

# Rising Waters, Sinking Hopes

October 3, 2023



## Plot Hooks for Other Adventures

This encounter can be introduced as a consequence of a severe storm that struck the region, causing widespread flooding, incited by someone arriving and pleading for help. Alternatively, it could be linked to an ecological imbalance in a nearby river, piquing the party's interest in investigating the source of the problem.

## Rising Waters, Sinking Hopes


The party, while exploring the forest, stumbles upon a picturesque homestead situated near the river. However, due to the flooding, the entire ground floor of the farmhouse is submerged beneath the newly formed river. Panicked shouts for help can be heard from inside.

- **Swift Currents.** The river's current is strong and six feet deep, making it difficult to move through the water. Any creature in the water must succeed on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check at the beginning of its turn or be pushed 40 feet downstream.
- **Entry Point.** The front door of the house is inaccessible

due to the water level and current, which pushes against the door. The party must find an alternative entry point. Attempts to open the submerged front door against the current require a DC 14 Strength check with disadvantage. The door has AC 15, 15 HP. Each floor has two windows on each side per floor. Attempts to move through one unprotected or without using an action to clear the broken glass requires a successful Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid taking 1d4 slashing damage. The second story windows require five feet of climbing to access from the surface of the water.

- **Frightened Family.** The family members inside are frightened and panicked. Calming them down and convincing them to cooperate requires a successful Charisma (Persuasion) check. Attempting to carry them without calming them requires a grappling check every round. Once calmed, they can assist as needed.
- **House Boat.** At the beginning of each round, the GM rolls 1d10. On a 10, the house begins moving down the river with a five foot movement speed.

## When Pigs Swim

As the party assesses the situation, they hear squealing from  within the nearby barn. Once they begin the rescue, three agitated [giant boars](#), distressed by the encroaching water, smash through the door and dash toward the party and seem hostile, protecting their home and territory. The family depends on these animals for their pork farm.

## Home and Farm

## House Description

The farmhouse is a two-story structure constructed of weathered timber, surrounded by lush, untamed gardens. Its dimensions are approximately 30 feet in length and 20 feet in width. The water level has risen to engulf the entire first floor, making the ground floor windows and the front door inaccessible. The house's second floor remains untouched by the flooding. A wooden table, chairs, and several books float near the ceiling.

The floors are connected by a lift operated by a sturdy rope-and-pulley system. It consists of a sturdy wooden platform and a thick rope with incremental leather grips to allow easy operation from above, below, or while on the platform. Counterweights enable easy movement. The platform is currently raised to the second floor, closing off access from below, but pulling the rope easily lowers it.

The second floor is cozy and earth-toned, featuring plush armchairs and couches, a wooden table with well-worn books, and a collection of intricately carved wooden figurines representing various forest creatures. A family portrait above the mantel depicts Elara, her [human](#) wife Clara who is no longer with the family, and their children, Ariana and Finnian, in happier times. Creaking floorboards betray the family's current fear as they huddle together, their usual composure shaken by the crisis.

Elara, an [elven](#) woman with silver hair and emerald eyes that match her tunic, fights to maintain her composure, her usual resilience shaken by the crisis. Ariana, the eldest, reflects Elara's graceful posture and sharp features. Her auburn hair frames her face in soft waves like Clara. Her banter reflects her quick wit, but when stressed, it becomes biting sarcasm. Finnian never stops moving his body nor his mouth, his emerald eyes absorbing his surroundings. Though no two of his hairs

point the same direction, like his sister, its color and his freckles memorialize Clara.

## **Barn Description**

The barn, located on slightly elevated ground behind the house, stands as a sturdy structure with dimensions of 40 feet in length and 30 feet in width. It is constructed of heavy oak beams and rough-hewn planks, designed to withstand the test of time. Inside, it houses various farming equipment, including plows, wagons, and stacks of feed. One corner serves as a workshop with various wood and metalworking instruments. A large stall with sturdy fencing forms a pigpen with doors that open into an outdoor pen. A chicken coop is affixed to the opposite exterior wall. The barn remains dry and safe from the encroaching waters.

## **Farm Environment**

The farm stretches over approximately 5 acres of land, hosting patches of fertile soil for crops and a small orchard of peaches, pears, and apples.

## **Possible Rescue Attempts**

Players may attempt any number of rescue methods. Besides magic options, here are guidelines on managing some potential methods effectively.

- **Chop down a tree.** Nearby trees are tall and strong. They have AC 15, 70 hp if someone attempts to cut one down. Extending the tree across the current to the house requires a DC 16 Strength check. Crawling across the wet log unaided is considered rough terrain and requires a

successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check in each direction to avoid falling off. If carrying anyone, the check is made with disadvantage.

- **Fallen Tree.** A few fallen trees lie within 30 feet of the shoreline, but they are showing signs of rot. If using one as a bridge, at the beginning of each round, roll 1d6. On a 1, the trunk breaks and begins floating downstream.
- **Use a rope and grappling hook.** Throwing a rope through a second story window via a grappling hook or other weight requires a ranged attack roll against AC 10, but if the family is still panicking, they will often stand by the window and risk injury. Holding the rope through the torrent requires a successful DC 10 Strength check each round. Tying each family member to the rope requires a successful DC 5 Wisdom (Survival) check. Simply holding the rope from shore will bring anyone holding or tied to it to shore in one round as the current pulls them downstream. Holding the rope long enough for everyone to reach shore requires a successful DC 8 + (number of people on the rope) Strength (Athletics) check.
- **Out Boar Motor.** Giant Boars can swim and carry two medium-sized creatures. A character can subdue one with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. Once all three are subdued, if none of the party has harmed any of them, a character may ride one with an additional DC 14 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. They can swim with a 20 foot speed but must also succeed on a Strength check to fight the current. If it begins five feet upstream of the house, it can take a running jump from the land and let the momentum reach the house the following round, although it still needs to swim back to shore.
- **Swim for it.** Aside from the Entry Point issues, a character swimming while carrying a willing passenger attempts the Strength (Athletics) with disadvantage.

- **Accessible Raft.** The lift in the house can hold up to 3 medium-sized creatures and function as a raft.

As the party successfully guides the grateful family to safety, Elara's eyes shimmer with relief. Ariana's sharp wit is replaced with genuine gratitude, and Finnian's boundless energy is tempered with awe. They thank their rescuers profusely, Elara's voice laced with emotion. With a newfound determination, they set forth towards town, seeking refuge and hoping for a resolution to the mysterious calamity that has befallen their once peaceful home.

## Rewards

In gratitude, the family offers the party one week's worth of rations in the form of dried and salted pork and as much fruit as they want from the orchard.

## Tying into the "A Light in the Tower" Conclusion

As the truth becomes clear to the townsfolk and they begin cleanup efforts, the family's plight touches the hearts of many. The townspeople rally around Elara, Ariana, and Finnian, offering support, shelter, and understanding while the family focuses just as much on strengthening their community as they do their own home.

## Map

Use the [Flooded House map](#) in 4K and animated formats for this encounter.

# Miniature

[Download a free STL of a giant boar](#) in 40mm and 28mm scale (Public Domain, based on Pietro Tacca's "Porcellino" statue)



[Download the PDF](#)

Artists: jcoope12, Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt, david – stock.adobe.com

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# Rumble in the Streets


October 3, 2023



## Content Trigger Warnings

This encounter includes the potential for property damage and the need for rescue operations.

# Rumble in the Streets

As the party explores [Smith Row](#), a sudden and violent  rumbling shakes the cobblestone streets. The ground beneath them trembles, and before their eyes, a massive construct of animated cobblestones and bricks, the [flagstone devastator](#), emerges from the earth. It rolls towards the party, creating a challenging terrain battle.

## Creature Tactics

- The Flagstone Devastator begins by using its “Tremor Torrent” ability to create difficult terrain and damage nearby creatures.
- It targets the party members with its slam attacks, attempting to knock them prone with “Rolling Charge.”
- The Devastator’s attacks will damage nearby buildings, which will collapse if they reach 0 HP

## Plot Hooks for Other Adventures

Consider these suggestions to insert this encounter into your urban adventure:

1. **Local Unrest:** The city has been experiencing increased unrest due to economic disparities and political tensions. The party is in the area to investigate the source of these problems, and they stumble upon Smith Row just as the Flagstone Devastator emerges from the ground.
2. **Citywide Disruptions:** A series of magical disruptions have been occurring across the city, causing chaos. The party is called in to investigate and must confront the Flagstone Devastator as it wreaks havoc.
3. **Rescue Mission:** The party hears rumors of people trapped



inside a crumbling building. They rush to the scene to rescue the trapped citizens, only to find the Flagstone Devastator causing the destruction.

4. **Thieves' Heist Gone Wrong:** The party is pursuing a group of thieves who are attempting a heist. Unbeknownst to the thieves, their actions awaken the construct, and the party must intervene.
5. **Citywide Festival:** The city is hosting a grand festival, and the Flagstone Devastator unexpectedly rises, endangering the populace.

## Minimizing Property Damage and Rescue

- The party can position themselves between the Flagstone Devastator and the nearby building to minimize property damage.
- If the building is destroyed by the Devastator's attack, players can attempt Strength checks (DC 14) to lift debris and rescue anyone inside. Failure results in a trapped NPC taking additional damage as the structure collapses.

## Possible Outcomes

1. The party defeats the Flagstone Devastator, minimizing property damage and rescuing any trapped NPCs.
2. The party defeats the Devastator, but the building collapses, resulting in potential property damage and NPCs needing rescue.
3. The Devastator defeats the party, leaving them unconscious and requiring rescue by NPCs or allies.
4. The party flees the encounter, leaving the construct to cause havoc in Smith Row.

## Rewards

- If the party succeeds in minimizing property damage and rescues trapped NPCs, they are rewarded with gratitude from the townsfolk, who offer a modest sum of gold or valuable items.
- If the building collapses, the townsfolk still show gratitude but are less generous in their reward.
- The encounter provides an opportunity to learn more about the origins of the Flagstone Devastator and its creator, which could lead to further adventures.

## Map

Use the [Smith Row map \(Hex\)](#) ([Square](#)) for this encounter. The monster may appear anywhere in the street.

[Download the PDF](#)

## Credits

Lead writer, cartographer & developer: [Dale Critchley](#)

Stock Art: tsuneomp – stock.adobe.com

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# Pawns of Francis

October 3, 2023



**Note:** This is the rest of The Insider. This section is still undergoing editing and is still very much a work in progress. but I wanted to get it to you so you can look it over in advance and hope to have a cleaned-up version with links, formatting, maps, and artwork available before Halloween.

After getting Yllbella's help or directly after the initial gathering, the party might decide to investigate regarding the criminals. Regardless of their suspicion about the organized crime in town, Francis, their leader, is well aware of their presence and the danger they represent for his business. He intends to use them to clear the castle of its threats so he can use it as a stronghold and proclaim himself as leader of an independent and sovereign town. When the party either plans to investigate the criminals or clear the castle, they have finally outlived their usefulness.

## Synopsis

Three key moments may cause Francis to decide that it's time to eliminate the party:

- **The Headstrong Party.** After the optional encounter in part one, the party decides to investigate the criminals instead of solving the matter of the missing count.
- **An unfortunate Turn of Events.** The party went after Yllbella's help, realized they were being followed and returned to town (Francis suspects his cover might be blown).

- **A well-deserved rest.** The party exits the castle victorious.

Regardless, if the Gray Brothers are alive, they remain hidden until combat starts, then they join in.

## **Francis' Ploy**

Francis has all thought out, or so he believes. Once the castle is free of its dangers, he will use the gold acquired over the years of crime to renovate the castle, arm his crew, and fortify the town. Before the lords of the region are aware, he will bring Chasm Town to its former glory, impossible to invade and easy to defend. From his point of view, to be someone that controls the criminals within the realm is a powerful asset for a king to have, therefore, awarding him with a lordship makes all the sense in the world and, if his royal majesty doesn't agree, he can most certainly be convinced.

The party fits his plans perfectly. Expendable outsiders come, clear the dangers of the castle, and are eliminated once they leave, injured and tired. If they present themselves as a nuisance, they can be overwhelmed by Francis' numbers, although that would likely take an undesired toll on his crew.

Francis prefers to let the party go to the castle, even facilitating that, instead of having a conflict with them before the issue is resolved.

He has a vague idea of what might have happened, but does not believe that the information is in any way useful for his agenda. Rather, if he's right, the intel might dissuade the adventurers from entering the castle. He will only reveal the information if he sees it as the only way to avoid direct confrontation and for the adventurers to finally enter the castle. In that case, he tells them the truth (except that he

was the married man in the story). In that case, read or paraphrase:

Puffing up his chest solemnly, Francis speaks in a grave, serious voice:

I am not one to spread rumors nonchalantly, but I do have a vague idea of why the count became a reclusive person, although I do not know what happened to him afterward. That can only be verified by entering the castle and investigating, as I suggested all along.

Francis smirks, putting his right hand on his chest and continues, posing like a theatrical narrator with a condescending voice:

Count Zuulpa Thaal was a family man. His wife lost her life at childbirth to his only daughter, and he loved that child deeply. The girl grew strong and vibrant, some kind of an indomitable genius like her father, as well as beautiful and cunning. As the girl became a woman, coveted by all the neighboring lords and princes, her heart was fixed on a married man, to the frustration of her father's frustration. To prevent the affair, the count locked her in the tower, sealing her fate, for the love she felt was not going to be swayed with ease. She tried to climb down the tower, fell, and broke her back.

He looks up at the tower, directing his gaze at a specific window, now boarded up, before continuing:

As the count ruled the area with an iron fist, he could not cope with the suffering his heart had to endure as a father. Her beloved left, as did all the suitors she used to have. He tried to provide her with all the freedom and liberty so she could continue to be the vibrant girl everyone knew.

Opening his arms broadly, gesturing all over town, he says:

He built all of these ramps and handrails just so that the entirety of town was accessible to her, but the sparkle in her eyes gradually faded under her father's unyielding rule. Her presence around town gradually decreased, as did her father's, until no one knew anything about them anymore. Rumors say that he was visited by booksellers that brought him dark tomes, and that he was conducting experiments in order to restore her health. Most likely nonsense, a rich man like him could have hired the best healers available instead of dabbling with such unreliable sources.

## **The Criminal's behavior**

The party may acquire information by observation without raising suspicions but not much from the criminal's activity itself, for Francis is a cunning leader. He ordered the gang to stop all activities if the party doesn't enter the castle to avoid being identified and giving the party evidence to investigate. The populace is too afraid to talk or to "misbehave," like taking water from the well while the criminals are "off duty."

A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal that two buildings stand out, aside from the Brawler's Cauldron.

- **Trap House.** This barn is isolated from the other buildings and appears well-maintained and in much better condition than those around it. The building looks like a barn, and it has a reinforced door, the windows boarded up inside and out. The criminals rigged the barn as a death trap in case of nosey adventurers. The roof is prepared with hay among its tiles, and curtains cover the walls so that the fire spreads easily. Once the adventurers enter, the

building is going to be locked from the outside and set ablaze. The full gang of criminals (20–30 **bandits** plus the remaining Gray Brothers) will gather outside to face any survivors. The building was chosen for being far enough from other buildings to prevent burning the whole city down.

- **Francis's House.** This house is well maintained, dissonant from the rest of gutter town. Ivaako believes that this is because Francis is a former captain of the city guard and a well-respected citizen, which Francis would claim if asked. If the adventurers insinuate that they are suspicious of Francis or ask to look around his home, he feels threatened and tries to lure them into the Trap House by revealing the information he has on the count's disappearance (see the sidebar above in Francis's Ploy) and adding the following, read or paraphrased:

Sadly, and I ask your discretion about the subject,. I must admit I was the married man she had an affair with. I was loyal to her father as I could be, even if I can't say the same about my marital vows.

He avoids eye contact while proceeding:

I know well that judging me and my weakness is useless in your quest and the solution to this mystery, so I'll spare both you, me, and the girl of the sordid details of my sins. What I have to tell you is that I've built a tunnel that leads from my basement to the castle's cellar where we used to, er, meet. I'd stopped seeing her after the accident, as per her father's orders, so I have no idea whether the passage is still secure nor what lies on the other side. I haven't the courage nor the youth to find out, but feel free to use the passage if you want. But please don't taint anyone's name. She might be alive. He could be as well for all I know.

## **Francis's Home and the Passage**

A neat and well-organized home with nothing luxurious, the house reflects a man with a stoic military background. Nothing stands out, except the full-plate armor beside the bed, a well-polished relic from his days of service, assembled on a mannequin. Inside the left foot of the armor, he hides his personal stash, a bag of gemstones (3000 gp). Francis had been buying the gems as a way to store big amounts of money in a little space to avoid notice.

The basement is empty except for the passageway, shut by a very strong steel door. Francis claims that he reinforced it, afraid of what could come from the castle while he slept, the same reason why Francis will shut the door as soon as the adventurers go through it. (The door only opens via a lock on the basement side.) It goes underground through a well-built tunnel in the direction of the castle. Halfway to the castle, the passage becomes more rustic and less cared for. The secret passage bifurcates to the barn, allowing Francis to visit the criminals' den without being seen by the townsfolk.

If the adventurers find the secret passage, they end up in the Trap House, as Francis is aware of that chance and prepared for it. The trap door leading into the Trap House is made of iron and is slightly ajar, so it will only open once, locking from below once it closes again. If it locks while one or more of the party is still below, a creature proficient with thieves' tools can pick this lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

### **Encounter One – The Headstrong Party**

After being attacked by the dissuasion group, the party might decide to deal with the rest of the bandits. On the corpse of one of the bandits, the party finds a paper with the words "don't forget the meeting at the barn" written on it. The paper



was planted there to lure the party to the Trap House.

As the bandits and the other people in town look indistinguishable from each other, it is nearly impossible to ask around without being seen by one or more criminals, and no citizen will risk talking to the party and “being a snitch”, as their doom would be certain.

If the piece of paper does not lure them to the Trap House, and they insist on investigating the criminal activity, the party receives a letter (see An Unfortunate Turn of Events).

## **Encounter Two – An Unfortunate Turn of Events**

During the recruiting of Yllbella, if the scouts were discovered, at least one of them has returned to town to warn their boss. In that case, Francis will have his guard up and will do his best to lure the party to the Trap House by using an unsuspecting child. Upon their arrival in town, a boy runs up to them and giggles with an envelope at hand. Read or paraphrase:

Heroes! Wait up! A letter to you!

A tiny girl runs up to you giggling, apparently happy despite the visible malnourishment. She hands over the letter and runs towards the alleyway, where the dark maze of corners covers her happy escapade. Inside the envelope, a letter written in beautiful calligraphy, signed as “concerned citizen”, says:

The criminals know of your arrival and are hiding with their leader in the barn.

The courier is very quick and knows the alleyway well, so following her requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, but if the party manages to do so, they’ll follow her to the front of The Brawler’s Cauldron and see her pick up a gold coin hidden on the side of a barrel. The girl will not reveal

who sent the envelope, as she made a “pinky promise” that she wouldn’t, unless she’s threatened, in which case she’ll cry and shout, “Uncle Francis did.” If that happens, and Francis is confronted, he’ll claim to be afraid to openly reveal that information, so he used a proxy to deliver the letter. According to him, now that the child shouted his name, it is paramount that the bandits are dealt with, or his life is in danger, so he urges the party to the barn. If cornered about the bandit’s leader identity, he claims it’s Ashur’s father.

Francis is a trained liar, and realizing that he’s lying requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check.

### **Encounter Three – A Well-Deserved Rest**

Half an hour after the party enters the castle, Francis orders his men to tell the locals to shut themselves inside their homes and then surrounds the castle with the totality of his forces, lying in wait for the party to come out victorious. After they exit, he’ll approach them to discover what they’ve learned and kill them afterwards. With closed doors and boarded up windows, the castle offers the adventurers no visibility to the outside and the threat that awaits them. Read or paraphrase:

A blinding lightning strike tears the sky as thunder echoes through town. The torrential rain washes gutter town as you exit the castle. Francis, the retired captain, stands in front of the castle, wearing full plate armor in a gallant display of vigor. At least twenty people have gathered, looking at you in disbelief as you emerge victorious from the castle. With his helmet open, he smiles with great satisfaction and says:

Welcome back, heroes! We awaited with grieving hearts for your return, for we thought your death was certain! We the people, are happy to have you back victorious! Tell us, what happened to the count and his heir?

This time, it is not as difficult, revealed by a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check, to realize that the people around him are in fact **bandits**, as they are all armed. After the party tells him what he wants to know, questions him about “what’s going on,” or refuses to cooperate, Francis decides the heroes have outlived their use and unsheathes his sword, in a signal to attack the party.

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## The Trap House

The bandits plan to set the building on fire after the party enters and is locked in. The windows are boarded up, and the door is heavily reinforced. A countdown will begin as soon as the fire is set. In 3 turns, the upper part of the barn is taken by the fire and anyone in range will suffer 1d6 fire damage as flaming wood and straw falls from above. On the 4<sup>th</sup> turn, the smoke starts taking a toll, and every character breathing the smoke must succeed on a Constitution Saving throw every turn or take 5 poison damage. On the 6<sup>th</sup> turn, the smoke has taken the barn completely, and any character without fire resistance has disadvantage on all rolls. On the 7<sup>th</sup> turn, the entire barn is on fire, and anyone inside takes 1d6 fire damage per turn. On the 10<sup>th</sup> turn, the building will collapse, and anyone inside will take 12d6 bludgeoning damage (half on a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw).

The iron trap door from the tunnel only opens until vertical and closes if not propped open. Once it closes, it locks and can only be unlocked from within the tunnel.

If the party tries breaking through the walls to get out, they have the following properties:

<b>Section</b>	<b>AC</b>	<b>HP</b>
Window Boards (2 layers)	15	40
Wall	15	27
Trap Door	19	14
Door	17	20

The iron trap door also has a damage threshold of 10, taking no damage from a hit with less than 10 damage.

## **The Castle**

### **Background**

After conducting all possible investigation, or equipped with pure bravery, the party finally decides to enter the castle and investigate the destiny of Count Zuulpa Thaal and his daughter. A trap awaits them outside, where Francis gathers his forces to eliminate the tired and injured adventurers, so he can finally consolidate his domain ofn the region.

### **Overarching Plot:**

The party is aware that all that enter the castle with the intention of investigating never come out. Many dangers lie inside, from insatiable hunger to terrible sorrow. They shall need to cooperate and use all of their cunning to survive, for there is good reason that the count has lived in isolation for all those years.

The ruins of the castle of solitude

### **The true tragedy of the insiders**

A decade ago, after the accident that left his beloved daughter paralyzed, depression overwhelmed the count. None of the

renovations or other measures could undo the damage he caused caused by him. It was impossible for him not to blame himself. After all, he locked his daughter in a tower as captive to prevent her from following her heart. At the time, he felt justified—lords and princes wanted to marry her, and countless alliances could be made, arrangements that could transform his lineage into a timeless dynasty. The fickle passions of a child should not prevent that destiny!

Only the tragedy made him realize his error and the futility of his values, seeing the love of his life disabled by his cruelty and greed, yet even in the wake of those consequences, he continued to attempt to control her while claiming to protect and accommodate her.

No efforts to improve the accessibility of the town would restore the shine to her soul, crushed not by the fall, but by his narrow understanding of love. She continued to rebel and attempt to follow her own dreams, resenting not her condition, but his continued efforts to control her. And for all the accessibility he implemented in the castle and town, he continued to try to keep her life on the rails he laid for her, both literally and figuratively.

Determined to make his daughter walk again, he tirelessly looked for an answer, any answer, but the gods who certainly had cursed and forsaken him.

## **The Castle of Solitude**

When facing the castle, read or paraphrase:

The castle itself is small if compared with the vulgar display of power that so many nobles exhibit. Despite its absolute lack of maintenance, the architecture reflects a geometric aptitude and seems stable and strong enough to withstand the stomp of a

god. The black stones that compose its walls are now in different shades of grey, colored by the ashes from the several fires in town. Partly covered in moss, the stonemasonry makes the walls smooth, nearly impossible to climb. All the windows are broken in clear signs of vandalism, but are all boarded up from the inside, suggesting that someone took the time to keep the interior away from prying eyes. On the other hand, a ramp leads up to its massive iron door, opened halfway, allowing you to peek inside, where you can see a rotten tapestry on the floor, covered in dust.

**Note:** The inside of the castle is cursed ground. Any attempt to sleep results in feverish nightmares and night terrors. Characters cannot take a long rest inside the castle, and a short rest takes 2 extra hours without first casting a Hallow spell.

The door is unlocked, but its weight requires a successful DC 20 Strength check to open. Once opened, the door makes a loud metallic sound. A spring activates, closing the door once again to its original position. Beside the inside of the door, a lever opens the door with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

The floor has grooves beside the lever. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the grooves would perfectly fit the wheels of a wheelchair, and a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal a connection between attaching the chair to the grooves in the floor and the lever, which makes the lever easy to use (requiring no test).

(Note for the DM: Given that, by all indications, people enter the castle and never leave, the adventurers are likely exercising caution. If for any reason they are noisy or shouting in the dining room, there's a 60% chance "the governess and the butler" will wake up and attack them, being joined by "the cook" afterwards. If the cook hears the fight with the couple, he joins the fight, as he won't allow them to spoil all the food.)

## The Dining Room

As the adventurers turn their gaze inside the main room of the castle, read or paraphrase:

Through the dim light coming from the door, you behold the remains of what used to be a sumptuous dining room. The large oak table stands degraded, the silverware covered in dust. The remains of a banquet are clean, as not even worms feast upon it. A big painting of the count and his daughter has multiple rips and adorns the wall above the fireplace. The fireplace itself has an opaque glass door that is shut, and although the fire burns, it emits only a faint light through the glass.

The room is broad, but the lack of lights obscures its details. Candles are positioned in several places around the room, as well as a big fancy candelabrum on the ceiling. The opposite wall has some doors with a small studio to the right. Multiple blood stains speckle the floor.

If the players choose to examine the room further, provide additional information based on a Wisdom (Perception) check.

- DC 15 Even though the fireplace is lit, and a considerable amount of firewood fills it, no smoke escapes the castle's chimney. Even though nothing is visibly rotting, the odor of putrefaction hangs heavily in the air.

- DC 20 A fresh scent of blood wafts from the kitchen. The dining table is missing one chair by a place setting, probably for the count's daughter.

- DC 25 Small and almost imperceptible spores of mold are scattered through the area.

(Note for the DM: Any character with Blindness has a + [IE] bonus to the Perception checks to notice the scents. There's no smoke, because the fireplace is designed to take the heat downwards, underground.)

After the initial description and information, let the players move around and decide where to explore.

If the adventurers move in the general direction of the Studio, the door to the left has the following painted on it in what appears to be a child's attempt at calligraphy: "Uncle Sal's Kitchen." On the wall in the same style is painted, "Daddy's studio, keep quiet," with an arrow pointing towards the studio.

## **1. The Kitchen**

As the players walk towards the kitchen, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal some muffled sounds, as if someone is trying to be silent and failing.

**Sal**, an ogre chef, heard the door and waits to ambush when the trespassers dare to enter his holy realm, the kitchen. Sal used to be the family's cook, and he continues to carry out his duties, cooking the invaders that come to the castle from time to time. It has been a long time since he last could cook a fresh meal, so he's having a hard time waiting for them to finally enter the kitchen and fall for his ambush, so his eagerness confounds his attempts at stealth, his enormous eye on the keyhole, drooling and waiting for his opportunity to attack.

If they open the door or look through the keyhole, Sal attacks immediately. If they linger around for too long, Sal opens the door and rushes them before his main ingredients escape. Once killed, Sal's body transforms into a human.

After the party defeats Sal, read or paraphrase:

Giving it a closer look, the floor of the kitchen is elevated in relation to the counters, making them accessible to someone in a chair, except when nearing the stove, as if only the non-dangerous parts of the room were adapted for accessibility. Even though everything is old, the kitchen is clean and seems to be



used regularly. Hanging on a line, a human leg is covered in salt to preserve it and a net wrapped around it to keep the many flies away. On the highest counter, there's a well-worn cookbook. Behind one of the low counters, there's a door. Other than normal kitchen utensils, nothing else stands out.

The aforementioned door is unlocked and leads to the cellar.

If investigated, the cookbook will reveal the following:

The cookbook starts as usual, hundreds of recipes of everyday food, written in calligraphy, scaling up to more and more sophisticated dishes, befitting of a lord. Some pages show doodles from a child, sometimes of food, sometimes a clown or other childhood images. The closer the book gets to its end, the better and more detailed the drawings become, showing that whoever created them improved with time, displaying better art until it got brilliant. Soon after that, the recipes and drawings stop altogether. In a few of the final blank pages, you find fragmentary rumblings written down. You find four in total, in order:

- Why would the gods allow that? Why!?? Poor Maggie.
- No! No! No! I want her back, poor little girl.
- Why is the count doing that? He makes no sense.
- I think I saw Maggie fly. I think I love her.

## **2. Storage**

The door to the storage is unlocked but is barricaded by something on the other side.

A simple wooden door with a simple lock, the only feature that stands out is the painted words, "Candy Storage," apparently by a child.

The remains of meat, seeds, flour, and other perishables line the shelves of this closet, moldy and rotten and corrupted by the evil that resides in this forsaken castle. Behind the door, a thick yet soft chunk of black mold has solidified on the door,

immobilizing it. The mold, a 10 ft. cube, sticks to the door and fills the entirety of the storage. If anything, or anyone opens the door, which requires a successful DC 15 Strength check, the mold explodes, causing a 20 ft. radius cloud of spores to expand 30 ft. Anyone caught in the spore cloud must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 3d12 poison damage be poisoned, success avoiding being poisoned and taking half damage. Each poisoned creature takes an additional 1d12 poison damage at the beginning of its turn and can attempt the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on a successful save. The cloud dissipates after 5 minutes, and all the residue stays on the ground. The cloud of spores can also be burned by fire in order to dissipate faster.

### 3. Studio

Arriving at the area of the studio, read or paraphrase:

The studio is open and simple. Two candelabra are located at the corners to provide light. A very comfortable armchair has fine embroidery and was likely the place the count used to read. The bookshelves are filled with history and art books, many by famous authors and some very rare. A collection worthy of a rich intellectual, that many would envy. Above them, a single shelf has a jewel box with a simple design on it.

Unbeknownst to the party, there are two **mimics** in the room, one disguised as the armchair; the other, a small mimic disguised as the jewel box. The jewel box mimic will only attack if interacted with, regardless of the armchair's behavior.

The armchair will attack on two conditions:

- If someone sits on it or attacks it.
- If someone touches the jewel box, as it is protective of its

cub.

On the remains of the jewel box, the key for the Master Bedroom can be found.

#### **4. The Vassal's Room**

Read or paraphrase:

The room at the corner has an inscription painted with the same design as the other doors, apparently made by a child. It reads, "Aunt Mallory and Uncle Mickey". The door is partially broken where the knob used to be; now some wood is nailed over it. Some spots of corrosion mar on the once beautifully carved door, as if acid spilled on it.

Listening at the door reveals heavy snoring, and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check allows the characters to recognize that the snoring is two different voices.

The room is the quarters of the Knox couple, Mickey, the butler, and Mallory, the governess. Unfortunately for them, they've been transformed in a single being, monstrously binding not only their loving souls, but their bodies in one. An **Ettin**, with a male and a female head, is the fate of the lovebirds that now indiscriminately protect the home of their master and will attack on sight. The monster is dressed in a formal suit in its upper body and a skirt on the lower body.

#### **5. The Master bedroom**

The door to the master bedroom is the only door on that floor without any painting or inscription, as the little lady wouldn't dare, for some reason, to deface her father's room. As the party approaches the door, read or paraphrase:

The biggest door on the floor is made of iron, and despite

standing out significantly, it is a simple flat metal door with no visible hinge and a strangely shaped keyhole at the center

The door is magically sealed and can only be opened by its key (Inside the small mimic at the studio). There is also a trap in the keyhole, in case someone tries to pick the lock, causing 2d6 lightning damage to anyone who puts an object into the hole, repeated every turn attempted.

When the party manages to open the door, read or paraphrase:

The door opens silently, gliding gracefully to the left. The fireplace and candles in the room light themselves as the door disappears inside the left wall, in a marvelous display of engineering. The bed is huge, made of ebony with a glass finish over the intricate woodcarvings. The silk sheets that cover the bed are embroidered with golden linings, probably a small fortune in itself (500 gp). The walls of the room, however, are in absolute dissonance with the astonishing quality and artwork of the lord's furniture. Feces and blood were used to write all manner of profanity and incomprehensible ramblings in multiple languages. Some arcane signs alluding to dark magic are mixed with the ramblings. On the corner, a well-organized oak desk has a tome upon it that resembles a grimoire, but the leather on the cover has human skin on it. The ripped-off face of an old man adorns the cover of the tome, with horror immortalized on the embalmed skin.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the master bedroom discloses some other information to the group. Read or paraphrase:

Upon inspection, the room reveals small details that tell a story of an organized mind that was disrupted by trauma. The bed is impeccably made but hasn't been used in years. The chest was left open the clothes on the top disorganized, while the ones at the bottom are neatly folded, as is true of the desk and drawers, as if the owner changed his habits over time until he started to write incoherently on the walls, showing his

frustration overwhelming him.

Some items that can be found in the room include:

- The first drawer of the desk is locked, but it can be lockpicked with a successful DC 15 thieves' tools check or forced open with a successful DC 20 Strength check and contains a bag of holding. The bag of holding contains the count's diary. (Note for the DM: The bag of holding can be used to safely transport the tome.)
- The tome on the desk is a powerful cursed item. Any creature of lawful good or neutral good alignment will feel a sense of discomfort when within ten feet of it. Any creature not of evil alignment that touches it must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or take 2d10 necrotic damage per round touching it. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage.
- A rare, custom-made wheelchair is stored inside the wardrobe. It has a crank on the side to adjust to a standing position with an adjustable brace to support the user. The chair is reinforced and perfectly fits the rails present in the castle.

## **The Tome of Despair**

### **Wondrous item, artifact**

When the Count looked for answers and solutions for his daughter's condition, a book collector sold him the accursed tome. Neither the count nor the collector had the full comprehension of what they had in hand. The tome was created in the depths of the Abyss by Anitta, a **succubus** who sent it to the material plane as a bridge that could facilitate her escape from her prison into a frail and desperate soul. That way, she could not only escape, but also harvest the pain and despair around her to grow in power and bring the stygian power with her. According to the book, she needs a certain yet unclear amount of

time and despair to complete her full escape from her Abyssal prison and establish herself on the material plane. Once the process is done, the tome merges with her material form and her full power awakens. On the other hand, if the tome is destroyed while the succubus is on the material plane, Anitta is forever destroyed with it.

This book has 100 hp with AC 15 and is immune to nonmagical damage and resistant to all except radiant damage. The Tome feeds on the damage it causes, draining life and restoring itself after being touched by any non-evil living creature. If the tome is reduced to 0 hp or placed into an unreachable place like a volcano, high seas, or inside monsters, the book will remake itself in the nearest place of great despair. The tome can only be destroyed in the upper planes or hallowed ground by a celestial or a good-aligned character using divine magic that causes radiant damage.

### **The Count's Diary**

If the adventurers find the diary inside the bag of holding, read or paraphrase:

The diary is an accounting book on its first hundred pages, but after that, it seems that accounting became less relevant and noteworthy, being replaced by increasingly nonsensical notes and expressions of frustration about his daughter's condition. In between the math and the gibberish, among torn pages and stains, one note remains legible:

- The book came to me, I haven't found it as I initially thought, but instead, it used its own mind and volition to come to me. The sheer fact that it was transported inside a magical container was enough to convince me to buy it, and the ridiculously low price, enough for me to know the collector wanted desperately to get rid of it. A tome of black magic that can or cannot be read because it wants to be read? When it wants? Is the book lying to me, talking to me? Can it really

restore her health? Will she ever forgive me for paying the price with blood? Does it matter? She will be happy again; this is all that matters.

## **Encounter Six: The Tower**

Encounter type: Exploration/Investigation

Read or paraphrase:

Reaching the stairs that lead up to the tower, you notice that the left wall and the left side of the staircase is adapted with a handrail, rails, pulleys, and a crank for accessibility. An elaborate and pristine work of masterful engineering, it allows a wheelchair up and down the stairs with minimal effort.

Up the stairs, a small balcony extends from which you can see the whole town, leading to a huge bedroom with no doors. The room displays clear signs that it used to belong to a young lady, full of pink sheets and lace curtains in a somewhat exaggerated girly cliché.

The bed has been adapted—it is lower than average with support rails so the owner could easily climb into it. The sheets are stained with blood on both sides, with drops falling down each side.

The dressing table has make-up scattered all over it, and the mirror is broken.

In case the adventurers observe the town from the balcony (If they have Yllbella with them, she notices it.), they notice something eerie down below. Read or paraphrase:

As you walk through the balcony, the stillness of the air and the deafening silence of the town is palpable. Looking down, the normal commotion is gone. The streets are vacant, all doors shut, with the exception of the immediate surroundings of the castle, which is the very opposite of what you have observed before. Dozens of people are around the castle, with their gaze fixed upon the entrance, while badly pretending to look busy.

Among them, a man in full plate stands still with his hand on the hilt of his sword.

If the adventurers have been in Francis's house, they recognize the armor as being his.

One of the drawers contains a roll of 30 drawings. Read or paraphrase:

The drawings were made by someone of great talent, possessing both anatomical exactness and refined nuance. All of the drawings depict the same couple, although in different scenes and sceneries. At first, the age difference between the couple doesn't make it clear whether they depict father and daughter or lovebirds, but as the images advance, the carnal relationship is established. They seem to be grouped in a specific order, making a graphic novel that tells the tales of lovers in their erotic adventures all over town.

## **As Above, so Below: The underground**

### **Encounter Seven: The Cellar**

The cellar has two access points, the secret passage through Francis's house and inside the castle, through the kitchen, behind the counter. Whatever the means of entering the place, read or paraphrase:

As you enter the room, the air is still except for the waving blue lights of three black candles.

The rest of the room is covered in dust. The wine and beer barrels are visibly broken and empty, as are the crates that once stored food.

On the right wall is a secret passage. Almost imperceptible indentations may be found with a successful DC 20 Wisdom



(Perception) check that would be perfectly fit by the wheelchair in the master bedroom. If fit by the chair, a door will open effortlessly, revealing a secret chamber.

**The Black Candles of Thunder:** These candles are cursed items that were put there to target people with hearing loss. Each magic candle is made of cooked human fat causes Silence as the spell for all in their radius, except those that are hard of hearing. The greater the extent of hearing loss, the clearer the perception of sound in their area of effect. Any character in the radius with that characteristic will perceive every sound on the environment, accompanied by a sense of euphoria, accomplishment, and warmth. A deaf character, however, will be welcomed by a telepathic message, seemingly coming from the candle in the middle of the room:

- Ahh, the chosen one, welcome my child.  
A pleasant voice echoes on your mind.

- This is but a sample of the gifts I bring to you child, and I chose you, among all the broken things of this land, to bear my message. I am the goddess of all that is imperfect and broken, the bringer of restoration, the avatar of all that should-have-been and a cradle of cure. To bring to shame all of those who once thought of you as meager and incapable, I shower you in glory, removing their ability to hear and giving it to you, as a graceful sample of my power and mercy, but will you listen, or is your mind as broken as your body? As I fixed Meghan's spine. I can fix you and all that choose to accept my embrace. Simply draw blood from your forehead and lower it into the blue flame to seal our pact of love so you can be whole again.

The Candles can be individually turned off with Dispel Magic, but any other natural method such as blowing on them or attacking them will trigger a chain reaction of sound

explosions. As one candle is doused, the sound wave explosion snuffs out the remaining candles, which explode in turn. Each creature within 15 feet of that point each candle takes 3d10 thunder damage, and creatures that can hear must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of their next turn. A successful Dexterity check halves the damage.

If a character accepts the proposed pact and drips blood on a candle, that triggers a chain reaction of explosions, this time with echoing laughter and disadvantage on both Dexterity and Constitution checks for the one foolish enough to seal the deal, as the message is but a ruse of Anitta to create division amongst the party.

### **Encounter Eight: The Laboratory**

As the party enters the room, read or paraphrase:

Even though the room is filled with countless bookshelves and two large tables for study and strange glass alchemical devices, the laboratory resembles a church, a place of worship filled with profane symbols written in blood all over the walls and ceiling. A young and beautiful woman with long hair, black as the night, sits at a small table. Behind her, a stout man brushes her hair with a golden brush. She notices your presence and stands up with some difficulty, noticeably pregnant. The description fits Meghan, the daughter of the missing Count. Dressed in a long night gown, black with golden embroidery, she seems afraid of you. Carefully holding her belly, she stands up and address you:

Who are you, and why are you in my father's home? Have you no respect? My father is the ruler of this land and bannerman to the king himself. You would do well to cease this trespassing at once and leave immediately!

The woman is in fact Annita, who has taken control of Meghan's

body. The pact made by her father with the evil entity for the recovery of his daughter's movements allowed her to possess her body and gradually take over her mind and soul. Meghan's soul still remains within the body but has become catatonic out of self-preservation. The man beside her is Ashur's father, Ubin, and if Bell is with the party, she'll recognize him instantly. If not, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check can lead the adventurers to that conclusion.

In this form, Annita doesn't have access to her full power, as her essence couldn't yet complete the transfer to the material plane, making her cautious. She cannot use her Shapechanger, Claw, or Etherealness abilities.

If the adventurers arrived there after going through the mausoleum, they'll already know the Count's fate, and she will be aware of that, due to her mental connection with her minions. If that's the case, she'll either attack them at the mausoleum while they're weakened by the combat there, or she'll try to dissuade them from the fight.

If they've arrived through the cellar, she tries to lure them towards the mausoleum.

Here are some examples of dialogue that can happen and how she replies.

- Example one, the group haven't found the tome and isn't aware of the succubus.

∅ Players question her: You and your father haven't been seen on the last decade and we were sent to verify what happened to you.

∅ Meghan/Annita:

"My father and I have been working on my cure, and as you can see, we made wondrous advancements. I can walk again, I have a

man, I'm pregnant by him, and I'm happy! I admit, we've been absent from ruling the town, but the advancements are so exciting and time consuming! We will remedy that at once!"

She this says while caressing the hair of the man beside her, more like one would caress a pet than a lover. The man stares at her lovingly.

"As per my father, he's old but strong. He takes very good care of me and is at the crypt at the moment, praying for my mother's soul. You can verify that yourself if you wish."

· Example two:

As the group suspects the possession and/or questions her about the monster upstairs and strange happenings, she feels threatened. Still, rather than direct confrontation, she would rather not risk facing them until the full transference of essence is complete, so she tries to dissuade them. In that case, she gives a mental command to the undead at the mausoleum to come towards the laboratory in case there's combat and holds Ashur's father as hostage. Once she understands that her cover is blown, Annita stops pretending to be Meghan and speaks plainly.

- Aren't you a bunch of smart little insects? So broken and yet so selfless. Ha ha ha! You are no heroes, for it is easy to relinquish defective lives that aren't worth living, but your fantasies of grandeur are entertaining nonetheless, I'll give you that! My designs, however, are far beyond your league, and you would do well to escape while I allow it, for I was invited here with a purpose, and as you can see, Meghan walks again. I will not depart until I have received what was promised, for the pact can't be broken. I was promised time, and while that time doesn't come to an end, here I'll remain. I bother no one, and I do not interfere with the subjects of lowlings. You have nothing to gain with your interference and everything to lose. Go back

to your people, and tell them Meghan lives and that if they are concerned with the bandits in the region, I'll deal with them myself, with my beloved husband and father, isn't that right honey?

The man gazes at the party with no emotional expression but suddenly snaps to attention and moves quickly to cast a spell. She smirks with a lecherous look towards him. Turning back at you, she proceeds:

- Leave my castle through the front door with your life as my gift for you, and let everyone know the problem is resolved.

Immediately after her speech, or any social interaction that ends in a confrontational dialogue in which the succubus is threatened, the undead (in case they were not already eliminated) barge in. If the party refuses her "offer", combat ensues. Ubin already cast Mage Armor and Haste before the party entered the room.

If the party has the cursed tome in their possession, she bargains for it. In that case, read or paraphrase **in addition to previous dialogue:**

- I see that you have something of mine in your possession, my book. It is very precious to me, and I offer you something as valuable in return for it. Instead of killing all of you for invading my home and meddling in my affairs, then simply taking my rightful possession from your corpses, I will provide you safe passage so that you can return to your king, or to do whatever you want with your sorry lives.

The demon looks at you with condescending pity before continuing.

- The man leading the city council, Francis, is in fact the leader of the criminals and have the castle surrounded with dozens of his scoundrels. If you fools were to exit through that door, he would simply kill you and take control of the city. You stand no chance against them, and only I can provide you a way to escape the castle through another path. Take my gracious offer and live to see another day, or refuse and die, for I will

use your corpses to enlarge my army of undead.

If the party accepts her offer, she will allow them to use the tunnel behind the underground mausoleum that leads to the passage in the forest (See Yllbella's storyline).

If the party refuses or tries to further parley, she'll lose her temper, and combat ensues.

### **Encounter Nine: The Underground Mausoleum**

The mausoleum has two entrances. One is the tunnel through the forest that Yllbella indicates/suggests when the party goes to find her. The other is through the underground laboratory.

Either way, read or paraphrase:

The mausoleum is very old, keeping generations of the Count's family buried there. The place is well kept, transpiring the respect the family has for the memory of lost loved ones. Built in solid polished stone, there are five richly engraved tombs, made of the same stone but with different details each. Clearly, the stonemason responsible for the tasteful work either knew the deceased personally or worked under the detailed instructions of someone who did. Everything is highly personalized.

Your admiration for the artwork doesn't last long, as you hear the growling of a beast that rises from one of the graves, an undead hound. From other graves rise their masters. Their matching nuptial clothing indicates they're a couple, and the Face of the Count is easily recognizable from all the paintings you've seen. Despite the similarity, it seems the Count was mummified right after his death, differently than his wife, whose decomposing bits fall on the ground as she rises from her grave.

Combat ensues with the **Undead Count**, **Undead Countess**, and **Undead Guardian Hound**.

## The Aftermath

If the party defeats Annita, a pillar of flame erupts from her body with a scream. Meghan remains, physically unscathed, but no longer appearing pregnant, as the pregnancy was a manifestation of Annita's gradual entrance into the plane.

Meghan is once again paralyzed and severely traumatized by everything she's endured. Ashur will find the party once it's safe to do so and will offer to get Meghan help in processing her experiences. She remembers Ashur and trusts him. Bell will retrieve her wheelchair unless someone else volunteers.

If Francis remains alive, he will attempt to seize power over the community and claim the castle as his own. If he dies, the rest of the mob will scatter and flee.

If Francis is defeated, the town will have a power vacuum. If Ubin is still alive, he will offer to go to the king in hopes of assigning a regent until Meghan feels ready to take over managing the town. The community knows her and loves her and eagerly anticipates her rule.

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# Silent but Deadly


October 3, 2023



# Can you defeat the silent threat lurking in the stacks?

This encounter is for 3–4 characters, levels 3–5.

## Encounter Summary

The party enters a magical library where they meet Rohna, a  woman in a four-armed wheelchair. The library is enchanted to cast the Silence spell whenever there is a loud noise. While conversing with Rohna, the party hears a loud scraping noise that triggers the wards. Investigating, they find a group of goblins stealing a valuable tome. A goblin glyphweaver attempts to summon a voidspawn residue, which attacks the party.

## Encounter Hooks

When the characters need information, libraries may hold the keys to unlock the riddles that vex them, either the books and scrolls or the scholars who spend time there.

This encounter will work in any library that has enough resources for some minor magical wards.

## Library Details

The library is a large room with towering bookshelves that line the walls, filled to the brim with tomes of various sizes and subjects. The shelves are made of dark wood and the walls are painted a rich cream color. The tops of the shelves are adorned with intricate marble and wood carvings of all sizes depicting




fantastical creatures and heroes of legend. The smell of old books and polished wood permeates the air.

The library is enchanted to cast the [Silence](#) spell within a 30-foot radius of the source for one minute whenever there is a noise louder than footsteps on the hardwood floor or quiet conversation.

The shelves bear inscriptions of magical glyphs. They have been enchanted with a protection spell that grants the shelves and the objects on them resistance to fire, acid, and cold damage.


## Meet Rohna

As you enter the library, the faint sounds of turning pages  and the occasional clinking of what sounds like ceramic on metal emanate from the back. The sounds originate from a woman sitting in a wheelchair with four arms, all made of shiny connected spheres. Her long dark brown hair falls in loose waves down her back, and she wears a brightly colored dress that seems to change colors with every movement. She wears a purple hat, and in the chair's right arms, she holds a teapot and cup, while her left chair arms hold a quill and tablet.

She uses her hands to turn pages while cheerfully humming a tune that you can't quite place. The air is filled with the faint scent of ink and parchment, mixed with a hint of chamomile tea. [Rohna Ginnsley](#) looks up from her book and greets you with a warm smile. "Hello there! Can I help you find something?" she asks, gesturing to the stacks of books around her.

# A Window of Opportunity

Five [goblins](#) and a [goblin glyphweaver](#) sneak into the library through a crack in a window that was left open for ventilation, grabbing a nearby chair, and scraping it across the floor loud enough to trigger the Silence spell. They use the silence to their advantage, sneaking around the library to steal a valuable tome.

As you converse with Rohna, you hear the typical sounds of a  library around you—the flipping of pages, the rustling of papers, the whispers of other patrons, and an occasional chair scraping across the floor. Suddenly, a scraping noise breaks through the ambiance, like another chair being moved, but louder than usual. However, the sound stops abruptly. You notice that the corner of the library near the window has become unnaturally silent – not even a trailing echo following the sound.

Rohna seems slightly annoyed by the noise, and if asked, she explains the silence wards in the library.

If the party doesn't investigate, anyone whose passive Wisdom (Perception) score is 15 or higher notices small movements through the stacks in that direction. If nobody notices, Rohna does and wonders aloud what's happening.

## Scuffle in the Stacks

If the party doesn't investigate, skip to the summoning of the ooze.

As the party investigates, rounds the corner of the library, they see a group of goblins huddled around a bookshelf, stuffing a large tome into a bag. One goblin stands apart from the

others, waving its arms in the air and chanting under its breath. As the party gets closer, they can see that the book the goblins are stealing is an old and ornate tome with gold leaf on the cover. While they can't read the cover as it's being stuffed into the bag, if the party examines the book afterward, the title is Slime and Punishment: A Treatise on the Properties and Behaviors of Extraplanar Oozes.

✘ As you round the corner of the library, sound returns to the area as goblins in the aisle ahead busily stuff a large tome into a bag. One goblin stands apart from the others, waving its arms in the air and chanting under its breath. The goblins look up, startled, and draw their weapons.

✘ The goblin glyphweaver will spend the first round casting a ritual spell. During the second round, a voidspawn residue will appear and will attack in the third round.

During combat, Rohna will begin with Bardic Inspiration, defend herself with her rapier if an enemy gets close enough, then attempt to help by knocking small sculptures onto the goblins with Mage Hand (The goblin target must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to avoid taking 1d3 bludgeoning damage.) or, because the aisles are tight, using Silent Image to lure them into open spaces. If the party triggers the Silence spell before the end of the first round, the summoning will fail, and the goblin glyphweaver will attempt to grab the book and flee during the second round.

If the goblin glyphweaver succeeds in the summoning, a [voidspawn residue](#) appears during the second round and attacks the party starting the third round.



Goblin art by

Armandeo64  
(armandeo64.deviantart.com) This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

With a sudden flash of light, a glowing substance seems to leak out of the air. It's a massive, amorphous blob with a shimmering, translucent body. Inside it, you can see bits of debris floating around, including fragments of what appear to be bone and metal, but not in any shape you recognize. Its body seems to pulse and undulate in a way that's almost mesmerizing to watch. Its surface is covered in tiny cilia that writhe and move like tiny tentacles, and its center is dominated by a gaping maw filled with rows of razor-sharp teeth. The ooze looks aggressive and hungry, ready to attack anything in its path. The goblin grins wickedly, ready to command the creature to do their bidding.

The voidspawn residue only obeys the goblin glyphweaver for a round before it loses control, after which the ooze uses its Cacophonous Vibration and attacks whoever is closest to it.

As the battle ends, ooze seems to drain back into the air, leaving only an odor of acrid ozone and complete stillness. The silence wards begin to wear off, but the library remains eerily quiet for a moment until the sounds of patrons who had fled in terror earlier begin to filter in.

Rohna, relieved that the goblins and voidspawn residue has been defeated, thanks the party and produces more teacups from her

belongings, inviting the party to sit down for a cup of tea. As she pours the tea, she congratulates them on their bravery and asks if they found what they were looking for in the library. She then offers to help them with any further research they may need, pointing out some other sections of the library that may be of interest. Her kind motherly tone and behavior put the party at ease after the harrowing encounter.

## Downloads

[Encounter PDF](#)

## Maps

- [Gridless](#)
- [Hex](#)
- [Square](#)

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# The Haunting of Smith Row

October 3, 2023



(Work in Progress, scheduled for Limitless Champions Adventures, summer 2023)

## **Content Trigger Warnings**

This adventure includes the death of a spouse and may include death and violence.

## **The tools have become the attackers!**

Chaos has erupted in the artisans' district! Can you restore order and find the cause?

This one-shot side quest adventure is designed for 3–4 characters, level 5–7, with a total of 20–22 levels.

## **Background & Synopsis**

A chaotic noise erupts from Smith Row. The items at the local blacksmith, weaponsmith, and other shops have suddenly become animated and are attacking anyone that gets too close. Rumors abound of a ghost that has returned to take revenge on the artisans after a warrior died in battle when their sword broke. In fact, a new weaponsmith has recently come to town and hired a local wizard to animate the equipment to scare off his competition. The party must defend the shopkeepers against the attacking objects, determine the source of the commotion, and bring those involved to justice.

## **Adventure Hooks**

This adventure is designed to immediately draw the party in during any visit to a city. The opening encounter will draw their attention, and curiosity should motivate them. If necessary, the captain of the guard will offer them a 100 gp reward to restore order.

## Where are we?

This adventure can occur in nearly any city large enough to support a street of artisans. The characters begin in the merchant district in the opening encounter, but their proximity to a city's artisans is more important. If used with the Nethermaw city setting, this adventure would take place in The Anvil.

## Opening Encounter

As the party wanders the merchant district, stocking up on supplies for their next adventure, rhythmic noises come from the next street over, called Smith Row and known for its artisans. Quickly, the clangs turn to random clashes and screaming, as terrified voices shout, "It's alive! Help!"

Two members of the town guard rush toward the clamor but come running back just as quickly, yelling, "Ghosts!" If the party tries to stop them, they'll insist that they're not getting paid to fight ghosts and will flee as quickly as possible.

As the party goes to investigate, they enter Smith Row, a street lined with shops, people fleeing, and animated objects moving or flying around inside the shops. Some of the owners have fled, while others are trapped in their shops. Many of the people are running towards the inn.

## Additional Clues and Tips

Besides what the characters can glean from the shop owners, if they get stuck, someone can drop other information for them:

- Banain Bloodgrip, weaponsmith, has been seen visiting William Duststone, a wizard. This isn't suspicious, as

townsfolk often hire William for simple magical jobs, but they seem to have a business relationship of some kind.

- Last night, someone saw a purple glow coming from the third story window of William's tower.
- A successful DC 10 Arcana check will suggest that a purple glow often means transmutation magic.
- To shorten the adventure, some of the shop owners may have already stopped the animated objects in their shops by smashing them or catching them in a chest, thus reducing the number of combats. (The blacksmith and bowyer (bowmaker) are the most likely to have rescued themselves.)
- The shop owners could also run out of the shops, causing the items to chase them, resulting in a bigger challenge for the party as they face a larger number of objects all at once.
- Veralynn can show up to give hints or assistance if needed. After any strenuous activity, she'll want to take at least a short rest or, more likely, a long rest.

## Places to Investigate

### 1 Grog's Shop (Blacksmith)

As you approach the blacksmith shop, you hear metal crashing and a low voice shouting, "Stop it! I have work to do! Go bother someone else!"

This wooden building with a tin shingle roof includes a forge, anvil, barrels of water, bellows, and other smithing tools, with horseshoes hanging around the walls. Grog the blacksmith, is hiding behind an overturned table, using a broken chair to protect himself and yelling angrily at the flying debris.

A hammer and four horseshoes are flying around the room and will



attack anyone in the shop.

## Animated Hammer

Tiny construct, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 4 (1d4 + 2)
- **Speed** 0 ft., fly 25 ft.

Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
- **Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The hammer is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by *Dispel Magic*, the hammer must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

**False Appearance.** While the hammer remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a regular hammer.

Actions

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

## Animated Horseshoe

Tiny construct, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 2 (1d4)
- **Speed** 0 ft., fly 25 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
- **Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The horseshoe is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by Dispel Magic, the horseshoe must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

**False Appearance.** While the horseshoe remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a regular horseshoe.

## Actions

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

## Grog

Medium cisgender humanoid (Dwarf), Neutral, he/him

- **Armor Class** 11 (leather armor)
- **Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

- **Skills** Intimidation +2
- **Senses** passive Perception 10
- **Languages** Common
- **Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

## Traits

**Tinnitus [IE 2, Chronic].** Grog has a persistent ringing in his ears that makes it difficult for him to understand speech, especially in the presence of background noise. The ringing sound is audible even in magical silence. This gives Grog a -2 on all hearing-related Wisdom (Perception) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks when background noise is present.

## Actions

**Hammer.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Grog is a middle-aged male dwarf. He is bald and has a short gray beard. He wears a leather apron and has soot on his face. He has a wide build and is very muscular. Grog is gruff in demeanor, and after being rescued, his appreciation will be minimal. When the party talks to Grog, because his tinnitus makes it difficult to hear, he'll generally nod in response and try to avoid conversation to avoid asking people to repeat themselves or speak up.

## 2 The String & Feather (Bowyer & Fletcher)

As you approach the String & Feather, a wooden building with a wood-shingled roof, you hear the sound of something thunking into wood repeatedly, followed by two voices shouting in fear.

The inside of the building has tool benches and woodcarving tools with drawers of strings, arrowheads, and feathers. One wall has a large painting of a phoenix. All of the walls are studded with holes.

Qiana and Clifton are crouched in a corner as an **animated longbow** is shooting arrows at them while they hold a large wooden board with several arrows stuck in it.

## Animated Longbow

Medium construct, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 12
- **Hit Points** 3 (1d8 – 1)
- **Speed** 0 ft., fly 25 ft.

Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (–1)	1 (–5)	3 (–4)	1 (–5)

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
- **Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The bow is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by *Dispel Magic*, the bow must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute. **False Appearance.** While the bow remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a regular bow.

Actions

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

## Qiana (Bowyer)

Medium cisgender humanoid (human), Lawful Good, she/her

- **Armor Class** 10
- **Hit Points** 4 (1d8)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

- **Senses** passive Perception 10
- **Languages** any one language (usually Common)
- **Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

### Actions

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

Qiana is a tall and slender woman with long black hair that falls down her back in loose curls. She has dark brown eyes and light brown skin. She usually wears a long flowing dress with a high neckline.

Qiana is a friendly woman who is always willing to help those in need. She will offer her bow making services to the party, and even give them a discount if they help her.

## Clifton (Fletcher)

Medium cisgender humanoid (half-elf), Lawful Good, he/him

- **Armor Class** 10
- **Hit Points** 4 (1d8)

- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

- **Senses** passive Perception 10
- **Languages** any one language (usually Common)
- **Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

## Actions

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

Clifton is a 23-year-old male half-elf fletcher. He has very long, straight, brown hair, light brown skin, and brown eyes with an average build. He wears beige pants and a loose orange tunic with an open neck, revealing a tattoo on his chest of a bow and arrow that seems to draw the arrow when he stands with his back arched, which is his typical posture.

Clifton is friendly but nervous. If the party helps, he'll offer them some food in thanks, having some smoked chicken and biscuits on hand.

## 3 The Gilded Brace (Orthotist/Prosthetist)

A wooden building with a gold-trimmed sign echoes with a crashing sound and a tenor voice singing a song of fear and betrayal. "I trusted you to take me home, but now I fear I'm all alone..."

### Qothfunt (Orthotist/Prosthetist)

Medium humanoid, nonbinary (gold dragonborn), Neutral Good, they/them

- **Armor Class** 10
- **Hit Points** 4 (1d8)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

- **Damage Resistances** fire
- **Senses** passive Perception 10
- **Languages** Common
- **Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

## Actions

**Breath Weapon (Recharge after a short or long rest).** Qothfunt exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

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

Qothfunt is a 23-year-old nonbinary dragonborn orthotist/prosthetist. They have a smooth head, brown eyes, and shiny gold scales. They stand 167cm (5'5") tall and have a round build. They wear a white tunic with a tan denim apron, and when spoken to, one of the words they hear typically reminds them of a song lyric that they begin humming or singing quietly.

Qothfunt cares a lot about the people of the town, especially the elderly and veterans. They helped some of Naesala's relatives with leg and back braces and can't imagine why she'd be attacking them.

## Animated Wheelchair

Medium construct, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 26 (4d8 + 8)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
- **Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The wheelchair is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by Dispel Magic, the wheelchair must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute. **False Appearance.** While the wheelchair remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a regular suit of armor.

## Actions

**Slam.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 12) as the wheelchair has scooped it up and is moving too erratically to escape. The wheelchair must continue moving to retain the grapple. Until this grapple ends, the wheelchair can attack another target, slamming its passenger into the new target, causing both targets to take the same amount of damage. If another target is not within range, the wheelchair slams its passenger into an available solid object, and if no such object is available, it attempts to move 30 feet then stops suddenly,



throwing its passenger 10 feet and causing 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

## 4 Walt's Weapons (Weaponsmith)

This simple wooden shop echoes with a deep voice shouting as metal clashes. "Down, blade! You were made for protection!"

On entering the shop, besides the forge, a pile of coal, a pile of iron ore, and associated tools, the wall is lined with polearms and various swords. Two animated longswords fly around the building and will attack anything that moves. Walter is desperately parrying with a rapier to protect himself.

### Animated Sword

Small construct, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 4 (1d6 + 1)
- **Speed** 0 ft., fly 25 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
- **Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The sword is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by Dispel Magic, the sword must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute. **False**

**Appearance.** While the sword remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a regular sword.

#### Actions

**Swordstroke.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d10 + 1) slashing damage.

## Walter Mistsplitter (Weaponsmith)

Medium humanoid (human), cisgender, Lawful Good, he/him

- **Armor Class** 10
- **Hit Points** 5 (1d8 + 1)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

- **Senses** passive Perception 10
- **Languages** Common
- **Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

#### Actions

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

Walter Mistsplitter is a 44-year-old male human blacksmith. He has short, curled, dyed teal hair, brown eyes, rough dark brown skin, and a short beard. He stands 167cm (5'5") tall and has a muscular build. Walter is kind and sees his work as necessary to allow people to protect themselves, but he's not very conversational, struggling with small talk and unstructured social situations.

Walter doesn't blame himself for Naesala's death and is confident in his workmanship. This seems like the work of a

ghost, but he can't explain who would attack him, but he's made enough weapons that it could be anyone. What's more, his weapons have certainly laid many enemies low.

Walter has the weapons contract with the town guard and fears that Banain is trying to discredit him to get the contract instead.

## 5 The Handy Hilt (Weaponsmith)

This stone building has "Lou's Jewels" engraved into the front wall but clearly worn by time and partly obscured by a new sign: "The Handy Hilt." The interior is quiet, the forge is cold, and the walls are lined with swords and axes. Lou, the jeweler who formerly owned this building, died a year ago, and Banian bought the building and opened his shop there a few months ago.

Banian doesn't have any animated weapons in his shop, but he's hiding nonetheless. If questioned, he will say that he's the only one who wasn't there when Naesala died, so she must not blame him. He will get defensive if questioned too long and demand that the party leave his shop unless they're going to buy something.

The truth is that Banain hired William Duststone to force Walter out so he could corner the market on weapons.

### Banain Bloodgrip (Weaponsmith)

Medium humanoid (dwarf), cisgender, Neutral Evil, he/him

- **Armor Class** 17 (splint)
- **Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
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16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)
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- **Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2
- **Senses** passive Perception 12
- **Languages** any one language (usually Common)
- **Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

## Actions

**Multiattack.** Banain 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: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Banain Bloodgrip is a 239-year-old male mountain dwarf blacksmith. He has very long, curled, dyed blue hair and beard and brown eyes. He has rough, reddened pale skin and has a massive build.

He is boisterous and talkative but clearly thinks himself superior to others.

## 6 Margaret's Mail (Armorer)

This stone building echoes with loud clashes of metal and an occasional frustrated grunt.

On entering, daylight streams through many windows as the breeze blows through. The forge has a dull glow, and the walls are lined with crates of tools, armor pieces, coal, iron, and coils of wire for chainmail. Above the crates, colorful shields decorate the walls.

Margaret is holding a shield, successfully evading the attacks

of the animated armor, but her hammer is out of reach. When the party enters the battle, she will use her first turn to dodge and get her hammer and will join in the attack for the second round.

## Margaret Crewe

Medium humanoid (hobgoblin), cisgender, Lawful Neutral, she/her

- **Armor Class** 18 (chain mail, shield)
- **Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** Common, Goblin
- **Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

### Traits

**Sensory Processing Difference (Sensory Over-Responsivity, heat) [IE 3, Triggered].** When encountering an overwhelming stimulus, as long as the stimulus is present, Margaret must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or act only to avoid the stimulus, however possible, for 3d4 rounds, after which another Constitution saving throw may be made. If she succeeds on the Constitution saving throw, the IE increases by 1 cumulatively until she avoids the stimulus for 3d4 rounds. While avoiding the stimulus, Margaret makes all rolls, except the previously mentioned Constitution saving throw, with a -3 penalty. She has a +3 bonus to all Wisdom (Perception) checks involving her sensitivities. Every time she takes fire or cold damage, Margaret must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take an additional 50 percent psychic damage.

## Actions

**Warhammer**. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d10 + 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Margaret Crewe is a 41-year-old female hobgoblin armorer. She has long, straight, dyed green hair, brown eyes, and smooth yellow skin. She stands 165cm (6'4") tall and has a beefy build.

She is very focused and rarely speaks.

She lives in her basement with large stores of ice and keeps cold water on hand. When needing to use her forge, she works in the heat as long as she can stand it but then goes into the basement to cool off, using that time to make chainmail or decorate shields.

Margaret spends most of her off time relaxing in her underground home and doesn't hear much. She doesn't believe the current situation is the work of a ghost, but can't explain it, and suggests checking with the local mage.

## Animated Armor

Medium construct, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)
- **Speed** 25 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

- **Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The armor is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by *Dispel Magic*, the armor must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute. **False Appearance.** While the armor remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a regular suit of armor.

#### Actions

**Multiattack.** The armor makes two melee attacks. **Slam.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

## 7 Sweetbriar Salves (Alchemist)

This rough log building has sweet aromas coming from the salves and ointments within. The party will hear a loud crash of pottery breaking and a voice yelling, "You're supposed to heal! This is going to be a mess!" Upon investigating, they find Veralynn brushing off her hands, having dispatched the animated jars that were attacking her. She welcomes the party as she goes to get a broom.

### Veralynn Sweetbriar

Insert stat block here

Veralynn used the skills she learned to open a shop where she sold her creations to help others, like her, that struggled with various chronic ailments that traditional healing, both magical and non-magical, could not properly address. While this was not in her plans at first, Veralynn has grown to love the work and

helping those around her. Wherever her shop is located, she is a hub for the community and is well known in the town.

Veralynn likes everyone on Smith Row but hasn't gotten to know Banain very well. She wonders whether someone has upset a nature spirit. If the party needs help fighting William, she will assist, using her spells or taking the form of a **tiger**, with leafy branch-like wheels attached to her hind legs. If asked to assist in investigating the tower, she will be willing to Spider Climb up the tower wall using only her hands after dark to look inside. (The violet glow is clearly visible after dark.) After making this climb, Veralynn experiences Confusion from the exertion and will have trouble explaining what she saw until after taking a long rest.

## 8 Furnishings by Galssa (Carpenter)

As the party nears this wood-paneled shop, Galssa runs out. An **animated hammer** is smashing her shop. Galssa managed to get out safely, but the hammer is still breaking up the shop, and she's desperately looking for help.

### Galssa Rosikini Inaxi Trinove (Carpenter)

Medium humanoid (gnome), cisgender, Lawful Good, she/her

- **Armor Class** 10
- **Hit Points** 4 (1d8)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

- **Senses** passive Perception 10
- **Languages** Common, Gnomish, Gnomish Sign Language
- **Challenge** 0 (10 XP)



## Actions

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

Galssa Rosikini Inaxi Trinove is a 328-year-old female forest gnome carpenter. She has very long, wavy, blond hair shaved on the right side and green eyes. She has soft golden skin. She stands 89cm (2'11") tall and has a round build and large scar on her left arm.

Galssa is friendly and courteous and avoids conflict as much as possible. If asked about any conflict in the community, she will try to change the subject by offering the party some cinnamon cookies and tea and tries to use that as an excuse to distract herself, instead talking about her cookie recipe. But if the party convinces her to answer them, she has heard the weaponsmiths (Walter & Banain) arguing and knows they don't get along but also wouldn't doubt that a ghost is the perpetrator.

## 9 Inn: The Indigo Mug

The inn is a single-story stone-walled building, with a ceramic tile roof and a smooth stone floor. Accommodations consist of a single large room with wooden cots. The inn is locally known for its food's good quality.

### Innkeeper

The innkeeper is a thin female dwarf named Frari. She has a young daughter who idolizes adventurers. She doesn't have much time to talk to adventurers, but if questioned, Frari'll say she knows nothing about it.

### Menu

- Boiled Eggs and Soft Cheese, Tankard of Cider (11 cp)

- Boiled Sausage and Leek, Tankard of Stout (12 cp)
- Millet Bread and Soft Cheese, Mug of Perry (3 cp)
- Millet Bread and Whey Cheese, Mug of Beer (2 cp)
- Stewed Pork and Lentils, Tankard of Beer (11 cp)

## Patrons

- **Burga: Female Human Artist.** Burga has red hair, light skin, and gray eyes. She wears expensive clothing and an amulet of luminous crystal. Burga is quarreling with a company of four elves about whether Smith Row is haunted. (She says it is. They say elves don't become ghosts.)
- **Shimil: Male Dwarf Undertaker.** Shimil has braided auburn hair, light skin, and blue eyes. He wears modest garments and numerous rings. Shimil buried Naesala in the woods outside of town. It was a major event in the town's history, and he will talk at length about the accompanying service, the songs of valor sung by local minstrels, and the epic eulogies. He believes that he followed all necessary procedures to make sure she can rest peacefully and considers any suggestions of a ghost to be an affront to his professionalism.
- **Bera: Female Halfling tanner.** Bera has black hair, brown skin, and narrow amber eyes. She wears sturdy clothing and riding boots. Anyone within ten feet of her can smell the tanning chemicals that permeate her clothing, but she's kind to all, so she tends to have people gathered around her. She is busy calming four children who were playing in the street and fled to the inn when the commotion started. If questioned, Bera has no opinion about ghosts, but she'll say, "This commotion is no noisier than the arguments between Walter and Banain, the two weaponsmiths! Those two clash more than their hammers!"

## 10 Naesala's Widower

### Finaeli Galamin

Medium humanoid (elf), cisgender, Chaotic Good, he/him

- **Armor Class** 10
- **Hit Points** 4 (1d8)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

- **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10
- **Languages** Common, Elvish
- **Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

Finaeli Galamin is a 193-year-old male high elf sailor who has since taken up rope and net making. He has long, wavy, gray hair, green eyes, and rough copper skin. He welcomes the party and offers them a cup of tea, which has a distinct flavor of rum if drunk. The house is decorated in a nautical theme with a lot of nets and rope.

Finaeli blames Walter for Naesala's death but rejects any claims of a ghost, since the only known elven ghosts are banshees, to his knowledge, and Naesala wasn't vain. He has plenty of insults for Walter's weapon quality, but is ambivalent toward Banain.

## The Wizard's Tower

A block north of Smith Row, William's house is a three-story round stone tower. If anyone examines the outside, while difficult to see in daylight, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal a violet flickering light and wisps of smoke emanating from the third story windows. At night,

the violet flickering is immediately obvious to anyone examining the windows from the ground. The floors are connected by a large elevator that can be operated with a crank from the inside. The elevator can hold up to six tightly-packed medium creatures.

The first floor serves as the living room and kitchen.

William is on the first floor, sitting in a large chair, reading an old tome. When the party arrives, he will act annoyed about being disturbed and will insist that he knows nothing about any problems in town, and that he's been in his tower reading all day. He will resist any attempts to have his tower searched.

Searching the first-floor chest of drawers will reveal a bag of 50 gp with the Handy Hilt logo embroidered on the bag.

The second floor is William's study, filled with books (mainly on the history of magic and biographies, but some on alchemy), trinkets, vials, and drawers of spell components. Among the books, the party may find the book, *Quickening Objects*. This book, which will reveal a transmutation aura if Detect Magic is cast on it, has instructions for creating animated objects, but if anyone opens it without casting Dispel Magic on it, the pages will all tear out and begin flying around the room like birds as a **swarm of pages**. Once animated, the pages cannot be reassembled to decipher the instructions as the ink will have smeared, and being a magic tome, the Mending spell will not affect it, although the cover remains intact and readable. If the party opens the book successfully, they will find that the words on the page are faded and almost unreadable. The words are written in a magical ink that fades slightly every time Dispel Magic is cast on it, and attempts to copy it into another medium will result in the words fading on the new source as they disappear from the book. The Dispel Magic spell that would allow the characters to see the contents of the book is the final casting

before the pages go completely blank, although the animation enchantment remains until activated. If the party keeps the book open, a ninth level wizard can study it for a week and cast a ritual spell to animate one object, after which the pages will fade completely.

The third floor contains a large magic circle, an empty book stand, and a censer surrounded by four candelabras in the circle's center. The violet flames in the censer dance strangely as if striking out at invisible objects. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will recall that violet likely indicates transfiguration magic. If the party extinguishes all of the flames, the animated objects in the city will all cease their animation, but the elevator will activate, and within 2 rounds, William will come out of the elevator and attack the party. He won't fight to the death, but he hopes to silence anyone who would damage his reputation.

If the party confronts William about the book, he will tell them that they don't know what the book actually is, and if they haven't opened it yet, he will offer to let them see for themselves, and when the swarm of pages attacks, he will join in the attack.

Climbing the wall to get into the tower from the outside requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or DC 10 with a rope and grappling hook. Accomplishing this without William noticing requires a successful DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

## **William Duststone**

Medium humanoid (human), cisgender, Neutral, he/him

- **Armor Class** 12 (15 with mage armor)
- **Hit Points** 40 (9d8)

- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Charisma</b>
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

- **Saving Throws** Intelligence +6, Wisdom +4
- **Skills** Arcana +6, History +6
- **Senses** passive Perception 11
- **Languages** Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Infernal
- **Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Spellcasting.** William is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). William 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, Blink, Fly

4th level (3 slots): Polymorph, Ice Storm

5th level (1 slot): Animate Objects

## **Actions**

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

William Duststone is a 53-year-old male human wizard. He has

very long, straight, black hair, golden eyes, and smooth pale skin. He wears a red robe.

William was hired by Banain to spook the town. He will deny this, and if cornered, he will attempt to silence anyone, including Banain, so that nobody finds out.

## Swarm of Pages

Medium swarm of Tiny constructs, unaligned

- **Armor Class** 12
- **Hit Points** 24 (7d8 - 7)
- **Speed** 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

- **Damage Vulnerabilities** fire
- **Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
- **Damage Immunities** necrotic
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
- **Senses** passive Perception 11
- **Languages** –
- **Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

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

### Actions

**Paper Cuts.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target in the swarm's space. Hit: 7 (2d6) slashing damage, or 3 (1d6) slashing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or

fewer.

## **Culmination**

Once the party stops the attacks, they'll need to determine the cause. Further questioning of other townsfolk will produce a recurring theme: Banain and Walter hate each other, and Smith Row was pretty calm before Banain moved into town.

For additional intrigue, the guards may return and blame the party, as the disruption began when they came into town.

If William is blamed, he will deny it and suggest that Banain has been using a cursed hammer, made a pact with a devil, or some other excuse. If Banain finds out William has betrayed him, Banain will reveal that he paid William to animate the objects, which William will deny and say Banain is just making the local wizard the scapegoat. William has no previous record of questionable activity and tends to keep to himself when not hired for local magical needs.

If William is asked to investigate, he will pretend to cast Detect Magic and announce that there's a residual transfiguration aura around any of the animated items. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check by a wizard will recognize that William didn't complete the spell, skipping a word or gesture. If questioned on this, William will insist that it's obvious and didn't want to waste his energy.

William will avoid combat if possible, but if cornered, he will fight.

## **Gifts at the Inn**

If the party solves the mystery, the shop owners appreciate all their help and give them the following gifts in appreciation,



besides buying them a meal at the inn:

Arrow +1

Salve of Healing (functions as a Potion of Healing)

Silvered longsword

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## Shadows of Corruption

October 3, 2023



*This entry offers a short encounter that may be used as a sidequest, one-shot, or a tier 3 campaign. Use the [free Tower of the Magi maps from Tom Cartos](#) , and populate the building with adventurers and devils of your choice. The [succubus/incubus](#) works well for this corruption-themed story, and [bone devils](#) and [barbed devils](#) make suitable minions. The humanoid guards guarding the castle may include a [mage](#), an [assassin](#), and a group of [veterans](#). Note that Estevot will be reluctant to kill his former comrades but will do so if necessary, and while most of them have abandoned their former altruistic goals, some may be naively duped by Jorgoras and its schemes.*

The Devoted Vanguard was once a group of skilled warriors and mages who dedicated their lives to protecting the innocent and

upholding justice. However, over time, the organization became corrupt and lost sight of its original mission. Greed replaced altruism as a motivation, causing many of the good members to leave.

But [Estevot the Gentle](#), a skilled warrior, remained with the Vanguard. He believed that if he stayed with the organization, he could still influence the remaining members to turn away from their dark path and return to the light.

As time passed, Estevot watched as the Devoted Vanguard grew more and more corrupt. The remaining members engaged in thievery, extortion, and other illegal activities, all in the name of elevating the Vanguard. Estevot struggled with his conscience, but he knew that if he left, the Vanguard would have no hope of redemption.

One day, Estevot heard whispers of a powerful [devil](#) lurking within the walls of the organization. The devil, known as [Jorgoras](#), had been summoned by the corrupt members of the Vanguard to grant them power and control over the land. However, as time went on, Jorgoras's influence grew stronger, and he began to take control of the organization, using it for his dark purposes.

Estevot knew that he had to act quickly to stop Jorgoras and bring light back to the Vanguard. He enlisted the help of a group of adventurers passing through the region, and together they made their way through the fortress.

They battled their way through rooms filled with corrupt members, fighting off creatures of darkness and confronting those who had fallen to the devil's influence. Finally, they arrived at the heart of the organization, where Jorgoras waited.

A fierce battle ensued, with the group of adventurers facing off

against the devil and his minions. In the end, they emerged victorious, banishing Jorgoras from the fortress and freeing the Devoted Vanguard from his grip.

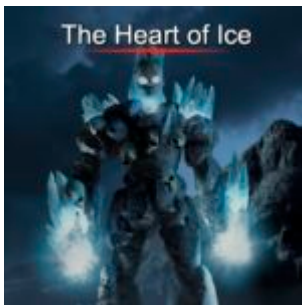
Estevot thanked the adventurers for their help, and together they vowed to work towards bringing the organization back to its former glory. It was a long road ahead, but with their determination and courage, they knew that they could overcome any obstacle in their way.

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# The Heart of Ice Full Version

## #RockYourScar #CHD

October 3, 2023



Here's the [Heart of Ice](#) Full Version:

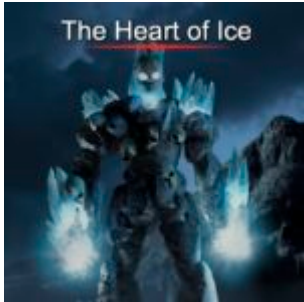
[Adventure PDF](#) or [Adventure Plain Text](#)

[Heart of Ice Maps](#)

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# The Heart of Ice #RockYourScar #CHD

October 3, 2023



## Are you ready to chill with the Glaciadon and save the Heartstone?

This adventure is for 3–4 characters, levels 6–8.

*This adventure is freely available here at the Lair through Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day, February 14, after which it will be available only to [subscribers](#). It's also available as pdf and txt with 4K maps [in our store](#) and [for Wyrmling+ subscribers](#).*

*If you're using the free option:*

*Use Theater of the Mind for the maps.*

*Lirien is a 3rd level half-elf rogue with the following additional trait:*

**Congenital Heart Defect.** *Lirien is easily tired and experiences Shortness of Breath. She has a -2 penalty on all saving throws against gas-based poison attacks and Constitution checks related to exertion. After three rounds of strenuous physical action such as melee combat, she must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take one level of exhaustion until*

*she stops the activity and rests for 2d10 minutes. Each round she continues, she needs to succeed on an additional saving throw, and the DC increases by 1 each round. Because she's used to assessing her physical capacity and finding creative solutions to perform physical tasks, once per long rest, she can choose to roll a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check with advantage*

*Use Air Elemental for the Glaciadon, but add 2D8 cold damage to its attacks, and change damage resistances to make sense for an ice creature. Or use the Air Elemental Myrmidon.*

Congenital Heart Defect affects heart function before birth, leading to symptoms like [shortness of breath](#) and [fatigue](#). [Rock Your Scar](#) celebrates the bravery of those with this condition and empowers them to embrace their strength.

Support people with CHD, or get support if you or a loved one lives with CHD at [Mended Hearts](#).

## **Setting & Synopsis**

A small village is being threatened by a Glaciadon, a powerful ice elemental, that has taken control of the Heartstone, a magical artifact that regulates the temperature of the village. The villagers have sought the help of adventurers to defeat the elemental and reclaim the Heartstone.


The party must travel to the Glaciadon's lair in a frozen cave system, encountering frost giants who want them to hunt caribou for them. The party finds Lirien, a half-elf rogue with a congenital heart defect, who's trying to steal the Heartstone back. The players must defeat the Glaciadon, retrieve the Heartstone, and return it to the village.

# Adventure

## Frozen Heart of the Matter

As the adventurers approach the village, they find it covered in snow and ice. The villagers explain that an ice elemental has taken control of the Heartstone and is making the temperature drop rapidly. They ask the party to journey to the elemental's lair in the nearby mountains and defeat it to reclaim the Heartstone.

## A Hearty Meal

 [Maps](#): Use the Ice Field map for the frost giant encounter and the Caribou Valley map to hunt.

As the party nears the mountains, they encounter two [Frost Giants](#) who are blocking their path. The Frost Giants demand tribute in the form of six [caribou](#) for their next meal in exchange for safe passage. The next valley, a mile-wide clearing of tundra grass, has a herd of 25 caribou, but the party must catch or kill six before they all flee.


Each turn, the herd moves in a random direction determined by the DM or through a d6 roll. On a roll of 1–3, the herd moves in a straight line for 40 feet, beginning by moving away from the party. On a roll of 4–5, the herd splits into two groups and moves in opposite directions for 20 feet each. On a roll of 6, the herd head back toward its starting position. When the herd splits, treat each group as a separate herd for determining movement. If a group gets smaller than three, it will move toward the nearest group.

The party can attempt to corral the herd by surrounding them with creatures or objects. If at least half of the herd is

surrounded, the herd stops moving for that turn.


If the party does not successfully corral the herd, they will continue to move until they have moved out of the party's reach. In this case, the party will have lost their chance to hunt the caribou, and the Frost Giants will attack the party to eat them instead.

## Hot on the Trail

[Maps](#): Use the Ice Cave map for the next two sections. 

When the adventurers reach the lair, they discover that one of the villagers, a young half-elf named [Lirien](#), is already in the cave, attempting to steal the Heartstone back herself. Lirien reveals that she has a congenital heart defect, and she needs the Heartstone to regulate her heart rhythm. The Glaciadon's control over the Heartstone is putting Lirien's life in danger.

## Out of Your Element

 The [Glaciadon](#) stole the Heartstone because, since it banishes harsh cold from the village, it senses that the stone can banish the Glaciadon back to the Plane of Frost, where it wants to return. If an arcane caster obtains the Heartstone while the Glaciadon still threatens, a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal how to banish the Glaciadon.

## Heartwarming Reunions

Upon retrieving the Heartstone, the adventurers return to the village where Lirien and the other villagers are waiting. Lirien thanks the adventurers for their help and offers to share a meal and stories with them. As they sit down to eat, the village

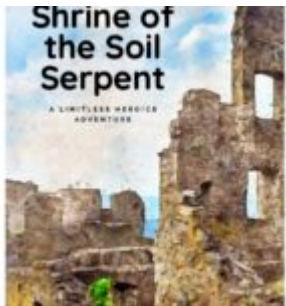
elder approaches the group and presents Lirien with a ceremonial necklace made from the Heartstone. The elder explains that the Heartstone is not only a symbol of life, but also of bravery and courage. Lirien is overjoyed and thanks the adventurers again, telling them they will always have a place in her heart. The villagers cheer and offer the adventurers a round of drinks, and the group spends the evening sharing tales of their adventures and making new friends.



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# Shrine of the Soil Serpent Full Version

October 3, 2023



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October 3, 2023



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