

OUT OF BLACKEST EARTH

A HAUNTED GRAVEYARD FOR FLEDGLING ADVENTURERS.



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OUT OF BLACKEST EARTH

The people in the town of Uria are disquieted. The graveyard by the church of St. Athanasius has lain abandoned for a lifetime. But although the ground is shrouded by dead leaves and some of the tombs are so dilapidated that bones lie in the open, the townsfolk have kept on visiting their family graves. Lately, however, ghostly apparitions have been seen moving among the sepulchres. People no longer dare to go there, and the town magistrate promises 500 sp to those who put the dead to rest again. In reality, the rumors are being spread by a gang of bandits who want to plunder the graves without being disturbed. Little do they suspect that their activities have awoken the spectre of a necromancer...

OUT OF BLACKEST EARTH is a location based adventure suitable for low level characters. It is designed to be system agnostic and compatible with traditional role-playing games.

- This adventure assumes silver standard. If you use gold standard, all treasure should be adjusted accordingly.
- The armor classes are given as both descending and ascending values. The ascending values are in brackets.
- If you prefer, you can easily use monster stats from a game system of your choice.
- This adventure assumes that a single basic saving throw is used. All creatures are assumed to use the same saving throws as a fighter of the same level as their hit dice. If your system of choice has several categories of saving throws, check the categories in order and use the first one which applies to the situation.

RUMORS (1D8)

Investigations will give 1d4 rumors (T = True, P = Partially true, F = False).

1. The last priest ran an illicit tavern and made a fortune on wine smuggling. (T)
2. St. Athanasius bound a demon to guard the crypts beneath the church. (T)
3. A cold-hearted noblewoman was buried in the crypts a century ago. It is said that she practiced the dark arts and was murdered by a rival! (T)
4. The magistrate lines his pockets at the expense of the commoners! Small wonder that the spirits of the ancestors are angered! (F)
5. The relics of St. Athanasius were kept in the church, but disappeared when it was abandoned. (T)
6. Once the well on the churchyard could cure the sick, but it has dried up. (P)
7. Revenants can be banished by fire, silver or holy water. (T)
8. Athanasius was a filthy heretic. Witches and devils fornicate in his church! (F)

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (1D8)

Roll 1d6 every third turn. An encounter occurs on a 1.

- 1-3. 1d4 graverobbers (**AL N, MV 120' (40')**, **AC 9 [10]**, **HD 1**, **AT 1 weapon (1d6)**, **M 6**)
- 4-6. 1d8 giant rats (**AL N, MV 120' (40')** (**Swim 60' (20')**), **AC 7 [12]**, **HD 1-1**, **AT 1 bite (1d4 + contagion)**, **M 8**)
7. 1d2 badgers (**AL N, MV 60' (20')** (**Burrow 30' (10')**), **AC 4 [15]**, **HD 1+2**, **AT 1 bite (1d6)**, **M 8**)
8. 1d4 bombardier beetles (**AL N, MV 120' (40')**, **AC 4 [15]**, **HD 2**, **AT 1 bite (1d6) or 1 poison spit, M 8**). These beetles can spit poison at an opponent within 5' as a ranged attack. On a successful hit, the the opponent suffers extreme pain, chemical burns, blisters and a -2 penalty to hit rolls for 1 day, or until the spell cure light wounds is used.

1. FUNERAL HOME

A stone bench for coffins in the middle of the room. There is a carved stone skull on the wall. Concealed in the right eye socket is a button which makes the stone bench swivel to the side and reveal stairs to #15. Anybody examining the floor will notice slight scuff marks from the bench.

2. CHURCH

A reliquary hidden in the altar holds the skull of St. Athanasius, a magic item capable of Turning Undead once per encounter. By the western wall there is a fount of holy water. The first PC who drinks the water gains cosmic insights (and 15 seconds to look through the DMs notes). Stairs lead to #8.

3. CRYPT SLAB

The statue of an angel (**AL L, MV 90' (30')**, **AC 4 [15]**, **HD 3**, **AT 2 fists (1d6 each)**, **M 11**) comes to life and attacks anyone who desecrates the slab. A spiral stair to #10.

4. DRY WELL

A hatch to #12 is concealed in the bottom clay. There are scuff marks from a grappling hook on the edge of the well.

5. MAUSOLEUM

A white marble tomb. It is dedicated to Messalina, a noblewoman who died of the plague. In a sarcophagus lies a mummy with a silver death mask worth 200 sp, a gold necklace worth 100 sp and 3 jewel rings worth 100 sp each. The plague is still contagious - all who handle the mummy or the treasures must make a save or fall ill within 1d6 days. The diseased character suffers from high fever, black boils and bleedings under the skin for 1d3 days. Thereafter the diseased character makes another save; a failure means death, otherwise they recover after another 2d10+10 days.

6. TOMBSTONES

2 graverobbers are hiding among the tombstones. (**AL N, MV 120' (40')**, **AC 9 [10]**, **HD 1**, **AT 1 weapon (1d6)**, **M 6**) disguised as undead. They try to scare away intruders.

7. ABANDONED TAVERN

The ruin of an old illicit tavern. A rotten wooden hatch is hidden beneath dead leaves and a stair leads to #19. If anyone steps on the hatch, it breaks. The character must make a save or fall down into the basement and take 1d6 HP of damage. The hatch is used by the graverobbers.

8. ANTECHAMBER

Stairs from #2 lead down to a locked door. If anyone steps into the room a blue skinned demon with black beard, pointed ears and boar tusks materializes (**AL C, MV 120' (40')**, **AC 5 [14]**,

HD 2, AT 1 great hammer (1d10), M 12, immune against fire, regenerates 1 HP per combat round, if it hits it may immediately follow up with another attack). With a grave and somber voice the demon asks “Who disturbs the peace of the crypt of St. Athanasius? What business have you among the dead?” It is compelled to guard the tomb from vandalism but hates its job. It will take any opportunity to spread death and destruction, but will reluctantly let characters pass if they state that they are there to stop the tombrobbing.

9. EMPTY SARCOPHAGUS

Anybody who lies down in the sarcophagus enters a state of suspended animation for one turn and receives visions from the land of the dead. If they make a save, their Charisma will increase by 1, but they will suffer Confusion if they fail.

10. CHEST

A dead graverobber lies in front of a lead chest. Opening the chest breaks an ampoule of poisonous gas. All within 10' must make a save or die from the toxic vapors. The chest contains cremation ashes and a silver dagger worth 50 sp.

11. ORACLE

Mummified priests lie in alcoves along the walls. In front of one of the alcoves is an empty oil lamp. An inscription above the alcove reads “Yes or no. I give an answer in the lamplight”. If the lamp is lighted the mummy in the alcove will answer one question per visitor with a “yes” or “no”.

12. WELL

The hatch in #4 leads here. A rusty grappling hook lies on the cavern floor.

13. THE CRYPT OF OLIVIA

The stone door of this crypt is locked. Statues of weeping angels stand in alcoves along the walls. In the southern end of the room there is a sarcophagus with skeleton reliefs. If it is opened the wraith of the necromancer Olivia Moritura will materialize (**AL C, MV 90' (30'), AC 3 [16], HD 4, AT 1 touch (1d6 HP + 1d6 STR), M 12, immune against non-magical weapons, casts Bless (only the reverse), Ray of enfeeblement, Magic missile and Cause fear as a 4th level Magic User, raises her victims as undead with 1 HD**). She desires vengeance on the descendants of her rival, which includes the magistrate and a number of other prominent townsfolk.

14. TREASURE CHAMBER

Behind the northwestern statue in #13 is a hidden room with 3 chests:

Chest 1 contains 450 sp and a glass orb filled with swirling darkness. If the orb is smashed all corpses within 300' will animate as undead. Within the churchyard, there are 263 skeletons (1 HD), 27 child skeletons (1-1 HD) and 8 mummified priests (3 HD). They will seek out the closest significant settlement. The pain of undeath may be eased only by slaying the living. If the sphere is broken in the graveyard of St. Athanasius, there is a 3 in 6 chance for each of the underground areas that 2d4 skeletons will emerge from the walls. The mummified priests will be in #11. The rest will claw their way out of the black earth in the graveyard above ground.

Chest 2 is locked and contains a scroll containing the spell Curious Wounds as well as a golden ring which stops the natural aging of the wearer. If the ring is removed, the years will immediately catch up with the wearer.

Chest 3 is locked and equipped with a needle trap with lethal poison. It contains “The Stygian Gospel”, a spellbook bound in human skin. In addition to the spells memorized by the wraith it also contains Unseen Servant.

CURIOUS WOUNDS

Level: MU 2

Range: 150'

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell does 1d6+1 HP of damage. Roll 1d12 for curious effect:

1. Bleeding wound, take additional 1d4 HP of damage each round. The blood turns into a number of gold pieces equal to bleeding damage.
2. The wound turns into a mouth that yells loudly, may attract attention from enemies.
3. The wound turns into writing that spells out the character's innermost secrets.
4. Psychic scarring. The wound is psychological and deals no HP damage but causes the character to develop a phobia.
5. Contagious wound. All within 10 ft of the target must save or take the same amount of damage.
6. The wound never fully heals. Loose one HP permanently.
7. The wound is permanent, as is all HP loss from the spell. The wound forms an extra-dimensional pocket, capable of holding 100 coins.
8. The wound leaves a permanent hole through the target's body. There is no HP loss, but subtract 1d4 points from Charisma.
9. The wound permanently glows with a greenish light equivalent to a torch.
10. The wound festers, and will kill the target in 1d4 days if not treated with Cure Disease.
11. Wound grows into an eye that the caster can see through.
12. The wound turns into a portal to darkness. 1 in 6 chance every day that a shadow (3HD, AC 5 [15], immune to physical attacks) comes through. The shadow tangles itself on the nearest target and sucks lifeforce from it until destroyed or banished. Loose 1d3 CON per turn. If the CON reaches 0 the target turns into a shadow and the two tangle on two individual nearest targets (and so on).

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15. OSSUARY

Walls and ceiling are covered by artfully arranged human bones. Stair to #1. Nine giant rats (**AL N, MV 120' (40') (Swim 60' (20')), AC 7 [12], HD 1-1, AT 1 bite (1d4 + contagion), M 8**). The largest rat wears a bloodstone necklace, worth 100 sp.

16. TUNNELS UNDER THE GRAVEYARD

The graverobbers have dug tunnels in order to get to the grave goods in the tombs without being seen. By the spot marked "T" they have placed a trip wire across the tunnel. If anybody steps on it a scythe blade will slash at chest height. Roll to hit as 1HD monster; the scythe blade does 1d8 HP of damage. A churchbell will toll if the trap is sprung. This will alert the graverobbers in #17.

17. GRAVEROBBERS

6 graverobbers resting on straw mattresses (**AL N, MV 120' (40'), AC 9 [10], HD 1, AT 1 weapon (1d6), M 6**).

18. TREASURE CHEST

Locked chest containing plundered grave goods worth 1,800 sp.

19. WINE CELLAR

2 graverobbers disguised as undead (**AL N, MV 120' (40'), AC 9 [10], HD 1, AT 1 weapon**

(1d6), M 6 are hiding and ready to scare off intruders. Stairs to #7. A large wine barrel hides an entrance to #20.

20. SUBTERRANEAN RIVER

Thoroughly rotten rowboats are moored on the muddy banks. A gold-plated helmet is gleaming in the water, worth 60 sp. A giant frog lives here (**AL N, MV 90' (30'), AC 7 [12], HD 2+2, AT 1 bite (1d4+1), M 6, surprises on a roll of 3 or less on 1d6**). The river had been used for wine smuggling. It dried up to a shallow stream when the flow of the water changed.

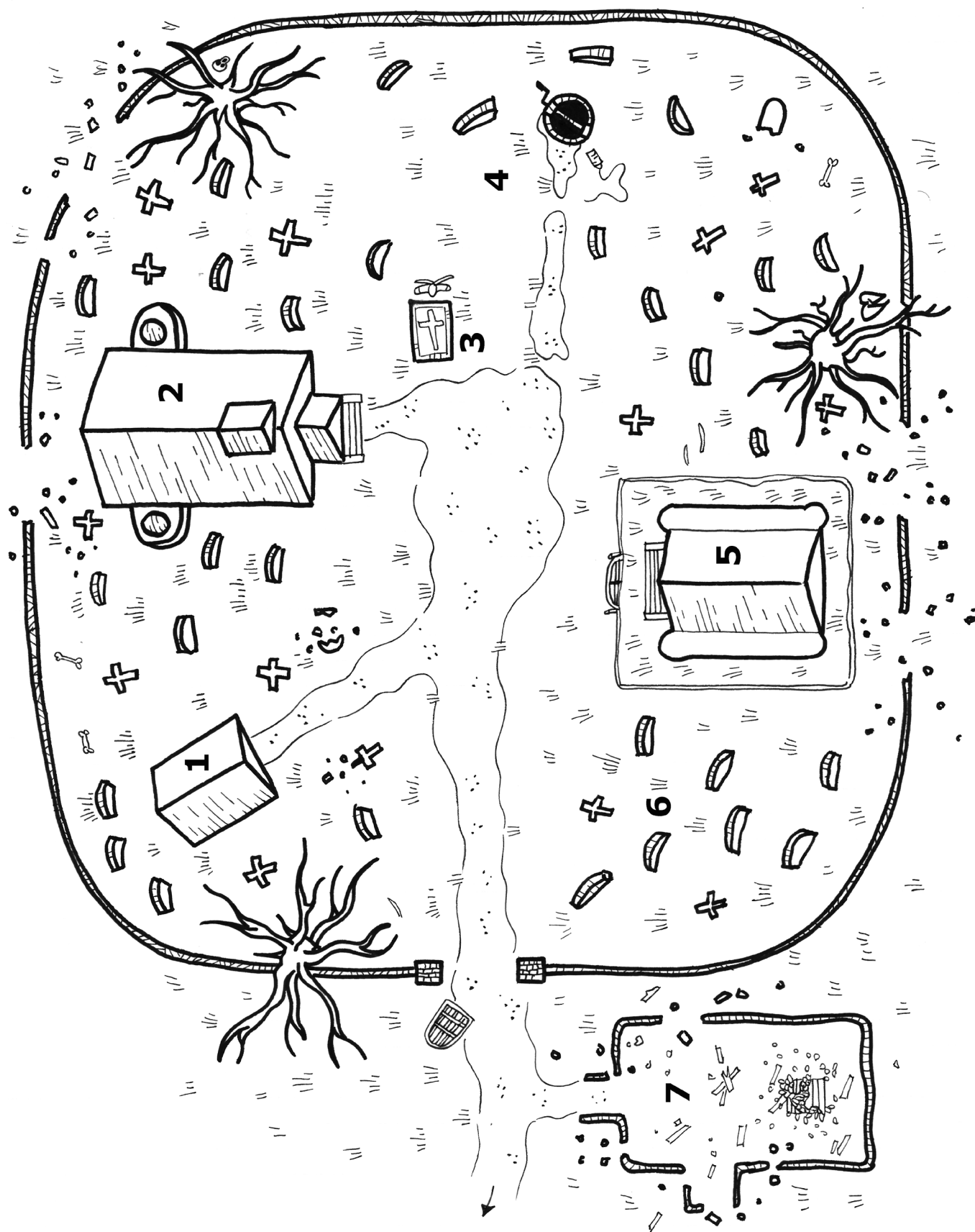
21. COMMON ROOM

A table and benches. There is bread, cheese and a jug of goat milk on the table. The children of one of the graverobbers, Aurelia (aged 5) and Titus (aged 3) are playing with wooden toy animals. The guard dog Old Nick (**AL N, MV 180' (60'), AC 7 [12], HD 1, AT 1 bite (1d4), M 8**) is sleeping in a corner.

22. STORAGE

Crates filled with rotten hay and three amphoras of soured wine. There are 3 giant rats here (**AL N, MV 120' (40') (Swim 60' (20')), AC 7 [12], HD 1-1, AT 1 bite (1d4 + contagion), M 8**). An amphora filled with 600 sp is hidden in a corner behind one of the crates.

GM MAP: GRAVEYARD



PLAYER MAP: GRAVEYARD

