



Codex Venator

CCC-SLMH01-01

The Last Hunter

Introduction: In the peaceful Silver Marches, a dangerous evil grows in the shadows beneath the trees of Moonwood.

The last descendent of an ancient order would like to vanquish that evil before it spreads, but, betrayed by his age, he'll need the help of noble adventurers to fulfill his ancient thirst for vengeance

A 4-hour adventure for 5th-10th level characters

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Introduction

Welcome to Codex Venator, a D&D Adventurers League™ CCC adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system.

This adventure takes place in the woods of Moonwood, where a terrible threat looms in the dark.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th - 10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

Adjusting the adventure

This adventure provides adjustments suggestions for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the party strength for the adventure, consult the following table.

Party composition	Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Before play at the table

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Playing the Dungeon Master

You have the most important role – facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your players (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after.

Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling – play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

Adventure primer

The adventure is composed of four parts. In the first part adventurers must reach the order's ancient manor and, once they meet the last hunter, go into the middle of the forest. In the second part they must get inside the temple's ruins, exploring the towers and the baptistery to discover the alchemical process used by the cultists. In the third part they must descend into the crypt to stop the production. Then, in the fourth and final part, they must vanquish the source of evil hiding in the heart of the forest.

Background

Within the heart of Moonwood an ancient evil is being shaped, unknown to Silver Marches' inhabitants, being less perceptive than usual because of the long-lasting period of peace in the region.

Some cultists of Shar who were looking for a place of worship found and desecrated the ruins of an ancient temple of Corellon, drawing the attention of the Mistress of the Night. The goddess bestowed her blessing on the cultist, granting them power and knowledge while denying them the touch of the sun. The cultists now live within the depths of Moonwood and act only during the night, following the orders of their goddess. Through an evil alchemical ritual, the cultists have almost completed the creation of an abomination able to spread darkness all over the Silver Marches.

Consequences are already noticeable on Moonwood as its slowly corrupted by the shadow.

Luckily, the last hunter of an ancient order of abominations slayers, stayed vigil even during years of peace, and now he needs adventurers to end this evil once and for all.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure is designed to be played in Moonwood, Silver Marches, but it can be adjusted for other regions of Faerun or other

settings like the misty lands of Barovia, switching some minor details to better fit the story.

Here are some ideas for you to hook your characters in the events of *Codex Venator*.

Official invitation

PCs are found by a breathless courier, telling them that he was sent to give them a message. He gives them a solemn scroll, closed by a red seal (give players Handout A), given to him by an old man living in an ancient manor some days away of Silverymoon.

He'll say "You should hurry; he is a very old man, almost unable to move and he may... well... you know..." before leaving for his next delivery.

Casual encounter

While the group is travelling the Silver Marches they'll need to spend the night in the woods. When they wake up at dawn, the sentinel notices something deeper in the wood: they will find a little grove leading to an ancient manor with an old man on a wheelchair asking them to come closer.

Take care of the family

A young nobleman from Silverymoon asks the characters to check on his old uncle and bring them some supplies for the coming winter. The uncle lives in a manor some days away from the city.

"He lives near an ancient forest and his house is very peculiar, you'll notice it for sure. He's an old fool, you know, because of the age, but I'll always love him. Beware, he'll try to tell you one of his strange tales!"

Lords' Alliance call

An agent of the Lords' Alliance asks the group to investigate an ancient secret society of noblemen vowed to the extermination of abominations and other monsters. The secret society seems to have vanished a long time ago, but there are clues leading to a man in the Silver Marches, living in a manor nearby Moonwood:

he can have important intel, leading to valuable relics.

Emerald Investigation

There are rumors about two agents of the Emerald Enclave going missing while on a pilgrimage to a temple of Corellon within the depths of the High Forest. The last person to see them seems to be an old man living in an ancient manor.

Part 1 – The manor and the woods

Duration: 60 minutes

Reaching the manor

Weather: *When the group arrives at the grove, the sky is blue and a light breeze blows through the wood around the manor.*

Menhir Circle: *The grove is surrounded by ten stone menhir covered by strange runes. A successful DC15 Intelligence(Arcana) check reveals that these runes mean “Non Magicae” (“No magic” in a long-forgotten language) and that all the grove has is an anti-magic field effect.*

The manor near the forest is not hard to find. The building is aesthetically strange and out-of-place, it seems as if it was transported from another world, but the signs of consumption show that it has been here for a very long time, despite its Victorian look.

The owner, an old man in a wheelchair, is waiting for the characters just outside the door, under the front balcony. As soon as he sees the characters he'll start waving his hands, slowly and with little coordination. Whether they have been invited or not, the old man seems to be waiting for them and he will greet them with a happy yet toothless smile on his wrinkled face. “I've been waiting for you, there isn't much time for formal introductions, we'll manage that when you come back; a new hunt is at hand!”

He speaks slowly, as if conserving his last breaths, he wears a long black vest, a pair of black boots and a black wide-brimmed hat. They were once very high-quality clothes, but they are old and consumed, making the man look like an old witch hunter. The only thing in a perfect state is the sword resting atop his knees, in a precious sheath covered by strange runes (a successful DC15 Intelligence(Arcana) check will reveal that the runes compose the name of the sword, “Beowulf”). If the characters are unsettled by his behavior he will stare at them and he will give the following clues, remaining vague on any other request, playing the old fool.

The old man says that there is something strange within the forest: evil creatures stalk the woods during the night and someone needs to hunt them before the evil spreads.

Every night he sees strange lights and unsettling shadows on the path to an old temple within the ruins, and he fears that the temple could now be the lair of some evil monster.

He keeps repeating that if it wasn't for his age he would personally take care of any abomination, like he did in his good old days, but he will turn silent and sad if interrogated about the secret society of hunters.

If asked about himself, he'll shut down the conversation saying that there is no time to lose with useless chit-chat and once they will complete the hunt he will tell them everything they need to know.

The entrance of the manor is open, and the characters can enter, discovering that the inside is in worse condition than the outside. The ground floor has a grand dining room, an office and the kitchen. A spiral staircase leads to the second floor, where the bedrooms are. The manor is a dirty mess, with scraps and trash everywhere and it would appear abandoned if not for some minor details. If the characters try to search the villa for clues, they will find

nothing but trash with empty spots instead of any valuable item. A successful DC16 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal that a fake book in a bookcase will open a secret door with a corridor that goes down and leads to a room with a mosaic missing some pieces. If they start losing too much time, the old man will start yelling at them, underlining the urgency of their mission and that it is quite rude to enter somebody's house without permission. If asked about the mosaic, he'll say "A remarkable work... a pity about the missing pieces..."

Through the woods

After one hour of travel, the characters will notice that the wood changes appearance. The green and healthy wood is replaced by dying soil, rotten leaves and warped trees, with branches seemingly leaning on the characters – luckily that is just a feeling.

A successful DC12 Wisdom (Survival) check will underline that the woods are unnaturally silent, as any living creature has left, scared.

Deeper and deeper into the woods the air will become thicker and thicker. A successful DC13 Wisdom (Nature) check will reveal the cause. Strange fungi are all over the place and continuously streams spores into the air: impossible to remove and a consequence of whatever illness the woods have.

The soil is covered by strange black roots, covered by a rotting black puddle. A successful DC15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal two rotting corpses with the insignia of the Emerald Enclave. The black roots have invaded their bodies, sucking any liquid from them. The roots have AC10, 20hp, immunity to psychic and poison damage, and every time they are hit all character within 10ft gets 2d5 acid damage unless they make a successful DC15 Dexterity saving throw.

Getting inside the woods will mean facing the spore clouds: one character of the group must make a Wisdom (Survival) check to find the best way through the cloud. He can receive help

and make the roll with advantage if some other character suggests an interesting solution. The result of this roll will determine how much time they will need to get through the spore clouds and how many DC15 Constitution saving throws they will need to face. Every failed saving throw will result in one level of exhaustion. Reward smart actions or good play (like covering mouth and nose with a wet cloth) giving advantage on the roll.

Survival check	# of saving throws
0-10	3 saving throws
10-15	2 saving throws
16+	1 saving throws

The effect is neither a poison nor a disease effect. Characters trying to fly over the woods will get slashed and torn by the warped trees and will receive 2d6 slashing damage, halved by a successful DC16 Dexterity saving throw. Once past the toxic clouds, they will be in the heart of the forest, which is deeply corrupted and suffering from this illness. The sun is setting and the groups will notice weird blue lights as if a procession is getting closer to the center of the forest.

Part 2 - The temple of Corellon

Duration: 60 minutes

Dim Light: *The only source of light inside and outside the temple is the light of the pale moon in the sky. Shielded by the trees and the building, the moonlight is weak. The cultists, like the elves who built the place, have no problem in dim light: there are no torches or lamps in the temple.*

By following the procession, the characters will reach the ruins of the temple of Corellon. The place is filled with a dark and evil presence. The temple was probably a great building in white marble, but its magnificence seems lost and everything is encrusted by a thin red blood-like cover, dripped from the top of the temple. With a successful DC17 Intelligence (Religion) check the characters will understand that the cultist desecrated the temple by mimicking the wound Corellon got during his duel with Gruumsh.

The temple seems abandoned but if paying attention, the characters will notice something moving in the two towers framing the entrance. The temple is surrounded by an unmaintained garden, invaded by twisted wildlife from the woods.

1. Entrance

A big door of rotten wood seals the entrance of the outer garden. A line of menhir surrounded the building but many of them are destroyed. They can offer $\frac{3}{4}$ cover if used.

2. Sacred pillar

In the middle of the garden there is a big pillar, covered by dead ivy and features engraved symbols of Corellon. The pillar has been vandalized by cultists: analyzing the new signs and a successful DC15 Intelligence (Religion) check will reveal that cultists are followers of Shar, the Mistress of Night, goddess of darkness and caves.

Moreover, this vandalization revealed the original material of the rock, a smooth black stone, completely out-of-place for a Corellon temple, pointing out that this place can hide a great amount of secrets.

3. Hedge fence

Once an elegant and well-kept hedge fence, this place is now a wild and tangled mass of plants. In these places there is a **Hedge sentinel pack**

Party	Hedge sentinel pack
Very weak	2 darkling elder + 1 will-o'-wisp
Weak	2 darkling elder + 1 will-o'-wisp
Normal	2 darkling elder + 1 will-o'-wisp
Strong	3 darkling elder + 1 will-o'-wisp
Very strong	3 darkling elder + 1 will-o'-wisp

This pack is a group of cultists, one of them has a stick with a lamp on top of it – the will-o'-wisp is the flame inside the lamp. When combat begins, the will-o'-wisp gets out of the lamp and starts attacking by initiative.

If any cultist is still active after they take their second turn (or third, if they were surprised), they will use a bonus action to blow a whistle, alerting the **Tower packs** in areas 4-5, making it impossible to surprise them.

4. Sun tower

The tower on the right, once dedicated to the sun and vandalized, is still in good condition. The dome at its top crumbled a long time ago and now just a little part of the big marble sun is still intact. Near the dome there is a **Tower sentinels pack** and two bells to alert the cultists at the temple.

Party	Sun sentinels pack
Very weak	3 darkling elder
Weak	5 darkling elder
Normal	5 darkling elder
Strong	6 darkling elder
Very strong	6 darkling elder

To activate a bell, a cultist has to use his action without having hostile creatures within 5ft –

advise the players of this mechanism. The characters will need to guard both the bells to let the cultists in the temple unsuspectingly. If the alarm is set, the sentinels on the other tower will shoot at them: roll a single crossbow attack against each player.

5. Moon tower

The tower on the left, dedicated to the moon, was smaller and frailer: its condition is worse than the sun tower and there is less room for the alarm mechanism. In this tower there is one extra cultist but there is only one bell, which works in the same way as the sun tower's bells.

Party	Moon sentinels pack
Very weak	4 darkling elder
Weak	6 darkling elder
Normal	6 darkling elder
Strong	7 darkling elder
Very strong	7 darkling elder

Outline the differences between the two towers (one has one extra enemy, the other has 2 points to defend) and let the players decide their strategy.

6. Temple entrance

The main entrance of the temple has a double reinforced door sealed from the inside. The heavy bronze plates have vandalized bas-relief that now depicts a mockery of ancient and forgotten ceremonies. There are 2 side doors open and almost unattended if the alarm bells of the towers were not rung.

Guarded doors have an **Entrance sentinel pack** defending them.

Party	Entrance sentinel pack
Very weak	3 darkling elder + 2 will-o'-wisp + 1 guard drake
Weak	3 darkling elder + 2 will-o'-wisp + 2 guard drake
Normal	4 darkling elder + 2 will-o'-wisp + 2 guard drake
Strong	5 darkling elder + 2 will-o'-wisp + 2 guard drake
Very strong	5 darkling elder + 2 will-o'-wisp +

2 guard drake

7. Antechamber

This place is used by the guards to prepare themselves. There are 4 cultists (statistics of a **Darkling elder**) unarmed and getting ready for their guard shift. They can be intimidated (DC15) and persuaded to remain silent if someone has proof of multiple kills against their cult.

Hooks on the wall have many cultist robes, that can be easily worn if not wearing any kind of armor.

8. Central nave

The place is solemn and majestic, as shown by the wide arches and the lit censers hanging from the columns. Thick smoke conceals the ceiling of the temple, where 4 cultists are guarding the place, with wide wooden beams used to move above the whole central nave. Behind them, the nave is used by other cultists for less-solemn and more mundane activities, like eating or chatting. There are at least 10 cultists at any time.

9. Altar

Once covered by golden plates, the altar is now a big roughly worked black basalt stone. There, the cultists spill blood with blasphemous rituals. There are no decorations and there is dim light due to two big braziers with a large intricate cover above them, made to cast an intricate pattern of shadows. Below the altar there is a hole with a very sharp black bladed sacrificial dagger, stained with coagulated blood.

10. Pool of rebirth

Behind the altar, covered by an old faded, moldy and moth-eaten red velvet drape, there is a now-empty holy pool. Walls are adorned by a mosaic representing the birth of a black dragon

and his spawnings. It's a raw mosaic, made by the rearranged tiles of whatever previous figure was there. Despite being incomplete, its hypnotic aura can subjugate lesser minds: a successful DC15 Wisdom saving throw will break the charm, allowing to get away from it. With a failure the character will be charmed and suffer 15 psychic damage and will stand still and enthralled contemplating the mosaic. If the saving throw was failed by 5 or more, the effect will be much more powerful, the character will suffer 15 psychic damage and gain one level of exhaustion. I will need to stay there, because he's sure to be close to decipher the unnatural geometries on the background. If the mosaic charms 2 characters, it'll deplete its effects until the next twilight. Charmed PCs can be freed with a *dispel magic*, *lesser restoration* or inflicting at least 5 points of damage.

Part 3 – The crypt

Duration: 30 minutes

Tomb of the ancient elves

The alcoves are filled with new vials and alembics filled of bubbling, with their previous content cast on the floor like rubble. Turf torches and censers burn constantly, thickening the already hard-to-breath air. A big brazier stands lit in the middle of the room. Two hooded **cultists** with thick red leather masks are working hard mixing unidentifiable liquids one vial after another. They seem to often read the scrolls on the walls. Smoke and incense make it difficult to spot anyone coming from the stairs. The scrolls on the wall report the process for an alchemical creation: mixing the elements from alcoves A-D-F-C-B-G-H, in this order, the group will prepare the same fluid used by the cultists to alter the dragon spawn. The various crypts have different occupants:

- A. Empty, with various vials filled with inert liquid
- B. 2 **cultists** mixing a vermillion liquid in small vials. The fluid is enough to prepare 4 *potions of healing*.
- C. 2 **cultists** concocting a virulent toxin: a failed DC15 Constitution saving throw, by anyone who ingests some of the toxin, inflicts the *poisoned* condition for 2 hours.
- D. A **cultist** with thick leather mask and gloves is preparing a powerful acid and, if required, he will use it: he can cast the *acid splash* cantrip three times as an 11th level character (saving throw DC13).
- E. Empty. Searching the alcove allows a DC10 Wisdom (Perception) check. A success reveals a plate in the floor with room around it to get grip and a pressure mechanism to open the access to a stair descending in the darkness, with a green glow much more down (see next: **the tunnels**).
- F. Some slime and enough tools to assemble an Alchemist Kit.

- G. Mortar, pestle, and enough tools to assemble an Herbalist Kit
- H. The chief alchemist (statistics of a **Mage**) and his personal laboratory. His face, body and hands are twisted by acids and covered by leather gloves, a mask, and an oversized leather apron. His cat familiar was the focus of various experiments and it's grown beyond expectations (statistics of a **sabretooth tiger**).

A bronze urn with a viscous black jelly lays on the desk: a DC15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal that the jelly has magical properties from multiple schools of magic; a DC10 Intelligence (Nature) will reveal that the jelly is not natural; a DC10 Intelligence (Religion) check will reveal that what's inside the urn has a high symbolic value for a good buyer. It's a relic of Shar, a piece of dark fabric drenched in her own blood, used to ignite the alchemical process and produce the strange fluid.

If the group have finalized the alchemic process in the correct way they will obtain a strange black fluid. Studying the substance for understand its nature requires an Intelligence (Arcana) test with DC15.

Due to the obscure and ancient origin of the process, passing the test didn't reveal much information except some topical clue, the liquid can alter the process of growing up of an embryo, infusing the future creature with the power of the shadow.

That should alert the characters about the risk of founding some dangerous aberration in the depths of the temple.

Trying to mix up all the ingredients without the correct order will cause the substances to ignite, generating a black and toxic smoke in the room. Each character in the room must immediately make a Constitution Saving Throw DC15 or be poisoned and take 20 poison damage.

The tunnels

Dim Light: *bioluminescent fungi are the only source of light.*

At the end of the stairs some luminescent fungi light up the place. A successful DC12 Intelligence (Nature) check will reveal their underdark origin. The access to the caves has been recently and imprecisely opened by the cult – the caves are, instead, a magnificent and well-designed work, revealing that these were just discovered by the cultists and that they were there before the elves built the temple. The sound of dripping water is amplified by the caves. Walls are built with a smooth black material, similar to the pillar outside the temple: there are no navigational signs. You can choose the tunnel to put a less involved player in the spotlight or select one randomly. In each encounter, it is possible to find a fluid sample: if the characters examined the mixture in the crypt above, they will recognize it as one of its components.

1. 2 cultists (**barbed devils** in human guise) are speaking about the fluid they are producing. A sample of fluid can be looted by the characters.
2. A narrow tunnel (the group can proceed only in line), covered in mud and slime and filled with rats. Suddenly, the rats stop altogether, turn their snout altogether to the second character on the line and attack (statistics of a **swarm of rats**). During the first turn, the mud will join the fight (statistics of a **water weird**). What remains of the mud seems to be a sample of the same fluid used by the cultists, and can be collected by the characters
3. The tunnel leads to a cave, filled of stalactites and stalagmites, the air stinks of rot. In the middle of the cave there is a human figure, gnawing a femur. The creature is a **ghast**, driven completely mad by the darkness. He will attack anything at sight, joined by tendrils of shadows (statistics of a **swarm of**

poisonous snakes). When defeated, a black liquid, similar to the corrupted fluid used by the cultists, can be harvested by the characters.

4. The tunnel leads to an open cave with a small lake. On the bottom of the lake the group can spot the corpses of two cultists with a dose of the corrupted fluid. If they try to reach the corpses, they are attacked by a **swarm of quippers** and a **water weird**. When they roll initiative they'll find themselves unable to breath: they get a level of exhaustion unless they succeed a DC10 Constitution saving throw.
5. The tunnel ends with 6 **darkling elders**, but there is a small side tunnel: the side tunnels ends with a big iron grate closed by a lock. This side tunnel is used to get rid of some of the beasts that roam the tunnels: the grate activates a trap, if pressed or opened without first deactivating it, inflicting 14 (4d6) slashing damage to anyone in the side tunnel. PCs can detect the trap with a DC12 Wisdom (Perception) roll – if detected, deactivation is trivial. A successful DC15 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) roll opens the lock.
6. The tunnel leads to a wide place where 10 cultists are busy gnawing something on the ground: the cultists are completely corrupted and turned to **ghouls** and are devouring other cultists. They can be avoided with stealth if the PCs set up some distraction. Reward creative solutions from players.

Every tunnel leads to the same destination – the nursery...

Part 4 – Final confrontation

Duration: 90 minutes

Nursery

In this room, under the temple, lies the secret the head of the cult foresaw thanks to a vision granted by Shar: a large room, filled with oily black slime and lit by bioluminescent fungi, where the black egg of an ancient draconic creature is hidden.

Near the egg there is Bertrando (statistics of a **kraken priest**), the head of the cult, performing a dark ritual with other cultists channeling obscure energies into the egg while chanting praises to Shar.

He will not show hostility and will try to show how beneficial their plan is: awakening the weak and softened people of the Silver Marches, who've fallen asleep because of the long years of peace.

A successful DC15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal that the egg is a black dragon egg left quiescent for a very long time, and that it's being influenced by the ritual, turning him into a powerful divine servant of Shar.

The PCs will not fall for the unstable logic of Bertrando, which will ask to honor the Mistress of the Night with a blood sacrifice. On the second round, Bertrando's bodyguards (statistics of a **champion**) will attack.

Party	Ritual encounter
Very weak	Kraken priest + 3 Darkling Elder + 1 Champion (2°turn)
Weak	Kraken priest + 4 Darkling Elder + 1 Champion (2°turn)
Normal	Kraken priest + 4 Darkling Elder + 2 Champion (2°turn)
Strong	Kraken priest + 4 Darkling Elder + 2 Champion (2°turn)
Very strong	Kraken priest + 5 Darkling Elder + 2 Champion (2°turn)

After 4 rounds of combat, the blood spilled will wake up the unfinished step of the ritual: the

egg will hatch, revealing a **Twisted shadow spawn**, rapidly growing. On his first turn it will devour any remaining darkling elder, on its second turn it will devour any remaining champion, and from the third round will turn its focus on the characters, losing 30hp at the end of each of its turn.

Bertrando will use his underlings as a shield to protect himself from the creature, praising Shar at every chance until he is the only one left, at which time he turns his back and tries to run away cowardly.

Party	Twisted shadow spawn
Very weak	Adult black shadow dragon, no breath/fly, no legendary actions, 1 legendary resistance, -2AC, -30hp
Weak	Adult black shadow dragon, no breath/fly, no legendary actions, 1 legendary resistance use, -2AC
Normal	Adult black shadow dragon, no breath/fly, no legendary actions, 1 legendary resistance use
Strong	Adult black shadow dragon, no breath/fly, no legendary actions
Very strong	Adult black shadow dragon, no breath/fly

Conclusion

When the beast is defeated the sun rises, cleansing the shadows of the temple. Any remaining cultist will vanish, leaving the structure silent, with a feeling of exhaustion and fatigue.

The road back to the manor is clear of any obstacle: the old man is still waiting for them on the porch, still in his wheelchair but serious and clearly not playing the fool anymore.

“Very well, you have accomplished your first mission, but beware: the horrors lurking in the dark corners of the world are still there. They are just waiting for a good time to strike. Back in my days I was there with my comrades to fight these abominations, but time marches forward... and we couldn't. Our legacy will be lost to history – unless someone is willing to carry it on.”

He points at the table, where a small scroll, a long-feathered pen, and a knife are waiting for the characters.

The scroll says:

“I shall protect the weak and sacred children of the gods.

I swear that the creatures that lurk in the dark will not prevail while my eyes are watching.

I swear to honor the memories of my brethren standing against the tide.

My blood is a gift: by my blood, for my blood, and with my blood, the land-in-the-middle will be safe.”

“Use your own blood and sign the scroll; danger will always be nearby, but the Order will be born again, and the creatures who lurk in the dark will be vanquished!”

Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Advancement and treasure checkpoints

All characters receive 4 experience checkpoints, 4 treasure checkpoints, 10 downtime days and 1 renown.

Player rewards

The characters earn the following player reward if they **sign the scroll of the last hunter**:

- **Newblood hunters:** The characters have chosen to join the ancient **Order of the Noble Hunters** signing a contract with their own blood. They can now use the manor as a base of their operation and they will certainly become entangled with other mysterious assignments from the Order. Naturally, this will draw the attention of old enemies of the order...

DM rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn advancement and treasure checkpoints and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the other rewards listed above.

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Appendix 1 – Monsters

Adult Black Shadow Dragon

Huge dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 195 (17d12 + 85)

Speed 40ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23	14	21	14	13	17
(+6)	(+2)	(+5)	(+2)	(+1)	(+3)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con + 10, Wis +6, Cha +8

Skills Perception + 11, Stealth +12

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 60ft., darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 21

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

Living Shadow. While in dim light or darkness, the dragon has resistance to damage that isn't force, psychic, or radiant.

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

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the dragon has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: + 11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect

ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Shadow Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dragon exhales shadowy acid in a 60-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies, and an undead shadow rises from its corpse and acts immediately after the dragon in the initiative count. The shadow is under the dragon's control.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. The dragon makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to half its flying speed.

Barbed Devil

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 110 (13d8 +52)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16	17	18	12	14	14
(+3)	(+3)	(+4)	(+1)	(+2)	(+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +7, Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Deception +5, Insight +5, Perception +8

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks that aren't from silvered weapons

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Infernal, telepathy 120ft.

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Barbed Hide. At the start of each of its turns, the barbed devil deals 5 (1d10) piercing damage to any creature grappling it.

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the devil's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The devil makes three melee attacks: one with its tail and two with its claws. Alternatively, it can use Hurl Flame twice.

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

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Hurl Flame. Ranged Spell Attack: +5 to hit, range 150 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) fire damage. If the target is a flammable object that isn't being worn or carried, it also catches fire.

Champion

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20	15	14	10	14	12
(+5)	(+2)	(+2)	(+0)	(+2)	(+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Indomitable (2/Day). The champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The champion makes three attacks with its greatsword or its light crossbow.

Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Cultist

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

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30ft.

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

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Actions

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Darkling Elder

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +3, Perception +6, Stealth +7

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Death Burn. When the darkling elder dies, magical light flashes out from it in a 10-foot radius as its body and possessions, other than metal or magic objects, burn to ash. Any creature in that area must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 7 (2d6) radiant damage and, if the creature can see the light, is blinded until the end of its next turn. If the saving throw is successful, the creature takes half the damage and isn't blinded.

Actions

Multiattack. The darkling elder makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the darkling elder had advantage on the attack roll, the attack deals an extra 10 (3d6) piercing damage.

Darkness (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The darkling elder casts darkness without any components. Wisdom is its spellcasting ability.

Ghast

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16	17	10	11	10	8
(+3)	(+3)	(+0)	(+0)	(+0)	(-1)

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the ghast must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the ghast's Stench for 24 hours.

Turning Defiance. The ghast and any ghouls within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Ghoul

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30ft.

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

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Guard Drake

Medium dragon, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16	11	16	4	10	7
(+3)	(+0)	(+3)	(-3)	(+0)	(-2)

Skills Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands Draconic but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The guard drake makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

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

Kraken Priest

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12	10	16	10	15	14
(+1)	(+0)	(+3)	(+0)	(+2)	(+2)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any two languages

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amphibious. The priest can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The priest's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *command*, *create or destroy water*

3/day each: *control water*, *darkness*, *water breathing*, *water walk*

1/day each: *call lightning*, *Evard's black tentacles*

Actions

Thunderous Touch. Melee Spell Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 27 (5d10) thunder damage.

Voice of the Kraken (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). A kraken speaks through the priest with a thunderous voice audible within 300 feet.

Creatures of the priest's choice that can hear the kraken's words (which are spoken in Abyssal, Infernal, or Primordial) must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Mage

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

Actions

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

Saber-toothed tiger

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)

Speed 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18	14	15	3	12	8
(+4)	(+2)	(+2)	(-4)	(+1)	(-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages -

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The tiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the tiger moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the tiger can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Swarm of Poisonous Snakes

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10ft., passive Perception 10

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Actions

Bites. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. Hit: 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Swarm of quippers

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 28 (8d8 - 8)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 8

Languages –

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The swarm has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

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

Water Breathing. The swarm can breathe only underwater.

Actions

Bites. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. Hit: 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Swarm of Rats

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 24 (7d8 - 7)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9	11	9	2	10	3
(-1)	(+0)	(-1)	(-4)	(+0)	(-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 30ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Smell. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

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

Actions

Bites. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. Hit: 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Water Weird

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 58 (9d10 + 9)

Speed 0 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17	16	13	11	10	10
(+3)	(+3)	(+1)	(+0)	(+0)	(+0)

Damage Resistances fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, restrained, prone, unconscious

Senses blindsight 30ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Aquan but doesn't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Invisible in Water. The water weird is invisible while fully immersed in water.

Water Bound. The water weird dies if it leaves the water to which it is bound or if that water is destroyed.

Actions

Constrict. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one creature. Hit: 13 (3d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13) and pulled 5 feet toward the water weird. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, the water weird tries to drown it, and the water weird can't constrict another target.

Will-o'-wisp

Tiny undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19

Hit Points 22 (9d4)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1	28	10	13	14	11
(-5)	(+9)	(+0)	(+1)	(+2)	(+0)

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, necrotic, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Consume Life. As a bonus action, the will-o'-wisp can target one creature it can see within 5 feet of it that has 0 hit points and is still alive. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw against this magic or die. If the target dies, the will-o'-wisp regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

Ephemeral. The will-o'-wisp can't wear or carry anything.

Incorporeal Movement. The will-o'-wisp can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

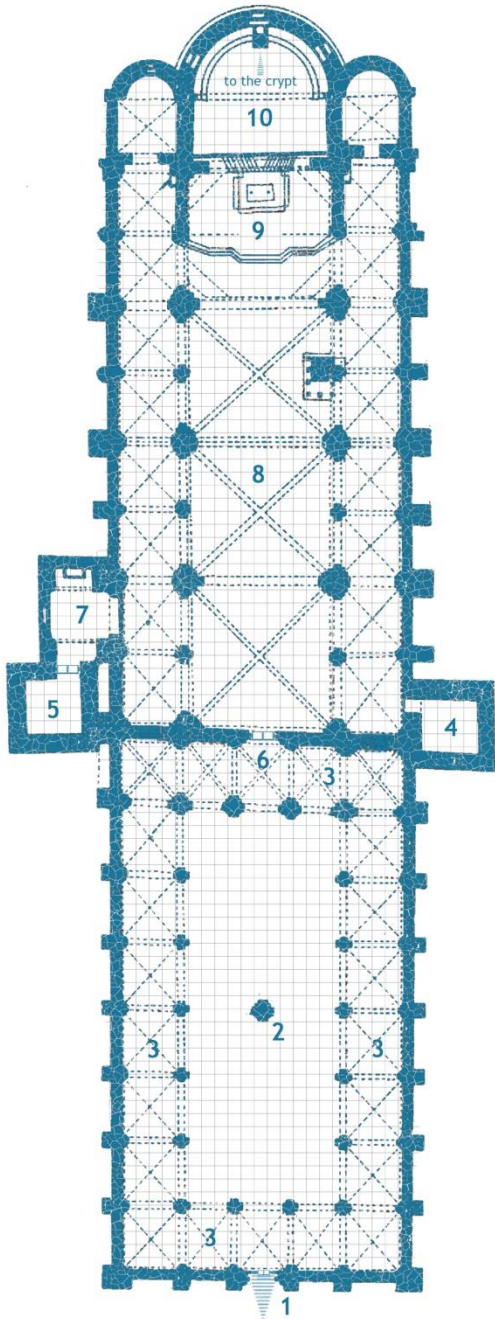
Variable Illumination. The will-o'-wisp sheds bright light in a 5-to 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius. The will-o'-wisp can alter the radius as a bonus action.

Actions

Shock. Melee Spell Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

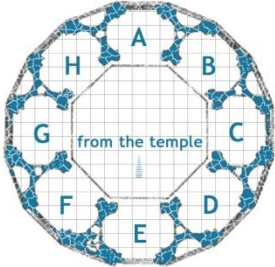
Invisibility. The will-o'-wisp and its light magically become invisible until it attacks or uses its Consume Life, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).

Appendix 2 – Map



The temple of Corellon

The Crypt



LEGEND

Door	Covered Pit	Altar	Stairs
Secret Door	Statues	Tapestry	Columns

□ = 10 ft. by 10 ft.