

Designed for use with the **Basic Fantasy** Role-Playing Game

MYSTERY OF THE CURSED MONASTERY



AN ADVENTURE FOR
ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS



SUITABLE FOR 4-6 CHARACTERS OF 1ST OR 2ND LEVEL

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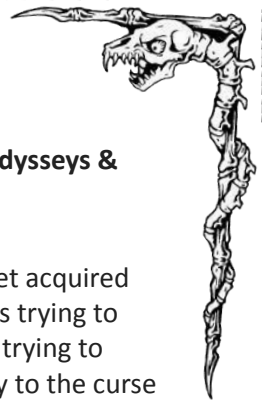

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ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS

In the ancient times, the Gods watched over humankind. This was a golden age of learning and peace. Humans revered the Gods, living in harmony with the divine and the companion beasts. Magic flowed freely allowing the learned and the faithful to alter their forms, prevent aging, and preserve health. The wild folk were born of this time as humans and companion beasts united in love. While most of the Gods rejoiced at this development, Ragnar, the God of Conquest was jealous and appalled by the humans choosing the animal companions as mates instead of the Gods. This caused a divine war during which the Gods who agreed with Ragnar tried to kill the other Gods. The first casualty of this war was Ember, the Goddess of knowledge. When Ember died, her scholar-priests, the Keepers of the Arcane were caught in a magical backlash creating the spellscorched. This war of Gods, called the Schism, raged for 1000 years, during which time the followers of Ragnar courted the worship and love of as many humans as they could. From these unions, the Abyss-kissed were born. After a long and bloody conflict, Ragnar and his followers were defeated. The Gods who fought them dragged Ragnar's followers into the Abyss where they are believed to still be fighting to this day. Only Ragnar and Chandra, the Goddess of the moon and nature remained among mortals. Declaring a cease fire, Ragnar retreated with a small retinue of cultists to the Tower of Wretched Wroth. Chandra and her highest clerics went to the Crystal Library on the surface of the northern Moon. Mortals were left to determine their own fates. The magic that had bound the souls of humans and the companion beasts shattered, though wild folk were already numerous enough to persevere. The spellscorched taught the ways of arcane magic sparingly, protecting the art nearly to extinction. Clerics of Chandra and Ragnar spoke of worship, but most mortal kingdoms rejected all gods and magic, relying on steel and blood to determine righteousness and rulership.

Now, the mortal lands are divided. A dozen kingdoms lie scattered across the world, separated by dangerous wilds filled with bandits and monsters. The bravest mortals act as adventurers, guiding travelers between the kingdoms, killing monsters to thin their numbers, and plundering ruins in search of the lost treasures of the golden age. This is the world of **Odysseys & Overlords!**

INTRODUCTION

This is a short adventure for use with the **Odysseys & Overlords** Role Playing Game.

BACKSTORY

A long time ago, a monastery in the Gauntlet acquired a cursed sword when the adventurer who was trying to break the curse died in the monastery. While trying to break the curse themselves, the nuns fell prey to the curse and became obsessed with possessing and protecting the sword. Eventually, they killed each other over it. They became ghouls, haunting the convent and killing anyone who tried to retrieve the sword.

Recently, a team of adventurers were sent to the abandoned monastery to search for treasure. They never returned.

Now, the clerics of Chandra's Haven have sent your team to investigate.

Note to GMs: If the players have met any of the other adventurers in Chandra's Haven, you can replace anyone in the missing party with them to raise the stakes. Otherwise, let the players know that their characters are at least familiar with the missing adventurers, having seen them around the Haven or gone on missions with them before. The members of the party are Sefu, a male human thief, Minh, a male human fighter, Mayumi, a female spellscorched fighter, and Nerida, a non-binary spellscorched cleric.

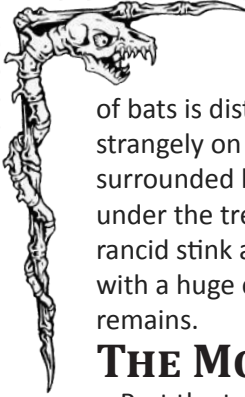
TRAVEL TO THE MONASTERY

ENTERING THE GAUNTLET

As the party treks through the wasteland, they hear hoofbeats and shouting; the unmistakable noise of a centaur band approaching. The centaurs have spotted the party, and have decided to have a little fun at their expense. Whooping and laughing, the centaurs descend on the party with weapons held aloft. They race past the group of adventurers, swinging weapons. If the party isn't bunched up, the centaurs will run through the group, otherwise, they'll just run around them. The centaurs circle the group until finally the leader, a male centaur with a shaved head and a curly tattoo under his left eye, stops in front of them and demands to see their writ. His goal is to antagonise the players; if they remain calm, the centaurs get bored, but if they get agitated or attack, the centaurs mock them for getting upset. Either way, the centaurs will leave after seeing the writ.

APPROACHING THE MONASTERY

The monastery is easy to find. A signpost marks the start of an old path that has almost completely worn away over time. Following the path, the party travels through a long, narrow ravine. When the players enter the ravine, a swarm



of bats is disturbed and flies away, their wingbeats echoing strangely on the rocks. Past the ravine is the monastery, surrounded by wildly twisting trees. As the players walk under the trees, a frigid wind rushes past them, carrying a rancid stink and shaking the leaves. A branch falls nearby with a huge crash, and the wind dies down. The stink remains.

THE MONASTERY GROUNDS

Past the trees, two old, stone buildings are tucked behind a lush but heavily overgrown and weed-filled garden. The smaller building is on a raised hill overlooking an abandoned vegetable patch, and the larger building curves around it, with a line of statues in front. There's a chill in the air, and the smell of rotting flesh grows stronger. Two ghouls are haunting the gardens. The ghouls are wearing nun's habits that are tattered and stained, and are vicious and feral.

ENCOUNTER: GHOUL AMBUSH (2 GHOULS)

If the ghouls have an opportunity for an ambush, they will take it. If the fight goes poorly, they'll try to run away and hide in the gardens. They'll continue to watch the players from afar, and if the players seem weakened, might try their luck again and attack.

2 Ghouls AC 14, HD 2*, #At 2 Claws/1 Bite, Dam 1d4/1d4/1d4 all plus paralysis, Mv 30', Sv F2, MI 9)

Ghoul 1 HP 8:

Ghoul 2 HP 9:

THE LARGE BUILDING

A large and imposing building. There is a line of statues in front; robed and hooded nuns, kneeling in prayer. The only way inside is behind the statues, through open archways set into the front and sides of the building. If the players spend time investigating the statues, they will discover a secret latch on the last statue in the row. This latch opens up the bottom of the statue, revealing a secret hiding space with a small statue of a grinning horned man. The first person to touch the statue can sense that they're being watched from afar. Investigating this statue could lead to further adventures. Who is it of, and why do the nuns have it? Was anyone truly watching the players, or was it just paranoia?

Treasure: A small statue of a horned man

1. CHAPEL

Huge stone archways set into the front of the large building lead to the open-air chapel, where a huge stone altar is ringed by benches. A single closed door leads deeper into the main building. There are signs of battle in the chapel, with both old and new bloodstains splashed across the room. There are bloody drag marks indicating that any dead bodies were later moved into the building.

If the players investigate the altar, they find a small latch. Opening it reveals a secret compartment in the altar. In the compartment are a small silver athame and a small book.

The book is a handwritten history of the nuns who used to live here. It ends with an entry detailing an adventurer who died in the convent from strange wounds, leaving her treasure and gold to the nuns. One of her treasures was a cursed sword; the adventurer was trying to remove the curse, and charged the nuns with continuing her work.

Treasure: A silver athame, worth a small amount of gold. A journal.

2. HALLWAY

A wide, tall hallway with more blood splattered across elaborate tapestries of nature scenes and staining the wooden floors. Bloody drag marks lead down the hall and through an open doorway. Across from the tapestry is a closed door covered in scratch marks. As the adventurers enter, a single ghoul charges through the doorway to attack. The players immediately recognise the ghoul as Mayumi, the female spellscorched fighter from the missing adventuring party, but she is a completely feral ghoul and fights to the death.

Mayumi the Ghoul

1 Ghoul AC 14, HD 2*, #At 2 Claws/1 Bite, Dam 1d4/1d4/1d4 all plus paralysis, Mv 30', Sv F2, MI 9)

Ghoul 1 HP 8:

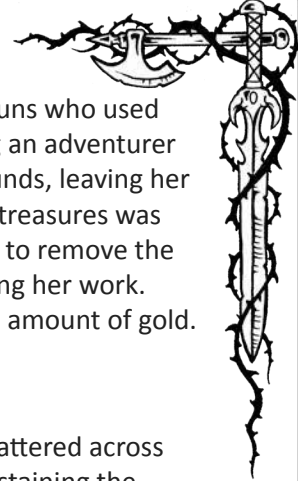
3. THE LIBRARY

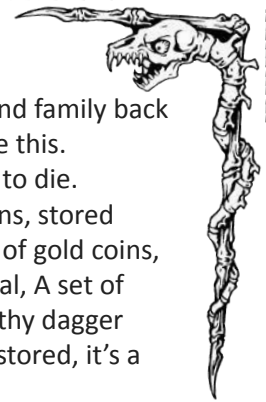
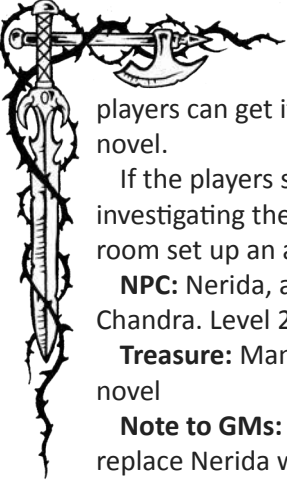
The door to the library is unlocked, but it won't open. If the players talk in front of the door or investigate it after the fight with the ghoul, a timid voice calls out to them, asking if they're dead or alive. If the players are friendly, the person will open the door and let them into the library.

The person is Nerida, a survivor from the adventurer party. They are a spellscorched cleric who managed to escape the ghouls and barricade the library doors. They've been laying low, trying to evade the ghouls and learn more about the situation, hoping the clerics would send more people after them. They fill the party in with what they've learned so far: there's a cursed sword in the monastery that the ghouls are obsessed with, and Nerida is starting to feel the obsession too. From reading journals and notes in the library, they think that the nuns were given this sword, and planned to break the curse. Nerida isn't sure what happened after that, but the ghouls in habits make it clear that it was something tragic. There's a ritual in one of the older books that should break the curse, but the item needs to be found and placed on the altar.

Nerida asks the players to help them break the curse by finding the item. They think it's in the smaller building, but every time they tried to get there, they were attacked by ghouls. They also ask the party to lay any of their adventurer friends to rest.

The library is in good shape - before the adventurers got here, the ghouls weren't interested in it at all. The shelves are full of dusty old books on various topics. There's a desk in one corner of the room with a locked drawer. If the





players can get it open, they'll find a dog-eared romance novel.

If the players spend time talking with Nerida and investigating the room, the two feral ghouls from the next room set up an ambush outside the door.

NPC: Nerida, a non-binary spellscorched Cleric of Chandra. Level 2. Spells prepared: Cure Light Wounds.

Treasure: Many old books on various topics. A romance novel

Note to GMs: If the players knew the adventurer party, replace Nerida with their second-closest friend. Nerida is happy to follow the party into battle - to make the adventure easier, make them a higher level cleric.

4. LIVING AREA

An austere dining and living room, with empty sconces on the walls and long benches in the centre of the room. On each side of the room is a nook with a lowered floor and old cushions on the ground - small areas to meditate. There are two open doors at the other end of the room; the drag marks continue along the ground and go through the doorways. If the ghouls didn't create an ambush outside the library, they are hiding in the meditation nooks and will rush the party as soon as they are distracted.

If the players investigate the nooks, they'll discover one of them is noticeably narrower than the other. One of the sconces is at a strange angle. If the sconce is pushed back into place, there's a quiet clunk noise and the narrow wall swings out, revealing a hidden shelf. On the shelf is a small journal written in code, an empty flask, and a bloodstained copper chalice.

Ghoul Twins 2 Ghouls AC 14, HD 2*, #At 2 Claws/1 Bite, Dam 1d4/1d4/1d4 all plus paralysis, Mv 30', Sv F2, MI 9)

Ghoul 1 HP 5:

Ghoul 2 HP 4:

Treasure: A journal that's written in code. An empty flask. A copper chalice

5. DORMITORY

As the players walk down the stairs, they are overcome with the stench of death and rot. This is the old dormitory, but the ghouls have been using it as a place to store bodies to eat later. There are a few corpses piled on one of the beds, and the whole room is rank with old blood. There are plenty of shelves and drawers to investigate if the players can bear the smell. If they investigate, they'll find a small hoard of treasures scattered throughout the drawers and shelves.

They'll also discover a ghouls in adventurer's gear hiding in the corner of the room; the remains of Sefu, the human thief from the previous expedition. Sefu's ghouls is intelligent, and can't stand what he's become. Sefu asks the players to give him a merciful death. He gives them a small medallion he was wearing, and asks the players to

take that, along with his love, to his friends and family back home. He doesn't want Nerida to see him like this.

NPC: Sefu, an intelligent ghouls who wishes to die.

Treasure: Sefu's medallion, 2x health potions, stored separately, A pouch of silver coins, A handful of gold coins, A set of dice made from an unfamiliar material, A set of silver jewellery; earrings and a necklace, A filthy dagger that gleams under the rust. If cleaned and restored, it's a +1 dagger.

Note to GMs: If the players knew the adventurer party, replace Sefu with their closest friend. You can use Sefu to start further adventures. What quests was he working on before his death? Who might blame the players for not saving him? What secrets does the medallion hold?

THE SMALL BUILDING

A smaller building, built on a hill above an old garden lying fallow. Behind the building is a small cemetery. Short stairs lead up to a wide porch, with a closed but unlocked front door. The side door has been hastily but securely boarded up, and is very difficult to open.

If the players investigate the boards, they hear a voice from behind the door. This is Larissa, the elder ghouls. She wants the players to leave her in peace with the sword, but also wants them to dispatch the other feral ghouls, as they've been trying to get to the sword. She is the one who boarded up the door. Larissa is very intelligent and will negotiate with the players if possible using any tactics. She might try to bribe them with the treasure in the larger building, or scare them with lies about the sword's powers.

The adventurers can hear scrabbling and groaning coming from inside the building, as well as dragging noises under the porch. If they investigate, they can see a badly wounded ghouls in adventurer's gear crawling out from under the porch. This is Minh, the male human thief, and the final member of the missing adventurer party. He is completely feral as a ghouls and fights to the death. If the players spend a long time talking to Larissa through the closed door, Minh will try to ambush them at the corner of the building.

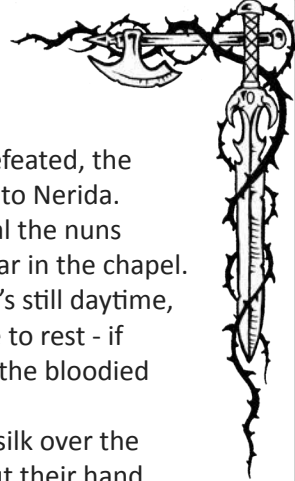
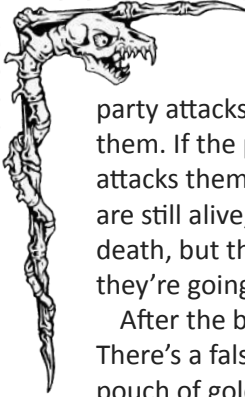
Minh the Ghouls

1 Ghouls AC 14, HD 2*, #At 2 Claws/1 Bite, Dam 1d4/1d4/1d4 all plus paralysis, Mv 30', Sv F2, MI 9)

Ghouls HP 6:

6. RECEIVING ROOM

When the door is opened, stale air that smells like rot and death rushes out. The door has been closed for a while. Inside is a small office and receiving room for the elder nun. Blood and gore are streaked across every surface, including a desk in the centre of the room, the empty sconces in the corners, and a huge fireplace at the back of the room. A feral ghouls in a habit is completely preoccupied with trying to scratch its way through a closed door on the other side of the office, but as soon as the



party attacks, it will shift its focus to killing and eating them. If the players didn't dispatch Minh's ghoul earlier, he attacks them during this fight. If the other garden ghouls are still alive, they might join in here. Minh will fight to the death, but the other ghouls will try to escape if they think they're going to die.

After the battle, the players can investigate this room. There's a false bottom in a desk drawer that reveals a pouch of gold coins and a small flask of very old liquor, and a series of small dragon statues on the fireplace mantel, all facing the same way except one. When that one is turned to face the same way, a loud clunk noise is heard, and a cloud of old ash rises from the fireplace. Inside the fireplace, a false wall has swung out, revealing a tiny shelf of handwritten books. At first glance, the books are nonsense. However, if the players read them carefully, they can decode them as worshipful notes about Ragnar.

Obsessed Ghoul

1 Ghoul AC 14, HD 2*, #At 2 Claws/1 Bite, Dam 1d4/1d4/1d4 all plus paralysis, Mv 30', Sv F2, MI 9)
 Ghoul 1 HP 10:

Treasure: A pouch of gold coins. A small flask of old liquor. Books about Ragnar

7. BEDROOM

An ancient, austere bedroom in perfect, if dusty, condition. A large two-handed sword is on a display rack in the center of the room. As the players enter, they feel an instinctive urge to wield the sword in glorious battle and protect it at any cost from any who would harm it. The feeling is easy to shrug off - for now.

The intelligent ghoul of Larissa, the elder nun, is locked in this room. Larissa is emaciated and weakened, but still fiercely intelligent and dangerous. She is obsessed with the sword and is protecting it by killing anyone who comes near it. She is too weak to wield it herself, but throughout any battle, she whispers to the sword constantly to soothe its restless soul.

She'll try to negotiate with the players now, regardless of the earlier conversation. At this point, they've probably killed all the other ghouls, so Larissa wants to be left alone with the sword to retake the monastery. She'll use any negotiation tactics to get the players to leave her in peace with the sword, stopping short of outright begging. If they refuse, she'll fight them. If the fight goes poorly, she'll beg for her life.

Ghoul of Larissa the Elder Nun

1 Ghoul AC 14, HD 2*, #At 2 Claws/1 Bite, Dam 1d4/1d4/1d4 all plus paralysis, Mv 30', Sv F2, MI 9)
 Ghoul 1 HP 10:

Treasure: A cursed sword. While cursed, it's a +2 two-handed sword. After the curse is removed, it's a regular two-handed sword.

BREAKING THE CURSE

After Larissa and the other ghouls are defeated, the players are easily able to return the sword to Nerida. Nerida and the party can perform the ritual the nuns discovered by placing the sword on the altar in the chapel. The ritual must be performed at night. If it's still daytime, the players and Nerida can take some time to rest - if they feel comfortable resting anywhere in the bloodied monastery.

When the moon rises, Nerida lays black silk over the altar, and places the sword on top. They cut their hand with a gleaming ritual knife, and let three drops of blood fall on the sword. Then they call out to Chandra; entreating her to intercede from her palace on the northern moon. They ask Chandra to consecrate the monastery, and break the curse on the sword. The moon grows brighter in the sky, there's a rustling in the trees outside, and the wind whips through the chapel, carrying with it the smell of grass after rain and the howl of wolves. When the wind dies down, the blood has soaked into the sword. Chandra has answered their call, and the curse has been broken.

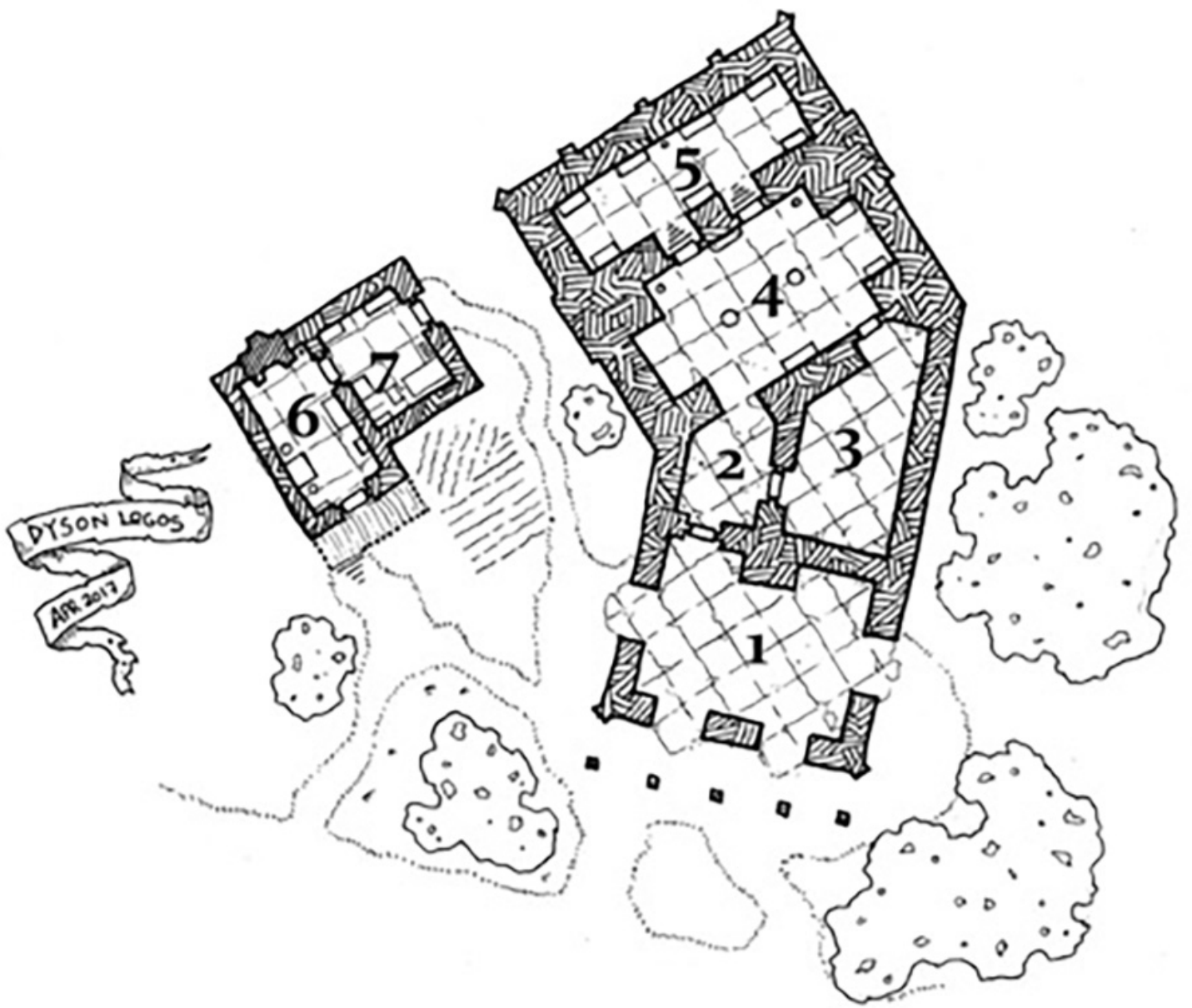
LARISSA'S PROMISE

It's possible that the players will negotiate with Larissa and leave the cursed sword in her skeletal hands. Since the clerics back at Chandra's Haven don't know about the sword, the adventurers know they won't be penalised for returning without it. If the players keep their promise to leave Larissa alive and not take the sword or break the curse, Larissa will let them explore the monastery to their heart's content, take what they want, and leave with their lives. Nerida doesn't like it, but with Sefu and her other friends dead, she's just happy to be alive.

Note to GMs: If Nerida was replaced by your own NPC who would be staunchly against dealing with ghouls, don't shy away from the conflict. Will the players fight their friend? Can they convince them it's the best plan?

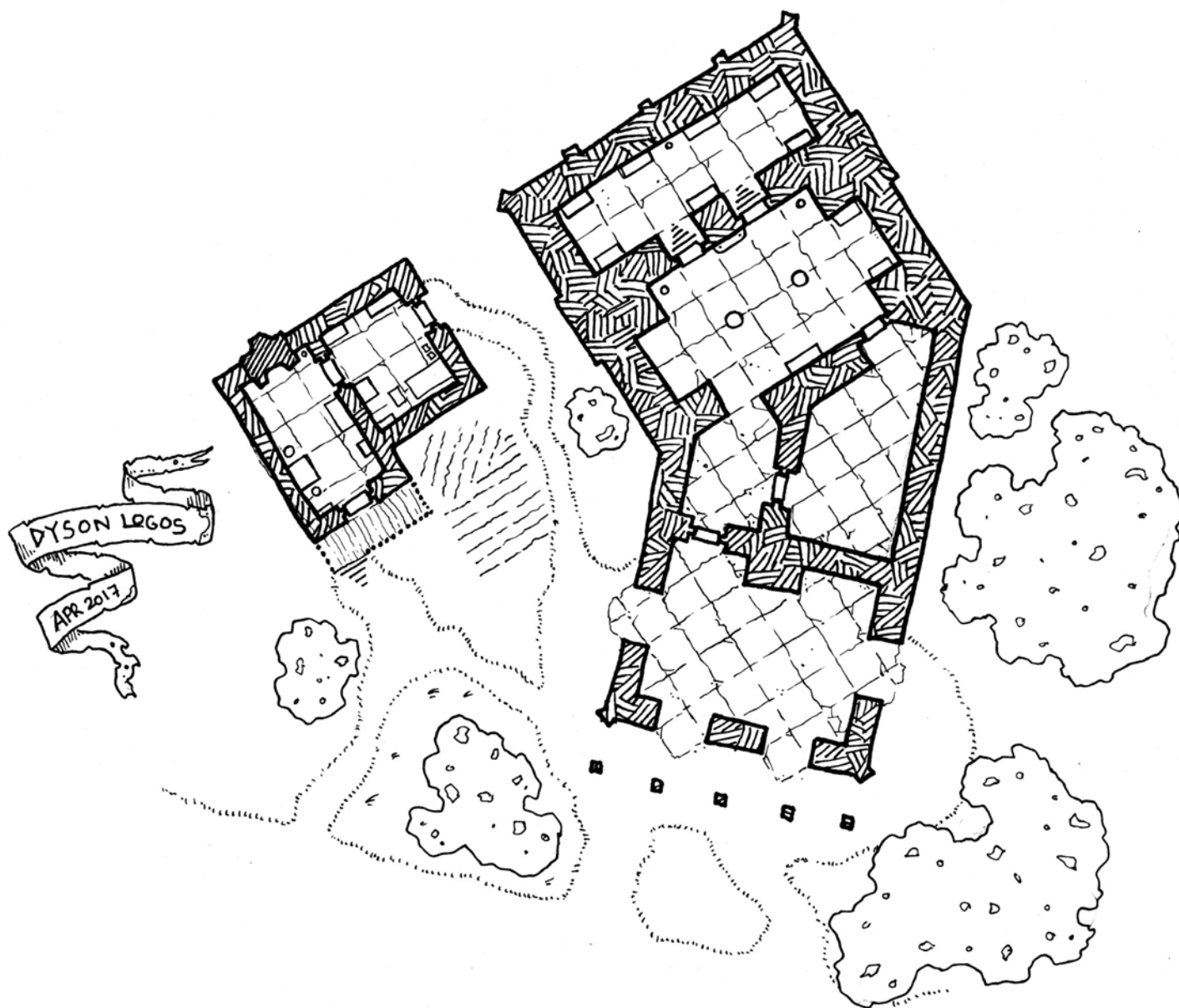
CONCLUSION

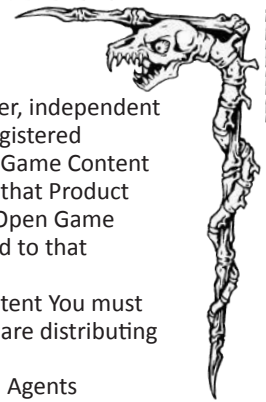
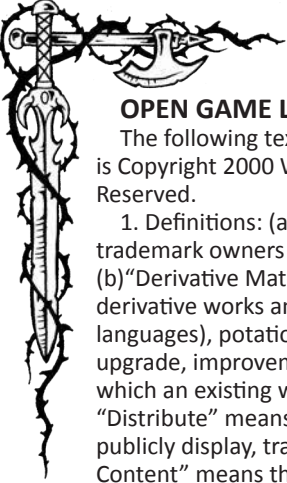
The players have laid the ghouls to rest and can return to Chandra's Haven with Nerida. They have the medallion and messages for Sefu's friends and family, and might have other quests to look into. They may have broken the curse on the magical item, but this has just given them further questions. Are there other, similar cursed items out there causing mayhem? With the ghouls gone, will other monsters move into the monastery? And if they left the sword with Larissa, how do they feel about that decision? Will she be okay on her own, or will the cursed sword cause further trouble?





MAP - PLAYER VERSION





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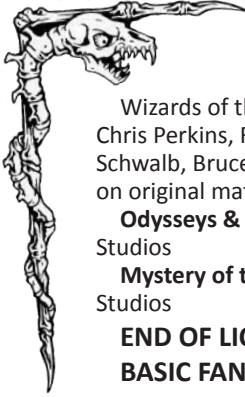
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