

# HEROES OF HIGH FANTASY



RULE OF THREE  
LOU FRYER — RALPH STICKLEY



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## CREDITS

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## INSTRUCTIONS

This adventure module is designed to be played at any level and in any campaign setting. The appendix includes statblocks for all of the monsters and NPCs within this adventure at 'Beginner', 'Intermediate', and 'Advanced' difficulty ratings. Beginner difficulty rating is considered level 1-5, intermediate is 6-10, and advanced is any level 11 or higher. You are free to add more monsters than stated in each section of the encounter to make things more difficult if needed.

We've also included this beginner / intermediate / advanced difficulty rating mechanic within the adventure itself. Various skill checks will require higher or lower numbers depending on which difficulty setting you're running. It's presented as follows: Make a **DC 10** (beginner)/**15** (intermediate)/**20** (advanced) Dexterity check to unlock the door. This way you can keep the adventure flowing nicely without flipping back and forth to determine the appropriate difficulty.

## RESOURCES

Digital versions of the maps in this module can be found at [www.nordgamesllc.com](http://www.nordgamesllc.com). We recommend that you have full poster-size versions if you intend to use the maps with miniatures.

## OVERVIEW

*Rule of Three* is a mid-length adventure which should fill 5–8 average gaming sessions of 3–4 hours.

It begins when the party investigates a house haunted by an unstable and violent ghost. Once they work their way through the house, they learn that the ghost, Brennan, was once an adventurer, whose party came to a tragic end half a century earlier. Back then, while exploring some ancient ruins, a mysterious entity offered the party's three spellcasters immortality if they sacrificed the life of one of their fellow party members. Brennan fled, leaving the rogue, Cadmus, to their fate at the hands of the three spellcasters.

Now transformed into liches, each of the three spellcasters holds part of a keystone necessary to enter the ruins where their shared phylactery is kept. Kiara, the druid, dwells in a swamp, and plots to restore the surrounding inhabited areas to their natural state. Lanius, the wizard, works in his tower to create a race of part-human part-animal mongrelfolk for future sacrifice. Zama, the cleric, prays for guidance at her mountain monastery, having felt a disconnect from her god since attaining lichdom.

Once all three keystones are assembled, the party can enter the ruins where, after making their way through traps laid by the three liches, they discover the shared phylactery - the still-living body of Cadmus, writhing in perpetual torment for the last 50 years. When the ritual is disrupted, Cadmus' broken spirit arises as a wraith. Once all of his former party members are put to rest, Brennan can finally join them in the peace of the grave.

## INTEGRATING THE ADVENTURE INTO A CAMPAIGN

*Rule of Three* is designed to fit easily into any game world and could simply begin when the party hears of a haunted house and chooses to investigate. While the adventure takes place in a variety of different locales, their relation to each other geographically is intentionally kept vague to allow you to integrate them into your setting with minimal work. Due to the wide-ranging nature of the adventure, it is entirely possible to treat it more as a long-running sidequest, with each chapter taking place spread out alongside your main campaign. Some suggested quest hooks to integrate the adventure into your world are listed below.

Hook #1 - The party encounters **Magdak Lubogg**, drowning his sorrows in a local tavern. Magdak is a brewer who recently purchased the house for, what he now realizes was, a suspiciously low price, hoping to follow his dream of opening an inn. Having been driven off by the ghost, he offers the party **100 / 300 / 900 gold pieces** if they are able to get rid of it.

Hook #2 - **Brennan** is a party member's great uncle. The family is vaguely aware that Brennan was formerly an adventurer before retiring to a life of unhappy solitude while still in his prime, but little more is known of him. The party is informed that Brennan has recently died, and that the party member is named in his will as the inheritor of his estate; apparently word reached him that the party member was following in his footsteps.

Hook #3 - The party stumbles across the **Swamp (Part 2)**, **Tower (Part 3)** or **Temple (Part 4)**, as part of another adventure. Refer to the relevant section. Upon touching the keystone after defeating the relevant lich in that area, **Brennan's ghost** appears to the party. Refer to the conversation in Part 1.7. Brennan explains the significance of the item the party have obtained, and entreats them to find the other two parts and put an end to the ritual.

NOTE: Using Hook #3 allows you to skip over the majority of Part 1, if you are looking for a shorter overall campaign, at the expense of a little scene-setting.



## PART 1: THE HANGED MAN

The party find themselves at the house of **Brennan**, a recently-deceased adventurer. He died consumed with the guilt of his greatest failure - he abandoned his friend and fellow adventurer, **Cadmus**, to die at the hands of the rest of his party. The killers, **Zama**, **Kiara**, and **Lanius**, used Cadmus' death to attain lichdom, and their continued existence is an eternal reminder of Brennan's failure. Until he has hope that his mistakes may be rectified - that the liches might be killed - Brennan will remain an unstable presence in the house and, until all three liches are destroyed for good, he will never know peace.

**Read the following when you are ready to begin:**

*The house looms over you, a crooked, lonely relic of faded grandeur. The air is still, and thick with the threat of rain, yet a gale howls beyond the door; an almost-human moan of despair, interspersed with the rending and crashing of a house tearing itself apart. A cold mist hugs the ground, twisting and curling in the still air, looming at your peripheries, only to part and fade as you observe it closer.*

The house is infested by physical and psychic manifestations of Brennan's regrets and shame which, subconsciously on the ghost's part, allow a loyal and cohesive fighting force to reach Brennan himself - exactly the sort of people who stand a chance of succeeding where he failed.

### 1. ENTRANCE HALL

The entrance hall acts as a simple test of courage - enough to discourage the majority of intruders from exploring any further.

**When the party enters the entrance hall, read the following:**

*Through the heavy oak doors is a simple but well-appointed hall, and the smell of mildew. In front of a cold, empty hearth is a small table and bench, its cushioned seat threadbare and dusty. Mist pools over the central rug, whose indistinct pattern was doubtless bright and inviting at some point in the past. As you take in the scene, the mist rises and, for a flash, a horrifying face can be glimpsed, eyes popping, bloated tongue bulging. "OUT!" it howls. "GET OUT!"*

Each creature that can see or hear the apparition must succeed on a **DC 10/12/15 Wisdom saving throw** or become **frightened** of the apparition for one minute, as well as making all subsequent saving throws against being frightened while in the house with disadvantage.



### 2. CELLAR

The cellar has not seen much use recently. It is currently home to a **ghoul**, which was initially attracted by the necromantic energy of the haunting, before getting distracted by the collection of fine wines.

**When the party enters the cellar, read the following:**

*Wooden racks of dusty bottles line the walls of the vaulted cellar. The cool, still air feels less malign down here, though a pungent smell of decay makes it far from pleasant. A slurping, glugging sound emanates from a dark corner, followed by the clink of a discarded, empty bottle. A hunched, spindly form separates itself from the shadows, and turns its orb-like eyes towards you with an expression of delayed surprise.*

**Ghoul.** The **ghoul** is quite drunk, but is dimly aware that, "ghosty man upstairs big sad", if engaged in conversation. While relatively benign, for a ghou, it still attempts to drag off and devour any easy targets.

**Wine.** While some of the wine is a little past its best, there are some good vintages here, including a number that would be suitable for use in Cadmus' hippocras recipe located in the **kitchen (area 4)**. A party member who wishes to find some wine, with the intention of selling it, may make an **Intelligence (History) check**: they are able to find a few particularly good bottles, with a combined value of 5 gp x their total for the check.







### 3. DINING ROOM

This room was where Brennan's party would gather to plan their adventures, and where Brennan's memories of them are strongest, and so is infused with strong psychic energy. Other than the immediate area around Brennan's chair, where he continued to take his lonely meals, the room is untouched since the party last vacated it.

**When the party enters the dining room, read the following:**

*This room appears to have been used for eating, entertaining, and planning. A mixture of utensils, drinking receptacles, and maps are spread over the central table, which is surrounded by five mismatched chairs, ranging from a cushioned stool to an almost throne-like armchair. The furniture rises like an archipelago in a sea of pale mist, and all are covered with a thick layer of dust, save for a corner of the table in front of a rough wooden chair, which seems to have seen regular use.*

**Chairs.** Each of the chairs was used by a different member of Brennan's party, and has been imbued with Brennan's guilt-wracked impression of their distorted personalities. The chairs include a padded, richly-carved high-backed armchair (belonging to Zama), a cushioned stool, designed to be sat on cross-legged (belonging to Kiara), a reading chair with an adjustable, ink-spotted lectern attached to one arm (belonging to Lanius), a wooden chair with a tasseled cushion, whose arms are marked where someone has absent-mindedly picked at them with a knife (belonging to Cadmus), and a rough, wooden chair, which seems to have been carved by an enthusiastic amateur (belonging to Brennan).

When a creature touches one of the chairs, they must succeed on a **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom saving throw** or be possessed by the spiritual energy surrounding it, and develop an additional flaw, which remains in effect until Brennan is subdued:

- Armchair (Zama): "We do it my way, or we don't do it at all."
- Stool (Kiara): "All lives are expendable, except my own."
- Reading chair (Lanius): "I'm only safe if I keep those more powerful than me happy."
- Picked-at chair (Cadmus): "Caution is for boring people."
- Rough wood chair (Brennan): "When push comes to shove, I'm saving my own skin."

**Map.** The map on the table depicts the ruins the party set off to explore, and where the incident that drove them apart took place.

### 4. KITCHEN

The unstable spectral activity pervading the house, combined with the numerous improvised weapons available in the kitchen, make for a dangerous combination.

**When the party enters the kitchen, read the following:**

*The kitchen seems to have seen little use for some time. Pots and pans line the upper shelves, coated in a film of greasy dust, and the pantry alcoves are largely empty save for a good stock of spices, dried herbs, and oils, neatly arranged, labelled and organised by a meticulous chef. Shelf space is also given to a fairly large collection of well-worn and stained cookbooks, and a large collection of wine bottles at various levels of emptiness. Above the cold ashes of the hearth is a relatively clean cauldron beside a few unopened bottles of wine, and a yellowed scrap of paper, deeply lined from being read over and over again.*

**Note.** The note was written by Cadmus, and reads, 'A gift on your birthday! Enjoy a few bottles of my famous hippocras, but don't forget to share! I know it eats you up that you don't know the secret ingredient - maybe I'll tell you next year, or maybe I'll take the secret to my grave. Probably the latter, if I'm being entirely honest. Enjoy the day, brother! Your loving friend, Cadmus'.

Next to the note are the bottles of hippocras themselves, still unopened as the last remnant Brennan has of his lost friend. If a party member opens a bottle and drinks from it, they are able to identify the secret ingredient, bay, with a successful **DC 15/20/25 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, though doing so immediately triggers the ghost's wrath (as a failed attempt to recreate the recipe).

**Empty Bottles.** These are Brennan's failed attempts to recreate Cadmus' recipe (see below). They bear labels such as 'too sweet', 'too bitter', and 'never use cabbage water again'.

**Cookbooks.** A successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals that one of the books is markedly less dusty than the others (this can also be noticed by anyone who investigates the books closely). This book contains a note marking a page with a recipe for hippocras.

The note reads 'Alright, one clue - it'll be more fun if I get to watch you struggle to wrap your remarkably meaty head around it anyway!'

*Look in the garden, and I can be found  
At a curve in the coast, on the breath of a hound  
In the hue of a horse, or a nook in a wall  
Now I'll leave on my laurels, standing tall*

*-Cadmus'*

**Recipe.** The recipe itself calls for a linen bag containing a cinnamon stick, ground ginger, cloves, grains of paradise, and long pepper (all of which are available in the pantry), to be simmered in good red wine until fragrant.

The answer to the riddle, and Cadmus' secret ingredient is 'bay'. Hints may be doled out at the GM's discretion, with a successful **DC 10/12/15 Intelligence check**, such as 'Look in the garden', and 'leave on my laurels' suggesting the answer is a plant or herb.

If the party deduces Cadmus' secret ingredient, bay leaf (also available in dried form in the pantry), they are able to recreate the recipe. A creature who drinks the hippocras has advantage on saving throws against being frightened by the house's effects.

**Failure.** If the party attempts the recipe but fails to add the secret ingredient, Brennan rages against them for attempting to meddle. Mist curls up from the floor, and possesses knives, pans, and other sundry kitchen equipment, hurling them about in a storm of dangerous objects. Each creature in the kitchen must make a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity saving throw**, taking **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) piercing damage** on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.



## 5. UPSTAIRS LANDING

The portrait-lined upstairs landing is a monument to Brennan's lost friends.

**When the party enters the upstairs landing, read the following:**

*A collection of portraits watch you from their frames along either side of the corridor. A striking woman in the robes and mail of a warrior priest, another with flowers woven in her hair, whose ears suggest some elven ancestry, a skinny youth seated amongst a tottering pile of books and papers, a rakish character smirking as if at a private joke, and an armored warrior, his hand resting on the hilt of a greatsword. In the mist-veiled light, there is a sombre cast to their flaking faces.*

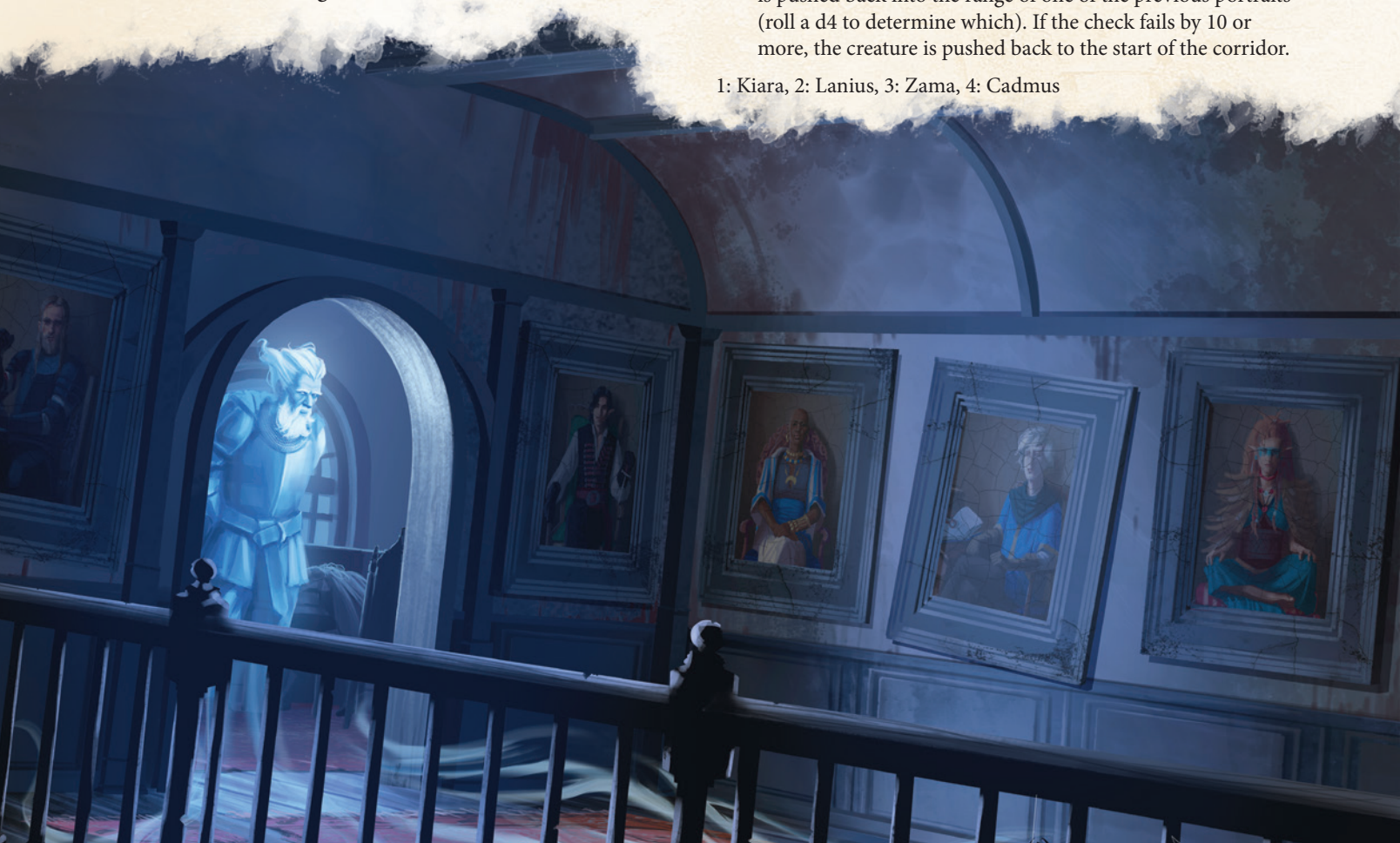
As they are approached, the portraits shift and warp into Brennan's exaggerated imaginings of how their subjects must now appear; horrific, twisted, half-rotted corpses screaming accusations of failure and cowardice. The first time a creature that can see a portrait comes within 10 feet of one, that creature must succeed on a **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom saving throw** or take **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) psychic damage** and become **frightened** of the portrait for one minute.

In addition, once activated, each portrait also exudes a physical manifestation, which affects the area around it, regardless of success or failure on the initial saving throw. Unless otherwise stated, these effects remain until Brennan returns to sensibility:

- **Kiara:** Fetid muck pours out of the portrait, turning the corridor into difficult terrain. If a creature starts its turn on the ground in the corridor, they must make a **DC 12/15/18 Strength check**. On a fail, they are restrained by the muck sucking at their feet. A restrained creature can be freed if it or another creature within 5 feet takes an action to make a **DC 12/15/18 Strength check** and succeeds.

- **Lanius:** Arcane energy sparks around the corridor. Each creature in the corridor must succeed on a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity saving throw** or take **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) lightning damage** and be paralyzed. A paralyzed creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the condition on a success.
- **Zama:** The portrait intones a terrible, blasphemous word in a primordial tongue. Every living creature in the corridor who can hear it must succeed on a **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom saving throw** or take **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) psychic damage** and become **frightened** of the portrait for one minute. In addition, if a creature is unable to move away from Zama's portrait while frightened of it, they take **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) psychic damage**.
- **Cadmus:** A shambling corpse made of thick black smoke emerges from the portrait and attacks the closest creature. It uses the same statistics as a **zombie**, with the following changes:
  - It can only use its slam attack, which deals necrotic damage instead of bludgeoning.
  - It has 1 hit point.
  - When reduced to 0 hit points, the apparition bursts into a cloud of smoke with a mournful cry of betrayal, and reappears within 5 feet of the portrait at the start of its next turn.
- **Brennan:** A tortured voice cries out in fear and pain, and a rattling, spectral gust of wind rushes down the corridor. When a creature moves within 5 feet of the portrait, they must make a **DC 12/15/18 Strength check** to resist being blown backwards by the wind. On a failed check, the creature is pushed back into the range of one of the previous portraits (roll a d4 to determine which). If the check fails by 10 or more, the creature is pushed back to the start of the corridor.

1: Kiara, 2: Lanius, 3: Zama, 4: Cadmus





## 6. MASTER BEDROOM

The master bedroom, as a solitary room with few memories associated with Brennan's party, remains largely untouched by the haunting.

**When the party enters the master bedroom, read the following:**

*While less dusty and cobwebbed than the rest of the house, the bedroom has the same smell of damp and neglect. The blankets of the four-poster are creased and rumpled, as if disturbed by a night of fitful sleep. A banded chest sits at the foot of the bed by a large armoire, and opposite a simple washbasin, long bereft of water.*

The room contains only a few objects from Brennan's past. The chest at the foot of the bed contains Brennan's set of plate armor, unceremoniously jumbled together and spotted with rust from decades of neglect. The armoire contains a variety of practical clothing which would suit an active, adventuring lifestyle, as well as a small number of outfits for formal, high society events, all of which are musty and a little moth eaten.

## 7. STUDY

The study contains Brennan's trophies from his adventuring life, where he would sit and reminisce on his past heroism. More importantly, it is the location of Brennan's body.

**When the party enters the study, read the following:**

*The walls of the study are lined with displays of weaponry and relics; faded, dusty monuments to a long-gone life of adventure. A writing desk is set up in front of the window, an unsheathed greatsword resting on it. The figure in the chair is slumped forward, still, cold, and lifeless. As you take in the scene, the pooling mist coalesces into a spectral figure.*

*"No.. can't...don't want... GET OUT!"*

The **ghost** of Brennan attacks with full force, primarily using its Animate Objects ability to fling weapons at the party in an attempt to drive them out of the house. This is, in fact, a test of the party's mettle; should they gain the upper hand and defeat Brennan, he snaps out of his violent state with a cry for peace.

*"I implore you, it's a matter of grave import. You wish to be rid of me? No more than I do myself, I assure you. Help me, and I'll be no more trouble. To you, or anyone else. I have enough failure behind me; at least help me die successfully."*

Brennan appears as a male human in his mid 60s, with the heavy build of an old warrior gone somewhat to seed (if you are using Hook #2, his race might be different, depending on the party member he is related to). The party might ask questions similar to the following:

**What do you need?** *"40 years ago, I was part of an adventuring band, much like yourselves. We made a bit of a name for ourselves, and maybe it went to our heads. It was all going so well, until we found the ruins. Heard there was some kind of power there we could tap into. Think of all the good we could do with that. There was power there alright, but you know what they say about power... A voice spoke in our heads, promised us eternal life, for a price. For a sacrifice. Zama led the way, and where Zama led, Kiara followed. Lanius, well, I think he was just more scared of them than he was of me, and I suppose he was right. That just left me and Cadmus, and... I ran. Maybe I told myself Cadmus was running with me, but the truth is I was more concerned with my own skin. Zama might have held the knife, Kiara and Lanius might have said the words, but I killed Cadmus as much as they did. I abandoned my friends, and now all of them are lost.*

*Help me, please, help me end all of this. Help me put my friends to rest."*

**Who were your companions?** *"Zama was our leader. She was a beacon, fiercely driven, strong in her faith. I think we were all half in love with her, and half in awe. Kiara was a child of two worlds, and never really felt part of either. Lanius was a quiet one, though no one could deny he was a genius - you could always count on him to see another approach to a situation. Cadmus and I would joke that we were outclassed by the three of them - they were slinging fireballs, transforming into bears, and calling down the fury of the gods, and we were expected to keep up with sword and dagger. Perhaps they saw themselves as apart from us as well."*

**Where are they now?** *"I kept track of them the best I could. Maybe I thought I could go after them one day, as if I had the strength. They split up soon after... everything. Zama seems to have returned to the mountain monastery she trained in, Kiara was always more comfortable in nature - she's hidden herself away in swampland, Lanius was last seen heading towards a remote tower house we'd explored years before."*

**What was the ritual?** *"Near as I could tell, they each gave up a bit of their souls to keep sealed in that place. They didn't exactly keep me around for my knowledge of the arcane."*

**What happened to Cadmus?** *"I failed them and they died."*

Brennan has his suspicions that Cadmus suffered a worse fate than simple death at the hands of his companions, but is unwilling to speak of it - such suspicions only bring more pain, and do not change that task that needs to be done.

**How do we stop them?** *"We needed three parts of a keystone to get into the ruin; they'll each have taken one, I've no doubt - liches aren't the most trusting of creatures. Once you've got them, you need to get into the ruin and destroy their phylactery, and put an end to this madness."*

Brennan tasks the party with finding all three parts of the keystone, each in the possession of one of his former party members, and gives directions to the ruins where the liches' shared phylactery is located. Once the three parts are reunited there, the party will be able to enter and destroy the phylactery, killing the liches for good, and putting Brennan's spirit to rest.



## PART 2: THE HERMIT

Parts 2, 3, and 4 can be approached in any order. Refer to this section when the party decides to pursue Kiara.

### APPROACHING THE SWAMP

The exact location of the swamp, and therefore the party's route and any adventures along the way, are unimportant to this adventure, and you are free to use whatever would make most sense in your game world. Below are some suggestions for regional effects the party might encounter as they approach Kiara's domain:

- Groups of zombies wander the area, entangled in weeds, discolored by algae, and with the bloated look of having decomposed in water. The zombies use crude tools (and some, simply their hands) to dig channels of filthy water spreading out from the swamp.
- Blighted, thorny vines choke the main thoroughfares, making progress difficult.
- Kiara's influence interferes with the usual flow of natural energy. Any magical attempts to communicate with, or influence, the natural world are made with disadvantage.
- Wildlife is more common, particularly scavenging creatures, as well as generally larger and healthier than elsewhere; Kiara's influence keeps away any competition for food or land from the civilized world. She also holds sway over the creatures of the area, and they report to her with news of any unusual activity.

**When the party enters the swamp, read the following:**

*The ground underfoot gives way to mud, interspersed with greenish pools. Crooked, twisting trees close in about you, their branches hung with long beards of moss. Sound and light seem deadened somehow, as you are enclosed by cool, grey-green damp.*

The swamp was the site of a battle around a century ago, and bodies of the slain are easy to find under the muck - some areas of boggy ground preserve them disturbingly well, while others reduce corpses to greening skeletons. Kiara is in the process of raising all the reasonably well-preserved bodies as zombies, setting them to work digging out and expanding the swamp in order to reclaim the land taken up by nearby settlements, to return it to a state of natural decay.

In life, Kiara was the second-in-command, and an almost motherly type, ensuring that the party's camp always left no trace, and encouraging others to live more in harmony with the natural world. Now able to view and plan on an immortal timescale, Kiara has concluded that compromise is a short-sighted aim, and no longer a feasible course of action; cutting out the rot of civilization entirely is the only way for the natural world to heal and thrive.

### ENCOUNTERING KIARA

Once the party enters the swamp, it is no easy feat to track down the lich in her home territory. A successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Survival) check** uncovers signs of zombie activity emanating from a central point in the swamp, while use of *detect magic* or similar magic suggests a concentration of necromantic activity in the same direction (though low-level necromantic magic pervades the entire area). The swamp is roughly 50 miles across,



and is difficult terrain. Unless the party specifically attempts to move stealthily (see below), it is likely that Kiara will become aware of their presence before they can track her down, having been informed by the local wildlife that act as her spies. Once informed, she receives regular updates from various creatures to keep track of the party's approximate location.

**Moving Openly.** If the party moves openly, Kiara ambushes them at an inopportune time, while they are separated or resting.

**Moving Stealthily.** The party can attempt to move stealthily with a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity (Stealth) check**. If at least half the party succeeds, Kiara's knowledge of their location remains vague and approximate (it takes magical means to disguise the party's presence entirely from the heightened senses of Kiara's animal spies).

**Tracking Kiara.** A successful **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom (Survival) check** allows the party to discover some evidence of Kiara's movements and so avoid an ambush. Unless the party are able to devise a particularly clever diversion or ambush, it is unlikely they are able to surprise her in her own territory, but they can at least meet her on slightly more even footing.

**Tactics.** Once Kiara begins to encounter serious resistance (when her hit points are reduced to around three quarters of her maximum), she will retreat, leading to an extended chase through the heart of the swamp.



## THE CHASE

After their initial encounter, Kiara makes a fighting retreat further into the swamp, using her familiarity with the environment to inconvenience her pursuers. The ease or difficulty with which the party overcomes these challenges should narratively inform how easily they are able to keep pace with Kiara, rather than determining *if* they are able to track her down. For a more challenging, or simply longer, experience, these sections could be exchanged for a chase using the rules in the core rulebook; this could be particularly suited to a group that would enjoy the challenge of surviving in hostile territory, in the event that they lose such a chase and must track the lich down again.

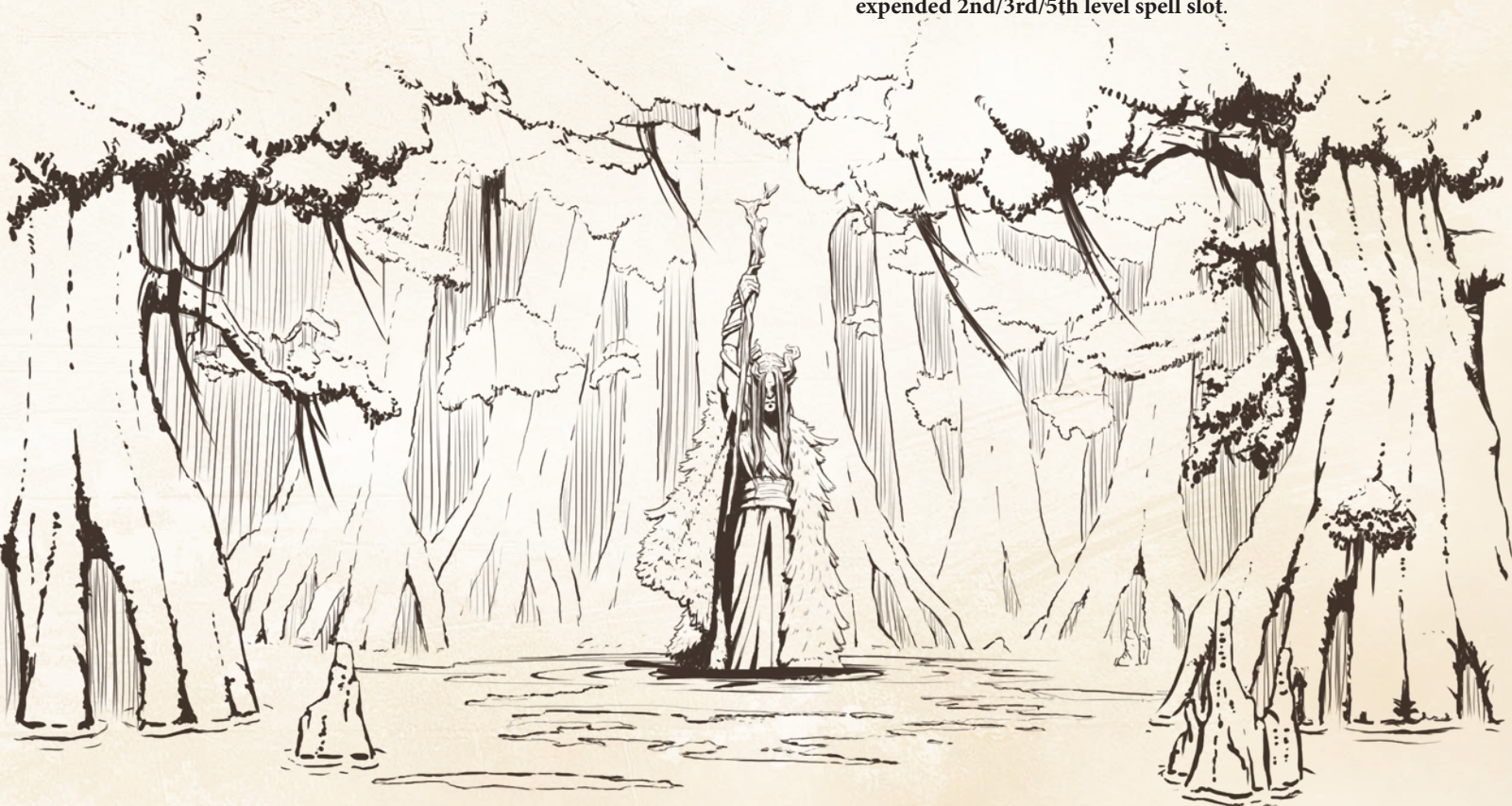
After each chase, Kiara turns to fight once more (or the party catches up to her and forces the issue, depending on how successful they are at overcoming the chase effect). These fights should be shorter than the initial combat, and leave Kiara some resources for the final combat to be an exciting one; her aim is to wear the party down before allowing a final confrontation, or to convince them that pursuing her is against their best interests. Ideally, she should flee once more after dealing some damage and before the party is able to gain any kind of upper hand.

If the party is able to engineer some method of increasing their speed, or is able to stop or hinder Kiara's flight, do not roll on the table, and instead move directly to their next combat encounter with Kiara.

To determine what happens as Kiara leads the party on a chase, the GM can select from the following Encounter Table, or the events can be determined randomly by rolling:

1d6 Effect

- 1 Kiara summons **1d4 zombies**, which rise from the water to cover her escape.
- 2 Kiara misdirects, doubles back, or simply hides, in an attempt to ambush the party. Each party member must make a **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom (Perception) check** to avoid being surprised.
- 3 Kiara summons a tangle of spiked, blighted vines and roots, which worm their way out of the water ahead of the party. Creatures attempting to pass through the area must make a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**, or take **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) piercing damage**. If a party member fails their check, or the party decides to make a diversion, Kiara is able to recuperate, and **regains 10/15/20 hit points**.
- 4 Kiara directs swarms of malign wildlife (such as crows or stinging flies) to harry the party. Each party member must make a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity saving throw** or take **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) piercing damage**.
- 5 Kiara summons **1d4 + 1 zombies** from the water, half of which immediately attack, and half of which join her in the next fight.
- 6 Kiara causes a bloom of snaring bog weed, which slows the party and disguises her trail. A successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Survival) check** allows the party to catch up. Otherwise, the party is diverted in picking up her trail, and Kiara is able to recuperate, **regaining an expended 2nd/3rd/5th level spell slot**.





## KIARA'S END

Once it becomes clear that the chase is not likely to throw off her pursuers (when her hit points are reduced to around one third of her maximum), Kiara leads the party to a clearing, and turns to make a final stand.

**When Kiara makes her final stand, read the following:**

*The fleeing figure of Kiara breaks through the overgrowth into a tangled clearing of ankle-deep, scummy water. Darker spots dotted around the clearing mark pools of deeper muck. At the centre, she turns to face you, the water roiling around her as she raises her staff.*

## LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Kiara takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. Kiara can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- A swarm of malign wildlife (roll a d4: 1: crows, 2: stinging flies, 3: leeches, 4: snakes) appears and harasses an area. All living creatures in a 10 foot sphere within 90 feet of Kiara must make a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity saving throw**, or take **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) damage**. On results of 1-3, the damage is piercing, on the result of a 4, it is poison.
- Pools of thick mud within 90 feet of Kiara bubble and surge outwards. Any creatures on the ground, within 20 feet of such a pool, must succeed on a **DC 12/15/18 Strength saving throw** or be pulled up to 20 feet towards the mud, knocked prone and restrained. A restrained creature can be freed if it, or another creature within 5 feet, takes an action to make a **DC 12/15/18 Strength check** and succeeds. The mud recedes when Kiara uses this lair action again, or when she dies. Kiara can't use this lair action again until she uses a different one.
- A wall of thorny vines writhes out of the muck within 120 feet of Kiara. The wall is up to 60 feet long, 10 feet high, and 5 feet thick, and it blocks line of sight. When the wall appears, each creature in its area must make a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity saving throw** or take **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) piercing damage** and be pushed 5 feet out of the wall's space. A creature can move through the wall, but for every 1 foot a creature travels through the wall, it must spend 4 feet of movement. A creature in the wall's space must make a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity saving throw** when it starts its turn in contact with the wall, or moves into contact with it on its turn, taking **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) piercing damage** on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Each 10-foot section of wall has AC 5, 15 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, resistance to bludgeoning and piercing damage, and immunity to psychic and poison damage. The wall withers away when Kiara uses this lair action again, or when she dies.
- A rotting **zombie** arises from the water. As an action, Kiara is able to siphon its necromantic energy to rejuvenate herself, dealing **10/15/20 damage** to the zombie, and regaining an equal number of hit points. If this damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it automatically fails its undead fortitude saving throw.

## TREASURE

The equipment Kiara is holding slowly dematerializes along with her body on her death, save for her piece of the keystone (a rough piece of opaline crystal which forms part of a sphere), worked into the head of her gnarled, worm-eaten wooden staff. If the party reacts quickly to grab it, they might also take possession of the staff itself. As a spellcasting focus, the staff grants a +1/+2/+3 bonus to spell attack rolls, and it can also be wielded as a quarterstaff with a +1/+2/+3 bonus to attack and damage rolls.







## PART 3: THE MAGICIAN

Parts 2, 3, and 4 can be approached in any order. Refer to this section when the party decides to pursue Lanius.

### APPROACHING THE TOWER

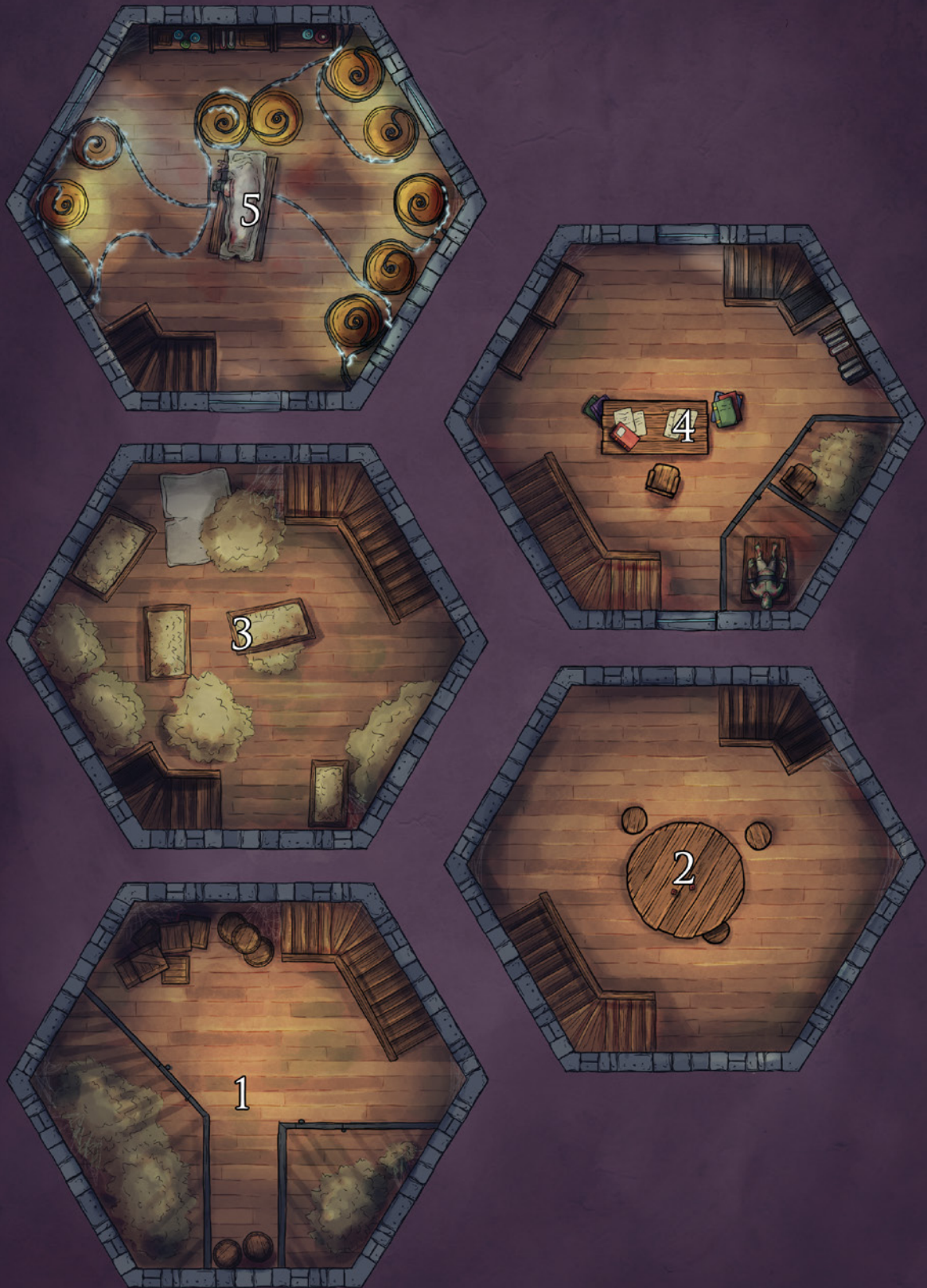
The exact location of the tower, and therefore the party's route and any adventures along the way, are unimportant to this adventure, and you are free to use whatever would make most sense in your game world. Below are some suggestions for regional effects the party might encounter as they approach Lanius' domain:

- Strange, mutated corpses can be found discarded around the area, part human and part animal. These are Lanius' failed experiments, who were either dumped dead or dying away from the tower, or abandoned and left to wander off and die on their own.
- Groups of **mongrelfolk** patrol the area, looking for any humanoids, or reasonably-sized animals, that could be useful in Lanius' experiments. Most of them began life as animals who were magically mutated, and retain an animalistic character and level of intelligence. Should the party be defeated by a mongrelfolk patrol, they will be knocked **unconscious** and brought to the **tower's cells (area 5)**.
- Traps litter the area, primarily in the form of disguised pits and nets - devices designed to capture rather than kill. They do not appear to be concentrated in any particular area or terrain, suggesting that whoever set them is not fussy about what kind of quarry they capture. Should the party be captured by such a trap, they will be detained by the next patrol of **mongrelfolk** and brought to the **tower's cells (area 5)**.

Lanius remains somewhat conflicted about his undeath; he is aware that a phylactery is fueled by the sacrifice of humanoids at regular intervals. While the shared phylactery he and the other liches created is unusual, he still suspects that additional sacrifices will be required at some point in the future, even if that point is centuries away. He is currently experimenting with 'augmenting' captured animals with humanoid features (and vice-versa) in the hope of creating something close enough to humanoid that the ritual sacrifice will still work. Lanius fully expects that he and the other liches will live forever, so the short term harm such experimentation causes will easily be balanced in the long run.

Assuming the party is not captured, tracking a mongrelfolk patrol is the easiest way to locate the tower, which can be achieved with a successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Survival) check**. At the GM's discretion, Dexterity (Stealth) checks, opposed by the mongrelfolk's Wisdom (Perception) checks may be required to avoid a combat encounter.







## THE TOWER

### 1. CELLS

The basement is used to hold animal and human subjects until they can be used in Lanius' experiments.

**When the party enters the cells, read the following:**

*This cellar has been converted into a rough jail. Two large alcoves have been closed off with rusted iron bars and their doors held with weighty padlocks. The sodden, stinking straw scattered on their floors suggests multiple occupants since they were last cleaned. Metal cages, crates, and traps are piled in a jumbled heap against one wall, and the murmured complaints of their inhabitants can be heard.*

**Locks.** The cages and cells are kept closed with heavy padlocks, designed to keep wild animals contained. The locks can be picked with a successful **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**, or broken with a successful **DC 15/20/25 Strength check**. **Orts** also carries a ring of keys on his belt (see 'Patrols').

**Cages.** The piled cages are filthy, and barely large enough to contain a Small or Medium sized beast. Most are empty, though one contains a **lynx (panther)**, another is crammed with **5 ravens**, and one contains the decomposing corpse of a small deer.

**Patrols.** A **mongrelfolk** named **Orts** attends to the cells once a day, delivering water, and a bowl of the same slop the mongrelfolk are fed. He is a rather meek soul, who was bullied by the other mongrelfolk into taking all of their shifts on guard duty, so is the sole jailer. Like most of the mongrelfolk in the tower, Orts sees himself as a failure, having fallen short of Lanius' expectations. He worships Lanius, and is always fruitlessly searching for a way to gain his approval, despite being treated as less than dirt on the few occasions his existence is acknowledged.

**Cells.** The two cells are used to house larger animals, and humanoid prisoners. They are both unoccupied at the moment (unless the party were captured). They are strewn with damp straw, and a successful **DC 12/15/18 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals an improvised shiv crafted by a previous prisoner hidden in a straw pile. This can be used as a dagger, and is also skinny enough to be used as a lockpick, though any checks using it are made with disadvantage. On any attack using the shiv, or any failed lockpicking attempt, roll a d20: on a roll of 5 or less, the shiv breaks and is useless.

### 2. GUARD ROOM

The main entrance of the tower is guarded by a small garrison of Lanius' more successful mongrelfolk.

**When the party enters the guard room, read the following:**

*A quartet of mismatched figures sits around a table in the middle of the entry chamber, keeping half an eye on the door, but mostly interested in a noisy game of dice. They appear an odd fusion of humanoid and animal, as though grown, sewn and melded together from spare parts.*

**4 mongrelfolk** sit around the central table playing with a set of knucklebone dice, though the lack of any items of value to wager means that, in practice, they mostly roll dice and ridicule each other when the numbers are low. If combat breaks out here, a few mongrelfolk from the **quarters (area 3)** might venture down to investigate.

### 3. MONGRELFOLK QUARTERS

Most of the mongrelfolk stay here while waiting to rotate out to guard duty, or for patrol assignments further afield.

**When the party enters the mongrelfolk quarters, read the following:**

*Rough pallets and bunks covered in piled rags, and resembling nests more than beds, are clustered against the walls. A musty smell hangs in the air, part animal musk, and part unwashed, mildewing cloth. A handful more strange figures sit listlessly, one of them rocking gently, another scratching incessantly.*

**6 mongrelfolk** lounge around in this area, sitting or lying on their rough bunks. These individuals are held in even less esteem than those on guard duty, and are little more than servants, or potential subjects for further experimentation. If combat breaks out here, a squealing mongrelfolk runs upstairs to get word to Lanius, forgetting about the trapped staircase in its haste.

**Trapped Stairs.** The stairway up to the library is trapped to discourage the mongrelfolk from wandering up and disturbing Lanius at work.



## SHOCKDOWN

*Hybrid trap (setback, hinder)*

A magical crystal in the doorframe at the top of the stairs shocks anyone who approaches, sending them straight back to the bottom.

**Trigger (Creature Detector).** Any creature, not accompanied by Lanius, that gets within 10 feet of the crystal triggers the trap.

**Effect (Elemental Blast).** The crystal shoots out a fork of lightning in a 20-foot line down the stairs. Each creature in the area must succeed on a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity saving throw**, or take **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) lightning damage** and become **paralysed** for 1 minute. A paralysed creature can make a **DC 12/15/18 Constitution saving throw** at the end of each of its turns, ending the condition on a success.

In addition, the stairs themselves flatten into a slide, sending any creature on the stairs down to the bottom. All creatures on the stairs must make a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid sliding to the bottom. Paralysed creatures automatically fail this saving throw.

Travelling up the stair slide requires a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or a **DC 15/20/25 Strength (Athletics) check** to climb the walls.

The stairs return to normal as soon as no creature is in contact with them.

**Countermeasures.** A creature can spot the crystal with a successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Perception) check** and *detect magic* reveals an aura of evocation magic on the crystal. Once discovered, a successful **DC 15/20/25 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or *dispel magic* (**DC 12/15/18**) can disable the trigger.

A successful **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals tiny gaps at the joins of the stairs, suggesting that they might move somehow. Hammering at least four pitons or similar objects into the joins can prevent the stairs from turning into a slide (or vice versa). Hammering each piton takes an action.

The trap will not be triggered by a creature carrying 'the master flesh', as it recognises it as Lanius.

## TREASURE

A few of the bunks conceal hoarded items and cached food, hinting towards the mongrelfolk's bestial origins.

## 4. LIBRARY

This room holds both Lanius' library, and observation cells for closer examination and indoctrination of the most promising experimental subjects.

**When the party enters the library, read the following:**

*This room is mostly free of the musky odor of the lower levels, though it does have its own whiff of neglect and dry decay. Rows of shelves are piled with books in various states of disarray, surrounding a desk covered with scattered notes and a large jar of greenish fluid. Towards the back of the room are a pair of heavy wooden doors with tiny, iron-barred windows.*

**Cells.** The two cells serve dual purposes. Primarily, they are used to contain Lanius' strongest subjects, where they are magically indoctrinated to obey him unquestioningly. However, the cells are also used to research the physical limitations of the least-promising and most expendable subjects in fights with larger subjects, or simple torture sessions.

One contains the vivisected remains of such an unfortunate mongrelfolk, strapped to an upright table.

The other contains a bulky **mongrelfolk** restrained in a chair and forced to stare at a flickering glyph on the wall. This is a magical means of indoctrination, and affects anyone who looks at it.

## INDOCTRINATION GLYPH

*Magical trap (moderate, subdue)*

A flickering, glowing glyph is inscribed on the wall of the cell, affecting the minds of those who look at it.

**Trigger (Look Into).** A creature that looks at the glyph while within 20 feet of it triggers the trap. A creature can avoid looking at the glyph, but they have disadvantage on any ability checks made to find or disable the trap.

**Effect (Spell Effect).** The triggering creature must succeed on a **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom saving throw** or become transfixed by the glyph. While transfixed, they are unable to look away, move, or take any other action. If physically forced to look away from the glyph, or if their vision is obscured, a transfixed creature takes **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) psychic damage**. A transfixed creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success, though if they fail they take **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) psychic damage** as admonishment for attempting to fight the indoctrination. If a transfixed creature takes damage other than psychic damage, they can immediately repeat the saving throw with advantage, ending the effect on a success.

Each round after the first that a transfixed creature spends staring at the glyph introduces additional effects, which remain in effect until Lanius is killed:

- 2nd round: The creature develops an additional flaw: "*I am a worthless animal, Lanius gives my life meaning.*"
- 3rd round: The creature's perception of its own body is distorted; it sees ever-shifting mutations where there are none. The creature is **poisoned** until it finishes a long rest, or is cured by *lesser restoration* or similar magic.
- 4th round: If the creature attempts to attack Lanius, it must make a **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom saving throw**. If it fails, it takes **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) psychic damage**.



**Countermeasures.** A creature that succeeds on a **DC 12/15/18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** recognizes the glyph and is aware of the trap. *Detect magic* reveals an aura of enchantment magic emanating from the glyph.

The glyph can be deactivated with *dispel magic* (**DC 12/15/18**) or with a successful **DC 12/15/18 Intelligence (Arcana) check**.

Alternatively, the glyph can be altered to change the object of transfixed creatures' loyalty with a **DC 20/25/30 Intelligence (Arcana) check**.

**Notes.** The notes hint at Lanius' attempts to create humanoids from animals, blended through magic and surgery with 'the master flesh', hoping to reduce the need for humanoid sacrifice to the phylactery. More recently, it seems curiosity has taken over, and he is more interested in tinkering with extreme mongrelfolk forms, and in creating an unquestioningly loyal workforce.

**Jar.** The jar contains 'the master flesh'; a number of strips of Lanius' own desiccated flesh, which he is using to replicate and grow additional body parts to graft together the various animal and humanoid anatomy he is able to lay his hands on.

**Trapped Stairs.** The stairway up to the laboratory is trapped to prevent access. With the trapped stairs to the library designed to repel careless mongrelfolk, it is assumed that only a determined attacker would attempt to force entry into the laboratory, so more deadly force is used.

## DO NOT DISTURB

*Magical trap (deadly, harm)*

Hidden crystals unleash an explosion of lightning against any who attempt to gain access to the upper level.

**Trigger (Creature Detector).** Any creature not accompanied by Lanius that gets within 10 feet of the door to the laboratory triggers the trap.

**Effect (Elemental Blast).** A 20-foot cube of lightning explodes from the crystals. Each creature in the area must make a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity saving throw**, taking **14 (4d6)/28 (8d6)/56 (8d6) lightning damage** on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

**Countermeasures.** A creature can spot a crystal with a successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Perception) check** and *detect magic* reveals an aura of evocation magic on the crystals. Once discovered, a successful **DC 15/20/25 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or *dispel magic* (**DC 12/15/18**) can disable a crystal. If a creature fails the check by 5 or more, the trap is triggered.

There are 5 crystals in total, and each one destroyed reduces the lightning damage inflicted by the trap by **1d6/2d6/4d6**.

The trap will not be triggered by a creature carrying 'the master flesh', as it recognises it as Lanius'.





## 5. LABORATORY

Lanius spends almost all his time in the laboratory, tinkering with his latest creation.

**When the party enters the laboratory, read the following:**

*The rafters of this room are clustered with snaking, looping tubes, some sparking, some leaking an acrid, green fog. A series of cylindrical tanks dot the outer perimeter, in which can be glimpsed twisted, unfinished creatures, floating in greenish murk. Dominating the centre of the room, at the confluence of the tubes, a hulking pile of flesh lies on a table, with heavy straps attached to what passes for its many, shapeless limbs. Behind it, a wizened, robed figure glances up at your intrusion with mild interest in its fleshless face.*

If engaged in conversation, Lanius attempts to convince the party that his work is for the greater good; a few mongrelfolk deaths now while he perfects the formula, in order to spare the 'real' lives which would otherwise need to be sacrificed to the phylactery.

While his primary goal is to remove the threats to himself and his work by whatever means necessary, should he gain an upper hand, he switches tactics and tries to take at least some of the party members alive; strong stock is always needed in his experiments.

**Experiment.** The hulking, brutish creature strapped to the table is Lanius' latest distraction from his original aim; an attempt to create a living weapon loyal only to him. While not ready for action yet, it can still jolt around with a semblance of life with the application of electricity.

**Tanks.** The 10 tanks each contain an unfinished experiment. If one is opened or smashed, there is a 50% chance that the creature within is viable enough to lash out before expiring. It makes a single attack against a random creature within 5 feet of the tank, +5/+8/+12 to hit, dealing 5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) **bludgeoning damage** on a hit.

A tank can be smashed or opened as an action. In addition, if a creature makes a melee attack within 5 feet of a tank, and the attack misses by 5 or more, the tank is smashed.

## LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Lanius takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. Lanius can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- The experimental subject strapped to the table receives a jolt of energy and grabs blindly around itself with multiple, powerful limbs. Each creature within 10 feet of the table must succeed on a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity saving throw** or be **restrained**. A restrained creature can be freed if it, or another creature within 5 feet, takes an action to make a **DC 12/15/18 Strength check** and succeeds.
- A powerful surge of electricity sparks from the tubes overhead, forming a 5-foot-wide line between two solid surfaces in the laboratory that Lanius can see. Each creature in that line must make a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity saving throw** or take **10 (3d6)/21 (6d6)/49 (14d6) lightning damage**.
- Gas is vented from the tubes overhead in a 20-foot-radius sphere, centred on a point Lanius can see. Its area is lightly obscured. It lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round. Each creature that enters the cloud, or starts its turn there, must make a **DC 12/15/18 Constitution saving throw** or be **poisoned** until the end of its next turn. While poisoned this way, a creature is **incapacitated**.

## TREASURE

The equipment Lanius is holding slowly dematerializes along with his body on his death, save for his piece of the keystone (a rough piece of opaline crystal which forms part of a sphere), worked into the handle of his sharply-pointed, metal wand. If the party reacts quickly to grab it, they might also take possession of the wand itself, which functions as a spellcasting focus and grants a +1/+2/+3 bonus to spell attack rolls.





## PART 4: THE HIGH PRIESTESS

Parts 2, 3, and 4 can be approached in any order. Refer to this section when the party decides to pursue Zama.

### APPROACHING THE TEMPLE

The exact location of the mountain temple, and therefore the party's route and any adventures along the way, are unimportant to this adventure, and you are free to use whatever would make most sense in your game world. Below are some suggestions for regional effects the party might encounter as they approach Zama's domain:

- Zama's influence interferes with the flow of divine magic and life forces. Healing magic and long rests only restore half the usual hit points.
- Groups of skeletons patrol the area, keeping an eye on the immediate surroundings. Zama occasionally inhabits one of these skeletons as her vessel to gain a more immediate picture of the situation, granting it the Zama possessed template (see sidebar in **Appendix A, B, or C**).
- If the party travel openly, or engage with any skeletal patrols, their progress is hindered by falling rocks and landslides as the mountain begins to quake. Zama is aware of their approach.

Zama has returned to the monastery where she trained in her youth. The driving force behind her decision to become a lich was to eternally serve her god and, having made such an enormous sacrifice for her faith, was disappointed by the lack of similar fervor in her fellows. She has since restructured, purging any of her faith who fell short of her exacting standards, which is to say all of them, and raising their corpses as undead servants to help her carry out the necessary functions of worship.

She currently worships and broods in the **sanctum**, protected by wards. These wards can be overcome by various sacrifices - it is Zama's hope that any who can overcome them will understand the tremendous sacrifice she herself undertook in service of her faith (as she sees it), and can be swayed to her point of view.

The path up to the monastery is fairly obvious and easily traversable, though rough and rocky. It used to be reasonably well-traveled by (and thus well-maintained for) pilgrims and their various attendants, though such traffic stopped quickly after the lich took up residence.

Zama is able to temporarily possess any skeleton she controls, using its senses, controlling its actions, and giving it access to her spells. This power may be used at the GMs discretion, though she should primarily use it to get a measure of the party, and speak with (or perhaps 'at') them in advance of meeting in person. See the **Zama possessed template** sidebar in **Appendix A, B, or C** for more information.









## 1. TEMPLE

This building served as a public place of worship where pilgrims and travelers were permitted to worship and meditate. With the exception of important guests or long-term visitors, few were allowed further into the complex than this. It is still occasionally visited by worshippers who have not yet heard about the lich's presence.

**When the party enters the temple, read the following:**

*A haze of incense hangs heavy in the air of the temple. Brightly painted statues, draped with garlands, line the walls. One stands sentry beside the only other door, hand outstretched as though expecting tribute. An enormous, tarnished copper bell hangs on a raised dais at one end of the room. Half a dozen skeletons, their bones smeared with streaks of ash and ochre, attend to the shrines, but pause at your approach.*

**6 skeletons** are stationed in the temple, with instructions to not let any living creatures pass through to the rest of the complex. When alerted, one of them moves to the bell and picks up the hammer to strike it.

**Bell.** The large bell was used to mark time, and to summon pilgrims to ceremonies. Corrupted by Zama's influence, it is now a potent magical weapon. If the bell is struck with the hammer as an action, all creatures within 60 feet of it that can hear it must make a **DC 12/15/18 Constitution saving throw**. On a failed save, a creature takes **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) thunder damage** and **5 (1d10)/11 (2d10)/22 (4d10) necrotic damage**, and is **deafened** for 1 minute. On a successful saving throw, a creature takes half damage and is not deafened. A deafened creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. The tolling of the bell can be heard up to 300 feet away, and reverberates for 18 seconds, after which it can be struck again.

**Zama.** If the bell is struck, or if they encountered a possessed skeletal patrol on their way to the temple, Zama is aware of the party's presence here. When only one skeleton remains, she calls for an end to the fighting, seeing promise in the party, and wondering if they have the will to undergo the necessary sacrifices to face her. This skeleton, or any possessed skeleton in subsequent areas can impart 'Zama's lesson' for each sacrifice.

**Zama's lesson:** "Faith can be painful, and requires sacrifice, but it can open doors."

**Door.** The door to the courtyard is magically sealed, and will only open when a hand is placed on the statue (see below), though it can be broken down with a **DC 15/18/21 Strength check**.

**Sacrifice.** The statue, its palm held out as though expecting an offering, is an initial test of faith to access the rest of the temple complex.

When a living humanoid places their hand on the statue's, it is held in place, and a thin spike pierces through their palm, dealing **11 (2d10)/22 (4d10)/44 (8d10) piercing damage**. The creature is unable to wield a weapon or shield in the affected hand, and has disadvantage on spell attacks which require a somatic component. These effects last until the creature completes a long rest. Restorative magic which specifically regrows tissue, such as *regenerate* also ends the effects.

A successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals that the statue has a small hole in its palm, from which a spike might emerge. A successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Medicine) check** allows a party member to intuit the effects of a spike of those dimensions piercing one's hand.

Once this effect is triggered, the door to the courtyard opens.

## 2. COURTYARD

**When the party enters the courtyard, read the following:**

*The low buildings of the temple complex ring a central fountain on three sides. On the fourth, a winding path leads further up the mountain to a secluded residence, alongside a broad set of steps leading up to a far grander building, surrounded by a cloud of twisting shadow.*

**Zama's lesson:** "Darkness must give way to light when the righteous are willing to make sacrifices."

**Ward.** The entry to the sanctum is barred by an area of twisting black shadow, emanating from the door to a **25-foot-radius** (which immediately recedes 5 feet, if the sacrifice was made in the temple). A creature takes **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) necrotic damage** for every **5 foot traveled** in the shadow, as well as **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) necrotic damage** if it starts its turn there.

While the shadow remains, the door is also magically locked. The lock can be dispelled with a **DC 18/22/25 Intelligence (Religion) check**, or the door can be broken down with a **DC 18/22/25 Strength check**.

The area of shadow recedes by 5 feet for each sacrifice performed in the temple complex; statue spike in the temple, armor in the living quarters, blood in the garden, and magic in the high priest's chambers (which may count as 2 sacrifices).

**1 skeleton** meanders in this area, occasionally listlessly dipping a bucket into the fountain. It will defend itself if attacked, but will not attack unprovoked without Zama's influence. It will impart 'Zama's lesson' if the party approaches the ward.



### 3. LIVING QUARTERS

This suite of sparse chambers was home to the monks who lived here.

**When the party enters the living quarters, read the following:**

*A series of near-identical rooms line the corridor of this crescent-shaped building, each with a rather uncomfortable-looking bed, a desk, and a washbasin. A few contain small idols of favorite gods. In one, an armor rack stands, draped with a set of faded monastic robes.*

**Zama's lesson:** "Sacrifice is surrendering yourself to a higher power. To give up what makes you you, and to don the mantle of something greater."

**Sacrifice.** A creature can don the robes on the armor stand in Zama's old room, doffing their own armor to replace it. As long as the armor stays there, and the creature continues to wear the robe, it counts as a sacrifice and reduces the area of shadow blocking the sanctum.

The robe carries a curse, and reduces the wearer's AC to 10, regardless of other modifiers.

A successful **DC 12/15/18 Intelligence (Religion) check** recognises the curse on the robes, and what must be done to fulfil the sacrifice.

**4 skeletons** can be found in their former rooms. Each is parroting their old daily routine - meditating, making an offering at their personal shrine, or lighting incense. Each will defend itself individually if attacked, but they will not come to each other's aid, or attack unprovoked without Zama's influence. One can impart 'Zama's lesson' if the party approaches the armor stand.

### TREASURE

A successful **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a loose brick in the wall of Zama's old room. Within is hidden a tightly rolled letter written while she was training here, and never sent, in which she details a crisis of faith, and a determination to never again shy away from what needs to be done in service of her cause (See **Appendix D**).

### 4. GARDEN

The garden served as a space for meditation, both through quiet reflection and through work in the form of growing food for the monastery.

**When the party enters the garden, read the following:**

*A winding path weaves its way through neatly ordered plots chosen, you suspect, for their culinary applications as much as their visual appeal. Towards the cliff edge, overlooking the mountains, a mound of freshly tilled soil waits for planting. Small shrines dot the path, with attendant skeletons fighting to keep their flames lit in the face of the mountain breeze.*

**Zama's lesson:** "Sacrifice is giving of yourself for others. The farmer gives their labor that others might eat, the priest gives their life that others might be saved."

**4 skeletons** tend to the shrines in this area, keeping their candle lit, cleaning the idols, and refreshing the food offerings. Each will defend itself individually if attacked, but they will not come to each other's aid, or attack unprovoked without Zama's influence. One can impart 'Zama's lesson' if the party approaches the disturbed earth.

**Sacrifice.** A wickedly sharp, curved knife is located next to the disturbed earth of one of the vegetable patches.

A living creature can complete this sacrifice by using the knife to inflict **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) slashing damage** to themselves, spilling their blood onto the earth. Their maximum hit point total is reduced by the damage taken until they complete a long rest.

A successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Nature) check** recognises what must be done to complete the sacrifice, and its effects.

### 5. HIGH PRIEST'S CHAMBERS

Zama briefly occupied these chambers on her return, though she has recently vacated them, preferring to remain sequestered in the sanctum.

**When the party enters the high priest's chambers, read the following:**

*While not exactly luxurious, this suite of rooms is, nonetheless, comfortable. A table and chairs are set out for private meetings, and a simple bed occupies the smallest room. The walls above and around the private shrine have been defaced with a complex, looping pattern daubed in crusted blood.*

**Zama's lesson:** "These were the high priest's chambers, and these his bones. I revered him once, but he was a creature of compromise, who saw status and power as its own end, rather than a tool to serve our faith. He was unwilling to sacrifice even a little of his power in service of something greater, and so lost it all."

**1 skeleton** occupies the chambers, that of the former high priest, his bones inscribed with swirling patterns as though painted for a religious festival. It can impart 'Zama's lesson' if the party approaches the shrine.

**Sacrifice.** Transcribing the pattern daubed on the wall of the shrine expends magical energy.

A successful **DC 12/15/18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** recognises the nature of the symbols, and what must be done to complete the sacrifice. A creature capable of casting spells can spend one minute copying the pattern, expending **2/4/6 levels of spell slots** in the process.

The creature can choose to carve the pattern into their own flesh, which deals **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) slashing damage** in addition to expending the spell slots, but this counts as two sacrifices for the purposes of reducing the area of shadow blocking the sanctum.

### NO SPELLCASTERS?

If there are no spellcasters in the party capable of transcribing the symbol, the effect can be substituted for gaining one level of exhaustion.



## 6. SANCTUM

The sanctum is the centre of worship, and where Zama spends most of her time.

**When the party enters the sanctum, read the following:**

*A grand stairway, lined with pillars, ascends to an enormous statue of a serene figure, hand raised in blessing. At its base, a robed corpse rises to its feet, the pinpoints of its eyes gleaming in the dim, hazy light.*

Zama hopes that the party's recent experiences with the nature of sacrifice and faith have opened their eyes to her reasons for attaining lichdom. In truth, she is in denial; she has felt disconnected from her god ever since becoming undead and, having lost everything from her former life, is enraged at the thought that it was all for nothing.

## LAIR ACTIONS

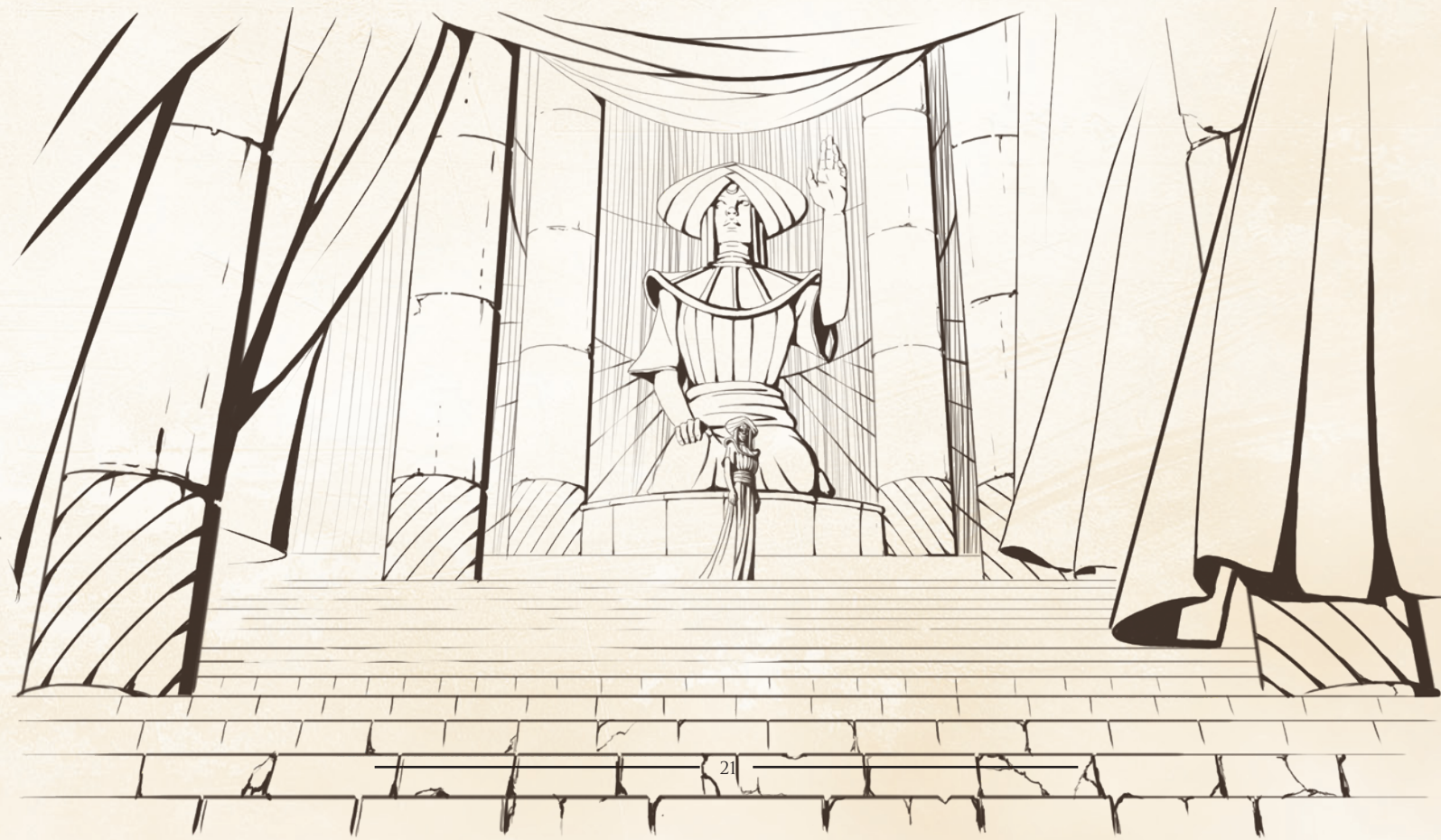
On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Zama takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. Zama can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- Grasping, spectral hands appear in a 20 foot radius centred on a point on the ground that Zama can see, within 120 feet of her. That area becomes difficult terrain. A creature that enters the area, or starts its turn there, must make a **DC 12/15/18 Constitution saving throw** or be **restrained**. A restrained creature takes **10 (3d6)/21 (6d6)/42 (12d6) necrotic damage** at the start of each of its turns. A restrained creature can be freed if it, or another creature within 5 feet, takes an action to make a **DC 12/15/18 Strength check** and succeeds. The hands retreat when Zama uses this lair action again, or when she dies. Zama can't use this lair action again until she uses a different one.

- Zama fills the chamber with a veil of magical darkness. Creatures with darkvision cannot see through the darkness and nonmagical light can't illuminate it. If any light in the area was created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled. Zama is able to see through the darkness.
- The statue briefly animates, slamming down a massive fist. One creature within 30 feet of the statue, that Zama can see, must make a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity saving throw**, taking **16 (3d10)/33 (6d10)/66 (12d10) bludgeoning damage** on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

## TREASURE

The equipment Zama is holding slowly dematerializes along with her body on her death, save for her piece of the keystone (a rough piece of opaline crystal which forms part of a sphere), worked into the head of her jagged, flanged mace. If the party reacts quickly to grab it, they might also take possession of the mace itself, which can be used as both a weapon and a holy symbol dedicated to a warrior deity. As a holy symbol, the mace grants a +1 bonus to spell attack rolls and, when wielded as a weapon, it grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls.





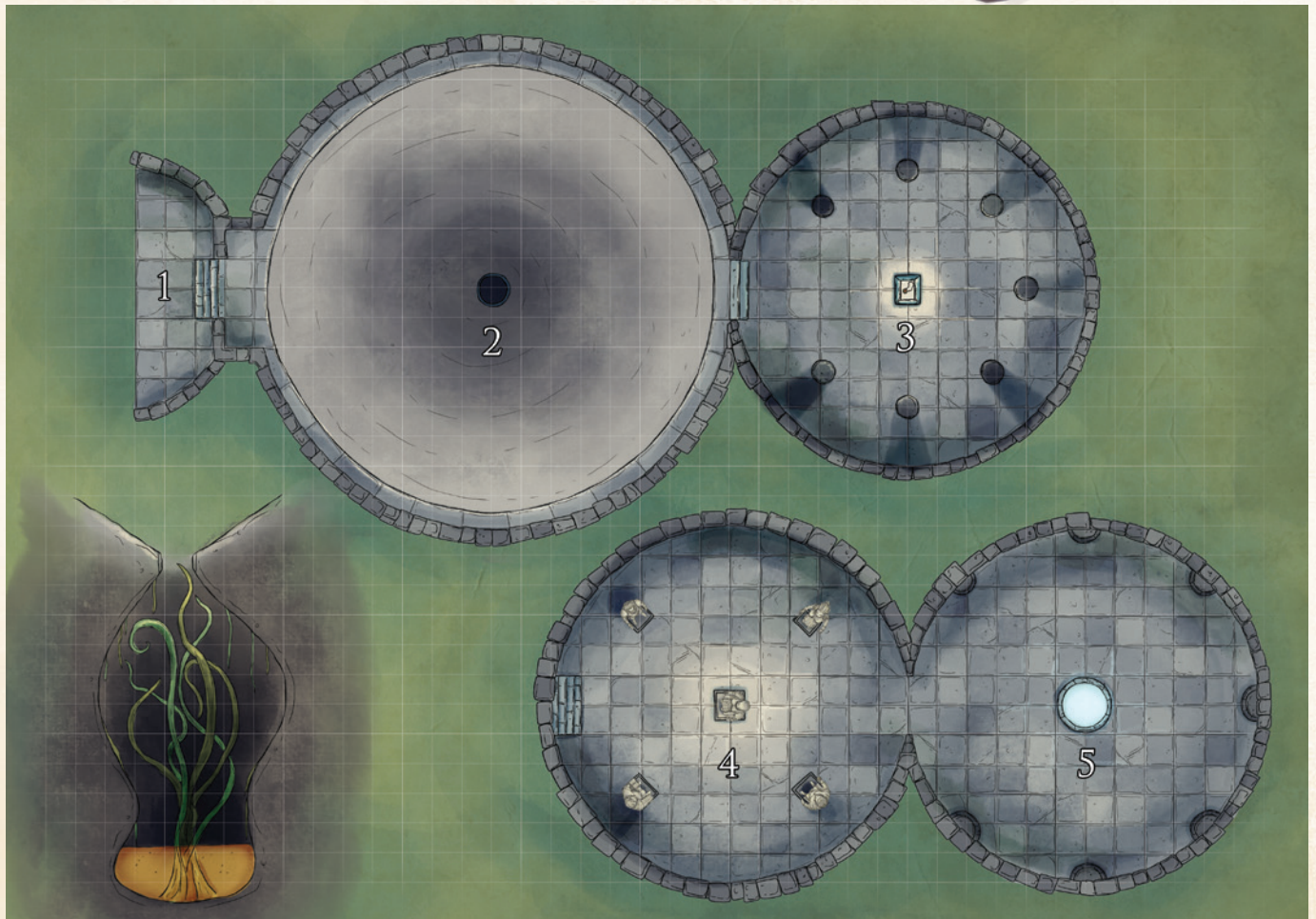
## PART 5: DEATH

Once the party has collected all three keystones, they are able to gain entry to the ritual site. Refer to this section when the party decide to put an end to the liches once and for all

### JUSTICE DELAYED...

The adventure assumes that the party seeks out the ritual site as a matter of priority, once they are able, and get there before the liches fully reform. If the party delays, it is entirely possible that the newly-reconstituted liches seek them out and attempt to reclaim their keystones, leaving at least one behind at a time to ensure access to the ritual nexus.

The entrance to the dungeon is an arched doorway of pale, white stone, speckled with moss. In the centre of the doorway is a hemispherical depression. When the three pieces of the keystone are placed in its immediate vicinity, they snap together, forming a glowing silver sphere which fills the depression, and the door grinds open.





## 1. ENTRYWAY

The entryway carries a warning to those who would venture further into the dungeon.

**When the party enters the entryway, read the following:**

*With a grating of stone, the door closes itself behind you, leaving you in twilight. Before you is an unassuming archway into the darkness of the ruins. Above it are carved the words 'Thief! You will go no further. Leave this place and return what you have stolen, and your deaths can be made swift.'*

## 2. KIARA'S CHAMBER

This chamber houses an enormous, magical plant conjured by Kiara, designed to trap and hold any creatures who enter the dungeon for use in future sacrifices.

**When the party enters the chamber, read the following:**

*The flagstones of the previous chamber give way to a smooth, flat, greyish surface covering the floor of this circular room, like the taut skin of a drum.*

### LICH PITCHER

A huge pitcher plant fills the area beneath the room. When it detects vibrations caused by moving creatures, it tips them into a deep chamber, the bottom of which is filled with fluid which will keep creatures in stasis, if imbibed. Paralysing thorns line the walls of the chamber, and lashing vines attempt to draw more creatures in.

**Trigger (Weight Sensitive Surface).** Two or more Medium or larger creatures standing on the upper surface of the plant (which occupies the entirety of the chamber, except for a 5-foot-wide ring around the outside) triggers the trap.

**Initiative.** The trap acts on initiative 20 and 10.

**Active Elements.** The Lich Pitcher is primarily a sloped floor depositing creatures in the pit at its center, but also has lashing vines that emerge from the pit to hinder escape and drag creatures in.

**Tilting Floor (Initiative 20).** This element activates only once, the first time the trap acts. The floor slopes down towards a central hole, turning into a funnel that is difficult terrain. Each creature on any portion of the upper surface of the plant must succeed on a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity saving throw** or fall **prone**.

**Open the Pit (Initiative 20).** This element activates only once, the first time the trap acts. A flap at the center of the floor opens, revealing a 50-foot deep pit.

**Lashing Vines (Initiative 10).** Four vines snake up from the bottom pit and attempt to ensnare creatures. Each vine can make an attack against a creature in the pit, or within 20 feet of the opening of the pit: **+6/+8/+10** attack bonus, **grappled** (escape **DC 12/15/18**) on a hit.

**Dynamic Elements.** A creature that starts its turn on the tilted upper surface moves 20 feet down it, towards the pit.

**Constant Elements.** Creatures drop into the pit when they hit the bottom of the tilted upper surface. Greasy fluid hinders efforts to remain upright. The grasping vines constrict their victims.

**Into the Pit.** A creature that reaches the bottom of the funnel must succeed on a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity saving throw** or fall into the pit, taking **17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage** and landing **prone**. Prone creatures have disadvantage on this saving throw.

**Grease.** Greasy fluid exudes from the outer perimeter of the upper surface, hindering attempts to escape. Any creature attempting to move in the area must succeed on a **DC 12/15/18 Dexterity check** or fall **prone**.

**Restraining Vines.** A creature that ends its turn restrained by the Lashing Vines takes **11 (2d10)/22 (4d10)/44 (8d10) piercing damage** and is dragged 10 feet towards the bottom of the pit.

**Paralysing Thorns.** Thin vines hang down the sides of the pit. A creature that touches a vine must make a **DC 12/15/18 Constitution saving throw** or be **paralysed** for one minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

**Pool.** The pool of amber liquid at the bottom of the pit is 5 feet deep. A creature submerged in the liquid follows the normal rules for drowning, but is knocked **unconscious** and is stable when it drops to 0 hit points, as the magical liquid filling its lungs keeps it in stasis.

**Countermeasures.** Creatures can deal with the trap's elements in multiple ways.

**Trigger.** A successful **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals that the floor of the chamber is organic in nature. If a creature succeeds the check by 5 or more, they also notice the hidden flap in the center of the floor.

With this information, a successful **DC 12/15/18 Intelligence (Nature) check** identifies the structure as being similar to a pitcher plant, and that it is likely triggered by pressure to the upper surface (they might also be able to intuit other features, such as the tipping floor, and grease).

**Trapdoor.** The trapdoor can be forced closed with a successful **DC 15/20/25 Strength (Athletics) check**. Once closed, it can be kept in place if pierced with a strong, sharp object (**AC 14/16/18**). If not kept in place, it will reopen again on initiative 20.

**Restraining Vines.** Reducing a vine to 0 hit points disables it. Each vine has **AC 14/16/18; 9/18/36 hp**; vulnerability to fire damage; resistance to piercing damage; and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

**Paralysing Thorns.** A successful **DC 12/15/18 Intelligence (Nature) check** identifies the paralysing effect of the vines. A creature aware of their nature can use either Dexterity or Constitution to avoid their paralysing effect, and has advantage on the saving throw.



### 3. LANIUS' CHAMBER

Lanius designed this chamber to fool any would-be adventurers into thinking they had found the lich's shared phylactery, and dissuade them from exploring further.

**When the party enters the chamber, read the following:**

*A grand, circular colonnade surrounds an altar at the centre of this chamber. Atop it, illuminated by a dust-specked shaft of light, is an ornate amulet, set with a deep red jewel.*

#### FALSE PHYLACTERY

*Magic trap (dangerous, harm)*

In the center of this chamber is an altar with a large, jewelled locket atop it. When a creature touches the locket, it begins to float, creating around itself an illusory lich that induces fear in nearby creatures. Additionally, it attacks with bolts of illusory energy, dealing psychic damage to creatures they hit. Creatures can leave through the door they entered, or search for a secret door which allows them to progress.

**Trigger (Touch Object).** Touching the locket triggers the trap.

**Initiative.** The trap acts on initiative 20 and 10.

**Active Elements.** The False Phylactery creates an illusory lich that scares creatures and attacks them with phantasmal bolts of energy.

**Lich Fear (Initiative 20).** An illusion of a lich manifests around the locket, its features a shifting medley of Kiara, Lanius, and Zama. All creatures within 30 feet of the locket must succeed on a **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom saving throw** or become **frightened**. A creature frightened this way must take the Dash action and move away from the locket area by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move.

If the creature ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to the illusory lich, the creature can make a **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom saving throw**. On a successful save, this effect ends for that creature.

Once a creature succeeds on their Wisdom saving throw to resist the Lich Fear, they are immune to it for 1 hour.

**Illusory Bolts (Initiative 10).** The illusory lich sends out eight bolts of energy. For each bolt of energy, it makes an attack against a random living creature within 30 feet of the locket: **+6/+8/+10 attack bonus, 7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) psychic damage** on a hit.

**Dynamic Elements.** Tampering with the locket increases the trap's power.

**Locket.** Each unsuccessful ability check made to disable the locket increases the damage of the Illusory Bolts by 1d6, to a maximum of 5d6/7d6/11d6, and increases the DC of the Wisdom saving throw to resist or end the Lich Fear by 1, to a maximum of 15/20/25.

**Constant Elements.** The Lich Fear and Illusory Bolts affect each creature that ends its turn within 30 feet of the locket.

**Lich Fear.** Any creature that ends its turn within 30 feet of the locket must make a saving throw against the Lich Fear, unless they are immune.

**Illusory Bolts.** Any creature that ends its turn within 30 feet of the locket is targeted by an attack: **+6/+8/+10 attack bonus; 7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) psychic damage** on a hit.

**Countermeasures.** The trigger and active elements of the trap can be thwarted by particular countermeasures. Additionally, creatures can escape the trap by locating a secret door.

**Trigger.** The locket has an aura of illusion magic when viewed with *detect magic*. A spellcaster can disrupt the enchantment on the locket with a successful **DC 15/20/25 spellcasting ability check**; *dispel magic* (**DC 15/20/25**) also disables the trap. This can be done before or after the trap activates.

Destroying the locket also disables the trap. While floating at the heart of the illusory lich, the locket has **AC 14/16/18; 9/18/36 hp**, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and resistance to all other damage types. A creature can attempt to grab the locket with a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check**. The locket's resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage is removed while it is not floating. The locket struggles and attempts to return to the heart of the illusory lich. Each turn it is being held, the creature holding it must make a **DC 12/15/18 Strength check**, or lose their grip on the locket.

**Lich Illusion.** Once activated, the illusory lich can be dispelled with *dispel magic* (**DC 12/15/18**). A creature that succeeds on a **DC 15/20/25 Intelligence (Investigation) check** recognizes that the lich is an illusion. Once a creature knows the lich isn't real, it is immune to Lich Fear and resistance to the psychic damage from the Illusory Bolts.

A party member that knows the lich is an illusion can use an action to try and convince one of their allies of the fact. If the party member succeeds on a **DC 12/15/18 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, their ally also recognises that the lich is an illusion.

**Secret Door.** If creatures can locate and unlock a secret door, they can escape the chamber. To locate the door, a creature must succeed on a **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice an inconsistency in the pattern on the floor, suggesting a moving panel. Once the door has been found, it can be unlocked with a successful **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**.



## 4. ZAMA'S CHAMBER

Zama designed this chamber as a last line of defense to destroy any intruders before they make it to the **ritual nexus**.

**When the party enters the chamber, read the following:**

*This room is ringed by five statues, their subjects now familiar to you from your adventures. The stone faces of Kiara, Lanius, Brennan, and Cadmus stare towards the middle of the space, where the larger figure of Zama holds court.*

### POISONOUS RECEPTION

*Hybrid trap (deadly, harm)*

There are five statues arrayed around the chamber. The trap activates when a living creature enters the area, causing magical bonds of necrotic energy to erupt and grapple creatures, dealing damage to them. In addition, poison gas spouts from the mouths of four of the statues; once the gas reaches a certain potency, the fifth statue ignites it.

**Trigger (Creature Detector).** Any living creature that ventures 15 feet into the chamber triggers the trap.

**Initiative.** The trap acts on initiative 20 and 10.

**Active Elements.** The trap consists of magical restraints made from necrotic energy, and poison gas which fills the room from pipes in the mouths of the statues.

**Necrotic Restraint (Initiative 20).** This effect activates only once, the first time the trap acts. Each living creature within 30 feet of the triggering creature must succeed on a **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom saving throw** or become **restrained** and take **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) necrotic damage**. The triggering creature makes the save with disadvantage.

**Locked Doors (Initiative 20).** This effect activates only once, the first time the trap acts. The exits and entrances to this room slam shut and are locked in place by magic.

**Poison Gas (Initiative 10).** Poison gas floods the room. Each creature inside must make a **DC 12/15/18 Constitution saving throw**, taking **3 (1d6)/7 (2d6)/14 (4d6) poison damage** on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

**Dynamic Elements.** The longer the poison gas remains in the room, the more lethal it becomes. After it hits a certain concentration, it ignites.

**Increased Potency.** The damage from the Poison Gas element increases by **3 (1d6)/7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)** each round after it activates, to a maximum of **4d6/8d6/16d6**. Once the gas reaches its maximum damage, the next time it would activate, the fifth statue's mouth opens, activating a sparking mechanism which ignites the gas. Each creature in the chamber must succeed on a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity saving throw**, taking **14 (4d6)/28 (8d6)/56 (16d6) fire damage** on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Once the gas has been ignited, the process starts again, with the gas dealing **3 (1d6)/7 (2d6)/14 (4d6) poison damage** on its next turn.

**Constant Elements.** The Necrotic Restraint affects each creature that ends its turn restrained.

**Necrotic Restraint.** A creature that ends its turn restrained by the Necrotic Restraint takes **7 (2d6)/14 (4d6)/28 (8d6) necrotic damage**.

**Countermeasures.** The trap's trigger and active elements can be thwarted by particular countermeasures.

**Trigger.** A successful **DC 12/15/18 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals a rune of detection on the ceiling that reacts to the presence of living creatures. The rune can also be found with *detect magic*, which also reveals an aura of evocation magic around the statues. A successful **DC 15/20/25 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or *dispel magic* (**DC 12/15/18**) disables the trap.

**Necrotic Restraint.** A restrained creature can be freed with a successful **DC 12/15/18 Strength check**, which deals **3 (1d6)/7 (2d6)/14 (4d6) necrotic damage** to the creature attempting the check.

**Open the Doors.** The doors' lock has been enhanced with *arcane lock*, which can be found with *detect magic*. As an action, a creature can pick the lock on the doors with a successful **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**. The doors can be pushed open as an action with a successful **DC 15/20/25 Strength check**.

**Poison Gas.** The gas can be disabled by blocking the flow from the statues' mouths, but heavily damaging a statue leaves the gas vents open. When all four gas-expelling statues are blocked up or disabled, the trap deactivates.

**Attack.** Reducing a statue to 0 hit points (**AC 16/18/20; 9/18/36 hit points**; resistance to fire, piercing, and slashing damage; immunity to poison and psychic damage), or making a successful **DC 15/20/25 Strength check** to break one increases the Poison Gas damage by **1d6/2d6/4d6**.

**Dexterity check using thieves' tools, DC 15/20/25.** A creature can use thieves' tools to disable the gas in one of the statues, reducing the Poison Gas damage by **1d6/2d6/4d6**. The same method can be used to prevent the fifth statue from opening its mouth and sparking the gas before the gas reaches its maximum damage.

**Strength check, DC 12/15/18.** A creature can block up the statue with a cloak or similar object, reducing the Poison Gas damage by **1d6/2d6/4d6**. Once a party member succeeds on the check, someone must remain within 5 feet of the statue to keep it blocked up.



## 5. RITUAL NEXUS

This chamber houses the soul well, home to the mysterious entity to which the lichs sacrificed **Cadmus**, and the body of Cadmus himself, suspended in perpetual torment to fuel their shared phylactery.

**When the party enters the ritual nexus, read the following:**

*A column of blinding, almost solid light dominates the chamber. It emanates from a circular pit ringed by columns, putting you in mind of both a temple and the bastion roots of an enormous tree. Half-heard voices echo from the depths of the well. Suspended in the light is a humanoid figure bound by hazy shadows and writhing in silent agony, a dagger seemingly made of solid smoke transfixing their chest.*

**Light.** The light is an avatar for a nameless, extra-planar entity which is powered by souls. It offers those who approach it the option to gain lichdom in exchange for sacrificing a living humanoid, and gains power from both the sacrifice and the fragment of the lich's soul shed as part of the ritual.

When the party approaches the well, the entity puppeteers Cadmus' body to speak to them; Cadmus' anguished face contrasting with the calm and unearthly voice composed of those of the three lichs' combined. Focussing on the most powerful spellcasters in the party, the entity offers them the chance to gain all the power they could possibly desire, should they take the knife from the altar and sacrifice a member of their own party.

**Altar.** On the altar is a knife, made of the same solid smoke as Cadmus' bindings.

**Figure.** The suspended figure is Cadmus, who has remained preserved on the point of death since the ritual took place some 50 years ago. They are unaware of any activity outside the pillar of light, and the shadowy bindings keeping them in place cannot be broken.

Removing the dagger is the only way to end the ritual, killing Cadmus and thus destroying the lichs' phylactery.

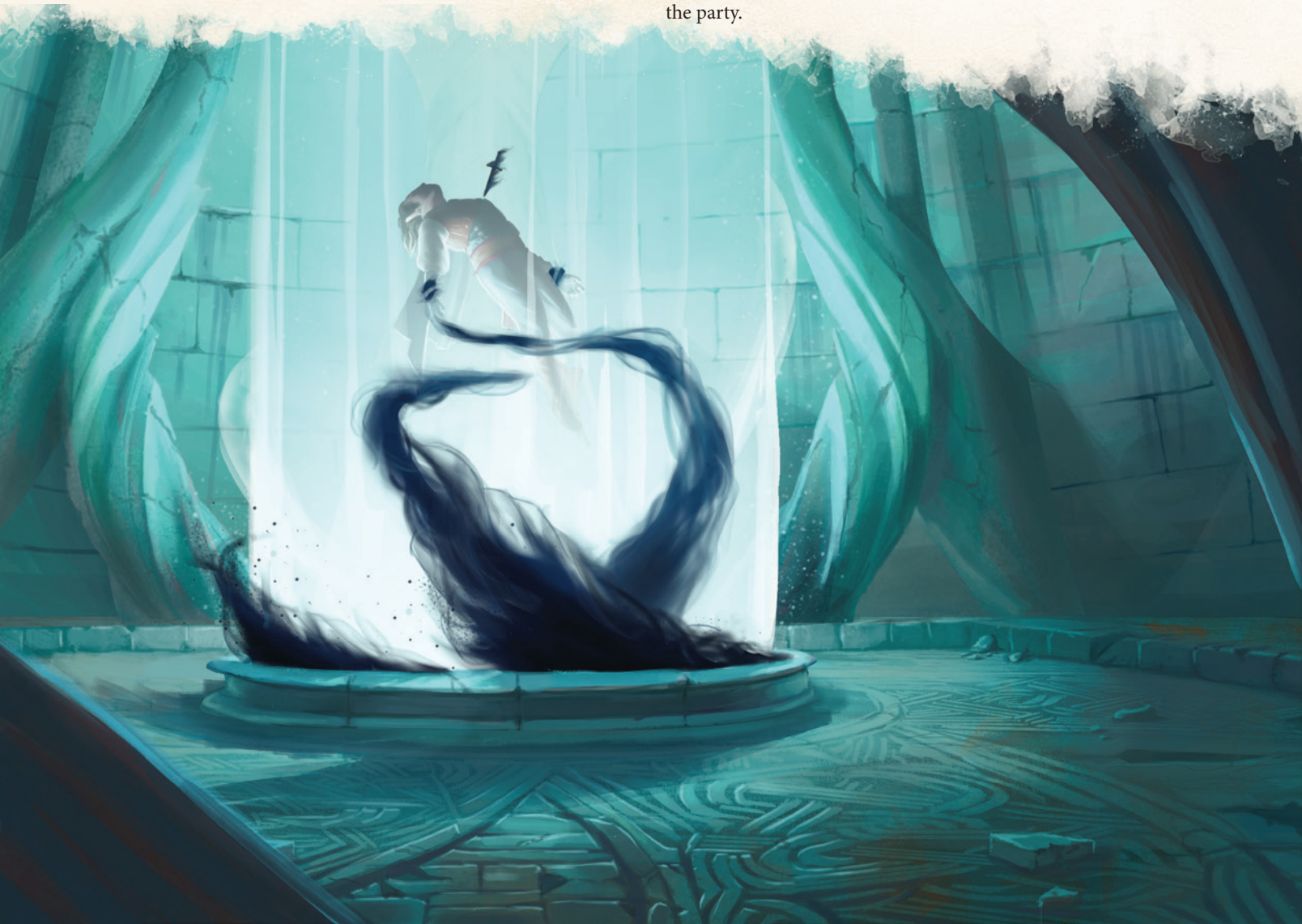
A living creature that makes physical contact with the pillar of light surrounding Cadmus must make a **DC 15/20/25**

**Constitution saving throw**, taking **11 (2d10/22 (4d10)/44 (8d10) damage** on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Half of the damage is **necrotic** and half is **radiant**. A creature that fails its saving throw also flinches back, and is unable to grasp the dagger to remove it.

**When the dagger is removed, read the following:**

*The dagger moves with some resistance, the darkness seeming to grasp at Cadmus' writhing form before giving up its grip. For a split second, Cadmus' face relaxes, almost returning to an easy smile, before they spasm once more. A torrent of inky black shadow pours from them, billowing out to form the hazy figure of a corpse surrounded by twisting darkness.*

Cadmus stops writhing and looks momentarily at peace, before their tormented spirit takes the form of a **wraith** and attacks the party.





## LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the wraith takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The wraith can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- The light pillar pulses, and tempting whispers of power creep into the minds of those nearby. Every living creature within 30 feet of the light who can see it must make a **DC 15/20/25 Wisdom saving throw** or become transfixed by the light until the end of their next turn. A transfixed creature is **incapacitated**, and must spend their movement moving at half their speed towards the light, by the shortest route. This effect ends immediately if the creature takes damage. If a creature makes physical contact with the light, they take **11 (2d10/22 (4d10)/44 (8d10) damage**. Half of the damage is **necrotic**, and half is **radiant**.
- The light pillar flares in a searing burst. Every creature who can see it must make a **DC 12/15/18 Constitution saving throw** or be **blinded** for one minute. A creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.
- Grasping tendrils of shadow issue forth from the light. Up to two creatures within 60 feet of the pillar must make a **DC 15/20/25 Dexterity saving throw** or be **restrained (escape DC 15/20/25)**. The tendrils retreat when the wraith uses this lair action again, or when it dies. The wraith can't use this lair action again until it uses a different one.



## CONCLUSION

**When the wraith is defeated, read the following:**

*The twisted creature stops dead, convulses as it begins to lose its form, and then it is gone, dissipating like morning fog. The pillar of light flares with a terrible howl of anguish - three broken souls' screams of pain and fear mingle with countless others from the depths below. The shadows retreat into the pit, and the light goes out. Whatever entity dwelt there is gone, and you are left blinking in the darkness. With a final thud, Cadmus' body comes to rest on the floor of the chamber - dead, simply dead, at last.*

With the liches' phylactery ritual destroyed, and Cadmus put to rest, Brennan is now released from his earthly bonds and is at peace. The faint image of him appears, kneeling beside Cadmus' corpse. He brushes their face with a ghostly hand, turns to the party with a grateful bow of the head, and is gone.

The nameless entity that lurked in the well of light has retreated. Unused to failure, it will lurk licking its wounds in its home plane for many ages, before attempting to return.

If the party followed either of the first two adventure hooks, they can collect on what is owed to them:

**Hook #1 - Magdak Lubogg** is delighted that Brennan has vacated the house, and is able to transform it into the tavern of his dreams. He enthusiastically pays the party their due, and insists that they never have to pay for a drink and the newly-opened Three Liches Tavern, so long as he tends the bar there.

**Hook #2** - The party member now has full legal ownership of the house. It is in a state of some neglect, but is structurally sound. With a little elbow grease, it can become a very comfortable residence for a small band of adventurers.



## APPENDIX A: BEGINNER MONSTERS

### BRENNAN (GHOST)

*Medium undead, any alignment*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 70 (20d6)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Dwarvish

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Ethereal Sight.** Brennan can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

**Incorporeal Movement.** Brennan can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Brennan can use his Horrifying Visage. He then attacks with his Blood-Chilling Touch. Alternatively, Brennan can make two Fling Object attacks.

**Blood-Chilling Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

**Fling Object (Requires Possessed Object).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 50 ft. (measured from the object's space), one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 4) damage if the object is Small, or 6 (1d4 + 4) damage if the object is Tiny. The damage type depends on the shape of the object. If the object has sharp points, it deals piercing damage, if it has a cutting edge, it deals slashing damage, otherwise the object deals bludgeoning damage. Weapons and pieces of ammunition always deal the type of damage that they would deal when wielded normally. A flung object is no longer possessed.

**Etherealness.** Brennan enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. He is visible on the Material Plane while he is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet he can't affect, or be affected by, anything on the other plane.

**Horrifying Visage.** Creatures within 60 feet of Brennan, other than undead, that can see him must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Brennan's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours.

**Object Possession.** Brennan possesses up to four Small or smaller objects of his choice, that are in the Material Plane, within 60 feet of him that are not being worn or carried. Each object remains possessed until Brennan relinquishes possession of it, leaves the Material Plane, or the object is more than 60 feet away from him. Brennan can independently move each possessed object up to 40 feet in any direction immediately after using this ability, or as an action on subsequent turns. While possessed, objects can be suspended in the air. Additionally, after possessing objects, Brennan can choose to make one Fling Object attack as a bonus action.

Brennan can never possess more than 4 objects at once. If Brennan uses this ability again, while possessing objects, he must choose any number of objects to relinquish in order to be able to possess any others.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Brennan can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Brennan regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Fling.** Brennan makes one Fling Object attack.

**Deathly Strafe (Costs 2 Actions).** Brennan moves up to half his flying speed. If he passes through another creature's space, he can make an attack with his Blood-Chilling Touch against the first hostile creature he passes through.



## KIARA (BLIGHT LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 104 (16d8 + 32)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Con +5, Int +5, Wis +6

**Skills** Nature +5, Perception +6, Survival +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** If Kiara fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when she is destroyed, Kiara gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Kiara is a 6th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Kiara has the following druid spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *guidance, poison spray, thorn whip*

**1st level (4 slots):** *detect magic, fog cloud, thunderwave*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *gust of wind, hold person, moonbeam*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *dispel magic, protection from energy, sleet storm*

**Turn Resistance.** Kiara has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Decomposing Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned, a creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns, or take 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, the effect ends for it.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Kiara can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Kiara regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Cantrip.** Kiara casts a cantrip.

**Decomposing Touch (Costs 2 Actions).** Kiara uses her Decomposing Touch.

**Rot Absorption (Costs 3 Actions).** Kiara draws life energy from creatures around her, that aren't undead or constructs, causing the victims' flesh to wither. Creatures within 30 feet of Kiara must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. Kiara regains a number of hit points equal to half the total damage dealt.



## LANIUS (APOCRYPHAL LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 88 (16d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Int +6, Wis +5

**Skills** Arcana +9, History +6, Perception +5

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Draconic, Dwarvish, Infernal, Sylvan

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** If Lanius fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when he is destroyed, Lanius gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Lanius is a 6th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Lanius has the following wizard spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *acid splash, mage hand, prestidigitation*

**1st level (4 slots):** *detect magic, magic missile, shield*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *detect thoughts, invisibility, mirror image*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic, fireball*

**Turn Resistance.** Lanius has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Paralyzing Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) cold damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Lanius can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Lanius regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Cantrip.** Lanius casts a cantrip.

**Paralyzing Touch (Costs 2 Actions).** Lanius uses his Paralyzing Touch.

**Frightening Apocrypha (Costs 3 Actions).** Lanius telepathically focuses a stream of forbidden knowledge on one creature he can see within 20 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, or become frightened for 1 minute. While frightened, the creature has disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against Lanius' wizard spells. The frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or the effect ends for it, the target has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against Lanius' spells until the next time it fails to save against one of them, and is immune to Lanius' Frightening Apocrypha for the next 24 hours.



## ZAMA (PROFANE LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 104 (16d8 + 32)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Con +5, Int +5, Wis +6

**Skills** Religion +5, Perception +6, Survival +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** If Zama fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when she is destroyed, Zama gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Zama is a 6th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Zama has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

**1st level (4 slots):** *bane, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *blindness/deafness, hold person, spiritual weapon*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic*

**Turn Resistance.** Zama has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Commanding Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage, plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, or be charmed by Zama for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Zama can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Zama regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Cantrip.** Zama casts a cantrip.

**Commanding Warhammer (Costs 2 Actions).** Zama attacks with her Commanding Warhammer.

**Profane Sermon (Costs 3 Actions).** Zama speaks a portion of an unholy sermon. Creatures within 30 feet that can hear her, other than undead, must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Additionally, undead creatures within 30 feet, that can hear Zama, regain 4 (1d8) hit points.



## CADMUS (WRAITH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 65 (10d8 + 20)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Thieves' Cant

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** Cadmus can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. They take 5 (1d10) force damage if they end their turn inside an object.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, Cadmus has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (5d8) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

If a creature is slain by this attack, its spirit rises on the next turn as a specter in the space of its corpse, or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under Cadmus' control. Cadmus can have no more than 7 specters under their control at a time.

**Necrotic Lash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

**Create Specter.** Cadmus targets a corpse within 10 feet of them that has been dead for no longer than an hour, and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse, or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under Cadmus' control.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Cadmus can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Cadmus regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

**Shift.** Cadmus flies up to half their fly speed, without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Hateful Lash.** Cadmus makes a Necrotic Lash attack.

**Create Specter (Costs 2 Actions).** Cadmus uses their Create Specter ability.



## GHOUL

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

## ACTIONS

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

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

## MONGRELFOLK

*Medium humanoid (mongrelfolk), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 19 (3d8 + 6)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Deception +2, Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Prominent Deformities.** The mongrelfolk has up to 4 features from the mongrelfolk deformity table (Appendix D), determined randomly by rolling a d4 and d20 each, or chosen by the GM.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The mongrelfolk makes two attacks: one with its bite, and one with its claw or dagger.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

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

## SKELETON

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt scraps)

**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning, radiant

**Damage Immunities** poison, necrotic

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 9

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life, but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Skeletal Appearance.** While the skeleton is lying still, it is indistinguishable from a mundane skeletal corpse. It can still be detected by a *detect evil and good* spell, or similar magic.

## ACTIONS

**Pike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

## REACTIONS

**Brace Pike.** When a creature enters its reach, the skeleton can make a pike attack against it.

## ZAMA POSSESSED TEMPLATE

A skeleton can become a vessel for Zama to inhabit. Zama controls the skeleton's actions and can perceive through its senses, as well as speak through the skeleton using her voice. It keeps its statistics, with the following changes:

**Ability Scores.** INT 15 (+2), WIS 17 (+3), CHA 16 (+3)

**Saving Throws.** Con +5, Int +5, Wis +6

**Skills.** Religion +5, Perception +6, Survival +6

**Languages.** Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

**Spellcasting.** The Zama possessed is a 6th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *guidance, poison spray, thorn whip*

**1st level (4 slots):** *detect magic, fog cloud, thunderwave*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *gust of wind, hold person, moonbeam*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *dispel magic, protection from energy, sleet storm*



## SPECTER

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 18 (4d8)

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

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

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Draining Form (1/Turn).** If the specter moves through another creature's space on its turn, it can force that creature to make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage, and its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage, and its hit point maximum isn't reduced. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The specter can't use its Draining Form and Life Drain against the same target on the same turn.

**Incorporeal Movement.** The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

## ZOMBIE

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 13 (2d8 + 4)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Wis +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life, but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Cadaverous Appearance.** While the zombie is lying still, it is indistinguishable from a mundane decomposing corpse. It can still be detected by a *detect evil and good* spell, or similar magic.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw, with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

## ACTIONS

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



## APPENDIX B: INTERMEDIATE MONSTERS

### BRENNAN (GHOST)

*Medium undead, any alignment*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 88 (16d8 + 16)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Con +4

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Dwarvish

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Ethereal Sight.** Brennan can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

**Incorporeal Movement.** Brennan can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends its turn inside an object.

### ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** Brennan can use his Horrifying Visage. He then attacks with his Blood-Chilling Touch. Alternatively, Brennan can make two Fling Object attacks.

**Blood-Chilling Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (5d6 + 4) necrotic damage.

**Fling Object (Requires Possessed Object).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 50 ft. (measured from the object's space), one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 4) damage if the object is Medium, 8 (1d6 + 4) damage if the object is Small, or 6 (1d4 + 4) damage if the object is Tiny. The damage type depends on the shape of the object. If the object has sharp points, it deals piercing damage, if it has a cutting edge, it deals slashing damage, otherwise the object deals bludgeoning damage. Weapons and pieces of ammunition always deal the type of damage that they would deal when wielded normally. A flung object is no longer possessed.

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

**Horrifying Visage.** Creatures within 60 feet of Brennan, other than undead, that can see him must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Brennan's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours.

**Object Possession.** Brennan possesses up to four Medium or smaller objects of his choice, that are in the Material Plane, within 60 feet of him that are not being worn or carried. Each object remains possessed until Brennan relinquishes possession of it, leaves the Material Plane, or the object is more than 60 feet away from him. Brennan can independently move each possessed object up to 40 feet in any direction immediately after using this ability, or as an action on subsequent turns. While possessed, objects can be suspended in the air. Additionally, after possessing objects, Brennan can choose to make one Fling Object attack as a bonus action.

Brennan can never possess more than 4 objects at once. If Brennan uses this ability again, while possessing objects, he must choose any number of objects to relinquish in order to be able to possess any others.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Brennan can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Brennan regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Fling.** Brennan makes one Fling Object attack.

**Deathly Strafe (Costs 2 Actions).** Brennan moves up to half his flying speed. If he passes through another creature's space, he can make an attack with his Blood-Chilling Touch against the first hostile creature he passes through.



## KIARA (BLIGHT LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (17d8 + 34)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Con +6, Int +7, Wis +8

**Skills** Nature +7, Perception +8, Survival +8

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** If Kiara fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when she is destroyed, Kiara gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Kiara is a 9th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Kiara has the following druid spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *guidance, poison spray, thorn whip*

**1st level (4 slots):** *detect magic, fog cloud, thunderwave*

**2nd level (4 slots):** *gust of wind, hold person, moonbeam*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *dispel magic, protection from energy, sleet storm*

**4th level (3 slots):** *blight, polymorph*

**5th level (2 slots):** *antilife shell, contagion*

**Turn Resistance.** Kiara has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Decomposing Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, or become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned, a creature must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns, or take 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, the effect ends for it.

**Undead Beast Shape (2/Day).** Kiara magically polymorphs into a beast with a challenge rating of 6 or less, and can remain in this form for up to 9 hours. While in this form, Kiara resembles a decomposing, undead version of that beast. Kiara can choose whether her equipment falls to the ground, melds with her new form, or is worn by the new form. Kiara reverts to her true form if she dies or falls unconscious. Kiara can revert to her true form using a bonus action on its turn.

While in a new form, Kiara retains her game statistics and ability to speak, but her AC, movement modes, Strength, and Dexterity are replaced by those of the new form. Additionally, she gains the special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) of her new form. Kiara can't cast spells with somatic components in her new form.

The new form's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunity to nonmagical attacks. Additionally, when Kiara hits with a melee weapon attack in her new form, the target takes an additional 14 (4d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, or become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned, a creature must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns, or take 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, the effect ends for it.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Kiara can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Kiara regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Cantrip.** Kiara casts a cantrip.

**Decomposing Touch (Costs 2 Actions).** Kiara uses her Decomposing Touch.

**Shapechange (Costs 2 Actions).** Kiara uses her Undead Beast Shape.

**Rot Absorption (Costs 3 Actions).** Kiara draws life energy from creatures around her, that aren't undead or constructs, causing the victims' flesh to wither. Creatures within 30 feet of Kiara must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, or take 11 (3d6) necrotic damage. Kiara regains a number of hit points equal to half the total damage dealt.



## LANIUS (APOCRYPHAL LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 93 (17d8 + 17)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Con +5, Int +8, Wis +7

**Skills** Arcana +12, History +8, Perception +7

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Draconic, Dwarvish, Infernal, Sylvan

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** If Lanius fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when he is destroyed, Lanius gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Lanius is a 9th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Lanius has the following wizard spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *acid splash, mage hand, prestidigitation*

**1st level (4 slots):** *detect magic, magic missile, shield*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *detect thoughts, invisibility, mirror image*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic, fireball*

**4th level (3 slots):** *confusion, dimension door*

**5th level (1 slot):** *cone of cold, scrying*

**Turn Resistance.** Lanius has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Paralyzing Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) cold damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Lanius can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Lanius regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Cantrip.** Lanius casts a cantrip.

**Paralyzing Touch (Costs 2 Actions).** Lanius uses his Paralyzing Touch.

**Frightening Apocrypha (Costs 3 Actions).** Lanius telepathically focuses a stream of forbidden knowledge on one creature he can see within 20 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, or become frightened for 1 minute. While frightened, the creature has disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against Lanius' wizard spells. The frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or the effect ends for it, the target has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against Lanius' spells until the next time it fails to save against one of them, and is immune to Lanius' Frightening Apocrypha for the next 24 hours.



## ZAMA (PROFANE LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (17d8 + 34)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Con +6, Int +7, Wis +8

**Skills** Religion +7, Perception +8, Survival +8

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** If Zama fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when she is destroyed, Zama gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Zama is a 9th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Zama has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

**1st level (4 slots):** *bane, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

**2nd level (4 slots):** *blindness/deafness, hold person, spiritual weapon*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic*

**4th level (3 slots):** *banishment, guardian of faith*

**5th level (2 slots):** *geas, insect plague*

**Turn Resistance.** Zama has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Commanding Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage, plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, or be charmed by Zama for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Bane of Life (1/Day).** Zama presents her holy symbol and speaks a baleful command, chastising the living. Each creature within 30 feet of Zama, other than constructs, fiends, and undead, must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, or be frightened for 1 minute, or until it takes any damage. If a creature with a challenge rating of 2 or lower fails its saving throw against this effect, it immediately drops to 0 hit points.

A frightened creature must spend its turns moving as far away from Zama as it can. As its action, the creature can only use Dash actions, or to try to escape an effect that prevents it from moving. If it has nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Zama can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Zama regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Cantrip.** Zama casts a cantrip.

**Commanding Warhammer (Costs 2 Actions).** Zama attacks with her Commanding Warhammer.

**Profane Sermon (Costs 3 Actions).** Zama speaks a portion of an unholy sermon. Creatures within 30 feet that can hear her, other than undead, must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Additionally, undead creatures within 30 feet, that can hear Zama, regain 4 (1d8) hit points.



## CADMUS (WRAITH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 195 (26d8 + 78)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Thieves' Cant

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** Cadmus can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. They take 5 (1d10) force damage if they end their turn inside an object.

**Specter Servants.** Cadmus' Life Drain and Create Specter abilities can both create specters under their control. Cadmus can have no more than 11 total specters under their control at a time.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, Cadmus has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 36 (8d8) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

If a creature is slain by this attack, its spirit rises on the next turn as a specter in the space of its corpse, or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under Cadmus' control.

**Necrotic Lash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.

**Create Specter.** Cadmus targets a corpse within 10 feet of them that has been dead for no longer than an hour, and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse, or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under Cadmus' control.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Cadmus can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Cadmus regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

**Shift.** Cadmus flies up to half their fly speed, without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Hateful Lash.** Cadmus makes a Necrotic Lash attack.

**Create Specter (Costs 2 Actions).** Cadmus uses their Create Specter ability.



## GHOUL

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### ACTIONS

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

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

## MONGRELFOLK

*Medium humanoid (mongrelfolk), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (6d8 + 18)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Athletics +4, Deception +2, Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Prominent Deformities.** The mongrelfolk has up to 4 features from the mongrelfolk deformity table (Appendix D), determined randomly by rolling a d4 and d20 each, or chosen by the GM. Instead of a d20, roll a d10 and add +10 to the result for the first two features generated.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The mongrelfolk makes three attacks: one with its bite, one with its claw, and one with its spear.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## SKELETON

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (rusty chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 44 (8d8 + 8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning, radiant

**Damage Immunities** poison, necrotic

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 9

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life, but can't speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Skeletal Appearance.** While the skeleton is lying still, it is indistinguishable from a mundane skeletal corpse. It can still be detected by a *detect evil and good* spell, or similar magic.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The skeleton makes two weapon attacks.

**Pike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

### REACTIONS

**Brace Pike.** When a creature enters its reach, the skeleton can make a pike attack against it.

## ZAMA POSSESSED TEMPLATE

A skeleton can become a vessel for Zama to inhabit. Zama controls the skeleton's actions and can perceive through its senses, as well as speak through the skeleton using her voice. It keeps its statistics, with the following changes:

**Ability Scores.** INT 16 (+3), WIS 18 (+4), CHA 17 (+3)

**Saving Throws.** Con +6, Int +7, Wis +8

**Skills.** Religion +7, Perception +8, Survival +8

**Languages.** Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

**Spellcasting.** The Zama possessed is a 9th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

**1st level (4 slots):** *bane, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

**2nd level (4 slots):** *blindness/deafness, hold person, spiritual weapon*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic*

**4th level (3 slots):** *banishment, guardian of faith*

**5th level (2 slots):** *geas, insect plague*



## SPECTER

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 55 (10d8 + 10)

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

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

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Draining Form (2/Turn).** If the specter moves through another creature's space on its turn, it can force that creature to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage, and its hit point maximum isn't reduced. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The specter can't use its Draining Form and Life Drain against the same target on the same turn, and can't use its Draining Form on the same creature more than once per turn.

**Incorporeal Movement.** The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

## ZOMBIE

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 68 (8d8 + 32)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)

**Saving Throws** Con +6, Wis +1

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life, but can't speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Cadaverous Appearance.** While the zombie is lying still, it is indistinguishable from a mundane decomposing corpse. It can still be detected by a *detect evil and good* spell, or similar magic.

**Grasping Horde.** If a creature is grappled by more than one creature with this ability, it has disadvantage on ability checks to escape the grapple.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw, with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The zombie makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the zombie can't use its slam attack against another target.



## APPENDIX C: ADVANCED MONSTERS

### BRENNAN (GHOST)

*Medium undead, any alignment*

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 121 (22d8 + 22)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

**Saving Throws** Con +5

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Dwarvish

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Ethereal Sight.** Brennan can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

**Incorporeal Movement.** Brennan can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends its turn inside an object.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Brennan can use his Horrifying Visage. He then attacks with his Blood-Chilling Touch. Alternatively, Brennan can make two Fling Object attacks.

**Blood-Chilling Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (6d6 + 5) necrotic damage.

**Fling Object (Requires Possessed Object).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 50 ft. (measured from the object's space), one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 5) damage if the object is Medium, 11 (2d6 + 5) damage if the object is Small, or 7 (1d4 + 5) damage if the object is Tiny. The damage type depends on the shape of the object. If the object has sharp points, it deals piercing damage, if it has a cutting edge, it deals slashing damage, otherwise the object deals bludgeoning damage. Weapons and pieces of ammunition always deal the type of damage that they would deal when wielded normally. A flung object is no longer possessed.

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

**Horrifying Visage.** Creatures within 60 feet of Brennan, other than undead, that can see him must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Brennan's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours.

**Object Possession.** Brennan possesses up to six Medium or smaller objects of his choice, that are in the Material Plane, within 60 feet of him that are not being worn or carried. Each object remains possessed until Brennan relinquishes possession of it, leaves the Material Plane, or the object is more than 60 feet away from him. Brennan can independently move each possessed object up to 40 feet in any direction immediately after using this ability, or as an action on subsequent turns. While possessed, objects can be suspended in the air. Additionally, after possessing objects, Brennan can choose to make one Fling Object attack as a bonus action.

Brennan can never possess more than 6 objects at once. If Brennan uses this ability again, while possessing objects, he must choose any number of objects to relinquish in order to be able to possess any others.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Brennan can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Brennan regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Fling.** Brennan makes one Fling Object attack.

**Deathly Strafe (Costs 2 Actions).** Brennan moves up to half his flying speed. If he passes through another creature's space, he can make an attack with his Blood-Chilling Touch against the first hostile creature he passes through.



## KIARA (BLIGHT LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 135 (18d8 + 54)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Con +8, Int +8, Wis +9

**Skills** Nature +8, Perception +9, Survival +9

**Damage Resistances** cold, lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

**Languages** Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Circle of Rot.** Whenever an undead creature is destroyed within 60 feet of Kiara, she regains a number of hit points equal to twice the destroyed creature's CR.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Kiara fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when she is destroyed, Kiara gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Kiara is a 13th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Kiara has the following druid spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *guidance, poison spray, thorn whip*

**1st level (4 slots):** *detect magic, fog cloud, thunderwave*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *gust of wind, hold person, moonbeam*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *dispel magic, protection from energy, sleet storm*

**4th level (3 slots):** *blight, polymorph*

**5th level (2 slots):** *antilife shell, contagion*

**6th level (1 slot):** *move earth, wind walk*

**7th level (1 slot):** *plane shift, reverse gravity*

**Turn Resistance.** Kiara has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Decomposing Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, or become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned, a creature must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns, or take 17 (5d6) necrotic damage. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, the effect ends for it.

**Undead Beast Shape (2/Day).** Kiara magically polymorphs into a beast with a challenge rating of 8 or less, and can remain in this form for up to 9 hours. While in this form, she resembles a decomposing, undead version of that beast. Kiara can choose whether her equipment falls to the ground, melds with her new form, or is worn by the new form. Kiara reverts to her true form if she dies or falls unconscious. Kiara can revert to her true form using a bonus action on her turn.

While in a new form, Kiara retains her game statistics and ability to speak, but her AC, movement modes, Strength, and Dexterity are replaced by those of the new form. Additionally, she gains the special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) of her new form. Kiara can't cast spells with somatic components in her new form.

The new form's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunity to nonmagical attacks. Additionally, when Kiara hits with a weapon attack in her new form, the target takes an additional 17 (5d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, or become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned, a creature must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns, or take 17 (5d6) necrotic damage. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, the effect ends for it.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Kiara can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Kiara regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Cantrip.** Kiara casts a cantrip.

**Decomposing Touch (Costs 2 Actions).** Kiara uses her Decomposing Touch.

**Shapechange (Costs 2 Actions).** Kiara uses her Undead Beast Shape.

**Rot Absorption (Costs 3 Actions).** Kiara draws life energy from creatures around her, that aren't undead or constructs, causing the victims' flesh to wither. Creatures within 30 feet of Kiara must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, or take 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. Kiara regains a number of hit points equal to half the total damage dealt.



## LANIUS (APOCRYPHAL LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 117 (18d8 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Con +7, Int +9, Wis +8

**Skills** Arcana +14, History +9, Perception +8

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Draconic, Dwarvish, Infernal, Sylvan

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Arcane Dismantlement.** Whenever Lanius successfully dispels or counters a spell with *dispel magic*, *counterspell*, or a similar spell, he can make an Intelligence (Arcana) check against a DC equal to the spell's level + the spell save DC of the spell's caster. On a success, Lanius recovers an expended spell slot equal to, or less than, the dispelled spell's level.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Lanius fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when he is destroyed, Lanius gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Lanius is a 13th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Lanius has the following wizard spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *acid splash*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

**1st level (4 slots):** *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *shield*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead*, *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*

**4th level (3 slots):** *confusion*, *dimension door*

**5th level (2 slots):** *cone of cold*, *screying*

**6th level (1 slot):** *disintegrate*, *globe of invulnerability*

**7th level (1 slot):** *plane shift*

**Turn Resistance.** Lanius has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Paralyzing Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Lanius can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Lanius regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Cantrip.** Lanius casts a cantrip.

**Paralyzing Touch (Costs 2 Actions).** Lanius uses his Paralyzing Touch.

**Frightening Apocrypha (Costs 3 Actions).** Lanius telepathically focuses a stream of forbidden knowledge on one creature he can see within 20 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, or become frightened for 1 minute. While frightened, the creature has disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against Lanius' wizard spells. The frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or the effect ends for it, the target has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against Lanius' spells until the next time it fails to save against one of them, and is immune to Lanius' Frightening Apocrypha for the next 24 hours.



## ZAMA (PROFANE LICH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 135 (18d8 + 54)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Con +8, Int +8, Wis +9

**Skills** Religion +8, Perception +9, Survival +9

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** cold, lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Zama fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If the ritual nexus is still active, when she is destroyed, Zama gains a new body in 4d10 days, regaining 1 hit point and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the ritual nexus.

**Spellcasting.** Zama is a 13th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Zama has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

**1st level (4 slots):** *bane, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *blindness/deafness, hold person, spiritual weapon*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic*

**4th level (3 slots):** *banishment, guardian of faith*

**5th level (2 slots):** *geas, insect plague*

**6th level (1 slot):** *create undead, harm*

**7th level (1 slot):** *plane shift, regenerate*

**Turn Resistance.** Zama has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Commanding Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, or be charmed by Zama for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Restore Undeath.** Zama touches a willing undead creature, within 5 feet of her, and expends a spell slot to channel negative energy. The target regains 8 (1d8 + 4) hit points, plus an additional 4 (1d8) hit points for each slot level above 1st of the expended spell slot.

**Bane of Life (2/Day).** Zama presents her holy symbol and speaks a baleful command, chastising the living. Each creature within 30 feet of Zama, other than constructs, fiends, and undead, must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, or be frightened for 1 minute, or until it takes any damage. If a creature with a challenge rating of 3 or lower fails its saving throw against this effect, it immediately drops to 0 hit points.

A frightened creature must spend its turns moving as far away from Zama as it can. As its action, the creature can only use Dash actions, or to try to escape an effect that prevents it from moving. If it has nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Zama can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Zama regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Cantrip.** Zama casts a cantrip.

**Commanding Warhammer (Costs 2 Actions).** Zama attacks with her Commanding Warhammer.

**Unholy Healing (Costs 2 Actions).** Zama uses her Restore Undeath ability.

**Profane Sermon (Costs 3 Actions).** Zama speaks a portion of an unholy sermon. Creatures within 30 feet that can hear her, other than undead, must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Additionally, undead creatures within 30 feet, that can hear Zama, regain 4 (1d8) hit points.



## CADMUS (WRAITH)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 246 (29d8 + 116)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Thieves' Cant

**Challenge** 18 (20,000 XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** Cadmus can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. They take 5 (1d10) force damage if they end their turn inside an object.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When Cadmus fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead.

**Specter Servants.** Cadmus' Life Drain and Create Specter abilities can both create specters under their control. Cadmus can have no more than 11 total specters under their control at a time.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, Cadmus has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 54 (12d8) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

If a creature is slain by this attack, its spirit rises on the next turn as a specter in the space of its corpse, or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under Cadmus' control.

**Necrotic Lash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (5d8) necrotic damage.

**Create Specter.** Cadmus targets a corpse within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than an hour, and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse, or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under Cadmus' control.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Cadmus can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Cadmus regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

**Shift.** Cadmus flies up to half their fly speed, without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Hateful Lash.** Cadmus makes a Necrotic Lash attack.

**Create Specter (Costs 2 Actions).** Cadmus uses their Create Specter ability.

## GHOUL

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 36 (8d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Stench.** Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the ghoul must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the ghoul's Stench for the next 24 hours.

**Turning Defiance.** The ghoul, and any ghouls within 30 feet of it, have advantage on saving throws against effects that would turn undead.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.



## MONGRELFOLK

*Medium humanoid (mongrelfolk), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 68 (9d8 + 27)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Athletics +6, Deception +2, Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Prominent Deformities.** The mongrelfolk has up to 4 features from the mongrelfolk deformity table (Appendix D), determined randomly by rolling a d4 and d20 each, or chosen by the GM. Instead of a d20, roll a d10 and add +10 to the result for the first two features generated.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The mongrelfolk makes three attacks: one with its bite, one with its claw, and one with its handaxe.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

**Handaxe.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

### SKELETON

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (rusty chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 97 (15d8 + 30)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison, necrotic

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 9

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life, but can't speak

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Legendary Durability (3/Day).** If the skeleton fails a saving throw, it can choose to reroll the saving throw.

**Skeletal Appearance.** While the skeleton is lying still, it is indistinguishable from a mundane skeletal corpse. It can still be detected by a *detect evil and good* spell, or similar magic.

**Osseous Phalanx.** As a bonus action, the skeleton can push its pike through the ribcage of another willing skeleton. The impaled skeleton takes no damage, but is considered grappled by the pike-wielding skeleton until either skeleton ends the condition on its turn as part of its movement. Until this grapple ends, as long as the impaled skeleton is not destroyed, the pike-wielding skeleton has three-quarters cover.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The skeleton makes two weapon attacks.

**Pike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

### REACTIONS

**Brace Pike.** When a creature enters its reach, the skeleton can make a pike attack against it.

### ZAMA POSSESSED TEMPLATE

A skeleton can become a vessel for Zama to inhabit. Zama controls the skeleton's actions and can perceive through its senses, as well as speak through the skeleton using her voice. It keeps its statistics, with the following changes:

**Ability Scores.** INT 17 (+3), WIS 19 (+4), CHA 18 (+4)

**Saving Throws.** Con +8, Int +8, Wis +9

**Skills.** Religion +8, Perception +9, Survival +9

**Languages.** Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

**Spellcasting.** The Zama possessed is a 13th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

**1st level (4 slots):** *bane, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *blindness/deafness, hold person, spiritual weapon*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic*

**4th level (3 slots):** *banishment, guardian of faith*

**5th level (2 slots):** *geas, insect plague*

**6th level (1 slot):** *create undead, harm*

**7th level (1 slot):** *plane shift, regenerate*



## SPECTER

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 132 (24d8 + 24)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

**Skills** Perception +4

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Draining Form (3/Turn).** If the specter moves through another creature's space on its turn, it can force that creature to make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage, and its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage, and its hit point maximum isn't reduced. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The specter can't use its Draining Form and Life Drain against the same target on the same turn, and can't use its Draining Form on the same creature more than once per turn.

**Incorporeal Movement.** The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** When the specter fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

## ZOMBIE

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 133 (14d8 + 70)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	6 (-2)	20 (+5)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

**Saving Throws** Con +8, Wis +3

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life, but can't speak

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Cadaverous Appearance.** While the zombie is lying still, it is indistinguishable from a mundane decomposing corpse. It can still be detected by a *detect evil and good* spell, or similar magic.

**Grasping Horde.** If a creature is grappled by more than one creature with this ability, it has disadvantage on ability checks to escape the grapple.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw, with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The zombie makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the zombie can't use its slam attack against another target.



## APPENDIX D: MONGRELFOLK DEFORMITIES

When randomly determining a feature for a mongrelfolk, roll a d4 and a d20. The d4 determines which part of the body is affected, and the d20 determines the exact effect. If you just want to generate purely cosmetic traits, simply roll a d10 instead of a d20. To only generate traits with mechanical effects, add +10 to the result of the d10.

When rolling for features randomly, it is possible that you will roll the exact same feature twice; if you do, the feature applies twice, if possible. Numeric bonuses stack with themselves. For

example, if you roll result 2 for legs twice, both legs end in hooves. A mongrelfolk can't have more than two of the same feature with a mechanical effect.

If two features are mutually exclusive, or you roll more than two of the same feature with a mechanical effect, reroll the feature you generated last until you get a feature that does not conflict with any other. It is up to you to decide whether to reconcile two features with each other, or find them to be mutually exclusive.

D20 \ D4	1. Head	2. Torso	3. Arms	4. Legs
1	Vertical pupils	Shaggy fur along the neck and shoulders	Humanoid hands in an unusual configuration, such as outward facing palms or zygodactylous fingers (two back and two front facing, like a parrot).	Vestigial extra leg
2	A patch of quills	Strongly hunched back	Vestigial animal limb protruding from one forearm, in addition to the humanoid hand	Hooves
3	Insectoid mandibles	Protruding spinal ridge	Bird-like talon for a hand	Shaggy fur covering one lower leg
4	A single, crooked antler or horn	Dorsal fin	Large paw and shaggy fur along one forearm	One lizard-like foot
5	A set of vestigial antennae	Vestigial insect legs, extending from the torso	One arm has an additional elbow joint	One leg, covered in thin, chitinous exoskeleton with an insectoid foot
6	Elongated, flexible neck	White, hairless albino skin	Large feathers growing from one forearm	A reduced number of large, fleshy toes
7	Split lower jaw	Bloated pot belly	Humanoid, non-functioning, non-arm tissue (such as teeth, ears or digits) grow out of the upper arm and shoulder	Blunt, shovel-like claws
8	Needle-like teeth	Fur-covered tail	One hand's fingers are miniature tentacles	Knees bend backwards
9	Tentacle pseudopods surrounding the mouth	Disproportionately long torso	Fleshy membrane connects wrist to torso	One leg ends in two feet
10	Lipless mouth with exposed teeth and gums.	Newborn-sized limbs protrude from the chest	One hand is unusually heavy with thick fingers fused together like a mitten	Splayed, grasping toes
11	<b>Single cyclopean eye.</b> The mongrelfolk has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets 30 feet or farther away. This feature has no effect if the mongrelfolk also has additional, or compound, eyes.	<b>Open lesions.</b> The mongrelfolk has disadvantage on saving throws against diseases, being poisoned, and effects that deal necrotic or poison damage.	<b>Crooked arm.</b> The mongrelfolk has disadvantage on attack rolls made with its affected arm.	<b>Withered leg.</b> If the mongrelfolk takes a Dash action, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, or fall prone at the end of its movement. If the mongrelfolk has this deformity twice, its speed is reduced by 5 feet.



12	<b>Prehensile tongue.</b> The mongrelfolk can pick up objects and attempt to grapple Tiny creatures using its tongue, instead of a free hand. The tongue can grasp or grapple targets up to 10 feet away. Its Strength score, for the purpose of lifting and dragging loads, is 4.	<b>Scaly tail.</b> The mongrelfolk has advantage on Dexterity checks and saving throws made to resist being knocked prone.	<b>Oversized arm.</b> The mongrelfolk can ignore the two-handed property of a weapon it wields in its oversized hand. When rolling for damage for the claw of the oversized hand, the mongrelfolk rolls the damage dice one additional time and adds it to the total.	<b>Exceptionally muscular legs.</b> The mongrelfolk's walking speed increases by 10 feet.
13	<b>Additional/compound eyes.</b> The mongrelfolk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. Additionally, it gains a +2 bonus to ranged attack rolls.	<b>Tough hide.</b> The mongrelfolk's armor class increases by 1.	<b>Third arm.</b> The mongrelfolk can wield items in two hands and still have a hand free to make a claw attack.	<b>Sensitive leg follicles.</b> The mongrelfolk has tremorsense out to a range of 30 feet.
14	<b>Muzzled face.</b> The mongrelfolk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell. Its bite attack deals 1d6 damage, rather than 1d4.	<b>Bone spikes.</b> While the mongrelfolk is grappled, it can use a bonus action to deal 2d6 piercing damage to the grappler.	<b>Elongated Arm.</b> The mongrelfolk's reach increases by 5 feet for melee attacks made with the elongated arm.	<b>Digitigrade legs.</b> The mongrelfolk's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, without a running start.
15	<b>Additional head.</b> The mongrelfolk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks, and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.	<b>Pseudopod tentacles.</b> When the mongrelfolk makes a weapon attack against a creature, it can attempt to grapple it as a bonus action (escape DC = 10 + the mongrelfolk's Strength modifier).	<b>Tentacle.</b> Instead of a claw attack, the mongrelfolk makes a tentacle attack that functions the same way, except that it deals bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled on a hit (escape DC = 10 + the mongrelfolk's Strength modifier). Until the grapple ends, the mongrelfolk can't attack another target with its tentacle.	<b>Additional leg.</b> The mongrelfolk has advantage on Strength checks and saving throws to resist being moved or knocked prone. If the mongrelfolk has this feature twice, its walking speed increases by 5 feet.
16	<b>Gills.</b> The mongrelfolk can breathe in both air and water.	<b>Exceptionally muscular frame.</b> The mongrelfolk has advantage on Strength and Constitution saving throws.	<b>Pincer.</b> The mongrelfolk's claw attack with this arm deals 1d8 bludgeoning damage, instead of 1d4 slashing damage.	<b>Webbed toes.</b> The mongrelfolk has a swim speed equal to half its walking speed.
17	<b>Reflective eyes.</b> The mongrelfolk has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.	<b>Wings.</b> The mongrelfolk has a flying speed of 40 feet.	<b>Abnormally long fingers.</b> The mongrelfolk has advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks and Dexterity checks using thieves' tools.	<b>Snaking lower body.</b> The mongrelfolk gains a constrict attack. It can choose to make one constrict attack in place of both its bite and claw. The attack functions the same way as a claw attack, except that it deals 2d4 bludgeoning damage rather than 1d4 slashing damage, and the target is grappled on a hit (escape DC = 10 + the mongrelfolk's Strength modifier). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the mongrelfolk can't constrict another target.



18	<p><b>Venomous fangs.</b> The mongrelfolk's bite attack deals an extra 1d4 poison damage. Additionally, as an action, or as part of its multiattack in place of its bite, the mongrelfolk can force a creature within 10 feet of it to make a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 10 + the mongrelfolk's Constitution modifier). On a failed save, the target takes 1d4 poison damage.</p>	<p><b>Stinger.</b> The mongrelfolk can choose to make a stinger attack in place of either a claw or bite attack. The stinger functions identically to the mongrelfolk's bite, except that it deals 1d6 poison damage in addition to the regular damage.</p>	<p><b>Climbing pads.</b> The mongrelfolk gains a climb speed equal to half its walking speed.</p> <p>If the mongrelfolk has the same feature on its legs, it can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings.</p>	<p><b>Climbing pads.</b> The mongrelfolk gains a climb speed equal to half its walking speed. If the mongrelfolk has the same feature on its arms, it can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings.</p>
19	<p><b>Flexible Vocal Organs.</b> The mongrelfolk can mimic any sound it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sound can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check.</p>	<p><b>Embedded maw.</b> When the mongrelfolk makes a bite attack against a creature it is grappling, or is grappled by, it can choose to have the bite deal 2d8 damage, rather than 1d4.</p>	<p><b>Electrostatic hand.</b> The mongrelfolk can innately cast the <i>shocking grasp</i> cantrip. Its spellcasting ability for this is Wisdom.</p>	<p><b>Padded feet.</b> As long as the mongrelfolk is not wearing footwear, it has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to move silently.</p>
20	<p><b>Bat ears.</b> The mongrelfolk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks based on hearing and has blindsight out to a range of 30 feet. It can't use its blindsight while deafened.</p>	<p><b>Rubbery hide.</b> The mongrelfolk regains 3 hit points at the start of each of its turns. If the mongrelfolk takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn.</p>	<p><b>Charred hand.</b> The mongrelfolk can innately cast the <i>produce flame</i> cantrip. Its spellcasting ability for this is Wisdom.</p>	<p><b>Dragon-like legs.</b></p> <p>The mongrelfolk has resistance against damage of the type associated with the scale color.</p> <p>1-2: Black, Acid 3-4: Blue, Lightning 5-6: Green, Poison 7-8: Red, Fire 9-10: White, Cold</p>



## APPENDIX E: DOCUMENTS

### CADMUS' RIDDLE

*A gift on your birthday! Enjoy a few bottles of my famous  
hippocras, but don't forget to share! I know it eats you up that  
you don't know the secret ingredient - maybe I'll tell you next  
year, or maybe I'll take the secret to my grave. Probably the  
latter, if I'm being entirely honest. Enjoy the day, brother!  
Your loving friend, Cadmus*

*Alright, one clue - it'll be more fun if I get to  
watch you struggle to wrap your remarkably meaty  
head around it anyway!*

*Look in the garden, and I can be found  
At a curve in the coast, on the breath of a hound  
In the hue of a horse, or a nook in a wall  
Now I'll leave on my laurels, standing tall  
-Cadmus*



*Does the soul make the man, or the man the soul?*

*Savages compare the flesh of men to pork - the meat is immaterial.  
The soul is the thing...*

*Regrettably, my goal of an entirely animal-based proxy will have to wait. Until the process can be refined further, some humanoid element will be required. It may be no consolation to them, but their sacrifice will not be in vain. Who knows how long the three of us shall remain, and how high the tally of sacrifices could grow? The few suffer now, in service of the many.*

*They do not suffer alone. I give of myself, also. The master flesh makes all of them my children.*

*To see my own flesh, the master flesh, fuse with the subjects' and blossom anew is poetry. I wonder if, as with the statue hiding in the marble block, these forms simply awaited the sculptor.*

*As breaking down subjects becomes more efficient, additional options reveal themselves. Rather than simply attempt to remake humanity, I can improve it...*

*Iteration six proved far too truculent. 3 previous iterations were sacrificed detaining it. Their parts will not go to waste.*

*Iteration eight strikes the balance of ferocity and loyalty, while still retaining enough cognitive function to wield a weapon. While I am certain it will never quote philosophy, it is at least capable of halting speech.*

*It is a blinkered view to assume the human form to be inherently superior, I see that now. Why assume the limits of simple bilateral symmetry? Only in pursuing the alternatives can one achieve perfection.*

*The forms await. The sculptor thrills to meet them.*



ZAMA'S LETTER

*I write to you, not as your daughter, but as a sworn warrior of The Resplendent Mother.*

*I was reluctant. I hesitated. How could renouncing my name help a power as great as Hers? Why must I, who has so little, give up what I have? These were the protests of an insolent child, and I shamed myself to entertain them.*

*But I understand now. The sacrifice is not to slake some cruel, inscrutable need. It is a test to see what we are ready to put before Her. In my hesitation, I lent my name - a simple, fragile word - more importance than my god. If I cannot give up my past, how can She ever fill my future? I shall not hesitate again.*

*Whatever She requires of me, I will not blink.  
This I swear.*

*Zama*

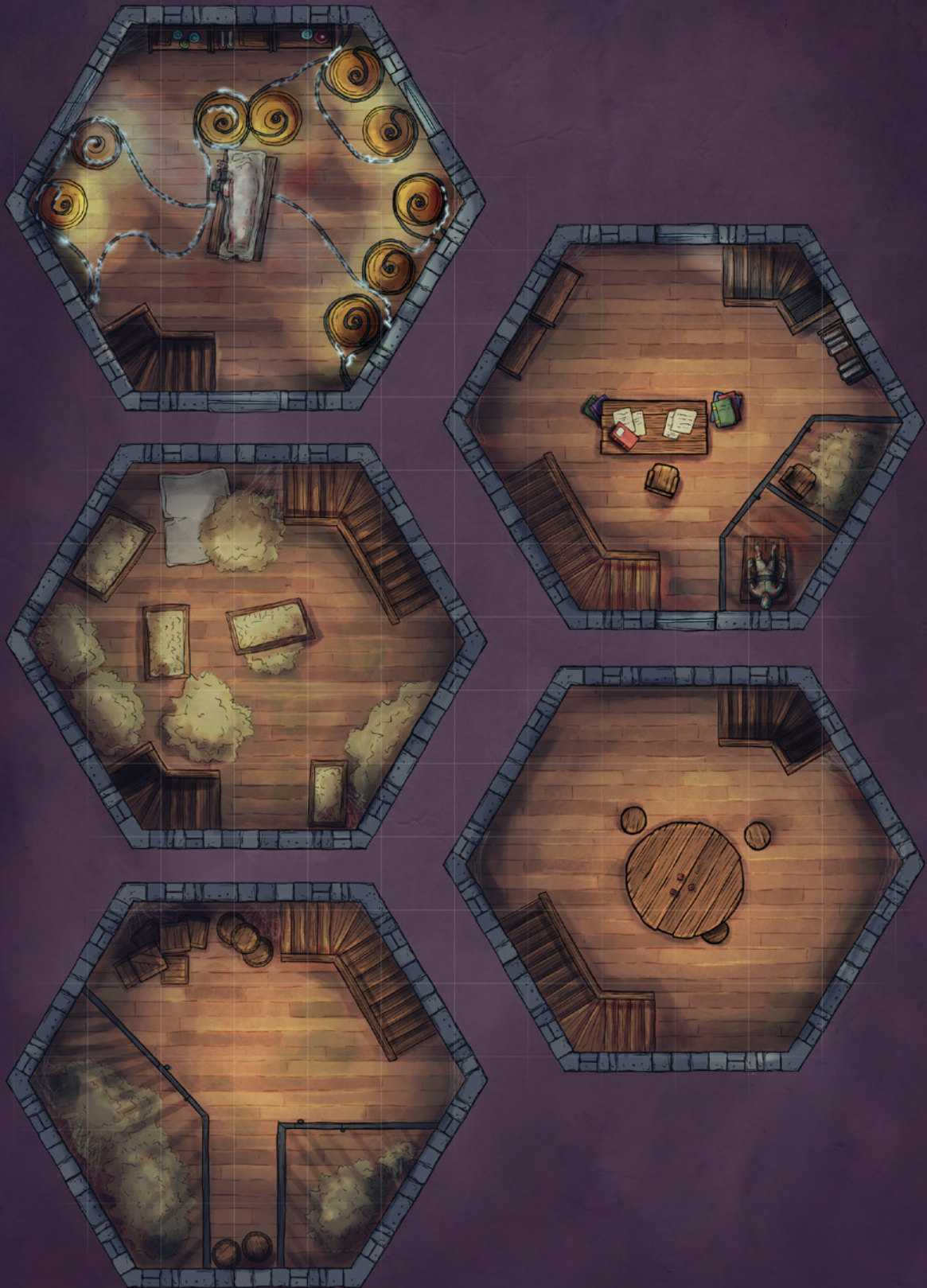








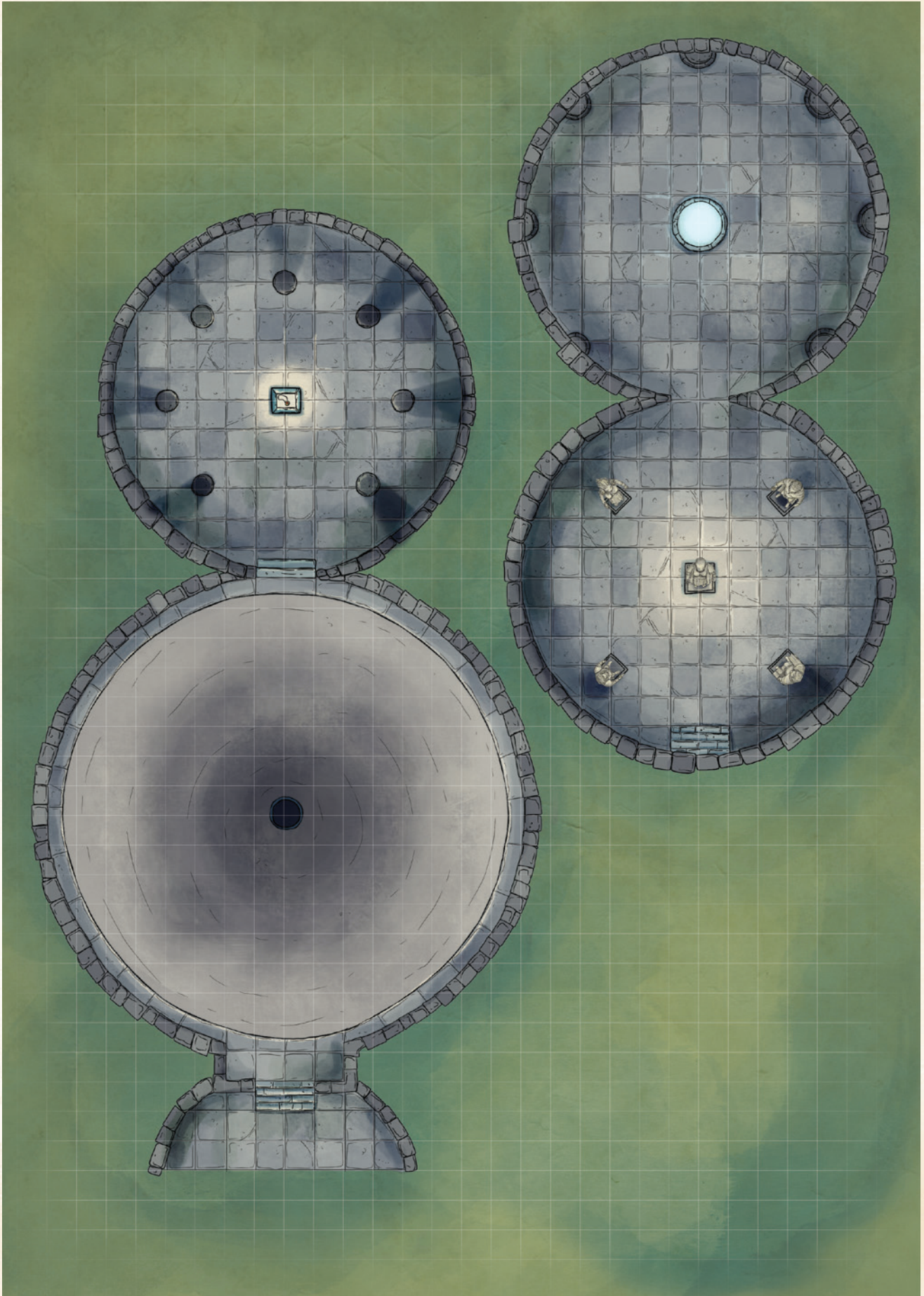














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A party of heroes shattered by betrayal. When the ghosts of the past refuse to rest, will you help put right a decades' old wrong?

This multi-part variable difficulty adventure is designed to be played at any level, and can be easily tailored to fit any fantasy campaign setting. It can serve as an extended side-quest, or as the basis for a longer campaign.

