

# DUNGEON AGE



## THE OBSIDIAN KEEP

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## “THE OBSIDIAN KEEP”

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an adventure for low-level play (1-3)

Written and illustrated by Joseph Robert Lewis © 2020

### INTRODUCTION

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Last month, a fleet of holy warships sailed out to destroy the evil sorcerers of the Obsidian Keep.

The fleet never returned.

Today there is a call for righteous heroes (or brave treasure hunters) to discover the fate of the lost fleet and the cruel masters of the Obsidian Keep.

At first, all seems obvious. The fleet was clearly destroyed by sorcery. Or was it? And why are the servants of the sorcerers fleeing in terror and suffering bizarre mutations?

The truth lies hidden among the arcane treasures, horrific creatures, and smoking ruins of the Obsidian Keep.

### DESIGN NOTES

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This adventure is intended for low-level characters (1-3). It is primarily geared for exploration, social encounters, and general mystery-solving. Opportunities for combat lurk everywhere.

It runs 8 to 16 hours.

Players will explore the harbor full of wrecked ships, the beach of miserable refugees, and the Obsidian Keep itself.

There are numerous NPCs as well as unique magical items.

### LAYOUT

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The DM’s read-aloud text looks like this. It’s brief!

Descriptions of locations focus only on key adventure items.

You may assume that any “missing” details are obvious, such as a pot in a kitchen.

Items that are further explained in their own bullet or section are **bolded and underlined**.

Creature statistics are at the end of each area/section.

### OBVIOUS NOTE

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The names and settings used in this adventure are drawn from the world of Dungeon Age. Obviously, you can and should change whatever you want to fit in your campaign setting.

The creatures in this adventure range in challenge rating from easy to deadly. Obviously, you can and should adjust the stats and numbers of creatures to meet the skills of your players or your style of play.

But you already knew that, right?

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# NOTES FOR THE DM

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## BACKGROUND

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**LORE:** On the subterranean shores of the **Sakeen Sea**, stands the holy city of **Radiant Vitela**.

In the center of the sea lies **Isla Requia**, where the lords of the **Obsidian Keep** harass passing ships with their magics.

In the palace, **Duchess Forza** studied and mastered sorcery. Her husband **Duke Avito** grew jealous of her power.

One year ago, the Archbishop of Radiant Vitela secretly sent the cultists of **Vermesh** to seduce and corrupt Duke Avito.

Two weeks ago, the Archbishop sent a fleet of holy warships to destroy the evil Obsidian Keep.

The fleet never returned. No one knows what happened to it.

So what happened?

Duchess Forza summoned a storm to destroy the fleet, but Duke Avito summoned the immortal horror Vermesh, which drove everyone insane, including Forza, who destroyed the palace and the fleet in her madness.

## TODAY

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The shattered remains of the Radiant fleet lie in the harbor. The shattered remains of the Obsidian Keep lie on the hill. The survivors flee on rafts or huddle in shelters on the beach.

Inside, the palace is a nightmare. Only a few people remain alive, all horribly mutated, and some possessing unholy powers.

Duchess Forza lies (mostly) dead in the keep. Duke Avito lies (entirely) dead in his private sanctum. But he is not alone.

Meanwhile, the people of Radiant Vitela wonder what happened to their holy fleet...

## THE BOTTOM LINE

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This is a starting adventure for low-level characters.

The party is dropped off at Isla Requia, where they can explore the wrecked ships in the harbor, the survivors on the beach, and the ruins of the Obsidian Keep.

This emphasizes exploration, mystery-solving, and social encounters, but also has opportunities for combat.

There is lots of treasure, and a fair chance of deadlines.

## STORY HOOKS

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### Option 1:

The Archbishop of Radiant Vitela has put out a call for faithful adventurers to sail to Isla Requia and learn the fate of their fleet and of the vile sorcerers.

Rewards are offered for saving sailors, recovering relics, and bringing proof that Duke Avito and Duchess Forza are dead.

Only clerics, fighters, monks, and paladins may apply.

### Option 2:

The antiques dealer Master Argento of Radiant Vitela has put out a call for treasure hunters to sail to Isla Requia and recover valuable items.

Rewards are offered for eye witnesses, weapons, and Obsidian Keep rarities, especially if they belonged to Duke Avito and Duchess Forza.

Only barbarians, bards, rogues, and warlocks may apply.

**DM:** You don't need to use the class restrictions. I just thought they added some nice flavor to the options.

## HOW TO RUN THIS

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A few things to know:

- Each area (Harbor, Beach, Grounds, Keep) is self-contained. You only need to deal with one at a time.
- Each area starts with a section called **DM Notes** that provides a quick overview of the location, encounters, NPCs, and what they know.
- The maps are designed to be presented to the players as “this is what you can see”. Location names are unique, but superficial.

## PREP WORK

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Nothing special. Just read it over and become familiar with the maps (and maybe the lore?).

## HOW LONG IS THIS?

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Between 8 and 16 hours. It depends on how many locations the PCs visit and how many combats you deploy.

## IS THIS ADVENTURE FAIR AND BALANCED?

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No! But the PCs can often choose whether to fight or negotiate or run away. There are always options.

## COMBAT

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There are certainly opportunities for combat, but the main intent of this adventure is exploration and mystery-solving. You can easily increase combats using the **Encounters** section in each area.

## LOOT

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There is a lot! Especially for a low-level party. Money, jewelry, potions, weapons, armor, artifacts, etc. But some of it is hard to get to...

Plus, there are the vague “rewards” offered by the Archbishop and the antiques dealer for rescuing people and finding proof of the Duke and Duchess’s fate.

## SO MANY NPCs!

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I know, right?

You definitely don’t need to make them all memorable. Each one only shows up for a few minutes, usually.

But there are notes for almost every NPC to help you roleplay them, if you want.

## WHAT IS THE DC?

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**Short answer:** It’s 13.

**Longer answer:** There are no skill checks or saving throws listed in this adventure.

Skill checks and saving throws were left out to encourage more organic play and narrative problem-solving.

But if you like rolling dice (and who doesn’t?), then a DC 13 works well for just about every skill check or saving throw in this adventure (for 5e).

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# HARBOR OF ISLA REQUIA

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## DM NOTES

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### Where is this place?

The harbor of Isla Requia lies between the Sakeen Sea and the beach below the Obsidian Keep.

### What is here?

Shipwrecks, rafts, islands, treasures, and monsters.

### Who is here?

A few local fishermen and stranded sailors.

### What do they know?

They **all** know the Radiant fleet came to attack the Obsidian Keep, but the fleet was destroyed by a strange “Red Storm” of lightning.

They **all** strongly suspect the Red Storm was created by Duchess Forza (lady of the Obsidian Keep) using her evil sorcery.

**Sailors** want to be rescued. They all refuse to go ashore, out of fear of the palace sorcerers.

**Fishermen** also know that during the Red Storm, lava destroyed part of the Obsidian Keep and the fishermen’s cottages above the beach. This is why many fishermen have left, or are trying to leave, the island.

## ARRIVAL

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The **merchantman** drops anchor off the coast of Isla Requia and you begin **rowing**.

Between the high red cliffs, the dark harbor waters lap hungrily at the **shattered hulls** of the Radiant Vitela warships.

The harbor is also thick with flotsam, rafts, and islands. On the far side of the harbor lies a low **beach**.

- **Merchantman.** The ship will wait three days. If you don’t return, then Captain Placida assumes you have died and she returns to Radiant Vitela.
- **Rowing.** You are given a longboat that can safely seat 10 people. There are four oars, and one small anchor on a 30-foot rope.
- **Shattered hulls.** Warships from Radiant Vitela, destroyed two weeks ago.
- **Beach.** Sandy and rocky. A recently built shanty town of huts and tents. No dock.

## ENCOUNTERS

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Roll 1d8 for some excitement!

1. A human scream echoes out across the water.
2. Three **skeletons** climb up on a nearby rock and leap onto your passing boat!
3. Two **kettle crabs** swim to the surface and nip at your oars and hands.
4. A hideous **vulgrane** swoops down to make clawing passes over your boat!
5. Three **harbor sharks** ram your boat, trying to flip it!
6. A giant blue tentacle rises out of the waves and smashes a nearby shipwreck, then slips back down beneath the dark harbor waters.
7. A lone sailor **Carlo** in a yellow jacket paddles a raft toward you, calling for help. The fin of a **harbor shark** circles the fragile craft.
8. You spot four desperate, starving **sailors** in yellow jackets rowing a longboat out toward your ship. They have cutlasses drawn. (**Leo, Donato, Marco, Raul**)

### 1. CAPSIZED CUTTER

An overturned **hull** rests above the waves on a rocky point. From a **square hole** in one side, a **woman** sits fishing.

- **Hull:** *Golden Dove*.
- **Square hole.** Clearly sawed out recently.
- **Woman.** *Rosetta*, 55, tough as nails, healthy, yellow jacket sailor. **Says** the ships were destroyed by red lightning. Most sailors eaten by sharks. **Asks** for rescue.
- **Inside.** Behind Rosetta's bedding and cookery and tools, there is a neat stack of nine swords and daggers, including one **ornate cutlass**.

#### ADMIRAL'S CUTLASS

This magic weapon has an ornate golden hilt with white coral spikes. The bearer can cast Thaumaturgy at will.

**Value: 1,000 GP**

### 2. GREEN BOTTLE

A green bottle bobs on the waves. A scrap of paper is rolled up inside it.

- “Dearest Olivia, we were destroyed by foul sorcery before ever reaching land. We cling to a rock now. The sharks are closing in. Each day, someone dies. So go on, marry my brother, if you want. I don't care anymore. Love, Bruno”

### 3. WRECKED FRIGATE

A barnacle-crust **hull** lies impaled on the sharp rocks. On one side, a **charred hole** gapes open. **Voices** echo inside.

- **Hull:** *Hammer of Faith*.
- **Charred hole.** 20 feet wide. Exploded outward.
- **Voices.** Two gaunt sailors in ragged yellow jackets argue loudly. **Antony** fears storms. **Filipe** fears sharks. They **beg** to be saved.
- **Inside.** Mostly empty. Lower deck is submerged. Six **electric eels** nest around a water-tight cask labeled with runes for “Danger”. Contains 12 Angelfire **grenades**.

### 4. RED GLOW

Waves and sloshing debris echo in a narrow black **cave** in the cliff wall. A dim red **light** flickers from inside.

- **Cave.** Too narrow for a boat. You must climb along the narrow slippery ledges in the walls above the water.
- **Light.** 30 feet back, a dented bronze lantern rocks in the waves, casting a red light.

#### MARINER'S LANTERN

The dim red glow from this magic lantern offers little light, but it clears away fog for 100 feet in all directions.

**Value: 500 GP**

### 5. TWO MASTS

Two masts rise above the waves. Twenty feet down, a broken **hull** rests on the sand. **Figures** move in the shadows. **Metal** glints in the light.

- **Hull:** *Shining Lady*.
- **Figures.** Twelve **skeletons** in tattered yellow uniforms. Shuffling, trapped inside.
- **Metal.** 800 GP glitter under the skeletons' feet. Also, 4 Angelfire **grenades**.

#### ANGELFIRE GRENADE

Apple-sized silver sphere. Twist to arm, 3 seconds to boom. Deals 1d6 fire + 1d6 thunder damage. Can ignite or shatter nearby materials.

### 6. CHURNING WATER

Five **harbor sharks** thrash just below the surface. A few logs and a yellow jacket bob away. The frothing waves are red.

- Two desperate sailors tried to escape on a raft. It sank. They're already dead.
- The sharks ignore you unless you attack them.



## 7. WHITE ISLAND

The titanic skull of an Imperial **Viperfish** rests on the low rocks. Ribcages and **rags** hang from its slender fangs. A **voice** sings softly inside the skull.

- **Viperfish.** A gigantic anglerfish. Never seen alive.
- **Rags.** Yellow sailor jackets.
- **Voice.** Lounging in a sheltered pool is an Ursaloth, half woman and half octopus, named **Angelica**. She offers secrets and gifts, for a price.
- **Give her a kiss:** “Forza was always in control of her powers. But the Red Storm was all chaos. Beware! There is something very old in that palace. I fear only the angels could cleanse it.”
- **Feed her a finger:** The stump grows into a tentacle and you can now breathe in water as well as air. The Boon of the Ursaloth!
- **Hidden Loot:** Angelica sits on a small rusty chest full of 77 silver forks and 23 jade statuettes of dancing mouselings worth 500 GP.

## 8. BLACK ISLAND

A flat table of black stone rises just above the frothing waves. A lone **shack** huddles against a rock wall. Two **robed men** fumble with a fishing net.

- **Shack.** Flotsam, canvas. Has random cookery, fishing gear, tattered uniforms.
- **Robed men.** Radiant priests. Squabbling, clumsy, skinny. From the ***Shining Lady (Two Masts)***.
- **Ivan**, 55, gray beard, Friar of Fate. “Free will is a myth!”
- **Matteo**, 35, black beard, Friar of Fortune. “Everything is our own damned fault!”
- **Claim** the fleet was destroyed by unnatural red lightning. Also claim to have heard an “unholy scream of ultimate betrayal” during the storm.
- **Beg** for rescue.

## 9. FALLEN LIGHTHOUSE

Black rocks form a jetty spearing out from the pebbled beach. The broken foundations of a tower stand in the foam.

- **Tower.** Five **kettle crabs** scuttle inside, picking at the corpses of four soldiers in black armor.
- **KEY.** A black iron key hangs on a chain around one soldier’s neck (**Franco**). This key opens the **East Gate**.

## 10. COLOSSUS

A stone warrior 50 feet tall stands carved into the cliff wall, its left arm shattered at the shoulder. The stone arm lies in the water, its closed fist just above the waves.

- **Fist.** Will take time to smash open. Encloses a gold **staff**.

### HOLY STAFF OF VITELA

This emerald-studded golden staff was once carried by the Archbishops of Radiant Vitela. The bearer is resistant to necrotic damage and undead cannot come within 10 feet of the staff.

**Value: 3,000 GP**

## 11. PALE SHAPE

A sickly white corpse floats by, face down.

- If you touch it, take 1d6 poison damage as it belches decaying fumes into the air.

## 12. ANCHORED RAFT

A large raft of mismatched timbers rides at anchor in the shallows. A sturdy **hut** stands on top. Two **adults** and three **boys** sit fishing.

- **Hut.** Simple, clean. Comfy hammocks. Clothes, tools, and food hang in small nets.
- **Adults.** *Alfeo* and *Velia*, 35, married, local fishermen. Cottage destroyed by lava in the Red Storm. Eager for news. A nice happy couple.
- **Boys.** *Beppe*, *Dino*, and *Elmo*. 5-10 yo. Sleepy, whiny, mischievous.
- **Offer them supplies:** Alfeo takes you aside and says that Duchess Forza probably used her sorcery to create the Red Storm to destroy the fleet. But then lava destroyed the palace and the fishermen's cottages. The Duchess would never do anything like that!
- **Request:** Velia gives you a toy boat made by the three boys. It is a gift for *Oscar*, their grandfather, wherever he is. The beach, maybe?  
(**Stilt Hut**)

## 13. TETHERED RAFT

Three small fishing **boats** bob and thump, tethered together against the mast of a sunken ship. An **old man** waves at you.

- **Boats.** A makeshift raft. Fraying ropes, rusty tools, tattered nets.
- **Old man.** *Gasparo*, 60, white hair, visible burn scars. Cannot speak clearly at all, damaged tongue. Injured by lightning in the Red Storm.
- **Offer him supplies:** He gifts you an oilskin case he found full of letters between the Archbishop of Radiant Vitela and Captain Marcus of the *Sacred Flame*, ordering:

“In addition to destroying the Obsidian Keep and its foul masters, you must also cleanse the world of the hideous servants of the conqueror worm. Strike quickly! Do not even allow them to speak. If any man hears the lies of the red priests, then that man must die as well...”

## 14. DARK SHAPE

A large turtle with a gleaming black shell glides languidly through the water. It raises its head to reveal a human face.

- A mutated human. Cannot speak or think.

## 15. WRIGGLING SHAPE

A mass of tiny legs and tails wriggles on the surface, but makes no progress in any direction.

- Fifty tadpoles have fused together into one mindless, harmless creature.
- If you return later, half the tadpoles have become full-grown frogs. Still harmless.

# HARBOR CREATURES

Electric Eel						100 xp
Medium beast		AC	HP	Swim		
unaligned		12	15	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	

**Senses.** Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 10

**Water Breathing.** The eel can breathe only underwater.

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

**Shock.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., three targets. Hit: 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

Harbor Shark						100 xp
Large beast		AC	HP	Swim		
unaligned		12	20	40 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)	

**Senses.** Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 12

**Pack Tactics.** The shark has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the shark's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Water Breathing.** The shark can breathe only underwater.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Kettle Crab						50 xp
Medium beast		AC	HP	Move		
unaligned		15	15	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	9 (-1)	3 (-4)	

**Senses.** Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 9

**Amphibious.** The crab can breathe air and water.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13).

Sailor						100 xp
Medium humanoid		AC	HP	Move		
Chaotic neutral		11	25	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	

**Multiattack.** The sailor makes two melee attacks.

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

**Angelfire grenade.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) fire + 3 (1d6) thunder damage. Limit one per sailor.

Skeleton			50 xp		
Medium undead	AC	HP	Move		
Lawful evil	13	15	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities.** Bludgeoning

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

**Spare Skull.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning.

Vulgrane			200 xp		
Large beast	AC	HP	Fly		
Neutral evil	10	20	60 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Senses.** Passive Perception 13

**Keen Sight and Smell.** The vulgrane has advantage on Perception checks that rely on sight or smell.

**Multiattack.** The vulgrane makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

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

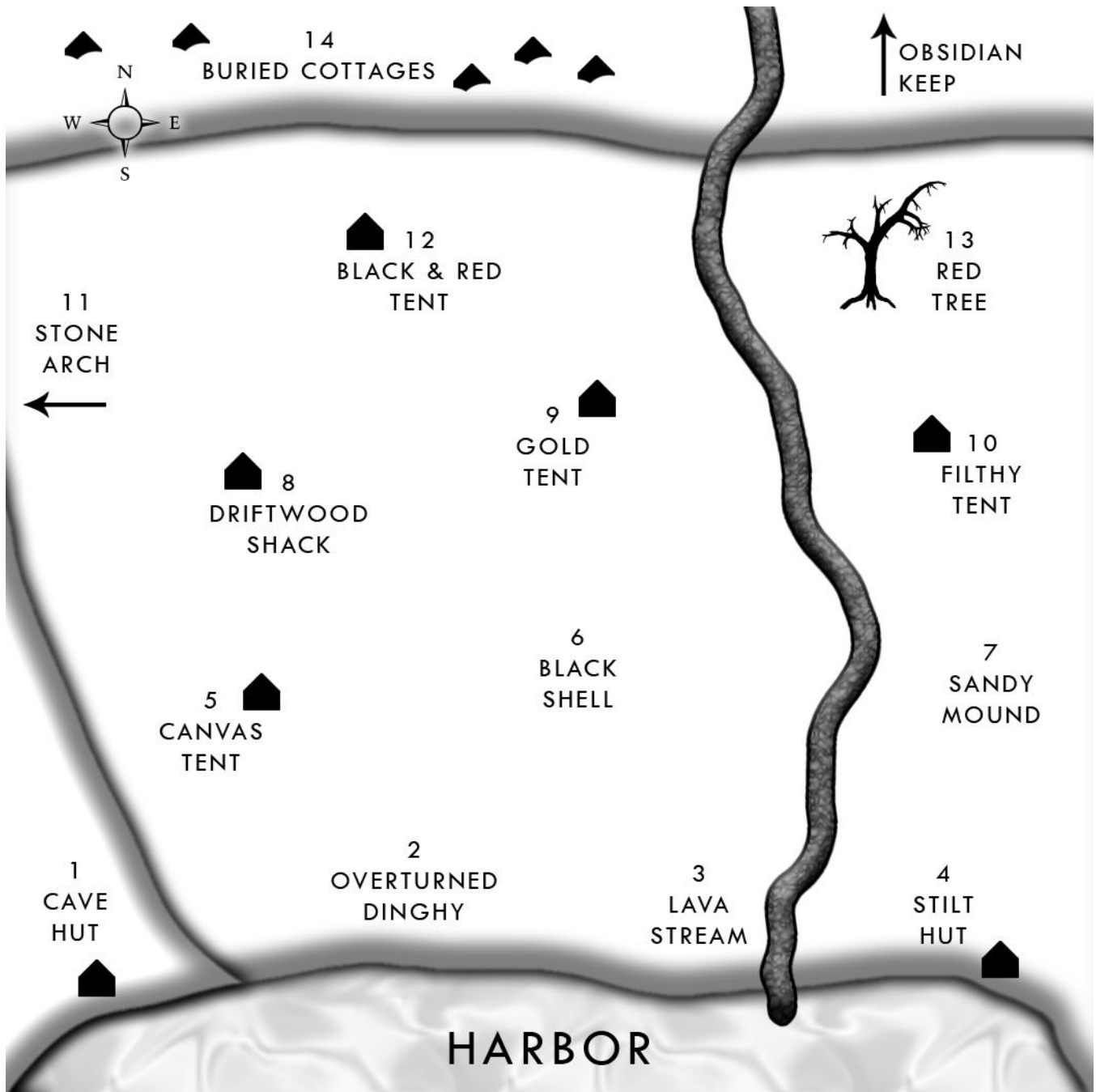
**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.



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# BEACH OF ISLA REQUIA

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## DM NOTES

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### Where is this place?

The beach between the harbor and the Obsidian Keep.

### What is here?

A shanty town of huts, shacks, and tents.

### Who is here?

Some survivors: local fishermen, palace servants, and outsiders (scholar, scavengers).

### What do they know?

#### **Fishermen:**

- Are healthy and strong.
- Their cottages at the top of the beach were destroyed by lava during the Red Storm.
- One by one, they are building rafts and leaving to find new homes away from Isla Requia.

#### **Palace servants:**

- Have physical mutations from living in the palace over the last year.
- Were saved by Prince Orsino during the Red Storm. If you ask about the prince, they point to the **Red Tree** (#13).
- Do not have the skills to survive on the beach. They are scared and desperate for help / rescue.
- Duchess Forza was a powerful magician, and her husband Duke Avito was obsessed with the occult.

## ARRIVAL

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The cold harbor waters slosh quietly on the pebbled shore. Dozens of shacks and tents dot the beach. Up the slope, the half-buried ruins of countless **cottages** sit in the shadow of the **Obsidian Keep**.

- **Cottages.** Stone, humble homes of the fisherman. All half-buried in cooled lava.
- **Obsidian Keep.** Half a league away, up a steep slope.

## ENCOUNTERS

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Roll 1d8 for some excitement!

1. A screaming cackle echoes down from the palace.
2. A corpse washes onto the shore. Its chest smashes open. A dozen eels spill out and race for the water.
3. Four **kettle crabs** emerge from the sand to surround you, and attack!
4. A hideous **vulgrane** swoops down to make clawing passes over your heads!
5. A giant mass of milky white flesh lies quivering on the beach. Take 1d6 lightning damage if you touch it.
6. The ground shakes and a rift opens at your feet, spilling searing hot lava onto the beach. Take 1d6 fire damage.
7. You find a red horseshoe crab on the beach. If you flip it over, there is a woman's horrified face inside. It scuttles away.
8. A shark lies still on the beach, its belly swollen. In its stomach is a golden **helmet** with a man's surprised head still inside it.

### **NICO'S GOLDEN HELM**

This blessed helmet grants the wearer immunity to fear.

**Value: 500 GP**

### 1. CAVE HUT

Sheltered from the elements, a ship's intact cabin rests inside this shallow cave. A **man** and **girl** sit, braiding ropes and nets.

- **Man. Sandro**, 35, healthy, friendly. Fisherman. Hates the mutant servants, glad Duchess Forza and Duke Avito are gone.
- **Girl. Nora**, 10, healthy, sarcastic. Wants to hear stories about monsters!

### 2. OVERTURNED DINGHY

A small dinghy rests upside down on driftwood poles. A man digs in the sand nearby.

- **Ivo**. 45, healthy, bored, over-eager for company, lifelong clam digger. Ready to sail off in search of a new home.
- **Task**. Ivo needs an intact sail. If you give him one, he says, "You can get under the palace through the East Gate. It leads straight into the Obsidian Keep. You'll need a black iron key, but only soldiers have those."

### 3. LAVA STREAM

A bright yellow stream of lava flows slowly down the slope from the Obsidian Keep, across the beach, and into the water.

- 10 feet wide, a cloud of foul hot steam hovers over it.

### 4. STILT HUT

A tiny wooden hut stands on 10-foot stilts above the waves. An old **man** sits on the platform holding a spear.

- **Man. Oscar**, 70, healthy, skinny, shirtless, toothless, timid, spear-fisher.
- A drunk. He passed out and slept through the Red Storm.
- Misses his daughter Velia.
- **Give him the toy boat**: he gives up drinking. He gives you his last bottle of **Requia Rum** (3 portions, each causes 8 hours of sleep).
- **Don't give him the toy**: when you come back, he is dead of alcohol poisoning.

### 5. CANVAS TENT

A flimsy tent of patched canvas stands shaking in the breeze. **Thumps** and shouts ring out!

- **Thumps**. A **kettle crab** is attacking a frightened woman clutching a baby!
- **Woman. Clio**, 25, tired, hungry, scared (red scales on her left hand), and baby **Rico** (healthy). She is a palace maid rescued by Prince Orsino during the Red Storm.
- **Claims** she saw dark stains in Duke Avito's laundry for the last few months. **Thinks** he was very ill, maybe dying. (He was sacrificing animals.)

### 6. BLACK SHELL

A slimy, barnacle-encrusted shell rises from the wet sand. A silver **rune** gleams on one side.

- **Rune**. "Angelfire"
- Unexploded Angelfire shell, launched by the fleet. 5 foot diameter. 100 pounds.
- **Boom?** 3d6 fire and 3d6 thunder damage to everything within 30 feet.

### 7. SANDY MOUND

A crooked **mound** of sand 30 feet across bulges from the beach. It stinks of salt and decay. Large blood-red **crabs** scuttle over the mound, digging into the sand.

- **Mound**. Contains 72 dead sailors, buried by beach-folk.
- **Crabs**. Six large **kettle crabs**, very territorial.
- **Treasure**. 12 daggers, frayed yellow uniforms, 1 Angelfire grenade, 109 GP.

## 8. DRIFTWOOD SHACK

A rickety cottage of salvaged driftwood stands on the beach. Three children play outside. Two women mend clothes.

- **Residents.** Two families of palace servants share this home. Prince Orsino led them to safety during the Red Storm.
- **Children.** *Aldo* (elf ear). *Lena* (goat eye). *Gino* (fang).
- **Women.** *Flora* (pig nose). *Berta* (gnarled horn).
- **Men?** Out looking for food.
- **Mutations?** They say the changes started a year ago when Duke Avito began fighting with his wife. He was jealous of her arcane powers.

## 9. GOLD TENT

A small tent of gold silk rustles in the breeze. A young man sits outside on an overturned bucket, writing in a book. Jagged chunks of glass sit on the sand around him.

- **Man.** *Hamza*, 25, healthy, beardless, black hair, yellow robes. Enthusiastic scholar from Radiant Vitela, just arrived yesterday, wants to learn what happened here. Black eye from a run-in with the scavengers at #10.
- **Book.** Drawings and notes about the shipwrecks.
- **Glass.** Fulgurite samples. Claims the storm was caused by a new, unknown sorcery. Very exciting!
- **Task.** He wants some red glass from #13, but he is too scared to go near the screaming tree. He offers you a pair of black gloves if you'll bring him some red glass.

### HAMZA'S GLOVES

The wearer of these magic leather gloves can safely touch any object. *Value: 250 GP*

## 10. FILTHY TENT

A muddy sail lies lashed across a shattered mast. Wood and iron stakes ring the area.

- **30 feet:** A crossbow bolt flies over your heads. A man yells, "Get lost!"
- **15 feet:** There are bear traps (1d6 damage) buried in the sand all around the tent.
- **Men.** *Dmitri* and *Lazar*, 30, tough, mean. Healthy. Scavengers and thieves.

**Chest inside.** Locked.

- 1,241 GP
- 47 white pearls
- 14 cutlasses
- 2 black pearl earrings
- 2 Angelfire grenades
- 5 boots
- 3 peg legs
- 1 stuffed parrot



## 11. STONE ARCH

**High** on the cliff, a stone arch curves over a dim cave. Ancient **markings** cover the stones. The **cave** smells of incense.

- **High.** There is no path. You must climb the sheer rock face 50 feet straight up.
- **Markings.** Olde Common: “Keep out! Danger! It was very hard to kill him! Leave him dead! Please!”
- **Cave.** Rough stone. 20 feet back, a stone door stands open, scorch marks on the dirt floor. 40 feet back, a stone sarcophagus lies open, inside a skeleton. The skull is missing. Scratch marks on the inside of the lid.
- **Sarcophagus:** the lid reads in Olde Common, “Here lies Prospero, long may he rot. He dabbled in magic, and look what he got!”

**LORE:** This is the ancient tomb of the wizard Prospero. Ten years ago, Duchess Forza entered and took his skull to learn his sorcerous secrets.

## 12. BLACK & RED TENT

A wide **tent** of black and red silk stands high on the dunes. A tattooed **man** sits on a rock. A masked **woman** lounges on a tattered sofa on the sand.

- **Tent.** Clean and sturdy, but fraying at the edges. Inside, one chest of silverware, one chest of jade figurines, and a simple cot.
- **Man.** *Ezio*, 40, beard, rapier. No left ear (he cut it off to remove his mutation). Grim, depressed bodyguard. Knows the lady is mad, but he has nowhere else to go.
- **Woman.** *Magdalena*, 35, blonde, charming, delusional. Painted porcelain mask hides her mutation, an insane smile stretched to her ears with large beaver teeth. Once a wealthy jade merchant and lady at court. Wants attention.
- **Claims** this is all a mistake and Duke Avito and Duchess Forza will return to restore the Obsidian Keep soon.
- **Task.** Thieves stole her black pearl earrings last week. She offers 1,000 GP reward for them. (She has no money.)

## 13. RED TREE

A twisted, branching pillar of milky **red glass** rises from the sand. A black **skeleton** stands frozen inside it. A silver circlet rests on the skull.

- **30 feet:** Muted screaming.
- **Red glass.** Fulgurite. Caused by a (huge) lightning strike.
- **Skeleton.** Naked, charred, frozen in a pose of pain.
- **Circlet.** Pure silver set with three black pearls.
- **Touch it:** The dead *Prince Orsino* begs you to break the glass and bury his bones, in return for his **story** and the **secret** of his circlet.
- **Orsino’s story:** “During the Red Storm, my sister Viola sent me to lead the servants to safety. But I was struck by lightning here. I’ve never seen Mother like that before. She wasn’t herself!”

### ORSINO’S CIRCLET

Three times a day, the wearer can say “Privacy please” and turn invisible for 1 minute.

**Value: 1,000 GP**

## 14. BURIED COTTAGES

Half buried in the cooled lava, fifty stone **cottages** are still partially visible along the bluffs above the beach.

- No signs of life here now.

# BEACH CREATURES

Kettle Crab						50 xp
Medium beast		AC	HP	Move		
unaligned		15	15	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	9 (-1)	3 (-4)	

**Senses.** Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 9

**Amphibious.** The crab can breathe air and water.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled.

Scavenger						300 xp
Medium humanoid		AC	HP	Move		
Neutral		15	40	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	

**Senses.** Passive Perception 10

**Cunning Action.** On each of his turns, the scavenger can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Multiattack.** The scavenger makes two shortsword attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing.

Vulgrane						200 xp
Large beast		AC	HP	Fly		
Neutral evil		10	20	60 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	

**Senses.** Passive Perception 13

**Keen Sight and Smell.** The vulgrane has advantage on Perception checks that rely on sight or smell.

**Multiattack.** The vulgrane makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

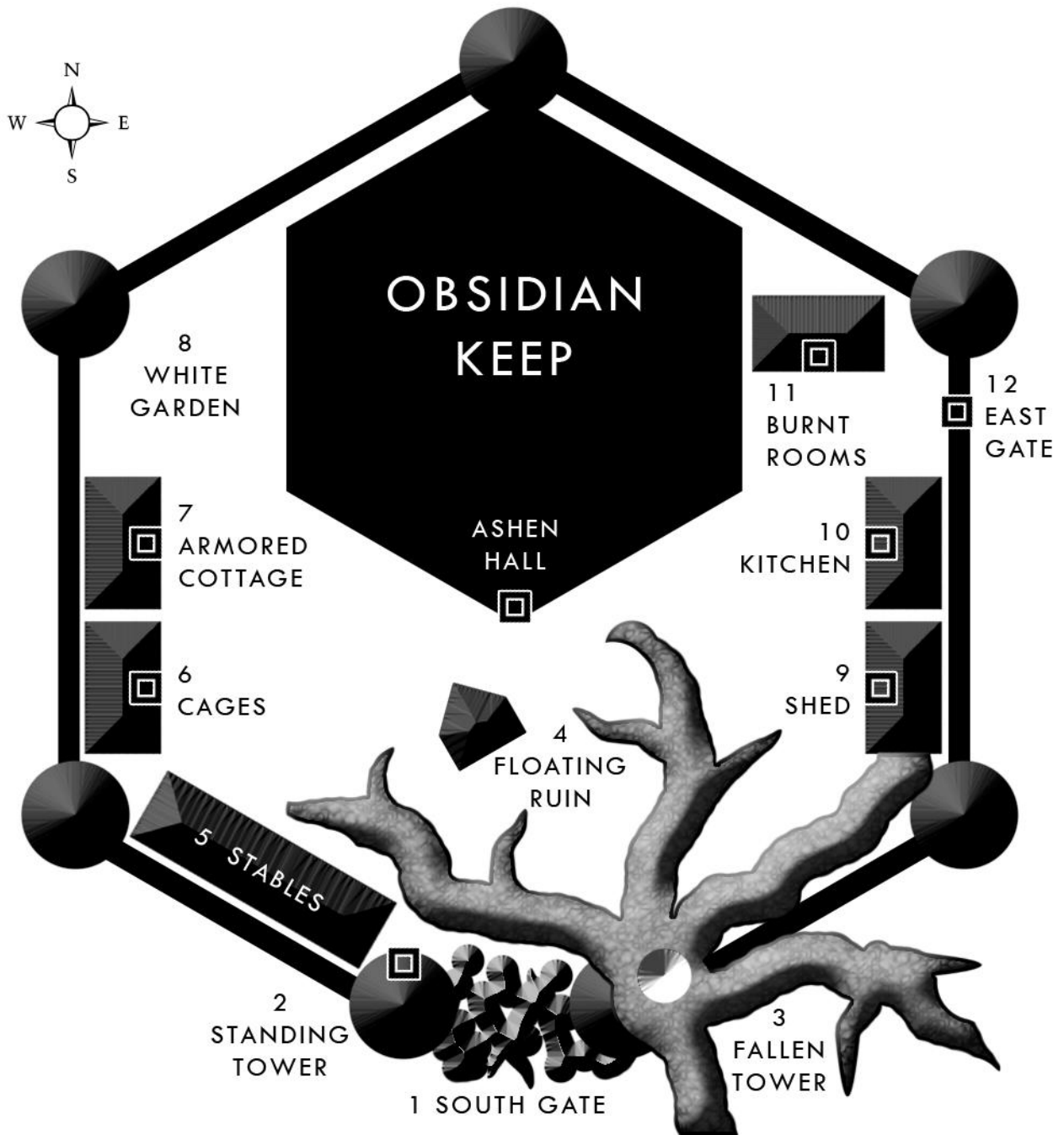
**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

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# GROUNDS OF THE OBSIDIAN KEEP

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## DM NOTES

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### Where is this place?

The buildings between the beach and the Obsidian Keep (stables, forge, kennel, etc.).

### What is here?

Ruined buildings, corpses, and some monsters.

### Who is here?

A couple of insane mutant palace servants.

### What do they know?

The **servants** know that Duchess Forza was at the height of her powers and her genius. She was going to rule all the seven cities of the Sakeen Sea with her mighty sorcery.

But there was a rift with Duke Avito. He was jealous of his wife. He surrounded himself with strange red robed priests and spent most of his time in private, starting a year ago.

## ARRIVAL

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Through a veil of falling ash, you see a wasteland of charred **ruins**. Magma creeps through **rifts** in the earth. Cooled lava covers the walls like blacken tumors. Dead **men** lie burned and buried in the volcanic rock. Amid the wreckage, a shining black **tower** stands unharmed.

- **Ruins.** Small stone buildings near the walls and tower.
- **Rifts.** 5 feet wide. Hot.
- **Men.** Soldiers in black armor. A hundred of them. Killed by the eruption during the Red Storm, crushed and burned.
- **Tower.** The Obsidian Keep.

## ENCOUNTERS

---

Roll 1d8 for some excitement!

1. A legless skeleton crawls past and tumbles into a fiery rift.
2. A mass of **cinder shrimp** swarm up from the lava and skitter toward the beach. If you do nothing, you hear screams a minute later.
3. The hardened lava crumbles underfoot and you fall into a jagged 10-foot hole (1d6).
4. A mound of igneous rock cracks open and three **obsidian skeletons** lunge out at you!
5. A **flailing mass** of fused human bodies crawls toward you on its burnt limbs.
6. A giant armored **ash louse** erupts from the ground!
7. A pale figure in black armor lies with a sword through its belly. As you approach, the **ghastly soldier** pulls the sword free and attacks!
8. Two tiny glowing **ember pucks** flutter up above you. Giggling madly, they begin to mutter an incantation...



## 1. SOUTH GATE

The black **walls** of the palace loom over you, the tops jagged and broken. Rubble blocks the mangled **gate**. An elegant black **carriage** lies crushed under fallen debris. Sulfurous fumes rise from the earth.

- **Walls.** 50 feet tall. Large stones have fallen from the top but it is otherwise intact.
- **Gate.** Iron. Bent, will never open again.
- **Carriage.** Leaving the palace. Decaying horse and driver. Inside, dead gentleman in black velvet suit in a white porcelain mask. No nose. Snuff box, full. **Red pearl key** (opens **Red Pearl Door**). Letter from Duke Avito to invading fleet: "Surrender or be devoured!"

## 2. STANDING TOWER

This round black tower glowers over the walls, its roof charred and shattered.

- **Entrance.** Open archway on the inner wall.
- **Interior.** Stone stairs spiral up to a landing. Black armor on charred skeletons (lightning).
- **Loot.** 7 black bows, 7 black breastplates, 37 arrows, and one **black iron key** (opens the **East Gate**).

## 3. FALLEN TOWER

Rubble lies around a smoking volcanic vent where the wall used to stand. Bright lava oozes down to the beach. Armored corpses lie everywhere.

- Dead soldiers in melted armor, buried in hard lava.
- Possible to climb over rubble to enter the grounds. Beware the searing heat and toxic fumes from the lava!

## 4. FLOATING RUIN

Twenty feet above the ground, the crushed shape of a stone **cottage** floats in the air, slowly tumbling in place. The stones sizzle and **spark**.

- **Cottage.** Home and shop of a cobbler. An open window offers a narrow path inside.
- **Spark.** Residual charge. One touch releases a loud shock (1d6 lightning), which removes the charge.
- **Treasure.** Cobbler tools, raw leather, 9 assorted shoes, and one **black leather jacket**.

### BLACK LEATHER JACKET

Striking. Sexy. Cool. All of the wearer's Charisma-based actions are coin tosses (total success or horrific failure).

**Value: 1,000 GP**

## 5. STABLES

Volcanic rock covers the floor inside the blackened stalls. Large **skeletons** slouch in the ashen corners. A **grunt** echoes from the far end.

- **Skeletons.** Seven horses, died trapped in their stalls.
- **Grunt.** A shining black horse with a white skull head stands calmly in the last stall. Eats ash and pebbles. Acts like a normal horse. Friendly.

## 6. CAGES

Four iron cages sit under a canopy. Three are open and empty. An overgrown white **hound** stands in the fourth, staring at you, whining.

- **Hound.** Mutant. Rattle tail. Shark teeth. A third eye on the right side. Eats ash.
- Will accept one new master, whoever **pets** it first.
- **Cage.** Latched with a heavy hook, easy to shove open.

## 7. ARMORED COTTAGE

The volcanic rock was recently cleared away from this large cottage. Pitted metal plates cover the windows. A light flickers inside. Smoke rises from the chimney.

- **Silvo**, 45, hairy, paranoid, survivalist. Blacksmith. Mutant crab-claw hand.
- **Thinks** you are ghosts, does not believe anyone is still alive, he is the last human.
- **Eats** oranges from the nearby **White Garden**.
- **Has** ugly black **armor**, giant **cleaver**, and **chain whip**.

### SILVIO'S ARMOR

This hulking black plate armor is immune to fire and lightning damage, but movement is halved.

### SILVIO'S CLEAVER

This ugly weapon of patched steel has a vicious serrated edge that deals 3d6 damage. On an attack role of 1, the cleaver shatters.

### SILVIO'S CHAIN

This rusty chain whip ends in an iron weight covered in razor blades. 10-foot reach, 2d6 damage. On an attack role of 1, the chain shatters.

## 8. WHITE GARDEN

Behind a **fence** of razor wire, twisted white **trees** curl over rows of sickly white **vines**. A lone white **bush** sits between the roots of one tree.

- **Fence**. A rough barricade of wires fixed to pig-iron posts. With a little time, you can carefully make an opening.
- **Trees**. Mutant blood-orange trees. No leaves, no bark. Produce and drop an orange every 3 minutes. Safe to eat, restore 1d6 HP. Rotting oranges litter the ground.
- **Vines**. White pumpkins filled with white worms. Take 1d6 poison if eaten.
- **Bush**. Mutant **Alma**, 25, sleepy, apathetic, bored. Gardener. Bone-white skin and hair, covered in white leaves. Can speak to plants. Very strong. Wants to stay.
- **Remembers** a blinding white light atop the Obsidian Keep during the Red Storm.

## 9. SHED

Inside this stone shed, three large metal **vats** sit half-full of dark, foul water. Heaps of cloth lie on a long **table**.

- **Vats**. Water, ash, algae, and rotting clothing. Foot-long red centipedes wriggle across the surface scum.
- **Table**. Laundry in various stages of washing. Gray servant clothes, and black velvet suits and dresses.

## 10. KITCHEN

Shining pots and pans hang from hooks in neat rows. The tile floor is spotless. Counters and stovetops gleam. A man snores on the floor.

- **Man. *Durante***, 20, thin, long blonde hair, thin beard. Awkward, timid, giggles. (Long webbed green fingers.) Has been eating from the pantry, cleaning the kitchen.
- **Thinks** you are Duke Avito / Duchess Forza. **Serves** you.

**Pantry.** Fruit preserves, dried fish, salted ox. If eaten, roll 1d10.

On a 1, gain 1d4 mutation:

1. A snake's tongue.
2. A termite's mandibles.
3. A beetle's eyes.
4. A small third arm.

## 11. BURNT ROOMS

Ten identical small rooms line a dim hallway. Scorched remains of doors hang on melted hinges. Charred corpses lie on the beds and floors.

- **Dead servants.** A woman clutches a singed letter: "My darling Dafne, soon I'll have enough saved to take you away from this terrible place. Please don't despair! I promise you, we are just a few weeks away from starting a lifetime of joy together. Have faith. Love, Gianni"

## 12. EAST GATE

A massive circular **hatch** of black iron sits in the base of the eastern wall.

- **Hatch.** Locked. Enchanted. Requires a **black iron key**. Opening the hatch without the key triggers red lightning, 3d6 damage to all in 25 feet.
- Leads to the **Barracks** inside the Obsidian Keep.

# GROUNDS CREATURES

Ash Louse				1,000 xp	
Large aberration	AC	HP	Move		
Chaotic neutral	16	75	40 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)

**Resistances.** Fire

**Senses.** Blindsight 30 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

**Tunneler.** The louse can burrow through solid rock at half its walking speed and leaves a 5-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

**Multiattack.** The louse makes two bite attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing and 3 (1d6) necrotic.

**Bitter Spray.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft. cone. Hit: 7 (2d6) necrotic and the target must make a DC 13 CON saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn.

Cinder Shrimp Swarm				200 xp	
Medium swarm	AC	HP	Move		
unaligned	13	25	40 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)

**Resistances.** Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing, Fire

**Vulnerabilities.** Cold

**Senses.** Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 8

**Amphibious.** The swarm can breathe air and water.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing and 7 fire damage.

Ember Puck				100 xp	
Tiny elemental	AC	HP	Fly		
Neutral evil	10	15	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Immunities.** Fire

**Senses.** Passive Perception 10

**Death Burst.** When the puck dies, it explodes in a burst of cinders. Each creature within 5 feet of it must make a DC 13 DEX saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) fire damage on a fail, or half on a success.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The puck can heat a metal object within 30 feet for 1 round, causing 3 (1d6) fire damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 1 fire damage.

Flailing Mass				750 xp	
Large aberration	AC	HP	Move		
Chaotic neutral	12	75	20 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Resistances.** Necrotic

**Senses.** Passive Perception 10

**Insane Whispers.** The mass mutters a constant stream of nightmarish nonsense that weakens the limbs of any creature that can hear it. A creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the mass attacks at disadvantage and moves at half speed.

**Flailing Limbs.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., four targets. Hit: 10 (3d6 + 1) bludgeoning.

Ghastly Soldier				400 xp	
Medium undead	AC	HP	Move		
Chaotic evil	12	30	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Resistances.** Necrotic

**Senses.** Passive Perception 10

**Stench.** Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the soldier must succeed on a DC 13 CON saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn.

**Turning Defiance.** The soldier has advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

**Sword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Mutant Hound				400 xp	
Medium aberration	AC	HP	Move		
unaligned	15	30	50 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)

**Resistances.** Necrotic

**Senses.** Passive Perception 17

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The hound has advantage on Perception checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing and 3 (1d6) necrotic.

Obsidian Skeleton				300 xp	
Medium undead	AC	HP	Move		
Lawful evil	15	30	30 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Resistances.** Fire

**Vulnerabilities.** Bludgeoning, Thunder

**Senses.** Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

**Charred Gladius.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing.

**Scorched Spear.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing.

Silvio the Smith				500 xp	
Medium humanoid	AC	HP	Move		
Chaotic neutral	18	40	15 ft		
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

**Resistances.** Fire, Lightning

**Senses.** Passive Perception 10

**Multiattack.** The smith makes two attacks.

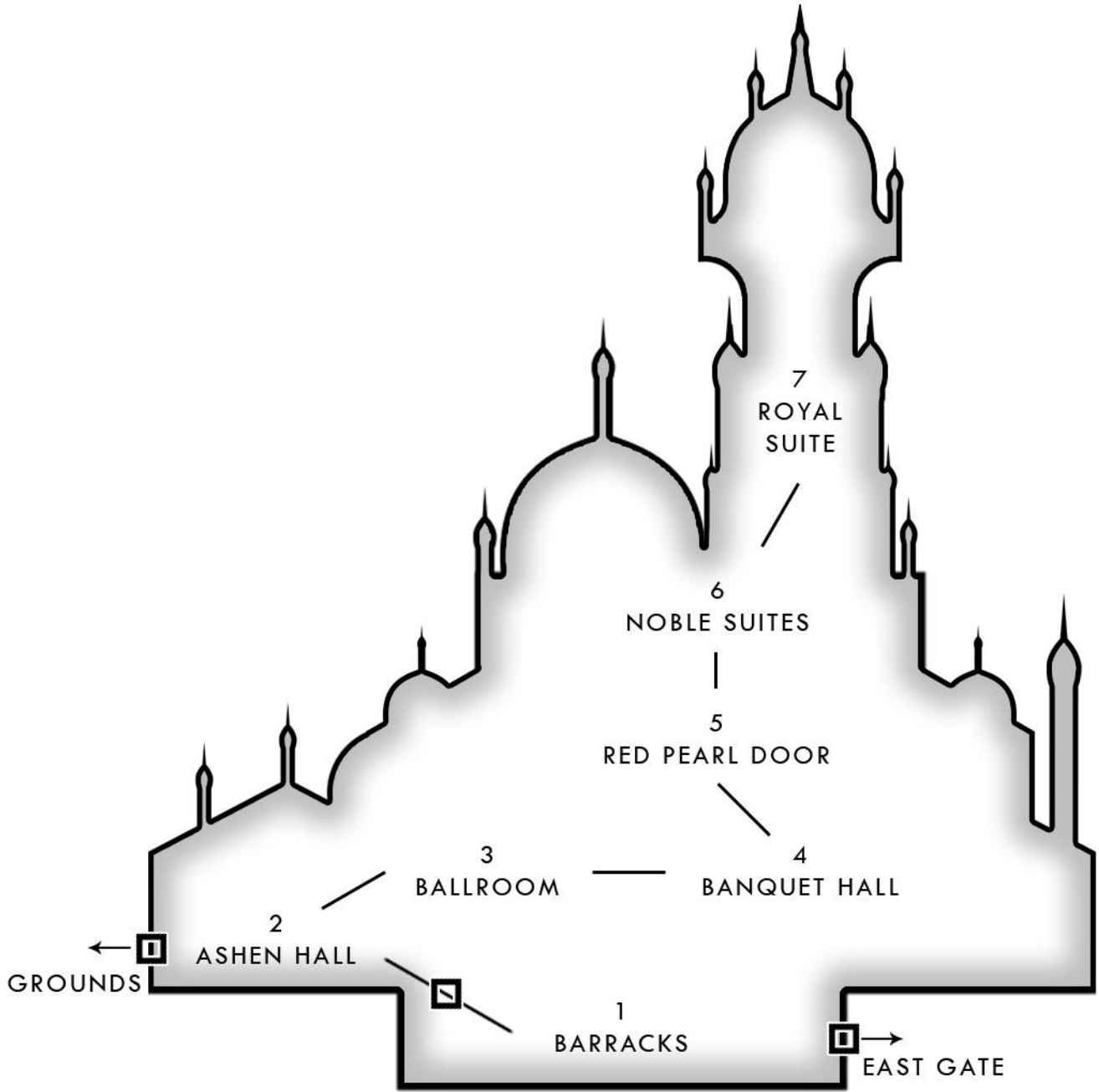
**Cleaver.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (3d6 + 3) slashing.

**Chain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., two targets. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 3) slashing.

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# OBSIDIAN KEEP

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## DM NOTES

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### Where is this place?

The inner keep where the nobility lived and entertained.

### What is here?

Twisted rooms full of corpses.

### Who is here?

Lovely Horrors, Princess Viola, undead Duchess Forza, and the immortal horror Vermesh.

### What are **Lovely Horrors**?

Insane nobles with grotesque mutations on the face and body. Wear black velvet clothing and white porcelain masks.

### What do they know?

**Lovely Horrors** can converse, but they are also insane and ravenously hungry.

**Everyone** knows Duchess Forza was using sorcery to destroy the warships, but then something went horribly wrong. They blame the craven Duke Avito, but they don't know what he did.

**Everyone** knows that, over the last year, Duke Avito has been hiding in his private sanctum and has had red robed visitors with sickly white skin. That's when the mutations started...

**DM:** The cultists in red have no eyes. *Literally*. Just skin, no sockets or lids or eyeballs.

## ARRIVAL

---

The marble stairs warp, cant, and curl underfoot. The stone walls sag as though perpetually melting. Most windows are shattered, letting cold salty breezes fill the rooms with a decaying dampness. Torches gutter in the wind, flashing red and violet.

**DM:** Two weeks ago this place was struck by a psychic blast. The survivors are now absolutely mad and ravenous.

## ENCOUNTERS

---

Roll 1d6 for some excitement!

1. A woman screams, "Perfidy!"
2. Three corpses in black armor shuffle toward you, moaning and reaching out. Harmless, wish to be destroyed.
3. A cracked wall shatters and stone chunks hurtle down at you for 1d6 damage.
4. Five **bone beetles** erupt from the floor, hungry for warm marrow!
5. A seemingly dead **Lovely Horror** rises to its feet, tittering and ravenous...
6. A woman in black and white jester's dress cartwheels toward you, cackling madly. Black and white feathers bristle from her torn clothes. Her hands are black scaled talons. The **Motley Magpie** attacks!
7. Gray webbing covers the ceiling. Eight-legged eyeballs skitter over the sticky silk. Six **Spying Eye-ders** stare down at you, and you start to feel queasy and weak...
8. A tiny white worm pokes out of the wall near your head and begins to chant softly. Every few minutes, another worm emerges and chants: "Verm...Esh...Verm...Esh"

## 1. BARRACKS

A vast chamber divided only by stone columns extends below the palace. A massive rift in the floor reveals a river of molten **magma**. **Corpses** cover the floor, the cots, the tables. **Steel** glitters in the shifting light.

- **Magma.** Suffocatingly hot. You cannot stay here long.
- **Corpses.** Fifty soldiers in black armor, burned to death.
- A burnt hand clutches a singed letter: “My sweet Gianni, I don't know if I can live like this any longer. I fear HE is truly mad. The masters grow more monstrous by the hour, and now even my reflection frightens me. You are the only star in my eternal night. Love, Dafne”
- **Steel.** Two black-steel weapons survive on a rack away from the magma.

### BLACK-STEEL CUTLASS

Attunement. Once per day, you can walk on water for up to an hour.

**Value: 3,000 GP**

### BLACK-STEEL TRIDENT

Attunement. You can breathe underwater. Also, you can summon the trident to your hand if you dropped or threw it in the last 1 minute.

**Value: 3,000 GP**

## 2. ASHEN HALL

Ash carpets the marble floor. Two burned **corpses** lie huddled together in one corner. A **central stair** leads upward. A **side stair** spirals downward.

- **Corpses.** Tattered black velvet garments and broken white porcelain masks hide grotesque facial mutations: a one-armed man with red crab mandibles, and a hunch-backed woman with glittering horsefly eyes.
- **Central stair.** To the **Ballroom**.
- **Side stair.** Leads to a black iron door, locked, requires a black iron key. Leads down to the **Barracks**.

## 3. BALLROOM

Shattered **windows** gape around the echoing ballroom. Massive crystal chandeliers creak in the wind. Twisted wooden and metal **objects** litter the floor amidst the still **corpses**. Three **figures** shuffle through the carnage.

- **Windows.** Exposed to the elements. Windy, wet, cold. Views of the harbor below.
- **Objects.** Cellos, trumpets, flutes, and violins all warped to look like people in pain.
- **Corpses.** Men and women, burned and covered in white worms and black beetles. Black velvet suits and dresses, red frill collars, red wigs, white porcelain masks. All mutated with claws, spines, mandibles, and insect eyes.
- **Figures.** Same as the corpses, but upright. Looting the dead for jewelry. These hungry **Lovely Horrors** attack!

### Loot:

- One **red pearl key** (opens the **Red Pearl Door**).
- Three white pearl necklaces
- One mother-of-pearl brooch
- One black jade ring

**LORE:** A party was in progress when the Red Storm began, and everyone died where they were standing. Well, almost everyone.

#### 4. BANQUET HALL

A crowded granite dining **table** stretches across the hall. A lone **figure** stands by the dark fireplace, examining a **body**.

- **Table.** Place settings for a hundred guests. Platters of rotten fish and fowl covered in wriggling white worms.
- **Body.** A shriveled woman with bone-white skin in a red robe. She has no eyes. Dead for two weeks.

**Figure.** *Princess Viola*, 30.

- Miserable. Shocked. Crazed. Curling black hair, tattered black dress, red frill collar.
- Her clear glass skin reveals her muscles, skull, and eyes. White worms wriggle through her visible viscera.

**LORE:** During the Red Storm, she told Orsino to save the servants while she killed the red priests that corrupted their father, Duke Avito.

- **Asks:** “Did you see him? My brother, Orsino? Did he save the servants? Did he escape?”
- **Begs:** “Kill me please! I can’t live like this anymore!”
- **If she sees you wearing Orsino’s circlet,** she attacks you in a blind rage! (**Note:** Her glass skin shatters easily and she dies quickly.)
- **If you kill her,** her worms burst out and swell into three **Ravenous Wyrmlings**.

#### 5. RED PEARL DOOR

This circular door gleams with red pearls set into a black iron sculpture of dancing nobles.

- Locked. Enchanted. Requires a **red pearl key**. Opening the door without the key triggers red lightning, 1d6 damage to all within 10 feet.

#### 6. NOBLE SUITES

Eight private suites fill this level of the keep. Each features a four-post bed on a rich red carpet, ebony furnishings, black silk curtains, and luxurious private baths.

Inside the eight suites:

1. A **Lovely Horror** hangs dead from a silk noose over the bed. The floor is littered with broken toy soldiers and shredded stuffed animals.
2. A **Lovely Horror** sits on the bed, reading a bloody book of romantic poems. Black dress, white mask. **If you speak once,** she shushes you. **If you speak again,** she leaps across the room onto you, tears off her porcelain mask to reveal a spider face, and vomits webbing onto your mouth to silence you.
3. A **Lovely Horror** lies dead in the bathtub, his throat torn out by large bird-like talons. Nearby lies an **ebony cane**.

4. A shriveled man with bone-white skin in a red robe lies on the floor, a dagger in his heart. He has no eyes.
5. Two **Lovely Horrors** sit on the floor, each driving a knife into the other’s back. Both dead. One is wearing a **violet pearl** earring. Nine black cats lounge around the room, sleeping, stretching. One has a collar with a **violet pearl**. It is very hard to catch.
6. Two **Lovely Horrors** waltz around the bed, humming a strange discordant melody. They scream at you to leave them alone!
7. A shriveled woman with bone-white skin in a red robe lies face-down in the full tub. Drowned. She has no eyes.
8. The outer wall is gone. The charred furniture is crawling with tiny white worms. A shriveled woman with bone-white skin in a red robe huddles in the corner. She has no eyes, but sobs and babbles. She does not acknowledge you.

**Nehir**, 40, cultist of Vermesh: “Lies, it was all lies. The Archbishop said we would be safe here. Lies! The Duke said he would be strong for us. More lies!” **If you touch her,** she flees in fear and falls out the open wall to her death.

## Noble Suites (cont.)

Random treasure (1d6):

1. Sleeping potion, 8 hours.
2. Charming potion, 1 hour.
3. Forgetting potion, 1 day.
4. Broken porcelain masks.
5. Two white pearl earrings.
6. Silver chess set.

### EBONY CANE

This black walking stick has a red jade handle carved into an octopus. When the bearer sleeps in water, they have euphoric dreams and cannot have nightmares.

**Value: 250 GP**

### VIOLET PEARLS

The creatures wearing these paired pearls can exchange simple telepathic messages, up to 100 feet. **Value: 500 GP**

## 7. ROYAL SUITE

Obsidian and gold **furniture** shines in the dim light. Ancient **books** and crystal **spheres** line the shelves. There are five skull-sized **alcoves** in the walls around the room. A high-backed **chair** sits on the balcony, facing the harbor.

- **Furniture.** Gorgeous, yet uncomfortable to sit on or lay on. Most objects are carved with human skulls or bird skeletons. Tiny glass bird figurines line the shelves.
- **Books.** All in dead languages. Disturbing illustrations of sea monsters and spellcraft. References to speaking to or capturing ghosts and souls.
- **Spheres.** 23. Each charged with raging storm energy. Smash one, deal 1d6 damage to a 20-foot radius.

**Alcoves.** Insert a storm sphere to activate.

- **Bedside.** A dim red light glows, soft music plays.
- **Desk.** Amber lamps ignite, a fan spins lazily.
- **Mirror.** Presents a view the harbor through the eyes of the Colossus.
- **Balcony.** A black silk canopy extends to shade the chair. The air warms and smells of lavender.
- **Oil portrait.** The painting vanishes to reveal the stairs that curve upward to the **Private Sanctum**.

**Chair.** The *Duchess Forza*, 55, sorcerer queen.

- A charred corpse in a black dress, her chest exploded, an ashen cavity where her heart should be. Tiny white worms writhe in her eye sockets. A white **staff** in her hand.
- **Staff.** Different bones bound together with iron rings, topped with a human skull.

She cannot move, but can speak.

- **Asks:** “Did I destroy the fleet? Did I save the palace?”
- **Asks:** “Where are my children? Where are Orsino, and Viola, and Bianca?”
- **If you convince her** that she saved the palace and her children are fine, then she gratefully crumbles to dust.
- **If you reveal** that the area is destroyed or her children are gone, then she screams. A bolt of red lightning destroys her body, deals 6d6 damage to everyone near her, and sends her staff flying into the sea.

### FORZA'S STAFF

Made of the bones of dead magicians, including the skull of the mad wizard Prospero, who offers unhelpful comments. The bearer gains resistance to lightning and fire damage, and can cast Lightning Bolt once per day. **Value: 3,000 GP**

## 8. PRIVATE SANCTUM (SECRET)

A pale shaft of light falls through a jagged gash in the roof of this domed chamber. A **body** lies just inside the door. Dozens of dead **animals** line the walls. A **woman** trembles spread-eagled and chained on the floor. A white **crystal knife** stands in her still-beating heart.

- **Body.** Male, 55, dead, right arm torn off (missing). The **Duke Avito**. Black robes, golden chains set with rubies, a bloody crown on the floor, a ring of 13 keys in his pocket.
- **Animals.** Chickens, goats, up to a year dead. All stabbed in the heart, identical wounds (from the crystal knife).

**Woman.** **Princess Bianca**, 35, still alive! Blood-soaked black dress, pale, gaunt, but fierce.

- Trembling, she whispers: “Don’t touch the knife...”
- **If you touch the knife**, an unseen creature bites off your arm, which vanishes.
- **If you touch Bianca**, suddenly you can see a fanged ethereal worm rising from her body like a giant cobra.

**LORE:** Duke Avito spent the last year sacrificing animals, trying to summon Vermesh to gain magic powers. During the Red Storm he sacrificed his oldest child, and he finally succeeded. Partially.

**Worm.** **Vermesh**, an immortal cosmic horror. Speaks in a small giggling rasp.

- Trapped in an incomplete ritual. Wants to complete the ritual and enter this reality so he can taste its delights.
- **The offer:** If you complete the ritual, Vermesh will give you the **Voidflesh Blessing**. (He does not explain what this means.) He says you must drive the crystal knife entirely into Bianca’s body. Vermesh does not trust you, so you must place one arm in his mouth as collateral.
- **If you push the knife in**, Bianca dies and Vermesh materializes in the chamber. You are released and receive the **Voidflesh Blessing**. Vermesh then begins eating the dead animals and growing very quickly. If you attack him, he eats you too.
- **If you pull the knife out**, Vermesh bites off your arm and vanishes into the ether. Bianca can then be healed. The keys to her chains are in the Duke’s pocket.

### CRYSTAL KNIFE

This ancient magic blade is a tooth stolen from one of the five Seraphim, the Engines of Creation. It can pierce anything in the universe, but only does 1d4 damage.

**Value:** *priceless*

### VOIDFLESH BLESSING

Your skin closes over your eyes, blinding you. You gain tremorsense and blindsight up to 60 feet. You can consume any living or non-living material as food. You are immune to disease.

# OBSIDIAN KEEP CREATURES

Ravenous Wyrmling			300 xp
Medium aberration	AC	HP	Move
Chaotic evil	17	35	30 ft
STR	DEX	CON	INT WIS CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0) 10 (+0) 12 (+1)

Motley Magpie			300 xp
Medium aberration	AC	HP	Move
Chaotic evil	14	35	40 ft
STR	DEX	CON	INT WIS CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1) 10 (+0) 10 (+0)

**Resistances.** Necrotic

**Senses.** Blindsight 30 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d6 + 2) piercing and 3 (1d6) necrotic.

**Thrash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., three targets. Hit: 7 (2d6) bludgeoning.

Lovely Horror			500 xp
Medium aberration	AC	HP	Move
Chaotic evil	13	35	30 ft
STR	DEX	CON	INT WIS CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0) 12 (+1) 14 (+2)

**Resistances.** Necrotic

**Senses.** Passive Perception 11

**Spellcasting.** Spell save DC 13, +4 to hit.

**Spells.** *Toll the dead, command, inflict wounds.*

**Multiattack.** The horror makes two melee attacks.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing.

**Resistances.** Necrotic

**Senses.** Passive Perception 13

**Cunning Action.** The magpie can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Evasion.** If the magpie is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a DEX saving throw to take only half damage, the magpie takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

**Multiattack.** The magpie makes two melee attacks.

**Talon.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 3) slashing.

Spying Eye-der			50 xp
Tiny aberration	AC	HP	Climb
neutral evil	12	5	20 ft
STR	DEX	CON	INT WIS CHA
2 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	2 (-4) 10 (+0) 2 (-4)

**Senses.** Passive Perception 10

**Withering Stare.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) necrotic and the target loses 10 feet of movement for 1 minute.

**False Tears.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) acid.



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Vermesh the Conqueror Worm	2,000 xp		
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Large aberration	AC	HP	Crawl
Lawful evil	17	100	10 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

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**Resistances.** Necrotic

**Senses.** Blindsight 30 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

**Multiattack.** Vermesh makes two melee attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing and 3 (1d6) necrotic. Target must make a DC 13 DEX save or be swallowed. Swallowed creatures cannot move or attack, and can attempt a DC 13 STR check to escape at the end of their turns.

**Cruel Telepathy.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft. cone. Hit: 7 (2d6) psychic and the target is Stunned until the end of their next turn.

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# TREASURE

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## ADMIRAL'S CUTLASS

This magic weapon has an ornate golden hilt with white coral spikes. The bearer can cast Thaumaturgy at will. *Value: 1,000 GP*

## ANGELFIRE GRENADE

Apple-sized silver spheres. Twist to arm, 3 seconds to boom. Deals 1d6 fire + 1d6 thunder damage. Can ignite or shatter nearby materials.

## BLACK LEATHER JACKET

Striking. Sexy. Cool. All of the wearer's Charisma-based actions are coin tosses (total success or horrific failure). *Value: 1,000 GP*

## BLACK-STEEL CUTLASS

Attunement. Once per day, you can walk on water for up to an hour. *Value: 3,000 GP*

## BLACK-STEEL TRIDENT

Attunement. You can breathe underwater. Also, you can summon the trident to your hand if you dropped or threw it in the last 1 minute. *Value: 3,000 GP*

## CRYSTAL KNIFE

This ancient magic blade is a tooth stolen from one of the five Seraphim, the Engines of Creation. It can pierce anything in the universe, but only does 1d4 damage. *Value: priceless*

## EBONY CANE

This black walking stick has a red jade handle carved into an octopus. When the bearer sleeps in water, they have euphoric dreams and cannot have nightmares. *Value: 250 GP*

## FORZA'S STAFF

Made of the bones of dead magicians, including the skull of the mad wizard Prospero, who offers unhelpful comments. The bearer gains resistance to lightning and fire damage, and can cast Lightning Bolt once per day. *Value: 5,000 GP*

## HAMZA'S GLOVES

The wearer of these magic leather gloves can safely touch any object. *Value: 250 GP*

## HOLY STAFF OF VITELA

This emerald-studded golden staff was once carried by the Archbishops of Radiant Vitela. The bearer is immune to necrotic damage and undead cannot come within 10 feet of the staff. *Value: 3,000 GP*

## MARINER'S LANTERN

The dim red glow from this magic lantern offers little light, but it clears away fog for 100 feet in all directions. *Value: 500 GP*

## NICO'S GOLDEN HELM

This blessed helmet grants the wearer immunity to fear. *Value: 500 GP*

**ORSINO'S CIRCLET**

Three times a day, the wearer can say "Privacy please" and turn invisible for 1 minute.

*Value: 1,000 GP*

**VIOLET PEARLS**

The creatures wearing these paired pearls can exchange simple telepathic messages, up to 100 feet. *Value: 250 GP*

**SILVIO'S ARMOR**

This hulking black plate armor is immune to fire and lightning damage, but movement is halved.

**SILVIO'S CLEAVER**

This ugly weapon of patched steel has a vicious serrated edge that deals 3d6 damage. On an attack role of 1, the cleaver shatters.

**SILVIO'S CHAIN**

This rusty chain whip ends in an iron weight covered in razor blades. 10-foot reach, 2d6 damage. On an attack role of 1, the chain shatters.

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