

Ravenloft®: Mist Hunters

THE AMBER SECRET



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By Alan Patrick

① AN ADVENTURE FOR 4TH LEVEL CHARACTERS ②

THE AMBER SECRET

A Ravenloft: Mist Hunters Adventure

You've revealed the mastermind behind the disappearances in River's Shelter, and confrontation is imminent! But is the puppet master merely a puppet himself?
If so, who is pulling the strings and to what end?

The fourth in the *Ravenloft: Mist Hunters* series of adventures.
An adventure for 4th-level characters.



CONTENT WARNING: Swarms of insects, claustrophobic suffocation, gaslighting

Reference the [Mist Hunters' Safety Kit](#) article and *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* for tips and tools on running a safe and fun game.

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ADVENTURE PRIMER

“Some people thirst for fame. They will do anything to have it. They will betray anyone. They will humiliate themselves and those around them. To be hated or loved makes no difference to them. What they want is to be known. It is a sad addiction, and such people wallow in it all their lives, like pigs in filth.”

—Sam Eastland, *Eye of the Red Tsar*

This adventure is designed for **three to five 4th-level characters** and is optimized for **four 4th-level characters**.

The Amber Secret occurs exclusively within the Cradle, an unfinished tomb near White Oasis in the domain of Har’Akir.

BACKGROUND

ALANIK RAY, an investigator hired by the **ORDER OF GUARDIANS**, is searching for a scholar named **RADAGA** whose scholarly pursuits into taboo subjects seems to have led her astray.

The characters’ search first led them to **KARTAKASS** and then to **FALKOVNIA**, where Radaga was located and returned to Alanik Ray. Through questioning Radaga, Alanik discovered two names—**WHITE OASIS** and **AMBER TEMPLE**, and something Radaga knew as the **APPARATUS**.

Alanik calls up on the characters once more to venture to **HAR’AKIR**—a domain of desert sands, tombs, and mummies—to seek out White Oasis and discover its secrets. The characters learn that darker forces are at play: a reed-pipe player named **ANATSU’PEH** is using a magical instrument to awaken **SACRED UNDEAD** and use them to abduct residents of the nearby community where they are ritually raised as mindless undead. These undead are, in turn, being used to construct a tomb around the amber sarcophagus of **MIRTU**—the vestige of a powerful evil entity known as the **WHISPERER OF LIES**.

OVERVIEW

The adventure’s story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **3 hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene. “Extending Play” sidebars in the adventure provide guidance on how to expand the adventure to occupy a roughly four-hour time slot. These estimations don’t include time spent in pregame and postgame discussion:

Call to Action: A Quick Recap. Picking up exactly where the previous adventure left off, the characters summarize the previous activities and are immediately confronted with the haunting sounds of Anatsu’Peh’s reed pipe.

Part 1: Confronting the Piper. Anatsu’Peh, the piper of White Oasis, springs his trap on the characters. He uses his magic and the dark gift bestowed upon him by the

vestige of Mirtu to bring the undead into conflict with the characters here in the quarry.

Part 2: Maze of Mirtu. The main chamber of the Cradle is filled with illusory hazards, each designed and deployed by the vestige of Mirtu. These challenges are intended to tax the body of a potential vessel for the vestige.

Part 3: Trapped in Amber. The door to the inner tomb contains a complex puzzle, placed there by the vestige of Mirtu to test potential hosts for mental viability. Once this is solved, the Whisperer of Lies delivers its vile offers to the characters.



STORY AWARDS

At certain points in the adventure, you’ll see this glyph along with an entry that describes how the specified story award is earned or impacted by the story. Ignore the entry if it refers to a story award none of the characters have. If it refers to a story award the characters just earned, it provides information for you and the players.

CHARACTER HOOKS

This adventure begins immediately after the events of RMH-03 *The Amber Dirge*. Having just confronted Anatsu’Peh, the characters are faced with the decision of how to deal with the mysterious piper that has been plaguing the settlement of River’s Shelter.

ENTERTAINER & ARCHAEOLOGIST

Characters with these backgrounds may find that they have a pre-existing bond or familiarity with the people of White Oasis in Har’Akir. Music and tradition drive many people and becomes part of their core, and many residents of White Oasis—including the now-deceased Pawero—found life-long comfort in their instruments and stories. Often a musician leaves behind a work when they pass, and this lingering obligation may haunt them even into the next life. Such characters may find it easier to relate with the people of White Oasis due to these factors and have advantage when dealing with situations that arise from music-related elements in this adventure.

AKIRAN CHARACTERS

Characters from the domain of Har’Akir feel an unnatural sense of unease while within the tomb. They’ve heard tales of Mirtu and may be more reluctant to accept the vestige than others are.

CALL TO ACTION: A QUICK RECAP

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

This adventure begins exactly where RMH-03 *The Amber Dirge* left off. This may present some challenges in a strictly timed environment, so once character introductions are done, feel free to read the boxed text directly or summarize as needed. If time permits, consider having the characters recap the information rather than read the boxed; doing it this way may help keep those events personal and relatable.

Themes: Are you ready for a montage?!

HAR'AKIR

Darklord: Ankhtepot

Hallmarks: Ancient tombs, desert perils, lost gods, mummies

The sands of time bury the desert realm of Har'Akir. Here, the wonders of fallen empires and pyramids of forgotten pharaohs crumble beneath a merciless sun. Untold generations of tombs and secrets lie beneath the sands, markers of a history the land's few residents know of only in story and song. Their interest in past splendor is smothered, as life is harsh in Har'Akir and the living exist only to serve a deathless god-king. As the pharaoh obsesses over his lost treasure, his servants plague the domain in his name. But all the pharaoh's servants also pursue his quest to find his mysterious lost treasure and are ever desperate for some clue or news to placate Ankhtepot and spare them from the storms of his wrath and buried legions of the ancient dead. For more information about this domain and the people that reside there, refer to *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each player a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and establish the reason why they're working with Alanik and Kabe. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop players if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you as DM to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to them.

Award inspiration (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) once everyone's had a turn.

OUTFITTING FOR THE INVESTIGATION

Before proceeding on this leg of their investigation, the characters decide what to bring with them on their journey:

Mundane Equipment. The Order of the Guardians has offered the characters access to its substantive resources to aid in their investigation. Each character has access

to any mounts and nonmagical equipment from the *Player's Handbook*, as well as the material components for any spell they themselves have prepared—provided the gp cost of the mount, item, or material component doesn't exceed 200 gp. The characters are still bound to the normal rules regarding carrying capacity and, at your discretion, may find themselves in a situation that precludes being able to haul around too much. While their resources are great, the Order discourages excessively frivolous requests.

Magical Equipment. As they adventure, the characters “unlock” magic items for later use. The group begins this adventure with one copy of each of these unlocked items and then decides who will use them. At the end of the adventure, each item is “returned” to the character who brought it with them. Magic items that are destroyed or lose their magic, such as a quaffed *potion of healing* or an exploded *horn of blasting*, however, are marked off of the character's investigation journal and are no longer unlocked; the character must find another one if they want to use that item in a later adventure. The character who brought an unlocked item to the table has ultimate discretion in who gets to use it; they should note that their investigations require teamwork and cooperation.

EXAMPLE: OUTFITTING FOR INVESTIGATION

Peter's character, Gregov the Fighter, is preparing for their next adventure. He requisitions a greatsword, a longbow and some arrows, and a suit of chain armor. He's also heard rumors of werewolves, so he asks for a silvered dagger, just in case. In his previous adventures, Gregov unlocked a *horn of blasting* and a *potion of healing*. The group decides who should carry the horn and the potion, and at the end of the adventure, both of the items are returned to Gregov. However, if one of the characters uses the potion or the *horn of blasting* explodes during the adventure, Peter marks it off in the investigation journal where it was unlocked.

ORDER OF THE GUARDIANS RING

Characters with this magical ring (more information can be found in the [Mist Hunters' Safety Kit](#) article) can obtain another dose of the anti-charm tonic from Alanik—provided that the dose they last obtained has been used.

MALIK'S DECANTER

In addition to their own equipment, the characters were lent the use of a magical decanter called *Malik's decanter* (handout 1).

NO RESPITE DESPITE HEROICS

If you are playing this adventure immediately after the previous one, feel free to skip this section and proceed directly to Part 1: Confronting the Piper.

The characters, in pursuit of a lead leading them to River's Edge, learned of a series of strange disappearances among the denizens of the settlement. The trail went cold in a long-abandoned quarry in the area to which a mysterious man named Anatsu'peh had been luring the unwary villagers with haunting pipe music, killing them, and then raising them as intelligent undead bent to his will. The adventure begins as the characters confront this new foe!

Anatsu'Peh reveals himself. A zombie stands beside him—immediately recognizable as Pawero.

TREASURE

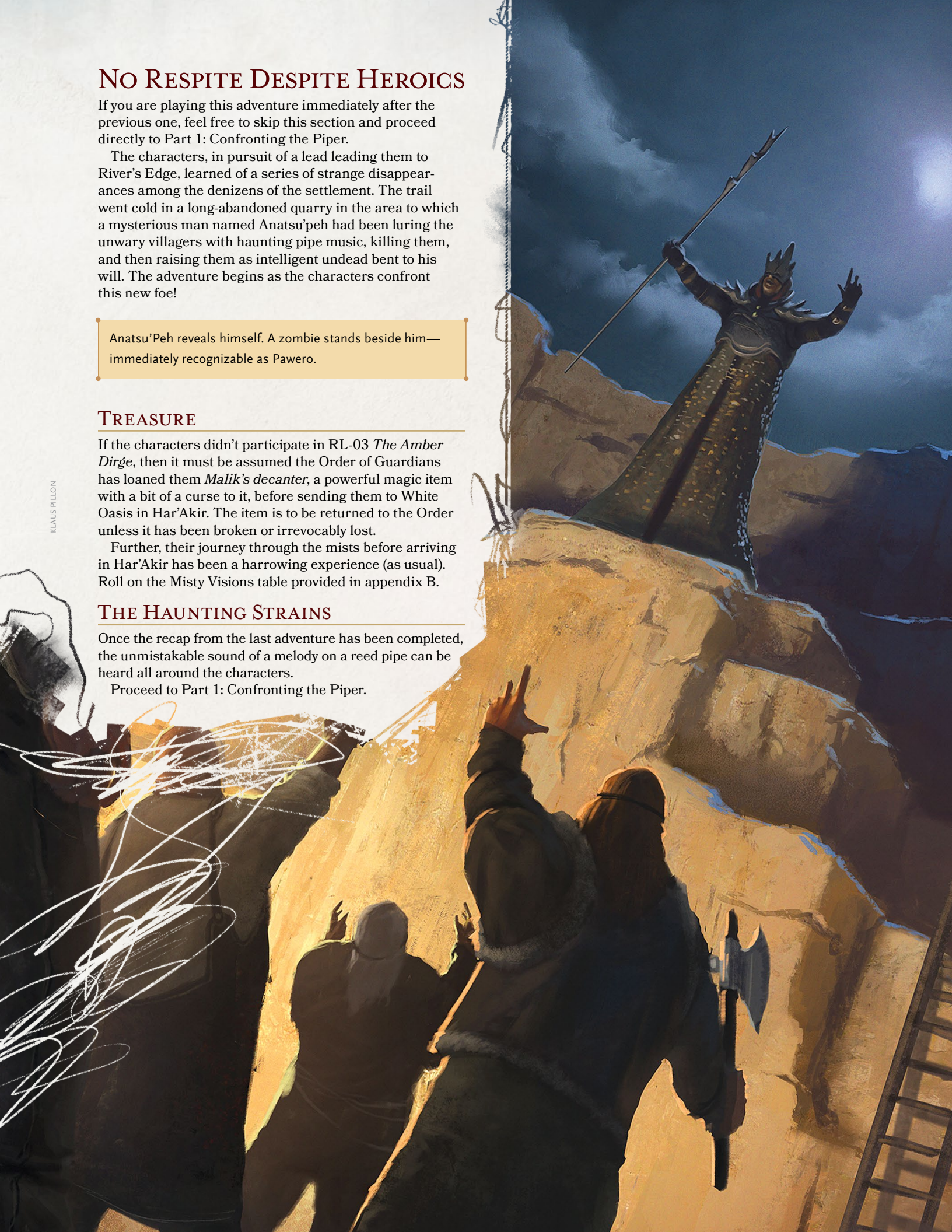
If the characters didn't participate in RL-03 *The Amber Dirge*, then it must be assumed the Order of Guardians has loaned them *Malik's decanter*, a powerful magic item with a bit of a curse to it, before sending them to White Oasis in Har'Akir. The item is to be returned to the Order unless it has been broken or irrevocably lost.

Further, their journey through the mists before arriving in Har'Akir has been a harrowing experience (as usual). Roll on the Misty Visions table provided in appendix B.

THE HAUNTING STRAINS

Once the recap from the last adventure has been completed, the unmistakable sound of a melody on a reed pipe can be heard all around the characters.

Proceed to Part 1: Confronting the Piper.



PART 1: CONFRONTING THE PIPER

Estimated Duration: 1 hour

Picking up at the end of the previous adventure, the Piper's trap has brought the characters together. Now the haunting tune rouses the dead and reveals that there are fates worse than the curse of undeath for those unlucky enough to fall for these terrible tricks!

The discordant tune that echoes around the quarry has summoned a veritable army of restless spirits. While weak in small numbers, these incorporeal entities can combine their strengths and forms to overwhelm unsuspecting foes.

Here, the characters confront Anatsu'Peh.

Themes: Discordant chaos, oppressive combat

QUARRY

While this area started as a simple quarry, two of its walls now feature carved reliefs, and the northern wall also has an entrance, though by the time the characters notice this, they should be busy with other things. The first half of the quarry has large stones and construction equipment left behind from earlier projects.

AREA INFORMATION

The quarry has the following general features.

Dimensions & Terrain. The floor of the quarry is stone with a thin layer of sand in most places. A number of barrels, boxes, and crates are scattered throughout the area, as are piles of mining equipment. Nine sarcophagi are inlaid in the ground near the south wall, scribed with hieroglyphics and other ancient symbols. The area is **trapped**.

Light. Moonlight lights the center of the area, but the edges are only dimly lit because of the angles involved.

Weather. It is a cold night, and wind causes occasional problems with blowing sand.

Worked Stone Walls. These areas have various designs (much like the outside of Petra). The south wall's designs are focused on honoring the dead. In the middle of the north wall is a sturdy, wooden portcullis blocking access to an unlit tunnel.

Stone Piles. Stones have been piled on the east and south sides of the quarry. The larger stones piles are 20 feet tall. The walls above them show signs of having been quarried (if examined closely). A character with a background in stonework would realize that a catastrophic collapse may have happened, causing the piles. The lighter and smoother stone piles are 5 to 7 feet tall. The rectangular shapes are 9-foot-high stacks of worked stone; individually, the stones are 3 feet high.

Large White Stones. The two large stones are covered in a fine coat of sand and dust. One is roughly the shape of a pyramid, 6 feet wide on each side, and reaching 6 feet in height. The other, larger stone shows signs of chisel work, but the edges are still rounded, and it is 15 feet tall.

Barrels, Boxes, & Crates. Crates to the north hold sealed containers of various spices, herbs, and linen cloths, while nearby barrels contain pitch and oil—though ten **scorpions** have made a nest among the disused barrels. To the south, a number of crates contain various size chisels, artisan tools, and a barrel containing rancid vinegar (actually spoiled wine). Another barrel contains a **swarm of centipedes**. One of the crates contains two potions delicately packed in straw (see Treasure, below). Four 3-foot-tall boxes to the east are filled with quarried stones that range in size from 5 inches to 1 foot long. A smaller, 1-foot-tall box contains amber shards of varying size and shape.

Mining Equipment. A stack of three ten-foot ladders are in the area and can be lashed together with the ropes found adjacent to the north wall. A handful of pickaxes rest against one wall, slightly dusty but in otherwise good shape. Coils of hemp rope—each consisting of three 5-foot lengths and one 20-foot length are scattered around the area.

Inlaid Sarcophagi. There are nine inlaid sarcophagi in the floor of the quarry covered with hieroglyphs and odd symbols.

Traps. In addition to the undead creatures and various insects, the quarry is trapped. The traps are sprung by pressure plates, tripwires, and other mundane triggers. The map provides suggested locations where these triggers might be, but they can be relocated if necessary.

- When triggered, a 3-foot-wide limestone sphere weighing over a ton descends from the quarry wall. It immediately moves 60 feet in a straight line to the opposite side of the quarry. On initiative count 20 (losing ties), the sphere moves a further 60 feet. It stops moving when it strikes the opposite wall of the quarry. Each creature whose space the ball moves through must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, being knocked prone and taking 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The ball rolls across the map in the aisle and open space.
- When triggered, a flame gout erupts from the nearby wall in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The echoing, haunting strains of **Anatsu'Peh's** discordant melody bounce around the quarry. Anatsu'Peh is accompanied by one **shadow** which emerges from the nearby stone on initiative count 20 (losing ties). Pawero, now a **zombie**, rises from a sarcophagus; no sign of recognition is displayed upon the grim rictus he now bears.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

Weak: The **shadows** only move or use their action during their turns. Anatsu'Peh taunts the characters in the first round rather than attacking directly.

Strong: Add two **shadows**.

The shadow begins within 10 feet of one of the characters, while Anatsu'Peh is near the entrance to the tomb. Pawero starts from one of the sarcophagi. While the zombie of Pawero doesn't attack a creature that openly carries its harp, it's focused solely on recovering it. It's not especially intelligent and is easily tricked if the harp is offered as bait or a prize. If the zombie manages to acquire the harp, it spends its action plucking out a slow, clumsy dirge (as best it can; after all, it's a zombie now). The shadows have a flight speed of 40 feet (hover) in addition to their walking speed. They have 5 hit points each.



ANATSU'PEH (UH-NOT-SOO PAY)

Human conjurer

Anatsu'Peh is a selfish person—he desires little more in life than control. He prefers to string along his foes and taunt them as he attempts to learn their motivations, drives, and desires; once he has accomplished this, he uses the **Gift of Mirtu** to attempt to *command* them or otherwise bend them to his will.

What They Want. Anatsu'Peh wants nothing more than total control of everything in his life. He doesn't want to actively rule, but he wants to possess power and unquestionable authority. He wishes to use his control of the undead to build a grand temple in his honor so that everyone knows he controls White Oasis.

Pretentious Blowhard. Anatsu'Peh seeks only to further his own position in life, and this makes him prone to speaking about his faults as if they are strengths in disguise. He brags about abusing the Gift of Mirtu for his own ends.

PAWERO (PA-WER-OH)

Zombie (formerly human)

Pawero carries his family's harp with him everywhere in goes in death just as he did in life. When alive, he offended a priest and for his transgression his hand was removed. He since learned to play dirges on the harp. Although Anatsu'Peh killed him (RL-03), he seems determined to continue playing his harp.

What They Want. Despite being a zombie, Pawero only wants to play his harp. He will not attack someone that is holding the harp, but he has no reservations about attacking things around that person until the harp is returned.

Bound by Music. Pawero is completely enamored with his family's harp. When not holding the harp, his fingers pluck the strings of an imaginary instrument; if the harp is played in his presence, he is enthralled and can do nothing for as long as the music can be heard.

Anatsu'Peh is a loudmouth and a braggart. Should the characters get a chance to communicate with him (possibly by destroying his reed pipe, through exceptional roleplaying, or something else entirely) they find that the piper delights in taunting them and holding his self-perceived greater intelligence over them. He takes great pride in his abuse and twisting of Mirtu's gift, proudly proclaiming that the "dark-birthed Gift is naught but a tool to be used as I see fit!" Anatsu'Peh has accepted the dark gift from the vestige housed in the amber sarcophagus. However, Mirtu is greatly displeased with Anatsu'Peh and desires a more capable host—preferably one with grander plans than dominating White Oasis. Should one of the characters prove themselves to be a suitable candidate, Mirtu may withdraw the gift at a suitably dramatic moment. If this happens, Anatsu'Peh's discordant tune loses all of its magical qualities and he's no longer able to control the undead—this results in the undead turning on him.

Who is Mirtu? Mirtu is the darkness, a god of ancient years that I alone can speak with.

What is the Gift of Mirtu? It is total command without question. It is the freedom that I bestow—the freedom for you to follow me forevermore. Ignore this and my sacred undead will feast upon you for a hundred days and nights until you beg for the sweet release of death.

What is This Place? This is the Cradle, from which life will erupt in my image. The sacred undead will build this place, and in turn become the bricks upon which I will build a glorious future as I rule over White Oasis.

ENCOUNTER FLOW

While Anatsu'Peh's discordant tune is playing, each character must roll a d20 at the end of each round of combat. On a result of 16-20, nothing happens. For any other result, one disturbingly quasi-humanoid **shadow** emerges from the sarcophagus of the same number and joins the fray with an initiative count of 20 (losing ties). This may result in a large number of undead joining the battle—the characters need to silence the piper quickly!

Be sure to call out Anatsu'Peh's taunts and verbal jabs. The dark gift granted by Mirtu's vestige has given him a false sense of security, and Mirtu is already angry with



his small-scale plans. While this encounter seems deadly, the undead may very well turn against Anatsu'Peh if the appropriate opportunity presents itself (or if a perfectly timed critical hit is scored against the brash piper).

When Anatsu'Peh is defeated, the shadows flee into the nearest rock face of the canyon at the end of the next round.

TREASURE

One of the potions in the crate is a *potion of jumping*. The other is a *potion of healing*. Anatsu'Peh's reed pipe isn't magical—all of the special effects were granted by the vestige of Mirtu that inhabited him. However, due to its proximity to the vestige and the legacy that it now possesses, it may be worth a small amount to the Order of Guardians. Anatsu'Peh wears *hobnail boots*.

DEVELOPMENT

Once defeated, Anatsu'Peh loses the dark gift granted by Mirtu's vestige. It's likely that the undead turned on Anatsu'Peh and then left the characters to their own devices, perhaps even sinking into the ground and taking the piper's body with them. If the zombie of Pawero hasn't been destroyed, it turns all about in search for its harp, even if it means walking back to the village.

If the characters need additional motivation to continue their exploration, describe the act of Mirtu vacating Anatsu'Peh's body as a grisly explosion of shadowstuff and blood as it erupts from his eyes, mouth, nose, and ears and flees screaming into the tomb beyond.

EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

If you wish to extend the play experience of this adventure, use one of the following options.

Who Goes There? Pawero is in desperate need of his harp. Even in his undead state, he desires nothing else, and he is likely to destructively search environments for it. If the characters don't have it or successfully hide it among their belongings, Pawero returns to White Oasis to root it out. Two **veterans** recognize him and although terrified, attempt to stop his rampage.

The Unsubtle Shadow. Pawero's very existence is bound to the harp. Should the characters be carrying it and unwilling to part with it, Pawero trails them and does everything in his power to cause them to fail in their mission. He may push rocks onto them from the top of the canyon or lead other creatures back to the characters (especially while they rest). Despite being a zombie, Pawero is crafty and singularly focused on the recovery of his beloved instrument. If he is destroyed, he simply reforms one minute later with full hit points. Until he is rejoined with his harp, he can only painfully moan a single word: "haaaaaaarp." Once he's been granted his prize, he and it slowly crumble to dust as he plucks out one last mournful dirge.

JUSTIN 13

PART 2:

MAZE OF MIRTU

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

The interior of the tomb is not yet complete. The characters arrive in the antechamber, and the larger open space beyond it is empty... at first. Only by entering the tomb proper and navigating through the illusory traps contained therein will the characters find what awaits them: the vestige of Mirtu, contained inside an amber sarcophagus nestled deep within the inner tomb.

Themes: mystery, questioning reality, surrealistic

THE CRADLE

The tomb that has been referred to as “the Cradle” is incomplete, but it is not without its challenges. From illusory hazards to the amber sarcophagus that houses the vestige of Mirtu, many dangers await the characters in the rooms beyond.

AREA INFORMATION

The Cradle has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. Anatsu’Peh was still working on the interior excavation and masonry when the characters interceded. The antechamber is mostly finished, but the main chamber, the Heart of the Cradle, is still quite rough.

Sounds. Any sounds present in the Cradle are the result of the vestige of Mirtu’s illusory craftings.

Light. The tomb has no ambient light.

Scattered Tools. The zombies that Anatsu’Peh has “employed” here have left their tools scattered around the interior of the Heart. Basic scaffolding, blunted shovels, pickaxes, and other tools can all be seen.

ANTECHAMBER

The entry chamber that leads into the heart of the Cradle is a small space, measuring roughly 15 feet by 15 feet. The walls and floor are made of sandstone, and the ceiling has a mostly complete mosaic of great pyramids and bountiful oases; it is composed of small pieces of limestone alongside some non-magical blue and green stones.

The Stones. Any character that succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check can confirm that the stones are naturally occurring around the domain of Har’Akir. Characters from Har’Akir who have the Stonecunning trait or backgrounds that rationally incorporate stonework automatically succeed on this check.

Archway to the Heart. The archway that leads to the heart of the Cradle is built of tightly fitted sandstone blocks. The center of each block shows a small container pouring out its contents; it is from each of these images that the curtain of sand and silt falls. Carefully etched into the outer edges of the blocks are numerous runes. These etchings use a wide variety of inks, many of which are quite vibrant. Be aware that the colors are only visible when light washes over them, as darkvision only reveals

shades of gray. Upon closer inspection, the characters also notice the following details.

- The containers carved on the sandstone blocks bears the same markings as *Malik’s decanter*, a magical item that has been loaned to the characters.
- A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the runes aren’t magical and are merely gibberish sigils that are intended to appear magical—likely to keep the local population from proceeding farther in.
- Creatures with a passive Perception of 14 or higher or creatures that succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check find a phrase in Common inscribed in between the sigils. It reads “The green path is the way.” If the characters are using natural light (a torch, etc.), they see that the word “green” is written in blue ink.

THE HEART OF THE CRADLE

The main chamber of the Cradle has not yet been completed. However, the vestige of Mirtu can reach out from its amber sarcophagus and affect the contents of this space. To ensure that at least one of the characters is a suitable enough vessel for its majesty and gift, it creates a number of illusory obstacles for them to overcome.

When the characters first arrive, read the following:

A slithering, silky voice wraps itself around your senses. “Oh yes, you are here. Here, with me—together we stand, and together we may yet remain. Come to me, my brave and hardy saviors.”

The chamber shudders as, before your eyes, the entire place tears itself apart and reforms over the space of a few utterly amazing moments.

The chamber presents one of a number of potential obstacles to the characters. Roll on the following table or choose one that represents an appropriate challenge.

MAZE OF MIRTU ILLUSORY CHALLENGES

d4	Challenges
1	The Silt Sea
2	Shower of Insects
3	Among the Reeds
4	The Encroaching Stone

If the characters succeed on an encounter very quickly, select another one from the table. The vestige of Mirtu doesn’t want to share its power with a showoff (as Anatsu’Peh revealed himself to be), instead desiring a powerful and resilient host that can handle a wide variety of challenges before exhaustion—or defeat—sets in.

While inside the large chamber, the archways leading to both the Antechamber and the Inner Tomb can always be seen in the far-off distance, but no matter how long a creature spends traveling, they never get closer to those exits.

If all of the characters are rendered unconscious or dead during one of Mirtu's illusions, the illusion immediately ends.

DETECTING & DEFEATING THE ILLUSIONS

The challenges here are all various kinds of illusions. If the characters correctly deduce that they are indeed not real, they should be rewarded with advantage on their skill checks or saving throws for the remainder of that single illusion. Consider permitting the characters to learn of the illusion through a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Insight) check and then increasing the DC by +1 or +2 in subsequent challenges as the vestige of Mirtu continues testing them.

Malik's Decanter. The decanter vibrates while in the Heart of the Cradle. The characters deduce that it can be used here to greater effect than normal.

Defeating the Illusions. Many of the illusions can be partially (or completely) defeated by the use of *Malik's decanter*. Any reasonable use of resources, skills, and equipment by the characters should result in a potential win against the illusion, as well. The vestige of Mirtu is more interested in challenging the characters than killing them, but if someone dies, the vestige simply believes they weren't strong enough. Be prepared to embrace and reward powerful roleplaying with generous (but still horrifying) results!

MALIK'S DECANTER

The challenges in the following section can be disrupted by *Malik's decanter*, the item that was loaned to the characters in RL-03 *The Amber Dirge*. Creative use of the item should be rewarded, but if the characters lean on the item to solve all of their problems, consider incorporating the following consequences.

- Slightly raise the cost of each effect
- Every use of the decanter by a creature that hasn't rested since they last used it results in that creature gaining one level of exhaustion
- The decanter can only expunge blood while within the Cradle
- Although still useful, the water from the decanter bears a rancid odor, and the blood is partially congealed

Furthermore, the vestige wants to be paired with a creature that earns its loyalty. Becoming entirely dependent upon the decanter may lower the vestige's interest in that character—and more importantly, the vestige may learn that the Order of Guardians not only exists but possesses potent magical items.

1. THE SILT SEA

The area has begun to fill with fine, silty sand which threatens to overtake the characters. As time goes on, the fine sand takes on the qualities of a storm-churned sea, tossing the characters to and fro in a violent storm. Everything in the chamber vanishes beneath the rolling seascape surrounding the characters. The giant waves make it difficult to stabilize while swimming, and the

strong winds mercilessly slam flying creatures back into the undulating sea of silt.

Defeating the Illusion. The characters can use *Malik's decanter* to blast away the fine silt using the geyser or burst options; doing so immediately terminates the illusion. Otherwise, the characters must swim through the fine silt for five minutes. This requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check on the first minute, DC 12 on the second minute, and DC 14 on the third and fourth minutes; in the fifth minute, the DC is still 14 but all checks (not just Athletics) are made at disadvantage as the churning sea of silt and sand experiences violent swells and surges. If a creature fails this check, they begin choking on the loose silt as they slip beneath the waves. A creature with a swim or fly speed has advantage on this check. At the end of the fifth minute, the characters are deposited back into the Heart.

SUFFOCATING

When a creature runs out of breath or is choking, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again.

2. SHOWER OF INSECTS

The space where the large chamber stood has been replaced with a wide-open landscape of rolling sand dunes. The dark grey storm clouds overhead precede a peal of thunder as torrents of insects rain down from the clouds. The construction and excavation equipment is still present and visible.

Defeating the Illusion. The characters are faced with many swarms here. There is one swarm in the first round, two more in the second round, and one more in the fourth round; these foes may be **swarm of insects (beetles)** or **swarms of rot grubs** as you see fit. The illusory swarms can't climb the scaffolding, but they eagerly scurry along the available "floors" of the dunes. Any swarm hit by water or blood produced by *Malik's decanter* is immediately destroyed. When all the swarms are defeated, or after one minute has passed (whichever happens first), the illusion fades and the characters return to the Heart.

3. AMONG THE REEDS

The cool rush of water flows around the legs of the characters as the area floods to a depth of 3 feet, and thick reeds push up violently from the floor. The Heart of the Cradle has been replaced with the marshy riverbanks of one of the rare rivers of Har'Akir.

Defeating the Illusion. As the water settles into stillness, the complete absence of noise greets the characters. Within moments, a trio of **crocodiles** erupts from the water. Any creature with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 15 or higher isn't surprised by the attack. If the characters use *Malik's decanter* here, whatever effect they choose is instead inverted (e.g., the fountain option causes the decanter to suck in 5 gallons of water, etc.). If a crocodile is in a space affected by the decanter's inverted effect, that crocodile is stunned until the end



of its next turn. A crocodile can only be stunned in this manner one time. If the geyser or burst functions are selected, the water is all drained out and the illusion immediately ends.

4. THE ENCROACHING STONE

The walls of the Heart crack and peel back to reveal a steep ramp directly ahead as the nearby walls shrink in until the space is only 10 feet across and 10 feet tall. At the top of the ramp, a large object is moving, and quickly: a huge boulder is rapidly coming down!

Defeating the Illusion. The boulder completely fills the space and has a speed of 30 feet. It starts 100 feet away, and, as it descends the ramp, uses each turn to dash. The characters can attempt to run away from the boulder, but the hallway never ends, even though they can see the exit archway in the far distance. The boulder never slows and is likely to overtake them unless they use *Malik's decanter* or some other viable resource to slow it down. It is extremely heavy, and most objects placed in its path are unlikely to slow it down or stop it. The boulder has an AC of 16, 100 hit points, and is immune to piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical sources.

MALIK'S DECANTER

The characters can use the decanter to create the following effects upon the boulder.

Stream. A stream projected from the decanter prevents the boulder from dashing until the end of the round.

Fountain. If the boulder is hit by a fountain from the decanter, it stops in place until the start of the next round.

Geyser or Burst. If the boulder is hit by the liquid produced by these options, it is immediately destroyed.

If the characters can successfully flee from the boulder for one minute, the illusion fades and they are returned to the Heart of the Cradle. Any creature that is run over by the boulder is reduced to 0 hit points and begins to die; unfortunately, the boulder blocks line of sight as it fills the entire hallway so healing and resuscitation may be tricky at best.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the characters have successfully navigated their way past at least one of the illusory obstacles and the total time spent here has been approximately one hour of gameplay, move to Part 3.

PART 3:

TRAPPED IN AMBER

Estimated Duration: 1 hour

Once the illusory challenges have been defeated, the characters must contend with a trapped door and the unholy treasures that lie beyond it. Namely, the amber sarcophagus that houses the vestige of Mirtu.

Themes: Puzzle, thought-provoking, temptation

DOOR TO THE INNER TOMB

The door to the inner tomb is crafted from a single, massive slab of amber. Cut into it are a series of boxes, many of which bear a simple sigil, while several others are empty. Give the characters Handout 2.

The characters can retreat from the Cradle if they like, but the sandstorm that raged above the quarry in Part 1 now fills it. No rest can be had while the storm rages and Mirtu waits, as any attempt to rest spawn a new illusion (choose an option from Part 2 the characters haven't already experienced).

AREA INFORMATION

The door has the following features.

Dimensions. The door is crafted of thick, solid amber.

Specific shapes can't be determined beyond the door, even with extremely bright light, though the vague shape of something large is visible (this is the sarcophagus that holds the vestige of Mirtu).

Carving. A grid pattern has been carved into the face of the door, along with a phrase written in Common. These details are in the Carving section below.

CARVING

The carving reads:

The way is true.
The way is long.
The way lies before you,
Should your mind prove strong.

If the characters are using a light source, they can see that although all of the carvings are dusty, there is a faint layer of blue dust in the empty box carvings. The vestige of Mirtu is keen to make the characters use their minds and prove they are mentally strong enough to bear its gift.

Solving the Puzzle. This puzzle may prove difficult for some participants. A character need only draw (etch, carve, whatever they deem necessary) the correct symbol in the correct box. If they etch the wrong symbol, the amber pulses with necrotic energy as all of the sigils drawn so far are magically erased and the creature that etched the incorrect sigil takes 1 point of necrotic damage. Every time an incorrect symbol is drawn,

the damage increases by 1. The characters can solve the puzzle by placing all of the correct symbols or by drawing all of the hollow box sigils (those marked in blue on the solution handout) in their correct locations.

Getting Help. If it helps the characters or players, you may encourage them to make Intelligence checks (DC 12) or skill checks (Investigation or Insight, for instance) for aid. You may also wish to consider granting a "free" space if a character has a Sage or similar background or if a character has a backstory of dealing with codes and puzzles. Each character should be allowed no more than one hint to place a sigil on the door, and these hints should be correctly placed—for although you are acting as the vestige of Mirtu in this scene, remember that the vestige does actually want to be free of this place. A *knock* spell reveals one correct sigil.

Picking the Lock or Breaking the Door. The door is magically locked by enchantment; it can't be picked. The door has an AC of 18 and is immune to nonmagical damage, as well as damage caused by psychic effects, disease, and poison. It has 100 hit points.

THE AMBER SARCOPHAGUS

Once the amber puzzle has been solved (or the door has been broken), the chamber beyond is revealed.

The inner tomb is a painfully simple room. The walls aren't decorated, and the ceiling is bare save for a few lonely cobwebs. The only thing present here is a large sarcophagus carved from amber. The lid displays a basic humanoid outline, but no features can be discerned through it.

The sarcophagus contains the vestige of Mirtu, and as such it radiates a palpable vileness. Any creature that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check recognizes that being here makes them uneasy. Any creature that examines the sarcophagus feels a desire to place their hands upon it (this isn't a mechanical aspect but something that feels compelling—this is Mirtu's compulsion).

When the first creature touches the sarcophagus, read the following:

The room twists and shifts until you see a place of quiet respite and comfort: perhaps an open-air tent on the shore of an oasis with piles of soft pillows, or maybe you see a library, stocked with tomes of power and mystery and derring-do. While each of you see something different, you all see the amber sarcophagus in your near vicinity.

As the characters examine their new locations, the disembodied voice of the vestige of Mirtu taunts them with promises of power and comfort. It says such things as:

- These are the things that the weak-willed fools will render unto you once we are joined. Accept that which you have rightly earned!
- I can provide this for you.
- You deserve this.
- Of all the things that you might want, this is the simplest for us to achieve together. Allow me to guide you to the rewards you truly deserve.
- I am but one of the keys to the Apparatus—and I can lead you to the rest!

MINDREADING FOR VILE PROMISES

The vestige of Mirtu delves into a character's mind in an effort to learn what it can offer to gain that character's trust. It consults their bonds and flaws and may even be aware of their surface thoughts. That said, it is not bonded to the characters at this point and is not aware of their deepest, darkest (or most optimistic) secrets. Be mindful that the vestige of Mirtu's delving does not upset the player and that it only upsets the character.

Whatever the vestige of Mirtu says, it says it telepathically and with complete belief in its own statements. It is only willing to explain its position as “a god of the forgotten age” and “a power that will once again walk the world... and you would do well to be at my side.” It can change and reform the visions that it has granted to the characters at its leisure and continues to do everything it can to tempt at least one of the characters into accepting itself into them. If pressed about the Apparatus, it shies away from the subject saying things like “such power shan't be granted in whimsical giveaway; we should really get to know each other first... it will be worthwhile, I assure you.”

Only one character can accept the vestige's offer. This character replaces their Dark Gift with the Deceitful Heart Dark Gift (handout 3), then the vision fades for everyone.

MIRTU, DENIED

If none of the characters accept the vestige of Mirtu's offer, the vestige rages at the characters as they attempt to leave. It taunts them by telepathically saying it will find another, more suitable host and that it will reign supreme across White Oasis and the “dread realms” once more.

TREASURE

Once the characters have laid their hands upon the amber sarcophagus, the vestige of Mirtu conjures a small ceramic pot that has been stoppered with a chunk of amber. This pot contains an *oil of slipperiness* which bears the unmistakable musk of fermented crocodile meat. While the oil can be taken by the characters regardless of whether or not they accept the vestige of Mirtu's offer, the oil inflicts the poisoned condition on the user for one minute if applied during this adventure if they refused the offer.

WRAP-UP: A LOVELY GIFT

Once the characters have learned of the amber sarcophagus and what it contains, the adventure is effectively over. All they need to do at this point is return to River's Shelter and await the arrival of Alanik Ray.

Once he arrives, the characters should summarize the things they've seen and done. Alanik has contacts in all manner of places, and if the characters omit references to Anatsu'Peh, the battle in the quarry, or what treasures they found inside (be they items or illusions), he may well ask them directly.

A DARK GIFT

If a character accepted the vestige of Mirtu, Alanik immediately recognizes the dark power that now surrounds them.

“I hope you know what you're doing. The darkness that inhabits you may one day threaten to overtake your heroic nature. Stay true to yourselves, champions. Don't lose sight of your missions.” Alanik waves his hands in a vague approximation of a warding sigil.

Alternatively, if the characters refused to accept the vestige of Mirtu into their bodies, Alanik is confounded. He is pleased that the characters chose to remain “unsullied” but is deeply afraid that the vestige will simply find a new and more morally malleable host. Regardless, he wraps up his thoughts with the following:

“You have denied the Whisperer of Lies for now, but Mirtu can be claimed by another. Radaga's pursuits and notes lead me to believe that these vestiges will play a bigger role in the coming conflict, and we would be wise to retain every potential weapon we can find.”

The adventure ends as Alanik and the characters ponder their next move in the search for the Apparatus.

INVESTIGATION JOURNAL

Provide each player with a copy of the Investigation Journal (handout 4). Before the session is over, each player must choose which of the items found during the adventure they'd like to keep, and line out others.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

ANATSU'PEH

Human conjurer

Anatsu'Peh (uh-NOT-soo PAY) is a selfish person; he desires little more in life than control. He prefers to string along his foes and taunt them as he attempts to learn their motivations, drives, and desires; once he has accomplished this, he uses the **Gift of Mirtu** to attempt to *command* them or otherwise bend them to his will.

What They Want. Anatsu'Peh wants nothing more than total control of everything in his life. He doesn't want to actively rule, but he wants to possess power and unquestionable authority. He wishes to use his control of the undead to build a grand temple in his honor so that everyone knows he controls White Oasis.

Pretentious Blowhard. Anatsu'Peh seeks only to further his own position in life, and this makes him prone to speaking about his faults as if they are strengths in disguise. He brags about abusing the Gift of Mirtu for his own ends.

PAWERO

Zombie (formerly human)

Pawero (PA-wer-OH) carries his family's harp with him everywhere he goes in death, just as he did in life. When alive, he offended a priest and for his transgression, his hand was removed. He since learned to play dirges on the harp. Although Anatsu'Peh killed him (RL-03), he seems determined to continue playing his harp.

What They Want. Despite being a zombie, Pawero only wants to play his harp. He will not attack someone holding the harp, but he has no reservations about attacking things around that person until the harp is returned.

Bound by Music. Pawero is completely enamored with his family's harp. When not holding the harp, his fingers pluck the strings of an imaginary instrument; if the harp is played in his presence, he is enthralled and can do nothing for as long as the music can be heard.



CREATURE STATISTICS

ANATSU'PEH (CONJURER)

Medium humanoid (human)

Armor Class 12 (15 with chain shirt)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft. (*hobnail boots*)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Deep Speech

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Spellcasting. The conjurer is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

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

1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *unseen servant**

2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers**, *misty step**, *web**

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball*, *stinking cloud**

4th level (3 slots): *Evard's black tentacles**, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill**, *conjure elemental**

*Conjuration spell of 1st level or higher

Benign Transportation (Recharges after the Conjurer Casts a Conjunction Spell of 1st Level or Higher). As a bonus action, the conjurer teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that it can see. If it instead chooses a space within range that is occupied by a willing Small or Medium creature, they both teleport, swapping places.

ACTIONS

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

STAT BLOCK MODIFICATIONS

Anatsu'Peh has some abilities that deviate from a standard **conjurer** stat block:

Telepathic. The Gift of Mirtu grants the piper telepathy with any creature within 100 feet. This telepathy also grants the piper the ability to issue a *command* (as per the spell, but no materials or spell slot is needed) to any number of undead within this range using a single action. All undead must receive the same command.

Discordant Tune. The piper can use his bonus action each turn to continue to play his tune. If he does, he can't speak except through telepathy. If the tune is interrupted, he must start it again on his next turn or the effects of his tune expire at the end of that turn. While the tune is playing, no light source within one hundred feet of the piper except for sunlight can be bright light, and darkvision fails to function entirely for all living creatures within that same range. Furthermore, while the tune is playing, the piper can't be attacked by the shadows, and all undead within 100 feet follow his telepathic commands.

Flute Focus. The verbal and somatic components for the piper's spells are replaced by playing his flute, which can be done while he plays his discordant tune. The piper does not require material components for his spells.

Gift of Mirtu. Mirtu the Whisperer has granted Anatsu'Peh access to some of its gifts, chief among these being the ability to cast the *command* spell (DC 14) as an action on a living creature. If Anatsu'Peh has commanded a creature and that creature dies, it rises as a **shadow** or **zombie** one minute later and regards the bearer of the Gift of Mirtu as its master. If a creature loses the Gift of Mirtu, undead in the area are incensed and hungrily seek him out.

CROCODILE

Large beast

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Hold Breath. The crocodile can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

SHADOW

Medium undead

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Vulnerabilities Radiant

Damage Resistances Acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities Necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Amorphous. The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

ACTIONS

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

SWARM OF INSECTS (BEETLES)

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts

Armor Class 12 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, frightened, grappled,

paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half or fewer of its hit points remaining.

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	2 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances Piercing and slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny maggot. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* The target is infested by 1d4 rot grubs. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these rot grubs. After this time, these rot grubs are too far under the skin to be burned.

If the target infested by rot grubs ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the rot grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target.

ZOMBIE

Medium undead

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

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

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

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

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

HANDOUT 1: MALIK'S DECANTER

Radaga has provided the characters with this potent magic item. It's only available for use during this adventure and RMH-04 *The Amber Secret*. It's returned to Radaga upon returning to Dementlieu.

MALIK'S DECANTER

Wondrous Item, uncommon

This stoppered flask sloshes when shaken, as if it contains water. The decanter weighs 2 pounds.

You can use an action to remove the stopper and speak one of four command words, whereupon an amount of fresh water or saltwater pours out of the flask.

The liquid stops pouring at the start of your next turn. Choose from the following options:

- "Stream" produces 1 gallon of water.
- "Fountain" produces 5 gallons of water.
- "Geyser" produces 30 gallons of water that gushes forth in a geyser 30 feet long and 1 foot wide. As a bonus action while holding the decanter, you can aim the geyser at a creature that you can see that is within 30 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or take 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage and fall prone. Instead of a creature, you can target an object that isn't being worn or carried and that weighs no more than 200 pounds. The object is either knocked over or pushed up to 15 feet away from you.
- "Tsunami" produces 200 gallons of water in a 10-foot-diameter bubble. A small bead of water is propelled out of the decanter's mouth, growing in size until it has traveled 30 feet, at which point it violently bursts in a 20-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw, falling prone and taking 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or taking half damage on a successful one.

This decanter is wrapped in red leather and stoppered with cobalt glass. It also bears a potent curse.

Curse. Each time the item is used, the user must sacrifice its life force to fuel the item's magic. Further, there is a one-in-four chance that instead of fresh or salt water, the decanter instead spews a like volume of sticky blood.

The price paid for using the item depends on the manner in which the decanter is used, as follows.

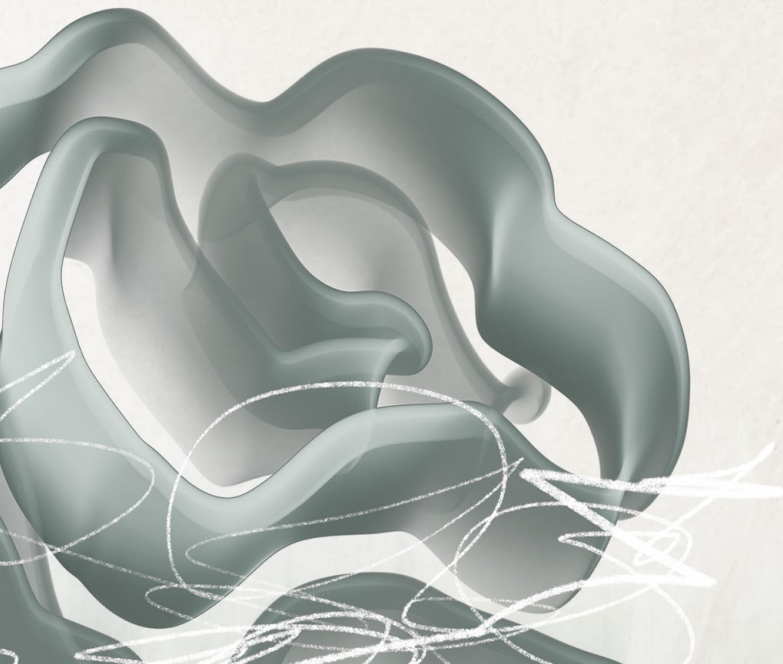
Stream: 1 hit dice

Fountain: 3 hit dice

Geyser: The user gains one level of exhaustion

Tsunami: The user must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be reduced to 0 hit points. On a successful saving throw, the user instead gains three levels of exhaustion.

Malik's Decanter functions as a *decanter of endless water*, which is found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



HANDOUT 2: THE AMBER DOOR

(PLAYER COPY)

	◆		□	◀	●
□	◀		⊙	■	
●	□	◆	■	⊙	◀
		◀	●	◆	□
	■	□			
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HANDOUT 3: DARK GIFT: DECEITFUL HEART

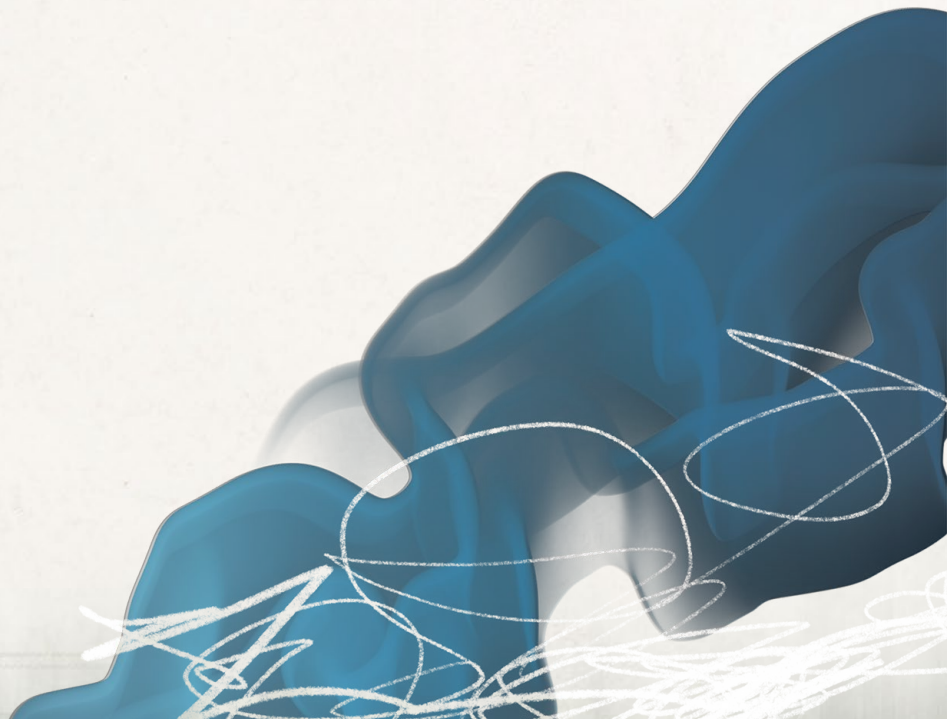
DARK GIFT: DECEITFUL HEART

Your heart is consumed with the irresistible urge to weave complex tapestries of lies and distrust—sometimes so real that even you find yourself falling prey to them.

Lying Tongue. You gain proficiency in Deception and Persuasion checks. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make using these skills.

Visible Guile. You learn the *minor illusion* cantrip if you don't already know it, and require no components to cast it. Your spellcasting ability for this spell is Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (your choice when you gain this Dark Gift).

Susceptible to Deceit. You have disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks and saving throws against any spell from the illusion school of magic or other illusory effects.



HANDOUT 4: INVESTIGATION JOURNAL

What an...intriguing...discovery. I've heard tales of amber sarcophagi and the horrors they entomb, but have never seen one myself. I'd be lying if I told you that I wasn't at least the tiniest bit jealous (a sentiment that Radaga shares).

That said, shameful conduct—exploiting those undergoing such emotional and spiritual turmoil. Hopefully, the people of River's Shelter can sleep at least a little bit better now.

Return to me at your leisure; there's much to discuss.

Yours in reason,
Alanik Ray

PS: The item that you found along the way is safe and sound at my chateau should you have need of it in the future

Choose one item from the list below by checking the box next to it.





































- Oil of Slipperiness
- Potion of Healing
- Potion of Jumping
- Hobnail Boots*

*Hobnail boots function as *slippers of spider climbing* which are found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. These boots are made of worn, aged leather with thick soles set with iron spikes. They're also possessed by a mischievous soul. When used, there is a one-in-six chance the boots unlace themselves, causing the wearer to fall.

STORY AWARDS

- Dark Gift: Deceitful Heart

APPENDIX A: THE AMBER DOOR (DM SOLUTION)

APPENDIX B: MISTY VISIONS

This adventure begins with the characters traversing the horrors of the misty borders of the various Domains of Dread. When instructed, roll on the table. If time permits, roll once for each character. Otherwise, roll once for the entire group. These effects end when the character leaves the domain.

MISTY VISIONS

d20	Vision	Effect
1	Dark, malevolent shadows flit around you, moving within the mists just beyond your sight.	You have disadvantage on initiative checks.
2	Thick, thorny vines erupt from the ground and grasp at your limbs—threatening to pull you into the clammy ground.	You have disadvantage on checks made to escape a grapple or end the restrained condition.
3	You hear the screams of friends and family crying out in fear and agony, but can't find them, despite your best efforts.	You have disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened.
4	The ground becomes wet with black, sticky mud (or is it blood?)—at first ankle-deep, then up to the knees . . .	You must spend an extra foot of movement for each foot spent moving through difficult terrain.
5	Countless clawed skeletons swarm you, clawing at your flesh and clothing.	You gain vulnerability to slashing damage.
6	You bump into a stone grave marker. Examining it closer, you see your own name engraved in its surface.	You have disadvantage on death saving throws.
7	The stench of rotting flesh fills your nostrils. Glancing at yourself, you see dark spots of decay covering your flesh.	You gain vulnerability to necrotic damage.
8	After a moment's distraction, and looking back, you find yourself in the Mists alone until you arrive at your destination.	You have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to notice hidden creatures and objects.
9	You see a small child in the Mists ahead of you—coaxing you deeper into the mists. After finally catching up with them, you find nothing but a cornhusk doll.	You have disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks.
10	The Mists turn into a thick, noxious miasma that burns your eyes and throat—threatening to suffocate you.	You have disadvantage on saving throws against poison.
11	Your deepest fear manifests before your eyes.	If you fail a saving throw against being frightened, you're also blinded until the end of your next turn.
12	A bone-chilling wind fills the area—driving the warmth from you and sending your body into tremors.	You have disadvantage on Dexterity checks made to accomplish tasks that require fine motor skills.
13	The Mists coalesce into a tall, dense hedge maze that seems to go on forever, and you pass the same landmarks repeatedly.	You have disadvantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks made to navigate or to discern your location.
14	You encounter a group of terrified adventurers who attack you with a rusted dagger before fleeing back into the Mists.	You take slashing damage equal to a roll of your largest Hit Die.
15	An incorporeal undead creature manifests in front of you and passes through you—driving your strength away.	You have disadvantage on Strength (Athletics) checks.
16	One of your teeth loosens and falls out. One by one, more fall out and crumble away into fine, white powder.	Your anxiety imposes disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks made to positively influence people.
17	You run from beastly shadows in the night. Your heart pounds at every snarl, hiss, and howl, feeling their breath on your heels as they catch up.	Your memories of the vision give you disadvantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks made to positively influence animals.
18	Everything around you withers and decays before your eyes.	If you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll made with a nonmagical weapon, the weapon breaks and becomes unusable.
19	You find yourself in a library behind your closest loved ones as they turn to you, all faceless. You open nearby books to find the answers to help them, but all their pages are blank.	You have disadvantage on Intelligence (History) checks involving the recollection of lore.
20	You breathe and your lungs fill with the Mists. It flows through your body, weighing you down and weakening you.	You have disadvantage on Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration on spells.

APPENDIX C: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To run this adventure as a DM, you must have three, four, or five players, each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see the "Adventure Primer" section at the start of the adventure).

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

Information about the Adventurers League, including finding places to play, organizing events, and a list of supporting resources and documents, can be found here:

https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal_general

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running it, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use during combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendixes and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running the adventure, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battle maps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception) score; and anything the adventure specifies as notable (such as backgrounds and story awards).

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a player or ran as a DM, but they can do so only once with a specific character. Ensure each player has their character sheet (if not, get one from the organizer).

PREPARING THE CHARACTERS

The adventure is designed to be played with characters of a specific level; characters of a different level should be modified accordingly. If necessary, the characters should be afforded the time needed to adjust their characters to suit.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they can't, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Characters that died during a previous adventure return to life, free of any conditions, curses, or other effects that would remove them from play—such as vampirism or lycanthropy. They keep any story awards they have, as any spells they might have copied during their adventures.

During the Call to Action, the characters are likely to review their available magic items among themselves and determine who is carrying what. Make sure they have a few moments to outfit one another.

NEW PLAYERS? NO PROBLEM!

With starter adventures like this one, it's possible you might have players new to D&D, or new to fifth edition D&D. As the DM, it's up to you to ensure these players have fun with the game, and that they learn the basics of how to play. At this level, having fun is more important than learning every rule exactly right. Be gentle with new players who make mistakes.

Make sure to keep your players smiling and rolling dice. Be positive and enthusiastic when describing the action, and you'll notice the players will quickly follow suit.

If you're a new DM, then welcome—and thank you! New DMs are the lifeblood of the D&D community. To help you run your game, some adventures include sidebars like this one that provide an explanation of the game's rules as they're used in the adventure.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, assess the **party strength** by consulting the table below.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
Three characters	Weak
Four characters	Average
Five characters	Strong

SAFETY TOOLS

Safety tools help ensure players aren't pushed beyond their comfort levels. These tools let your players know you want them to have a positive experience. Some common safety tools are provided below, each with a summary of how they work. An [article about one such safety kit](#) is provided to help with further information. Ensure that you discuss these tools with your players before the game:

- **Code of Conduct.** This is a group agreement for play. It outlines desired and prohibited behaviors, confidential reporting, and possible consequences.
- **Pregame and Postgame Discussions.** Use time before the game to explain content warnings, set boundaries, and collaborate on a safety plan. Then decompress and discuss improvements at the end of the game.
- **Be Welcoming.** Welcome and encourage respectful and open conversations about issues as they arise. Show that you're listening by avoiding defensive responses.
- **Confidentiality.** Provide contact information for private and confidential conversations between players and DM. Only disclose another player's name if that player gave unpressured permission for you to do so.
- **Safety Tools.** Learn about the safety tools that TTRPG community members have created and compiled. A broad range of such safety tools are available for you and your players online, or you can get more information by reaching out to your event organizer or community@dndadventurersleague.org.