	...who need a way out.
78	Sociologists researching a thesis...	...who are dangerously curious.
79	Refugees of the same calamity...	...who bicker to pass the time.
80	Bandmates...	...who are both certain they are the talented one.
81	Terrible hypnotist and lone success story...	...who are gawked at wherever they go.
82	A noble and a pauper who changed places as a bet...	...who are trying to sell the rights to their story.
83	Animal rights activists...	...who are self-righteous.
84	Strangers who saw one another in a dream...	...and are marching toward their doom.
85	Noble and housecarl...	...who refuse to talk about their scars.
86	Bird watchers seeking a rare warbler...	...who are relentlessly positive.
87	Retiree and replacement...	...who are terribly homesick.
88	Thrillseekers with the same guidebook...	...who get antsy when forced to stand still.
89	Strangers indebted to the same crime lord...	...who love a good bribe.
90	Architect and foreman...	...who accidentally destroyed a whole town.
91	Accused of the same crime...	...and one of them is definitely guilty.
92	Competitive eaters...	...who don't care for crowds.
93	Professional grapplers...	...who have three catchphrases each.
94	Undercover cops...	...who are disguised as humble pastry chefs.
95	Real estate developers...	...who can't stop flipping property.
96	Debt collectors...	...who constantly trade memories of the good ol' days.
97	The creators of a new ale...	...who know they'll be famous one day.
98	Escapees from the same cult...	...who still have flashbacks.
99	Veterans of the same war...	...who get a new tattoo together every week.
100	A popular charmer and the goofball they bet they could make seem cool...	...who may also be falling in love.

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Your GMs Are...

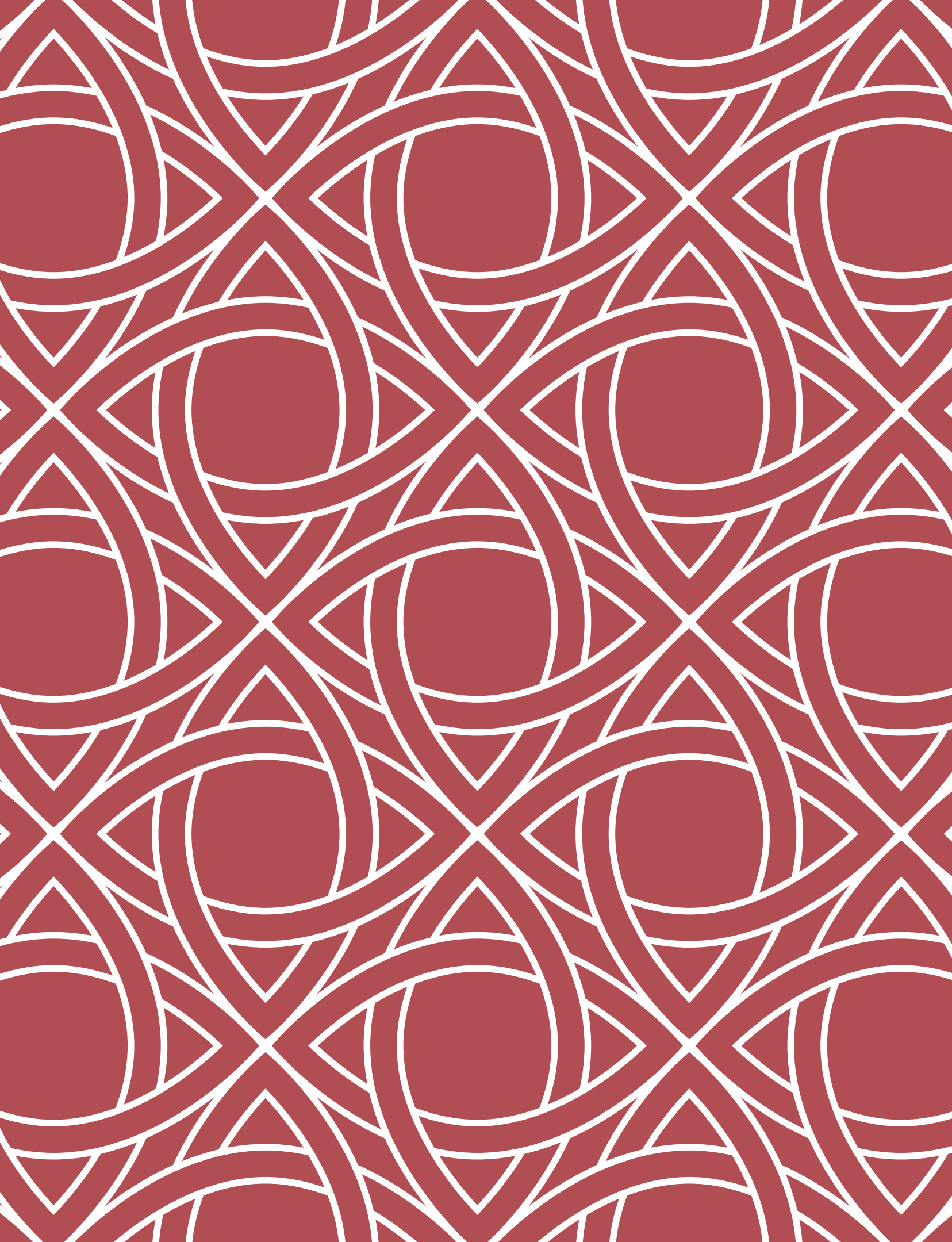
JEFF ASHWORTH is a writer, editor and storyteller whose credits include work for Disney, Nickelodeon and World Wrestling Entertainment. When he isn't working on special projects for *Newsweek* or Media Lab Books, he enjoys playing and designing games with his friends. In his role-playing career he has gambled with giants, sweet-talked succubi and devastated dragons without breaking a sweat. In the real world, after failing a late-night Perception check, he was nearly crippled by a foot-piercing d4. He and his wife live in Brooklyn, New York, with their dog, Zelda.

JASMINE KALLE is a writer, illustrator and editor hailing from the sunny tropics of Brisbane, Australia. She has a Master of Arts (Writing, Editing and Publishing) and several years of TTRPG experience—though she doesn't tend to put that second part on her CV. In 2018 she embarked on an important quest that lead her to the frozen winter tundra of New York and it was there that she first discovered some rather interesting dungeons, went on to fight more than a couple of dragons, and hasn't looked back since. When she's not traveling and running games for various friends around the world, she returns home to hang out with her cat, Kiba, and dog, Otto and regale them with tales of her adventures.

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

LIAM GALLAGHER is a writer and gamer living in Brisbane, Australia. He has a great love of traveling in worlds both real and imagined. The fact that the latter is usually cheaper is no doubt responsible for his obsession with TTRPGs. Whether daydreaming about some future Antarctic expedition or GMing a crew of friends on a rollicking pirate adventure, his main wish is to have either his mind's eye or his actual fleshy eyeballs pay witness to new and incredible sights.

MICHAEL SHEA is the creator of the wildly popular website Sly Flourish (*slyflourish.com*) and the award-winning author of *The Lazy Dungeon Master*, *Return of the Lazy Dungeon Master*, *Fantastic Adventures: Ruins of the Grendleroot* and many other RPG supplements. He has worked with numerous RPG companies including Wizards of the Coast, Kobold Press, Pelgrane Press and Sasquatch Games. Shea lives with his wife, Michelle, in northern Virginia.



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