**BASILICA OF THE LEPER MESSIAH**

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**THE SITUATION**

For centuries, Owlshade has dealt with the walking plague by confining its victims to a high-walled enclave. At its center is the Basilica of the Leper Messiah, ruled over by a lich, **Husmanna**.

The enclave survives because it takes in afflicted nobility. **Husmanna**’s tinctures stave off death, allowing the afflicted to continue directing family affairs. In this way, the enclave remains a powerful political force in the city.

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**THE ENCLAVE**

The walls of the enclave (not shown) are tall, and enclose thirty ruined buildings.

A chained platform is lowered to allow parties in or out of the enclave, but only those with blue tongues will be allowed back out into the city. Roll on the **Enclave Visitors** table to see who is using the platform.

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**THE APPROACH**

The Basilica is tall, a study in harsh vertical lines.

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** COURT OF PETITIONS**

A red-robed proctor with leprous skin hears petitions from visitors. d3 visitors will be here, waiting, along with 4 **Quietus** guards.

A pair of halberd-armed **Quietus** guard the inner archway, allowing in only the wealthy- or healthy-looking.

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**HALL OF ASCENSION**

Six huge, gray pillars dominate the room, but a moment’s inspection reveals that they do not support the ceiling.

They are gray monoliths, made from cremated ash of cremated lepers.

A unit of six **Quietus** blocks the entrance to the **Nave**—only those with black tokens from the **Court of Petitions** are allowed through.

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**NARTHEX**

d8 wretches await entry. Afflicted with the walking plague, but too low born to be given Indigo status, they will eventually be taken to the **Hall of Purification**.

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**HALL OF PURIFICATION**

Here, d8 Indigo tend unfortunate plague-bearers insufficiently wealthy or connected to be spared. d2 poor visitors from the **Mourner’s Gate** will be here speaking with them in the first pit.

When they (or Indigo) die, their bodies are cremated in the second, central pit. The ashes are refined and ground in the third pit, before being taken to the **Hall of Ascension** to be made into bricks.

The stairs lead to a mezzanine crowded with unseen undead. Any disturbance here draws thrown masonry.

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**MOURNER’S GATE**

Unseen undead throw bits of stone (they have run out of javelins) from slit-like windows at any who approach. The most dangerous area is directly before the main entrance, but this is protected by a crude loggia made from reclaimed masonry. Brittle tiles explode overhead and rain white dust.

Any who linger will eventually be struck.

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**BLUES**

- 1 d3 bailiffs bringing a debtor or petty criminal to the enclave as punishment.
- 2 Shorn relative coming to use the **Mourner’s Gate**.
- 3 Noble house lawyer bringing documents for review (real estate, final wills).
- 4 Noble in mourning, secretly bringing the ashes of a deceased relative to be bound into a monolith.
- 5-6 Liveried noble house factor, escorted by d3-1 armed youths. 1 in 3 chance of carrying a sack of gold to deposit in the enclave.

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**Bluetongue**—dyes the tongue blue for a day, and inoculates against the plague exposure up to 24 hours earlier (gold purse, or a blue token)

**Graydream**—a bitter tincture that brings on pleasant (but not-magical) dreams of deceased relatives (silver purse)

**Hole**—a mild hallucinogen that relieves feelings of grief; 1 in 3 people react badly. For d6 hours they feel they are falling backwards into a hole that is shaped like their own body. (copper purse)
HALL OF ASCENSION
Three Indigo toil here, making ash bricks and assembling the Basilica’s 20th monolith.

A cavernous hole in the ground is used by Ormina to enter the sewers below the city.

MOURNER’S GATE
Mulpitus, a round-bodied husk of a monk with deeply set eyes, lives in this reeking alley and guards the second way into the Basilica.

His long tenure grants him the right to allow three desiring mourners into the Hall of Purification each day. He gives a blue token to those he admits, for use in the market.

Each morning, d20 mourners will be lined up at the gate, hoping to be selected. Some have been coming for months.

QUIETUS
Chain-armored skeletons with razor-sharp halberds act as guards. They sense without seeing, so their helmets completely enclose their skulls and shoulders in a smooth ovoid of polished steel. Quietus are dry and brittle—they break easily, but fight until smashed.

THE INDIGO
Indigo robes signify a wealthy plague-afflicted who remains here as a servant, their life extended by Husmanna. Their eyes, noses, and mouths are stained with refined blue-tongue paste to keep them alive. The newest are flabby or sad, retain their names, and advocate for their house. The longest-lived have had their affairs assigned to the proctor and are barely more animate than the Quietus.

CHOIR
A statue made of curved clay pipes emerges from the floor. Air hisses through them; in its susurrus can be heard the unspoken wishes of everyone in the city. Ormina sleeps at its base, listening.

ORMINA
A horse-sized ermine with sleek, gray fur. She behaves like a cat, uncaring and lazy, but she is a demon brought back from beyond the middle silence. The construction of the monoliths is her project.

She moves backwards, following the tip of her tail like a bizarre, furred snake. Her head comes last, peering over her shoulder with a golden, lidless eye.

Anyone bitten by her is cursed—any attempt at speech comes out as gray smoke.

Occasionally she slips through the sewers into the city, invisible, to bring her plague to someone prominent chosen by Husmanna.

THREE SILENCES
The huge statues here represent the silence before creation, the silence after all has ended, and the middle silence: the death that comes for everyone.

Once potent idols, they are inert. Two centuries ago, Husmanna completed the ritual that brought Ormina, fulfilling the purpose of the silence cult that made them.

HUSSMANNA THE LICH
He stands among twelve identically robed skeletons; he uses ventrioloquism to disguise which is him. The rest of his magic is gone, spent summoning Ormina.

Husmanna peddles influence and Indigo status for gold. (Bluetongue is made from sapphire, which is costly.)

He will happily use the influence he commands in exchange for large gold donations.

After two centuries cultivating this empire, he secretly fears the world Ormina’s monoliths will bring.

THE GRAY MONOLITHS
Assembled from thousands of bricks of compressed funerary ash, the monoliths stand 10 paces tall. The outer surface is plastered with ash, then painstakingly embossed with rectangular runes.

The spell they form is repetitive, but powerful, apparently binding many spirits into a single being.

Most of the 19 complete monoliths in the Basilica are dormant, but when adventurers first enter a room containing monoliths, there is a 3-in-6 chance that one of the monoliths has reached Stage 2.

THE SLEEPERS AWAKEN
There’s a 3-in-6 chance the most alert monolith advances to the next stage whenever any of these things happen:

• A monolith is physically damaged (puffs of white ash and grit) for the first time
• A spell is cast
• An intelligent being is killed
• Ormina dies

STAGE 1—DORMANT
The monolith is a riot of terried, independent souls slowly pairing and combining into greater entities. As a whole, it is not aware of its environment, but it radiates powerful magic. Attempts to commune cause a harmful psychic backlash.

STAGE 2—NEODEUS
The dominant entity emerges and the entire psychic structure crystallizes, remaking itself. This produces an audible pop, and a psychic shockwave.

The monolith is now transcendentally intelligent and can:

Perceive its environment with perfect clarity
Communicate telepathically with other alert monoliths and undead (e.g., the Basilica’s Quietus)
Launch and sustain psychic attacks (which feel like having a boulder gently lowered onto your self-esteem)

STAGE 3—ASCENDED
Ascended monoliths are demi-gods. Torched between the temporal reality of the Basilica and their higher destiny, roll randomly for each action they take (see table).

MONOLITH DESTRUCTION
Monoliths smash in minutes with maces or similar weapons.

Doing so sends a psychic shockwave that destroys d2-1 other monoliths in the Basilica.

The shockwave hits the living like an overwhelming identity assault. The players of affected PCs exchange characters (really). This reverts after d10 minutes as long as both PCs are still alive.

### d6 Actions of Stage 3 (Ascended) Monoliths

| 1 | Rise two paces into the air and begin slowly rotating. The monolith emits an ozone smell and a static crackle. |
| 2 | Attack the ancestral host of Owleshade. This causes d10+10 ghosts to become briefly visible before being torn apart. Their essence is drawn into the monolith. If this happens 3 times, d2 demons arrive, sensing the weakness of the host. |
| 3 | Telekinetically slam into the nearest lower-stage monolith, absorbing its power. Anything caught between is crushed. If a large stone or metal object is in the way, then both monoliths are destroyed. |
| 4 | Catalyze a new spell from the void. The entire monolith flashes like lightning. Runes for the spell are flash-burned into all surfaces (including clothes, skin, and eyes) within line of sight. The monolith can now use the spell effect at will. |
| 5 | Emit a deafening, nauseating base hum. All distances inside the Basilica (heights, room width) multiply by d6. (In practical terms, it’s like the monoliths and living things all shrink.) The effect is permanent, but only inside the Basilica. |
| 6 | Teleport to its appointed place in the world, d10x100 leagues away, to begin displacing the regional deity. A portal to the monolith and its new surroundings can be seen (and used) for d20 seconds. |