

Holy Mandate

A Dungeons & Dragons Adventure Series

Chapter 5: The Lake Ruse



About GND Adventures

Holy Mandate is part of a new series of adventures designed to be easy to read, easy to run, and a blast to play. They focus on detailed world building that grows alongside the characters. In these pages, players will find cunning intrigue, intricate puzzles, crafty combats, and grand adventures. The Dungeon Master will find easily accessible information, full stat-blocks for any monsters, creatures, or NPC's, and well laid out content that makes your job easier.

In the course of this adventure, some text appears in **Bold**. Any text, outside of a stat block, appearing in bold should be read or paraphrased to the PC's.

Stat Blocks

Full Stat Blocks are enclosed for each creatures or NPC used in this adventure. Abbreviations are used in some places. An explanation of the stat blocks and those abbreviations is listed below.

Example:

8 Brick Skeletons (**Number and type of creature appearing in the encounter**)

Atk (**Attack**): Shortsword +4 1D6+2 Dmg (P) (**Damage amount and type; (B) Bludgeoning, (P) Piercing, (S) Slashing**), HP: 15, AC: 14, Speed: 30; Saves: (+0,+2,+2,-2,-1,-3) (**Save values for Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma in that order**); M (**Size. (S) Small, (M) Medium, (L) Large**) Undead, LE (**Alignment**)

Vul: (**Vulnerabilities**) Bludgeoning, Imm: (**Immunities**) Poison, Exhaustion, Poisoned. Darkvision 60 ft. Perception 9. CR ¼

NPC's

Key NPC's are described in detail, but random and minor NPC's have stat blocks that tell their gender, race, age, and general character traits. They appear as such:

M/HE/25/Random and Aloof.

Explanation

Gender (M(Male), F(Female))/**Race** (Hu(Human), HE(Half-Elf), Dw(Dwarf), E(Elf), G(Gnome), Hl(Halfling), HO(Half-Orc), DB(Dragon Born), TF(Tiefling))/**Age**(years old in appearance)/**Character traits**(How they usually interact with the world.)

Introduction

Just outside the Lonely Desert, on the edge of civilized lands stands a massive 200 ft., black cube known as The Brick. Glyphs and symbols adorn The Brick, etched into its impossibly hardened sides in an ancient forgotten language. Some say The Brick is a doorway between the living and the dead. Some say it is a gateway to another plane. Still others claim that it is the foundation for the entire world and discovering its secrets will unlock the keys to the multiverse.

Every night, as the sun falls below the horizon, the glyphs on The Brick blaze to life in a hundred different hues. The Brick can be seen for miles and is a dazzling display, that is, before it vomits forth its horde of undead. A seemingly steady stream of zombies, skeletons, and worse exit The Brick and roam the night, venturing out only as far as it would take them to return by the time the sun makes its appearance in the morning. Even worse, at random intervals throughout the year, The Brick releases a violent, negative shock-wave that destroys anything in its path. Trees, animals, even rocks are destroyed by this wave. Those that fall, rise again as undead versions of their past self.

Into this unique landscape clerics and holy orders of all types come to The Brick to train in destroying and controlling undead. The vast majority of the undead are lowly skeletons, zombies, and other common types, but every once in a while, a truly intelligent undead will venture out and compel the undead waves to a specific task.

What secrets does The Brick hold? What treasure might be uncovered within its black sides? Gather your companions, grip your holy symbols, and bring light into true darkness as you come face to face with the mysteries of The Brick.

Γ N Δ

This series of adventures takes place in and around the Town of Safepoint, an area about two miles south of The Brick. It is the furthest point that a shock-wave has ever been recorded and is heavily fortified by holy orders that train in fighting off the undead. Once the PC's have gathered enough experience and power, they will find themselves entering The Brick itself in an effort to discover its lost secrets. The adventure is broken up into 12 parts and designed to start with first level characters. Each Chapter is set-up to run in one evening and should give the PC's enough experience to advance to the next level. They are designed as a fast paced, hack and slash adventure with problem and mystery elements.

Chapter Synopsis

Chapter 5 is an exercise in time and resource management as the PC's are placed into a trap setup by The Cult of Withering Rebirth. The PC's battle against cult members while racing against the clock to avoid their own destruction. Can the PC's escape before time runs out? Or will they be destroyed, adding to the cult already growing power.

What's really going on.

A powerful Lich emerged one evening from The Brick several months past. Since then she has established herself as a reputable citizen and even manipulated events to get herself elected mayor. She is building a following of cult members to help undermine the town's defenses.

Hooks

There are many reasons why the PC's might head to Safepoint. Here are a few ideas if needed.

One of the PC's is here to train fighting undead. Safepoint is renowned as the safest way to learn how to fight the undead.

One of the PC's has a close relative or friend who lives in or near Safepoint and needs assistance.

The PC's have heard legends of a rare relic inside The Brick and go looking for information on it.

The PC's came into possession of one of the glyphs on their journeys and come to Safepoint to figure out what it does.

The PC's receive a mysterious summons from a past adventuring partner asking them to meet them at Safepoint to discuss important business.

One of the PC's has business on or around Lake Gentle and the cultists have been rumored in the area.

Key NPC's

Delila Norsh, young, mid-20's. Female human. Curly brown hair and green eyes. The current leader of the Templar's of Light. This is her first post and she second guesses herself constantly. She is currently looking for a partner in life and will target one of the PC's that exhibit the tenants of Pelor; good, strength, light. She'll pursue the PC throughout the story arc, though she is very shy. She'll give what healing she has daily for those that pay lip service to Pelor. The DM should do their best to cultivate this NPC-PC relationship throughout the adventure arc. Doing so will make decisions in the final chapter much more interesting and satisfying for the story. F/Hu/24/Shy and Nice

Lady Falow Parson. Looks early 30's or late 20's, Human, female, strawberry blonde hair, pretty. Smiles and laughs easily. Her eyes seem older. Current elected mayor of the town. Will seem very helpful to the PC's investigations. However, she is really known as The Falow Princess, a Lich in disguise from The Brick. She will attempt to manipulate the PC's into causing discontent in the town. Her goal is to bring about the destruction of Safepoint and raise it's residents as her army. Note that Lady Falow wears a ring of mind shielding and is excellent at deception. Falow will do everything in her power to hide her true form from the PC's. On a practical note, if the PC's find out the truth and try to take her on too early, she would be way too strong. F/Hu/28/Helpful and Sweet

Delafray. A flighty, angry young man in his twenties, Delafray has a talent for illusions. He was born into a wealthy family of means. Money, power, and magic always came easily to him. So much so, that he resents those that struggle. This logic made him fall in with The Cult of Withering Rebirth as they preach subjugation of the weak. He rose in ranks and became an enforcer with his lackey Brute. He is loyal only to himself, however, and will betray anyone and anything if necessary. Hu/M/25/Angry & Cauchy

Brute. Brute is dumb. He left his clan when Delafray convinced him an angry god was coming to kill all of them. He has since manipulated the Ogre into thinking they are friends. In reality, Delafray would turn on Brute in a heartbeat. Brute, for his part, is loyal and dumb. Did we mention he is dumb? He's dumb. Play him that way. He doesn't care about any cult or really anything besides treasure. He would turn on just about anyone for about a thousand gold or so. Ogre/M/28/Dumb & Dumb

Random NPC's

Katherine Mystralath Sculptor; middle-aged, wears a worn and beaten armor, chestnut hair in a flapper bob. Not very most attractive but has a passion for adventuring and risk, as well as a need for knowledge about a nearby landmark. F/HE/45

Marastyr Grawnahk, Armorer; young; long red hair; face is full, cheeks are rosy, always seems to sport a perfect smile and a twinkle in her hazel eyes; Wears a closed helm and plate; Quiet and reserved, prefers to listen than to talk. She will nod occasionally and communicate nonverbally. Her temper goes off on the smallest of things. F/Dw/69

Anselm Feenkis, Fisher; middle-aged, wears a faded coat and loose pants complete with Stetson hat, blue eyed hair is always cut to a buzz; grim and serious, understands how dangerous the world is and has a habit of throwing himself into exceedingly dangerous situations. M/Hu/42

Joanor Quinten, Marshal; pastel face paint in a stripe pattern across her face, hair is red and very short, majority of her body covered in plate, wears crescent spectacles with a black brim; sociable first and foremost, can carry on conversation for hours, will pursue extreme courses of action in the short term. F/Hu/32

Jelenneth Withrethin, Guard; exceptionally lanky likes to wear ponchos typically of a light black in addition to tight pants, black hair is cut short, has gleaming, smiling violet eyes; pretentious jerk, feels kind of lost in life. F/E/112

Greeba Hankis, Artisan- Glassblower; missing left arm wears suspenders, red workpants and a heavy red leather apron, face is covered beneath a completely black helmet; shy and timid, is generally bored by everything. F/HO/36

Guy Jorro, Body Guard; scrawny, very clearly needs to put on some weight, blonde hair and beard is wavy and long; takes his job very seriously, in part because he fears he cannot get a new one. M/Hu/32

Mialee Arineth, Butcher; slender standing about 4'11", wears a fine chain shirt, auburn hair, has several tiny amethyst earrings on each ear. Does not trust anyone and sleeps with one eye open. F/HE/75

Antina Tiltathana, Wizard; wears a red armored body suit with a mask on her face, brown hair is heavily combed to the left; quiet and unassuming yet loves to dance with anyone who is interested. F/E/98

Investigations

Investigations are tidbits of information PC's might learn from NPC's as they investigate the town. Not all of them are true; some don't even make much sense. They exist to add flavor or foreshadow future events. Each time the PC's are looking for clues or other guidance; have them roll Investigate Checks, DC 10. Success rewards one of the following rumors, which may or may not be true.

- A new cult has sprung up in town. They are called The Cult of Rebirth and want to turn everyone into undead.
- The glyphs and runes on The Brick were created by a powerful Lich a millenia ago in order to slowly turn the world into an undead domain.
- A giant, fish-creature was spotted by fishermen down by Gentle Lake.
- I heard undead were afraid of cats, but it turns out they are actually afraid of weasels.
- The town vampire turned his sites inward and now runs one of the local stores. Not sure which one, just don't go into any backrooms alone.
- The Great Assault is only a few months away. All the knightly orders will venture out with their veterans to examine The Brick.
- The Brick is actually home to several Deep Spawn who keep birthing undead every night.

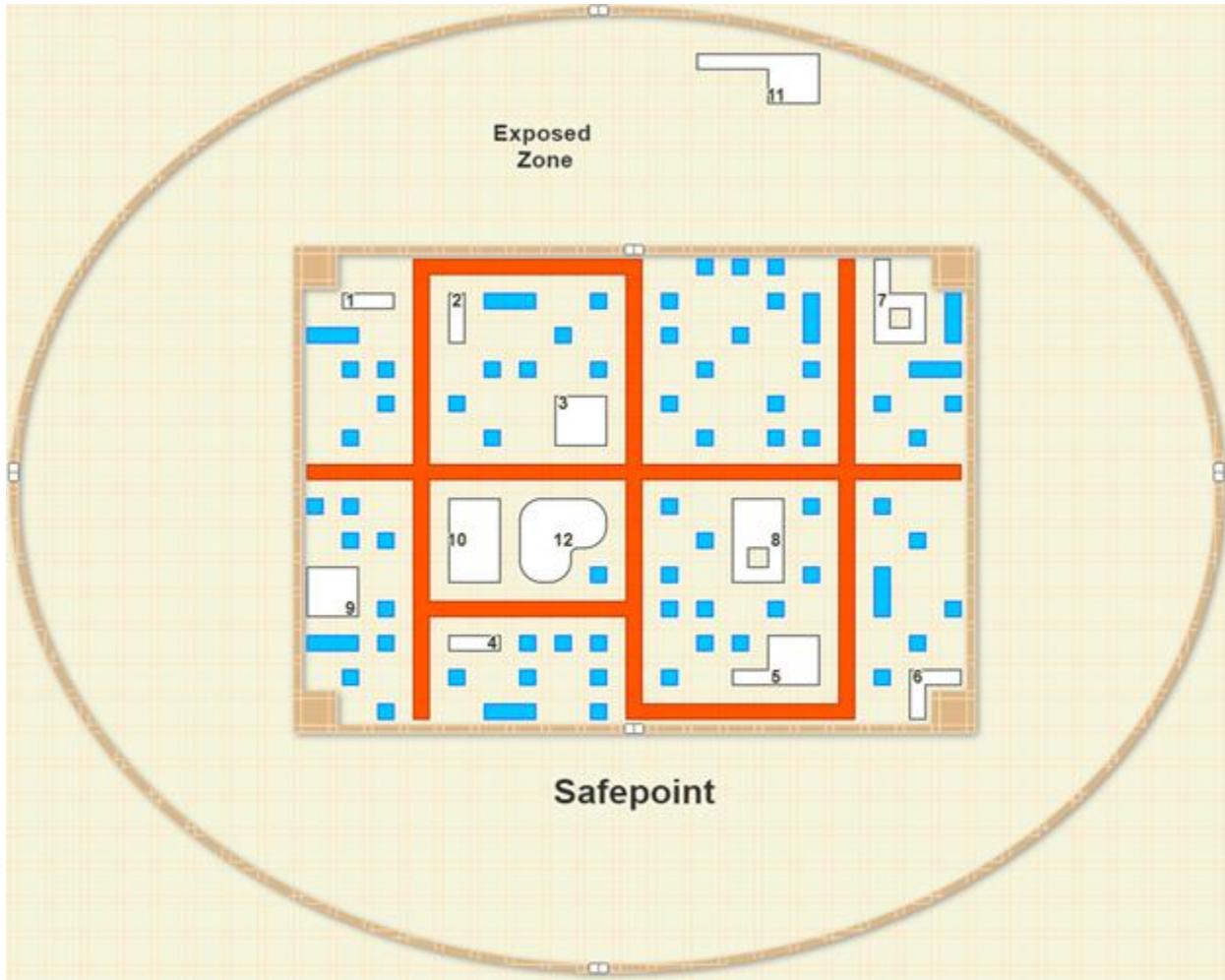
Prologue

Gentle Lake is a small body of water, roughly five miles around, two days south of Safepoint. A small community of fishermen tamed the west shore, but the rest of the perimeter, along with the dozens of islands in the lake are mostly

filled with wilderness. The lake is relatively safe, although every now and then a large creature makes its way to the surface to harass fishers. The lake is a place of mystery, its shores more often filled with more shadow than light.



Safepoint City Map



Orange line : Major Roads

Brown line : Walls

1: Skeletal Fitting

7: Six Holy Arms

2: Sam's Serious Sundries

8: Temple of Discipline

3: Last Knight Inn

9: Templar's of Light

4: Poundin's Pete's Pastries

10: Holy Order of the Vanguard

5: The Old Ones

11: Ehlonna's Stand

6: Secrets and Lies

12: The Stand

Locations Detailed

1: Skeletal Fittings: A wealthy clothing shop that makes designer clothing as well as fitted light armor. Ran by a thin, frail man named Wyarm with beady, black eyes. M/Hu/58/Quiet and Misunderstood.

2: Sam's Serious Sundries: Ran by a woman, Samantha Doorkeel, who took over the business when her father, Nigel, passed away several years ago. She secretly buried him, as he wished, rather than cremate him as is required by town law. She sells most common items, rations, and other bulk food for long journeys. F/Ef/24/Loud and Anxious.

3: Last Knight Inn: A large inn always with a bard ran by, Den Freeman, a former member of the Holy Order of the Vanguard. He opened this place after exploring the first level of The Brick. He does not talk about what he saw. But the ordeal broke him, made him not want to adventure anymore. He stays here because he feels like he owes The Order something. Members can always stay for free. The Order has a saying, "Going Den." Which means you saw something that was too much for you to bare. M/Hu/29/Broken and Sad.

4: Poundin' Pete's Pastries: A small inn and tavern run by Poundin' Pete, an adventurer who retired after his group found a large cache of treasure. Quaint place known for Delina Cakes, an invention of his late wife, who died of disease. He likes to help

sometimes with nightly raids. M/Hu/40/Honest and solemn.

5: The Old Ones: A lively tavern run by the elected mayor, Lady Falow Parson. Looks around 30 years old, but her eyes seem older. Rumor has it that she has consumed a great many Potions of Longevity, which has kept her young. Actually, she is a Lich and the true power behind what has been going on in town. She is polite and loves a good joke. She plans to make all of Safepoint her undead domain. She gives food to the downtrodden and lets people stay in front of the hearth if they can't pay for a room. F/Hu/28/Helpful and flirty, actually F/Lich/?/Cunning and Evil

6: Secrets and Lies: A two-story tavern ran by Uri Povyin', a semi-retired rogue. He does not get along with the holy orders. They always assume if something went missing, he did it. Sometimes they are right. He has dirt low prices on food and lodging. The right person could buy poison's here. M/HI/27/Personable and Annoyed.

7: Six Holy Arms: A weapon shop and smith run by Lilith Farstride. She purchased the shop two months ago from the former owner who left town. They make and sell custom weapons. Has five workers that are all scared of her. She is actually a Marilith in disguise. She was summoned here by Lady Fallow and likes the ruse. She has a ring of mind shielding as well. She is great at deception and makes any Deception checks

at +12 and with advantage. F/Hu/36/Stern and Impulsive, actually (F/Marilith/?/Deceptive and Cruel)

8: Temple of Discipline: The house of Cuthbert is built like a fortress with a wall surrounding the inner house and two towers protecting the walls. The Temple of Discipline organizes the nightly defenses. The Order is very strict with no alcohol use and chastity proclamations. Currently ran by Commander House Loring. M/Dw/36/Disciplined and Polite

9: Templar's of Light: The temple of Pelor is a two story brick building with a blazing sun statue at the top. They provide healing at half cost to those that at least give lip service to Pelor. They sell minor healing potions and scrolls. Currently run by Delila Norsh F/Hu/24/Shy and Nice young

10: Holy Order of the Vanguard: This square, one story building is home to a small knightly order made up mostly of good aligned paladins, clerics, and fighters. They train specifically in fighting undead and hate the abominations. They sell holy water at half price. They will also cure any disease inflicted by an undead for the cost of the material components of the spell. Currently ran by Sir Gladus Fellstone, Long, curly black hair, muscular. Wears rich clothing. M/Hu/50/Disciplined and Polite

11: Ehlonna's Strand: In the exposed zone stands a ring of shaped trees with a thatched roof. Serving as both a temple to Ehlonna and a way stop for those that pray

to her, it is informally organized and frequented by Druids, Rangers, and Monks. Those at balance with nature can use it free of charge, although no metal is allowed through the doors. Caretaker is Terif Gorinhide who loves philosophy and meeting new people. M/HE/28/Calm and Ugly.

12: The Stand: At the center of town stands the largest structure, a four story, round, stone tower topped with an emblazoned open eye. The Temple of Boccob allows anyone into their first floor to buy minor scrolls or talk magic. The second level is a lounge specifically for those that work on the arcane arts to trade spells or discuss arcane matters. The third and fourth levels are for members only and are off limits to most travelers, though members can stay on the third level as they will. The tower mostly stays out of town affairs, though they practice spells on the undead hordes each evening and would come to the town aid if ever necessary. The fourth level is the home of the Tower First, Yamik Klav, the wizard who runs the place. He is largely over weight and eats a lot. M/Gn/41/Cocky and overweight.

Act 1: Spring the Trap

Part 1

You wander the city of Safepoint and admire the jubilant atmosphere of the people. These are hard people, who chose to be here despite dire conditions. A street vender offers cooked duck, another sells leather satchels, still a third is packaging and selling rations for customers heading out on the road. Everywhere you go, people greet each other with a smile and a nod, enjoying life in a place surrounded by death.

Delila will again keep most of her advances resigned to an individual she has designated as a spousal candidate. The DM should remember to cultivate this relationship as much as possible.

You round a corner to see Delila Norsh, the young cleric of Pelor spot you. She bounces up to your group, letting her eyes linger a little longer on one of you, then smiles her wide grin. "There you are. I've been looking all over for you. Come on, all!" She grabs your hand and pulls you to a round table under a large, shade tree.

If the PC's follow.

I have big news. A friend recently told me he found a headquarters to the undead loving cult that has been gathering around town. It's down south on Lake Gentle. If you are up for the task, I'd like you to go there and dismantle it, question the cultists and bring them back for judgement.

Delila will answer any information she can. She has the following information if asked.

- **The person that brought her the information is named Adrian Ukilia, a fellow cleric of The Sun God. He was passing through town and shared the information with her.**
- **Lake Gentle is 2 days south and mostly wilderness. Gentleburrow is a small village on the west side of the lake.**
- **She doesn't know who to trust and has told only the PC's about this.**
- **The southern road passes within a few miles of Gentleburrow and the lake itself is easy to find.**
- **Be careful in the village as you never know who might be a cultist.**
- **Adrian provided a rough map of the lake and where the cultist's headquarters is. (See Appendix A)**

Delila will ask her spousal candidate to linger a bit longer than the others so she can show her affection. If the PC agrees, she'll also provide 6 *potions of greater healing*. (4d4+4) Although she only offers these to the group if her advances have been reciprocated. Delila hasn't seen Adrian in years, but they both grew up together in the same village. He was the one that got her interested in Pelor.

Part 2

If the PC's agree, they can take as much time as they need, but eventually should head south toward Lake Gentle. Read or paraphrase the following.

You head south along the main road, a dusty, dirt affair ten feet wide, parts rutted with wagon wheel tracks. The road is heavily traveled and you pass numerous groups heading to and from the town. Two days of light travel and you find yourself on a hill looking down at the wilderness of Lake Gentle. A smaller road heads off toward the lake a few miles down. The wilderness is so thick you can't see any of the village from here, but smoke from several fireplaces lingers up through the foliage.

It is up to the PC's if they want to go into or avoid the village. They might think that the village has cultist spies, but in reality, all cult members have been pulled back to what they refer to as, Trap Island.

Part 2A

Gentleburrow is a village of roughly 80 people, almost all fishermen and women. A dozen or so wooden houses for a circle around a larger, square house that acts as both a Common House and a Temple of Melora (Goddess of Nature, Wilderness, and the Sea).

The people here are a close-knit community. They work together to survive and have a saying "Build your house to face your neighbor." As such, all the home doors face the inside of the circle so each can

watch out for the other. The people will generally be wary of outsiders and give them a wide berth. Ale and basic food can be had free at the Common House, which is run by Porm Mayesti M/Hf/62/Relaxed and Settled. If asked, Porm doesn't believe anyone in town is a cult member. He knows each and every person and trusts them, mostly. A few strangers have been in and out of the village, but nothing out of the ordinary. If the PC's ask, they are free to use any of the small, five person boats on the shore, so long as they promise to bring them back.

If the PC's avoid the village, they'll have to find a way out to the islands. They can probably steal a boat without much anyone knowing or caring. Boats are small, five person vessels with oars for two.

Part 2B

Navigating and finding the proper island requires 3 Survival Checks, DC 15. A result of 5 or less means the PC's have become lost and need to start again. Once the PC's succeed, read or paraphrase the following.

You wander on the clam waters of Gentle Lake for the better part of two hours, following the landmarks marked off by the map, avoiding currents that draw you in toward rocky island shores, and trying to get your bearings in this wilderness landscape. Finally, as your legs grow sore from sitting, you spot an island in the distance with a large Oak tree hanging precariously out on a rock ledge, massive roots holding it to the nearby soil. The island is small, a few hundred yards on either side and choked in vegetation. It seems like you have found your goal.

A well-hid lookout keeps watch over the waves. A Perception Check DC 30 reveals a humanoid figure well hidden in one of the trees. If the PC's seem to spot him, he will

slowly creep away, back into the island wilderness. Otherwise, he makes his way back to inform the others and spring the real trap.



Act II: The Real Trap

The PC's can wander the wilderness of the island as much as they please. No large animals live on the island and the only natural threat is from biting insects and the occasional sinkhole. The PC's should make Stealth checks as they move if they are trying to be stealthy, but The Cult of Withering Rebirth already knows they are coming. In fact, they set the trap for the PC's, devised by Lady Falow to eliminate the

PC's who have been causing a stir amongst her lower level cult members.

The PC's can find humanoid tracks all around the island as well. A Survival Check DC 15 allows PC's to find and follow them. When the PC's find the correct route, read or paraphrase the following.

You journey through the small island until you find a small rock outcropping near the island center. Thick trees and bushes choke out most vision, but you can see an opening in the rocks that appears to head

down, into the earth. Outside, lying in front of the entrance are two large dogs, lazily resting on the ground.

The PC's might expect these to be guard dogs. In reality, they are just dogs stolen from a nearby farmstead. They are friendly to people and don't want to fight. If frightened they'll run off. If approached in a friendly manner they'll lick the PC's and be friendly. A Nature Check DC 17 reveals that the dogs demeanor seems very relaxed and not aggressive at all. If the PC's attack the dogs, they'll run off, away from the opening, but will only fight back if cornered.

2 Dogs

Atk: Bite +4 2D4+2 Dmg (P), HP: 11, AC: 13, Speed: 40; Saves: (+1,+2,+1,-4,+1,-2); M Beast, Unaligned. Perception 13. CR ¼

Keen Hearing: Adv. on Perception Checks using hearing or smell. **Pack Tactics:** Adv. on atks if has an ally within 5ft. of target.

After the PC's deal with the dogs they can proceed.

The rocky outcropping drops off into a hole that leads down. A rope ladder has been fitted against the side and the bottom is out of view in darkness, though you can see torches set every 50 feet or so in the opposite wall. The hole seems very deep.

The hole is indeed very deep. It goes down 300 feet. An Athletics Check is not required to traverse the ladder at half speed, and a PC can move up the ladder at full speed by Succeeding at an Athletics Check DC 10. About half way down the PC's will begin to hear the rush of water behind the walls. A

map of the internal areas can be found in the Appendix.

Area 0

You finally reach the bottom and find yourself in a small, twenty-foot wide circular room. Small, natural passages go off in a half dozen ways while a larger one, lined with torches branches off as well.

There are seven passages here. Six of them appear to be narrow, normal tunnels. If the PC's take passages 1,2,3,5, or 6 the tunnels will eventually pitter and narrow out until they effectively end or are not traversable.

Passage 4 will wind around and end in a solid stone wall, though in actuality, it is a large, stone slab covered with a *Hallucinatory Terrain* spell. Anyone interacting with the wall will feel the stone and have no idea the spell exists. However, anyone searching the wall may feel the edges, allowing them to attempt an Investigation Check DC 16 to realize it is an illusion. Anyone succeeding sees the stone slab with the wall superimposed over the edges. *Detect Magic* reveals an aura of *Illusionary* magic on that wall.

Moving the stone requires an Athletics Check DC 26. However, moving the stone will alert the guards on the other side who will move back to area C to warn the others. A Perception Check DC 22 allows the PC's to hear footsteps moving quickly away from the stone slab on the other side.

If the PC's take the larger, seventh tunnel, read or paraphrase the following.

Area 1

You creep down the larger tunnel, heading slightly downhill as you go for a few minutes before the tunnel dumps you into a large natural chamber. Water rushing behind the walls washes out any sound you are making. Inside is a stone altar, stained with blood and a simple looking dagger. The tunnel continues on the far side of the room.

There is nothing in this room. It serves as a pretend sacrificial altar to intrigue PC's to continue their investigations.

Area 2

The roar of water intensifies as you move into this room. The chamber is large, 100 ft. or so in diameter. On either side a cliff falls away 30ft. down and torrents of water flow out from the ceiling down the cliffs. Eight coffins line either edge of the cliff and a bridge of wood connects the far end to an exit tunnel.

This is the first serious threat the PC's will face here. Of the 16 coffins, Six hold undead that will rush forth once the PC's begin their investigations.

5 Brick Ghouls

Atk: Bite +3 2D6+2 (P) and Claws +4 2D4+2 (S) (Con Save DC 10 or Paralyzed 1 minute, repeat Save end of each round), HP: 24, AC 13, Speed: 30; Saves: (+1,+2,+1,-2,+0,-2); M Undead, CE

Imm: Poison, Charm, Exhaustion. Darkvision 60ft. Perception 10. CR 1.

1 Brick Mummy

Atk: Rotting Fist +6 2D6+4 (B) + 3D6 (necrotic) + DC 13 Con Save or *Mummy Rot*, HP: 67, AC: 12, Speed: 20; Saves: (+4,+0,+3,-1,+1,+2); M Undead, LE

Vul: Fire, Imm: Necrotic, poison, Resist: B,P, S from non-magical atks, Charm, Exhaustion, Frighten, Paralyzed. Darkvision 60ft. Perception 10. CR 3

Dreadful Glare. Once per round as a second attack, target 1 creature within 60ft. DC 12 Wisdom Save or *Frightened* until the end of the mummy's next turn. Failure of 5 or more and creature is also *Paralyzed*. If save is successful, immune to other Dreadful Glares for 24 hours.

Tactics: The undead have been commanded to grapple creatures and pull them off the cliff. Once grappled, the undead makes opposed Athletics (Strength) Checks. Failure means the undead moves both of them half of its speed toward the cliff edge.

If both move over the cliff edge, the PC must make a Dexterity Save DC 16 to avoid going over with the undead. They must then make a Strength Save DC 17 to avoid being pulled off by the weight of the clinging undead. Success means the PC is left dangling over the edge with an undead wrapped around him! Each round the undead must make a Strength Save DC 14 to continue holding onto the PC. Failure means it falls off.

Anyone falling goes thirty feet down into the icy water below. They take 2D10 Damage and must make Athletics Checks DC 10 to tread water.

Delafray watches invisible from up on a ledge behind the rushing water. Brute, his Ogre friend is also up there, though hidden behind the water. A Perception Check DC 25 reveals there is a large humanoid creature watching them from behind the rushing water.

Treasure: In the sarcophagus that housed the mummy rests Midnight. (See Appendix)

A note on water

5th Edition D&D is very forgiving when it comes to water environments. For the purposes of this adventure, the following optional terrain rules are recommended.

- Walking through water of more than a few inches is considered difficult terrain
- Standing water of more than three feet applies Disadvantage with any physical weapon that is not Piercing.
- All creatures have half Cover, +2 to AC, +2 to Reflex Saves when in water more than three feet deep.
- Wearing Medium or Heavy armor applies Disadvantage on Athletics Checks for Swimming.

Area 3

The small, fifty-foot tunnel ends abruptly in a stone wall. On the far wall is a glyph, glowing green and shaped like a backwards “K”.

PC's that take the time to search will find that the entire tunnel is a long, well-concealed ramp. Investigation Check DC 22. A Perception Check DC 22 allows the PC's to

locate the triggering rock as well, near the start of the tunnel.

Once all or most of the PC's are in the tunnel, Delafray will activate the trap. When this happens, read or paraphrase the following.

As you study the glyph there is a loud click, followed by a terrible grinding of stone on stone. A second later, the entire tunnel pivots at the mouth and falls away.

PC's can attempt a Dexterity Save DC 22 to grab on to something. Others fall into the pit below. Anyone hanging on must make Athletics Checks DC 16 to hold themselves off the ground. If a PC seems troublesome, Delafray will reveal himself and toss spells at the PC to get him to fall. PC's can make Athletics Checks DC 17 to crawl at half speed on the walls or ceilings. However, any damage Delafray inflicts on the PC's requires them to make another Athletics Check, DC 5+Damage done hang on.

PC's that fall in the pit.

You fall for 50 feet or so as water rushes around you landing in a cold lake of liquid. There is no light here and the current is a jumbling vortex of waves.

The PC's must make Athletics Checks DC 10 to swim at half speed. There is an island of land in the center of the room, roughly 20 feet across, although unless the PC's have magical light or darkvision, they will be blind. Torches and lanterns are instantly doused by the falling water.

Once the PC's have been “trapped”, Delafray will retract the stone ramp, sealing them to their fate.

If the PC's discover the trap, fail to fall in the pit, or the majority avoid it, the DM will need to improvise. Delafray will break his invisibility, activate the trap, and feather fall down into the water, expecting to *Teleport* out when the PC's are trapped. If only one or two PC's remain up with Delafray, they may want to jump down rather than engage him and Brute.

Area 4

This area has no light so the PC's will have to make their own or rely on Darkvision for visual information.

You find yourself in a natural cave. Water rushes in from all sides and swirls into a maelstrom of waves. Small parcels of rock stick out of the water here and there.

The room is roughly a hundred feet wide or so on either side. The walls are solid, natural stone. There are two ways out, both under water.

The first is a long tunnel that runs down and out of the cave complex. It is a long and arduous, 500 foot maze of tunnels full of swirling currents with several passages that end in dead ends. Most PC's will not be able to make the trip unaided. To exit the maze takes 10 minutes of swimming. A PC that has the ability to move at full speed while swimming can clear the maze in 5 minutes.

A PC can hold their breath a number of minutes equal to 1+ Con modifier. Once this transpires, a PC can hold their breath for 1+Con modifier more rounds before their hit points drops to 0 and they begin dying.

The PC's must make the following ability Checks to navigate this underwater maze.

- Survival Checks DC 17 to avoid getting lost. Failure means the PC must backtrack and makes no progress for 1 minute. This can be avoided by using some sort of rope or string as a guide.
- Athletics Checks DC 10 every minute of swimming. Failure means the PC makes no progress.
- Athletics Checks DC 20 every 2 minutes as the PC attempts to navigate a complex series of sloshing currents. Failure means the PC is pushed back 1 minute of travel. Any PC that is swims must make a Constitution Save DC 20 every 5 minutes of swimming. Failure means they gain one level of Exhaustion.

Exhaustion

Some special abilities and environmental hazards, such as starvation and the long-term effects of freezing or scorching temperatures, can lead to a special condition called exhaustion. Exhaustion is measured in six levels. An effect can give a creature one or more levels of exhaustion, as specified in the effect's description.

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed Halved
3	Disadvantage on Attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit Point Max Halved
5	Speed reduced to 0

6 Death

If an already exhausted creature suffers another effect that causes exhaustion, its current level of exhaustion increases by the amount specified in the effect's description.

A creature suffers the effect of its current level of exhaustion as well as all lower levels. For example, a creature suffering level 2 exhaustion has its speed halved and has disadvantage on ability checks.

An effect that removes exhaustion reduces its level as specified in the effect's description, with all exhaustion effects ending if a creature's exhaustion level is reduced below 1.

Finishing a long rest reduces a creature's exhaustion level by 1, provided that the creature has also ingested some food and drink.

If a PC can pass all these checks while still holding their breath or using magic as an aid, they will be dumped into Area 6. This challenge is designed to be nearly impossible, although clever PC's might find a way through. Reward clever play.

The second tunnel can be found with an Investigation Check DC 18. This tunnel is much smaller and requires only 1 minute of underwater travel. The following checks must be completed to navigate the tunnel.

- Two Athletics Check DC 10 to swim the tunnel.
- One Final Athletics Check DC 15 to avoid a strong, swirling current that, if failed, effectively places them back at the tunnel entrance.

If the PC's successfully navigate the tunnel, it leads them to Area 5.

Alternate methods of exit. The PC's might get crafty and try using magic to escape. The PC's shouldn't have access to any *Teleport* spells at this level, and *Misty Step* is only to a destination you can see, so most likely spells like *Stone Shape* or *Levitate* will be used. *Water Breathing* would be very helpful and help avoid having to hold one's breath. If a PC can breath under water, they can avoid having to make Constitution Saves against Exhaustion.

The Trap Door itself requires a Sleight of Hands Check DC 27 to open from this side and must be done by someone proficient with lock picks.

Stone Shape can get through the stone, but only back up to the ramp. Attempting to shape most the other stone will simply make another tunnel of water.

Area 5

You clear the underwater tunnel and find yourself in a large, open cavern full of jutting stalagmites and stalactites. A pale, purple light sheds bright light from the far wall and various islands of sharp rocks litter the watery floor. A faint, distant noxious smell permeates the air.

Area 5 is the real trap. Delafray expects any PC's that survive the fall to eventually make their way here. He knows the cave fills with gas every few hours and sends Brute down to collect the bodies for reanimation. The noxious smell is from the gas buildup, Survival Check DC 18 indicates it smells like, "some sort of toxic, natural occurring, underground gas."

As the PC's navigate the room, the gas will begin to intensify. An Investigation Check DC 16 allows the PC's to find the natural vents that are exuding the gas. More importantly, the gas is building up within the chamber. A Wisdom Check DC 14 indicates the PC's have about a minute before the chamber reaches toxic levels.

Allow the PC's a few rounds to do what they wish; search the area, talk about how to avoid the gas, etc. They can discover the following things. If they have clever ideas while searching, feel free to award them Advantage on the Checks.

An Investigate Check DC 17 allows the PC's to discover a small air current just above the surface of one waterway. This waterway exits to Area 6.

A Survival Check DC 16 allows the PC's to deduce that one small enclave in particular should be safe from the bulk of the gas.

A Perception Check DC 20 reveals several humanoid creatures hiding below the surface.

If the PC's discover the undead they will attack immediately. If not, they will begin rising from under the water after a few rounds.

5 Rydavam

Atk: (2) Spear Arms +5 1D8+2 (P) and (1) Horn +5 2D6+2 (P); HP: 43, AC: 16, Speed: 30, Swim 30; Saves: (+3,+3,+2,+0,+1,-1); M Undead, LE

Vul: Bludgeoning, Lightning, Imm: Necrotic, Poison, Resist: B,P,S from non-magical atks, Charm, Exhaustion, Frighten, Paralyzed. Darkvision 60ft. Perception 15. CR 1

Watery Grave. Advantage on Grapple Checks and any check related to Grappling when in at least 2 ft.

The undead are unaffected by the gas buildup and fight to the best of their abilities. The Intelligent undead will use the others as fodder as they maneuver into position to strike at the weaker members of the party.

The Gas

After three rounds of combat the gas will begin to build up. The gas effects are listed below.

- Round 1-3: No effect
- Round 4-5: PC's begin coughing. Con Saves DC 12 or take 1D6 points of Poison Damage. Success reduces the damage to half.
- Round 6-7: Con Saves DC 14 or 2D6 Poison Damage and the Poison Condition. Success reduces the damage in half and avoids the Poison effect.
- Round 8-9: Con Saves DC 16 or 3D6 Poison Damage and the Poison Condition. Success reduces the damage in half and avoids the Poison effect.
- Round 10: Con save DC 18 or 4D6 Poison Damage and the Poison Condition. Success reduces the damage in half and avoids the Poison effect.

After round 10 there is a loud burst of air, followed by a rapid exit of the gas as the pressure build up pushes most of the gas out through a tiny, mostly blocked natural fissure in the ceiling.

The PC's then have 1 minute until the gas begins building up and the rounds begin anew.

Treasure: One of the Undead has a Brick Glyph shaped like  lodged between its rib bones. (See Appendix)

Area 6

If the PC's are able to navigate out the waterways successfully, they will be dumped out in a natural pool surrounded on three sides by high rocks, one side with a waterfall coursing over the edge. Read or paraphrase the following.

You come out of the water in a small, natural bay of water. Rocks on three sides reach up twenty feet and a beautiful waterfalls courses over one edge. "So, you managed to survive." comes a shrill voice from atop one of the cliffs. Looking up you see a squat, unkempt man in his 30's wearing fine purple robes grinning down at you. Next to him a large Ogre stands guard holding several spears the size of small trees. "Thank you for so eagerly falling into our little ruse. Did you really think we would allow you to discover our hideout? If your souls manage to escape me after death, be sure to find your cleric friend Delila in the afterlife and tell her what a fool she was. It was easy to turn her friend Adrian to our cause, once he no longer had to breathe. Don't worry, you'll see soon enough." With that he begins weaving spells and the Ogre takes aim with one of his spears.

The PC's are in the middle of a thirty foot radius of water. An Athletics Check DC 5 is required to swim in either direction. Failure means no progress is made. Scaling the rocks can be done at half speed with an Athletics Check DC 16. Delafray and Brute will fight to the death, expecting Lady

Fallow to bring them back from death if necessary.

1 Delafray

Atk: Spell Atk +8, HP: 43, AC: 14, Speed: 30;
Saves: (+2,+3,+2,+7,+5,+1); M Humanoid, LE

Spells: Cantrips (at will) *Minor Illusion, Ray of Frost, Mage Hand, Chill Touch*; 1st: *Shield x3, Charm Person*; 2nd: *Invisibility x2, Misty Step*; 3rd level: *Slow, Fireball, Hypnotic Pattern*; 4th: ~~*Hallucinatory Terrain*~~.

Perception 12. CR 7

1 Brute

Atk: Greatsword Atk +7, 2D6+5, HP: 94, AC: 16, Speed: 40; Saves: (+6,+1,+5,-2,-1,-2); L Giant, LE

Abilities: Great Weapons Fighting: Reroll 1's and 2's on weapon dmg once per attack.;
Second Wind: Heal 1D10+4 as Bonus Action.;
Champion: Crits on 19-20.
Perception 11. CR 6

Tactics: Delafray uses his spells and height advantage to injure PC's, aiming at any spellcasters or immediate threats first. Brute isn't as refined and will use range weapons until someone engages him in melee, when he will switch to his Great Sword. If brought low Delafray will rat out his contact, Belasa, who lives in Safepoint. Brute will run if dropped to half hit points. He'll also turn on Delafray for about 1,000 gp, subjugate to Brute's stupid negotiations.

Treasure: Delafray has the ring, Jacob's Folly worn. Additionally in his pack is the quiver Latharia, 800 gp., and his spellbook. (See Appendix) Brute has 110 gp., and half a roasted turkey on a spit.

Denouement

This ends chapter 5 of Holy Mandate. Reward the PC's enough experience to advance to level 6. The PC's may have discovered another Brick Glyph, which can be combined with the others to form a powerful magic item. (See Appendix) The Cult of Withering Rebirth has taken a serious blow, but greater threats await. Chapter 6 will find the PC's attempting to save Delila from her once friend Adrian, who has fallen under the sway of the evil cult.

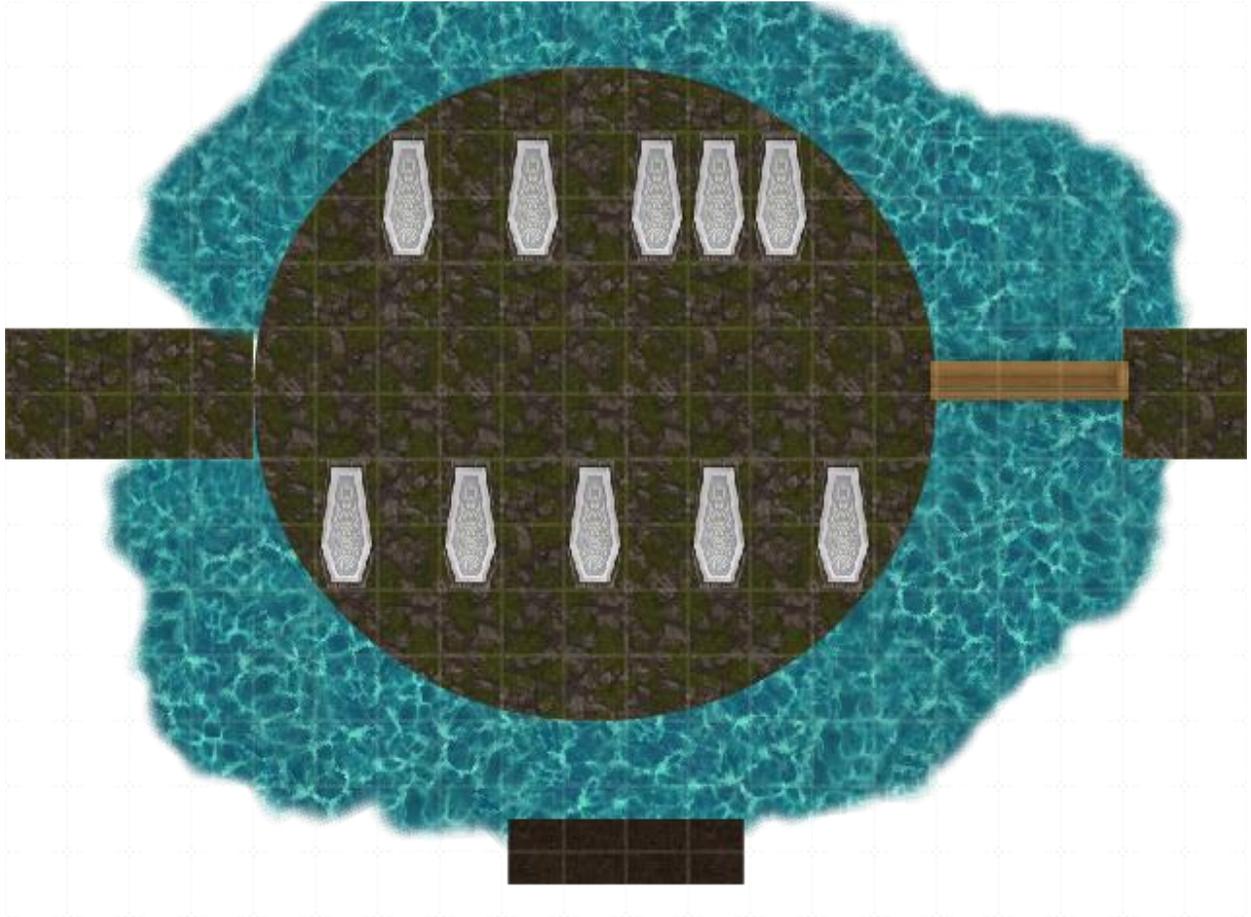
Corrections

The *Undead Tactics* feat was unintentionally omitted from Chapter 4. It is listed below in detail.

Did something unexpected or amazing happen? Was there an especially epic or noteworthy encounter? Drop us a line at geeksnextdoorftw@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you. We will talk about it on our Geeks Next Door podcast and maybe even use your encounter as an NPC to liven up the world.

Appendix 1

Map of Area 2



Full NPC Blocks

Delafray, Wizard, level 7

Atk: Staff +5 1D8+2 (B), HP: 7d6+con, AC: 13, Speed: 30, Saves: (+2,+3,+2,+7,+5,+1); M Humanoid, NE

Str: 14, Dex: 17, Con: 14, Int: 18, Wis: 15, Cha: 12

Skills: Arcana +7, History +7

Spellcasting: Delafray is a 7th level spellcaster. He has eleven spells memorized and usually the following slots prepared. Spell Save DC's are 14. His Spell Attack Bonus is +8.

Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion, Ray of Frost, Mage Hand, Chill Touch*

1st level (4 slots): *Shield x3, Charm Person*

2nd level (3 slots): *Invisibility x2, Misty Step*

3rd level (3 slots): *Slow, Fireball, Hypnotic Pattern*

4th level (1 slot): *Hallucinatory Terrain*

Abilities: Malleable Illusion: Illusions lasting more than 1 minute may be altered using the parameters of the spell.

Equipment:

Spellbook: 1st level: *Disguise self, Charm person, fog cloud, illusory script, thunderwave, identify, shield, magic missile, grease.* 2nd level: *invisibility, misty step, see invisibility, levitate.* 3rd level: *fireball, water breathing, slow, hypnotic pattern.* 4th level: *hallucinatory terrain, black tentacles*

Description: A flighty, angry young man in his twenties, Delafray has a talent for illusions. He was born into a wealthy family of means. Money, power, and magic always came easily to him. So much so, that he resents those that struggle. This logic made him fall in with The Cult of Withering Rebirth as they preach subjugation of the weak. He rose in ranks and became an enforcer with his lackey Brute. He is loyal only to himself, however, and will betray anyone and anything if necessary. Hu/M/25/Angry & Cauchy

Brute, Fighter, level 4

Atk (2): +7 Greatsword 2D6+5 (S), HP: 94, AC: 16, Speed: 40, Saves:(+6,+1,+5,-2,-1,+2); L Giant, LE

Str: 20, Dex: 12, Con: 16, Int: 6, Wis: 8, Cha: 6

Skills: Athletics +7, Perception +1

Abilities: Great Weapon Fighting Style: Reroll 1's and 2's on damage rolls, once per attack, Second Wind: Heal 1D10+4 HP once per rest as a Bonus Action, Action Surge: Once per rest take an additional action, Champion: Critical hits are now on 19 and 20 rolls.

Equipment: Greatsword, Chain shirt, sack, (6) spears.

Description: Brute is dumb. He left his clan when Delafray convinced him an angry god was coming to kill all of them. He has since manipulated the Ogre into thinking they are friends. In reality, Delafray would turn on Brute in a heartbeat. Brute, for his part, is loyal and dumb. Did we mention he is dumb? He's dumb. Play him that way. He doesn't care about any cult or really anything besides treasure. He would turn on just about anyone for about a thousand gold or so. Ogre/M/28/Dumb & Dumb

New Creatures

Rydavam

Medium Undead, lawful evil

Armor Class: 16

Hit Points: 43 (6d8+12)

Speed: 30 ft. Swim 30 ft.

Str 16 (+3) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 14 (+2) **Int:** 10 (+0) **Wis:** 12,(+1) **Cha** 8 (-1)

Skills: Stealth +7, perception +5

Damage Resistances: Fire, Slashing and Piercing, Any damage from a non-magical source

Damage Vulnerabilities: Bludgeoning, Lightning

Damage Immunities: Necrotic, Poison

Condition Immunities: Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned, Stunned

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft. Passive Perception 15

Challenge Rating 1 (200 XP)

Actions:

Multiattack: As an action, a Rydavam can attack three times. Twice with its Spear arms and once with its Horn

Spear arms. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit 1D8+2 Piercing Damage

Horn. Melee Weapon Attack +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one creature. Hit 2D6+2 Piercing Damage

Abilities:

Unnatural Grace: A Rydavam receives double its Dexterity modifier to its AC.

Watery Grave: A Rydavam is at home in the water. In any body of water, it receives Advantage on Grappling Checks and any Check related to Grappling.

Description: A Rydavam looks like a freshly polished, white skeleton covered in moss and sea rocks. Its eyes burn with a cold, blue light and a glimmer of cunning flashes through its frozen orbs. It has no fingers, instead both arms end in long, pointed spears it uses to impale foes. Finally, a vicious black horn tops its hairless skull.

About: Rydavams are undead horrors created by The Cult of Withering Rebirth within The Brick. Through ancient magic, a humanoid is killed, raised as a skeleton or zombie, and then destroyed again while submerged in water. There its body is reshaped and soaked until the final ritual, which affixes a black horn to its head brings it back as a Rydavam. Finally, the creature is imbued with the power of The Brick bolstering it further. Rydavam's are cunning and retain some of the intelligence they had in their previous lives, although all are now twisted and evil. They can speak a rudimentary form of any language they knew in life. Because they are difficult to create, Rydavams are only used to guard important places or people or for strategic incursions. Legends tell of even more powerful rituals that can bring back stronger forms of Rydavams.

Magic Items

Midnight

Shortsword, Rare

Midnight is a shortsword of the finest craftsmanship, made with a light blue metal and a half crescent moon emblazed into the pommel. When drawn and commanded as a free action it gives off a soft pale light for 20ft. The blade magical and grants a +1 bonus to both attack and damage rolls. Additionally, undead struck take an additional 1D6 radiant damage. Not much is known about Midnight's origin. The craftsmanship is human in appearance, but the metal seems to consist of some sort of unknown alloy.

Jacob's Folly

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

This magic ring has a white band and a dark green emerald atop it. The word's "Jacob's Folly" are scrawled in the language of the Halfling's along its base. The ring gives the wearer a +1 bonus to Armor Class as well as Advantage on Athletics Checks involving Swimming. However, it imposes a penalty of -5 speed on the wearer's movement. The ring was designed and given to a young Halfling ages ago who was afraid of the water. Since that time it has surfaced to aid young Halflings on journey's in the water. Although designed and fit for a Halfling, the ring magically fits any individual who attempts to ear it.

Latharia

Weapon, rare (requires attunement)

Latharia appears to be a well-made quiver of 16 arrows. Imagery around the quiver tells the story of a young man first gaining, than losing a fortune, followed by gaining and losing love. Any of the 16 arrows shot from Latharia grants a +1 bonus to both attack and damage rolls. The arrow makes a low, painful moan as it travels. Additionally, any of the 16 arrows shot appears back in Latharia at the start of the yielders next turn. However, any critical miss with an arrow, destroys that arrow forever, as it turns to dust. Once all 16 arrows are lost, the quiver releases a loud, painful moan and shutters, forever becoming a normal quiver with no further magical properties.

Brick Glyphs

The Glyphs that emblazoned The Brick are in themselves powerful magic items. Each has a unique ability unto themselves. Additionally, each gains power and possibly additional powers when joined together. However, joining the glyphs together is a difficult and ribosome trial. The glyphs hum with a low, almost unperceivable tone. Each evening when the sun sets, the glyphs flare into a bright, green glow for roughly 5-10 minutes. The light sheds dim light out to 30 feet. Undead sense the presence of the glyphs and do everything in their power to recover them. Mindless undead will prioritize glyph wielders over others, but will not endanger themselves for such. The glyph powers are limited to the item and not the individual wielder, so changing wielder has no additional effect.

Ckappa

Ciota glyph is shaped as like a $\text{\textcircled{C}}$ and shakes slightly occasionally from small tremors. Ckappa can heal a bearer for $1D8+4$ hit points, twice per day. When combined in a chain of three glyphs the healing improves to $2D8+4$ hit points. If combined in a chain of 5 glyphs the healing can be used 3 times per day. If combined in a chain of 7 glyphs the healing increases to $3D8+4$ hit points. Finally, if combined in a chain of 10 the healing increases to $4D8+4$ hit points. Additionally, when in such a larger chain, it allows the wielder to, once per day, distribute an additional 60 hit points worth of healing to any creatures in a 60 ft. radius.

New Feat:

Undead Tactics

Those skilled in fighting undead bring to the battle several advantages. Use of this feat allows a PC to reroll a failed save against an undead's abilities. This ability can be used once per day. Additionally, a PC receives Advantage on any *Frightened* effects from undead. Finally, after at least one combat with any specific type of undead, a PC receives a +1 Bonus to hit that type of undead in future combats. An entire encounter must elapse before a PC receives this benefit.

Credits

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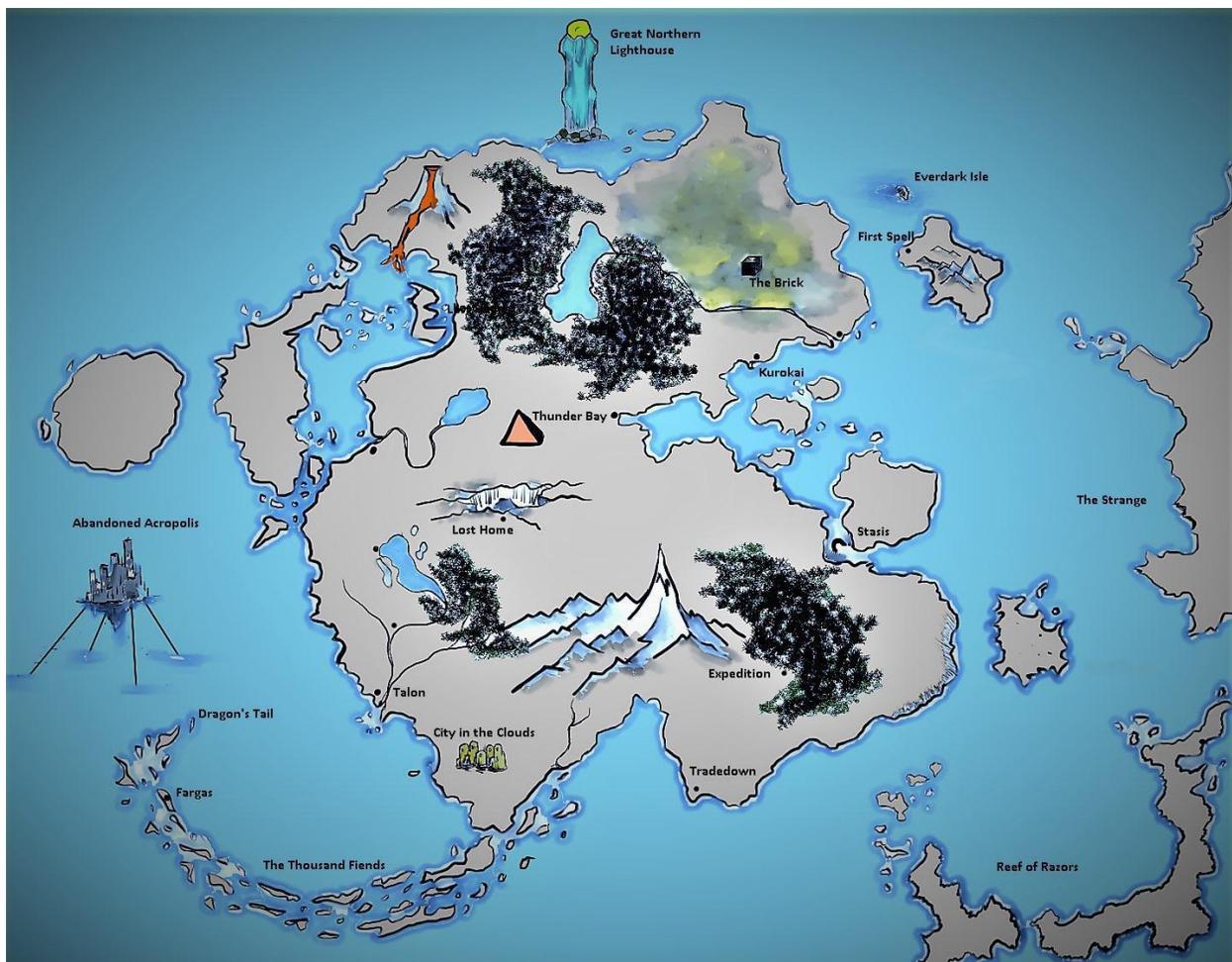
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The World of Tahalas



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