

CCC-BFG01-01



A House Divided

An Avatar of Shar Adventure



A retired paladin's disappearance and rumors of his manor being haunted cause the local Temple of Selûne to hire adventurers to investigate. What secrets does the manor hold?

Part 1 of the Avatar of Shar Adventures

A Two to Four-Hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters. Optimized for APL 8.

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Adventure Primer

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5-10 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.

This adventure begins in Thentia, and moves to Valen Family Manor a few hours ride North.

Background

Several years back, **CASSIUS VALEN**, a retired paladin, settled with his family near **THENTIA**. Cassius and his family were well respected and devoted to the **TEMPLE OF SELÛNE**. They formed a local group to study religious artifacts, and styled themselves as the **VALEN SOCIETY**.

Rumors say that Cassius' wife **ALIA** has dabbled in **DARK MAGIC**. The priests of Selûne are particularly distressed by rumors that Alia had been channeling magic from **SHAR**.

Over the past tenday, travelers passing by Valen Manor have reported sightings of **GHOSTLY APPARITIONS** and tortured howling emanating from somewhere on the grounds.

Selûne

Also known as the Moonmaiden, she is the goddess of the moon. She presides over the moon, stars, and navigation; she controls the tides and her followers find great meaning the cycles of the moon.

Shar

The twin sister of Selûne, known as the Mistress of the Night, Shar is the goddess of darkness, caverns, forgetfulness, loss, night and secrets. The Underdark and the Shadowfell are her realms.

Overview

The adventure's story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **2 hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene. It also contains **two optional bonus objectives**—each taking **an additional hour** to play.

- **Call to Action: Concern on the Moor.** The party is hired by the Temple of Selûne to investigate happenings at Valen Manor.

- **Part 1: Mind Your Manors.** The adventurers must explore the manor and discover several clues about the family's fate and a shadow artifact located in a secret vault at the manor (**Story Objective A**).
- **Part 2: Broken Promises.** The adventurers must defeat the vault's guardian and retrieve the item to bring it back to the Temple for research. (**Story Objective B**).
- **Bonus Objective A: A Haunting.** Darius Valen, son of Cassius, fell victim to a misguided attempt by his mother to protect him. The adventurers can find him and end what afflicts him. (It is highly encouraged to have the party tackle this objective as it explains many plot points, it can happen at any point during the course of Part 1 while the characters are exploring the manor.) See **Appendix 1**.
- **Bonus Objective 2: Cults and Confidences.** Members of a Dark Moon Cult came to Valen Manor to recruit Cassius. They follow the party and learn about the artifact. (This objected can be easily skipped for time if needed. It is designed to take place at any point of the adventure.) See **Appendix 2**.

Adventure Hooks

If any character already played a later adventure in this series (CCC-BFG01-02 or CCC-BFG01-03), then Miri asks the party to investigate the manor to discover the backstory. (The Shadow Shard and map can already be retrieved at the end).

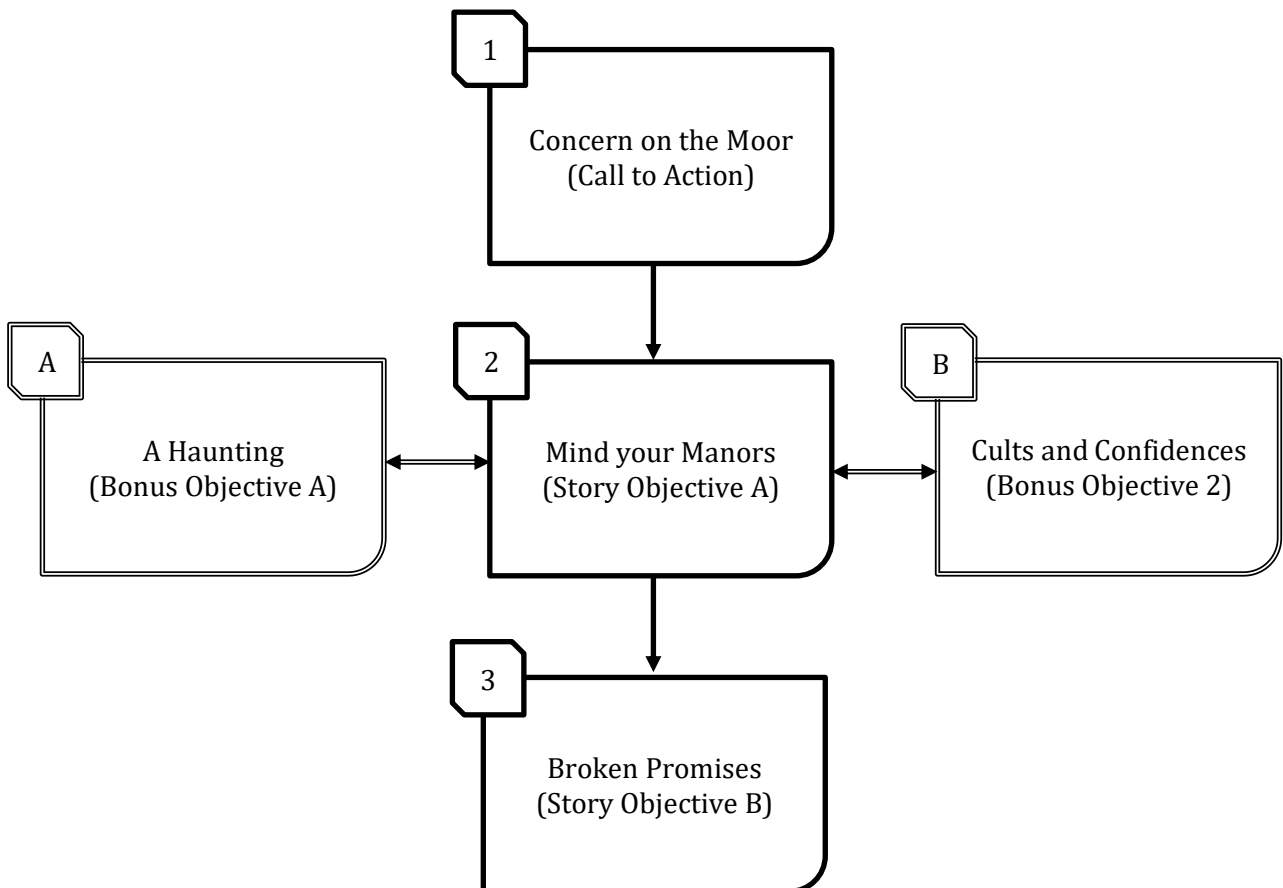
Adventure Hook 1. Followers of Selûne have received a letter from the temple in Thentia requesting urgent assistance to investigate rumors of Shar asserting power in the city.

Adventure Hook 2. Any religious based characters may have heard of dark tidings in Thentia relating to the Temple of Selûne.

Adventure Hook 3. Rumors abound that Thentia is the place to find high-paying jobs with the bustle from the port.

Adventure Flowchart

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the adventure, but also the outline of the different paths your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



Call to Action: Concern on the Moor

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

"We ask only to be reassured about the noises in the cellar and the window that should not have been open."

-T.S. Eliot

Thentia

Thentia is a city located on the north shore of the Moonsea. Much of Thentia is rough and crude but the city is noted for its powerful mage guild, as well as its large Temple of Selûne.

General. City sounds and smells abound – the clapping of horses throughout the city, the cries of sellers hawking local fruit, the sounds of boots on rough stones.

Weather. Arriving in the day, the sky is clear with the sun shining brightly down on the streets. If arriving at night, the moon is full and shining brightly in the sky. The weather is unusually good for Thentia.

Call to Action

The adventurers are in Thentia for their own reasons, but in time are each approached by a representative of the Temple of Selûne in Thentia, an elven priestess named Miri Kirmani. She arranges to meet the party at a small tavern called the Ave Palma in the northeast of town between the Winter and Mourning Gates to discuss arrangements for the adventurers to investigate rumors at Valen Manor.

The Ave Palma

The Ave Palma tavern is unassuming, with peeling paint and a faded laurel emblem on its sign.

Inside the tavern, the air is warm and the tantalizing smell of food wafts past. The common area is fairly empty when the party arrives and the tavern keeper softly calls out, "Rooms still available," as she absently waves at a table for the party to seat themselves.

Creature Information

At a table in the corner sit three figures in robes adorned with the symbols of the Temple of Selûne. A handful of other patrons are eating meals and conversing.

The priestess you met sits with two other disciples. She gestures you over. Once you all are seated, she says, "A retired paladin of our order, named Cassius Valen, who lived a few hours north of town has gone missing for a tenday. We have also heard strange reports from merchants passing his manor. We wish to hire you to investigate this situation."

Objectives and Goals. Miri and her companions represent the Temple of Selûne and wish to hire the party to investigate strange happenings at Valen Manor. The church cannot spare anyone to investigate themselves as they have been busy preparing for the night stalk rituals that accompany the full moon.

What Do They Know? Miri will convey the following additional information when asked appropriate questions:

- Cassius Valen and his family moved into town several years ago.
- Cassius made local friends who joined him in researching religious artifacts. They called themselves the Valen Society.
- They were very philanthropic and well regarded in the city.
- The temple is concerned that Cassius's wife, Alia, could have been dabbling in dark magic. Rumors floated that she had been attempting to channel magic from Shar.
- Alia and her son Darius have a close relationship and he would be the most likely person to lay those rumors to rest.
- No one has heard from Cassius, Alia, Darius or any of the Valen Society for the last tenday.
- Merchants passing the manor reported seeing ghostly apparitions and hearing howling sounds emanating from the grounds.

Miri seems reluctant to convey some other information, but a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check can persuade her to add the following details:

- Cassius and Darius were said to have gotten into a very heated dispute recently. Cassius was witnessed threatening his son and accusing him of ignoring divine guidance.
- Cassius also was reportedly fighting with Alia, causing Darius to fiercely defend his mother's honor.
- Darius sought guidance in the temple after this row, before allegedly leaving the city.

Additional Rumors

The adventurers can uncover the following specific rumors from the other patrons or the tavern keeper with a successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)

- The Society actively sought out items of power to add to a growing collection in the manor. Items of holy renown were displayed proudly. Items of evil repute were identified and locked away to prevent others from abusing them.
- It is whispered that Alia Valen may have been a warlock. Those close to her will speak of her referencing a "Celestial Patron."
- Alia was selfless and took it upon herself to heal those in need who were unable to find aid at the temple. The Temple of Selûne might not have looked favorably upon her if she was calling on some other power.

Once the party has finished speaking with anyone they wish to talk to, continue to Part 1.

Part 1. Mind Your Manors

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

"Dark spirits from the grave come forth. Lift us from the black. And show us, show us the way back."

-Madame Leota, Haunted Mansion

Valen Manor

Situated several hours ride from the city of Thentia, Valen Manor stands on the moors overlooking the Moonsea.

Story Objective

In this section, the adventurers need to learn about the Shadow Shard and that it is hidden in the Chapel. **This is Story Objective A.**

Bonus Objectives. If time allows, the adventurers can complete **Bonus Objective A: A Haunting** during this part. Darius will appear while the party explores the manor. For more detail, see **Appendix 1**. The other bonus objective: **Bonus Objective B: Cults and Confidences** can occur at any point.

Area Information

General. The manor is a two-story stone building with two wings branching off into u-shape surrounding a central courtyard in the rear of the house.

Weather. Dense fog settles over the moors as the party gets further from the city, obscuring vision. An unnatural chill also hangs in the air.

I Need a Nap

The veil between Shadowfell and the Material Plane has become thin here due to magic. A dense fog that cannot be cleared covers the area even extending into the manor itself, bringing an unnatural chill with it. If the party wishes to take a rest while on the Valen property, they must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution save or gain one level of exhaustion. If the holy symbol of Selûne in the foyer is discovered and restored, this effect is removed from inside the manor, but still applies outside. This effect also makes the light dim everywhere it touches.

Arduous Journey

Travel to the manor can take up to three hours on foot in poor weather conditions. Thickening fog obscures most of the moor. The characters will somehow always approach via the front of the manor, drifting off course.

Creature Information

As they approach, they are confronted by **two shadows** and a **ghost**.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very weak:** Remove **both shadows**
- **Weak:** Remove **1 shadow**
- **Strong:** Add **1 ghost**
- **Very strong:** Add **2 ghosts**

What Do They Want? They have crossed over from the Shadowfell and want to destroy anything from this world.

What Do They Know? The ghosts do not know how they have crossed over, but only that the veil is thin in this area for some reason.

Playing the Pillars

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. This is designed to be an easy combat to for the group to start off the adventure and set the scene of the "haunting." You can have the encounter take place at any point leading up to the manor or on the front steps. Have the creatures surround the characters.

Exploration. If the party wishes to make a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check, or casts *pass without trace*, allow them to surprise the creatures yet still from close quarters. If they are creative in methods, feel free to allow them to skip the encounter completely.

Social. If the characters wish to talk with the ghost and succeed an opposed Persuasion Check, it will respond and hold off attacking at first, sharing what little it knows. The shadows will continue to approach and attack the party. The ghost cannot be completely persuaded from leaving.

Crossing the moor towards the coast once more, the fog suddenly dissipates, and you see a stately manor house which looks strangely dilapidated given what you know of the Valens and that only a tending day has passed since their disappearance. Vines cling to rotting wood while dirt and mold streak the stones of the house. The front door hangs open.

1A. First-Floor Foyer

This area has the following features:

General. Entering from the front door, a grand staircase to the north splits off into two branches leading to the upper floor. Two small doors to the northwest and northeast, accessible underneath either side of the staircase, lead through a short hall which connects the ground floor rooms and **1D: The Courtyard**. To the west is a wood-paneled door leading to **1B: Dining Hall**. To the east, another wood-paneled door leading to **1C: Kitchen and Servants' Quarters**.

A few mirrors and paintings are hung here, but the room's walls are lined with glass display cases. All of them now lie empty, with marks in the dust showing items have been recently removed. One case is smashed open, the shards of glass stained red with blood.

Lighting. Small lanterns set into the side walls provide bright light throughout the room, though occasionally the lights sputter.

Valen Family portrait. A formal family portrait hangs centered above the central staircase landing. The family looks happy and affectionate.

Holy Symbol of Selûne. A 5-foot circular symbol of Selûne has been drawn on the floor near the staircase. It has been disturbed with streaks of blood, causing any magic it was creating to fail. It still faintly radiates abjuration magic. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Religion or Arcana) check can be made to determine this was a form of protective magic. The party may make one attempt to restore the symbol which removes the **I Need a Nap** effect from the inside of the manor. This will require a DC 14 Intelligence (Religion) check for success. Clerics and paladins have advantage on this check.

1B. Dining Hall

This area has the following features:

General. The Dining Hall is a formal 30 feet long by 20 feet wide dining hall meant for events or company. The room is dominated by a huge table with a dozen high backed chairs. At the head of the table, a silver goblet sits in front of the most ornate chair, both are decorated with the Valen Society crest. The goblet still bears red stains. To the right sits the remains of a smaller similar chair that has been smashed to pieces. The other chairs, all nondescript in appearance, are in one piece.

There is a door to the south leading to **2A: The Foyer** and a door to the northeast leading to **2D: The Courtyard**.

Lighting. Ornate candleholders are placed along the corners of the room and upon the dining table, though only the candles in the corners are lit. Dim light fills the room.

Creature Information

As the characters are investigating, or attempting to leave the room, **four sword wraith warriors** appear and attack. Each wraith has a vague image of the Valen crest on their form. (If the party is completing **Bonus Objective A** and has Darius with them already, he seems to recognize the faces of the wraiths.)

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very weak:** Remove **2 sword wraith warriors**
- **Weak:** Remove **1 sword wraith warrior**
- **Strong:** Remove **2 sword wraith warriors** and add **1 sword wraith commander**
- **Very strong:** Add **1 sword wraith warrior** and add **1 sword wraith commander**

What Do They Want? They desire to keep anyone from gaining access to the shard.

What Do They Know? They are former members of the Valen Society who were slain by Cassius. They know Cassius began acting weirdly and craving more power after obtaining a magical relic called the Shadow Shard. They know it is still here, though not where it is.

Playing the Pillars

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. This is designed to be a medium difficulty combat for the party. Have the creatures appear at a good point in the narrative the characters are creating. Perhaps when they touch the goblet, or as they attempt to leave the room towards the courtyard. This will be a very tight quarters combat, so be prepared for the party to retreat to other rooms of the building.

Exploration. The party should be free to explore the room a while before the combat happens. If your party has quickly moved from the initial combat directly to here, feel free to delay combat and give the players another reason to return here later.

Social. The players can choose to speak with the wraiths, but they are intent on stopping anyone from claiming the shard. It would take an extremely powerful and creative effort to somehow convince them that the party's intentions are pure and to let them pass, as Cassius's were as well and he killed them.

1C. Kitchen and Servants' Quarters

This area has the following features, feel free to describe the two rooms together, with the door between the rooms open, to shorten the investigation of this space.

General. The kitchen and servants' quarters are each approximately 15 x 20 feet.

The kitchen is sparse; herbs dry on rafters and in bunches along the counters and worktables, providing a sweet woody scent to the room. No other food or utensils are here. A large oven is set into the eastern wall. A plain door to the north opens into the servants' quarters.

Musty beds take up the eastern wall of the servant's quarters. No people or personal effects remain aside from a footlocker crammed into a corner and a hand mirror next to a broken wooden washbasin. Set into the western wall is a door opening to **2D: Courtyard**. To the north is a plain door opening to a cramped stairwell leading to the 2nd floor, exiting next to **2G: Master Bedroom**.

Lighting. Large lanterns are set into walls to provide bright light throughout the kitchen and are lit. The servants' quarters have simple candle sconces that while lit could go out soon.

Treasure

The footlocker contains a dust-covered *potion of greater healing*.

1D. Courtyard

This area has the following features:

General. Covered in ragged brown grasses with patterns worn into the dirt, the courtyard appears to more recently have been used for combat drills and other physical exercises. In the center is an ornate outbuilding decorated with holy symbols, **3A: The Chapel**.

Note for the DM

If time is running short, players can proceed to the Chapel sooner in order to move to Part 3. If play is moving fast, there are plenty of options to explore in every room of the manor.

2G. Master Bedroom

From the stairs in **1C: Kitchen and Servants' Quarters**, the adventurers exit to a hallway on the second floor. Immediately to the south is a door opening to the master bedroom.

General. The master bedroom is spacious, a 15x25-foot wood-paneled room containing ornate candle stands, a large bed, two nightstands and a long table with a standing mirror and washbasin. Drawers inset into the bottom of the bed reveal bedding and several changes of fine clothes. A small family painting hangs above the bed. In the painting, the faces of all three Valens have been scratched out. Aside from the defacing on the painting, the room is in pristine condition.

Alia's Diary. One of the nightstands contains a book. It is written in a cipher, but inscribed on the rear cover in Common are the words "altar successful, Darius will be safe for now."

2H. Study

From the hallway, the adventurers enter a small study. A fine set of double doors leads further on to **2I: The Library**.

General. This 10-foot-square wood-paneled room contains an ornate candle stand, a wooden chair with the Valen crest worked into the back

of the chair, and a large writing desk with drawers. The desk has a small mirror, and blank paper scattered on it. An inkstand on the desk holds dried-up ink and a pen bearing ink stains is on the floor by the desk. The drawers of the desk are locked, requiring a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to unlock.

Valen Society Papers. If the drawers are unlocked, the adventurers will find a bundle of crumpled letters written between Darius and various members of the Valen Society. The letters express concern about Darius' parents. When read they convey the following details:

After one mission, where they found an evil artifact that looked like a shard of glass, Cassius began to change. He started craving more power, forsaking his sacred Oath to gain it, and began wielding some of the artifacts he had sworn to keep safe.

Alia, they fear, has made a pact with Shar to gain more power herself, though one writer states she was "purely motivated by a mother's love for their child." Many in the society are upset that Darius has been defending his mother's actions.

Everyone is frightened by these changes, and there is concern about the safety of the artifacts in the Vault. One letter states that they are hopeful since "She Who Guides" guards the vault.

2I. The Library

From **2H: The Study**, a fine set of double doors swing outward and lead here. As the party enters the library, the doors open with a cloud of dust. Must, mold, and a foul stench greet their senses.

General. This 20x30-foot room contains candle stands and a few chairs but is otherwise full of floor to ceiling shelves crammed with books. The rug in the center of the floor is covered in dust, just like everything else.

The Shelves. Investigating the shelves yields titles related to fiendish pacts, magical rituals, the rites of Selûne, and several personal journals of knights in the Valen Society.

A Single Book. Strangely, a single book lying open on a chair is the only item not covered in dust. The book is entitled *The Unholy Records*. It contains drawings of every artifact the Valen Society has acquired since inception, however, several pages have been torn from it. The book is open to a page with a drawing of what looks like a chunk of obsidian with magical symbols on it. The item is labeled as the "Shadow Shard".

A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the adventurers to notice a gap on the shelves where this the book should go. Placing the book into its spot, an audible click is heard and then the shelf swings open, revealing a secret altar that has been placed in a carved recess.

Secret Altar. The scent of incense and sulfur is revealed as the altar is unsealed. There are small blue-flamed candles that appear to be frozen in time, their flames barely flickering. On the altar sits both a symbol of Selûne and one of Shar, each covered in inscriptions in an elegant handwriting along with a small sketch of Darius Valen that has been stained with several drops of blood. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check identifies that a strange ritual has been performed here, combining the magic of both goddesses. The altar radiates both abjuration and evocation magic.

Bonus Objective A. If you are doing this bonus objective, refer to **Appendix 1** for additional information. Otherwise, state that the magic is immune to being dispelled and the altar cannot be damaged.

Part 2. Broken Promises

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

“Magic is really very simple, all you’ve got to do is want something and then let yourself have it.”

-Aggie Cromwell, Halloweentown

The Chapel

The chapel is a small building at the center of the courtyard, and from its holy symbols and its colors, it is clearly devoted to Selûne.

Objectives. In this section, the adventurers must find the Shadow Shard to take back to Miri.

Bonus Objectives. If time allows and you have not yet run **Bonus Objective 2: Cults and Confidences**, you might choose to run it either before the adventurers enter the chapel, right as they find the entrance to the vault, or even after the final combat, being ambushed on their way back to the temple. For more detail, see **Appendix 2**.

The Story Unfolds

By this point, the party should realize Cassius has been corrupted by the evil in the Shadow Shard he found, and they need to find the hidden vault where it is stored. They should have discovered a hint pointing towards the chapel but it’s also the only place left to look. It is suggested that you encourage the players to explore the manor before entering the chapel, adding an appropriate plot device if needed.

3A. The Chapel

The chapel is a 25-by-20-foot room with dressed stone, expensive imported woods, and large windows on both the walls and the ceiling to allow a view of the night sky. There are rugs on the floor to help keep warmth and coziness in the building. Simple benches line the walls to allow people to sit and reflect.

Lighting. A soft glow fills the room from an invisible source but is meant to evoke a sense of calm. The windows help create a feeling of openness and peace. The fog does not penetrate here.

Statue of Selûne. A statue of Selûne sits along the northern wall, along with an altar. Upon closer inspection, the statue’s face has been scarred by something heavy that left black stains on the formerly polished marble. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals marks on the floor as if the statue had been dragged aside multiple times. Pushing the statue in that direction reveals a trapdoor that leads to **3B: The Secret Room**.

3B. The Secret Room

Spiral stairs descend 20-feet into an unnaturally dark room. Cold dry air mixed with mold and rot drift upward towards the exit, leaving the adventurers with a chill. At the bottom of the stairs, a room is dimly illuminated by purple candlelight. Worked into the walls are glass cases, all open or smashed with their contents removed except for one along the southern wall, containing a sword.

Eerie Feeling. Crossing the threshold of the room requires a successful DC 13 Wisdom Saving Throw or the character becomes frightened for ten minutes, unable to enter the room.

The Sword Case. The case is locked, and the glass is protected by a magical barrier with AC 19 and 75 hit points. If the attack that destroys the barrier does so by at least 10 points over the HP, the glass is smashed. The case will radiate abjuration and evocation magic, and once the barrier is down, the sword itself will show abjuration magic.

The barrier can also be removed with *dispel magic*. If the case is not destroyed, a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Thieves’ Tools) check can unlock the case once the barrier is removed, or the glass can be easily smashed.

The Alcove. When the glass is smashed (causing the sword to fall) or the sword is removed, an audible click will resonate through the room. The bottom panel of the display case flips up revealing a smaller recess containing a worn and stained map along with the Shadow

Shard. Just as the stone is revealed, the sword pulses with energy and a section of the south wall opens to reveal a small alcove revealing a woman with a haunted expression on her face.

Creature Information

The woman, **Alia (Warlock of the Fiend)**, moves forward from the alcove and initiates combat, but her movements are jerky and her face has a look of pain on it.

Objectives & Goals. Characters need to subdue or kill Alia, and deal with the additional creatures that appear.

The Curse. Alia is acting under the effects of a curse Shar placed on her, betraying Alia in favor of Cassius. This causes her to fight to the death to defend the Shadow Shard. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check will show that Alia seems to be under an effect she is struggling against. If a character casts *remove curse* on her, it only has a partial chance of working due to this being the work of Shar. Have that character make a DC 15 check using their primary spellcasting stat. On success, the curse is lifted and Alia drops to the ground, unconscious, and unable to be revived until she is returned to the Temple of Selûne.

Shar's Shadows. Once three rounds of combat have passed, or the curse has been broken on Alia, a **shadow mastiff alpha** and **four shadow mastiffs** appear, intent on stopping the characters from leaving with the Shadow Shard.

Darius and Alia

If Darius is with the party when combat begins, roll him into initiative. On his first turn, he will cast *Remove Curse* to try and help free his mother. He has +5 on his DC check. After that Darius will then spend all of his actions trying to protect his mother, regardless of the success of the spell.

Alia tries to eliminate any divine casters first and then the strongest member of the party. She is compelled to fight to defend the shard but is trying to fight against the compulsion.

What Do They Know? Alia is not only under the effects of a curse, she also summoned two fiends in a last desperate attempt to stop Cassius. The demons have been waiting for the

wards to be removed from the shard so they can take it.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very weak:** Have Alia instead be a **Warlock of the Archfey**, and have all five mastiffs instead be **shadows**
- **Weak:** Have Alia instead be a **Warlock of the Archfey**
- **Strong:** Add **4 shadow mastiffs** to the second wave
- **Very strong:** Add **4 ghosts** to the second wave

What Do They Want? Alia is compelled to protect the shard and kill all intruders. She will focus on divine casters then whoever appears strongest in the party. The other creatures that appear want to regain control of the Shadow Shard; they will attack whoever is holding it or pick it up themselves

What Do They Know? Alia is fighting against the curse; she doesn't want to hurt anyone (especially her son). She knows that Cassius was corrupted by the Shadow Shard and was becoming violent, including towards Darius. In an attempt to protect her son, she made a pact with Shar, that she would serve her, if Shar would not hurt Darius. Shar accepted the bargain but didn't do anything to stop Cassius. In a last ditch attempt, Alia tried to protect her son, combining magic of Shar and Selûne to send him somewhere he couldn't be hurt. It worked (partially), he vanished, but was trapped halfway between the Shadowfell and this plane. Shar discovered this, and cursed Alia to defend the shard while Cassius went out on a mission that he never returned from.

The shadow beings who join the fight, only know that they must return with the shard.

Playing the Pillars

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. This is designed to be a hard difficulty combat for the party. However, it might get suddenly much easier if Alia is quickly nullified. Be prepared to adjust the encounter on the fly if so, to still give the characters a challenge. The secret room is small, so players may attempt to go upstairs to continue the battle. You can have the creatures sent by Shar appear in the secret room, or outside the chapel stopping the players from leaving. They won't first appear inside the chapel due to the light. Be careful playing the Warlock

of the Fiend, planeshifting a Tier 2 character can quickly mean unrecoverable player death.

Exploration. The party can explore the grounds outside but will find no other entrances. Looking around the Chapel and the Secret Room will reveal no other clues until the sword is moved and the shard revealed.

Social. The players can attempt to communicate with Alia but while under her curse she is unable to respond. If Darius is there, he will plea for the characters to subdue his mother instead of killing her. If Alia is saved, she will share everything she knows back at the Temple of Selûne.

Treasure

The sword in the case is a *weapon of warning* (longsword). Additional information on this item can be found in the player handout: **Appendix 4**.

Conclusion

Once the fiends have been defeated, if Alia still lives, the party will need to take her back to the town to be healed and blessed by the priestesses of Selûne. Alia, once healed, will share all knowledge she has about what happened in the manor.

Miri is relieved to see Alia alive but disturbed by what the adventurers saw at the manor and thanks them profusely for their help. She takes the Shadow Shard and map for safe keeping. Miri pledges to research the shard and discover whatever dark secrets it contains. Perhaps the map may lead to some additional clues.

The adventure is completed – for now.

Rewards

At the **end of the session**, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments.

Character Rewards

The characters earn the following rewards:

Advancement

Upon successfully **completing** this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind your players that the amount of gold that their characters can earn per level is limited; declining advancement means that they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

Gold

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold that you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

Magic Item(s)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in **Appendix 4**:

- *Weapon of Warning (Longsword)*
- *Potion of Greater Healing*
- *Potion of Heroism*

Dungeon Master Rewards

For running this adventure, one of your character gains a level. That character receives gold based on their tier prior to advancement:

Tier	GP Earned
1	80 gp
2	240 gp
3	1,600 gp
4	6,000 gp

You may also complete DM Quests for running this adventure. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

Alia Valen (Ah LEE A Val En). Wife of Cassius Valen: once a cleric, now a warlock. Still alive.

- **What They Want:** Alia wants to protect her son at all costs.
- **Highway to Hell** Sometimes you have to do whatever you need to do to protect those that are most important to you. How far would you go?

Darius Valen (Dar E US Val En). A twenty-five-year-old paladin and son of Cassius and Alia.

- **What do they want:** Darius wants to rescue his mother from making a horrible mistake.
- **Blind Faith** Honor, Loyalty and the Valen way, these are the most important things in life?

Miri Kirmani (Mer Ee Kir Mon Ee). An Elven Priestess of Selûne.

- **What They Want:** Miri wants to know what has become of the Valen family and why there are strange reports coming from where they live.
- **I seek to know in order to serve:** Miri has dedicated her life to Selûne and seeks to be the best vessel of her will in the service to her fellows as she can.

Creature Statistics

Assassin

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

Armor Class 15 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +3, Perception +3, Stealth +9

Damage Resistance Poison

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Thieves' Cant plus any two languages

Assassinate. During its first turn, the assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the assassin scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

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

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the assassin deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the assassin that isn't incapacitated and the assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The assassin makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Cult Fanatic

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

Armor Class 13 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages: Any one language (usually Common)

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

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

Actions

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

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

Ghost

Medium undead, any alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Damage Resistances Acid, Fire, Lightning, Thunder; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Cold, Necrotic, Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained

Senses **Darkvision** 60 ft., **Passive Perception** 11

Languages Any languages it knew in life

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost 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.

Actions

Withering Touch. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good spell*. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Shadow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 12 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft

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

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Vulnerabilities Radiant

Damage Resistances Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Thunder; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Necrotic, Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages --

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

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

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

Actions

Strength Drain. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

Shadow Mastiff Alpha

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 42 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 40 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks while in Dim Light or Darkness

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages --

Ethereal Awareness. The shadow mastiff can see ethereal creatures and objects.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The shadow mastiff has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Shadow Blend. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow mastiff can use a bonus action to become invisible, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. The invisibility lasts until the shadow mastiff uses a bonus action to end it or until the shadow mastiff attacks, is in bright light, or is incapacitated.

Sunlight Weakness. While in bright light created by sunlight, the shadow mastiff has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Terrifying Howl. The shadow mastiff howls. Any beast or humanoid within 300 feet of the mastiff and able to hear its howl must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom 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. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to any shadow mastiff's Terrifying Howl for the next 24 hours.

Shadow Mastiff

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 40 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks while in Dim Light or Darkness

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages --

Ethereal Awareness. The shadow mastiff can see ethereal creatures and objects.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The shadow mastiff has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Shadow Blend. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow mastiff can use a bonus action to become invisible, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. The invisibility lasts until the shadow mastiff uses a bonus action to end it or until the shadow mastiff attacks, is in bright light, or is incapacitated.

Sunlight Weakness. While in bright light created by sunlight, the shadow mastiff has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sword Wraith Commander

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (Breastplate, Shield)

Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (-0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances Necrotic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft, Passive Perception 14

Languages the languages it knew in life

Martial Fury. As a bonus action, the sword wraith can make one weapon attack, which deals an extra 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a hit. If it does so, attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Turning Defiance. The sword wraith and any other sword wraiths within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The sword wraith makes two weapon attacks.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Call to Honor (1/Day). To use this action, the sword wraith must have taken damage during the current combat. If the sword wraith can use this action, it gives itself advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn, and 1d4 + 1 sword wraith warriors appear in unoccupied spaces within 30 feet of it. The warriors last until they drop to 0 hit points, and they take their turns immediately after the commander's turn on the same initiative count.

Sword Wraith Warrior

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (Chain Shirt, Shield)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances Necrotic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

Languages the languages it knew in life

Martial Fury. As a bonus action, the sword wraith can make one weapon attack. If it does so, attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Warlock of the Fiend

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +7, Religion +4, Perception +7

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Silvered

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages any two languages (usually Abyssal or Infernal)

Innate Spellcasting. The warlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *alter self, false life, levitate* (self only), *mage armor* (self only), *silent image*

1/day: *feblemind, finger of death, plane shift*

Spellcasting. The warlock is a 17th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, fire bolt, friends, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*

1st–5th level (4 5th-level slots): *banishment, burning hands, flame strike, hellish rebuke, magic circle, scorching ray, scrying, stinking cloud, suggestion, wall of fire*

Dark One's Own Luck (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When the warlock makes an ability check or saving throw, it can add a d10 to the roll. It can do this after the roll is made but before any of the roll's effects occur.

Actions

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Warlock of the Archfey

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 11 (14 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 49 (11d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +2, Deception +6, Nature +2, Persuasion +6

Condition Immunities Charmed

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages any two languages (usually Sylvan)

Innate Spellcasting. The warlock's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *disguise self, mage armor* (self only), *silent image, speak with animals*

1/day: *conjure fey*

Spellcasting. The warlock is a 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, eldritch blast, friends, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, vicious mockery*

1st–5th level (3 5th-level slots): *blink, charm person, dimension door, dominate beast, faerie fire, fear, hold monster, misty step, phantasmal force, seeming, sleep*

Actions

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Reactions

Misty Escape (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). In response to taking damage, the warlock turns invisible and teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. It remains invisible until the start of its next turn or until it attacks, makes a damage roll, or casts a spell.

Appendix 1: Bonus Objective A, A Haunting

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

"Maybe all the people who say ghosts don't exist are just afraid to admit that they do."

— Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*

Still in Valen Manor

This bonus objective takes place during Part 1, as the players are exploring Valen Manor

Prerequisites. The adventurers should have explored a room or two of the house before this begins. You should not wait until they are in the library, or else some of the mystery is lost.

Bonus Objective A

In this section, the adventurers encounter Darius Valen at the Manor and must free him from the magical effect put upon him by destroying the hidden altar. **This is Bonus Objective A.**

Encountering Darius

As the party is exploring the manor, have the character with the highest Passive Perception catch a fleeting glimpse of a figure in a mirror. When they try to look back, they can't see the figure anymore. In the next area, have multiple members of the party see him. He looks pleadingly at the adventurers through the mirror.

Darius attempts to convince the party to follow him upstairs by using hand gestures only which can be seen in the mirror, or directly if Darius is revealed. No matter what actions are taken, Darius is unable to speak to the party, communicate telepathically, or interact with the environment other than walking on floors.

If the party follows Darius, he will lead them upstairs to the library where he points out a stack of books sitting atop a desk. All of the books focus on rituals of varying types. A small hand mirror can be found laying on a table in the library.

A successful DC 16 (Intelligence) Arcana or (Wisdom) Religion check will allow the adventurers to deduce that a ritual has caused

Darius to exist in his current state and that he wants the party's help in ending the effects.

Revealing Darius

Darius is currently trapped halfway between the Shadowfell and the Material Plane. He also has an enchantment on him, similar to an invisibility spell, that makes him invisible except in mirrors, and undetectable by magic.

Deduction. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal there is illusion magic cloaking the figure standing in the room with you that could perhaps be removed.

Dispel. A *dispel magic* can be cast on Darius to make him visible, although he is still trapped between planes and will appear slightly translucent, similar to a ghost. They will have to end the ritual.

Ending the Ritual

If the party shares information they find in the books in the library with Darius, he nods and gestures helplessly around the room. A DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check allows the party to understand that Darius doesn't know how to end the curse on himself.

If the party questions Darius on how this happened to him, he will lead them to the nearest family portrait and point at his mother before making a wide gesture at his surroundings and shrugging his shoulders.

Once the adventurers find the altar in **2i: The Library**, a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check shows them that it was used to try and place a protective spell on Darius and that destroying the altar will likely end the spell.

Destroying the Altar

The altar is made of a hard-black stone. It has an AC of 20 and 80 hit points. Anytime the altar is attacked in any way, it will deal half the damage, rounded down, back to the attacker as force

damage. (Maximum 15 damage per hit). It is vulnerable to radiant and lightning damage.

and otherwise endeavor to remove Alia from harm.

Darius Returns

Once the altar is destroyed, Darius returns to his normal state. He explains the enchantment must have been intended to keep danger from noticing him: it was not a curse, but a misguided protective enchantment that he believes his mother cast to protect him from his father.

Filling in the Gaps. If the party is not already aware of Cassius's misdeeds, Darius shares the following information: The Valen Society had been collecting magical artifacts to safeguard innocents, but recently Cassius acquired the artifact they called the Shadow Shard and began acting strangely afterwards. He became hostile, lashing out, and wanted to use the evil artifacts that had been collected.

Darius' Fate. Darius and his father had a terrible fight, where Darius demanded the artifacts be destroyed. His mother witnessed that fight, and shortly thereafter Darius found himself in his previous state. He was unable to find his parents nor other members of the Society, so had been in the tavern listening for information. He heard that the adventurers were going to be investigating the manor so followed them.

Continuing Onward

Darius is grateful to the adventurers for their help and entreats them to help him find his mother as he fears she is in grave danger. He will travel with the party but not take part in any encounters until the encounter in **3B: The Secret Room**, with his mother. There Darius will cast *remove curse* the first round of combat

Appendix 2: Bonus Objective B, Cults & Confidences

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

"When one consorts with assassins, one must expect to dance along the edge of a knife once or twice."

- R.L. LaFevers

The Setting

This bonus objective is flexible and designed to take place at almost any point of this adventure. Suggested spots might be:

- At any point the party takes a rest
- In any room of the manor while exploring
- In the chapel, just as the stairs are revealed
- At the end, on the way back to the Temple

Bonus Objective B

In this section, the adventurers must defeat a group of cultists who have traveled to Valen Manor to look into rumors of powerful magic artifacts. **This is Bonus Objective B.**

Encountering the Cultists

Having heard rumors of a fallen paladin of Selûne, members of a Dark Moon Cult have come to Valen Manor in hopes of recruiting Cassius to the order. The cultists shadow the players and soon learn about the magical artifacts. They trail the players in the hopes of simply using the party to do "the dirty work" of discovery and fighting and then to steal any artifacts the party uncovers.

If the party attempts to take a short rest during the adventure, immediately trigger this combat. If a long rest, then the attackers get a guaranteed surprise round.

Creature Information

When the party doesn't expect it, they are attacked by **two Cult Fanatics** accompanied by **an Assassin**. Unless someone in the party has a Passive Perception of 18 or higher, the party is surprised by this attack.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very weak:** Remove **both cult fanatics**
- **Weak:** Remove **1 cult fanatic**
- **Strong:** Add **1 assassin**
- **Very strong:** Add **2 assassins**

What Do They Want? The cultists desire any magical artifacts that remain at the manor.

What Do They Know? They are members of the Dark Moon Cult (but will not reveal that willingly). Their orders had been to recruit Cassius. They had not expected him to be missing, nor for the adventurers to be here. They changed their plans when it seemed the party was ripe for picking.

Playing the Pillars

Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. This is designed to be a hard difficulty combat for the party. The assassins will make use of the surprise round to assassinate what appear to be the most powerful characters. They fight to the death to not let their cult be exposed.

Exploration. Reward the players for being extremely cautious in their actions, for example, having one member not rest and be on purely lookout duty could get an active perception check. Resting in a *Leomund's Tiny Hut* or moving with *Pass Without Trace* could also reward them by removing the surprise round.

Social. The cultists will be unwilling to discuss anything during combat. However, if one is captured, a successful DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) attempt can convince them to start talking.

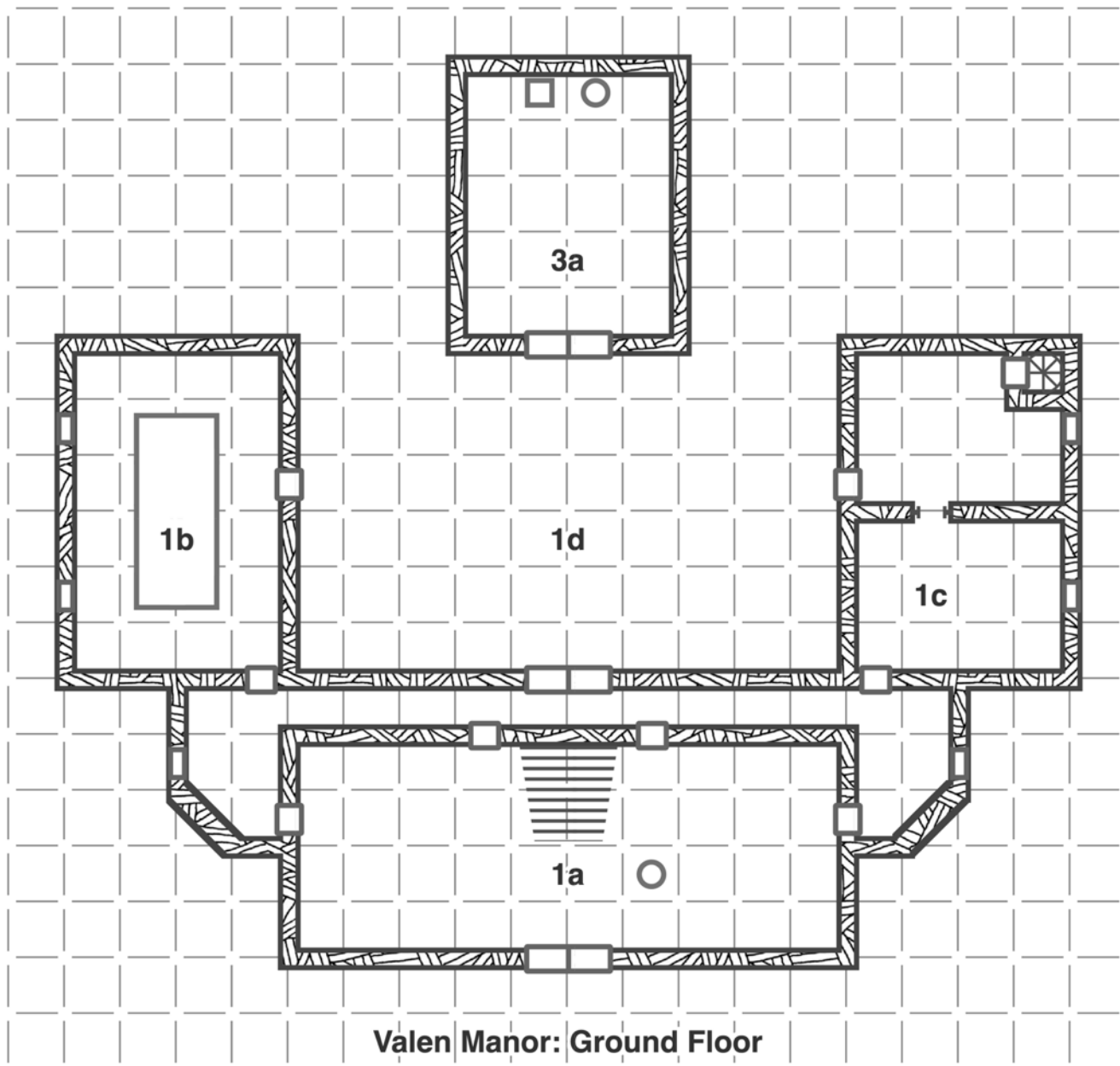
Continuing Onward

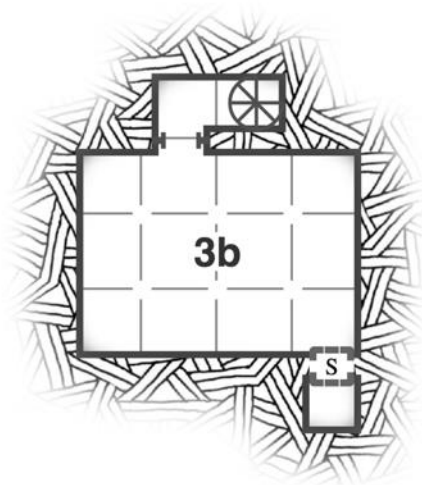
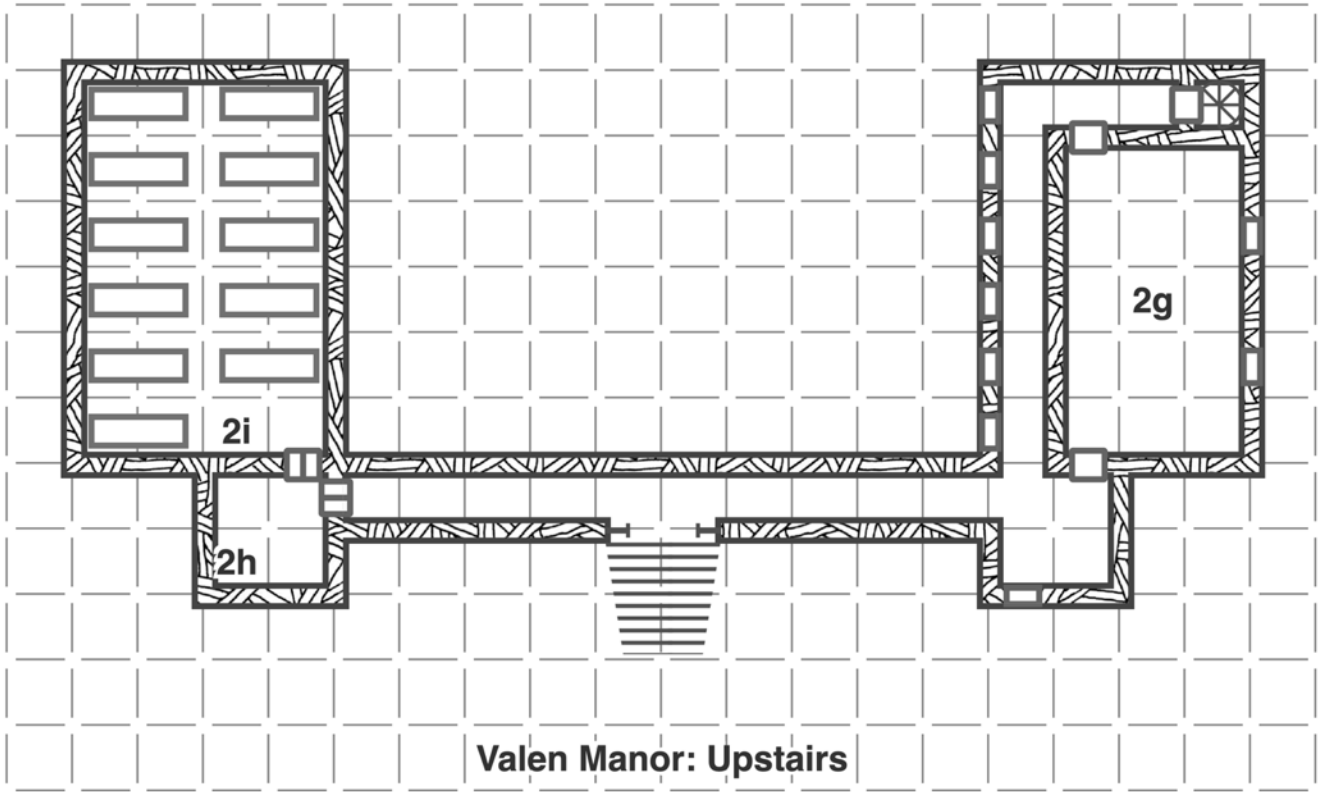
If the party brings a cultist or their back to the temple, Miri goes into a panic, immediately recognizing the regalia of the Dark Moon Cult. She thanks party profusely for bringing the serious threat to their attention.

Treasure

An assassin is carrying a *potion of heroism* on their belt.

Appendix 3: Maps





The Secret Room

Appendix 4: Character Rewards

This appendix includes descriptions of the various character rewards that might be earned for completing the adventure including magic item unlocks, story awards, and downtime activities.

Weapon of Warning (Longsword)

Uncommon, requires attunement.

This magic weapon warns you of danger. While the weapon is on your person, you have advantage on initiative rolls. In addition, you and any of your companions within 30 feet of you can't be surprised, except when incapacitated by something other than nonmagical sleep. The weapon magically awakens you and your companions within range if any of you are sleeping naturally when combat begins. This item can be found on **Magic Item Table F** in the **DMG**.

Potion of Heroism

Rare

For 1 hour after drinking this potion, you gain 10 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour. For the same duration, you are under the effect of the *bleed* spell (no concentration required). This blue potion bubbles and steams as if boiling. This item can be found on **Magic Item Table C** in the **DMG**.

Potion of Greater Healing

Uncommon

You regain 4d4+4 hit points when you drink this potion. The potion's red liquid glimmers when agitated. This item can be found on **Magic Item Table B** in the **DMG**.

Appendix 5: Dungeon Master Tips

To DM an adventure, you **are recommended to** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure’s level range (see Adventure Primer).

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running 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--such as note cards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- 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.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information is added at the end of the adventure session—whether the completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If

they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting This Adventure

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group’s average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party	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 greater than		Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than		Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent		Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than		Very strong