

HEROES OF FAERUN: SHADOWBORNE



CHAPTER I: DARK SORCERIES

A 5E SOLO ADVENTURE

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A SOLO ADVENTURE FOR FIFTH EDITION DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

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INTRODUCTION & RULES

Thank you for purchasing *Dark Sorceries!* This adventure is set in the *Forgotten Realms*, and is the first 5e solo adventure for the *Heroes of Faerun: Shadowborne* campaign!

This adventure is designed for a 2nd-level character, and will reward enough experience points to advance your character to 3rd level! While this adventure is intended for solo play, it can be easily tailored to fit the size of any gaming group (see *Group Play*).

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- A 2nd-level character with an open backstory
- A set of polyhedral dice, or a virtual dice roller
- Paper and pencil for keeping track of mechanics
- The *Basic Rules for Fifth Edition Dungeons and Dragons* (PHB and DMG recommended)
- Miniatures, tokens, or a virtual tabletop (Roll20, Fantasy Grounds, etc) for keeping track of the enemies and players during combat encounters
- Printed maps or a virtual tabletop for running the combat encounters

HOW TO PLAY

This adventure does not need a *Dungeon Master* in order to play. The narrative progresses in a manner similar to a “choose your own adventure” book. Read the blocked text and choose the response that best fits your character. If you are using the PDF version of this adventure, follow the bold text links after each response to progress through the story. If you have printed the adventure, navigate to the correct heading of your response to progress through the story. Try not to read any of the other blocks of text until you are instructed to.

While you play, you will be asked to keep track of various gameplay mechanics. If at any time you have a gameplay related question, remember that you are the *DM* and can ultimately make the final call on whatever task you are attempting to accomplish.

The goal of this adventure is to have fun and explore a gripping, dramatic narrative with

challenging and exciting combat encounters. I hope you have as much fun playing the adventure as I did writing it!

GROUP PLAY

If you are playing through this adventure with more than one player, each encounter has a *Group Play* section with detailed information on how to adjust the encounter.

When enemies attack, roll randomly to determine the creature’s target, or do your best to roleplay the creature’s state of mind, targeting a player based on damage dealt, or how threatening the player may seem to the creature.

For determining responses while playing, you can either share the responses, roll for responses, or round-robin the responses. If you are a *DM* running this game for a group of players, feel free to roleplay and improvise the scenes as necessary.

Shared Responses. All players agree upon a response and progress through the story, accepting the chosen response for all players.

Rolled Responses. Each player chooses a response and rolls a 1d20. The highest number determines the winner, and each player accepts the winning player’s chosen response.

Round-robin Responses. Have each player roll a 1d20 at the start of the game. The highest number determines the winner. The winning player makes the first response. The player to the winning player’s left chooses the next response. At each new response, continue to rotate to the next player so that every player has a chance to participate in selecting responses.

EXPLORATION

While playing, you will have the opportunity to pursue various responses and outcomes. When choosing a response, you may not repeat a choice unless the rules explicitly state that you can take 20 and try again.

RESTING AND HEALING

You will be informed when you can take a short rest as you play through the adventure.

You can use potions and cast spells at any time while exploring, but may not cast spells or use potions when you are involved in character interaction segments (unless prompted).

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Each combat encounter has a detailed map associated with it. Combat tactics, terrain, and enemy behaviors are detailed with each combat encounter.

When determining actions for enemies or NPCs, ask yourself what that enemy would do in the given situation, and then do it. Stay as close to the enemy script as possible.

DIFFICULTY

This adventure is designed to be challenging. The goal of this solo campaign is to tell a gripping story, and present difficulties to the player that they must overcome. Because this adventure is intended for solo play, there are two modes that you can choose from when starting this campaign:

Hardcore. The classic D&D mode. If you die, reroll a new character and start the adventure over.

Story. If you die, start the encounter over with the same character state that you initiated the encounter with. For example, if you had only 1 spell slot left and 3 hit points, and you die, you would start the encounter over with 1 spell slot and 3 hit points.

FEEDBACK

Do you have some constructive criticism about the adventure? Did you absolutely love it? Did you absolutely hate it? Leave a review on the Dungeon Master's Guild and let me know!

DARK SORCERIES

"Evil 'round every corner. Careful not to step in any."

—Minsc

INTRODUCTION & BACKSTORY

The year is 1361. Nestled deep within the secluded hills and farmlands of the Dessarin Valley, the quiet and peaceful village of Verland is where you have made your home. North of Kheldell, at the edge of the Kryptgarden Forest, the village provides solitude in exchange for hard work.

You settled down after a few lucky years of prosperous adventuring, giving up sword and shield in exchange for an honest craft. Some might call it a boring life, but you were eager to leave behind the turmoil of adventuring, of plundering dungeons, and thwarting evil plots. You have lost allies during your adventures, some of them good friends.

Although you had gained a small fortune in a short amount of time, you did not gain much fame. Regardless, many in the village have heard rumor of your deeds, and almost all regard you as the most able-bodied and experienced adventurer among them. When livestock goes missing, or when children do not come home when true night falls, you are the first that worried villagers call upon for aid.



It is the first week of Hammer, and winter has just begun to show itself in the form of a

glistening white frost. The frost greets you on most evenings, coating wooden porches and thatched rooftops throughout the village. It is on one such evening that Tymora has decided to pay you a visit. The gods, and the adventuring life that you had long thought left behind, are not done with you yet...

How to Play: Responses

Read the following blocked text and choose the response that best fits your character. Follow the links to progress through the story. Try not to read any of the other blocks of text until you are instructed to.

Occasionally you will interact with NPCs. Choose your answers carefully, as NPC attitudes can shift depending on how you respond to them. Different attitudes can cause different outcomes in the story. Keep track of NPC attitudes while you are playing, and make adjustments to their Attitude scores when prompted. All Attitude scores start at 1.

WELCOME TO VERLAND

The fire crackles and spits in the stone hearth before you. You ease back into your seat, a padded chair facing the fireplace in the common room of the Crossed Staves Inn. The inn is the only two-story building in the village of Verland, and a veritable ghost town on most nights.

Tonight, the first night of winter, many of the villagers have gathered together to raise tankards of ale and offer prayers to Auril for a mild season. The high-backed chair is comforting after your hard day of labor.

What is your trade in Verland?

- I'm a trapper and hunter. Go to **Hunter**
- I'm a blacksmith. Go to **Blacksmith**
- I'm a logger. Go to **Logger**
- I'm a farmer. Go to **Farmer**
- I live off of my riches and try to do the bare minimum on a daily basis. Go to **Rich and Lazy**

MEET DAVIAN

Hazy pipe smoke fills the common room. The warmth emanating from the stone hearth is pleasant, and keeps the cold of winter at bay. A chill breeze sweeps through the room whenever the main doors of the establishment are opened, causing you to shiver.

"...and that's why Pharin always said, 'Never turn your back on a spurned woman'. He learned his lesson, I suppose. Hey, have you been listening to anything that I've been saying?" The question catches you off guard. You turn to answer the halfling sitting in the chair next to you.

Davian Stoutheart is your closest friend in Verland, even if he hasn't given you a choice in the matter. Short and wiry, Davian has unkempt brown hair and thick sideburns that end at his jaw. He is always eager to crack a joke and tell you a story about his family history, or his past romantic ventures. Davian seems to be stock full of wild tales, many of which you believe to be completely fabricated. Still, it's nice to have some company, even if the tales Davian spins are wild and exaggerated.

How do you respond?

- Apologize for not paying attention. Go to **Apologies**
- Make up some excuse for not listening, and ask Davian to repeat his story. Go to **Broken Record**
- Shake your head and ask him why he's bothering you... again! Go to **Bothersome**

DRINKS ARE ON ME

Davian takes a final swig of his ale and smacks his lips. "I think it's time for another round. What are you drinking tonight?"

How do you respond?

- Tell him you're drinking Dragonfire Red. Go to **Memories of Adventure**
- Ask for some water, and advise that he do the same. Go to **Waterboy**
- Tell him you're fine. You still have half a tankard left. Go to **Memories of Adventure**

MEMORIES OF ADVENTURE

With a clap on the back, your halfling friend rises from his chair near the hearth, and saunters off towards the bar.

You look back into the flames. The fire burns low, charring the logs black. The orange embers begin to glow brightly, then fade.

The memories of your adventuring days return to you, one haunting image in particular: your comrade, Serius Valsorum, burning to ash.

Go to the next section: The Stranger



HUNTER

You look down at your hands, rubbing your callused palms. Your fingers are still stained with dirt, and carry the scent of sage from your day spent foraging and hunting in the Kryptgarden Forest.

Go to the next section: Meet Davian

BLACKSMITH

You look down at your hands, rubbing your callused palms. They are still stained with soot from the forge, and they carry the smell of smoke and ash.

Go to the next section: Meet Davian

LOGGER

You look down at your hands, rubbing your callused palms. A small dot of sap mars the otherwise clean

surface. The sting of a new splinter in your finger causes you to wince. You'll have to remember to dig that out later.

Go to the next section: Meet Davian

FARMER

You look down at your hands, rubbing your callused palms. Dirt stains the creases. A new blister seems to have surfaced just beneath your thumb.

Go to the next section: Meet Davian

RICH AND LAZY

You look down at your hands, clean and free of calluses. Scars criss-cross your fingers, and the remnants of a deep gash can be seen on your palm, evidence of your former adventuring life.

Go to the next section: Meet Davian

APOLOGIES

"No worries," Davian responds. "I know how you get in the winter. I was uh... just trying to lighten the mood. Because, you know..." The halfling trails off, looking into the fire.

How do you respond?

- Tell him that you have no idea what he is talking about. Go to **Clueless**
- Shrug and take a sip of your drink. Go to **Drinks Are On Me**
- Thank him, but say that you're fine (Deception). Go to **Pants on Fire**

BROKEN RECORD

"You lost your chance, friend," Davian replies with a sigh. "You'll never find out why you should never turn your back on a spurned woman. Here's a hint though: it has to do with a knife, and an unpleasant surgical procedure." He winks at you.

How do you respond?

- Say that you're glad you missed the punchline. Go to **Drinks Are On Me**
- Say that you really want to know what happened (Persuasion). Go to **Inquiring Minds Want to Know**

BOTHERSOME

"Well now! Look at the cranky former-adventurer snapping at his mild-mannered friend," Davian snorts. "Fine, if you're going to be like that..."

Subtract -1 from Davian's Attitude score.
Go to the next section: Drinks Are On Me

CLUELESS

Davian looks at you blankly. "How long have we known each other? Two years? You've told me the story. And every year around this time you act the same way. You get into these... *moods*." He sighs. "For what it's worth, I don't think it was your fault. You need to stop blaming yourself," Davian looks you in the eyes. "Sometimes terrible things happen when you're out there in the wild. Sometimes things are outside of our control. We just have to make peace with the will of Ilmater, and move on." The halfling smiles somberly. "I'd like to think he has a plan for us all. I'd like to think that that's why you're here."

Go to the next section: Drinks Are On Me

PANTS ON FIRE

Davian looks at you out of the corner of his eye. He doesn't seem to believe you.

Roll a Deception check, DC 11.

- Success? Go to **Deception**
- Failure? Go to **Clueless**

DECEPTION

"Alright, fine. We don't have to talk about it. Sorry for bringing it up." Davian replies, looking into the fire.

Go to the next section: Drinks Are On Me

INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

You create an elaborate excuse for not paying attention, explaining to Davian that you really want to hear the tale about this "Pharin" character.

Roll a Persuasion check, DC 9.

- Success? Go to **Persuasive**
- Failure? Go to **Fail to Persuade Davian**

PERSUASIVE

"Well, if you really want to know, Pharin once said that..." The halfling goes on to tell the wild tale of his great grandfather, who angered a forest nymph one summer while he was out harvesting his favorite mushrooms in the Westwood.

The story culminates with the unfortunate encounter of the forest nymph exacting revenge upon the stubborn halfling, who was caught napping with a bag filled with the forbidden fungus.

"Cut his sideburns clean off!" Davian exclaims, shaking his head and drinking from his tankard of ale. "And THAT's why Great Grandpappy Pharin used to say, 'Never turn your back on a spurned woman!'" He chuckles to himself.

Add +1 to Davian's Attitude score.

Go to the next section: Drinks Are On Me

FAIL TO PERSUADE DAVIAN

"It really should be saved for another time," Davian replies. "A time when you aren't dwelling on the past, I think."

Go to the next section: Drinks Are On Me

WATERBOY

"Bah! Never!" Davian responds. "The night is too young, and I am definitely still too sober. I'll surprise you with something good. Looks like Rholsk is rotating the cask out now. Although knowing him, it'll be some half-orc grog from way-back-whenever-he's-from," he adds bitterly.

Go to the next section: Memories of Adventure

THE STRANGER

All conversation abruptly stops as the door to the inn crashes open.

A cloaked figure staggers into the room, falling to his knees. The stranger looks human, though his cowl is pulled low, hiding his features from sight. His clothes are covered in frost and fresh snow.

"P-please... h-help... m-me..." a strangled voice pleads from under the hood. Pain and desperation are evident in the man's voice.

The stranger reaches out a hand towards those gathered in the common room. Towards you. You can see that the hand is smeared with dried blood.

Before you can act, the stranger falls face down onto the floorboards and ceases to move.

What do you do?

- Try to get a better look at the unconscious body on the common room floor (Perception). Go to **Snooping**
- Shout for everyone to stay back, you're going to take a closer look (Approach the corpse and ready a fist attack). Go to **Better Safe Than Sorry**
- Make an attempt to hide in the dark shadows of the inn (Stealth). Go to **Stick to the Shadows**
- Turn back to the fire and shake your head. You are done with the adventuring life, leave it to the others to handle. Go to **Nope**

WHO IS HE?

"Well... w-who is he?" Davian's voice carries across the common room, breaking the silence. You look over your shoulder and see the halfling's eyes peeking out from behind the far end of the bar.

"Could be from Red Larch, I suppose," one of the villagers remarks. "Got lost on the road?"

The burly half-orc barkeep, Rholsk, stomps forward, shouldering past the circle of stunned villagers that has started to form around the unconscious stranger.

"Not likely," he grunts. Rholsk stands a head taller than the rest of the villagers. He bears a nasty scar that runs down the side of his face. From a bar brawl gone wrong, Rholsk told you once — you would hate to see the other guy. The half-orc's dark hair is pulled back into a top-knot. His sleeveless gray tunic is stained with ale.

"There," Rholsk points to the clasp on the man's

cloak. The cloak is twisted, the clasp barely visible. "That is the symbol of Cyri—"

A raspy voice interrupts the barkeep, making the hair on your neck stand on end. "Must... feed..." The voice whispers. The stranger's voice is different now, evil.

In a blur of motion, the stranger is on his feet and roaring. The guttural roar is inhuman, bestial.

The man's hood falls back, revealing a pair of solid black eyes. His pale skin is covered in dark splotches. A single gray stone is embedded in his forehead, radiating with twisting tendrils of shadow energy. A long, forked tongue hangs from the man's mouth past rows of sharp teeth. Dark saliva drips down his chin.

You can't help but think that the stranger resembles a ghoul, a creature you have fought in your former adventuring days.

What kind of dark sorcery is this? You think to yourself as your heart begins to beat rapidly.

If you readied an attack, go to: **Readied Attack**
Otherwise, go to the next section: **Arcane Energy**



DARK SORCERIES

Shouts and cries of dismay erupt throughout the common room as the man -- whose hands now end in vicious, elongated claws -- roars and whirls among the crowd, cutting down the villagers of Verland where they stand.

I have to stop this, you think to yourself, adrenaline coursing through your veins. I'm the only one who can!

Go to the next section: Battle With The Beast

SNOOPING

You take a moment to examine the contorted body of the collapsed stranger on the common room floor.

Roll a Perception check, DC 11.

- Success? Go to **Discoveries**
- Failure? Go to **Nothing of Interest**

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

You warily approach the unconscious figure on the floor of the common room, raising your fists to defend yourself if needed. The figure does not move. He might be dead.

Go to the next section: Who Is He?

STICK TO THE SHADOWS

You attempt to vanish from sight, stealing yourself away into one of the deep shadows cast from the tabletop oil lamps glowing throughout the common room.

Roll a Stealth check, DC 10.

- Success? Go to **Quiet As A Mouse**
- Failure? Go to **Creaky Floorboards**

NOPE

"Some adventurer you are," Rholsk grumbles, shaking his head at you.

Subtract -1 from Davian and Rholsk's Attitude Scores.

Go to the next section: Who Is He?

DISCOVERIES

Though the hood of the cloak is still covering the man's face, you can see that his feet are bare, and adorned with cuts and bruises. His trousers are crafted from dark brown wool, and covered in mud. The cloak he wears is smeared with blood and dirt. He doesn't

appear to have a weapon, and his skin is rubbed raw around the wrists and ankles. Was he a prisoner of some kind?

If you rolled a 16 or higher, you also notice:

The clasp of the stranger's cloak is a steel medallion. The medallion is emblazoned with a skull on a black sunburst.

If you are trained in Religion and wish to make a skill check, go to: **Pantheon**
Otherwise, go to the next section: **Who Is He?**

NOTHING OF INTEREST

Nothing jumps out at you as you examine the body of the unmoving stranger. Much of the man's tattered cloak still covers a majority of his contorted body.

Go to the next section: Who Is He?

QUIET AS A MOUSE

Moving swiftly and silently, you find a shadowed corner nearby and disappear into the darkness.

Make note of your success.
Go to the next section: Who Is He?

PANTHEON

You take a moment to recall the religious connotation from the sigil emblazoned on the stranger's clasp.

Roll a Religion check, DC 14.

- Success? Go to **Deities**
- Failure? Go to **Can't Recall**

CREAKY FLOORBOARDS

The floorboards creak loudly under your feet as you attempt to hide in a dark corner of the inn. You wince. So much for the stealthy approach.

Go to the next section: Who Is He?

DEITIES

You close your eyes, calling upon your knowledge of the Faerunian pantheon.

Cyric. The name comes to you seemingly out of nowhere. Or possibly, from the divine.

The symbol on the stranger's clasp represents Cyric, Prince of Lies, god of murder, intrigue, and strife.

Go to the next section: Who Is He?

CAN'T RECALL

Try as you might, you fail to call upon your knowledge of the Faerunian pantheon. You are unsure what the symbol on the clasp represents.

Go to the next section: Who Is He?

ARCANE ENERGY

The creature throws back its head and lets out a loud howl. The swirling tendrils of shadow energy emanating from the rune imbedded in the beast's forehead flare to life. A wave of arcane energy suddenly blasts into you, knocking you to the floor.

Make a Dexterity saving throw, DC 12. If you succeeded on a Stealth check and did not attack the creature, you have advantage on the roll.

- Success? Go to **Tuck And Roll**
- Failure? Go to **Blasted**

READIED ATTACK

With your attack readied, you throw a fist at the creature's face. It can't get any uglier.

Make an unarmed attack roll against AC 12.

- Success? Go to **Sucker Punch**
- Failure? Go to **Uncanny Speed**

SUCKER PUNCH

Your punch strikes true. The head of the creature snaps back violently. The half-ghoul snarls in pain and spins to face you. It grins with malice, black eyes peering into your soul. The creature hisses and licks its bloodied mouth.

Go to the next section: Arcane Energy

UNCANNY SPEED

The creature dodges you, ducking under your strike with uncanny speed.

Go to the next section: Arcane Energy

TUCK AND ROLL

You hit the floor of the common room and roll with the impact of the magical blast, avoiding any serious harm from the attack. The villagers around you are thrown from their feet, their bodies crashing backwards into tables and chairs, splitting the wooden furniture to pieces.

Go to the next section: Dark Sorceries

BLASTED

Your head violently strikes the floorboards of the inn (**take 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage**). You can feel something warm and wet trickling down the side of your face. Through blurred vision, you watch in horror as the cloaked figure begins to tear into the villagers around you, striking down one after another.

Go to the next section: Dark Sorceries

BATTLE WITH THE BEAST

Place your token in front of the fireplace on Map 1: The Crossed Staves Inn. You are prone. You also have no armor or weapons on your character at this time. Place a token to represent the half-ghoul one square inside the shattered entryway of the inn. Roll Initiative and proceed to do battle. Use the half-ghoul stats below for your opponent.

WEAPONS

Three weapons are littered throughout the common room. You must be adjacent to a square containing the weapon to pick it up. You can pick

up a weapon and attack in the same action. Your first move action can get you to the sword and battleaxe, or the staff and dagger. The weapons are listed below:

- A longsword and greataxe hang above the fireplace.
- A longbow and quiver rest in the north-west corner of the inn, near the entryway.
- One of the villagers lies unconscious in the middle of the common room. He holds a dagger in one hand, and a gnarled oak staff in the other.

TACTICS

Villagers. Only a handful of villagers are still standing, and they stay well away from the enemy, covering behind chairs and tables. At initiative count 0, roll a d20. On a 10 or higher, one of the villagers strikes the half-ghoul for 1d4 points of damage using a chair, a bottle, or another type of improvised thrown weapon. The villagers will stay as far away as possible from the fighting at all times, ensuring that you will not target any of them with Area of Effect spells or abilities.

Half-ghoul. The half-ghoul ignores the villagers until you are dead. Roll for the recharge of the half-ghoul ability Arcane Blast at the start of each of the creature's turns. The creature will move towards you by the shortest route possible, attempting to strike at you with either a bite or a claw attack. Flip a coin to determine which attack the creature uses. The half-ghoul will not leave the inn for any reason, and will attempt to keep you on the first floor at any cost.

The Rune. The rune in the creature's forehead may be targeted and attacked. You have disadvantage on the attack roll, but damage dealt to the creature is doubled if the attack hits. The rune cannot be destroyed.

Difficult Terrain. Any square with the shattered remnants of furniture is considered difficult terrain, and costs twice as much movement to pass through.

Davian. If you fall below half of your hit point maximum, and if Davian has an Attitude score of +1 or higher, he will cast a 1st-level Healing Word spell (1d4 + 3 hit points recovered) on Initiative count 0.

GROUP PLAY

If you are playing the adventure with more than one character, double the half-ghoul's hit points for this encounter.

If the half-ghoul defeats you, go to: **Defeated**
If you defeat the half-ghoul, go to: **Victorious**

HALF-GHOUL

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Arcane Blast (Recharge 5–6). The half-ghoul magically emits a wave of thunderous energy in a 20-foot cube originating from the half-ghoul. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the creature saves, they take no damage and are knocked prone.

VICTORIOUS

With one last strike, the half-ghoul falls, bloodied and broken. An eerie, guttural voice emanates from the

creature's cracked and bleeding lips. "Your realm will fall..."

You have defeated the half-ghoul! Award your character 200xp!

How do you finish off your opponent?

- Step forward, and crush the creature's skull with your boot. Go to **Crush Skull**
- Cut the creature's head off. If you have a sharp bladed weapon, you use that, otherwise you use the longsword mounted above the fireplace. Go to **Decapitate**
- Grab an oil lamp from a nearby table, and set the creature on fire. Go to **Kill It With Fire**

DEFEATED

Razor sharp claws tear into your flesh as you fall to the floor of the inn, gasping for breath. Blood spatters the floor beneath you. Something sharp sinks into your shoulder, tearing through muscle and skin. Unable to hold yourself up any longer, you let your body collapse. Your vision blurs. All you know next is silence, and darkness.

You were defeated by the half-ghoul. Roll up a new character and try again. Thanks for playing!

CRUSH SKULL

The head of the creature makes a sickening crunch as your boot stomps down upon it. The body of the half-ghoul twitches a few times, then ceases to move.

The rune imbedded in the creature's forehead dissolves instantly, crumbling to dust. A bloody indentation resides where the rune once rested.

Go to the next section: An Old Friend

DECAPITATE

You bring the blade of your weapon down onto the neck of the creature, severing the head from the body with one clean cut. Dark blood spreads from the lifeless form, seeping into the floorboards of the inn.

The rune imbedded in the creature's forehead dissolves instantly, crumbling to dust. A bloody indentation resides where the rune once rested.

Go to the next section: **An Old Friend**

KILL IT WITH FIRE

You snatch an oil lamp from a nearby table and throw it at the half-ghoul writhing on the floor. The creature bursts into flame. The smell that fills the room is sickening...

The rune imbedded in the creature's forehead dissolves instantly, crumbling to dust. A bloody indentation resides where the rune once rested.

Go to the next section: **An Old Friend**

AN OLD FRIEND

"Well, that's one way to do it," a familiar voice says from the doorway of the inn.

The voice catches you off guard, how do you respond?

- Spin around, brandishing your weapon and ready yourself for another attack. Go to **Brandish**
- You turn to face your new adversary, arcane energy flaring to life in your hand. You prepare yourself for the worst. Go to **Spellflare**
- Flip a dagger in your hand and spin, launching the weapon at the newcomer. Go to **Dagger Throw**

VATTAR KASARI

Your old comrade, Vattar Kasari, stands before you. A dark cloak is draped over his shoulders, the hood thrown back to reveal his half-elven features. Stubble litters his lower jaw, and his shoulder-length brown hair glistens with melting snowflakes. The long locks hide his elven heritage well. Vattar's gloved hands rest on the weapons sheathed at his waist, a shortsword and dagger. A crossbow is slung across his back.

What do you do?

- Say that you thought he was dead. Go to **Tombstone**



- Mention that his timing, as usual, is anything but fortuitous. Go to **Suspect**
- Ask what in the Nine Hells is going on. Go to **Direct**

CLOSING TIME

Vattar Kasari raises an eyebrow and walks into the ruined common room. The villagers make way, whispering amongst themselves as your old friend steps across the threshold and picks his way through the debris. "You always could hold your own in a fight," Vattar says.

Rholsk steps forward, blocking Vattar's path before he can reach the mutilated corpse of the half-ghoul.

"We're closed," the half-orc grunts, arms crossed over his chest.

What do you do?

- Hold up your hand and say that it's alright, he's an old friend. Go to **Mediator**

- Stand beside Rholsk, and repeat that the establishment is indeed closed. Go to **Sorry, We're Closed**
- You recognized the half-orc's threatening countenance, but you ignore it. Ask what Vattar wants. Go to **Motives**

FRESH AIR

You step outside as the villagers of Verland begin to clean up the ruined common room. Thankfully none of the villagers lost their lives, though many bear nasty cuts and slashes across their bodies. The fight with the undead horror was difficult, and you know that the inn is going to need a hard scrubbing to remove the stains of battle from the floorboards.

"Just let me know if you need somethin'," Rholsk says with a nod. The half-orc takes charge, moving among the wounded and assisting with bandages and stitches. You remember Rholsk mentioned that he used to be a soldier.

Other villagers limp about the building, clearing the debris and broken furniture from the inn, offering to help in whatever way they can. Some mumble and stare silently into the shadows, still in shock from the battle that erupted in their quiet and secluded village.

None of the villagers are eager to go near the corpse of the half-ghoul. The villagers glance in your direction, leaning close and whispering to one another. You're not sure if the villagers are blaming you, or thanking Tymora that you were present to help defeat the undead creature. Either way, hearsay is the least of your concerns at the moment.

The air is cold as you make your way outside. A light dusting of snow covers the ground, glistening in the moonlight. The homes nearby are dark and quiet.

"You're not going to like this," Vattar says, leaning against the railing of the covered porch that surrounds the inn. Shadows fall across his face. "Malisar is alive."

Your stomach suddenly drops, your blood chilling in your veins. *Malisar*. The name still makes you shudder. The human Malisar was the last powerful enemy you and your fellow adventurers defeated before you settled down in Verland.

You can still remember Vattar's blade slicing off Malisar's arm, and the kick that sent your foe plummeting into darkness. And the dark magic that was cast after...

How do you respond?

- Say Malisar can't be alive. You all watched him die. Go to **Witnesses**
- Remain silent and listen. Go to **He's Alive**

HE'S ALIVE

Vattar shakes his head. "I wouldn't believe it either, but I've seen him with my own eyes. He's alive, and he's here. Malisar hasn't stopped searching for a way to heal his affliction."

The half-elf rubs at his face. "It gets worse." His hands drop to his sides, and he stares at the ground for a moment before continuing. "Malisar is working with the Zhentarim." He looks you in the eyes. "They're using those... *things*... creatures like the one that you just killed. Every time we defeat one of them, we make the enemy stronger. Every death bolsters their ranks. They have some kind of wizard helping them. Some necromancer from Thay."

How do you respond?

- Ask where Vattar saw Malisar. Go to **Location**
- Ask about the necromancer. Go to **Thayan**
- Ask what he means by "we". Go to **Allies**

WHAT'S NEXT

"You need to gather your gear, and you need to come with me," Vattar says. "We will make our way into Kryptgarden Forest, and from there I can lead you to the ruins where Malisar is hiding. Help me get close enough, and we can end this."

How do you respond?

- Ask what's in it for you. Go to **Reward**
- Say that you are glad to help. You don't like leaving things unfinished. Go to **Agree**
- Say that you are done adventuring. Go to **Refuse**

AGREE

"We leave at first light," Vattar says. "Gather your belongings and meet me here at the inn. It is little more than a day's ride to the ruins where I last saw Malisar and his band of Zhentarim."

The half-elf begins to turn away and stops. "And when we find him," he says coldly, "I'll be the one to kill him. For good this time. For our friend Serius."

Your throat gets scratchy and begins to burn.

How do you respond?

- Repeat what Vattar said: "For our friend." Go to **Leavetaking**
- Say that he had better do it right this time. Go to **Callous**
- Contemplate the memory of your friend, but remain silent. Go to **Leavetaking**

BRANDISH

You spin around, twirling your weapon. Standing before you is a man you thought to be long dead.

He holds his hands up. "Easy, friend. It's been a long time."

Go to the next section: Vattar Kasari

SPELLFLARE

Arcane energy crackles between your fingers as you turn to stare at a man you thought to be long dead.

"Calm down, friend, I'm not one of them," he says, nodding to the corpse of the undead creature on the floor.

Go to the next section: Vattar Kasari

DAGGER THROW

The dagger flies from your hand, streaking towards a cloaked man standing at the entrance of the inn. The man gasps in surprise, sidestepping the dagger. The blade flashes past the surprised stranger, embedding itself into the frame of the entryway.

"It's nice to see you again too," the man says. He has the face of someone you thought to be long dead.

Go to the next section: Vattar Kasari

TOMBSTONE

Vattar shrugs. "I needed to throw off a few... less than reputable individuals. What better way to avoid a real death than by faking your own, eh?"

You let out a sigh and shake your head. Some things never change, and Vattar would always be a mannerless gurge.

Go to the next section: Closing Time

SUSPECT

"Fortuitous indeed," Vattar replies. "You're lucky that I found you first. But you're right. I need your help with something. And I think you're going to want to hear what I have to say."

Go to the next section: Closing Time

DIRECT

"Those things need to be stopped," Vattar says, pointing to the corpse on the common room floor. "And I know how to do it. Well, sort of. I'm going to need your help. There's more to this than you know."

Go to the next section: Closing Time

MEDIATOR

Rholsk looks at you, then back at Vattar. The massive half-orc grunts, but stands aside.

"Let's discuss this outside," Vattar says, walking out of the inn through the broken doorway.

Add +1 to Vattar's Attitude score.

Go to the next section: Fresh Air

SORRY, WE'RE CLOSED

"Yeah, we're closed!" Your friend Davian adds, grunting and limping forward to stand beside you and Rholsk. His arms are similarly crossed over his chest, and you can see a deep gash across his forehead.

Vattar looks between you, the hulking half-orc, and the small halfling.

"This is serious," Vattar says to you. "If there's anything left of the adventurer I once knew, you'll want to hear this. Let's talk outside." Vattar turns and exits the inn. He shakes his head as he leaves, muttering under his breath.

Subtract -1 from Vattar's Attitude score.

Add +1 to Rholsk and Davian's Attitude scores.

Go to the next section: Fresh Air

MOTIVES

"I just want your help, old friend," Vattar says. "Believe me, you are going to want to hear what I have to say. Come, let us discuss this outside."

Go to the next section: Fresh Air

WITNESSES

"Did we, though?" Vattar asks. "We all watched him fall. We didn't see his body after that. Isn't it possible that he could have survived, that he has been healing and regaining his strength all this time?" Vattar shrugs. "Or maybe he's just risen from the dead."

Go to the next section: He's Alive

LOCATION

"Last I saw, Malisar and the Zhentarim were scouting out some ruins deep within Kryptgarden Forest. I couldn't get too close without being spotted. I'm not entirely sure what they're doing, but it can't be good if our old enemy is involved."

How do you respond?

- Ask about the necromancer. Go to **Thayan**
- Ask what he means by "we". Go to **Allies**

To continue, go to the next section: What's Next

THAYAN

Vattar shrugs. "To be honest, I don't know much about her. We learned about the Blood Witch during our interrogation of a captured Zhent agent."

He notices your expression and laughs. "I know, 'Blood Witch'. *That's* not creepy in the least. Thayans are known for their cruelty, demonology, and powerful magics. I hope we never have to cross her. Unfortunately, in order to stop these creatures, we're going to have to."

How do you respond?

- Ask where Vattar saw Malisar. Go to **Location**
- Ask what he means by "we". Go to **Allies**

To continue, go to the next section: What's Next

ALLIES

Vattar throws his cloak over his shoulder, revealing a silver brooch pinned on the chest of his blackened leather armor. Inscribed on the pin's surface is a crescent moon and harp. "I work for the Harpers now, and for the moment, our goals align. We have to stop Malisar, but we need your help."

How do you respond?

- Ask where Vattar saw Malisar. Go to **Location**
- Ask about the necromancer. Go to **Thayan**

To continue, go to the next section: What's Next

REWARD

Vattar's eyebrows shoot up in surprise. "I didn't think you would still require compensation after all these years. You never cease to surprise me."

He reaches into his cloak and withdraws a hefty pouch of coins. The leather pouch clinks softly as he tosses it to you. "Five hundred gold. And another five hundred when we have Malisar's head."

Subtract -1 from Vattar's Attitude score.

Go to the next section: Agree

REFUSE

Vattar's features darken. "You aren't just refusing me, friend. You're refusing the realm. We *have* to do this. I'm not giving you a choice in the matter. We both owe it to him." You know exactly to whom Vattar is referring.

Subtract -1 from Vattar's Attitude score.

Go to the next section: Agree

CALLOUS

Vattar pauses for a moment and shakes his head. "Don't make me regret this." His tone is hollow. "You had better get some sleep. We ride hard tomorrow. The journey to the ruins won't be easy."

Subtract -1 from Vattar's Attitude score.

Go to the next section: Leavetaking

LEAVETAKING

Your sleep is restless. Your dreams are filled with nightmares and images of the creature you defeated in the common room of the Crossed Staves Inn. In your nightmares, it isn't a cloaked stranger that turns into the half-ghoul, it is Davian. Then it is Rholsk. Then it is you...

You awake the next morning with a jolt.

The sun is just beginning to peek above the treetops, painting the sky with an orange glow. You can hear chickens clucking outside your window. Frost clings to the edges of the window pane.

You have taken a long rest. You recover all of your hit points, spell slots, and your abilities are recharged.

What do you do?

- Quickly don your clothing and gather your gear for the journey ahead. Go to **Get Ready**
- Roll over and mumble five more minutes. Go to **Lazy**

GET READY

You quickly don your clothing and wash the sleep from your eyes using the washbasin in your room. The water is cold and refreshing. The cuts and bruises on your body ache, but you ignore the pain. You know the feeling is only going to get worse as you continue your journey. Vattar needs your help, and the realm will not be safe until Malisar is defeated. You may not like it, but you know that you are the only one who can help the Harper agent. You have fought Malisar before, and that gives you an advantage.

After donning your armor and weapons, you throw your cloak over your shoulders, and strap on your backpack. With a quickness to your step, you make your way down into the cold cellar that you constructed beneath your home.

The cellar is dark and shadowed, and cobwebs cling to the corners and ceiling of the underground chamber. A rack of weapons stands against one wall, covered in a dusty white sheet. Two barrels stand in one corner next to a seldom-used workbench. A heavy, iron-bound wooden door rests ominously at the far end of the room.



You take out a key from the leather pouch at your waist. The runes on the key begin to glow as you approach the massive door. You had hoped that you would never have to open it again, but you don't have much of a choice now. You are going to need all the help you can get.

While the underground cellar and the magical wards that seal your private room were costly to build, the items that you have stored within the chamber are priceless.

You slide the key into the lock and whisper the passphrase.

What is the passphrase?

- Whisper the name of a fallen adventurer. Go to **Speak Password**
- Whisper the name of your lost love. Go to **Speak Password**
- Whisper the name of your most hated enemy. Go to **Speak Password**

- Whisper the elvish word for 'friend'. Go to **Speak Password**
- Burp loudly. Go to **Speak Password**

SPEAK PASSWORD

As you speak the passphrase, magical runes begin to flare across the door's surface. You turn the key in the lock and hear a loud click. The door shifts slightly and begins to swing open. The door opens no more than a crack before stopping. The crack is large enough to fit your arm through. Dust falls from the ceiling, and a stale breeze billows past you.

You pull on the handle, but the door does not budge.

What do you do?

- Examine the door (Investigation). Go to **Search Door**
- Study the door for latent magical energy (Arcana / Detect Magic). Go to **Detect Magic**
- Pull on the door with all your might (Athletics). Go to **Pull Open**

TUNNEL VISION

With the door now open, you see a short hallway stretching out ahead of you. The hallway opens into a dark chamber beyond. Thick spiderwebs cover the walls, floor, and ceiling of the passage. This is not how you had left your storeroom two years ago.

A low chittering noise echoes off the stone walls, catching your attention. The chittering grows louder as two large spiders crawl into view at the far end of the tunnel. Both creatures hiss menacingly when they see you.

Go to the next section: Web Walkers

LAZY

You roll over and try to go back to sleep. Images from the previous night flash through your mind in horrific detail. You see Vattar approach the inn. He rushes inside, greeted by death. He jerks suddenly, and staggers forward, blood running from his mouth. The shadow of the creature rises behind him...

You awake with a start. A rooster crows in the distance. The sun is shining brightly outside your

bedroom window. You had better wake up, Vattar wanted to leave at first light.

Your character gains 1d4 temporary hit points. Unfortunately, you are still a little groggy. Your character also suffers disadvantage on their next attack roll.

Go to the next section: Get Ready

SEARCH DOOR

You take a moment to search the massive, iron-bound door.

Roll an Investigation check, DC 9. If this is your second try, you can take 20 to accomplish this task.

- Success? Go to **Stuck**
- Failure? Go to **Just A Door**

DETECT MAGIC

You close your eyes and hold out your hand, attempting to detect any sign of magical energy that could be preventing the door from opening.

Roll an Arcana Check, DC 14, or cast Detect Magic.

- Success? Go to **Magical Energies**
- Failure? Go to **Desensitized**

PULL OPEN

You take the handle of the door in both hands, planting your feet firmly on the dirt floor.

Roll an Athletics check, DC 15. If this is your second try, you can take 20 to accomplish this task.

- Success? Go to **Tear Free**
- Failure? Go to **Impossible**

STUCK

You trace your hand along the edges of the doorframe. Suddenly your fingers catch on something

solid. You try to pull your hand away, but to no avail. Your hand is stuck! As you try to twist and pull your hand back, all of your fingers become attached to a sticky substance on the far side of the door. With one last tug, you manage to wrench your hand free, and a strip of white webbing comes with it.

You hold your hand up to examine the silver strands attached to your fingers, immediately realizing that the strands are actually the tangled fibers from a giant spider's web!

What do you do?

- Attempt to cut the webs on the other side of the door with your dagger. Go to **Cut Webs**
- Throw a torch (or cast a fire spell) inside the passage and light the webbed passage on fire. Go to **Light 'Em Up**
- Slam the door shut. No amount of dusty gear is worth this. Go to **Slam Shut**

MAGICAL ENERGIES

There is a faint magical emanation from thirty feet away, past the door, but no spells or wards are preventing the door from opening.

What do you do?

- Examine the door (Investigation). Go to **Search Door**
- Pull on the door with all your might (Athletics). Go to **Pull Open**

DESENSITIZED

You detect no magical energy emanating beyond or around the door. Something else must be preventing the wooden structure from opening.

What do you do?

- Examine the door (Investigation). Go to **Search Door**
- Pull on the door with all your might (Athletics). Go to **Pull Open**

JUST A DOOR

Try as you might, nothing catches your attention as you trace your hand along the edges of the door. The

runes that were once glowing have faded, the magical wards deactivated.

What do you do?

- Study the door for latent magical energy (Arcana / Detect Magic). Go to **Detect Magic**
- Pull on the door with all your might (Athletics). Go to **Pull Open**

TEAR FREE

With a roar, you wrench the door open. The door swings free, slamming into the stone wall of the cellar with a loud bang.

Go to the next section: Tunnel Vision

IMPOSSIBLE

You grunt and pull on the handle of the door. The door refuses to budge. Your feet slide out from under you and you fall to the floor, dust rising in the air around you.

What do you do?

- Examine the door (Investigation). Go to **Search Door**
- Study the door for latent magical energy (Arcana / Detect Magic). Go to **Detect Magic**

CUT WEBS

You carefully reach behind the door and into the shadows, slicing through the strands of webbing holding the barricade in place. The process to free the door from the viscid substance takes a few minutes, but you soon have the door free of obstructions. With a triumphant creak, the door begins to swing open on rusted hinges.

Go to the next section: Tunnel Vision

LIGHT 'EM UP

The webs ignite quickly, and smoke begins to fill the cellar. After a short time, the glow of the flames subsides, and the fire burns down to smoldering embers.

You reach forward and try the door once more. With

a triumphant creak, the door swings open on rusted hinges.

Go to the next section: Burnt Remains

SLAM SHUT

As you move forward to slam the door closed, the long, hairy legs of a giant spider curl around the wooden timbers of the door. You hear a low chittering sound emanating from the other side of the barricade.

What do you do?

- Push the door closed with all your might (Athletics). Go to **Push Closed**



BURNT REMAINS

With the door now open, you see a short, charred hallway stretching out ahead of you. The hallway opens into a dark chamber beyond. The blackened remains of spiderwebs cling to the walls and ceiling of the hallway. Orange embers glow dimly on the stone floor of the passage.

A low chittering noise echoes off the stone walls, catching your attention. The chittering grows louder as two giant spiders crawl into view at the far end of the tunnel. Both creatures hiss menacingly when they see you.

Go to the next section: Web Walkers

PUSH CLOSED

You place both hands on the reinforced door and push hard.

Roll an Athletics check, DC 14

- Success? Go to **Mighty**
- Failure? Go to **Strained**

MIGHTY

There is a shriek of pain and a loud crunch as the door slams shut. Three severed spider legs fall to the floor of the cellar, writhing in the dirt (roll 1d4 + strength modifier for damage against the giant spider).

Go to the next section: Loud Crash

STRAINED

Your feet slide in the dirt. Your muscles strain. You push with all of your might, but are unable to close the door. With a gasp, you stagger back and watch as the door rumbles violently. Something large is slamming itself against the reinforced structure!

Go to the next section: Loud Crash

LOUD CRASH

Before you can react, a loud crash resounds throughout the cellar, and the door slams open. Two large spiders crawl out of the shadowed passageway. Both creatures hiss menacingly when they see you.

Go to the next section: Web Walkers

WEB WALKERS

If the spiders did not bash the door open, place your token at the doorway connecting the cellar to the web-strewn passage on Map 2-1: Underground Cellar. Place two tokens to represent the giant spiders on the opposite side of the passage.

If the spiders bashed the door open, place your token near the stairs. Place two tokens for the

spiders at the doorway connecting the cellar to the web-strewn passage.

Roll Initiative and proceed to do battle. Use the Giant Spider stats below for your opponents.

WEAPONS

You are fully armed and armored for this fight. In addition, the weapon rack in the cellar contains all of the starting equipment weapons listed for your character class. You can pick up a weapon and attack in the same action.

TACTICS

Giant Spiders. The giant spiders will fight until you are defeated. The giant spiders can occupy the same square and attack your character by climbing on the walls and ceiling.

Webs. The spiderwebs are highly flammable. If the webs are set on fire, roll a 1d4+1. The result represents the number of rounds that the webs will remain burning. If the webs are ignited, roll 1d20 on each spider's turn. On a result of 15 or higher, the spiders rush through the flames at your character. Otherwise, the spiders wait until the flames burn out to move and attack your character. On each round at initiative count 0, the fire spreads to each adjacent square from the origin square until the tunnel is engulfed in flames. If a creature moves through the flames, or if a creature starts its turn in a burning square, the creature takes 1d6 points of fire damage.

If you did not light the giant spiderwebs on fire and you enter a square with a giant web, your character is restrained until you can free yourself with a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. The webbing can also be destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

GROUP PLAY

If you are playing the adventure with more than one character, add an additional giant spider for each additional player.

GIANT SPIDER

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spider Climb. Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 9 Constitution saving throw or take 2 (1d4) poison damage.

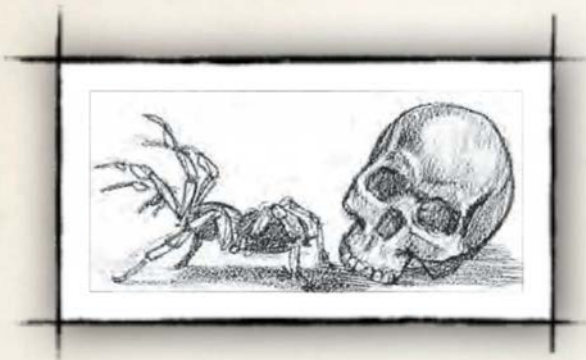
If the giant spiders defeat you, go to: **Defeated**

If you defeat the giant spiders, go to: **Victorious**

DEFEATED

Sharp fangs sink deep into your leg. You collapse to the floor of the cellar, shrieking in fear as a giant spider leaps upon your chest. The creature's fangs dig into your neck, and another sting of pain courses through your body. Blood fills your mouth, and your vision goes dark...

You were defeated by the giant spiders. Roll up a new character and try again. Thanks for playing!



VICTORIOUS

The last of the spiders explodes violently with your final attack. The thick, yellow blood of the beast splatters the walls and floor around you.

You have defeated the giant spiders! Award your character 100xp!

Go to the next section: A Dusty Storeroom

A DUSTY STOREROOM

With the giant spiders defeated, you make your way cautiously down the shadowed hallway and into the chamber beyond. You breath a sigh of relief having finally gained access to your warded storeroom. It is time to gather your adventuring gear and meet Vattar at the inn.

Your heart drops as you take a moment to examine the current state of the room. A large table rests nearby, charred and burnt. The remnants of translucent webs dangle from the wooden surface. The walls and floor around the table are similarly scorched. Lying on the dirt floor next to the table is a burnt corpse.

Cobwebs and a thick layer of dust coat the banners and flags lining the stone walls of the chamber. A suit of dented splint mail stands on display in the far corner of the room, seemingly undisturbed.

One of the walls of the storeroom has collapsed, revealing a cramped and shadowed tunnel beyond. Rubble and dirt has spilled into the room. Sitting on top of the rubble are three giant spider eggs, resting gently in a net of webbing. The eggs are yellow, and semi-transparent. You can see a mass of writhing, blurry shapes moving within the eggs.

What do you do?

- Hurl a spell at the eggs. Go to **Fast Cast**
- Attack the eggs with your weapon. Go to **Shatter**
- Ignore the eggs and search the table. Go to **Lost Treasures**

TINY SHAPES

Your muscles tense as a familiar chittering sound echoes off the stone walls of the storeroom.

Dark shadows begin to climb out of the suit of armor, emerging from the gaps between the overlapping plates of splint mail. The shapes rush towards you, darting across the floor and stone walls. The chittering grows louder as the creatures draw near, and you can see that the beasts are tiny relatives to the giant spiders you just defeated. The spiders are no bigger than a cat, but much more deadly.

Go to the next section: Spider Swarm

FAST CAST

You chant the ancient incantations of the spell and channel the mystical energies of the multiverse. You complete the cast with a complex series of gestures, your eyes focused on the cluster of eggs at the far end of the room.

Choose a spell to cast and roll accordingly. If the spell requires a saving throw, roll a 1d20. If the result is 10 or higher, the save succeeds. An egg has AC 6; hp 5; vulnerability to fire, slashing, piercing, bludgeoning.

- Did you hit at least one egg? Go to **Spell Strike**
- Did you fail to hit any of the eggs? Go to **Miscast**

SHATTER

You draw your weapon and breath deeply, flexing your muscles and preparing your attack.

Make an attack roll against an egg. A giant spider egg has AC 6; hp 5; vulnerability to fire, slashing, piercing, bludgeoning.

- Success? Go to **Weapon Strike**

- Failure? Go to **Missed**

LOST TREASURES

You use your hand to wipe away the ash and debris from the table. Scorched parchments and burnt artifacts have been reduced to charcoal and gray ash. Your hand stops as you brush against something solid, something not completely consumed by the inferno that engulfed this corner of the room. As you pull the item free of and begin to dust it off, a familiar chittering noise catches your attention.

Pick one item from the following list:

- A potion of red glimmering liquid.
- A dusty old scroll.
- A tattered and wrinkled scroll, bound with a gold string.
- A brown leather bag. The leather is cracked and worn.

The list does not necessarily represent all of the items on the table. The choice merely represents the item your character feels and instantly retrieves.

Go to the next section: Just a Moment

SPELL STRIKE

The egg targeted by your magic explodes violently as your spell strikes true. The webs and walls around the pile of rubble are coated in a sour-smelling, yellow ichor.

Go to the next section: Tiny Shapes

WEAPON STRIKE

The egg bursts open from the impact of your weapon. The webs and walls around the pile of rubble are coated in a sour-smelling, yellow ichor.

Go to the next section: Tiny Shapes

JUST A MOMENT

You wipe the item clean of ash and loose cobwebs. You notice that the item seems to be largely intact. You have a brief moment to examine the item before you have to face the source of the muffled chittering noise.

Roll an Arcana check, DC 15, or use the Identify spell on the item you recovered.

- Success? Go to the section for the item you grabbed:
 - **Potion**
 - **Dusty scroll**
 - **Tattered scroll**
 - **Brown bag**
- Failure? Go to **Lack of Concentration**

MISCAST

Your spell misses the egg, striking the webbing adjacent to your target. The magical energy from your spell sputters and pops, melting a section of the webbing surrounding the eggs. An acrid, burnt smell permeates the stale air of the storeroom.

Go to the next section: Tiny Shapes

MISSED

You curse softly under your breath as your weapon connects with the egg and slides away harmlessly, failing to puncture the malleable outer sack. Beads of sweat begin to form on your brow.

Go to the next section: Tiny Shapes

LACK OF CONCENTRATION

You think hard, letting your knowledge of the arcane guide you. The incessant chittering breaks your concentration.

Go to the next section: Tiny Shapes

POTION

You think hard, letting your knowledge of the arcane guide you. Finally you have it! The flask of red glimmering liquid is a Potion of Healing!

Go to the next section: **Tiny Shapes**

DUSTY SCROLL

You think hard, letting your knowledge of the arcane guide you. Finally you have it! The dusty old scroll is a 1st-Level Spell Scroll!

Choose a 1st-level spell from your class's spell list and add the scroll to your inventory.

Go to the next section: **Tiny Shapes**

TATTERED SCROLL

You close your eyes and let your knowledge of the arcane guide you. Finally you have it! The tattered and wrinkled scroll is a Scroll of Protection!

Go to the next section: **Tiny Shapes**

BROWN BAG

You think hard, letting your knowledge of the arcane guide you. Finally you have it! The brown leather bag is a Bag of Holding!

Go to the next section: **Tiny Shapes**

SPIDER SWARM

Go to Map 2-2: Ancient Storeroom. Place your character token on a square adjacent to the spider eggs if you attacked them with a melee weapon. If you attacked with a ranged weapon or a spell, place your character token at the entrance of the room. If you went for the treasures on the table, place your token adjacent to the table.

Four spiders are attacking you. The remaining eggs burst open and hatch. If you were only able to destroy one spider egg or less, add another 1d4-1 spiders (minimum 0) to the total number of enemies. Roll 1d6 for each spider. If the result is even, place the spider token in a square on the east side of the room, adjacent to the suit of

armor. If the result is odd, place the spider token on the west side of the room, adjacent to the webs.

Roll Initiative and proceed to do battle. Use the Spider stats below for your opponents.

TACTICS

Spiders. The spiders will fight until you are defeated. The spiders will attempt to move into your square and climb onto your character if they can get close enough. Climbing onto your character provokes an opportunity attack. If a spider has successfully climbed onto your character, it gains advantage on its next attack roll. A maximum of three spiders can be on your character at any time. Your character moves at full speed when one spider is climbing on them, and moves at half speed when two or more spiders are climbing on them.

On your turn, you can use an action to knock away any spider that has climbed onto your character. If you want to attack a spider that has climbed onto your character, roll with disadvantage. If you want to use a skill check to knock a spider off of your character, make an Athletics check, DC 9. If you want to grab and throw a spider, make an Athletics check, DC 12. If a spider is knocked away, it falls into an adjacent square. If it is grabbed and thrown, roll a 1d6. The result represents the number of squares the spider travels before falling to the ground. If the spider strikes a solid object before it can travel the distance rolled, the creature splatters against the object and is destroyed.

Webs. The spiderwebs are highly flammable. If the webs are set on fire, roll a 1d4+1. The result represents the number of rounds that the webs will remain burning. If the webs are ignited and positioned between your character and the spiders, roll 1d20 on each spider's turn. On a result of 15 or higher, the spiders rush through the flames at your character. Otherwise, the spiders wait until the flames burn out, or attempt to move around the flames to attack your character. On each round at initiative count 0, the fire spreads to each adjacent square from the origin square until the webs are engulfed in flame. If a creature moves through the flames, or if a creature starts

it's turn in a burning square, the creature takes 1d6 points of fire damage.

If you enter a square with a giant web, your character is restrained until you can free yourself with a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. The webbing can also be destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

Difficult Terrain. Any square with large stones or a giant web is considered difficult terrain.

GROUP PLAY

If you are playing the adventure with more than one character, have an additional 1d4+1 spiders swarm the players on rounds 3 and 4 of the encounter. These spiders emerge from beyond the broken wall.

SPIDER

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)

Skills Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Spider Climb. Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

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

If the spiders defeat you, go to: **Swarmed**

If you defeat the spiders, go to: **Squashed**

SWARMED

Tiny stings of pain wrack your entire body. You fall to the floor of the storeroom, your vision blurry. *This can't be how it ends.* Continuous sharp stings cause you to convulse uncontrollably, and your vision goes dark.

You were defeated by the spiders. Roll up a new character and try again. Thanks for playing!

SQUASHED

A sickening crunch resounds throughout the chamber as you destroy the last of the tiny spiders. All of your senses are on high alert. You appear to be safe... for now.

You have defeated the swarm of tiny spiders! Award your character 100xp!

Go to the next section: Lost Treasures

LOST TREASURES

You take a few moments to catch your breath, glancing around the room. The stench emanating from the shattered spider eggs stings your nostrils.

Many years have passed since you were last here, and you definitely did not leave the storeroom in this state. At some point, the spiders must have burrowed in from beyond the collapsed wall and built a nest. The burnt corpse of a humanoid tells the tale of another who was a little too curious about your locked treasures.

On the far side of the room, past the pile of rubble and the remnants of giant spider eggs, a shadowed tunnel descends into darkness.

The table that used to hold the majority of your gear is blackened and burnt. A charred corpse lies motionless on the floor beside the table.

The splint mail that was once on display now lies scattered across the dirt floor.

What do you do?

- Recover your adventuring gear from the table. Go to **Salvage**
- Investigate the dark tunnel beyond the collapsed wall. Go to **Shadowed Recesses**
- Examine the dented splint mail scattered in the corner of the room. Go to **Armor Display**
- Examine the burnt corpse. Go to **Extra Crispy**

ROOM OPTIONS

What do you do next?

- Recover your adventuring gear from the table. Go to **Salvage**
- Investigate the dark tunnel beyond the collapsed wall. Go to **Shadowed Recesses**
- Examine the dented splint mail scattered in the corner of the room. Go to **Armor Display**
- Examine the burnt corpse. Go to **Extra Crispy**

When you are ready to continue, go to: Back Where It All Started

SALVAGE

Though the table and this corner of the room are scorched and warped from fire, you are able to sift through the ash and recover one item that may prove useful on your journey. It seems Tymora has not abandoned you yet.

Choose an item from the following list and add it to your inventory:

- Wand of Magic Missiles
- Weapon +1
- Mithral plate armor
- 1st-level spell scroll x2 (choose the spells from your list of class spells)
- Potion of Healing x2
- Cloak of Protection
- Bracers of Archery
- Pearl of Power

To continue, go to: Room Options

EXTRA CRISPY

You kneel down beside the burnt corpse. Most of the flesh is blackened and charred. The tattered remains of

a tunic and leather armor still cling to the body. The face has completely melted away.

Roll an Investigation check, DC 14.

- Success? Go to **Clues**
- Failure? Go to **Nothing of Interest**

SHADOWED RECESSES

You carefully pick your way through the rubble of the collapsed wall. The ichor leaking from the eggs has diluted the adhesive of the webbing, making your ascent up the pile of loose stones easier than it could have been. The soles of your boots and the palms of your hands still cling for a moment to the fibrous strands, but you manage to clamber up to the mouth of the shadowed tunnel without too much of a struggle.

The tunnel is small and cramped, and is comprised of loose dirt and dangling roots. The tunnel extends a short distance into the earth before sloping upward and turning sharply to the right. You think that you may be able to crawl through the tunnel, but you have no idea where the passage might lead.

What do you do?

- Crawl through the tunnel and see where it leads. Go to **Explorer**

To see more choices, go to: Room Options

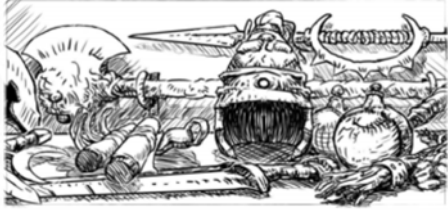
ARMOR DISPLAY

The dented splint mail has seen better days. You lean down and pick up the chest guard. The interior padding of the armor is coated with cobwebs. Rust has started to spread across the overlapping plates of mail. All in all, the armor just needs a good cleaning to be usable once more.

Add the armor to your inventory if you choose to keep the battered splint mail. During a short rest, you can choose to repair the armor. If you selected the Blacksmith trade at the start of the game, after you make your repairs, the armor gains an additional +1 AC for 12 hours. Alternatively, during a long rest in a town or village, you can choose to have someone repair the armor for you. Once the armor is repaired, it

functions as splint armor.

To see more choices, go to: **Room Options**



CLUES

Searching the corpse, you are able to discern that the body is fairly old, months at the least. You also discover a worn leather pouch that seems to have fused with the remains of the body. The source of the heat that scorched this individual must have been terribly powerful.

You reach down and peel the leather pouch away from the body. Charred remains of flesh cling to the blackened leather before tearing free with a sickening squelch. The pouch contains a handful of melted gold coins and a crispy, fragile note.

As you lean back on your heels to examine the note, shards of glass crunch beneath your leather boots.

Add 50 gold coins to your inventory.

What do you do next?

- Examine the Note. Go to **Note**
- Examine the shards of glass. Go to **Glass**

NOTHING OF INTEREST

Other than the body appearing fairly old, nothing of interest jumps out at you as you investigate the burnt corpse.

To continue, go to: **Room Options**

EXPLORER

You crawl into the tunnel. Pushing yourself through the cramped passage, you navigate past loose rocks and tangled roots that protrude from the cavern walls. After following the tunnel to the right, you can see that the passage continues another thirty feet before opening up into a small cavern.

You continue forward, eventually reaching the lip of the tunnel overlooking the cavern. Slivers of sunlight filter down from a narrow opening fifty feet above. You can see swaying limbs of treetops through the sunlit opening. A frayed rope dangles twenty feet from the narrow opening overhead. Wind whistles into the cavern, and water trickles down the chamber's nearly-vertical stone walls.

The makeshift tunnel that you crawled through stands twenty feet above the cavern floor. A similarly frayed rope, identical to the one dangling overhead, lies coiled on the stone floor. A pickaxe and shovel rest next to a mound of loose dirt and broken rocks.

What do you do?

- Watch and listen for anything out of the ordinary (Perception). Go to **Sentinel**
- Climb down into the chamber (Athletics). Go to **Spelunker**
- Go back down the tunnel and return to the storeroom. Go to **Room Options**

NOTE

You unfurl the small note. The parchment is crisp and dry, no larger than the palm of your hand. The paper cracks slightly between your fingers. The note is written in common. The penmanship is sloppy and hastily written, combining a number of crude symbols and slang terms.

If you have **Thieves' Cant**, go to: **Coded Message**

Otherwise, roll an Intelligence check, DC 19 to try to decode the note.

- Success? Go to **Decoded**
- Failure? Go to **Stumped**

GLASS

You take a moment to examine the shards of glass that crunched beneath your feet. You manage to gather a

few of the broken pieces into your hand. The glass is curved, the edges blackened and smooth.

Roll an Insight check, DC 15. If you managed to decode the note, you have advantage on the roll.

- Success? Go to **Eureka**
- Failure? Go to **No Luck**

CODED MESSAGE

You are more than familiar with the secret mix of jargon and dialect that thieves share when attempting to communicate illicit activities. It takes you only a moment to decipher the message:

Take these vials Lerris cooked up and burn the damned things out. Whatever you do, don't drop 'em!

What do you do next?

- Examine the shards of glass. Go to **Glass**

To see more choices, go to: Room Options

SENTINEL

You wait quietly, crouched in the tunnel overlooking the dark cavern. You turn your head, trying to listen through the wind as it whistles past your ears.

Roll a Perception check, DC 12.

- Success? Go to **Spotted**
- Failure? Go to **Silence**

DECODED

You examine the note in your hand, tracing the strange symbols into the dirt beneath your feet. You erase, rearrange, and recombine the symbols until you think you have the answer. The note reads:

Take these vials Lerris cooked up and burn the damned things out. Whatever you do, don't drop 'em!

What do you do next?

- Examine the shards of glass. Go to **Glass**

To see more choices, go to: Room Options

STUMPED

You examine the note in your hand, tracing the strange symbols into the dirt beneath your feet. You erase, rearrange, and recombine the symbols. Try as you might, you are unable to come up with any kind of comprehensible sentence. You are not sure what the message could mean.

To continue, go to: Room Options

SPOTTED

You listen intently for any suspicious sounds emanating from within the cavern. The howling wind and a steady trickle of water dripping down the stone walls is all that you can hear. No other sound catches your attention at this time.

As your eyes survey the darkness of the cave, you notice the corner of a dusty leather bag poking out from behind a mound of dirt on the cavern floor.

What do you do?

- Use **Mage Hand** to grab the leather bag and bring the object back to you (**Cantrip**). Go to **Magic Hands**
- Climb down into the chamber (**Athletics**). Go to **Spelunker**
- Return to the ancient storeroom. Go to **Crawl Back**

SILENCE

Your breathing is steady. The wind howling throughout the cavern is loud, but you hear little else that would give cause for concern. The steady trickle of water gently dripping down the stone walls echoes throughout the underground chamber.

You survey the darkness of the cave, but are unable to see anything of interest from your vantage.

What do you do?

- Climb down into the chamber (**Athletics**). Go to **Spelunker**
- Go back down the tunnel and return to the storeroom. Go to **Crawl Back**

EUREKA

You transfer the glass shards from one hand to the other, looking between the charred corpse, and the portion of the room that is scorched and blackened. You have heard of powerful alchemical concoctions, and you come to the conclusion that the thief must have mishandled a vial of alchemist's fire. Last mistake he'll ever make.

What do you do next?

- Examine the note. Go to **Note**

To see more choices, go to: **Room Options**

NO LUCK

Try as you might, you are unable to connect the dots. The thief died a terrible death, and ruined a majority of your adventuring gear in the process. The cause will remain a mystery.

What do you do next?

- Examine the note. Go to **Note**

To see more choices, go to: **Room Options**

MAGIC HANDS

You cast the cantrip. A magical, floating hand appears next to the leather bag. Wisps of arcane energy swirl about the spectral appendage as it gently bobs in the air, awaiting your command.

What do you do?

- Use the magic hand to retrieve the items, one at a time, from the floor of the cavern. Go to **Arcane Handiwork**
- Go back down the tunnel and return to the storeroom. Go to **Crawl Back**

SPELUNKER

You carefully begin to descend to the cavern floor, lowering your body over the lip of the excavated tunnel...

Roll an Athletics check, DC 9.

- Success? Go to **Climb Down**

- Failure? Go to **Loose Stones**

CLIMB DOWN

The descent to the cavern floor takes no more than a few seconds. You are able to find handholds and footholds from roots and jagged stones protruding from the cave wall. You lower yourself down and drop to the cavern floor with a thud.

Go to: **Underground Cavern**



LOOSE STONES

Your hands slip, the stones you were holding onto tumble free from the cavern wall. Your boots slide against the rough stone as you plummet the remaining ten feet to the ground below. You collapse on the floor of the cave with a grunt of pain (**Roll 1d6 bludgeoning damage**).

Go to: **Underground Cavern**

ARCANE HANDIWORK

The spectral hand picks up the leather bag and carries the objects back to you. The magic hand repeats this process for the pickaxe, shovel, and rope. Before long, you have all of the contents of the cavern resting at your feet. The tunnel is starting to feel even more cramped than before.

What do you do?

- Examine the bag. Go to **Discarded Bag**
- Examine the tools. Go to **Tools**
- Examine the rope. Go to **Waterlogged Rope**

- Return to the storeroom. Go to **Crawl Back**

UNDERGROUND CAVERN

The stone floor is cold and slick with muddy runoff. A mound of dirt rises beside you. Next to the mound of dirt are cracked and broken stones, and a discarded pickaxe and shovel. A frayed rope rests nearby.

A narrow fissure in the east wall of the cavern disappears into darkness. The fissure is too small for you to fit through.

If you did not use Mage Hand to grab the leather bag, you also see:

Sitting behind the pile of dirt is a dusty leather bag.

What do you do?

- Examine the leather bag (Investigation). Go to **Discarded Bag**
- Examine the shovel and pickaxe. Go to **Tools**
- Examine the frayed rope. Go to **Waterlogged Rope**
- Climb back up to the excavated tunnel (Athletics). Vattar is expecting you. Go to **Ascend**

DISCARDED BAG

The tattered, leather bag is covered in dirt and dust. You open up the satchel and root around inside.

Roll and Investigation check, DC 12. You have advantage on the roll if you examined the burnt corpse in the ancient storeroom.

- Success? Go to **Loot**
- Failure? Go to **More Trash**

LOOT

Inside the bag, you find a handful of gold coins, a pair of old gloves, a sack of moldy rations, and two glass flasks filled with a green, bubbling liquid. The glowing flasks bathe the bag in a soft green light. Green flames flicker on the surface of the liquid. You believe that each flask contains a volatile portion of alchemist's fire, which can cause very serious burns if mishandled.

Add two vials of Alchemist's Fire and 5 gold pieces to your inventory.

What do you do?

- Examine the shovel and pickaxe. Go to **Tools**
- Examine the frayed rope. Go to **Waterlogged Rope**

If you are still in the tunnel, you can:

- Return to the storeroom. Go to **Crawl Back**

If have climbed down into the cavern, you can:

- Climb back up to the excavated tunnel (Athletics). Go to **Ascend**

MORE TRASH

Inside the bag, you find a handful of gold coins, a pair of old gloves, a sack of moldy rations, and two glass flasks filled with a bubbling green liquid. The flasks bathe the bag in a soft green light. Green flames flicker on the surface of the liquid. You are unsure what the flasks might contain, but the substance looks extremely volatile.

Add two vials of volatile liquid and 5 gold pieces to your inventory.

What do you do?

- Examine the shovel and pickaxe. Go to **Tools**
- Examine the frayed rope. Go to **Waterlogged Rope**

If you are still in the tunnel, you can:

- Go back down the tunnel and return to the storeroom. Go to **Crawl Back**

If have climbed down into the cavern, you can:

- Climb back up to the excavated tunnel (Athletics). Go to **Ascend**

TOOLS

The edges of the pickaxe and shovel are rusty and chipped. The wooden handles of the tools are wet, and stained with dried blood. Both pieces of equipment look like they could break at any moment if used again.

What do you do?

- Examine the leather bag (Investigation). Go to **Discarded Bag**
- Examine the frayed rope. Go to **Waterlogged Rope**

If you are still in the tunnel, you can:

- Return to the storeroom. Go to **Crawl Back**

If have climbed down into the cavern, you can:

- Climb back up to the excavated tunnel (Athletics). Go to **Ascend**

WATERLOGGED ROPE

The rope is soaked with water. One end is frayed and split. The rope looks like it may have been severed by something with a sharp edge. You squint up at the rope dangling from the narrow opening overhead. The end of the dangling rope is also frayed and torn.

What do you do?

- Examine the leather bag (Investigation). Go to **Discarded Bag**
- Examine the shovel and pickaxe. Go to **Tools**

If you are still in the tunnel, you can:

- Go back down the tunnel and return to the storeroom. Go to **Crawl Back**

If have climbed down into the cavern, you can:

- Climb back up to the excavated tunnel (Athletics). Go to **Ascend**

ASCEND

You grip the jagged rocks protruding from the partially excavated wall, and begin to climb up to the makeshift tunnel above.

Roll an Athletics check, DC 9. You have advantage on the roll if you successfully climbed down earlier.

- Success? Go to **Climb Up**
- Failure? Go to **Slick Stones**

CLIMB UP

Your ascent up to the tunnel is quick and painless. Before long, you are crouched in the mouth of the excavated passage overlooking the shadowed cavern.

To go back to the ancient storeroom, go to: Crawl Back

To leave the underground cellar and head back to the inn, go to: Back Where It All Started

SLICK STONES

Your feet slide on the wall and your hands slip from the wet stones. You clench your jaw in frustration. You examine the wall, looking for the best route up...

Roll another Athletics check, but this time take 20. Go to: Climb Up

CRAWL BACK

You emerge from the cramped tunnel and stand up, stretching your back and arms.

The table that held the majority of your gear from your previous years of adventure is blackened and burnt. A charred corpse rests on the floor beside the table.

The splint mail that was on display lies scattered across the floor.

What do you do?

- Recover your adventuring gear from the table. Go to **Salvage**
- Examine the dented splint mail scattered in the corner of the room. Go to **Armor Display**
- Examine the burnt corpse. Go to **Extra Crispy**

To leave the storeroom and continue, go to: Back Where It All Started

BACK WHERE IT ALL STARTED

Having recovered what little remained of your adventuring gear from your warded storeroom, you procure the rest of the traveling supplies from your home, and finalize your preparations

for the journey ahead. Feel free to treat this downtime as a short rest, and fill your inventory with any common supplies that you may need on your travels.

When you are ready to continue, read the following:

Having gathered your adventuring gear and equipped yourself for the journey into Kryptgarden Forest, you exit your home, and make your way back to the Crossed Staves Inn.

The sky is cloudy and grey. You have to fight against the strong winds to keep your cloak wrapped around your shoulders. The chill touch of winter hangs in the air, and tiny white snowflakes begin to drift down from the sky as you push open the door to the inn. It seems that Rholsk was already able to replace the wooden door that had been destroyed in the previous night's altercation.

A warm blast of heat and a crackling fire greets you as you enter the building. Three cloaked men stand at the bar. One of the men is massive, with a bald head and broad shoulders. Another is wiry and tall, and has the hood of his cloak drawn up, hiding his features in dark shadows. The last man has dark, oily hair pulled into a tight ponytail, and turns to greet you with a crooked smile.

Vattar is present, leaning against the bar and nursing a steaming mug of cider. Rholsk stands behind the bar, wiping a ceramic bowl with a towel. Both of their eyes flick to you with concern.

Other than the three strangers, the common room is vacant. A large rug has been thrown over the floorboards where the half-ghoul died. The broken furniture has been removed, and only a few tables remain, making the common room feel empty and bare.

"Ah, I suppose this is the man I was hearing so much about," the cloaked stranger says. His face is gaunt, almost grey. His nose is long and narrow, and his eyes are too close together, appearing almost beady. Whiskers sprout from his chin, and crooked yellow teeth comprise a similarly crooked smile. He has dark lines beneath his eyes.

"And I was just telling you that we're closed for the day," Rholsk says. "So if you won't be bookin' any rooms, I'm going to have to ask you to leave." The half-orc sets the bowl down and crosses his arms over his chest. "So, what'll it be?"

"My mistake," the stranger says, cocking his head to the side. He never takes his eyes off you. "Order a

round, will you lads? For the road. I have some questions for our new... *friend*. Now, what did you say your name was?"

"We've answered your questions, *friend*," Vattar responds, slamming his mug down on the counter and rising from bar. "We haven't seen the man named Merric. I'm the only guest that has booked a room of late. You heard the barkeep, the inn is closed. Best be on your way."

"Tsk, tsk," the beady-eyed man clicks his tongue. "How is that for foreign hospitality? Let me at least introduce myself. The name is Xefna." He holds out a gloved hand in your direction. "And yours is...?"

What do you do?

- Tell the stranger your name. Go to **Nickname**
- Remain silent. Go to **Backwater Town**
- Tell the stranger that it is time to leave. Go to **Time to Leave**

BACKWATER TOWN

"You see, lads," Xefna says, rising to his feet, "this is why I hate coming to these backwater towns and questioning these inbred swine. They always just end up lying to our faces. They call us liars, we call them liars, it just goes on and on and on."

Vattar starts to speak, but Xefna cuts him off, holding up a hand. "Please, save us the charade. I know that you are lying. We know that our companion was here. We know what you have seen. We tracked Merric to this fine establishment."

"Never heard of him," Rholsk grumbles. You notice his hand reach beneath the bar.

"Oh, he wouldn't have been able to tell you his name, I don't think," Xefna replies. "He probably looked... *unwell*. He had an issue, you see. He couldn't control the power that he was given. The power granted by our Blood Witch.

"But I'm afraid we've come to the hard part of the conversation. This really is my least favorite part." A wide grin spreads across Xefna's face, his eyes sparkling with malice.

Xefna turns to Vattar. "We have been blessed with divine gifts to aid in our cause, and our mistress demands that we silence those who have witnessed the birth of her children." He holds a gloved hand to his forehead, then turns back to face you.

Behind him, Vattar curses, reaching for his weapon. You hear the sound of steel being drawn. A dark rune is embedded in Xefna's forehead.



"It's nothing personal, you just saw something the realm is not yet ready for. I'm afraid we'll have to kill you all, and burn your village to the ground." Xefna's words make your blood run cold.

The rune flares to life. Dark tendrils of shadow energy spill forth from the rune as Xefna's body begins to grow thick tufts of fur. His ears become pointed, and his bones crack. His jaw protrudes violently, his nose widening. Long fangs dripping with saliva elongate dramatically from a massive underbite. He seems to have taken on the form of a bugbear!

One of the other cloaked newcomers, a heavy-set bald man, kicks over a stool and draws a large wooden club. The last of Xefna's companions brandishes two curved blades and clashes with Vattar. Sparks flash in the room as the cloaked man and half-elf exchange blows.

"Don't let them turn!" Vattar shouts.

Xefna laughs, emitting a deep bestial noise, and lunges towards you.

With a loud roar, Rholsk barrels into the back of misshapen Xefna. The two fall to the floor, rolling and grunting.

The door to the inn suddenly slams open, and a gust of wind billows past you. You turn to see Davian stride into the room, a large pack rests on his shoulders. The backpack is stacked high with traveling supplies.

"Thinking you could leave... without... me?" the halfling's voice trails off as he looks around the room, confusion wrinkling his face into a frown.

The heavy-set stranger chuckles to himself and stomps towards Davian, twirling his large club. "Another of the wee ones. Must be my lucky day. Let me introduce you to my friend, little man." You notice the bald man's club is stained with dried blood.

Go to the next section: The Turned

NICKNAME

Xefna listens intently as you tell him your name, and his eyes light up. You can see now that he is wearing stained riding leathers beneath his cloak. "Yes! This is the one I have heard so much about." He turns to his companions and pulls a stool away from the bar. He sits down and turns to face you. "You are the one that defeated the devil single-handedly! At least, that's what the other villagers said. Oh, they were a nice couple. Darby and Piqina, I think their names were? Two halfling folk. Made terrible shepherd's pies." Xefna wrinkles his nose.

Vattar looks at you hurriedly, giving the slightest shake of his head. This is not going to end well.

"You're saying *this* weakling defeated one of the Turned, Xefna?" Another of the strangers asks, stepping forward and looking you up and down. The man is stocky and bald, and has a bulbous nose that looks like it has been broken more than once. He takes a swig of his ale and burps. "I doubt it." He wipes his mouth with the back of his arm. You catch sight of a heavy wooden club swinging at his waist.

What do you do?

- Say that you have no idea what they are talking about (Deception). Go to **White Lie**
- Admit that you are indeed the mighty slayer of the half-ghoul. Go to **Slayer of Beasts**
- Remain silent. Go to **Backwater Town**

TIME TO LEAVE

Xefna holds up his gloved hands. "I'm only trying to enjoy a mug of ale, and track down our lost... *companion*." He smiles as he takes a sip of his drink. "Now *that* is a tasty beverage!" Xefna smacks his lips, nodding to himself as he examines his spirit.

Add +1 to Rholsk and Vattar's attitude scores.

Go to the next section: Backwater Town

WHITE LIE

You look Xefna in the eyes and say that you have no idea what he is talking about.

Roll a Deception check, DC 15.

- Success? Go to **Disbelief**
- Failure? Go to **Backwater Town**

SLAYER OF BEASTS

Xefna claps his hands together. "You see, I knew we had the right person."

"That one gets hit in the head a lot," Vattar says quickly, glaring at you. "Rumor has it, they survived a kick from a horse. They would agree with anything you say. Come now, let us share another drink before you have to be on your way." You notice Vattar palm a clear vial out of his belt pouch. "Rholsk, another round, please."

"Really," Rholsk rumbles. "That one doesn't know what he's talking about." The half orc motions in your direction. "We don't get many travelers through here. We don't even know what these *Turned* are. What kind of beast did you say they were?"

Rholsk gathers three more mugs and begins filling them with ale.

Subtract -1 from Rholsk and Vattar's attitude scores.

Go to the next section: Backwater Town

DISBELIEF

"That's not what Darby said," Xefna replies. "Although he did take some convincing. We really had to *drag* the information out of him."

Xefna's two companions chuckle to themselves.

"Tell me, friend. Have you ever seen how fast a horse can run while dragging a halfling behind it?" Xefna asks.

What do you do?

- Say that Xefna had better be kidding. Go to **Backwater Town**
- Threaten Xefna. Go to **Backwater Town**

THE TURNED

Go to Map 3-1: The Crossed Staves Inn (Refurbished). Place your character token on any square fifteen feet from the entryway. Place separate tokens for Rholsk and Xefna ten feet from the fireplace. The tokens should be adjacent to one another. Place a token for Davian five feet inside the entryway. Place a token for the bandit with the club on any square adjacent to Davian. Place two tokens for the remaining bandit and Vattar on a square adjacent to the front of the bar.

During this encounter, you will be controlling allies that will assist you in battle. You will also gain the advantages of having a Bonded Ally. To determine who your Bonded Ally is, select the NPC with the highest Attitude score from among Rholsk, Vattar, and Davian. If any of the Attitude scores are equal, choose your favorite from among the NPCs with equal Attitude scores. Your Bonded Ally will always attempt to help you during the fight, by either using the Help action, flanking your targeted enemy, or by using one of their Ally Tactics when available. Only your Bonded Ally can use their Ally Tactic during this fight. If any of your allies drop to 0 hit points during the fight, roll for death saving throws as normal at the start of each of their turns.

Roll Initiative and proceed to do battle. Use the Bandit stats and Xefna (Turned) stats below for your opponents. Use the Rholsk stats, Vattar stats, and Davian stats for your allies.

If you want to keep the fight simple, roll a single initiative for the enemies, and a single initiative for your allies. Each enemy and each ally will act on their respective initiative count. If you would like to keep the fight more tactical, but with a little more bookkeeping, roll separate initiatives for each enemy and each ally.

TACTICS

Xefna. Xefna has taken the form of one of the Blood Witch's minions, the creatures referred to as the Turned, and has assumed the shape of a bugbear. Xefna starts the fight grappling with Rholsk and will attempt to break out of the grapple and fight Rholsk until the half-orc drops to 0 hit points. Xefna will use his Arcane Blast

ability as often as possible. If Rholsk falls, Xefna will target the main character and fight them until they are defeated. Xefna will also try to arm himself with any kind of improvised weapons available, most likely a stool or chair. Xefna will use this object as an improvised weapon, gaining the bugbear Brute passive ability. Give a stool or chair the same stats as a greatclub.

Bandits. The bandits are currently fighting their respective chosen targets. The heavy-set, bald thug with the club is targeting Davian, while the more lithe, dexterous bandit with two blades is targeting Vattar. If either of the bandit's targets falls to 0 hit points, and if they have no other creatures attacking them, they will assist Xefna.

Rholsk. The half-orc fighter will continue to maintain his grapple on Xefna until Xefna frees himself. If Xefna frees himself, Rholsk will use his battleaxe. If Rholsk is your character's Bonded Ally, Rholsk will use his Ally Tactic Aegis whenever possible. Don't forget to roll for the recharge at the start of each of Rholsk's turns!

Davian. The halfling bard will yelp and run for cover (using the Disengage action when necessary), attempting to keep himself distanced from any targets that close to melee range. Davian will assist the player with the least amount of hit points by way of spell or weapon attack. If Davian is your character's Bonded Ally, Davian will use his Ally Tactic Tall Tale whenever possible. Tall Tale can be spent whenever Davian grants Bardic Inspiration to a creature.

Vattar. The half-elf rogue will attempt to subdue the bandit attacking him, and then assist the player with the least amount of hit points. If Vattar is your character's Bonded Ally, he will use his Ally Tactic Bad Luck whenever possible.

The Rune. The rune in Xefna's forehead may be targeted and attacked. You have disadvantage on the attack roll, but damage dealt to Xefna is doubled if the attack hits. The rune cannot be destroyed.

Difficult Terrain. Any square with a table or other piece of furniture is considered difficult terrain.

GROUP PLAY

If you are playing the adventure with more than one player, adjust the hit points of all enemies as follows:

- 2 players: Add 10 hit points to each bandit.
- 3+ players: Double all enemy hit points.



XEFNA (TURNED)

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	11(+0)	9(-1)

Skills Stealth +6, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Xefna hits with it (included in the attack).

Surprise Attack. If Xefna surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

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

Chair Smash. *Improvised Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Arcane Blast (Recharge 5–6). Xefna magically emits a wave of thunderous energy in a 20-foot cube originating from Xefna. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the creature saves, they take no damage and are knocked prone.

BANDIT

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather)

Hit Points 15 (3d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (50 XP)

Actions

Dual Strike. If the bandit is wielding two light melee weapons, it makes two attacks with its daggers.

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

RHOLSK

Medium half-orc fighter, lawful neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 20 (2d10 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Relentless Endurance. When Rholsk is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, he can drop to 1 hit point instead. He can't use this feature again until he finishes a Long Rest.

Savage Attacks. When Rholsk scores a critical hit with a melee weapon Attack, he can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Actions

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Second Wind. Rholsk has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his Turn, he can use a Bonus Action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 2. Once Rholsk uses this feature, he must finish a short or Long Rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. Rholsk can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On Rholsk's Turn, he can take one additional action on top of his regular action and a possible Bonus Action. Once Rholsk uses this feature, he must finish a short or Long Rest before he can use it again.

Aegis (Recharge 5–6). Ally Tactic; When a creature Rholsk can see attacks a target other

than himself that is within 5 feet of him, Rholsk can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the Attack roll. If the attack hits, Rholsk takes the damage instead of the intended target. The damage dealt is reduced by Rholsk's Constitution modifier.

DAVIAN STOUTHEART

Small halfling bard, lawful good

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 14 (2d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Halfling

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Lucky. When Davian rolls a 1 on the d20 for an Attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Halfling Nimbleness. Davian can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than his own.

Brave. Davian has advantage on saving throws against being Frightened.

Spellcasting. Davian is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Davian knows the following bard spells:

Cantrips (at will): vicious mockery, true strike

1st level (3 slots): bane, cure wounds, faerie fire, healing word, sleep

Actions

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

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Bardic Inspiration. Davian can inspire others through stirring words or music. To do so, Davian must use a Bonus Action on his Turn to choose one creature other than himself within 60 feet of him who can hear him. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, Attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Bardic Inspiration die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Bardic Inspiration die at a time. Davian can use this feature a number of times equal to his Charisma modifier (a minimum of once). Davian regains any expended uses when he finishes a Long Rest.

Tall Tale (Recharge 5–6). *Ally Tactic:* Davian can choose to spend Tall Tale when he targets a creature with Bardic Inspiration. Any creature that Davian targets with Tall Tale can apply the Inspiration die to health points recovered, damage dealt as part of an attack, or to reduce damage from an enemy attack.

VATTAR KASARI

Medium half-elf rogue, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarf

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Vattar has advantage on saving throws against being Charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Vattar can deal an extra 1d6 damage to one creature that he hits

with an Attack if he has advantage on the Attack roll. The Attack must use a Finesse or a ranged weapon. Vattar doesn't need advantage on the Attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't Incapacitated, and Vattar doesn't have disadvantage on the Attack roll.

Actions

Duel Wield. Vattar makes two weapon attacks with his shortsword and dagger.

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

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Bad Luck (Recharge 5–6). *Ally Tactic:* When a creature Vattar can see attacks a target other than himself, or the creature rolls a saving throw against a spell, Vattar can use his reaction to impose a penalty to the the roll equal to Vattar's Dexterity modifier.

If you are defeated, go to: **Beatdown**

If you defeat Xefna and his lackeys, go to: **Victorious In Battle**

BEATDOWN

With one more solid hit, you collapse to the floor of the inn, your body broken and bleeding. You can barely open your eyes through the warm blood dripping down your face. Dark silhouetted figures stand over you and laugh as darkness consumes you.

You were defeated by Xefna and his gang. Roll up a new character and try again. Thanks for playing!

VICTORIOUS IN BATTLE

With a pained roar, the last of your opponents collapses to the floor of the inn. Dark pools of blood begin to spread beneath the corpses of the fallen. The rune that was embedded in Xefna's head has dissolved into dust, leaving only a bloody indentation surrounded by dark, splotchy veins.

You have defeated Xefna and his lackeys! Award your character 300xp!

Go to the next section: It's Not Over Yet

IT'S NOT OVER YET

As you stand over the corpses of the your defeated enemies, you begin to smell smoke on the air.

And then you remember what Xefna had said: *I'm afraid we'll have to kill you all, and burn your village to the ground.*

The door to the inn crashes open and a young boy rushes inside. Blood mats his disheveled brown hair, and his arms and tunic are stained with soot.

"Th-they're burning everything!" He cries, pointing outside.

You push past the youth and rush to the doorway of the inn. Red flames burn violently across the rooftops of the village. Frightened commoners litter the streets, crying and shielding their loved ones with their arms.

Cloaked figures on horseback race through the streets wielding wickedly curved blades. More shadowed figures dart between buildings, brandishing torches, and shooting bows with flaming arrows.

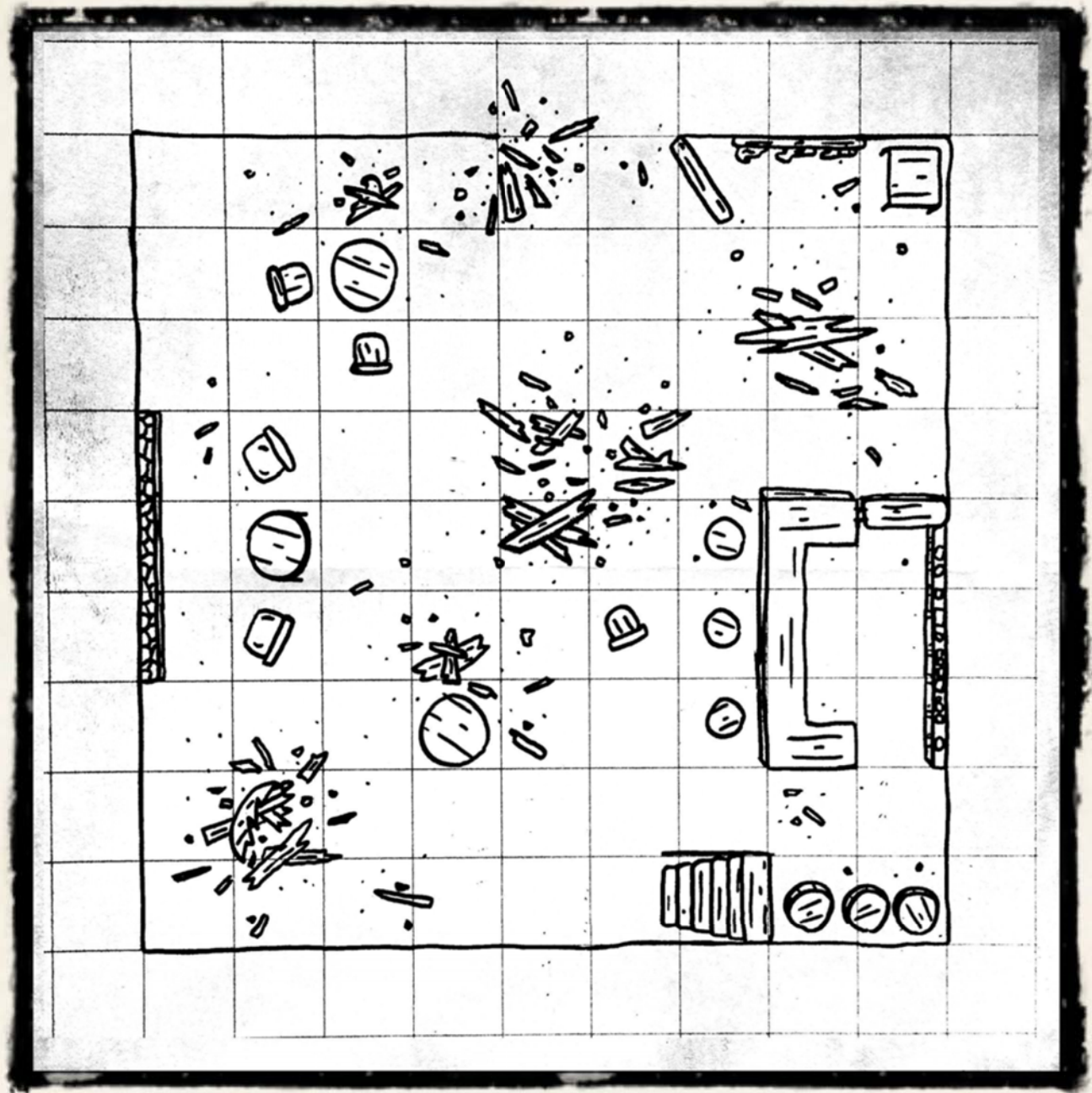
An arrow whistles past you, embedding itself into the doorway of the inn.

It's not over yet.

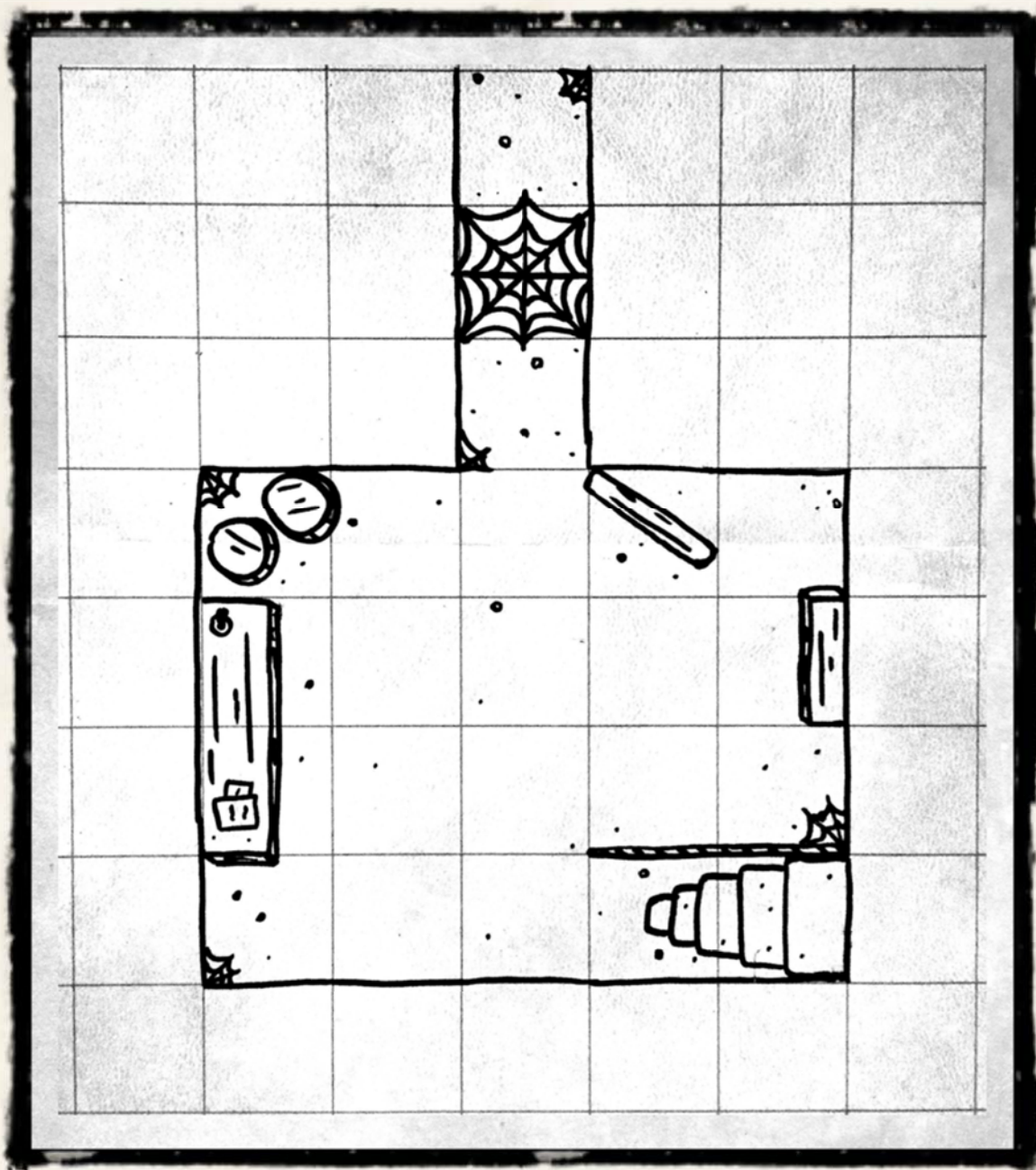
Congratulations! You have completed Chapter I: Dark Sorceries in the Heroes of Faerun: Shadowborne campaign! You have earned enough experience points to advance to level 3! Update your character sheet, and keep your eyes open for the next installment Chapter II: The Ruins of Kryptgarden Forest.

Did you enjoy the adventure? Let me know by submitting a review on the Dungeon Master's Guild! Thanks for playing!

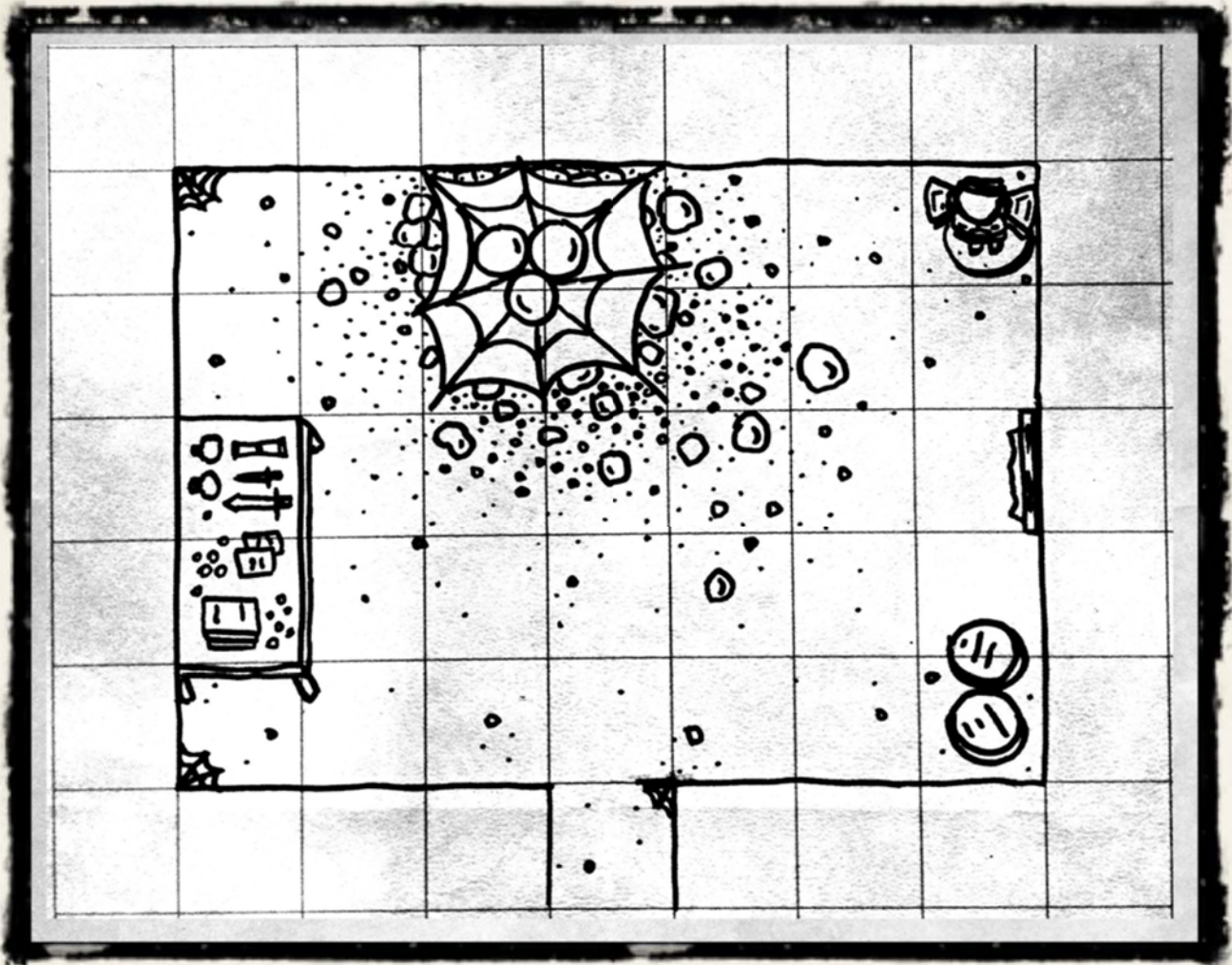
MAP 1: THE CROSSED STAVES INN



MAP 2-1: UNDERGROUND CELLAR



MAP 2-2: ANCIENT STOREROOM



MAP 3-1: THE CROSSED STAVES INN
(REFURBISHED)

